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## Foreword to the Volume

*Fayaz Khuzin*

The last two centuries of the first millennium c.e. is accurately described in historical sciences as a critical stage in the history of the peoples of Eastern and Central Europe. During this period significant changes in the social, economic and public life of Slavic, Turkic and Finno-Ugric peoples took place which eventually led to the formation of early feudal states. On the territory of Eastern Europe these states were Ancient Rus', Khazaria and Volga Bulgaria. Throughout many centuries they maintained close contact with each other in economics and culture, and competed for extending their sphere of influence on neighbouring regions. This competition very often led to serious military confrontations which usually ended with the concluding of peace treaties.

Almost beginning from its very founding, Bulgar, the short name for the country and its capital given to them by contemporaries, became a remarkable phenomenon of medieval Eurasian civilisation, and the object of interest of Arab and Persian geographers, Russian chroniclers, Western European travelers and traders. This is for good reason. As the most northern Islamic country of that time, quite an extraordinary fact, it very quickly won fame as a powerful trading state. And not only due to its convenient geographical location. First of all, highly developed agriculture (plow farming, cattle breeding) and a handicraft industry formed the basis of economic power within the country which facilitated active and equitable international trade. Their products were intended to both satisfy internal needs and to be exported.

The equal partner relations in trade, foreign policy, other areas of international activities were only possible when the participating countries had approximately the same economic and spiritual potential, and were on the same level of social and economic development.

According to these variables, Volga Bulgaria was not inferior to its partners Khazaria, Kiev Rus' and Russian principalities, or the countries of Western Europe or the Middle East.

Volga Bulgaria holds a special place in the medieval history of the Tatar people. It is perceived by modern, first of all, mid-Volga Tatars, as a state founded by one of their primary, not to say direct, ancestors. There are many aspects that connect us with the Bulgarian period of our centuries-long history. It is during this period that the full transition from nomadic to settled life was completed, stationary settlements appeared, including cities such as Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan which celebrated its 1000th anniversary in 2005. In 922, during the reign of khan Almas, Shilka's son, a monotheistic religion, Islam, was officially adopted. It played an exceptional, undoubtedly progressive role in the spiritual and social and political life of the Bulgars and their descendants. The world-famous poem 'Kyyssa-i Yusuf', written by the Bulgarian poet Kul Gali in the beginning of 13th century, still enjoys great popularity among Tatar readers. No wonder Tatars hold a reverent attitude to everything associated with their Bulgarian ancestors.

In Russian historiography Volga Bulgaria becomes an object of scholarly interest beginning in the latter half of the 18th century (V. Tatishchev, N. Rychkov and others). In the 19th century special articles were written (see the works of Kh. Fraehn, V. Grigoriyev, A. Likhachev, K. Nevostruyev, N. Tolmachev and others) as well as monographs (for example, that of S. Shpilevsky) on separate aspects of Bulgarian history and archaeology. Bulgarian Studies as a separate branch of historical science was established during the Soviet era when the archaeology was being actively developed in the historical discipline (see the works of A. Smirnov, N. Kalinin, A. Khalikov, T. Khlebnikova, R. Fakhrutdinov and others). The last two-three decades were marked by major discoveries in the history and archaeology of Bulgaria. These discoveries significantly enlarged the collection of sources of Bulgarian Studies, allowed for the development of a new approach to solving many issues in the medieval history of the Tatar people and for the creation of new research tasks.

The present volume of the seven volume edition 'The History of Tatars since Ancient Times' is dedicated to the history of Volga Bulgaria before the Mongol conquests, but it also covers a great number of questions associated with the Finno-Ugric neighbours of the Bulgars and the Turkic, primarily, nomadic, population of the Great Steppe. There is a simple explanation to this, as it is impossible to imagine the history of the Bulgarian state outside its Ugric and Turkic environment. As has been justly noted in the first volume of this edition, 'the Tatar people do not have a single ethnic root'. Among its ancestors there were, apart from the Volga Bulgars, many steppe tribes (from Huns to Kipchaks and Nogais), local Finno-Ugrians, the Slavs and others. 'It is not scientific... to search for ethnic purity among the Bulgars' [the History of Tatars, 2002, pp. 5–6]. The ancestors of contemporary Tatars had never lived in isolation. Contacts with the world around them and not only with their closest neighbours, but also with remote countries, had a certain influence on the establishment of the social and political structures of the state and facilitated the creation of a new Volga Bulgarian ethnic component, which played some part in the ethnogenesis of Volga Tatars.

Taking this into account, the editorial board considered it necessary to include in this volume sections on Great Bulgaria of Kubrat and Danubian Bulgaria and the Khazar Khaganate, which was the first early feudal state in Eastern Europe which also included the territories of Bulgars after the dissolution of their former state. It is in the period of their coexistence with the Khazars, during the so-called Arab and Khazar wars, that the first acquaintance of Bulgars with Islam occurred, which later, beginning in 922, became their state religion. In the course of their relationship with the Khazar Khaganate, the Bulgars learned to effectively trade, build cities and engage in crafts. And what is most important is that from the Khazars they acquired the experience of nation-building, a social and political structure which were all significant during the establishment of their own state in the Middle Volga Region.

From the south and east, Volga Bulgaria was surrounded by nomadic Ugrians, Pechenegs and Kipchaks, from the north and west by settled Volga Finns. The Bulgars maintained

close contact with all of these groups, with relations being mostly peaceful, but sometimes hostile, which was natural for the Middle Ages. In these contact areas mutual influence and appropriation of cultures and ethnic movement occurred. This in turn resulted in the formation of a Bulgar nation and original culture to which distinguishably alien groups joined. This explains the presence of sections in the book dedicated to the Finno-Ugric neighbours of the Bulgars and the nomads of the Great Steppe.

Regarding the place and significance of Volga Bulgaria in the history of the peoples of Eastern Europe, the outstanding archaeologist A. Smirnov wrote about half a century ago that 'Having united many tribes of the Middle Volga Region the Bulgarian state played a significant role in the ethnogenesis of the peoples of the Volga region. Without knowing the history of the Volga Bulgars one cannot write a history of the Kazan Tatars, Chuvashes, Mordvins, Mari, Udmurts or Komi. It should not be forgotten that the Volga Bulgars were the basis for the formation of the Kazan Khanate, and, ultimately, the history of the Volga Bulgars is closely connected with that of Ancient Rus', especially with the history of the Vladimir-Suzdal, Ryazan and Moscow principalities' [Smirnov, 1951, p. 3]. These words remain true today.

\* \* \*

The work in your hands is the result of efforts by a large team of authors, themselves highly qualified specialists from major academic centres in Russia and foreign countries. They have their established views on many issues addressed in this book, and several of them are authors of interesting concepts, sometimes even controversial, but, nevertheless, noteworthy. In such cases the editors did not seek for complete unification of the texts, but instead decided to reflect the conceptual views of the authors in their entirety. Only the spelling of the names 'Bolgaria', 'Bulgaria', and 'Bolgars', 'Bulgars', and 'Kipchaks' and 'Kypchaks' was standardized throughout the book. In order to avoid confusion between Danubian and Volga Bulgars, the accepted spelling using 'o' was used in regard to the Bulgars living in the Azov Sea region before they moved to the Middle Volga region, as well as to the Danubian Bulgars. Spelling with a 'u' ('Bulgars') is reserved for the

Volga Bulgars. In contemporary texts, references to the city Bulgar are written with a 'u', while those to the archaeological site with an 'o'. And finally, regarding the ethnonym 'Kipchaks' and 'Kypchaks', different spellings are encountered even in a manuscript by the same author. It was decided to retain the spelling of this ethnonym with a 'y' as more consistent with the original of the sources.

\* \* \*

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## Historiographical review

### 1. Russian historiography

*Fayaz Khuzin*

The first steps in the study of Volga Bulgaria are traditionally associated in Russia with the name of V. Tatishchev [1686–1750]—a famous Russian historian and public official of the 18th century. However, in reality, long before Tatishchev, back in the 11–12th centuries, there a historical school had been formed in Bulgaria itself, one of whose prominent representatives was Yakub Ibn Nugman. He wrote the book 'The History of Bulgaria', which has unfortunately not survived to the present day. Some fragments of this work which are devoted to the history of the Bulgars' adoption of Islam are known to us through Abu Hamid al-Gharnati who visited this area twice in the middle of the 12th century [al-Gharnati, 1971, pp. 30–31]. It is not improbable that other historical works written by the Bulgars existed, but we do not yet possess any concrete information on them. However, it is without doubt that the Bulgar nation and its offspring knew and remembered their history, and praised many heroic pages of their past in legends, tales and dastans. The 'historiography' of the early period may be observed as part of the forming state ideology of Volga Bulgaria.

In the period of existence of the Kazan Khanate, 'historical works of an official character existed, which is proved not only in theory, but also in practice. A range of Tatar historical compositions of the 17th century retained traces of preceding works ['Compendium of Chronicles' by Kadir-Alibek' and 'Daftar-i Chinggis-name', the author of which is unknown] [Usmanov, 1972, p. 27]. It is curious that I. Georgi, a famous naturalist and traveler of the latter half of the 18th century, especially emphasized a wide popularity among the Tatars of historical works which contained 'considerable accounts about their own antiquity' [Georgi, 1799, p. 10]. Short insights into the Bulgars' history were made by an anonymous author of the latter half of the 16th century who wrote 'The History of Kazan' [The History of Kazan, 1954, pp. 49, 91]. However, the absence of independent historical works dating to the Bulgar-Tatar period does not provide

enough ground to make it a separate stage of the Volga Bulgaria historiography, although it is possible in theory.

Therefore, *the first stage* of studying Volga Bulgaria only begins in the 18th century. This stage finishes in 1878 with the creation of the Society of Archaeology, Ethnography and History at the Imperial Kazan University. It should be characterized as the time of the primary accumulation in Russian historical science of reliable information on the Volga Bulgars and their archaeological antiquities.

The emergence of interest towards Bulgar antiquities can be dated to the beginning of the 18th century. In 1712, dyak A. Mikhailov made the first known description of an ancient Bolgar town with an indication of many buildings and quarters, including the so called 'small trench',—earth fortifications of the pre-Mongol period which have not survived to the present day [Nevostruyev, 1871, p. 528 et seq.]. Peter I's visit to the ruins of the town of Bulgar is usually dated to 1722. Upon his initiative, measures aimed at the protection and repair of Bulgar's landmarks were taken, while the texts written on 50 Islamic grave stones were copied [The History, 1990, p. 47]. In 1732, the complex of fortifications of Bulgar,—external ramparts of the 14th century and remains of earlier fortifications—were included in the description made by N. Savenkov and I. Krapivin [Shpilevsky, 1877, p. 571 et seq.].

V. Tatishchev's work 'Russian History from the Ancient Times', the first volume of which was published in 1768, is valuable for us first of all because it expounds on the most important events and facts from the life of the pre-Mongol Bulgars based on multiple ancient Russian chronicles and some other sources. These sources of course chiefly touch on Russian-Bulgar military, political and trade relations. They also contain interesting information about various Bulgar towns (Bulgar-Bryakhimov, the Great City of Bilyar, Zhukotin, Oshel-Askli and others). V. Tatishchev made a rather curious

hypothesis concerning the construction of the Russian cities of Nizhny Novgorod, and later, Vasilsursk on the sites of ancient Bulgar towns: 'In 6729 [1221], Grand Prince Yury founded a city left from the Bolgars on the Oka river estuary, naming it Novgorod Nizhny, though it used to be a Bolgar town' [Tatishchev, 1964, p. 360]. Thus, 'Russian History' was the first to acquaint the Russian public with the Volga Bulgars and contributed to the emergence of a stable interest to their history.

In his work, V. Tatishchev devoted a special article to the nomads of the Great Steppe—the Pechenegs, Torks and Polovtsians, and attempted to define the origin of their names, whereabouts, their route of nomadism, as well as portray their social system, religion and their relations with their settled neighbours [Tatishchev, 1768, 1, p. 114]. In general, official Russian historiography, beginning with V. Tatishchev and N. Karamzin, treated nomads as a power which hampered the development of the Russian state.

The latter half of the 18th century is marked by the activities of academic expeditions which carried out complex multiple-sided research of natural resources of certain in mostly Eastern and Southeastern regions of Russia. In accordance with the instructions given by the Russian Academy of Sciences, participants of these expeditions were obliged to collect data on the history, culture and lifestyle of the peoples who inhabited these regions. The first field examination of monuments of Bulgar antiquity was conducted between 1768 and 1774 by the distinguished researchers N. Rychkov [1770], P. Pallas [1773, 1788] and I. Lepekhin [1795] during their trips throughout modern Tatarstan, Ulyanovsk and Samara oblasts [regions]. These trips are sometimes, and not without reason, referred to as archaeological, at the same time noting that the work was mostly of registering character, while the scientific value of the examined artifacts remained to a great extent unclear to even the researchers themselves [Formozov, 1961, pp. 31, 57–58].

The study of the history, archaeology and numismatics of Volga Bulgaria notably intensified in the 19th century, which was to an extent connected to the opening of Imperial Kazan University in 1804. The name of one of the first university professors, H. Fraehn [1782–1851], went down in history as the founder of Eastern

numismatics and the first authoritative source expert who brought the famous 'Notes' ['Risalas'] by Ahmed ibn Fadlan under the domain of Russian Science [Fraehn, 1823; 1832]. He was the first to define Bulgar coins of the 10th century [Fraehn, 1832a], coins dating to the 13th century, and those which were minted on behalf of Nasir lid-din [Fraehn, 1816]. H. Fraehn published papers on interesting archaeological finds from Bilyar [a mirror and a copper vessel with images of people and a Kufic inscription] [Fraehn, 1822], as well as some antique legends of the Bulgar epoch [Fraehn, 1816a]. The above mentioned works of H. Fraehn were the a large contribution of the scholar to historical science and had a beneficial impact upon its further development.

P. Saveliyev [1846] and V. Grigoriyev [1842] were worthy successors of Fraehn's work. In their writings, we can find vast information on the pre-Mongol history of Volga Bulgaria based upon examinations of accounts by Arabic authors', as well as information from coins. The outstanding orientalist of the 19th century V. Grigoriyev [1816–1881] is also known as the author of the first survey work on the Volga Bulgars of the 10–13th centuries, published in 'Biblioteka Dlya Chteniya' [The Library for Reading] for 1836. As alleged by the author, the Bulgar state emerged on the coasts of the Volga and Kama 'circa the 5th century if not earlier' and occupied a large stretch of territory 'from the Ural mountains to the Sura and Oka. From the Volga and Kama and to the banks of the Don, the Khopyor and Samara', i.e. it included 'many possessions which were governed by particular princes' [Grigoriyev, 1876c, pp. 80, 98]. Its capital was situated on the location of the ancient town of Bilyar. The Bulgar state, in V. Grigoriyev's opinion, was inhabited by heterogeneous tribes [Turkic, Finnish and Slavic], however he obviously exaggerated the Slavic component and suggested that the modern Danube Bulgars are the offspring of those of the Volga-Kama. Rightly emphasizing the Bulgars' 'trading spirit' and the high level of scholarship which they achieved 'earlier than any other nation of Northeastern Europe except the Khazars', the author at the same time blames them for excessive bellicosity [Ibid., pp. 82, 102]. But despite their militancy, V. Grigoriyev's thought

that in 1236 the Volga Bulgars surrendered to the Mongols without resisting.

The article written by V. Grigoriyev reflects the level of historical knowledge at the time on Volga Bulgaria, and is one of the most serious studies of the 19th century of the area we are interested in.

We should also mention V. Grigoriyev's works which are dedicated to the overview of the Khazars' political history as well as an analysis of their state structure [Grigoriyev, 1876; 1876a; 1876b]. During an extended period of time, these works remained 'the best and the most complete collection of information on the Khazars and served for a number of generations of Russian historians as the basic textbooks which allowed them to become acquainted with the Khazars and their history' [Artamonov, 1962, p. 29]. V. Grigoriyev called the Khazar Khaganate an extraordinary phenomenon of the early medieval history of Europe: 'Surrounded by wild nomadic tribes, it possessed all the advantages of educated countries, an organized government, vast flourishing trade and a standing army. When terrific anarchy, fanaticism and deep ignorance struggled with each other over the domination of Western Europe, the Khazar empire was famous for its justice and religious tolerance... As a bright shooting star, it shone on the bleak horizon of Europe and went out without leaving any traces of its existence' [Grigoriyev, 1876a, p. 66].

Apart from the above-mentioned writings of H. Fraehn, the collection of sources of research on Bulgarian history was enriched in the 19th century with another work, short in volume, though extremely intense in its content, which was written by the famous Russian Semitist D. Khvolson and dedicated to the publication of accounts of the Arabic geographer Ibn Rustah of the beginning of the 10th century about the Bulgars and their neighbours. The proper commentaries accompanied this work [Khvolson, 1869]. Bulgarists actively use this work even today, 135 years after its first publication.

Interesting information about the Bulgars may be found in the book of A. Garkavi, which represents a collection of accounts of Arabic authors about the Slavs and Russians [Garkavi, 1870].

The first half and the middle of the 19th century is marked by an intensified search for

Bulgar monuments. In 1812, adjunct of Kazan University P. Kondyrev travelled to Bilyarsk where he managed to buy interesting discoveries of the Bulgarian antiquity [Shpilevsky, 1877, p. 551]. In 1832, the publisher of the Kazan journal 'Zavolzhsy Muravei' ['The Trans-Volga Ant'] M. Rybushkin visited Bolgar and Bilyarsk and richly described all the extant monuments [Rybushkin, 1833]. Various newspapers and journals published articles and notes by A. Vtorov [1849], A. Artemyev [1852], I. Berezin [1852], K. Evlentiey [1871] and other authors. There emerged the first composite works in the form of archaeological maps, compiled by K. Nevostruyev [1871] and N. Vyacheslav [1874]. They included a detailed description of dozens of Bulgar sites, mostly ancient towns which were discovered in different years in the Kazan, Simbirsk and Vyatka guberniyas. Based on the mapping of the identified sites, the territory of the Bulgarian state could be rendered more precisely.

An exceptionally important event of the second half of the 19th century which defined the further prospects and direction for the study of Volga Bulgaria's history became the IV All-Russian Archaeological Congress held in Kazan in 1877. The publication of the fundamental book 'Ancient Cities and other Bulgar-Tatar Monuments of the Kazan Guberniya' written by professor of Kazan University S. Shpilevsky, was especially timed to coincide with the opening of the Congress [Kazan, 1877]. We can say without exaggeration that this book became part of the golden fund of Bulgarian Studies. It represents a vast collection of all the sources [written, archaeological, numismatic, folklore and others] on cities and other archaeological records of Volga Bulgaria and the Kazan Khanate which were known at that time. His work is distinguished by a complex and strictly critical approach to the examination of the sources. On the basis of this approach, he presents his ideas on the territory of the Bulgar state, and the location of the Bulgar tribes and cities known from written data, as well as the chronology of records, etc. He was the first to put forward and prove the hypothesis concerning two capitals of Volga Bulgaria of the pre-Mongol period [Bulgar on the Volga in the 10–the first half of the 12th century and the Great City of Bilyar on the Cheremshan river from 1164 to 1236]



which dominated Russian historiography for a long time.

It was decided at the IV Archaeological Convention to found a Society of Archaeology, Ethnography and History [SAEH] at Kazan University. The Society began its work in 1878 and quickly turned into a genuine centre of study of Volga Bulgaria. It was the initiator and organizer of the first archaeological excavation of Bulgar cities.

The foundation of SAEH marked the beginning of a new, *second stage* in the historiography of Volga Bulgaria. This stage is linked with the names of A. Likhachev, P. Ponomarev, I. Iznoskov, V. Kazarinov, N. Vysotsky, A. Shtukenberg, N. Smirnov, M. Khudyakov, V. Smolin and others, as well as with the first representatives of the emerging national historical sciences, Sh. Marjani, K. Nasyjri, M. Zaitov, G. Akhmarov, R. Fakhreddinov and others.

Among the significant achievements in Bulgar archaeology of the last quarter of the 19th century, works on localising [identification] historically known cities should be noted. The location of the city of Zhukotin [Juketau], as described in chronicles, was identified by A. Artemyev in his work in 1851. Sh. Marjani, the founder of Tatar historical studies, in his fundamental work 'Möstäfadel-äkhbar fi äkhvali Kazan vâ Bolgar' ['Reliable Accounts on the History of Kazan and Bolgar'], published in 1885 in Tatar, described for the first time the correct location of the city of Suvar, on the site of a large ancient town near the village of Kuznechikha in the Spass uyezd of the Kazan guberniya [Märçani, 1989, 91 b]. This location was afterwards brilliantly confirmed by the outstanding Tatar historian G. Akhmarov [1893, pp. 478–481]. 'Izvestiya OAIE' [Reports of SAEH] began publishing interesting articles on the location of Oshel [Ponomarev, 1892a], Juketau [Ponomarev, 1892a], Kashan [Ponomarev, 1893], Tubylygtai [Ponomarev, 1893a], Kirmenchuk [Soloviev, 1889] and other cities with descriptions of their topography and discovery. However, archaeological excavation of these monuments was almost never carried out, aside from some small work in Bilyar [Kazarinov, 1884; Ponomarev, 1919] and Bolgar [Shtukenberg, 1892].

Local Kazan historians and SAEH members collected a substantial number of Bulgar antiquities among which the large collections

of A. Likhachev and N. Vysotsky stand out. As a result, they comprise the basis of the Bulgar fund of the State Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan. The works of A. Likhachev [1876; 1886], N. Tolmachev [1884], A. Shtukenberg [1896], N. Vysotsky [1908] and others were instrumental in shedding light on the characteristic features and diversity of the Bulgars' material culture; however, they did not provide a chronological division into its pre-Mongol and Golden Horde periods.

The above-mentioned authors also provide interesting thoughts concerning the overall issues in Volga Bulgaria's history. Thus, A. Likhachev, following his predecessor V. Grigoriyev, believed that 'the first appearance of the Bulgars at the Volga river is coincident with the epoch of the Migration Period', but unlike Grigoriyev he believed that the Bulgars were not bellicose. Instead, they were 'inclined to trade, agriculture and industry; they evaded war and suffered robbery from neighbours more than they robbed themselves' [Likhachev, 1876 c; 1886 c]. Initially, A. Likhachev supported N. Ilminsky's idea concerning the relation between the Bulgar and Chuvash people, but soon rejected it and emphasized 'the absolute equivalence between the Bulgar and Tatar cultures' [see: Khudyakov, 1922, p. 15].

P. Golubovsky [1888] and professor at Kazan University N. Smirnov [1912] in their own essays examined issues relating to Bulgar history in greater detail. The former exaggerated the 'industrial and commercial character' of the Bulgar state, while the latter overstated the significance of borrowing in the formation of the material and spiritual cultures of the Bulgars. Thus, according to I. Smirnov, nomadic 'Bulgars-Chuvashes' who had come to the Middle Volga in the 5–6th centuries, borrowed agriculture from the local Finns, while they borrowed stone and brick architecture, along with some clay pottery forms from Middle Asia and the Middle East, and some forms of weaponry and utensils from the Scandinavians. 'It is quite possible, wrote I. Smirnov, that the first cities and markets of Volga Bulgaria owe their emergence to the Khazars' [Smirnov, 1912, p. 22].

It is also worthy to note that the first pre-revolutionary historiographical survey devoted to the ethnic, socio-economic and political histories of the nomadic neighbours of Rus' and

Volga Bulgaria, was P. Golubovsky's monograph 'The Pechenegs, Torks and Polovtsians before the Tatar invasion' [Golubovsky, 1884]. This work, as considered by specialists in the field, 'became the crown achievement of scientific research on the Polovtsians in Russia before the end of the 19th century and reflected all the drawbacks and advantages of Russian historiographical thought in this sphere' [Akhinzhanov, 1999, p. 10]. Among P. Golubovsky's merits comes to mind his successful attempt portray peaceful relations between the Polovtsians and Russians which lied in their cultural and trading ties, in the formation of military unions against their common enemies and in the development of diplomatic contacts, instead of falsely emphasizing, as it usually happens, military collisions, conflict situations and negative events [robbery, violence, forging] in their interactions.

Original ideas on the history of the Bulgar state and its cities may be found in N. Spassky's book 'Essays on the Motherland Studies'. In particular, he suggested that the city of Bulgar on the Volga had been founded on the site of the former trading city of Bryakhimov after its complete devastation by the Mongols in 1236 [Spassky, 1912, pp. 178, 220]. Despite S. Shpilevsky's concept that there were two capitals of pre-Mongol Bulgaria, which was prevalent at the time, N. Spassky adamantly argued that the capital had not been located on the Volga, but rather on the Maly Cheremshan river, in the Great City of Bilyar which had been called Bulgar at that time [ibid., pp. 190, 226]. It is worthy to note, that Shpilevsky's concept concerning Bulgar on the Volga being the first capital did not garner support from A. Spitsyn, an influential Russian archaeologist who in 1898 made an attempt to find the remains of Bulgar from the 10th century in the area of the Utku river of Spass uyezd [Spitsyn, 1901]. Incidentally, the first serious archaeological excavations in Bilyar were initiated in 1915 by P. Ponomarev and M. Khudyakov, and were timed to the forthcoming jubilee, the 1000th anniversary of the arrival of the Baghdad embassy in Bulgaria, when, in their opinion, Bilyar-Bulgar was founded as the fortress and capital of the country [Ponomarev, 1919, p. 48].

The last quarter of the 19–beginning of the 20th centuries are characterized by the unprecedented rise of the national movement among

large masses of the Tatar people. A bright indication of this growing awareness is presented by the historical works of Sh. Marjani [Marjani, 1989], R. Fakhreddinov [Fakhreddinov, 1993], G. Akhmarov [Akhmerov, 1998] and many other authors who treated Bulgar history as an indivisible part of the common history of the Turkic peoples.

The October Revolution of 1917 was usually treated as the most important turning point in the study of Volga Bulgaria. This is in fact not that true. Such change was not observed up until the 1930s. That is why the first 10–15 years after October 1917 may be completely observed within the framework of the second stage in the periodisation of Bulgar historiography.

However, this by no means assumes that research in the field of Bulgarian Studies was not conducted in the period under examination. The most significant of these are the works of professor V. Smolin [1890–1932]. In one of these, published in Kazan in 1921 as a separate book, the author examines the main theories about the origin of the Bulgars [Smolin, 1921], while another, an archaeological essay of Tatarstan since ancient times, contains a vast section on the history and archaeology of Volga Bulgaria [Smolin, 1925]. The writing of this history was strongly influenced by the vulgar sociology of the first Marxist historian M. Pokrovsky, who was popular at the time. Thus, when observing the social stratification in Bulgar society, V. Smolin distinguished between a 'class of capitalists' and a 'trading bourgeoisie'. In his opinion, the Bulgar khan was 'the first big capitalist in the country' and so on. Despite all these drawbacks, Smolin's work undoubtedly had a positive impact upon further generations of scholars. Its author was the first to present a scientific periodisation of Volga Bulgaria's history, dividing it into the early Bulgar [from the 7th to the 9th century], the pre-Mongol [the 10th to the beginning of the 13th centuries] and the Golden Horde [1236 to the beginning of the 15th century] periods [ibid., p. 32]. In fact, contemporary Bulgaria experts still adhere to this periodisation.

While the absence of sources on the first period deprived Smolin of the opportunity to give an objective characteristic to the early Bulgars on the Volga, the pre-Mongol period of their history is sufficiently reflected in the article by virtue of its use of Smolin's predecessors' works.

V. Smolin was a staunch supporter of those scholars [V. Grigoriyev, A. Spitsyn, N. Spassky, P. Ponomarev, M. Khudyakov] who considered Bilyar-Bulgar to have been the only pre-Mongol capital of the state [ibid., pp. 52, 55, 67]. Bulgar on the Volga, as he believed, had been founded on the site of Bryakhimov, which he wrote about in a special article published in one of the volumes of 'Izvestiya OAIE' ['Reports of SAEH'] for 1925 [Smolin, 1925a]. In the same volume, the numismatist R. Fasmer's substantial and interesting article on the Volga Bulgars' coins in the 10th century was also published [Fasmer, 1925].

Several expeditions focused on the identification and examination of Bulgar records were organized in the 1920s. The expedition led by professor V. Holmsten discovered a group of settlements in the Samara-Volga region. In 1928–1929 the expedition carried out an excavation of the town of Murom, where they uncovered the remains of two brick buildings constructed in the pre-Mongol period [Matveeva, 1975, pp. 129–136]. During the same years, Professor A. Bashkirov organised an expedition to Bilyar. He published a small article based on findings from the field [Bashkirov, 1929]. A number of articles later borrowed the work's findings and used them non-critically as proof that an ancient town had existed during the time of the Golden Horde [Smirnov, 1951, p. 230].

As we see, the second era in the study of Volga Bulgaria continued almost till the beginning of the 1930s and was marked by significant achievements. It was characterized by an increase in the sources available for research, the beginning of archaeological excavation at the sites of huge Bulgar landmarks, fruitful works on the location of historically known cities, the emergence of a national historiography of the Tatars, with special attention to the Bulgar part of its history. At the same time, the most important aspects of the history of the Bulgar state [the issues of the socio-economic system, artisan production, spiritual life, etc.] either remained outside the focus of scholars or were discussed improperly. Thus, the hypothesis that 'Bulgaria is a trading country' which was widespread at the time, often eclipsed other sides of the population's economic life and first of all, its artisan trades. In this respect, especially characteristic is famous historian N. Firsov's statement: 'Items

of various industries came from Bulgaria, but Bulgarian imports into Rus' did not serve as an indicator of Bulgaria's industrial development, for Bulgarian goods were not their own, but rather foreign and imported themselves, and their variety only illustrated the large scale of Bulgarian transit trade' [Firsov, 1898, p. 482]. Such a conclusion was the result of the unsatisfactory state of Bulgar archaeology, as only it could provide an objective representation of the economic structure of the state.

The systematic and planned archaeological research carried out by the Moscow archaeologist A. Smirnov between 1933 and 1937 in Suvar and begun in 1938 in Bolgar, mark *the beginning of the third stage* in the study of the history of Volga Bulgaria which lasted till the end of the 1960s. A. Smirnov [1899–1974], a distinguished scholar and author of fundamental historico-archaeological research in the field of Bulgar problematics, is considered to be the founder of Soviet Bulgarian Studies, which became one of the main branches of Soviet historical sciences. 'The archaeology of Volga Bulgaria, which is important for understanding the historical processes as well as the historical characteristics of the Slavs and Rus', was, before A. Smirnov, a collection of badly studied and roughly dated artifacts obtained after poor-quality excavations and accumulation. Now, after lengthy work carried out by the scholar, it became a field of highly-accurate methods, detailed chronology and precisely elaborated periodisation, a field which is rapidly developing and involves many specialists, including A. Smirnov's students' [Fedorov-Davydov, 1977, p. 5].

A. Smirnov's multifaceted activity as a Bulgar historian began with studying one of the biggest landmarks of Volga Bulgaria, Suvar. Here for the first time a scientific methodology for the excavation of Bulgar cities was developed, thanks to which rich and accurately documented material was obtained, which formed the foundation for modern ideas about the material and spiritual culture of one of the Volga Tatars' ancestors. The publication on the results of the Suvar expedition [Smirnov, 1941] is still the indisputable source of our knowledge on this wonderful Bulgarian city.

The large-scale research conducted by A. Smirnov at the archaeological site of Great

Bulgar constituted almost a whole epoch in the study of the Bulgars. As his students and colleagues justly noted, these works gave 'such an amount of material on the history of the city and the Bulgar state in general, which had not been accumulated throughout the entire 225-year period of Bulgarian Studies' [Aksenova et al., 1977, p. 57].

Since the beginning of field work at the ancient town, A. Smirnov's efforts were directed to developing a stratigraphic scale of cultural stratas and examining the socio-historical topography of the site. These efforts prompted the accumulation of archaeological material on the history of pre-Mongol Bolgar. He summarized the initial results of the research carried out in Suvar and Bulgar city, as well as the overall results of the study of the principal issues in Volga Bulgaria's history in his doctoral thesis which he defended in 1944, as well as in the monograph 'The Volga Bulgars' published in 1951. In the above mentioned works, A. Smirnov was the first to pose and successfully resolve many of the issues of ancient Bulgar history, such as those relating to the formation of an ethnos and culture, the emergence of the state and socio-political system, the peculiarities of the population's economic life and their military art, the formation of the Volga Tatars' ethnic foundations on Bulgar ground and so on [a list of the works on these subjects may be found here: Fedorov-Davydov, 1979].

When examining artifacts of material culture and the evidence presented in written sources, A. Smirnov came to the conclusion that the ancient Bulgars 'were the autochthons of the steppes of the Azov sea region and were among the Alan-Sarmat tribes, who had been for a long time referred to as the Scythians according to literary tradition' [Smirnov, 1951, p. 10]. He dated the arrival of the Bulgars to the Middle Volga region and Turkisation of its population to the 7–8th centuries and adhered to this conception throughout his life.

A. Smirnov was the first to convincingly prove that feudal relations in Volga Bulgaria had existed since the 1600s [ibid., p. 35 et seq.]. This issue had earlier been studied in the work of Academic B. Grekov who, basing himself on a textual analysis of the newly discovered Mashhad manuscript of 'Notes' by Ibn Fadlan, insisted on the pre-feudal character of the state of the pre-

Mongol Bulgars [Grekov, 1945]. Disagreeing with this concept, A. Smirnov quoted a whole range of unquestionable evidence in support of the existence of obvious elements of a feudal type class society in Ibn Fadlan's time. His main conclusion that 'in the pre-Mongol period Bulgaria was a country with dominating feudal relations' [Smirnov, 1951, p. 37] was later accepted by all Bulgarian experts. Only a few Chuvash historians stuck to another position. For example, V. Dimitriyev and I. Pankov suggested that an Asian despotism mixed with slavery reigned among the Bulgars [Dimitriyev, Pankov, 1958, p. 69]. I. Kuznetsov also argued against the concept of a feudal Bulgaria. He wrote in one of his works that scholars rather often commit mistakes because 'they firstly do not take into account that Bulgaria never moved beyond the Asian form of domination and obedience, and secondly, that Bulgaria's trade and cities mostly relied on transit, intermediary trade' [Kuznetsov, 1957, p. 22]. A. Smirnov convincingly rejected these kinds of groundless statements [Smirnov, 1962, pp. 169–174].

In the first years after the Great Patriotic War, large-scale archaeological searches and the stationary excavation of Bulgar landmarks were begun. Kazan archaeologists at the Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Kazan Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences [N. Kalinin] and at the State Museum of Tataria [A. Efimova, O. Khovanskaya and Z. Akchurina] began taking an active role in these efforts. From this time onwards, the Institute of Language, Literature and History at the Kazan Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences gradually transformed into one of the main scientific centres for Volga Bulgarian Studies. One of the immediate tasks set in front of the archaeologists of this Institute in 1945 was compiling the republic's archaeological map through the thorough examination of its territory. This work was led by the tireless researcher and the founder of the Kazan school of archaeologists N. Kalinin [1888–1959], who accomplished a great deal in the sphere of Bulgarian Studies.

The results of research conducted between 1945 and 1952 were summarized by N. Kalinin in one of the sections of a book devoted to publishing new materials on the ancient and medieval archaeology of Tatarstan [Kalinin, Khalikov, 1954, pp. 63–126]. In this work, the

first attempt was made to typologically classify Bulgar ancient towns. The size of the fortified territory of settlements were taken into account along with the peculiarities of their planning, the locality's relief and the characteristics of the cultural layer.

N. Kalinin's survey work, written in cooperation with academician B. Grekov [Grekov, Kalinin, 1948], gained great significance in the development of Bulgarian Studies' and formed the basis of the second chapter of the first volume of 'The History of the Tatar ASSR' [Kazan, 1955]. These works helped formulate contemporary perceptions of Volga Bulgaria in the 10–13th centuries as an early feudal state with a Turkic-speaking population, an economic basis formed by highly developed agriculture [plow farming and cattle breeding], handicraft and trade, both domestic and foreign. It was exactly these kinds of attributes which Sh. Mukhamedyarov and A. Smirnov gave the Volga Bulgars in their sections written for 'Essays on the History of the USSR' [Essays, 1953; 1958].

The 1950s were marked by an increase in expeditions by archaeologists. Apart from those in Bolgar, extensive excavations were carried out by T. Khlebnikova, N. Tukhtina, V. Gening, A. Efimova and G. Fedorov-Davydov at two Palitsin [Khlebnikova, 1958] and Kriushinsk settlements [Tukhtina, 1960] of Ulyanovsk oblast, at Rozhdestvensk settlement [Gening et al., 1962], in the town of Balymer [Efimova, 1962] of the Tatar ASSR, as well as at the ancient settlement of Tigashev [Fedorov-Davydov, 1962] and other Chuvash settlements. M. Polesskikh through his archaeological surveys on the territory of Penza oblast managed to discover a series of artifacts which formed the basis for studying the peculiar South-Western [Penza] group of the pre-Mongol Bulgars [Polesskikh, 1959]. Researchers obtained a great number of new materials which were then used for the creation of the first specific works on the history of basic branches of the craft industry [iron and nonferrous-metal industries, pottery] [Khlebnikova, 1964] and agriculture [Kiryakov, 1958].

The most significant event of the 1950s in the area of Bulgar archaeology was the discovery and further excavation of the first early Bulgar burial sites, including the Kaybelsky site in Ulyanovsk oblast [Merpert, 1957] and the Bolshe-Tarkhan burial site in Tatarstan [Gening,

Khalikov, 1964]. The bulk of these burial sites have been dated from the latter half of the 8th to the first half of the 9th centuries. At the same time however, taking into account the early items uncovered among the burial gifts, scholars allowed for the possibility that people had appeared in the region of the Middle Volga as early as the turn of the 7–8th centuries; those who had left the Bolshe-Tarkhan burial site. V. Gening and A. Khalikov defined the ethnic affiliation of this population as Bulgar based upon the close analogies of the burial ceremony and gifts with those of Bulgar sites discovered in the south of Eastern Europe; in particular, in the Don river area [ibid., p. 66].

The discovery and thorough examination of the unique Tankeev burial site in the 1960s provided the opportunity to complement and clarify our scarce knowledge on the early Bulgar period. The Polomsk-Lomovatov landmarks of the High and Middle Kama River region, the basin of the Cheptsya river, as well as burial sites similar to Bolshe-Tarkhan were defined as the sources of the Tankeev population. Based on the materials from Tankeevka, scholars managed to trace 'that complicated, ethnogenetic process which took place on the Middle Volga, when throughout the centuries, beginning with the 8–9th centuries, during the time when tribal traditions broke down, a conglomerate of various tribes gave birth to a new people which later went down in history as the Volga Bulgars' [Khalikova, 1971].

Ethnogenetic issues were widely researched using materials dating from the time of Volga Bulgaria in the works examining the origins of the Tatar [Mukhamedyarov, 1968] and Chuvash [Kakhovsky, 1965] peoples. The works of various anthropologists, though still small in number, contributed to the successful development of these topics [Trofimova, 1949; 1956; Gerasimova, 1956; Akimova, 1964].

Thus, since the beginning of the 1930s and until the end of the 1960s, Soviet Bulgarian Studies, which developed as an independent branch of the historical discipline with its peculiar subjects and lines of research, achieved significant successes. Smirnov's school of archaeologists and Bulgarian Studies' experts was formed and began to actively work [G. Fedorov-Davydov, T. Khlebnikova, V. Kakhovsky, A. Efimova, Z. Akchurina, O. Khovanskaya, N. Aksenova et

al.]. N. Kalinin laid the foundations for archaeological research at the Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Kazan Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences, which in the 1960s became an important centre of Bulgar studies in the country. The historiography of Volga Bulgaria was enriched with precious works which served as a sound basis for writing survey works [The History of the USSR, 1966, pp. 473–475; The History, 1968, pp. 35–54], and for further deepening the study of issues set before science.

The stage under consideration yielded fruitful examination of issues in the history of Khazaria and that of the Turkic-speaking nomads of the Eurasian steppes. Especially noteworthy in this area are the fundamental works of M. Artamonov, in particular, the monograph 'The History of the Khazars' [1962] which his student S. Pletneva justly named 'an encyclopaedia of the history of Southeastern European peoples of the first millennium AD' [Pletneva, 1976, p. 4]. The large-scale excavations under the supervision of M. Artamonov of the left-bank ancient town of Tsimlyansk received much publicity, as they uncovered the famous Khazar fortress of Sarkel and other records [1958]. Later on, the archaeological study of landmarks of the Khazar khaganate [a Saltovo-Mayaki culture] and nomadic antiquities was continued by S. Pletneva [1958; 1967] and G. Fedorov-Davydov [1966].

*The fourth, contemporary stage* in the study of Volga Bulgaria was begun at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s. Archaeology has been intensively developing since then. The scale of field work is increasing considerably and the application of natural science methods [geophysics, paleozoology, palaeophytology, metallography, the spectral analysis of metal and glass, etc.] both in the process of surveying and excavating, as well as in the examination of extracted materials is receiving wide application. Apart from archaeologists working at the G. Ibragimov Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Kazan Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences [after 1996 renamed to the Institute of History of the Kazan Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan] and Kazan University, Bulgar problematics are being actively studied by archaeologists from Moscow, Samara, Penza, Ulyanovsk, Cheboksary and Perm.

Among the important achievements of Bulgaria archaeology of this era, it stands to mention the compilation and publication of the most complete up to date collection of archaeological records of Volga Bulgaria. R. Fakhrutdinov, who brilliantly completed the main part of this time-consuming task which required a years-long survey of the vast territories of the Middle Volga Region as well as archival research, studied the dynamics of change of the state territory of the Tatars' ancestors throughout the 8–16th centuries [Fakhrutdinov, 1975]. In the 1980s, similar work was carried out in Penza oblast by G. Belorybkin, who added 30 ancient towns and 40 ancient settlements to the collection, which he dated to the pre-Mongol period [Belorybkin, 1991]. R. Fakhrutdinov's suggestions that these settlements dated actually later, from the Golden Horde epoch, did not garner support among scholars. Field surveys carried out by Professor V. Kakhovsky and his colleagues also led to the discovery of a range of new records [Kakhovsky, 1980].

Works concerning the study of this Bulgar city in the pre-Mongol period became more popular [Khuzin, 1993]. Systematic excavations of the ancient town of Bolgar were continued. The history of this outstanding monument of Medieval Europe found a place in four volumes of a collective monograph in which the city's stratigraphy and topography [T. Khlebnikova], its defensive fortifications [Yu. Krasnov], the handicraft and activities of its population [L. Savchenkova, Yu. Semykin, R. Sharifullin, G. Polyakova, Yu. Krasnov, A. Petrenko at al.], numismatic materials [G. Fedorov-Davydov], city necropolises and anthropological materials [L. Yablonsky], architecture and construction [S. Aydarov, R. Sharifullin], the provision of urban amenities [V. Baranov] and other questions were considered [Gorod Bolgar [The City of Bolgar, 1987; 1988; 1996; 2001]. Unfortunately, the non-specialist reader may find it difficult to obtain an overall idea of Bulgar in the pre-Mongol period from book materials, as this period of its history has not been separated from the overall history of the city, presumably due to a lack of materials.

At the end of the 1960s and first half of the 1970s, works on the archaeological study of other Bulgar cities were begun, including the Murom townlet at the Samara Bend [Vasi-

lyev, Matveeva, 1986], Juketau on the Kama river [Khlebnikova, 1975], Suvar [Khlebnikova, 1977] and ancient Kazan [Khalikov, 1985]. In later years, the excavation of the ancient towns of Zolotarev and Yulovsky on the Sura river was carried out [Belorybkin, 1991]. It is difficult to overestimate the significance these new material bring to the study of various issues concerning pre-Mongol Bulgaria.

However, the large-scale study of the biggest Bulgar city, the archaeological complex of Bilyar, begun in 1967 by professor A. Khalikov and carried on by his students, continues to the present-day and is a landmark in and of itself. Thanks to the efforts of a collective of scholars, including not only archaeologists [A. Khalikov, F. Khuzin, S. Valiullina, R. Sharifullin, A. Kochkina, N. Kokorina, M. Kaveev], but also highly-qualified specialists from other fields [historians of architecture S. Aydarov, F. Zabirowa, paleo-botanists V. Tuganayev, V. Frolova, anthropologists S. Efimova, R. Fatkhov et al.], Bilyar became not only well-studied, but also a benchmark record of the pre-Mongol Bulgars. As a result of extensive excavations, the stratification and chronology of the ancient towns' cultural strata was determined [Khuzin, 1995], and the oldest brick buildings and ruins of a cathedral mosque in the northern zone of Eastern Europe, as well as multiple residential and household units, pits, the remains of the only yurt of the 10th century in Bulgar archaeology, production facilities [pottery and metallurgical furnaces, an alchemist's and glassblower's workshop], the burial sites of ordinary citizens and the necropolis of the nobility, as well as other such monuments were uncovered [IVG [The History of the Great City], 1976; NAP [New in the Archeology of the Volga Region], 1979; Posuda [Foodware], 1986; Khuzin, 1989; Valiullina, 1997]. Significant and in many ways unique materials [a pen with a runic inscription of the 12th century, the leaden seal belonging to either ancient Russian prince Vsevolod the Big Nest or his son Yuri, a vintage glass and others] were obtained which supplement and clarify our perceptions on the pre-Mongol Bulgars' culture [Kultura Bilyara [The Culture of Bilyar], 1985].

The research carried out through the course of the Bilyar expedition spurred an active interest among the academic community in relation

to a revived discussion from 1972 concerning the capital of Volga Bulgaria before the Mongol invasion [Smirnov, 1972; Khalikov, 1973; Fakhrutdinov, 1974; 1975]. A. Khalikov, F. Khuzin, G. Davletshin and other scholars presented in their work irrefutable evidence in favour of Bilyar-Bulgar being the capital since the 10th century [Bilyar, 1991], and their point of view gradually won support.

In the 1990s, archaeological excavations in the ancient town of Bilyar were practically halted, although research of unique records on its peripheries continued. First of all, this related to the II-III ancient settlements of Bilyar, the archaeological remnants of Golden Horde Bilyar [Valiullina, 1997] and Balygunzsk III [Toretzsk], a settlement of the 14th or first half of the 15th centuries [Valiullina, 2002]. The materials extracted from these settlements are valuable for the study of issues of succession in material culture of the pre-Mongol and Golden Horde Bulgars.

In 1994, archaeological research was begun on the territory of the Kazan Kremlin, as well as in the central, historical part of the city.

The contemporary stage of Volga Bulgaria's historiography is first of all marked by a deepened study of separate important issues of Bulgar history which, due to reasons pertaining to sources and methods, were not sufficiently developed.

In the field of early Bulgar archaeology, fruitful research was conducted by E. Khalikova, A. Khalikov and E. Kazakov, who made important publications of materials found at the Tankeevsky and Bolshe-Tigansky burial sites [Khalkova, Kazakov, 1977; Khalikova, Khalikov, 1981]. Early Bulgar subject matter found treatment in publications of the G. Ibragimov Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Kazan Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences [Rannie Bulgary [The Early Bulgars], 1989; 1990]. E. Kazakov published his survey work on the given subject in 1992 [Kazakov, 1992]. Despite the polemical character of certain hypotheses developed by the author, his main conclusion on a multi-wave Bulgars migration to the Middle Volga, as well as on the complex ethnic composition of the emerging state's population, which apart from the Bulgar tribal union, also included the High Kama [the Polomsk-Lomovats] and the Turkic-Ugrian [the ancient

Magyar] tribes, is justified through concrete materials gathered throughout the course of his years long research.

The study of issues of pre-Mongol Bulgaria took several directions. The works of T. Khlebnikova [1984], A. Kochkina [1986], I. Vasilyeva [1993] and N. Kokorina [2001] reflect the contemporary level of study of the pottery industry and its basic products of ceramic foodware. Among these works, especial attention is due to T. Khlebnikova's monograph [1984], where she summarized her multiple-year research based on ceramic materials on pre-Mongol Bulgaria's ethnocultural composition. Examining a combination of features [the vessel's form, ornamentation, admixture in the clay dough, the character of surface treatment, degree of burning, etc.], she was able to distinguish between around 20 groups and convincingly linked them to certain ethnic groups and traced the influence between the identified groups at different chronological stages of their development. T. Khlebnikova's results agree with the data presented from other sources.

Since the 1980s, there a tendency has emerged to apply methods of the natural sciences to the examination of Bulgar handicraft. The fascinating works of Yu. Semykin on intaglio printing carried out by Bulgar blacksmiths [Semykin, 1991; 1997] and S. Valiullina on spectrography of glass items deserve to be noted [Valiullina, 1995; 2002a]. The work of paleo-botanist V. Tuganayev, ethnographer N. Khalikov and especially Yu. Krasnov refined our knowledge on Bulgar agriculture [The Culture of Bilyar, 1985; Krasnov, 1987]. Extremely interesting accounts on cattle breeding among Bulgaria's population were published in A. Petrenko's monograph, which was the first work to be written based upon osteological data provided by the materials uncovered after the excavation of the settlement [Petrenko, 1984].

The history of commercial, economic, military, political and cultural relations between two neighbouring states of Eastern Europe of the 10–13th centuries . Volga Bulgaria and Kievan Rus', and later ancient Russian principalities , left enduring traces in many medieval sources. A part of them was already introduced into academic circulation via the prior works of A. Smirnov [1951], B. Rybakov [1969], V. Kropotkin [1970; 1973], and V. Yanin [1956]. However, in the 1980–1990s, a complex study of these

sources was undertaken, which led to interesting and even absolutely surprising results, which are attested by the articles from the collected work entitled 'Volga Bulgaria and Rus' [Kazan, 1986], compiled by archaeologists of the Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Kazan Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences, as well as in M. Poluboyarinoва's monograph 'Rus' and Volga Bulgaria between the 10th and 15th centuries' [Moscow: Nauka, 1993]. In 1989–1991, under the direction of A. Khalikov and A. Motsa, joint expeditions were organised along the famous trading route Bulgar-Kiev, already known from the detailed descriptions of al-Idrisi [1154]. Their interesting results were presented in a special volume and monograph which contained exclusively rich information on the centuries-long contacts between the inhabitants of the Dnieper river region and the Middle Volga area, and on the location and role of the caravan route which connected the capitals of these two medieval states [The Route, 1992; Motsa, Khalikov, 1997]. The problems of trade and monetary relations of Volga Bulgaria were also covered in the works of the famous historians-numismatists A. Mukhamadiev [1983; 1990], V. Kropotkin [1986], as well as R. Valeev [1995]. E. Kazakov collected extensive material relating to this topic at Bulgar settlements on the lower reaches of the Kama river which had been very similar in peculiar ways to proto-urban centres of Ancient Rus' and Northern Europe [Kazakov, 1991].

Questions concerning economic and cultural cooperation between Volga Bulgaria and the population of the Perm Cisurals in the 13th century became the focus of A. Belavin's research, who has recently published an interesting monograph on this topic [Belavin, 2000]. The results were published of the author's years long work on systematizing the medieval records of the High and Middle Kama River regions, where items of Bulgar origin had been discovered. Of special note are the ancient towns of Rozhdestvenskoe and Anyushkar as their basic population consisted of Bulgar craftsmen and merchants. A. Belavin examined over 200 locations, whose materials undoubtedly indicate that trade relations had been going on between the Perm Finns and the Volga Bulgars, and that the Volga Bulgars pursued active, though mostly peaceful, colonisation of the territory of the Perm Cisurals, i.e. of the lands where groups of Perm Tatars



were later formed. Traces of colonisation were also found in other regions [Udmurtia, the Mari Volga Region and Chuvashia].

A. Khalikov, I. Khaliullin, I. Izmaylov and other authors demonstrate a revolutionary new approach to the study of many questions concerning armament and military-defensive matters, the Mongol invasion and its consequences and the role of the Bulgars in the history of the struggle between the Eastern European peoples and the Tatar-Mongols in their articles published in thematic collections of the Department of Archaeology of the Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Kazan Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences [Voenno-Oboronitelnoe Delo [Military-Defensive Matters], 1985; Volga Bulgaria, 1988]. Issues of weaponry and the military art of the pre-Mongol Bulgars are discussed thoroughly in L. Ismailov's monograph [1997].

E. Khalikova's monograph describes the results of examining village burial sites and city necropolises of the 10–13th centuries. By outlining the peculiarities found in the pagan and Islamic burial ceremony, the author convincingly solved the controversial issues concerning the adoption and spread of Islam among the Bulgar population which are important not only for studying spiritual culture, but also for ethnic history. Using reliable materials, E. Khalikova traced the stages of Volga Bulgaria's Islamisation and proved the inadequacy of the views expressed by those scholars [in particular—Chuvash historians] who attempted to prove the thesis that the Bulgars' pre-Mongol culture was mostly pagan, based on suspicious sources [Khalikova, 1986].

E. Khalikova's main conclusions were accepted by G. Davletshin who created a survey work on the spiritual culture of Volga Bulgaria's population [Davletshin, 1990]. In recent years, he has broadened the variety of topics he addresses and chronologically deepened his research in this field, as well as presented to readers a monograph on the Turko-Tatars' spiritual culture since the Huns, through the period of the Kazan Khanate [Davletshin, 1999]. Much new information on the history of the pre-Mongol Bulgars' spiritual life is contained in the collected volume 'The Poet-Humanist Kul Gali' [Kazan, 1987], which were compiled on the basis of materials presented at the scientific conference

in honor of the 800th anniversary of the founder of Bulgar-Tatar written literature, the author of the immortal poem 'Kijssa-i Yusuf' ['The Story of Joseph']. The art of Volga Bulgaria of the 10–13th centuries and the earlier, pagan period, was thoroughly examined in the works of F. Valeev and G. Valeeva-Suleymanova [1987], D. Valeeva [1983], S. Chervonnaya [1987].

In the modern era of the study of the Volga Bulgars' history, interest towards paleo-anthropological materials from pagan and Islamic burials sites has vividly increased. The primary data concerning the formation of the anthropological structure of the Volga-Cis-Ural region's medieval population was provided in the works of V. Alekseev [1971], M. Akimova [1973], R. Fattakov [1979], N. Postnikova-Rud [1987] and S. Efimova [1991]. Craniological data helped to identify 'three main territories, from which incomer groups could have moved to the Middle Volga Region due to historical reasons. These are the territories of the High and Middle Kama River regions; the steppe zone of the European part and the Trans-Urals; and the Northern Caucasus'; however, the main role in the formation of Volga Bulgaria's anthropological structure of the pre-Mongol and later periods was played by the autochthonous Volga-Cis-Urals population [Efimova, 1991, pp. 45, 81].

A noticeable event in Bulgarian Studies became the book written by R. Fakhrutdinov 'Essays on the History of Volga Bulgaria' [Moscow: Nauka, 1984]. It set the task of examining the overriding issues of Bulgaria's history of the pre-Mongol and Golden Horde periods through classifying, generalizing and comparatively analysing written and archaeological sources. The creation of such a work was in many ways facilitated by the availability of serious papers by Soviet Bulgaria scholars on archaeology, anthropology, numismatics and other historical disciplines. R. Fakhrutdinov, however, dedicated special attention in the book to analysis of and commentary on the already known fragmentary data provided by written sources of non-Bulgar origin, although they appeared to be insufficient for the task of restoring a comprehensive picture of Volga Bulgaria's history.

In the 1980s and later years, a range of interesting works emerged on the problem of the Volga Tatars' origin which paid significant attention to the Bulgar period of their history. Issues con-

cerning the ethnogeny and ethnic political history of the Tatars were intensively studied in the last twenty years by A. Khalikov [1989], M. Zakiyev [1986; 1995; 2003], A. Karimullin [1988], S. Alishev [1985; 1995], who traditionally developed the idea of the Volga Bulgars being the primary ancestors of the Tatar nation, as well as by V. Dimitriyev [1984], V. Kakhovsky [1984], R. Fakhrutdinov [1993; 1993a], N. Mazhitov [1997] and others, who were adherents of the theory which spoke of the Tatar-Mongol roots of contemporary Tatars. The most well-reasoned concept today is that which is based on the acknowledgment of the wider Turkic and Tatar ethnic cultural roots of the Tatar people [Iskhakov, Izmaylov, 2000]. 'As a key moment in the ethnic history of the Tatar ethnos this theory studies the period of Ulus of Jochi, when on the foundation of the incomer Mongol-Tatar culture and earlier existing local Bulgarian and Kipchak traditions, a new national identity, culture, literary language were formed' [Tatars, 2001, p. 43].

The modern period of historiography on Volga Bulgaria is characterized by the expansion and extension of research questions and more extensive engagement of natural science methods [Archaeology, 2003]. Survey research studies appeared such as that on the Bulgarian pre-Mongolian city by F. Khuzin [Khuzin, 2001], on the fortifications of ancient cities by A. Gubaydullin [Gubaydullin, 2002], on the armament and military science of the population of Volga Bulgaria in the 10–early 13th centuries by I. Izmaylov [Izmaylov, 1997], on the continuity of Bulgarian and Bulgarian-Tatar cultures based on ceramic materials of the 11–early 15th centuries by N. Kokorina [Kokorina, 2002], as well as a number of interesting works by K. Rudenko dedicated to the publication of materials on the artifacts he studied [Rudenko, 2000; 2000a; 2001; 2001a; 2002; 2003]. Results from studies on Bulgarian artifacts from the Western Volga region are provided in G. Belorybkina's monographs [2001; 2003]. Much attention in these works is devoted to the problems of the economic and ethnic cultural development of the medieval population of the region.

Deserving special note are the materials of the large-scale excavation works performed by the Kazan archaeological expedition on the territory of the Kremlin and in the historical part of the city, which gave ground to date the founding

of the Tatar capital to the late 10–early 11th centuries [Khuzin, 1999; Khuzin, Khakimov, 2000]. Research on ancient Kazan gave rise to another important but insufficiently developed question for scholars to address concerning the history of the Volga Trade Route and its important role in creating a common economic space covering a significant part of Eurasia. Many aspects of this question were discussed at international academic conferences held in 2000–2004 at the initiative of the Sh. Marjani Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences and Kazan State University funded by the Kazan Council of People's Deputies [Gross Domestic Product [VVP], 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004].

Standing out in the last three decades are major achievements in the study of archaeology and the history of Khazar Khaganate, antiquities of medieval tribes and the peoples of the Eurasian prairies. The works of S. Pletneva [1973; 1974; 1976; 1982; 1989; 1990; 2000], L. Gumilyov [1989], S. Klyashtorny [1984; 1986; 1993], B. Kumekov [1972; 1987], A. Novoseltsev [1990], S. Akhinzhanov [1999], Yu. Khudyakov [1986; 1989; 1995] and of other scholars gained recognition both in Russia and abroad. The above mentioned works touch upon the problems of relations between Volga Bulgaria and nomadic world of South-Eastern Europe.

As shown in this historiographical review of pre-Mongol Volga Bulgaria, the efforts of many generations of Soviet and Russian scholars in studying the rich and complicated history of this medieval state of Eastern Europe produced great achievements. Since the 18th century till the mid 1930s scientific knowledge on the Volga Bulgarians was being accumulated and Bulgarian Studies was being established as a separate branch of historical science. The origin of Bulgarian Studies as a complex of scientific disciplines which include history, archaeology, numismatics, anthropology, epigraphy, and others, each with its own research agenda determined by the specifics of the sources and methods for studying them, dates back only to the 1930s–50s. During the last two to three decades the discipline experienced rapid development which enriched science with valuable discoveries and fundamental works, all of which are a reliable foundation for further and deeper research into the separate questions of Bulgarian history.

## 2. Foreign historiography

*István Zimonyi*

The Volga Bulgars and their nomadic neighbours were first of all studied by those researchers who were specialized in the history of medieval Eastern Europe. Since the Turkic-speaking Bulgars constituted the basic element [in ethnic, political and socio-economic respects] of Volga Bulgaria's population, their history was first of all reflected in the academic works of medievalists who were involved in studying the history of Turkic-speaking nomads of the Eastern-European steppes. An important factor is that the Volga Bulgars inhabiting the northern periphery of Eastern Europe at the beginning of the 10th century adopted Islam and not any other religion, thus made contacts with the Baghdad Caliphate. They attracted the Islamic world's attention by this act, and the Islamic culture took root in Eastern Europe. Foreign scholars are most of all interested in these problems.

The life of Volga Bulgaria was greatly influenced by domestic and foreign trade, which was actively developed owing to the Volga and Kama river routes, the two important waterways of Eastern Europe. Bulgarian merchants linked Northern, Middle and Eastern Europe with the Islamic world. The trade of pre-Mongol Volga Bulgars is richly represented in foreign literature. Researchers are also interested in other problems of the Bulgars' history. We suggest a short overview of this literature, a part of which may not sound familiar to the Russian reader.

As for the encyclopaedias: 'The Encyclopaedia of Islam' contains an article about the Volga Bulgars which was written in German by the famous Russian orientalist, academic W. Barthold [Enzyklopadie, 1913, S. 819–825; see the Russian translation: Bartold, 1968, V, pp. 509–520]. In the new edition of the encyclopaedia, this article was rewritten and complemented by I. Hrbek in English [Hrbek, 1960, pp. 1304–1308]. I. Zimonyi describes the history of the Volga Bulgars in the recently published encyclopaedia 'Lexicon des Mittelalters' [Zimonyi, 1998, S. 315–317]. Articles about the Volga Bulgars, written by this author, are also found in the 'Encyclopaedia of Early Hungarian History' [Zimonyi, 1994, pp. 132–133, 733–735]. 'The Pol-

ish Encyclopaedia of Medieval History' contains an article by T. Kubiak about the Volga Bulgars [Kubiak, pp. 202–203].

In the survey work on the history of the Eastern European nomads [the Huns, Khazars, Pechenegs and Proto-Bulgars], the famous Polish research E. Tryjarsky devotes an exhaustive chapter to the history and archaeology of the early Bulgars [Tryjarski, 1975, pp. 184–244]. The American orientalist P. Golden summed up the history of the Volga Bulgars two times: first, in the special volume of the series 'Cambridge History' and then, in the book 'An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples' [Golden, 1990, pp. 234–242; 1992, pp. 253–258]. A book by Australian researcher D. Cristian also contains a small section on the Volga Bulgars [Cristian, 1998, pp. 296–298]. Survey works on the early history of the Turks, published by W. Scharlipp and I. Vásáry, which offer brief insights into the history of the Bulgars, also deserve attention [Scharlipp, 1992, S. 78–80, Vásáry, 1999]. Upon the initiative of Turkish scholars, a multiple-volume work on the history of Turkic peoples was published. The second volume of this work contains an separate chapter devoted to the history of the Bulgars on the Volga [Yazici, 2002, pp. 394–408]. The research of the famous German historian-Sovietologist A. Kappeler, which covers a vast chronological period of time, also mentions the Volga Bulgars of the pre-Mongol period [Kappeler, 1978].

Survey monographs on the history of the Volga Bulgars have so far been published only in Russian [see the works of such famous researchers of the Bulgars as A. Smirnov, R. Fakhrutdinov, F. Khuzin]. Special monographs were also published in Russia, which were devoted to separate problems of the history and archaeology of the Bulgars [see works of F. Valeev, I. Izmaylov, N. Kokorina, A. Khalikov, T. Khlebnikova and others]. So far, only I. Zimonyi's monograph on the origin of the Volga Bulgars has been published abroad [Zimonyi, 1990]. I. Zimonyi also wrote and defended his thesis on the destruction of Volga Bulgaria by the Mongol-Tatars. Separate articles on the given topic are avail-

able [Zimonyi, 1984, pp. 197–204; 1992/1993, pp. 347–355; 2001, S. 52–66; see also: Allsen, 1983, pp. 5–24].

Detailed comments often accompany the various editions and translations of the most important sources on the history of the Volga Bulgars. We consider it necessary to list the most valuable of them.

As is well-known, the manuscript of Ibn Fadlan's work was discovered in Meshhed and was first published by Z. Togan together with accompanying philological and historical comments [Togan, 1939]. K. Czeglédy complemented the editions and published a facsimile of the manuscript [Czeglédy, 1950, S. 217–263] and H. Ritter suggested some corrections intended to improve the text [Ritter, 1942, S. 98–126]. M. Canard wrote valuable historical comments for the French translation [Canard, 1958]. Similar comments were prepared for the Polish edition and translation by T. Levitsky, K. Kmietowicz and F. Kmietowicz [Zrodla, 1985].

Valuable information on the Volga Bulgars has been preserved in the works of 10th century Islamic geographers [BGA, I–VIII, 1870–1894]. French orientalist A. Miquel wrote and published detailed comments on these geographers and their writings in a four-volume work [see the section on the Volga Bulgars in the second volume: Miquel, 1975, pp. 272–285]. Important information about the Volga Bulgars of the 10th century is preserved in the texts of al-Jayhani, al-Balkhi and al-Masudi. The original writings of al-Jayhani contain a whole chapter devoted to the Volga Bulgars and are preserved in the works of Ibn Rusta, al-Gardizi, al-Marwazi and also in the geographical compilation 'Hudud al-Alam' [For a translation of the fragments relating to the Eastern European peoples together with detailed historical commentaries see: Göckenjan, 2001]].

Ibn Rusta's text has been translated into French, Polish and Hungarian with the addition of historical comments [Ibn Rusteh, 1955; Zrodla, 1977; Kmosko, 1997, pp. 193–216].

A critical edition of two of Gardizi's manuscripts was published in Tehran [Habibi, 1963], while a new English translation of the fragments describing the Eurasian steppes was published by A. Martinez together with a photocopy of the older Cambridge manuscript [Martinez, 1982, pp. 109–217].

A new edition of an Andalusian author al-Bakri's work became available in 1992 [al-Bakri, 1992].

Fragments from al-Jayhani's work were translated into French by J. Ducene [Ducene, 1998, pp. 259–282].

A facsimile of 'Hudud al-Alam' was published by W. Barthold and later, in Tehran, a critical edition also appeared [Hudud al-Alam, 1962]. An English translation of this Persian work with exemplary comments was published by V. Minorsky [Minorsky, 1937]. He also published fragments of al-Marwazi's text describing the peoples of Eastern Europe [Marwazi, 1942]. Later, these passages were translated into Persian and Turkish [Hazai, 1957, pp. 157–197].

Al-Balkhi's composition mostly consisted of the interpretation of various maps. Al-Istakhri, Ibn-Hawqal and al-Muqaddasi used al-Balkhi's original work. Information about the Volga Bulgars may be found in the chapter about the Khazar [Caspian] Sea. Chapters on the Eastern European steppes by these three authors were translated into Hungarian and supplied with comments by M. Kmosko [Kmosko, 1997, pp. 11–133]. An English translation of al-Istakhri's passages about the Volga Bulgars is present in D. Dunlop's book on the Khazars [Dunlop, 1954, pp. 91–100; information on the Volga Bulgars may be found here: pp. 98–99].

Fragments on the Volga Bulgars Ibn Hawqal's work were translated and commented by J. Markwart [Markwart, 1924, S. 261–334, 266–267], while Kramers prepared a new critical edition and together with Wiet, translated the whole text into French [Ibn Hawqal, 1964].

Al-Masudi, who had visited the Caspian region, also wrote about the Volga Bulgars, but he often confused them with the Danube Bulgars, and sometimes even with the Hungarians. The primary work of al-Masudi [in the chapter on the Caucasus] contains precious information about the Volga Bulgars which was translated into German by Markwart and then into English by Minorsky, while the whole composition was published in French by Charles Pellat [Marquart, 1903, pp. 149–160; Minorsky, 1958, pp. 142–165; Masudi, 1962].

The first scientific examination of the Turkic languages was written by Mahmud al-Kashgari who lived in the 11th century at the court of the Kara-Khanids' dynasty. He mentioned the Volga

Bulgars and their language several times [Kasgari, 1982]. O. Pritsak analysed this source [Pritsak, 1959, S. 92–116].

In the 12th century, the Andalusian traveler and merchant Abu Hamid al-Gharnati departed from the city of Saqsin to Volga Bulgaria and from there, to Hungary through Kiev. His itineraries have been preserved in two works [al-Gharnati, 1925; Abu Hamid, 1953]. The Czech orientalist I. Hrbek published an article where he analysed Abu Hamid's idea about the origin of the Volga Bulgars [Hrbek, 1956, S. 113–119], while Devin DeWeese studied the legendary story about the Volga Bulgars' adoption of Islam. This story was quoted by Abu Hamid from the original work, whose author was the qadi of the city of Bulgar [DeWeese, 1994, pp. 75–78]. The German scholar H. Göckenjan analysed other legends contained in Abu Hamid's compositions [Göckenjan, 2003, S. 233–265].

Apart from accounts by Arabic-Persian authors, Byzantine sources are also of special interest. Among them we can distinguish a work by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus. He mentioned 'Black Bulgars' [Die Byzantiner, 1995], whom Macartney identified with the Volga Bulgars [Macartney, 1931, pp. 150–158].

There are also Latin sources which refer to the Volga Bulgars. An anonymous Hungarian author in his work 'Gesta Hungarorum', dating from the latter half of the 12th century, tells of several noble Bulgars who moved from Volga Bulgaria to Hungary [Scriptores, 1937; Nemeth, 1973, S. 165–170]. Valuable knowledge on the Volga Bulgars is provided by the Hungarian Dominican Friar Julian, who traveled to the Volga Region in 1235 [Dörrie, 1956; Julianus, 1965; Göckenjan, 1985]. I. Fodor and H. Göckenjan analysed Julian's accounts about the Volga Bulgars [Fodor, 1977a, pp. 9–20; Göckenjan, 1977].

In order to make the present review more complete, we should note that scholars also have at their disposal Jewish sources. These include preserved passages concerning the Volga Bulgars in the correspondence between Khazar ruler Joseph and the Spanish minister Hasdai ibn Shaprut.

In the 10–13th centuries, Volga Bulgaria was an important trading centre of Eastern Europe which linked the Islamic world with the North and Northwest. A significant amount of works written by foreign scholars are devoted to this

problem. R. Vasmer's thorough research on the Bulgars' coining in the 10th century has been published in Russian and German and has not yet lost its significance [Vasmer, 1925, S. 63–84].

American researcher T. Noonan published an article concerning the treasures of the dirhams, discovered on the territory of the former Volga Bulgaria [Noonan, 1980, pp. 294–311]. He emphasized the role of trade in the formation of Volga Bulgaria, and discussed the state's golden age, explaining the importance of the replacement of the Volga Trade Route by a road coming via Transoxiana—Khwarezm—the Kazakh steppe—the Volga and Kama regions which thus became an important centre of trade [Noonan, 1984, pp. 151–282; 1985, p. 179–204].

T. Noonan and D. Martin also wrote articles concerning the trading connections of Volga Bulgaria in the 11–13th centuries [Noonan, 1978, pp. 371–384; Martin, 1980, pp. 85–98]. L. Richter-Bernburg [Richter-Bernburg, 1987, S. 667–685], A. Nazmi [Nazmi, 1998] and M. Esperonnier [Esperonnier, 2000, pp. 409–424], using Islamic sources, studied trading routes in Eastern Europe, where the Volga Bulgars, occupied one of the most influential positions. H. Haussig examined the most important Eurasian trading routes in a broader framework in his two-volume work [Haussig, 1983; 1988]. Szabolcs Polgár has written a thesis at the University of Szeged on the trading relations of Eastern Europe in the 8–10th centuries which will be published soon.

As for imported and exported goods, in particular, wax and furs, this subject is widely discussed in separate articles in western literature [Warnke, 1987, S. 545–569; Bennigsen, 1978, pp. 385–400].

Bulgarian and Hungarian archaeologists are actively working in the field of Bulgarian problematics. The reason is clear, since the Volga and Danube Bulgars are close relatives, then the ancestral home of the ancient Hungarians in the early Middle Ages was localised in the Volga-Ural region. The articles and monographs of the famous Bulgarian scholars D. Angelov [1971], S. Vaklinov [1977], D. Dimitrov [1987], R. Rashev [1982; 2001; 2004] and other authors touched upon the questions related to the history and archaeology of the Proto-Bulgarians, the common ancestors of the Danube and Volga Bulgarians. G. Vladimirov wrote an article on the capital city of Volga Bulgaria [Vladimirov,

2002]. The articles of the Bulgarian scholars A. Stoynev, R. Rashev, S. Stanilov and M. Inkova have recently been published in Russia [Tatarstan], and those written by Bulgarian specialists from Tatarstan [A. Khalikov, E. Khalikova, T. Khlebnikova, E. Kazakov]—in Bulgaria.

Hungarian scholars have long been interested in the archaeological research of the medieval monuments of Tatarstan and the history of Bulgar-Hungarian relations [Feher, 1921, S. 25–190]. This interest was noticeably intensified thanks to the successful excavation of the Tankeyevka necropolis in the 1960s and the Bolshe-Tigany burial site in the 1970s, as well as other monuments, the materials of which unambiguously bear witness to the presence of ancient Hungarian component within the population of early Bulgaria on the Volga. Articles and monographs written by E. Kazakov, E. Khalikova and A. Khalikov were dedicated to publishing the materials relating to the above mentioned monuments [Khalikova, Kazakov, 1977; Khalikova, Khalikov, 1981]. The same materials were used and uniquely interpreted by the famous Hungarian archaeologist I. Fodor during his examination of the problems relating to the ethnogenesis of the ancient Hungarians [Fodor, 1982]. I. Fodor is the author of archaeological works on the Bulgars and their contacts with the Hungarians [Fodor, 1977; 1979; 1982a].

The archaeological records of the Volga Bulgars were successfully summarized by Cs. Balint in his monograph on the archaeology of the Eastern European steppes of the 6–10th centuries [Balint, 1989].

D. Kristo [Kristo, 1966] and A. Rona-Tas [Rona-Tas, 1999] devoted their monographs to the ancient Hungarians in the Volga Region. The same problem takes a central place in I. Zimonyi's article [Zimonyi, 2002, pp. 130–186].

