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Rafael Khakimov

The History of the Tatars: a Look from the 21st Century

The Tatars are one of the few peoples about whom legends and outright lies are known to a much greater extent than the truth.

The officially published history of the Tatars was ideological and biased to an extreme extent both before and after the revolution of 1917. Even the most outstanding Russian historians treated the "Tatar issue" in a biased way, or simply avoided it altogether. In his famous work 'Essays on the History of the Kazan Khaganate', Mikhail Khudyakov wrote as follows: 'Russian historians were interested in the history of the Kazan Khaganate only as material for studying the movement of Russians eastward. It should be noted that they mainly paid attention to the last moment of the battle and seizure of territory, especially the victorious siege of Kazan, and all but ignored the gradual stages of absorption of one state by another' [At the crossroads of continents and civilizations, p. 536]. In the preface to his multi-volume 'History of Russia since Ancient Times', the outstanding Russian historian S. Solovyev noted as follows: 'A historian is not entitled to interrupt the natural thread of events beginning in the first half of the 13th century – the gradual transition from patrimonial prince relationships to state ones – and simply insert the Tatar period, to put the Tatars and Tatar relationships in the foreground so that the main events and the main reasons for these events become closed off' [Solovyev, p. 54]. Thus, a period encompassing three centuries, the history of Tatar states (the Golden Horde, the Kazan other Khaganates), which influenced global processes and not just the fate of the Russians, was omitted from the chain of events comprising the formation of Russian statehood.

Another outstanding Russian historian named V. Kliuchevsky divided Russian history into periods in accordance with the logic of colonisation. 'The history of Russia,' he

wrote, 'is the history of a colonized country. Its area of colonization expanded together with its state territory'. In addition, he stated that '...the colonization of the country was the main event in our history, and it is both intimately and distantly connected with other events' [Klyuchevsky, p. 50]. The state and the nation were the main focuses of V. Klyuchevsky's research. According to him, the state was Russia, and the nation was the Russian people. In their wake there remained no place for the Tatars and their statehood.

As regards Tatar history, the Soviet period was far from notable for any fundamentally new approaches. Moreover, with its regulation 'On the condition and measures for improving the mass political and ideological work in the Tatar party organization' dated 1944, the Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks simply forbade studying the history of the Golden Horde (the Ulus of Jochi) and the Kazan Khaganate, thus omitting the Tatar period from the history of Russian statehood.

As a result of these approaches, an image of the Tatars emerged as a terrible and wild tribe oppressing not only the Russians, but almost half of the world. A positive Tatar history or Tatar civilisation was out of the question. It was initially believed that the Tatars and the idea of a civilisation were incompatible notions.

Today, every nation is starting to write their history on their own. Scientific centers have become more ideologically independent, they are now more difficult to control or influence.

The 21st century will inevitably introduce significant changes not only in the history of the peoples of Russia, but also in the history of the Russians themselves, as well as in the history of Russian statehood.

The viewpoints of contemporary Russian historians have also underwent cer-

tain changes. For example, there is now a three-volume history of Russia published under the auspices of the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences and recommended as a textbook for university students that provides a lot of information on the non-Russian peoples who lived on the territory of modern Russia. It provides information on the Turkic and Khazar Khaganates, the Volga Bulgaria, and more calmly describes the era of the Tatar invasion and the period of the Kazan Khaganate. However, it is still the Russian history, which cannot replace or comprise the Tatar one.

In their studies, Tatar historians have been limited by a number of strict objective and subjective conditions. Before the revolution, they worked for the purpose of an ethnic revival as citizens of the Russian Empire. After the revolution, the period of true freedom was too short to write a complete history. The ideological struggle strongly influenced their opinions, but the repression in 1937 perhaps had the greatest impact. Control over the work of historians in the Central Committee of the Communist Party undermined the ability to work out any scientific approach to history, having subordinated it to the tasks of the class struggle and the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The democratization of Soviet and Russian society has now allowed for a revision of many pages of history, and more importantly, a shift of the entire research body from ideological to scientific foundations. Now it is possible to utilise the experience of foreign scientists, and access has been opened to new sources and museum storerooms.

Along with the overall processes of democratisation, a new political situation has emerged in Tatarstan that declares sovereignty on behalf of the entire political and ethnic nation of the republic. Moreover, other rapid processes have occurred in the Tatar world. In 1992, the first World Tatar Congress was convened, where the problem of an objective study of the history of the Tatars was determined as a key political task. All this required reconsideration of the Republic's and the Tatar people's place in post-Soviet

Russia. The need has emerged to look anew at the methodological and theoretical foundations of the historical discipline involving the study of Tatar history.

* * *

The History of the Tatars is a relatively independent discipline because the existing Russian history cannot replace or comprise it.

Methodological problems of studying the history of the Tatars have been raised by scientists working on generalising works. In his work 'Mustafad al-akhbar fi akhvali Kazan va Bulgar' ('Information involved in the history of Kazan and Bulgar'), Shigabutdin Marjani wrote as follows: 'Wishing to fulfill the duty of providing complete information on various epochs and explain the meaning of human society, Muslim historians have gathered a wealth of information about the capitals, Caliphs, Tsars, scientists, Sufis, various social groups, paths and lines of thought of ancient wise men, nature and everyday life, science and crafts, and wars and rebellions'. He also went on to note that 'historical science incorporates the fate of all nations and tribes, evaluates scientific directions and discussions' [Marjani, p. 42]. At the same time he did not single out any research methods characteristic exclusively to Tatar history, although it is evident enough from the context of his works. He focused on the ethnic roots of the Tatars, their statehood, Khan reigns, economy, culture, religion, and the position of the Tatar people in the Russian Empire.

In Soviet times, ideological clichés required the use of the Marxist methodology. Gaziz Gubaydullin wrote as follows: 'If we consider the history of the Tatars, we can see that it is composed of certain economic formations that gave way to others, and of interactions between classes that emerged due to certain economic conditions' [Gubaydullin, p. 20]. This can be summed up as the need to follow the requirements of the time. However, he described history itself in a much broader sense than the one proposed in this quote.

All subsequent Soviet historians were under strict ideological pressure and reduced

methodology to the works of Marxist-Leninist classics. Nevertheless, many works by Gaziz Gubaidulin, Mikhail Khudyakov and others demonstrated another, not so official approach to history. Despite the inevitable limitations imposed by censorship, a monograph by Magomet Safargaleev titled 'The collapse of the Golden Horde' and works by Herman Feodorov-Davydov greatly influenced subsequent research with the very fact of their publication. Works by Mirkasim Usmanov, Alfred Khalikov, Yahya Abdullin, Azgar Muhamadiev, Damir Iskhakov and many other authors added some alternative to the existing interpretation of history that spurred people on to look deeper into ethnic histories.

Foreign historians who have studied the Tatars include such well-known scientists as Zeki Velidi Togan and Kurat Akdes Nimet (Nigmat) Kurat. Zeki Velidi was purposefully engaged in the methodological problems of history. However, he was more interested in the methods, objectives and tasks of history as a science in general in comparison to other sciences, as well as approaches to writing general Turkish history. At the same time, his books describe certain specific methods for studying Tatar history. First of all, it should be noted that he described a general Turkic-Tatar history, without singling out Tatars specifically. Moreover, this is true not only for the ancient Turkic period, but for subsequent periods as well. He examines Chinggis Khan, his children, Tamerlane and various Khaganates, including the Crimean, Kazan, Nogai, and Astrakhan, referring to all of these as the Turkic world. Of course, there were reasons for such an approach. The ethnonym 'Tatars' was often understood very broadly and included not only the Turks but even the Mongols. At the same time many of the Turkic peoples in the Middle Ages had a single history, primarily within the Ulus of Jochi. Therefore, the term 'Turkic-Tatar history' in relation to the Turkic population of the Ulus of Jochi allows a historian to avoid many difficulties when describing historical events.

Although other foreign historians (Edward Keenan, Azade-Ayşe Rohrlach, Jaroslav Pelenski, Uli Schamiloglu, Nadir Devlet, Tamurbek Davletshin, etc.) did not set out to find general approaches to the history of the Tatars, they nevertheless introduced rather significant conceptual notions into the study of various periods. They compensated for gaps in the works of Tatar historians in the Soviet period.

The ethnic component is one of the most important in historical studies. Before the emergence of statehood, the history of the Tatars was largely reduced to ethnogenesis. Moreover, the loss of statehood moves the study of ethnic processes to the foreground. Although the existence of a state pushes the ethnic factor into the background, it nonetheless retains its relative independence as an object of historical study, and furthermore sometimes this is ethnicity that serves as a state-forming factor, and therefore decisively impacts the course of history.

The Tatar people have no common ethnic roots. Their ancestors include the Huns, the Bulgars, the Kipchaks, the Nogais and other peoples who originated in ancient times based on the cultures of various Scythian and other tribes and peoples, as can be seen in the first volume of this publication.

The formation of modern Tatars was to a certain extent influenced by the Ugro-Finns peoples and the Slavs. It is unscientific to try and find ethnic purity in the Bulgars or some ancient Tatar people. The ancestors of the modern Tatars never lived in isolation. On the contrary, they actively moved around, mixing with various Turkic and non-Turkic tribes. On the other hand, having to work out an official language and culture, state structures contributed to the active mixing of tribes and peoples. This is even more true given the fact that the state has always had the important function of being a vital ethnicity-forming factor. And recall that the Bulgarian state, the Golden Horde, Kazan, Astrakhan and other Khaganates existed over the span of many centuries, which is a sufficient period to form new ethnic components. Religion was an equally strong factor contributing to the intermixing of ethnic groups. While in Russia Christianity made many christened

peoples Russian, Islam turned many people into Turks and Tatars in the middle ages.

The dispute with 'bulgarists' calling to rename Tatars as Bulgars and reduce our entire history into the history of one ethnic group is mostly political in nature, and therefore it should be studied within the framework of political science rather than history. At the same time the emergence of such a current in public opinion was influenced by the weakly-developed methodological foundations of the history of the Tatars and the impact of ideological approaches to history, including the desire to omit the 'Tatar period' from history.

In recent decades, scientists have been interested in the search for language, ethnographic and other features of the Tatar people. The slightest peculiarities in language were immediately declared a dialect, linguistic and ethnographic nuances formed the basis for singling out separate groups that claim to be independent peoples today. Of course, there are some distinctive features in the use of the Tatar language by Mishars, or the Astrakhan or Siberian Tatars. The Tatars living in various territories of course possess certain different ethnographic features. But this is simply a unique regional way to use a singular Tatar literary language and the nuances of a singular Tatar culture. It would be thoughtless to discuss language dialects on such grounds, and especially to distinguish independent peoples (Siberian or other Tartars). If we follow the logic of some of our scientists, the Lithuanian Tatars who speak Polish cannot be attributed to the Tatar people.

The history of a nation cannot be reduced to the peripeties of an ethnonym. It is not easy to trace the connection of the ethnonym 'Tatars' mentioned in Chinese, Arabic and other sources with the modern Tatars. This is indeed even more incorrect than seeing a direct anthropological and cultural connection of modern Tatars with ancient and medieval tribes. Some experts believe that true Tatars spoke Mongolian (see for example [Kychanov, 1995, p. 29]), although there also exist other points of view. There used to be a time when the ethnonym 'Tatars' de-

noted the Tatar-Mongol peoples. 'Because of their extraordinary greatness and honourable position', Rashid al-Din wrote, 'other Turkic clans were known under their name despite all the differences in their ranks and names. They were all referred to as Tatars. And those various clans believed that they were great and honourable because they were attributed to this nation, and became known under this name. Today, due to the influence of Chinggis Khan and his family, since they are Mongols, various Turkic tribes like the Jalairs, Tatars, Onguts, Keraites, Naimans, Tanguts and others, each of which had a certain name and a special nickname, all of them call themselves Mongols with the purpose of self-glorification, despite the fact that they did not adhere to this classification in ancient times. Thus, their descendants today imagine that they have long belonged to and have been referred to as Mongols, but this is not true, as the Mongols were only one of many Turkic steppe tribes' [Rashid al-Din, Volume 1, Book 1, pp. 102–103].

The word 'Tatars' has denoted various peoples in various periods of history, and it often depended on the nationality of the Chronicles' author. Thus, Friar Julian, an ambassador of Bela IV, the King of Hungary to the Cumans in the 13th century, linked the ethnonym 'Tatars' with the Greek word 'Tartaros', which means 'hell' or the 'underworld'. Some European historians used the ethnonym 'Tatars' in the same meaning as the Greeks used the word 'barbarians'. For example, on some European maps, Muscovite is referred to as the 'Moscow Tartaria' or the 'European Tartaria' in comparison to the Chinese or the Independent Tartaries. The meaning of the ethnonym 'Tatars' in subsequent years, especially in the 16th-19th centuries, varied greatly [Karimullin]. Damir Iskhakov writes as follows: 'In Tatar Khaganates formed after the collapse of the Golden Horde, the word 'Tatars' traditionally denoted representatives of the military service class... That is, people who played a key role in spreading the ethnonym 'Tatars' over the vast territory of the former Golden Horde. Ordinary people began using this word after the fall of the

Khaganates. But at the same time people also used many local names and the confessional word 'Muslims'. Their elimination and the final fixation of the ethnonym 'Tatars' as a nationwide original name happened rather late due to national consolidation' [Iskhakov, p. 231]. The above arguments contain a considerable element of truth, although it would be a mistake to overemphasize any facet of the term 'Tatars'. The ethnonym 'Tatars' has obviously been, and still remains, a topic of scientific debate. There is no doubt that before the revolution of 1917, the word 'Tatars' denoted not only the Volga, Crimean and Lithuanian Tatars, but also the Azerbaijanians and a number of Turkic peoples of the Northern Caucasus and Southern Siberia, but the ethnonym 'Tatars' was ultimately fixed only for the Volga and Crimean Tatars.

The term 'Tatar-Mongols' is very controversial and touchy for the Tatars. Ideologues have invested a lot of energy to present the Tatars and Mongols as wild barbarians. In response, a number of scientists use the term 'Turko-Mongols' or simply 'Mongols' to spare the feelings of the Volga Tatars. But in fact history does not need any excuse. No nation can boast about the peaceful and humane character of its past, because those who did not know how to fight could not survive and were conquered and often assimilated. The European crusades or the Inquisition were no less brutal than the invasion of the 'Tatar-Mongols'. The only difference is that the Europeans and the Russians took the initiative in the interpretation of this issue and proposed a version that benefited both them and the assessment of historical events.

The term 'Tatar-Mongols' requires careful analysis in order to determine a justification for combining the names 'Tatars' and 'Mongols'. As they expanded, the Mongols relied on Turkic tribes. Turkic culture had a profound influence on Chinggis Khan's empire and especially that of the Ulus of Jochi. It so happened from a historical perspective that both the Mongols and Turks were often simply referred to as the 'Tatars'. Indeed, this was at once both correct and misguided. This was correct since the true Mongols were only

a few in number, and the Turkic culture (their language, writing, military regime, etc.) gradually became commonplace for many peoples. This was wrong due to the fact that the Tatars and Mongols are two different nations. Moreover, modern Tatars should not be identified with either the Mongols or the medieval Central Asian Tatars. In addition, they in fact inherited the culture of peoples of the 7th-12th centuries who lived on the Volga and in the Cis-Ural region, along with the people and state of the Golden Horde and the Kazan Khaganate, and it would be incorrect to state that they had nothing to do with the Tatars who lived in Eastern Turkistan and Mongolia. Even the Mongolian element, which is insignificant in modern Tatar culture, affected historical formation of the Tatar people. After all, the Khans buried in the Kazan Kremlin were Chinggisids, and this should be always be kept in mind [Kazan Kremlin Mausoleums]. History is never simple and straightforward.

When presenting the history of the Tatars, it seems very difficult to separate it from a general Turkic basis. First of all, certain terminological difficulties in studying general Turkic history should be noted. While the Turkic Khaganate is definitely interpreted as general Turkic heritage, the Mongol Empire and especially the Golden Horde are very complex formations from an ethnic standpoint. Indeed, the Ulus of Jochi is considered to be a Tatar state, and the ethnonym here means all the people who lived there,—that is, the Turko-Tatars. But will the modern Kazakhs, Kyrgyz people, Uzbeks and other peoples that came to be in the Golden Horde recognise the Tatars as their medieval ancestors? Of course not. It is all too obvious that no one will emphasise the differences in the use of this ethnonym in the Middle Ages and at present. Today, the ethnonym 'Tatars' is most associated with the modern Volga and Crimean Tatars by most people. Consequently, it would be methodologically more appropriate to use the term 'Turko-Tatar history' following Zeki Velidi, which helps differentiate between the history of the modern Tatars and other Turkic nations.

The use of this term also has another purpose, as there is a problem correlating general and national Turkic history. It is difficult to single out individual parts of a general history during certain periods (e.g. the Turkic Khaganate). In the era of the Golden Horde, it is quite possible to study individual regions that later separated and turned into independent khaganates right alongside with the general history. Of course, the Tatars interacted with the Uighurs and Turkey, as well as the Egyptian Mamluks, but these relationships were not as organic as those with Central Asia. Therefore, it is difficult to find a single approach to correlate general Turkic and Tatar history, as they differed greatly throughout various periods and in relation to various countries. Therefore, both the term '*Turko-Tatar history*' (in relation to the Middle Ages), and simply '*Tatar history*' (in relation to later periods) will be used in this work.

The 'History of the Tatars' as a relatively independent discipline exists because there is a research object that can be traced from ancient times to the present day. What ensures the continuity of history, and what can confirm the succession of events? After all, over the centuries certain ethnic groups were changed by others, states emerged and collapsed, peoples combined and separated, and new languages were formed in the place of obsolete ones.

Generally, a historian studies a society that inherits the previous culture and transmits it to the next generation. This society can be in the form of a state or an ethnic group. And in the years of Tatar persecution since the second half of the 16th century, individual ethnic groups not closely connected to one another became the main keepers of cultural traditions. The religious community always plays a significant role in the historical development as a criterion for classifying society as belonging to one civilisation or another. Since the 10th century and up to the 1920s, mosques and madrasahs were the most important institutions uniting the entire Tatar world. All of the above—the state, ethnoses and religious community—contributed to

the succession of the Tatar culture, and thus ensured the continuity of its historical development.

The concept of culture has a very broad meaning and is understood as all the achievements and norms of a society, whether this be the economy (for example, agriculture), the art of state management, military art, writing, literature, social standards, etc. Studying culture in general grants us the opportunity to understand the logic of historical development and determine the place of the society in the broadest possible context. The continuity of cultural conservation and development is what allows historians to speak about the continuity of Tatar history and its features.

Any historical periodisation is conventional, and therefore can be based on various grounds, which in turn makes various assertions equally correct: it all depends on the problem faced by the researcher. If one studies the history of statehood there will be a specific basis for the division of periods, but during the study of ethnic groups there will be another. And if, for example, one studies the history of a house or garment, their periodisation can be based on very specific grounds. Each specific research object has its own logic of development along with its general methodological purposes. Even the convenience of a narrative (e.g., in a textbook) can be the basis for a specific periodisation.

The logic of cultural development will serve as the main criterion in our publication for distinguishing major milestones in the history of the nation. Culture is the most important social regulator. The term 'culture' can be used to explain both the fall and rise of a state, and the disappearance and emergence of civilizations. Culture determines social values, creates benefits for the existence of one nation over another, creates incentives for labour and individual personal qualities, determines the openness of a society and opportunities for communication among peoples. Culture can help understand society's place in world history.

Tatar history, with its sophisticated twists and turns, is difficult to represent as a single picture because its upswings were followed

by catastrophic regressions, right down to the need for physical survival and the preservation of elementary cultural foundations and even the language.

The Tatar, or rather the Turko-Tatar, civilization was formed on the basis of steppe culture that defined the appearance of Eurasia from ancient times until the early Middle Ages. Cattle breeding and horses determined the nature of their economy and way of life, along with housing and clothing, and ensured military successes. The invention of saddles, curved sabres, powerful bows, war tactics, a Tengriism ideology and other achievements had a tremendous impact on world culture. It would have been impossible to settle the massive Eurasian territories without a steppe civilization, which is what gives way to its historical merit.

The adoption of Islam in 922 and the development of the Volga Trade Route were turning points in the history of the Tatars. As a result of the adoption of Islam, Tatar ancestors were included in the Muslim world, which was the most advanced at that time, and this determined the nation's future and their civilizations features. And thanks to the Bulgars, the Islamic world reached all the way to the most northern latitude, which has been a very important factor up to this day.

After the ancestors of the Tatars transitioned from a nomadic to a settled life and urban civilization, they were looking for new ways of communication with other peoples. The steppe remained in the south, and the horse was already unable to fulfill its universal functions in the new conditions of settled life. It simply became an auxiliary tool in the economy. It was the Volga and Kama rivers that connected the Bulgarian State with other countries and peoples. The route along the Volga, Kama and Caspian Sea was supplemented by access to the Black Sea through the Crimea, which became one of the most important factors for the economic prosperity of the Golden Horde. The Volga Trade Route played a key role in the Kazan Khaganate as well. It was not by chance that Muscovite's expansion to the east began with the establishment of the Nizhny Novgorod Fair,

which weakened the Kazan economy. Eurasian development in the Middle Ages cannot be understood and explained without the role of the Volga-Kama basin as a means of communication. Even today the Volga performs the function of an economic and cultural linchpin in the European part of Russia.

The emergence of the Ulus of Jochi as a part of the Mongol super-empire, and then as an independent state, was the greatest achievement in the history of the Tatars. In the era of Chinggisids, Tatar history became truly worldwide as it touched the interests of both the East and Europe. The contribution of Tatars in military art is indisputable and can be seen most vividly in the form of improved weapons and military tactics. The state management system, the postal (yam) service inherited by Russia, the spectacular financial system, literature and urban development of the Golden Horde truly reached great heights: there were just a few cities in the Middle Ages that were equal to Sarai in the size and scope of trade. Thanks to intensive trade with Europe, the Golden Horde had direct contacts with European culture. There was a huge potential for mimicry of Tatar culture precisely in the epoch of the Golden Horde. The Kazan Khaganate continued this down this route mostly mechanically.

The cultural pivot of Tatar history after the capture of Kazan in 1552 was preserved primarily thanks to Islam and took the form of cultural survival, a sign of the fight against Christianization and the assimilation of the Tatars.

Tatar history has three turning points associated with Islam that greatly influenced subsequent events: 1) the adoption of Islam in 922 as the official religion of Volga Bulgaria, which meant Baghdad's recognition of the young and independent (from the Khazar state) state, 2) the Islamic 'revolution' of Uzbek Khan, who in violation of Chinggis Khan's 'Yasa' ('the Code of law') on the equality of religions, introduced one state religion—Islam⁴, that greatly determined the

⁴ This did not affect Russian principalities where Orthodoxy's domination was not only preserved but

process of the society's consolidation and the formation of the (Golden Horde) Turkic-Tatar people, 3) Islamic reform in the second half of the 19th century called Jadidism (from the Arabic 'ad-Jadid', meaning new, updated).

The revival of the Tatar people in contemporary history begins exactly with the reform of Islam. Jadidism indicated several important facts: first, the ability of Tatar culture to confront forced Christianization, second, the confirmation that Tatars belonged to the Islamic world and even their claim for a leading role therein, third, the competition of Islam with Orthodoxy within a single country. Jadidism was a significant contribution of the Tatars and contemporary world culture, along with a demonstration of the ability of Islam to modernise.

The Tatars had managed to create many public structures by the early 20th century, including an education system, periodicals, political parties, their own ('Muslim') faction in the State Duma, economic structures (primarily commercial capital), etc. By the revolution of 1917, Tatars had come up with certain ideas of how to recover their statehood.

The Tatars' first attempt to recreate their statehood dates back to 1918 when the 'Idel Ural' state was proclaimed, but the Bolsheviks managed to prevent them from seeing this ambitious project through to the end. However, the Decree on the creation of the Tatar-Bashkir Republic was adopted as a direct result of this political act. The complex twists and turns of the political and ideological fighting ended with the adoption in 1920 of the Decree of the Central Executive Committee on the creation of the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. This Republic was quite different from the structure of the Idel Ural state, but it was certainly a step in the right direction, without which there would have been no Declaration

also developed further. In 1313 the Uzbek Khan sent a *yarliq* to Rus' metropolitan Pyotr that contained the following words: 'If someone blasphemes Christianity, speaks ill of churches, monasteries, or chapels, this person will be executed' (quote according to: [Fakhretdin, p. 94]). It should also be noted that the Uzbek Khan himself married his daughter to the Moscow prince and allowed her to get baptised.

of State Sovereignty of the Republic of Tatarstan dated 1990.

The new status of Tatarstan after its declaration of state sovereignty placed on the agenda the question of choosing its principle path of development, as well as defining Tatarstan's place in the Russian Federation and the Turkic and Islamic world.

Russian and Tatar historians now face a serious challenge. The 20th century was the epoch of collapse first for the Russian and then the Soviet empire, and a time of massive changes on a global political scale. The Russian Federation was formed as a separate country, and now it is forced to take a fresh look at how it got to where it is. It needs to find ideological reference points to develop in the new millennium. This will largely depend on historians,—that is, how people understand the underlying processes occurring in the country, and how non-Russian peoples will perceive Russia as 'their own' or a 'foreign' country.

Russian science will be unable to ignore the emergence of an array of independent research centers with their own views on emerging problems. Therefore it will be difficult to write Russian history from Moscow alone, it should instead be written by various research teams taking into account the history of all indigenous peoples.

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This seven-volume work entitled *The History of the Tatars since Ancient Times* is published under the Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences, but it is nonetheless a joint work of Tatar, Russian and Foreign scholars. This collective work is based on a series of scientific conferences held in Kazan, Moscow, and St. Petersburg. The work is academic in nature and therefore developed primarily for researchers and experts. We are not invested in making the text a best-seller or accessible to just any reader. Our number one task was to present the most unbiased picture of historical events possible. Nevertheless, both teachers and those who are simply interested in history are sure to find lots of interesting stories in these volumes.

This publication is the first academic work ever to describe the history of the Tatars starting from the 3rd millennium BC. The ancient period cannot always be represented as a series of events, as sometimes it only exists in archaeological materials. However, we considered it necessary to describe it in this very way. Many issues that a reader will find in this work are open to further analysis and require additional study. After all, this is not an encyclopedia that only contains well-established facts. It was important for us to establish the existing level of knowl-

edge in this field of science, offer new methodological approaches when the history of the Tatars is presented in the broad context of global processes, embrace the fate of many nations and not only the Tatars', and to focus on a number of problematic issues to thereby stimulate further scientific thought.

Each volume covers an essentially new period in the history of the Tatars. The editorial staff considered it necessary to also provide illustrative materials, maps and excerpts from the most important sources to accompany the main text.

Sergey Klyashtorny

Foreword to the Volume

The ethnographic map of Eurasia clearly indicates the fact that the Slavic and Turkic worlds, these two powerfully large ethnic groups, intertwine to a certain extent. This proximity and fusion for the most part define and dictate the realities of Russia's federal structure and policy towards the largest countries in its 'near abroad' territory, including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenia, and Azerbaijan. The commonality of historical destinies in ancient times relates modern Tatars to Bashkirs and Chuvash in the Volga-Ural region, Kumyks, Nogais, Karachays and Balkars in the Northern Caucasus, Altaians, Shors, Kumandines, Khakas, Tuvinians and Tofalars in Southern Siberia, and Yakuts and Dolgans in Eastern Siberia. A large part of the Turkic population in Russia, including immigrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus, live side by side with other peoples outside of their ethnic territories. According to the last Soviet census (1989), the Turkic population in Russia was about 14 million or slightly more, while the Turkic population of the CIS states listed above exceeds 40 million.

Over the centuries, the history of Slavic-Turkic relations was defined not only by dramatic collisions, but also by spirited symbiotic processes, where the latter trend continues to this day. Its prevalence is a condition of civil peace and political stability in Eurasia. Any disregard for these historically established forms of symbiosis for the sake of immediate economic and political benefits is fraught with tragic implications for the fate of millions of people living in Eurasia.

Can we consider the totality of Turkic peoples as a single entity that extends beyond mere linguistic kinship? Starting from the early 20th century onwards, there are two opposing answers to this question. The first answer (Pan-Turkism, Turkism) claims that all Turkic people are one nation that comes from Turan, their common ancestral home, while the nu-

merous languages they speak are not separate languages at all, but rather dialects or regional forms of a single Turkic language. The second answer is equally authoritative: no Turkic ethnic unity ever existed or exists now, and even the term 'Turkic' originally meant only one group and not a variety of linguistically related tribes. All Turkic peoples are genetically related to the territories where they currently live. Naturally, there are significant mental, cultural and anthropological differences among peoples that speak different Turkic languages.

To clarify this issue, we must turn to the realities of the Turkic ethnogenesis,—that is, the early stages of the ethno-political history of Turkic peoples revealed by more than a century of studies conducted primarily by Russian researchers, including archaeologists, philologists, historians and ethnographers.

How did things actually develop in reality?

The contemporary ethnic map that reflects the settlement of Turkic peoples is the result of ethnogenetic and migration processes that went on for many thousands of years. The most ancient centres of Turkic ethno- and glottogenesis,—that is, the centres where Turkic peoples and languages initially emerged, are inextricably linked with the East of Eurasia, including Southern Siberia and Inner Asia. This vast region was not isolated from neighbouring civilisations or from the mountain, taiga and steppe tribes of other ethnic makeups. For example, since as early as the 6–2 millennia BC, the Eurasian steppes between the Volga and Yenisei rivers have been occupied by Indo-European tribes of Caucasoïd racial type, or those very 'Indo-Europeans', whose many tribes spoke related languages of the Indo-Iranian language family, Balto-Slavic language family, Germanic language family, and many other related tongues. The eastern part of the Eurasian steppes was dominated by ancient Iranian languages, the

very ones that had been used to found Avesta and where Zoroaster preached his sermons (late 2nd millennium BC.)

Further on we examine the 'Indo-European' period in the history of the Great Steppe, which lasted about two or three thousand years, as any isolation in space and time throughout the Eurasian steppe artificially carved along ethnic lines distorts the true historical reality and paves the way to biased interpretations of the past used for one-sided politicisation and nationalistic claims.

During those distant times, a line of ethnic contact with areas to the east dominated by Turkic and Mongol tribes and those to the west dominated by the Indo-European peoples, existed in the Altai mountain ranges stretching south to the Gobi desert and along the valley of the upper Yenisei river and its tributaries. The routes of migratory flows that ebbed and flowed in alteration permeated the entire Great Steppe. For thousands of years, right up until the first centuries CE, the Turkic ethnogenesis was linked to the eastern part of Eurasia's mountain and steppe area.

The history of interaction and, in part, the merger of all ancient population groups over a period of two or two and a half thousand years represents the process of ethnic consolidation and formation of Turkic-speaking ethnic communities. The present-day Turkic peoples of Russia and adjacent territories emerged from these closely related tribes in the 2nd millennium CE.

The numerous autochthonous tribes (Indo-European in Central Asia, Ugro-Finns in the Volga and Cis-Ural regions and Western Siberia, Iranian and Adyg peoples in the Northern Caucasus, Samoyedic and Ket-speaking peoples in Southern Siberia) were partially assimilated by Turkic peoples during the existence of the ethno-political entities they established, meaning first of all the Hunnic states of the first centuries CE, the ancient Turkic Kaganates in the second half of the 1st millennium CE, Kipchak tribal alliances and the Golden Horde in the first half of 2nd millennium CE. These numerous conquests and migrations led to the formation of Turkic ethnic communities in the areas of their present-day

settlement within a historically limited period.

Throughout all of ancient and medieval history ethno-cultural traditions were formed and established in a successive way among the Turkic peoples. While often having different origins, these traditions gradually built the essential ethnic characteristics which, in one way or another, are common to all Turkic tribes. The most intensive formation of such patterns occurred in ancient Turkic times,—that is, the second half of the 1st millennium CE, which determined the optimal forms of economic activity (nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralism), and saw the overall emergence of a material culture system (type of dwelling, clothing, vehicles, food, decorations, etc.) and a certain maturity of spiritual culture, social and familial organization, popular ethics, visual arts and folklore. The greatest achievement of this period was the creation of Turkic runic writing, which spread from its Central Asian homeland (Mongolia, Altai, Upper Yenisei river area) to the Don region and the Northern Caucasus.

The emergence of statehood in the Central Asia, Southern Siberia and Volga region in the early Middle Ages (6th–11th centuries) was associated with the establishment of the Turkic Khaganate, the traditions of which were inherited by the Uighur Khaganate, the states of Kyrgyz in the Upper Yenisei river area, Kimaks and Kipchak in the Irtysh river area, the Bulgarian state and Khazar state in the Volga region and the Northern Caucasus. The commonality of the social order, ethnic and cultural affinity and similarity of the political organisation in these states allows us to view the time of their existence and dominance in the Great Steppe as a relatively seamless historical and cultural period: the period of steppe empires.

It is necessary to define the term 'empire' as applied to the states created by the nomads of Asia. Without attempting to propose a universal definition, we can note that we apply the concept of 'empire' only to multi-ethnic entities established by military force in the process of conquest and governed by military and administrative methods that disintegrate following the collapse of political might of

the empire's founder. The analysis of historical situations empires have emerged in shows that the conquering impulse was aimed not so much to expand pastoral lands (which is an abnormal case), but to subjugate the territories of other economic and cultural types. At the first stage of conquest, the factor defining the purpose of such a conquest was the consolidation of steppe tribes under the rule of a single dynasty and single tribe. This was followed by the appearance of aspirations that are usually achieved in the course of military action, such as making regions and states with a more complex structure and more diverse economic activity dependent on the consolidated military might of the nomads. Such a balance of power required a final outcome in the form of a tributary dependence or some sort of direct political subjugation. It is at this stage that the states established by nomadic tribes transformed into empires.

The Mongol invasion captured and dragged many Turkic tribes (mostly Kipchaks), who by that time represented the main population of the steppe from the Great Wall of China to the Danube river, into the vortex of political and military turmoil. After their campaigns of the 13th century, the Mongols partly returned to their homeland and partly became gradually assimilated in the Turkic population of Central Asia and the Volga region. Despite often preserving their ancient Mongol tribal names, they lost their language, converted to Islam, and their nobility assimilated with nobles from Turkic tribes. New Turkic aristocratic families also appropriated Mongolian ancestry. For example, among the Kazakhs, right up until the 20th century only people whose 'shejeres' (genealogical lists) confirmed their origin from the 'golden family' of Chinggisids could qualify for higher titles.

The tribes that had inter-mixed in the course of the conquest and endless resettlement of the 13th–16th centuries settled in the new lands by pushing out the political boundaries of the Great Steppe. For example, at the turn of the 15th–16th century the nomadic Uzbek tribes of Desht-i Kipchak (Kipchak steppe) headed by Muhammad Shaybani Khan, a Chinggisid, seized most of Central Asia and

established the Uzbek State of Shibanids (descendants of Shiban, son of Jochi, the eldest son of Chinggis Khan). Uzbek-Kazakhs, another group of Uzbeks from Eastern Desht-i Kipchak, established the Kazakh Khaganate as early as 1470s. A new stage of the Turkic ethnogenesis, the stage of intensive mixing with substrate population and the initial stage in the formation of contemporary Turkic peoples, began on lands belonging to uluses that split and separated from the Mongol Empire and were governed by the Chinggisids.

Therefore, by accepting the thesis of a relative similarity in the historical destinies experienced by most Turkic tribes and peoples over the course of no less than two millennia, the connection of their ethnic history within the general history of Eurasia, we renounce both the thesis on the existence of an original, single Turkic nation and the thesis on the individual indigenous nature of contemporary Turkic peoples.

The historical interaction between the Rus–Russia and Turkic worlds stretches over 1,500 years and was initially far from being peaceful. The settling of Turkic tribes to the west from Central Asia in the 5th–15th centuries gave rise to at least two instances of military and political integration of the Eurasian space, including the Oghur-Turkic integration in the 5th–10th centuries and the Mongol-Turkic integration in the 13th–15th centuries. It is revealing that while differing chronologically, these processes that involved the Northern Black Sea region, southern areas, Cis-Ural and Volga regions, Siberia and Northern Kazakhstan, coincided in terms of their area. However, unlike the westward migration of Turkic peoples, Russian expansion to the east and southeast was carried out for a different economic reason, as the economic base for this powerful migratory flow was plow farming. Cropland did not completely replace pasture, but rather existed side by side with it, which gave rise to new types of economic symbiosis.

Therefore, the history of Turkic peoples, along with other nomadic tribes of the Great Steppe, is an organic part of Eurasian history and since ancient times is inseparable from the history of the Slavic states of Eastern Europe.

Although later in the 16th–19th centuries most of these peoples, large and small, became part of the multinational Russian Empire, but the processes in the historical life of the Crop-land and Steppe preserved their relative internal autonomy right up until the middle of the previous millennium. The formation of their common geopolitical space, which had began simultaneously with the emergence of Kievan Rus' and the Khazar-Bolgarian states in the Northern Black Sea and Volga regions, intensified much later.

Therefore, considering the history of Turkic peoples and state entities established by them only within the history of Russia and the USSR, as it was practiced in the recent past, is methodically unjustified and virtually deprives the Turkic peoples of Eurasia of their own national history. The time has come to write a book that provides coherent and multi-faceted coverage of the origins of Turkic peoples, their early history and the history of territories related to the Turkic ethnogenesis, the emergence of statehood and its development among the Turkic peoples, the formation of economic and cultural types inherent to these peoples, their traditional beliefs, and the combination of their ethnic and national cultures.

This collective monograph is certainly not intended to be a complete account of the history of Turkic peoples. From all the variety of their past, we have emphasised only what makes up the backbone of ancient and medieval history, including the main events of past centuries, and the formation of the economy, religious ideology, culture and statehood that are examined in their relation and interaction with the history of other peoples and states of Eurasia. Chronologically, this book covers the events that took place in areas where Turkic peoples had been evolving for more than three millennia. The need to examine such an extensive historic period is dictated by the abrupt change of stages and the direction of ethnogenetic processes and their successively increasing complexity. The ethnic turning points reached their peak in the early and mid 2nd millennium BC, mid 1st millennium CE, 13th–16th centuries, and second half of the 19th–20th centuries.

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This volume covers a large number of issues where there is a lack of consensus on how to approach them as many authors have different visions of the problems at hand. Given that this book was written by a group of authors with their own views of historical processes in the Eurasian steppes, the editors sought neither to achieve a full harmonisation of events, which is only needed in textbooks, nor to eliminate the repetitions occurring in various chapters. Therefore, the conceptual views of each author are reflected in their entirety and may become the subject of comparison and further discussion, which is an advantage rather than a shortcoming of any collective work.

Each author is a recognised expert in the area of historical knowledge they present in the corresponding section.

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Four reconstructions prepared by M. Gorelik have been used in this volume.

The list of sources and literature, indexes of archaeological cultures and their carriers, names, political, geographic, ethnic, ethnopolitical, and ethnosocial terms were prepared by Ibn Khamidullin.

Kamil Akhsanov

Historiographical Review

The interest shown in Russia to Turkic peoples has deep, centuries-old roots. The Turkic peoples, including both the nomads and those who turned to a sedentary way of life, are often remembered on the pages of Russian chronicles. The inclusion of Turkic peoples in the Russian state deepened the interest in their present and past. In the 19th–early 20th centuries Turkic studies in Russia achieved noticeable success in subjects such as language, way of life, customs, and most importantly, the history of the Turkic peoples. During the Soviet Union the study of the history of Turkic peoples was elevated to a qualitatively new level following the acquisition by these peoples of certain statehood attributes within the Soviet Union. However, like all historical sciences, Russian-Turkic studies experienced the full brunt of the totalitarian regime. The period of 'thaw' after the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party introduced a noticeable revival in Soviet historiography, including in Turkic studies. The current consensus is that currently we are on the verge of a new upsurge in Turkic studies. The acquisition of sovereignty and the rise of national consciousness gave rise to a tremendous interest in the pasts of the Turkic republics of the former Soviet Union. On the other hand, the geopolitical and economic interests of great powers and transnational corporations regarding the resources of Turkic states represent, in our view, an important incentive to study the past and present of Turkic peoples abroad.

Throughout the years of studying the history of Turkic peoples Russian research has achieved significant results, including a large number of books and articles as well as the emergence of entire scientific schools and areas dedicated to historical Turkic Studies. Clearly this brief review cannot reflect the historiography of the history of Turkic peoples in all of its diversity. Therefore, we se-

lected the works of major Russian researchers with views that have greatly influenced the development of Russian historical thought. Our review examines the most relevant and controversial issues in Russian historical Turkic studies, such as the date of the initial statehood formation stage among Turkic peoples (the issue of the ethnolinguistic affiliation of the Huns) and the issue of social development and politogenesis in nomadic societies.

The history of Russian-Turkic studies can be divided into several stages:

Stage 1: From ancient times to the early 19th century. This was a time of accumulating initial knowledge of the Turkic peoples and the first attempts to summarise the collected information, the early foundations of scientific Turkic Studies were laid.

Stage 2: 19th century–1930s. This was the period of the formation and growth of the 'traditional' school of Russian-Turkic studies.

Stage 3: 1930s–mid 1950s. This period was characterised by the formation of the Soviet school of historical Turkic studies and the absolute dominance of a rigid doctrine of historical materialism.

Stage 4: From the late 1950s (after the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party) to the 1990s. This was a period of relative liberalisation and the emergence of a pluralism of views in the works of Russian researchers.

Perhaps today we are witnessing the beginning of a new stage in the development of historical Turkic studies, but this will only become clear after a few decades.

Stage 1: From ancient times to the early 19th century.

The study of the history of Turkic peoples in Russia achieved spectacular results. There are good reasons for that as over the centuries the ancient Rus, Muscovite state, and Russian Empire maintained contact with the Turkic world. The Turkic tribes were the neighbours

of the Eastern Slavic tribes even before the establishment of the ancient Russian state. With the emergence of Kievan Rus' relations with Turkic states and tribes became permanent and stable. Amid the frequent shifts between peace and hostility in the relations of eastern Slavs and Turkic peoples, there has been a continuous and centuries-long interaction that has left its mark on the languages, customs, and cultures of both ethnic groups. The ups and downs of Russian-Turkic relations were reflected in the chronicles, which represents the initial period of Russian historiography. Even by taking into account the fact that the Turkic-speaking neighbours of Rus were at different stages of economic, sociopolitical, and spiritual development, we can identify some common characteristics in the attitude of Russian chroniclers to these peoples. First, as the chronicles were prepared by the Orthodox clergy, these documents pursue a line of religious intolerance toward the peoples of other religious confessions. Second, the early Russian chronicles promoted the idea of uniting the Russian princes in the fight against common enemies, especially the pagan ('poganye') Pechenegs, Polovtsians, and Muslim ('busurmane') Bolgars.

During the Golden Horde period relations between the Russians and Turkic peoples acquired a more close-knit and intense character. Given the need to maintain the necessary relations with the Horde, a practical knowledge of Turkic languages took on a much stronger hold [Kononov, 1982, p. 33]. However, for a number of reasons the establishment of the Jochid Ulus failed to expand the geographical horizon both in Russia and in Europe, and the description of the Golden Horde in the Russian sources cannot stand any comparison with the information provided by Western and Muslim authors [Bartold, 1926, p. 171]. Nevertheless, the close interaction between Russia and the Horde resulted in the adoption of vocabulary, customs, and traditions. Tatar traditions had the most lasting impact on Russian foreign policy and its embassy ceremonial. After the weakening of Tatar khanates the Russian tsar became in part the carrier of the Tatar state's idea as he

became known as 'the great Beg, white Khan' [Bartold, 1925, p. 172].

This fact meant that Moscow, which by the time had become the capital of the centralised Russian state, began to consider itself the successor of the Jochid Ulus, and this had an understandable impact on its policies towards Tatar khanates. By the 16th century the political ambitions of the young Russian state had found their reflection in the concept of 'Moscow as the Third Rome.' The historical writings and essays of that time justified the legitimacy of Russian claims to the lands of Tatar khanates [Izmaylov, 1992].

With the conquest of Kazan, Astrakhan, and Siberia, on the one hand, and the establishment of Ottoman sovereignty over the Crimean Khaganate, on the other, the attention of Russian historical writers turned to the subject of Crimea and Turks as reflected in the 'Scythian History' of A. Lyzlov. This was the first writing in the Russian historiography on the history of Turkic-speaking peoples. The author commonly described the Turkic nomads of the southern Russian steppes, Mongols, Tatars and Ottoman Turks as 'Scythians.' 'Scythian History' reflected the level of oriental studies, historiography and source studies at the end of the 17th century and had all the attributes of a scientific monograph [Chistyakov, 1963]. Yet the scientific foundations of Turkic studies in the full sense of this word were only established in the 18th century.

The emergence of Turkic studies as a science in Russia was inextricably connected to the reforms implemented by Peter the Great. These transformations led to radical changes both in domestic and foreign policy as well as in scientific fields. In domestic policy this encompassed the colonisation of captured Turkic territories in the Volga Region, Cis Ural, and Siberia and attempts to convert the local population to Christianity, while in foreign policy it included further confrontations with the Ottoman Empire and Crimean Khaganate as well as attempts to expand into Central Asia and Transcaucasia. Under Peter the Great Russia was unable to achieve any serious success in its struggle with Turkey, and its attempts to establish Russian influence

in Central Asia were also unsuccessful. But despite its failures in foreign policy, this time laid the foundations of the scientific and practical study of Turkic peoples. It is known that the early study of Turkic epigraphy in Russia was associated with a visit made by Peter the Great in 1722 during his Persia campaign to the ruins of Bulgar [Baskakov, 1969, p. 23].

During Peter the Great's rule, a significant role in the development of Russian science was played by Western scholars, including its historical branch. This also fully applied to the emergence of Turkic studies in Russia. Philip Johan Strahlenberg, a captive Swedish officer who lived in Siberia in 1713–1722, was the first to publish sketches of Turkic runic-like inscriptions and also made the first attempt to classify the Ural-Altai peoples and their respective languages. In addition, he acquired the 'Shajara i-Turkie' ('The Genealogy of the Turks'), a work of Abu al-Ghazi (1603–1644), the Khiva ruler, and organised its translation into Russian and then from Russian into German [Kononov, 1982, p. 65].

In the Russian historiography of the 18th century, the history of Turkic peoples was viewed through the prism of relations between the Russian principalities and the Great Steppe. In his 'History of Russia,' V. Tatishchev tried to determine the origin of the names of nomadic peoples, establish their location, nomadic routes, describe their social system, religion, and the relations between them and other peoples. As for his personal attitude, V. Tatishchev saw Pechenegs, Kuman, and Torks first of all, as enemies that posed a threat to Rus [Mavrodin, 1983, p. 12].

Starting in the second quarter of the 18th century Russian policy towards Turkic countries became noticeably more active. In 1735–1739, 1768–1774, and 1787–1791 Russia was engaged in wars with Turkey, the second of which resulted in the annexation of Crimea. The incorporation of Kazakh hordes began in 1730, but the tsarist government was never content with only bringing the nomads in as part of its subjects. With the weakening of the Turkey and Central Asian khaganates Saint Petersburg was preparing plans for extensive conquests. In 1735 professor Kehr, who

worked in the Russian Academy of Sciences, submitted a draft proposal to establish a special oriental academy in which he mentioned his earlier plans for the conquest of Turkey and Central Asia. He also expressed the hope (that was partly realised in the 19th century) that the conquest of Samarkand and Bukhara would help to find a bounty of oriental manuscripts [Bartold, 1926, p. 219]. As we can see, on the one hand, foreign policy set practical tasks for science, and, on the other hand, the results of foreign policy provided rich material for the further development of science.

The second quarter of the 18th century marked the beginning of the systematic study of the history and language of Turkic peoples along with the development of Russian science and the opening of the Russian Academy of Sciences. As in the early 18th century the key role in the nascent Russian-Turkic studies at that time belonged to foreigners. For example, Gottlieb Siegfried Bayer, a native of Königsberg who worked in Russia from 1726 to 1738, translated a chapter from 'The Genealogy of the Turks' written by Abu al-Ghazi into Latin [History of Russian Oriental Studies, 1987, p. 53]. The name of Bayer was also mentioned in the history of studying the Turkic Yenisei inscriptions because he made an attempt to explain the characters of these inscriptions with Celtic script [Kononov, 1982, p. 42]. In 1750 Gerhard Friedrich Müller, a historian who spent ten years in Siberia as part of an expedition and collected a huge amount of material, published his main work in Saint Petersburg based on the chronicles and other primary sources found in Siberian archives titled 'A Description of the Siberian Tsardom and All Events Occurring There since Its Creation, Especially after Its Subjugation to Russian, up to the Present Time' [History of Russian Oriental Studies, 1987, p. 55]. From 1768–1774 a series of expeditions covered the areas of Siberia, Cis Ural, and the Volga Region led by Peter Simon Pallas, a well-known scientist. These expeditions helped him to collect a wealth of materials on history and ethnography. Most of them were published by Peter Simon Pallas in his 'Travels through the Russian Empire' as well as in

his special work 'A Collection of Historical Information on the Mongolian Peoples' [Baskakov, 1969, p. 7].

Throughout the history of Russian Turkic studies as a whole the 18th century was the initial stage in creating a base of sources and gaining research and teaching experience. Without this foundation it would have been impossible to reach the high level achieved by this science in the 19th–20th centuries.

Stage 2: 19th century–till the 1930s

At the beginning of the 19th century science and the higher education system in Russia underwent certain changes that have had a direct impact on the development of Turcology in Russia. In line with the new rules of the Academy of Science approved on 25 July 1803, humanities that were excluded from the Academy in 1747 were reinstated in its official programme [Kononov, 1982, p. 109]. New universities were established, one of which was Kazan University, which played an important role in the development of Russian Turcology. And lastly, the Asian Museum of the Academy of Sciences was set up in 1818. All of these activities were intended to create a system for the preparation of academic staff with different oriental specialisations, and the establishment of scientific and academic centres of oriental studies were determined by the intensification of Russian foreign policy in the East. The East was the main theatre of military operations for the Russian army after the Napoleonic wars and until the First World War [Istoriya otechestvennogo vostokovedeniya, 1987, p. 109]. In the 19th century the Caucasus were brought into the Russian state and populated mainly by Turkic nations from Central Asia. The process of Russian expansion in the region had gone through the following stages: from the beginning of the century until the 1840s diplomatic intelligence and attempts at economic penetration were the norm, the 1840s were marked by more active operations involving the use of military force, and finally the 1860–1880s are marked by the complete conquest of Central Asia by the Russian army [Kinyapina, Blijev, Degoyev, 1984, pp. 209–210].

Such an active foreign policy in Central Asia challenged Russian science with an entire group of regional study targets and tasks. Academician V. Bartold had the following to say on this issue: 'Following the annexation of a number of Muslim provinces to Russia, the study of both the current condition of these provinces and their history to bring to light both the written and real monuments of their past as well as taking actions to preserve these monuments are obligations of Russia to both the local population and world science' [Bartold, 1992, p. 57]. Indeed, in the 1820–1880s the basis of national historiography of Turkic nations was formed. The study of written sources of oriental studies combined with achievements in geographical science (and ethnography) allowed at that time moving from the sporadic interpretation of different historical data to their critical examination and primary generalisation. Even though until the end of the 19th century most researchers were focused on the period between the 13th–18th centuries [Klyashtorny Romodin, 1970, p. 148], the source base of ancient and early-medieval history of Turkic nations was formed mostly in the 19th century.

Source studies of the ancient and early-medieval history of Turkic nations are characterised by an almost complete lack of preserved Turkic historical records, thus researchers have to base their theories on foreign narrative sources. As V. Bartold himself put it, 'being a Turcolog is more than just the study of the history of Turkic communities, one also has to be a sinologist, specialist in Arab studies, or a specialist in Iranian studies depending on the period under study' [Bartold, 1992, p. 21]. In the first half of the middle of the 19th century the orientalist scholars of said specialties made invaluable contributions to the historical study of Turkic nations.

An excellent example of this are the works of outstanding Russian scholar N. Bichurin, who was one of the founders of Central Asian studies in Russia. He was responsible for the translation of a number of Chinese works related to the ancient and medieval history of Central Asian nations. His works were published in the second quarter of the 19th century.

ry and served for a long time as the basis for regional historical studies.

His book titled 'A Collection of Information about Nations That Lived in Central Asia in Ancient Times' was completed at the end of his life and featured a scope and translation quality that was way ahead of other authors of his century and was just as accurate as similar translations done by later authors. An interesting fact about this work is that Bichurin was tasked to write about 'The History of Ancient Central Asian Nations' on the threshold of the 1848 when Russian troops launched an attack in Central Asia, and the development of such a work was especially relevant for the Academy of Sciences [Bernshtam 1950, p. XXVI]. Despite certain faulty judgments on Bichurin's part that resulted from the unexamined perception of Chinese sources and arose from his personal historical conception, the Chinese chronicles he published opened up the golden age of Russian Oriental Studies [Bernshtam 1950, p. XXV]. The works of N. Bichurin served as the basis for works of historians like V. Grigoryev, V. Radlov, V. Bartold, K. Inostrantsev, G. Grumm-Grzhimaylo, A. Bernshtam L. Gumilyov, etc.

The translation and publication of other groups of sources on the history of Turkic nations—the works of Muslim authors—are associated with Kazan university and the work of outstanding scholars like H. Fraehn (1782–1851) and I. Berezin (1818–1896). They published the manuscript text of 'The Genealogical Tree of Turks' by Abu al-Ghazi and translated and published portions of the most important sources about the history of Turkic and Mongolian tribes and their dynasties titled the 'Compendium of Chronicles' by Rashid al-Din [Istoriya otechestvennogo vostokovedeniya, 1987, p. 100]. After the opening of the Oriental department at Kazan University in 1807, Kazan becomes the centre of oriental studies in Russia. Even when in 1855 the Oriental department was moved to Saint Petersburg University, Kazan continued to play an important role in the development of Russian oriental studies.

The discovery and interpretation of Turkic runiform monuments was a major turning

point in the history of Turcology. Texts that had been discovered earlier by researchers were left uninterpreted, but the inscriptions discovered by N. Yadrintsev in Mongolia in 1891, which were erected in 732 and 735 in honour of the Second Turkic Khaganate Bilge Khagan and his younger brother Kultegin with Old Turkic and Chinese scripts, gave a clue to the interpretation of runiform scripts. Danish scholar V. Thomsen in 1893 and after him Russian academician V. Radlov in 1894 presented their different interpretations. The significance of introducing Turkic runic inscriptions into scientific circulation was that it was the first discovery of an actual Turkic source about the history of Eurasian Steppe states as earlier the only available data about them was found in the sources of their neighbours (Chinese, Byzantines, etc.).

Following the introduction of all three groups of sources—Chinese, Muslim, and Turkic runic scripts—into scientific circulation by the end of the 19th century, they began to be understood and expounded upon. The first person to compare and correlate the western (ancient and byzantine) and eastern records was Arabist, specialist on Iranian studies and expert in Greco-Roman historiography V. Grigoryev. Based on the translations of N. Bichurin, he created a summary titled 'Chinese or Eastern Turkestan' that at one time was an example of comprehensive research on the historical geography of the region [Gumilyov, 1960, p. 8].

The works of V. Radlov (1837–1918) constitute an epoch in the history of Russian and World Turcology. He is not only famous for his fundamental works on Turkic philology, but he also contributed to the study of the ancient and early-medieval history of Turkic nations. Apart from the series of runic inscriptions, Radlov himself rewrote and published a set of Uighur inscriptions [Kononov, 1982]. He devoted his special work 'On the Question of the Uighurs' to the history of the Uighurs [Radlov, 1893]. In this work Radlov addressed the issue of the origin of the Uighurs and put forth his own conception on the establishment and development of statehood in nomadic tribes.

According to Radlov, nomadic statehood emerges on the basis of the primary social unit called an 'aul.' An aul is a sustainable community that emerges from a large and close-knit family structure. Then a larger union of steppe-dwellers called a 'subtribe' forms around the aul. Subtribes are a group that needs certain initial forms of nomadic community regulation and management. Favourable circumstances then led to the establishment of a larger unit, a tribe, out of subtribes. According to Radlov, the main reason for the growth of nomadic communities lies in the personal qualities of the bey, or subtribe leader. The next level of nomadic tribes is the 'koleno,' which already consisted of several tribes, and several koleno could in turn unite into a Horde. According to Radlov, nomadic states were formed on the basis of said communities.

V. Radlov's conception is centred around the dominant role of nomad leaders—beys and khans—because according to his work the sustainability of nomadic states was based solely on the personality of khans along with their power and authority. The weakening of the khan's power led to the downfall of the nomadic empire. According to Radlov's conception, the rise and further development of the nomadic state is an accidental event because as a general rule the nomadic community does not need a state institution, and the khan's power only appears in exceptional cases.

In 1896 a work of N. Aristov titled 'Notes on the Ethnic Composition of Turkic Tribes and Peoples' was published in the journal 'Zhivaya starina.' Considerable attention in the research is devoted to the ancient and early-medieval history of Turkic nations, and this is where the original concept of Turkic national statehood is put forward. As concerns the question of the starting point of the history of Turkic nations, Aristov supports the idea that Huns were Turkic-speaking and considers the Hsiung-nu Empire as the most ancient Turkic state [Aristov, 1896, p. 290]. As for the issue of the establishment of statehood in nomadic tribes, N. Aristov's views were drastically different from the conceptions of V. Radlov. According to Aristov,

the establishment and evolvement of nomadic empires were inseparably associated with the tribal system. Aristov put forward the following politogenesis scheme as it relates to a tribal community: first of all, the head of the dynasty (the 'founder') takes control of the dynasties within his tribe, and then the rest of the tribes are conquered. According to the scholar, the downfall of a steppe empire occurs not only due to the ebbing of the khan's power but because of both a waning of the ruling dynasty and the desire of conquered tribes and clans to gain independence. Following some time after the downfall of a nomadic state, another dynasty rises in the steppe, and the state formation process starts over again [Aristov, 1896, p. 284]. Thus, according to the conception of N. Aristov, politogenesis inseparably associated with tribal relations is inherent in nomadic communities and not as occasional or exceptional as it was supposed by V. Radlov.

G. Grumm-Grzhimaylo, who examined the history of Central Asia from a geographer's perspective, occupies a conspicuous place in nomadic studies. 'Based on his own experience accumulated in travel, he found parallels between data taken from the chronicles and the nature of the Tian-Shan, Khangai and Gobi' [Gumilyov, 1994, p. 96]. Over a 25-year period he developed an overview titled 'Western Mongolia and Tannu Uriankhai' (a brief history of these countries in relation to the history of Central Asia). Grumm-Grzhimaylo mainly focused on issues of historical geography, palaeoethography and certain issues of chronology. But he did not address issues of the rise and evolution of the statehood of Turkic nations.

An important contribution to the historiography of Turkic nations was made by K. Inostrantsev's book 'The Hsiung-nu and Huns.' The work contains a detailed analysis of all the theories circulating at that time about the origins of Hunnu in Central Asia and the European Huns [Inostrantsev, 1926, p. 118]. The author concluded that the Hsiung-nu and the majority of other tribes in the Hsiung-nu Empire were Turkic-speaking. As regards the matter of the ethnogenesis of Eu-

ropean Huns, Inostrantsev focuses on the idea of the gradual assimilation of Central Asian Hsiung-nu to the local population—first the Finnish then the Slavs and Germans. At the same time, the author does not even question the issue of Hun succession from the Hsiung-nu: 'the invasion of cruel conquerors in the 4th–5th centuries is associated with and was caused by an overthrow at the eastern most borders of Asia' [Inostrantsev, 1926, p. 119].

The history of Turkic nations is all but the main focus in the collected works of the prominent Russian orientalist V. Bartold. In his academic career he had twice addressed the issue of the history of Turkic nations. From 1892–1899 he focused on the specific issues of Turkic history, especially the historiographic importance of the Orkhon inscriptions, which he was the first to interpret [Klyashtorny, Romodin, 1970, p. 149]. From 1925–1930 Bartold's concern about the history of Turkic nations was related to the massive changes happening in the Turkic-speaking outskirts of the former Russian Empire. National dissociation, state-building, the establishment of national republics: all of this stimulated attention to the historical, national, and cultural traditions of Turkic nations. At that time Bartold had written a lot of generalising works on the history of Turkic nations. 'Twelve Lectures on the History of the Turkic People in Central Asia,' 'History of Turkic-Mongol nations,' 'Turks' [Bartold, 1968], etc. His smaller articles were devoted to specific Turkic nations, including the 'Karlucs,' 'Kimaks,' 'Kipchaks' [Ibid.], etc. Bartold's works were based mainly upon the Orkhon inscriptions, the translation of Chinese historical overviews, and the works of ancient and Byzantine authors.

As regards the matter of the earliest stage of Turkic statehood, V. Bartold was far from explicitly recognising the fact that the Hsiung-nu were Turkic-speaking [Bartold, 1968, p. 267]. He considers the history of Turkic nation statehood to begin from the age of the Turkic Khaganate.

The issue of the reasons behind the establishment of state power in a nomadic commu-

nity was also addressed in some of V. Bartold's works [Bartold, 1968, p. 279]. His ideas were based on the conception of V. Radlov about the exceptional character of the khan's power in the steppe. On the contrary, he was strongly critical of the views of N. Aristov and called them a 'huge misconception' [Bartold, 1968, p. 267]. Like V. Radlov, V. Bartold supposed that in normal conditions a nomadic community is regulated by traditional relations and the norms of common law and for this reason does not need a state organisation. However, when the process of income differentiation starts to gain momentum in the steppe, the nomadic community divides into stratas and classes, and signs of a class struggle appear. According to Bartold, this struggle causes the establishment of the basics of political power in the nomadic community. According to the scholar's conception, income inequality, conflict between the rich and poor and 'steppe aristocracy, and democratic elements' were the actual exceptional circumstances mentioned by V. Radlov. Like V. Radlov, V. Bartold assumed that the representatives of state power (the khans) seized power themselves, neither assigned nor chosen. However, according to Bartold, the processes of class formation and politogenesis are reversible, and over time a nomadic community may return to pre-class and pre-state development level—that is, to the 'normal condition' for a nomadic community. Apparently, despite some common points in Bartold's conception with Marxist theory, his views were significantly different from classical Marxism.

Bartold considered the seizure of wealth of 'cultured countries' as one of the factors of the nomadic empire's stability, thus he highlighted the ekzopolitician (external exploitative) character of nomadic states [Bartold, 1965, p. 28].

While reviewing the historiography of nomadic nation history, it is impossible to not mention the book by Ibn Vladimirtsov's 1931 book titled 'The Social System of the Mongols: Mongolian Nomadic Feudalism.' Despite the fact that the work is not directly related to Turkic nations, it played a prominent role in the development of Russian historic

Turkology. In his work, Vladimirtsov 'for the first time raised the question of the nature of social interactions between Mongols in the Middle Ages in its entirety, showed the difference between the Mongolian tribes of Chinggis Khan's age from the perspective of their social development level' [Klyashtorny, Romodin, 1970, pp. 152–153], and at the same time he mentioned that in the tribal system of Mongols 'there is nothing special and original that would somehow distinguish ancient Mongols from other nations, that are living or lived according to a clan system' [Vladimirtsov, 1931, p. 58]. Thus, trends inherent to the development of the Mongolian nomadic community can also be applied to other steppe nations, including Turks. The monograph by Vladimirtsov contains the first well detailed and comprehensive picture of the establishment of the foundations of nomadic statehood on the basis of the most detailed analysis of socioeconomical development of the Mongolian society. Vladimirtsov's Mongol State establishment conception in brief looks as follows: In the 12th century two interrelated processes occurred in the steppes of Mongolia: the disintegration of the tribal system and the start of the transition from kuren to ail-type pastoralism. In the case of ail-type wandering a rich cattle breeder divides his herd by ails, where cattle grazes under the supervision of vassals. The stratification of the ancient Mongol community into rich cattle breeders, free but not rich commoners and vassals, gains momentum. The nomadic aristocracy emerges within this framework, and its representatives gather around themselves different categories of vassals such as slaves, serfs, and *druzhina*. A system based on the exploitation of vassals and formally free people develops, and the relations of hierarchical inter-subordination and vassalage occur. According to Vladimirtsov, all of these phenomena represent signs of a feudal system with nomadic features. The 12th century was marked by continuous clashes between different groups of the nomadic feudal aristocracy for hegemony in the steppe. However, in spite of the severity of clashes, the main aim of feuding groups was to establish a sin-

gle sustainable power that would accord with the interests of the wealthy nomadic aristocracy. This is how the Mongol Empire was founded by Chinggis Khan. Ibn Vladimirtsov described the formation and gradual development of a class-divided society of Mongol tribes that he defined as feudal. According to the scholar, 'things that were happening in the evolving state of Chinggis Khan were likely happening in other khanates as well, but perhaps not in the same proportions and not so strictly organised.' According to the conception of Vladimirtsov, the expected result of the process of class formation was the formation of the Mongol feudal state.

The work of Ibn Vladimirtsov summarises the pre-revolutionary period of domestic nomadic studies in a unique way. Even though the book was written during the Soviet regime just like the last works of V. Bartold, it does not contain the strict wording of historical materialism typical of the works of Soviet period *turkologs* such as S. Tolstov, A. Bernshtam etc.

The official pre-revolutionary historiography of the History of Russia counted nomads as so-called 'non-historical' people [Mavrodina, 1983, p. 12]. N. Karamzin, S. Solovyev, V. Klyuchevsky, and others in their works considered the history of Turkic-speaking nomads only in the light of their relations with Russia, and these relations were interpreted as the fight of civilised Russia against 'barbarians,' like the irreconcilable confrontation between the 'forest' and 'steppe.' The impact of nomads on the course of Russian history was explained as inarguably negative. 'The fight against the steppe nomad, the Polovt-sian, the evil Tatars, which lasted from the 8th century up to the end of the 17th century, is the most painful historical memory of the Russian people. The thousand-year long and hostile adjacency with predatory steppe Asians is a circumstance that itself can shade more than one European fault in the history of Russia,' V. Klyuchevsky concluded at the time (quote from [Mavrodina, 1983, p. 17]). This approach, which prevailed in the official historiography up until 1917, markedly affected the establishment of ideas about the

role of Turkic nations in the history of Russia in Russian society.

The completely opposite point of view was raised in the 1920s in the works of scholars of the Eurasian school. Eurasianism is a sociopolitical movement that took root among the Russian emigration following the end of the civil war and called for the re-examination of the history of Russian-Turkic relations. Eurasianists believed that Russian ethnicity cannot be limited solely to the Slavic ethnos as Turkic tribes have also played a great role in its formation. The Eurasianist idea of Russian-Turkic relations in general and the Tatar-Mongol 'yoke' in particular can be recast as simply as 'there would never have been Russia without the Tatarschina' [Savitsky, 1993, p. 123]. Eurasians considered Russia not the direct continuation of Kievan Rus' but as the 'successor of the great khans, successor of Chinggis and Timur and the owner of Asia, it combines both the settled and steppe lifestyle' [Savitsky, 1993, p. 125]. Eurasianists review the history of Russia in their works as a part of Eurasian history, and in doing so emphasise the important role of Turkic nations in every possible way. Scholar and linguist prince N. Trubetskoy argued that the Turkic ('Turan') tribes had initially played far more of an important role in the history of Eurasia than East Slavic tribes: 'Even in what is known as the pre-Mongol period, the States of Turan were a lot larger than Varangian-Russian within the boundaries of European Russia (the tsardom of the Volga-Kama Bulgars and the Khazar Empire). The first unification of almost the entire territory of modern Russia under the power of one state was accomplished not by Russian Slavs but by the Mongols, a Turan people as well [Trubetskoy, 1993, p. 59]. Eurasianists were more interested in the period of Mongol invasions and the Golden Horde, and they associated the 'Turan element' in Russian history with the 'heritage of Chinggis Khan,' whose empire united the Eurasian world as a whole for the first time in history. Geographer and geopolitician P. Savitsky emphasised in any way possible the positive role of Tatar rule in the establishment of the Russian state: 'Leading by example and with the blood of rulers instilled

in them, they (the Tatars) taught Russia how to act together, establish a state-compulsory centre, and achieve sustainability, they taught it how to become a strong Orde' [Savitsky, 1993, p. 124].

Eurasianist ideas impacted the works of such historians as E. Khara-Davan, G. Vernadsky, etc. For a wide swath of the Russian and CIS population, the works of the Eurasians from the 1920s only became available in the last decades. However, some statements of the Eurasian School formed the basis of L. Gumilyov's historical conceptions. Even though Eurasians were not absolutely objective and unbiased in their ideas and would sometimes rely on extremes in opposition to the official historiography, Eurasianism was still an important stage in the development of Russian historical thought.

Stage 3: 30s—the middle of the 1950s

The transition from the old school of domestic Turkology to the Soviet-Marxist tradition happens approximately at the beginning of the 1930s. During this time the formation processes of a totalitarian state (the USSR) were coming to an end. Party policy started to play a crucial role in the formation of the historiographical foundation of the country, and specific research works started being checked against the historical views of Stalin [Balashov, Yurchenko, 1994, p. 43]. Following the death of V. Bartold and Ibn Vladimirtsov, scholars who drew firmly on the premises of historical materialism started to set the tone for local historical Turkology. While Ibn Vladimirtsov's book 'The Social System of the Mongols: Mongolian Nomadic Feudalism,' which was published in 1934 (three-years after the death of the author) to a large extent still follows the traditions of the old school, N. Kozmin and S. Tolstov's books published in the same year were already opening a new milestone in national nomadic studies. If in the 19th—the beginning of the 20th centuries research was aimed at collecting sources and data about the pasts of people populating the Asian part of Russia, then in this new period it was ideological tasks and practical issues of class struggle that moved to the forefront.

The works of Siberian scholar N. Kozmin [Kozmin, 1934] focus on the domination of feudal relationships during the Turkic Khaganate and Mongol Empire. In the Orkhon-Enisey Turkic community he distinguishes between the feudal aristocracy and ordinary people who were overwhelmed by a violent class struggle. The First Turkic Khaganate allegedly collapsed as a result of this struggle and also because of a conflict of interests in the feudal aristocracy. According to Kozmin, the Second Khaganate was formed by the growth of a small feud into a large feudal state. Kozmin compares the state institutions of the Turkic Khaganate with the institutions of early-feudal European states and highlights a lot of common features. According to the historian's conception, both the Turks and Mongols had long ago established a tribal system with a dominant feudal relationship. Just as in Medieval Europe, feudalism in Central Asia was reflected in the institution of vassalage and land holding. According to Kozmin, there were no significant differences between European and Central-Asian feudalism.

Owing to the fact that he was a political prisoner, for a long time his works were strictly prohibited and withdrawn from scientific circulation. The main discussion about the socioeconomic and political development of nomadic communities took place between S. Tolstov and A. Bernstam.

An outstanding national historian and researcher of Central Asia S. Tolstov contributed greatly to the study of the history of Turkic nations. He has written works on the ancient and early-medieval history of Central Asia, and his major work 'The Ancient Khwarezm' [Tolstov, 1948], which also considers certain issues of the history of Turkic nomadic nations, stands out as the most influential book of his career. The article 'Cities of Guzes' [Tolstov, 1947], which is devoted to the history of the Oghuz tribes of the Aral Sea Region, is also worth mentioning. One of the main subjects of the works of Tolstov was the issue of the socioeconomical and political development of nomads. One of the main points reflected in this scholar's works is the idea that

in the course of their development nomadic nations went through a slave-owning stage [Tolstov, 1934, p. 174]. According to Tolstov, the aristocracy that stood apart from the mass of nomads was actually slave-owning. But the rudiments of a feudal relationship in different forms of feudal subjection and vassalage were already germinating in the depths of the slave-owning system. Tolstov believed that the most important institute of further feudalisation in the nomadic community was *saun*—that is, cattle rental relations between poor commoners and rich cattle owners. According to the scholar, feudal exploitation in the nomadic community happened not directly through the land ownership of feudal lords but indirectly through cattle rental on specific terms. At the same time, grasslands were tribal property in a nominal sense. According to the scholar, tribal institutions themselves had long ago lost their initial purpose and were usurped by the nomadic aristocracy, which in reality was a cover for an initially slave-owning and then feudal form of exploitation [Tolstov, 1934, pp. 185–191].

S. Tolstov considers the unions of Central Asian Huns and Orkhon-Enisey Turks as 'military, slave-owning empires.' According to Tolstov, in these state formations slave-owning relationship slowly began breaking down as feudal relationships started to germinate. These empires fall and disappear as a result of contradictions between an obsolete slave-owning and an evolving feudal formation. According to his work, relatively small but much more sustainable feudal states take root in their place. According to the researcher, in the 8th–10th centuries the Khazar state, Bolgars, and Uighurs were already the states and people of an evolving feudalism. S. Tolstov agrees with Ibn Vladimirtsov that in the 12th–13th centuries feudal relationships were established among Mongols, but in his view the Mongol Empire was founded like an expansionist military slave-owning state. But as time went on, feudal relationships among medieval Mongols gained the upper hand. According to Tolstov, Eurasian nomads established stable feudal-type states a lot later than the Mongol conquests.

The renowned archaeologist, historian of the ancient world, and researcher of Siberian antiquities S. Kiselyov has the same point of view as S. Tolstov on the sociopolitical system of nomads. His main book 'The Ancient History of Southern Siberia' [Kiselyov 1951] is a result of many years spent studying in the field and an analysis of acquired material. According to Kiselyov the collapse of the tribal system and the establishment of slave-owning relations were already present in the Hsiung-nu society. The main reason for the dissolution of tribal relations was private property, which already existed even at such an early period. First of all, slaves and the goods produced by them formed the basis of private property, and these resources accumulated in the hands of the nomadic aristocracy. It was the nomadic aristocracy that supported state power and evolved into the Hsiung-nu tribal union. Thus, according to this scholar, the Hsiung-nu military union was also founded, and its political system became common in the history of Central Asia for a long time to come.

According to the conception of S. Kiselyov the same situation was also observed in the Ancient Turkic community, where slavery led to significant changes in the social system. The aristocracy here encountered opposition from ordinary nomads. The battle that followed led to the establishment of the 'eternal el,' or the union of Ancient Turkic Tribe aristocracies. According to Kiselyov the Turkic el was both a system of state and a way to organise the nobility. He assumed that the expansionist policy of the Turkic Khaganate was a kind of compromise between the aristocracy aimed at bringing the main bulk of nomads under control and the peasant class that resisted them. The success of military campaigns would temporarily downplay internal struggles by providing members of the campaigns, nobility and nomads, with rich yields.

The works of famous national Turcologist and author of a wide range of works on the history, archaeology, and culture of Kyrgyzstan A. Bernstam contain the idea of an early feudalisation of nomads. According to Bernstam

slavery had a patriarchal character and was simply a way of life within feudal society. Bernstam supposed that the main reason behind the creation of nomadic states was class struggles that would spark up and enthrone new dynasties. According to this scholar's conception, in the course of their development nomads moved from primitive communism to feudal society, avoiding slave-owning systems altogether. In the researcher's opinion, nomadic states represented military-feudal unions that were the only possible way of a ruling class dictatorship.

One of the areas of A. Bernstam's scholarly interests was the history of Huns, which is addressed in his book 'Essay on the History of the Huns' [Bernstam 1951]. A. Bernstam stuck to the conception of K. Inostrantsev on the continuity of Central Asian Hsiung-nu and European Huns, who were both Turkic-speaking. According to Bernstam the union of Central Asian Hsiung-nu represented a pre-class 'barbarian society.'

His monography 'The Social and Economical Structure of Orkhon-Enisey Turks' is devoted to the history of Ancient Turks [Bernstam 1946]. According to his conception, the Ancient Turks had already created an early feudal union, and the origination of the Ancient Turks is a specific type of ethnogenesis coinciding with feudalisation processes. The Ancient Turkic state was a certain 'feudal island' among the 'barbaric' tribes of Central Asia. According to Bernstam the Second Turkic Khaganate was a state in the real sense of the word and was formed at the end of the 7th century after a short period of the subordination of Turkic people to China. According to the historian, this period in particular was marked by the formation of a feudal relationship and class struggle between the feudal aristocracy and ordinary population, which resulted in the formation of the Ancient Turkic State.

The works of outstanding national historian and archaeologist M. Artamonov made an invaluable contribution to the study of the history of Turkic nations in Eastern Europe. The monography 'History of the Khazars' was the result of his decades-long scholarly en-

deavors [Artamonov, 1962]. This book takes as a significant focus the tribes and state formations of nomadic and semi-nomadic Turkic people starting from the age of the Huns. Individual chapters of the book are devoted to the Savirs, Proto-Bulgar tribes, Avars, Turkuts, and Great Bulgaria. The history of the Khazars is also thoroughly analysed, starting from their first inclusion on the pages of written sources and up until the fall of the Khazar state in the 10th century. Artamonov's work was a comprehensive study of this subject for its time, and the book is still relevant today.

It is also important to note that the post-war period was marked by new progress in the study and publication of sources on the history of Turkic people. In the 1950s S. Malov published a series of works on Old Turkic written sources [Malov, 1951, 1952, 1959]. This was also when a major work on the history of nomadic Turkic people—a collection of translations of Chinese chronicles by N. Bichurin—was republished [Bichurin, 1953]. Based on the achievements of nomadic studies in the 1930–1950s, researchers of the following generation achieved new results in the study of this issue by further developing, completing, and criticising the results of their predecessors' work.

Stage 4: From the late 1950s to the 1990s

The end of Stalinist period was marked by a radical change in the sociopolitical life of the country. 'The 20th Congress of the Communist Party and, published shortly thereafter, the decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party 'On Overcoming the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences,' triggered a wave of renewal across the country and also became a landmark for the historical studies. While dogmatism and orthodoxy began to be challenged, constructive discussions again became the main tools for solving controversial issues [Balashov, Yurchenko, p. 88]. The changes occurring in the historical sciences during the 'thaw period' were also applied in full to the study of nomadic societies. The ideas that had previously dominated the field, linking the origins of nomadic societies to slave-owning,

feudal (feudal-patriarchal) groups, began to be criticised and reformulated, which in turn led to rise of questions about the statehood of nomads. Works of some researchers questioned seemingly unshakable notions about the direct dependence of sociopolitical development on the economic basis of nomadic communities, even the very existence of a nomadic state apparatus itself had been doubted. At the same time, the theory of nomadic feudalism was not forgotten and was further studied by a wide range of authors. Because of all of these circumstances, the overall picture formed by these different points of view became far more focused and diversified than in the previous period.

In the late 1950s L. Gumilyov, one of the most interesting and yet ambiguous figures of the Russian historiography of the last century, began to publish his academic research.

The majority of his books and articles are devoted to the history of the nomads of the Eurasian steppes. The idea of the pre-class character of the early statehood of the nomads is the most strongly pronounced line of thought throughout the works of Gumilyov. According to this historian, a form of statehood had emerged among the Hsiung-nu as part of their transition from being divided into ails to a state of year-round migration. These ails began to form cohesive groups, which had to be organised in order to ensure protection from enemies and to maintain their internal order. According to Gumilyov, this embryonic form of statehood was older than the institution of the class-based state. He considered the Hsiung-nu Empire as a society with prevailing tribal institutions and classed it as a 'tribal empire' [Gumilyov, 1960, p. 83].

For L. Gumilyov, the Turkic Khaganate was founded due to the expansion policy of the khans from the Ashina dynasty, resulting in the amalgamation of almost all the steppe peoples of Eurasia and the surrounding areas with a settled agrarian population. In order to effectively control these lands and peoples, the Ancient Turks formed a new state institution called the *el*. The main contradiction in the First Turkic Khaganate was between

the Turkic military democracy and the conquered tribes who were still living under the tribal system. Due to the short period of existence of this state, Gumilyov viewed the Turkic Khaganate as an incomplete process of class formation [Gumilyov, 1961, p. 18].

According to this view, a feudal relationship existed only around the periphery of the Grand Steppe, where the nomads were conquering lands with a settled agrarian population. As an example, Gumilyov mentions the Seljuk State, the Golden Horde, and the Mongol dynasties in Iran and China. At the same time, the nomads who remained in the steppes preserved their old system of social relations [Gumilyov, 1969, p. 80].

L. Gumilyov's works are marked by an accessible prose and a clear narrative, which made them widely popular, especially in the Turkic Republics of the former USSR, including Tatarstan. It is also important to note that together with sympathy for Turkic people, Gumilyov's works show signs of a negative attitude to Islam (see [Gumilyov, 1994]), the religion practiced by the overwhelming majority of Turkic people. If Gumilyov's early works, such as 'Hsiung-nu,' 'The Ancient Torks' etc., stayed within the framework of scientific monographs, the latter works are based on his theory of 'ethnogenesis and passionarity.' The history of the Turkic people in these works is used only to illustrate this fairly disputable and controversial theory.

However different from each other the approaches of Soviet historians and the old-school Russian Turkic studies scholars had been on the issues of the sociopolitical development of nomadic communities, both groups accepted the existence of nomadic states. But this idea was criticised and challenged in the works of a large number of researchers during the Khrushchev 'thaw' period and in later years. G. Markov [Markov, 1975] and S. Pletnyova [Pletnyova, 1976] can be included among them.

According to G. Markov, a prominent researcher of the nomadic peoples, the nomadic communities had suffered from growing income inequality and alienation from the dominant strata of society: the military and

tribal leaders. In turn, the strengthening of military organisation led to the emergence of nomadic empires, representing the military centralisation of cattle breeders. But these nomadic empires tended to be short-lived and lacked a robust economic basis. The consolidation of various tribes into a nomadic empire could have been achieved only on the condition of creating a single management system based on strong military power. But the weakening of this central authority would lead to the fall of the nomadic empire, its military and administrative systems would cease to exist, and the steppe-dwellers would revert from a 'military nomadic' to a 'community nomadic' condition. Thus, the nomadic empires, according to Markov, were not a state in the real sense of the word.

Markov's point of view is close to that of S. Pletnyova, a renowned academic specialising on the history of the Turkic peoples of Eastern Europe and the author of a number of works on the history of the Khazars and Polovtsians. Her views are clearly laid out in her monograph 'Medieval Nomads' [Pletnyova, 1976]. Like Markov, she believes that nomadic states did not exist at all, and that the consolidation of nomads into groups was represented by tribal unions which turned into a state only if a part of population became agrarian. Pletnyova highlights three developmental stages of nomadic societies: the first stage consisted of nomadic camps, with no farming or permanent settlements and social relations characterised by military democracy, the second stage had semi-nomadic economy with permanent winter camps and partial preparation of feed, decline of the tribal system and military democracy, formation of early-class society and state institutions, and the third stage had semi-nomadic economy alongside the development of farming and settlements, the founding of cities, feudalism and the state system.

According to S. Pletnyova, the second stage of nomadism is further divided into two stages, the first one marked by nomadic huts, and the second one, by ails. At that time the democratic military system was substituted by a class system. According to Pletnyova,

the Hsiung-nu, the Ancient Turks of Khaganate age, the Empire of Attila, the Avar Khaganate, Kubrat's state, and Khazar state at the period its development, etc., were all at the second stage of nomadism.

The third stage of nomadism was characterised by a highly developed farming and cattle breeding economy, the evolution of crafts, the rise of cities, a homogenisation of culture and language, and the emergence of a written language. According to Pletnyova, all of these were signs of the development and consolidation of a state. In her view, if the second stage of nomadism can be characterised by the formation of unconsolidated state institutions, as in the 'nomadic empires,' then the third stage is marked by sustainable and organised unions, or 'khaganates.' As the clearest examples of the third stage of nomadism, Pletnyova mentions the Uighur Khaganate, with its class feudal system, the Kyrgyz Khaganate, Khazaria at its peak, etc.

The prominent Turkic studies scholar S. Klyashtorny has made important contributions to the historiography of the Turkic peoples. His books and articles are devoted to the history of the Turkic peoples in general, the historical relevance of written traces of the Ancient Turkic script, and questions of social structure and state development in the nomadic Turkic communities [Klyashtorny, 1964, 1970, 1971, 1984, 1994, etc.]. S. Klyashtorny is an academic editor and one of the authors of this book, so the reader can become acquainted with his views and historical concepts.

Among the works published in recent years, it is worth mentioning a book by the Vladivostok researcher N. Kradin, 'Nomadic Societies (Issues of Formational Characteristics)' [Kradin, 1992]. According to Kradin, even though nomads were materially self-sufficient, they still needed the products of craftsmen, as well as weapons, silk, ornaments, and farming goods. There were two ways to obtain these products: by war or peaceful trade. Both of these means were used by the nomads. When they were sure of their superiority and invulnerability, they would mount on a horse without further thought and start

a campaign. But when their neighbour was a powerful state, cattle breeders preferred peaceful trade. But quite often the governments of settled states hampered such a trade because it lay outside of state control. And in that case, nomads had to assert their rights to trade in a military way.

Like V. Radlov and V. Bartold, N. Kradin believes that at the beginning nomads did not have a need for their own state. In Kradin's view, nomadic states emerged in the regions where they had to have extensive and active contact with more highly organised agrarian and urban societies (the Scythians and the Old Eastern and Ancient States, the nomads of Central Asia and China, the Huns and the Roman Empire, Arabs, Khazars, Turks and Byzantium, etc.). Thus, Kradin is of the opinion that the statehood of nomadic nations emerged under the influence of settled agrarian civilisations.

The case for the class character of nomadic societies is thoroughly argued in a monograph by a prominent scholar of Chinese sources and author of the history of the medieval Tanguts and Mongols, Ye. Kychanov [Kychanov, 1994]. He does not even doubt the existence of states amongst the nomadic peoples. In this work, Kychanov addresses the issues of the level of development of the nomadic nations from the standpoint that nomadic societies were class societies, and nomadic states were formed as a result of income inequality and the division of these societies into classes. The book contains the most detailed analysis of early forms of statehood of the nomadic nations that shared a border with China at different periods of time. For Kychanov, the nomadic state itself was not only a means for defence against looting by neighbours but also a form of societal organisation which allowed the aristocracy and the prosperous spheres of lay society to exercise power, control, and influence in order to exploit the poor and indigent tribesmen and slaves. The main idea raised by Kychanov in his monograph is that the nomadic states were first of all the result of the internal development of nomadic societies, stemming from their division into strata or

classes with the ensuing conflicts of interest.

A particular strength of Kychanov's book is that he often refers to the original Chinese sources rather than translations.

A collection and systematisation of resource base on the ancient and medieval history of nomadic Turkic people was undertaken between the 1960s and 1990s. This included the search for, interpretation, and publication of Ancient Turkic written sources. The first Turkic source on the history of the First Turkic Khaganate, the Bugut Inscription in Sogdian language, was published in 1971 [Klyashtorny, Livshits, 1971]. In 1983 D. Vasilyev published the Turkic runic inscriptions from the Yenisei basin, which was the most comprehensive publication to date of the ancient Turkic written traces in the region [Vasilyev, 1983]. The same year he published a monograph devoted to the description, study, and systematisation of multivariant graphics of Turkic runic inscriptions of the 8th–10th centuries [Vasilyev, 1983].

V. Taskin translated and published extracts from the Chinese chronicles relating to the history of the Eastern Huns [Materialy, 1968, 1973]. He re-examined the translations of Chinese sources which had been published in 1851 by N. Bichurin. V. Taskin updated and corrected a wide range of inaccuracies and mistakes made by his predecessor. Taskin's publications are important not only for the study of the sources but also from the historical point of view because the inaccuracies and mistakes made by N. Bichurin in his translations of Chinese chronicles were reflected in subsequent works by A. Bernsh-tam L. Gumilyov, and others, who used them as a basis for their historical concepts. For instance, V. Taskin disproved L. Gumilyov's point about the domination of tribal relations among the Hsiung-nu.

The development of historical studies in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in the Soviet period resulted in multivolume collective monographs where a prominent place was also occupied by the Old Turkic period in the history of these republics [Istoriya Kyrgyzskoy SSR, Istoriya Kazakhskoy SSR, 1977].

Overview of International Historiography

No overview of the historical literature would be complete without at least a brief mention of the research on the ancient and early medieval history of the Eurasian peoples conducted abroad.

Historical research on the ancient and early medieval history of the peoples of Central Asia began in Europe in the 18th century, when French missionaries translated historical sources from Chinese and Manchurian. Based on this data as well as Byzantine sources, the Sorbonne professor Joseph Deguignes wrote the first seminal work on the nomadic peoples of Central Asia.

In the following 19th century further research on the ancient and early medieval history of the Turkic peoples was carried out by French researchers Louis Vivien de Saint-Martin [Saint-Martin] and Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat. A new wave of research into the history of Central Asia occurred in France at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries. The following authors are worth mentioning here: Édouard Chavannes, Paul Pelliot, Henri Cordier, René Grousset, and Louis Hambis.

The 19th century historians who studied the history of the steppe peoples were more interested in issues of political rather than social history. However, most of them rejected the idea that these nomads could have lived in a class society. They tended to portray nomadic life as primitive and stagnant, seeing social relations as static [Kradin, 1992, p. 14].

There is recurrent mention of various aspects of nomadic social life in the works of K. Marx and F. Engels. K. Marx judged nomadic to be more developed than that of pre-historic peoples, while neither K. Marx nor F. Engels included nomadism as part of their scheme of production methods.

In Germany in the first half of the 20th century research on Central Asia was conducted by experts in Chinese studies such as F. Hirth, de Groot [de Groot], and Franke [Franke, 1930] and by the oriental studies scholar I. Marquart.

The history of the Huns is described in the works of McGovern [McGovern] and Otto Maechen-Helfen.

Overall, in the 20th century western research into nomadism paid much more attention to the social problems in nomadic societies, to their economy, kinship systems, governing structures, and authorities [Kradin, 1992, p. 26].

O. Lattimore [Lattimore, 1963, 1967, 1974, 1979] paid considerable attention to the nomadic social order. In his view, nomadic society remained relatively unchanged. 'Nomadic people periodically united and then broke apart, evolving overall in a spiral pattern. Nomadic empires were only formed during their expansions against agricultural civilisations, when an able chieftain succeeded in uniting a large number of nomadic tribes. Social antagonisms were not highly developed within nomadic societies but rather channeled towards the outside world' (cit by [Kradin, 1992, p. 26]).

By comparing agricultural and nomadic societies, K. Wittfogel pointed out that a nomadic way of life significantly diminished a number of conditions for setting up despotism. Strong power was established only after subduing and conquering irrigated lands, but in this case military failures or natural disasters could weaken the tyranny of a nomadic leader [Kradin, 1992, p. 27].

L. Krader formulated the conception of the 'clan state' adhered to by nomads [Krader, 1955], where political, social, and other links were based on kinship. In some of his articles [Krader, 1978, 1979, 1981] Krader agrees with a number of Ibn Vladimirtsov's ideas. In these articles nomadic states are interpreted as class states [Kradin, 1992, p. 27].

The works of T. Barfield [Barfield, 1981, 1989, 1992] play an important role in the reconstruction of the social system of ancient nomads in Central Asia. This author considers that the state system was not an institution that was inherently essential for the nomads. After O. Lattimore and others, T. Barfield developed the idea that the state system appeared as a way for the nomads to become adapted to neighbouring agricultural civilisations. 'The

nomadic state system was organised, by his opinion, in the form of 'imperial confederations' that had an autocratic and 'state-like' view from outside but remained consultative and tribal from inside. This peculiarity of the nomadic state defined the character of power relations within the Hsiung-nu Empire. The power of the Chanyu and his family was strongly limited by the chiefs of the tribes that were part of the confederation. However, being the single mediator between China and the Steppe, the Hsiung-nu ruler was able to control the distribution of the spoils from China, thereby strengthening his own power. This fact supported the existence of an entire political system that could not survive merely on the basis of an extensive stock-raising economy' [Kradin, 1996, p. 19].

Tatar Historians on the Ancient and Early Medieval History of the Turkic Peoples

The main regions inhabited by modern Tatars, the Volga River basin, and the Cis-Ural region are located far from the ancient Turkic nomadic state building centres. Memories of the time of the ancient Turkic khaganates can only be traced back to the oldest roots of Tatar folklore. This is likely to explain the lack of focus on the pre-Bulgar period of Tatar history during the early stages of Tatar historiography. Later Tatar historians, however, repeatedly alluded to the ancient and early medieval history of their ancestors. This theme has survived to this day.

One of the founders of Tatar historiography is Shigabutdin Marjani (1818–1889), the author of over thirty vast works of research and considered a prominent researcher and a pioneer in this field. His historical works are mostly based on Eastern sources gathered by the researcher during his studies in Central Asia. One of the most important works by Sh. Marjani is his book 'Mustafad al-Akhbar fi akhvali Kazan Va Bulgar' (Sources on the History of Kazan and Bulgar') [Marjani, 1989]. In this work, besides the Bulgars, the author ascribes great importance to the various Turkic tribes and peoples of the Middle Ages: Khaz-

ars, Burtases, Kipchaks, etc., while emphasizing their common Turkic origin. At the same time, an earlier period of the Turkic peoples history is practically not described.

The ancient Turkic period is discussed in more detail in a book by the renowned historian and political figure Ahmed Zaki Velidi (1890–1970) 'A Brief History of the Turko-Tartars' [Velidi, 1992], which was first published in Kazan in 1917. In a section outlining the ancient period of Turkic history, Zaki Velidi provides information about the Hsiung-nu, ancient Turks and Oghuzes, as well as descriptions of ancient Turkic culture. The author mentions and refers to the works of such famous Turkic specialists as N. Bichurin, K. Inostrantsev, V. Bartold, and others. Zaki Velidi was at his most productive during his years spent in emigration, where he wrote a huge number of research works, including over thirty monographs. One of his most important breakthroughs was his publication of the complete copy of Ahmad ibn Faldan's work.

The ancient Turkic period was also discussed in the works of one of the first professional Tatar historians, Doctor of Historical Sciences Gaziz Gubaydullin (1887–1938). In one of his main works, his book 'History of the Tatars' [Gobeydullin 1989], first published in the Tatar language in 1926, the pre-Bulgar period plays a significant role. The author describes the state apparatus of the Central Asian Turks and provides information about the ancient Turkic religion and culture as well as the written language of the Orkhon and Yenisei Turks. The book documents in more detail the history of Turkic peoples in Eastern Europe, such as the Huns and the Khazars. The section devoted to the Khazars in this book is as long as the chapter on the pre-Mongol period of the history of the Volga Bulgars.

In his book 'The History of Siberia' [Atlasi, 1993] the famous Tatar researcher and public intellectual Khadi Atlasi (1876–1938) briefly describes the ancient Turkic period in the history of this region. In the chapter dedicated to the Kirghiz, Atlasi covers the events which took place during the Turkic Khaganate.

Besides the work of these historians, the ancient Turkic period is covered in the works of the pioneering academic, historian, social, and religious figure Riza Fakhreddinov (1859–1936). The ethnic history of the Turkic peoples is discussed in the works of the historian and religious figure Hassan-Gata Gab-yashi (1863–1933).

The gradual development of Tatar historical thought was violently interrupted by the totalitarian regime imposed by Stalin. A large number of historians were repressed, and their works forbidden. Following the famous statements of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Bolsheviks in 1944 and the conference about the origin of the Kazan Tartars in 1946, Tatar ethnic history was mostly limited to modern Tatarstan.

An interest in the ancient Turkic period of Tatar history began to gain momentum a few years later, following the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the condemnation of Stalin's personality cult in the late 1970s. Deserving special mention here are the works of the famous historian and archaeologist A. Khalikov (1929–1994), dealing with questions of the ethnic origins of the Tatar people, the ethnic classification and chronology of the archaeological cultures in the Volga-Ural region, etc. In his works [Khalikov, 1978, 1989] he pays particular attention to the ancient Turkic roots of the Kazan Tartars and provides further information on the Huns and the Turkic khaganates. A wave of interest in the ancient Turkic period began to emerge at the beginning of the perestroika period and with the rise of a sense of Tatar national self-identity at the turn of the 1990s. At that time, the works of Sh. Marjani, R. Fakhreddinov, G. Gubaydullin, A. Velidi, and others were republished, and they are still in print. The ancient Turkic theme has been present in the books and periodical publications of contemporary historians such as Academician M. Usmanov, Doctor of History R. Fakhrutdinov, Academician I. Tagirov [Tagirov, 2000], Professor A. Muhamadiev [Muhammadi, 2000], and others.

More recently a number of books have been published on the ancient Turkic pe-

riod of the Tartar history. Worthy of mention here are the books by Doctor of History S. Alishev, 'Ancient Turkic World' [Alishev, 2000], and the monograph by the Associate Professor of History G. Fayzrahmanov 'The Ancient Turks in Siberia and Central Asia' [Fayzrahmanov, 2000] devoted to the history of the ancient Turkic states from ancient times to the beginning of the 13th century. The spiritual culture of the Turkic peoples is described in a seminal monograph by G. Davletshin [Davletshin 1999].

Also worth mentioning is the publication of 'From the Depths of the Centuries' (2000) and 'Scythian History in the Eyes of its Contemporaries' (2001). Edited by Ibn Khamidullin, both books are collections of commented sources on the pre-history, ethnic origins, and ethnic history of the modern Tartar people, reflecting specific moments of ethno-political Turko-Tartar history from 1,000 BC [From the Depth of the Centuries, The Scythian History].

The Study of Bronze Age and Iron Age Archaeological Records in the Territory of Tatarstan

A. Likhachov (1832–1890) and N. Likhachov (1862–1936) studied Bronze Age archaeological monuments in the modern territory of the Republic of Tatarstan, including conducting research on the I Poliansky burial ground, among other sites [Likhachov, 1891]. They collected a huge number of copper and bronze tools, which are today preserved at the national museum of the Republic of Tatarstan. In the Ulianovsk and Samara Trans-Volga regions the burial places of the timber-grave culture were studied by N. Merpert (1844–1905) [Merpert, 1954]. In the second half of the 19th century archaeological excavations were also carried out by the Kazan University Professor A. Shtukenberg (1844–1905) and N. Vysotsky (1843–1922), the geologist P. Krotov (1852–1914), and others. In the 1920s these studies were continued by P. Ponomarev (1847–1919) and I. Smolin (1890–1932). The cultural and chronological evaluation of Bronze Age archaeological monuments was also strongly supported by materials obtained during the excavations carried out by

the greatest specialists of the Soviet period P. Tretyakov and Ye. Goryunova in the adjacent regions of Chuvashia and Mari. During the pre-war years these monuments were the object of research by N. Kalinin (1888–1959) [Kalinin, 1948]. However, the largest contribution to the studies of the Bronze Age on the territory of the republic was provided by A. Khalikov. For twenty years and under his supervision, numerous settlements and burial places were studied, excavated, and dated, leading to the identification of the Prikazan culture [Khalikov, 1969, 1980, Bader, Khalikov, 1976]. The archaeological monuments of Bronze Age cultures: Andronovo, Abashevo, and Cherkaskul located in the east and south of Tatarstan were actively studied at that time by K. Salnikov (1900–1960) [Salnikov, 1967]. In the 1970s Ye. Kazakov studied over seventy burial sites of the Taktalachuk burial ground. These materials served as a basis for defining one of the stages in the Cherkaskul culture—about twenty necropolises of the grave-timber culture [Kazakov, 1979]. An analysis of the metal from the grave-timber culture monuments was carried out by Ye. Chernykh and S. Kuzminykh.

The second half of the 19th century gave a start to studies of the early Iron Age monuments on the territory of the modern Tatarstan. In 1858 P. Alabin carried out excavations on the Ananjino burial ground, which gave its name to the culture associated with it. The work he began was taken over by K. Nevostruyev, P. Ponomarev, and others. Beginning in the 1920s, the monuments of this period were studied by A. Zbruyeva (1894–1965) [Zbruyeva, 1952]. Since the 1960s intensive studies of the Ananjino records were carried out by the Kazan researchers in the vicinity of the Kuybyshev reservoir [Khalikov, 1977]. Later, studies of the burials and settlements of that period were carried out by V. Markov, Ye. Kazakov, A. Chizhevsky, among other archaeologists.

V. Gening (1924–1993) played a crucial role in describing the history of the population in the east of Tatarstan and neighbouring regions during the Pyanobor period. Besides research articles, he published a series of monographs analysing historical artefacts from that period [Gening, 1970, 1988]. Gen-

ing's contribution to the study of the Azelino cultures is also very important [Gening, 1963]. Excavations of archaeological records in the lower part of the River Kama were carried out by P. Starostin.

V. Gening actively worked on the question of the origins and ethnic and cultural makeup of the Volga and Ural peoples [Gening, 1959, 1974]. Comprehensive studies of the monuments, which he named as Imenkovo, were undertaken under his supervision [Gening et al., 1962]. P. Starostin compiled a list of the imenkovo archaeological monuments known by that time and established the features of the first local agriculture [Starostin, 1967].

In the 1960–1970s there were thorough excavations of the pagan burial sites from the early Bulgar period in the republic [Gening, Khalikov, 1964]. In 1977 and in 1981 Kazan archaeologists published two monographs in French and German in Budapest [Chalikova, Chalikov, 1981, Chalikova, Kazakov, 1977]. In 1992 a summary of the research to date was published as a monograph by Ye. Kazakov [Kazakov, 1992]. Based on a wide range of materials, the complicated problems of setting up dates, sources, and the origins of the ethnic groups involved in forming the culture and ethnic makeup of the early Bulgar union are addressed from a novel perspective.

It should be noted that there is no clear consensus on the degree of relevance of the

Imenkovo, Turbaslin, Nevolinsk, Kushnarenkovo, or other cultures of the Ural and Volga Region in the early Middle Ages, for the emergence of the Volga Bulgar ethnic group. The question of the ethnic identification of the archaeological records of the Imenkovo culture, spanning the region between the forest steppes of Eastern Europe, from the River Belaya to the Penza Oblast has been debated over the last 60 years of historical research. For instance, V. Gening associated them with the ancient Turkic material culture, while P. Stepanov saw them as having Magyar origins. N. Kalinin and A. Smirnov viewed the Imenkovo culture as belonging to the Gorodets ethnic group. G. Matveeva sees the Imenkovo people as proto-Slavic, and Ye. Kazakov, as late Sarmatian. Moreover, the opinion of some archaeologists has changed over time: At first, A. Khalikov classified the Imenkovo as Turkic and later as Baltic in origin. P. Starostin primarily saw them as a combination of the Turkic and Finno-Ugric groups, while today he assumes them to be proto-Slavic.

More recently there has been large-scale cooperation between Tatar researchers and historians in Saint Petersburg, Moscow, and other research centres in Russia. This publication is among the products of such a cooperation between Tatar and Russian researchers.

Kamil Akhsanov

Overview of sources

The first volume 'The History of the Tatars since Ancient Times' covers a vast stretch of time, from the Bronze Age up to the first centuries of the second millennium. The sheer geographical scale of the events covered in this edition is even more striking, spanning the huge expanse of Eurasia from China to the Carpathian Mountains. It is during this period that these territories were inhabited by the ancestors of the modern Turkic peoples, including the Tatars. A great number of tribes of various origins were part of the emergence of the Tatar people. These peoples left their traces on the pages of ancient chronicles and other written documents but also their stone arrowheads together with numerous objects of material culture. Bearing this in mind, the historical sources containing the ancient history of the Tatars and their ancestors can be divided into three main groups: 1) written sources, 2) epigraphs, and 3) archaeological materials.

Modern-day historians have no direct access to the written sources of the peoples of the Eurasian steppes during this period, therefore research needs to be conducted based on translated sources from elsewhere. For thousands of years the Eurasian steppes fell under the sphere of influence of many countries and peoples. Among the highly civilised regions that maintained close relations with the peoples of the Eurasian steppe was China.

The Chinese sources. The ancient Chinese historical sources are numerous, highly varied, and, as a rule, fairly accurately dated. Since ancient times the Chinese have maintained the belief that knowledge of the past is required to understand current events. They placed a high value on history as providing an education for life. This explains their deep interest in compiling data about the past, in the form of various chronicles, documents, legends, songs, objects of material culture [Source Studies, 1984, p. 321]. As well as determining the events of their own history,

since ancient times Chinese sources have mentioned the various peoples living to the north and north-west of the Celestial Empire—that is, in Central Asia and the region of what is now Mongolia and its neighbours. The sources are replete with records of conflict with these peoples, starting at the very beginning of Chinese history. 'The first reliable mention of China's northern neighbours can be found in the inscriptions on the Yin oracle cards, made around fifteen centuries BC' [Taskin, issue 1, 1968, p. 6]. Later ancient Chinese historical essays, such as the 'Shujing,' the 'Chunqiu,' and others, mention the following tribes and peoples: the Guifang, the Hunyi, the Xunyu, the Xianyu, the Xirong, the Di, and the Hu, living to the north and the north-west of China. Evidence of the existence of these peoples in the essays is extremely sparse and episodic.

Consistently dated events in the history of Central Asia began being to be recorded in Chinese sources only from the Han period onwards, when the steppes of the modern Mongolia and its neighbouring territories were controlled by the people whom the Chinese called the Hsiung-nu (or Eastern Huns in Russian historiography). The history of this people was traced in the work of the eminent Chinese historian Sima Qian (145–90 BC).

The development of the fundamental features of Ancient Chinese historiography began from the time of the Eastern Zhou. From this time onwards, the governing court began to employ chroniclers, whose duties were to record important events, which took place during the reign of a particular wang. Sima Qian's essay 'Historical Notes' ('The Historian's Notes') is rather unique in this context. Although the author worked as a historian at the imperial court, he wrote his book not because it was his responsibility but because he wanted to fulfil the will of his father, who had started and failed to complete an enormous work [Source Studies, 1984, p. 351].

Sima Qian's essay was the first wide-ranging history of China to cover the period from the legendary governors until the age of Emperor Wu of Han, who governed in the 2nd century BC [Krol, 1970, p. 4]. While working on his book, Sima Qian systematised and generalised all the available historical facts from the previous periods, while using not only written sources. He also meticulously took into account folk traditions. During his travels around the Empire he made use of every possibility to visit the sites of famous battles and the ruins of towns, talked to the elderly, and learnt about the daily life of the non-Chinese tribes inhabiting the outskirts of the Empire [Source Studies, 1984, p. 352]. Sima Qian's history of the Hsiung-nu people from the Han dynasty is a comprehensive and systematically written historical work. 'His access to the state archives and direct connections with important civil and military officials as well as personal observations allowed Sima Qian to thoroughly describe the Hsiung-nu history of the Han period. The story about the period of Emperor Wu of Han is told by the witness of those events who was close to the imperial court. Earlier events are likely to have been described on the basis of archives and memoirs about the recent past' [Taskin, issue 1, 1968, p. 10].

The history of the Hsiung-nu is devoted a special chapter in the 'Historical Notes,' and further information about the Hsiung-nu is found in the biographical descriptions of outstanding Chinese state figures. Sima Qian describes in detail the political history of the Hsiung-nu state, its sociopolitical system, daily life, and customs. The work describes the main trends in the relations between China and its northern neighbour—the Chinese expansion towards the north by driving the Hsiung-nu out of their lands [Taskin, issue 1, 1968, p. 6].

Unlike his predecessors, the compilers of the chronicles Sima Qian rejected a simple chronological perspective. He instead developed a more complex structure for a historical essay. Besides the descriptions of the most important events during the reign of a dynasty or an emperor, it also included some additional sections: chronological tables, treatises on

certain economic and cultural aspects, the histories of the property of the ancient Chinese nobility, and 'life histories'—that is, the biographies of outstanding figures (these sections also contained descriptions of Ancient China's neighbouring peoples, including the Hsiung-nu). Sima Qian's methods had a decisive influence on the further development of Chinese historiography, which was soon enriched with a new genre – that is, the so-called dynastic histories. Such a history would be written after the collapse of the preceding ancient Chinese (and, later, medieval) dynasty and describe its 'rise and fall.' The author of an essay of this type would have some different aims to the ones pursued by Sima Qian. However, in terms of the manner of describing the material, he would follow his brilliant predecessor' [Source Studies, 1984, p. 353–354]. Extracts from Sima Qian's essay on the history of the peoples of Central Asia were translated and published by the renowned Russian scholar of Chinese studies N. Bichurin in the first half of the 19th century [Bichurin, 1950, V. 1]. For a long time, this translation was considered unsurpassed both among Russian and foreign historians. In the 1950s, V. Taskin produced a new translation of the sections of the essay by Sima Qian which dealt with the history of the Hsiung-nu. V. Taskin took into account and corrected a lot of flaws and mistakes in the work by N. Bichurin and added detailed comments to the text [Taskin, issue 1, 1968].

The later history of the Hsiung-nu was recorded in the work of another ancient Chinese historian Ban Gu (32–92). His essay, the 'Book of Han' started a new genre of historical writing – that is, the history of separate dynasties [Sinitsyn, 1975, p. 100]. Ban Gu describes Hsiung-nu history from the late 2nd century BC to the early 1st CE. His essays included the relationships between the Hsiung-nu and the Han Empire, the political history of the Hsiung-nu state and contained descriptions of the internal structure of Hsiung-nu society [Taskin, issue 2, 1973, p. 3]. Paying a lot of attention to the peculiarities of the daily life of the Hsiung-nu and their neighbours, Ban Gu moved away from the idea of innate and immutable differences between 'the people

of the Middle Tsardom,' the ancient Chinese, and 'the barbarians of the four cardinal points.' For this reason the historian rejected both the voices who encouraged the emperor to expand the Han territory into the lands of neighbouring peoples and the supporters of signing 'peace and kinship' treaties with them. Ban Gu assumed that the barbarians could not be real citizens of the Han Empire and that their lands were useless for agricultural purposes, therefore the best policy towards the Hsiung-nu and other peoples would be to avoid any contact with them altogether [Source studies, 1984, p. 355]. References to Ban Gu's essay are to be found in the seminal work by N. Bichurin [Bichurin, V. 1, 1950]. In 1973 a new translation of Ban Gu's essay was published, containing further details about the Hsiung-nu [Taskin, issue 2, 1973].

The next period of Hsiung-nu history, now reduced to its southern region (after the collapse of the Hsiung-nu state in the 1st century), can be found in the essay 'Hou Han Shu' (or 'the History of the Later Han') by the Chinese historian Fan Ye (398–445). This work covers the events of the early 1st century, while Fan Ye also added (just as Ban Gu did) an account of earlier Hsiung-nu history, as described in the book by Sima Qian.

The final stage of Hsiung-nu history is to be found in an essay by Fang Xuanling, the 'Shujing' ('The History of the Jin Dynasty'). This work was written during the reign of the Tang dynasty, when China became a great empire and started its expansion towards Central Asia, as it did during the Han Age. Fang Xuanling describes the events of the 4–5th centuries, when the southern Hsiung-nu invaded China, established a power base there, and (after the collapse of their three dynasties) disappeared from Chinese sources. 'Fang Xuanling closely connects his essay with the events described by Sima Qian, Ban Gu, and Fan Ye. That is why these essays by the four Chinese historians offer a complete description of this ancient nomadic people, at a time when it played an active role in the historical arena' [Materials, issue 1, p. 3, 1989]. Extracts from the 'Hou Han Shu' and the 'Shujing' are also presented in the book by N. Bichurin [Bi-

churin, V. 1]. A new translation of these essays was produced by V. Taskin and published in 1989 [materials, issue 1, 1989].

Medieval Chinese historical sources can be of great interest in studying the history of the ancient Turks Uighurs, and other tribes and peoples of Central Asia. Chinese historiographers of this period continued in the tradition founded by Sima Qian and Ban Gu, beginning to write the history of a particular dynasty only after its collapse. A historiographic committee, headed by a high-ranking official, would be set up for this purpose. Besides the chronicles of the reigns of the emperors and chronological tables, the dynastic histories also included specific treatises on astronomy, mathematics, music, administrative structure, laws, and geography as well as the biographies of state figures and high-ranking military officials. The sections on foreign countries and peoples are of particular interest. The sources of the dynastic histories were daily chronicles, the writings of public figures and the emperor's own words. Reports by ambassadors, the accounts of travellers and merchants played a huge role in the sections about foreign countries. These essays are renowned for their breadth, completeness, and the accuracy of the data contained in them [Flug, 1959, p. 223].

Of the great variety of texts of medieval Chinese literature, which refer to Turkic peoples and other nomads, the following historical essays deserve special mention:

the 'Beishi,' or 'Northern History,' which is the history of the following dynasties: the Yuanwei, the Northern Qi, the Northern Zhou, and the Sui. These dynasties ruled China in the 5th and 6th centuries. The author of this work was Li Yanshou, who lived during the reign of the Tang dynasty.

The 'Suishu' is the 'Sui History' or the 'History of the Sui Dynasty' (from the late 6th century to the early 7th century). The essay was also written during the reign of the Tang dynasty. The author is Wei Zheng.

The 'Tzu Tang Shu,' or 'Old Book of Tang' was written by the historian Li Xu in the 10th century, using early sources.

The 'Tanghuyao,' or 'Review of the Tang History' by Wang Go was written in the 10th

century during the reign of the Song dynasty. This essay contains a wealth of new and valuable details about Turkic history, making it a highly important work.

The 'Xin Tang Shu,' or simply the 'Tang Shu,' is the 'New Tang History,' or the 'Tang History.' This essay also contains a large amount of information about the Turks the Uighurs, and other peoples of Central Asia. The work was written in the 11th century during the reign of the Song dynasty. The author is Ou Yangxiu [Kyuner, 1950].

Extracts from medieval Chinese historical literature make up a significant part of N. Bichurin's book 'A Comprehensive Collection of Information on the Ancient Peoples of Central Asia' [Bichurin, V. 1]. Among the modern Russian translations are the works by N. Kyuner [Kyuner, 1961] and A. Malyavkin [Malyavkin, 1981, 1989].

Ancient Greek and Byzantine Sources.

The peoples of the Eurasian steppes attracted the attention of historians and geographers in the cradles of ancient civilisations. One of the most ancient historical works to mention the inhabitants of the steppes of Western Eurasia – as Scythians – is the 'History' by Herodotus (the 5th century BC). This essay contains facts on the geographical locations of the Scythians' settlements and those of their neighbours, along with descriptions of their economy, daily life, customs, and social relations [Herodotus, 1972].

Mention of the Scythians is also to be found in an essay by the Ancient Greek Historian Arrian (2nd century BC), 'The Anabasis of Alexander.' This work contains descriptions of the diplomatic relations between Alexander the Great and the Scythians in Central Asia.

Detailed materials on the history of the Black Sea region, the Caspian territory, and Central Asia can be found in the work of the Ancient Greek geographer and historian Strabo (about 63 BC–20 CE) 'Geography.' Valuable descriptions of the Scythians' political history and their relations with the Greek cities are to be found here along with accounts of the war campaigns with the Cimmerians, etc.

A large amount of material on the tribes of the Northern Black Sea Region and the North-

ern Caspian territory can be found in the 'Geography' by Claudius Ptolemy (the first half of the 2nd century BC). These lands are mentioned by the author as Sarmatia, named after the Sarmatians, who populated the region at that time.

Valuable facts regarding the Scythians are contained in an essay by the 1st century CE Roman Historian Quintus Curtius Rufus, 'The History of Alexander the Great' [Quintus Curtius Rufus, 1812].

One of the most important sources on the history of the Huns in the 4th century is a work of the historian Ammianus Marcellinus, 'The Acts.' In this work the author thoroughly describes the Huns' daily life, customs, and traditions. Two circumstances need to be taken into account when studying this source. First, Ammianus Marcellinus was not an impartial historian but rather a talented and creative storyteller with a particular world view, original literary techniques, and artistic methods. He often employed methods such as contrasting and sharply defining 'good' versus 'bad' [Udal'tsova, 1984, p. 137]. The Huns, according to Marcellinus, are the picture of evil. He has not a single kind word to say about them, which proves that the objectiveness of this author leaves much to be desired. Second, some international researchers believe that Ammianus Marcellinus could not have fully reliable facts about the Huns. They do not find his description to be an accurate representation of the Huns, assuming instead that it is constructed from broad passages used by ancient authors to describe the nomads [Ibatullin, 1990]. The essay

by Ammianus Marcellinus was published in Kiev in 1908, translated into Russian [Marcellinus, 1908].

A very valuable source on the history of the Huns in the 5th century is an essay by Priscus of Panium, 'The Byzantine History and the Actions of Attila,' only some fragments of which have survived. The diplomat and historian Priscus of Panium was one of the most eloquent and talented writers to create a unique, accurate, and reliable picture of the so-called 'barbarian' and Roman world during the period of the great migrations. He was a member

of the diplomatic mission of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Emperor Theodosius to the headquarters of Attila in Pannonia and wrote descriptions of the daily life and customs of the Huns and about Attila himself and his entourage. What really sets Priscus of Panium apart from a lot of his contemporaries is the impartiality and absence of hostility in his descriptions of the social system, daily life, and customs of the Huns and other tribes. Priscus describes the interior and exterior decorations of the palace of the Hun chief Attila in admiration, finding beauty in the Hun customs. None of the early Byzantine writers left such a vivid, naturalistic, and trustworthy portrait of Attila as the one recorded by Priscus. His Attila is an extraordinary state figure, leading an active international policy. To Priscus, Attila is less a commander and a conquerer than a statesman and an honest judge of his people, a hospitable person who can welcome foreign ambassadors. While commenting on the magnificence of Attila's palace and his untold wealth, Priscus highlights his restraint, moderation, and distaste for luxury.

His vivid and richly descriptive accounts of the Byzantine diplomatic mission to the court of Attila made Priscus famous as a writer. 'The compelling honesty and simplicity in Priscus's portrayal of Attila's palace make it one of the finest passages of ancient historiography. An unprecedented impartiality for a Byzantine towards the barbarians and a deep understanding of the historical significance of the great migrations, his life knowledge and genial descriptions of the characters, his ability to see the big picture and and single out the most important features, all these facts make the work of Priscus one of the finest among the historical essays by the early Byzantine writers. Priscus succeeded in creating an outstanding historical work not only due to his talent and observational skills but also because he was not a fervent Roman patriot, nor did he have contempt for the barbarians. He could see the Huns and the Slavs, Attila, and other barbarians as living people, with all their merits and faults' [Udaltsova, 1984, pp. 371–379]. The work by Priscus was translated into Russian by G. Destunis [Priscus, 1861].

The late Roman historian Jordanes in his 6th century essay 'On the Origin and Actions of the Getae' ('Getica') gave much importance to the Huns. This book presents a large scale picture of the Great Migrations of the 4th–6th centuries. Jordanes described the movements of the tribes from the north and their fighting against the Roman Empire. Included in this work are the entire collected fragments of texts by Priscus of Panium, and thus Jordanes managed to preserve the most valuable parts of his notes, which were not included in the fragments of the essay by Priscus, such as his account of the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains and of Attila's death, etc. [Jordanes, 1997, p. 271]. However, Jordanes's assessment of the Huns sharply differs from that of Priscus. Jordanes stresses the cruelty and treachery of the Huns. He paints a scathing picture of Attila, portraying him above all as a severe conquerer, threatening to take over the entire world. There is a translation of this essay by Ye. Skrizhinskaya [Jordanes, 1960, 1997].

A similar attitude towards the 'barbarian' was expressed by Jordanes' contemporary, the famous Byzantine historian Procopius of Caesarea. His 'History of the War against the Huns' can be of huge interest for studying the history of the peoples of Eastern Europe. The importance of this source is due to the personal observations of Procopius, who was an advisor and a secretary of the Byzantine military chief Belisarius and took part in the campaigns against the Persians, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths. Moreover, Procopius made use of different written sources, many of which have not survived. While describing the 'barbarian' tribes, on the one hand, Procopius pointed out their belligerence, bravery, hospitality, and other positive features. On the other hand, his essay displays a certain contemptuous superiority of the educated Roman over the rude 'barbarians.' Procopius very often demonstrates his open hostility towards them. However, at the same time, he voiced ideas about the clear need to reach a compromise between the Empire and the barbarians. 'The essay by Procopius is a priceless resource to study the ethnic origins, social system, religion, daily life, and customs of the barbarian

tribes and peoples as they were variously encountered by the Byzantines at that time. Especially important for Procopius is to try to understand the enormous changes to the ethnic map of Europe, which were taking place in the period of the so-called great migrations' [Udaltsova, 1984, p. 159]. The collection of the essays of Procopius of Caesarea was translated by A. Chekalova and published in 1993 [Procopius of Caesarea].

One of the most noteworthy authors writing about Byzantine diplomacy and imperial foreign affairs during the 6th–7th centuries was Menander the Protector, a figure of a similar stature as Priscus of Panium. Unlike Priscus, Menander was not a diplomat but a trained lawyer and held an imperial state position. Menander's essays have been preserved only in fragments, from the period 558 to 582. In his work, Menander used diplomatic correspondence, the reports of Byzantine ambassadors, historical essays, witnesses' accounts, and personal observations. One of the most vivid passages in his essay is the description of the Byzantine diplomat Zemarchus's embassy in the Turkic Khaganate. This essay is filled with bright and colourful details and is to some extent similar to the story of Priscus of Panium. Menander describes the Turkic customs and daily life. His description of the luxurious decorations of the Turkic governor's tent and the feast arranged to honour the Byzantine embassy is narrated in exquisite detail. Menander's account is famous for its vivid writing, the accuracy in the details, and his realistic descriptions of what was seen by other witnesses. Menander's essay is an outstanding example of early Byzantine historiography and one of the most important sources on the history of ancient Turkic peoples. A large number of facts from his essay have been confirmed by the archaeological studies of recent years and by studying Eastern, in particular Chinese, chronicles. 'Priscus wrote his personal impressions on the Hun state and its governor. Menander's essay about the Turkic state is filled with colourful detail but cannot be considered an eyewitness account, being based mainly on oral stories as told by the members of the Byzantine embassy or as de-

scribed in diplomatic documents which have now been lost. Like Priscus, however, in his essays about the Byzantine diplomacy in the 6th century Menander is not a mere compiler but a thorough historian, although without the life experience and artistic talent as his predecessor' [Udaltsova, 1984, pp. 389–392]. The translation of Menander's essays, produced by G. Destunis, was published in 1860 [Menander the Byzantian, 1860].

Historical facts about the Torks Bolgars, Avars, and other tribes of Eurasia are contained in the essays of Theophylactus Simocattes. Simocatta lived at the court of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, whose views he shared. He decided to write his own work, a 'History,' as the continuation of the essays of Menander, whom Simocatta mentioned with praise. Simocatta's 'History' covers the period 582–602. Its main theme is the wars that Byzantium waged on the Balkan peninsula with the Slavs and the Avars and with Iran in the east [Pigalevskaya, 1957, p. 11]. A Russian translation of Simocatta's work was published in 1957 [Theophylactus Simocattes, 1957].

The movements of the Bolgars, the Panonian Avars, and other peoples are described in an essay by the contemporary 9th century Patriarch Nicephorus, the 'Short History.' This work provides a direct link to the chronicles of Theophylactus Simocattes (starting with the 6th century) [Bibikov, 1989, p. 90]. There is a translation of the work of Nicephorus published in 1980 [Nicephorus].

A significant development of historical studies in Byzantium took place during the reign of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (905–959). The period known as 'Byzantine encyclopaedism' saw advances in education, culture, literary works, and spiritual life [Bibikov, p. 95]. Most of the written monuments of historical thought in the 10th century were inevitably linked with the figure of the emperor. In some cases he encouraged and commissioned the historic essays, while in others he was probably an editor and even an author. During the reign of Constantine a number of thematic collections were compiled. They included very rich historiographic materials: 'On embassies,' 'On military leader-

ship,' etc. The texts of the essays by Priscus of Panium, Menander, and others have survived only because extracts from them were included in the written works of Constantine's period. The Emperor himself wrote such works as 'On themes,' 'On peoples,' and others [Constantine Porphyrogennetos, 1899]. The treatise 'On governing the state,' which Constantine addressed to his son Romanos, contains practical instructions on foreign affairs issues and information about the so-called 'barbarian' peoples with whom Byzantium had contact—that is, the Pechenegs, the Khazars, the Bolgars, etc. Here Constantine describes in detail the construction of the Sarkel fortress by the Khazars on the River Don [Bibikov, 1989, pp. 96–97].

Valuable information on the peoples of the Eurasian steppes is to be found in the 'Alexiad,' a work of Anna Comnena, the 12th century Byzantine historian and daughter of the Emperor Alexios I [Comnena, 1965].

The Byzantine historical works are complemented by the works of the 6th century Syriac Christian historians Zacharias Rhetor and John of Ephesus. These works contain substantial information about the history of the peoples of the Caucasus, eastern Europe, and Central Asia [Pigulevskaya, 1941].

The Muslim sources. From the late 7th and early 8th centuries the peoples of the Eurasian steppe were faced with a newly-born and fast growing Arab-Muslim civilisation. During that period the Arab troops in the Northern Caucasus reached the borders of the Khazar state and began to penetrate the territories of the local Turkic-speaking tribes in Central Asia. A century later, information on the Turkic-speaking people begins to appear first in the Arabic and then in the Persia historical and geographical literature. 'The Arabic historical and geographical works represent one large and complex set of sources from which modern research can build a historical picture of the countries influenced by the Arabic culture in the Middle Ages' [Belyaev, 1939, p. 12]. An Arab historical literature had already developed by the end of the 8th century. This was based on Arabic half-legendary tales, tribal genealogy, and legends about the life and

deeds of the prophet Muhammad. The Iranian epic and historical tradition and the stories by Judaic and Syriac-Christian writers about biblical figures and events also had a noticeable impact on the Arabic historical literature. The golden age of Arabic historiography appears to be the period between the 9th and 10th centuries. This period was hugely productive for the translation of Greek, Indian, and Persia writings. Histories of the most important cities in the development of an Arab-Muslim civilisation were written at this time. These included Mecca, Medina, and Baghdad. Written accounts of the Arabic conquests began to appear along with the first attempts at compiling world history. A new genre emerged during the 9th century: geographical writings. They began to appear in connection with the military conquests and administrative needs of the Caliphate (to levy taxes and set up postal service networks between the provinces).

The author of the first geographical work that has been preserved, 'The Book of Roads and Kingdoms' ('Kitab al-Masalik w'al-Mamalik'), was the Arab geographer Ibn Khordadbeh, of Iranian origin (born in 820 CE). He was close to the court of the Caliph of Baghdad and later held the position of a Director of Post and Intelligence in the province of Jibal, in North-West Iran. Ibn Khordadbeh wrote several works, but only this one has survived. This work exists in an abridged version today, but another, more extensive, edition was written. In 1939 some extracts from this book were published in the first volume of the collection of works 'MITT' [MITT, vol. 1, 1939, pp. 144–146]. Ibn Khordadbeh provides detailed information about the cities and peoples of Central Asia. He also mentions Turkic peoples such as the Karluks, the Kimaks, the Guz, and others and briefly describes their way of life.

The writings of the greatest Arabic historian of his time, Iranian by birth, al-Baladhuri (died in 892 CE), 'The Book of the Conquests of the Lands' ('Kitab Futuh al-Buldan'), are of particular interest. This work outlines the history of the Arab campaigns. The material is presented in a systematic order, following geographical and then chronological consider-

ations. The last chapter of this book describes the conquest of Khorasan and Central Asian Mesopotamia. Here al-Baladhuri reports that the Arabs had to struggle against the local Turks. This part of his work has come to us in a brief edition as part of 'MITT' [MITT, vol. 1, 1939, pp. 62–78].

Information about the Oghuzes and other Turkic peoples is contained in the work 'Concise Book of Lands' ('Kitab Ahbar Al-Buldan') by the early 10th century author Ibn Al-Faqih. It seems clear that most of the information about the Turkic peoples, containing valuable details about their settlements and customs, were borrowed by Ibn Al-Faqih from Ibn Khordadbeh. The descriptions of the routes to the Turkic countries and the list of the Turkic peoples were taken from Ibn Khordadbeh, too. Part of the stories provided by Ibn Al-Faqih is based on the oral tradition. His writings have survived only in part. 'MITT' also contains sections devoted to the history of Central Asia and information about the Turkic peoples [MITT, vol. 1, 1939, pp. 151–155].

A part of the 7th volume of works by Ibn Rustah 'Book of Precious Records' (Kitab al-Alak an-Nafisa), the only surviving one, is devoted to the Turkic and Finnish peoples of Eastern Europe. Ibn Rustah based his work on the writings of travellers and other historians. He provides interesting information about the Burtas, the Khasars, the Bolgars, and other peoples. This work by Ibn Rustah was first published by D. Khvolson in 1868 [Khvolson, 1868], with extracts from it included in 'MITT' [MITT, vol. 1, 1939, pp. 150–151].

A prominent Arab scientist, the 9th century historian and theologian al-Tabari, provides an account of the conquest of Khorasan and Central Asia by the Arabs and about their conflicts with the Turkic tribes in his book "The History of the Prophets and Kings" ('Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk'), based on the writings of his predecessors. Extracts from this book, devoted to the conquest of Central Asia by the Arabs, are also included in 'MITT' [MITT, vol. 1, 1939, pp. 86–143].

The account of Ahmad ibn Fadlan, the secretary of the Embassy of Baghdad to the king of the Volga Bolgars, is especially interesting

in the context of the history of the peoples of the Eurasian steppes. Following a long journey from Baghdad to the Volga in 922, he provided valuable descriptions of the life and customs of the peoples whose territories they crossed following the route of the Embassy: the Oghuzes, the Khazars, and, naturally, the Volga-Kama Bolgars themselves. A translation of this work into Russian was published for the first time by professor A. Kovalevsky under the editorship of academician I. Krachkovsky in 1939 [Ibn Fadlan, 1939]. The second edition was produced by A. Kovalevsky in 1956, with a refined translation and commentary [Ibn Fadlan, 1956].

An anonymous work in the Persia language, dating from the late 10th century, contains valuable information about the Oghuses. 'Hudud al-'Alam' ('Boundaries of the World') [MITT, vol. 1, 1939, pp. 209–217].

The work of al-Gardizi a Persia historian of the 11th century living in the state of Ghaznavids, is of interest, too. It is called 'Zajn al-akhbar' ('The decoration of the records'). This work contains information about the Turkic peoples of Central Asia and about the initial stage of the Seljuqs' state formation [MITT, vol. 1, 1939, pp. 223–234].

One of the most important sources on the history of the Turkic peoples in the Middle Ages is the work of the famous 13th century Persia historian and statesman Rashid al-Din 'Jami' al-tawarikh' ('Compendium of Chronicles') [Rashid al-Din, 1952]. The first chapter of the first book is devoted to the tribes who, according to Rashid al-Din, descended from the legendary Oghuz and his relatives: the Uighurs, the Kipchaks, the Karlucs, and others. The second section contains valuable information about the ancient (Central Asian) Tatars. Descriptions of the Uighurs, the Karlucs, the Kipchaks, the Kyrgyz, and others are given in the third chapter, 'About the Turkic Tribes, Each of Which Had Its Sovereign and Chief.'

Among the sources on the history of the peoples of the Eurasian steppes, of particular interest is **a letter by the Khazar Khagan Joseph** written in Hebrew to Hasdai ibn Shaprut, a Jew by birth, who held a high-level position

at the Court of the Caliph Abd ar-Rahman III of Cordoba in the 10th century. The letter is written in the form of answers to a series of questions posed by Hasdai ibn Shaprut. Joseph discusses briefly and in a fragmentary way about the country of the Khazars: their state, several historical episodes, customs, and laws. The information is given in a confusing and boastful manner. At times when their country was going through hard times, the Khazars sought to give a strong impression of their once powerful country. This accounts for the solemn description of the greatness of their own country together with a paucity of concrete information about it. But 'in any case, the letter is the only document in which the original Khazar perception of the steppes, their estates, and their political influence on the surrounding peoples can be traced through their use of a foreign language and even, to some extent, by a mode of thinking, which is slightly different from the Khazar one' [Pletnyova, 1976, pp. 5–12].

The writings of the **Armenian historians** Moses Khorensky, Yeghishe bishop Sebeos, Movses Kaghankatvatsi, and Ghevont contain a variety of reports about the Khazars and other Turkic peoples in Eastern Europe.

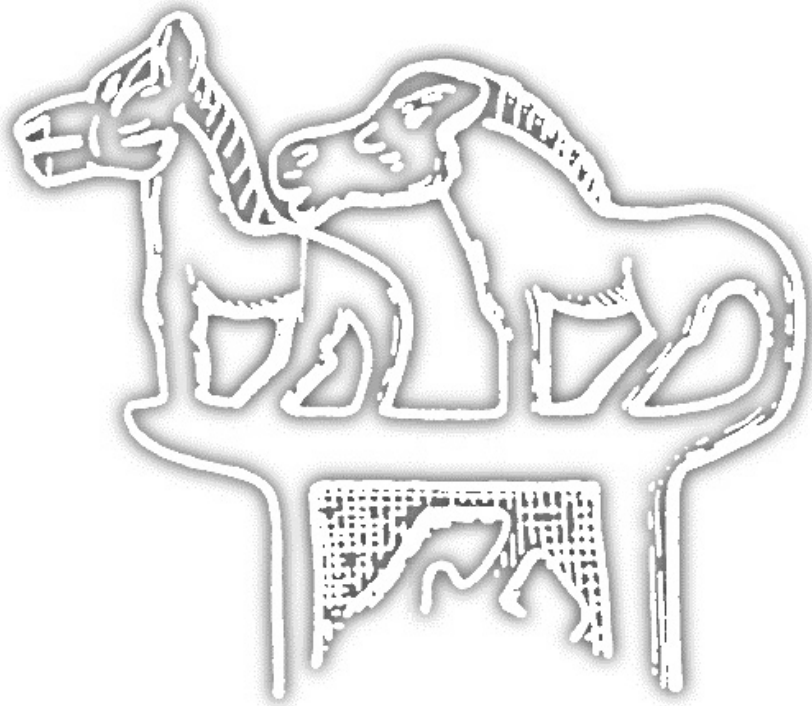
The ancient Turkic epigraphic texts engraved in rune-like letters represent a special group of sources on the history of the Turkic peoples of the Eurasian steppes. The discovery and interpretation of the Orkhon-Yenisei written records at the end of the 19th century became a new milestone in the history of the study of the Turkic language. For the first time

the ancient Turks had 'spoken up' and provided first-hand information, whereas previously researchers had confined themselves to the reports from the Turks' neighbours and enemies. The rune-like ancient texts complement and refine the records of the Chinese, Byzantine, and Muslim authors [Malov, 1951, 1952, 1959]. A monograph by S. Klyashtorny is devoted to the study of ancient Turkic archaeological records [Klyashtorny, 1964].

The archaeological materials related to the history of the peoples of the Eurasian steppes are numerous and diverse. These include ancient burials containing weapons, horse harnesses, and jewellery as well as the remains of ancient settlements and mines. An invaluable contribution to the study of the material culture of the nomads of Eurasia was made by the prominent Russian scientists S. Rudenko [Rudenko, 1962], S. Kiselev [Kiselyov 1951], and A. Okladnikov [Okladnikov, 1955]. In recent years significant advances on the comprehensive systematisation and generalisation of the accumulated archaeological material on the history of the nomads in Antiquity and the Middle Ages have been made, as reflected in the collective monographs in the series 'Archaeology of the USSR' [Steppes, 1981, Steppes, 1989, Steppe zone]. Among these the collection of works 'The Eurasian Steppes in the Middle Ages' is of particular interest as it is the first collective summarising of the huge body of research conducted by the Russian and Soviet researchers who studied the medieval nomadic roots of the country over the course of the last century.

Section I

**The Earliest Stages
of the History of Eurasia**



CHAPTER 1

The Bronze Age in Steppe and Forest-Steppe Eurasia

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The Volga-Ural Region during the Bronze Age

The Bronze Age went down in the history of the Volga-Ural region as one of its most important and vivid periods. It began in the 4th millennium BCE and ended at the turn of the 2nd and 1st millennia BCE. *Its development culminated in the formation of a Volga-Ural centre of cultural genesis in the early 2nd millennium BCE.* This is characterised by a strong growth in the economy and culture and an outburst of social and military activity. Advanced technologies in metal working, new forms of social relations and new cultures appeared and were developed in the depths of this centre. According to many researchers, the local population had by that time reached a pre-state level of development and was consolidated with regard to its ethnicity. It is believed to have formed the initial core of the tribal alliances of the Aryans, who subsequently played a significant Section In the history of Western and Central Asia, and also Hindustan. The Volga-Ural achievements and innovations quickly spread throughout the vast territory in different ways, including the distant migrations of cattle-breeding tribes and military campaigns. They reached Southern Siberia and Middle Asia in the east and south-east, and the Sub-Dnieper region and Northern Caucasus in the west and south-west. *As a result, an extensive cultural province emerged, in which Volga-Ural traditions were predominant.*

For various reasons, the Volga-Ural cultural centre fell into decay in around the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE. This was followed by the collapse of the cultural

province it had created. Several independent cultures emerged in its place but, in the end, these disappeared with the advent of the early Iron Age.

Numerous factors influenced the development of the Bronze Age. These include the natural environment of the Volga-Ural region. The Lower and Middle Volga regions and the Ural region form its integral parts. This vast territory is very diverse from an ecological point of view. It is intersected by several landscape areas: from semi-desert in the south to tundra in the north. Its relief also varies quite noticeably. Vast plains and lowlands alternate with highlands and mountain ridges. Numerous rivers, large and small, flow down from mountains and foothills. Flora and fauna in the Bronze Age were characterised by virgin abundance and variety. Herds of wild horses and saiga antelopes grazed on the endless steppes, the rivers and lakes were abundant with fish and waterfowl. There were large numbers of elks, roe deer, wild boars and furry animals in the forests. Enormous natural reserves of albuminous food allowed the local population, especially in the north, to sustain themselves for long periods of time by means of hunting and fishing.

But a productive economy was increasingly gaining ground in the Volga-Ural region. Despite a multitude of local differences, it had acquired a clear predisposition to cattle-breeding from the very beginning. This could be seen in the influence of the environment. The severe continental climate

of the Volga-Ural region was not conducive to the broad implementation of agriculture. But the conditions here were favourable for developing cattle-breeding. Endless grassy plains, water meadows, flood plains of rivers and timberlands were able to provide food for a huge amount of cattle. During the summer months, and for half a year in the extreme south, the cattle grazed on natural pastures. Hay, twigs, and reeds were stored for the winter. Sickles and scythes were used for this purpose. Pastoral cattle-breeding prevailed in the south whilst domestic cattle-breeding dominated in the north. It has been established that under favourable conditions a cattle-breeding form of economy can develop quickly and bring in considerable material profits. Evidently, this situation arose in the early 2nd millennium BCE, which was a prerequisite for the emergence of the Volga-Ural region as a centre of the economy. The cattle-breeding economy model of that time turned out to be easily adaptable to the conditions of the steppes, which held little water. It enabled large expanses of steppe land to be acquired and settled as densely as never before. As a result, the colonisation of remote districts of the steppes in the 2nd millennium BCE was one of the most important events of the Bronze Age in Eastern Europe and Kazakhstan.

At the same time it should be emphasised that this type of economy was very sensitive to changes in the environment. Such changes occurred repeatedly throughout the two-thousand-year history of the Volga-Ural Bronze Age. They had a cyclical character: the arid climate was replaced by a colder and wetter one and vice versa. Then there were changes in the landscape and other kinds of natural transformations. All this had an effect on the economy to a greater or lesser extent. The abrupt worsening or improvement of the situation often had the same consequences: the migration of large numbers of cattle-breeders to new lands. This occurred quite regularly and it came to characterise the Volga-Ural Bronze Age.

Of all the natural riches of the Volga-Ural region the deposits of copper ore were the

most valuable for the people of the Bronze Age. These deposits were very large in number and spread from the Middle Volga Region to the Southern Trans-Ural region. They started to be mined during the earliest stage of the Bronze Age. Copper extraction reached its peak in the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE. Metal from the Volga-Ural region was supplied to much of Eastern Europe at the time. The evidence of work at the Kargaly mines in the Orenburg region gives an idea of the grandiose scales of mining and smelting production in the Ural region. According to the calculations of Y. Chernykh, between 2 and 5 million tonnes of ore were extracted from these mines, from which between 50–60 and 100–120 thousand tonnes of ore were smelted [Chernykh, 2000, p. 15].

Copper and cattle were the major sources of wealth of the local population. Thanks in large part to these riches, the Volga-Ural region managed to occupy the leading position in Eastern Europe. Metal played a similarly significant role in the establishment of other centres of cultural genesis during the Bronze Age.

Besides the economy, society was of great significance in the history of the Bronze Age. In many respects, it determined the precise course of the cultural and historical process. The Volga-Ural society of the Bronze Age did not emerge from its primitive state throughout its many centuries of existence. It preserved the clan-tribal system with a weakly developed social and material stratification. It only reached the threshold of civilisation on one occasion. This happened early in the 2nd millennium BCE, when the 'Chariot Aristocracy' appeared on the historical arena. Its opulent tombs with the remains of chariots and horse bridles, the ruins of marvellous fortresses, reminiscent of towns in their layout, traces of ceremonial constructions, etc. have been handed down to us. This military nobility is believed to have successfully created several proto-state alliances in the Southern Trans-Ural region. Social and political organisations of this kind are defined in the study of ethnography as chiefdoms. Their characteristic feature was the concentration

of political, economic and religious power in the hands of the chieftains. By mobilising all the available resources of the ruling elite (in our case the Chariot Aristocracy) it was possible to create a mighty economic and military potential, unite the population in ethnic and religious points of view, and build monumental fortresses, tombs and sanctuaries. As a result of its activities, the Volga-Ural centre of cultural genesis was established on the north-eastern fringes of Europe. Its history was inseparably linked with the fate of the Chariot Aristocracy. This becomes evident from an examination of the course of further events. As all signs of this aristocracy disappeared from archaeological monuments, the Volga-Ural region gradually lost its leading position in Eastern Europe. In the latter half of the 2nd millennium BCE, it was transformed into one of the undistinguished provinces of Northern Eurasia. The primitive elements put an end to the burgeoning civilisation and the Volga-Ural society returned to its traditional clan-tribal structure.

A study of the Volga-Ural Bronze Age shows that the most significant changes occurred in the early 2nd millennium BCE. These concerned culture, the economy, and the social sphere. All these changes were directly or indirectly related to the emergence of the Volga-Ural centre of cultural genesis. This significant event can be regarded as a milestone separating the early Bronze Age from the later. According to modern data, the early Bronze Age covered the period from the late 4th –turn of the 3rd to the 2nd millennia BCE. The later Bronze Age covered all of the 2nd millennium BCE. Each of these periods is divided into several stages, the chronological framework of which is mainly determined by the time of the existence of the archaeological cultures concerned.

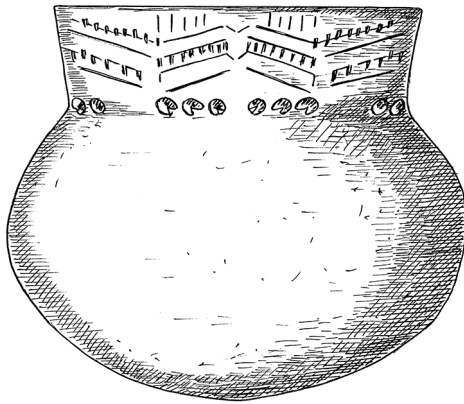
The Early Bronze Age

The archaeological cultures of this period can be divided neatly into two territorial groups: *the southern (steppe) group* and *the northern group*. The border between them was in the forest-steppe area.

The southern group included the *Yamna* and *the Poltavka cultures*. They took their names from the shape of funeral structures ('yama' - a pit) or the place of their first discovery (the village of Poltavka). The most ancient of them is the Yamna culture, which, according to radio-carbon chronology, appeared in the late 4th millennium BCE. Its monuments can be seen in the Lower and Middle Volga region as well as in the Southern Cis-Ural region (Fig. 1). The total area of the Yamna culture is immense. It spread from the Cis Ural to the River Prut and the Lower Danube. It is clear that the population of the Yamna culture did not occupy this vast territory immediately. It is believed that it developed in the Volga-Ural steppes as a special cultural and ethnic group and then spread to other regions. According to some researchers (M. Gimbutas), this expansion can be seen as one of the first waves of settlement by Indo-European peoples. Although this conclusion remains doubtful, it can be stated that the Yamna culture is one of the earliest examples of the large-scale migration of the steppe cattle-breeders in a westerly direction. Afterwards migrations of this kind occurred frequently and became a permanent factor of the ancient and medieval history of Europe.

The Yamna culture is associated with a whole range of other innovations. These include the so-called burial mound ritual. Although this originated in the preceding epoch, its mass distribution dates back to the time of the Yamna culture. Since then the erection of burial mounds has become a characteristic feature of the burial ceremony of the cattle-breeding peoples and the burial mounds themselves—a vivid feature of the steppe landscape.

The people of the Yamna culture were the first in Eastern Europe to use two and four-wheeled chariots harnessed with bulls and



Vessel IV. Devichy gorodok.
Maklasheyevka culture 11–9th centuries BCE
Archaeological excavations by E. Kazakov

oxen. The remains of these chariots can often be found inside the Yamna burial mounds. They had wheels that were made completely of wood and measured about one meter in diameter. The frame, body and all the main construction parts were also made of wood. They were held together by means of wooden nails, glue, ropes, and straps. In spite of this seemingly primitive method of assembly, these chariots were quite solid and reliable constructions. According to several calculations, their carrying capacity was about one and a half tonnes.

The wooden chariots were among the most complicated and expensive articles of that time. Their production required a high level of craftsmanship on the part of carpenters as well as perfect metal tools. These tools (axes, gouges, adzes, chisels) were already being produced. They were particularly common in the Yamna burial mounds of the Middle Volga and the Southern Cis-Ural regions. An analysis of these finds proves that they were cast or forged from metal extracted from the Kargaly mines near present-day Orenburg. These and a host of other factors have convinced researchers that the Yamna population succeeded in creating their own centre of metallurgy and metal working in the Southern Cis-Ural region. This event was of great historical significance as it laid the foundations for the in-

dependent development of metal production in the whole Volga-Ural region.

Archaeological materials provide us with an opportunity to acquire a general understanding of the economy, way of life and social organisation of the population of the Yamna culture. The main activity of this population was cattle-breeding. Hunting, fishing and gathering were of secondary importance and, from all appearances, agriculture was not developed at all. Cattle-breeding was of a specialised nature. They mainly bred sheep and, to a lesser extent, cattle and horses. The complete absence of permanent settlements as well as the composition of the herds indicate that these cattle-breeders led a mobile way of life. The opinion is frequently expressed in literature that they were already genuine nomads. This nomadic mode of existence determined the everyday life of these people in many respects. Of household items they only had what was absolutely essential and what could easily be taken away in carts and on pack animals. Their supplies were stored in leather, wooden and clay containers. They are best known to archaeologists for their clay pots, which are characterised by their simplicity of form and coarse workmanship. Both features are typical of the ceramics of the nomads. In the early Yamna era egg-shaped pots were widespread. These were designed for transportation and for quickly preparing hot meals on fires. Thanks to their round bottom, they could be put on hot coals or embers or placed over a fire on special stands. Flat-bottomed pots appeared later, the shape of which suggests the use of hearths of a more complex construction (Fig. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7).

Apart from cattle-breeding, some groups of the Yamna culture occupied themselves with metallurgy. The inhabitants of the Southern Cis-Ural region enjoyed particular success in this branch of the economy. There were already true professionals among them: miners, founders, smiths. Many factors provide evidence of the benefits of the early specialisation of people working in metallurgy, including the graves of foundry workers. One of these graves was discovered near the Kargaly mines. This is of particular interest because a mould for casting hatchets was found

in the grave of a 12–13-year-old adolescent. No doubt this young man would not yet have fully mastered his profession. It is clear that the casting mould in his grave indicates that he belonged to a family or clan of smiths and casters. Such professional clans were widespread in ancient times. They led a secluded life and always had a special place in the structure of society.

The master craftsmen of the Yamna culture produced quite a broad range of goods: woodworking instruments, jewellery, arms (Fig. 2.1–3, 5, 3.1, 6). Many of these items were highly valued at the time. As a rule, they were used for the most opulent tombs. The common population still used stone, bone and wooden tools. A significant part of the production was set aside for bartering, which is illustrated by maps showing the distribution of metal of Southern Ural origin. In all probability, trade and exchange operations made great profits for the local elite. It is illustrative in this respect that the largest and richest burial mounds of the Yamna culture are concentrated in the Middle Volga region and in the Southern Cis-Ural region.

The society of the Yamna culture was not homogeneous from a material and social point of view. It consisted of the common people, members of professional clans and the nobility. The nobility enjoyed considerable power and wealth. Like the Scythian rulers, it demonstrated its high social status by building enormous burial mounds. Some of these were 6–8 metres or more in height. There was only one tomb under each of these burial mounds. These tombs are remarkable for the sheer size of the tomb chambers, and the expensive and varied inventory. This includes articles made of copper, gold and meteorite iron (Fig. 2). The very fact that meteorite iron was used is particularly interesting. This material was, of course, very expensive and it is surprising that articles made of it should be found in Yamna tombs so frequently. Moreover, according to the legends of ancient peoples, this iron had a special magic power because its origins were connected with Heavens. It is believed that all these large burial mounds belonged to the chieftains of

the tribes and the clan-tribe nobility. It is evident that this group of people possessed large herds of cattle, controlled the production and exchange of copper, and supervised the activity of the metal-working craftsmen. However, their power and wealth turned out to be short-lived. The social and economic system created with their participation was not developed further and it collapsed in the latter half of the early Bronze Age.

The anthropological research of bone remains have allowed us to establish that the people of the Yamna culture were of the Caucasian racial type. They were tall and had a solid bodily structure and expressive facial features.

According to some researchers (E. Kuzmina), the population of the Yamna culture represented the most ancient stratum of Indo-Iranians, who later created a mighty ethnic union in the 2nd millennium BCE. But, from an archaeological point of view, the further destiny of the Yamna culture is not quite clear. It was transformed into the Poltavka culture in the Volga region and continued to exist without any remarkable changes in the Southern Cis-Ural region (Fig. 4). All traces of them had disappeared by the late 3rd millennium BCE. From all appearances, the Yamna and Poltavka cultures ceased to exist before the start of the late Bronze Age, and for some time the Volga-Ural steppes were left in a state of neglect. It is evident in any case, however, that between the early and late Bronze Ages the epicentre of major events shifted from the south to the north, from the steppe to the forest-steppe and forest areas.

A special cultural world, which was weakly related to the vibrantly developing and flourishing south, reigned for quite some time in the steppe and forest-steppe areas. The local population continued to hunt and fish. They had practically no knowledge of agriculture, cattle-breeding, and metallurgy. This situation changed abruptly with the appearance of the *Fatyanovo culture* in the Upper and Middle Volga regions (its first burial site was discovered near the village of Fatyanovo in the Yaroslavl region). From all initial appearances, this culture is so closely relat-

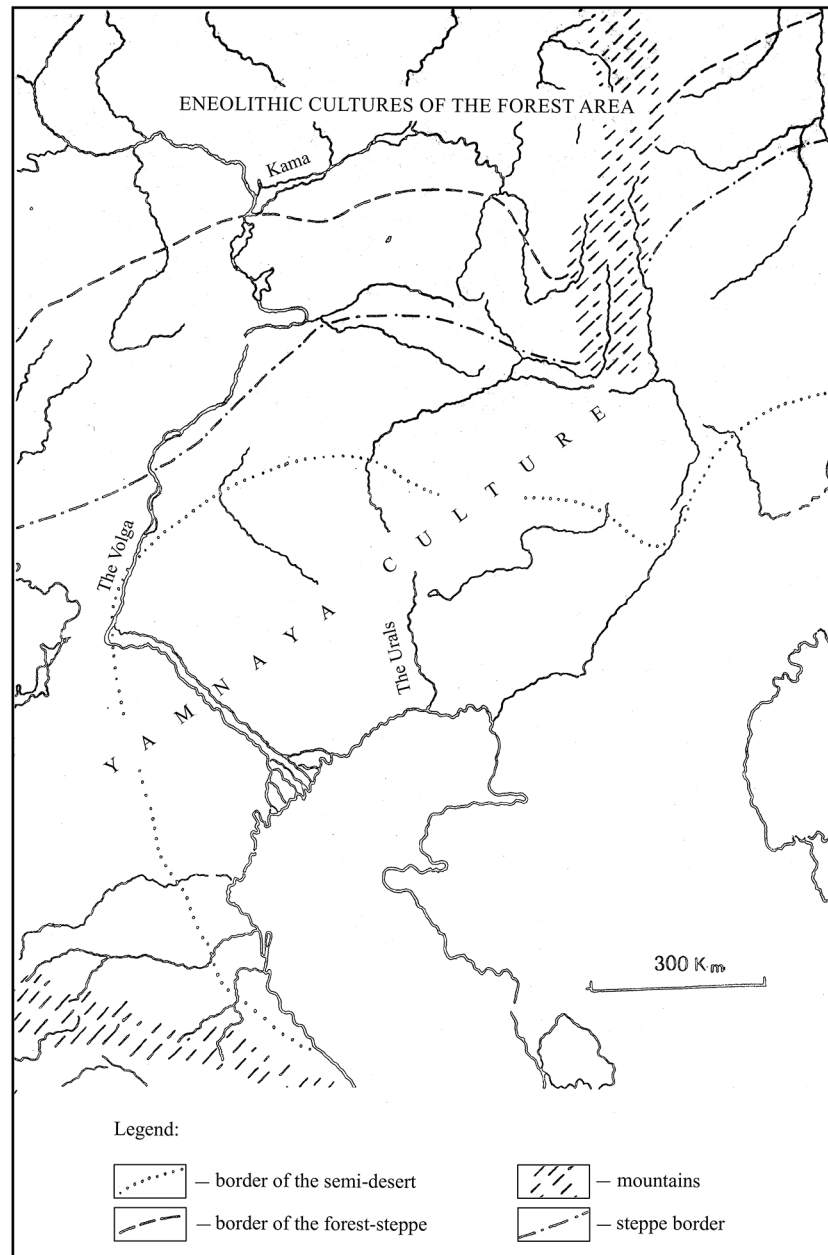


Fig. 1. Cultures of the beginning of the early Bronze Age

ed to The Battle Axe Culture of Central and Northern Europe that there is no doubt about its migration origins. According to one opinion, the migration of the Fatyanovo culture must have been linked with the displacement of the early Indo-European peoples. But there is insufficient reliable evidence to substantiate this conclusion. It can only be noted that the steppe area in the early Bronze Age was

marked by a movement of the population from east to west and in the forest area—in the opposite direction, and both these groups are ascribed to the Indo-Europeans. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that, as far as culture is concerned, the Fatyanovo tribes had nothing in common with the Volga population and, in all probability, they belonged to another ethnicity.

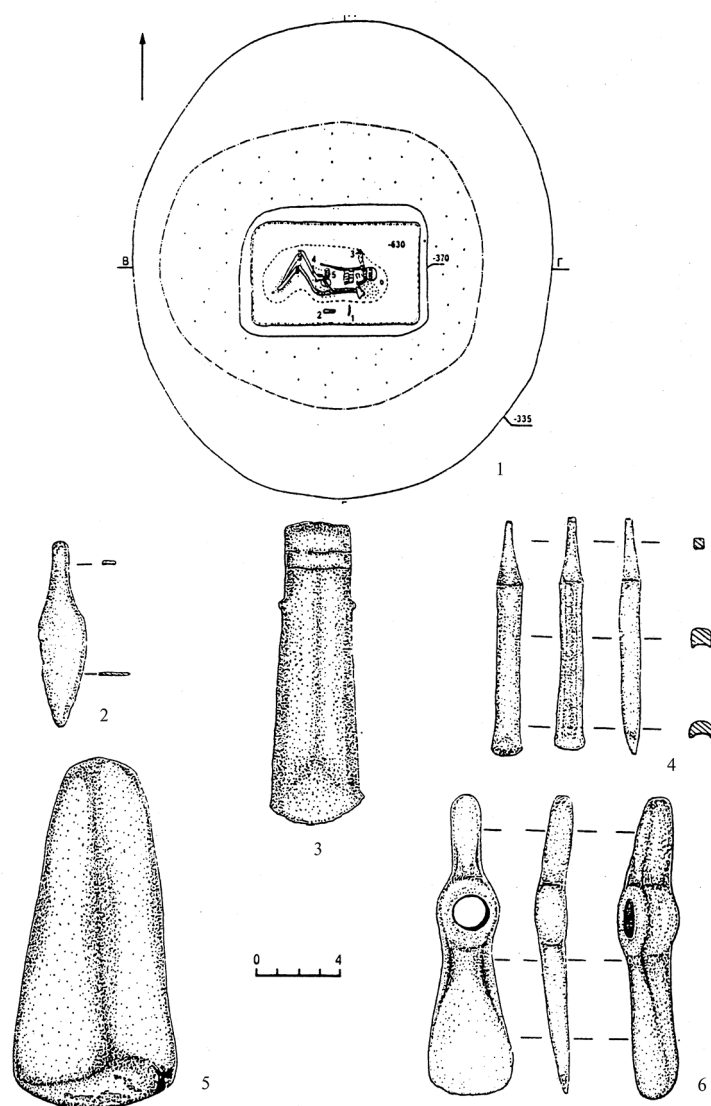


Fig. 2 Yamna culture burials near the Baryshnikov farmstead in Orenburg region.
1—burial layout and its inventory, 2—copper knife, 3—copper adz, 4—copper chisel,
5—copper adz-chisel, 6—stone hammer

The members of the Fatyanovo culture had a good knowledge of agriculture and metallurgy. They were familiar with all the main types of domestic animals: cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, and horses. Domestic cattle-breeding was their main activity. Moreover, they devoted themselves quite intensively to metallurgy and were amongst the first to start copper mining in the Middle Volga region. The production of metal articles was mastered by professional crafts-

men, which is evident from the burial sites of smiths and casters. They mainly produced items of weaponry (axes, spearheads) and jewellery. From a social perspective, the society of the Fatyanovo culture was relatively weakly differentiated. There is no trustworthy information regarding the well-defined and isolated elite. But there are clear details of the gender and age gradation of population. This gradation can be seen in the burial ceremony of large burial sites such as the Bala-

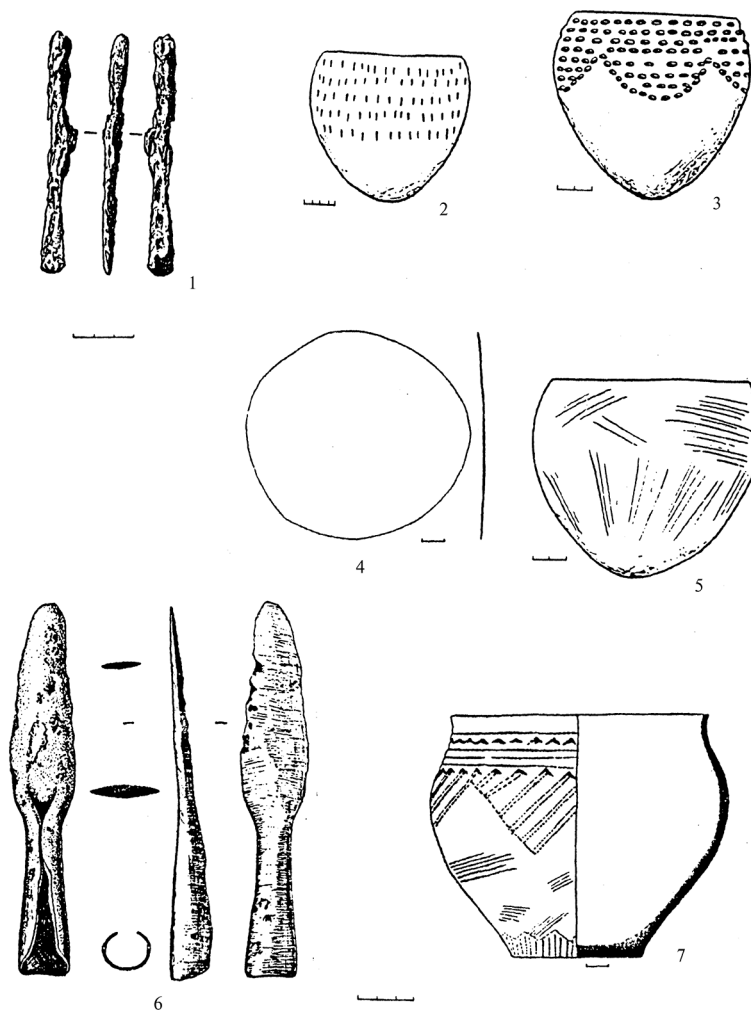


Fig. 3. Some inventory categories of the Yamna culture: 1—chisel, 2, 3, 5, 7—clay dishes, 4: disc made of meteorite iron, 6—copper spearhead

novo (Chuvashia). All men's skeletons were laid on the right side and the women's on the left. Many inventory categories were distributed according to the gender. For example, stone battle-axes, metal weapons, necklaces and amulets made from perforated fangs of animals and several types of ceramics could be found only in men's tombs. Women's burials were characterised by a different inventory set. Small articles and miniatures, clay copies of axes and toys are predominantly found in children's tombs. It should be added that the most expensive inventory was concentrated in the deepest tombs, belonging to men and elderly women.

The population who buried their deceased in the Balanovo burial site were of the Caucasian Mediterranean type. Their appearance was noticeably different from that of the native inhabitants of the Middle Volga Region. It is believed that the people of the Fatyanovo culture were of proto-Baltic ethnic origin.

In the Middle Volga Region the Fatyanovo culture was replaced by the Abashevo culture in the latter half of the early Bronze Age. It was named after the burial site of the same name in Chuvashia (Fig. 4). This culture is divided into two territorial groups: the Middle Volga and the Southern Ural groups. The first one was famous for its burial monuments

and isolated finds of metal items and the second one for a broader range of sources. These are not their only differences. They are also apparent in the forms and sets of clay vessels, elements of burial ceremonies, etc. Hence, they are likely to be two local variants of the same culture.

The originality of the Abashevo culture is best reflected in their ceramic articles. Examples of these are flat-bottomed and round-bottomed dishes. The latter articles look very archaic and are reminiscent of the pots of the early Yamna culture. The mixture of pounded shells and clay, bell-shaped rims of pots, etc. were also typical. But the ornamental style of the Abashevo ceramics differs sharply from the steppe patterns. Typical of these are the complex compositions consisting of various geometric elements (triangles, rhombuses, meanders, zigzags, etc.), which are arranged very compactly and are meticulously finished.

Festive women's costumes make up another typical category of Abashevo articles. They consist of leather hats, bands for the forehead and jackets. All of these were embroidered with copper decorations (plaques, tubes, beads, etc.) which were arranged in various patterns. These costumes were usually accompanied by jewels: silver pendants and bracelets, copper rings. Some types of copper decorations are authentic and are peculiar to the Abashevo culture (Fig. 5, 6).

The main monuments of the Abashevo culture were settlements and burial sites. However, settlements have as yet only been discovered and examined in the Southern Ural group. They are frequently encountered along the Belaya River in Bashkortostan. The settlements are usually situated on promontories in rivers. Some of them have remnants of fortifications. Judging from the data of archaeological excavations, the Abashevo villages were rather small. They consisted of several ground-level houses arranged in terraces or closely grouped together. The dwellings were unicameral or multicameral. Some of them were of considerable proportions (38 metres long and 14 metres wide) Numerous traces of people's daily routine have been discovered in the ruins of these settlements. These are mainly pieces of

ceramics and kitchen waste (cracked animal bones). The waste of metallurgical and metal working production can also be frequently seen: pieces of copper ore, scoria, fragments of casting moulds, bowls, etc.

The burial mound ritual was widespread in the Abashevo culture. The burial mounds were made of earth and in the Southern Cis-Ural region's stones were used in their construction. They were rather small, arranged in groups and in a number of cases they formed burial sites of considerable size. There were between 1 and 4 tombs underneath a mound. The deceased were buried in rectangular or oval holes, the walls of which were lined with wood or stones. The holes were covered with a layer wooden beams and stone slabs. The dead bodies were placed on their backs—that is, the same pose as that found in burials of the early Yamna culture. The accompanying inventory usually consisted of clay pots and food and drinks for the repose of the dead, metal costume decorations and, more rarely, of other items.

The Pepkinsky burial mound in the Mari Republic was remarkable in comparison with other Abashevo burials. Underneath the 1.43 metres high mound were three tombs, one of which was particularly striking on account of its size and contents. It resembles a trench which is 10.2 metres long, 1.6 metres wide and 0.65–0.70 metres deep. The remains of 27 skeletons were found at its base (Fig. 7:1) Along with them, there were 20 clay pots, 25 bone articles (fasteners and finials) and several small copper articles. One skeleton alone was remarkable for its extraordinary inventory. A set of blacksmith's tools was found by his side (Fig. 7).

The condition of the skeletons in this tomb is especially interesting. All of them belonged to men who had died a violent death. Researchers of the Pepkinsky burial mound write the following description: 'Almost every skeleton in the communal grave bears traces of a fatal injury. For example, there were flint arrowheads, all of the same type, in the upper part of the bodies of thirteen skeletons in the area of chest... in most cases sticking out of their backs. And all the arrowheads had been

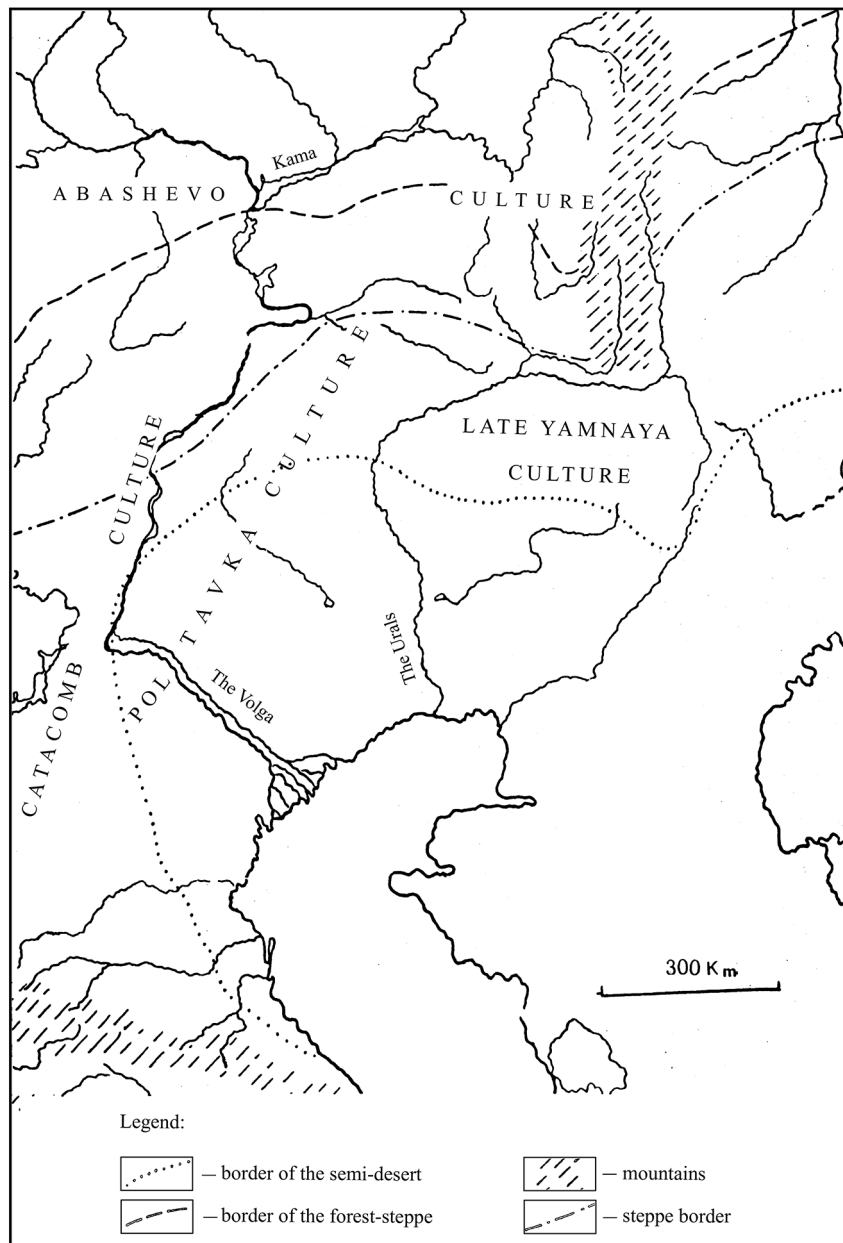


Fig. 4. Cultures of the end of the early Bronze Age

broken off, apparently in an attempt to draw them out of the bodies... Almost all the skeletons had been beheaded—11 skeletons have no skull at all. Almost all of the preserved skulls have traces of severe injuries.' According to an analysis carried out in the Central Institute of Criminalistics, four skulls have pronounced traces of blows inflicted by the sharp blade of a bronze axe [Khalikov, Lebedinskaya, Gera-

simova, 1966, p. 17]. Further anthropological research has shown that some skulls have preserved traces of incisions, most probably as a result of scalping [Mednikova, Lebedinskaya, 1999, pp. 214–215].

The author of the archaeological excavations (A. Khalikov) was correct in assuming that the Pepkinsky burial mound was a communal grave for Abashevo warriors.

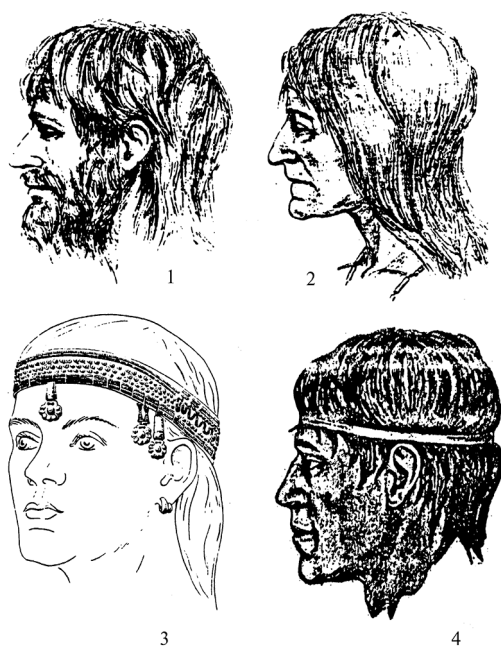


Fig. 5. People of the Bronze Age of the Volga-Ural region: 1–2–Fatyanovo culture, 3–4–Abashevo culture

In all probability, they had been ambushed, captured and killed, their bodies being badly abused by their enemies. Their tribesmen managed to recover the dead bodies and bury them according to their traditions and rituals. This unusual monument is an illustration of one of the tragic episodes in the life of the Abashevo population and the Barbarian customs of that time. Judging by the general state of affairs at the turn of the 3rd and 2nd millennia BCE, this population found itself in a difficult situation and was forced to ward off their enemies, who were advancing from the north-east.

The materials of the burial sites and in particular the settlements give an indication of the general direction of the economy of the Abashevo population. Cattle-breeding was their main activity, as it was for the majority of the inhabitants of the Volga-Ural region at that time. This branch of agriculture has been studied best of all from the data of Cis-Ural region's settlements. Based on this data, it is possible to conclude that the Abashevo animal-breeding was of the domestic type. Cattle was the main form of herd animal. There were

far fewer sheep and pigs, and horses were very few in number. There are grounds to believe that the cattle were used for the production of meat and milk, and sheep and goats for the production of meat and wool. There is no direct evidence of agriculture, although many authors write about this. In this respect, they mostly refer to the numerous finds of metal sickles. But these instruments are not in themselves evidence of agriculture. They could have been used for stocking up fodder.

Metal production was a very important branch of the economy, in the development of which the Abashevo population probably achieved their greatest successes. They succeeded in creating their own centre of metallurgy and metal working. The Abashevo craftsmen managed to improve their production technology and broaden the range of their products significantly. Except for pure copper, they started to use alloys of a better quality and more advanced methods of producing a number of important items of weaponry. They were among the first peoples in Eastern Europe to successfully organise the production of sickles and sickle-like instruments, and some new kinds of jewellery. These and many other articles started to be produced in large quantities, which made them affordable for a wide range of consumers. As a whole, the Abashevo metal production was one of the largest and the most developed in Eastern Europe by the end of the early Bronze Age.

But in spite of their considerable economic achievements, the Abashevo society failed to escape from the clutches of their primitive state. There is no reliable evidence that it had a strong and independent elite. This does not mean, of course, that it was socially homogeneous. Finds of expensive arms, treasures of metallic articles, tombs of casters and certain other factors indicate that there were several social classes in it.

The Abashevo culture was destined to play an outstanding role in the process of cultural genesis of the Volga-Ural region and a significant part of Eastern Europe. It became one of the most important components in the structure of the wide range of cultures in the era of the late Bronze Age.

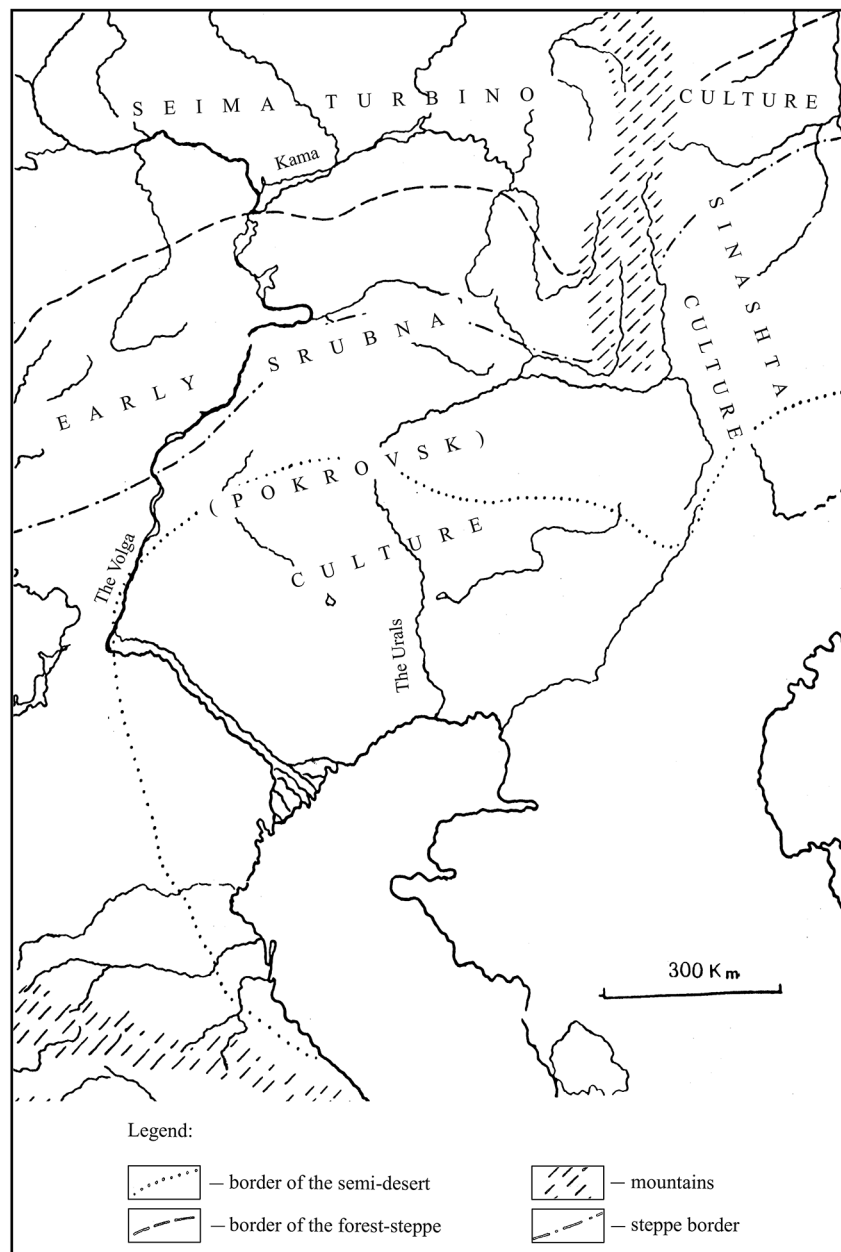


Fig. 6. Cultures of the beginning of the Late Bronze Age

The Late Bronze Age

The division of the Volga-Ural cultures on the landscape principle loses its meaning to a large extent during the period of the late Bronze Age. The population of the steppes, forest-steppes and parts of the southern forests became caught up in a common stream of events, was periodically displaced and be-

came extremely mixed. This process began in the forest region, with the appearance of the Seima-Turbino population. They left us several burial sites (Seima, Turbino, etc.) and a large array of single finds of metallic articles. These monuments spread for several thousand kilometres along the southern edge of the forests and taiga—from the Altai to the mouth of the Oka River. Like a long, sharp

needle, they pierced the depth of the cultures of Northern Eurasia of the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages. Their natural habitat is so extraordinary that hardly any analogues can be found in the materials of the Bronze Age. For this reason, many archaeologists are reluctant to regard the Seima-Turbino relics as belonging to a separate culture. At any rate, they are highly original and can be easily distinguished among Siberian and Eastern European materials. They mainly consist of bronze and stone articles of high quality. Among the former are axes, spearheads, daggers, knives and spike hammers (Fig. 8). Many of these are decorated with elegant, geometric ornamental patterns. It should be emphasised once again that, in terms of technique, these items may count amongst the finest samples of casting in the Bronze Age. The Seima-Turbino daggers are absolutely stunning. One of these originates from the Rostovka burial site near Omsk. The top of its handle is decorated with a sculptural group consisting of a skier holding the bridle rein of his horse (Fig. 9). 'The figure of a human, obviously a man, is distinguished by a broad face with expressive eyes, nose, ears and chin. The prominent cheek bones and flattened face are, according to V. Matyushenko, characteristic of the anthropological Mongoloid type... The right hand is holding the reins, fastened to a strap on the muzzle of a horse... The man is standing on short, pointed skis... The horse has a massive head and its mane is standing on end...' [Chernykh, Kuzminykh, 1989, pp. 120–121]. This sculpture is one of the most outstanding works of art of Northern Eurasia dating back to the Bronze Age. Everything is interesting about it: its perfect casting technique, the realistic and original finish, the Mongoloid features of the skier's face, the skis themselves and, finally, the breed of the horse. The hidden meaning of this sculpture has not yet been revealed.

Another fascinating dagger originates from a Seima burial site on the Oka. It is similar to the Rostovka one but it is decorated in a different manner. It has a latticed, perforated handle with a sculpture of two horses, the one following the another (Fig. 9). The

mare, on whose head a bridle can clearly be discerned, is walking ahead, followed by the stallion. They are designed in the same way as the horse on the Rostovka dagger. Both of these sculptures demonstrate a specific artistic style, known as the Seima-Turbino style. Some researchers consider it a forerunner to the famous Scythian-Siberian animal style of the early Iron Age.

It is surprising that such highly developed and excellent bronze samples are combined with a large number of flint articles in the Seima-Turbino burial sites: arrowheads, inlays for knives, etc. Most of them are remarkable for their extremely high level of technique, typical for the late Stone Age.

Several Seima-Turbino burial sites are open at the present time. The Turbinsky (Perm), the Rostovka (near Omsk), the Seima and Reshensky (both are situated at the mouth of the Oka) are the most famous of these. The Rostovka burial site is the most informative. It contains 38 ground burial chambers and several piles of articles near the tombs. Two blacksmiths' tombs were discovered in the burial site. The majority of the other burial sites are clearly military. A description of one of them is given below. In it was a skeleton of a 25–30-year-old man. A bronze axe and a bronze spearhead had been placed beside his shoulder. A bronze dagger in a wooden scabbard lay on the hip bones of the deceased man and a quiver with flint arrowheads lay near his knees. Two golden earrings were found beside the skull (Fig. 8). The inventory of this burial site illustrates the weaponry of a Seima-Turbino warrior in the best way possible. A bow and arrows were intended for long-range combat and an axe and dagger for close combat. It should be added that the Seima-Turbino warriors were protected by leather and bone armour, and probably shields too.

In terms of the might of their weapons, these warriors had no match in Siberia and Eastern Europe by the end of the early Bronze Age.

The groups of these well-armed people came to Eastern Europe from beyond the Cis Ural. Their invasion had enormous cultural and historical consequences, which were,

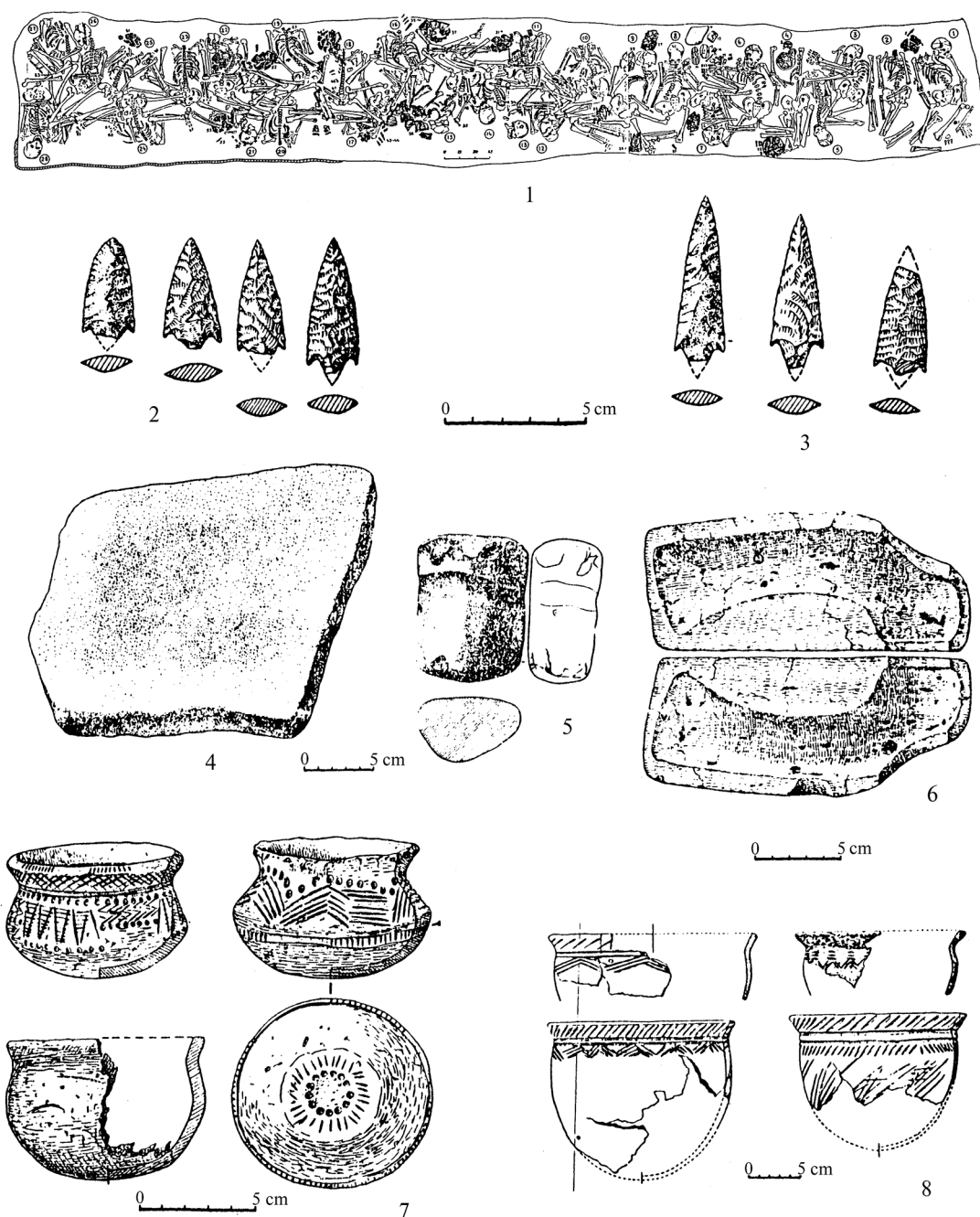


Fig. 7. Inventory from a burial in Pepkino burial mound (Mari El Republic).
 1—'Communal grave' of Pepkino burial mound, 2, 3—flint arrowheads, 4, 5—stone anvil and smith's hammer,
 6—two clay casting molds for bronze axes, 7, 8—clay dishes

clearly, far more significant than the migration of the Fatyanovo culture. It destroyed the existing balance and caused a chain reaction of cultural transformations. The first culture of significance to be dealt a blow by them was the Abashevo culture. It is possible that among the victims of these newcomers were those 27 men who were buried in the Pepkino burial mound. But not all of them perished. A significant part of the Abashevo population survived but they were forced to leave the Middle Volga and Southern Cis-Ural regions. They dispersed throughout the East European plain. This event is determined by archaeologists on the basis of several groups of Abashevo monuments, which can be seen on the Lower and Middle Don, on the territory of the Samara and Bryansk regions, in the Southern Trans-Ural region. This wave of Abashevo resettlers became the basis for the formation of new cultures during the late Bronze Age: *the Pokrovsk*, *the Sintashta* and *the Petrovka* cultures (Fig. 6). These cultures formed a common bloc which became the centre of the development the Volga-Ural culture. Its emergence can be seen as a reaction to the threat posed by the Seima-Turbino threat. It is reasonable to assume that these cultures emerged in the areas of influence of the military elites and the aristocracy.

The central link of this bloc, both geographically and in the cultural-historical sense, was the Sintashta culture of the Southern Trans-Uralic region. It occupied a rather small territory (400 * 200 km) on the Eastern slopes of the Cis Ural. This culture is represented by a large number of exceptionally vivid archaeological traces. One of them lends its name to this culture. The attention of archaeologists, historians and linguists was drawn to the unusual nature of Sintashta ancient towns, often referred to as proto-cities or urban centres. There are about twenty of them in the Chelyabinsk region. These developed territories or districts (20–30 km in diameter) surrounded each fortified centre. [Zdanovich, 1999, p. 92]. As well as ancient towns, these territories contain burial sites, sanctuaries and common ancient settlements. The most thoroughly examined of these is the

ancient town of Arkaim, in the south of the Chelyabinsk region (fig. 10). It has a distinct concentric-radial structure. The settlement is surrounded by a 1,5–2 m deep round ditch and a round defensive wall which is 143–145 m in diameter. The foundations of this wall are 3–5 m thick. It is made of wood, adobe blocks and floodable ground. The ground part was at least 3–3,5 m tall in ancient times. A further internal wall (85 m in diameter) was built at a certain distance from the external one. It surrounded the so called citadel. There was a round space (25*27 m) in the centre of this citadel which had no buildings. The gap between the internal and external walls was filled with ground-based dwellings built on a radial pattern. These dwellings stood inside the citadel, between the central ground and the internal wall. In total there were about 27 of these in this ancient town. They are all of a standard shape: large rectangular houses. Partitions divided their internal space into several rooms or compartments. They were built using wood and blocks of earth.

The Arkaim fortress had 4 entrances, on the north, south, west and east. The main one overlooked the west. Three entrances out of four had a complicated construction. They looked like narrow curved mazes situated between the walls of houses. Remains of the towers overlooking the gates have also been found.

Arkaim had a very straight and regular structure. Its layout is reminiscent of that of a military camp. This is not surprising, Arkaim being primarily a military fortress. Researchers estimate that between 2,500 and 4,000 people may have inhabited settlements this type at the same time. This number of people would have clearly exceeded the requirements for defense. Also, basic agricultural activities would hardly have been possible with such a concentration of people living in a cramped and enclosed space. So it is fair to assume that these settlements were fortresses and shelters. The inhabitants of neighboring villages would hide there at times of military threat. Another theory postulates that Arkaim was spiritual centre (G. Zdanovich). Its concentric structure could be explained by this fact.

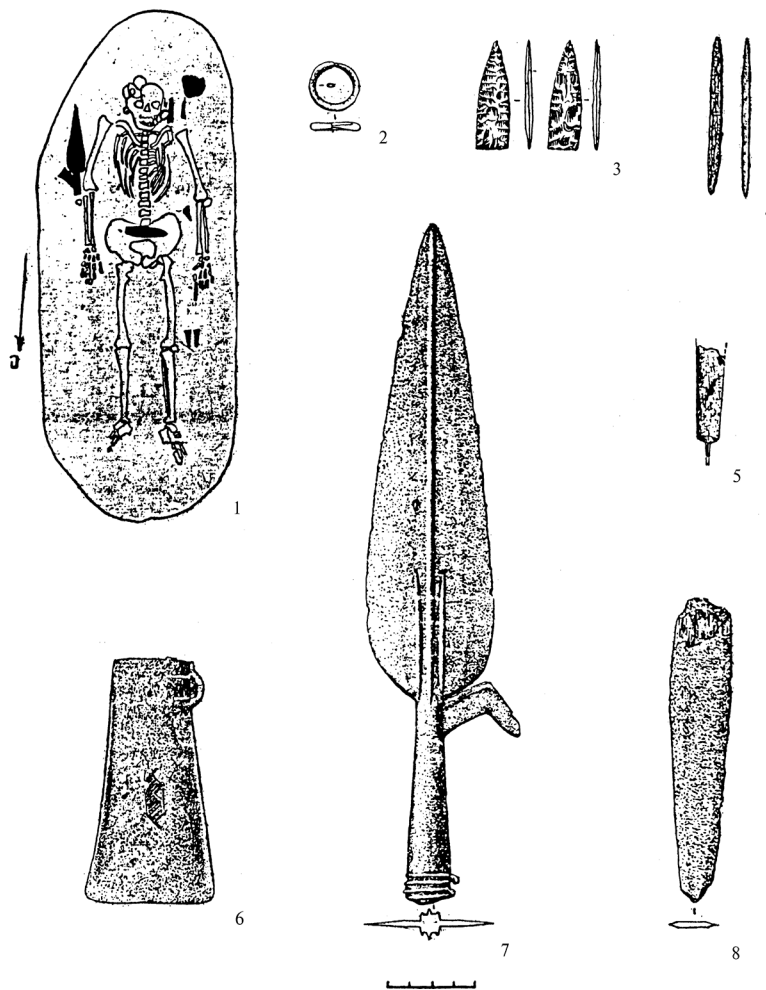


Fig. 8. Rostovka burial site near Omsk. 1—layout and inventory of burial No. 34, 2—golden earring, 3—flint arrowheads, 4—bone edge, 5—bronze awl with a bone handle, 6—bronze axe, 7—bronze spearhead, 8—bronze dagger

There were necropolises near the fortified settlements, some of them also found in Sintashta. It is noteworthy that in most cases they are separated with a water barrier. Water separated the world of the living from that of the dead. Both underground and mound-type burials have been found. Some researchers assume that small mounds formed naturally as a result of the destruction of structures built over the graves in the burial grounds. Between one and three of the largest tombs were usually placed in the centre of the areas beneath the mounds and smaller tombs were situated around them. In the overwhelming

majority of cases dead bodies were put on the right side in a slightly crouching position. They were accompanied by many and varied sacrifices. In most cases the carcasses of animals or their parts were placed on the coverings of tombs. Animal skins were spread over the bottom of tombs. Cattle, sheep and goats, as well as horses and dogs were the most common sacrificial animals. Burials, especially men's ones, were filled with a wide range of objects. These included clay containers, metal objects (points of spears, adzes, chisels, sickles, various jewels, etc.), stone articles (flint arrowheads, maces, met-

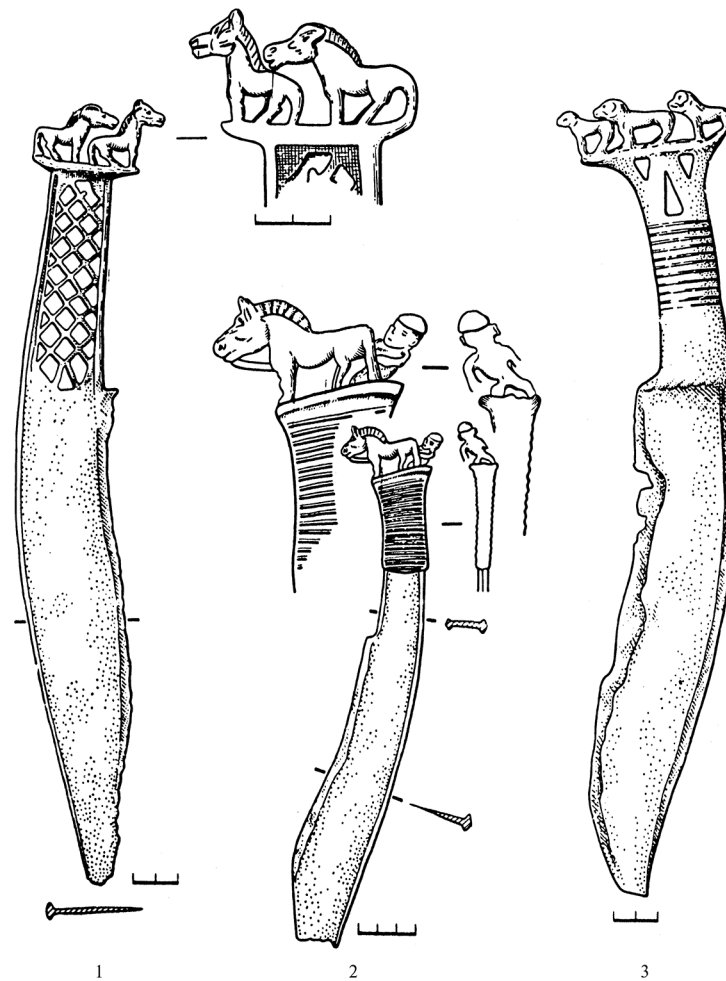


Fig. 9. Seima-Turbino knives: 1–Seima burial site, 2–Rostovka burial site, 3–Turbino burial site

alworking tools, etc.), articles made of bone and horn (details of bridles, bows, various types of pommels, etc.). They also contained a great number of decorations made of metal, paste, bone, and other materials. But chariots were clearly the most expensive articles in the Sintashta burial inventory. They were made from wood and other organic materials. Metal was not used for their production. Each chariot had two wheels with 8–12 spokes. On average they were 90 cm in diameter. The distance between them was just over 1 m. The frame of a chariot for 1–2 people (a charioteer and an archer) could be either rectangular or round, and open towards the

rear. Such chariots were often used in a two-horse configuration (Fig. 11). Judging by ancient Eastern written sources, these chariots, such as the Sintashta type, were the most lethal weapon used in the 2nd millennium BCE. They would have been very valuable, and thus accompanied the noblest and richest people on their way to the other world.

The agriculture of the Sintashta culture mainly revolved around cattle-breeding, with the prevalence of meat and milk production. Cattle played a central role, along with a smaller number of goats, sheep, horses, and pigs. Horses were bred both for meat and trade. The second function was a defining

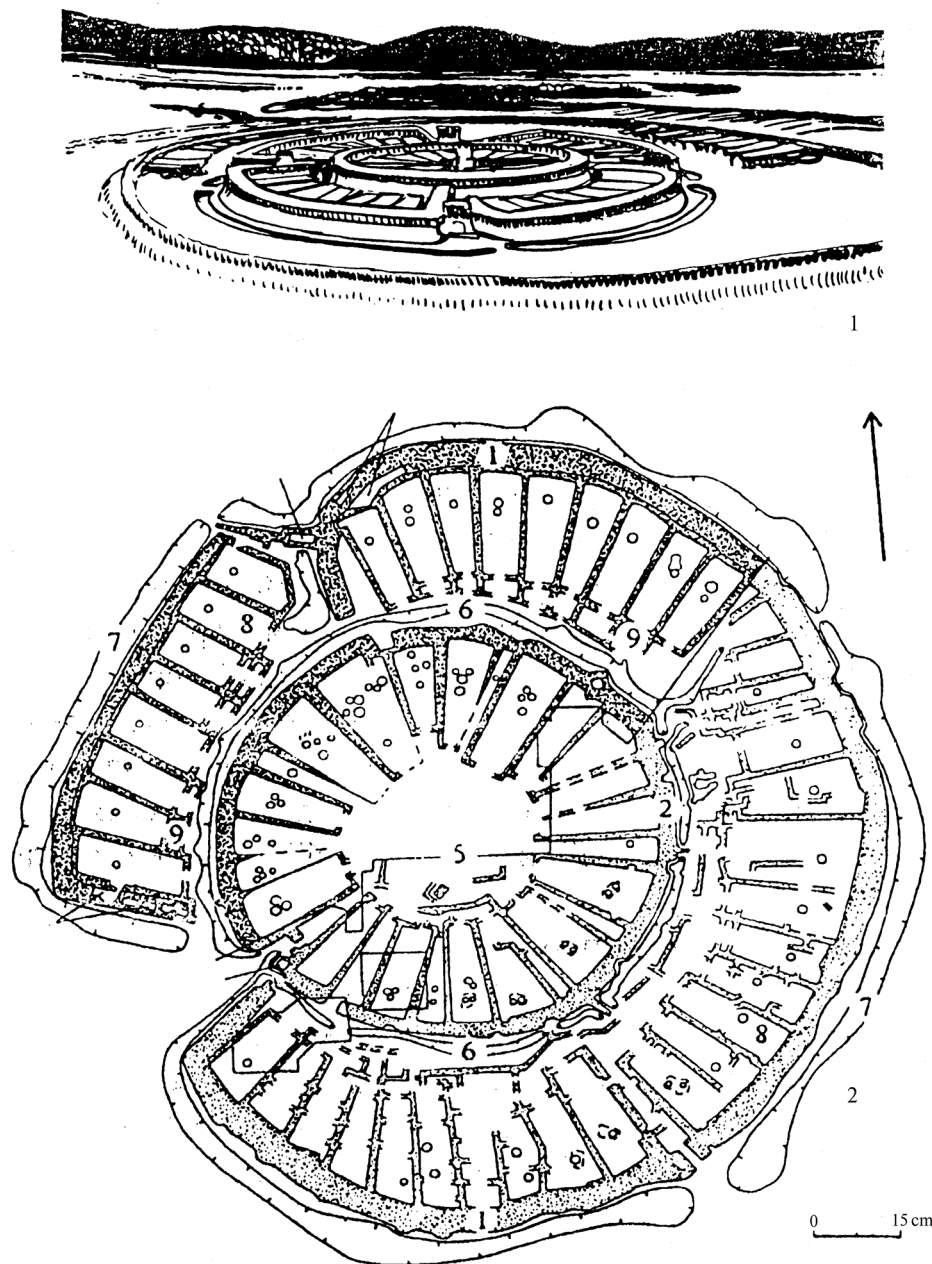


Fig. 10. Layout (2) and reconstruction (1) of Arkaim (according to G. Zdanovich)

feature of the new period, a development no doubt related to the use of military chariots.

Metal production was another basic branch of the Sintashta economy. A wide range of data on the mining and smelting activities of the local population is available, pointing to the fact that the Southern Trans-Uralic region was one of the largest

centres of metal production. Professional smiths, working in Sintashta workshops and foundries, produced a wide range of objects. There were pieces of armament (spearheads, battle-axes, daggers, etc.), woodworking tools (adzes, chisels, gouges), jewels, utensils (knives, awls, etc.), including agricultural instruments (e.g. sickles). Many of them

were produced in large quantities, to cover the requirements of a wide range of customers. Sintashta metal production continued with the traditions of the Abashevo to a certain extent. At the same time, the trends of the new period were becoming apparent. Sintashta masters began to use tin bronze, stone casting molds, and molds with invisible plugs although these were still rather small in number. These methods introduced significant quality improvements in and increased production. The new technology was not a local invention, but was borrowed from Seima-Turbino masters by the Sintashta casters. It then spread across Eastern Europe and Kazakhstan, together with other Volga-Uralic innovations.

There is a large amount of data allowing researchers to form a picture of the social structure of the Sintashta society. These materials cannot of course be interpreted unambiguously, as is often the case in archaeology, but they are particularly illustrative in this case so the final conclusion seems to be predetermined. According to this view, Sintashta society was on the verge of transition to civilization. In this context its heterogeneous character should be taken into consideration. Judging by the burial traces, the gender and age-specific social structure would have been quite distinct. The tombs of men, women and children contain different sets of objects, have different sizes and orientation of holes, present traces of different sacrificial animals, etc. (A. Epimakhov). This structure was part of a more sophisticated system of family and clan organization which was also reflected in their burials. In this context the layout of tombs in the Sintashta burial mounds seems to be noteworthy. Most of them have a neatly divided central part containing 1 to 3 of the largest and wealthiest tombs. Other burials, which sometimes were large in number, were grouped around them. Single, double and communal tombs of men, women and children were located in the central and outlying pits. Each of these burial mounds was essentially a separate cemetery in which several dozens of people were buried. These burial mounds were clearly the necropolises of sep-

arate groups of people with family and clan connections. On the other hand, they formed part of larger burial sites which belonged to more numerous communities. Let us recall that such burial sites were usually situated near fortified ancient towns.