Foreign linguists have been actively involved in the analysis of relics of the Volga Bulgars' language. A significant number of articles is dedicated to the etymology of the word 'Bulgar' [Sismanov, 1903, 1904; Nemeth, 1978, S. 68–71]. The title of the Volga Bulgars' ruler has also been examined [Czegledy, 1944, pp. 179–186; Bombaci, 1970, pp. 1–66]. As original manuscripts of the Volga Bulgars of the 10th–13th centuries have not yet been discovered, so specialists may only rely upon the

notes from various written sources and loanwords, which passed from the Volga Bulgars' language into neighbouring tongues, as well as upon the epigraphy of burial monuments of the Golden Horde epoch. In his book on Turkic languages, Mahmud al-Kashgari included several notes on the Volga Bulgars' language which were analysed by O. Pritsak and L. Ligeti [Pritsak, 1959, S. 92–116; Ligeti, 1986, pp. 460–463]. G. Doerfer, L. Ligeti and A. Rona-Tas attempted to analyse the words and names which have survived in written sources, in most cases in the works of Ibn Fadlan [Rona-Tas, 1982, pp. 163–169; Ligeti, 1986, pp. 456–460; for the Bulgar version of the name of Kiev see: Pritsak, 1955, S. 1–13].

The languages of the peoples which were adjacent to the Volga Bulgars preserved words from the Bulgar language which may be still found in contemporary languages of the Volga Region. Bulgar words borrowed from the Perm languages were analysed by A. Rona-Tas and K. Redei [Redei, 1983, p. 341]. K. Agyagasi has fruitfully worked in the sphere of the history of the Bulgarian language [from the point of view of the Chuvash language] [Agyagasi, 1992, p. 113; 1997, pp. 11–15; 2003]. A. Berta treats the history of the Bulgarian language from another perspective, hypothesizing that the Kypchak dialect, the predecessor of the modern Tatar language, had existed in Bulgaria during the 10th–13th centuries [Berta, 1982, S. 14–19; 1989, S. 282–283].

As is known, in Volga Bulgaria [the latter half of the 13–14th centuries] epitaphs were written in Arabic, but they also contain Turkic phrases and sometimes even whole sentences. The majority of modern Western scholars emphasized that only those linguistic relics can be regarded as Volga Bulgarian, which are predecessors of the modern Chuvash [Rona-Tas, 1973; Erdal, 1993].

To conclude the overview, let us count the most important works on the history and archaeology of the Turkic-speaking tribes inhabiting the Eastern European steppes, who later emigrated to the territory of the Middle Volga Region. Among them, we should mention the works of Gy. Moravcsik [Moravcsik, 1930, S. 53–90], V. Besevliev, [Besevliev, 1981], I. Zimonyi [Zimonyi, 2002] and others. Written sources relating to the history of khan Kubrat's

[Kovrat's] state were analysed by H. Lauterbach [Lauterbach, 1967, S. 539–619], while J. Werner dedicated a monograph to the subject of Kubrat's grave [Werner, 1984], A. Rona-Tas compared archaeological findings with written sources [Rona-Tas, 2000, pp. 1–22].

In the period before the end of the 10th century, according to historical sources, the Volga Bulgars were under the protectorate of the Khazar Khaganate. Therefore, studying Khazar history is unavoidable for those who are involved in Volga Bulgaria Studies. When examining Khazar history, foreign historians first of all relied upon written sources. D. Dunlop used Islamic and Jewish sources [Dunlop, 1954]. P. Golden collected Khazarian glossaries and analysed them [Golden, 1980]. D. Ludwig has recently written an exemplary work on the Khazars based upon written sources [Ludwig, 1982]. The newest monograph, summing up the results of research on the Khazars, has been written by Brook [Brook, 1999].

In 965 prince Svyatoslav overthrew the Khazarian power. A new political system was formed in Eastern Europe. After adopting Christianity through the mediation of Byzantium, Kievan Rus' became another political power in Eastern Europe. Later on, these political relations were changed to a lesser extent

by the Cumans, who migrated to the Eastern European steppes in the middle of the 11th century. The relations between the Volga Bulgars and Rus' were peaceful at first, but a decisive turn came in the mid 12th century, when their relations soured due to rivalry for the control over the Volga trade. Some of these problems became the object of study in survey works by Western historians [see, for instance: Paszkiewicz, 1934; 1963; Vernadsky, 1948; Handbuch, 1981; Pritsak, 1980; Goehrke, 1992; Heller, 1993].

The Southern neighbours of the Volga Bulgars were the Kipchaks-Cumans-Polovtsians since the mid-11th century. Their history is closely connected with the history of Volga Bulgaria. Bulgarian rulers asked them for help in their struggle with Vladimir-Suzdal princes. Some of the Cumans inhabited the country's southern regions, thus participating in the formation of a Bulgarian nationality. Bulgarian merchants created quarters or trading posts in cities on the Cumanian territory. The works of P. Golden, L. Rasonyi and A. Paloczi Horvath touched upon these subjects with sufficient detail [Golden, 1991, pp. 58–101; 1984, pp. 45–87; 1986, pp. 5–29; 1995–1997, pp. 99–122; Rasonyi, 2000, pp. 303–331; Paloczi Horvath, 1989].

## Overview of sources

### 1. Arab and Persian Written Sources

*Nuriya Garayeva*

The Arab-Persian sources which allow us to examine the history of Eastern and South-Russian countries and peoples in the latter half of the 7–13th centuries, including Volga Bulgaria, are recognized as authentic records, as the Arab caliphate during the pre-Mongol period of its existence [mid 7–the first half of the 13th centuries] maintained constant contact with the nations and states of not only Transcaucasia, but also of the Northern Caucasus, the steppes of the Caspian-Black sea intermarium, as well as with the Lower and the Middle Volga regions.

Their materials fall into two groups: the data collected by historians<sup>1</sup> is devoted to the events of the Arabic-Khazar wars of the latter half of the 7th and first half of the 8th centuries, while the information gathered by geographers refers to the 9–13th centuries when, after an almost century-struggle for domination in the Caucasus between the Arab caliphate and the Khazar Kha-

<sup>1</sup> Among them are the materials of Khalifah ibn Khayyat, al-Ya'qubi, al-Baladhuri, al-Tabari, Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, Balami, Ibn al-Athir [The History of Tatars, 2002, p. 440 et seq.].

ganate, peaceful relations were established and the exchange of trading contacts and people began to be developed. The data of these groups of sources hardly coincides, but in both cases they somehow integrate fictional and scientific traditions along with the personal impressions and observations of eyewitnesses who were either direct participants of Arabic military campaigns against Derbent and northward from there, or Muslim merchants and scholars who traveled to far countries for the sake of trade or, in accordance with Medieval traditions, in order to obtain more knowledge.

The writings of Arabic geographers is a combination of knowledge of astronomy, mathematics and geography of ancient writers as well as contemporary witnesses. The first accounts of the Volga Bulgaria and the neighbouring Bashkirs, Burtases, Ruses, as-Saqaliba and other nations were given by the early Arabic geographers Ibn Khordadbeh, Ibn al-Faqih, Ibn Rustah, Al-Masudi, Ibn-Fadlan, Estakhri, Ibn Hawqal, al-Biruni, al-Idrisi, al-Garnāti, Yaqut al-Hamawi, as well as al-Marwazi and the anonymous 'Hudūd al-Ālam'.

In terms of genre, the works of Arabic geographers can mostly be referred to descriptive geography and also to works of mathematical geography.

The writings of the first group are represented by descriptions of travels [Ibn Fadlan, al-Garnāti] with a detailed presentation of the phenomena [wonders—'ajaib'] unusual for the Islamic world, which they saw first-hand, in addition to 'road guides' for the expansive and well-organized postal service of the Arab caliphate [the 'Kitāb al-Masālik wa l-mamālik'—that is 'The book of itineraries and kingdoms'], which contains precise information on the distances between inhabited localities given either in miles or parasangs, or sometimes defined by the number of horse changes [sikk] at stations between settlements.

The little information on the peoples of the Middle Volga region presented in the works of Ibn Khordadbeh, Ibn al-Faqih, Ibn Rustah, Estakhri, Ibn Hawqal and al-Idrisi is scattered among materials on the Northern Caucasus and the Lower Volga region, and their overall amount is not big. Since the road to the northern countries usually came from Transcaucasia through the Northern Caucasus to the Caspian steppes

and further northwards to the Khazars, Bulgars, Burtases, Pechenegs, Bashkirs, as-Saqaliba, Ruses [through Derbent along the coast of the Caspian sea, to the Volga estuary and then northwards along the river or its coast], information on the roads, postal stations on the way to the Volga region, as well as peculiarities of other countries where a traveler headed, were grouped in the literature together with the materials on the Transcaucasia, Northern Caucasus, the steppes between the Black and Caspian seas, the Lower and Middle Volga regions, as well as other 'unknown lands', including the country of Yajuj and Majuj located far in the North from the lands of the Bulgars and Ruses.

In accounts of mathematical geography [usually works on astronomy], geographical data was usually used for the illustration of the astronomical calculations of the authors [Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi, Abu Raihan al-Biruni].

The study of the history of the East and Southeast of the European part of Russia using Arabic-Persian sources has a long history in Russia.

H. Fraehn was the one who laid the foundation for the examination of these sources in the 1820s with his research on the data provided by Ibn Fadlan about the Bulgars, Ruses and Khazars [Fraehn, 1823]. Throughout the 19th century, the main tasks of orientalists were the identification and publication of the materials of Arabic-Persian historians and geographers both about the pre-Mongol and the Golden Horde periods of the history of Russia's peoples. Moreover, the examination of the sources began with later works which had been widely spread in handwritten copies to earlier and rarer works<sup>2</sup>. Every

<sup>2</sup> This is especially characteristic of historical papers. For instance, examination of the Arab-Khazar wars began in the 19th century using materials published by A. Kazembek in 1861: 'Derbent-name', as well as 'Tarikh-i Dagestan', 'The Histories of Shirvan and Derbent' and the Turkish translation of 'Tarikh-i Tabari'. All these works obviously provided one and the same version of events, which was absent in the Arabic original, but well-known by the widely-spread Persian version of al-Tabari's works. It is considered, that part of the account given in 'Derbent-name', 'Tarikh-i Dagestan', 'The Histories of Shirvan and Derbent' dates back either to the Turkish or the Persian version of al-Tabari's writings. However, the basis of the Turkish translation of 'Tarikh-i Tabari' was not the Arabic original of 'Kitāb tārīḥ ar-rusul wa al-mulūk', but the Persian interpretation of al-Tabari's



publication of new information was at the same time historical research, and each research was always accompanied by the publication of some new text. All the works of B. Dorn followed this pattern. The publication of extracts from manuscripts which mentioned Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, characteristic of Russian Oriental Studies [Kunik, Rozen, 1878; Khvolson, 1869; Garkavi, 1870; 1871], came against the backdrop of the intensive activity of European orientalists of publishing Arabic and Persian historical and geographical works [Gabrieli; de Goeje] which contributed to the understanding and wider analytical interpretation of the data which specifically concerned the region under examination. The bulk of the sources on the Southeast of European Russia were published and investigated by the end of the 19th century. Then, until the mid 1920s, Russian oriental studies usually published selections of translations on a regional basis [Karaulov, 1901; Kunik, 1903; al-Baladhuri;<sup>3</sup> al-Ya'qubi; Ibn al-Athir, 1940].

A fresh wave of research came in the 1930s and is related to the introduction into scholarly circulation of the text 'Risalas' ['Notes'] written by Ibn-Fadlan [Togan, 1939; Ibn-Fadlan, 1939]. A. Zeki Validi Togan was lucky to discover the hand-written collection in the mosque of the city of Mashhad. Apart of the 'Notes' of Ibn-Fadlan, the manuscript contains a more detailed version<sup>4</sup> than the text of the critical edition, of 'Akhbar al-buldan' ['The Book of Countries'] of Ibn al-Faqih and 'The Second Note' of Abu Dulaf, an important source on the history of the Turks inhabiting Middle Asia [Togan; Bulgakov, Khalidov, 1957].

At the end of the 1930s beginning of the 1940s the examination and extraction of ma-

terials from Arabic sources on the history of Southeastern Europe were carried out by A.-Z. Validi-Togan and A. Kurat. In particular, their publications of fragments from the Arabic original of 'Kutab al-futuh' written by Ibn Atham al-Kufi, which had been found in Hyderabad, laid the foundation for the critical examination of the materials provided by Arabic sources about the Arab-Khazar wars [Togan, 1939; Kurat, 1949; Dunlop, 1957]. A.-Z. Validi-Togan examined 'Kitab surat al ard' by astronomer Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi, while his publication of the Arabic text of 'Book 5' of 'Masud's Canon' written by Abū Rayḥān Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Bīrūnī has so far been a reliable edition of this text which formed the basis for the work's translation into the Russian language [Validi-Togan, 1940]. Early copies of these works were also published in Persian [Minorsky, 1937] and Turkic languages [Minorsky, 1963].

After a pause in academic research activities due to World War II, they were renewed with attention given to the works contained in the Mashhad manuscript. The majority of publications were dedicated to 'Risala' of Ibn Fadlan [Ibn Fadlan, 1956; Ritter, 1942; Czeglédy, 1951; Canard, 1958; Blake, Frye, 1949; Dunlop, 1949] the climax of which became the new edition of the Arabic text of 'Risalas' [Risala Ibn Fadlan, 1959; Risala Ibn Fadlan, 1978].

In the 1960s–70s, Tadeusz Lewicki and B. Zakhoder compiled a review of the materials in Arabic sources [Lewicki, 1956; Zakhoder, 1962–1967].

Publication of the Russian translation of 'Mu'rib 'an ba'd 'ajā'ib al-Maghrib' ['The Narrative about Magical Things in Maghrib'] of the Andalusian traveler Abu Hamid al-Ghar-nati [1971] prompted the publication of special research and translations into Russian of the complete texts of works by Arabic authors whose materials had earlier been known only in fragments. Among them was the translation of 'Kitāb al-Masālik wa-al-Mamālik' ['The Book of Highways and Kingdoms'] of Ibn Khordadbeh.

At the turn of the 21st century, examination of the information, presented by Arabic authors, took the form of thematic research devoted to a certain group of narratives on the Burtases, the Slavs, and Ruses of Eastern Europe [Kalinina, 1976; 1984; 1994]. A separate monograph is

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work fulfilled by Balami. The translator added materials about Marwan ibn Muhammad's campaigns from the work of Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, which were absent in al-Tabari's primary work. The original of al-Kūfī's work, however, was not found until the mid-20th century.

<sup>3</sup> Pantelemon Krestovich Zhuze [a Christian Arab coming from Palestine] prepared translations of the historical works of al-Baladhuri, al-Ya'qubi and Ibn al-Athir. At the beginning of the 20th century, Zhuze occupied the position of associate professor at the Kazan Spiritual Academy. Apart from Arabic, he spoke Turkish and cooperated with N. Katanov, who wanted to make him a member of the Kazan Temporary Committee for Press [September 1912].

<sup>4</sup> The critical edition does not contain a chapter about the Turks.

devoted to an overview of all accounts of the as-Saqaliba found in Arabic sources [Mishin, 2002]. The complex of al-Idrisi's materials on the peoples of Eastern and Western Europe was particularly examined [Beylis, 1984, pp. 208–288; Konovalova, 1999]. Analytical overviews of the materials of Arab-Persian sources on

Bulgaria [Zimonyi, 1990] and ancient Rus' and others were also compiled [Ancient Rus', 2000. Eastern sources, pp. 169–258].

A whole range of research is devoted to examining the works of Arabic astronomers [for example, Muhammad al-Khwarizmi, Ahmad al-Farghani, Sorhab ibn Sarabiyun].

## 2. Ancient Russian Written Sources on the Bulgars and Volga Bulgaria

*Iskander Izmaylov*

Chronicles are considered to be the main ancient Russian sources. Historical records first began being preserved in Kiev in the first half of the 9th century. Later, over a span of several centuries [up to the 17th century], they were kept incessantly and sometimes were even written as independent chronicles.

The composition of the chronicles is fairly complex, and includes the description of events during a given year, documents [including international agreements, private and public acts], independent literary works [diverse 'tales', hagiographical narratives, 'khozhdeniyas' or peregrinations] or their passages, as well as writings of a folkloric character.

*The Tale of Bygone Years [TBY]*. The beginning of ancient Russian chronicle writing is usually associated with the stable common text which is found at the beginning of the bulk of the extant collections of chronicles. Certain copies of TBY were lost and its current text is a result of reconstruction. In all the extant compilations, TBY's text is merged with the accounts of its continuators, which in later compilations run through the late 16th century. In different chronicles, the text of TBY finishes at different years: in 1110 in the Laurentian Codex and those similar to it, or in 1118 in the Hypatian Codex and the svods related to it. It is most likely that the issue here is different editions of the original text of the Primary svod.

Since TBY includes accounts from ancient times up until the beginning of the 12th century, which in turn bring tidings of the Bulgars and Bulgaria from the time of Vladimir Svyatoslavich's campaigns against the Bulgars in 985, about 'the choice of faith', the Bulgars' campaign

against Murom in 1088, etc. The reports on the campaign against the Bulgars and choice of faith have vivid folkloric motives and it is obvious that they came to be included into the chronicle from some oral tale.

As separate ancient Russian territories became more politically independent, chronicle traditions continued to develop locally. The most complete and original source of information about Volga Bulgaria of the 12–the first half of the 13th century was preserved in the following chronicles:

South Russian chronicle writing is represented by a range of chronicles. *The Hypatian Chronicle*. Two primary sections which were merged together may be distinguished in the structure of the Hypatian Chronicle. The first section, beginning with TBY, describes events up to 6706/1198. After this, there is an ample narrative about the construction of a stone wall by Grand Prince Rurik Rostislavich in Mikhail's Monastery located in Vydubychi. The second chronicle begins with a laudatory 'praise' of Rurik Rostislavich and describes the events in South-Western Ruthenia after the death of Grand Prince Roman Mstislavich. This Galician-Volynian chronicle differs from the first section due to the absence of a chronological network which is an obligatory feature of all ancient Russian chronicles in general. Such indications as 'in the summer of 6712', 'in the summer of 6713' and so on were inserted by the compiler of the Hypatian Chronicle, not by his protograph [Shakhmatov, 1938, p. 69]. The textual analysis allowed scholars to suggest the existence of a Kievan grand-ducal svod of 1200. It is generally considered that this svod was compiled under

prince Rurik Rostislavich at Vydubychi monastery and its author was Abbot Moisey.

Among the sources of the svod of 1198, scholars name the Kievan svod of Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich [the primary source which ends with an account of the prince's death in 1194]. At the time of his reign, the grand-ducal Kievan chronicle was edited. Other sources are believed to be the family chronicle of the Rostislaviches, the brothers of the grand prince [more specifically, the collection of their necrologies compiled at the same Vydubichi Kievan monastery under Rurik], the family chronicle of Chernigov Prince Svyatoslav Olgovich and his sons: Oleg and Igor Svyatoslaviches [finished in the year 1198], the princely chronicle of Pereyasavl Yuzhnyi which recounts the war feats of Vladimir Glebovich and finishes with the year of the prince's death [1187] and the Vladimir chronicle of 1189 [or 1193], which also represents a svod, but of the Northeastern Russian annalistic tradition [Limonov, 1967, pp. 90–91]. Apart from the Hypatian copy, sources for study of South-Russian chronicle writing of the 12–13th centuries include the Khlebnikov [16th cent.], the Pogodino [17th cent.], the Yermolaev [end of the 17th –beginning of the 18th cent.] and other copies, as well as the copies of the Voskresensk and the main edition of the Sofia First Chronicle [for more details on the copies and history of the text see: [Kloss, 1998, EN]].

South Russian chronicle writing contains additional data on Russian-Bulgarian relations, which have their roots in the Vladimir chronicles [1177, 1198 and others] and are excluded from Northeastern and general Russian chronicle writing.

The Novgorod chronicle-writing tradition is one of the most ancient forms of accounts and was never interrupted during the whole history of Russian chronicle writing. *The Novgorod First Chronicle [NFC]* is inherently a chronicle which was kept at the Novgorod bishop's chancellery. Two recensions [editions] are known, the oldest of which recounts events up to the 1330s [accounts before 1016 and from 1273 to 1298 are lost] and the newest continues up to the 1440s [svod of 1432 with further additions up to 1446]. Both recensions are similar in their descriptions of the events of the 12th century; however, we may assume that the younger one preserved the most ancient version text which

had been used when compiling the chronicle of the older recension.

Northeastern chronicle writing includes a whole range of chronicles which were preserved in a number of later chronicle svods such as the Radziwiłł [end of the 15th century], the Moscow Academic [the 15th century], the Chronicler of Pereyasavl in Suzdalia [CPS] [copy dated to the 1460s] and the Laurentian Codex [1377]. Their textual intercomparison made it possible to show that three grand-ducal svods lie in their foundation: of 1177, 1193 and 1212. The information about Volga Bulgaria accounted in them and preserved in later chronicle svods represents the primary thesaurus of ancient Russian knowledge about the Bulgars and their country.

*The Radziwiłł [Königsberg] Chronicle* is the most ancient Russian illustrated chronicle and has been preserved in a single copy [end of the 15th century]. In the 17th century it had been kept in the library of the Radziwiłłs princes [hence the name], until one of them granted it to the library of the University of Königsberg [hence its second name] from which it was transported to Saint Petersburg after the Seven Years' War. The narration of events by year runs through 1206, and the whole text is illustrated with miniatures [over 600]. The text of this chronicle reflects two important stages in the history of Russian chronicle writing: TBY and the Vladimir svod of the beginning of the 13th century.

*The Chronicler of Pereyasavl in Suzdal [CPS]* is preserved in a single copy dating to the 1460s and includes TBY and a number of other svods. Entries between 1138 and 1214 reflect the Vladimir chronicle-writing style of the beginning of the 13th century. In the opinion of A. Shakhmatov, this text of CPS is more closely connected to the Radziwiłł than to the Laurentian chronicle. B. Kloss provides grounds to the hypothesis that the Laurentian Chronicle and TBY find their roots in the various editions of the svod dated 1205, which was compiled by the close circle of Grand Prince Vsevolod the Big Nest. In any case, its data somehow complements the information provided by other chronicle svods.

*The Laurentian Chronicle* was either compiled or rewritten from a finished original in 1377 for Grand Prince Dmitry Konstantinovich with the blessing of Dionisy, the bishop of Suzdal, Nizhny Novgorod and Gorodets [Shakhmatov, 1938, pp. 5–10]. Besides TBY, the Laurentian

chronicle contains a narrative about the events in South Russia and Suzdal [1111–1205] and then a general Russian narrative, though with a vivid Rostov character [1206–1305]. The complex composition of the Laurentian Chronicle or, more precisely, of the Laurentian svod is evidence that it represents a compilation of several chronicle svods. In the opinion of textual critics, the text of this svod preserves in the most complete form the Vladimir svod of 1193.

Because in 1305, the prince of Tver Mikhail Yaroslavich became the grand prince of Vladimir, the centre of grand-ducal chronicle writing was moved to Tver, where, possibly, already at the end of the 13th century they started to keep chronicle records. The creation of the grand-ducal svod at the beginning of the 14th century was coincided with Mikhail Yaroslavich adopting the new title 'the Grand Prince of All-Rus'. Being overall Russian in general, the svod included not only local news, but also tidings about Novgorod, Ryazan, Smolensk and Southern Russia. Judging by the research conducted by A. Shakhmatov, svod of 1305 became the basic source of the Laurentian chronicle.

The new All-Russian chronicle svods of 1328 and 1327, created in Tver, became the continuation of this svod. Their traces were found in later Moscow chronicles [Trinity and Simeon chronicles]. Therefore, the chronicle svod which became the protograph of the Laurentian chronicle through a chain of editions and other svods became the basis for the description of events of the 12th century in a whole range of chronicle svods which had the svod of 1305 as their protograph and other svods of the early 15th century that were related to this protograph.

The first All-Russian metropolitan svod became the so-called *Trinity Chronicle* of 1408, which was mostly reflected in the Simeon copy, some other chronicles, as well as the notes of N. Karamzin to 'The History of the Russian State'. In the opinion of B. Kloss, this svod may have been compiled at the Trinity monastery by Epiphanius the Wise—the author of the 'Life of Sergius of Radonezh'. Ya. Lurie, however, insists that the svod of 1408 was compiled right in Moscow. Going further, he suggests that the svods of 1390 and 1408 were in fact two editions of the All-Russian metropolitan svod. Its notable feature is the absence of any pro-Muscovite or anti-Horde tendencies.

At the end of the 1940s, M. Tikhomirov discovered the Uvarov copy of the *Moscow chronicle svod dating from the end of the 15th century*. In this copy, the svod of 1479 was continued through 7000/1492. The Uvarov copy completely reflects grand-ducal chronicle writing, from its very beginning till the end. The discovered svod found its reflection in the basic svods of the 16th century, such as the Voskresensk, Ioasafov, Nikon and other chronicles. The Moscow chronicle svod of the end of the 15th century includes extensive accounts of the most important acts of grand-ducal policy-making, the family of the grand prince and the construction of Moscow and other cities, etc. Almost all the evaluations which may be found here are mostly of an official character and justify the Moscow grand prince's actions. This svod survived to the present-day both almost completely intact and in form of fragments relating to the 1480s–1490s joined to the svods bearing an unofficial character.

The relatively late [end of the 15th century] *Simeon Chronicle* in its narrative through 1391 reflects the Tver edition of the svod of the beginning of the 15th century, thanks to which some of its data helps to complement information which is absent in the Trinity and partly in the Laurentian chronicles.

Another chronicle which takes roots in the protograph of the Trinity chronicle and is close to Moscow chronicle writing is the *Typographic Chronicle*. Although the general text of all of its complete copies provides accounts up to 1484, the Typographic-Synodal chronicle has a range of secondary readings as compared to other editions and, what is especially important, as compared to the Typographic-Academic chronicle with which it is linked by a common protograph. But the original of the Typographic-Academic chronicle was finished in 1489, similar to the original of the Typographic-Library and the Typographic-Mazurin editions. The foundation of these editions is formed by the Rostov svod of 1489, which finishes with the news of Metropolitan Geronty's death. This was the chronicle svod of Archbishop Tikhon. Therefore, the hypothesis of A. Shakhmatov on the existence of the svod of 1484 which is the protograph of the Typographic chronicle has to be rejected [Kloss, 2000, aX–XI].

*The Nikon Chronicle* was compiled at the end of the 1520s in Moscow at the court of

the Metropolitan of All Rus Daniil of Ryazan [1522–1539]. Consequently, the Nikon svod would repeatedly be supplemented with borrowings from official annals and was stopped in 1558. As a result of painstaking work over the extant copies of the chronicle, B. Kloss identified its original, the copy of Obolensky. Thanks to these efforts, the dating, place of writing, as well as the scriptorium, where it was compiled, and personality of the compiler became clear. The aim of compiling the chronicle was preparation for the church council of 1531. In B. Kloss's opinion, the main sources of the Nikon svod were the Simeon chronicle and a special edition of Novgorod V [the so-called Novgorod Chronological chronicle], as well as the Ioasafov Chronicle, the Vladimir chronicle, the Ustyug svod and the Russian Chronograph [Kloss, 1980]. The Nikon chronicle represents the most complete collection of accounts of Russian history, and what is more, part of them is unique. The use of a large amount of sources, many of which are unknown, cause us to treat the information presented in the Nikon svod carefully, as it is likely a result of the editorial work of its compilers which was done in the first half of the 16th century. First of all, this concerns 'redundant' information. In this respect, it was proved that a whole range of such information concerning Bulgaria and its inhabitants incorporated into the text of TBY [for example, accounts of the campaigns against the Bulgars conducted by Vladimir in 994 and 997 and news of 990 about the arrival in Kiev of Bulgar princes who wanted to get baptized] and into later chronicle tales [insertions of extended text of accounts of the campaigns of 1164, 1173, 1183, 1220, as well as naming Bulgaria's population 'the Bolgars now titled as Kazan people'] were the additions of its editor. Nevertheless, the Nikon chronicle is one of the most important sources on the history of the Russian Middle Ages, because it provides rich material for examining the formation of the imperial ideology of the emerging Russian tsardom.

This brief analysis of Russian chronicle svods presents the complicated character of their formation and allows us to draw a conclusion about their repeated rewriting and editing.

In relation to the analysis of the ancient Russian chronicles, we should point to the problem of authenticating the data on the history of the

Rus' and its neighbouring countries which are contained in the work 'The Russian History' written by V. Tatishchev. This also concerns information about Russian-Bulgar relations in the 10–13th centuries which researchers unreasonably often quote as chronicle accounts. Apart from the descriptions which notably widen the narratives presented in the chronicles, the text of 'Russian History' also includes 'redundant' information [for example, about the Russian-Bulgar agreement of 1006, the reasons for the Russian-Bulgar war of 1183, the campaign against Bulgaria 1209 and so on]. In the meantime, the works of S. Peshtich [1961], B. Kloss. E. Dobrushkin [1976; 1977], Ya. Lurie [1997] and especially A. Tolochko [2005] ascertained that V. Tatishchev had not had any 'unknown chronicles' [such as the Schismatic or Ioachim chronicles] at his disposal. A textual analysis of 'Russian History' and its different editions showed that its author used the copies of the Hypatian [the Yermolaev copy], the Radziwiłł, and the Novgorod First chronicles, as well as a number of later svods [such as the Vladimir, Nikon, Voskresensk and other chronicles]. Still, the 'redundant' information is a result of V. Tatishchev's writing activities, who keeping with the traditions of historiography of the 18th century, did not differentiate between the source's and author's texts, dissected and replenished concise chronicle data, in turn transforming them into a consistent and logical narrative.

Apart from the chronicle tidings, some fragmentary information about the Bulgars was preserved in the church literature. Thus, the work 'On the abstinence for the Ignorant' the creation of which literary historians set in the 13th century, contains a passage about the strength of Bulgars' faith. The inserted tales also contain interesting information about the Bulgars, portraying them as Muslims with fairly spiteful invectives about Islamic customs. These may be found, for example, in the so-called 'Lay of Idols'. The image of the Bulgars is also present in a number of other extra-chronicle texts, for example, in the 'Letters' of Feodosy Pechersky.

All of this provides the evidence that although the ancient Russian sources on the history of the Bulgars are short and fragmented, they present an important set of information which sheds light upon the past of Bulgaria's inhabitants.

### 3. Western European Written Sources on the Bulgars

*István Zimonyi*

The term 'Western European sources' usually implies works in the Latin language. However, our short review should be started with a Byzantine source. We have in mind the work 'De Administrando Imperio' [On the Governance of the Empire], written by Constantine Porphyrogenitus. It was written circa 952. The only earlier manuscript is the Parisian one [9th century] which was later reproduced into three copies in the 16th century.

The critical edition was published by Moravcsik and supplied with an English translation by Jenkins [Constantine, 1967]. The second volume contains commentaries to the text [Constantine, 1962]. Recently, new editions which also contain voluminous commentaries have been published in Russia and Germany [Constantine Porphyrogenitus, 1989; Die Byzantiner, 1995]. Constantine Porphyrogenitus mentions Black Bulgaria in chapters 12 and 42. The Tale of Bygone Years is also acquainted with Black Bulgars. Scholars usually identify them with the Azov Bulgars but there is another point of view according to which this ethnonym refers to the Volga Bulgars [Macartney, 1931, pp. 150–158].

As for Latin sources, we should first of all mention the works of Hungarian authors. The reason for the Hungarian's increased attention to the Bulgars lies in their friendly contacts during the period of Magna Hungaria, which was located on the territory between the Volga and the Urals. Although the Hungarians left Eastern Europe at the end of the 9th century and were baptized in their new homeland, their contacts with the East were not interrupted. The author of the work *Gesta Hungarorum* ['The Deeds of the Hungarians'] is not known. An anonymous author writes at the beginning of the work that he used to be a scrivener for King Béla [it was most likely Béla III]. Béla III died in 1196 and the work was composed after his death, circa 1210. The writer gave an account of Hungarian history from ancient times to 997—that is, till the reign of King Saint Stephen. Only one of the manuscripts survived, which is dated to the 13th century. The work was published in the form of a facsimile, and a critical edition is

also available. [Scriptores, 1937, p. 33–117; reprinted edition: 1999]. Apart from the various Hungarian translations, there is also a German translation which contains ample commentaries [Gesta Hungarorum, 1991]. The 57th chapter of the source states that during the reign of Hungarian Grand Prince Taksony [c. 955–c. 972], Hungary was visited by noble representatives of Volga Bulgaria [de terra Bular], Bylla and Bocsu, who were ancestors of Ethey. One bogatyr, Heten, was among them. Bylla and Bocsu were granted the city of Pest by Prince Taksony [Scriptores, 1937, pp. 114–116]. The term '*Bular*' was analysed in the work of György Györffy [Györffy, 1993, p. 13]. I. Németh's work contains the analysis of personal names [Németh, 1973, S. 165–170], while A. Kubinyi wrote about the role of the Volga Bulgars in the history of Pest [Kubinyi, 1972, S. 14–15].

In 1235, the Dominican monk Julian took to the road on behalf of Prince Béla in order to find the Eastern Hungarians. At first, he searched them in the Northern Ciscaucasia and then came further to Volga Bulgaria. He returned home through Mordovia and Rus'. In 1236, Papal Curia called him to Rome, and the next year he took another trip to Eastern Europe, but only managed to reach Suzdal, as the Mongol-Tatars had conquered Volga Bulgaria. These two trips were described in independent reports. The first one was compiled by the Dominican monk Ricardus [The Report of Monk Ricardus—*Relatio fratris Ricardi*]. It was sent to Rome and included in the collection '*Liber censuum*', which contains the most important acts of the Latin church [critical editions: Scriptores, 1938, pp. 535–542, 786–789 [reprinted]; Dorrie, 1956, S. 151–161; Julianus, 1986, pp. 61–70; Göckenjan, Sweeney, 1985, S. 67–92; Anninsky, 1940]. Julian wrote about the second trip in a report titled 'Letter on the Life of the Tatars' [*Epistula de vita Tartarorum*] dated no later than the beginning of 1238. It contains detailed information about Mongol-Tatars and their conquests. Fragments concerning the Volga Bulgars were scrupulously analysed by I. Fodor and H. Göckenjan [Fodor, 1977, p. 9–20; Göckenjan, 1977].

The notes of a number of travelers of the early Horde times contain invaluable information about the Volga Bulgars. Giovanni da Pian del Carpine, a Franciscan monk, was sent to the court of the Mongol khan in 1245. He went through Kiev to the residence of khan Batu and then to the capital of the great khan Güyük, during which there were elections for a new great khan. On his return, he once again visited the court of Batu khan. The work of Giovanni da Pian del Carpine, finished circa 1247, provides a detailed description of the Mongol Empire.

Another Franciscan monk, William of Rubruck, departed for the Mongol Empire from Palestine, via Constantinople to the residence of Sarktak, son of Batu, and then to Batu himself and further on to the great khan Möngke. When returning home, he again arrived at Batu's court

and spent one and half months there. In 1255, he returned to the island of Cyprus where he compiled a report on his journey.

Giovanni da Pian del Carpine and William of Rubruck did not visit Volga Bulgaria; however, they have reliable data on this country which was collected in Batu's residence. Giovanni da Pian del Carpine mentions the Bulgars three times: 'the Bilers, that is Great Bulgaria' / 'Byleri id est magna Bulgaria'. When speaking about Mongol conquests, he also touched the topic of Volga Bulgaria's geographical location, placing it between the Mordvins and the Bashkirs. Rubruck writes about the country *Bulgaria maior*, located on the banks of the Etil [the Volga], to the north of the Polovtsians and west of the Bashkirs in relation to the fur trade and to Islam which, to his surprise, was found so far in the north.

#### 4. Archaeological Sources

*Fayaz Khuzin*

The fragmentariness and often lack of informational value contained in written sources describing the pre-Mongol Bulgars and their neighbours make archaeological sources especially valuable in the study of the history of Volga Bulgaria. It is widely accepted that the given group of sources primarily covers various sides of the material culture of the population. However, archaeological artifacts contain a significantly larger amount of information, including that which exceeds the scope of the history of material culture.

One of the biggest achievements of archaeology of the latter half of the 20th century was the creation of the six-volume Archaeological map of Tatarstan [AK, 1981; 1985; 1986, etc.] which includes a full collection of archaeological records of Volga Bulgaria compiled by R. Fakhrutdinov [Fakhrutdinov, 1975]. Works in this regard were also carried out by archaeologists of Cheboksary, Samara, Penza and Perm. Mapping the monuments [2000 overall] provided the opportunity to define the state borders of Bulgaria, and trace the dynamics of their changes throughout the 8–13th centuries, thus substantially clarifying the scarce data of

Eastern geographers ibn Rustah, Estakhri, the author of 'Hudūd al-Ālam', ibn Hawqal and others.

Archaeological sources also allow us to examine the problems of ethnogeny and the ethnic history of Bulgaria's poly-ethnic population which were poorly discussed in documents. Especially valuable in this respect is the information examining mass material provides, such as ceramics and women's jewelry which refer to the ethnicity-defining category of discoveries, as well as the burial ceremonies of the early-Bulgar burial sites [see the works of T. Khlebnikova, N. Kokorina, E. Kazakov, E. Khalikova].

The Islamic burial ceremony served as an important source in clarifying controversial issues surrounding the time of the arrival and spread of Islam among the Bulgar population [Khalikova, 1986].

As is well-known, written sources do not contain direct information about urban crafts, and accounts of other sectors of the economy are also incomplete. We make hypotheses about these ideas mostly [and even solely] based on archaeological materials. Remnants

of production facilities, craft tools, semi-finished products, production waste and defective products which archaeologists examine by applying modern methods allow us to identify the level of development of city craft, while osteological [bones of domestic and wild animals] and paleobotanical [remnants of grains of cultivated plants and weeds] materials provide the opportunity to evaluate the state of agriculture. An important category of discoveries on the cultural level of settlements is represented by imported goods which make it possible to imagine the scale of international trading communications of the country.

Written sources contain little information about the weaponry and warfare, as well as on the fortification of cities. This gap is easily filled with archaeological data [Izmaylov, 1997]. Items of armament, trappings and the munitions of horsemen fall under the number of discoveries which provide a picture of the cultural level of settlements. Materials extracted after the excavation of the city ramparts and ditches serve as a basis of the reconstruction of fortifications. Among the archaeological stratas of some cities, archaeologists uncovered depictions of large military battles known from chronicle sources [for example, traces of the Mongol conquests of 1236 in Bilyar and Bolgar].

Archaeological materials represent an important source for the examination of various aspects of the history of the Volga Bulgars' spiritual culture. Museum collections keep zoomorphic handles of pottery vessels and bronze snaps, sometimes even with inscriptions, toys [including chess pieces], bone pencils, slabs with pictures, items with various symbols, tamgas, separate letters of the runic alphabet, etc. They successfully attract specialists to examine issues of the spiritual culture and decorative arts of the ancestors of the Tatar people.

Archaeologists achieved considerable success in the previous century in accumulating archaeological sources on the history of nomadic people of the Great Steppe. The discovery and excavation at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century of several forest-steppe and steppe monuments in Eastern Europe, such as

the Upper-Saltovo catacomb and Vlivinsky pit burial sites, as well as of the Mayaki ancient towns, laid the foundation for the study of the peculiar Saltovo-Mayaki culture whose belonging to the state culture of the Khazar Khaganate is unmistakable. M. Artamonov, I. Lyapushkin, S. Pletneva, G. Afanasyev, K. Krasilnikov, V. Flerov, V. Mikheev and other researchers [see bibliography] have created a great fund of archaeological sources which form the basis for our contemporary understanding of the material and spiritual cultures of the multi-ethnic population of the Khazar khaganate and about the ethno-cultural relations of its inhabitants with their neighbours.

The Turkic-speaking nomads of the early and late Middle Ages who inhabited vast spaces of Eurasian steppes, including the Pechenegs, Torks [Guzes], Kimaks and Kypchaks [Polovtsians], as well as the Magyars, played a huge role in the ethnogeny, political and cultural life of the settled peoples of Eastern Europe, including Volga Bulgaria. The search and examination of archaeological monuments left by the Turkic-speaking and Ugric-speaking nomads were crowned by significant discoveries which found their reflection in the publications and survey works of S. Pletneva, G. Fedorov-Davydov, L. Kyzlasov, D. Savinov, Yu. Khudyakov, V. Ivanov, F. Arslanova and others.

During archaeological excavations, materials are still found to be passed on for further qualified examination by representatives of interdisciplinary sciences—anthropologists [bone remnants of people], paleozoologists [bone remnants of animals], paleobotanists [grain materials] and numismatists [coins].

Therefore, the significance of archaeological sources in the study of Volga Bulgaria's history continues to grow due to the increasing amount of artifacts which are annually discovered. Thanks to constantly improving methods of extracting historical information, these artifacts provide the opportunity to objectively reconstruct the basic spheres of public life of the Medieval population [to include economic, social, spiritual, ethnic, domestic spheres and the like].



Section I

**Turkic Heritage  
in the Steppes of Eastern Europe  
and Western Siberia  
(7–10th Centuries)**



## CHAPTER 1

### Great Bulgaria

*Rasho Rashev*

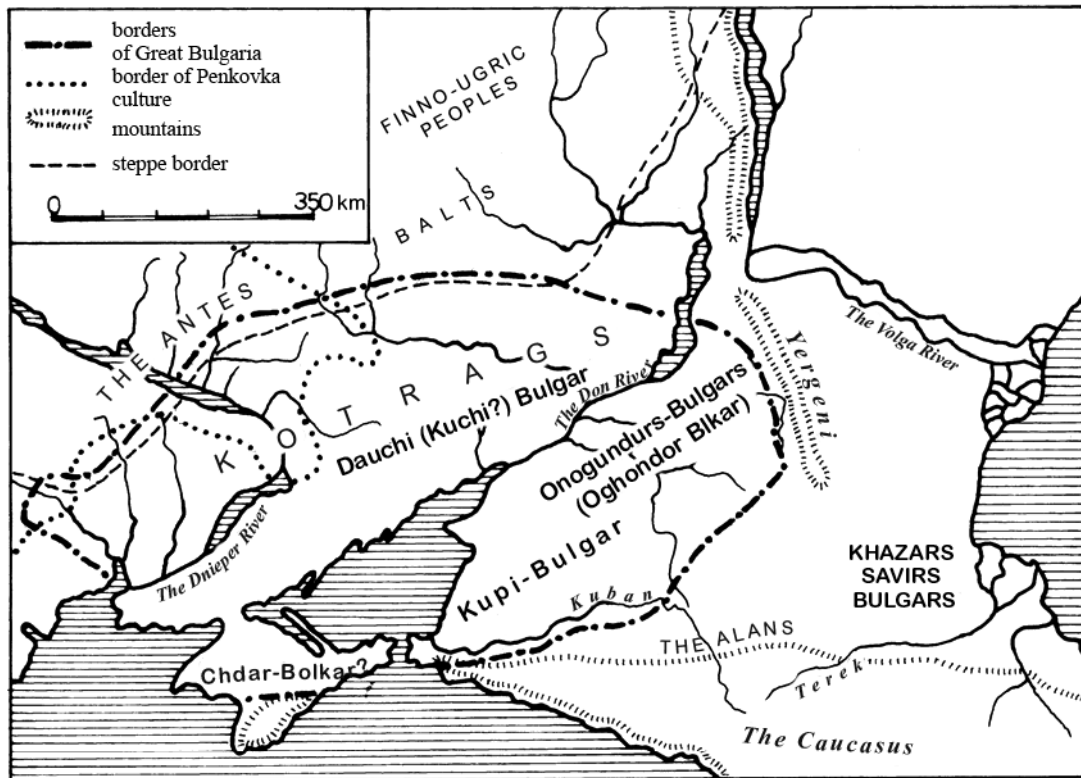
In the latter half of the 6th century significant ethnopolitical changes took place on the steppe of Eastern Europe. In 557 Avars (Ju-juan) migrated to the Northern Black Sea region. Their domination in the Central Asian steppes had ended after Turks successfully rebelled (Göktürks, Türküts). In 10 years Avars and a big group of Kutrigurs, a Bulgarian tribe living in the same region, moved west to the Pannonian Basin and established their own state there—the Avar Khaganate. The Turkic Khaganate, which had been established in Central Asia without facing any serious resistance, quickly took control of a majority of the peoples on the Eurasian steppe. Around 570 Turks reached the shores of the Azov Sea and added the Utigur and their related tribes residing there to the territory of the Khaganate [the History of Tatars, 2002, pp. 173–184]. These events inhibited the process of unification of the steppe peoples for some time. However, the migration of Avars to the west, the division of the Turkic Khaganate, and the subsequent crisis that developed in its western part created the conditions for the birth of a new state. It filled the territorial and political vacuum between Avar and Turkic khaganates and resulted from the political liberation of the local tribes. This state was Great Bulgaria.

The formation of Great Bulgaria can be viewed as a unique result of a long process that started with the dissolution of the Hunnic State, which abolished the centralized control over the related tribes on the steppes north of the Black and Azov seas. As a result, ancient authors began to record the names of previously unknown tribes that had fallen before under the common ethnopolitonym of 'Huns', although even after Attila's death the word 'Hun' was sometimes used as the main and descriptive name for steppe tribes.

In the 6th century, the name 'Bulgars' was almost completely excluded from ethnic nomenclature of the region. However, information provided by Jordanes that they lived 'above the Pontic Sea' [Yordanes, 1958, p. 337], and by Zacharias Rhetor that they inhabited the North Ciscaucasia [Pigulevskaya, 1941, p. 81], demonstrate that they continued to live there. Procopius of Caesarea, who witnessed the events, wrote that mostly two tribes divided by the Don lived there: the Kutrigurs in the west and the Utigurs in the east [Procopius, 1959, pp. 137–141].

Kutrigurs still maintained the former hostility of the Huns towards Byzantium. Since the late 5th century and until the arrival of Avars in 558, they launched regular attacks on the Empire's territory on the Balkan peninsula, with the biggest being the one on Constantinople led by Zabergan in 557. Utigurs, on the other hand, were loyal to the Empire until it initiated an internecine war among them.

In the last third of the 6th century, Bulgar-related tribes and Bulgars themselves, having become vassals of Avars and Turks, got a historical challenge to disappear or preserve themselves as an independent political unit. They chose the second option. The recreated state was widely assumed to be the direct successor of the Hunnic Empire. It's no wonder that Avitohol and Irnik from the Dulo clan, which were identified with Attila and his third son Ernak long ago, headed the list of the 'Nominalia of the Bulgarian Khans'. After the death of his elder brothers, Ernak settled in the Northern Black Sea region and prolonged the life of the Empire of Huns for a while which, therefore, made him a direct heir of his father in the eyes of his descendants. In order to move the Bulgarian history back to an earlier period, the author of the 'Nominalia' gave Avitohol a biblical age—300 years—



Territory of Great Bulgaria

and dated the year he ascended to the throne by the lunar calendar as 'dilom tvirem', that is, the year of the Snake, ninth month, which corresponds to 153 and coincides with the year of his death, 453, the dilom year. Irnik lived for 150 years and also came to power in 'dilom tvirem' (year of the Snake, ninth month), that is, he died in the year 603 [Moskov, 1988, p. 145]. Thus the biblical life of Irnik and his rule coincided with the decentralized period of the Hunnish-Bulgar leaders of the late 5–6th centuries. They were apparently intentionally disregarded so that Kurt (Kubrat), the founder of Great Bulgaria, was considered the direct heir to Irnik [Rashev, 1996, p. 40].

According to the Nominalia, between Irnik and Kubrat, it was Gostun of the Ermi clan who ruled. He 'was the vicegerent for 2 years'. The power was handed over to him in 'dokhs tvirem', that is in the year of the Pig, ninth month. Depending on their understanding of the nature of the Old Bulgarian annals, various scholars ascribe his rule to the years 628–630

or to 603–605 [Moscov, 1988, pp. 176–181]. The name Gostun is not mentioned in other sources. His special status allows us to regard him as a vicegerent of the Turkic Khagan over the Bulgar tribes in the western periphery of the Khaganate or, more likely, as Kubrat's vicegerent or regent when the latter was a youth. A number of historians identify him as Kubrat's uncle Organa [Zlatarski, 1994, pp. 84–88]. Some scholars reject this possibility, pointing out that Organa is not directly mentioned in the Nominalia, and viewing him as a local Turkic khan, following whose death the vicegerent Gostun ruled till the establishment of the Great Bulgaria [Artamonov, 1962, pp. 161, 164]. Nonetheless Gostun was the first real Bulgar lord after the semi-mythical reign of Avitohol and Irnik.

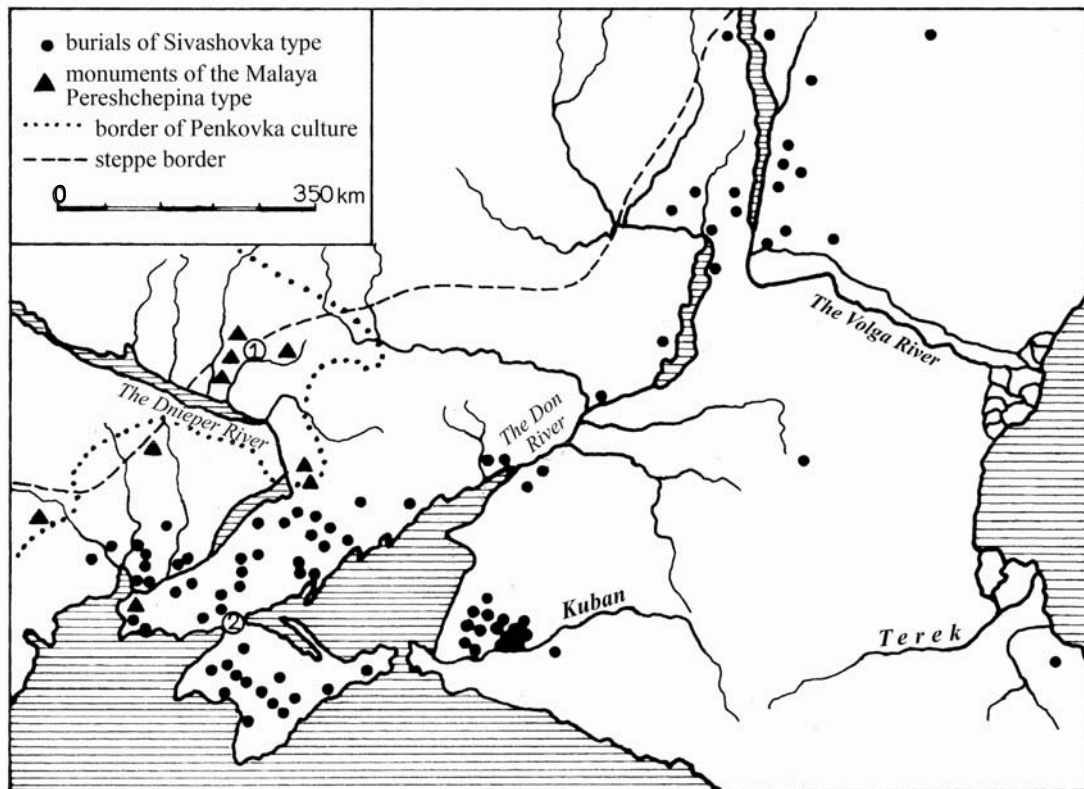
As reported in the Nominalia, it was Kurt who ascended the throne following the brief vicegerency of Gostun. He ruled for 60 years, descended from the Dulo clan and came to power in 'shegor vechem', that is, in the year of the Ox, third month. Some historians identify

the years of Kurt's rule with the years of his life and calculate them in different ways. According to the latest attempts to chronologize the Nominalia, that would be 605–665 [Moskov, 1988, pp. 181–209]. It has long been established that Kurt and Kubrat are the same person. As the most prominent political figure in Eastern Europe of the 7th century, his name became known from various sources as *Koubratos*, *Krobatos*, *Krobatus*, *Qetrades*, *Hudbadr*, *Hudbaat*, and *Hubraat*. There is little information about his life. John of Nikiu, whose Chronicles were compiled in the 7th century and later translated into the Ethiopian language, relayed that 'Qetrades, chief of Moutanes (Huns), the nephew of Organa, had been baptized in the city of Constantinople, and received into the Christian community in his childhood and had grown up in the imperial palace. And between him and Heraclius (the Emperor) a great affection and peace had prevailed, and after Heraclius' death he had shown his affection to his sons and his wife Martina because of the kindness had shown him. And after he had been baptised he overcame all the barbarians and heathens through Virtue of life-giving and holy baptism' [Artamonov, 1962, p. 161].

The available sources do not allow us to reconstruct the exact chronology of Kubrat's life. Without any doubt, already in his early days he was connected with the Byzantine court. It is not clear when he was actually baptized. Patriarch Nikephoros wrote that in the year 619 'the king (*Greek*—*kirios*) of the Huns arrived in Byzantine with his archons and doryphoroses (spearmen) requesting the Emperor initiate him in the Christian sacraments. The Emperor willingly received him, and Roman archons adopted Hun archons at the holy baptismal font, as their spouses did to the Huns' wives. Those initiated into the holy sacraments were honored with gifts and titles from the Emperor, while the Emperor bestowed the title of patricius upon their leader and benevolently released him back to the Huns land' [Chichurov, 1980, pp. 159, 168–169; Nikephoros, 1960, p. 291]. This record is sometimes referred to in connection with Kubrat's baptism, although he is not named in the source [Zlatarski, 1994, p. 94]. Patriarch Nikephoros further writes that Kubrat received this title later, in 632–635. It

can be therefore assumed that it was Organa or some other 'Hunnish' king who was baptized in the year 619 [Artamonov, 1962, pp. 157–158]. For Patriarch Nikephoros the 'Huns' and 'Bulgars' were equivalent ethnonyms. There is no doubt that in 619 Byzantine diplomacy succeeded in bringing the Bulgar nobility to the side of the Empire, thus securing allies for preserving Byzantine presence in Crimea, where the Empire's main strongholds in the Northern Black Sea region—Khersones and Bosphorus—still existed, having survived the troubled years following the Hun invasion. This was the continuation of the same policy through which the Utigur leader Grod (Gord) had been baptized in the times of Justinian I (525–565). The crisis and disintegration of the Turkic Khaganate in 588 weakened the Byzantine-Turkic alliance that had been directed against Persia. Byzantium sought an alliance with local tribes, which in turn readily accepted the radical rapprochement, including adoption of Christianity. The arrival of the Hun leader in Constantinople could not have been a chance occurrence. In fact, Emperor Heraclius was in a quite difficult situation in 619. The war with Persia that had started in 605 was going badly for the Empire. In 619 Persians gained control over Syria and Egypt and threatened other Byzantine provinces. They established an alliance with Avars, who had never stopped raiding the Balkan territories of the Empire. Finding itself between two enemies and not able to count on its former allies—the Turks, who were preoccupied with their own problems in Middle and Central Asia, Byzantium was looking for new allies. Neighboring pro-Avarian Kutrigurs, the Bulgar-related tribes of the Azov Sea region, could be useful for the Empire [Zlatarski, 1994, p. 95].

Obviously Organa was a well known personality, as Kubrat was specified through his name. As was mentioned, he might actually be the Gostun from the Nominalia, though the names only vaguely resemble each other. Some believe he was an appanage Turkic khan who governed local tribes in the steppes between the Azov Sea and Caucasia. A Chinese source calls him Mohotu-Heu (Hero-Prince). An internal struggle for power flared up in 630–631 in the Turkic Khaganate. It was con-



Archaeological sites of the 7th century in East European steppe.  
1—Mala Pereshchepina, 2—Sivashovka

ducted between the confederation of Nushibi tribes supporting the Khagan Ashina clan and the confederation of Dulu tribes who lived in Middle Asia. Mohotu-Heu belonged to or was supported by the Dulu clan. He killed Tun-djabgu-kagan and seized the throne, but he also perished during the war. This apparently served as grounds for his nephew to cut the weak ties with the Khaganate center and to use the periphery vassal regions to build an independent territory headed by the ruling Dulo clan, to which he indeed belonged as a nephew of Organa, being most likely a son of his sister [Artamonov, 1962, p. 162; Gumilyov, 1993, pp. 202–203]. The separation of Bulgar tribes from the Khaganate center also had another consequence. The closely related Khazars, who lived to the east of the Bulgars in the Lower Volga and north-western Caspian Sea region, took the Nushibi's side in the internecine war. This sparked hostility between them that ended 30 years later when Khazars occupied Bulgar lands.

Thus, by 630 the Bulgar tribes had freed themselves from direct subjugation to the Tur-

kic Khaganate, but this had happened naturally, without political demonstrations or military clashes, as Kubrat not only did not deny the Turkic tradition, but demonstrated his connection with it.

Relations with Avars turned out to be a more substantial factor for establishing the state. Patriarch Nikephoros wrote in this regard: 'At that time (634–640) Kubrat, Organa's nephew, the ruler of the Onogundurs, revolted against the Avar Khagan and, rendering insults, expelled Khagan's people that were with him from his lands. And (Kubrat) sent an embassy to Heraclius and made peace with him, which they maintained till the end of their lives. (In return, Heraclius) sent gifts and conferred on him the title of patricius' [Chichurov, 1980, p. 161]. The Greek 'laos' (people) is sometimes translated into Bulgarian as 'voisko' (army) [Nikephoros, 1960, p. 294], but an army in the literal sense of the word could hardly go so far east to a foreign land.

The historical validity of Patriarch Nikephoros' record about the presence of Avars in the Northern Black Sea region is sometimes

viewed as quite realistic, but also as rather unlikely. A number of scholars hypothesize that following their migration to Pannonia in 568, Avars retained their control over the Kutrigurs remaining in the region. It has been said that the eastern wing of the Avar Khaganate was in the Northern Black Sea steppe region, where an Avar prince ruled on the Khakan's behalf, with his headquarters on the Mid-Pannonian Plain. This belief is based on the resemblance of certain articles (golden pseudo-buckles, golden horn for drinks) from Mala Pereshchepina in Ukraine and Bocsa in Hungary [Laszlo, 1955, pp. 283–284]. But this interpretation now looks unconvincing. It is unlikely that the Avar Khakans had a strong political presence in the Northern Black Sea region or a military administrative center from which they exercised control over the local tribes. The Avar influence, however, should not be completely dismissed. Noting that the center of the Avar Khaganate was situated too far away to exert any real pressure on the Northern Black Sea steppe, some scholars tend to conclude that, since there are no other sources about Avars being in the northern Black Sea region or the Khaganate weakening after 626, real Avar influence in this region is rather unlikely. It is conceded, as a hypothesis, that the episode might not relate to the Khagan people or warriors, but to the Avar embassy that Kubrat expelled [Chichurov, 1980, pp. 175–176, fn. 65]. This point of view is explained by the fact that Great Bulgaria was located east of the Don and Azov Sea, where Avars, as all researchers believe, never had a presence, since this was the zone of Turkic Khaganate influence, and therefore it could be quite possible that Patriarch Nikephoros was referring to the Turkic and not the Avar Khagan [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 75]. According to yet another opinion, the Byzantine chronicler misunderstood his original source and confused the information about the 631–632 Avar-Bulgar conflict in the Khaganate center or the recollections about the overthrow of the Avar Khaganate early in the 9th century, when the rise of Danubian Bulgars was linked in Byzantium with the decline of Avars [Pohl, 1988, pp. 273–274].

However, these assertions are unconvincing. First of all, it is unlikely that a well educated and well informed writer like Patriarch Nikephoros could confuse reports of his sources, shifting the events back by 200 years. Despite the Avar Khaganate crisis that started in 626, at the beginning of the 630s Avars probably still maintained their ties with the Black Sea Kutrigurs. The latter recognized the authority of the Avar Khagan, constituting the ethnic mass on their territories, which separated the states of two old enemies—Turks and Avars [Artamonov, 1962, p. 160]. It must be acknowledged that the researchers who long ago accepted the report about the Kubrat rebellion against Avars as a historical fact were correct [Zlatarski, 1994, p. 920]. It is not clear what the 'laos' were who resided in the Kubrat lands on behalf of the Avar Khagan—a people, a host, a permanent diplomatic representation or some delegation. In any case, we do not find it appropriate to confer the Avarian title of 'Khagan' on Kubrat just because he was considered an heir to the reigning Avars in the Northern Black Sea region, and because of how similar articles from noble Avar tombs are the artifacts from the Pereshchepina Treasure [Werner, 1984]. Byzantine sources call him 'kirios' (lord, sovereign), but it is not known what title he applied to himself.

It is difficult to precisely date the events described by Patriarch Nikephoros. He begins his narrative with the words 'at that time' without specifying the actual date. Before 'that time' he mentions the 'life-giving' cross was captured from Persians and returned to Jerusalem, which happened in 629, while after 'that time' troops were sent against Arabs to Egypt, which took place just after 640. Therefore the date for the rebellion against Avars is determined in different ways: 634–640 [Chichurov, 1980, p. 161], 635–638 [Nikephoros, 1997, p. 40], 635 [Zlatarski, 1994, p. 93], 632 [Artamonov, 1962, p. 163], and 631–635 [Bozhilov, Gyuzelev, 1999, p. 76]. Considering the above dates, the year 635 can be tentatively accepted for the formation of Great Bulgaria.

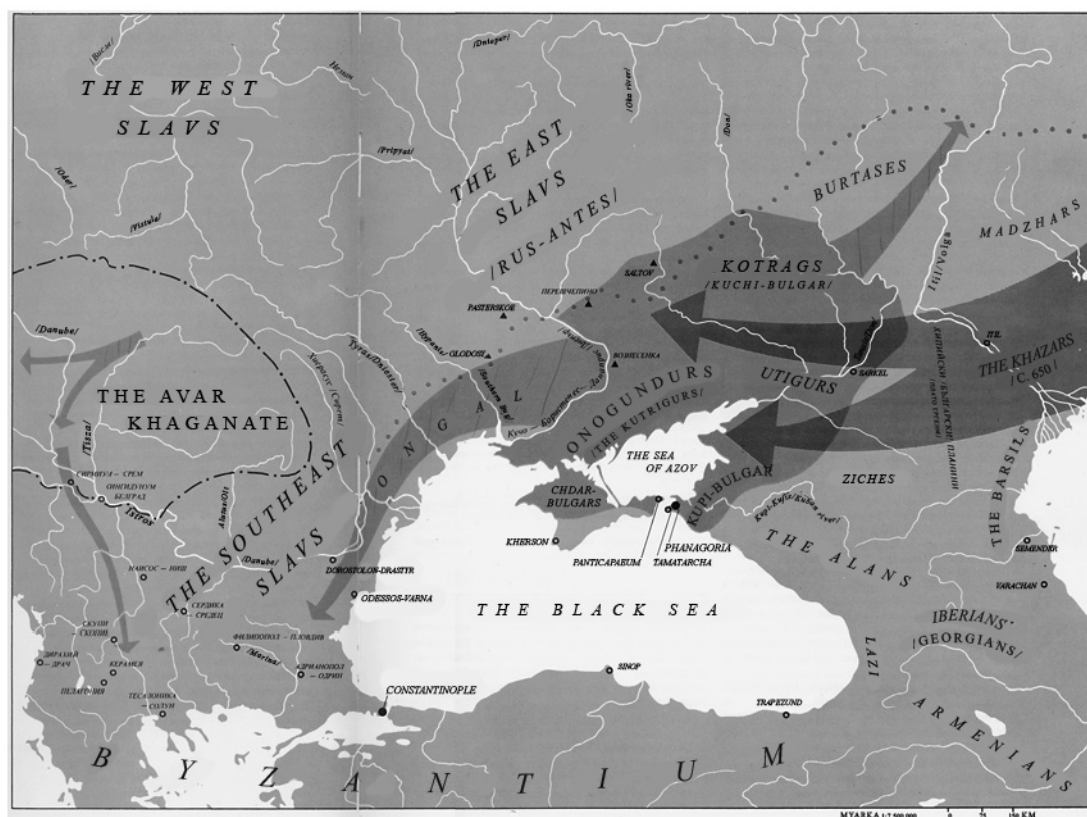
Theophanes the Confessor names 'Krobat, the sovereign of the mentioned (Great)

Bulgaria and the Kotrags' as the founder of the state. Patriarch Nikephoros mentions him as 'Kubrat, the ruler of the Onogundurs' and 'someone named Kuvrat, the former lord of these tribes' [Nikephoros, 1960, pp. 261, 295; Chichurov, 1980, pp. 60–61, 161–162]. Nikephoros specified that the tribes he spoke about were the Huns, Bulgars and Kotrags. The geography of the tribes within the Kubrat state shows that he was the unifier and ruler over all major tribes in the Black Sea and Azov Sea region steppes, known from the 6–7th century sources. There are no grounds whatsoever to look for 'two Kubrats' in this region, as has been proposed by some researchers—the first living in the Kuban region in Great Bulgaria proper and the other being Organa's nephew, Heraclius' friend, who lived in the Middle Dnieper region and allegedly owned the Golden Treasures from Pereshchepina [Zalesskaya and others, 1997, pp. 99, 143–144]. Later this hypothesis was fundamentally refuted and the concept of one Kubrat was reinstated on the basis of rather questionable 13th century Bulgar annals 'Gazi-Baraj tarikhy' [L'vova, 2002, pp. 223–227], though it had been clear already from the Byzantine chronicles.

The international situation at the time Great Bulgaria was formed was extraordinarily favorable for Kubrat's success. An internecine war had flared up in the Western Turkic Khaganate in 630–631, while the Eastern Turkic Khaganate fell under the blows of China and ceased to exist for 50 years [IT, 2002, p. 228 and the next]. All this put an end to Turkic claims to the far western domains and increased the role of local tribes in the Byzantine-Persian conflict that had erupted. By 626 the Persians still had the upper hand, but the unsuccessful siege of Constantinople the same year conducted with the Avars and their subordinate Slavs marked the rapid decline of the two allies. The next year Emperor Heraclius inflicted a crushing defeat on the Persians under the walls of ancient Nineveh and later took the treasures of the Sasanian dynasty from the Shah palace in Dastagird. Apparently the silver Sasanid vessels from the Pereshchepina Treasure are actually Heraclius' trophy gifts to his friend and future ally Kubrat.

The strengthening of the Empire's positions in Europe signified the approaching decline of the Avar Khaganate. Its military and political importance rapidly diminished after 626. Even before that, in 623, a certain Samo had attempted to unite the Slav tribes who were subordinate to the Avars and establish an independent state, which demonstrated the internal weakness of the Khaganate. The internecine feud of 631–632 only added to this. After the death of Khagan Bayan, the Avar and Bulgar groups each proposed their own candidates to the throne. An armed conflict followed that was won by Avars. The surviving 9000 Bulgars migrated to the neighboring Bavaria, where King Dagobert at first received them sympathetically, but later ordered them killed. Only 700 men escaped the slaughter. They were later taken by Alcek to the lands of the Veneti [Pohl, 1988, p. 269]. The unsuccessful actions of the Bulgars in the Khaganate proper could have instigated Kubrat's anti-Avar movement on their own, but the main reason was the Bulgars believed they were entitled to a political inheritance on the steppes east of the Carpathian Mountains.

Byzantium welcomed these claims, as it was interested in isolating the Khaganate by backing a new pro-Byzantine political unit in the Northern Black Sea region. It is unlikely that Byzantium just stood by and waited for Kubrat to succeed. Most probably, it rendered him moral and financial support, and it cannot be at all excluded that the experienced Byzantine diplomats had been doing everything to incite the Bulgars against the Avars. The significance of the personal friendship between the two rulers Kubrat and Heraclius should not be discounted either. That is why a bilateral treaty was signed right at the end. The rulers observed the treaty throughout their whole lives. The Empire accorded a singular, personal respect to Kubrat by making him a Byzantine patrician. This highest distinction was bestowed upon neighboring 'barbarian' rulers by the Empire very rarely and only after they accepted Christianity. Traditionally the patrician received patrician clothes and a waist belt set, as well as expensive gifts. These can be seen in the Mala Pereshchepina Treasure. The big ceremonial golden buckle probably belonged to the patrician waist belt set



Great Bulgaria of the Kurbat era and the Proto-Bulgar settlement  
(compiled by V. Gyuzelev, P. Koledarov)

of Kubrat, and some of the decorations were made in Constantinople jewelry workshops. Once he became an ally of the Empire, Kubrat received the backing of the biggest and most powerful state in the world at the time, not counting faraway China. With Persia cast from power, Byzantine had no other serious rivals. Although the Arabs launched the invasion of the Byzantine Middle East at this very time, in 635, the news could not yet have reached Kubrat's court.

Greek chronicles write of the state founded by Kubrat as 'Old Great Bulgaria' ('xe palajya megalī Bulgaria'). Anastasius Bibliothecarius, who translated the chronicles by Theophanes, called it 'Vulgaria est magna' [Anastasius Bibliothecarius, 1960, p. 248]. It was old relative to the newer Danube Bulgaria that existed at the time (end of the 8th – beginning of the 9th centuries) when the chroniclers lived and wrote. The word 'megalī' literally means 'large', that is, a large territory (compared to the ter-

ritory of the new Bulgaria). Some scholars are of the opinion that the word 'magna' was used to distinguish the region of the secondary colonisation from the initial, earlier territory; compare, for example, Magna Graecia, Magna Scythia, etc. [Trubachev, 1974; Stepanov, 1995, p. 9]. If so, then it is necessary to determine in relation to which initial territory was Old Great Bulgaria (Magna Bulgaria, located between the Don and Kuban) secondary? The answer to this question is not yet clear. The boundaries of the supposed eastern (initial) territory where the Bulgars originated are still unknown, and the speculations made in this regard remain unconvincing. Only one thing is clear—the Bulgars came to Eastern Europe as a result of the migration of the Huns; and they formed ethnically from Turkic, Ugric and Iranian elements [Beshevliev, 1981; Rashiev, 2000, pp. 13–16]. The 12th century Greek chronicler, Michael the Syrian, wrote that three brothers—Bulgarios, Khazarig and



an unknown—left internal Scythia and headed west. Khazarig stayed in the Don area. Bulgarios went westwards, reached the Danube and requested permission from the Byzantine Emperor Maurice (582–602) to settle in his land, pledging to defend the borders. This legend [Rashev, 2003] does not clearly outline the initial territory, especially since no matter where it was located in the vast expanses of Internal Scythia, it was not only Bulgarian. Maybe the Northern Black Sea steppes were this initial territory? As already noted, Ernakh headquarters were located there in the second half of the 5th century, and Kubrat was Ernakh's direct heir, according to the *Nominalia*. A series of treasure hoards appeared in that same area in the 7th century, including the Pereshchepina Treasure, indicating that it was the residence of a rich aristocratic group and it covered an area that can be considered central in relation to other parts of the territory. Unfortunately, no other source has yet been found that would give grounds for calling these lands 'Bulgaria' and therefore this possibility should be regarded only as a hypothesis.

Let us review the main sources that give us at least a general idea about the boundaries of Great Bulgaria.

Theophanes gave a detailed description of the geography of the Eastern Azov Sea region and outlined the location of Bulgaria quite clearly: '... from the lake itself (lake of Meotida, modern Azov Sea) and up till the river called Kuphis (Kuban), abundant with Bulgarian xyston fish, stretches Old Great Bulgaria and live the Kotrags akin to the Bulgars'. Nikephoros narrates literally almost the same: 'By the lake of Meotida, along the river Kuphis, there lies Bulgaria, in the old times called Great, and dwell the so-called Kotrags, their (Huns, Bulgars) fellow tribesmen' [Chichurov, 1980, pp. 60, 161–162; Theophan, 1960, pp. 261, 295]. No doubt, the chroniclers believed Great Bulgaria to be situated in the lower Kuban area [Chichurov, 1976; review of opinions: Dimitrov, 1987, pp. 107–112]. Theophanes, however, says that Kubrat was 'the ruler of the mentioned Bulgaria and Kotrags'. No doubt, the Kotrags is an abbreviated form of the name Kutrigurs, who lived to the west of the river Don. To the east of the Don, where Great Bulgaria was

located, the Avars, against whom Kubrat revolted, had never had any presence or influence. This may be applied only to the territories inhabited by the Kutrigurs. An opinion has been expressed, therefore, that the actual western border of the Kubrat state ran along the Dnieper or the Southern Bug [Zlatarski, 1994, p. 92; Artamonov, 1962, pp. 164–166; Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 90].

The geographical distribution of 7th century burial locations is used to validate the delineation of more expanded contours of the Kubrat state borders. The borders of this territory may be specified as follows: southern—the Black Sea northern coast (excluding the zone of mountains and southern coast in Crimea) and the Caucasus mountainside till the eastern end of the Stavropol highlands or further to the east; eastern—the Caspian Depression and Ergeni watershed between the Don and Volga; northern—the border of steppes and forest steppes; western—the Southern Bug. This vast territory (with an approximate area of around 450,000 sq. km) is common for steppe states and empires where single tribes and clans had large areas for nomadic cattle breeding.

Some scholars are inclined to look for a permanent capital center of the state, the residential palace of khan Kubrat. As is known, long ago, but without providing a rationale, Phanagoria, an ancient Greek colony on the Taman peninsula where allegedly 'according to the available data' Kubrat had died, was declared the capital of Great Bulgaria [Istoriya, 1966, p. 331]. This was done based on Theophanes' assertion that the town of Phanagoria was situated in the area of Lake Meotida, where he believed Great Bulgaria was located. The text does not refer to this town as the capital. Besides, the archaeological research conducted at its ruins has so far failed to produce evidence of any relics of the 7th century that could be linked to Kubrat. The small local population of Phanagoria at that time lived as close as possible to the sea. Those coastal areas, unfortunately, were destroyed by the battering of waves and today rest on the bottom of the bay [Pletneva, 2000, p. 145]. It may be assumed that Kubrat's 'capital' was not so different from the headquarters of rulers of other steppe states whose people lived a nomadic

life. Most probably, there were winter and summer headquarters, with the winter quarters somewhere on the sea shore (but hardly on the Taman peninsula, which was isolated by swamps), and the summer quarters on the northern boundary of the steppe. Their exact locations are not yet known.