One can see the signs of social and material inequality in Sintashta burial mounds and cemeteries. As we have already mentioned, central tombs are remarkable for their size and expensive inventory. The so-called chariot complex is often related to it. According to historical, linguistic and archaeological data, the chariot and its attributes were a universal symbol of high social standing. Charioteers were a part of the highest strata of society everywhere and formed a privileged governing minority. The burials of charioteers make up only 14% of all tombs examined (A. Epimakhov).

Traces of settlements provide other important data on the social structure of Sintashta society. According to research by G. Zdanovich, the Sintashta culture is remarkable for its two-level hierarchy of settlements. The upper level was represented by fortified centres and the lower one by small, ancient settlements [Zdanovich, 1999, p. 42]. Structures of this sort indicate a marked centralization of economic and political power. The character of the settlements of the Arkaim type itself also points in this direction. It is obvious that such grandiose constructions could not have been erected spontaneously. Each of them was erected rather quickly, following a common layout and under the direction of the same leader, concentrating significant resources and power in his hands.

Based on this and other data one can conclude that the Sintashta community had a complex, multi-level structure, close to a chiefdom in terms of its social organization. All the main signs of chiefdoms (social rank, trade specialization, fortified centres, monumental constructions, places of worship, etc.) can be found in Sintashta materials. There were probably several chiefdoms in the Southern Trans-Uralic region and each of them controlled a province several dozen kilometres in radius. They were highly

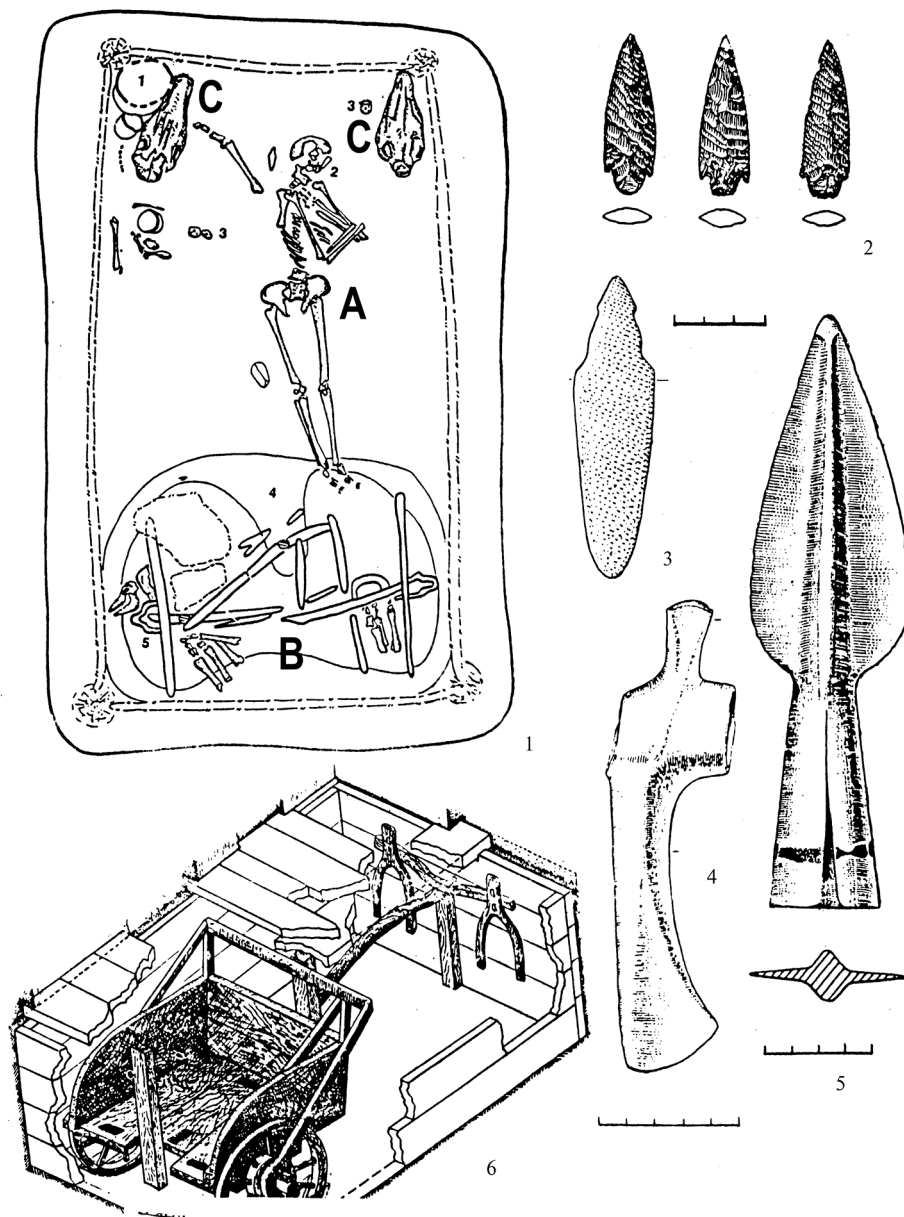


Fig. 11. Charioteers' burials, Sintashta culture: 1—burial layout (A—skeleton of a man, B—remains of a wooden chariot, C: skulls of horses), 2–5—inventory of the burials of charioteers (2—flint arrowheads, 3–5—bronze knife, axe, spearhead), 6—reconstruction of a chariot

militarized (weapons have been found in almost every Sintashta male burial) and seem to have been permanently at war with each other (there were fortresses in each of them). Their governing layer was represented by charioteers consisting of heads and some members of family and clan groups.

The tribes of the Pokrovsk culture were western neighbors of the Sintashta culture and the tribes of the Petrovka culture were their neighbours to the east. Both cultures became familiar to archaeologists after the excavations near Pokrovsk (by Saratov) and near the village of Petrovka in North-Western

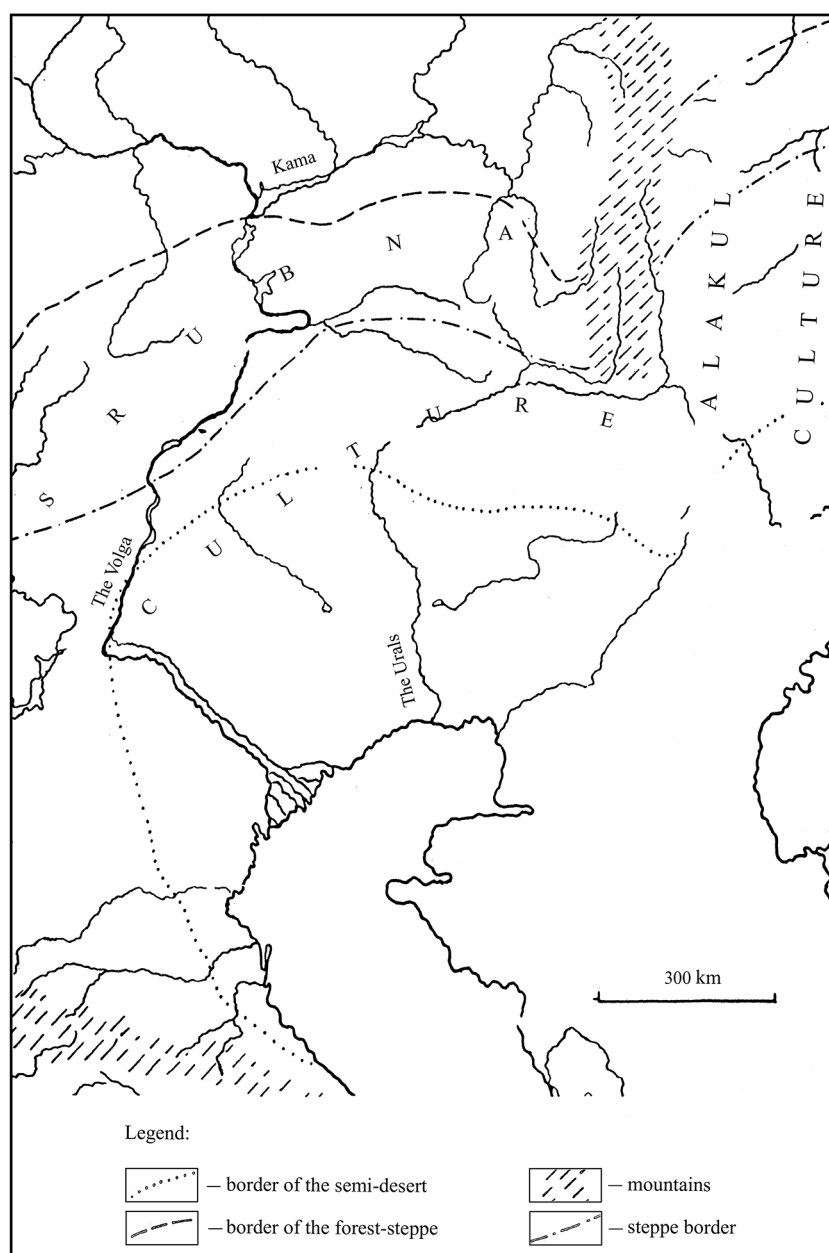
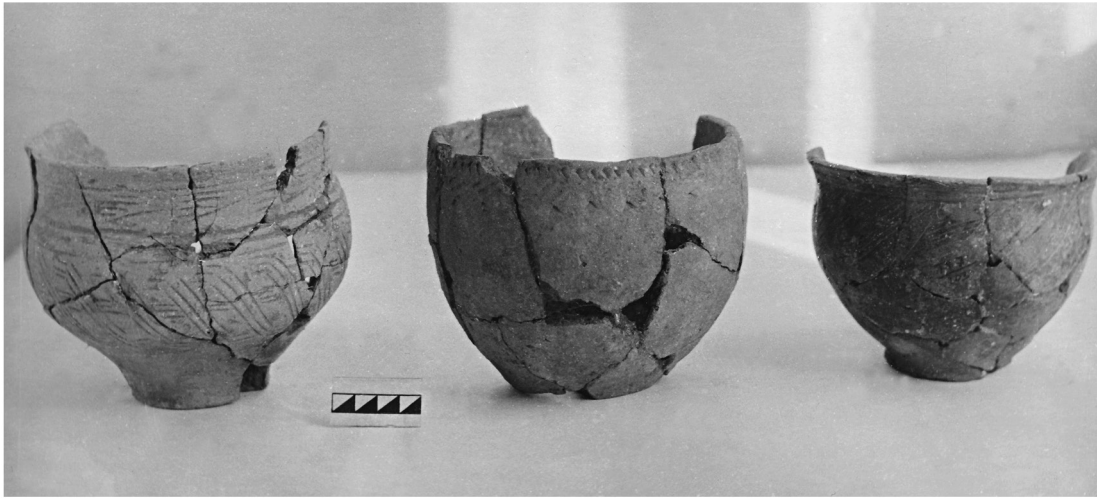


Fig. 12. Cultures of the middle period of the late Bronze Age

Kazakhstan. The Pokrovsk culture occupied a steppe and a forest-steppe between the Cis Ural and the Don and Petrovka culture inhabited the territory of North-Western Kazakhstan. They were close to the Sintashta in their origins, way of life and general level of development, but they were inferior from them in social aspects. The leading role in society was also occupied by charioteers, who were

however not so rich and influential. Burial mounds with the remains of chariots, draught horses, bridles and armament have been preserved. The Petrovka nobility erected small fortified settlements which cannot be compared with the fortresses of the Arkaim type, which are absent in the Pokrovsk culture. The population of both cultures had a sedentary way of life and dedicated to cattle-rearing



Ceramics from the Taktalachuk burial site, Cherkaskul culture. 14th century BCE
Archaeological excavations by E. Kazakov

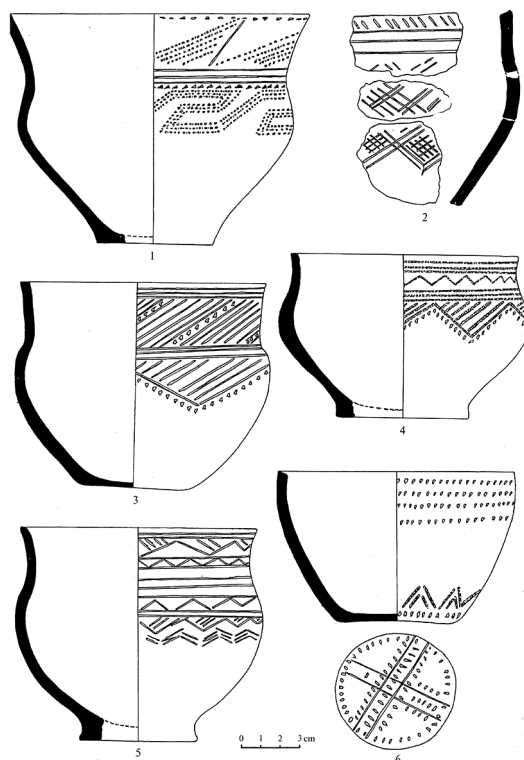
and herding. They settled in small villages, dispersed along the banks of rivers. Burial mounds and underground burial sites were also located here, and metallurgy was quite highly developed. Petrovka masters were among the first to start mining copper in the territory of Kazakhstan. They also had access to the sources of tin, which was then highly appreciated. The production of blacksmith's workshops was large and varied, satisfying the requirements of the nobility and of a significant part of the common people. The production of metal weaponry was considered very important because the population of Pokrovsk and Petrovka cultures were highly militarized. In this context it should be noted that the military nobility earned their income from plundering and thus strove to extend their domination by any means. The population of Petrovka reached Central Kazakhstan and its separate groups even penetrated into Central Asia.

Afterwards the paths of the Sintashta, Petrovka and Pokrovsk cultures began to diverge. The last one became the Srubna culture and Petrovka developed into the Alakul culture (Fig. 12). The Sintashta culture had disappeared by that time. Its population is likely to have died during a civil war or was defeated in wars against its neighbors. It is also plausible that they migrated to Central

Asia and then further on to the south led by their aristocracy. In the end the Southern Trans-Uralic region was occupied by the Petrovka culture.

The Srubnaya and Alakul cultures were named by archaeologists this way because of their particular style of a burial construction (srub) and after the place where the first burial site was found: Alakul lake in Chelyabinsk region. Between them they occupied the vast territory lying between the Irtysh and Dnieper rivers. The border between them ran along the Ural mountain range. Their population had a sedentary way of life and engaged in cattle-rearing and herding, metallurgy and metal working. They lived in small steppe villages consisting of several dwellings in the form of mud huts and dugouts. These dwellings were mainly divided into several compartments, one of them used as a shelter for cattle. They were heated by small fireplaces, with a special hole in the roof as an outlet for the smoke. This hole also allowed for light to come into the mud hut. The inhabitants of these villages buried their deceased in burial mounds or ground burial sites. The burial ceremony and inventory were very modest.

All of these cultures show stable traditions in all basic categories of materials, from the archaeological point of view. Lasting canons and stereotypes are evident in ceramic and



Ceramics from the Taktalachuk burial site,
Cherkaskul culture.
[Kazakov, 1978, p. 90].

metal-working techniques, in burial ceremonies, the structure of settlements, in the social sphere, etc. But at the same time all signs of a chariot aristocracy and a developed social and property stratification disappeared. Judging by their burial ceremonies, an ideology of equality prevailed in these societies. All these signs can be considered a return to the old tribal structure, which implied the preservation of

ancient traditions, stagnation and even regression in certain cultural and economic aspects.

The Volga-Ural region contains a large number of archaeological traces of the Cherkaskul culture, dating from the 3rd quarter of the 2nd millennium BCE. A large-scale archaeological excavations of Taktalachuk burial site were carried out in Tatarstan.

The later course of history of the Volga-Uralic Bronze Age in the late 2nd millennium BCE can be characterized as a process of transformation of cattle-breeding cultures. These cultures appear to be quite similar and left a small number of material traces. They did not surpass the Srubnaya and Alakul cultures in their economy or social sphere. Just before the early Iron Age the number of settlements, burial sites and single finds comes to an abrupt end. It would seem that the population was undergoing a deep crisis, most likely related to the transition to nomadic cattle-breeding. In the 10–9th centuries BCE, the Volga-Uralic cultures of the Bronze Age ceased to exist. They were replaced by the new nomadic cultures of the early Iron Age.

The history of the Bronze Age represented here is dull and featureless. It describes only the most general cultural and historical processes taking place at that time. But this is the nature of archaeological sources, which cannot provide information in the language of written documents. Luckily, legends and myths, religious treatises and anthems, and some historical evidence written by the civilized peoples of the Ancient East have been preserved, reflecting the turbulent events which took place in the Great Steppe from the 2nd millennium BCE.

Sergey Klyashtorny

Land of the Aryans

Three thousand years ago, in the country called Aryana Vaejah (meaning 'Space of the Aryans') the priest Zoroaster proclaimed his belief in the only eternal God, creator of all other deities (*ahur*) and all good things—Ahura Mazda ('Lord of Wisdom'). The aim of all the believers was 'the good thought', 'the good word' and 'the good deed'. This is a triad which was supposed to destroy Angra Mainyu 'Destructive Spirit' who did not know anything about the truth and was the leader of demons.

The essence of Zoroaster's sermon, compared to previous beliefs was summarised by German Iranian studies scholar G. Humbach as follows: 'Zoroaster borrowed a belief in this theory from his predecessors. He apparently adapted these beliefs, probably also created the name of Ahura Mazda and put forth a theory of Ahur as the embodiment of the features of Ahura Mazda. But these theological matters were hardly able to involve the entire population in the religious movement. The privileged position ascribed to Arta ('Truth', 'Righteous Way'—S.K.) was not new, as the concept was also glorified by adversaries of the prophet, together with the worship of the cow which Zoroaster attributed to Friyana, the mythical forefather of Vishtaspa. Probably even dualism (belief in two beginnings—S.K.) was mainly developed by predecessors of Zoroaster. What, then was the fundamentally new idea which helped Zoroaster eclipse the cow-worshipping shamans and brahmans and make him one of the greatest religious reformers in the region? It was to do with the beginnings of the last stage of existence for human beings, when the notions of right and wrong were separated. It was Zoroaster who gave this notion to mankind. It suggested that every individual could take Section In the destruction of evil and the establishment of the kingdom of good, in which all people would live an idyl-

lic life and be equal, so it would be possible to transform the land of the living into one of milk and honey [Humbach, p. 74].

Zoroaster, an Arian from the clan of Spitama and the son of Pourushaspa, was not a rich man. His name meant 'the one owning an old camel', or 'the one who rides a camel' according to another version. He did not have high prestige in his homeland, and only managed to convince his cousin that his theory was right. But nobody considered Zoroaster a prophet in neighboring lands either. Many people denied his theory, and a leading modern researcher of this religion, Mary Boyce explained the reasons for which Zoroastrianism had been denied for many years, despite being better than many others: 'Although Zoroaster's religion is a developed version of belief in Ahura, it contained many factors which were irritating and disturbing to his fellow tribes people. By giving anyone who would follow him and strive for the righteous hopes of achieving paradise, Zoroaster broke with the old aristocratic and pagan tradition which tended to condemn all poor and common people to hell after death. He did not only gave hope of salvation to the poor but also warned the great and powerful of the world that they could go to hell if they acted unfairly. His theory about the afterlife seemed to be designed to anger the privileged class in double measure. As for the denial of demons, it could seem groundless and dangerous for both the rich and the poor because that brought the anger of divine creatures upon the whole of society. Later the grandiose idea of a single Creator, the division of right and wrong and exalted world struggle requiring permanent moral efforts was hard to comprehend and when they became comprehensible, these notions turned out to be too audacious for common polytheists [Boyce, pp. 40–41].

After many years of wandering, Zoroaster took refuge far from his homeland, at

the home of Vishtaspa, one of the kavis (pagan tsar-priests) of the 'Arian countries'. The Tsar's wife, Khutaosa, liked the new belief and when the rulers of neighbouring countries, angry about Zoroaster's success at the court of Vishtaspa, joined forces against him, the tsarina convinced her husband to wage war against their neighbors. Vishtaspa emerged victorious and the philosophy of Zoroaster was consolidated in the country. But the old class of pagan priests did not forgive Zoroaster. A legend says that he was stabbed by a pagan priest while saying prayers.

The Holy Book of zoroasterism was called Avesta ('Admonition' or 'Eulogy'). Only the Gathas ('hymns') were attributed to Zoroaster in this code of liturgical texts. The disciples of Zoroaster learnt the sacred texts by heart and passed them on from generation to generation for many centuries. The theory, created in the amps of Arian herding tribes and borrowing their myths and legends, had neither cathedrals nor buildings for worship in the beginning. The Aryans said prayers and made sacrifices on the top of hills and mountains, at the hearth, or at the banks of rivers and lakes. Only after 1500 years would Zoroastrianism become a public religion, after it was codified (fixed) by the special script (writing) in Iran under the dynasty of Sasanids. The written Avesta consisted of 21 books, divided into various numbered parts referring to different periods. Only some of them date from the time of Zoroaster and earlier times. The Yashts (Hymns) are part of the earliest, pre-zoroastrian sections of the Avesta. They have been preserved despite numerous subsequent changes and abridgments, and are priceless fragments of past knowledge and knowledge about the past, narrations and myths of past centuries far before the days of Zoroaster.

However, the specific period when Zoroaster lived remains unclear. Mary Boyce estimates that he lived sometime between 1500 and 1200 BCE [Boyce, p. 27]. However, Zoroaster is more commonly believed to have lived at the beginning of the 1st millennium BC or even 8th or 6th centuries BCE. We accept another, rougher estimate: the late 2nd or the early 1st millennium BCE.

Hypotheses about his homeland and the place where his philosophy began to spread are even more arguable. Current research tends to locate the rise of Zoroastrianism in Eastern Iran, including a part of Central Asia. This view is put forward in the seminal work 'The Heritage of Persia' by Richard N. Frye: 'Linguistic data suggests that the origins of the prophet can be attributed to Eastern Iran. It is historically coherent that the mythological component of the Avesta should contain features of heroic epic poems, mixed with common Eastern Iranian tales, and written in a language which was very close to that of the natural homeland of the Aryans. This initial homeland can be situated in Central Asia or even near Herat. When the Indians migrated from their initial homeland to different regions of the (Indian) subcontinent, they preserved Vedic anthems in the ancient language of their legends, despite the changes taking place in their dialects, the Iranians dispersed along the (Iranian) plateau also preserved anthems to Mitra and other Arian gods' [Frye, p. 54].

The Avesta's multiple historical layers offer clues as to its origins in different parts of Central Asia and Iran with its references to the most respected early religious centres at a time when Zoroastrianism was spreading from the east to the west and from the north-east to the south-west. For example, Yasht 19, glorifying hvarenah ('the divinely kingly Glory') mentions that this kingly feature is held only by those 'who govern near the Kasaoya lake, which is nourished by the Haetumant river'. The river and the lake are associated with Hamun and Helmand in the modern province of Sistan in Iran. Nevertheless, Zoroastrianism was consolidated there only around the 6th century BCE [Bojs, p. 52]. On the contrary, the 'Mihr Yasht', glorifying Mitra, includes only Eastern Iranian and Central Asian countries among the 'Arian lands': Merv, Ishtaka (Northern Afghanistan), Kharaiva (Aryana, district of Herat), Khwarezm and the 'High Khata Mountains' from where deep rivers flow down reaching Sogdia and Khwarezm, the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, whose valleys are also part of

'the land of the Aryans' [Avesta, p. 57, Frye, pp. 73–75]. The Airyanem Vaejah is called the initial homeland of the Aryans in another book of the Avesta, the Videvdat ('Law against devils') and sixteen more countries created by Ahura Mazda are mentioned, including Sogdia, Merv, and Bahdi although Khwarezm is not mentioned [Bojs, p. 52].

Finally the most ancient and complex layer of the Avesta's geography in terms of interpretation can be found in the anthems devoted to Ahura Mazda and the goddess Ardvī Sura, which were brilliantly translated into Russian by I. Steblin-Kamensky. The 21st poem describes 'the good world' of Airyanem Vaejah:

Thank Airyanem Vaejah
and blessed be that which was given by
Mazda!
Thank the waters of the Datya
and the pure waters of Ardvī!
[Avesta, p. 17].

Here Airyanem Vaejah is a vast country irrigated by two mighty and deep rivers which are mentioned in the Yashts several times. There are also mountains in the country, called Ushida, and Ushidarna. Another ancient Yasht, an hymn devoted to Ardvī Sura, develops the theme of the geography of Airyanem Vaejah. The waters of the Ardvī 'flow powerfully from Hara Berezaiti to Vourukasha':

The Vourukasha rises
in waves which stir
when the thousand tributaries
and lakes of the Ardvī
flow into it.
...
Say prayers to it,
o Spitama! [Avesta, p. 24].
...
I say prayers
to the great, golden Hara Berezaiti
from which the good Ardvī Sura
flows down to us
I say prayers to it for my happiness!
[Avesta, p. 45].

Vourukasha is not a mythical lake in this hymn at all, but a huge sea in the very heart

of Airyanem Vaejah. Khvarenah, the divine paradise of the past and future kings of the Arian countries, is hidden there, in the middle of the sea [Avesta, p. 31]. It is worth remembering that lake Hamun in Eastern Iran was later known as the place where Khvarenah was hidden. The centres of Zoroastrianism were associated with the Iranian Plateau at the time.

Another great river in Airyanem Vaejah, the 'good Datya' flowing from mountains such as Ardvī was not given any further coordinates, we do not know whether or not it flowed into the sea.

The shores of Vourukasha did not belong only to the Aryans. Enemies of the Aryans, such as the Turas, also said prayers and made sacrifices here. The Arian hero Karsaspa, the terror of dragons and devils, asks Ardvī Sura to give him victory over Gandarva, 'follower of lies' whose house is 'at the shores of the Vourukasha' (verse 39).

Another leader of the Turas, Yoyshta makes a sacrifice to Ardvī Sura 'on the island at the rapids of the broad Rankha river'. Despite being the most fearsome enemy of the Aryans, the three-headed serpent Dakha also honours the Ardvī Sura and makes a sacrifice to it 'in the country known as Bavri' ('Beaver'). The goddess Ardvī Sura, wearing a beaver-skin cape made of the 'skins of three hundred beavers' (verse 29) is also in some way related to Bavri country. Another boundary region between the Aryans and the Turas is mentioned in verses 54–59. The 'powerful warrior Tusa' asks for victory over the 'quick sons of Vaysaka' to defeat the heroes of Turan at the gate of Khshatrosuk (The Light of the Tsardom) 'which was the highest and holiest in Kangju'. And the sons of Vaysaka, the forefather of Turan heroes, make a sacrifice to the Ardvī Sura at the gate of Khshatrosuk 'which was the highest and holiest in Kangju' [Klyashtorny, 1964, p. 169].

Other enemies of the Aryans, the Hjana tribe, also approach Airyanem Vaejah. In the Ashi hymn ('Ard-Yasht') the wise Vishtaspa asks for a victory over the 'Hjana malefactor' the 'mendacious Areja-taspa' and other heroes from the Hjana countries who wear 'pointed

helmets'. These prayers for victory would take place near the Datya river [Avesta, p. 121]. Meanwhile the Datya river is a place in Airyanem Vaejah where Ahura Mazda worshiped Ardvi [Avesta, p. 26], Zoroaster himself worshiped the goddess Ashi 'in Airyanem Vaejah, near the Datya'.

The Hjana malefactor Arejataspa's brother, the Hjana chief Vindarmanish who is willing to avenge the powerful Vishtaspa and defeat one hundred Arian warriors, asks the Ardvi Sura for a victory at the Vourukasha [Avesta, p. 44].

The Chaychasta lake is another important site in the land of Aryans. Khosrow, a hero uniting the lands of the Aryans made sacrifices for Ardvi Sura there [Avesta, p. 32]. In the Ashi hymn ('Ard-Yasht, verses 37–43) an episode featuring Khoasrav is represented in detail: 'the great, healing, golden-eyed Haoma' asks Ashi to help him capture Frankhrasyan (Afrasiab) and take him, tied, to the Chaichasta lake. Khosrow prays for the same things at the Chaichasta lake [Avesta, pp. 119–120].

Let us come to some conclusions on the geographical review of Airyanem Vaejah and try to see 'the land of the Aryans' as it was described in ancient pre-Zoroaster Yashts which were only given their final form by the prophet and his followers. The plain of 'the land of the Aryans' is drained by two divine rivers: the Ardvi and Datya, which are extremely important for the life of the Arian tribes: the gods and heroes of the Aryans, as well as their enemies, make sacrifices in their honour. Both rivers flow from the same mountains, but only one of them flows into Vourukasha, whose shores are home to the Aryans, Turas and Khyonas. 'The country of Bavri' and a Turan hero making a sacrifice on the island at the rapids of the Rankha river are also related to the Ardvi.

The Hjana threatened the Aryans near the Arian river Datya and also the Turan, near the high and holy Kangkha and near the camp of the hero of Arryan lands Kai Khosrow at the Chaichasta lake. Hara Berezaiti ('high Hara') is well known to the Aryans, and the sources of the Ardvia and Datya, the dwelling places of Gods, especially Mitra, are located there.

But these mountains are beyond the central districts of Airyanem Vaejah, the places where the clashes between Arian heroes took place.

We will later refer to two rather well-grounded identifications: there is no doubt that Rankha is the most ancient name for the Volga [Abaev, 1965, p. 122] and the Ardvi river, the river of the goddess Ardvi Sura, is the Amu Darya river flowing into the Caspian Sea through the channel of Uzboy in the 3rd–2nd millennium BCE. Vourukasha, which the Ardvi river flows into, is the Caspian Sea, related to the Volga and the Kama rivers [Chlenova, 1984]. At that time the second river of Airyanem Vaejah, the Datya, is identified with the Syr Darya, and as for the localization of Kangkha along the middle and lower course of the Syr Darya, a lot has been written about it [Klyashtorny, 1964]. The Chaichasta lake can be hypothetically identified with the Aral Sea. And Hara Berezaiti, meaning 'High Watchpost' is the mountain country of Pamir Alay and Tian.

The centuries-old migration of the Aryans to the south and the east, as well as the typology of settlements in the early period of resettlements were reflected in Avesta tales. In the second Fragard of Vendidad, Ahura Mazda tells Zoroaster about a person whom he instructed. This was Yima the Great, 'the owner of good herds'. Yima failed to become the proponent of Ahura values, but with the help of Ahura he became a person who 'cultivated' and 'defended' the world. After the kingdom of Yima had existed for 'three hundred winters', there was not enough space for living creatures: 'cattle, sheep, goats and people'. Then Yima 'stepped forward on the way of the Sun and made this land one third larger than it used to be and cattle, sheep and goats and people found their shelter here as they wished'. A new crisis came after 'six hundred winters', and Yima set out 'on the midday light towards the sun once again to make this land two thirds larger than it used to be', and he settled cattle and people in new places. In 'nine hundred winters' this process happens once again. In the past the 'glorious country Airyanem Vaejah' was created by Ahura's

free will and at the expense of the labour of Yima the Great, for the Aryans [Avesta, pp. 176–178].

And Yima created this kind of settlement for people and cattle, by Ahura's free will, which was called 'Var' in the Avesta. A Var made of earth and clay consisted of three concentric circles of walls and dwellings and there were nine passages in the external circle, six passages in the central circle and three passages in the internal circle [Avesta, pp. 178–179, Steblin-Kamensky, pp. 307–310].

After three thousand years the archaeologists working on the space between the Ural and Irtysh rivers found dozens of these settlements dating from between the 20th and 15th centuries BCE, with three circles of walls. The walls of the two internal circles are formed by blocks of dwellings which either rested against the walls or formed the external wall themselves. The dwellings overlooked the circular street. External and internal ditches completed the defensive structure and radially placed streets led to the central square. Arkaim, one of the most famous settlements of this sort is situated in Chelyabinsk region [Relics of the Ural-Kazakhstan steppes, Traces the Proto-town Civilization, Arkaim]. No less than two thousand people lived in the dwellings of its internal cities. The total area of each of them was about 190–300 m². The village itself, with powerful fortifications, was the seat of the chief and a shelter for people from small neighbouring settlements, with their typical Andronovo (Sintashta) one-dimensional layout in case of attack. Settlements with a radial layout and two-, and three-ringed system of defensive constructions were mentioned in the Avesta using the term 'Var'. Their detailed description in the text of the Avesta, coinciding with archaeological findings dating from the 20–15th centuries BCE, allows researchers to date the corresponding sections of the text to the same time and confirm the historical accuracy of the descriptions preserved in the myths of the Arian period.

The turbulent history of inter-tribal warfare between the Aryans, Turas and Hjona,

who worshiped the same gods and asked them to grant them victory in the same language, took place at the border of Airyanem Vaejah, on the banks of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, in the Caspian and Aral seas, in the Volga and Kama river regions. The events which were preserved in the Yashts probably took place long before the times of Zoroaster in the latter half of the 2nd and early 1st millennium BCE.

The clashes and prayers of the Gods and heroes of the Yashts are myths and epic poems of the Andronovo (Sintashta) period, and also those of the Aryans and other tribes such as the Turan, Hjona, Dana, Sairima, Saina, and Daha.

The warriors of the Yashts are charioteers (*ratae-shtar*), owners of fast horses and enormous herds, 'vast pastures' and 'good wagons'. Their god and patron was Mitra, the God of the sun, and a heavenly charioteer. They say prayers to him:

We worship Mitra,
who rules
from a high-wheeled chariot.

...

The powerful Mitra appears
in a beautiful, lightweight golden chariot
which is drawn
by four eternal fast white horses
with golden and silver hooves.
And all of them were harnessed
under the same yoke
with ties on beams,
and the drawbar
was attached with a hook.

...

So help us,
oh Mitra!
His pastures are vast,
let us and our bridles be strong,
give us the ability
to see our enemies at a distance
and defeat them with a blow,
every one who is hostile to us!

[Avesta, pp. 70, 83, 85].

The main weapons of the charioteer are a bow with a string made of deer sinews, arrows with eagle feathers, long darts, throwing knives, and a metal mace 'made of golden metal'.

In another description Mitra has the appearance of an imperial warrior.

A broad-shouldered warrior
holding a silver spear
and wearing golden armour,
he spurs on his horses
when he comes to the land
where Mitra is respected,
and creates wide valleys for pastures
where people and cattle
can wander freely

[Avesta, p. 82].

A military chariot made by a carpenter (chariot makers are mentioned in the Avesta) was a real masterpiece and combined structural strength and maneuverability at high speeds. This is based on a wooden frame, covered with leather and attached to a long axle. The wheels, with nine or ten spokes were much lighter than those on wagons. Between two and four horses were fastened to the pole. The axle was often placed in the tail end of the body to make it more stable when turning.

The attacking chariots depicted on the cliffs of Arpa-Uzen, in the Karatau Mountains, have an axle in the middle of the body [Medoev, chart 29]. A coachman mentioned in the Yasht devoted to Mitra could be in chariots of this type together with a warrior. When a warrior-charioteer fought alone, he would fasten the reins to his belt and use a bow at a distance and darts in close combat (a quiver with darts was fastened to the frame). A charioteer would a long spear to break through the enemy lines, but a pole-axe was the main type of weapon. This is a description of Mitra's attack:

We respect Mitra,
whose furious horses
with broad hooves
rush towards the bloodthirsty troops
of fighting countries.

...
He begins battles,
withstanding the fight,
and breaks the ranks
while wielding a sharp axe in his hand
made of golden metal
which defeats men.

It is the most powerful kind of weapon,
bringing victory!

[Avesta, p. 66].

Those governed by warriors-charioteers, tsars and gods are cattle-breeders whose possessions are bulls, horses and camels, whose lands are pastures, and whose food is milk and meat. The sacrifices they make to gods are

one hundred stallions, one thousand
cows and thousands of sheep

[Avesta, p. 44].

Zoroaster was against these sacrifices. There are descriptions of other peaceful sacrifices in the Yashts:

May the man who respects you be happy,
he will take firewood,
a bundle of twigs
and milk and a mortar,
and wash a pestle
with his clean hands,
and lifting up the bundle of twigs
and Haoma
he will sing 'Ahuna Varya'.

[Avesta, p. 76].

But there was a deity to whom Ahura Mazda himself ordered to make bloody sacrifices: one far more ancient, who never lost his animal embodiments. This god was Verethragna, god of combats and victory, the embodiment of fury and military triumph, and described as 'created by Ahyras':

Zoroaster asked
Ahura Spitama:
Tell us, Ahura Mazda:
how should we say prayers,
and which sacrifice
should we make to Verethragna?
Ahura Mazda said:
May the Aryans
make sacrifices to him
and may them
boil cattle for him,
whether it be dark or light!

[Avesta, p. 103].

Verethragna is an idol of charioteers, a deity of ten embodiments, faithful companion of the militant Mitra, fighting alongside him

in the form of a wild boar, his saintly embodiment:

We respect Mitra...
Verethragna, the creation of Ahura,
is flying in front of us
as a furious and wicked wild boar
with sharp teeth
and sharp fangs
which kill in one blow
[Avesta, p. 71].

If Verethragna is a furious wild boar for warriors, the kings see him as the first embodiment of the wind carrying Khvarenah, for all other Aryans Verethragna appears as a bull, horse or a camel.

The pantheon and epic traditions of the Aryans were immortalized not just in words, but also in art. Majestic collections of art have been discovered in pagan mountain temples where sacrifices were made and hymns performed. One of these sanctuaries is situated in the cave of Tamgaly, 170 km to the northwest of Almaty, in the mountains of Anrakhay. The most ancient depictions date back to the Bronze Age, the time of the Andronovo culture: epic heroes race in their chariots, drawing a bow, roam in wagons drawn by camels, and perform ritual dances. The main figures of the sanctuary are the so-called 'sun-headed creatures', rising above mortals (this name was given to them by the archaeologists working in Tamgaly). Enormous head-disks were surrounded by hollows depicting a halo, symbolising divine grace. In some cases their heads have rays of different radiuses [Maksimova, etc., p. 9]. The main subject in the composition consists of two sun-headed creatures surrounded by cattle and twelve tiny dancing people. The clue to the meaning of the scene is found in Section In the 'Khurkhed-Yasht' ('Anthem to the Sun'):

Let us say prayers to Mitra,
whose cornfields are large...
Between the sun and the moon!
[Avesta, p. 51].

The gods of the sun and the moon give their blessings to cattle and people. An enormous sun-headed deity is depicted on another

stone surface: this is Mitra riding on the back of a bull. The bull is another embodiment of Verethragna, companion of the main deity.

Verethragna came to Zoroaster
for the second time
as a creation of Ahura,
a dazzling and powerful
golden-eyed bull
with power and strength
over his horns!

[Avesta, p. 95].

The myths and epic traditions of the Aryans encouraged respect for their gods. Depicted in eternal rock engravings, the Arian gods themselves became a fragment of eternity, of the unshakable cosmological order.

The structure of the Avestan cattle-breeding society, which is an embodiment of this cosmological order among the people, is straightforward: it consisted of the head of the house, the head of the clan, the head of the people (tribe) and the head of the country (king). The social system and its specific features perfectly coincides with the observations made by archaeologists researching the cultures of the Andronovo complex, above all the Sintashta culture. According to French scientist J. Dumezil, Indo-Arian society is comprises three interdependent groups: the military aristocracy, pagan priests and common members of the community including shepherds and farmers [Dumezil].

What did Andronovo Aryans look like? According to renowned anthropologist and academician V. Alekseev, 'The representatives of Andronovo culture were certainly Caucasoids, and their typical features may appear to be exaggerated even from our modern point of view. Their Caucasians features may seem harsh to us at the expense of a very clear expression of the Caucasoid type.' Representatives of the Andronovo culture were had very large noses, almost no cheek-bones, and large eyes, somewhat reminiscent of the Caucasians. But they were even more broad-faced than representatives of the Afanasevo culture, as there was a stronger and more powerful frontal bone on the forehead and over the eyes. They would have had a rough

appearance but also a handsome one, with a strong physique and virile constitution... They must be seen as the last relapse, the final echo of the large resettlement of Caucasians to the east, a large part of the chain of migrations seemingly followed by the penetration of several elements of Andronovo culture to the south, the resettlements of ancient Iranian tribes, the appearance of the Aryans in India. In a nutshell, a kaleidoscope of more and less important events shaking the Ancient East' [Alekseev, pp. 236–237].

So the Arian (Iranian) and Indo-Arian (Indian) tribes were related to the Indo-European language and cultural community which settled in the steppe regions of Eastern Europe and Kazakhstan in the early 2nd millennium BCE, where they became known to modern research as bearers of the Srubna and Andronovo cultures. The second quarter of the 2nd millennium BCE was the time of the major expansion of these tribes and their general ethnonym was 'Aryans'. They spoke kindred dialects, from which Vedic Sanskrit (a cycle of Indian sacred texts formed in Northern India between the 12th and 10th centuries BCE), and the language of Avesta originate. Although the main directions of migration were towards the east and south-east, many tribes migrated to the Hindu Kush

in Northern India and a significant part of them penetrated Western Iran and Mesopotamia. Traces of the Indo-Arian languages were left in the form on cuneiform clay tablets in the Hittite and Mittani (Northern Mesopotamian) empires. For example, the Arian gods Mitra, Varuna and the twin deities Nasatya were mentioned in a treaty signed between the king of Mittani and the king of the Hittites around 1370 BCE. Other Hittite documents contain Arian cattle-breeding terms: a treatise composed by Kikkuli contains an especially large number of them. It seems that the first wave of Arian migration into Western Asia was followed by a second, more significant wave, the exact dates of which remains unclear, the iranisation of the country, taking its name from these settlers, probably took place in the early 1st millennium BCE (Iran, Eranshahr) [Frye, pp. 19–20, 35–45].

The Aryans of the Volga region, Ural, Kazakhstan and Central Asia ceased to exist as such by the early 1st millennium BCE, when nomadic type of cattle-breeding gave way to agricultural settlements, represented by the creation of large irrigation systems in the south.

The Scythians, Saka and Sarmatians became the successors of the Aryans in the Great Steppe.

CHAPTER 2

Steppe and forest-steppe Eurasia in the 1st millennium BCE

Dmitry Rayevsky

Scythia

For millenia, no Eastern European people had their own script, so our vision of the history of the inhabitants of this region can only be based on archaeological materials, and partly on historical reconstructions. In the course of time societies which were the closest to civilization, such as the peoples of the Ancient East, invented a written language and began to use it to record the most important events of their own history, as well as the peculiar facts of life of their less civilized neighbors. But the life of the inhabitants of the regions of Eurasia in question was not covered in written sources for a long time.

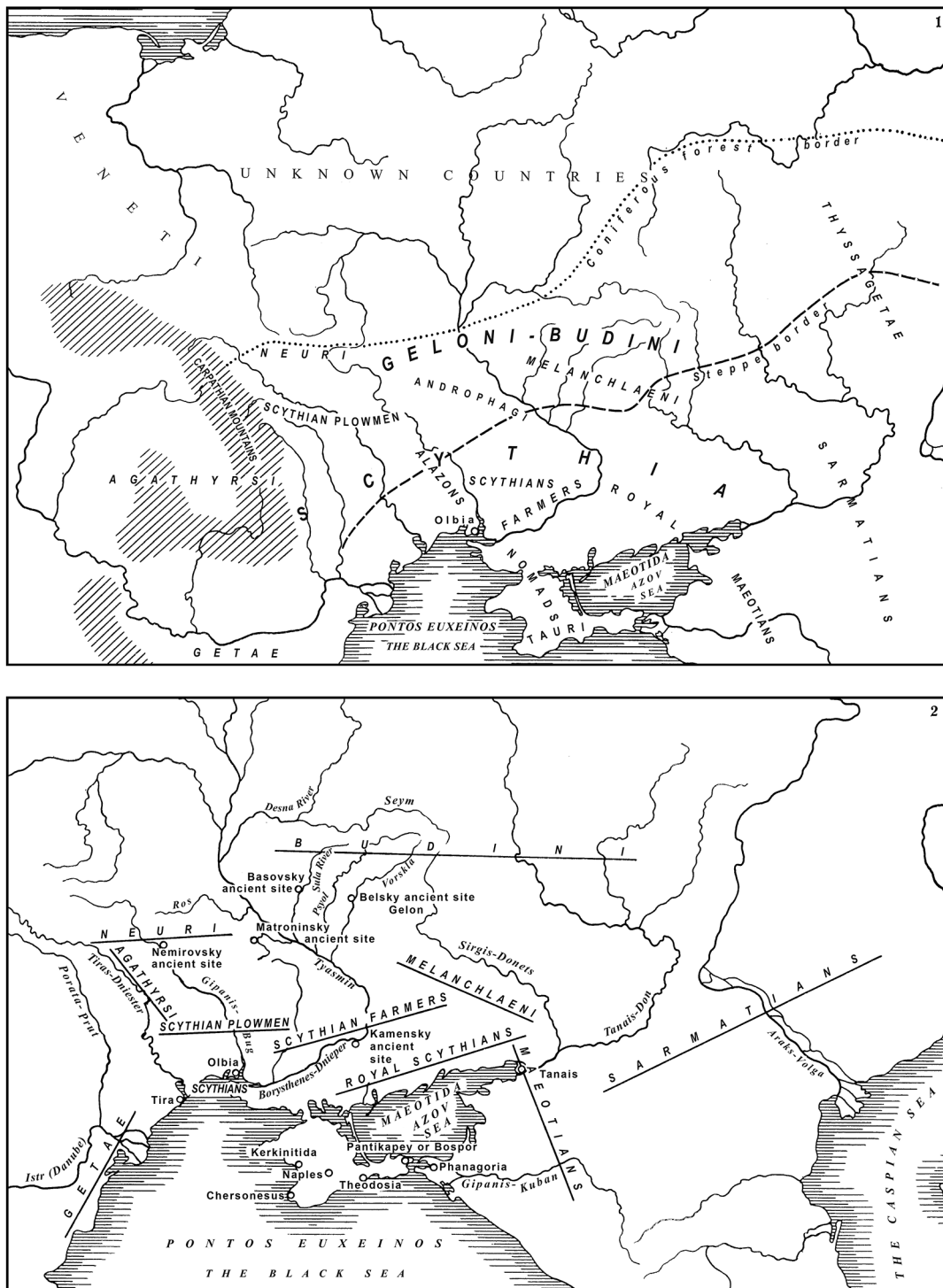
This situation suddenly changed when the process of the so-called Great Greek colonization began in the ancient world. This process describes the expansion of the ancient Greeks beyond Hellas—the somewhat bounded space of the Balkan peninsula and the Aegean islands—for various economic and demographical reasons. This was intended to provide the Greek world with natural and supplied resources which were rather limited in the centre of the Greek empire. The Greeks had to develop new lands for that purpose and conquered almost the entire coast of the Mediterranean sea in a short time [Jessen, 1947, Lapin, 1966, AGSP, 1955, pp. 23–30].

As they developed lands suitable for colonization, the Greeks usually sought to establish active relationships with the local population. At first this process was dictated by pragmatic interests: friendly relations with the inhabitants of the host countries brought

enlightenment to the Hellenes, including the development of markets of handcrafted products which were important for the Greek economy. Meanwhile almost all the colonies started providing the Hellenes with information on the moral systems and customs of the inhabitants of these lands, and those of less known and remote provinces. This type of data was recorded in numerous volumes of ancient works. This knowledge, collected by Greek and later Roman intellectuals, laid the foundations of the science which would later be known as ethnology. In these records we can find evidence of peoples who had no script at the time, thus providing fragmentary but invaluable information on their history and customs.

This data, preserved by ancient scholars still forms the basis of much of the knowledge about the ancient inhabitants of the whole of Eastern Europe. Beginning with the aforementioned period, the reconstruction of ancient ethnic history is based on archaeological and linguistic data, as well as verbal testimonies. The fact that this knowledge was recorded by another culture (as opposed to the peoples described) requires a strong analytical approach, avoiding full confidence in its authenticity.

The northern shore of the Black Sea, known as Pontus Euxinos by the Greeks, came under colonisation and became one of the most remote provinces of the Greek world. During the ancient period this region was inhabited by tribes of Scythians and related or culturally similar tribes. The Greeks became

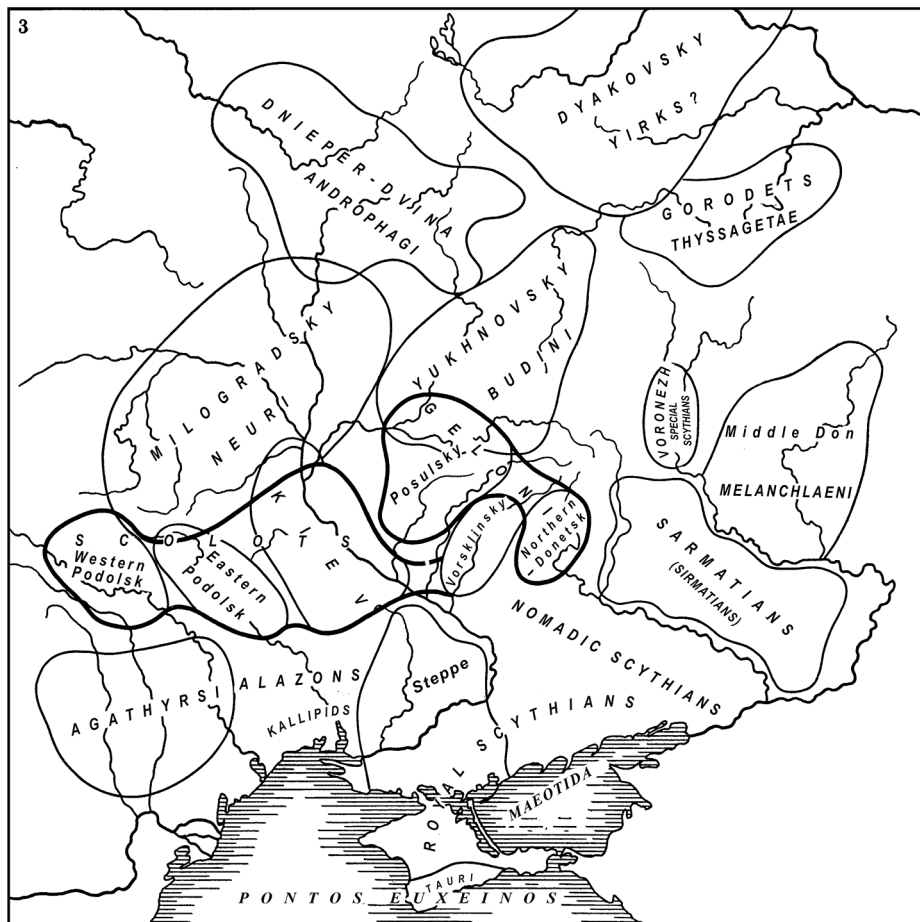


The distribution of tribes named by Herodotus on the modern map.

1—according to M. Artamonov, 2—according to Ibn Grakov [The steppes of the European part, 1989, p. 42]

the first representatives of written civilization to mention the Scythians and their neighbours

in their literature. Works about these 'Barbarian' peoples were quite numerous at that time.

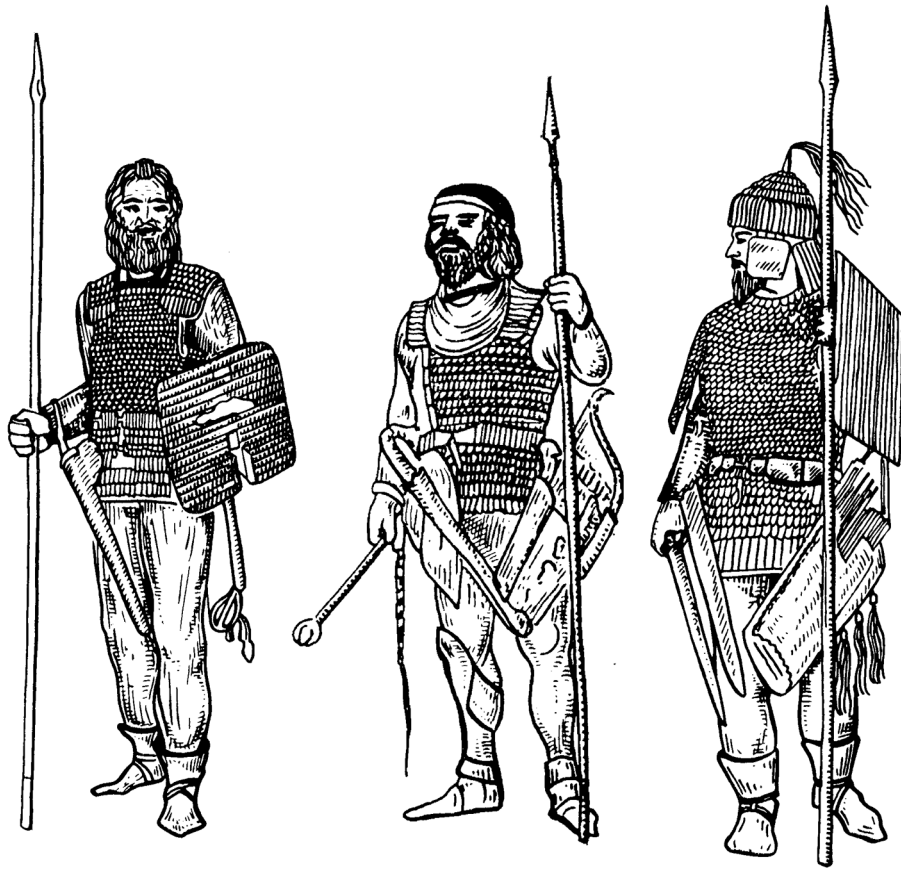


The distribution of the tribes named by Herodotus on the modern map.
3—according to Ibn Rybakov [The steppes of the European part, 1989, p. 43].

Unfortunately the majority of these texts has not survived due to the upheavals of the migration period and the early Middle Ages. They known to have existed due to mentions of their titles or the discovery of small surviving fragments. One of the authors of these texts is Hecataeus of Miletus (late 6th to early 5th centuries BCE), who wrote a comprehensive 'World Survey'. There are abundant references to this work in ancient and early medieval literature. Judging by these references, Hecataeus was familiar with many of the peoples of Eastern Europe and the neighbouring provinces. We can only assume how valuable this work would be if it had reached us.

One of few preserved texts of this sort is the famous 'History in nine volumes' by

Herodotus, a native of Halicarnassus, which is particularly interesting in this respect. Herodotus aimed to write a detailed description of the wars between the Greeks and the Persia Achaemenid dynasty, which took place almost one and a half centuries before him. He sought to do it as thoroughly as possible, providing detailed descriptions of events which he saw as leading to these wars. He attempted to corroborate these facts with stories about the morals, customs and main historical events of the various countries involved in the processes he was concerned with. He even personally visited some of these provinces for this purpose. The descriptions of the Scythians and their neighbours are perhaps the most valuable part of



Scythian warriors Reconstruction by M. Gorelik [The steppes of the European part, 1989, p. 338].

his 'History', as they remain the main source of information this part of the Greek world.

Modern researchers can also find references to these peoples in the works of other ancient authors, although these are mainly devoted to other topics and usually only preserved in fragmentary form. Valuable data to supplement Herodotus's text can be found in works by Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Pliny the Elder and other Greek and Roman authors. Overall, there is detailed data about many ancient peoples in Eastern Europe which was preserved by the ancient tradition. It has been possible to later associate this data with archaeological materials found in the relevant regions, as will be discussed later.

There is no doubt that Scythians occupy a prominent position among the peoples of Eastern Europe mentioned by the authors of antiquity. The Greeks, colonising the North-

ern Black Sea region, were among the first to encounter the Scythians, so evidence on them can often be found in ancient literature. As they contacted the various inhabitants of Northern Eurasia, the Hellenes tended to compare all the local peoples with the well-known world of the Scythians, who came to become a peculiar 'ethnographic standard'. Some of the Greeks paid more attention to the closeness of agriculture, way of life and culture of the local peoples even if they were not otherwise related. As a result such Greek authors came to call all of these peoples 'Scythians'. Later historians and geographers applied this name, inherited from ancient authors, to various inhabitants of Eastern Europe even after the real Scythians had been absent in the historical arena for several centuries. The name 'Scythia' was also used for a long time to refer to the local lands, no matter who lived on them.



Scythian stone sculptures.

1—Vasilievka, 2—Olkhovschik, 3—Mederovo [The steppes of the European part, 1989, p. 345]

Other Greek and Roman authors paid more attention to individual features of each of the peoples of the 'Scythian world' even while uncertain whether there were any linguistic or ethnic similarities between them. The name 'Scythians' was attributed to a somewhat contained ethnic whole, referring to all other inhabitants of these region with other ethnonyms. Such distinctions are especially important to recreate the ethnic history of these peoples. For example, Herodotus (IV, 21) used this term to refer to a certain people inhabiting the Black Sea and Azov steppes between the Danube and the Don. The land of the Sarmatians, lying to the east of the Tanais, was not 'the land of Scythians' for him although he knew about their closeness to the Scythians. For example, Diodor, in his account of early Scythian history, reports that after the Scythians had acquired power, they were divided into several branches: 'the first group was called the Saka, the second group the Masagetae and the third one the Arimasps'. etc. (II, 43). Herodotus was also familiar with all these peoples, but for him each of them is a sepa-

rate, non-Scythian tribe while Diodor identified all of them as Scythians.

We can see that while creating an ethnic map of Eastern Europe during the Scythian time, the ancient tradition uses two entirely different meanings of the name 'Scythians' referring to distinct entities at the ethnic (and sometimes pseudo-ethnic) level, and this must be taken into account when reconstructing the ancient ethnic geography of this region using antique sources.

These sources mainly shed light on the period of Greek presence in Eastern Europe, but the Hellenes themselves would have known about the past only through the oral accounts of the local population. For example, an account of the appearance of the Scythians in the Northern Black Sea region, recorded in detail by Herodotus, has reached us in three versions. The author presents two variants of mythical narratives about the divine origins of the Scythian people and the appearance of the first man, which are not relevant to us, but goes on to provide a story which seems to be the most trustworthy according to Herodotus. According to this au-

thor, the Scythians had formerly lived somewhere 'in Asia' but later crossed the Araks under the pressure of the Massagetae, and found themselves in the Northern Black Sea region which had formerly been populated by the Cimmerians. Chasing the Cimmerians, the Scythians appeared with them in Western Asia where they dominated for 28 years (IV, 11). They were later driven away from there and returned to the steppes of the Black Sea region.

Herodotus makes reference to the 'Arimaspeya', an unpreserved work dating back to the 7th century BCE, to support his story. In Herodotus's account, Aristéas mentions a one-eyed people called the Arimasps, living at the edge of earth, removed the Issedons from the territory they used to live on. They removed the Scythians and the Scythians drove away the Cimmerians living 'at the southern sea' in their turn (IV, 13). Herodotus does not pay much attention to the differences between Aristéas's version and his own.

The story of Diodorus Siculus (II, 43) is very close to the reports of Herodotus and Aristéas, although he does not say anything about the removal of the Scythians by any other people but rather about their pressure on the Cimmerians, and explains their migration as due to the reaffirmation of Scythian power. However, his story about the Scythians leaving the Araks river for the land between the Caucasian mountains and the Tanais river, and their subsequent penetration first into the lands between the Tanais and Thrace, and from there to the river Nile in Egypt, is reminiscent of other versions of early Scythian history recorded by the ancient tradition and may be even more accurate than them in some parts.

As the arrival of the Scythians in the Northern Black Sea region from their supposed initial homeland was viewed negatively by the Greek colonisers and the story about it is most likely based on local oral narratives, it is necessary to carefully judge the authenticity of this version. In this sense, the information gathered from eastern cuneiform inscriptions establishing the presence

of military detachments in the Middle East belonging to the peoples of *Gimmiri* and *Iskuza* (i.e. the Cimmerians and the Scythians of ancient tradition) are of primary importance. At the same time, the eastern texts do not directly confirm the information about the origins of both peoples from the same region, which was external to Western Asia, nor their connections with Eastern Europe. This sort of data is only based on the ancient tradition. This comparison of Akkadian data with the ancient sources, confirming the fact that these peoples invaded the countries of the east, is evidence of the time compression of the data preserved by ancient authors because the military campaigns of the Cimmerians and Scythians in Western Asia seem to have lasted several decades, from the late 8th century to the early 6th century BCE, and these peoples were not as interdependent as it would seem from studying the ancient sources.

To what extent can the evidence of the ancient authors on the location of the Scythians' homeland, from which they migrated to the Black Sea region, be considered reliable? Unfortunately, the versions of Herodotus and Diodor, locating it on the banks of the Araks River, do not appear to be sufficiently accurate. It is evident that these authors were not referring to the Caucasian river now bearing this name. It seems that a number of different rivers had this name in ancient times so we have no reliable grounds to place the initial Scythian homeland near one of them. Herodotus's evidence, according to which this initial homeland was close to the land of the Massagetae, is at odds with his reference to the opinion of Aristéas, which saw the Issedons as their neighbours. However, Herodotus assumed that these two people lived nearby (I, 201) and in essence there are no major differences between these versions. References to the Issedons in other passages of Herodotus's work (IV, 21–26, etc.) place them in the Southern Cis Ural or Western Siberia. But other ancient authors use the same ethnonym in reference to peoples in regions further to the east. Reports that the Scythians initially lived somewhere in Asia



Specimens of animal style on items from steppe Scythia burial mounds. 6th–3rd centuries BCE.
 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20—gold, 1, 9, 13—bronze, 3, 5, 10, 17—silver
 [The steppes of the European part, 1989, p. 343]

turn out to be rather inconclusive as well because in ancient times the Tanais (Don) was considered to be the border between Europe and Asia. It should be acknowledged that it is rather risky to determine the localization of the land from which the Scythians moved to Eastern Europe only on the basis of the ancient tradition. That is why archaeological data has been used for a long time to solve this problem.

Nevertheless it bears mentioning that the interpretation of archaeological materials in this context was based not only on their own specific features but on the ones which seemingly correspond to the picture presented in the ancient tradition. So these materials were considered proof of the fundamental change in the cultural outlook of the Northern Black Sea region at the dawn of the Scythian period and one of the main sign of this newly emerging culture was its similarity to one of those archaeological cultures which had existed somewhere 'in Asia'. In this case it is

logical to identify the culture of the former population of this region as Cimmerian, and to associate the new one with the Scythians.

The fact that roughly since the middle of the 7th century BCE—that is, since the Scythians moved from Asia to the Northern Black Sea Region, according to the antique tradition, traces of the same type were spread across the Eurasian steppe area contributed to this interpretation of archaeological data. These are mainly burial mounds containing the graves of warrior-horsemen. The burial inventories found in them is also rather similar. This is especially evident in items known as the Scythian triad: armament, elements of horse ammunition and works of art created in the so-called animalistic style. As in general the area where they are found coincides with the territory with which the antique tradition connects the settlement of the Scythians with the meaning of the aforementioned name, the burials of this type were often called Scythian and the creators

of these artifacts were seen as a single people, the Scythians. The problem of searching for archaeological traces of the migration from Asia mentioned by Aristéas, Herodotus and Diodor was also often addressed accordingly. The main task was to determine where such a culture would have initially emerged.

For example, in the 1960s, after the burial mounds of Tagisken and Uigarak in the lower reaches of the Syr Darya had been examined, a hypothesis appeared according to which the Scythians originated from this very region of Central Asia [Tolstov, Itina, 1966, p. 174]. Later on the research of the great Scythian time 'royal' burial mound of Arzhan in Tuva [Gryaznov, 1980] and then the discovery of a whole range of less significant archaeological traces from this era gave rise to a version, which still had many adherents, according to which Scythian culture had emerged in this Central Asian region before spreading up to the Northern Black Sea region [Terenozhkin, 1976, pp. 210–211]. As for the Cimmerian epoch preceding the arrival of the Scythians, the adherents of this theory connect the so called pre-Scythian or Chernogorov-Novocherkassk traces with it in the Black Sea region, which are significantly different from the Scythian ones [Terenozhkin, 1976, Makhortykh, 1994]. Assuming that traces of the Scythian-Siberian type in the south of Eastern Europe, relating to the wider interpretation of the term 'Scythians', really emerged in the middle of the 7th century BCE, the connection between these archaeological materials and the references in the ancient tradition would be confirmed. Nevertheless, there is a whole range of data which is at odds with this interpretation.

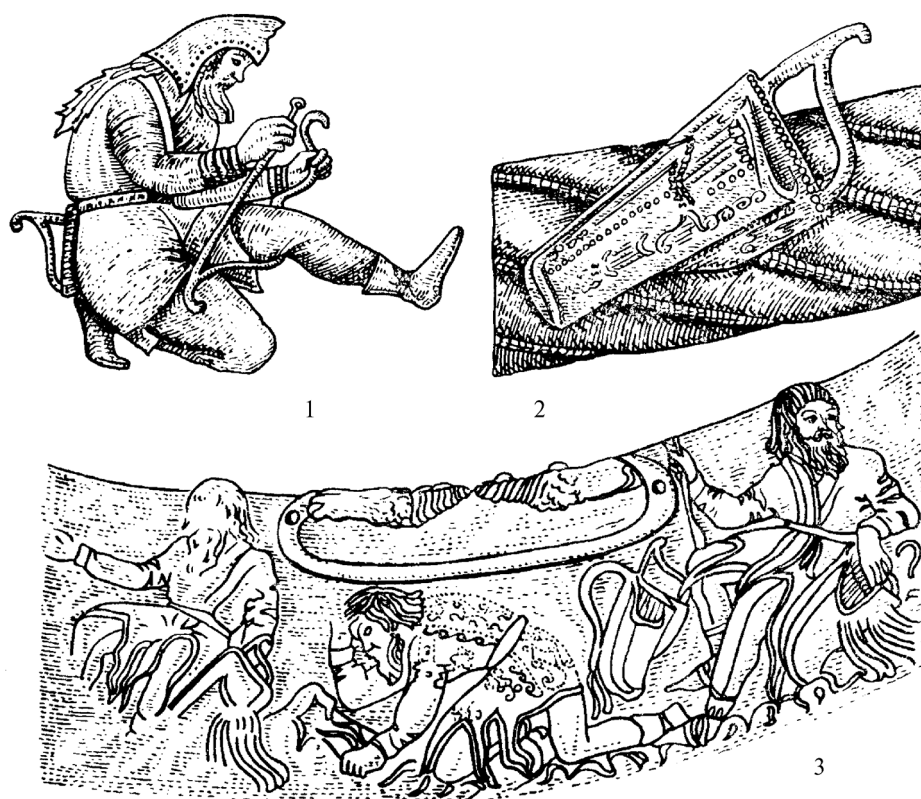
First of all, the examination of the Eurasian steppes of the Scythian period disproved the theory of their cultural homogeneity. It emerged that despite certain similarities, the population of this territory in the 1st millennium BCE belonged to different archaeological cultures whose roots could often be traced back to the previous period. The similarities between them can be seen in elements of culture which could easily have been borrowed from their neigh-

bours. However, it is possible that in some cases this perception was simplified despite the migrations of certain groups of population. The archaeologist M. Gryaznov, a leading researcher of this group of cultures, believes that 'each of them is rather peculiar and extraordinary in connection with its special historical past' [1978, p. 18]. In essence, the views of many archaeologists on the unity of the cultural picture of the Eurasian steppes in the Scythian period is close to the aforementioned ideas of the ancient world about the same territory, which gave birth to the wider definition of the term 'Scythians'.

Moreover, not all the researchers see the 7th century BCE as a time of radical changes in the cultural makeup of the Northern Black Sea region, explained by a radical change in the ethnic geography of this region, but instead many tend to associate events taking place here with cultural, rather than ethnic shifts. As a result, the archaeological picture of the transition between the Cimmerian and Scythian periods in the Northern Black Sea region, corresponding to the version of Herodotus, begins to lose ground.

Nevertheless, there is also experience of another concordance of narrative and archaeological data in relation to the beginning of the Scythian epoch in Eastern Europe. The foundation for this version was laid out in the works of O. Krivtsova-Grakova proving the shift by the tribes of the so-called Srubna culture from the Lower Volga region to the Azov and the Black Sea region in the last third of the 2nd millennium BCE [Krivtsova-Grakova, 1954]. It is worth remembering that, according to one of the versions, the Araks river, near which the initial homeland of the Scythians was alleged to be situated, (before they had penetrated in Eastern Europe) is in fact the Volga. One of its names, frequently mentioned by ancient authors, was Ra.

K. Smirnov described the archaeological landscape in this region between the late 2nd and early 1st millennium BCE. He was based, however, on the ethnic map of Herodotus and connected the processes



Scythian bows and quivers. 4th–3rd centuries BCE

1—on a pectoral from Tolstaya Mogila, 2—on a vase from Kyul-Oba, 3—on a cup from Gaimanova Mogila [The steppes of the European part, 1989, p. 366].

mentioned by him with the rise of the Sarmatians living to the east of the Don. As we shall see, there are good reasons to see the development of this culture as belonging to a later period and there are other ethno-cultural processes happening in the period under consideration. According to K. Smirnov's observations, Andronovo tribes from the Volga region constantly infiltrated the space to the east of the Tanais occupied by Srubna tribes and others who were related to them at that time. Having certain influence on the local culture, these tribes were assimilated by the local population. At the same time the Srubna culture also had a clear influence on the Andronovo culture [Smirnov, 1964, pp. 176–178]. A rather homogeneous ethno-cultural entity emerged in the Lower Volga region as a result. The formation of the Eastern Iranian peoples populating most of this

region during the Scythian epoch seems to be related to it. In the course of time parts of this body formed their own pre-Scythian cultures in the aforementioned regions in the south of Eastern Europe.

A logical question arises: what if one of migrations discovered in the space to the east of the Don was in fact the exile of the ancient Scythians from their initial homeland, as mentioned by the ancient sources? It is impossible to determine whether the removal of Srubna-Andronovo groups can be seen as one of the stages of resettlement of Srubna tribes from the Volga region or a migration of cultures from the pre-Scythian period. Only one thing seems clear: if we accept this interpretation, these resettlers cannot be considered bearers of the well-known Scythian culture of later times. As noted by one of the leading Russian Scythian studies

scholars, Ibn Grakov [1971, p. 26], this first resettlement of the Scythians was the removal of tribes from a habitat taken up by rather closely related steppe cultures at the turn of the bronze and iron ages, and it is impossible to trace it back archaeologically. But the references in the ancient tradition to the removal of the Scythians from their initial homeland, as well as Diodor's evidence on their initial settlement in the Ciscaucasia would seem to prove this interpretation.

As for the subsequent events in the ethnic history of Eastern Europe, let us refer to the work of the author of the first detailed research work on traces of the 'pre-Scythian' (Chernigov-Novosherkassk) circle, A. Jessen [1953, pp. 109–110], who believed that they should be considered not only as traces of the Cimmerian culture, but also of early Scythian tribes. In other words, in his opinion the Cimmerians and Scythians had a common culture at a certain stage. Based on archaeological data, A. Jessen also believed that the result of the Scythian invasion of the natural habitat of the Cimmerians mentioned in ancient sources was not a complete change of the population in this region but the domination by the Scythians of a tribal union formerly headed by the Cimmerians. Unfortunately, the ancient sources are inconclusive as to where exactly the clash between the Cimmerians and Scythians took place. If Herodotus stated that the Cimmerians occupied the territory of all Scythia, Diodorus, as we have already mentioned, states that the first stage of the presence of Scythians in Europe was only related to the provinces to the north of the Caucasus. Most likely the inter-tribal conflicts we are concerned with took place in this very region and were mostly of a local character. But this conflict seems to have played a rather important role in Scythian culture, which why it was memorized in the form of epic narratives as the defining event in the history of the Scythians, and was accepted by the antique tradition (this view of pre-Scythian history is described in detail by [Pogrebova, Rayevsky, 1992]).

These clashes were followed by the long (about one hundred and fifty years) history

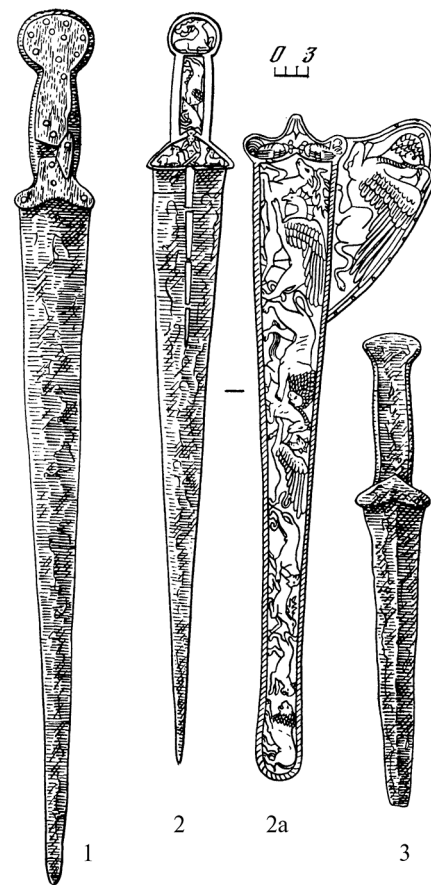
of Cimmerian-Scythian military campaigns in Western Asia, which led to the end of the culture with which the Scythians are usually associated with. The elements of this culture, which emerged on the basis of Srubna culture in the process of evolution of 'pre-Scythian cultures', initially developed in Western Asia at the expense of the so-called animalistic style of art which emerged on the basis of the animalistic traditions of different cultures absorbed in the process of interaction between the Scythians and the different peoples of the East. The so called Treasure of Saqqiz (Ziwiye Treasure) is especially noteworthy among Western Asian traces, in terms of studying the process of formation of this type of art. This name is given to a collection of items which have sporadically been found in Saqqez, in Iranian Kurdistan. In ancient times, this region was part of the Tsardom of the Mannaeans. According to references in eastern texts, there were frequent incursions by both Cimmerians and Scythians into this territory. By all appearances, this set is not a treasure from the archaeological point of view but the remains of an ancient, and extremely expensive burial [Ghirshman, 1979]. Its inventory includes items in connection with a wide range of cultures of Western Asia [Lukonin, 1987, pp. 69–70]. These seem to be the remains of the burial of a tribal leader whose army made raids in different regions of Western Asia. This location in particular seems to meet all the necessary conditions for the formation of a specific Scythian art on the basis of various cultures [Artamonov, 1968]. Not all scholars of Scythian studies share this point of view on the process of formation of Scythian art.

Not all Cimmerians and Scythians migrated to Western Asia in their time, despite the ideas of the ancient authors, but only their largest military detachments. Some of them came back to their motherland from time to time, to the regions which were the springboard for the military campaigns in the countries of the Ancient East. As a result, the process of the formation of Scythian culture happened simultaneously on both sides of the Caucasus Mountains. It is illustrative

that the oldest traces of a mostly developed Scythian culture in Eastern Europe were discovered specifically in Ciscaucasia [Petrenko, 1983, 1989] at the place where the Scythians settled according to Diodor.

The return of the Scythians to Eastern Europe, as well as their invasion of Western Asia was not a single action either but was a process which lasted for decades, contrary to the opinion of Herodotus. Ancient oriental artifacts used by the Scythians as trophies or commissioned from oriental masters to be brought back to Scythia have been found in local complexes dating from between the late 7th and early 6th centuries BCE, which can be seen in different provinces of Ciscaucasia, the Black Sea region and in regions further to the north. We can find such items at the Kelermes burial site discovered in the Kuban region, for example, in the Melgunov burial mound which was found in the middle of the 18th century in the outskirts of Yelisevograd, and in a whole range of other sites scattered across the south of Russia. It is evident that Scythians returning from military campaigns spread across vast territories of the Northern Black Sea region which resulted in the spreading of typical elements of Scythian culture throughout the entire region. Separate detachments of Scythians penetrated further to the west, even to Central Europe.

Unlike the fragmentary evidence on the period of cultural emergence of the Scythians, which had to be reconstructed using secondary data, information on the ethnic layout of Eastern Europe in the Scythian time was very well recorded in the ancient tradition, above all in the work by Herodotus. It is natural that the ancient authors were primarily concerned with the Scythians themselves, and particularly with the different tribes inhabiting Scythia. This included the Callippidae, the Halizones living in the neighborhood along the Hypanis (Southern Bug) and the Scythian farmers inhabiting the Lower Borysthenes (Dnieper), nomadic Scythians living to the east of them and finally the Royal Scyths, the most powerful Scythian tribe living at the eastern border of



Scythian iron swords (1, 2, 3)
and golden scabbard (2a)
[The steppes of the European part, 1989, p. 337]

Scythia and who considered all other Scythians their slaves, according to Herodotus (IV, 17–20). Strictly speaking, these subdivisions of Scythian peoples were not tribes in the strict sense of the word but larger ethnic units, although it is customary to call them so in the specialist literature following Herodotus.

It is noteworthy that according to Herodotus, the Tanais (Don) was definitely the eastern border of the country occupied by the aforementioned Scythian tribes. This corresponds Herodotus's view that Scythia was situated between the Don and the Danube. Let us compare this fact with the account by Diodor on the presence of the Scythians on a territory further to the east in earlier times,

namely Ciscaucasia. Archaeological material also suggests that while the Scythian culture was spreading through different regions of Eastern Europe (during and after the western Asian military campaigns) it was rather uniform and when this process was over—approximately in the latter half of the 6th century BCE—a certain cultural separation of several parts of this region took place. Most likely it was related to the formation of the ethnic map described by Herodotus. Apparently the historian determined the ethnic borders of Scythia in his time rather accurately and the regions of the Levoberezhye of the Don and Ciscaucasia were not part of this territory. According to Herodotus, the Sarmatians, a tribe which was related to the Scythians and spoke a similar language but which had been 'spoiled from the earliest times' lived to the east of the Don. Herodotus says that this is explained by the fact that the Sarmatians originated from an alliance between Scythian young men and militant women, the Amazons (IV, 110–117). Translating this legend-based data into the language of ethnic history (and most historians acknowledge the presence of a historical component in them) it can be assumed that the Sarmatian language would have been close to the Scythian dialect and the people ethnically related to the Scythians, although the Sarmatian culture became isolated in the process of ethnic development and acquired certain additional features. It is interesting that Diodor (II, 43) and Pliny the Elder (VI, 19) both consider the Sarmatians as originating in Media and this can probably be interpreted as an indication of the fact that this people was formed after the Scythians had returned from their western Asian military campaigns. The separation of their culture from the main core of Scythian culture appears to have taken place at that time.

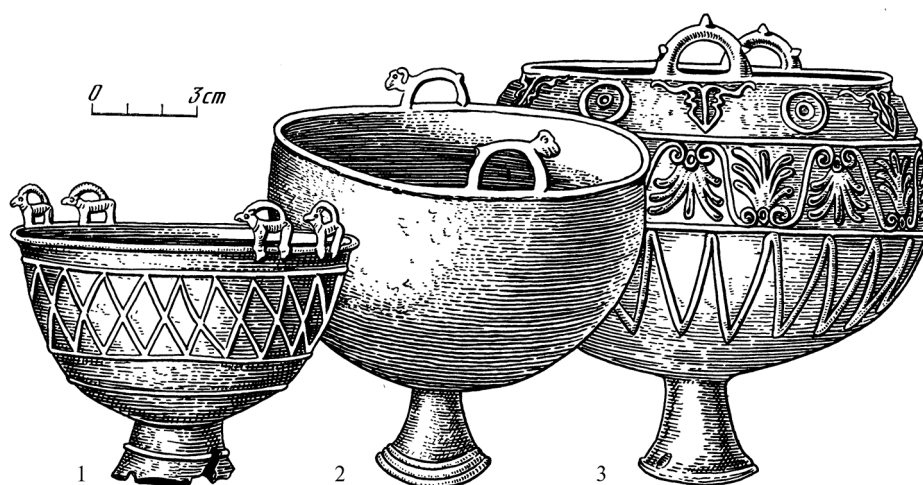
In modern archaeology, burial mounds of the Scythian epoch situated between the Don and Volga rivers are customarily attributed to the Sarmatian people, while more eastern complexes found in the Southern Cis-Ural region and bearing many similarities to Sarmatian ones are attributed to other peoples—

the Issedons, Massagetae and Dahae, mentioned in antique sources.

The problem of reconciling verbal and archaeological data when determining the borders between the Scythians and their northern neighbours is pertinent as well. Different researchers interpret this matter in different ways, with diverging opinions regarding which eastern-European tribes and peoples mentioned by Herodotus should be identified as the bearers of forest-steppe cultures—the ones whom he places to the north of the Scythian border, or the ones the ancient source attributes to the Scythians? Some historians deny the ethnic unity of Scythia as described by Herodotus, considering it a purely political polyethnic institution. In this case, the bearers of Scythian forest-steppe cultures are called 'pseudo-Scythians'. [Ilyinskaya, Terenozhkin, 1983, pp. 229–230, Rybakov, 1979]). Under this interpretation, northern neighbours of Scythia are placed in the forest area, identifying them with the creators of the so-called ancient sites' cultures. In this case, it should be acknowledged that the lifestyle and material culture of these peoples were fundamentally different from those of the Scythians.

Nevertheless, currently most Scythologists believe that the Iranian-speaking Scythians are accountable only for the steppe culture that was prevalent between the Don and Danube rivers, while many similar yet not identical monuments of the steppe were left by other peoples living along the northern border of Scythia [Grakov, Melyukova, 1954, Grakov, 1971]. At the same time, it is quite plausible that the Scythians took Section In the formation of these forest-steppe cultures—the ones who dispersed through various regions of Eastern Europe after their return from Western Asia, assimilating with the local tribes and introducing Scythian features to their culture. Later, all of these regions separated from the Scythian territory and from each other in the cultural and political sense, similar to the Sarmatians.

According to Herodotus, the Budins were Scythia's eastern-most neighbours to the north, bordering the habitat of the



Metallic crockery.

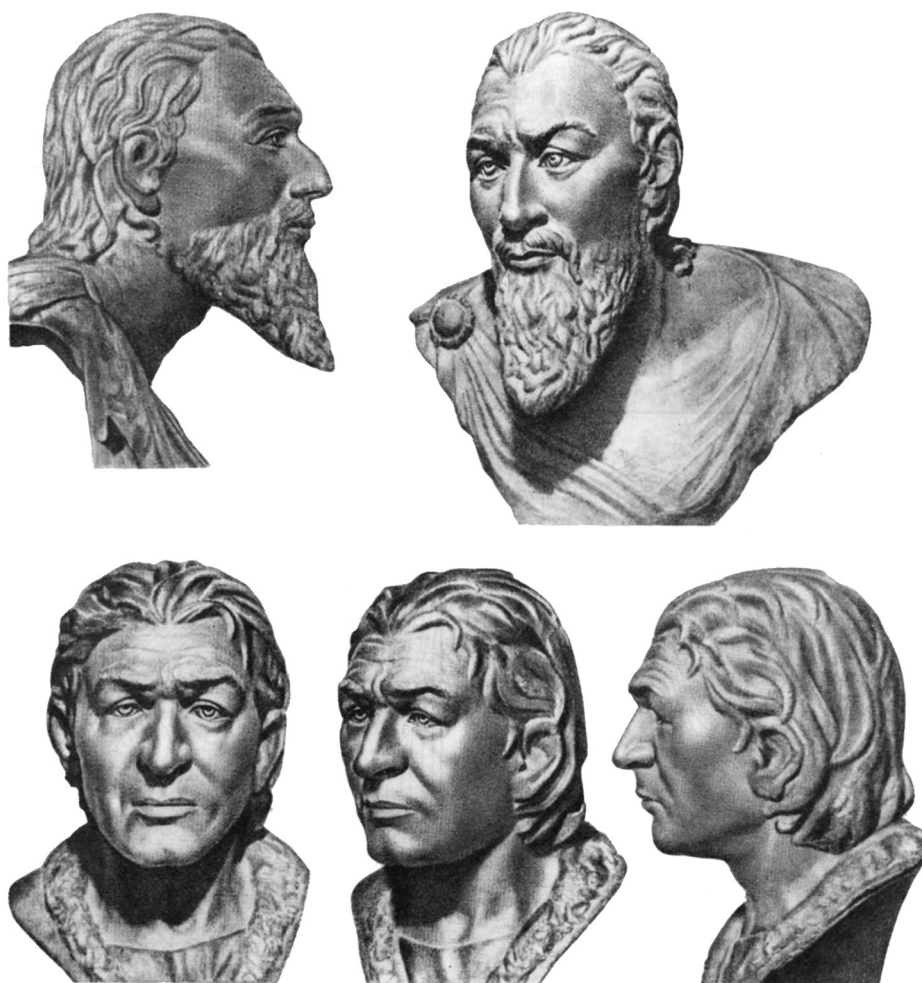
1, 3: Tolstaya Mogila, 2: Kelermes [The steppes of the European part, 1989, p. 351]

above-mentioned Sauromates. The historian described them as a great and plentiful people (IV, 108). According to Herodotus, the Geloni also lived here among them. They were alleged to have Hellenes origins, having moved from coastal cities to the land of the Budins, speaking partly Scythian and partly Greek. They were distinguished from the Budins by their appearance, form of economy, and way of life (IV, 108). According to Herodotus, the Melanchlens lived to the west of the Geloni and Budins and to the north of the Scythians. We do not know who these people were because the antique historian provided only their Greek name, which means 'wearing black clothes' (IV, 107). We are not interested in other northern neighbours of the Scythians dwelling closer to the west—the Androphagi, Neuri and Agathyrsi—because they were situated too far from the territory under consideration.

It is not easy to place the habitats of the above-mentioned peoples on the real map of Eastern Europe, including the archaeological map. It is notable that Herodotus not only lists the peoples bordering Scythia to the north, but also provides some information about them. While attributing all these peoples to 'special', 'non-Scythian' ones, at the same time he unequivocally emphasises

a cultural closeness between many of them and the Scythians. For example, he mentions that the Neuri have Scythian customs (IV, 105), and that the Androphagi have their own non-Scythian language, while leading a nomadic life and having similar clothes to the Scythians (IV, 106). He says that the Melanchlens have Scythian customs, although they are another, non-Scythian tribe (IV, 107). All this supports the hypothesis that Scythian cultures of Eastern European forest-steppes belong to none other than these peoples. That is why the Budins, for example, are considered to have a homogeneous culture with a habitat that covers the regions between the Dnieper and Don rivers midstream. Their region of settlement extends to the borders of the land of the Neuri to the west, and to the east it occupies the regions to the north of the Sarmatians living beyond the Don.

Another argument in favour of this archaeological identification of the land of the Budins is the identification of the enormous Belsky ancient town, situated in the Vorskla river basin, with the city of Gelonus, described by Herodotus, which was allegedly situated in this country. Most researchers are of the opinion that the wooden walls of this city, 30 stadions long on each side and with a perimeter of 120 stadions (about



Reconstruction of the Scythians by M. Gerasimova [The steppes of the European part, 1989, p. 353].

25 km), along with the wooden houses and cathedrals, correspond quite well to the archaeological data on the Belsky ancient town [Shramko, 1987].

Most peoples that, according to information provided by the antique tradition, dwelled in the northern outskirts of Scythia, can be approximately correlated with certain groups of archaeological sites of the forest-steppe area of Eastern Europe. Of course, we have to acknowledge that some of the information about these peoples—for example, the assertion that the Geloni originated from the Hellenes—are not true.

Naturally, the ancient world knew much less about lands situated further from the

Black Sea Scythia, whether towards the north or deeper into Eurasia. It is quite telling that in his descriptions of the habitats of peoples living to the north of the Scythians, Herodotus concludes every passage in the following way: There is a land 'over' the Neuri 'that is uninhabited as far as we know' (IV, 17), the country situated 'over' the Androphagi is 'a real desert, with no human tribe there as far as we know' (IV, 17), 'swamps and a uninhabited land as far as we know' lie 'over' the Melanchlens (IV, 20). It is completely evident that Herodotus had no information on the inhabitants of lands farther to the north, envisioning nearly the entire northern half of Eastern Europe as an uninhabited desert. The

abundance of archaeological monuments from different periods, including the first millennium BCE, indicates how incongruent this view is with the historical reality. These monuments include, in particular, numerous above-mentioned ancient sites' cultures situated in forest areas extending from the Cis Ural to the Baltics. However, we have almost no knowledge of the ancient ethnogeography of these lands because the ancient world was unfamiliar with them.

Yet we unexpectedly uncover a breach in the wall of ignorance barring the peoples of north-eastern Europe from the ancient tradition. It is situated at the northern frontier of the land of the Budins. According to Herodotus (IV, 122), there is a desert directly behind it, as well as above other peoples of this region, extending across seven days of travel. However, further, if one travels eastward, one will arrive to the land of the Thyssagetae and Iirks, and travelling to the north-east, one will find 'other Scythians' who allegedly separated from the 'Royal Scythians' and settled on this land. Moving deeper into the continent, Herodotus situates the habitat of the Aremphaei, a people that dwell at the foot of lofty mountains, bald from their birth, flat-nosed, and broad-chinned. They speak a special language, but wear Scythian clothes and are remarkable for their sense of justice, earning the respect of all the neighbouring peoples.

This fragment is especially interesting to us because it is directly related to the history of the lands that are part of present-day Tatarstan. Why was Herodotus familiar only with the lands on this specific route out of all the remote continental provinces of the Black Sea Scythia? He answers this question by relating that both the Scythians and Hellenes from coastal cities know this route, and that travellers along this route resort to services of interpreters speaking seven different languages. It is evident that we are dealing with a description of an ancient trade route connecting the Black Sea region with remote provinces situated deep inland.

Certainly, Herodotus' story about his trip to the land of the Aremphaei presents a mix

of real and semi-mythical evidence. For example, the latter include the mention of these people's exceptional sense of justice and details about lands lying to the north of the country of the Aremphaei—statements that are assessed critically even by Herodotus: here, in impassable mountains, a goat-legged people are alleged to dwell, and higher yet, the one-eyed Arimasps, who are always at war with the gryphon, who guard gold—a plentiful resource in this country. It would be absurd to treat these improbable details as an ethnographic source on the lands under consideration. Nevertheless, they are quite helpful, allowing us to narrow down the general location of the trade route described by Herodotus. G. Bongard-Levin and E. Grantovsky [1983] compared these stories to the concept of an impassable chain of mountains extending along the northern edge of inhabited lands, common in the mythology of most Indo-Iranian peoples, as well as the concept of the land of the blessed, situated nearby, which can be correlated to the Aremphaei in the story under consideration. Apparently, the legendary details in this story come from Scythian mythology and simultaneously indicate that the trade route described by Herodotus is generally oriented northward.

There is archaeological evidence supporting this conclusion, allowing us to presumptively identify the peoples dwelling along this route. According to Herodotus, the land of the Tussagets and Iirks living with them, beyond the lands of the above-mentioned Sarmatians and the Budins, and beyond the 'desert' situated above them, which should probably be considered an underpopulated province. Apparently, it should be identified with the geographical range of the *Gorodets culture*—one of the ancient sites' cultures occupying the basin of the Oka and the right bank of the Middle Volga. Apparently, its bearers belonged to Ugro-Finns peoples, considered to be the ancestors of the modern Mordvins. To the north of this region, there is an area where another culture of the early Iron Age—the *Ananjino culture*—was prevalent, also likely belonging to a Finnish-speaking people. For

our purposes, what is important is that we frequently find Scythian articles dated to the 7–6th centuries BCE, combined with items specific to Central Caucasia and even Urartu at some Ananjino burial sites situated along the Volga where it is joined by the Kama and Vetluga. The same combination of Scythian and Caucasian items are found at burial sites in Central Caucasus, which are similar to the mentioned Ananjino monuments, allowing us to reconstruct the resettlement of a group of warriors from the Caucasus to the Middle Volga approximately at the same time as Scythians returning from Western

Asia through the Caucasus were resettling in various regions. In this case, Scythian and Caucasian items found at Ananjino burial sites can be considered archaeological traces of the 'other Scythians' who, according to Herodotus, separated from the main body of their people and moved far to the north-east of Europe [Pogrebova, Rayevsky, 1992, p. 195]. This is one of the few cases when a historian has been able to sufficiently correlate information provided by the ancient tradition with archaeological materials concerning remote inland provinces of Eastern Europe.

Sergey Klyashtorny

Saka

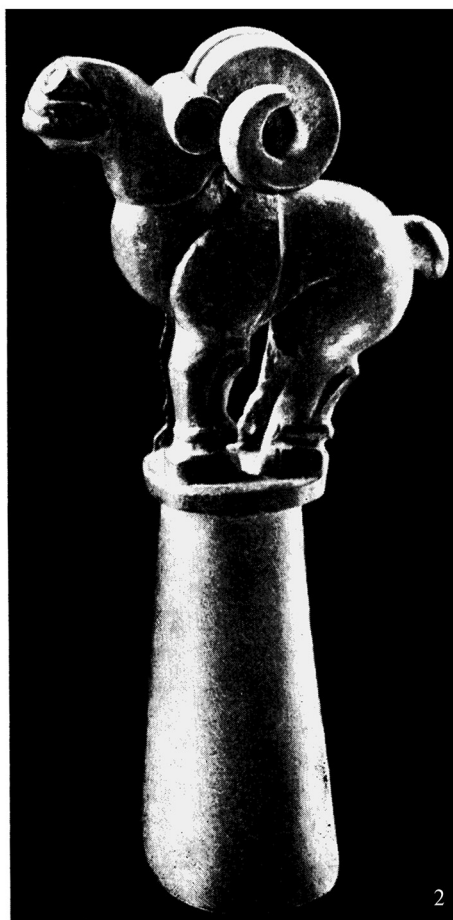
It is customary to denote the epoch of Sacae and Sarmatian domination of the steppes either by archaeological terminology or terminology with ethnographic rather than historical significance: 'the early Iron Age', 'the age of early nomads', 'the Scythian era'. In the latter case, the self-designation of one of the nomadic tribes of the Black Sea region was attributed to the entire nomadic world of the Eurasian steppes (*skuda* or *shkuda*, and later, a plural form—the *Scolots*). 'All together, they were called Scolots... But the Greeks called them Scythians,' wrote Herodotus [IV, 6]. Armaments and horse harnesses typical of the Scythians, distinctive Scythian clothes, and 'animalistic style' in art were found by archaeological excavations between the Huang He (Yellow River) and the Danube, substantiating a common name for the culture established in the steppes by the 9–8th centuries BCE and lasting there at least till the 3rd century BCE.

What did the nomadic Scythian tribes residing to the east of the Volga call themselves? The first answer to this question can be found in the famous Behistun Inscription—a rock inscription by Darius I (who ruled between 522–486 BCE) relating to the early years of his reign, in which the tribes living beyond the Syr Darya are called *Saka*. We will come back to the story of Darius again at a later time. In the meantime, let us note that Herodotus, whose 'History' was completed between 430 and 424 BCE, asserted that: 'the Persians call all the Scythians "Saka"' [VII, 64]. Indeed, in his inscription from Naqsh-e Rostam, king Darius uses the name '*Saka Paradraya*', meaning 'Sacae beyond the sea', not only to refer to Central Asian nomads, but also to nomads from the Black Sea coastal area, whom the Greeks had referred to as Scythians. The founders of the powerful Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BCE), who called themselves 'Persians' and 'Aryans from the Arian tribe', were well familiar with their neighbours and tribes-

men. They did invent the name of the people used so extensively by the Achaemenid dynasty. The name 'Saka' appeared in written Western Asian sources long before the Achaemenid inscriptions.

In the late 8th–early 7th centuries BCE, Assyrian kings were very troubled by the devastating raids of their lands by horsemen whom they called '*Gimmiri*'. Three hundred years later, Herodotus wrote about the withdrawal of the *Cimmerians*—a people that were native to the Black Sea region—to Asia as they were pushed back by the Scythians. Both Cimmerians and Scythians, who followed them southwards, created small kingdoms in Asia Minor and Northern Iran that became a threat to the neighbouring tribes. Currently it is supposed that the name *Cimmerians* (Assyrian-Babylonian *Gimmiri*) is not a tribal name at all, but an ancient Iranian denotation of mobile cavalry detachments making raids [Dyakonov, 1981, pp. 90–100]. To the Cimmerians' neighbours, this became the name of militant tribes of mounted archers whose culture and way of life were identical to those of the Scythians-Scolots, according to archaeologists [Ivanchik, Alekseev, Kachalova, Takhtasiev].

The self-designation of the Sacae became known only after an inscription was found in a cathedral of goddess Ishtar in the course of archaeological excavations in Assyrian Nineveh. A marble plate found there contained an inscription by the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (who ruled between 669–631 BCE). It mentions the Gimmiri and their chief Tugdamme, who later died in Cilicia, referring to him as 'the tsar of the Sacae'. However, the text may also be interpreted differently [Medvedskaya, 1994]. A decipherment of Ashurbanipal's inscription revealed that the Persians did not invent the name of their nomadic neighbours, but had used their self-designation—one that was not tribal, but was common to all nomadic tribes neighbouring the Persians in Central



Bronze finial of the early Scythian period [Gryaznov, 1980, p. 40].

Asia and the Middle East. Despite the discussion of the term found in the inscription at the cathedral of goddess Ishtar, it should be noted that the Persians called the Sacae, whom they knew well, 'Cimmerians' in the Akkadian version of the Behistun Inscription [Dandamaev, 1977, p. 32]. The Gimmiri-Cimmerians and Scythians from the coastal Black Sea region who 'came from Asia', according to Herodotus, as well as all the nomads of the Aral Sea and Zhetysu regions who were forced to pledge allegiance to the empire, also belonged to this group of tribes [Grantovsky, pp. 84–85, Rayevsky, pp. 143–144].

The fact that the Saka tribes were aware of their genealogical and cultural unity, as expressed by their common self-designation and similar languages, actually suggests the existence of local ethno-territorial groups

and tribal unions large and small. The names of some of them were recorded in the rare specimens of surviving written texts composed by their neighbours. We know of two groups of ancient texts presenting evidence on the Sacae: cuneiform petrographic inscriptions by Achaemenid kings and compositions of Greco-Roman authors, beginning with Herodotus. The Achaemenid political and historiographic tradition was expressed to some extent in compositions by writers of antiquity, although other types of information were prevalent, obtained in various ways and through various agents. For example, Herodotus obtained his information not only from the Persians, but also from Greeks of the coastal Black Sea region who were well familiar with the local Scythians, who personally traveled Scythian lands and collected data about the

routes leading to the east. This entire body of informational has three 'tiers'. The lowest or earliest tier is based on evidence from ancient Persia inscriptions and the 'Scythian story' of Herodotus. The second tier comprises information collected and preserved by the Hellenes during and immediately after the military campaigns of Alexander the Great and his political successors (the Epigones) in Central Asia. Finally, the third tier comprises evidence from Greek and Latin writers who not only reproduced earlier stories, but also transmitted messages received from their contemporaries, who had interacted in various ways with Central Asian peoples and countries. Information about Central Asian 'Barbarians' recorded on paper at the other extreme of the ecumene (the Ecumene of the time) in the Han Empire (ancient China)—is synchronous with this chronological tier.

From the point of view of foreign historiographers, the main political events in inland Asia in the 6–4th centuries BCE were relations with the Achaemenid dynasty, and in the 4th–3rd centuries BCE, the military campaign of Alexander the Great in the east and the emergence of Greek or Hellenised states in central Asia. The main events stipulating the content of the third informational tier were the collapse of Central Asian Hellenism under pressure from the nomadic periphery and the establishment of the Great Silk Road, for the first time connecting the supercivilisations of the Far East and Mediterranean via Central Asia.

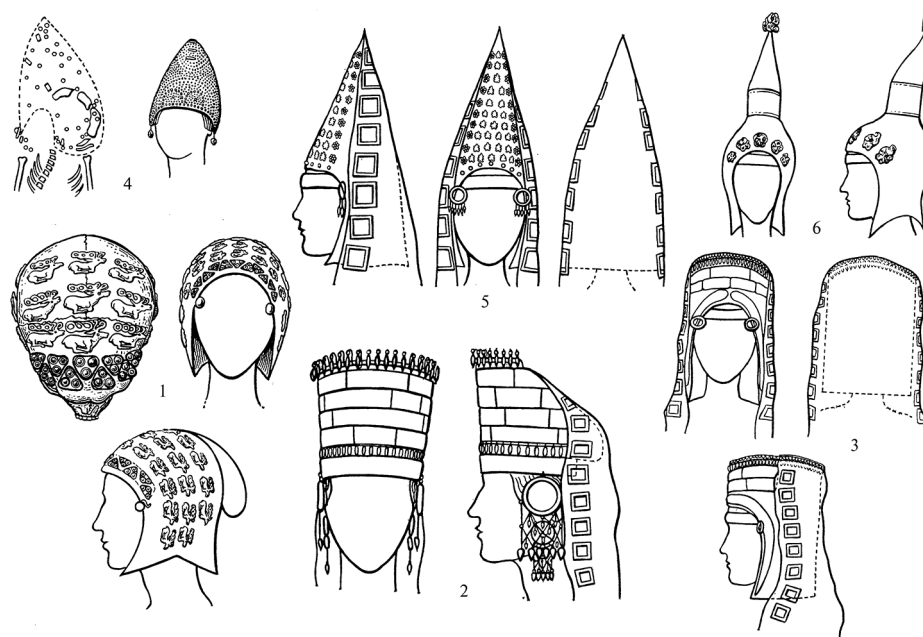
For the historians of antiquity, Cimmerian and Scythian invasions of Western Asia and the coastal Black Sea region in the 8–7th centuries BCE marked the beginning of the saga of the Saka. It continued with military campaigns led by the Achaemenid kings Cyrus and Darius against the Sacae beyond the Ox and Yaksart (the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, respectively) and against the Saka 'beyond the sea', meaning from the coastal Black Sea region, who were the Scythians-Scolots according to Herodotus. With these events in the background, the initial information appeared about the homeland of the Saka tribes, their life on their land, their customs and traditions,

their tribes, their northern and eastern neighbours, although this information was not always clear or fully authentic.

In 558 BCE, Cyrus, the grandson of Cyrus, king of Parsuash from the Achaemenid dynasty, became the leader of Persia tribes in the south-west of the Iranian Plateau. His small kingdom neighboured the four most powerful powers of the time—Media (on the Iranian plateau), Lydia (in Asia Minor), Babylonia (between the Tigris and Euphrates), and Egypt. In 553 BCE, Cyrus rebelled against his suzerain, the Median king Astyages, and three years later he had settled into the palace of the former Iranian ruler. In 547 BCE, the Lydian kingdom of Croesus was destroyed, followed by Babylonia in 539 BCE. No one could withstand the Persia army.

However, before the conquest of Babylonia, in 545–539 BCE, Cyrus directed his main army forces to the east. There is very little information about Cyrus' first military campaign, and the available information is not quite accurate. Nevertheless, the Behistun Inscription reveals that Darius inherited lands from Cyrus that extend to the North-West boundary of India, including the land of the Sacae. Ancient historians report that the city-fortress of Kurishtish (apparently, *Kuru-shkata*, meaning 'the city of Cyrus') was erected at the border with the Saka, near Yakhsha Arta (the Syr Darya). Later, it was named Cyropolis by companions of Alexander the Great. The thick walls of Cyropolis were broken with great effort by Macedonian siege towers and the captured fortress was renamed *Alexandria Eskhata*—'Alexandria the Farthest'.

Cyrus set out on his second military campaign, which turned out fatal for him, to the east in 530 BCE at the age of 70. Apparently, the situation at the eastern border called for decisive measures. One hundred years later, Herodotus will call Cyrus' adversaries '*Massagetae*', a large and powerful tribe. According to Herodotus, the Massagetae lived on plains to the east of the Caspian Sea and beyond the Araks river, forty branches of which end in mires and swamps, and one branch flowing into the Caspian Sea. Amu Darya is called Araks here, with Uzboy, full-flowing



Scythian head-dresses. Reconstruction by T. Miroshina.

1–bashlyk from burial mound 17 in Zlatopol, 2–cone-shaped head-dress of a 'tsarina' from Chertomlyk, 3–cone-shaped head-dress of a tsar from Kyul-Oba, 4–bashlyk from burial mound 100 in Sinyavka, 5–kalaf from the tomb of Tolstoy, 6–tiara from burial mound 22 of sovkhos [state farm] 'Krasny Perekon' [European Steppes, 1989, p. 348].

at the time, being its main distributary. To reach the Massagetae, Cyrus erected bridges and 'towers on vessels for crossing the river' [Herodotus, I, 205].

The ancient literature presents several thrilling, yet absolutely legendary narrations, about Cyrus' last military campaign, involving the Massagetaen queen Tomyris, who allegedly had Cyrus' head thrown into a wineskin filled with human blood after his demise in the fatal battle. Even Herodotus called this version 'one of numerous stories about the death of Cyrus'. What is certain is the fact that Cyrus died in combat on the shore of the Uzboy (that is, Amu Darya) river in early August 530 BCE, and his body was not captured by enemies. It was delivered to Pasargadae and buried there, with a magnificent shrine over the grave that has been preserved to the present day. It is still unclear whether the Persia army was defeated after losing its king, or left the conquered lands at the banks of Amu Darya.

The ancient tradition uses different names for Cyrus' adversaries. Herodotus calls them

the *Massagetae*, Ctesias the Cnidian—a physician who returned to Greece in 398 BCE after 17 years at the Persia court—calls them the *Derbiks*, Berossus—a Babylonian pagan priest, historian and astronomer writing in Greek in the 3rd century BCE, who was well-versed in Greek and Persia traditions, calls the tribe battling Cyrus '*the Dahae*'.

In 522 BCE, Cyrus' distant relative, Darius, acceded the throne in Iran, which was in a state of turmoil. The countries conquered before, including the land of the Sacae, were eager to restore their independence. Darius began rebuilding the empire and rebels were punished mercilessly. The carnage of Margiana (or Merv, the present-day city of Mary in Turkmenia) was particularly ruthless. The city was crushed by Dadar-shish, a Persia, the satrap in Bactria who remained loyal to Darius. According to German researcher J. Junge, the Sacae were also crushed and subordinated together with the Margianians [Junge, p. 182].

Eleven years after Cyrus' death and in the third year of the reign of Darius (519 BCE),



Scythian head-dresses. 1—Melgunovsky burial mound, 2—on the relief of the Scythian Naples, 3—on a pectoral from the tomb of Tolstoy, 4—on a vase from Kyul-Oba, 5—Kelermes [European Steppes, 1989, p. 348].

the king expressed concern about the events in the east: 'Thus says King Darius: Then I led my troops against the land of the Sacae. Then the Sacae, wearing pointed hats, came forth to begin the battle. When I came to the river, I crossed it with all my troops. Then I crushed a part of the Sacae and took the other part captive... (excerpt—*S.K.*) Their chief,

called Skunkha, was captured and brought to me. Then I appointed another man to be their chief as I wished. Then the country became mine.' [Dandamaev, 1985, pp. 100–101]) This is the text of Darius' victorious inscription on Mount Behistun about his campaign against the Sacae Tigrahauda, 'the Sacae with pointed hats'. This text is the first to name one of the

Saka tribal unions. However, the name used here was made up by the Persians, who accentuated a specific feature of the clothing of this tribe.

The scene of battle between the king and the Saka-Tigrahauda is engraved in one of Darius' seals, where one defeated enemy is shown lying at the feet of the captor, while the king holds another, wearing a pointed hat, in his left hand, preparing to strike a blow with a dagger. Before this battle, the Sacae Tigrahauda were not subordinated to the Persians: Darius does not call them rebels and does not accuse their chief Skunkha of telling lies, meaning a revolt against the current authority. In the Behistun Inscription, Skunkha was not depicted with a bare head like other rebels, but wearing a pointed hat half his size. He also says nothing about the execution of Skunkha, but only notes his replacement with another chief of the Saka, whom Darius favoured. Consequently, Darius' military campaign against the Sacae Tigrahauda was not a punitive action, but the submission of a previously unconquered people [Dandamaev, 1985, p. 101].

The location of the land of the Sacae Tigrahauda is determined by the name of the large river (the word '*Draya*—sea, large river' was used) that Darius crossed before the battle. The river is not named in the inscription, but there is indirect evidence indicating that the Syr Darya was the large river separating the Persians from the Sacae at the time. In some inscriptions engraved on golden and silver plates (which were placed in the foundations of royal palaces), Darius determines the boundary of his empire at the extreme north-east as the land of 'the Sacae, beyond Sogdia', and at the extreme south-west as Kush (Ethiopia). As Ibn Litvinsky noted, 'In these inscriptions, Darius undoubtedly wished to demonstrate the colossal size of his domain, showing how remote the extreme boundaries are. At the same time, as astutely noted by V. Struve, the geographical definitions are provided from the standpoint of a Western Iranian, to whom Sogdia was situated in the north-east and Ethiopia—in the south-west. It follows that the inscriptions must point to the

Sacae living to the north-east of Sogdia' [Litvinsky, p. 169]. Samarkand was the centre of Sogdia (*Marakanda* in Greek), but in the east Sogdia bordered Fergana and Chach (district of Tashkent). The land of the Sacae situated to the north-east of Sogdia and subordinated to the Persians was separated from Sogdian lands by the Syr Darya.

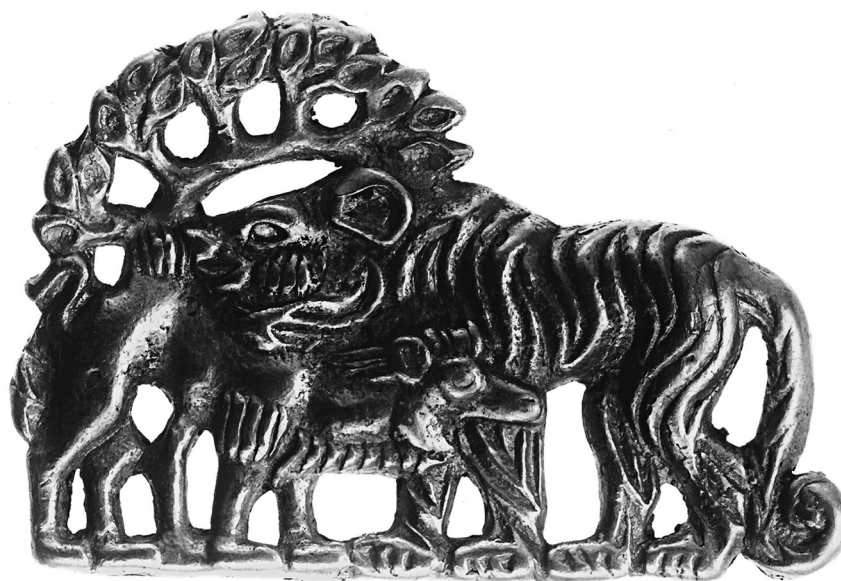
In their inscriptions, Darius and his successor Xerxes (who ruled between 486–464 BCE) name one more tribal union of the Central Asian Sacae, subordinated to the Persians. They are called the *Saka Haumavarga*, meaning 'venerating Haoma'. Haoma was a stimulant drink made of ephedra juice and consumed during cultic rituals. 'Golden-eyed Haoma' was an Arian deity who was the first to perform the ritual crushing of haoma and prepare the cultic drink. He is solemnly praised in the 'Mihr Yasht':

We venerate Mitra,
to whom the illustrious,
powerful, golden-eyed,
Haoma the Healer said his prayers,
standing on the peak
of the tall Harati mountain...
He was the first priest to raise Haoma,
ornamented with stars
and created by the spirit,
to the tall Harati mountain.

[Avesta, pp. 75–76].

The dwelling place of Haoma is the tall Harati—the Pamir-Alay mountain country and the adjoining mountain systems, where the ephedra plant grows abundantly. This is where the main lands of the Saka Haumavarga were situated—in the mountains of the Pamir-Alay, the valleys at the foot of the tall Harati, primarily in Fergana and Eastern Turkestan. A distant offspring of the language of these Saka was the Hotano-Saka language, preserved in manuscripts dated to the 8–10th centuries in oases of Eastern Turkestan. In cases where Achaemenid inscriptions contain only the word 'Saka' without any specifying terms or definitions, they refer to the Saka Haumavarga [Dandamaev, 1963, pp. 178–180].

Along with the Saka Haumavarga and Sacae Tigrahauda, the Persepolis inscription by



Golden plate—a struggle between a tiger and two-humped camel. Length: 8.0 cm x 4.0 cm
6th century BCE The Siberian collection of Peter I. Inv. No. 1727 1/16. The State Hermitage

Xerxes also mentions the Dahae among peoples subordinated to the Achaemenid dynasty. Berossus, a Babylonian, had named the Dahae as the victors over Cyrus the Great. Ancient Persia sources do not mention any other 'Scythian peoples' to the east of Iran, while Greco-Roman authors name many.

Herodotus mentions the *Sacae Orthocorymbantes*, meaning 'wearing pointed hats' and the *Saka Amyrgians* (some authors also call them 'the Saka of king Amorg/Omarg') whom researchers confidently identify with the Sacae Tigrahauda and the Saka Haumavarga of the Persians. The Dahae were also mentioned several times. All other ethnonyms of Saka tribes mentioned in ancient sources are absent in the Achaemenid Inscriptions.

The absence of any mention of the *Massagetae*, the main enemies of the Persians since the times of Cyrus, poses quite a mystery. The Uzboy-Khwarezm region, where Cyrus fought the Massagetae, was integrated into the Persian Empire. A magnificent palace was built for the Persia satrap governing Khwarezm and the Aral Sea region (today, this is the site of the Kalaly-Gur ruins excavated by the Khwarezm expedition, led by S. Tolstov in the 1950s) [Stavisky, p. 157].

There is a hypothesis that the Massagetae mentioned by Greek authors were called by another name in Persia inscriptions. A. Herman was the first to propose such a hypothesis. He was supported by Ibn Litvinsky: 'The Massagetae of ancient sources are identical to the Sacae Tigrahauda... We accept their identification with the Massagetae and place them in the western part of Central Asia' [Litvinsky, pp. 172–173]. Nevertheless, this localisation of the Sacae Tigrahauda diverges greatly from evidence found in Darius' inscriptions, rendering their identification with the Massagetae highly improbable.

If the Massagetae really are present in Achaemenid inscriptions, the powerful tribal union of the Dahae, the more likely to be identified with them. The Dahae, who were mentioned as far back as in the Avesta among tribes that, according to Darius, 'did not venerate Ahura Mazda', were mentioned in Xerxes' Persepolis Inscription in the list of the largest countries and peoples subordinated to this powerful conqueror. The native lands of the Dahae in the 4th century BCE were situated 'beyond the Tanais', that is, beyond Syr Darya, and 'along the Tanais' [Arrian, III, 28], as well as in the Aral Sea region [Strabo, XI, 9]. The

Dahae were mentioned as allies of Darius III Codomannus (336–331 BCE) in his war against Alexander the Great, in which Darius was defeated. During the battle of Gaugamela, which opened the route to the east for Alexander, the Dahae and the Bactrian cavalry fought the elite Macedonian forces—the Companion cavalry, which was the personal milieu of Alexander. Arrian pointed out a characteristic feature of the Dahae's armaments that was uncommon at the time: 'the Scythians and their horses were thoroughly protected by armour' [Arrian, III, 13]. These 'Dahae from the Tanais' fought the Macedonians even Darius was killed, but later they became Alexander's allies during his military campaign in India.

The armour protecting the warriors and horses is an important detail of the Dahae's armament. A century earlier, Herodotus mentioned only the Massagetae to be using similar double armour: 'they hang metal plates on the horses' chests' [I, 215]. The emergence of cataphracts—horsemen in heavy plated armour riding armoured war horses—was remarked not only in written sources, but also documented by archaeological findings in the land of the Dahae and the Massagetae. In the 1950s, the Khwarezm expedition, led by S. Tolstov, excavated the Chirik-Rabat ancient site—'the capital' of the Aral Sea region Saka situated on the Levoberezhnye of the Syr Darya, in the upper course of a dry channel of Zhana Darya. Iron plate armour was found in a burial structure dated to the 4th century BCE [Tolstov, pp. 148–150]. Protective armour of this sort was preserved in later centuries by the Parthians, relatives of the Dahi, and was not noted as having been used by any other steppe tribe.

Three independent compositions from different periods—the Avesta, inscriptions by Xerxes, and works by Arrian—denote tribes of the Dahae by the same name, their self-designation. Otherwise, it would be logical to suppose that there is a common source for all three compositions, which is impossible.

On the other hand, the name '*Massagetae*' was preserved only in ancient historiography, where it unites tribes with different economies, ways of life and cultures, beginning with nomadic horse-breeders and ending

with seal hunters and root collectors wearing 'Wood Bark' [Strabo, XI, 8]. In compositions of Greek authors, the Massagetae are connected only by their territorial unity—the Aral Sea region, Lower reaches of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, and the Uzboy region. They are noted to have some common customs: the remains of group marriage, ritual murder and consumption of the elderly, which are incredibly archaic and cannot be used as evidence of unity. Most likely the name '*Massagetae*' united the whole group of tribal unions connected by infinitely ancient genealogical tradition preserving its meaning in conservative sphere of clan and tribal mythology and ethnonymy depending on it but becoming out of date in the middle of the 1st millennium BCE.

Let us take a closer look at information provided by Arrian, who mentions Scythians-Massagetae and Scythians-Dahae when describing parallel events, which seems to contradict closeness between the two. His narration is based on eye-witness accounts of companions of the Macedonian conqueror, recorded during and after the military campaign. Unlike the exotic, surprising, enticing and repulsive stories told by Herodotus and Strabo, relying on many different sources of information, including from different time periods, Arrian does not praise the valour of the Massagetae (like Strabo) and does not write about 'countless gold and copper' in their country (like Herodotus). But here is a case from the military destiny of the Sogdian Spitamenus, who waged partisan warfare against the Macedonians for almost three years, winning the favour of a detachment of the Massagetae: 'These Scythians (Massagetae) lived in extremely poverty. They had no cities, no housing to call their own, they had nothing to fear losing, so it was easy to draw them into a war... After being defeated, the Massagetae sacked the carts of Bactrians and Sogdians who fought them and fled to the desert with Spitamenes. When they found out that Alexander was going to invade the desert, they beheaded Spitamenes and sent his head to Alexander so he would change his mind' [Arrian, IV, 17].

For Arrian, the Massagetae were the inhabitants of the country situated along the Levo-



Bronze torc. Diameter: 17.5 cm

The 5th–3rd centuries BCE The Siberian collection of the Stroganovs. Inv. No. 1135/11. The State Hermitage

berezhnye of the Ox (Amu Darya), bordering Sogdiana to the west. For him, the Dahae were north-eastern neighbors of Sogdia, inhabitants of the Tanais (Syr Darya) valley. According to Alexander's companions, the Massagetae were the poorest of Scythians, willing to wage any war for the sake of money, and willing to plunder and betray allies. The Dahae were, on the contrary, armour-clad horsemen with war horses covered in iron plates, comprising the elite cavalry of Darius during battles against Alexander, and the avant-garde cavalry of Alexander during battles against the Indian king Porus. Obviously, the Dahae differed greatly from other Scythians, but resembled the Massagetae horsemen from Herodotus' narration.

Neither Arrian nor his informants knew that tribes with different appearances had common territory, common political and cultural centres in the Aral Sea Region, where the towns-camps of kings were situated, and common places of worship venerating Mitra, god of the sun. Burial sites, fortified ancient towns, and settlements they left along the ancient channels of Syr Darya–Zhana Darya, Kuvan Darya, and Inkar Darya–were studied by the Khwarezm expedition. The archaeological findings clearly characterise the

day-to-day routine of cattle-breeding and agricultural tribes of the Aral Sea Region in the 7th–2nd centuries BCE and expose the dependency of the monuments of this period on the monuments of the Bronze Age as well as their genetic connection. This was especially noticeable in excavations of mausoleums of the Bronze Age of Tagisken and Saka burial sites at Tagisken and Uigarak on the Levoberezhnye of the Syr Darya. The continuity in the development of cultures is quite evident here, and it applies to the entire Aral Region to the east of Khwarezm.

The tribes of such a large nomadic union could not be the same, but they could have had the same name. The Massagetae is the common ancient name for tribes living in the Aral Sea Region, having a common genealogical tradition and possibly a common eponym or ancestor, most likely a mythological one after whom the people were named. The ancient eponymic name of the Massagetae was preserved in Iranian onomastics and passed down through the oral tradition: one of the military leaders of Xerxes was called 'Massagetae, son of Oariz' [Herodotus, VII, 71]. It is unknown who was the real hero-eponym of the Massagetae tribes, but he had the same name.

The Dahae were the military core of Syr Darya and Aral tribes, with great significance in the political aspect that was revealed in the Xerxes inscription. That is why we have to allow for the authenticity of Berossus's evidence who called Cyrus' enemies the Dahae. In the 3rd century BCE, the name of the Dahae was completely replaced by an older, more general name—the Massagetae. This process transpired even in the Caspian Sea Region, where since the times of Herodotus Greek historians considered any 'Scythian' tribe the Massagetae. In 238 BCE one of the Dahae tribes, the *Parthians*, headed by the Arashkid dynasty created a new empire in Iran that replaced the successors of Alexander. In the meantime, in the north, in the steppes of Western Kazakhstan and Cis-Ural region, the Dahae-Massagetaen expansion of the 3rd century BC, repeating events that took place a thousand and a half years ago, forced the *Sarmatians*, descendants of the *Sarmatians* of Herodotus, whose language, way of life, and culture were close to the Saka, to leave to Black Sea Scythia.

Some modern researchers suppose that in the 3rd century BCE the Dahae, who moved from the Syr Darya to the Caspian steppes, pushed them away from the lands of the Massagetae. However, it is impossible to provide a sure answer to the question of where the 'removed' Massagetae went, and where they came from. Thus, the Massagetae became the Dahae. The three-century-long story of the degradation of their name came to an end.

In essence, the world of the Trans-Yaksart steppes and mountains was closed to ancient authors. The most ancient data concerning it is provided by Herodotus, relying on a poem by Aristeas from Proconnesus at the Sea of Marmara, the owner of a fulling workshop. Aristeas, seemingly influenced by Apollo, made a six-year-long trip to the east through the land of the Scythians, trying to reach the mysterious Hyperboreans. He reached the country of the *Isseds*, or *Issedons*, and when he came back he expressed his impressions in the poem. Aristey lived in the 7th century BCE [P'yankov, 1978, pp. 184–190]. In the 6–5th centuries BCE Hecataeus of Miletus and Herodotus, told plenty of fabulous stories

heard from the Scythians: 'And the Scythians who come there (to the Greeks) reach agreements with the help of seven translators in seven languages' [Herodotus, IV, 24].

The majority of researchers locate the Issedons in the forest-steppes of the Trans-Ural region and Kazakhstan. Some customs of the Issedons are similar to those of the Massagetae. The leading researcher of the Saka archaeological monuments of Kazakhstan K. Akishev believes that the early Saka culture of Central Kazakhstan, named 'Tasmolinskaya,' belongs to the Issedons whom he definitively relates within the circle of Saka tribes. Moreover, the peak of the Saka culture in Zhetysu and Southern Kazakhstan, according to K. Akishev, is 'the result of resettlement of Issedon tribes in Central Kazakhstan with the almost completely formed Saka culture to the south of Kazakhstan and to Kyrgyzstan' [Akishev, Kushayev, pp. 134–135].

The further story of Herodotus had a frankly legendary character probably because of the translation made in 'seven languages' or 'by seven translators': 'One-eyed men—Arimasps—live above the Issedons. Griffins guarding gold live above them, and Hyperboreans reaching to the sea live above them. Except for the Hyperboreans, all these tribes, beginning with the Arimasps, always attacked their neighbours' [IV, 13]. The reports of endless wars between the tribes, permanent clashes leading to the resettlement of whole peoples were more realistic here than their names: 'The Issedons are replaced by the Arimasps as the Scythians are replaced by the Issedons' [Ibid.] One is reminded of the words of the Scythians rendered by the poet Lucian: 'We always wage wars, we either attack ourselves or rebut attacks or struggle for pastures and plunders' [Khazanov, p. 34].

Archaeological monuments give the clearest idea of the Saka culture in Central Asia and Kazakhstan, first of all, the famous Besshatyr burial mounds at the Il River and the Issyk-sky burial mound which, unusually, is abundant with its finds. The Great Besshatyr burial mound which is 104 m in diameter and 17 m high, surrounded by a wall, represents a veritable architectural achievement.

There was a funeral chamber inside the burial mound made of Tianshan firs. Unfortunately, these 'royal' burial vaults were robbed in ancient times. The burial of 'a golden man' from the burial mound Issyk, dated back to the 4th century BCE, was luckily preserved. A special monograph is dedicated to the description of the burial [Akishev, 1978]. The two-lined inscription consisting of 26 symbols of unknown runic text applied on a silver vase seems to be the most noteworthy among all the finds. It has not been decoded yet. K. Akishev relates the deceased young man to the chiefs of the Sacae Tighrauda.

Now we can offer a further developed definition. As we have already noted, the Saka living behind the Syr Darya near the middle of its course were called 'the Saka wearing pointed hats' in Persia inscriptions. The tiara of the Issyk young man was a parade variant of this head-dress. But the name, on the sole ethnographic sign that is noticeable only to external observers, can hardly be the full name of a people. The clue to the ethnonym may be found in the later history of the Saka tribe.

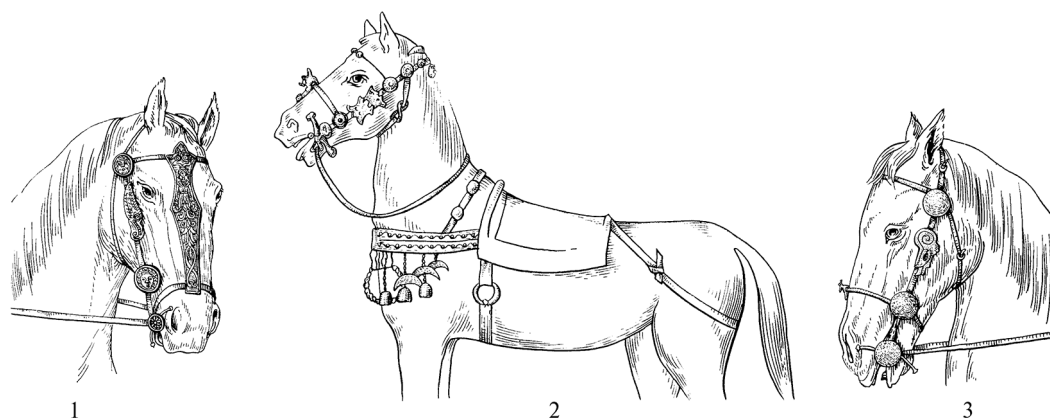
In the 2nd century BCE significant movements of the steppe tribes, caused by the growing powers of the Huns in Central Asia, began. The movement of the Yuezhi tribes to the west after a long and unsuccessful war and the removal of the Wusun from their pastures in Eastern Turkestan fell on the Zhetysu Sakae who are called 'se' in the Chinese chronicles. The Sacae left in several directions, including to the Syr Darya River. Between 141 and 128 BC they crossed the Yaksart and defeated the successors of Alexander in the Greco-Bactrian Tsardom. Tribes, which have been unknown recently, found themselves in the spotlight of ancient authors. Strabo [XI, 8] names four tribes crossing the Yaksart: the Asians, the Pasians (another version is 'the Asians or the Asii', then their number decreases to three), the Tocharoi, and the Sakarauks. Another author Justin, retelling the works of the Roman historian of the 1st century CE Pompeius Trogus, mentions two Scythian tribes—the Sakarauks and the Asians. However, he also mentions the Tocharoi. The table of contents of the unpreserved 42nd book 'Stories' by

Pompeius Trogus contains the following fragment: 'the Asians, having become the kings of the Tocharoi, killed the Sakaravaks (or a variant: 'The Asian kings of the Toka- Rov and the death of the Sarauks') [Justin, XI, 11].

Many pages are dedicated to the history of these mystical tribes in the scientific literature, but there are few original conclusions. Anyway the tribes lived in the east before they had crossed the Yaksart. *The Sarauks* (*the Sakaravaks*, or later *the Sakarauks*) were the Saka group of tribes within this number. Now their name is explained on the basis of ancient Iranian linguistic materials: *Saka Rauka*, meaning 'the light Saka' [Grantovsky, p. 79]. According to another etymology, this ethnonym should be restored as the 'royal Sakas' [Bailey, p. 207]. Most likely they were named the Saka tribe by Chinese dynastic history in its retelling of the banishment of the Se people from Zhetysu. Judging by the unclear report of the author Orosius (referring to the 4th century), relying on early sources on the connections that the Dahae and Sakarauks had with the Ganges River, it is assumed that the Sakarauks, after leaving Zhetysu, initially settled in the Kang kingdom on the middle reach of Syr Darya, which is called *Kang-ku* in Chinese sources. Only after many years the Sakarauks as well as the Asians and Tocharoi conquered Bactria and were 'ruined' there.

If the reconstruction of events was right, the sakaruks, or 'royal sacae,' were the very tribes who owned Zhetysu in the 5th–2nd centuries BCE.

The Saka tribes of Kazakhstan were direct descendants of the Andronovo people—the *Aryans and Turas, the Dahae and the Danes* in Avesta. This undoubted conclusion is confirmed by archaeologists drawing direct connections between the Andronovo and Saka cultures as well as by anthropologists detecting the genetic succession of the population of the Saka period right after the Bronze Age [Akishev, Kushayev, pp. 121–136, Ismagulov, p. 33]. At the same time it was indicated that since the early Saka epoch the dwellers of the Aral and Cis-Uralic steppes had acquired Mongoloid features, which caused their appearance. According to V. Alekseev, 'a broad



Equine equipment of the 4th–3rd centuries BCE
 1, 3—reconstruction by V. Ilyinsky, 2—reconstruction by Ibn Mozolevsky
 [The European Steppes, 1989, p. 341]

zone of Eurasian steppes... (one century earlier than the 1st millennium BCE) was ruffled.' Across them blew the oriental wind. The population started absorbing ethnic influences of Central Asian origins. Many strangers with wiry black hair and slanting eyes appeared among the Europeoids... There were few people like this, but then by the beginning of our era their number had increased' [Alekseev, p. 255].

The breakthrough in economics, and correspondingly the way of life, was the main breakthrough at the turn of the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. The business institution of nomadic stock-raising became a sign of this breakthrough. The transition for the nomadic way of life involved in economic circulation huge unsettled and unused spaces of steppe situated between rivers. The changing herds in the late Andronovo epoch, in which cattle was replaced by horses that did not need daily care and were appropriate for winter pastures, allowed the migration routes to be made longer and seasonal in the early 1st millennium BC. Nevertheless, the growth of herds and economic specialisation caused the growing dependence of the population of the steppe on weather and climatic conditions and on the state of the pastures. Any failure in the natural cycles created a crisis situation that could not be completely compensated by the weakening farming in the winter fields

in the flood-lands of rivers and streams. The nomads themselves hardly realised that the migrations, military campaigns of conquest, and raids were stipulated by critical changes in nomadic economics. It is possible that some of the tribes of the union temporarily reverted to a sedentary or semi-sedentary way of life and even to irrigation farming. For example, archaeologists have observed this for the Dahae and the Massagetae on the Lower Syr Darya. Settlement was also stimulated by the material stratification of the tribe, depending on herds being at the disposal of different families. The poorest families inevitably settled.

The nomadic mode of life in the Eurasian steppes is described in detail in other sections of the book. Now let us note that the emergence of nomadic agriculture was the most rational answer of the society to the change of environment and abrupt growth of population in the late Bronze Age and to the increasing military threat as well. The last one was stipulated by the emergence of horsemen and mounted archers—they were mobile and tactically flexible, with both an ability to move fast and with the incredible stopping power of their armaments.

Ancient authors dedicated many lines to the excellent fighting qualities of the Saka warriors and the incredible speed of their horses. Let us dwell not on a military ep-

isode but instead on a sporting episode that also characterises the ethical norms of the Saka. Xenophon (434–355 BCE), who lived under the Persia court for a long time, said: 'The Persia king established hippodromes for horsemen representing different peoples. A racetrack was five stadiums (about one kilometre.—S. K.) long. When the races started, a young Saka shot ahead and finished first, leaving everybody behind. The Persia king offered the Saka his kingdom in exchange for the horse but he refused, saying that he would give his horse only in exchange for a brave warrior' (quotation rendered by I. P'yankov: [P'yankov, 1975, p. 37]).

When it comes to judgments about the social structure of the Saka society, the poverty of the written records makes us rely on archaeological materials. Indeed, the differences between the enormous burial constructions of nobility and common burials are illustrative and are convincing evidence that the differentiation of the society was rather large-scale. Certainly, material polarisation inside the tribe reinforced the social stratification of the society, but it did not always play the decisive role for the status of its members. Those belonging to a noble clan or personal military fame were not less prestigious than in the Saka tribes.

The Saka kings mentioned in ancient sources had much power, they settled questions of war and peace, sent ambassadors, concluded alliances, and headed troops. During the reign of Ctesias (the late 5th century to the 4th century BCE) the land of the Saka was not a part of any Achaemenid satrapies, and the king of the Saka was considered to be not a citizen but an ally of the Persia king [P'yankov, 1975, p. 32]. Nevertheless, the limits of their power within the tribes are unclear. The king's power was preserved in one clan. Arryan mentions the case when a brother became the heir of the dying king. Reports about tsarinas inheriting power look more unclear. All the data on them

is presented in evidently legendary narrations or connected with literary plots.

The role of a popular assembly was noted in the only available message about negotiations between Alexander and 'the king of the Scythians' after a clash at the Tanais, which the Saka (apparently, the Dahae) lost. The tsar did not consider this battle as a war because, according to him, the groups of the Saka attacked the Macedonians, and the Saka people did not declare war to Alexander. Probably this case is evidence of the fact that the power of tribal chiefs was limited by the decisions and power of the popular assembly—that is, the adult men of the tribe.

Arryan also mentions satraps among the institutions of the tsar's power—that is, governors of a province of a tribe assigned by the tsar. The military-tribe aristocracy came in second place. In general, there is no evidence about the existence of social classes in the Saka society, and one can assume that they existed only by analogy. For example, the mention of Massagetaen infantry may be evidence of horseless members of the Saka community. The evidence of Greek authors on the Scythians of the Black Sea Region, which distinguishes a class of pagan priests apart from the common members of communities and the tribal nobility, can be also attributed to the Saka.

The Wusun in Zhetysu and the Kangju kingdom were direct successors of the Saka traditions in oases near the Syr Darya and the western part of Zhetysu in the first centuries CE. The appearance of the Kangju Tsardom on this territory in the second century BCE most likely was related to the resettlement of the Tocharoi and Sakaruk tribes, sharing with the Wusun the former lands of the Yaksart and Zhetysu Sacae. Nevertheless, the real change of the ethnic, racial, and cultural situation in the region was related to the epoch-making event—the great migration from the east.

Vladimir Ivanov

The Country of Sarmatians and Their Neighbours

In the 6–4th centuries BCE the Sarmatians lived to the east of the Tanais (Don), and according to the ancient geographic tradition that was Asia. Archaeologists K. Smirnov, D. Machinsky, Yu. Desyatchikov, and others identify burial mounds and burial sites in the Volga-Ural Region within the indicated period to this people precisely. Judging by the geography of these monuments, the northern border of the Sarmatian nomads' encampments in the region passed along the basin of the Samara River, the upper reaches of the Dyoma, and slightly covered the spaces of steppe between the Belaya and Dyoma Rivers [Pshenichnyuk, 1983, p. 87, Myshkin, Skarbovenko, 2000, p. 39]. According to the results of research by A. Pshenichnyuk, the eastern border of the land of the Sarmatians passed along the Southern Cis Ural and continued along the Mugodzhzar Hills. There were other nomadic tribes in the steppes of the Southern Trans-Ural region and modern Kazakhstan, which were close to the Sarmatians from the standpoint of their material culture but different in the whole range of ethnocultural signs: first of all, according to their burial ceremonies and clay dishes (these are the signs that are neither items of trade import nor military trophies). According to modern researchers, these tribes are connected by their origins with the Saka-Massagetaen nomadic world of Southern Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

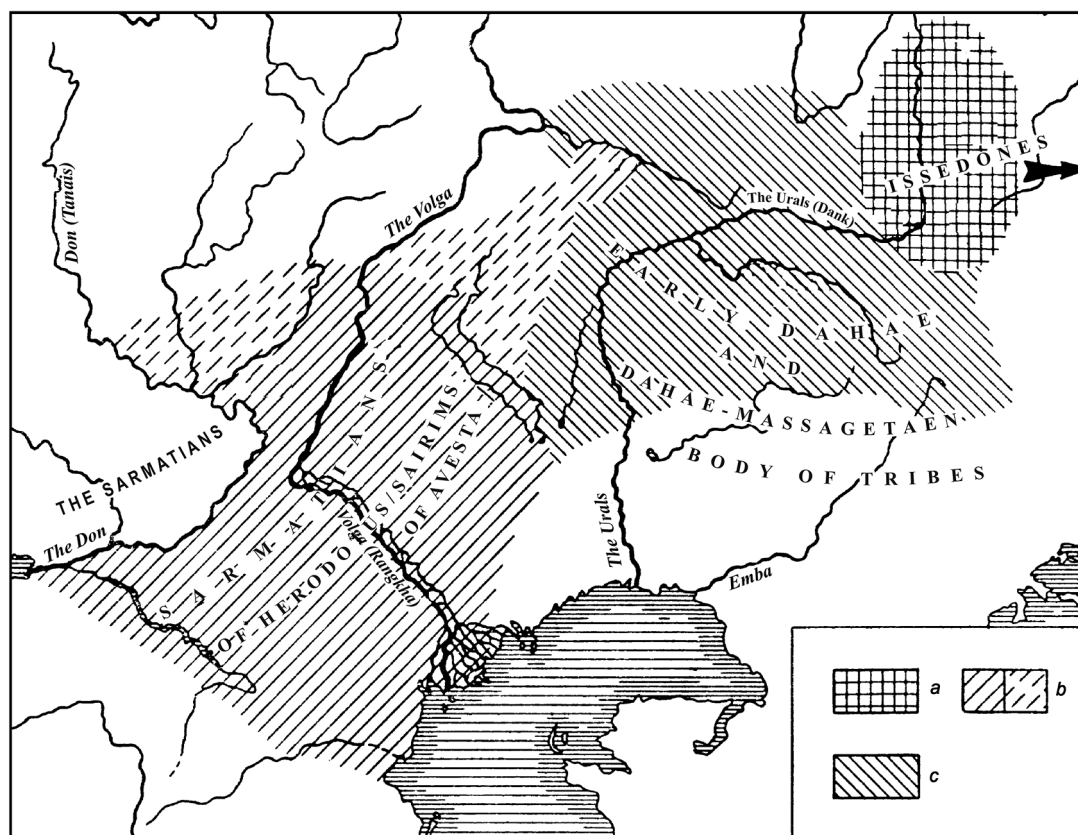
The ethnogenesis of the Volga-Ural Sarmatians is still a rather complicated and unsolved problem of Russian archaeology. The classical theory, of the autochthonous origins of the bearers of Sarmatian culture on the basis of its religious Srubno-Andronovo components, has definitely become old-fashioned. There are no records of the period of cultural genesis in the Volga-Ural steppes that could be dated back to the 8–7th centuries BCE. Apparently, this fact is evidence of

the insufficient population of the Volga-Ural steppe in the indicated period.

So the majority of researchers of the region concluded that the Sarmatian culture had formed in more southern territories—particularly in the Aral Sea Region [Zhelezchikov, 1988, p. 59], from where its bearers came to the Volga-Ural Region. Here the closest eastern neighbours of the Sarmatians were nomadic tribes of the Massagetae, whose penetration into the steppes of the Southern Trans-Ural region is ascribed to the late 6–5th centuries BC [Vasilyev, Savelyev, 1993, p. 4]. The reasons for this migration can be hardly explained now, and researchers suppose that it was caused by military and political events connected with the military campaigns of the Persia tsars Cyrus II and Darius I in Central Asia (530 and 519–512 BC, respectively).

There were few Massagetae in the steppes of the Southern Trans-Ural region so they could not have much influence on the process of cultural genesis of their western neighbours—the Sarmatians. Moreover, in the middle of the 6th century BC burial monuments were laid in the Cis-Ural region's steppes. Their emergence in the region may be related to the migration of a part of the Scythian tribes to the east [Gutsalov, 2000, p. 15].

The situation radically changed in the late 5th century BC, when a powerful ethno-political union of 'Prokhorovo' Sarmatians was formed in the steppes of the Southern Cis-Ural region (it was named after a burial site near the Prokhorovo village on the upper reaches of the Dyoma, researched by renowned Russian archaeologist M. Rostovtsev in 1915). The origins of those people who bore early Sarmatian ('Prokhorovo') culture are still an object of discussions among archaeologists. According to the traditional point of view, Prokhorovo culture is a result of ethnocultural interaction between sepa-



Variants of Sarmatian archaeological culture.
a—Eastern Ural, b—Don-Volga, c—Samara-Ural
[Smirnov, 1984, p. 10]

rate groups of the Volga-Ural Sarmatians and semi-nomadic (ancient Ugric) tribes of the forest-steppe districts of Western Siberia—the bearers of *Sargatskaya culture* [Moshkova, 1974, p. 48]. Adherents of another point of view believe that the nomadic tribes of the Dahae resettling in the Cis-Ural region from the southern-eastern Caspian Sea Region had the leading Section in the institution of the Prokhorovo Sarmatians [Vasilyev, Savelyev, 1993, pp. 5–7]. Finally, there is another hypothesis that the bearers of early Sarmatian (Prokhorovo) culture in the Southern Cis-Ural region and Western Kazakhstan were the very 'separated' Scythians mentioned by Herodotus [Ismagilov, 1996, p. 43].

One way or another, based on available archaeological data in the 4th century BC, it is believed that the Prokhorovo Sarmatians were a powerful tribal union that maintained

contacts with different ethnic groups in Central Asia and in the south of Western Siberia and Altai. The process of material and social differentiation took place within Sarmatian society. The so called 'royal burial mounds' of the 4th–3rd centuries BC from the Southern Cis-Ural region, similar to royal burial mounds in Scythia and Saka burial mounds in Eastern Kazakhstan in terms of their solid constructions and abundant burial inventory, were an illustration of this fact. The Philipian mounds researched by A. Pshenichnyuk in the Orenburg Region in 1986–1987 relate primarily to them.

The territory of the Sarmatian nomadic encampments in the Volga-Ural Region was extended significantly to the west and the south, and in the latter half and the end of the 4th century BC the northern districts of the Volga-Ural steppe (within modern Sama-



The image of a predator and ungulates in the Sarmatian art of the Cis-Ural region:

- 1–Krylovsky khutor, burial mound (1896), 2–the village of Pyanovka, occasional find, 3, 4–Bish-Oba, burial mound, 5, 6, 9, 13–Pyatimay I, burial mound 8, burials of horses, 7–mound group Mechet-Sai, burial mound 2, burial 2, 8–the village of Abramovka, burial mound Black Mountain, 10–Isakovsky settlement, burial mound 15, 11–Kairankul lake in Kustanai Region (excavations by S. Rudenko, 1921), 12, 15–Pyatimay I, burial mound 6, burial 4, 14–Bulycheva settlement at the Ufimka River, occasional find of 1913, 16–collection of N. Vitzen, 17–former Turgai Region, burial mound (1901), 18–Aktobe Region, occasional find, 19–Vanyushi village, burial mound. 1–stone, 2, 5–7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 18, 19–bronze, 3, 12, 15–17–gold, 4, 8–bone, horn, 11–iron [Smirnov, 1964, p. 371]

ra and Orenburg Regions, southern districts of Bashkortostan and Western Kazakhstan) were the main districts of settlements of Sarmatian tribes.

The majority of modern researchers believe that deterioration of environmental conditions in the Cis-Ural steppe (a lasting drought) forcing the Sarmatians to move to



The image of a predator, fantastic animal, and ungulates in Sarmatian art of the Volga Region:

1—the village of Susly (Gertsog), burial mound 5, 2—the village of Zolotushinskoye, a scattered village (1928), 3—the village of Kovylovka, burial mound (1923), 4—the village of Friedenberga (Mirnoye), group 1, burial mound 5, burial 1, 5—the village of Berezhnovka, group II, burial mound 97, burial 3, 6–11, 13, 14—the village of Blumenfeld (Tsvetochnoye), burial mound A 12, 12—the village of Kalinovka, burial mound 8, burial 35, 1, 2—gold, all the rest is made of bones.

[Smirnov, 1964, p. 370].

more favourable natural regions of Eurasia was the reason for this migration. The reinforcement of military activity of Western Siberian Ugric people, who were the closest neighbours of the Sarmatians in the Trans-Ural Region, could be a supplementary factor of Sarmatian migration to the west. Histori-

ans for a long time connected the decay of the Great Scythia in the late 4th–early 3rd centuries BC to the Sarmatians [Smirnov, 1984, pp. 66–69, 118–123]. Nevertheless, studies of Sarmatian monuments in the steppes between the Don and the Dnieper show that the Sarmatians appeared to the west of the Don



Small scent-bottle with the depiction of animals.
Gold

The 1st century CE Lower Don, Novochoerkassk,
burial mount Khokhlach. Occasional find from 1864
Inv. No. 2213/6. The State Hermitage

not earlier than the 2nd century BCE—that is, almost 100 years after the Scythians had left the Black Sea and Dnieper steppes. Consequently, they played a significant Section In the destruction of Great Scythia. However, based on reports of classical authors, it is believed that the Sarmatians were quite active on military-political map of the south of Eastern Europe at the turn of the 3rd—the 2nd centuries BCE. For example, Polyaeus mentions the peace treaty concluded by Pon-

tus Tsar Pharnaces and neighbouring states in his 'History.' Sarmatian tsar Gatal was named among them. Polyaeus speaks of the Sarmatian Tsarina Amaga who ward off the Scythian raid in the Chersonesus according to the treaty with its population. In the late 2nd century the Sarmatian Roxolani tribe entered into an alliance with the Scythians and fought against Mithradates Eupator, the tsar of Pontus, who later persuaded the Sarmatians to take Section In the combat against the Romans.

The Sarmatian tribes of Eastern Europe during that period were not a homogeneous ethnocultural body. Classical authors (*Strabo* and others), when enumerating the nomadic tribes who supported the Pontus kingdom, name not only the Roxolani but also the Aorsi, the Upper Aorsi, the Siraces, and the Yazzygs. In the latter half of the 1st century CE the Alans begin to appear in this conglomeration of Sarmatian tribes in the steppes of Eastern Europe. They left many monuments of the so-called *Middle Sarmatian culture*. The Alans were a nomadic people, which were firstly referred to by Chinese authors in the late 1st millennium BCE to the north of the Aral Sea as a part of the Kangju kingdom. By the late 1st century BCE the Alans had become the leading military-political power in the steppes of Eastern Europe occupying vast territories, beginning with the Caucasus in the east and the Lower reaches of the Danube in the west. The northern provinces of the Roman Empire and Transcaucasia suffered from their devastating raids.

The steppes of the Volga and the Southern Cis-Ural regions were the deep periphery of Alan encampments. This was reflected in a small number of corresponding burial mounds and burial sites of the middle Sarmatian culture of this region. Judging by the geography of middle Sarmatian monuments, the Alans, like their predecessors—Prokhorovo Sarmatians, were localised in the steppe area of the region. The ancient southern edge of the Volga-Ural forest-steppe was their northern border [Ivanov, 1995]. The only district in which the Sarmatian monuments appear beyond the steppe area is the so called

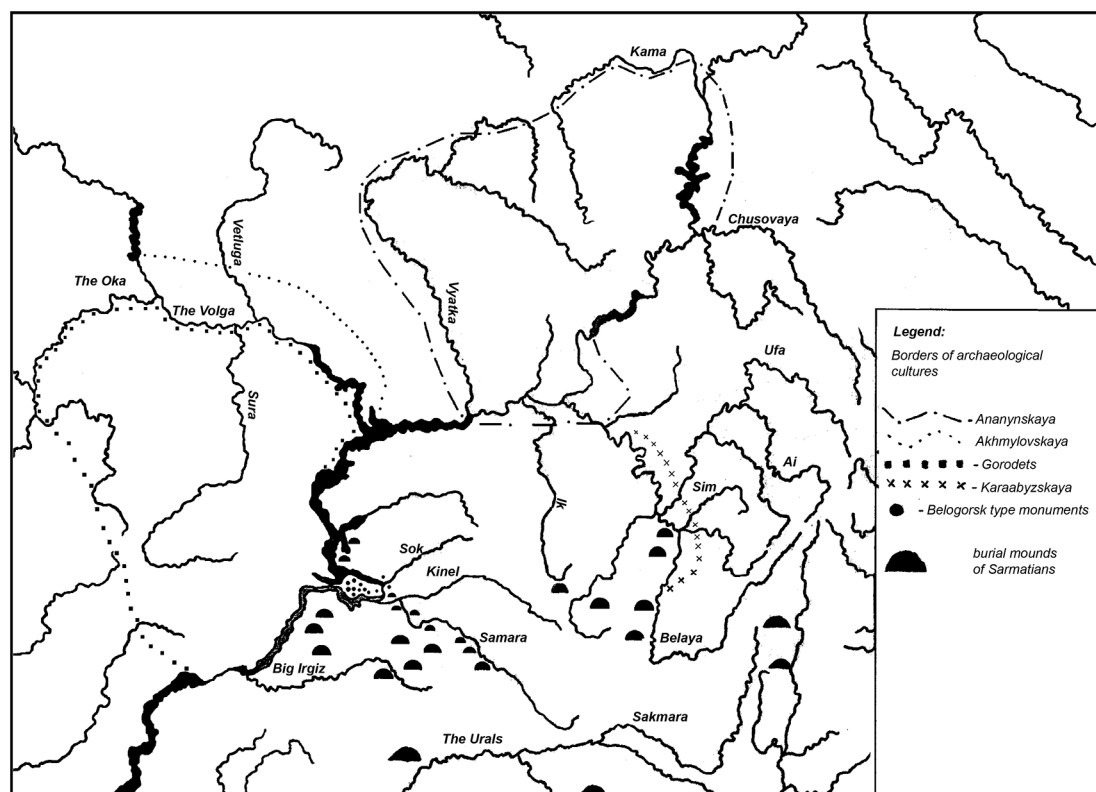


Fig. 1. Cultures of the early Iron Age in the Volga-Kama region

Belaya-Dem steppe corridor that reaches as far as modern Ufa. The most northern burial sites of early Sarmatian (Prokhorovo) culture—Staro-Kiishkinsky, Bishungarovsky, Churaklinsky, Iltuganovsky, Lekandinsky burials mounds—are to be found within its borders. Then there was another world of sedentary forest tribes. These were the forefathers of modern Ugro-Finns peoples of the Volga-Ural Region along the Levoberezhye of the middle course of the Belaya River.

The largest ethnocultural formations of the 1st millennium BC in the Volga-Ural Region were the *Akhmylovo* (along the Levoberezhye of the Middle Volga Region), *Ananjino* (the Middle Kama Region), *Pyanobor* (Cheganda), *Kara Abyz* (the right bank of the lower course of the Belaya River in the Cis-Ural region) archaeological cultures (Fig. 1). In succession (*Akhmylovo* and *Ananjino* cultures—the first half of the 1st millennium BC, *Pyanobor* and *Kara Abyz* cultures—the latter

half of the 1st millennium BC—the early 1st millennium BC) these cultures, which genetically originated from the Eastern Finnish tribes of the late Bronze Age, demonstrated the stability of the ethnocultural situation in north-east of Eastern Europe during the early Iron Age.

The *Akhmylovo* was the culture named after the Older *Akhmylovsky* burial site on the territory of Gornomariysky District of the Mari El Republic. It was researched by A. Khalikov and V. Patrushev in 1960–1973. The bearers of this culture were the forefathers of the modern Mari people who in the 8–6th centuries BC dwelled on the forest banks of the Middle Volga from the mouth of the Vetluga to the mouth of the Kama. The representatives of the *Akhmylovo* culture left numerous burial sites (Older *Akhmylovsky* one, *Akozinsky* one, *Kozmodemyansky* one, etc.) and ancient settlements—towns protected by walls and ditches (*Kopansky* one, Ar-



Fig. 2 Reconstruction of male and female costumes of Akhmylovo culture (according to A. Khalikov)

dunsky one, Basilsurski, Bogorodsky, etc.). Cattle-breeding and hunting were their main activities. The representatives of Akhmylovo culture were familiar with weaving, casting, and iron production.

According to V. Patrushev, the ethnographic specific features of the Akhmylovo culture are round-bottom moulded vases in a cup-shaped form with a mixture of crushed shell decorated with horizontal rows of small round holes and prints in the form of couple horizontal zigzags or herring-bone patterns. They also include bronze combat axes of the so-called 'Akhmylovsky' type and the presence of burials in 'the houses of the dead' in burial sites. The latter resembled a timbered or wicker construction erected over a shallow grave [Patrushev, 1992, pp. 100–102]. Although in general the burial ritual of representatives of the Akhmylovo culture is quite traditional for the Volga-Ural Region: burials in shallow rectangular tombs with the deceased lying on the back with feet oriented to the nearest (available) water surface. A deceased person is accompanied by his personal possessions such as jewels and arms which he used during his life.

Numerous finds of articles of Caucasian and Scythian production in the Akhmylovo culture's burial complexes are significant.

These include iron daggers of 'Cimmerian type,' bronze pole-axes, acinaces, bronze belt plates, detail and decorations of horse bridle, etc. (Fig. 2). Taking into account the specificity of Akhmylovo culture's tribes, all these finds can be considered as a result of trade exchange between Scythia and the Caucasus. A wide range of researchers link the emergence of all these items in the Middle Volga Region with the resettlement of the Scythians at the turn of the 7–6th centuries BC and the influence of the Transcaucasian cultural traditions [Pogrebova, Rayevsky, 1992, pp. 207–221]. However, when analyzing the way in which the representatives of the Akhmylovo culture used imported items (first of all, the details of Transcaucasian set belts that decorated women's head-dresses), researchers themselves have come to the conclusion that 'the migration from Transcaucasia did not have any long-term consequences, and Scythian-Caucasian features were completely absorbed by the autochthonous element rather quickly.'

In the 6th century BCE the Akhmylovo culture ceased to exist. The reasons for this phenomenon are not quite clear. A. Khalikov established two hypotheses that, although not indisputable, are quite attractive and interesting. Initially, the academic connected the disappearance of the Akhmylovo culture to the events of the Scythian-Persia war of 512 BCE, when the Scythians retreating under the pressure of Darius I's army reached 'the land of the Thyssagetae' (many researchers considered this to mean representatives of the Akhmylovo culture under that) and forced them to move to new places [Khalikov, 1977]. Nevertheless, A. Khalikov put forward new hypotheses during the last years of his life. According to him, the representatives of the Akhmylovo culture left the Middle Volga Region due to a regional earthquake. Its traces in the form of tectonic cracks were discovered by researchers in the Volga settlements dating back to the early Iron Age [Khalikov, 1992].

The monuments of the Akhmylovo culture had already disappeared in the Middle Volga Region by the 1st millennium BCE,

but new settlements containing clay dishes, which were typologically close to Akhmylovsky ones, appeared on the right bank of the Belaya. It can be concluded that some of the tribes, which were kindred to representatives of the Akhmylovo culture, left their original territories and resettled to the east—the Cis Ural.

The resettlers failed to stay and consolidate their grip at the Lower reaches of the Belaya with its abundant flood-lands and forests because a wave of northern migrants—representatives of the Prikamskaya Ananjino culture—had already come here by that time.

According to most modern researchers, representatives of the Prikamskaya Ananjino culture were formed as an ethnocultural phenomenon in the forests of the Upper and Lower Kama Region on the basis of local tribes of the Bronze Age. So they continued an uninterrupted line of development of the Finno-Permic population of the region [Goldina, 1999, p. 190]. In the first half—the middle of the 1st millennium BC they actively expanded their territory down the Kama River to the southern border of Kama-Cis-Ural forests. Here their roads crossed with the Volga Finns—bearers of the Akhmylovo culture. Apparently, under the pressure of representatives of Ananjino culture the Volga Finns left to the east along the course of the Belaya River, towards the southern foothills of the Ural Mountains where the groups from the Cis-Uralic Bronze Age *Kurmantau* culture dwelled. They were small in number and separate.

The Lower reaches of the Belaya River become a part of Ananjino culture's oecumene, the South-Eastern borders of which reached modern Birska in the middle of the 1st century BC. The materials of lower layers of Biktimirovsky ancient town in Birska district of Bashkortostan testify to that. Here on the capes, which rise above the flood-lands, the representatives of the Ananjino culture erected a small ancient town protected with 1–3 lines of walls. Since this was a boundary district (the Sarmatians entered the territory of Bugulma Upland in the south, and the offspring of representatives of Akhmylovo cul-

ture left the Volga to settle along the middle course of the Belaya River in the south-east), the Ananjino culture's ancient town at the Lower Volga were not placed in a chaotic way but according to a considered system. First of all, the chain of ancient towns protected the approach to the flood-lands of the Belaya River in the area of the Levoberezhye of the river between the mouths of its left tributaries—Syn and Baza—that is, in the area where the high promontories of the Bugulma-Belebey Upland overlook the flood-lands of the Kama, Belaya, and Ik Rivers. On the right flank stood the the citadel of the ancient settlement of Peter-Tau (Yuldashevsky), and on the left was the settlement of Trikol protected by a triple line of fortifications on the border with the village of Trikol (Gryemyachy Klyuch) in Ilishevsk District. The ancient towns of Anachevskoye, Andreyevskoye, Uyandykovskoye, Novomedvedkovskoye were situated between them. In this place the Belaya River forms a meandering bend so the entire system of fortifications can be seen at a distance of 18–20 km. Warning smoke signals could be seen throughout the entire system of ancient towns and in the other Ananjino culture's ancient towns along the right bank of the Belaya River: Kakry-Kyul near the village of Staraya Mushta in Krasnokamsky District, Kyz-Kalatau, Novokabanovsky, Tra-Tau, and then up to the centre of Ananjino culture's territory opposite the mouth of the Belaya River.

We consider this region to be the centre because here on the right bank of the Kama, between the mouths of the Belaya and Vyatka, a great number of Ananjino culture's ancient towns and two largest Ananjino culture's burial sites at the Kama were situated. These are the Ananjino culture's burial site (which gave its name to all archaeological culture under consideration) researched in 1858 by official P. Alabin (who later became the head of Samara) and student of local lore and amateur I. Shishkin from Elabuga, who was the father of the great landscape painter, and Zuyevsky one in Udmurtia researched by Russian archaeologist A. Spitsyn. There is one small Ananjino culture's burial site near

the village of Tash-Yelga in Yanaul Region, on the right bank of the Buy River on the territory of Bashkortostan.

Representatives of Ananjino culture buried their dead in shallow rectangular tombs along the bank of the river with their feet oriented to the river. The funereal objects accompanying the deceased correspond to his gender and activities: the men were buried with arms (bronze and iron points of spears, daggers, points of arrows, combat axes), knives, grindstone, a typical men's jewel—bronze neck hryvnia, the women were buried with bronze jewels that were small in number (bracelets, rings, round plates), earrings, clay decorative articles with ornamental patterns.

Most of the finds in Ananjino culture's ancient towns are represented by fragments of clay containers resembling wide-necked open cups with a round bottom that are very big in diameter. There are ornamental patterns along the neck of the cup resembling a line of small round holes and prints of a twisted cord in the form of 3–9 horizontal stripes. Moreover, one can find several items that testify to their economic activity: pieces of copper and iron scoria, clay cups for melting crucible, fragments of stone and clay casting moulds, bone harpoons, bronze fishing hooks, clay spindle whorls. The analysis of animal bones allows us to say that representatives of Ananjino culture bred cattle and horses and also hunted for fur game (beavers, weasels, bears, foxes). Elks and deer could be found in the 1st millennium BCE in the Kama forests.

Apparently, representatives of the Ananjino culture were engaged in a variety of kinds of farming. The find of a clay container with charred rye grains in Novokabanovskoye ancient town is evidence of this fact.

While representatives of the Ananjino culture developed the abundant flood-lands of the Lower Belaya, the descendants of the Finns dwelling in the Middle Volga (representatives of the Akhmylovo culture), who had moved towards the basin of the middle course of the Belaya, were going through a process of adaptation under new geographic and ethnopolitical conditions. Occupying the

Levoberezhye of the Middle Belaya River, these tribes initially guarded traditional features of their culture brought from the Middle Volga and the Lower reaches of the Kama, that is why here on the territory of modern Bashkortostan we can find settlements referring to the 1st millennium BCE and containing clay dishes, which are typologically close to Akhmylovo culture: round-bottomed pots and bowls decorated with chains of small round holes, notches, and various imprints of a toothed seal (Novobiktorovskoye settlement in Dyurtyulinsk District of modern Bashkortostan, Voronki and Chernikovskoye settlements on the territory of Ufa, Kurmantusskoye, Mikhailovskoye, Kasyanovskoye ancient settlement in Gafuryiskiy District of Bashkortostan) and small burial sites with close Akhmylovo culture's burial rituals (near the railroad bridge across the Belaya River in Ufa, Starshy Shipovskiy on the territory of Iglinsky District). However, in the 4th century BC the resettlers, becoming more and more familiar with their new motherland, reinforced their traditional cultural connections with Sarmatians in the Cis-Ural region and Ugric Trans-Uralic tribes related to them. As a result of these contacts an absolutely original and simultaneously syncretic culture was forming on the Levoberezhye of the Middle Belaya River. It is called the *Kara Abyz culture* in archaeological research.

The name was coined by archaeologist A. Schmidt who organised the archaeological excavations of an ancient town at the lake-side of Kara-Abyz near Blagoveshchensk. By that time the Ananjino and Pyanobor archaeological cultures were already known in the Lower reaches of the Belaya River, and Sarmatian culture had been familiar in the steppes in the Southern Cis-Ural region. However, the finds collected by A. Schmist in the ancient town of Kara-Abyz were similar to neither Sarmatian nor Ananynskya cultures' objects. As the researcher noted, the objects (especially the clay dishes) were similar to materials from the ancient town of Ufimsky (Chertov) and the burial site researched in 1911–1913 by professor V. Golmsten at the outskirts of Ufa. To distinguish



Spiral bracelet with a frieze consisting of figures of big-nosed wolves. Gold, turquoise, corals.
The 1st century CE Lower Don, Novocherkassk, Khokhlach burial mound. Occasional find from 1864
Inv. No. 2213/3. The State Hermitage

these monuments from the ones we already know, A. Schmidt united them under the title 'Kara Abyz' (or 'Ufa') culture.

Further research into the Kara Abyz culture is linked to the name of archaeologist A. Pshenichnyuk who examined the monuments of this culture for many years and distinguished its basic ethnocultural and economic-cultural signs [Pshenichnyuk, 1973].

According to his research, in the late 1st century the bearers of the Kara Abyz culture lived in three compact but powerful groups along the Levoberezhye of the Belaya River in its middle course. They occupied territories at the mouth of the Sim River (ancient towns and a burial sites at Okhlebnino and the village of Shipovo), Ufa (ancient towns and burial sites of the territory of modern Ufa), and in the outlying districts of modern

Birsk (Biktimirov ancient towns and burial sites). These were territories of large tribes in the centre of which were enormous ancient towns. The smallest was 50 thousand m² (the ancient town of Biktimirov) and up to 200 thousand m² (the ancient town of Okhlebninsk). They were situated along the high bank routes overlooking provinces and the Levoberezhye of the Belaya River first of all. The ancient towns were fortified with walls. Nowadays they are about 4–6 metres tall. The cultural layer of these monuments is abundant with finds that provide evidence of various economic activities of their dwellers: hunting, fishing, spinning and weaving, metallurgy, leather working, etc.

However, the most impressive finds representing all the variety and complexity of the culture of Kara Abyz culture's tribes were

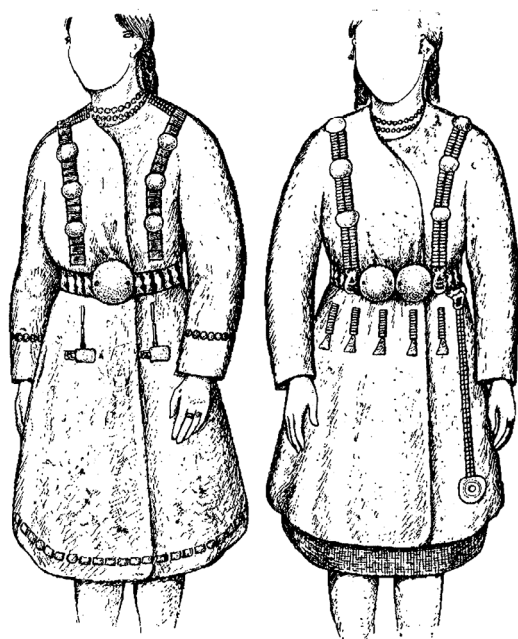


Fig. 3. Reconstruction of a female costume from the Kara Abyz culture (according to A. Pshenichnyuk)

found in the thousands of necropolises situated near ancient towns. The two types of ethnocultural traditions organically combined into the Kara Abyz culture can be seen in the types of items which accompanied the burials: the Eastern Finnic ritual is expressed by the abundance of metal decorations on women's costumes (pendants-earrings, rings, belts decorated with plates and strips, particular chest decorations—'shoulder-belts' consisting of metal plates) (Fig. 3) and a fixed set of armament on men's tombs (an iron spear, knife-dagger, set of bronze, iron, or bone points of arrows), and the Sarmatian rite that can be first of all seen in the types of items used by representatives of the Kara Abyz culture. We can find numerous bronze points of arrows of Sarmatian types, iron swords and daggers, horse bridles in men's burials of Kara Abyz culture, waist and chest plates made from Sarmatian bronze mirrors, necklaces made from beads produced in the Caucasus and the Black Sea Region, figured plates-galloons in animalistic style depicting animals that were unknown in the Southern Cis Ural: a

lion, Caucasian goats, reindeer with branched horns. The finds of typically Sarmatian clay containers in the style of globe-shaped pots with a thickened neck decorated with ornamental triangular patterns, firs, flutes are quite common for Kara Abyz culture's burials and ancient towns.

The nature of interaction between the representatives of the Kara Abyz culture and the Sarmatians can be traced back in the materials of male burials because their weapons were the most dynamical category of material culture. They give an idea of the level of development of a given society and its ability to react adequately to the ethno-political environment.

Kara Abyz culture's militia troops were evidently prepared for confrontation with horsemen because more than one the third of male burials contain a fixed set of arms consisting of a bow and arrows, a spear and bridle. The bridle symbolises a horse indicating that in real life this man was a horseman. The Cis-Uralic Sarmatians whose encampments began beyond the Belaya River were the most probable adversaries [Ivanov, 1984, p. 73].

Another widespread type of arms among representatives of the Kara Abyz culture was the long combat knife worn in the scabbard at the belt decorated with bronze points. These knives were peculiar imitation of short Sarmatian swords—akinaks.

The return of representatives of the Kara Abyz culture down the Belaya River in the 4th–3rd centuries BC contributed to a particular ethnocultural injection in the declining Ananjino culture's community of the Kama River Region. As a result a new archaeological culture was formed in the Lower reaches of the Belaya and the Kama. It has been named as the Pyanobor culture (after a destroyed burial site near the village of Pyany (now Krasny) Bor at the Kama, on the territory of Tatarstan where the first things typical for this culture were found in 1880).

The territory occupied by representatives of the Pyanobor culture spread from the Levoberezhye of the Kama opposite the mouth of the Belaya River in the west to the

modern village of Dyurtyuli at the edge of which there is an ancient town of the Pyanobor culture in the east, and from the upper courses of the Bystry Tanyp River in the north to the middle course of the Ik River in the south. This became a major tribal union whose centre was apparently situated at the mouth of the Belaya where numerous ancient towns and burials sites of the Pyanobor culture are now known: near the village of Cheganda in Udmurtia, Yuldashevo, Trikol, Uyandyk Novosasykulevo in the north-west of modern Bashkortostan, and many other similar monuments.

One can see a certain continuity between the late Ananjino culture's and early Pyanobor culture's monuments, which is evidence of ethnogenetic relationship between bearers of these cultures. First of all, almost all Pyanobor culture's ancient towns in the Lower reaches of the Belaya and Kama were situated at the places of former Ananjino culture's settlements. We can find many common economic and cultural features between the Anaynskaya and Pyanobor cultures' tribes where pasture cattle-breeding and commercial hunting were leading occupations. The following type of traditional residential construction was typical: rectangular log houses where the floor was 50–60 cm deeper than usual. They were heated and lit by open hearths situated in the central part of the dwelling. These dwellings—large log houses with a slightly recessed floor—were typical for both representatives of Akhmylovo (Malakhaisky archaeological site) and Ananjino (Argyzhsky archaeological site) cultures [Patrushev, 1992, p. 57, Chernykh, 1995]. Traces of similar buildings have also been found in the ancient town of Okhlebninsk of the Kara Abyz culture [Pshenichnyuk, 1973, p. 194]. The representatives of Pyano-Borsakay culture inherited them from their predecessors and forefathers (as evidence of the continuity of the ethnocultural development of the Kama-Cis-Ural population).

It is true that the representatives of the Pyanobor culture organised their clan burial sites close to their ancient towns on a neighbouring high cape or behind the defensive wall unlike their predecessors. There were

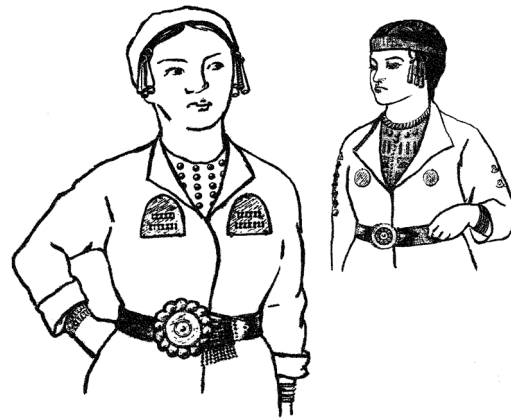


Fig. 4. Reconstruction of a female costume from the Pyanobor culture (according to V. Gening)

special family areas separated from each other with empty space in every burial site. The deceased were buried in shallow rectangle graves and they were oriented in the direction of the river.

The decoration of Pyanobor culture's female costumes (Fig. 4) was definitely different from both Ananjino and Kara Abyz cultures' clothing. They also had a lot of metal that seems to be the continuation of the Volga-Finnish tradition. However, all the numerous bronze plates, galloons, seal-rings, strips, and pendants are absolutely unique. First of all, the representatives of the Pyanobor culture did not possess items with animals depicted on them. The predominant design consisted of galloons decorated with geometric patterns: flourishes, triangles, spirals, etc. One can often see rectangular chest plates with ornamental patterns in the view of flowers, semi-spheric relieves, 'pseudo-cord.' Pyanobor culture's burial complexes are incomparable in terms of the amount of finds of bronze belt fasteners in the form of big 'epaulets.' They consist of a trapezoid hook and a round or oval plate connected with three or more bronze plaits. There are many imported jewels in Pyanobor culture's burial sites: glass beads in the form of figurines resembling lions, scarabs, bunches of grapes, amphoras, men's genitals and bronze Ancient Roman fasteners with inscriptions

in Latin. Pyanobor culture's burial site situated near the village of Novosasykulevo researched by archaeologists S. Vasyutkin and V. Kalinin was especially abundant with such finds. These and similar finds similar to well dated finds in Crimean and Caucasian burial sites of the Roman time are evidence that Pyanobor and Kara Abyz cultures emerged in the 1st millennium BC, passed well from one millennium to another, then ceased to exist in the forest and forest-steppe of the Cis-Ural region in the epoch of the Great migration. The final process of Finno-Permian ethnocultural dominance in the Volga-Kama region and the Cis-Ural region during the 3rd–5th centuries was the transformation of the Pyanobor culture's ethnic community into two related formations: The *Azelino* (*Khudyakovskaya*) culture in the basin of the Volga and Vyatka and *Mazunin culture* in the lower Kama Region and the Cis-Ural region.

Thus famous archaeological cultures from the early Iron Age show that in the first millennium BCE the forest and forest/steppe sectors of the Volga-Ural Region formed the centre of Finno-Permian oecumene. The southern border passed along the Middle Volga, the lower course of the Kama, the right bank and the lower course of the Belaya River. The Finno-Permian tribes adjoined the early nomads of the Ural-Volga Region who reached the latitude of modern Ufa following the steppe path between the Belaya and the Dyoma Rivers. A vast forest-steppe extended to the west up to the Volga forming a particular buffer area between the Finno-Permian (sedentary) and Indian-Iran (Sarmatian) ethnocultural worlds in the epoch under consideration.

Then we should look at the dense outlands of Samara Bend, where we can find the ancient towns of the so-called 'Belogorsk' type.' Samara archaeologist G. Matveeva interprets their culture as the southern variant of the Ananjino culture [Matveeva, 2000, pp. 84–86]. The specific feature of the *culture of Belogorsk ancient settlement* named after ancient town Belaya Gora in Samara Bend

Modelled round-bottomed vases with a cylindric neck abruptly transforming into

a spherical body were discovered and researched by V. Golmsten in 1922–1923. The ornamental patterns of Belogorsk vases resemble triangular impressions in 2–3 horizontal rows along its neck.

In general, ten ancient towns containing Belogorsk ceramics in their cultural layer (Belaya Gora, Lysaya Gora, Manchikha, Zadelnaya Gora, Kamennaya Koza, Tsarev Kurgan, etc.) situated along the Levoberezhye of the Volga are known in Samara Bend. The monuments of Belogorsk type are unknown beyond this territory. Burial sites of the Belogorsk type are also unknown.

The genesis, ethnocultural belonging, and historical destinies of the population which left the Belogorsk type artefacts are still a puzzle for researchers. After researching an early Ananjino culture's vase from Gulkinsky burial site on the Levoberezhye of the Utka River (in modern Ulyanovsk Region) decorated with triangular imprints along its neck, G. Mateyeva considers it possible to integrate the settlements containing Belogorsk ceramics with a range of monuments of Ananjino culture as its southern variant' [Matveeva, 2000, p. 85]. It is hard to say now whether this supposition is right or not because Belogorsk type materials are very few in number. However, if it is so, the natural habitat of eastern Finnish (representatives of the Akhmylovo culture) tribes in the first part of the 1st millennium BC must be extended to the south. That means probably one of their groups left the Levoberezhye of the Middle Volga, went down the river, and established itself at Samara Bend.

G. Matveeva connects the time when the Belogorsk type monuments came into existence in Samara Bend with the time of existence of the Ananjino (Akhmylovo) culture in the Middle Volga Region. According to the researcher, representatives of Belogorsk culture left for the Kama River Region at the turn of the 6–5th centuries BC following the common movement of the Volga-Finnic tribes to the east. Later they contributed to the formation of the *Pyanobor* culture there' [Matveeva, 2000, p. 86]. Then the tribes with Gorodets culture moved from the west to the

forest-steppe Volga Region. This culture was formed in the early 1st millennium BC at the basin of the Oka and named after an ancient town situated near the village of Gorodets in Ryazan Province examined in 1898 by V. Gorodtsov. The natural habitat of the Gorodets culture covered a significant part of the Volga forest-steppe beginning with the Oka in the west and Samara Bend and modern Khvalynsk in the east according to the results of many years of research carried out by Russian archaeologists. It is mainly represented by small ancient towns fortified with mud walls. Their dwellings are rectangular earth-houses with hearths in the centre. However, in two ancient towns—Paletsky and Chardymsky—the traces of round ground-based dwelling resembling yurts were discovered. Stone rectangular or round altars were found in many ancient towns (Kamen-naya Koza, Lbische, Gorodetskoye, Alekseevskoye, etc.).

Most of the finds in the Gorodets settlements consist of fragments of specific containers—pots and jars decorated with imprints of seal and net.

Although the burial sites of the Gorodets culture have not yet been found out, one can judge by available materials that they are rather different from similar cultures of the Volga-Kama Region—Pyanobor and Kara Abyz—in terms of their morphological features. Correspondingly, there are good reasons to believe that this ethnocultural origins of these cultures was not identical. At the same time most modern researchers consider the Gorodets culture to be the ethnogenetic basis for the ancient Mordvins and link the culture itself to the Volga Ugro-Finns peoples [Ledyajkin, 1975]. Nevertheless, taking into account the differences between Gorodets materials and those used by the early iron age Kama-Cis-Uralic cultures, where the Ugric ethnocultural substratum is more plausible, it would be more correct to link the Gorodets culture to the ethnocultural habitat of eastern Finnish cultures of Eastern Europe.

The Gorodets culture is one of the most mysterious ethnocultural phenomena of the ancient history of tribes of Eastern Europe

although it has been studied for more than 100 years. Judging by area throughout which the Gorodets monuments are spread, during the second half of the 1st millennium, the tribes of this culture occupied the main part of the Volga forest-steppe and territory between the Volga and the Oka. Nevertheless, the material culture of these tribes is manifest in its final form almost everywhere, so it is hardly possible to trace back the stages and dynamics of its institution and development. The most important factor is the lack of materials allowing researchers to trace back the initial stages of the establishment of the Gorodets tribes. It is also impossible to characterise the extent of ethnocultural ties between the Gorodets tribes and their nearest neighbours—the bearers of Akhmylovo, Ananjino, and Pyanobor (Cheganda) cultures. So we can only state at this stage of the development of our knowledge about the ethnocultural history of Eurasia in the early Iron Age that the forest and forest-steppe areas of the European east and north-east were the ETHNO-CULTURAL AREAS (ECA) of Eastern-Finnic and Finno-Permic cultures in the 1st millennium BCE. The notion ECA introduced by D. Savinov means the territory on which a certain ethnocultural community was formed. As for the typology of historian-ethnographic provinces common in ethnography, the notion of 'social-cultural region' formed as a result of the synthesis of historical-ethnographic (traditional-cultural) and social-economic communities is the most appropriate. From the point of view of archaeology, ECA is an attribute of archaeological culture, to be more precise, its space-cultural expression in a certain period. *The borders of ECA are determined by extreme points of the spreading of monuments of the given archaeological culture (my bold type.—V. I.).* The name ECA, if it is possible, is accorded to a well-known written monument localised at the same time in the same place... Within each ECA one can distinguish the compact and disperse settling of bearers of the given ethnonym (polytonym), *while their narrow ethnical belonging from the standpoint of language, origins, etc., may*

be different (my bold type.—*V. I.*). In view of the last circumstance, archaeological monuments with different details of burial rites, figuration on ceramics, and other traditional cultural elements can be represented on the same territory at the same time' [Savinov, 1984, p. 48]

That means that the north-east of Eastern Europe in its forest and forest-steppe areas represents an ECA of eastern Finnish and Finno-Permic cultures in the early Iron Age. The tribes forming this ECA bordered with later Sarmatians in the south and with the ancient Slavs and Balts in the west. The Cis Ural were the eastern border of this ECA behind which there was the territory of ECA of Ugric cultures of Western Siberia. In the 1st millennium BC ethnocultural ties between Eastern Finnish, Finno-Permic, and Ugric population of Eurasia were apparently spontaneous, and this is to an extent reflected in archaeological materials. Finnish-Permian cultural domination in the Volga-Ural Region was preserved almost until the 1st millennium CE. Afterwards the ethnic map of the region undergoes significant changes.

It should be noted that in general the first third of the 1st millennium CE was a time of relative stabilisation of the ethnic map of

the steppe and forest-steppe zones of Eastern Europe. The Alans still dominated in Eastern European steppes (the majority of researchers traditionally link the monuments of the late Sarmatian culture of the 2nd–4th centuries to another Alan migration wave from Central Asia). At that time their military-political interests were directed at the north-eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, the Bosphorian Tsardom, and the Transcaucasia. Thus their contacts with the inhabitants of the forest-steppes of Eurasia practically cannot be traced back in archaeological materials. Even in the middle of the 3rd century, when most of the Sarmatian-Alanians had to move to the Trans-Volga steppes under the pressure of the Goths invading the Northern Black Sea Region, the situation did not change a lot [Skripkin, 1984, p. 115]. It is true since most Northern Black Sea trade and manufacturing centres fell into decay as a result of the Goth invasion, and previous trade connections were destroyed, separate groups of Sarmatian-Alanians moved closer to the borders of the Ugro-Finns oecumene to begin trade exchange with them and nothing more. Radical changes in ethnocultural map of Eastern Europe began in the 370s, when a new nomadic wave fell upon the Alanian lands from the north—the Huns.

Section II

**Turkic Peoples
and State Formations
in Eurasia**



CHAPTER 1

The Huns in the East and West

Sergey Klyashtorny

The Huns in the East

During the period from the 1st millennium BCE to the first half of the 1st millennium CE, the sedentary population and nomadic tribes within the strip of steppe and mountains between the Lower Volga Region and the Altai Mountains spoke mostly Indo-European languages. However, intense and continuous migrations of the population in the steppes of Eurasia had resulted in more or less compact groups of not only Indo-European but also Proto-Ugric tribes from Western Siberia and Cis Ural as well as the so called Altaic tribes from Eastern Siberia and the east of Central Asia continuously entering the territory of Kazakhstan and Middle Asia.



Deer Stone in the Mongol Steppe.
Photo by S. Klyashtorny

The term *Altai* applied to those tribes is rather arbitrary, they were initially formed far east of the Altai Mountains, in the vast territory of Southern Siberia, between the Yenisei River and the Pacific Ocean, in Mongolia, Manchuria, and in the territory currently belonging to provinces of Northern China. During the period of the 2nd–1st millennium BCE, Proto-Turkic-Mongolian and Proto-Manchu-Tungus speech communities gradually formed among the Altaic tribes. In the middle of the 1st millennium BCE, the formation of Proto-Turkic and Proto-Mongolian languages began with in the former, tribes speaking Proto-Mongolian languages consolidating in Northern Manchuria and North-Eastern Mongolia and those speaking Proto-Turkic languages mostly spreading across Central and Inner Mongolia, from Baikal to the Ordos. The processes of linguistic differentiation were quite complex and varied depending on the region, Proto-Turkic and Proto-Mongolian tribes were mixed together in numerous territories. In Western and Central Mongolia, which was dominated by the Iranian-speaking Yuezhi until the early 2nd century BCE, Proto-Turkic tribes lived directly adjacent to them.

Such was the very general ethnolinguistic map of Middle and Central Asia before the establishment of the first nomadic Empire in Central Asia, which was created by the polity known as the *Hsiung-nu (Huns)*, who forced the Yuezhi and numerous Saka tribes to Middle Asia.

Though the Huns did not belong to the 'Altai' ethnic groups, the Hunnic confedera-



Portraits of the Hsiung-nu in Chinese Art [Artamonov, 1962, p. 43]

tion was dominated by tribes who apparently spoke the most ancient Turkic languages. It is noteworthy that nomadic tribes within the Hunnic Empire were not linguistically homogeneous.

Proto-Turkic and Proto-Mongolian tribes began to enter western territories early, anthropologists have found the Saka of the Cis Ural to have Mongoloid features. It was the Altaic tribes who bore the Mongoloid physical type. In the 1st millennium BC, the steppes of Middle Asia and Kazakhstan were the centre of regular linguistic and cultural contacts between Iranian, Ugric (Cis Ural) and Altaic tribes. However, it may not have been until the westward Hunnic migration at the turn of the Common Era that large Turkic-speaking communities began to form in the steppe area of Central Asia.

In the 4–5th centuries, the *Oghur* tribes, the *Bolgars* being the largest of them, began to consolidate in the Volga region and in Western Kazakhstan. They spoke an archaic Turkic language. Certain words and grammatical forms preserved in written monuments and representative of the language of the Bolgars of the Volga and Danube regions (before the latter were slavicised) show the Bulgar dialect to have been the precursor of the contemporary Chuvash language, the languages of the Tatars inhabiting the Volga regions, the Gagauz people, the Kumyks, and some more Turkic-speaking ethnic groups have also preserved some of its elements.

The ethnolinguistic processes are connected to the changes that had been taking

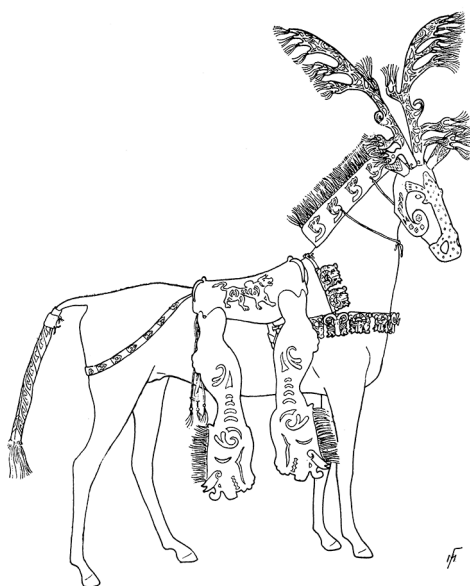
place deep in Central Asia and the Far East for centuries, changes that gave rise to the powerful migration flows which were to rock the civilisations of Middle and Western Asia and then Europe for over a thousand years. The nomadic statehood of the type which was characteristic of nomadic proto-state and state formations in Central Asia and Kazakhstan originates from the east of the Great Steppe. Thus, it would be reasonable to consider the processes that took place in the centre of Asia from the late 2nd millennium BCE to the early 1st millennium CE.

Early Nomads of Central Asia

In the mid-2nd–early 1st millennium BCE the formation of two distinct economic and cultural regions in the east of Eurasia was complete—principally Chinese, in the middle and lower course of the Huang He, and that of Central Asia in the vast territory from Eastern Turkestan in the west to Southern Manchuria in the East, from the Gobi and the Ordos in a turn of the Huang He to Tuva and the Transbaikalian region. In the major part of the territory, the economy relied on nomadic and semi-nomadic livestock breeding combined with primitive agriculture and hunting. In the early 1st millennium BCE, tribes inhabiting Central Asia formed a Scythian nomadic culture. They mastered bronze and iron metallurgy, metal working, wheeled carts, and horseback riding. They lived in hemispherical felt kbitkas with a conical top, which was fixed to a large bull-driven cart when it was time change locations.



Horse mask. The Altai Mountains. Pazyryk Kurgan I. Excavations by M. Gryaznov. 1929.



Horse in attire (reconstruction)
[Gryaznov, 1950, p. 38]

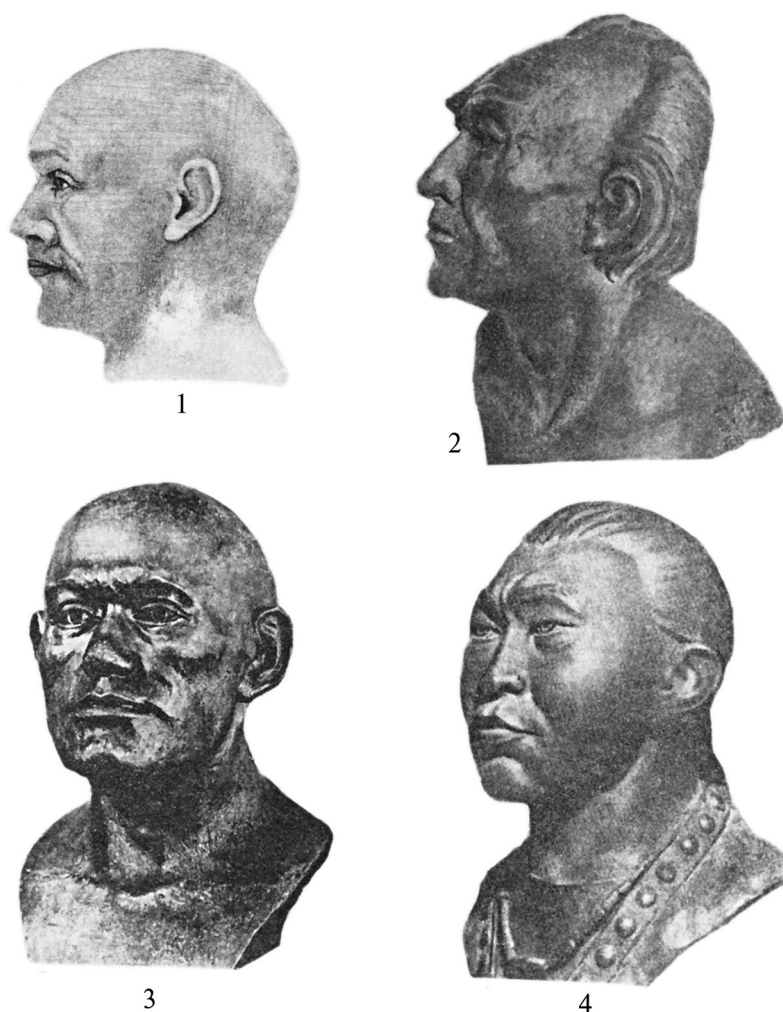
Written sources created in Ancient China add a little to the image of the Scythian culture of Central Asia reconstructed by archaeologists. In Yin oracle scripts on animal shells, crania, and shoulder blades (14–11th century BCE), the north-eastern neighbours of the Proto-Chinese tribes are mostly called

Qiang or, later, in historical treatises, *Xirong*. The scripts refer to them as 'horse Qiang' and 'the Qiang people who breed numerous horses'. The northern neighbours of the Chinese states of the 8–7th century BCE, called the *Di*, also belonged to Scythian tribes, of which the so called 'bronze of the Ordos', splendid monuments of Scythian art in Central Asia, are archaeological evidence.

The founder of standard Chinese historiography Sima Qian (135–67 BCE) collected early stories on 'the northern neighbours' in his 'Records of the Grand Historian'. His information on this topic is fragmented, non-systematic, extremely brief and very different from the wordy narrations on the Black Sea Scythians by Herodotus.

Sima Qian refers to the nomads who inhabited Central Asia in the 7–6th centuries BCE as the Xirong or the Di. The term Hu was applied to them later. During the same era, the mountain Xirong, or the Donghu ('barbarians of the East') inhabited the steppes of Inner Mongolia and Southern Manchuria, as well as in branches of the Great Khingan Range. The northern tribes were permanent participants of the political life of ancient Chinese states, whether fighting against them or joining coalitions of states at war with each other for a remuneration.

Sima Qian presents a vivid depiction of their 'barbaric' lifestyle and social structure. The Xirong, or the Donghu, were not politically united, 'they all were scattered across glens, each group having a chieftain of its own, even though it was not infrequent for over one hundred of Xirong tribes to gather, they failed to unite'. Sources mention the Xirong and the Donghu sowing millet, however, they mainly engaged in livestock breeding: '...they move with their livestock from place to place to get enough grass and water. They do not exercise permanent residence. They live in round yurts, the exit of which faces the east. They eat meat, drink kumis, and make their clothes of colourful woolen fabrics... They appoint those who are brave, strong, and capable of settling disputes as their elders. They do not practice hereditary succession. There is a head for each camp.



Men of the Tatar period (1), a Hun (2), a Saka man (3), and a Slab Grave man (4).
Reconstructed by M. Gerasimova [Stepnaya polosa, 1992, p. 409]

One hundred to one thousand yurts form the community... Everybody from the elder to the most inferior member of the community grazes his cattle and takes care of his property on his own, they do not serve each other... They follow the women's opinion on everything, they address military issues on their own... War is of high importance to them' [Bichurin, v. 1, pp. 142–143].

One can hardly think of a more vivid depiction of a tribal society before class differentiation and authority by force. According to a Chinese witness of the 7th century BCE, Xiaong 'superiors preserve simplicity in relations with their inferiors, while the inferiors

serve the superiors (that is, elected elders and chieftains—S.K.) out of sincerity and loyalty' [Taskin, Issue 1, p. 123] War and pillaging raids are an important aspect of their lifestyle. According to a Chinese nobleman of the 6th century BCE, 'the barbarians of the North' 'value riches and neglect the land', the word 'riches' is explained as 'gold, jasper, cloth, and silk'. However, even when smaller Chinese kingdoms were weaker, the Xirong never threatened them with conquest. Military actions, gifts, bribes to chieftains, or trade could check or limit the nomads' raids. The Chinese had numerous opportunities to see the advantages of the 'barbaric' cavalry

in military clashes and sometimes even borrowed clothes and weapons from their enemy. The Zhao ruler, Wuling (reigned 325–299 BCE), 'changed the tradition and began to wear barbaric clothes, learn horseback riding and archery'. However, Wuling, as other rulers, relied more on long walls and fortifications along the border line than on a field army. Yet, the Chinese were able not only to check the Xirong expansion along their borders but also to conquer their land. The first evidence of this dates back to 623 BC, when Duke Mu, the ruler of the State of Qin, attacked the Xirong to conquer 'twenty of their regions' [Taskin, Issue 1, pp. 122–123].

Sima Qian claims that the general situation in Central Asia changed drastically during the Warring States period (403–221 BCE). Powerful unions of nomadic tribes, the *Hsiung-nu* (the Huns) and the *Yue-zhi* replaced the Xirong in the north and in the west, and the Donghu are said to have 'achieved prosperity' and to have a single ruler. In the 4th century BCE, the Chinese mentioned the Huns as one of their enemies for the first time, the Huns later launched a fierce struggle against the Zhao Tsardom for the Ordos. It was a fluctuating struggle, but the Xirong tribes that had been independent

appeared to have entered the Hunnic union. The Huns' western neighbours were the Yue-zhi, Eastern Scythian (Saka and Sarmatian) tribes occupying the vast territory from the Tian Shan to Central Mongolia along with the related Wusun people. The tamgas (heraldic signs) of Yuezhi tribal chiefs recently found on the black rocks of the Tsagan Gol Ravine in the Gobi Altai help determine the southern boundary of Yuezhi lands.

Work by Russian and Mongolian archaeologists has made it possible to check, expand, and clarify messages from written sources. Excavations yielded two types of cultures within the Scythian circle (1st millennium BCE). One type comprises the *Slab Grave culture* and the 'deer stones'. Slab graves were constructed of flat stone slabs inserted into the ground to a shallow depth to form a rectangular box. Bodies were interred with their heads to the east, with weapons, jewellery, and containers. Specific burial objects include containers on three hollow legs (tripods) and bronze knives with carved animal and human figures, bronze bridle bits, and, quite often, horse bones. Slab graves are arranged in chains to form clan cemeteries. Unfortunately, most of the burials have been plundered to nothing.

Deer stones are another type of monument—stone steles bearing symbolic images of deer with long branching horns along their bodies and legs bent upwards in a flying gallop. Other objects like battle axes, knives, mirrors, and sharply curved bows are depicted on the stone along with the deer. Most of those objects, made of bronze, and horn bow coating have been found in slab graves. Iron object finds are extremely rare.

The Slab Grave culture covers the vast territory from the Transbaikal region to Northern Tibet, including the steppe area of Manchuria as well as the entire Inner, Eastern, and Central Mongolia, truncated on the western slopes of the Khangai Mountains. The area of another culture of the Scythian type begins there: instead of stone boxes, there are kurgans similar to the famous Pazyryk burials discovered in the Altai Mountains. The area covers Western Mongolia, Tuva, the



Deer Stone in the Mongol Steppe.
Photo by S. Klyashtorny

Altai Mountains, and Eastern Kazakhstan. In anthropological terms, the buried bodies are as dramatically different as the burials themselves. Mongoloids belonging to the northern (Paleosiberian) branch of the race were buried in slab graves, and Europeoids were buried in kurgans. In the 3rd–2nd century BCE, burials of a different appearance, with iron accessories instead of bronze, replaced the slab graves and Scythian kurgans.

Applying the information in written sources to the archaeological map, it seems logical to infer that the bearers of the Slab Grave culture were the Xirong and Donghu tribes. The kurgan burial culture of the Western Mongolian and Sayan–Altai regions, dating back to the 5th–3rd centuries BCE, belonged to the Saka and Sarmatian tribes—the Yuezhi and the Wusun.

It is among monuments similar but not identical to Scythian ones that numerous burial complexes dating back to the 7–5th centuries BCE and which possess all the features of the later Hunnic burials are now distinguished. The peculiar monuments are common in the area east and south-east of the modern-day Mongolia and, partially, in Inner Mongolia. It seems to be the place where the nomadic animal-breeding tribes with a clearly Mongoloid appearance, who were to be known as the Huns later in the 4th–3rd centuries BCE, having moved to the west and conquered the steppes between the Ordos and the Transbaikalian region, once originated and were initially formed [Minyaev, pp. 70–77].

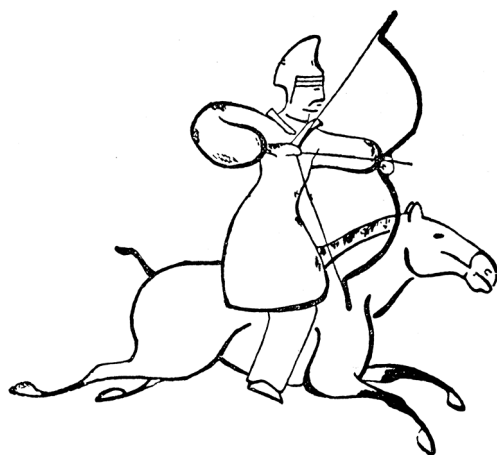
The Dominion of the Hun Chanyus

In the last decades of the 3rd century BCE, the Hun tribal union headed by the military chief, the chanyu, along with its subordinate tribes, experienced an unparalleled breaking of traditional relations, which resulted in the formation of primitive state. Sima Qian's account on the events in the steppe that set the stage for the Huns' might more closely resembles an epic tale that a historical chronicle—it preserves the echo of the legends born in faraway nomadic camps [Taskin, Issue 1, pp. 37–39]. 'The Donghu people were strong

back then, and the Yuezhi had achieved prosperity. Touman was the chanyu of the Huns. He had two sons by different wives. The chanyu decided to sacrifice his elder son and send him to the Yuezhi as a hostage in order to make the younger one his successor. Then Touman attacked the Yuezhi. Mao Dun did not die, he stole a horse and rode back to his people. His father made him the head of a military detachment. Instructing the soldiers, Mao Dun ordered them to shoot where his 'whistling arrow' flew [the Huns' battle arrows had bone balls with holes in them—hundreds of whistling arrows terrified the enemies and frightened their horses]. Soon, Mao Dun shot an arrow at his own wonderful horse. He ordered that those soldiers of his detachment who did not shoot be decapitated. After some time, Mao Dun shot an arrow at his beloved wife. He decapitated those who would not follow him. When hunting, Mao Dun shot an arrow at his father's horse, and none of his warriors hesitated to shoot. It was then that Mao Dun realised that the time had come. When he aimed a shot at his father, none of his warriors hesitated—Touman was riddled with arrows. Having executed his younger brother, stepmother, and his father's retinue, Mao Dun became Chanyu.

Upon learning of the events in the horde (the term used by the Huns for the military camp and the prince's headquarters), the Donghu ruler decided that the turmoil had weakened the Huns and demanded that Mao Dun cede the border territory to him. Fearing war, many elders recommended that Mao Dun give up the land. Outraged, Mao Dun replied, 'Land is the foundation of the state, how can we give it away!' He decapitated every person who had advised him to cede the land. Then Mao Dun mounted his horse, ordered that any late arrivals be decapitated, and moved eastward to launch a sudden attack on the Donghu... He routed the Donghu, killed their ruler, captured their people, and took their cattle'. This is how Sima Qian described the beginning of the Hun conquests.

In 203–202 BCE, Mao Dun subordinated the tribes inhabiting the Sayan and Altai Mountains, the upper Yenisei region (includ-



A Hsiung-nu horseman. A Chinese drawing
[Artamonov, 1962, p. 42]

ing the ancient Kyrgyz people in the territory of today's Khakassia), and firmly established the north boundaries of his dominion. Yet, China and the Yuezhi remained his two main rivals.

The civil war in China ended in 202 BCE. The Han dynasty came to power. In the winter of the year 200 BCE, its founder Liu Bang (Emperor Gao Di) personally marched his troops against the Huns to secure the country's borders. Mao Dun retreated after the initial encounters, and the Han advanced guard separated from the main troops to pursue the enemy. The emperor was with the advanced guard. The Huns immediately stopped the retreat, and their four cavalry corps surrounded the emperor in the Baideng Mountains. 'For seven days, the Han troops in the mountains and beyond them could provide neither military or food aid to each other,' Sima Qian writes. 'All the Hsiung-nu cavalry men in the west rode white horses, those in the west had gray horses with a white spot on their faces, those in the north rode black ones, those in the south had chestnut horses' [Taskin, Issue 1, p. 41].

What saved the emperor was his promise to enter into a kinship-based peace treaty with the Huns,—that is, to marry a princess of the Emperor's house to Mao Dun. Mao Dun released the encirclement. The Emperor

did not fulfil his promise until after several more Hun raids. He sent luxurious gifts such as silk and cotton, wine, rice, and jewellery, along with the princess, which he undertook to do annually. In effect, it was a veiled tribute. Peaceful relations were established between the Huns and the Han people for 40 years, only to be broken for a short time with Hun raids in 166–163 BCE, after these, the treaty of peace and kinship was renewed.

The fiercest war which Mao Dun and his successor Laoshang Chanyu (reigned 174–161 BCE) had to fight was against the Yuezhi. The struggle went on for a quarter of a century, and it was not before 177–176 BCE that the Huns were able to turn the situation in their favour after an enormous effort. The final victory was achieved at some point between 174 and 165 BCE. The Yuezhi chief fell on the battlefield, and Laoshang Chanyu turned his skull into a drinking cup. After the Yuezhi were forced to move into Middle Asia, they got hold of the land in the upper reaches of the Amu Darya and subsequently founded the Kushan Empire. The Huns' western border was stabilised for a long time in Eastern Turkestan, where they had fought numerous battles against the Han people to rule the rich oasis towns of the Tarim Basin.

The Yuezhi and the Huns

The Yuezhi, a powerful tribal union of Central Asian nomads, is only referred to as Yuezhi in Chinese sources that describe the events in the steppe around the states of Northern China in the 3rd–2nd centuries BCE. However, the Yuezhi had inhabited Inner Asia for many decades by that time—'information on the Yuezhi, Wusun, and Sse (Saka) people suggest that those tribes had moved far to the west (the Yuezhi reaching Gansu Province) long before the 3rd century BCE, most probably not later than the 7–6th centuries BCE' [Grantovsky p. 80].

Even though Sima Qian located the original Yuezhi territory as of the late 3rd century BCE 'between Dunhuang and the Qilian Mountains',—that is, north of Nanshan, in the south-west of Gansu Province, a broad-

er source analysis enabled Kazuo Enoki to claim that only the major Yuezhi centres were connected to the trans-Asian trade route. In fact, the power of the Yuezhi chiefs and their tribes spread across most of Mongolia, Dzungaria, the Tian Shan, where the Wusun were their neighbours, the Tarim Basin, and the upper reaches of the Huang He.

Vague and unclear information of the Yuezhi and their country appeared in China as early as within the pre-Han literary and historiographic tradition. The ethnonym is mentioned in a somewhat different hieroglyphic transcription (*Yushi*, *Yuezhi*) in the Guanzi treatise (5–4th centuries BCE) to refer to the people as well as to a country where nephrite is produced in the mountains. Later, Chinese commentators on the text explain that 'Yushi is the name of north-west barbarians' [Haloun, p. 316]. The country of *Yuezhi* is mentioned in another ancient Chinese treatise, the Tale of King Mu, Son of Heaven. The treatise, written on bamboo plates, was discovered in 279 BCE in the ransacked tomb of a prince, along with the chronicle titled 'Bamboo Annals' ending in 299 BCE [Kravtsova, pp. 354–363]. According to the realistic part of the travel undertaken by Mu, Son of Heaven, which is exactly the same as the route of the campaign by King Wuling of Zhao (reigned 325–299 BCE), the country of Yuezhi lay within five days' march west of today's Yanmenguan mountain pass, in the north of Shanxi, east of the Huang He branch. It is mentioned in connection with the 'Jade Mountain'. The Chinese transcriptions *Yushi* and *Yuezhi* adequately convey the same original form of the ethnonym⁴.

The ethnolinguistic identity of those referred to as the Yuezhi is another aspect of the Yuezhi problem. Major scholars of ancient Inner Asia such as N. Egami and K. Enoki join G. Haloun in connecting the Yuezhi to the Scythian–Saka ethnocultural community [Haloun, p. 316, Enoki, pp. 227–232]. Another equally popular opinion views the Yuezhi as the ethnic group which is referred to as the

Tocharians in sources from ancient Greece and India. The identification is based on extensive evidence of texts dating back to the middle and second half of the 1st millennium BC found in Eastern Turkestan, which link the Yuezhi to the Tocharians of the Tarim Basin, who spoke and wrote in the dialects of the archaic Indo-European language (Tocharian A and Tocharian B) [Ivanov, 1967, pp. 106–118]. The reconstruction of the stages of the *Tocharians'* eastward movement and the possible Tocharian–Chinese language links suggested by E. Pulleyblank presents reliable evidence of the hypothesis of the Yuezhi being related to the Tocharians [Pulleyblank, 1966, pp. 9–39, 1970, pp. 154–160].

It may seem reasonable to analyse linguistic materials in the form of written monuments by the Central Asian descendants of the Yuezhi, the founders of the Kushan Empire, to get a clearer idea of the ethnolinguistic identity of the Yuezhi. Epigraphic and numismatic discoveries have shown the Kushan official language practice to have included, apart from Greek and Sanskrit, the Iranian language, which is undoubtedly connected to the territory of ancient Bactria and known as Bactrian [Livshits, 1974, pp. 312–313]. So what was the language that the Kushans' ancestors, the Yuezhi–Tocharians, brought to Bactria? According to V. Livshits, the language in question is definitely the Saka Kushan dialect [Livshits, 1969, p. 48], which is directly related to the Hotanese–Saka dialects of Eastern Turkestan. The Kushan Saka language, like that of the Parni in Parthia, disappeared following the newcomers' assimilation into the local Iranian environment [Ibid.]. On the contrary, V. Ivanov considers it possible that the original language of the Tocharian–Kushans, –that is, the Kuchi Tocharian dialect, has a Tocharian origin [Ivanov, 1992, pp. 19–20].

However, it was V. Ivanov who developed the hypothesis that the Yuezhi tribal union, which 'apart from the Tocharians, included also Eastern Iranian tribes at a certain stage', was not ethnically homogeneous [Ivanov, 1992, p. 17]. Considering the fact that not all the Yuezhi left Inner Asia in the 2nd century

⁴ The advice of S. Yakhontov, whom the author owes his detailed commentary to the data extracted from Chinese sources.



Fig. 1. Images of Hun warriors:
1 – bridle pendants from the Pazyryk Burial. 5th century BCE, 2–3 bas-reliefs of the monument to Ho Qubing. 2nd century BCE

BCE (according to Chinese sources, 'the minor Yuezhi' remained in Gansu and Eastern Turkestan), V. Ivanov concedes the 'fact of the Eastern Iranian component of this (Yuezhi–S.K.) tribal union, which used, among the others, the ethnonym 'Tocharians', having roamed back to Middle Asia' [Ivanov, 1992, p. 17].

Quite unexpectedly, the assumed ethnopolitical heterogeneity of the Yuezhi tribal union was confirmed by petroglyphical discoveries in South-Western Mongolia, where a set of tamga signs was found on the rocks of the Tsaganol Ravine (Govi-Altai Aigam) among rock drawings [Weinberg, Novgorodova, pp. 69–73]. Ibn Weinberg researched the possible links between the tamgas of the Tsagan Gol and showed them to have an outline and origin similar to that of a rather peculiar tamga group in Middle Asia and the

Black Sea region—those on the coins of the kings of Khwarezm, Sogdia, and Bukhara, as well as the Sarmatian tamgas [Ibid.]. She had previously found the related dynasties of Sogdia, Bukhara, and Khwarezm of the 2nd–1st centuries BCE to have originated from nomadic tribes who contributed to the defeat of the Greco-Bactrian Tsardom, however, they were by no means related to the Kushan dynasty [Weinberg, 1972, pp. 146–154]. Ibn Weinberg refers to them as 'the Yuezhi of the Zhaowu House'. Chinese sources indicate that all ruling 'houses' created by the Yuezhi north of Bactria are connected to that 'house'.

The branch of Yuezhi tribes whose tamgas were found in the Gobi Altai Mountains, and later in Sogdia, Bukhara, and Khwarezm. was clearly not identical to the Southern Kushan group of the Yuezhi. In terms of genetic links, the Northern Yuezhi were closer to the Sarmatian tribes of Kazakhstan and the Cis Ural, whose tamgas were recorded as similar to those of the Tsagan Gol for the 3rd–1st centuries BCE (for information on the Sarmatian connections of the Yuezhi, see also: [Mandelstam, pp. 194–195]). The Tsagan Gol tamga complex is evidence of the resettlement of South-Western Mongolia, at least within the Mongolian and Gobi Altai Mountains, having been inhabited 'by a group of Iranian tribes in the second half of the 1st millennium BCE' [Weinberg, Novgorodova, p. 71]. Therefore, the tamgas of the Tsagan Gol reliably support the hypothesis of the Yuezhi origin of the 'Pazyryk people' suggested by S. Rudenko and, moreover, of their Sarmatian (Eastern Iranian) links.

The ethnopolitical division of Yuezhi tribes and their 'reigning houses' in the 2nd–1st centuries BCE into the northern and southern groups is representative of the decay of the Yuezhi (Tocharian) multi-tribal union, which had created an archaic nomadic empire in Inner Mongolia headed by a single ruler and which possessed a cavalry of up to one hundred thousand warriors, following a series of crushing military defeats in the late 3rd century BCE [Hulsewe, pp. 119–120]. Sima Qian describes that period in Yuezhi history as follows: '(The Yuezhi) used to be pow-

erful and have a disdainful attitude towards the Hsiung-nu' (cited by: [Kryukov, 1988, p. 237]).

Moreover, the Huns (Hsiung-nu) were politically dependent of the Yuezhi, who forced them to send the hanyu's sons to the Yuezhi ruler's court as hostages. Mao Dun was the last of such hostages who, having become the chanyu, inflicted the first military defeat on the Yuezhi and invaded their native land in Eastern Turkestan. However, it was not until several decades had passed that Mao Dun's descendant 'Hsiung-nu chanyu Laoshang killed the Yuezhi ruler and turned his head into a drinking cup' [Kryukov, 1988, p. 237]. The great migration of the majority of the Yuezhi to the west began after 165 BCE.

Therefore, Chinese historiography provides both direct and indirect evidence of a long history of Hun-Yuezhi wars, two periods in the history of Hun-Yuezhi relations. The Yuezhi had clear military and political advantages over the Huns ('had a disdainful attitude towards the Hsiung-nu') up to the late 3rd century, which they lost at the turn of the 3rd–2nd century BCE.

When and where did the first interactions between the Yuezhi and the Huns become possible? Sima Qian mentions the Hsiung-nu in connection with their raids into the Tsardom of Zhao (403–222 BCE). The Tsardom of Zhao occupied the southern part of Hebei Province, the east of Shanxi Province, and the land north of the Huang He up to Henan [Taskin, Issue 1, p. 124]. Zhao controlled the land north of the Ordos, which was highly valued by the nomads of the Mongolian steppes. Several military commands were created to resist them. It was the Huns who became Zhao's main opponent in the north. In the mid–3rd century BCE, the most experienced Zhao commander, Li Mu, was in charge of the commands. He was able to resist the Huns for many years and even inflicted a crushing defeat on the chanyu. He was not called away from the border until 244 BCE [Sima Qian, v. 7, pp. 259–260].

The Yuezhi appeared in the territory of Inner Mongolia, close to the Ordos, much earlier, for which there is archaeological evidence.

Emma Bunker has shown that the Yuezhi were the only ethnic group that could be linked to numerous finds in Inner Mongolia of plates depicting scenes of fighting mythological predators of a very Pazyryk-like appearance, which can be safely assumed to date back to the 4th century BCE [Bunker, 1993, pp. 99–116, 1997, pp. 41–74]. The Yuezhi exercised an active military policy not only west of the Altai Mountains, to which certain 'trophies' of the Pazyryk chiefs are evidence, but also in the far east of the Great Steppe. They faced tribes of a very different appearance there.

Were the Huns mongoloid? Anthropologically confirmed by materials of Hunnic burials in Mongolia, the Mongoloid appearance was assumed with the reservation that 'we have neither images or descriptions of the appearance of the Huns and the Donghu' [Rudenko, p. 177]. However, the reservation does not fully apply to the Huns.

In 121 BCE, Emperor Wu of Han appointed the famous warrior Ho Qubing 'commander of the strong cavalry' to suppress the Huns in their territory. Ho Qubing's success was so great that, even though he died soon after (117 BCE), he was able to inflict irrecoverable losses on the Huns. The victory over the Huns that contributed the most to his fame was that in the Qilian Mountains, in the land of the 'minor Yuezhi'. 'A hill resembling the Qilian Mountain was formed' above Ho Qubing's grave [Taskin, Issue 1, p. 94]. The marble tomb was decorated with a bas-relief depicting several groups of his enemies and scenes of triumph. In 1936, the Hungarian anthropologist Zoltán Takács visited Ho Qubing's burial complex and made engraved copies of the group titled 'Horses trampling Hsiung-nu men'. In 1938, Takács published the estampages and drawings in Beijing [Takács, pp. 275–277], but the wonderful iconographic material eluded the attention of researchers. However, works by Takács have the importance of a reference, and we take the opportunity to use his drawings for this purpose (Fig. 1).

The iconographic images of Huns from Ho Qubing's burial closely resemble the mysterious faces on the Pazyryk bridle (see



Examples of scenes of predators attacking even-toed ungulates
 a – Persepolis, b – Kelermes, c – Kyul Oba, d – Pazyryk, e – Noin Ula
 [Rudenko, 1953, p. 317]

[Rudenko]) and show the same mongoloid features: protruding cheekbones, a low forehead, thick lips, a short flat nose, a beard and straight coarse hair sticking up. Therefore, it is safe to say that the gilded heads on the Pazyryk bridle that once embellished the ceremonial dress of a Yuezhi chief's horse belonged to slain Hun warriors, whose skulls were turned into gilded cups—evidence of the cruel Hun-Yuezhi wars of the 4th–3rd centuries BCE. During the wars, which prevented the westward expansion of the Huns for a long time, the Yuezhi created a nomadic empire in Inner Asia and, according to Sima Qian, 'achieved prosperity'. The Pazyryk bridle is evidence of Yuezhi hegemony in the Great Steppe, when the Yuezhi princes, buried in the Altai Mountain, fought in far away in the east for power 'over the bow-straining peoples' [Taskin, Issue 1, p. 43]. Less than two centuries had passed before new rulers

of the Great Steppe were established in the Altai Mountains, having turned the skulls of their former suzerains, the Yuezhi, into gilded drinking cups.

Economic, Social and State Structure of the Huns

The gifts which chanyus received from the Han court were far from sufficient to meet the large nomadic population's demand for the production of a sedentary economy. As such, it was important for the Huns to establish border trade, which the emperor's government would not permit, viewing trade only as an instrument to put pressure on the 'barbarians'. One Chinese historiographer later presented a clear summary of the policy: 'No tribute (from the barbarians) means no trade with them, tribute ensures remuneration (that is, trade)' (cited by: [Martynov, p. 234]).

In order to ensure open border markets, the chanyu initiated a new series of raids in 158 BCE, devastating several northern districts. 'After that (in 152 BCE), Emperor Xiaojing entered into a kinship-based peace treaty with the Huns once more, opened markets at border entry points, and sent gifts and a princess to the Huns according to the previous agreement'. 'Being exceptionally avaricious,' Sima Qian adds, 'the Huns valued border entry points market and liked Chinese goods' [Taskin, Issue 1, pp. 49–50].

Sima Qian described the Huns' economy as highly primitive: 'In peacetime, they follow their livestock while hunting birds and animals, thus maintaining their sustenance, in years of tumult, everyone learns the military art for carrying out attacks. These are their inborn traits... Everyone, including the rulers, eats livestock meat and wears livestock skins, felt coats are common' [Taskin, Issue 1, pp. 34–35]. The programme of their relations with China, as formulated by one of the chanyus, is based on the economy and appears just as simple: 'I want to open large trade toll gates with the Han, to marry a daughter of the Han house, to receive ten thousand dans of rice wine, five thousand hus (measurement unit) of millet, ten thousand pieces of various silk fabrics, and more every year, in this case, no mutual robbery will take place at the border' (Ibid.).

However, multiple records of small towns deep in Hun territory with grain stores seem inconsistent with the assumed purely nomadic Hun society, recounting the winter and summer of 89–88 BCE, which were hard for the Huns, the chronicler notes: 'A snowfall began and lasted for several months, the population lost its livestock and suffered from diseases, the crops did not ripen, and the scared chanyu had a praying house built' [Taskin, Issue 2, p. 28].

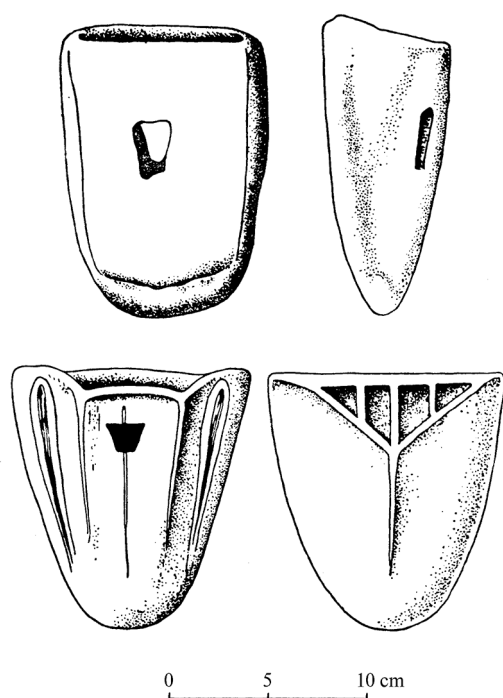
In the Transbaikal region, archaeologists studied a Hunnic town where the Ivolga River falls into the Selenga. Ivolga settlement, surrounded by four moats and four barrows, has an area of 75 hectares with half-dugouts (about 80 houses have been discovered), traces of metallurgical and bronze casting activities, and, most importantly, ploughshares of

cast iron and moulds for them, iron reaping hooks, and milling stones have been found. The size of the ploughshares suggest that the Huns had small wooden ploughs that dug the ground to a shallow depth. However, the harsh nature of the Huns' country impeded agricultural development, and their own grain production (mostly millet and barley) could never meet the demand of the relatively large population (researchers estimate it to have been about 1.5 million people).

Nomadic livestock breeding was always the principal economic activity of the Huns, which both written sources and finds of archaeological excavations confirm. The horse was of paramount importance to the Huns. With extensive livestock breeding, when no fodder would be prepared for the winter, the horse had the advantage of being able to graze all year round, reaching grass under shallow snow. Bones found in Hunnic burials suggest that the horses were typically Mongolian—short, with a coarse but well-muscled body and a short broad face.

Aside from enormous herds of horses, the Huns' most valuable property were herds of bulls, yaks, and camels, as well as huge flocks of sheep and goats. According to contemporary estimates, though very approximate, the Huns had 19 heads of livestock per capita in their years of prosperity and five to nine heads during decay. By comparison, the number of all kinds of livestock in pre-revolutionary Mongolia (1918) was about 17 heads per capita. Cattle was family property, each family was entitled to a certain part of the clan's territory for grazing and enjoyed the protection of the entire clan. According to Sima Qian, to keep family property abundant and integral, the Huns 'marry their stepmothers after their fathers die and marry their elder or younger brother's wife after the brother dies' (the Huns practiced polygamy, like many nomadic tribes). Family liability for stealing other families' property, in particular livestock, was also provided for—the family of the guilty party could be reduced to slavery.

The social and state structure of Hun society cannot be reconstructed completely, but it is clear that the Hunnic Empire was social-



Cast iron ploughshares. Ivolga ancient town
[Rudenko, 1962, p. 29]

ly developed. The upper class of Hun society consisted of four aristocratic clans connected through marital relations: men of each of the clans could only marry women of the other three noble clans. The head of the state, the chanyu, could only belong to the Luandi clan, which was the noblest of the four. More recent sources also mention other noble clans. The hierarchy of clans and tribes obviously played a major part in Hun society. Subordinated tribes that had adapted to fit into the Hunnic clan and tribal system made up the lowest rung. Subordinated tribes not included among the Hunnic tribes came even lower, and they were subject to especially ruthless exploitation. For instance, the Donghu subordinated to the Huns had to pay a regular tribute in the form of fabric, sheepskin, and leather. If the tribute was delayed, the Huns would execute clan elders, capture the tributaries' women and children and turn them into slaves, demanding a special ransom for their release.

Sources contain frequent mentions of slavery in Hun society. Most slaves were

captives, but Huns could also be reduced to slavery for various crimes. Slaves from other tribes were primarily used in sedentary households, they lived with the Huns in fortified cities, dug irrigation canals, did ploughing, construction, mining, and handicraft. The status of Hun slaves is unclear, they might have represented the lowest part of the large patriarchal family.

The structure of the Hunnic state was as hierarchical as that of society. The Hunnic state, which developed on the basis of Xirong tribal unions of the 5–4th century BCE, was formed in a deadly struggle against the neighbouring tribal unions and Chinese kingdoms. The founders of the country and their successors viewed their main goal as dominating 'all bow-straining peoples' (that is, nomads) and being superior to 'people living in ground homes' (that is, sedentary ploughmen), the state could only exist as a centralised empire relying on military administrative principles. According to T. Barfield, the surviving importance of the tribal aristocracy should not be understated, the Hunnic state is best understood as an imperial confederation. Barfield believes that state structures are not necessary for the development of a nomadic society, the only reason why they emerge being the effect of external circumstances and to exert military pressure on neighbouring sedentary states to force them to pay tributes (contributions) or open border markets [Barfield, pp. 45–60]. Conversely, E. Kychanov believes the Hunnic state to have emerged, like other nomadic states, as the result of internal processes within nomadic society—those of property and class differentiation, which led to a state with all the attributes being formed [Kychanov, 1997, pp. 36–37].

The chanyu, whose power was hereditary and hallowed by divine authority, ruled the country. He was called 'son of Heaven' and bore the official title of 'great Hunnic Chanyu, born by Earth and Heaven, glorified by the Sun and by the Moon'. The ruler's power was determined by the following rights and functions: a) the right to manage the entire territory of the state, all the land belonging to the Huns, and the function of securing the

territory, b) the right to wage war and make peace and the function of personally commanding the troops, c) the right to have all the state's international relations concentrated in his hands and the function of establishing the international policy, d) the right to determine the life and death of each subject and the function of the supreme judge. The chanyu must have been the centre of sacred power, too, at least any measures to protect and observe the cult mentioned in the sources available originated with the chanyu, who would 'leave his headquarters in the morning to worship the rising sun, and worship the moon in the evening'. A large group of assistants, councillors, and commanders surrounded the supreme ruler, however, it was always the chanyu who made the decision, even if he acted contrary to the opinion of his entourage.

The second highest positions in the state after that of the chanyu, those of the left and right (that is, western and eastern) 'wise princes' were held by his sons or close relatives. They administered the western and eastern territories of the empire and at the same time commanded the left and right wings of the army. They were followed by other members of the chanyu's family, each ruling a certain territory—their titles varied but included that of 'heads of ten thousand horsemen' (tumen heads). Their number was strictly fixed—24 commanders-in-chief allocated between the left and right wings of the army, and the western and eastern parts of the empire. The position to which one could be appointed depended on the extent to which one was related to the chanyu. The chanyu himself appointed tumen heads. He allocated a territory along with its population to each tumen head. Any tribal migration without the chanyu's order was strictly forbidden.

It was not the size of the lot but the size of the population that determined the authority and military power of each tumen head, the number of ten thousand warriors was rather symbolic—Sima Qian notes that each of the 24 commanders had at least ten thousand warriors.

Within his domain, each tumen head would appoint heads of thousands, hundreds,

and tens, like the chanyu, allocating land with population roaming within it to them. Only the chanyu could remove and punish a tumen head. Tumen heads also contributed to the enthronement of the chanyu, though the process was merely a formality: they did not have a right of choice—the power was passed on according to the strict system of inheritance, which did not lose its significance until the Hunnic state was completely weakened.

Military service was main duty of the entire male population within the state. Each Hun was considered to be warrior, and any attempts to evade one's military duties was punished by death. All men were assigned to a rigorously defined military detachment from childhood until death, and everyone fought under the command of his tumen head.

During the reign of Laoshang Chanyu, tributes began to be levied systematically, no information is available on their amount or nature. Three times a year, all commanders, mostly originating from the four aristocratic clans, gathered in the chanyu's headquarters to 'offer sacrifices to their ancestors, heaven, earth, human spirits and those of heaven', to discuss governmental affairs, they also had annual gatherings in autumn 'to count and check the number of people and livestock'. As all participants were related to the chanyu, such meetings were more like a family council than a governmental body.

Therefore, the ruling class of the Hunnic empire was formed of the tribal noblemen, kinship and connection by marriage remained crucial to the social status and political role of everyone in high Hunnic society. At the same, preserving its relations within the clan and the tribe, the noblemen also acted as the patriarchal upper crust of the tribes, as their 'natural' chiefs were related to their common tribesmen by blood.

Ownership of grazing land in the form of the rule to manage roaming, thus allocating forage grasslands among clans, underlay the social influence and political power of noblemen. The extent to which the proprietary right was exercised was fully determined by the place occupied by the respective nobleman within the military administrative sys-



Woolen cloth tapestry pattern.
Kondratyevsky Kurgan. Noin Ula
[Rudenko, 1962, p. 109]

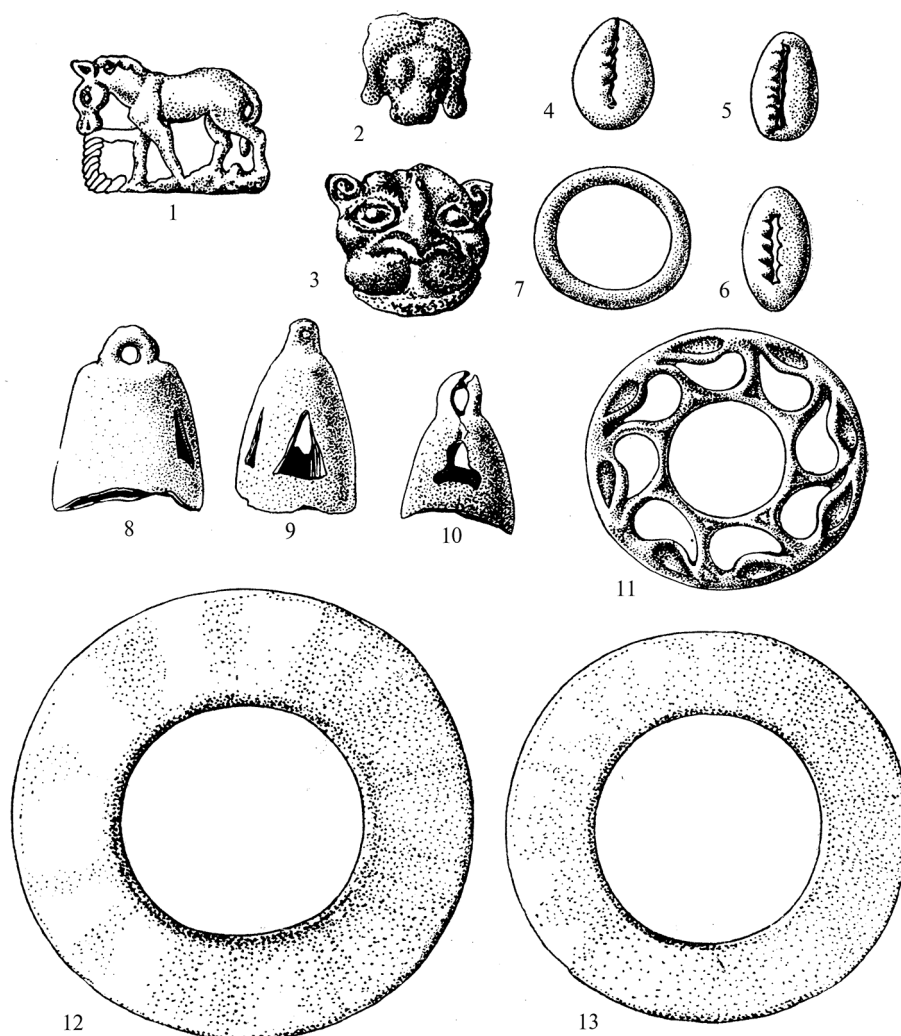
tem, which, in turn, depended on his position in the clan and tribal hierarchy. The entire structure was stable enough to ensure over three centuries of existence for the Hunnic empire and several more centuries of smaller Hunnic states.

The Rise and Fall of the Nomadic Empire

After the Hunnic Empire was formed and the long Hun-Yuezhi War was over, peace came to the steppe. For the most part, the 2nd century BCE was the time when the Hunnic nomadic economy developed. During several Hun-Chinese wars, the nomads won back the grazing land south of the Gobi, which had been conquered by Qing emperors, and fulfilled their main goal—a stable supply of fabrics and grain from China through border market trade and 'gifts' (disguised tribute) to the chanyus.

The Han dynasty initiated a new series of Hun-Chinese wars in 133 BCE. Emperor Wu of Han (140–87 BCE) decided to reclaim the Hun land south of the Gobi and defeat the powerful nomads once and for all. The Han attack met with success in 127 BCE: 'The Huns ran far away, and their ruler's headquarters no longer lay south of the desert. Having crossed the Huang He..., the Han people built irrigation canals and, conquering land little by little, came to share a border with the Huns...' In 124–123 BCE, the war was carried into the Huns' native land, to the Mongol steppes, where it had varying degrees of success. In 119 BCE, the enormous Chinese army conquered the northern headquarters of the chanyu and killed about 90,000 Huns but suffered heavy casualties itself [Taskin, Issue 1, pp. 50–54]

At the same time, the Han troops began to move westward into Central Asia, where they plundered Fergana cities in 101 BCE, cutting the Huns off from the oases of Eastern Turkestan. In 99 and 97 BCE, Han troops launched two major attacks against the Huns, but failed. Finally, in 90 BCE the 70,000-strong Chinese army commanded by Li Guang Li invaded Hun lands, defeated the Huns' advanced guard, and faced the chanyu's army in a decisive battle. At that time, Li Guang Li discovered that his family had been arrested in the capital on charges of sorcery and that death was awaiting all his relatives and, when he returned, himself. He decided to win the emperor's favour with a victory but sustained heavy losses in the first battle. The senior commanders of the army wanted to detain him. However, Li Guang Li put the conspirators to death and began a decisive battle near the Yanrin Mountains. During the hard-fought battle, the Chinese were besieged, and Li Guang Li gave himself up and was taken prisoner. The emperor no longer had a field army to continue the war. China failed to subdue the Huns on its own, but they suffered a crushing defeat from other nomadic peoples twenty years later—in 72 BCE, the Wusun from the west, the Wuhuan (part of the Donghu) from the east, and the Yenisei Dingling people invaded Hun lands, the cruel war claimed up to one third



Jewellery from Transbaikial Hsiung-nu kurgans (2/3 size).

1 – cast bronze horse figure, 2 – bronze plate shaped like a bull's head, 3 – cast bronze adornment shaped like a cat's head, 4, 5, 6 – bronze models of a Cypraea shell, 7 – bronze ring, 8, 9, 10 – bronze bell-shaped pendants, 11 – openwork bronze ring, 12 – bone ring, 13 – jade ring. 1 and 2 – camp near the village of Dureny, 3, 4–12 – Dyrestuj burial site, 13 – Ivolga ancient town [Rudenko, 1962, p. 46]

of the Hun population. A crisis of the Huns' political dominance in Central Asia followed.

The crisis manifested as a split—the Huns divided into the Southern and Northern Huns in 56 BCE. The Southern Huns, headed by Huhanye Chanyu, established peaceful relations with China and withdrew from raiding, with China fully committed to their appeasement. No major clashes took place along the Hun-Chinese border for over fifty years. The Northern Huns, headed by Zhizhi Chanyu, moved to Middle Asia, to the allied state of

Kangju (on the Middle Syr Darya), only to be annihilated by a Chinese expeditionary force—the Han government feared lest Zhizhi in alliance with the Kangju people pose a threat to their dominance in Eastern Turkestan.

The unity and might of the Hunnic Empire was restored for a short time in the early 1st century CE. However, a new Hunnic split into Northern and Southern Huns followed in 48 CE. The further history of the Southern Huns until the fall of the Han Empire is, in fact, that of regular federate 'barbarians' fully

dependent on the government in the empire's capital. Attacks from the south and pressure exerted by their former vassals, ancient Kyr-gyz Yenisei tribes, and especially descendants of the Donghu, the Xianbei (proto-Mongolian tribes in South-Western Manchuria) made the Northern Huns lose their power and territories over several decades. Their headquarters were moved to Western Mongolia, South-Western Manchuria, and Eastern Turkestan, where they continued to resist Han westward expansion until the mid-2nd century. The Huns suffered their most crushing defeats in their wars against the Xianbei in 93–94 CE, where tens of thousands of their families were included in the Xianbei tribal confederation, and in 151–155 CE, when the founder of the fleeting Xianbei dynasty forced the Huns to leave their last territories in Dzungaria. It was in the first half of the 2nd century that Hunnic tribes began to migrate, first to Eastern Kazakhstan and Zhetysu, where they founded the state of Yueban, which existed until the 5th century, and then, along with Ugric tribes of Western Siberia, to the Cis Ural, the Caspian and trans-Volga steppes.

The Huns between the Altai Mountains and the Aral Sea

While the memory of the Huns in Europe is preserved in numerous vivid accounts by Greek and Latin authors, hardly any information is available on the emergence in Central Asia of new nomadic invaders from the East. The archaeological materials available are also extremely scarce. The narratives by Syrian and Byzantine chroniclers on the so called 'white Huns'—the Xionites and the Hephtalites (4–6th centuries)—are by no means indicative of any genetic affinity of both ethnic groups with the Huns of Central Asia. It is still possible to partially reconstruct the 'Hunnic period' in the history of the nomadic peoples inhabiting the territory between the Altai Mountains and the Aral Sea.

The Huns began to move westwards back during the reign of Chanyu Mao Dun, during the war for political dominance in Eastern Turkestan. A letter sent by Mao Dun to Han

emperor Wen Di in 176 BCE presents a detailed report on the crushing defeat of the Yuezhi and the conquest of other tribes in the west: 'By the mercy of Heaven, the commanders and warriors were in good condition, and the horses were strong, which enabled me to wipe out the Yuezhi people, who were annihilated and surrendered. I harnessed the Loulan, Wusun, and Huze people, as well as twenty six adjacent regions, all of which now belong to the Hsiung-nu (the Huns)' [Taskin, Issue 1, p. 43] Mao Dun is clearly exaggerating his success—neither the Yuezhi nor the Wusun were defeated and conquered at that time, though they might have suffered heavy casualties. However, this letter contains the first reference to the Hunnic incursion into Eastern Turkestan and ingress to Kazakhstan's borders. Hun chanyus enjoyed high political authority in the Western Region (the term used in the Han Empire to refer to Eastern Turkestan and Middle Asia) for nearly one hundred years. A Han chronicler notes: 'Each time a Hsiung-nu (Hun) messenger with credentials from the chanyu arrived in one of the states (in the Western Region), he would be accompanied on his way from one state to another and provided with food, nobody dared to detain him or interfere with his business' [Hulsewe, p. 37].

Soon, territories dependent on the Huns were present not only within the Tarim Basin but also far to the west of it. A Chinese historiographer mentions one of them in connection with the events of the mid-1st century BCE. The son of the heir to the Hunnic throne was married to the daughter of ruler Ujang Mu, about whom the following information is available: 'Ujang Mu initially ruled a small territory between the land of the Wusun people and that of the Kangju. He suffered numerous attacks and great oppression from his neighbours, which made him side with the Huns as the head of his several thousand people (warriors?) Chanyu Huluhu... ordered (him) to continue ruling his people as before and live in the western land' [Bichurin, v. 1, p. 85].

As such, there is a small principdom in North-West Zhetysu (between the Wusun

people and the Kangju people), the ruler of which established relations with the Hunnic imperial house through marriage to ensure protection and auspices by the mighty relative in the form of vassalage. A little later, ruler Ujang Mu's son-in-law, Prince Ji Hou Xian fled with his horde to his father-in-law's land following a failed attempt to seize the vacated throne. It is the earliest record of Hun migration to the territory of modern-day Kazakhstan.

The awe which the chanyus inspired in their western neighbours made rulers of the Western Region recognise the suzerain rights of the Hunnic rulers and watch over their interests. The situation was unchanged until the Hunnic state fell and the chanyu of the 'Southern' Huns, Huhaxie, was subordinated to the Han emperor (53 BCE).

After becoming the head of the 'Northern' Huns, Huhaxie's younger brother Zhizhi Chanyu relocated his headquarters to Dzungaria. The first recorded Hunnic engagement in the war between Kangju and the Wusun people is linked with him and eventually led Zhizhi Chanyu and some of his troops to move to the Talas valley. In 42 BCE, the Huns and the Kangju people sacked the Wusun capital, a city in Red Cliff Valley, on the bank of Issyk-Kyul. Then Zhizhi undertook a campaign against Fergana. The Chinese commanders in the Western Region sent an expeditionary force to Kangju to secure the border. They stormed the fortress where Zhizhi's headquarters were located, and the chanyu and his companions died.

In the early 1st century CE, the 'Northern' Huns restored their political influence in Eastern Turkestan, only to face a bitter fight against the Han army in 73–94 CE. The Huns suffered an extremely heavy defeat in the Eastern Tien Shan in 90–91. The 'Northern' Huns, headed by the noble Hoyan clan, had their headquarters between Lake Barkul and the Altai. It was here that the army of two Han commanders, Dou Xian and Geng Kui, descended upon them, after which, according to a Chinese historiographer, 'the frightened chanyu quickly put on clothes of felt and fled to the Wusun land, afraid to breathe. The land

north of the desert was desolate' [Taskin, Issue 2, p. 98]

Therefore, in the late 1st century defeats in the struggle for Dzungaria and the Eastern Tien Shan made the numerous 'Northern' Huns move to the 'Wusun land',—that is, Zhetysu and Eastern Kazakhstan, which was adjacent to their former territory. Sources provide no information on their return to Dzungaria, though failed attempts at establishing diplomatic relations with the Han court were made, for example, in 104–105. During the period 120–150 CE, the Huns made raids on the oases in the Tarim Basin from their new territory, but severe defeats often followed military success. For instance, in 137 the ruler of Dunhuang slaughtered a Hun detachment near Lake Barkul, and in 151 a Hun attack at Hami resulted in troops sent from Dunhuang putting them to a precipitate flight. The Xianbei intrusion in the 170s finally forced the 'Northern' Huns out of Dzungaria to territories behind the Tarbagatai Mountains. The Huns began to gradually conquer land in the steppes between the Tarbagatai



Deer Stone in the Mongol Steppe.
Photo by S. Klyashtorny

Mountains and the Caspian Sea region.

The only state formation created by the Huns north of Lake Balkhash during that period is referred to as *Yueban* in Chinese sources. According to the authors of 'Bei Shi', the 'Northern' chanyu 'crossed the Ginweishan (Tarbagatai) Mountain Range' and moved westwards to Kangju, towards the Syr Darya and the Aral Sea, to escape Dou Xian's troops. However, part of his force (200,000 warriors) stayed behind the Tarbagatai Mountains, for they 'lacked strength'. They were the founders of the new Hunnic state, the ruler of which took the traditional title of the chanyu. It existed even in the 5th century, exchanging embassies with a North Chinese state, and even formed a military alliance with it against Ju-juan. According to the Chinese, the distinguishing feature of the nomads was their extreme slovenliness, which they believed to have motivated the hostility between the Yueban chanyu and the Ju-juan khagan. One of the sources contains the following story as told by a Yueban ambassador: 'The (Yueban) ruler used to have friendly relations with the Rouran (Ju-Juan) people. Once, he entered the Rouran land with several thousand people to see (Khagan) Datan (d. 429). Upon entering

his dominion, before he had covered a hundred li (approximately 50 km), he saw that men would not wash their clothes, bind their hair, or wash their hands, and women licked dishes with their tongues. He spoke to his noblemen, 'You are laughing at me for undertaking a trip to this country of dogs!' And he rode back to his land. Datan sent cavalry to get them, but they failed. They became enemies and waged war against each other on several occasions' [Bichurin, v. 2, pp. 258–259].

Most notable in the references to Yueban is that the population of the state, descendants of the 'Northern' Huns, are claimed to speak the same language as the Gaoche,—that is, the language of the ancient Turkic tribes. Therefore, a very well-informed written source relying on reports on the personal communication between Northern Wei Chinese officials and Yueban ambassadors was the first to record the linguistic identity of an ancient state existing in the territory of Kazakhstan and Dzungaria in the 2nd–5th centuries as clearly Turkic. It is safe to say that a population speaking an ancient Turkic language (languages?) belonging to the Turkic family appeared in the vast Kazakhstan steppe along with the 'Northern' Hunnic tribes.

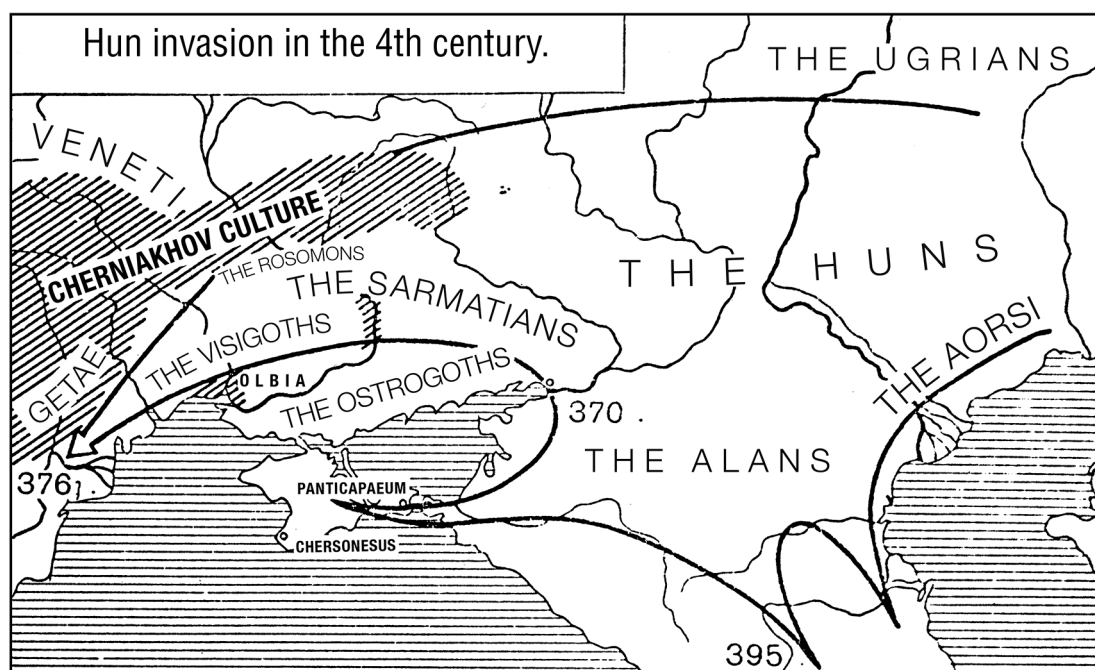
Irina Zasetskaya

The Huns in the West

The Huns at the Borders of the Roman Empire

The Greek poet Dionysius Periegetes, who lived during the reign of Emperor Hadrian (117–138) and composed a description of the world in verse, was the first to mention the Huns in the Caspian Sea region. Describing the peoples living around the Caspian Sea, Dionysius also mentions the *Unns* [CK, I, Issue 1, pp. 185–186]. Some researchers believe the Unns to be a corrupted reference to the Uti or Vitis as described by Strabo originated from a mistake made by ill-informed scribes who are thought to have replaced the unknown name with that of a tribe familiar to them. However, a more detailed analysis of the text by Dionysius and Strabo [SK, I, Issue 1, pp. 148, 149, 151] proved it to be impos-

sible to identify the Unns and the Uti people. Then additional information by ancient Greek authors of the 1st century CE, namely Plinius Secundus and Pomponius Mela, enabled the researchers to localise the Unns in the west of the Caspian Sea, most probably between the rivers Kuma and Terek, though the Unns of Dionysius were commonly believed to have inhabited the territory between the Caspian and Aral Seas. An extract from a work by 6th-century CE Gothic historian Jordanes, in which he describes the Gothic migration from Scandinavia to Scythia in the 3rd century CE, indirectly confirms it. Claiming the territory of Scythia to have reached the Caucasian Mountains and the Aragvi (Araks) River, Jordanes noted that the Scythian land skirted the Caspian Sea in the west to reach the steppes, where he believed the Hunnic domain to be-



The Hun invasion into Eastern Europe in the 4th century. [Artamonov, 1962, p. 41]

gan [Zasetskaya, 1994, pp. 132–138].

The map by Ptolemy, a Greek geographer of the 2nd century CE, also contains a reference to the Hun tribe. Describing the population of the European Sarmatia, Ptolemy notes that the Huns lived between the Bastarnae and the Roxolani, thus occupying the territory between the Dnieper and the Azov Sea [SK, I, Issue 1, p. 232].

Perhaps the early information regarding the emergence of tribes which ancient Greek authors called the *Unns* and the *Huns* in the Northern Caucasus and in the Northern Black Sea region reflected the events in Central and Middle Asia in the 1st century BCE–2nd century CE following the Huns' split into northern and southern groups. Constant wars and migrations might have caused some small groups of eastern Hunnic tribes to enter the territory of the 'Southern Russian' steppes. However, archaeological sources show that the first Hun intrusion into Eastern Europe, if any, caused no significant changes to the population structure or the nature of the regional culture.

The first relatively reliable account of the European Huns is contained in reports by the Roman writer of the late 4th century CE, Ammianus Marcellinus, a contemporary of the Hunnic westward expansion. The period of the Hun conquest and domination in Eastern Europe marks the beginning of a new era, known as the *Migration Period*.

The Huns in Eastern Europe

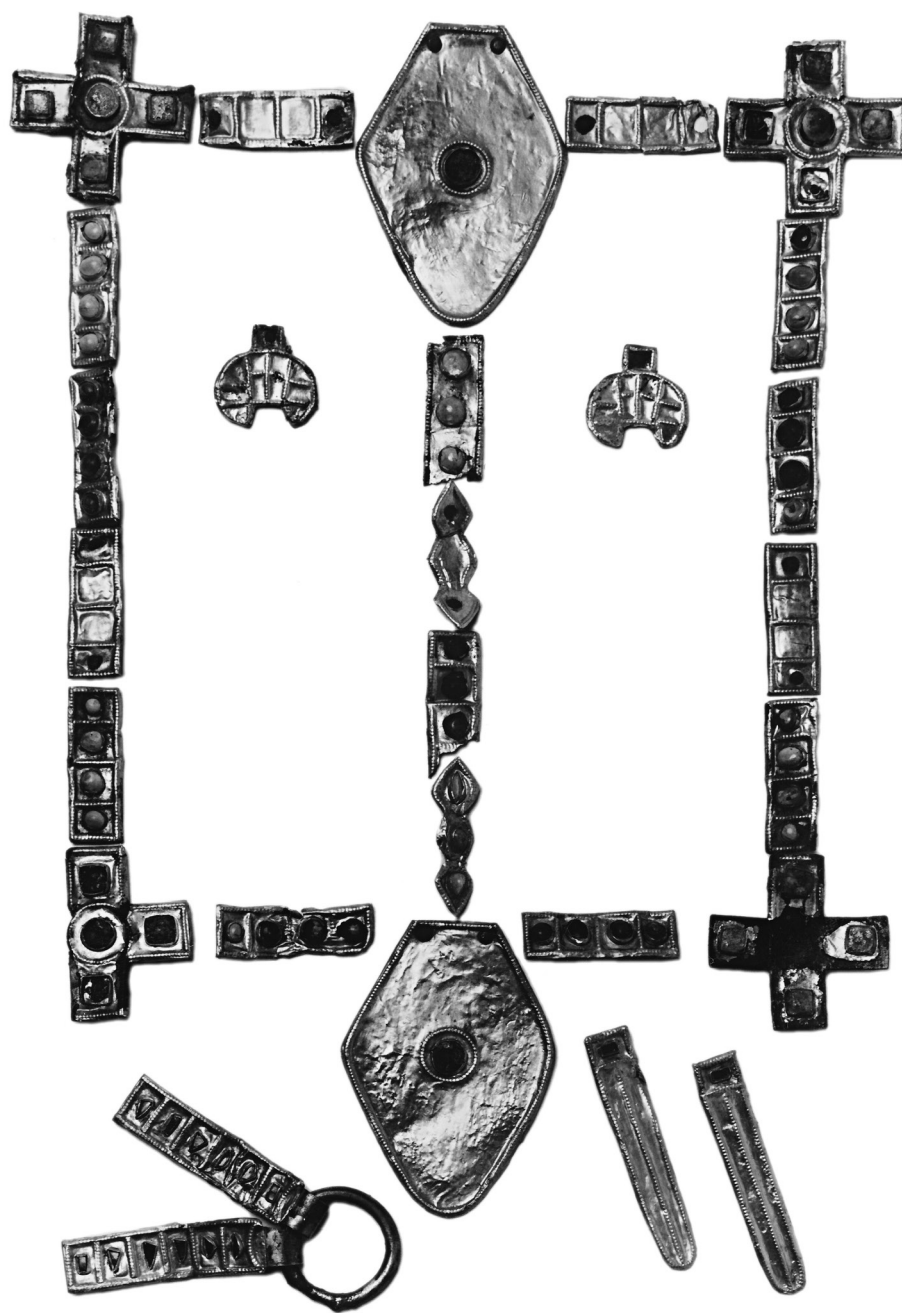
In the 370s CE, Eastern Europe was appalled at the invasion of the Huns—'a kind of people never seen before'. Their sudden and rapid movement westward terrified not only Roman society but also other peoples who were the first to feel the power of the conquerors' crushing blow.

Written reports by ancient writers and, most importantly, Ammianus Marcellinus, claim that the Huns, who appeared from somewhere behind the Maeotian marshes in the 370s, attacked the Alans and, 'inflicting dreary extirpation and devastation on them', conquered their land. At that time, the Al-

ans occupied the steppe territory north of the Maeotis and the Tanais Stream and the northern foothills of the Caucasus. Pursuing the surviving Alans, who fled to the mountains of the Northern Caucasus, some part of the Hun troops crossed the steppes of the Kuban region and entered the Taman Peninsula. They conquered the cities and settlements of the Asian Bosphorus and crossed the Kerch Strait to enter the territory of the European Bosphorus.

At that time, the main body of the Hun troops, who had been moving across the steppes north of the Azov Sea, entered the 'vast and fertile' land of the Ostrogoths, the interfluvial area between the Don and the Dnieper. The Huns engaged in a battle against them and emerged wholly victorious, leading Ermanaric, the king of the Ostrogoths, to commit suicide. Moving farther west, they reached the Dniester region, the Visigoths' territory. The Huns won the battle at the Dniester, too. Pursued by the Huns, the Visigoths and some Ostrogoths, Sarmatians, and Alans who had joined them moved toward the Danube to ask the Roman Emperor Valens for protection. He permitted the retreating troops to cross the Danube and occupy the land of Thrace and Moesia. According to written sources, the conditions provided by the Romans were extremely harsh, which motivated the Visigoths to rise against their saviours. The Romans suffered a defeat in the bloody battle of Hadrianopolis in 378, and Emperor Valens fell. At that time, the Huns suspended their westward migration and returned to the steppes of the Northern Black Sea region to force the conquered peoples to obey them and to prevent sporadic internecine feuds among the Hunnic tribes.

That was the end of the first stage of the Hun conquest of Eastern Europe. The Huns conquered the steppe territory from the Volga to the Dniester, uniting the subordinated population of the region—the Sarmatians, the Alans, and the Goths—in a tribal union headed by a Hun chief. Ancient writers report that some of the defeated peoples, for instance, the Ostrogoths, were granted the right to choose 'a minor king of their own', though only with



Horse bridle set. Gold, cornelian, almandines. End of the 4th–first half of the 5th century CE
Zaporizhia Novogrigoryevka settlement. D. Samokvasov's Excavations. 1884. Inventory No. 1911/94 and other.
The State Hermitage

the Huns' permission. However, they lost the privilege, and Jordanes tells that the Goths were not to have a king of their own for 40 years after the death of Thorismund, who ruled for only two years.

While the main forces of the Huns were concentrated in the steppes of the Northern Black Sea region, part of them acted along the Danube. According to Greek author Zosimus, who wrote a detailed narration of his-

tory from 270 to 410, the Huns, headed by Uldis, fought for Rome against the Gothic commander Gainas in the 400s. Zosimus believed the Huns to have pursued two aims: firstly, to prevent Gainas from 'having a place of residence behind the Istros', and secondly, to 'please the Roman emperor' [SK, I, Issue 3, p. 809]. Gainas' troops were eventually crushed, and the commander was slain on the battlefield. Another author, Hermias Sozomenus, who wrote nine books on history spanning 324 to 423, mentions Hunnic commander Uldis again in his ninth book. However, he is said to fight against the Romans in this case. According to Sozomen, 'Uldis... with an enormous army crossed the river and encamped in Thrace'—a Roman province in the Balkan Mountains. Having conquered the city of Castra Martis, he raided the rest of Thrace's territory and, 'self-assured as he was, would not listen to any suggestions of coming to an agreement with the Romans' [SK, I, Issue 3, p. 771]. However, the Romans eventually forced Uldis out of Thrace, and he had to cross the Danube to flee.

The assumption that Uldis was the chief of the entire Hun tribal union, whose successors were such Hun chiefs as Donatus, Charaton, Rugila, Bleda, and Attila, is not consistent with the general policy of the rulers of the Hunnic union, whose power was great enough for them to never think of serving in the Roman army. On the contrary, written sources claim that Romans were dependent on the Hun chiefs, with whom they had to conduct diplomatic negotiations in order to secure their territory against Hunnic invasion. Besides, Donatus, whose headquarters lay in the Northern Black Sea region, is known to have been the head of the Hunnic union at that time. In 412, the Eastern Roman Empire sent an embassy headed by Olympiodorus to Donatus, and the ambassadors had to cross the Black Sea to reach the Huns' land [Jordanes, 1960, p. 59]. When Donatus died, his son Charaton inherited the power, which is indicative of hereditary succession. We find out that the union was then headed Ruga (Rugila), who initially shared power with two brothers, Munzduk and Octar, who held pow-

er until Attila, though not his entire territory [Jordanes, 1960, p. 101]. It was not until 432, when his brothers had died, that Ruga became the sole ruler.

Of interest is the report by the Roman historian Priscus of Panium on Ruga's decision to wage war against the Amilsurs, the Itimars, the Tonsurs, the Voisks, and other peoples settling on the Istros and forming an alliance with the Romans. The tribes were of Hunnic origin. Giving a list of Hunnic tribes, Jordanes mentions the Alpidzurs, the Alcildzurs, the Itimars, the Tuncarsi and Boiscs, etc. [Jordanes, 1960, pp. 72, 101]. The tribes mentioned by Priscus as those against which Ruga was intending to wage war when undertaking a new western campaign might have been the once detached Huns who had not returned to the steppes of the Northern Black Sea region along with the main forces of the Hunnic army in the late 370s. Remaining on the Danube, independent from the Hunnic political union in the steppes of Eastern Europe, that part of the Huns were active there in early 400 under the command of Uldis. It is likely that those were the tribes who helped Roman commander Aetius against the Goths in 425, for which they received the province of Pannonia. According to Priscus, Ruga wanted to subdue the Goths in order to create a 'single dominion'. However, it was Ruga's successor, the famous Hun chief Attila who completed his policy of conquest.

Attila's Dominion

In 433, Ruga died and his nephews Bleda and Attila, the sons of his brother and co-ruler Munzduk, came to power. Attila's conquest of Pannonia, where the chief relocated his headquarters, took place at that time. In 445, Bleda was killed and Attila became the absolute sole ruler of the Hunnic state.

Attila's reign was the triumph of Hun dominance in Europe. Attila's era was marked by constant wars against the Eastern and Western Roman Empires, which many times resulted in the complete destruction and devastation of Roman cities and agricultural land. For instance, in 443 the Huns raised their arms to

cross the Istros and sack numerous cities and fortifications. In the same year, Attila gathered an army and sent a letter to the Roman emperor, demanding that he immediately release deserters and pay a tribute as well as send a messenger for negotiations regarding future tribute payment. The Romans refused to fulfil Attila's demands, and he began to lay waste to Roman land and razed a number of fortresses [Priscus, 1861, Extracts 3 and 5, pp. 23, 25]. In 447, another colossal battle between the Romans and the Huns took place, later known as the Battle of Hersonissos, near the Dardanelles. The Romans were defeated and had to make peace by accepting all Hun conditions. According to the peace treaty, the Romans were obliged to hand over all deserters to the Huns, give them six libras of gold in settlement of their debt, and to pay an annual tribute of two thousand libras of gold per Roman prisoner of war who had fled and come to his land without a redeem, in case of a failure to pay, they would have to give the runaway to the Huns. In addition, Attila demanded that the Romans stop tilling the land conquered by the Huns along the course of the Istros, from Pannonia to Novae of Thrace, and Naissus (city of Niš) became the new trade centre.

Attila soon undertook another campaign to the west, towards the Rhine. After winning a series of battles and swelling his ranks with Eastern Franks, the Thuringians, and the Burgundians inhabiting the land behind the Rhine, Attila entered Gaul. The decisive battle between the Romans and the Huns took place in the Catalaunian Plains (Champagne) in 451. Jordanes' historical work presents a vivid description of the battle: 'the strongest regiments of both sides fought without any secret crawling attacks, the battle was an open one... People say 165,000 people on each side fell in the most famous battle of the most powerful tribes, apart from fifteen thousand Gepids and Franks, they had a clash at night, before the enemies fought the main battle, and killed each other—Franks fighting for the Romans, and Gepids for the Huns' [Jordanes, 1960, pp. 104, 109]. Seeing that the enemy troops had left their camp, Attila

made another attack on Roman lands, invading the province of Venetia in the north-east part of Italy and destroying numerous cities. The Romans sent an embassy headed by Pope Leo to sign a treaty of peace. Having accepted the Romans' proposal, Attila went beyond the Danube.

In 454, Attila died. Jordanes says Attila's body was secretly committed to the earth at night in three coffins of gold, silver, and iron. Along with him went weapons, 'costly phaleras shining with colourful gemstones and various adornments belonging to a palace'. In order to prevent the riches from evoking human curiosity, they killed everyone entrusted with it' [Jordanes, 1960, p. 118].

Attila's death determined the final decline of Hun domination, the Hunnic state was dissolved. Attila's heirs began a power struggle and 'stupid as they were, each tried to rule until they all lost their power' [Ibid.]. Attila's sons demanded that the subordinated tribes be allocated by drawing lots, not taking into account the opinion of their chiefs. The vassal rulers were outraged. The Gepids headed by King Ardaric were the first to sever ties with the Huns. Other tribes subordinated to Attila joined them. 'And everyone raised their arms to inflict death on each other, and a battle took place in Pannonia, near the River called Nedao'. The Gepids won this battle. Attila's oldest son Ellac died, the other two, Dengiz and Irnik, had to flee to the Pontic Sea, to the steppe of the Northern Black Sea region, which was dominated by the Akatziri.

The fall of Attila's Hun state was effectively the end of the Hunnic tribal union, which relied on the power of arms and the authority of its invincible and mighty ruler, like Attila.

The subsequent history of the Huns appears to be rather vague. Written sources report failed attempts by the Huns to reconquer the Goths and Pannonia. They then tried to establish friendly relations with Rome by offering to make peace and renew the traditional exchange of goods. However, the embassy sent to Emperor Leo for this purpose received a refusal. After that, Dengiz 'tried to raise a war against the Romans to no avail, and Irnik refused to prepare for it, as he was distracted

by local wars' [SK, I, Issue 3, pp. 843–844]. Finally, Dengiz was killed, and his head was delivered to Constantinople by the Roman commander Anagystis.

The Hunnic Way of Life

The history of the European Huns can be divided into four stages: 1—the Hunnic invasion in the steppes of Eastern Europe and farther up to the Danube and their return to the Northern Black Sea region (370–378 CE), 2—the establishment and domination of the Hunnic tribal union in the Northern Black Sea region and Attila's western campaign, the conquest of Pannonia (378–433 CE), 3—the establishment of Attila's state from the Volga to the Danube, with its centre in Pannonia (440–454 CE), 4—the collapse of the Hun empire, the Huns' return to the Northern Black Sea region and gradual disappearance into oblivion (454–latter half of the 5th century CE).

Hunnic society underwent both political and cultural changes during this relatively short but eventful period. As nomadic livestock breeders, just like the Sarmatian and Alan tribes they conquered, the Huns were at a lower level of nomadic economy as compared to the latter. The Sarmatians had not only a firmly established roaming territory but also winter settlements, mostly concentrated around the ancient city of Tanais. Ammianus Marcellinus described the Huns, who invaded the steppes of the Northern Black Sea region in the 370s, as a tribe of utter savagery. Highlighting their nomadic way of life, he wrote that the Huns had no permanent residence but always roamed 'like eternal runaways, with kibitkas, in which they spend their entire life. Here their wives weave ugly clothes for them, sleep with their husbands, have babies, and feed them until maturity. None of them can tell where his motherland is: they are conceived in a place just to be born far away from it and fed even farther' [SK, II, Issue 2, p. 339]. 'They seem stuck to their horses, which are hardy but ugly, they often do their everyday activities sitting on horseback as women do. They spend night and day on

horseback. They buy and sell, eat and drink, and fall asleep leaning on the horse's steep neck, and even have dreams. When they have to discuss serious matters, they conduct their meetings on horseback' [Ibid.]. It is notable that this custom was preserved in Attila's era. Priscus writes that Attila's ambassadors, when meeting the embassy of Rome 'had a gathering outside the city, sitting on horseback, for it was not customary among the barbarians to negotiate in a dismounted position' [SK, I, Issue 3, p. 811].

Ammianus Marcellinus reported the Huns to have no houses, which is indicative of a nomadic life: 'They never use buildings for protection and find them repugnant. They do not have even cane-covered huts'. The Huns did not practice agriculture, even in its most primitive form, which an ancient Greek author confirmed by noting that none of the Huns 'tills soil or ever touches a plough'. They have no king with a strong authority, being 'content with the occasional leadership of the most noble of them, crushing whatever comes in their way' [SK, II, Issue 2, pp. 337–339].

The extracts from reports by Ammianus Marcellinus suggest the Huns to have been at the first,—that is, camping stage of nomadic life, which is indicated by a combination of features according to S. Pletnyova's classification [Pletnyova, 1982, p. 18, Fig. 1]. Two of them fully correspond to the stage of the development of Hun society of the Hunnic tribes who conquered the steppe territory from the Volga to the Danube in the 370s. First of all, it is the nature of military action—invasion resulting in the annihilation of the population and conquest of grasslands, and the social system—military democracy, where the entire people forms the army, headed by chiefs and elders. The other features characteristic of the first stage of nomadic life according to S. Pletnyova are rather problematic in terms of the history of the European Huns for the lack of evidence in both written and archaeological sources.

During the two stages in the history of the Huns following the invasion, which lasted a little more than 70 years, the structure and nature of Hun society changed to a cer-

tain extent, which has been mentioned above. There is reliable written evidence of the fact that the Hunnic tribal union that formed had a multiethnic and multilingual composition. It included the Huns themselves, among which other Turkic tribes, Iranian-speaking Sarmatians and Alans, and the Germanic tribes like the Goths and the Gepids were present. Priscus describes a meeting with a Greek in the camp of Attila, who was wearing 'barbaric clothes', and notes that Attila's court was a mixture of tribes, emphasising the fact that 'apart from the Barbaric language, Scythians easily learn that of the Unns and the Goths, as well as that of the Ausones in case they have relations with the Romans' [SK, I, Issue 3, p. 827]. Now the union was headed by the principal ruler of Hunnic origin, his power was hereditary. At the same time, individual tribes within the union had their clan chiefs, often appointed by the principal ruler.

The ruler had a place of residence, where he lived with his family, entourage, and troops. As we have seen, the ruler's headquarters were initially situated in the Northern Black Sea region, to be relocated to Pannonia during the reign of Attila. Unlike the Huns of Ammianus Marcellinus, whom he claimed had no houses, Attila's court was described by Priscus as 'a huge settlement', where Attila's residence was situated, 'built of logs and well-cut boards and surrounded by a wooden fence not for security but for decorative purposes. Behind the king's residence stood that of Onegesios (Attila's close advisor—*I.Z.*), also surrounded by a wooden fence, which was not embellished with towers unlike Attila's' [SK, I, Issue 3, pp. 825–826]. The residence of Attila's wife Kreka was no less luxurious.

The shifting nature of military action, now characterised not by invasion but by raids in pursuit of specific purposes,

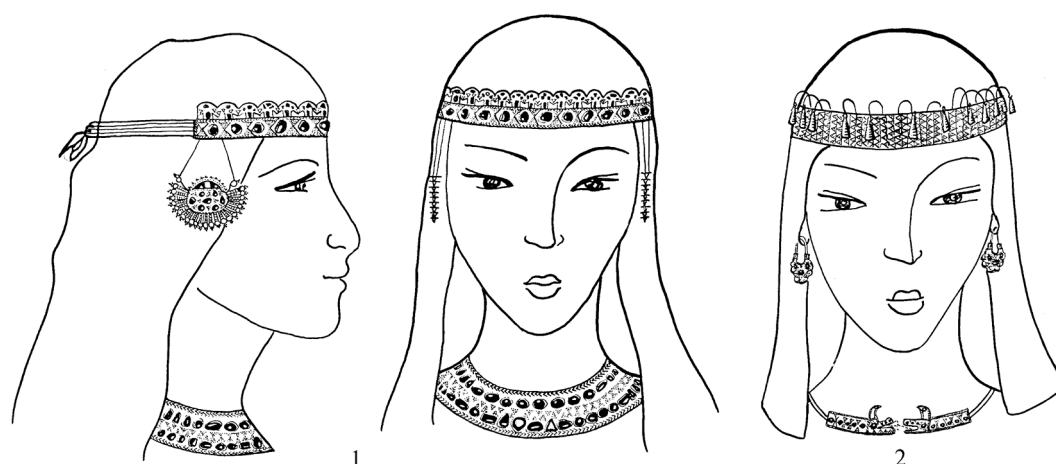
such as capturing prisoners, plunder, buy-out, and tribute, was typical of the Hunnic society at that time. However, the battle strategy remained unchanged throughout the history of the European Huns. Light-armed cavalry with bows and long swords, the offensive weapons of the Huns, was crucial to Hunnic

war. Ammianus Marcellinus reports that the Huns were 'excellent warriors' and conducted distant battles with the help of arrows and used swords at a close distance. They would dodge a strike to throw a noose on the enemy to make him unable either to sit on horseback or to walk away... 'They fling themselves at the enemy in a V-formation, producing a menacing howling scream. Lightweight and fleet, they suddenly scatter around deliberately to attack here and there without forming a battle line, which results in a dreadful slaughter. Being extremely fast, they are never seen storm or rob their enemy's camp' [SK, II, Issue 2, p. 338]. The report suggests the Hun strategy relied on sudden attacks, which their enemies feared most of all. According to Jordanes, when Emperor Valentinianus II sent an embassy to the Visigoths and their king Theodoric I to form an alliance against Attila, he reminded them that 'the Huns do not attack their enemies openly... but... lay in artful ambushes to creep up to them' [Jordanes, 1960, p. 103]. The battle strategy did not change during the reign of Attila.

Archaeological sources in the form of burial monuments suggest that active income diversification of society took place during the period, with a clear noble class emerging, a set of objects representative of the culture of the nobility was formed. The sociopolitical formation, which corresponds to the second stage of nomadic life according to S. Pletnyova, can be conventionally termed a 'state' or an 'empire' relying on the power of arms and on the might of its ruler. That is why the first severe military defeats caused the chief's authority to decline, indirectly leading to the disintegration of the ethnically diverse union.

The Issue of Ethnic Attribution of the European Huns

The origin of the European Huns and their relation to the Eastern Huns, who are referred to as the Hsiung-nu in Chinese written sources, is a controversial issue of Hunnic history. It has been widely discussed in scholarly literature for over two centuries. As early as the 18th century, French historian Deguignes



Noble women's gold jewellery of the Hun era (the end of 4–5th centuries CE).

I. Zasetskaya's Reconstruction. 1 – The diadem and kolt from the burial in Verxneyablochnoe, a neck decoration from the ruined tomb in village Aleshki (Kherson province of the Ukrainian Republic), 2 – ornamentation from the village Karagach (Kazakhstan)

suggested a hypothesis of the unity of the European Huns and the Hsiung-nu of Central Asia. It gave rise to a dispute between Deguigne's supporters and his opponents, carried out through the academic literature. There was no common idea of the origin of the Huns and the Hsiung-nu, who were believed to be Mongolian, Turkic, Finnish, Ugric, and even Slavic.

K. Inostrantsev, who supports the idea that the Huns and the Hsiung-nu are the same people of Turkic origin, has described the history of research into the issue up to 1925 [Inostrantsev, 1926]. The issue remained of interest after that. New hypotheses emerged alongside the existing opinions. The author of one of them, A. Bernshtam, believed the Huns of Eastern Europe to be descendants of the Central Asian Hsiung-nu and viewed the 'formation of the Hunnic people' as a complex and long process, to which the population of Central Asia had also contributed. Assimilation caused the Hsiung-nu to change their racial type and culture, and later, in the 4th century, 'that mixed Hsiung-nu type' moved westwards, joined by peoples inhabiting the Cis Ural, the Volga region, and even the Kama region, which led to even greater changes to their culture and appearance [Bernshtam, 1951]. L. Gumilyov views the Eu-

ropean Huns as a mixture of two tribes, the Hsiung-nu and the Ugric people, with a remark that 'the Ugric people of the Cis Ural were the ones to shelter the runaways (the Hsiung-nu) and enable them to pull themselves up again. It is in the Ugric territories where the Huns started their new western campaign, the two people mixed and merged into a new ethnic group—the Huns' [Gumilyov, 1960, p. 242]. M. Artamonov supported this point of view, believing that over 200 years the Hsiung-nu, originating from Mongolia, 'turned into the Huns, in essence becoming a brand new ethnic group. The relatively small Hsiung-nu horde in the steppes of the Cis Ural was surrounded by primarily Ugric tribes, with which it did not hesitate to establish various contacts' [Artamonov, 1962, p. 42].

Studying the complex and controversial issue of the connections between the Hsiung-nu and the Huns, researchers mostly relied on written and linguistic data, leaving aside archaeological sources. The latter fact is attributable to the lack of any visible affinity between monuments by the Hsiung-nu of Central Asia (2nd century BCE–2nd century CE) and the Huns of Eastern Europe (late 4–5th centuries CE). Indeed, the chronological gap of 200 to 300 years makes it general-

ly unlikely for the archaeological complexes to be even vaguely similar. However, a more detailed comparison of the antiquities from Eastern Europe and Central and Middle Asia enabled experts trace certain cultural traditions from the Hsiung-nu to the Huns.

In this respect, examination of arrowheads from burial complexes of the European Huns, in particular, those from the steppes of the Northern Black Sea region, yielded interesting findings. It was not the local Sarmatian-Alani weapons of the preceding period but the Hsiung-nu monuments of Mongolia, Tuva, and the Transbaikial region, as well as the burials of the first centuries CE in Middle Asia where their prototypes were found. [Zasetskaya, 1983, pp. 70–84]. The territory of Pannonia (Hungary) is the westernmost point where such finds were discovered.

Another category of objects, bronze cauldrons, also indicate an ethnocultural link between the Huns and the Hsiung-nu, which both domestic and foreign researchers have noted many times. By studying the cauldrons belonging to the Hsiung-nu–Hunnic circle, experts were able to trace the path and ethnocultural links at the interim stage in the history of the Eastern and Western Huns,—that is, from the time the Hsiung-nu left Central Asia until the Hunnic expansion into Eastern Europe. Mapping the cauldrons yielded several areas where the finds appeared to be concentrated—Northern China, Mongolia, and the Transbaikial region, the Sayan–Altai, Ural–Volga, Romanian Danube regions, and Pannonia (Fig. 2). Only one discovery of a 4th century CE Hunnic bronze cauldron has been recorded in the steppes of the Northern Black Sea region. The development of the morphological features of Hsiung-nu–Hunnic cauldrons in correlation with the chronological definitions of the discoveries indicate a gradual advancing movement of the carriers of such ritual products from east to west [Bokovenko, Zasetskaya, 1993, pp. 73–88].

Of great interest in this respect are the discoveries of clay containers imitating the Hunnic-type bronze cauldrons found in monuments of the Dzhetysay culture of the second period along the Lower Syr Darya. The

appearance of clay copies of the 2nd–4th century CE Hunnic cauldrons of Middle Asia is an important link in the chain for solving the problem of Hunni–Hun relations. The presence of such copies of the pots is indicative of a long presence of the prototypes, which, in turn, suggests that a Hunni group inhabiting the territory for a certain time once moved to the Lowed Syr Darya area.

Therefore, the Hsiung-nu migration from Central Asia that started in the 2nd century BCE affected many peoples of the Sayan–Altai region, Siberia, Middle Asia, the Cis Ural, and the Volga region, peoples of various origin—Turkic, Samoyedic, Ugro-Finns, etc., who were not only influenced by the strangers' culture but also made major contributions to the formation of the Hsiung-nu–Hun ethnocultural community.

Written reports suggest the European Huns, just as the Hsiung-nu of Central Asia, to belong to the Mongoloid race. Ammianus Marcellinus emphasised that the Huns were beardless, which was achieved by deeply cutting newborn babies' cheeks with a sharp knife to prevent hair growth 'so they get old without growing a beard and are as far from being handsome as eunuchs'. Ammianus Marcellinus then described them as having 'extremely thick and strong limbs, thick napes, and an appearance generally so scary and monstrous that one could take them for bipedal animals or compare them with piles worked deeply to build a bridge' [SK, II, Issue 2, p. 337]. Jordanes describes the appearance of the famous Hun chief Attila as being similar to that of his tribesmen: 'In appearance Attila was short, broad-chested, big-headed and small-eyed, he had a thin frosted beard, a flat nose, and a disgusting (skin) colour, presenting a vivid evidence of his origin' [Jordanes, 1960, p. 102].

Even though these descriptions of the Hunnic appearance clearly exaggerate their ugliness, they indicate something unfamiliar and even frightening to the Europeans. Quite naturally, when speaking to the Huns to raise their morale and remind them of their previous victories, Attila said, 'Who at last opened the way to the Maeotian marshes to our an-


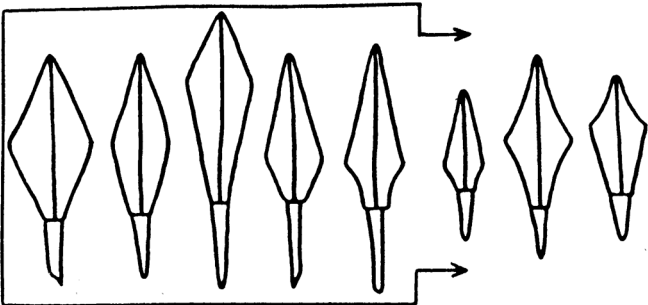
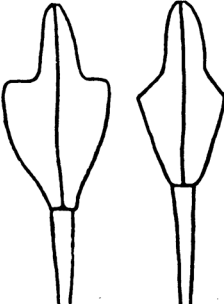
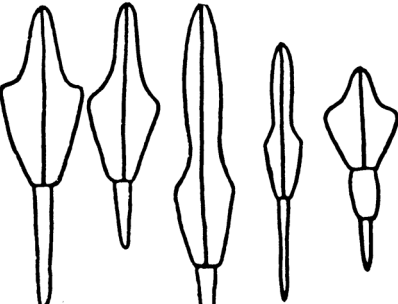
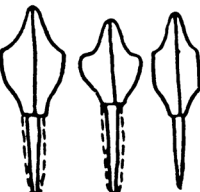


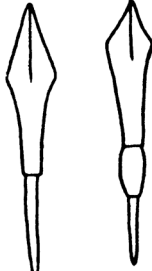

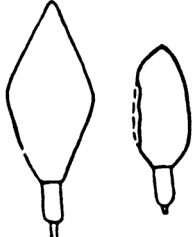
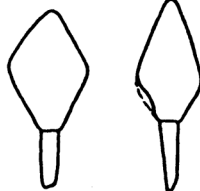
Transbaikal region, Mongolia 1st century BCE– 1st century AD.	Tuva. Kokel burial site 1st–3rd centuries AD.	Eurasian steppe the end of 4th–5th century AD
		
		
		
		
		

Fig. 1. Comparative table of arrowheads

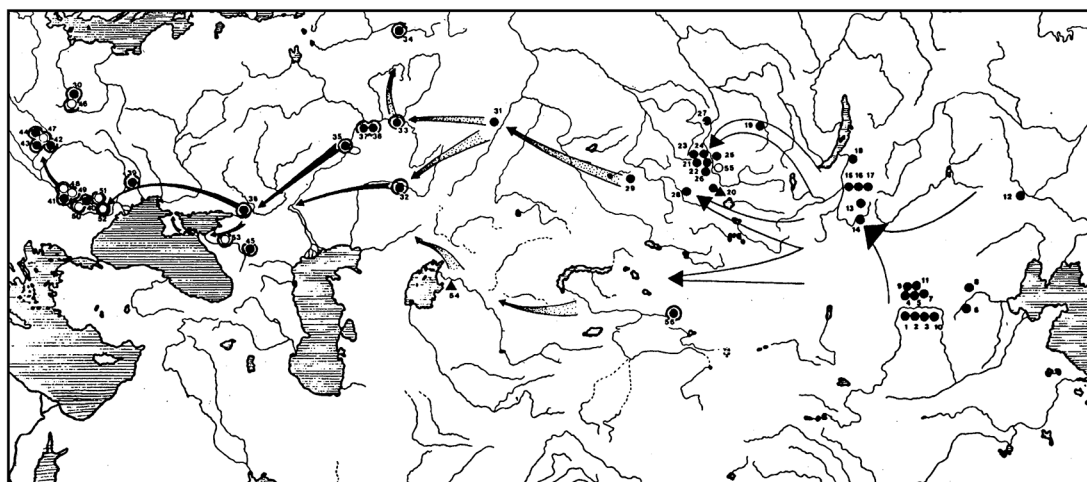


Fig. 2 Map of Hsiung-nu-Hunnic cauldrons.

Legend: ● – the location of a whole cauldron, ○ – a fragment, ▲ – a ceramic copy, Hsiung-nu movement
 ← – 2nd century BCE–1st century CE, ← – 2nd–3rd centuries CE, ← – 4–5th centuries CE

The locations of the finds of group II cauldrons are circled.

List of cauldrons.

- 1–3, 10 – Northern China (Ordos), 4–5, 7, 9, 11 – Northern China, 6 – Suiyuan (China), 8 – Zhang zakou (China), 12 – Manchuria, 13 – Noin Ula (Mongolia), 14 – Mongolia, 15 – Kiran (Mongolia), 16 – Chikoy (Zabaykalsky Krai), 17 – Sava (Zabaykalsky Krai), 18 – Ivolginsky burial ground (Zabaykalsky Krai), 19 – Nizhnesudinsk, 20 – Kokel burial ground (Tuva), 21 – Dorina (Minusinsky Krai), 22–23 – Minusinsky Krai, 24 – Kyul (Minusinsky Krai), 25 – Komarkova (Minusinsky Krai), 26 – Oznachennoe (Minusinsky Krai), 27 – Krasnoyarsk, 28 – Byushk (Altai), 29 – Chernaya Kurya (Altai), 30 – Höckricht (Silesia), 31 – Savinovka (Tyumen Oblast), 32 – Kyzyl-Aldyr (Orenburg Oblast), 33 – Perm, 34 – Syktyvkar (Komi), 35 – Osoka (Simbirsk Oblast), 36–37 Aksubaevo (Tatarstan), 38 – Ivanovskoe (Rostov Oblast), 39 – Shestachi (Moldova), 40 – Ionești (Romania), 41 – Dessa (Romania), 42 – Tortel (Hungary), 43 – Kaposvold (Hungary), 44 – Várpalota (Hungary), 45 – Stavropol, 46 – Benih (Czechoslovakia), 47 – Intercisa (Hungary), 48 – Hinova (Romania), 49 – Hotarani (Romania), 50 – Sucidava (Romania), 51 – Cervseni (Romania), 52 – Boșneagu (Romania), 53 – Malai (Krasnodar Krai), 54 – Altyn-Asar (Kazakhstan), 55 – Minusinsky Krai, 56 – Ürümqi (Western China) (author – I. Zasetskaya)

cestors?.. Who made armed men retreat in the face of those bare-handed? However numerous they were, they could not stand the face of the Huns'.

There is also anthropological evidence of a few discoveries to Mongoloid tribes having been included in the Hunnic society. In three burials, the Mongoloid features of the dead people were combined with a Turkic burial ceremony of entombing a horse skin together with the dead one. Four cases of a horse skin being buried have been recorded—two were found in the Lower Volga region in burial sites near the village of Verkhne-Pogromnoye and near the town of Pokrovsk, one in the eastern part of the Crimea in the ancient site of Belyaus, and one in the settlement of

Kubej, Odessa Oblast. Both burials in the Lower Volga region are female and were included in older kurgans. The burial sites near the village of Verkhne-Pogromnoye was situated on the ancient horizon, horse skull and leg bones lay at the dead woman's feet. In the niche burials near the town of Pokrovsk and in the settlement of Kubej, horse skull and legs lay on the steps of the entrance pit. In the Crimean burial, which enters the ground of the stone burial vault dating back to the 1st century CE, horse skulls and leg bones lay on a stone slab covering a narrow rectangular tomb dug in the ground of the burial vault. A boy aged 14 to 15 with clearly Mongoloid facial features and a cranial deformation was buried there. Burying an animal skin is a tra-

dition within an ancient animal sacrifice ritual known since the Bronze Era, which was practiced by different peoples, during different periods, and in different territories.

The tradition became more common than ever in the late nomadic culture of the 8–11th century in connection with the general migration of Turkic tribes from east to west. Monuments from Central Asia and Siberia as well as those of the 'Southern Russian' steppes suggest that a similar ritual had been practiced before.

Written sources and ethnographic data are available that suggest that Turkic tribes practiced the horse skin burying ritual. Describing the burial ceremony of the Turkic Ghuz tribe, Arab author Ibn Fadlan wrote that after the burial the dead man's horses were taken, and, depending on the total number, one hundred heads, two hundred heads, or one head was killed, the meat except for the head, skin, and tail, was eaten.

However, we believe the emergence of such ritual, which appears exotic in the context of the preceding Sarmatian and Alan culture, in monuments of the Eastern European steppes of the Hunnic era (late 4–5th century)

to be attributable to some tribes of Turkic origin who might have entered the steppes of the Northern Black Sea region along with the Huns.

It is noteworthy in this respect that a series of tribal names with such typically Turkic endings as 'urs', 'irs', and 'ars' is associated with the Huns of South-Eastern Europe. This includes the Akatzirs, the Altziagirs, the Hunnogurs, the Itimars, the Alpidzurs, etc. mentioned by Priscus and Jordanes. Procopius of Caesarea and Agathias of Myrina includes the Utighurs, the Kutrigurs, and the Ultidzurs in their lists of Hunnic tribes. The ethnonyms show an affinity to such tribal names of clearly Turkic origin as the Savirs, the Uighurs, the Avars, the Khazars, and the Bolgars.

Therefore, the entire combination of features indicate an undoubtedly eastern origin of the European Huns and their belonging to the Mongoloid race. The question of whether the Huns were Turkic-speaking is a controversial one, but it is beyond doubt that representatives of the Turkic world entered Europe along with the Huns. As mentioned by many researchers, it was the Hunnic invasion which unlocked the way to the west for the Turkic peoples.

Flarid Sungatov

The Huns in the Volga-Ural region

The Volga-Ural interfluvial area occupies a special place in Eurasian medieval history. It has served as 'a bridge between the two continents. It was connected by the opened steppe territories with the Northern Black Sea region and Caucasian cultural site, the oldest Middle East agricultural oecumene and boundless, rooted into range of Central Asia areas of Southern Siberia. It was situated in the centre of the great and ancient way of the multilateral cultural relations, active contacts and influences and finally, grand relocations of human groups' [Merpert, 1974, p. 16]. Such broad historical links and the activity of ethnocultural exchange from ancient times has been related to the formation of a meridian cycle even in the early Iron Age, when in the arid summertime and especially due to the Eurasian steppe drying out from the south, nomads moved their livestock to the rich grass forest steppe of the Middle Volga and Cis-Ural region.

Researchers consider that meridian season long distance movements characteristic of this Epoch, have also played an outstanding role in the establishment of economic, ethnic and cultural connections of the Middle Volga region and Southern Cis-Ural region with the territories of Aral Sea region, Caspian Sea region and Northern Caucasus. This circumstance allows us to view those territories as a single ethnic world—the Volga–Ural–Northern Caucasus–Caspian–Aral Sea province [Kuzeev, 1992, p. 38]. In the middle of the first millennium CE, since the beginning of the Hunnic tribes invasion into Eastern Europe, differences in their origin tribe groups (first of all Turkic) repeatedly penetrated to the Volga–Ural region. In effect, it was a continuation and further development of previously established migration traditions, but with the difference that the main reason for nomadic movement to the north was caused not by climatic vulnerabilities, but by military and political developments, which had turned around

in the Eastern Aral Sea region even before the beginning of 'the Migration Period' Epoch and related with them by migration impulses of Hun-Dahae-Massagetean Kangju population in the 3rd–4th centuries CE towards south-west and north-west (the Lower and Middle Volga region and the foothills of the Cis Ural) [Levina, 1996, p. 375].

Contemporary history does not have any written records which would be able reliably and fully highlight ethnocultural changes in the Southern and Eastern foothills of the Cis Ural and Western Kazakhstan steppes. But there is every reason to localise in this territory the borders of the new ethnocultural integration, headed by newcomers, nomad tribes which erstwhile were the part of the legendary Hun Chanyu Zhizhi State. As a part of this integration have been Dahae-Massagetean, Alan tribes of Asian Sarmatia, Finno-Ugrians from Ural–Volga region and Siberia. Their descendants became famous in Eastern Europe under the name the *Huns*.

Archaeological shifts in this territory have been detected by the written monuments which has come to be known as 'Hunno-Sarmatian'. In general terms the particular aspects of the burial ceremony and clothing material are close to Dzhetyasar antiquities. They are represented by 128 burial complexes in the Ural-Ishim interfluvial (Bajramgulovo, Malkovo, Druzheno, Bolshekaraganka, Temyasovo and other) [Botalov, 1993, Botalov, Polushkin, 1996, Pshenichnyuk, 1983]. In Southern foothills of the Cis Ural it has been marked with the cave burial in the Kyzyl-Adyr village, interment of Zagrebalovsky kurgan 5, separate kurgan complexes on a Myortvy Soli mountain, kurgan burial grounds like Derbenevo, Salikhovo, Akhmerovo and other [Zasetskaya, 1994, Pshenichnyuk, 1983, Vasyutkin, 1977, 1986]. There are numerous archaeological monuments of the late Sarmatian period in the Lower and Middle Volga regions.

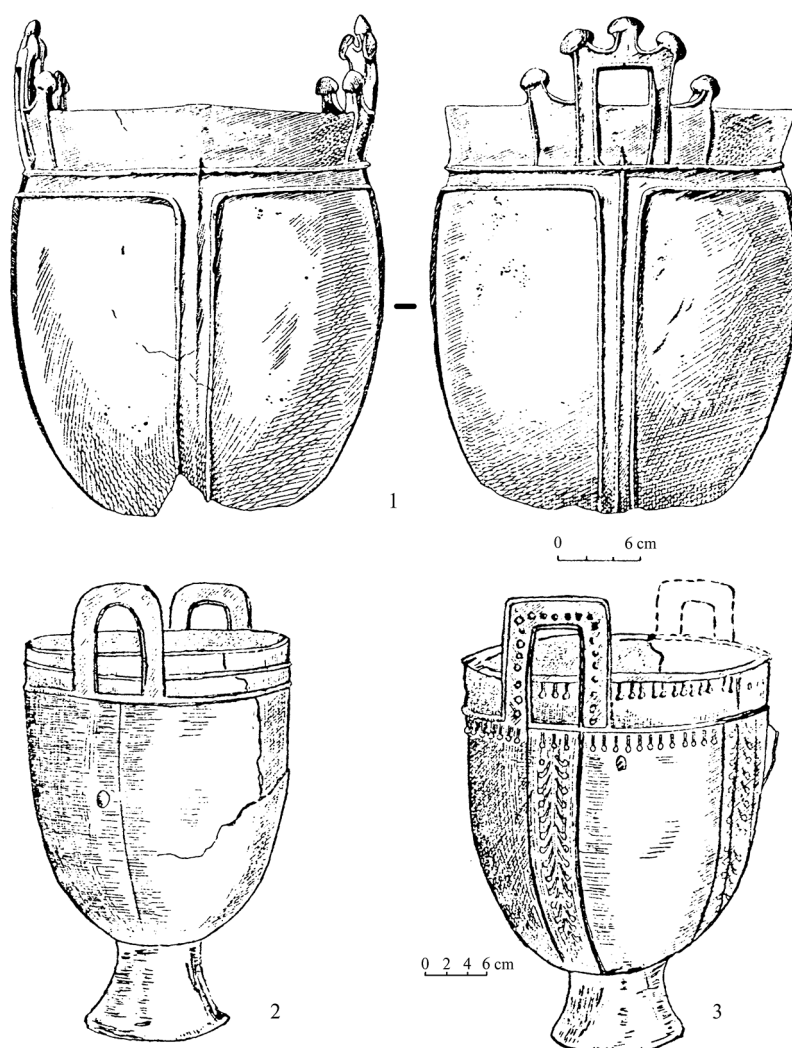


Fig. 1. Hunnic cauldrons of the Volga-Ural region.

1 – a cauldron from the cave burial in Kyzyl-Adyr village (Orenburg Oblast), 2, 3 – cauldrons – accidental finds near Tatarskoye Suncheleevo village (Tatarstan). 1–3 – bronze

Thus, archaeological data allows us to localise the Huns' settlement in the 2nd–4th centuries on the vast area from Ural to Irtysh basin, to the south up to the Middle Syr Darya River. Many researchers have been observed the western border on the Yaik river, perhaps reached the area of Volga. In any case, there are circumstantial archaeological evidences of Huns infiltration into Sarmatian population of the Lower and Middle Volga regions already in first centuries of CE (interment of 51 Suslov's burial) [Minaev, 1927, p. 116, Zasetskaya, 1994, p. 138].

In the 4–5th centuries at Volgo-Ural forest steppe clearly displayed the contours of separate areas, where archaeologically is well defined the presence of Hun Horde tribal groups that came from the south (Fig. 1) and their active interaction with local tribes of Finno-Permic ethnocultural area.

In the 'Southern Russian' steppe the number of Huns' circle monuments are actually very small. According to I. Zasetskaya's data, the Huns' presence in Eastern Europe is recorded with only 54 burial grounds and sepa-

rate accidental finds [Zasetskaya, 1994, p. 6]. In the Middle Volga region it is represented by an even lower number, some of the most renowned of which are the Fyodorovo and Vladimirovo burials, and finds of individual objects in the Hun style in the villages of Muslyumovo, Osoka and Tatarskoye Suncheleevo [Werner, 1956, Khalikov, 1978, Bogachyov, 1998].

The listed monuments for the many scholars provide evidence of the Turkic-speaking population representatives' settlement even in the pre-Bulgar period [Fakhretdinov, 1996, p. 29, Khalikov, 1971, p. 12]. But not all researchers support this point of view.

A special place in the Volga-Ural region is occupied by the Turayevski material (a lower reaches of Izh River), Staro-Mushtinski (a lower reaches of Belaya River) kurgans and burial grounds of Kharino type (the Upper Kama River region), that appeared here at the same time and existed synchronously in the 4–5th centuries. The population that left those monuments had resulted hitherto not only unknown locally Underkurgan burial rites, but also new types of material culture of southern (Hunnic) image.

The alien character of the 'Turayevo', 'Staraya Mushta' and 'Kharino' populations is recognised by practically all researchers. But some researchers recognise them as Ugric people from the southern Trans-Ural region, others consider them to be Iranian-speaking Sarmatians, while some see them as Samoyedic peoples and also mixed Ugric-Iranians or Turkic-Ugric and even Proto-Slavic.

It is possible that the appearance of 'Turayevo–Staraya Mushta–Kharino' population in the region was linked to the Huns' movement to the west [Gening, 1976, p. 108]. This is indicated by the main body of the burial inventory. In any case, in terms of the composition of finds it's almost the same as the

Hun-era antiquities and reveals direct similarities with synchronous monuments of the Eurasian steppes in the 5–7th centuries and especially among the materials of *Dzhetyasar culture* in the Eastern Aral Sea region. Examples of this include items of belt mountings, weapons arms and horse trappings. With regard to the items which be western in origin (helmets), the possibility cannot be excluded that they were spoils of war of the Huns and their allies, taken after the conquest of the Northern Black Sea region at the end of the 4th century.

It is logical to assume that geography of the Huns' military campaigns was not limited to a solely western focus. It is quite likely that military campaigns were organised in the north too, notably towards the forest steppes and forest areas of the Kama River region and the western foothills of the Cis Ural. The new ethnicity played an important role in the subsequent transformation of the archaeological culture of the local Finno-Permic population and furnished them with a specific identity. Seemingly thanks to the ethnocultural influence and even direct involvement of the newcomers to the Kama River region, *Mazunin (Early Bahmutin) culture* developed, prevailing through a Pyanobor-Karaabyzsk cultural basis in the 3rd century CE. In this regard, the differentiation of the Turayevo and Staraya Mushta burial sites is notable for the separation of the sexes—that is, in tombs under the kurgans lie the men-warrior-newcomers, in the ground tombs—women who were representatives of the local population.

One consequence of the cultural innovations in the Kama River and Ural regions in the Migration Period was the splitting of the Mazunin community. This resulted in two variants in the 4–5th centuries—Udmurt and Bashkir, each with a different historical fate.

Lyudmila Gmyrya

The Huns in the Northern Caucasus

The appearance of the new Hunnic (Unnic) population in the Northern Caucasus is noted by ancient writers from the mid-2nd century CE. The steppes of the west Caspian coast are also connected with them. Dionysius Periegetes (2nd century) claimed the peoples known in Europe as the Caspians and the Albans were the Southern neighbours of the 'Unn' tribe. The northern border of Caucasian Albania (*Aghuank* in Armenian sources) was near the Derbend pass, which had been controlled by the Albans since 68 CE. The Huns in the 2nd century lived north of the Albans' possessions, having mastered near-Caspian steppe areas [Gmyrya, 1995, p. 45–47]. The earlier Caucasian and Iranian-speaking (Sarmatian) population had been expelled from those territories or assimilated. The Hun Union was not ethnically homogeneous. Specialists have classified the Hunnic language under the western Hsiung-nu branch of the Turkic language [Baskakov, 1960, pp. 106–107], which is relatively arbitrary as the composition of the Western Huns' language is unknown.

After securing power in the conquered Western Caspian Sea region, the Huns in the 3rd century and first half of the 4th century actively intervened in political and military developments in Transcaucasia. 5th-century Armenian historians recorded the political activity of the Huns from the Caspian Sea region dating back to the 230s. Their involvement in the Armenian and Caucasian peoples' joint military campaign against Persians in 227 was well-known. During the reign of Armenian king Tiridates III (287–332), according to 5th-century Armenian historian Movses Khorenatsi, 'the Hun Land' existed as a stable inhabited territory of the Hunnic tribes. The Huns from the Caspian Sea region, according to 5th-century Armenian historian Faustus of Byzantium fought alongside the Alans in the Armenian battle, headed by King Arshak II (350–368) against troops of the Persia king

Shapur I (309–379). Researchers recognise the Hunnic tribes infiltration into Eastern Greater Caucasus in the 2nd century CE as real, considering it prior to massive migration of Huns (L. Gumilyov, S. Klyashtorny, A. Novoseltsev, S. Ashurbeyli and others).

The 370s saw the beginning of the massive migration of Hunnic tribes to the region and their settlement along the Caspian Sea coast, including the Caspian (Derbend) pass (N. Pigulevskaya, M. Artamonov, A. Gadlo, V. Kuznetsov, S. Pletnyova and others). Scholars pinpoint the emergence of a tribal union that included Hun and Alan (Masqut) population groups to the 390s, whose inhabited territories extended from the Terek River to the Derbend Pass (A. Gadlo). In 395, the Huns from the Caspian Sea region brought military action to Transcaucasian countries and Near East as far as Syria. The famous Latin ecclesiastical historian Eusebius Hieronymus, who lived through the Hun campaign, noted it in his letters dating back to 396 and 399 as a terrible scourge of the year 395: '...from the vanishing points of Maeotis..., where Alexander hasps (Derbend Passage region.—*L.G.*) hamper wild tribes with Caucasian rocks, have broken out the swarms of Huns'. [Eusebius Hieronymus, p. 1030].

The settlement territory of Hunnic tribes in the Caspian Sea region from the middle of the 5th century began to be called 'the Hunn land' by writers of the time [Yeghishe, pp. 79–80 and others]. The frontier border between Hun territories in the Caspian Sea region and Transcaucasian countries in sources are called Derbend strongholds, often referred to as 'Huns' Gates' [Yeghishe, pp. 31, 53, 79 and others]. The Huns, who have been taken the territory to the north of Derbend were at that time the main military and political force in Eastern Ciscaucasia. One of the numerous names of the Derbend defensive complex, the mud brick fortifications of which have been pinpointed to first half of the 5th century [Kudryavtsev,

1982, p. 77], Armenian historian Lazarus of Parb (5th century) has put it in a form of Pak Heons—'defence against Heons'.

The Hun tribes, which occupied the land in northern borders of the Transcaucasian territory under Iran dependency, have been the subject of ongoing support not only from Iran, but also from its rival on Caucasus—Byzantium, as well as peoples from Caucasian Albania, Armenia and Georgia, to whose land almost every year rapacious Hun campaigns have taken place. Depending on how the political situation stood within these countries, retaliatory campaigns into Hun territory were carried out. But rulers of Iran, Byzantium and also Albania and Armenia mostly preferred to establish allied relations with the Huns from Caspian Sea region, relying on some assistance in their foreign policy activities. In 450, when Persia Armenia was gripped by an anti-Iranian popular uprising led by Prince Vardan, Armenians and Albanians called the Huns from Caspian Sea their allies. The Huns had an accurate assessment of the military and political situation in the South Caucasus and acted accordingly. Before confirming their participation as allies of the rebels 'the Huns came to the battlefield and proved themselves in feats accomplished by Vardan's Christian army...' [Yeghishe, pp. 79–80]. During the entire time that Armenia was caught up in a partisan war with the Persians, the Huns were committed to their agreement, 'constantly harried the king of Persia' and refused to be drawn into any plots to betray the rebels. In order to stop the Huns providing support to the rebels, the Persians captured the Dzhora (Derbend) pass after calling for the aid of many hill tribes. In the Battle of Avarayr in 451 between Armenian and Persia troops, the Huns were not involved although the Armenians '...sent messengers, harried and inflamed their army, referring to the agreement where they sworn to Armenian' [Yeghishe, p. 116]. Within this altered situation (Albania, Iberia and number of other areas retreated from the Armenian rebels), the Huns preferred neutrality, but a portion of them were on the side of the Persians. Taking advantage of the Persia power struggle that ensued after Yazdegerd's II death (438–457) between his sons, the Al-

banians waged war against the Persians (460–462). The Huns who had been bribed by Persia king Peroz (459–484) betrayed the union with Transcaucasian peoples and were fighting rebels during 462 [Yeghishe, p. 170, Movses Kaghankatvatsi, I, p. 11].

In the Eastern Ciscaucasian steppe, the union between Hunnic and the Masqut tribes formed in the 4–5th centuries, which is reflected by Armenian writers of the 5th century living in the population area through their use of double ethnonyms: *Huns Khaylandurks* (Yeghishe) and *Masakha Huns* (Agathangelos). *The Masqut* (Masakha), whose holdings in the first centuries CE were located in the Derbend pass area, engaged in military, political and ethnocultural interaction with the Huns. Armenian literary tradition connects the tragic death of the Bishop Grigoris, who made an attempt to Christianise the nomad tribes of the near-Caspian Sea region in the 330s, with the name of Masqut king Sanesan, who is also identified as the 'master of numerous Hun troops' [Faustus of Byzantium p. 14]. The place where the bishop died has been described in sources as 'Vatnean field' on the bank of 'the Great North Sea' corresponding to an area south of Derbend. Sources link Masquts' campaign headed by the Sanesan against Armenian king Khosrow II (330–338) to the same period. Huns, Alans and other nomad tribes were among the Masqut troops. Faustus Buzand described the traditional way of counting the number of troops led by a Masqut king: 'His cavalry was too numerous and so many foot soldiers armed with sticks that even they couldn't enumerate themselves. But when they had come to some significant place, they would organise a military parade by regiment, banner and unit in conspicuous places and ordered that everyone carry a stone and throw it on a heap, and then by counting them, to estimate how many people they had and leave a powerful sign of past events for future times. And everywhere they passed through, they left these signs at the crossroads and ways' [Faustus of Byzantium p. 15]. Among the Masqut king's troops were not only allied units, but, as the sources also note, an 'indigenous regiment' (Faustus Buzand), which consisted of Masquts



Hun chief. 5th century Reconstruction by M. Gorelik

and Huns. This military campaign went badly for Sanesan. Having seized most of Armenia, the Masakha Huns stayed there for a year. Armenians, with their remaining strength, attacked the camp '...in the morning time during worship'. Everyone in the camp (Ayrarat Gavar) who was guarding the plunder and prisoners, died. In the battle near Vagharshapat the main Masqut, Hun and Alan forces were crushed and Sanesan also died—'the head of the great king Sanesan they brought to the Armenian king' [Faustus of Byzantium p. 16].

5th-century Armenian historian Agathangelos pointed out the location of the country of the 'Masakha Huns' within the north-eastern part of Caucasian Albania, and also defined its

status in the political system of the Albanian state [Gadlo, 1979, pp. 32–33]. The identification of the Masquts and Huns by ancient authors, it is believed, 'reflects some integration of the Iranian-speaking descendants of Masageteans and Turkic-speaking Huns' [Gadlo, 1979, p. 39].

In 502, military action between Iran and Byzantium was renewed in what rapidly became a lengthy war that continued until the first quarter of the 7th century. The Hunnic state of the Caspian Sea region was dragged into military action by acting for one side or the other. At the beginning of 6th century, the Huns appear to be allied to Byzantium. Distinguished 6th-century Byzantine historian

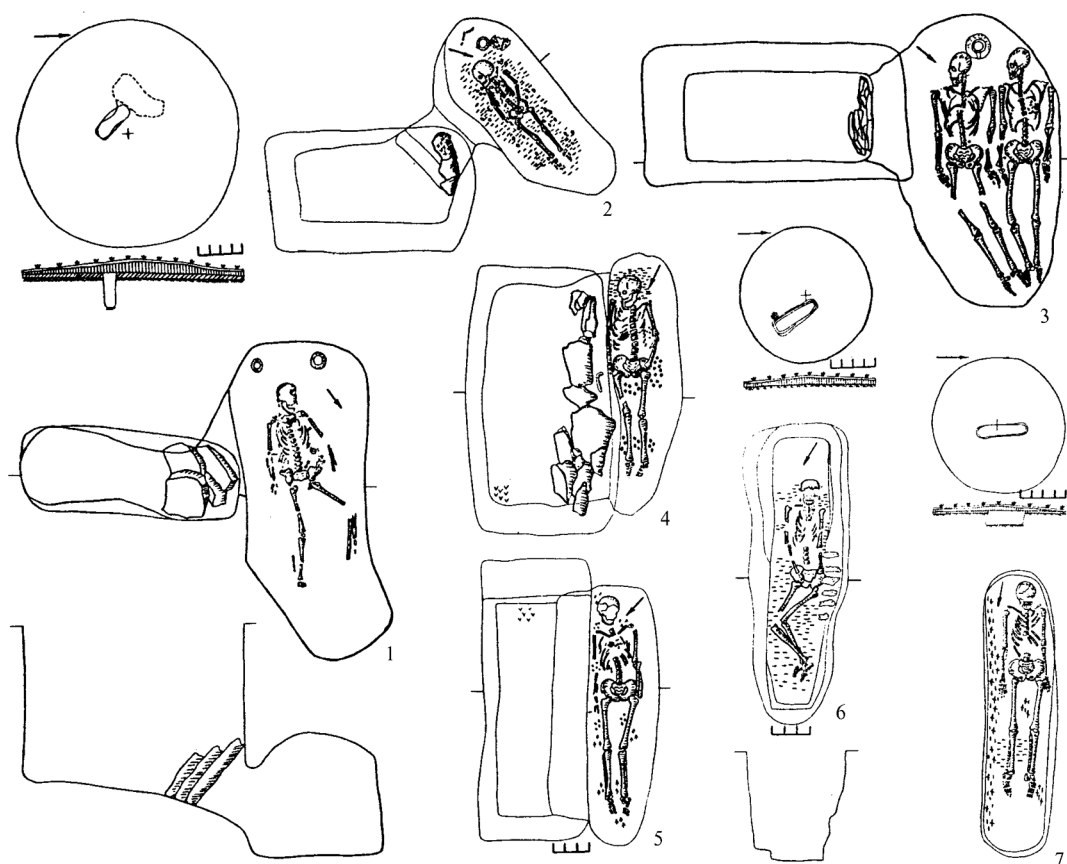


Fig. 1 Caspian Dagestan. Palasa-Syrtsk burial site of the 4–5th centuries Burial ceremony.
1–3 – burials in catacombs, 4–5 – burials in kerfs, 6–7 – burials in pits

Procopius of Caesarea in one of his writings mentioned a Hun named Amvazuk, who ruled a fortress and the Caspian Gate in the reign of Byzantine Emperor Anastasius (491–518) and Persia King Kavadh (488–496, 499–531). The Caspian Gates are described by the historian as 'a castle built near the Caspian Gates of Alexander the Great',—that is, the Derbend Pass: 'Alexander, Philip's son... had built where it was said a gate and fortification, which in different times have been occupied by many, by the way, and by Unn Amvazuk, friend of Romans and Emperor Anastasius' [Procopius of Caesarea, I, pp. 112–113]. Anastasius refused to buy out this passage from Huns, but soon it was seized by Kavadh.

In military actions of 502–506, the Caspian Sea region Huns fought as mercenaries in the armies of both states. Hun support was

highly valued by Persians and Byzantines alike. In one famous episode, which was described by a Syrian author in the 6th century, during the Persia assault of the city of Harran (502 CE) the besieged captured the Hun leader. The Persia King Kavadh lifted the siege and provided 'one hundred and fifty sheep herd and other items' to secure the freedom of the noble Hun warlord [Joshua the Stylite, p. 155]. When the Byzantium Empire realised how important the Hun tribes had become along the Persia north-eastern borders, they sought to win them to their side at any cost. Bribery, threats or paid military assistance were all used to this end. For its part, Persia understood the danger of conducting hostilities on two flanks at the same time—against the Huns and Byzantium, which is why they also used everything at their disposal to make the

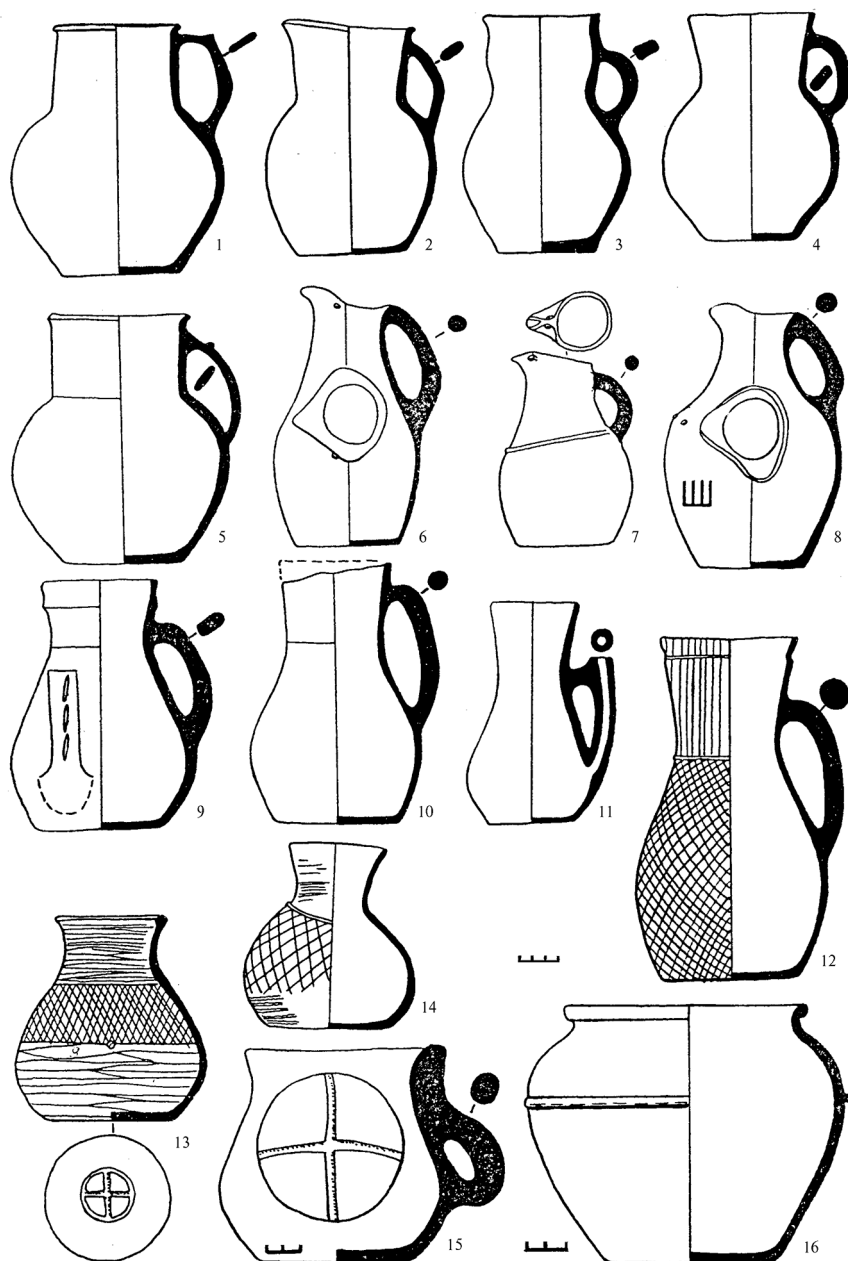


Fig. 2. Caspian Dagestan. Palasa-Syrtsk burial site of the 4–5th centuries Vessels from the burials.
 1–5 – red-engobed jugs, 6–8 – pink-clay polished jugs, 9–12 – brimstone polished jugs (12 – striped polishing), 13–14 – brimstone polished thrift-boxes (striped polishing, 13 – imprint on the bottom of a cross in a circle), 15 – brimstone polished mug (imprint on the bottom of a cross in a circle), 16 – brimstone polished pot

Huns their allies. This most often included the hiring of Hun detachments as mercenaries, but also murders of inconvenient Hun leaders and betrayal of their allies.

In 504, the Caspian Sea region Huns became the allies of Byzantium by organising an invasion into territory controlled by Persia. Persia was forced to redeploy their forces

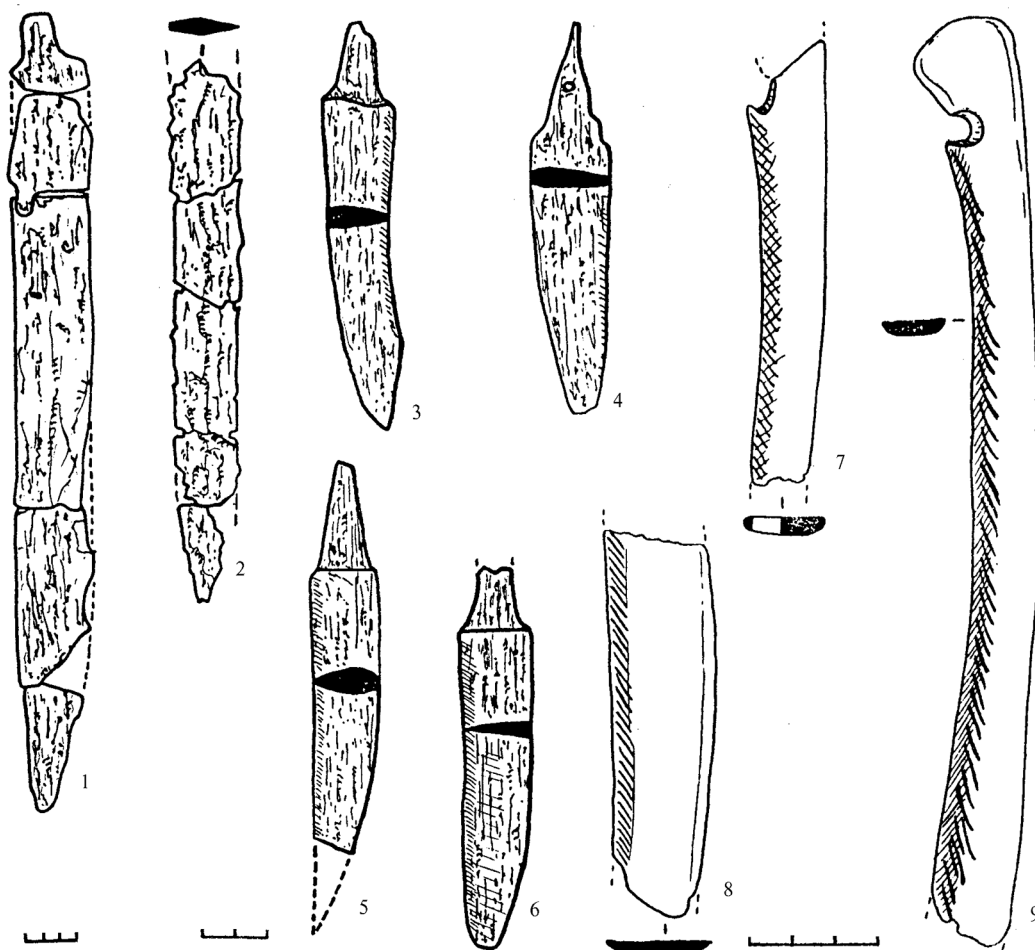


Fig. 3. Caspian Dagestan. Palasa-Syrtsk burial site of the 4–5th centuries. Items from the burials.
1–2 – swords, 3–6 – knives, 7–9 – bow straps. 1–6 – iron, 7–9 – horn

in northern areas and wage against the 'Unns a long-term war' [Procopius of Caesarea, I, p. 101]. The war with 'Unns' were so taxing for Iran, that in 507 the Persians and the Romans agreed to a seven-year truce. The Persians displaced the Huns from Derbend and forged an alliance with them, pledging to pay specific tribute. The Byzantine emperor Anastasius, wishing to break this disadvantageous union, made a promise to pay Huns a higher tribute. The Huns had attempted to haggle with the Persians for better terms in the alliance, by taking waging a campaign in their lands in 513. The Persians opened negotiations with Huns by agreeing to increase their

tributes. In the Persia camp, all that remained was '400 men of the Hun commanders', the rest of the force had been released. The Persians, according to anonymous Syrian author of the 6th century Pseudo-Zachariah, 'prepared for war against the Huns, who were dispersed, and also against those 400 who remained and the ones who were with them' [Pseudo-Zachariah, p. 150]. Somehow the Huns managed to withstand the battle, and in revenge they raided Persia holdings.

Information about the physical appearance of the Huns from the Caspian Sea region is not present in the sources. In a work by Armenian historian Movses Kaghankatvatsi (written al-

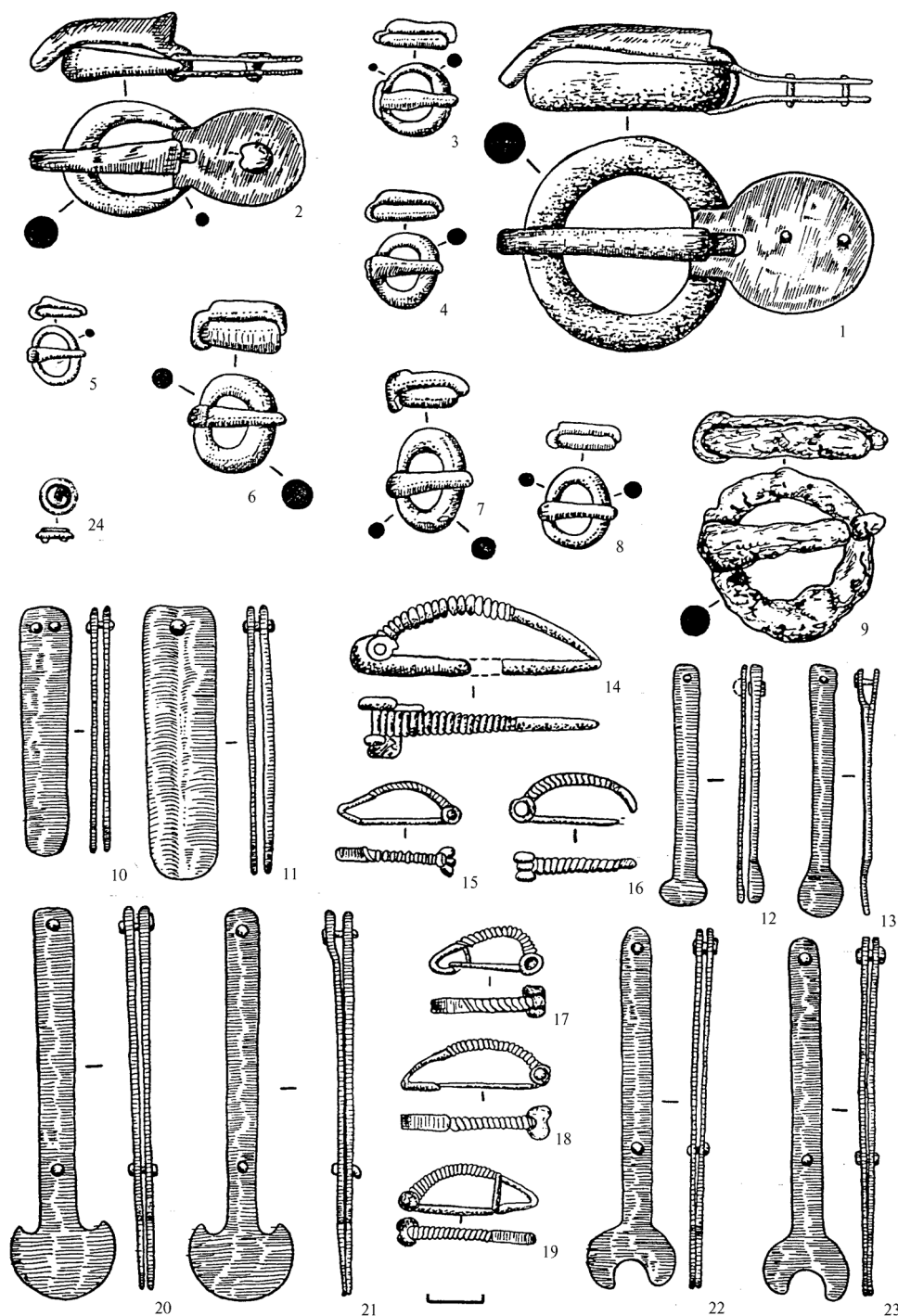


Fig. 4. Caspian Dagestan. Palasa-Syrtsk burial site of the 4–5th centuries. Items of clothing from the burials. 1–9 – buckles, 10–11 – belt tips, 12, 13, 20, 21, 22, 23 – appendages, 14–19 – fibulas, 24 – button, 1 – jet (frame), silver, 2–4, 10, 11 – silver, 5–8, 12–13, 16, 17, 20–23 – bronze, 9 – iron, 14 – iron, bronze (winding), 15 – bronze, silver (winding), iron (rod), 18 – silver, iron (rod), 19 – bronze, iron (rod), 24 – gold, red glass (insert)

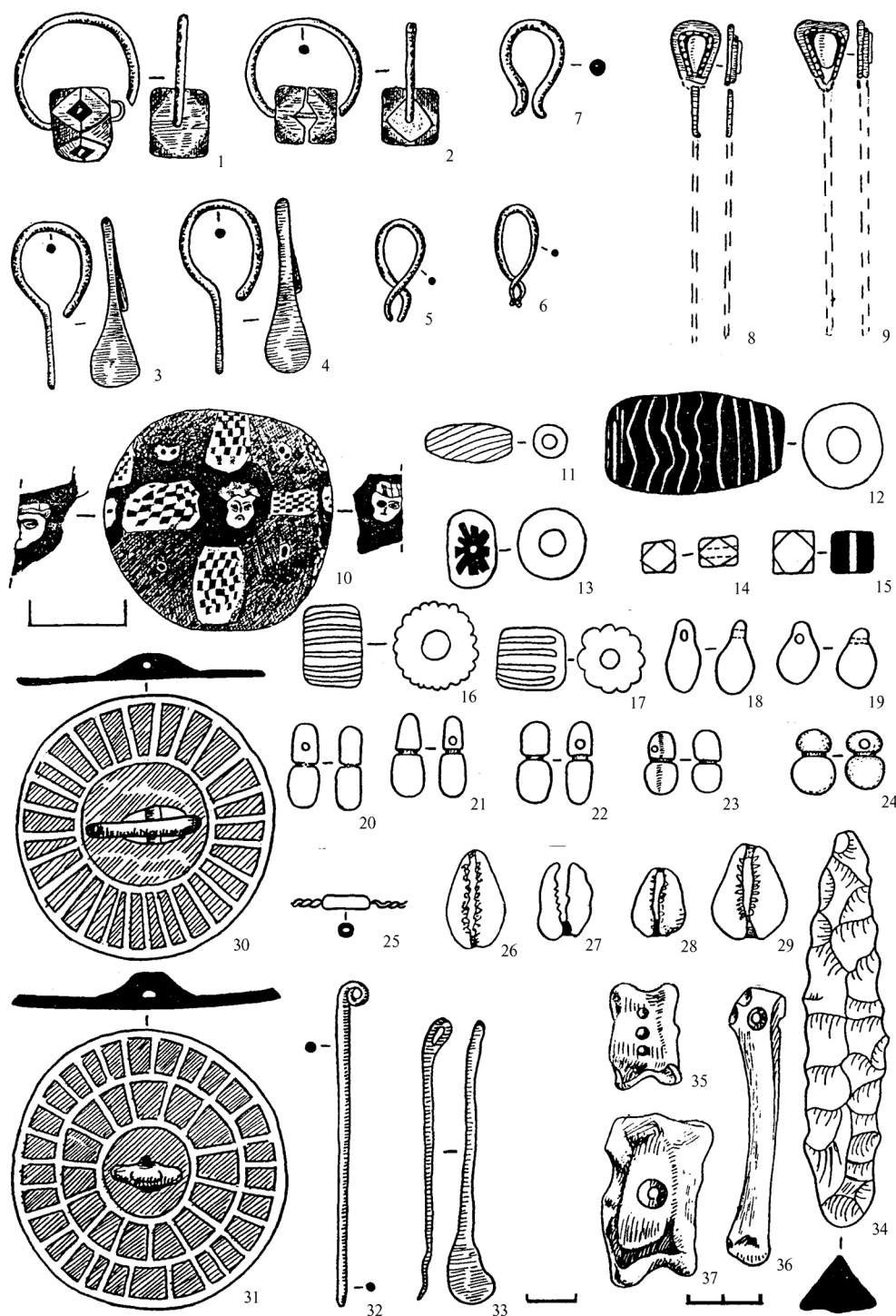


Fig. 5. Caspian Dagestan. Palasa-Syrtsk burial site of the 4–5th centuries Jewellery and objects of worship from the burials. 1, 2 – temporal pendants, 3–7 – earrings, 8–9 – head pins, 10–24 – necklace, 25 – necklace supply, 26–29 – Cypraeidae shells, 30, 31 – mirrors, 32, 33 – pronged appendages, 34 – hammer stone, 35, 37 – bones with drilled marks, 36 – charm-pendant. 1, 2 – bronze, stained glass (insertion), 3–7, 30–33 – bronze, 8–9 – bronze, semiprecious stone (insertions), 10–13 – polychromatic glass, 14, 16, 17 – transparent glass, 15 – fayence, 18–19 – jet, 20–24 – amber, 25 – bronze, thread, 26–29 – shells, 34 – flintstone, 35–37 – bone

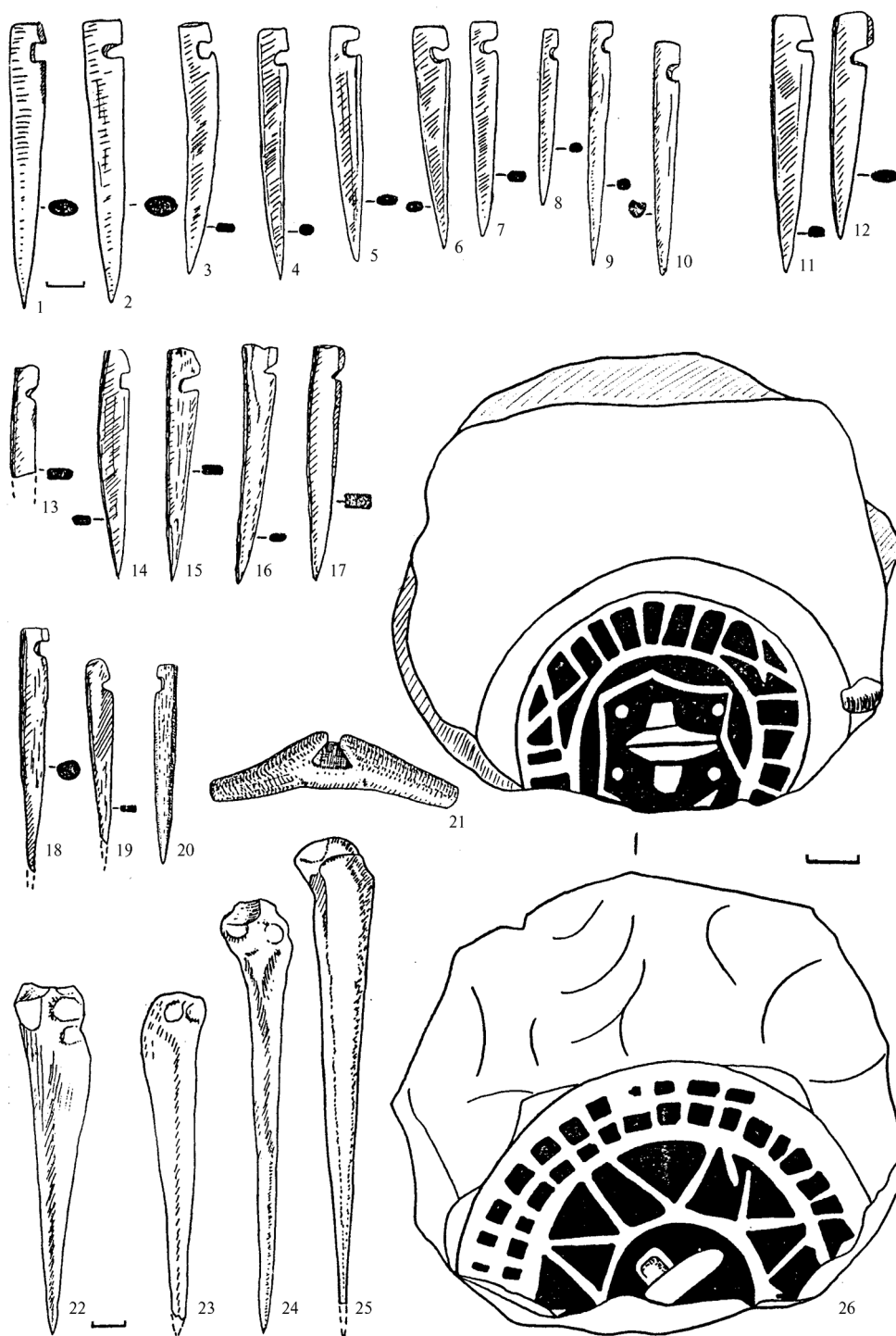


Fig. 6 Caspian Dagestan. Work implements. 1-19, 22-26 – Palasa-Syrtsk settlement of the 4-6th centuries, 20, 21 – Bavyugay settlement of the 4-5th centuries. 1-20 – gear for weaving nets, 21 – shuttle for seine knitting, 22-25 – piercers, 26 – a piece of form for mirror casting (front and back shall). 1-21 – horn, 22-25 – bone, 26 – stone. 20-21 according to M. Pikul

legedly in the 7th century) a fight between the leader of the Hun troops and a Persia warrior is reported, held the day before a battle. In the source the events were linked to the times of Shapur II (309–379). The Hun leader, as described, made an unusual impression: 'At the same time the Hun of Huns named Khonagur appeared ... The Hun was tall, of a gigantic height and wore chain mail, on his huge head he wore a riveted helmet. A copper plate protected his forehead on three spans. The shaft of a massive lance was made from a strong cedar tree. His sword flashed with flame and inspired awe with his appearance alone' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 66]. The Huns in the 4th century, according to different sources, were Mongoloids—characteristic features of this anthropological type are reflected in the very few physical descriptions of European Huns (Ammianus Marcellinus, Claudius Claudianus, Jordanus, Priscus of Panium). Some of the sources reflect the Hunnic custom of deforming the skull (elongating it by wearing compression dressing). Living approximately in the years 430–480, the Bishop of Clermont Apollinaris Sidonius in one of his poems had described the Hun's appearance as: 'Above the round body rises the narrow head, there are hollows with vision below the forehead, but not eyes, burrowing light deeply into the brain vessel, barely reaching the hollow eyeballs, however opened... in order that the two nose tubes do not overhang the cheeks, wrapped around ribbon compresses tender nostrils, so that they fit in the helmets...stretched cheeks are yet wider if the nose in the middle does not tower over it. The rest of the man's body parts were notable for their beauty: a broad chest, powerful shoulders, and a tucked-up belly. Average height unmounted...' [Apollinaris Sidonius, p. 1090]. The unusual (for Europeans) Hun anthropological type generally gave rise to hyperbolic descriptions of their appearance, however, these did not reflect all the ethnic diversity of the tribes caught in the Migration Period.

Information from written sources about the economic development of the Hunnic union in the Caspian region was highly fragmentary. During the initial period of being in the Cas-

pian Sea region (end of the 4th–beginning of the 5th centuries), the Huns were well-known to ancient authors as a people who knew nothing of agriculture and whose primary activities were nomadic cattle breeding and hunting. Another important source of income for the Huns from the Caspian Sea region was raiding, carried out annually in the countries of the Transcaucasia. Virtually all adult men were warriors. 5th-century Armenian historian Faustus of Byzantium describing the events of the 330s related to the failure to Christianise the Masqut and Hun tribes, emphasising the barbarous lifestyle of these peoples, indicated that they did not engage in other activities, except robbery and embezzlement. In response to the preachings for Christian virtues by the Catholicos of Caucasian Albania Grigoris, the Hun and Masqut chiefs replied: 'How can we feed ourselves and so many troops? What should we live off, if we will not be seated on our horses as our primordial tradition says?' [Faustus of Byzantium p. 14]. Campaigns were typically short, but the Huns could remain in occupied territories for a year [Faustus of Byzantium p. 15].

Movement of the new population into the Caspian Sea region of Dagestan was marked by the appearance of burial mounds in the 4–5th centuries in the region, which, as a rule, occupied elevated areas—plateau, small hills, and river terraces. Among the burial sites there are extensive as well as small compact groups. On the Caspian Sea region Dagestan territory 11 burial sites are known, where explored 112 burials, among them 90—in Palas-Syrtsk mount burial site [Gmyrya, 1993, pp. 44–133] (Fig. 2–7). Low soil embankments (0.4–1.2 m) were positioned on the named burial site by compact groups. Burial places were created in catacombs (64 %), kerfs and pits, buried individuals were placed on plant litters in a stretched position with the head towards the south.

Burial sites of the local population at that time (Urtseki I and II, Bolshoj Buynaksky kurgan) were ground entombments in stone boxes, tombs and shrines with uncertain orientation of the interred [Gmyrya, 1993, pp. 309–335].

Lyudmila Gmyrya

Successors of the Huns in the steppes of South-Eastern Europe

The Savirs

Byzantine historian of the mid-8th – beginning of the 9th century Theophanes the Confessor near 6013 of the Alexandrian Era (516/517 CE) noted the military campaign of the new Caspian Sea region tribes to Byzantine holdings in Asia Minor: 'This year, the Huns, called the Savir, crossed the Caspian Gates raided Armenia, and after having looted Cappadocia, Galatia and Pontus, almost reached Euchaita' [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 49]. This message is considered the first reporting the emergence of the Savirs in Caspian region that has been precisely dated. The Savirs (Sabirs) are believed to have lived in Western Siberia, between the Altai and Cis Ural, but under pressure from the Avars, resettled in the Caspian steppes of Eastern Ciscaucasia [Artamonov, 1962, p. 62–65]. In ethnic terms, the Savirs were no different from the Huns and, likely, very quickly mixed with them in the Ciscaucasian steppes [Artamonov, 1962, p. 78]. Procopius of Caesarea—an outstanding Byzantine historian of the mid-6th century, the first among his contemporary historians to focus on the Savirs among the heterogeneous Caspian Hunnic tribes, consistently emphasised their relation to the Huns, in some cases using the dual ethnonym for them—'Unn-Savirs' or 'Hun-Savirs' [Procopius of Caesarea, I, p. 180–181, II, p. 432]. His contemporary, Agathias Scholasticus, did the same [Agathias, p. 88]. But already in the latter half of the 6th century, the Hun tribe of the Savirs was well-known by Byzantine historians. They are mentioned in sources without explanation of their origin (Menander the Byzantian (Protector), Theophanes the Confessor). The Savirs were actively involved in the Persia and Byzantium confrontation in the Caucasus in the 6th century. Byzantine and Syrian authors in the first half of the 6th century knew the Hun-Savirs as a numerous people divided into

many tribes. Procopius of Caesarea noted that the Hun-Savirs tribe were 'very numerous, duly divided into many distinct tribes' [Procopius of Caesarea, II, p. 407]. Pointing to the inconstancy of Savirs in military alliances, another Byzantine writer of the 6th century, Agathias, was not even certain if they were one nation: 'the same ones or another, but, regardless, from the same people, were sent as an allied army' [Agathias, p. 117]. In the 520s and 530s, Eastern Ciscaucasia saw the formation of a Hun-Savir tribal alliance. The Hun leader, named Zilgivin, with whom Justin I (518–527) negotiated in 522, is named in Theophanes the Confessor's 'Chronicle' as the 'king of the Huns' [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 50]. In 527/528 the Savir ruler Boariks, who had 100,000 Huns under her authority, negotiated peace with the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (527–565). She led the Hunnic union unit after the death of her husband Valakh [Ibid.]. Boariks was famous for 'seizing two kings from another tribe of the inner Huns, named Styrax and Glona, persuaded by Kavadh, the Emperor of Persia, to provide military assistance against the Romans and crossing her lands in (the boundaries of) Persia with twenty thousand. She routed them: the one king, named Styrax, whom she seized, she sent to the emperor in Constantinople, and killed Glona in the battle' [Ibid.]. The names of Boariks and Valaks are recognised by researchers as Turkic. Styrax is the Greek name meaning 'spear'. Perhaps, this name was taken by the baptised Hun leader. Glona is believed to be the Greek transcription of the Persia name [Chichurov, 1980, pp. 77–79, NB: 62, 63, 66, 67].

In subsequent Iranian and Byzantine military campaigns in the 530s–60s, the Hun-Savir detachments for paid military assistance fought alongside the armies of both warring parties, by undertaking sometimes independent campaigns. In 551, when the Byzantines stormed the town of Petra, the battering weap-

ons (rams), invented by the Savirs were used for the first time and played a decisive role in its capture [Procopius of Caesarea, II, p. 407]. At the time of the storming of Arkheopol (551) by the Persians, in which the 4000-strong detachment of the Hun-Savirs participated, they also used the Huns' facilitated battering guns, which had a great advantage over the known heavy rams in the mountainous terrain. But the siege of the town was unsuccessful. During the second storming of the town in 553, which also failed, the Romans pursued the retreating Persians and killed 'a leader of the Savirs', which provoked a strong battle that lasted until dusk [Procopius of Caesarea, II, p. 432]. In 555, when the Persians tried to storm the town again, they found out that the Savir's 2000-strong detachment, allied to Byzantium was quartered near the town walls, headed by 'Bajmakh, Kutlitzis and Alager, their most significant people', they sent three thousand dolimnites to destroy them. Although the attack of the stockade fortified camp was unexpected, but the Savirs managed to win, by using the strategy of an ambush [Agathias, p. 88].

In 562, Byzantium and Persia made a peace for fifty years. Byzantium agreed to annually pay Iran more than 400 libras of gold (128.8 kg) to protect the Caucasian passages Khorutson and the Caspian Gates, and Persia pledged not to let the Huns and Alans pass through the passages [Menander Protector, p. 342]. In the 60s the Persia king Khosrow Anushirvān (531–579) crushed the Savir tribes settled in Transcaucasia and increased the strengthening of Derbend with the stone constructions, making it more difficult for the Hun-Savirs to penetrate the lands controlled by Persia. In 572–591, the Savirs supported Persia in Iranian and Byzantine military actions. When they came into Albania in 575, the Byzantines, intending to subdue the Savirs and Albans, who lived there, took some hostages among them, but 'after they left the Savirs got out of control of the Romans immediately. The Roman military leaders came to Albania again, forced the Savirs and the Albans to relocate on this side of the Kira (Kura) river and henceforth to remain in the Roman country' [Menander Protector, pp. 411–412].

In 576, the embassy of the Caucasian Savirs and Alans arrived in Byzantium. Emperor Tiberius (578–582) promised the Savirs and the Alans more preferential terms of an alliance, than the Persia offering. The messengers seemingly hesitated, as the Emperor had to resort to threats. 'He told them, to those, who will join him, he will provide benefactions, and to those, who will not want it, he will subjugate to his authority' [Menander Protector, p. 416]. In 578, the Savirs, according to Menander, were in the army of the Byzantine Emperor, who was confused by the troops of twenty thousand cavalry repelled [Menander Protector, p. 437]. It is believed that it's the last testament about the Hun-Savirs in Byzantine sources.

The characterisation given by Byzantine historian Agathias to the Caspian Hun-Savirs and which became archetypal ('These people are very greedy for wars and robbery, like to live far from home in a foreign land, always searching what doesn't belong to them, only for the benefits and a hope to get the plunder they joined one or another as a participant in the war, becoming from ally to enemy' [Agathias, pp. 116–117]), appears to be at least an unilateral view on a complex system of mutual relationships of the Hun leaders with the outside world. In their foreign policy activities the Hun and later Hun-Savir leaders had borne in mind the domestic circumstances and international situation of their two main rivals in the Caucasus in the 5–6th centuries—Iran and Byzantium, which in turn used the Huns to their advantage.

Byzantine historians of the 6th century who wrote a lot about the military activities of the Hun-Savirs gave virtually no information of their place of habitation. Procopius of Caesarea was the one of the most enlightened Byzantine historians, well-versed in many facets of life of the Caspian Hunnic tribes—in economic and social development, military-political orientation, weapons and military technology, describes in detail the Caucasian pass hopping, that was used by the Hun-Savirs to break into Transcaucasia, but his information about the Huns' state localisation is not very specific. Ac-

cording to his information, the Savirs and other Hun tribes lived in foothills of Caucasus and close to their estates were two main passages—the Caspian Gates (Derbend Pass) and the Tzur (Daryal) passage. The Huns occupied the plains—'the fields straight and smooth, irrigated with plentiful waters with convenience to have horses' [Procopius of Caesarea, I, p. 112]. Due to different circumstances, some 6th-century Syrian writers have more detailed information about the Huns in the Caspian Sea region. Joshua the Stylite (writing around 517) indicates that the territory controlled by the Huns was sufficiently defined from the possessions of the cross-border regions. To identify it the author used expressions such as 'their land' and 'the borders of their land' [Joshua the Stylite, p. 131]. This information is supported by accounts from Joshua the Stylite's contemporary, Pseudo-Zachariah, accurately dated to 555 (N. Pigulevskaya). He noted that the land controlled by the Huns was on the shore of a sea and in 'the Huns' boundaries' the Caspian Gates were located [Pseudo-Zachariah, p. 165]. 'The Bazgun land' was adjacent to 'the Huns' boundaries' from the south, and the Caspian Gates served as their border. The location of the ethnopolitical formations the author identifies as follows: '...the Bazgun land with (its) language, what adjacent and reaching the Caspian Gates and the sea, located in the Hun boundaries. The Bolgars are (living) outside those gates with (their) language, the barbaric and pagan people, they have towns, and the Alans, they have five towns. From beyond the Dadu who live in the mountains, they have fortresses. The Avnagurs are a people who live in tents. The Avgars, Sabirs, Bolgars, Alans, Kurtargars, Avars, Khasar, Dirmars, Sururgur, Bagrasiks, Kulas, Abdels, Eftalits—those thirteen peoples live in tents, and live on cattle meat and fish, wild animals and weapons' [Ibid.]. However, the Huns, as people who were converted to Christianity in the middle of 6th century, are ranked by the author to the five religious people of the Caucasus, while 13 others, including the Sabirs, had been identified by Pseudo-Zachariah, as a pagan

or barbarian people.

The anonymous Syrian author provides detailed information about the mission of an Armenian Bishop Kardost to the Caspian Huns, who accomplished the Christianisation of some tribes from the Hunnic union between 537 and 544, about the beginning in 544 of Hun writing. Those details were provided by Pseudo-Zachariah with the words of two Byzantine prisoners, who had lived among the Caspian Huns for 34 years (503–537). The details of their personal fate during their stay in the Huns' camp highlight many facets of Caspian Hun life, including relations between the Hunnic union and Byzantium in the first third of the 6th century, the level of development the social and economic relations, nature of occupation of the population. It is expected that with the ethnonym 'Khasar' Pseudo-Zachariah identified the Khazar (Khazir) tribe, which became known during this period from other sources (A. Novoseltsev).

At the end of 6th century the situation in the north-west frontier of Persia possessions had been escalating. Albanian historian Movses Kaghankatvatsi noted this situation in a separate chapter of the second book, where he placed only one message: 'in the second year (of the reign) of Khosrow, the king of kings, when the Armenian chronology had been started, at the same year the patriarchal see Aghuank (Caucasian Albania) were moved from the Chola town (Derbend) to the capital Partaw because of plundering marauders of the enemies of Christ' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 71]. The Albanian author named as the king of kings the Persia king Khosrow II Parviz (591–627), after emphasizing once his succession to Hormizd IV (579–590): 'the king of kings Khosrow of Persia, the son of Ormizd' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 73]. That's why the shift of Albanian patriarchal see can be pinpointed to 592. The reign of Khosrow II was characterised by the Albanian historian as a period of the particular hardship for the country, related to 'numerous raids of our surrounding enemies—the Barbarians'. According to the author, the most significant events took place in the 35th year of Khosrow II's reign,—that is, 626. These events arose

from another confrontation between Byzantium and Persia. Between 622–625 the Byzantine army, headed by the Emperor Heraclius (610–641), launched a successful raid into the far rear of Persia territories, but in Caucasian Albania, where the Byzantine troops stopped for a winter, they were defeated by the Persians: 'and although the Persia army were dealt severe blows, they still chased him (Heraclius) back to his country' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 77].

The Byzantine historian Theophanes the Confessor near 624 describes the same events in Caucasian Albania, when the integrated troops were preparing to attack the Byzantines: 'The basileus (Heraclius) rushed into the Huns' land and their narrows by mountainous, barren land' [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 58]. The question of who Theophanes meant in 624 when he referred to 'the Huns' is polemical [Chichurov, 1980, pp. 96–97, NB: 200]. It is believed that the last mention of the Caspian (Caucasian) Huns under the ethnonym 'Savirs' in the Byzantine sources was in 578. Scholars note that around 572 Theophanes gave an explanation of the ethnonym 'Huns': '...the Huns, who we calling Turks as usual' [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 54]. It was about the Huns, who had sent their ambassadors to Byzantine Emperor Justin II (565–578) through the Alan lands. That's why, maybe, Theophanes the Confessor in this message meant Turks [Chichurov, 1980, p. 97, NB: 200]. But in his previous messages (516/517, 522, 528, 572) Theophanes denotes the Caspian Huns using the ethnonym 'Huns', explaining in two cases that it refers to the Savirs and in another to the Turks. Thus, the author highlighted the other Huns who lived 'near the Bosphorus',—that is, in the western part of the Caucasus (527/528). The same author indicates the Avars of 625/626 as 'western Huns' [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 58]. Therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that the retreat of the Byzantines from Caucasian Albania under the pressure of the Persia army to north neighbouring 'Hun lands' (*the Hunnic state* of Armenian authors) may have occurred in 624.

Concerted military actions by Iran and the Avar Khaganate, which they launched during the siege of Constantinople in 626 forced the

Byzantine emperor to resort to an alliance with the Turks. In the sources, the specific person called by Emperor Heraclius to be his ally, is hard to determine. In 625/626, Theophanes the Confessor notes that Emperor Heraclius, who was in Lazik (western Georgia), 'called for the uniting of eastern Torks that are called Khazars' [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 59]. This is the first mention of the Khazars in Byzantine sources. Movses Kaghankatvatsi, describing the negotiating process of Byzantine ambassador Andre, indicates that 'the descendant of the king of the north' had gone into an alliance with Heraclius, he is mentioned in the source also as 'second person in his kingdom, named Dzhebu-Khakan...' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 81]. The army, that were sent by the 'king of the north' to Caucasian Albania, following the agreement with Byzantium, was headed by his nephew with a princely shat (shad) title, indicated by the Albanian historian as 'Khazirs' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 77–78, 81]. From the following storytelling it turns out, that the shad was an older son of Dzhebu Khakan, so he was the relative of the 'king of the north'. Theophanes Confessor indicates the same person (Dzhebu Khakan) as 'Ziebil, the second person deservedly after the Khakan' [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 59]. In fact, this is referring to the Eastern Turkic Ton-Yabgu Khakan. The nomadic population of the Western Turkic Khaganate, in accordance with the military and administrative system, were included in the 'union of 10 arrows', which consisted of the eastern and western branches. Belonging to Ashina dynasty, the leaders of the western branch were considered to be the younger line of the khagan line, unlike the eastern branch—the Dulu line. The first had the military title 'yabgu' and were called yabgu-khakans. Each 'arrow' provided 10,000 troops—one 'tyumen', which was commanded by 'the great leader', bore the title of 'shad' [Klyashtorny, Savinov, 1994, pp. 18–19, Klyashtorny, Sultanov, 2000, pp. 86–87].

The political and military force identified in sources as 'eastern Turks' or 'the Khazars'/'Khazirs' is ambiguously defined in the literature (for information on this subject

see: [Chichurov, 1980, p. 100–102, p. 214, 218]). According to one of the main versions, Byzantium held negotiations with the Turks in the first quarter of the 7th century [Artamonov, 1962, pp. 146–147, Gumilyov, 1993, pp. 193–195]. According to another version, the Khazar state formed from the first quarter of the 7th century [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 89], which in that period was nominally dependent on the Western Turkic Khaganate. Dzhebu Khagan is defined as the ruler of Khazaria and, at the same time, as the vassal of the Turkic Khagan. But the foundation of the Khazar state was followed by an extended period of evolution (until the 670s) manifesting in the conquering of neighbouring peoples and territorial expansion. But Dzhebu Khakan, according to Movses Kaghankatvatsi, is a ruler who already in 626–627 controlled 'all the tribes and races, living in mountains and plains, on land or the islands, sedentary or nomadic, those, getting their head shaved and those, having braids'. [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 78]. It is also known that Dzhebu Khakan with his army participated in the Caucasian operations in 627–628. Then he left the army, by entrusting the leading of military actions to his son the shad, whose presence in the region ended in 629 when he received a secret message from his father. In it Dzhabu Khakan wrote of his misfortune and the grave danger looming over the shad, as his heir: 'instead of staying and keeping myself safe, I was desperate for impractical rule, which I should not have done. It is because of this pride that I fell from a height. Now don't delay to exterminate all who are with you and save yourself from them. Because if they find out about what happened here before you do it, they will do the same to you. Then I will die without an heir' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 93]. According to Chinese sources, the broad strokes of this period are restored this way. In 630, discord broke out among the ruling dynasty of the khagan of the Western Turkic Khaganate. Khagan Ton-Yabgu was killed by his uncle Kyul-Bagatur, who seized the throne but died in 631 in a power struggle with a new pretender. The death of Ton-Yabgu is corroborated in the message of the Byzantine histori-

an Nicephorus (c. 758–829), where he writes that 'Heraclius ordered his daughter Eudokia to go (on a journey) from Byzantium, as he betrothed her with the Turkic. But when he discovered that the Turkic had died in a battle, he ordered her to return' [Nicephorus, p. 161]. By a Turkic the author meant Ziebil (Dzhebu Khakan), whom the Byzantium Emperor at a meeting in the besieged town of Tbilisi in 626 'promised to get his daughter Eudokia married to him' [Nicephorus, p. 160]. This message is dated around 628–629.

With regard to events that occurred in 626–629 in the Caucasus, the alliance with Dzhebu Khakan was concluded by Emperor Heraclius in 626 and in the same year in the Transcaucasia, an army of Turks led by a shad was sent against Iran. Albania and Atropatene were attacked, and a great plunder was seized there—'...golden articles and jars, splendid garment and numerous people and cattle taken (captured)'. [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 78]. The threat of the Persia king to respond in kind with forays into the khaganate's eastern lands was not implemented.

In 627, the new Turkic and Khazar campaign was launched, this time it was headed by Dzhebu Khakan, but without his shad son. Before entering Albania they stormed and seized Derbend. Movses Kaghankatvatsi described the awful scene of destruction that the town had been subjected to, despite its modern fortifications. The storm of the town by numerous troops paralyzed the forces of its defenders: 'A terrifying number of people, ugly and high-cheekboned, without eyelashes, with long loose hair like women, raced on their horses, deadly fear swept over them, more so after they saw what excellent marksmen they were, when from their tough bows they brought down a true hail of arrows on their heads' [Ibid.].

Later, after repelling Albania, the army of Dzhebu Khakan entered Iberia and laid siege to the 'famous pampered and rich town of Tbilisi' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 79]. Persia king had time to send his famous commander Shargakag (Sharkhapal) and a thousand of the finest warriors from his guard to the defenders of Tbilisi. Among the seized was the king of

Iberia Stefan (Stepanos). Emperor Heraclius from Lazika (Western Georgia) rushed with troops to help his allies the Turks. The meeting of the Byzantine emperor and Dzhebu Khakan took place near the walls of besieged Tbilisi. Movses Kaghankatvatsi described it very succinctly: 'They were very happy to see each other and exchanged royal gifts and offerings' [Ibid.]. The Byzantine authors describing the smallest details of diplomatic ceremonies, which was staged by Heraclius and the leader of Turks and the Khazars Ziebil (Dhebu Khakan). Of particular interest are the ceremonies of Turks that stunned the Byzantines: 'Seeing Heraclius, Ziebil rushed to him (the Emperor), kissed his shoulder and prostrated himself in front of him and all the Persians from the town of Tiflis. All Turkic army fell in the ground, prostrated themselves facedown, and honoured the basileus with a homage, unfamiliar to the barbarians. As well their leaders, climbing on the stones, fell the same way. Ziebil brought his older son to the basileus, enjoying his orations, astonishing with his appearance and mind' [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 59]. Another Byzantine chronicler Nicephorus attributed this meeting to 622 and described it somewhat differently: 'he, hearing of Emperor's arrival, went towards the emperor with a huge number of Turks. He got off his horse and bowed down to the ground before the emperor. The large crowd with him did the same thing. The emperor, seeing the honour extended to him, gestured for the Turkic to rise and that, if his intentions to make an alliance were strong, to come closer to him on a horse, and called (the Turkic) his son. Then the Turkic embraced the Emperor, and Heraclius, took his crown off his head and laid it on Turkish head, making a feast for him, Heraclius presented him all the convivial gear, Emperor garment and adorned with pearl earrings. In the same way the emperor adorned with similar earrings the archons who accompanied the Turkic' [Nicephorus, pp. 159–160].

The siege of Tbilisi lasted until the summer months of 627. Special equipment was used to shell the city walls with stones. They also attempted to flood the fortress, by blocking the riverbed with wineskins filled with

sand and gravel [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, pp. 79–80]. Due to the heavy losses, heat and exhaustion, it was agreed to relocate the siege from the city and to resume it the following year 'upon the end of the hot months'. The defenders of the town, having become proud of the enemies setbacks, launched the operation, through which in the annals of history was kept a portrait description of the Dzhebu Khakan (Ziebil): 'they brought a large pumpkin a kangun in width and a kangun in length and draw on it the face of the Hun king: they drew invisible lines instead the eye lashes, where the beard should have been, they left disgustingly bare, they made the nostrils five inches wide, the moustaches were rare, so it was easy to recognise him. Later they brought the (painted) pumpkin, put against the wall facing to them and addressed the enemy warriors, shouting: 'Here he is, your sovereign king, come and bow down to him. It is Dzhebu Khakan!' And taking their spears they started to poke the pumpkin depicting the khakan' [Ibid.]. While the typical features of Dzhebu Khakan were drawn in caricature, but those responsible for the image accurately captured the main features of his physical appearance—the head is large and round, the skull is bald (perhaps, they ridiculed the practice shaving off one's hair), wide nostrils, narrow eyes, and light stubble on the face,—that is, it was a typical mongoloid appearance. However, this does not mean that the entire army consisted of representatives of Mongoloids. Sources speak of the predominance of the Khazars (Khazirs) and that many peoples under Turkic control were involved in the operation. In particular, in the army were both 'those who shave their heads and wear braids' and the warriors with 'long loose hair, like women'. The physical type of the Dzhebu Khakan as a representer of the ruler dynasty of Ashina dynasty, having the Mongol origin, is described by Movses Kaghankatvatsi as typical Mongoloid (the head is large and round, narrow eyes—they depicted him as 'blind' in the caricature, without eyelashes or a beard, and with a wide nose). However, his army, its root regiment, consisted of Torks whose unusual appearance stunned the defenders of Derbend—the war-

riors had long loose hair. According to Chinese sources, long hair was one of the characteristic ethnic features of Turks. 'a Tukyuests custom: they wear their hair loose, and place their left flap on the top'. [Bichurin, vol. 1, p. 229],—that is, they wrap over their outer clothing left-to-right. Dzhebu Khakan's army included men with braids who were linked to the Avars. According to Theophanes the Confessor, in 557/558 the residents of Byzantium turned out to see the 'unusual tribe of those called the Avars', who were dressed like Huns but wore their hair differently: 'From behind their hair was very long, gathered up into a bun and braided'. [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 52]. This feature of the ethnic portrait of the Avars was noted by many contemporaries of the events—Latin, Byzantine and Syrian authors. The soldiers with shaved head in Dzhebu Khakan's army could be the Bolgars. We know from written records that Proto-Bolgarian rulers, the princes, would leave only a lock of hair on top of their heads, which they sometimes braided [Artamonov, 1962, p. 155].

When the siege of Tbilisi was over, Dzhebu Khakan moved his troops from the Transcaucasia leaving to Emperor Heraclius 40,000 Turkic troops headed by shad. Heraclius launched a campaign deep into Persia possessions, but the Turks who had been involved in this operation, unable to withstand the difficulties, '... slowly started to run, and finely all, left him and came back home' [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 59]. In December 627, the Persians were routed in the battle near Nineveh. Persia king Khosrow Parviz was killed in the palace coup, that was organised by his son Kavadh. Kavadh Shiroe, reigning seven months after him, made peace with Byzantium in April 628. The subjects of Khosrow II were not happy with his politic, but also, what's interesting is, with the closing of mountainous passages: 'How long will the passageways be locked up tight, thereby hampering the gains from trade with other countries' [Theophanes the Confessor, II, p. 82], apparently, bearing in mind the Caucasian passageways and first of all—Derbend Pass, which obstructed an ancient Caspian caravan route that connected South-Eastern Europe with the countries of the East.

In 628, a new siege of Tbilisi was launched by the Turkuts under the leadership of Dzhebu Khakan, and lasted two months. Among the captured town residents was the Persia ruler of Tbilisi and the representative of Iberian princes—the artists behind the pumpkin caricature of Dzhebu Khakan. Their mocking of the unusual appearance of Dzhebu Khakan resulted in their torture and death. Their dead bodies were filled with hay and hung from the city wall as an example [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 86]. The Turks captured many treasures as trophies, their number was so large, that Dzhebu Khakan 'was tired of looking at them'.

Dzhebu Khakan left Iberia, entrusting his son the conquest of Albania, telling him in the case of wrongdoing to 'let your eye not to pity (the resident) males over fifteen years of age. Leave the young ones and women as retainers and maids to serve me and you' [Ibid.]. The ruler of Albania refused to accept the Turks' conditions and fled to Persia. The Catholicos of Albania Viro entered into negotiations with them, but he waited for the command of the king of Persia. The Turks began to ravage the country: 'by lot, yet beforehand they distributed (all our) gavars and villages, rivers and tributaries, springs and forests, mountains and plains between their individual detachments, and all at once at the appointed hour they launched the raids' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 87]. Catholicos Viro was forced to negotiate with Turks. By taking gifts for 'the princes and commanders, nakharars and tribal leaders (present) in their army', he came to the shad's camp located near the town of Partava. The arriving Albans were struck by the table of grandees and shad's nakharars. '...they were sitting there (in a tent), cross-legged, like heavy-loaded camels. In front of every one of them was a basin full of unclean meat and nearby—bowls of salt water, in which they soaked (meat) and ate. They also had drinking goblets made from horns and large oblong wooden (pots), which they were using for guzzling the pottage. With the same dirty, unwashed and grease-coated pots and jugs, they greedily ladled out the pure wine or camel's and mare's milk, while the

same dishes were used by two to three men' [Movses Kaghanatvatsi, II, pp. 88–89].

The Albanian delegation was ordered to bow three times before entering the shad's tent. Only Catholicos Viro was permitted through and he 'threw himself before him and gave the gifts to him'. The prince swore to cover the costs of the harm caused to the Catholicos of Albania. 'I swear to you by the sun of my father Dzhebu Khakan, that I, by all means, will do everything what you will ask', and spoke of the Turkic claims to part of Transcaucasia: 'my father came to own these three countries—Aghuank (Albania), Lpink (South-Eastern part of mountainous Caucasus) and Chora (Derbend) for ever' [Movses Kaghanatvatsi, II, p. 89]. Catholicos Viro recognised the authority of the Turks over Albania and as a sign of respect to him the shad's subjects dignified him as their suzerain too: 'God Shad and God Catholicos'. During the repast the Albanian delegation was presented with 'foul meat', seemingly horsemeat, which they had refused because of forty days of fasting. Then they brought 'some thin bread, baked on a tapha' [Ibid.].

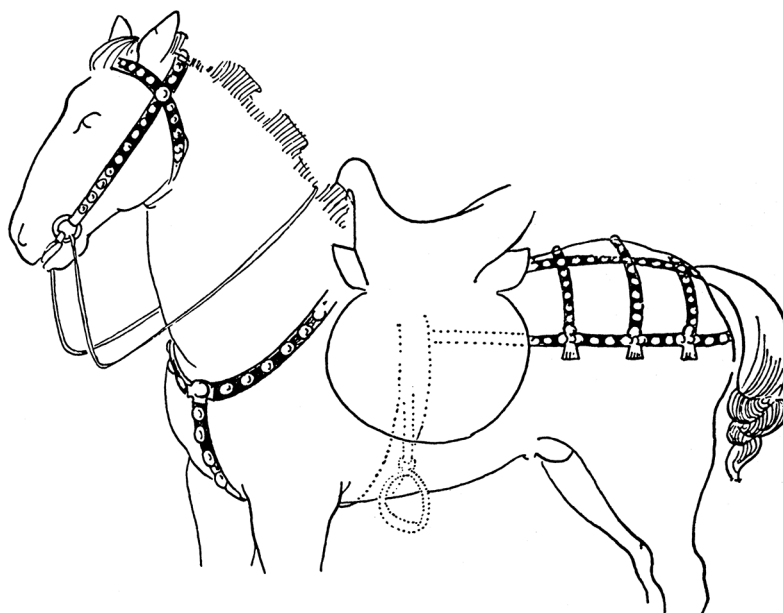
At the end of 629, the Turks tried to conquer Armenia. The 3000-strong vanguard of Turkic troops had succeeded in smashing 10,000 Persians, but how the operation was handled is not known. In 630, as mentioned, the discords started in the khaganate and Turks had to leave Caucasus.

In 658, the Western Turkic Khaganate completely disintegrated. The Khazar state became its successor in Eastern Ciscaucasia, with the country of the Huns (Savirs) under their authority. In the 640s–7th century, the Arab Caliphate initiated a move to Eastern Ciscaucasia, laying the foundations for the beginning of nearly a century of Arab–Khazar confrontation. The Hunnic state in the fight against Arab expansion in the 7th–first half of the 8th centuries were an ally of Khazaria, because it was one of the main forces in the Caspian Sea region, which was able to withstand the Arab Caliphate consolidation in the region.

The Avars

The *Avar* ethnonym appears in Byzantine historiography in the latter half of the 5th century. Historian and diplomat Priscus of Panium (wrote c. 470) in one of his historical writings entitled 'The History of the Goths', of which only fragments have been preserved, states that in 463 a delegation from unknown tribes—the *Saragurs*, *Urogs* and *Onogurs*—came to the Romans and explained they had entered Europe because they had been expelled from their former homeland by the *Savirs*, who had been previously displaced by the *Avars* [Priscus of Panium, p. 843–844].

The Avars had started to migrate from the depths of Asia back in the first half of the 5th century. The Avars pushed the Savirs out and took their territory [Ibid.]. According to one historical version, a large part of the population of the Rouran Khaganate had been Avars [see: Erdelyi, 1982, p. 15–18], who caused the Ogurs (mid–5th century) and the Savirs (beginning of the 6th century) to migrate from Asia to Europe. Chinese sources indicate that in 460, the Rourans decimated the late-Hun tribes living in Eastern Turkestan and forced them to resettle in Altai [Klyashtorny, Savinov, 1994, p. 12, Klyashtorny, Sultanov, 2000, p. 74]. Among them were Turkic tribes headed by representatives of the Ashina dynasty. In 551, Turks crushed the state of the Mongolian-speaking Rourans, to whom they had been paying tribute for almost one hundred years [Klyashtorny, Savinov, 1994, p. 15, Klyashtorny, Sultanov, 2000, p. 77, 113]. Turkic Khagan Dyangu mentioned this significant event in a letter he sent with an ambassador in 598 to Emperor Maurice (582–602). In this letter, noted the Byzantine 7th-century historian Theophylactus Simocattes, 'all his wins were described with great praises' [Theophylactus Simocattes, p. 160]. Khagan Dyangu described the crushing defeat of the Avars as: 'After crushing the head of the Abdels tribe's chieftain (I am talking about those who are called Ephthalites), this Khagan defeated them and took authority over them for himself. Puffed up with pride for this victory and



Reconstruction of the Avar horse harness (According to Laslo) [Artamonov, 1962, p. 178]

having made Stembi Khagan (Istāmi Khagan) his ally, he conquered the Avar tribe ... [Theophylactus Simocattes, p. 161].

A large number of Avars moved west to flee the Torks and in the process many local tribes of northern and eastern Middle Asia and the foothills of the Cis Ural and the Volga region were drawn into the migration. Among the Asian tribes were also tribes that spoke languages related to the Turkic language, the *Uar* and *Hunni*, who took the ethnic name of 'Avar', whose authority they recognised. This is noted by Theophylactus Simocattes, who calls them 'pseudo Avars' to distinguish them from Avars: 'When Emperor Justinian ascended the throne, a part of the Uar and Hunni tribes escaped and settled in Europe. They called themselves Avars and glorified their leader with the appellation of Khagan. Let us declare, without departing in the least from the truth, how the means of changing their name came to them. When the Barselt, Unnugurs, Savirs and other Hun tribes, in addition to these, saw that a section of those who were still Uar and Hunni had fled to their regions, they plunged into extreme panic, since they suspected that the settlers were Avars. For this

reason they honoured the fugitives with splendid gifts and supposed that they received from them security in exchange. Then, after the Uar and Hunni saw the well-omened beginning to their flight, they appropriated the ambassadors' error and named themselves Avars. For among the Scythian peoples that of the Avars is said to be the most adept tribe. In point of fact even up to our present times the Pseudo-Avars (for it is more correct to refer to them thus) have bestowed upon themselves the highest status in the tribe, are known by different names, some bearing the time-honoured name of Uar, while others are called Hunni' [Theophylactus Simocattes, p. 159–161].

The source of Theophylactus Simocattes's information is unknown. It is presumed to be from a lost part of a work by Menander, a Byzantine historian of the latter half of the 6th century, whose successor he was [see: Theophylactus Simocattes, note 27 S. Kondratyeva to book VII]. But starting with Theophylactus Simocattes, it became traditional in European historiography to consider the Avars, who emerged in the middle of the 6th century in South-Eastern Europe, to be 'pseudo Avars'. However, the Turks themselves identified

their enemies who fled west as 'Avars'. This ethnonym was used by many historians, including Byzantine, of the early Middle Ages. Uncertainty in the origin of the European Avars has led to several theories, among which the Central Asian and the Middle Asian ones stand apart (about the theories see: [Artamonov, 1962, p. 106–107, Gumilyov, 1993, p. 35, The History of the Northern Caucasian peoples, 1988, p. 98, Klyashtorny, Savinov, 1994, p. 18, Klyashtorny, Sultanov, 2000, p. 86, Erdelyi 1982, p. 15–18, Erdelyi, 1998, p. 89–90, 92]) The origin of the Avars is still not entirely clear. The ethnogenesis of the European Avars, in which the Avars are characterised as ethnically mixed people, is a complex process for contemporary researchers [Erdelyi 1998, p. 92, Klyashtorny, Sultanov, 2000, p. 77].

The Avars took a route to Europe through the steppes of the Northern Caucasus. They were in the Northern Caucasus, according to an anonymous Syrian author of the 6th century known as Pseudo-Zachariah, in exactly 555 [Pigulevskaya, 1941, p. 81]. Pseudo-Zachariah picked out the Avars among 13 North Caucasian tribes who led a similar lifestyle. The geographic reference point described by the Syrian author as the 'Northern Side' (Transcaucasia and Northern Caucasus) was the 'Caspian Gates' (Derbend passage). The Caspian Gates and coast to the north are identified by the Syriac author as the 'Boundary of the Huns', the people of which, along with four other political groups (Gurzan land, Arran land, Syzgan land, and Bazgun land) located south of the Caspian Gates, had accepted Christianity [Gmyrya, 1995, p. 57–58]. According to the author, the pagan peoples from the 'northern side', including the Avars, lived 'outside the gates',—that is, beyond the boundaries of the Huns: 'The Bazgun land with (its) language, which is adjacent to and reaches the Caspian Gates and the sea, is located within the Hun's boundaries. Outside the gates (live) the Burgars with (their) language, a people pagan and barbarian... From beyond the Dadu who live in the mountains, they have fortresses. The Avnagurs are a people who live in tents. The Avgars, Sabirs,

Burgars, Alans, Kurtargars, Avars, Dirmars, Surur-gur, Bagrasiks, Kulas, Abdels, Eftalits—those 13 peoples live in tents, survive on cattle meat and fish, wild animals and weapons' [Pseudo-Zachariah, p. 165].

By about this time—the reign of Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (527–565)—Theophylactus Simocattes says the Avars first came into contact with the Northern Caucasus tribes of the *Barselts, Unnugurs and the Savirs* [Theophylactus Simocattes, p. 159–161], who recognised the authority of the Avars.

Having established alliances with the Alans, the Avars, with the mediation of the Alan leader Sarozius, began negotiations with the commander of the Byzantine army in Lazik (Eastern Black Sea Coast), who conveyed to the Emperor that the Avar leaders were willing to join a union with Byzantium. Soon Justinian I accepted the first Avar ambassadors. Byzantium historian of the 8th century Theophanes the Confessor (p. 760–818) placed the story about him in 557/558, outlining the ethnographic image of the Avars: 'In the same year the unusual tribe called the Avars entered Byzantium, the whole city came to look at them, as they had never seen such a tribe before. In back their hair was very long, gathered up into a bun and braided, the rest of their clothes were similar (to clothes) of the other Huns. They, having escaped from their country, came to Scythia and Mizia and sent ambassadors to Justinian, asking him to accept them' [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 52]. This ethnic portrait of the Avars (long, braided hair) was noted by another authors that were contemporaries of these events: Byzantium historian Agathias, the Syrian chronicler John of Ephesus, and the Latin poet Corippus (for bibliography see: [Chichurov, 1980, p. 83, p. 97]).

A contemporary of these events, Byzantine historian Menander, included in his 'History' the speech of the Avar ambassador Kandik addressed to the Emperor in which he explained the advantages for Byzantium to form a union with the Avars that would be capable of protecting the borders of Byzantium. The Avars demanded annual gifts and the right to settle on favorable lands as payment: 'The greatest

and the strongest nation is coming to you. The Avar tribe is invincible, it is able to repel and destroy enemies. That is why it would be useful to accept the Avars as allies and receive in them excellent defenders for yourself, but they will only have friendly relations with the Roman Empire government if they receive from you precious gifts and money annually and are settled by you on fertile land' [Menander Protector, p. 321–322]. Having accepted the Avar ambassadors, Justinian I sent his ambassadors to the Avars in response to present gifts and forge an alliance.

The First Turkic Khaganate that emerged in 551 after the defeat of the Rourans greatly expanded its lands in a short period of time, having confirmed its authority in the east in Central Asia and Southern Siberia, and in the west in 558 after completing the conquest of the Aral Sea and Volga regions. The union of Byzantium with the enemies of Turks—the Avars—which strengthened their rule in the northern Caucasian region concerned the Turks. However, the leader of the western Turkic campaigns Istāmi-Yabgu-Khagan stopped the movement beyond the Volga by starting a battle with the powerful Ephthalites, whose territory from the south bordered the Turkic Khaganate lands.

Byzantium intended to use the Avars to weaken the tribes of the Northern Black region, which were allies of its enemy Iran, and also those whose relations with the Empire were unstable. In particular, the Utighurs and Kutrigurs were a great concern for Byzantine as they periodically invaded the lands of the Empire. The actions of the Avars against the Kutrigurs, who lived in the north Black Sea region, and the related Utigur nation, which inhabited the Azov Sea region, were not successful in this period. The Avars also launched a struggle with eastern Slavs who had relocated to the Carpathian Basin and had entered into a union with the Kutrigurs [Erdelyi, 1998, p. 90]. The Emperor offered a region of present-day Serbia for the Avars to settle in but they refused, in return they wanted to get the lowlands of Dobrudzha, located along the banks of the Danube. However, the Avars did not stay for long in this region. Byzantium

made annual payments to the Avars that had been established by their alliance. In the 6th century those payments reached 80,000 solidi per year (333 kg of gold). Concerned about the rise of the Avars, Turkic ruler Istāmi sent ambassadors to Constantinople in 563 to persuade the Emperor to stop supporting the Avars [Klyashtorny, Sultanov, 2000, p. 88]. Ascending the throne in 565 Justin II (565–578) stopped paying the annual gifts to the Avars [Menander Protector, p. 356–359].

The Avars made an alliance with the Langobards against the Gepids, destroyed them, and in 567 settled in Pannonia on the territory where the Gepids had lived. Under the terms of the agreement, the Langobards left Pannonia for Northern Italy and there founded the Langobard kingdom (present-day Lombardy). Thus, all of Pannonia fell under control of the Avars [Menander Protector, p. 385–387].

Taking advantage of the Gepids' defeat, the Byzantines seized their capital, which was located on the site of the ancient Sirmium (current Mitrovica). This caused prolonged enmity between Byzantium and the Avars, with periods of military clashes and peace agreements.

In 566, after the defeat the Turkic Khaganate along with the Iranian Ephthalites and the ensuing deterioration of relations between them, in 567 Istāmi formed an alliance with Byzantium directed against Iran. By leading short military campaigns against Iran and concluding peace with them, in 571 Istāmi moved military operations to the Volga region and seized the Northern Caucasus [The History of the people of Northern Caucasus, p. 1988, p. 99]. According to the Arabic historian al-Tabari (839–923), 'Turkic Khakan Sindzhibu' (Istāmi) appeared in the Derbend passage region with an army numbering 110,000 warriors and, threatening Iran with war, demanded Persia king Khosrow Anushirwan (531–579) pay a ransom equivalent to what Iran paid to the local tribes to restrain their incursions into the Caucasus [al-Tabari, p. 69–70]. However, after seeing the fortresses constructed in the Derbend passage, the Turks left.

Under Istāmi, the Turks were able to expand their territories in the west to the Bospo-



Drilled axe. Stone. 3rd–2nd mil. BCE
Babinovichi village of Mogilevsk guberniya Discovery of 1913
Inv. No.GE 164/1. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Round-bottomed vessel. Clay. 3rd–2nd mil. BCE Chuvash Republic.
Balanovo burial site. Excavations by O. Bader, 1937.
Inv. No. GE 2279/11. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Vessel. Clay. Height: 24.8 cm. 2nd mil. BCE
Krasnoyarsk Krai Sargovulus burial site.
Excavations by M. Pshenitsina, 1965
Inv. No. GE 2372/4. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Bit. Bronze. Tagar culture (8th–3rd centuries BCE)
Inv. No.3180. National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



Snaffle. Bronze. Tagar culture.
Inv. No.3216. National Museum
of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



Pins. Bronze.
Tagar culture.
Inv. Nos.3196, 3213.
National Museum
of the Republic of Tatarstan,
Kazan



Knives. Bronze. Length: 1. 14.5 cm; 2. 15.5 cm; 3. 19 cm;
4. 21.5 cm; 5. 24 cm. Tagar culture.
Inv. No.3173. National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



'Small iron'. Stone. Size: 6x3.5 cm.
Tagar culture (8th–3rd centuries BCE)
Inv. No.3201. National Museum
of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



Mirror. Bronze. Diameter: 12.5 cm.
Tagar culture.
Inv. No.3176. National Museum
of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



Daggers. Bronze. Length: 25 cm. Tagar culture.
Inv. No.3172. National Museum
of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



Dagger. Iron. Length: 26.5 cm.
Karasuk culture (10–8th centuries BCE).
Inv. No.3172. National Museum
of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



1



2



3



4



5

Celts. Bronze. Sizes: 1. 11.3x4.2x2.3 cm; 2. 5.2x6.7x2.3 cm; 3. 6.3x5.7x2.1 cm; 4. 15.5x5.2x3.6 cm; 5. 17x5.5x3 cm. Tagar culture.
Inv. No.3179. National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



Metal badge in the form of a curled up panther. Gold. Diameter: 10.9 cm. 6–5th centuries BCE
The Siberian collection of Peter I. Inv. No. GE Si 1727 1/88.
Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Two belt plates: 'knights under a tree'. Gold. Size: 15x12 cm.
5–4th centuries BCE. The Siberian collection of Peter I.
Inv. No. GE Si 1727 1/161. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Torc. Gold, turquoise, corals. Diameter: 14.8 cm. 5–4th centuries BCE.
The Siberian collection of Peter I.
Inv. No. GE Si 1727 1/67. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

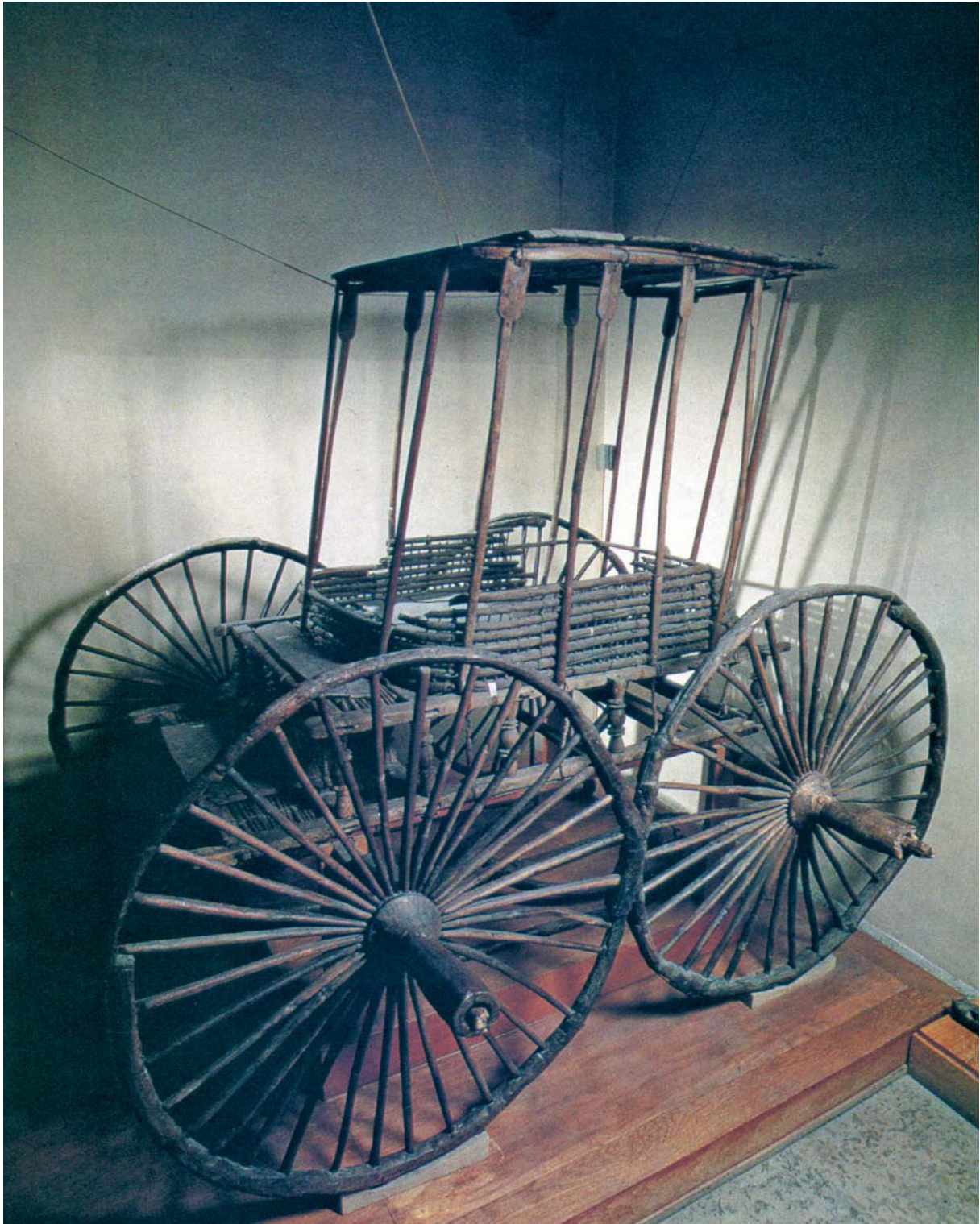


A tattoo from the leader's right hand, depicting a scene of 'suffering'.

5th century BCE. The Altai Mountains.

Pazyryk burial mound 2. Excavations by S. Rudenko, 1947.

Inv. No. GE 1684/298. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Cart. Wood. 5–4th centuries BCE. Altai. Pazyryk burial mound 5. Excavations by S. Rudenko, 1949.
Inv. No. GE 1687/404. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



A carpet detail: a 'goddess' on her throne. Felt. 5–4th centuries BCE. Altai. Pazyryk burial mound 5. Excavations by S. Rudenko, 1949. Inv. No. GE 1687/94. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Cauldron. Bronze. Height: 62 cm. 5–4th centuries BCE.
Accidental discovery on the Kargalinka River, near Almaty.
Inv. No. GE 1654/1. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Hair pick with a battle scene. Gold. Size: 12.6x10.2 cm. 439–390 BCE
The Don River area. Solokha burial mound. Excavations by N.Veselovsky, 1913.
Inv. No.GE Dn 1913 1/1. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Bracelet. Gold. Height: 6.6 cm. 4th century BCE.
The Siberian collection of Peter I.
Inv. No. GE Si 1727 1/68. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Vessel with a picture of Scythians. Silver. Height: 10.5 cm. 4th century BCE.
The Middle and Lower Don area. 'Frequent mounds'. Excavations by Zverev, 1911.
Inv. No. GE Do 1911 1/11. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

Amphora with a friso depicting scenes of Scythian life.
Silver. Height: 70 cm. 4th century BCE. The Don River area. Chertomlyk burial mound.
Excavations by I. Zabelin, 1863.
Inv. No. GE Dn 1863 1/166. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





Ironwork of a wooden vessel's crown depicting two stylised deer.

Gold.

Size: 8.8x5.7 cm, weight: 48.1 g.
4th century BCE. Orenburg oblast, the Ural–Ilek interfluvium, 60 km southwest of Orenburg. Filip'sky burial site. Big Fillippovka burial mound. Early Sarmatians.

Excavations and photo by A. Pshenichnyuk, 1988.

Inv. No.831/231a. Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography at the National Archive of the Ufa Scientific Centre, Russian Academy of Sciences, Ufa



Ironwork of a wooden vessel in the form of a curled up deer.

Gold. Size 4x4.7 cm, weight 5.12 g.
4th century BCE. Big Fillippovka burial mound. Early Sarmatians.

Excavations and photo by A. Pshenichnyuk, 1988.

Inv. No.831/99. Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography at the National Archive of the Ufa Scientific Centre, Russian Academy of Sciences, Ufa



Laced jangling pendant. Gold. Diameter 4.1 cm, weight 66.04 g. 4th century BCE.
Orenburg oblast, the Ural-Ilek interfluvium, 60 km southwest of Orenburg.
Filipsky burial site. Burial mound 17. Early Sarmatians. Excavations and photo by A. Pshenichnyuk, 1990.
Inv. No.837/59. Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography at the National Archive of the Ufa Scientific Centre,
Russian Academy of Sciences, Ufa



A sewn on badge depicting a scene of sworn brotherhood. Gold. Size: 2.5x2.5 cm. 400–375 BCE.
The Don River area. Solokha burial mound. Excavations by N.Veselovsky, 1913.
Inv. No.GE Dn 1913 1/42. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

Pommel with three birds.
Bronze. Height: 28.9 cm. 4th–beginning of the 3rd century BCE. The Don River area.
Aleksandropol burial mound. Accidental find of 1851.
Inv. No.GE Dn 1851 1/17. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





Hun clothing. Silk, felt, fur, wool. 1st century BCE
Northern Mongolia. Noin-Ula. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Plate with a picture of a deer.

Silver. 1st century BCE–1st century CE
Noin-Ula.
Burial mound No.6 Hermitage Museum,
Saint Petersburg



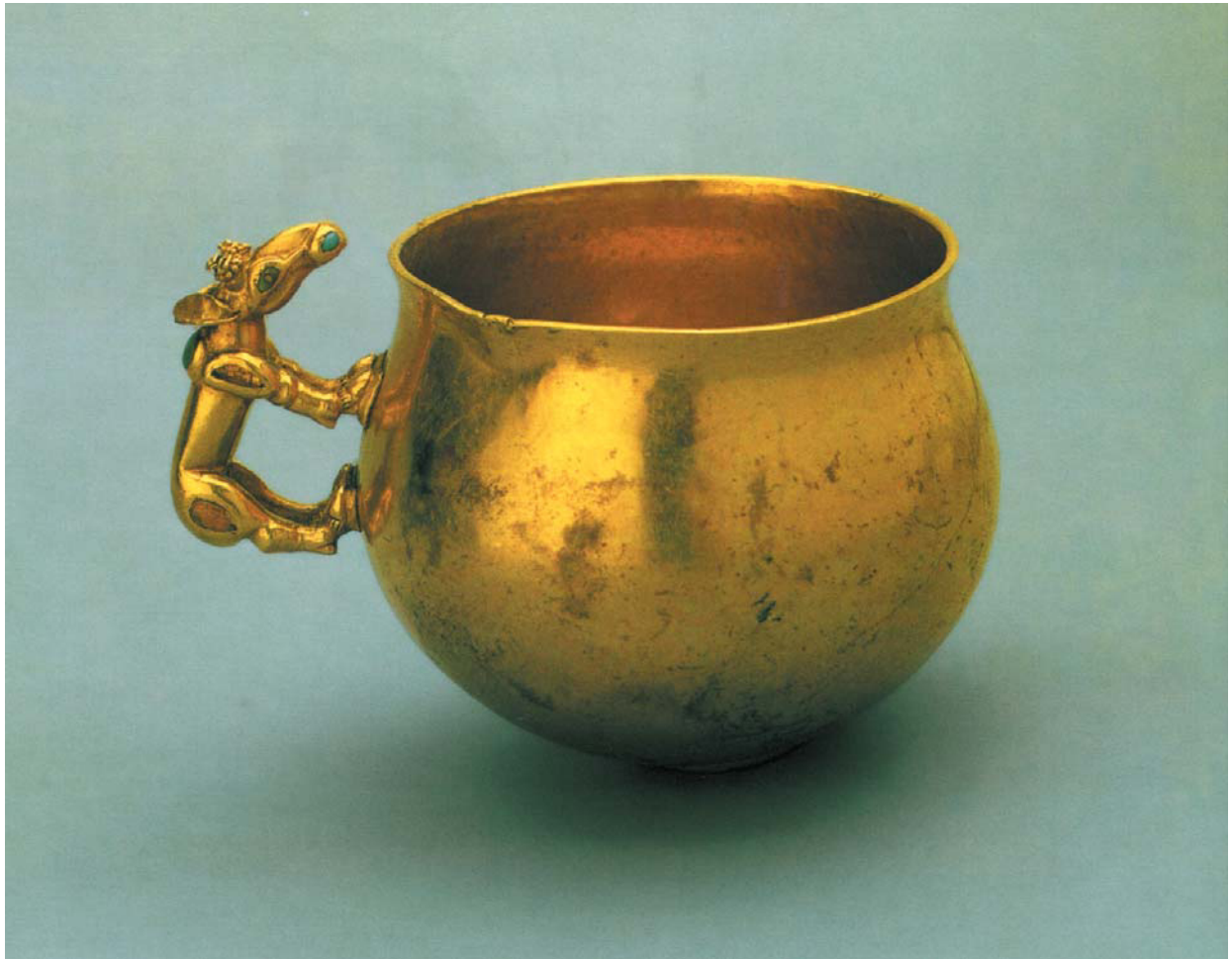
Bas-relief on a thin plate with a picture of a yak turning its head back and standing on rocks between conifers.

Silver. 1st century BCE–1st century CE
Northern Mongolia. Noin-Ula. Burial mound No.6
Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Bas-relief on a thin round plate with a picture of a yak standing on rocks among conifers.

Silver. 1st century BCE–1st century CE
Northern Mongolia. Noin-Ula.
Burial mound No.6 Hermitage Museum,
St. Petersburg



Vessel with a handle in the form of an elk. Gold, turquoise, corals, glass. Height: 7.5 cm. 1st century CE
The Lower Don, Novocherkassk city. Khokhlach burial mound. Accidental find of 1864
Inv. No.GE 2213/13. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

Vessel detail: a handle in the form of an elk.
Inv. No.GE 2213/13. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





Pot with figures of goats. Bronze. Height: 25.5 cm. 1st–2nd centuries CE Rostov oblast. Sokolovskaya balka. Burial mound No.3. Excavations by B. Raev, 1970. Inv. No.GE 2645/6. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Copy of a gold coronet. 1st century CE The Lower Don, Novocherkassk city.
Khokhlach burial mound. Accidental find of 1864
Inv. No.GE SK-367. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Coronet. Gold, bronze, garnets. Length: 24 cm. End of the 4th–first half of the 5th century.
The Don–Volga interfluvium. Verkhne-Yablochny farm. Accidental find of 1902.
Inv. No.GE 1948/2. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Buckles and badges of belt sets. Bronze. 7th century CE
 Altai. Kudyrga burial site. Excavations by A. Glukhov and S. Rudenko, 1925.
 Inv. Nos. GE 4150/114 and 123. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Belt set. Bronze. 7th century CE
 Altai. Kudyrga burial site.
 Excavations by A. Glukhov and S. Rudenko, 1925.
 Inv. No. GE 4150/159, etc.
 Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Belt covers (1–4) and buckles (5–7). Silver.

1–2. Height: 2 cm, width: 1.4 cm.

3–4. Height: 2 cm, diameter: 2.5 cm, width: 2 cm.

5, 7. Height: 3.2 cm, width: 2.5 cm.

6. Height: 3.5 cm, width: 2.6 cm.

Latter half of the 6th century CE Spassk District of the Republic of Tatarstan. The Imenkovo-Turbaslino community.

2nd Komintern burial site. Grave 46.

Excavations by E. Kazakov, 1992.

Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences, Kazan

Belt cap. Bronze. Length: 9 cm. 7th century CE

Altai. Kudyrga burial site.

Excavations by A. Glukhov and S. Rudenko, 1925.

Inv. No. GE 4150/157. Hermitage Museum,
Saint Petersburg



Goblet. Glass. Height: 9.5 cm, width: 9.4 cm.

Latter half of the 6th century CE Spassk District of the Republic of Tatarstan.

The Imenkovo-Turbaslino community. 2nd Komintern burial site. Grave 43.

Excavations by E. Kazakov, 1991.

Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences, Kazan



Pot. Clay. Height: 23.2 cm.
Spassk District of the Republic
of Tatarstan.
Imenkovo culture.
4th Maklasheev burial site.
Grave 107. Inv. No.IV M/186.
Institute of History of the Tatarstan
Academy of Sciences, Kazan



Plaster pot. Clay. Height: 12.6 cm.
Laishev District of Tatarstan.
Imenkovo culture.
Bogoroditsk burial site.
Institute of History of the Tatarstan
Academy of Sciences, Kazan



Bugut Stele, the first known record of the Turkic Khaganate. 582. Northern Mongolia.
Photo by S. Klyashtorny

Monument in honour of Kul Tigin (southern side). 732. Mongolia.
Photo by S. Klyashtorny

Monument in honour of Kul Tigin (northern side). 732. Mongolia.
Photo by S. Klyashtorny

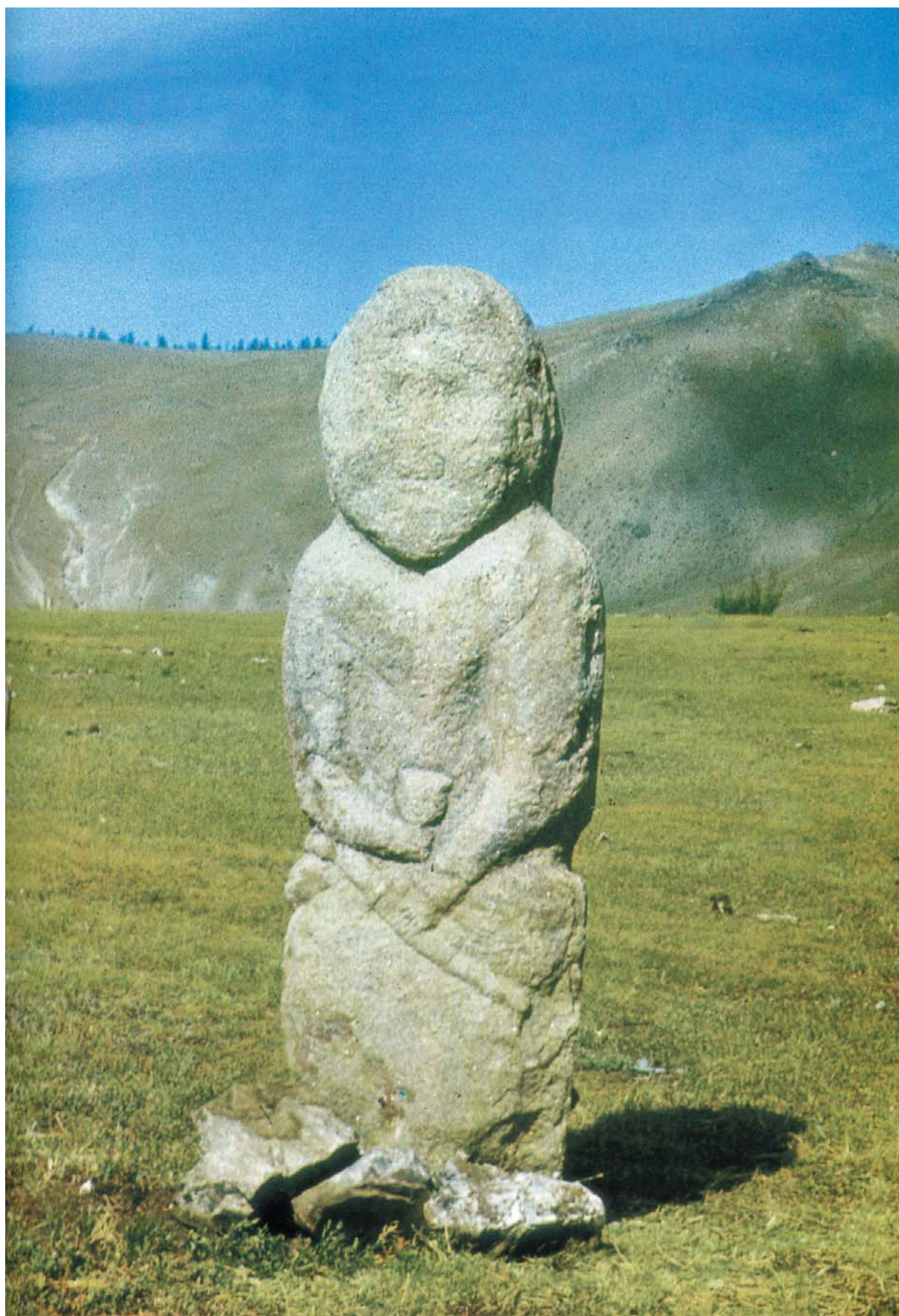


Old Turkic stone statue.
Mongolia.
Photo by S. Klyashtorny



Old Turkic stone statue. Mongolia.
Photo by S. Klyashtorny

Old Turkic stone statue. Mongolia.
Photo by S. Klyashtorny





Chain. Silver. Length: 61.5 cm, width: 7 mm. Turn of the 7–8th centuries.
Aktanysh District of Tatarstan. Kushnarenkovo culture. Taktalachuk burial site.
Grave 115. Excavations by E. Kazakov, 1969.
Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences, Kazan



Detail of a silver chain: its shield.



Jangling pendants with arch (1, 2) and horse (3, 4) shields.

Bronze.

1. Height: 16 cm, width: 3.2 cm.

2. Height: 20.5 cm, width: 3.5 cm.

3. Height: 9.2 cm, width: 3.2 cm.

4. Height: 10 cm, width: 3.5 cm.

End of the 9th–beginning of the 10th century
Spassk District of the Republic of Tatarstan.

Tankeevo burial site. Excavations by A. Khalikov
and E. Kazakov, 1964–1965.

Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy
of Sciences, Kazan



Earring (2) and cult pendants (1, 3).

Silver (2), bronze (1, 3).

1. Diameter: 4.2 cm.

2. Height: 4.3 cm, width: 2 cm.

3. Height: 4.2 cm, width: 5 cm.

Beginning of the 10th century. Spassk
District of the Republic of Tatarstan.

Tankeevo burial site. Early Bulgars.

Excavations by E. Kazakov, 1961–1964.

Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy
of Sciences, Kazan



Jangling pendant with a tubular shield.

Bronze.

Height: 16.5 cm, width: 7 cm.

Latter half of the 10th century.

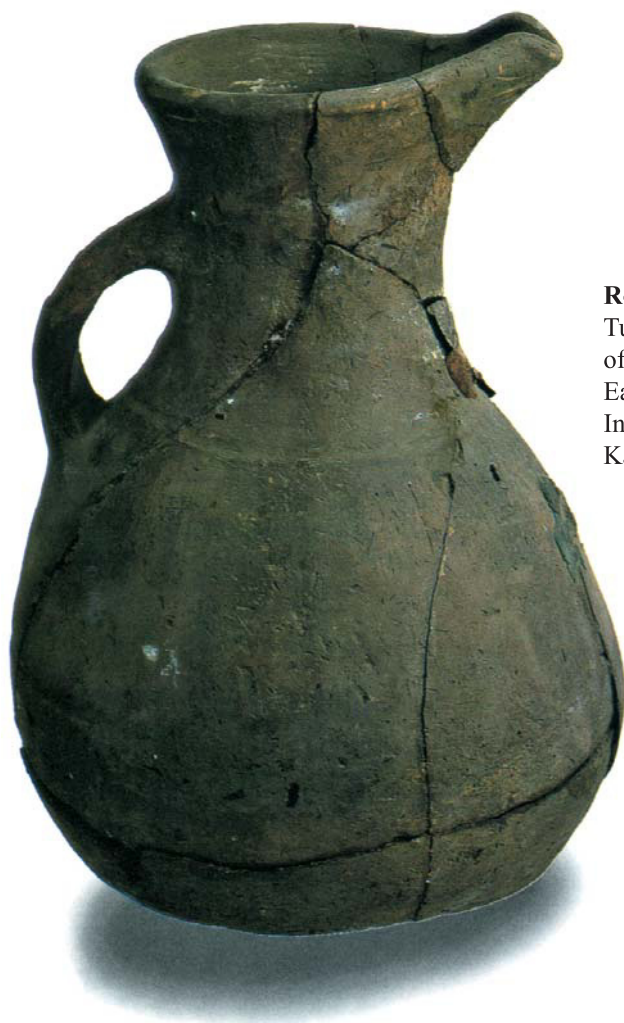
Spassk District of the Republic of Tatarstan.

Tankeevo burial site. Grave 1101.

The Oka Finns in Volga Bulgaria.

Excavations by E. Kazakov, 1978.

Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy
of Sciences, Kazan



Round one-handed jar. Height: 30 cm.
Turn of the 9–10th centuries. Spassk District
of the Republic of Tatarstan. Tankeevo burial site.
Early Bulgars. Excavations by E. Kazakov, 1973.
Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences,
Kazan



Plaster round-bottomed vessels. 1. Height: 9.5 cm. 2. Height: 14.5 cm.
End of the 9th century. Spassk District of the Republic of Tatarstan. Tankeevo burial site.
Early Bulgars. Excavations by A. Khalikov and E. Kazakov, 1965–1966.
Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences, Kazan



Jangling belt pendant. Bronze.
Height: 13 cm, width: 17.5 cm.
Latter half of the 10th century.
Spassk District of the Republic of Tatarstan.
The Oka Finns in Volga Bulgaria.
Tankeev burial site. Grave 1101.
Excavations by E. Kazakov, 1978.
Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy
of Sciences, Kazan



Jangling pendant with a laced trapezoidal shield.
Bronze. Height: 9.5 cm, width: 7 cm.
Latter half of the 10th century. Spassk District of the Republic of Tatarstan.
The Oka Finns in Volga Bulgaria. Tankeev burial site.
Grave 1101. Excavations by E. Kazakov, 1978.
Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences, Kazan



Mask. Gilded silver.

Height: 13 cm, width: 14.5 cm.

Turn of the 9–10th centuries. Spassk District of the Republic of Tatarstan. Early Bulgars.

Tankeevo burial site. Grave 1092. Excavations by E. Kazakov, 1977.

Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences, Kazan

rus (Kerch), having subjugated the Alans and Utighurs [Klyashtorny, Sultanov, 2000, p. 85–86, 89]. In 576 after Istämi's death (575), one of his sons Turksanf, who had an appanage in the far west of the Turkic Khaganate, accused the Byzantine Emperor of violating the alliance that had emerged during negotiations with the Avars. He captured Bosphorus and invaded Crimea, but soon left the lands he had taken [Klyashtorny, Sultanov, 2000, p. 90].

As for the Avars, after seizing Pannonia, they founded on its territory the Avar Khaganate, headed by Khagan Bayan. The Avar Khaganate had authority over many tribes living in the region, including the Slavs and Gepids. At the end of the 6th century the Kutrigurs, Tarniakhs and Zabenders were being harassed by the Turks and resettled with the Avars.