The people of the state were ethnically diverse. Several tribes lived on its territory that were of common origins. They spoke kindred languages, had similar lifestyles, burial ceremonies, and beliefs. There were Iranian, Turkic and Ugric tribes. Each had a more or less a permanent territory. The Bulgars were the lead tribe, giving their name to the state. The Latin Chronography of 354 places the tribe of the Vulgares in the North Caucasus region. The Armenian historian Moses of Khoren (Movses Khorenatsi), whose reports on the Bulgars are at times considered not credible, and his compatriot Pseudo-Zacharias, confirm this location. The Syrian author Zacharias Rhetor located the 'Burgars' to the north of the Caucasus. The same area, between Abasgoi and Alans, according to Procopius of Caesarea, was inhabited by the Bruhi tribe ('Bulhi' of Anania Shirakatsi), a possible form of the name 'Bulgar' [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 73]. Jordanes added that the Bulgars lived 'above the Pontic Sea' in the 6th century.

In the 7th century the Bulgars were identified with the Onogundurs, or rather the Onogundurs were regarded as a Bulgar branch. Theophanes' assertion that 'the ancient history of the Onogundur Bulgars and Kotrags should be told' [Theophan, 1960, p. 261] is sometimes incorrectly translated as '... the ancient history of the Onogundurs, Bulgars and Kotrags' [Chichurov, 1980, p. 60]. After all, sources refer to Kubrat as the ruler of 'the mentioned Bulgaria (where the Onogundur-Bulgars were living) and the Kotrags' (Theophanes) and 'the ruler of the Onogundurs', 'the lord of these tribes', that is of the Huns, Bulgars and Kotrags (Nikephoros). Onogundurs is a form of the name of the Onogurs, the tribe that settled together with the Saragurs and Ogurs in 463 to the north of the Caucasus. Zacharias Rhetor refers to them as the Avnagur, and the Raven-

nese anonymous places *Patria Onogoria* in the Azov Sea area. In the 6th century, the Onogurs became known to Byzantine chroniclers as the Utigurs, and in the 7th century as the Onogudurs. Theophanes calls the people of Asparukh 'the Bulgar people', but already in 713 the subjects of his son khan Tervel were called 'Onogurs-Bulgars', and in the 10th century Constantine Porphyrogenetos knew that the same Bulgars had been earlier referred to as the Onogundurs. This name can be viewed as an assemblage, being a mixture of similar names: Huns, Onogurs, Utigurs, Bulgars and Onogundurs-Bulgars. They lived in the steppes between the Caucasus, Azov Sea and the Ergeni. The 7th century Armenian Geography contends that 'Aspar-Hruk, son of Hubraat, who fled from the Khazars from the Bulgar mountains...' and further on—'from the Hippeios mountains fled the son of Hudbadr' [Patkanov, 1883, pp. 26, 28]. Hippien (or Horse) mountain is also called Bulgarian mountain, which is identified with the present-day Ergeni [Dimitrov, 1987, p. 106, v. 2].

The same source adds something significantly new to the geography of the Bulgars. It says that in Asian Sarmatia, in the steppes between the Don, the Volga and the Caspian Sea, specifically, north of the rivers Valdani (Kuban) and Psevkhros (?) flowing from the Caucasus, 'live peoples of the Turks and the Bulgars who are called by the names of the rivers: Kupi-Bulgar, Duchi-Bulgar, Oghondor (Voghondor)-Blkar—the new comers, Chdar-Bolkar (Patkanov 1883, p. 29).' Obviously, not all the branches of the Bulgars should be linked to the rivers near which they lived. For example, Oghondor-Blkar is certainly the Onogundur-Bulgars of Theophanes. K. Patkanov explained the term 'new comers' originates from the migration of some of the Bulgars through the Caucasus to Armenia, according to Movses Khorenatsi. He calls them Vgndur-Bulgars adding that they supposedly received the name from their leader, Vunda (Patkanov 1883, p. 2425). It is believed that they are called 'the new comers' because it was the Onoguroghondors who migrated to the Danube lead by Asparukh. There is no doubt that

the Kupi-Bulgars were named after the Kufis river (Kuban river) The origin of the name Duchi is unknown. It has been suggested that it should be read as 'Kuchi' or 'Kocho' to identify it with the Dnieper or the Dnieper estuary, and to see Kutrigur-Kotrags in Kuchi-Bulgar (Artamonov 1962, p. 168). It is difficult to provide a specific location for the Chdar-Bolgar. They have been placed in different regions of the East European steppes (Dimitrov 1987, p. 49) and even in Western Europe (Gening, Khalikov 1964, p. 116).

The second main tribe of the Bulgarian circle is the Kotrags. It was already proven that *Kotrags* is a short form of Kutrigurs in Byzantine sources from the 6th century. In the 7th century, they were still living on the steppes of the Northern Black Sea region to the west of the Don. In written sources, they are directly called 'fellow tribesmen (congeners) with the Bulgars'.

Patriarch Nikephoros writes about the Huns as an ethnic group separate from the Bulgars, Onogundurs, or Kotrags. It is unclear if he meant any particular tribe or heirs to the Huns. We should remember that in the 4th and 5th centuries all the tribes of the Hunnish union were called Huns or Scythians. This can be seen in Byzantine sources until the 10th century. However, it is believed that in this case, we are talking about a group of people that was different from the rest of the inhabitants of Great Bulgaria. It is unknown what the Armenian geographer meant by saying that the Turks lived near Bulgarians. One can assume that the related Khazars were called like this. It is no wonder that their language is classified as an Old Turkic (Western) language. Besides, it was the Khazars who were the real heirs of the Western Turkic Khaganate, and their leaders took the Turkic title of Khagan.

The fact that several ethnic groups of Great Bulgaria separated indicates that its territory was divided by tribes. Merging tribal areas suggest that the tribal principle was overcome and the territorial-administrative organization grew in importance. It was combined with the traditions of the steppe states in which territory was divided between a khan's brothers or sons. According to Byzantine sources, Kubrat had five sons who, after

the state collapsed, 'moved away from each other with his own people', 'each one separated with his own nation' (Chichurov 1980, pp. 61, 162). The eldest son, Bayan (Batbayan) may have owned the territory of the Kuban steppes where the Kupi-Bulgarians lived. Kotrag, whose name is most likely an eponym, controlled all or part of the territory of the Kutrigur-Kotrags, that is, the steppes west of the Don. It is unknown where the possessions of Kuber and Alcek were. Kuber owned the territory of the Onogundur-Bulgars in the eastern part of the Azov Sea region as he was their sovereign. Asparukh was the direct heir to this territory. His Bulgars, who settled on the Danube, are considered to be the descendants of the Onogundurs. It was the practice to pass inheritances from the father to the youngest son, not the eldest one. Although Asparukh ranks third on the list of the Byzantine chroniclers, we can assume that he was most likely the youngest of all of them (Stepanov, 2000).

There are not enough facts available about the military-administrative organisation of Great Bulgaria and the relationship between the individual tribes and social groups. A possible solution is to look at similar institutions in the steppe states and societies of steppe Eurasia (Yordanov, I–III).

Great Bulgaria was surrounded by many tribes that were its immediate neighbors. Accordingly, Alans and Khazars lived in Central and Eastern Ciscaucasia. Some Arab sources point out the similarity between the origin and the language of the Bulgars and Khazars (Novoseltsev, 1990, pp. 76–81). They turned out to be connected with warring groups in the Western Turkic Khaganate; however, there is no information about any clashes between them before Kubrat's death. On the northern border of the Black Sea steppes, the Bulgars' neighbors were the Antes, who were the bearers of the Penkovka archaeological culture. The written sources do not contain information on the relations between the two neighboring nations, but the analysis of the archaeological sites in the contact zone shows that the Antes and the Bulgars maintained a peaceful relationship possibly because both of them were Byzantine-oriented (Gavritukhin, Oblomsky 1996, pp. 145–146).

In foreign policy, Kubrat remained loyal to his friend, Heraclius. Moreover, after his death in 641, he took part in the struggle that broke out for the throne in Constantinople. Some of the Byzantine nobility supported the rights of the sons of Constantine, the elder son of Heraclius by his first marriage. Others insisted on the rights of Heraklion, who was a son from his second wife, Martina. John of Nikiû states that Kurbat (Ketrades) himself was supposedly the initiator of the second 'plan' since he was devoted to Martina and her sons (HIB, 1, p. 78). Eventually, the first group won, enthroning Constans II (641–668) after his father, Constantine, died unexpectedly. This apparently didn't negatively impact the relations between Kurbat and the new Emperor, because the most recent coins from the Pereshchepina Treasure (minted 642–646) belong to Constans.

Kubrat died 'during the time of Constantine, who died in the west' (Chichurov 1980, p. 162). This is in fact Constans II, who was going to bring the capital of the Roman Empire back to Italy, where he spent the last years of his life (664–668). There is an assumption that the Bulgarian ruler died during the 'Italian' period of his reign. However, in reality, it is necessary to consider the entire period of Constans' reign, because the place of his death is explained so as not to confuse him with other Emperors of the same name. On the basis of numismatic evidence it can be assumed that Kubrat died in about 650, or even in the next decade. Nominalia reports that Bezmer ruled after him for three years. He took the throne in 'shegor vechem', in the year of the Ox, the third month, which corresponds to the period from 665 (death of Kubrat) till 668, according to new calculations. It is believed that Bezmer is Bayan (Batbayan), the eldest son of Kurbat. He carried out the duties of heir apparent until Khazars arrived.

In the sources there are two versions of the causes of the fall of Great Bulgaria.

The Byzantine authors claim that this happened because of a disagreement between Kubrat's sons, even though he warned them in his lifetime, 'to be in any case not separated from each other, so that they could guard their power by their mutual benevo-

lence'. But they 'separated, and each one broke away with his own people' (Chichurov 1980, p. 162),

As we noted before, Kubrat had five sons. The eldest son, Bayan, stayed 'in the land of the ancestors', becoming a vassal of the Khazar Khagan. The second son, Kotrag, crossed the river Tanais (the Don) and settled 'across from' Bayan. Kotrag, an eponym or real name, was the leader of the Kotrag-Kutrigurs. Modern authors sometimes arbitrarily add to a source, claiming that after the crossing, he went north, and at the confluence of the Volga and Kama rivers he established the Volga Bulgaria. The sources do not contain any indication of this. The third son, Asparukh, went to the Danube. The fourth one, whose name is not reported by the sources, settled down in Pannonia, and signed a contract with the Avar Khagan. His name, Kuber, is known later from another source, when he attempts to create his own state in the south-western part of the Balkan Peninsula. The fifth one's name was Alcek. At first he also settled in the Avar Khaganate, but later he migrated to northern Italy and submitted to the Byzantines and the Lombards under King Grimalda (662–671). Some scholars tend to regard him not as Kubrat's son, but as Alcek's successor of the period 631–632 [Pohl, 1988, p. 269].

The second, Khazar-Armenian version asserts that the state came to an end only because of the Khazar's military pressure on the Bulgars, pressure that was only put on those Bulgars who moved beyond the Danube. The Khazar Khagan Joseph wrote in his famous letter: 'The land in which I now live was formerly occupied by the Wununtur (Bulgars). Our ancestors, the Khazars, ... fought with them ..., they left their country and fled while the Khazars pursued them as far as the Danube River ...' [Artamonov, 1962, pp. 171–172].

In reality the disintegration of the state was influenced by the fact that the appanage structure, under which each son was a semi-autonomous ruler of his territory, could not ensure full centralisation. This disintegration became extreme, which manifested itself not only in the isolation of individual territories

of Great Bulgaria, but also in the resettlement of kindred tribes. It can therefore be assumed that an internecine feud, resembling even a civil war, occurred among Kubrat's sons. It resulted in resettlement, which the neighboring Khazars used to their advantage. Initially they just raided, but then they staged a real war, which ended in the subjugation of Bayan, who started paying them tribute. By the end of the 7th century the territory of Great Bulgaria was a part of the territory of a new political entity on the East European steppes—the Khazar Khaganate. As for Byzantine diplomacy, it made sure that the Khazars preserved the Empire's influence in the Northern Black Sea region, thus acting in this regard as successors to the Bulgars.

The formation and existence of Great Bulgaria was a significant event in the 7th century history of the East European steppes. It was the first time following the breakup of the Hunnic Empire that an integration of kindred steppe tribes was achieved. As the Huns had done earlier, the Bulgars became a powerful and influential nation around which the steppe tribes unified. The split of Kubrat's sons and their migration to the Danube and Middle Volga may be in a way regarded as the end of the so-called Great Migration Period. The disintegration of states in the late 7th century led to or partially coincided with certain significant ethnocultural changes that have been established by archaeological research on the steppe periphery. These include treasures and fires in the areas of the Penkovka and Korchak cultures, some new elements in the culture of the Avar Khaganate, a new wave of Slavs migration in the Lower Danube, etc. [Gavritukhin, Oblomsky, 1996, p. 147; Rashev, 2002]. The formation of two new Bulgarian states in the Lower Danube and Middle Volga was the most significant outcome of the breakup of Great Bulgaria and resettlement of its peoples. Bayan descendants who remained in the Khazar Khaganate retained a special place in the khaganate and acquired the name of Black Bulgarians.

The culture of Great Bulgaria was a mainly nomadic one that from spring to late au-

tumn moved about the steppe, while in winter stayed in seaside camps. This culture can be analyzed mostly by the artifacts of funeral and memorial rites. There are two known groups of artifacts [Rashev, 2000, pp. 37–48, Prikhodnyuk, 2001, pp. 25–41, Pictures 15–24, 38–43]. One mostly contains golden and silver articles: arms, harness, decorations, vessels. It is located in the area of the Middle and Lower Dnieper. Some of the artifacts are situated on the territory of the neighboring Penkovka culture. The most remarkable trove is the famous Pereshchepina Treasure, which contained pieces belonging to a tribal leader of the highest rank: a golden horn-shaped rhyton for drinks, a wooden staff covered with gold, a waist-belt set decorated with plaques, etc. [Werner, 1984, Werner, 1988]. Three golden signet rings had Greek monograms 'Xobratoy Patrikoy' ('Kubrat the Patrician'). One of them was deciphered as 'Batorxanoy Patrikoy', meaning Organa [Zallesskaya and others, 1997, p. 42]. The Bulgarian title of Kubrat is not known. The Byzantine title was most likely considered more prestigious in foreign relations. Articles of similar nature are found in the 'treasure troves' from Kelegej, Novye Sanzhary, Glodtsy, etc.

The second group includes over a hundred burial sites of medium- and lower-class people [Rashev, 2000, pp. 16–37; Prikhodnyuk, 2001, pp. 39–40, Pictures 25–37]. All of them are inlet burial mounds located in the steppe of three groups: the Black Sea-Crimean, Azov Sea-Kuban and the Volga regions. The first two groups fit entirely in the already delineated territory of Great Bulgaria, being dated from that same period, hence there no grounds to link them with the 'early Khazars', as it is sometimes done [Komar, 2000]. The third one, the Volga group, belonged to a kindred population that maintained a loyal relationship with their neighbors, being probably vassals of Great Bulgaria. Descendants of those people later found themselves on the same path as the Bulgar group that migrated northwards and founded Volga Bulgaria.

## CHAPTER 2

### First Bulgar Tsardom on the Danube

*Rasho Rashev*

The history of the Danubian Bulgars in the Middle Ages is traditionally divided into three periods: the First Bulgarian Empire (681–1018), the period of Byzantine domination (1018–1185), and the Second Bulgarian Empire (1185–1396).

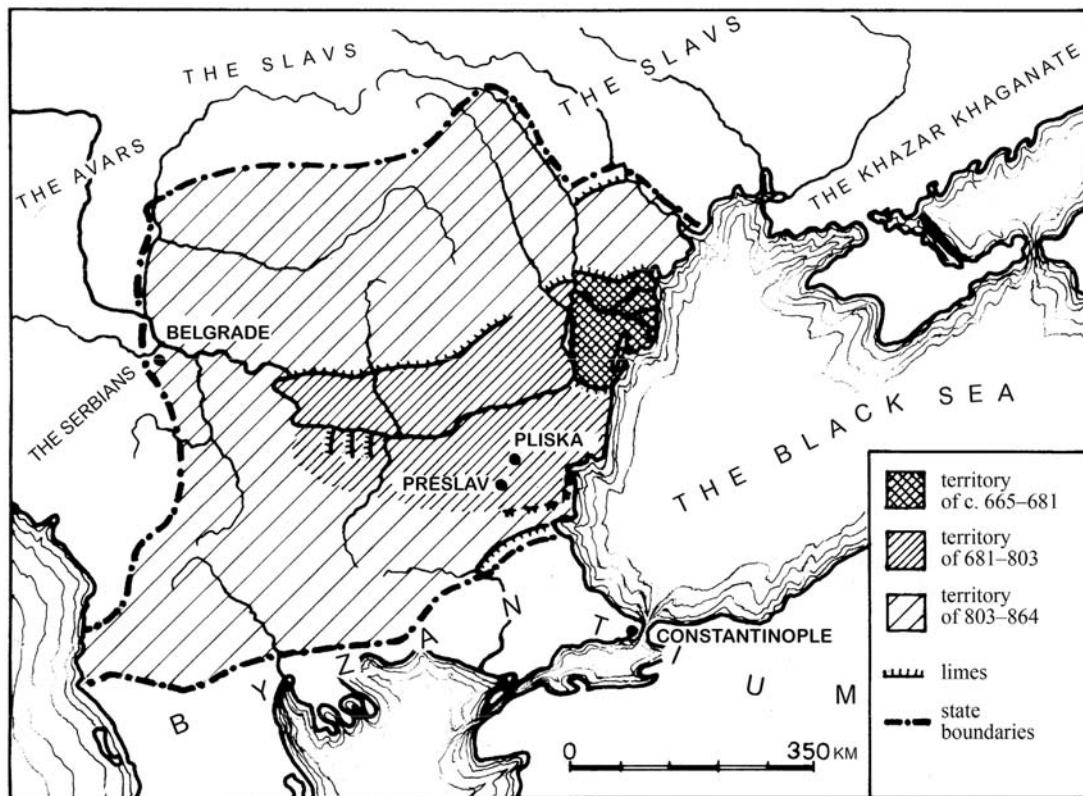
The first period was the direct continuation of the history of Great Bulgaria. To summarize Bulgarian statehood before they came to the Danube, Imennik reports the following: 'These five princes ruled on the other side of the Danube for 515 years with closely-cut hair. And then Prince Ispereh came to that side of the Danube' [KhIB, Vol. 1, p. 87]. Ispereh-Espereh (ancient Greek Asparukh), the third son of Kubrat, crossed the Dnieper and Dniester and stopped at the Danube at a place called in the Bulgar language '*Oglos*' or '*Onglos*' [Theophan, 1960, p. 263; Nikephoros, 1960, p. 295; Chichurov, 1980, pp. 61, 162]. An Armenian geographer claims that Aspar-Khruk settled on the island between the arms of the Danube river delta called Pyuki (Peuce). It is now recognized that the settlement was located in the lowest part of the Danube, on both banks of the river. The land north of the river belonged to no one, but land south of the river was territory belonging to the Byzantine Empire, although after the uprising of Phocas in 602, the Empire had not been guarding the Danube border. Asparukh settled on the Empire's territory without asking the Emperor's permission, like 'barbarians' used to do, and delineated the south borders of his land with a 60-km-long rampart from the right bank of the Danube to the shore of the Black Sea. He behaved as an independent ruler, continuing the state traditions of Great Bulgaria in a new place. The process, which usually in relation to other peoples is called 'the time of acquiring a homeland,' was completed. The year the new territory was seized should be

considered as the beginning of the Danube Bulgaria history [Rasev, 1997]. It is unfortunate that the exact time of Asparukh's arrival to the Danube is unknown. It probably happened in about 665. Seizure of the initial area and the foundation of the capital after its expansion was noted in an anonymous Bulgarian chronicle of the 11th century, where it says, 'Tsar Ispor... created a great Praeses from the Danube to the sea; he also created the city of Plyuska' [KhIB, Vol. 1, p. 440].

The occupation of a small piece of the Empire's land by the Bulgars prompted a response from Byzantium. As soon as the Arabs lifted their latest siege of Constantinople, in 680 a large army led by the ailing Emperor Constantine IV Pogonatos besieged the Bulgars in Oglos, but in a few days was defeated. Chasing the retreating warriors, Asparukh reached the southern boundary of the Danube lowland—the mountain of Haemus (now Stara Planina) and picked the place for his new headquarters on the plain not far from the large Byzantine cities of Odesos and Marcianopolis. This headquarters was called Pliska.

In the spring of 681, Asparukh headed to the south of Stara Planina and began to attack the Byzantine cities of Thrace, which posed a risk for the capital of the Empire itself. Constantine IV had to sign a treaty, pledging to pay an annual tribute to the new state. In August 681 during the discussion of the Church Council held in Constantinople, a presbyter Constantine from the Syrian town of Apamea, while noting the defeat in the recently concluded war, said the name of the new neighbor of the empire was *Bulgaria* [Constantine Apamejski, 1960, pp. 169–170].

The year 681 is considered the beginning of Danube Bulgaria, that is, the signing of the treaty to pay tribute is considered an act of international recognition [Zlatarski, 1994, pp.



Territory of the First Bulgarian Empire until the mid-9th century

123–158; Petrov, 1981, p. 209 and next]. But a tribute did not mean that there was official recognition. Unable at this point to put up a decent armed resistance, Byzantium bought peace for itself, waiting for the chance to rectify the situation. The new state came into existence sooner, and the official recognition by the empire came later.

The fact that the state was established in violation of rules of political theory and practice of the empire created the antagonism that characterized the relations between the two counties until the end of the 14th century, when they both were conquered by Turks. The main focus of Byzantium was to eliminate Bulgaria and restore its borders along the Danube river. For their part, Bulgarians sought not only to maintain their independence within the initially occupied territory, but also to expand it through the regions of the Empire where Slavic tribes had settled even before Asparukh's arrival. Slavs had good reason to support Bulgarian state. The policy of Byzantium was built on denational-

izing and assimilating all external ethnicities who settled on its territory by instilling Christianity and the Greek language. Bulgarians were more tolerant, they did not impose their language or religion, thereby guaranteeing cultural autonomy of Slavs. When expanding his territory in 680–681, Asparukh met no resistance from Slavs. On the contrary, they agreed to settle along the border of the new state from the side of the Avar Khaganate and Byzantium, and to be the border guards of Bulgarians, preserving a degree of autonomy and the traditional laws within their own territories. The political strategy of the khans became to unite the Balkan Slavs within Bulgaria.

Whereas Asparukh organized his new territory and established relationships with the Slavic tribes of Severs and Seven Tribes, who lived in the region of Moesia and Scythia (now Northern Bulgaria and Dobruja), in the southwestern part of the Balkan peninsula there was an attempt to organize another Bulgarian state on Byzantium territory.



Pliska. Eastern gates of the fortress

Kuber, the fourth son of Kubrat, promised to bring the Byzantine captives and their descendants who resided on the territory of the Avar Khaganate back to the motherland. He started an uprising against the Khagan of the Avars and defeated him. Kuber moved south and stopped on the territory of present-day Macedonia, in Keremissian field, having already obtained authorization from the Byzantine Emperor to settle there in exchange for recognizing his rule. Having received permission, he began preparations to capture Solun in order to make it his central city. An anonymous author of the Solun Urban Chronicle wrote that he intended to depart later for the islands of the Aegean Sea, to Asia Minor and Constantinople [Acts, 1960, p.161]. The escape of prisoners from the camp and the failure to seize Solun prevented him from implementing this bold plan.

The treaty of 681 was observed until the end of Asparukh's days. The Bulgarian Chronicle of the 11th century reports that Asparukh reigned 172 years and was killed on the Danube by Ishmaelites (probably that is what they called the Khazars). This alleged war and, in fact, Bulgar-Khazarian relations in the latter half of the 7th century, are barely mentioned [Kh. Dimitrov, 1989; Atanasov, 2003]. Tervel, the successor to Asparukh, ascended the throne in the year of 'tekuchitem tvirem'—that is, the year of the ram, which

is the year 700, the ninth month. Asparukh had laid the foundations for a new state, but the new Khan had to consolidate it not only militarily but also diplomatically, which meant obtaining official recognition from the Empire. Tervel was a worthy successor to his father. He carefully examined the internal status of the Empire. Besides the several decades of war Byzantium had experienced on the Asia Minor border with Arabs, at the end of the 7th century riots broke out in Byzantium that ceased only in 717. The crisis dates back to the rule of the impulsive Justinian II (685–697). Having been deposed and exiled to Cherson, he escaped, married the daughter of the Khazar Khagan, escaped again, and asked Tervel to help him take back the throne, promising gifts in return and a daughter as a wife. In the spring 705 thanks to the army of Tervel, which besieged Constantinople, he broke into the city and entered into Palace of the Porphyrogenitus. The promised marriage with Justinian's daughter never came to fruition. It is likely that the Emperor was afraid to break a tradition that prevented introducing a 'Barbarian' into the imperial family. But the critical assistance of the Bulgarian was rewarded richly and publicly. Khan Tervel was invited to the palace, he was dressed in imperial clothing (chlamys) and was given the title of Caesar—the highest rank in the Byzantine hierarchy after the Emperor. Normally the heir apparent to the throne would receive





Yurt stone model



Bulla of Khan Tervel

it, a brother or a son of the Emperor. They also gave Tervel an instrument for engraving the lead seal that was used on letters of officials at that time, where he was represented wearing robes of the Byzantine Emperor and reading the Greek invocation: 'Sacred Virgin, help Caesar Tervel'. Then Justinian II and Tervel sat next to each other and reviewed the parade of Byzantine military units as equals. These events, described by Patriarch Nikephoros [Nikephoros, 1960, pp. 297–298], were expanded upon by later Byzantine sources. Tervel spoke to the people in a church with a golden roof in the heart of the capital. He received expensive trophies of gold, silver, silk clothes, and also the region of Zagor, a part of present-day Thrace plain.

The most important outcome of Tervel's intervention into the internal affairs of Byzantium was that he received the title of Caesar ('Caesar' in Latin; later 'Tsar' in Slavic, particularly, in Bulgarian from the mid-10th century). At the beginning of the 7th century it was a very high, but, however, only an honorary position (that's probably why it was so easily given to the pagan ruler). It can be assumed that by doing this, Justinian II made sure that Tervel would govern the Bulgarian region on behalf of the Emperor as his Caesar. The Bulgarian ruler hardly saw his new position in that way. Tervel returned to his land with the understanding that he was equal to the Byzantine Emperor.

They were actually well aware of this in Byzantium. In 708 the Emperor tried to rectify his political mistake with a war, but he was defeated near the walls of Anchialos fortress. In 711 he found himself isolated again and once again asked for Tervel's help, but this time he lost the throne and his life. The next year the Bulgarian army reached the walls of Constantinople encountering no resistance, which was not only a display of Bulgarian military muscle, but also the desire for recognition that the two countries were equals. Observing the Empire becoming increasingly unstable, Tervel picked that moment to exert pressure on it and to compel it to conclude a new treaty. The treaty was signed in 716 and was an agreement concluded for the maximum term of 30 years. Its content can be considered as official recognition of a new state on the part of Byzantium and it regulated the most important factors in inter-state relations. The first article of the treaty indicated the common border in present-day Thrace. In fact, the Byzantine Empire officially revoked their claims to the territories conquered by Bulgarians, while accepting the status of the state established there. The second article confirmed annual payments to Bulgaria of 30 liters of gold (2,160 gold coins [nomismas]).

It was paid in the form of clothing, likely made from silk and red leather. In Byzantium only the Emperor was entitled to wear boots made of red leather, a symbolic color of su-



The Madara Rider. Rock carving near the village of Madara, Shumen Province

preme authority. Thus, the Empire confirmed the equality of the two rulers. The third article called for the return of political refugees, and the fourth established rules for trading.

In the final years of his rule, Tervel received the opportunity to once again demonstrate the value of Bulgaria for the Empire. In 717, Constantinople was under siege by Arabs. The new Emperor Leo III (717–741) asked the Bulgarians for help and Tervel quickly agreed. The Bulgarian army met and destroyed the first Arab detachment, which had crossed to the European shore. During the siege, the Bulgarians defeated the detachment of the Ubayd warlord and fought retreating Arab forces. The defeat of Arabs near the walls of Constantinople in 718 had particular importance for the future of Europe. Byzantines and Bulgarians didn't allow Arabs to connect with the Arabian column that reached Gaul via the Strait of Gibraltar in 712. In Western Europe they followed events on the Balkan peninsula with increased attention. The Bulgarian involvement in these events was confirmed in a range of sources, and Tervel became one of the most popular rulers of Bulgaria.

Tervel's governance was important for the future development of the state and its relations

with the Byzantine Empire. He left behind a strong country, having added with new territories. Taking advantage of the Empire's weakness, he received recognition of equal partnership for the state and for himself. Participation in the coalition against Arabs propelled Bulgaria onto the world stage at the very beginning of its history.

Tervel and his successors, Kormesiy and Sevar, came from the ancient Dulo clan, and this, along with the Bulgarian-Byzantine treaty of 716, allowed the state to develop stably. After Sevar's death in 738, the monopoly of the Dulo clan to propose candidates to the throne was broken. The new Khan Kormisosh (738–754) descended from the Ukil (Vokil) clan. The decline of the Dulos marked the beginning of a struggle for power between the most influential Bulgarian clans. The contradiction between them flared up particularly acutely after the beginning of Byzantine-Bulgarian war. It was prepared by the son of Leo III, Constantine V Copronymus (741–775). A capable warlord, after successful battles in Asia Minor he was able to make an advantageous peace with Arabs and to immediately rededicate his efforts to the Balkan Peninsula. This big change in Byzantine politics cannot be considered as a whim or adventure. The new emperor represented the part of Byzantine society that thought Bulgaria was illegally holding Byzantine lands which should be rejoined to the borders of the Empire. War replaced the peace that had been bought by Constantine IV. As part of his preparations, Constantine V settled heretics from Syria and Armenia along the borders and started rebuild the walls of the border fortresses, which was in violation of the Byzantine-Bulgarian peace treaty. Because of this, Khan Vinekh (754–760) wanted to impose an extra tribute, but his ambassador-at-large was not accepted at the court of the Emperor. Vinekh demanded satisfaction on the battlefield. In 755 he advanced further inland within Byzantine territory, and some sources suggest that he won the battle, while others say he did not. Nevertheless, it was official grounds for the Empire to undertake military actions. The war started in 756 and finished only after the death of Constantine V in 775.

Byzantines' war strategy was to destroy the Bulgar state. The tactics were based on combined military actions by land and sea to break through to the central region. In order to make it there, the ground troops were to defeat the guarded Haemus passes, and the fleet could have used only ports in their part of the Black Sea coast, south of the mountain. Battle experience, numerical superiority and weapon quality could have offset those difficulties for Byzantines.

The first campaign against Bulgaria was attempted in 756. The Byzantine army reached the border fortress of Markeli and defeated the Bulgarian detachment guarding the nearest pass. A fleet of 500 ships advanced into the Danube Delta. Settlements along the river banks were set afire and many prisoners were taken. In the end, Bulgaria lost Zagore region, and Byzantium stopped paying annual tributes.

In connection to these events, the first record was made about the meaning of Slavs of present-day Macedonia, back then part of the Byzantine Empire, to Bulgarian-Byzantine relations. Byzantines called areas inhabited by Slavs 'Slavinia,' stressing the density of Slavic population and semi-autonomy of their territories in relation to the central authority. Slavinia maintained relations with Bulgaria, which threatened the Empire and obstructed its actions. Therefore, before starting preparations for the next move, Constantine V invaded Slavinia and 'enslaved and conquered' it [Theophan, 1960, p. 270].

In 760 another battle took place at the south head of Veregava pass that was won by the Bulgars. Many Byzantines were killed, including notable commanders and dignitaries. Khan Vinekh had a chance to make the most of this success, by chasing the surviving part of the Byzantine army and entering the territory of the Empire. However he did not do it. In the capital city of Bulgaria his actions were taken as a sign of weakness, a rebellion ensued, the Khan and people from his Ukil clan were massacred. Telets of the Ugains, who was known for his courage, ascended the throne.

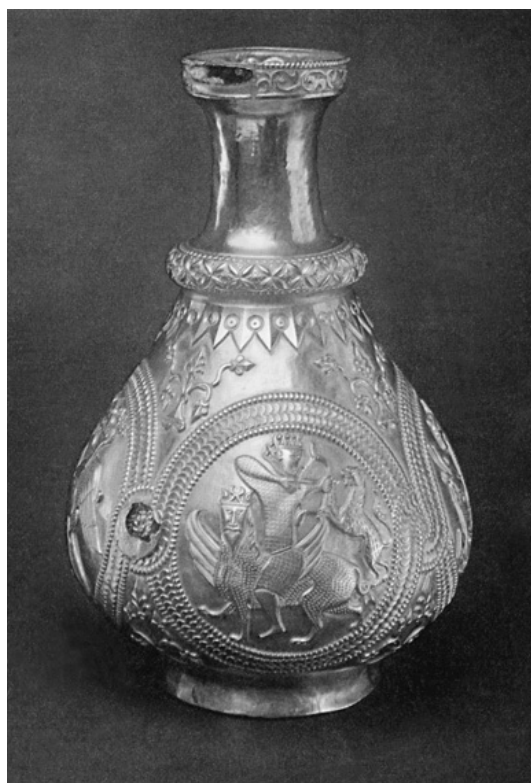
The new khan did not rush to start first military campaigns. In 763 Byzantines made another attack. A fleet of 800 ships made their

way to the Danube Delta, land forces pitched their camp on the plain by the city of Anchialos. Telets was apparently informed in advance and was waiting for the enemy that was hiding in the surrounding woods. The battle lasted from dawn until dusk on 30 June 763. In the end the Bulgars could not withstand and retreated. Constantine V was victorious [Ibid, p. 271].

The military defeat sealed the fate of Telets. A new rebellion burst out and the khan was killed together with his supporters. Khan Sabin from the Ukil clan took the throne (763–766).

In 766 Constantine V was about to declare the end of the war, having organized the biggest campaign against Bulgaria. The army set up their camp at the head of the Veregava pass, and a fleet of 2,600 ships set off towards Anchialos port to carry extra cavalry there. When Sabin heard about the size of the Byzantine army, he offered to negotiate, however Emperor Constantine was sure of his success and declined. But when ships came up to the landing site, suddenly strong wind came up that pushed the ships ashore and crushed them. The Emperor refused to continue the war. Sabin insisted on holding peace negotiations and sent his ambassadors to Constantinople. Apparently, he did this without listening to the council of many influential Bulgarian dignitaries. They held an assembly with representatives of the nobility at which they accused Sabin of treason. As Theophanes wrote, he was told, 'Because of you, Bulgaria will be enslaved by Romans' [Ibid, 1960, p. 271]. Sabin knew that he would be murdered soon and thus he fled and found refuge in Constantinople. His betrayal was not forgiven. His name was not added to the Nominalia of Bulgarian Khans.

Sabin was succeeded by Umor (reigned for 40 days in 766, apparently killed), Toktu (killed in 767) and Pagan (768). During Pagan's reign the Byzantine army brazenly violated the peace, penetrating into the central Bulgaria and setting afire some settlements. Trying to escape the death penalty for this major setback, Pagan fled from the capital, but was murdered by his subjects. Despite the imperial army's successful invasion, it was obvious that Byzantium was not ready conquer



A golden vessel from the Treasure of Nagyszentmiklós, Romania. The 9th century

the whole country. All the military campaigns barely changed the initial status quo of the forces and showed that Bulgaria was ready to actively resist.

At last, khan Telerig (768–777) managed to put an end to the war and inner instability. In 768 Constantine V again dispatched a fleet of 2,000 ships towards the Danube delta. Halfway there the fleet turned back, probably because of a strong north wind, so Bulgars were sent a proposal for holding peace negotiations. At this point Telerig adopted the tactics of Byzantine Emperor. While the negotiations were being held in Constantinople, he sent an army to Macedonia in order to resettle the Slavic Berzitian tribe to Bulgaria. However, the army was ambushed by Byzantines and defeated. Telerig realized that the Emperor had agents in the Bulgarian court who had informed him of all the khan's plans. They had to be exposed. Telerig chose a simple but effective method. He wrote Constantine V indicating he desired to seek refuge with him,

and asked for a list of Constantine's friends in the capital of Bulgaria who might help him. The Emperor believed him and gave him the names of his agents, who were immediately executed by Telerig. In the following 775, the Emperor campaigned for the last time against Bulgaria, seeking revenge, but fell ill and died on his way there. Telerig's reign finished very unexpectedly. In 777 he fled to Constantinople. After being baptized into the Christian faith, he married a relative of the Byzantine Empress and was given the title of patrician.

Seven different khans ruled in Bulgaria during the twenty-year war with Byzantium. Only two of them reigned for more than three years. This fact alone clearly illustrates the level of deep internal crisis that had been further exacerbated by Byzantine interference.

The instability of the authority of the khans was caused by the struggles between the two noble Bulgarian clans that created two groups. They had different opinions regarding relations with Byzantium. The first group believed that negotiations, compromises and failures on the battlefields were treason and should be punishable by death. This policy was supported by Slavs who inhabited the frontier regions. The other group believed that it was better to use diplomacy, negotiate and make concessions. Eventually the more militant group got the upper hand. Consequently, in the mid-8th century the country experienced its first big political separation of society. Two 'parties' were formed: an anti-Byzantine party and a pro-Byzantine one that existed till the end of the First Bulgarian Empire and pursued their policies as the situation demanded. Periods of peace and followed periods of war in Byzantine-Bulgarian relations changed several times [Rashev, 2001, pp. 91–92].

Successors of the militant Constantine V abandoned the policy of conquering Bulgaria. Khan Kardam (777–803) demanded the Byzantines renew their payments of an annual tribute, but received an adamant refusal. This caused several military clashes along the border, but they did not change the general situation. Kardam used the interval of peace between wars to finally unite the state and

strengthen the fading authority of the khan. At the end of Kardam's reign, the Bulgarian state emerged from the crisis and took the initiative in relations with Byzantium. The empire itself had given ample reason. In the early 9th century it signed a truce with Arabs, which initiated actions on the Balkan front line. The plans to destroy Bulgaria re-emerged.

But the Bulgarian state had changed and was no longer being torn apart by internecine feud of influential clans. Besides, a new khan had ascended the Bulgarian throne who could be compared with his well-known contemporaries like Harun al-Rashid and Charles the Great. His name was Krum (803–814). The state that passed under his authority had recovered from its deep crisis, which gave him the historic chance to expand its territory at the very beginning of his reign. In 803 the Frankish Empire dealt the death blow to the Avar Khaganate by annexing its western half. Krum, meeting no resistance from the Franks, occupied the eastern half of the Khaganate in 805. Transylvania, with its gold and salt mines, made up a part of it. Besides the Avars themselves, the khan of Bulgaria now had new subjects like Slavic tribes residing in the Pannonian Basin. The borderline between the Frankish Empire and Bulgaria ran along the Tisza river. In this way, Bulgaria filled in the territorial and political vacuum between Byzantium and the Frankish Empire and got the opportunity to become the third force on the continent. But it first had to settle the relationship with its southern neighbor.

Busy with managing the new lands, Krum was in no hurry. The first move was made by Emperor Nikephoros I Genik (802–811). After signing an advantageous peace treaty with Arabs in 806, the next year the Emperor set off on a campaign against Bulgaria, but had to return because there was a risk of rebellion in the capital. Krum perceived it as a declaration of war. He decided to respond immediately. Bulgars penetrated deep into Byzantine territory, attacked Strum military post on the day the soldiers were to receive their wages, and seized a lot of gold. Krum's next actions showed that this was not a risky scheme or an isolated act of retaliation, but part of an ambitious plan to expand the state south of Haemus mountain, where Slavic tribes had been



A golden vessel from the Treasure  
of Nagyszentmiklós, Romania.  
The 9th century

inhabiting Byzantine territory. It had been known for a long time that the tribes would tend to support Bulgaria in conflicts with Byzantium. In 809 Bulgars occupied a key position—the city of Serdica (modern-day Sofia). Located in the center of the Balkan peninsula, it controlled the road to Solun and Macedonia and served as a land route connecting Byzantium with the north-west side of the peninsula.

Byzantines immediately understood the negative consequences of Krum's successful actions. The Bulgars' presence in Thrace threatened above all the safety of their capital. They had to take decisive steps to keep Bulgaria from becoming entrenched in the region. And so 35 years later after the death of Constantine V, the forgotten idea of conquering Bulgaria once again emerged. This was the goal of the campaign in 811 led by Nikephoros I himself together with his heir apparent Staurakios, his son-in-law Michael and many Byzantine high military officials and civilians.

Once Krum learned about it, he rushed to offer peace as long as the Emperor was encamped on the border, but Nikephoros haugh-



Khan Krum feasts in honor of the victory over  
Emperor Nikephoros

tily refused to negotiate. After crossing over Mount Haemus and some clashes in which Krum was unsuccessful, Nikephoros seized his residence (Greek: *aul*) and left his seal on Krum's treasury doors. The local population was captured and subjected to unusually violent beating. Krum sent a second offer of peace, but it was rejected again. Then the enraged khan mobilized the surviving part of his army, reinforced it with Slavic detachments, women and Avar mercenaries. The mountain pass that the Byzantine army was to go through on their way back was blocked with a thick wooden wall. When he learned about Krum's preparations, the Emperor hurried back, setting the wooden buildings of the capital on fire.

In the morning of 26 July 811, the Byzantine camp near the pass was suddenly attacked. Nikephoros was killed along with a number of nobles from his retinue. The wounded heir apparent Staurakios managed to escape, but in three months he died from his severe wounds. Most of the Byzantine soldiers met their death in the deep ditch dug along the wooden wall. Nikephoros' head was cut off and put on dis-

play in order to demonstrate the Bulgarian Khan's power. Later Krum had Nikephoros' skull lined with silver and used it as a cup to serve wine to Slavic leaders who helped him to victory.

The news about the defeat and death of Nikephoros stunned the Empire. According to Roman ancient traditions, he had personified the Holy Christian Empire and its privileged position in the world at that time. And all of a sudden the life of a sacred person was taken by an pagan barbarian. The Bulgars' victory was not only militarily and politically significant. It made above all a deep psychological impact on Byzantines and marked a turning point in their views on Bulgaria. Contempt and arrogance gave way to respect, and during last years of Krum's rule there was nothing but fear. The Bulgars, in turn, took advantage of the opportunity to expand their territory south of Haemus. Krum crossed the border and seized the key frontier town of Develt in the following year of 812, which caused a mass exodus of other inhabitants of Byzantine cities from Thrace. The khan was not an extremist, he demanded the peace treaty of 716 be reinstated, which would have returned a part of Thrace to Bulgaria. When Emperor Michael I refused to accept the proposal [Theophan, 1960, pp. 285–286; Theophanes' follower, 1992, pp. 7–8], he besieged and captured Mesembria, a major Black Sea port. Here for the first time Bulgars used siege equipment made by Byzantine craftsmen who had fled from Byzantium to Bulgaria, where they were warmly welcomed by Krum. The Mesembria invasion gave the Bulgars a free hand and on 17 July 813, after defeating the Byzantine army at the walls of Versinikia, Krum performed a triumphant pagan ceremony right in front of the main gold door of Constantinople's fortress wall.

Krum extended his fourth offer of peace in two years, and the new Emperor Leo V responded with an invitation to negotiate. The negotiations were to be held outside the city walls. But it was just a trick aimed at killing the dangerous khan. When Byzantine soldiers ambushed and then tried to capture Krum, he managed to escape. It was probably at this moment he realized that Byzan-

tium would never sincerely accept friendly proposals for co-operation with the Bulgars and never abandon their claims on his territory. It seemed that there was not enough room for two states on the peninsula. Apparently, it was at this time when Krum decided that invading Constantinople would be the Bulgarian political strategy, which basically did not change until this medieval state ceased to exist. He did not delay in seeking revenge for the Emperor's treachery, preparing at the same time his plans for invading the Byzantine capital. He destroyed all the palaces, manors and monasteries in the environs of Constantinople. Many fortresses in more remote regions shared the same fate, including Adrianople, the 'key' to the capital. In the winter of 813–814 Krum made large-scale plans for the siege of Constantinople. A large army including Avars and all of Slavina was recruited. Siege equipment was built that had to be carried by 5,000 carts drawn by 10,000 oxen. This news forced Byzantines to quickly erect another fortress wall around their capital. However, Byzantine captives who had managed to escape from Bulgaria brought the unexpected news that khan Krum had died suddenly on 13 April 814.

Krum had been an outstanding khan. He ruled for almost 10 years and was known as an energetic and productive leader in many differ-



Silver cup. 9th century from Preslav.  
Archaeological Museum. Preslav

ent areas. He helped Bulgaria establish direct contact with Western Europe. He defined goals and started preparing for an invasion of Constantinople that could have made Bulgaria politically dominant on the Balkan peninsula. He instituted the first common laws based on the Byzantine legal system. These laws provided severe punishment for slander and trespassing. Krum showed a particular interest in Byzantine culture, thus it stands to reason that he made Greek the official language of the Bulgarian state chancellery. Adopting the Greek writing system was a sign that Bulgaria was turning from the traditions of the Eurasian steppe to values of the Mediterranean-Christian culture. Krum put an end to the 'barbaric' period of history of the Danubian Bulgars [Bozhilov, 1995, p. 61]. The state started to participate in the European relations system. At the end of Krum's reign, Bulgaria had become almost the third force in Europe along with the Byzantine and Frankish Empires.

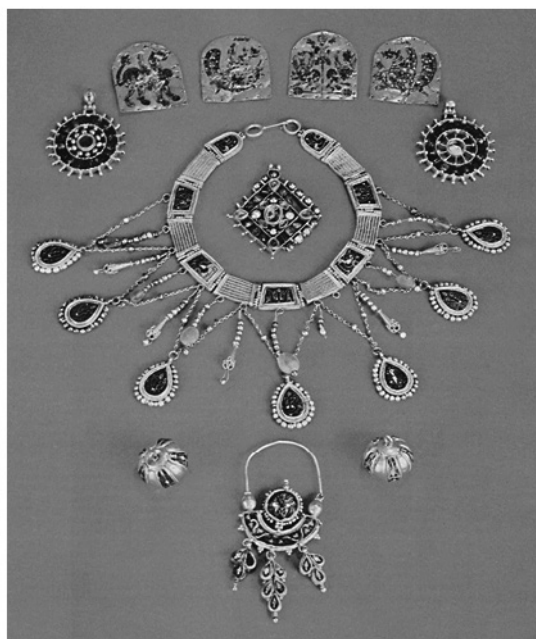
Krum's successors not only preserved his achievements, but in some cases extended them.

In 815 his son Omurtag (814–831) made a treaty with Byzantium that, in the first place, defined the common borderline with Thrace. This treaty can be seen as a turning point in Byzantine–Bulgarian relations. For Bulgaria, it meant abandoning the idea of invading Constantinople. Apparently, the pro-Byzantine group had finally managed to convince the Bulgarian nobility to adopt a new policy based on peaceful relations between the two countries and strengthening Bulgarian interests in Thrace. For Byzantium, the treaty im-



Gold medallion of Khan Omurtag.  
Veliko Tarnovo.  
National Historical Museum





Gold jewellery from the Preslav Treasure.  
9–10th centuries.

plied recognition of their political and military equality. Ideology and religion grew more important. Bulgarian khans began borrowing attributes and titular formulas from Byzantine Emperors, as from equals.

After establishing peace on the south border, Omurtag took an interest in the immense territories north of the Danube. In about 820, the Bulgarian army fought against Khazars or Magyars in the area around the Dnieper River. When a part of Pannonian Slavs preferred to be subjected to the Frankish king, the Bulgarian army undertook military campaigns in the region of the Drava and Tisza rivers [Beshevliev, 1992, No 59, 60].

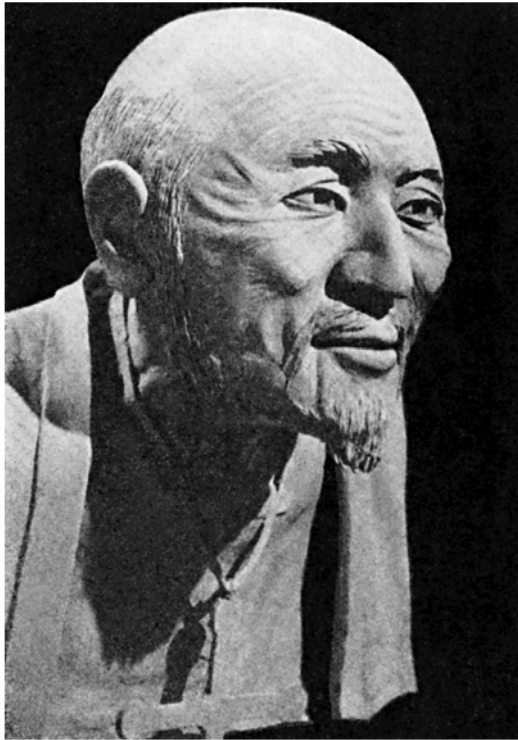
Omurtag's domestic policy started with a large-scale building program in the capital to reconstruct it and its environs after the fire of 811. Everything was engraved with inscriptions in Greek. This not only testified to the scale of the construction, but also showed the Bulgarian khan was openly aware of his superiority over the Roman Emperor: 'Kanasubigi Omurtag, Archon from God in the land where he was born. While in the field of Pliska he made an aul at (the river) Tisza and moved his forces against Greeks and Slavs. And he skill-

fully erected a bridge at Tisza together with the aul and he put four columns in this aul and above the columns he erected two lions. May God grant the Archon from God to trample the Byzantine Emperor as long as the Tisza flows... and to rule over many Bulgars, to subjugate his enemies, to live in joy and happiness for a hundred years. The time when this was built was Shigor Elem according to the Bulgarian calendar and in Greek, Indiction 15' [Ibid, No. 57]. The Greek saying 'from God' (ek Theou) in the text is a direct borrowing of the title of the Byzantine Emperor, who was no longer considered a single ruler in Bulgaria.

During the short reign of the underage Malamir (831–836) little changed in politics, but his successor Presian (836–852) tried to renew policy of Krum in relation to Byzantium. He took advantage of one of the rebellions of Slavic tribes in the Thessaloniki region in 837 and sent his army there to begin the annexation of the Rhodope Mountains and modern-day Macedonia. By the end of his reign, the south-western border of the state extended to the coast of the Adriatic Sea, establishing control over Slavic tribes on the territory of modern-day Albania. By the mid-9th century, Bulgaria was intensively conducting its mission as the unifier of the Balkan Slavs of the so-called Bulgarian group and protector of their ethnocultural independence.

The rapid increase in Slavic population in the state, the differences in their pagan beliefs and the partial propagation of Christianity among them made it necessary to establish a common religion. Christianity was practically the only choice, as it was the official religion of both neighboring Empires. The final step was made by khan, later Prince Boris (852–889). When he was still a khan, he constantly interfered in the events on the Middle Danube where, due to the increasing influence of the Moravian kingdom, the political interests of the German military colony and Byzantium were intertwined. Boris could not put up a resistance against Byzantium, having concentrated all his forces in the north-west. In 864 the Byzantine army crossed the border and Emperor Michael III demanded that the Bulgarian ruler and his people convert to Christianity under the Byzantine rite.





Portrait sculpture by a Bulgar, early 10th century. Reconstruction of a skull from the Mostich burial site. Preslav, Bulgaria (according to I. Yordanov)

The history of pagan Bulgaria was largely connected with the traditions of the Eurasian steppe. After the conversion to Christianity, the importance of two new factors grew at once within the state—Slavic and Byzantine-

Greek. Prince Boris managed to take advantage of the unsuccessful mission of Cyril and Methodius to Moravia by uniting their followers to disseminate the Slavic script in Bulgaria. In 893 Slavic language and writing became the liturgical language of the Bulgarian church, which practically inaugurated the birth of Bulgarian national literature. It flourished during the reign of Simeon (893–927), which was the 'golden age' of medieval Bulgarian culture. In politics, it was the time of an attempt to implement the idea of a Byzantine-Bulgarian political society headed by Bulgarian ruler in Constantinople, which caused a return to war in the period from 914 to 927. Simeon's successor, Peter I (927–969), married the granddaughter of the Byzantine Emperor Romanos Lekapenos, and until her death, in spite of his title 'Basileus of Bulgaria', he was considered a subject of the Emperor. Peter's attempt to present himself as a tsar of an independent state renewed the Byzantine idea of destroying Bulgaria. Byzantine diplomacy started with sending the Kievan Prince Svyatoslav to Bulgaria, but when he threatened Byzantium itself, the imperial army crossed over Haemus Mount and captured Preslav, the capital of Bulgaria, in 971. The center of the state was moved to the south-west territories while Tsar Samuel (991–1014) did much to try to preserve the independence. In 1018 Emperor Basil II occupied the capital Ohrid and destroyed its walls. In 1185 the state was restored with the capital in Veliko Tarnovo and it lasted until the Ottoman Turks invaded in 1396.

## CHAPTER 3

### Turkic nations of the North Caucasus

*Lyudmila Gmyrya*

#### **Caucasian wars of the Arab Caliphate (707–738 A.D.)**

Military actions in the Caucasus started in 640–650 A.D. with the advances of the Caliphate army to the Derbent region and campaigns against the Khazar city of Balandjar; these are usually called 'the Arab-Khazarian wars' in the literature. The conventionally adopted terminology, however, blurs both the nature of the conflict and the composition of its participants. In fact, the wars of the 7–8th centuries were less an Arab-Khazarian than an Arab-Byzantine confrontation, where both parties aimed to gain dominance of Asia Minor and Transcaucasia. The Khazar Khaganate was involved in the conflict as an ally of Byzantine.

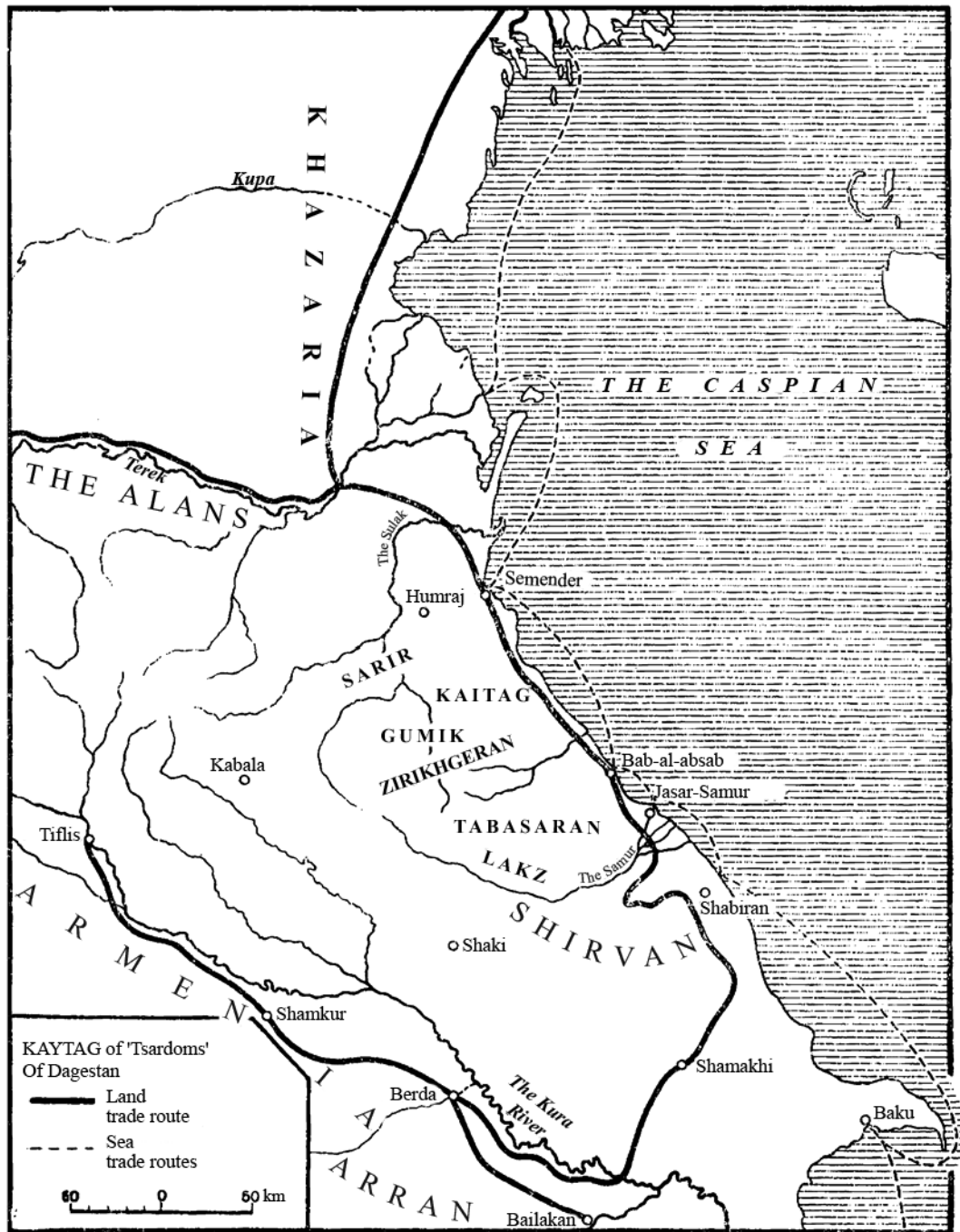
The overthrow of the main rival in the East—that is, Byzantium, was unfeasible for the Caliphate without the destruction of the Caucasian provinces of the Khazar Khaganate, which were a foothold for feint attacks of Khazars against Transcaucasia, an area politically dependent on the Caliphate. In the war with Byzantium, the Arabs had to conduct battles on two fronts simultaneously—that is, the Byzantine front in Asia Minor and the Khazarian front in the north-east Caucasus. This was a forced strategy, which, undoubtedly, weakened Arab state resources and constrained the strength of blows against Byzantium. The nations of Transcaucasia and the Northern Caucasus were plunged into a long exhausting war, which also involved massive man-power resources of various regions of the Arab Caliphate and Khazar Khaganate. The main toils of war were experienced by the population of the north-east Caucasus (modern Dagestan). Multiple independent political entities were subjected to continuous devastation; economic centers perished, the economy was destroyed, valuables were evacuated, hu-

man resources were exterminated, and women and children were enslaved. In the Caucasus, the Arabs had to confront not only with the well armed, well trained, and experienced army of the Khazars and its allies, but also with the stout resistance of the local population—that is, inhabitants of towns, fortresses, and settlements.

Military actions of the Arabs in the Caucasus are described, with various degree of completeness, in works of Arabic and Persian-speaking historians of the 9–13th centuries. Knowledge of these events is based on recorded stories about the conquests of the Arabs, compiled in the third quarter of the 7th century from recollections of witnesses and numerous participants of the events. However, neither the first recorded stories about the conquering campaigns of the Arabs nor their later copies up to the 9th century have survived. The main sources for studying the events of the Caucasian wars of the Caliphate include the historical works of Khalifah ibn Khayyat (died 854 A.D.), al-Baladhuri (died 892), al-Ya'qubi (died 897), al-Tabari (died 922/923), al-Kūfī (died 927), Balami (died 974), and Ibn al-Athir (1160–1233).

The events of the Arab expansion in the Caucasus also found reflection in the works of Armenian-speaking historians of the 7–13th centuries—that is, Movses Kaghankatvatsi (7th c.), Sebeos (middle 7th c.), Vardapet Ghevond (late 8th ct.), Vardan Areveltsi (13th c.).

Reconstruction of the complete and clear picture of military actions in the North Caucasus in the 7–8th centuries is almost impossible due to the specific nature of Arabic and Persian sources. Researchers note the requirement of an integrated approach to using information from Arab authors, paying attention to their controversies and identify the reasons for the variability of information about the



Dagestan in the 9–10th centuries according to Arab sources.

same events. A critical analysis of the set of knowledge about the Caucasian actions of the Arab Caliphate allows us to isolate both data that is valid and that is legendary, as well as 'plausible but unhistorical knowledge' [HT, 2002, p. 441].

The history of the Arab campaigns of conquest in the North Caucasus in the 8th century is rooted in earlier Arab actions in the region dated to the 40s–50s of the 7th century. Two phases are usually chronologically identified in the periodization of the Caucas

wars—that is, first (early), from 642/643 to 652/653 C.E., and second, from 706/707 to 738/739 C.E. A short-term advance of the Arab army to the region of the Derbent passage took place in between them in the 90s of the 7th century. In the Caliphate's Caucasian war, some researchers isolate three stages, considering the goals, objectives, events, and military, economic, and ideological consequences for the parties involved, etc. [Shikhsaidov, 1986, pp. 12–13; Gadzhiyev et al., 1996, pp. 200–207].

Entrenchment of the Arabs in Derbent should be mentioned among the successful actions of the Caliphate during the first phase of the wars. The timing of this event cannot be accurately determined due to controversy in the sources. Researchers argue about two dates; 642 and 652 C.E. [History of the East, II, pp. 37, 117]. According to al-Tabari, Derbent was handed over to the Arabs by its Persian ruler Shakhrbaraz in 22/642–643 C.E. during the rule of caliph Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (634–644) [Al-Tabari, 1986, pp. 72–74].

Entrenched in Derbent, the Arabs started conquering campaigns against south-eastern provinces of the Khazar Khaganate (modern Caspian Dagestan). Military operations against the Khazars in the north-east Caucasus are denoted in Arabic sources as 'the campaign against the Turk's or 'the Balandjar campaign' [HT, 2002, pp. 282–284]. Here, Balandjar acts both as the border region, located to the north of Derbent, and the country, city, river, and mountain range. Armenian-speaking and Byzantine historians mention the 'Hun's country'—that is, the political entity of Hun-Bulgarian, Iranian-speaking and Caucasian tribes, included into the Khazar Khaganate located in plain and piedmont regions of the north-east Caucasus ('at the foot of mountains') in the 7th century [Artamonov, 1962, pp. 181–192; Gadlo, 1979, pp. 138–152 and others]. According to al-Tabari, the campaigns of conquest against Balandjar continued for 10 years—that is, from 22–32/642–643 to 652–653 C.E. Al-Tabari dates the seizure of the city by the Arabian army to 22 AH/642–643 C.E. [Al-Tabari, 1986, p. 74]. In the same year, he dates the intrusion of the Arabs into the interior of the Khazar Khaganate (al-Baida city),

separated from Balandjar by a 20 day march (200 farsakhs). However, the information on the al-Baidu campaign was found to be inaccurate. Al-Tabari dates the defeat of the Arab army under Balandjar to the ninth year of caliph Usman's rule [HT, 2002, p. 452], which corresponds to 31 AH/651–652 C.E.

Some researcher argue that the Arabs' conquest of Derbent and their defeat near Balandjar took place during one campaign in 653, however, Arabic sources include the same scenes of military action 'in stories of various years with a 10 year gap' [Bolshakov, 1993, p. 170]. This thesis seems to be confirmed by Sebeos' description of the overthrow of the Arab army in the 'country near the foot of mountains', following the suppression of the Armenian rebellion against the Arabs [Sebeos, p. 164]. However, Sebeos' evidence may apply to the last Balandjar campaign (652/653 C.E.), but not to all operations against it. A. Novoseltsev considered real the Arabs' advance to the Derbent region in the 40s of the 7th century and possible re-subjugation of the town and regions to the north of it in 652/653 C.E. [Novoseltsev, 1990, pp. 174–175].

The defeat of the Arab army near Balandjar, where four thousand warriors were killed, became a state-wide tragedy for the Caliphate. All Arabic and Persian sources mention this event, noting that graves of the perished warriors are venerated in the Islamic world as the 'graves of martyrs'. The Arab General Salman ibn Rabiha became famous not only as the successful leader of military actions in the Caucasus, tragically killed in the battle for Balandjar, but his name is also associated with a 'peculiar' phenomenon by many Arabic authors. Reportedly, relics of the famous Arabian general, buried in Balandjar, were used by locals in profane rites of rainmaking and sunmaking [Gmyrya, 2002a, pp. 33–38].

The first phase of the Caliphate army's advance in the north-east Caucasus ended with the unsuccessful action of the Arabs near Balandjar. Up to the 90s of the 7th century, Arabian military detachments appeared neither in the Derbent passage region, nor to the north of it, although the fight between the Caliphate and Byzantium for Transcaucasia continued during this time. Each party took advan-

tage of the weakening of the other, achieving temporary successes. In the 650s, internecine struggle for power broke out in the Arab Caliphate, triggered by a religious and political crisis [Bolshakov, 1998, p. 3; Prozorov, 2004, pp. 27, 295; Stanley Lane-Poole, 2004, p. 16]. In 661, the authority of the Umayyads was established in the Caliphate in the person of caliph Muawiyah I (661–680) who, like the Prophet, belonged to the Quraysh tribe. The Umayyad Caliphs ruled up to 750 C.E. Their capital was Damascus. The last caliph from this dynasty was Marwan II (744–750), who became famous for the final overthrow of the Caspian provinces of the Khazar Khaganate in 737 C.E. During the years of Muawiyah I's rule, Caucasian Albania recognized its dependence on the Caliphate; one of the conditions of this act was lowering the tributes of Albania by 1/3. However, in 669, the ruler of Albania, Prince Javanshir, who got the favorable conditions for Albania from the Caliphate, was killed by a conspirator. His nephew prince Varaz-Trdat (669–699) came to power and preferred to tighten relations with the northern neighbors of Caucasian Albania—that is, 'the Huns' country'. Khazaria and its ally, 'the Huns' country', renewed their active policy in Transcaucasia after the overthrows of the Arabs in the 640s–650s. According to written sources, several major military actions were conducted by the Khazars and Huns in the 60s–80s of the 7th century: 662—Khazars' attack on Albania, they are defeated; 664—an attack on Albania of the Hun king's army, peace agreement, conclusion of marriage between prince Javanshir and a daughter of the 'Huns' country' ruler Alp-Ilitver, return of prisoners and looted cattle; 669—Alp-Ilitver's attack on Albania, new union treaty which determined the status of the great prince of the Huns as the protector and helper of the Albanian ruler; 669–682—annual raids of Huns on Albania; 682—new treaty between Albania and 'the Huns' country', adoption by the latter of Christianity from Albania; 684—Khazars attack on Albania, death of the ruler of Armenia and many Albanian and Georgian princes (see: [HT, 2002, p. 284–286]).

Successes of Khazaria and 'the Huns' country' in Transcaucasia are mostly accounted for by the weakening of the Caliphate positions

in this region in conjunction with a new phase of feuds from 680 to 685. During a short period of time, three caliphs replaced each other as ruler of the Caliphate [Stanley Lane-Poole, 2004, p. 19]. Transcaucasian states, leveraging the situation, stopped paying tribute. In 685 C.E., caliph Abd al-Malik (685–705) concluded peace with Byzantium, providing for joint possession of Armenia and Iberia. In 688, however, the Byzantine emperor Justinian II (685–695) violated the treaty and occupied the Transcaucasian countries [Bolshakov, 1998, p. 259]. The civil war in Byzantine prevented the emperor from entrenching in the region, and Arabs restored their supremacy here in the 690s. In 692/693, the Arabian ruler of Armenia attempted an invasion of Albania and advanced to the Derbent passage region but failed to take hold there. Due to the anti-Arab rebellion in Armenia, Arabs had to leave Derbent [Kaghankatvatsi, 1861, p. 259; 1984, p. 160; Ghevond, 1862, p. 12; Ibn al-Athir, 1940, p. 22].

Evaluating the nature and outcomes of the first phase of conquests of the Arab Caliphate in the north-east Caucasus, researchers come to ambiguous conclusions. The period of 7th century wars is characterized as both 'an insignificant episode' and as 'the first interaction between future stubborn adversaries' [Artamonov, 1962, p. 180], and reconnaissance or a 'preventive' war of the Arabs [Shikhsaidov, 1986, p. 12; Gadzhiyev et al., 1996, p. 200]. However, judging from the geography of Arab campaigns, the Caliphate had strategic plans to squeeze Khazaria out of the West Caspian region, where there were exits to Caucasian passages. The violence of punitive expeditions and persistence in implementation of the Caliphate's plans in the north-east Caucasus give reason to judge the first phase of the war as an unsuccessful attempt to entrench in the region, despite a number of successful military operations. The Arabs managed neither to capture the territory of 'the country of Huns' and Khazars, nor to take hold in the Derbent passage. The advance of the Arab army to the Derbent region in 692/693 implicitly indicates that Derbent was under the rule of Khazaria in this time. The first operation of the second phase of the Caliphate's war in the north-east Caucasus in

the 8th century (706/707) was also the capture of Derbent, where about 80 thousand Khazars with families had settled by this time [al-Kūfī, 1981, pp. 14–15].

The Caliphate was not able to achieve its goals in the first phase of the war due to a number of objective reasons, both political and social. One of them was the stubborn resistance to Arab expansion (military, economical, ideological) of Khazaria and 'the Huns' country', as well as a number of mountain principalities in the north-east Caucasus. The struggle of the local nations against the Caliphate's plans of entrenchment in the region may be to some extent characterized as an anti-Arab union for collective security. Undoubtedly, treaty obligations of joint actions against the Arabs existed between Khazaria and 'the Hun's country', since almost all actions of the Arabs were repulsed by joint efforts [al-Tabari, 1986, p. 76; Ibn al-Athir, 1940, p. 20; al-Kūfī, 1981, p. 9].

In the first phase of the Caliphate's war in the Northern Caucasus, the role of Derbent as the Arabs' stronghold in their struggle with Khazaria and mountain principalities was identified. Almost all military actions against Balandjar began from Derbent, where the Arabian army also retreated in case of defeat or the threat of defeat.

Despite the low-yielding nature of early conquests of the Arabs in the north-east Caucasus, they accrued experience in the conduct of military operations in the region, which was fully used in the war of the first third of the 8th century. The Arab Caliphate was the strongest opponent for Khazaria and 'the Huns' country'. By the beginning of its advances in the north-east Caucasus, the Caliphate had already conquered Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Iran, several states of Middle Asia, Armenia, and Caucasian Albania [History of the East, II, pp. 114–117]. In fights with the Arab army, Khazars and Huns developed their tactics for military operations. Often, they managed to destroy the myth of the invincibility of Arab warriors, and the complete defeat of Salman ibn Rabiah's army near Balandjar offered hope for the possibility of repulsing the aggression. The experience led to an understanding of the need for

organizing anti-Arab unions in the Caucasus. Such was the treaty of 669 between Caucasian Albania and 'the Huns' country' [Shikhsaidov, 1969, p. 82], under which the ruler of the latter was declared the 'assistant and protector of the power' of the Albanian ruler. This union was secured by the adoption of Christianity by 'the Huns' country' in 682, but it only survived prior to active Arab-Byzantine actions of 685–692 in Transcaucasia.

After stabilization of the internal situation in the Arab Caliphate in the 90s of the 7th century during the rule of Caliph al-Valid (705–715), campaigns of conquest were renewed. Active military actions were conducted against Byzantium in 705; in 715–717, the Arabs besieged Constantinople. In the second decade of the 8th century, the Caliphate reached its largest size. Significant territories were captured in Middle Asia, and the Iberian peninsula was ceded to the Caliphate [History of the East, II, p. 122].

In 701/702, the Arabs finished the conquest of Armenia. In 703 and 705, anti-Arab rebellions were noted there. The Arab vicegerent Muhammad ibn Marwan, a brother of caliph al-Valid, defeated the united forces of the Armenians and Byzantines, and then subjected his opponents from among the Armenian princes to death by burning.

New advances of the Caliphate in the north-east Caucasus began in 706/707. Thirteen major military actions of the Arab Caliphate in the north-Caucasian front of military activities were reflected in Byzantine, Armenian, and Arab historic works; however, it is believed that there were many more of them. From the sources, three large-scale actions of Khazars are also documented, conducted together with allied forces in Transcaucasia, but the activities of the Khazar Khaganate in the Caspian region were primarily defensive.

A thirty year period of frequent military activity was draining for both the nations of the Khazar Khaganate, repulsing the expansion of the Arab Caliphate, and the Arab state itself. For over 25 years, the actions of the Arabs in Eastern Ciscaucasia were not very successful, and the results of infrequent successful military operations, as a rule, were not secured. Additionally, the Khazars often

managed to inflict considerable damage on the enemy. Some authors argue that the Arabs 'did not try to entrench themselves north of the Caucasus ridge', realizing that they have 'neither the forces nor the prospects for this' [Novoseltsev, 2001, p. 67]. However, the unsuccessful results of Arab military actions in the north-east Caucasus before 737 had a number of objective reasons. The Arab army usually confronted the army of the Khazars, which outnumbered them by an order of magnitude. Additionally, the Arabs conducted military actions in foreign territories, where they had to confront not only the well-armed and experienced army of the Khazars and their allies, but also the stubborn resistance of the local population [History of Dagestan, 1967, pp. 151–154 and others]. During the war with the Khazars, caliphs changed the overall operational leadership seven times, moving experienced generals from other regions for military actions on the Caucasian front. At the frontlines of the Caucasian region, the most significant operations were led by generals Maslama, al-Jarrah, and Marwan.

Maslama ibn Abd al-Malik, a son of the Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (685–705), became famous as a general in 705–707 in the war of the Caliphate with Byzantium. In 706/707, he was transferred to the Caucasus to attack the Khazars. Five military operations of Maslama against the Khazars are reflected in the sources. The most successful action of the general was his conquest of Derbent city in 88/706–707 [al-Kufi, 1981, pp. 14–15; HT, 2002, pp. 466–467]. The last campaign of Maslama in 'the Khakan's land', which took place in 731/732, was also successful in the beginning—that is, many cities and fortresses were conquered and the son of the khagan was killed [al-Tabari, 1986, p. 79; al-Kufi, 1981, pp. 41, 47; Ibn al-Athir, 1940, pp. 29–30]. However, upon arrival of the numerous Khazar army, the Arabs hastily retreated to Derbent. Maslama is also known as a leader who undertook massive works on the reconstruction and modernization of Derbent's fortifications.