The political structure of the Avar Khaganate included, besides the Khagan, his vice-roys in some parts of the country called *tudun and ugur* [Erdelyi, 1982, p. 252]. Debt collectors, who assembled on behalf of the Khagan, were tarkhans, which had noble origins. Beneath them were the tribal and clan leaders in the social structure of the Avar society [Erdelyi, 1998, p. 93]. Many of the people served as warriors, the army was organised along the decimal system. Slavery was present in the form of exploiting labour of prisoners and destitute tribesmen [Erdelyi, 1998, pp. 94–95].

The presence of Avars in Europe is commonly divided into three periods. *The early Avar period* lasted from the middle 6th century till almost the end of the 7th century. *The Middle Avar period* was very short, and was replaced at the beginning of the 8th century by *the late Avar period*, which lasted till the beginning of the 9th century. [Erdelyi, 1998, p. 93]

In 70s–80s of the 6th century, the Avars and Slavs raided the lands in the Lower reaches of the Danube river that were part of Byzantium. The Byzantine struggle with the Avars and their allies had varying degrees of success. The troops of Khagan Bayan did manage to reach Constantinople [Theophanes Confessor, p. 54].

In the 590s, the Avar Khaganate in alliance with the Slavs fought with Bavarian tribes and the Franks.

The 7th century was also marked with tumultuous events for the Avar Khaganate. In 601, the Byzantium army defeated the troops of the Avar Khaganate in two battles on the Tisa river (half were Slavs and only one-fifth of them were Avars [Theophylactus Simocattes, p. 178], there also were many Kutrigurs and Bolgars [Menander Protector, p. 391]). In 626, the Avars besieged Constantinople in alliance with the Bolgars, Slavs and Gepids [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 58–59, Nicephorus, p. 160–161]. The Avars had received approval to undertake this action from the enemy of Byzantium–Iran. Theophanes the Confessor in 525/526 writes that Persia Shah Khosrow II Parvez (591–627) sent his commander Shahvaraz (Sarvaros) to Constantinople to conclude an agreement with the Avars and their allies to plan the siege of Constantinople: '(Khosrow) sent Sarvaros and his army to Constantinople to conclude an agreement with western Huns, called Avars, with Bolgars... for them to march against the town and to seize it' [Theophanes Confessor, p. 58–59]. Concerted efforts of the Avars and Persians was also confirmed by another Byzantine historian–Patriarch Nicephorus (c. 758–829). He wrote that in 626 the Avars, in violation of the truce with Byzantium, 'launched a campaign, approached the walls of Byzantium, and set fire to all the outlying towns. So, dividing between themselves the Thracian Bosphorus, the Persians seized (its) Asian part, and the Avars devastated the lands of Thrace' [Nicephorus, p. 160].

The intention of Khosrow was to distract Byzantium from military actions in Iran, which had started in 622 [Chichurov, 1980, p. 98, note 205]. The Byzantine Emperor, finding himself in a difficult situation, called for an alliance with the Torks in whose army the dominant positions were held by Khazars. Due to this, they came to the attention of Byzantine historians [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 59].

The siege of Constantinople was well planned and organised. Persians attacked the

town of Chalcedon, located on the Asia Minor coast of Bosphorus, opposite Constantinople (present-day Kadıköy). The Avars went to Constantinople from Thrace and besieged it from the Long Walls side, using 'numerous siege structures' to demolish it, as Theophanes the Confessor pointed out [Ibid.]. Nicephorus explained that the Avars used 'wooden towers and the testudo formation' [Nicephorus, p. 160]. The Avars' Slavic allies were supposed to participate in the siege of the city from the side of Golden Horn harbour, which they would reach with their fleet of small boats dug out of solid tree trunks. Theophanes the Confessor called them 'slotted boats', and Nicephorus, as 'single-spar boats' [Theophanes Confessor, p. 59, Nicephorus, p. 160]. The sudden appearance of the Slavic fleet in the harbour near Constantinople was supposed to create confusion among the besieged people. It was expected that the Slavs, leaving in boats from the mouth of Danube, would reach Thrace via the Black Sea and secretly congregate in the estuary of the Barbiş river (present-day Kadzytanes), ending up in the north end of Golden Horn bay [Chichurov, 1980, p. 104, NB: 229, p. 173, NB:49]. The advance of the Slavic fleet should have begun with the prearranged signal from the Avars.

According to Theophanes the Confessor, the Avars and their allies besieged the capital of Byzantium for 10 days: 'Ten days they besieged the city from the land and from the sea, but thanks to God's help, the power and protection of Our Most Pure Mother of God, they failed. Having lost many warriors on the land and on the sea, with great shame they returned to their land' [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 59]. But, Nicephorus wrote, the Byzantines had found out about the plans of the Slavic fleet to attack and, drawing them out with a fake signal, 'the boats of the Romans came out to meet them, surrounded them, and immediately destroyed them. The spilled blood turned the sea scarlet. Among the dead bodies female Slavs were also found' [Nicephorus, p. 161]. The loss of the Slavic fleet, which made up a significant part of the forces that besieged Constantinople, forced the Avars to lift the siege.

The failure of the siege of Constantinople in 626 became a turning point for the Avars. They were basically excluded from Byzantine foreign policy [Chichurov, 1980, p. 103, see: 227]. In addition, the Avar Khaganate underwent a serious internal crisis during this period. Back in 623 in the western part of the Avar lands the Slavs, rising up against the Avars, created a state that brought together Czechs, Moravians, Slovenes and others that lasted 35 years [Erdelyi, 1998, p. 91]. In 630, with the death of Khan Bayan his dynasty ended. A power struggle between the Avars and Kutrigurs-Bolgars emerged in the Khaganate. The latter started an internal rebellion in 631, but it was put down by the Avars and they were displaced from the lands of the Khaganate [Artamonov, 1962, p. 112].

In the 630s, important events took place in the Black Sea region that affected the Avar Khaganate too. Supported by Byzantium, the Bulgar tribes of the Azov Sea region united and created their own state in 635, known from sources as Great Bulgaria [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 60, Nicephorus, p. 162]. According to Nicephorus, this event had been preceded by the uprising of Bolgars headed by Kubrat against the rule of the Avars: 'At that time Kuvrat, a nephew of Organa, the sovereign of Onogundurs, rebelled against the Khagan of Avars and having suffered insults, drove Khagan's people from their land' [Nicephorus, p. 161].

Based on the report of Nicephorus, the authority of the Avar Khaganate in the 630s extended east up to the Bulgar villages in the Azov Sea region. However, modern historiography does not give a clear-cut answer as to the extent of influence of the Avar Khaganate at that time [see: [Chichurov, 1980, p. 175–176, p. 65]. The lack of clarity in the information from Nicephorus, lack of substantiation from other authors, and also the evident weakening of the Avar Khaganate in the first half of the 7th century all make it impossible to talk of any significant extension of the authority of Avars to the east [Ibid.]. Nevertheless, the politics of the Kuban Bolgars soon directly affected the Avar Khaganate.

Great Bulgaria existed till the death of its founder Khan Kubrat, which occurred during

the reign of Byzantine Emperor Constans II (641–668) [Chichurov, 1980, p. 111, see: 265]. Bulgar tribes and lands in Azov Sea region were divided between the five sons of Kubrat, four of whom migrated from their territories under the pressure of the Khazar state. The fourth son, named Kuver [Chichurov, 1980, p. 114, see: 273], allegedly took his subjects west, crossed the Danube, and settled in Pannonia, accepting the allegiance of the Avar Khagan [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 61, Nicephorus, p. 162]. The new influx of Bulgars into the Avar Khaganate contributed to the change in the ethnic type of the European Avars [Erdelyi, 1998, p. 92].

The Late Avar period in the history of the European Avars was marked by struggles with the Franks, under whose authority many European nations had fallen. The more powerful Avar Khaganate was the most dangerous enemy of the Franks. The most serious conflicts between the Franks and Avars happened during the reign of Charles the Great (768–814). The king of the Franks tried at first to establish friendly relations with the Avar Khaganate. In 780, ambassadors from the Avars visited the city of Worms, and later Frankish ambassadors visited the Avars. But in 788, the Avars formed an alliance with the Bavarians and both marched against the Franks, but were defeated by them.

In 791, the Franks made a decisive attack against the Avar Khaganate [Erdelyi, 1998, p. 99–100]. Charles I and his main forces started to move along the Danube to the east, and Crown Prince Pipin entered Avar territory from Italy and captured an Avar fortress. The Saxons, who had been conquered by Franks, instigated a rebellion in the homefront of the Franks to support the Avars. The Avars could not take advantage of this situation because of inner conflict that led to the death of yugur and Khagan. In 796, the vicegerent Tudun of the Khagan of the Avars arrived in the capital of the Frankish kingdom, the city of Aachen, where he swore allegiance to Charles the Great. In that same year, Prince Pipin captured the residence of the Avar Khagans, which it is believed was located on the Tisa river. The political autonomy of the Avar Khaganate was

gone, many Avars were captured, others managed to escape across the Tisa river.

At the end of 8th–the beginning of 9th centuries, the Avars made several attempts to free themselves from the control of the Franks, but were unsuccessful. The final submission of the Avars was brought about when they were introduced to Christianity. In 805, the Khagan of the Avars accepted the new religion.

In the 9th century, the Avars occupied a compact territory around the Danube river, possibly between the rivers Wien and Raba. Information about the last Avar ambassador to the Franks is from 823, however the Avar Tsardom was mentioned in official documents (Treaty of Verdun dividing the empire of Charles I between his sons) in 843. In the 12th century the fate of the Avars, who called themselves 'Obres', was described in 'The Tale of Bygone Years' as a people who had disappeared from the political scene: 'They all died, and there isn't even one Obre, not their tribe, not their descendants'.

It is not correct to compare the Avar ethnonym with modern Avars from Dagestan because the Avars called themselves 'Maarulal' and 'Khyindalal' and the neighbouring nations called them by different names, but didn't call them 'Avars' [Erdelyi, Aglarov, 1998, p. 71]. Researchers have established that the Avar ethnonym in the Caucasus was an artificial creation with roots in the anthroponym Avar, the name of the king of Sarir [Erdelyi, Aglarov, 1998, p. 72]. The language of the Dagestan Avars is part of the Caucasian language family, and the language of the ancient Avars belonged to the Altai language family.

The Avar epoch in Pannonia is archaeologically represented with 30,000 burial sites and several hundred settlements from the 7th–9th centuries. Research has shown that the half-nomadic Avars lived from spring to fall in yurt-like dwellings that could be taken down and moved. They spent the winter in villages to which they would return with their cattle from the summer pastures [Erdelyi, 1982, p. 251, Erdelyi, 1998, p. 95]. In winter the Avars lived in semi-recessed dugouts with wooden walls that were heated with stone ovens. Avars mainly were engaged in semi-nomadic stock breed-

ing. Horses played the most important role, but they also bred large and small cattle. Before the Avars came, the local population of Pannonia and the Slavs practiced agriculture, the Slavs also bred hogs. There is very little information on farming. Charred grains of millet and wheat have been found (6–7th centuries), and also rye and oats (9th century) [Erdelyi, 1998, p. 95–96]. The wheat was harvested with iron sickles, which were placed in some burial mound as necessary equipment. The pottery kilns, iron furnaces and also high-quality ceramics, offensive and defensive weapons (swords, sabres, chain mails), battle suit for horses and iron tools (addices, sickles and others) testify to the fact that the Avars developed ceramics and metal working. The Avars also traded with neighbouring tribes, mainly with Byzantines, receiving from them some types of decoration, silk, clothing, and eastern spices [Erdelyi, 1982, p. 251, Erdelyi, 1998, p. 97]. Taxes derived from the trade caravans that passed through Pannonia to the west were one source of income for the leaders of some regions of the Avar Khaganate and also the Khagan himself [Erdelyi, 1998, p. 96]. The significant contributions to the treasury of the Avar Khagans were received as annual payments from Byzantium stipulated in their alliance. In the 6th century those payments reached 80,000 solidi per year, in 680 they were 100,000, and at the beginning of the 7th century they were 120,000 solidi. It is estimated that by 626, 6 million solidi (25 thousand kilograms of gold) had been paid to the Avar Khaganate as a tribute [Erdelyi, 1998, p. 97]. These funds were used by the Khagans mainly to purchase goods not traditional for the Avars from Byzantium and to make adornments. Partly they used the gold to secure obedience of the leaders of allied tribes [Ibid.].

The burial ceremony of the Avar epoch in Pannonia was different. The deceased were buried in simple pits, and less often in lined graves. The majority of the burials are individual, and the orientation of the buried person varies (easterly or westerly) [Erdelyi, 1998, p. 98]. Anthropological materials show the predominance of Mongoloid types in some burial sites, and in other sites Mongoloids are far outnumbered by Europeoids (North European, Mediterranean, East-Baltic types) [Erdelyi, 1998, p. 92–93]. Research shows that in the 6th to 9th centuries a mixed population lived in the Carpathian Basin 'united by name Avar'. [Erdelyi, 1998, p. 93].

Warriors and nobility were buried with weapons and a part of their war horse. The equipment consisted of ceramic jugs, adornments, belts, and some tools. The burial of the early and middle Avar periods demonstrate the social gap between the rich and the poor. Every big patriarchal family had its own place at a burial site, but nobility was buried in a special part of the burial site separately from the main family members. In the late Avar period the society consolidated, which affected the inventory at burial sites [Erdelyi, 1982, p. 252, Erdelyi, 1998, p. 93–96].

Little is known about the spiritual life of the Avars. The Avars worshiped idols. Religious ceremonies were led by attendants headed by the main priest [Erdelyi, 1998, p. 97–98]. After they were conquered by the Franks, the Avars disappeared among other peoples of Europe and did not leave either descendants or their language. However, having landed on the pages of the historical writings of the 6–9th centuries, the Avars added their name to the list of peoples of the Great Migration Epoch who began to establish the modern ethnic European society.

CHAPTER 2

Early Bulgarians in Ciscaucasia and the Volga region

Sergey Klyashtorny

Proto-Bulgarians in the Eurasian Steppes

The question of when the Bulgarian tribes first emerged on the steppes of South Eastern Europe still remains hotly debated. The ethnic and tribal composition of early Bulgarians (according to present-day Bulgarian researchers—Proto-Bulgarians) is hotly debated as well.

Certain 'vulgares' are named in 'Chronography', which was written in the West Roman Empire in 354, and in some 5th-century manuscripts that have survived (it is believed that this almanac, which was reconstructed by T. Mommsen, dates back to the collection of the Roman scribe Filocalus), among peoples who lived in the East and descended from the biblical Shem, near the Scythians and Laz peoples. This name is usually understood as a somewhat distorted transcription of the name 'Bulgarians'. However, the source directly connects the tribe with the Zygians,—that is, the Adyghe ethnic groups of the Western Caucasus.

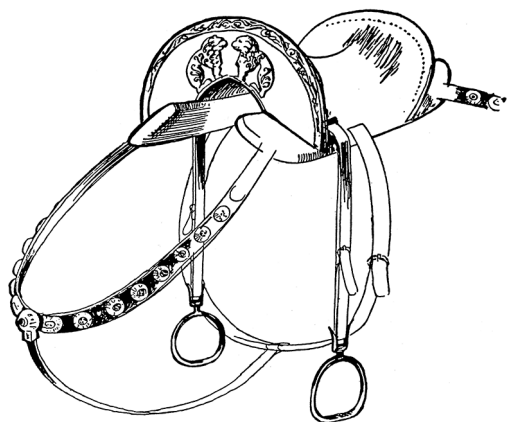
It appears that the Bulgarians emerged in the Black Sea coastal area only after the fall of Attila's Empire. Emperor Zeno of the Eastern Roman Empire turned to the Bulgarians, who had been living in the Black Sea coastal area, for help against Ostrogoths in 480. In fact, this is the first recording of the geopolitical significance of Bulgarian tribes to the Byzantines, and consequently as a focus of Byzantine diplomatic records management and Byzantine court historiography.

The name of Bulgarians or tribes that were in the Bulgarian tribal community (Onogurs – Onogundurs – Haylandurs) is mentioned fairly often in Armenian historiography, mainly

in connection with the incursions of these tribes into Transcaucasia. But the trustworthiness of the chronology of Armenian historians is questioned because of the frequent and undoubted anachronisms both in their writings and in later adaptations. The only somewhat reliable information is from the end of the 5th century. Sources are unclear as to the original territory occupied by Bulgarian tribes, although, in any case, it was in the Black Sea coastal area. Judging by 'Armenian Geography' by Ananiya Shirakatsi (the end of the 7th century), the Bulgarians lived somewhere in Western Ciscaucasia. Later it was this region, centred in Phanagoria, that Byzantine historians referred to as *Great Bulgaria*.

Though the genetic connection between Bulgarians and Turkic tribes is for the most part acknowledged by historians, it isn't by any means without reservations. So, according to A. Novoseltsev, 'Bulgarians originally were Turkified (it isn't clear when) Ugric people and were one of their tribes who most likely lived somewhere in the northern part of modern Kazakhstan and were led to West in the time of the Hun Invasion' [Novoseltsev, 1990, p.72]. This rather widespread point of view is incorrect chronologically first of all, because the Bulgarians emerged west of the Volga river only after the fall of the Hunnic Empire. It is absolutely ungrounded ethnographically as well, because it is based only on very dubious etymological interpretations of the ethnonyms of Bulgarian tribes.

There is another theory of the early ethnic history of Bulgarians that is more con-



Reconstruction of a saddle from findings near Malaya Perecepina village. The 7th century (according to Laszlo)
[Artamonov, 1962, p. 237]

vincing. It is based on various information from written sources and on the advances in contemporary Turkology related to the history of the Turkic languages. Eastern Roman (Byzantine) historiography plays a key role, in particular Priscus of Panium, a historian famous for his report on the mission to Attila's camp. In another of his historical works, of which only fragments have been saved, it is said (fragment 30) that in about 463 from somewhere in the depths of Asia hitherto unknown tribes invaded the Black Sea coastal area. Priscus gives their names as *Oghurs*, *Saragurs* and *Onogurs*.

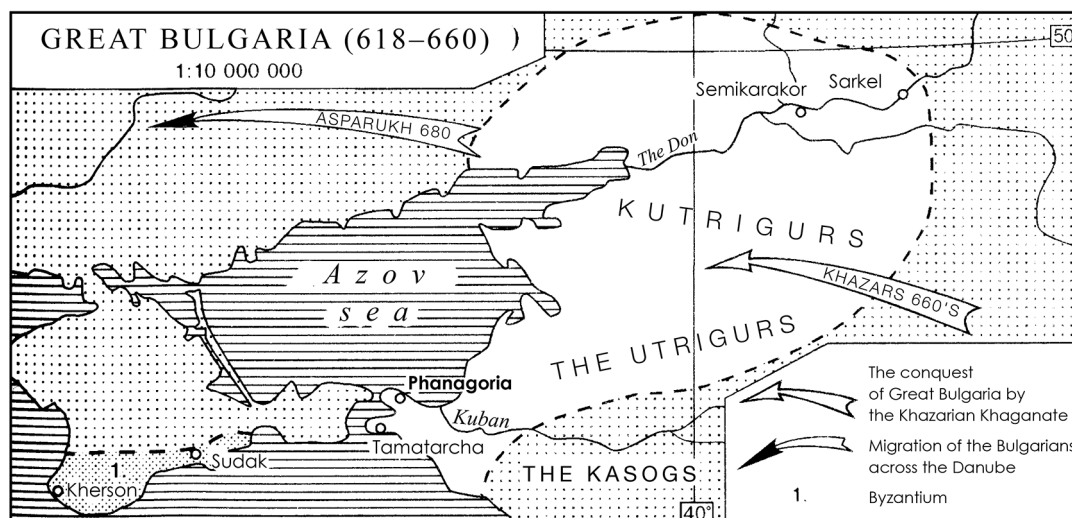
What follows is an outline of the chain of conflicts and wars so typical for the history of Eurasian nomads in all kinds of different ages. These 'chain reactions' always ended in the emergence of another wave of steppe-dwellers and invaders in South-Eastern Europe and sometimes further to the east. According to Priscus, the Oghurs were driven from their homeland by the Sabirs who had lived to the east, and then the *Sabirs*, in turn, were driven out by the *Avars*. All of them, in sequence, emerged on the border of the Byzantine Empire or its overseas themes.

And all of this movement began with steppe peoples who moved West because they were attacked by some unknown people liv-

ing on the shore of the Ocean,—that is, according to the conceptions of Classical antiquity, at the end of the world. This unknown people living in the land of sea mist had suddenly fallen victim to man-eating griffins and had to leave their country.

If we put aside the idea of griffins, which came from Herodotus and was very popular in antiquity and Byzantine traditions, and was evidently put forward to explain the unexplainable, Priscus's words are about quite historical events. All of them are confirmed in latter Byzantine, Armenian, and Syrian sources. Also of great interest in this regard are reports of Chinese historians on events that happened in the 5th century somewhere far in the West, in the steppes near the Western Sea. Only the faintest echoes of these events reached China.

In the very beginning of the 5th century in Central Asia at the northern boundaries of the Chinese state of Tuoba Wei, the powerful nomadic state of the Ju-juan (Rouran) arose. Under constant military pressure from the Wei State, Shelun Khagan of the Ju-juans delivered powerful attacks against his neighbours living east and north-west from Ju-juans. These neighbours were the tribes of *Tiele* (Uighurs). Their Chinese name translates as 'tall carts'. The Tiele were only a part of a huge group of Turkic steppe tribes called Tiele in Chinese sources—a word not found in the Chinese language. This word is the transcription in Chinese characters of the Turkic-Mongol term *Tögrög*—'cart, cartwright'. Evidently, it came to the Chinese from their neighbours, the Tiele, who were not part of this steppe group, though they belonged to the Turkic-Mongol world. Later in the 6–7th centuries when texts appeared written in the Turkic language, the creators of these texts recorded the self-designation of those Tiele tribes in writing for the first time. This self-designation turned to be the name Oghuzes that had originated, according to Old Turkic (Old Oghuz) legends, from the name of the hero-eponym (hero-progenitor?) Oghuz-Khagan. A more archaic form of the name *Oghuz* is the word *Oghur*. It existed in this form in a particular group of Ancient Tur-



Great Bulgaria. 618 – 660. [Tatar Encyclopedic Dictionary, p. 109]

tic languages, the successor of which is the contemporary Chuvash language.

In the 4–5th centuries a huge group of Turkic Oghuz tribes (Tiele) that lived in the area from Central Mongolia to Northern Kazakhstan were not politically united, but were divided into numerous groups that were frequently at war with one another. In any case, three hundred years later in the writings of the Uighur Byogyu-Khagan (the Uighurs were a part of the Oghur tribal community), the author recalling these long ago times complains that, 'My people started a number of internecine conflicts and quarrels'. (Tessin's inscription, line 10) [Klyashtorny, 1983, p.88]. The emergence of the powerful Ju-juan Khaganate and its unstoppable westward expansion in the beginning of the 5th century significantly influenced the unstable power balance of the nomadic world of Eurasian steppes. The western group of Oghurs left the Kazakh-Dzungarian space and crossed the Volga river. According to Chinese historiographers, dozens of Tiele tribes went west from the Western Sea.

These events happened in the middle of the 5th century. There on the Volga-Don steppes, on the Great Steppe of the Black Sea coastal area, the remains of Attila's great empire was in its death throes. The newly-ar-

rived Oghur tribes found themselves in a political vacuum. This was immediately felt beyond the old Roman Limes, in the borderland Byzantine themes. In 463, ambassadors from the Oghurs, Saragurs and Onogurs arrived in Constantinople. And three years later, having gained a victory over the Hun-Akatzi tribes and a foothold in the Azov Sea region, they raided Transcaucasia, which belonged to the Persians, to fulfil the terms of their treaty with Constantinople.

Subsequently all three tribes—the Oghurs, Saragurs (*Sar Oghur* 'white Oghurs'), Onogurs (*On Oghur*, 'ten [tribes] of Oghurs') seldom acted jointly, as they all joined different political coalitions. It was in this period that somewhere in the Azov Sea region or in the Western Caucasus a tribal coalition of Bulgarians originated from several Oghuz groups, with the Onogur tribes playing the decisive role. Their very name (literally 'rebels' or 'break-away') shows that this new coalition resulted from the breakup or separation of an earlier community of Oghur tribes. In the course of several decades the Bulgarians were a threat to the surrounding lands. Although the Bulgarians had saved the Byzantine Empire from the formidable invasion of the Ostrogoths in the battle of Sirmium in 480, they later were a great danger for the Empire. In 493, 499,



The Bulgarian Warrior. 7th century.
Reconstruction by M. Gorelik

502 the Bulgarians ravaged Illyria, Moesia and Thrace time and time again. In 514, they supported the rebellion of Byzantine general Vitalian who began to move on Constantinople from the shores of the Don.

In the second half of the 6th century, the Bulgarians fell under the sway of the Avars, who became the new conquerors of the steppe of South-Eastern Europe. However, the situation in the Black Sea coastal area had already begun to change at the end of the 6th century, after the emergence of a Turkic people who inflicted a string of disastrous defeats on the

Avars. The Avars suffered a serious setback, and only the internecine war in the Turkic Khaganate and the diplomatic manoeuvres of the Byzantine Empire in the Turkic-Avar feud allowed the Avars retain power in Ciscaucasia. Soon the emerging military alliance of the Avars and Iran directed against the Byzantine Empire forced Constantinople to give decisive support to the Oghur-Bulgarian tribes of the Kuban region, hostile towards Avars. A good opportunity to do that presented itself to Emperor Heraclius. The nephew of the Bulgarian leader Organa, Kubrat had spent his early days in Constantinople and was baptised there in 619. He had been friends with Heraclius from childhood. For many years Heraclius had pursued a policy of forging alliances with those steppe rulers who were willing to fight Iran and its allies. In 627–628 when he was at the walls of Tbilisi besieged by the Turkic-Khazar troops he had crowned Tong Yabghu Khagan the ruler of the Western Turkic people and promised him the hand of his daughter, Princess Eudokia, in marriage if he would continue the war with Iran. He also encouraged Kubrat with his support.

Under the leadership of Kubrat, the rule of the Avars in the Black Sea coastal area was crushed in 635 by the Bulgarians. There a new state—Great Bulgaria—emerged with its capital of Phanagoria. It existed, however, only until the demise of its founder (in about 660). Kubrat's five sons divided up the Bulgarian tribes and Bulgarian lands in Ciscaucasia and the Azov region. However, once divided they were unable to withstand the onslaught of the Khazars. Most of the Bulgarians, who had adopted sedentary and half-sedentary lifestyle long ago, submitted to the Khazars and made up the most significant part of the population of the Khazar state. Those who remained nomads set out to the west and north. The most famous is Asparukh's tribe, which founded the Bulgarian kingdom on the Danube river (679) that was soon recognised by the Byzantine Empire (681).

Eugene Kazakov

Early Bulgarians in the Volga region

Excavations in the Bolshetarkhansky, Tankeevsky, Tetyushsky, Bolshetigansky and other burial sites have revealed the previously hidden history of the Bulgarians (fig.1). It dates back, in our opinion, to the second

half of the 8th–the first half of the 10th centuries. It was a pagan and mainly nomadic period, over the course of which a new ethnos was formed, resulting from the complex ethnocultural interactions of different ethnic

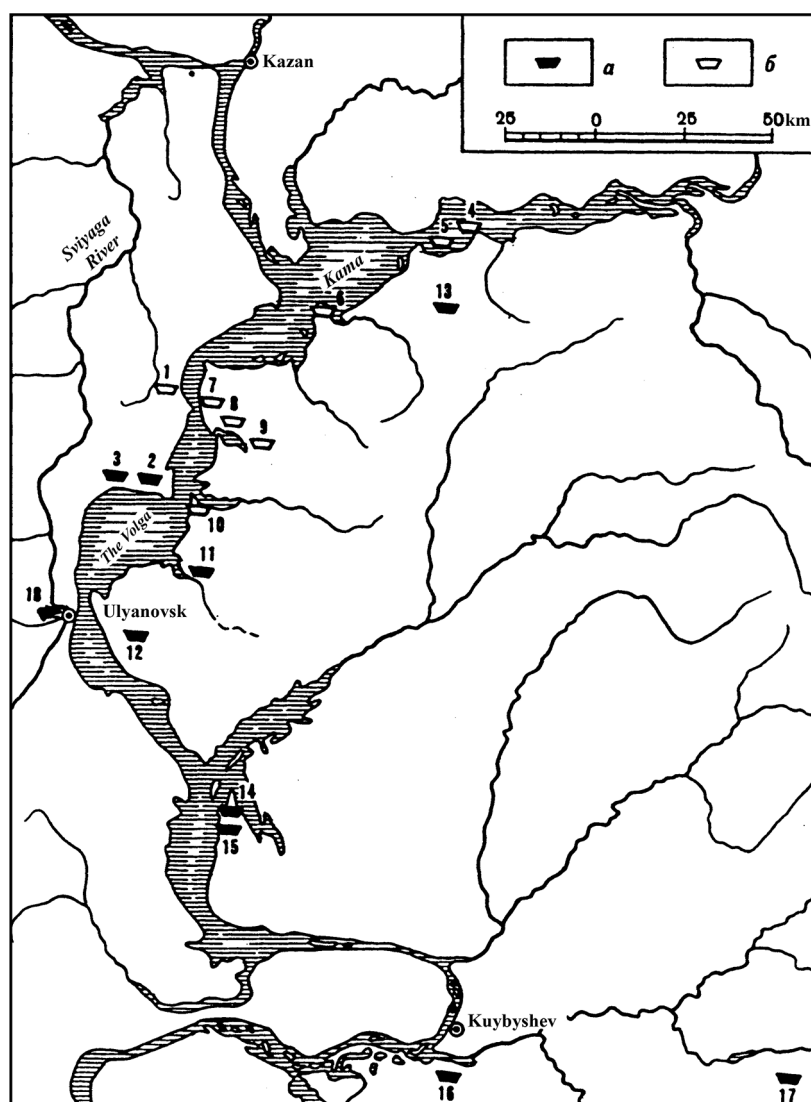


Fig. 1. Burial sites of early Volga Bulgaria.

- 1 – Tetyushsky, 2 – II Bolshetarkhansky, 3 – I Bolshetarkhansky, 4 – Lebyazhsky, 5 – Alekseevsky, 6 – II Devichiegorodsky, 7 – Balymersky, 8 – Tankeevsky, 9 – Kokryatsky, 10 – Staromainsky, 11 – Urensky, 12 – Kaibelsky, 13 – Bolshtigansky, 14 – Khryashhevsky, 15 – 'Zolotaya Niva', 16 – burial site at 116th kilometer, 17 – Nemchansky, 18 – Avtozavodskoy.
a – I phase sites, b – II phase sites

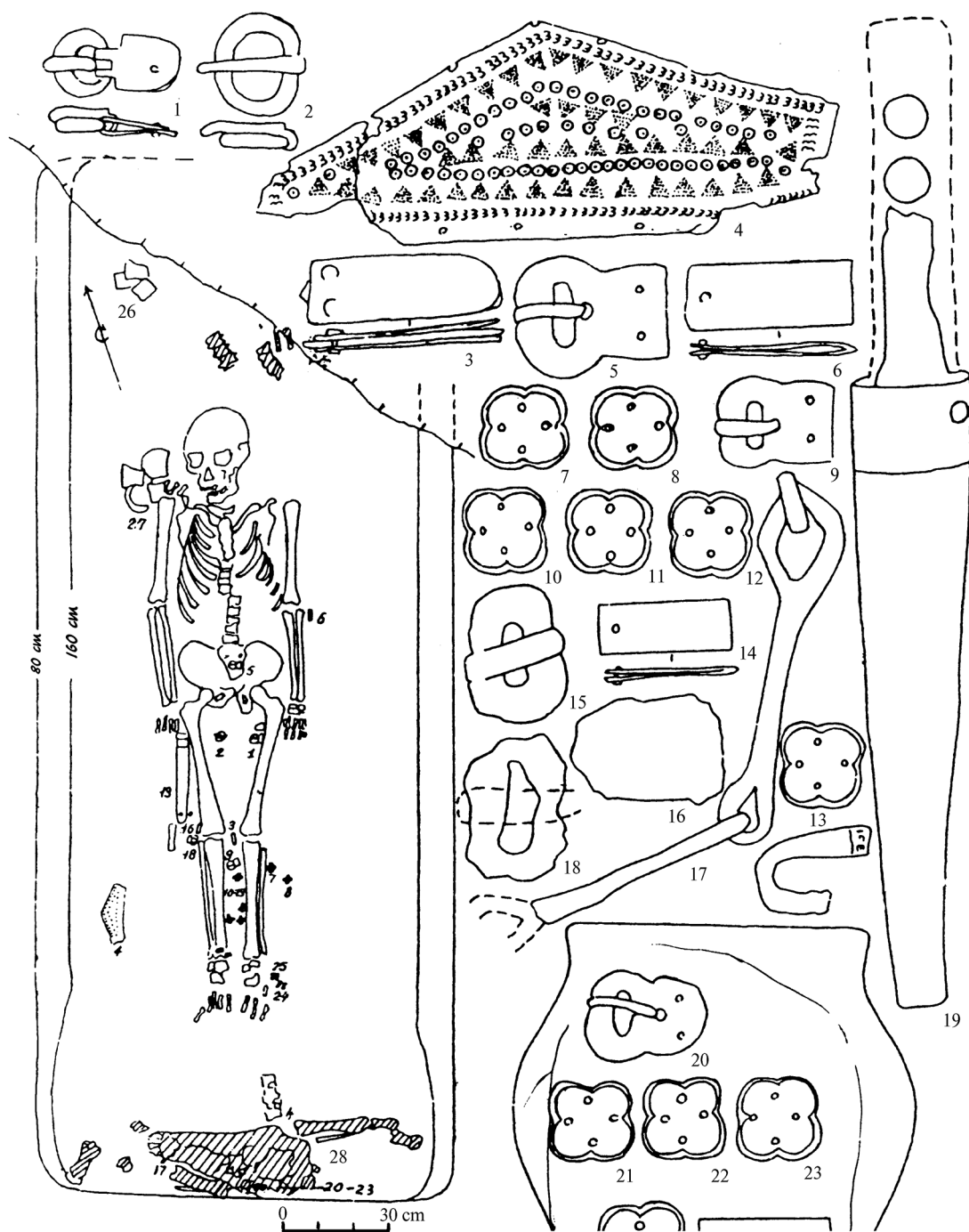


Fig. 2 Plan and item complex of a male grave of Kominternovskiy II burial site (Turbaslinninskaya culture).
 1, 5, 15, 18 – buckles, 3, 6, 14, 25 – belt tips, 7, 8, 10-13, 21-24 – scales of the belt set, 4 – facing of the saddle,
 17 – bit, 19 – dagger, 27 – vessels, 28 – detail of the saddle. 1, 2 – bronze, 3-14, 20-25 – silver, 17, 18, 28 – iron,
 16 – iron, bronze, 26-27 – ceramics

groups that had recently arrived in the Middle Volga region. Archaeological discoveries shed light on these processes.

In the 8th century, the Bulgarian Age began in the Middle Volga region and in the Ural region. The early period of this epoch is divided into stages that have unique chronologies, culture and levels of social-economic development of the population.

The earliest burial sites confirming the arrival of the Bulgarians to the Middle Volga region are Kaibelsky, Bolshetarkhansky, II Urensky and some other cemeteries located in the south-west part of the future Volga Bulgaria. Here are characteristic the modelled, flat-bottomed, pot-like nomadic Bulgarian ceramics of the South-Eastern European steppes, which were distinct from Imenkovo ceramics, and round Saltov-like dishes that the Bulgarians adopted from the Caucasian Alans. The dead were buried in a western orientation in simple graves accompanied by harness parts, sabers, quivers, arrows, steel objects, etc. typical of nomads. A simple set of jewelry was typical of children's and women's graves. It should be noted that 17 % of the burial objects from these graves are not typical of Bulgarian sites of the Saltov culture in South-Eastern Europe. Some graves are deep and narrow and have a complicated construction with linings and lugs. Burial skins of horses, from which only skulls and feet bones are left, are placed at the feet. Such features are typical of Turbaslinnsko-Imenkovskie graves of the latter half of the 6th – beginning of the 7th centuries. (Kushnarenkovo II Kominternovskiy burial site (fig.2)). Apparently, Bulgarian tribes that came to the North borrowed these elements in some region from the descendants of Imenkovskiy-Turbaslin population.

Most of the burial sites don't differ either in rite or inventory from the corresponding sites of Saltov culture in South-Eastern Europe. They differ considerably from the Novinkovsky burial sites that a number of researchers believe are Bulgarian. The relatively shallow Novinkovsky graves are made at sites with trenches that circle mounds with stone lining. The dead are oriented with their

heads directed east. Novinki monuments occupy a narrow local region at the Samara Bend and date back to the end of the 7th–first half of the 8th centuries. Naturally their items differ from Saltov and are not continued in the antiquity of Volga Bulgaria (in contrast to cultural traditions of Bulgaria proper, which continued till the mid 10th century).

It should be noted that the Bulgarian-Saltovsky population that came to the Volga area wasn't homogeneous either. They left sites of the Bolshetarkhanskaya subgroup on the right bank of the Volga River, (368 burial sites) where the dead were buried in ordinary dirt pits (fig. 3). The sites with burials around Kurgan (Kaibelsky, II Urensky and other burials) belong to the second Kaibelskaya subgroup (about 40 burial sites) in Ulyanovskiy Trans-Volga Region.

Researchers have dated the sites of both subgroups back to the latter half of the 8th–first half of the 9th centuries due to the 8th-century coins (750–752, 775–809) and clothing found. The sites have attracted attention due to the typical circular Saltov ceramics not seen before in this region. Historical tradition gives us good reason to associate them with the Bulgarians who emerged in South-Eastern Europe back in the time of the Huns, and who in the latter half of the 8th century resettled in the Volga region.

Thus even at the first stage of the early Bulgarian period, nomadic Bulgarians in this region are characterised by the Saltov culture, typical elements of which were preserved till the mid-10th century.

During the second phase, which can be limited to the latter half of the 9th – first quarter of the 10th centuries, the majority of bearers of the moulded round-bottom ceramics with specific ornamentation entered the Middle Volga region. These newcomers came originally from the Middle and South Ural regions, and neighbouring regions of the Upper Kama and the Cheptsa River watershed as well, where the *Nevolinsk Kushnarenskaya*, *Lomovatovo* and *Polomskaya* cultures were located (fig. 4). Functionally, the objects from the men's, children's and women's burial sites of emigrants hardly differed from

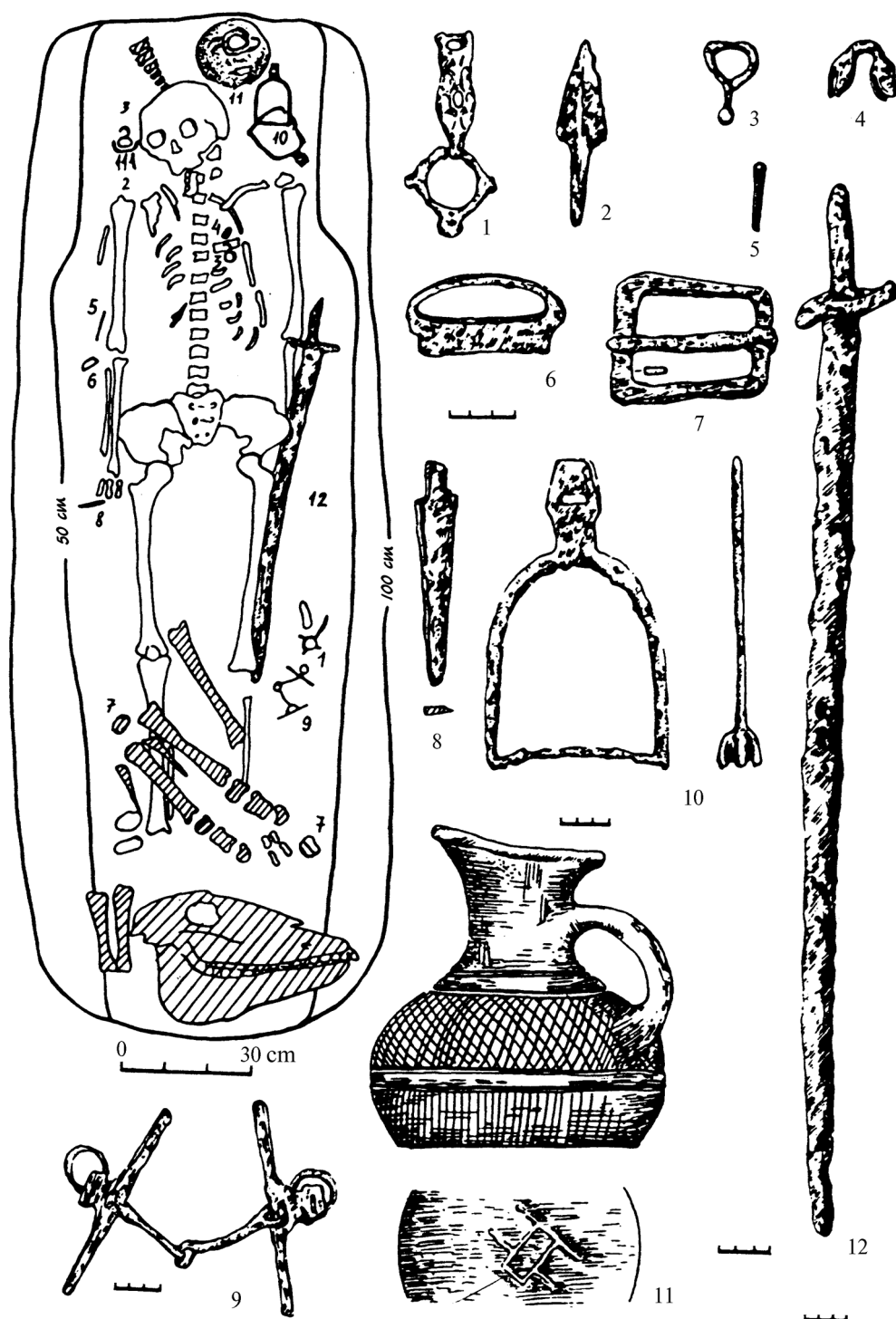


Fig. 3. Plan and item material of grave 143 of Bolshetarkhansky burial site I.

1-3-5 - bronze, 2, 6-10, 12 - iron, 11 - ceramics.

1 - belt hanging, 2 - arrow tips, 3, 4 - quiver details, 5 - needle, 6 - still, 7 - buckle of a saddle-girth, 8 - knife, 9 - bit, 10 - stirrup, 11 - jar, 12 - sabre

the Bulgar-Saltovskie, but they were more varied and had their own particular forms and materials. The newcomers left (mostly in the Western Trans-Kama region) sites that can also be divided into the Polomsko-Lomovotovo (with cord-comb ceramics) and Kushnarenkovo (with comb-carved utensils) subgroups.

The ethnic affiliation of the bearers of the moulded round-bottom ceramics with cord-comb ornamentation is debatable. A number of researchers (O. Bader, V. Oborin, R. Goldina, V. Gening) categorise them as Komi and Udmurts, and others, following F. Teploukhov, A. Teploukhov and A. Shmidt, tend to refer to them as Ugric peoples and even Turkic-Ugric peoples, considering the presence of clear signs of nomadism, as well as the remarkable connection of object material with the material from sites further to the south and south-east.

About 1300 burial sites from the latter half of the 9th – first half of the 10th centuries are currently being explored at the Tankeevsky, Tetyushsky and other burial sites. The fact that at the largest studied burial sites, judging by the burial ceremony (funeral rites with animal bones, burial masks etc.) and inventory (vessels of the Kama region, jangling hangings, ridge flints etc.), the Polomsko-Lomovotovsky component of the Kama-Priuralsky region was no less prevalent than the Bulgar-Saltovsky component and even exceeded it in some elements, testifies to the large number of people that appeared again in the Middle Volga region. Such sites were mostly in the north-east part of Volga Bulgaria bordered by the Volga, Kama and Sheshma rivers, however, they are also met in the regions of the Samara Bend (Khryashhevsky burial) and on the right bank of the Volga River (Tetyushsky burial site, later sites of Bolshie Takhany).

As noted, the Kushnarenkovo (Karayakupovo) sites, also earlier unknown in the region, are from the second phase: Bolshe-tigansky, Nemchansky, 12th Izmersky and other burial sites located in the eastern part of the future Volga Bulgaria. More than one hundred Kushnarenkovo burial sites with

typical (delicate comb and carved ornamentation) ceramics and a set of items typical of nomads—saddlery items, sabres, etc. (fig. 5)—have been studied. Researchers consider the Transural and Western Siberia regions to be the source of the Kushnarenkovsky ceramics because they appeared in the west only in the latter half of the 6th century. Researchers associate Kushnarenkovo sites with the Samoyedic, Ugric or Magyar proper groups (E. Khalikova, A. Khalikov).

This opinion does have a basis. According to the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenetos who wrote a historical survey in the 10th century, as well as according to other materials, the Magyars (Hungarians) originally lived east of the Volga River, apparently, in the Volga-Ural region. Later, under pressure from the Pechenegs, they were forced to settle in Levedia within Khazaria. Renewed attacks by their enemies the Pechenegs compelled the Magyars to retreat further west, to Atelkuzu on the right bank of the Dnieper River. The Pechenegs continued to brutally raid their camps, and so they left Atelkuzu and crossed the Carpathian Mountains at the end of the 10th century, settling in the present territory of Hungary. The fact that the Magyars lived for some time near the Volga Bulgarians gives an indication, as we shall see later, of many important features of the pagan culture of both peoples. The appearance of peoples from the Ural-Volga region around the Volga River may be connected with the above-mentioned confrontation of the Magyars with the Pechenegs. Archaeological evidence highlights many questions associated with these events. Primarily, the changes in the localisation of Ural-Kama cultures at this time are noticeable in connection with the military and political situation in Eastern Europe in the latter half of the 10th century. In the second third of the 10th century in the Khazar state, whose largely nominal influence extended to the Upper Kama region, there was a fierce struggle between adherents of Islam and Judaism. The Pechenegs, having defeated the Magyars, began to attack the Ugric tribes of the Ural-Kama region. At this time the Kushnarenkovo and Nevolinskaya cultures, the southern sites

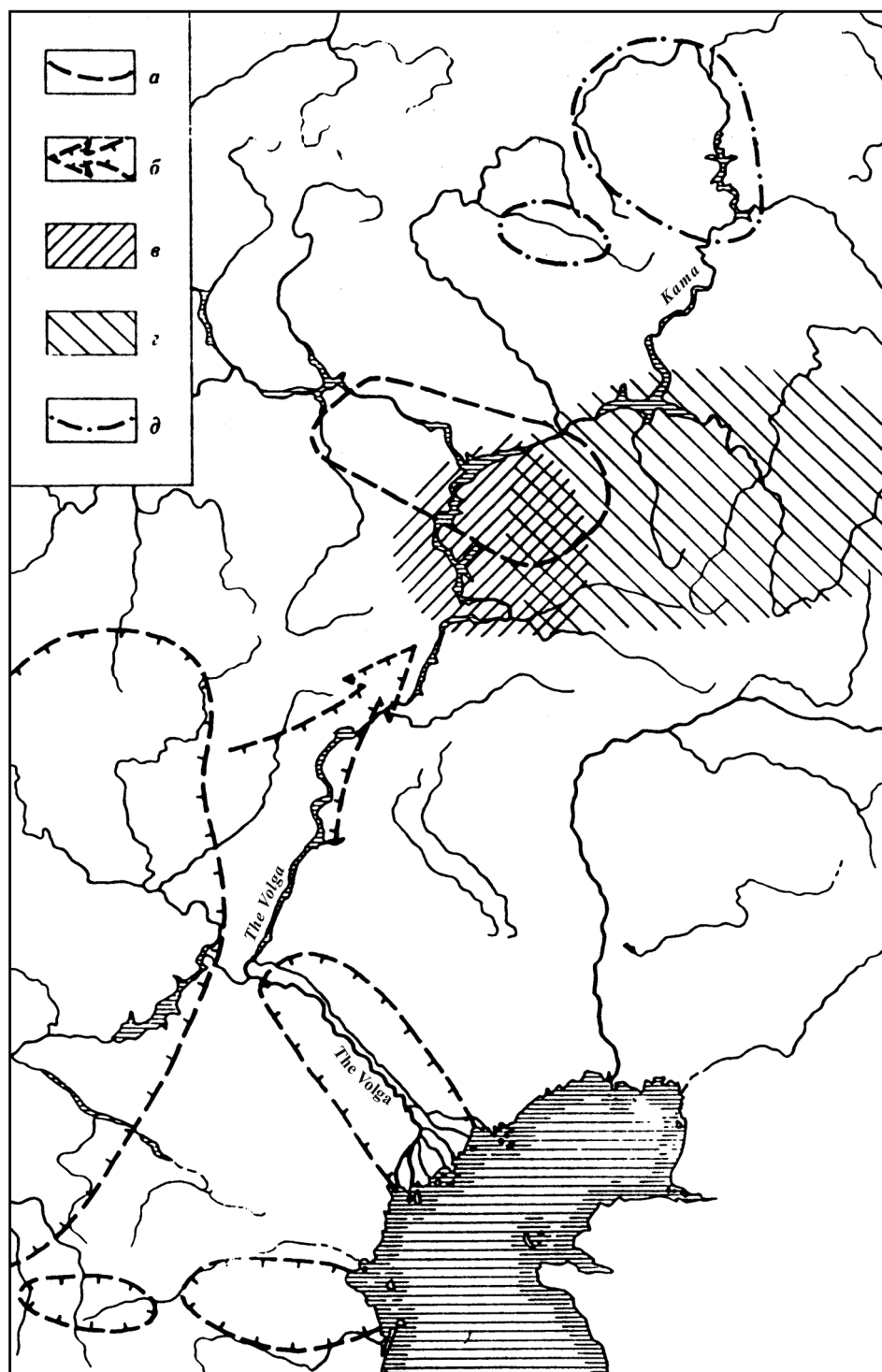


Fig. 4. Location of cultures of the Ural-Volga region in the 8–9th centuries.
 a – range of the Imenkovo culture (according to P. Starostin), b – resettlement of Bulgarian population, c – territory of early Volga Bulgaria, d – cultures with stamp-comb (Kushnarenkovo) ceramics, e – range of cultures with comb-corded (Lomovatovo, Polomskaya) dishware

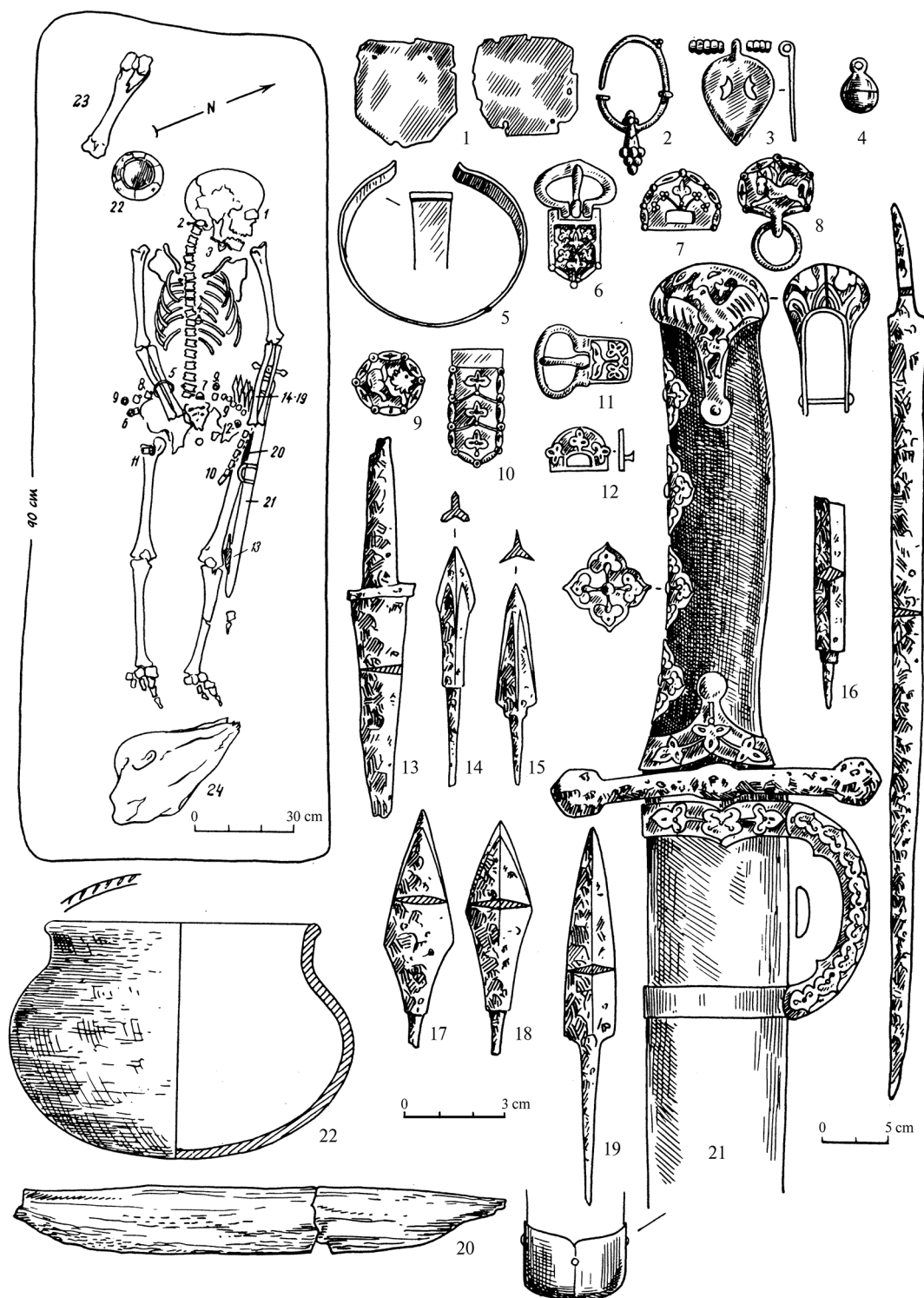


Fig. 5. A male grave 6 of the Bolshetigansky burial site. Plan and item material.
 1 – a strap of a burial-mask, 2 – an earring, 3 – a pendant and string of a necklace, 4 – a drop-shaped pendant, 5 – a bracelet, 6, 11 – buckles, 7–9, 12 – straps of a belt set, 10 – belt tips, 13–19 – arrow tips, 20 – bow strap, 21 – sabre, 22 – vessel. 1, 6–12 – silver, 2–5 – bronze, 13–19 – iron, 20 – bone, 21 – iron, silver, 22 – ceramics
 (according to E. Khalikova and A. Khalikov)

of Polomskaya and Lomatovskaya cultures, cease to exist. And at the same time in the future central part of the country of the Volga Bulgarians, where the cities of Bulgar, Suar, and Bilyar had appeared in the 10th century, the Bolshetigansky, Tankeevsky, 12th Izmersky and other burial sites appeared in the latter half of the 10th century. Obvious features can be seen in them of the material culture of the Ugric people, which had deep and complex ideological views. At the Tankeevsky burial site, for example, women's graves have contained plate-shaped jaw harps, which have been used by the Ural Ugric people from ancient times up to the present. The custom of placing horse hides at the feet of buried warriors who had ridden on horseback, which was adopted by the nomadic Ugric people from the Turbaslin population, was typical of the Magyars. Hundreds of such cases have been observed at pagan burial sites in Pannonia (Ch. Balint). The Tankeevsky burial site revealed 82 graves with such objects. All of them belonged to men that had been buried with a extensive set of weapons (swords, axes, spears, bows, arrows) and other objects. Burial masks are irrefutable proof that the Ural-Kama migrants were a Ugric people.

A variety of religious hand-made objects, amulets, women's jewelry and much more are also connected with the Ugric culture. They originated in the Ural region and later variations have been found even at late-Middle Age sites in the Transural region (Halas Pogor burial site and others).

All these material manifestations reflected the underlying spiritual conceptions of Siberian shamanism. They are akin, in many ways, to the ideology of the Bulgarians who came to Europe at an earlier time. Thus, the culture of Volga Bulgaria in this period predominantly penetrated deeply westward into the pagan culture of the peoples of the Cis Ural and Siberia.

How did the pagan culture of the early Bulgarians continue to transform? It can be traced, to some extent, by analyzing the extensive materials of the most widely explored Bolshetarkhansky (I stage) and Tankeevsky (II stage) burial sites. The Bolshetarkhansky

burial site contains 120 ceramic vessels, including 68 Saltov circular ones, 38 flat-bottomed, moulded Bulgarian proper nomadic pots, 12 round-bottomed pots of the Kama region and a moulded jug. In Tankeevka, of more than 600 vessels, a third are Saltov round ones, more than 50 are moulded, flat-bottomed nomadic vessels, more than 260 are round-bottomed vessels of the Kama region and over 60 are moulded jugs.

Thus, in Bolshie Tarkhany, 57 % of the ceramics are circular Saltov and in Tankeevka, 34.3 % are. Flat-bottomed Bulgarian nomadic pots make up 32 % and 9 %, respectively, and 45 % are Kama region dishes. These calculations not only show there was a new wave of people from the Upper Kama region in the second stage, but also are a sign that the newly-arrived ethnic groups interacted and interassimilated.

When the Polomsko-Lomovatovky and Kushnarenkovsky population joined the early Volga Bulgaria peoples, assimilation accelerated significantly. New ethnic groups came into close contact (in fact, they mixed) with the Bulgarian proper groups. Typical Saltov (circular vessels, earrings with mock beads, etc.) and typical Kama region (round-bottomed dishes, jangling hangings, masks etc.) objects (fig. 6) are found together in many graves. It was a period during which the Kama-Ural peoples (mostly of Siberian-Ural origins) strongly influenced the Bulgarians.

Gradually, however, Bulgarian influence began to dominate. A statistical analysis of all the graves at the Tankeevsky burial site with item complexes and located on the square in chronological zones, divided by half-century, gave the following picture. The circular Saltov vessels seldom occur in the early part of the necropolis, in the excavations of the turn of the 9–10th centuries they make up 40–50 %, and in the excavations of the first half of the 10th century they clearly dominated, reaching 70 %. Obviously, circular dishes lost their ethnic uniqueness at this time. They were used by all groups of the population and most often accompanied the richest adult burials. In poor (especially children's) burials, even in the first half of

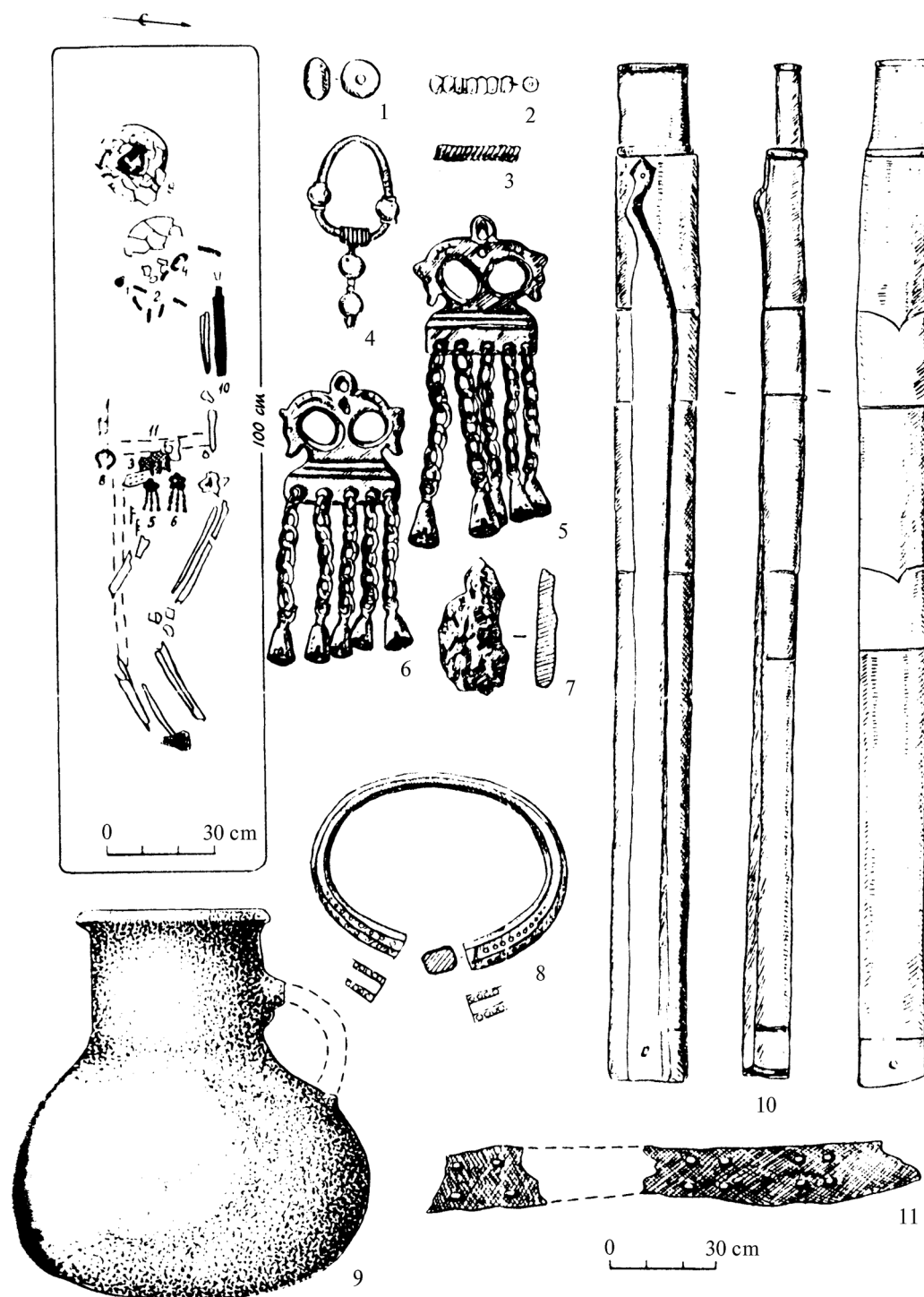


Fig. 6. Plan and item material of the burial 953 of the Tankeevsky burial site
 1-2 – necklace, 3 – a string of beads, 4 – an earring, 5, 6 – chest pendants, 7 – an iron shatter,
 8 – a bracelet, 9 – a moulded jug, 10 – a sword, 11 – a leather belt. 1, 3-6, 10 – bronze, 2 – glass,
 7 – iron, 9 – ceramics, 11 – flint

the 10th century, the population, depending on ethnicity, continued to put the traditional moulded vessels—nomadic Bulgarian, Polonsko-Lomovatovskie of Kama region or Kushnarenkovo vessels.

It is interesting that the Tankeevsky population of the Kama region at the turn of the 9–10th centuries began to produce moulded single-handled jugs *en masse*, imitating Saltov rounded dishware. Such vessels, obviously imitating the Saltov forms but with in many cases rounded bottoms, an admixture of shell and a cord ornament, were found in 60 burials, mostly of horsemen warriors of

that time. These were the richest burials of the horsemen warriors. They made up only about 7.5 % of the whole Tankeevskoe population. Evidently, this economically prominent category of people, in anticipation of the formation of a state, were the most open to innovations brought in by the Bulgarians. This was social and military support of the ruling class of the nascent feudal state.

In this way, as a result of the far-reaching interactions between different ethno-cultural components, a distinctive Volga Bulgarian culture was formed, which had many common features in all its aspects.

CHAPTER 3

Ugro-Finns Peoples of the Cis Ural-Volga Region

Vladimir Napolskikh

Prehistory of Peoples of the Uralic Language Family

Since ancient times the forest area, forest tundra and the tundra to the west of Scandinavia reaching to the Taymyr peninsula in the east and lying to the north of the steppe and forest-steppe zone of Eurasia, have been inhabited by peoples, speaking the languages of the Uralic (Ugro-Finns and Samoyed) language family. In the Volga-Ural region, this group is represented by Udmurts, Mari and Mordvins. The language(s) of the Yukagirs—a small-numbered people, living in the north of Eastern Siberia today, in the basin of the Kolyma River—is more distantly related to the Uralic languages.

The scheme of a 'family tree' for the Uralic languages in Figure 1 is the most clear and convenient way to illustrate how related languages are connected with each other and show the degree of their proximity.

It is believed that the genetic relationship of these languages is due to the onetime existence of a proto-language, the development and decay of which, through several stages of intermediate proto-languages, has eventually resulted in the appearance of the related languages of this family or group. Regarding the Uralic languages, one should assume the former existence of the Uralic proto-language, which gave rise to the Ugro-Finns and Samoyed proto-languages, as a result of the decay of the Ugro-Finns proto-language, the Ugric, Perm, Proto-Mari, Proto-Mordovian and Baltic-Finnish-Sami proto-languages developed. The Finno-Perm, Finno-Volga, Ob-Ugric language communities probably owe their existence to the bygone, relatively different,

common proto-languages, as well as the quite intensive contacts between closely related languages. Linguistic cognation is almost the only thing that unites the Uralic peoples with each other and sets them apart from all others: it is impossible to identify features of the material and spiritual culture, and anthropological type that are characteristic for the Uralic peoples only or common to all members of this community. Therefore, the study of Uralic pre-history must first answer the question about their *urheimat* (hypothesised *homeland*)—the temporal and spatial localisation of the Uralic, Ugro-Finns and Samoyed proto-languages.

The timing of the decay of the Uralic and the Ugro-Finns proto-languages is primarily determined through borrowings from the Indo-Iranian (Arian) languages in the Uralic ones, which are distributed as follows: the Uralic proto-language had no Indo-Iranian (Indo-European in general) borrowings, the Samoyed proto-language had only very few borrowings from a language of the mid—Iranian type, that indicates very late (almost before the end of the 1st millennium BCE) contacts between the proto-Samoyed people and the population of the Eurasian steppes. The Ugro-Finns languages have words, dating back to the proto-language (that is, common in all or almost all of the Ugro-Finns languages), borrowed from the Indo-Iranian languages after their release from the Indo-European community, but still reflecting the very early stage of development of the sound system of these languages. More recent Arian (or rather

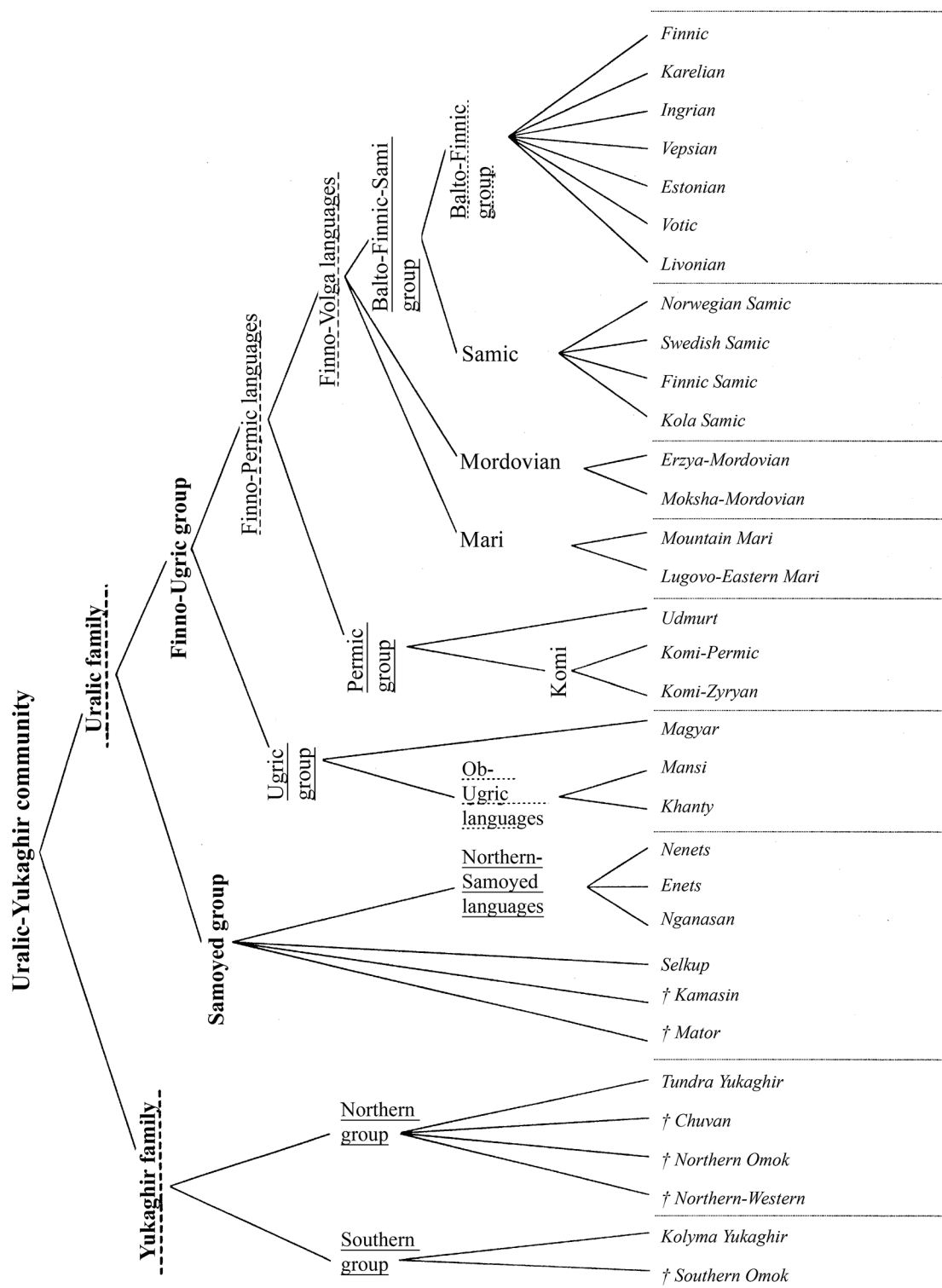


Fig. 1. Family tree of the Uralic languages The top line includes modern and historically recorded languages (including literary languages, if there are separate rules).

Extinct languages are marked with †

Iranian) borrowings in certain groups of the Ugro-Finns languages (especially—in Hungarian, Permic and Mari) show that, firstly, the contacts of the Ugro-Finns population of the forest zone of Eurasia with the forest and steppe population, speaking the Arian (Iranian) languages, were probably continuous from the proto-Ugro-Finns times until the replacement of the population in those steppes with the Turkic people, and, secondly, that the decay of the Ugro-Finns proto-language occurred after the decay of the Proto-Indo-European language, during independent development of languages within an Indo-Iranian (Arian) branch, but before the appearance of actual Iranian linguistic forms, recorded in the Old Persia and Avestan monuments in the 1st–2nd to the mid–1st millennium BCE. In absolute dates, the decay of the Ugro-Finns proto-language should be dated between the end of the 4th and the second half of the 2nd millennium BCE. Purely evaluative criteria allow us to assume that the decay of the Proto-Uralic language took place at least a thousand years earlier.

An analysis of the reconstructed Proto-Ugro-Finns language shows with a high degree of certainty that speakers of the Ugro-Finns proto-language were not familiar with the productive economy, as well as not being at all advanced in metalworking. It eliminates the 2nd millennium BC, when these innovations were gradually spreading in the forest zone of Eastern Europe and Western Siberia, from the interim period, to which the later stage of the existence of the Proto-Ugro-Finns community may be referred. As for the Proto-Uralic language, it is not certain that the language speakers of that time were familiar with ceramics, as researchers of the early and mid–20th century assumed: a Proto-Uralic word, traditionally interpreted as an earthen vessel, did not necessarily mean a ceramic vessel of the Proto-Uralic era, in addition, it has interesting parallels in the Dravidian and Indo-European languages and can thus be a migratory cultural term, integrated in various Uralic languages already after the decay of the common Proto-Uralic one. Therefore, basically nothing prevents attributing the decay of

the Uralic proto-language back to the times of the Mesolithic period.

The decay of the Samoyed proto-language, based on considerable proximity of the Samoyed languages in general, availability of the 'Bolgarian type' (R-Turkic) borrowings from the Turkic language, including the words for 'horse', as well as words, proving that the Samoyed proto-language speakers were familiar with iron, cattle and so on, is usually referred to the turn of the eras or to the first centuries CE.

In order to date decays of proto-languages, some linguists apply the glottochronology method, consisting in the calculation of a share of etymological matches between different languages in a specially compiled list of words. There are reasonable doubts about the reliability of this method, therefore such results cannot be viewed as absolute. However, there is no doubt that it allows a degree of divergence to be demonstrated mathematically between related languages that, to some extent, depends on the time elapsed since the decay of the proto-language. The proportion of matches in the Swadesh list of 100 words between the Permic and Ugro-Finns languages is in the range of 20–28 %, between the Ugro-Finns and Samoyed languages—11–19 %, which corresponds to the latter half of the 6th–mid-4th century BCE for the decay of the Proto-Uralic language and the latter half of the 4th–the latter half of the 3rd millennium BCE for the Proto-Ugro-Finns language. The percentage of matches between the Hungarian and the Ob-Ugric languages (27–34 %) allows us to date the decay of the Proto-Ugric language within the latter half of the 3rd–middle of the 2nd millennium BCE, the percentage of matches between the Northern Samoyed and other Samoyed languages (51–60 %) makes it possible to date the decay of the Proto-Samoyed language within the period of the 2nd century BCE until the 3rd century CE.

Based on the above considerations and taking into account a tradition, existing in the Uralic studies, the following dates of the proto-language decays may be accepted as true: Uralic proto-language decayed in the 6th–late 5th millennium BCE, Ugro-Finns–

in the middle of the 3rd–by the turn of the 3rd–2nd millennium BCE, Ugric—at the end of the 2nd–latter half of the 1st millennium BCE, Samoyed—around the turn of the eras, Baltic-Finnish—in the first centuries CE, Permic—in the late 1st–early 2nd millennium CE. The Finno-Permic and Finno-Volga proto-language community existed, therefore, from the turn of the 3rd–2nd millennium BCE until the first half of the 1st millennium BCE.

When determining the Uralic (Ugro-Finns, etc.) urheimat, one should begin with the fact that the final stage of the existence of a proto-language, immediately preceding its decay, is the one that is reconstructed via comparative linguistics. Therefore, geographic localisation of the urheimat of the Uralic (Ugro-Finns peoples, etc.) community should be timed to coincide with the above-mentioned dates of the decays of respective proto-languages, by a palaeoclimatic scale—to the Atlanticum (the 6–4th millennium BCE) and to an early stage of the Subboreal (3rd–last centuries of the 1st millennium BCE).

Already in the 19th century, researchers used the method of linguistic palaeontology to determine the urheimat of the Ugro-Finns peoples. The method reviews a proportion of certain notions in the reconstructed proto-language vocabulary, which allows the imagination of an environment, where the proto-community dwelt, and matches this proportion with the existing conclusions of palaeobiogeography in respect to an age, to which the lifetime of the proto-language refers. It allows the definition of an area, in which those complex notions could be formed, in that era. It is suggested that this area should be called a proto-language environmental habitat, which somehow must correlate with an area of the former settlement of proto-language speakers before the decay of that language,—that is, with their urheimat.

That linguistic reconstruction suggests that speakers of the Uralic proto-language knew, among other things, the following trees:

– *fir*. A typical tree in taiga forests, favouring countries with wet and cold climates. The area, occupied by firs, was cut down in the Eastern Baltics and in the centre of European

Russia, in the early Atlantic, it started to play a prominent role in these areas in the second half of the Atlantic—that is, at a time when the Uralic proto-language community had probably already decayed, while the traces of fir pollen were widely spread in the Cis Ural and Western Siberia throughout the Atlantic,

– *silver fir*. Until the beginning of the 6th century BCE, the Siberian silver fir was found nowhere to the west of the Cis Ural. It gradually advanced in Europe only in the 6th century BCE, we can hardly mention the silver fir growing to the west of the Upper Kama and Pechora Rivers, when it comes to the era of the Uralic and Ugro-Finns urheimat.

– *nut pine* (or rather—Siberian nut pine). During the Atlantic, there was virtually no nut pine in Eastern Europe (with the exception of slight traces of pollen in the upper reaches of the Pechora River) and in the Cis Ural, the main area, where it grew, was Western Siberia (including the basin of the Yenisei River and the Altai Mountains). The actual time, when it spread into the Cis Ural and adjacent areas, took place no earlier than the mid Sub-Boreal phase, however, nut pine had never grown to the west and to the south of the Central Kama River and the Upper Vychegda River.

This complex covers the following Proto-Ugro-Finns reconstructions (without parallels in the Samoyed languages):

– *pine nuts* or *cone*, therefore, the proto-language speakers were familiar with the living tree, not with pine wood products, as suggested by some researchers,

– *larch tree*, today it is not widespread in Eastern Europe, and in the Atlanticum and Subboreal there were almost no larch trees to the west of the Cis Ural, while the Cis Ural and Trans-Cis Ural were the main area where those trees grew in the 9–7th millennium BCE, with even greater numbers in the north and east of Western Siberia, as well as in Eastern Siberia.

These names prove that the Proto-Uralic and Proto-Ugro-Finns environmental areas at the end of the Atlantic period to the first third of the Subboreal were located in the dark coniferous taiga forests of the West Siberian type, from the Cis Ural in the west to the ba-

sin of the Yenisei River and the Altai-Sayan Mountains in the east. This conclusion is consistent with the Proto-Uralic reconstructions of names for other boreal and northern animals and plants: *sable* (with a good Yukagir parallel), *hazel grouse*, *cloudberry*, *reindeer* and others.

At the same time, the Proto-Uralic and especially Proto-Ugro-Finns environmental areas cannot be placed in the northern taiga zone, as indicated by the reconstructions of names for the following animals: (Proto-Uralic) *snake*, (Proto-Ugro-Finns) *beaver*, *hedgehog*. The Proto-Ugro-Finns reconstructions of the names for elm and linden (or rather—the reconstructed Finno-Permic word for bark) are traditionally viewed as an indication of a shift of the Proto-Ugro-Finns environmental area to the south and possibly to the west, compared to the Proto-Uralic names of animals above. During the Atlantikum, elm and linden were fairly widespread in Western Siberia and in the Cis Ural, forming the West Siberian periphery of European deciduous forests, linden grows in the southern reaches of the Irtysh River to this day. In addition, it is important to mention the Ugro-Finns names for the bee and honey, borrowed from the Arian languages: the natural area of honey bees is associated with the distribution area of such a honey plant such as linden, the borrowing of the word indicates: firstly, that it took place during or after the decay of the Uralic proto-language community, and secondly, it is likely to indicate a shift of the settlement area of Proto-Ugro-Finns language speakers to the south and / or west.

The names of the following fish are reconstructed for the Uralic and Ugro-Finns proto-languages:

- *nelma* (*white salmon*), it lives in the basins of rivers, flowing to the Arctic Ocean, from the Kola Peninsula to Eastern Siberia, inclusive, and in the basins of the Volga River and other rivers in the Cis Ural,

- *tench*, almost universally known in Europe and Siberia—in the Ob-Irtysh basin and in the upper reaches of the Yenisei River. This thermophilic fish is rarely encountered in the north,

- *acipenser*, it dwells in all Siberian rivers, in the basin of the Volga River, and in the rivers of Central and Western Europe, flowing to the Atlantic Ocean and, in particular, the Baltic Sea. Apparently, it had never lived in Eastern European rivers of the basin of the Arctic Ocean,

- *sterlet*, in ancient times, it did not live in the basins of rivers of the Baltic Sea, the Pechora, the Mezen and Siberian rivers to the east of the Yenisei River,

- some kind of whitefish, there was no whitefish in the Volga River basin in ancient times,

- *syrok* (*peled*), *syrok*, as well as other whitefish, was completely absent in the Volga River basin until it was artificially acclimatised in the 20th century, however, it has been the most common fish in the Ob River basin since ancient times.

Such a set of fish names could be formed only among the population of the Ob-Irtysh basin, most likely in the southern part of it. All other ichthyonyms, reconstructed for the Uralic and Ugro-Finns proto-languages, do not contradict this conclusion, while the borrowed origin (from the Baltic languages) of the names for main fish species of the Baltic basin (*salmon*, *eel*, etc.) in the Baltic-Finnish-Saami languages clearly points to the later penetration of Ugro-Finns language speakers to the banks of rivers, flowing into the Baltic Sea.

Thus, the Proto-Uralic environmental area in the 5th–early 4th millennium BCE was bounded by the Ural Mountains in the west, by the Polar Circle (relatively) in the north, the area of the middle and upper reaches of the Yenisei River in the east, and in the south (approximately) by the modern southern boundary of the Western Siberian taiga from the northern foothills of the Altai-Sayan Mountains to the Lower reaches of the Tobol River and the Middle Cis Ural, inclusive. The Proto-Ugro-Finns environmental area in the 3rd millennium BCE largely coincided with the south-western part of the Proto-Uralic environmental area (Middle Cis Ural, Middle and Southern Trans-Cis Ural, south-western sector of Western Siberia), and apparently included the areas west of the Ural Mountains–basins

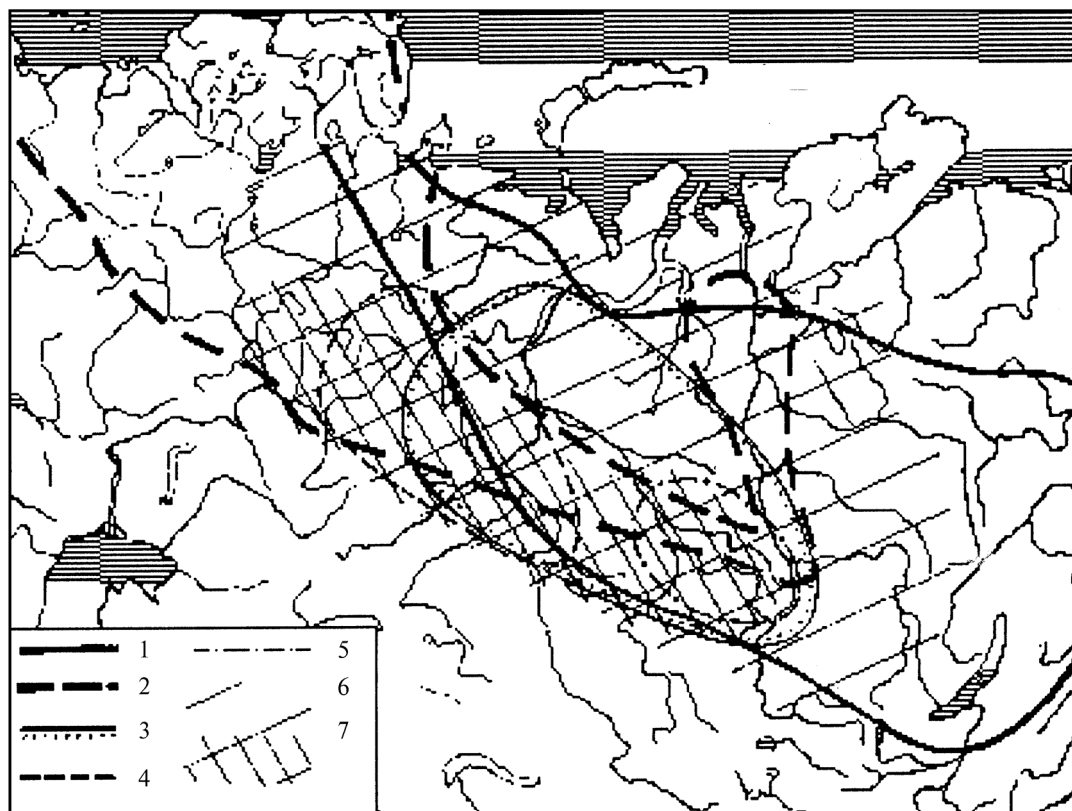


Fig. 2 Proto-language environmental area and urheimat of the Uralic peoples. 1 – dark coniferous taiga area in the Subboreal (the 7th millennium BCE), 2 – dark coniferous taiga area in the late Subboreal (second half of the 2nd millennium BCE), 3 – proto-Uralic environmental area, 4 – proto-Ugro-Finns environmental area, 5 – proto-Samoyed environmental area, 6 – hypothetical maximum distribution area of the proto-Uralic groups, 7 – the most probable distribution area of the proto-Uralic population

of the Kama Rivers, Upper Vychegda and Upper Pechora (Figure 2).

After the decay of the Uralic proto-language community, speakers of the *Samoyed* proto-language probably did not leave the zone of the Western Siberian taiga, as evidenced by the good preservation, reflecting the corresponding nature realities in the Proto-Uralic vocabulary in the Samoyed languages, as well as a number of other Samoyed etymologies with corresponding values (names for *larch*, *sable*, *wood grouse*, *wolverines*, *nutcrackers*, etc.). Several etymologies indicate the presence of domestic reindeer breeding in the culture of the Samoyed proto-people (names for domestic *reindeer*, *sleds*, *castrated deer*). It also proves the localisation of the proto-people in the region of ancient reindeer breeding (in the broadest sense—

the taiga and mountain taiga zones of Western and Middle Siberia)). In general, the analysis of the Proto-Samoyed lexicon allows us to localise the Proto-Samoyed environmental area of the times, when the community collapsed (turn of the eras) in the southern taiga zone of Western Siberia, between the Middle Ob and Yenisei Rivers (see Figure 2).

To address the issue of the relationship between the proto-language environmental area and urheimat, it is necessary to correlate the above conclusions with data on external relations (contact and genetic) of the Uralic, Ugro-Finns and Samoyed proto-languages, the origin of the physical types, characteristic of the contemporary Uralic peoples, and combine these data with the map of archaeological cultural traditions of the era.

As mentioned above, the Uralic proto-language had no direct contacts with the Proto-Indo-European language. Two hypotheses of the Indo-European urheimat meet the linguistic and historical facts best: Central European (area to the north of Balkan agricultural crops, such as Vinca-Starcevo, from Southern Germany to Western Ukraine) and steppe (zone of the Eurasian steppe and forest steppe from the Danube River to the Cis Ural). Localisation of the Uralic urheimat in the southern taiga zone of Western Siberia allows the absence of traces of the Proto-Uralic and Proto-Indo-European contacts to be explained in both cases. Subsequent expansion of the area of the Proto-Ugro-Finns settlement to the west of the Cis Ural in the forest zone and the area of early Indo-Iranian tribes to the east—in the steppe would lead to contacts between the Proto-Ugro-Finns peoples with native early Arian dialects in the forest-steppe zone of the Volga Region and the Cis Ural, which is reflected in Arian loanwords in the Ugro-Finns proto-language. At the same time, ancestors of the Samoyed people remained in the Western Siberian taiga, their contacts with the Aryans took place no earlier than the 1st millennium BCE, when the area of their settlement was, apparently, expanded to the south.

On the other hand, obviously the Proto-Uralic, Proto-Samoyed and then some Samoyed languages in the east were in continuous contact with native speakers of the *Tungus-Manchu*, Common Tungus and Evenki languages. Moreover, a number of parallels date back to such ancient proto-language times that it is not possible to determine whether a particular word was borrowed from the Proto-Tungus-Manchu language into the Proto-Uralic one or vice versa, or whether it should be referred to a common proto-language. It is possible that these contacts involved not only the Proto-Samoyed language but the Proto-Ugric as well, already after the collapse of the Uralic unity. The issue of the Tungus-Manchu urheimat is far from being solved but in any case it is impossible to localise Proto-Tungus and Proto-Uralic contacts to the west of the Yenisei River. Consequently, the eastern flank of the Uralic and later Sam-

oyed urheimat was supposed to reach at least the basin of the Yenisei River.

Borrowings of the words meaning taiga realities (*spruce, cedar, larch, sable*), from the early Proto-Samoyed (or Proto-Ugric) source, prove the fact that ancient contacts between the Uralic peoples—residents of the Western Siberian taiga—and speakers of the Tungus-Manchu and Turkic languages, spread over that zone from the south and the east. On the other hand, the Proto-Samoyed language has cultural terms that are old borrowings from a Turkic language of the 'Bulgar type'.

Finally, external genetic links of the Uralic proto-language also 'pull' it far to the east: first of all, the fact of the Uralic-Yukagirs linguistic affinity (see above), as well as numerous typological, lexical, syntactic parallels between the Uralic and the so-called 'Altai' (Turkic, Mongolian, Tungus-Manchu, Korean and Japanese) languages cannot be ignored, regardless of a solution to the Altai relationship problem, and prove at least ancient area (not genetic) connections between the Proto-Uralic (Proto-Yukagirs-Uralic) with the languages of Central and Eastern Asia.

This picture contrasts sharply with traces of contacts between the Uralic languages and the historically known languages in Europe: there are no borrowings from the Baltic languages in the Ugric and Samoyed languages, the earliest contacts between the Uralic peoples (or, more precisely, the western group of the Ugro-Finns peoples after the decay of the Ugro-Finns proto-language) cannot be dated in such a way earlier than the end of the 3rd millennium BCE. Contacts with the German languages took place in an even later period, and they only included the ancestors of the Baltic Finns and Sami. The probability of ancient contacts between the Uralic peoples and speakers of the Palaeo-European languages, spoken in Eastern and Northern Europe before the Indo-European and Uralic ones, is very high: in particular, it is evident that the Sami language contains a strong Palaeo-European substrate, creators of a combination of Neolithic cultures with pit-comb ceramic ware (Lyaloovo in Central Russia) and typical com-blike ceramics of the Eastern Baltic States and Fennoscandia can be

viewed as speakers of the palaeo-European languages with a high degree of probability. However, the issue of the nature, time and location of these contacts is generally open.

In the anthropological (racial) sense, the Uralic peoples belong to the most diverse types: from classic Caucasoid to classic and even archaic Mongoloid. Anthropological types of the majority of the Uralic peoples combine features of both Eastern and Western racial trunks. The viewpoint that these forms resulted from the blending of Caucasoid and Mongoloid populations cannot explain the fact that they not only have a paradoxical combination of features of the Mongoloid and Caucasoid races but that these features are directly related. This indicates that the majority of the Ugro-Finns peoples had a common anthropological component of a non-Caucasoid / non-Mongoloid origin—the ancient Uralic race that had been subjected to intensive mixing with the Mongoloids in the east and the Caucasoids in the west, it is preserved at its best in the anthropological type of the Mansi.

The localisation of the ancient Uralic race, as well as the problem of correlating this anthropological type with speakers of the Uralic proto-language, are unresolved issues and have not even been set properly yet. In any case, it should be assumed that, firstly, speakers of the ancient Uralic type had played a significant role in the ethnic history of the Cis Ural already at its earliest stages, and secondly—that the area of distribution of this type should have been located between the eastern and western centres of the race formation, the assumption of a pre-glacial zone as the most likely area, where a similar set of features could have emerged and persisted, has a particular significance. All these findings are in excellent agreement with the hypothesis about the Western Siberian origins of the Uralic community.

Features of this ethno-linguistic binding of archaeological cultures are very limited in general and are even more so in respect of cultures of the Mesolithic and early Neolithic times (the collapse of the Uralic and the Ugro-Finns communities). However, archaeological materials allow boundaries to

be set between cultural traditions that existed in Northern Eurasia during these periods. In the most general terms, the area that we are interested in included at least three clearly distinctive early Neolithic traditions with the Mesolithic and even Upper Palaeolithic origins: Eastern European (post-Ahrensburg and post-Swiderian traditions, originating from the Palaeolithic in Central Europe, giving birth to Neolithic cultures with comb-type ceramics of Lyalovo in Central Russia and typical comb-type ceramics in the Baltic States), Ural-Western Siberian with local Mesolithic cultures—comb-type ceramics in the Trans-Kama region and Western Siberia, Eastern Siberian—succession of Yakutia's cultures from the Sumnagin Mesolithic one to Ymiyakhtakh. Given the obvious differences and various cultural origins of these regions, we can associate the genesis of the Uralic peoples with only one of them. When the question is put this way—the only possible way—it is obvious that only the Ural-Western Siberian tradition can act as an archaeological analogue to the proto-Uralic community, since only the territory of its distribution correlated with the proto-Uralic and Proto-Ugro-Finns environmental area, as specified above. This conclusion does not mean that all natives of the Ural-Western Siberian cultural traditions spoke Uralic languages, but with a high degree of probability we can say that the Uralic and the Ugro-Finns *urheimat* was located within the area of distribution of this tradition, that is, the forest zone of the mouth of the Kama River in the west to the Yenisei River in the east, most likely in the southern and western parts of it (see Figure 2).

Thus, most likely, the Kama region was part of the distribution zone of Uralic languages as early as the beginning of the Neolithic period. The decay of the Uralic and Ugro-Finns community and expansion of the Uralic (Ugro-Finns) speech in the west to Scandinavia and the Baltic states were related to global environmental changes at the end of the Atlanticum—the Subboreal (6th—until the end of the 2nd millennium BCE) and a socio-economic revolution in the lifestyle of the population of Eurasia's forest zone during the

Bronze and early Iron Ages (2nd–1st millennium BCE). In this era, there was a shift in the 'native' ecological niche of the Uralic population—the dark coniferous taiga forests: their suppression in Western Siberia and spread in Eastern Europe, west and south, due to climate cooling and humidification (see Fig. 2). At the same time, marshes were being intensively formed in Western Siberia, which led to a catastrophic reduction in the productivity of those areas and forced people to look for new lands. Expansion of the dark coniferous forest defined the overall direction of these searches.

On the other hand, starting from the early Bronze Age, the Uralic-speaking population of the southern and western-southern 'outskirts' of the Uralic urheimat (first of all, some of natives of the Garino-Volosovo circle in Eastern Europe and creators of monuments of the Lipchin and Ayat stages of the Trans-Uralian culture with comb-type ceramics, Yekaterininsky and Barabinsky versions of the culture with pit and comb ceramics of the Irtysh region in Western Siberia, etc.) became acquainted with metals and productive economy in the course of intensive contacts with the predominantly Indo-European population of the Eurasian steppe zone and mixed forests of Central Europe, who penetrated far enough to the north and east (*Fatyanovo*, *Balanovo*, *Abashevo*, *Pozdnyakovo archaeological cultures*, etc.) from time to time during relatively favourable climate periods. In the era of the late Bronze Age, in the latter half of the 2nd–early 1st millennium BCE, the population of the southern taiga and forest-steppe zone of the Upper Ob River in the east to the Kazan Volga region in the west began to play a dominant role in the forest zone through mastering metallurgy (Uralic metal processing centre) and developing a complex hunting, fishing and cattle-raising economy, gradually (apparently, moving

to boreal forests at the same time) extending its influence to the Baltic and Scandinavian countries in the west. This influence reached its peak in the early Iron Age (in the first half—the middle of the 1st millennium BCE), when two large cultural areas formed in Eastern Europe—Ananjino, from the Kama region and the Cisural region through the north of European Russia to Karelia, judging by very clear reminiscences, and cultures with *textile* (*false textile*, *mesh*) ceramics, the effects of which can also be traced from the Middle Volga to Sweden. Similarly, androic cultures in the southern taiga and forest-steppe zone of the Cis Ural to the Upper Ob were developing in the Bronze Age, the creators of which were probably descendants of the Neolithic forest population of the region. By the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE, they got far ahead of related language families from more northern areas in socio-economic terms.

By the middle—the second half of the 1st millennium BCE, these tumultuous historical processes eventually led to the formation of archaeological communities, the creators of which can be viewed, with some extent of probability, as the population, speaking proto-languages of certain Uralic groups: cultures with false textile ceramics in Karelia and Finland like Sarsa-Tomica (proto-Sami), cultures of stone tombs with fences in Estonia and in the neighbouring areas (proto-Baltic Finns), the *Dyakovo* and *Gorodets* cultures in the Upper and Middle Volga region and in the basin of the Oka River (proto-Mordovians and proto-Mari), the Pyany Bor and *Glyadenovo* cultures in the Kama region (Proto-Permic), the Itkul culture in the Cis Ural (ancestors of the Ob-Ugric peoples), the *Sargatsk* and *Gorokhov* community in the south-west of Western Siberia (proto-Mag-yars), the *Kulay* culture in the Middle Ob region (proto-Samoyed people).

Vladimir Ivanov

The Ugro-Finns peoples in the Southern Cis Ural and the Cis-Ural region

Years of researching the written monuments of the Neolithic era in the Volga-Ural region show that, on the one hand, they seem to continue inextricably the economic and cultural traditions of the preceding (Mesolithic) era. Most Neolithic settlements were located on main sites of the Mesolithic era, the life-style and economy types remained the same as well—hunting, fishing, and gathering. At the same time, discoveries of pottery in those settlements show that significant changes occurred in the history of the ancient proto-Uralic peoples: two major ethno-cultural communities were formed in the region, they were located at the opposite sides of the Ural Mountains and differed from each other primarily by the nature of ornaments on their ceramics. To the west of the Cis Ural, in the basin of the Kama, Vyatka and Middle Volga, there were settlements with the so-called comb-type ceramics (before firing the surface of pottery was covered with prints of gear stamps (combs)), whereas settlements in the Trans-Cis Ural had more pottery with comb-incised ornament (prints of gear stamps, combined with patterns, incised on damp clay with sharpened ends of sticks). There were differences in the techniques, used to make and process stone tools: in the Trans-Cis Ural, most of the tools were made from different varieties of the Ural jasper and in the Cis-Cis Ural region from grey flint.

Such differences are basically consistent with the historical and linguistic concept of the collapse of the proto-Uralic community into two groups in the Neolithic period. There is a view that dates back to works of O. Bader and V. Chernetsov, according to which Neolithic monuments in the Cis-Ural region were left by the ancient Ugro-Finns people, while the ones in the Trans-Ural region (following the logic of the concept)—by the ancient Samoyed people. In addition, Neolithic monuments in the Cis-Ural region included another group of

ceramics—jars, decorated with comb-like belt patterns, separated by horizontal rows of rare round holes (the so-called pit-comb ceramics of the Lyalovo type), which had been brought here from the regions of the Middle Volga and between the Volga and Oka Rivers.

The collapse of the Finno-Permic community, according to historical and linguistic data, was completed by the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE. In terms of archaeological manifestations, this was the time of a powerful cultural momentum for the ethno-cultural environment of the Kama and Cis-Ural regions, linguistically—probably Ugro-Finns. This momentum was spread through tribes that left Seima-Turbino type of monuments in the region. Most researchers explain the appearance of those monuments in the forest Kama region by the migration of some ancient tribes of Altai, presumably, of the Indo-European origin, from the East [Chernykh, Kuzminykh, 1989].

The migration from the East had an impact primarily on the further development of the economic life of people in the forest Kama region: due to migrants, they mastered skills of bronze metallurgy.

In the second half of the 2nd millennium BCE, according to researchers, there were five archaeological cultures, carriers of which were the core of the Uralic-Kama ancestors of the Permic peoples—*Yerzov*, *Kurmantau*, *Cis-Kazan*, *Lugovsk* and *Buyisk*. The area of those cultures occupied a large part of the Kama zone of deciduous forests—the borders of this zone in the period under review were some 300 km to the north, compared to the modern ones [Nemkova 1985], from the upper reaches of the Kama and Vyatka Rivers, to the middle reaches of the Belaya River, and the reaches of the Volga River near Kazan. All of them represented a continuation of the ethnic and cultural traditions of local tribes that had lived there in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic eras, therefore, they are treated as integral

components of the Finno-Permian ethnocultural community of the Volga-Kama region [Nemkova 1985, pp. 161–164].

However, archaeological studies in the Southern Cis Ural and the Cis-Ural region show that there was a number of archaeological cultures of a well-defined Trans-Ural-Western Siberian origin with different time components: *Mezhovka*—in the Bronze Age, *Gafuri*—in the early Iron Age, *Kushnarenkovo*, *Karayakupov* and *Chiyalik*—in the Middle Ages. Most modern scholars agree that all of the aforementioned cultures contained an Ugric ethnic component [Salnikov, 1967, p. 371, Obydenov, Shorin, 1995, p. 117, Obydenov, 1998, p. 49] or were left by speakers of the Ugric languages [Veres, 1979, p. 11, Gening, 1972, p. 274, Khalikova, 1975, Pshenichnyuk, 1988, pp. 5–9, Kazakov, 1976, pp. 85–89, Ivanov, 1988, p. 64, Garustovich, Ivanov, 1992, pp. 17–31 et al.]. In addition, it is possible to trace the presence of the proto-Magyar ethnolinguistic formation in the region by toponymy and ethnonymy data [Matveyev, 1968, Khisamitdinova 1988, pp. 102–129, Nmeth, 1966]. There are well-defined data that allow mention of an Ugric period in the ethno-cultural history of the peoples of the Southern Cis Ural and the Cis-Ural region, when speakers of the Ugric languages were not only living in the region but also dominated in some of its areas.

Available materials, scattered across the vast chronological field, require organisation to trace the dynamics of the Ugric component in the region and over time.

The first stage of penetration and settlement of the ancient Ugric population in the Southern Cis Ural and in the Cis-Cis Ural took place at the end of the 2nd millennium BCE. It was associated with the expanding area of the *Mezhovka* archaeological culture. According to researchers, the latter was formed in the 12th century BCE, based on the Cherkaskul archaeological culture, carriers of which (presumably, the proto-Ugric people) occupied vast areas of forests in the Trans-Cis Ural from the Tobol River in the east to eastern slopes of the Ural Mountains in the 15–13th centuries BCE. However, some monuments of

the Cherkaskul culture were found in the middle and Lower reaches of the Belaya River, the Lower reaches of the Kama and the Middle Volga Rivers [Obydenov, Shorin, 1995, Obydenov, 1998].

In the 11th century BCE, part of the *Mezhovka* population entered the Cis-Ural region via river systems of the Southern Cis Ural. It occupied forest and steppe frontiers there (mostly—in the basin of the Belaya River) between the Lower reaches of the Kama River and the Southern Cis Ural. That population led a settled way of life and had a diversified economy, which was based on cattle breeding. Archaeological data prove that agriculture, hunting and fishing were widely spread but as auxiliary sectors of the economy [Obydenov, 1977, pp. 71–96].

The ethno-cultural processes in the Cis-Ural region during the Late Bronze Age primarily manifested themselves through contacts between the *Mezhovka* (Ugric) population and the Finno-Permian tribes of the Volga-Kama regions—carriers of the *Maklasheyevka* and *Yerzovo* cultures—prevailing respectively in the Volga region near Kazan and in the Middle Kama region. Those contacts resulted in the assimilation of the *Mezhovka* representatives into the local population, which ended by the beginning of the 7th century BCE according to the dates of *Mezhovka* monuments in the Cis-Ural region [Obydenov, Shorin, 1995, p. 97, Obydenov, 1998, p. 58].

The era of the early Iron Age (the 7th century BCE – 3rd century CE) and the early Middle Ages (the 4–5th centuries CE) were periods of absolute dominance of the Finno-Permian peoples in the Volga-Kama and Cis-Ural regions. The ethno-cultural image of the region at that time was determined by the interaction of two communities: cultures of textile ceramics in the Volga and Lower Kama regions and *Ananjino* in the Middle Kama region and Lower reaches of the Belaya River. Among the results of this cooperation was the formation of the *Akhmylovo archaeological culture* (the so-called 'Middle-Volga *Ananjino* people') in the Middle Volga and the Lower Kama regions. The beginning of the early Iron Age was marked by the migration

of the Akhmylovo (Volga-Finnic?) population to the east, to the Cis-Ural region, which led to the formation of the *Karaabyz archaeological culture* on the right bank of the middle reaches of the Belaya River [Ivanov, 1978, p. 15]. One of the components of the latter was the tribes that left written monuments of the so-called 'Gafuri type' in the Cis-Ural region, which appeared there in the beginning of the 4th century BCE [Pshenichnyuk, 1988, p. 7]. Distinctive features of those tribes that set them apart from the general population of the Kama-Cis-Ural region are a burial mound rite and ceramics, as well as round or flat-bottomed pots with thickening—a roll at the top and the admixture of talc in clay dough.

Most researchers agree on the Trans-Ural origin of the 'Gafuri tribes'. Moreover, according to M. Obydenov, their cultural genesis dates back to the Cherkaskul-Mezhovka tribes from forest and steppes of the Trans-Cis Ural [Obydenov, 1998, p. 57]. Morphological characteristics of the 'Gafuri tribal culture' are similar to the Sargat and Gorokhovo cultures of the forest-steppe Trans-Cis Ural, the Ugric linguistic affiliation of which is recognised officially. In addition, it is the presence of the Gafuri ceramics in the early Sarmatian (Prokhorovo) complexes that served as a ground for K. Smirnov to assume that there was an Ugric component in the *Sarmatian culture* genesis [Smirnov, 1971, p. 71].

However, the Ugric presence was negligible in the Cis-Cis Ural in the early Iron Age, and the Ugric substrate in the ethnic image of the Karaabyz culture was inferior to the Finno-Permian one, although, in general, it led to the development of those features that distinguished this culture from Finno-Permian synchronous cultures of the Volga-Kama region. Therefore, as researchers note, Mazunin and Azelino, the archaeological cultures of the region in the early Middle Ages, which were based on local cultures of the early Iron Age (Pyaniy Bor and Karaabyz), have a pronounced local flavour of the Kama region and are viewed as the result of an independent ethno-cultural development of the local population [Goldin, 1987, p. 13, Pshenichnyuk, 1988, p. 8].

The second phase of the Ugric penetration into the Southern Cis Ural and Cis-Ural region falls within the time immediately after the Migration Period. At this time, due to the arrival of new ethnic groups in the Volga-Kama region, represented by monuments of the Kharino-Turaevo type, Finno-Permian ethnocultural dominance in the region was disturbed. The ethnic affiliation of this population is not clear, and it does not seem to be possible to definitely associate its origin with any of the adjacent regions, in particular with Western Siberia.

A new population appeared here, represented, apart from the aforementioned monuments of the Kharino-Turaevo type, by monuments of the *Turbaslin culture*, localised on the Levoberezhye of the middle reaches of the Belaya River, while bearers of the Imenkovo culture, who presumably spoke a language of the Balto-Slavic group, settled to the south of the mouth of the Kama, along the right and left banks of the Volga [Matveeva, 1998, p. 88–91] (fig. 1).

The linguistic affiliation of the people who created the monuments of the Kharino-Turaevo and Turbaslin type has not yet been conclusively established. For instance, R. Goldina considers them Ugric people,—that is, bearers of the late Sargat culture, who crossed the Ural Mountains under pressure from the Huns in the late 4th century CE and settled in the Kama River region and the Kungur wooded steppe [Goldina, 1999, p. 276]. In her opinion, as a result of ethnic interaction between the Trans Ural Ugric people and Kama-region Permians, the symbiotic *Nevoln culture* left by the mixed Permian-Ugric population was formed.

The disturbed ethnocultural integrity of the region was never restored. In the late 6th and early 7th centuries, two new nations almost simultaneously appeared in the southern areas of the Cis-Ural region: the early Bulgars, in the Samara Bend area (monuments of the Novinkovo type) [Matveeva, 1997, Bagautdinov, Bogachev, Zubov, 1998], and the bearers of the Kushnarenkovo culture, who came from beyond the Cis Ural and might be considered proto-Hungarians, in the

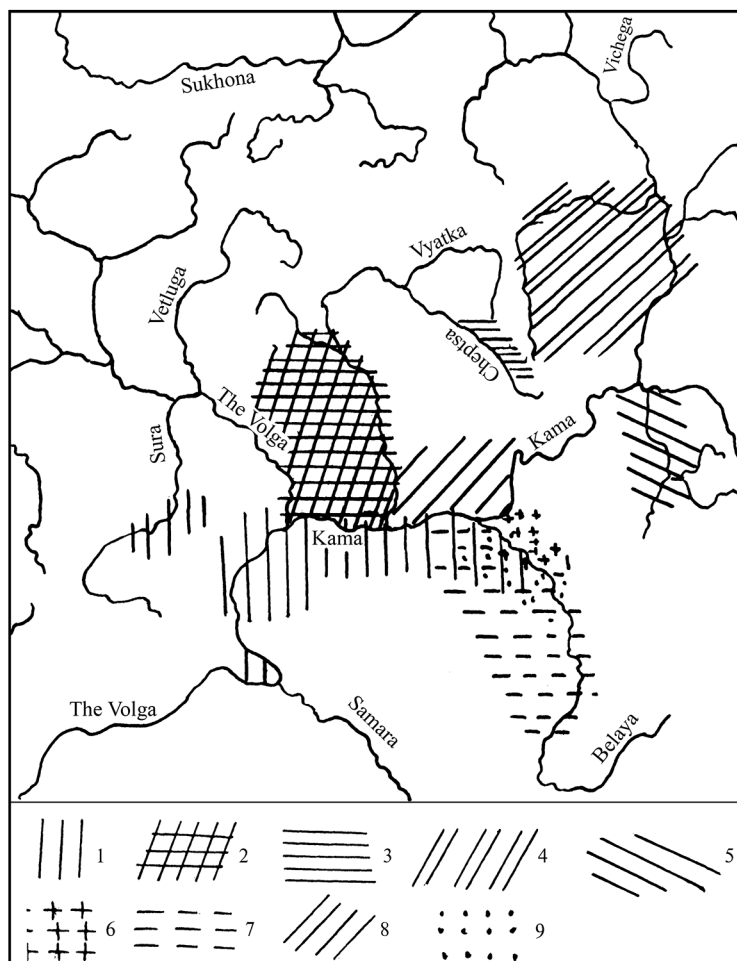


Fig. 1. Archaeological cultures of the middle of the 1st millennium CE in the Kama and Middle Volga regions.

1 – Imenkovo culture, 2 – Azelino culture in the 5–7th centuries, 3 – Chepitsa culture (according to R. Goldina), 4 – Lomovotovo culture (according to R. Goldina), 5 – Nevolinsk culture (according to R. Goldina), 6 – Bakhmutino culture (according to R. Goldina), 7 – Kushnarenkovo culture (according to R. Goldina), 8 – Verkhny Utchan culture (according to R. Goldina), 9 – Turbaslin culture (author P. Starostin)

basin of the Belaya River. For the second half of the 1st millennium CE, the Bulgars and Kushnarenkovo people become the driving ethnocultural force on the territory of the Volga-Cis Ural wooded steppe. It is difficult to judge the nature of their relationships from the available archaeological materials. However, considering that in the latter half of the 8–9th centuries CE, when the early Bulgars moved northward and firmly established themselves in the area near the mouth of the Kama and the bearers of the *Karayakupovo culture*, akin to the Kushnarenkovo people, came, again, from beyond the Cis Ural, the areals of their

settlement in the region were sharply delineated, it can be assumed that there was no ethnocultural blending between the Bulgars and the Cisuralian proto-Hungarians. Differences in the morphological characteristics of the early Bulgar and the *Karayakupovo* cultures indicate this as well. Particularly, the *Karayakupovo* people again brought with them to the Cis-Cis Ural their traditional rite of multiple-grave burials under mounds, the tradition of placing a horse's head and legs into the grave or in the grave-mound filling, and ceramics decorated with a carved ornament of herringbones, oblique grids, zigzags, hori-

zontal lines, or 'pearls', which is not typical of the Kama-region nations. It should be particularly emphasised that the closest parallels of the main characteristics of the Kushnarenkovo and Karayakupovo burial rite have been found in monuments of the Makushino, Molchanovo, and Potchevash types in the Trans-Ural region and Western Siberia, directly associated with the ancestors of the Khanty and Mansi. The areal of these monuments occupies the southern part of the Trans Ural taiga forest zone and the Trans Ural and Western Siberian wooded steppe.

In the Cis-Ural region, the Ugric people occupied the landscape zone familiar to them,—that is, the northern periphery of the Volga-Cis Ural wooded steppe, which corresponds to the environmental conditions of their Western Siberian ancestral homeland. In the west, they stopped at the Lower reaches of the Kama, neighbouring with the Volga-Kama Bulgars, in the east, their territory included a part of the Trans Ural wooded steppe, primarily in the foothills of the Ural range.

The ethnopolitical situation in the Volga-Ural region during the latter half of the 1st millennium CE developed such that it almost precluded any opportunities for ethnocultural symbiosis of the nations which inhabited the region at that time. The trade-driven expansion of the Bulgars northward into the wooded Kama region, which started as early as in the first half of the 10th century, finally resulted in ethnocultural expansion, and ended with the establishment of trade settlements in the Upper Kama basin [Belavin, 2000, p. 34–43]. However, the Karayakupovo proto-Hungarian people, who had started their contacts with Kama Region tribes about a century earlier, stood in the way of this expansion.

It is hard to say what relations between the proto-Hungarians and the Volga Bulgars were like, but there is reason to assume that they were by no means peaceful. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain the fact that all Karayakupovo fortress sites were located on the western outskirts of the Karayakupovo territory, on the side toward Volga Bulgaria. The largest and richest burial sites of the Karayakupovo people are, by contrast, hidden in the foothills and mountain

forest regions of the Southern Cis Ural.

The reason why the ancient Ugro-Magyars left the Cis-Ural Region was apparently the westward military and political expansion of the ancient Kyrgyz state into the steppe and wooded steppe regions of Western Siberia, starting in the 9th century. The findings of archaeologists in the southern Chelyabinsk region (burials of the so-called 'Tyukhtyat' culture) testify to the fact that Kyrgyz military detachments reached the steppes of the Trans-Ural Region. It was they who most likely caused the massive movement of the Karayakupovo people westward, to the Cis Ural and Cis-Ural Region. However, there was nowhere to retreat westward, as Volga Bulgaria stood in the way...

The massive exodus of the proto-Hungarians westward in the mid-9th century [Ivanov, 1999] means a change in the population of the Southern Cis Ural and an alteration of the outline and composition of the regional ethnic map in the subsequent period. Indeed, for the 10th century, we find monuments in the Cisuralian wooded steppe whose material culture differs noticeably from those of Kushnarenkovo and Karayakupovo. Its attribute is round-bottomed moulded ceramics decorated with horizontal imprints of braid and a large-toothed stamp around the neck. Monuments with such ceramics are grouped into the Chiyalik culture (named after the settlement near the village of Chiyalik on the Lower reaches of the Ik river, studied by E. Kazakov). Presently, over 1000 monuments of this culture (settlements, burial sites, individual burials and mounds, buried treasures), whose areal covers the northern part of the Cisuralian wooded steppe from the mouth of the Kama to the middle reaches of the Belaya river and the Trans Ural wooded steppe, have been identified and to some extent studied.

12 local territorial groups are distinguished in the geography of the Chiyalik culture monuments, nine of which,—that is, the Ik, Kama-Belaya, Syun', Chermasan, Dem, Ayd, Middle Belaya, Lower Belaya, and Ural groups, were situated in the Southern Cis Ural and Cis-Ural Region. The nature of the monuments constituting the above-mentioned

groups is rather homogeneous,—that is, we find both settlements and burial sites almost everywhere, except for the Lower Belaya and Kama-Belaya groups, where only burials have been found so far.

The Chiyalik culture period is confined to the interval from the late 10th to the early 15th century, which we will divide into two phases: the first phase (late 10th to 13th centuries) we will call the Mryasimovo (or early Chiyalik) phase, and the second (late 13th to early 15th centuries) we will call the Chiyalik phase. The selected phases correspond to two groups of bearers of the braid ceramics, called Postpetrogrom and Chiyalik by E. Kazakov [Kazakov, 1978, p. 42–43]. They are primarily represented by mounds and mound burial sites.

The linguistic affiliation of the population which left Mryasimovo-type monuments in the region is defined in terms of their typological and chronological correlation with previous and contemporary cultures of the Ural-Siberian region. And, first and foremost, with cultures defined as Ugric. These, as is obvious from the previous chapter, include the Kushnarenkovo and Karayakupovo cultures in the Southern Cis Ural and Cis-Ural Region and the Potchevash and Molchanovo cultures in the Trans-Ural Region and the Western Siberian wooded steppe. Results of the comparative and statistical analysis of representative features of the burial rite in the above cultures show that the Mryasimovo-type mounds are characterised by the same burial rite features as their predecessors and neighbours in the wooded steppe zone of the Southern Cis Ural.

The Mryasimovo-type mounds, which are later than the Karayakupovo mounds, also reveal a high coefficient of typological similarity with them. This fact is nothing less than a reflection of the ethnic kinship of the populations who left these monuments [Garustovich, Ivanov, 1992, p. 22–24].

The high typological similarity between the Mryasimovo and Karayakupovo monuments is not the only indicator of their Ugric affiliation. The ceramics (round-bottomed pots, jars, and cups), whose form and braid

and crested ornamentation have the closest parallels in the ceramics of the Petrogrom, Molchanovo, Yudino, and Makushkino monuments of the forest and wooded steppe of the Trans-Ural Region, also stand out.

The same applies to the feature of horse jaws and teeth present in earth mound fillings. The shallow depth of the graves, the placing of horse bones ('horsehide') in the pile at the feet of the buried person (Mryasimovo, mound 21), a horse humerus placed in the grave, the placing of a saddle under the head or at the feet of the buried person, the tradition of placing one stirrup in the grave, remnants of horse blinders, and finally, the finding of a small anthropomorphic wooden figure (Bakalino burial sites, mound 5) which is completely similar to those found in the culture of the Ob Ugrians (Khanty and Mansi) [Kulemzin, 1984]—all these features of the Mryasimovo burial rite leave no doubts as to the ethnogenetic kinship of the Mryasimovo people with the Ugrians of the forest and wooded-steppe Transural region.

Thus, the Mryasimovo-type mounds of the 10–11th centuries testify to the time when the group of Ugric tribes which in the 12–14th centuries was represented in the region by Chiyalik-type monuments [Kazakov, 1978, Garustovich, 1992] started to penetrate into the Cisuralian wooded steppe.

The southern boundary of the Mryasimovo (Ugric) monuments' areal, according to currently available data, can be delineated by the basin of the middle reaches of the Belaya river and the area of the Mesyagutovo wooded steppe in the north-east of modern Bashkortostan. No monuments of the turn and beginning of the 2nd millennium CE have been identified to the south of the above-mentioned territory up to the northern edge of the Volga-Ural steppe. This fact allows us to consider the southern part of the Cisuralian wooded steppe (the southern districts of modern Bashkortostan) a sort of 'buffer zone' dividing two ethnocultural areals,—that is, Ugric and Turkic. In the historical period of interest, the latter were represented in the region by the mounds and mound burial sites of the Oghuz and Pechenegs.

Sergey Klyashtorny, Petr Starostin

Proto-Slavic tribes in the Volga region

For a long time, the cultural palette of the Volga region has been determined by three ethnic blocks, which created here a diversified unity of environmentally driven types of economy and culture. Their symbiotic connection and, at the same time, the diversity of their civilisational motivations were significantly pre-defined by the direction of the great waterway and by those opportunities which were opened and dictated by the connecting role of the water route. These three main ethnic blocks are the Ugro-Finns, Turkic, and Slavic groups. Sometimes their convergence in the Volga basin is interpreted as a relatively new phenomenon, caused by historical events of the last half millennium. Sometimes, on the contrary, the temporal and territorial parameters of the distribution of a certain ethnic group are wrongly exaggerated. Let us consider the little evidence that has been preserved.

In 737 CE, the governor of the Caucasus and Jazeera Umayyad Marwan ibn Muhammad, having finally finished bringing Transcaucasia under the control of the Caliphate, was preparing for a big war with the Khazars. In conquered Georgia, the governor was nicknamed Murvan Kru,—that is, 'Marwan the Deaf', since, in the Georgians' opinion, he disregarded the voice of reason and was distinguished by the incredible audacity of his plans and actions. The Armenian nakharars, led by Ashot Bagratuni, joined Marwan's Syrian army of 120,000. After the Armenians, troops of the 'kings of the mountains',—that is, the militias of Northern Caucasian tribes, joined the ranks of Marwan's army. With two detachments, the army made a forced crossing of the mountain passes, reached the plain, and took the largest Khazar city of Samandar by storm.

The subsequent history of the campaign are outlined in considerable detail by the early 10th century Arabian historian Ibn Asama al-Kufi, and in less detail by at-Tabari, al-Baladhuri, and al-Yakubi. Sections about

the Arab-Khazar war of 119 AH from the work of al-Kufi were first published by Zeki Velidi Togan in 1939 and A. Kurat in 1949 (see details in [Klyashtorny, 1964, p. 16–18]).

According to al-Kufi, the main goal of Marwan was to compel the Khakan to convert to Islam,—that is, the final solution to the 'Khazar problem' in the context of struggle between the three powers—the Byzantine Empire, the Caliphate, and Khazaria—for the Caucasus and Asia Minor. Therefore, not content with plentiful spoils in Samandar, Marwan led his troops on a long-distance march to the Khakan's headquarters, the city of al-Baida,—that is, 'White', and besieged it. In the opinion of Zeki Velidi Togan, al-Baida is synonymous with the later capital of the Khazars, Itil, but it is more likely another Khazar headquarters, Sarygshin, as I. Markvart and V. Minorsky have already suggested. This is because the word sary/saryg meant the colour white in the Bulgar family of languages, and the Arabs simply made a loan translation of the name of the Khakan's headquarters. According to later sources, Sarygshin was situated in the steppe.

Al-Kufi describes the subsequent events as follows: 'The Khakan fled from Marwan and reached the mountains. And Marwan stubbornly moved on with the Muslim (troops) through the Khazar land, until he crossed (it) with them and left (it) behind. Then he attacked the Slavs (*as-sakaliba*) and neighbouring infidels of various kinds and took captive twenty thousand families. After that, he came to the river of the Slavs (Nahr as-Sakaliba) and encamped'. Marwan ordered one of his military leaders to do battle with the Khazar troops, led by General Hazer Tarkhan, that were confronting the Arabs. This military leader, al-Kausar ibn al-Aswad al-Anbari, leading forty thousand horsemen, crossed the river at night, unexpectedly attacked the Khazars, and defeated them. After the defeat, the Khakan, asking for peace, sent an embassy

to Marwan, and the ambassador, in the course of negotiations, mentioned the Khazars and Slavs who had been killed and captured by the Arabs.

After the Arab troops approached al-Baida, the Khakan fled toward the mountains. According to Zeki Velidi Togan, Ibn Asama meant Obshchy Syrt here, since the way south toward the Caucasus was cut off by the Arabs. In Togan's opinion, there are no other mountains around. Togan needed to interpret the text this way to prove his hypothesis, according to which the 'sakaliba' are not the Slavs, but a 'Turkic-Finnish mix'. Exactly which mountains, according to Arabic and Persia geographers, surrounded the Khazar cities is clear from the anonymous book *Hudud al-'Alam* (10th century) and al-Idrisi's map (12th century). According to *Hudud al-'Alam*, mountains encircle the Khazar country not only in the south (the Caucasus), but also in the west, separating the Khazar lands from the lands of the Khazar Pechenegs, who led a nomadic life in the Azov sea region. In the section on the Khazar Pechenegs, these mountains are called the 'Khazar Mountains'. They correspond to the Yergeni hills on the contemporary map. According to the map of al-Idrisi, the 'Khazar Land' was limited by the Itil (Volga) in the east and by the Khazar (Caspian) sea and a half-circle of mountains (the Caucasus, Stavropol upland, Yergeni hills, Volga upland) in the south, west and north-west.

The next phase defining the Arabs' advances in the Ibn Asama story is the 'River of the Slavs', also mentioned by Ibn Khordadbeh. T. Levitsky has convincingly demonstrated that Ibn Khordadbeh used the name 'River of the Slavs' for the Itil (Volga), which, as Ibn Khordadbeh writes in another place in his work, flows 'from the lands of the Slavs'. Z. Togan also comes to the conclusion that the 'River of the Slavs' mentioned by Ibn Asama can only be the Volga. Therefore, chasing the Khagan, who had fled toward the mountains, the Arab troops came up to the Volga at the same time.

The area in the 'Khazar Land' where the mountains approach the river is located to the north of a bend in the Volga. There, according to al-Idrisi's map, the Khazar city of

Khamlij was situated, where, according to the writings of Ibn Khordadbeh and al-Masudi, large Khazar forces were deployed which collected duties from merchants and closed the route along the Volga to enemies. The troops of al-Kausar crossed the river in this place and defeated the Khazar forces on the eastern bank. Marwan himself did not cross the river. However, moving north from al-Baida toward the mountains, Marwan left Khazaria and attacked the settlements of *as-sakaliba*,—that is, the Slavs and their neighbours from other tribes, and captured 20,000 families. This does not mean there was a continuous Slavic population in the area military operations, or 20,000 Slavic families (as in al-Baladhuri), but rather that there were Slavic settlements scattered among the block of various tribes to the north of Khazaria.

Advances in archaeological studies of the Volga region during recent decades has made it possible to identify the locations of these Slavic settlements. In 1956, the monuments of interest to us were identified by V. Gening as a separate culture called the Imenkovo culture after the ancient settlement near the village of Imenkovo (Laishevsky district of Tatarstan) (see the map of the distribution of the Imenkovo culture on p. 207). Bearers of this culture occupied the territory from the Lower reaches of the Belaya river in the east to the middle reaches of the Sura river in the west and from the mouth of the Kama in the north to the Samara bend in the south. The time of existence of the Imenkovo monuments studied dates from the late 4th to the 7th centuries [Starostin, 1967, Matveeva, Skarbovenko, 1999, p. 3–49, Sedov, 1994, p. 343].

The settlements were usually situated in groups (usually of three to five ancient villages). Each village probably belonged to a single extended patriarchal family (patronymia). A group of such settlements belonged to a clan. Towns were usually built in strategically important locations. Over 20 Imenkovo settlements have been identified on the Lower Kama and adjacent parts of the Volga.

During excavation of the Imenkovo settlements, dwellings (dugouts, semi-dugouts, and long above-ground pillar houses), house-

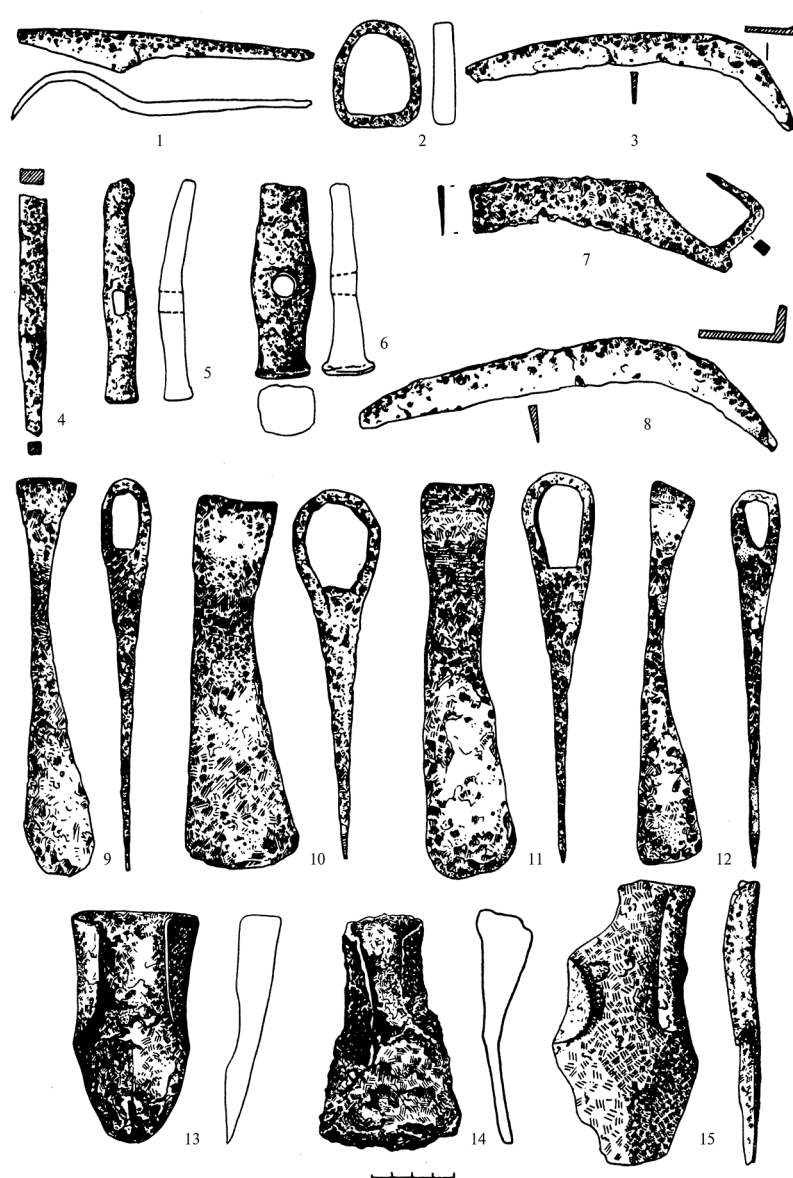


Fig. 1. Iron tools from Imenkovo settlements.

1 – spoon knife, 2 – scythe ring, 3, 8 – sickles, 4 – fragment of a file, 5, 6 – hammers, 7 – fragment of a drawknife, 9, 12 – 'axe-like grivnas', 10, 11 – axes, 13, 15 – plough tips, 14 – adze-hoe, 1, 5, 11 – from the Kominternovo settlement (Kurgan), 2–4, 7–10, 14, 15 – from Shcherbetyevo island ancient settlement I, 6 – from Maklasheyevka ancient town II, 12 – from Imenkovo ancient town I, 13 – from Tashkirmen findings

hold storage pits, and workshops for casting articles from non-ferrous metals were investigated. Signs of iron processing and smelting were detected. The assortment of iron articles includes dozens of items (sickles, knives, files, scythes, plough tips, axes, hoes, chisels, metalworking chisels, pliers, hammers, drawknives, awls, fishhooks, cheek-pieces and oth-

ers) (Fig. 1, 2). Metallographic analysis of the iron articles showed that ancient craftsmen were strong in the technology of forge welding, welding sheet steel onto an iron base, strip welding (a steel strip between two iron strips), and heat treatment of iron products. In comparison with the previous population, the Imenkovo tribes revolutionised the de-

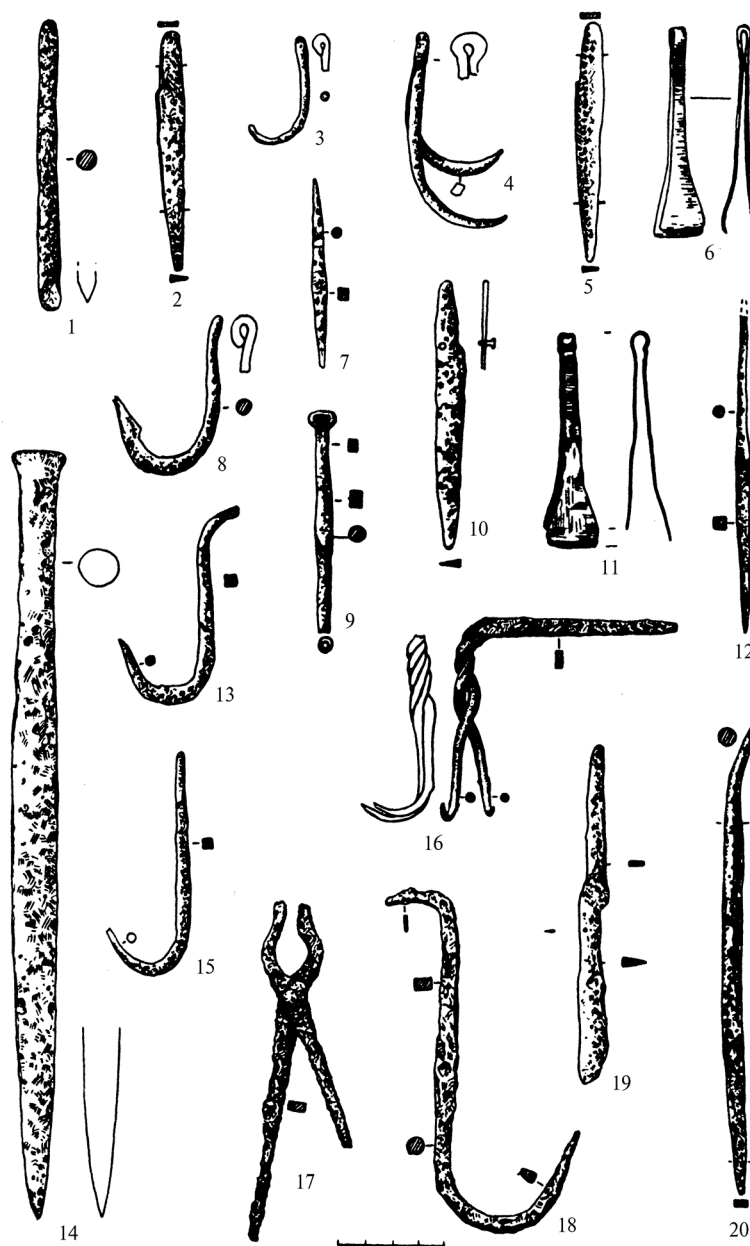


Fig. 2 Metal tools from Imenkovo settlements.

6,11 – bronze, the rest, iron, 1–5,10–13,15 – from Shcherbetyevo island ancient settlement I, 6,7,9,16–18, 20 – from Maklasheyevka ancient town II, 8,14 – from Kominternovo settlement (Kurgan), 19 – from Imenkovo ancient town I

velopment of iron working. People engaged in the smith's craft were distinguished among the Imenkovo population. A set of iron goods, which included 27 iron axes and so-called 'axe-like grivnas', belonged to such a craftsman at Shcherbetyevo Settlement I. The 'axe-

like grivnas', judging by the most recent data, were soft metal blanks which were re-sold in Eastern Europe as semi-finished goods.

Judging from the available materials, agriculture was the leading sector of the economy for the population of interest. The Imenkovo

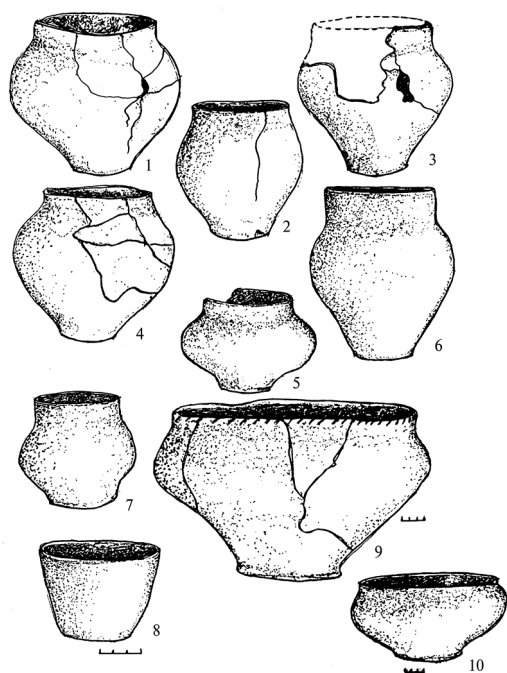


Fig. 3. Imenkovo vessels.

1–7 – from Rozhdestvensky burial site II,
8 – from Shcherbetyevo island ancient settlement I,
9 – from Maklasheyevka ancient town II,
10 – from Imenkovo ancient town I

tribes were the first in the Middle Volga region who transitioned to arable farming with the use of iron plough tips. Paleobotanists have been able to establish that the Imenkovo culture population sowed wheat, rye, millet, oats, barley, and peas. Iron sickles and scythes of a distinctive form were found in dozens of Imenkovo culture settlements. Judging from the findings, the population under examination baked bread and prepared cereals for cooking.

Stock farming was another sector in the economic life of the Imenkovo culture tribes. Paleozoologists have established that the population being studied raised cattle, horses, pigs, sheep and goats, as well as camels. The role of hunting and fishing for the population faded into the background. Fur hunting was encouraged by demand from southern neighbours and in Eastern countries. Among household crafts, pottery and weaving are worth noting. The majority of pottery was made by hand, and only part using a pottery wheel (Fig.

3). Few remnants of weapons were found (Fig. 4). Judging from these, the main weapons were bows with arrows fitted with bone or iron points, spears, and swords, chain mail was in use as well. Remnants of adornments and costume accessories (buckles, bracelets, pendants, earrings, etc.) are also present, but to reconstruct the costume of the population being studied is impossible.

The main features of the Imenkovo tribes' burial rites were the cremation of the deceased, completely dressed, apart, placement of the remaining ashes in small graves, and the presence of pottery vessels with sacrificial food in the graves.

The Imenkovo population had trade relations with adjacent regions and remote territories. 6th century Sassanid coins have been found in several settlements in recent years. Bronze and brass ingots, found in many monuments in Eastern Europe from the middle of the 1st millennium, were used as counter values. There is reason to suppose that a considerable part of the fur transported from far northern regions to the south passed through the settlements of the Imenkovo culture.

Relationships between the Imenkovo culture tribes and their northern neighbours developed in various ways. In the late 4th century, the Imenkovo tribes pushed tribes of the Mazunin and Azelino cultures northward. Ugro-Finns adornments are often encountered in the inventory of the monuments of the Imenkovo circle. Apparently, some part of the Ugro-Finns tribes blended into the Imenkovo environment. The Ugro-Finns tribes adopted ironworking technology, arable farming and types of agricultural tools from the Imenkovo people. Contacts between the Imenkovo culture and Ugro-Finns tribes resulted in the Verkhny Ujang culture, which developed on the Middle Kama during the second half of the 1st millennium. At the same time, the Imenkovo tribes had active contacts with the bearers of the Tubrasli (Sarmat) culture. Individual groups of the Tubraslin population reached the mouth of the Kama and blended into the Imenkovo environment.

The issues of the distinctiveness, origin, and fate of the Imenkovo culture have been

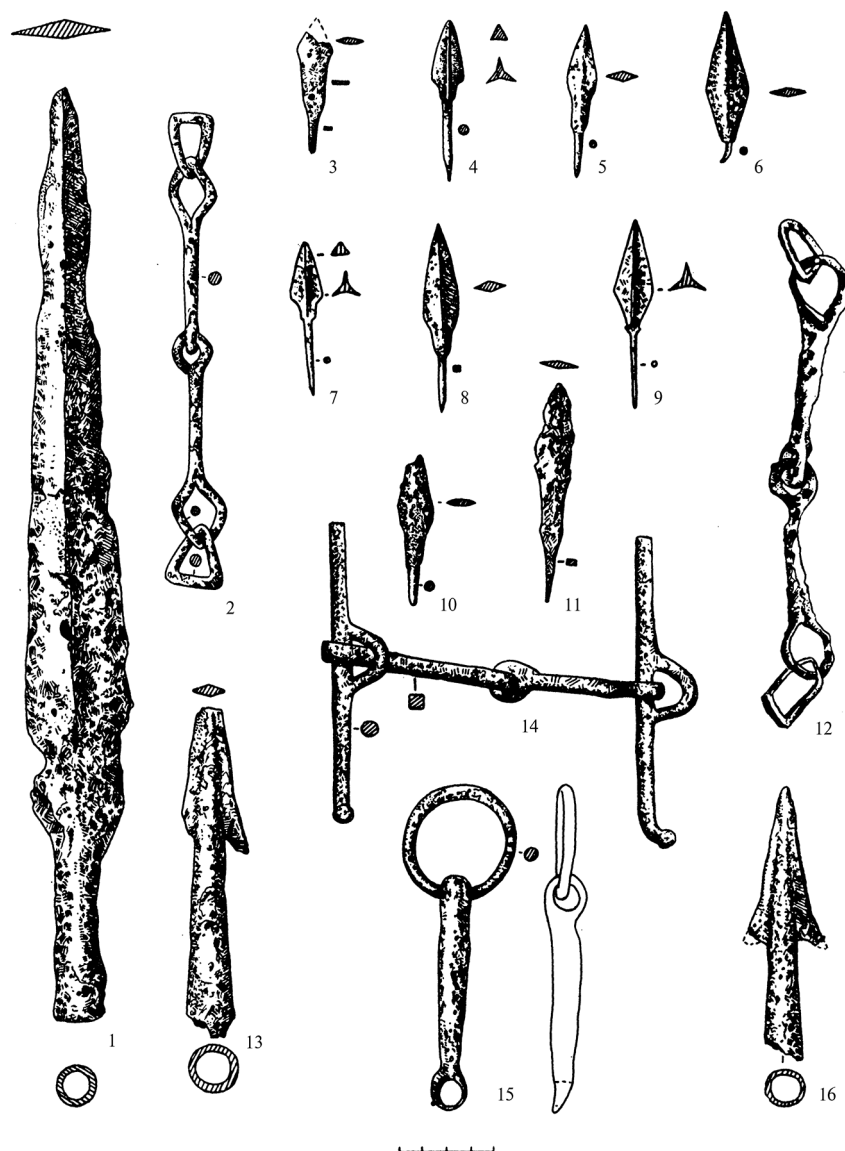


Fig. 4. Iron weapons and horse harness accessories.

1, 13, 16 – spearheads, 2, 12, 14, 15 – bridle bits, 3–11 – arrowheads.

1, 5, 6, 8, 15 – from Imenkovo ancient town I, 2, 13, 14 – from Shcherbetyevo island ancient settlement I,

3, 4, 7, 9, 10 – from Maklasheyevka ancient town II, 11 – from Tatsuncheevo ancient town,

12 – from Embulatikha ancient village, 16 – from Kominternovo settlement (Kurgan)

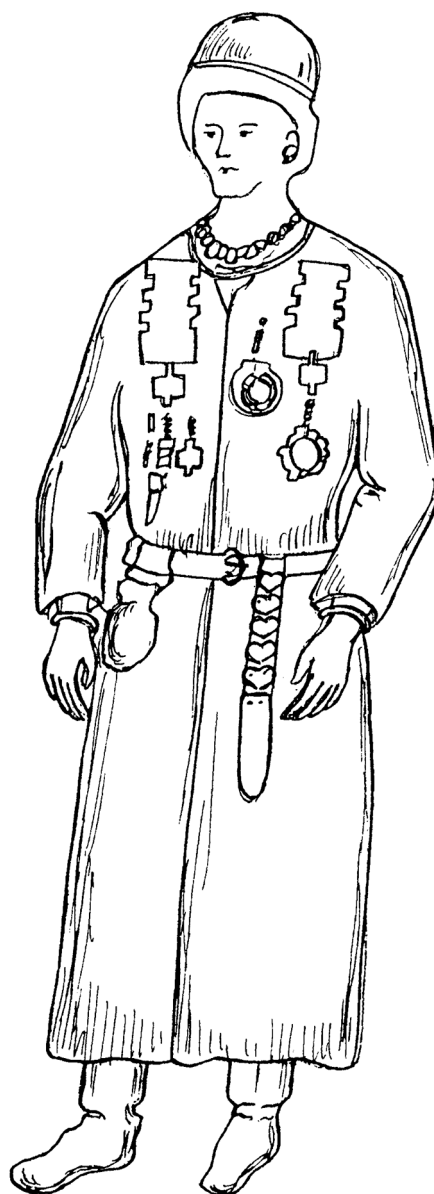
the subject of fierce disputes since the late 1950s. Many archaeologists, including A. Smirnov, attributed these monuments to the Gorodets culture and associated them with the ancient Mordovians. At the same time, Smirnov considered Rozhdestvensky Burial Site II to be Slavic. Other points of view were later given regarding the ethnic affiliation of the Imenkovo tribes (some considered them

Ugro-Magyars, others, Turks, and yet others, Balts). The wide variation of opinions on matters related to the Imenkovo culture was mainly due to the insufficient source base. A large amount of work was carried out in the 1960s–90s by archaeologists from Kazan and Samara. This made it possible to identify new groups of monuments of the Imenkovo culture.

The findings of linguists are significant for the attribution of the linguistic affiliation of the Imenkovo people. They have determined that a number of agricultural terms ('rye', 'land plot', 'land') in Ugro-Finns languages of the Volga and Cisural regions (Udmurt, Komi, Mari, Mordovian) were adopted from a language of the Balto-Slavic group no later than the middle of the 1st millennium CE. Considering the phonetic aspect of the adoptions, it can be argued that the donating language was Proto-Slavic. The archaeological analogy of the linguistic situation is the existence of the Imenkovo culture in the same areal in the middle of the 1st millennium, with which the spread of progressive forms of agriculture and new cereal crops, particularly rye, in the area is related. Thus, there are good grounds to believe that the creators of the Imenkovo culture spoke a language (languages) of the Proto-Slavic group [Napolskikh 1996].

The Imenkovo culture of the 4–7th centuries, created by tribes whose economy was based on arable farming, which had not been practiced in the Middle Volga region before, with a very broad spectrum of cereal crops, turned out, as was first shown by Samara archaeologist G. Matveeva, to be genetically related to the Proto-Slavic Zarubinetz culture of the Upper and Middle Dnieper regions (late 1st millennium BCE to early 1st millennium CE) and its variant, the *Przeworsk culture*. According to the well-grounded conclusion of Matveeva, supported and developed by Moscow Slavist and archaeologist V. Sedov, the tribes of the Imenkovo culture created a solid block of agricultural Slavic population in the Middle Volga region. Currently, there are over 500 monuments of the Imenkovo culture known here, and only a few dozen of them have been studied to a greater or lesser degree. At the turn of the 7–8th centuries, a part of the Imenkovo people went west, to the Middle Dnieper region.

The problem of correlation between the data of written sources and linguistic and archaeological materials is now solved. Moreover, any doubts expressed regarding the ethnic semantics of the term 'as-sakaliba' in the reports of Arabian authors on Marwan's cam-



Imenkovo-Turbaslin woman's costume.
Reconstructed based on materials from
Kominternovo burial site II, burial 43.
Latter half of the 6th century.
[Kazakov, 1999, p. 36]

paign have now been discarded. Their stories describe a major historical event,—that is, the first and only intrusion of Caliphate troops not only into the interior Khazar lands in the Volga region, but also into the territories to the north of the Khakan's domain, into the

Middle Volga region, where they attacked the settlements of the Slavs and other tribes, captured and relocated people to the territory of the Caliphate, and possibly impelled a large number of people to pull up their roots and flee.

At the same time, this is also a matter of a historiographical fact of the highest importance,—that is, the first written identification of the Slavic population in the Middle and Lower Volga region, the first record of the co-existence within this territory of an ethnically mixed population including a considerable Slavic block.

In the early 10th century, Ibn Fadlan mentions the title which the ruler of Bolgaria, who had the ancient Turkic name of Il Almysh, used for himself. In its most comprehensive form, recorded by Ibn Fadlan and, undoubtedly, ascending to the Bulgar tradition, the title is 'Yltyvar (—that is, Elteber), Malik of Bulgar and Amir of Slavia'. The name and title of the Tsar of Bolgaria were reconstructed by textologist and numismatist O. Smirnova back in 1981, but her article regarding this matter has not been properly appreciated yet.

In the early 10th century, Il Almysh calls himself Etelber,—that is, the chief, head of a tribal union, as well as the Tsar of the land of the Bulgars and Amir of the land of the Slavs.

In the 10th century, the title 'Amir of Slavia' was the same kind of anachronism, or historical reminiscence, as the mentioning of the tsardoms of Kazan, Astrakhan, and Siberia in the title of the Russian emperors, but the reminiscence had its political value, the value of the legitimacy of power.

In the 12th century, Baghdad preacher and historiographer Ibn al-Jawzi, a very prolific author and collector of knowledge about former events in Baghdad (A. Khalidov was the first who noticed his work), recounts that a nobleman from Bulgar, escorted by 50 companions, arrived in Baghdad en route to Mecca in July 1042. The Caliph's court did him a courtesy, and he was supplied with food from the palace kitchen. Yala Ibn Iskhak, a Khwarezm who was one of the companions, was questioned in the Divan in the presence of a qadi,—that is, under oath, as it were. In particular, he was questioned about the Bulgars and what kind of people they are. And the Khwarezm answered: 'In their origin, those people are between the Turks and Slavs (born between the Turks and Slavs), and their country is on the outskirts of the Turkic countries'.

And this was the last dim recollection of the ancient Turkic-Slavic unity on the banks of the Volga.

CHAPTER 4

The Steppe Empire of the Turks and its Heirs

Sergey Klyashtorny

'When the Blue Sky came into being above and the Brown Earth below, the human race arose between the two of them. And my forbears, Bumyn-khagan and Istämi-khagan, sat in state above the people. Having sat to reign, they instituted the El (the State) and established the Törü (the Law) of the Turkic people... They made those who had heads to bow their heads and those who had knees to bend the knee! They disseminated their people to the east and to the west. They were wise Khagans, they were courageous Khagans!'

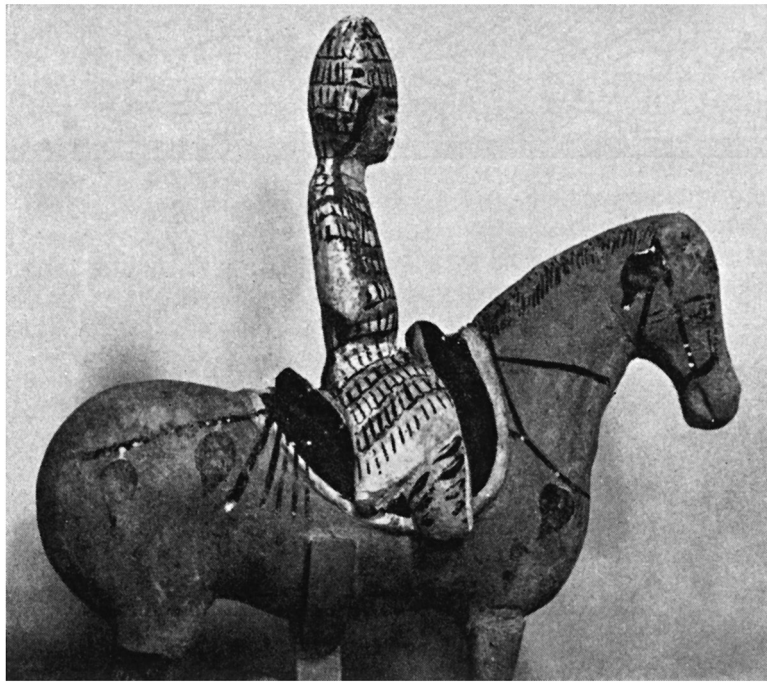
Such is the tale about the past ages, about the beginning of the Turkic El and its first Khagans, recounted by their remote descendant Yollyg Tegin, 'the Prince of good fortune', the first Turkic chronicler whose name and work were preserved. On two tablets of 'eternal stone' crowned with figures of dragons, he had a commemorative inscription for his deceased kinsmen, Bilge Khagan and Kyul-khagan, inscribed in Turkic runic characters, and did not forget to mention the founders of the state. He repeated this text twice, in 732 and 735. The two stone tablets with inscriptions narrating the turbulent history of the Turkic people still lie in one of the intermontane hollows of Khangai, near the Orkhon river, where the rulers of powerful empires put up their yurts and built their palaces.

In the text, the time of the creation of the universe coincides with the time when humans come to existence, and the creation of the 'sons of man' is very close to the time of the reign of the first Turkic Khagans, who conquered the 'peoples of the four corners of the world'. After almost two hundred years after the 'beginning of beginnings', after the emergence of the Turkic El, history aligned with legend, and the greatness of the past was called upon to elevate the present.

What real historical events actually stood behind the emotional words of the first Turkic chronicler?

In the 1st millennium CE, the ethnic environment started gradually changing in Eurasian steppes. Turkic-speaking tribes came increasingly to dominate here. Accelerated processes of social development and territorial and political consolidation led to the establishment of several large state entities (khaganates) within the territory of Southern Siberia, Central and Middle Asia, the Lower Volga region, and the Northern Caucasus by Turkic-speaking tribes in the latter half of the 1st millennium CE: the first Turkic, Eastern Turkic, Western Turkic, Turgesh, and Uighur khaganates, as well as the states of the Yenisei Kyrgyzes, Karluks, Kimaks, and Aral region Oguzes (Ghuzes). This time is usually called the Old Turkic period.

Further we will take a very general look at the ethnic, social, and political history of the Turkic peoples of Central and Middle Asia in the latter half of the 1st millennium CE. It was at this time that the ethnic and political unions which became the immediate predecessors and ancestors of modern Turkic-speaking nations emerged. This was also when the intellectual culture of the steppe dwellers rose to a new level: Turkic writing emerged, both adopted and original, written Turkic literature appeared, and Turkic tribes were first exposed to the great religions of those times,—that is, to Buddhism, Manichaeism, Christianity, Islam, and widely assimilated the achievements of other civilisations. In the environment of



Turkic horseman. Clay statuette from Dunhuang [Artamonov, 1962, p. 194]

nomadic and semi-nomadic life, and sometimes after a transition to a settled and urban way of life, such as in Zhetysu and Eastern Turkestan, a peculiar and distinctive new culture was created which took its place in the global culture of that time.

It is impossible to separate these processes into 'histories' of individual tribes and peoples of the Great Steppe and align them exclusively with the past of any single modern nation. Over the course of many centuries, the Turkic-speaking peoples of Eurasia, like their predecessors, had a common history and a culture with a common origin, which has become their common heritage. The replacement of some tribal unions with others on the historical arena certainly does not mean the total extinction of the former: ancient tribes were preserved in newly emerged ethnic and political structures, often under other names, and formed new peoples, having undergone their own alterations. The history of each of them is inseparable from the history of their neighbours and tribesmen.

The unity and succession in the history and culture of the Eurasian steppes that emerged in

the beginning of the Bronze age and reached their heyday in the Scythian era did not disappear, but merely acquired new ethnic colours with the onset of the Old Turkic period.

The formation of the Old Turkic union of tribes

The only epigraphic monument from the initial period of the existence of the Turkic Khaganate, a tablet with a Sogdian-language inscription from Bugut, was discovered in Mongolia in 1968 [Klyashtorny, Livshits, p. 1121–1126, Klyashtorny, Livshits, p. 69–102]. In the upper part of the monument, the figure of a wolf is depicted, under whose belly lies a little man with his feet and hands cut off. What did that strange bas-relief on the Khaganic tablet signify?

According to a Turkic legend written down by Chinese historians in the 6th century, the ancestors of the Torks 'who lived on the edge of a large swamp', were exterminated by warriors from a neighbouring tribe. Only a ten-year-old boy, mutilated by his enemies (they cut off his hands and feet), survived and was

fed by a she-wolf, who subsequently became his wife. Hiding from the enemies, who eventually killed the boy, the she-wolf flees to the mountains to the north of Turpan (the Eastern Tien Shan). There, in a cave, she gives birth to ten sons, fathered by the boy she saved. The she-wolf's sons marry Turpan women. One of her grandchildren, called Ashina, became the chief of a new tribe and gave it his name. Later on, chiefs from the Ashina clan led their clansmen to the Altai, where they become the leaders of the local tribes and take on the name of Turkic.

The legend associates the origin of the Turks with the Eastern Tian. The same was reported by Chinese historical chronicles, according to which a group of Late Hunnic tribes, which migrated to the area to the north of Nanshan in the late 3rd to early 4th century, was pushed to the Turpan region in the late 4th century and stayed there until 460. That year they were attacked by the Mongol-speaking Ju-Juan (Rouran) people, who destroyed the domain they had created and relocated the conquered Huns to the Altai. The tribe of Ashina's descendants was among those displaced as well.

Both the Turkic legend (it is known in two versions) and Chinese historiography notice that while living in Eastern Turkestan, the Ashina clan assimilated a new ethnic group,—that is, they mixed with the local residents. In the territory where the Ashina people lived from the late 3rd century to 460, the Iranian (Sogdian) and Tocharoi (Indo-European) populations were prevalent and influenced the language and cultural traditions of Ashina. It was here that the foundation of tight Turkic-Sogdian relations, which had a huge impact on the entire cultural and state system of the Ancient Torks was laid.

The very word ashina has an Iranian etymology and means 'blue, dark-blue'. Colour designations are usual for the royal onomastics of Eastern Turkestan, with which this name is associated. Thus, the royal clan of Kuchi was titled 'white', while the royal clan of Hotan was 'gold, golden'. Later, in 732–735 CE, in Great Orkhon inscriptions, in the section dedicated to the first Khagans,

the people who inhabited the newly established empire are called *Kök Turkic*, which is commonly translated as 'azure (blue) Turks'. Here, however, the first word is simply a loan Turkic translation of the Turkic dynasty's clan name, and these words should be translated as: 'Köki and Turks', i.e. 'Ashina and Turks' (see more details in: [Klyashtorny, 1994, p. 445–447]).

In the Altai, the Ashina clan gradually consolidated local tribes around itself. The new tribal union, as stated before, took the name of Turkic. According to legend, this name supposedly coincided with the local name of the Altai mountains. The subsequent events in the initial history of the Ashina Turks are closely connected with the history of several Northern Chinese states.

In Western Wei, one of three heirs of the formerly united Northern Wei empire (386–534), it was the 8th year of the Datong era. The eighth year after the Chinese Wei Empire, headed by the ruling clan of the Mongol Xianbei tribe, split into two empires, Eastern and Western. The weak and powerless Emperor Wen Di reigned, but did not rule. His palace in Chang'an, where he received foreign ambassadors, was merely a symbol of imperial greatness. Ambassadors brought exotic gifts and told about their countries, religions, and calendars. Ambassadors from Da Qin, or Byzantium, considered that year the 542 from the birth of the Messiah, whom they called Christ.

The actual ruler of the kingdom was Yuwen Tai, nicknamed the Black Otter. Being from the Xianbei tribe, he modestly called himself the first counselor of the Emperor. However, life in the Emperor's palace was not attractive to him, and the Black Otter established his headquarters in the mountainous Hua district.

The year of the Dog (the Black Otter preferred the steppe calendar) was uneasy. The feud with Eastern Wei and the southern Liang kingdom continued. However, the long steppe frontier in the north was the biggest concern for the Black Otter. There, beyond the Huáng Hé river, lived the Mongol-speaking Ju-juan people, akin to the Xianbei people. Their



Turkic stone sculptures [Artamonov, 1962, p. 204]

Khagan Anagui, who had been friendly until recently, suddenly started negotiating a matrimonial and military alliance with Eastern Wei. Then came a message from the western frontier: the Suizhou prefecture, in the Huáng Hé river bend, had been attacked by a nomadic Turkic tribe.

For several winters already, as soon as the river froze, the Turkic detachments had been crossing its icy surface. This year the nephew of the Black Otter had fought back the attack by a sheer demonstration of force. But yesterday's enemy could become tomorrow's ally, and Western Wei badly needed support in the steppe. And the ruler of Wei ordered that complete information about the Turkic peoples be collected and brought to him. What he learned was entered in the annals of the ruling dynasty, and after several editings became the main source of data on the most

ancient period of Turkic history.

The Turks had lived far to the west from the Chinese border, in the southern foothills of the Altai Mountains. Eight years before, in the year of the Leopard (534 CE), Bumyn, who had inherited the title 'great yabgu',—that is, 'great prince', from his father, had become their chief. He was officially the vassal of the Khagan of the Ju-juans, and he sent a tribute of iron from the Altai mines and foundries to his headquarters. But in fact Bumyn stopped reckoning with his suzerain, and he advanced the domains of the Turks far to the east. The Turks appeared on the banks of the Huang He, and first they behaved peacefully. On the Chinese border markets they exchanged horses for silk and grain. The border officials didn't encourage the unofficial trade and threw obstacles in their way. Then the winter raids began.

In 542 CE, when the Turks extended their domains from Altai to the banks of the Huang He, the Black Otter had to decide which steppe neighbour he would choose for the conclusion of a military alliance. The alternative was the numerous and populous tribes which the Chinese called *gaoghuy*,—that is, 'high carts', and the Mongolian-speaking Ju-Juans called them 'Tögrög'—'cartsmen'—in their dialect (in the Chinese transcription—'tiele'). They called themselves the Oghurs/Oghuzes. Later their tribes were led by the Uighurs, but in the 6th century the Oghuzes didn't have any leader. While similar to the Turks in language and way of life, the Oghuzes, unlike the Torks were not consolidated by the power of one chief and were often at enmity with each other. Rebellious subjects of the khagan Anagui, they constantly rose against the Ju-Juans and failed each time. In 542, the Ju-Juans suppressed another mutiny of the Oghuzes. The chief who had led the mutiny fled to the capital of Eastern Wei. There he was treated kindly and given encouragement. For Western Wei, a union with the Oghuzes became impossible.

The Black Otter made a decision and started to prepare an embassy to the Turks. He took into account the information about the Iranian genealogical connections of the royal family of Ashina. The embassy was headed by a Sogdian from Bukhara, who lived in the extreme west of China in one of the trade centres on the Silk Road. In the year of the Bull,—that is, in 545 CE, the embassy arrived at Bumyn's headquarters. From that moment, by having been recognised by one of the largest empires of that time, the state of the Turks acquired international status. Here is how a Chinese historiographer describes the event: 'The Turks were congratulating each other and saying: "Now our state will prosper. The ambassador of a great kingdom has come to us!'. The next year a Turkic embassy arrived in Chang'an. A military alliance was formed.

Having gained such strong support in the south, Bumyn began to conquer the north. 50,000 families of the Oghuzes were subdued first. The unified forces of Bumyn descended upon the main enemy—the Ju-Juans. Their

state was destroyed and Anagui committed suicide. In 551 CE, Bumyn was lifted on a white rug and proclaimed the Khagan of the Turkic El. It was the beginning of a new empire of the Great Steppe.

Bumyn died in 552 CE, soon after his marriage to a Chinese princess from the Wei house. His brother and co-ruler Istāmi-Khagan began an aggressive campaign to the west, to Middle Asia, to the Volga and to the Northern Caucasus. And Bumyn's sons, Mugan-khagan and then Taspar-khagan, established the domination of the dynasty in Central Asia and Southern Siberia. Both states of Northern China effectively became the tributaries of the Turkic El, and Taspar-khagan derisively called their sovereigns 'sonnies',—that is, vassals. Some Ju-Juans fled to Korea and Northern China, the others fled to the west, where they became known as Avars. Having included the numerous Late Hunnic tribes of the Volga region, Azov sea region and the Northern Caucasus into their hordes in 558–568, these Avars broke through to the borders of Byzantium, created their own state in the valley of the Danube, and from time to time devastated the countries of Central Europe.

In the latter half of the 6th century the term '*Turkic*' became widespread. The Sogdian reproduced it as 'Turkic' and in plural it had the form 'Turkut', 'the Turks'. The Sogdian plural form was borrowed by the Chinese (*Tu-jue-Turkut*), since originally diplomatic and written communication between the Turks and China was maintained with the help of the Sogdians and in the Sogdian written language. After that the term '*Turkic*' is recorded by the Byzantines, Arabs, and Syrians, and it enters Sanskrit and Tibetan and various Iranian languages.

Before the creation of the Khaganate, the word 'Turkic' meant only the name of the union of ten (later twelve) tribes which were formed soon after 460 in the Altai. This meaning was kept in the era of the Khaganates. It is reflected in the expression from the oldest Turkic texts '*Turkic bodun*', the word '*bodun*' means a body or union of tribes, a people consisting of separate tribes. As late as the middle of the 8th century, sources mention 'the

twelve-tribe Turkic people'. The same word designated the multi-tribal state created originally by the Turkic tribal union—the Turkic El. Both meanings are reflected in ancient Turkic epigraphic written monuments and in Chinese sources. In a broader sense, the term '*Turkic*' started to denote the belonging of various nomad tribes to the state created by the Turks. It was used in this context by the Byzantines and Iranians, and sometimes by the Turks themselves.

Later the meaning of the term was developed by Arab historians and geographers in the 9–11th centuries, and the word 'Turkic' appeared as the name of a group of peoples and languages, but not as the name of a people or state [Bartold, vol.5, p. 584]. The general concept of the genetic relationship of languages spoken by the Turkic tribes and of the genealogical relationship of these tribes first emerged in Arab literature. But such broad interpretation was used only in the circles of educated Muslims. For example, in the Russian chronicles of 985, the tribe of Torks (—that is, Turks) is mentioned, but it is only one of the numerous nomadic unions of the Wild Field, named among the Berendeis, the Pechenegs, the Black Caps and the Polovtians.

Now, having clarified the main notions connected with the old Turkic states, we should preface the consistent account of their political and social history with at least the most general outline of the ethnic history of those tribes which actually formed the world of the ancient Turkic nomads of the first millennium CE. We understand that such anticipation isn't always easy for readers to understand, but nevertheless we consider it necessary to introduce several generalised ideas into the text.

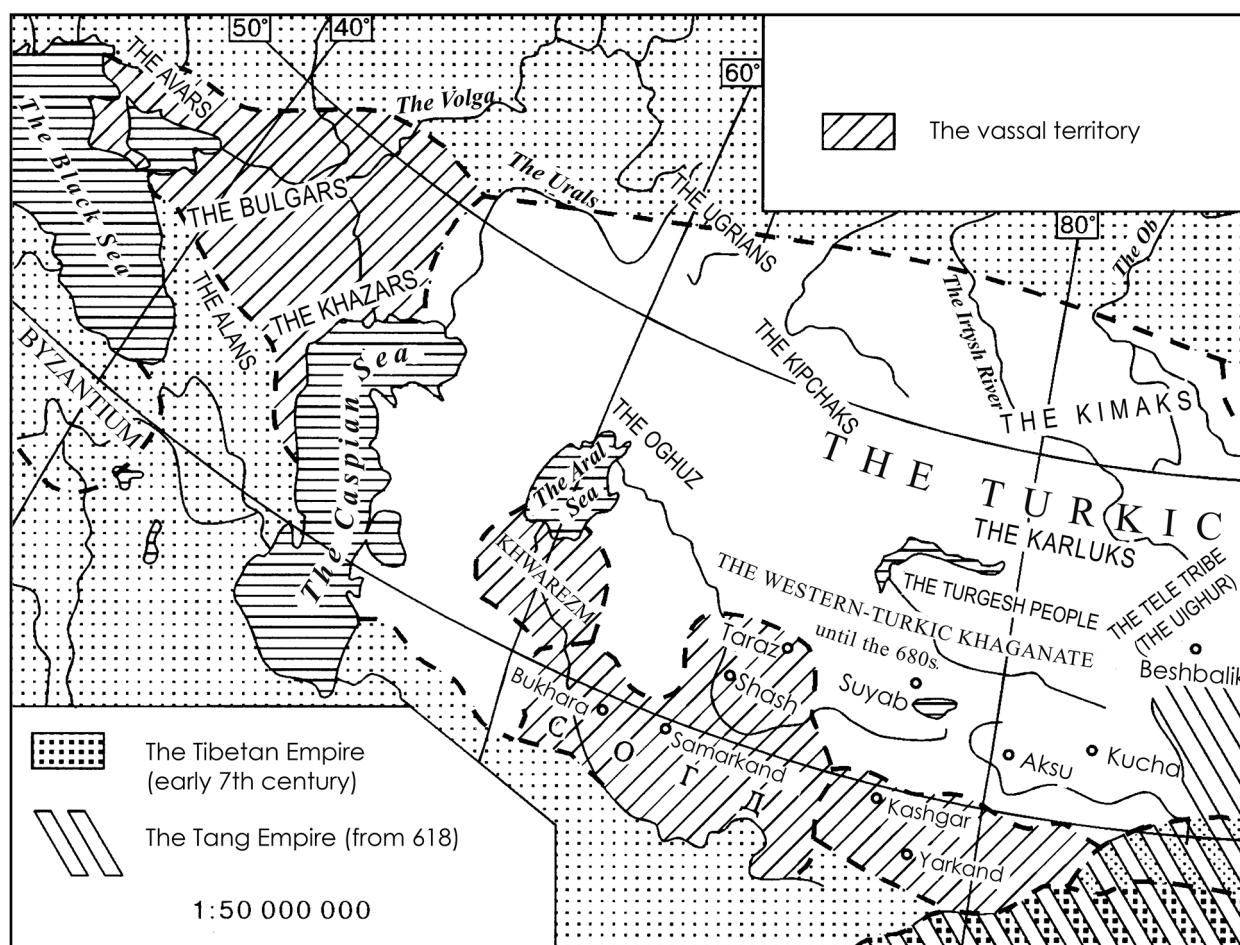
A general concept of the ethnic history of ancient Turkic tribes

The most ancient centres of Turkic ethno- and glottogenesis (—that is, the territories where these ethnic groups and languages were formed) are inseparably connected with the eastern part of the Eurasian

continent—Central Asia and Southern Siberia—from the Altai Mountains in the west to the Khingan in the east. This vast region was not isolated from neighbouring civilisations or from the mountain, taiga and steppe tribes of other ethnic makeups. The routes of migration processes, now intensifying, now lessening, ran through the Great Steppe. A peculiar feature of the ethnogenetic processes in the Great Steppe was their non-local (not associated with any territory) character, defined by the high degree of mobility of the tribes who lived there. A common feature of the Turkic tribal unions of antiquity and the Middle Ages was their instability, mobility, and ability to easily adapt as part of reemerging tribal groups. Only within the framework of the ethnopolitical unions created by one tribal group (dynasty) or another did the seemingly chaotic migrations acquire a certain direction. And only in the context of large chronological periods can one notice the general regularity these migrations obeyed—the shifting of the Turkic-speaking groups from the east to the west.

The extreme paucity of written sources and difficulties of ethnic interpretation of archaeological materials predetermine the reconstructive character of the processes under consideration in general and the hypothetical character of specific conclusions. Therefore, we must confine ourselves to the most general and clearly delineated periods within the limits of the ancient Turkic era which are associated with fundamentally different stages in the formation of the Turkic-speaking ethnic communities.

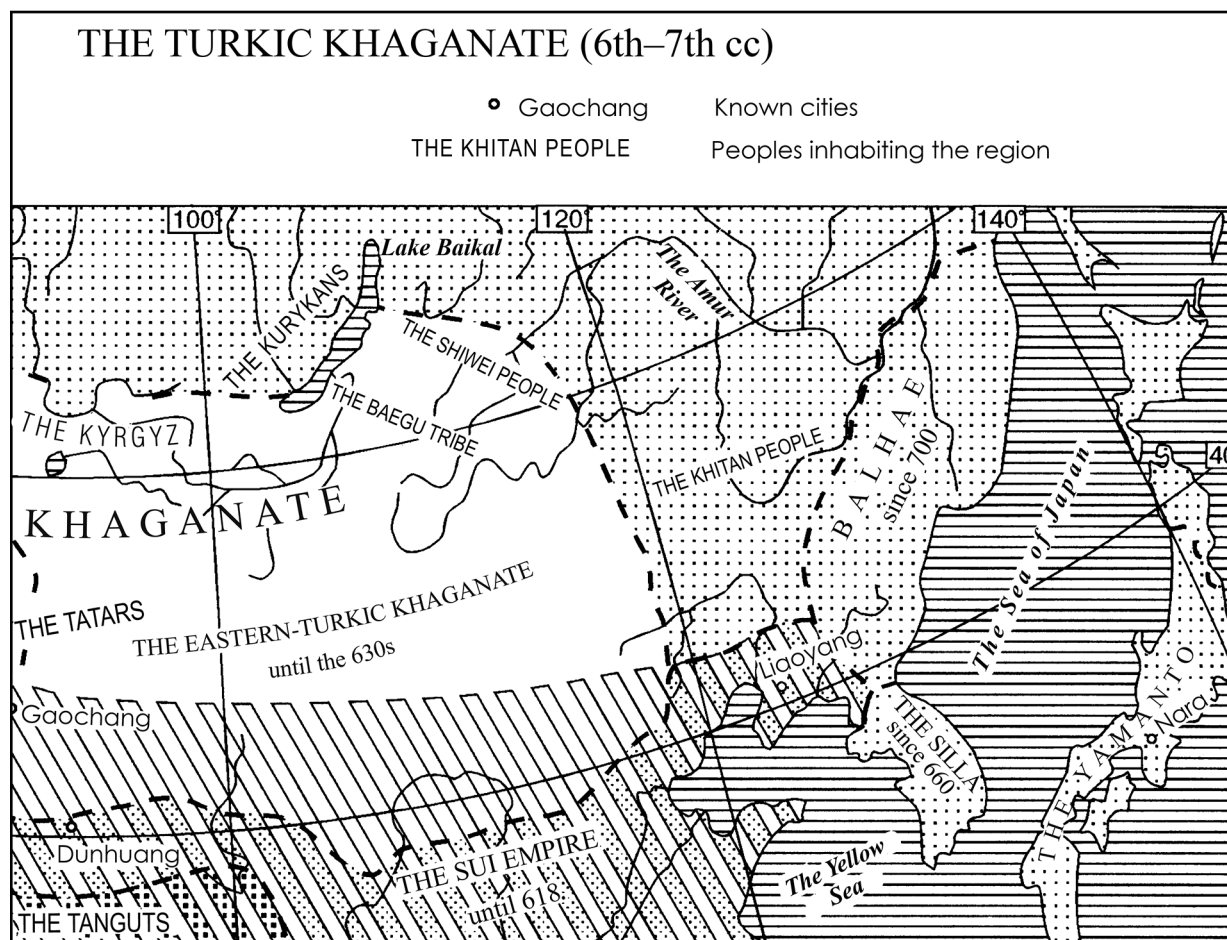
The beginning of the Turkic ethnogenesis is habitually linked with the collapse of the state of the Huns and the isolation of previously unknown tribal groups on the territory of Central Asia. However, the connection of the latter with the Huns, despite a certain tendency in the Chinese historiographic tradition, is not indisputable with regard to ethnogenesis. By now a distinction has definitely been established between the 'non-Altai' (in the linguistic sense) affiliation of the early Huns, who created the empire, and the obviously conglomerate character of the late Hun-



nic community, dominated by 'Altai' ethnic groups. It is on the periphery of the empire of the Huns that the first proto-Turkic ethnopolitical groups emerged in the first centuries CE.

The first Turkic folklore monuments, written in the 6th century and reflecting the early stage of Turkic ethnogenesis, are genealogical legends about the origins of the Ashina tribe and its transformation into the dominant group within the tribal union. The genealogical legends of the Torks which usually are interpreted quite narrowly, nevertheless allow us to trace the origins of three more tribal traditions, apart from the originally Turkic genealogy. These turned out to be connected with the initial stages of the ethnogenesis of the Kyrgyz, the Kipchaks and the Tiele (the Oghuzes).

Usually two legends recorded in 'Zhou Shu' and 'Bei Shi' about the origin of the Turks are interpreted. Both of them are most likely different recordings of the same legend, reflecting successive stages of the settlement of the Ashina Turks in Central Asia. After the migration of the Ashina to the Altai, the Turkic-speaking ethnic groups from the north of Central Asia and Southern Siberia, who had created separate tribal unions in the neighbourhood of the Ashina Torks were included into their genealogical tradition as equal participants. According to the genealogy recorded in China, this is the group of the Tsigu—that is, the Kyrgyz from the Yenisei, the group of the 'White Swan', which I identify with the late Kipchaks, and the group of the 'Tiele' (the Tiele-Oghuzes),



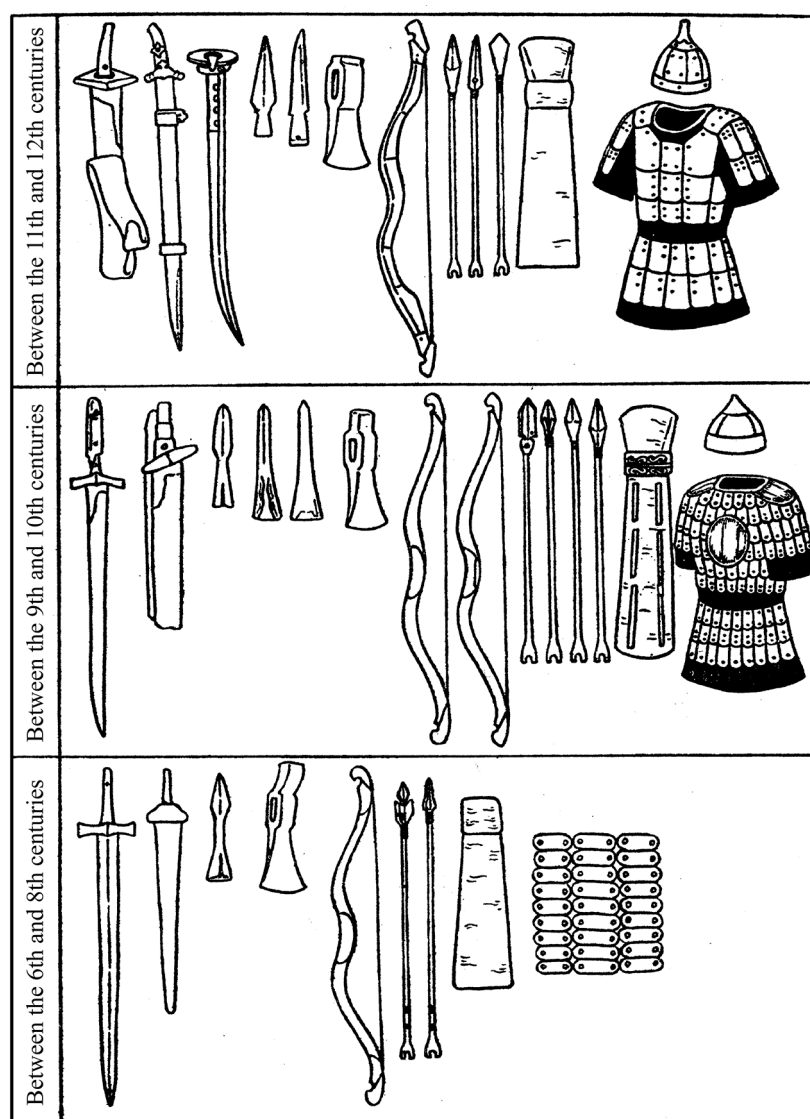
The Turkic Khaganate in the 6–7th centuries [Tatar Encyclopaedic Dictionary, p. 592]

identified with the relatives of Ashina mentioned in the legend who settled near the river Chzhuchzhe.

An analysis of the versions of the legend enables us to notice two important circumstances. Firstly, the four main ancient Turkic tribal groups that retained their historical succession in the later period had been formed at a very early stage of the Turkic ethnogenesis, when their genealogical kinship was still felt and reflected in the narrative tradition. Secondly, judging by the number of generations, the information recorded in the 6th century reflected the events of the 5th or perhaps the 4–5th centuries that had taken place on the territory of the eastern Tian and the Sayan-Altai (including the Mongolian Altai). The latter gives us the opportunity to address the

surviving fragments of descriptions of historical events and the archaeological materials of that time.

On the territory of the Sayan-Altai in the 3rd–4th centuries, several archaeological cultures may be pointed out which according to some characteristic elements can be attributed with various degrees of accuracy to the early Kyrgyz, early Tiele (early Oghuz) and early Kipchak cultures. For example, in the *Tashtyk culture* of the 3rd–4th centuries, which took shape on the territory of the Middle Yenisei lowland, a number of elements which were later developed in the culture of the Yenisei Kyrgyz (the rite of corpse cremation, some constructional peculiarities of burial vaults, some types of jewellery and ceramics) are clearly discernible.



Chronological and typological matrix of Kyrgyz weapons and arms
[Khudyakov, 1980, p. 133]

The monuments of the Berel type in the Altai Mountains (3rd–5th centuries) are noted for the burials of horses and for that reason are rightly treated as early Tiele (early Oghuz) monuments. In the synchronous monuments of the Northern Altai which make up the conglomerate culture of the Upper Ob, elements subsequently typical of the early medieval Kipchak culture can be observed. The creators of the above-mentioned archaeological complexes are evidently connected with the ethnocultural substrate of the Hun time, but

in the 3rd–5th centuries the ancient Turkic cultures had already split off as manifestations of separate ethnic communities. Thus, the analysis of the written traditions and archaeological materials allows us to outline the first deep level of the Turkic ethnogenesis, which can be conventionally named the **stage of legendary ancestors**.

In the middle of the 6th century, four main groups of ancient Turkic tribes became members of a new political unit, created by the Ashina Torks which laid the foundations

for the next stage of the ethnic and political history of Central Asia—the **stage of archaic empires** (6–9th centuries).

The new stage of Turkic ethnogenesis unfolded against the background of changed social conditions (intensification of the separation of dominant and subordinate groups of the population) and within different territorial limits (expansion of the power of the Turkic Khagans to all the Great Steppe and penetration of their political influence into the area of Central Asian settled civilisation). This stage defined the new level of ethnic contacts and economic symbiosis with the world of Eastern Iran. The formation of the Turkic and Uighur Khaganates and the states of the Karluks, Turgesh, Kyrgyz and Kimaks, who had created similar socio-political structures, predetermined the gradual shift of the centres of Turkic ethnogenesis to the west, together with the weakening of the previous ethnic processes connected with the Turks on the territory of Central Asia.

Tribal particularism within the archaic empires,—that is, striving for isolation, for the first time met a counterbalance—the imperial ideology. A unified literary and written language, an empire-wide fashion in the material culture and a single socio-political nomenclature appear within the single empire and continue to exist even after its disintegration. These processes reflected the new ethnic world view which opposed them as a whole to the rest of the cultural world. At the same time, in Zhetysu, Eastern Turkistan and partly in Central Asian Mesopotamia, processes quite different from the above-mentioned ones were taking shape. These involved a quite narrow localisation of stable ethno-territorial groups in which the influence of centripetal forces increased and the initially unstable tribal ties strengthened, forming the future Turkic nation.

The centripetal and centrifugal processes, alternating and co-existing in the history of the archaic empires, were reflected in the contradictory nature of the development of archaeological cultures of that time. On the one hand, the common Turkic cultural complex is being formed: it includes the forms of the ar-

tifacts widely spread across the steppe zone in the latter half of the 1st century CE (saddles with stirrups, complex bows, three-feathered arrows, buckles, jewellery), ideological views reflected in the burial ceremony, and works of art. On the other hand, culturally differentiating features of archaeological complexes with specific ethnic content are quite clearly recorded. For example, three independent archaeological cultures can be distinguished, differing in standards of burial ceremonies, the typical design of objects and their decoration—the *culture of the Yenisei Kyrgyz*, the *culture of the Altai Turks* and the *Srostkin culture*,—that is, the *Kimek-Kipchak culture* of Eastern Kazakhstan and Northern Altai. The general trend in the development of early medieval cultures can be traced through the way innovations spread—from south to north and from east to west.

Thus, during the entire 1st century in Central Asia and the steppe zone of South-Western Manchuria, in Zhetysu and the Tian Shan, within the framework of processes common to the Turkic ethnic environment the complex formation of cultural traditions connected with Turkic, Oghuz, Kyrgyz and Kipchak ethnogenesis was taking place.

Within the boundaries of the archaic empires, four different groups of Turkic-speaking tribes consolidated and turned into centres for the formation of new ethnic groups. The Kimek-Kipchak group and some Oghuz tribes, having left Central Asia, moved into the basin of the Irtysh river, and then rapidly spread westward, pushing many other Turkic tribes to the south. The Kyrgyz, having pushed the boundaries of their Yenisei state outwards, occupied areas which were not very comfortable for nomads, but had considerable economic potential, the piedmont and steppe areas from Baikal to Eastern Kazakhstan, which is also reflected in the archaeological materials. The boundaries of Kyrgyz settlements in the 9–10th centuries are marked by the burial sites near Chita in the east and by the burial site Uzun-Tal in Southern Altai in the west, Kyrgyz elements can be found in the inventory of burial mounds in Western Altai and Upper Irtysh. The spread

of the influence of the Yenisei Kyrgyz in the west is marked by the materials of a burial site on the Ili River.

The group of the Toquzghuz tribes, in the aggressive struggle against the northern expansion of Tibet, was gradually moving towards the western part of Gansu and Eastern Turkistan, having turned the Tarim Basin into the western periphery of their state by the middle of the 8th century. The Torks having suffered a political defeat in 744 and having lost their Central Asian motherland, concentrated in Kashgaria and Zhety-su, where in the 10th century, after adopting Islam and blending with the kindred Karluk tribes, they created the Karakhanid state. Their Zhety-su branch—the descendants of the Turkic Oghuz tribes of the Western Turkic Khaganate, pressed by the Karluks—formed the Aral Oghuz state at the same time, assimilating the population of the Syr Darya oases and the Aral steppes. The dynamics of ethnic development defined in the depths of the archaic empires clearly revealed itself in these states, the formation of which initiated the next stage of the political, social and ethnic history of the Great Steppe—the **stage of barbarian states**, which later transformed into the early feudal powers. It was in these states that the nuclear components became most clearly outlined, consolidating the ethnic processes which determined the specific linguistic and cultural character of the Turkic proto-peoples of the early Middle Ages.

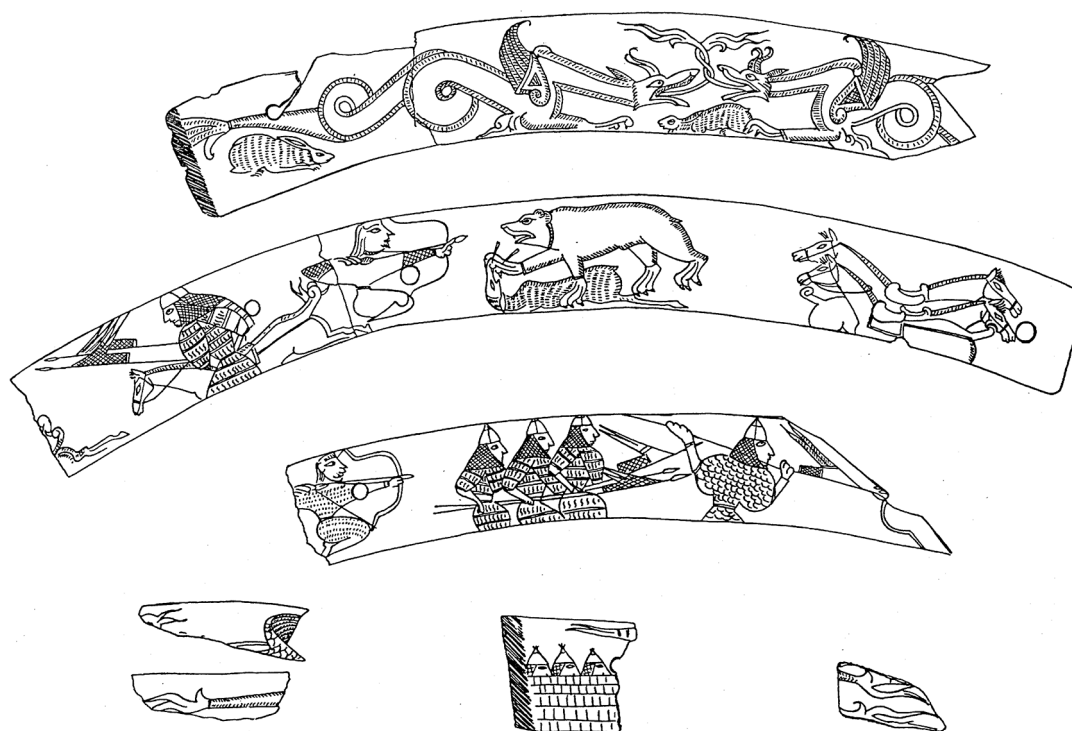
At the same time, the balance of internal and external factors which determined the orientation of ethnocultural processes changed dramatically. The most important factor at the next stage of ethnogenesis was not so much the self-development of the ancient Turkic components as the impact of close contacts with the surrounding ethnic environment—Iranian, Caucasian, Anatolian, Ugro-Finns, and Slavic. Both lines of ethnic development—the Central Asian line brought from outside and the local substrate line—manifested themselves in different ways in the formation of the race and culture and in the ethnic history of the Turkic-speaking peoples.

The First Turkic Khaganate (551–630)

Mugan Khagan (ruled in 553–572), the heir to the Bumyn and Kara Khagan, consolidated his domination over the Turkic Eli in Central Asia and Southern Siberia by conquering the Mongol tribes of Khitans in South-Western Manchuria and the tribes of Kyrgyz on the Yenisei river. According to a Chinese chronicle, he 'gave the cold shivers to all lands outside the border (the Great Wall, S.K.). From the Korean Bay in the east to the Western Sea (the Caspian Sea, S.K.) up to ten thousand li, from the south, the Sandy Steppe (the Gobi and Alashan deserts, S.K.), to the north of the Northern Sea (Lake Baikal, S.K.) between five to six thousand li, this entire expanse of land was under his power. He became a rival of the Middle Tsardom" [Bichurin, vol. 1, p. 229]. The latter statement is not entirely accurate, as during that time the Khaganate had actually made both northern Chinese states, the Northern Qi and Northern Zhou, its tributaries. Their dependence grew particularly marked during the rule of Mugan Khagan's heir, Taspar Khagan (ruled 572–582).

The western campaigns were successful for the Turks. By the end of the 560s, the Turkic Khaganate had become part of the system of political and economic relations between the largest states of the time, Byzantium, the Sasanian Iran, and China, and was fighting for control of the trade route linking the Far East with the Mediterranean countries.

Continuous wars of conquest for a time muted the sharp contradictions that had arisen in the course of social restructuring of the Turkic society, but the very first defeats quickly changed the situation. In 581–588, a previously divided China was united under the rule of the Sui dynasty (581–618), the implemented reforms led to a rapid growth of the economic and military power of the empire. The rise of China coincided with the beginning of strife within the ruling group of Torks especially in the dynastic clan of Ashina itself, and also with a terrible famine in the steppe. A Chinese historian says: 'They ate powdered bones instead of bread' [Bichurin,



Bone plates: backing of the front arch of the saddle with representations of military scenes, animals and dragons. The Shilov burial site. Mound 1. Ulyanovsk Oblast. The second half of the 7th century [Bagautdinov, Bogachev, Zubov, p. 106]

vol. 1, p. 229]. A number of factors resulted in the Khaganate facing an acute crisis and civil strife, among them: the growth of the state and the influence of a Turkic aristocracy eager to autonomously control the conquered territories, the impoverishment of the ordinary nomads, who bore the brunt of continuous wars and lost their livelihoods as a result of the cattle famine of 581–583, and the new political situation making raids unavoidable for the Turkic Khagans.

In 582–603, the Khaganate finally disintegrated into the eastern (Central Asian) and the western (Middle Asian) parts, while debilitating wars were being waged between the Eastern and Western Turkic Khaganates.

It was only under Shibi Khagan (ruled 609–619) that the Eastern Turkic Khaganate briefly found relief from its state of crisis by experiencing a rise in political power. The civil war in China (613–618) and the fall of the Sui dynasty, which was succeeded by the

Tang dynasty (618–907) allowed Shibi and his younger brother Illig Khagan (ruled 620–630) to renew the wars at the south border. However, by that time the situation within the Khaganate had changed significantly.

Long gone were the days when the entire Turkic tribal alliance had regarded raids as a normal and profitable business. Eighty years of historical development of the state created by the Turks resulted in profound qualitative changes within the society. The all-powerful khagan was guided in politics by the interests of the aristocratic elite, who were largely cut off from their roots in the clan and tribe. Warfare became profitable only for the Khaganate's ruling class, who received the lion's share of the loot and tributes. The bulk of the population derived their income from livestock farming. Most of the Turks were more interested in peaceful barter trade than in military campaigns for slaves and jewels, or to pursue tributes paid in silk. Sometimes the

Khagans, taking into account the vital problems of their subjects, would appeal to the imperial Chinese government with a request to allow barter trade. But, for nearly a millennium, border trade was seen in China only as a means to exert political control over the 'barbarians', and was therefore monopolised by the imperial court and remained extremely limited. Only a handful of reports on exchange markets opened at the Chinese border have survived from the period of two hundred years that the Turkic Khaganates existed in Central Asia. Therefore, at a certain stage in history the Turkic aristocracy managed to obtain broad support from the common people for its military campaigns in the south. Greed and the struggle for domination over foreign lands were inherent to both the imperial court and the khagan's mobile camp, while those who suffered from it were Chinese farmers and Turkic cattle breeders, who sought for peaceful trade at the border markets.

Between 620 and 629, Illig Khagan and his generals made 67 attacks on the borders. These relentless wars required large sums of money, and as a result, Illig Khagan, not content with the tributes and loot, raised the taxes and levies imposed on his own people. Taxes rose to extortionate levels during the years of cattle losses and famine between 627 and 629. Illig Khagan, following in the footsteps of his predecessors, turned to the forms and methods of exercising power that were characteristic of more developed societies. Rather than relying on the old governing bodies, which were linked to some extent to tribal traditions, he replaced officers in key positions with Chinese and Sogdians.

In the eyes of the people, the aggravation of social and income inequalities was directly related to this transfer of real power to foreigners. The people's resentment turned into hatred of foreigners. The internal conflicts within the Khaganate were so evident that they were the subject of reports by Chinese border officials, whose observations were summarised by a historian: 'The Turks had simple traditions and were simple-minded by nature. Heli (Illig Khagan, S.K.) had a Chinese scholar named Zhao De-yang at his side.

The khagan respected the scholar for his talents, and trusted him completely, so that

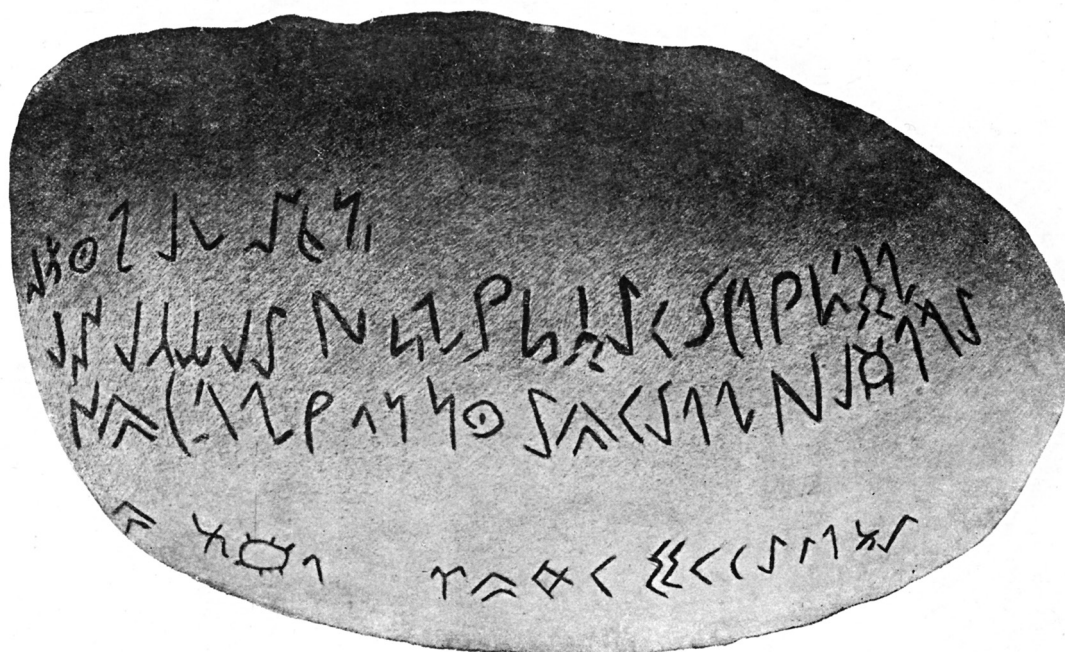
Zhao De-yang gradually came to exercise control over state affairs. Moreover, Heli entrusted the management to the Hu people (Sogdians), distanced himself from his countrymen and kept them out of service. Every year he sent troops to perform raids and his people could no longer endure these hardships. Year after year, there were great famines in the country. Taxes and fees became unbearably heavy, and the tribes increasingly turned away from Heli' [Bichurin, vol. 1, p. 194].

The consequences were not slow in coming. In 629, Illig Khagan was defeated in Shanxi. The Oghuz tribes immediately rebelled against him. The imperial army invaded the Khaganate, taking advantage of the situation. Abandoned by his followers, Illig Khagan was taken captive in 630. Thus ended the history of the first Turkic Khaganate.

The Turks in Central Asia

An 8th century Turkic historian, describing his ancestors' state and the conquests by the first Khagans, wrote: 'They settled their people to the front (that is, east), up to the Qadyrqan gorge, and to the back (that is, west), up to the Iron Gate'. The Qadyrqan gorge stands for the Greater Khingan mountain range, while the Iron Gate means the Buzgala passage in the Baysun-Tau mountains, on the road from Samarkand to Balkh, about 90 km south of Shahrissabz. In 576, at the time of its greatest territorial expansion, the Turkic Khaganate stretched from Manchuria to the Cimmerian Bosphorus (the Kerch Straits), and from the upper reaches of the Yenisei River to the headwaters of the Amu Darya. Thus the Turkic Khagans created the first Eurasian empire, the political and cultural heritage of which has had a significant impact on the history of Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe.

The brother of Bumin Khagan, Istāmi (called Silzibul or Dizavul in the Byzantine annals and Sindzhibu in Arabic historical works) came to be the ruler of the Khaga-



Funeral memorial with an ancient runic inscription from the basin of the Talas river
[Malov, 1954, between pp. 74–75]

nate's western territories. He held the title of yabgu khagan, which would later become traditional for the western branch of the Turkic Ashina dynasty. The military title of yabgu (yavuga) was borrowed by the Turks from the Kushan political tradition, preserved by the Hephtalites. It was under the rule of Istāmi, who died in 575, that the Turks reached the peak of their military power in the west.

The Turkic tribes, moving west, had captured the Yeti Su region (Zhetysu), and the whole steppe zone up to the Syr Darya river and the Aral Sea region in 555. Perhaps it was then that the suzerainty of the Turkic yabgu khagan had spread to Khwarezm. The westward movement of Turks was directed not just at conquering new lands, but was in fact a large-scale migration of the Central Asian Turkic-speaking tribes which populated the extensive mountain-steppe areas in the north and east of Central Asia, primarily in the steppe. Local nomadic tribes, linguistically related to the Torks were either included in the military administrative system created by the Torks or fled together with the Avars into the steppes of South-Eastern Europe, adopt-

ing the same ethnic name and thus significantly contributing to the military potential of the Avars. This fact led the early seventh-century Byzantine historiographer Theophylactus Simocattes to refer to these fugitives as 'pseudo-Avars'. However, the Turks themselves, according to Menander, another late 6th century Byzantine historian, called the fleeing enemy 'Avars'.

There is no evidence to suggest that the Turks influenced the social, economic or political system of the Central Asian lands they conquered, along with their cities and settled farming population. On the contrary, the fragmentary data from the sources suggests that, even in the early stages of the conquest, the domination exerted by the Turkic Khaganate over these lands was limited to receiving tribute.

The nomadic population formed the 'ten-arrow tribal alliance' (on ok bodun), which was quite similar at the time to the military administrative system adopted by the eastern Turks. Istāmi yabgu khagan is named in a Chinese source as the 'khagan of ten tribes'. However, the 'arrow', according

to later reports, was a form of military, rather than tribal administrative organisation. It is possible that several tribes were part of the 'arrow', united by a common name. Each 'arrow' fielded one *tumen*,—that is, an army of 10,000, led by the 'great leader' (*shad*) and had its own military banner. All of the 'ten arrows' were divided into eastern and western tribal confederations, each comprised of five 'arrows'. A Chinese document of the time says: 'The eastern part comprised the so-called five tribes of Dulo, led by five great chors. The western part was called the five tribes of Nushibi, and led by five great *irkins*. Later, each "arrow" came to be known as a tribe, and the great leaders of the "arrows" were given the title of *shad*. The five tribes of Dulo resided east of Suyab, while the five tribes of Nushibi resided west of Suyab' [Chavannes, pp. 27–28].

The division into two wings was inherent to many of the large Turkic tribal alliances of antiquity and the Middle Ages, like the Hunnic tribal alliance, with its eastern and western parts, and the Oghuz confederation, whose semi-mythical prototype, the *ulus* of Oghuz Khan, was divided into the Buzuk and the Uchuk. The symbol of power of the junior branch of the Oghuz confederation, the Uchuk, was an arrow. It is worth pointing out that the *yabgu* Khagans of the western branch of the Ashina dynasty were considered the junior line of the khagan dynasty and were in the same relation to Khagans of the eastern branch as the Uchuk to the Buzuk in the legendary genealogies of 'Oghuz-name'. In the 7th century, the 'ten-arrow' system in the Eastern Turkic Khaganate was replaced by a system of 'twelve tribes' divided into two confederations, the *Tölis* and the *Tardush* (the eastern and the western wings). This latter system was inherited in the 8th century by the Uighur Khaganate.

Thus, just three years after the establishment of the Turkic Khaganate, in 555, its western (Middle Asian) territories already had a military administrative system, similar to yet independent from the eastern one. This created the political conditions for the subsequent collapse of the Khaganate.

The seizure of new territories made the Turks neighbours of the powerful state of Hephthalites, the eastern lands of which (Hotan and tributary principalities in Zhetysu) had been conquered by the Turks. The hostility which was immediately manifest in Turkic-Hephthalite relations, however, remained latent for at least eight years. The Hephthalites, bound by war in India and the threat posed by Iran, were wary of another conflict on the steppe, while the Turkic leaders considered it their mission to finally defeat the Avars, who had spread beyond the Volga.

By 558, the Turks had completed the conquest of the Volga and Cis-Ural regions. That same year the Emperor Justinian received a visit to Constantinople from the ambassadors of the Avar khagan Bayan, who had conquered the Caucasus. The Byzantines soon sent a diplomatic mission in return. All this could not fail to alarm *Istämi*, especially since the attacks by the Avars on the new Turkic lands created a situation of tension at the Khaganate's western border.

Moreover, in the late 550s, *Istämi* had the prospect of a successful military campaign against the Hephthalites. The Shah of Iran, Khosrow I (ruled 531–579), had stopped paying tribute to the Hephthalites and was preparing for war with them. In 557, he renewed his truce with the Byzantine Empire, thus relieving his country from conflict in the west. Although the final agreement on a lasting peace was only reached in 561–563, Khosrow offered the Turks to form a military alliance against the Hephthalites. The alliance was concluded and formalised: *Istämi*'s daughter was married to Khosrow and would become the mother of the heir to the throne, Hormizd. This alliance was to shape the direction of the new nomadic raids. Turkic ambassadors were sent to Constantinople, headed by the leader of a Nushibi tribe, *Eskil Kyul Irkin*. Their diplomatic mission arrived there in 563 in order to make the Emperor stop supporting the Avars. And in the same year the khagan's army, supported in the west by the attack by Iranian troops on Balkh, invaded the Hephthalite lands from the east. According to the *Shah-nameh*, the decisive battle took place

near Bukhara, defeating the army of the Hephthalite king Gatifar. Only a small Hephthalite state in Tokharistan (in the north of present-day Afghanistan) managed to maintain independence for some time, but soon fell under the sway of Khosrow, who had extended his influence to all the former Hephthalite lands south of the Amu Darya.

The rift between Khosrow and the Turkic khagan, ignited by the partition of the Hephthalite legacy, soon escalated into an open conflict due to the clashing economic interests of both nations.

The Turkic Khaganate, Sasanian Iran and Byzantium. The Silk Road

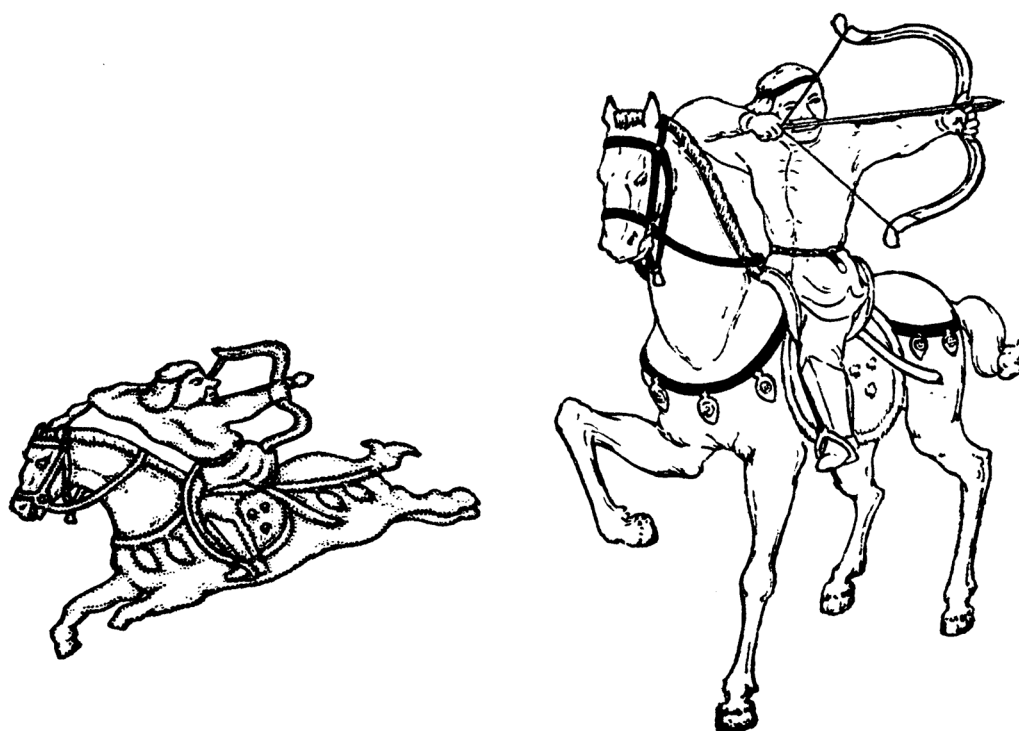
Having conquered Central Asia, the Turks gained control over a large part of the trade route from China to the Mediterranean known as the Great Silk Road. The main participants in the silk trade were the Sogdians (on the Central Asian and Middle Asian parts of the Route) and the Persians, who controlled the Route from Paikend (near Bukhara) to Syria. The largest importer of silk fabrics was Byzantium. The silk trade brought huge profits to the Sogdian merchants and Turkic khans. Through the Sogdians, the Turks saw an opportunity to sell the booty and tributes paid to them by the Chinese kingdoms. And the Sogdians amassed an unprecedented amount of valuable silk. However, from the late 4th century, Sogdia had had its own production of silk weaving based on domestic raw materials. The Sogdian silk was highly valued not only in the west, but was imported even in Eastern Turkestan and China. In the 6th century, sales of these fabrics became an important issue for the Sogdian cities. Iran and the Byzantine Empire, especially Syria and Egypt, also had a well-developed silk-weaving production, but its raw material was the unprocessed silk imported from Eastern Turkestan and Middle Asia. However, in the 6th century, Iran and Byzantium were able to source raw silk for themselves.

The Sogdians first attempted to sell the accumulated silk and reach an agreement on regular trade in Iran. The Sogdian ambassa-

dor Maniah arrived there in 566 or 567 as a representative of the Turkish khagan. However, Khosrow, worried that the Turks would gain free access to his country and was wary of a sharp increase in the amount of imported silk in the Iranian market (which would lower the income for the domestic silk weavers), so he purchased the silk brought by Maniah and burned it immediately. After that, Maniah made an attempt to find a better customer—Byzantium. In 567, he headed the Turkic khagan's diplomatic mission to Constantinople. Byzantium, like Iran, did not feel an acute need for Sogdian silk, but was seeking an alliance with the Turks against the Persians. The Sogdians tried to use this aspect of the Constantinople court's foreign policy to enter into a trade agreement.

The Turkic ambassadors were honourably received at the imperial court, and the Turks signed a military alliance with Byzantium against Iran. Maniah was accompanied to the khagan's mobile camp by the Byzantine envoy, Zemarchus the Cilician, the imperial 'strategist of the eastern cities'. The khagan received Zemarchus in his residence near the 'Golden Mountain' in the Tian, and immediately suggested that the envoy join the Turkic army in the campaign against Iran. The shah's attempt to stop the Turks' attack by diplomatic means failed, and the Turks captured a number of wealthy cities in Gurgan. However, the troops returned to Sogdia in 569.

After that, Istämi focused the attacks on the Volga river, and by 571 he had conquered the Northern Caucasus and soon entered the Bosphorus (Kerch), subjugating the Alans and the Utighurs. By doing so, the khagan was 'clearing up' a challenging bypass to Byzantium, the road through Khwarezm, the Volga region and the Caucasus or the Crimean peninsula. The Byzantine historian Menander mentions seven Byzantine embassies sent to the Turks between 568 and 576 and reports that each embassy was joined by Torks Sogdians and Khwarezmians. Their number was often considerable, for example, in 576, the embassy of the military commander Valentine was joined by 106 'Turks',—that is, subjects of the khagan, who had arrived in Constan-



Reconstruction of a lightly armed Turkic warrior of the 6-7th centuries
[Khudyakov, 1980, p. 137]

tinople at different times. Most of them were merchants. Regular trade ties with Byzantium are confirmed by numerous findings in Central Asia of 6th century Byzantine coins. However, in 575–576, Turko-Byzantine relations experienced a brief, yet sudden downturn. After the death of İstāmi Khagan, one of his sons, Turksanf, having received his privileges in the far west of the Khaganate and being extremely dissatisfied with the peace talks led by the emperor Justin II with the Avars, accused Byzantium of violating the alliance and proceeded to capture the Cimmerian Bosphorus and invade the Crimea in 576. Soon, however, he was forced to retreat from the peninsula.

The second campaign of the Turks in Iran dates from 588–589. The army led by the ‘king of the Turks’ Saveh (or Shaba) invaded Khorasan. Near Herat, it was met by Iranian troops commanded by the famous general Bahram Chobin. Chobin defeated the Turkic

army and killed ‘the king of the Turks’ with an arrow. The counter-attack was unsuccessful, and the parties made peace.

Until the defeat of the Sassanids by the Arabs, the border between the Turkic lands in Central Asia and Iran remained unchanged. During all that time, caravans carrying silk and other goods moved west through both Iran, Khwarezm, and the Volga region, with more or less regularity.

The Western Turkic Khaganate. The Sogdian settlements of Zhetysu

The internecine wars in the Turkic Khaganate, torn apart by separatist drives and inner struggles for the territories within the ruling dynasty, continued for 20 years and culminated in 603 with a split into two states: the Western Turkic Khaganate in Central Asia, including Dzungaria and part of Eastern Turkestan, and the Eastern Turkic Kha-

nate in Mongolia. The brief flourishing of the Western Turkic Khaganate during the reign of Sheguy (who ruled between 618 and 619) and Ton-Yabgu (who ruled between 618 and 630) became a period of maximum territorial expansion of the new state, rapid enrichment and the rise of a tribal-military elite that had united its tribal forces under the aegis of the Khaganate power structure to carry out almost incessant and always successful campaigns. Sheguy had already made the Altai region the eastern border of the Khaganate and extended his power over the entire basin of the River Tarim and the eastern Pamir region. Ton-Yabgu revived the active pro-western politics of the Khaganate and moved his winter residency to Suyab, a major trading and crafts centre in the River Chu valley (now the settlement of Ak-Beshim near the River Tokmak), and his summer headquarters to Ming-Bu-Lak near Isfijab (not far from present-day Turkistan). New campaigns expanded the borders of the Khaganate as far as the upper reaches of the River Amu Darya and Hindu Kush. Ton-Yabgu handed the reins of his power over the south (Tokharistan) to his son, Tard-Shad, whose headquarters were based in Kunduz.

In implementing the terms of the treaty with Byzantium, Khagan Ton-Yabgu personally participated in the third campaign of Emperor Heraclius in Transcaucasia (627–628). The spoils of the Turks in Chor (Derbend) and Tbilisi, which they had conquered, were huge. A pinnacle of success of Khagan Ton-Yabgu was his meeting with Heraclius at the foot of the walls of Tbilisi, when the Byzantine Emperor placed his own crown on the head of the Turkic Khan and promised to give him his daughter's, Princess Eudokia, hand in marriage.

During his reign Ton-Yabgu-Khagan introduced a stricter political control of the Khaganate in the erstwhile practically independent Central Asian states, whose vassalage had always been limited to the paying of a tribute. Khagan's commissaries-tuduns, who were responsible for checking that the tributes were collected and sent to the Khagan's headquarters, were sent to all subject territories from Isfijab to Chach (the Tashkent oasis) in the north as far as the territory of southern

Afghanistan and North-West Pakistan. Turkic titles were 'conferred' on local rulers, as if to include them into the administrative hierarchy of the Khaganate. At the same time, Ton-Yabgu was eager to strengthen his ties with the most prominent of the local rulers, so he offered his daughter's hand in marriage to the most powerful sovereign in Central Asia—the ruler of Samarkand. Summing up the reign of Ton-Yabgu, a Chinese chronicler notes: 'Never before had western barbarians been so powerful' [Chavannes, p. 24].

The despotic character of the rule of Ton-Yabgu, who, 'relying on his power and wealth, treated his subjects harshly' [Ibid], soon conflicted with the growing separatism of the tribal nobility that had become wealthy as a result of successful warfare. In an attempt to prevent internecine feud, the uncle of Ton-Yabgu, Kyul-Bagatur, killed his nephew and declared himself Khagan Kyul Elbilge. A proportion of the tribes, however, supported the other pretender and so an inter-tribal war broke out. By as early as 630–634 the Khaganate had lost all its Central Asian lands to the west of the River Syr Darya. The state entered a period of protracted political crisis, the main reason for which was the struggle for power between the nobility of the two confederations that made up the western Turkic tribal union—the Dulu and the Nushibi.

In 634, Yshbara Elterish Shir-Khagan, of the Nushibi tribe, came to power. He made an attempt to revive the military-administrative system of 'ten arrows'. New reforms turned the tribal chieftains (the Irkins and the Chors) into 'governors', elected or approved by the Khagan at his own discretion. Moreover, in order to exercise effective control, a member of the Khagan dynasty—Shad, in no way connected with the tribal nobility and governed by the interests of the central authorities, was dispatched to every 'arrow'. Hence, the political initiative of the local chieftains was very limited. However, the military and political resources of the Khagan's authority were insufficient to keep the tribes in servitude. The Dulu tribes proclaimed as Khan one of the Shads that had been sent to them as early as 638. After a bloody and fierce war between

the Dulus and the Nushibis, the Khaganate was separated into two empires, the borderline between them running along the Ili River. Yshbara Khagan was dethroned and fled to Fergana [Chavannes, p. 56].

The tribal warfare and conflict between the dynasties, which continued for the following 17 years (640–657), culminated in the invasion of Zhetysu by Chinese troops. The 'ten arrows' militia were defeated and their last independent sovereign, Nivar Ishbara Yabgu Khagan (*Ashina Helu* in Chinese sources), was taken captive and died two years later, in 659.

The Tang Empire tried to rule the western Turkic tribes with the support of their minions from the Khagan dynasty. These methods worked for some time, but the incessant struggle of the Turkic population for independence at the end of the 7th century was crowned with success. The state of the western Turks was reinstated by the Turgesh tribe chieftain, Uch-Elig, who created a new state—the Turgesh Khaganate. By this time a new political situation had come about in Central and Middle Asia, defined by the revival of the Eastern-Turkic Khaganate and Arabian conquests in Middle Asia.

The Western-Turkic Khaganate (which called itself *On Ok Eli*—'The State of the Ten Arrows') was different from the Turkic Khaganate in the east. Whereas a nomadic way of life was predominant in the east, the majority of the population in the west was domesticated and engaged in husbandry, crafts and trade. The social structure of the Western-Turkic Khaganate was more complex by far, and it would be perfectly justifiable to regard it as a state with relatively advanced feudal relations, as compared with the Eastern-Turkic Khaganate.

The early medieval urban and farming culture of the Western-Turkic Khaganate was developed with the participation of the Sogdians, who at a very early stage had started to establish their own trading and farming colonies on the Silk Road—in Zhetysu, Dzungaria, Eastern Turkestan and North China. Intensive Sogdian colonisation in the valleys of the Rivers Talas (the 'State of Argu' according to Turkic sources), Chu and Ili in

the 5–7th centuries led to the appearance of dozens of cities and fortified settlements in these areas. The main influx of the Sogdians to Zhetysu, especially to the Chuy Valley, was seen during the 7–8th centuries. The settlements at that time were partially excavated. These were large cities, equal in size to the majority of the early-medieval cities of Middle Asia. Their central part consisted of a citadel and a compactly constructed *shahrestan*. The shahrestan was adjacent to a *rabad* (a crafts and trade area) and a walled plot of land belonging to a farmstead, fortified farm yards—*kyoshki*, surrounded by gardens and vineyards, were spaced 50–100 metres apart. The adjoining territory, which consisted of the ploughed land of the residents of the city, was also ramparted.

In the Chuy Valley alone there were no fewer than 18 major cities and a large number of smaller settlements, founded and inhabited by the Sogdians, Torks Syrians and Persians in the 6–8th centuries. The Chinese traveller, Xuanzang, visited the country in 630 and was the first to describe the cities of Zhetysu and their population: 'We came to the city of Suy-e (Suyab), having travelled over 500 li to the north-west of the Transparent Lake (Issyk-Kyul). This city is 6–7 li in circumference. Its inhabitants are a mixture of tradesmen from different countries and the Hu (the Sogdians). The soils are suitable for the cultivation of red millet and vines. People wear textile woollen clothes. Directly to the west of Suy-e there are a few dozen cities that stand alone, each of them with its own patriarch. Although they are independent from each other, they are all subject to the Turks' [Zuyev].

Another large city, Talas, is described by the traveller in the same way. Xuanzang sums up his observations: 'The land from the city of Suyab as far as the principality of Kushania is called Sogdia, its population bears the same name' [Ibid]. It is quite clear that Xuanzang, who showed himself to be an acute observer, did not find any ethnic difference between the part of the population of the Zhetysu cities and Sogdia itself.

Having described the clothing, appearance and literacy of the Sogdians, Xuanzang was

not too complimentary about their traditions—their entrepreneurial spirit and pursuit of gain were quite repulsive to the Buddhist monk, who preached detachment from worldly vanities. However, the pilgrim did not fail to notice an extremely important fact, which immerses his reader in the everyday life of the Sogdian settlers: 'There are an equal number of those who till the land and those who strive for profit (that is, craftsmen and tradesmen)' [Ibid]. This evidence clearly demonstrates the agrarian as well as the commercial character of the Sogdian cities, which is substantiated by archaeological observations.

The Khagans' power in the Western Turkic Khaganate in the 7–8th centuries was not as great as in the east. Fierce fighting by various tribal-military elite groups, who held the military might in their hands, often made sacrifices of the Khagans, who clung to every chance of finding a political and economical base of support in their country. In these circumstances, the position of the large and wealthy Sogdian cities, which had robust fortifications, strong military troops and extensive trading and diplomatic ties, was extremely favourable. They had a constant opportunity to become involved as 'a third force' in any major internal or external conflict. The Turkic Khagans called their Sogdian subjects *Tats*,—that is, dependent tributaries. However, there is every reason to believe that the role of the Sogdians in the Western Khaganate was quite significant—the whole economic life of the state, including currency issue, was under their control. All local coins of the 8th century found during excavations in the capital of the Turkic and Turgesh Khagans, *Suyab*, bear legends in the Sogdian language and were cast in Sogdian workshops.

The Revival of the Eastern-Turkic Khaganate. The Turgesh Khaganate. The struggle against the Arabs.

In 679–689, the Eastern Turks restored their state as a result of a persistent struggle for independence with China. The first Khagan was *Kutlug*, who assumed the title of *Elterish-Khagan*. His closest aide and adviser

was *Tonyukuk*, who left a description of his activities engraved on a stone wall in the ancient Turkic runic script. The centre of the Khaganate was located at *Otyuken* (the *Khangai* mountains), and the *Altai* region already formed its western border during the time of *Elterish*. In 691, after the death of *Elterish*, his brother *Kapagan-Khagan* (ruled 691–716) succeeded to the throne, and the period of his reign is recognised as the pinnacle of the military and political potency of the second Eastern Turkic Khaganate. Several successful campaigns against the Chinese in northern China, the debacle of the *Khitans* (696–697), the subjugation of *Tuva* and the crushing defeat of the *Yenisei Kyrgyz* state (709–710) made *Kapagan* the overlord of Central Asia. The state of affairs in the Western Khaganate provided him with a pretext for military involvement.

In 699, *Uch-Elig*, the chieftain of the *Turgesh*, forced out his contender for power in the Western Khaganate, henchman of the Imperial Court, *Khosrow Byori-Shad*, compelling him to flee to China, and established his authority in all the territory from *Chach* (*Tashkent*) to *Turpan* and *Beshbalyk*. Together with *Khosrow Byori-Shad*, 60–70 thousand people from the Western-Turkic tribes subject to him left for *Beshbalyk*. The vicegerency of *Beytin* (*Beshbalyk*), where, apart from a large Chinese garrison, all chieftains from the *Ashina* dynasty subject to China were concentrated, became a formidable foe of the *Turgesh*. In 704, one of the contenders, *Ashina Xian*, invaded *Zhetysu* together with *Byori-Shad*. The *Turgesh* carried out several reprisal attacks and started to prepare for a large-scale campaign to Eastern Turkestan.

The headquarters of the Khagan were set up by *Uch-Elig* in the *Chuy* and *Ili* valleys, and the country was divided into 20 districts (*tutukstva*), 7 thousand troops being posted to each of them. During the rule of the successor of *Uch-Elig*, *Sakal*, referred to by Chinese sources as *Soge*, the first insurrections of the tribal nobility broke out, which were supported by the Chinese troops. *Sakal* defeated the insurgents and crushed the army of the Chinese vicegerent in *Kuchi*.



Illustrations of Turkic people.

1: the urochishche [plot of land] of Tete in the Kurai steppe (Altai), 2: Kyzyl-tei (Tuva),
3: the Shemi River (Tuva).

Created by A. Ambroz [Eurasian Steppes, 1981, p. 127]

The campaign of 708 to Kuchi (Ansi) was still being prepared by Uch-Elig. His aim was to force the Tang Empire to stop the invasions of Zhetysu, which were being constantly organised by the Chinese government. The Chinese troops suffered defeat on the battle fields. The vicegerent of Ansi himself, Nyu Shijian, was killed, along with many other military leaders. The remnants of the Kuchi garrison sat it out in the fortresses. For the Turgesh the threat from the south disappeared for some time. Subsequently, however, the younger brother of Sakal stirred up a rebellion, having asked his eastern neighbour, Kapagan-Khagan, for help.

In 711, the Eastern Turkic troops, headed by Kapagan's son, Inel, and the apatarkan (commander-in-chief) Tonyukuk, crushed Sakal's army on the River Boluchu in Dzungaria. The two feuding brothers were put to death at the order of Kapagan, and for some time (711–

715) the Turgesh Khaganate ceased to exist. The remnants of the Turgesh armies, headed by commander and member of the Khagan dynasty, Suluk Chabysh-Chor, dropped back to the Syr Darya and headed for the south. In pursuit of them, in 712–713, the troops of the Eastern Turkic army, headed by Tonyukuk and the sons of Elterish-Khagan, the future Bilge-Khagan and Kultegin, found themselves in Sogdia. Here they took part in the battles against the Arabs on the side of the Sogdian Tsar Gurek, but routed by Arabian commander Qutaybah ibn Muslim, they retreated in 714 and, overcoming the resistance of rebellious tribes in the Altai, they returned to Otyuken.

Suluk returned to Zhetysu and, declaring himself Turgesh-Khagan, restored the Turgesh state. He had to fight on two fronts. In the west the country was seriously threatened by the victorious Arab armies, who had led campaigns to the Syr Darya in 714–715.

In the east the Chinese Court supported the revenge-seeking princes from the dynasty of the Western Turkic Khagans who had settled in Eastern Turkestan.

First of all, Suluk attempted to neutralise the threat from the east. In 717, he made a successful diplomatic visit to Changan, the capital of the Tang Empire. After this, he concluded marital contracts with three rulers who posed a danger to him: he married the daughter of a descendant of the Western Turkic Khagans of the Ashina dynasty and, in so doing, he legalised his authority, the daughter of the Tsar of Tibet became Suluk's second wife. Suluk married his son off to the daughter of Bilge-Khagan, following which their amicable relations were never damaged once. The attempts of the Chinese vicegerents in Eastern Turkestan to curtail the sovereignty of Suluk were conclusively suppressed. In 726 and 727, the Turgesh army (for second time, together with the Tibetans) besieged Kuchi on two occasions.

However, Suluk's main military action was directed towards the west, where he, without hesitation, joined the anti-Arab struggle of the Central-Asian states. In 720–721 the commander of Suluk, chieftain of the Sara-Turgesh Kuli-Chor (Kursul according to Arab sources), conducted successful combat operations against the Arabs in Sogdia.

In 728–729, at the time of the largest anti-Arab rebellion by the population of Samarkand and Bukhara, the Sogdians turned to the Khagan for help. For a brief period the invasion by the Turgesh resulted in the almost total liberation of Sogdia from the Arabs, who only retained Samarkand. In 730, the Arabs managed to achieve some successes, but in 731 and 732 were once again crushed by the Turgesh in the mountains between Kesh and Samarkand and then in Kermine. It was only towards the end of 732 that the Arab vicegerent Dzhunaid ibn Abdallah crushed the Turgesh and entered Bukhara.

Around five years had passed since the conquest of Bukhara when the Turgesh army again appeared in the upper reaches of the Amu Darya in response to the appeal for help by the Yabgu of Tokharistan (the Yabgu him-

self belonged to the Turkic dynasty), who was besieged by the Arabs. Within a short time the Turgesh forced the army of the Arab vicegerent Asad ibn Abdallah out of Tokharistan, but then spread around the country in small detachments. The Khagan, with his few forces, attacked the Arabs and suffered a crushing defeat. This misfortune cost Suluk his life. On his return to Nevaket (737) he was killed by his commander (the Chinese call him by his title—Baga Tarkan). The new Arab vicegerent in Khorasan, Nasr ibn Sayar, invaded the Khaganate in 739, inflicted defeat on the Turgesh and beheaded their captive chieftain Kuli-Chor.

The Arabs named Suluk Abu Muzahim (literally: 'attacking, butting') and saw him as the main threat to their authority in Sogdia. During the reign of Umayyad Caliph Hisham (724–743) an attempt was made to solve the matter in a diplomatic way, by converting the Turgesh Khagan to Islam. The exact date and circumstances of the Arab embassy at the Turgesh headquarters (one of these was on the Ili River) are unknown, but an account by the historian Ibn al-Faqih (beginning of the 10th century), summarised in the geographical works of Yaqut 'Mudjam al-Buldan', has been preserved: 'The ambassador narrates: "I was given an audience (by the Khagan), when he was making his own saddle. The Khagan asked the interpreter: Who is it? His interpreter replied: The ambassador of the Arab Tsar. The Khagan asked: My subject? The interpreter replied: Yes. Then he gave orders to take me to a tent, where there was a lot of meat but little bread. Then he gave an order to call me and asked: What do you need? I started flattering him and said: My governor sees that you are under a misapprehension, and wants to give you a sincere piece of advice—he wants you to adopt Islam. The Khagan asked: What is Islam? I told him about (religious) precepts, about what Islam prohibits and what it encourages, about religious duties and serving God..." [Yaqut, v.1, p. 839].

There is an omission here in the text of Yaqut. In the complete text of Ibn al-Faqih, preserved as the Meshkhed manuscript, the Khagan asks: Who are the Muslims? And the



Illustration of a Turkic.
Afrasiab (Samarkand).
By A. Ambroz
[Eurasian Steppes, 1981, p. 127]

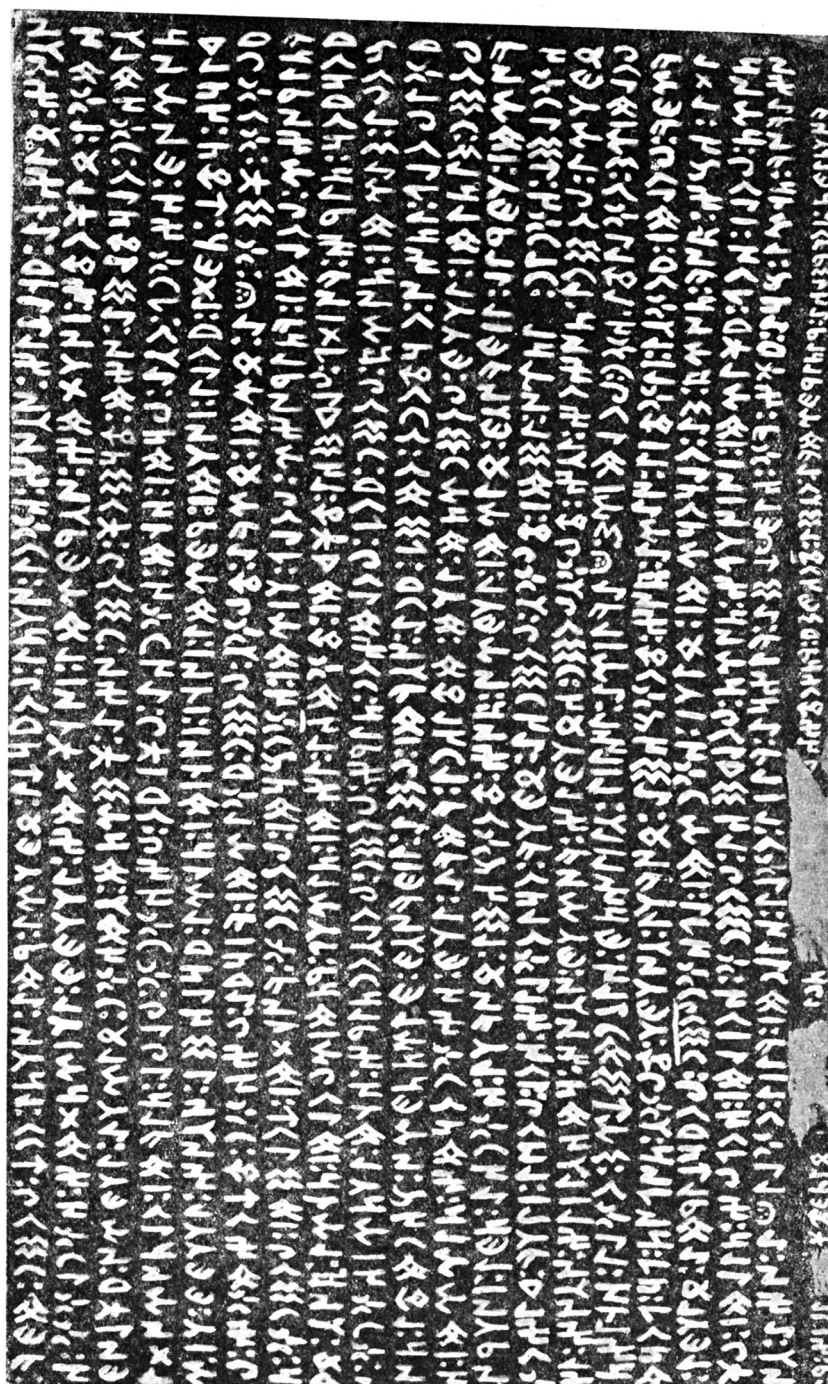
ambassador replies that they are inhabitants of cities, and among them there are bath attendants, tailors and shoemakers. 'The Khagan told me to wait a couple of days. One day the Khagan mounted his horse and he was accompanied by ten people, each of them holding a banner. He ordered me to go with them. We (soon) came to a hill with copses on all sides. As soon as the sun rose he ordered one of the ten men who had accompanied him to unfold his banner, and it began to gleam (in the rays of the sun)... And there appeared ten thousand armed horsemen, who were shouting: Chah! Chah! And they lined up under the hill. Their commander rode forward up to the Tsar. One after another, the standard-bearers unfolded their banners (on the hill), and each time a new line of ten thousand horsemen appeared under the hill. And when all ten banners were unfolded, there stood a hundred thousand horsemen, armed head to toe. Then

(the Khagan) ordered the interpreter: Say this to the ambassador and let him tell his governor—there are no bath attendants, no shoemakers and no tailors (amongst my warriors). If they were to convert to Islam and followed all its precepts, what then would they eat?' (cit. ex: [Marquart, p. 289–291]).

The demonstration of the army of the 'ten arrows' appeared quite convincing and the Arabs no longer tried to persuade the Khagan to adopt a new religion.

The Muslim authors, who knew about the Turks from the participants in the Arab campaigns to Turkestan, preserved many vivid descriptions of the manners and customs of the nomads, especially their military features. The treatise of the Baghdad erudite Ibn al-Jahiz (deceased 869) serves as an example of such work. This is what he writes about the Turkic way of life: 'The Turks are a people for whom a settled way of life, a state of inertia, prolonged stays in one place and the paucity of movement and change are intolerable. Their very essence is based on movement and it is not their intended purpose to rest... They do not occupy themselves with commerce, crafts, medicine, farming, tree-planting, building, canalisation and harvesting. And they have no trade apart from raiding, plundering, hunting, riding, knight-combat, scouring for loot and conquering lands. Their thoughts are guided by this alone, are controlled solely by these aims and motives, limited by and tied only to these. They have mastered these things to perfection and have taken them to their limits. They have become their craft, trade, pleasure, pride and the subject of their conversations and night-time discussions'.

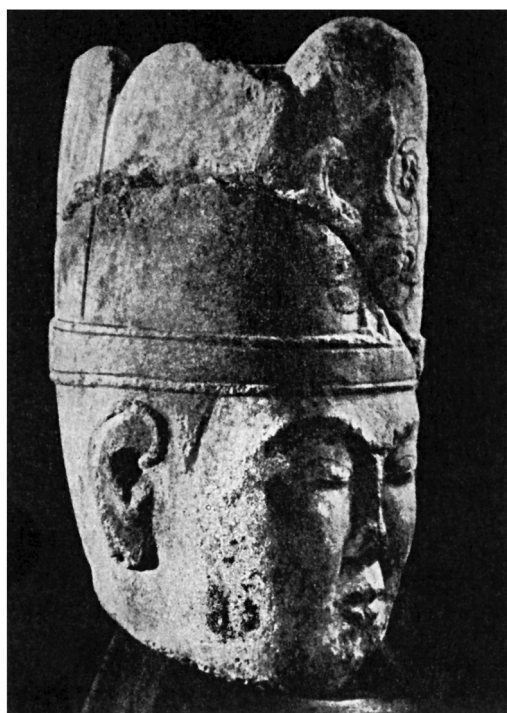
The principal weapons of the Turks are the bow and arrow, in which they are exceptionally skilled: 'The Turkic shoots at wild animals, birds, targets, people... He shoots, riding like a madman back and forth, to the right and left, up and down. He shoots ten arrows before the (Arab) haridzhit manages to place one arrow onto his bow-string. And he races on his horse, down a hill or along a valley, at a greater speed than the haridzhit is able to ride on flat ground. The Turkic has four eyes—two on his face, two on the nape of his neck'.



Text on a monument in honour of Kultegin on the shores of the Orkhon River (Mongolia)
[Malov, 1954, between pp.24–25]

Describing a meeting of the caliph's ambassador with the Turgesh Khagan, Ibn al-Faqih notes a detail that the Arab found astonishing—the Khagan made his saddle him-

self. Jahiz develops this theme. Conversing about sword-making by the Arabs, he enumerates eight or nine operations, each of which is performed by a particular craftsman, and



Kultegin. Mongolia
[Artamonov, 1962, p. 256]

then he notes: 'This is the way in which the saddle, arrows... quiver, spear and all weapons are made... And the Turkic does it all by himself from start to finish, without asking his companion for help or turning to his friend for advice. He has no use for craftsmen, and is not bothered by their delays day after day, their false promises, and does not have the worry of paying him' [Mandelstam, p. 230–241].

Of course, there are exaggerations in Jakhiz's accounts and he acknowledges this: 'But not all Turks are how we have described them'. The Arab historians and geographers were actually the first not to restrict themselves to the registration of political and juridical institutions when comparing the Turks with their fellow countrymen and other peoples known to them, but took account of the human qualities and peculiarities of the psychology and nature of the Turks and attempted to link these peculiarities to the way of life and life goals of the nomads. There was no disrespect for the 'barbarians', so characteristic of other sources, in the opinions of the

Arabs, their emotional evaluation, admiration or conviction was based, not on preconceived ideas, but on their personal experience of communication throughout several centuries.

The death of Suluk and the brief reign of his son, Tukhvarsen Kut Chor-Khagan, laid the foundation for a twenty-year fight for power between the 'yellow' and 'black' Turgesh and led to the destruction and degradation of the Turgesh Khaganate. Internecine feud among the Turgesh gave the Chinese vicegerents in Eastern Turkestan an opportunity to interfere in the affairs of the country. Meanwhile, the second Turkic Khaganate was restored by Bilge-Khagan and his brother, Kyul-Tegin, following the death of Kapagan-Khagan (716) and the power crisis that appeared as a result of the rebellion of the Oguzes. Through victory in the war against China (721–723), Bilge achieved favourable terms for peace—frontier trade was expanded, and in 727, in exchange for a symbolic tribute of 30 horses, Emperor Xuanzong sent 100 thousand piles of silk to the Turkic headquarters. This was a generous payment for peace on the northern border, which Bilge-Khagan never disturbed.

Kultegin (Kultegin) died in 731. Bilge did not outlive his brother for long—in 734 he was poisoned by one of his servants. Commemorative temples with runic inscriptions, chronicles of the turbulent history of the second Turkic Empire, were erected in memory of the two brothers near the river Orkhon, in an inter-mountain basin at the site of an encampment of caravans.

The descendants of Bilge-Khagan did not change his political course, but certain rulers from the Ashina dynasty came to regard the central authority less and less. In 741, the young Tengri-Khagan was killed by his uncle Kutlug-Yabgu, who had seized the throne. A war broke out with the former vassals, the Oghuzes, the Basmyls and the Karluks, in which Kutlug-Yabgu and his descendants died. By 744, the Ashina dynasty ceased to exist. The chieftain of the Basmyls was pronounced the Khagan. His reign, however, lasted little over two years.

The Turkic tribes, who had preserved part of the territory to the west of their former em-

pire, in the Altai region and Dzungaria, did not play any significant role in the events of the following years. The last mention of them in Chinese sources related to the year 941, at this time part of the Turkic people were among the tribes that had created the Kara-Khanid Khaganate.

The Uighur Khaganate and the Karluk State. The Karakhanids

The fall of the second Turkic Khaganate created a political vacuum in the steppes. The battle for lordship over the Turkic people and for the title of Khagan commenced between the victorious tribes which had put an end to the Ashina Empire—the *Basmyls*, the *Uighurs* and the *Karluks*. The Uighurs, having taken power from the Basmyls, proved to be the strongest.

The Uighurs, like the Torks the Kyrgyz and the Kipchak, were among the most ancient tribal alliances of Central Asia. In the 3rd–4th centuries the Uighurs were a part of a union which in the Chinese dynastic chronicles was called *Gaoche* (literally: 'high carts'). In the 5th century a new name for this union appears in Chinese sources—the *Tiele* (Tögrög—'cart people'). A significant part of the Tiele people migrated to west to the steppes of Kazakhstan and South Eastern Europe. Those who stayed in the steppes of Central Asia were subordinated to the Turks and became part of their state. The main lands of the Tiele were then in Dzungaria and Zhetysu. But in 605, after several hundred Tiele chiefs were treacherously killed by Western Turkic Churin Khagan, the chief of the Uighurs lead his people to the Hangai Mountains, where they organised a separate group which Chinese historiographers called 'the nine tribes'. In the Orkhon inscriptions, the tribes of this group are called *Toquzghuz*. Starting in 630, after the fall of the first Turkic Khaganate, the Toquzghuz was a significant political power, led internally by ten tribes of the Uighurs headed by the Yaglakar dynasty.

The chief of the Toquzghuz, the elteber Tumidu, established his state in 647 in the basin of the Tola and Orkhon rivers. The Chinese chronicles report: 'Tumidu nonetheless

ТОРКОВ И СС НАСЛЕДНИКИ

ЛТJ



Text on a monument to Tonyukuk on the shores of the Selenga river (Mongolia)
[Malov, 1954, between pp.56–57]

declared himself Khagan, and established positions for officials which were the same as the Turkic positions' [Chavannes, p. 91]. The Tang government did not recognise the newly created state. Moreover, from 660 to 663 the Toquzghuz were at war with the Tang dynasty, and the Chinese army could not secure the victory. However in the early 680s, the Toquzghuz suffered defeats in battles with the Turks of Elterish Khagan and lost their statehood.

A new state of the Uighurs appeared in a ferocious struggle not only with their former allies, the Basmyls and Karlucs, many tribes of the Toquzghuz fiercely resisted the Yaglakar dynasty. The Uighurs managed to defend the right of the Yaglakar dynasty to the title of Khagan, but the final peace came only after great military successes in China, where after 755 a rebellion of the Northern frontier troops broke out under the command of a descendant of the noble Turkic-Sogdian line An Lushan, followed by a civil war. Eletmish Bilge Khagan (ruled in 747–759) and his son Bögü Khagan (ruled in 759–779), having provided support for the imperial government, helped to suppress the revolts and received immense material gains for their help. Loot, tributes and border trading for a time ensured peace in the Khaganate and the dynasty's authority.

Together with war loot and imperial gifts, Bögü Khagan brought from China to Ordu-Baliq, his capital on the Orkhon, the preachers of a new teaching—Sogdian Manichaean missionaries, whose faith he accepted in Luoyang, the capital of the Tang, which he had freed from the rebels. After 763 and almost until the end of the century, the Uighurs became a decisive political power in the affairs of Central Asia. Only the Tibetans and the Karlucs were their rivals.

The rebirth of the statehood of the Western Turkic people during a new stage in the history of Turkic Central Asia is connected with the dominance of the Karlucs. A large tribal formation repeatedly mentioned in runic inscriptions under the name Uch Karluk ('three Karlucs') appears in the Chinese sources in connection with the events of the first half of the 7th century. Camping grounds in Dzun-

garia, Eastern Kazakhstan and Altai (including Mongolian Altai) remained the main territory of the Karluk tribes for several centuries.

In the middle of the 7th century the Karlucs took active part in the political life of the Western Turkic Khaganate, where besides the Dzungar-Altai region they also had control over Tokharistan. According to Arabic sources, the ruler of Tokharistan was called either 'Yabgu of the Tocharoi' or 'Yabgu of the Karlucs'. In 710, the Arabic conquerer of Middle Asia Qutaiba ibn Muslim arrested the Karluk Yabgu of Tokharistan, and he spent long years in Damascus, which nevertheless did not prevent his son from taking his father's throne.

The rebellion of the Dzungarian Karlucs on the Black Irtysh in 630 was one of the reasons for the death of the Western Turkic Khagan Ton-Yabgu. An attempt to subdue this group of the Karlucs, undertaken in 647–650 by the Eastern Turkic Khagan Chabysh, who stirred up a rebellion against the Tang empire and settled in Northern Altai, is also known.

The common chief of the Karlucs is mentioned in the Orkhon inscriptions for first time under the title *elteber*, which was given to the chiefs of large tribal unions. A Chinese source mentions that the Karlucs have the same customs as other Western Turks and their language does not differ much from that of the majority of them. A characteristic feature of the Karluk language was 'dzhekanye': they said, for example, 'dzhabgu' instead of 'yabgu' typical of the neighbouring Turkic tribes.

While remaining under the political influence of the Eastern Turkic Khagans starting in the late 7th century, the Karlucs did not resign themselves to the loss of independence. Only in the first quarter of the 8th century, Bilge Khagan and Kyul-Teghin participated three times in battles with the rebellious Karlucs, and the inscription of their commander Kuli-chor of Tardush tells about the defeat of the Turks in a fierce battle on the river Tez (in North-West Mongolia).

Taking part in the coalition with the Basmyls and the Uighurs and then fighting with his former allies, the head of the Karlucs took the title of Yabgu, which the rulers of the West Turkic Khaganates bore. Hav-

ing been defeated, the Karluks, according to the inscription of the Uighur Eletmish Bilge Khagan, 'in the year of the Dog (746), having planned treachery, fled. They came to the West, to the country of the Ten Arrows' [Klyashtorny, 1980, p. 94]. Eletmish evaluated the situation correctly. The following year the Karluks, in alliance with the Toquz Tatars, fought with the Uigurs again. However, a rapid change in the military and political situation between the Syr Darya and Altai made the Karluks forget for a time about their rivals in the East and face another enemy.

Having taken advantage of the collapse of the Turgesh Khaganate after the death of Suluk, the Tang administration of the Western region gradually subdued

Zhetysu, and the imperial army moved beyond the Syr Darya. In 740, the Chinese troops captured and plundered Taraz, and the ruling Turgesh dynasty of the Karachors was physically annihilated. A Chinese appointee, the 'Khan of the ten arrows' Ashina Xian, appears in Zhetysu, but in 742 he was killed in Kulan. In 748, a Chinese expeditionary force captured and destroyed the capital of the Western Turkic Khagans, Suyab, and in 749, the Chinese army captured Chach. The local ruler was executed. It seemed that the Tang governor in Kuchi, Gao Xianzhi, could consider the full subjection of the recently menacing enemies in the Western region completed.

Meanwhile, the successes of China seriously worried the appointee of the Abbasid Caliphs in Khorasan, Abu Muslim, and provoked the ever growing resistance of the Karluks. The Arab detachment of Ibn Humaid captured Taraz, but was besieged by a more numerous Chinese army. Appeals for help from the son of the executed ruler of Chach and fear about the fate of his detachment in Taraz caused Abu Muslim to send another detachment under the command of Ziyad ibn Salih to aid the besieged.

The opposing armies met on the river Talas in July of 751 and hesitated to start the battle for a few days. On the fifth day of the conflict, the Karluks suddenly attacked the Chinese in the rear, and then the Arabs began attacking from the front. The Tang army,

bearing great losses, staggered and fled. The escort convoy of Gao Xianzhi made way for him with difficulty through the warriors running in panic.

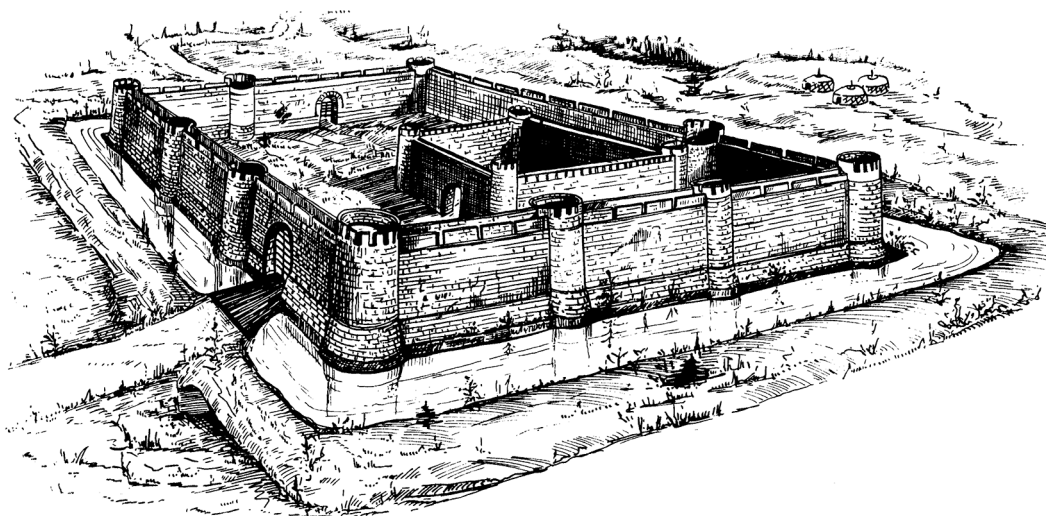
The Muslims and the Karluks captured a great amount of booty, and the Chinese craftsmen discovered among the captives were brought to Samarkand and Iraq, where they engaged in producing paper and silk weaving. The battle of Talas 'put an end to Tang China's attempts to interfere in Central Asian affairs' [Bolshakov, p. 132].

By their participation in the battle of Talas, the Karluks did not spoil the relationships with the Tang court. Already in 752, after a six-year break, the embassy of the Karluk Yabgu arrived in the imperial capital of Changan. The reason for such quick restoration of connections was the strengthening of the Uigurs, which worried both sides. In the same year the Karluks resumed the war with the Uigurs. The Yabgu still counted on taking the Khagan's throne in Otyuken Jyş, the traditional camp of the rulers of the Central Asian nomadic people, captured by the Yaglakar. The hopes of the Yabgu were not groundless—the Yenisei Kyrgyz, the Basmyl and Turgesh became his allies, and the Karluk tribes which remained in the Khangai mountains after 744 were especially dangerous for Eletmish.

The war continued for two years with varying success in the middle of the Uighur lands. With great difficulty the Uighur Khagan was able to overcome his enemies, whose actions were too uncoordinated to win.

The consequences of the war had considerable significance for the future of the Karluks. The Karluks of Otyuken submitted to Eletmish and accepted the tutuq (ruler) appointed by him. The Karluk Yabgu completely abandoned his hopes for the Khaganate and ended the war for the Turkic succession. From that moment all his aspirations were directed at capturing Zhetysu and his consolidation in Dzungaria and in the towns of the Tarim Basin. However, even here he failed—in 756 the Uighurs forced the Dzungar group of Karluk tribes to submit.

We know of the Western campaign of two commanders of Eletmish from the Khagan's



Uighur fortification in Tuva (8-9th centuries.) Reconstruction of the III archaeological site of Shagonar.
Made by L. Kyzlasov [Eurasian Steppes, 1981, p. 142]

Terkhinskaya inscription. Occupied by An Lushan's rebellion, China no longer could provide support for the remote Western garrisons. Not only did the main city centres of the Tarim Basin come under the Uighur Khaganate's control, but so did the Turkic tribes of Eastern Turkestan. For the first time a tribe or tribe alliance called the Yagmas was mentioned among them.

The Yagmas were known first of all from two Persia geographical works—Hudud al-'Alam ('The Regions of the World', 10th century) and Zayn al-akbar ('The Ornament of Histories') of Gardezi (11th century). According to these works, the Yagmas united numerous tribes dwelling between the Uighurs in the East, the camping grounds of the Karlucs in the West, and the tributaries of the Tarim in the South,—that is, in the larger part of the Eastern Tien Shan. In the West the Yagmas had control over the region and the city of Kashgar. In the 10th century the Yagma ruling dynasty was of Toquzghuz origin. Gardezi, whose sources date back to the 8th century, calls the Yagmas 'rich people with large herds of horses' living in a country of 'one month of travel' [Bartold, vol.8, p. 45–46]. Both works tell of continuous clashes of the Yagmas with the Karlucs and

the Kimaks and of their dependence on the Western Turkic Khagans.

Meanwhile, in Zhetysu the Karlucs faced the opposition not of the small Tyurghesh principalities, which had become the allies and subjects of the Yabgu, but the fierce resistance of the Oghuz tribes, which had been living there since the times of the Turkic Khaganate and over the course of several centuries had become separated from their Eastern branch (the Toquzghuz). The overall course of the fighting between the Karlucs and the Oghuz is poorly documented by the sources. It is only known that in the latter half of the 8th century the Oghuz left Zhetysu and went to the Lower reaches of the Syr Darya. Their chief also took the title Yabgu, thus making a claim for leadership over the Western Turkic tribes, soon in the Aral Sea region the state of the Oghuz formed (Muslim sources called them the Ghuz) with their capital in Jankent, a town on the Syr Darya.

The history of the Oghuz state became the pre-history of the Seljuk Empire, which ruled all the Middle and Near East in the 11–12th centuries, from Turkmenia to Asia Minor. The history of the Seljuk state and its connections with neighbouring countries and peoples have been studied in detail and are available to a wide readership [Agadzhanov].

The dominance of the Karlucs finally became established in Zhetysu in 766, when they captured Taraz and Suyab. From that time, rivaling the Uighurs, the Karlucs started to fight for Eastern Turkestan.

In the 780s, the relations between the Uighur dynasty and the population of the Tarim cities abruptly worsened. Discontent and concern were caused there by the anti-Manichaean coup in Ordu-Baliq, to which Bögü Khagan fell prey. His killer, who proclaimed himself Alp Qutlugh Bilge Khagan, sanctioned the slaughter of the Sogdian and Manichaean religious teachers who lived in the Uighur capital. Both in Zhetysu and in the Tarim oases, Manichaeism was the predominant religion. The Sogdian and Turkic Manichean congregations were the chief coordinators of trade operations on the route from Zhetysu to the capital centres of the Tang Empire. An important section of this route went through Ordu-Baliq, this was blocked by the self-proclaimed Khagan immediately after the seizure of power in the capital.

The principles of negotiation that had helped the former ruler, Bögü-Khagan, to establish his presence in the oases of Tarim were violated, the usurper preferred plundering the Sogdian and Turkic communities to the benefits of trading. The consequences were not long in coming, the towns of the Tian Shan foothills rebelled, and the neighbouring Karlucs and Tibetans formed an alliance to support the rebels. As a Chinese historiographer wrote, 'the Turks in white robes',—that is, the Manichaeans, together with the Karlucs seriously defeated the commander of the Uighur army Il Ughasi several times, in 790 the Tibetans and the Turks seized Beshbalyk, the last Uighur stronghold. A new Uighur army of 50–60,000 warriors tried to turn the tide, but the attempt failed.

The defeat in Dzungaria and Tarim resulted in dissension within the Khagan's headquarters, Alp Qutlugh's heir was overthrown and killed by his younger brother, who in turn could not retain power and died during a rebellion. The difficult war with the Karlucs and the Tibetans continued, its course was almost undocumented by the sources.

In the turbulent times a new dynasty from the Ediz tribe came to power in Ordu-Baliq, 'having assumed the name of Yaglakar' and thus identifying itself with the legitimate dynasty of the Khagans (795). 'The religion of light' was restored in the capital, where a Manichaean presbyter arrived. Alliances and agreements with the Manichaean communities of the Tian Shan foothills were restored after a fifteen-year interruption, and the 'Uighur passage' of the Silk Road through Ordu-Baliq was re-opened for caravans.

The Karlucs lost a powerful support in the Northern Tian Shan, where the towns and nomad tribes (possibly, the Yagmas) recognised the protectorate of the Khagan of Otyuken Jyš. In 803, the Uighur army captured Qocho (Turpan) and, having defeated the Karlucs, reached Syr Darya via Fergana. It was the last success of the Uighurs on the Western border.

In the first decade of the 9th century, the Yenisei Kyrgyz became the main enemy of the Uighur Khaganate. The wars between them, with variable success, went on for more than twenty years. In 840 the Kyrgyz, having united their efforts with a rebellious Uighur commander, captured Ordu-Baliq. The Uighur Khagan died in battle.

Losing those who had fallen behind and the despairing along the way, the remainder of the Toquzghuz led by one of the Yaglakar princes, having left their homeland to the Kyrgyz, came to their former borderlands. The unity of the tribes was soon lost. The fugitives consolidated in Kuchi and Beshbalyk. The chieftain of the Beshbalyk Uighurs, Buku Ching, having defeated the Tibetans, became the master of the situation in all the Tarim Basin. Thus the foundation of the Uighur state of Qocho was laid, with centres in Turpan and Beshbalyk.

Despite failures in the wars of the early 9th century, the position of the Karluk state, which relied on the rich towns of Zhetysu, remained strong. Profitable trading in Turkic slaves for the guard of the Abbasid Caliphs in the Syr Darya slave markets and control of over the transit passage to China on the section from Taraz to Issyk Kyul contributed to the accumulation of the Yabgu's wealth. The position

of the Karluks became stronger in Fergana as well, despite some attempts by the Arabs to force them out from there. The campaign of a famous associate of Caliph al-Mamun (governed in 813–833), Al-Fadl ibn Sahl known under the title of *Zur-riyasatayn* ('Owner of two banners'), proved to be the most dangerous for the Yabgu. The Arabs undertook a campaign between 812 and 817 to the region of Otrar. There the chief of the Karluk border guard was killed, and then allegedly the family of the Yabgu was captured, and he himself fled to the Kimaks. The success of the attackers was obviously exaggerated in Fadl's report, however, the position of the Karluk border guard could indeed create an intense situation for the Yabgu on the Western border.

A quarter of a century passed, and the collapse of the last Khagans of Otyuken, who had ruled for three centuries, created an absolutely new geopolitical situation in all Turkic Central Asia: for the first time in three hundred years, a strong power centre which had determined the possibilities of the expansion or even existence of any state in Turkestan disappeared completely. From that time on the Turkic tribes recognised only the high status of the clan which inherited the title of Khagan, but never again its uniform power.

According to the testimonies of several Muslim historians, after the Uighurs had lost their power, the highest authority among the Turkic tribes passed on to the leaders of the Karluks. The connection with the dynasty of Ashina, the ruling dynasty of the Turkic Khaganate, allowed the Karluk dynasty to disguise this power in legitimate attire and, having rejected the old title of Yabgu, to accept the new one—Khagan. 'Yabgu', the author of *Hudud al-'Alam* writes, 'is a former title of the Karluk tsars'.

One can hardly speak of the real power of the Karluks over the Turkic tribes in the 9th century, the old tradition had a rather moral and ideological value. Still, the main tendency of these messages is clear, and it is best of all reflected by al-Masudi: the 'Khagan of Khagans' comes from the Karluks, he has the power over all Turkic tribes, and his ancestors were Afrasiab and Shana (—that is, Ashina!).

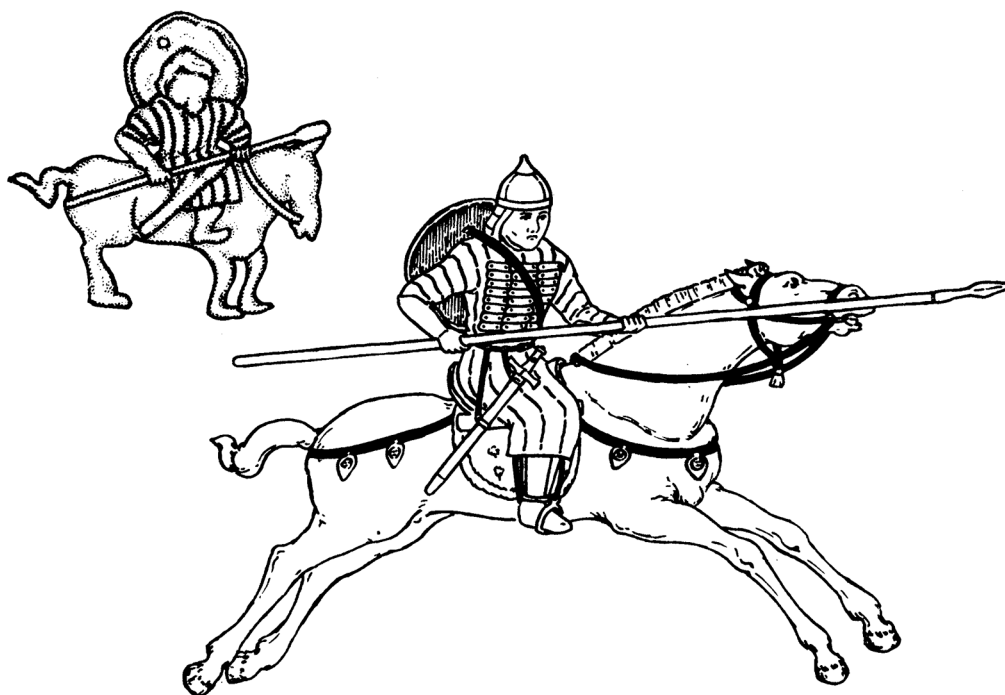
Thus a new Turkic Empire in Middle Asia and Kashgaria was founded, which in Russian scholarship was called the State of the Karakhanids. The political ambitions of the House of the Karakhanids are made perfectly clear in the report of al-Masudi.

The Karakhanid State did not leave a historiographic tradition of its own, and all the information about it is contained in the works of Arab and Persia authors, who lived outside the Khaganate. *Tarikh Kashgar*, the work of the only Karakhanid historian whose name survived, the Imam Abu-l-Futuh al-Garif al-Almai, is known only from small fragments in the works of Jamal al-Qarshi (13th century). The absence of their own historiography was noted by the later contemporaries of the Karakhanids, one of which, the brilliant Persia writer Nizami Aruzi, wrote in 1156: 'The names of the tsars from the House of the Khakan (that is, the Karakhanids—S. K.) have been preserved only thanks to the poets' [Bertels, 1960, p. 458].

Seven hypotheses concerning the origin of the Karakhanids are known. V. V. Bartold limited the search to three tribes (the Karluks, the Yagmas, and the Chighils). Now it is clear that the Chighils and the Yagmas, and also one of the Turgesh tribes, the Tukhsi, and the remainder of the Orkhon Turks were included in the Karluk tribal union, and the history of these tribes, at least beginning from the 9th century, is inseparable.

Karakhanid legend (the Kashgar tradition of Jamal al-Qarshi) names Bilge Kyul Kadyr Khagan, with whom one of the Samanid emirs, the rulers of Samarkand and Bukhara, were waging war, as the first sovereign of the Karakhanid dynasty. It was determined that this emir was Nukh ibn Assad, who undertook a campaign against the Turks of Zhetysu in 840 and captured Isfijab. That year, according to Gardezi, the Yabgu of the Karluks accepted the title 'Khagan'. The circle of sources has closed—the only Khagan in 840 was the ancestor of the Karakhanid dynasty and the former Yabgu of the Karluks Bilge Kyul Kadyr Khagan.

Power in the Karakhanid state was divided between the nobility of two tribal groups



Reconstruction of a heavily armed Turkic warrior between the 6th and 8th centuries.
[Khudyakov, 1980, p. 134]

which were the centre of the Karluk tribal union in the 9th century—the Chighils and the Yagmas. Outwardly this was expressed in division of the Khaganate into two parts, Eastern and Western, each headed by its own Khagans. The Eastern Khagan was considered the highest, he had a camp in Kashgar and Balasagun (ancient town of Buran, near Tokmak in Kyrgyzstan). He was of the Chighils and had the title *Arslan Kara-Khagan*. The Western, younger Khagan, of the Yagmas, had the title *Bogra Kara-Khagan*, and his camp was in Taraz, and later in Samarkand. There was a complex hierarchy of the rulers, each Khaganate having its own: *Arslan-ilek* and *Bogra-ilek*, *Arslan-Teghin* and *Bogra-Teghin* and others. For the first time the dual power structure was realised during the rule of the first Khagan's sons, Bazyr Arslan-Khan and Ogulchak Kadyr-Khan, but the final disintegration of the state dates back to the middle of the 11th century. During Ogulchak's reign the successful campaign of the Samanid Emir

Ismail ibn Ahmad to Taraz in 893 started long and ferocious wars between the Karakhanids and the Samanids for dominance over all Middle Asia. The wars lasted for more than a century and ended with the complete fall of the Samanids and the spread of their enemies' power to the Amu Darya. Many Karakhanid domains appeared in the territory of Middle Asia, their dependence on the Khagans in Balasagun was minimal, and their relations with each other were far from being friendly.

The most significant event of the early Karakhanid era was the conversion of the dynasty and its dependent tribes to Islam. 'The Arab geographers of the 10th century still describe the Turks as a people absolutely alien to Islam and hostile to Muslims', notes V. Bartold [Bartold, vol. 5, p. 59]. However, it was in the 10th century that radical changes occurred. An Arab geographer of that time, Ibn Hawqal, reports the conversion of one thousand families of Turkic people, who led a nomadic life between Isfijab and

Shash,—that is, in the mountain-steppe area adjacent to the middle of the Syr Darya, to Islam. But the most important event of this kind happened in 960, when somewhere in the inland areas of the Karakhanid State, most likely in Zhetysu, 200,000 Turkic tents were converted to Islam.

This fact is connected with the name of the Karakhanid Khagan, the son of Bazyr and the nephew of Ogulchak, Satuq Bughra Khan, who himself, prior to mass Islamisation of the Turkic people, had adopted the new faith and a new name—Abd al Karim. It was Satuq's son, Musa, who succeeded to the throne in 955, that declared Islam the state religion. It is possible that Musa's decision was connected with the activity of the Muslim theologian Abu al-Hassan Muhammad ibn Sufyan Kalimati from Nishapur, who lived at the court of Satuq and Musa, however, nothing is known for sure of his role in the events [Bartold, vol. 2, part 1, p. 245–246]. One thing is certain: the Islamisation the Karakhanid Turks was not a consequence of some missionary's short-term efforts, but on the contrary, a process of gradual penetration of Islam into the Turkic environment due to those economic and political benefits that were brought by the conversion. Satuq, who had been waging a long war against his uncle, the Great Khagan, used the conversion to the new faith in order to obtain very important support from the Samanids. The son of Satuka, Musa, under the device of fighting the infidels and protecting Islam, successfully carried out military expansion in the direction of Hotan and towards Isfijab.

Being under the powerful influence of a settled civilisation, the Turkic tribes got involved in a new system of economic and social relations, became a part of this system, and found acceptable ways of entering the economic and cultural regions of Middle and Western Asia which had formed a long time ago. The outward expression of such integration, at least in its ideological aspect, was the rather rapid Islamisation of the Turks in the Karakhanid and Seljuk states, which created

the prerequisites for the political acceptance of new dynasties in the world of absolute domination of Muslim religion.

The states of the Karakhanids and the Seljukids, carrying on the traditions of the Turkic Khaganates at the beginning, did not repeat them in economic, nor in social aspects. Another political system which was different from that of Central Asia, with another cultural orientation, appeared and was established here. An early feudal military structure (Iqta) was formed, which gave birth to new nobility and gained fast and full development in the Turkic empires of Middle and Western Asia.

The invasion of the Kara Khitais (the Khitans)—Far Eastern Mongolian tribes—and the formation of their own state in Zhetysu (1130–1210) for a long time turned part of the Karakhanid domains into vassals of the Gurkhan, the chief of the Khitans. The Kara Khitais, however, confined themselves only to high suzerainty and collection of taxes, not interfering with the organization, religion or culture of their subjects. Even a small Karluk principality in Almaliq—a relict of the pre-Karakhanid state of the Karluk Yabgu—was not destroyed by them. Nevertheless, the rule of the Kara Khitais marked the beginning of the Karakhanids' political death.

In 1210, during the fight against the Naimans, the East Karakhanid dynasty was terminated. In 1212, in Samarkand, Kkwarezmshah Muhammad executed the last representative of the West Karakhanid dynasty. And soon the Fergana branch of the Karakhanids disappeared as well.

By that time Middle Asia, Zhetysu, and Kashgaria had acquired a new ethnic identity, a new social and economic structure, and a new type of spiritual culture. In the process of the formation of feudal statehood here and the inclusion of Turkic tribes into the sphere of a settled, primarily urban civilization, it was clear that a supratribal ethnic community with one common language and written culture was taking shape. Only the shocks of the Mongol conquest interrupted the natural process of development.

Public ideals and the social system in ancient Turkic states

The attribution of the social nature of the ancient Turkic states, which had identical institutions of social structure, still remains quite varied. They are defined as a military democracy, as well as tribal states and military slave-owning empires, and as feudal or patriarchal feudal state formations. The well-known scarcity of sources impels many researchers to be guided more by generalized notions than by the results of the analyses of scanty and not always clear testimonies.

The written sources created in the ancient Turkic environment have special value for identification of social connections and dependences. The counting of ancient Turkic written sources begins with the stele which acquired the name Bugutskaya. For half a millennium, stone steles with runic inscriptions were erected on the funeral mounds of the highest nobility of the Turks the Uighurs and the Kyrgyz, where the apologia of the deceased leaders was next to an imperial chronicon and a relevant declaration, and the didactics were touched by political emotions. Doleful epitaphs became a means of monumental propaganda. They reflected, formulated, and shaped the vision and the world view, and defended and imposed life and moral ideals, aspirations, and purposes.

Some centuries later in the capital of the Karakhanid state, which had already joined the system of the developed Islamic civilizations but still kept archaic institutes of the ancient Turkic times, a didactic poem Kutadgu Bilig (Wisdom Which Brings Good Fortune) was written. Its author, statesman and political theorist Khass Hajib Yusuf Balasaguni, depicted ideal forms of the social and political system in many respects correlating with the social realities imprinted by the runic texts. The society designed by Yusuf was strictly hierarchical. There a person is completely deprived of identity and acts only as an embodiment of class features, his behavior being programmed and defined exclusively by the class functions. Everything that a person does or can do in the world depicted

by Yusuf comes down to two categories—the due and undue. Of course, those due and undue are absolutely different for people from different classes, and attempts to violate the main differentiations are regarded as an absolute evil, a violation of the divine will and the commandments of the ancestors. It is unlikely that any other written source of the Turkic Middle Ages reflects the mentality of the Karakhanid aristocracy so fully. And no other written source echoes so vividly the most ancient Turkic texts—Central Asian stone inscriptions. Both sources emphasize a political doctrine reflecting the world-view of the Turkic tribal military nobility, for whom the aspiration to subdue and dominate over other tribes was an absolute imperative.

War for the sake of the loot, diligence in its search and generosity in the distribution of the captured wealth among the army are presented by Yusuf as nearly the main virtues of governors:

*Oh Begs! We are delighted with the zeal
of elik.
May your vigour be great as well,
By the zeal of the Begs power will
strengthen,
It will fall from their laziness!
Hark what the man said of his army:
'When you gain the victory - spare no
reward!
Feed, reward, spare no honours,
Should the gifts run out—spur again
for loot'⁴.*

The same motifs echo in the declarations of the Turkic Khagans and commanders of the 8th century, engraved on the steles of Orkhon in Mongolia and on the Talas epitaphs in the Tian Shan. 'I constantly went on campaigns against the near and the far!' recounts the epitaph of Beg Chor one of the Talas princes from the 730s. The structure of the ancient Turkic community had been formed and adapted to the aims and goals of the military lifestyle for centuries. The Turkic tribal union (Turkic Kara Kamag Bodun), which consisted of the tribes (Bod) and clans (Ogush), was politically organized into the El, an imperial

⁴ Translation by S. Ivanov.

structure. The tribal organization (Bodun) and military administrative organization (El) complemented each other, defining the solidity and strength of social connections. The Khan 'held the El and was the head of the Bodun' (Yenisei inscription 45, line 4). He fulfilled the functions of the 'civil' head of government within his own tribal union (people) by right of the eldest in the genealogical hierarchy of the clans and tribes and acted as the Chief, the Supreme Judge, and the High Priest. Alongside this, being the head of the political organization created by his tribal union, he fulfilled the functions of a military leader who subdued other tribes and forced them to pay taxes and tributes. Maintaining the fighting force of the army at a proper level, planning campaigns and raids, keeping the conquered in subjection and obedience, and using their economic and military resources—those were the functions of the ancient Turkic El, which was headed by the Khagan, who in turn relied upon the tribal aristocracy, the source of the 'military estate'—that is, the military administration and personal circles of the Khagan.

Addressing their 'audience' with the manifesto inscriptions ('Hark carefully my speech!' demands Bilge Khagan, Kyul Tigin Monument small inscription 2), the Turkic Khagans and their confidants distinguish two classes among their 'listeners'—the nobility and the people. In the Bugut inscription, these two classes are called *kurkapyns*—that is, 'those who possess a title', and 'tribesmen and people', who rank lower (line 12). In the inscriptions of the second Turkic Khaganate, there is an equivalent stereotype in addressees—Begs and the people (*Türk begler bodun*—'Turkic Begs and the people'). The Begs and the 'common people' are mentioned in the monuments of the Yenisei Kyrgyz. The sharpest opposition between the nobility and the people is found in the terminology of both ancient Uighur monuments of the middle of the 8th century: *atlyg*, 'the noble' and *igil kara bodun*, 'the common people'.

The two-level nature of the social opposition within the structure documented by the texts, 'Khagan-Begs-people', is clearly demonstrated in the monuments.

The situations recorded in the inscriptions reveal differences in the behaviour and interests of the Begs and the people. Thus, the Onghinskaya inscription tells of a battle during which the 'common people' fight and die, and the Begs escape, abandoning the battlefield (Onghinskaya inscription 1). The Uighur Khagan Eletmish Bilge, contrasting the interests of 'the noble' who betrayed him with the interests of 'his common people', appeals to the split-off tribes to submit again (Mogon-Shine-usu inscription 19). In another situation, the Turkic Bilge Khagan demands that the people 'not stray away' from their Begs (Bilge Khagan Monument, large inscription 13). This reflects the same tendency as in the 'aristocratic folklore', preserved by Mahmud Kashgari [Mahmud Kashgari, vol.1, p. 466]:

*The support of the earth is the mountain,
the support of the people is the Beg!*

The essence of the attitude of the nobility towards the people is clearly expressed in the epitaph-commandment of one of the Kyrgyz Begs: 'Common people, be zealous (hard-working)! Do not violate the institutions of the El!' (Yenisei inscriptions, line 7).

Another opposition, on the contrary, unites the Begs and the people, counterposing tribal interests to the unity of the El, personified by the Khagan. Reproaching the Begs and the people for previous treason, for the intention to migrate away and get out from under the authority of the Khagan, Bilge accuses them of the previous misfortunes of the Turkic El and demands repentance for past actions and eternal loyalty to the Khagan (Kultegin Monument, small inscriptions 10–11, large inscriptions 6–7). In some variants of the political epigrams only 'the Turkic people' were 'guilty' before the Khagan (Tonyukuk Monument 1–4), but the context obviously points out that the Begs are not separated from the people here. (Kultegin Monument, large inscriptions 6–7, 22–24). The appeal for the Begs and the people to obey the Khagan and the appeal for united resistance to a hostile environment is expressed in the Orkhon inscriptions most emotionally.



Turkic Nobleman. 7th century. Reconstruction by M. Gorelik

Both positions, so vivid in the ancient Turkic written sources, while remaining social oppositions, did not become fully-formed contradictions. In recording the positions of the traditional classes which constituted the community, they reflect more the struggle of these classes for their share of the material wealth received by the community than attempts to change the structure. In this respect the story by an informed foreign historiographer about the rise and death of Turgesh Khagan Sulu (Suluk) is illustrative: 'In the beginning (of his reign.—S.K.) Sulu ruled the people well: he was attentive and thrifty. After each battle he would give his loot to his subordinates, that was why the clans were content and served him with all their might... In later years he became stingy and slowly started to keep the captured loot without distribution. Then his subordinates also started

to estrange themselves from him... Mohe Dagan and Dumochzhi suddenly attacked Sulu at night and killed him'.

The highest class of the ancient Turkic community were the Begs, aristocrats by blood, by right of descent from a clan whose special status in managing the tribe's affairs was unquestionable, authorized by tradition. The elite of the aristocracy by blood in the Turkic El was the Khagan Ashina clan, in the Uighur state—the Yaglakar clan. Together with some other noble clans, the hierarchy of which was widely known and accepted, they constituted the highest echelon of their communities, a special, privileged class.

The position of the noble clans was based both on the right to govern the tribe and community and on the responsibility to care for the welfare of their fellow tribesmen. Each tribal group—Turkic, Uighur, Kyrgyz—was united

by the ideology of genealogical community, which had as its material base the proprietary right to native and captured lands, the right to a share in the profits from military loot, and exploitation of conquered and subjected tribes. In the inscriptions of all Turkic Khagans and their companions it is persistently repeated that only the Khagan, with the help of his kin and in-laws, is able to 'nourish the people'. In the surviving fragments of the Bugut inscription, this formula is repeated three times: regarding Mugan Khagan (ruled in 553–572) it is said that he 'nourished the people well' (Bugut inscription 11 4). Bilge Khagan constantly reminds his 'listeners' that he 'dressed the naked people', fed 'the hungry people', and made 'the poor people' rich, thanks to him 'the Turkic people acquired much', 'for the sake of the Turkic people' he and his younger brother Kultegin 'were never idle in the daytime and did not sleep at night' (Kultegin Monument, small inscriptions 9–10, large inscriptions 26–27, Bilge Khagan Monument 33, 38, 10, 11–12) Bilge Tonyukuk recalls the incessant 'acquisitions' for the Turkic people made by Elterish Khagan and himself, accompanying his words with a maxim: If people had a Khagan and (he) was an idler, what a disaster they (the people) would have! (Tonyukuk Monument 57).

The unity that the Khagans required, the unity within the community based not on the equality of the tribesmen, but on a multi-level system of subordination, meant the renunciation of class contradictions and acceptance of a political structure and legal system according to which the power and, therefore, the wealth gained by means of non-economic force, by war and threat of war, would belong to the aristocracy by birth, who would give to the rest of the community the share of loot and tribute established by tradition. The unity found its social and legal manifestation in a common name applied to all its members, *er*, 'warrior-man'.

Any young man who had reached a certain age and received an *eraty*, a 'man's (hero's, warrior's) name', would become a 'warrior-man' by his birthright, whether he was one of hundreds of soldiers or a prince of royal blood. Thus, in the expression 'chief of five thousand warrior-men' (Terhin, 7) the term *Er*

denotes each warrior of a detachment of five thousand. But when he turned ten years old, the son of Elterish Khagan, Kultegin, also became a 'warrior-man' (Kultegin Monument, large inscriptions 30, 31)

The acquisition of a 'man's name' was connected with an initiation ritual, which was preceded by a hunting or military feat accomplished by the young man. It is likely that the hunting feats of the hero mentioned in the inscriptions from Ikhe Khushotu are connected with this ritual: 'At the age of seven, Kuli-chor killed a mountain goat, and at the age of ten—a wild boar' (Ikhe Khushotu 18). It cannot be excluded that in noble families the initiation ritual occurred earlier than in other families, right after the first hunting successes of the tested youth. A more widespread variant of initiation is mentioned in the relatively late (10th century) runic text on paper Yrg Bitig (The Book of Divination): 'They say the son of the warrior-hero (*alp er ogly*) set out on a campaign. On the battlefield, Erklig made him his envoy. And they say that when he returned home, he came famous and joyful, with the fame (of a man), worthy of maturity. So be aware—this is very good!' (parable 10). Only having taken part in battle and having showed military prowess did a young man (*ogul*) 'attain maturity'.

A similar situation depicting the initiation ritual, is described in the Oghuz epic 'The Book of my Grandfather Korkut': the son of Khan Bai-Buri turned fifteen, and he became a *dzhigit*, but 'in that time a young man did not get a name until he had cut off a head or spilled blood'. This does not mean the absence of a name in general—the boy was called Basam—but the absence of a 'man's name'. Basam kills robbers who had attacked a merchant's caravan. And then Bai-Buri calls the Oghuz Begs to a feast: with the Begs 'came my grandfather Korkut, he gave the young man a name: you call your son Basam, (now) let his name be Baisi-Beirek, the owner of a grey stallion!'

Having acquired a 'man's name', the warrior could attach titles to it indicating his nobility or his place in the military administrative hierarchy of the Khaganate, however, in all cases he remained first of all a 'war-

rior-man'—that is, a rightful member of the Turkic community.

Alongside this the Turkic El, like any of the tribes included in it, was a thoroughly ranked community, where the position of each er was defined by the degree of his clan's and tribe's privilege. A strict hierarchy of clans and tribes was the basic principle of social and state structure in the nomadic states of Central Asia.

The place of an er in the society was determined by his title and rank, which was a part of his 'man's name' and was inseparable and often indistinguishable from the name. The title was often inherited by rule of primogeniture when succeeding to the throne and the rule of ultimogeniture when inheriting the house and household. A vivid example of inheriting the title and position is given in the inscription from Ikhe Khushotu, where the fate of three generations of the Kuli-chors, ancestral chiefs and 'Becs of the people' of Tardush is described. It was the title that indicated the place of an er in the system of management and subordination. Most of the epitaphs found in Mongolia and on the Yenisei give the name and the title of the deceased in the first lines, sometimes his kinship is specified, but often they simply reproduce his genealogical tamga with additional (diacritic) signs recording the place of the subject of the inscription in the count of generations. Here is an example of an inscription, complete in its indication of position in the El (written source from Uyuk-Tarlak, Yenisei inscriptions 1).

(1) *With you, my El, my wives, my sons, my people—oh, what a pity!—I parted in my sixtieth year.*

(2) *My name is El-Togan-tutuk. I was the ruler of my divine El. I was the Beg to my six-tiered people.*

An er's wealth and his family's welfare were of great importance to his position and prestige. The notion of ownership in relation to movable property, including yurts (eb kergyu) and buildings (bark), but first of all of the ownership of livestock, is revealed in the Orkhon Yenisei inscriptions quite clearly. Wealth disparity within the Turkic tribes,

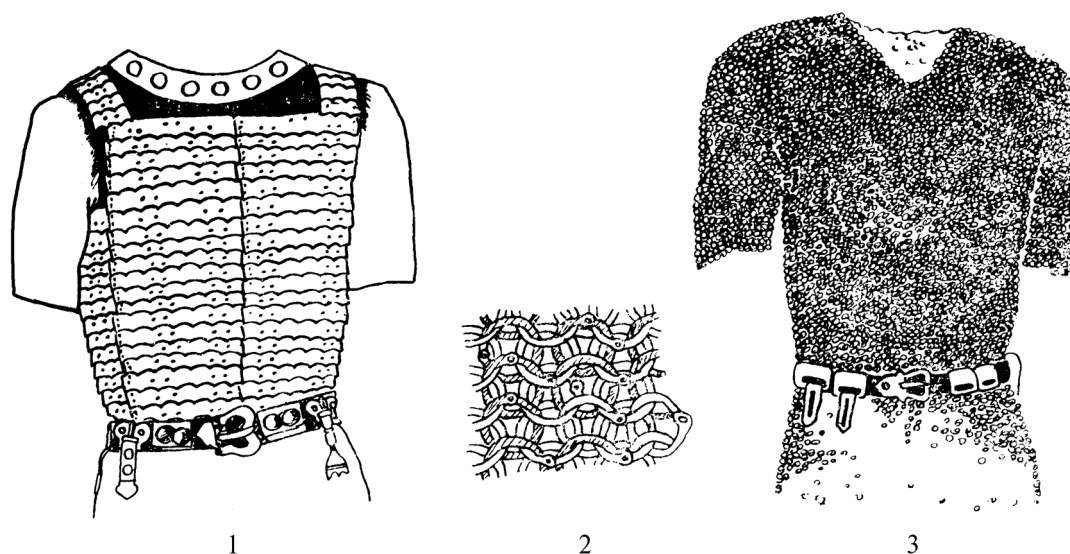
as among other nomads of Central Asia, was quite significant. Wealth became a source of pride and boasting for the Turkic aristocracy. The Kyrgyz inscriptions contain specifically vivid descriptions of wealth. 'I was rich. I had ten corrals for livestock. I had an uncountable (number of) herds of horses!' with these words from his epitaph, Kutlug Baga Tarkan, a noble Kyrgyz Beg who lived in Northern Mongolia in the latter half of the 9th century, defined his social status in the world from which had departed (Yenisei inscriptions 47, line 5). Another Kyrgyz Beg mentions his six thousand horses (Yenisei inscriptions 3, line 5)—that is, according to the usual ratio of horses to other livestock, he owned more than twenty thousand head. In other inscriptions, camels and various livestock in 'uncountable numbers' are also mentioned. The happiness which a man asks from a god is given by a common wish of wealth, 'May there be cattle in your corrals!' (Irk Bitig, 10 8).

The rich (bay, baybar, jylysyg) are opposed in the inscriptions to the poor and the deprived (chygai, jok chygai). For the author of the Koshotsaidam inscriptions, the poor people, 'who have no food inside and no clothing outside', are 'pathetic, miserable, low people' (*yabyz yablak bodun*) (Kultegin Monument, large inscriptions 26). Poverty did not evoke sympathy, moreover, it was despised. A true 'warrior-man' earned his wealth by his weapon: 'In my fifteenth year I went (on a campaign) against the Chinese Khan. Thanks to my valour... I gained (for myself) in (the Chinese) state gold, silver, Arabian camels, and people (as a variant: wives)!' (Yenisei inscriptions 11, line 9).

As if echoing the ancient text, Yusuf Balasaguni depicts an impressive image of an enterprising 'warrior-man':

*A skillful man's treasury never grows scant,
Abundance of grain for birds never grows scant,
As long as a man has weapons and he is brave and strong,
He has no fear of lootless times⁵.*

⁵ Translation by S. Ivanov.



Reconstruction of a Turkic warrior's armour. 1: armature, 2: system of attachment of chainmail rings, 3: chainmail [Chindina, 1981, p. 93].

The results of archaeological research give remarkable examples of social and wealth disparity in the ancient Turkic society. In comparison with the magnificent funeral constructions of the high nobility, which were built by hundreds of people and decorated by invited foreign craftsmen, the burial mounds of ordinary warriors, where together with its master in full armour lay his saddled warhorse, seemed plain. But in the burials of the poorest community members there was neither expensive weaponry nor a horse.

On the border between Tuva and Mongolia, in the high mountain valley of the Karga River in Mogun-Taiga, where several of the many Turkic burial mounds of the 6–9th centuries have been excavated, two burials attract special attention. One of them is a burial of a rich and noble *er* from a far border tribe of the Turkic Khaganate. He was buried according to the full ritual with his horse, in clothes of expensive Chinese silk. Such silk was denoted in the ancient Turkic language by the word *agy*—'precious thing, treasure'. Nearby there was a Chinese metal mirror with a hieroglyphic inscription and an ornament of superb artistry, one of those which were highly valued by the ancient nomads of Central Asia and sometimes were mentioned in epitaphs (Yenisei inscrip-

tions 26). Ten golden plates decorating the horse's trappings are made of high karat gold. In the neighbouring mound, a 30–35-year-old man was buried, whose main wealth was a birch-bark quiver. Instead of a warhorse there was a bridled and harnessed ram.

Poor *ers* inevitably fell into personal dependence on the Beks. It is regarding them that Mahmud Kashgari writes: 'the *er* knelt before the Bek' [Mahmud Kashgari, vol. 2 p. 21] Only from the noble and rich Beks could they get cattle for use for their work and service or become shepherds of the enormous herds and flocks of their rich tribesmen. Poor *ers* made up a Bek's regular retinue and his servants—the people who went on campaigns and raids with him, who protected his herds and property, and who served the Bek in everyday life. Mahmud Kashgari calls each of them *kulsyg er*—'slave-like *er*' [Mahmud Kashgari, vol. 3 p. 128].

Only rich Beks could support a large number of dependent tribesmen. In turn, the Bek's capability to acquire and maintain his wealth, prestige and position depended on the number of his retinue and servants. Mahmud Kashgari preserved a two-line proverb used in the ancient Turkic environment [Mahmud Kashgari, vol. 1 p. 362]:

He whose wealth multiplies should be the Beg.

Without wealth, a Beg suffers from a lack of ers.

The Beg cannot maintain his prestige without ers dependent on him. A poorer deprived of livestock cannot live without the material help and protection of the Beg. But even the poorest of the ers, who had no disdain for begging, preserved a certain independence and freedom from his Beg tribesman. No matter what contradictions characterized the relations between the poor and the rich, between the Begs and 'common people', the *bodun* in general was opposed to another group of population included in the ancient Turkic *El*—slaves who were fully dependent on the ers and who never became members of the ancient Turkic community, even if they had been integrated into the families of their masters. The slaves were the social periphery of the ancient Turkic society, deprived of rights.

The semantic meaning of the terms which denote an enslaved man (*kul*) and an enslaved woman (*kün*) in the ancient runic written sources of Mongolia and Yenisei is revealed in the analysis of typical situations described in the texts where these terms are used. The most typical of such situations was the capture of people during a raid during inter-tribal wars. Reports of the seizure of captives are common in the runic sources. Male and female slaves in the ancient Turkic community were people who were taken from their dwelling places by force, torn away from their tribal (ethnic) environment, deprived of their status and given under the power of their masters. Slavery became their life-long state.

The description of the economic role of slavery in ancient Turkic society is inevitably very incomplete due to the absence of indications about how the slaves were used. Beyond the scope of researchers' attention remains the important fact that the texts report mainly, and often exclusively, the capture of women and girls, sometimes boys and young men, but never adult men. Women and girls are usually mentioned as the main military loot, they were demanded as a contribution, and they were taken from subordinate tribes

if those tribes revolted or delayed in paying tribute. The tendency to enslave mainly women clearly shows that domestic slavery, which was a kind of patriarchal slavery, prevailed.

Having been enslaved, a woman entered the system of her master's family relations, as well as the system of household affairs carried out by his family, taking part both in family and social production. It was of no definitive importance whether she found herself in a position of one of her master's wives or in a position of a servant. Ethnographic observations show that in nomadic tribes women's share of participation in everyday labour exceeds that of men. This peculiarity of warlike nomadic society was well noted and somewhat exaggeratedly described by a remarkable observer of Mongol life during the era of the first Chinggisids, Giovanni da Pian del Carpine: 'The men do nothing at all except make arrows, and also partly take care of the herds. But they hunt and practice shooting... Their wives make everything: short fur coats, clothes, shoes, boots and all items of leather, they also drive carts and repair them, load the camels and in everything are very swift and agile'.

The information of Giovanni da Pian del Carpine is confirmed and augmented by William of Rubruck and Marco Polo, later ethnographic materials testify to the same. Thus, Mongolian women were fully engaged in milking the cattle, processing animal products, sewing clothes, cooking food and other household work. In addition, women took active part in pasturing sheep and goats.

In the conditions of a patriarchal natural economy, and any nomadic or semi-nomadic economy is exactly that, the welfare of the family depended not only on the number of cattle and its safety and reproduction, but to no lesser extent on the ability to fully and promptly process and prepare all various products of stock raising, hunting, foraging, and subsidiary farming for use or preservation. Women's labour played the main part in all this. The polygamy of the nomads of ancient Central Asia, their preservation of levirate marriage, and the capture of primarily women during their raids were obvi-

ously economically determined, they sought to provide additional working force to their family's household, the main producing cell of any nomadic society. The richer in cattle was this household, the more women's hands it needed.

The use of slave women's labour in nomadic economy instead of any significant number of slave men was stringently dictated primarily by safety reasons. The concentration of male slaves—that is, recent warriors of hostile tribes, in ails scattered in the steppe and the mountains and in the camps of the nomadic nobility, and placing the cattle, homes and families of the warriors of the ruling tribe in the care of slaves while they were away on the next long campaign—all of this was impossible due to simple self-preservation. The concentration of female slaves, part of whom became the wives and concubines of the masters, presented no danger to them, they were watched over in the daily life of the household. Moreover, intensive use of the labour of female slaves in all jobs, including pasturing the cattle, freed a significant part of men for war. As, according to the Yasa of Chinggis Khan, during the campaigns the women 'carried out the labour and duties of men'.

The nomads also had male slaves. Judging by the examples of the Hunnic and Mongol periods, many of them became herdsman of cows and sheep (chabans) but not of horses—the horses were not entrusted to slaves. Only the Yenisei Kyrgyz, who practiced irrigation farming and built fortified 'towns' quite often used the labour of male slaves. Part of the captives the Turkic peoples freed for a ransom or sold to China.

Thus, though private households in the Turkic states of Central Asia mainly did not go beyond domestic slavery, all life activities of the ancient Turkic community, and in some respect its military power, were connected with the exploitation of slaves, mainly female slaves. Capturing slaves was one of the main goals of the wars waged by the Turkic peoples.

As is obvious from the above, the society which had been formed in the steppe zone of Central Asia had a high potential for horizontal social mobility, which often took shape of

invasion and in the course of its realization was accompanied by segmentation of the initial social cells. The main factors in horizontal mobility in these conditions were the high instability of an extensive stock-raising economy and its extreme specialization, which deprived the nomadic society of the ability to be fully self-sufficient. Of course, it should be mentioned that such specialization was determined by ecological factors.

In defining the forms of vertical social mobility, the described society should, with some restrictions, be classified as a socially open one, which seemingly contradicts its strictly hierarchal character. However, the role of wealth and personal military valour created the prerequisites, often implemented, for either advancement or degradation, with subsequent differentiation which did not disturb the integrity of the system. Only at the highest level of governance was a change in status inevitably followed by a forced change of the entire ruling tribal group and, strictly speaking, by simultaneous change in the entire structure of the privileged class.

Nevertheless, the accepted forms of vertical mobility were not of a regular and legalized character. They were perceived by the common consciousness, but had no justification in political doctrine or in the higher forms of ideology, which most probably should be connected with general immaturity of the social and political structure, or, to be more precise, with hopeless inner inconsistency of the structure of the nomadic society.

Written sources of the Central Asian and Siberian Turkic peoples in the Early Middle Ages

In the 6–7th centuries, the Turkic-speaking tribes of Central and Middle Asia which were part of the Turkic Khaganate, as well as the Western Turkic tribes of the Lower Volga Region, the Middle and Lower Don basin and the Northern Caucasus constituting the Khazar state, already used their own writing system. It is obvious that the necessity to develop their own script arose from administrative and diplomatic needs, so that it was

possible to record state acts and maintain the state tradition. Religious motives could also have played a certain role.

Foreign sources report the existence of wooden tabulas on which the Turks made cuts (signs?) when they counted 'the required amounts of people, horses, tributes, and cattle'. At the same time, Turkic ambassadors were provided with charters. Thus, the Turkic ambassador, a Sogdian named Maniah, who arrived in 568 in Constantinople to Justinian's court, brought a message from the khagan which was written with 'Scythian characters', as Byzantine historian Menander states.

The most ancient written source of the Turkic Khaganate—the Burut inscription from Central Mongolia—allows us to draw certain conclusions about these characters. The basic Sogdian text which, unfortunately, was not preserved in its complete form, narrates the events of the first thirty years of existence of the Turkic Khaganate and describes in particular detail the merits of Taspar-khagan. The appeals to the readers show that in the khaganate, the Sogdian text was understandable to a fairly wide circle of educated people in the highest classes of Turkic society. A significant number of Sogdians lived at the courts of the Turkic Khagans: in the text of the charter, they were referred to as diplomats and officials, courtiers and mentors, which is directly stated in foreign sources. They would build fixed settlements and lead caravans to China, Iran and Byzantium with goods belonging to Turkic nobles. Their cultural influence upon the Turks was significant. First of all, through the Sogdians, the Turks got acquainted with the achievements of the ancient civilizations of Middle Asia and Western Asia.

There is ample evidence to conclude that, along with the use of the Sogdian language, the Turks used the Sogdian alphabet in order to record their own speech. In the years when the Burut stele was being built, the buddhist work 'Nirvana-sutra' was translated into the Turkic language, aimed at spreading Buddhism among the Turkic people. It could not be written in any other alphabet than the Sogdian one, which the Turks knew very well. Later, after it was modified, this alphabet

obtained the name of Uighur, as the Uighurs used it widely between the 9th and 15th centuries. But in stone engravings (the so-called 'monumental writing'), the cursive Sogdian alphabet was only rarely used.

In the initial period of the Turkic Khaganate's history, no later than the 7th century, a new writing began to appear among Turkic-speaking circles, which included with several signs similar to ancient Turkic tamgas (symbols of kin). It consisted of 38 signs with geometric contours which did not join when forming words so, by contrast with the Sogdian script, it was well suited for carving on wooden and stone surfaces. The new script accurately reflected the new phonetic characteristics of the Turkic language, thus, the majority of consonant symbols had two variants of writing, soft or hard, depending on what vowel sound they accompanied. Compared with the Sogdian writing, this one allowed to draw differences between the signs (in the Sogdian language, many symbols were written in a similar way), which made them much easier to pronounce and learn by heart.

The ancient Turkic script was discovered in the valley of the Yenisei in the 1720s by German researcher D. Messerschmidt, who was in the service of Peter I, and I. Strahlenberg, a Swedish captive who accompanied him. They named this script 'runic' as it resembled the Scandinavian runic writing. Although this name is rather inaccurate, it was convenient for usage and has remained in use in the academic literature. In 1889, Russian scientist N. Yadrintsev discovered huge stone steles with runic inscriptions in Northern Mongolia, in the valley of the Orkhon River. The runes were deciphered and read by Danish scientist V. Thomsen, who was the first to find the key to the alphabet, and by the Russian Turkic studies scholar V. Radlov, who was the first to read the inscriptions. The script was named 'Orkhon-Yenisei' after the site of its discovery, and based on its other characteristics (linguistic and relating the nature of its letters), it is still known as the ancient Turkic runic script.

The main body of all the known runic inscriptions is constituted by traces of writing

found as part of written sources in Northern Mongolia, mostly concentrated in the basins of the rivers Orkhon, Tuul, and Selenga. These date from the time of the second Turkic Khaganate (689–744) and the Uighur Khaganate in Mongolia (745–840). The most famous of these are the written sources erected in 732–735 in honour of Bilge Khagan and his brother, the military officer Kulteegin, and the written source dedicated to Tonyukuk, the adviser to the first Khagans of the second Turkic Khaganate, which was created soon after 716, in the lifetime of Tonyukuk (the written source was made on his behalf). All the large written sources of the Orkhon group are rather similar in form. They contain descriptions of the life and achievements of their heroes, set against the background of the general history of the Turkic state, and accompanied by political declarations of various kinds. These inscriptions present abundant material for examining the history, ideology and culture of the ancient Turkic tribes and nations, as well as their language and literary devices.

Over 150 sources with runic inscriptions were discovered in the Yenisei valley, on the territory of Tuva and Khakassia. They are mainly constituted by the steles located near burial sites belonging to the ancient Turkic nobility, which were erected between the 8th and 12th centuries. The Yenisei texts are significantly shorter than the Orkhon ones and are of an epitaphic character, as they mourn and praise the deceased Kyrgyz begs. However, unlike the Orkhon ones, they contain less historico-political data and descriptions. The sources were written in the same ancient Turkic literary language.

Small and faintly visible inscriptions were discovered on the cliffs surrounding Lake Baikal and the upstream of the Lena, sites which had been populated by the ancient Turkic tribe of Guli gan (Kurykan). Several small inscriptions and writings on bowls were discovered in the Altai region. Fairly large texts on paper were discovered in Eastern Turkestan where the runic alphabet had been used in the Uighur state (which existed between the 9th and 13th centuries) up to the 10th century. The state had been formed by the Toquzghuz

tribes (the Uighurs forming the main part of them) who had escaped from Mongolia after their defeat by the Kyrgyz people in 840.

Two groups of runic written sources can be distinguished on the territories of Middle Asia and Kazakhstan: the Fergansk group (small inscriptions on ceramic pottery, dating from the 8th century) and the Semirechensk one (on the territories of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan). Here we can identify nine inscriptions on tombstones and rock inscriptions in the ravine of the Terek-Say (the valley of the Talas river), inscriptions on ceramic pottery discovered near the town of Taraz (former Jambul), small inscriptions and separate symbols on coins and everyday items, an inscription on a wooden wand (which was discovered by chance during mining operations at the valley of the Talas river), as well as runic inscriptions on two bronze mirrors from Eastern Kazakhstan and a small inscription on a clay spindle whorl from the ancient town of Talgar (near Almaty).

All of these written sources are related to the Western-Turkic khaganate and the Karluk state (from the 8th to the 10th centuries), while the inscriptions on the bronze mirrors were made by the Kimek people. The inscription on the wooden wand is the most mysterious of these. The style of the script used is extremely different from the Orkhon-Yenisei one, but coincides with the script used in small inscriptions discovered very sparsely on the ancient territory of the Khazar state: in the Volga Region, the Middle and Lower Don Region and in the Northern Caucasus. It also coincides with the script of the so-called 'Pecheneg' inscriptions on the gold bowls discovered during the excavations at the valley of the Danube river (the inscriptions of Nagyszentmiklós). This Western variant of the runic script, despite all the attempts to decipher it, has yet to be decoded due to the absence of any larger texts. It is likely that the Talas wand is evidence of an ancient relationship between the Khazars and the Western Turkic khaganate.

The ancient Turkic script was hardly used anywhere after the 11th and 12th centuries. In Central and Middle Asia, it was rendered

obsolete first by the Uighur cursive and then by the Arabic script which spread across the Turkic tribes who converted to Islam.

The long runic texts of Mongolia and the Yenisei are not just important historical documents, they also represent extraordinary literary works. The most remarkable runic texts, in literary terms, are the inscriptions in honor of Bilge Khagan and Kultegin. They were written on behalf of Bilge Khagan himself, although, as is stated at the bottom of the texts, their author was a completely different person. These are the most vivid examples of political prose in the whole Turkic-language literature of the Middle Ages, preserving the eloquence of the traditional oral narratives about the bogatyr's feats which were common at the time.

The composition of both of these inscriptions is very similar, while significant parts of the inscriptions are textually identical. The introductory lines of the written sources provide a historical background.

The tradition bearing this record of past times, which was carried forward for two centuries, could be called epic rather than historical, if it were not for the sense of a huge social upheaval lying behind the laconic text of the record and if the steady rhythm of the narrative did not vividly reflect the pathos of a political declaration praising the new social order which the Turks inherited from the distant ancestors of the reigning Khagan. In the same vein, the texts describe the events surrounding the creation of the second Turkic Khaganate, praising the heroic deeds of Bilge Khagan and Kultegin.

The divine will, which is manifested in the power of the khagan, begs' and the people's loyalty to the khagan constitute the leitmotif of the ideas laid out in both inscriptions. As if summing up the history lesson presented to his listeners and readers, Bilge Khagan concludes: 'If you, the Turkic nation, remain faithful to your khagan, your beys, and your motherland... you will remain happily in your homes and will live a life free of sorrows!'

These lines vividly display the core ideology that the aristocracy of the Turkic Khaganate adhered to, with the insistent demand for

absolute obedience to the khagan and beys, and the very text of these written sources must serve, in the view of the author, as the foundation of this idea. The well-being of the Turkic nation is the result of their obedience to the khagan, who orders his warriors, led by his beys, to wage victorious campaigns and reward the nation with the trophies and tributes collected from the subdued tribes. 'Their gold and shining silver, their finely-woven silk, their drinks made of grain, their riding horses and stallions, their black sables and blue squirrels, all of this I obtained for my Turkic people!'

The written sources emphasize that everything that is written is 'spoken from the bottom of the heart' of Bilge Khagan, his genuine words which were carved at his own request. In order to ensure that the Turkic people would remember that he, Bilge Khagan, 'made poor people wealthy, sparse people numerous', so that the Turkic nation would what they should fear and what they had better follow, the khagan's speech was engraved on 'eternal stone': 'O Turkic beys and people, listen to this! Here I engraved how you, beys and people... created your state, how you committed sins and shared your things—I engraved it all upon an eternal stone. Remember this, beys and people of the present day, when looking at it!'

This political declaration, with a considerable dose of social demagoguery, praises and reproaches both previous and current generations, appealing to the 'listeners' using a diverse palette of artistic techniques, including sayings and aphorisms, which imbue the color and style of the official narrative with emotion and showcase the extraordinary literary talent of the text's author, a historian and eulogist of the reigning dynasty. The author who 'engraved upon an eternal stone' 'the word and speech' of his suzerain was Yollyg Tegin, the first time an author is identified by name in the history of Turkic-language literature.

The language of the runic inscriptions between the 7th and 10th centuries was a unified and standardised literary form used by diverse Turkic tribes speaking their own languages and dialects: the Oghuz, Uighur, Kyrgyz, Kimek and other peoples. The shared written

literary language of these runic inscriptions displays a stylistic uniformity and stability of figurative tools which is most vividly preserved in the Orkhon written sources. The commonality of the language and the literary canon of these documents points to close ties between ancient Turkic tribes and makes it impossible to view the written sources as the linguistic or literary heritage of a single nation.

The ancient Uighur script was strongly established in the cities of Eastern Turkestan from the 9th century. The very authors who wrote in this language called it 'Turkic'. Indeed, the language of these documents appears to be the direct descendant of the language of the runic written sources, with slight grammatical differences. However, being widely used in religious works, mainly translations, and in legal documentation reflecting the new customs of the Turkic population in Eastern Turkestan, this language gained traction and developed a rich vocabulary, grammar and stylistic forms. The ancient Uighur script was less widespread across the territory of Middle Asia and Kazakhstan than in Eastern Turkestan. Its earliest traces, however, have not survived, but it appears to have been used in this area, judging by the documents found in the Turpan oasis. One of them includes descriptions of the Manichaean inhabitants in Taraz, where works of a spiritual nature were written and translated into the Turkic language. It is known that the Manichaean form of the ancient Uighur script is the oldest and closest to the Sogdian prototype. It is likely that scribes were employed by the Manichaean monasteries in Taraz from the 8-9th centuries. Surviving correspondence (two yarliqs) between the Uighur and Karluk princes written in the ancient Uighur language and dating from the 10th century discusses events in the Il river valley and mentions the Turkic tribe of the Basmyls and Sogdian captives. It is worth noting that the yarliq written on behalf of 'ruler of the state Bilge-bey' mentions a message in Sogdian which he received and 'deigned to understand'. This gives evidence of the continuous domination of the Sogdian language and writing in the Turkic world at the time.

The spread of the Sogdian writing in Turkic Manichaean circles is proved by two Sogdian inscriptions of the 9th or 10th centuries on ceramic pottery which are currently stored at the Taraz museum. One of them mentions 'archiereus Shirfarn' and another 'presbyter Iltag'. Stone inscriptions in the ravine of the Terek-Say in Zhetysay are of great significance for the history of Turkic-Sogdian relations. They relate to the 10th and 11th centuries, are written in the Sogdian language and contain long lists of Turkic princes who visited the valley. These inscriptions are evidence that even at the time of the incipient Islamisation of the nobility in the Kara-Khanid state, nobles still had a Sogdian education and retained their 'pagan' names.

Therefore, in the Early Middle Ages, two types of ancient Turkic script prevailed on the territory of the Turkic states in Central and Middle Asia: runic and cursive (ancient Uighur). Meanwhile the Sogdian writing, which had appeared earlier, was still in use. The first to use the script were undoubtedly the higher strata of Turkic society. However, the existence of unprofessional inscriptions executed in a rough manner and with imperfect knowledge of the writing tradition, for example, the inscription on the bronze mirror from a woman's burial in the Cis-Irtysh area, or on the spindle whorl from the Talgar ancient town, proves that the runic writing was widespread among the Turkic-speaking population of Central and Middle Asia.

Religion and spirituality

Three chronologically close, but geographically and culturally distant sources reveal a surprising similarity on one issue, the religious faith of the three nomadic peoples: the Turks of Central Asia, the Huns of the Caucasus and the Danubian Bulgars, as documented by Mongolian stone-carved runic steles, the Greek epitaphs of the Danubian Madara and Movses Kaghankatvatsi, an Albanian chronicler.

The archaeological records of Madara—the major ceremonial center of the proto-Bulgars—somehow integrate the Early Middle

Age cultures of the nomads of the Danube valley with those of the Northern Caucasus and Central Asia. The sanctuary itself, the majestic relief depicting the Madara knight and the Madara stone inscriptions allow us to imagine the scale of the religious ideology and liturgical rites of the proto-Bolgarian tribes whose distant ancestral homeland were the steppes and mountains of Central Asia.

One of the inscriptions of the Madara sanctuary mentions the name of the supreme god of the proto-Bolgars, whom the 'khan and commander Omurtag' worshipped with sacrifices [Beshevliev, p. 123]. The name of the god—Tangra—leads the researcher into the world of the most ancient religion among Central Asian nomads, which is reflected in the Orkhon stone inscriptions, ancient Turkic documents from the first half of the 8th century. There are only hints at the myths of gods and heavenly forces in these inscriptions, with the name of the deity usually mentioned in relation to his actions or to certain situations. The Orkhon runic texts mention only three deities: Tengri ('Sky' in Turkic), Umay, and Yduk Yer-Sub ('Sacred Earth-Water'). Research into the figure of Tengri and the universality of his features prompted several scientists to view the ancient Turkic religion as especially close to monotheism, which could be labelled 'Tengrism', while bearing in mind that it also has more ancient layers. Thus, G. Doerfer suggests that the worship of the Sky as the supreme deity was inherent in almost all ancient nomadic cultures of Central Asia regardless of their ethnic affiliation, although this does not assume the unity of their mythology and beliefs. Therefore, terminological coincidences in the name of the supreme deity of the proto-Bolgars and ancient Turks pointing to the common origin of the both religions, are not enough to make more definite conclusions on their degree of proximity. It is obvious that only structural similarities between the two systems of belief can show the depth of their genetic links and their possible mutually reinforcing interpolations. The proto-Bolgarian system of belief, due to utter scarcity of data on the Danubian

Bolgars, is not yet fully understood. And its clarification, according to other information referring to the tribes of the proto-Bolgarian circle in South-East Europe, amounts to a pre-condition for reconstructing the pre-Christian religion of the founders of the ancient Bolgarian state on the Danube.

The descriptions of the ancient Turkic religion in the Orkhon written sources are a good starting point for such a reconstruction. It does not contain a specific classification of the various gods. However, the Siberian-Central Asian mythology contained a naturally intrinsic classification system of deities. At its heart, there was a division of the universe into the Upper, Middle and Lower worlds, and all animate beings, gods and spirits were divided between them.

The trichotomic system complemented the existing horizontal models of the world with a vertical one, and its creation is now attributed to high antiquity, specifically to the Upper Paleolithic era in Siberia. The contraposition of Sky (Tengri) and Earth (Yduk Yer-Sub) in the ancient Turkic pantheon allows us to hypothesize with some certainty that there existed two groups of heavenly forces in the religious ideology of the khaganate, which were respectively connected with the Upper and Middle worlds. The fact that the complete tripartite model of the Universe existed in the ancient Turkic mythology was proved by the revelation of the most important and striking character of the Lower world to be found in the runic texts of the Yenisei and Eastern Turkestan. This is Erklig-khan, who 'separated' people and sent them 'messengers of death' [Klyashtorny, 1976, pp. 261–264].

The lord of the upper world and the supreme deity of the ancient Turkic pantheon was Tengri (Sky). In comparison with the sky, which is part of the cosmos, it is sometimes called Kök ('blue sky', 'sky') or Kalyk ('the vault of heaven', 'near sky'). It was Tengri who, sometimes in tandem with other deities, governed everything happening in the world and above all people's destinies: Tengri 'handed out the terms (of life)', but the births of 'human beings' were controlled by the goddess Umay, and their death was the compe-

tence of Erklig. Tengri grants the Khagans wisdom and power and grants Khagans to the people. He punishes those who commit sins against the Khagans and even 'instructs' Khagans on how to solve state and military affairs. The Burut inscription written in the Sogdian language, the epitaph of Taspar-khagan (who died in 581) mentions his constant appeals to God (or the gods?) when dealing with political affairs. Tengri is vividly anthropomorphized: he possesses human feelings, though he expresses his will verbally, he does not execute his decisions directly, but through natural and human intermediaries.

Another deity of the Upper world was Umay, the goddess of fertility and newborns. She is the personification of femininity. Along with Tengri, she protects warriors. While the khagan is similar in his image to Tengri, his spouse queen looks like Umay ('my mother-tsarina resembles Umay'). There is a clear hint at the myth of the celestial spouses, Tengri and Umay, whose worldly incarnation is represented by the king's spouses living in the world of people.

The main deity of the Middle world was 'Sacred Earth-Water'. This deity is never mentioned separately in the Orkhon inscriptions. But together with Tengri and Umay (or only with Tengri), he supports the Turks and punishes the sinful. In the Yenisei runic inscriptions, the hero of the epitaph, who departed for the Lower world together with the attributes of the Upper world, the Sun and Moon, which he 'abandoned' and did not 'enjoy', also mentions 'my Earth-Water', i. e. the Middle world which he left. According to foreign observers, the Earth deity was the object of a special cult. Theophylactus Simocattes wrote that the Turks 'sing hymns to the earth' [Theophylactus Simocattes, p. 161]. 6th century Chinese sources called the mountain which the Turks worshiped 'the god of the Earth'. The cult of sacred summits was part of the general cult of Earth-Water among the ancient Turkic tribes.

Besides the main four divinities (Tengri, Umay, Yduk Yer-Sub, and Erklig), the ancient Turkic pantheon included many secondary or helper deities. The Book of Omens ('Irk

Bitig', from the first half of the 10th century) is a runic paper text from the cave library of Dunhuang—an extremely important source for the analysis of the ancient Turkic pantheon—mentions two 'helper' deities: 'the god of the road riding on a dappled horse' and 'the god of the road riding on a black horse'.

Another equally ancient mention of the Turks' 'god of the road' is found in the ancient Tibetan 'Catalogue of the Ancient Principalities', a fragment of which was also discovered in the Dunhuang caves. Thus, 'eight Northern lands' were considered to be among the neighbors of Tibet. The inhabitants of its capital—the fortress Shu-Balik—worshipped the 'Turkic god Yol-Tengri'. The Tibetan inscription (or its source) is reliably dated from the 8th century. Although the Tibetan author's perception of 'the Northern lands' was quite blurred, it is important to note that the image of Yol-Tengri ('the god of the road') was directly connected to the state cult of the Turks.

As judged by the functions of both Yol-Tengris in the ancient Turkic 'Book of Omens', one of whom grants people 'kut', or 'divine grace, soul', and another restores and organizes the state, both of them, apparently, are the messengers of the sky deity (Tengri) and are the direct executors of his will. Runic inscriptions provide many examples of how Tengri would bestow blessings or how he 'ordered' and brought about the creation and reconstruction of the Turkic state. The Yenisei runes call the very state 'the divine El'. Both Yol-Tengris are therefore minor deities and Tengri's junior relatives, who, while executing his will, are always on the move and connect the Upper and Middle worlds, as do the Khagans who appeal to the Sky with questions and prayers (compare with the quoted Bugut inscription) and constitute a link between the Middle and Upper worlds.

This was the ancient Turkic pantheon in its main and best-known manifestations. Despite several modifications which entered the ancient Turkic mythology under the influence of changing socio-political conditions, there is no doubt that a wide range of ancient Turkic ethnic groups shared the common features of all the main characters of this archaic Cen-

tral Asian Olympus. This is evidenced by the Orkhon steles, the inscriptions of the Yenisei Kyrgyz, ancient Uighur runic and cursive texts, the data provided by Muslim authors about the religions of the Kimeks, Kipchaks, Ghuz, and Karluks and information provided by Chinese sources on the tribes living to the North of the Great Wall. No matter how clear any particular differences between the tribal cults may have been, they did not distort the general structure of the pantheon which had been formed long before the tribe of the Turks appeared on the historical arena (460). The very name of this pantheon, which is 'ancient Turkic', is purely conditional and depends more on linguistic and historical factors than on the paleo-ethnographic reality. Nevertheless, the issue is about the real historico-cultural and religious-ideological commonality which was formed among nomadic tribes of Inner Asia and the commonality which they preserved despite the many migrations of the first millennium CE.

Surprising proof of the above can be found in a written source from the same period as the runic inscriptions, which was created far from the Orkhon and Yenisei rivers, 'The History of the Land of Aghvank' by Movses Kaghankatvatsi (10th c.). A significant part of the second volume of this work is taken up by 'The Chronicle of the Mihranids' a princely dynasty from Caucasian Albania in the 7th century. A part of the Mihranids' chronicle was included in a biographical text on the bishop Israel, which discusses the Christian mission led by Israel in 'the land of the Huns' (682), which was located in the plains of Dagestan [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, pp. 193–194, 197–198].

The tribal affiliation of the Huns of Northern Dagestan remains unclear. This group of related tribes, which were quite significant in number, settled in the steppes north of Derbend in the early 6th century, having created a robust form of government which Ananiya Shirakatsi (7th century) calls 'the tsardom of the Huns'. A part of the Huns even went from 'living in tents' to adopting a settled and urban lifestyle with the help of the local Irani-speaking rural and urban population and supported

by systematic missionary activity (the missions of Kardost and Macarius) which the Church initiated among the Huns in the first quarter of the 6th century. However, the bulk of the Huns, including their nobility, continued living 'in camps', that is, they preserved their nomadic lifestyle and their dedication to cattle breeding, especially horse husbandry as their primary occupation. After the Khazars gained control over the region in the 680s, the Huns managed to maintain their autonomy.

The majority of contemporary researchers of the history of the Northern Caucasus now adhere to the view that the Huns of Dagestan were part of the Sabir people, or part of the Sabirs and Barsils who in turn belonged to the Bulgar tribes. Turkic-speaking ethnic groups inhabiting the Cis-Caucasus region and the Northern Caucasus at the end of the 4–6th centuries, who included the Huns of Dagestan, are inseparable from the bulk of the Hun-Bolgarian tribes and are definitely connected to the Western migration of part of the union of the Tiele tribes. In Central Asia, on the basis of this tribe, the new tribal unions of the 'nine Oghuz' ('Dokuz-Oghuz') and 'ten Uighurs' ('On-Uighur') were formed, and played prominent political and cultural roles up to the Mongol era.

Movses Kaghankatvatsi calls the prince of the Northern Caucasus Huns Alp Iluetuer (the literary translation of the name is 'hero-elteber'). This is most likely to be a title, rather than his proper name. The same title was carried by the Volga Bulgar 'tsars'. The title 'elteber' was not a regal one like khagan or khan, but was commonplace in Central Asia during the Turkic period among leaders of large tribes and tribal unions which often preserved their independence. Thus, among heads of the Oghuz tribes who bore the title 'irkin', only the most powerful among them, the leaders of the Uighurs, were eltebers. The fact that the prince of the Huns in Dagestan bore the title of elteber and not khan, points both to the position he occupied in the hierarchy of the Hun-Bulgar leaders of South-East Europe and to the fact that he recognised the superior position of other, more significant tribal unions, like the union of the Bolgars-Unno-

gundurs during the reign of khan Kubrat (Old Great Bulgaria) or the Khazar state.

The only source which describes the internal life of the 'tsardom of the Huns' in the Caucasus at the end of the 7th century remains 'The life of bishop Israel' preserved in the work by Movses Kaghankatvatsi. The author of 'The life...', a member of the Albanian mission, wrote detailed descriptions of the 'wicked delusions' and 'nasty deeds' of the idolaters who were absorbed by the 'dirty pagan religion, so his patron's heroic deed looked even more remarkable, as he had led the Huns led by Alp Iluetuer (Alp-elteber) to adopt the Christian faith. These 'denunciations' contain extremely valuable details about everyday life, providing a vivid picture of the pantheon, rites and customs of the Hun-Bulgar tribes.

The Albanian clergyman does not name any particular main figure in the pantheon, but mentions two deities who were especially honoured: Kuar, the god of 'lightnings and ethereal fire', and Tengri-khan, a 'huge monstrous hero', a 'wild giant'. The author uses the Iranian name for the latter, As-pendiat (in Pahlavi—'created by the heavenly [spirit]'), without mentioning, however, that the Huns used the same name.

The name 'Kuar', as V. Henning has noted, apparently originates from the Pahlavi *xwar*, or 'the sun'. The worship of the sun-god by the Scythian-Sarmatians and Sarmatian-Albanians has been well established. The god Kuar, inherited by the Caucasian Huns, was apparently also the god of the local Iranian population, while in the pantheon of the Huns, his image merged together with that of the of 'thunderer' Tengri-khan. In any case all further mentions of Tengri-khan (Aspendiat) in the text of 'The life...' mark him as the main evil that the Christian missionary had to deal with. He mentions two types of sanctuaries in which ceremonies in honour of Tengri-khan were held: *kapishches*, that is, pagan temples in which idols (images of Tengri-khan?) and sacred groves were located. In these, the highest trees were held to be personifications of Tengri-khan. They offered horses in sacrifice, which were slaughtered in the sacred groves.

The blood of the horses was used to sprinkle the earth under the trees, while their heads and skin were hooked on branches, and the carcass of the animals burnt on sacrificial fires. The sacrifices were accompanied by prayers directed towards the image of Tengri-khan. The destruction of their sacred trees which personified Tengri-khan, and the construction of a giant cross with their trunks was the culmination of Israel's missionary activities and a symbol of his victory over idolatry.

The cult of Tengri-khan, the ruler of the Upper world, including the worship of his symbols and images, such as the Sun (Kuar), Moon, the 'heavenly thunders', tall trees, and 'idols', was the central religion in the tsardom of Alp Iluetuer. This cult is identical in details with what is known about the worship of Tengri (the Sky) among the ancient Turkic nations of Central Asia and Siberia. Similar to the Caucasian Huns, between the 6th and 8th centuries the Turks made sacrifices to the Sky in sacred mountain forests and the 'cave of ancestors'. Along with the Sky, they worshiped celestial bodies such as the Sun and Moon. Mahmud al-Kashgari, a devout Muslim of the 9th century, was appalled at the 'disbelievers' who used the word 'Tengri' to refer to 'tall trees'. Ethnographic data are also confirmed by the ritual burning of the carcasses of sacrificial animals.

Along with Tengri-khan, the 'tsardom of the Huns' also worshiped a female deity, whom the Christian observer, familiar with the classical culture, names 'Aphrodite'. The connection between the Huns' goddess and the goddess Umay of the ancient Turks is clear.

Water and earth are mentioned as objects of veneration, the deities (or deity) of the Middle world. There was also a special rank of Hun 'sorcerers', who 'appealed' to the Earth. In essence, we are describing the ancient Turkic cult of 'sacred Earth-Water', with its 'hymns to the Earth', as described by Theophylactus Simocattes.

The most specific characters of the Huns' pantheon which are mentioned incidentally in 'The life...' were a number 'gods of the road' who are clearly reminiscent of Yol-Tengris, constituting a quite specific rank of ancient

Turkic deities. The description of the 'pagan fallacies' of the Huns only lacks information on the Lower world and its deities. However, 'The life...' describes their burial constructions, which appear to be quite similar to those of the Central Asian Turks. The Christian missionary was deeply stricken by the displays of grief (crying and scratching of cheeks with a knife) was accompanied by horse racing, games 'by their demonic customs' and 'lustful indulgence'. In a similar manner, the Chinese source describes the funeral of a noble Turkic man in the 6th century. The relatives of the deceased kill sacrificial animals and cut their cheeks as a sign of grief, after which they organise horse races and games for the youngsters, dressed in their best outfits. The games were of an erotic character, and after them the parents would arrange weddings.

Describing the destruction of the Huns' funeral constructions, the Christian author notes that they were set on a 'high place', and consisted of 'kaphiches' (funeral temples), idols (statues) and the 'filthy skins of sacrificial stuffed animals' (hung around the temples). The 'Kaphiches' were called 'high' and they were said to be destroyed by fire—that is, were built of wood. It is possible that the Huns' 'idols' were also made of timber. The source mentions that all these funeral elements are also found among the Central Asian Turks: a temple built 'by the grave', 'images of the deceased' (ancient Turkic stone statues), the heads and skins of sacrificial sheep and horses hanging from poles. Another ritual common to the Huns and ancient Uighur tribes was the worship of thunder and lightning, with sacrifices made on the sites of lightning strikes.

While the Caucasian Hun-Bulgarian pantheon has an ethnic connection with the ancient Turkic mythology, the Tengri cult's evolution into the politicised religion of an early feudal

state clearly demonstrates the processes which took place simultaneously but independently from each other during the 7th and 8th centuries in Mongolia and on the Danube river. The Orkhon inscriptions repeatedly assert the heavenly origins of the Khagan's family. Together with the view of Tengri and Umay as heavenly spouses and patrons of the dynasty, this late mythological cycle bore a clear mark of its appearance within a class society and was a doubtless part of the state cult of the Turkic Khaganate. The following elements are characteristic of this cult: yearly sacrifices in a 'cave of ancestors' where the khagan himself would act as the chief priest, the honouring of deceased ancestors-Khagans, the consecration of khagan funeral compounds and steles—all of these are mentioned in stone written sources or in the writings of foreign observers.

The same processes and, most importantly, the amplification of the cult of the leader, whose image is consecrated and transformed into the image of the tsar-chief priest, the earthly guise of the heavenly ruler, are also characteristic of the First Bulgarian tsardom. This similarity cannot always be analysed in detail in order to detach typological parallels from genetic impulses.

The common features of the pantheon, mythology, ritualism, archaic beliefs and superstitions common to the Turkic-Oghuz tribes of Central Asia and the Hun-Bulgar tribes of the Northern Caucasus influenced the religious beliefs of the Danubian proto-Bulgars, with their cult of Tangra (Tengri, Tengri-khan). Thus the extrapolation of the characteristic features of the ancient Central Asian religions onto the religious ideology of the proto-Bulgarians is as reasonable and logical as the identification of analogues in other spheres of culture of the tribes of Inner Asia and the 'people of Asparukh'.

CHAPTER 5

The Volga-Ural region in the Era of the Turkic Khaganates*Flarid Sungatov*

In the middle of the 1st millennium CE, the ethnocultural map of the Cis-Ural region underwent new radical changes. In terms of archaeology, these events were characterised by the arrival in the 5–6th centuries of an alien population who left behind the monuments known as the *Turbaslinn archaeological culture* which existed in the region until the 8th century CE [Mazhitov, 1968, 1981, Sungatov, 1998].

The territory of spread of the Turbaslinn culture monuments covers the Northern frame of the forest steppe—the basin of the mid-stream of the Belaya river. The presence of burial sites and settlements of the Turbaslinn culture allows us to suggest that, in comparison with the Kharinsk-Turaevsk-Staromush-tinsk alien population, the former managed to create their own ethnic territory.

The distinctive and unifying features of the monuments of the Turbaslinn culture are: the rite of burials under mounds [tumulus or 'kurgan' burials], traces of ritual hearths and funeral feasts under mounds, graves of complex constructions (kerves in narrow walls, protrusions of soil), the dead body was laid down on its back with the head directed towards the north, clay bowls were placed at the head of space in burial chambers, the dead body was provided with meat of sheep or horse, three-part belt and shoe buckles were found as part of the burial inventory. The typical buckle had a folded 'tongue' which protruded over a ring. The list of features also includes items of the belt garniture of the 'Hun' outfit, kalach-looking earrings of the 'Kharinsk' type [kalach is a traditional Slavic twisted white

bread], mirrors with honeycomb ornament, laminated and cast fibulas and many other features (Fig. 1, 2).

There is currently a wide range of opinions on the ethnic affiliation and the ancestral homeland of the Turbaslinn culture. V. Gening considered them to be the Turkified Ugrians whose development was related to the processes of mutual assimilation and mixture of the ancient Turkic and Ugrik tribes, which took place back in the Iron Age on the territory of Western Siberia [Gening, 1987, pp. 97–99, 1989, p. 120]. N. Mazhitov considers them to be of Turkic-ancient Bashkir origin and links their origination with the tribes of the state of Kangju (Eastern Aral Sea region) [Mazhitov, Sultanova, 1994, p. 108–110]. V. Ivanov and S. Vasyutkin expressed a similar point of view: they argued that the Turbaslinn ethnos included a significant Ugrik component [Ivanov, 1999, p. 33, Vasyutkin, 1992, p. 101]. We link the origination of the Turbaslinn culture to the nomads of the Eurasian steppes of the 5–7th centuries who constituted part of the Hun military union [Sungatov, 1998]. E. Kazakov is inclined to the opinion that the Turbaslinn people in their origin are connected to the territory of the Eastern Aral Sea region. But, in contrast to N. Mazhitov, he detects Indo-Iranian roots and identifies them with the Khionites who retreated to the Ural-Volga region after their defeat at the hands of the Turks in 558 [Kazakov, 1998, p. 110].

Indeed, the closeness between the Turbaslinn and the Dzhetyasar cultures—which some scholars have noted—is seen through

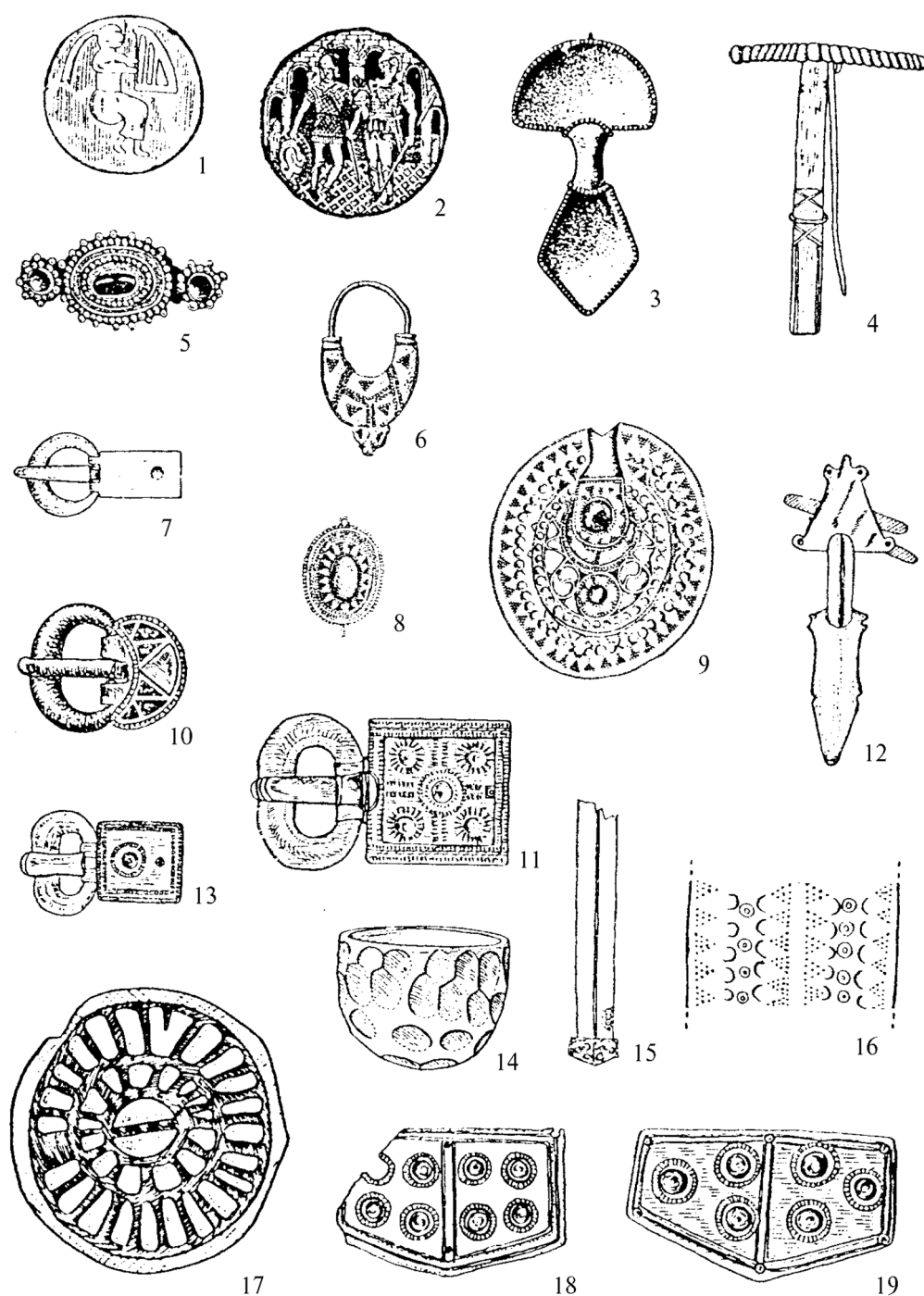


Fig. 1. Materials of the early stage of the Turbaslinn culture.

1 – gemmae, 2–4, 12 – fibulas, 5 – ring, 6 – earring, 7, 10, 11, 13 – buckles, 8, 9 – pendants,
 14 – bowl, 15 – detail of scabbard, 16 – fragment of scabbard lining, 17 – mirror, 18, 19 – chapes.
 1 – carnelian, 2 – bronze-iron, 3, 4, 7, 12 – silver, 5, 6, 8, 9, 15, 16, 18, 19 – gold, 10, 11, 13 – gold-bronze,
 14 – glass, 17 – bronze

many features of the burial ceremony (burial pits with protrusions of soil and props, presence of crypts, northern orientation of buried bodies, the rite of artificial deformation of skulls) and according to the composition of the items of the material culture, including cult handicrafts and separate specific objects. Meanwhile, along with the similarity of the burial ceremonies, Turbaslinn antiquities contain items which have analogies only in the monuments of the Hunnic period of the Eastern-European steppes of the 5–7th centuries. Some of them obviously belonged to the Byzantine production (gold kolts—part of female headgear, medallions, fibulas, mirrors with honeycomb ornament and many others).

The aforementioned facts allow us to speak of two separate waves of resettlement of the nomads of the Cis-Cis Ural which took place in the middle of the first millennium CE. The first flow of the Turbaslinn population occurred in the 5th century CE, as stated in early written sources (the Dezhnev burial site which contains over 200 mounds, including the Kuvykov mound and separate Ufa burials). The origin of this population who left these burial sites is connected in its origin with the reverse flow of separate ethnic groups of the Hunnic tribal union from the steppes of the Northern Black Sea region [Sungatov, 1998]. The composition of this very union was polyethnic. It included the Hunnic-Sarmatian population of the Volga-Ural region and tribes of the Dzhetyasar culture of the Eastern Ural region. Various contacts and mutual assimilation of tribal groups of the Hunnic confederation led to the formation of a new ethnos with the predominance of the Aral component. The anthropological data also demonstrate this. M. Akimova notes, for instance, that skulls extracted from the Dezhnev burial site of the Turbaslinn culture allow us to infer the mixed character of its population [Akimova, 1968, p. 75]. This ethnocultural formation happened to be on the territory of the Cis-Ural forest steppe area at the end of the 5th century.

A new influx of the Dzhetyasar population into the Turbaslinn territory occurred at the end of the 6th century and was coinci-

dent with the political events in the Eurasian steppe, when the military-political domination of the Western-Turkic Khaganate spread to the Volga, while the Turkic military detachments conquered the Northern Caucasus and the Black Sea region. In 558, the Turks defeated the wrestling tribes of the Huni (Chionites), Var and Ogor peoples in the Aral Sea region [Kazakov, 1998, Kazakov, Rafikova, 1999]. Part of these unconquered tribes seemingly had to retreat to the Cis-Cis Ural. This alien group of migrants seems to have been cognate in their culture and language with the Turbaslinn migrants of the first wave (ultimately the origin of both was related to the Eastern Aral Sea region). It is no coincidence that later burial sites (NovoTurbaslinn, Kushnarenkovsk, Shareevsk and others) appeared and started functioning in close proximity to the location areas of earlier monuments of the Turbaslinn culture. Besides this, the palaeontological data on later burial sites of the Turbaslinn culture (Kushnarekov and NovoTurbaslinn sites) also point to the southern (Aral Sea region) origin of the tribes of the second wave of migration [Akimova, 1968, pp. 63, 71–72, Yusupov, 1991, p. 11].

The appearance of the Turbaslinn population in the Cis-Cis Ural coincides with the formation of the Imenkovo culture in the Middle Volga Region. Scholars have expressed various hypotheses regarding its roots. The current interpretation of the ethnic affiliation of its population is balanced between proto-Slavic [Matveeva, 1981, 1986] and Baltic [Khalikov, 1987]. However, E. Kazakov notes that the extant Imenkovo monuments with a range of features of the Turbaslinn culture (Komintern II, the ancient settlements of 'Shikhhan' and I Polyankinskoe) containing complexes similar to the Turbaslinn monuments on the Belaya river. At the same time, both the Imenkovo and Turbaslinn monuments are widely spread across the entire territory of the Ural-Volga area [Kazakov, 1996, p. 31]. Regarding the origin of the 'Turbaslinn-Imenkovo' monuments, he expressed a hypothesis that they were somehow related to the Chionites of the Aral Sea region [Kazakov, 1998, p. 110]. In this light, it seems to us that the relative

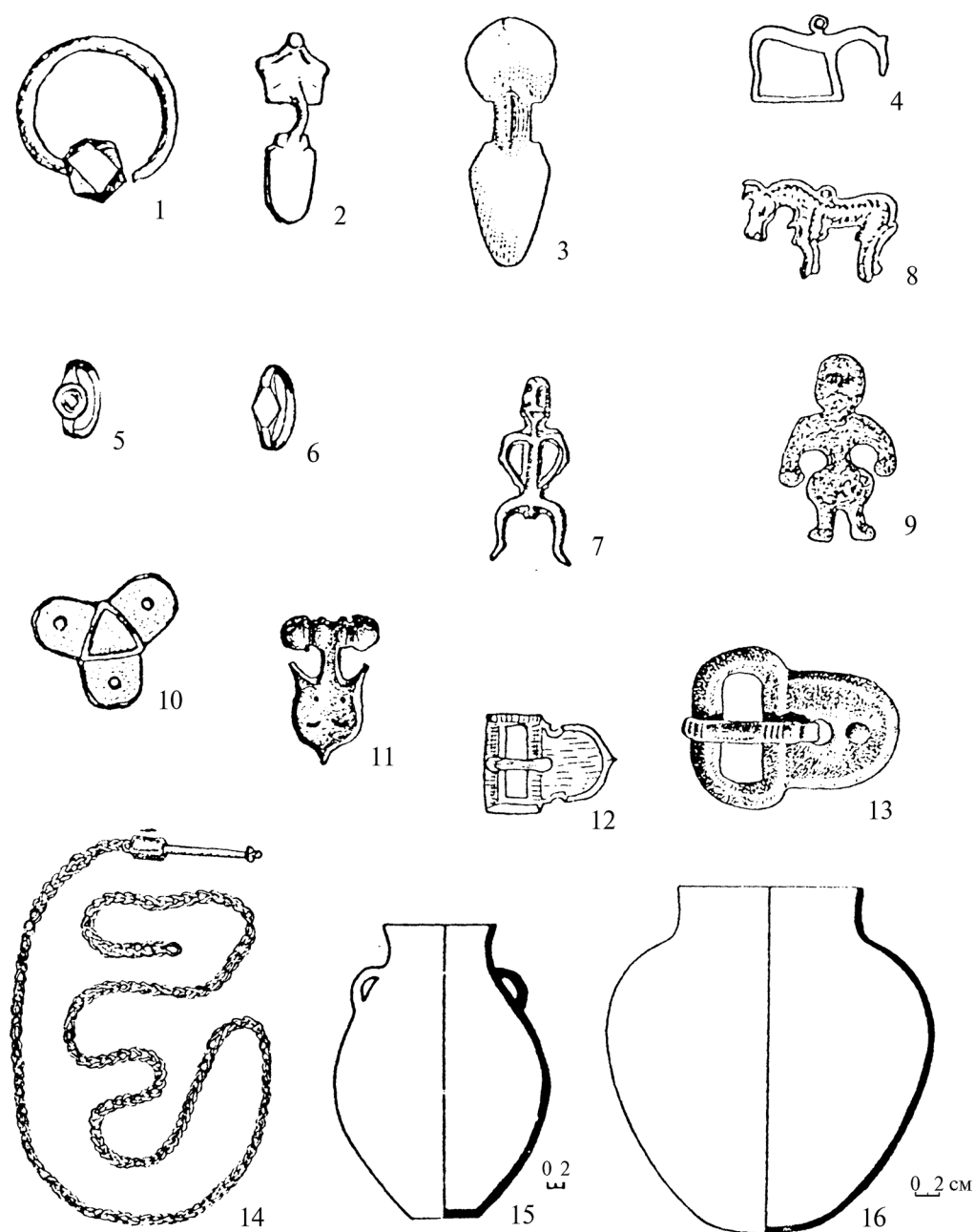


Fig. 2 Materials of the later stage of the Turbaslinn culture.
 1 – earring, 2, 3 – fibulas, 4, 8 – horse pendants, 5, 6 – rings, 7, 9 – pendants in the form of a human figure,
 10, 11 – linings, 12, 13 – buckles, 14 – chain, 15, 16 – vessels. 1 – silver with gilt, 2, 4–9, 11, 12 – bronze,
 3, 10, 13 – silver, 14 – gold, 15, 16 – clay

closeness of contacts between the Imenkovo and Turbaslinn populations in the given region may be explained by the inertia of former contacts and vicinity of their ancestors in the period of their stay in the middle of the first millennium CE in the Eastern Aral Sea region. The common features in their burial ceremony and culture point to the same thing. The special features, for example, were as follows: flat-bottomed vessels were found upon the burial sites and in the settlements of the Turbaslinn culture, which resembled the ones belonging to the Imenkovo culture (the Romanov type) in terms of morphological characteristics, burial rituals which included cremation (the Kushnarenkovo burial site, Ufa burials) were also recorded. As relates to the Imenkovo culture, where the ritual of cremation utterly dominated, the 2nd Komintern burial site is known, in which burials through cremation and inhumation are mixed. The features of the burial ceremony with the elements of inhumation (the northward orientation of the corpse, sacrificial complexes built of horse skulls and leg bones, construction of clay bowls into the grave, placing sacrificial food and funeral equipment inside the graves) find full counterparts in the Kushnarenkovo burial site of the Turbaslinn culture. All the above described allows us to see that the components of both cultures—Imenkovo and Turbaslinn—are present in both of them. These findings also allow us to acknowledge the close cultural and ethnic ties between them. This, in turn, allows us to question the view that the origin of bearers of the Imenkovo culture is linked to the proto-Slavic or Baltic ethnoses⁴.

In the area of the midstream of the Belaya river, bearers of the Turbaslinn culture came into the contact with the Finno-Permic population of the Mazunin (early Bakhmutino) culture. The extant materials of the Bashkir variant of the Mazunin culture allow us to speak of its further transformation which was initiated by the alien population of the preceding period.

The Mazunin (early Bakhmutino) culture ceases to exist in the Kama River region of

Udmurtia in the 5th century, and the subsequent fate of its bearers is still not clear [Ostaniina, 1997, pp. 177–181]. In the meantime, another development is observed in the contact zone (the interfluvium between the Belaya and the Ufa rivers) of the Mazunin and Turbaslinn population. On this very territory, the Mazunin (early Bakhmutino) culture found its continuation in a new archaeological culture. Representing one of the possible variants of further development of the Finno-Permic ethnocultural community, it reflects the complicated processes of active ethnocultural intercommunion and mixing between the local Mazunin population and the alien Turbaslinn people, and later—between the Kushnarenkovo and Karayakupovo ethnoses. As a result of these processes, a separate ethnocultural group of monuments was formed, which received the name of the Bakhmutino culture.

The Bakhmutino culture of the 5–8th centuries, which occupied the territory of modern-day northern Bashkortostan, is characterised by tumuli, burial grounds in which corpses were oriented northwards, sacrificial complexes in birchbark boxes placed by skeletons, pendants in the Bakhmutino style included in the funeral equipment, vessels with pitted ornamentation on their corpora, details of belts of the Eurasian fashion, bracelets, necklaces, small beads, clasps-syulgamas, etc. (Fig. 3).

Researchers believe that the Bakhmutino culture has a genetic relationship with the cultures of the Kama river of the beginning of the Common Era. This opinion is borne out by the results of the comparative-typological analysis which compared the features of the Mazunin burial ceremony with the Pianobor and Karaabyz archaeological cultures [Ivanov, 1999, p. 35, Sultanova, 2000, p. 17]. In addition to the similarities in the burial characteristics, the ethnogenetic closeness between bearers of the Bakhmutino culture and the Finno-Permic tribes of previous times is proved by the results of the comparative-typological analysis between the Chandar (Bakhmutino) ceramics and the ceramics of the Pianobor and Mazunin cultures [Ivanov, 1999, pp. 35–36].

⁴ See the section: S. Klyashtorny, P. Starostin. Orthodox tribes in the Volga Region.

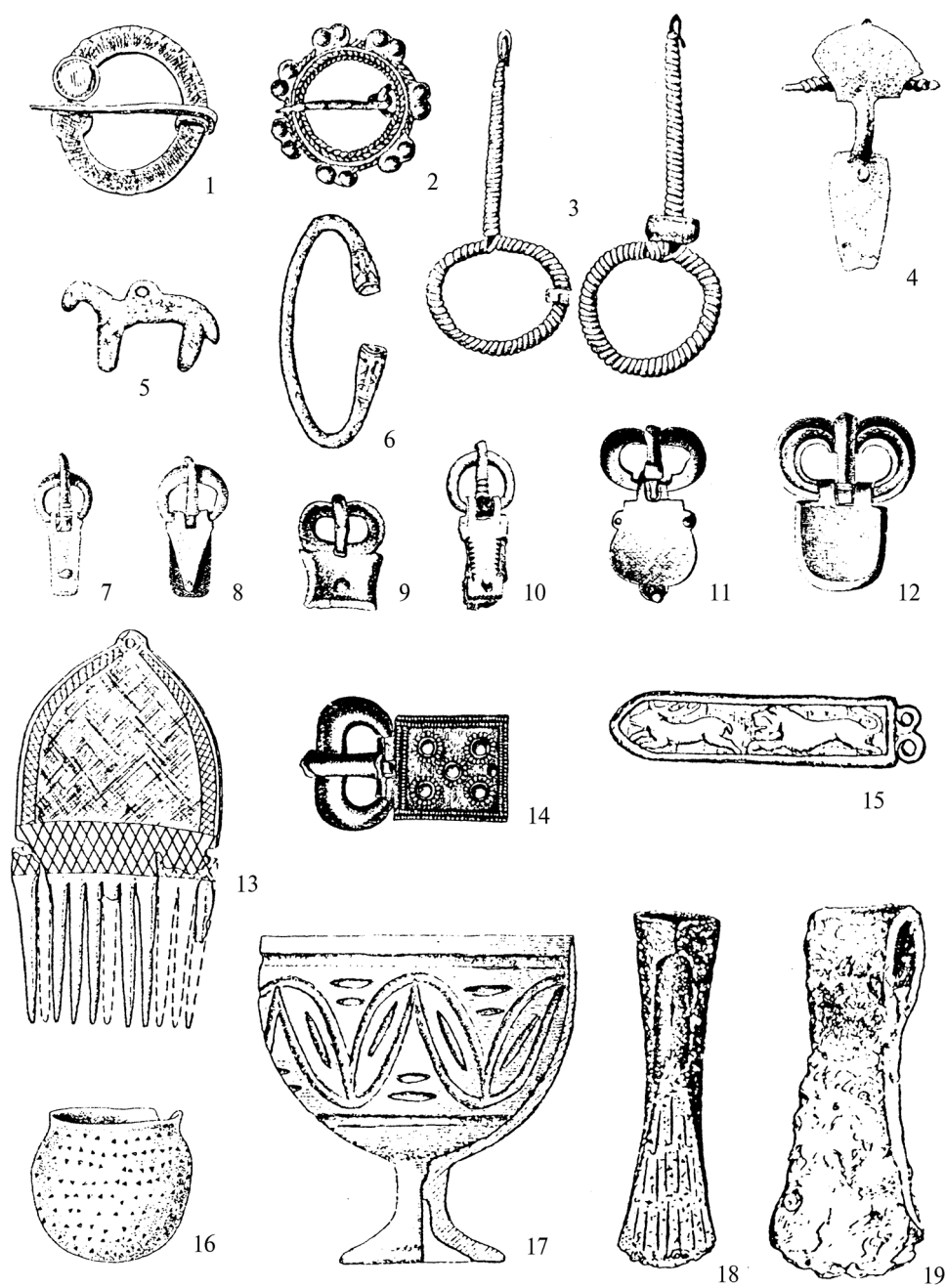


Fig. 3. Materials of the Bakhmutino culture. 1, 2, 4 – fibulas-buckles, 3 – temporal pendants, 5 – horse pendants, 6 – bracelet, 7–12, 14 – buckles, 13 – hair pick, 15 – tip of the belt, 16 – bowl, 17 – cup, 18, 19 – axes. 1, 2, 3, 6 – bronze, 1, 7–12 – silver, 13 – bone, 14, 15 – gold-bronze, 16 – clay, 17 – glass, 18, 19 – iron

These facts allow us to categorically conclude that the bearers of the Bakhmutino culture were the local population. This culture was not from Southern Siberia, as V. Gening and N. Mazhitov suppose [Gening, 1972, p. 265, Mazhitov, 1977, p. 45], but represents the result of the ethnocultural symbiosis (mixture) of nomads and the Mazunin population [Matveeva, 1969]. The materials found in the Birsk burial site convince us that the formation and functioning of the Bakhmutino society was not a simple evolutionary development. The collected items show that there were close ethnocultural ties between the Mazunin and Turbaslinn populations in the 5–8th centuries. This interaction which was dominated by the Bakhmutino population, i.e. by the locals living on the territory of their resettlement, is expressed by the discovery of Chandar vessels inside the burial complexes of the Turbaslinn culture [Pshenichnyuk, 1968, Sungatov, 1995] and vice versa, the vessels of the Turbaslinn type lacking any ornament found in the Bakhmutino sites. This interaction found its reflection in peculiar syncretical vessels, the ornamentation of which had Mazunin details (rows of slant notches) mixed with Turbaslinn forms.

Close ethnic ties were vividly demonstrated by the items found in the Birsk burial sites. In particular, the records contain a range of Turbaslinn burial grounds among which are graves of people with artificial deformation of their heads. At the same time, it was discovered that the burial sites of the Turbaslinn culture (Dezhnevo) contained female tumuli, the anthropological type of which fell outside of variations of the Uraloid population, i.e. are autochthonous. This, in turn, points to the matrimonial character of relations between the Bakhmutino and Turbaslinn people.

The arrival at the turn of the 6–7th centuries of a new alien population known under the name of the Kushnarenkovo tribes led to a serious shift in the ethnocultural situation. Soon the territory of their resettlement covered not only the regions of the Turbaslinn and Bakhmutino cultures, but also the Middle Volga region. In this respect, the appearance of graves containing Kushnarenkovo

ceramics and relevant funeral equipment on the Turbaslinn and Bakhmutino burial sites becomes significant. In the 8th century, the Turbaslinn and Bakhmutino burial sites cease to function. It is not improbable that a part of the Turbaslinn population was pressed towards western areas by new arrivals. Many elements of its culture recorded in the pagan culture of the Volga Bulgars point to the same fact [Kazakov, 1999, p. 111]. The historical destiny of the Bakhmutino population remains unclear. The links between them and the Northern Bashkirs of the Cis-Cis Ural make us suppose that they remained in their areas of habitation even after the 8th century.

The Kushnarenkovo culture existed in the territory of the Ural-Volga region in the 7th–8th centuries and even in the 10th century. It is characterised by mound burials, northern orientation of the corpse which was accompanied by a wide range of items (belt garniture of 'heraldic', Turkic and Saltovsk types, armaments and horse harness). A hallmark of the Kushnarenkovo culture is thin-walled clay pottery adorned with exquisite decoration (Fig. 4). In the opinion of N. Mazhitov, it was ritualistic in nature, and the design resembles patterns on the toreutic items of Central Asian jewellers [Mazhitov, Sultanova, 1994, p. 106]. Many skulls which were extracted during excavation of burial sites of the culture under consideration have traces of artificial deformation.

There is no consensus on questions of the origin and ethnocultural affiliation of bearers of the Kushnarenkovo culture. However, the majority of contemporary researchers have come to acknowledge their Ugrian-Magyar affiliation (V. Ivanov, A. Khalikov, E. Khalikova, E. Kazakov, R. Kuzeev and others). In particular, V. Ivanov supposes that the monuments of this culture, forming a strong typological connection with the Ugrian cultures of the Molchanov and Potchevash types of the forest Trans-Cis Ural and the Irtysh areas, represent a single cultural-typological community and in fact appear to be their western periphery [Ivanov, 1999, pp. 66–71].

However, the ethnocultural environment which emerged in the Steppe due to the for-

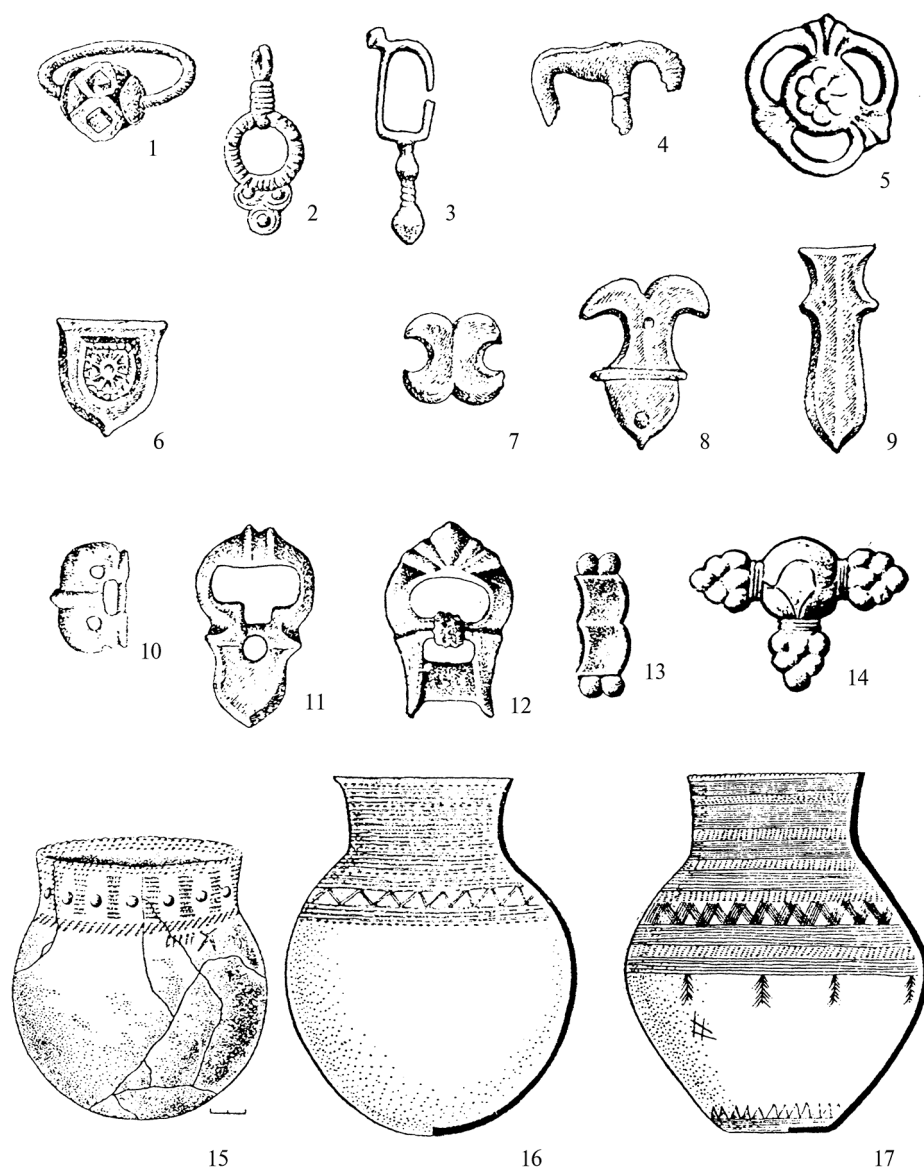


Fig. 4. Materials of the Kushnarenkovo and Karayakupovo cultures.

1, 3 – earrings, 2 – earring-like pendant, 4 – horse pendant, 5 – belt distributor, 6–10, 13, 14 – linings, 11, 12 – buckles, 15–17 – bowls. 1 – bronze-glass, 2–4, 7–9 – bronze, 6 – silver-gold, 10, 11, 13, 14 – silver, 15–17 – clay

mation of the Turkic Khaganate, as well as continuous migrations of the Dzhetyasar population of the Eastern Aral Sea region in the middle of the first millennium CE not solely towards the Lower Volga and Northern Caucasus, but also towards the Southern Ural and the Trans-Ural areas, allows us to evaluate the similarities between the Kushnarenkovo and Molchanov-Potchevash cultural complexes in

a different way. The similarity between them could be the consequence of multidirectional migration of the Kushnarenkovo tribes from one and the same original area – the Eastern Aral Sea region. N. Mazhitov, A. Sultanova and E. Kazakov relate the origin of the Kushnarenkovo tribes to this exact territory.

However, the first two scholars consider them to be representatives of some Tur-

kic-speaking tribes, while the third identifies them with the Ogors (Ugrians), who were forced to retreat from the Eastern Aral Sea region after the Altai Turks defeated them in 558 [Kazakov, 1998, p. 110].

The next wave of Karayakupovo migrants, cognate with the Kushnarenkovo tribes and recorded archaeologically in the Southern Cis Ural since the middle – latter half of the 8th century, may also be linked to migrational impulses taking root in the Eastern Aral Sea region. According to the data provided by L. Levina, for example, a fresh influx of the Dzhetyasar population is observed in the 8th century [Levina, 1996, p.375].

The Karayakupovo tribes in the Southern Cis Ural settled throughout almost the same territory occupied by the Kushnarenkovo people. They differed little from the Kushnarenkovo people in their way of life, culture and funeral traditions. However, the former had fairly different clay pottery and elements of the material culture which represent the evidence of their contacts with the culture of the Altai Turks. This is shown particularly by the composition of the funeral equipment of the Karayakupovo burials, where belts, items of military equipment and items of horse caparisons of the so-called Turkic types were found.

The Kushnarevo-Karayakupovo tribes who settled in the territory of the Cis-Cis Ural experienced simultaneous influence of the culture of two ethnocultural blocks: the Turkic-speaking Bulgars who had arrived into the Volga-Kama area from the regions of the Don and the Northern Caucasus, and the forest Finno-Permian tribes of the Kama River region.

The Kushnarevo-Karayakupovo tribes had the most intense ethnocultural contacts with the early Bulgars on the north-west territory of modern-day Bashkortostan and Eastern Tatarstan. There are good reasons to suppose that the relations between them were of a fairly peaceful nature. Two factors convince us of this: the Kushnarenkovo-Karayakupovo component in the monuments of early Volga Bulgaria and the reverse Bulgar-Saltov influence over the Cis-Uralic tribes noted by researchers [Kazakov, 1992, pp. 242–245, 267].

The military-political expansion of the Yenisei Kyrgyz to the west that began in the 9th century and is proved by the discovery of Tyukhtetsky records in the steppe Trans-Cis Ural possibly became the reason for the outflow of some southern group of the Kushnarevo-Karayakupovo tribes from the territory of the Southern Cis Ural and the Aral Sea region. Unable to resist the military pressure from the east and as the summer nomadic paths in the Aral Sea region were blocked, they moved beyond the Volga river into the steppes of South-Eastern Europe through western areas of modern Orenburg region, Samara and Saratov regions. The north-west group of the Kushnarenkovo-Karayakupovo population which remained at the sites of their former habitation, merged into the state of Volga Bulgaria and was assimilated with the Bulgarians. In the meantime, the Southern Ural group continued to live in the territory of modern Bashkortostan after the 9th century. This very group, in N. Mazhitov's opinion, played a decisive role in the formation of the ancient Bashkir ethnos [Mazhitov, 1977, p.183].

CHAPTER 6

Eastern Europe in the era of the Khazar Khaganate

Lyudmila Gmyrya

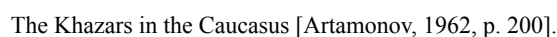
The Khazars in the Caucasus

The historic memory of the Khazars begins in the time of the formation of the Khazar kingdom (the middle of the 7th century).

When explaining the Khazars' origin, researchers usually cite the genealogical legend about the Khazars and two other allied tribes, which was originally placed in the 'Ecclesiastical History' of John of Ephesus (d. circa 586), but reached our time in the chronicles of later authors – Michael the Syrian (12th century) and Bar Hebraeus (13th century). The content of the legend is as follows: during the reign of Byzantine Emperor Maurice (582–602), three brothers with 30,000 Scythians came from Inner Scythia, from the side of the Imeon Mountain Range. On a journey which lasted 65 days (they went in the winter time, so that it was easier to cross rivers), they reached the Tanais river which flows from the Maeotian Lake [the Azov Sea] and flows into the Pontus Euxinos (Black Sea). One of the brothers, Bulgar, took 10,000 people, crossed the Tanais, reached the Danube and pleaded emperor Maurice to grant him a land for living within the Byzantine Empire. They were accommodated near the border so that they provided protection from the Avars. The Romans named those Scythian people Bulgars. Two other brothers, one of whom was named Khazarik, came to the land of the Alans called 'Barsalia', in which the Romans had built 'cities of the Caspian' called the 'Gates of Turae'. Since the time of Khazarik's reign in Barsalia, its population started being called the Khazars [Artamonov, 1962, p.128]. It is not completely clear where Barsalia was situated, but researchers have definitively connected the placename

'Gates of Turae' with the Pass of Derbend on the Caspian coast, identifying it as the 'Gates of the Turks' or the 'Gates of all Gates'. The source reveals that before the arrival of the Khazars, its population was called 'the Pugurs'. It is difficult to link them to well-known tribes, since its name could have been distorted by scribes. It is presumably one of the degrees of the Bulgars. Based on the comparison between the placename 'Turae' and 'Derbend', researchers place the country of Barsalia near it, on the territory of modern Northern Dagestan.

Other sources also mention the country of Barsalia, but they do not describe its precise location. In the section dated 679/680, Theophanes the Confessor reproduces the legend about the ancient history of the Bulgars, which also mentions 'the people of the Khazars' and Barsalia. After the fall of Old Great Bulgaria, situated on the Black Sea coast of the Western Caucasus, the Bulgarian tribes divided: '...after they thus divided into five parts and became thin, there came the great people of Khazars from the depths of Berzilia, first Sarmatka, and started reigning over the whole land on the far side (on the European coast of the Black Sea) up to the border of the Pontus Euxinos. These people made the first brother, Batbayan – the ruler of former Bulgaria, their tributary, and collect tribute from him until now' [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 61]. Another Byzantine chronicler of the latter half of the 8th–the beginning of the 9th centuries, Patriarch Nicephorus, does not equate Barsalia and Sarmatia: 'And since this nation [the Bulgars] divided and dispersed, the tribe of the Khazars, who settled near the



In the Arab historical literature, Berzilia is mentioned in the form '*Barshalia*'. According to the data provided by al-Baladhuri (d. 892), the meeting of Persia King Khosrow I Anushirvān (6th century) and 'the king of the Turks' was held in Barshalia. The Arab tradition links the

construction of fortifications in the area of the Caspian Gates (Derbend) with activities of Khosrow Anushirvān. Having conceived the idea of a rampart which would block the path from the sea to the mountains, '...Anushirvān sent a letter to the king of the Turks in which he offered him friendship, conclusion of peace and establishment of mutual consent. 'In order to get in good with him, he asked to give his daughter in marriage to him and expressed the desire to become his son-in-law (or become his relative), and sent him one of his bond-maids, who had been adopted by one of his wives, saying, however, that she was his own daughter. And the Turkic granted Anushirvān his own daughter and then visited him himself. And they met in Barshalia (or Barshile) where they had a feast during many days, became friends and paid attention to each other.' And then, after a series of planned provocative acts against 'the Turkic', the Persia shah, as al-Baladhuri

writes, appealed to 'the Turkic king' with the following request: 'My brother, our warrior hosts did not like the peace (that we concluded), as (because of it) they now lack revenues brought by constant raids and wars which used to happen between us, and I am afraid that they could perpetrate something which could sadden our hearts and cause a feud between us, after we became sincere friends, were imbued with mutual trust and even became relatives. (It would be great), I think, if you allowed me to build a wall between you and me and arrange a gate in it, so that no one could pass from you to me and vice versa, except for those whom we would like to let in ourselves. (The Turkic) eagerly agreed to do it, and then came back to his country, while Anushirvān stayed in order to construct the wall. And he did it... having completed the construction, Anushirvān erected Iron Gates at the entrance, ordering one hundred knights to guard them, though prior to that, there had been needed only fifty thousand soldiers to patrol this place. After this, the chagan was said: Anushirvān outfoxed you, you married a woman who is not his daughter, and he managed to fortify himself against you, but the chagan could not imagine anything to resist this' [al-Baladhuri, pp. 6–7]. The location of Barshalia is not clearly specified in the source. However, indirect data provided by the source allow us to draw certain conclusions. Derbend during the reign of Khosrow Anushirvān is presented as the northern border point of the Persians, dividing the lands of Sasanian Iran and 'the Turks'. The meeting of the rulers was probably held within the possession of the Iranian king, since the source mentions that 'the king of the Turks 'returned to his country' after peace was reached and the meeting was over. Anushirvān called the Derbend fortifications the wall 'between you and me'. It is possible that the Barshalia of the Arab authors was located in the Caspian region, south of Derbend.

The construction of fortification lines in the Caspian Sea region south of the Derbend Pass during the time of King Kavadh was attributed by al-Baladhuri to the threat of the Khazars' raids. Anushirvān negotiated for peace in Barshalia with 'the king of the Turks', who was presumably 'the king of the Khazars'. However,

in the 560s and 570s, The Caspian territories up to Derbend fell under the control of the Turks from the Western Turkic Khaganate. As the allies of Byzantium, they were in opposition to Iran there. However, the first appearance of the Turks in the area of the Derbend Pass refers to the time when the adobe defensive wall partitioning the pass had already been constructed.

All Arabic-speaking historical and geographical works, the earliest of which were written in the first half of the 9th century, attribute the beginning of the struggle between Iran and the Khazars in the Northern Caucasus to the reign of Persia King Kavadh I. Construction activities in the Caspian region of Sasanian Iran, related to Kavadh and his son Khosrow Anushirvān, is also explained as directed to opposing the tribes inhabiting the region of the Derbend Pass and north of it. Arabian encyclopedist al-Masudi (ibn in the beginning of 10th century, d. 956), whose works are considered to be the most informative historical source among Arab geographers, provides a list of tribes 'inhabiting the territory adjacent to the Kabkh Mountains' (the Caucasus). The Derbend fortifications were erected in order to be protected from them: 'the Mount Kabkh is a great mount occupying a huge territory. It accommodates many kingdoms and peoples. 72 peoples live upon it and each of them possess their own tsar and language, which differ from others. This mountain has many rocky spurs and valleys. The city of al-Bab al-Abwab ('the city of the [main] gate and [other] gates') is situated upon one of the branches and was built by Kasra Anushirvān between the mount and the Khazar Sea. He erected that (famous) wall on the very sea, and the wall spreads into this sea for the distance of one mile, then it is stretched along the Mount Kabkh – this all was made to deflect danger from the peoples neighbouring this mount. To be more specific – to rebuff attacks of the Khazars, Alans, different Torks Sarirs and other disbelievers' [Al-Masudi, pp. 189–190].

In accordance with Arabian sources, Sasanian Iran in the Eastern Caucasus in the period from the 480s to the 580s was opposed by the Khazars. However, the main military-political force in this region in the 5th century was rep-

resented by the Hunnic-Bulgarian tribes, and since the first decades of the 6th century, by the Hunnic-Savir tribes, about whom reliable information was provided by Byzantine, Syrian, Armenian and Albanian writers.

Researchers explain the contradictions in the data provided by Arabic-speaking, Byzantine and other sources in different ways. As an example, M. Artamonov explained this by the fact that the Sabirs and Khazars were members of one and the same military-political union of the middle of the 6th century, which was headed by the Savirs, he also explained it by the fact that they both had the same ethnic affiliation [Artamonov, 1962, p. 127]. When explaining the confusion and uncertainty of ethnic terminology in the works of the early Middle Ages, A. Novoseltsev noted: '...Armenian sources were persistent in naming nomads of the Northern Caucasus the Huns, while Arab sources were obstinate in naming the Khazars of the 8th century the Turks. Here we should see not only a tribute to the historical tradition, but be aware of the fact that the Huns and Turks inhabiting the Northern Caucasus did not disappear, but mixed with the same Khazars and thus could be identified with them' [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 84]. A subjective factor may also be relevant when evaluating the facts. When excessive significance is attached to the Arabic-language literature of the 9–13th centuries in the description of the Caucasian events in the 6–8th centuries, the role of Armenian, Byzantine and Syrian authors of the 6–8th centuries is overlooked [Novoseltsev, 1990, pp. 8–33].

Despite an abundance of sources, the early history of the Khazars (6–7th centuries) is unclear and almost inextricable from the history of other nomadic tribes which flooded the steppes of the Northern Caucasus in the period from the 4th to the 7th centuries. Their ethnic proximity to the Bulgars is defined more or less clearly. The language of the Khazars is identified as Turkic, judging by fragmentary data. But we have to take into account the following: when describing the way of life of the Khazars in the 10th century, Arab geographer of the mid-10th century al-Istakhri noted that 'the language of the Khazars neither resembles the language of the Torks nor is similar to the Persia language,

and in general, it does not resemble any language of peoples (that we know)' [Al-Istakhri, p. 45]. His younger contemporary, geographer Ibn Hawqal generally repeated the information provided by al-Istakhri, when he characterised the language of the Khazars. However, he made some additions: 'The language of pure Khazars is not similar to the Turkish language, and no language of the known nations resembles it' [Ibn Hawqal, p. 113]. He also brought forward other conclusions about the language of the Khazars, noticing that their language is identical to the language of the Bulgars, while the language of the Burtas is different. The language of the Russes is not similar to the Khazar and Burtas languages [Novoseltsev, 1990, pp. 78–79].

The Khazar language, as linguists have already proved, was part of an isolated group of Turkic languages and differed from other Turkic (Oghuz, Kimek, Kipchak) tongues which spread in the 9–10th centuries, when Arabic-speaking historians and geographers could have become acquainted with them. Mahmud al-Kashgari, who compiled 'The Dictionary of the Turkic Languages', included the Khazar language in the Turkic group. However, in the 11th century, the Khazar language had already been squeezed out by other Turkic languages spoken by the Kipchak tribes who dominated the steppe. While the dictionary of Mahmud al-Kashgari uses the words of the Bulgar language, judging by the data provided by Ibn Hawqal on the relationship between the Khazar and Bulgar languages, the former is considered to be a Turkic language.

Regarding the ethnonym of the Khazars, al-Masudi suggested that they were called the Sabir in Turkic, and the Khazaran in Persia. They came from the Turks and in Arabic their name was pronounced as 'al-Khazar' [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 79]. Al-Istakhri, who wrote during the same time, noted that 'the Khazars do not resemble the Turkish people, they have black hair and are divided into two classes: the first is called 'Kara-Khazars', they are sooty, almost black, like Indians, another class includes white people, noticeable for their beauty and other qualities of their appearance' [Al-Istakhri, p. 49]. This description was confirmed by many

Arabic-speaking continuators of al-Istakhri.

Researchers find the explanation of contradictions found in the data provided by written sources in the complex history of the Khazars. A. Novoseltsev assigned an important part in the ethnogenesis of the Khazars to the mountain tribe of the Sabirs [Novoseltsev, 1990, pp. 81–82], whose presence in the Northeast Caucasus from 516–517 to 624 was recorded by written sources.

Indeed, the Khazars rose in the Caspian-Azov region due to lengthy wars with the tribes inhabiting that area. In the 10th century, tsar of the Khazar state Joseph pointed to this fact: 'they sent them away and occupied their land, and made some of them pay tribute...' [Joseph, p. 92]. 'The land, in which I live now, used to be inhabited by the V-n-n-try... they left their country and escaped, and those (Khazars) were chasing them till they caught them, at the river called Duna' [Ibid.]. V-n-n-try should undoubtedly be identified as 'the Bolgars', while their land is associated with Old Great Bulgaria which was forced to lose their supremacy in the region to the Khazars. It is most likely that during this period (670s), the Khazars were settled further east from the kingdom of the Bolgars, which sources definitely place into the Black Sea part of the Western Ciscaucasia.

The 640s–650s marked the beginning of the first stage of the Arab advance into Eastern Ciscaucasia. The Khazars are considered to be the first force which they faced in the middle of the 7th century. This conclusion is based on the data provided by Arab authors. The earliest historical works about Arab conquests were written over 200 years after their beginning (first half of the 9th century). Descriptions of military campaigns in the Arab 'Books of Campaigns' or 'Book of the Conquests of Lands' and later in 'The History' are based upon the stories told by informers living simultaneously with the authors of those works. They were typically the successors of warriors and commanders who had taken part in the conquests of the 7–8th centuries, who transferred the information which their families preserved as legends.

In 658, the Western Turkic Khaganate completely disintegrated. It is believed that the Khazars, taking advantage of the chaos in the

khaganate, detached from it and created an independent state, but no sources have preserved information on that. In that period, the territory and political structure of the Khazar state were in the process of forming, and its rulers received the name of Khagans. How the dynasty of the Khazars' Khagans emerged is still uncertain. An anonymous Persia source of the end of the 10th century states that Khazar rulers 'Tarkhan-Khakans' descend from the successors of Ansa [Hudud al-'Alam, p. 31] – the Turkic kin of the Ashina. 'The very fact that the sovereigns of Khazaria were called Khagans from the very beginning is evidence that the founder of this dynasty was a khagan' [Artamonov, 1962, p. 171]. Presumably, this could be a successor of the khagan of the tribal union called Ibi Shegui who had been overthrown in 651 and found refuge with the allies of the Torks the Khazars. It is also possible that after the Western Turkic Khaganate disintegrated, the Khazars absorbed the organisational structure of its political authority. The formation of the Khazar state, i.e. a vast union of tribes, began with the war against Old Great Bulgaria, whose rulers in this Turkic civil war supported the tribes of Dulu – the rivals of the Nushibi people. By the 670s, the power of the Khazars had spread around the steppe of the Northern Black Sea region and the major part of the Crimea [Artamonov, 1962, p. 174]. Arab military campaigns against Khazar possessions in the 640–50s were not recorded in the memory of the Khazars, and Tsar Joseph does not mention the Arabs as early enemies of Khazaria. It is held that the Caspian Huns (the Hun-Savirs) and their political entity (the land of the Huns) became part of the Khazar state as the Khazars' allies. Sources definitely state this fact to have happened in the 680s, as it was stated in the titulary of the ruler of the Hunnic state and his nominal dependence on the Khazar khagan (Movses Kaghankatvatsi). But was the state of the Caspian Huns dependent in the same way on the Khazar khagan in the period of the first stage of the Arab advance into Eastern Ciscaucasia in the 40–50s, sources keep silent of this fact.

Although sources do not mention if the Hunnic state existed in the period of military

operations in Transcaucasia in 626–629, there is a wealth of geographical and political data related to this political entity. Writing in the 650s–60s, Bishop Sebeos does not state the names of the Huns' place of habitation, but defines the area of their stay in the Caspian region as 'the land by the foot of the mountains', noting also that the Huns live 'by the mountainous country of the Caucasus' [Sebeos, pp. 30–31, 164]. He links their settlement to the Derbend Pass, entitling it either 'Gorge Dzhora', or 'the Gates of the Huns', or 'the Caspian Gates' [Sebeos, p. 164]. The Huns of Sebeos are 'the nation living at the Caspian Gates'. In 'The Geography of Armenia', the author of which is considered to be 7th-century mathematician and astronomer, Ananiya Shirakatsi [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 43], possessions of the Huns are also located near the Caspian Sea, north of Derbend. This work describes the territories controlled by the Huns as 'thel and of the Huns'. When describing the nations of the Northeast Caucasus, the author noted that 'to the north of this ridge, there lives the people of the Masquts in the Vardanian field by the Caspian Sea. On this spot, the ridge approaches the sea, where the wall of Derbend stands... To the north (of Derbend) near the sea, there is thel and of the Huns, to the west, by the Caucasus, there is the city of the Huns, Varachan, as well as the cities of Chungars and Msndr (Semender). To the east, there live the Savirs up to the river Talta (Atil) which divides Asian Sarmatia from Scythia. Their king is called the hagan, and his queen, the hagan's wife, is called the hatun' [Ananiya Shirakatsi, p. 30]. This source calls the Khazar and Bushhi peoples 'those coming to winter pastures and accommodating themselves to the east and west of the river' (the river of Atil) [Ananiya Shirakatsi, p. 29].

Movses Kaghankatvatsi, who described the important events of the 7th century which affected the life of the Huns and who distinguished them from other adjacent political entities, names only one geographical landmark – 'the Gates of Chora' (Derbend) through which the Huns penetrated Transcaucasia. They were also usually called 'the Gates of the Huns'. He also names several other cities of this country, including its capital, the city of Varachan,

and describes one of the mountain routes from Parthava through Derbend. According to Armenian sources, the country of the Huns was located in the immediate proximity of the northern borders of Caucasian Albania. Most contemporary scholars suppose the Hun state was situated in the Caspian Sea regions of the Northeast Caucasus (M. Artamonov, V. Bartold, G. Vernadsky, L. Gumilyov, S. Klyashtorny, V. Kuznetsov, Ya. Fyodorov, L. Gmyrya).

By the 660s, the state of the Caspian Huns is acquainted with the reign of a single ruler – 'highly respected Prince Alp Iluetuer' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 127]. Alp Iluetuer, the ruler of the Hunnic state, occupied the third position in the hierarchy of the khaganate after the khagan and his heir [Klyashtorny, 1984, p. 21]. The power of the Huns' ruler spread to all areas of domestic and foreign policy-making of the country [Gmyrya, 1995, pp. 168–170]. He initiated wars and would often command the hosts himself, he led negotiations with rulers of other states and enter into alliances with them. He decided such important issues as choosing or changing the state religion. Authorities of the supreme court and penal functions were concentrated in his hands. At his command, certain representatives of the pagan clergy – those opposing Christianisation – were burnt at stakes organised at crossroads in the streets of Varachan. Others were put in prison where they stayed until they were tried. The trial of representatives of the supreme clergy of the Huns' country, who refused to accept Christianity and called on citizens to resist, was held in the square of Varachan capital city, visited by 'great assembly of people'. The details of the judicial process are of special interest – both parties (defendants and their accusers) were allowed to speak [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 131]. When especially important issues were at stake, the ruler of the state sought the agreement of the tribal aristocracy and leaders.

In the 7th century, there existed a separate class of aristocracy in the land of the Huns – patrimonial and serving. Movses Kaghankatvatsi states that the closest circle of Alp Iluetuer included princes and tarkhans. Tarkhans were a military class consisting of noble people [Gadlov, 1979, p. 148, Novoseltsev, 1990, pp. 118–

119]. In comparison with tarkhans, princes occupied a higher position, they were heads of tribes [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 118]. Playing the role of messengers, patrimonial and serving nobility would often fulfill important foreign-policy missions of the grand prince. In certain non-official circumstances, Alp Iluetuer would send his close relatives, for instance brothers, to carry out diplomatic missions.

Participating in military campaigns was the main obligation of the male population of the Hun state. The army consisted of '...armed soldiers and their voivodes, gonfalons, regiments, armour-clad archers and weaponed knights dressed in chain armour and helmets' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, I, p. 185]. The army was commanded by the grand prince whom Movses Kaghankatvatsi calls a military man, famed for 'strength, wealth and valiant warriors. He accomplished many feats in Turkestan' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, I, p. 199]. The armament of the forces of the Huns' country included protective armour, ranged weapons, melee weapons, as well as siege equipment. The Huns' melee weapons included several types. They used swords, spears and lassos. The main type of ranged weapons was the bow. The Huns used light battering rams, covered with leather to storm fortifications, and stone-hurling machines were used by the Huns in order to repel assaults of those storming their fortresses. The level of armament and battle tactics met the contemporary demands of the military art, bringing warriors of the Hun state the glory of great military men [Gmyrya, 1995, pp. 174–186].

The most active period of the Hunnic state in the Caspian region was marked by the beginning of the Arabs' advance into Eastern Ciscaucasia. Having conquered Georgia, Caucasian Albania, Maskat and Shabiran, Arab regiments approached Derbend in 22 AH (642/643). The Persia ruler of the city of Shahrbaraz surrendered the city without a single blow being struck, stipulating special conditions of subordination to the Arabs. He and some areas of Transcaucasia were granted safe-conduct charters which allowed the chief of al-Bab passes (an official position in Arab regiments introduced by the caliph) 'to provide them safety of their lives,

property, religious community if they did not cause trouble or oppose them [the Arabs]. Regarding inhabitants of Armenia and al-Abwab – who had moved from far sites and settled there, as well as those surrounding them – he reached an agreement, so that they would take part in all campaigns and carry out any deed that the ruler deemed good. Those who agreed were excused from (all) obligations except for military conscription, which in fact substituted all obligations [Al-Tabari, p. 73]. Arab sources call the subsequent operation after the Arabs gained a foothold in Derbend as 'the campaign against the Turks' (al-Tabari) or 'the campaign against Balanjar' (al-Tabari, Ibn al-Athir). Sources do not provide further details on how the Arabs conquered Balanjar in 642/643, however, it is known that the operation was successful and the Arabs' cavalry 'reached the city of al-Baida' which is two hundred parasangs (20 daily passages) north of Balanjar' [Al-Tabari, p. 74, Ibn Al-Athir, p. 14].

It is possible that the conquest of Balanjar was not complete, since before 32 AH (652/653) military operations against this city had been conducted repeatedly [Al-Tabari, p. 74]. Another campaign against Balanjar undertaken during the reign of Caliph Usman (644–656), according to the data provided by al-Tabari and Ibn al-Athir (1160–1234) in 32 AH (652/653) brought a defeat to the Arabs. The city was situated on a high point and therefore, 'no one could approach Balanjar without being noticed or killed' [Al-Tabari, p. 75]. It is possible that the city had a fortress, because sources mention the 'tower' of Balanjar, as well as the fact that beleaguers used heavy and light missile machines. City inhabitants used stone-hurling machines. Balanjar's fate was determined in a confrontation outside of the city, in which, according to al-Tabari, the citizens of Balanjar and 'the Turks' who came to help them took part [Al-Tabari, p. 76]. Ibn al-Athir also notes that 'the Turks joined their forces with the Khazars' [Ibn Al-Athir, p. 20]. According to the data provided by al-Kufi (d. 926), the Arabs had to fight a 300,000-strong army of 'the Khazars' [Al-Kufi, p. 9]. They lost 4,000 warriors near Balanjar [al-Baladhuri, p. 14], a famous Arab commander, the leader of regiments, was

also killed. Some sources suggest it was Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'ah, others state it was his brother Salman. Sources most often name the second of the brothers. However, Arab historians confused the names of the two commanders who would often take part in military actions in the Eastern Caucasus together [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 174]. According to the information provided by Ibn al-Athir, there, near Balanjar, was killed 'Abd ar-Rahman, whose by-name was Zun-nun ('light'), which was the name of his sword' [Ibn al-Athir, p. 20]. The remaining Arab troops broke ranks and fled. Some led by Salman Ibn Rabi'ah managed to escape via the Caspian route to Derbend without suffering losses, others, when retreating, 'took the path to the Khazars and their lands' [Al-Tabari, p. 76], they appear to have reached the southern coast of the Caspian Sea via mountain passages with heavy losses. The graves of the deceased Arabs were honoured in the Muslim world as the 'graves of martyrs' (al-Kufi). According to another version, the only grave which was venerated was of a deceased commander who became famous for his generosity while alive (al-Baladhuri). However, the third version is the most widely spread in the Arab literature. It is reported by Ibn Qutayba (9th century), al-Tabari and other authors: 'People (the Turks) took the body of Abd ar-Rahman and put it in a coffin (a basket). He remained among them, and to the present day they summon rain with the help (of this body)...' [Al-Tabari, p. 76]. The use of the relics of distinguished people in pagan rituals of 'rain summoning' is known to many nations of the world.

Arab historical literature describes in detail the tactics of the Arab Caliphate in Transcaucasia and Eastern Ciscaucasia, which they applied at the first stage of their advance into the region. In particular, al-Kufi pointed to the fact that some of the regions concluded peace with the Arabs on the condition of indemnity payment. The same was done by 'lords of the mountains' Lakz, Filan and Tabaristan. Others were subdued by force: 'And Salman ibn Rabi'ah started to destroy those who expressed hostility towards his warriors and to conquer all the cities and fortresses which were in his way' [Al-Kufi, p. 9].

In the 650s, disturbances began in the Arab Caliphate. In 656, Caliph Usman (Osman) was killed, and in 661 Caliph Ali met the same fate. As a result of these perturbations, Umayyad Muawiyah I achieved victory (reigned 661–680), as he relied on Syrian regiments. The internal unrest weakened the positions of the Arabs in Transcaucasia. In 651 Caucasian Albania concluded a treaty of alliance with Byzantium. The emperor conferred Prince Juansher with the title of the sovereign of Albania, the borders of which stretched in that period 'from confines of Iberia to the gates of the Huns, until the Yeraskh river' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 99].

Movses Kaghankatvatsi provides much data on the activation of Caucasian Albania's northern neighbours. According to his information, in 662, Caucasian Albania was attacked by 'the Khazirs', but were defeated on the Levoberezhye of the Kura river. Two years later (in 664) 'on the day of the winter equinox, the king of the Huns with a numerous cavalry' marched against Albania [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 102]. The source does not provide the name of this king, but he is also called 'the Turkestan Tsar' and 'the Tsar of Turkestan'. It becomes clear from the further narrative of Movses Kaghankatvatsi, that that name was born by Grand Prince of the Hun state Alp Iluetuer and it is possible that in the 7th century, the Huns' country was designated as Turkestan [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, pp. 100, 102, 127]. It is not clear what became a reason for attacking Albania, but prior to this, the relations between the two countries had been peaceful. Movses Kaghankatvatsi notes that 'the Tsar of Turkestan', in order to confirm their peaceful relations, sent 'select horses, servants and maids, as well as skins of different amphibians as a gift' to Prince Juansher [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 100].

During that military campaign, the Huns conquered Aghuank, several regions of Ayrarat and the country of Syunik, captured locals and took cattle which descended into the valley to winter. After organising their main camp on the Levoberezhye of the Kura river, Alp Iluetuer sent messengers – his two brothers – to Juansher, with an offer to meet and conclude peace. Negotiations of the two rulers were held on the far bank of the Kura river, which Alp Iluetuer

'reached by shallop'. Peace was achieved, and the next day, Juansher 'came to the camp of the Huns and married the tsar's daughter' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 103]. The Huns returned 'one hundred twenty thousand beasts, seven thousand horses and stallions and not less than one thousand two hundred captives' [Ibid.].

At the end of the 7th century, Albania became a vassal of the Caliphate. New Caliph Muawiyah I sought to subdue Caucasian Albania by peaceful means, keeping in mind the country's allied relations with Byzantium and the Huns' kin. The Arabs were especially afraid of the fact that Juansher 'keeps the tribes of Turkestan on a short leash and (at his own wish) could either withdraw, or keep them on the territory because of his kindred relations with them' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 104]. Juansher wrung reduction of tributes by one third out of the caliph and was granted precious presents, including an elephant and a rare bird for that time – a parrot. He also received expensive weapons, fabrics, clothes and 52 racing horses.

In 669, the ruler of Albania was killed by conspirators. Juansher's nephew (the son of his brother) Varat Tiridates ascended to the Albanian throne (reigned 669–699). A new campaign of Alp Iluetuer against Albania in 669 was associated with an act of revenge for the assassination of his ally and relative. As judged by the number and composition of forces which included 'local warriors and valiant men who arrived from different places of the state of Govg', the Huns rigorously prepared themselves for the military action. Part of the forces foraged the lands 'at the foot of the great Caucasian mountains', another part, led by Alp Iluetuer, acted in the lands of the Udis. Varaz Tiridates ordered Bishop Eleazar to take part in negotiations and sent him to the main camp of the Hunnic state organised 'near the confines of Lpinka'. Varaz Tiridates confirmed the previous alliance with the Hun state and assured he had not been involved into the assassination of Juansher. Technically, the grand prince of the Huns became 'the patron and supporter of the power' of the Albanian ruler, but nevertheless, the Huns' raids into Transcaucasia were repeated up to 682.

In 682, Albania was forced to anchor their alliance with the Hunnic state (Turkestan) with a new peace treaty, one of the conditions of which was the strengthening of family ties between the rulers and the Huns' obligation to adopt Christianity. In order to have the last condition fulfilled, Varaz Tiridates delegated Israel, the Bishop of Metz Kolmanḡ, to lead an embassy to the Hunnic state. The journey of the Albanian mission from Parthava, Albania's capital city, into Varachan, the capital city of the Hun state, was lengthy and exhausting. The mission route was as follows: Peroḡ-Kawat (city of Parthava) – Kura river – 'city of the Lpins' – 'state of the Chilbs near the slope of the great mountain' – 'mount Vardedruak' (Shalbuzdag) – 'ancient royal residence where Catholicos Saint Grigoris was conferred the crown of martyrdom' (the land of the Masquts) – 'the gates of Chora, near Derbend' – the city of Varachan. It took 51 days to traverse this route in winter.

The Albanian mission spent approximately a month and a half in the Huns' capital city of Varachan. A detailed narrative about the events of this time, based on diary entries, the official report on Bishop Israel's trip to the Huns, supplied with the data on pagan beliefs of the Hunnic population, as well as archive materials from state depositories of Caucasian Albania and Armenia (diplomatic correspondence between Alp Iluetuer and secular and spiritual leaders of these states), is placed into the historic work of Movses Kaghankatvatsi, which represents a unique source on pagan faiths and the religious reform (adoption of Christianity) [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, pp. 123–124, Artamonov, 1962, pp. 187–189, Klyashtorny, 1984, pp. 20–22, 1994, pp. 85–87, Gmyrya, 1995, pp. 217–243, 248–253].

Religious reform caused the destruction of one of the main sanctuaries of the Hunnic state – the oak grove. Craftsmen created a highly artistic cross of the trunk of the highest sacred oak. The cross was set near the castle of grand prince Alp Iluetuer. Easter day saw the consecration of the 'newly-built' cross and baptising of the last defenders of 'the native confessions' – the main servants of paganism. This day marked burning of the pagan relic of

the Huns – princely memorial complex and sanctuary dedicated to the Hunnic deities. Alp Iluetuer thought that adoption of Christianity would allow the Hunnic state to join the circle of such great Christian empires as Byzantium, Armenia, Iberia and Caucasian Albania. This religion should have increased the power and strength of the Huns' grand prince and anchored the processes of social stratification which touched both the feudalising nobility and the masses. It is also likely that in this way the ruler of the Hunnic state attempted to release himself from dependence on the Khazar state, which took place at that time, according to sources.

In 684, the Khazars waged one of the most significant campaigns against Transcaucasia. In the battles against the Khazars, according to late 8th-century Armenian historian Ghevont, the Armenian ruler Grigory Mamikonyan and many Albanian and Georgian princes were killed [Ghevont, p. 10]. After laying waste to a number of regions, capturing people and trophies, the Khazars returned to the Caspian Sea region. It is not known whether the troops of Alp Iluetuer took part in this campaign. It is widely accepted that the religious reform in the Hunnic state spurred dissatisfaction of the Khazar khagan and became a reason for the devastation of Transcaucasia. Researchers (for instance, A. Novoseltsev) also cite the establishment of family ties between the rulers of Khazaria and the Hunnic state (one translation of Movses Kaghankatvatsi's work states that Alp Iluetuer 'was forced to give his daughter in marriage to the Khakan', while another version says that it was the Khakan who 'gave Alp Iluetuer his daughter as a wife'). However, a Khazar khagan established marital ties with ruling houses of the countries under his control only in accordance with certain traditions or if there was a political necessity. The Khazars' campaign against Transcaucasia in 634 was most likely an demonstration for the benefit of the Arab Caliphate that Khazaria had the right to control this region.

In the period from 680 to 685, there again emerged civil discord within the Caliphate. Ruling caliphs Yazid I, Muawiyah II, Marwan I were changed one after another. Armenia, Kar-

tli and Albania ceased paying tribute to the Caliphate. In 685, Caliph Abd al-Malik (reigned 685–705) concluded a peace treaty with Byzantium which established joint rule of Armenia and Iberia. In 688, the troops of Byzantine emperor Justin II (reigned 685–696) occupied Armenia, Kartli and Albania. But soon, a civil war began in Byzantium, and the Arabs managed to restore their rule in Transcaucasia. In 692/693 the Arab ruler of Armenia attempted to invade Albania and occupied the Derbend Pass but failed to hold it [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, I, p. 259, Ghevont, p. 12]. Sources do not provide any information on what forces opposed the Arabs in Derbend.

During the reign of Caliph Al-Walid I (ruled 705–715), there began the second stage of the Arab conquest of Eastern Ciscaucasia, which was revived over 50 years after the time of the first conquest. During that time, the Arabs lost the areas which they had conquered in Transcaucasia, while the political entity of the Hunnic state consolidated its positions in Eastern Ciscaucasia. They held an important strategic point in the Caucasus – Derbend. The Khazar state, which had allied and kinship relationships with the Hunnic state, strengthened and raised its positions. The Arab expansion of the first quarter of the 8th century marked a tragic period in the history of the nations of Caspian Dagestan. The Hunnic state bore the brunt of the Arab army military might. Over 30 years, the area of the Caspian Sea was repeatedly desolated, economic centres declined, agriculture was destroyed and the population killed, women and children were enslaved and valuables were carried away. In the struggle with the Arabs, the Hunnic state is presented as an ally of Khazaria, as one of the main forces of the Caspian Sea region which was capable of resisting the Arab Caliphate. Sources provide data that the peoples of the Hunnic state and many other mountain possessions expressed persistent resistance to the Arab offensive. The war proceeded with varying success. The Arabs were forced to repeatedly conquer the same regions and cities of Dagestan. And when the Arab hold weakened in the region, the desolate lands abandoned by inhabitants were populated again. The Arab Caliphate's conquest of the ter-

ritories near the Caspian Sea continued for 31 years. During that time, 13 large-scale military actions were undertaken, which are reflected in Byzantine, Armenian, Arab and other historical works. The majority of the Arabs' military operations were executed in the territory of the Hunnic state. Sources provide three large-scale responses from the Khazars, which they carried out in Transcaucasia together with the troops of their allies.

The Arab military actions conducted over 25 years did not produce tangible results despite a number of successful operations. The period of the war saw five Umayyad caliphs: Al-Walid I. Sulaiman (reigned 715–717), Umar ibn al-Yazid (reigned 717–720), Yazid (reigned 720–724) and Hisham (reigned 724–743). During that time, the caliphs changed the overall leadership of the Transcaucasian operations seven times. Moreover, the same commanders were removed and then designated to the same positions again. Thus, Maslama ibn Abd al-Malik was thrice appointed to the position of the ruler of the Transcaucasian regions, and was thrice removed from this post. Before his death, al-Jarrah ibn Abdallah al-Hakami was twice the commander of military operations against the Khazars and was once suspended from command. Marwan ibn Muhammad ibn Marwan was also the head of the general leadership twice and was once dismissed. In total, Maslama oversaw five campaigns into the regions of the Caspian Sea, two were done by Jarrah and three by Marwan. Marwan was the only caliph who fundamentally reorganised the strategy of military operations in Eastern Ciscaucasia (simultaneous offensive from two flanks – from the sides of Derbend and Alania) and in four years managed to destroy the economic centres of the Hunnic state, depopulate the region and force Khazaria recognise their interests in Transcaucasia. Moreover, Marwan subdued the main political centres of mountainous Dagestan which apparently were allies of the Hun state and Khazaria.

Written sources reflected dozens of Arab military actions against the Khazars which took place in 88, 91, 104–111, 113, 114, 117 and 119 AH (id est 706/707, 709/710, 722/723–729/730, 731/732, 732/733, 735/736 and 737/738).

In 88 AH, Maslama ibn Abd al-Malik was repositioned from the front line of military actions into the Caucasus to attack the Khazars. According to the data provided by al-Kufi, there were located 80,000 Khazars in Derbend at that time. The Arab troops managed to penetrate into the city only with the help of a local who pointed to a vulnerable place in its defence system. The Khazars, after a fierce night battle, opened the gates and fled, abandoning their wives and children in the city. Maslama destroyed one of the long city walls, captured trophies and returned to Transcaucasia [Al-Kufi, pp. 14–15]. Al-Tabari and Ibn al-Athir inform that Maslama conquered 'castles and cities' during that campaign [Al-Tabari, p. 77, Ibn Al-Athir, p. 22], but there is no accurate information. After the departure of the Arab troops, the Khazars returned to Derbend.

In 104 AH, the united army of the Khazars and other 'Turkic tribes', as Ibn al-Athir reports, '...met the Muslims at a place known under the name of the 'Meadow of stones' and entered a fierce battle with them, during which many Muslim people were killed, the Khazars seized the camp and took everything it contained' [Ibn Al-Athir, p. 23].

Movses Kaghankatvatsi and Ghevont pinpoint this operation which the Arabs failed to 98 AH (716/717) attributing its leadership to Maslama. According to the data provided by Movses Kaghankatvatsi, the Arab commander during the hasty retreat 'left his camp with all his property, even leaving his harem in the rear guard' [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, II, p. 261]. The Arabs' retreat was protected by the Albanian prince who saved them from the Khazars' pursuit. Ghevont writes that the Arab troops passed through the 'Chora gate', penetrated 'the country of the Huns', organising their camp 'near the Huns' city of Targu' [Ghevont, p. 28]. The Huns reached out to 'the tsar of the Khazars, the khagan'. The tsar of the Khazars deferred initiating a battle, waiting for reinforcements from Alp Tarkhan. In the meantime, there were duels between the Arab and Khazar warriors – 'not between regiments, but between individual fighters'. After the Arab commander noticed that the Khazars had numerical superiority, the Arab commander left his camp in secret: '...he

ordered his troops to light a heavy fire in the camp and, leaving his camp utensils, maids, servants and other valety, he made his way to mount Kokas. He deforested the area thus providing himself a path and, narrowly escaping the adversary, he returned to the country of the Huns ashamed with his heart broken' [Ibid.]. The Arabs' failures could explain the removal of Maslama from ruling in the Transcaucasia, its governance was then passed to al-Jarrah in 104 AH (722/723).

After receiving support of the Caliphate, in 104 AH Al-Jarrah, according to Al-Tabari's concise story, 'completed a campaign into the Turkic land, conquered Balanjar, defeated the Torks drowned them and all their descendants in the water. The Muslims captured as many people as they wanted. Al-Jarrah conquered the fortress adjacent to Balanjar and ousted all its citizens' [Al-Tabari, p. 78]. Al-Kufi's story abounds in details of this operation. Having asked 'the lords of the mountains' of Southern Dagestan to provide support, the Arab army launched a secret night offensive from the Rubas river through Derbend, which had been abandoned by the Khazars, and then along the Arran river which was situated, according to the source, six parasangs (about 42 kilometers) north of Derbend. There the battle with the Khazars took place. Despite the numerical superiority of the Khazars (40,000 against 25,000 Arab warriors) and severity of the battle, the Khazars were defeated. The Arabs pursued the Khazars to the fortress of al-Hasin, killed many of them and seized huge trophies [Al-Kufi, pp. 17–18]. Al-Hasin, beleaguered by the Arabs, begged for mercy. Under the concluded peace treaty, al-Hasin had to pay war indemnity and its citizens were to resettle into Haizan. Barufa was the next city to be under siege. The armistice for them was achieved only on the conditions of resettlement of locals in the village of Ganiya in the volost of Kabala (the Transcaucasian provinces of the Arab Caliphate). The final act of this operation was the storming of Balanjar. The city's fortified section was apparently its citadel, which was located on a high point. When defending the unfortified part of the city, the Khazars applied a traditional type of perimeter defence

with the use of nomadic carts linked together. Al-Kufi writes that 'the Khazars collected over 300 carts which they tied together and placed around the perimeter of their fortress in a defensive circle, so that it helped to prevent penetration of the fortress' [Al-Kufi, p. 19]. The 'cart' defence was highly effective. Ibn al-Athir points out that 'those carts were the strongest (obstacle) in the Muslims' fight against the foe' [Ibn Al-Athir, p. 24]. Only the regiment of Arabs-suiciders consisting of 30 warriors managed to cut the ropes linking the carts and destroy the Khazars' line of defence despite of heaviest shooting from the side of the fortress. In the fierce battle that arose in the vicinity of Balanjar, the Khazars were forced to surrender. After this, the Muslims 'subdued the fortress by force and seized everything which was inside' [Al-Kufi, p. 19]. The yield was huge – each of the 30,000 warriors received 'three hundred dinars' [Ibn Al-Athir, p. 25]. The ruler of Balanjar escaped with 50 of his warriors 'to the outskirts of Samandar'. Al-Jarrah bought the wife, children and servants of Balanjar's ruler for 30,000 dirhams and returned them to him on the conditions that he must be 'an observer for Muslim people' and inform him of 'everything the disbelievers do' [Ibid.]. When after Balanjar the Arabs conquered 'the territory of Vabandar' (Olugbender) numbering 40,000 'Turkic houses', and intended to advance against the city of Samandar, the ruler of Balanjar informed al-Jarrah about a huge army which the Khazars mobilised and the rebellion of the 'lords of the mountains'. Al-Jarrah withdrew his forces from the Caspian region into Azerbaijan via mountain paths, and not along the Caspian Sea road. Ibn al-Athir writes that 'inhabitants of these countries colluded and blocked the (return) path for the Muslims' [Ibid.].

In 108 AH, in accordance with the data provided by Ibn al-Athir, 'the Turks' under command of 'the son of the khakan, the Turkic tsar', invaded Azerbaijan and besieged several cities. After several battles with Arab troops, many Turks were killed and others dispersed [Ibn Al-Athir, pp. 25–26].