Local historiographic tradition and some folkloric compositions of Dagestan's nations attribute the fame of the first propagator of Islam in Dagestan to this Arab general, usually

called *Muslim* or *Abu Muslim* [Shikhsaidov et al., 1993, pp. 24–27, 32–33, 69–70, 79–80, and others]. Local Dagestanian legends of the holy sword of Maslama, which symbolizes the inviolability of Islam in the region and is an object of worship for believers, are also recorded by some Arabian authors of the 12–15th centuries [al-Gharnati, 1971, pp. 24, 49–50]. Their content shows that the cult of the holy sword of Maslama was imposed on the ancient fertility cult, where a sword is the main attribute [Gmyrya, 2001, pp. 55–62; 2003, pp. 237–261]. The local Derbent chronicle 'Derbent-name' associates the name of Maslama (Abu Muslim) with the building of one congregational (Juma) and five quarter mosques in Derbent, one of them bore the name 'the mosque of the Khazar tribe' [Shikhsaidov et al., 1993, p. 32]. Seven months after his return to Syria in 732/733, Maslama died of a serious disease.

Al-Jarrah ibn Abdallah al-Hakami was the Umayyad general who replaced Maslama as the ruler of Transcaucasia in 722/723 upon latter's first removal. The most prominent military action is considered to be al-Jarrah's offensive of 104 AH against the Khazars, during which many embattled settlements of Eastern Ciscaucasia were captured and a tremendous battle at the wall of Balandjar was won [Al-Tabari, 1986, p. 78; al-Kufi, 1981, pp. 17–19; Ibn al-Athir, 1940, p. 25]. He became notorious as an extremely violent person. Al-Tabari states that the prisoners of war captured at Balandjar and all their children were drowned on Jarrah's orders. In 730/731, Jarrah's army was defeated by the Khazars at Ardebil town (modern Southern Azerbaijan), and the general himself was killed in a violent battle. This event is described in the works of many Eastern authors [al-Kufi, 1981, pp. 21–24; al-Tabari, 1986, p. 79; Ibn al-Athir, 1940, p. 26; Ghevond, 1862, p. 72]. The Byzantine historian Theophane dates Jarrah's death to 728/729 [Chenchurov, 1980, p. 67].

Marwan ibn Muhammad ibn Marwan al-Hakam conducted three campaigns in the Caspian provinces of Khazaria. His father, the famous general Muhammad ibn Marwan, was the son of caliph Marwan I (684–685) and brother of caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan. Afterwards, Marwan became a caliph as

well (744–750). Marwan changed the strategy of offensive operations and systematically and purposefully brought the situation on the Caucasian front to a turning point. As a result of the operations of 735/736 and 737, the Caspian provinces of Khazaria were defeated; the Arabian army invaded the main territory of the Khaganate and reached its capital al-Baida. Threatened by the loss of his tsardom, the Khagan accepted the terms of truce with the Arabs [Khalifah ibn Khayyat, 2000, p. 461; al-Kufi, 1981, pp. 50–52; HT, 2002, pp. 467–469; Ghevond, 1862, p. 80]. Certain Arab authors indicate that under the terms of the truce, the Khagan and many of his compatriots accepted Islam [al-Baladhuri, p. 462; HT, 2002, p. 52], however, researchers find this information to be a legend. During the campaign of 737, according to Armenian authors, the capital of 'the Hun's country' Varachan was vanquished.

After the defeat of the Caspian region, in 738/739, Marwan undertook the subjugation of the internal mountain regions of Dagestan—that is, the political entities Sarir, Khamsin, Tuman, Shandan, and others. The local population stubbornly resisted the Arabs, so the rulers of the mountain regions had to conclude peace with the Arabs under very harsh terms, providing for an annual supply of food, cattle, money and concubines. Hundreds of mountain settlements were destroyed.

The conquest of the north-east Caucasus was completed, primarily, in the 40s of the 8th century, although, individual military clashes between the Khazar Khaganate and Arab Caliphate took place up to the late 8th century. Marwan remained in Transcaucasia up to 743/744. After killing caliph Valid II (743–744), Marwan left for Damascus and proclaimed himself a caliph in 126 AH. He remained in power for six years and, after his defeat in the battle against the Abbasid army at the Great Zab river in 750, fled with his supporters first to Syria, and then to Egypt, where he was killed in Busir, one of the Egyptian provinces [Ibn al-Athir, 1981, p. 33]. With his death, the approximately ninety-year rule of the Umayyad dynasty ended, beginning the five-hundred year epoch of the Abbasids (750–1258), decedents

of Muhammad's uncle Abbas [Stanley Lane-Poole, 2004, pp. 19–21].

For the caliphate, the Caucasian war ended with conclusion of the treaty with Khazaria in 737 and subjugation of the mountain principalities of the north-east Caucasus in 738–739.

Who exactly took part in military actions in the Caucasus? It is known that the army of the Arab Caliphate was not regular and was formed from militia detachments, usually comprised of people from a certain town or region. Participation in military operations of the state was considered a duty of a Muslim, and it was well-paid, too. Common soldiers received an annual payment of 300 to 500 dirhems (e.g., a cow cost 30 to 40; a ram, 5 to 10 dirhems) [History of the East, I, p. 116]. According to sources, militiamen from Kufa led by Salman Ibn Rabiha and military troops from Syria led by Maslama participated in the military actions of the first phase of the Caucasian war [Khalifah ibn Khayyat, pp. 444–446; HT, 2002, pp. 450–452, 455; Gadzhiev et al., 1996, p. 211]. In the second phase of military actions, the Arabian army was not homogeneous, as well, and was also built on a regional basis. There are important indications of this in the sources. Thus, al-Kufi, apart from Maslama's reconstruction of Derbent before his departure to Syria, also points to structural changes in the city: '...Maslama ordered to divide al-Bab town into four sectors: one sector was given to warriors from among the people of Damascus, the second, to warriors of Homs, the third, to warriors of Palestine, and the fourth, to other warriors from Syria and al-Jazira' [al-Kufi, 1981, pp. 47–48]. According to the Dagestanian chronicle 'Derbent-name', the city was divided into seven quarters, where people from Damascus, Homs, Kinnasrina (Syria), Mosul (Iraq), Jazira, Jordan, and Palestine settled down [Shikhsaidov et al., 1993, p. 32, n. 155–162]. With this, the settlers quarters were separated, and each one had its own mosque. Al-Ya'qubi noted that 20 thousand volunteers were enlisted from Syria, Jazira, and Mosul to Marwan's army in 735 [al-Ya'qubi, p. 8]. The same author reports that apart from volunteers from various regions of the Caliphate, seven thousand criminals, released from prisons, were



included in the militia that left for the Caucasus in 735.

The army of the Arab Caliphate confronted the army of the Khazar Khaganate and military departments of political entities of the north-east Caucasus, as well as other local populations. The Armenian historian Vardapet Ghevond, who wrote in the late 8th century, notes that military actions from 713 to 737 were conducted, primarily, within the territory of 'the Huns' country'. Its southern borders, according to Gevont, opened with the Derbent passage ('Caspian gates', 'Chora passage', 'Jora passage'). Its towns were located in the seaside and piedmont regions. The author denominated the Khazarian territories as the 'northern lands'—that is, located far to the north of Derbent. Ghevond calls the population of the 'Huns' country' the Huns and does not mix them with the Khazars. In certain military operations, the Khazars act as the allies of the Huns; in others, they act independently [Ghevond, pp. 27–28, 72, 80–81]. The Huns of the 8th century are also mentioned by later Armenian authors [Vardan Areveltsi, p. 95; Stepanos Taronsky, p. 95].

There is no specific data on the 'Huns' country' in the 8th century in Armenian sources, except for information on the siege and capture of towns and fortresses, called 'Hunnic', as well as Marwan's overthrow of its capital city Varachan. The main set of knowledge about the 'Huns' country' was left by the Armenian-speaking historian of the 7th century Movses Kaghankatvatsi, and it is dated to 662–682—that is, to the period after the end of the first phase of the Caucasian war of the Arab Caliphate. It was an established union of Hunnic-Bulgarian tribes, which also included local Iranian-speakers and Caucasian populations. The ruler of the 'Huns' country' held the title of Elteber; Movses Kaghankatvatsi defines his position in the social hierarchy as a 'high-throned prince'. The authority of the ruler of the Huns extended to all areas of internal and external life of the tribal union; however, to a certain degree, it was limited by a collective body comprised of tribal leaders, higher generals, and his immediate circle [Gmyrya, 1995, pp. 164–173]. The ruler had at his disposal a well-armed and trained army, which brought considerable revenues to both the

'high-throned' prince and other representatives of the military estate. According to the sources, agriculture, cattle breeding, cropping, as well as crafts and trade were developed in the 'Huns' country'. Armenian-speaking authors name several cities in the 'Huns' country', e.g., Varachan, Targu, and Samandar, emphasizing the first as the capital—that is, the residence of the ruler, and religious center [Gmyrya, 1995, pp. 115–163, 174–204, 217–253; HT, 2002, pp. 282–283, 285–286]. Since the 80s of the 7th century, the 'Huns' country' was politically dependent on the Khazar Khaganate, and acted as its ally in the struggle against the Caliphate.

Arabic authors use other terms when denoting the military-and-political powers in Caspian Dagestan during the second phase of the Caucasian war of the Caliphate. Khalifah ibn Khayyat, referring to the enemies of the Arabs in the Caucasus in the 8th century, names the Khazars and Turks. He not only discerns these two ethnoses, but also mentions that the Arabs tried to use the Turks in their struggle with the Khazars. For the first phase of the war (7th century), Khalifah ibn Khayyat does not name the ethnicities of the Caliphate's opponents, denoting them with the term 'enemy' and the name of the country 'Balandjar' [Khalifah ibn Khayyat, 2000, pp. 36–41]. Al-Kufi usually writes about the forces of 'Khazars', which the Muslims encountered in the region [Al-Kufi, 1981, pp. 10, 14–15, 17–22, 24, 29–31, 35]; he also mentions 'other tribes of infidels', which were 'the same faith and tribe' as the Khazars and whose warriors were in the Khazar's army. To denote the main force opposing the Arabs in the Caucasus, al-Kufi's contemporary, al-Tabari uses two terms—the 'Khazars' and 'Turks', but primarily the 'Turks' [Al-Tabari, 1986, pp. 74, 76–80]. Ibn al-Athir, who used the works of al-Tabari, contrasts the Turks and Khazars with the inhabitants of Balandjar [Ibn Al-Athir, 1940, pp. 9, 13, 15, 21–23, 25, 26, 28, 30, 34]. Primarily, Ibn al-Athir uses the ethnonyms 'Khazars' and 'Turks' to generally denote the main military forces of the opponent of the Arabs in military operations in the Caucasus. Al-Ya'qubi calls people who stubbornly resisted the Arabs in the 'Turks' country' by the ethnonyms 'Turks' and 'Kha-

zars' [Al-Ya'qubi, pp. 7–9]. In al-Baladhuri's work, the main force opposing the Arabs in the Caspian region in the 8th century was the Khazars [Al-Baladhuri, pp. 5–7, 16–19].

The overthrow of Khazaria in the Caucasus and the adoption of Islam by the Khagan and his closest circle are usually emphasized among the main results of the second phase of the Caliphate's military actions in the Caucasus. However, the reports of certain Arab authors on the adoption of Islam in Khazaria in 737 were considered to not correspond to historical realities [Garayeva, 1997, p. 216; HT, 2002, p. 441; History of the East, I, p. 37]. The overthrow of Khazaria in 737 had very deep consequences. According to the sources, Khazaria accepted the supremacy of the Caliphate in Transcaucasia; Derbent became the natural border between the spheres of influence of both states, and the Arabs successfully used its important strategic location in the war in the Caucasus and many times tried to turn it into a foothold in the struggle with Khazaria and Caucasian principalities. However, it is difficult to judge whether or not the Caliphate's positions were strong in Derbent after the overthrow of Khazaria, since the sources are mute thereof. Nevertheless, it is known that in the 60s of the 8th century the 'Khazars and Turks' comprised a considerable part of Derbent's population (Ibn al-Athir). After the events of 737, there was no question about joint possession of the city. It is likely that it was the Turkic-speaking population that exercised Islam. It is known from the Dagestani historical chronicle that one of Derbent's mosques, built in the 30s of the 7th century, was called 'Khazarian'.

One of the results of the military victories of the Caliphate in the Caucasus was the relocation of the political and administrative center of the Khazar Khaganate from the territory of the north-east Caucasus to the Volga region.

Undoubtedly, the overthrow of the political and economic centers of Caspian Dagestan became one of the main outcomes of the second phase of the Arabs' war in the Caucasus. Armenian-speaking authors of the 7th century identify, apart from Derbent, other towns of the 'Huns' country' in this region, such as Varachan, Samandar, Chungars, and for the

first third of the 8th century, they mention Varachan, Samandar, and Targu. At the same time, Arab authors list Balandjar, Samandar, Yargy, Vabandar, and several fortresses. Arab geographers of the 9–10th centuries only provide actual information on Samandar, while information on Balandjar is only available from books. Arab authors noted the depopulation of seaside territories to the north of Derbent. Al-Istakhri described this with a succinct phrase: 'I don't know a single densely-populated place in the Khazar region except for Samandar' [al-Istakhri, p. 49]. Khazarian King Joseph also mentions only one town, Samandar, in the Caspian region, on the road to Derbent [Kokovtsov, 1932, p. 100]. The Rus-eses, who finished the destruction of Khazar provinces in the Caspian region, focused their attack on Samandar in 969, since there were no other serious 'targets' in the region [Knowledge, 1908, p. 114].

Researchers write about a large-scale population migration from the Caspian region during the wars of the 8th century and thereafter [Pletneva, 1986, p. 41; 1981, p. 77]. There is no explicit data about this in the sources. It is argued that Caspian region inhabitants (Hun-Bulgars, Khazars, Turks) partially moved to mountain regions, partially went west to Alania and further to the Volga-Don region, partially moved to the Khazaria mainland in the Lower Volga region and, probably, settled in its middle reaches and in the Kama River region. These arguments are supported by indirect information from written sources and interpretation of the material culture of the populations of the above regions in the 8–10th centuries [Archeology in USSR, 1981, pp. 77–80, 209–218]. In his letter to Hasdai ibn Shaprut, the Khazarian King Joseph listed the people and city of Suvar among Khazarian dependencies located on the Volga [Kokovtsov, 1932, p. 98]. Researchers place the city of Suvar to the Middle Volga, 70 to 80 km to the west of the city of Bulgar. Its name is consonant to the 'Suvar domain' of Arabic authors, who affix it in the 9th century to the north of Derbent.

The migration of Turkic-speaking tribes from their areal in the Caspian region is confirmed by documents from the Derbent histori-

cal chronicle, where there is one message for 1064: 'remaining Khazars numbering 3 thousand families came to Kakhtan town of the Khazar land (or: to Kakhtan in the (former) Khazarian territory). They rebuilt it and settled there' [Minorsky, 1963, p. 75]. The town of Kakhtan is not explicitly identified with known towns in the Caspian Region, but, probably, the chronicle refers to Samandar city, destroyed by the Rus in 969, to which the Khazars returned in 1064 [Gmyrya, 1995, pp. 147–149; 1998, pp. 178–179].

Arabic sources include information on the violent uprooting of people from north-east Caucasian towns and fortresses that resisted the Arabs. Such actions were undertaken by Jarrah in 104 AH toward the people of Balandjar and Targu, who were moved to various regions of Caucasian Albania [Khalifah ibn Khayyat, p. 38; Al-Baladhuri, p. 16; al-Tabari, 1986, p. 78]. According to al-Kufi, after the overthrow of the Khagan's army in 737, Marwan took 'forty thousand or more captives' out of Khazaria and settled them in the Samur valley and the lower reaches of the Kura river [al-Kufi, 1981, p. 52]. Al-Baladhuri described how a 'great many Khazars', were taken by Marwan out of Khazaria and settled in the Samur valley 'on the plains, in the Laks' (Lezgians') region' [Al-Baladhuri, p. 18].

The enormous losses of soldiers in battles with the Arabs, the perishing of town and village populations in sieges and assaults, the execution of prisoners, the Arab practice of enslaving civilians (women, children) and the immigration policy of the Arabs, all undoubtedly led to considerable demographic changes in the Caspian region. Mountainous regions were affected to a lesser degree, although even there, there was a significant loss of life due to warfare and a burdensome annual supply of hostages from conquered settlements (of boys and girls) totaling more than two thousand people [Gadzhiyev (et al.), 1996, p. 210]. It is no coincidence that the return of three thousand Khazar families (about fifteen to twenty thousand people) to the Caspian region of Dagestan in 1064 was a notable event that was given precedence in historical chronicles as one of the most important events in the history of Shirvan and Derbent.

### **The Khazar campaign against the Transcaucasian provinces of the Caliphate (762–764)**

The Arabian Caliphate's intent to subdue and conquer the North-East Caucasus was tenacious, stubborn and sustained despite the great human losses and the duration of the campaign which lasted about one hundred years. Neither the difficulties of the campaign, nor the severity of the losses on the battlefield could deter the Caliphs from pursuing their goal; the subjugation of the Khazar provinces in the Caucasus, along with the lands of their allies in the mountain regions. After the signing of the Arabian-Khazar Treaty in 737 and subjugation of the mountain regions of the North-East Caucasus in 738–739, this ambition seemed to have been achieved. However, events in the second half of the 8th century demonstrated that the Arabs were unable to achieve lasting military successes against the Khazar Khanate. Thus, the Caliphs attempted to change their approach in order to appease their formidable opponent.

This change of strategy in its relations with the Khazar Khaganate occurred when the second Abbasid Caliph, al-Mansur (754–775) came to power. From 734–736, al-Mansur had been the governor of Azerbaijan, Armenia and al-Jazira under the rule of the first Abbasid Caliph, al-Saffah (749–754). Perhaps it was his awareness of social and political situation in Transcaucasia and the North-East Caucasus that forced Caliph al-Mansur seek a rapprochement with the Khazar Khaganate. Two unassociated authors, the Armenian historian, Ghevond, and the Arabic historian, al-Kufi, independently report this. Ghevond indicates that the Arab governor of Transcaucasia, Ezid, courted the daughter of the Khagan, 'with the aim of becoming his relative, to make peace with him and with the Khazar forces' [Ghevond, 1862, p. 92]. Al-Kufi cites the text of a letter ascribed to Caliph al-Mansur in 735 to the governor of Arran, Yazid ibn Usaid ibn Zafir as-Sulami [Ashurbeyli, 1983, note on the page 102], outlining the tactical and strategic plans of the Caliphate in Transcaucasia. 'And further. Arran will not be at peace until you have established familial ties with the Khazars. I think you should intermarry with them and then the country will be at peace. Otherwise, I'm afraid

for you and all your tax-collectors, because the Khazars will not let you rest. If they want, they will assemble an army and will win. Do not neglect my advice and do you best to intermarry with the Khazars. And peace!' [al-Kufi, 1981, p. 62].

Only al-Kufi gives details about the wedding ceremony, although Ghevond does offer some specific information [Ghevond, p. 92]. Matchmakers were sent to the Khazar Tsar and he gave his consent to the marriage of his daughter. The groom paid a dowry of one hundred thousand dirhams. The bridal wedding procession which departed to meet the groom in Bardaa was an impressive sight: 'She was followed by ten thousand Khazars, with her relatives among them, four thousand splendid mares, one thousand mules, one thousand slaves, ten thousand short Khazar camels, one thousand camels of Turki-breed, each with two humps, twenty thousand sheep, ten covered caravans with doors and coverings plated with gold and silver and interiors carpeted with sable and upholstered in silk, twenty carts loaded with gold and silver objects, crockery, and so on' [al-Kufi, 1981, p. 62]. All of this happened sixteen years after the defeat of Khazaria in 737. It is interesting to note that upon her arrival in Bardaa, the bride was not allowed to be wed until she had studied the fundamentals of Islam. This is one more piece of evidence (although consequential) that supports the idea that neither the Khagan, nor his relatives were converted to Islam in 737.

The premature death of the Khagan's daughter and her two sons two years after the marriage, was according to al-Kufi, the cause of the Khazar campaign against the Caliphate and renewal of the military hostilities between them. Ghevond indicates the same reason, adding that the Khazars 'considered her death an act of treachery' [Ghevond, 1862, p. 92]. The majority of sources date the Khazar attack on Transcaucasia in 762–763 [Ibn al-Asir, 1940, p. 34; Artamonov, 1962, p. 242].

Theophanes, al-Tabari and Ibn al-Athir clearly indicate that the first campaign was followed by a second. Theophanes refers to the second Khazar raid in 764–765 [Ibn al-Athir, 1940, p. 34]. Al-Ya'qubi, al-Kufi and

Ghevond do not divide the Khazar raids chronologically and describe them as a single event, however, the account of al-Kufi regards it as an event of significant duration and various stages.

No author gives definite figures about the number of Khazarian troops taking part in the campaigns of the 760s. The sources talk about 'the strong forces', 'the great army' and 'vast military' of the Khazars and 'hordes of Turks'. Al-Kufi stated that the final battle between the Arabs and the Khazars featured two hundred thousand horsemen [Al-Kufi, 1981, p. 64], although it is difficult to verify the accuracy of this figure.

The information from the sources is also contradictory with regards to the leader of the Khazarian troops. Al-Kufi says that they were headed by 'Khakan, Tsar of the Khazars', who is referred to by the author by the name of 'Ta'atur' [al-Kufi, 1981, pp. 62, 64]. Al-Ya'qubi also identifies a 'Tsar' by name 'Ras Tarkhan' as the high commander of the Khazars. Al-Tabari and Ibn al-Athir write that 'Astarkhan Khwarezmian' attacked Transcaucasia in the second campaign of 764–765. Ghevond clearly reports that the Khagan entrusted the undertaking of the campaign to 'his commander, Ras Tarkhan from the Khatiriltber's generation'. The origin and status of the commander Ras Tarkhan (Astarkhan, Raj-Tarkhan) are determined differently in the literature. M. Artamonov regarded him to be a member of the Farsi-speaking Yasi-As (Alans) tribes [Artamonov, 1962, p. 244]. K. Tsegledi associates the Khazar commander with the Great Prince of the 'Kingdom of the Huns' Alp-Ilitver (Elteber) who is referred to by the 7th century Armenian historian, Movses Kagankatvatsi in relation to the Christianization of the Caspian Huns in 682. K. Tsegledi believes Astrakhan to be a Khwarezmian mercenary who headed the Huns [Tsegledi, 1960, p. 85]. Judging by the title of 'Elteber' assigned by Ghevond, Astarkhan was the ruler of a large union of tribes, subordinate to the Khazars. The reference to his belonging to 'Khatiriltber dynasty' signifies that he was a bearer of that title by right of succession. Al-Tabari's reference to the nisba of the Khazar commander, 'Khwarezmian', definitely suggests that that his

ancestors originated from Middle Asia. Movzes Kagankatvatsi also alludes to a link between the ruler of 'the Kingdom of the Huns', Alp-Ilitver and 'Turkestan', where he committed 'many feats of bravery' [Movzes Kagankatvatsi, 1984, pp. 127–128]. This comment possibly relates to the military exploits of the ruler, which were carried out within the territory of the Western Turkic Khaganate in the first part of the 7th century. Astarkhan, probably the descendant of Alp-Ilutuer, headed 'the Kingdom of the Huns' in the of the 8th century.

The outline of the events of 762–764 can be reconstructed, according to the sources, as follows. The Arabs, with seven thousand cavalry at their disposal, were unable to withstand the onslaught of the Khazars who swiftly occupied eleven provinces of Caucasian Albania, located along the left-bank of the Kura river, and seven provinces of Georgia. The governor of the Transcaucasian provinces of Caliphate informed the Caliph about the catastrophic situation. The Caliph promptly sent ten thousand warriors to the conflict area and later a further thirty-five thousand from Iraq. Apparently, reinforcements and other troops also arrived, because, summing up, al-Kufi writes that Yazida had a army of sixty thousand, which included the large detachment of thirty thousand from Iraq and detachment of twenty thousand from Syria and al-Jazira [al-Kufi, 1981, pp. 63, 64]. Al-Ya'qubi gives a lower figure of twenty thousand troops from Syria, Jazira and Mosul [al-Ya'qubi, p. 8]. The Arabs, crossed the river Kura and joined the battle against the Khazars 'in the land of Shirvan'. The battle was tremendous; many authors wrote about the great Arab losses, although no one is able to give precise figures.

As a result, the Khazars slaughtered a vast number of the Muslim population and the inhabitants of Transcaucasia who recognized the authority of the Caliphate. They took many prisoners, looted valuable property as well as herds and cattle.

The ruler of the Transcaucasia, Yazid ibn Usaid, set off for Iraq to report to the Caliph about the tragedy in Transcaucasia and a decision was made to change tactics in their relations with the Khazars. Al-Kufi writes that the Caliph directed significant resources to strengthen Derbent and the mountain wall [al-Kufi, 1981,

p. 64]. Al-Ya'qubi reports on the building of strong new Arab bases in Transcaucasia: the towns of Kama, al-Muhammadiya, Bab-Vaq, and so on [al-Ya'qubi, p. 8]. 'Derbend-name' informs that in the vicinity of Derbent, fourteen towns, one hundred and ten castles and settlements were built in the space of six months; the inhabitants of which were obliged 'to guard the ravines and roads' [Shikhsaidov (et. al), 1994, p. 38]. The names of the bases specified in the source are effectively unidentifiable with contemporary toponymy [Orazayev, 1993, pp. 61–62, notes 211, 214–217, 219–222]. The military settlers and their families were settled in the new bases. Three hundred people were resettled from Tabasaran to the town of Mitei, the warriors from the Syrian city of Hims were settled in Himaydi, those from Damascus in Darvaq and from Mosul in Derpush. In total, forty-seven thousand military settlers from the Caliphate were stationed [Shikhsaidov (et al.), 1993, pp. 37–38].

The Arab military contingent in Transcaucasia was strengthened by the thirty thousand-strong army mustered in Iraq, Syria, and al-Jazira. According to al-Kufi, a detachment of seven thousand experienced warriors was also sent there 'so that each warrior was worth several' [al-Kufi, 1981, p. 64]. Al-Ya'qubi writes that the Caliph released seven thousand convicts from prisons and gathered workers and builders from various provinces in the caliphate and sent them to Transcaucasia together with the warriors [al-Ya'qubi, p. 9]. 'Derbend-name' reports of a forty-two thousand-strong contingent of troops sent to the Derbent area, thirty thousand 'brave young warriors' were recruited in Khorasan and the rest in Sham [Shikhsaidov (et. al), 1993, p. 37]. The fortifications of Derbent, including the nine gates of the city, were strengthened and repaired. The settlers were deployed in Derbent and in the bases on the Mountain Wall, protecting the routes around Derbent. The settlers were allocated the ration allowance which existed during the rule of the Umayyad Caliphs [al-Kufi, 1981, p. 65]. The 760s saw the final expulsion of the Khazars from Transcaucasia and conversion of Derbent into a large military area, which was able to contain the aspirations of the Khazars to infiltrate Transcaucasia.

**The Khazar campaign against the Transcaucasian provinces of the Caliphate (799–800).**

The pressure of the Khazars on Derbent continued until the end of the 8th century. Al-Kufi writes that during the rule of Caliph Rashid (786–809), the inhabitants of the Derbent requested and exemption from payments of the kharaj land-tax on the grounds that they 'were at war with the Khazars' [al-Kufi, 1981, p. 68]. Kharaj was the payment due for the usage of lands 'belonging to the Islamic community by right of conquest' [The History of the East, I, p. 127]. In the 8th to 9th centuries, the size of the kharaj land tax depended on the difficulty of land cultivation; its minimum rate was one tenth of the harvest. The inhabitants of Derbent, the majority of who had settled as soldiers during the Arabian period, were not only exempt from paying taxes, but some political entities of the North-East Caucasus were obliged to supply Derbent with an annual tax levy, which was intended to support the military settlers and their families. Al-Kufi has some information on this point. Maslama, as governor of the Transcaucasian provinces of the Caliphate, was the first to undertake the conversion of Derbent into a large base in 731–732, having charged military settlers from different provinces of the Arabic State with the guarding of the city. Each settler had an annual salary of 110 dinars, and a monthly supply of 'wheat, olive oil and foodstuffs' [al-Kufi, 1981, p. 48]. The local chronicle 'Derbend-name' reveals that during Maslam's rule,

Derbent recieved payments from the kharaj tax supplied by Kaitag, Tabasaran and Guy-bechi (Zerikhgeran) [Shikhsaidov and others, 1993, p. 34]. 'Derbend-name' also shows that during the rule of the Umayyad Caliph, Khisham (724–743), the inhabitants of Derbent were obliged to guard the city 'day and night' and the city was exempt from the kharaj and konaklyk taxes. The ruler of the city would be dismissed if he broke these directives by collecting taxes from the population (konaklyk, oshur, and kharaj). Al-Kufi gives specific information about the taxes that supported Derbent, which were set by Marwan in 737–738 in Mountain principalities that he had conquered: Serir, Tuman, and Khamzin. The annual income from these three political entities alone totaled ten thousand dinars, two thousand poods of foodstuffs, one hundred head of livestock and 1,600 beautiful boys and girls [Al-Kufi, 1981, pp. 55–58]. 'Derbend-name' confirmed the information about Marwan's actions, although it exaggerates the extent of territory paying the kharaj to Derbent [Shikhsaidov and others, 1993, p. 36; Orazayev, 1993, p. 60, note 196]. 'Derbend-name' indicates that the privileges of exemption afforded to Derbent were preserved during the Abbasid Caliphate, notably, this situation existed even during the rule of the Caliph, Makhdi (775–785) [Shikhsaidov (et al.), 1993, pp. 37, 39], although the geography of the principalities dependent of Derbent changed over time [al-Kufi, 1981, p. 65].

In the period following the rule of the Caliph Makhdi, the Caliphate's policy towards



Derbent. Naryn-Kala Fortress. View from the south

Derbent changed. The chronicle 'Derbend-name' establishes that the status of Derbent changed, but does not name the precise reasons for this: 'These laws and rules had been adhered to for a long time, that is, until the time of Jayun ibn Nejma ibn Hashim. Jayun's rule was characterised by injustice, tyranny, disobedience to the Caliph and the execution of high-handed acts. These improper actions were similar to those of Nejma, Jayun's father. He was (in due course) dismissed from his role as governor of Derbent. Having taken away the Derbent Emirate from Jayun, the Caliph transferred it to Rabia Bakhili, and Nejma was imprisoned for some time. Afterwards, his son, Jayun, did not become the ruler (of Derbent). Having found common language with the Khazar kafirs, he gave back the wall to the Khazars. Devastation came in Derbent and the population of the city was scattered throughout Shirvan and Berda'a' [Shikhsaidov (et al.), 1993, p. 39]. In the Arabic sources, Jayun ibn Najma ibn Hashim is known as Hayyun ibn Najm ibn Hashimi. He was a son of the governor of Derbent, an-Najm ibn Hashimi, the patriarch of the future local dynasty of the Hashimids in Derbent who ruled from 869–1077. According to 'Derbend-name', Najm ibn Hashimi, the representative of the Caliph's authority in Derbent, committed some 'unseemly deeds', and was dismissed from power and taken into custody. According to al-Kufi, the events in Derbent took the following course. The new ruler of Transcaucasia, Said ibn Salm ibn Kutayba al-Bakhili (796–799), assigned Nasr ibn Anan as the governor of Derbent, who arrived at his place of appointment. Said ibn Salm sent a detachment of tax-collectors headed by al-Kharis ibn Yahya al-Barmaki to Derbent. The inhabitants of Derbent protested against the new governor of Derbent, but he refused to comply with their petition not to collect the kharaj from the city, citing the will of the Caliph: 'Harun al-Rashid does not allow anybody to reduce the kharaj' [al-Kufi, 1981, p. 68]. The son of the ousted governor of Derbent, Hayun ibn an-Najm ibn Hashimi, took inhabitants of the city under his protection—that is, effectively proclaiming himself governor of Derbent. When the tax collectors headed by the Commissioner al-Khasir ibn Yahya al-Barmaki entered the city,

'a band of citizens attacked him and his men, beat some of them, seizing his men, cattle and property and banished the others from the city' [al-Kufi, 1981, p. 68]. The Commissioner of tax collection reported the incident to the ruler of Transcaucasia. He informed al-Najm about his son's actions, but Najm denied his involvement in the Derbent rebellion. Following these events, the former governor of Derbent was imprisoned in Barda'a. In response, his son arrested the newly-assigned governor of Derbent, Nasr ibn Anan. Later an-Najm was executed.

A son of Najm, according to al-Kufi, 'grabbed hold of the tax collector, Nasr ibn Anan, brought him out of prison, decapitated him, and sent his head to Said' [Ibid, p. 69]. However, Nasr ibn Anan was the governor of Derbent, and not a tax collector. Al-Ya'qubi writes about the death in Derbent of 'Said's representative in al-Bab-u-al-babe' [al-Ya'qubi, p. 11]—that is, appointed him governor of Derbent. The actions of Hayyun ibn Najm are evaluated unambiguously in sources: 'he was disobedient to the Caliph' [Shikhsaidov (et al.), 1993, p. 93], and, 'spoke openly in public against the authorities' [al-Ya'qubi, p. 11]. The cause of events in Derbent was not a feud between two Arab officials [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 191], but the deprivation of the privileges of Derbent, which was exempt from the payment of any taxes. The ruler of Derbent, Najm, was removed from power as he, apparently, disagreed with the decision of the Arab authorities to change the status of Derbent. This cost him his life. It is possible that this decision did not come from the Caliph Rashid, but was an initiative of his vicegerent of Transcaucasia, Said ibn Muslim. Al-Kufi advises that, some time later, the chief of the tax collection squad, al-Kharis ibn Yakhya al-Barmaki, was arrested and sent to the Caliph, and that the inhabitants of Derbent were pardoned by him.

Following reprisals against the new ruler of Derbent, a 'great warrior host', headed by the ruler of the Transcaucasian provinces of the Caliphate, was unleashed against the rebel city. Hayyun ibn Najm appealed to the Khazars for help. Al-Ya'qubi writes that Hayyun entered 'into negotiations with the Khakan, the tsar of the Khazars, who obliged and, heading a large army, attacked the Muslims, killing and cap-

turing a great number of them. He then took up position at al-Kurra, capturing many Muslims, killing a huge number of people, including women and children, and setting fire to the country' [al-Ya'qubi, p. 11]. Al-Kufi confirms the fact that negotiations had been held with the Khazars, adding that gifts to the value of a hundred thousand dirhams had been sent to 'the tsar of the Khazars', and that 'the country of Islam had been promised in spoils for their help' [al-Kufi, 1981, p. 69]. Al-Tabari and Ibn al-Athir state that Hayyun ibn Najm, having left Derbent, went to the Khazars and incited them against the Arabs [at-Tabari, 1986, p. 80; Ibn al-Asir, 1940, p. 34].

In all probability, Hayyun ibn Najm did not leave Derbent. According to al-Kufi, an army of Khazars, headed by the Khagan and consisting of 'forty thousand horsemen of Khazars and Tarkhans', advanced as far as Derbent. A punitive expedition of the Arabs was approaching the city. Out of fear of atrocities, the inhabitants did not allow the Khazars into the city, but diverted them through one of the districts of the Mountain Wall. Al-Kufi writes that the Khazars were accompanied to 'as-Sula and, with their help, opened up a passage in the district of al-Baba, through which they (the Khazars) invaded the country of Islam' [al-Kufi, 1981, p. 69].

According to al-Tabari, the Khazars' breakthrough in the Caucasus dates back to 783/799–800.

The news of the invasion of the Khazars in Transcaucasia reached its ruler, who was approaching Derbent with his forces. The Arab ruler fled and hid in the city of Bardaa [Ibid, p. 69]. The Khazars occupied all the districts as far as the river Kura, many peaceful inhabitants and Arab warriors perished, and a hundred thousand people were captured. The Khazars' activities continued for around 70 days.

After wreaking devastation, the Khazars left Transcaucasia and returned 'to their own country' [Ibid, p. 69]. The Caliph appointed a new ruler of Transcaucasia, increased the Arab forces, and 'defeated the Khazars. The passage was (then) strengthened' [at-Tabari, 1986, p. 80].

In Derbent itself, reconstruction works were carried out and measures were taken for its redevelopment: the city was supplied with running water, and mills, barns, mosques and

architectural structures were built. The Caliph Rashid organised social and economic reforms. On the outskirts of Derbent gardens and vegetable plots had been destroyed, the tax collected from them included a reduction for the costs of repairing irrigation channels and mills. These facts bear witness to the fact that tax privileges had not been re-established in Derbent even after the rebellion in 799/800, but the city was granted the means of attaining independent incomes. Derbent was transformed from a military base into a city of landowners, craftsmen, merchants and warriors.

The cause of the Khazars' military action in 799/800 was cited by the majority of authors as being the execution of the ruler of Derbent, Najm ibn Hashim, which had driven the citizens to rebellion and provoked the Khazar campaign. As an analysis of these sources shows, the Khazar raid in 799/800 was a link in the chain of events around Derbent, the main one of which was an amendment of the status of the border city, namely, its disfranchisement from tax privileges.

The military campaign of 799/800 is considered to be the last incursion of the Khazars into Transcaucasia [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 192], which had become inaccessible to the Khaganate. The Khazars changed their tactics in the North-East Caucasus by directing bitter fighting against Muslim Derbent, which in the 9th century had become a centre for the Islamisation of political formations in the region.

### **The ethno-political situation in the North-East Caucasus in the 9th century.**

There is practically no mention in the sources of the military and political activity of the Khazar Khaganate in the Caucasus during the 9th century. The sparse amount of information available shows that Caucasian politics were still important for the Khazars in the 9th century, despite the fact that their aspirations in the region of Derbent were practically blocked by the Arabs.

The political situation in Transcaucasia and the region of Derbent during the first half of the 9th century was not propitious for the Arab caliphate. Al-Ya'qubi was witness to the events as they occurred, as he personally gathered the necessary information for his works in Armenia



and Azerbaijan. His historical treatise dates back to 873. Al-Ya'qubi characterises the situation in the Transcaucasian province of the caliphate during the period of rule by Caliph al-Wathiq (842–847) as follows: 'The situation in Armenia has again deteriorated, part of the Arabs, the Batriqs and the seceded have become agitated; the tsars of the mountains and Bab-al-abvab have occupied the neighbouring regions, and the Sultan's power has weakened' [al-Ya'qubi, p. 19]. The ruler of Transcaucasia, Khalid ibn Yazid, appointed by Caliph Mamun (813–833), launched a number of punitive actions against 'the seceded'. The chronicle 'The History of Shirvan and al-Bab', written in Derbent by an unknown author around 500/1106, describes in greater detail the geography of the campaigns led by the ruler of Transcaucasia. The Caliph appointed him as ruler in 205/820. But his authority was not recognised in Transcaucasia, where a series of anti-Arab rebellions had broken out. The Derbent chronicle describes the rebellion in Shakki, its defeat, and the suppression of the uprising by the Sanaryans (Tsanars who lived in the mountains of Georgia near the Dariel ravine) [Minorsky, 1963, p. 44]. But the unrest in Transcaucasia did not abate, and rebellion was incited during the rule of Caliph al-Wathiq by the ruler of Tiflis, Iskhak ibn Ismail. The Caliph again appointed Khalid ibn Yazid as ruler of Transcaucasia, who was removed from power in 220/835, and sent him a 12-thousand-strong troop of horsemen for the struggle against the rebels. Having reached Georgia (Jurzan) with his troops, the ruler of Transcaucasia soon fell sick and died in 230/844–845. His son, Muhammad, who replaced him as ruler of Transcaucasia, 'fought with Iskhak, but suffered defeat' [Ibid, p. 46]. The new Caliph, Mutevakkil (847–886) assigned retaliatory functions to Abu Musa, a Turk by birth, known from the sources as Buga the Elder (Buga ash-Sharabi). In 231/851, the Caliph granted Muhammad 'the city of Bab al-abvab with its dependent lands by way of a fief'. This coincided with the beginning of a new period of struggle with seceded Georgia. It was an unrelenting struggle; the Shirvan and Derbent chronicle talks about 'the numerous battles' of Buga the Elder in Georgia. Al-Ya'qubi reports that the Sanaryans appealed to the rulers of Byzantium, Khazaria, and Rus' [al-Ya'qubi, p. 21; Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 192]. Clearly, the

Khazars offered the insurgents some support, entering Georgia by way of the Dariel ravine, which was located within the territory of Alania. The Shirvan and Derbent chronicle states that, having suppressed the rebellion in Georgia and executed its leader, Iskhak, Buga the Elder carried out punitive measures against the Abkhazians, and then 'attacked the Alans and the Khazars, defeated them and obliged them to pay tributes' [Minorsky, 1963, p. 46]. There was probably an incursion into Alania too, where Khazar forces might have been stationed. According to al-Tabari, the rebellion in Tbilisi was quashed in 238/852–853; he also cites depressing figures of the deceased in Tbilisi: 50 thousand inhabitants of the city were killed, the others were taken prisoner [at-Tabari, 1986, p. 80]. Iskhak's wife and children were sent to the Caliph. Al-Tabari writes that Iskhak's wife was the daughter of the 'sovereign (sakhib) of Sarir'—the mountain principality of Dagestan. The ruler of Transcaucasia, Muhammad ibn Khalid, remained in Derbent throughout this time until, in 242/856, he re-established his authority in Transcaucasia with the help of Buga the Elder. According to the Shirvan and Derbent chronicle, the anti-Arab unrest in Transcaucasia continued for 35 years (817–852).

More detailed information about the political situation in the North-East Caucasus in the 9th century can be found in Arabic geographical literature. The work of Ibn Khordadbeh, compiled in the second half of the 9th century, cites six political centres, situated to the south and north of Derbent, of which the city of Samandar stands out in particular: 'Beyond al-Bab, (are the lands of) the sovereigns of the Suvars, the Lakzes, the Alans, Filan, al-Maskat, Sahib as-Sarir, and the city of Samandar' [Ibn Khordadbeh, p. 109]. The dominions of Lakz and Maskat were situated to the south of Derbent, in the valley of the river Samur, the dominion of Sarir was located in the mountainous districts in the basin of the river Avarskoe Koisu, and the dominion of Filan was also situated in the mountainous regions in the eastern part of Dagestan [Minorsky, 1963, pp. 110–112, 132–136, 138; The History of Dagestan, 1967, pp. 121–126, Gadzhiyev and others, 1996, pp. 234–254]. The city of Samandar, mentioned in Armenian sources from the 7th century, was well known to Arabic-speaking authors. According to their

information, it was one of the largest cities in the West Caspian Region during the period of Arab expansion in the Caucasus during the first half of the 8th century. Details of the city were contained in all geographical treatises of Arabic and Persian-speaking authors of the 9–10th centuries. However, it is difficult to determine its status in the 9th century. Ibn Khordadbeh mentions Samandar on three occasions. The first time – together with Balandjar, the second time – after enumerating the 13 known strengthened passages in the Caucasian mountains: 'The city of Samandar is situated beyond al-Bab. Everything beyond this (city) is in the hands of the Khazars' [Ibn Khordadbeh, p. 109]. The city of Samandar was mentioned again by the author in a list of political centres located to the south and north of Derbent. According to the information of Ibn Khordadbeh, the territories located between Derbent and Samandar did not form part of the Khazar Khaganate in the 9th century. To Ibn Khordadbeh, Samandar stands out as the sovereign city of the territories detached from the Khazars, bordering in the north with the lands of the Khazars. Ibn Khordadbeh does not list Samandar amongst the well-known Khazar cities, which include Hamlij, Balandjar and al-Baida. It is possible that Samandar was mentioned as a major centre in the North Caucasus by the early Arab geographer, al-Khwarizmi, who wrote in 836–847. He noted the existence of three large cities in the North Caucasus, the names of two of which the author gives as al-Bab-va-l-Abvab (Derbent) and Bab al-Lan. The third one is distinguished by the description; 'the city near the mountains between two al-Bab(s)' [Kalinina, 1988, pp. 40, 42]. Considering that the author mentions two Caucasian passes by name—the Caspian Gates (al-Bab-va-l-Abvab) and the Dariel Pass (Bab al-Lan), the third city also could be situated in a strategically important location, near a pass. This describes Samandar, which was well known to Arab writers.

Certain facts about Samandar may be gleaned from a letter written by the Khazar Tsar, Joseph, to the Spanish political figure, Khasdai ibn Shaprut, in the 60s of the tenth century. The document shows the boundaries of 'the land of the Khazars', not, however, the country of the time of Joseph, but of the period of its flourishing, the 8–9th centuries [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 100]. The south-

ern border, according to the source, ran along the foothills of the North-East Caucasus as far as Bab-al-Abvab (Derbent) [Kokovtsov, 1932, p. 100]. It is interesting to note that the ancestral possessions of Tsar Joseph – the representative of, by his definition, the 'small' tribe of Khazars, who lay the foundation for the ruling dynasty of the 'Khazar tsardom' – stretched 20 parasangs to the south, whereas the distance to the southern borders of the Khazar Khaganate was 30 parasangs. Evidently, the territories of the Caspian region of Dagestan was not included amongst the ancestral possessions of the Khazar tsars, which had been transferred by succession—that is, which were, by Joseph's definition, 'possessions from their ancestors' [Ibid, p. 102].

In the Caspian regions Tsar Joseph marks, for geographical orientation, the southern border of the Khazar Khaganate as S-m-n-d-r (Samandar), which was situated 'at the end of (the country of) T-d-lu, as far as the turning (of the border) towards "the Gates"—that is, Bab-l-Abvabu, which is situated on the coast' [Ibid, p. 100]. This laconic excerpt from Tsar Joseph's letter implies that Samandar was situated at the northern end of (the country of) T-d-lu, whose territory stretched as far as Derbent. The designation T-d-lu is considered to be a variant of the second name for Samandar–Tarku [Golb, Pritsak, p. 154].

An anonymous Persian author of the geographical treatise 'The Boundaries of the World', written in 982, also reveals some facts about Samandar. His information, taken from the Arab author, al-Jayhani [Krachkovsky, 2004, pp. 224, 226], dates back to the period before the 90s of the 9th century [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 111]. He is aware of two 'populated regions' in the North-East Caucasus: 'the region of the Alans' and 'the region of the Serirs', and characterises them as mountain-steppe. The anonymous author does, however, mention the 'Turks' in his treatise, 'who live in the area neighbouring the Khazar region' [Khudud al-alam, 1930, pp. 30–31]. There is no direct information about the Turks. The anonymous Persian compares their customs with the customs of the Bulgars, finding them very similar. It is an interesting fact that it is the 'Turks', and not the Khazars, who are mentioned amongst the peoples with customs similar to those of the Bulgars. Considering that the 'Turks' are described as the nearest

neighbours to 'the Khazar region', this probably refers to the population of the Caspian region, the so-called 'Samandar region'.

The source does not contain many facts about Samandar. The information given is very laconic: 'Samandar is a city on the coast, an affluent city, with bazaars and merchants.' [Ibid, p. 32] The description of Samandar is placed in the section entitled 'On the Khazar Region', immediately following the description of Atil. The author then cites a list of eight more cities of the Khazar Khaganate. Samandar does not appear to rank directly amongst the Khazar cities, and the facts about it are not given any particular emphasis by the author. It is difficult to understand why the author arranged his material in this way. But it could be that Samandar had a special status of mutual relationships with the 'land of the Khazars', and that this is what the author attempted to emphasise.

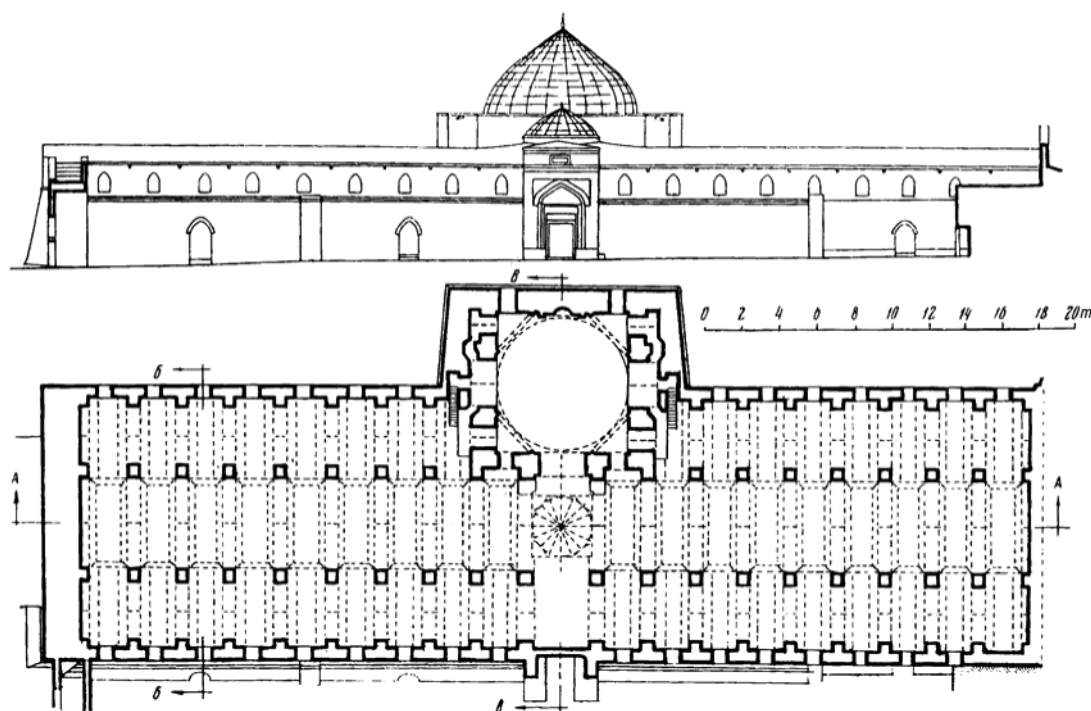
Ibn Khordadbeh also mentioned the city of Balandjar. It is interesting that the author includes Balandjar in a list of capital cities of the Khazar Khaganate, in which Hamlij and al-Baida are mentioned – the capitals of the Khazar Khaganate at the time of the author. Ibn Khordadbeh also presents historical facts that prove that Balandjar and Samandar were built in the 6th century. The author quotes the Arab poet, al-Buhturi, who writes this about Balandjar: 'Respect in al-Iraq was shown to the person who had entered into an agreement in Khamlij or in Balandjar' [Ibn Khordadbeh, p. 109].

The Arab geographer does not provide any details about the location of Balandjar, but does give this information with regard to another city, Samandar. If Ibn Khordadbeh's facts about Samandar and Balandjar are compared, this creates a general impression that the facts about Balandjar were gleaned from the works of other authors. The Arab geographer clearly did not possess any accurate information about the city. It is not by chance that he even refers to a literary source. It is possible that by the beginning of the 9th century Balandjar had lost its former significance. But in all probability, it had already ceased to exist in the time of Ibn Khordadbeh. At any event, Balandjar is not even mentioned by the Khazar Tsar Joseph, whose information about the historical geography dates back to the end of the 9th century to beginning of the 10th century.

Balandjar was mentioned by the Persian anonymous in the list of eight cities of the Khazar Khaganate immediately after the capital Khamlij [Khudud al-alam, 1930, p. 32], but there is no other information about this (the author's facts, as we know, may relate to the period before the 890s). Thus, the Persian author, who began writing his geographical treatise in 982/983, did not know anything about Balandjar himself and could only find limited information in the works of the 9th century author, al-Jayhani (who wrote in 892–907), which were amongst his main sources.

Mentioned by Ibn Khordadbeh in a list of seven political entities in the North-East Caucasus in the 9th century, Suvar had not been heard of earlier [Ibn Khordadbeh, p. 109], yet the author does not give any information about it. Ibn al-Faqih, who in 903 had created a compilation of the works of his predecessors [Krachkovsky, 2004, p. 156], repeats Ibn Khordadbeh's information about the political centres situated in the vicinity of Derbent, but Ibn Khordadbeh's Suvar is referred to by him as 'the tsardom of Sura' [Ibn al-Faqih, p. 41].

What this 'tsardom of Suvar (Sura)' was, and where exactly it was situated, the sources do not clarify. It is possible that it was directly adjacent to the lands of Derbent in the south, and to the lands of Samandar in the north. Al-Muqaddasi, an important proponent of the Arab school of geography in the 10th century who wrote a description of the Islamic countries in the 980s, included a city with the identical name of Suvar in a list of major cities located on the Volga [al-Muqaddasi, p. 3]. He also provided a number of facts about the economic activity of its inhabitants and the nature of their dwellings: 'Suvar is situated on this very river. The people of Suvar live in tents and enjoy plentiful crops and an abundance of corn' [Ibid, p. 5]. The anonymous Persian author, characterising the cities in the land of the Khazars, also mentions amongst them the city of Suvar, located on the Volga: 'Suvar is a city near Bulgar; there are fighters for faith just as there are in Bulgar' [Khudud al-alam, 1930, p. 32]. The Volga Suvar was probably founded by migrants from the Caucasian Suvar. This political entity in the North-East Caucasus is not specified in the sources from the 10th century.



Derbent. Juma Mosque. Map and facade.

M. Artamonov identifies the 'country of Suvar', named, in the researcher's view, after the Savir Huns, with the 'country of Hamzin', which was established in the coastal area of Dagestan after the disintegration of the 'country of the Huns' in the 8th century [Artamonov, 1962, p. 222]. The 'country of Suvar', which Y. Fedorov places in North-East Dagestan, was, as the author assumed, another title for the 'kingdom of the Huns' [Fedorov, 1972, pp. 18–19, 35]. According to A. Gadlo, the name 'Suvar', cited by the Arab geographer Ibn Khordadbeh, could have been one of the earlier titles of the land of the Khazars [Gadlo, 1979, p. 151].

#### **The ethno-political situation in the North-East Caucasus in the 10th century.**

In the first part of the 10th century, the Khazar Khaganate re-activated its politics in the Caucasus. According to the chronicle 'The History of Shirvan and al-Bab', the Khazars initiated their own military action against Derbent in 901. As the author relates, in August 901 'the Khazars with their tsar K.sa ibn B.ldjan al-Khazari attacked Bab al-abwab...' [Minorsky, 1963, p. 65]. The ruler of Derbent, together

with the Ghazis (military settlers), held off the Khazars' attack and defeated them.

In 909 (912), the Khazars, along with the troops of Sarir, helped Shandan to repel a joint attack on Derbent and Shirvan. In the battle for Shandan the Muslims were crushed, the Emirs of Derbent and Shirvan were taken prisoner, and the total number of captives amounted to ten thousand [Ibid., p. 48, 65]. The author of the chronicle notes that the captives were shared amongst the allies; those who had become the spoils of Shandan and the Khazars were sold, while Sarir released his captives without ransom after three months.

In 916, the Khazars, together with the ruler of one of the political entities in the North-East Caucasus, mentioned in the source under the title of 'Salifan', assisted the Emir of Derbent Abd al-Malik ibn Hashimi ibn Suraka in his struggle to regain the throne, seized by his nephew. Laying siege to the city, the Emir of Derbent and his allies captured the usurper and his supporters and 'brought Abd al-Malik to the city' [Ibid., p. 66].

The information provided by al-Masudi (d. 956) relates to the mid-10th century and describes the relations between the mountain prin-

city of Sarir and the Khazars, as well as their ethno-geography: 'Then there is (the dominion of) Tsar Sarir, who calls himself Filanshah... His country is harsh and therefore inaccessible, as it is located on one of the spurs of the Kabkh Mountains. The Tsar carries out attacks on the Khazars and emerges victorious because they are on the plain while he is in the mountains' [Ibid., p. 204]. Al-Istakhri, whose reports also relate to the mid-10th century, noted that the city of Samandar was situated two parasangs from the Sarir border, and it took three days to get from Derbent to Sarir [Al-Istakhri, pp. 47, 55].

The last mention of the Khazars in the Derbent chronicle dates back to 1064: 'In the same year, 3,000 of the remaining Khazar families arrived in the city of Kakhtan in the land of the Khazars. They rebuilt it and settled there' [Minorsky, 1963, p. 78]. Assuming there are six persons in one family, the chronicle puts the number of people migrating to the North-East Caucasus at around 18,000. According to the author of the chronicle, the location and sovereignty of the city of Kakhtan defines it as a territory in some way related to the Khazars—'Kakhtan of the country of the Khazars (Kakhtan on the (former) territory of the Khazars)'. V. Minorsky assumed that the Khazars returned to Barshaliya (the present-day village of Bashlykent), which he identified as the city of Varachan, the early capital of the 'Huns' country' [Ibid, pp. 128–129]. A. Novoseltsev did not believe it was possible to associate the city of Kakhtan with the well-known cities of the Caucasus. The researcher proposed an alternative interpretation of the historical accounts on the subject of Kakhtan: 'The same year, three thousand of the remaining Khazar families (houses) arrived in the city of Kakhtan from the land of the Khazars, rebuilt it and settled there' [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 231]. A. Novoseltsev believed that the Khazars arrived in the city of Kakhtan from the land of the Khazars, where, in his opinion, the Alans occupied a number of regions. But it may be that the author of the Derbent chronicle defined Kakhtan as a city in the North-East Caucasus which was the capital of one of the political entities before its destruction and whose ruler, according to al-Masudi, originated from the Arab Kakhtan tribe [Minorsky, 1963, p. 202]. From the context of the Derbent Chronicle it

is clear that the population that returned to the ruined city had been, in some way, related to it earlier. It might be that the source meant the city of Samandar, which was considered to be the early capital city of the Khazar Khaganate by many Arabic authors. The only city in the North-East Caucasus destroyed by the Ruses in 969 was the city of Samandar [Svedeniya, 1908, p. 114]. Information about Salifan and the Khazar army, who regained the throne for the emir of Derbent, refers to 916. Al-Masudi's information about Salifan, who derived his origin from the Kakhtan tribe, refers to 943, that is 27 years time period. Apparently both sources refer to one and the same person. Information provided by Ibn Hawqal concerning the destruction of Samandar by the Ruses dates back to 969, that is 26 years separate it from al-Masudi's information. The report of the Derbent Chronicle about the return of the Khazars to their former city of Kakhtan and the date of destruction of Samandar are 95 years apart, that is a time period equal to the lifespan of three or four generations. It is interesting to note that the Derbent Chronicle presents various events concerning the political entities in the North-East Caucasus, however the Ruses campaign of 969 against Samandar is not reflected in it. The Khazars' return to their former town in 1064, which the author of the Derbent Chronicle probably witnessed (the last events in the source dated back to 1075, the manuscript was created in 1106), was a notable event. It is possible that the Derbent Chronicle dated 1064 has the last credible information in written sources about the Khazars in the Caucasus [Minorsky, 1963, p. 144].

In the 10th century, the Khazars had special relations with one of the political entities in the North-East Caucasus, Shandan, characterised by Yakut as 'one of the Khazar lands'. In the Derbent Chronicle Shandan and Sarir are the most frequently mentioned political units and both of them are opposed to the Islamic Derbent throughout the 10th and first half of the 11th century.

Shandan was mentioned six times in the Derbent Chronicle. The first reference relates to 886 and reports that the emir of Derbent made 'Islamic incursion' on Shandan and occupied some territories. In the first decade of the 10th century Derbent took new actions

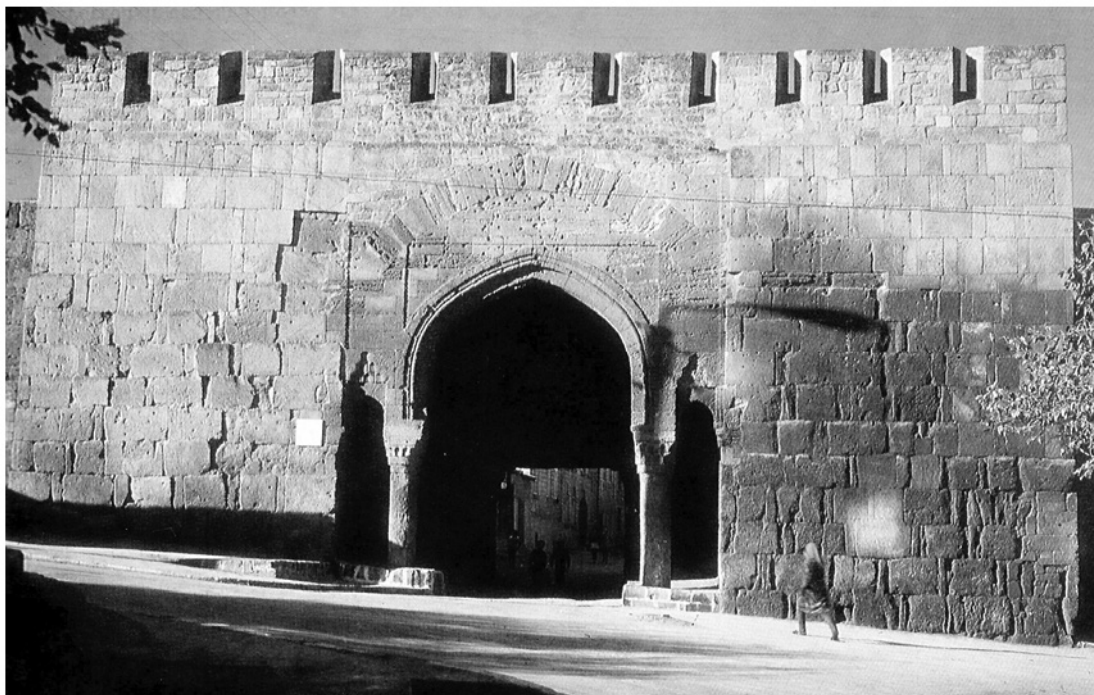
against Shandan. In the first chapter of the source, where the history of Shirvan is described, this event was dated to 912, in the second chapter, which contains information about Derbent and its frontier 'centres', this event is referred to 909 [Ibid, p. 48, 65]. The raid on Shandan was organised by the emir of Derbent, Muhammad ibn Hashimi, the one who raided Shandan in 886, repelled the Khazar attack on Derbent in 901, was captured and later released by the ruler of Sarir Bukht-Yisho in the course of negotiations in 905; in 915 he died. The new raid on Shandan was a grandiose action. Troops of Shirvan and Derbent were involved and led by both emirs. 'A great number of volunteers and elocutionists of the Quran from different places' joined them [Ibid]. The number of participants was significant, since after the battle 10,000 raiders were captured. In the battle at 'the gates of Shandan', evidently the main settlement, Muslims were defeated, both emirs were captured. The Khazars and Sarir joined Shandan when repelling the raid. The author of the Chronicle provides interesting details concerning this action and characterising the relations between Derbent and its frontier 'centres': 'Disbelievers shared Muslims among people of Shandan, Sarir and the Khazars. The Sarirs set free all their prisoners without ransom in three months. Ali ibn Haysam (emir of Shirvan.—*L. G.*) and the emir of al-Bab were also released and sent to their countries, but the Khazar and the Shandan captives were sold and very few of them managed to escape' [Ibid.].

In 916, the brother of the deceased emir Abd al-Malik ibn Hashim ibn Suraka became the ruler of Derbent, but in two months he was dethroned by his nephew Abu-n-Najm ibn Muhammad ibn Hashimi. Emir Abd al-Malik made his way first to Shandan, where he apparently sought support and then set out to the ruler of Azerbaijan, standing for the Caliph in Transcaucasia. After he was approved to reign in Derbent and got an army of 6 thousand warriors, Abd al-Malik conquered the inhabitants of Derbent and reestablished his rule in the city. In several months the emir of Derbent set off to Shirvan in order to imprison Abu-n-Najm, who hid there, but the latter sneaked into Derbent and conquered

the fortress. It seems that the siege of the city failed and according to the Derbent Chronicle the emir as assisted by 'Salifan with the Khazar army. They captured Abu-n-Najm and all his supporters and brought Abd al-Malik into the city' [Ibid, p. 66]. It is not stated in the source whose representative the ruler with the title Salifan was. A. Gadlo believes that he was the ruler of Samandar and identifies him with the ruler of Haydak [Gadlo, 1994, p. 11, fn. 15, p. 58].

In 938, 23 years after the restoration of authority, emir of Derbent Abd al-Malik conducted a successful raid on a mountainous region designated as 'M.raf.sa' in the sources. At the same time, a mounted detachment of the citizens of Derbent and Haydak led an unexpected night attack on Shandan, during which they 'murdered a lot of Shandan nobles and seized Dik.sh' [Minorsky, 1963, p. 66]. It probably took Shandan a long time to recover from the debacle; for about 100 years after that, it didn't take part in any political events in Derbent and its adjacent areas. The author of the Derbent Chronicle mentioned it two more times. He reported on the unsuccessful campaign of the Shandans against Derbent in 1037 and on Derbent's response to Shandan in 1040, though providing no information about the results of the latter [Ibid., p. 72]. The policy of the rulers of Shandan was clear-cut throughout the 9th and the first half of the 10th centuries. It was aimed at standing up to 'Islamic raids' of Derbent. And Shadan's obvious allies in this policy were the Khazars.

A contemporary of many events occurring in the first half of the 10th century in the North-eastern Caucasus was the Arab encyclopaedist al-Masudi. During his multiple trips, al-Masudi visited the Southern Caspian, and many of the events he described he dated as contemporary, namely, to the years 332/943. Some information provided by al-Masudi about Derbent and the nearby political centres overlaps with the data of the Derbent Chronicle. Al-Masudi, who wrote his work in 943, gave information about the ruler of Tabasaran: 'Its current ruler is a Muslim, nephew (sister's son) of that Abd al-Malik, who was the emir of al-Baba' [Ibid., p. 191]. Emir of Derbent Abd al-Malik died in 939, so the information by al-Masudi was



Derbent. Southern city wall. Orta Kapi Gate. 6–14th centuries.

synchronous with the political situation in the North-East Caucasus.

Al-Masudi described in detail the so-called 'Jidan Tsardom', which he also dated to 943. In al-Masudi's opinion, Jidan was the most powerful tsardom in the region, the key enemy of Islamic Derbent, and was controlled by the Khazars: 'The citizens of Bab-wal-Abwab suffer because of the adjacent tsardom called Jidan and controlled by the Khazars, the capital of which is the city of Samandar, located eight days from Bab. So far it has been populated by the Khazar tribe; however, from the time it was seized by Suleyman ibn Rabia al Bagalian in the first days of Islam, the throne of the tsardom has been relocated to Atil, seven days farther... Out of all the tsardoms situated in these countries, Jidan is the most powerful. The tsar of this country is a Muslim and considers himself to belong to the Arab family of Kakhtan. His name is Salifan and he lives at the present time, namely in 332. The whole tsardom has no Muslims but him, his children, and his wife. I suppose his name to be generic for all the tsars of this region' [al-Masudi, pp. 43, 51].

According to researchers, the name 'Jidan' is an inaccurate rendering of the name of the

Khaidak (modern-day Kaitag) political entity and can be attributed to the peculiarities of the Arabic graphics [Minorsky, 1963, p. 127, note on a page 55; Gadzhiyev, et al., 1996, p. 242]. The rationale for this version is to be found in the data of al-Masudi about the location of Jidan and that fact that, describing the largest political entities of the North-East Caucasus in a clear sequence from the south to north and north-west, he mentions neither Khaidak nor Shandan—though, according to the Derbent Chronicle, Shandan, Khaidak, and Sarir were the three most noticeable participants of the military-political events around Derbent in the 10th and the first half of the 11th centuries. According to the Derbent Chronicle, from 909 (912) to 938, the most dangerous neighbouring political entity for Derbent was Shandan; according to al-Masudi, it was the Jidan Tsardom identified with Khaidak. It may be that, after Shandan had been defeated in 938, the role of an active enemy went to Khaidak—exactly what Masudi documented in 943. However, the analysis of the Derbent Chronicle, the quality of which was highly rated by V. Minorsky [1963, p. 89], suggests that the Khaidak political entity was inactive in the 10th century. Prior to this period,

Khaidak is only mentioned referring to 938. That was a year when mounted troops from Derbent and Khaidak unexpectedly attacked Shandan and dealt a major blow to it. Khaidak entered the political arena in the middle of the 11th century, but it couldn't be considered an enemy to Derbent in that period by any measure. Khaidak is bound to Derbent by dynastic ties, underlying its joint actions with Derbent. According to the Derbent Chronicle, the emir's wife Lashkari Abd al-Malika was from Khaidak, and in 1055, after the emir died, his son Abd al-Malik, the future ruler of Derbent, was born. His brother, emir of Derbent Mansur ibn Abd al-Malik, married a granddaughter of the Khaidak emir in 1064. The kinship of the Derbent rulers with Khaidak helped them in their fight against the Shirvanshahs and in the domestic political fight against the raises (leaders of quarters). In 1064, the Khaidaks twice expressed their support for emir Mansur in his fight against the raises, but in 1065 he was murdered by them. In 1066, the 11-year-old emir of Derbent, Abd al-Malik b. Lashkari, sought refuge and support in Khaidak, when the citizens of Derbent gave the power to a Shirvanshah. In 1068, Khaidak shooters stood firm near the walls of Derbent, defending the power of emir Abd al-Malik from the claims of Shirvan. The author of the chronicle noted that in the fierce 2-day fighting warriors of Derbent broke under the attack and drew in; only the endurance of the Khaidaks made them return to the battlefield, and the Shirvans were defeated. The complicated internal political struggle for power that unfolded in Derbent among the emir, raises, and the disgraced Shirvanshah brother eventually ended with the seizure of power by a Shirvanshah. Emir of Derbent Abd al-Malik was again seeking refuge in Khaidak (for details, see [Minorsky, 1963, pp. 58, 61, 73, 75, 78]). In 1075, emir Abd al-Malik, being expelled by the Derbent citizens, went to Khaidak. The author of the chronicle clearly pointed out that Khaidak was a stronghold of the Derbent rulers: 'As usual, he went to Khaidak to seek reinforcement, so that he could return to power, but the Derbent people captured him in the pursuit and placed in the city of al-Humaydiya as a

prisoner' [Ibid., p. 79]. His cousin Maimun was elected emir.

In the history of relationships between Derbent and Khaidak in the 10th and the first half of the 11th centuries there is only one unfriendly action from Khaidak. In 1040, according to the Derbent Chronicle, the Khaidaks conquered the Derbent citadel and captured emir Abd al-Malik (the father of emirs Mansur and Lashkari) and his wife Shamkuye (the sister of Shirvanshah) [Ibid., p. 72], but it was likely done at the request of the city's raises.

There is some overlap between al-Masudi's information about Jidan and the Derbent Chronicle. For instance, both authors determine the key enemy of Derbent in the first half of the 10th century—a political entity located near Derbent. For 938, al-Masudi names Jidan, while the author of the Derbent Chronicle names Shandan. The characteristics of these political centres are also the same. According to al-Masudi, it's the most powerful tsardom among all the adjacent political centres (variant—the most harmful); according to the author of the Derbent Chronicle, it's the bitterest enemy of Muslims among the disbelievers. According to al-Masudi, Derbent suffered considerable losses from it (variant—experienced difficulties); the Derbent Chronicle of 886, 909 (912), 938 states the same. According to al-Masudi, the tsar of this tsardom bore the title 'Salifan'. The Derbent Chronicle also mentions some Salifan, who, together with the Khazar troops, restored the power of emir Abd al-Malik in 916. It may be that the Chronicle referred to the tsar of Shandan, for it was to Shandan where the Emir of Derbent went deprived of the throne by his nephew—apparently, to ask for help. Then he was established on the throne and received military assistance from the Caliph's deputy in Azerbaijan, but, in the critical moment during the second attack on Derbent, the Salifan with the Khazar troops came to help him. All these events took place during 916. According to al-Masudi, the most powerful political centre in the North-East Caucasus was controlled by the Khazars (variant—was part of the Khazar lands). In the Derbent Chronicle, the Khazars are allies of the Salifan. And finally, both authors use the term 'Kakhtan'. According to al-Masudi,



the tsar of Jidan descends from the Arabian tribe of Kakhtan; the Derbent Chronicle mentions Kakhtan as a city of the Khazars, where they returned in 1064.

Comparing the mentioned overlaps between the texts of al-Masudi and the Derbent Chronicle, we come to a conclusion that both authors describe the same political entity, and most likely the Shandan Tsardom. Both authors probably drew information from the same source, but the local author accurately rendered the name of the key enemy of Derbent in the 10th century.

Al-Masudi provides further information about the Salifan and his tsardom, revealing the location of Jidan and its religious situation. Jidan had its southern border with the estates of Arabian migrants, one parasang away from Derbent. Apparently, those estates suffered from attacks by Jidan. The author of the chronicle noted that the terrain (vast rivers, forests, brushwoods, and valleys) acted as natural barriers from adjacent Jidan, and Derbent always came to help [Ibid., p. 203]. Then the author named the western and north-western neighbours of Jidan, defining this direction as 'from the side of Kabkh and Sarir'—that is, from the side of the mountains. Jidan probably spanned the marine plain and foothills, since the mountain group was located to its south. The nearest western centre, according to al-Masudi, was an estate of the 'tsar named B.rzban.' Researchers interpret the term B.rzban as 'Marzuban,' which means 'the guardian of the border' [Ibid]. The title of this tsar carries a certain message imposed, in the opinion of V. Minorsky, by the location of this political entity 'behind the fortified zone' (meaning the Derbent fortified line). The function of the Marzuban tsar was, in all appearance, to safeguard Islamic Derbent from raids of mountainous princedoms. The major city of the Marzuban was *K.r.dzh* interpreted as Karakh (modern-day Urkarakh). Moving to the west from Derbent, the author names the mountainous estates of Gumik (Kazi-Kumukh) bordering with the Marzuban's land, and of Zarikaran (a land of masters of mail armours), Sarir with the capital of *Dzh.mr.dzh* (Khumzakh) located on 'one of the Kabkh's spurs' [Ibid., pp. 203, 204]. The eastern border of Sarir probably went to the 'Khazars' land.'

The author notes that the tsar of Sarir leverages the mountainous terrain of his country and 'attacks the Khazars and defeats them, for they are on the plain, and he's in the mountain.' However, in the Derbent Chronicle there is no evidence to support this note made by al-Masudi. During the 10th century, no Sarir attacks on Samandar were reported. Moreover, in 909 (912) in the fight for Shandan against Derbent and Shirvan, Sarir troops took part together with the Khazars [Ibid., pp. 48, 65]. The main aspirations of Sarir in the 10th century were aimed against Derbent; campaigns of the latter against Sarir were considered a good tradition (in 861, 876, 878, 905, 971). Thus, the Jidan Tsardom, according to al-Masudi, was actually counterposed to mountainous centres, the terrain of which is sometimes especially highlighted (Tabarsaran, B.rzban, Lakz, Gumik, Sarir) [al-Masudi, pp. 191, 203–204].

The question about the capital city of Jidan isn't readily apparent. Al-Masudi mentions the centres of several princedoms in the North-East Caucasus as well as the capital of Alania: *K.r.dzh* on the land of the Marzuban, *Dzh.mr.dzh* in Sarir, Magas in Alania. However, it looks like the main city of the 'most powerful of all the tsardoms,' from which Derbent 'suffers great losses,' isn't described by the author at all. In the translation by N. Karaulova, the city, which al-Masudi mentioned when describing Jidan, was the capital of Jidan in 943 [Ibid., p. 43]. In the copy of V. Minorsky, Samandar described by al-Masudi is the first capital of the 'Khazars' land,' from which the government functions were transferred to the city of Atil, at a distance of 7 days [Minorsky, 1963, p. 191]. Samandar, in epoch of al-Masudi (943), was populated by the 'Khazar people.' But al-Masudi called Jidan a tsardom incorporated into the lands of the Khazar tsars (variant— controlled by the Khazars). Probably, Samandar, which lasted until the defeat by the Ruses in 969, was part of Jidan, and in the 9th and the first half of the 10th centuries, was its capital city [Gadlo, 1994, p. 10]. According to the Derbent Chronicle, in 909 (912) the battle of allied forces of Derbent and Shirvan against Sarir and the Khazars occurred near the 'gates of Shandan' [Minorsky, 1963, p. 48]. This indicates that there were fortifications in the chief city of Shandan, and, per-

haps, fortifications of a strategic kind, similar to the ‘gates’ of Derbent—that is, long walls blocking the way. The 10th century authors agree that Samandar was a wealthy, densely populated city with markets, mosques, temples, synagogues, but none of them mentions the fortifications of Samandar, although their presence during the localisation of the city in the place of what is now the village of Tarki, on the southern outskirts of Makhachkala, is anticipated [Kotovitch, 1974, pp. 235–255]. Quite interesting is the fact that in the Derbent Chronicle the city of Kakhtan is characterised as ‘our, Khazars’ city’ in the territory of the Western Caspian. Only Samandar, widely known in the Islamic world and linked to the early history of the Khazars, could be called like that. Back in 943, the main population of Samandar were Khazars. In the Derbent Chronicle names of some 9th and 10th centuries Shandan settlements are abbreviated, such as *D.nk.s.*, *Sh.l.shli*, *Dik.sh* [Minorsky, 1963, pp. 65–66]—are almost impossible to localise. *D.nk.s* is taken by V. Minorsky for the village of Dibgashi; *Sh.l.shli* is taken for the village of Chishli located in immediate proximity of modern-day Urkarakh. However, in the Derbent Chronicle Karakh is the capital city of the tsar (Marzuban)—that is, of the Karakh. The assumption of V. Minorsky that these settlements ‘went from hand to hand’, from Karakh to Shandan and from Shandan to Derbent [Ibid., p. 130] doesn’t clarify the historical topography of the region.

The question about Samandar in the 10th century and the political status of lands lying on the plain between Derbent and Samandar isn’t clarified by other Arabic-speaking geographers either. Al-Masudi describes Samandar as a city situated eight days from Derbent [Ibid., p. 191], whereas al-Istakhri, who wrote at the end of al-Masudi’s life (950), and Ibn Hawqal, a follower of al-Istakhri, both indicate the presence of the ‘region of Samandar’ situated to the north of Derbent, four days of journey from it [al-Istakhri, p. 39; Svedeniya, 1908, p. 107]. When matching the information given by al-Masudi with that of the aforementioned authors, the length of ‘the country of Samandar’ turns out to be four days of journey, and its capital was situ-

ated on the northern outskirts [Gmyrya, 1995, p. 142]. Al-Istakhri and Ibn Hawqal, who wrote after al-Masudi, report some information about the earlier Samandar. Al-Istakhri added to his paper the entire work of an earlier Arabic geographer al-Balkhi, who wrote in about 921/922. Al-Istakhri complimented the information of his predecessor with the numerical data about the length of the route from Derbent and Atil to Samandar. In the 20s the tenth century, Samandar was a thriving region. ‘Khazars also have a city called Samandar; between this city and Bab-ul-Abwab, there are numerous gardens belonging to Samandar. They say these gardens have about 4,000 grapevines extending to the borders of Serir, and grapes constitute the main part of the fruit. I don’t know any other densely populated town in the Khazar region except Samandar’ [al-Istakhri, pp. 47, 49]. Ibn Hawqal wrote 27 years after al-Istakhri and 34 years after al-Masudi. In the meantime, some significant events occurred in the Caspian Sea region. Having fully repeated the information of al-Istakhri about Samandar—however, mentioning a higher number of grapevines in its gardens—Ibn Hawqal complemented it with the newest information about Samandar contemporary to the author: ‘All these died together with the country, and it abounded with vines and grapes. Then the Ruses came and destroyed all these and crashed everything belonging to the Khazars, Bulgars, and Burtases on the river of Atil’ [Svedeniya, 1908, p. 114]. When the book of Ibn Hawqal was being written, Samandar had already been laying in ruins for 8 years, after the pogrom committed by the Ruses in 969.

According to Arabic-speaking geographers, even in the 10th century, in the Western Caspian there was a territory controlled by the Khazars or politically dependent from them [Gadlo, 1994, p. 9]. In foreign relations, this entity was a stable opponent of Islamic Derbent and periodically contacted with Sarir. It is difficult to determine its name, for the information in the source is conflicting, and all interpretations of researchers contain elements of subjectivism.

The religious question in the principdom, which was the most hostile towards Islamic

Derbent in the 9–10th centuries, hasn't been yet clarified. According to al-Masudi, in Jidan in 943 the tsar and his family were Muslims; the religious affiliation of the rest of the population is unknown [Minorsky, 1963, p. 202]. Apparently, the ruler of Jidan had converted to Islam quite recently, as there were no Muslims even among the nobles of this principedom. It is also possible that an ethnic Arab, rather than a representative of the local dynasty, ruled Jidan. Such a situation could emerge if we identify Jidan of al-Masudi and Shandan from the Dagestan Historical Chronicle. After the defeat of Shandan in 938, many 'nobles', as it was indicated in the Chronicle, died out there [Ibid., p. 72]. In that case, the origin of the Jidan ruler's bloodline, which he drew from an Arab tribe and what V. Minorsky thought was 'the invention of Arabs' becomes more clear [Ibid., p. 127]. Perhaps the rulers during the period from the 9th to the first third of the 10th centuries traced their lineage from Turks, which was reflected in the title as 'Salifan' and in close connection with the Khazars. In the *Tarikh Bab-al-abwab Derbent Chronicle* all the population of the political entities of 'the border region al-Baba' were called 'disbelievers' [Ibid., pp. 46–49, 66, 7274]. Specifically, the people of Sarir, Shandan and Gumik were called 'disbelievers'. Denbent's punitive actions against them were called 'Islamic raids (campaigns)'. According to the *Derbent Chronicle*, the purpose of these raids was the economic weakening of the political entities in the region. During the raids, they destroyed the population, seized properties, captured women and children. And only one article referring to 995 in the Chronicle tells that the 'people of Karakh' were converted to Islam as a result of emir Shirvan Maymun's activities. According to al-Masudi, in 943 the Muslim rulers were in Tabarsaran, Jidan, K.r.dzh., and the Arab migrants' land [Ibid., pp. 191, 202–203]. The tsar that ruled Sarir was Christian, so were the residents of Gumik, while representatives of the three different religions lived in Zari-karan—Muslims, Christians and Jews [Ibid., p. 203]. Arabic geographers of the 10th century claim that the tsar was Jewish, however, they also emphasise that he was a relative of the Khazar tsar [Chwolson, 1869, p. 62; al-Istakhri, p. 47; Svedeniya, 1908, p. 141].

Al-Balkhi and his follower al-Istakhri mentioned a high number of Muslim inhabitants, that lived in Samandar in the 20s of the 10th century and the existence of mosques in the city [Chwolson, 1869, p. 62; al-Istakhri, p. 47]. Ibn Hawqal more thoroughly described the religious situation in Samandar. He noted that Muslims and others lived in the city, and 'their tsar is Jewish'. Based on the reference to different religious buildings in the city—mosques, temples, synagogues, there also lived a Christian population [Svedeniya, 1908, p. 114]. Al-Muqaddasi, whose data related to the 980s, noted that in Samandar 'most of the citizens are Christians, who are gentle people, very friendly to foreigners, but are engaged in robbery' [Ibid., p. 5]. He also mentioned about the existence of mosques in the city. A. Shikhsaidov believed that the Muslim population in Samandar were colonists [Shikhsaidov, 1969, p. 94]. However, judging by the military and political situation in the region in 10th century, the Muslim population, as in Atil of that time, could include foreign merchants, artisans and a mercenary army [Minorsky, 1963, pp. 193–195]. The inconsistencies of written sources data on the religious situation in Samandar in the 10th century is explained by the researchers in different ways [Bartold, II, 1963, p. 677; Gadlo, 1994, p. 10].

The date of Samandar destruction and plundering of its possession by the Ruses is considered to be 968/969. It is based on the information of Ibn Hawqal [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 16]. But his information on the time of the Ruses military action against the Khazars and its maintenance are different from the information provided by the author of 'The Tale of Bygone Years', which mentions 965 [The Tale of Bygone Years, 1978, p. 79]. In this regard, it's believed that there were two campaigns of the Ruses against the Khazars—in 965 and 968/969 [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 16]. During the second campaign Atil and the cities in the North-East Caucasus, including Samandar, were vandalised.

The Caspian international marine route at its connection point with the Volga river route in the 10th century was under the Khazar control, even though they were not seafarers [Minorsky, 1963, p. 195]. The maritime traffic on the route between the Caspian and Black Seas

in the first half of the 10th century was intense. Hasdai ibn Shaprut (the 60s of the 10th century), referring to the information provided by Byzantines noted that 'many ships come from this country (Khazaria) to us (Constantinople)' [Harkavy, 1874, pp. 103, 105]. Al-Istakhri pointed to land, maritime and river dues imposed on merchants by Khazars [Al-Istakhri, p. 41]. An anonymous Persian author of the 80s of the 10th century highlighted only the maritime due as the main source of Khazaria's income: 'The income of the Khazar tsar comes mostly from the maritime due' [Hudud al-'Alam, 1930, p. 32]. According to the Arabian sources, the Caspian international marine route was used mainly by the South Caspian regions, such as Jurjan, Tabaristan, Jil and Deylam. In the 9–10th centuries the South Caspian regions established heavy sea traffic, using many ports of the western coast as transit points, in particular, Mukan, Baku, Derbent and, maybe, Samandar [Gmyrya, 2006, pp. 256–262].

The Volga-Caspian route served not only as a means of trade and cultural communication. In the 10th century the Ruses used it for their military campaigns into the Caspian regions. Tsar Joseph (the 60s of the 10th century) indicated the prevention of Rus ships' passage through the Volga-Caspian route into the sea as their main duty: 'I live at the entrance to the river and I do not allow the Ruses, arriving on their ships, to access it...' [Kokovtsov, 1932, p. 83] (meaning the penetration by the Ruses to Ghuzzes). The earliest records on the military raid by the Ruses flotilla on the Caspian Sea is provided by al-Masudi (the first half of the 10th century): 'As for (the raid) of the Ruses ships, the information about them is widely known to different peoples in these countries. The year is also known: It was after 300/912, but (the precise) date has slipped my mind' [Minorsky, 1963, p. 201]. The Ruseses, according to al-Masudi, went up to the southern coast of the Caspian Sea on their ships attacking the port of Abaskun. According to al-Masudi, the Ruses were also engaged in a struggle with the Caliph's vicegerent in Transcaucasia. The ruler of Shirvan tried to resist them, but his fleet was destroyed: 'Thousands were killed and sunk' [Ibid., p. 200]. Accord-

ing to al-Masudi, the Ruses flotilla operating on the Caspian consisted of 500 ships. According to Russian chronicles, one Rus vessel accommodated 40 people. The Ruseses stayed in the Caspian for many months and then came back to Atil. Having agreed to give a part of the plunder to the Khazar Tsar, the Ruses hoped to easily breach the Khazar barricades in Atil, however they were ambushed while cutting through and lost 30 thousand people. 5 thousand managed to escape by taking ships and sailing upstream the Volga [Ibid., p. 266].

The report of Ibn Isfandiyar, a Persian-speaking historian of the 12–13th centuries, gives some information about an earlier Rus military raid to the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, the region of Abaskun, referring to the 60–80s of the 9th century [Aliyev, 1969, pp. 317–318]. Ibn Isfandiyar also provided further details about the Ruses campaign to Abaskun in the first decade of the 10th century: 'In the same year, sixteen ships belonging to the Ruses appeared in the sea and they went to Abaskun... At that time the sixteen Rus ships destroyed and plundered Abaskun and a seashore on that side, many Muslims were killed and robbed there' [Ibid.]. According to his information, the following year the Ruses appeared 'in a large number' in Deylam and Tabaristan, but due to the collaborative efforts of the Caspian States they were defeated [Ibid.].

The exact date of the Ruses campaign (campaigns) into the Caspian in the first decade of the 10th century is not established and is determined between 909 and 914 [Dorn, 1875, p. 5; Bartold, 1963, p. 831; Minorsky, 1963, p. 150; Aliyev, 1969, p. 318; Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 213; 2001, p. 70].

The Schechter Letter describes a later-in-time Rus campaign to the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, which is ascribed to Prince Oleg (Khlgu). The source indicates that the reason for the Ruses eastern raid was the defeat of their fleet in Constantinople: 'And he (Igor') run away, and was ashamed to come back in his land and went by sea to Prs, where he died with his army' [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 216]. The translation of N. Golb is in accordance with the content of the source: 'He

escaped and was ashamed to come back to his (own) country, he escaped by sea to FRS and there he and all his army died' [Golb, Pritsak, 1997, p. 142]. Prs (FRS) is identified with the southern coast of the Caspian Sea [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 244, fn. 557; Golb, Pritsak, 1997, p. 164]. Ibn Hawqal notes a big degrade of the capital of Arran Bardaa, that occurred because of the debacle caused by the Ruses [Ashurbeyli, 1983, p. 104, fn. 79].

In 'The Tale of Bygone Years' the Ruses' campaign to Byzantium is referred to 941 and the exact name of the Ruses Prince is stated as Igor' [The Tale of Bygone Years, 1978, p. 59]. According the information of the sources, in total, the military raid of the Ruses to the southern coast of the Caspian Sea headed by Prince Igor is referred to the 40s of the 10th century, namely, to 945 [Novoseltsev, 1990, pp. 217–218; 2001, p. 70]. There is also another point of view on these events [TH, 2002, p. 312; Semyonov, 2002, pp. 89–90].

In 968/969 the Ruses launched a campaign into Khazaria, which affected also the Western Caspian Sea regions. Some publications erroneously attributed it to Prince Svyatoslav [Kalinina, 1976, p. 91]. The Ruseses crushed the capital of Khazaria (Atil and Khazaran), Samandar on the Caspian was also destructed. Some information about this is provided by eastern authors. The earliest records about the Ruses raid on the Volga and the Caspian Sea in 968/969 are provided by Ibn Hawqal. In particular, the author mentions twice about the destruction of Samandar [Kalinina, 1976, p. 95; Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 221]. The first concise note was dated 358/968–969 [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 221]. The second contains details on the destruction of Samandar and its agricultural district with gardens and vineyards. The quotation by Ibn Hawqal on this event was mentioned above in the translation by N. Karaulov. It would be useful to present here the same message from another edition of the source published by Kramers in 1938–1939, translated by A. Novoseltsev and T. Kalinina, which contains additional information: 'And al-Khazar is the side and there is a city there, called Samandar, and it's in the space between it and Bab al-Abwab, and there are many gardens there... (*an omission of A. Novoseltsev*), but the Ruses came there, and no

grapes or raisins remained in this city. Muslims, and groups of people holding the faith, and idolaters inhabited the city, and then they left it, but it is thanks to the merits of their land and their good profit that within three years everything will go back to as it used to be. There were mosques, churches and synagogues in Samandar, and they (the Ruses) launched their raid against anyone who lived on the bank of the Atil River, whether Khazars, Bulgars, or Burtases and took over them, and the people of Atil sought refuge on the Bab al-Abwab island, and they settled down there, and some on the island of Siyakh-kukh, and they stayed there in fear' [Ibid]. 'There is a city on the Khazar side, called Samandar, it is between (the Khazar side) and Bab al-Abwab (i.e. Derbent), there were many gardens there; they say that (they) contained almost 40 thousand vineyards, and I asked about (this city) in Jurjan in 358, in order to become more familiar with (this city), and (the one I asked) said: 'There is a vineyard or a garden (such), that was a mercy for poor people, and if (something) was left there, than it was only a leaf on a stem'. The Rusesesiya came there and did not leave any grapes or raisins. And Muslims, groups of followers of (other) religions and idolaters inhabited the city, and (they) left, and it was thanks to the merits of their land and their good profit that within three years everything went back to as it used to be and there were mosques, churches and synagogues in Samandar, and these (the Ruses) launched their raid against anyone who was on the bank of the Atil river, (among them) Khazars, Bulgar, Burtases and took over them, and the people of Atil sought refuge on the Bab al-Abwab island, and they settled down there, and some of them—on the island of Siyakh-kukh, and they lived in fear' [Kalinina, 1976, p. 91]. Siyakh-Kuikh was identified with the Mangyshlak Peninsula [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 246, fn. 615]. The mention of Bab al-Abwab was most likely the name of a stronghold, which was given by analogy with Derbent. Another Arabic geographer al-Muqaddasi also confirms the devastation of Khazaria by the Ruses: 'Later I heard that the army from Rum, called the Ruses, launched a raid against them and invaded their country' [Svedeniya, 1908, p. 4]. Ibn Miskawayh and Ibn al-Athir reported on

further developments in Khazaria. The information of Arabic authors on the Ruses raid in 968/969 and the destruction of the cities on the Volga and west Caspian are interpreted in different ways by researchers (see: [Novoseltsev, 1990, pp. 222–230]). In particular the researchers debate the date of the Khazar Khaganate's destruction and the role of the Ruses in that event. Although the Ruses campaign of 968/969 took a heavy toll on Khazaria, it didn't destroy it. Researchers consider the state ceased to exist in the 990s [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 230; 2001, p. 71]. The Khazars in the North-East Caucasus were mentioned for the last time in the Derbent Chronicle in 1064. It is believed that Khazaria faded from history in the 1050–60s [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 231]. The Khazars were mentioned for the last time in Russian chronicles in 1083 in Tmutarakan, where they were slaughtered by Prince Oleg [Pletneva, 1986, p. 73].

One of the places where the residents of the devastated cities took refuge was Shirvan, according to al-Istakhri. He wrote that some time after the devastation of the Khazarian capital, the majority of its residents 'came back to Atil and Khazaran during the reign of the powerful Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Azdi, the Keeper of Shirvanshakh, who helped them with men and people, and they hoped and asked for (them) to make a treaty with them, and they would be obedient to them (shirvants) for the beneficences towards them' [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 221]. In

the translation of that passage by T. Kalinina, the semantic content was somewhat different: '...and I have heard that the majority of them came back to Atil and Khazaran during (the rule) of the powerful Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Azdi, the ruler Shirvanshakh and (he provided) support to them with his men and people, and they hoped and asked to make a treaty with them, and they would be obedient to them (the Ruses) for the fact that they (the Ruses) gave to it (Shirvanshakh) beneficences for them (refugees)' [Kalinina, 1976, p. 93]. A. Novoseltsev believes that 'it's more accurate to understand the text' as he translated it [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 246, fn. 624]. Muhammad ibn Ahmad, Emir of Shirvan (981/982–991), is known for his active riots against the neighboring states in Transcaucasia including Derbent [Minorsky, 1963, p. 51]. His actions were described in the Derbent Chronicle, but there was no mention of any contacts between Muhammad ibn Ahmad and the Khazars.

The Ruseses stayed in the region (the lower reaches of the Volga and Western Caspian) for a long time, until the 1020s [Novoseltsev, 1990, pp. 229–230]. The Derbent Chronicle mentions a few facts about the involvement of the Ruses forces in the political and military events. Thus, in 987 the Emir of Derbent Maymun ibn Ahmad ibn Abd al-Malik called on the Ruses to help in the fight against raises, who arrived to the city on 18 ships. The Ruseses were also recorded as having been in Derbent in the 1020s [Minorsky, 1963, pp. 68, 70–71].

## CHAPTER 4

### Turkic nations of Western Siberia

*Yuly Khudyakov*

The appearance and settlement of Turkic-speaking nomadic populations in the forest-steppe and steppe regions of Western Siberia and the dispersion of Turkic languages and cultures have long been a subject of historical and archaeological studies.

The monuments of medieval nomads and items from graves looted by treasure hunters in the steppes between the Ob and Irtysh rivers first caught the attention of researchers and travelers in the 18th century. Among the 'curious things' found by D. Messerschmidt and F. Strahlenberg, G. Miller and I. Gmelin, G. de Gennin, P. Demidov and other researchers and antiquarians in the Ob and Irtysh region were items typical for Turkic-speaking nomadic culture, such as toreutic work, harnessing and lower body garments, jewelry, earrings, pendants and others [Miller, 1999; pic. 22, 23, 24; Formozov, 1986, pp. 24, 25; Molodin and others, 2002, pic. 1, 3, 4; Brentjes, Vasilievskiy, 1989, S. 23, 161]. Researchers were of differing opinions, regarding the ethnic and cultural heritage of these findings. They were ascribed to the Tatars, Mongols or mythical Finnish people—the 'Chud'. There are descriptions and pictures of Irtysh graves from the early Middle Ages in the materials found in the 18th century by researchers [Molodin and others, 2002, p. 40; Formozov, 1986, p. 127]. Among researchers who studied Altaic and Siberian antiquities in the first half of the 19th century, the version about 'Chud' origins was most widely accepted [Eichwald, 1858, p. 19].

V. Radlov made prospecting expeditions in the Ob and Chulym regions, and the Baraba and Kulundia forest steppe and steppe in 1861–1867. He excavated medieval record sites in Baraba. Among excavated objects, there were harnessing garments, household items and tools typical for the culture of Turkic-speaking nomads of the steppe region in Eurasia [Molodin and others, 1988, pp. 5–8]. Evaluating these materials V. Radlov tended

to think that the monuments he explored north of the Middle Irtysh 'belonged to the Turkic tribes'. Nevertheless, he found it difficult to determine whether archaeological sites on the territory of North Altai, Lower Irtysh, Ishim, Tobol, Tara and Chulym could be related to the Turkic or 'Ugro-Samoyedic tribes' [Radlov, 1989, p. 477]. Archaeological materials were analyzed and interpreted in the work of V. Radlov by taking into account information from written sources, and ethnographic and linguistics data.

At the end of the 19th century, early medieval monuments in the forest-steppe zone of Western Siberia were studied by G. Ossovsky and S. Chugunov. Findings from these excavations include armament accessories and horse and belt harnesses of ancient Turkic times [Molodin and others, 1988, pp. 8–12].

The original yet proofless point of view on the affiliation of Western-Siberian antiquity 'to the primeval Slavic' was put forward at the end of the 19th century by V. Florinsky, an officer, amateur archaeologist, and one of the founders of the Tomsk University museum. He counterpoised this opinion to the popular interpretation of Siberian antiquities as belonging to the ancient Finnic 'Chud' population [Demin, 1989, p. 97].

At the end of the 19–beginning of the 20th centuries, a large collection of early medieval nomadic cultural items from the Upper Ob region was gathered by N. Gulyaev. He conducted amateur excavations of the Near Elbany monument [Demin, 1989, pp. 71–74].

In 1920, due to the growth of national identity and national state building, interest in the historic past of Turkic peoples significantly increased. G. Grumm-Grzhimaylo suggested in 1926 that Baraba was the 'cradle' of ancient Turks [Grumm-Grzhimaylo, 1926, p. 211].

Research on archaeological sites in Western Siberia continued. The local historian M. Kopytov conducted amateur excavations in

the Upper Ob region in 1920. He excavated several graves in the Srostky and Krasnoyarskoe monuments. S. Sergeyev, an employee of the Biysk Museum, conducted excavations of the same monument in 1929–1930. Several graves at the Srostky site were examined in 1925 by M. Komarova. Ob coastal areas were surveyed by M. Gryaznov, who summarized existing archaeological findings pertaining to the early Middle Ages in the Upper Ob region and Altai. Based on a categorisation of metal cultures from the Minusinsk Hollow by S. Teploukhov, the author marked several stages in the development of Iron Age cultures in Altai, including the Srostki culture [Gryaznov, 1930, p. 9]. These definitions were instrumental in the classification of monuments of the early Middle Ages in the Upper Ob region and the whole forest-steppe zone of Western Siberia.

In the 1920s–1930s, excavations of a number of medieval monuments were conducted in the valleys of the rivers Tom and Inya [Kulemzin, Borodkin, 1989, p. 9].

The work of M. Gryaznov in 1946–1949 in the Ob river valley was of great significance for the study of early Middle Age monuments. A large collection of material sources was gathered and analysed during excavations of monuments in the Near Elbany area of the Upper Ob region. Based on an examination of these sites, M. Gryaznov identified an Upper Ob culture, dated from the 2nd to the 8th century C.E., and the Srostki culture, dated to the 9–10th centuries. The researcher considered bearers of the Upper Ob culture to be 'new-comers from the Northern forests', but at the same time he underlined the significance of livestock to their household activities and the existence of graves containing saddle horses, which were present in monuments from the Odintsovo cultural period [Gryaznov, 1956, p. 114]. When analysing the materials of the Fominsk period, M. Gryaznov noted the significant difference in social development levels between the local population and the Turks of Altai. At the same time he discovered Turkic influences in such practices as mournful ritualism and toreutics, which included images of a hero and his horse. Nevertheless, the chronology of the Fominsk stage became

a subject for discussion and was later reconsidered. He considered bearers of the Srostkin culture to be new-coming nomads from the steppe areas, who had chosen a semi-sedentary lifestyle [ibid., p. 152]. Further he offered to distinguish the localized groups in Srostkin culture: Biysk, Barnaul, Novosibirsk and Kemerov, which corresponded to the tribal differences of the population [Gavrilova, 1965, p. 72].

In 1965, the artifacts of Srostkin culture were considered in tandem with the memorials of ancient Turkic culture from the Altai mountains by A. Gavrilova, who suggested to include them into the 'mountain-Altai' group. She considered Srostkin culture as the 'culture of conquering tribes'—the Uyghurs and Kyrgyz [Ibid.]. Later she claimed that 'monuments of Srostkin culture should be considered as monuments of Uighur culture in Altai' [Gavrilova, 1974, p. 180]. The hypotheses of A. Gavrilova regarding the diffusion of Srostkin culture in the Altai Mountains and its Uighur ethnic attribution were not supported by experts in medieval archaeology of Western Siberia. Nevertheless, her classification of medieval monuments served as a basis for the analysis of nomadic monuments in Altai and Western Siberia.

In the 1950s–1960s, excavations of monuments from the early Middle Ages were continued by A. Umansky in the Upper Ob region, T. Troitskaya in the Novosibirsk region, and M. Elkin in the Kemerov region. There were differing opinions in regards to the ethnic affiliation of artifacts of the Srostkin culture. A. Umansky attributed the burial mounds on the Inya river with 'Kok Turks, who, starting from the 7th century, switched from cremation to inhumation' [Umansky, 1970, p. 72]. M. Elkin attributed the items discovered during excavations in the Ur river valley to the Turks of Kuzbass, who 'were under the influence of the Kyrgyz' [Elkin, 1970, p. 92].

An important role in the interpretation of the ethnic background of early Middle Age monuments in Western Siberia was the identification of burials by cremation of the Kyrgyz in the Ob and Irtysh region, and burials by inhumation with accompanying saddler horses of the Kimaks [Arslanova, 1972, p. 75].



Many researchers argued in favour of the Kyrgyz origin of cremations in Western Siberia and Altai. According to T. Troitskaya, Turkic tribes came to the forest-steppe area of Western Siberia at the end of the 1st millennium C.E. Their burial sites often contained horses. Burial mounds with cremation were related to the Kyrgyzs, or tribes under their influence [Troitskaya, 1978, p. 117].

Identification of the Srostki culture with the Kimak tribal alliance gave an impulse to search for ethnic equivalents of the early Middle Age cultures of Western Siberia [Savinov, 1976, p. 97]. D. Savinov proposed the idea that ethnic communities of Tsuyoshi-Kipchaks in the northern part of Altai were already forming during the time of Xiongnu [Savinov, 1984, p. 18]. A. Umansky wrote about the dispersion of 'early-Turkic elements, at least since the 3rd–4th centuries C.E.' [1974, p. 149]. V. Mogilnikov didn't agree with the proposition that Srostki culture records belonged to the Kimaks. According to him, only monuments in the Upper and Middle Irtysh region could be attributed to Kimak culture, while Srostki culture was formed by local Ugro-Samoyed tribes assimilated by the Turks of the Altai Mountains and Kimaks [Archaeology of the USSR, 1981, p. 45]. He attributed the emergence of cremations in the steppe areas of Altai with the coming of the Yenisei Kyrgyz in the 9th century. They came across Oghuz and Kimak-Kypchak populations in the steppes and then joined the Kimak Khanate. V. Mogilnikov proposed that ancient Turks from mountain areas and Mongolian-speaking nomads from Central Asia could have migrated to the Altai steppe [Mogilnikov, 2002, pp. 123, 125].

Burial complexes with graves according to the individual inhumation ceremony and accompanied by the head and limbs of a horse with ancient Turkic equipment were found in Baraba, and were attributed to Srostki culture by V. Molodin, D. Savinov, V. Elagin and their co-authors. The authors suppose that the Turkification of the Baraba forest-steppe population was determined by the inflow of nomads from the steppes of the Middle Irtysh and eastern Kazakhstan [Molodin and others, 1988, p. 136]. The authors further specified that the medieval population of Baraba was

affected by the Kimaks—bearers of Srostki culture, who inhabited the steppes of Kazakhstan, Altai and Western Siberia [Ibid., p. 167].

D. Savinov noted that the presence of various versions of funeral rites in the memorials of Srostki culture corresponded to the complexity of the Kimak alliance, which consisted of seven Turkic and Mongol tribes. He attributed burials with horses to the Teles, with horsehide to the Kipchak, burials in catacombs to the Uighur, and cremations to the Kyrgyz components. At the same time, D. Savinov attributed the monuments of the Kimaks at the Isrtysh river to the leading Yemek tribe in the Kimek confederacy [Savinov, 1984, pp. 107–108]. According to D. Savinov, the Kipchaks, included into the Kimak alliance, inhabited the northern regions of Altai. After the breakdown of the Kimak Khaganate, the Kipchaks conquered nomadic tribes inhabiting the steppes of Kazakhstan, the Urals and Western Siberia, and migrated to the northern Black Sea region [Ibid., pp. 118, 147]. S. Akhinzhanov and Yu. Trifonov considered the monuments of eastern Kazakhstan to be of Kipchak origin, because in this region, burials with horses and fencing with stone statues, which are typical for the Kipchak in Eastern Europe, were widespread [Akhinzhanov, Trifonov, 1984, p. 160].

Researchers' opinions concerning the chronology, periodisation and ethnic attribution of Upper Ob and Srostki cultures have considerably changed over the last decades. T. Troitskaya reconsidered the chronology and cultural origin of monuments from the Fominsk period in the Ob region, which were previously attributed to the Kulai culture and the beginning of the 1st millennium C.E. [Troitskaya, 1978, pp. 16–17]. She also classified the monuments of the Odintsovo cultural period from the Upper Ob region as an independent Odintsovo culture of the 5–6th centuries, which was formed on the basis of the preceding Kulai culture. T. Troitskaya supposes that the Ugro-Samoyed tribes were the bearers of this culture [Troitskaya, 1981, pp. 103, 116, 119]. This opinion was supported and developed in the works of Barnaul archaeologists [Kazakov A., 1996, pp. 169–170]. Nevertheless, T. Troitskaya later changed her point of view and again included Odintsovo records

into the Upper Ob culture, while fundamentally changing its chronology and periodisation. At the present time, she refers to the Upper Ob culture to the early–beginning of the advanced Middle Ages [Troitskaya, Novikov, 1998, p. 5860]. During the existence of this culture, the population of the Ob region came under the Turkic influence [Ibid., pp. 85–86].

During the past decade, a significant number of monuments were examined from the early Middle Ages in Kuznetsk Hollow. Initially, A. Ilyushin referred examined cremations at the Sapogov burial site to the ancient Turkic epoch, dated them the 8–9th centuries, and hypothesized that the memorial belonged to the Tyurgesh culture [Ilyushin and others, 1992, p. 50]. Afterwards, he began to refer cremations in Kuznetsk Hollow to the Upper Ob cultural community, the bearers of which were the Samoyed 'boma' tribes [Ilyushin, 1992, pp. 52–56]. He interpreted burial-sites with horses in the valley of Bachat river as being of Kipchak origin, and later attributed them to the Telengut [Ilyushin, 1993, pp. 39–41]. Inhumation burial sites accompanied by a horse and cremations in a chamber and on the horizon in the excavated burial site of Toropovo in the valley of Kas'ma river were interpreted by A. Ilyushin as 'ethnic substrata consisting of three ethno-cultural components' that became a basis for the formation of Shors and Northern Altaians [Ilyushin, 1999, p. 90].

A number of researchers offered to change the chronology, periodisation and ethnic attribution of different types of monuments of the Srostki culture. S. Neverov offered to consider burials with a horse as belonging to the ancient Turks of the Altai mountains, burials with horsehide to the Kimak-Kipchaks, and cremations to the Kyrgyz. He attributed individual inhumation burial sites, left by local Samoyed or Ugro-Samoyed populations of the Upper Ob region, to Srostki culture. He limited the territorial boundaries of Srostki culture but extended the chronological frame to the 13th century [Neverov, 1990, p. 173]. A. Adamov proposed to include the complexes from the 10–14th centuries to the list of Srostki cultural monuments in the Novosibirsk Ob region. He considers the bearers of Srostki culture to be part of the 'Turkic, or more spe-

cifically, Kipchak ethnoses', distinguishing their 'commemorative buildings' made of wood and their similarity to ancient Turkic fences [Adamov, 2000, p. 84].

The differences of opinion among researchers in regards to the Turkification and ethno-cultural genesis of populations in the forest-steppe area of Western Siberia in the early Middle Ages is explained by differing approaches to their ethnic attribution. The absence of information about events in the latter half of the 1st millennium C.E. in sources from the Middle Ages led researchers to reconstruct ethnic processes in the Western Siberian forest-steppe according to existing ethno-cultural genesis models, suggested by the adjoining regions of Sayan-Altai and the taiga of Western Siberia.

In the period preceding the early Middle Ages, Late Antiquity, from the end of the 1st millennium B.C.E. through the first half of the 1st millennium C.E., the population of the southern regions of Western Siberia was affected by the so-called 'Migration Period'—a wave of nomadic migrations in the Eurasian Steppe. The migration of the northern Xiongnu Horde, escaping from the Xianbei from Central Asia in the steppes of modern Kazakhstan, laid the foundation for the migration of nomadic tribes. A large number of Iranian-speaking nomadic tribes were involved in the process of migration, moving from their previous lands to states in urban and settled-agrarian civilizations. As a result of the movement of part of the nomadic population through the pine forests of the southern regions of Western Siberia, located along big rivers, the taiga hunting population of Samoyed and Ugric origin migrated. The bearers of the Fominsk period of Kulai culture came to the Upper Ob region from the northern taiga. Having analysed Fominsk-type materials in excavations in the Upper Tom region, Yu. Shirin suggested that they should be categorised into an independent Fominsk culture and dated to the 2nd–4th centuries C.E. [Shirin, 2003, p. 114].

Nevertheless, in the 4–5th centuries C.E., the advancement of nomadic tribes can be traced from the steppes northward to Sayano-Altai and Western Siberia. A rich mili-

tary burial site from the 4–5th centuries was found in the Altai steppe at the Tugozvonovo site. The buried warrior had a mixed racial appearance and a ring-shaped deformation on his skull. He was buried with a broadsword, a dagger and gold and silver jewelry in polychromic style [Umansky, 1978, p. 157]. This memorial is analogous to burial complexes of the Kenkol culture in Tian Shan [History, 1984, pp. 165–168]. It is evidence of the occasional appearance of Kenkol nomads in the steppes of the Altai region.

V. Molodin discovered a burial-site of a warrior with a horse, weapon, and belt harnesses in polychromic style at the Sopka-2 memorial in the forest-steppe of Baraba. The buried warrior was Mongoloid. By his anthropological characteristics, he was similar to the nomad-bearers of Kokel culture in Tuva [Molodin, Chikisheva, 1990, p. 168].

Inhumation burials with the skin or whole carcass of a horse were documented in the Eurasian steppes in singular cases. Similar kinds of monuments were found in Eastern Europe and the steppes of Kazakhstan [Archaeology in USSR, 1981, p. 19; Zasetskaya, 1994, pp. 17–18]. They don't have a definite cultural or ethnic attribution.

It can be assumed, that the bearers of this ritual appeared in the forest-steppes of Baraba from Kazakhstan. The spreading of the custom of circular cranial deformation among segments of the Upper Ob population and discoveries of polychromic-style articles in the Ob region [Gryaznov, 1956, p. 112; Borodovsky, 1999, pp. 283–287] may be evidence of the influence of the Eurasian steppe nomads on the inhabitants of Western Siberia. Indeed, one cannot exclude that the polychromic style were brought to the Ob region from territories, occupied by the Sargat culture in the Irtish region, the inhabitants of which are considered Ugric but were strongly influenced by Sarmatians, for whom this style was characteristic in the first half of the 1st millennium C.E. [Matveev, Matveeva, 1987, p. 192].

In the 5–6th centuries, the Sayano-Altay became the area of expansion for part of the Rouran Khaganate. After subjecting the nomad tribes, Rouran rulers established their vassals, i.e., military settlers, on the newly conquered territories for support. Ancient

Turks, led by the Ashina clan, settled in the southern regions of Altai [Bichrin, 1950, p. 221]. Berel-type monuments—inhumation burials in the company of one to three horses, are attributed to the ancient Turkic culture of this period [Savinov, 1984, p. 29]. At the same time, the ancient Kyrgyz were resettled to the Yenisei region from the Eastern Tyan Shan region [Khudyakov, 2001, p. 80]. A group of Chaatinsky culture nomads, for whom single and double catacomb burials were characteristic, was resettled to the Tuva territory. The Chaatinsky culture nomads had a Caucasian racial appearance. They practiced circular cranial deformation [Khudyakov, 1993, p. 61]. These signs indicate that the Chaatinsky tribes migrated to Tuva from Middle Asia or Eastern Turkestan.

The appearance of ancient Turks, led by the Ashina clan, in Altai, their military and political strengthening after subjecting the tribes of the Bulan-Kobinsky, Kokpash and Airydash cultures, and their vanquishing and subjection of the Teles tribes in the first half of the 6th century, made their union a great military power. Even Emperor Wen of Sui from the distant Chinese empire of Western Wei had to consider the ancient Turks as potential allies; he sent his ambassadors to the Ancient Turkic Horde and married the Chinese princess Chan-le to the Turkic ruler Bumyn [Bichurin, 1950, p. 228].

Therefore, the impact of ancient Turks and assimilated turkified nomads of the Altai Mountains on neighboring tribes living on the northern periphery of the ancient Turkic union in the Upper Ob region appears quite obvious. Inhumation burial sites with horses, found in historical sites of Upper Ob culture, may indicate the penetration of Ancient Turks into the Upper Ob region. The burial sites containing a horse investigated at Blizhnie Yelbany were for women, sufficiently rich, and abound with ornaments [Gryaznov, 1956, pp. 106, 114].

Probably, the ancient Turkic rulers, preparing for a decisive struggle against the Rourans for domination of the Middle Asian steppes, attempted to ensure the dependability of rear areas, securing their Horde from surprise attacks of the northern Upper Ob tribes; thus, they concluded dynastic alliances with the tribal leaders, marrying high-born girls from

Turkic ruling or other noble clans to them. Cultural connections between the Upper Ob tribes and the Ancient Turks expressed themselves in the spread of many elements characteristic to the ancient Turkic culture into their set of articles. First, these included important technical novelties and prestigious elements of the military detachment culture of the Ancient Turks. Iron stirrups of an early design with narrow laminar footrests, a semicircular opening and shackle, and a high laminar loop with rectangular hole were found in the Upper Ob culture monument Krokholevka<sup>23</sup> in the Novosibirsk Ob region. The Krokholevka stirrup is ornamented with three to four parallel lines [Novikov, 1998, p. 51]. Similar stirrups began to enter Eurasian nomadic culture in the middle of the 1st millennium C.E., and their advancement was related to the military activities of Ancient Turks in the period of expansion during the so-called First Turkic Khaganate [Grichan, Plotnikov, 1999, p. 77; Izmaylov, 1990, p. 65]. The collection of weapons of Upper Ob tribal warriors consisted of composite bows with cover plates, various three-blade iron arrowheads, the majority of which had elongated diamond-shaped and tiered strikers, swords and broadswords, and pectoral and lamellar iron armour and protective belts. The best weapons for distant and close combat and protective means of the time have their counterparts in the weapons of the Ancient Turks [Khudyakov, 1986, pp. 122, 132]. There are reasons to believe that it was the Upper Ob tribes, deprived, as compared to the Ancient Turks, of such extensive combat practice, who were very interested in contact in order to borrow the most advanced weapons from their southern neighbours.

Certain kinds of men's belts and women's ornaments, including ones with pendants, glass beads, marble and amber pendants were likely brought to Upper Ob inhabitants through the intermediation of Ancient Turks [Gryaznov, 1956, p. 106].

The ethno-cultural interaction between Turkic-speaking nations and Western Siberian inhabitants in the middle of the 1st millennium C.E. was not limited to contacts between the ancient Turks of Altai and the people of the Upper Ob culture in the Ob region. Min-

ature fixed-stud bronze buckles typical for the Tashtyk culture, which were found in the Upper Ob materials, may provide evidence of contact between local inhabitants and Yenisei tribes [Gryaznov, 1956, pp. 103, 106].

The decimation of the Rourans in the 6th century and the establishment of the mighty Turkic Khaganate, which subjected all the nomadic tribes of the Eurasian steppe belt, became a powerful stimulus for the proliferation of characteristic elements of the Ancient Turkic culture across the entire nomadic world and its northern periphery. During the existence of the so-called First Turkic Khaganate, the penetration of Turkic speaking people into southern regions reduced due to the large outflow of the Turkic-speaking nomadic population to territories conquered by the Turks in Eastern Turkestan, Middle Asia, and Eastern Europe. The proliferation and borrowing of elements of the ancient Turkic culture among tribes populated the Tom, Ob, and Irtysh valleys, enhanced significantly.

One of the attributes of the Ancient Turkic culture of the 6–7th centuries are belt and harness accessories made in the heraldic style. Records with similar items are rather rare in the territory of the Altai Mountains, where ancient Turkic statehood was formed [Gavrilova, 1965, p. 60; Khudyakov, Kocheev, 1997, p. 16].

Singular inhumation burials were found in the Upper Ob region with various accessories and heraldic totemics at the Gorny burial site in the Isha river valley at the bottom of the Kazryk ridge. Burials in ground pits were typical for this record. The buried were placed on their back in an outstretched position with the head oriented toward the north west. Signs of corpse scalping and dissection were found during the excavation. Weapon items, bows and arrows in quivers, daggers, belts with decorative plates, and horse harnesses were found in men's graves. Ornaments and toilet articles were found in women's graves. Due to typical elements of the funeral ritual and accompanying inventory, monument investigators M. Abdulganeyev and N. Stepanova hold that it has counterparts in the Samoyed culture of the Upper and Middle Ob and the ancient Turkic culture of Sayano-Altai [Abdulganeyev, Ste-

panova, 2001, p. 217]. Additionally, the burial rite of this monument corresponds to the traditions of the local population of the wooden steppe region in Western Siberia and the accompanying inventory is typical for ancient Turkic nomads in the period of the First Turkic Khaganate. The leaders of the excavation did not associate the monument with any of the known early medieval cultures of Western Siberia [ibid, p. 221]. One may consider that this was one of the ethnic groups of the local population of the West Siberian wooden steppe which considerably adopted the ancient Turkic culture and turkified itself at an early stage in the proliferation of the culture.

Heraldic-style articles are rare among the materials of the Upper Ob culture in the Ob region, however, other elements of the Kudyrginsky period of Ancient Turkic culture are available in a wider range. Single-person inhumation burials are dated from this period. Cremation burials, two-person, and group inhumations are rarer. The buried lie on their back in an outstretched position, sometimes with bent extremities, head toward the north-east, east, or south-east. Several burials can be found under one burial mound. Isolated trenches can be found around the burial mounds. The Upper Ob population preserved the practice of circular cranial deformation. Among the accompanying inventory of Upper Ob burials, the objects which can be attributed to signs of Ancient Turkic influence include horse harness elements, belts with decorative plates, and individual items of weaponry and ornamentation. Among them, there are mouthpieces with ring ends, cheek-piece rods with one bent end, stirrups with rounded or plate-like loop, belt buckles, heraldic-style badges and cover plates, three-blade tiered and elongated diamond-shaped iron arrowheads, and bronze earrings. Chinese, Kwarezmian, and Iranian coins could like have been brought to Upper Ob tribes through the intermediation of Ancient Turks [Troitskaya, Novikov, 1998, p. 83].

However, items typical for cultures of the Western Siberia taiga zone dominate the inventories found at 6–7th century burial sites in the Ob region. These include bronze pendants, belt badges, West Siberian cultic casting-style decorations depicting birds with spread

wings, bears' figures or heads, and sometimes, human figures. Typical for records of this culture are multiple findings of variously-shaped tanged bone arrowheads. Bone arrows are also occasionally found at ancient Turkic monuments. For the Upper Ob culture, they were one of the most widely spread types of man-made projectile weapons [Khudyakov, 1986, pp. 113–115, 147]. Moulded round-bottom ceramic tableware, pots, jugs, and cups ornamented with a comb-shaped or plain stamp around the crown, neck, and upper body were typical for records of the 6–7th century Upper Ob culture in the Ob region [Troitskaya, Novikov, 1998, p. 83]. Ancient towns with ditches and earthen walls at the field side as well as dense residential development in the ward area were typical for the population of this culture. The population of the Upper Ob culture differed significantly from Ancient Turks in their cultural-and-economic type, way of living, and economic activities. They lived a settled life and were engaged in free-range cattle-rearing. Inhabitants of wooden steppe regions bred horses, cattle, sheep and goats, which grazed during the entire calendar cycle. They practiced plow agriculture, as evidenced by discoveries of plowshares and mill-stones. Hunting and fishing played an important part in the household. Home crafts, manufacture of metalware, ceramic tableware, woven and leather clothes, footwear, and utensils were well-developed. The exchange between Upper Ob culture tribes and Sogdian merchants, who were engaged in trading in the First Turkic Khaganate, was likely established in the 6–7th centuries. The trade route from Semirechye to the Upper Irtish, Ob, and Tom regions, which was one of the branches of the Great Silk Road, began to be actively used in this period. The object of trade for visiting merchants was, likely, fur. Imported goods to exchange for fur included ornaments, belt and harness accessories, and coins.

Heraldic-style articles were also found in the Tom region in monuments at cremation burial-sites, which are also attributed to the Upper Ob culture. Elements belonging to the Ancient Turkic culture, i.e.,—belt and harness accessories, stirrups and mouth-pieces, arrowheads with West Siberian cultic castings

and round-bottom, moulded, sparsely ornamented ceramic tableware are typical for the set of artifacts found in 6–7th century burial mounds at the Saratovka monument in the river Ur valley [Ilyushin, 1999, pp. 62–63].

Individual artifacts made in the heraldic style were also brought into the taiga zone of the Middle Ob region [Belikova, Pletneva, 1983, p. 22].

It is important to notice that there are no such articles in the Yenisei valley; this demonstrates the weakening of cultural connections with the Ob region population in the 6–7th centuries. Document evidence shows that the Yenisei Kyrgyz state was at enmity with their northern neighbors, the Boma tribes, during this period [Bichurin, 1950, p. 354].

The influence of Ancient Turkic culture is also reflected in the set of artifacts of the Potchevash culture, monuments of which are located in the Irtysh region and the western part of the Baraba wooden steppe. Scholars consider people of this culture to be Ugric [Molodin et al., 1988, pp. 123–124].

Considerable changes took place in the history of the Ancient Turks, their cultures, and statehood in the 7–8th centuries. The united Turkic Khaganate disintegrated into two separate Turkic states, so-called Western and Eastern Khaganates. The Eastern Khaganate temporarily lost its independence when it was subjected by the Tang Empire, but revived in the late 7th century. Changes affected the culture of the Ancient Turks, the appearance of weapons, military ammunition, horse harnesses, and manufacturing of artistic metalwork. The Katanda style with typical smooth ornament-free surfaces prevailed in the design of belt and harness decorations.

A certain standardisation began to show in the manufacturing of belt and harness accessories. During the existence of the so-called Second Eastern Turkic Khaganate, the size of the Ancient Turkic nomadic population in Sayano-Altai and its influence on neighbouring tribes of the West Siberian plane increased considerably. The wooden steppe population maintained trade and cultural connections with the Ancient Turks of the Western Khaganate.

Caravans of Sogdian merchants, who reached the Tom and Yenisei, regularly made their way from Semirechye to the Irtysh and Ob regions. In the 7–8th centuries, the intensity of trade contacts between the populations of Western Siberia and Middle Asia increased noticeably, resulting in the arrival of imported articles and coins.

Katanda-style belt and harness accessories are presented in the artifacts of monuments classified by T. Troitskaya and A. Novikov as belonging to the Upper Ob culture of the Ob region in Kamenny Mys, Krasny Yar I burial mounds, and in single-person inhumation and cremation burial-sites. In the Baraba wooden steppe, similar artifacts were found in the inhumation burial-site with a horse in the Chingis-2 burial ground [Troitskaya, Novikov, 1998, Fig. 10: 6; 26: 50–52, 58–60]. In the Ob region, West Siberian bronze casting-style artifacts were found at the same sites [ibid., Fig. 18: 23]. In the Tom region, Katanda-style artifacts were found in cremation burial-sites at the Saratovka burial ground [Ilyushin, 1999, p. 66]. This record site was relegated to the Upper Ob cultural entity. The set of articles found in sites in the Western Siberia wooden steppe zone includes, apart from articles of Katanda-style toreutics, iron mouth pieces, stirrups, arrow and spear heads, elbowed daggers and lamellar armor's plates typical for the Ancient Turkic culture of the 7–8th centuries. This shows the consistent orientation of local tribes and, most significantly, of their nobility, towards prestigious elements of the military retinue culture of Ancient Turks and the largely successful processes of acculturation and Turkification of the foreign-ethnic, non-Turkic population. However, they still preserved considerable ethno-cultural diversity in burial rituals, where single-person inhumation and cremation rituals prevailed, and inventory, which included locally-made mold ceramic tableware and West Siberian bronze castings.

There is no consistent scholarly opinion regarding the ethnic affiliation of this population. M. Gryaznov argued that it could be Ugric; T. Troitskaya that it could be Ugric-Samoyed; and A. Ilyushin relegates the cremation burial mounds in the Tom region to the Samoyed tribes of Boma or Syaomi [Gry-

aznov, 1956, p. 113; Troitskaya, 1981, p. 119; Ilyushin, 1999, p. 67]. Armory hoards, found in the territory of the Tom and Chulym regions and pertaining to the cult of Mir-Susne-Hum, one of main characters of the Ugrian pantheon of gods, give reasons to assume that West Siberian wooden steppe tribes were at the stage of building their ethno-social hierarchy and potestarian unions, where the Ugrian military retinue class occupied dominant positions [Plotnikov, 1987, pp. 131–132]. At the same time, unions consisting of Ugrian and Samoyed tribes lived in dependence to the powerful Second Turkic Khaganate; this promoted the orientation of local Ugrian and Samoyed nobility to borrowing more advanced Ancient Turkic weapons, warrior and horse ammunition, as well as prestigious elements of the Ancient Turkic military retinue culture. Penetration of the Turks into the West Siberian wooden steppe was very limited during the period of the Second Eastern Turkic Khaganate, as evidenced by the small number of inhumation burials with a horse.

In the middle of the 8th century, the Second Eastern Turkic Khaganate collapsed. On its ruins, the Uighur Khaganate emerged, the ethnic base of which was formed by the Uighurs and other Teles tribes. However, the Eastern Turks or Kok Turks were not exterminated. They continued to live in Central Asia, and their culture entered a new, Kurai period of development. In the 8th century, the Turgesh Khaganate, to which the Western Turkic tribes belonged, also ceased its existence. In the middle of the 8th century, tribes of the Karluks established their state, moving to Semirechye from Central Asia. Although the history of the statehood of the Ancient Turks was over, the Ancient Turkic ethnos and culture existed for the next two and a half centuries. The size of the Ancient Turkic population, and number of burial and memorial monuments belonging to the Ancient Turkic culture in the Altai Mountains, Tuva, and within the Minusinsk depression territory, conquered by the Turks in the early 8th century, increased considerably. After the collapse of the Second Eastern Turkic Khaganate, the Eastern Turks lost the capability to create the most monumental and majestic memorial records. However, burials with a horse and memorial fences

with statues were spread across the entire territory, occupied by the Ancient Turks. There were also changes to their set of accessories. The most remarkable changes in weapons are evident in Ancient Turkic cultural monuments in the Altai Mountains, where impact spears, broadswords, battle axes, and fragments of lamellar and combined armour were found. The development of close-combat offensive weapons and protective items among the Ancient Turks of the Altai Mountains was deliberate. During the existence of the Uighur Khaganate, this territory did not belong to it. An independent Ancient Turkic union existed within it. However, the Ancient Turks absorbed certain influences from the Uighur ethnos and culture, which dominated the nomadic world at the time. This influence was most remarkable in the design of artistic metal work. The Kurai style, with its typical intricate floral ornamentation, ornithomorphic, ichthyomorphic, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic motifs, and Manichean canonical religious symbolism became popular in Ancient Turkic toleutics under the Uighur influence.

Probably, under pressure or a threat of military pressure, a part of the Ancient Turkic population migrated from the territory of the Altai Mountains to the Ob, Tom regions and Baraba wooden steppe, where inhumation burials with one or two saddle horses were spreading [Troitskaya, Novikov, 1998, pp. 21–22]. A large number of belt and harness accessories with rich floral and anthropomorphic ornamentation were discovered in the monuments of the Ob and Tom regions and the Baraba wooden steppe [Troitskaya, 1978, p. 113; Troitskaya, Novikov, 1998, p. 34].

The most significant changes in the ethnocultural development of the wooden steppe zone of Western Siberia, as part of the processes of Turkification of the local Ugrian and Samoyed population and the migration of considerable groups of Turkic-speaking nomads to Baraba and the Ob and Tom regions, took place after the collapse of the Uighur Khaganate and the mass migrations of the Kyrgyz, Teles tribes, Kipchaks, and other nomads from the Kimak union, and the establishment of the Kyrgyz and Kimak Khaganates in the 9–10th centuries. During this period, sizeable regions of Western Si-

beria, including the Tom and Ob regions up to the Upper and Middle Irtish regions, were included in the Kyrgyz Khaganate, and the Irtish valley, a part of the Altai Steppe, and Baraba were included in the Kimak state. The wooden steppe zone of Western Siberia was extensively occupied by the Kipchaks. Along with the Kyrgyz army, the Tom, Ob, and Irtish regions were occupied by military detachments of the Boma tribes, which were treated

as kyshtyms (vassals) by the Kyrgyz state and were considerably influenced by Kyrgyz culture. In the 9–10th centuries, Western Siberia became the scene of two waves of Turkification; one from the Altai and Upper Irtish, the other, from the Yenisei. A political and ethnic situation developed which determined the focus, nature, and strength of ethno-cultural genesis of the West Siberian region in the following centuries.



Section II

**Population  
of the Volga-Ural Region and  
Formation of the Bulgar State**



## CHAPTER 1

**The Bulgarian era in the history of the Finno-Ugric peoples  
of the Volga and Cis-Ural Regions**

Vladimir Napolskikh

**Ethnic Map of the Middle Volga and  
Cis-Ural Regions in the Bulgarian Era**

Despite the limited nature of the early medieval written sources on the history of the region, they allow us to at least trace the general evolution of its ethnic map in the Bulgarian period.

As to the beginning of the Middle Ages, we have a list of the peoples contained in a work by Jordanes, a Gothic historian, who were conquered by Ermanaric, a Gothic 'king' (he lived in the middle of the 4th century), which likely represents a kind of an itinerary (a list of peoples and countries on the way from the Baltic Sea to the Volga River and further down it) of the first centuries of our era. The most recent publication of 'Getica' by Jordanes represents the text of the list in the following form: *'thiudos: Inaunxis Vasinabroncas Merens Mordens Imniscaris Rogas Tadzans Athaul Nauego Bubegenas Coldas'*<sup>1</sup> [Jordanes, p. 116]. It should be interpreted as a very distorted piece of the text in the Gothic language [Anfertyev, 1994, pp. 150–151], whose original can be reconstituted in the following way as it concerns the territories from the Baltic Sea to the Middle Volga Region, which are of interest to us: *'\*þiudos: in Aunxis Vas, in Abroncas Merens, Mordens in Miscaris, Ragos stadjans / stadins [Athaul Nauego Bubegenas Coldas]'* and can be translated as follows: '[conquered] nations: in Aunux<sup>2</sup> - all, in Abronkas<sup>3</sup> (?)—the Merya, the Mordvinians in Meshchera<sup>4</sup>, [along] the Volga<sup>5</sup> Region [the Athaul, Navego, Bubegenas, Coldas].'

The nation written in the first place in this list *\*Vas* is traditionally linked with the ancestors of the Vepsians (old self-designation *þeps* < *\*vepsä*), *Ves* in ancient Russian sources. These people played an important role in the international trade on the Volga-Baltic route and are perhaps (as has been considered

since the time of H. Fraehn) continued to be mentioned in Arabic and Persian sources of the 10–12th centuries, primarily by Ibn Fadlan, who called them *the visu people* (ويسو) [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 135]. However, there are some problems: in a number of later sources (Yaqut, the end of the 12–beginning of the 13th centuries, Zakariya al-Qazwini, the middle of the 13th century, etc.) preserved the wording *Visu*, while others, including very early authors (al-Biruni, the first half of the 11th century, al-Marwazi, the first decades of the 12th century [Göckenjan, Zimonyi, 2001, p. 45], etc.) write *Isu* (ايسو). The word *Isu* is apparently used in the only published manuscript of the second Arabic author following Ibn Fadlan, who personally received information about the people in the Volga Bulgaria—al-Gharnati [Churakov, 2001]<sup>6</sup>. It is understandable that the form *Isu* much less resembles the old Russian name of the Vepsians, *Ves*, and requires a different interpretation. However, we cannot but note that the disappearance of *Vesi* as well as *the visu people* / *Isu* from the pages of historical sources in the 13–14th centuries is apparently connected with the collapse of Volga Bulgaria and with the cessation of active trading with the North and the Baltic Region through the Volga trade route.

Jordanes's list mentions only the Merya and the Mordvinians of the peoples of the Middle Volga Regions that are known to us. Furthermore, if we talk about the Mordvinians, this is an exoethnonym, and we cannot say for sure that it means the Moksha and Erzya (however, the presence of the Mordovian language in the Middle Volga Region is clearly marked by the pra-Mordvinian form of the Volga's name *\*Raya* see note 5 to this essay).

The second source—a well-known letter by Joseph, a Khazar Khagan, to Hasdai ibn Shaprut, an official of the Cordoba Caliph (the 960s)—reflects the situation at the end of the 8–

middle of the 9th centuries—that is, practically the time when the Bulgars came to the Middle Volga Region. Here we find the following list of nations: '*Bur-t-s*, *Bul-g-r*, *S-var*, *Arisu*, *Ts-r-mis*, *V-n-n-tit*, *S-v-r*, *S-l-viyun*'. P. Kokovtsov suggested interpreting these names in the following way: *Bur-t-s* as the Burtases, *Bul-g-r* as the Bulgars, *S-var* as the Suvars, the town of Suvar in Volga Bulgaria, *Arisu* as the Erzya Mordvinians, *Ts-r-mis* as the Cheremis, Mari people, *V-n-n-tit* as the Vyatichi, *S-v-r* as the Severians, *S-l-viyun* as the Slavs or maybe, the Novgorod Slavs [Kokovtsov, 1932]. The Mari people are first mentioned there under their old probably Turkic name *the Cheremis*: Tatar *čirměš*, chuvash *šarmăš* < tyu \* *čer*- 'army.' To motivate the semantics of the name *Cheremis* ('warlike' -?) in the Turkic languages, compare the opposite (in etymological terms) name of the Chuvash: chuvash *čăvaš* < Turkic \**jawaš* 'peaceful, calm' [Räsänen, 1969, p. 175].

It is presumed that the Erzya Mordvinians are first mentioned there under their own name, which is clear: the Turks (including the Khazars and Bulgars) probably did not know the Iranian ethnonym \**mord-* (see the note to Jordanes's *Mordens* and used Mordvinian self-designations (compare the Tatar *muxşy* 'Mordvinians (originally, *Mokshas*)', the Chuvash *irše*, 'Mordvinians (originally, *Erzya*).' The same is also found in earlier sources whose information originates from the steppe, the Turkic-Mongol world: William of Rubruck mentions people called *Moxel* (*Mokshas*, the word was learnt by Rubruck from the Tatars), who lived to the north of the Tanais, followed by (further to the north) the '*Merda*s, called by the Latins as *Merduinis*' (probably Erzya, to be exact, the Mordvinians in general, which word was probably obtained from the Rusessians and correlated with the sources known in accordance with Byzantine sources) [Carpini, Rubruck, pp. 108–109], Rashid al-Din (the end of the 13–beginning of the 14th centuries) writes about peoples such as *Moksha* and *Arjan* (apparently, *Moksha* and *Erzya*), without using the word *Mordvinian* was used [Rashid ad-Din, 1960, p. 96].

However, the problem is that the brief version of Joseph the Khagan's letter states that there were nine peoples living on the main river of the Khazar state (there were no names of

these peoples in this version), while there are only eight names in the above list. Since most of the names coincide with the historically known ones and can be surely identified, there is the temptation to divide the name of *Arisu* (𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏) into two components and see two ethnicons at the same time there: *Ar(u)* and (*V*)*isu*, which are mentioned by al-Gharnati as the names of peoples and areas, which were subordinated to Volga Bulgaria. There is a philological argument in favour of such an interpretation: if *Arisu* (𐰽𐰺𐰍𐰏) actually meant the ethnonym of *Erzya*, it would be hard to explain the presence of the letter *yod* in the middle of the word: there is no vowel either in the self-designation of the *Erzya Mordvinians* or in its Chuvash derivative *irše*, and there are no reasons for its appearance from the point of view of adaptation to the source language and script. Moreover, if *Arisu* is *Ar(u)* and (*V*)*isu*, the order of the peoples in the detailed version of Joseph the Khagan's letter becomes more logical: the Lower Volga Region, the Burtases; the Kazan Volga Region, the Bulgars and Suvars; the Cis-Kama Region, *Aru*; the same region, *Isu* or (if *the Visu people* = *Ves*) up the Volga River from the mouth of Kama; the Nizhny Novgorod and Mari Volga Region, the Cheremis; the basin of the Oka River, the Vyatichi; the left bank of the upper Dnieper River, the Severians; and further up, the Slavs as a whole.

At the beginning of the 12th century the Rusessian chronicles listed '*the peoples who paid tribute to Rus*': *Chud*, *Merya*, *Ves*, *Muroma*, *Cheremis*, *Mordvins*, *Perm*, *Pechera*, *Yem*, *Litva*, *Zemigola*, *Kors*, *Noroma*, *Lib*' [The Tale of the Bygone Years, I, p. 13]. We cannot but notice some similarities between the initial part of this list and the initial part of the Gothic Jordanes's itinerary (especially if we take into account the possible link between the ancient Russian *Chud* and the Gothic *þiuda* 'people'), but the *the Cheremis* (Mari people) had already asserted themselves among the peoples of the Volga Region, and *Perm* was mentioned for the first time—already an old Russian contribution to the ethnotoponymy of the north-east of Eastern Europe (← Finnic *peräo maa* 'back land'), the name indicating lands on the Vychegda River and the Upper Kama River inhabited also by Komi ancestors not later than since the end of the 13th

century. The above sources do not directly mention only the Chuvashes and Udmurts of all the peoples that inhabited the northern periphery of Volga Bulgaria in the later period. This strange absence of data about the two major peoples of the region can be explained by sociopolitical reasons, but some indirect information about them can also be found in sources.

The first mention if not of the Udmurts as such but at least of a geographic term that was a basis for the Udmurt's name in the Turkic languages of the Volga Region (Tatar *ar* 'Udmurt') can be seen in a message of Abu Hamid al-Gharnati about the two regions located to the north of Bulgar, whose residents pay *kharaj* to the Bulgar tsar—*Isu* (namely *Isu* and not *Visu*, as in the Rusessian edition, see above) and *Aru*; where people produce beaver, ermine, and squirrel skins, and which are followed by the region of the *Yura* [al-Gharnati, 1971, pp. 31–34]. As regards *Aru*, mentioned by al-Gharnati, it can be interpreted on the all-Turkic basis *\*ar(y)* (> Tatar *ary*) 'the opposite, back side': the Bulgars could probably call the right bank of the Atil (the Belaya—Kama – Volga Rivers). Apparently, the term later began to designate the population living beyond the Atil and the main peoples constituting it—that is, the Udmurt, as a result of which the Bulgars' descendants—the Kazan Tatars—are still called the Udmurts *ar*; that is actually, 'people living on the other side of the River' [Belykh, 1996]. However, the region of *Aru*, mentioned by al-Gharnati can hardly be correlated specifically with the Udmurts (and more than that, there is no reason to see there any reference to an 'Udmurt Principality' with a centre in Arsk). Most likely, in the Bulgar era this title designated the extensive areas of the right bank of the Lower Kama River Region, the Vyatka-Kama interfluvium, and the Upper Cis-Kama Region, which were under the direct control of Volga Bulgaria or at least under its economic and political influence.

If we accept the above interpretation of the name *Arisu* mentioned in Joseph the Khagan's letter as *Ar(u) + (V)isu*, we can see that al-Gharnati mentioned the same two ethnicons. The use of the concept 'the other side of the river' (Turkic *\*ar(y)*) with respect to the lands on the other side of the Atil River in the 9th century (the time when the information contained in Joseph

the Khagan's letter originated), which is practically during the emergence of the Bulgars in the Kama River Region, looks even more natural than in the 12th century, when the Bulgars already had settled in the Cis-Kama territories. However, while there is a quite acceptable etymology for *Aru*, as regards *Isu* if we accept this interpretation and thus reject any connection of this ethicon with the Vepsians' name, we cannot propose anything reasonable as of yet. The country of *Isu* should be located to the north of Bulgaria, 20 (according to al-Marwazi) or 30 (according to al-Gharnati) days of travel away. But this information is not of any use as it is not clear what means of travel they were referring to: by boat down the river, by foot, on horseback, or skiing with dog sledges in winter. The possibility that *Isu* was the Upper Cis-Kama Region, where the Rodanov and Polom-Cheptsa cultures were widespread (this hypothesis was first independently proposed by M. Talitsky [1941, p. 47] and R. Hennig [1961, p. 251] and is supported today by various researchers), is quite admissible, given the specified distance, the intermediary role of *Isu* in Bulgaria's trade with *Yura*, the time when *Isu* was mentioned in sources, and the nature of the relationship between *Isu* and Bulgaria, but it is not yet possible to onomastically link this ethicon, and there are no new more specific arguments speaking in favour of this version, so it remains unprovable. Similarly, the problem of the correlation of the names *The Visu people* and *Isu* in Arab-Persian sources should also be deemed unsolved: it is possible that the Vepsian name has been contaminated with some unknown name from the Upper Cis-Kama Region.

Apparently, the Chuvashes' ancestors are first mentioned only in a Russian source dated to the beginning of the 13th century—in the 'Lay of the Ruin of the Rusessian Land': '*Burtas, Cheremis, Veda, and Mordvin people were engaged in forest bee-keeping for the Grand Prince of Vladimir.*' The name *Veda* mentioned in the 'Lay of the Ruin...' represents the Mordvinian name of the Chuvashes borrowed in the Old Russian language *vet'ke* (root *ved*—compare *ved'eñ* 'Chuvash') [Mokshin, 1991, pp. 33–34]. The etymology of the name is not clear: it is not possible to link it with the name of the Udmurt territorial group *Vatka* as pro-

posed by N. Mokshin because the latter was derived from Russian *Vyatka*, and the Chepsta Udmurts began to call themselves that much later than the Mordvinian name of the Chuvashes was used in the 'Lay of the Ruin...' (see also below and note 12 to this essay). We can suggest a connection with the Mordovan *ved'* 'water' if this word in the Mordovian languages could mean a great river in the past, for example, the Volga River, then *vet'ke* would mean 'those living on the great river.' On the other hand, the term is possibly connected with the name of the Slavic tribe of *Vyatichi* (again derived from the same Slavic word *\*vět-* 'big' as in the name of the *Vyatka River*; although there is nothing in common between the two words except for their derivation from the same basis), who were recorded near the Erzya Mordvinians in the letter by Joseph the Khagan, but in this case we should presume that the word was borrowed by the Mordovian language after the disappearance of the nasal sounds in the East Slavic languages (which is possible), and that the name was transferred from the *Vyatichi* to the Chuvashes (that is hard to explain).

So we can say that by the end of the Bulgarian era in the 13th century, all the local Finno-Ugric peoples and Chuvashes were present in the Middle Volga and Cis-Ural Regions in one form or another. Most probably, it is the existence of a powerful state in the region, its economic, political, and cultural influence that played a crucial role in the formation of the region's ethnic map.

We cannot but mention the expansion in the Bulgarian time of the land boundaries in the north, which was known to Arab and Persian geographers: presumably since the message by Ibn Fadlan (B. Zakhoder's presumption [1967, p. 59] about an earlier source of this information has not been confirmed yet) further north following the *the Visu people*, the *Yura* country and *people* are mentioned, who traded furs with *the Visu people* and Bulgar merchants, who travel north in sledges drawn by dogs (al-Biruni, al-Marwazi, and al-Gharnati in the 11–12th centuries described *Isu* and mentioned skis as a means of transportation [al-Gharnati, 1971, pp. 31–35; Göckenjan, Zimonyi, 2001, p. 262]—perhaps the first in Arab-Persian literature!); the *Yura* were followed

by the sea of darkness where wild people lived, and where the fangs of a certain fish were obtained (meaning walrus), which were suitable for the preparation of various items [Zakhoder, 1967, pp. 59–69]. This northern nation of *Yura* should be the *Yugra* described in old Russian sources, a country and its population living in the extreme north-east of the Novgorod lands, probably on the left bank of the Lower Ob (see the location and ethnic and linguistic origin of *Yugra* in [Napolskikh, 1998]). Since this issue appears in the reports of travelers, who visited Bulgaria (Ibn Fadlan reports that he received information about the North directly from the Bulgarian ruler), the source of this information is clear: it is the trading activities of the Bulgarian merchants that expanded the northern boundaries of the populated universe for the entire Islamic world<sup>7</sup>.

#### **Interaction of the Local Population with Volga Bulgaria and Formation of the Peoples of the Region**

At the beginning of the Bulgarian era in the Middle Volga Region, there must have occurred significant changes to settlements and the economic, social, military, and cultural life of the Finno-Ugric peoples of the region. The tribal elite of the local peoples, who spoke mostly Finno-Ugric languages, had to solve a political problem they were facing for the first time in the 9–10th centuries: to develop and implement a strategy of relations with a state that had emerged in the region, namely with Volga Bulgaria. The appearance in the Middle Volga Region of the first state with a self-defined stable military and political environment, intense development of economic relations, and inevitable direct and indirect exploitation of the local population had both pros and cons for the local elite and could lead to two different attitudes. On the one hand, there should have been a desire to maintain independence—that is, the local tribal elite's power over its people. To do this they had to try to protect themselves (such attempts would unlikely be successful given the obvious military and political inequality of the sides) or at least to somehow distance themselves and ideally just move away from the sovereign neighbourhood.

On the other hand, representatives of the local tribal elite could try to integrate into the economic and perhaps the political state system and try to gain certain benefits from it: relying on this system and providing specific services to it, to strengthen and consolidate their domination over the tribe.

Despite the lack of direct written sources, even indirect linguistic and archaeological data allows us to suggest which attitude was chosen by the nations living in the Volga and the Cis-Ural Regions before the beginning of the Bulgarian period.