In 112, Khazar troops penetrated into Transcaucasia through Alania. Prior to that, the Khazars had gathered an army of 300,000:

'Khakan, the tsar of the Khazars, sent messengers to all countries of disbelievers which were of the same faith and tribe, asking them to join the war against the Muslims. And all of them gave agreement to this' [Al-Kufi, pp. 21–22]. The regiments, situated near Ardabil, were pillaging neighbouring cities and settlements at that time. Al-Jarrah met the Khazars with 'warriors from Syria' who stayed by his side, while other regiments were not completely organised. In the battle 'which people had never before seen' [Ibn Al-Athir, p. 26], Arab commander al-Jarrah died and Arab troops were defeated [Al-Athir, p. 79, Al-Kufi, p. 24, Ibn Al-Athir, p. 26]. Theophanes refers the death of al-Jarrah to 728/729 supposing that it was the son of Khazaria khagan who defeated al-Jarrah's army: 'This year, the son of the khagan, Khazaria's sovereign, marched against Media and Armenia. Finding Gharakh, the strategist of the Arabs, in Armenia, he killed him together with a troop that accompanied him. Having sacked the countries of the Armenians and Medians, he turned back, striking a great fear into the Arabs' [Theophanes the Confessor, p. 67]. Armenian historian Vardapet Ghevont states that since the khagan died, his mother Parsbit ordered commander Tormach to march against Armenia. He gathered troops and '...went through the land of the Huns and through the Pass of Dzhora (Derbend), via the lands of the Masquts and so made a raid into the country of Paytarakan (Bailakan). He crossed the Araks river and headed to Persia (Azarbaijan). After meeting Ismail's troops led by Jara, (the Khazars) crushed them' [Ghevont, p. 72]. Al-Kufi also writes about the involvement of the khagan's son in this operation [Al-Kufi, pp. 21–22]. Ibn al-Athir points to the fact that at the moment of al-Jarrah's death, the khagan's son Barsbek was under siege in the city of Varsan in Transcaucasia [Ibn Al-Athir, p. 26].

After al-Jarrah's death, the caliph appointed Sayyid ibn Amr al-Harashi as the ruler of Armenia. His troops passed through Armenia and Albania, reached Azerbaijan and headed to the city of Varsan to help those under siege. When the Khazars learnt the Arabs were on their way, they lifted the siege and headed for Badjarvan. After careful preparation, the Arabs attacked the

camp of the Khazars 'when the night was on the wane'. In that battle, many of the 10,000-strong Khazar army were killed [Al-Kufi, pp. 30–31], the Arabs even took the Khazars' gonfalon, according to Vardapet Ghevont: 'they took their gonfalon away from them – a copper banner' [Ghevont, p. 72]. Barsbek retreated with the rest of his army, the Arabs pursued them 'until they, together with the runaways, reached the coasts of their (sea)' [Al-Kufi, p. 36].

The last campaign of Maslama ibn Abd al-Malik into 'the land of the khakan' (113 AH) is described by al-Tabari as successful: '(Many) cities and fortresses were conquered, (many) people were killed and captured. Many Turks burnt themselves. (Even) those who were behind the mountains of Balanjar, bowed to Maslama. The son of the khagan was (also) killed' [Al-Tabari, p. 79]. Ibn al-Athir points out that the Khazars' villages were burnt by Maslama [Ibn Al-Athir, p. 29]. The detailed account by al-Kufi contains information on the fact that Maslama, after reaching Derbend, in which '1000 Khazar tarkhans' stayed, decided not to storm it and prevent the Khazars from leaving it. According to another version offered by al-Kufi, the Arabs poisoned the source that fed the fortress's water reservoirs, and only after this did the Khazars leave [Al-Kufi, pp. 41, 47]. Then, Maslama's troops reached the cities of Balanjar, Vabandar and Samandar – all abandoned by their inhabitants. After receiving messages that the Arabs had invaded Khazaria lands, the khagan 'started gathering troops from all Khazaria lands and soon marched out at the head of a huge host of warriors' [Al-Kufi, p. 41]. Maslama was quick to retreat: '...he ordered his troops to light a fire and then, leaving tents and carts, reversed his course and headed back with his warriors and with no burden. And they covered many 'stations' (daily passages), travelling two 'stations' a day instead of one, until they reached, barely alive, Bab al-Abwab' [Ibn Al-Athir, pp. 29–30]. Al-Kufi adds that Maslama abandoned his camp at night, after an evening prayer [Al-Kufi, p. 41].

In 114 AH, Maslama, having strengthened and reconstructed fortifications of Derbend and resettled 24,000 Syrian inhabitants there on the conditions of an 'increased reward' [Baladhuri,

p. 17], departed to Damascus to visit the caliph. After his departure, the Khazars, according to al-Kufi, 'returned to their lands, which Maslama had taken from them. They got them back and repopulated them' [Al-Kufi, p. 47].

The offensive launched in 119 AH began from two flanks – the army led by Marwan advanced to Khazaria through Alania, leaving it ruined, another army penetrated into inner areas of Dagestan. Ibn al-Athir writes that the campaign into Alania was organised in order to disorient the Khazar khagan and disguise the main target. The Arab commander initiated peace talks with the Khazars while preparing for the decisive attack against them. Then, after declaring war against the khagan and sending a Khazar messenger the 'long way', Marwan, as Ibn al-Athir points out, invaded the lands of the Khazars where he 'captured many trophies and people and reached the end' [Ibn Al-Athir, p. 31]. Then, Marwan's army penetrated into the central mountainous part of Dagestan – 'the country of the throne's holder' – and the Arabs concluded a harsh peace treaty with its tsar. Every year, 'one thousand five hundred young men, five hundred black-haired girls and one thousand mudds of wheat' had to be brought to Derbend [Ibid.] The same conditions were set for other Dagestan areas which the Arabs had subjugated.

Then, under the threat of losing the kingdom, the Khazar khagan accepted the conditions of peace demanded by the Arabs. The khagan converted to Islam and 'following him, many people from his relatives and tribesmen also adopted Islam' [Al-Kufi, p. 52]. Marwan kept the khagan in power, but took 40,000 captives from Khazaria, and settled them near the Samur river (the area of 'nahr as-Samur') and in the lands adjacent to the Kura river.

When describing Marwan's majestic campaign, Arab authors say nothing about the fate of the Caspian Sea nations through which two Arab armies passed to reach the Khazar capital. Some details about the destruction of Khazaria's Caspian province were provided by Armenian authors. In his description of Marwan's campaign of 737, Vardapet Ghevont notes that the Arabs' auxiliary troop was led by Armenian prince Ashot. Without naming the dam-

aged city of the state of the Huns, the author tells of the huge destruction which the Arabs caused: 'Merwan, Mahmet's son, gathered a strong army, took with him Prince Ashot and other nobles with their regiments and attempted to march against the Hun state. After defeating the city troops, he seized the city. After he conquered the city and its citizens saw that the adversary had vanquished them, many of them started dropping their possessions in the sea and others jumped into the sea themselves and died in its abysses' [Ghevont, p. 80]. 13th-century Armenian writer Vardan Areveltsi, who was undoubtedly familiar with works of his predecessors, when describing the same campaign of Marwan, calls the subdued city Varachan: 'Marwan marched against Varachan – the city of the Huns, and returned from there the victor' [Vardan Areveltsi, p. 95]. It is noteworthy that Arab authors do not use this name for the Western Caspian city. They list Samandar, Balanjar, Vabandar and others. But Balanjar was never mentioned by Armenian and Albanian writers.

After the Caspian Sea region was devastated and the Khazar khagan became subordinate to the Arab Caliphate, in 121 AH, Marwan attempted to conquer the inner mountainous regions of Dagestan. It was achieved through many difficulties, because the local population offered stiff resistance. For instance, 'Haizah' castle, in which 'the royal throne' was situated, was besieged by the Arabs 'throughout the winter and the summer', and only after this, 'the owner of the throne' concluded peace on harsh terms: 'to bring him one thousand cattle and one thousand mudds (wheat)' [Ibn Al-Athir, p. 33]. 'The land of the Hamzin' submitted to Marwan after the Arabs desolated it and laid siege to the castle of its ruler for a month. According to the data provided by al-Kufi, 'over 300 villages' were destroyed in 'the land of the Hamzin'. The terms of peace with the Arabs involved annual provision of 500 captives and 500 mudds of foodstuffs from this land [Al-Kufi, pp. 55–56]. Prior to the winter, as al-Kufi states, Marwan 'had subdued all fortresses of the countries of as-Sarir, Hamzin, Tuman and Shandan, as well as those which he managed to reach' [Al-Kufi, p. 56]. And each time, the conditions of peace included delivery of slaves (young men and

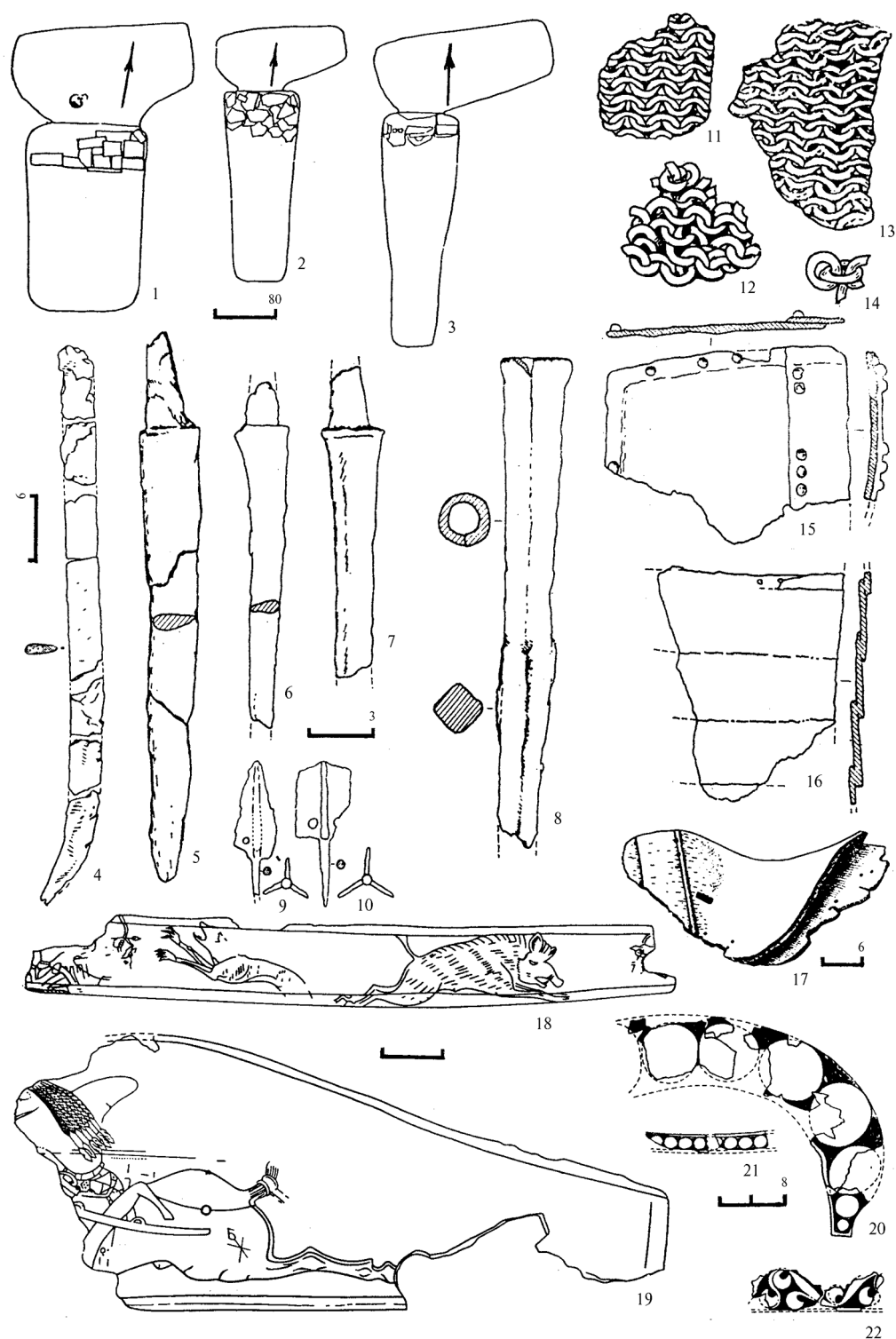


Fig. 1 Caspian Dagestan. Verkhnechiryurtovskiy I burial site of the 7–8th centuries Burial ceremony and inventory extracted from burials. 1–3 – burials in catacombs, 4 – sabre, 5–7 – knives, 8 – tip of a spear, 9, 10 – tips of arrows, 11–14 – fragments of chainmail, 15–16 – fragments of plate armours, 17 – fragment of a saddle, 18–22 – linings for a saddle. 14–16 – iron, 17–22 – bone. 1–22 according to M. Magomedov

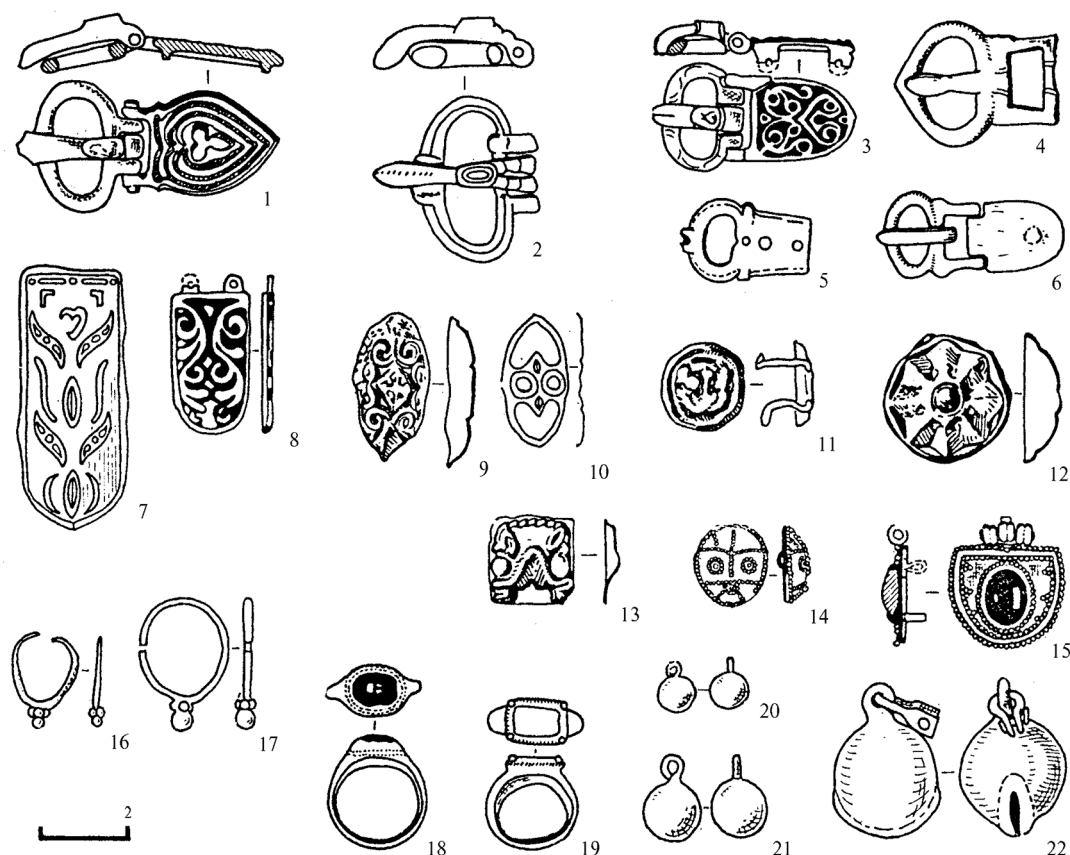


Fig. 2. Caspian Dagestan. Verkhnechiriyurtovskiy I burial site of the 7–8th centuries Inventory from burials. 1–6 – buckles, 7–8 – tips of a belt, 9–15 – belt plaques, 16–17 – earrings, 18, 19 – rings, 20, 21 – buttons, 22 – bells. 1, 2, 4–6, 22 – bronze, 3–8 – silver, 7, 9–14, 16, 17, 20, 21 – gold, 15 – gold, amber (inlays), 18, 19 – gold, stone (inlays). 1–2 according to M. Magomedov

girls 'blond with long eye lashes'), monetary funds, foodstuffs and cattle [Al-Kufi, pp. 53–55, Ibn Al-Athir, p. 32–33].

Even after all economic centres in the Caspian province of Khazaria were destroyed, the local population did not cease to resist Arab domination. 26 years after the destruction of 119 AH, according to Ibn al-Athir, in 145 AH (762/763), 'the Turks started a rebellion...' in Derbend '...and Khazars began an uprising in Bab al-Abwab and killed a great number of the Muslims in Arminia' [Ibn Al-Athir, p. 34]. It is possible that another campaign was launched into the northern possessions of the Arab Caliphate. 38 years after these events, in 183 AH (799/800), as al-Tabari writes, the Khazars attacked from Derbend 'the Muslims and dhimmis' (the people who were under the

Caliphate's protection) and 'captured over one hundred thousand of them... and caused much violence to them, the scale of which the (world of) Islam has never seen in its history' [Al-Tabari, p. 80]. Many Arab authors, including al-Tabari, consider one of the reasons for the campaign against Khazaria to be the death of the khagan's daughter who was the wife of Arran's ruler Yazid ibn Asid ibn Zafir as-Sulami during the reign of Caliph Mansur (754–775). As al-Kufi recounts, this marriage was recommended to the Arab commander by the caliph himself, who supposed that establishing family ties with the Khazars would strengthen peace in Transcaucasia. 'The Khazars will not leave us in peace, the caliph said. For if they desire, they will gather an army and defeat us' [Al-Kufi, p. 62]. Due to this reason, the Khazar prin-

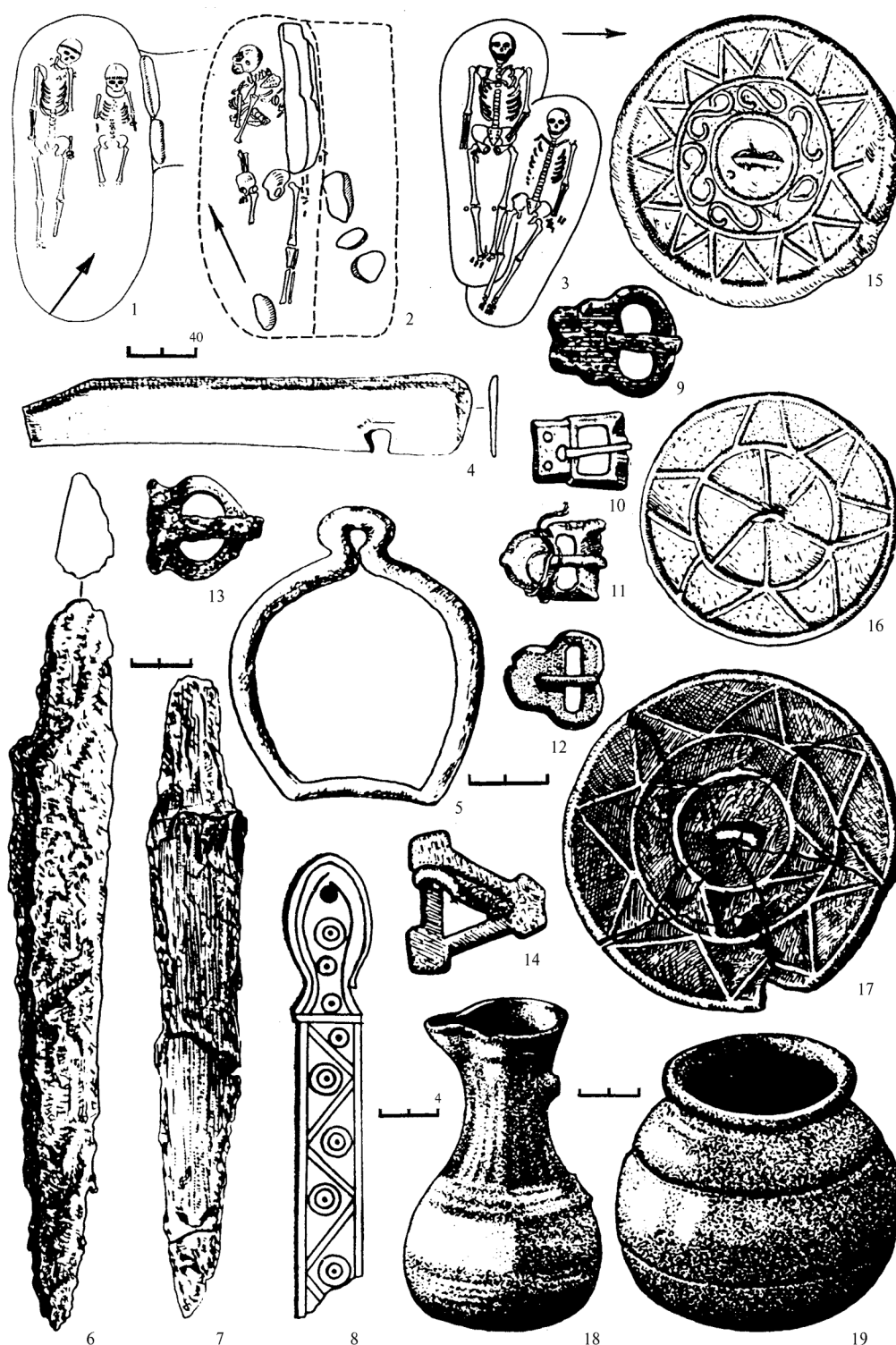


Fig. 3. Caspian Dagestan. Verkhnechiryurtovskiy I burial site of the 7–8th centuries Inventory from burials.

1–4 – fibula-shaped pendants, 5–7, 10 – pendants, 8 – plaque, 9 – medallion, 11 – bell, 12 – grivna, 13, 14 – bracelets, 15, 16 – earrings, 17 – temporal pendants, 18 – button, 19–20 – rings. 1–7, 10, 11, 13–18, 20 – bronze, 12 – silver, 8 – bronze, glass (inlay), semiprecious stone (inlay), 9 – bronze, stone (inlay), 19 – bronze, glass (inlay). 1–19 according to N. Putintseva

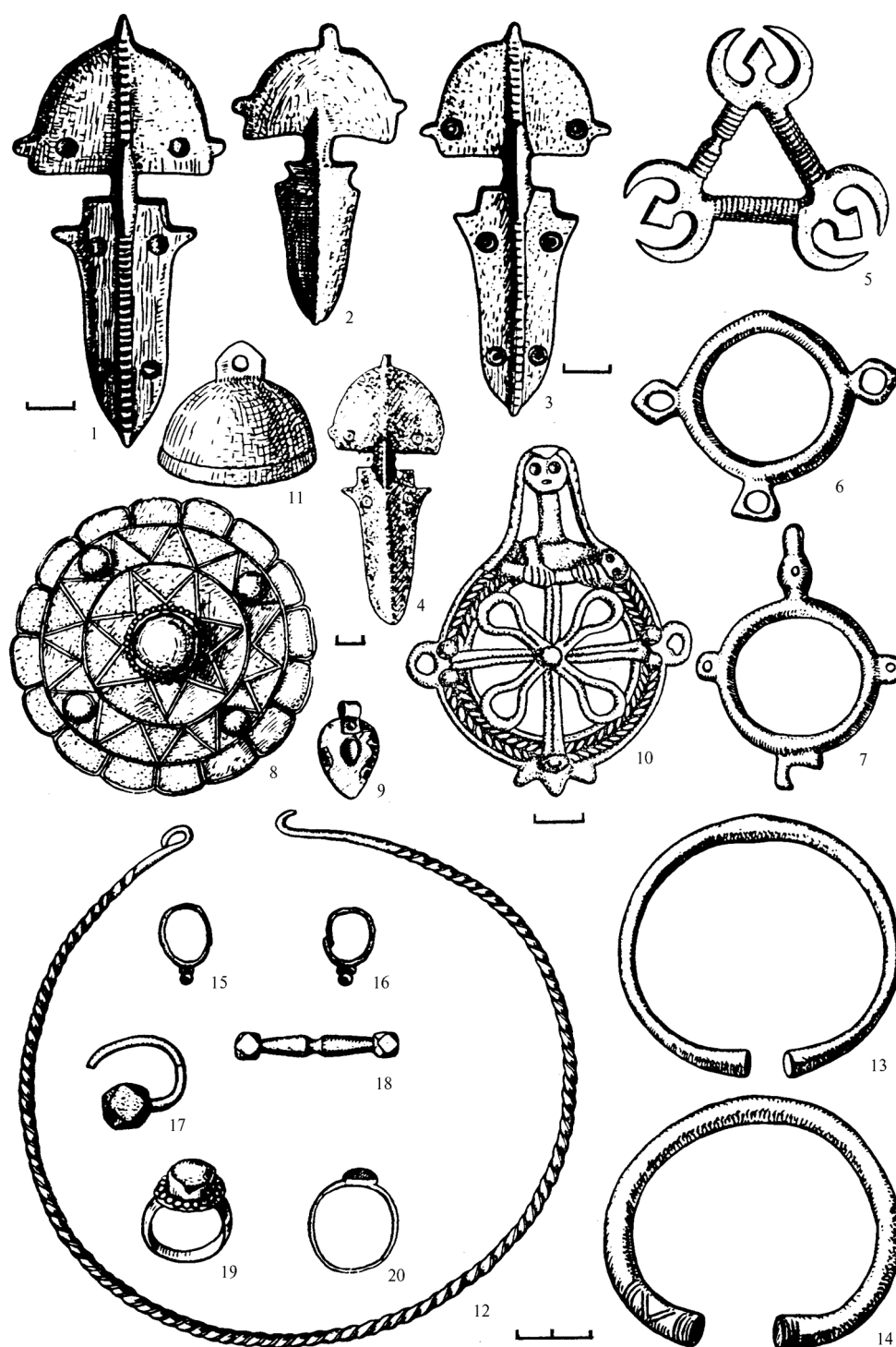


Fig. 4. Caspian Dagestan. Verkhnechiryurtovskiy I burial site of the 7–8th centuries Burial ceremony and burial inventory. 1 – burial in a catacomb, 2 – burial in an undercut, 3 – burials in holes, 4 bow lining, 5 – stirrup, 6 – fragment of a sword, 7 – knife, 8 – lining of a knife handle, 9–14 – buckles, 15–17 – mirrors, 18 – clay jar, 19 – hardened-clay pot. 4, 8 – bone, 9–17 – bronze, 5, 6, 7 – iron. 1–19 according to N. Putintseva

cess was to be married. The commander lived with her for two years and she gave birth to two sons. But for some reason, the daughter of the Khazar khagan and his grandsons, whose father was the Arab commander, died. In revenge, the Khazar khagan attacked the Transcaucasian possessions of the Arabs. However, other reasons are also described in sources.

According to al-Kufi, the Khazars' 'cavalry brigades' numbered 200,000 knights. In Shirvan, the Arabs gathered 60,000 warriors, joining 20,000 Syrian fighters and 35,000 Iranians to the 7000-strong regiment which was already located in that region. Al-Kufi describes the battle, which was tragic for the Arabs, as follows: 'And the Muslims have never seen a day more frightening than that, for many of them were killed on that day' [Al-Kufi, p. 64].

The Arab ruler, a relative of the Khazar khagan, fled the battlefield to hide in the city of Barda. The Khazars seized enormous riches and left. After this defeat, the Arabs strengthened Derbend's fortifications and settled new people in it, appointing them ration allowance.

Arab-Khazar relations were stabilised only by the beginning of the 10th century. Derbend became the barrier which divided the spheres of influence of these states – the Arab Caliphate and Khazaria – and it was heavily guarded by the Arabs [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 191].

It is likely that the Caspian provinces of the Khazar state were able to recover after Marwan's destruction of the 730s, but the sources mention only one large city in that area – Semender. Arab geographer of the mid-10th century al-Istakhri notes: 'I do not know any densely-populated settlement except for Samandar' [Al-Istakhri, p. 49], meaning the Caspian territories of Khazaria.

The ethnopolitical environment formed in Eastern Ciscaucasia in the 7th century—the first half of the 8th century is reflected in archaeological materials. In the territory of Caspian Dagestan, one kurgan tumulus dating from the Khazar period has been discovered. It is

Verkhnechiryurtovsky burial site on the Sulak river, in which M. Magomedov examined 59 graves [Magomedov, 1983, pp. 66–94]. Burial mounds were usually not high (0.5–1.7 metres), but large ones (2.4–5.5 metres) have been found. The burials were mostly situated in catacombs (57 burials) with cells in a perpendicular position. The entrance to the cells was walled up with sun-dried earthen brick and flagstones. The position of the buried is impossible to define, as the majority of mounds have been looted. The dead were buried in cane coffins (38.6%) or were placed onto cane flooring.

The inventory includes many items of weaponry (bone linings of bows, fragments of iron blades of sabres, iron tips of spears), components of defensive armour (fragments of iron chainmails and brigandines) and horse armour (fragments of wooden saddles and bone linings placed upon them, snaffle belts, bar bits and psalium). Pieces of clothing made of gold, silver and bronze have also been found. Few jewels were among the finds, however, there were imitations of Byzantine gold coins of the beginning of the 7th century, which were supplied with solders and holes for hanging (Fig. 1, 2). Researchers link the burial site to the early history of the Khazar tribes [Magomedov, 1983, pp. 87–94].

A number of burial sites located at a foothill – Verkhnechiryurtovsky I (Fig. 3, 4), II, Bavgarsky, Targu – are dated to this time (7–8th centuries). For description and analysis of their complexes, see: [Gmyrya, 1993, pp. 211–228, 309–318]. The majority of the graves were arranged in catacombs. The burial ceremony of the burial sites of that time vividly demonstrates the shift of part of the nomadic population to sedentism and presence of mixed population whose burial ceremonies included some features of local tribes (absence of kurgans, collective graves, multiple burials), as well as a new form of burials – catacombs – which was borrowed from the nomads of the Caspian Sea region.

Vladimir Petrukhin

The Khazar Khaganate and its neighbours

Forming in opposition to Byzantium and the Arab Caliphate, the Khazar state stretched from the foothills of the Caucasus and Lower Volga region to the Middle Dnieper, where the Slavs had to pay tribute to the Khazars.

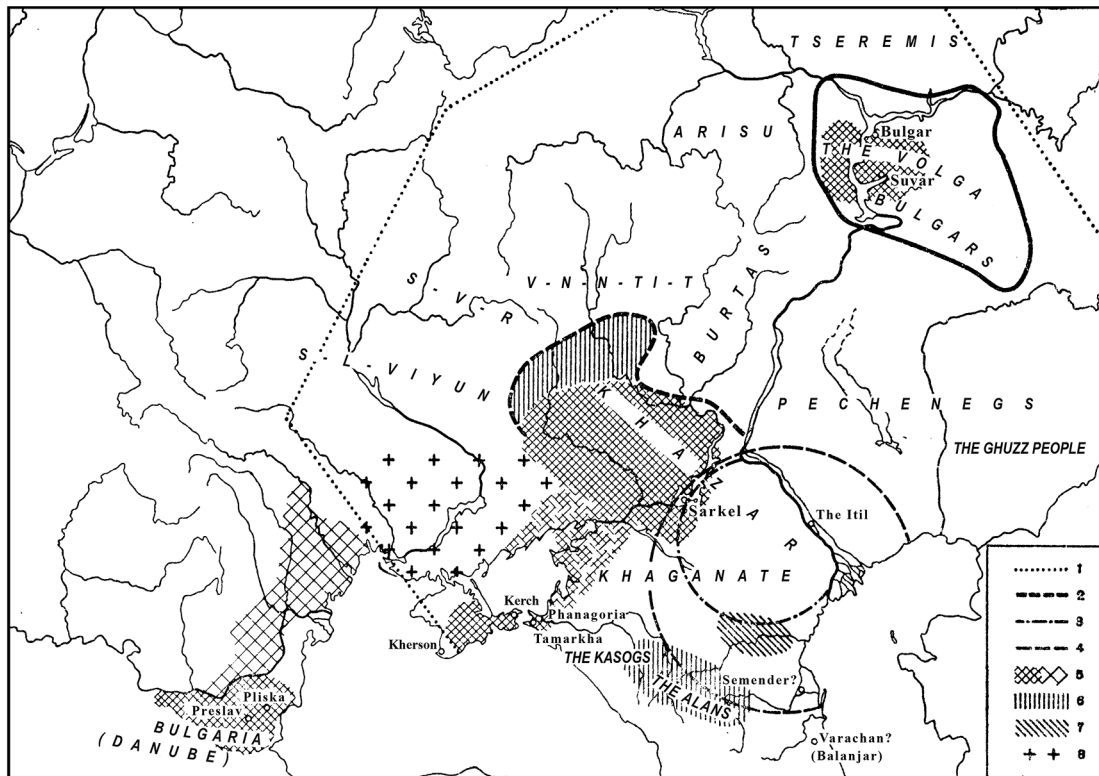
The tribes under the rule of Khazaria had settled around the Black Sea steppes by the middle of the 8th century, and reached the forest steppe area and moved along the Volga river northwards until they reached the interfluvium between the Volga and the Kama – the lands of future Volga Bulgaria. Apart from the Bulgar people, it is believed [Gadlov, 1983, p. 84], these lands were also inhabited by the Savirs (Suvars) and the Barsils. The Alans began settling in the basin of the Don and the Upper Donets rivers [cf. Afanasyev, 1993], the Bolgars – by the Lower reaches of the Don, the very Khazars, a part of the Barsils and other tribes – in the Lower Volga region and the Kalmyk steppes. A new Khazar urban centre emerged in the Lower Volga region – al-Baida' or Itil.

The kaghanate's economy was characterised by complex arable and livestock farming: along with distant pasture cattle breeding, when in the summer time herds were driven from the steppes to mountain pastures, agriculture and gardening was also developed. The process of mass settling of nomads is reflected in the multiple settlements and burial sites of the Saltov-Mayaki culture, including traces of nomadic camps, permanent unfortified settlements, ancient town with earthen shafts, castles containing fragments of stone walls, walled towns and, finally, the Black Sea cities raised under Khazar rule, including Phanagoria and Tamatarkha–Tmutarakan [Pletnyova, 1999].

Local variants of the Saltov-Mayaki culture identified thanks to research conducted by M. Artamonov, I. Lyapushkin, S. Pletnyova and other scholars, reflect ethnic specifics of those groups of the Khazar population

which occupied certain regions of the Black Sea steppes and forest steppes. In the upper reaches of the Don and the Donets, the settlements with half-dugouts and yurt-shaped dwellings were situated like nests around the ancient towns with white stone walls (including the white stone Mayaki ancient town located on the Don river which, together with the Saltov burial site, gave the name to the culture itself). The ancient towns were situated on high riverbanks, while the opposite banks were covered with plain pastures, similar to the geographic conditions of the Northern Caucasus. The burial sites mostly consist of catacomb burials, allowing us to link the population who left these monuments to the Alans, as indicated by anthropological data. The Don Alans assimilated with the local population, bearers of the Penkovo culture, which is usually attributed to the Slavs-Antes, but was actually spread much more widely than the territory presumed to have been occupied by the Antes, according to ancient sources.

In the Don steppes, the agricultural population lived in large ancient settlements and towns, fortified with earthen shafts in which half-dugouts and yurt-shaped dwellings were situated, nomads also left cattle camps behind. A great number of amphorae and pithoi – special vessels for wine – provide evidence that the population engaged in wine growing, which became traditional for this Russia. The dead were buried in simple graves, and horses were buried near warriors' graves. This variant of the Saltov-Mayaki culture, just as the similar Azov variant, is attributed to the Bolgars: the Azov Sea region is characterised by specific building techniques – dwellings and walls of ancient towns were constructed of adobe brick on stone pedestals, dwellings consisted of two cells that included anterooms, which in winter could be used as a barn for young stock. In Crimea, such dwell-



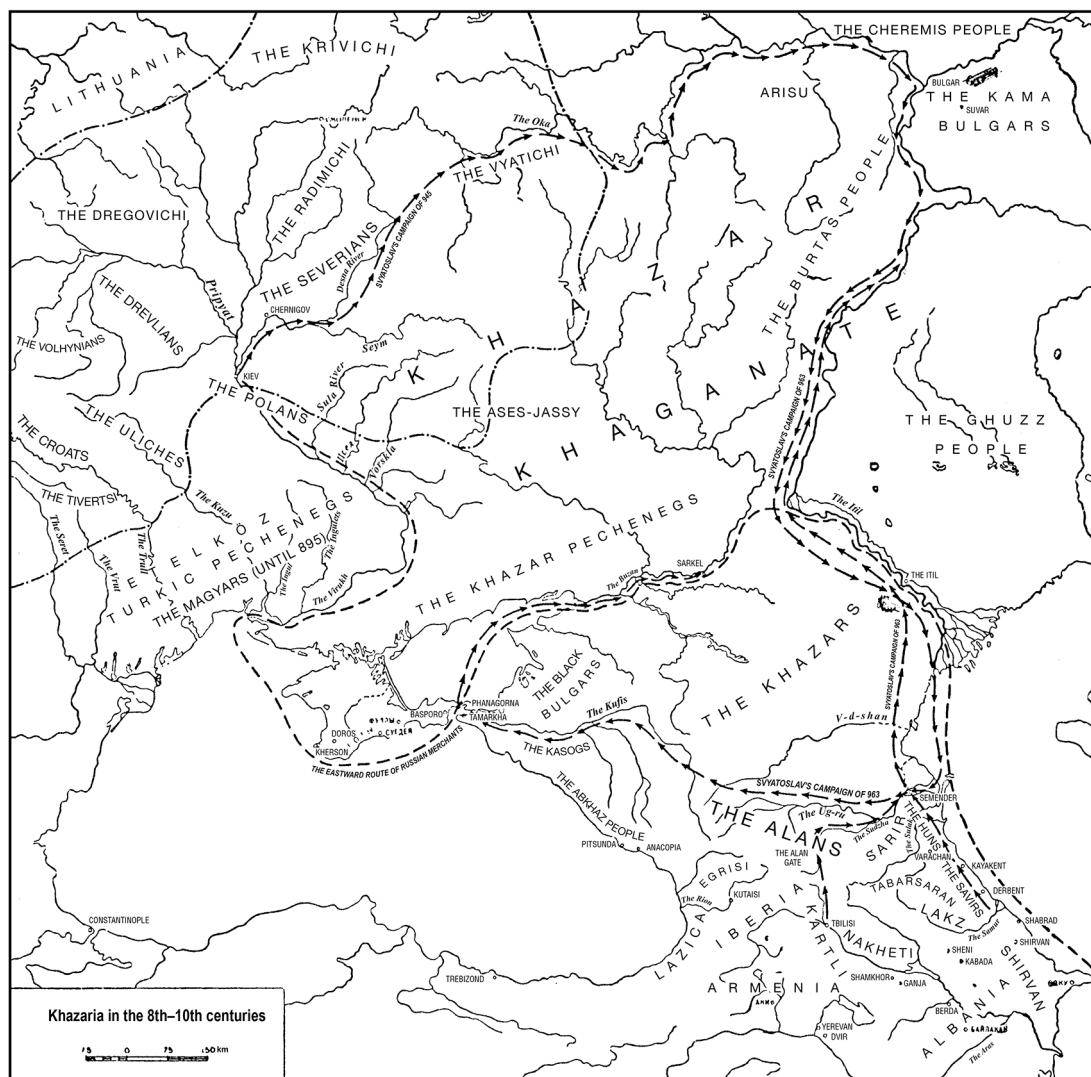
Variants of the territory of the Saltov-Mayaki Culture, the Khazar state, states with the same culture and peoples surrounding the khaganate in the 8–9th centuries (according to the letter by Khagan Joseph)
 1 – borders of Khazar state according to S. Tolstov, 2 – borders of the Khazar Khagan's domains according to M. Artamonov, 3 – borders of Khazaria according to Ibn Rybakov, 4 – the North-West, northern, and north-eastern borders of the khaganate according to M. Artamonov and S. Pletnyova, 5 – Bulgar variants of the Saltov-Mayaki Culture, 6 – Alan variants of the Saltov-Mayaki Culture, 7 – Khazar variant of the Saltov-Mayaki Culture, 8 – steppe variant of the Saltov-Mayaki Culture, unstudied
 [Pletnyova, 1967, p. 187]

ings were built of stone – in accordance with the ancient tradition of stone construction.

Along with these local variants in the Kalmyk steppes (until the Samara bend) [cf. Bagautdinov, Bogachyov, Zubov] and the Azov Sea region, we know about single tumuli with square pits filled with military equipment and horses which were considered to belong to the Khazars or, more broadly, to the Turkic Khazar-Bolgarian group that lived in the khaganate. Finally, the famous Voznesensk funerary complex of the 8th century by the Dnieper river – a rectangular shaft of earth and stone which surrounded a square with remnants left after burning of multiple objects – weaponry, horse harness, gold jewels and horse bones, according to A.

Ambroz's interpretation, is similar to funeral monuments devoted to Kyul-Tegin and other rulers of the Turkic Khaganate in Central Asia, similar monuments were discovered not only in the Middle Dnieper river region (the Pereshchepina 'treasure' may also belong to them) [cf. Aibabin, 1999, p. 195], but also in the Volga region and in the Northern Caucasus. These monuments could have belonged to representatives of Ashina dynasty to which the khagan himself belonged.

The most fertile lands in the central (Don) part of the khaganate were covered by the system of white stone walled towns beginning from Mayaki in the upper reaches of the Don to the right bank of Tsimlyansk Lake in its lower reaches and Semikarakory located



Khazaria in the 8–10th centuries [Artamonov, 1962, p. 424]

near the Sal river, which controlled the way from the Northern Caucasus towards to Don river. Behind the towered walls, which were up to four meters thick, yurt-shaped dwellings were located. The bricklaying technique in the Tsimlyansk ancient town – walls built of carefully hewn stone blocks with inner masonry – resembles the construction technique used in Danube Bulgaria, while the ancient town in Semikarakory is similar to Dagestan fortresses. At last, in the 830s, the brick fortress of Sarkel was constructed by Byzantine engineers for the Khazars on the Don river.

The local diversity does not eclipse a defi-

nite unity within the Saltov-Mayaki culture, which is found in construction techniques, popular housekeeping equipment, including specific ceramics, amulets, etc. The Turkic runic script was also widespread (see observations by: [Kyzlasov, 1994, Pletnyova, 1999]) which showed that this culture is supra-ethnic – it characterises the state culture of the Khazar khaganate. It is essential that the areal of the Saltov-Mayaki culture coincides with the territory of the Khazar state which was described by Khazar Tsar Joseph in the letter to the dignitary of the Cordoba Caliph Hasdai ibn Shaprut.

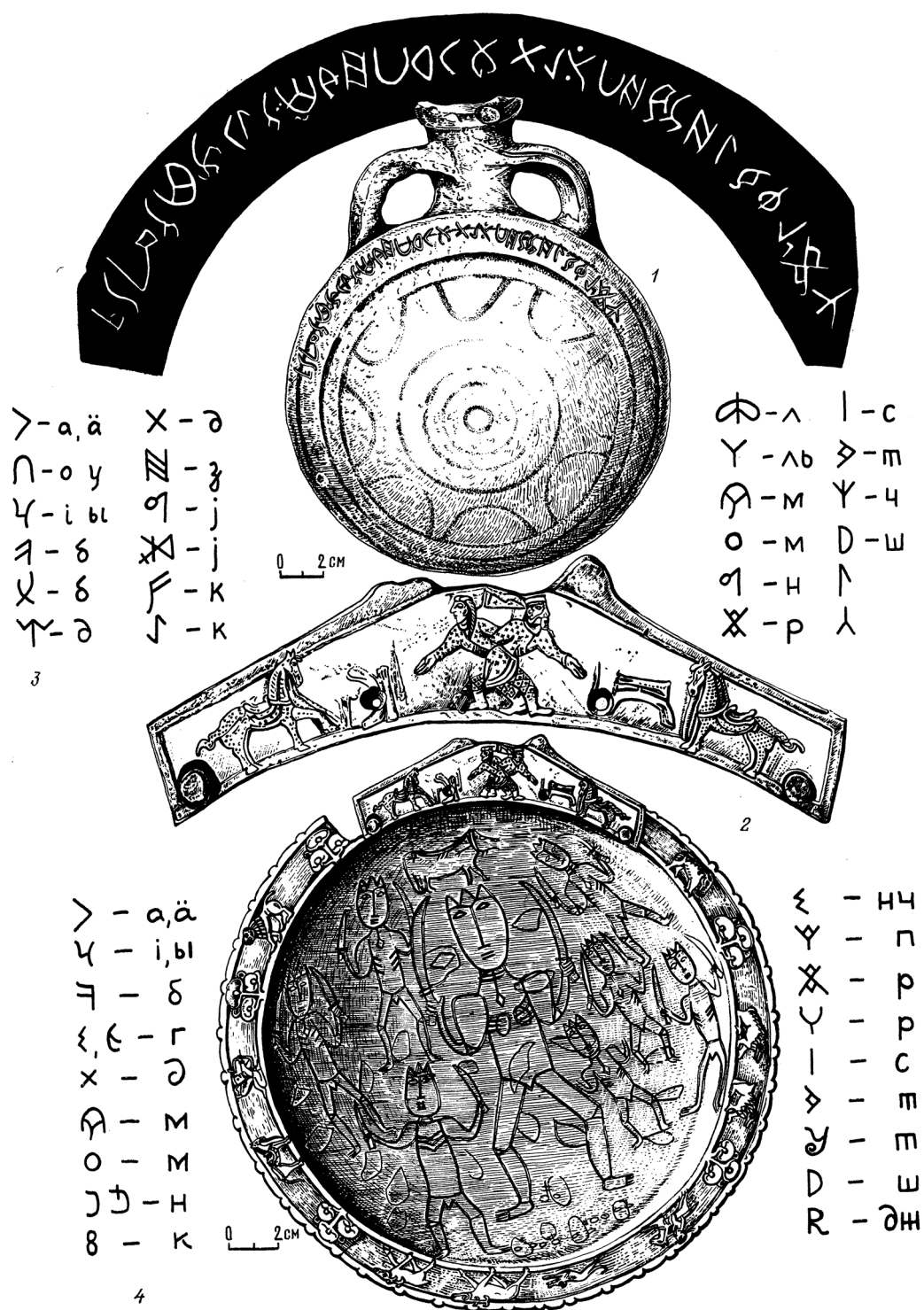
This correspondence between the Cordoba

Jew and the Khazar king – the so-called Jewish–Khazar correspondence – is attributed to the epoch of the decline of the Khazar state in the 960s [Joseph], but Tsar Joseph in his letter describes Khazaria as being in a golden age. In the so-called voluminous edition of his message, Joseph writes that he himself lived by the Itil river, near the Gurgan Sea – both the khagan's capital and his winter quarters were located there. From there, the khagan, following the traditions of the nomad nobility, departed to spend the summer visiting the lands in the interfluvium between the Volga and the Don, which were under his control: the fortresses of Sarkel and Semikarakory were situated near the western borders of this domain. The king lists 'multiple nations' near the Itil river which were under his control, naming them in the ancient Hebrew language: these are Burt-s, Bul-g-r, S-var, Arisu, Ts-r-mis, V-n-n-tit, S-v-r, S-l-viyun. Then, in Joseph's description, the border of his state turns to 'Khuwarism' – Khwarezm, the state in the Aral Sea region, and in the south it includes S-m-n-d-r and turns to the 'Gates' (Bab al-Abwab), and to the mountains where the nations controlled by the Khazars live. Their names are difficult to identify [see: Joseph, p. 98 et seq.] except for the Alans and the neighbouring countries of Afkan and Kasa. Then, Khazaria's border comes to 'the sea of Custandine' – 'Constantinople', i.e. the Black Sea near which Khazaria includes the regions of Sh-r-kil, S-m-k-r-ts, K-r-ts and others. From there, the border turns northwards to the nomadic tribe of B-ts-ra and reaches the region of H-g-riim.

Many names of the people which, according to Joseph, pay tribute to the Khazars, are restored quite definitely and have analogies in other sources. The first of them – *the Burtas* – ('Bur-t-s') whose name is sometimes associated with the gentilic 'mordens' (*Mordovians*) mentioned by Jordanes. However, the ancient Russian work 'Tale of the destruction of the Russian land' (13th century) provides an amazingly similar list of nations already controlled by Rus', in which the Burtas people are mentioned along with the Mordovian people: the borders of Rus' spread 'from the sea to the Bolgars, from the Bolgars to the Burtas people, from the

Burtas to the Cheremis, from the Cheremis to the Mordva' [Monuments of Ancient Russian Literature: 13th century, p. 130]. It is considered that the gentilic '*Burtas*' is of Iranian-Alanian origin and reflects the Alanian ethnonym '*Furdas*' – originating from '*furd*'/'*ford*' ('great river') and 'the As' – a widely spread Alanian ethnonym [Afanasyev, 1988]. Similar to many ancient gentilics, the name 'Burtases' could have been attributed by sources to diverse ethnic communities: in particular, to the Turkic-speaking neighbours of the Mordovians, the Chuvash people, who were descendants of the Volga Bolgars, could also be called this (the placenames 'Burtas', 'the Burtases' are known in the territories of Mordovia and Chuvashia) [Fasmer, vol. 1, pp. 247–248]. In the context of Joseph's letter, this gentilic is apparently linked to the Volga region where the Burtases are followed by the Bolgars ('Bul-g-r' in Joseph's list, which is confirmed by the data provided by 10th-century Arab geographer al-Masudi) and then '*S-var*' – the name which is associated with the city of Suar in Volga Bulgaria and with the already mentioned name of '*the Savirs*' – one of the Hun-Khazar tribes. The next gentilic '*Arisu*' is associated with the self-designation of the Mordovians' ethnographic group '*Erzya*' (as a result, 'the Burtases' are often associated with another group of the Mordvins – '*Moksha*'). The name 'Ts-r-m-s' is aligned with the Cheremis found in ancient Russian sources: it is 'the Cheremises' – the medieval name of the Mari people, a Finnic-speaking nation in the Middle Volga region. We will discuss the relations between Khazaria and Volga Bulgaria separately: and now we should note that in the 960s, when Tsar Joseph's letter was written, there was hardly a possibility that any nation of the Middle Volga region was dependent on the declining khaganate.

The same can be said in respect of the following group of peoples which are considered to be Slavic tributaries of Khazaria. The gentilic 'V-n-n-tit' is usually associated with the name of the *Vyatichi/Ventichi* who, according to the Russian chronicle, paid tribute to the Khazars until they were released by Prince Svyatoslav during his campaign against Khazaria in 965. The city of 'V-ntit', located, as mentioned by



Written and toreutic monuments of the Khazar state. 1 – Water bottle with an inscription from the Novochoerkassk Museum, 2 – Silver plate with scenes of hunting and fighting along its border, 3 – Alphabet from the Novochoerkassk Water Bottle, 4 – Alphabet of the archaeological site of Mayaki. Compiled by S. Pletnyova [Eurasian Steppes, 1981, p. 163]

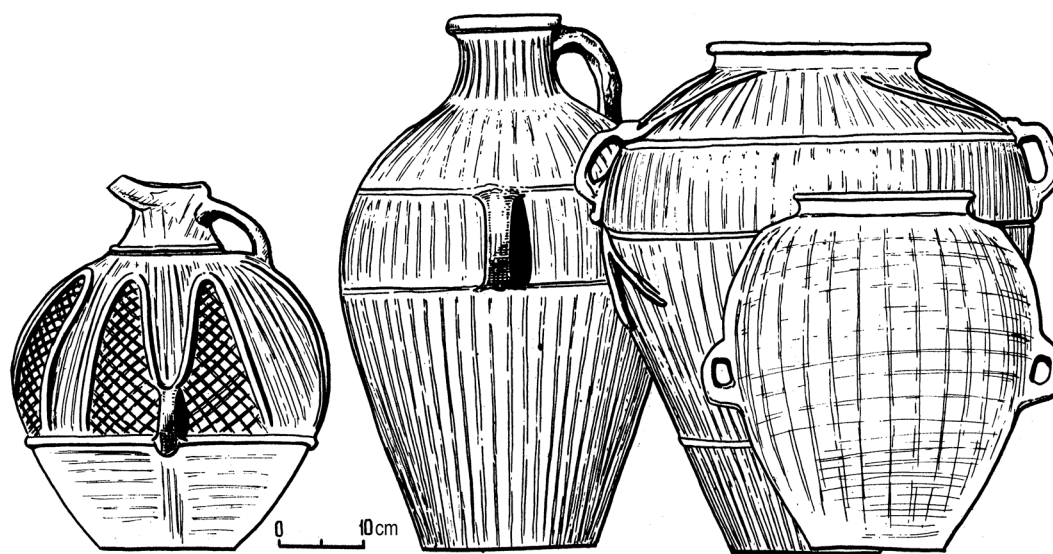
Arab authors of the 10th century, in the east of 'the country of the Slavs', seems to reflect the same ethnonym: it is supposed that this 'city' was situated on the way from Bulgar (Bilyar – 'Great City') – the capital of Volga Bulgaria – to Kiev described in a later (12th century) work by al-Idrisi and 'Vantit' is even equalised with the 'nest' of Borshevo – Vyatichi – settlements by the Don river near Voronezh [cf. Pryakhin and others]. The next gentilic 'S-v-r', which obviously means '*the Severians*' who were released from the paying tribute to Khazaria by Prince Oleg, when Russian princes settled in the Middle Dnieper region (in 882, according to the dating presented in the chronicle). The term 'S-l-viyun' refers to a general name for the Slavs: It seems that here we may construe this as the Radimiches and the Polans, who paid tribute to the Khazars before the Rus tribe appeared in the Dnieper basin in the 860s, as well as the Slavs – bearers of the so-called Borshevo culture, who had reached the Middle and Lower Don region. It is notable that according to Arab sources, as early as 737, during the campaign into the Khazar steppes, commander Marwan captured not only the Khazars, but also 'as-Saqaliba' – the name the Arabs gave the Slavs. In general, the list of tributaries therefore refers to the time of no later than the latter half of the 9th century, and even to the latter half of the 8th – first half of the 9th century, as the golden age of the Khazar state. Generally speaking, Joseph's list of the Khazars' tributaries in Eastern Europe is composed according to a certain system: it begins with the peoples inhabiting the Volga region and includes the Oka Vyatichi, the Desna Severians, apparently the Dnieper Slavs and finishes at the Don river. We note in advance that the same route was repeated by Svyatoslav in 965 when he destroyed Khazaria.

Joseph includes the area of Semender (Samandar) within the southern borders of his state. Semender was one of the main cities of Khazaria in the Northern Caucasus (along with the former capital of Balanjar). Derbend – or the Caspian 'Gates', in Arabic Bab al-Abwab – was also included in Joseph's list. Derbend (Derbend) in Dagestan was a fortress defending the most important passage into Transcau-

casia and became part of the Caliphate after the Arab–Khazar wars. An Arab garrison was placed there. The city remained the main Islamic centre of the Northern Caucasus even after the settlement of an independent dynasty in the 10th century, in the meantime, the population of Derbend included representatives of local 'pagan' inhabitants and even Ruses who were hired to serve to the city's rulers [Minorsky, 1963]. The lands between Samandar and Derbend were part of the aforementioned principality of Serir (Sarir), which was independent of Khazaria. The names of the mountain peoples of Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia living between Derbend and the state of the Alans are not clear, and neither are their relations with Khazaria: the Alans themselves could be either allies (tributaries), or rivals of the Khazars and Sarir's allies. However, the states of Afkan and Kasa, mentioned after the Alans, in comparison with other tribes listed between this state and 'the sea of Custandine' are definitely interpreted as the lands of the *Abkhazians* and the Kasogs in the Russian chronicle, the *Kashak*, *Kasak* in Arab sources – the Adyghe people of the Western Caucasus [cf. Gadlo, 1979, p. 170 et seq.].

The list of western regions in Joseph's letter begins with 'Sh-r-kil' – Sarkel/Sharkel, Khazar 'White fortress' constructed by the the Byzantines at the khagan's order in the 830s on the Don river. Then, 'S-m-k-r-ts' is mentioned, which researchers construe as the city in the Taman Peninsula – Tamatarkha in Byzantine sources and *Tmutarakan* in Russian sources, and a group of Crimean cities, the list of which is headed by K-r-ts – Kerch, ancient Panticapaeum.

The country of 'B-ts-r-s' situated north of the Black Sea region constitutes the lands of the Pechenegs, the Pachinakits in Byzantine sources, the *Bajnak* in Arab sources, in the Turkic language they were called 'Bachanak', 'Bechenegs' ('the husband of the elder sister' – an archaic tribal naming in accordance with family relationships characteristic of the Turks). This nomadic Turkic horde arrived in the steppes of the Black Sea region in the 9th century from beyond the Volga river and, by the end of that century, began ruling there. Constantine Porphyrogenetos wrote [chapter



Clay tableware of the Saltov-Mayaki Culture. Clay tableware excavated from the burial site of Dmitriyevka, Sarkel, and Mayaki. Compiled by S. Pletnyova [Eurasian Steppes, 1981, p. 160]

37] that the Khazars attempted to halt their advance and entered into a union with the Uzes (Oghuzes, Ghuzes), but they simply pressed the Pechenegs to the west. The new orda, conquering pastures, laid waste to many Khazar lands and settlements, including Mayaki ancient town (it seems that the Pecheneg invasion became the reason for the decline of the Saltykovo-Mayaki culture), the ancient city of Phanagoria (which Joseph already does not mention in his letter) and Kerch – Bosphorus, and by the beginning of the 10th century it invaded Rus'. Emperor Constantine VII in the first chapters of his work 'De Administrando Imperio' ['On the Governance of the Empire'] devotes some pages to 'the Patzinakos: how useful they were', when at peace with the 'basileus of the Romans': if you send them an official with rich gifts and capture the people responsible for peace-making, they will allow neither the Ruses, nor the Turks (Hungarians), nor the Bolgars to attack Byzantium. Below [Chapter 37] the same author provides an ethnogeographical description of Eastern Europe: the land of the Pechenegs – Patzinakia – 'is situated five days from Uzia (the land of the Uzes-Ghuzes) and Khazaria, six days from Alania, 10 days from Mordia (the land of the

Mordvins), one day from Rosia, four days from Turkia (Hungary) and half a day from Bolgaria, it is very close to Kherson and even closer to Bosphorus'. The Pechenegs forced the Hungarians – whom Joseph calls H-griim – from the Black Sea region.

The Hungarians – an Ugric-speaking people who nomadised together with the Turks in the Eastern European steppe in the 8–9th centuries came from the proto-Ugric regions of the Trans-Cis Ural. Hungarian legends of the Middle Ages preserved memories about the ancestral motherland – Greater Hungary presumably located in the Bashkir steppes, between the Volga and Southern Cis Ural, Arab sources name the Hungarians as '*the Badjkurt*' – this gentilic is related to the ethnonym '*the Bashkirs*' (though the Bashkir nation itself was formed later). Russian chronicles name the Hungarians '*the Ugric people*' – the gentilic taking its roots (just as the Western European name 'Hungarians') from the Hunnic-Bolgarian name of the tribal union Onogur (literary means 'ten [tribes] of the Ogurs'). It is possible that this name was known to the Slavic union of the Antes, and the Slavs started naming the nomads of the Eastern European steppes this way: the Russian chronicle calls 'the Black

Ugric people' the Hungarians, 'the White Ugric people' is one of the name of the Khazars, which could reflect their dominating position in the khaganate. The Ugric self-designation of the Hungarian people – the *Magyars* – is related to their Trans-Uralic relatives of the Mansi, some tribal names of the Bashkirs, as well as the name of '*Meshchera*' – the Volga-Finnic nation living near the Oka river which disappeared in the Middle Ages. It presumably means 'a person, congener' [Ageeva, 1990, pp. 65–66]. Constantine Porphyrogenetos [Chapter 38], who called the Hungarians 'Turks', but mentioned their self-designation 'the Magyars', states that the Hungarians lived close to Khazaria and their leader 'voivode' Levedia received from the khagan a Khazar noblewoman as a wife. Their country, by the beginning of the 9th century located west of the Don river, was also called *Levedia* [cf. Tsukerman, 1998], but the Hungarians were forced to leave it before the Pechenegs and a part of them migrated to the land called Atelkuzu (Etelköz), a part of them nomadised away to the east of Persia. The locality 'Atelkuzu' is placed by the majority of researchers between the Dnieper and the Dniester, the Ugorsk urochishche [place of land] outside Kiev was preserved, where, according to the chronicle, the Ugric-Hungarians stayed in their 'lavvus' [temporary dwellings], from *Atelkuzu*, the khagan called Levedia and appointed him, following the advice of the ruler named Arpad, who became the founder of the dynasty of the Hungarian kings. 11th-century Persia historian Gardezi, who relied on the early information, provides evidence of the Hungarian people in Eastern Europe who 'go to the Ghuzes, Slavs and Ruses and take captives from there, bring them to Rum (Byzantium) and sell them' [Novoseltsev, 1965, p. 389]. But the Hungarians themselves were attacked by the Pechenegs even in Atelkuzu, thus they had to move at the end of the 9th century to Great Moravia (Pannonia) which became a new motherland for them [see: Shusharin, 1997]. Multiple analogies of Hungarian antiquities are known throughout great spaces of Eastern Europe – from the Middle Volga region to the Middle Dnieper area, including in the Slavic settlement (see the summary by: [Se-

dov, 1987]), linguistic data provides evidence on tied contacts between the Slavs, Turks and the Hungarians during this period, and also points to the fact that the Hungarians borrowed through the Turks (Khazars) such important words for the Slavic ethnic culture, as 'korol' [king] and 'Walachian' – 'Franc, Italian' [Xelimsky, 2000, p. 404 et seq.].

In general, Tsar Joseph in his letter describes the 'ultimate' borders of Khazaria during its golden age: other sources confirm that the nations he described were dependent on the Khazars to a certain extent, but that dependence was not continuous – the tributary-allied relations could turn into hostile and 'fluctuated' depending on the geopolitical situation, including the policy-making of the Caliphate and especially Byzantium, which used the Pechenegs and Rus' against the Khazars or vice versa, supported weakening Khazaria by the construction of the fortress (Sarkel).

Regarding the Khazars themselves, the letter of Joseph contains a distinctive legend about their origins based upon the Biblical tradition. Joseph connects the Khazars to the sons of Japheth, descendants of his son Gomer, and in particular – Togarmah (Phogarmah): this identification has deep and even 'historical' roots not only because all the European nations and Eurasian nomads traditionally belonged to the descendants of Japheth, but also because the name of Homer takes its roots in the name of Cimmerians, while Togarmah was usually associated in ancient sources as Armenia. The Cimmerian Bosphorus and Transcaucasia were indeed the areas of initial Khazar activity. Joseph lists the following eponyms among Togarmah's sons: Aviyor (Uyur, Agiyor in the brief edition), associated with the Iver-Georgians or the Uguri-Oguri, Tudis (Tiras in the brief edition, a traditional Biblical ethnonicon), Avaz (Avaz in the brief edition), the eponym of the Avars, Uguz – the eponym of the Ghuz (Uz), Biz-l – supposedly the Barsils, an ethnic group related to the Khazars, T-r-n-a is associated by Constantine Porphyrogenetos with the name of the Hungarian clan of Tarian (unless it represents the title of tarkhan), followed by Khazar and somebody named *Yanar* (Z-nur in the brief edition), associated with the



Marks on Sargel bricks
[Artamonov, 1962, p. 303]

mountain ethnic group of the Tsanars living west of the Darial Gorge, the Bolgars and the Savirs complete the list. Curiously, a similar list of Togarmah's 10 sons is found in another Jewish source dating back to the 10th century, 'Josippon', compiled in Italy: among them, it lists the clans of the Cuzar (Khazars), Pacinak (the Pechenegs), Alan, Bulgar, Kanbinah (?), Turq, most probably denoting the Hungarians, or, more specifically, the *Kabars*, a Turkic group that parted from the Khazars to join the Hungarians, Buz, or Kuz, which is more accurate, is mentioned then to denote the Ghuz-Uz

people, Zakhukh (?), Ugr – Hungarians proper, their names presented by Josippon in the Slav-ic manner, and, finally, Tulmes – a Pecheneg tribe [Petrkhin, 1995, p. 36 et seq.].

The lists of peoples representing Togarmah's descendants provided in the two sources are not the same, it is noteworthy that the list in Josippon begins with the Khazars, apparently indicating the notion of their dominance, while Joseph emphasizes the fact that his ancestors were few, Khazar being only the seventh son of Togarmah. Their might grew after they were able to defeat the numerous enemies referred

to as V-n-t-r, whom the Khazars pursued as far as the 'Duna' River – the Danube. The name apparently denotes an Onogur tribal union in Great Bulgaria, which included the Bolgars of Asparukh, who fled behind the Danube to escape the Khazars. The Khazars then conquered the land of V-n-t-r, which they ruled until the reign of Joseph.

Thus, King Joseph associated the Khazars' origin with a group of Turkic peoples. However, Arab geographers report that the Khazars differed from the Turks: according to 10th-century writer al-Istakhri, they fell into two categories – the Kara-Khazars, or the Black Khazars, having a complexion as dark as that of the Indians, and the White Khazars, who had an exceptionally beautiful appearance. Researchers today tend to view the two groups as the ruling stratum – the Khazars proper (the White Khazars) – and the dependent 'black' people, al-Istakhri used the term 'Black Khazars' to refer primarily to slaves from the Khazar land who ended up in eastern slave markets: slaves belong to pagans, for it is only pagans, but not Jews and Christians among the Khazars, who allow their children and relatives to be sold into slavery. The term *White Khazars* might have preserved the meaning in the aforementioned Byzantine (and ancient Russian) historiography, referring to the Khazars as the *White Ugrians*, and the Hungarians, who are subordinated to them, as the *Black Ugrians*. It should be remembered that the colour classification typical of the ethnic and geographical beliefs of the Turks or other peoples cannot be applied directly to any social or, even less, anthropological notions: cf. references to the Black and White Bolgars, *White Croats*, etc. up to *Black and White Rus'*. However, the concept of 'black' people as dependent and obliged to pay tributes survived in the medieval tradition (in particular, that of ancient Rus) for a long time.

Choice of Faith. The Spread of Judaism in Khazaria

It is notable that al-Istakhri clearly refers to those professing Judaism and Christianity as White Khazars, the ruling stratum, while claiming Black Khazars to be represented by

pagans, mostly Bolgars and Alans, bearers of the Saltov-Mayaki culture who practiced pagan burial ceremony. Indeed, what made the ethnic and confessional situation in the Khazar state special was that its ruling stratum, the Khazars headed by the khagan, professed Judaism. In his letter, Tsar Joseph tells the legend of the Khazars' conversion: several generations after defeating V-n-t-r (the Bolgars, Khazar Tsar Bulan, who still bore his Turkic clan name (meaning 'deer' and apparently having a totemic origin), dreamt of hearing an angel of God promising to multiply his tribe and power as long as the tsar observed the commandments and laws and built a temple. In order to obtain the riches needed to build a sanctuary, Bulan had to go to D-ralan – Daryal, the land of the Alans, and Ar-v-vil – Ardabil, a city in the territory of Azerbaijan. With God's help, Bulan achieved a victory and built a tabernacle (tent) with an ark, a lamp, credence tables, etc., as prophet Moses did during the Jewish Exodus from Egypt. The rumor of Bulan's conversion spread 'across the world,' and 'the tsar of Edom', the Byzantine emperor, as well as 'the tsar of the Ishmaelites', the Arab caliph, sent their embassies to Bulan to persuade him to convert to their faith. Then Bulan called for an 'Israelite' sage and held a dispute of faith. The wise men argued for a long time, contesting each other's faith, until, artful as he was, Bulan finally asked the Christian priest which faith he believed to be better – that of the Israelite (Judaism) or that of the Ishmaelites (Islam). Quite naturally, the Christian preferred Judaism, for he acknowledged the Old Testament as much as the New, Bulan then asked the Muslim a similar question, and he found the faith of the Israeli 'more respectful' than that of Christians. Then Bulan accepted the faith of Israel and 'performed circumcision on himself, his slaves and servants, and all his people.'

Being obviously 'legendary', the 'choice of faith' plot has historical parallels in the history of the Turkic peoples, or, more specifically, that of the ruling dynasties who in fact showed an inclination, back in Central Asia, towards religions having a 'written law', such as Manichaeism and Buddhism, but different from the official cults of the Turks' antagonist

China. Giving up the traditional tribal religion (the cult of Tengri, shamanism) for written law were necessary, at least for the ruling stratum, to overcome tribal separatism and build a national ideology. The historical basis of the narrative on the Khazar king choosing his faith is also clear: maneuvering between the Caliphate and Byzantium, when the khagan can marry his baptized sister off to the emperor and then, after a defeat in a war against the Arabs, consent to convert into Islam, the Khazars chose a truly 'prestigious' faith relying on the Holy Scripture acknowledged both by Christians and by Muslims. A surprisingly similar plot is found in the early history of Russia, when Prince Vladimir had to face the choice of religion in the late 10th century.

Describing Bulan's choice of faith, Tsar Joseph views the Khazars' conversion as a miracle – he does not mention the Jews spreading their law among the Khazars, Bulan's son of sons Obadiah built synagogues and called for sages to come to his land and explain him the Scripture as well as the Mishna and the Talmud – the holy tradition. Another, more 'historical' document describing the Khazar conversion and also belonging to the Jewish–Khazar correspondence is the Cambridge Letter, apparently addressed to the same Hasdai ibn Shaprut by an unknown Khazar Jew [cf. Joseph, 1932, p. 113 et seq., Golb, Pritsak, 1997, p. 99 et seq.].

The beginning of the letter being cut off, the context suggests that the ancestors of the Khazar Jews had fled from the Pagans of Armenia to Khazaria and joined the Khazars to become 'one nation' with them. Of their ancestor's law, they only observed circumcision, and only a part of them celebrated the Sabbath. A successful commander of Jewish origin converted back to Judaism, which bothered 'the king of Macedon' (Byzantium) and 'the king of Arabia': their ambassadors came to see the 'heads' of Khazaria and ask why they returned 'to the faith of Jews, who are slaves subordinated to all (other) peoples'. Then a religious dispute, showing the Israeli sages to be the ones most proficient in interpreting the books of Scripture. The Khazars converted to Judaism, drawing Jews from Baghdad, Khorasan

(Iran), and Greece to Khazaria. The Jewish commander was given the name Sabriel and elected tsar (Hebr. *melech*), in addition, the Cambridge Letter tells that the Khazars have elected a judge for themselves, whom they called the khagan in their language.

Despite the general similarity of the two documents on the Khazar conversion, they are largely inconsistent. Experts tend to view Bulan and Sabriel, the first Khazar 'kings', as one and the same person, however, Bulan's descendant King Joseph claims him to be not of Jewish but of Turkic origin. Joseph does not mention the khagan, who was the supreme ruler of the Torks while the Cambridge document refers to the khagan as the judge as well as the king. The Khazars did have a 'diarchy' – the khagan was the nominal ruler, while a commander, a shad or a beg, managed the governmental affairs, the diarchy is sometimes believed to be a consequence of the 'choice of faith', when a Jewish commander occupied actual power, leaving the representative functions for the Turkic khagan. However, it is not clear from the letter by Joseph whether the ruler of Turkic–Khazar origin (Togarmah's descendant) was the actual 'king' or the nominal one (the khagan). Diarchy is indeed characteristic of the Turkic early statehood tradition (as well as those of other nations, including the Hungarians), and what we know regarding the Khazar diarchy indicated the tradition to be ancient.

10th-century Arab author al-Masudi describes the diarchy in detail: he claims that the 'khakan' was fully subordinate to the 'king' and was unable even to leave his castle in Itil. If famine or another disaster befall the country, the people declare the khagan to be responsible and demand his death, it is up to tsar to determine his future. Al-Masudi admits not knowing whether the tradition is old or new [Minorsky 1963, p. 192 et seq.]: it is safe to say that the narrative presented by the Arab author belongs to the common mythological and ritual Golden Branch plot, that of a 'sacred tsar' possessing no real power but being magically responsible for the country's wellbeing, modern historiographers dispute whether the narrative belongs to historical reality or myth-

ological epos. There is no doubt when it comes to the Khazars that the narrative cannot belong to the period following their conversion to Judaism, any forms of human sacrifice, even the most vestigial, are absolutely inconsistent with the religion. Al-Masudi had clearly heard his information providers tell the ancient Turkic epos about the sacred tsar [Petrukhin, 1998].

The issue of when the Khazars converted to Judaism is among those difficult to address. The more voluminous edition of Joseph's letter mentions the time 340 years after the tsar's reign, i.e. the 620s, a more realistic date of the 740s is preserved in a 12th-century Jewish source: the Khazar Khagans could become related to the Byzantine emperor and have their relative baptised (which was impossible for a Jew) in the early 8th century, and in 730/731, during a war against the Arabs, the Khazars did attack Arbedil, the campaign against which Joseph claims to have preceded the conversion. According to Arab accounts, it was during the reign of Harun al-Rashid, i.e. at the turn of the 8–9th centuries, that the Khazars converted to Judaism: the information is associated with Joseph's report on Judaism growing stronger during the reign of King Obadiah, when learned Talmudist rabbis arrived in Khazaria. It was not the end of religious disputes in Khazaria: in 861, a Byzantine mission headed by Constantine (Cyril) the Philosopher, who was to become an illuminator of the Slavs, arrived in the khaganate – 'to Maeotian Lake and to the Caspian Gate of the Caucasian Mountains' – and the khagan did not impede the dispute between Christians and Jews. Though 'Vita' by Constantine claims him to have won the dispute with the Jews and baptised a number of pagans [see Florya, 1981, p. 78 et seq.], the mission generally failed – the khagan and his entourage remained Jewish.

It is not clear whether the Khazars contacted any Jewish communities: such communities are known to have existed in the ancient centres in Transcaucasia, in particular, in Mtskheta, the early medieval Georgian capital, and in the Baku area, however, cities of the Northern Black Sea region, including Phanagoria, the center of Great Bulgaria, Hermonassa-Tamarkha, to which Joseph refers to

as Samkarsh (referred to as the City of Jews) in Arab documents, and, finally, the Byzantine Chersonesus were also traditional centres where Jewish communities were closely connected to nomadic Iranian-speaking, and later Turkic-speaking citizens. Essentially, Jewish communities were able to spread among the Khazars not only the written Law but also the skills of urban life.

Archaeologists have been unable to find the capital of the khaganate, the city of *Itil* (*Atil*) in the Volga Delta (Arab geographers refer to it as the River Itil or Atil). A detailed description of it is preserved in the work by al-Masudi, who claims the city to have consisted of three parts: its quarters were located on both banks of the river, and in the river lay an island where stood the castle of the king and the khagan of burnt brick, which was rare in Khazaria, Itil had walls of adobe brick. The population of the capital consisted of Jews, Muslims, Christians, and pagans (in particular, Slavs and Ruses). It was the khagan, his entourage, and 'Khazars of his clan' who were Jewish, many Jews fled from Byzantium to Itil to escape the persecutions of Emperor Romanus in the 940s. According to the Arab author, the majority of the urban population was Muslim, including the *al-Larisiyya* army – hired warriors from Khwarezm: they served the khagan with the prerequisite of religious freedom for them, the army of Khwarezm was to fight only 'disbelievers', but not Muslims, a vizier, one of the highest officials of the oriental court, was appointed from among the citizens of Khwarezm. V. Minorsky [1963, p. 193] associated the name *al-larisiyya* with the ancient Sarmatian (Alani) ethnonym Aorsi.

It was the king who had actual power over Khazaria, not only the *al-larisiyya* but also the Ruses and the Slavs, who also served in his army, were subordinated to him. Apart from warriors, many Muslim merchants and artisans lived in Itil, feeling safe under the rule of the Khazars: they not only had mosques, but also schools (madrasahs) where children could study the Quran. Each community, whether Jewish, Muslim, Christian, or pagan, had judges of its own. The complex confessional structure was characteristic even of early medieval

capitals, especially in state formations including multi-tribal unions. Samandar, which was considered to be traditionally 'Hunnish' as a city (consider the name of a Hunnic tribe Zabender, a direct road from the Northern Caucasus to Itil began in Samandar), and such cities of the khaganate in the Black Sea region as Tamatar-cha, Phanagoria, and Kerch must have been traditionally ethnically diverse. In the fortress of Sarkel, the citadel itself was occupied by Khazars (probably also Ghuz people), Bolgars and (from the middle of the 10th century) a group of Slavs inhabiting the external city surrounded with barrows, the strategic meaning of Sarkel was not only its protecting the western borders of the Khazar ruler's domain, but also controlling a branch of the famous Silk Road and guarding merchants' caravanserais [Pletnyova, 1996]. Trade duties (tithe) along with tribute imposed on subordinated peoples were an essential income item of the Khazar state: the khaganate enjoyed a firm hold of the main rivers – the Danube and the Volga, running from the north, from the deep of Eastern Europe and the fledging Russian state to the Black and Caspian Seas, to Byzantium and Middle East, also controlling (until the 10th century) a branch of the so-called Silk Road leading from the East (China) via the Northern Caucasus (and Sarkel? – see: [Pletnyova, 1996]) to cities in the Northern Black Sea region. In spite of the common idea of 'financial capital' being dominant in Khazaria, numismatists have scarcely any information on monetary circulation in the khaganate, Khazars coined their own imitations of the Arab dirhems, but hoards of silver coins are extremely few in the territory of the khaganate [cf. Flerov, 1993], especially when compared to dozens of hoards of hundreds of coins in the territory of Rus' (and Scandinavia as connected to it). Rus' had to ask for the Khazars permission so that the latter allowed their troops to enter Transcaucasia, it was also to pay tithe when transporting goods for commercial purposes. Tsar Joseph claimed that the Ruses would have conquered the entire civilized world if he had not checked them. Rus' became the principal rival of the khaganate in Eastern Europe.

The Khazars, the Slavs, and Rus'

The Khazars controlled part of the Eastern Slavic tribes' territory in the Middle Dnieper region, receiving tribute from the Polans in Kiev, the Severians and the Radimichs on the Levoberezhye (as well as the Vyatichi on the Oka River): archaeological evidence, namely Khazar burial monuments in the Middle Dnieper region (Voznesensk Complex etc.), suggest the tributary arrangement have been made before the Khazar ruling elite converted to Judaism, in the first half of the 8th century.

In the Primary Russian Chronicle, compiled at the turn of the 11–12th centuries, the Tale of Bygone Years [TBY, p. 11–12] mentions the tribute that the Khazars demanded from the Polans following the death of the legendary founders of Kiev – the brothers Kyi, Shchek and Khoryv. The Polans gave them 'a sword of their house', which the Khazar elders interpreted as a bad sign, since it was sabres, weapons sharpened at one end, what won the Khazars their power, the Polans had two-edged swords. The legendary narrative is preceded by another chronicle narrative – that of Kyi and the meaning of Kiev on the route from the Varangians to the Greeks: the tsar himself is claimed to have caught Kyi in Tsargrad. The chronicle presents the motif as an antithesis to the legend of Kyi as the 'carrier' across the Dnieper: it is in itself a typical toponymic legend, but it appears to be connected to the historical reality of the early Kiev. The fact is that Kiev (or, more specifically, the monuments within the territory that was to become the city) was an 'outpost' of the 8–9th century's left-bank Volyntseve culture on the right bank of the Dnieper. The Volyntseve culture presented a synthesis of Slavic and steppe – Saltov or Khazar – traditions in the Middle Dnieper region (yurt-like houses have been found in settlements belonging to the culture): the area of that culture is the same as the territory forming the basis of the princely domain of the Russian Land in the Middle Dnieper region with its capital in Kiev. The domain in turn was formed in the land of the Slavic tribes who paid tribute to the Khazars – having taken the princely throne of Kiev with his Russian druzhina, Oleg the Seer appropri-

ated the Khazar tribute in the 880s. The Saltov features of the Volyntseve culture are clearly representative of the 'Khazar' period in the history of the Middle Dnieper Region.

In relation to the 10th century's letter by the Jewish Khazar community of Kiev, which was found among the manuscripts of the Cairo Geniza and printed by N. Golb and O. Pritsak in 1982 (see the Russian edition [Gold, Pritsak, 1997]), the period gave rise to (and revived) another surge of interest in the origins of Kiev. While the hypothesis of a Khazar (Khwarezm) origin of the name Kiev as such relies on an arbitrary separation of the placename from a number of similar Slavic names [see Trubachyov, 1992 and the ongoing polemics with the author of the hypothesis O. Pritsak in the following book: Golb, Pritsak 1997], the name of the other 'Polan brother'—Khoryv and Mount Khorevitsa clearly refer to the Biblical tradition: it was on Mount Horeb where the Burning Bush appeared to Moses, and he received the Tablets of the Covenant [Exodus, 3:1, Deuteronomy, 4:10]. It is nevertheless clear that the Christian chronicler failed to recognise the Biblical name behind the local Kiev placename. Mount Khorevitsa must have become well-established in the microtoponymy of Kiev in the pre-Christian period of the city's history. Certain evidence is available that it reveals some microtoponymic traces of the Jewish Khazar community inhabiting the territory since another source—that is, the treatise by Constantine Porphyrogenetos 'De Administrando Imperio'—preserves another placename related to Kiev, the name of Sambatas Fortress, also revealing a Jewish origin. The names of Sambatas, Sambation, etc., are related to a miraculous river in Talmudist legend, which is rough six days a week and calm only on Sabbath—the lost ten Tribes of Israel live behind the river [Arkipov, 1995, pp. 71–96]. The river flows along the borders of the inhabited world—Kiev was undoubtedly the outer limit for the Jewish diaspora.

The fact that the Russian chronicler could not recognise the name Khoryv does not seem attributable to his poor knowledge of the Biblical text alone, moreover, it is the 'Khazar' period in the history of Kiev and the Polan land

with which the Biblical motif of the Exodus in the chronicle is connected. In their narration on the Khazar tribute imposed on the Polans, who had sent two-edged swords, Khazar elders predict that the Slavs are to impose tribute 'on the Khazars' and on 'their countries.' 'As it was during the reign of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt,' the chronicle summarised the text, 'Moses inflicted death of the Egyptian people, on whom they used to work. You own, but you are to be owned, the Russian princes have subordinated the Khazars until today [TBY, p. 12] It is not merely a pronouncement of the 'historical fact' of Russian princes having power over the Khazars in the 11th century: the phrase presents the 'legendary' cosmographic introduction to the Tale of Bygone Years—it is followed by the 'history,' a chronicle describing the history of the Russian Land year by year. Therefore, the epoch of the Khazar domination belonged to the prehistory of Russia.

Early evidence of contacts between Rus and the Khazars can be found in a work by Ibn Khordadbeh, providing a detailed description of the route of Jewish merchants called ar-Razaniyya, who traveled from Western Europe to China (through the Khazar city of Khamlij), Ibn Khordadbeh (or the scribe copying the work) inserted in the text on the routes of Jewish merchants a report on Rus merchants, who reached Baghdad along the rivers of Eastern Europe, via Khazaria, to sell fur and swords, using Slavic eunuchs as interpreters [see Kalinina, 1986, p. 71]. Ibn Khordadbeh is the only early medieval author to define the Ruses as 'a type of Slavs.' Many sources, both foreign and ancient Russian, most importantly the Tale of Bygone Years, believe the most ancient Rus to be Varangians originating from Scandinavia.

It is not clear how regular the contacts between Rus merchants and ar-Razaniyya might have been—curiously, they spoke 'Slavic' among other languages. However, the text by Ibn Khordadbeh does not suggest the route of European merchants to run via Eastern Europe [Kalinina, 1986], the route would be hardly possible in the early Middle Ages, the relations between the Khazars and nomadic peoples (the Hungarians and the Pechenegs) in the Northern Black Sea region were too strained. Only the Ruses

could, at a minor or major risk, travel through the steppe area on rivers using their lightweight rowboats. Jewish merchants most probably used traditional routes connected to the diaspora of Asia Minor, preferring the southern shore of the Black Sea to the northern shore. The 'Slavs' to whose land Jewish merchants 'behind Byzantium' travelled could be Balkan Slavs.

The relations between the most ancient Ruses and Khazaria were not limited to trade, the fact that the first Russian princes of the 9th century claimed the Khazar title of the kha-gan evidences this. Moreover, A. Novoseltsev assumed the 'official' calling of the Varangian (Russian) princes to Ladoga and Novgorod (862 according to the chronicle) is attributable to the Khazar threat to the tribes in the north of Eastern Europe. It is not clear how real the threat could be, but the context of early medieval sources make it obvious that the clash between Rus and Khazaria in Eastern Europe was unavoidable. According to the Russian chronicle, in the 880s Prince Oleg with an army of Varangians and Novgorod Slavs 'calling themselves Rus' conquered Kiev and appropriated the Khazar tribute in the Middle Dnieper Region. The fact that Oleg transferred the capital to 'the mother of Russian cities' might be attributable both to the belief of the princely clan that Russian princes had power over all Slavs (this is the way the chronicle presents it) and to their aspiration to reach world markets without entering Khazaria. The moment that Oleg chose was quite favourable, Khazaria being in a state of conflict with the Hungarians [Novoseltsev, 1991, p. 14, Tsukerman, 1998]: it was in a settlement called Ugorskoye (Hungarian) that Oleg stopped before conquering Kiev, and the movement of 'the Black Ugrians' to their future motherland in Pannonia is described (as 898) as clearly related to the previous establishment of the Ruses in Kiev—they also passed the settlement of Ugorskoye.

During the reign of Oleg the Khazar tributary territory in the Middle Dnieper Region was given the name of the *Russian Land* (in a narrow sense). Numismatic evidence suggests that Khazaria responded by declaring economic warfare against Rus—eastern coins did not come to Eastern Europe in the last quarter of

the 9th century. Oleg clearly sought new trade routes and international contacts: his legendary campaign against Tsargrad in the Byzantine Empire resulted in a peace treaty in 911, which provided for exceptional privileges for Russian merchants in Constantinople.

The rivalry between Rus and Khazaria could not but affect the Jewish Khazar community living in Kiev in the 10th century, judging by the letter by its members mentioned above. Written in Hebrew, the letter contained an appeal to communities in diaspora for assistance in the debt repayment. A member of the Kiev community Ya'akov Bar Hanukkah was the guarantor of his brother, who borrowed money from a non-Jew and was robbed. The community bailed the guarantor, who had spent a year in prison, by paying 60 coins for him. Ya'akov was to collect the remaining 40 coins from diaspora communities. The letter of recommendation bore a resolution in Khazar (Turkic) runes: Pritsak interprets the inscription as 'khokurum,' meaning 'I have read it,' attributing it to a Khazar official. The letter is signed with traditional Jewish names (Abraham, Isaac, etc.), including non-biblical ones (Sinai, Hanukkah), Turkic (Khazar), and most probably Slavic names—that is, Gostyata, Severyata [see Torpusman]. The name *Gostyata Bar Kjabar Cohen* sounds like an oxymoron: a proselyte, whether Khazar (Kabar when we follow O. Pritsak in associating the patronymic name Kjabar with the ethnonym Kavars/Kabars) or Slavic, could not belong to cohens, descendants of the first High Priest Aaron.

Experts have various opinions on the status and composition of the Jewish Khazar diaspora of Kiev: it remains unclear whether the signers of the letter were Jewish, who had partially accepted Slavic or Turkic names, or proselytes from the Slavic Kiev (see a recent work [Chekin]). Yet, it is almost obvious who controlled the 'commercial and monetary relations' in Kiev: these relations as well as Kiev itself were controlled by the princely authority and the Russian druzhina—it is suggested in particular by agreements with the Greeks signed in 911 during the reign of Oleg and in 944 during that of Igor. The complications in Russian-Khazar relations can be assumed to have made the troublesome situation of the

Kiev community that turned to its co-religionists even more dramatic. Yet, the situation of the community in Kiev is unlikely to have been very different from that of multi-ethnic communities in other early medieval capitals, in particular in Itil, which also had a Jewish, Muslim, and Slavic-Russian Pagan communities in the 10th century (according to al-Masudi). In any case, a quarter referred to as Koza-re and inhabited in particular by Varangian Christians did exist in Kiev in the mid-10th century, when Igor signed the agreement with the Greeks.

The further history of the Jewish Khazar community of Kiev is vague. The next record related to Khazar Jews in Kiev is connected with the motif of faith choice during the reign of Vladimir Svyatoslavovich. Russian chronicles contain a narration dated 986, according to which 'Khazar Jews' came to the Russian prince following the Muslim Volga Bulgars and 'the Germans from Rome' to persuade Vladimir to convert into Judaism. It is the only case where Russian sources mention Judaism as related to the Khazars, and it is still unclear whether they are Khazars professing Judaism or Jews from Khazaria. The chronicle claims the Jews to have come to the prince after finding out about the previous embassies having failed: the 'efficient response' can be interpreted as an evidence of the legend in the chronicle referring to the 'nearer' Judaists from Kiev living in Kozare Quarter, but the text of the 'dispute of faith' enables the motif to be interpreted as being relatively recent formed during the compilation of the chronicle in the late 10th century and not connected with more ancient legends. During the 'dispute,' Prince Vladimir asked the Jews a typical question natural for the head of a fledging state in search of a national ideology: 'Where is your land?' They had to answer: 'in Jerusalem' since Khazaria had been defeated and ruined by Vladimir's father Prince Svyatoslav...

The Decay of the Khazar state and the Khazar Legacy in Eastern Europe

In spite of the unstable internal ethnopolitical structure of the Khazar state, when the peoples subordinated to it remained 'autonomous,' having rulers of their own, and the

controversial geopolitical situation in Eurasia, contemporary historiographers traditionally believe the conversion into Judaism, strange to a vast majority to the pagan population of Khazaria, to have caused the crisis in the khaganate that is never overcome. The Cambridge Document claims 'wise people' feared 'a revolt of peoples' around Khazaria. Constantine Porphyrogenetos [Chapter 39] describes the revolt of the Kabars of the Khazar tribe (the name Kabar probably means 'revolter'), who were suppressed by the Khazar elite and joined the Hungarians (having taught them the Khazar language) in the land of the Pachiknaks-Pechenegs, their revolt is believed to have come in response to the introduction of Orthodox Rabbinic Judaism during the reign of Obadiah. However, archaeological discoveries near the village of Chelaryovo in Yugoslavia (Vojvodina), on the Danube—in the land which was occupied by the Hungarians in the 10th century—disturbed the hypothesis: among traditional nomadic burials with weapons and horse sacrifices, several tombs with bricks bearing images of menorahs and other Judaistic symbols traditional for Judaist tombstones were discovered. The burial site is attributed to the Kabars, who migrated to the Danube along with the Hungarians: most probably, the environment of different cults and faiths motivated the Kabars to use Judaist symbols in their burial ceremonies. Thus, the conflict with the Khazars was not merely religious caused by the introduction of Judaism.

Internal wars in 'nomadic empires' were unavoidable both due to the frailty of the early state formation, the central authorities being unable to check the separatist strive of the tribal nobles, due to the inherent weakness of the authorities fighting within the ruling clan, and due to interference from 'global powers' willing to weaken the 'barbarian' states. However, the Byzantine Empire helped to enforce the Khazars in the 830 by building Sarkel (and other fortresses), but the Cambridge Document indicated the 'king of Macedon' to have besieged Khazaria with the help of Asian rulers, the Torks and some *BM* and *Piniil* people back during the reign of King Benjamin, Joseph's grandfather. The traditional allies, the Alans,

remained true to the Khazars since part of them, according to the document, professed the Jewish law. It appears rather difficult to define the composition of the anti-Khazar coalition: 'Asia' can be interpreted as the Ases—a union of Don Alans since Caucasian Alans were Khazar allies, but they could be Iuz-Oghuz. The term 'Torks' as has been mentioned above, could apply to the Hungarians and to Turkic-speaking nomads. Experts are inclined to interpret 'BM' as the Black (Kuban?) Bolgars. Finally, the 'Piniil' is generally viewed as the Pechenegs. Then the Alan king defeated the anti-Khazar coalition. However, the situation changed as soon as during the reign of King Aaron in the first half of the 10th century, and the Alan King, encouraged by the Byzantine Empire, attacked Khazaria in the 930s, Aaron hired the Turkic king. The Alan ruler was defeated and captured, but Aaron opted for preserving their alliance, he married his son Joseph off to his daughter and let Alan return to his land. According to the hypothesis by M. Artamonov [1962, p. 356 ff.], the conflicts between Khazaria and its subordinated people, in particular the Don and North Caucasian Alans, caused the Saltov-Mayaki Culture to disappear in the early 10th century. More accurate dating indicates that the culture, including that of the Don Alans, continued to exist until the mid-10th century. Many settlements belonging to the Saltov-Mayaki Culture obviously ceased to exist in the early 10th century because of the Pecheneg invasion. However, the end of the Saltov-Mayaki Culture does not appear to be connected with the emergence of a new wave of nomads. Its central region, the interfluvium of the Volga and the Don with Itil and Sarkel, was devastated by Svyatoslav's Rus in the 960s.

Rus was the khaganate's principal rival in Eastern Europe, of which rivalry the Byzantine Empire took advantage. When another conflict with the Byzantine Empire broke out during the reign of Joseph, Emperor Romanos Lekapenos began to persecute Jews, while the Khazar king persecuted Christians, the Byzantine Empire encouraged a Rus 'tsar' Helgi (Oleg), a representative of the princely clan ruling Rus, to initiate a campaign against a Khazar territory in the Black Sea Region.

Even though Khazar commander Pesakh defeated the Russians and forced them to raise their arms against the Byzantine Empire (the campaign of 941), the rivalry of Khazaria with Rus and the Byzantine Empire, the Pecheneg aggression from the west and that of the Uz-Oghuz people from the east, as well as internal fighting determined the fall of the khaganate.

The Tale of Bygone Years, being generally 'poor' in terms of Khazar narrations, presents a very brief account of Svyatoslav's campaign against Khazaria. Svyatoslav is told to have initiated a campaign to the Oka and the Volga (!) and subordinated the Vyatichi people living there in 964. Then 'Svyatoslav marched his army against the Khazars, having found it out, the Khazans marched against him with their prince, the khagan... Svyatoslav defeated the Khazars and conquered their city and/or White House. He defeated the Jassy people and the Kasogs.' The Khazar city most probably refers to the capital, Itil (Atil) in the Lower reaches of the Volga, Belaya Vezha (White House), the Russian name of Sarkel Fortress built by Byzantine people for the Khazars on the Don, became a Russian city, the prince defeated the Jassy (the Alans) and the Kasogs (the Adyghe) in the Northern Caucasus, it must be the time when Tmutarakan was subordinated to Kiev. The khagan's domain, the 'nomadic camp' described in the letter by King Joseph, with Sarkel on its west border and Itil (Atil) as its winter quarters, appears to have been devastated [Pletnyova, 1986, pp. 49–50]. Thus, the prince undertook a circular campaign around the Khazar land, reaching the Don from the Lower Volga, and returned to Kiev [see Artamonov, 1962, pp. 426–428, Gadlo, 1994, pp. 54–57]. The mention of Svyatoslav's second campaign against the Vyatichi people as an event of 966 results from the further breakdown of the chronicle text (the so called Primary Edition) into yearly notes [see Petrukhin, 1995, p. 103 ff.]. The Oghuz people completed the devastation of the khaganate, brief reports by eastern authors tell that the Khazars turned to Khwarezm search of allies against the Oghuz people and had to convert to Islam [see Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 194 ff.].

After Svyatoslav's inflicting a defeat on Khazaria, the Khazars were still mentioned in Russian sources in the late 11th century in Tmutarakan, which belonged to Russia, Byzantine documents, Arab (al-Gharnati, etc.), and Western European (Marco Polo) sources still use the choronym *Khazaria* to refer to the Taman Region, but the ethnic group that had dominated the south of Eastern Europe for three weeks is assimilated among the numerous people and ethnic groups once included in the khaganate. Some representatives of peoples that professed Judaism sometimes want to trace their origin back to the Khazars: the Mountain Jews (Tats) of Dagestan and the Crimean Karaites, but the evidence available does not provide any direct support to those theories.

In the 1970s English-speaking writer Arthur Koestler tried to trace the Turkic-Khazar origin of the European (Ashkenazi) Jews in his popular book 'The Thirteenth Tribe' (see translation of fragments from the book in the following edition: [Gumilyov, 1996, p. 515 ff.]). Koestler openly tried to prove anti-Semitism to be groundless on the pretext of the European Jews being not Semitic but Turkic in origin, belonging to a thirteenth tribe and not one of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. The concept virtually revived the confabulated genealogy accepted in King Joseph's letter, who believed his clan to have its origin in Togarmah's tribe. It is not clear what happened to the Jewish communities of Khazaria (a Jewish-Khazar community seems to have been preserved in Kiev in the 10–11th centuries), it seems unlikely that they could be large outside of the traditional centres of the Jewish diaspora in the Black Sea Region, and there is no basis for linking them to the European Ashkenazi Jews, who formed independent communities in Eastern European cities in the early Middle Ages.

However, the Khazar era did affect Eastern Europe (just as that of the Huns and the Avars affected the Slavs and the Hungarians in Central Europe): Rus (partially) succeeded Khazaria in the Early Middle Ages, followed by the Golden Horde, its power spreading across the territory of Khazaria during its high time. It was not only Rus who participated in

the complicated relations of rivalry and partnership with Khazaria but also other peoples and countries of Eurasia, primarily Alania and Volga-Kama Bulgaria.

Caucasian Alania and the Peoples of the Northern Caucasus in the 6–10th centuries

The famous 10th-century Arab geographer al-Masudi located 72 peoples in the Caucasus, which is, of course, not the accurate number of ethnic group inhabiting the region but the general account of the number of 'tongues' in the Caucasus, which is equal to the number of 'tongues' that built the Tower of Babylon. The ethnic diversity was confident with the very nature of Caucasus divided into numerous areas hosting different tribes by natural borders. However, ancient and medieval authors were unaware of some part of them. Al-Masudi believes the Alan to be one of the most powerful and famous peoples in the Caucasus. Byzantine sources of the mid-5th century referred to the Caucasus as 'the Alan Mountain.' According to the legends that he tells, Iranian shah Anushirvān had a wall built near Derbend (Bab al-Abwab) in the 6th century to check the Khazars, the Alans, various Torks inhabitants of Sarir, and other peoples, while an even more ancient Iranian ruler Esfandiār founded Alan Fortress, or Alan Gate, Daryal, to prevent the Alans from entering Transcaucasia.

Descendants of the Scythian-Sarmatian population of Eurasian steppes, the Alans, whose campaigns with Germanic peoples, the Huns, and other peoples shook the Mediterranean during the Migration Period, grew firmly established in the steppes and foothill areas of the Northern Caucasus in the first centuries CE, subordinating and partially assimilating the local population. Procopius of Caesarea [Procopius of Caesarea, II, VIII.3] claims the Alans to occupy 'the entire country from the borders of the Caucasus to the Caspian Gate' (the author refers to the Daryal as the Caspian Gate). There the Alans shifted to transhumance livestock breeding and farming (also by mastering the local skills of terrace agriculture

on mountain slopes), founded numerous small and large fortified settlements. In the planes of the Stavropol upland the Kuma, Terek, and Sunzha Valleys the so called earth settlements with barrows of soil, clay, and air brick were dominant, while in Central Ciscaucasia rock settlements with walls and towers, utility and housing buildings built of stone were popular. A network of fortified settlements controlled the mountain grazing land, enabling them to take the population and the livestock to the mountains in case of an invasion. At the turn of the 7–8th centuries, rare yurt-like dwellings and ceramic indicating Turkic (Bulgar) groups appeared in certain settlements, apart from the catacomb burial type typical for the Alans, rock tombs and ground pits grew common, which also resulted from the Turkic migrations when the Khazars were dominant. Yet, the Alan's cultural skills not only enabled them to survive the invasion of the Huns and other peoples of the Eurasian steppe but also played a major part in the formation of the culture of the Khazar state (and even Volga Bulgaria). Numerous monuments of the Alan culture in the Northern Caucasus often existed from the 3rd to the 4th century and even longer.

Like other 'barbarian' Eurasian peoples, the Alans had to maneuver between the early medieval great powers: the Byzantine Empire and the Sasanian Iran in the beginning and the Arab Caliphate afterwards, three groups are assumed to have existed within the Alan tribal union: pro-Iranian and pro-Byzantine, which most probably had formed in the Northern Caucasus by the 6th century CE. The East Alans controlled the Daryal Pass leading to the Georgian kingdom subordinated to the Persians named Kartli. The western Alanian union formed in the upper reaches of the Kuban River, near the west-Georgian state of Lazica and Abkhazia, which were controlled by the Byzantine Empire. Thus, West Alania also belonged to the Byzantine sphere of influence and often allied with the Byzantine Empire: for instance, in 558 the Avars turned to western Alan king Sarozius, asking him to establish friendly contacts with the Byzantine Empire [Kovalevskaya, 1984, p. 133 ff., see Kuznetsov, 1992, p. 85

ff.]. On the contrary, in 550–551, within the Iranian army, the East Alans invaded Colchis, which was subordinated to the Byzantine Empire, and later (576) entered into a favourable agreement (along with the Savir people), the Byzantine buy-out amount being larger than what the Persians had been paying them. Justin II tried to use the Alans against the *Abasgoi* and the *Lazi*–Abkhazians people and the population of West Georgia revolting against the Byzantine Empire in the early 8th century [Chichurov, 1980, p. 65–67]. It was not only Alania's strategical location in the Caucasus what made it of particular interest but also the changed route of the Silk Way, which Iranian wars had caused to reach the Byzantine ports of the Northern Black Sea Region via Alania (Middle Asian silk clothing found in the tombs of Alan noblemen support this statement).

By the mid-8th century the Alans were subordinated by the Khazar state—very few references are made to them in 8th–9th century Byzantine sources. Archaeologists have discovered Saltov-Mayaki monuments with clearly Turkic features in the interfluvium of the Kuban and the Terek—the Khazars were moving towards the summer pasturing land near Mount Elbrus, aspiring to control the Silk Way [Kuznetsov, 1997, p. 164 ff.] However, the Byzantine Empire used its traditional connections with the Alans when the relations between the Khazar state and Danube Bulgaria were extremely strained. When the Danube Bulgars began to threaten Constantinople in 917, Patriarch Nicholas Mysticus in his letter to King Simeon expressed a threat of an invasion by Turks (Hungarians), Pechenegs, Ruses, Alans, and 'other Scythian tribes.' Among the actual political accomplishments of the Patriarch is the Christianisation of West Alania in the early 10th century (with assistance from the Abkhazians ruler). As a result, the Byzantine Empire was able to trigger the 932 conflict between the Alans and the Judaist Khazaria mentioned in the Cambridge Document: the Alans were defeated and, according to al-Masudi, had to send Byzantine priests in exile (the Jewish document claims them to have converted into Judaism). They did not give up Christianity for a long time for in the mid-10th century Emper-

or Constantine Porphyrogenetos in his work 'De Ceremoniis Aulæ Byzantinæ' calls the ruler of Alania his 'spiritual son' and rewards him with charters bearing seals of gold, thus showing Alania to be equal to such Christian states as Danube Bulgaria and Armenia. Records on the Alan Metropolis date back to the late-10th century. It was in the same 10th century when church building began in West Alania. The ancient town of Nizhny Arkhyz in the upper reaches of the Kuban River apparently became the centre of the eparchy, being associated with the capital of Alania mentioned by al-Masudi, the city of Magas (Maas), Alania was included in the list of Christian cities in the Black Sea Region [Kuznetsov, 1992, pp. 102–122].

According to al-Masudi's description, the king of the Alans (*al-Lan*) owned many castles and residences, which he would visit every once in a while, apart from his capital Magas (Iranian for 'Great')—the pattern is characteristic of early medieval rulers: from the Carolingian Empire to Rus and Khazaria. In the 10th century a network of stone fortresses built with the Byzantine traditions influencing the local technique was formed in Alania. The king of Alania maintained matrimonial connections with that of Sarir and enjoyed friendly relations with the mountain region of Gumik associated with the contemporary land of the Lak people speaking a Nakho-Dagestanian language, formerly known as the *Kazikumukh* by the name of the principal settlement of Kumukh (the name of the ancient region is preserved in the ethnonym of the Turkic-speaking Kumyk people). The Alans' neighbours, the *Kashak* (Adyghe), had no king and professed a pagan religion, it was only their fortified settlements that protected them against the Alans. Constantine Porphyrogenetos [Chapter 43] claimed the Alans to also raid the more distant Adyghe Region between the Kuban River and the river Nicopsis, referred to as Zikhia in

Greek sources, the Zichians had to hide from the Alans on islands in the Black Sea. Al-Masudi claimed the Alan king to have power over the Abkhazians people, too. The Alan rulers clearly wanted to win access to the sea.

The Alan state existed before the Mongol-Tatar invasion of the 13th century. After the Mongol attack the Alans formed the ethnolinguistic basis of a new Iranian-speaking Caucasian ethnic group—that is, the Ossetians. However, the Alan influence on the ethnic and linguistic history of the peoples of the Northern Caucasus was far broader and indicative in particular of an interaction between Iranian- and Turkic-speaking ethnic groups, including the ancestors of the Turkic-speaking Karachays and Balkars (the name of the Balkars appears to be related to the ethnonym Bolgars, referring to their early medieval neighbours of Alans).

In spite of the traditionally diverse ethnic composition of the North Caucasus at the turn of the 1st and 2nd millennium CE, evidence is available of the same trends in the development of ethnic cultures as found in earlier periods: the south-west is dominated by Adyghe tribes (the *Zikhian* and *Kasog* people according to medieval sources), the Alans occupy the central part, mountainous regions are inhabited by such mountain peoples as Nakh peoples (ancestors of the Chechens and Ingushes), the eastern territory in Dagestan, such regions as Serir, Gumik, etc., is inhabited by ancestors of the Avars, the Laks, the Lezgians, the Dargins, and other peoples living together with Turkic-speaking tribes that had entered the north of Dagestan back in the Hunnic era, in particular the Khazars (e.g., the archaeological site of Tarki near Makhachkala is presumably Samandar). Descendants of the Onogur-Bulgar and Khazar tribal union inhabited the steppes of the Kuban River Region [see Gadlo, 1979, pp. 199–209, Kuznetsov, 1997].

CHAPTER 7

The Oghuz People and the Pechenegs in the Steppes of Eurasia*Vladimir Ivanov*

The steppes of East Europe, in particular those of the Volga-Ural Region, disappeared from view of medieval geography for several centuries after the ancient Greek geographical tradition decayed. It is no wonder since after the Migration Period nearly the entire Eurasia experienced a state of 'tectonic movement' with certain states clashing and falling to make room for others, which were to be destroyed by yet new states. One would not expect any historical or geographical works, if any, to be preserved under such conditions to help the contemporary historian to reconstruct the political and ethnic map of the early medieval steppe Eurasia. Therefore, in order to write the history of Eurasian peoples, we had to collect information from most diverse, sometimes fragmented, scattered written evidence from the most varied chronological sources. Sometimes we had to verify and clarify it with the help of archaeological data. First of all, it applies to the peoples of the Volga-Ural Region on the margins of both European and Asian medieval civilisations.

Representatives of the dynamic Muslim world, who, having established themselves in West and Middle Asia, wanted to expand their sphere of influence north- and westwards, were the first to enter the depth of the Volga-Ural steppes. In 921 an embassy of Caliph al-Muqtadir with Ahmad ibn Fadlan as the secretary made its way from Baghdad to the domain of the Bulgar king.

Ahmad ibn Fadlan was a man of profound education for his time and, quite naturally, made travel notes on his way to the Volga.

A refined Muslim intellectual and theologian, Ibn Fadlan during his trip paid particular attention to circumstances and facts beyond the outlook he was used to, which he recorded in his travel notes. After the Baghdad embassy crossed the borders of the Caliphate and entered 'the land of the Torks' Ibn Fadlan's notes turned into a proper guide on the ethnography and geography of the peoples inhabiting the steppe Volga Region and Cis-Cis Ural.

After the long and hard trip, having descended from the waterless Ustyurt Plateau, the embassy's caravan reached the camps of the Oghuz (Ghuz) people inhabiting the steppes between the North Aral Sea Region and the Lower reaches of the Volga. In addition to reports on the lifestyle and custom of the ethnic group, Ibn Fadlan provided a detailed description of an Oghuz burial, recording such features of the burial ceremony as digging a spacious rectangular tomb ('...a large house-shaped pit will be dug for him...'), placing the dead man's belongings to his tomb ('they will put his jacket, his belt, his bow on him, and put a wooden cup with nabiz into his hand, bring all his belonging and put it with him into the house'), using wooden boards to cover the tomb pit with and making an earth mound above the tomb ('they will cover the house with a ceiling and make something like a clay dome over it').

Ibn Fadlan found the purely pagan ritual of burying a horse's remnants with the man especially noteworthy: 'Then they will take his horses, and, depending on the total number, one hundred heads, two hundred heads,

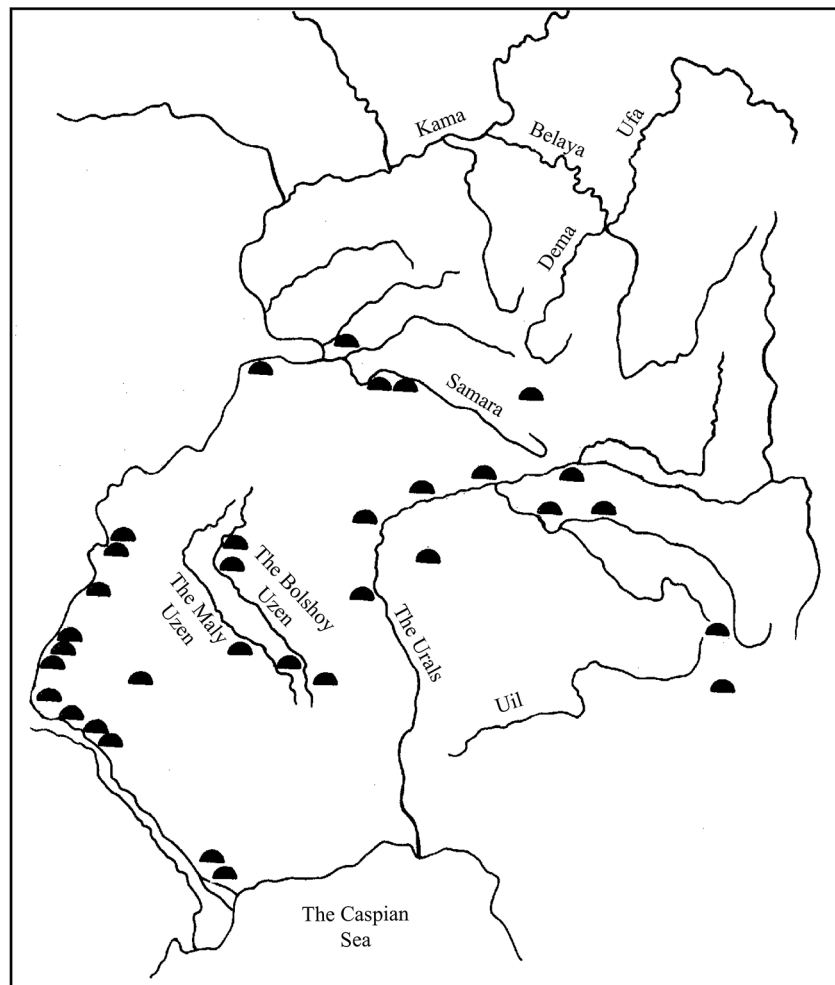


Fig. 1. The location of Oghuz and Pecheneg burial mounds in the Volga-Ural steppes

or one head will be killed, the meat, except for the head, skin, and tail, will be eaten. Indeed, they stretch it on wooden structures and say: 'Those are his horses to take him to heaven.'

The information provided by Ibn Fadlan has enabled archaeologists to ethnically identify some of the 10–11th century burial mounds in the Volga-Ural steppes, which form a relatively small territorial and typological group characterised by a stable combination of such features as burying under earth mounds, a wooden cross-cover of the tomb pit, horse skulls and leg bones placed on the ceiling above the man or in the tomb burden, bronze kopoushka dangles and stylized bird-shaped dangles among the accessories. Most

of the monuments lie along the Levoberezhnye of the Lower Volga, in the territory of the contemporary Astrakhan (La Paz Dune) and Volgograd (Verkhne-Pogromnoye, Kilyakovka, Zaplavnoye, Elton, Chenin, near the settlement of Leninsk, Srednyaya Akhtuba, Bykovo, Kano, Volzhsky Sovkhoz, etc.) Regions, isolated burial sites were found in the territory of Uralsk (Saralzhin III), Akto-be (Bolgarka-1, Atpa), and Orenburg (Uvak, Tamar-Utkul, Kurgan I) Regions (Fig. 1).

It should be mentioned that Ibn Fadlan's notes are the earliest evidence of the Oghuz presence in the Volga-Ural steppes. However, some older written sources suggest the Oghuz people not to be indigenous to the region, the area of their initial dispersal ly-

ing far in the east of the Eurasian steppes. There are well-studied runic monuments of the first half of the 8th century (inscriptions in honour of Kyul Tigin, Bilge Khagan, and Tonyukuk). The texts present the Oghuz people as the nearest neighbours, political rivals, and subjects of the Turkic peoples within the territory of contemporary Mongolia, with whom Turkic Khagans have been at war for years.

East of Transoxiana (Middle Asia), Arab geographers of the mid-9th century were also aware of the Oghuz people. In particular in the 'Book of the Description of the Earth' written by Arab scientist Muhammad al-Khwarizmi between 836 and 847 and relying on geographical data provided by Ptolemy, the coordinates of Oghuz camps referred to as 'the land of at-Tuguzguz' are far east of Khwarezm, Bukhara, and Samarkand [Kalinina, 1988, pp. 48, 97].

However, in the latter half of the 9th century, Arab authors (Ibn Khordadbeh, al-Ya'qubi) mentioned the Oghuz people among other nomadic Turkic tribes in Central Asia (the Kimeks, the Karluks, the Toquzghuz people, the Kyrgyz people, and the Kipchaks) without specifying the limits of their settlements. However, two other authors, al-Baladhuri (died 892) and at-Tabari (died 923) in their works tell that the Toquzghuz people raided Ustrushana in 820–821, while the ruler of Khorasan Abdallah ibn Tahir, probably in response, sent his troops against 'the land of Georgia' in 824.

Thus, 80 years after the wars against the Turkic peoples in Central Asia, the Oghuz people inhabited the Lower reaches of the Syr Darya, 3,000 west of the Orkhon and the Selenga. There in the north periphery of the Middle Asian steppes and semi-deserts the Oghuz people, according to S. Tolstov, created their state with its capital in the city of Yangikent on the Syr Darya. In the early 10th century the western frontiers of the state reached the Lower reaches of the Volga, approaching the eastern borders of the Khazar state.

Ibn Fadlan's notes present the most complete information on the lifestyle, religion,

and social structure in the society of the Oghuz people living beyond the Volga and near the Caspian Sea in the 10th century. They describe the Oghuz people as '...nomads who have houses of wool, which they arrange in camps and then travel on. You see their houses in one place to see the same houses in another place, which is consistent with their nomadic way of life and their movement. Now they are in a wretched condition. Moreover, they are like wandering donkeys—they do not profess obedience to Allah, turn to reason, or worship anything, but they call their elders 'lords.'

Ibn Fadlan claimed that the Oghuz social structure resembled a military democracy ('They settle their disputes by holding a council. However, as soon as they agree on something and decide on it, the most worthless and pathetic of them comes and cancels what they have agreed upon'), with features characteristic of the early feudalistic supreme power ('They call the king of the Turkic Ghuz people yabgu, which is the title of the ruler. Everybody who is the king of the tribe goes by this title. They call his assistant kyuzerkin. Similarly, everyone who assumes the duty of one of their heads is called kyuzerkin'). The fact that the regime was not fully feudalistic can be evidenced by the reaction of an Oghuz man ('looking shabby, scraggy, of a pathetic nature') who stopped the caravan of the Arab embassy to the Arabs' declaring themselves to be 'the kyuzerkin's friends,' as described by Ibn Fadlan. In response, the Oghuz shouted some obscene words at the kyuzerkin and would not let the Baghdad caravan pass until Ibn Fadlan gave him a bribe.

Some of the facts in the book suggest hostility between the Oghuz people and their western neighbours. Ibn Fadlan's contemporary Arab geographer and historian al-Masudi (died 956) provided a clearer account of this aspect. Firstly, his work claims the Oghuz to have roamed across the Northern Caspian Sea Region, between the mouths of two large rivers flowing into the Caspian (Khazar) Sea. Masudi refers to them as the *Black Irtysh* and the *White Irtysh*, which apparently mean the Yaik and the Emba. Then, towards

the winter the Oghuz gathered on the Volga (the *Khazar River*) and crossed it on the ice to attack the Khazars: '...After the year 300 from Hegira about 500 vessels, each carrying about 100 men (Ruses), happened to enter the estuary of the Naitas (the Black Sea) connected to the Khazar River. The Khazar king had placed there numerous men to check those who come by the sea and those coming by land from where the area of the Khazar Sea enters the Naitas Sea. The reason why he would do so is that Turkic nomads, the Ghuz people, came to the land to spend the winter there, the water connecting the Khazar River with the arm of the Naitis often freezes, and the Ghuz people cross it with their horses... and enter the Khazar land. Sometimes the Khazar king marches against them, when the men appointed are too weak to hold back the Ghuz people, prevent them from crossing the frozen water, and repel them from his state. During the summer season the Turks have no road to cross it' [Garkavi, 1870, p. 131]. It should be mentioned that the text by al-Masudi is not entirely clear. It is understandable that the Volga (the Khazar River) served as the frontier between the Oghuz people and the Khazars, but it is absolutely not clear what the 'Naitis arm,' connected with the Khazar River, near which the Oghuz people would enter the Khazar borders, refers to. Since no contribution has been made by source-study experts, we can only assume that al-Masudi might have meant the region of the contemporary Volgograd, where the Don ('the Naitis arm?') and the Volga approach each other closely, and where Oghuz burial sites of the 10th century have been found.

Ibn Fadlan does not mention the limits of the territory occupied by the Oghuz people. A work by his contemporary al-Istarkhi presents more detailed information regarding 'the frontiers of the Ghuz land' west of Transoxiana, 'between the Khazars and the Kimeks, the Karluk land and that of the Bolgars and the borders of the Muslim countries from Gorgan to Farab and Isbijab.' [Karaev, p. 36]. If we look at a contemporary map, it is a large territory from the upper reaches of the Syr Darya in the east to the North Cas-

pian Sea Region and the Lower Volga in the west. Ibn Hawqal (1070s) describes the borders of the Oghuz territory as similar to this [Pantusov, 1909, p. 152].

Moving farther north of the Oghuz camps, the Baghdad embassy after several days reached the banks of Lake Shalkar (Uralsk Region in Kazakhstan), around which the Pechenegs roamed.

It was apparently the shortness of their sojourn (the embassy only stayed with the Pechenegs for a day) that prevented Ibn Fadlan from studying the everyday life and custom of the ethnic group, limiting his description to a brief portrait ('They are dark brunettes with their beards shaven completely...') and a very laconic summary of the property of the Pecheneg group they encountered ('they are poor unlike the Ghuz people').

Therefore, the Pechenegs are another Turkic nomadic ethnic group living in the Volga-Ural steppes in the early 10th century. Similar reports by other medieval authors contemporary with the Arab traveler, namely Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenetos and Arab writer, historian, and geographer al-Masudi, support the information provided by Ibn Fadlan. The information is complete with the data of archaeological studies that revealed burial mounds with features similar to that of the Pecheneg kurgans known to be numerous in the steppes of Ukraine and the Northern Black Sea Region in the north of the Volga-Ural Steppes: burials under small earth mounds, simple rectangular tombs, westward or south-westward body orientation prevailing, though eastward orientation can be found occasionally, horse skull and leg bones arranged anatomically on the bottom of the tomb next to the body (mostly on its left), belt details or complete sets of belt plates found frequently among the burial accessories, occasional molded flat-bottomed clay vessels at the head.

The area of the monuments in question includes Volgograd (Rakhinka, Verkhy Balykley, Novo-Nikolskoye, Kalinovskiy), Saratov (Rovnoye, Kurayevsky Sad, Novouzensk, Chernaya Padina), Uralsk (Kara Su, Kara Oba, Chelkar, Rubezhka), Orenburg

(Khakan Grave, Alabaster Mountain, Pchel-nik, Kolychevsk II, Mertvetsovo, Yaman, Tamar-Utkul), and Samara Regions. The northern borders of Pecheneg camps in the region behind the Volga and in Cis-Cis Ural (Trans-Volga Pecheneg State matched the southern margin of the Volga-Ural wooded steppe, the western steppe reaching the Samara Bend (medieval geographic maps use the term 'the Pecheneg Mountains' to refer to the Zhiguli Mountains).

In the 8th century the Oghuz people and the Pechenegs lived in the east of the Eurasian steppes separated by the domain of the Turkic khagan. However, the Oghuz people appeared on the banks of the Syr Darya, a short distance from the Pecheneg camps, as early as the first quarter of the 9th century. The proximity eventually led to a series of wars between the Pechenegs and the Oghuz people, the Karluks and the Kimeks over the land 'around the Gorgan Sea' (The Aral Sea) described by al-Masudi. Though written sources do not present a detailed description of the wars, they resulted in the Pechenegs being forced to leave the Syr Darya Basin and the Aral Sea Region, first to the steppes of the Volga-Ural region and then farther to the west. Ibn Rustah, who wrote not later than 912, mentions 'the Pecheneg land' lying within a 10 days' trip from 'the Khazar land,' between the Pechenegs and the 'Bulgar Esegels, near the first of the Majar lands.' A brief description of the road from the Pechenegs to the Khazars, which is known not to lie east of the Volga, as well as the southern border of the 'Majar land' mentioned to lead to the Sea of Rum (the Black Sea) suggest that in this case it is the East European Pechenegs who are meant ('...there is no well-trodden path or major roads between the lands, people have to cross woods and marshes to reach the Khazar lands from that of the Pechenegs').

The information provided by Ibn Rustah is supplemented by that contained in the Russian chronicles describing the Pecheneg campaign against Bulgar King Simeon to the Danube, which took place under an agreement with the Byzantine Empire in 915 ('In the year 6423 the Pechenegs came to the

Russian land and made a peace with Igor and went to the Danube. At that time, Simeon came to conquer Thrace. The Greek sent embassies to the Pechenegs. When the Pechenegs come to fight against Simeon, Greek commanders began to fight against each other. Seeing them fight against each other, the Pechenegs went away...' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, 1962, p. 31].

Therefore, in the first quarter of the 10th century medieval authors recorded that the Pechenegs lived both east and west of the Volga and even provided a partial explanation of the dissociation of the Pecheneg tribal union. The book by Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogennetos (dead 959) 'De Administrando Imperio,' providing the most complete reference on the history of the European Pechenegs of the first half of the 10th century, is of great interest in this respect. In particular, it describes the significant role which the Pechenegs played in East European politics of the 10th century, manifested, for instance, in the necessity of maintaining an alliance with the Pechenegs to prevent the Ruses, the Bolgars, and the 'Turks' from attacking the Byzantine Empire (here the 'Turks' mean the ancient Magyar-Hungarians, who inhabited Pannonia in the basin of the Danube and the Tisa in the late 9th century).

Constantine Porphyrogenitus provides quite accurate coordinates of the Pecheneg dispersal in the steppes of East Europe: from the Lower reaches of the Danube ('... the Pechenegs are close to the Bolgars') and the northern borders of the 'Turks' (Magyars), inhabiting the basins of the rivers Timisis, Tutis, Morisis, Kris, and Titsa (Temeş, Begu, Mureş, Körös, and Tissa, respectively, in East Hungary), to the Khazar Sarkel Fortress, along the banks of the rivers

Varukh (Dnieper), Kuvu (Bug), Trull (Dnieper), Vrut (Prut), and Seret [Constantine Porphyrogennetos, 1934, pp. 18–20]. The Pechenegs lived on the territory in eight 'districts,' four of which lay along the right bank of the Dnieper (Giazikhopon, Gila, Kharovoi, and Yavdiyertim), the rest being arranged along the Levoberezhye (Kvartsipur, Sirukalpei, Vorotalmat, and Vulatsospon).

The Byzantine Emperor specifies the territory initially inhabited by the Pechenegs—on the Volga and the Ural rivers (the rivers Atil and Geykh)—and mentions the reason why they moved to the west: 'It should be mentioned that the Pechenegs initially lived on the Atil River and on the Geykh River, the Khazars and the so-called Uz people being their neighbours. Fifty years ago the Uz people entered into an agreement with the Khazars and entered a war against the Pechenegs, which they won. They forced them to leave their own country which was occupied by the so called Uz people. Having fled, the Pechenegs began to roam in different countries to find a good place to settle. Having come to the land they now occupy and found it to be inhabited by the Torks they defeated them in a war, forced them out, settled in the land, and have now owned it for 55 years now [Constantine Porphyrogenetos, 1934, p. 15].

The book provides a curious evidence of the authenticity of the ethnonym 'Pecheneg-Kangar,' which seems to each oriental written sources: '...In the meanwhile, the Pechenegs, previously called the Kangar (for they applied the term to nobility and valour), having waged war at the Khazars and suffered a defeat, had to leave their land and inhabit that of the Turks. The Turkic army was crushed in the war between the Turks and the Pechenegs who then called themselves the Kangar people...' (according to Constantine Porphyrogenetos, 'then' means the late 9th century). Just above, the author emphasised the fact that '... the Pechenegs go by the name of Kangar, though not all of them but only the people of three districts—that is, Yadviirt, Kvartsitsur, and Khavuksigil, being the braves and the most noble of them, for this is what the name Kangar means.' We can assume that such 'bravest and most noble' tribes included those living in the central part of European Pechenegia—that is, along the banks of the Dnieper (Yavdiertim District is adjacent to territories controlled by the Rus).

Constantine Porphyrogenetos also mentions the Pecheneg group which remained in the east, behind the Itil, adjacent to the Oghuz

land and subordinated to the Oghuz people: '...It should be known that at the time when the Pechenegs were forced out of their land, some of them stayed there of their own accord. They settled together with the so-called Uz people and remained. They possessed the following features that distinguished them and showed who they were and how they became separated from their tribe: their overclothes were shortened to knee-length, the arms cut from the forearm to indicate their having been cut off from their kinsmen and tribesmen' [Constantine Porphyrogenetos, 1934, p. 16].

Al-Masudi also mentions the Pecheneg-Oghuz wars as a possible reason of the former moving west of the Volga: '...Those astronomers who made astronomic charts and other ancient wise men believed the sea of Burgar, Rus, Bajna, Bajnak, and Bajgurd, the three Turkic clans, are the same as the Neitas Sea (the Black Sea)', 'They conquered many of the five 'bunuds' (meaning Byzantine provinces). After 932 they put their tents here and blocked the road from al-Qustantiniyya to Rumiya...'. In the book 'Funul al-Ma'arif wa Majra fi ad-Duhur as-Sawalif' ('Kinds of Knowledge and What Happened in the Past'), we mentioned that the reason why the four Turkic tribes appeared from the east was war and continuous clashes between them and the Oghuz, Karluk, and Kimek people around the Sea of Gorgan' [Garkavi, 1870, p. 127].

Hudud al-'Alam' ('Boundaries of the World'), written in 982–983 based on earlier works by al-Balkhi, al-Istakhri, Ibn Khordadbeh, al-Jaikhani, and Ibn Hawqal, presents data about two Pecheneg groups ('Turkic' and 'Khazar') (V. Bartold, I. Krachkovsky). Judging by the coordinates of Pecheneg dispersal as specified in the work mentioned above, the 'Khazar Pechenegs' appear to be the tribes of Trans-Volga Pechenegia, while the 'Turkic Pechenegs' must be the Pecheneg tribes in the East European steppes described by Constantine Porphyrogenetos.

The fact that the Pechenegs were found in the steppes of the Trans-Volga Region and Southern Cis-Cis Ural, which is record-

ed in 10th century medieval works, has long ceased to cause any doubt among experts. The first Russian historians (V. Tatishchev, N. Karamzin), relying on the work by the Byzantine emperor, viewed the territory in question as the Pechenegs' ancient country of origin. Though more recent experts, who had a wider spectrum of written sources to rely on, do not support the idea, the steppes of the Volga-Ural interfluve as part of the Pecheneg ecumene are ubiquitous in contemporary works. One of the first experts to present a clear statement in this regard was Turkish historian A. Kurat, who used the data presented by Constantine Porphyrogenetos, Gardezi, and 'Hudud al-'Alam' to outline the borders of Pecheneg camping grounds of the late 9th–early 10th century as follows: '... from the city of Sarai on the Idil to the Samara River, including the middle course of the Yaik and the valleys of such rivers as the Sakmar and the Ilek. They would arrange their summer camps in the foothills of the Ural Mountains in years of draught' [Kurat, 1937, p. 36]. Major Russian experts in medieval nomadic antiquities S. Pletnyova and G. Feodorov-Davydov present a similar map of the Pecheneg dispersal in their works [Pletnyova, 1958, p. 162, Feodorov-Davydov, 1966, p. 134].

American historian P. Golden relies on information provided by medieval authors to suggest the following route of and reasons for the Oghuz and Pecheneg migration from the east of the Eurasian steppes to East Europe: following long wars between the Oghuz people and the Uighurs in the 920–940s, the Oghuz people and their allies Karluks were forced out to Zhetysu, where they had to face the Pechenegs (the Kangar-Kengheres people) and forced the latter out, first to the Aral Sea Region and then farther to the Trans-Volga Region and Cis-Cis Ural [Golden, 1967, pp. 59–61]. However, the Lower reaches of the Syr Darya, remote as they were and cut off from the borders of wealthy Asian states by sands, were unlikely to appear to the Pechenegs and the Oghuz people as 'the promised land' for which they would fight to the bitter end. Most probably, the Pechenegs

continued their westward migration up to the frontiers of the Khazar state in Volga Region to be soon followed by the Oghuz people.

In order to clear the Trans-Volga steppes of the Pechenegs, the Oghuz people entered into an agreement with the Khazars (the opposite would have been inconceivable since the Khazars did not care much who disturbed their eastern frontiers—the Pechenegs or the Oghuz people), thus placing the Pechenegs 'between a rock and a hard place.' The only way out for the latter was to move on in search of a calmer place. This is what we believe to have been the ethnopolitical background of the formation of Trans-Volga Pechenegia—a territory serving both as an intermediate point in the Pecheneg westward migration and as their heartland—along the southern margin of the Volga-Ural wooded steppe. It was there (near the northern borders of Trans-Volga Pecheneg State where the ancient Bashkirs roamed in the early 10th century (according to Ibn Fadlan, on the River Kondurcha)—that is, the third group of Turkic-speaking tribes to be recorded in medieval written sources as inhabiting the Ural-Volga Region, which R. Kuzev views as the vanguard of the Pecheneg migration to the Ural-Volga steppes [Kuzev, 1992, p. 59].

Thus, having forced the Pechenegs out to the northern margin on the Volga-Ural steppe with the help of the Khazars, the Oghuz people obtained a territory that, although relatively poor in terms of environmental potential, was very suitable for cultural and economic interactions between the nomadic and sedentary worlds. Most importantly, the steppes in the Lower Volga Region had direct access to the major urban civilisations of East Europe and Middle Asia—only the Volga separated the Oghuz people from Khazar cities with their markets and craft shops. While written sources (al-Masudi) report regular winter raids on Khazar fortresses by the Oghuz people (a very peculiar way to thank the Khazars for their assistance in forcing out the Pechenegs), the related archaeological monuments suggest an Oghuz 'base area' along the right bank of the Lower Volga (the khutors Kuzin, Staritsa, Krivaya

Luka III, Baranovsky, Nikolsky VM, etc.), on which the Oghuz people could rely to raid the Khazars, which the latter most likely had to put up with.

Then from the southern borders of the Oghuz camping grounds, at the foot of the Northern Cliff, an ancient caravan route ran. It had wells along the route enabling travellers to reach the northern borders of Khwarezm and the city of Kath, the principal centre of the Oghuz-Khwarezm trade.

Finally, in the middle-latter half of the 10th century another large centre of trade and craft was formed near the northern borders of the Desht-i-Oghuz—an ancient town on the Samara Bend, referred to as the Townlet of Murom in archaeological literature, the southernmost town of pre-Mongol Volga Bulgaria.

All these factors provided an important prerequisite for a well-balanced nomadic economy: stable trade relations with the sedentary urban population engaged in agriculture or craft and markets in the nearby to sell livestock grown and slaves captured.

The situation of the Pechenegs, who were pressed to the southern border of the Volga-Ural wooded steppe, was much more dramatic: on the north there arose branches of the Bugulma-Belebey Upland, which did not favour nomadic livestock breeding either naturally and climatically (very high relief, no large water sources, a thick, 50–60 cm, snow cover that tends to linger, frequent summer droughts). The fledging Volga Bulgaria, whose borders were still unstable, was unlikely to offer patronage, as was later to happen between Kievan Rus' and the Turkic-Pechenegs ('the Black Klobuks'). It was not impossible, however, for a part of the Pechenegs to find refuge within the territory of Volga Bulgaria. The emergence of moulded flat-bottomed dishware in settlements in the southern regions of Volga Bulgaria (the so called Second Ethnocultural Ceramic Group) appears to be evidence of this. They were typologically associated, according to T. Khlebnikova, with the monuments within the nomadic group of the Saltov-Mayaki Culture, which belonged to various tribes within

the Khazar state: the Bolgars, the Khazars, the Pechenegs, and the Ghuz people.

The majority of the Pechenegs seemed to have left the Trans-Volga Region and moved to the west in the 980s–990s. The data currently available suggests it to have happened shortly before 895—the year when the Pechenegs attacked the ancient Magyar territory Levedia (Lebedia), which most of contemporary Hungarian experts locate, though not very clearly, as lying in the interfluvium of the Don and the Seversky Donets. However, we have reasonable grounds to believe the Seversky Donets not to have been the western border of the legendary area but the eastern border. It is in the interfluvium of the Dnieper and the Seversky Donets where all burial monuments and separate discoveries, few but very representative, are typologically related to ancient Magyar antiquities (Zaplavskaya Kurgans, the Chingul River Burial Site, etc.) [Ivanov, 1999].

Having been forced to leave Levedia, the Magyars crossed the Dnieper to form another ethnocultural area of Etelköz (Atelkuzu). Many experts refer to the list of rivers flowing within the area by Constantine Porphyrogenetos located in the steppes of the interfluvium of the Dnieper and the Dniester, the steppe corner between the Seversky Donets, the Dnieper, and the Azov Sea being occupied by the Pechenegs.

Numerous monuments were found in the region, enabling experts to outline the borders of the 10th century's European Pechenegia quite accurately: it is the Seversky Donets in the east with a chain of Saltov-Mayaki ancient towns stretched along its right bank to form the western defence line of the Khazar state (Verkheye Saltov, Mokhnach, Sukhaya Gomolsha, Bogorodichnoye, Sidorovskoye, Mayaki, Kamensk-Shakhtinskoye). In the north burial mounds lie along the Orel and the Vorskla, the first defence line of Kievan Rus' stretching north of them along the Sula. Further to the west there is a group of Pecheneg burial mounds in the Lower reaches of the Bug, the Dniester, and the Kogilnik, along the banks of which another fortification system of the early Kievan Rus' period lay. The

camping grounds of the European Pechenegs did not reach the Volga in the east either. The Saltov territory was virtually adjacent to that of the Slavic Severian and Vyatichi tribes (the Romny and Borshchyovo Cultures) in the upper reaches of the Seversky Donets and the Don. Thus, vast territories inhabited by tribes alien and hostile to the Pechenegs divided the European and Trans-Volga Pechenegias during the entire 10th century. Thus, taking into account the fact that no Pecheneg monuments have been discovered in the Volga-Donets interfluve, we cannot accept the dispersal of the East Pechenegs (the tribes Vulatsopon and Vorotalmat) as reconstructed by A. Pálóczi-Horváth.

Having moved to the southern borders of Kievan Rus', the Pechenegs very soon became a significant power in the East European politics. First of all, Russian chronicles include 13 records on Pecheneg involvement in political events of Kievan Rus' during a century, from 920 to 1034, mentioning them as allied to the Prince of Kiev only once (944): 'In the year 6452. Igor gathered a large army of Varangians and Ruses, and Polans, and Slovens, and Krivichis, and Tivertsy, and Pechenegs and marched them against the Greeks in sea vessels and on horses...' Moreover, Igor separated from them to demand a ransom from the Byzantine Empire: '...and he ordered the Pechenegs to fight against the land of the Bulgars, and took gold and fabric for his entire army from the Greeks, and went back, and returned to Kiev' (Hypatian Chronicle).

The other chronicle narratives are generally a register of Pecheneg raids on Kiev (968, 988, 993, 1015, 1034), Vasilev, and Belgorod (996, 997) and evidence of the Pechenegs being engaged in the internal fighting of Kiev princes, which was most intense in the early 11th century (980, 1016, 1019).

The Pecheneg siege of Kiev in 1034, leading to their crushing defeat imposed by the družina of Prince Yaroslav the Wise ('...a deadly battle took place, and Yaroslav did not defeat them before the evening, when the Pechenegs ran scattered without knowing where they were running, and some drowned

in the Sitolma, and others died in other rivers. The rest fled') is the last major clash between Rus and the Pechenegs recorded in a chronicle.

A number of advanced studies on the nature and development of the Russian-Pecheneg and Byzantine-Pecheneg relations has yielded most extensive data [Pletnyova, 1988, pp. 35–46]. Besides the fact that, relying on the data available, the rival states in the West Black Sea Region of the latter half of the 10th century, namely the Pechenegs, had to face not merely a conglomerate of nomadic hordes but a nascent state system: a firmly outlined territory of residence, an internal tribal—essentially administrative—structure (the Pechenegs being divided into 'eight femas' or tribal unions having specified roaming territories), transition to the second stage of nomadism. Unlike S. Pletnyova, who believed that '...the Pechenegs apparently never entered the second stage of nomadism or at least were on the first step, sources describing this as hardly different from the camping stage,' we think the second stage of nomadism to have been the dominant form of life and economy with the European Pechenegs back in the latter half of the 10th century. The signs, which the above scholar believes to indicate the second stage of nomadism, are present in the European Pecheneg culture: limited camping territories with firmly established borders (the division into eight tribes with specified residence territories), burial sites in summer and winter camps (these European Pechenegs sites apparently were—if not burial sites proper—at least areas where burials were localised along the northern shore of the Azov Sea, in the Lower reaches of the Dnieper, the Bug, and the Dniester).

Please not that al-Masudi mentioned the tribe of Bashgird (the Bashkirs) in connection with the territory of European Pechenegia. These records, which have been studied in detail by R. Kuzeev, are clearly indicative of a certain number of ancient Bashkirs within the Pecheneg tribal union (the existence of which has been proven by S. Pletnyova relying on an analysis of the data provided

by Constantine Porphyrogenetos) having migrated westwards in the 10th century, thus sharing the destiny of their allies, the Pechenegs.

During the first decades of their East European history, the Pechenegs in cooperation with Russian *druzhinas* were very active near the northern (near the Danube) borders of Byzantium and Bulgaria, presenting a stable link in the anti-Byzantine coalition created by Prince Svyatoslav. The changes in the political climate in the west of the Eurasian steppes in the early 970s seem to have been caused not only by the actions of Byzantine emissaries but also by intensified internal fighting within European Pechenegia. The fact that a Pecheneg horde attacked Kiev in 966, when Svyatoslav, allied with the West Pechenegs, was at war with Danube Bulgaria, is indicative of an absence of an all-Pecheneg union allied with Rus. Svyatoslav's death inflicted by the Pecheneg Khan Kurya in 972 is a stark evidence of a controversial attitude to the Prince of Kiev among the Pechenegs.

While Russian chronicles provide detailed information on the political history of the European Pechenegs, that of Trans-Volga Pechenegs is very obscure. This fact underlies the assumption that the Pechenegs who remained in the Trans-Volga steppes 'surrendered to the Uz (Oghuz) people and joined their union never again to have independence or be mentioned again in any sources' [Pletnyova, 1988, p. 38]. Nevertheless, this is not quite true according to the description of the Pecheneg land contained in the work Zayn al-akbar ('Embellishment of Reports') by 11th century's Persia historian al-Gardezi. Though the author lived and wrote at the time when the Kipchak-Polovtsians from the east were already exerting pressure on the Oghuz and Pecheneg people, his chapter on the Pechenegs ('Badjinaks') relied on earlier authors—that is, Ibn Khordadbeh, al-Jaikhani, Ibn Rustah, thus being fully representative of the situation when Trans-Volga Pechenegia existed [Krachkovsky, 1957, p. 262]. 'As for the Pechenegs, the road to them leads from Gurganj to the Khwarezm Mountain and far-

ther towards the Pechenegs. When people reach Khwarezm Lake, they leave it on the right and go on. They reach a waterless land and a steppe, through which they have to go for 9 days, they reach a well every day or once in two days, go down on a rope, and get water for their horses. On the tenth day they reach springs offering water and game of birds and antelopes, grass is thin. It takes them 16 days to cross the area, they reach the tents of the Pechenegs on the 17th day. The Pecheneg land spreads over 30-day travel. They have adjacent peoples on all sides. There are the Kipchaks on the east, the Khazars on the southwest, the Slavs on the west... The Pechenegs own herds. They have a lot of horses and sheep, plenty of gold and silver vessels, and a lot of weapons. They wear belts of silver' [Bartold, 1897, pp. 119–120].

The latter description is significant since it contradicts the information provided by other medieval authors, claiming the Pechenegs to be poor and dependent on the Oghuz people (Ibn Fadlan, Constantine Porphyrogenetos). This description resembles a similar report by Abu Dulaf, depicting the Pechenegs ('Badjinaks') as having a warlike nature and being independent. He claimed that the Pechenegs (the coordinates of the Pecheneg dispersal suggest it is the Trans-Volga Pechenegs whom Abu Dulaf meant) 'often wage war against each other and pay no tribute to anyone'. The book by al-Marwazi (Seljouk sultans' court doctor) 'Tabai al-Hayawan' ('The Nature of Animals'), written in the first quarter of the 12th century, also relying on earlier data provided by al-Jaikhani, presents similar information on the territory and lifestyle of the Pecheneg and Oghuz people: 'The Pechenegs are nomadic people moving where there is rainfall and pasturing land. The land of the Pecheneg is 30 days' journey long and just as wide. Numerous people surround them. To the north of them lies the land of the Kipchaks, that of the Khazars is southwest, the Oghuz land is east of them, the Slavs have their land west of them. The peoples attack the Pechenegs, and the Pechenegs attack them. The Pechenegs are rich, they have saddle animals, sheep, belong-

ings, gold, silver, weapons, flags, and special markings' [Khakovskij, p. 209].

The Pecheneg raids north- and eastwards grew more intense during the period from 980 to 1036. S. Tolstov believed them to be caused by the aspiration of the Muslim Khwarezm to weaken the political influence on East Europe of Rus undergoing Christianisation, while V. Kargalov believed the reason to have been their extensive livestock breeding economy failing to satisfy the Pecheneg noblemen's avarice. However, the following circumstances seem to be a more probable cause of the changes to the Pecheneg military and political interests and aspirations. First, the steppes between the Don and the Danube were already occupied by the Pechenegs. As mentioned above, they had transferred to the second stage of nomadism by dividing the territory of the steppe. This in turn led to an escalation of intertribal conflicts by the late 10th century. Second, the decay of Khazaria which never fully overcame the consequences of the crushing defeat imposed by Prince Svyatoslav's *druzhinas* in 965. A fact that could not avoid influencing the situation. Finally, the internecine feud of 980 in Rus with the Pechenegs supporting Prince Yaropolk could be the trigger. The increased threat of the Pechenegs motivated Prince Vladimir Svyatoslavovich urgently to fortify the southern borders of his state using a system of barrows and towns 'along the Desna and Oustria, along the Trubeshcheva and the Sula, and along the Stuhna.' The fortifications must have encouraged the Slavic population to leave the banks of the Don in the late 10th century.

The Pecheneg raids could not but affect the western borders of Khazaria, which continued to exist even after Svyatoslav's campaign. However, Svyatoslav was still occupied with intensifying his military and political activity along the Danube and would not keep a powerful garrison in the Khazar Sarkel Fortress, occupied during the 965 campaign, even though it was the link connecting Rus and the land of Tmutarakan. Thus, it is no wonder that an Oghuz population, represented by a mound type burial site

near Sarkel-Bila Vezha, appeared in Sarkel and its outskirts [Pletnyova, 1990]. Contemporary experts believe the Oghuz people (the Torks) to have allied with Svyatoslav for his Khazar campaign [Tolstov, 1948, p. 252].

The last dated record of an Oghuz presence on the Volga is the narrative on Prince Vladimir's Bulgar campaign of 985 contained in Russian chronicles: 'In the year 6493. Volodimit and Dobrynya started a campaign against the Bolgars. They moved in boats, and the Torks rode along the bank, so they defeated the Bolgars' (Hypathian Chronicle). It should be noted that the content of Russian chronicles does not indicate the Torks to be the Oghuz people. Contemporary experts fully accept the assumption of their predecessors (in particular, V. Bartold) that the Oghuz people '...are probably the Torks as mentioned in Russian sources, Russian chronicles mention the Berendeis along with the Torks—probably a reference to the Oghuz Bayundur clan' [Bartold, V. 5, p. 589]. In this case, a number of facts indicate that they are nomads of the Volga Region, namely the Oghuz people, who are referred to in the extract from the Hypatian Chronicle above. First, the object of the campaign by Vladimir and Dobrynya were the 'Bolgars.' Experts seem to have no doubt that these were the Volga Bolgars, referring to the fact that shortly before (in 984) 'Volodimir marched against the Radimichis,' from where there was a direct and convenient boat route to the Bolgars along the Oka and the Volga. Second, Vladimir's turning to the Torks (the Oghuz people) seems very logical in the context of his international policy since the Pechenegs, roaming near the southern border of Kievan Rus', were a dangerous power. They were hard to cooperate with, while the Tork-Oghuz nomads of the Volga Region, who had no contacts with Rus, could be seen in a more positive light. Not to mention the fact that a precedent of Russian-Tork alliance had taken place by that time.

Experts relying on data in Russian chronicles believe general Oghuz (Tork) migration to the steppes of East Europe to have taken place in the mid-11th century. S. Tolstov viewed it as a symptom of a social and

political crisis in the Oghuz state manifesting itself through the splitting of the Oghuz tribes into two wings—the Turks Oghuz people and the Seljuk Oghuz people (the term Turks was used to denote the Oghuz people in Russian chronicles. The name Seljuk was given to them in Asia Minor), the Turk Oghuz moving from the Volga-Ural steppes to East Europe and the Seljuk Oghuz migrating from the Aral Sea Region to West Asia via Khwarezm nearly simultaneously. The researcher believes this to be a deliberate military and political measure taken by a single tribal union. Such an interpretation of the process seems unnecessarily complicated, first, because the reality of a single Oghuz state (or a single tribal union) within the territory from Balkhash to the Volga does not now appear doubtless and, most probably,

we should be talking about two independent groups (tribal unions?): the Oghuz union proper in the steppes of the Volga-Ural and Caspian Sea Regions and the Oghuz-Turkmen-Seljuk union (its ethnocultural composition and territory still need to be studied in detail) in Middle Asia, east of the Aral Sea. Both unions had clear political and economic points of references by the early 11th century: the Oghuz looked to the west, to Khazaria, while the Turkmen-Seljuks were south-oriented, relied on Khwarezm. Therefore, when a third ethnopolitical power entered the stage of history—nomads from the Irtysh Region and the Altai Mountains belonging to the Kimek-Kipchak tribal union (according to S. Agadzhanov, the Kuns and the Kayi people), the directions in which the Oghuz could retreat were clearly determined.

CHAPTER 8

The Kimeks, the Kipchaks, and the Polovtsians

Sergey Klyashtorny

Ibn Khordadbeh, an Iranian aristocrat who grew up in Baghdad and was admitted to the court of the Abbasid Caliphs, received an important appointment to Jibal Province (North-Western Iran). He became the head of the state information service (intelligence and counter-intelligence) and postal communications. The absence of any official reference books impeded his work dramatically. In 846–847, having collected reports by officials and informants, he wrote a book entitled 'Book of Roads and Kingdoms' ('Kitāb al-Masālik w'al- Mamālik'), which was extended and abbreviated several times and set a standard for such works.

In addition to the names of provinces and cities, settlements and post stations, routes and distances, information on the tax revenue and the economic life, Ibn Khordadbeh presents some information of the Caliphate's neighbours. In particular, he used a 8th century's document to include in 'The Book' a list of Turkic peoples, both those living 'on this side of the river' (Amu Darya) and those living 'on the opposite bank of the river.' The list of those on 'this side of the river, west of the Amu Darya, is limited to the *Karluks of Tocharistan and the Khalaj people*. On the contrary, that of the tribes 'beyond the river' is quite extensive and contains the first record of sixteen Turkic cities in Arab geography. The border of the countries of Islam and Turkic countries is clearly outlined as the area of Farab, currently city of Turkestan: 'Both Muslim and Turkic Karluk troops are situated in the area at the same time' [The materials on the history of the Turkmen and

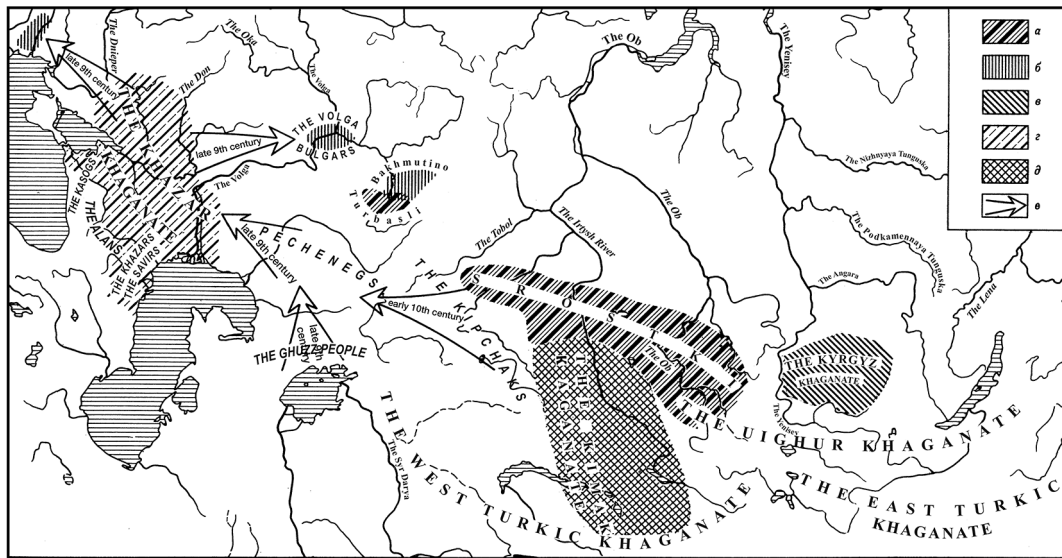
Turkmenia, Vol. 1, p. 144]. In 812 an Arab detachment of Zu-r-riyasatain attacked the Karluks and killed the 'head of the border guard' [Klyashtorny, 1964, p. 159].

Quite naturally, Ibn Khordadbeh only mentions the most significant 'countries of the Torks' like the land of the Toquz Ghuz people (the Uighur Khaganate), adding: 'Their reign is the largest of Turkic countries, sharing borders with China, the Tibet, and the Karluks.' The country of the Toquz Ghuz people on the list is directly followed by 'the Kimek land,' and the term 'the Kyrgyz people who have musk' is used near the end of the list, before little-known Arabs, to denote the *Kipchaks*.

That is the first time the two largest tribal union, probably the most significant ones for the further ethnic history of the Eurasian steppes, were mentioned in Muslim sources⁴.

In the 8–10th century the Kimek and Kipchak dominance, first in the Altai Mountains, the Irtysh Region, and East Kazakhstan and then in the Cis-Cis Ural and in Central Kazakhstan, acquired critical importance in the vast steppe area. The fall of the Kimek state and the westward migration of some of the Kipchaks to the Aral Sea Region and the Vol-

⁴ The message of Ibn al-Athir, an Arabic historian of the 12–13th centuries, about the participation of the Kipchaks on the side of the Khazars during the war between the latter and the Arabs on Armenian territory (722) is not confirmed by Arabic historical works of the 9th century (al-Tabari, Ibn Asama, al-Yakubi, al-Baladhuri) and is an obvious anachronism. However, the appearance of the name of the Kipchaks may be explained by their active participation in Trans-Caucasian affairs in the 12th and 13th centuries during the time when Ibn al-Athir was writing, who in fact had been born and grew up in Mosul, close to Trans-Caucasia.



Steppes in the 8th–early 9th centuries

a, b – the culture of peoples who had not formed state unions, c, d, e – state cultures, f – migration of peoples, g – peoples and states whose archaeological monuments are understudied. Compiled by S. Pletnyova [Eurasian Steppes, 1981, p. 282]

ga Region (latter half of the 10th century–former half of the 11th century) determined the new stage of the Kimek-Kipchak migration. Finally, in the mid-11th–early 12th century, at the last stage of the pre-Mongol Kipchak migration, the five major groups of Kipchak and the Polovtsian (Coman) tribes related to them were formed: 1) the Altai-Siberian group, 2) the Kazakhstan-Uralic group (including the so-called 'Saxon'—that is, Itil-Yaik subgroup), 3) the Don group (including the Ciscaucasian subgroup), 4) the Dnieper group (including the Crimean subgroup), 5) the Danube group (including the Balkan group). Separate Kipchak groups are known to have inhabited Fergana and Eastern Turkestan. For instance, Mahmud al-Kashgari mentions a 'land of the Kyphchaks (Kipchaks)' near the Kashgar [Mahmud al-Kashgari, Vol. 1, p. 474].

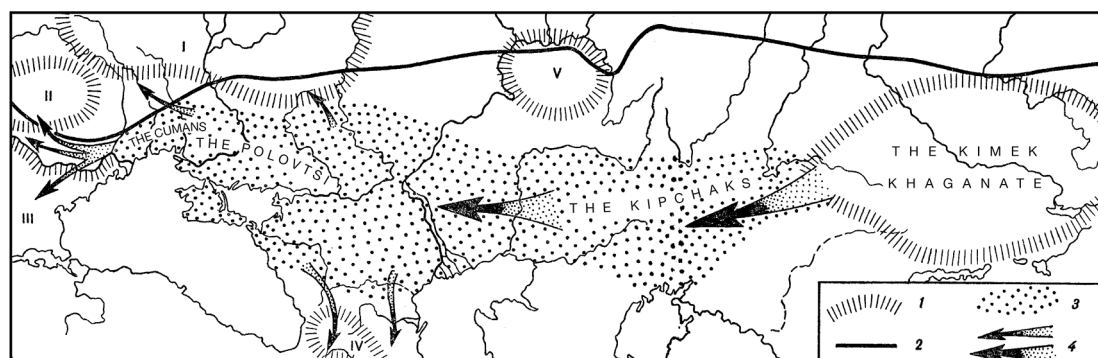
Therefore, the name of the Kipchak tribe appeared in works in different languages more than one thousand two hundred years ago. Muslim historiographers knew the Kipchaks to be a large and powerful tribe that gave its name to the entire Great Steppe. However, no narrative of that time sheds

light on the past of the Kipchaks⁵. Even legends about the *Kipchaks'* origin meant to clarify the ethnonym belong, according to V. Bartold, to 'a more recent folk and scholarly etymology' [Bartold, Vol. 5, p. 550].

The lack of records on the Kipchaks dating back to earlier than the 8–9th century seems unusual. It suggests that such information might be contained in a coded form within known sources. In order to test this idea, we should turn to the earliest record of the *Kipchak* ethnonym.

In 1909, during his trip around Mongolia, Finnish scientist G. Ramstedt discovered a stele bearing a runic inscription in Mogen Shine Su Hollow south of the Selenga River. The discoverer referred to the monument as the 'Shine Usu Inscription' or, in a different place, 'Selenga Stone.' The inscription turned out to be part of the burial structure of Eletmish Bilge Khagan (ruled 747–759), one of the founders of the Uighur Khaganate. Most of the inscription deals with the Uighur wars against the Turkic Khaganate in 742–744.

⁵ The attempt to reconstruct the name of the ethnonym 'tsuyshe' mentioned by Sima Qian (the 2nd century BCE) as 'Kipchak' is not phonetically justified.



Layout of the Steppe Location of the Kimeks, the Kipchaks, the Polovtsians, and the Cumans.

Legend: I – Rus, II – Hungary, III – Bulgaria, IV – Georgia, V – Volga Bulgaria, 1–2 – northern border of the steppes, 3 – nomadic communities, 4 – key directions of the nomadic expansion in the late 10th–early 13th century [Pletnyova, 1990, pp. 34–35].

Ramstedt read the following in a half-decayed line in the northern part: 'When the Turkic-Kybchaks had exerted power (over us) for fifty years...' [Ramstedt, p. 40]. Indeed, the Turks were suzerains to the Toquzghuz people, who were then led by the Uighurs, in 691–742.

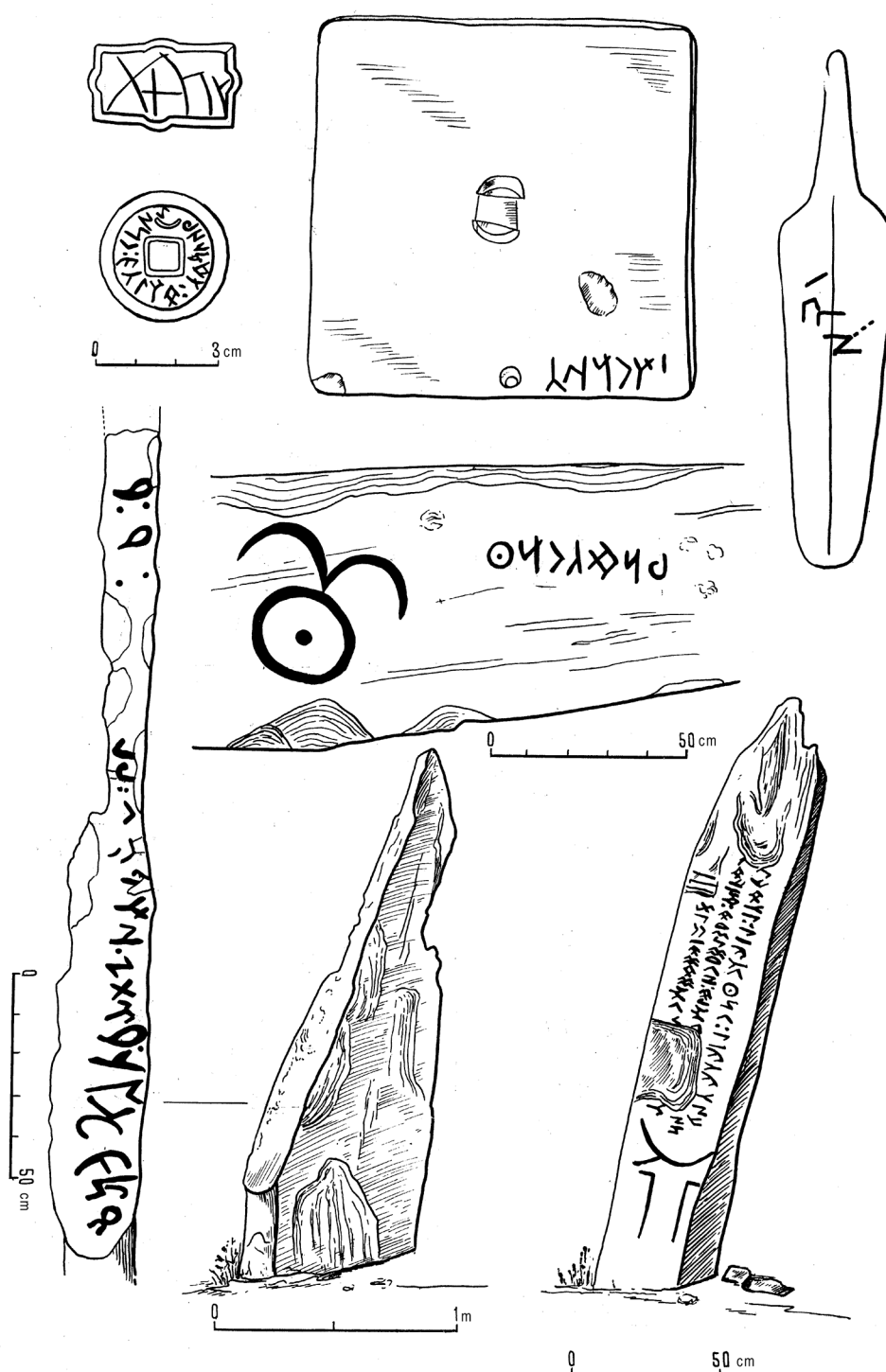
Although grammatically correct, Ramstedt's interpretation of 'Turkic-Kybchaks' as a single word does not appear acceptable. Not a single case of writing two ethnonym as a single word or stating them to be the same through unitary writing has been recorded in inscriptions. Moreover, the semantics (i.e., the meaning) behind each ethnic name is strictly specified and possesses no expanded meaning. We thus prefer to read successive ethnonyms as independent names, as is traditional for runic texts: 'the Turks and the Kybchaks (Kyvchaks).'

The joint reference to the Turks and the Kipchak in a context indicative of their political alliance and military unity (shared power of the Uighurs) is not revealed in information from other sources. We shall turn to those runic inscriptions that mention the Turks along with other tribes in order to find the answer.

Inscriptions in Kultegin's and Bilge Khan's honour (the Khōshōō Tsaidam monuments) only name the large and powerful Toquzghuz tribal union apart from the Turkic Bodun—that is, 'the Turkic tribal union.' They mention the conquering of the Toquzghuz peo-

ple in 687–691 and about wars against them during the periods of 714–715 and 723–724. 'Ten Uighur (tribes)' dominated the Toquzghuz union. The leader of the 'ten Uighurs' and the head of the 'nine Oghuz Eletmish Bilge Khagan referred to the period of the second Turkic Khaganate (691–744) as the fifty years when 'the Turks and the Kybchaks' ruled the Uighurs.

The Inscription of Tonyukuk, chancellor and relative of the first three Turkic Khagans, which describes the same events as the Khōshōō Tsaidam texts, applies another term to the ruling tribal group of the Turkic El. While referring to the time before the khaganate was founded (subordinated to China), Tonyukuk, also the author of the Khōshōō Tsaidam texts, only mentions the 'Turkic tribal union.' However, from the Turkic rebellion and the subsequent founding of the Turkic state in the land of the Otyuken—that is, following the migration to the Khangai Mountains, North and Central Mongolia, the term Turkic Bodun, the 'Turkic tribal union,' is replaced by Turkic Syr Bodun, the 'Turkic and Syr Tribal Union (Unions).' The original territory of the second Turkic Khaganate, the Otyuken Jyš, is referred to as 'the country of the tribal union (unions) of the Turks and the Syrs,' but its ruler is referred to as the 'Turkic Khagan.' The semi-decayed text of the Ikhe Khushotu monument, which is chronologically close to the Khōshōō Tsaidam texts, mentions the Syr chief. It refers to him



Written monuments in the Yenisei script. Steles with epitaphs, 9–10th century's inscriptions on rocks and individual objects Compiled by L. Kyzlasov, I. Kyzlasov.
[Eurasian Steppes, 1981, p. 146]

as Syr irkin—that is, the 'Irkin of the Syrs.' The last line of Tonyukuk's Inscription mentions the 'tribal union of the Turks and the Syrs' and the 'tribal union of the Oghuz people' as two separate unions.

However, the monument in honour of Bilge Khagan refers to the Syr tribes in a manner which is slightly different from that of Tonyukuk's Inscription. The preamble contains the khagan's words addressed to his subjects, not fully preserved: '...Oh you begs who live in yurts and common people...(of the Turks?), six Syr tribes, nine Oghuz tribes, two Ezid tribes!' The author of Bilge Khagan's Inscription, Yollyg Tegin, addressing the people in the

name of his suzerain, called for the 'begs and common people' of the tribes whose attitude to the dynasty determined at least the integrity of the el. The fact that the Syrs precede the Oghuz people is indicative of their priority in the hierarchy of tribes. While Tonyukuk distinguished the Syrs as the Turks' most reliable allies engaged in governing the country and the conquered tribes, Yollyg Tegin emphasised the Syrs' high status in the ethnopolitical structure of the Khaganate, though in a less pronounced manner.

To sum up the data of runic monuments on the tribal unions dominating the Turkic El:

The Uighur (Oghuz) written monuments

I have erected	List of tribal unions	Political status
Tonyukuk Inscription circa 726	Turks and Siry the Oghuz	predominant group of tribes inferior group of tribes
Bilge Khagan monument 735	Turks six Sirs nine Oghuz people two Ediz people	ruling tribe second tribe within the hierarchy inferior tribes inferior tribes
Monument of Eletmish Bilge Khagan from Shine Wusu 760	Turks and Kipchaks the Uighurs	a formerly predominant group of tribes formerly inferior tribes

of Shine Usu refers to the dominant group of tribes, referred to as 'the Turks and the Syrs' in Turkic written monuments, as 'the Turks and the Kybchaks.' It can be inferred that Turkic sources applied the ethnonym Syr and Uighur sources, the ethnonym Kybchak (Kyvchak) to one and the same tribal union, which to some extent shared power with the Turks. That is, both ethnonyms have the same referent, and the difference in their usage to denote a tribe (tribal union) familiar to the authors of the inscription is politically or otherwise motivated.

The finding has to be tested by putting the following questions: Who were the Syrs? When and where did the tribal union live? What circumstances caused the Turks and the Syrs to merge into a single ethnopolitical

group? What happened to the Syr-Kybchaks in Turkic and Uighur states?

Back in 1899 German sinologist F. Hirth suggested that the tribes Se and Yanto, known from Chinese sources, might have formed a confederation of *Seyanto*. They are often mentioned in descriptions of the events of the first half of the 7th century along with the Tiele people and the Turks. Hirth believed the Turkic names for the Seyan people to be *Syrs* and *Tardush* (*Syr-Tardush*). In 1932 orientalist I. Klyukin from Vladivostok showed that it was incorrect to associate the ethnonym Yanto (Yamtar in the Orkhon Inscriptions) with the name of a military and administrative union (wing) of the western tribes of the khaganate—Tardush. Then American sinologist P. Bood-

berg, without rejecting the equality Se=Syr, put an end to the 'Syr-Tardush phantom' (as termed by P. Boodberg).

Thus, the following was discovered out: a) the ethnonym presented as Se in the Chinese transcription is the same as Syr in the Turkic written monument, b) the tribe referred to as Seyanto in Chinese sources goes under the name of the Syrs in Tonyukuk's Inscription.

The earliest reports on the tribes Se and Yanto are heavily fragmented. The Yanto are mentioned among the Hunnic tribes that migrated to the territory of the Chinese state known as the Former Yan (337–370)—that is, to the steppe east of the Ordos Desert. Chanyu Eloutou, who managed the migration of 35 thousand families subordinated to him, most probably ruled from 356 to 358. A little later the neighbours of the *Yanto*, the Se (Syr) tribe, exterminated the Yanto ruling clans and subordinated the rest of the tribe. The ruling Syr clan, Ilitu (Ilter) came to rule the new confederation. Chinese historiographers mechanically merged the two ethnonyms denoting the name of the tribal group that existed in the 4–7th centuries. As a result the name of the dominant tribe, the Syrs, was merged with that of the subordinated Yanto tribe. Turkic written monuments do not present the mechanical fusion of the two names, which is consistent with the patterns of ancient Turkic ethnonymics. They only mention the dominant Syr tribe.

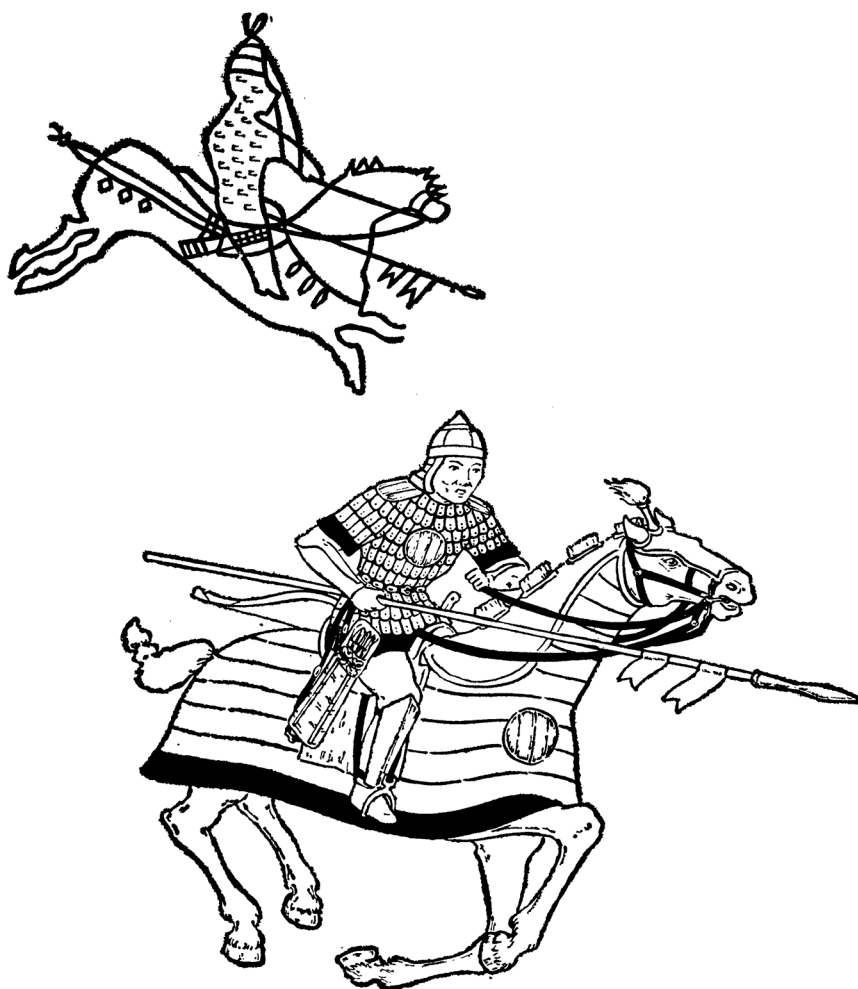
After the Rouran Empire fell in 551, the Seyanto became vassals of the Turkic Khagans. They largely lived in the Khangai Mountains, the rest having moved to the Tannu Mountains (the East Tian Shan). Chinese historical works mention that 'their (*Seyanto* people's) administrative system, weapons, and customs were very similar to those of the Turkic peoples' [Chavannes, p. 35]. In the later 6th century, after the First Turkic Khaganate was dissolved, the *Seyanto* people of the Tian Shan were subordinated to the West Turkic Yabgu Khagans. The Seyanto roamed with some Tiele (Oghuz) tribes, to which the source claims them to belong, between the East Tian Shan and the south-west branches of the Altai Mountains. In about 600 the Tiele

tribe of the Siker pressed the Khangai Seyanto group farther.

For fear that the Tian Shan Seyanto might rebel, West Turkic Churyn Yabgu Khagan 'gathered many of them and had their chief executed' in 605. A rebellion followed at once, and the Tiele tribes partially moved eastwards, taking along the Seyanto with them. A series of failed conflicts with the Western Turks caused most of the Seyanto to leave the Tian Shan. 70 thousand families headed by their chief Inanchu Irkin roamed back to their ancient land south of the Tola River to be subordinated to the Eastern Turkic Khagans. In 619 Illig Khagan appointed his younger brother to manage the Seyanto, awarding him the second highest title after that of the khagan, 'shad.'

After the khagan's appointed governor collected 'lawless taxes' from his subjects, they 'got out of his control.' A powerful group of Tiele tribes headed by the Seyanto and the Uighurs inflicted such a crushing defeat on Illig Khagan that he fled to his southern domain, to the Yinshan, leaving the Khangai Mountains to the rebellious tribes (628). The Turkic tribes in the Khangai Mountains merged with the Seyanto. It was the beginning of the 'tribal union of the Turks and the Syrs.'

In 630 Illig Khagan was captured after a series of lost battles with the army of Tang. The First Turkic Khaganate ceased to exist as an independent entity. The Seyanto and the Uighurs competed to get the power in the Khangai Mountains. Both sent separate embassies to the court of Emperor Taizong as early as in 629. It was the Seyanto, headed by Inanchu Irkin, who called himself Yenchu Bilge Khagan, who won the support of the Tang court. It was then that the union of ten Tiele tribes, formed in Mongolia in the early 7th century, split. The Seyanto, who headed the tribes, withdrew from the alliance, and the Uighurs came to dominate it. Thus, the formation of the Toquzghuz tribal confederation was complete. After 630 the Toquz Oghuzes appeared to be vassals rather than allies to the Syr khagan and most probably initially accepted the role. Nevertheless, they did not send any embassies of their own to the court of Tang in the 630–640s. No records on clashes between them and the



Reconstruction of a heavily armed Turkic warrior of the 9–10th centuries [Khudyakov, 1980, p. 135].

Seyanto are available. A new state emerged in North Mongolia—the Syr Khaganate ruled by the Ilter Dynasty. The Altai and the Khingan River, the Gobi and the Kherlen River formed its borders. The Seyanto khagan conquered the land of the Yenisei Kyrgyz people in the north and appointed a local governor, *elteber*, for 'superior control.'

Yenchu Bilge Khagan accepted the same administrative structure as that of the Turkic Khaganate for his state. The two territorial tribal unions were brought back to life in the form of the Tardush 'western wing' and the Tölös 'eastern wing.' Yenchu appointed his sons, *shads*, who were later to be granted the

titles of 'minor Khagans,' to rule the Tardush and Tölös people. Yenchu arranged his camp on the northern bank of the Tola River. A new tribal union of the Syrs and the Torks the Syr dynasty dominant, formed in the centre of the Otyuken Jyš.

Taizong found the emergence of a strong nomadic state near its norther frontiers extremely disturbing. To restore the small vassal Turkic state to protect the northern border turned out to be the only solution acceptable to him. The Turkic tribes, which were forced to move south of the Huang He River in 630, were called back to the mountainous area of the Yinshan (the Chugai Kuzy for the Turks)

and the steppes north of the Ordos Desert (the Karakum Desert), to the southern territories of Illig Khagan and his southern camp (Heishachen, 'the City of Black Sands' in Chinese sources). A close relative of Illig Khagan, Ashina Symo, claimed the title of khagan to head the Turks. The new khagan was loyal to Taizong and enjoyed his utter trust but lacked credibility with his kinsmen.

Being worried about the new rival and uncertain about what would come of the alliance with the Khangai Torks Yenchu Bilge Khagan took countermeasures. In December 651 a Syr and Toquzghuz army commanded by Yenchu's son Tardush Shad crossed the Gobi Desert. Ashina Symo hid behind the Great Wall, and the Syrs found themselves engaged in a war against the empire, which they lost. Negotiations on 'peace and kinship' began and they lasted for over three years.

After Yenchu's death, his younger son Bachjo (Bars Chor) killed his brother to seize the power. In 646 Oghuz tribes suffering oppression by Bachjo appealed to Taizong for help. Their ambassadors complained about Bachjo's being 'cruel and lawless, unfit to be our lord.' The empire entered into a military alliance with the Toquzghuz people against the Syr khagan. In June 646 the Toghuz Oghuz army commanded by the Uighur chief, 'Great Elteber' Tumidu, attacked the Syrs to inflict a crushing defeat on them. Bachjo took to flight but was caught by the Uighurs. 'The Hoihu (the Uighurs) killed him and exterminated his entire clan.' The Chinese army and two Uighur cavalry tumens in cooperation with it crowned the Syr defeat in the Khangai Mountains. The Syr state ceased to exist. Many clans were exterminated, many were driven away to China.

The dissolution of the powerful tribal union was very sudden and complete, and the remnants of Syrs attributed it to an evil interference of legendary supernatural forces. The legend seemed to present a plausible explanation of what happened and was widely known across the steppe. Chinese historiographers at least recorded a number of very similar variants of the legend. We shall study the shortest of them.

'Before the Seyanto people were exterminated, somebody asked their tribe for food.

They took the guest to their yurt. The wife looked at the guest to see he had a wolf's head (the wolf was believed to be the Uighur's ancestor.—S. K.). The husband did not notice it. When the guest had finished his meal, the wife recounted to the tribe. They pursued him together until they reached Mount Yujdugyun (The Otyuken Jyš.—S. K.). They saw two men there. They said: 'We are spirits (gods). The Seyanto will be exterminated.' The pursuers were scared and ran away. This is why they lost them. Now they (the Seyanto people) are crushed at the foot of that mountain, indeed.'

The Syr tribes who survived the battle fled to the Western Region, to the land they had abandoned twenty years before. In 647–648 Ashina Sher, Turkic prince serving the Tang Dynasty, fought with them and conquered Kuchi for Taizong. The rest of the Syrs remained in their camping grounds in the Khangai Mountains. In 668 their attempt at winning back independence was suppressed at the order of Emperor Gaozong. However, in 679–681 the Syrs supported the Turkic rebellion in North China. They joined the Turks to fight against the Tang army in the 'Black Sands' and suffered heavy casualties.

The further history of the Syr people is that of the 'tribal union of the Turks and the Syrs' dominated by the Turks. The Syrs were true to the alliance. They joined the Turks in their rebellion against the abusive tribes of Chinese rulers and became formidable enemies of the Tang Empire. They joined the army of Elterish Khagan and Tonyukuk to take revenge on the Uighurs for their kinsmen who fell in the battle of 646. Together with the Turks they won back the Otyuken Jyš, 'the land of the Turks and the Syrs,' and shared the fate of the Turks. However, the further history of their tribal names differed. The ethnonym *Turkic* was not only preserved but also brought back to life as a political term free of ethnic implications. No known source after 735 mentions the ethnonym *Syr*. However, a runic text and the first Arabic list of Turkic tribes of the latter half of the 8th century contain the ethnonym *Kyrbchak* (*Kyvchak*)–*Kipchak*.

The situational coherence in the usage of the ethnonyms *Syr* and *Kyvchak-Kyrbchak* in

Turkic and Uighur runic documents, written close in time to each other and mutually contradictory, suggests that both ethnonyms, the ancient and the new, coexisted for a certain period and were understandable to readers of the texts. Therefore, the choice of the name by the authors of historic documents, from two mutually hostile tribal groups, could be either random or motivated. However, there is no correlation with the chronological features of the written documents or the difference between the ethnic terminology of the Turks and that of the Uighurs. The terminology is the same in all cases that could be checked.

The emergence of the new ethnic term connected to significant and widely known circumstances was obviously a response to an event that changed the life of Syr tribes dramatically. Such an event, which was chronologically closest to the epoch of runic written monuments, was the slaughter of the Syr by the Uighurs and the Chinese, the downfall of their state, and the extermination of their ruling clan. The semantics—the meaning behind the new tribal name—naturally reflected the events.

The common meaning of the word *Kyvchak-Kybuchak* in the language of ancient Turkic written monuments is beyond any reasonable doubt: it means 'failed,' 'infelicitous,' 'ill-fated' in the phraseology of two elements *kyvchak kovy/kybuchak koby*—'empty,' 'worthless' (by the meaning of the second component) [*Drevnetyurkskij slovar*, pp. 449, 451, 462, Clauson, pp. 582, 583, Arat, p. 252].

The semantics behind the ethnonym is very clear and does not require any sophisticated analysis. Is the formation of the name connected with the altered ethnic self-identification of the tribe resulting in a new self-denomination? Or did a name from outside, from the vocabulary of a different tribal group, gradually replace the old ethnonym?

It seems to be attributable to one of the most ubiquitous features of religious magical thinking: the idea that there is a firm connection between the object (creature) and its name. In particular, Turkic and Mongolian peoples have preserved a group of protective names, which more widely used in the past.

Children or adults, usually after the death of the preceding child or family (clan member) as well as after a serious illness or a danger of death, receive a new talisman name with a pejorative meaning or a new protective name to deceive the supernatural forces haunting the person (family, clan) and inflicting misery on them.

The same applied to the whole Syr tribe after the infighting and slaughter of 646–647, when what remained of the once rich and powerful Syr clans could barely survive. A Syr legend attributed the misfortunes to evil deities (spirits) willing to exterminate the tribe. Therefore, the only reliable way out was to protect the rest of the Syrs from the revenge of the blood-thirsty spirits, which the legend presents as the ancestors of the hostile Uighur tribe. Their salvation was to change the name of the tribe. They accepted a protective name with a pejorative meaning ('ill-fated,' 'worthless'), which must have emerged to ritually substitute the ethnonym.

There was no immediate political evaluation of the old ethnonym, which co-existed for a certain length of time, and the new protective name which took on certain ethnonymic functions. The evaluation clearly depended on the changing situation and the balance of power between different tribal unions. In the revived Turkic Khaganate the original name of the Syr prevailed over the epithet. The ancient ethnonym was connected to the right to own their native land ('the land of the Turks and the Syrs') and that of shared power. As long as the Syrs, the most noble of all Tiele (Oghuz) tribes, shared power with the Torks at least symbolically, the legitimacy of their superiority to the Oghuz people was beyond doubt.

For the Uighurs, the Syrs' old enemy, the replacement of the ancient name of the tribe with the pejorative protective name could not have come at a better time. Uighur runic written monuments describe the victory over the Turks as the triumph of historical justice and genealogical legitimacy. However, the princes of the Yaglakar clan had no advantage over the Syr ruling clan, Ilter. The title of the khagan, appropriated by the Uighur chief, ap-



Reconstruction of a heavily armed Turkic warrior of the 11–12th centuries [Khudyakov, 1980, p. 136].

peared dubious, to say the least, in the general legal context of the rest of Oghuz tribes. It is no wonder that a powerful Oghuz rebellion broke out at the earliest stage of the existence of the Uighur El. The Oghuz people refused to recognise the Yaglakar Khagans. To bury the Syr name in oblivion by emphasising the pejorative epithet was politically beneficial and expedient. Eltemish Bilge Khagan's document

mentions that the tribe shared power with the Turks as the Kybchaks.

A long time passed. The reasons why the name Kybchak appeared, together with its semantics barely acceptable in terms of ethnic self-designation, were also forgotten. A new legend emerged to explain the ethnonym. It was preserved in the Oghuz epos that underwent multiple redactions. Oghuz Kha-

gan called himself 'Uighur Khagan,' and his guardian spirit was the 'gray wolf,' the mythic ancestor of the Uighurs. He was to grant his begs such names which according to the legend were to become eponyms for Oghuz tribes. One of the begs was called Kyvchak, a name which is associated with a tree. Another variant of the legend narrated by Rashid al-Din and recited by Abu al-Ghazi suggests that the name Kyvchak is associated with a hollow tree called kabuk (Ancient Turkic kovuk). Abu al-Ghazi notes: 'The Ancient Turkic word for a hollow tree is kipchak.' Thus the prior meaning of Kyvchak-Kybchak was to narrow and eventually become defined as 'an empty, hollow tree.'

After defeat by the Uighurs in 744, the Turks and their allies were forced to leave the 'Country of Otyuken.' The Sayan Mountains and the Altai Mountains formed the northern and western border of the Uighur El. Beyond these borders, in the Northern Altai Mountains and in the Upper Irtysh Region, archaeologists have found evidence of more sophisticated variants of ancient Turkic burial sites with horses. These emerged in the latter half of the 8th century and first half of the 9th century and are present in a large number of monuments. Later, in the 9–10th century this type of burial type was top developed in the so-called Strostki Culture established by the Kimeks and the Kipchaks (for details see [Akhinzhanov, pp. 66–71]).

This was the end of Syr history. The history of the Kipchaks first started with one of the Kimek Khaganate tribes, which then turned into a leading tribal union composed of many nomadic tribes of the Great Steppe.

While Kipchaks were starting a new tribal union in Altai, in Priartyshye, the eastern part of the Kazakhstan steppes, Turkic tribes united into a community, which the Muslim sources called Kimaks, whereas the Turkic philologist of the 11th century Mahmud al-Kashgari called it Yemeks. There is little information on Kimeks, which mainly comes from several Arabic and Persia sources studied by well-known Kazakhstan historian-orientalist Ibn Kumeikov. He was the first to reconstruct the genesis, population, and

short historical life of the tribal union and the state of Kimeks on the basis of sometimes quite vague pieces of information [Kumeikov, 1972].

The only genealogical legend of Kimek origins, or rather the origins of their tribal union, was preserved by Gardizi (11th century), who used sources from the 8–9th centuries—that is, of the same period as the copy of Turkic tribes by Ibn Khordadbekh. The legend ties the origin of the Kimek union to the tribe of Tatars, which initiated the search for Kimek ancestors among the Mongol-speaking tribes of Central Asia. However, being well familiar with Turkic languages, Mahmud al-Kashgari classifies not only the Kimek (Yemek) language to the Mongol languages but the Tatar language as well, although he admits they had their own dialect.

This needs some explanation. The perception of the Ancient Tatars just as a single Mongol-speaking nation, living in the 8–13th centuries in the eastern part of Mongolia, is not quite accurate. The Orkhon Inscriptions first mention Otuz Tatars, meaning 'thirty Tatar (tribes),' and then Toquz-Tatars, as in 'nine Tatar (tribes)'—that is, huge and unstable tribal communities. Rashid al-Din completely denies the existence of any Tatar unions both in past and present (i.e., in the 13th century), writes about the rivalry and constant wars of Tatar tribes among each other, mentions that before the Mongol conquests there were six separate Tatar states, and, in fact, many Turkic tribes also called themselves 'Tatar' (see below).

Therefore, the first stage of the formation of the Kimek community does not have to be connected to Mongol-speaking tribes, and the emergence of Tatars in Priartyshye in the 8–9th centuries did not actually prove their migration from Eastern Mongolia. The genealogical legend of Kimeks and the additions to that, included by Gardizi from other sources, feature only those Turkic tribes that became a part of the Kimek tribal union. This process was not completed until the middle of the 9th century, when the fall of the Uighur Khaganate drove the remains of the Toquz-Oguz tribes to the lands of the Kimeks on the

River Irtysh. The most crucial factor for the formation of the Kimek union was the joining of the Kipchaks, which probably did not happen until the end of the 8th–beginning of the 9th century.

After 840 the head of the Kimek tribal union took on the title of Khagan (Khakan), as written in the Muslim sources, and by that he started not only a new state but also—along with the Karluks and Yenisei Kyrgyz—declared his pretension to become the supreme authority of the Steppe.

The sources mention 'eleven rulers' of the Kimek country regions. These rulers, otherwise called as 'tsars' (khans), were approved by the khagan and ruled their appanages inherently, which was quite similar to the political government system and structure of the Kara Khanid Khaganate. The internal instability of such state formations, caused by separatism of hereditary rulers and tribal particularism, ultimately predetermined their defeat in showdowns with stronger enemies a few generations after its creation and their successful raids and conquests in the beginning.

While Ptiyrtshye was the original territory of the Kimeks, they soon expanded their lands to the Dzungaria borders, taking over North-Eastern Zhetysu, and in addition the Kipchaks took over the Aral region. Based on information from a book by Djanakh ibn Khakan al-Kimaki—that is, 'Djanakh, son of the Kimek Khakan' (a book that was not preserved), al-Idrisi, an Arab geographer of the 12th century, touched upon the political importance of the Kimek state by writing the following: 'The Tsar of the Kimeks is one of the greatest tsars and one of the most honourable... Turkic tsars fear the khakan's power, fear his revenge, are wary of his force and his raids as they have already learnt this the hard way and have suffered from his actions' [Kumekov, 1972, p. 120]. Despite the obvious apologetics of this rant, he clearly implies the abundance of wars and raids in the history of the Kimeks.

In the west and south-west the Kimeks shared borders with the Syr Darya and Aral Oghuz, in the south, with the Karluks, and the state of Yenisei Kyrgyz in the east. Evidently,

their relationship with the Oghuz was the most peaceful. In any case, when they were not at war with each other, the Kimeks and Oghuz had a mutual agreement to share their pastures for grazing cattle. Their rivalry with the Karluks and Kyrgyz, whose rulers were also called Khagans and also laid claim to the 'Uighur heritage,' was much more bitter. Al-Idrisi writes that the Kyrgyz 'should be particularly wary of the Kimek tsar's proactiveness as he is a belligerent monarch, who is nearly always at war with his neighbours' [Ibid.]. However, other than wars, the sources point out the close cultural relations between the Kimeks and the Kyrgyz. According to 'Hudud al-Alam,' one of the Kyrgyz tribes wore clothes similar to the Kimeks, whereas many Kimeks followed Kyrgyz traditions. One extremely interesting story by al-Idrisi was the one about sixteen Kimek cities, with one of which was the residency of the tsar. The residential settlements were also mentioned by the Arab traveller Tamim ibn Bakhr, who visited the country of the Kimeks in the early 9th century. The anonymous author of 'Hudud al-Alam' mentions croplands and villages as well as the tsar's residency. Nevertheless, all the sources agree that the main occupation of the Kimeks was nomadic cattle-breeding.

The crash of the Kimek state at the end of the 10th or the beginning of the 11th century is associated with tribal migration in the Great Steppe. From then on, it was a time of Kipchak domination.

Nasiri Khosrow, famous Persia poet, traveller and Shia Ismaili missionary, born in 1004 in Kibadian, in the south of Tajikistan, nevertheless, had *nisba* (sobriquet according to birthplace) al-Marwazi—that is, 'Mervian.' He moved to Merv in 1045, where he served the Seljuq sultan Chaghri Beg: 'I was a *dabir* (official) and belonged to the number of people who were entrusted with the Sultan's property and lands,' he wrote later on [Bertels, 1960, p. 175].

Back then in Merv, Nasiri Khosrow, who in his forties had already visited Iran, India, and Arabia, learnt about the Turks for the first time. The political environment at the north-eastern border of the Seljuq empire was uneasy and



Image of Polovtsian women in luxurious attire and caftans
[Pletnyova, 1974, pp. 119, 127]

required from Chadhri Beg's entourage constant awareness of the former Oghuz lands, the ancestral homeland of Seljuqids, which Arab geographers of the 10th century called *Mafazat al-Guzz*—that is, 'Steppe of Oghuz.' The poet and official captured the main essence of the changes as Nasiri Khosrow was the first ever to name the lands from Altai to Itil *Desht-i Kipchak*, 'Steppe of the Kipchaks.' Half a century later the Black Sea steppes became the 'Polovtsian field' in Russian chronicles, and in the early 14th century Persia historian Hamdallah Qazvini, who was close to Rashid al-Din, clarified that the vast expanse of the Volga steppes, called *Khazar steppe*, had long become the *Steppe of the Kipchaks*.

What were the events that led to such significant changes in the customary geographical nomenclature?

The first vague information on new ethnic waves, which back then spread out to only the west of the Great Steppe, is briefly given by al-Masudi, the great Arab geographer and historian of the first half of the 10th century. In one of his geographical theses al-Masudi writes about the Pechenegs and their departure to the west, referring to his other work, which is no longer extant: '...we have mentioned... the reasons behind the migration of these four

Turkic tribes from the east and that they were at war with Guzz, Karluks, and Kimeks and raided them nearby the Djurdjani lake (Aral Sea)' [MIKK, vol. 1, p. 166].

His commentary clearly refers to the 9th century, when the Oghuz forced Pechenegs out of the Aral Sea area and created their own state with the city of Yangikent on the Lower Syr Darya as its capital. At that time the Karluks controlled Farab—that is, the lands of the middle Syr Darya. But there was no information on the Kimeks being involved in the Aral Sea area events before as al-Masudi was the first to mention them being by the 'Djurdjani lake.'

A while later another Arab geographer and traveler al-Maksidi, who worked during the latter half of the 10th century, places the Kimeks in his geographical thesis, ordered by Samanids and presented in 985 to their court in Bukhara, in the Aral Sea area and Syr Darya, the same as mentioned by al-Masudi. Based on information from Samanid sources, al-Maksidi called the Syr Darya city of Sawran 'a (Samanid) border fortress against Ghuz and Kimeks' [MIKK, vol. 1, p. 185]. The same information is given by other geographers, contemporaries of al-Maksidi.

V. Bartold accurately rendered al-Maksidi's writings and noticed that al-Maksidi

called the Kipchaks, who belonged to the western part of the Kimek empire, 'Kimeks.' The writings of al-Masudi (9th century) and information relevant up to the end of the 10th century, given by al-Maksidi, are a century apart. Kipchak pastures closely bordered the Aral Sea and Syr Darya lands of the Oghuz, so during the time of peace the Kipchaks used them for grazing cattle. The situation exploded out of nowhere, however, this explosion had been under preparation little by little for a long time.

In the early 12th century the archiater of the Seljuq sultan Malik Shah and his heirs, native Mervian, Sharaf az-Zaman Takhir al-Marvazi wrote a treatise on zoology 'Tabai al-khayavan' ('Nature of Animals') and completed it with some information on ethnography and history. Based on some local Oghuz tales, he included to his chapter about Turks a quite vague folk epic about the half-remembered events from the ancient history of Seljuq, or rather Oghuz tribes: 'There is a group of tribes among them (Turks) called Kun, they ran from the Chinese lands in fear of Kyta-Khan. They were Nestorian Christians. They left their lands as their pastures were too small. One of them was Khwarasm Shah Ikindji ibn Kochkar. The Kuns were followed (or: chased) by a nation called Kai. They were stronger and outnumbered them. They chased them away from those pastures. The Kuns moved to the land of the Shary, while the Shary took the lands of the Turkmen. The Turkmen moved to the eastern lands of Oghuz, and the Oghuz moved to the lands of the Pechenegs near the Armenian (Black) sea' [Marvazi, pp. 29–30].

According to Marvazi, 'Turkmen' are the Turks who arrived in the Islamic countries and embraced Islam. The text by al-Maksidi explains who the Turkmen, living on the eastern borders of the Oghuz lands right before they moved in on the Pechenegs, were: 'Ordu is a small town where the Tsar of Turkmen lives, who always sends gifts to the ruler of Isfidjab' [MIKK, vol. 1, p. 185]. The city of Ordu, located in-between the rivers Talas and Chu, was the capital of the Semyrechye Karluks back in the 10th century. Hence, according to al-Marvazi, 'Turkmen' are the Karluks converted

to Islam by the Samanids in the 9th century and who had previously professed Nestorian Christianity. During a military campaign in the Karluk lands in 893 Samanid Ismail ibn Ahmed destroyed the Nestorian church in Taraz, built a mosque instead, and converted the people of this small western Turkic state to Islam.

Thus, the last stage of migration, which was briefly mentioned by al-Marvazi, is not as challenging: he just recites the events selectively and incompletely. Let us review the sequence of events: according to al-Marvazi, the Kytai—that is, the Khitans—forced a tribe of Kuns out of their lands. Due to a lack of pastures and attacks from the Kai tribe, the Kuns invaded the lands of the Shary, who moved to the lands of the Turkmen, who in turn took over the eastern lands of the Oghuz. The Oghuz retreated to the west to the Black Sea, the lands of the Pechenegs.

The western lands of the Turkmen-Karluks up to the River Talas and the foothills of Karatau bordered the eastern lands of the Syr Darya Oghuz, and the borders were not peaceful. By the 9th century there had already been occasional religious wars there. In the early 1040s the Turkmen-Seljuqids and Turkmen-Karluks completely destroyed the Syr Darya Oghuz state, who then moved to the Volga steppes. In 985 Volga Oghuz in cahoots with Prince Vladimir raided the Kama Bolgars. In 1050 they emerged on the riverbanks of the Don and Dnieper, where they battled with the Pechenegs and the Rus. Russian chroniclers named them 'Torks'—that is, Torks whereas Byzantines called them 'Uz'—Oghuz. That was the conclusion of the events in the west of the Eurasian steppes, as described in the work of Marvasi.

What exactly happened in the Asian part of the Great Steppe?

Regardless of whether there were wars between the tribes listed by al-Marvazi or not, or whether they were moving incrementally, the western migration of the eastern Turkic tribes was due to the negative political situation in the 10th—first half of the 11th century, caused by the formation of the Khitan empire Liao in North China and Mongolia, the Tangut em-

pire of Xi Xia in Gansu, and the Kara-Khanid Khaganate in Zhetysu and Eastern Turkestan. In 1036 the Tanguts conquered the state of the Uighurs in Guangzhou and permanently closed the Gansu Corridor for the eastern Torks who were under pressure of the Khitan. The Islamised Kara-Khanid Karluks, former Nestorian Christians, became an obstacle for the 'unfaithful' Turks on their way to the oases of Zhetysu and Mawarannahr. There was only one relatively free route to the west, which ran through the Upper Ob and Irtysh, Northern Dzungaria and North-Eastern Zhetysu along the northern borders of the Kara-Khanid empire.

In 1027 in search for allies against the Kara-Khanids the Khitans sent their embassy to Gazna to Sultan Mahmud. Two years later al-Biruni, who at the time lived in the court of Mahmud, mentions in one of his writings two unknown eastern-Turkic tribes, the Kuns and Kai. Before that, in circa 960, religious activists Karluk Ghazi were embroiled in a gruesome, ongoing war with pagan Torks a war of which the Muslim authors were practically unaware. The traces of these events, captured in Kara-Khanid heroic songs, were preserved in the notes of Mahmud al-Kashgari, but, unfortunately, only fragmentarily. However, it lists the main enemies of the Torks Muslims, which included Yabaku, Basmyls, Chomuls, Kai, and Yemek. Similar to al-Marvazi, Mahmud al-Kashgari referred to Muslimised Karluks, founders of the Kara-Khanid empire, as 'Turkmen,' same as the Oghuz-Seljuqs, Islamised in the 10th–early 11th centuries.

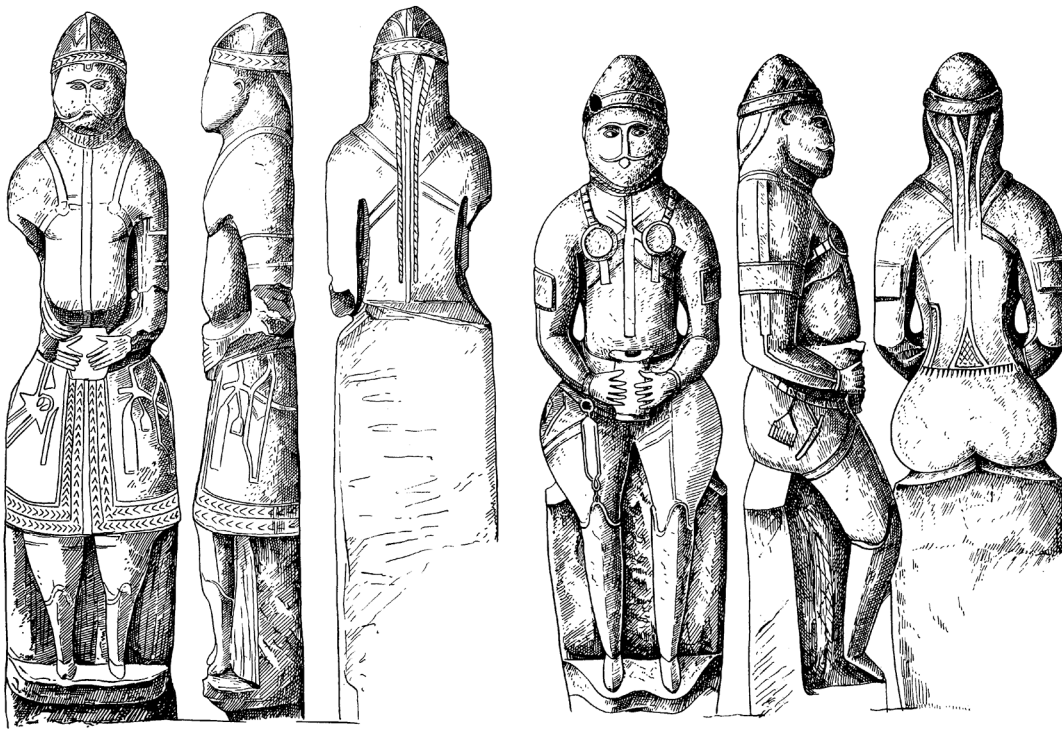
The main character of those epic fragments, written down by Mahmud, was Ghazi Arslan-tegin, sometimes referred to as bekech, 'prince.' Afterwards he quite possibly became one of the first Kara-Khanid Khagans, although there is no reliable confirmation. Sometimes the leading role in the poems was taken by Khakan himself, but Mahmud omitted his name. However, it was unnecessary as Mahmud used these extracts from heroic tales just as poetic examples, illustrating the use of words.

The enemies of the Kara-Khanids, tribes of pagan Torks are recited a few times. They

were Uighurs, idol worshipers, living over the Ila (Ili) River in the country of Mynglak. There were also Ograks, a border tribe, that occupied the area of Kara Yigach. Another was the Irtysh region's Yemek. However, the most dreadful enemy of the Kara-Khanids was a union of three tribes: the Basmyls, Chomuls, and Yabaku along with the neighbours of Yabaku, the Kai. These three tribes are known from Chinese and Ancient Turkic sources. Back in the 7–8th centuries their lands spread from the eastern part of Zhetysu through Tarbagatai, Northern Dzungaria, and Altai to the Ob. Aspired to impose their regime and ideology, the new Muslim empire cut these tribes from the wealthy cities and settlements of Zhetysu and Eastern Turkestan and took control over a number of nomad camping grounds. The showdowns turned into wars, wars became a part of the daily routine and lasted decades. Now and then the Muslim chronicles would mention news about pagans' breakthrough or their conversion to Islam. Only the songs about Ghazi heroes, written in the grammatical work of the honourable philologist from Kashgar, reflected the tension and intransigence that predetermined the power and depth of the following breakthrough the Muslim barrier, the scale and precipitance of the migrations to the new lands and new borders.

The epic extracts often showed Yabaku, Chomuls (remnants of the ancient Hunnic-Turkic tribes of Zhetysu, 'Chumi' in Chinese sources), and Basmyls, or as the Uighur runic inscription from Mogon Shine Usu calls them 'forty-tribe Basmyls,' as initiators of war. It was the Basmyls who, after the fall of the Turkic Khaganate in 742, became the successors of the imperial tradition as the Idiquts—that is, august monarchs, of the Basmyls—were princes of the Ashina dynasty. However, the Uighurs and Karluks took power and title from Basmyls.

The most troublesome towards Muslims was Beg of the Basmyls and the headman of the Yaboku Budrach, who also went by the name Beke—that is, 'huge snake, dragon.' An extract is preserved from a tale about the decisive battle between Muslims and the 'Great



Images of Polovtsian warriors [Pletnyova, 1974, pp. 128, 136]

Snake' Budrach. He attacked the Muslim country with an army of 70 thousand (!), but Ghazi Arslan-tegin and 40 thousand Muslims destroyed his army and captured him. Here is a fragment of Ghazi's speech on the eve of the battle:

*Let us ride our horses hard at dawn,
we will seek Budrach's blood,
let us burn Beg of the Basmyls down.
Let the Yigits gather now⁶.*

Whether the supremacy of the Yabaku was a result of the previous military actions, mentioned by Mahmud Kashgari, or whether they were binded with some other relations, remains a mystery. It is appropriate to recall a folklore tale by the Armenian historian of the 11th century Matthew of Edessa about an attack of the 'people of snakes' on the 'yellow people.' In research literature 'yellow' or 'ginger' people of Matthew refer to Shary—that is,

'yellow' people described by al-Marvazi and his compiler Ibn al-Aufi. However, the fact that only Yabaks had a headman named 'Great Snake' and the term 'people of snakes' clearly correlates to the Yabaku was overlooked. Al-Marvazi calls the people that conquered Shary on one of the stages of western migration Kuns. This name, set by al-Biruni in pair with the name Kai, is strangely omitted by Mahmud Kashgari, who was perfectly familiar with the ethnic situation at the Kara-Khanid border and had not forgotten the Kai. While in case of Shary, Mahmud calls them by the name of the leading tribe Basmyls, the omission of the name of the Kuns can only mean that they went by some other name. Within the context of the described events this other name was Yabaku, which is somewhat derogative, as that was how they called people or animals with long messy hair or tangled fur [Mahmud Kashgari, vol. 2, p. 166].

The Kuns were one of the most ancient Turkic speaking tribes that had an honourable place in the Tiele confederation. In 840, after

⁶ [Mahmud as-Kashgari, vol. 2, p. 330], poetic translation by [Stebleva, p. 47].

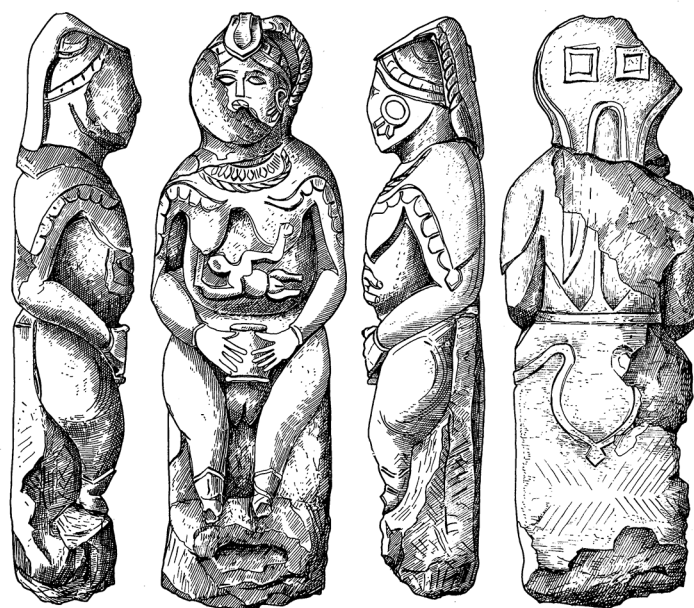


Polovtsian tents. The Radziwill Chronicle miniatures [Artamonov, 1962, p. 455]

the rout of the Uighur Khaganate, they fled to the east of Mongolia and soon fell under the influence of the Khitans. When and under what circumstances they were forced out of Mongolia by the Khitans is unclear, but even al-Biruni mentions Kuns and Kai to be near the Yenisei Kyrgyz. Kai is assumed to be identified with Mongol-speaking Xi from the tribal union Shiwei, although I believe this hypothesis needs serious clarification. Apart from Xi, related to the Qitan from the Shiwei tribes, the Chinese sources repeatedly mention 'white Xi,' which, as far back as the 7th century, were part of the Turkic speaking tribal union of Tiele. It is no coincidence that

Mahmud al-Kashgari describes the Kai as one of the Turkic speaking tribes, only with their own dialect.

The ethnonym Shary that emerged clearly needs explanation. There is a possible connection to the Basmyls' migration to the territory of 'yellow' Turgesh in the middle of the 9th century. But there are other hypotheses. Tutszyue-Turks were initially divided into groups marked with colours. Thus, after the fall of the Turkic Khaganate in 630, the Chinese distinguish the tribes as those conquered and those resettled to the south, the Ashina Turks-Kök and Torks 'blue' Torks and Sheli Turks-Shary Torks 'yellow' Turks.



Sculpture of a Polovtsian woman with a baby
[Pletnyova, 1974, p. 75]

This classification remained unchanged as in 735 in his report to the Emperor's court a Chinese frontier official wrote about Mochjo Turks (he changed the dynasty name Ashina to the name of Khagan, Mochjo) and the 'yellow-headed' Turks.

The more common classification in Turkic ethnonymics is the division of related tribal groups into 'white' (*ak*) and 'black' (*kara*). These terms have nothing to do with their anthropological differences. They just mark the structural subdivisions within tribal unions. There could be other colour markers, 'blue' and 'yellow,' 'black-headed (Black Hats),' and 'red-headed.' Terms with the word *sary*, *shary*, prevail among the tribes of the Kipchak group—Kazakh, Karakalpak, Kyrgyz, and Altai. The term *kyzyl* ('red') primarily refers to the Turkmen.

Initially, colour onomastic markers always come in pairs. When one of them separates itself from its pair and turns into an established ethnonym, it means a demise of the former tribal community and the formation of a new tribal group, colour terms of which have lost their attributive semantics.

Thus, during the early 11th century a large group of Turkic tribes (Kuns and Kai), which

were a part of the tribal confederation Tiele and forced out of the Mongolian steppes by the Qitan moved forward to Western Siberia, Northern Dzungaria, and North-Eastern Zhetysu. That is where it joined another group of Turkic tribes, the Shary and Basmyls. Having lost the war against the Kara-Khanid Karluks, both groups moved further to the west along the traditional route of Central Asian migration. Their contact with the Kipchaks, whose lands were on the route of migration, was inevitable, but the specifics of this contact are unclear. It is obvious that the new formation had two main groups: Kuns-Comans and Shary-Polovtsians.

Having studied the Arabic sources about the Kipchaks, Ibn Kumeikov discovered that in the 9–10th centuries there was a separate group of Comans (Cumans) that nomadised between the Northern Aral Sea area and Southern Cis Ural and in the early 11th century 'fell under the political influence of the Kipchaks' [Kumeikov, 1993, pp. 66–67]. In the middle of the 11th century Comans formed an advanced guard of the western migration of the steppe tribes, most probably politically stimulated by the Kipchaks but led

by the Cumans-Kuns-Shary. This very group included among Kuns-Comans a tribe of Kytans—that is, Qitan which most definitely has a connection to the earliest and the most eastern stage of this migration.

In 1055, forcing the Oghuz-Torks out, the Shary-Polvtsians settled in the southern border areas of Kievan Rus'. They included the Turkic dynasty clan of Ashina—Khan Osen (Asen) was the father of Sharukan the Elder—as well as the Kai (Kayepichi) and the Yemeks (Yemyakove). The fate of the Kuns-Comans was decided in the west from the Polovtsian nomad camping grounds. In 1187 the Danube Polvtsians originated a dynasty of founders of the Second Bulgarian Empire, the Asens (Ashen).

In the Aral Sea Region part of Desht-i Kipchak the structure of the tribes started changing in the 12th century: numerous tribes of Kangly formed and joined the Kipchak communities but did not blend in with them. The main camp of the Kangly was located on the Lower Syr Darya, while their importance in the steppe was so high that in the early 13th century the Mongol tale about Chinggis Khan 'The Secret History of the Mongols' (1240) referred to the steppe to the west from Irtysh as 'the land of Kanglys and Kypchauts' [The Secret History of the Mongols, p. 151]. However, Mongols started up a new era in the history of the Great Steppe.

The main results of the comparison of the events and ethnonyms from various sources are summed up in the table below:

Muslim sources		Matthew	Chinese sources	Russian and Western sources
al-Biruni Marvazi	Mahmud al-Kashgari			
1	2	3	4	5
Kun	Yabaku	'people of snakes'	Hsiung-nu	Hynn, Kun, Coman
Kai	Kai		white Xi	Kayepich
Shary, Basmyl	Basmyl	'ginger'	Baximi, Tutszyue-Sheli	Polovtsians, Plavci, Falones, Pallidi
Turkmen (Karluks)	Turkmen (Karluks)			
the Ghuz people	the Ghuz people	the Uz people		Uz, Torks
Bajnaks	Bajnaks	Paceniks		Pechenegs
Kytai			Xidan	Kytan

This is presumably a reconstruction of Asians and my perception of it within the

Polvtsian history and its connection to the history of the Sir-Kipchaks.

CHAPTER 9

Tatars in Central Asia

Sergey Klyashtorny

Probably our main and essential source of the history of the Central Asian people during the pre-Mongol and Mongol time is 'Jami al-tawarikh' by Rashid al-Din. Naturally, it mainly focuses on the history of the founders of the Mongol Empire, but it does cover other time periods and tribes, more or less in detail.

Here is information on the Tatars, whose tribes, according to 'The Secret History of the Mongols,' were destroyed by Chinggis: 'Their name was known to the world since olden days. Numerous branches detached from them... Places of their camping grounds, encampments, and yurts were determined according to the dynasties and branches near the Khitai Region borders. Their main inhabitation (yurt) is a place called Buir-Naur... They were feuding and fighting with each other as well, and the war between these tribes lasted years, and they had battles' [Rashid al-Din, vol. 1, p. 101].

Thus, the main yurt of the Tatars was located by the Buir lake in Eastern Mongolia. However, there were mentions of some other yurts and other branches of Tatars that had been feuding with each other since olden times. Next, it tells us about their power over the Mongols during the pre-Chinggis time. And suddenly it gives an insight into the distant past of the Tatars and their surroundings: 'Given their population, would they be unanimous and not at feud, other peoples of China and other, not one thing (at all) could stand against them. Nonetheless, given all the feuds and contention, they had some rulers since the olden times, they were conquer-

ers and lords of the majority of tribes and regions, (standing out) for their greatness, power, and honour (from others). Because of their extraordinary greatness and honourable position, other Turkic clans were known under their name despite all the differences in their ranks and names. They were all referred to as Tatars' [Ibid.].

Further on Rashid al-Din adds that now (in the early 14th century) Turkic tribes go by the name 'Mongols' for the same reasons, 'although back in the days they refused to acknowledge that name' [Rashid al-Din, vol. 1, p. 102]. Finally, here is another remarkable reminiscence from the pre-Chinggis history of Central Asia: 'There are six Tatar tribes that are famous and glorious, and each one has an army and (their own) sovereign' [Rashid al-Din, vol. 1, p. 103].

Rashid al-Din puts forward his ethnological scheme of the pre-Mongol Central Asia, or rather its steppe part, inhabited primarily by Turkic tribes. Structure-forming 'constructions' of the scheme are six Tatar states ('each with an army and their own sovereign'), the predominant one being the Buir yurt. Since 'the olden days' Tatars, regardless of their intertribal feuds, took over all the tribes and regions 'up to the border areas of Khitai.' The tribes that surrendered first were the Turkic tribes. They changed their name to 'Tatars' after the name of the predominant tribe. These events refer to such olden time that Mongols were still nowhere to be seen as they 'became known' only about 'three hundred years ago'—that is, in the 9–10th centuries. However, Rashid al-Din notes that 'back

in the days Mongols were (just) one of the tribes among all of the Turkic steppe tribes' [Ibid.].

As we can see, Rashid al-Din divides the ethnohistorical history of the Central Asian steppe into three chronological periods: a) period of domination of 'Turkic steppe tribes,' with uncertain time parameters, b) period of conquering Turkic tribes by Tatars and transformation of the ethnonym 'Tatars' into a general polytonym, time frames: from 'the olden days' until the beginning of the Tatar-Mongol wars (12th century), c) period of the rise of Mongols and transformation of the ethnonym 'Mongols' into a general imperial polytonym, following the extermination of the Tatars (12–13th centuries).

With that, as noted by Rashid al-Din, the power and strength of the Tatars at the time was so great that even now (in the early 14th century) all the Turkic tribes from China to Desht-i Kipchak and Maghreb are referred to as Tatars [Ibid.].

While the terms 'Turkic era (period)' and 'Mongol era (period)' have long become common in research literature, there is no generalised perception of the 'Tatar period' in the history of the steppes of Central Asia. On the contrary, it completely integrated into the stereotypical 'Mongol-Tatar period' and 'Mongol-Tatar invasion.' In the meantime, the Rashid al-Din scheme clearly separates, counterposes, and sets the 'Tatar' and 'Mongol' periods apart in time.

Obviously, the authenticity of the historical concept suggested by Rashid al-Din needs to be thoroughly examined. Unfortunately, his writings have many things unsaid or implied, and a lot of ethnic terms, placenames, and proper names, which were abundant in the 'Jami' al-tawarikh, are challenging to interpret. All of this gets in the way of a historian to define the spacial and time parameters of events and situations. For instance, it remains a mystery where and when other five Tatar yurts besides the Buir one existed. Therefore, it is beneficial to use other sources that hold earlier findings about the Tatars.

In 1960 S. Weinstein discovered an unknown Kyrgyz stele with a runic inscription

in the area of Kherbis-Baary (Tuva). The inscription was subsequently published twice by A. Shcherbak. The written monument includes an epitaph to a noble warrior named Kulug Yige. The text mentions his main heroic act to be his march on the Tatars: 'At the age of twenty-seven I marched on the Toquz-Tatars in the name of my state.'

In 1976 L. Kyzlasov discovered a stele with a runic inscription (the ninth monument of Uybat) in Khakasiya by the River Uybat, which was published by I. Kyzlasov and later re-read and interpreted by me [Kyzlasov, 1987, pp. 21–22, Klyashtorny, 1987, pp. 35–36]. The first line of the inscription mentions a 'Tatar hostile el' and Tatars paying tribute or contribution.

When and where did the Yenisei Kyrgyz successfully fight wars with Tatars?

The first to mention the Tatars (Otuz-Tatars) was the biggest known runic inscription, the Kyul Tigin monument (732). The first time it refers to their name in connection with the funeral of the first Turkic Khagans—that is, the events of the latter half of the 6th century (Kyul Tigin big inscription, p. 4). The second time the same inscription mentions them by the same name (Otuz-Tatars) as the enemies of Kyul Tigin's father, Ilterish Khagan (died in 691). Back then the Tatars and the Kyrgyz supported the Toquzghuz in the war with Turks (Kyul Tigin big inscription, p. 14). In 723–724 the Tatars (Toquz-Tatars) in league with the Toquzghuz rose up against Bilge Khagan, which appears in another runic stele with an epitaph to the elder brother of Kyul Tigin (Bilge Khagan big inscription, p. 34). The last mention of the Tatars (Toquz-Tatars) in Orkhon runes appears in an inscription from Mogon Shine Wusu, in the epitaph to Eletmish Bilge Khagan (760) [Ramstedt, p. 17]. In the late 740s the Tatars, along with the Oghuz tribes, rebelled against the Uighur Khagan and were defeated. Thus, in the late 7th—the first half of the 8th centuries the Tatars followed the same policy as the Kyrgyz and eventually became their close ally.

It is noteworthy that the Orkhon inscriptions of the 6–7th centuries called the Ta-



Tatar nobleman. 12th century. Reconstruction by M. Gorelik

tar tribal union 'thirty Tatars' (Otuz-Tatars), whereas those from the middle of the 8th century as well the Yenisei inscription from Kherbis-Baary referred to them as 'nine Tatars' (Toquz Tatars). The name might have changed due to the fall of the initial Tatar tribal group, but what is remarkable is that the events mentioned in the Yenisei inscription did not happen until the latter half of the 8th century. However, according to their palaeographic characteristics, both Kyrgyz steles cannot be considered as early Yenisei written monuments dating back to the first half of the 8th century [Klyashtorny, 1976, pp. 258–267].

Now let us turn to the Chinese sources for some other information about the Tatars. First, it needs to be said that Tatars were one of the vassal tribal unions of the Uighur Kha-

ganate (744–840), according to Van Mintzi, a Chinese author of the 12th century, back then 'Tatars were herdsmen to the Uighurs' cows' [Kychanov, 1980, p. 143]. As to the Kyrgyz, the Uighurs repelled them over the Sayan Mountains, but not long before 840 they emerged in the south of the Tannu-Ola mountains. Hence, we can determine the earliest date of the Kyrgyz-Tatar war. Due to the events of 842, Tatars were mentioned as the enemy of the Kyrgyz and the ally of the last Uighur Khagan for the first time in a Chinese source, a letter of the Chinese official Li Deyu [Pelliot, 1929, pp. 125–126].

The main route of retreat for the Uighurs, defeated by the Kyrgyz in Northern Mongolia, was to Gansu and Eastern Turkestan.

That was the direction the Kyrgyz chased them in. Li Deyu, who was in talks with the

Kyrgyz embassy at the border fortress Tian-De in 842, reports that, according to the Head of the embassy, Kyrgyz 'General' Tabu-hetszu, the Kyrgyz returned to the 'old Uighur lands' on the He Lo Chuan River—that is, Upper Etsin Gol—and conquered the peoples of Ahsi (Kuchi), Beitin (Beshbalyk), and *Dada* (Tatars). This was the first and only mention of the military showdown between the Kyrgyz and the Tatars, which happened somewhere in Gansu or Eastern Turkestan and ended with the Tatars acknowledging the Kyrgyz sovereignty, in other words, paying them tribute [Sai Wen-shen, p. 148]. The following year (843) Tabu-hetszu (some other sources call him Chzuu-hesu) led the first Kyrgyz embassy to the Emperor's court [Suprunenko, pp. 67–69].

In 1915 Ibn Vladimirtsov discovered a petroglyphic runic inscription in the valley of the River Tes (North-Western Mongolia) that we re-examined and read in 1975. The inscription included a name that, having perused the text in 1989, I read as *Tupek Alp Sol* [see Klyashtorny, 1987, p. 154]. Following consultation with S. Yakhontov, it transpires that the Chinese version of the Kyrgyz commander's name Tabu-hetszu is a somewhat inaccurate transcription of the Turkic *Tupek Alp Sol*. Judging by the contents of the inscription, which now could be dating back to the middle of the 9th century, it marked the centre of the lands belonging to the Kyrgyz nobleman, commander, and diplomat, which then became his yurt after he banished the Uighurs and conquered the north of Mongolia. That is how meticulously similar the information from the Chinese diplomat's report and from the epitaphs to Kyrgyz marchers of the Southern campaign proved to be. Nevertheless, the Kyrgyz were not destined to keep hold of the lands on the 'Uighur route' to the Tarim Basin, the crucial part of the Great Silk road. Back before 875 the Guangzhou Uighurs reclaimed their authority there.

The land of Tatars in the West, so far from their homeland in Eastern Mongolia, was founded before the fall of the Uighur Khaganate. In any case, the colophon of the Pahlavi Manichaean script 'Makhr-namag,' re-written

in Turpan between 825 and 832, mentions the head of the Tatars (Tatar apa teking) to be among local noblemen. Much later, in the late 10th century, a Chinese ambassador to the Uighur Idikut–Van Yande–learns about another Chinese official who visited Turpan as the embassy to the Uighurs was preceded by the embassy to the Tatars [Malyavkin, p. 90]. Diplomatic efforts were mutual but infrequent. Between 958 and 1084 there were mentions of three embassies to various Chinese courts collectively sent by the leaders of the Guangzhou Uighurs and Gansu Tatars to form a military alliance against the Tanguts [Malyavkin, pp. 63–86]. An important addition to this information is stored in two Chinese manuscripts of 965 and 981 from the library cave in Dunhuang. It clearly says that the centre of the Tatar state was Suzhou—that is, in the border between Gansu and Eastern Turkestan [Hamilton, pp. 89–90]. The same Tatars are described in the Hotanese-Sakan documents of the 9–10th centuries [Bailey, 1949, p. 49]. 'Hudud al-Alam,' an anonymous Persia geography of the 10th century, mentions Tatars as neighbours and allies of the Toquz-Ghuz—that is, Uighurs—and refers to Eastern Turkestan as the 'land of the Toguz-Ghuz and the Tatars' [Hudud al-Alam, p. 47]. Another important mention in the official letters from Dunhuang in the Turkic and Sogdian languages (late 9–10th centuries), interpreted by G. Hamilton and N. Sims-Williams, goes to the 'official (Amga)' who 'came on behalf of the Tatars' [Sims-Williams, Hamilton, p. 81].

Along with the given sources, there are some findings about the Tatar state in Gansu (Eastern Turkestan) in an epistolary source of the 9th century. The letter of the Tangut ruler Shan Hao, sent to the Song court in 1039, includes a declaration of new borders of the Tangut state, which barely corresponded to the facts. Yuan Hao boasts about the voluntary submission of Tupans (Tibetans), Ta-ta (Tatars), Zhangye (Guangzhou Uighurs), and Jiaohe (Turpan Uighurs)—all the neighbouring lands of Xi Xia in Gansu and Eastern Turkestan or those with some piece of land there [Kychanov, 1968, p. 134].

In the pre-Mongol period, at least in the 10–12th centuries, the ethnonym 'Tatars' was well-known not only to the Middle Empire but to Middle Asia and Iran as well. For instance, the Tatars as well as the Karakhanid Turks are often mentioned in the poems of famous Persia poets. The Gaznevid poet Abu-n-Najm Manuchihrī (11th century) writes about a handsome young man of 'Turkic-Tatar appearance', his other contemporaries often used a metaphor 'odour of a thousand Tatar musks,' whereas imam Sadr al-Din Kharramabadi (11–12th centuries) in his qasida to Sultan Iskander mentions some 'Tatar man' [Brown, pp. 166, 169, 202, Vorozhejkina, p. 26].

As for the ethnic affiliation of Tatars, mentioned in the Orkhon inscriptions, P. Pelliot comments: 'It is quite possible that even back then they were a Mongol-speaking people, however, the Tatar titulary and nomenclature of the 12th century had traces of a Turkic influence' [Pelliot, 1949, pp. 232–233]. However, the skepticism of some modern researchers as to whether obtaining an accurate ethnic identity of the large tribal communities of ancient Central Asia was actually possible is quite justified.

Thus, in the 9–12th centuries the territory of Gansu and Eastern Turkestan was taken by a Tatar state, known both to Chinese diplomats and Muslim merchants. Nevertheless, the information about this state seemed to the South Song scholar and official Lee Sing Chuan (1166–1243) so inexplicable that it forced him to comment as follows: 'There were two states in the east and west, and the states were a few thousand li apart. We do not know why they were merged into one and referred to as one' [Kychanov, 1980, p. 143]. This commentary by Lee Sing Chuan has still remained unclear.

Another chance to find the 'Tatar states' was opened up by the text of a Persia author of the 11th century Gardizi, whose work includes a few unique descriptions of ancient Turkic tribes and their genealogical legends. As we have established, all of these descriptions refer to an unknown early source dating back to 745–780 [Tsegledi, 1973, pp. 257–

267]. According to Gardizi, the formation of the tribal union (state) of Kimeks in the Upper Irtysh was driven by internecine wars among the Tatar tribes. The defeated junior member of the Tatar dynasty titled shad (Gardizi gives the title as a proper name) flees with a group of his tribesmen and settles in the Upper Irtysh, where he forms a tribal community, which later, not until the 9th century, would be named Kimek [Bartold, pp. 43–44]. At the early stage of formation of the Kimek community, it was considered by its founders and the outside world to be one of the Tatar tribes. Only a century later the Kimeks started their own state [Kumekov, 1972], but its rulers belonged to the Tatar dynasty.

It is hardly possible to locate other Tatar states, mentioned by Rashid al-Din, just as effectively. But his knowledge of the pre-Mongol era in the history of the Tatars is now obvious, despite the doubts expressed by V. Bartold [Bartold, vol. 5, p. 559]. A competent source of the 11th century refers to the vast region between Northern China and Eastern Turkestan as 'Tatar steppe' for good reason [Makhmud Kashgari, p. 159] as back then Muslim authors named the same southern Russian and Kazakhstan steppes 'Desht-i Kipchak' ('Kipchak steppe'). The title 'Tatar steppe' blends well with other findings on the distribution of Tatars in the 9–10th centuries and explains the reason why a century later Mongols, conquering the same lands, were referred to as 'Tatars' in the Turkic and Muslim community and in China as well. This Turkic name of Mongols caught on not only in Central Asia and the Middle East but in Rus and Western Europe as well, regardless of the fact that the Mongols never called themselves Tatars.

Starting from the Song period, the Chinese political and historiographical tradition decisively used the term 'Tatars' to refer to Mongols. Even when the servicemen of the Song military and diplomatic services had no doubts as to how to call their new neighbours, the texts were edited and the ethnonym 'Mongol' was replaced with either *Da-da*, 'Tatars,' or *Men-da*, 'Mongol-Tatars.' In this case the fact introduced by Lee Sing

Chuan is very illustrative: 'When Mongols (*Men-zeng*) invaded the Jin dynasty, (they) called themselves the Great Mongol Empire (*Da Men-Ggo*). Thus, the border officials called them Mongolia (*Men-Gu*).¹ Later their latter name was changed to *Men-Da* [Munkuev, p. 123]. Such changes were vital for official texts, even when describing the actual contacts. For instance, the report of the Song embassy of 1211–1212, recently published by G. Franke, consistently refers to Mongols as 'Tatars' [Franke, p. 170 ff.]. Another extremely illustrative case is that given by the author of 'Men Da Bei Lu.' In his words, Muqali, Chinggis Khan's governor in Northern China (*Go Van Mo*

Hou), repeatedly called himself 'we, Tatars' [Munkuev, p. 53]. Wang Go Wei comments on this saying that the author just used the name of Mongols accepted among the Chinese. Muqali, who originated from the Jalair tribe, obviously would never call himself a Tatar [Munkuev, p. 135].

In summary, the Kyrgyz-Tatar war of 842, in which the character of the Yenisei runic inscription Kulug Yige took part, was reflected in the new situation in Central Asia in the 9–10th centuries, defined by the relationships between the Kyrgyz, Tatars, and Qitaj former outsiders, who managed to take centre stage.

Appendices



No. 1

Herodotus on the Western Scythians

The ancient Greek historian Herodotus was born between 490 and 480 BCE in Halicarnassus, a city in south-western Asia Minor, and died around 425 BCE. On his many travels he visited Asia Minor, Babylon, Phoenicia, Egypt, Cyrene, various cities of Balkan Greece, and the Black Sea coast up to Olbia, where he collected information about the Scythians.

The work of Herodotus, conventionally called 'The Histories,' described the Greco-Persia Wars (500–449 BCE), the most important political event of ancient Greek history, the narrative covers the period up to the capture of the city of Sestos (in the Hellespont) by the Greeks in 478 BCE. Subsequently, Alexandrian scholars divided the work of Herodotus into 9 books, after the number of Muses, and each book was named after one of the Muses. The main theme of 'The Histories' is the idea of the struggle between the Greek world and the Eastern world. In a purely epic fashion, with many digressions and special excursuses, Herodotus described the beginning of the clashes between the Greeks and the inhabitants of Asia, presented the story of Lydia, Media, and the Persia Empire of the Achaemenids, and wrote about individual campaigns of the Persia kings, such as that of Cyrus I, the founder of the Persia Empire, to Media (550 BCE) and Babylon (539 BCE), that of Cambyses to Egypt (525 BCE), and that of Darius I to Scythia (514 BCE), each time detailing the geographical position of the country that was the target of the Persians' campaign, the manners and customs of the local people, their religion, and the characteristics of economic and political life. Book IV gives the first systematic description of the Scythians and their everyday life in ancient literature.

We quote the source from the following publication: Herodotus. The Histories in Nine Books / Translation by A.D. Godley // Loeb classical library. – Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920–25.

Excerpt from the source:**'...Fourth Book MELPOMENE**

1. After taking Babylon, Darius himself marched against the Scythians. For since Asia was bursting with men, and vast revenues were coming in, Darius desired to punish the Scythians for the wrong they had begun when they invaded Media first and defeated those who opposed them in battle. For the Scythians, as I have said before⁴, ruled upper Asia⁵ for twenty-eight years. They invaded Asia in their pursuit of the Cimmerians and ended the power of the Medes, who were the rulers of Asia before the Scythians came. But

when the Scythians had been away from their homes for twenty-eight years and returned to their country after so long an absence, as much trouble as their Median war awaited them. They found themselves opposed by a great force, for the Scythian women, when their husbands were away for so long, turned to their slaves.

2. Now the Scythians blind all their slaves because of the milk they drink, Taking tubes of bone very much like flutes, they insert these into the genitalia of the mares and blow into them. Some blowing while others milk. According to them, their reason for doing this is that blowing makes the mare's veins swell

⁴ In the 1st book.

⁵ In Western Asia.

and her udder drop. When done milking, they pour the milk into deep wooden buckets and make their slaves stand around the buckets and shake the milk, they draw off what stands on the surface and value this most, what lies at the bottom is less valued. This is why the Scythians blind all prisoners whom they take: for they do not cultivate the soil but are nomads.

3. So it came about that a younger generation grew up, born of these slaves and the women. And when the youths learnt of their parentage, they came out to fight the Scythians returning from Media. First they barred the way to their country by digging a wide trench from the Tauric mountains⁶ to the broadest part of the Maeetan lake⁷, and then, when the Scythians tried to force a passage, they camped opposite them and engaged them in battle. There were many fights, and the Scythians could gain no advantage, at last one of them said: 'Men of Scythia, look at what we are doing! We are fighting our own slaves, they kill us, and we grow fewer, we kill them and shall have fewer slaves. Now, then, my opinion is that we should drop our spears and bows and meet them with horsewhips in our hands. As long as they see us armed, they imagine that they are our equals and the sons of our equals, let them see us with whips and no weapons, and they will perceive that they are our slaves, and taking this to heart they will not face our attack.'

4. The Scythians heard this and acted on it, and their enemies, stunned by what they saw, did not think of fighting but fled. Thus, the Scythians ruled Asia and were driven out again by the Medes and returned to their own country in such a way. Desiring to punish them for what they had done, Darius assembled an army against them.

5. The Scythians say that their nation is the youngest in the world, and that it came into being in this way. A man whose name was Targitaüs appeared in this country, which was then desolate. They say that his parents were Zeus and a daughter of the Borysthenes river

(I do not believe the story, but it is told). Such was Targitaüs' lineage, and he had three sons: Lipoxaïs, Arpoxaïs, and Colaxaïs, youngest of the three. In the time of their rule (the story goes) certain implements—namely, a plough, a yoke, a sword, and a flask, all of gold—fell down from the sky into Scythia. The eldest of them, seeing these, approached them meaning to take them, but the gold began to burn as he neared, and he stopped. Then the second approached, and the gold did as before. When these two had been driven back by the burning gold, the youngest brother approached, and the burning stopped, and he took the gold to his own house. In view of this, the elder brothers agreed to give all the royal power to the youngest.

6. Lipoxaïs, it is said, was the father of the Scythian clan called Auchatae, Arpoxaïs, the second brother, of those called Katiari and Trasprians, the youngest, who was king, of those called Paralatae. All these together bear the name of Skoloti, after their king. 'Scythians' is the name given them by Greeks.

7. This, then, is the Scythians' account of their origin, and they say that neither more nor less than a thousand years in all passed from the time of their first king Targitaüs to the entry of Darius into their country. The kings guard this sacred gold very closely, and every year offer solemn sacrifices of propitiation to it. Whoever falls asleep at this festival in the open air, having the sacred gold with him, is said by the Scythians not to live out the year, for which reason (they say) as much land as he can ride round in one day is given to him. Because of the great size of the country, the lordships that Colaxaïs established for his sons were three, one of which, where they keep the gold, was the greatest. Above and north of the neighbours of their country no one (they say) can see or travel further because of showers of feathers. For earth and sky are full of feathers, and these hinder sight⁸.

8. This is what the Scythians say about themselves and the country north of them. But the story told by the Greeks who live in Pontus is as follows. Heracles, driving the cattle of

⁶ In the Eastern part of present-day Crimea.

⁷ Present-day Azov Sea.

⁸ It seems that Herodotus meant a snowstorm and blizzard.

Geryones, came to this land, which was then desolate, but is now inhabited by the Scythians. Geryones lived west of the Pontus, settled in the island called by the Greeks Erythea, on the shore of Ocean near Gadira, outside the pillars of Heracles. As for Ocean, the Greeks say that it flows around the whole world from where the sun rises, but they cannot prove that this is so. Heracles came from there to the country now called Scythia, where, encountering wintry and frosty weather, he drew his lion's skin over him and fell asleep, and while he slept his mares, which were grazing yoked to the chariot, were spirited away by divine fortune.

9. When Heracles awoke, he searched for them, visiting every part of the country, until at last he came to the land called the Woodland, and there he found in a cave a creature of double form that was half maiden and half serpent, above the buttocks she was a woman, below them a snake. When he saw her, he was astonished and asked her if she had seen his mares straying, she said that she had them and would not return them to him before he had intercourse with her. Heracles did, in hope of this reward. But though he was anxious to take the horses and go, she delayed returning them, so that she might have Heracles with her for as long as possible, at last she gave them back, telling him: 'These mares came, and I kept them safe here for you, and you have paid me for keeping them, for I have three sons by you. Now tell me what I am to do when they are grown up: Shall I keep them here (since I am queen of this country) or shall I send them away to you?' Thus she inquired, and then (it is said) Heracles answered: 'When you see the boys are grown up, do as follows, and you will do rightly: whichever of them you see bending this bow and wearing this belt so, make him an inhabitant of this land, but whoever falls short of these accomplishments that I require, send him away out of the country. Do so and you shall yourself have comfort, and my will shall be done.'

10. So he drew one of his bows (for until then Heracles always carried two) and showed her the belt, and gave her the bow and the belt, which had a golden vessel on the end of its clasp, and, having given them, he departed.

But when the sons born to her were grown men, she gave them names, calling one of them Agathyrus and the next Gelonus and the youngest Scythes, furthermore, remembering the instructions, she did as she was told. Two of her sons, Agathyrus and Gelonus, were cast out by their mother and left the country, unable to fulfill the requirements set, but Scythes, the youngest, fulfilled them and so stayed in the land. From Scythes son of Heracles comes the whole line of the kings of Scythia, and it is because of the vessel that the Scythians carry vessels on their belts to this day. This alone his mother did for Scythes.

11. There is yet another story, to which account I myself especially incline. It is to this effect. The nomadic Scythians inhabiting Asia, When hard pressed in war⁹ by the Massagetae, fled across the Araxes River¹⁰ to the Cimmerian country (for the country which the Scythians now inhabit is said to have belonged to the Cimmerians before)¹¹, and the Cimmerians, at the advance of the Scythians, deliberated as men threatened by a great force should. Opinions were divided, both were strongly held, but that of the princes was the more honourable, for the people believed that their part was to withdraw, and that there was no need to risk their lives for the dust of the earth, but the princes were for fighting to defend their country against the attackers. Neither side could persuade the other, neither the people the princes nor the princes the people, the one party planned to depart without fighting and leave the country to their enemies, but the princes were determined to lie dead in their own country and not to flee with the people, for they considered how happy their situation had been, and what ills were likely to come upon them if they fled from their native land. Having made up their

⁹ Ancient Greek poet and traveller Aristaeas recorded that the Scythians appeared in Western Europe under pressure from the Issedones.

¹⁰ The Syr Darya? The Volga?

¹¹ Herodotus' tidings about the invasion of the Scythians (circa 700 BCE) takes root in Akkadian sources, the Scythians entered from present-day Western Turkestan onto the Southern coast of the Caspian Sea, crossed the Araks River, and invaded the Eastern European steppes.

minds, the princes separated into two equal bands and fought with each other until they were all killed by each other's hands, Then the Cimmerian people buried them by the Tyras River, where their tombs are still to be seen¹² And, having buried them, left the land, and the Scythians came and took possession of the country left empty¹³.

12. And to this day there are Cimmerian walls in Scythia and a Cimmerian ferry, and there is a country Cimmeria and a strait named Cimmerian. Furthermore, it is evident that the Cimmerians in their flight from the Scythians into Asia also made a colony on the peninsula, where the Greek city of Sinope¹⁴ has since been founded, and it is clear that the Scythians pursued them and invaded Media, missing their way, for the Cimmerians always fled along the coast, and the Scythians pursued with the Caucasus on their right until they came into the Median land, turning inland on their way. That is the other story current among Greeks and foreigners alike...

46. Nowhere are men so ignorant as in the lands by the Euxine Pontus¹⁵ (excluding the Scythian nation) into which Darius led his army. For we cannot show that any nation within the region of the Pontus has any cleverness, nor do we know of (overlooking the Scythian nation and Anacharsis) any notable man born there. But the Scythian race has made the cleverest discovery that we know in what is the most important of all human affairs, I do not praise the Scythians in all respects, but in this, the most important: that they have contrived that no one who attacks them can escape, and no one can catch them if they do not want to be found. For when men have no established cities or forts, but are all nomads and mounted archers, not living by tilling the soil but by raising cattle and carrying their dwellings on wagons, how can they not be invincible and unapproachable?..

59. ...It remains now to show the customs

which are established among them. The only gods whom they propitiate are these: Hestia in particular, and secondly Zeus and Earth, whom they believe to be the wife of Zeus, after these, Apollo, and the Heavenly Aphrodite, and Heracles, and Ares. All the Scythians worship these as gods, the Scythians called Royal sacrifice to Poseidon also. In the Scythian tongue, Hestia is called Tabiti, Zeus (in my judgment most correctly so called), Papaeus, Earth is Apia, Apollo, Goetosyrus, the Heavenly Aphrodite, Argimpasa, Poseidon, Thagimasadas. It is their practice to make images and altars and shrines for Ares, but for no other god.

60. In all their sacred rites they follow the same method of sacrifice, this is how it is offered. The victim stands with its forefeet shackled together, the sacrificer stands behind the beast and throws it down by pulling the end of the rope, as the victim falls, he invokes whatever god it is to whom he sacrifices. Then, throwing a noose around the beast's neck, he thrusts in a stick and twists it and so strangles the victim, lighting no fire nor offering the first-fruits, nor pouring any libation, and having strangled and skinned the beast, he sets about cooking it.

61. Now as the Scythian land is quite bare of wood, this is how they contrive to cook the meat. When they have skinned the victims, they strip the meat from the bones and throw it into the cauldrons of the country, if they have them: these are most like Lesbian bowls, except that they are much bigger, they throw the meat into these, then, and cook it by lighting a fire beneath with the bones of the victims. But if they have no cauldron, then they put all the meat into the victims' stomachs, adding water, and make a fire of the bones beneath, which burn nicely, the stomachs easily hold the meat when it is stripped from the bones, thus a steer serves to cook itself, and every other victim does likewise. When the flesh is cooked, the sacrificer takes the first-fruits of the flesh and the entrails and casts them before him. They use all grazing animals for sacrifice, but mainly horses.

62. This is their way of sacrificing to other gods, and these are the beasts offered,

¹² Tiras is present-day Dniester river.

¹³ Modern researchers note that in that epoch there was a gradual mixture of Cimmerii and Scythian ethnic components which originally could have been related.

¹⁴ On the Southern bank of the Black Sea.

¹⁵ On the Black Sea—that is, its bank.

but their sacrifices to Ares are of this sort. Every district in each of the governments has a structure sacred to Ares, namely, a pile of bundles of sticks three eighths of a mile wide and long, but of a lesser height, on the top of which there is a flattened four-sided surface, three of its sides are sheer, but the fourth can be ascended. Every year a hundred and fifty wagon-loads of sticks are heaped upon this, for the storms of winter always make it sink down. On this sacred pile an ancient scimitar of iron is set for each people: their image of Ares. They bring yearly sacrifice of sheep and goats and horses to this scimitar, offering to these symbols even more than they do to the other gods. Of enemies that they take alive, they sacrifice one man in every hundred, not as they sacrifice sheep and goats but differently. They pour wine on the men's heads and cut their throats over a bowl, then they carry the blood up on to the pile of sticks and pour it on the scimitar. They carry the blood up above, but down below by the sacred pile they cut off all the slain men's right arms and hands and throw these into the air, and depart when they have sacrificed the rest of the victims. The arm lies where it has fallen, and the body apart from it.

63. These then are their established rites of sacrifice, but these Scythians make no offerings of swine, nor are they willing for the most part to rear them in their country.

64. As to war, these are their customs. A Scythian drinks the blood of the first man whom he has taken down. He carries the heads of all whom he has slain in the battle to his king, for if he brings a head, he receives a share of the booty taken, but not otherwise. He scalps the head by making a cut around it by the ears, then grasping the scalp and shaking the head off. Then he scrapes out the flesh with the rib of a steer and kneads the skin with his hands, and having made it supple he keeps it for a hand towel, fastening it to the bridle of the horse which he himself rides, and taking pride in it, for he who has most scalps for hand towels is judged the best man. Many Scythians even make garments to wear out of these scalps, sewing them together like coats of skin. Many too take off the skin, nails and

all, from their dead enemies' right hands, and make coverings for their quivers, the human skin was, as it turned out, thick and shining, the brightest and whitest skin of all, one might say. Many flay the skin from the whole body, too, and carry it about on horseback stretched on a wooden frame.

65. The heads themselves, not all of them but those of their bitterest enemies, they treat this way. Each saws off all the part beneath the eyebrows, and cleans the rest. If he is a poor man, then he covers the outside with a piece of raw hide, and so makes use of it, but if he is rich, he covers the head with the raw hide, and gilds the inside of it and uses it for a drinking-cup. Such a cup a man also makes out of the head of his own kinsman with whom he has been feuding, and whom he has defeated in single combat before the king, and if guests whom he honours visit him he will serve them with these heads, and show how the dead were his kinsfolk who fought him and were beaten by him, this they call manly valor.

66. Furthermore, once a year each governor of a province brews a bowl of wine in his own province, which those Scythians who have slain enemies drink, those who have not achieved this do not taste this wine but sit apart dishonoured, and this they consider a very great disgrace. But as many as have slain not one but many enemies have two cups apiece and drink out of both.

67. There are many diviners among the Scythians, who divine by means of many willow wands as I will show. They bring great bundles of wands, which they lay on the ground and unfasten, and utter their divinations as they lay the rods down one by one, and while still speaking, they gather up the rods once more and place them together again, this manner of divination is hereditary among them. The Enarees, who are hermaphrodites, say that Aphrodite gave them the art of divination, which they practise by means of lime-tree bark. They cut this bark into three portions, and prophesy while they braid and unbraid these in their fingers.

68. Whenever the king of the Scythians falls ill, he sends for the three most reputable diviners, who prophesy in the aforesaid way,

and they generally tell him that such and such a man (naming whoever it may be of the people) has sworn falsely by the king's hearth, for when the Scythians will swear their mightiest oath, it is by the king's hearth that they are accustomed to swear. Immediately, the man whom they allege to have sworn falsely is seized and brought in, and when he comes the diviners accuse him, saying that their divination shows him to have sworn falsely by the king's hearth, and that this is the cause of the king's sickness, and the man vehemently denies that he has sworn falsely. When he denies it, the king sends for twice as many diviners: and if they too, consulting their art, prove him guilty of perjury, then he is instantly beheaded, and his goods are divided among the first diviners, but if the later diviners acquit him, then other diviners come, and yet again others. If the greater number of them acquit the man, it is decreed that the first diviners themselves be put to death.

69. A type of execution for soothsayers. A cart yoked with oxen is loaded with brushwood to the top. The soothsayers, with their tied legs and crooked arms behind their back, are pushed into the heap of brushwood. The brushwood is set on fire, and then the oxen get scared and urged on. Sometimes the oxen also die in the fire along with the soothsayers. However, when the beam is scorched through, sometimes the oxen are able to survive with burns. Incidentally, soothsayers are also burnt to death for other offences and called false prophets. The tsar does not even have mercy on the children of the executed: he executes all the sons and does not harm the daughters.

70. All the agreements about friendship, sanctified by oath, are made by the Scythians in the following way. A large earthen cup is filled up with wine, mixed with the blood of the participants in the agreement, gained by pricking the skin with an awl or cutting it slightly with a knife. Then a sword, arrows, a hatchet, and a spear are dipped into the cup. After this rite, long incantations are uttered, and both the participants in the agreement and the most revered guests drink from the cup.

71. The tsars' tombs are located in the Gerrhus (previously, Borysthenes was

navigable)¹⁶. When a Scythian tsar dies, a huge rectangular pit is dug. When the pit is ready, the body is put on a cart, covered with wax. Then the stomach of the deceased is cut, cleaned, and filled up with ground camphire, and the perfumes, and seeds of celery and anise¹⁷. Then, the stomach is stitched up again, and the body is carried on the cart to another tribe. The residents of each region where the tsar's body is brought behave in the same way as the tsar's Scythians. They cut off a piece from their ears, crop their hair in a circle, make a cut around their hands, scratch their foreheads and noses, and pierce their left arms with arrows. Then the deceased is taken away to another region of the tsardom. The body is followed by those to whom it was brought before. After travelling around all the regions, they return again to the Gerrhus, to the tribes who live in the most remote parts of the country, and to the tsars' graves. There the body is lowered on straw mats into the grave, along both of the sides spears are stuck into the ground, planks are placed above, and these are then covered with reed mats. In the rest of the vast area of graves one of the tsar's hetaeras was buried, having been choked to death, and also a cup-bearer, a cook, a groom, a bodyguard, a messenger, horses, firstborns. Golden cups (silver or copper were not used by the Scythians for this purpose) were also placed there. After that all together they raise a giant mound over the grave, trying to make it as high as possible.

72. A year later they carry out the burial ceremonies again: from the remaining servants of the deceased tsar, they choose the most diligent (all of them are Scythian by origin: like everyone whom the tsar orders to serve him, the tsar has no slaves bought for money). So they kill 50 of the servants by strangling them to death (as well as the 50 most beautiful horses), remove the bodies' innards, clean their uterus, fill them up with bran, and sew them up. Then on two wooden pillars they fix one half of a split wheel rim with its curve

¹⁶ Gerra was an area of Western Scythia located where the Gerr River flows into the Boristhenes/Dnieper.

¹⁷ This embalming method is also documented among the Altaians.

downwards and fix the other half on the other two pillars. In such a fashion they beat in a large number of wooden pillars and wheel rims. Then, having pierced the horses with large stakes through the entire body length, up to the neck, they raise them on the rims. The horses' shoulders are on the front rims, and the rear rims bear their bellies and thighs. The front and back legs hang down, not touching the ground. Then they put bridles with riding bits on the horses, tighten the bridles, and tie them to the sticks. All 50 strangled young men are placed on the horses in the following way: each body is pierced along the spine with a straight stake up to the neck. The end of the stake protruding out of the body is set in a hole drilled into the other stake that is piercing the horse's body. Placing these horsemen around the grave, the Scythians leave.

73. This is how the Scythians bury their tsars. When any other Scythians die, the closest relatives put the body on a cart and carry it around the neighbourhood, to the friends. All the friends welcome the deceased and arrange food, which is offered even to the deceased to taste, as to all the guests. Common people are carried around like this for 40 days, before being buried. After funerals the Scythians purify themselves in the following way: first, they anoint and then wash their heads, then clean their bodies in a vapour bath, by doing the following: they set up three poles with the upper tips leaning against each other and cover them with woolen felt, then they tighten the felt as much as possible and throw it onto a tub that is in the middle of the yurt, on red-hot stones.

74. In Scythia there is a plant called hemp, similar to flax but thicker and bigger. In this regard hemp significantly beats flax. It is planted there, but wild hemp can be found as well. The Thracians make even clothes from cannabis, appearing so close to those from flax that a person who is not particularly appreciative of clothing will not be able to differentiate hemp clothing from flax clothing. And one who has never seen hemp fabric will take it to be flax.

75. Taking a hemp (or cannabis, as it is also known) seed, the Scythians creep under

the woolen yurt and then throw it on the red-hot stones. It provokes such powerful smoke and vapour that there is no Hellenic vapour bath that can be compared with it. Enjoying it, the Scythians scream with pleasure. This steaming serves them as a bath as they are not washed with water at all¹⁸. The Scythian women grind pieces of cypress, cedar, and incense on rough stones, adding some water. Then, having obtained a dough from this grinding, they spread it on their bodies and faces. Following this, the body acquires a pleasant smell. The following day, when they wash this dough layer away, it even becomes clean and shines.

81. I cannot identify what the size of the population of Scythia is, as I have received quite different facts about this. Indeed, according to some facts, the Scythians are very numerous, but others say that authentic Scythians number very few. However, the locals showed me the following: between the rivers Borysthenes and Hypanis there is a land called Exampeos. I have mentioned it several times earlier when speaking about a spring of bitter water there, the water flows into the Hypanis and makes the river water undrinkable. In that place there is a copper vessel, probably six times bigger than a vessel for mixing up wine, which Pausanias, Creombrotus's son, ordered to be devoted to the gods and placed at the entrance of Pontus Euxeinus. To those who have not seen this vessel: it easily contains 600 amphorae, and the width of this Scythian vessel is six fingers. According to the words of locals, it is made of arrowheads. The Scythian tsar named Ariantes wanted to know the population of the Scythians. To that end, he ordered all the Scythians to bring one arrowhead, and those who would not were threatened with death. Then the Scythians brought such a great number of arrowheads that the tsar decided to construct a monument from them to himself: he ordered this copper vessel to be made from the arrowheads and exhibited in Exampeos. Here is the data that I obtained about the Scythian population...

¹⁸ Compare with the latest written evidence about the nomadic peoples of Asia.

101. If we imagine Scythia as a rectangle, the two sides of which are stretched out to the sea, the line crossing the inland will be absolutely equal by length and width to the sea line. The journey from the Istros¹⁹ estuary to the Borysthenes takes 10 days, and the journey from the Borysthenes to Lake Maeotis takes 10 days more, and then the journey from the inland sea up to the Melanchenos, who live higher than the Scythians, takes 20 days. A day's march I take to equal 200 stadia. Thus, the transversal sides of the rectangle of Scythia extend to 40,000 stadia, and the lateral sides, which stretch inland, extend the same distance. This is the size of the region...'

Material prepared by Bulat Khamidullin

¹⁹ The Danube.

No. 2

Quintus Curtius Rufus on the Eastern Scythians

In view of all the circumstances recorded in the text of 'The History of Alexander the Great of Macedon,' the researchers assign Curtius' writing to the reign of Roman Emperor Claudius (41–54), specifically, the first years of his reign—that is, the beginning of the 40s of the 1st century CE. The works of writers at the beginning of the 2nd century CE about Alexander the Great, in particular works by Plutarch and Arrian, obscured Curtius' work, which from then on lost its popularity. This explains why none of the ancient authors quote or mention Curtius. He was remembered only in the 15th century. Printing of manuscripts of the 'History...' began in Venice in 1470, and almost simultaneously in Rome in 1472 and Milan in 1475.

The 'History...', written by Curtius Rufus was translated into Russian language for the first time and was published in Moscow on the order of Peter the Great in 1709. In the first half of the 18th century the edition was republished in Russia four times. Still another translation of this work was made in Saint Petersburg in 1750–1751. By 1812 Curtius Rufus' work had been republished in Russian another six times. The Soviet edition of the work was produced in 1963 by Moscow University staff under the editorship of V. Sokolov. We have used the last edition in preparing this material.

Excerpt from the source:

'... From there, on the fourth day, they reached the town of Maracand²⁰. The length of its walls is 70 stadia, the fortress is surrounded by a second wall. Having left a garrison in the town, Alexander devastated and burnt down the villages nearby. Then the ambassadors of the Scythian-Ambians, who had remained free since Cyrus²¹ death, arrived and wanted to surrender to Alexander. They were considered the most just barbarian tribe. They took up arms only when they were attacked. By experience in moderate and equitable freedom, they made the common people and chiefs equal amongst themselves. The tsar talked to them graciously and sent to the European Scythians one of his friends, Penda, to order them not to cross the border of their land, the river Tanais²², without

his permission. He was also ordered to make himself acquainted with the country and to visit the Scythians living on the shores of the Bosphorus²³. The tsar chose the place on the Tanais bank to found a town which would be a fortress to govern both the conquered land and the lands where he had not been yet... The town was built up so rapidly that on the 17th day of the construction of the fortifications the town houses were already built...

The Scythian tsar, whose country was on the other bank of the Tanais, considered the town founded by the Macedonians on the river to be a yoke around his neck. That is why he sent his brother Carthasis, with a large detachment of horsemen, to destroy the city and to force the Macedonian army far away from the river. The Tanais separates the Bactrians from the Scythians described as 'European.'²⁴ Moreover, it is a border between Asia and Europe. The Scythian tribe, situated not far from Thrace²⁵,

²⁰ Present-day Samarkand.

²¹ Cyrus the Great (?–530 BCE), the first king (from 558) of the Achaemenid Empire, died during the campaign against Central Asia.

²² Quintus Curtius Rufus equates the Tanais (present-day Don) with the Jaxartes (present-day Amu Darya), considering this river to be the natural border between Asia and Europe, this brought about constant confusion in his text, as he calls the Central Asian Scythians 'Europeans.'

²³ On the banks of the Aral Sea? (see previous note).

²⁴ That means that the Amu Darya separates inhabitants of Bactria from the Central Asian Scythians.

²⁵ The Black Sea (Western, European Scythians) lived near Thrace.

spreads to the east and the north, but it does not border on the Sarmatians, as is widely thought, but is instead a part of them. They occupy one more region, the one behind the Istros to the left, and, at the same time, they border on Bactria and the edges of Asia. They inhabit the land to the north, and beyond there are thick forests and spacious uninhabited lands²⁶, the lands along the Tanais and Bactria have traces of a similar culture. The first time Alexander started a war without preparation was against this tribe: the enemy's horsemen were riding around in front of his eyes, and he had not yet recovered from the wound, especially as his voice was weak from not eating and pain in the back of his head. Thus, he ordered his friends to be called for a council. He was not frightened by the enemy but by the unfavourable atmosphere. The Bactrians retreated, but the Scythians started to worry him. He himself could not stand on his feet, ride a horse, command, nor inspire his warriors. Facing a double threat, grumbling even against the gods, he complained that he was lying in bed and whilst before nobody could escape from his agility, now his warriors could hardly believe that he was not pretending.

Having stopped consulting with magicians and soothsayers after defeating Darius, he again indulged in superstitions, airy fictions of the human mind, he ordered Aristander, whom he trusted, to make sacrifices in order to know the outcome of a case... Whilst trying to learn the future from the organs of animals, Alexander asked his friends to sit closer in order to prevent his scarcely healed wound from being reopened by exerting his voice. Together with guards, Hephaestion, Craterus, and Erigyius were allowed to enter his tent. Alexander said: 'I met with danger in conditions more favourable for my enemies than for me. But misfortune outruns the advice of the mind, especially during the war, for which one can rarely choose its time. The Bactrians, having attacked us till we were on our knees, retreated, and with help from other forces they experienced our fortitude. It is absolutely clear that if we leave the impudent Scythians unpunished, we will return with shame to those who had retreated from us. If we

cross the Tanais and arrange a bloody massacre against the Scythians, we will demonstrate that we are invincible everywhere, who will be slow to show obedience to the conquerors even of Europe? Anyone is mistaken who measures the limits of our glory by the space that we will go through. Between us, there is only one river. By crossing it, we will move, armed, to Europe. Is it a small price for us that we, conquering Asia, will construct our trophies as if in another world, combining immediately after one victory countries that nature seems to have scattered across vast territories? I promise you, if we delay even for a small while, the Scythians will go surround us from behind. Are only we able to cross the rivers? Against us there will be many who have given us victory so far. Fate teaches military arts to the defeated, too. We gave a recent example of crossing the river on animal skins. If the Scythians do not borrow it themselves, the Bactrians will teach them. So far, there has been only one detachment of this tribe, other troops are expected. Thus, by avoiding war, we will cause it, and instead of attacking, we will be forced to defend. The reasons for my decision are clear. However, I am afraid that the Macedonians will not allow me to make use of them: as since the time of this decision I have not either ridden a horse nor stood on my feet. But if you, friends, follow me, I am healthy. I am strong enough to overcome these difficulties. However, if my end is close, in what could I find a more glorious death?'...

...without observers, thinking over the decision coming to his mind, he lay with his eyes open for many nights, often raising the skins of the tent in order to see the fires of the enemy and guess how many of them there were. It was already daybreak when he put on his armour and appeared in front of the warriors for the first time after his latest wound. The warriors respected their tsar so much that his presence alone made them easily forget about the fearsome danger. They greeted him with tears of joy and demanded with bravery in their hearts the war that they had previously resisted. Alexander announces that he will cross the river on the rafts with the cavalry and a phalanx and orders the light-armed to cross on the animal skins at the same time. Further words were unnecessary...

²⁶ It seems that the Middle Volga, Cisurals, and Western Siberia are what is meant here.

They had already prepared everything for the crossing when 20 Scythian ambassadors, having come through the camp on horses according to their custom, asked the tsar to be told of their will to give him their message personally. After entering the tent, they were invited to take a seat, and they fastened their eyes on the face of the tsar. To those who are used to judging the strength of mind by height, the tsar's slight build and unprepossessing appearance must have seemed inadequate to his glory. The Scythians, unlike other barbarians, have minds that are not rough or strangers to culture. Some of them are said to possess wisdom, so far as that is possible in a tribe that is always armed. Memory has saved even the content of the speech they made when speaking to the tsar. Perhaps, their eloquence is different from that we are used to through living in enlightened times. However, if their speech can give rise to contempt, our honesty demands from us that we pass forward whatever is said to us, unchanged. So, as we have found, one of them, the eldest, said: 'If the gods wanted to make the size of your body equal to your greed, you could not be placed on the earth, you would touch the East with one hand and the West with the other and, having reached the limits, you would be eager to learn where is the fireplace of the divine light. You want even what you cannot take. You left from Europe for Asia, and from Asia for Europe. If you succeed in conquering the entire human race, you will start a war against forests, snow, rivers, and wild animals. What more? Don't you know that big trees grow slowly and will stay eradicated for just one hour? Silly is one who covets their fruits, without measuring their height. Watch out, in case in climbing to the top you fall, together with the twigs you grasp hold of there. Even a lion once served as food for tiny birds. Rust devours iron. There is not anything so strong that it cannot be threatened by even a weak creature. From where came this enmity between us? We have never stepped on your land. Aren't we, in our enormous forests, allowed to know who you are and where you came from? We cannot serve anyone and do not wish to rule. Know that we, Scythians, are given such gifts: a team of oxen, a plough, a spear, an arrow, and a cup. You use them to communicate with friends and at

war against enemies. The fruits gained through working oxen we give to our friends. From the cup together with them we make libation to the gods with wine. With the arrow we hit enemies from afar, and with a spear, those nearby. This way we have defeated the Tsar of Syria, then the Tsar of Persia and the Medes, and owing to these victories we acquired an open passage as far as Egypt. You blow your own trumpet, saying that you have come here to pursue robbers, but you rob all the tribes you have come across. You took Lydia, conquered Syria, keep Persia. Bactria is under your power. You strove for India. Now you are stretching your greedy and insatiable hands towards our herds. For what do you need wealth? All it achieves is a huge craving. You are the first to feel oversaturation from it. The more you have, the greedier you are to possess what you do not have... In your case, war comes out of your victories. Although you are truly the greatest and most powerful man, no one wants to bear a foreign master.

Cross the Tanais, and you will know the width of our lands. You will never overcome the Scythians. Our poverty will be faster than your army, carrying its loot plundered from so many peoples. And another time, thinking that we are far away, you will be surprised by us inside your camp. We are equal in both following and running away. I hear that the Scythians' deserts are even mentioned in Greek sayings. We are more eager to wander about deserted places untouched by culture than around towns and benign fields. So, hold on tighter to your destiny. It will slip away, it must not be kept by force. You will come to understand this advice better than you do now. Put the bridle on your fortune: It will be easier to rule. We say: fortune has no legs, only arms and wings, stretching its arms, it does not allow anyone to catch it by its wings, either. At the end of the day, if you are a god²⁷, you should not take away the goods of mortals and should do good deeds for them. If you are a man, remember that you will always stay one. It is silly to think about what can make you forget about yourself. You will be able to find loyal

²⁷ During his stay in Egypt in 332 BCE Alexander the Great undertook a pilgrimage to the oracle of the god Amun who allegedly through his priests proclaimed Alexander his son.

friends among those against whom you will not fight. The most solid friendship is between equals, and equals are those you have never threatened with force. Imagine not that those defeated by you are your friends. There can be no friendship between a master and a slave. The rights of war remain during times of peace. Think not that the Scythians seal friendship with oaths: for them oaths are about keeping loyalty. It is the Greeks who from caution sign agreements and appeal to gods, keeping loyalty is our religion. He who does not respect people, deceives the gods. No one needs a friend whose loyalty they doubt. Nevertheless, you will keep us as the guards of Asia and Europe. If we were not separated by the Tanais, we would border on Bactria. Behind the Tanais we inhabit the lands up to Thrace, and Thrace is said to border on Macedonia. We are neighbours of both of your empires²⁸. Think how we are better for you: as enemies or friends.'

So spoke one barbarian. The tsar replied that he would make use of his fortune and their advice, follow the will of his destiny, which he trusted, and their advice not to act thoughtlessly and high-handedly. Having letting the ambassadors go, he moved the army onto the prepared rafts. At the head of the ship he placed warriors, with shields on their knees in order to keep themselves safe from arrows. Behind them there were mangonels, the last of these were surrounded by warriors on the sides and on the front. The rest, behind the mangonels, were in a terrapin formation, protecting the rowers, who did not have brigandines with shields. The same order was followed on the rafts with the cavalry. The majority were holding the reins of the horses swimming behind the stern. Those swimming on the animal skins, filled up with straw, were protected by those on the foremost rafts. The tsar himself, together with his best warriors, was the first to untie his raft and to head towards the opposite bank. Against him the Scythians placed horsemen at the water line in order to prevent the rafts even from arriving to the bank. Besides the fact that the Macedonians saw the army of the enemy at the water line, they had another fear: the rowers

steering the rafts were unable to deal with the current taking them away, and the warriors, suffering from seasickness, were afraid they would be thrown overboard and disturbed the rowers. Despite their efforts, the Macedonians could not even shoot from the bows as their foremost challenge was to keep their balance, not hitting the enemy. They were helped by the mangonels, from which they successfully shot javelins into dense rows of their enemies who carelessly stood against them. The barbarians also shot clouds of arrows against the rafts. There was scarcely a shield without some arrows in it.

The rafts were about to reach the bank when the warriors with shields rose up in one instant and, with a free movement, confidently threw the spears from the rafts. Having seen that the sacred horses of the enemy were retreating, they, cheering each other up, jumped to the land and started violently striking at their confused enemies. Then the detachments of the horsemen already on their horses broke through the line of the barbarian order. Meanwhile, the rest, being protected by the fighting detachment, prepared for the battle... The barbarians could not stand any longer neither the view, the weapons, nor the enemy shouting, and, having pushed their horses at full gallop (their army consisted of cavalry), they all turned to flee. Although the tsar was suffering from the weakness of his body, he pursued the enemy doggedly for 80 stadia.

Owing to the spread of the news about the successful victory, the campaign led to the subdual of a major part of Asia, which was in revolt. Its population believed in the invincible Scythians. Their defeat made everyone admit that there was no tribe that could resist the Macedonian weaponry. After that the Sakas²⁹ sent their ambassadors with a promise that their tribe would be loyal to Alexander. They were encouraged to do this not only by the tsar's valour but also by his clemency to the defeated Scythians: he set free all prisoners without ransom, thus proving that he competed with the bravest of the tribe in courage but not in rage...'

Material prepared by Bulat Khamidullin

²⁸ That means the Balkans and Persia.

²⁹ The Scythian nomadic tribe.

No. 3

Sima Qian about the Hsiung-nu

Numerous facts about the Hsiung-nu can be found in Chinese written sources. One of the first to tell us about these people is the 'father of Chinese history,' Sima Qian. Sima Qian (around 145 or 135–86 BCE) is an ancient Chinese historian, an author of the overview of Chinese history, 'Shiji' ('Records of the Grand Historian'). He was born near Longmen, in the family of the main historian of the Han court, Sima Tan. In his youth Sima Qian travelled a lot around the country, helping his father in collecting material on the history of different parts of the empire. After his death Sima Qian inherited the post of main historiographer (in 108 BCE). At the very end of the 2nd century BCE Sima Qian worked intensively on systematising historical materials left by his father and on writing the chapters of his planned history of China. Being accused during intercession before the emperor on behalf of the maligned chief Li Ling, Sima Qian was sentenced in 98 BCE to a shameful punishment, to castration. However, this misfortune did not break him down, he found the strength to continue his work on the history of China. Soon the emperor again called Sima Qian to service and assigned him to be chief of the imperial secretariat. It gave him means to live and the possibility to finish his huge work, 'Shiji.'

Containing 130 chapters, the 'Shiji' embraces the events of a huge period, from the legendary time before the first century BCE, and in fact presents the first comprehensive history of China. In it is found Sima Qian's original historical method: he was the first in the Chinese historical literature who applied a complex principle combining a chronological description of events ('The Annals'), thematic descriptions of different aspects in the life of society ('The Treatises'), and a genre of biography. Sima Qian skilfully made use of numerous sources (chronicles, archives, manuscripts, books, inscriptions, personal notes, etc.), artfully comparing different data, and adhered to a historiographical principle 'to speak about the trustworthy and to omit the doubtful'³⁰...

Proposed further excerpts from the work of Sima Qian, taken from the book: N. Bichurin (Yakinf)³¹. The collection of data about the peoples who lived in Central Asia at ancient times. Moscow–Leningrad: Publishing House of the USSR Academy of Sciences, 1950, vol. 1, pp. 39–40, 46–56.

³⁰ See Soviet publications in Russian: Sima Qian. Selected [Chapters from the book 'Records of the Grand Historian'] / Translation from Chinese by V. Panasyuk, general editorship, foreword, and commentary by L. Duman. Moscow.: Goslitizdat, 1956, Sima Qian, Records of the Grand Historian ('Shiji') / Translation from Chinese and commentary by R. Vyatkin and V. Taskin, under the general editorship of R. Vyatkin. Series 'Written Monuments of the East.' Vols. 1–7. Moscow: Nauka, Publishing company 'Vostochnaya Literatura,' 1972–1996 (edition not yet complete).

³¹ Nikita Bichurin (1777–1853) was a native of the Kazan Guberniya, sinologist, and corresponding member of the Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences since 1828. For 14 years he has been the head of the spiritual committee in Beijing and a translator at the Ministry of External Affairs of Russia. His main works are on the history and ethnography of Mongolian peoples (according to Chinese sources) as well as on Chinese history, culture, and philosophy.

Excerpt from the source:

'Shiji'
Chapter 110

'...the ancestor of the Hsiung-nu was a descendant of the House Hiaheu Shi named Shun Wei³². Before the times of Tang and Yu³³ there were the generations of Shen Rong, Xianyun, and Hunyu³⁴. Living to the north of China, they move with their cattle from one grassland to another. As livestock, they keep horses, large, and small-horned cattle, also a portion of camels, donkeys, hinnies, and horses of the best breeds. They travel as nomad from place to place, taking into account grass and water. They have no towns, no settlements, no agriculture, though everyone has their own separate piece of land. There is no writing, and laws are announced orally. As soon as a boy can sit on a ram, he shoots little birds and animals from the bow. As he becomes more grown-up, he shoots foxes and hares and eats them. Those who master the bow are included in the armoured cavalry³⁵. During their traverses of the expanses, usually following their cattle, they hunt in camps and live from this, in the extreme everyone practices military exercises in order to make raids. These are their inherent features. Their long weapon is a bow with arrows, and their short weapons are a sabre and a spear. If they are successful, they go forward, if not, they go back. Running away is not considered shameful. When they see opportunities for gains, they know neither respectability nor justice. Starting from the

governors, they eat the meat of the cattle, get dressed in their skins, and covered in woolen and fur clothes. The powerful eat the fattest and best, the old eats the rest after them. The young and strong are respected, the old and weak are treated badly. After the father's death, they marry a stepmother, and after the death of brothers, they marry their sisters-in-law. As a rule, they call each other by name, they have no surnames...

The Donghu House was in power. The Yueji House was in blossom. For the Hsiung-nu, Chanyu³⁶ was called Tuman. Tuman could not resist the Qin House and moved to the north. 10 years later Min Txian died, and the appanage princes turned against the Qin House. The Middle Tsardom³⁷ descended into confusion, and the garrisons of criminals, sent by the Qin House to the border, disappeared. After that the Hsiung-nu felt liberty and step by step again crossed the Huang He³⁸ to its southern bank, and set up its previous borders with the Middle Tsardom. Chanyu had an heir called Mao Dun³⁹, later his beloved Yanji gave him a younger son, Chanyu wanted to put the elder out of the way and to place the younger on the throne: As soon as Mao Dun came to Yueji, Tuman immediately attacked Yueji. Yueji wanted to kill Mao Dun but Mao Dun stole an Argamak horse from him and rode home. Tuman considered him a daring fellow and appointed him to rule 10,000 of the cavalry⁴⁰. Mao Dun made an arrow that whistled in flight⁴¹ and began to practice with his people on horses to shoot from a bow, giving them this order: All those hunting who on a hunt looses an arrow other than where the whistling arrow flies will be beheaded.

³² Hiaheu Shi was a historical name for the kings of the first Chinese dynasty of Xia. Jie-Hui, the final ruler of this dynasty, died in exile in 1764 BCE. His son Shun-Wei in that same year left to the Northern steppes along with his entire family and subordinates and started leading a nomadic lifestyle. Medieval Chinese historiography refers to Shun Wei as the ancestor of the ruling Turkic-Mongolian clans of the Great Steppe.

³³ The first, Emperor Yu, ascended the throne of the Empire in 2357 BCE, and the second, Emperor Shun, ascended to the Empire's throne in 2255 BCE.

³⁴ The latter were direct descendants of the Huns.

³⁵ The presence of a heavily armed cavalry indicates a fairly high level of development in the nomadic society.

³⁶ 'The greatest'—that is, a ruler, sovereign.

³⁷ China.

³⁸ Huang He.

³⁹ In the text, Mao Dun.

⁴⁰ That means an ulus capable of deploying such a large number of warriors.

⁴¹ An arrow that whistled in-flight.

Mao Dun himself threw his whistling arrow at his argamak. Some of those surrounding did not dare to shoot, and Mao Dun immediately ordered those who had not shot to be beheaded. Some time later Mao Dun again threw the whistling arrow at his beloved wife, and some of those nearby were scared and did not dare to shoot. They were also beheaded. Some time later Mao Dun went for a hunt and threw the whistling arrow at the argamak of Chanyu. Those surrounding shot their arrows there. From this, Mao Dun saw that he could exploit his people. Following his father, Chanyu Tuman, while hunting, he threw the whistling arrow at Tuman, and his people also shot their arrows at Chanyu Tuman. Thus, having killed Tuman, Mao Dun did the same with his stepmother, with his younger brother, and with the chiefs who did not obey him, and declared himself Chanyu⁴².

I. Chanyu Mao Dun. At the time when Mao Dun got onto the throne, the Donghu House was powerful and in blossom. Having received the news that Mao Dun had killed his father and gained the throne, Donghu sent him a messenger to say that he wanted the horse left after Tuman. Mao Dun demanded advice from his nobles. The nobles told him: This horse is a treasure for the Hsiung-nu. It must not be given away. Mao Dun replied to this to ask why someone living in the same neighbourhood should be grudging one horse. And the horse was given away⁴³. Some time later Donghu, thinking that Mao Dun was afraid of him, again sent him a messenger to inform that he wanted to get from Mao Dun one of his Yanji. Mao Dun again asked the advice of his confidants. His confidants with indignation told him: Donghu is an unscrupulous man if he demands a Yanji. It is necessary to declare war against him. Mao Dun replied: Why should we grudge one woman for our neighbours? He took his beloved Yanji and sent her to Donghu. The master of Donghu became even prouder. In the Xionghu properties from Donghu to the

west, there is a strip of uninhabited land of up to 1,000 li⁴⁴. There there were sentinel posts only on the border from both sides. Donghu sent a messenger to Mao Dun to inform him that the strip of abandoned land, behind the chain of mutual sentinel posts, belonging to the Hsiung-nu, was not convenient to them, and he wanted to possess it. Mao Dun consulted his confidants, and they said: The land is inconvenient, it can be given away or not. Mao Dun in extreme anger said: land is the basis of the state. How can it be possible to give it away? All those who had advised Mao Dun to give the land away were beheaded. Mao Dun mounted a horse and gave the order to behead anyone who fell behind. After that he went to the east and suddenly attacked Donghu. Donghu had previously disregarded Mao Dun and had not taken any precautions. Having arrived with his troops, Mao Dun triumphed completely, defeated the Donghu House, and took his people, cattle, and property. After returning, he made an attack on Yueji in the west and drove him off. In the south he conquered the owners of Ordos, Leu Fan and Bai Yan. He took back all the lands taken from the Hsiung-nu by the chief Min Txian and entered with the Han House, on the border, in Ordos, at Chao Na and Lu Shi. After this he searched again for Yan and Dai. At that time the army of the Han House was at war with Hian Yu, and the Middle Empire suffered from war. This gave Mao Dun the possibility to become more powerful. His troops were over 300,000. From Shun Wei to Tuman, for over 1000 years, the Hsiung-nu House went up and down, became divided or united: thus, the order of the previous successive inheritance can be determined. In Mao Dun's time the Hsiung-nu House became extremely powerful and rose up. Having conquered all the nomadic tribes in the north, it became equal to the Middle Court⁴⁵ in the south. This is how the names of the heritable state posts can be described. The following ones have been identified: 1) Eastern and Western Tuqi King,

⁴² Historian Xu Guan wrote that this occurred in the first summer of Er Shi (209 BCE).

⁴³ A horse capable of running 1,000 li per day. Li = 576 m.

⁴⁴ A sandy steppe in Mongolia south-west of Kalgan (Zhang zakou).

⁴⁵ That means became an equal ruler of China.

2) Eastern and Western Luli King, 3) Eastern and Western great leader, 4) Eastern and Western great Duyu, 5) Eastern and Western great Danhu, 6) Eastern and Western Guduheu. Amongst the Hsiung-nu the 'wise' are called Tuqi, that was why the heir to the throne was always the Eastern Tuqi King⁴⁶. From the Eastern and Western Tuqi Kings to Danhu, the higher ones each have around 10 cavalry units, while the lower ones have several thousand cavalry units. In total there are 24 chiefs, who are called emirs. The magnates are hereditary noble people. The Huyans, the Lans, and, subsequently, the Xiubu are 3 famous houses⁴⁷. The eastern princes and chiefs take the eastern side, opposite Shan Gu, and then to the east up to Su Mo and Zhao Xian, the western princes and chiefs take the western side, opposite Shan Gun, and then to the west up to Yueji, Di, and Qiang. The Chanyu horde was directly opposite those of Dai and Yong Zhong. Each one had a separate strip of land and migrated from place to place depending on the pasture and water available. The Eastern and Western Tuqi Kings as well as the Eastern and Western Luli Kings were considered the most powerful governors. The Eastern and Western Guduhei were their aids in governing. Each of the 24 chiefs, to assist with matters, provides their own 'thousandths,' 'hundredths' (captains), and 'tenths' (foremen). The lower princes assign their own Duyu, Danhu, and Ju Xu. At the New Year's first moon a few chiefs come to the temple at the Chanyu horde. At the fifth moon they all gather together in Lun Chen where they make a sacrifice to their ancestors, the skies, the ground, and the spirits. In the autumn, when the horses get fat, they all come together to go around the forest and to check the people and the cattle. He who takes out a sharp weapon or a fut⁴⁸ is sentenced to death, for kidnapping the family is taken away, for lesser crimes the face is gashed, but

for serious crimes, death is the sentence. The trial does not last longer than 10 days. In the whole country there can be several dozen prisoners. In the morning Chanyu comes out of the camp to give a bow to the rising sun and in the evening, to the moon. He sits on the left side with his face to the north. The most respected days are the first days of the months of Xū and Sì. The deceased⁴⁹ are buried in coffins, both an external and an internal coffin is used, the robes are from golden and silver satin and fur, however, there are no cemeteries fenced with trees, nor mourning clothes. From the closest magnates and hetaerae who will have to die, there are between one hundred and several hundred. Affairs are carried out in accordance with the positions of the stars and the moon. By the full moon they go to war, at the decline of the moon, they retreat. One who beheads an enemy during fighting will be awarded with a cup of wine and given all the spoils gained. The prisoners, both men and women, become slaves. Because of this, during the battle everyone is encouraged by greed. They decoy the enemies skilfully in order to surround them: that is why when they see the enemies, they rush with greed like a flock of birds, but when defeats occur, they fall to pieces like tiles, like the clouds dispersing. He who brings the killed from the battle will get all their property. Later, in the north, they conquered the lands of Hunyu, Xueshe, Dingling⁵⁰, Gegun, and Caili, because of this the chiefs and magnates obeyed Mao Dun-Chanyu and accepted him as wise. At that time [201 BCE] the Han House had settled a peace in the Middle State and sent Prince Han Xin to Dai with a stay in Ma-i. The Hsiung-nu, in great strength, besieged Ma-i, and Prince Han Xin was taken by them and became their subject. Having captured Han Xin, the Hsiung-nu troops went to the south. Having crossed the Geuzhou ridge, they besieged Taiyuan and approached Jin Yang.

⁴⁶ Often the words *Eastern* and *Western* designate not only cardinal points but also refer to *Senior* and *Junior*.

⁴⁷ The clans of Huyan and Xiubu were always in a marital relationship with the rulers of the Huns. The Xiubu occupied the post of government judges.

⁴⁸ A military iron weapon in the form of a stick.

⁴⁹ Below Shanyu's burial is described, compare with Jordanes's description of Attila's burial and Ibn Fadlan's description of the Khazar state.

⁵⁰ The Dinglings at that time occupied the area from the Yenisei to Lake Baikal.

Gao Di⁵¹ himself led the army against them [200 BCE]. In the winter there were severe frosts and snowfalls. About one third of the warriors suffered from frostbite of their fingers. Mao Dun pretended defeat and, while retreating, decoyed the Chinese army chasing him. Mao Dun had hidden his best troops and brought out only the weak ones: the entire Chinese army, numbering 320,000, mostly infantry, rushed to chase him. Gao Di arrived in Pyong Chen before the others, but the infantry were still incomplete. Mao Dun, with 400,000 of the best cavalry, surrounded Gao Di in Bai Din. The Chinese army could not provide food to the besieged for 7 days. The Hsiung-nu cavalry had white horses in the west, gray horses in the east, black horses in the north, and red horses in the south. Gao Di sent spies to bribe the Yanji. The Yanji said to Mao Dun: Two governors should not hinder each other. Now you, who gained the lands of the Han House, cannot live on them, moreover, the governor of the Han House is a wise man. Think it over, Chanyu. Mao Dun appointed a time when Wang Huang and Zhao Li, the chiefs of Prince Han Xin, must come to him, but they did not appear: he started suspecting that they had made an agreement with the Han House, moreover, he took into account the words of his Yanji. So he opened a passage in one corner: Gao Di ordered to his troops to go straight through the opened corner with their bows strung and pointing to the sides. Thus, he united with the main forces. Mao Dun returned. Gao Di also stopped the war and sent Liu Gin to make an agreement based on peace and kinship⁵².

Later Prince Han Xin, who was a Hsiung-nu general, Zhao Li, and Wang Huang several times breached the agreement and devastated the lands of Dai and Yong Zhong. Some time later Cheng Hi⁵³ incited a riot, united with Han Xin, and intended to attack Dai. The Chinese

Court sent the army headed by the commander Fan Khuai, who took back Dai, Ya Ming, and Yong Zhong, but did not cross the border. In that period the Han House commanders one by one went over to the Hsiung-nu, Mao Dun often came to plunder the land of Dai, and this disturbed the Han House.

Gao Di sent [in 198 BCE] Liu Gin to convoy the princess of his House to Chanyu's Yanji, with annual gifts such as silk, cotton, wine, rice, and other food, and to put in agreement a brotherhood⁵⁴, based on peace and kinship. This halted Mao Dun for a while. Later Lu Guang, the governor of the Yan land, rebelled, went to the Hsiung-nu with several thousand of his followers, and started harassing the lands from Shangu to the east [in 195 BCE]. At last, Gao Tsu appeared. At the reign of the Empress Hiao Hoi Lu Tai Hou⁵⁵, the Han House had only just consolidated its position: the Hsiung-nu became proud, and Mao Dun sent to the Empress Gao Hou a letter [in 192 BCE], written in impudent expressions⁵⁶.

Gao Hou thought to declare war against him, but her chiefs told her that although the deceased Gaodid was a clever governor and warrior, even he had been constrained near the town of Pyong Chen. So Gao Hou managed to maintain her position and confirmed peace and kinship with the Hsiung-nu. Hiao Wing Di, on his accession to the throne [in 179 BCE] of the Hsiung-nu Western Tuqi King, moved his nomad camps to Ordos and started devastating the borders of Shan Gun, the foreigners killed and captured those living there. That was why Hiao Wing Di ordered the Minister Guang In to go with 85,000 units of cavalry and chariots against the Western Tuqi King, but the Western Tuqi King fled abroad. Wing Di took a trip to Taiyuan, but at that same time Ji Bei Wang incited a riot. Wing Di returned and called off the troops that had been sent against the Hsiung-nu. The following year [in 176 BCE] Chanyu sent to the Chinese Court a letter with the following

⁵¹ Or Gaozu was the founder of the Han dynasty.

⁵² The agreement based on peace and familial ties was predicated on the fact that the Chinese Court, when marrying off a princess to a foreign sovereign, was obligated to annually pay a certain amount of material goods provided for in the agreement, which was in fact a tribute.

⁵³ A troop warden in Zhao and Dai.

⁵⁴ That is equal to each other.

⁵⁵ The widowed spouse of the founder of the Han dynasty.

⁵⁶ The content of this letter is presented in 'The History of the Former Han.'

content: 'the Hsiung-nu's Great Chanyu, placed by the Heavens, respectfully enquires to Huang Di⁵⁷ about health. Last time Huang Di wrote about peace and kinship. This case, to mutual joy, was concluded with the content of the letter. The Chinese border officials insulted the Western Tuqi King, and, without presenting himself to me, by the advice of Ilu Hei Nangji and others, he started quarreling with the Chinese officials, breached the agreement concluded between the two governors, broke the brotherly kinship between them, and caused the hostility of the Han House with its neighbouring country. Two letters with reprimands have been received, but the messenger with the reply has not arrived yet, and the Chinese one did not return. It was the cause of discontentment between the two neighbouring countries. The breach of the agreement came from the lower officials, and the Western Tuqi King was punished by being sent to the west, to Yueji. By the grace of the Heavens, the warriors were healthy, the horses were strong. They defeated Yueji. By bringing to the point of a sword, or by conquering everybody, they gained a foothold in Loulan, Wusun, Huse, and in the 26 surrounding lands⁵⁸. The residents of these lands entered amongst the ranks of Hsiung-nu warriors and created one house. After stopping the war and making peace in the Northern country, I would like to give rest to the warriors and to fatten the horses, to forget the past and restore the previous agreement in order to provide peace for the border residents, like it was at the start. Let children grow up, and old people quietly live out their life, and everyone enjoy peace from generation to generation. But the opinion of Huang Di has not been received yet. Sending Langzhong Xiduxian with a letter, I beg to present him one camel, two riding horses, and two carriages. If Huang Di does not want the Hsiung-nu to approach his borders, it is necessary to order the officials and people to settle farther from the borders.' After arriving, the messenger was

immediately sent back and at the sixth moon came to Chaiwan⁵⁹. After receiving this letter, the Chinese Court had a council: what is more beneficial: war or peace and kinship? Amongst the officials was the opinion that it was difficult to fight against the celebrating enemy, who had recently defeated Yueji. Besides, the Hsiung-nu lands of the lakes and salt marches are not suitable for settled life. That was why they considered it would be better to keep peace and kinship. Hiao Wing Di agreed with their opinion, and the sixth summer, of the previous chronology⁶⁰, he sent to the Hsiung-nu a letter with the following content: 'Huang Di respectfully enquires to Hsiung-nu's Great Chanyu about health. In the letter, delivered by Langzhong Xiduxian, was written: The Western Tuqi King, without permission and by the advice of Ilu Hei Nangji, breached the agreement concluded between the two governors, interrupted the fraternal consent, and made the Han House hostile to its neighbouring country. However, as the breach of the agreement came from the lower officials, the Western Tuqi King was punished and sent to the West, to Yueji, and he conquered this land. Now, after stopping the war, it is desirable to give rest to the warriors and fatten the horses, to forget the past and confirm the previous agreement in order to provide peace for the border residents, like it was at the start. May children grow up, and old people quietly live out their life, and all enjoy peace from generation to generation. I approve of this, indeed: as this is the way that the ancient saintly governors thought. The Han House agreed with the Hsiung-nu House to be brothers, and that was why it sent a great many gifts to Chanyu. The breach of the agreement and the breaking-off of the fraternal consent were always initiated by the Hsiung-nu. However, as the case of the Western Tuqi King is already covered by forgiveness, I ask Chanyu not to extend his anger further. If Chanyu wishes to behave in accordance with the content of the letter, let him announce to his officials that they should not breach the agreement and should

⁵⁷ That means the Chinese Emperor.

⁵⁸ This is about the conquest of lands up until the Caspian Sea in 177 BCE.

⁵⁹ The name of a frontier settlement.

⁶⁰ That means in 174 BCE.

act in accordance with the letter of Chanyu. The messenger said that Chanyu himself was a commander in the Western war and overcame great difficulties. That is why I send an his⁶¹ embroidered caftan with lining, a long brocaded caftan, a golden wreath for hair, a gold-mounted belt, a gold-mounted rhinoceros buckle for the belt, 10 pieces of embroidered silk fabrics, 30 pieces of damask, and 40 pieces of silk fabrics in dark crimson and green colours. I send the official for a personal presentation.'

Soon after that Mao Dun died [in 174 BCE]. His son Giyu was named Laoshang Chanyu...'

Material prepared by Bulat Khamidullin

⁶¹ That means which he wore himself.

No. 4

'Shangshu' about the Hsiung-nu

The proposed text is a sample of the 97th chapter of the History of Chinese Dynasty 'Shangshu' (265–400) compiled by Qiao Fang in the Tang dynasty. Although little information about the Hsiung-nu is included here, it is undeniably interesting. What is particularly important is that the 'Shangshu' text repeats almost no information of previous historians and gives its own original data, for example, about the resettlement of Hsiung-nu tribes in China, about the tribal structure of the 'southern' Hsiung-nu, and so on. The text was first introduced into scientific use in 1939 by William Godwin. The first translation into Russian was made in 1940 by A. Bernshtam with the assistance of Ibn Pankratov (Soviet Asian Studies. – 1940. – No. 3/4. – pp. 225–227). Somewhat later N. Kyuner made his own version of the translation (see, for example, V. Kyuner Chinese Reports on the Peoples of Southern Siberia and the Far East. – Moscow, 1691. – p. 319 ff.). When publishing a source, we use the edition: V. Taskin. History of the Nomadic Peoples in China of the 3rd–5th Centuries. – Moscow, 1989. – No. I. – pp. 150–153.

Excerpt from the source:

**'Beidi (Northern dists)
Hsiung-nu**

The tribes belonging to the Hsiung-nu group are called by the common name 'Beidi' or the 'Northern Di'⁶². The lands of the Hsiung-nu adjoined the lands of the former possessions of Yan and Zhao⁶³ in the south, bordered on the desert in the north, adjoined the lands of the nine Yi tribes⁶⁴ in the east, and reached the lands of the six Hsi-jung tribes in the west. The tribes submitted to each other from one generation to the next, and did not

wish to adopt the calendar used in the Middle Tsardom. During the reign of the Xia dynasty, they were called the 'Hsünyü', during the reign of the Yin dynasty, the 'Kuei-fang'⁶⁵, during the reign of the Zhou dynasty, the 'Hsien-yün', and during the reign of the Han dynasty, the 'Hsiung-nu'...

At the end of the reign of the Former Han⁶⁶ dynasty, when the Hsiung-nu raised a great revolt, and 5 Chanyus⁶⁷ were struggling for power, Chanyu Hu-han-hsieh, deprived of the throne, came to the Han Dynasty together with his nomadic people and declared himself its servant. The Han Dynasty appreciated Hu-han-hsieh's intention and allocated the northern part of the Binzhou region for him to settle. After that more than 5000 Hsiung-nu yurts came to live in Shuofang and other counties and started to live among the Hans. Hu-han-hsieh, who was grateful to the Han dynasty for their mercy, came to the palace,

⁶² Compare: 'The Hsiung-nu are generally called Northern barbarians' (A. Bernshtam's translation), 'The Hsiung-nu tribes are generally called Beidi (Northern barbarians, aliens)' (N. Kiuner's translation).

⁶³ The possession of Yan was one of the 7 largest territories during the Zhanguo period (403–221 BCE). It occupied the Northern part of the present-day province of Hebei with its capital city being the city of Gzi (North-west of Beijing). The possession of Zhao was also one of the 7 largest possessions in the Zhanguo period. It occupied the Northern part of the present-day province of Shanxi, while its capital was in the city of Handan. Yan and Zhao were destroyed in 222 BCE by the possession of Qin.

⁶⁴ Nine tribes (*tzu-i*): tzuan-i, yu-i, fang-i, huang-i, bai-i, chii, xuan-i, fen-I, and yan-i.

⁶⁵ Literally, 'Devil's country.'

⁶⁶ Early Han, 206 BCE–7 CE.

⁶⁷ Chanyu is 'the greatest'—that is, a ruler, sovereign.

and the Han dynasty temporarily kept him there, presented him a residence, allowed him to call himself 'Chanyu' according to his title, and annually gave him silk batting, silk fabrics, grain, and money, and his sons and grandsons, like Lehou⁶⁸, inherited power without any interruption for several generations. The heads of the districts and counties where the nomadic Hsiung-nu lived were ordered to oversee them, and in general their position was like that of houses listed in household lists, except that they were not obliged to pay any tributes or taxes. After many years the number of Hsiung-nu households had gradually increased, they had occupied all the northern lands, and it had become difficult to control them.

At the end of the reign of the Later Han⁶⁹ dynasty, when there was great unrest in the Celestial Empire⁷⁰, dignitaries were vying with each other to say that there were too many Hsiung-nu⁷¹ and expressed their worries that they would certainly start looting, so it was necessary to take defensive measures against them in advance.

In the Jian'an⁷² era Emperor Wu of Wei was the first to divide the Hsiung-nu into 5 parts, placing the noblest of each part at the head as a leader, he appointed Hans to the position of army commanders and ordered them to supervise the leaders. At the end of the reign of the Wei⁷³ dynasty the title 'leader'⁷⁴ was changed to 'chief warlord'.⁷⁵

The authority of the chief warlord of the left part of the Hsiung-nu nomad groups covered more than 10,000 yurts living in the former Xuanshi County in the district of Taiyuan, the chief warlord of the right part of the Hsiung-nu nomad groups had more than 6,000 yurts living in Qi County, the chief warlord of the southern part of the Hsiung-nu nomad groups had more than 3,000 yurts living in Pu County, the chief warlord of the

northern part of the Hsiung-nu nomad groups had more than 4,000 yurts living in Xinxing County, and the chief warlord of the southern part of the Hsiung-nu nomad groups had more than 6,000 yurts living in Tayling County.

After Emperor Wu of Jin took the throne⁷⁶, there was great flooding in the lands of the Hsiung-nu beyond the fortified line, after which more than 20,000 yurts of the nomad groups Xaini, Hainan, and others submitted to the emperor. The Emperor again accepted them and ordered to live near the former city of Yiyang located west of the Huáng Hé River. Later the Hsiung-nu again began to live among the Jin people in the counties of Pingyang, Xihe, Taiyuan, Xinxing, Shandong, and Leping.

In the 7th year of the Tai Shi⁷⁷ era Chanyu Liu Meng rebelled and occupied the city of Kongcheng. Emperor Wu presented his credential sign to He Zheng, who had the title of Lou Hou, and sent him to punish Liu Meng. He Zhen, who had always been characterised by prudence, determined that the troops of Liu Meng were angry and defiant, and he could not defeat them with small forces, and therefore he secretly incited Li Ke, who served Liu Meng as a supervisor of the left part of the Hsiung-nu nomadic groups, and Li Ke killed Liu Meng. Thereafter, shuddering with horror, the Hsiung-nu submitted to the Emperor and did not dare to rebel for many years to come. Later they killed senior officials in anger and gradually turned into a source of troubles on the borders.

Go Jin, who was born in Xihe County and served in the position of a court censor, submitted a report which read as follows: 'The Xirong and the Di are strong and cruel and had been causing troubles for a long time. At the beginning of the reign of the Wei dynasty all the North-West districts became the dwelling place of the Xirong because of the small number of people living there. Now they declare their submission, but if 100 years from now the dust rises from the hooves of warhorses, the Hsiung-nu riders from the counties of Pingyang and Shandong will reach the crossing on the

⁶⁸ As appanage princes.

⁶⁹ Late Han, 25–220 CE.

⁷⁰ That means China.

⁷¹ The Huns.

⁷² 196–200 CE.

⁷³ 220–265 CE.

⁷⁴ 'Shuai.'

⁷⁵ 'Du-yui.'

⁷⁶ In 265. Reigned until 289.

⁷⁷ In 271.

Mengjiing⁷⁸, and the districts of Beidi, Xihe, Taiyuan, Fengyi, Anding, and Shangjun will be captured by the Di leader. It is necessary to show the power that was demonstrated while pacifying the Wu lands, use the plans of wise dignitaries and courageous commanders, enter the districts of Beidi, Xihe, and Anding, free the Shangjun district, and settle the Fengyi district, to do this, it is necessary to gather criminals sentenced to death in the counties to the north of the Pingyang district and relocate 40,000 families of current officials from the Sanhe district and the Weijun⁷⁹ district, which is divided into 3 parts, and settle them in these districts. And in order for the barbarians not to disturb the Hsiung-nu, it is necessary to gradually move the various Hsiung-nu tribes from the districts of Pingyang, Hongnong, Weijun, Jingzhao, and Shandong, to immediately take strict security measures needed to control the arrival and the departure of barbarians living in the four corners of the world, and to restore the system of paying tributes established by the previous Wangs. This is a long-term plan for 10000 generations.' The Emperor did not follow the advice.

In the 5th year of the Tai-kang⁸⁰ era the Hsiung-nu Taihou leading a nomadic group of 29,300 people submitted to the Emperor.

In the 7th year of the Tai-kang⁸¹ era the leader of the Dudabo Hsiung-nu nomadic group and the leader of the Weiso Hsiung-nu nomadic group with more than 100,000 tribesmen, including the elderly and small children, came to Sima Jun, the ruler of the Yongzhou district, who bore the title Fufang Wang, and submitted to him.

The following year the chief Hsiung-nu leaders Dadou, Dei, Yutsuy, and others heading nomad groups numbering 11,500 people, including the elderly and small children, came to submit to the Emperor, with 22,000 head of cattle, 105,000 sheep, and innumerable carts, donkeys, and various property. All of them paid a tribute consisting

of objects produced in their lands. The Emperor received them kindly.

The Northern Di form a group divided into nomad camps. Among those who came to live within the fortified line are 19 tribes: the Chuge, the Xianzhi, the Koutou, the Wutan, the Chiqin, the Hanzhi, the Haylan, the Chisha, the Yuybi, the Weisuo, the Tutun, the Bome, the Qiangqui, the Helai, the Zhongqi, the Dalou, the Yongji, the Zhenshu, and the Lijie. In each tribe are nomad camps that do not intermix. The strongest and noblest tribe of all is the Chuge, thus its representatives may become Chanyus who rule all the tribes.

There are 16 stages among the titles that exist in their state include, namely: Left Xiang Wang, right Xiang Wang, left Yilu Wang, right Yilu Wang, left Yulu Wang, right Yulu Wang, left Jianshang Wang, right Jianshang Wang, left Shuofang Wang, right Shuofang Wang, left Dulu Wang, right Dulu Wang, left Xianlu Wang, right Xianlu Wang, left Anle Wang, and right Anle Wang. All these titles are borne by the Chanyu's sons and younger brothers. Left Xian Wang is deemed to be the noblest title, and it may be borne only by the son and heir of the Chanyu.

There are four noble families⁸², namely the families of Huyan, Bo, Lan, and Qiao, of which Huyan is the most notable family, the left and the right Jichju, who have always been the Chanyu's assistants, come therefrom. From the family of Bu come the left and right Juqu, from the family of Lan come the left and right Donghu, and from the family of Qiao come the left and right Duhou. In addition, there are various names of positions formed by attaching the words 'cheyang' and 'juqu,' corresponding to the positions of officials in the Middle Tsardom⁸³.

⁷⁸ In Henan Province.

⁷⁹ The district occupied lands of the present-day counties of Wei xian and Ci xian in the province of Hebei.

⁸⁰ In 284. In A. Bernshtam's translation, 391.

⁸¹ In 286. In A. Bernshtam's translation, 393.

⁸² In A. Bernshtam's translation: 'They have 4 noble families...' To compare: Ibn Fadlan noted several times that they had 4 'kings' subordinate to the ruler of the Volga Bulgars, Almush, 'The Secret History' describes 4 'stalwarts' of Genghis Khan, 'The History of Yuan' mentioned 4 heroes of Genghis Khan, al-Omari wrote that Khan Uzbek had 4 ulus emirs, the Tatar anonymous historical work 'Daftar-i Chinggis-name' says that when Tamerlane subdued the city of Bulgar, 4 of the 'eldest' begs were executed along with Khan Abdulla...

⁸³ That means in China.

Among the population of their state are the Qiu and Le families, who are characterised by courage and are inclined to rebellion. During the reign of Emperor Wu, Qiu Qianye, the commander of horsemen, committed a heroic deed during an attack on the Wu lands and therefore was appointed to the position of the chief warlord of the Chisha tribe.

In the Yuan Kang era⁸⁴ established by Emperor Hui of Jin, Hao Xian of the Hsiung-nu attacked Shandong County, killed the senior officials, and then entered Shangjun County. The following year, a younger brother of Hao Xian, Hao Duyuan, leading Qiangs and Huns who lived in the counties of Fengyi and Beidi, attacked and seized these 2 counties. After that the northern Di gradually became stronger, and disorder broke out in the Central Plain⁸⁵.

Material prepared by Bulat Khamidullin

⁸⁴ 291–299 CE.

⁸⁵ That means in China.

No. 5

**Ammianus Marcellinus about the Huns
and other peoples of Eastern Europe**

Ammianus Marcellinus was a Roman historian of Greek origin. He was born about 330 and died about 400. In 353–363 he was involved in wars with the Persians and Germanic peoples, later he lived in Antioch (one of the hearts of early Christianity in Syria). After moving to Rome Ammianus wrote 'The Acts' ('Res gestae'), which he intended as a continuation of the 'Annals' and 'Histories' of the Roman historian Tacitus (c. 58–c. 117 CE). Marcellinus' work in 31 books covered the period from the reign of the Emperor Nerva (96–98) to 378. We received only 18 books (from 14 to 31), with a description of the events of 353–378. The focus was on the historian's attention to wars, palace intrigues and the struggle for power. Ammianus Marcellinus' information about the tribes in Eastern and Central Europe, who were under Roman rule or fighting them, has great academic value.

We offer the reader the following extract from this work in the edition: C.D. Yonge The Roman history of Ammianus Marcellinus: During the reigns of the emperors Constantius, Julian, Jovianus, Valentinian, and Valens London: Bell 1911.

Excerpt from the source:

'Book XXXI...

...the people called Huns, slightly mentioned in the ancient records⁸⁶, live beyond the Sea of Azov⁸⁷ on the border of the Frozen Ocean, and are a race savage beyond all parallel. At the very moment of their birth the cheeks of their infant children are deeply marked by an iron, in order that the usual vigour of their hair, instead of growing at the proper season, may be withered by the wrinkled scars, and accordingly they grow up without beards, and consequently without any beauty, like eunuchs, though they all have closely-knit and strong limbs, and plump necks, they are of great size, and low legged, so that you might fancy them two-legged beasts, or the stout figures which are hewn out in a rude manner with an axe on the posts at the end of bridges. They are certainly in the shape of men, however uncouth, but are so hardy that they neither require fire nor well-flavoured food, but live on the roots of such herbs as they get in the fields, or on the half-raw flesh of any animal, which they merely

warm rapidly by placing it between their own thighs and the backs of their horses⁸⁸. They never shelter themselves under roofed houses, but avoid them as people ordinarily avoid sepulchres as things not fitted for common use. Nor is there even to be found among them a cabin thatched with reed, but they wander about, roaming over the mountains and the woods and accustom themselves to bear frost and hunger and thirst from their very cradles. And even when abroad they never enter a house unless under the compulsion of some extreme necessity, nor, indeed, do they think people under roofs as safe as others⁸⁹... they wear linen clothes, or else garments made of the skins of

⁸⁶ Regarding the Europeans, multiple pieces of data about the Huns–Hsiung-nu is contained in the written Asian sources, for instance, in Sima Qian's 'Records.'

⁸⁷ The Azov Sea.

⁸⁸ When describing the 'inhabitants of Golden Tataria'—that is, the Golden Horde Tatars, Johann Schiltberger wrote: 'I personally saw that when they suffered a shortage in food, they bled horses and, upon accumulating blood, boiled and ate it. In a similar way, when they had to depart soon, they took a slab of meat, cut it in thin stripes, which they put under their saddles. Having salted it beforehand, they ate it when hungry, imagining they had prepared a nice meal, because this meat gets dry because of the horse's warmth and softens under the saddle because of the riding, which produces juices. They use this means when they have no time to cook at all.'

⁸⁹ A gap in the text.

field-mice⁹⁰. Nor do they wear a different dress out of doors from that which they wear at home, but after a tunic is once put round their necks, however it becomes worn, it is never taken off or changed till, from long decay, it becomes actually so ragged as to fall to pieces⁹¹. They cover their heads with round caps, and their shaggy legs with the skins of kids, their shoes are not made on any lasts, but are so unshapely as to hinder them from walking with a free gait⁹². And for this reason they are not well suited to infantry battles, but are nearly always on horseback, their horses being ill-shaped⁹³, but hardy, and sometimes they even sit upon them like women if they want to do anything more conveniently. There is not a person in the whole nation who cannot remain on his horse day and night. On horseback they buy and sell,

⁹⁰ Squirrels, martens, minks.

⁹¹ One Chinese source provides the following story: 'One ruler of Yueban used to have friendly relations with the Ruanruan people (ancestors of the Avars and Old Tatars). One day, accompanied by several thousand people, he entered the Ruanruan lands desiring to visit Khagan Datan (died in 429 CE). Upon crossing the country's borders, he did not pass even 100 li (ca. 50 km) when he saw that the men did not wash their outfits, nor did they comb their hair, while the women licked dishes with their tongues. He addressed his foremen, saying: 'Are you mocking me? Why have I undertaken a trip into this dirty state?' And so he turned back to his possessions...' Arabian Ibn Fadlan wrote (922): 'He (the commander of the Turkish-Ghuzes) took off his brocade suit to put on said honourable gifts. And I saw the jupe he wore under this brocade—it was almost torn to rags because of dirt, for their rules dictated that no one take off their underclothes until they are torn to pieces.' We see the following in 'Meigda Beilu' (1221): 'They neither take off, nor do they wash clothes unless they are worn out.' Giovanni da Pian del Carpine wrote in 'The History of the Mongols' (the 13th century): 'They neither wash their dresses, nor do they allow anyone else to do so, especially when a storm is approaching...' Sigismund von Herberstein (the 16th century) says the following in his chapter 'On the Tatars': 'The rest of the people [the Golden Horde's population] wear clothes made of sheepskin and change it only after lengthy use when it becomes absolutely worn and torn.'

⁹² Chinese historian Sima Qian as early as the 2nd century BCE wrote that the Asian Huns (Hsiung-nu) had an armoured cavalry. Archaeological materials evidence a high level of shoe and cloth manufacturing among the Huns (see: S. Rudenko. *Hun Culture and Noin Ula Kurgans*. Moscow – Leningrad, 1962).

⁹³ Mongolian horses found in Hun–Hsiung-nu burials were short, with well-muscled bodies and short, wide nebs.

they take their meat and drink, and there they recline on the narrow neck of their steed, and yield to sleep so deep as to indulge in every variety of dream. And when any deliberation is to take place on any weighty matter, they all hold their common council on horseback⁹⁴. They are not under the authority of a king⁹⁵, but are contented with the irregular government of their nobles, and under their lead they force their way through all obstacles. Sometimes when provoked, they fight, and when they go into battle, they form in a solid body, and utter all kinds of terrific yells. They are very quick in their operations, of exceeding speed, and fond of surprising their enemies. With a view to this, they suddenly disperse, then reunite, and again, after having inflicted vast loss upon the enemy, scatter themselves over the whole plain in irregular formations: always avoiding a fort or an entrenchment⁹⁶. And in one respect you may pronounce them the most formidable of all warriors, for when at a distance they use missiles of various kinds tipped with sharpened bones instead of the usual points of javelins, and these bones are admirably fastened into the shaft of the javelin or arrow, but when they are at close quarters they fight with the sword, without any regard for their own safety, and often while their antagonists are warding off their blows they entangle them with twisted cords, so that, their hands being fettered, they lose all power of either riding or walking. None of them plough, or even touch a plough-handle: for they have no settled abode, but are homeless and lawless, perpetually wandering with their waggons, which they make their homes, in fact they seem to be people always in flight. Their wives live in these waggons, and there weave their miserable garments, and here too they sleep with their husbands, and bring up their children till they reach the age of puberty, Nor, if asked, can any one of

⁹⁴ Priscus of Panium wrote: 'They organised a meeting in the countryside, mounted, because the barbarians did not have a tradition of holding discussions dismounted...'

⁹⁵ Marcellinum's statement contradicts data from many other sources.

⁹⁶ The conquest of Roman cities by the Huns is described by Priscus of Panium and Jordanes fairly vividly and in a detailed way.

them tell you where he was born, as he was conceived in one place, born in another at a great distance, and brought up in another still more remote. In truces they are treacherous and inconstant, being liable to change their minds at every breeze of every fresh hope which presents itself, giving themselves up wholly to the impulse and inclination of the moment, and, like brute beasts, they are utterly ignorant of the distinction between right and wrong. They express themselves with great ambiguity and obscurity, have no respect for any religion or superstition whatever, are immoderately covetous of gold, and are so fickle and irascible, that they very often on the same day that they quarrel with their companions without any provocation, again become reconciled to them without any mediator.

This active and indomitable race, being excited by an unrestrainable desire of plundering the possessions of others, went on ravaging and slaughtering all the nations in their neighbourhood till they reached the Alani, who were formerly called the Massagetæ. And from what country these Alani come, or what territories they inhabit (since my subject has led me thus far), it is expedient now to explain: after showing the confusion existing in the accounts of the geographers, who...⁹⁷ at last have found out ... of truth⁹⁸.

The Danube⁹⁹, which is greatly increased by other rivers falling into it, passes through the territory of the Sauromatæ, which extends as far as the river Don¹⁰⁰, the boundary between Asia and Europe. On the other side of this river the Alani inhabit the enormous deserts of Scythia¹⁰¹, deriving their own name from the mountains around, and they, like the Persians, having gradually subdued all the bordering nations by repeated victories, have united them to themselves, and comprehended them under their own name. Of these other tribes the Neuri inhabit the inland districts, being near

the highest mountain chains, which are both precipitous and covered with the everlasting frost of the north. Next to them are the Budins and the Geloni, a race of exceeding ferocity, who flay the enemies they have slain in battle, and make of their skins clothes for themselves and trappings for their horses. Next to the Geloni are the Agathyrsi, who dye both their bodies and their hair of a blue colour, the lower classes using spots few in number and small—the nobles broad spots, close and thick, and of a deeper hue. Next to these are the Melanchænæ and the Anthropophagi, who roam about upon different tracts of land and live on human flesh. And these men are so avoided on account of their horrid food, that all the tribes which were their neighbours have removed to a distance from them. And in this way the whole of that region to the north-east, till you come to the Chinese¹⁰², is uninhabited. On the other side the Alani again extend to the east, near the territories of the Amazons, and are scattered among many populous and wealthy nations, stretching to the parts of Asia which, as I am told, extend up to the Ganges, a river which passes through the country of the Indians, and falls into the Southern Ocean.

Then the Alani, being thus divided among the two quarters of the globe (the various tribes which make up the whole nation it is not worth while to enumerate), although widely separated, wander, like the Nomades, over enormous districts. But in the progress of time all these tribes came to be united under one generic appellation, and are called Alani. They have no cottages, and never use the plough, but live solely on meat and plenty of milk, mounted on their waggons, which they cover with a curved awning made of the bark of trees, and then drive them through their boundless deserts. And when they come to any pasture-land, they pitch their waggons in a circle, and live like a herd of beasts, eating up all the forage—carrying, as it were, their cities with them in their waggons¹⁰³. In them the husbands sleep with

⁹⁷ A gap in the text.

⁹⁸ A gap in the text.

⁹⁹ The Danube.

¹⁰⁰ Tanais is the Don. According to Plutarch, the river's ancient name was the Amazon River. In ancient times the Tanais was considered the border between Europe and Asia.

¹⁰¹ That means Eastern European steppes.

¹⁰² The Chinese?

¹⁰³ Ibn Battuta described the horde of Uzbek Khan (the 14th century) in the following way: 'The main camp arrived, which they call the Urdu, and we saw a large city moving together with its citizens, there were

their wives—in them their children are born and brought up, these waggons, in short, are their perpetual habitation, and wherever they fix them, that place they look upon as their home. They drive before them their flocks and herds to their pasturage, and, above all other cattle, they are especially careful of their horses. The fields in that country are always green, and are interspersed with patches of fruit trees, so that, wherever they go, there is no dearth either of food for themselves or fodder for their cattle. And this is caused by the moisture of the soil, and the number of the rivers which flow through these districts. All their old people, and especially all the weaker sex, keep close to the waggons, and occupy themselves in the lighter employments. But the young men, who from their earliest childhood are trained to the use of horses, think it beneath them to walk. They are also all trained by careful discipline of various sorts to become skilful warriors. And this is the reason why the Persians, who are originally of Scythian extraction, are very skilful in war¹⁰⁴. Nearly all the Alani are men of great stature and beauty, their hair is somewhat yellow, their eyes are terribly fierce, the lightness of their armour renders them rapid in their movements, and they are in every respect equal to the Huns, only more civilized in their food and their manner of life. They plunder and hunt as far as the Sea of Azov and the Cimmerian Bosphorus¹⁰⁵, ravaging also Armenia and Media. And as ease is a delightful thing to men of a quiet and placid disposition, so danger and war are a pleasure to the Alani, and among them that man is called happy who has lost his life in battle. For those who grow old, or who go out of the world from accidental sicknesses, they pursue with bitter reproaches as degenerate and cowardly. Nor is there anything of which they boast with more

mosques and bazaars and smoke from kitchens rising up in the air...'

¹⁰⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus does not make any distinction between the Persians and the Parthians. The latter were the Scythians' descendants (for more details, see, for example: L. Yelnitsky. *Skifiya Yevraziyskikh Stepey* [Scythia of Eurasian Steppes]. Novosibirsk, 1977) and successfully defeated the Roman regular forces (see, for instance: V. Sarianidi, G. Koshelenko. *Za barkhanami – proshloye* [Past is behind barchans]. Moscow, 1966, pp. 107–114.

¹⁰⁵ The Kerch Strait.

pride than of having killed a man: and the most glorious spoils they esteem the scalps which they have torn from the heads of those whom they have slain, which they put as trappings and ornaments on their war horses. Nor is there any temple or shrine seen in their country, nor even any cabin thatched with straw, their only idea of religion being to plunge a naked sword into the ground with barbaric ceremonies, and then they worship that with great respect, as Mars, the presiding deity of the regions over which they wander. They presage the future in a most remarkable manner, for they collect a number of straight twigs of osier, then with certain secret incantations they separate them from one another on particular days, and from them they learn clearly what is about to happen. They have no idea of slavery, inasmuch as they themselves are all born of noble families, and those whom even now they appoint to be judges are always men of proved experience and skill in war. But now let us return to the subject which we proposed to ourselves.

* * *

Therefore the Huns, after having traversed the territories of the Alani, and especially of that tribe of them who border on the Gruthungi¹⁰⁶, and who are called Tanaitæ, and having slain many of them and acquired much plunder, they made a treaty of friendship and alliance with those who remained. And when they had united them to themselves, with increased boldness they made a sudden incursion into the extensive and fertile districts of Ermenrichus¹⁰⁷, a very warlike prince, and one whom his numerous gallant actions of every kind had rendered formidable to all the neighbouring nations. He was astonished at the violence of this sudden tempest, and although, like a prince whose power was well established he long attempted to hold his ground, he was at last overpowered by a dread of the evils impending over his country, which were exaggerated by common report, till he terminated his fear of great danger by a voluntary death. After his death Vithimiris was made king. He for some time maintained a resistance to the Alani, relying on

¹⁰⁶ The Ostrogoths.

¹⁰⁷ King of the Goths.

the aid of other tribes of the Huns, whom by large promises of pay he had won over to his party, but, after having suffered many losses, he was defeated by superior numbers and slain in battle. He left an infant son named Viderichus, of whom Alatheus and Saphrax undertook the guardianship, both generals of great experience and proved courage. And when they, yielding to the difficulties of the crisis, had given up all hope of being able to make an effectual resistance, they retired with caution till they came to the river Dniester¹⁰⁸ which lies between the Danube and the Dnieper¹⁰⁹, and flows through a vast extent of country. When Athanaric, the chief magistrate of the Thuringians¹¹⁰, (against whom, as I have already mentioned, Valens¹¹¹ had begun to wage war, to punish him for having sent assistance to Procopius¹¹²), had become informed of these unexpected occurrences, he prepared to maintain his ground, with a resolution to rise up in strength should he be assailed as the others had been. At last he pitched his camp at a distance in a very favourable spot near the banks of the Dniester and the valleys of the Gruthungi, and sent Muderic, who afterwards became Duke of the Arabian frontier, with Lagarimanus¹¹³ and others of the nobles, with orders to advance for twenty miles, to reconnoitre the approach of the enemy while in the mean time he himself, without delay, marshalled his troops in line of battle. However, things turned out in a manner very contrary to his expectations. For the Huns (being very sagacious in conjectures) suspecting that there must be a considerable multitude further off, contrived to pass beyond those they had seen, and arranged themselves to take their rest where there was nothing at hand to disturb them, and then, when the moon dispelled the darkness of night, they forded the river, which was the best plan that presented itself, and fearing lest the piquets at the outposts

might give the alarm to the distant camp, they made all possible speed and advanced with the hope of surprising Athanaric himself.

He was stupefied at the suddenness of their onset, and after losing many of his men, was compelled to flee for refuge to the precipitous mountains in the neighbourhood, Where, being wholly bewildered with the strangeness of this occurrence, and the fear of greater evils to come, he began to fortify with lofty walls all the territory between the banks of the river Pruth and the Danube, where it passes through the lands of the Taifali¹¹⁴, and he completed this line of fortification with great diligence, thinking that by this step he should secure his own personal safety. While this important work was going on, the Huns kept pressing on his traces with great speed, and they would have overtaken and destroyed him if they had not been forced to abandon the pursuit from being impeded by the great quantity of their booty.

In the mean time a report spread extensively through the other nations of the Goths, that a race of men, hitherto unknown, had suddenly descended like a whirlwind from the lofty mountains, as if they had risen from some secret recess of the earth, and were ravaging and destroying everything which came in their way. And then the greater part of the population which, because of their want of necessaries[Pg 585] had deserted Athanaric, resolved to flee and to seek a home remote from all knowledge of the barbarians, And after a long deliberation where to fix their abode, they resolved that a retreat into Thrace was the most suitable for these two reasons: first of all, because it is a district most fertile in grass, and also because, by the great breadth of the Danube, it is wholly separated from the barbarians, who were already exposed to the thunderbolts of foreign warfare. And the whole population of the tribe adopted this resolution unanimously...'

Material prepared by Bulat Khamidullin

¹⁰⁸ The Dniester.

¹⁰⁹ Borisfen is the Dnieper.

¹¹⁰ The Visigoths.

¹¹¹ Flavius Julius Valens (circa 328–378) was the Emperor of the Eastern part of the Roman Empire from 364. Valentinian I's brother and co-ruler.

¹¹² The organiser of the struggle with Valens was executed.

¹¹³ One of the Visigoths' leaders.

¹¹⁴ One of the Goth tribes.

No. 6

Priscus of Panium about the royal Scythians–Huns

Priscus was a Thracian who was a member of the embassy of the Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire Theodosius II to Attila's headquarters in 448, he left records about this embassy, which contain the most detailed information about the Huns, Attila, and the people closest to him. There is an existing publication of his notes in Russian: *Tales of Priscus of Panium*. Translated by G. Destunis // *Bulletin of the 2nd branch of the Academy of Sciences*. – Book 7. – No. 1. – Saint Petersburg, 1861. We use the following publication here:

Priscus of Panium. 'The History of the Goths' // V. Latyshev. *Bulletin of Ancient Writers about Scythia and the Caucasus* // *Bulletin of Ancient History*. – Moscow – Leningrad: Publication of the USSR Academy of Sciences, 1948. – No. 4 (26)

Excerpt from the source:

'1. Rugila, the king of the Huns, having decided to go to war¹¹⁵ with the Amilsurs, Itimars, Tonosurs, Bisks, and other peoples living along the Ister¹¹⁶ and having resorted to Roman protection, sends Esla, who usually served him in conflicts with the Romans, threatening to break the established peace if they do not give up all those who have escaped to them. The Romans proposed to send an embassy to the Huns, Plinta and Dionysius expressed a desire to be the ambassadors, of whom Plinta was a Scythian, and Dionysius, a Thracian, both of them were military commanders and served as Roman consuls. But as it was supposed that Esla would return to Rugila before this embassy, Plinta sent with him one of his relatives Sengi Lakh to persuade Rugila to negotiate with him and not with other Romans. When Rugila died¹¹⁷, and Attila and Bleda became the kings of the Huns, the Roman Senate decided to send Plinta to them as an ambassador. Upon approval of this decision by the emperor, Plinta expressed a desire to take with him Epigenes, who enjoyed the greatest fame for his intelligence and served as a questor. When he was also selected as an ambassador, they both arrived in Margus¹¹⁸. This was a town of the Illyrian Moesi located

on the Ister River across from the fortress of Constantius situated on the other bank, the Royal Scythians also gathered there. They held a meeting outside the town sitting on their horses because the barbarians were not used to conducting meetings on foot, therefore, taking care of their dignity, the Roman ambassadors came to the Scythians, in compliance with this custom, to avoid a situation in which some are on horseback, and others are on foot...¹¹⁹ that the Romans would not only stop accepting those who escaped from the Scythian land but would hand over those who had already fled, together with the Roman prisoners of war who had arrived in their country without ransom, unless 8 gold coins were given for each fugitive to those who had acquired them during the war, the Romans agreed not to enter into an alliance with barbarians who went to war against the Huns, fairs should be equal and safe for the Romans and the Huns, and the treaty should be observed and remain in force to the effect that the Romans were to pay 700 litras of gold annually to the Royal Scythians (before that the tribute had amounted to 350 litras). The Romans concluded a treaty with the Huns on these conditions, and, having sworn an oath, both sides returned home. Those who fled to the Romans were handed over to the barbarians, including the children of Mamas

¹¹⁵ In 433.

¹¹⁶ The Danube.

¹¹⁷ Occurred in 434.

¹¹⁸ A fortress at the Roman-Dacian border.

¹¹⁹ A gap in the text.

and Atakam, from the royal family, who were crucified in Kars, the Thracian fortification, as a punishment for their flight. Upon conclusion of peace with the Romans, Attila and Bleda began conquering the peoples who lived in Scythia and went to war with the Sorosgs¹²⁰.

1. The Scythians were besieging Naissus, an Illyrian city on the Danube River. They say that it was founded by Constantine... The barbarians, wishing to seize this populous and fortified city, made numerous attempts. As the citizens did not dare to come out for battle, in order to make an easy crossing of the river for their army, the besiegers built a bridge on it on the south side, where it flows near the city, and brought various machines to the walls, primarily logs carried on wheels for the purpose of their convenient transportation, men standing on them would shoot at the defenders standing on the parapets, and men standing at the side would push the wheels and move the machine to where they needed so they could shoot aiming through the windows made in the coverings, because in order for those standing on the logs to be safe, these machines were covered with twigs and skins to protect them from projectiles, some of them fiery, thrown at them by the enemies. After a great number of such machines had been built to attack the city, so that the defenders standing on the parapets were forced to retreat due to the numerous projectiles, they began to bring in the so-called battering rams as well. This is also a very large machine, it was a log freely hanging on chains between timbers slanted towards each other and having a sharp point and coverings prepared as described above for the safety of the labourers. It is these men who drew it back mightily with ropes from the back end in the opposite direction from the object to be hit, and then let it go such that an entire part of the wall was destroyed by the blow. In turn, the defenders standing on the walls would throw wagon stones¹²¹, which they had prepared in advance, when the engines were brought to the wall, and some of them were smashed to pieces together with the men, but they did not have enough force compared to

the number of machines. The besiegers brought ladders as well, so that the city was seized after the wall had been broken in some places by the battering rams, and in other places those standing on the parapets had to retreat because of the large number of attacking machines, and the barbarians got into the city through a hole in the wall made by the battering ram and using ladders brought to the part of the wall which had not fallen.

2. When the Scythians attacked the Romans¹²² during a fair and killed many of them, the Romans sent ambassadors to them accusing them of seizing the fortress and violating the peace. The Scythians told that they had not instigated it but only defended themselves, for the Bishop of Margus, having come to their lands and searched their royal tombs, stole the treasures placed therein, and if the Romans did not hand him and other fugitives over in accordance with the treaty—for the Romans were still keeping a large number of them—then they would start a war. When the Romans denied the fairness of this accusation, the barbarians, insisting on the truth of their words, did not want to settle the misunderstanding in court but preferred war and, having crossed the Ister, devastated many towns and fortifications along the river, and seized Viminacium, a city of the Illyrian Moesi¹²³. After that, when some people started saying that they had to hand over the bishop of Margus so as not to bring the danger of war down upon the entire Roman Empire for the sake of one man, this man, suspecting the possibility of his extradition, secretly came to the enemies and promised to betray the city to them if the Scythian kings gave him a decent reward. They answered that they would shower him with various riches if he fulfilled his promise. Having shaken hands and sworn oaths as a sign of agreement, he returned to the Roman lands with a barbarian army, and, having set it in ambush on the bank, roused it in the night with a prearranged signal, and betrayed the city to the enemies. When Margus was thus devastated, the power of the barbarians increased even more.

¹²⁰ With the Saragurs.

¹²¹ That means suitable by size and weight to be loaded into a cart.

¹²² In 442.

¹²³ A city in Moesia Superior on the Danube coast.

3. Under the reign of Theodosius the Younger, Attila, the king of the Huns, having gathered his army, sent a letter¹²⁴ to the emperor demanding that the fugitives and tributes that had not been handed over under the pretext of the war should be sent to him immediately, and that ambassadors should be sent for negotiations to settle the matter of future tributes, he added that if the Romans delayed or prepared for war, he would not be able to hold back the Scythian army even if he wanted to. Having read this, the courtiers said that they would not hand over the fugitives, who had come to them for protection, but they would withstand the war together with them and decided to send ambassadors to resolve the misunderstandings. When Attila learnt of the decision of the Romans, he angrily began to ravage the Roman lands, and, having destroyed several fortifications, he started the siege of Ratiaria¹²⁵, a large and populous city.

4. Theodosius sent the consul Senator as an ambassador to Attila. Even under the name of an ambassador, he did not dare to come to the Huns by land but sailed to the Pontus Euxinos and the city of Odessos¹²⁶, where the commander Theodoulos, who had arrived there earlier, was staying.

5. After the battle between the Romans and the Huns near Chersonesus¹²⁷, a peace treaty was concluded with the help of ambassador Anatolius. They agreed that the Huns should receive their fugitives and 6,000 litras of gold in accordance with the previous conditions, the annual tribute was agreed upon in the amount of 2,100 litras of gold, for each Roman prisoner of war, who had fled and entered his own land without ransom, they had to pay 12 gold coins, and in the case of non-payment those who had received the fugitive were obliged to hand him over, the Romans could not receive any barbarian who had fled to them. The Romans pretended that they were voluntarily concluding such a treaty, but in fact

they were striving for peace out of necessity and the desperate fear, which had gripped their commanders, and therefore they strove to conclude a peace treaty and were ready to accept any requirements, even the most burdensome ones, thus, they agreed to such a tribute, which was difficult to pay because their income and royal treasures had been spent not for work but for aimless spectacles, reckless splendor, dissolute pleasures, and other costs, which could not be endured by a reasonable person even in favourable circumstances, to say nothing of those who neglected weapons. So they obeyed the demands for tribute not only of the Scythians but also of other barbarians who lived on the borders of the Roman provinces...

8. ...When Bigila¹²⁸ had set out, we¹²⁹ stayed for another day after his departure, and the next day we went with Attila to the northern part of his country. Having travelled some distance with the barbarian, we turned onto another road on the order of our Scythian guides, who explained that Attila had to go to a village where he wanted to marry Eskam's daughter, although he already had many wives, but he wanted to take this one as well in accordance with the Scythian custom. From there we continued along a level road running through a plain and encountered navigable rivers, of which the Drekon, Tigas, and Tifesas were the largest ones after the Ister. We crossed them on the dugout canoes used by the people living on the banks and crossed the rest of the rivers on rafts, which the barbarians carry with them on carts to use where there are river overflows. In the villages we were given food, but millet instead of wheat and so-called 'mead' instead of wine, the servants following us also received millet and a drink made of barley, which the barbarians call 'kamos.' Having travelled a long way, we settled for the night near a lake with potable water, which was used by the inhabitants of the nearby village. Suddenly a storm arose with whirlwinds, thunder, frequent lightning, and pouring rain, it not only overturned our tent but blew all our belongings into the lake water. Terrified by the raging elements and all that had happened, we

¹²⁴ In 442.

¹²⁵ A city in the area of present-day Bulgaria on the right bank of the Danube, a Roman borderline fortress and port of the Danube fleet.

¹²⁶ A city on the site of present-day Varna in Bulgaria.

¹²⁷ This clash occurred in 447 near the Thracian Chersonesus.

¹²⁸ One of the Roman ambassadors to Attila.

¹²⁹ The embassy Priscus was a member of.

left the place in the darkness under the rain and lost each other since each of us took the road which he considered easiest. When we reached the huts of the village—since it turned out that we had all moved in one direction though by different paths—we gathered together and began shouting and searching for those who had fallen behind. The Scythians, who had jumped out of their huts because of the noise, lit the cane they used as a combustible material, lighted the area, and asked why we were shouting. When the barbarians who were with us said that we had been frightened by the storm, they invited us into their homes, entertained us, and warmed us, lighting many canes. The woman who ruled the village, who turned out to be one of Bleda's wives, sent us food and beautiful women to keep us company according to the Scythian custom of receiving honoured guests. We treated these women to the food we had been offered, but we declined relations with them and spent the night in the huts. In the morning we started looking for our belongings, and, having found all of them, partly in the place where we had camped the day before, partly on the lake shore and even partly in the water, we gathered them together. We spent this day in the village drying our belongings, for the storm had stopped, and the sun was shining brightly. Having also prepared our horses and other pack animals, we came to the queen, greeted her, and offered gifts in reciprocation, namely three silver bowls, fine leather, Indian pepper, dates, and other delicacies, which were appreciated, because they were rare in the lands of the barbarians, then we went away, wishing her prosperity for her hospitality. Having travelled seven days, we stopped in a village by the order of the Scythians escorting us because Attila had to visit it on his way, and we had to go after him. Here we met western Romans¹³⁰, who had also arrived as ambassadors to Attila. Among them were: Romulus, awarded the honorary title of Comes, Promutus, the governor of the province of Noricum, and Romanus, the head of a military detachment, with them was Constantius, whom Aetius had sent to Attila as a secretary, and Tatullus, the father of Orestes,

the companion of Edecon. The latter two persons were not members of the embassy but had undertaken the journey for private reasons, namely: Constantius due to acquaintance with these people that had started in Italy, and Tatullus due to family relationships because his son Orestes was married to Romulus's daughter...

Having met them on the road and waited for Attila to go forward, we followed him with all his retinue. Having crossed some rivers, we arrived in a huge settlement where, as they said, were the dwellings of Attila, which were more spectacular than those built in all other places, they were made of logs and well-planed boards and surrounded by a wooden fence built not for security but for beauty. Next to the king's dwellings were the dwellings of Onegesius, which were also surrounded by a wooden fence but were not ornamented with towers as were Attila's. At a short distance from the fence there were baths which had been built by Onegesius, whom the Scythians considered the most important after Attila. The stones for them had been brought from the lands of the Peons¹³¹ since the barbarians living there had neither stones nor wood and used only imported materials. The architect of the baths was a captive from Sirmium¹³², who had hoped that his manumission would be the reward of his labour, but unexpectedly he found himself in a more serious trouble than slavery in Scythia: Onegesius made him the superintendent of the bath, and he served him and his family during their ablutions. As Attila entered this village, he was met by maidens arranged in rows under fine, white, and very long veils, under each veil, held by women walking on each side, were seven or more maidens, singing Scythian airs, there were many such rows of women under veils. The way to the royal residence lay by the dwelling of Onegesius, and when Attila was passing it, the wife of Onegesius came out with a crowd of servants, some bearing dishes and some bearing wine (this is the highest compliment amongst the Scythians), and she greeted Attila and invited him to taste the dishes she had brought... Wishing to please

¹³⁰ That means from the Western Roman Empire.

¹³¹ That means from Pannonia.

¹³² From Lower Pannonia.

the wife of his favourite... Attila ate, sitting on his horse, and the barbarians following him lifted the plate for him (it was made of silver). Having tasted the cup offered to him, he retired to the palace, which was higher than the other buildings and was located in an elevated place. We stayed in the house of Onegesius upon his request because he had already returned together with Attila's son and dined there, being received by his wife and relatives, for he had not time to partake with us: he met Attila for the first time after his return and reported to him on the mission for which he had been sent and on the misfortune which had befallen Attila's son, who had fallen from his horse and broken his right arm. After dinner, when we left the house of Onegesius, we pitched our tents near Attila's palace, so that Maximinus¹³³ might be at hand to confer with him or his counselors. We spent the night in the place where we had camped...

...The next day I arrived at Attila's palace, carrying gifts for his wife, whose name was Kreka, she had borne three children to him, the eldest of whom ruled the Akatziri and other nations living in the part of Scythia near the sea. Inside the fence were various buildings, some of which were constructed of planks beautifully fitted together, others of straight hewn logs set in wooden circles, these circles, starting from the ground, rose to a moderate height. I was admitted to Attila's wife by the barbarians standing at the door and found her lying on a soft bed, the floor of the room was covered with felt carpets, on which we walked. The queen was surrounded by a number of servants, servant women sitting opposite her on the floor were embroidering scarves, which were worn by the barbarians over their clothing for ornament. Having approached the queen and, after greeting her, presented the gifts, I left and went to the other buildings in which Attila himself resided to wait for Onegesius: he had already left his house and was now in Attila's palace. Standing amid the crowd—as Attila's guards and the barbarians surrounding him already knew me and thus no one hindered me—I observed a mass of people coming, and

there was much talking and noise in that place, signaling that Attila was coming out, he came out of the palace, bearing himself haughtily and casting glances all around. When he came out together with Ogenesius and stood in front of the palace, many people who had disputes among themselves came to him and received his decision. After that he returned to the palace and gave audience to the ambassadors of barbarian nations who had come to him.

While I was waiting for Onegesius, Romulus, Promutus, and Romanus, who had arrived from Italy as ambassadors to Attila regarding the issue of golden cups in the presence of Rusticius, Constantius's companion, and Constantiolus, a native of Pannonia, which was under Attila's control, inquired whether we had been dismissed or were to remain. I replied that I was waiting for Onegesius to ascertain this very matter, and therefore I was waiting near the fence, and in turn I asked whether Attila had given them a favourable and friendly answer to their ambassadorial matters. They answered that Attila was quite inexorable and would declare war unless either Silvanus¹³⁴ or the golden vessels were delivered up to him. While we were expressing surprise at Attila's arrogance, Romulus the ambassador, who was very experienced in many matters, said that Attila's good fortune and the power resulting from it greatly increased his conceit, and he could not stand fairness if it was not beneficial for him. No king, either of Scythia or any other state, had ever done such great things in such a short time and possessed even islands in the ocean, and in addition to all of Scythia, to make the Romans pay tributes to him. Wishing to achieve still more and to increase his possessions, he even wanted to advance into Persia. Someone asked how he can reach Persia, and Romulus answered that Media was not far from Scythia, and that the Huns knew this way because they had already invaded Media when their country was suffering from hunger, and the Romans could not prevent the invasion due to another war. Thus, Bazic and Cursic from the tribe of the Royal Scythians, the leaders of a great mass of people, entered

¹³³ A person within Emperor Theodosius II's circle, a diplomat.

¹³⁴ Silvan, the bishop of the city of Marg, who robbed kings' burial mounds.

Media, they later went to Rome to negotiate a military alliance¹³⁵. They said that they had crossed a desert and then a lake, which Romulus supposed to be the Maeotis, and after a fifteen-day journey, having crossed the mountains, they entered Media¹³⁶. While they were ravaging the country with their raids, an army of Persia archers filled the air with arrows, so that the Huns were forced to retreat back across the mountains carrying with them only a small portion of the loot because the largest part thereof had been taken by the Medes. Fearing pursuit by the enemies, they turned to another road and, having passed an underwater rock with fire rising out of it and having left it...¹³⁷ they came to their native country. Thus they learnt that Media was not far from Scythia. Thus, if Attila wanted to attack Media, it would not require much work or a long journey, and he could conquer the Medes and Persians and Parthians and make them pay tributes because he had such military power that no nation could resist. When we expressed a wish that he would attack the Persians, Constantiolus said that he fears that Attila, having easily subjugated the Persians, could return as a master instead of a friend, now the Romans bring him gold in consideration of the dignity conferred upon him, but if he conquered the Medes, Persians, and Parthians, he would no longer suffer the Romans to usurp his power but would treat them openly as his slaves and impose harsh and unbearable requirements on them. The dignity mentioned by Constantiolus consisted in the title of a Roman military commander, to get which Attila accepted from the Emperor a name of concealing payment¹³⁸ of the tributes, so that the tributes were paid to him under the name of provision funds payable to commanders. So Constantiolus said that after conquering the Medes, Parthians, and Persians, Attila would refuse this name by which the Romans want to name him and the title by which they thought they showed honour, and would make them

call him a king instead of a commander. For he had once already said in anger that for the emperor his servants are commanders, but his commanders are equal in honour with the emperors of Rome. After that his power would become even greater. God himself had testified to this by revealing the sword of Ares, which was considered sacred and worshiped by the Scythian kings as dedicated to the god of war, but had disappeared in former times and then had been again found with the help of a cow.

Everyone wanted to say something regarding the present state of affairs, but as Onegesius had already come, we went to him to ask what we wanted to know. Having at first spoken to some barbarians, he ordered me to ask Maximinus what man of consular dignity the Romans wanted to send as an ambassador to Attila. Having come to the tent, I reported what I had been told and discussed with Maximinus how best to answer the barbarian's question and then returned to Onegesius and said that the Romans would prefer that he should come to them for negotiations regarding the controversy, but if this was impossible, the emperor would send the ambassador most acceptable to Attila. He asked me to immediately call Maximinus, and when he came, they went to Attila. Some time later Maximin came out to say that Attila demanded that either Nomus, Anatolius, or Senator¹³⁹ should be sent to him, refusing to receive any other person as an ambassador. Maximinus said that when inviting persons as ambassadors it is not good to show them as suspicious before the Emperor, but Attila replied that unless they agree to do as he required, he would settle the controversy by the sword. When we returned to the tent, the father of Orestescame¹⁴⁰ with an invitation from Attila to a feast that would begin at the ninth hour of the day. At the appointed time we came to the feast together with the ambassadors from the Western empire and stood at the threshold in front of Attila. The cupbearers gave us a goblet in accordance with the local tradition in order

¹³⁵ Must have occurred at the beginning of the mid-5th century.

¹³⁶ Therefore, the Huns' route passed through the Azov Sea and then the Caucasus.

¹³⁷ A gap in the text.

¹³⁸ ?

¹³⁹ All of these people are Roman consuls from different years who had a profound influence at Theodosius II's court.

¹⁴⁰ Orestes was Attila's wingman and his secretary, whose cognomen was 'Roman.'

for us to pray before taking our places. After we had tasted the cup, we went to the seats in which we were to sit for the meal. The seats were placed against the walls on both sides. Attila was sitting on an elevated couch in the center, and behind him was another couch, from which there were steps leading to his bed, covered with sheets and colourful curtains for decoration, as the Hellenes and the Romans do for newlyweds. The seats to the right of Attila were considered the first row, and those on the left, where we were sitting, were the second, and Berich, a noble Scythian, was placed above us. Onegesius was witting on a seat to the right of Attila's couch. In front of him on other seats two of Attila's sons were sitting, while the eldest was sitting on the very couch of Attila, not near him, but on the edge, looking at the ground as a sign of respect for his father. When everything was arranged, a cupbearer approached Attila and handed him a goblet of wine. Having taken the goblet, Attila greeted the person who occupied the first place, and the person who was thus honoured stood up and could not sit down until Attila, having tasted or drunk from his goblet, returned it to his cupbearer. All the guests saluted the person in a like manner, taking their goblets and drinking from them after Attila's salutation. Each person had his own cupbearer, who had to come in the right order after Attila's cupbearer. After the second and all subsequent guests were thus welcomed by Attila, he saluted us as well in accordance with the location of our seats. When everyone had been greeted in this way, the cupbearers left the hall, and tables for three, four, or more guests were placed

after that of Attila's, so that each person might help himself from the dishes without leaving the row of seats. First the attendant of Attila came bearing a dish filled with meat, and after him those serving the guests brought bread and savouries and put them on the tables. Sumptuous dishes were prepared for the other barbarians and for us, served on round silver platters, but Attila himself ate nothing but meat served on a wooden plate. He demonstrated similar moderation in everything else: for example, the goblets offered to all his guests were made of gold or silver, but his own cup was of wood. His clothes were equally simple and were not remarkable for anything but their cleanness, and neither the sword hanging at his side, the thongs of his barbarian sandals, nor the bridle of his horse were ornamented with gold or precious stones like those of other Scythians. Having eaten the first dishes, we stood up, and no one sat down again before each guest from the first row of seats had drunk a cup of wine to the bottom wishing health and prosperity to Attila. Having thus honoured him, we sat down, and the second dish was served. When everyone had partaken of this dish, the ceremony of standing up, drinking, and sitting down again was repeated. In the evening torches were lighted, and two barbarians, standing in the centre opposite Attila, began singing songs, which they had composed, celebrating his victories and military virtues, the guests listened to them, and some were delighted with the songs, others were excited from recollecting the battles, and yet others wept because their strength had been reduced by age, and their spirits required tranquility...'

Material prepared by Bulat Khamidullin

Excerpt from the source:

Memorial inscription in honour of Kultegin

A short inscription

- (1) 'The Heavenly, Sky-born (*in fact* 'in the sky' or 'from the sky arose') Turkic Khaganate,' these days I mounted (the throne). (You) Listen to my speech fully, my junior relatives and the youth (you) following me, my allied tribes and peoples, (you, standing) on the right heads of shad and apa, (you, standing) on the left heads: tarkhans and mandators, (you) thirty...
- (2) (you) the heads and people of the 'nine Oghuz,' listen properly and listen closely to (this) my speech! Forward, to the sunrise, on the right, (in the state) of noonday, backward, to the sunset, on the left, (in the state) of midnight, – (everywhere) there (*that is* within these limits) live (*literally*: which are located inside) peoples—all are mine to control, so many people I
- (3) was agreed by all. And if this Turkic Khagan sat (on the throne) in the Otyuken chern, who has no current deterioration, then (it is natural that) in the tribal union (of Turks) there was no(*that is* was not being felt) discomfort (about anything). Forward (*that is* to the East) I passed with my troops down to Shantung plain, not quite to the sea, to the right (*that is* to the South) I passed with my army up to 'nine erkens,' and barely reached Tibet, backward (*that is* to the West), crossing the Yencha (Pearl) River, I passed with my warriors down to
- (4) Temir-kapyga (Iron Gate), to the left (*that is* to the North) I passed with my army down to Jir-Bajyrku state, – up to so (many) states I have taken (my troops). (During those campaigns) there was no good master in the Otyuken chern (*that is* real), but Otyuken chern was (exactly) the state where (it was possible) to create a tribal union. In this country, where I stayed (*that is* settled), I have joined my life (and the people's life) to the Tabgach clan.
- (5) The Tabgach people, who give (us now) limitless gold, silver, spirits (*or*: wheat) and silk, (always) had sweet words, and 'luxurious' jewellery were (*that is* luxurious, enervating), tempting with sweet words and luxurious jewellery, they have so (*that is* very) strongly attracted people (living) far away. (The same) settled close by, then they acquired bad knowledge.
- (6) The Tabgach people and their followers did not (could not) lead good and wise people and noble heroes (astray). But if (individuals) from the Turks (were seduced), whole families (even) up to in-laws (relatives by marriage) did not stray. Tempted by their sweet talk and splendid jewellery, you, O Turkic people, perished in great numbers. Turkic people, when part of you said: I wish to settle not only on the right hand (*that is* in the South) in Chugaj chern,'
- (7) but also in the Tyun (?) plain, then evil people there instructed part of the Turkic people, saying: 'Whoever lives far (from the Tabgach) receives bad gifts, and whoever lives close, (these) receive good gifts,' with these words he instructed you so (strongly). And (now) you, people, lacking (true) wisdom, listened to the talk and after moving closer died (there) in great numbers.
- (8) (So), O Turkic people, when you go to that country, you are about to die, and when you are in Otyuken country, (only) sending caravans (to take gifts, – *that is* tribute), you do not have any sorrow, when you stay to live in Otyuken chern, you can live by creating your eternal tribal union, and you, Turkic people, are well fed, and when you are thin and hungry, (but nevertheless) you do not understand the (condition of) satiety (*that is* real reasons of satiety), and once satiated, you do not understand the (condition of) hunger. Because you are like that (*that is* extravagant, shortsighted),

- (9) you, without accepting (*that is* not listening to) your khan, who has raised (you), not a single word, (began) wander through all the countries and completely collapsed there exhausted (*that is* many of you died), and you, the ones left (alive), wandered through all the countries in a totally miserable condition (*literally*: living and dying). By the mercy of Heaven and because of my happiness, I started (a reign) as Khagan. After becoming a Khagan,
- (10) I fully raised (gathered?) the dead and poor people, made poor people rich, and made sparse people numerous. Is there any lie (falsehood) in what I am saying?! O, Turkic chiefs and people, hear this! I have engraved here (*that is* on this stone) how you (O chiefs and people) gathered the Turkic people, created (your) tribal union, how you, by sinning, became divided, I have
- (11) engraved everything here. Everything I (had) to say, I have engraved on an eternal stone (*that is* a memorial inscription). Looking at it, know (*that is* learn) you, Turkic chiefs and people of today! Chiefs obedient to the throne (*literally*: who are watching the throne), are you not under a delusion?! (*that is* to betray, to disobey and so on). From the Emperor of the Tabgach people I have brought masters and commissioned (them) to incise... an eternal stone. They did not corrupt (*that is* did not distort) my speech, (since)
- (12) the Tabgach have sent me 'inner' masters of their Emperor. I have commissioned a particular (special) task for them, I told them to cover (the walls) inside and outside with particular (special) carving and to erect a stone, my heartfelt speech...you, to the sons of 'ten arrows' and to pripushchenniks (tats), inclusive (all of you) know, looking at it (*that is* at the memorial inscription). I have erected
- (13) a monument...if up to the present time it is at a road stop, then at (this) road stop (here) I have erected (this monument), (know) that I made an inscription (on it). Looking at it, know: that stone I... This inscription was (is) written by his grandson Yolyg-T(egin).'

The large inscription

- (1) When the blue sky above and the brown earth below were created, between them a human being was created. Over the human beings, my ancestors Bumin Kagan and İstāmi Kagan ruled. They ruled people by Turkish laws, they led them and succeeded.
- (2) From all four sides there were enemies. They sent there lance-bearing armies to conquer all those people in the four quarters of the world and made them still. They made bow those who had heads and made kneel those who had knees. To eastwards up to the Kadyrkhan mountain forests and westwards as far as the Iron Gate they went on campaign. There were Kok (Blue) Turks between the two boundaries,
- (3) having neither rulers nor masters. Wise kagans were they. Great kagans were they. Their buyruqs (officials), too, were wise and brave, indeed. They were great too. Both the lords and people were straightforward and honest. For this reason kagans were able to rule the state.
- (4) They (the lords) thus passed away (*literally* 'fled away to Tengri'). The representatives of the people of the Böküli Čölüg (Korea), Tabyač (Chinese), Avar, Rome, Kirgiz, Uc-Quriqan, Otuz-Tatar, Qitaŋ, and Tatabi, these many people came and mourned and lamented. So famous kagans were they. Then the younger brothers became kagans,
- (5) and their sons became kagans. But apparently the younger brothers did not resemble their elder brothers. The sons did not resemble their fathers. Unwise kagans succeeded to the throne. Bad kagans succeeded to the throne.
- (6) The lords and people went unfair. Since they give way to Chinese people, since they were defrauded by them, younger and elder brothers became revengeful and enemy to each other. Turkish people were exiled.
- (7) The kagans were exiled. Chinese people made your kind sons slave, made your beautiful daughters servant. The Turkish lords forgot their Turkish titles. Those lords held Chinese titles, and obeyed the Chinese emperor for fifty years,

- (8) and gave their deeds and services to him. They went on campaigns up to the Böküli kagan in the east and as far as the Iron Gate in the west. They gave the Chinese emperor to rule the state and lordship.
- (9) Then Turkish common people said as follows: "I had a state. Where is my state now? Who do I give my state to? I had kagans. Where is my kagan now? Who do I give my deeds and services to?" So they became hostile to the Chinese emperor.
- (10) They became hostile and struck against, (but) they submitted again. They were near to be annihilated. They could not get that they gave all their deeds and services, they had no warn against. All Turkish people degraded, they had no generation and went to ruins. Then Turkic Tengri above, Turkish holy Earth
- (11) and Water said as follows: "in order to Turkish people would not go to ruin and in order to it should be a nation again", They rose my father Ilteris Kagan and my mother Ilbilga Katun to the top and sat them upwards on the throne. My father, the kagan, gathered together seventeen brave lords.
- (12) All having heard that they went off on campaigns, those who were in towns went off to fields, and those who were on mountains went down, gathered together seventy brave men. Tengri gave them power, my father's army was like wolves, their enemies were like sheep. Having gone on campaigns forward and backward,
- (13) gathered together seven hundred soldiers. After they had numbered seven hundred men, he brought them to order and trained people who had lost their state and their kagan, people who had turned to slaves and servants, people who had lost the Turkish institutions, brought to order and followed the rules of my ancestors. Then he gave people Tolis and Tardush states.
- (14) And gave them two rulers, a yabgu and a šad. Chinese people were our enemy in the south, Toquz-Oguz people in the north with Baz Kaganon head were our enemies, too. The Kirgiz, Quriqan, Otuz-Tatar, Qitan, and Tatabi—they all were hostile to us. My father, the kagan,
- (15) was on campaigns forty-seven times and engaged in twenty battles. By the grace of Tengri, he took the realm of those who had had a realm and captured the kagan of those who had a kagan, he subjugated enemies. He made powerful enemies kneel and proud ones bow. (My father, the kagan,)
- (16) after he had founded (such a great) empire and gained power, passed away (*literally*: 'went flying'). Balbals erected for my father, the kagan, were first erected from Baz Kagan's balbals. My uncle succeeded to the throne then. My uncle, the kagan, organised and nourished Turkish people anew. He made poor people rich and few people numerous.
- (17) When my uncle, the kagan, succeeded to the throne, I was šad over Tardush people. Together with my uncle, the kagan, we went on campaigns eastwards up to Green River (= Yellow River) and Shantung plain, and we went on campaigns westwards as far as the Iron Gate. (We went on campaigns up to the land of Kirgiz) beyond the Kogmen (mountains).
- (18) We went on campaigns twenty-five times in all and, we fought thirteen times. We took the realm of those who had a realm, and we captured the kagan of those who had a kagan, we made powerful enemies kneel and proud ones bow. The Turgesh kagan (and his people) was our Turkic. (Because of their unawareness and foolishness)
- (19) their being traitorous to us, their kagan had died, his buyruqs and lords, had died, too. The On-Oq people suffered (a great deal). In order the land (*literally*: 'earth and water'), which was ruled by our ancestors, not to be left without a ruler, we organized Az people and put them in order.... and because they were treasons their kagan had died, his buyruqs and lords, also
- (20) was Bars Beg. It was we, who had given him the title of kagan. We had also given him my younger sister, the princess, in marriage. But, he betrayed (us). (As a result) the kagan

was killed and people became slaves and servants. In order the Kogman land would not remain without a ruler, we organized the Az and Kirgiz peoples, and then we came (back) and fought.

- (21) We gave (them) back.... Eastwards as far as beyond the Khingan mountains we thus settled and organized people, Westwards as far as Kaŋu Tarman we thus settled and organized Turkish people. At that time our slaves themselves had slaves (and servants themselves had servants. Younger brothers did not acknowledge their elder brothers, and sons did not acknowledge their fathers).
- (22) We had such well-acquired and well-organized state and power. You, Turkish and Oguz lords and peoples, hear this! If the sky above did not collapse, and if the earth below did not go away, what could destroy your state and power? O Turkish people, regret and repent!
- (23) Because of your unruliness, you yourselves betrayed your wise kagan, who had (always) supported you. And you yourselves betrayed your good realm, which was free and independent. And you (yourselves) caused discord. Where did the armed (people) come from and dispersed you? Where did the lancer come from and carried you away? You, people of sacred Otukan mountains, it was you, who went away.
- (24) Those (of you), who meant to go to east went to east, and those (of you), who meant to go to west went to west. In places you went away, your (only) profit was the following: your blood ran like a river, and your bones were heaped up like a mountain, your sons worthy of becoming lords became slaves, and your daughters worthy of becoming ladies became servants. Because of your unawareness,
- (25) and because of your mischievousness, my uncle, the kagan, met his death. First I erected balbals (for him) beginning from Kirgiz kagan's. Tengri, which had raised my father, the kagan, and my mother, the katun, and which had granted them a state, For the name and fame of the Turkish people would not perish, (that Tengri)
- (26) enthroned (me). I did not become ruler of wealthy and prosperous people at all, (on the contrary,) I became a ruler of poor and miserable people, who were food-less inside and cloth-less outside. I and Kultegin, my younger brother, consulted together. For the name and fame of people, which our father and uncle had ruled, would not perish, and
- (27) For the sake of Turkish people, I did not sleep at night and I did not relax by day. Together with my younger brother, Kultegin, the two šads, we worked to death and I won. Having won and gathered in that way, I did not let people split into two parts like fire and water. (When) I (succeeded to the throne) in all countries people, who had gone (in almost all directions)
- (28) vagrant people came back utterly exhausted, without horses and without clothes came back. In order to nourish people, I, with great armies, went on campaigns twelve times, northwards against Oguz people, eastwards against the Qitan and Tatabi, southwards against Chinese, (and I fought ... times).
- (29) After (that), since I had fortune and since I had good luck – my Tengri was gracious! – I brought people to life, who were going to perish, and nourished them. I dressed naked people with clothes and I made poor people rich and few people numerous. I made them superior than people, who had great states and (esteemed rulers).
- (30) I subdue all people, who live in four parts of the world. There was no enemy left. Many of them submitted to me. My younger brother, Kultegin passed away, after he had established the powerful lordship, where people had been giving their services to me. When my father, the kagan, passed away, my younger brother Kultegin was at the age of seven...
- (31) My younger brother Kultegin became a man due to good luck of my Umay-like mother, the katun. When he was sixteen, my uncle, the kagan, gathered the lords. We went on a campaign in direction of Six-Čub Sogdian colonies. The Chinese governor On-Tutuq came with fifty thousand armies. And we fought.

- (32) Kultegin attacked on his foot. He took On-Tutuq Yorčyn with his army. He showed their weapons to the kagan. We destroyed that army then. When he was twenty-one years old, we fought against General Čača. First he mounted Tadqyš Čor's gray horse and attacked. That horse died there.
- (33) Secondly, he mounted Isbara Yamtar's gray horse and attacked. That horse died there. Thirdly, he mounted Yigan Silbeg's dressed bay horse and attacked. That horse died there. He was hit with more than one hundred arrows on his armor and caftan, (but) he was not hit on head and face even once.
- (34) Turkish lords, you all know what attacking is! We destroyed that army then. Then Great Irkin of Bayirqu land became our hostile. We destroyed him too at Turgi-Yarayun lake. The Great Irkin ran away together with few men. Kultegin was...
- (35) ... year old. We went on a campaign against Kirgiz. Dissecting lance-deep snow we marched around the Kogman mountains and fell upon Kirgiz people. We fought with their kagan at the Soņa mountains. Kultegin mounted Bayirqu's (white stallion)
- (36) and attacked. He hit one man with an arrow and killed two men with spear. He was attacking until the backbone of Bayirqu's white stallion was broken. We killed the Kirgiz kagan and conquered his country. In that year we marched to Turgesh ...
- (37) crossing over The Irtysh river. We fell upon Turgesh people and conquered them. A lot of army of the Turgesh kagan came clustered (against us) at Bolču land. We fought with them. Kultegin mounted Bašyu's white horse and attacked. The Bašyu's white horse ...
- (38) and he (*that is* Kultegin) himself captured two of them. There he again broke into (the enemy's lines) and captured the Az Tutuq (Governor) and his army. There we killed their kagan and subdued his country. Many of the common Turgesh people run away. We ... those people in Tabar.
- (39) To subdue Sogdian people, We marched as far as the Iron Gate, crossing over the Pearl (Syrdaria) river. Then common Turgesh people rose in revolt in back. We went back toward Kanaris. Our army horses were lean and army had no provisions. A coward man ...
- (40) A brave man attacked us. We asked and sent Kultegin forward together with a few men. It was a great battle. He mounted the white horse of Alp Šalči and attacked. There we killed and subjugated the common Turgish people. Having marched again
- (41) (1) ... We fought with ... against Qosu Tutuq. He (*that is* Kultegin) killed many of their brave men. He brought a lot of their properties and belongings. When Kultegin was twenty-seven years old, he went to Karluk people. They became (our) enemy. We went on a campaign to Tamaq-iduq headwaters.
- (42) (2) Kultegin was thirty years old on that battle. He mounted the white horse of Alp Šalči and attacked. He stabbed two men pursuing them. We won the Karluk and subjugated them. Az people started hostilities against us. We went with a battle to the Black Lake. Kultegin was thirty-one years old then. He mounted the white horse of Alp Šalči
- (43) (3) and attacked. He took the governor of Az people to prison. Az people were annihilated then. When the empire of my uncle, the kagan, became shaky and when country was split into two parts, We fought against the Izgil people. Kultegin mounted the white horse of Alp Šalči
- (44) (4) and attacked. That horse fell down there. Izgil people were killed and destroyed. Toquz-Oguz people were my own people. Since Tengri and earth became in disorder them, they revolted against us. We fought five times in a year. First we fought at Toyu-Balıq (city).

- (45) (5) Kultegin mounted white horse Azman and attacked. He stabbed six men with his lance. In hand-to-hand fighting he cut down the seventh man with a sword. The Second time we fought against Ediz at Quşluyqaq. Kultegin mounted his brown horse Az and attacked. He stabbed one man with a lance.
- (46) (6) He took nine men to prison. Their people were killed then. The third time we fought against Oguz at Bolçu. Kultegin mounted his Azman horse and attacked and stabbed. We fought at Uçuş headwaters.
- (47) (7) Turkish people were coward at Adır Qamıs. Kultegin put their army, which had come earlier assaulting. We surrounded and killed ten giant warriors of Toḡra tribe at the funeral of (Prince) Toḡrategin. Fifthly, we fought against Oguz at Azginti-Qadiz.
- 48 (8) Kultegin mounted his brown horse Az and attacked. He stabbed two men. He didn't go to city. That army was killed (= defeated) there, not arriving to the city. After we spent winter at Mayı-Qoryan, in spring we marched off with an army against Oguz. --Kultegin being in home commanded the camp.
- (49) (9) The hostile Oguz attacked the camp. Having mounted his white orphan horse, Kultegin Stabbed nine men and did not give the camp. My mother, Katun, and my stepmothers, my mothers-in-law, my elder sisters, my daughters-in-law, my princesses all these people would become slaves. They would have been left lying dead on roads.
- (50) (10) If Kultegin had never existed, we all would have been died. My younger brother Kultegin passed away. I mourned myself missing him. My eyes to see became as if they were blind. My mind to think became as if it were unconscious. I mourned myself missing him. Tengri creates death. Human beings have all been created in order to die.
- (51) (11) I mourned badly. Tears dropped down from my eyes and didn't stop. Sorrow captured my heart and didn't pass away. I cried missing him always. I mourned deeply in sorrow. I worried that the eyes and eyebrows of two šads and of my younger brothers left behind, my sons, my lords and all of my people could have been coward. I missed him. Heading mourners and lamenters of Qitaṇ and Tatabi peoples,
- (52) (12) Udar Seṇün came. From the Chinese emperor, Isije Likeṇ came. He brought immeasurable quantity of silk, gold and silver in abundance. From the Tibet kagan Bülin came. Inek Seṇün and Oyal Tarkan came from Sogdians, Persians and Bukhara people in west.
- (53) (13) From my On-Ok descendants, from the Turgesh kagan, seal-keepers Maqarač and Oyuz Bilge came. From the Kirgiz kagan, Tardush Inanču Čor came. Čan Seṇün, the nephew of the Chinese Emperor, came in order to build the mausoleum, to make sculptures, to paint and to prepare inscription stone inscriptions.

Kultegin passed away (*literally*: 'flew away to Tengri') on the seventeenth day of the Sheep Year. We held (his) funeral on the twenty-seventh day of the ninth month. We finished his mausoleum, the statues and paintings, and his inscription stone on the twenty-seventh day of the seventh month, in the Monkey Year. Kultegin was at age of forty-seven. The Tuyyun Elteber brought all of these sculptors and painters.

Beginning of the inscription of the memorial inscription in honour of Tonyukuk
[Malov, 1954, p. 56].

- (8) Our main food were deer and hears. People were full. (But) our enemies were very strong (litr, like three arrows). We were light bags for them. A messenger came to us from free Oguzes.
- (9) The messenger's words were as follows: "A kagan came to the throne of Nine Oguzes people. He sent Kuny Sengun to Tabgach (China). He sent Tonra Semik to Kitan. He sent them with the following words: Turks are few now,
- (10) They used to go to wars! Their kagan was great and as an advisor he was wise. If these two are alive they would kill their neighbours Tabgaches (Chins). They would kill Kitan in the east. And us, Oguzes
- (11) Would kill. (Let) Tabgach (China attacked from the south, Kitan – from the east, I (*i.e.* Oguz) attacked from the north. Do not let their master give orders (litr. go) in the land of noble Turks! Let us fall upon them (from three sides)!"
- (12) When I heard these words I could not sleep nights and could not be calm by days. I prayed for the sake of our kagan after that. I judged as follows: "Tabgaches (China), Oguzes, Kitans decided to join together and attack us.
- (13) Each of us protects only his own horde. To crush the "thin" – is an easy (matter)! But to become "thick" from "thin" – is not difficult! If to gather "thins"
- (14) into "thicks", then it is necessary to have great force to crush! We have two – three thousand spear-bearers at Kitans in the east, at Tabgach in the south, in Kurudun in the west, at Oguzes in the north. We need to recall all of them!"
- (15) I, Bilge Tonyukuk, asked my kagan to listen to (my this advice). He listened to and did, what he thought to be right. I was ordered (to pitch a camp) In Otuken near the lake Kekung. Oguz advanced along the Togla river in the lake Ingek.
- (16) They had six thousand spear bearers. We were two thousand. We fought. Tengri was gracious to us. We scattered and threw them into the lake. On the way of pursuit some more were died. After this Oguzes (gave up) joined us in great numbers.
- (17) Having heard that I brought the Turkic people to Otuken land and that I , wise Tonyukuk, had settled in the land of Otuken, the people from south, west, north and east joined us.
- (18) We became two thousand. Since the Turkic people became strong and Turkic kagan mounted the throne, they did not go with war to Shantung towns and the seas. I asked my kagan and moved the army.
- (19) I reached my army to Shantung towns and the seas. Twenty three town were destroyed. All of them had left on Usyn-bundatu land.(?). Tabgaches' kagan (China) was our enemy. The kagan of "Ten Arrows" was our enemy.
- (20) But our first enemy was the strong Kyrgyz kagan. These three kagans joined and agreed to gather their forces on the Altun mountain. Having formedan alliance they told: "we went on campaign against the Turkic kagan to the east! If not we then he would (kill) us!
- (21) Their (*i.e.* Turks) kagan is great and advisor – is wise. If we look back, do not join in alliance and do not struggle (with them), then they will go away (without punishment)" Then the Turgesh kagan told: "There is my people there!
- (22) And Turkic people is in confussion (now)! And Oguzes" - said he "are also in discord!" Having heard these words I could not sleep at nights, and lost quietness by days. Then I decided...
- (23) We shall fight ... said I. When I heard that the road to Kegmen is (only) one and it had been blocked (by snow), I told: that won't do to go this way. I look for a person who knew that place... .
- (24) ...(There) was a stopping place, he brought us there. "if to start then there would be one horse's speed before lodging for the night", - he said. I said: "if to go that way then it might be". I thought over, and asked my kagan
- (25) "Bring cavalry troop!" Havinggone across the river Ak-Termel I left rear camp. I made a road up through the snow, walking the horses, leaning on wooden staffs. While two soldiers raised in the east

- (26) we crossed Ybar Bashi. We went down on the slope. We reached Togbery on the slope in ten nights. A guide was slaughtered, having lost the way. The kagan caught us.
- (27)...We swam across the river, Stopped several times. On the slope of the mountain we went at a trot day and night. Brought down arrows on Kyrgyz people.
- (28)...fought with their army. Their khan gathered the army. We fought them, killed their kagan. Kyrgyz people surrendered our kagan. .
- (29) We came back from Kyrgyz people. A messenger came from Turgesh kagan. The word of his was as follows: "we go on campaign to kagan from the east. If we do not attack, then their (*i.e.* Turkic) kagan is great, his advisor – is wise, this or that way, he might kill us "
- (30) he might kill us ". "So the Turkic kagan started out" – he said. "All "Ten Arrows" people started out" – he said. – "(among them) there is also Tabgaches' (China) army". Having heard these words my kagan said: "I will be a kagan
- (31) (My) wife died, I want to organize funeral ceremony for her". "sent the spear bearers!" – (the kagan) said. – "Let them pitch a camp in Altun mob!" Tunyukuk told me the Bilge (wise):
- (32) "Lead the army! Tell me what are the difficulties? What else can I suggest? If (somebody) comes (*i.e.* joins us), then the number of (brave men) will increase, If (nobody) comes, then gather different news (lit. words, "tongues")". We were in Altun mob.
- (33) Three messengers came, their words were similar: "One kagan with his army went on campaign. The army of "Ten Arrows" people went on campaign too. They told that they would gather in the step of Yarysh". Having heard these words I told them the kagan. What to do?! With the reply (from khan)
- (34) a messenger came: "Sit! – it was said. – "Do not hurry to go, keep the guard as good as possible! Do not allow to crush yourself!" – he said. Begyu kagan ordered me to tell this. I sent a message to Apa-tarkhan (Commander-in-chief): "Wise Tonyukuk – is cunning, he himself ...
- (35) offered to me to send the spear bearers. Having heard these words, I sent the spear bearers. I crossed the Altyn mob through absence of roads. We crossed without the ford the Irtysh river. We reached Bolchu early in the morning without stops for night.
- (36) They brought a tongue, his word was: "Ten Tyumen army gathered in the Yarysh step (100 thousand)". Having heard these words the beks consulted and
- (37) Said: "We retreat! We must keep our honour". And I said the following: - "I am- Tonyukuk the wise! We crossed Altyn mod on the absence of roads. Went across the Irtysh river
- (38) Without the ford. We came as the greats! We were not tired. When Tengri Umay, Sacred land and water are gracious to us, why do we need to retreat?!
- (39) Why should we be afraid of their number? Let us attack them as if they are few!" I told: "Advance!" And we advanced and overthrew them. The second day
- (40) They came down with great force (lit. like fire). We fought. They were twice more than we. Due to Tengri
- (41) We were not afraid of their number. We fought. We won the Tardush Shad. We captured their kagan. And their yabgu and shad
- (42) Killed there. We took to prison about fifty persons. That night we sent (messengers) to every nation. Having heard these words, beks and people of "Ten Arrows" all
- (43) came and subdued. When I was settling down and gathering the coming beks and people a few people ran away. I led to campaign the army of "Ten Arrows" people.
- (44) We were still fighting and pursuing them. Having swimming cross the Pearl river, crossing the Binlik mountain – where Tinsi's son lived...
- (45) we pursued (the enemy) till Temir-kapyg (Iron Gates). We made (them) return back. Inel kagan... tadhiks and tokhars ...
- (46) The whole sogdian people leading by Asuk came and obeyed... Those days the Turkic people reached the Iron Gates.

The Ancient Turkic Runic Alphabet [Malov, 1954, p. 17]

Type face	Meaning		Type face	Meaning	
	Russian	Latin		Russian	Latin
ᠠᠨᠠ	a, ä	a, ä	ᠢ	ñ	ñ
ᠪ	б ¹	b ¹	ᠨᠲ	нт	nt
ᠶᠠᠨ	б ² , ä	b ² , ä	ᠨᠴ	нч	nč
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	г	γ	ᠣᠤ	о, у	о, u
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	г	g	ᠥᠦ	ö, ū	ö, ü
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	д ¹	d ¹	ᠮ	п	p
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	д ²	d ²	ᠷ	р ¹	r ¹
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	з	z	ᠷ	р ²	r ²
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	и, i	y, i	ᠰ	с ¹	s ¹
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	й ¹	j ¹ , i	ᠰ	с ²	s ²
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	й ²	j ² , i	ᠲ	т ¹	t ¹
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	к	q	ᠲ	т ²	t ²
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	к	k	ᠶ	ч	č
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	л ¹	l ¹	ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	ш	š
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	л ²	l ²	ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ		
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	лт	lt	ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ		
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	м	m	ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ		
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	н ¹	n ¹	ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ		
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	н ²	n ²	ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ		
ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ	ң	ṅ	ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨ		

- (47) There was no master in the mountains where Tinsi's son lived. When I, Wise Tonyukuk, reached that place,
- (48) he presented me yellow gold, white silver, girls and women, treasury, silk on camels in huge number. For the greatness of Elterish kagan, Bilge kagan
- (49) we fought thirteen times with Tabgaches (China). Seven times fought with Kitans. Five times with Oguzes. An advisor then...
- (50) Only I was powerful. I was Elterish kagan's advisor. Turkic Byegu kagan, Turkic Bilga kagan...

- (51) When Kapagan kagan was thirty three ... wasn't sleeping at nights,
(52) Did not have calmness by days. Shed red blood and perspired. I served and gave all my force.
Dericted long (far) military forays.
(53) I raised Arkur guard. Led army to capture the enemy. We fought with their kagan. Due the
Tengri
(54) I did not allow the supremacy of the strong enemy over the Turkic people. I did not allow
enemy's horses to trample down (our land). If Elterish kagan did not rule the country,
(55) And if I myself did not rule (the country), there would not be neither country nor people! For
kagan was in power, I myself was in power too, the country
(56) became the country, people became people. I got older. I reached old age. If in some place
people, having a kagan
(57) Bentegi (?), it would be sad!
(58) In Bilge kagan's country I ordered to write (this). I am – The Wise Tonyukuk.
(59) If Elterish kagan did not rule (the country) and if he was young, I, The Wise Tonyukuk would
not rule (the country), or if I was not here,
(60) then on the land of Kapagan kagan, on the land of gracious Torks neither a family nor a single
person would not have a ruler.
(61) Due to ruling of Elterish kagan (and) Bilge Tonyukuk, the noble Torks the people of Kapagan
kagan,
(62) Turkic Bilge kagan, the people of noble Torks Oguzes lived and raised!

Translation of texts from Old Turkic into English by Gulzada Serzhan

No. 8

**Reports of Arabic and Persia historians
on the campaigns to the North of Derbend (22/642–643 and 119/737)**

The confrontation between the Arab Caliphate and the Khazar state for dominance in the Caucasus, which spanned almost a hundred years (22–121 A.H./642–739), took place mostly in the Transcaucasia and the Northern Caucasus¹⁴¹. According to the sources, only twice were the Arabs able to enter the steppes of the Lower Volga Region to approach al-Baida (obviously, the nomadic camp of Khazar Khagan): initially this happened in year (22 A.H.) 642–643, during the very first campaign of the Arabs in the Caucasus, then this achievement was repeated in the year (119 A.H.) 737, already by the end of the Arab-Khazar wars.

Despite the fact that the events of Arab-Khazar wars had taken place far away from the Middle Volga Region, their consequences, in many respects, were of major importance for Volga Bulgaria, in particular, when it came to the penetration and dissemination of Islam in the Volga Region. It is universally acknowledged that one of the principal results of the Arab-Khazar wars was the defeat of the Khazars in the year (119 A.H.) 737 and, as one of conditions of the peace treaty between the Arabs and the Khazars, the adoption of Islam by the Khazar Khagan and his closest associates. The dissemination of Islam in the Caucasus and Lower Volga Region also promoted its entry into the Middle Volga Region and, therefore, prepared the official conversion of Volga Bulgaria in the year (310 A.H.) 922.

The events of the Arab-Khazar Wars were best described in the works of Arabic and Persia historians of the 9th–13th centuries: the materials of al-Baladhuri: (279 A.H.) 892, al-Ya'kubi: (284 A.H.) 897 or (292 A.H.) 905, at-Tabari: (310 A.H.) 922–923, Bal'ami: (363 A.H.) 974 or (382 A.H.) 992, and Ibn al-Athir: (555–631 A.H.) 1160–1233), brought into the scientific circulation in the latter half of the 19th century, were supplemented in 1970s by the materials of Khalifa ibn Khayyat: (240 A.H.) 854 or (243 A.H.) 858 and Ibn A'sama al-Kufi: (314 A.H.) 927. The discovery of works of the latter two authors allowed a number of revisions to be made in the dates and locations of events and names of their participants¹⁴². However, their main importance lay in the fact that their emergence made it possible to perform a source study of the entire complex of written materials on the Arab-Khazar Wars.

For the purposes of this publication, information on events of the years (22 A.H.) 642 and (119 A.H.) 737, related to the advance of the Arabs into the territory of the Lower Volga Region, has been selected, which can at the same time be interpreted as proof of one of the first contacts of the Caucasus and Volga Region Turks with the Muslims. Since due to specific characteristics of formation of early Arabic historical literature materials of the sources on the respective events are offered as a part of interrelated communications over a period of several years (dated and undated, brief or extensive), all messages (on subsequent or preceding events) related to the communications on the campaign being examined are also included in the translations as meaningful for its criticism. For example, the

¹⁴¹ A full examination of the Arab-Khazar wars was for the first time made by D. Dunlop in his monograph titled 'The History of the Jewish Khazars' and then in M. Artamonov's fundamental research work 'The History of the Khazars,' who nonetheless in many ways followed D. Dunlop in his interpretation of the Arab-Khazar wars [Dunlop, pp. 41–87, Artamonov, 1962, pp. 177–183, 202–232]. Moreover, military events can be partly observed in research on the histories of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Dagestan in the degree to which they were relevant to their territories [Czegledy, pp. 75–88, Biro, pp. 289–299, Bunyatov, Shikhsaidov, 1969, Ter-Ghevontyan, pp. 36–45, 85–97].

¹⁴² A translation of selected data was published about the Arab-Khazar wars from Khalifa ibn Khayyat's and al-Kufi's works [Al-Kufi, trans. pp. 5–21, Khalifa, trans. pp. 32–53]. The issue of new data revived an interest in the events of the Arab-Khazar wars [Klyashtorny, 1964a, pp. 16–18, Aitberov, pp. 172–196, The History of Dagestan, 1996, pp. 195–207]. However, they are all characterised by the traditional approach to using data from the sources (i.e., trustfully and without the aid of any criticism on the source).

collection of data grouped together under that title 'March on Derbend (Balandjar and al-Baida) in the year (22 A.H.) 642–643' comprises the data on events of the years (22–35 A.H.) 642–656, and the collection of data grouped together under the title 'March of Marwan ibn Muhammad in the year (119 A.H.) 737' comprises the data on events of the years (113–119 A.H.) 731–737.

Each of the collections includes quotations of various authors in order to demonstrate the modifications in the texts, starting from the early authors and ending with later ones. For example, in the first case the collection comprises data of Khalifa ibn Khayyat, at-Tabari, al-Kufi, and Bal'ami, and in the second case, the materials of Khalifa ibn Khayyat, al-Baladhuri, at-Tabari, al-Kufi, and Ibn al-Athir.

The analysis performed on the sources of these historians has shown, on the one hand, the interdependence of their data and, on the other hand, that they comprise the same circle of early data that has been reproduced by various authors in various degrees of detail. The specific characteristic of the early Arabic historical literature, to which these historians referred, is the combination of brief witness accounts of the participants of the events and the legendary tales connected to the same events, which came to be based on the same recollections, even at the early stage of the formation of Arabic historical literature. A dedicated research of the entire complex of data on the Arab-Khazar Wars allows not only separating the legendary materials (which are frequently quite obvious) but also distinguishing the believable, however, historically inaccurate data. Such eliminations leave a narrow range of brief but accurate data. In analyzing them, we see that they depict only a portion of actual campaigns of the Arabs in the Caucasus (possibly, there were more campaigns). Moreover, the information on the mentioned campaigns describes only a portion of events that occurred in the campaigns (their beginnings or endings, or some memorable event, or episode possibly not always the most important one). Therefore, it becomes obvious that based on the data provided by the Arabic historians we shall never have a complete picture of the events of the Arab-Khazar Wars but shall only be able to imagine a portion of the events taking place in some of the campaigns.

A review of the contents of legendary materials indicates that their objective was mostly to celebrate the courage and wit of the Arabs who, always laboring under a numeric disadvantage, overcame the desperate and valiant resistance of the defending Dagestanis or the massive advancing troops of the Khazars.

These believable but historically inaccurate reports were based on fragments of data about the real events, but taking place at different times, with names of real people, but those who lived at a later time than the one being described. In such reports the mentions of placenames and hydronyms that are of particular interest for scholars are especially misleading: usually easily recognisable and important for the localisation of events, they, as at first glance, provided a kind of proof of the authenticity of the message and in fact are 'literary clichés' included in an artfully composed but historically unreliable message. It is extremely difficult to prove the false nature of such a tale, becoming possible only based on the general context of the entire group of data.

The completed analysis of the whole complex of data on the Arab-Khazar Wars of (22–121 A.H.) 642–739 indicates the inaccuracy of the reports made by at-Tabari on the advancement of the Arabs to the North of Derbend to al-Baida in (22 A.H.) 642, and the legendary nature of reports of al-Kufi on the conversion of the Khazars to Islam as a result of the campaign of Marwan ibn Muhammad. The resulting conclusions deprive scholars of a number of advantageous facts and dates, very useful and convenient for substantiation of extremely important events of the Early Medieval history of the peoples of modern Russia. In our opinion, however, the rejection of a number of scientific misconceptions in this case does not alter the substance of actual historic processes, related to the penetration and spread of Islam in the Northern Caucasus and Lower Volga Region. Thus, the exclusion from the circle of reliable information on the adoption of Islam by Khakan of Khazar and his inner circle (also the dialogue between Khakan and Muslim theologians as well) leads to the loss of not only 'direct evidence of the source' of the adoption of Islam by the Khazars but the ability to concretely date this fact—that is, (119 A.H.) 737. According to all dated reports of

sources, which essentially do go back to Khalifa ibn Hayyat, the successful campaign of Marwan ibn Muhammad near Balandjar and al-Baida is attributed to the year (119 A.H.) 737. The conversion of the Khazars to Islam is known only from undated materials and is described in most detail by al-Kufi. Possibly during the campaigns of Marwan ibn Muhammad in Dagestan in the years (119–121 A.H.) 737–739 the Arabs were forced to overcome the resistance of Khazars in the steppes of the Northern Caucasus, and in (119 A.H.) 737 they had a decisive battle, as a result of which the Khazars were forced to conclude a treaty disadvantageous for them, which could have been later interpreted as an agreement on their conversion to Islam. This, naturally, does not preclude the possibility of conversion to Islam by separate individuals, but in those times the conversions undoubtedly did not have a mass character [Garaeva, 1984, pp. 25–27, Garaeva, 1997, pp. 214–217].

The fact of the successful march of Marwan ibn Muhammad in the year (119 A.H.) 737 deeply into the territory of the Khazar state remains absolutely certain, which undoubtedly is a direct proof of contacts of the people of the Northern Caucasus and Lower Volga Region with the Muslims. However, if the (119 A.H.) 737 campaign of Marwan ibn Muhammad was one of the final events of the Arab-Khazar Wars, then the first contacts of the peoples of Transcaucasia and Northern Caucasus with the Muslims can be attributed to the beginning of the wars. An analysis of a group of data on early marches of the Arabs to the Caucasus (22–32 A.H.) 642–652, while proving the inaccuracy of Sayf's reports on the advancement of the Arabs to the North of Derbend in the direction of al-Baida in (22 A.H.) 642, mentioned by at-Tabari, does not eliminate the possibility of an Arab campaign towards Derbend as early as in (22 A.H.) 642, which indicates that the first appearance of the Arabs in the Northern Caucasus dates back to the year (22 A.H.) 642 [Garaeva, 2001, pp. 126–133, Garaeva, 2001a, pp. 6–22].

Khalifa ibn Khayyat d. (240 A.H.) 854 or (243–244 A.H.) 858, a Hadith scholar and historian, was an author from the same generation as al-Madini d. (215 A.H.) 830 or (225 A.H.) 840, (228 A.H.) 842–843 and Ibn Sa'd d. (279 A.H.) 892), the predecessor of al-Baladhuri and al-Ya'kubi. He descended from a family of respected Hadith scholars in Basra, and, as a Hadith scholar himself, he was deservedly recognised by Muhammad al-Bukhari and other creators of the collections of Hadith. His brief 'History' ('Tarih') is the earliest surviving whole historical work (covering the period (1–232 A.H.) 622–846. The principal value of Khalifa's information is that he dates the events not only year-by-year but also uses more accurate dates (for example, with accuracy to the day of the month), which helps to determine the timing of more detailed but undated reports of other sources. His source of information on the marches to the Caucasus was his teacher Abu Khalid Yusuf ibn Sa'id al-Basri d. (190 A.H.) 805–806. In a few occasions, in a parallel to his data, Khalifa includes the information of Hisham ibn al-Kalbi d. (204 A.H.) 819–820, a younger contemporary of Abu Khalid. Abu Khalid's sources were Abu al-Khattab al-Asadi and Abu Bara an-Numayri, of an unknown era, but since they had been the predecessors of Abu Khalid, one can assume that their records had been made in the middle of the 2nd century of Hijra (last quarter of the 8th century) [Khalifa, Arabic, Spenkova, pp. 76–81, Khalifa, translation, pp. 32–35, 45].

Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad al-Baladhuri d. (279 A.H.) 892 is the author of 'The Book of Conquest of Countries' ('Kitab futuh al-buldan'), similarly to the chronicles of at-Tabari it was conceived as a general history. Unlike the 'History...' by at-Tabari, this work is shorter, and the materials in it are arranged based on the regional principle (the description of the conquests of Arabs by region and in chronological order), moreover, al-Baladhuri offers few dates for the events and rarely names his sources. Even when he does, unlike Khalifa ibn Khayyat and at-Tabari (who generally include the isnad with the chain of source names directly before the report), he lists the names of authors in the beginning of the collection of data and presents the reports without references to specific sources. For example, in the beginning of the chapter 'Conquests of Arminia,' comprising the data on the Arab-Khazar Wars, al-Baladhuri also names Abu Bara 'Anbasu ibn Bahra al-Armani as one

of his sources, he is probably identical to Abu Bara an-Numayri referred to by Khalifa ibn Khayya [al-Baladhuri, Arabic, p. 193]. Apart from the data from sources named in the beginning of the chapter (natives of such Transcaucasian towns as Barza'a, Dabil, alKali, and Hlat), al-Baladhuri anonymously (without a reference to sources) used the reports of Abu Mikhnaf and a number of other materials identical to a portion of statements by at-Tabari and al-Kufi. al-Baladhuri's data on the Arab campaigns in the Caucasus during the reign of the 'righteous' caliphs, while it combines a portion of materials known from at-Tabari and al-Kufi, does not contain the reports of Sayf ibn 'Umar. His materials on the Arab-Khazar Wars during the Omayyad period are close to the version of al-Kufi but are significantly shorter, even though in a number of cases al-Baladhuri provides more detail than al-Kufi (for example, the texts of agreements concluded by the Arabs with the mountain princedoms of Dagestan). This indicates that both al-Baladhuri and al-Kufi used a common source [al-Baladhuri, Arabic].

Abu Ja'far Muhammad at-Tabari (224-225–310 A.H.) 839–922-923 is a well-known historian and theologian, whose main work was the Quran Tafsir, in addition to which he compiled a multivolume historical work 'The History of Prophets and Kings' ('Tarih ar-rusul va-l-muluk') [al-Tabari, Arabic]. The importance of the historical chronicles of at-Tabari lies in the fact that, as a historical compilation, it comprises the fullest collection of materials from the works of his predecessors, whose works for the most part have not survived. Following the Tafsir and Hadith tradition, at-Tabari frequently (but not always) mentions the names of the earlier historians, whose works he quotes. In his chronicles the information is grouped in the form of stories about campaigns or conquests of specific cities and countries, arranged based on the chronological order of the campaigns, under each year of Hijrah (brought to the year 303 A.H.) 915. After at-Tabari no other historians offered more complete materials on the early history of the Caliphate. Prior to the events of the Arab-Khazar Wars, the data of at-Tabari is uneven: for the period of 'righteous' caliphs he offers extensive but frequently legendary and romantic tales, materials of Sayf ibn 'Umar [Mednikov, 1897, pp. 53–66, al-Tabari, translation 1987, pp. 5–13, Garaeva, 1987, pp. 28–29] (along with which he provides several reports of al-Vakidi and Abu Mihnaf), and for the period of the Omayyad caliphs, brief data going back mostly to Khalifa ibn Khayyat.

Ibn A'sam al-Kufi d. (314 A.H.) 927 is a contemporary of at-Tabari d. (310 A.H.) 922–923. The value of his 'Book of Conquests' ('Kitab al-futuh') lies in the fact that he offers a detailed and cohesive (though undated) narrative about the Arab-Khazar Wars, earlier known through its Persia translation (translated in 596 A.H.) 1199, through 'Tarih-i Tabari' by Bal'ami d. (363 A.H.) 974, and through later composition in the Persia and Turkic languages ('Derbend-name,' 'The History of Shirvan and Derbend,' Hafiz-i Abru, etc.) [Dorn, 1844, pp. 1–25, 67–98, Minorsky, 1958, Saidov, Shikhsaidov, pp. 5–64]. Among the contemporaries and the later generation of historians, al-Kufi did not enjoy great confidence due to his extreme enthusiasm about legendary data, therefore, he was rarely quoted or quoted without a mention of his name [Velidi Togan, 1939, Kurat, 1949, Al-Kufi, Arabic, Al-Kufi, translation, pp. 3–84]. Al-Kufi speaks about the activities of Marwan ibn Muhammad in the 'Story of the March of Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik to Fight the Disbelievers and His War against Them' that combines the reports of the first and second appointments of Marwan ibn Muhammas as the regent of the Caucasus as well as about two other regents who had preceded him: Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik and Sa'id ibn 'Amr al-Harashi.

Abu 'Ali Muhammad Bal'ami d. (363 A.H.) 974 or (382 A.H.) 992 is a Bukharan scientist who held the position of wazir during the rule of several Samanid emirs, in (352 A.H.) 963 he translated the brief version of at-Tabari's 'History...' into the Persia language, in which, however, he included additional data on Arab campaigns against the Khazars, which at-Tabari had ignored. The study of the close-in-content texts of al-Kufi and Bal'ami demonstrates that Bal'ami did not

offer more details than al-Kufi and probably used the text of al-Kufi. So far there is no critical text on 'Tarih-i Tabari' by Bal'ami, its absence is likely related to the existence of an enormous number of handwritten copies and lithographs of the work. Out of the seven copies of 'Tarih-i Tabari' by Bal'ami kept at the Saint Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the earliest one (dating back to 972 A.H.) 1564–1565, the text of which is given, has later interpolations on the Rus people absent in other copies [Bal'ami, manuscript].

'Izz ad-din 'Ali ibn Muhammad Ibn al-Athir (555–631 A.H.) 1160–1233 is the author of the multivolume historical chronicle 'The Perfect Book on History' ('Al-Kitab al-kamil bi-ttarih'), where the description of events ends in (629 A.H.) 1231 [Ibn al-Asir, Arabic]. For the earliest period (events before 303 A.H.) 915 Ibn al-Athir's reports on the campaigns in ar-Rum and the Western Caucasus are similar to the materials of al-Baladhuri, but as far as the Central and Eastern Caucasus are concerned he mostly reproduced the information of at-Tabari, though sometimes supplementing or replacing it with materials of other authors, who frequently are not known to us. For example, as it turned out, when talking about the Arab-Khazar Wars, he made additions, sourced not only from 'Kitab futux al-buldan' by al-Baladhuri but also from 'Kitab al-futuh' by al-Kufi, after editing the data of the latter author, obviously doubting their veracity or in accordance with contemporary ideas. In the process of comparison of texts created by early historians and those compiled by Ibn al-Athir, it has been discovered that he, when working with the materials of his predecessors on the Arab-Khazar Wars of the Omayyad period, made an attempt to amalgamate the undated and dated data, which resulted in a number of chronological displacements. For example, when speaking about Marwan ibn Muhammad's campaign in (119 A.H.) 737, Ibn al-Athir briefly retells the entire story by al-Kufi 'The Story about Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik's Action in the Fight with Disbelievers and His War against Them' (that, as we have already mentioned, describes the events of several years) and based on the respective dated report by at-Tabari on the first rule of Marwan places the entire block in the (114 A.H.) 732 section. As a result, the events of Marwan's campaign, which took place in the year (119 A.H.) 737, were attributed to the year (114 A.H.) 732. Moreover, this report by Ibn al-Athir is a vivid example of editing of al-Kufi's text, which apparently Ibn al-Athir did not trust. And under the year (119 A.H.) 737 Ibn al-Athir repeats the brief report of at-Tabari who, in his turn, had reproduced the materials of Khalifa ibn Hayyat [Garaeva 1990, pp. 18–19].

Translations

I. March to Derbend (Balandjar i al-Baida) in the year (22 A.H.) 642–643.

KHALIFA Ibn KHAYAT. 'TARIKH' (HISTORY)¹⁴³

25 A.H. (645–646)

[p.132] In this year 'Usman ibn 'Affan¹⁴⁴ deposed Sa'd ibn Malik¹⁴⁵ from Kufa and appointed al-Valid ibn 'Ukbu ibn [Abu] Mu'ayt as its ruler. Al-Valid sent Salman ibn Rabi'u¹⁴⁶, one of the family

¹⁴³ One interesting feature of Khalifa ibn Khayyat's materials on the period of the 'virtuous' khalifs lied in the fact that he did not mention Derbend and al-Baida among the fortresses the Arabs raided, while also connecting the first campaigns against the Caucasus with the rule of Khalif 'Usman ibn 'Affan.

¹⁴⁴ 'Usman ibn 'Affan was the third 'virtuous' Khalif who reigned in 23–35/644–656.

¹⁴⁵ Sa'd ibn Malik (Abi Waqqas) was one of the first followers of the Prophet.

¹⁴⁶ Salman ibn Rabi'ah al-Bahili was a military commander of the Arabic army deployed in Kufa, one of the generals who participated in campaigns against the Caucasus during the rule of the 'virtuous' khalifs.

of Kutayba ibn Ma'na ibn Malik, at the head of twelve thousand warriors to Barza'a¹⁴⁷. He killed and took prisoners. Said Abu 'Ubayda¹⁴⁸, according to as-Samari¹⁴⁹: 'Umar¹⁵⁰, sent Salman ibn Rabi'u to Barza'a, he captured it.

29 A.H. (649–650)

[p.138] In that year 'Usman ibn 'Affan deposed al-Valid ibn 'Ukbu from the post of the regent of al-Kufa and appointed Sa'id ibn al-'As¹⁵¹ as the regent of Armenia¹⁵². Salman ibn Rabi'a al-Bahili entered one of its regions. Sa'id met the enemy, and Salman went forward to Balandjar¹⁵³, and there he met his death, may Allah have mercy on him.

They say¹⁵⁴: 'Umar sent Salman to Balandjar.

March against al-Baylakan, Barza'a, Djurzan, Haydak, and Balandjar

[p.139] Abu Khalid¹⁵⁵ said: Abu al-Bara¹⁵⁶ said: Salman marched against al-Baylakan¹⁵⁷, and they made peace with him, and he became its ruler. And he sent the commander of his cavalry to Djurzan¹⁵⁸, and they made peace with him. And Salman went to Khaydak¹⁵⁹, and they made peace with him, then he reached Maskat¹⁶⁰, and its residents made peace with him. And he was killed at Balandjar.

'Usman wrote to Khabib ibn Maslama al-Fihri¹⁶¹ to come from Syria with his troops. Khabib came from the al-Khadas¹⁶² Pass. The residents of Djurzan made peace with him and paid ransom with grain. And he wrote them a charter.

¹⁴⁷ Barz'a (Partaw) was the capital of Caucasian Albania—Barda—a city in the historical area of Arran in modern Azerbaijan.

¹⁴⁸ Abu Ubaida Mamar ibn al-Musanna (died in 209/824–25) was the author of works in various subjects (genealogy, history, etc.), including works on the conquest of Armenia.

¹⁴⁹ Ali ibn Muhammad al-Samarri (as-Samri) was one of Abu Ubaidah's sources.

¹⁵⁰ Umar ibn al-Khattāb was the second 'virtuous' Khalif, who ruled from 13–23/634–644.

¹⁵¹ Sa'id ibn al-As ibn Abi Umayya was Khalif Usman's governor (appointed in 25/645–46) in Kufa, the population of which demanded that he leave. He took part in the campaigns against Gorgan (29/649–50) and Tabaristan (30/650–51) [Khalifa, Arabic, p. 157].

¹⁵² According to the territorial administrative division of the Caliphate, the historical province of Arminiya was divided into four districts. One of them, so-called 'Fourth Arminiya' (al-Arminiya ar-rabi'ah) included Trans-Caucasia, the rest of the districts covered territories in Asia Minor that became the north-eastern part of present-day Turkey. Arabic authors often called the entire Transcaucasia region Arminiya and sometimes noted Arminiya, Azerbaijan, Arran, and Jurzan within Transcaucasia.

¹⁵³ Balandjar was associated with the ancient town of Verkhnechichyurtovskoye (near the place where the railroad crosses the Sulak River) [Magomedov, 1983, pp. 46–51].

¹⁵⁴ This remark of Ibn Khayyat (along with what Abu Ubaidah's recorded in 25 AH) might possibly evidence the fact that he was acquainted with the materials of other historians on the campaigns against the Caucasus, which connected them with the rule of Khalif 'Umar ibn al-Khattab.

¹⁵⁵ Abu Khalid Yusuf ibn Sa'id ibn 'Umair as-Samti al-Basri (died in 190/805–806) was one of Khalif ibn Khayyat's main informers about the Arabs' campaigns against the Caucasus.

¹⁵⁶ Abu al-Bara an-Numairi was one of the two main informers of Abu Khalid on the campaigns against the Caucasus. He might be the same as Abu al-Bara 'Anbasa ibn Bahr al-Armani, whom al-Baladhuri quotes [al-Baladhuri, Arabic, p. 193]. In Khalifa's edition Abu al-Bara is sometimes referred to as Abu Bara, and we follow this version in our translation.

¹⁵⁷ Balaikan was a city in Arran, the present-day ancient town of Orenkala in the interfluvium of the Kura and Araks on the territory of Kabirli settlement in Azerbaijan.

¹⁵⁸ Jurzan was the Arabic name for the Georgians (collective) and Georgia, in a narrower sense, Iberia.

¹⁵⁹ In the text, *Jairan* (*Jiran*, *Khizan*). Khizan was located near Shirvan and Masqat. Kaitak, or Kaitag, was the area north of Derbend inhabited by the Kaitaks, who spoke one of the Dargin languages.

¹⁶⁰ Masqat was the area south of the Samur River near the Caspian Sea coast.

¹⁶¹ Habib ibn Maslamah al-Fihri al-Qurashi (died in 43/663–664) was the general of the Umayyads, conducted military operations in Syria and the Caucasus.

¹⁶² Al-Hadas (Greek: Adata) was a fortified city along the road from Raqqa into the border zone of al-Jazira [Ibn Khordadbeh, translation, p. 93].

30 A.H. (650–651) The conquest of Tabaristan

[p. 142] ...And in this year Mi'dad ash-Shaybani¹⁶³ was killed. And [also] they say: Salman ibn Rabi'a was also killed.

Abu Khalid said: Abu al-Khattab al-Asadi¹⁶⁴ said: Salman was killed in the year thirty-one¹⁶⁵.

AL-TABARI. 'TARIKH AR-RUSUL WA-L-MULUK' (THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS)

22 A.H. (642–643)

The conquest of al-Bab

[Ser. I, p. 2663] According to Sayf¹⁶⁶ and his informants¹⁶⁷, the conquest of al-Bab¹⁶⁸ took place in that year.

- They say—that is, those whose names I have mentioned before: 'Umar returned Abu Musa to Barsa, and Suraka ibn Amr, known as Zu-n-nur¹⁶⁹, he returned to al-Bab. To the vanguard he assigned 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'u¹⁷⁰, who is also known as Zu-n-nur, at the head of one flank he placed Khuzayfa ibn Asid al-Gifari, he named Bukayr ibn 'Abdallah al-Laysi the commander of the other one, and the latter had been staying at al-Bab even before Suraki ibn 'Amr arrived, to whom ['Umar] had written to catch up [with Bukayr]. He appointed Salman ibn Rabi'u to divide the loot.

Suraka sent 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'u ahead and followed him until he left Azerbaijan¹⁷¹ towards al-Bab. He approached Bukayr near al-Bab itself, joined Bukayr, and entered the al-Bab area at the head of the army gathered for him by ['Umar]. 'Umar sent Khabib ibn Maslama from al-Djazira¹⁷² at the head of reinforcements, and in his place in al-Djazira he appointed Ziyad ibn Khanzala.

¹⁶³ Mi'dad ash-Shaibani was one of the participants of Balanjar's siege. Al-Tabari recorded his death and the death of his fellow men at Balanjar's walls. The mention of Khalif ibn Khayyat is very important as it allows us to extract the trustworthy portion from al-Tabari's materials.

¹⁶⁴ Abu al-Khattab al-Asadi was another one of Abu Khalid's informers. His materials, despite those presented by Abu al-Bar, address not only Caucasian campaigns but also the campaigns against other regions.

¹⁶⁵ 31/651–652.

¹⁶⁶ Saif ibn 'Umar (died in 180/796) was an Iraqi historian whom al-Tabari often quotes when describing the events of the 30s AH. He is characterised by his excessive usage of legendary materials, which earned him the reputation of an unreliable author. Therefore, the next generation of historians attempted to not make references to him or quote him without reference to his name.

¹⁶⁷ Al-Tabari usually writes this way when he is referring to data from the main informers of Saif ibn 'Umar. The chain of informers in its complete chain looks like this: 'As-Sariy wrote to me quoting Shu'aib's words, and the latter, quoting Saif's words, [who spoke] referring to the words of Muhammad, Talkhi, al-Muhallab, 'Amr, and Sa'id, and they said: ...' [Al-Tabari, Arabic, Ser. I, pp. 28–89].

¹⁶⁸ Al-Bab (an abbreviation of Bab al-Abwab) was the Arabic name of Derbend, which in Persia means a *mountain pass*, a *gorge* and can also mean a *fortress*, a *lock*.

¹⁶⁹ 'Shining.'

¹⁷⁰ According to al-Tabari, 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'ah al-Bahili was an Arabic general who was the first to undertake a campaign from Derbend towards Balanjar and al-Baida. In his Caucasian campaigns he was accompanied by his brother Salman ibn Rabi'ah al-Bahili, who after 'Abd ar-Rahman's death near Balanjar became his heir as the governor. However, no other historian, except al-Tabari, mentions 'Abd ar-Rahman either in relation to the Caucasian campaigns or regarding any other events (even Ibn Sa'd mentions him in 'Tabakat', only referring to al-Tabari). Furthermore, other historians link the circumstances of 'Abd ar-Rahman's death to Salman.

¹⁷¹ Azerbaijan was a historical province with a territory that far exceeded the size of present-day Azerbaijan. So-called Southern Azerbaijan is a part of present-day Iran (Northern provinces).

¹⁷² Al-Jazira (Arabic: peninsula) is the interfluvium of the Tigris and Euphrates, Northern Mesopotamia.

When 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'u stood before the tsar of al-Bab, and at time the tsar [was] Shahribaraz¹⁷³, a Persia, and he ruled this border area. He descended from Shahribaraz, a man who fought the Israelis and cleared them out of Syria. Shahribaraz wrote [to 'Abd ar-Rahman] and asked him to guarantee his safety, [p. 2664] so he could come to him. He gave [such a guarantee]. And so he came to him and said: 'I find myself next to a ferocious enemy and various peoples that are not of a noble descent. It is not fit for a valiant and clever [man] to help such of his enemies or approach them for help against the noble and eminent ones. A noble is always a noble, wherever he may be. I have nothing in common neither with al-Kabh¹⁷⁴ nor with al-Arman. You have defeated my country and my people. Now I belong to you, and my hand is in your hand, I obey the one you obey, may Allah bless both of us. Our jizya¹⁷⁵ to you is the help for you, and perform [everything] that you might wish. Do not humiliate us with the jizya: you will weaken us against our enemy.'