As shown by S. Belykh [1999], the habitat of the speakers of the Perm parent language (the ancestor language of the Udmurts and Komi) should have been in the Middle (Perm, Sarapul) Cis-Kama Region at the end of the 1st–beginning of the 2nd millennium (the areas where those people inheriting the Lomatov, Nevolino, and Polom-Cheptsas archaeological cultures instead of the Kama Glyadenovo culture were living). According to archaeologists, there was a significant inflow of people to the territory of Volga Bulgaria from these areas in the 9–10th centuries (Upper and Middle Cis-Kama Regions, Sylva and Cheptsas River basins), who brought in particular Cis-Kama forms of ceramics [Khlebnikova, 1984, pp. 223–225]. The existing attempt to interpret these facts in the archaeological literature [Ivanov, 1998, pp. 107–109] are mainly limited by hypotheses that the residents of the Middle Kama River Region were brought to the Lower Kama and Middle Volga Regions by the Bulgars, who needed an agricultural population in the conquered territories. We cannot deny the reasonableness of such an assumption, but the interests of this population should be also borne in mind: the formation in the Middle Volga Region of a Bulgar state meant that Kama Perm farmers could be stably engaged in agricultural work under the conditions defined by a type of 'social contract' with the rulers of Volga Bulgaria. Such a prospect was very attractive both for the population as a whole and for the tribal elite in particular, who ensured social domination over their fellow tribesmen as they were integrating into the social structure of the Bulgarian state. Naturally, it

is necessary to take into account the benefits of trade on the Volga, cultural exchange, and the relative security at least from occasional predator raids of steppe-dwellers, etc.: there were many factors that attracted the Cis-Kama population in Bulgaria, and such a relocation should not be explained only by violence on the part of the Bulgars. The same factors clearly applied not only to the population of the Upper and Middle Kama River Regions but also to the Permians, who, by the time of the Bulgars' emergence, had lived in the Lower Kama and its inflows and who could also join the ranks of the emerging Permian-speaking territorial groups of the population of Volga Bulgaria.

Apparently, the Permian groups formed in such a manner in the 9–10th centuries in the Lower Kama and its inflows that it should be connected with the beginning of the formation of the Udmurts and Besermians. The ancient town of Elabuga could be the original centre of this region [Kazakov, 1997, p. 39], and then this could be Arsk, the domain centre of the Kazan Khanate, where, according to a legend of the local Udmurt population, an *eksey Udmurt* 'Udmurt tsar' lived<sup>8</sup> and where there are substrate placenames of Udmurt origin. Exactly on the Vyatka River the Mari people should have clashed with the carriers of the self-designation *\*odz-mort* (> Udmurt *udmurt*), which is the basis for the Mari name of the Udmurts *odomari* [Napolskikh, Belykh, 1994]. Later in the 14–15th centuries, simultaneously with the relocation of the Bulgarian groups—that is, ancestors of the Cheptsas (Nukrat, Karino) Tatars (as evidenced by the Bulgar epitaph of the 14th century found in the Gordino settlement on the Cheptsas River)—the ancestors of the Udmurts and Besermians also penetrated to the north, to the Lower Cheptsas Region, where the *Vatka* Udmurt group was formed, which was subordinate to the Karino Arsk Tatar Princes until the latter half of the 16th century (see note 8 to this essay) and formed the basis for the Cheptsas Udmurts. It is necessary to locate there the original area of the north-east migration of the ancestors of another territorial Udmurt group—that is, *Kalmez*

who settled in the basin of the Kilmez River. In the course of these relocations the ancestors of the Udmurts assimilated the Permian population of the Vyatka-Kama interfluvium.

At about the same time, when some of the Permians moved from the Middle Kama River Region to the Lower Kama River Region, to the Bulgarian state, other Permians chose the opposite strategy of 'leaving' and shifted to the regions of the Lower and Middle Vychehda and its inflows, where the Vym culture was formed in the 10–14th centuries, which is usually correlated with the Perm Vychehgodskaya, the ancestors of the Komi-Zyryan peoples described in chronicles [Savelyeva, 1985, p. 1319].<sup>9</sup> Actually, the matter was not in leaving but in another economic, political, and cultural orientation: the Kama population that moved to the Vychehda River was mostly interested in contacts not with the Bulgars but with Rus', and the intensity of these relations was continuously growing, and the population of the Upper Kama River Region also made contacts. Later this was reflected in the substitution in the Komi language of potential Bulgarisms, borrowings from the (Old) Russian language [Nasibullin, 1992], the baptism of the Komi ancestors, and finally, in the collapse of the Permian linguistic unity [Belykh, 1995].

Some of the Permian population of the Middle and Upper Cis-Kama Regions was in close relations with the Bulgars, having remained at the same place of habitat: a network of fortified settlements (monuments such as the Anyushkara and the ancient town of Rozhdestvensk in the Upper Kama River Region, Idnakar and Dondykar on the Cheptsa)<sup>10</sup> was formed in the Cheptsa basin and in the Upper Kama River Region by the 9th–10th centuries, where the presence of the Bulgarian population was obvious to a greater (on the Kama River) or lesser (on the Cheptsa River) extent. Judging by the nature of the fortifications, which could not be used to defend against a siege properly organised by a professional army (pay attention to the defensive defect of the Idnakar ancient town such as its lack of a water source), by the relatively small area of these settlements, by the absence of traces of any regulatory bodies, residences of the rulers, etc., and

taking into account many other considerations, it is clear that these ancient towns essentially represented outpost towns that appeared in the territory of local tribal centres and that were controlled probably by the local nobility relying on the Bulgar group present there (see, for example, the ancient town of Rozhdestvensk with its Islamic cemetery, the Islamic graves in Anyushkar, possible Islamic burials in the ancient town of Idnakar, etc. [Lents, 1999; Krylasova et al., 2003]) or directly by military and trader Bulgar groups. The main purpose of these outposts lied probably in the collection, storage, and preparation for shipment to Bulgaria of furs—it would be reasonable to ask the question: is it possible to talk about equitable trade between the local population producing furs and the Bulgars, were volumes of imported (Bulgarian and Eastern in general) valuables found in the ancient towns comparable with the amount of furs produced by the local population and concentrated in these ancient towns (it is widely known that there were many bones of immature beavers in Idnakar, indicating the mass extermination of fur animals; compare, for example, the uniqueness of the oriental silver coins discovered directly in these ancient towns that is in stark contrast to that [A. Ivanov, 1998, pp. 110–113, 128–130, 143]). Naturally, these outposts were inhabited by craftsmen who met the needs of their inhabitants and the surrounding population; trade and commerce grew.

The basic connection between the ancient towns of Upper Kama-Cheptsa and Volga Bulgaria is clear if judging by the time of their existence: their growth begins in the 9th century simultaneously with the formation of the Bulgarian state; their decline begins in the 13th century during the Mongol invasion and the first defeat of Bulgaria, and by the end of the 14th century practically all of these ancient towns had ceased to function simultaneously with the collapse of Volga Bulgaria as an independent political and economic entity. It is noteworthy that nobody has yet managed to explain the reason for the sudden end of the Upper Kama-Cheptsa ancient towns (by the way, there are practically no reasonably accurate demise of the death of individual ancient towns): all archaeological considerations on

this subject are reduced to the documentation at settlements of arrowheads, traces of fire, etc., which, of course, do not prove the demise of the ancient towns as a result of their destruction. The reason was, apparently, the demise of Volga Bulgaria and the disappearance with it of the economic, social, political, and military base for these centres.

In all likelihood, the main population of the Upper Kama-Cheptsä ancient towns originating in the territory of the Perm ancestral home spoke a dialect of the late proto-Permian language, which owing to the active cultural and economic position of this population had been in contact, on the one hand, with the pre-Udmurt Permian dialects from the territory of Volga Bulgaria, and on the other, with the northern pre-Komi dialects of the Upper Kama and Vychegda, thus ensuring the continuity of late proto-Permian linguistic continuum in the 9–12th centuries [Belykh, 1995a]. It makes no sense to try to denote these dialects as ancestral ones specifically for the (northern) Udmurt or Komi (-Permian) languages as it is done in the archaeological literature. First, it is hardly possible to make such a delimitation for the said period (the definitive breakup of the proto-Permian unity should be dated in any case not earlier than to the beginning of the 13th century [Belykh, 1999, pp. 252–253]), and second, such a dichotomy simply does not exist: in the final period of the existence of the proto-Permian community numerous dialects could and should have developed, the crystallisation of which in the Udmurt and Komi languages took place later within not divergent, however, integrating social processes (in the same way, for example, it would be absurd to call the language of the Severyans as either Russian or Ukrainian, or the language of Krivichi as Russian or Belarusian)<sup>11</sup>.

As has already been stated above, it is possible to presume that the founders of the Upper Kama-Cheptsä ancient towns were known in the Arab-Persian sources as a people and a country of *Isu*. Perhaps it is the word that reflects the lost self-appellation of this population. Mediation of *Isu* in the Bulgarian trade with *Yura*, which is mentioned in the sources, may reflect the fact that the ancient Permian

population, apparently already in the 11–12th centuries, penetrated into the lower Ob, to the area where one should locate the annalistic *Yugra*, and left there monuments in the form of the ancient towns of Peregrebnoe I and Sherkal'y I/2, close to the ancient towns of Vymsky and Rodanovskoye [Parkhimovich, 1991]. It is from a Permian (proto-Permian) dialect that the name *the Yugra* was borrowed first by Old Russian and then by the Bulgarian language (see note 7 to this essay).

After the destruction of the system of the Upper Kama-Cheptsä ancient towns at the time of the demise of Volga Bulgaria, with the loss of old trading relations and generally quite unstable military, political, and economic situation in the late 14–15th centuries, their inhabitants had to move to live in small agricultural settlements away from the big rivers, which in fact explains the mysterious hiatus in the archaeological records in large parts of the said territory in the specified time. Single ancient towns could for some time continue to exist as purely local defensive and political centres, but over time the population began to gravitate towards the new centres, forming or already growing by the early 15th century: Russian Vyatka land, the centre of the Tatar princes in Karino on the Cheptsä River, and the Great Perm, the centre of Cherdyn sprung up on the extreme periphery of the Upper Kama-Cheptsä ancient towns in contact with the Trans-Urals, Vychegda, and Novgorod. So the proto-Permians, descendants of the founders of the Upper Kama-Cheptsä ancient towns, make up a part of the Northern Udmurts—*Vatka* (i.e., the Vyatka Udmurts, the Udmurts of the Vyatka land)<sup>12</sup> and Komi-Permians, the population of the Great Perm.

In principle, it was also possible for the local Finno-Ugric tribal leadership to enter into alliances, and especially military relations, with the Bulgars in the areas that for some reason could not be placed under the immediate control of the Bulgarian administration but were important in military and political terms, not unlike the settlements of the Germans and other barbarian federates on the borders of the Roman Empire. Such a situation could arise in the lands between Bulgaria and Rus' in the Middle Volga Region, on the



territory of modern Bashkortostan—on the eastern periphery of the Volga Bulgaria and on the Bulgarian-Khazar frontier in the south. In consideration of the history of the Finno-Ugric peoples, the north-west of the Bulgarian lands, the Vetluga forest area on the left bank of the Volga, is particularly interesting. These lands in the middle of the 1st millennium AD were populated by tribes who moved here from the south-west and left monuments such as the Younger Akhmylovsky burial site, which in the 8th century reached the Vyatka, assimilating with the local post-Azelinsky population and thus forming the basis for the composition of the Mari people [Nikitin, 1996]. These areas are not of great interest to the Bulgars because—unlike, for example, the Vyatka and the Kama or the Volga—the rivers of the area, not too comfortable for navigation, did not provide routes to the riches of Siberia, the Baltics, or Western Europe. However, on the other hand, it was necessary to take into account the danger of military expeditions and consistent expansion of Rus' in this direction.

In these circumstances, the effort that would have had to be made to establish direct control and administration of the ancient Mari population hardly justified the benefits the establishment of such a control could have procured: the most rational solution was just to have that population as a kind of allied federate in potential conflicts with Russia. The right bank of the Volga, the modern Chuvashia, had been subject to more intensive Bulgarisation as between the territories (which were also of great value for the development of agriculture) and Rus' were Mordovian lands that served as a buffer zone.

Apparently, these differences and possibly the remaining specifics unknown to us about the local tribal leadership were the causes for divergences in the ethno-linguistic development of the ancestors of the Chuvashes and Mari in the Bulgaria era. The amalgamation of these two peoples on a substrate common in cultural and anthropological terms cannot be doubted: it is clearly denoted by the proximity of the physical types represented in the Chuvashes and Mari, and their material culture ranging from the traditional costume,

food, and musical instruments (and here what is fundamentally important is the commonality of not only the external forms but also of terminology), and finally, the name of the Chuvashes from the mountainous Mari areas, *suasla marə* literally 'Tatar Mari.' The abundance of Chuvash borrowings in the Mari language [Räsänen, 1920] points to the fact that the Mari people developed as a result of the same Bulgarisation process of the local (most likely, Finno-Volgian in language) population as with the Chuvash, but in the case of the Mari people the process of linguistic assimilation was not completed. A similar ethno-historical situation can be found, for example, in the Balkans: the Albanian language has perhaps no less Romance elements from different times than the Aromanian dialects, but the process of turning it into a Romance language was not completed.

Here again it is appropriate to return to the opposition of the ethnonyms discussed above *Cheremis* < tur. \**čer-* 'army' and *Chuvash* < Turkic \**jawaš* 'peaceful, calm.' This opposition quite closely corresponds to the role played by the two peoples at a later time in the confrontation between Moscow and Kazan, although judging at least by the insertion of the first ethnonym already in the letter of Khagan Joseph in the 10th century (the information originated a century earlier), it can be transposed in the Bulgaria era as well, reflecting the position of the tribal leadership of both groups in their relations with the Bulgars (compare, for example, the terms *peaceful* and *unpeaceful outlanders* with respect to the Siberian and Caucasian peoples in the Rusessian language of the 18–19th centuries).

The position of the Mordvinian tribal elite with the emerging confrontation between Rus' and Bulgaria was probably in some way close to the Mari position. The Mordovian Prince Purgas, according to Russian chronicles, repeatedly and quite successfully fought against the Rusessians at the beginning of the 13th century, but the second Mordovian character Puresh/Pureysha, known to us from the chronicles, who was perhaps of Polovtsian origin, on the contrary, fought against the Purgas and was in contractual relations with Yury Dolgoruky [Mokshin, 1991, pp. 38–41]. In the future such

polarisation in the political orientation of separate groups of both the Mordovians and the Mari (towards Rus' or Bulgaria, and later, Kazan) only deepens.

Reviewing the history of the peoples of the Volga and Cis-Ural Regions in terms of their different relationships with Volga Bulgaria allows us to provide a hypothetical explanation as to the aforementioned strange absence of the Udmurts and the Chuvashes in the earliest written sources. It is for these two peoples that one can say the most consistent integration into the population of Bulgaria occurred, where they most likely occupied a socio-economic status and niche. Since the sources at our disposal are external to Bulgaria (we do not have purely Bulgarian documents, except for the epitaphs; and the evidence from Arab and Persian authors, although at times taken on-site, was still an 'outside perspective'), it is unsurprising that ancestors of the Udmurts and the Chuvashes organically included in Bulgarian society simply remained unnoticed by external observers, and when noticed, were perceived not as alien ethnic and foreign-language entities independent in the military and political sense but merely as social groups within the Bulgarian people, so that there was no need to stress their presence.

It makes sense to illustrate here how the nuances of the linguistic analysis of the Bulgarian borrowings in the Finno-Ugric languages can be of help in the reconstruction of the medieval relations between speakers of these languages and the Bulgars. There is a word in the Udmurt language *viť-kerś* 'Poll tax, a tax,' which is a composite, of which the second component *kerś*, is considered to be a Bulgarian borrowing, compare, Chuvash *χṛṣṣṣ/ χṛṣṣṣṣ* 'poll tax, social tributes'; this word in turn is an Arabic borrowing, and traditionally it is derived from Arabic *ḥarāj* (خراج) 'land tax, poll tax from the non-Muslims' [Wichmann, 1903, pp. 73–74]. The tax—*kharaj*—according to Arab-Persian sources was allegedly paid by the northern neighbours to 'the tsar' of the Bulgars. It seems that everything is quite clear, but there is, however, one nuance: the fact is that to derive the Chuvash word *χṛṣṣṣ/ χṛṣṣṣṣ* (and, accordingly, the Udmurt word *kerś*) from the Arab word

*ḥarāj* with a long *ā* in the second syllable is difficult: a long vowel had to be preserved as a full one (more likely, *u* or *i*) in Chuvash, but in no way reduced to zero! The source of the Bulgarian and later Chuvash and Udmurt words could have been the Arabic *ḥarāj* (خراج) 'consumption; ration; tax, tribute' (suggested as a possible alternative to [Róna-Tas, 1982 p. 762])—a word that now does not have the special meaning 'a poll tax on non-Muslims,' and does not denote the kind of tributes allegedly paid to the 'tsar' of the Bulgars by the inhabitants of the northern lands. This finding is consistent with the view expressed above regarding the inclusion of the Udmurt and Chuvash ancestors in the Bulgar social structure. It is significant that—like many other Bulgarisms—this word was borrowed also by the Mari language—that is, the language of the alleged 'federates' of Bulgaria, and with a completely different meaning: Mari *arāše*, *ārāšə* 'debtor': to the ancestors of Mari the Arabic term *ḥarāj* meaning 'tribute' was not applied and was not familiar to them.

### The Bulgarian borrowings in the Finno-Ugric languages of the Volga and Cis-Urals

The borrowings from the Bulgarian language by the Finno-Ugric languages have been studied quite well and allow us to speak of an entire epoch in the history of the languages of the region and, respectively, in the cultural development of its peoples [Paasonen, 1897; Wichmann, 1903; Räsänen, 1920]). The main phonetic features of the Bulgarisms allowing us to separate them from the borrowings from other Turkic languages and primarily from Tatar are as follows:

– *r* in place of the common Turkic *\*z < \*R >* Chuvash *r*, as in Udmurt *Bultir* 'sister-in-law; the second (younger) wife' ← Bulg.: chuvash *pultār < Turkic \*baldyR > Tatar baldyz* 'sister-in-law';

– *ś* [Mari *s*] or *é* at the beginning of the word and in an intervocalic position in place of the Turkic *\*j (/ \*č / \*ǰ ) > Chuvash ś or (rarely) é* (In the Bulgar language, there are presumed to be two dialects which are a source of borrowings: in one there has been a development of *\*j > \*ǰ /*

\* $\acute{z}$  >  $\acute{s}$ , in the other, \* $j$  > \* $\check{j}$  >  $\acute{c}$  [Rédei, Róna-Tas, 1972, p. 292]), as in Udmurt *śulĭk*, Mari *solĕk* 'kerchief, head towel' ← bulg.: chuvash *śulĕk* < Turkic \**jauĭlyq* > Tatar *jauĭlyq* 'kerchief';

–  $\acute{s}$  in place of the common Turkic \* $\acute{c}$  > Chuvash  $\acute{s}$ , as in Udmurt, Komi *kiś*, Mari *is* 'comb' ← Bulg.: chuvash *χəs* 'knife, comb' < Turkic \**qylyč* 'sword, saber' > Tatar *qylyč*;

– zero in place of the common Turkic intervocal \*-l- > Chuvash zero as in the above example, and in Udmurt *ken* 'daughter-in-law' ← Bulg.: chuvash *kin* < Turkic \**kelin* > Tatar *kilen* 'daughter-in-law';

–  $r$  in place of the Turkic \* $\delta$  in an intervocal position (> -j- / -d- in the majority of Turkic languages) > Chuv.  $r$  (compare the Turkic \**aḍaq* 'leg' > Tat. *ajaq*, chuvash *ura*), as in Udmurt *kĭrśi*, Mari *kārška* 'son-in-law' ← Bulg.: chuvash *kərü* < Turkic \**küḍägü* > Tatar *kejäü* 'son-in-law, bridegroom';

–  $j$  in place of the Turkic vocal in the beginning of a word > Chuv. *jV-*, as in Udmurt *jĭran*, Mari *jĕraŋ* 'boundary, furrow' ← Bulg.: chuvash *yĕraŋ* 'boundary, garden bed' < Turkic \**yRaŋ* > Tatar *yzarŋ* 'boundary.'

A significant number of borrowings from a Bulgarian language is also present in Hungarian; they had entered it even before the conquest by the Hungarians of the homeland, in the era of intensive contacts between the ancient Hungarians and the Turkic tribes in the steppes of the North Caucasus and the Black Sea area [Gombocz, 1912]. Although these borrowings are generally characterised by the same features as the Bulgarisms in the Permian and the Volga-Finnish languages, some of the differences can be identified between the language(s) of the Bulgarian group, with whom the Hungarians had contact, and the language of the Volga Bulgars, with whom the Permians and Volga Finns had contact. For instance, the above-mentioned double dialectic reflection of Turkic \* $j$ - as \* $\acute{s}$ - and as \* $\acute{c}$ - in the language of the Volga Bulgars corresponds to a double reflection of this sound in the source language of the Hungarian Bulgarisms, but if \* $j$ - > \* $\acute{s}$ - is reflected in the same way (Hung. *szél* 'wind' compare the Udm. *śil* in *śil'tel* 'storm' ← Bulg.: chuvash *śil* < Turkic \**jel* > Tatar *ĭil* 'wind'), then \* $j$ - > \* $\acute{c}$ - is reflected in Hungar-

ian as voiced \* $\check{j}$ - (Hung. *gyékény* 'reed, mat' compare the Udm. *śakan* 'matting' ← Bulg.: chuvash *čakan* < Turkic \**jäkän* > Tatar *ĭikän* 'reed')—that is, it corresponds apparently to an earlier stage of development of the Bulgarian language, prior to the devoicing of the initial stops and affricates. Common Turkic \* $\acute{c}$  had not yet passed into the source language of the Hungarian Bulgarisms into \* $\acute{s}$ , and is reflected as a hard (> Hung. *s*) or a soft (> Hung. *cs*) affricate like \* $\acute{c}$ . These and other features of the Hungarian Bulgarisms point to the more archaic and less advanced in the 'Chuvash' direction character of their source language as compared to the language of the Volga Bulgars, which in fact corresponds to the historical chronology: intensive contacts of the ancient Hungarians with the Bulgar-speaking Turks had occurred at least two or three centuries earlier than the contacts of the Bulgars with the languages of the Volga and Cis-Ural Regions.

Since the features found in the Bulgarisms of the Finno-Ugric languages are present in the modern Chuvash language, some researchers call them the 'Chuvash' borrowings. Although the source language of these borrowings belongs to the same group as the Chuvash language, it differs in this respect from the other Turkic languages, and the possibility of it being considered a direct ancestor of the Chuvash language is beyond any doubt. Nevertheless, it would still be more correct to use the term *Bulgarian* borrowings, thus distinguishing the words that had got into the Finno-Ugric languages from the Bulgarian language from more recent borrowings from Chuvash proper, which are plentiful in the Mari language as well as in the Mordovian and Udmurt dialects. Although the problem of the stratification of Bulgarian-Chuvash borrowings is far from being solved, it is possible to outline some preliminary criteria allowing more recent Chuvashisms to be distinguished from old Bulgarisms:

– In the Meadow and Eastern Mari language in old Bulgarisms, Turkic \* $q$ - > Chuvash  $\chi$ - is reflected as zero, in the Hill Mari language, as zero, or  $\chi$ - (this distinction also enables a stratigraphic boundary to be drawn, see below), for example, the Mari *oza*, (Г) *χoza*, Udm. *kužo*, Mord. *koža* 'host' ← Bulg.:

chuvash *χusa* 'host.' In the same way, in the above Mari *arəše*, (Γ) *ärəša*, Л 'debtor' ← Bulg.: chuvash *χirśś*/ *χirśə* 'poll tax, social charges'; in contrast to this, the Mari *karəz* 'tribute, yasak' must be regarded as a later borrowing from Chuvash proper chuvash *χirśś* / *χirśə*, and not from the Bulgarian language since Chuv. *χ*- is reflected here in the Meadow Mari as k-;

- n the Hungarian Bulgarisms there are no traces of the Chuvash prothesis v- in old words with a vocal anlaut, as in Hung. *ökör* 'bull, ox' ← Bulg.: chuvash *vəkkər* < Turkic *ökür* 'bull.' In the Mari language, Chuv. *vV*- < \**V*- is always represented as w-, and from this point of view the Mari Bulgarisms look like the later ones or the ones rearranged in the Chuvash manner in the course of ongoing Chuvash-Mari contacts. While in the Udmurt language it is possible to find, on the one hand, Udm. *uśse* 'day after tomorrow (on the third day)' ← Bulg.: chuvash *viśśə* < Turkic \**üč* > Tatar *öç* 'three,' and on the other hand, Udm. *veme* (also the Mari *wüme*) 'to help' ← Bulg.: chuvash *wime* < Turkic \**ümäg* > Tatar *öme* 'to help.'

In general, although the number of Bulgarian and Chuvash borrowings in the Mari language is extremely high (about 1,500) and by far exceeds the number of Bulgarisms in the Udmurt (up to 200), Mordovian and Komi (about 20) languages, this should not be explained by the longevity of the contacts but by their continuity and intensity, especially in the post-Bulgarian era. Bulgarisms began to enter the Mari language relatively recently (according to M. Räsänen, barely earlier than the 13th century): the words where Turkic \*q- > Chuv. *χ*- is reflected as zero were borrowed both by the Meadow and Hill Mari languages in the 13th century since they have words of Mongolian origin, for instance, the Mari *orol*, (Γ) *orolə* 'guard' ← Bulgar: chuvash *χural* ← Mong. *qarayul* 'guard, sentry,' at a later time, in the Mountain Mari language, under Chuvash influence, the sound x developed, and borrowings appeared like the Mari *ola*, (Γ) *χala* 'town' ← Bulgar: chuvash *χula* ← Arabic *qalʿa*—thus they should be dated not earlier than the 13–14th centuries (for the discussion on the stratification of the Bulgarisms in the

Mari language with the main arguments, see [Róna-Tas, 1982, pp. 768–771]).

Apparently, the Permic languages had come into contact with Bulgarian earlier, in the era of Permian unity (i.e., at least prior to the 13th century, and if we believe the glottochronological estimates, before the early 12th century [Belykh, 1999, p. 256]). A. Róna-Tas and K. Rédei suggested that the result of the proto-Permic-Bulgarian contacts (the beginning of which they dated, relying on purely extralinguistic considerations, to the 9th century; later on Róna-Tas tried to bring in linguistic arguments in favour of the dating to the 10th century, but his arguments proved to be untenable [Róna-Tas, 1982, p. 761]) should be considered only those Bulgarisms represented not only in the Udmurt and Komi-Permic languages, but also in the Komi-Zyryan dialects; they counted 19 such words with 3 more doubtful ones. In the Komi-Permic dialects these authors found 9 more correspondences to the Udmurt Bulgarisms with no parallels in the Komi-Zyryan dialects [Rédei, Róna-Tas, 1972; 1975]<sup>13</sup>. As has already been mentioned, in Udmurt there are up to two hundred Bulgarian and Chuvash borrowings, including the names of towns, which could have been relevant to the ancestors of the Udmurts not earlier than the latter half of the 14th century: Moscow (Udm. *Musko*) and Kazan (Udm. *Kuzon* - the latter, however, could possibly come from a Tatar source). Consequently, direct Udmurt-Chuvash contacts continued at least until the end of the 14th century.

Basically, the distribution pattern of the Bulgarian borrowings within the Permic languages corresponds to the presumed relationships outlined above between proto-Permic groups of the Komi and Udmurt ancestors and Volga Bulgaria: twenty or thirty borrowings, which entered into the Udmurt and Komi dialects, can be traced to the contacts of the Bulgars and residents of the Upper Kama-Cheptsas medieval settlements in the 9–13th centuries, and an abundance of borrowings in the Udmurt language suggests very close and longer ties with the Bulgars.

In the Mordovian languages Bulgarian borrowings are apparently not numerous: there are about twenty of them; however, this clearly has been studied insufficiently (compare a similar

assessment in [Róna-Tas, 1982 pp. 766–767]), and the main study is still represented by the old work of H. Paasonen [Paasonen, 1897], but nevertheless their origin from a Chuvash language is beyond any doubt, see, for example: Mord. M *ajêra* 'cool, cold' ← Bulg.: chuvash *ujar* < Turkic \**ajaR* > Tatar *ajaz*; That a Chuvash language is the source of the borrowing is not under doubt, but the presumption of Paasonen regarding the very old age of the borrowings (before the start of the transition \**a* > \**â* > *o* > *u* in Bulgarian) can hardly be tenable: and is a possible Moksha-Mordovian innovation<sup>14</sup>.

Turning to the cultural context of Bulgarian borrowings in the Volga-Finnish and Permic languages, it should, first of all, be noted that often all the languages of the region simultaneously borrowed the same Bulgarian words, and, furthermore, many of them were borrowed by Hungarian. So of the 31 words from the presumed proto-Permic Bulgarism (based on the maximal list by Rédei and Róna-Tas, including those reflected only in the Komi-Permic dialects, see above) around a half (15 to 18) of the words have also been borrowed by Mari, and 3 to 5 words have parallels in Mordovian and Hungarian. If we compared the lists of the Bulgarisms present only in the Udmurt and Mari languages, the number of correspondences would be even higher. This indirectly confirms that it is not just a random borrowing of individual words but a systemic cultural influence of the Bulgars on the Finno-Ugric peoples, the impact which has been more or less of the same type in different regions and in different periods. Therefore, while naming the thematic groups of the Bulgarian borrowings, one should bear in mind that most likely the cultural factors they denoted and of which the peoples of the region learnt when making contact with the Bulgars were borrowed, too.

So the Mari language abounds with Bulgarian-Chuvash borrowings, and the issue of the separation of one from the other has not been solved yet; the number of Bulgarisms in the Komi and Mordvin languages is small, so to illustrate the Bulgarian influence (which is older than Chuvash) on the languages and cultures of Finno-Ugric peoples, the details of the Udmurt language are best suited: the later Chuvash-Udmurt contacts were clearly marginal and did

not cover the entire array of the Udmurt language; therefore, here we have in most cases borrowings from the Bulgarian time or at the latest borrowings from the language of the Bulgarian type of the epoch of the Kazan Khanate. Since, as noted above, the impact of the Bulgarian language was of the same type for all of the Finno-Ugric languages, the picture obtained by the Udmurt data will be quite representative, and in general some of the features that are specific to the Udmurt Bulgarisms will be specified.

Common, technical, and craft terms are represented by a small number of not particularly expressive words (to save space, only the definitions of the Udmurt words are given): 'stolb' (pole), 'latun' (brass), 'kolodka' (block), 'tarelka' (plate), 'kocherga' (poker)—it is clearly in most crafts the influence was negligible. In the field of metallurgy borrowings are sporadic perhaps because by the time of the arrival of the Bulgars the industry was already at a high level of development (most metal names in the Udmurt language are of Iranian origin). However, the poor preservation of craft terminology could play a role: for example, pottery vocabulary in the Udmurt language is represented very poorly.

Some borrowings related to road transport are noticeable among the technical terminology: 'duga' (arc), 'sedlo' (saddle), 'dyshlo' (drawbar), 'telega' (cart), 'os' (axle), which is understandable in terms of the impact of the original steppe nomadic people on the inhabitants of the forest zone. On the other hand, however, the presence of a large group of Bulgarisms related to the field of spinning, weaving, and sewing requires special explanation: 'pryalka' (finial wheel), 'naver-shie pryalki' (finials), 'pryad' kudeli' (strand of tow), 'berdo' (loom), 'tcevk/shpulka' (bobbin), 'chelnok' (shuttle), 'nozhnitsy' (scissors), 'golovnoy platok' (headscarf), 'shyolk' (silk), 'lenta' (lace), 'zanaves' (curtain), 'tcinovka' (mat).

The set of borrowings in the area of agriculture is also of significance. In addition to the above-mentioned words related to animal transport, from cattle breeding there are only the words 'koza' (goat) (however, its source may be the Tatar language) and 'khlev' (barn) (the word is also of a quite obscure origin). All the rest is exclusively agricultural vocabulary. Moreover, if the term 'borozda/mezha' (groove/

boundary), 'postat' (postal), 'pole' (field) can still be attributed to the influence of land relations, the words 'vily' (prong), 'serp' (reaping hook), 'tok' (barnyard), 'snop' (bundle), 'soloma' (straw), 'stog' (stack) are nothing more than notations of the simple realities of peasant life. Apparently, the development of horticulture in the ancestors of the Udmurts is related to the influence of the Bulgars, as is evidenced by a set of vegetable crop names: 'redka' (radish), 'luk' (onion), 'kapusta' (cabbage), 'repa' (turnip) (the names of most other vegetables entered into Udmurt even later from the Tatar language, see details in [Napolskikh, 2001]).

In the area of sociopolitical vocabulary the following words are represented: 'gosudar' (ruler), 'guest,' 'host,' 'svaxa' (matchmaker), 'enemy,' 'witness,' 'wounded/disabled,' 'neighbour,' 'to help,' 'sbor' (tax/fee), 'money'. The virtual absence of special trade, political, and military terms is noteworthy. The borrowed kinship terminology is fairly rich, in particular the properties: 'older sister/aunt,' 'daughter-in-law,' 'brother/sister-in-law,' 'kinsman,' 'brother-in-law,' 'son-in-law,' 'kinsman by his wife,' 'step-father/stepmother.'

The impact of the Bulgars in the field of spiritual culture and religion is traced in two ways. On the one hand, the ancestors of the Udmurts borrowed terms used in their traditional folk religion: name of the spring holiday *Akashka*, the terms 'sin,' 'custom,' 'sacrifice to ancestors,' the root 'lekarstvo' (medicine), which forms the verb 'lečit' (to heal) and the name of the traditional healer ('lekar')—all these words are actually of Turkic (pre-Islamic) origin. On the other hand, among the Bulgarisms in the Udmurt language there are some Islamic terms derived ultimately from the Arabic and Persian language; however, in Udmurt they are not associated with religion but with time. First of all, this is the word 'week' (Udmurt *ar'ia* ~ Mari *ar'ia* 'nedelya' (week) ← Bulgar: chuvash *erne* ← Persian *ad'ine* 'pyatnica' (Friday) with a typical Bulgar transition \*-d- > -r-) and the traced names of days of the week such as the Udmurt *vir nunal* 'sreda' (Wednesday), literally 'day of blood'—middle Chuvash *jun kun* 'sreda' (Wednesday), literally 'day of blood'; connected with time are the Udmurt (dialect) terms *im'ir* 'vek' (age, lifetime) ← Bulgar: chuvash *ëmër* ←

Arabic *withumr* 'tzh' and *u'sse* 'poslezavtra' (the day after tomorrow) (see above). Perhaps the only contribution of the Bulgarian Islamic tradition to the Udmurt religious and mythological terminology is a character, sporadically occurring in spells *Ashapartna* [Vereshchagin, 2000, pp. 35–36] ← Bulgar: chuvash *ašapatman* 'tzh' ← Arabic *withaiša* 'Ajsha' + *fātima* 'Fatima' (the names of the wife and daughter of the Prophet Muhammad) [Ashmarin, I–II, p. 211]—the emergence of -r- in the place of Arabic -t- reflects apparently the same Bulgar sound development like \*-d-<sup>15</sup>.

Thus, the semantics of Bulgarisms of the Udmurt language fit the hypothesis of the intended place of the ancestors of the Udmurts in the population of Volga Bulgaria as agricultural people, who lived in quite autonomous peasant communities, whose relations with the state did not involve military or political activity and the proselytising activities of the Muslim clergy.

The Bulgar era has left its mark on Udmurt ethnonymy. We are talking about the origin of the self-designation of the Udmurt-language ethnographic group—*Besermyans*. The Besermyans living in northern Udmurtia, despite their small number and geographical dispersion, separate themselves very clearly from the surrounding peoples—the Udmurts and Tatars; they speak a dialect of the Udmurt language, which stands out in the system of Udmurt dialects, converging according to different attributes with the northern, southern, and in particular the peripherally-southern dialects [Kelmakov, 1998, pp. 286–304]. The traditional material culture of the Besermyans (primarily their traditional clothes) points to their extremely close relationship in the past with the Chuvashes [Belitser, 1947]. Therefore, it is obvious that in the 16–17th centuries the Besermyan ancestors, who lived along the Cheptsya River, were named in Russian documents for good reason '*Chuvasha*' [Teplyashina, 1968]. Some features of Besermyan spiritual culture can testify to their close contacts in the past with the Muslims and even of the past profession of Islam by their ancestors [Wichmann, 1893, pp. 167–168].

In the Russian written sources of the 14–15th centuries the word '*besermen/busurmen*' meant the Muslims. Under this name a

group of local people is repeatedly mentioned, which differ from *the Tatar and the Cheremis* (Mari), *and the Mordvins*, in particular some towns (Bulgar, Kazan, Djuketau). As under *the Tatars* the Rusessian sources of this time mean the Muslim population, in *besermens* (= 'Muslims') we should apparently see not a confessional but an ethnic group, most likely of some descendants of the Bulgars [Tikhomirov, 1964, pp. 51–56].

In addition to the Rusessian language, this name has been known since the 13th century in Hungarian (*böszörmény*), where it meant the Ismaili Muslims of Middle Asian origin, who settled in Hungary. Both the Rusessian and Hungarian words come ultimately from the Persian plural form of the word 'Muslim' *musulmān*. The emergence of *b-* instead of *\*m-* is explained by a standard Turkic consonantal shift *b- / m-*; the transition *\*l > r* is somewhat unusual, but in general it is not so rare in the Turkic languages of the Middle Asian area: compare, for example, dialect forms such as the Turkmen *musyrman*, Uighur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz *musurman* 'Muslims' [Etymological Dictionary of the Rusessian language, I, p. 252; EWU, p. 137]. It was in Middle Asia, on the territory of Khwarezm, where in the 13th century the country of *Bisermens* was visited by Giovanni da Pian del Carpine [Carpine, William of Rubruck,

pp. 50–51, 74]. The penetration of the Middle Asian name of Muslims into Volga Bulgaria is apparently connected with the circumstances of the adoption of Islam by the Bulgars. It has long been observed that the famous dispute of Ibn Fadlan with the Bulgars on the double pronunciation of *iqamah* by the local muezzin [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 134–136] points to the prevalence of the Middle Asian Hanafi rite in Bulgaria at the beginning of the 10th century. [Tatars, 2001 pp. 424–425]. In all likelihood, terms like *\*büsürmen* 'Muslims,' derived from the Persian *musulmān* in the Turkic languages of Middle Asia, in Khwarezm, entered Volga Bulgaria with Islam at least in the beginning of the 10th century and came to refer to a certain part of the local Muslim population, possibly adhering to the old traditions in rituals, being aware that they were the descendants of the 'first' Muslims in the country. In the 14–15th centuries this ethnic and confessional group was known by the Rusessians as the *Besermens*. Apparently, these Besermens had some kind of special relationship with an Old Udmurt group—ancestors of the Udmurt *Besermyans*, whereby they borrowed their endonym, some features of their material and spiritual culture, and began—like the Bulgarian Besermens—to distinguish themselves from the surrounding population who spoke the same language.

## Notes

1. Gothic forms of the accusative plural can be well reconstructed *-ns* in the names of different peoples. However, the *-s* endings in the names of localities from the Gothic grammar point of view are quite strange, as we would normally be expecting the dative case ending *-i* or *-n*. However, taking into consideration what is known about the unsystematic nature of borrowed words in Gothic, it is possible that here we are dealing with the frozen locative forms of *\*-s* of Baltic-Finnish-Mordovian languages. Or perhaps these forms really should be translated as genitive and understood approximately as the following: '[out of] aunuksovski—entire, [out of] abronski—measure...', etc. A passage of a copy following the words *\*Ragos stadjans* is currently uninterpretable.

2. To understand the placenames *Aunuks* - compare form *Aunus* (root *Aunukse-*, locative: *Aunuksessa*) 'city of Olonets, Olonetski kray (south-western Karelia)'.

3. It is not yet possible to link this name to any historically known placenames. It is most likely a case of the ancestral territory of the Merya people (the Kostroma Region, the Yaroslavl Region, the Ivanovo Region, the Vladimir Region of the Rusessian Federation), the target placename could have existed in the Merya language and disappeared with the last.

4. Here for the first time we come across the name of *Mordvinian* was used exoethnonim of Iranian origin that was never (as far as can be traced back) an original self-appellation from the people who called themselves the *Moksha* and *Erzya* (the word *Mordvinian* was used by them as a self-appellation when they spoke Russian, but if that word is used in Moksha and Erzya language it represents a late Russian borrowing. However, Jordan (more precisely, in the Gothic text that Jordan quotes) uses this ethnonym in its pure-stem form *mord(-ens* with Gothic ending Ass. Pl.), which is very close to the Middle Iranian source (compare Persian *mard* 'a person'), wherefrom this word entered the Gothic language and then finally made it to Old Russian. This exact route of borrowing (with possible unknown intermediates): Iranian → (?) → Gothic → (?) → Old Russian should be considered, especially

taking into consideration the lack of traces of this ethnonim in Turkic and Finno-Ugric languages. Apparently, this name became known in Byzantium thanks to the Goths or Slavs but not steppe-dwellers: compare *Mopdia* from Constantine Porphyrogenitus (the middle of the 10th century), mentioned as a reference (that is, known earlier and not written into the changing steppe context, but into the 'normal' traditional geographic nomenclature) geographical name for the localisation of a pachinakitski (Pecheneg) theme [Constantine Porphyrogenitus, pp. 37, 42]. As far as the word in question historically served as an external collective name for at least two nations, it cannot be excluded that the word *Mordens* from Jordan means not only Mordvin (Mordvinian) (Moksha and Erzya) itself but also other ethnic groups who were living in the Oka River basin and its tributaries (the region referred to in the copy and later seen in Russian sources under the name of *Meshchera*) in the beginning of A.D.

5. In *\*Ragos* (my conjecture for the Gothic text instead of *Rogas* from Jordan) in the Gothic text may see the Gen. Sing. form from *\*Raga*, which specifically reflects the pramord. *\*Raya* > mord. E *Rav*, *Ravo* 'Volga,' and thus confirms the etymology of Ernst Levi, who derived the Mordvin name of the Volga from an Iranian source like avest. *Raṇhā* 'the name of mythic river,' reflected also in the (Scythian?) name of the Volga *\*Pā* from Ptolemy (quote from: [Joki, 1973, p. 307]).

6. The Rusessian edition of al-Gharnati contains the form *ويسو* [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 72]. As demonstrated by V. Churakov [2001], publishers took it not from the manuscript but from the Arabic version of the Spanish edition of al-Gharnati. The author of the Spanish edition S. Dubler mentions in the notes that instead of being written in the text as *the visu people* (*ويسو*), the manuscript contains *Isu* (*ايسو*). By making such a conjecture, S. Dubler was apparently following common tradition, but inattentive use of his work resulted in the further preservation of this tradition: the form *the visu people* is used in al-Gharnati by almost all researchers with reference to Dubler (Zakholder, 1967, p. 61) or with reference to the Rusessian edition of al-Gharnati [Gökenjan, Zimonyi, 2001, p. 261].

7. Interestingly, the Arab-Persian sources report on trade with the *Yura* people with the initial help of *The Visu people* / *Isu* which might be the Vepsian Belozerye, a part of Novgorod lands (see the text for the identification issue). Later, in the 14th century, according to new information (that is in fact first-hand information, as there were Kipchaks from the Golden Horde and also likely Russians among the Mamluks) acquired in Mamluk Egypt from the words of sheikh Ala ad-Din ibn Nugman recorded by al-Umari [Tiesengauzen, 1884, pp. 240–241] through *Julman* (*جولمان*), in Egyptian pronunciation *Golman*, that is, in this case likely Novgorod, *Hólmgardrín* Scandinavian sagas [Polyak, 1964, pp. 35–37]. (On a different topic of al-Umari recorded based on the words of merchant Badreddin Hasan al-Rumi [Tiesengauzen, 1884, pp. 236–239], the word *Julman* probably already means two different centres: Novgorod and some country in Western Siberia.) Only through the mediation of the Rusessians in the contact of the Bulgars with the *Yura* can we explain the occurrence of the form *يوغرة* (for instance, according to V. Tiesenhauzen, al-Umari has the more correct form dated from the 14th century) *يور / يوره*, with the sound *g* in the first syllable and the loss of the sound like *\*g* in earlier sources: if that name was borrowed by the Bulgar language from the Perm language, one would have expected the Bulgar *\*jegra* / *\*jögra* (← pre-Perm *\*jógra* > Komi *jegra* 'the northern Mansi and Khanty,' Udmurtian *egra* 'Egra' is the name of the Udmurt dynasty [Napolskikh, 1998]) that would have in Arabic script looked like *يغره* (without the letter *vav* and with a clearly audible *g* in the word vocalised in the front). On the other hand, the reconstructed based on the *يور / يوره* Bulgar *\*jyura* (with rear vocalism, weak *\*y* and *\*u* in the second syllable) reflects not the Perm form but the Old Russian *Yugra* (which in turn borrowed from the pre-Perm *\*jógra*). The Old Russian origin of information about the *yura* is also indicated by the picturesque theme of 'dumb trade' repeated in almost all Arab-Persian messages about the *yura* people: here one cannot but notice parallels with the story about the 'dumb trade' of the *Yugra* with the hillmen from the famous 'story by Gyuryat Rogovich' in the Laurentian Chronicle [The Tale of the Bygone Years, I–II, p. 167].

8 This tale is about *Arsk princes* from Russian sources that are difficult to separate from *Arsk princes* of Kipchak origin, who since the middle of the 15th century resided in the village of Karino in the current Slobodki District in the Kirovsk Region within the Vyatka lands [Iskhakov, 1998, pp. 31–38] and controlled the Chepetsk Udmurt and Besermians until the second half of the 16th century [Luppov, 1999, pp. 28–29].

9. The similarity of Vymsk culture with the simultaneous Upper Kama Rodanovski culture is obvious, and this is usually explained by their common Ananinsk-Glyadenovsk sub-base, which considers the Vymsk culture as originating from the preceding Vanvizdinsk culture in the same area. However, archaeological continuity cannot be an argument in resolving matters of ethnic history: if desired, this kind of continuity can be proven for any two successive cultures. In this case, there are several circumstances of fundamental importance. First, the Vymsk culture arose not throughout the entire territory of Vanvizdinsk culture but mostly on the Lower and Middle Vychehda River in the regions closest to the Upper Kama River Region. Second, the noticeably high share of farming and cattle-breeding in the way of life of Vymsk culture bearers, in contrast to Vanvizdin people, can by no means be explained by a mere evolution of the economy of the local population: on the contrary, during the development of the international fur trade in both the south (Volga Bulgaria) and east (Novgorod), one would in fact expect a hunting specialisation. For this reason, it must be a case of the arrival of southern population-bearers of a different economic system to Vychehda. Third, the assumption about the division of ancestors of the Komi-Zyryans and Komi-Permyaks in the middle of the 1st millennium AD resulting from the archaeological hypothesis about Vymsk culture bearers, being direct descendants of the Vanvizdin people, totally conflicts with any possible linguistic dating. But this on no account means that the originators of Vanvizdin culture were not Permyaks from a linguistic point of view: they were likely speaking dialects of a Permian pre-language that did not leave behind any direct descendants (*para-Permian*).



10. In archaeological literature it is common to divide up the Chepetsk ('Polomsky-Chepetsk culture') and Upper Kama ('Rodanov culture') archaeological sites, which is explained mainly through different authorship and the various departmental and territorial/administrative identity of researchers who excavated these written sources (the Upper Kama—the Perm Region, Cheptsä—Udmurtia, and the Upper Kama Region was excavated mainly by staff from Perm and Udmurtia universities, and the Chepets, by the staff of the Udmurt Institute of History, Language, and Literature, etc.) From the historical point of view, the cultural and socio-economic community of these written sources is from a single area that existed in one limited period of time and was clearly associated with Volga Bulgaria. In all probability, this place was unquestionably inhabited by a single Perm population from an ethno-linguistic point of view.

11. It is possible to speak about the 'Udmurt' identity of the population of ancient Chepetsk towns because in Udmurt local folk tradition these ancient towns are definitely linked with the names of *Udmurt* bogatyrs, the kinds of names preserved in legends (*Idnakar—Idna*, *Dondykar—Dondy* etc. However, the most important aspect when resolving issues of ethnic history is that none of these names have a meaning in the Udmurt language). Yet this argument is still not satisfactory: it is common knowledge that the perception of heroes of other ethnic folk tradition origins as 'their own' heroes is an absolute and universal rule, compare for instance Attila-Atli in 'Older Eddie,' or Beowulf with the Anglo-Saxons, etc. The best equivalent to the Udmurt situation with bogatyrs from Chepetsk archaeological sites is most likely the perception of the classical and post-classical period heroes by the Greeks, including ethnically Dorian Greeks (Cretans or Spartiates) and even Macedonians!, from Homer's poems as 'their own,' even though it is clear that the historical prototypes of Agamemnon, Menelaus, and Nestor were city rulers in Achaean Greece, they spoke a language quite different from classical ancient Greek, and the cities were actually destroyed by an invasion of the Dorians, while most of the population was turned into helots.

12. The name of the territorial group of Udmurts who lived in the Cheptsä River and the basin of its tributaries in the 19th century *Vatka* is a borrowing from Russian: Rus. *The Vyatka River* (the name of the river and land, and later, the main city of the province and governorate (guberniya) → Udm. *Vatka* (reverse borrowing, which is often assumed in the local literature but absolutely impossible because of phonetic reasons). Thus, Udm. *Vatka udmurtjos* 'Chepetsk Udmurts-Vatka' actually means 'Vyatka Udmurts, Udmurts of Vyatka lands'.

13. Of course, just like other similar calculations, these are quite approximate: there are obviously inaccurate etymologies among the Bulgarisms mentioned in the aforementioned work. The criterion assumed by the authors cannot be taken as correct either as the lack of an equivalent to Udmurt Bulgarism in the Komi-Ziryan language can be explained by the disappearance of the corresponding word in the Ziryan language and its substitution by a Russian borrowing, etc. Despite all the 'buts' here, one important thing remaining significant is that the number of Bulgarisms in Komi-Ziryan dialects is much less than in Udmurt, while in Komi-Perm dialects they are at least one and a half times more frequent than in Komi-Ziryan dialects.

14. Generally speaking, researchers should be very careful using issues of vocalism as a criterion for the identification of a source and the age of borrowings. For instance, just as in the Mordvinian example, the presence in mountain Mari Bulgarisms but locally *o / u* (< \*a) in the Chuvash language (in meadow Mari, *o*) or mountain Mari *ch* instead of *a* (< \*ch) in the Chuvash language (in meadow Mari—*a*) is not necessarily evidence of how old the borrowings are because similar equivalents are also seen in words of Mongol origin, in Tatar borrowings, and even in Turkisms that never had the sounds \*a and \*ä [Róna-Tas, 1982, pp. 770–772]. The same goes for *u* in Turkisms in the Udmurt language instead of *tyu*. \*o and \*a: such an equivalent does not necessarily indicate a Chuvash-type source language because a phonetic development such as \*CoCa > CuCo existed in the Udmurt language and functioned even with old Russian borrowings.

15. Usually mentioned as a Bulgarism, the word *keremet* 'sacred grove and spirit-owner of the sacred grove' in the Udmurt language is in reality a Russian word, which even at the beginning of the 20th century was used by Udmurts when they were speaking Russian as an equivalent to the Udmurt word *lud* 'sacred grove and spirit-owner of the sacred grove,' while in Russian it meant the sacred grove of peoples living in the Volga Region (the Mari, Chuvash people, Udmurts) and was borrowed from the Chuvash or Mari *keremet* ← Bulg. ← Arab. *kirāmat* 'a miracle, supernatural power of something sacred.'

## CHAPTER 2

### The Early Bulgars in the Middle Volga Region

*Riza Bagautdinov, Fayaz Khuzin*

The issue of the pre-Bulgarian Turkisation of the Middle Volga Region existing in Soviet-Russian historiography at least since the 1920s has not yet been somehow satisfactorily solved because of a lack of reliable sources. Most researchers start the Turkisation process with the Bulgars, who penetrated into native Finno-Ugric territories in several waves for more than two centuries beginning from the end of the 7th century.

As is known, the Bulgars and other related tribes lived in the eastern European steppes prior to their movement to the Middle Volga Region. They probably came here from the east as a part of the Hunnish hordes [Pletnev, 1997, p. 31] and began to actively participate in political events in the 5th century [Gadlo, 1979, pp. 28, 48]. According to Zacharias Rhetor, a Syrian author, they even had their own towns [Pigulevskaya, 1941, p. 165]. At the end of the 6th century the Bulgars became dependent on the Western Turkic Khaganate, and after it disintegrated, Great Bulgaria headed by Kubrat was formed in the 30s of the 7th century on the eastern shores of the Black and Azov Seas, on the Taman peninsula and Kuban. The vast majority of the population of the state was nomadic, but remains of camps and even some traces of sedentary settlements belonging to the Bulgars, according to S. Pletneva, are being found by archaeologists everywhere [Pletneva, 1997, p. 37].

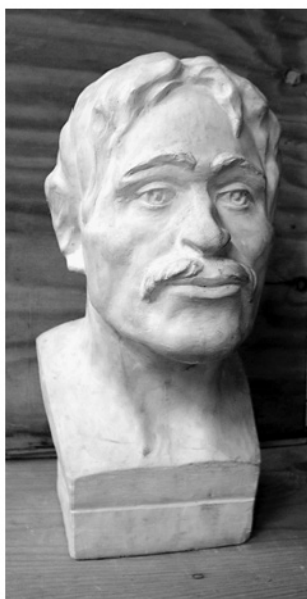
*The first wave of migration* to the Middle Volga Region is rightly associated by Samara archaeologists with the collapse of Kubrat's Great Bulgaria. In recent decades, Novinkovo mound and soil burial sites have been opened and studied in the territory of the Samara and Ulyanovsk Volga Region, which were left by Bulgarian migrants in the latter half of the 7–first half of the 8th centuries [Bagautdinov et al, 1998, pp. 150–172; Matveeva, 1997, pp.

85–100]. However, not all researchers have recognised 'Novinkovo residents' as Bulgars, but no one doubts that they belong to the Turkic (Turkic-speaking) population [Kazakov, 1999, p. 65].

According to archaeological materials, we can talk about two main alien population groups leaving two different types of burials: burial mounds with ripraps, earth mounds with pits and inlet burials.

A. Bogachev, based on a detailed analysis of a belt garniture on the broad background of Eurasian medieval antiquities, developed a chronological scale for Novinkovo monuments, and based on the latest findings of Samara archaeologists, managed to single out the Pereshchepina-Shilovka chronological horizon lying within the latter half of the 7th century [Bagautdinov et al, 1998, p. 161; Bogachev, 2000, p. 29].

Shilovka mounds are the major monument within the Pereshchepina-Shilovka chronological horizon. Several Novinkovo burial mounds date back to the same time. The leading Novinkovo mound researchers G. Matveeva and A. Bogachev unanimously recognise that oriental burials are the most ancient and date back to the latter half of the 7th century. A gold solidus found in the Shilovka mounds dates back to not later than the first quarter of the 7th century [Bagautdinov et al, 1998, p. 109]. A. Semenov believes that not more than 20 years passed from the issue of the solidus to its placement in burials and treasures in the 7–8th centuries. If this is correct, the Shilovka mounds date back to the middle of the 7th century. It is tempting to associate the appearance of monuments such as the Shilovka mounds with the departure of the Bulgars-Kutrigurs to the Middle Volga under the attack of the Khazars [Baranov, 1990, p. 87]. Our observations show that Saltov dishes in Novinkovo burials are found only in burials with a northern orientation. So the Novinkovo



Reconstruction sculpture of a man.  
Author: L. Yablonsky. the Samara Region.  
Burial site Malaya Ryazan I.  
Excavations by S. Zubov, 1996



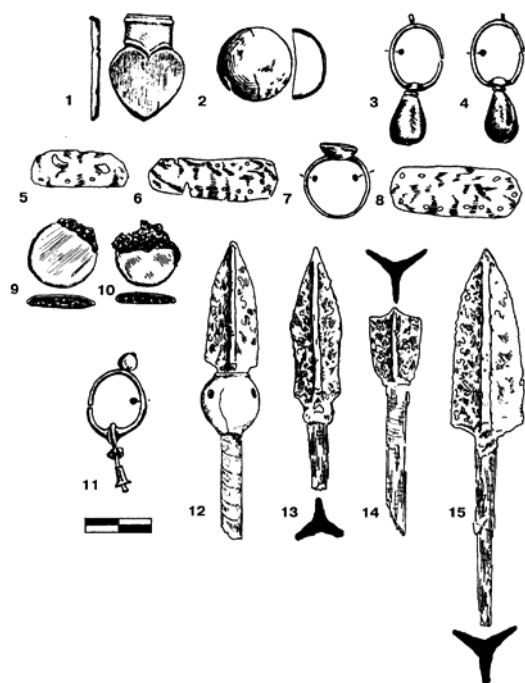
Reconstruction sculpture of a woman.  
Author: L. Yablonsky. the Samara Region.  
Burial site Malaya Ryazan I.  
Excavations by S. Zubov, 1996

monuments fall within the latter half of the 7–8th centuries.

However, except for the eastern and northern orientation of the burials, there are several burial sites with a western orientation in Samarskaya Luka, which are dated back by A. Bogachev to the turn of the 8–9th centuries. The above does not mean that the Novinkovo population disappeared in the 9th century. The interaction between the alien population and those who came from the Cis-Kama Region continued, and this has been documented by new materials. There was a Cis-Kama container in one of the mounds of the II Brusyany burial sites in an early Bulgarian burial. In 2000 near the Podgora settlement burials with Cis-Kama round dishes were opened, which date back to the 9th century according to the round non-closed temporal ring. Furthermore, some non-inventory Bulgarian burials in Samarskaya Luka with a western orientation can be connected with the penetration of Islam and date back to the 9th century. All of them are located outside the riprap; some of them are even slightly turned to the right side; the face is turned towards Mecca. This observation applies to both published mounds [Bagautdinov et al, 1998, p. 247, table XX-XV] and un-

published ones (R. Bagautdinov's excavations, 1998). Finally, it should be noted that not all people buried in the early Muslim necropolis of the townlet of Murom in Samarskaya Luka with a western and north-western orientation had their faces turned towards Mecca.

Let us now turn to the second group of the early Bulgarian population who left earth mounds with and without pits. Pits are not necessarily an ethnic indicator. Those people buried under mounds with pits could belong to the Bulgarian-Khazar-Alan-Ugric nobility. It is important for us that many Turkic people came to the Middle Volga Region in the latter half of the 7th century. The second group of the early Bulgarian population, who left the Uren burials, appeared much later. Judging by the Saltov dishes, we can say that that happened not earlier than in the middle of the 8th century, which is about 50 years after the first wave. The fact that mounds with ditches belonged to the Turkic, most likely early Bulgarian population, is confirmed by: 1) horse bones in the tombs in the ancient surface and in the ditches, 2) the addition of coal in the central tombs, 3) most burials are pits, 4) Saltov dishes that are comparable with the early Bulgarian ones.



Grave goods of burial sites Uren II  
and Staromaynski I.

1–Uren II (2/2); 2, 3–Uren II (4/2);  
4–Uren II (4/1); 5, 6–Uren II (4/1);  
7–15–Staromaynski I (1/1)

Attention should be paid to the conclusion of the anthropologist N. Rud made by her as a result of a study of skulls found in the Novinkovo II burial site. She believes that the 'population that left this burial site, according to the complex of craniological and odontologic features, was included in the habitat of the Bulgarian nomad tribes of the Volga and the Don Regions and was mixed in terms of its anthropological structure' [Rud, 1987, p. 141].

So our present level of knowledge allows us to suggest that the population that left earth mounds with pits existed since the latter half of the 7th century to the middle of the 8th century and mixed with the Volga Bulgarian population that was being formed at that time. It is obvious that the absence of evidence of mixing with the local population in the early Bulgarian antiquities points to the arrival of the new population to the Middle Volga rather than its foreignness.

The origin of the population who left Novinkovo monuments is found in the east, more precisely in Altai, where their earlier counter-

parts are located [Bagautdinov et al., 1998, p. 170]. In particular, there are mounds with stone ripraps in Altai, where soldiers are buried with their heads to the east. These complexes date back to the 6–7th centuries [Archaeology of the USSR, 1981, p. 32]. As they were moving to the west, the ancient Turks began making (in Middle Asia) kerf burials, and under the influence of the Samoyedic peoples—cremations [Archaeology of the USSR, 1981, p. 33]. All these features of the burial ceremony are also observed in the Middle Volga Region.

The earth mounds with pits recently opened in the Middle Volga Region have raised many questions. A long search for Khazar antiquities and the mass appearance of mounds with pits on the territory of the Lower Don, the Volga-Don interfluvium, and the Lower Volga Region [Ivanov et al., 2000, p. 81] made some authors think that such mounds with pits were Khazar [Semenov, 1978, 1991; Kazakov, 1999, et al.]. However, one cannot answer this question for sure. Everybody understands that not ordinary commoners were buried at the centre of the earth mounds with pits (the presence of a ditch suggests a higher social status of the person buried). But what is not clear is why they should only be Khazars. After all, the nobility of the Khazar Khaganate and the Great Bulgaria was multi-ethnic. Rectangular platforms surrounded by ditches and ramparts or stones served as memorable and funerary temples in various Turkic tribes. In this case, not only Khazar military burials could be located there.

The issue of the origin of different groups of the early Bulgarian population remain problematic. It seems that along with the southern regions of Eastern Europe, there was some connection with the Asian cattle-breeding population, in particular, with the Altai tribes. In addition to the similarities of the burial ceremony and many categories of items, such an assumption can be made on the basis of the anthropological data of the early Bulgars. Despite the fact that in the 8–9th centuries this generally was the Caucasoid population with very smooth Mongoloid traits [Akimova, 1964], Novinkovo skulls included several specimens with a Mongoloid admixture, which is most evident among females [Gazimzyanov, 1995].

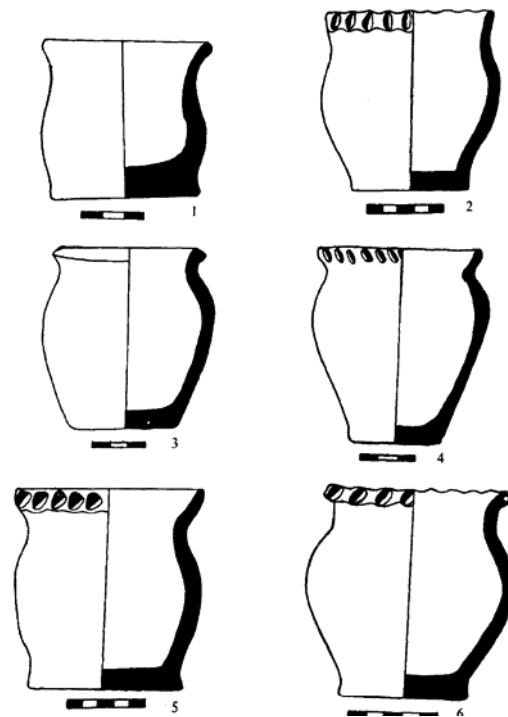
G. Matveeva is clearly right that the Novinkovo tribes migrated to the Middle Volga Region simultaneously with the movement of the Asparukh-headed Bulgarian horde to the Danube [Matveeva, 1997, p. 42]. A similar view was expressed by S. Pletneva [1997, p. 42].

*The second wave of Bulgar migration* of the Bulgars from the Don Region to the Middle Volga Region began in the middle of the 8th century.

As is known, upon the collapse of Great Bulgaria, most of the Bulgars ended up part of the Khazar Khanate, which is archaeologically represented by the Saltovo-Mayaki culture. According to S. Pletneva, the Khazars themselves traditionally remained nomads until the death of the state, but other ethnic groups, including the Bulgars, Alans, and Savirs, who were part of the Khaganate, were semi-settled or fully settled [Pletneva, 1982, p. 99]. In the 8–9th centuries they had towns and fortresses, and they lived not in portable yurts but in semi-dugouts and stationary yurt-shaped dwellings [Flerov, 1996] and were engaged in agriculture and viticulture, various types of crafts and trade, including foreign trade [Novoseltsev, 1990]. As S. Pletneva stresses, 'the general settled nature of the Khaganate population and primarily the agricultural nature of its economy' have already been proven [Pletneva, 2000, p. 207].

Upon the major defeat of the Khazar Khanate in a battle with the Arabs in 737, a large part of the Bulgars moved to the Middle Volga Region [Khalikov, 1989, p. 74]. Their monuments dating back to the middle of the 8–first half of the 9th centuries are represented by the Bolshiye Tarkhany I and II, the Kaybely, the Uren, and some other burial sites located in the Republic of Tatarstan, the Ulyanovsk and Samara Regions [Kazakov, 1992].

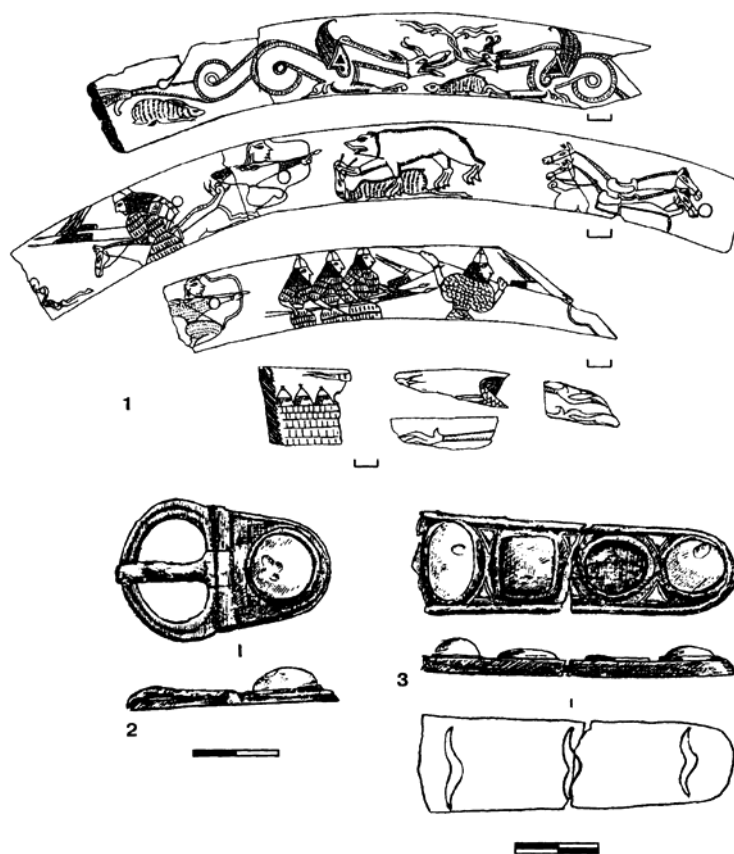
The burial ceremony of the population is characterised by the following features: the deceased were buried in deep (70–160 cm) rectangular pits with steep walls, sometimes with a collar and kerf. The skeletons lie stretched with their heads to the west, often with a small seasonal deviation to the north or south. There are traces of fire worship in the form of small pieces of coal or burnt wood found in the ground filling the burial pits. A characteristic detail of the rite lies in putting the meat of domestic



Brown ware from the Shilovsk burial site,  
barrow 1, grave 2

animals into the grave—horse, sheep, and cow bones were found in many graves. Attention should be paid to the small number of complexes made of skulls and horse leg bones usually put at the feet of the deceased. Along with the horse bones, some parts of the harness were placed there: the bit, stirrup, and girth buckles. This element of the funeral rite is totally alien to the Bulgars, and it is believed that they borrowed it from the neighbouring Ugrian tribes.

Comparatively few objects were placed in graves, but they are impressive and diverse. Iron knives, flint items (steel for striking sparks, flint stones, tubes for tinder) and weapons (arrowheads, spears, swords, battle axes, parts of quivers) were typically found in male graves. Clay spindle whorl usually lying to the left of the feet or near to the hands, iron needles with remnants of wooden cases, ornaments, and suit components (beads from necklaces, earrings, chest and waist pendants, cover plates for belts, rings, and bracelets) usually accompanied female graves. In some burials there were amulets made of predators' teeth, sheep astragals, and fish vertebrae.



Cover plates and components of a belt. Shilovsk burial site, barrow 1, grave 2

Clay dishes were found in many graves. Wide-bottom pitchers with a squat body, black and dark gray jugs and mugs, made of well-levigated clay with fine sand and plants burnt during the baking process were the most typical forms of round containers. The surface of most of the containers is covered with glossing. The moulded ceramics include flat-bottomed pots and a small group of round-bottom bowls, which were made, however, by the foreigners who had come from the north-east of the Upper Kama and Cis-Urals Regions.

The burial ceremony and items found in the Bolshiye Tarkhany burial sites are very similar to the Saltovo-Mayaki antiquities of South-East Europe. The Saltovo-Mayaki archaeological culture established in the East-European steppes was left by the population of the Khazar Khaganate—the Bulgars, Alans, Sav-

irs, and other Turkic-speaking peoples [Pletneva, 1967, p. 188]. The Bulgars themselves left numerous monuments located in the Don and Azov Sea Regions, in the North Caucasus and Crimea, on the Dniester and Danube Rivers. The Middle Volga version of the Saltovo-Mayaki culture, whose early monuments are represented by Bolshiye Tarkhany burial sites, is also ethnically associated with the Bulgars, who were somehow culturally influenced by the Cis-Kama and Cis-Ural (Finno-Ugric) population.

At the time under review there were nomadic tribes in the Middle Volga and Lower Kama Regions who were ethnically different from the Turkic-speaking Bulgars. In particular, there is the Bolshiye Tigany burial site left by early Hungarians moving to Pannonia [Khalikova, Khalikov, 1981; Fodor, 1982].

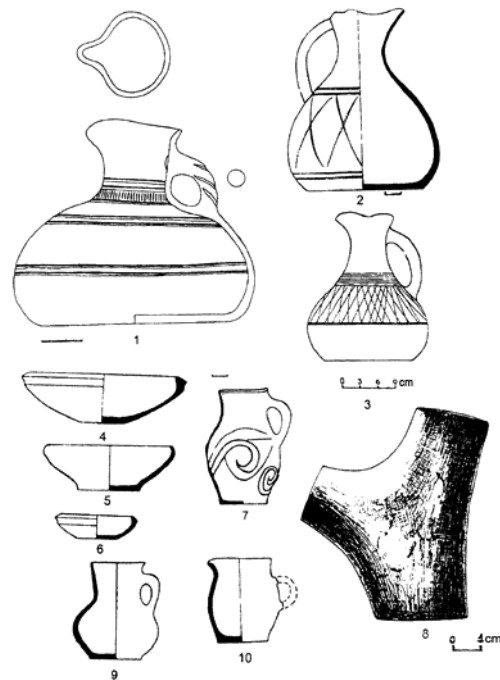
This burial site has rectangular graves, which are 50–95 cm deep, with the heads oriented primarily to the west. Under the bones there are remainders of wooden frameworks, pieces of felt, coarse cloth, and bark. The fire cult can be traced in the form of the additions of coal and ash in the soil filling the graves.

Many burials were accompanied by complexes made of skulls, leg bones, and the tail part of the horse skeleton. By the way, burials with horse bones in the above Bolshiye Tarkhany burial site are considered by researchers as the result of interaction between the early Bulgars with the Bolshiye Tigany population. However, the most impressive feature of the funeral rite of the Bolshiye Tigany population lies in the use of facial coverings made of fabric or leather with silver plates sewn on them in the place of eyes. This aspect of the rite is clearly connected with the Ugrian world and finds parallels in the ancient Hungarian monuments on the Danube River [Kazakov, 1968].

The richness and originality of the Bolshiye Tigany burials are well expressed in the range of items found there. Men's graves often contained sabres in luxuriously decorated sheathe, arrow tips, bow and quiver parts, flint objects, and horse harness. Women's graves contained rich adornments located as they were worn while living: remainders of a headdress decorated with silver plates, necklaces made of beads and metal pendants, earrings, bracelets and rings, belt sets with silver plates, buckles and belt tips.

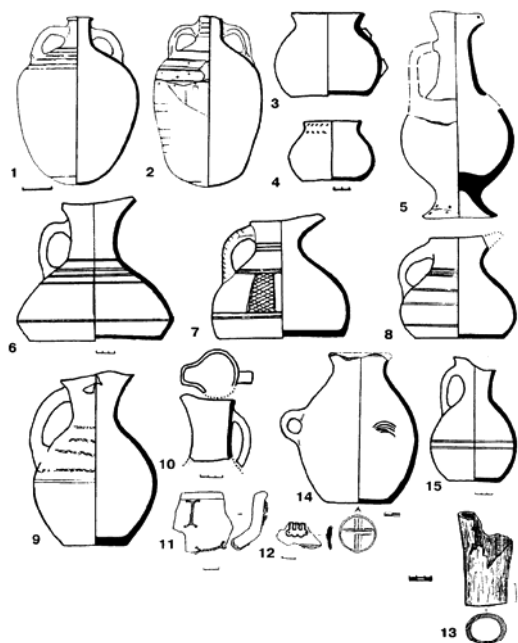
The small clay dishes, which were usually put at the head of the buried, are quite unique. Containers, primarily pot-shaped with a cylindrical mouth and rounded bottom, were made by hand from clay with sand or organic matter. They are decorated with a sophisticated and compositionally complex ornament of thin lines, obliquely set small-combed stamp prints, short cuts on the neck and the upper half of the body. Such ceramics were widespread in the monuments of the Kushnarenko culture of the Southern Urals.

This population was in close contact with the Bulgars and entered into a single ethnic and cultural association with them, from which the Volga Bulgarian nationality was formed.