[Then] 'Abd ar-Rahman said: 'There is a man above me, he will offer you his protection, go to him.' 'Abd ar-Rahman allowed him [to pass], and [Shahribaraz] he went to Suraka, who met him in the same manner [as 'Abd ar-Rahman]. Suraka said: 'I shall agree in thre name of those who stand by you, as long as you stand firm. Collection is mandatory from those who fulfill [the agreement] and do not rebel.' [Shakhrabaraz] accepted this. It became a custom for those who fought the enemies out of the ranks of disbelievers, and those who did not pay the jizya had to leave, but first they had to pay the jizya for that year.

[p. 2665] Suraka wrote about this to 'Umar ibn al-Khattab. He confirmed his [decision] and approved it.

In the countries, located on the territory of those mountains, there is no such a highland where the Armenians did not live, who were always ready to go away. They and the newcomers living around them were uprooted by the raids to their highlands, so they were no longer the permanent residents, and the dwellers of these mountains hid from them in the mountains, they left their places of permanent residence. Only the troops stayed there and those who helped them or came to trade with them. And he wrote a charter on [behalf of] Suraka ibn 'Amr: 'In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Pitiful. This is [the guarantee] that Suraka ibn 'Amr, the regent of the Emir of believers, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, gave to Shakhrabaraz and the dwellers of Armenia and al-Arman. He guaranteed safety to themselves, their properties, and religious community, so that no harm would be done to them, and their [property] would not be reduced. Regarding the inhabitants of Armenia and Al-Abwab [who had moved] from far sites, and the landowners, and those surrounding them, he reached an agreement, so that they would take part in all campaigns and accomplish any deed if the government deemed it to be good. On condition that jizya is collected from those who agree to this, except from those who are drafted [for support service] (khashar), and for them khashar replaced the jizya. If one of them is not needed, and he stays [in place], then they like the residents of Azerbaijan must pay the jizya, act as guides, and provide quarters for the whole day. And if they are taken, this obligation is removed from them. And if [p. 2666] they fail to fulfill any obligation, they shall be punished. 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'a, Salman ibn Rabi'a, Bukayr ibn 'Abdallah were the witnesses. Written and witnessed by Mardiy ibn Mukarrin.'

After that Suraka sent Bukayr ibn 'Abdallah, Khabib ibn Maslama, Khuzayfa ibn Asid, and Salman ibn Rabi'a to the dwellers of mountains then surrounding Armenia. He sent Bukayr to Mugan¹⁷⁶, Khabib, to Tiflis, Khuzayfa ibn Asid, to those who lived in the mountains of al-Lan¹⁷⁷, and Salman ibn Rabi'a, in the other direction.

¹⁷³ Bal'ami Shahriyar's [Bal'ami, manuscript, p. 335 a].

¹⁷⁴ In the text, *al-Kabh*. Al-Kabh is the Arabic name for the Caucasus.

¹⁷⁵ Jizya was a per capita yearly tax historically levied by Islamic states on certain non-Muslim subjects, it was considered as a ransom for the preservation of their lives after the conquest.

¹⁷⁶ In the text, *Mukan*.

¹⁷⁷ The al-Lan Mountains or Arran Mountains is a mountain ridge near the Dariali Gorge.

Suraka also wrote to 'Umar ibn al-Khattab where he had sent his people. Ansa so 'Umar learnt about the fulfillment of what he had not expected, especially since [Suraka] marched away in a hurry, without provisions, and this border region was important, and it had a large army.

And when they joined each other and enjoyed the justice of Islam, Suraka died and left 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'a in his stead.

And those commanders whom Suraka had sent already left, but they did not conquer any place where they had been sent, apart from Bukayr who had dispersed the Muganis, but later they returned on condition of payment of the jizya. He wrote them a [charter]: 'In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Pitiful. This is the guarantee, which was issued by Bukayr ibn 'Abdallah to the residents of Mugan from the al-Kabh¹⁷⁸ Mountains, of the safety of their property, themselves, their [religious] community, and laws (sharai') on condition of payment of the jizya: one dinar or its equal value from each person of age, to be sincere, to show the way to a Muslim, to accommodate him for a day and a night. For this they are granted safety as long as they fulfill the promise and are friendly, and we shall maintain [the guarantee of safety] [p. 2667], may Allah be the witness to [this]. But if they break [their promises], and their deception is discovered, they shall not have aman until they give up the rebels, otherwise, they shall be considered as co-conspirators. Witnessed by ash-Shammah ibn Dirar, ar-Rusaris ibn Junadib, and Khamala ibn Juvayya. Compiled in the year 21¹⁷⁹.'

They say: When [the news] of Suraka's death and that he appointed 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'a as his successor reached 'Umar, he appointed 'Abd ar-Rahman as the regent of the border area and ordered him to march against the Turks¹⁸⁰. 'Abd ar-Rahman left with his people and crossed al-Bab. Shakhribaraz told him: 'What do you wish to do?' He answered: 'I wish to [march to] Balandjar.' [Shakhribaraz] said: 'We were happy when they left us [alone] on this side of al-Bab.' ['Abd ar-Rahman] said: 'And we are not satisfied with this, and we shall enter their country. I swear by Allah! When we have such people with us that, should our Emir order us to attempt, I would reach ar-Radm¹⁸¹ with their help.' - 'Who are they?' ['Abd ar-Rahman] said: 'These people were the companions of the Prophet, may Allah bless and greet him. They were eager to undertake this task. The companions were modest and noble people during the Jahiliyyah¹⁸², [now] their modesty and generosity have increased. These characteristics are inherent to them, and therefore the victory shall always be on their side until they are changed by the one who overcomes them, and they are turned from their condition by these who change them.'

['Abd ar-Rahman] marched to Balandjar during the rule of 'Umar, when not a single woman was widowed, and not a single child was orphaned, and during this campaign his cavalry reached [p. 2668] al-Bayd¹⁸³, located at the distance of two hundred parasangs¹⁸⁴ from Balandjar, then he made another raid, and then he made peace. He carried out campaigns during the rule of 'Usman, and 'Abd ar-Rahman was killed during the reign of 'Usman, when the population of Kufa changed since 'Usman had appointed an emir for them to establish order there and stop their backsliding from the faith, but this act did not bring order but, on the contrary, disorder since they were ruled by one who strove for worldly pleasures, and they bothered 'Usman so badly that he even composed the following verses:

¹⁷⁸ In the text, *al-Kabdj*.

¹⁷⁹ 21/641–642.

¹⁸⁰ Al-Tabari in his notes about the campaigns against the Caucasus during the rule of the 'virtuous' khalifs mentions the Turks but not the Khazars.

¹⁸¹ A wall that was erected, according to the folklore, by Alexander the Great against the invasion of Yajuj and Majuj.

¹⁸² The epoch of paganism, the time before Islam.

¹⁸³ Al-Baida was a Khazar city traditionally located in the Lower Volga Region. Since al-Baida is not related to any ancient town known to archaeologists, al-Baida could have been the Khagan's main nomadic camp, which did not have a permanent location but was constantly moving along one and the same route. In Arabic it means 'White,' which may correspond to the Khagan's tent or standard: 'White tent' or 'White standard' [For an overview of the theories regarding al-Baida's localisation, see: Novoseltsev, 1990, pp. 125–128].

¹⁸⁴ Parasang is the distance covered in one day on foot or mounted.

With 'Amr I was like [a man] who
had fed his dog,
and it scratched him with its teeth and nails.

I received a letter from as-Sariy who repeated the words of Sayf, and that one, the words of al-Gusn ibn al-Kasim, and that one, the words of some man, and that one, the words of Salman ibn Rabi'i, who had said: When 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'a came to fight them, Allah did not let the Turks to oppose him. They said: 'This man dared [to act] against us only because he is accompanied by angels who save them from death.' And so they hid from him in fortresses and fled, and he returned with loot and victory. And this was during the rule of 'Umar. Then he led campaigns against them during the reign of 'Usman and was victorious as before, until the people of Kufa rose when 'Usman appointed a despoiler of the faith to rule over them. Later he led another campaign against them. The Turks were complaining to each other, saying: 'Verily, they do not die.' And one of them said: 'We shall see.' And they did [as follows]: they hid in the underbrush, laying in an ambush, and one of the [Turks] suddenly shot at a Muslim and killed him, and the companions [of the Muslim] abandoned him and fled. After that, they moved against ['Abd ar-Rahman]. There was a battle, and it was cruel for the Muslims. A voice from the sky called: '[p. 2669] 'Abd ar-Rahman, your recourse is Paradise!' 'Abd ar-Rahman fought until he was killed, and the people retreated, and Salman ibn Rabi'a took the banner and fought with it. A voice from the sky called: 'Perseverance, the line of Salman ibn Rabi'a!' Salman said: 'Can you not see your recompense?!' And then he left with his people. Salman¹⁸⁵ and Abu Khurayra ad-Davsi went to Gilan¹⁸⁶ and through it, they reached Jurjan¹⁸⁷. And after that the Turks became bolder, but this did not prevent them from taking the body of 'Abd ar-Rahman. Even now they invoke the rain with his help.

And 'Amr ibn Ma'di Karib told, repeating the words of Matar ibn Salj at-Tamimi, who said: I went to see 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'a in al-Bab, and Shahribaraz was at his place. A gaunt man arrived to see ['Abd ar-Rahman], came to him and sat next to Shahribaraz...¹⁸⁸

[p. 2804] In the same year, that is the year 24¹⁸⁹, al-Valid ibn 'Ukba marched against Azerbaijan and Armenia since they had abandoned the arrangements of the peace made with the people of Islam during the rules of 'Umar, [this followed] from the story of Abu Mihnaf¹⁹⁰, and according to other people [this happened] in the year 26¹⁹¹.

Narration of the report about this and about the work of the Muslims and how they performed their work during the campaign

[p. 2805] Hisham ibn Muhammad¹⁹² mentioned that Abu Mihnaf had told him, repeating the words of Farva ibn Lakit al-Azdi, also known as al-Gamidi, that the object of the campaigns of the

¹⁸⁵ Salman al-Farisi is meant here [al-Tabari, Arabic, Ser.I, p. 2890].

¹⁸⁶ Gilan (Gilyan) was an area on the Southern bank of the Caspian Sea.

¹⁸⁷ Jurjan (Gorgan) was an area on the Artek River and the name of its capital.

¹⁸⁸ The translation does not contain the legendary description of an iron wall between the two mountains provided by al-Tabari and originally from Matar ibn Salj at-Tamimi. The shortened adaptation of the text in this collection corresponds to the story about the wall of Yajuj and Majuj in Bal'ami's materials [Al-Tabari, Arabic, Ser.I, pp. 2669–2671].

¹⁸⁹ 24/644–645.

¹⁹⁰ Abu Mikhnaḥ Lut ibn Yahya (died in 157/773) was an early historian of the Shiite persuasion of the late Umayyads. He mostly wrote essays on Iraqi history and relied upon dependable data told by contemporaries about the described events. He was one of al-Tabari's most important informers.

¹⁹¹ 26/646–647.

¹⁹² Hisham ibn Muhammad ibn al-Kalbi (died no later than 822) was a famous connoisseur of shejares and tales, the author of 'Tarih' ('History').

Kufians were Rey¹⁹³ and Azerbaijan. And in the two border areas there were ten thousand Kufian warriors: six thousand in Azerbaijan, four thousand in Rey. [And in total] at the time there were forty thousand warriors in Kufa. Of that number ten thousand warriors raided these two border areas every year, and each person was obliged to participate in a campaign every four years.

During his rule in Kufa, in the reign of Caliph 'Usman, al-Valid ibn 'Ukba marched against Azerbaijan and Armenia. He called up Salman ibn Rabi'a al-Bakhili and sent him ahead as his vanguard. And al-Balid set out with the main force, striving to go deeper in the lands of Armenia. He went ahead with his army and entered Azerbaijan. He sent 'Abdallah ibn Shubayl ibn 'Aufa al-Ahmasi at the head of four thousand warriors, and he attacked the residents of Mugan, al-Babar, and at-Taylasan and took loot, captured their property, the residents hid from him.

Then he came to al-Valid ibn 'Ukba. [p. 2806] Then al-Valid made peace with the people of Azerbaijan on condition of payment of 800,000 dirhams, and these were the same conditions as the peace concluded by Khuzayf ibn al-Yaman in the year 22, a year after Nahāvand¹⁹⁴. Then when 'Umar died, they stopped the payments. And when 'Usman became [the Caliph] and appointed al-Valid ibn 'Ukba as the regent of Kufa, this latter went against them and entered their land with an army. When they saw this, they obeyed him and asked him to make peace on the same conditions. He agreed and received the arranged amount of money from them. Then he sent them to raid those around them who were enemies of the Muslims.

When 'Abdallah ibn Shubayl al-Ahmasi returned to him from this campaign, al-Valid had already made peace and taken the loot.

In 24 [al-Valid] sent Salman ibn Rabi'a al-Bakhili to Armenia at the head of 12,000 warriors. He entered the lands of Armenia, killed, captured, took loot, and later left with his arms full of treasure. He went to al-Valid, but al-Valid had already left victorious, having done as he had intended.

The attack of the Rums against the Muslims and the help of the Muslims to residents of Kufa

According to the story of Abu Mihnaf, the Rums marched out, and [then] those who lived in Syria asked 'Usman for reinforcements out of the Muslim troops.

The story is about this

Hisham said: 'This story was related to me by Abu Mihnaf, who said: 'This story was related to me by Farva ibn Lakit al-Azdi, who said: 'When al-Valid, having fulfilled his intentions in Armenia during the campaign [p. 2807], which I had mentioned in the year 24 of my 'History,' entered Mosul and stayed at al-Hadis, he received a letter from 'Usman, may Allah be pleased in his deeds: 'And then. Mu'awiya ibn Abu Sufiyan¹⁹⁵ wrote to me, notifying me that the Rums had gathered a large army and attacked the Muslims. I believe it necessary that their brothers from the population Kufa lend assistance to them. As soon as you receive my letter, send them a man who is brave, fearless, daring, and faithful to Islam, at the head of eight thousand, or nine thousand, or ten thousand, from the place where my messenger finds you, and may peace [be with you]!'

Al-Valid stood in front of the people, he glorified and thanked Allah. Then he said: 'And then. Oh people! Truly Allah has given outstanding bravery to the people to perform this deed. He has returned them their countries that had lost their faith, he has conquered the countries that had not been conquered before and returned them home unharmed, with loot and rewards. May Allah, the

¹⁹³ Rayy was the centre of Jibal Province, the ruins of which are in the southern suburbs of Tehran.

¹⁹⁴ The Battle of Nahāvand (occurred in 21/642) was one of the most important battles of early Arabic conquests, when the army of Sasanian Iran was defeated, and the Arabs managed to continue their advance into the Caucasus and Central Asia.

¹⁹⁵ Mu'awiah ibn Abu Sufiyan was a governor in Syria and consequently the first Umayyad khalif (ruled between 41–60/661–680).

God of the Worlds, be praised! And the Emir of the faithful has written to me already, ordering me to send ten or eight thousand from among you to help your brothers in Syria who had been attacked by the Rums. This [campaign] promises a great reward and an obvious glory! March against them, may Allah have mercy on you, follow Salman ibn Rabi'a al-Bakhili!

They say: 'And the people went. Less than three days later eight thousand warriors from among the residents of Kufa marched out. [p. 2808] They went on, and they entered the land of ar-Rum together with the Syrians (residents of Syria). The army of the residents of Syria was led by Khabib ibn Maslama ibn Khalid al-Fihri, and the army of the residents of Kufa, by Salman ibn Rabi'a. They raided the land of ar-Rum, and the warriors took who they wanted as prisoners, filled their arms with treasure, and conquered many fortresses there.'

Al-Vakidi¹⁹⁶ asserts that it was Sa'id ibn al-'As who sent Salman ibn Rabi'a to help Khabib ibn Maslama.

They say: The cause of this was that 'Usman wrote to Mu'aviye, ordering him to send Khabib ibn Maslama at the head of the Syrians to Armenia. And so he sent him there. It became known to Khabib that al-Mavriyan ar-Rumi¹⁹⁷ had marched out to meet him at the head of eighty thousand Rums and Turks. Khabib wrote about it to Mu'aviya, while Mu'aviya wrote about it to 'Usman, and later 'Usman wrote to Sa'id ibn al-'As, ordering him to assist Khabib Maslama. Sa'id sent Salman ibn Rabi'a at the head of six thousand warriors to help him. And Khabib was a cunning man. They decided to attack al-Mavriyan at night. His wife, Umm 'Abdallah bt. Yazid al-Kalbiya, heard them speaking of the plan and asked him: 'Where is your arranged meeting place?' He answered: 'Al-Mavriyan's tent or Paradise!' Then he attacked them at night, he was killing everyone he encountered, and when he entered the tent, he found his wife there—she had arrived there ahead of him. She was the first Arab woman for whom a tent was erected. Khabib predeceased her. [p. 2809] She later married ad-Dahhak ibn Kays al-Fihri. And she was the mother of his son.

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According to Sayf, in that year [Sa'id] ibn al-'As appointed Salman ibn Rabi'a as the regent of the border region of Balandjar. To reinforce his troops, which were headed by Khuzayfa, [Sa'id ibn al-'As] sent the Syrians headed by Khabib ibn Maslama al-Fihri. In the same year there were disputes between Salman and Khabib about leadership, this is why the Syrians and the Kufians fell out.

The story is about this

According to what as-Sari wrote to me about it, repeating the words of Shu'ayb, [and the latter] repeated the words of Muhammad and Talha, who had said: 'Usman wrote to Sa'id: 'Send Salman to the campaign in al-Bab. And he wrote to 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'a, who was [the regent] of al-Bab, that many of his subjects from among [the local population] had been overcome with pride and as a result impertinent, so take care [when going] with the Muslims [against them] and do not put the Muslims in danger, or, as I fear, harm might befall them.

But this did not stop 'Abd ar-Rahman from fulfilling his intentions, and he did not retreat from Balandjar. He started the campaign in the ninth year of the rule¹⁹⁸ of 'Usman and reached Balandjar.

They besieged it and brought out catapults and ballistas against it. [p. 2890] And whenever anyone approached [Balandjar], he was either wounded or killed. They were hasty [in doing this]

¹⁹⁶ Al-Waqidi (130–207/747–823) was an author of 'Book of Histories and Campaigns' ('Kitab al-Maghazi'), which is a fundamental work and the most reliable for further historians. He was one of at-Tabari's informers.

¹⁹⁷ Al-Kufi wrote: 'a man from the Rums named al-Marzban at the head of three and more thousand...' [al-Kufi, Arabic, vol. II, p. 108].

¹⁹⁸ Corresponds to 31/651–52.

with the people. [Since as it turned out,] Mi'dad was killed in those days. And once! The Turks reached an arrangement with each other. [That day] the population of Balandjar left [the fortress], and the Turks joined them. A battle broke out. 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'a was killed. He was now being called Zu-n-nur. The Muslims fled and dispersed outwards. As to those who chose to follow Salman ibn Rabi'a, he protected them until they reached al-Bab. As to those who went the way of the Khazars and through their country, they passed through Gilyan and Jurjan, and with them Salman al-Farisi and Abu Khurayra.

And the people took the body of 'Abd ar-Rahman, placed it in a large basket. He stayed with [the Muslims]. And even now they use his name when invoking the rain and the victory in a battle.

Thus wrote to me as-Sari, repeating the words of Shu'ayb, who repeated the words of Sayf, who repeated the words of Daud ibn Yazid, who repeated the words of ash-Sha'bi, who had said: I swear by Allah! Salman ibn Rabi'a knew better where to deliver his strokes than a butcher knows the joints of a cow!

So wrote to me as-Sari, repeating the words of Shu'ayb, who repeated the words of Sayf, who repeated the words of al-Gusn ibn al-Kasim, who repeated the words of some man from banu Kinan, who had said: When military raids against the Khazars followed one after another, they started expressing displeasure and reproach each other. They said: 'We used to be the people without equal until these lesser people arrived. And we could not resist them.' Some of them said to others: 'Is it true that [the people] do not die? If they died, they would not be able to defeat us.' During those raids, until the last campaign of 'Abd ar-Rahman, not a single person was killed. [c. 2891] They say: Why not try and kill one of them? They laid in wait in the depths of the forest. Some people from the Muslim army passed by them. They shot [arrows] at them from an ambush and killed them, and they had promised [to bring] their heads. Then they agreed with each other about the war on them, and then they agreed about the day. A battle broke out. 'Abd ar-Rahman was killed. And they [the Turks] quickly killed many. [The Muslims] separated into two groups. A group went to al-Bab. They were protected by Salman until he led them to safety. And the group that took [the road towards] the Khazars went to Gilyan and Jurjan. They were led by Salman al-Farisi and Abu Khurayra.

As-Sari wrote to me, repeating the words of Shu'ayb, and he repeated the words of Sayf, and he repeated the words of al-Mustanir ibn Yazid, and he repeated the words of his brother Kays, and he repeated the words of his father, who had said: 'Yazid [ibn] Mu'aviya, 'Alkama ibn Kays, Mi'dad ash-Shaybani, and Abu Mufazzir at-Tamimi were in [the same] tent, 'Amr ibn 'Utba, Khalid ibn Rabi'a, al-Khalal ibn Zurri, and al-Karsa were in another tent. These tents were placed next to each other in the camp in Balandjar. Al-Karsa' spoke: 'How beautiful is the brightness of blood on the white kaba¹⁹⁹ of this clothing!' 'Amr ibn 'Utba spoke about his clothing: 'How beautiful is the redness of blood on your whiteness!'. The Kufians raided Balandjar for several years during the reign of 'Usman, and then not a single woman was widowed, and not a single child orphaned. [This was] until the ninth year [of 'Usman's reign] came.

When the ninth year came, two days before they were to march out, Yazid ibn Mu'aviya had a dream: they brought a male gazelle to his tent, and he had never seen a more beautiful one, and it was wrapped in a cloak. And then they took it to the grave, near which there were four people, and Yazid had not seen a more even and beautiful grave than this one, and he was buried in it. When in the morning the people attacked the Turks they threw a stone at Yazid and crushed his head. And it looked as if he had decorated his clothing with blood and not dirtied it. He was the male gazelle from his dream. The blood looked very beautiful on the clothing. Before the morning attack Mi'dad told 'Alkama: 'Lend me your cloak—I shall wrap my head with it,' and he did so. He approached the tower where Yazid had been killed. He shot at them and killed some of their number. [The Turks] threw the stones using the stone propelling machine. [A stone] hit his head. His friends took

¹⁹⁹ A mantle.

him away and buried him next to Yazid. And 'Amr ibn 'Utba was injured, and he saw his cloak as he wished it to be, and so he died. When the day of the battle came, al-Karsa' fought until he was pierced with a spear in many places. And so his clothing was white in the centre and red at the edges. And the people fought valiantly until those four were killed, and after their deaths [the Muslims] turned and fled.

And so as-Sari wrote to me, repeating the words of Shu'ayb, who repeated the words of Sayf, who repeated the words of Daud ibn Yazid, who had said: 'Yazid ibn Mu'aviya an-Nadja'i, may Allah have mercy on him, 'Amr ibn 'Utba and Mi'dad fell on the day of the battle at Balandjar. [p. 2893]. As to Mi'dad, he wrapped his head with the cloak he had taken from 'Alkama, and a piece of stone hit him...²⁰⁰

And so as-Sari wrote to me, repeating the words of Shu'ayb, who repeated the words of Sayf, who repeated the words of Muhammad and Talha, who had said: 'Sa'id appointed Salman ibn Rabi'a as the regent of this [border] region, and he bid Khuzayfa ibn al-Yaman to march out with the Kufians. Before that [the regent of this border] region had been 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'a. On the tenth year²⁰¹ [of his rule] 'Usman sent the Syrians to help them, headed by Khabib ibn Maslama al-Kurashi. Salman was giving him orders, but Khabib refused [to obey] him. And so the Syrians said: 'We wish to kill Salman.' And so, the Kufians responded: 'Then, we swear to Allah, we shall kill Khabib and put him in jail. And if you resist, there shall be many dead amongst you and amongst us.' And so Aus ibn Magra said about this:

If you kill Salman, we shall kill your Khabib.

If you go away to Ibn 'Affan²⁰², we shall also leave.

[p. 2894] If you act justly, then this [border] region will be under the rule of our Emir.

And the Emir leads horse-mounted troops.

And we are the rulers of the border region, its protectors.

On the nights when we fought against all border regions,

[we also] were repelling [the enemies from the already conquered regions].

Khabib wished that he be made an Emir above the ruler of al-Bab, like had been [above him] the commander of the troops, if it was coming from Kufa. When Khuzayfa learnt about [Khabib's wish], he approved this, and the Kufians also agreed.

Khuzayfa ibn al-Yaman pursued three campaigns, and during the third one 'Usman was killed. When it became known that 'Usman was killed, [Khuzayfa] said: 'Oh Lord, curse the murderers of 'Usman, those who attacked him, those who hated him. Oh Lord, we had reproached him, and he had reproached us, while that one had hated him. Oh Lord, we had reproached him, and he had reproached us, when the one who he had placed [above us] had reproached us, and we had reproached him. And they did this preparing for sedition. Oh Lord, do not grant them [any other] death than by the sword.

The retelling of the mentioned events that took place during the year

[p. 2927] ...In that year the residents of Kufa expelled Sa'id ibn al-'As from Kufa.

During that year they wrote to 'Usman ibn 'Affan about a meeting to talk about what they would say if they accused him.

²⁰⁰ The next fragment is not included in the translations.

²⁰¹ Corresponds to 32/652–53.

²⁰² Khalif 'Usman ibn 'Affan is meant here.

The retelling of the report with a description of their meeting for this purpose

From what as-Sari wrote to me about it, repeating the words of Shu'ayb, who repeated the words of Sayf, and he, the words of al-Mustanir ibn Yazid, and he, the words of Kays ibn Yazid an-Naha'i, who had said: '... Sa'id ibn al-'As came to 'Usman in the eleventh year of the rule²⁰³ of 'Usman, and a little more than a year before the departure of Sa'id ibn al-'As from Kufa, 'Usman sent al-Sh'as ibn Kays to Azerbaijan... [p. 2928] ...and Salman ibn Rabi'a to al-Bab...'

AL-KUFI 'KITAB AL-FUTUKH' (THE BOOK OF CONQUESTS)

The story of the conquest of Armenia and the death of Salman ibn Rabi'i al Bahili.

[vol. II, p. 108] He says²⁰⁴: Mu'aviya summoned a man from Qurayshit named Khabib ibn Maslama al-Fikhri, and gave him four thousand horsemen and two thousand of foot [soldiers], and commanded him to go to Armenia on the orders of Usman ibn Affan.

He says: Khabib ibn Maslama left the county of Syria towards the country of al-Jazira. Then he left the country of al-Jazira and moved towards the country of Armenia. When he came to Shimshat and its outskirts, he learnt that a man from Rum, called al-Marzban²⁰⁵, leading over thirty thousand warriors, had set up camp not far from Shimshat. Khabib ibn Maslama wrote about this to Mu'aviya, [Mu'aviya] wrote about this to Usman, Usman wrote about this to al-Valid ibn Ukba ibn Abu Mu'aytu, who was his regent in Kufa. [Usman] wrote to him, ordering to select ten thousand warriors from the inhabitants of Kufa, place them under the command of Salman ibn Rabi'a al Bakhili, and send him to Khabib ibn Maslama in Shimshat lands to help him fight against the enemies.

[p. 109] He says: When the letter of Usman, may Allah bless him, reached al-Valid ibn Ukba in Kufa, he spoke to the people in a sermon, praising and thanking Allah, and then said: 'Oh people! Usman, Emir of the believers, wrote to me, asking me to send Salman ibn Rabi'u al Bakhili with ten thousand warriors to Shimshat lands to help your brothers from Syria. The Rums have already gathered an army against them. This action is both a great reward and great retribution. Hurry, may Allah have mercy upon you, and join Salman ibn Rabi'a and do not be lazy on your path to Allah. The people replied to him [agreeing] and got ready to join Salman.

He led them, ten thousand Kufa people, to Khabib ibn Maslama. This news reached Khabib, and he said to his soldiers: 'Syrians, it is up to you to decide! The people of Kufa are already marching to your rescue. I fear they might defeat the enemy, and all the honour and glory will go to them and not you. Maybe you should attack before they arrive? And we will achieve victory over the enemy.' He says: They said: 'It is up to you to give the orders, oh Emir! Do as you choose.'

He says: And Khabib ibn Maslama was a man skilled in military arts. He says: He was crafty and cunning. He decided to attack those people at night. When the night fell, he marshaled his army, and marched them out, and made an unexpected attack against the infidels. He killed their soldiers and captured their people. Al-Marzaban and the rest of his soldiers fled, not stopping until they arrived in the land of ar-Rum. The Syrians took many handsome trophies, and they shared these among themselves.

[p. 110] He says: Salman ibn Rabi'a arrived with the Kufa people after that. The Syrians had their hands full of treasure. And the Kufa people told them: 'Hey, [share] your trophies with us, you won, you became stronger, and you dared attack your enemy only because you knew about us.'

²⁰³ Corresponds to 33/653–54.

²⁰⁴ Al-Kufi's work does not contain references to informers, but the anonymous 'kala' (he said) is frequently repeated.

²⁰⁵ Al-Tabari wrote: '...al-Mavriyan ar-Rumi... at the head of eight thousand Rums and Turkish...' [Al-Tabari, Arabic, Ser. I, p. 2808].

The story about what happened between Syrians and Iraqis fighting over loot

He says: Khabib ibn Maslama said: 'Hey you! You came to us, [when] Allah the Great and Almighty put our enemies to flight and scattered them. Loot came into the hands of those warriors who showed their strength and fought, and so you have no right to this loot.

He says: And an altercation arose between the Iraqis and the Syrians, they fought, and the Iraqis won. This marked the beginning of enmity between the Iraqis and Syrians. He says: They tried to threaten each other.

He says: Then Khabib ibn Maslama sent a messenger to the Iraqis, asking them not to rush into the fight with their brothers and wait until he wrote about this to Usman ibn Affan.

He says: And the Iraqis consented. Khabib ibn Maslama wrote [a letter] to Mu'aviya, in which he told him about the hostility between the Iraqis and Syrians, about their threatening of each other, about the fight for the trophies, which were taken by the Syrians without the Iraqis. He says: Mu'aviya wrote about this to Usman ibn Affan.

He says: 'Usman ibn Affan, may Allah bless him, decided that the Syrians should share their trophies with the Iraqis [p. 111], and they should not be stingy in doing this.

He says: When Usman ibn Affan's letter reached the Syrians, they said: 'The Emir's wish is our command.'

He says: Then they shared their trophies with the Iraqis. Khabib ibn Maslama stayed where he was. Usman ibn Affan wrote to Salman ibn Rabi'a ordering him to go to Armenia.

The story of Salman ibn Rabi'a's campaign in the land of Armenia and the conquest of that country

He says: Salman ibn Rabi'a and those Iraqis who were with him marched away to the land of Armenia.

He says: The tsars of Armenia learnt that the Arabs were marching towards their country and fled over the hills and far away until they were hidden in the mountains, citadels, valleys, and woods. And they said to each other: 'We were visited by people who are said to have come from heaven: they do not die, and weapons cannot kill them.'

He says: Salman ibn Rabi'a marched on, killing all who opposed him and conquering cities and fortresses in his path. He cleared the country from his enemies and reached al-Baylakan in the land of Arran²⁰⁶.

He says [p. 112]: The people of al-Baylakan came to him [asking] for mercy and offered him support and money, which he actually received from them. They concluded a peace treaty for the money they gave him. And he accepted it from them. Then he left al-Baylakan and set camp near the Barza'a Fortress. He concluded a peace treaty with its people for the money they gave him, and he allocated it among his soldiers. And thus he encouraged them. After that he moved with his cavalry towards Jurzan. He concluded a peace treaty with its population on condition that they should pay him a certain sum of money yearly. After that he and his soldiers went back, and so they moved until they crossed the al-Kurr River²⁰⁷ and reached the land of ash-Shirvan²⁰⁸. He made camp there, called its tsar to come to him, and concluded a peace treaty with him on condition that he would pay money, which he took from him. After that he left ash-Shirvan and went to Shabiran²⁰⁹ and Maskat. Then he sent messengers to the mountain tsars calling them to

²⁰⁶ Alania.

²⁰⁷ The Kura River.

²⁰⁸ Shirvan's location is not precisely known [Ibn Khordadbeh, translation, pp. 305–306, Note 49]. It is approximately on the right bank of the Samur River, at times Shirvan included more than just a significant portion of Lezgin lands [The History of Dagestan, 1996, pp. 530–352–361].

²⁰⁹ Shabiran was a town on the Caspian Sea coast in the Shakhnazarli settlement, north-west of Divichi [Ibn Khordadbeh, translation, p. 302, Note 33].

come. Tsar al-Lakz²¹⁰, Tsar of Filan²¹¹, and Tsar [p. 113] of Tabaristan²¹² came to see him. They brought him money and presents. They concluded a peace treaty with him on conditions that they should pay him a certain sum of money yearly. And he received it from them. Then he went to the city of Al Bab. At that time the tsar of the Khazars, Khakan, with three hundred thousand infidels was staying there. When he learnt that the Arabs managed to cross all the lands before his dominions, he left the city of al-Bab. He was told: 'Oh tsar! You have three hundred thousand warriors, and they have ten thousand, and you are fleeing from them?' Khakan answered: 'I know that these people have come down from heaven, and that weapons cannot kill them. Who will fight against them?'

He says: And then he went over the hills and far away. And Salman ibn Rabi'a came to the city of al-Bab with his Muslims, and there were already no infidels present at that time. He had spent three days there until his soldiers had enough rest. Then he left it, following Khakan and his warriors. He arrived at one of the Khazar cities—that is, Yargu²¹³, there was no one there... then he moved... [p. 114] to Balandzhar, one of the Khazar cities.

He says: Salman ibn Rabi'a stopped at the thick forest, where a group of the Khazars, Khakan's soldiers, were staying, on the bank of a flowing river. One of them came closer to look at the camp of the Muslims. While he was standing there, he saw a Muslim soldier come to the river to wash himself. And he wanted to test his weapons: to try to find out whether he could be killed or not. He shot an arrow, and the soldier was killed.

Then he came to him, took off his clothing, and cut his head off. He took it with him to Khakan and said: 'Oh tsar! This is one of those who were thought to be invulnerable, unable to be killed!'

He says: When Khakan saw that, he called his warriors and held a meeting. Then he led three hundred thousand soldiers to fight against the Muslims, and so they fought until no Muslim was left alive.

He says: Salman ibn Rabi'a al-Bakhili and all his people, may Allah bless them, were killed. Their tombs are known to the present day in Balanjara as the 'martyrs' tombs' (kubur ash shukhada).

He says: Usman ibn Affan learnt about Salman ibn Rabi'a's and his warriors' deaths in the land of al-Balanjara, and he was upset, it bothered him, and he lost sleep over it. Then he wrote to Khabib ibn Maslama, asking him to go to Armenia with all his soldiers.

The story of the transit of Khabib ibn Maslama to the land of Armenia after the death of Salmana ibn Rabi'a al-Bakhili.

He says: When Usman's letter reached Khabib ibn Maslama, the latter called his soldiers [p. 115], all six thousand of them, both cavalry and foot soldiers. Then he marched them out towards Armenia.

He says: They moved across the mountain pass that is now known as the Banu Zarrara Pass. He went on until he entered the city of Khilat²¹⁴ and he put up in the citadel, where a group of infidels were staying. He spent a few days within its walls and then he left. He arrived at the land of Siradzh in the country of al-Matamir and made camp there. Then he wrote to the people of Jurzan. A group of their leaders came to him and he concluded a peace treaty with them,

²¹⁰ Al-Lakz (the area of the Lakzes, Lezgians) was the basin of the Samur River, Kurach-Chai, and Chirach-Chai [Shikhsaidov, 1980].

²¹¹ Filan was the region south of al-Lakz [Shikhsaidov, 1976].

²¹² Tabaristan was a mountainous area along the Southern coast of the Caspian. This must be a mistake as it should be Tabarsaran (Tabasaran)—that is, the basin of the upper stream of the Rubas River and the Levoberezhye of the Chirach-Chai.

²¹³ Yargu is Targu, possibly identical to the present-day Tarki settlement near Makhachkala.

²¹⁴ Hilat was a city and fortress on the western bank of Lake Van (Turkey).

provided that they should pay his eight thousand dirhems. He received the money and wrote out a receipt. He stayed there and started writing to Armenia's tsars, telling them to obey and submit to his terms.

The story of removing Khabib ibn Maslama and of Khuzayfa ibn al-Yaman's governance, may Allah bless both of them

He says: While Khabib ibn Maslama was busy doing that, Usman sent him a message informing about his removal and the appointment of Khuzayfa ibn al-Yaman.

He says: Khuzayfa called a soldier from his [p. 116] uncle's family, his name was Silla ibn Zafir al-Absi. He sent him to Armenia and appointed him as his viceroy, and Khuzayfa stayed in Medina. Silla ibn Zafir al-Absi arrived in Armenia and stayed there for a year. He humiliated its tsars until they submitted to him with obedience and humility.

The story of removing Khuzayfa ibn al-Yaman and of Al Mugira ibn Shu'ba's governance, may Allah bless both of them

He says: Then Usman ibn Affan, may Allah bless him, removed Khuzayfa from the regent's position. He called al-Mugira ibn Shu'ba and appointed him as the governor of Armenia and Azerbaijan. He stayed there as long as Allah wished. Then Usman removed him and appointed al-Ash'as ibn Kaysa al-Kindi. He held the post until Usman ibn Affan was killed, may Allah bless both of them. Al-Ash'as collected kharaj from Armenia and Azerbaijan and sent it to Usman ibn Affan, may Allah bless him...

[pp. 363, 367–371] Al-Ash'as ibn Kays retained his position of regent of Azerbaijan during the governance of Ali ibn Abu Talib²¹⁵...

BAL'AMI. 'TARIKH-I TABARI' (HISTORY OF TABARY)

The story of conquering Azerbaijan and Derbend of the Khazars²¹⁶

[p. 335a]...²¹⁷ [Bukayr] sent a messenger to Umar, informing him about the victory, with khums and loot, and asked him to go to Derbend. That was Umar's order. Bukayr appointed Utba as the regent of all Azerbaijan and assigned to him Simak ibn Kharashu²¹⁸ with his troops as well as the prisoner²¹⁹ Isfandiyar. And he, with his troops, moved to Derbend.

Umar wrote a letter to Utba and entrusted him with Azerbaijan. Umar learnt that Bukayra needed troops and military assistance in Derbend. [Umar] sent a letter to Suraka ibn Amr in Basra, asking him to march his troops across Akhvaz²²⁰ to Derbend to help Bukayra. He ordered Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'a and Khuzayfa ibn Asid with a group of noble knights to march out together with Basra's troops to help Suraka.

Umar sent a letter to Khabib ibn Maslama, asking him to march to Derbend with Dzhazira'a troops to help Bukayra. Khabib marched out with his troops as well. Suraka marched along one ravine (gorge, path), and Khabib, along the other one. And both ravines led to Jurzan. Suraka

²¹⁵ The fourth 'virtuous' khalif (reigned between 35–40/655–661).

²¹⁶ In this work Bal'ami in his translation combined two stories by al-Tabari: 'The Conquest of Azerbaijan' and 'the Conquest of al-Bab.'

²¹⁷ The translation does not include the majority of materials corresponding to al-Tabari's chapter titled 'The Conquest of Azerbaijan.'

²¹⁸ Simak ibn Kharasha al-Ansari, after Reyys's conquest, was sent to Azerbaijan by Khalif 'Umar in 22/642–643 to help Bukair ibn 'Abdallah [al-Tabari, Arabic, Ser. I, p. 2660].

²¹⁹ Al-Tabari's Isfandiyaz ibn al-Farrohzah (al-Farruhzad) [Al-Tabari, Arabic, Ser. II, p. 2660].

²²⁰ Al-Ahvaz was an area in south-western Iran and the cognominal centre of this district.

ibn Amr came with his advanced guard and appointed Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'u to head it. Shakhriyar²²¹ arrived there and concluded a peace treaty in order not to pay jizya. And he said: 'I am fighting between two foes: the Khazars and the Russians, and these are foes to the whole world, especially the Arabs. [The Arabs] must fight only against them. Instead of taxing me, let us fight against the Russians with our soldiers and our weapons. Let us drive them away and force them to stay in their own country. We strongly against paying jizya and kharaj because we have to fight every year.'²²² Abd ar-Rahman said: 'There is the Emir, my superior, I have to report to him.' He sent Shakhriyar, with one of his own men, to Suraka, and Suraka said: 'I have to tell Umar.'²²³ Umar answered: 'Refuse the jizya. It has already become a habit': [the population] of all ravines does not pay either kharaj or jizya because they drove away the Kafirs from the Muslims and are fighting on their own, that is why they should be exempted from kharaj and jizya. This tradition was observed during the conquest of Transoxiana. The same happened in the city of Sinjab: neither kharaj nor jizya, only the tithe, because they were fighting day and night and drove the Turks away from the lands of the Muslims.' Then Suraka, Bukayr ibn Adallah, and Khabib ibn Maslama concluded a peace treaty with all those ravines, provided that they should protect Muslims against their foes, that the Muslims should not have any troops there, and no army should come to the lands of the Muslims.

Suraka sent each of these commanders to the ravines and cities located in the mountains. He then sent Bukayr ibn Abdallah to the city in the same ravine, and he sent Khuzayfa ibn Asid to the mountains and cities located opposite the al-Lan ravine. And the Arabs fortified all the ravines of the Khazars and Alans. And the Muslims in the city were now guarded against their foes. They wrote about it in the letter to Umar. Umar was very happy because he had been thinking of defending the ravines if the enemies came to the lands of the Muslims, and the Persians would unite with them, and Islam [p. 335b] in those lands would retreat. He did not know what he would do in such a case. When the news reached him, he was very happy and praised Suraka. Then Suraka died in that Derbend. His death upset Umar, and he sent a letter to Abd ar-Rahman appointing him as his regent in Derbend and saying: 'You should make a good contribution to the Muslims guidance like Suraka did.' Abd ar-Rahman discussed it with Shakhribaraz²²⁴ and told him: 'I will fight in these ravines, I will send my troops there and convert the ravines population to Islam.' Shakhribaraz said: 'We allowed them to let the enemy come to us.' Abd ar-Rahman said: 'I will not allow them. There is a padishah and many cities in those Russian ravines'²²⁵ opposite, and they call it Balanjar. And there is Iskander's²²⁶ wall across, it is called Ya'juj and Ma'juj, built by Dhu-l-karnayn²²⁷.' Abd ar-Rahman said: 'I will not stop until I come to the borders of Balanjar. If you are not afraid of the khalif, we would come to the wall of Ya'juj and Ma'juj. [Abd ar-Rahman] equipped his troops and marched out with them along the ravine towards Balanjar. His troops plunged two hundred farsangs deeper in that land, and converted many cities to Islam (i.e., placed them under the rule of Islam), and went back to Derbend. He stayed there during the entire rule of Umar and Usman until his death. After he had converted all those cities and ravines to Islam.

Abd ar-Rahman went to Umar, and Umar asked him: 'How were you able to enter those ravines and enter those lands, and how did you fight?' His interpreter replied: 'All kafirs in

²²¹ al-Tabari's 'Shahribazar' [Al-Tabari, Arabic, Ser.I, p. 2663].

²²² In this copy of 'Tarih-i Tabari' by Bal'ami the text containing Shahriar's words does not coincide with the corresponding Shahriari text presented by al-Tabari. The change seems to have come from the scribe as in other lists and editions of 'The History...' by Bal'ami the texts in the original and the translation coincide.

²²³ Al-Tabari's text is different: the episode with Khalif 'Umar has been added. According to al-Tabari, this decision was made by Suraqa and supported by Khalif 'Umar [Al-Tabari, Arabic, Ser.I, p. 2664].

²²⁴ Shahriar and Shahribaraz seem to be one and the same person.

²²⁵ Another change of the original text made by the scribe.

²²⁶ Alexander the Great is meant here.

²²⁷ Alexander the Great is meant here.

those cities were Khazars and Alans²²⁸ related to the Turks. When they saw us, they said: 'No troops have ever come here. These are angels that have come from heaven, that is why they managed to come here.' Then they asked us: 'Are you angels or humans?' We said: 'We are humans, but angels came with us. They help us to fight against any enemy.' Their fear prevented them from fighting against us. No one fought against us. And they said: 'No matter how many times you kill them, they will not die because angels will help them.' And we came to their lands. There was a man in those cities who said: 'One day I am going to kill one of them, and we will see whether he dies or not.' Standing behind a tree, he shot an arrow into one of our soldiers and killed him. When they found out that we could die, they declared war on us, and we went back to Derbend.

He said: Once Abd ar-Rahman was talking to Shakhribaraz. Shakhribaraz was wearing a ring with a red ruby shining like fire in the daylight and like a lamp in the night time. Abd ar-Rahman asked: 'Who brought you this precious stone, and where from?' Shakhribaraz called one of his servants and told Abd ar-Rahman: 'This stone was brought by this man from the wall of Ya'juj and Ma'juj. There are many states from here to that wall. There is a tsar who owns the wall between the mountains. I sent gifts to each tsar, and they passed from tsar to tsar until they reached the tsar of the wall. That tsar received many gifts that my servant brought to him. The servant gave him my letter, in which I asked him for a ruby, his precious stone. He sent it to me.' Abd ar-Rahman asked the [servant]: 'Where have you brought it from?' That one replied: 'When I brought the tsar the gift from Shakhribaraz, he called his falconer and said: 'Find that stone.' The falconer had an eagle, he left and did not feed that bird for three days. Then he took the eagle and a piece of meat and asked me to come with him [p. 336a]. We climbed up the mountain bordering upon the wall of Dhu-l-karnayn. I looked down and saw a chasm going deep, I could not see its bottom. The falconer said: 'I will throw the meat across that mountain into the chasm. And I have an eagle to get it. If he catches it [the meat] in flight and brings it back, then consider the matter as lost: the ruby is lost for us. But if it touches the ground, you will get what he lifts up from it.' Then he threw the piece of meat and released the eagle. And the meat fell down onto the ground. The eagle picked it up, brought it back, and sat on his arm. The ruby was stuck to the meat. The falconer took the ruby and gave it to me, and so I brought it here.' Abd ar-Rahman asked: 'Describe that wall to me.' The servant said: '[There are] two high mountains, and there was a passage between them. [Dhu-l-karnayn] built a wall there as high as the mountain, a wall of stones, copper and iron, thus shutting off the passage.' Abd ar-Rahman said: 'He speaks the truth. This man saw what the Almighty and Great Allah in the Quran described as:

Bring me pieces of iron. And when he levelled it
between the two hills, he said: 'Blow!' And when
he turned it into fire, he said: 'Bring it to me,
I will pour it over the molten metal.'²²⁹

Then Abd ar-Rahman asked the servant: 'What colour is that wall: is it white, red, or black?' That Majlis had a man dressed in Yemen white clothes, with white and black stripes like golden rings. Then the servant said: 'The wall is the colour of those clothes.' Abd ar-Rahman said: 'He speaks the truth.' Then Abd ar-Rahman asked Shakhribazar: 'What is the price of this ring?' His interpreter replied: 'No one knows its price. But, via my servant, I sent one hundred thousand dirhams to that tsar, and I sent one hundred thousand dirhams to other tsars along the way. It cost me two hundred thousand dirhams, in addition to living expenses and gifts to that servant.' Then Shakhribazar took off the ring and put it down in front of Abd ar-Rahman.

²²⁸ The Khazars and Alans' is a late insertion.

²²⁹ The corresponding text by al-Tabari does not contain these verses. Since they are written in Persia, it is difficult to define what ayah of the Quran they correspond to.

Abd ar-Rahman put it on Shakhribazar's finger and said: 'Keep it forever.' Shakhribaraz said: 'If the Iranian tsars heard my story of the ring, they would take it from me. You will conquer the whole world because you have a shield (you have protection), and you are a man of your word.'

II. Marwan ibn Muhammad's campaign in (119 A.H.) 737

KHALIFA Ibn KHAYAT. 'TARIKH' (HISTORY)

113 A.H. [731–732]

...²³⁰ [p. 359] Abu Khalid said: Abu-l-Khattab said: When Maslama²³¹ came, the Khazars attacked him, but Maslama did not know it until it happened. Maslama fought against them until the night came. The Muslims did not sleep that night, staying on guard, and the Khazars left. Maslama went back, leaving Marwan ibn Muhammad²³² as his deputy. And all this happened in 113.

114 A.H. [732–733]

That year Hisham ibn Abd al-Malik²³³ removed Maslama ibn Abd al-Malik from the position of regent of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and al-Jazira, and on the first day of Muharram year 114²³⁴ appointed as their regent Marfan ibn Muhammad ibn Marfan.

Abu Khalid said: Abu Bara said: In the yer 114 Marwan²³⁵ marched out and crossed the ar-Ramm River²³⁶, he killed, captured, and attacked as-sakaliba²³⁷.

117 A.H. [735–736]

[p. 362] Abu Khalid reported the words of Abu Bara, who said: In that year Marwan ibn Muhammad, who governed Armenia and Azerbaijan, sent two troop regiments to the mountains of al-Kabk²³⁸. One of the regiments occupied three fortresses of al-Lan²³⁹. The other

²³⁰ The previous text is not included in the translation as it has nothing to do with the period under consideration.

²³¹ Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik was the son of the Umayyad Khalif 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (65–86/685–705), a general who played an active role in the Caucasian campaigns and the Khalif's governor in the Caucasus in 107–111/715–730 and 113–114/731–733.

²³² Marwan ibn Muhammad ibn Marwan al-Khimar was an Arabic general (the son of the famous commander Muhammad ibn Marwan) who achieved great success in the campaigns against the Caucasus. He was consequently the last Umayyad Khalif (reigned between 127–132/744–750). He started to participate in the Caucasian campaigns at the same as Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik. His father Muhammad ibn Marwan ibn al-Hakam, the son of Khalif Marwan (reigned in 64–65/684–85) and the brother of Khalif 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (reigned in 65–86/685–705), was a famous general who distinguished himself in the campaigns against Byzantium, Syria, and Armenia.

²³³ An Umayyad Khalif who ruled between 105 and 121 or 724–743.

²³⁴ 3 March 723.

²³⁵ The events of Marwan ibn Muhammad's campaign and the advance into the Northern Caucasus through Bab al-Lan and Bab al-Abwab when the Arabs, after defeating the Khazars, advanced towards al-Baida and Nahr as-Saqaliba, which are known from the works of al-Baladhuri and al-Kufi [al-Baladhuri, Arabic, pp. 207–208, Al-Kufi, Arabic, vol. 8, pp. 71–72] as the events of one and the same campaign (which we are used to dating to 119/737) but are divided into the campaigns of 114/732–33 and 119/737 in Ibn Hayyat's materials.

²³⁶ Ar-R...mm is difficult to identify. It might be a distortion of ar-Ras–Araks or al-Lan.

²³⁷ Possibly the same as Nahr as-Saqaliba [Al-Kufi, Arabic, vol. VIII, p. 72, al-Baladhuri, Arabic, pp. 207–208]. Apparently, Arabic historians and geographers in different periods granted different meanings to the term 'as-Saqaliba.' For example, to oppose 'at-Turks' (the Turkic peoples) 'as-Saqaliba' may denote non-Turkic peoples, possibly including the Slavs, or 'as-Saqaliba' as a nation inhabiting forests, unlike the peoples inhabiting the steppe.

²³⁸ The Caucasus.

²³⁹ The land of al-Lan or Arran.

one attacked Tuman-Shah²⁴⁰, and the latter surrendered to Marwan ibn Muhammad. Marwan sent him to Hisham, and Hisham sent him back to Marwan, and Marwan reinstated him back to his position.

118 A.H. [736]

[p. 364] That year Marwan ibn Muhammad marched out of Armenia. He came to the lands of Vartanis²⁴¹ going through three passages. Vartanis fled to the Khazars and left the fortress. And Marwan used stone mortars against it. The people of Khumrin²⁴² killed Vartanis and sent his head to Marwan. Marwan showed Vartanis' head to the besieged, and they surrendered to Marwan. He killed the soldiers and took the children as captives.

119 A.H. [737]

[p. 364] That year Marwan ibn Muhammad marched out of Armenia with very few soldiers. He came to Bab al-Lan²⁴³, crossed the land of al-Lan, and then went to the land of the Khazars, passed Balanjar, and reached al-Bayd²⁴⁴, where Khakan was staying. Khakan fled.

That year [Abd al-Malik ibn] Marwan ibn Muhammad killed in Armenia Khazar-Tarkhan and all his people.

121 A.H. [738–739]

[p. 367] That year Marwan ibn Muhammad, as the regent, marched out of Armenia. He reached the Bayt as-Sarir fortress²⁴⁵ ...²⁴⁶

AL-BALADHURI. 'KITAB FUTUKH AL-BULDAN' (THE BOOK OF CONQUEST OF COUNTRIES)

The Conquest of Armenia²⁴⁷

... [p.207] Marwan ibn Muhammad was with Maslama and fought with him against the Khazars. He showed bravery and fought fiercely. Then Maslama Hisham assigned Sa'yid al-Kharashi²⁴⁸ as regent, and he lived in the frontier lands for two years.

Then he assigned Marwan ibn Muhammad to be a regent in the frontier lands. He was staying at Kisal²⁴⁹, and he built his town, forty parasangs from Barz and twenty parasangs from

²⁴⁰ Identical to the settlement of Gumik.

²⁴¹ Equal to the Lakzes' king, Arbis ibn Basbas [Al-Kufi, Arabic, vol. VIII, pp. 80–81].

²⁴² Khamzin.

²⁴³ The Arabic name for the Darial Gorge.

²⁴⁴ See note 356 (al-Baida).

²⁴⁵ The campaign against as-Sasir was undertaken in 121/739. This mountainous principality is mentioned as the first among other Dagestan principalities, with which the Arabs entered into an agreement. As-Sasir's territory is located in the interfluvium of the Andi Koysu, Awarskoje Koysu, and Kara-Koissou. As-Sasir in literal Arabic means 'throne.' Sources also provide its definition as 'golden' (az-Zahab). The full name of the As-Sasir Principality is 'Bait Sahib as-Sasir az-Zahab' (the house of the country of the possessor of the golden throne). See al-Tabari, Arabic, Ser. II, p. 1667.

²⁴⁶ The translation does not include data about the further campaigns of Marwan ibn Muhammad against the mountainous principalities of Dagestan.

²⁴⁷ al-Baladhuri, who used the same sources as al-Kufi, was critical to these materials. Apart from al-Kufi, only he provides information about the adoption of Islam by the Khazars' Khakan and his closest circle.

²⁴⁸ Sa'id ibn Amr al-Harashi was an Umayyad commander who distinguished himself in successful campaigns against Central Asia. At Khalif Yazid II (101–105/720–724) he was the governor of Basra.

²⁴⁹ May also be read as Kasal, al-Kufi has it as Kasak [Al-Kufi, Arabic, vol. VIII, p. 71].

Tiflis. Then he entered Khazar land from the Bab al-Lan side. He ordered Asid²⁵⁰ ibn Zafir al-Sulami and Abu Yazid²⁵¹, together with mountain tsars from Bab al-Abwab, to enter Khazar land. Marwan raided [p. 208] Saqaliba, who were in the Khazar state, and he took into captivity twenty thousand families and resettled them in Xaxit²⁵². And then they killed emir [assigned to rule them] and fled, but they were all caught and killed.

They say: When the head ('azim) of the Khazars realised the large number of men with whom Marwan came onto the lands, about their arms and their strength, then he lost courage, and his heart was filled with horror. When Marwan came close to him, he sent a messenger, urging him [to choose] Islam or war. He answered: 'I have converted to Islam. Send me the one who will interpret it to me.' And that one did so. And he publicly converted to Islam and stopped hostile action against Marwan on the condition that the latter would support him as the tsar.

AL-TABARI. 'TARIKH AR-RUSUL WAL-MULUK' (THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND TSARS)²⁵³

113 A.H. [731–732]

[Ser. II, p. 1560] To the events of the year should be included Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik's troops spreading out around Khakan's country and his conquest of the towns and fortresses. He murdered them, captured them, and took them into slavery.

And many Turks set themselves afire. Those who were in the Balanjar mountains capitulated to Maslama. And Khakan's son²⁵⁴ was killed.

114 A.H. [732–733]

[p. 1562] [In that year] Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik came back from al-Bab after he destroyed Khakan, built al-Bab, and strengthened what was there.

[In that year] Hisham appointed Marwan ibn Muhammad as regent of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

117 A.H. [735–736]

[p. 1573] In that year Marwan ibn Muhammad, who was Armenia's regent, sent two regiments. One of them conquered three fortresses of al-Lan, and the other one attacked Tuman-Shah, whose residents surrendered on the terms of a peace treaty.

²⁵⁰ How it is vocalised in the text. The correct reading is Usaid.

²⁵¹ Abu Yazid is a kunye (the honourable name of the father in the son's name) of Usaid ibn Zafir as-Sulami. This indication made by al-Baladhuri evidences the fact that Usaid ibn Zafir was the father of Yazid ibn Usaid as-Sulami, who in 135/752–53 was appointed as the governor of Arminiya and who by the order of Abbasid Khalif al-Mansur (136–158/754–775) had to marry the daughter of the Khazars' Khagan [al-Kufi, Arabic, vol. VII, pp. 229–232].

²⁵² Khakhit means Kakheti.

²⁵³ To describe the Caucasian campaigns undertaken at the Umayyads, al-Tabari reproduces data provided by Khalifa ibn Khayyat. Due to the scarcity of these materials, Bal'ami in his translation changes them out for al-Kufi's text.

²⁵⁴ According to al-Kufi, the Khakan's son Bars-bik was killed during military operations in the Caucasus led by Sa'id ibn 'Amr al-Harashi, who at the order of Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik replaced him in the Caucasus [Al-Kufi, Arabic, vol. VIII, pp. 52–56]. The difference in the sources between the two versions of the name of the Khakan's son is determined by a different placement of diacritics: Martik ibn Khakan [Khalifa, Arabic, p. 35], Bars-bik ibn Khakan [Al-Kufi, Arabic, vol. VIII, p. 18, Note 26], and Naras-tik ibn Khakan [Bal'ami, manuscript]. The number of textual discrepancies is particularly high in the manuscript copies of al-Tabari's translations into Persia and Turkic.

118 A.H. [736]

[p. 1593] Armenia's and Azerbaijan's regent was Marwan ibn Muhammad ibn Marwan.

119 A.H. [737]

[p. 1635] Armenia's and Azerbaijan's regent was Marwan ibn Muhammad.

120 A.H. [738]

The events of that year included a campaign by Iskhak ibn Muslim al-'Ukajli: his conquest of Tuman-Shah's fortresses and emptying of his lands, Marwan ibn Muhammad's campaign on Turkish lands.

[p. 1667] Armenia's and Azerbaijan's regent was Marwan ibn Muhammad.

121 A.H. [738–739]

To the events of that year could be attributed the campaign of Marwan ibn Muhammad to country of the golden throne²⁵⁵: he conquered his fortresses and devastated his lands...

AL-KUFI 'KITAB AL-FUTUKH' (THE BOOK OF CONQUESTS)**The story about Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik's action in the fight with non-believers and his war against them²⁵⁶**

[vol. VIII, p. 63] ...²⁵⁷ He says: Then Maslama arose, divided his troops into the left and right flanks, the centre, and the wings. The mountain tsars marched in front of him. He ordered them to be given quivers with arrows. He ordered his standard should be brought to him and hoisted it in front of him.

He says: Khakan, the tsar Khazars, looked on this standard, approached his tarkhans and his knights from his subordinate population, and told them: 'You should know that this standard after it is attached will fly only on that day. Go forward to it, and if you will be able grab it and rip it to shreds, and then you will have won. And now go. And be careful, do not let anyone stay behind, except the chosen ones.

He says: And one of the tarkhan Khazars moved out with a big regiment of riders against the Muslims. And Marwan ibn Muhammad ibn Marwan slapped his horse's belly and moved out from the ranks of his warriors, he was wearing a yellow silk shawl [kaba], which he tied himself with a yellow ribbon, the ends of which were laying in the back between his shoulders. He exclaimed: 'Muslims! Let my father and mother be victims for you, I ask for your persistence and to chop off heads to the bow of the saddle. And less talking, when there are many of them—that is defeat. And chop with swords their faces and hands.

He says: And the Muslims replied to him with full approval. Then Marwan ibn Muhammad ibn Marwan and his warriors went forward towards the mounted regiments of the Khazars.

He says: A vortex and thick dust went up, and no one saw them.

²⁵⁵ The Principality of as-Sasir is meant here. See note 418.

²⁵⁶ Al-Kufi included data on all the campaigns of Marwan ibn Muhammad into 'The Story about Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik's March against the Kafirs and His War against Them,' which in reality contains data about the campaigns undertaken during 113–121/731–739 by several governors: Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik, Sa'id ibn 'Amr al-Harashi, and Marwan ibn Muhammad.

²⁵⁷ The translation does not contain data about Maslama's campaigns that preceded those in which Marwan ibn Muhammad also took part.

He says: Suleman ibn Hisham²⁵⁸ came to his uncle, Maslama, and said: 'Oh emir! I swear by Allah, Marwan has been killed!' Maslama aswered him: 'No, he has not been killed, and shut up!' And Suleman ibn Hisham remained silent. And when the dust dispersed, then Maslama saw the Muslims from Marwan ibn Muhammad's regiment, that Marwan ibn Muhammad had caught up with the mounted regiments of the Khazars [p. 64], and that many of them were already killed, from his regiment and from their regiments. And Marwan wiped the blood of Khazars from his sword on his horse's mane.

He says: Khakan became angry, the tsar of the Khazars. Then he rode up to his tarkhans and said: 'I stood behind you, watching your actions. Are you not ashamed that one man has disgraced you!'

He says: Then he arranged into attack formation the other mounted regiment. Better still, more numerous and [better] armed. And [Marwan ibn Muhammad] said: 'I will give ransom for these people.' You should know that you have the keys to heaven [in your hands]. And you will have those honours in abundance, which Allah has promised you from the immensity of his bounty. Indeed, those who will be killed, will be greatly rewarded in heaven, [the benefits of which] are beyond imagination. Because Your Lord does not break any promises.

He says: Then Marwan ibn Muhammad and his warriors attacked the mounted regiments of the Khazars, and killed more of them than the first time, and wounded many of their people.

He says: Every time Khakan led the mounted regiments of the Khazars against the Muslims, from [the Muslim's lineup] Marwan ibn Muhammad and his warriors emerged. He attacked him and killed a large number of Khazars, and then he came back to the Muslim camp and stood there like nothing had happened. And he invited Maslama for a meal, and he started to eat together with his cousins and those of the highest rank. And Khakan at this moment stopped his horse, filled with rage, and looked at him, not knowing what to say. Then rode up to his tarkhans and said: 'Today I will kill myself with a horrible death. Woe to you, Khazars! There are ten times more of you than them, but they are eating and drinking, not fearing you and not paying you any attention.'

He says: The Khazars replied: 'Oh tsar! Do not be angry! Tomorrow we will please you, and we will bring their leader as a prisoner to you. [p. 65] And he will be all yours.'

He says: And when morning came Khakan lined up his warriors the same way as the day before. Then he selected the best of the Khazars and lined them up in front of him and in the centre. He admonished them and ordered them not to fail in battle. Maslama found out about this and said: 'I will show you, you non-circumcised barbarian! You have separated the Khazars and lined them up in front of you. I swear by Allah, they will not see the Muslims capitulate.'

- Then Maslama lined up his people. His right flank was headed by Marwan ibn Muhammad, at the head of the left flank was Suleman ibn Hisham, the centre was led by al-'Abbas ibn al-Walid²⁵⁹, the reserve (al-dzhanakh) was headed by al-Xuzajla inb Zafir ibn al-Xaris al-Kilabi.

- And the warriors converged on each other and grappled and a fight broke out between the two regiments. It happened that a Muslim struck a Khazar with his lance, then pulled it out, and attacked him again, hitting him with his sword and killing him.

- People did not stop fighting in this way until the sun came up high and bright.

- And another man came to Maslama, asking about mercy and with the intention to be converted to Islam. This man asked: 'Do you need Khakan, the tsar of Khazars?' Maslama replied: 'And where is he?' His interpreter replied: 'He is in a wagon (adzhala), which is in front of you, covered with a brocade.'

- Maslama sent a man to Marwan ibn Muhammad, called him to him, and said: 'Oh Abu 'Abdallah²⁶⁰, do you see the wagon covered with a brocade?' Marwan replied: 'Of course, I see it.' Maslama said: 'That is the wagon of Khakan, and he is sitting in there.' Marwan said: 'I will take

²⁵⁸ Suleman ibn Hisham was the son of Umayyad Khalif Hisham ibn 'Abd al-Malik (ruled in 105–125/724–743).

²⁵⁹ Son of Khalif al-Valid ibn 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (ruled in 86–96/705–715).

²⁶⁰ Kunye (the honourable name of the father given by the son's name) of Marwan ibn Muhammad.

care of him.' Maslama said: 'And I will go with you, Abu 'Abdallah! I swear by Allah! If we defeat him today, we will remain in the memoirs with him until the end of time.'

- Suleman ibn Hisham came up to his uncle and said: 'Oh emir! Listen to my words [p. 66], and do not rush.' Maslama said: 'Speak, what is it?' Suleman said: 'Khakan is not sitting in his wagon, he lined up his warriors and the Khazar knights to the left and to the right and behind him. And I am not sure that when you and Marwan come out, he will not order his tarkhans to surround you, and you will be able return to your camp only as dead men. And I consider that you need to chose a man amongst the knights from your own army, whose bravery and strength you know, and give him your knights, and then order him to go up against Khakan.'

He says: And Maslama understood that Suleman had given him good advice. He called a man from his troops named Subajt al-Baxrani²⁶¹, who was one of the knights. And Maslama told him: 'Subajt, I have chosen you among my warriors for this assignment, which I assign to you. I have found that you are just as I expected, in terms of courage and bravery. If I achieve success in that which I desire, you will receive the [desired] payment. I will reward you with ten thousand dirhams, I will nominate you for the gifts of the emir's faithful, I will glorify your name. And if you turn out to be a coward and do not carry out your assignment, I swear by Allah, I will certainly crucify you on the first tree, which I will find.'

He says: Subajt answered him: 'May the emir please Allah! Tell me what you want me to do!' Maslama said: 'I will give you a thousand people from those whom you know and in whose courage and bravery you will be sure. And then attack Khakan's army with them. And do not come back until you crush him or capture him, if this is possible.'

He says: Subajt said: 'May the emir please Allah! As for his captivity, I do not know if I will be able to do that or not! However, the emir can be certain, may Allah help him, that I will not return without crushing him [p. 67] and his troops, if Allah is willing, and no one has that power but Allah the Highest, the Greatest.'

He says: Then Subajt al-Bakhrani picked a thousand people from the Syrian knights. Later he outlined their assignment and gave them some instructions, and said: 'Look, you are fighting not for Maslama and not for the faithful emir Hisham, you are fighting for the religion of Allah, and you are waging a holy war on your way to Allah.' His people replied to him: 'You have said your piece, may Allah be gracious to you! Lead us, and we will go with you, and decide as you wish, if Allah is willing, and no one has that power but Allah the Highest, the Greatest!'

He says: And Subajt al-Bakhrani went forward with these one thousands against Khakan. And Khakan was then in his wagon, which was called al-jadada. And it was covered for him with various carpets. And above it there was a tent made of brocade and at the top of it, a golden pommel.

He says: Subajt did not lie about reaching the wagon. And he attacked the tent with his sword, severed the brocade covering, and hit Khakan's sword but did not cause him any injuries. Khakan became greatly frightened, he jumped out of the wagon and rushed off to his horse, which was tied to the side of the wagon. He jumped up on it and sped off so fast that they could not catch him. And the Muslims attacked the Khazars, and they turned on their heels, running away, and their troops were dispersed and kept running until they reached their homelands. And Subajt al-Bakhrani pronounced a poem, beginning with the words:

How many, how many, and how many I severed that dusty day
with my Indian [sword] amidst the dust

and so on till the end.

[p. 68] He says: Maslama gathered the loot taken from the Khazars, separated one-fifth of it, and then divided the rest of it between the Muslims. Then he gave [the order] to his army and went to

²⁶¹ In an-Nahrani's edition. Z. Bunyatov's reading: Sabit an-Nahrani [Al-Kufi, translation, p. 45, note 67]. An-Nahrani's nisba is an obvious distortion of al-Bahrani's nisba, which is evidence of belonging to al-Bahra's tribe [Garaeva, 1982, p. 20].

the town of al-Bab. And in the meantime in his citadel were located one thousand Khazar families. He had it surrounded, besieging them, for several days. And he could not think up anything to use against them, and he was already thinking about leaving, when a man appeared from al-Bab and said: 'May the emir please Allah! If I give you this citadel with a slight effort, will you return [to me] my possessions, my family, and my children?' Maslama replied: 'Yes, that you can have. - 'Give me one hundred head of cattle and sheep now for me to release this citadel.'

He says: Maslama instructed his people to give him what he wanted. He went over to the water spring, which Anushy'rvan ibn Kubad has brought for them in the old days, and made pipes go into the citadel and he said: 'Dig in this place until you reach water.' Then he ordered: 'Now take these cows and sheep and cut them near the water spring!' And they started to cut, and the blood flowed with water into their tanks. When this man confirmed that all the blood had leaked out into the tanks, he then ordered the water should be turned off. And he turned off their water and took [water] from the wells into the valley. In the morning people [saw] that their tanks were filled with blood. And by the evening the tanks began to stink. And after that maggots appeared there. They started to suffer from unquenchable thirst. And this man came to Maslama and said: 'Oh emir! These people are already dying of thirst. Release the gates of the citadel and make a path for them to escape, and the citadel will be yours.'

He says: Maslama gave the order to his warriors, and they moved away from the gate of citadel. And when the night came, those people opened the door and, running for their lives, went on their way. [p. 69] And the citadel remained in Maslama's hands. Maslama went and entered the citadel. He inspected it and its fortifications. Then he ordered the tanks should be cleaned of blood and feces, and they did it. Later he ordered water should be poured in there as usual. Then [Maslama] ordered the town of al-Bab should be divided into four quarters. He gave one quarter to Damascans, another quarter, to the people from the Himsa mountain area, yet another quarter, to the Palestinians, and a quarter, to the remaining Syrians and Jazeerians. That day is famous for this.

He says: Then Maslama called one man from his warriors, named Farid ibn Aswad as-Sa'labi²⁶², to be the ruler of Bab al-Abwaba and ordered him to build the temple spires of the town, warehouses for wheat, barley, and arms, to erect stone battlements and to fortify [the town] with Iron Gates. Later Maslama assigned the maintenance [of the garrison] for the al-Bab town: 110 dinars annually, except wheat and butter, and that ration (rizk) was to be given monthly.

He says: Then Maslama called his uncle's son Marwan ibn Muhammad, designated him to be ruler of all Muslims in the town of al-Bab, and left. He went back to Hisham in Syria and informed him that Allah had conquered with his [Maslama's] hands, and that he had left Marwan ibn Muhammad to be the ruler of the Muslims.

He says: The Khazars found out that Maslama had left for Syria, and they returned to their country, which had been taken from them, and seized it and settled there. Marwan ibn Muhammad found out about this. He gathered people, arranged an inspection for them, and there were more than 40 thousand people. And he lead them to Balanjar. Then from Balanjar he went to the Khazar state. And he started to take prisoners and killing so much so that he killed most of the Khazars. [p. 70] He captured women and children, stole livestock, and came back to the town of al-Bab successfully with his loot. And it was winter and very cold. This campaign is called the 'muddy campaign' because of so much rain and mud. During this campaign he ordered the tails of horses to be cut off. And they cut them off because there was so much dirt and dampness²⁶³.

He says: Marwan ibn Muhammad spent the winter in the town of al-Bab. By early spring Hisham ibn 'Abd al-Malik sent [a messenger] to him, dismissed him from leading this land, and summoned him back. He [Hisham] called Sayid ibn 'Amra al-Kharashi, handed over the charter to him, and made him a governor of that state.

²⁶² In the edition the name of as-Sa'labi is provided without diacritics, so we read it according to Bal'ami [Bal'ami, manuscript, p. 425b], the reading is Karir ibn Suva'id as-Sa'labi [Al-Kufi, translation, p. 48].

²⁶³ The 'mud' campaign occurred in 110/728–29 and was led by Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik.

He says: And in the spring Sayid ibn 'Amral-Kharashi became emir of the whole of Armenia, Azerbaijan, ar-Ran, and Jurzan. He came to the town of al-Bab and stayed there. Then he waged war against the Khazars day and night so that the saddle-cloth never dried out until his eyesight failed. And he wrote to Hisham ibn 'Abd al-Malik, announcing that black water poured down into his eyes, that his eyesight failed so much that he could not tell a mountain from a plain.

He says: Hisham sent his faithful man from Syria to check if he was in such a bad condition as he claimed!

He says: His trusted person arrived, looked at Sayid ibn 'Amra, and saw that he was as he had said.

He says: He wrote to Hisham, informing him about it. Hisham sent a messenger to al-Kharashi and discharged him. He called Marwan ibn Muhammad ibn Marwan, and gave him a charter to rule Armenia and Azerbaijan, and ordered him to wage war against the Khazars.

[p. 71] He says: Marwan left Syria with 120 thousand warriors. He arrived in Armenia and stopped in a place named Kasak²⁶⁴, forty parasangs from Barza'a and twenty parasangs from Tiflis. Then he started fighting with the tsars of Armenia and its batriks (patricians) until they became obedient to him. Later he moved forward, conquering fortress after fortress until he seized all the fortresses in Armenia. Then he wrote to all the warriors who were in Bab al-Abwab and ordered them to invade the Khazar state, and they met him in the town of Samandar²⁶⁵.

He says: Then Marwan convened his warriors, set off, and entered Bab al-Lan. He killed, captured, and burnt until he came to Samandar, one of the Khazar towns.

He says: And the Muslim troops met him from the town of al-Bab [headed by] by a man named Usayd ibn Zafir as-Sulami²⁶⁶. And Marwan moved on there with 150 thousand warriors. And there he lined up his warriors into attack formation, and no warlords remained with him, no subordinates, no servants who would not wear the helmet and would not carry the lance, on the top of which there was an arrowhead, shining like a flaming torch.

He says: The brightness of the army was such that a bird could not fly past it, and flying over it, fell down struck by the strength of its magnificence and radiance.

He says: Then he went and reached the town of al-Bajd, where Khakan, the tsar of the Khazars, was staying.

He says: And Khakan fled from Marwan until he reached the mountains. In the Khazar state Marwan with the Muslims was so successful that he cut through their opposition and left them behind. And then [p. 72] he raided as-sakaliba and the tribes of the infidels, which were nearby. Among them he took into captivity 20 thousand families. Then he moved forward and set up a camp on the as-Sakaliba River (nahr as-Sakaliba)²⁶⁷. And he called a man from the brave Syrian men named al-Kausar ibn al-Aswad al-'Anbari, who was the head of his guard (shurta). And he told him: 'Oh Kausar! A spy came to me and told me that Khakan, the tsar of the Khazars, sent against us one of his tarkhans named Khazar-Tarkhan at the head of 40 thousand sons of Tarkhan. And you cross this river, meet them, and lie in wait with the same number [of warriors] as they have. And when the morning comes, I will join you, if Allah is willing, [because] there is no power but Allah the Highest, the Greatest!'

He says: Al-Kausar said: 'May the emir please Allah! Evening is falling, and dusk is approaching. Give me more time, emir, until tomorrow.'

²⁶⁴ Kasal or Kisal [al-Baladhuri, Arabic, p. 207].

²⁶⁵ Samandar was a Khazar city with a problematic localisation. Archaeologists accept the hypothesis put forth by J. Markwart that Samandar was situated on the site of the present-day Tarki settlement near Makhachkala [Magomedov, 1983, pp. 52–60].

²⁶⁶ The kunye is not provided. See note 96 [al-Baladhuri, Arabic, p. 186].

²⁶⁷ Under which the Volga is mostly implied [Artamonov, 1962, p. 223, Klyashtorny, 1964a, pp. 16–18], rarer the Don [Al-Kufi, translation, p. 81, Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 186].

He says: Marwan became angry and then said: 'I swear by Allah! If you do not cross this river now, I will cut off your head, and I will slaughter all your family. And now choose what you prefer!' Al-Kausar said: 'I will cross it. May the emir please Allah!'

He says: Then al-Kausar at the same time selected 40 thousand men from the knights of this army. Then he was given the flags, and he crossed [the river], and more than a thousand men crossed it with him.

He says: And al-Kausar came with them all that day before the new day had begun. And suddenly he met a man with twenty Khazar knights, who was hunting with dogs and falcons.

He says: Al-Kausar attacked him, and killed him, and killed those people who were with him, and not one of them slipped away.

[p. 73] He says: And the Muslims seized their arms and horses. Al-Kausar and his people went further until they ended up at the edge of a dense thicket. After they had set up camp, he suddenly saw smoke, coming from the deep shrubs. Al-Kausar asked: 'What is that smoke?' Someone replied: 'That must be part of the Khazar army there.'

He says: Then al-Kausar called his companions, mounted his horse, and they rode on together in the direction of the smoke. And before the Khazars were aware, al-Kausar appeared in front of them with 40 thousand men, and they were put to the sword. And 10 thousand of them were killed, 7 thousand were captured, and the rest fled as far as the eye could see into the forests, valleys, and mountains. Then al-Kausar rode up to these prisoners, who were in his hands, and asked them: Tell me what your commander Khazar-Tarkhan is doing?' They replied: 'He went to hunt with some of his people. And we do not know what he is doing!'

He says: And al-Kausar understood that the one whom they met was Khazar-Tarkhan. They had seized all of them in the dusk. Then went back. And the sun of second day had not yet come up, when the head of Khazar-Tarkhan and heads of his people were in Marwan's camp on the tips of spears.

He says: Khakan, the Khazar tsar, found out about this, and he was deeply terrified, and he raised his arms to the sky. Then he sent a messenger to Marwan ibn Muhammad: 'Oh emir! You already have taken the Khazars and the Slavs (as-sakaliba) as prisoners, you have crushed [them], and achieved your goal. What do you want?' Marwan told the messenger: 'I want him to be converted to Islam, or I will kill him, I will take his kingdom, and I will give it to another.' The messenger asked for three days' time for him to return to Khakan and pass him this message.

He says: Marwan ibn Muhammad agreed to this. And the messenger went to Khakan and told him [p.74] the message. And Khakan sent the messenger back to Marwan: 'Oh emir! I have already been converted to Islam, I follow it and I love it. But send me a man from your people who would explain it to me.'

He says: And Marwan sent him two men: One of them was Nukh ibn as-Saib al-Asadi, and the other one was 'Abd ar-Rahman son of some al-Khaulani.

He says: They went together to Khakan and explained Islam to him. Khakan said to the translator: 'Ask them on my behalf: I want you [both] to allow me to have wine and carrion.' Al-Khaulani said to al-Asadi: 'Let him have that before he has not yet been converted to Islam. And when he and his people convert to Islam, we will inform them that it is forbidden to them. Al-Asadi said: 'I am not like that to let what Allah forbade and to forbid what Allah allowed since in this religion only sincerity and truth are permitted. Then al-Asadi went to the translator and told him: 'Translate for your master that the Islamic religion does not allow forbidden things and does not forbid that which is permitted. And if you have been converted to Islam, then you are not supposed to have carrion, blood, or pork, and everything which has not been blessed with the name of Allah during the slaughter. Once the translator told this to Khakan, he said: 'Tell them on my behalf: 'You are the real Muslims!'

He says: Then Khakan, the tsar of the Khazars, was converted to Islam, so were many of his relatives and residents of his country.

He says: Marwan anointed him to reign, and then he fraternised with him as with a brother in faith, later he received offerings from him, and then he began his return voyage with forty thousand infidel prisoners towards the town of Bab al-Abwab. Marwan lodged them in their area, named As-Samur River, on the plain of the land of Al-Kurr. After that he wrote to Hisham [p. 75] ibn 'Abd al-Malik, informing him about that, and sent [to the caliph] one-fifth²⁶⁸ of all that which Allah had provided him.

He says: Winter has come. Marwan spent the winter in the place named Kasak. And when the winter passed and the spring came, he decided to invade as-Sarira. He wrote to his replacement, Usajd ibn Zafir as-Sulami, and asked him to meet him in the as-Sarir area with his warriors and fighters...²⁶⁹

IBN AL-ATHIR. 'AL-KITAB AL-KAMIL-FI'T-TARIKH' (THE COMPLETE BOOK OF HISTORY)²⁷⁰

113 A.H. [731–732]

The tale about the campaign and return of Maslama

[vol. IV, p. 129] In this year Maslama sent his troops through the country of Khakan. The cities and strongholds were conquered, he killed and captured warriors and their family members, and he burnt what he saw. The inhabitants of that side of Balandjar submitted to him. And he killed the son of Khakan²⁷¹. The following peoples united in opposition to him: the Khazars and others in such a number that nobody had ever seen, except Allah the Almighty. But Maslama had already passed Balandjar. When the news about them reached him, he issued an order to his warriors. They kindled fires, then left their tents and carts. [p. 130] Together with his warriors he set off on the way back. He put the weak warriors forwards and the brave ones rearward. They had passed the distance of two junctions when they eventually reached Bab al-Abwab.

114 A.H. [732–733]

The tale about the rule of Marwan ibn Muhammad in Armenia and Azerbaijan

[p. 131] This year Hisham ibn 'Abd al-Malik assigned Marwan ibn Muhammad to be the governor of al-Jazir, Azerbaijan, and Armenia [p. 132], he was a son of his uncle. The reason for that is that he was in Armenia in the army of Maslama waging war with the Khazars. When Maslama returned, Marwan went to Hisham and unexpectedly appeared before him. [Hisham] asked [Marwan] why he had come there. [Marwan] answered: 'It is difficult to talk about this, but I do not think that anybody else, except me, could bring this news. [Hisham] said: 'What is

²⁶⁸ Khums was a deduction from different types of goods in the amount of 1/5. Introduced by Muhammad as the share of the spoils of war given to him. It replaced the traditional quarter, which was given to the ruler.

²⁶⁹ The translation does not include the final part of this 'Essay...' with the data about Arabic campaigns against the principalities of mountain people in Dagestan in 121/739.

²⁷⁰ In his rendering Ibn al-Athir combined materials presented by al-Kufi and al-Tabari. He perceived al-Kufi's tidings with scepticism and therefore missed a lot in his rendering, including the fact that the Khazar Khagan had adopted Islam. Relying upon al-Tabari's materials, he dated a part of the events, thus, all text presented by al-Kufi was divided into two parts. He dated the events related to Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik's rule to 113, while the events associated with Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik's reign in the Caucasus were dated to 114/732–733. But in 114 AH it was the first time when Marwan was appointed as the governor of the Caucasus. The materials recorded in 114 AH appeared to have included data about the campaigns undertaken by Marwan ibn Muhammad during his second governorship in the Caucasus (117–119/735–737). Reproducing al-Tabari's recordings, Ibn al-Athir does not mention their correlation with the information provided by al-Kufi.

²⁷¹ See note 424.

it?' Marwan answered: 'The attack of the Khazars on the lands of Islamand²⁷² the murder of al-Jarrakh and other Muslims²⁷³ have sapped the power of Muslims. The Emir of believers decided to send his brother Maslam ibn 'Abd al-Malik against them. I swear by Allah, in their country he set foot only on the edges. When Maslama saw the size of his army, he rejoiced and wrote to the Khazars, declaring war. After that he stood for three months, and during that time those people were preparing. So when he entered their country, he did no damage to them, and the main goal for him was to survive. I want you to permit me to carry out a campaign to restore our honour and take revenge on our enemy.' [Hisham] said: 'You have my permission. [Marwan] asked: 'Give me one hundred and twenty thousand warriors.' [Hisham] answered: 'Consider it done.' [Marwan] said: 'You should conceal this affair from everybody.' [Hisham] answered: 'Very well. I appoint you the ruler of Armenia.' [Marwan] said goodbye to him and set off as the ruler of Armenia. Hisham sent troops from Syria, Iraq, and al-Jazira. One hundred and twenty thousand warriors and volunteers joined [Marwan]. He pretended that he was going to attack al-Lan and enter their country. Marwan sent a messenger to the tsar of the Khazars with a request for an armistice. [The tsar of the Khazars] agreed and sent a person to Marwan, who was to make peace. Marwan delayed the ambassador until he had completed his preparation and everything he wanted. Then he sent a rude message to the [Khazars] and declared war against them, and with that he sent the ambassador to his master, having charged the person, who would have accompanied him on a longer route, while Marwan himself set off on the shortest route. By the time the ambassador reached his master, Marwan had already got there. The messenger handed over the news to his master and reported to him that Marwan had summoned, brought together, and prepared an [army] against him. The tsar of the Khazars began consulting with his advisors. They said: this man deceived you and entered your country. If you wait to bring together the [troops], then before you do this time will have run out, and he will get from you everything that he wants. But if you meet him with the army you have, he will expel you and defeat you. The right decision would be that you go to the most distant edges [p. 133] of your country and allow him to [do] everything he wants. He accepted their advice and set off to where he was directed. Marwan entered the country, advanced farther, destroyed, plundered, took into captivity, and reached its distant edge where he remained for several days until he defeated them, and took revenge on them for the [Arabs]. He entered the country of tsar as-Sarir...²⁷⁴

The tale about different events

[p. 134] This year Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik arrived in Damascus after he had defeated the Khakan, strengthened what there was, and built al-Bab... This year the governor of Armenia and Azerbaijan was Marwan ibn Muhammad.

117 A.H. [735–736]

[p.137] ...This year Marwan ibn Muhammad, who was the governor of Armenia, sent two detachments, one of which occupied the three fortresses of Al Lan, and another one attacked Tumanshakh, and its residents agreed upon a peace treaty.

²⁷² It seems that the Khazars' advance to Mosul mentioned by al-Kufi is meant here.

²⁷³ The mentioning of Al-Jarrah's campaign evidences the fact that Ibn al-Athir in his narration relied upon al-Kufi's text.

Al-Jarrah ibn Abdallah al-Hakami was an Umayyad general and became famous in Khorasan campaigns, after which he successfully fought the Khazars in 104–107/722–726 and 110–112/728–731. However, during Ramadan in 112/December 730 the Khazars defeated the Arabs near Ardabil (Southern Azerbaijan), and many Arabic warriors were killed, including al-Jarrah [Khalifa, Arabic, pp. 354–357, Al-Kufi, Arabic, translation, pp. 29–42].

²⁷⁴ The translation does not include data about Marwan's campaigns against the mountainous principalities in Dagestan undertaken in 121/739.

The tale about different events

[p.145] This year the governor of Armenia and Azerbaijan was Marwan ibn Muhammad.

118 A.H. [736]

[p.147] This year Marwan ibn Muhammad led a campaign from Armenia and entered the land of Varnis²⁷⁵ through three passages. Varnis fled from him to the Khazars. Marwan approached his fortress. Marwan besieged the fortress and fired upon it with catapults. Varnis was killed by a person who was passing by him. His head was sent to Marwan and exhibited for the residents of his fortress. Then they surrendered on his mercy. He killed warriors and captured children.

[p.148] This year the governor of Armenia was Marwan ibn Muhammad.

119 A.H. [737]**The tale about different events**

[p.160] This year Marwan ibn Muhammad led a campaign in Armenia. He entered the country al-Lan and passed through it into the country of the Khazars. He passed Balandjar and reached al-Baida, where the Khakan was, and the Khakan fled from him.

The translation of texts from Arabic into Russian and commentaries were done by Nuriya Garaeva

²⁷⁵ Identical to Vartnis [Khalifa, Arabic, p. 363] or Arbis ibn Basbas [Al-Kufi, Arabic, vol. VII, pp. 80–81].

No. 9

Al-Masudi about the Peoples of the Caucasus and the Volga Region

At the end of the 9th century Abu-l-Hassan Ali ibn al-Khusejn al-Masudi, who was destined to occupy a prominent place in the history of Arab-Muslim geography, historiography, and literature, was born into a noble Baghdad family of descendants of the companion founder of Islam Muhammad Abdullah ibn al-Masud. According to I. Krachkovsky, 'his main school was apparently wide travel and lively communication with the representatives of a broad range of backgrounds.' As a young man, al-Masudi travelled to Iran, in 915 CE he was in Istikhara and Shiraz. Then he went to India and Ceylon. An unquenchable thirst for knowledge and travel led him to China with traders, from where he headed to Zanzibar and returned to Baghdad through Oman. Then he travelled the along the south coast of the Caspian Sea. Later al-Masidi lived in Syria for a long time, where he died in Fustat (Cairo) in 345 or 346 AH (= 956 CE).

Masudi left all his material accumulated during his travels—the description of most of the Muslim Arab lands and people known at that time—for his descendants in the form of historical and geographical works, most of which are unavailable now. Today all that exists is the geographical work 'The Book of Guidance and Beliefs' ('Kitab at-tenbikh va-l-ishraf') and author's extract of his major works named 'The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems' ('Murudzh az-zakhab va ma'adin al-javakhir'), tentatively compiled in 947 and revised in 950, and which is a coherent historical and geographical encyclopedia of the 'habitable world.'

We quote the passage from the book of al-Masudi 'Murudzh az-Zakhab...' from the edition: F. Minorsky A History of Shirvan and Derbend in the 10–11th Centuries. – Moscow: Eastern Literature Publishing House, 1963. – p. 189 ff. (this edition is the translation of a book by V. Minorsky. A History of Sharvan and Darband in the 10–11th centuries. – Cambridge, 1958, prepared by S. Mikoelyan and substantially edited and updated by V. Minorsky in 1967).

Excerpt from the source:

'... Chapter 17

Report on the Kabkh Mountain²⁷⁶ with information about various peoples such as the Alans, Khazars, various Turks and Bolgars²⁷⁷ and information about the gates of al-Bab val-Abwab²⁷⁸ and the tsars and peoples surrounding them.

§1²⁷⁹. Masudi says: The Kabkh Mountain is a great mountain occupying a vast area. It accommodates many kingdoms and peoples. 72 peoples live upon it and each of them possess their own tsar and language, which differ from others. This mountain has many rocky spurs and valleys. The town of al-Bab val-Abwab is situated on one of the rocky spurs and was built by Kisra Anushirwan²⁸⁰

²⁷⁶ The Caucasus.

²⁷⁷ The Bolgars.

²⁷⁸ Darband (present-day Derbend), literally 'the city of the [main] passage and [other] passages.'

²⁷⁹ The text is divided into paragraphs by V. Minorsky.

²⁸⁰ Khosrow I Anushirvan (531–579), the Sasanid king. Different theories on the city's formation may be found here: A. Kudryavtsev. Drevny Derbend [Ancient Derbend]. Moscow, 1982, p. 14 ff.

between the mountain and the Khazar²⁸¹ sea.

He constructed that famous wall from the very sea, in which it goes for one mile, then it runs along the Kabkh Mountain over its peaks, ravines, and valleys for a distance of 40 parasangs²⁸² before it reaches the fortress called Tabaristan²⁸³. Every three miles, more or less, depending on the road for which the gates served, Anushiruwan had built Iron Gates. On the inside by each gate he settled some tribesmen to guard the gates and the adjoining part of the wall, this all served to repeal the danger from the neighbouring peoples living on the mountain—that is, from the Khazars, Alans, various Torks and other disbelievers. The extent of the Kabkh Mountain upwards in length and in breadth is 2 months or more on foot. Around it an enormous number of different peoples live, who only the Creator can count.

§4. The population of al-Baba endured a lot of damage from the kingdom of Haydak²⁸⁴, whose people were part of the dominion of Khazar tsars²⁸⁵. The capital of these tsars was Samandar²⁸⁶, a city situated at a distance of 8 days on foot from al-Baba. Even now this town is populated by people from the Khazars, but due to the fact that in the early days of Islam it was conquered by Suleyman ibn Rabiah al-Bahili²⁸⁷, the rule was transferred from there to the city of Atil at a distance of 7 days from Samandar. Atil²⁸⁸, where the Khazar tsar now lives, consists of

three parts divided by a great river²⁸⁹ that runs from the upper part of the Turkic lands. From it [near?] the Burgaz/Burgar²⁹⁰ country, a tributary separates and flows into Matas²⁹¹. The above-mentioned capital is situated on both banks of the river. In the middle of the river there is an island, where the residence of the Government is situated. The tsar's castle²⁹² is on one side of the island, which is joined by a bridge of boats to one of the banks. The inhabitants of the capital are Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Pagans. The Jews are: the tsar, his surroundings, and the Khazars of his clan. The tsar adopted Judaism during the rule of caliph Harun ar-Rashid²⁹³. A number of Hebrews joined him from other Muslim countries and the Byzantine Empire. The reason was that the emperor, who was currently ruling—that is in 332²⁹⁴, and who went by the name of Armanus²⁹⁵, converted the Hebrews of his country to Christianity by force and did not like them... and a large number of Hebrews ran away from Rum to the country of the Khazars. There is no point in talking about the adoption of Judaism by the Khazar tsar because we have already spoken about that in our early works²⁹⁶.

As for pagans in the Khazar State, they include Saqaliba²⁹⁷ and the Russians, who live on one side of this town. They burn their corpses together with their pets, utensils, and costume jewelery. If a man dies, his wife together with him is burnt alive, but if a woman dies, the man is not burnt. If someone unmarried dies, they must be married

²⁸¹ The Caspian.

²⁸² 1 parasang = 3 miles = 12 thousand elbows = 6–7 km.

²⁸³ Should be read as *Tabarsaran*.

²⁸⁴ In the text, *Jidan*.

²⁸⁵ The following is a translation of the chapter about the Khazars: Dunlop D. M. *The History of the Jewish Khazars*. – Princeton, 1954. – pp. 204–215. See also the work by A. Novoseltsev 'Khazarskoye Gosudarstvo I Yego Rol v Istorii Vostochnoy Yevropy I Kavkaza' (The Khazar State and Its Role in the History of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus) (Moscow, 1990)).

²⁸⁶ See, for example, the *Tatar Encyclopaedic Dictionary*. Kazan, 1999, p. 512.

²⁸⁷ Salman al-Bakhili was a contemporary of Khalif Osman (?–656), who ruled the Arab Caliphate starting in 644.

²⁸⁸ The Itil. See, for example, the *Tatar Encyclopaedic Dictionary*.

²⁸⁹ The Volga (Rus.) means Itil/Idel (Turkic.).

²⁹⁰ Volga Bulgaria.

²⁹¹ The Azov Sea.

²⁹² That means the palace of chagan/khakan. See below.

²⁹³ 786–814.

²⁹⁴ 943/944.

²⁹⁵ Roman I Lakapin (?–948) was the Emperor from 920 to 944.

²⁹⁶ It should be noted that al-Masudi's expansive historical works have yet to be found. 'Muruj al-Dhahab' is an author's extraction from them.

²⁹⁷ The majority of contemporary researchers equates the notions of 'Saqaliba' and 'Slavs.' A portion of scholars use the term 'Saqaliba' to denote the conglomerate of the tribes living north of the Arabs (the Slavs, Finno-Ugrians, Turkic). Still others see a Turkic tribe in the 'Saqaliba.'

posthumously, and women strongly desire to be burnt to enter into paradise with the souls of their husbands...

The majority of people in this city (*or* in the country) are Muslims, and the tsar's army is made up of them. In the city they are known as Larisiyah (al-Arsiyah) and are immigrants from the surroundings of Khwarezm. In ancient times after the emergence of Islam in their country war erupted, and a plague broke out, and they had to resettle to the Khazar tsar. They are heroic and brave and serve as the main support for the tsar in his wars. They remained in his dominions under certain conditions, one of which was that they would openly profess their faith, have a mosque and the call to prayer, also that the position of the tsar's viceroy would remain for them, as currently the viceroy is one of them—that is, Ahmad ibn Kuya (*or* Kuba), also that if the tsar went to war against the Muslims, they would stand in his army separately and would not fight, but they would fight with the tsar against other enemies—the disbelievers. At the present time about 7 thousand people saddle up horses together with the tsar, armed with bows, protected with armour, chainmail, and helmets. They include men with spears armed as typical Muslims. They also have Muslim judges.

In the Khazar capital there are seven judges (*qadi*) by convention, two of them for the Muslims, two for the Khazars who are judged according to Tore, two for the Christians who are judged according to the Gospel, and one for Saqlabs, Ruses, and other Pagans who are judged according to a Pagan custom—that is, according to their belief. And when it is a case of a great importance, for which they have no knowledge, they assemble at the Muslim *qadi*'s and are judged in front of them, following the rules of Sharia. Among the Eastern tsars of these countries only the Khazar tsar had troops who earned a wage. Every Muslim in these countries is called by the name of these Larisi.

The Russians and Saqlabs, who, as we have already said, are Pagans, also serve in the army of the tsar and are his servants. In his country, in addition to Larisiyah, there

are many Muslim merchants and craftsmen who came to the country of the Khazar tsar because of the justice and security that prevails there. They have a great mosque with a minaret, which raises above the tsar castle, and also other mosques with schools where children study the Quran. If the Muslims and the Christians concluded an agreement, the tsar would not have the means to stop them.

Masudi says: Speaking about the information that we reported, we actually meant not the tsar (*Malik*) of the Khazars but the *Khakan*. In fact the Khazar State has a Khakan, and he ruled that he must be in the hands of another tsar in his palace. The Khakan should stay inside the castle and may not go out or appear in front of the courtiers or residents or leave his dwelling where he lives together with his family. He does not command anyone, does not prohibit anything, and does not make decisions on state affairs. However, the tsar could not rule the Khazar kingdom properly if the Khakan was not in the capital with him side by side in the castle.

When the Khazar kingdom is faced with starvation or some other disaster, or when it wages war against another nation, or some misfortune suddenly falls upon the country, the noble people and ordinary residents go together to the tsar (*Malik*) and say: 'We have observed the beliefs of this Khakan and his days, and we considered them to be evil. So kill him or we will.' Sometimes he gives the Khakan to them, and they kill him, sometimes he kills him by himself, and sometimes he feels sorry for him and protects him, provided that he did not commit any crime for which he would deserve to be punished and was not charged with any sin. I do not know if this system is old or new, but if the position of this Khakan belongs to the members of a certain family of their grand people, I suppose that this family has ruled since olden times, but only God is omniscient²⁹⁸.

The Khazars have canoes, on which they row from their town up the river, which flows into their river from the upper

²⁹⁸ This formula points to the fact that in this case Masudi is not certain of what is being told.

places and which is called Burtas²⁹⁹, settled Turkic tribes live along it, forming a part of the Khazar kingdom. Their settlements stretch uninterrupted between the Khazar kingdom and the Burgars. The river runs from the direction of the Burgars, and ships continuously sail between the lands of the Burgars and the Khazars.

§5. *Burtas*³⁰⁰ is a Turkic tribe that lives, as was already mentioned earlier, on the river named after it. The skins of the black and red fox, called *Burtases*, come from their country. One black skin reaches a price of 100 dinars or even more, while red skins are cheaper. The Arabian and Persia tsars were proud of black furs, which they valued more than the fur of the sable, *fenec*³⁰¹, and other similar animals. Tsars had hats, caftans, and fur coats sewed from them, and it was unthinkable for a tsar not to have a caftan or fur coat made of those black foxes, burtases.

§6. In the upper part of the Khazar River there is a tributary flowing³⁰² into the gulf of the Nitas Sea³⁰³—the sea of the Ruses, on which other tribes do not travel, and they (the Ruses) settled on one of its shores.

The Ruses are a vast tribe³⁰⁴, they do not submit to any tsar or any law. They include merchants who constantly go to the tsar of the Burgars. In their lands the Ruses have silver mines that resemble the mines in the Pandjir Mountains in Khorasan.

²⁹⁹ Apparently (see text below), this is just the Volga's mainstream.

³⁰⁰ A. Khalikov supposed that the direct descendants of the Burtases are the present-day Mishar Tatars.

³⁰¹ ? Compare: *fenecus arabicus* — 'a little Sahara fox.'

³⁰² A cart road existing between the Volga and the Don.

³⁰³ Into the Black Sea gulf—that is, *Maitas* — the Azov Sea.

³⁰⁴ V. Minorsky wrote that the use of the term *Rus* (as well as *Saklab*) in Arabic medieval literature is 'odd and confused.' 'This all evidences,' the researcher continues his thought, 'that there was no accurate distinction between the Rus and Saqaliba among early Islamic geographers. It was not multiple Scandinavians gathered into large groups in just army or trading expeditions (outlined by me. — *Ibn Kh.*), and not among the farming or hunter populations who were Slavs. The latter absorbed the Scandinavians entirely, except for the aristocracy (the Rurik dynasty, etc.) who merged with the Slavs more slowly.' See also §8 of the text.

§7. The town of the *Burgars* is situated on the bank of Matas, and I suppose that these people live in the Seventh climate³⁰⁵. They are a [peculiar?] clan of Torks and caravans constantly go from them in Khwarezm, which is situated in the Khorasanian land, and from Khwarezm to them, but the road crosses the nomad camps of other Torks and the caravans should be guarded from them. At present, in the year 332, the Burgar tsar is a Muslim, he adopted Islam at the time of Mukhtadi-Billah after 310³⁰⁶, when in his sleep he had a vision. His son had already made a pilgrimage, reached Baghdad, and brought the colours for Mukhtadir, *Savad*³⁰⁷, and taxes (*or* money). The Burgars have a great mosque³⁰⁸. This tsar undertook campaigns on Constantinople with

³⁰⁵ This thus means that the city of *Burgar* is situated on the bank of the Azov Sea, but the *Burgar* people live far to the north. Masudi's mistake lies in the fact that he almost does not draw any distinction (see also the text below) between the Black Sea Bulgars of the epoch of 'Great Bolgaria,' with its centre in Phanagoria, the Bulgars of the 'Bulgarian Tsardom' on the Danube, and the Bulgars of Volga Bolgaria (in addition, we should also keep in mind that Bulgarian ethnic groups inhabited the Northern Caucasus, Caspian, and Northern Black Sea Region). V. Beylis correctly noted that the neighbouring areas of 'Kievan Rus' and the Volga and Danube Bulgars provided another reason for Masudi (the basic reason was the commonality of the ethnonym) to unite them into a coherent whole. This mistake is characteristic of not just Masudi but also al-Idrisi (1100–1165) and other authors.

³⁰⁶ After 922, that year Volga Bolgaria was visited by the famous embassy of Baghdad Khalif al-Mukhtadir in order to officially introduce Islam there (see Ibn Fadlan's notes).

³⁰⁷ *Sawad* literally means 'blackness'. V. Minorsky wrote: 'The original might have included something about 'Abbasid 'black banners'.'

³⁰⁸ Compare: '...The king of the Bulgars, named Almush, professes Islam... the majority of Bulgars profess Islam, and their settlements have mosques and elementary schools with muezzins and imams...' (Ibn Rustah, the beginning of the 20th century), 'Bulgar is the name of a country whose citizens profess Islam and the name of the city where the main mosque is located...' (Al-Balkhi, the beginning of the 20th century), 'Bulgar is the name of this city, and there are Muslims there, there is a cathedral mosque in the city, nearby there is a city called Suar, and it also has a cathedral mosque...' (Estakhri, the beginning of the 10th century), 'Bulgar is a small city located on the Itil coast. Everyone is Islamic in it, it can deploy 20 thousand knights. They can fight and defeat any army of kafirs, no matter how large it is... Suar is a city near Bulgar, its citizens are

his army of 50 thousand horsemen or more and sent his marauding detachments around Constantinople to the countries of Rome and Andalus, to the Burgundians, Galicians, and Franks³⁰⁹. From him to Constantinople it is a distance of about two months of non-stop movement through inhabited lands and steppes.

In the country of the [Volga] Bulgars, for part of the year, nights are extremely short. Some of them say that a man has no time to cook a pot of meat before morning arrives³¹⁰...

§8. The Ruses consist of numerous tribes of different clans. They include the Urmans³¹¹ who are the most numerous³¹², and who for trading purposes regularly visit the following countries: Andalus, Rome, Constantinople, and the country of the Khazars. Some time later after 300³¹³, about 500 ships arrived at the gulf of Nitas connected³¹⁴ with the Khazar Sea. There are well-equipped people of the Khazar tsar here. Their objective is to oppose everyone who sails from that sea or from another coast, which stretches from the Khazar Sea to Nitas. It is necessary because Turkic nomads—the Ghuz people—came to spend the winter in those places. Sometimes the branch, which connects the river of the Khazars³¹⁵ with the gulf of Pontus Euxinos³¹⁶ (the Black Sea), becomes frozen, and the Ghuz people with their horses cross

over it. It is a big body of water, but it does not give way under them because in winter it becomes as firm as stone³¹⁷. So the Ghuz people crossed the Khazar territory and often, when the people of the Khazar tsar, who were stood here to repulse the Ghuz raids, could not beat them back them, the tsar himself appeared to prevent their crossing on the ice and keep them out of his kingdom, however, in summer there was no way for the Turks to cross. When the ships of the Ruses approached the Khazar troops situated near the entry to the gulf, they met the Khazar tsar, asking him permission to cross his land, go down his river, enter the river, and as such reach the Khazar Sea, which... is the sea of the Jurjan, Tabaristan, and other Ajam regions, under the condition that they would send half of the loot to him seized from the peoples living by that sea. He permitted them that lawlessness, and they entered the gulf, reached the mouth of the river, and started going up this mouth until they got to the Khazar River, on which they went down to the town of Atil and, having passed it, reached the mouth where the river flowed into the Khazar Sea, and from there they sailed to the town of Amol in Tabaristan. The mentioned river is large and has much water. The ships of the Ruses dispersed across the sea and performed raids on Gilyan, Deylam, Tabaristan, Abaskun situated on the coast of Jurjan, on an oil-bearing region, and on lands lying towards Azerbaijan. It should be noted that the distance from the district of Ardabil, in Azerbaijan, to the sea is 3 days of travel. The Ruses shed blood, did whatever they wanted with the women and children, and looted. They sent out detachments that looted and burnt. The peoples living on the shores of the sea were confounded because in former times they had never seen an enemy attack from the sea, and only ships of merchants and fishermen had sailed on it. The Ruses fought against Gilyans, Deylams, and against one of the commanders of ibn Abi as-Saj, and

also warriors for the same faith as in Bulgar...' ('Hudud al-Alam, the end of the 10th century), etc.

³⁰⁹ It seems that this information reflects the military and political activity of the Danube Bulgars (Bolghars) during Simeon's reign (893–927), undoubtedly the most prominent among the rulers of the so-called 'First Bulgarian Tsardom.' For more details, see: *Kratkaya Istoriya Bolgarii* [The Short History of Bulgaria]. Moscow, 1987, pp. 75–78.

³¹⁰ Compare, for example, with the text presented by Ibn Fadlan, al-Gharnati, and Ibn Battuta (*Iz Glubiny Stoletiy* [From the Depth of Centuries]/Compiled by Ibn Khamidullin. Kazan, 2000, pp. 81, 99, 101, 197).

³¹¹ The Normans.

³¹² See commentary about the Rus.

³¹³ After 912.

³¹⁴ ? Nitas means the Black Sea, the Khazar Sea means the Caspian. The next two comments will probably make this sentence more understandable.

³¹⁵ The Volga.

³¹⁶ Masudi means the Don (Tanais), and a cart road between the Don and the Volga.

³¹⁷ Al-Gharnati wrote about the Volga: 'And this river freezes in such a way that it becomes like the earth, and horses and lambs and different cattle walk along it. And they fight on that ice...'

then they moved on to the oil-bearing coast of the Shirvan kingdom, known as Bakuh. When they returned from the coast, the Ruses hid on islands which were only several miles from the oil-bearing area³¹⁸.

The tsar of Shirvan at that time was Ali ibn Haytham. Having made their preparations, the inhabitants sailed on their boats and merchant ships to those islands, but the Ruses headed for them, and thousands of Muslims were killed and sunk. The Ruses remained on that sea for many months, and, as we described, the peoples did not have any way to them³¹⁹ other than crossing the sea. In regard to them people maintained a state of readiness and alert because the sea had plenty of tribes living around it. When the Ruses had taken their loot and became bored with their adventures, they moved on to the mouth of the Khazar River³²⁰ and talked with the Khazar tsar who they sent money and loot to, as it was agreed between them. The Khazar tsar did not have any seagoing vessels, and his people did not know how to deal with them, if it was not for that, the Muslims would have had many more sorrows. The Larisiyans and other Muslims of the

kingdom found out about what the Ruses had done and said to the tsar: 'Let us punish these people who attacked our Muslim brothers, shed their blood, and captured their women and children.' The tsar could not prevent them but sent a messenger to warn the Ruses of the Muslims' decision to fight against them. The Muslims gathered an army and went down the river, looking for them. When they were drawn face to face, the Ruses left their ships. There were 15 thousand Muslims on horses and fully armed, also there were some Christians with them who lived in the city of Atil. The fight between them lasted for 3 days, and Allah granted a victory to the Muslims. The Ruses were put to the sword, killed, and sunk. About 5 thousand of them escaped, who on their ships sailed to that side that led to the country of Burtases. They left their ships and started travelling by land. Some of them were killed by the Burtases, others were captured by the Burgars-Muslims who also killed them. As one could calculate, the number of persons who were killed by the Muslims on the bank of the Khazar River was about 30 thousand, and since then the Ruses have not resumed that, which we described...'

Material prepared by Bulat Khamidullin

³¹⁸ Small isles near the entrance to the Bay of Baku.

³¹⁹ To the Rus?

³²⁰ The Volga.

No.10

An anonymous Persia author on the Ghuzes

The geographical work 'Hudud al-'Alam' ('The Regions of the World') was compiled in 982/983 and contains information on 'all the lands and kingdoms ever mentioned in books or stories of knowledgeable people.'

The only manuscript of this work, discovered in 1892 in Bukhara and originally owned by A. Tumansky, was included in one volume together with three other manuscripts: 1) the geographical work 'Jehan-name', 2) a work on music, 3) the work now under consideration, under the full title of 'Hudud al-alam min al-mashrik ilya-l-magrib' ('The Regions of the World from East to West') on 39 separate leaves, 4) 'DJami-al-ulum' by Fakhr al-Din al-Razi.

As stated in the manuscript of 'Hudud al-alam', the work was begun in 372 (982/983) and was intended for the ruler of Guzgan, or Guzganān (Arabic, *Juzjan*), Abu-l-Kharis Muhammed ibn Ahmed of the Ferigunids. Apart from the general mention of the 'books or stories of knowledgeable people' noted above, the anonymous author never quotes any of his sources. Research by V. Barthold (see: *Hudud-al-alem. Manuscript of Tumansky with an introduction and index* by V. Barthold. – L., 1930) revealed the author's dependence on Ptolemy and Aristotle, as well as Arab geographers Balkhi and Istakhri, furthermore, A. Tumansky compared certain places in the manuscript with similar information on the Slavs and Ruses in the work of Ibn Rustah (A. Tumansky *Novootkry'ty'j persidskij geograf X stoletiya i izvestiya ego o slavyanax i russax* (A newly discovered Persia geographer of the 10th century and his information on the Slavs and Ruses) // *Zapiski Vostochnogo otdeleniya imp. Russkogo arxeologicheskogo obshhestva*. – SPb, 1897. – Ed. 10. – pp. 121–139). The author's main source of information regarding Turkic nations is apparently a no longer extant essay by al-Jayhani.

In 1937, V. Minorsky published his complete translation of the anonymous work: *Hudud-al-Alam. 'The regions of the world', a persian geography. 372 A.H. – 982 A.D./Translated and explained by V. Minorsky, with a preface by V.V. Barthold* (1930) translated from the Russian. – Leningrad, 1937 (GMS, NS, XI).

Here we quote a part of the translation of the text from the 'Hudud al-alam' published by V.V. Barthold and edited by A.A. Romaskevich (*Materials on the history of the Turkmen and Turkmenia. – V.1., 7th – 15th c. Arab and Persia sources* / Edited by S.L. Volin, A.A. Romaskevich, and A.Yu. Yakubovsky. – Moscow – Leningrad: Publishing House of the USSR Academy of Sciences, 1939. – pp. 209–211).

Excerpt from the source:**'The country of the Ghūz and its borders**

Another sea is the Sea of the Khazars. Its eastern side is a desert adjoining the Ghūz and Khwārazm. Its northern side (adjoins) the Ghūz and some of the Khazars. Its western side adjoins the towns of the Khazars and of Ādharbādhagān. Its southern side adjoins the

towns of Gilān, Daylamān, Tabaristān, and Gurgān. This sea has no straits. Its length is 400 farsangs with a breadth of 400 farsangs. It produces nothing but fish...

Another sea is that of Khwarāzm which is situated at a distance of 40 farsangs in

the North-West direction from (the town of) Khwarāzm. All round it are the places of the Ghūz. The circuit of the sea is 300 farsangs.

In the Caspian Sea there are two islands. The one lies off the Khazar Darband and is called Jazīrat al-Bāb. It produces madder exported to all the world and used by the dyers. The other island is Siyāh-kūh, a horde of Ghūz Turks who have settled there loot on land and sea. There is another island on the sea, but one of its corners is joined to the land off of Dihistān. It is called Dihistānān-Sur, and on it are found a few people: hunters of falcons and pelicans. and fishermen.

Another river is the Ras⁴, flowing up in the North, in the country of the Ghūz. It is a large river of which (the waters) are black and bad-smelling, it rises from the mountain which is on the frontier between the Kīmāk and the Khirkhīz⁵, traverses the Ghūz country and falls into the Khazar Sea. Another river is the Artush, which rises in the same mountain. It is a large water, black yet drinkable and fresh. It flows between the Ghūz and Kīmāk until it reaches the village Jūbīn in the Kīmāk country, then it empties itself into the river Ātil.

Another river is the Ātil which rises in the same mountain north of the Artush, it is a mighty and wide river flowing through the Kīmāk country down to the village Jūbīn, then it flows westwards along the frontier between the Ghūz and Kīmāk until it has passed Bulghār, then it turns southwards, flowing between the Turkish Pechenegs and Burtās, traverses the town of Ātil belonging to the Khazar, and flows into the Khazar Sea⁶.

⁴ Ras, most likely the Ilek, a tributary of the Yaik (Ural).

⁵ The Kyrgyz.

⁶ The ideas of 'Hudud al-'Alam's' author on the direction of the Ātil (Volga) are founded on Arabic geographical literature. V. Minorsky is hardly correct in thinking that these ideas of the Persia geographer are totally unsupported. Both he and Estakhri considered the Volga's upstreams the upstreams of the Kama River, which allegedly flowed from the Altai Mountains. Only this inaccurate idea may explain that, according to Estakhri and the author of 'Hudud al-'Alam', the Volga flowed between the areas of the Guzes and Kimaks.

Another river in the province of Khorāsān is called Hirand⁷. It rises from the mountain of Tūs and skirts the region of Ustuvā⁸ and Jarmagān. It cuts into two (the town of) Gurgan, flows to the town of Abaskūn, and empties itself into the Khazar Sea.

Another desert is the one of which the east skirts the confines of Marv down to the Jayhūn. Its south marches with the regions of Bāvard, Nasā, Farāv, Dihistān, and with the Khazar Sea up to the region of Ātil. West of it is the river Ātil, North, the river Jayhūn, the Sea of Khwārazm, and the Ghūz country, up to the Bulgaria frontier. It is called the desert of Khwārazm and the Ghūz. In this desert there are sands which begin from the limits of Balkh, and stretch south of the Jayhūn and down to the sea of Khwārazm. Their breadth varies from 1 to 7 stages.

Discourse on the Khallukh Country and Its Towns⁹

East of it are some parts of Tibet and the borders of the Yaghmā¹⁰ and the Toghuzghuz, south of it, some parts of the Yaghmā and the country of Transoxiana, west of it, the borders of the Ghūz, north of it, the borders of the Tukhs, Chigil, and Toquzghuzes. This is a prosperous country, the most pleasant of the Turkish lands.

Whenever there is peace between the Kīmāk and the Ghūz, they go in winter towards the Ghūz. The king of the Kīmāk is called khāqān.

Andar az Khifchāq¹¹. A country of the Kīmāk of which the inhabitants resemble the Ghūz in some (of their) customs.

⁷ The author mixes two rivers: he supposes that the Atreks' upstreams and the Gurgan's lower reaches form a single river called the Khirend.

⁸ As vocalised in the manuscript, usually 'Ustuva'.

⁹ That is the Karluks, who according to 'Hudud al-'Alam' occupied the valley of the Chu River and Tian Shan.

¹⁰ The Yagma – a Turkic nomadic people, who according to 'Hudud al-'Alam' occupied the territory of present-day Eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang).

¹¹ This name is unclear and may mean 'inner Khifchaks'. The Khifchaks are the Kipchaks.

Discourse on the Ghūz Country

East of this country is the Ghūz desert and the towns of Transoxiana, south of it, some parts of the same desert as well as the Khazar sea, west and north of it, the river Ātil. The Ghūz have arrogant faces and are quarrelsome, malicious, and malevolent. Both in summer and winter they wander along the pasturelands and grazing-grounds. Their wealth is in horses, cows, sheep, arms, and game in small quantities¹². Among them merchants are very numerous. And whatever the Ghūz, or the merchants, possess of good or wonderful is the object of veneration by the Ghūz¹³. (The Ghūz)

greatly esteem the physicians and, whenever they see them, venerate them, and these doctors have command over their lives and property¹⁴. The Ghūz have no towns¹⁵, but the people owning felt-huts are very numerous. They possess arms and implements and are courageous and daring in war. They continually make inroads into the lands of Islam, whatever place be on the way, and (then) strike, plunder, and retreat as quickly as possible. Each of their tribes has a (separate) chief on account of their discords with each other.

[From the chapter 'Discourse on the Turkish Pechenegs'.] East of this region are the limits of the Ghūz'.

Material prepared by Bulat Khamidullin

¹² It comes as no surprise that the author of 'Hudud al-'Alam' does not say a word about the agriculture of the Guzes. This silence is understandable, as the author does not describe lands on the Syr Darya as belonging to the Guzes, where in the 10th century there were mainly croplands. The fact that the Guzes lived a sedentary lifestyle is also evidenced by al-Masudi: 'among the Torks the Guzes prevail in this area. They are partly nomadic and partly sedentary' (al-Masudi means the lower stream of the Syr Darya).

¹³ The text is entirely unclear and there is possibly a gap in the text.

¹⁴ Shamanism is clearly evident here.

¹⁵ The author of 'Hudud al-'Alam' is the only one who denies the existence of cities among the Guzes, although later he himself mentions Dihi Naw (Jankent).

No.11

Anna Comnena on the Pechenegs, Ghuz and Polovtsians

The Byzantine princess Anna Comnena was born in 1083. Soon after the death of her father, Emperor Alexios I Komnenos, she tried to seize power from her brother John, but failed and entered a monastery, where, already being elderly, she wrote the history of her father's reign, which contained unique information on the First Crusade, on the wars between Byzantium and the Normans, and on the peoples of the Eurasian steppes (which she collectively calls *Scythians*). She died around 1153–1155. We quote her work according to the publication: Anna Comnena. *Alexiad* / Introductory article, translation, commentary by Y.N. Lubarsky. / Series 'Pamyatniki srednevekovoj istorii narodov Central'noj i Vostochnoj Evropy'. – Moscow: Nauka, 1965.

Excerpt from the source:

«...I now intend to relate a second attack on the Roman Empire, more terrible and greater than the first¹⁶, and I again resume the story at the beginning¹⁷, for one subject has come up after another as wave follows wave. A certain Scythian tribe¹⁸, who were daily harried by the Sauromatae¹⁹, left their homes and travelled down to the Danube²⁰. It was, of course, necessary for them to make terms with the dwellers on the shores of the Danube, so by common consent the chieftains met for a conference. There were Tatus and Chales and Sesthlabus and Satzas...²¹ The last-named was chief over Dristra, the others over Bitzina and neighbouring towns. After having made a truce with the chiefs the Scythians proceeded fearlessly to cross the Danube, and to ravage the surrounding country and also took a few small towns. And in between when they rested a little, they commenced to plough and sowed millet and wheat.

But that fellow, Travlos, the Manichaeon, with his followers ... heard of these Scythians and so brought to birth the plan they had been

hatching so long, for they seized the rough roads and passes, sent for the Scythians to help them and then started to devastate the Roman territory...

On hearing of this, Alexius sent orders to Pacurianus, the Domestic of the West, to take an army and march against them, for he knew he was the ablest man for training and organizing and marshalling it, with him was to go Branas, another very gallant commander. Pacurianus found that the Scythians had scaled the mountain-pass and planted their palisades this side of Beliotaba, and when he saw their countless host he at once shrank from battle with them, thinking it better to keep his own troops quiet for the present rather than to risk a battle with the Scythians and be defeated and lose many. However, Branas, who was of a very adventurous and daring nature, did not approve of this plan. So the Domestic, to avoid the imputation of cowardice for postponing the battle, yielded to Branas' impetuosity, bade his men arm, and after drawing them up in line of battle marched against the Scythians, himself holding the centre of the line. But, since the Roman army was not equivalent even to a small fraction of the opposing host, they were all panic-stricken at first sight. However they did attack the Scythians, and many were killed in the fight and Branas himself fell, mortally wounded. The Domestic fought desperately

¹⁶ Anna wrote earlier about the war between Byzantium and the Seljuk Turks.

¹⁷ By 1086, or by the events of the beginning of the Pecheneg war, 'Alexiad' is almost the only source of our data on these events.

¹⁸ The Pechenegs.

¹⁹ On the side of the Guzes.

²⁰ To the Danube.

²¹ Their ethnic affiliation is unclear.

and made fierce onsets on the foe, but was dashed against an oak and killed on the spot.

... Yet in spite of it all [Alexius] did not lose heart, but called Taticius and sent him with sufficient money to Adrianople to give the soldiers their pay for the year and to collect troops from all quarters so that he might raise a fresh army large enough for the war. He ordered Hubertopoulos to leave an adequate garrison in Cyzicus and taking the Franks only with him to lose no time in joining Taticius²².

When Taticius saw the Latins and Hubertopoulos, he took courage and as he had already collected a sufficiently large army, he immediately marched straight against the Scythians. When near Philippopolis he pitched his camp on the edge of the river which flows by Blisnus. But when he beheld the Scythians returning from a raid and bringing back much booty and captives, although the baggage had scarcely been brought into the camp, he selected a division of his army and sent it to attack them, then he armed himself, bade all do the same, drew up his lines and then followed the soldiers he had sent ahead. As he observed that the Scythians with their spoils and captives were rejoining the main Scythian body on the bank of the Eurys (?), he divided his army in two and bidding both divisions raise the war-cry he attacked the barbarians amidst loud shouts and clamour. As the conflict grew fierce, the majority of the Scythians were slain but many saved their lives by running away. Then Taticius gathered up all the booty and returned victorious to Philippopolis.

There he quartered his whole army and then meditated from what direction and in what manner he could best attack the barbarians again. As he knew that their forces were innumerable he sent out spies in all directions, so that through them he might be kept informed of the Scythians' movements. The spies returned and reported that a great multitude of the barbarians was near Beliotaba and ravaging the country. Taticius, who expected the Scythians to come, and had not sufficient forces to pit against such numbers, was at a loss what to do and in great

perplexity. Nevertheless he whetted his sword and put courage into the army for a battle. Soon a spy ran in, announcing the approach of the barbarians and adding that they were already close at hand.

Taticius quickly snatched up his arms and getting the whole army ready, crossed the Eurys immediately and disposed his regiments in battalions and having formed his plan of battle waited, his own station being the centre of the line. The barbarians who drew themselves up in the Scythian fashion and arrayed themselves for battle, seemed to be eager for a fight and to wish to provoke their opponents to a battle. But really, both the armies were afraid and tried to avoid an engagement, the Roman army quaked before the overwhelming numbers of the Scythians, while these for their part were alarmed at the sight of all our men in full armour, and the standards, and splendid clothing and the glitter shining over all and gleaming like starlight. Alone amongst them all the adventuresome Latins, so daring in battle, wished to be the first to attack, and they whetted their teeth and their swords at the same time. But Taticius restrained them, for he was very levelheaded and very clever in forecasting the trend of events. So both the armies stood, each waiting for the other to make a movement, and not a single soldier from either army daring to ride out into the intervening space, when the sun began to set, each of the generals returned to his own encampment. This was done for two days ... at dawn of the third day the Scythians retreated...

At the approach of spring Tzelgu (the supreme commander of the Scythian army) crossed the passes above the Danube with a mixed army of about eighty thousand, composed of Sauromatians, Scythians, and a number from the Dacian army (over whom the man called Solomon was leader)²³, and plundered the towns round about Chariopolis. And after entering Chariopolis itself and carrying off much booty, he settled down in a place called Scotinum. On receipt of this news Nicolas Mavrocatalon and Bebetziotes ...

²² Taticius was Alexius's most active and loyal commander, by the 'Celts' and 'Latins', Anna Comnena has in mind 'people from the West' in general.

²³ Dacians – here refers to the Hungarians.

occupied Pamphylum with the forces under their command ...

At dawn of day Tzelgu drew up his own forces and contemplated battle with Mavrocatalon. But the latter climbed up with a few chosen comrades to the pass overlooking the plain to spy out the barbarian forces, and seeing the multitude of the Scythians, he deferred the battle, although madly impatient for it, as he realized that the Roman army was numerically far inferior to the Scythian horde ... As they all urged him to [attack] and his own inclination lay in that direction, he divided the troops into three portions, bade them sound the attack and engaged the barbarians. In the combat many Scythians fell wounded, and no fewer were killed, and Tzelgu himself, who had fought valiantly and thrown the ranks into confusion, received a mortal wound and gave up the ghost...

In this manner, then, the Scythians were driven out from the districts round Macedonia and Philippopolis, but they returned and encamped beside the Ister and settled along its banks and plundered our territory as freely as if it were their own. The Emperor heard this... When he had collected a large army, he deliberated whether he should traverse the defiles and commence warfare with the Scythians ...

... when the trumpet with its loud summons directed all to the road of the Haemus Mountains, as if to march against the Scythians, Bryennius, who had tried his utmost to dissuade the Emperor from this attempt and had not succeeded, remarked sententiously, 'If you cross the Haemus, Emperor, you will certainly find out whose horses are the swiftest.' When somebody asked what he meant by those words, he replied, 'When you all flee'...

... To resume, when a portion of the Scythians saw George Euphorbenus coming up this river, and were told that the Emperor too was already marching towards them overland, with a very considerable army, they recognized that it would be impossible for them to fight against both and so looked about for a way of escape from this imminent danger. Accordingly they sent a hundred-and-fifty Scythians as ambassadors to discuss terms of peace, and

also to insinuate a few threats and perhaps to promise that if the Emperor acceded to their requests, they would furnish him with thirty thousand horsemen, whenever he required them. But the Emperor, awake to the Scythians' treachery, knew that this embassy was merely to circumvent the immediate danger, and that, at the next opportunity, they would kindle the latent sparks of their malice into a mighty conflagration, therefore, he refused to receive the ambassadors ...

On the following day he marched along a river flowing at about a distance of twenty-four stades from Dristra and there he piled the baggage and erected his palisades. Here the Scythians made a massed attack upon the Imperial tent and killed not only a number of the light-armed troops but also captured some of the Manichaeans who had fought most courageously. Hence a great din and confusion arose in the army and even the imperial tent was overturned by some horse-soldiers careering about wildly, and this fact was looked upon as a bad omen by the Emperor's ill-wishers. However, the Emperor drove off the barbarians with a detachment of the army to some distance from his tent, so that they should not cause confusion again, then he mounted his horse and quelled the tumult, immediately broke up the camp and marched with all his troops in good order to Dristra (this is the best-known of the towns near the Danube) in order to besiege it with engines.

... But the Scythians too had arranged a plan of battle, for the science of warfare and of ordering troops is inbred in them, they set ambushes and connected their ranks in close-ordered array, and built towers, as it were, of their covered wagons, and advanced against the Emperor in squadrons, and hurled missiles from afar. The Emperor adapted his army to meet these squadrons, and forbade the hoplites to move forward or to break the covering formed by their shields, until the Scythians had come quite close. Then when they judged the intervening space between the two armies to be no more than a bridle's length, they were to advance against the foe in a body.

Whilst the Emperor was making these preparations the Scythians appeared in

the distance travelling with their covered wagons, wives and children. When the battle commenced, it raged from morning till evening and the slaughter on either side was tremendous ... The result of the battle was still hanging in the balance, and both armies were fighting with great spirit, when some Scythian chieftains²⁴ were seen in the distance coming with thirty-six thousand men, the Romans, who could not possibly stand against so many, then turned their backs to the enemy.

... At that time Tatus returned to the Ister with the Comans he had won over, directly they saw the amount of booty, and of captives²⁵, they said to the Scythian chieftains, 'We have left our homes and travelled a long way to come to your assistance on the understanding that we should share your dangers and your victories. Therefore as we have done our best it would not be right to send us back empty-handed. For it was not by our choice that we arrived too late for the battle, nor can we in any way be blamed for that, for it was the fault of the Emperor who hurried on the battle. Therefore you must either divide all this booty equally with us, or instead of allies you will find us your enemies.' The Scythians refused to do this. As the Comans would not accept their refusal, a violent struggle took place between them and the Scythians were thoroughly beaten, and only escaped with difficulty to the town called Ozolimne. And there they stayed for some time, hemmed in by the Comans and not daring to cross the lake.

This lake which we now call 'Ozolimne' is the largest in diameter and circumference of all the lakes... It lies beyond the Hundred Hills²⁶, and is fed by very large and beautiful rivers, on its southern half it can carry a number of large merchant vessels which proves how deep the lake must be in that part. It is called Ozolimne... because a Hunnish army once lodged near it (this name 'Huns' (Ounni) was converted into 'Ouzi' in the local patois) and made their camp on its banks, and thus the lake was called Ouzolimne... Let these remarks about Ozolimne be thrown out once for all

in the true spirit of history. Now when their provisions ran short, the Comans returned to their homes to get a new supply, and then move against the Scythians once more.

In the meantime the Emperor recuperated at Beroë and fitted out the captives²⁷ he had redeemed and all his hoplites with arms ... Afterwards the Emperor left Beroë with the troops he had amassed and entered Adrianople. The Scythians next came down the narrow valleys between Goloë and Diabolis and pitched their camp near the place called Marcella. Now the Emperor heard of the doings of the Comans and, as they were expected to return, he was alarmed because he foresaw danger from their coming. So he sent Synesius armed with Golden Bulls to the Scythians to treat with them and say that if they could be induced to make a treaty and give hostages, though he would not allow them to enter further into his territory, yet he would arrange for them to stay in the place they had taken and provide them liberally with all necessities. For Alexius meditated using the Scythians against the Comans if the latter crossed the Ister again and tried to advance farther. But if the Scythians could not be persuaded, Synesius was to leave them and return. This Synesius accordingly went to the Scythians and after making an appropriate speech persuaded them to enter into a treaty with the Emperor²⁸, and he stayed there for some time and courted their favour, thus removing every possible cause of offence.

The Cumans returned, fully prepared for war with the Scythians, but not finding them and learning that they had come over the passes, occupied Marcella and after arranging terms of peace with the Emperor, demanded permission to cross the passes and attack the Scythians. However, the Emperor refused, as he had already concluded peace with the Scythians, saying, 'We have no need of auxiliaries at present, take a satisfactory present and go home!' He treated the ambassadors courteously, gave them satisfactory presents and sent them home in peace. This emboldened the Scythians

²⁴ The Greek term 'lochagos' denotes a commander of a troop of 16 men.

²⁵ Captured by the Pechenegs during battle.

²⁶ In Dobruja.

²⁷ That is the Byzantine people whom Alexius freed from capture.

²⁸ The exact date of this event is not known, we can only approximately mention autumn 1087.

who promptly broke the treaty, reverted to their former cruelty and laid waste the neighbouring lands and cities. For, as a rule, all barbarians are unstable, and the observance of treaties is not natural to them...

Well, both parties, the Scythians and the Emperor, reached Cypsella. And now, as a mercenary force²⁹ which he expected had not yet arrived, the Emperor felt very helpless, for he knew how quickly the Scythians moved and saw that they were already hastening towards the Queen of Cities. As he had insufficient forces for meeting their immense host, and considering that 'what was not worse, was better,' as the saying is, he again resorted to negotiations for peace. Consequently he sent ambassadors to confer with them about the peace, and the Scythians at once fell in with the Emperor's wishes...

The interval of peace with the Scythians did not last long...

...When the troops entrenched at Choëreni learnt of the advances of incredibly large Scythian armies, they sent the word of this to the Emperor... As he saw that his own forces were infinitely smaller than the Scythians he fell into great perplexity and fear, for as far as man could see, he had no one to help him. Yet he did not give way or shew weakness, but was lost in a welter of reflections.

Four days later he saw far off in quite a different direction an army of the Comans approaching, about forty thousand strong. Accordingly he reflected that if these made common cause with the Scythians, they would begin a terrible war against him (from which no other result could be expected than utter destruction), so he judged it wise to conciliate them, for it was he himself who had previously sent for them. Amongst a crowd of other captains in the Coman army, Togortac, Maniac and a few very valiant men stood out pre-eminent. The Emperor was afraid when he saw the multitude of approaching Comans, for knowing of old their easily-led nature, he feared that his one-time allies might become his foes and enemies, and inflict grievous harm on him.

He thought it would be safer to take away the whole army and recross the river³⁰, but before doing so he determined to invite the chiefs of the Comans to a conference. They straightway came to him, Maniac himself too, though later than the others as at first he demurred.

So Alexius ordered the cooks to spread a gorgeous banquet for them. When they had dined well he received them very graciously and presented them with various gifts, and then, as he was suspicious of their treacherous character, he asked them to give him an oath and hostages. They fulfilled his demands readily, and requested to be allowed to fight with the Patzinaks [Pechenegs] for three days, and if God should give them the victory they promised to divide all the booty that accrued to them into two parts and assign one half to the Emperor. He granted them permission to pursue the Scythians, not only for three days, but for ten whole days in whatever way they liked, and gave them permission to keep the whole of the booty they took from them, if within that time God granted them the victory. However, the Scythians and the Coman armies remained where they were for some time, while the Comans harassed the Scythian army by skirmishing.

...So much then for the Emperor's doings. The Scythians, on their side, kept still in their position on the banks of the stream called 'Mavropotamos' and made secret overtures to the Comans, inviting their alliance, they likewise did not cease sending envoys to the Emperor to treat about peace. The latter had a fair idea of their double-dealings, so gave them appropriate answers, as he wished to keep them in suspense until the arrival of the mercenary army which he expected from Rome. And as the Comans only received dubious promises from the Patzinaks, they did not at all go over to them, but sent the following communication to the Emperor in the evening: 'For how long are we to postpone the battle? Know therefore that we shall not wait any longer, but at sunrise we shall eat the flesh either of wolf or of lamb.' On hearing this the Emperor realized the keen spirit of the Comans, and was no longer for

²⁹ The Count of Flanders, Zealand and Holland Robert I promised to send 500 knights to help the Rum people.

³⁰ The Maritsa River is meant here, on the right bank of which was the Khirin fortress.

delaying the fight. He felt that the next day would be the solemn crisis of the war, and therefore promised the Comans to do battle with the Scythians on the morrow, and then he straightway summoned the generals and 'pentecontarchs' and other officers and bade them proclaim throughout the whole camp that the battle was reserved for the morrow. But in spite of all these preparations, he still dreaded the countless hosts of Patzinaks and Comans, fearing the two armies might coalesce.

At the first smile of the dawn he came out of the gully in heavy armour, and bade them sound the attack. And beneath the hill called Lebunium he split up the army and drew up the infantry in troops. The Emperor himself stood in the fore-front breathing fierce wrath, whilst the right and left wings were commanded by George Palaeologus and Constantine Dalassenus, respectively. On the extreme right of the Comans stood Monastras with his men under arms. For directly they saw the Emperor drawing up his lines they too armed themselves and arranged their line of battle in their own fashion, to the left of them stood Uzas, and looking towards the west was Hubertopulos with the Franks. When the Emperor had thus fortified the army, so to speak, with the heavy-armed troops and encircled it with squadrons of horse, he ordered the trumpets to sound the attack again.

The Romans, in their dread of the countless Scythians and their horrible covered wagons which they used as walls, sent up one cry for mercy to the Lord of All and then, letting their steeds go, dashed at full speed into battle with the Scythians, the Emperor galloping in front of them all. The Roman line was crescent shaped and at the same instant, as if at a signal, the

whole army of the Comans rushed forward too, So a distinguished chieftain of the Scythians, foreseeing the issue of events, secured his safety in advance, and taking a few men with him went over to the Comans, as they spoke the same language. For although these too were fighting fiercely against the Scythians, yet he felt more confidence in them than in the Romans, and approached them in the hope that they would act as mediators for him with the Emperor. The Emperor noticed his secession and grew alarmed lest more should go over and persuade the Comans to make common cause with the Scythians, and to turn their horses as well as their feelings against the Roman army. Consequently, as he was quick in perceiving what was expedient at a critical moment, he ordered the royal standard bearer to carry the standard and post himself close to the Coman camp.

By this time the Scythian array had been completely broken, and the two armies met in hand-to-hand fight, and then such slaughter of men was seen as nobody had ever witnessed before. For the Scythians were being terribly massacred as if by the Divine Power...

That day a new spectacle was seen, for a whole nation, not of ten thousand men only, but surpassing all number together with their wives and children was completely wiped out. It was the third day of the week³¹, the twenty-ninth of April, hence the Byzantines made a little burlesque song, 'Just by one day the Scythians missed seeing the month of May.'

... I must now conclude my narrative of the Scythian wars, although I have only related a few incidents out of a great number, and have only touched the Adriatic sea with the tip of my finger... '

Material prepared by Bulat Khamidullin

³¹ The battle of 29 April 1091 put an end to the 6-year Byzantine-Pecheneg war. Anna's statement about the death of the entirety of the Pecheneg people is wrong.

No.12

Al-Gardezi on the Turkic peoples

Abu Sa'īd Abdul-Hay ibn Dhahḥāk ibn Maḥmūd Gardēzī was a Persia geographer who lived in the 11th century. He wrote his work 'Zayn al-Akḥbār' during the reign of the Ghaznavid sultan Abd al-Rashid (1050–1053). It is kept in the Oxford Bodleian library in Cambridge.

This work by Gardezi is one of the most important sources for the history of the eastern part of the Islamic world. Gardezi used works by Jayhani, Ibn Khordadbeh and others as sources.

Only the parts of the chapters on the Turkic peoples which contain valuable data on Turkic tribes is given in the book.

This text is cited in accordance with the publication: Bartold V. Sochineniya (Works). – Vol. 7: Raboty' po istochnikovedeniyu. – Moscow: 'Nauka' Publishing House, main editorial office of Eastern literature, 1973.

Excerpt from the source:

'Ubaydallah ibn Khordadbeh in his 'Book of Histories' says that the Turks belong to the Chinese. Abū Amr Abdallah Ibn al-Muqaffa in the book 'The Fourth Part of the World' says that when the prophet Noah came out of the ark, the world was devoid population. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and between them, he divided the world. The land of black people – the Negroes, Abyssinians, Nubians, and Berbers – and the country, with land and sea, as well as the area of Iran, he gave to Ham, Iraq, Khorasan, Hijaz, Yemen, Syria, and Iranshahr made up the share of Shem, and the land of the Torks Slavs, Yajuji and Majuji³² up to China went to Japheth. Since the region of Turkestan was remote from the inhabited lands, it was given the name of Turkic. Noah prayed, asking the Almighty to enlighten Japheth as to such a name that would immediately bring about rain should it be pronounced. Immediately, God heard his prayer and enlightened Japheth, having learned the name, Japheth wrote it on a stone and hung it around his neck as a precaution so as not to forget it. Every time one pronounced that name and asked for rain, the rain started, if the stone was thrown into the water and this water was given to an ailing man, he felt better. The stone

was passed by inheritance to his descendants, and when there became many of them, such as Ghuz, Khallukh³³, Khazar and others, there was a dispute between them over the stone. The stone was in the hands of the Ghuzes. It was agreed to meet at a certain day and cast lots, the stone would be given to him on whom the lot fell. The Ghuzes took another similar stone and wrote the prayer on it, their chief hung the counterfeit stone around his neck. When on the appointed day the lots were cast, the lot fell on the name of Khallukh, the counterfeit stone was given to the Khallukhs and the real stone remained with the Ghuzes. Thus the custom came about among the Turks to seek rain through a stone. As for the scarcity of hair in their beards and their canine temper, Japheth as a child was ill, and could not be cured, finally, one old woman said to the mother of Japheth: 'Give him ant eggs and wolf's milk, this will cure him.' After that, his mother fed him constantly for a month with these two things until he felt better. When he started growing a beard, it was thin, and his descendants were the same. So thin beard hair comes from the ant eggs, and an evil character from the wolf's milk. From him descended the Turks, now I

³² The peoples of Gog and Magog.

³³ Thus, Persia works constantly use the name of the Kharlukh people, or the Karluks. A probable origin of the Karluk River (one of the Surkhan's tributaries).

will give a description of their individual tribes, as I found it in the books.

About the Khallukhs it is said that this Khallukh was one of the Turkic chiefs. These Turks moved from place to place, Khallukh's mother once was sitting on a horse. The place was deserted, one of Khallukh's servants came to Khallukh's mother and wanted to take her, and grabbed her. The woman drove him away with threats, it is known that Turkish women are very moral. Seeing this, the servant became frightened, ran away and came to the country of the Tuguzguz, to the possessions of the Khakan. One of the Khakan's people found him in a hunting area with harsh terrain, covered with two pieces of felt, he gave him the name of Yabagu³⁴. Then he brought him to the Khakan, the Khakan, on hearing of his adventures, gathered all the Khallukh people in his lands, and immediately appointed this Yabagu as a ruler over them, and he gave this tribe the name of Yabagu-Khallukh.

After this, a man came to the Tuguzguz tribe from Turkestan³⁵ and fell in love with a servant woman from the Yabagu tribe, abducted her and took her to Turkestan. The Khan of Turkestan took the servant woman away from him for himself, treating her very well, wrote a letter to her family, informed them of her position and invited them to come to him. When they came, he allotted areas of cultivated land to all of them and summoned the rest of the tribe. When the news reached the rest of the tribe, the whole tribe went there. When there were many of them, the sovereign settled them as foreigners in his lands and gave them...³⁶. Thus they remained until the Turkestanis made an attack on the Khakan's people, they killed 12 famous chiefs, and wielding their swords killed all the Khakanians, all the Khakanian kingdom was left in the hands of the Chunpan family (?) of the Khallukhs. The last of the Khakanians killed was Hutuglan³⁷-Khakan, Ilma-masyn (?) – dzhabgue was the first of the Khallukhs to

sit on the throne. Power remained in the hands of the Khallukhs. In Turkestan, there are many tribes originating from this Yabagu-Khallukh tribe, but no details about them are known.

The origin of the Kimaks is as follows. A leader of the Tatars died and left two sons, the eldest son reigned over the kingdom, and his younger brother envied him, the younger brother's name was Shad³⁸. He made an unsuccessful attempt on the life of his elder brother, fearing for himself, he took with him a slave-mistress, fled from his brother, and came to a place where there was a large river, lots of trees and an abundance of wild game, there he pitched his tent and stayed. Every day, this man and his slave woman went out together to hunt, ate the meat of wild game and used the fur of sables, squirrels and stoats to make their clothes. Then seven people came to them from their Tatar relatives: Imi, Imek, Tatar, Bayander, Kipchak, Lanikaz (?)³⁹ and Adzhlad (?). These people pastured the herds of their masters, in those places where the herds had previously been no pastures were left, looking for grass, they came to the other side, where Shad was. Seeing them, the slave woman went out and said, 'Irtysh',—that is, 'Stop', hence the river was named Irtysh. Having recognized the slave woman, they all stopped and pitched their tents. Shad returned and brought with him a large kill from the hunt, and regaled them with it, they stayed there till the winter. When it snowed, they could not go back, there was a lot of grass there, and they spent all winter there. When the earth was adorned and the snow melted, they sent one man to the Tatar camp to bring news of that tribe. He came there, and saw that the whole area had been devastated with no people left, an enemy had come and ravaged and killed all the people. The remainder of the tribe descended to this man from the mountains, he told his friends about Shad's situation, they all went to the Irtysh. Arriving there, they greeted Shad as their chief, and began to honor him. Other people, on hearing the news, also began to arrive there, 700 people gathered⁴⁰. For a

³⁴ The title of Karluk Khans, Arab geographers write it as *jabguya*. We obviously have the same title in the word 'yabgu', found in the Orkhon inscriptions.

³⁵ The tribe of the *Turgesh* is possibly what is mean,, not the country of *Turkestan*.

³⁶ An unclear word.

³⁷ Possibly Kut-oglan.

³⁸ A Turkic title.

³⁹ V. Minorsky suggests reading this as *Nilkaz*.

⁴⁰ It is notable that according to the Orkhon inscriptions, the same number of people are considered

long time they remained in Shad's service, then, when their number increased, they scattered throughout the mountains and formed seven tribes called by the names of these seven men. All these Kimaks are marked by an evil temper, avarice and inhospitality. – Shad once stood on the bank of the Irtysh River with his people, and a voice was heard: 'Shad? Did you see me in the water?' Shad did not see anything except hair floating on the water's surface, he tied his horse, went into the water and grabbed the hair, it turned out that it was his wife, Khatun. He asked her, 'How did you fall?' She replied, 'A crocodile grabbed me from the shore of the river.' (The Kimaks have great respect for this river, and honour and worship it, saying, 'The river is the Kimaks' god') Shad was given the name Tutuq, which means 'He heard a voice, went into the water and was not afraid'⁴¹.

As for the way to the Kimaks, it lies from Farab to Yangikent, on the way from Yangikent to the Kimaks' country one crosses a river and comes to sands, the Turks call this place Uyukman (?). Then one comes to the Sokuk river, upon crossing it, one enters the alkaline fields. Then comes the mountain Kendir-Tagi⁴². The traveler continues along the banks of the same river, among the verdure, trees and grass, to the source of the river, the mountain is high. After that, one ascends the mountain on a narrow path. From Mount Kendir-Tagi one comes to the river Asus (?), on this road for an entire five days no sunlight falls on a traveler due to the shade of the trees, up to the shore of the river Asus. The water in the river is black, it flows from the east and reaches the gates of Tabaristan⁴³ (?). Then one comes to the Irtysh river, where the country of the Kimaks begins. On both sides of the river there graze wild horses, sometimes one can see one or two thousand of them in one place, they are descended from royal horses which have gone wild, their number continues to increase.

necessary to form an independent tribe.

⁴¹ The word 'tutuk' surely does not bear this meaning, it rather represents a Turkic title and comes from the root 'tut' ('hold', 'possess'). The given legend apparently represents a 'people's etymology' of the title *tutuk*.

⁴² That is 'a bunch of hemp'.

⁴³ The text here is illegible.

These horses can be caught only with a noose, when one catches them, one can mount them and tame them, they are easily tamed and eventually get used to people. Irtysh is a big river, so that if someone is on one side of it, he cannot be recognized from the other bank of the river due to the great distance. The water in the river is black. After crossing the river Irtysh, one comes to the Kimaks' tents. They do not have any low buildings, everybody lives in the forests, gorges and steppes, all possess herds of cows and sheep, they have no camels, If any merchant brings a camel here, he hardly lives here a year: as soon as a camel eats this grass, it dies. They have no salt, if someone brings one man of salt here, he takes an ermine's fur for it. In summer they feed on mare's milk, which they call kumys, for the winter, they prepare dried mutton, horsemeat or beef, depending on what they can afford. In this country a lot of snow falls, sometimes the snow's thickness in the steppe reaches a spear's height. In winter, they take the horses away to a distant country, to the place called Ok-tag⁴⁴. They have underground reservoirs made of wood for the wintertime, when there is a lot of snow, their horses drink this water in the winter months, since they cannot get to the waterhole because of the snow. The Kimaks hunt sable and ermine, their chief bears the title of Bamal-Peygu (*or* Yamal-Peygu).

As for the tribe of Y a g m a, the Turkic Khakan noticed that the Khallukhs had become numerous and stronger and had entered into relations with the Tokharistan Haytals⁴⁵, the latter demanded women from them, and the Khallukhs gave them women. At the same time the Khakan noticed Turkestan's weakness and began to fear for his possessions. After that, part of the Tuguzguzes ran away and separated from their tribe, they came to the Khallukhs, but the latter could not get along with them. The Turkic Khakan told them to settle between the lands of the Khallukhs and the Kimaks, they had a chief called ...⁴⁶ The Yagma are rich people, owning large herds of horses and living on the left side of China, at

⁴⁴ Perhaps the 'Ektag' of Byzantine writers.

⁴⁵ *Eftalits* in Byzantine sources.

⁴⁶ A gap in the text.

a distance of one month's travel, They bring from there ...⁴⁷ There were feuds among them, part of the tribe turned to the patronage of the Turkic Khakan. When they came to the rest of the Yagma people and joined them, they sent ambassadors to the Turkic Khakan to notify him of their position and said, 'We have come to serve you, if permission is granted, we will make raids⁴⁸ in all directions.' The Turkic Khakan liked this, he answered them kindly and gave them the permission that they had requested. The Khallukhs started to treat them badly, and suffering heavy losses, they went from there to the Kimaks. After a while, Shad-tutuq started to offend them, and demand a tribute from them, they were ruined. After that, they turned to the mercy of the Turkic Khakan, left the Khallukhs and Kimaks and settled in the Khakan's territory. The Khakan gave their above-mentioned chief the title of Yagma-tutuk, in imitation of the title of Shad-tutuk.

The reason for the unification of the Kirghiz under the authority of their chief was as follows. He descended from the Slavs and was one of the Slavic nobles, when he lived in the country of the Slavs, the Ambassador of Rum arrived there, this man killed the ambassador. The reason for the murder was that the people of Rum are descended from Shem, a son of Noah, and the Slavs – from Japheth. Their name is related to the word *sag* ('dog') as they were fed with a dog's milk. Here is how it was: when the ant eggs had been taken for Japheth, an ant began to pray to the Almighty not to let Japheth have a son to enjoy. When Japheth's son was born, he was given the name Emke, both his eyes were blind. At the time, the dog had four eyes. Japheth had a dog that whelped at that time, Japheth killed the puppy, and until the age of four Japheth's son sucked the dog's milk, held on to its ear and walked as the blind walk. When the dog had had a second puppy, she abandoned Japheth's son, and praised God that she had gotten rid of him. The next day it turned out that two of the dog's eyes had gone to the child and the dog was left with two eyes, traces of this are still on the dog's face, for this

reason they are called the *Saklals* (Slavs). So that chief killed the ambassador in a dispute and had perforce to leave the country of the Slavs. He left there and went to the Khazars, the Khazar Khakan treated him well until his death. When another Khakan came to the throne, he evinced a dislike toward the newcomer, the latter was forced to retire, and went to Bashdzhurt. This Bashdzhurt was one of the Khazar nobles and lived between the lands of the Khazars and Kimaks with 2000 horsemen. The Khazar Khan sent a man to Bashdzhurt, demanding that he banish the Slav, Bashdzhurt talked about it with the Slav, and the Slav went to the land ...⁴⁹ with which he was related. On the way, he came to a place between the lands of the Kimaks and Tuguzguzes, the Khan of the Tuguzguzes quarreled with his tribe and was angry with them, many of them were killed, the rest were scattered, and in one or in twos began to come to the Slav. He received them all and treated them well, so that they became numerous. He sent a man to Bashdzhurt, made friends with him, and strengthened his position, after that, he made an attack on the Ghuzes, killed many of them, captured many and collected a lot of money, partly by plundering, partly by selling all the captives into slavery. To the tribe that had gathered around him, he gave the name of Kirghiz. When news of it came to the Slavs, many of them came to him with their families and possessions, joined the others, and intermarried, so that all merged into one. The signs of Slavic origin are still evident in the appearance the Kirghizes, namely red hair and white skin⁵⁰.

The way to the Kirghiz goes from the Tuguzguz country, namely from Chinandzhket to Khassan, and from Khassan to Nukhbek and up to Kemiz-art it is one or two months of travel among meadows and 5 days in the desert. From Kemiz to Manbek-Lu, it is two days going through the mountains, then comes the forest, the steppe begins, and there are springs and hunting places up to the mountain which is called Manbek-Lu, the mountain

⁴⁷ An unclear word.

⁴⁸ Apparently, the name of the tribe is given here in relation to the Turkic word '*yagma*' ('attack').

⁴⁹ A gap in the text.

⁵⁰ According to Chinese tidings, the Kirghizes differed in height, as they were tall, had red hair, a rosy face and blue eyes.

is high, and on it there are many saules, squirrels and antelopes giving musk, lots of trees and abundant hunting, the mountain is well populated. After Manbek-Lu, one comes to Kyogmen⁵¹, on the road there are pastures, good springs, and a lot of game, for four days one travels through this kind of terrain to the mountain Kyogmen. The mountain is high, on it, there are a lot of trees, and the road is narrow. From Kyogmen to the Kirghiz camp, it is seven days' journey, the road goes through the steppes and meadows, past pleasant springs and interwoven trees, making it hard for the enemy to penetrate there, the entire road to the camp of the Kirghiz is like a garden. Here is the military camp of the Kirghiz Khakan, the most important and the best place in the country, there are three roads leading there that one can take, besides these, access is barred from all directions by high mountains and intertwined trees. Of the three roads, one leads to the Tuguzguz to the south, the second to the Kimaks and Khallukhs to the west, and the third to the steppe, it takes 3 months of travel to come to the large Furi tribe. Here there are also two roads: one across the steppe – 3 months of travel, the other on the left side – 2 months of travel, but this road is difficult. One must go all the time through the woods, on a narrow path and in a narrow space, on the way, there is a lot of water, frequent rivers, and constant rains. Whoever wants to take this road should provide himself with something where he could put luggage and clothes, the whole area on the way is impregnated with water, and nothing can be placed on the ground, one must go behind one's horse until this marshland is passed. In these marshes, savage people live without relations with anyone, they do not speak the languages of the others, and no one understands their language. They are the wildest of all the people, they put everything on their backs, and all their property consists of animal hides. If you take them out of these marshes, they are so ill at ease that they are like fish taken out of water. Their bows are made of wood, their clothes from animal skins, and their food is game meat.

⁵¹ The Kegmen mountain ridge in the land of the Kyrgyz is mentioned several times in Orkhon inscriptions.

Their religion consists in that they never touch other people's clothing and property. When they want to fight, they come with their families and possessions and begin the battle, defeating the enemy, they do not touch his property, but burn everything and take with them nothing except weapons and iron. When they want to copulate with a woman, they put her on all fours, then copulate. The bride-price for women is game or a valley in abounding with game and trees. If one of them ends up among the Kirghizes, he accepts no food, having caught sight of one of his friends, he runs away and disappears. They take the dead to the mountain and hang them on trees until the body decomposes. From the Kirghiz country are brought musk, fur and khutu horn⁵². The Kirghizes, like the Hindus, burn the dead, saying, 'Fire is the purest thing, everything that goes into the fire is cleansed: thus the dead are cleansed by fire from dirt and sins.' Some Kirghizes worship the cow, others – the wind, others – the hedgehog, others – the magpie, others – the falcon, and yet others – beautiful trees. Among them there are people who are called the faginuns (?), every year they assemble on a certain day, bring all the musicians and prepare everything for a merry feast. When the musicians begin to play, the faginun loses consciousness, then he is asked about everything that will happen in that year: about hardships and abundance, rain and drought, fear and security, and about the invasion of enemies. He predicts everything, and most of what he has said happens.

The reason for the emergence of the Tibetan people was the following. There was a man from the noble Himyarites by the name of Sabit, Sabit was among the retinue of the Yemenite kings called the Tubba'. When the Tubba' made Sabit their viceroy, Sabit's mother wrote him a letter saying that one of the Tubba' went to the East, beat many people and came to a land where the plants were of gold and the land was of musk, in the meadows grew only fragrant grass, the game consisted of musk-bearing antelopes, the mountains were covered with snow, but the plain was splendid, the croplands there required only earth and dust, not water.

⁵² The horns of an animal, one of the trade items between the Arabs and Central Asian peoples.

After reading this letter, Sabit became very interested, so he gathered a big army and set out. Having arrived in Tibet, he saw all these signs and was very glad that everything was true. Suddenly it grew so dark that people could not see each other, after that Iblis told the daevas to capture Sabit and carry him away by air. Sabit always wore chain mail, such as nobody ever had, under his clothes. The daevas brought him to the top of the mountain and left him there for 20 days, then Iblis came to him in the likeness of an old man and said: 'Bow down to me and be obedient to my will!'. Sabit did so. Iblis came down from the top of the mountain with him, put him to sleep and had intercourse with him, then Iblis himself fell asleep, having ordered Sabit to have intercourse with him, after that Sabit's hair hung down on his forehead like a woman's, and on the end of the hair hung a louse. Iblis brought a kerchief, tied it round his head, sat down next to him and put the louse into his mouth, Sabit swallowed it. Iblis said: 'He who wants to enjoy longevity and have no enemies must eat this animal'. Then he ordered Sabit to kill 7 commanders of his army and told him their names. Sabit asked him: 'If I do all this and obey your orders, what do I get for that?'. Iblis answered: 'You will become the Khakan, all this region will be yours and you will be the chief of all the people'. After that they climbed down the mountain and saw one of the warriors gathering firewood, who instantly noticed Sabit and Iblis coming with him in the likeness of an old man. Sabit asked him about the army, the warrior answered: 'After you left, there was dissension'. The warrior in his turn asked Sabit what had happened to him, Iblis gave him the answer: 'Angels took him to God. He gave him commands, dressed him in chain mail and sent me with him'. This man immediately ran to the camp and told the soldiers what he had seen and heard, then Sabit came and carried out all the commands, he was proclaimed the Khakan. This is the reason why the Tibetans eat lice, have intercourse with each other, wear their hair over their foreheads like women, and tie it with a kerchief. It is said in the title of the Tibetan Khakan: 'He came down from the sky wearing chain mail made of light'.

As for the road to Tibet, one has to go from

Hotan to Alashan (?) over the mountains of Hotan. The mountains are inhabited, and there are a lot of herds of bulls, sheep and argalis⁵³, through these mountains one comes to Alashan. Then there is a bridge from one side of the mountain to the other, they say, this bridge was built by the Hotanese in ancient times. There is a mountain which extends from the bridge to the capital of the Tibetan Khakan, when one comes closer to it, it takes one's breath away so one cannot breathe and the tongue becomes heavy, a lot of people die thereby, the Tibetans call this mountain the 'Poison Mountain'. If you go from Kashgar, you have to go to the right between two mountains toward the east. After the mountains you come to the Adyr (?) region, which extends for 40 parasangs, one half of the region is covered by mountains, the other half by plains (?) and cemeteries⁵⁴ (?). There are a lot of villages and a countless number of volosts near Kashgar, in ancient times this region belonged to the Tibetan Khan. From the Kashgar region you come to Sarymsanket, thence to Alishur and go over the steppe to the Kuchi river, which flows towards Kuchi city, on the bank of this river, on the edge of the desert, is the settlement Khumkhan (?), from which come the Tibetans. Then there flows a river which must be crossed by boat, after that you arrive in the country of the Tibetans. On the border of the Tibetan Khakan's lands there is a pagan temple with many idols in it, among them there is an idol sitting on a throne, behind this idol's back there is some sort of wooden object which looks like a head, the idol is leaning on this head-like piece of wood. If you pass your hand over the idol's back, it seems to exude sparks of fire. Left of this place there is a steppe and a desert, where there are a lot of roadside breast trees along the banks of the river.

The inhabitants of Barskhan are descended from the Persians who lived in Fars. Here is how it was. When Dhul-Qarnayn⁵⁵ defeated Darius and conquered the Persians and Iranshahr, he began to fear for himself, as Persia was inhabited by intelligent, brave, educated,

⁵³ Mountain sheep.

⁵⁴ The text here is illegible.

⁵⁵ 'Two-horned', Alexander the Great's cognomen.

cunning, far-sighted and prudent people. Dhul-Qarnayn Alexander thought they would raise a rebellion, slaughter his governors and seize the throne when he left. Then he took along one or two people from each clan as hostages, went to Turkestan and thence toward China. When Alexander arrived where Barskhan is situated now, scouts told him: 'Ahead of us there are deserted roads and poor lands with no feed for the livestock, there is not enough food there for the wagon train you have with you'. Alexander ordered that all unnecessary things be buried here and that the horses be loaded with feed, he gave orders to the sons of the Iranian noblemen: 'Stay here until I return from China, then I will take you along and bring you back to your land'. They were obedient to the order and stayed there, when the sons of the Iranian noblemen got news that Alexander had conquered China and set off for India, they lost hope of returning back to their homeland, sent an ambassador to China, invited master clay firers, carpenters and painters and ordered them to make set up the area in the manner of the cities of Fars, they called the area Barskhan, meaning the Lord of Fars.

As for the road to Barskhan, it leads from Nevaket to Kumberket (or *Kerminket*), across the country of the Djikils, and thence to Jil. Jil is a mountain, the word 'jil' means 'narrow'⁵⁶. It is 12 parasangs to Yar from there, Yar is a settlement with 3,000 warriors, the tents of the Teksin of the Djikils are located here, and there are no human settlements between these places. On the left side of the road there is a lake named Issyk-Kyul, it takes 7 days to cross this lake. Up to 70 rivers flow into Issyk-Kyul, the lake water is salty. It is 5 parasangs to Ton from there, and it is 3 days of travel from Ton to Barskhan, one encounters only the tents of the Djikils along the road. The Dehkan of Barskhan bears the title of *Maniakh*⁵⁷. Barskhan can field

an army of 6000 warriors. All the outskirts of Issyk-Kyul are occupied by the Djikils. On the right side of Barskhan there are two mountain passes, one is named Peigu, the other is named Ozar. There is also a river named Tefskhan, it flows towards the East, in the Chinese land⁵⁸. The pass is very high, so that birds flying from China cannot fly over it.

The *Tuguzguzes* were the people whose king bore the title of Tuguzguz-Khakan. In ancient times in the clan of the Tuguzguz-Khakans there was a man named Kur-tegin. His mother came from China, Kur-tegin's brother, whose mother was a free woman, was the Khakan. Kur-tegin's brother decided to kill him, he cut his throat and threw him where corpses lay. Kur-tegin had a nurse, she took him to the Manichaeans and gave him to the Dinawerians for⁵⁹ them to heal him, they began to heal his wound and he got better. After that he came to the city of Azal (?), the capital of the Khakan of the Tuguzguzes, and was hiding there, for a time Kur-tegin's friends lied to his brother, but finally told the Khakan of the Tuguzguzes the truth and softened his heart, so he allowed his brother to return and let him live. He held him at a distance, but let him govern the city of Panjiket. Kur-tegin became stronger there, he won the local citizens to his side, heaped them with favors and bided his time. Finally he learned that the Khakan of the Tuguzguzes went hunting, Kur-tegin gathered a huge detachment and attacked the Khakan. They met and the battle began, Kur-tegin defeated the army of the Khakan, and the Tuguzguz Khakan fled and locked himself in his fortress. Kur-tegin ordered that water be poured over the fortress walls, the walls were broken, and Kur-tegin ordered that everyone who asked for mercy be pardoned. The inhabitants of the fortress were faint with hunger, all of them came out and started begging for mercy, and all of them received pardon. The Tuguzguz Khakan stayed in the fortress, Kur-tegin sent his people there to strangle him, and Kur-tegin seized the throne of the Khakan. – They say the

⁵⁶ Jil-Aryk Gorge is probably meant here. It is not known in what language the word 'Jil' bore the indicated meaning. Consequently, Boam Gorge (compare with present-day maps, 'Boom' would be more correct). The old name Jil (Jil-Aryk) was preserved as the name of a locality near the entrance into the gorge from the Chuy Valley side.

⁵⁷ Maniakh in Byzantine sources. V. Minorsky considers V. Bartold's reading erroneous, suggesting

instead to read it as '*manaf*'.

⁵⁸ The Iir-Tash River is possibly meant here.

⁵⁹ One of Manichaean sects spread mainly in Transoxiana.

Tuguzguz Khakan had 1,000 servants and 400 servant women. Every year three times a day these 1000 people have a meal in the presence of the Khakan and take away as much food as they want, during their meal, also three times a day, they drink wine, the wine is made from grapes. The Khakan makes a public appearance only on rare occasions. When he mounts a horse, all the chiefs come and move to the fore, all the way from his dwelling to the edge of the city there are people standing in rows. One of the city chiefs moves to the fore and... When the Khakan comes out of the water and the horse is being led to him, everyone bends the knee to his horse while the horse is passing by. The Tuguzguz Khakan is of the Dinawerian faith, but there are also Christians, Dualists and Buddhists in his city and possessions. He has 9 viziers. If somebody is caught and accused of thieving, they tie his legs, tie his arm to his neck, beat each leg 200 times and his back 100 times with sticks and lead him around the bazaar, then they cut off both his ears, both hands and his nose, and the heralds announce: 'Let everyone see this and never do such things'. If somebody commits adultery with a girl, he gets beaten with sticks 300 times, and take from him a mare and a silver bowl weighing 50 sitirs⁶⁰ of silver. If somebody commits adultery with a married woman they are both taken to the royal palace, Tsar orders that they be beaten with sticks 300 times, the man builds a covered tent made of new felt with full furnishings and gives it to the woman's husband, then the woman who is guilty of adultery is given to the man with whom she committed adultery. The husband of that woman demands that the adulterer find him a new wife and pay a dowry for her. All this happens if the adulterer is rich, if he is poor he gets beaten with sticks 300 times and is allowed to go. If somebody kills a man he has to pay a big fine which entirely ruins him, then he is kept in prison for a month, gets beaten 300 times with sticks and is allowed to go. If the murderer is poor he only gets beaten with sticks and is allowed to go. The Tuguzguz Khakan lives in a palace, in a low building, the floor there is covered with felt, the outer

side of the building is upholstered with Islamic fabrics, over the felt is spread Chinese brocade. But the common people are all steppe-dwellers who live in tents. The clothes of their kings are made of Chinese brocade and silk, the clothes of the common people are made of silk and cotton fabric. They wear loose clothes covering the entire body, loose-sleeved and with long skirts. Their king wears a golden (or *pearl*) belt, when he arranges a big meeting he puts a crown on his head, and when he mounts a horse a thousand of horsemen wearing armor and chain mail mount their horses as well, they fight with spears.

As for the routes, it is necessary to go from Barskhan to Penchul (?), thence to Kuchi, thence to Azal⁶¹, thence to Siket (*or* to Sutket), thence to Mekshemirghnasur (?), and from there a day of travel to Chinandzhket. This region is smaller than Kuchi, there are 22 settlements. This region is a plain with cold winters with little snow, summer can be very hot, so the local people make cold cellars and live there most of the time, then at the end of summer they come back to their houses. All the inhabitants wear belts and hang their knives, daggers and all the things they need on it. Near the gates of the governor's palace there are 300 or 400 Dinawerians crowding together every day and reading the writings of Mani in a loud voice, then they go to the governor, greet him and come back. From Chinandzhket one again comes to Kera (?) and the land of the Tuguzguzes...

As for the Pechenegs, the road to their land runs from Gurganj to the Khwarezm Mountain and further to the Pecheneg land. When people reach Khwarezm Lake, they leave it on the right and go on. They reach a waterless land and a steppe, through which they must travel for 9 days, they reach a well every day or once in two days, go down on a rope and get water for their horses. On the tenth day they reach springs with water and various game like birds and antelopes, there is not much grass here. It takes them 16 days to cross the area, they reach the tents of the Pechenegs on

⁶⁰ A measure of weight equal to 1/40 of a man, or batman.

⁶¹ We should probably read this as 'Aral'. There is the Aral settlement in Eastern Turkestan now, but it is located west of Kuchi.

the 17th day. The Pecheneg land spreads over 30-day travel. They are surrounded on all sides by other peoples, to the east are the Kipchaks, to the southwest are the Khazars, and to the west are the Slavs. All these peoples carry out invasions, attack the Pechenegs, take prisoners and sell them into slavery. The Pechenegs own herds. They have a lot of horses and sheep, plenty of gold and silver vessels, and a lot of weapons. They wear silver belts. They have flags and spears and raise them during the battles, their trumpets, which they blow during the battles, are made in the shape of bull heads. The roads to the Pecheneg lands are difficult (?) and uncomfortable. He who wants to leave this land has to buy horses, since the only possible way to leave these lands is to ride due to the rough roads. Merchants on the way there do not follow any roads, as all the roads are overgrown with trees, they find their way by the stars.

It takes 10 days of travel over the steppe, groves and woods to get from the Pecheneg lands to the lands of the Khazars. The Khazar lands are notable for their vastness, they are surrounded on all sides by high mountains, the mountains extend to Tiflis. The Khazars have a king who bears the title of Ishad, in addition, they have the main king named the Khazar-khakan. The Khazar-khakan only has the title, all governance is in the hands of the Ishad, the Ishad is the most powerful man in the land. Their main chief and the ishads practice Judaism, as well as all their retainers, chiefs and noblemen, others practice a religion similar to the belief of the Ghuz Turks. They have two big cities, Sargysh (?) and Hylyg (?), they live in these cities in winter. When winter comes they go to the steppe and do not return to the city before winter. A number of Muslims live in both cities, they have their mosques, imams, muezzins and schools, the Khazars levy a tax on these Muslims annually according to the property they have. Every year they invade the Pecheneg land and steal cattle and prisoners. The Ishad himself levies tributes and allocates revenues among the troops. Sometimes they invade the land of the Burtas, they have flags, spears, strong armor and good chain mail. When the Khazar king mounts a horse, up to 10,000 horsemen mount their horses as well,

some of them are mercenaries, others are provided by noblemen and accompany the king with their own arms. If they equip an army and go to some other land, they still leave a big army to protect their families and property. There is a vanguard which goes ahead of the troops and carries wax candles and lamps in front of the king, the king with his army goes by the light of the candles. Having seized the booty, they bring it to the camp, then their chief takes anything he wants from that booty and the rest of it is split between the warriors. By order of the chief, each warrior has to carry a spike and three ropes with a pointed end, when the army halts they drive these spikes in around the troops and tie a shield to each nail, so that the camp is fortified with a wall. If the enemy carries out a night attack, his efforts are in vain as the camp is like a fortress due to these spikes. In the Khazar lands there are a lot of croplands and gardens, much wealth and much honey, they also bring good wax from here⁶².

[About the Burtas – as Ibn Rustah writes⁶³, with the addition that raids upon the Bulgars and the Pechenegs are made every year. Further on:] The whole area between their lands and the Khazar land is a plain, on the way there are populated places with springs, trees and flowing waters. Some people make their way from the land of the Burtas to the land of the Khazars on the Itil river by boat, others travel by land. The only weapons they have are two javelins, an axe and a bow, they do not have armor or chain mail, and only very rich people have horses. Their clothes are earrings (?) and a *jubbah*. There is no fruit in this land, the wine there is made of honey. Their wear caps and wrap them with turbans.

[About the Bulgars – as Ibn Rustah writes⁶⁴. After the words about the king, the following is added: 'There are about 500,000 noble men among the Bulgar people'. When listing grain crops, pumpkins, lentils and beans are named instead of millet. The pagans are said

⁶² The abstract about the Khazars constitutes several details which Ibn Rustah does not have, and which are repeated in Afi's works, for example, the story about the camp fortification method.

⁶³ Khvolson's edition, 19-21.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 22-25.

to prostrate themselves before each Muslim they know. The price of marten fur is estimated at 2 dirhems instead of 2 1/2. At the end it is said about dirhems:] they break these dirhems and [make use of?] every piece. Then they give those dirhems to the Ruses and the Slavs as, they sell goods only for minted dirhems.

Between the Bulgar lands⁶⁵ and the lands of the Iskils, who also belong to the Bolgars, lies the M a g y a r land. These Magyars are a Turkic tribe. Their chief rides at the head of 20,000 horsemen, he is called the Kende. Kende is the title of their main king, while the title of the chief who actually rules is the Jilah, all the Magyars obey the Jilah. They own a plain covered with grass and a vast region, the length and the width of their lands is 100 parasangs. Their country reaches the Rum Sea⁶⁶. They live between these two rivers. When winter comes, those who were far from the riverside return to the bank of the river and spend the winter there, they go fishing, and that is how they live. On the bank of the river which is located to the left of them, towards the Slavs, live people from Rum. All of them are Christians, they are called the Nenders (?): they are more numerous than the Magyars, but they are weaker. One of these two rivers is called Itil, the other – the Danube. When the Magyars live on the bank of the river they can see the Nenders, above the Nender region, on the bank of the river, there is a high mountain with a river flowing down the side of it. A Christian people called the Mardats (?) live beyond the hill, it takes 10 days of travel to get from their region to the Nender region. They are numerous, they dress in the manner of the Arabs and wear turbans, shirts and jubbahs. They have croplands and grapes, the waters in their region flow only over the surface of the ground, there are no groundwaters. They say they are more numerous than the Rum people. They are a separate people, they conduct trade mainly with the Arabs. The river which is located to the right side of the Magyars flows

towards the Slav country and thence to the Khazar country, this river is bigger than the other one. The Magyar region is covered with trees and swamps, the soil is wet here. They all make raids upon the Slavs, levy tributes on them and treat them as their prisoners. The Magyars are fire worshipers. They make raids upon the Slavs and the Ruses, take prisoners from there to Rum and sell them. These Magyar people are pretty and handsome, their clothes are made of brocade, their weapons are made of silver and...⁶⁷ They attack the Slavs all the time, it takes 10 days of travel to get from the Magyar country to the Slav country. In...⁶⁸ the Slavs have the city of Vantit (?). Regarding matchmaking they have the following custom. A man seeking a bride shall pay a bride-price of a greater or lesser number of horses according to his wealth. During negotiations about the bride-price, the bride's father takes the groom's father to his house, gathers all the furs of ermine, beaver, squirrel, marten, and fox...⁶⁹, he chooses 10 furs, rolls them up on a flat surface, ties them to the horse of the groom's father and sends him home. The groom's father sends the agreed bride-price of horses, money and goods for the bride, then this woman is brought to his house.

[T h e S l a v s – as Ibn Rustah writes⁷⁰, it is added that 'sometimes they get 50, 60 or 100 mans of honey from one hive'. As for religion, it is said that they 'worship the bull'. Crops, musical instruments and meeting death with joy, as Ibn Rustah writes⁷¹, further on: 'they do not have a lot of horses. Their clothes are like the boots which are worn by the women of Tabaristan. Their means of living are not plentiful'. Weapons, rulers and the city, as Ibn Rustah writes⁷², it is added that 'their chief wears a crown'. Further on:] they have a custom of building a fortress, several people come

⁶⁵ According to Ibn Rustah (Khvolson's edition, 25) – the Pechenegs.

⁶⁶ Phrase is omitted with illegible text, it possibly said that 'two rivers fall into this sea, one of which is larger than Dzheikun' (Ibn Rustah, Khvoson's edition, 26). V. Minorsky suggests the following reading: 'in which two large rivers fall'.

⁶⁷ The end of the phrase is hardly understandable. V. Minorsky reads it as 'their weapons are adorned with silver and gold'

⁶⁸ A gap in the text.

⁶⁹ The end of the phrase is unclear.

⁷⁰ Khvolson's edition, 28–29 (§§ 1,2,3, § 4 is absent).

⁷¹ Ibid, 30–31.

⁷² Ibid, 31–32.

together and build fortresses, as the Magyars attack and rob them all the time. When the Magyars come, the Slavs lock themselves in the fortresses, they mostly spend winter in these fortresses and fortifications, in summer they live in the woods. They have a lot of prisoners. Having captured a thief, they take away all his property, send him to the outskirts of their land and punish him there. They never commit adultery. If a woman loves a man she comes to him, after the union, if she was a virgin, he takes her as his wife, otherwise, he sells her and says: 'If you were good, you would have saved yourself'. If someone commits adultery with a married woman, they kill him, accepting no apology. They have a lot of wine and honey, sometimes one man can have up to 100 jugs of honey wine.

[About the Ruses – as Ibn Rustah writes⁷³. 'The length and the width of the island is 3 days of travel', it is added that 'up to 100,000 people live on this island'. §§ 2 and 3 as Khvolson writes, instead of § 4 there is only: 'The objects of their trade are the furs of ermine, squirrel and others'. It is added about their clothes: 'The clothes of the Ruses and the Slavs are made of linen'. The end of the story about human sacrifice (§ 9): 'If doctor says: This is the decree of the tsar, no one says anything to him, but everyone accepts his act'. Instead of § 10: 'Their tsar takes a tenth of everything from the merchants. 100 or 200 of them always come to the country of the Slavs and rob them of useful things so they may be kept by the Ruses, a lot of Slavs come to the Ruses and serve them to protect themselves'. After § 11: 'They wear overclothes and hats'. §§ 12 and 13 as Khvolson writes].

As for the lands of the Serirs, they are about 12 parasangs away from the Khazar lands. First you go across the plain, then you come to a high mountain and a river, and in three days you come to the fortress of the tsar. The fortress is situated on the top of the mountain and is 4 parasangs in length and in width. The walls are made of stone. This tsar had two thrones, a gold one and silver one, he sits on the gold throne and his noblemen sit on the silver one. Most of

the inhabitants of that fortress are Christians, the other inhabitants of the tsardom are the pagans. There are 20,000 tribes and religions in this tsardom, they have settlements and estates, they worship the lion. If one of them dies, they put him on a stretcher, carry him to the square and leave him there for three days. On the third day they come with weapons wearing armor and chain mail, stand on the edge of the square, prepare their spears, bows and arrows, draw their swords and pretend to attack the dead body, but do not hit it. They explain this by the fact that one day one of them died and they laid him in the grave. On the third day he resurrected from the grave, they started asking him and he said: 'My soul temporarily left my body, and you put me in the grave, when I was in the grave my soul came back to my body, and I stood up and came out'. Since then if somebody dies they do not put him in the grave for three days, then they frighten him with spears, arrows and swords, if he is alive he will stand up, and if he does not wake up they put him in the grave, such a custom remains among them. They call their tsar Avar (*or* Avaz). On the right side of the country of the Serirs there is a region called Haizan⁷⁴. The inhabitants of this region practice three religions⁷⁵: on Fridays they go to the cathedral mosque with Muslims, observe the Friday namaz and come back, on Saturdays⁷⁶ they pray with the Jews, and on Sundays they go to church with the Christians and observe the church service according to their rite. If somebody asks them why they do so, they answer: 'These three communities disagree with each other, each of them claims that the truth is on their side. We agree with all of them, maybe we will find the truth in such a way'. 10 parasangs away from their city there is a city named Hamrin⁷⁷ where a tree bearing no fruit grows, every Wednesday the city residents come to the tree, bring fruit and hang it on it, then they worship it and make a sacrifice there.

⁷⁴ Ibn Rustah put it like this, de Goeje's edition, 147, it is Jendan in Gardezi's manuscript.

⁷⁵ Ibn Rustah, de Goeje's edition, 147, says the same about their king.

⁷⁶ There is a gap in the text, reproduced from Ibn Rustah, de Goeje's edition, 147–148.

⁷⁷ This reading is offered by de Goeje (Ibn Rustah, 148).

⁷³ Khvolson's edition, 34–40, §§ 1–13.

If you leave the country of the Serirs you must go over the mountains and meadows for three days to the country of the Alans. The Alan king is Christian, all the inhabitants of his kingdom are kafirs or idolaters. It takes 10 days of travel past trees and across rivers and blooming places from the border of his lands to the fortress called the Alanian Gates. It is located on the top of a mountain at the foot of which the road passes, on all sides it is surrounded by high mountains. 1,000 people guard this fortress day and night by turns⁷⁸.

As for the road to the lands of the Djikils and the Turgesh, it leads from Neviket to Panjiket, the Panjiket Dehkan is called Kulbakar (?), there are 8000 warriors in the city. Next to it there is a settlement named Zeket (?) with another dehkan, on the left side of this settlement, between it and the Suyab settlement, there are three other settlements. The dehkan of Suyab is the brother of Peigu and rules together with the representative of the latter (?)⁷⁹, he is accompanied by 500 horsemen. This settlement is situated near the mountain. The other settlement is called Hut-Kuyal (or Kubal) (?), it is 1 parasang away from the first one, and there are 5000 warriors. The dehkan of the settlement is called Baglila

(?), he is of Turgesh origin and lives in the steppe. The third settlement is Dalugandzh (?), it is smaller and has about 300 warriors. This settlement is situated near the mountain as well. The Turks pray to this mountain, swear by it and say: 'This is the dwelling of the Most High', may God keep us from saying so! On the left side after this pass there is the region of the Turgeshes, namely, the Tukhsiyans and ...⁸⁰. There is a settlement in this region with 1000 warriors, near it there is another settlement named Beklig (?), where a brother of Jabghuy lives. He is accompanied by 500 horsemen, if he goes somewhere, he takes 3,000 horsemen from the settlement outskirts. The dehkan here is called Badan-Sangu, and he comes from this place, there are 7,000 warriors here. Near that pass⁸¹ there is a river, if you cross it you come to the lands of the Turkic-Djikils, to their tents.

This is the information about the Turks obtained partly from the work 'Roads and States' by Jayhani, partly from the book 'The Insignificance of the Earthly World', partly from the book of Ubeydallakh ibn Khordabek, partly from various other places. It is possible there are also other tribes, but we did not find information about them and the author apologizes'.

*Material prepared
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⁷⁸ Gardezi's story about the Serirs and Alans literally corresponds to Ibn Rustah's story, de Goeje's edition, 148.

⁷⁹ V. Minorsky translates this the following way: 'and his dikkhan is the brother of yabgu, and he is a turgesh'.

⁸⁰ An unknown name. As a consequence, V. Bartoldt read this name as 'Azians', drawing it closer to the nation of Az mentioned in the Orkhon inscriptions. See: Bartoldt. Ocherk Istorii Semirech'ya. [The Essay on the History of Zhetysu]. P. 15.

⁸¹ It is not quite clear whether the Kastek passage is meant here.

No. 13

Rashid al-Din on the Central Asian Tatars

Perhaps the main source documenting the history of the peoples of Central Asia in the pre-Mongol and Mongol periods is the work by Rashid al-Din Faḍlullāh Hamadānī 'Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh' (the work was written in 1300–1311, this name is most precisely translated as 'Compendium of Chronicles').

Until the 1940–1960s, the work of Rashid al-Din had not been published in full. We know only the translations of passages from 'Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh' made by the Frenchman Quatremère (1836), the Russian Orientalist I.N. Berezin (1858, 1861, 1868 and 1888) and the Frenchman E. Blochet (1911).

The difficult and demanding challenge of a complete edition of 'Compendium of Chronicles' was carried out for the first time by Soviet Orientalists (and so far we have several volumes of the original text and several volumes of translation into Russian with comments).

'Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh' consists of two main parts, the first of which tells about the Mongol and Turkish tribes and the states they founded and about Chinggis Khan, his ancestors and descendants, and the second one is about world history, including the world history of the pre-Islamic period, the history of the Islamic states, and the history of the non-Muslim peoples of 'the entire world' (within the confines of geographical conceptions of that time). We know that Rashid al-Din intended and, perhaps, made a geographical description of the world, but this work either wasn't written or perished during the plunder of the library of Rashid al-Din after his execution in 1318.

The text presented here is taken from the publication: Rashid al-Din. Sbornik letopisey (Compendium of Chronicles). – Vol. I. – Book 1 / Translation from the Persia by L. Khetagurov, Ed. by A. Semenov. – Moscow – Leningrad: Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1952.

Excerpt from the source:**'The Tatar tribe**

From the earliest times their name was known around the world. A lot of family lines came from the Tatars. The whole tribe consisted of 70,000 houses.

The locations of their camping grounds, encampments and yurts were precisely defined according to dynasties and branches near the borders of the Khitai region⁸². Their main inhabitation is a place called Buir-Naur⁸³. Most of the time they obeyed and paid tribute to the Chinese Emperors, some of them rebelled all the time and the rulers of Khitai set their troops against them and brought them into submission.

They also feuded and fought with each other, and for many years there was a war between these tribes and battles took place. They say that when the tribes of the Tatars, the Durbans, the Saldzhiuts and the Katakans united, they all dwelt in the lower reaches of rivers. At the place of these rivers' junction, the river Ankara-muren⁸⁴ is formed. This river is extremely large, a huge Mongol tribe called Usutu-mankhun dwells here. The borders of the tribe's settlement adjoins....⁸⁵ That river is near to a city called Kikas at the point where this river and the river Kem flow together⁸⁶.

⁸⁴ It seems that these are the Angara's tributaries, which flow into it at its outflow from Lake Baikal.

⁸⁵ A gap in the text.

⁸⁶ The Yenisei River in its sources is called Ulu Kem and Kemchik (a tributary of the Ulu Kem). There

⁸² Near Northern China.

⁸³ The north-east of Mongolia.

That city belongs to the region of the Kirghiz. They state that this river flows into one area near which there is a sea. Silver is everywhere there. The area's names are: Alafkhin, Adutan, Mangu and Balaurnan. They say that their horses are all skewbald, and every horse is as strong as a four-year-old camel, all their tools and dishes are made from silver. There are many birds.

Sorkuktani-begi sent three emirs with a thousand people on a ship to that country: Tunlik of the Karchukur tribe, Bakdzhu of the Kara-tut tribe and Munkur-Khitna of the tribe of...⁸⁷ with a thousand men. They brought much silver to the shore but were unable to put it on board the ship. More than 300 persons from that army did not come back, the rest died of the rottenness of the air and the damp vapours. All three emirs came back safely and lived long after.

This Tatar tribe was notorious for stabbing each other, as they were intractable and ignorant and offhandedly used knives and swords, just like the Kurds, the Shuls and the Franks. In that era they did not have the laws that currently exist among the Mongols, hatred, anger and envy were predominant among them. Given their numbers, if they were to be unanimous and not at feud, the other peoples of China and others and no one at all could stand against them. Nonetheless, despite all the feuds and contention prevailing among them, since ancient times they have been the conquerors and lords of the majority of tribes and regions, standing out for their greatness, power and honour.

Due to their extraordinary greatness and honorable position, other Turkic clans became famous under their name, despite all the differences in their ranks and names, and were all referred to as Tatars. And those various clans believed that they were great and honourable because they were attributed to this nation, and became known under this name, like today, due to the influence of Chinggis Khan and his family, since they are Mongols, various Turkic tribes like the

Jalairs, Tatars, Oirats, Onguts, Keraites, Naimans, Tanguts and others, each of which had a certain name and a special nickname, all call themselves Mongols with the purpose of self-glorification, despite the fact that they did not acknowledge this classification in ancient times. Their present descendants, therefore, imagine that since the ancient times they belong to the Mongols and can be called by that name, but it is not true, because in ancient times the Mongols were just one tribe out of all the Turkic steppe tribes. As divine mercy was extended to them, meaning that Chinggis Khan and his clan came from the tribe of the Mongols, from which sprung many branches, especially since the times of Alan-Gua⁸⁸, and about 300 years ago there arose a numerous branch with tribes called the Niruns, which became honorable and dignified, all of them became known as the Mongol tribes, though other tribes were not called Mongols in those days.

Due to the similarities in their appearance, figure, nickname, language, customs and manners, though in ancient times they had some differences in language and customs, now it has come to the point that the peoples of Khitai and Jurchen⁸⁹, the Nangyas⁹⁰, Uighurs, Kipchaks, Turkmen, Karluks, Kalaches, all their prisoners and the Tajik peoples which have grown up among the Mongols are called Mongols. And all these peoples find it useful for their greatness and dignity to call themselves Mongols. The same thing happened earlier due to the strength and power of the Tatars, and for that reason all the Turkic tribes in the areas of Khitai, Hind and Sind, Chin and Machin⁹¹, in the country of the Kirghiz, the Kelars and the Bashkirs, in Desht-i Kipchak, in northward areas, among Arab tribes, and in Syria, Egypt and Morocco are called Tatars. There are six Tatar tribes which are famous and glorious and each one has an army and a

is also Yeniseisk city on the confluence of the Angara and Yenisei Rivers.

⁸⁷ A gap in the text.

⁸⁸ Alan Gua – the ancestor of the group of Mongolian tribes from whom Chinggis Khan came.

⁸⁹ The state of the Jurchens, Jin.

⁹⁰ The Naimans.

⁹¹ That is Northern China, India, Eastern, Central and Southern China.

ruler: the Tutukuljut Tatars, the Alchi Tatars, the Chagan Tatars, the Kuin Tatars, the Terat Tatars, and the Barkui Tatars. The Tutukuljut tribe is the most respected Tatar tribe.

There is a custom according to which every man of this tribe is called a Tutukulitai and every woman is called a Tutukulichin. Those coming from the tribe of the Alchi Tatars are called Alchitaj and Alchin, from the tribe of the Kuin Tatars – Kuitaj and Kuichin, and from the tribe of the Terats – Terati and Terauchin.

Though these tribes had many battles and conflicts among themselves, and they were always engaged in murders, ruin and robbery of one another, it happened that there was a conflict and war between them and the Mongol tribes. In this situation, the Tatar tribes joined forces. Old blood and enmity between the Tatars and the Mongols occurred for the following reason: in the time of Khabul Khan, who was the Mongol khan, from whose line come the majority of the Qiyat tribes, and to whom the Mongol tribes of Nirun were cousins, and other branches of the Mongols, each of which was known by its own special name and nickname – all were his uncles and grandfathers, and all were considered his friends and allies, and in adversity and misfortunes they became his helpers and defenders – at that time somebody named Sayn-tegin became ill, he was the brother of Kara-Liku from the tribe Qungirat, who was a wife of Khabul Khan. They asked the Tatars for a shaman named Charqil-Nuduya to treat him. He came and performed a ritual, but Sayn-tegin passed away. They did violence to the shaman and sent him home. After that elder and younger brothers of Sayn-tegin killed this shaman Charqil.

As a result there arose a feud between the Tatars and the Mongols, and the sons of Khabul Khan, owing to their brotherly relations and connections by marriage with Sayn-tegin, had to help his tribe by perforce and necessity. For this reason, there arose a quarrel, enmity and war between them and the Tatars, and they battled repeatedly.

On both sides, they killed each other and plundered any time they had such an

opportunity. For many years these wars and conflicts continued. At the beginning of the events the Tatars, taking a convenient opportunity, captured Khambakay Khan for a reason that will be explained in the history of the tribal branches of the Taydzhiut. Khambakay Khan was from among the rulers and leaders of the Taydzhiut people, whose origin comes from the nephews of Khabul Khan⁹². Due to the fact that the Tatars knew that the Khitai emperor had been offended by Khabul Khan, because the latter had killed his ambassadors and men-at-arms, as it will be recounted in that narration, that the emperor had ill intentions toward Khabul Khan and the Mongols, who all were his relatives and were together with him, and that hatred had ingrained itself deeply into the emperor's heart, while the Tatars were dependent and subordinate to him, they sent Khambakay Khan to him. Furthermore, they themselves harboured ancient hostility and enmity toward Khambakay Khan, and that's why they were bent on such impudence and inflexibility. The Khitai emperor ordered that Khambakay Khan be nailed to a 'wooden donkey'. Khambakay Khan said: 'I was taken by others, not you, it would be unworthy and illaudable and far from noble to treat me so odiously. The Mongol tribes, who are my relatives, will try to take revenge on you for me, and therefore troubles will be caused to your possessions'.

Altan Khan⁹³ did not listen to his words and nailed Khambakay Khan to a 'wooden donkey', as a result of which he died. The emperor allowed one of his bodyguards by the name of Bulagachi to return home. He brought the bad news to the Mongols.

After that Kutula Khan unleashed war against the Khitai emperor and plundered his country...

At another time the Tatar tribes, finding a suitable opportunity, captured Ukin-Barkak, the eldest son of Khabul Khan and the ancestor of the Kiyaturkin tribe, and sent him

⁹² In 'The Secret History' Khambakay Khan – Ambaghai Khagan – is recognised as the ruler of all Mongols.

⁹³ The Turkic name for all Chinese emperors.

to Altan Khan so that he might kill him by nailing him to a 'wooden donkey'. For these reasons, the Mongols' enmity and hatred toward the Khitai Emperor increased, and up to the time of Chinggis Khan they were constantly at war with each other. People from each side went to the other and killed and plundered, until finally, as recounted in the narration about Chinggis Khan and his family⁹⁴, Chinggis Khan made all tribes of the Tatars and of the Khitai emperors food for his sword, made all of them weak and captives, and he took all of them and that side under his power and obedience, as we see ourselves in the present days. Of all the battles that at all times each of the Mongol rulers was waging with the Tatar leaders and tsars, some are worth mentioning.

One is as follows. One of the Tatar rulers named Matar was at war with Kadan Bahadur, the son of Khabul Khan. In the first attack Kadan Bahadur struck him and the saddle of his horse with a spear and cast him onto the ground together with his horse. Though Matar was injured, he didn't die of this wound, however, he was ill for a long time. After recovery, he again joined the war. Kadan Bahadur again struck his back with a spear so that it passed through his spine, and Matar immediately died, the army fell prey to the Mongols...

Another battle during the time of Chinggis Khan was as follows. The latter had already fought with the Tatars before, but once, having found a good opportunity to prevail over them, he killed the majority of them and completely plundered them. This happened as follows: some Tatar tribes, the ruler and tsar of which was Mudzhin-Sultu, joined the war with the Khitai emperor Altan Khan, as they didn't want to obey him. The Khitai emperor equipped an army and, with his great emir by the name of Chinsan as the leader, sent them to war with the Tatars, since the latter could not resist the Khitais, they lost their courage, retreated and fled. Having learned of this, Chinggis Khan, using this opportunity, marched out with his army

about him, struck them, killed a great number of the Tatars and plundered everything they had. It is known that in that war among the captured goods was a silver cradle, a coverlet embroidered with gold and other different things, because at that time the Tatar tribes were the most prosperous and the richest of all nomads. After that the son of the above-mentioned Mudzhin-Sultu, by the name of Alak-Udur, and his brother Kyrkyr-tayshy united with each tribe of the Mongol people and with other tribes allied to the Mongols, and battled together with Chinggis Khan...

When the supreme truth made Chinggis Khan powerful and he conquered all his enemies, such as the tribes of Katakina, Saljiut, Taichiut and Durban, the ruler of the Keraites On Khan⁹⁵, Tayan Khan, the ruler of the Naiman, Kushluk Khan, the ruler of the Merkit, Tokta-beki, and others who were at enmity with him, the Tatars, who constantly went to aid and support those tribes, were weakened, and since they were murderers and the enemies of Chinggis Khan and his fathers, he ordered that all the Tatars be killed and not to leave even one alive, to the limit which was determined by the law, to kill women and children also, and to cut pregnant women's wombs open so as to destroy them completely, because they were founders of mutiny and rebellion and had exterminated many kindred tribes and families of Chinggis Khan. There was no possibility for anybody to give protection to that tribe or to hide any one of them, or even for those few who had survived to show themselves and appear in public.

However, at the beginning of Chinggis Khan's reign and later, each of the Mongol and non-Mongol tribes took women from the Tatars for themselves and for their families, and gave them theirs. Chinggis Khan also took women from them, because among his wives Esulun and Esukat were Tatars, the elder brother of Chinggis Khan, Jochi-Kasar, also arranged a marriage with a Tatar girl, many emirs also took Tatar girls⁹⁶. For

⁹⁵ of Van Khan.

⁹⁶ The offspring of mixed-ethnic marriages often have a bifurcated ethnic identity, therefore I consider

⁹⁴ Rashid al-Din, vol. 1, book 1.

this reason, they hid some Tatar children. Chinggis Khan gave one thousand of the Tatars to Jochi Kasar in order for him to kill all of them. He, for the sake of his wife and from compassion to the condemned, killed 500 of them, and hid 500...

Eventually, after Chinggis Khan's anger toward the Tatars and their annihilation, nevertheless some number of them remained in different places, each for some reason, children from the Tatar tribe who were hidden in the hordes and in the houses of emirs and their wives were brought up. Some pregnant Tatar women who had avoided death delivered children, therefore the tribe which now is considered Tatar is from their line. From this nation, both in the time of Chinggis Khan and after him, some became great and respected emirs and authorised persons of the state in the hordes⁹⁷...

After that, up to the present days, in every horde and in every ulus there appeared great emirs from among them. Sometimes they were given girls from the families of Chinggis Khan and marriages were arranged with theirs. In each ulus there are also a lot of people from that tribe who didn't become emirs, but joined the Mongol army, any of them knows what branch of the Tatars he comes from.

Among the Tatar children who at the time of Chinggis Khan became respectable persons and emirs and who were brought up by him and his wives, there was a Kutuku Noyon, who was also called Shiki Kutuku. The facts of his life were as follows. When the Mongols devastated the Tatar people, Chinggis Khan had no children yet, and his

senior wife, Börte Üjin, wanted to have a child. Once Chinggis Khan unexpectedly saw a child who had fallen on the roadside, picked him up and sent him to Börte Üjin with the words: 'As you wish to have a child, bring him up instead of your own child and safeguard him'. The wife of Chinggis Khan brought him up like her own son, with full honour and esteem, in her own family. When he grew up, he was named Shiki Kutuku, and also Kutuku Noyon, he called Chinggis Khan 'echige', which means 'father' and he called Börte Üjin 'terikun-eke', which means 'mother'. It is said that when Börte Üjin died, he beat her grave with his hands and shouted, 'Oh, my dear mother!' and thus mourned her. After Chinggis Khan he was still alive. Ugedey Kaan called him his elder brother, and he sat with his sons higher than Mengu Kaan, he was a confidant of the children of Tolui Khan and Sorghaghtani Beki and died during the revolt of Ariq Böke. One of his sons was in the service of the Great Kaan. Kutuku Noyon was 82 years old, he resolved litigation equitably and gave help and favours to offenders, he said repeatedly: 'You needn't confess because of fright or fear'. He said to the guilty persons: 'Do not be afraid and speak the truth!'...

There were two other boys, both were full brothers. One was named Kuli, and the other – Kara-Mengetu-Ukhe, they were Tatars from the Tutukuliut tribe. Two wives of Chinggis Khan whom he had taken from the Tatars, Esulun and Esukat, being from the same family, administered charity to those two boys, having begged Chinggis Khan for them. He gave them these two children. Both of them became cupbearers in Esulun's Orda...

From the Hoyin Tatar tribe came: Samkar Noyon, the groom of Hulagu Khan, who at the time of Abaga Khan became an honourable and great emir, Tugan, Mulai and Kui-tai, the father of Buka Kurchi. From the Nerait Tatar tribe in Iran no one who was esteemed and famous is known, but undoubtedly there are many of them among the ordinary soldiers. But since they aren't esteemed and famous,

it possible to use conditional terms: 'Mongol-Tatars' for the era of Chinggis Khan, 'Tatar-Kipchak' when speaking of the early period of the Golden Horde, 'Bulgar-Tatars' for the era (area) of the Kazan Khaganate, etc., thus the reader must not forget that these 'ethnonyms' are conditional.

⁹⁷ This source evidence allows us to question the statements of some researchers about **the complete extermination of the Tatars** at the beginning of the 13th century, the point of view **about the total extermination of the Volga Bulgars** in the second third of the 13th century seems to be absurd, history shows that the complete extermination of an entire ethnicity almost never occurs.

no inquiries have been made about them. There is also no one from the Alchi Tatar tribe in this state who was honored or famous and would be worthy of recording. However, in the ulus of Jochi Khan⁹⁸, the senior wife of Jochi's son Batu, named Burakchin, was from the Alchi-Tatar tribe, also from this tribe was the wife of Tuda Mengu, the ruler of the same ulus, named Ture Kutlug, among the emirs of Batu, a senior emir by the name of It-Kara was from this tribe, among the emirs of Mengu Timur, also the ruler of that ulus, a senior emir by the name of Beg Timur was from the same tribe...!.

Material prepared by Bulat Khamidullin

⁹⁸ In the Golden Horde.

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