Molded vessels from the grave and bank of the Rozhdestvenski III (1, 4, 6) and Novinkovski II (2, 3, 5) burial sites

*The third wave of Bulgar migration* from the territory of the Khazar Khaganate occurred in the latter half in the 9th century. It was connected with the adoption of the Jewish religion in the Khazar Khaganate, which caused a storm of indignation among the Bulgarian population. This led to unrest in the Kaganate, which was the impetus for new migrations [Pletneva, 1997, pp. 45–46]. The model monuments of the Bulgars of that time included the Tankeyevka, Tetyushi, Kokryat, Staraya Mayna, and other burial sites, some of which were functioning in the 10th century. The first one belongs to the largest early medieval necropolises of Eastern Europe. The burial ceremony and the rich range of items of the Tankeyevka population are largely close to those of the Bolshiye Tarkhany and Bolshiye Tigany but in some cases are significantly different from them. One such feature, which is not typical of the actual Bulgars, lies in the commemorative complexes—the remainders of ritual sacrifice found outside the graves in the upper layers of the grave soil or between the grave space. They primarily represent a pile



Brown ware. Shilovsk burial site.  
1–5, 10–12—barrow 2, grave 2;  
6–9—barrow 1, grave 2

of animal bones, mainly horse skulls and leg bones, accompanied by moulded round-bottom or flat-bottom containers. As in the Bolshiye Ti-gany burial site, there were masks on the faces of the deceased made of thin silver sheets with slits for the eyes and mouth, which were sewn on a silk cloth.

The inventory of the Tankeyevka burial site also has its own specific traits, which are mainly expressed in ceramics that differed from the Saltovo-Mayaki (Bulgarian) ceramics. However, Saltov glazed pitchers and pods are often found there, but most of the containers are still characteristic of the monuments of the Polom, Lomovatovo, and early Rodanovo cultures of the Upper Kama, Cheptsy and, of course, are the result of the penetration into the Volga and Kama Regions of the Finno-Ugric, though strongly Turkicised, population from these areas. These ceramics are represented by wide-mouth round-bottom moulded containers made in the form of pots and cups, decorated with a string, a comb lattice-lace ornamentation along the neck and collar, cutting and impressions along the top edge. We should also note the presence of items (primarily ceramics) related to the Kushnarenkovo population whose mon-

uments, as was noted above, occupied vast expanses of the forest-steppe Volga-Ural Region at that time. According to researchers, the left bank of the Volga River, where the Tankeyevka burial site is located, represents the western periphery of the Kushnarenkovo (ancient Hungarian) community, to where this population group penetrated after the Imenkovo population had left it at the end of the 7th century.

So the materials of the Tankeyevka burial sites are a reflection of the complex ethnic and genetic processes that took place in the lands of the early Bulgar state, which was being formed in the 9th century, and finally led to the formation of the Volga Bulgarian nationality.

The last *the fourth migration* of the Bulgars and Cis-Kama and Cis-Ural population to the Middle Volga Region took place at the end of the 9–the beginning of the 10th centuries—that is, at the time of the transition from the early Bulgarian period to the pre-Mongol one. The reason for the Bulgar migration was a powerful attack on the Khazar Khaganate by new nomads, primarily the Pechenegs, who had come from the east. S. Pletneva writes in this regard: 'Most of the non-fortified steppe settlements and even some towns were destroyed and burnt by the Pechenegs at the beginning of the 10th century... At the beginning of the 10th century the population that inhabited the Don basin steppes again rose and began to leave them in large groups. They went along well-trodden roads: to the Danube, to the forest-steppes, to forested Slavic territories (to the upper reaches of the Don), and to the Volga-Kama Region. All this is confirmed primarily by archaeological findings. New Bulgarian settlements appeared in the Danube Region that date back to the 10th century and are similar to the Don and Crimean settlements of that time. Finally, according to archaeologists, the Bulgarian migration wave of the 10th century is well traced in the Bulgar state on the Volga that had already been formed by that time. So this was the fourth and last wave of Bulgarian and related ethnic groups in Eastern Europe' [Pletneva, 1997, pp. 48–49].

The last migration wave further increased the proportion of Bulgars among the ethnically diverse population of the state being formed and contributed to the growth of their political and cultural influence on the Finno-Ugric



population of the region. Archaeologists attribute the appearance of the first permanent settlements in the Volga Bulgaria to these new settlers, mainly with the Bulgars who migrated there here under Pecheneg pressure. The ceramics of the two ethnic and cultural groups is an unchanged element of the material culture of the early ancient settlements and towns that appeared at the beginning of the 10th century. One of them—flat-bottom pots made of chamotte and sand dough with a wavy ornament and grooving along the body, notches along the edge—is typical of the steppe and forest-steppe versions of the Saltovo-Mayaki culture of the Don and Azov Sea Regions. The other—round-bottom containers with a cylindrical neck made of shell dough and decorated with a string-and-comb ornament—is characteristic of the Ugrian population of the Upper Cis-Kama, Middle Trans-Urals, and North Bashkortostan Regions, which was Turkicised to a considerable degree. These materials again demonstrate the formation and development of the Volga Bulgarian nation in the process of ethnic integration, the constantly expanding contacts, and mutual influence that took place in the vast Volga-Kama Region from the latter half of the 7th century.

Taking into account the newly found materials, it is deemed necessary to briefly touch upon the issue of the Bulgar religion. Prior to the adoption of Islam, Tengrism was clearly the most widespread religion among them. But as the Bulgars' ancestors were settling in Europe, including the Caucasus, they were inevitably subject to cultural influence from the Byzantine Empire. In 555 Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor wrote about the peoples who lived to the north of Derbent that they 'ceased to write in their own language 20 years ago or more' [Pigulevskaya, 1941, p. 84]. The Bulgars-Barsils lived to the north of Derbent. Christian missionaries built churches and clearly had their flock among the 'Huns.' Apparently, Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor meant Kardost the bishop, who preached in the Caucasus for seven years and even issued a Holy Writ in the 'Hun' language [Pigulevskaya, 1941, p. 86]. A cross was cut in a wall in one of the Dagestani catacombs (Chir-Yurt). The remains of two small Christian churches were also found there, and some crosses were found in the mounds; a gold one and several

ceramic ones [Magomedov, 1983, p. 165, Fig. 66]. Christianity was clearly spread among the Bulgarian nobility as well. Along with two gold rings with the inscriptions 'Kubrat Patrician' and 'Bat Organ Patrician,' the 'treasure' found in Malaya Pereshchepina included a paten—a container for religious service. At first, golden crosses were torn off the container but then adapted to serve their purpose, 'for which crosses were soldered to it in a barbaric workshop' [Lurie, 1996, p. 37].

The Shilovka mounds belong to the same cultural and chronological horizon as the Malaya Pereshchepina complex. In this regard, it is interesting that we see Christian symbols in Shilovka—crosses on coins and a cross in an insert made of rock crystal. So we can presume that some of the early Bulgarian noblemen, including those who came to the Middle Volga Region, were at least familiar with Christianity.

The early Bulgars knew about Islam firsthand as well. Since the beginning of the 8th century the Arabs periodically invaded Khazaria, forcing the population to move to the north. Marwan's ride of 737 and the subsequent surrender forced the Khagan to accept the Muslim preacher [Gumilyov, 1993, p. 61]. Islam penetrated into Khazaria at least at the beginning of the 8th century. Since early Bulgarian times Volga Bulgaria had close trade and cultural relations with the Islamic Middle Asia, which was noted by Ibn Rustah, who said that the Bulgars had mosques and madrasahs even before the arrival of the Baghdad embassy. It is clear that the Middle Asian form of Islam rooted itself among the Volga Bulgars to such an extent that the Bulgars immediately returned to the original form of teaching upon the adoption of the Shafi'i, Baghdad teaching, which was characterised by one ikama. It is important for us that Islam had deeply rooted itself in the Middle Volga Region already by the beginning of the 10th century. Clearly, the findings of skeletons with their heads oriented to the west or the north-west in the 'canonical' Islamic position were a material embodiment of this influence. There are many Muslim graves among those of the Tankeyevka and Tetyushi burial sites of the early Bulgarian period [Kazakov, 1992, pp. 89, 103]. In our opinion, there are early Islamic burials in Novinkovo as well.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Bulgar State: formation, territory, and population

#### 1. The Formation of the Bulgar State

*Iskander Izmaylov*

When discussing the initial stage in the formation of the Bulgar State, it is necessary to take into account two important circumstances: the Bulgars, who came to the Middle Volga Region while running away from the Khazar invasion, had long-standing traditions of sovereignty from pre-Turkic times, and the ethno-cultural and ethnopolitical situation in the latter half of the 1st millennium in the Middle Volga Region was quite complicated. These circumstances not only played an important role in the Bulgar's rise but also became key factors in the formation of a new state on the Volga's banks.

The Bulgar tribes, most likely headed by Kotrags living on the right bank of the Don, by resettling to the Middle Volga Region in the late 7th century, ended up being surrounded by the ethnically close Turkic population that had arrived there slightly earlier [Hening, 1989, p. 13].

The archaeological proof of the Bulgars' re-settlement to the Volga-Kama Region can be found in the Burakovo burial site, and the Shilovo, Brusyanka, and Novinskovo burial sites with analogous sites in the monuments of the Northern Black Sea Region (Malaya Pereshchepina) and Bulgaria (Madara) [Bagautdinov and others, 1998, pp. 150–164]. Especially prominent is the Burakovo burial site, which possesses all the same features as burial sites of Kubrat himself or those of his close heirs: in both cases it is an individual burial, most likely carried out by the ritual of cremation, and the tomb was discovered with a rich burial stock, including weapon (swords and daggers), caparisons (irons, a bridle with precious covers), ceremonial belts with golden garniture, and other decorations. All this leads to the idea that we are dealing with the same type of phenomena, and thus the chiefs of the Bulgars that came to the Volga had quite a high social status and were

probably even descendants of Kubrat. However, in the Middle Volga Region they could not immediately take the leading position.

Initially, the Bulgars occupied the territory along the Volga from the Samara Bend to the Kama estuary by forcing out or conquering the Balto-Slavic (?) tribes (Imenkovo culture). In the Eastern Trans-Kama Region and Western Cis-Urals there are Ugrian tribes (bearers of the Kushnarenkovo and Karayakupovo culture) [Hening, Khalikov, 1964, p. 129 ff.; Khalikov, 1989, pp. 71–87]. In the steppes of the Transvolga Region and Southern Ural researchers localise the legendary ancestral homeland of the Hungarians—'Magna Hungaria' [Khalikova, 1975; 1976; Kristo, 1996, pp. 31–41, 85–95; Ivanov, 1999]. This community was not an ethnopolitical unity—it was a conglomerate of tribal and clan unions.

The territory of the Middle Volga Region had been occupied by the Oghur tribes even earlier. Judging by the information from the writings of Arab and Persian authors, among them were groups of Bersuls (Barsils), Esegels, and other smaller tribal groups,—the Suvars (Savirs) and Baranjars. This means that the population of future Volga Bulgaria included Alano-Khazar (Baranjars), Turkic-Oghur (Savirs/Suvars), and Middle Asian (Esegels/Chigils) components in addition to the Bulgars [Golden, 1980, pp. 86–89]. In other words, at the initial stage of the formation of the Bulgar State the proper Bulgars, who had resettled to the Middle Volga Region, faced groups of Oghur-Turkic tribes and started a struggle against them for hegemony. As a result of the various military and political collisions during the latter half of the 9th century, there were three strong ethnopolitical unions:—Bulgars, Esegels, and Bersuls. It was predominately between these groups where there was a struggle for hegemony.

By the early 10th century the Bulgars had managed to win and conquer or integrate the entire population of the Middle Volga Region with allied relations. It is also possible that in this struggle the Bulgars were supported by the Khazars, for whom it was easier to lean upon Bulgar relatives in order to conquer the Volga Region. Nevertheless, in the early 10th century, when the written sources started recording information on the situation in the Middle Volga Region, the Bulgars were already a hegemonic tribe and a uniting centre for the entire population of the region. The name of the ruler who reigned as this union was established is unknown. However, at the time of the father of Almysh Shilka it was a well-known fact. The ruler of this new Bulgar el that united all the nations of the Middle Volga Region under Bulgar rule had a title called 'elteber,' which displays its dependence on the Khazar Khagan [Smirnova, 1981, pp. 248–251]. The nature of this ethno-political union can only be imagined, but according to structure and typology it was obviously close to the Turkic states of Eastern Europe. In other words, the Bulgars, as a tribal group or clan, became a hegemonic tribe and formed the military-serving elite of society. The populations of other ethno-tribal groups became dependent after being included in the Bulgar el. Even the old tribal aristocracy was a level below the Bulgar nobility and was likely to be a part of the elite only by becoming relatives with the Bulgars. From that moment on, belonging to the Bulgar clan most likely meant having a higher social status.

By the early 10th century the Bulgar state was going through a period of intensive growth and consolidation of its economic, military, and political power. This process was also urged on by external factors. One of them was the establishment and operation of the Great Volga Route.

The Middle Volga Region was located just to the side of the intensively developing civilisations of Asia and Europe for many centuries. The long-lasting and slow-paced life of its population was only sporadically interrupted with the resettlement of new tribes and became more varied through trading contacts with more developed southern nations that brought the echo of other cultures with them. However, in the late 9th century the traditional history of the Volga Region as the periphery of civilisation shattered and led to an entirely new political, cultural, and historical situation. A state was born, a series of urban

settlements were built, regular trading contacts with the countries of Europe and Asia were established, and Islam became the state religion. In other words, the Middle Volga Region became an integral part of the cultural oecumene.

The impulse and catalyst for these social changes in Bulgar society were the Vikings' military and trade campaigns. The term 'Vikings' is most strongly associated with the troops of courageous warriors prowling seas and rivers in their ships and committing daring raids in European lands. But at the same time, the Viking Age in Northern and Eastern Europe is not strictly limited to the history of wars and raids. It should be mentioned that in this exact period of the history of many nations was an abundance of intensive processes forming medieval society: cities were born and developed, writing systems appeared, the world's religions took their leading positions, and vast trading contacts were established. The world had never been so tightly connected with trading routes as it was in the 9–10th centuries when the exchange of goods involved nearly all the nations from England in the west to China in the east, and from the Kama River Region in the north to India in the south. It is enough to recall this period's numerous buried treasures, including hundreds and thousands of coins that define the lines of the trading routes. There was a particularly tight connection between the countries of Northern and Eastern Europe, which preserved their own traditions as well as absorbed the new cultural elements. At that time, similar items, decorations, ornamental motives, and compositions that were particularly significant in the formation of a military way of life and determination of the social prestige of their owner were widespread from the Scandinavian coast to Bulgaria. Not all the innovations of that period can be directly related to the presence of the Scandinavian Vikings, but their role in spreading new cultural elements and setting up regular contact between different parts of Europe, especially during its initial stages, is very important.

For Volga Bulgaria as well as other regions of Northern and Eastern Europe, the Viking Age was a period of state formation, a time when a new ethnos was born, and cities were developing. Bulgar-Scandinavian relations were established in the context of the collapse of congeneric relations and the creation of a new social organism. For a long time, the influence of the

Baltic-Volga artery upon history was regarded inclusively for its trade significance or as a field of ethnocultural contact. Only relatively recently, owing to the works of A. Kirpichniyov, G. Lebedev, V. Bulkin, V. Petrukhin, and others, more attention has been given to the colossal significance it had on the formation of states and new ethnopolitical unions.

Inclusion in large-scale international trade became a powerful source of wealth for the nobility and established the grounds for its further segregation from the tribe. The needs for local goods to sell made the role of tributes more important: the quantity of goods to sell had now reached a greater scale than what was necessary for internal consumption. The increase of tributes lead to the complication of the potestary structures in the region and, respectively, to the strengthening of central power.

The Baltic-Volga artery was not just a road for merchant caravans. Alongside its banks new settlements serving travellers popped up, along with points controlling dangerous parts of the water and places to trade with locals (markets), etc. The route was developed with a complicated infrastructure, including a system of related complexes, the number and functional diversity of which gradually increased with time [Kirpichnikov, 2001, p. 12 ff.]. The area that to a greater or lesser degree was involved in the operation of the trade route where food and, if possible, other goods purchased through trade were supplied by was expanding at the same time. The route was concentrating and uniting surrounding areas and included the greater region into its area of focus—it was playing a consolidating role.

The flow of the majority of economic and social processes in this area was determined by the requirements of distant trade or promoted by trade. Involvement in trade and especially the possibility of seizing control over certain parts of the trade route attracted the upper crust of the local community with get-rich-quick opportunities. On the one hand, this led to the acceleration of income inequality and social differentiation of both society in general and among noblemen, which resulted in the hierarchisation of the nobility, but on the other hand,—forced the nobility to move to the critical points of the route and concentrate in the

already established or newly-established localities, which in turn were becoming not only trade and craft centres but also administrative centres. The areas around trade routes were marked by the formation of prerequisites for more intense socio-political development than in neighbouring areas, which in some cases were inhabited by the same ethnic groups but without links to the trade route.

Hoard of Arabic silver coins dating from the 9th century represent an important piece of evidence of the formation and territorial expansion of the Baltic-Volga Route area. They were found mostly along the rivers that formed the Baltic-Volga Route, in the area from Yaroslavl to the Gulf of Finland, as well as in the main centres along the way (in Ladoga, Timirev) or close to them. Thus, they describe the same region that is documented in written sources.

No treasure was ever found down the Volga River lower than Yaroslavl, but the chain formed by it to the south along the Volga-Oka interfluvium area and concentrations in Upper Podonye highlight the main direction of movement of east silver—the Don. The only exception is a hoard of 150 dirhems found near the village of Staroye Almetyevo ('Elmed') near Bilyar, which contains two coins with graffiti. One of them is exactly the same as the Scandinavian benevolent rune (i.e., 'sun'). To put it another way, before being buried they were in the hands of a Scandinavian and then buried with a special sacral aim.

One more very small hoard, but representative enough of the accumulation of treasure to the east of the Yaroslavl Volga Region, can be included in the topography of treasure dating back to the 9th century. It consists of four hoards, three of which were found in the Vyatka Governorate (guberniya), and one—found in Udmurtia on the border with the Kirov Region. According to the youngest coin, all of them can be dated to the first half—the middle of the 9th century. This chain of discoveries crosses the Vyatka and goes up to the upper reaches of the Vyatka and Kama. In this region there are also three more discovered treasure sites dating to the 10th century. It is hardly possible to consider this chronologically compact number of discoveries as accidental. Obviously, the upper reaches of the Vyatka and Kama represented a region that, while tucked away from the main routes,

was still somehow attracting merchants, mainly Scandinavians, which were actively using the Baltic-Volga Route in the 9th century. Of course, this does not mean that there was no monetary circulation in the Middle Volga Region. On the contrary, its very intensity resulted in the fact that coins in this regions were buried so rarely. Historians had long ago stated that the majority of northern treasure repositories did not serve as 'banks' that a Scandinavian could withdraw cash from for his needs but were a sacrifice to the Gods, a 'deposit' that was meant to bestow luck and success in campaigns.

The discovery of archaeological evidence associated with the trade-druzhina social layer of the Ruses enables to assess the real contribution of Vikings to the process of the formation of the medieval Bulgar State, its institutions, and culture.

The burial site with cremated remains and a series of northern-European local type goods was found near the village of Balymir and investigated as a part of the archaeological excavations of A. Stoyanov, P. Ponomarev, and P. Likhachev in 1870, 1882, and 1893. Archaeological and historical analogues and comparisons allowed them to conclude that this burial site was left by the Ruses, a mixed Slav-Finn-Scandinavian layer of soldiers and merchants, among whom the leading role belonged to Viking-Swedes [Izmaylov, 1999].

For a long time contacts with Scandinavians were viewed through the prism of this burial site's research, but there are a number of problems, including the lack of Scandinavian items in Bulgar burial sites of the 8–10th centuries, the role of the Ruses in the establishment of early cities and states, and the formation of military-druzhina culture, etc., remained unsolved.

Currently a vast amount of information has been collected about Bulgar military culture and is being compared with the process of formation of the cities and states of the Bulgars, and the role of Bulgar contact with Northern Europe as a social marker of these processes has also been identified. The full range of these discoveries is related to military-druzhina daily life. Carolingian swords, which as a rare and expensive weapon were used only by the nobility and professional soldiers, stand out among the other artifacts. New types of armaments, unknown to Bulgars in the 8–9th centuries, show the expan-

sion of common European military elements. In addition, several discoveries were made related to Scandinavian dress (including an equal-arm brooch, annular brooch with long needles, etc.). These items are part of the sacralised set of personal belongings and protective amulets of women's dress, could not be considered as a commodity, and were obviously associated with the presence of Scandinavian women in the Middle Volga Region.

Mapping these discoveries shows that all of them are concentrated around the early-city centres of Bulgaria, such as Bulgar, Bilyar, Balimer, and ancient towns near localities like Staraya Mayna, Stariye Nokhraty, etc. It is revealing that such a concentration of similar socially prestigious commodities is characteristic of both Rus' and Hungary during the periods of state formation.

Therefore, the dominant and organising role of the Baltic-Volga Route that was opened and functioned thanks to Scandinavian merchant and soldier activity clearly emerges in the life of Northeastern Europe in the 9th century.

Areas around the route were marked by the formation of the first pre-town localities, the intensification of social differentiation among local tribes, and the consolidation of old and the establishment of new potestary institutions. Finally, it leads to the consolidation of vast territories, where in the middle of the 9th century new early-state formations were occurring. One of them, with its centre in Ladoga, was headed by Scandinavian Khrerek (Rurik), the head of a detachment of Vikings. Elteber of the Bulgar clan Shilki, and later his son Almysh, established an empire in the Middle Volga Region.

In the 9th century the prosperity of the Khazar Khaganate suddenly came to an end. The adoption of Judaism and the internecine wars and uprisings that followed led to the destabilisation of the situation. Phanagoria, the former capital of Great Bulgaria, just like many other settlements in the Azov Sea Region, fell under enemy attacks at the end of the 9th–the beginning of the 10th centuries. This represents a clear indication of the crisis and beginning of the fall of Khazaria. The attack of Pechenegs was the most tremendous blow that almost destroyed the unity of Khazaria. In 898 Hungarians left the lands of Atelkuzu in the Dnieper Region and moved to Pannonia, and following them detachments of Pechenegs streamed

into the steppes of Eastern Europe. In 915 they reached the borders of Rus' for the first time, made peace with prince Igor [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicle, II, p. 32], and actually began to rule in the Northern Black Sea Region. At the end of the 9—the beginning of the 10th centuries, according to archaeological data, all large ancient towns and main localities in Podonye—Saltovski, Mayatski, Semikarakorski, Pravoï Levoberezhnotsimlyanski, as well as the—Dmitrievski, Mayatski, Sukhogomolshanski, etc., burial sites ceased to exist [Pletneva, 1967; 1989; 2000; Afanasyev, 1993].

Apparently, part of the settled population died in raids, and part of them had to shift to a nomadic lifestyle due to the political instability, almost fusing with Pechenegs and later the Kipchaks. However, the majority of them moved to more northern regions, first and foremost to Volga Bulgaria. According to archaeologists that studied Saltovo-Mayatsky written sources, even from the end of the 9th century a flow of refugees familiar with settled farming and craft industries was rushing into the Middle Volga Region. In their new motherland, they continued to develop their traditional lifestyle and industries. It is no surprise that round pots produced according to Saltovski traditions comprise between one-third to half of all pottery discoveries in Bulgar burial sites (Bolshetarkhanski, 8–9th centuries; Tankeyevski, 9–10th centuries). Some monuments dating from the 8–10th centuries (Novinkovski, Bolshetarkhanski, Tankeyevski burial sites) contain agricultural tools—tips, hooks, scythes, hoes, etc., which can shed light on the occupations of the population. These materials lead us to assume that the previous agricultural population, who lived fairly dispersed and left behind remnants of Imenkov culture, quickly dissolved among the sedentary agricultural migrants from the south who introduced more progressive agricultural traditions and craft industry processes.

This particular population at the end of the 9—the beginning of the 10th centuries became the basis of the sedentary population of proto-towns emerging during that period around the Great Volga Route. These records are very difficult to discover from an archaeological point of view because the earlier layers either have not been discovered yet (as they occupied a fairly small area) or were destroyed by later buildings.

However, remnants of early settlement dated by coins from the end of the 9th to the beginning of the 10th centuries were discovered in Bulgar near the Jerusalem gully. The earlier layers, although not so expressive, were found during the excavations of the ancient town of Bilyarsk and some rural localities in the Lower Pre-Kama Region (see [Khuzin, 2001, p. 52 ff.]).

Information recorded in written sources about the sedentary population indicates their southern (Cis-Caucasian) origin. For instance, Ibn Fadlan wrote down that he met a group of 'folks' in Bulgaria—Baranjars, a sedentary people, who had a wooden mosque. Their name—explicitly about their motherland—the first capital of Khazaria, the city of Belenjer (Baranjar).

Thus, we can say that the operation of the Great Volga Route and caravan routes to Khwarezm was an economic catalyst for the development of the Bulgar state as it led to a quick enrichment of the Bulgar clan's aristocracy and massive influxes of the kindred Turkic population from the Don River, Azov Sea Regions, and Northern Caucasus. The establishment of the Bulgar state, the creation of its ruling structure, and formation of its military and service class nobility strata happened under conditions of economic expansion.

Modern historiography quite unambiguously considers the term *druzhina* as an organisation of professional soldiers subject to a military leader (king, prince), which existed in the majority of peoples during the transition period from a primitive communal society to a class society. Unlike military detachments organised by free members of tribes in cases of warfare, *druzhina* had a permanent nature and was relatively independent from potestary-political structures. During the formation of early medieval states, *druzhina* becomes a form of organisation of the service class part of the ruling class, a special social strata of nobility different from tribal leadership. Military and service class nobility united in a prince's *druzhina* plays the most important role in the feudal community formation process, functioning as its military and political foundation and thus determining the military/service nature of the authority.

Speaking about *druzhina*, we need to discuss the issue of when this type of organisation emerged among the Volga Bulgars. Many researchers testify that by the end of the 9th

century Bulgars had advanced *druzhina* organisation, which led to the establishment of a state. Without questioning this thesis, we need to say that if the Bulgars are already forming an early medieval society in the 9–10th centuries, then the creation of *druzhina* organisation is most likely rooted in the 7–8th centuries.

Due to the necessity of determining the specific stages and forms of transition from a tribal *druzhina* to a medieval military and service class, particular attention should be paid to armaments and their distribution among the Bulgar population of the Middle Volga Region. A total of 1,600 graves have been explored in early Bulgar burial sites dating from the 8–10th centuries, and more than 100 of them contained armaments. The results of their analysis show that most of the soldiers were horsemen and almost all of them were equipped with throwing weapons. The groups of buried items are more specifically divided according to the sets of close combat weapons. The first group contains a set of weapons consisting of sabers or javelins, throwing weapons, and caparisons (6%–10% of graves in the Bolshetarkhanski and Tankeevski burial sites). The second group—a battle ax or sometimes battle flails and throwing weapons, and caparisons as well. The third, most numerous, group—was equipped with throwing weapons and sometimes caparisons.

In general, the Saltovo cultural monuments (just like the early Bulgars) are marked by a small number of burial weapons, for this reason each item of weaponry is directly linked to the social rank of the deceased. The sacralisation of a certain type of weapon as a status indicator of a soldier in the *druzhina* organisation indicates, on the one hand, the ancient practice of troop stratification (because it had already consolidated in the funerary cult), and on the other hand,—indicates that the process of segregation of professional soldiers into special military contingent had become quite advanced. Of course, in different tribes of the 8–10th centuries this process was represented to varying extents, but in general it clearly indicates the existence of horse *druzhinas* among early Bulgars, who unlike other troops were using different types of weapons and equipment.

There is no question that this new stage in the development of the *druzhina* is associated with drastic changes in Bulgar society resulting

from stable economic expansion, the establishment of cities/trade and handicraft localities, the involvement of the Middle Volga Region in international trade through the Baltic-Volga trade route, and the formation of a state.

In parallel with state development, Islam was actively penetrating into the culture of the Bulgars, including in regards to burial ceremonies. Based on materials obtained from the excavation of several burial sites, Ye. Khalikova came to the conclusion that pagan burial ceremonies were terminated around the end of the 10—the beginning of the 11th centuries. However, city burial sites, first of all in Bilyarsk, were Islamic from the very beginning, and together with other facts this circumstance allows us to discuss the Islamisation of social leadership, including the *druzhina*, as early as at the beginning of the 10th century.

Excavations in localities provide a limited but quite telling wealth of information characterising the Bulgar *druzhina* of the 10th century. The most descriptive are discoveries of armaments (sabers and their parts, spearheads, battle axes, mace, flails, remnants of protective armour, etc.) that are especially often found in the ancient towns of Bilyarsk, Bolgar, Alekseyevsk, Valynsk, Khulash, Zolotarev, Balymer, as well as in some ancient settlements primarily located near the estuary of the Kama River. Out of this traditional set of armaments, we must highlight items that due to their absence in the materials from the 8–9th centuries can be considered new additions in the military structure.

This relates first and foremost to the discoveries of swords. All of them are quite densely located in the Western and Central Trans-Kama Region. One sword and two chapes originate from the ancient town of Bolgar, and from Bilyar—the pommel of a sword and two chapes. Two swords from the Staroalmeteyevsk treasure also likely originate from Bilyar. One more discovery of a sword from the village of Salmany apparently was found in one of the adjacent localities. Another sword—from Balymerski barrow, which was located in immediate proximity to the ancient town of Balymer. Two pieces of sword were found in the trade and craft localities in the Lower Kama Region. This leads to the conclusion that the discoveries of swords (together with other weapons) are clearly concentrated around early urban centres—of Bilyar,

Bulgar, and Balymer, which definitely indicates a concentration of the druzhinas in them.

In addition to swords and their hardware, some other items of eastern-type druzhina armaments were discovered in the same localities, including semispherical umboes of round shields, wide long triangular javelins, and spurs, which represent a certain western leaning in the Bulgar army. There is no doubt that these military innovations were introduced to the Bulgars by the druzhinas of the Ruses. In this respect, the Balymer barrow grave is of special interest as its burial ceremony (cremation near the grave and the placement of cremation remains together with burial items) is similar to graves in the Tikhomirovski and Mikhaylovski burial sites. Based on the set of items found in it, this grave is dated to the first half of the 10th century. The presence of the Ruses at that period of time in the Middle Volga Region was recorded by Ibn Fadlan, who mentioned that their camp was located close to the headquarters of the ruler of the Bulgars, and described the burial of one of their tribal leaders. Just like the druzhinas of the Slavs and the Ruses served the Khazar Khagan or Byzantine Emperor, certainly a part of the druzhinas of the Ruses were mercenaries for the army of Bulgar princes.

Armaments, especially eastern ones, therefore clearly indicate the existence of a new type of military organisation—professional feudal druzhina with a syncretic culture, and this is proven by the discoveries of ancient Russian, Finno-Ugric, and Scandinavian ornaments. The Balymer grave with clearly hybrid items also serves as vivid evidence of this fact. According to this data, especially the early cities of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th centuries are marked by—presence of feudal druzhinas with a polyethnic strata dominated by the Bulgar substrate gradually establishing its eclectic class culture.

Archaeological evidence of the concentration of druzhinas around urban centres is not accidental and is typical of many European states of the time. This process is objectively associated with the consolidation of druzhina elements at the foundation of early cities that were in the 10th century in Bulgaria first and foremost centres of political power—the residences of 'princes' and their druzhinas. There is reason to be-

lieve that, for instance, the cities of Bulgar and Suvar were centres of state formation with their own military administrative structure, which can be proven by the coinage of their own coins with the ruler's name.

The presence of the ruler's court and his druzhina in a city played one particularly important function for the city: it sped along the consumption, processing, and distribution of surplus product (through craft and trade) for the satisfaction of military/feudal nobility needs. The seizure of surplus products and the accumulation of wealth in the druzhina nobility took place through the capture of the spoils of war and rent/taxes. Eastern sources repeatedly mention the wars of the Bulgars with Burtases and other neighbours. Conquered people were subject to paying tributes. Another way of obtaining a part of surplus products was through taxes. The existence of a regular land-related tax system (taxable entity,—'houses') demonstrates the transformation of military-druzhina nobility into corporate landowners that realise their supreme right to own the land.

Already at the beginning of the 10th century the Bulgar state was a potestary state united under the supreme military/political and administrative/judicial power of single Bulgar dynasty, but also partially retaining dependent tribal leaders. There is no doubt that the active formation process of the state power apparatus based on military-druzhina nobility had already started by that time. In that period of time the Bulgars had a well-developed druzhina organisation consisting of upper and lower stratas ('thinking' and 'young' druzhinas). Apart from solely political functions, druzhinas, especially their noble part, performed other functions as well, including diplomatic—that is, it was an embryo of the state apparatus. Apparently, the further development of the Bulgar druzhina was leading to the further polarisation and separation of the nobility, which was creating its own druzhinas.

The adoption of Islam as the state religion was the most important step in the consolidation of society within the state. This issue will be reviewed below in further detail, but here it is necessary to emphasise that the process of state formation for the Bulgars was happening almost at the same time as the introduction of Islam. Islam penetrates into the population of the



Middle Volga Region as early as the 9th century, if not earlier, and apparently at the beginning of the 10th century it was adopted by Almysh and Bulgar nobility.

With an increasing economic power and military capacity against the weakening of the Khazar Khaganate's power, elteber Almysh grew in his desire to become independent from the Khazar Khagans, whom he had to pay tribute to and give his children over in hostage. In 912/913 the Bulgars supported the Atil Muslims incited by Samanids in their defeat of Rus' campaign to the Caspian. This step shows that the Bulgars were trying to gain control of the Varangian *druzhi*nas that were running campaigns on the Volga and also signifies their desire to gain the support of Muslims in their battle against Khazaria. The exchange of embassies between Bulgaria and the Baghdad Caliphate in 921–922, when a new Islamic state was recognised diplomatically on the north of the oecumene, was a new step towards the recognition of independence. The next steps in the Bulgar state show that its rulers actually attained independence from the Khazar Khagans, but until a certain period of time they were formally in the orbit of their power.

The further development of the Bulgar state and its institutions is poorly documented in written sources, but it can be described in specific terms.

Numismatic material to some extent can be helpful in the reconstruction of events. The coins show that following the death of the son and heir of Almysh, Mikail ibn Jafar, Bulgaria broke into two domains—Bulgar and Suvar (apparently headed by the Suvar tribe) emirates. The Eastern sources repeatedly mention the two cities—Bulgar and Suvar, and they mint coins separately. It is obvious that without new sources we will not be able to understand clearly enough whether these cities were centres of independent domains or were centres of large lands of Bulgars, just like Kiev and

Novgorod in Rus'. However, there is no reason to see in this breakdown Suvar's desire to preserve paganism because the eastern sources especially emphasise that there are mosques in both cities inhabited by the 'faith warriors.' The coins highlight the dynasty of Akhmedids (Mikail, Talib, and Mumin) from Suvar (948–976). The defeat of the Khazar Khaganate by the troops of Svyatoslav in 965–968 led to a consolidation of power for the ruler of the Bulgar emirate Mumin ibn al-Hasan (perhaps a descendant of Almysh), who conquered Suvar and started to mint coins only in Bulgar (976–980/981). Apparently, Suvar was transitioning into some kind of administrative/territorial unit (*vilayet*) of a single state. Thus, the singular Bulgar state was established in the Middle Volga Region in 980.

This new stage in the history of the Bulgar emirate can be characterised by a territorial expansion, consolidation of authority of the emir's power, and the establishment of Islamic ideology, the final overcoming of tribal particularism, the formation of national institutions of power, and the establishment of feudal relations based on the state ownership of land.

This single state was successful in developing an effective military-political system that was able to stand up against Kievan Rus' and its ever-increasing power. The Bulgar emirate withstood confrontations with Kiev and strengthened its credibility on the international arena by signing a peace treaty with Kievan prince Vladimir I (985). Approximately by the end of the 10th century Bulgaria conquered the lands of the Burtas people in Posurye and became one of the leading medieval states in Eastern Europe. By that time Islam had expanded to the entire territory of Bulgaria, and pagan burial sites had ceased to function. The process of state formation, its ethnopolitical, estate-potestary and administrative-legal systems all came to an end. Bulgaria starts turning into a medieval Islamic state.

## 2. Territory

*Fayaz Khuzin*

Arab and Persian geographers placed the Bulgar country in the seventh climate and considered it the northern-most country inhabited by Muslims. Ibn Rustah described it in detail in his 'Book of Precious Records' (903–913): 'The Bulgar land is bordered by the Burtas land. The Bulgars live on the bank of the river that flows into the Khazar [Caspian] Sea, known as Atil... Their country consists of marshlands and primeval forests, among which they live' [Khvolson, 1869, p. 22]. This final statement does not exactly correspond to reality, but there is no wonder that in the eyes of an Arab traveller or merchant, who is used to seeing endless deserts and steppes, the far northern country might appear to be swampy and woody. Meanwhile, Ibn Fadlan later wrote in amazement about the primeval forests of the Bulgar land stretching 40 parasangs in length and width [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 136].

A more accurate description of the south-eastern lands of Volga Bulgaria in the 10th century is provided in the messages of al-Istakhri and the anonymous author of the 'Hudud al-'Alam' ('The Regions of the World'), who mark the Bulgar territory as far as the Yaik River (the Ural River) by limiting it with the land or area of the Guzes. The same is mentioned in the later sources of the 11–13th centuries. However, it would be more accurate to mention only the lands that were under strong influence and control from the Bulgar state, as the written sources have yet to be proven by modern archaeological findings. These lands were likely to be included in the pastoralism area of the semi-settled part of the Bulgar population. Otherwise, it would not have been necessary for the Bulgar outpost detachment to fight against the Mongol-Tatars in 1229.

Some Muslim geographers in the 10–11th centuries (Ibn Hawqal, al-Masudi, al-Gardizi), who define the western borders of Bulgaria, place it to the east of the Slavs [Garkavi, 1870, pp. 191, 193, 220]. This does

not imply that the Slavic and Old Russian tribes were direct neighbours to the Volga Bulgars. These areas instead seem to be lands that were politically and economically influenced by the Bulgars.

The northern and southern extremes of Volga Bulgaria are difficult to define using information from the written sources. It is interesting that Mahmud al-Kashgari, an 11th century author, placed the cities of Bulgar and Suvar near the Caspian Sea on his map [Kashgari, 1960]. This is indeed incorrect. Evidently, without any accurate data at hand about the location of the two famous cities, yet knowing that the Bulgars live around the Lower Volga, Kashgari considered this placement justified to a certain extent. In fact, a large number of sources actually state about a dense settlement of Bulgars in the Khazar capital of Atil, and later in Saqsin [al-Gharnati, 1971], located on the Lower Volga near the Caspian Sea. In the steppes of south-eastern Europe there were a lot of Bulgar nomads. These people were the last hold outs of the Khazar Khaganate, which was defeated in 965, who later integrated with the Kipchaks-Polovtsians [Pletnev, 1990, p. 38]. However, this population was not a part of the Bulgar State, although they did have regular contact.

As we can see, the written sources present only quite a general idea about the territory of Volga Bulgaria during the pre-Mongol period. But this issue can be effectively solved thanks to archaeological excavations.

In the 1960–1970s the famous archaeologist and Bulgar specialist R. Fakhruddinov started large-scale excavations to discover and chart the archaeological monuments of Volga-Kama Bulgaria. On the basis of his findings he was attempting to determine its territory. At the present there are over 2,000 known Bulgar monuments from the 10–14th centuries: about 190 ancient towns, over 900 settlements, 80 underground burials, and 500 other sites. The majority of them, about 1,700 ancient towns, over 700 settlements, and several dozen burial

sites, have been dated to the pre-Mongol period. However, it should be taken into account that the monuments were dated, for the most part, on the basis of scarce primary research material. A more accurate date can only be provided if more evidence is found in a wider excavation effort.

However, there are certain aspects that should be clarified at once. One of them is related to the chronology of the Bulgar monuments of the Upper Sura and Moksha in the Penza Region. They have been active objects of study since the late 1950s. M. Polesskikh stated that all the monuments he studied personally (19 ancient towns and 21 settlements) possessed common features, such as red pottery ware, and grouped them into the specific Penza category of medieval settlements preliminarily dating back to the 13–14th centuries. He believed that these settlements were left by people of Kpchak-Polovtsian or Alan origin' [Polesskikh, 1959, p. 95 ff.]. Later, using the findings of the excavations in the ancient town of Zolotarevo, M. Polesskikh took another look into the date and the ethnic affiliation of the population of the Penza ancient towns and reclassified them as monuments of the 'Bulgarised Burtases' of the 11–13th centuries [Polesskikh, 1971]. R. Fakhrutdinov, for one, does not believe this date is accurate. In his opinion, most of the Penza monuments are 'from the 13–14th centuries, some even later, for example the 15th century' [Fakhrutdinov, 1975, p. 65]. He asserts that 'a small part of the population of Volga Bulgaria was forced to leave their original territory after the Mongol invasion came to what is now Penza Region, which was inhabited by the Mordvins. Soon on this land there will be an ulus of the Gorden Horde with the centre in Narovchat [Ibid., p. 66].

For the latest twenty years G. Belorybkin has been engrossed in the study of the Penza monuments with red-brown pottery ceramics. In his work he takes into account the data from about 30 ancient towns and 39 settlements [Belorybkin, 1991]. Following M. Polesskikh, G. Belorybkin also assured that the Penza settlements belonged to the Bulgarised Burtases of the 11–13th centuries [Belorybkin, 1992; 2001; 2003]. The chronology of the monuments in his works is developed quite thoroughly and per-

suasively. All the researchers who later dealt with this problem agreed that the monuments dated back to pre-Mongol times [Rastoropov, 1990, pp. 70–71; 1995, pp. 70–71]. However, they fairly consider that the issue of the archaeological attributes of the proper Burtases has not yet been thoroughly solved. In particular, A. Rastoropov proposes to call them 'monuments of the Bulgar type' that mark the south-western borders of Volga Bulgaria. The sources of the culture of the population that left these monuments of the Bulgar type evidently became apparent in the Saltovo-Mayaki culture as well. In the justified opinion of Ye. Kazakov and A. Rastoropov, these monuments might have appeared in the Sura Region not necessarily as a result of resettling from the central districts of Bulgaria but most likely from the south-west of Khazaria directly [Rastoropov, 1995, p. 71].

When it comes to a more accurate determination of the pre-Mongol Bulgar territory, much interest is given to the medieval monuments of the Upper and partly Middle Kama Region, where there are findings brought over from Volga Bulgaria. In the works of prof. A. Belavin, who was a key researcher of these monuments, there are about 200 places of this type, including ancient towns, settlements, burials, and other places [Belavin, 2000, p. 45 ff.].

Up to the present the Bulgar-Upper-Kama (Perm) links of the 10–13th centuries have been considered in the context of mutual trading and cultural relations. Meanwhile, there is a great number of Bulgar materials in the mentioned region, namely: pottery ware, up to a third and even half of all ceramics found; two-level high-production pottery furnaces of the classic Bulgar type discovered in the ancient towns of Rozhdestvenskoye and Kyla-sovo (Anyushkar); Muslim burials around these monuments; certain specific categories of things, for example, decorations and toilet-ries of Bulgar women as well as agricultural production tools, instruments of jewellery craftsmen, etc.; finally, a rich Turkic toponymy of the country dating to the pre-Mongol period. This is clear evidence of the active and generally peaceful Bulgar colonisation of the Perm Cis-Ural Region in the 10–11th centuries. According to A. Belavin, this is where the

country of Visu or the Chulyman Land was located, which was closely related not only economically and politically but also ethnically with Volga Bulgaria [Ibid., p. 31 ff.]. The materials of the studies from the ancient towns of Rozhdestvenskoye and Kylasovo is of great interest as they show researchers the rest of the historically-known towns of Afkul and Chulyman, which were built up by the Bulgars in the 10–11th centuries [Krylasova, Belavin, 2000; Lents, 2000; Belavin, 2000a, p. 123]. Production facilities were discovered there, and this proves the existence of not only the above-mentioned pottery works but also bone-carving, bronze-casting, and even glass workshops.

The Middle Volga Region, where the Bulgar State was located, occupies an enormous part of the Rusessian Plain. The richness of its nature is matched only by the diversity of the landscape. In the north around its cultivated fields the taiga can be found with its dark spruce and light pine woods, while the southern part of the region is dominated with a picturesque forest-steppe area: plough lands, various grasses, broad-leaved forests and isles of green oak groves. In the south-east the Samara Trans-Volga Region is known for a totally different landscape: an endless chernozem steppe that was once grey from mat grass and now completely cultivated and planted with corn.

Despite being plain, the relief of the region does not appear too monotone. The uplands, with absolute marks over 200–300 m, alternate beautifully with the lowlands. The sand hollow of the forest Trans-Volga Region cut through with the numerous creeks and gullies of the Volga Uplands, the flat ridges of the Bugulma plateau, the steppe valleys of the Trans-Kama, the Zhiguli Mountains with their deep gullies and high bluffs on the Volga: these barely scratch the surface of all the relief forms. The general features of the natural geographic conditions of the region are described in specialised literature [Milkov, 1953].

The Middle Volga Region is irrigated by the Volga and its numerous large and small tributaries, the largest of which is the Kama. The Volga and Kama valleys dissect the region

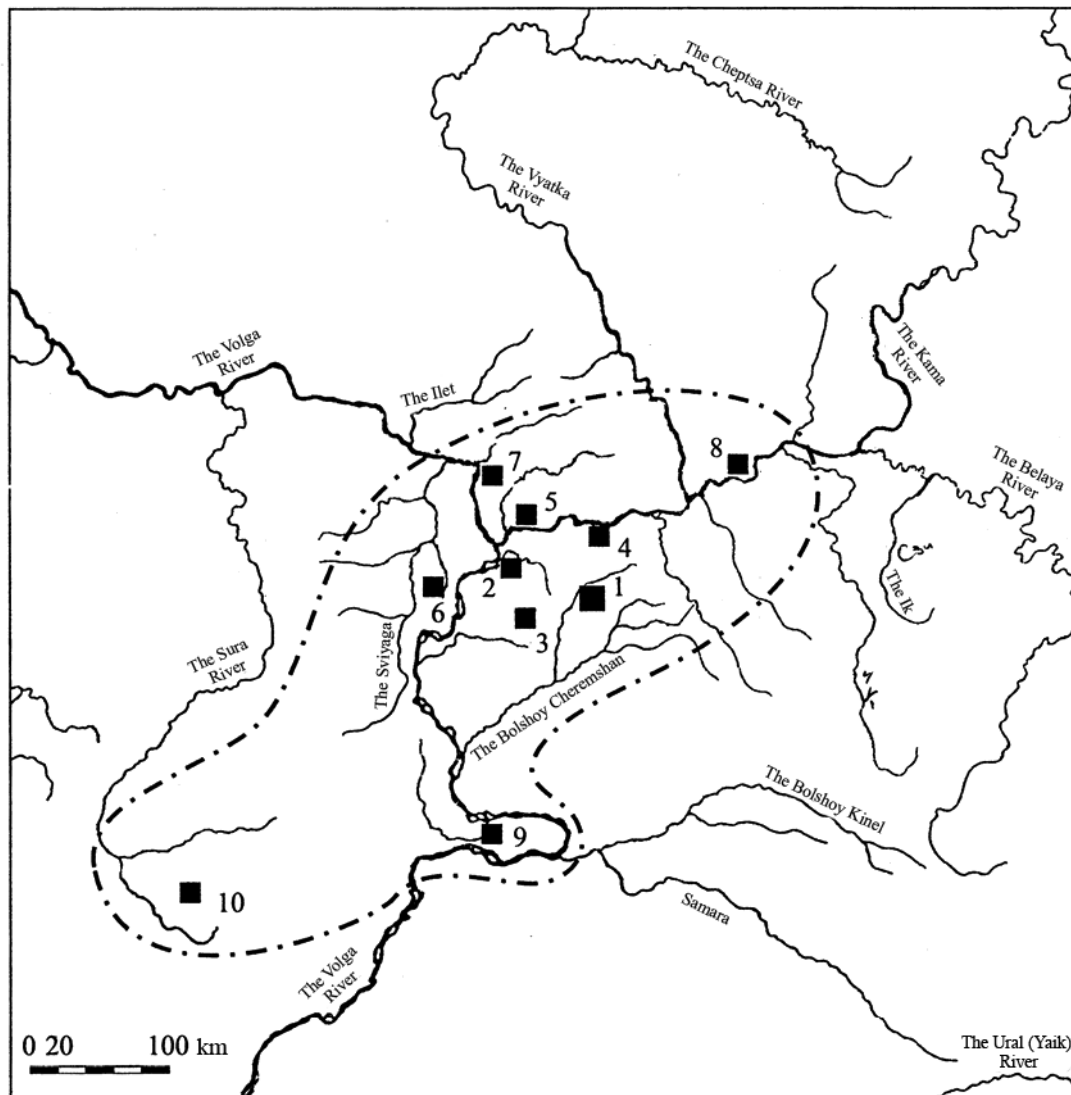
of interest to us into three historical and geographical provinces.

*The Trans-Kama Region* - the left Volga bank to the south from the Kama. The Western Trans-Kama (or the Lower Trans-Volga Region), where the main territory of Volga Bulgaria from the pre-Mongol period was located, to the east is outlined by the Sheshma River, the left Kama tributary. This land, which is the warmest in Tatarstan, attracted the Bulgars mainly by its extremely favourable geographic location at the cross of two huge water arteries in Eastern Europe. Its relief is noted for a clearly defined valley character that gives it a peculiar steppe look.

In terms of its landscape, the Western Trans-Kama Region is in a typical forest-steppe zone, which is characterised by a series of broad-leaved forests and vast meadow steppe areas. The basic grass stand there is a combination of colourful meadow and forest varieties of grasses that are valuable hay and grazing lands. The main natural wealth of the region is chernozem (up to 65%–70% of all the planted acreage) and dark grey forest soils with a high level of humus. In these soils the Bulgars successfully cultivated wheat, barley, millet, peas, flax, and hemp—the main grain and technical farming plants.

In the Western Trans-Kama Region there are slightly fewer than one half of all the famous archaeological monuments of Bulgaria, including 97 ancient towns. Here there are such exemplary political and economic state centres as Bilyar, or Great City (Bulgar), Suvar, Bulgar, or Bryakhimov (ancient Bulgar town), Juketau, and other large cities with names never preserved in written sources and forgotten in folk memory. On these central lands the most inhabited in comparison with other regions is the Maly Cheremshan River with Bilyar, or Great City at the centre.

The Eastern Trans-Kama Region (or the High Trans-Volga Region) occupies the western part of the Bugulma-Belebey Upland with absolute altitudes of 250–300 m. In the Bugulma Region at the head of the Stepnoy Zay River the land rises up to 372 m and reach the height of the Zhiguli Mountains. The most significant rivers—the Sheshma, the Stepnoy Zay, and the Ik—are tributaries of the left Kama.



The territory of Volga-Kama Bulgaria from the 10–beginning of the 13th centuries picturing its main cities. 1–Bilyar –the Great city (Bulgar), 2–the ancient town of Bulgar (External Bulgar, Bryakhimov), 3–Suvar, 4–Dzhuketau, 5–Kashan, 6–the ancient town of Bogdashkin (Oshel), 7–Kazan, 8–Alabuga, 9–the ancient town of Valyn (the town of Murom), 10–the ancient town of Yulov (Burtas?)

In the Eastern Trans-Kama Region, particularly in the Lower Zay River, there are also well-known early Bulgar monuments, including ancient towns. However, during the pre-Mongol period this territory was scarcely inhabited. On the map of the Eastern Trans-Kama Region there are only 7 ancient Bulgar towns.

*The Pre-Kama Region* is the left Volga bank to the north of the Kama. The Vyatka divides it into two parts: Western Pre-Kama and Eastern Pre-Kama. The region is located within dark coniferous and broad-leaved forests—in the

subzone of the south of the taiga. The absolute altitudes waiver between 170 m and 190 m but in some places are above 200 m. The surface of Western Pre-Kama gradually rises to the north-east from the Volga and sharply breaks towards the Vyatka. It is cut through strongly with numerous tributaries and gullies. The part to the east of the Vyatka valley is not much different from the one to the west in terms of relief. The soils are non-chernozem, mainly grey forest and sod-podzolic, with not a high humus content.

The main monuments of the Pre-Kama part of Volga Bulgaria, dating back to the 11–13th centuries, are concentrated around the Kama River, including the Lower Myosha. The city of Kashan is traditionally considered the political and economic centre of the region. The most northern monuments of the pre-Mongol Bulgars were discovered in the Kazanka basin, where at the turn of the 10–11th centuries a trading point and fortress (named Kazan) were built, and thus the future capital of the homonymous 'principality' and khanate was born. At the same time, as the north-eastern outpost of the country on the high right bank of the Kama, a fortified point known as Alabuga was being constructed. It is well-known in the historical and archaeological literature as the ancient town of Chertovo.

*The Pre-Volga Region* on the right Volga bank is also a province of the Volga Upland with an average relief altitude at 200–300 m. In the north of the Zhiguli Mountains the absolute altitude is 370 m. This is the most disjointed part of the Middle Volga Region. The slopes of the valley are asymmetric: high and steep in the east, and smooth and low in the west. The Sura and the Sviyaga, the right tributaries of the Volga River, flow to the north. In the north-west of the region one of the most significant rivers is the Moksha, which flows into the Oka. The Pre-Volga Region is a forest-steppe zone (a small part of the territory to the south-east of the Samara Bend is considered a steppe zone). Coniferous forests can hardly be found anywhere, and there are no fir forests at all. Grey and dark grey forest soils along with leached and bleached chernozem with fairly good fertility is what makes up the region.

The Pre-Volga lands played an extremely significant role in the history of the Bulgar State. The earliest Bulgar monuments of the late 7–8th centuries were discovered by Samara archaeologists precisely in that territory. A lot of pre-Mongol monuments were also discovered on the Samara Bend and farther to the north in the Ulyanovsk Region. The Penza group of the Bulgar settlements is also well-known. In the 8th century the Bulgars had

already appeared on the Sviyaga River (the Bolshiye Tarkhany burial site). Here there are several dozens of various ancient settlements of the 10–13th centuries, among which the most notable is the Bogdashkivo site, which contained the remains of Oshel from the chronicles, according to the localisation of the majority of researchers. In general, there are about 60 ancient settlement sites from the pre-Mongol period in the Pre-Volga Region of Volga Bulgaria.

If we approach this area from the perspective of modern administrative and political units, the territory of pre-Mongol Volga Bulgaria stretched far out from the borders of modern Tatarstan. If we consider the incomplete data, there are about 200 Bulgar monuments in the Ulyanovsk Region and about 160 in the Samara Region. Their numbers are increasing annually. The most southern monuments are located at the latitude of the Samara Bend and the Samara River.

It has been reliably ascertained that the south-eastern regions of the neighbouring Chuvashia, connected with the Sviyaga basin, were also populated by the Bulgars. About 40 monuments were discovered here, and they have been determined to be Bulgar by specialists. Our Chuvash colleagues state this number as 70 and place the western borders of Bulgaria up to the Sura River. Unfortunately, these monuments are still at the initial stage of research. However, a significant number of Bulgar settlements in the Penza Region persuade us to believe that the Sura River was actually the western border of the state during the pre-Mongol period.

Thus, the pre-Mongol territory of Volga Bulgaria, reconstructed on the basis of the written and archaeological sources, included lands from the Kazanka River in the north to the Samara Bend in the south, from the Sura River in the west to the lower parts of the Belaya and the Yaik in the east and south-east. This territory was populated unevenly. As noted above, the density of the population was high in the Trans-Kama Region. The peripheral south-eastern lands were likely to be used for seasonal pastoralism.

### 3. Population

*Fayaz Khuzin*

At the end of the 9–10th centuries various, mainly Turkic tribes, lived in the defined territory, who Ibn Fadlan called 'as-Saqaliba' [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 121, 131]. In the first half of the 10th century this confederation of tribes included the Bulgars, Bersuls (Barsils), Esegels (Askil, Ishkil), Savirs (Savirs, Sabirs), Bilers, Baranjars. The first three names are known according to reports by Ibn Rustah [Khvolson, 1869, p. 22] and the author of 'Hudud al-Alam' [Hudud al-Alam, 1930, p. 32—'Bakhdula, Ishkil, and Bulgars']. The Savirs, who did not want to submit to the Bulgar ruler, the Esegels (Askil), whose 'prince' was married to Almysh's daughter, and the Baranjar households totalling 5 thousand people were described by Ibn Fadlan [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 138, 139, 141]. The Bilers, 'who came from Bilyar or Bulgaria, Muslim Bulgars,' were mentioned in the Hungarian Chronicles of the 10th century [Khvolson, 1869, p. 109]. According to 'Hudud al-Alam,' the above tribes were 'all at war with each other: and when an enemy appears, they become friends with each other' [Hudud al-Alam, 1930, p. 32]. It is interesting that in the latter half of the 10th century many of the above ethnonyms disappeared, but the Bulgars and Suvars continued on, whose tribes were very close in terms of language, as Mahmud al-Kashgari later noted [Kashgari, 1960, p. 66].

All the repeated attempts to locate the listed tribes on the map of Volga Bulgaria made by researchers should be considered as purely hypothetical. The Bulgars are usually very easy to locate without any extra evidence since they are associated with the ancient town of Bolghar. However, according to several researchers, Bilyar—the Great City on the Maly Cheremshan River—was also called Bolghar in the pre-Mongol period [Khuzin, Khalikov, 1991]. Furthermore, it should be noted that the main monument of the Bulgars, who came from the Azov Region—the Bolshetarhansky burial site—is located in a different part of the Volga River on the right-bank, and the Tankeyevsky burial site is located not far from the ancient town of Bolghar, where most of the burials were made

by people not of Bulgar but Finno-Ugric (Kama-Cis-Urals) origin. It is noteworthy that one of the earliest settlements of the late 9–early 10th centuries studied in recent years on the territory of the Malo-Jerusalem ravine provided expressive ceramic materials in the form of fragments of stucco receptacles from the Polomskaya and Lomovatonov cultures.

Thus, the location of the Bulgars in the area of the ancient town of Bolghar has not yet been proven. It is possible that they occupied the more eastern regions of the state, the basin of the Maly Cheremshan River, where their capital was founded, which is known as the Great City of Silver Bulgars according to Russian chronicles. The names 'Bilyar' and 'Bolghar' are often mentioned in sources as synonyms [Adamovic, 1998].

There is no objection to the location of the Suvar people, who founded their 'tribal' centre on the Utka River in the modern Spassk Region of the Republic of Tatarstan at the beginning of the 10th century.

A group of Baranjars containing 5 thousand people, 'who had already converted to Islam,' was also found by Ibn Fadlan in the central regions of the country.

It appears to be impossible to determine the original settlement area of the Bersuls (Barsils) due to the scarcity of the sources.

It is noteworthy that the above ethnonyms come from the south and are known at least since the emergence of the Khazar Khanate, if not earlier. The only name—the Esegels—is not mentioned in the south, and according to scholars, its origin is associated with the Kama-Cis-Urals ethnic area [Khalikov, 1989, p. 78; Bellavin, 1999]. However, it is hardly appropriate to look for their original habitat on the right bank of the Volga River (near the town of Oshel). At the time of Ibn Fadlan they were located on the left bank of the Volga River, which is also confirmed by a message written by Ibn Rustah about a country of Magyars located 'between the territories of the Pechenegs and the Bulgarian Esegels' [Khvolson, 1869, p.

25]. Therefore, they lived in the eastern, maybe even in the north-eastern regions of Volga Bulgaria, where settlements were located and whose material culture reveals the Kama-Cis-Urals aspect in the form of ceramic such as 'Juketau' and 'Postpetrogrom.'

Despite certain sometimes quite substantial differences in their material culture, anthropological type, language, etc., these tribes were generally close enough in terms of their lifestyle and were approximately at the same level in terms of socio-economic, military, and political development.

The Bulgarian nationality was finally formed in the 12–early 13th centuries, which was reflected in written and archaeological sources. A specific but single culture based on a common language, spiritual, and material culture was formed on the whole centralised territory of Volga Bulgaria. Note the consolidating role of the official Muslim religion aimed at uniting all the tribes that made up the populace of Volga Bulgaria around a single tsar. Eastern writers and Russian chroniclers unambiguously call the populace of the country by one name—that is, the Bulgars; and the country itself, Bulgaria, the land of Bulgaria. Ethnonyms such as 'Sobekulyans, Chelmats, and Temtuzes' mentioned in ancient Russian chronicles in the description of events of 1183 should be understood as the names of some small local groups of the general Bulgarian populace.

Of course, the seeming ethnic homogeneity of the population of the pre-Mongol Bulgaria is not absolute. Sources suggest that ethnic diversity, which is so characteristic of the early stages of nationality formation, was preserved for a long time. We can suppose that the Turkic-speaking groups relatively quickly consolidated within a single community. However, foreign groups regularly penetrating from neighbouring lands also lived in Bulgaria (Finns, Ugrians, Slavic, and Rus peoples), who mostly did not lose their ethnic identity. Only a part of the population was subject to assimilation.

Representatives of the tribes adjacent to the Bulgars lived in the southern and eastern periphery areas of the country. Sources mention groups such as the Turkic-speaking Ghuzzes, Pechenegs, Kipchaks, and Bashjards (Mazhjards or Magyars). According to data provided

by Ibn Rustah, the habitat of the latter lay 'between the territory of the Pechenegs and the territory of the Bulgarian Esegels.'

According to al-Balkhi, 'they were subject to the Bulgars' [Khvolson 1869, p. 25].

In the South Urals, in the basin of the Yaik River, there were vast nomad camps of the Pechenegs, who were related to the Ghuzzes and later occupied the steppes of South-Eastern Europe, and of the Kipchaks-Polovtsians, who later replaced them. The latter, having conquered vast expanses of the Great Steppes from the Irtysh and Balkhash in the east and almost to the Danube in the west in the 11th century, became perhaps the main ethnic and political force of the Eurasian south for a long time and played an enormous role in the destiny of Volga Bulgaria, ancient Russian principalities, as well as other states and nations of the Middle Ages.

The Shars or 'yellow' Kipchaks, having taken fertile pastures needed to graze the horses and maintain the cattle of the nomads, became an ethnic kernel uniting the hordes of the Pechenegs, Ghuzzes, Bulgars, and Alans scattered all across the steppe that were earlier a part of the Khazar Khaganate. Polovtsian nomad camps reached almost the southern borders of Volga Bulgaria. Archaeologists found numerous kurgan burials of Kipchaks-Polovtsians in the region of Samara Luka, Southern Urals, and Western Cis-Urals [Ivanov, Krieger, 1988]. Close contacts between the related Kipchaks and Bulgars in the pre-Mongol period were reflected in written sources. Russian chronicles note that the Kipchaks and 'Bulgars had a common language and origin.' They also describe repeated penetrations of certain Polovtsian detachments in the central regions of Bulgaria and their participation in complex political intrigues in the 12th century. In recent years, interesting archaeological facts have emerged pointing to the significant participation of the Kipchaks in the formation of the ethnicity and culture of the Volga Bulgars in the 11–early 13th centuries [Kokorins, 2002, pp. 109, 214].

So in the more than three centuries since the state was formed, important changes were seen in Volga Bulgaria primarily related to the formation of the state territory and consolidation of a new ethnic community of a higher order on the basis of various tribal groups—the Bulgarian people.



## CHAPTER 4

### The socio-political structure. Social relations

*Albert Nigamayev, Fayaz Khuzin*

The works of medieval Islamic authors (Ibn Ruste, Ibn Fadlan, al-Gharnati, Beyhaki) and also some Russian chronicles contain information about the social structure of Volga Bulgaria. In order to study separate aspects of this topic, researchers have access to information from epigraphic sources dating from the 13–14th centuries, works of Tatar folk literature, and manuscripts dating from the 17–18th centuries ('Daftar-i Chingizname,' 'Tavarikh-i Bulgariya' by K. Sharafeddin, etc). The obvious prevalence of data from the written sources of non-Bulgar origin creates a serious problem for the accurate restoration of socio-political terminology. Arab-Persian geographers or Russian monks/chroniclers usually used terms that were most convenient to them, considering the Bulgar socio-political system from the perspective of their own conceptions. Neither considerable archaeological, including numismatic material, nor ethnographic and linguistic data can make up for the incompleteness of information from actual Bulgar-written sources.

One of the problematic issues in Bulgarian studies is the question of the type of state and the form of state rule. For instance, back in 1925, when pointing to the existence of independent 'princdoms' with their own mint within the state, V. Smolin put forth an assumption about the presence of feudal relations in Bulgaria in the first half of the 10th century [Smolin, 1925, p. 48]. The development of feudalism since the 960s was described by A. Smirnov, who defended his point of view by referencing the highly developed farming, craft, trade, and network of urban and suburban localities [Smirnov, 1951, p. 35 ff.]. At the same time, a certain group of historians still rejected any elements of feudalism in Volga Bulgaria in the 10–12th centuries, considering it a pre-feudal state. For instance, academician B. Grekov asserted

that Bulgars of that period were showed only mild signs of developing feudalism; production based on the work of subject peasants did not exist, thus the leading role of large landholding and the political power of large landholders reflecting an established state power was more or less out of the question [Grekov, 1945].

V. Dimitriyev and I. Pankov [1958, p. 69] put forth their ideas about the dominance of Asian tyranny intermingling with slavery among the Bulgars. I. Kuznetsov [1957, p. 22] was also against the conception of a feudal Bulgaria. Later A. Smirnov [1962, pp. 169–174] convincingly disproved statements about the 'barbaric' character of civil order in pre-Mongol Bulgaria and the similarity of its final form with the Asian system of domination and submission.

Russian historiography considers the socio-political order of pre-Mongol Volga Bulgaria as something both complete and static. Researchers studying this issue base their theories only upon the richest sources of the 10th century. In fact, as described by Ibn Fadlan, the structure of Bulgar society at the beginning of the 10th century with minor additions is transferred to the entire pre-Mongol state history.

The history of pre-Mongol Bulgaria can be divided into three stages: 1) pre-feudal (final military-democratic or *druzhina* based)—up to the middle of the 10th century; 2) early feudal—the middle of the 10–the latter half of the 12th centuries; 3) advanced feudalism stage—the latter half of the 12–the first third of the 13th century. We draw information about the social structure of Bulgars in their first stage from the works of Arab-Persian geographers. We cannot speak about distinct feudal relations in the Bulgar state when we consider the period authentic to the notes of Ibn Ruste and Ibn Fadlan. There was

no regulated system of feudal rent in place either. The Bulgar ruler collected direct tribute from the population for his own treasury, and additional tribute was sent to the Khazar Khagan (Khagan of Khazars). Ibn Fadlan mentions that the 'Bulgar tsar pays tribute to the Khazar tsar: from each house in the state— a sable fur.' According to Ibn Ruste, direct tribute to the tsar is payed in horses and other items [Khvolson, 1869]. It is not clear what is meant by 'others,' though. Some researchers believe them to be agricultural products [Smirnov, 1951, p. 37], which in our opinion conflicts with Ibn Fadlan's statement that: 'everything that people sowed they used for themselves. The Tsar does not have the right to take it' [Ibn Fadlan, 1956]. Perhaps, at that period of time a harvest tax similar to the 'ushr' tithe had not yet been introduced. But there were other charges, such as a 10% duty from merchant ships or one-tenth of the spoils of war. Finally, sources show that Bulgars made special tributes for the benefit of the tsar. The first source mentions that 'from each recorded person the tsar takes one riding horse'. The 'Risala' also contains another type of tribute—'everyone who holds a wedding or feast shall make a contribution to the tsar depending on the size of the feast—'sakhraj' of honey nabiz and nasty wheat.' This information shows that at the beginning of the 10th century neither land nor cattle were yet to be the main items of taxation. The rural community was the absolute owner of its land. By that time large semi-nomad cattle breeding was only maintained on the farms of the congeneric aristocracy.

The special part of the feudalisation process of Bulgar society is that it does not mirror neither western European (Frankish) nor Arab-Persian (Islamic) systems, and neither the Old Russian nor nomadic models well-studied by Russian and foreign researchers. To a greater or lesser extent it contains elements of both. The Bulgar community descended from the cradle of its traditions as a nomadic cattle breeding people and was quickly turning into an advanced agricultural community. The disintegration of congeneric and the formation of feudal relations coincided in time with the processes of 'dzhatakstvo'

(sedentarisation)—that is settlement. For this reason, feudal land (pastures) ownership was later expressed in its combination with the utilisation of communal land, and in addition land was neither sold nor expropriated. The duties of ordinary tribesmen, including feudal duties to the nobility, were expressed in the form of tribal help, an ancient patriarchal custom. Headed by their ruler, the nobility took upon itself to protect its tribesmen and their property and to expand their land (pastures). Finally, the absence of the state as a legal body in court proceeding also indicates the pre-feudal character of the Bulgar community at the beginning of the 10th century. Based on the observations of Ibn Fadlan, we can say that the entire punishment system, regardless of the crime, was based on common law. Sources do not mention anything about fines or other charges for the benefit of the state ('tsar').

The development of the state economy based on agriculture, cattle breeding, highly advanced craft, and internal and external trade was accompanied by the social stratification of the population. The further Islamisation of society following the official entry of the country into Islamic civilisation was also an important point. All of this had a definite impact on the process of early feudal state formation that finished not later than the middle of the 10th century. Unlike Western Europe, where private large landholding existed from the very beginning, and rulers often acted like judges in relations between landholders/feudal lords and free commoners, in Volga Bulgaria the exploitation of the free population began not by imposing any type of rent for the financial benefit of the state but by imposing state duties and various charges for the benefit of the treasury. In this case, the state itself acted as a feudal lord. State feudalism does not necessarily mean depriving free commoners of their land and especially of their personal liberty.

Some researchers consider the construction of a strong system of fortifications in the main Trans-Kama Region, and partially in the Cis-Volga Region lands, as the most significant evidence of the existence of state feudalism in Volga Bulgaria in the 10–11th

centuries [Smirnov, 1951, p. 36; Fakhrutdinov, 1984, p. 29].

The domination of feudal relations had a major impact on the internal policy of the state as well. The tough stance of the central government towards the separatism-minded aristocracy in the 970–980s led to the end of independence of the Suvar principedom and the emigration of certain Bulgar princes to Hungary and Rus'. The state-led colonisation of northern, north-eastern, and south-western territories was accompanied by the active construction of cities and military fortresses along trade routes. This process reached its peak at the turn of the 10–11th centuries, which was related to the consolidation of the feudalisation of Bulgar society.

Questions about the form of feudalism in pre-Mongol Bulgaria and its associated land tenure system are controversial among researchers. Some researchers only agree with state feudalism [Khuzin, 1997], while others consider exploitation in the form of private patrimonies possible in the 12–13th centuries with the domination of the state [Fakhrutdinov, 1984]. Unfortunately, these issues are not well-suited for study because of a lack of sources. These kinds of issues are typically resolved theoretically, sometimes through the use of extrapolation.

The Islamisation of Volga Bulgaria came to an end during the first half of the 11th century. All Islamic states share general Islamic legal norms and ownership structures. Even Ibn Fadlan was a proponent of the 'fight' against deviations from these norms: 'If one of them dies, then prior to his sons, his brother takes over. I taught the tsar that it is forbidden and explained to him the ['correct'] rules of inheritance until he understood them.' For this reason it is useful to consider the forms of land tenure in the Islamic countries of that period.

For instance, land tenure in the Abbasid Caliphate was based on state lands, and the Caliph was the supreme holder of lands. Taxes from these lands—*kharaj*—(a land tax in kind or money tax) from 1/3 to 2/5 of harvest, was to the benefit of the state treasury (see below about taxes). In the 9–11th centuries the most common form of land tenure was *Iqta* (Arab.—a parcel of land),

which was given to members of the service class for life-long or temporary use. Initially, *iqta* meant only rent (a *kharaj* from the land), and in terms of content it was close to the Western European benefice, but later the holder obtained the right to use the land as he thought fit. Taxes from *iqta* were often given entirely to its holder. The intermediate position between state lands and *iqtas* was occupied by *safavi* or *khass*—the land of the Caliph's family free of state taxation. Less than *iqtas*, private land tenure was a part of Caliphate,—known as *mulk*—and was similar to Western Europe's allodium. *Mulk*—is an entirely alienable tenure that was most frequently taxed by such taxes as *ushr* (the goshier tithe), divided proportionally between the owner and the state. Finally, the period from the 10–12th centuries was marked by the formation of *waqf* (*waqf*—endowment) tenure, where the profits were used entirely for religious needs.

We can see the same forms of tenure in Middle Asia during the Samanid period (the 9–10th centuries): state (*sultani*), *mulk* (lands of *dekhkans*, taxed by *kharaj*), *hass* (family bound), and *waqf* (religious). The most common form—*iqta*—was gradually transforming from benefice to a hereditary fief. This process carried on during the Karakhanid period and wrapped up by around the 13th century. Moreover, during the Karakhanid period *mulk* lands were converted into *iqta*. Farmers that were using *iqta* lands relied almost entirely on their owners. However, just like under former rulers, they were not yet assigned to land. In the Seljuk State (the 11–12th centuries) large and small *iqta* were combined with certain immunity advantages—, including taxes and partial judicial privileges [World history, 1957, III, p. 499]. *Iqta* started to become entirely hereditary property. Major military leaders received entire areas with the duty to maintain a detachment, often becoming district rulers.

In Turkic states, which emerged in conquered Islamic regions, state (communal) lands, the population of which was charged with different taxes and fees for the treasury and was obligated to fulfill certain duties (construction work, involvement in wars, etc.), constituted the base of the land fund. It

is noteworthy that all of them were marked by a sudden reduction in the number of private and family properties and a rise in the number of conditional and waqf plots.

The Volga-Bulgar people entered Islamic civilisation much earlier than the Karakhanid Karluks and Seljukid Oghuzes, so their Islamic traditions run much deeper (William of Rubruk described the Bulgars as Muslims 'following Muhammad's teaching stricter than anyone else'). Therefore, it is difficult to imagine that pre-Mongol Bulgars had other forms of land tenure markedly different from the general Muslim system.

There is no doubt that starting in the middle of the 10th up to the latter half of the 12th centuries state feudalism, with the majority of lands legally belonging to the state, prevailed in Volga Bulgaria. This land fund was used to allocate plots for conditional/temporary use by members of the military-service class and provide larger areas of land for congeneric or communal use by the population groups penetrating the country (the continuous migration of the population during this period, especially from the east and the south, is confirmed by archaeological evidence). Unfortunately, the sources do not contain information about the characteristics of conditional/temporary tenures. Most likely, in terms of form they were close to iqta. Otherwise, it would have caught the attention of al-Gharnati and other Islamic authors. During the active period of the tradition to distribute iqta lands, for their service feudal lords received a plot appropriate to their rank from the ruler, and it became a hereditary plot on the condition that they fulfill their duties. We can assume that the centres of such tenures were small ancient towns widespread in the latter half of the 11th century with strong fortifications, otherwise known as 'feudal castles.' Civil servants could also get similar land plots as payment for their service as well.

Written sources left scanty information about the taxes and charges that existed at that time among the Bulgars. Visiting Bulgaria twice in 1135 and 1150, Abu Hamid al-Gharnati wrote the following: 'There are numerous people living upstream, they pay

jizya to the Bulgar tsar. ... It [Bulgar] has a region, [the inhabitants of which] pay kharaj, it is located a month's run from Bulgar, and its name is Visu.' Here in the first instance, the real subject is the 'jizya' tax, which is compulsory for non-Muslims (what is known as a 'faith tax'). Jizya was collected from all adult men except elders, the disabled, beggars, slaves, and soldiers serving in Islamic troops in the amount ranging from 12 to 48 dirhem per year (in kind, mainly in furs). By comparison: according to al-Masudi, the price of black fox fur was 100 dinaries (1,200 dirhem). Jizya was typically payed by the non-Muslim community depending on the number of people. In the second instance, which is applicable to the people of the Visu Region, the word 'kharaj' was used not to mean a type of tribute but merely as a form of rent. In this period in Volga Bulgaria, kharaj was only collected in the amount of 1/3 of harvests (rarely, low-income lands paid 1/10 of harvests). But al-Gharnati used it to mean any type of tax, meaning—rent collected according to agreements, when it was virtually impossible to differentiate the land tax from the head tax.

Just like in any other Islamic country the population had to pay the treasury ushr, which was a head tax or fee in the amount of 1/10 of profit. Everyone was responsible for paying this tax: merchants, craftsmen, farmers who were turning a profit. The ushr land tax was simultaneously also considered a zakat (tax from Muslims for the benefit of those in need) from the agricultural products that should be paid by every faithful member of society. There were also khums (taxes from unplanned profit) and sadaka (one-time alms to those in need).

In fact, iqta is a handover of the right to collect kharaj from a defined territory by the state for a specific period of time. Historically speaking, the owner of iqtas received the difference between the kharaj and 'ushr (as a man of faith he had to pay 'ushr to the treasury), which was a bit more than 2/10 of profit. But on the example of other states we can see that feudal lords were fighting for their right to control their kharaj in every possible way. For minor land plot holders, the replace-

ment of the kharaj by 'ushr was considered a personal privilege.

Today because of a lack of sources we do not have any information about the existence of private patrimony tenure similar to the general Muslim 'mulk' or 'khass' of the early feudal period. As it was mentioned before, this period in the East is marked by the movement from private patrimony to conditional tenure. At the same time, the existence of the domain tenure of the Khazar tsar, the Golden Horde, and the Tatar khans is proven by written sources as well.

In the latter half of the 12th century Volga Bulgaria entered the period of advanced feudalism. Feudal disunity is considered one of the characteristic features at this stage of a society's development. Some researchers see these signs in the texts of the Rusessian chronicles dated 1183 when 'Yemyak Polovtsians came together with the Prince of the Bulgars to fight against the Bulgars,' and other researchers also add the appearance of 'land based territorial organisations,' similar to temtyuz, sobekulyan, and chelmat or references in the sources about allied Bulgar princes who were ready to help each other just like in the events of 1220. But such facts are not enough, nor are they specific as they do not provide a base to speak about the initiated process of the decentralisation of state power in Bulgaria. At any rate, by the time of the Mongol conquests the country was fairly monolithic and strong. Unlike Rus', where disunity (political, economical, cultural) had almost all regions in its vice-like grip, Volga Bulgaria preserved its unity. This was due to many factors. First, the compact nature of the territory allowed the central power to quickly react to whatever centrifugal tendencies might be present. Second, according to some researchers, the singular Bulgar nation formation process had come to an end, which means that any kind of ethno-territorial base for separatism was eliminated by the end of the 11th century. Third, a very important factor was the presence of large cities and the large proportion of the urban population in the country, etc. The highly developed trade and prominent role of the economically strong trade strata in society

also played a role in the preservation of political unity in the country.

Feudal relations had already deeply penetrated into the agricultural system. Nevertheless, the main holder of lands continued to be the state. The regulation of feudal land relations based on the distribution of conditional/hereditary tenures in the form of feoffs was one of the strategic components of the internal policy of the government. This period in the entire Turkic-Islamic world is marked by the end of the process of the transformation of iqta from a temporary benefice to an actual hereditary feoff, or feuds. The existence in the late pre-Mongol period of such established feudal categories as 'yuvari' (hereditary military officer) and 'hoji' (owners), who were mainly keepers of middle and minor land plots, shows that this form of land tenure in particular was widely distributed. One of the outstanding features of local feudalism in Western Europe is that land provided to feudal lords for their service was never out of state control. Furthermore, the state collected certain taxes from it.

In respect of the feudal lords of pre-Mongol Bulgaria, some researchers use the sicionim 'tarkhan.' According to R. Fakhrutdinov, tarkhan are feud keepers, and A. Khalikov considered them to be the privileged part of feudal lords. Pointing to the presence of the 'tarkhan' title among Golden Horde period Bulgars in sources, A. Khalikov wrote that tarkhans 'existed even earlier, they were present also among the Khazars and early Bulgars, and not only Volga Bulgars but Dunai Bulgars as well, and also later during the Kazan Khanate period'; hence, 'we can assume the presence of this title, and thus the presence of some tarkhan charters among Bulgars even in the Golden Horde period' [Khalikov, 1994, p. 13 6]. In the Golden Horde and Kazan Khanate periods a person (feudal) was provided tarkhanship for special services for the state (ruler), and it was a grant of the state for all rights to land and property. The lands of the tarkhan were exempted from taxes and charges, and he and his people were exempted from state duties. Furthermore, the keeper of this right had legal and administrative immunity, and the right was hereditary for several generations.

As mentioned by many researchers (M. Safargaliyev, G. Fedorov-Davydov, etc.): 'Feudal relations established in the 12th century were still evolving in the settled lands controlled by the Golden Horde' [Fedorov-Davydov, 1973, p. 25]. The existence of tarkhan rights and tarkhan lands in the latter half of the 12–beginning of the 13th centuries casts a light on the formation of private patrimonial feudalism in Volga Bulgaria.

Until the beginning of the Mongol conquests, Volga Bulgaria had signs of a state with advanced feudal relations. Feudal ownership of land (mainly conditional/hereditary) and an advanced taxation system for the tax-paying population placed it on par with such states as Khwarezm or Rus' (Ruthenia).

\* \* \*

Available sources show us a society that back in the 10th century was fairly stratified in terms of social groups and did not fit into the framework of the pre-feudal period. During the epoch of Ibn Fadlan this society was at its final stage of decomposition as regards the institutions of military democracy. The armed population was not the holder of supreme power anymore. Gradually, power was concentrating in the hands of the Bulgar 'tsar' ('malik,' according to Ibn Fadlan), who like Kievan princes Igor and Svyatoslav was a supreme ruler of all tribes and dynasties inhabiting the Volga-Kama Region.

Initially, the Bulgar ruler acts as a military leader of the population (union of tribes) organising campaigns against neighbours and receiving his share for that. A similar role of the leader can be traced among all cattle breeding peoples of the Eurasian steppes since the Hunnish period. However, by the beginning of the 10th century not only the military but supreme legal and civil power was being concentrated in his hands. According to Turkic traditions, the leader of a state or population was also a pontiff (in early state formations this is noticeable in the sacralisation of the ruling dynasty). The Islamisation of society had not drastically impacted the role of the Bulgar ruler. According to Ibn Fadlan's notes, tsar Almysh acts

as the supreme religious and legal authority in the state. Despite his position, a complete detachment from society is not the case. He is available ('... everybody who comes to the tsar, young and elder'; 'when the tsar rides a horse, he is alone, without a lad, and there is nobody with him'), furthermore, he performs common bureaucratic duties, for instance, he meets embassies and performs customs inspection of merchant ships on his own. In this period the Bulgar ruler surely sharply differs from his apotheosised suzerain, the Khazar Khagan, who in front of the population of his capital appeared only three times a year. During that time, with the strong relics of a military democracy remaining, the Bulgar 'tsar' could not be a sole ruler. Four tsars (princes) of subordinate tribes were under his control. Ibn Fadlan also called them 'maliks,' meaning rulers. These leaders of tribes together with the closest relatives of the eltabar constituted a kind of council for the ruler. The entrenched court ceremonies also mentioned by Ibn Fadlan to a certain extent indicate the permanent operation of this council. This advisory body had a lot of executive power, particularly of a military and diplomatic nature, and if it was not limited, in any case it shared power with the monarch.

One more institute that used to be public administration but was now of an organisational nature was the congress of free commoners (assembly of militaries—kurultai). This institute descended from the tribal assemblies of the previous age and in the 10th century was already more of an anachronism and performed only legitimate affirmative functions. Dzhien was called by the ruler for the national approval of solutions to the most important issues facing society and also to check the military condition of the population of troops (chiru). The author of 'Risale' mentions two dzhien that he participated in. One of them, on 16 May 922 'the tsars of his land, the leaders, and population of his country came together' to participate in the official ceremony of the adoption of Islam. The dzhien called by Almysh at the end of June of the same year on the river Dzhavshyr was held with the involvement of not only Bulgars but also other tribes of the state, in-

cluding Esegels and Suvars. In all likelihood, besides the discussion of various other issues at the meeting, it was decided to build a new state capital.

Due to the intensification of the feudalisation and Islamisation of society, the social and political structures of society underwent significant changes in the latter half of the 10–11th centuries. To a certain extent this was due to the fall of the Khazar Khaganate—the former suzerain of Volga Bulgaria and the success of central authority in consolidating the unity of the country. Further spread of feudal relations led to a decline of the social and political institutions of the military democracy age. The *dzhien* from the assembly of the entire population gradually transforms into an assembly of communities (associations) based on the territorial and not congeneric principle. As an example of such communities we can mention the *temtyuz*, *sobekulyan*, *chelmat*, etc., which were recorded in Russian chronicles [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, II, p. 626]. The decline in the significance of *dzhien* in the political life of the state resulted in a decline in the role of the militia, even though the latter existed right up until the Mongol conquests.

The end of the country's unification process and the consolidation of the individual rule of a ruler resulted in the disappearance of another outdated institute from the political arena—that is, the council of 'princes.' Its functions were handed over to an administrative apparatus headed by a 'vizier.'

Bulgar society at the beginning of the 10th century already had a fairly complicated social structure, but the extreme scarcity of written sources prevents researchers from reconstructing it. One additional issue is the complicated intertwining of traditional congeneric titulature with official state titles. This unique conglomeration of titles and epithets is not unique only to pre-Mongol Bulgaria. We also observe a similar picture in Ulus of Jochi and later Tatar states. This tradition has its roots in the early Middle Ages. The Turkic Khaganate that represented the symbiosis of the congeneric organisation of ancient Turks ('beks—kara budun') and the state management system is an example of such syncretism ('Eternal Turkic El'). For

this reason, it is impossible to construct, for example, a clear feudal hierarchical ladder as was found in Western Europe. The difficulties start even from the titulature of the Bulgar ruler, whom the Islamic authors called *tsar* ('malik'), but Russian chroniclers called 'Prince of the Bulgars.' In Tatar historical manuscripts and folk literature he was referred to by the traditional Turkic title of *khan*. Some historians assume that the title of 'khan' did not exist in the social terminology of pre-Mongol Bulgaria at all, and that 'it appeared' in the Middle Volga Region 'following the establishment of the Golden Horde in the middle of the 13th century' [Fakhrutdinov, 1984, p. 25]. The lack of said title in the written sources of the pre-Mongol period is considered an argument by supporters of this view.

Indeed, sources that made it to our days contain scarce information about social terms. For instance, in the work 'Murib an bad ajaib al-magrib' by al-Gharnati, the supreme hierarch of Volga Bulgaria is referred to by the term of 'malik' (*tsar*), which is universal for the Islamic East. For this reason, more specific information about Bulgar rulers can only be distilled from 'Risale' by Ibn Fadlan and 'Tarikh-i Beyhaki' by Abu-l Hasan Beyhaki. In the first source the Bulgar ruler *Shilki* (*Silki*) and his son *Almish* (*Almush/Almas*) that ruled the country at the end of the 9—the beginning of the 10th centuries are called 'Bulgar *yiltivar* (*bltivar*, *elteber*).' This socionym in the form of 'bltivar' is also found in the works by Beyhaki in regard to the predecessor of 'tsar' Abu Ibrahim Muhammad, who ruled at the end of the 10th century. Thus, the term 'yiltivar' or 'bltivar' could be used to denote Bulgar rulers, at least since the latter half of the 9th and up to the end of the 10th centuries. The etymology of this word has different variants. A. Khalikov, with reference to 'Mustafad al-akhbar' by Sh. Marjani, put forward a variant of 'beltuvar' ('belekvar' according to Sh. Marjani) meaning a 'sensible man,' 'scholar,' or 'born marked' [Khalikov, 1991, p. 146]. Sh. Marjani himself gives weight to his words with reference to Abu-Ishak al-Istakhri, who in his work 'Kitab masalik almamalik' (930–933) wrote the following:

'In their (Bulgar and Khazar) language their tsars are called 'belek' and 'beg' [Marjani, 1989, p. 65]. In our opinion, researchers who are closer to reality see parallels between the 'yiltivar' of Ibn Fadlan and ancient Turkic 'elteber,' meaning a ruler of a large nation (tribe) subject to the Turkic Khagan and in fact the highest administrative position in 'the eternal Turkic el' [Kychanov, 1997, p. 104]. Later elteber (eltabar, ilitver) was also preserved in the socio-political structure of the Khazar Khaganate. In the latter half of the 7–10th centuries this term was used to name rulers of certain large nations, including the Volga Bulgars, who were vassals of the Khazar Khagan (Khaganbek). For this reason, the socionym 'eltabar' shall be considered as an epithet showing the degree of sovereignty of Bulgar rulers. It should be noted that this epithet at the time of Ibn Fadlan could have been used to denote the heads of other large tribes of the Bulgar union, for example, the Suvar. The author of the 'History of Aghvank' Movses Kaghankatvatsi asserts that the ruler of the Hunno-Savirs in the Caucasus held the title of alp-ilitver (major eltabar) [Movses Kaghankatvatsi, 1984, p. 123].

'Tarikh-i Beyhak' (the 12th century) contains information about the ruler of the Bulgars, emir Abu Ishak Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn B.l.t.var, who in 415/1024–1025 sent presents to the sovereign of Khorasan and money for the construction of a mosque in Sabzevar and Khosrowjerd [Zakhod er, 1967, p. 46]. Ibn Fadlan also used the Arab title of 'emir' (sovereign, coming from the word 'amr'—that is, to rule, order) with regard to the Bulgar ruler only once, in the khutbah on his behalf: 'Save your servant Jafar ibn Abdallah, Bulgar emir, Mavla (customer) Emirül Müminin.' 'Emirül Müminin' (sovereign of the faithful) was one of the titles of the Baghdad caliph (at the same time it was implied that the supreme sovereign—that is, 'al-malik'—is Allah).

At the same time, officially the term 'emir' was used to name rulers of all Islamic regions (states) recognising the supremacy (sometimes only spiritual) of the Caliph, regardless of whether it is the semi-indepen-

dent bukhhar khudats, or Khwarezm-Shahs of Mawarannahr, or the absolutely politically independent sultans of Gazna. For this reason, in this case the Arab title 'emir' with regard to the Bulgar ruler can serve only as a socionym, or epithet, indicating his degree of sovereignty. In fact, in 922 or a bit later the term 'eltabar,' indicating dependence from the Khazar Khagan (Khagan of Khazars), was changed or replaced by the term 'emir,' affirming nominal vassalage from the Baghdad Caliph. The entrenchment of Islamic traditions in society led to an improvement of the position of Arab social terminology as well. The term emir was also used to name the rulers of large cities or separate regions ('princelands') of the state. The more high-sounding epithet 'the great emir' was used with regard to the head of state. For this reason, depending on the degree of sovereignty, the Arab title of 'emir' was identical to the Slav title of 'prince,' and in Russian chronicles Bulgar rulers are referred to only as 'princes.' This in turn causes some difficulties in understanding the essence of events and makes information from the chronicles of little use in the study of the sociopolitical structure of Bulgar society. For instance, who was 'the Prince of the Bulgars' who 'escaped on a horse with minor družhina' from the burning city of Oshel in 1220? The ruler of this region, or the ruler of the state? And who was 'the Prince of the Bulgars' who poisoned the Polovtsian khan Aepa and his sons in 1117, or 'the Prince of the Bulgars' who fought in the lands of Mordovian prince Puresh in 1228?

In our opinion, the emergence of the general Turkic title of 'khan' only in the Bulgar-Tatar socio-political hierarchy during the Golden Horde does not have any logical basis. Traditionally, the rulers of all ethnopolitical formations closely linked to the Volga Bulgars are referred to as khans: the Dunai Bulgars, Pechenegs, and Kipchaks. S. Pletneva also mentioned the weighty position of the khans of the Bulgar hordes of the Don Region in the political system of the Khazar Khaganate in the latter half of the 8–the beginning of the 9th centuries [1976, p. 57].



The title of 'khan' used in the meaning of leader/military leader of a tribe or union of tribes was recorded for the first time in Chinese sources ('Tun tszyan tsi shi ben mo') with regard to the leader of toba Lin,' who reigned in the first half of the 2nd century [Kychanov, 1997, p. 58]. In the meaning of monarch, the sovereign ruler of the country khans are recorded in all medieval Turkic and Mongol political entities, including the Ulus of Jochi and Tatar Khanates. It is known that in the Ulus of Jochi sovereign rulers—that is, the Jochids—were referred to as 'khans' ('tsars' in Russian sources), but officially their degree of sovereignty was determined by the title/epithet 'sultan.' The fact that in this case the socionym 'sultan' is not a traditional title but merely an epithet indicates not only its place in front of the proper name (according to the logic of Turkic speech titles are placed after the proper name, while socionyms/epithets are put in front), but in some cases it also indicates the parallel use with the already-forgotten by that time socionym 'khakan' ('tsar of tsars'), as in the title of a Crimean ruler from the beginning of the 16th century 'the great sultan, khakan Mengli Giray khan.' M. Usmanov refers to traditional titles as 'permanent titles,' noting that often they were not mentioned in official documents, for instance, in the phrasing 'the fair sultan Tokhtamysh' [Usmanov, 1979, pp. 156, 157].

Throughout the history of Volga Bulgaria the title 'khan' was indeed used with regard to the rulers of the country and was their permanent title. Thus, the top of hierarchical ladder was occupied by the khan, which in line with his status was called 'eltabar' (the 9–10th centuries) or 'emir' (the 10–the beginning of the 13th centuries). According to A. Khalikov, the Bulgar tsars of the pre-Mongol period likely came from the Barsil tribe [Khalikov, 1991, pp. 40, 55]. Taking into consideration the position of this nation in the Khazar Khaganate, this statement is quite logical. According to the data from 'Armenian Geography,' Khagans from the ruling dynasty of Ashina married girls from the Barsil tribe [Artamonov, 1936, p. 104]. As some of the first migrants, the Barsils occupied the central lands of the future Volga Bulgaria, and later the capital of the country

the Great city (of Bilyar/Bulgar) will be built specifically on their territory.

It is more difficult to determine the dynasty of Bulgar tsars. Sh. Marjani numbered them among the famous dynasty of Dulo (tolo, tele), to which, if we believe 'The Nominalia of Bulgar khans,' sovereigns of the Great and Danube Bulgaria belonged [Zakiyev, 2003, p. 326]. A. Khalikov did not exclude the possibility of the involvement of the Dulo clan in the formation of the local ruling dynasty but still leaned more towards the Ashina dynasty [Khalikov, 1991, p. 146]. Logically this can be explained first of all by the fact that the Barsil-Bulgar population of Dagestan, like the Savirs, were never adherents of the Dulo clan. Second, the latter could hardly keep their political positions as rulers of the Don Region Bulgars during the Khaganate, when almost half of Eastern Europe was ruled by the Nushibi branch of the Ashina dynasty, which was openly hostile to them. The latter is also backed by the fact that even in the 11th century certain rudimentary branches of this dynasty could have been preserved among the nomadic tribes of the Eastern European steppes, for instance, among the Kipchaks-Shars [IT, 2002, p. 346]. But the truly striking fact is that the ruling dynasty of Ashina was a sacred dynasty among the Turks and Khazars, while in the sources there are no signs of the sacralisation of the personality of the Bulgar sovereign (not his entire surname) in the 9–10th centuries. Only upon the formation of a unified Bulgarian nation in the latter half of the pre-Mongol period was the 'tsar's' power legitimised. The name in historical legends for the founder of the Bulgars was Iskander Dhul-Qarnayn (Aleksander of Macedon), who was also a founder of the ruling dynasty that 'built' the capital cities of Bilyar/Bulgar (Great City) and Great Bulgar (Bryakhimov). The relationship to the Quranic Dhul-Qarnayn, who, following the will of Allah, punished infidels and protected faithful ones, built cities for them not only to give 'sanctity' to the ruling dynasty but also to contribute to cementing the idea of his 'messianism,' uniqueness, and role as the continuer of the 'great ancestors' causes.

At the same time, another legend appeared among the most ardent adherents to the Muslim religion, according to which the

dynasty of Bulgarian tsars is linked if not with the Prophet Muhammad but at least with his closest asbabs (and it stated the name of the founder of the Bulgarian Muslim dynasty, Abdurrahman ibn Zuber) [Tatars, 2001, p. 58].

Were there any titles of heirs to the throne or princes in the socio-political system of Volga Bulgaria, such as the Tegins in the Turkic Khaganate or Oglals in the Ulus of Jochi? Probably, as princes carried the universal title of 'bey' here as in the Khazar Khaganate [Semenov, 1994, p. 70], which is also evidenced by a later legend about the Bulgar Khan Abdullah and his sons Altyn Bey and Alim Bey. Both in the pre-Mongol and Golden Horde periods, princes could be assigned by the individual rulers of cities and regions and could be called 'emirs' according to their positions. For example, an epigraphic monument from Kazan (the 14th century) states that 'this is the place of burial of a great and honourable assistant of rulers, **an honoured Emir**, victorious, honourable and great, flags, victorious, two honours, pride of the family and faith, God's shade Hasan **bey** the son of **mir**Mahmud' [Yusupov, 1960, Table 2].

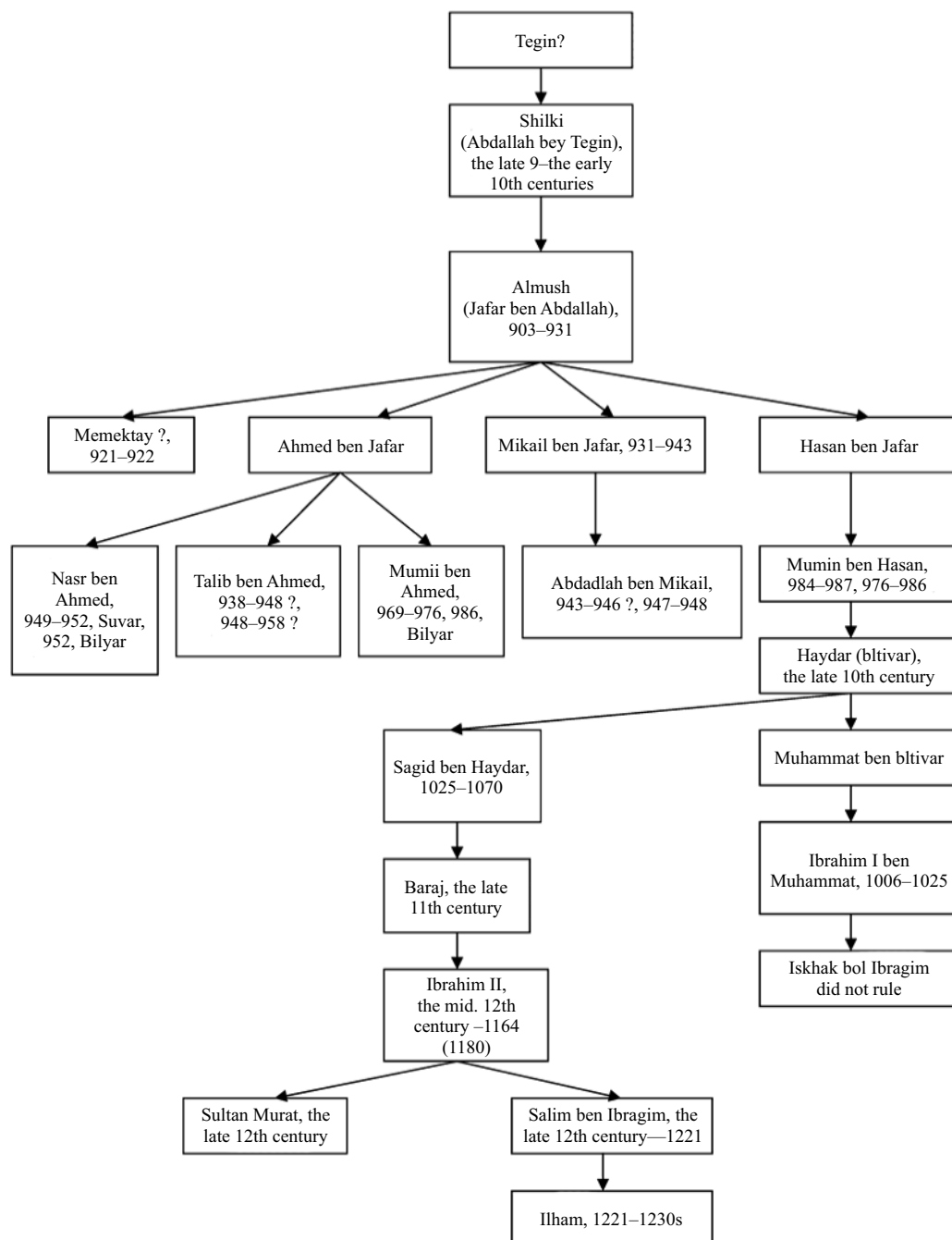
The representatives of the ruling dynasty were followed by the Turkic tribal noblemen—beks and biys (the relation between these titles has not been finally established yet, although most experts suggest their equivalence). The beginning of the formation of this social category dates back to the Hunnish era. In the Turkic Khaganate they already represented an integral part of the tribal organisation of the titular people to whom the supreme ruler of 'el' appealed. During the second mass migration of Turkic peoples (the 9–11th centuries) this title became widespread not only within the Eurasian steppes but also in Western Asia and Asia Minor. For example, 'bek' was a permanent title of the founders of the largest oriental empires: the sultans of the Seljuk and Ottoman dynasties [World History, 1957, p. 498; Rekhimova, 1996, 32 b.]. In terms of its status, it corresponded to the Arabic title of 'emir' and Slavic 'prince.' In the early pre-Mongol period of Volga Bulgaria, beks (biys) were primarily the heads of Tur-

kic dynasties and sometimes tribes that were a part of the state's population as well as the sons and relatives of the ruler.

The title of 'inal' was close to bek, which was also seen in Bulgarian monuments up to the Golden Horde period [Mukhametshin, Khakimzyanov, 1987, p. 101]. It is possible that this title was borne by the heads of Oghuz Turkic ethnic groups or Bulgarian aristocrats who had come from Middle Asia. Referring to Rashid al-Din, G. Yusupov stated: 'I do not exclude the possibility that this title was borne in Bulgaria by tsars subordinate to emir—princes of tribes mentioned by Ibn Fadlan in the 10th century, or that it was borne by a leader of the Oghuz Turks within the Bulgarian state' [Yusupov, 1960, pp. 102–103]. The presence in the territory of Volga Bulgaria in the 10–11th centuries of ethnic and cultural groups of a south-eastern origin is also confirmed by archaeological materials [Khlebnikov, 1984, p. 121].

Ibn Fadlan calls the heads of the tribes 'tsars of his land' and distinguishes them from the 'leaders.' It is hard to judge whether these 'leaders' were beks of a lower order or this term related to all representatives of the tribal and military elite. But at the same time, sources at the first half of the 10th century provide some information that the Bulgarian tsars had druzhina ('askhabs'—that is, friends according to Ibn Fadlan). As in all early states the ruler's druzhina included personally independent and free men from the middle and sometimes upper social groups. Some of the druzhina members were composed of hired servants from among the Varangians—the Ruses or Khwarezmians [Khalikov 1991, pp. 144, 153]. Other tribal leaders could have such druzhinas, who recognising the supreme authority of the tsar, could still rise against him with weapons in their hands [Khuzin, 1997, pp. 40, 41]. These druzhinas underwent gradual stratification. The most notable and powerful druzhina members of the tsar, who were called 'kuvvads' (companions), began to simultaneously act as representatives of the central government in the regions [Grekov, 1959, p. 164]. Alyp druzhina members and Chura Batyrs commanding military forces (from the Old Turkic 'Cherig bagatur'—the

### The dynasty of the Bulgar rulers of the pre-Mongol period



troop commander) will later become the basis for the further formation of the state military class.

The feudalisation of the Bulgarian society accompanied by the centralisation of the country and the fading of tribal differences brought about significant changes to the social structure. Representatives of the titled

nobility (members of the royal family, bey princes, inals), appointed the rulers of regions or cities, were called 'emirs.' Moreover, the socionym 'emir,' which indicated the level of sovereignty, position, was also becoming a term defining nobility or its holder or family, like in the formula 'Shahid Hajji, the son of Mir Ibrahim inal.'

Of course, 'khoja' was the most numerous category of Bulgarian feudal lords in the late pre-Mongol period (as well as in the subsequent Golden Horde period). The title of 'khoja' (lord, master) was borne by feudal lords of the middle order, and this title was passed from one generation to another, with the preservation of possessions, as evidenced by an epitaph dated 1308 found in the ancient town of Bolghar, which recorded a whole dynasty of khojas: 'Myun-Suvar family... Ali khoja's son, Atryach khoja's, (his) son Abu Bekir khoja's, (his) son Alp khoja's grave-stone' [Mukhametshin, Khakimzyanov, 1987, p. 101]. G. Yusupov connects this socionym with clerical titles—confessiononyms [Yusupov, 1960, p. 102]. It is possible that 'khoja' was a universal term meaning a feudal lord owning small iqta land plots.

According to a number of sources, in the latter half of the pre-Mongol period, the serving military class of yuvari or yori ('man of war') was completely formed. The existence of this social category already in the pre-Mongol period is confirmed by the text of the gravestone dated to the 14th century: 'Brave Ars Siraj yory's son Yagkub yori, (his) son Ayub yori, (his) son Hasan yori, (his) son Gali yori, (his) son Atryach yori, (his) son Muhammad mir Mahmud.' A. Khalikov separates these hereditary military men from the hired guardsmen of the rulers. According to the researcher, Alyp Bagaturs, who were the basis of this class, were given land plots for their successes, which transformed them into landowners in the future [Khalikov, 1991, p. 153].

The presence of some women's titles, such as 'khatun' (wife of a ruler, khan, emir), 'bike' (wife of a bek-prince), 'alti,' or 'ilchi' (lady, mistress, owner) certainly suggests significant rights and the independent position of wives of the Bulgarian feudal lords [Yusupov, 1960, p. 105]. The participation of a ruler's wife in

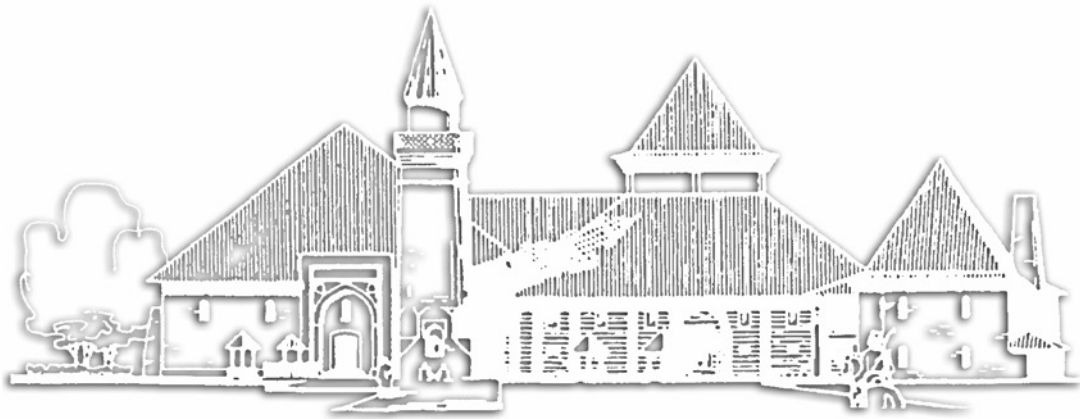
official ceremonies was described by Ibn Fadlan. These titles that appeared in the ancient Turkic period will be also used by the Bulgars in the Golden Horde era.

The structure of the Islamic clergy in the country was built on a different principle. One of the unique features of Islam was in the absence of the rigid hierarchy of clerical titles, which is found in Christian countries. There is no principle of 'priesthood' of the clergy; therefore, it was replaced by the degree of the priest's education or the position occupied. Sheikhs were the most respected persons, who in fact controlled the whole Islamic ummah of the country (Sheikh al-Islām, Sheikh ash-Sheikh, 'Sheikh'—the elder), many of whom received a fairly high level of education from prominent Muslim theologians in Eastern training centres and headed religious communities having returned home. Maybe, the tradition of electing a mufti—an expert in sharia, who adopted decisions on controversial issues in the form of a special conclusion (fatwa)—had already emerged by this time.

Sheikhs were followed by imams ('standing ahead,' priors of cathedral mosques, spiritual leaders, and preachers-khatibs), mullahs ('lords,' ministers of worship, experts in religion), muezzins ('notifying,' mosque attendants), etc. A cult of worship was established of the people who undertook a pilgrimage to the sacred Mecca—that is, Hajji. Faqihs (legal scholars) stood apart, the most authoritative of whom could be elected as muftis and qadis (judges) administering justice under sharia law. And finally, Islam was the most closely related with the education system. To a significant extent, it was the responsibility of parish mullahs, although there were special teachers: mudarrises (teachers of fiqh in madrasahs), mugallims (teachers in madrasahs), khalfs (teachers in maktabas).

## Section 3

# **Volga Bulgaria: Cities and Rural Settlements**



## CHAPTER 1

### Bulgaria: a country of cities

#### 1. Bulgar cities and the problems of their origin

*Fayaz Khuzin*

To date, approximately 170 ancient towns of the pre-Mongol period have been discovered on the territory of Volga-Kama Bulgaria. They include the remains of military fortresses, feudal castles, and real towns. Historians considered a medieval town as a multifunctional social organism within the structure of the feudal state. This is first of all a fortified settlement with administrative-political, military, cultural, and trade-and-craft functions.

The following may be included in the list of pre-Mongol cities of Volga Bulgaria:

1. Barsko-Yenaruskinskoye ancient town: the town's kremlin (around 3 ha) with a broad trading quarter (63.5 ha) on the right bank of the Sulcha River.

2. Shchebenskoye I ancient town: the town's kremlin (3 ha) with a trading quarter 40 ha in size.

3. Bilyar ancient town (fortified territory: 620 ha; area together with the suburbs: 800 ha): the remains of *the Great City* described in Russian chronicles or *the Bolgar* of Eastern authors, the pre-Mongol capital of the state.

4. Gorkinskoye II ancient town: a large town (212.5 ha) with a small trading quarter (12 ha) located only 3–4 km far from Bilyar. It is not identified yet whether they existed contemporaneously.

5. Krestovo-Gorodishchenskoye ancient town: the remains of Bulgar town 'Simbir' (according to A. Khalikov) located at the trade fair across the Volga.

6. Suvar ancient town (around 90 hectares): the remains of Suvar, the centre of the 'principality' of the 10th century.

7. Kokryatskoye ancient town (94.5 ha in size): a town located along the trade route Bolgar—Kiev, which had the functions of a manzil (a place of residence).

8. Shmelevskoye ancient town: the remains of a medium town (28.3 ha) on the right bank of the Utkha River.

9. Bolgar ancient town (a fortified territory in the 12th - the beginning of the 13th century, 24–25 hectares in size) - the remains of Outer Bulgar (on the Volga) or Bryakhimov, known as the biggest trading location of the country;

10. Krasnoklyuchinskoye ancient town: a large town (67 ha), the materials of which contained remains of craft activities.

11. Staro-Nokhratskoye ancient town: a small town (3.8 ha) with a trading quarter (20 ha), there were traces of production activities among the materials.

12. Romodanskoye I ancient town: the town's kremlin (2.8 ha) with a vast trading quarter (approximately 100 ha).

13. Zapadno-Voykinskoye ancient town: a town of a medium size (11 ha) with a craft trading quarter.

14. The ancient town of Gorodok: a large town with a craft trading quarter (total area of about 85 ha), located on the left bank of the Kama.

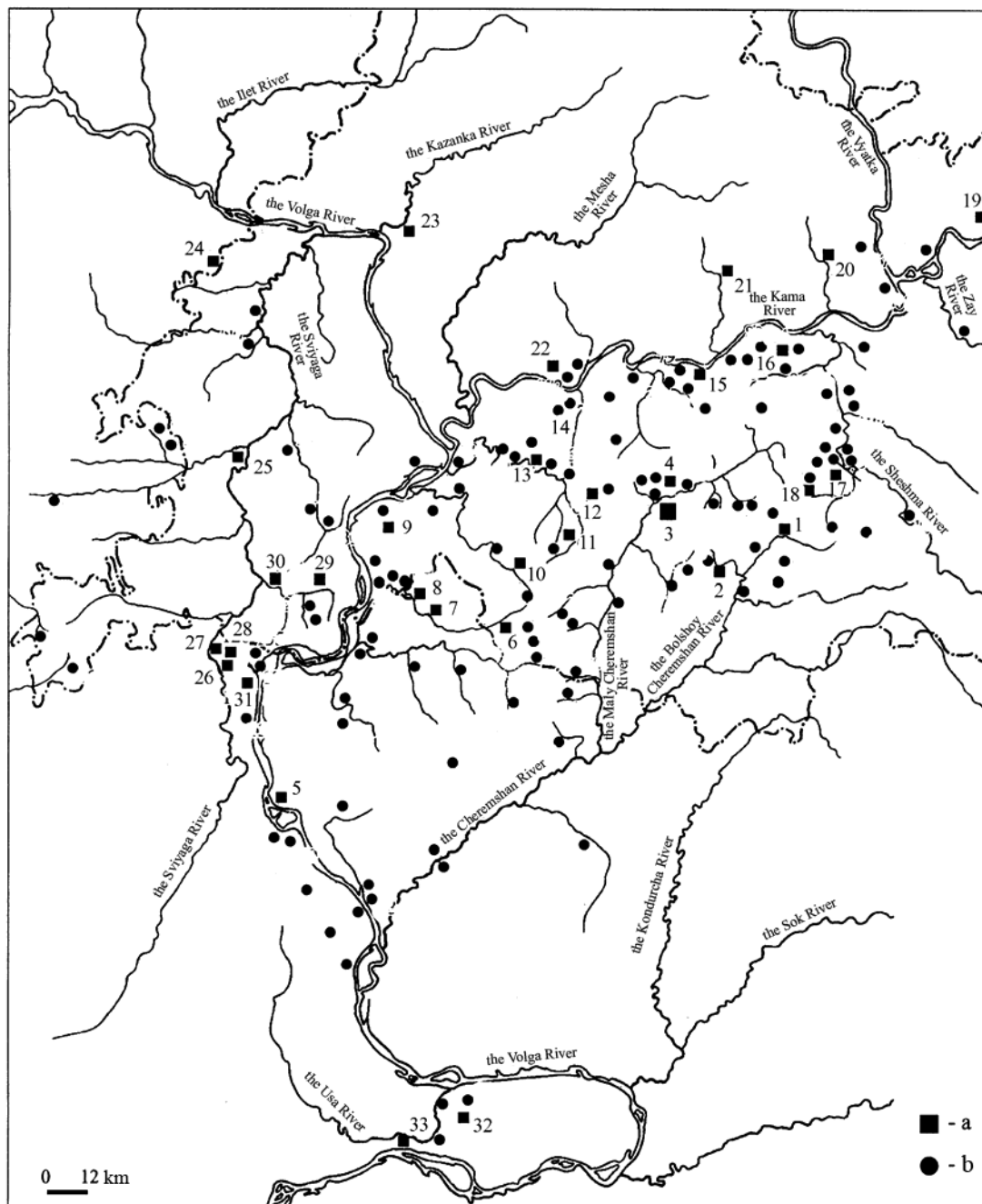
15. Ancient town: the remains of the town of Juketau (fortified area equals 5.8 ha) with trading quarters and the suburbs amounting to approximately 15 ha.

16. Malopolyanskoye ancient town: the town's kremlin (around 1 ha) with a wide trading quarter (90 ha).

17. Novosheshminskoye I ancient town: the remains of a medium-sized town (fortified territory amounting to 16 ha).

18. Yekaterinino-Slobodinskoye I ancient town: the remains of a medium-sized Bulgar town (18 ha) with a trading quarter 30 ha in size.

19. Yelabuga (Chertovo) ancient town: the kremlin of Yelabuga (3 ha) with a suburban trading quarter on the right bank of the Kama.



A map of the ancient towns of Bulgaria from the pre-Mongol period: a—cities, b—feudal estates and fortresses. The numbers correspond to those on the list of the Bulgar cities mentioned in the text

20. Kirmenskoye ancient town: the remains of Kirmenchuk, which was a town of the 14th century described in chronicles as existing in the pre-Mongol period.

21. Challynskoe ancient town: the town's kremlin (1.2 ha) with a large trading quarter (nearly 60 ha), the pre-Mongol borders of which have not been identified yet.

22. Kashanskoe I ancient town: the remains of the annalistic Kashan of the 14th century which used to exist in the pre-Mongol time.

23. The ancient town of Kazansky Kreml: the town's kremlin (around 5 ha) with a craft trading quarter, the size of which has not been identified yet.

24. Almenevskoye ancient town: the remains of a medium-sized Bulgar town (34 ha) located in the basin of the Sviyaga.

25. Deushevskoye ancient town: the remains of a medium-sized town (over 28 ha) with a suburban trading quarter on the left bank of the Sviyaga.

26. Staroaleyskoye ancient town: the remains of one of the biggest cities of Bulgaria (230 ha) on the right bank of the Sviyaga.

27. Krasnosyundyukovskoe 1 ancient town: the remains of a medium Bulgar town with the fortified territory being around 50 ha and a suburban trading quarter (75 ha in size).

28. Krasnosyundyukovskoe 2 ancient town: the remains of a town with a fortified space of about 10 ha and a suburban trading quarter (24 ha in size). In a well-argued manner, A. Kochkina treats the latter two towns with five neighbouring suburban settlements as a single complex—a city agglomeration with an overall size of 177 ha, created not later than the beginning—first half of the 10th century [Kochkina, 1997, p. 185].

29. Bogdashkinskoye ancient town (a fortified territory of 77 ha): a possible remain of Oshel as described in chronicles.

30. Khulashskoye ancient town (a fortified territory of 11.3 ha): the remains of a small Bulgarian town.

31. Gorodishchenskoye ancient town: the remains of a large Bulgar city with a fortified territory of approximately 81 ha on the right bank of the Volga.

32. Murom Townlet (around 400 ha in size): the remains of one of the biggest Bulgar cities on the Samara bend, the centre of Bulgaria's southern lands.

33. Mezhdurechenskoye ancient town: the remains of a medium-sized Bulgar town (24 ha) on the Volga.

34. Treskinskoye ancient town: a medium-sized Bulgar town (16 ha) on the left bank of the Sura.

35. Yulovskoye ancient town: the remains of the administrative-political centre of the Penza group of Bulgars. The presented list undoubtedly requires further corrections which may be added after archaeological excavations on the sites of these monuments.

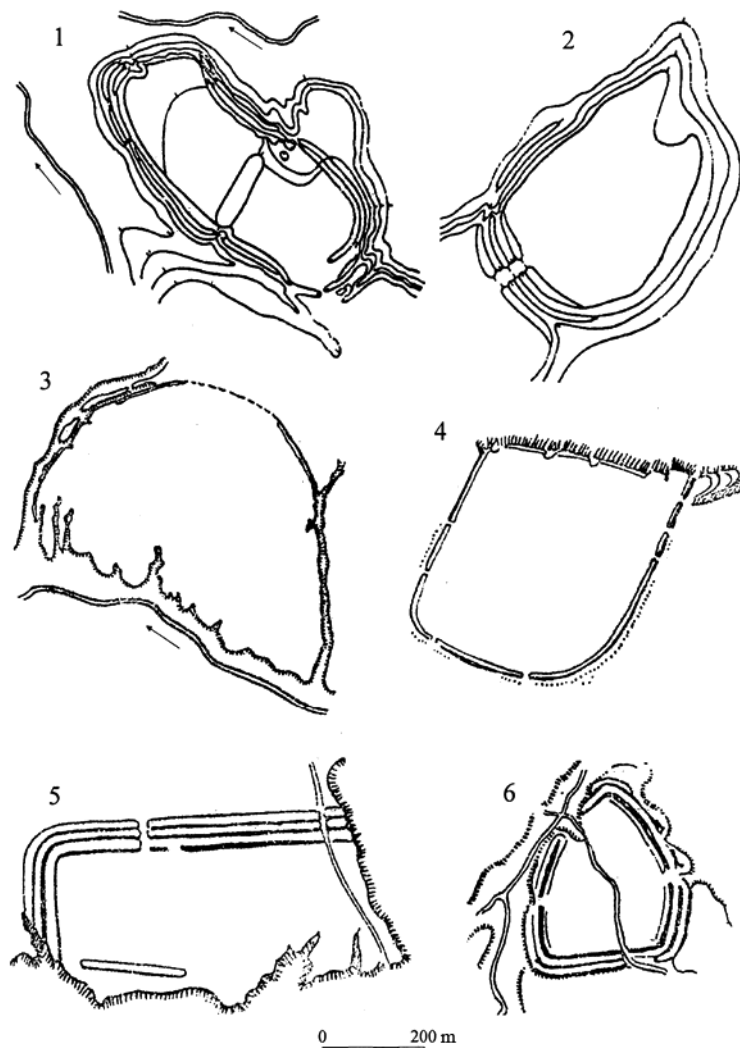
Two monuments in the Permian Cis-Urals Region are considered by historians to be Bul-

gar cities located outside the main territory of Volga Bulgaria: Rozhdestvenskoye ancient town with a neighbouring trading quarter and a burial site on the Obva River (the right tributary of the Kama) and Kylasovo ancient town, or Anyushkar, on the Inva River near its influx into the Kama [Krylasova, Belavin, 2000; Lents, 2000]. Anyushkar's strong system of fortifications, in the opinion of G. Lents, was 'unusual for Rodanovsky-type ancient towns' and was likely built by the Bulgars. A. Belavin identifies the first of them with Kasaba Afkula, and the second one, with the city of Chulyman known from Arabic sources of the 13–15th centuries [Belavin, 2000, p. 123]. In both settlements traces of craft activities were discovered such as pottery horns, traces of blacksmithing, bone-carving, jewellery, and even glass productions. According to researchers, most of their inhabitants were natives of Volga Bulgaria [Krylasova, Belavin, 2000, p. 326]. A. Belavin assumed that a mosque had been built for them. The deceased were buried in an Islamic cemetery.

The biggest discovered—that is a non-fortified, trade-and-craft settlement of the pre-Mongol Bulgars—was located on the site of Izmerskoye I ancient settlement on the Kama River, which occupied the territory of no more than 60 ha [Kazakov, 1999]. Based on the huge amount of discovered artefacts (coins of the 10–11th centuries, trading equipment, items of the Western and Eastern import, remains of craft production), the monument's researcher Ye. Kazakov considers it to be the biggest international trading location of the Bulgars situated on the Kama. We are inclined to identify it as 'the ferriage of the Rusesses' described by Ibn Fadlan and the meeting place of the Baghdad embassy with the Bulgar tsar in May 922.

Even a cursory glance at the plans of Bulgar towns reveals their complex socio-topographic structure. Bilyar and Valynskoye ancient towns have complex layouts, consisting of three or even four topographic parts. The following towns may be distinguished: 1) with two fortified parts and strongly-pronounced traces of settlements, which were adjacent to their ramparts and could be preliminarily defined by the territory of trading quarters: Krasnosyundyukovskoye I, Yekaterinino-Slobodinskoye, Gorkinskoye II, and





The plans of the Bulgar cities of Trans-Kama Region: 1–Romodanskoye I, 2–Shcherbenskoye I, 3–Krasnoklyuchinskoye, 4–Shcherbetskoye, 5–Zapadno-Voykinskoye, 6–Staronokhratskoye archaeological sites

other ancient towns; 2) with two fortified parts and without traces of neighbouring settlements: Gorodishchenskoye on the Volga, Bogdashkinskoye, Staroaleyskoye, and others; 3) with one fortified part and an unfortified suburb: Suar, Juketau, Barsko-Yenarusskinskoye ancient towns. Unfortunately, as of now we do not know whether the vast settlements, which were adjacent to the town walls, would always represent an integral part of the town as their trade-and-craft quarters (posads). This must be proved archaeologically. Without conducting targeted research, it is impossible to understand the significance

of certain topographic parts within the general urban structure.

As is known, the emergence and further development of medieval towns were preconditioned not only by general regularities but also by peculiar and sometimes essential features that had appeared due to natural geographic conditions in certain regions of the country as well as by the uneven development of feudal relations within them, by different economic and demographic potentials of these regions, and some other factors. All this inevitably leads to a variety of forms of the urban structure or to hierarchical ranking of towns.

They differed from each other by the prevalence or conversely by the comparatively weak development of certain functions (political-administrative, military and defensive, or cultural and religious) and ultimately by the position they occupied in the state system. To date, we can distinguish such categories of cities as the nation-wide capital centre with its vivid multi-functionality, which is Bilyar (Bolgar, the Great City); centres of independent lands-principalities: Suar, Oshel, Juke-tau, Kashan, Alabuga, Murom on the Samara Bend, Yulovo on the Sura River, Afkula in the Permian Cis-Urals; medium-sized and small towns: Stary Nokhrat, Khulash, Shcherbenskoye I ancient town—the centres of the rural district; large trading or trade-and-craft centres: Bolgar ancient town, Izmerskoye, Lai-shevo settlements, ancient Kazan. A more precise definition of these cities' social status will be possible only after an in-depth study by way of excavations.

The origin of Bulgar cities is related to the problem of the Bulgars' sedentarisation and the time when their first stationary settlements emerged. These processes took place in the early stages of Bulgar society.

The historical content of the early-Bulgar period was defined long ago by V. Smolin. He believed that during the 7–9th centuries the Bulgars, who were already familiar with agriculture and handicrafts, 'start to change their steppe tent-like yurts into wooden houses and their occasional encampments into towns fortified with ramparts and ditches.' The following cities emerge: Bulgar (within the modern suburb of Bilyarsk), which became the state capital, and Suvar, whose golden age occurs in the second pre-Mongol period [Smolin, 1925, pp. 33–34]. V. Smolin's fundamental correctness was proved over the whole course of development of Bulgar archaeology in the previous century.

In recent years a number of archaeologists (Ye. Kazakov, P. Starostin, Ye. Begovatov, K. Rudenko) have decided that the upper limit of the early-Bulgar period should finish in the last quarter of the 10th century. In Bulgarian Studies the generally accepted point of view is that the early-Bulgarian period was a pre-state, mostly nomadic and pagan period in the history of the Volga Bulgars. According to the

supporters of the new concept, until the last quarter of the 10th century the Bulgars did not have a state, they led a purely nomadic way of life and continued to worship their pagan gods.

This concept is in conflict with sources.

The climatic, natural, and geographic conditions of the Middle Volga Region were never favourable for year-round nomadism. Already in the early stages of 'acquiring a Motherland,' a part of the population—the poorest first of all—had to settle down and start engaging in agriculture and crafts. It is improbable that the nomads could leave such a huge necropolis, like Tankeyevsky, which, according to preliminary estimates, contained over 5 thousand graves. Apparently, a major part of a sedentary population inhabited its surroundings.

Before migrating to the Middle Volga, being part of early-feudal Khazaria, the Bulgars were already familiar with sedentism, engaged in agriculture, participated in the construction of cities and fortresses, religious wars, and foreign-policy actions, thus gaining a rich experience of life under the conditions of nationhood. Undoubtedly, this experience considerably accelerated the process of state formation in their new Motherland. It is no coincidence that already at the beginning of the 10th century, the Volga Bulgars started minting coins (902–908) and in 922 officially adopted Islam as a monotheistic religion which met the new economic and sociopolitical conditions. Baghdad's embassy visited a country whose population already had firm traditions of sedentism, having their own cities (even though at the initial stage of development) and villages, but not a nomadic society of pastoralists, which is unthinkable in the conditions of the Middle Volga.

It is important to emphasise that, according to the data provided by Arabic geographer of the early 10th century Ibn Rustah, whose work was written in the period between 903 and 913 based on earlier sources, the bulk of the Bulgars had professed Islam before its official adoption, their settlements had mosques where elementary religious schools with muezzins and imams were present [Khvolson, 1869, pp. 22–23]. Ibn Fadlan saw Muslim Baranjars in 922 who already had mosques before the arriv-



Ramparts of the Gorkinsky II ancient town

al of the Baghdad embassy [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 138]. Despite the fact that these sources say nothing about whether the Bulgars had towns, it is hard to imagine that he spoke about the nomadic Muslims who did not have sedentary settlements.

'The Bulgars are an agrarian nation,' noted Ibn Rustah. According to academician B. Grekov, Ibn Fadlan witnessed the 'well-established agriculture and individual development of land' by the Bulgars. [Grekov, 1945, p. 4]. Agriculture not only satisfied the country's internal need for bread but also created a significant surplus export product. According to the Laurentian Chronicle, during the famine of 1024 in the lands of Suzdal the Rusessians set off along the Volga to Bulgaria, thus 'bringing home crops and sustaining themselves' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, 1962, I, p. 147]. But it is doubtful that the Bulgars, having barely mastered agricultural production in the third quarter of the 10th century, would have been able to export crops beyond their borders. Exporting requires that the population have a long and fairly stable agricultural tradition. But, in our opinion, the Bulgars had it. Many indus-

trial and agricultural skills mastered during the Khazar Khaganate were brought to Volga Bulgaria by migrants of the last wave at the end of the 9–beginning of the 10th centuries [Pletneva, 1997, p. 49]. These Bulgars, who had already been partially Islamicised and who led a sedentary life, could hardly be called nomads. And the archaeological data proves it.

Discoveries from burial sites dating from the end of the 7th - the beginning of the 8th century provide evidence of the first settlements by Bulgarian nomads, who had moved to the Middle Volga Region [Matveeva, 1997, p. 99]. Thus, G. Matveeva considers the ancient settlement at Sevryukayevskoye II one of the earliest permanent settlements of the Volga Bulgars. D. Stashenkov, who examined the item complex dating from the 6–8th centuries from the ancient town of Proletarsky at Samara Bend, concluded: 'For the first time in this region a significant number of fragments of amphorae and circular Saltovo-Mayaki ceramics, which mark the beginning of the process of sedentarisation by nomads of the Khazarian period, have been discovered at a settlement site' [Stashenkov, 1997, p. 76].

After studying new materials obtained from field examinations, Ulyanovsk archaeologist Yu. Semykin concluded that at the beginning of the early-Bulgar period there already existed seasonal lodgings like the ancient settlement of Abramovsky in the Middle Volga Region with a poor cultural layer as well as fortified settlements like Chertov Gorodok where they lived year round [Semykin, 1996, p. 74].

It is evident that the ancient settlements of Palitsinskoye and Kriushskoye are among ancient early-Bulgar settlements dating from the 9–11th centuries as are two settlements situated outside of the north-western fortifications of a Bulgar archaeological site in the lower reaches of the Malo-Iyerusalimsky ravine. During the excavation of Malo-Iyerusalimsky settlements 5 silver Samanid dirhams were discovered. The earliest coin was minted in 894/895 AD. A coin dating from 898/899 AD was discovered in one of the ground dwellings, while the latest coins are possibly from 913–932 [Starostin, 1999, p. 101].

Thus, according to the evidence, the emergence of permanent settlements among the Volga Bulgars took place earlier than the third quarter or the end of the 10th century. The Bulgars start to settle down almost immediately after their movement to the Middle Volga.

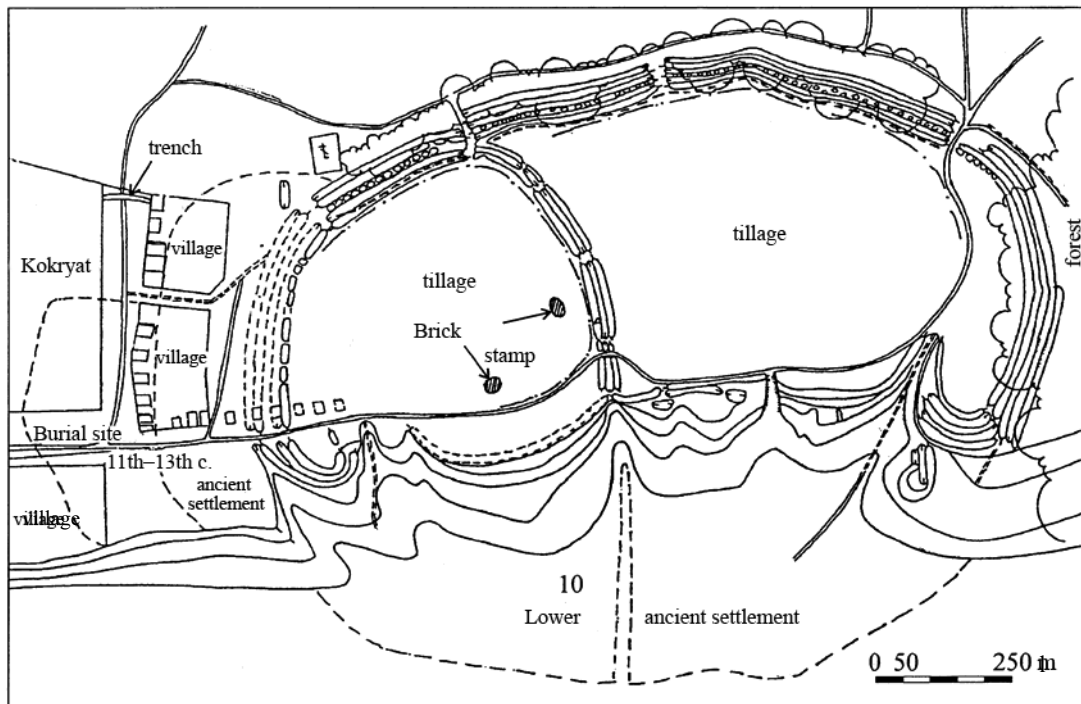
In the first half of the 10th century a great number of settlements appeared, including the trade and craft centres of Semenovskoye and Izmerskoye, where tens and hundreds of silver dirhams dating from 930–970 AD (the earliest of which is a Samanid dirham from 902–908 AD as well as a dirham issued by emir Mikail Ibn Jafar in the 920s) were found [Begovatov, 1998, p. 9; Kazakov, 1991, p. 29]. According to S. Valiullina, the collection of artefacts from Semenovskoye contains mainly items produced in specialised workshops in the Middle East that are frequently found at Bulgarian sites in the Middle Volga Region beginning in the 8–9th centuries [Valiullina, 2000, pp. 57, 62].

The pre-Mongol layers of the ancient towns of Bolgar, Suvar, and Bilyar, which undoubtedly arose at the beginning of the 10th century, contain almost identical and chronologically indistinguishable materials.

Bulgar and Suvar are mentioned in written sources of the first half of the 10th century beginning in the 920s. According to the stories of Ibn Fadlan, however, we know that as of 922 AD the Bulgars did not have large cities as in the East. At the same time, Ibn Fadlan discussed with 'tsar' Almush (Almış) a plan for the construction of a large fortress where they might protect themselves from their foes [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 121, 133, 141]. In the opinion of scholars, 'by 922 the construction of both the city of Bilyar (Bulgar?), far from the Volga, and another city of Bulgar, situated near a market on the bank of the Volga, where Ibn Fadlan had seen the Ruses,' had begun'; by 930 (or 950) they had become 'noticeable centres' [Machinsky, 1985, p. 7]. The existence of the (Outer) city of Bulgar, Suvar, and Bilyar (the capital city of Bulgar) in the first half of the 10th century is unanimously accepted by all experts in Bulgarian Studies. Thus, it follows that early materials extracted from ancient layers of these three monuments should serve as a benchmark for determining the chronology of other Bulgarian settlements.

Therefore, the end of the 9–first quarter of the 10th centuries undoubtedly represents the end stage of the process of sendentarisation for the Volga Bulgars, when permanent settlements appeared en masse. These processes took place against the backdrop of the formation of new public regulations, the emergence of early-feudal nationhood, the establishment of connections between neighbouring countries, and the establishment of diplomatic relations with distant Baghdad, which led to the adoption of the Islamic religion.

Academician M. Tikhomirov, a Soviet historiographer, formulated the problems tied to the discussion of the medieval city's genesis: he discussed this process in connection with the development of agriculture and trade in economic and feudal spheres as they pertain to social relations [Tikhomirov, 1956, p. 64]. This theory, which historians adhered to for a long time, has undergone quite a bit of revision and definition in the last two decades. A fruitful area of research for a number of contemporary scholars has been the idea of a close interdependence between the genesis and the subsequent development of nation-



Plan of the Kokryatsky ancient town  
(according to A. Khalikov)

hood in a number of medieval cities. According to these new concepts, cities 'emerge in a particular social and demographic environment, when the social organisation becomes so complicated that further life-sustaining activity becomes impossible without coordinating centres.' It is exactly in an environment full of social connections that cities, which are clusters of these connections, arise. Such a moment occurs during the last stage of primitive society, when large tribal and intertribal unions appear [Froyanov, Dvornichenko, 1988, p. 29]. The earliest cities, which had originally served as centres of such ethno-social institutions, mostly played the role of administrative, religious, or cultural, military-political hubs and trading centres. We cannot exclude the possibility of some concentration of trades that served the nobility in these cities, but their presence would not have been significant. In general, researchers tend to consider to a variety of options in respect of the origin and development of cities, which corresponds to their multiplicity of form and social structure.

The famous concept developed by A. Smirnov and N. Kalinin concerning the formation of Bulgarian cities based upon the conquest of late Gorodetsky (Imenkovsky) or even Ananinsky-Pyanoborsky patriarchal city-shelters by militant, Bulgarian feudal princes should be regarded only as a historical fact within the context of the development of Bulgarian feudal society [Smirnov, 1940, p. 55 ff.]. From the position of contemporary scholarship, A. Efimova's view regarding the genesis of a number of Bulgarian cities, which is similar to the aforementioned, should also be considered groundless. Proceeding from the thesis of the continual historical development of early medieval towns of the Volga-Kama Region, she tried—on the basis of late Gorodetsky (Imenkovsky) settlements—to describe the emergence of Bulgar on the Volga initially as a military fortress. It later became a trade-and craft centre [Efimova, 1957, p. 12]. In A. Efimova's opinion, at the foundation of the ancient town of Balymer lies 'a large village, which used to serve as the tribal centre of neighbouring urban settlements.'

Later, as a result of invasion by the Bulgars, it became a small feudal city. Suvar, however, unlike Bulgar or Balymer, was founded by one of the largest Bulgarian tribes as a fortress on a new site with no previous foundation layer. 'Bolgar and Suvar represent similar ways of city emergence via the formation of trade-and-craft quarters near walls of a feudal fortress,'—A. Efimova concluded [1957, p. 17].

Here we should mention Ye. Kazakov's hypothesis about the possible emergence of Bulgar, Suvar, and Bilyar on the foundation of tribal centres corresponding to ethnic groupings [Kazakov, 1967, p. 76].

In the 1970–1980s A. Khalikov and T. Khlebnikova addressed this topic, presenting their own theories on the founding of Bilyar and Bulgar. The former researcher was convinced that Bilyar, which Eastern sources called 'Bulgar,' was founded by Tsar Almush—Ja'far ibn 'Abdullah in 922 as the capital of the state [Khalikov, 1973, p. 94]. T. Khlebnikova believed that Bulgar, unlike Bilyar, developed from a feudal castle situated in the centre of a heavily-populated rural district during the feudal period in Bulgarian society as a nation began to take shape at the end of the 9–beginning of the 10th centuries [Khlebnikova, 1987, p. 52]. While this view deserves attention, we should, however, acknowledge that despite multiple large-scale archaeological excavations at this site over the course of many years, little is still known about Bolgar of the pre-Mongolian period. We still do not have enough evidence to sufficiently describe the urban character of the settlement in the 10–11th centuries.

A different theory concerning Bulgar cities' genesis and emergence was recently proposed by K. Rudenko [1999, p. 132]. Similar to Ye. Kazakov, he believes that Bulgar and Suvar served firstly as tribal centres. Thus, the first of them became the centre of the Bulgar tribe, and the second, the centre of the Suvar tribe. However, all attempts by scholars to situate 'the Bulgar tribe itself' within the wider confines of the ancient site of Bolgar should be recognised as purely hypothetical. In the pre-Mongol period Bilyar-the Great City was also named Bulgar. Moreover, the main archaeological site of the Bulgars who came from the

Azov Sea Region—Bolshetarkhansky burial site—is located in a completely different right bank of the Volga. And rather close to the ancient Bulgar site is Tankeyevsky burial site. Here most of the graves are those not of Bulgar peoples but of Cis-Kama and Cis-Uralic (Ugric-Finnish) origin. And since this was already a functioning burial site during the period when Bulgar first appeared on the Volga, it is unlikely that we will find a reason to look for the Bulgars themselves in the area. It is noteworthy that decorated clay pottery in the shape of modelled Polomsky-Lomovatovsky dishware with rope-comb and lattise-dyed ornamentation were discovered, as mentioned earlier, at one of the earliest 9–century settlements discovered on the left bank of the Malo-Iyerusalimsky ravine on the territory of the ancient town of Bulgar.

It is most likely that the Bulgars themselves occupied central densely-populated regions of the state in the basin of the Maly Chereysh, where their capital Bilyar-Bulgar was founded. The city was known in several Russian chronicles as 'the Great city of the silver Bulgars.' As is well-known, the ethnonyms 'Bilyar' and 'Bulgar' are often used in sources as synonyms. 'The Bilers—that is, Great Bulgaria'—are often mentioned in later documents, for example, in Giovanni da Pian del Carpine's report on the campaign by Mongol troops against the Mordvins and the Bulgars' [Giovanni da Pian del Carpine, 1957, pp. 47–48]. Moreover, the famous Polish scientist, philologist, and source expert M. Adamovic believes that the ethnonym 'Bilyar' is the original vernacular form of the name 'Bulgar'; the latter appeared later in Arabic sources and was not always treated as an ethnonym by the population [Adamovic, 1998, p. 163 ff.]. In the light of this, the suggestion that early Bulgar city on the Volga was a tribal centre seems groundless.

The theory that large and most famous of the Bulgar cities arose on the foundations of 'tribal centres,' and idea borrowed from the arsenal of ancient Russian archaeology, is also unacceptable for us because at that time, in the first quarter of the 10th century, there were no such existing tribes in Bulgarian society. They had almost completely disappeared due to processes taking place in the Eastern European



Ramparts of the Tatar Burnayevsky ancient town

steppes relating to the formation and subsequent fall of Great Bulgaria, the Khazar Khaganate due to stormy political events accompanied by mass migrations. The Bulgars-Bilers, Suvars, Bersula, Esegels, and others were not tribes in the traditional meaning but special ethnosocial groupings, a confederation of Bulgar tribes during a transitional period: they stood on the verge between the final decomposition of primitive tribal order and the appearance of a feudal type of nationhood. Therefore, it would not be accurate to refer to the original urban centres of such groups, members of which were not connected so much by ancestral ties as by neighbouring territorial relations, as 'tribal.' In all probability they were centres of fairly large territorial associations that it would be more appropriate to refer to as 'principalities.' Suvar, Oshel, Murom townlet, and later Yulovo were, in our opinion, the centres of such principalities.

Bilyar represents the second way in which a Bulgarian city might arise—it was founded from the start by a decree from the emir or malik as the state's capital. While agreeing with this fact, K. Rudenko, however, mistakenly attributes the appearance of Bilyar as a city to a period not later than the 11th century, when 'fortifications of the inner town were constructed around several small settlements (?).' 'At the same time, burial sites (for example, Bilyarsky II) functioned around them

on the adjacent territory' [Rudenko, 1999, p. 132]. As many years of research have demonstrated, Bilyar as a city with strong fortifications undoubtedly existed since the first quarter of the 10th. Otherwise, we would have to make the founding of Bulgar and Suar a hundred years earlier since materials taken from their sites, as noted previously, are identical to those found at Bilyar. In fact, items discovered at Bilyar's lower layer appear even more archaic than those from Suvar which, according to data provided by Eastern authors, already existed in the 920–930s.

The only site that serves as a good example of the third way, in which a small town might arise on the site of a former pagan sanctuary that later became a feudal castle, is, according to K. Rudenko, the ancient town of Tigashevsky, which was approximately 2 ha in size. Despite traces of handicraft production on the settlement's territory, G. Fedorov-Davydov did not consider it a city [Fedorov-Davydov, 1962, p. 88]. It would be senseless to claim that a Bulgar town developed in a certain way on the basis of only this one ancient town.

Further, K. Rudenko distinguishes 'a fourth and fifth manner in which small cities might arise: this could happen on the sites where tribal or clan centres were located, for example, the ancient towns of Romodansky, or on sites of previous fortresses along trade routes

such as the Voykinskoye, Balakhchinskoye, and Gorodok ancient towns [Rudenko, 1999, p. 132]. Unfortunately, neither of the sites named has been excavated. Thus his hypotheses remain unsubstantiated. This group of ancient towns and fortresses that arose along trade routes is, however, noteworthy.

Russian and foreign scholars have lately begun to acknowledge the important role played by trade and trade routes in the development of early towns in the Middle Ages. In Russian scholarship the so-called 'trading theory' on the origins of ancient Russian cities suggested by V. Klyuchevsky has been to a great degree rehabilitated [Nosov, 1998]. Researchers on the Middle Ages emphasise the special role played by the Great Volga or the Baltic-Volga River Routes in international trade of the 9–10th centuries. In their opinion, travel from the Ladoga and Volkhov Areas to the Volga and then along the Volga was established in the middle of the 9th century [Dubov, 1989, p. 180]. Both caches of coins discovered along this road and trading settlements of the kind at Ladoga, Rurik, Gnezdovo, Sarskoye ancient towns, and the Timerevsky and Mikhaylovsky ancient settlement in the Yaroslavl Volga Region all provide evidence of this. Judging by a number of features, they are close to sites like Hedeby in Denmark, Birka in Sweden, Kołobrzeg and Wolin on the southern coast of the Baltic sea, and others (for more details, see [Slavyane, 1986, p. 57 ff.]). In our opinion, Semenovskiy I and Izmerskiy I settlements are typologically close to them, and in this respect Ye. Kazakov is correct as he believes they were open trade-and-craft settlements, which served as large transit points in the system of Arabic-Baltic communications. These two settlements did not have defensive fortifications—one of the key characteristics of a city. Nevertheless, their rural character cannot be excluded. Archaeological literature usually refers to such settlements 'proto-cities.' For a variety of reasons, mostly connected to the loss of the Volga trade route's significance because

of the silver crisis in the east, these proto-cities failed to develop into authentic towns and ceased to function in the first half of the 11th century. There was, however, a glimmer of life in Semenovskiy and Izmerskiy settlements in the following centuries.

As excavations during the 1990s have demonstrated, at the turn of the 10–11th centuries one Bulgar pre-Mongol trading centre was located in the area of modern Kazan [Khuzin, 2000]. As in the village of Izmeri (see 'Devichy Gorodok'), a fortress was built on a high cape on the left bank of the Kazanka River next to the market. Traces of trading suburbs were discovered outside the city walls. Unlike many trade-and-craft settlements, Kazan never disappeared but grew into a large city. This was due, of course, to the exceptionally-favourable, natural geographical conditions in the region, and to the Bulgarian rulers' aspirations to consolidate their positions in the lands of their Finno-Urgic neighbours as well as on the Volga and Oka Rivers, which were often invaded by Vladimiro-Suzdal princes—the Bulgars' trading rivals.

A. Belavin and other scholars have suggested that the ancient towns of Alabuga, Rozhdestvenskiy, and Kylasovskiy in the Permian Cis-Urals arose in a similar manner—that is, as a result of Bulgar trading activities on the Kama River [Belavin, 2000; Nigamayev, Khuzin, 2000]. The first of them had most likely been founded as a military fortress to defend Volga Bulgaria's north-eastern borders and, as A. Smirnov justly emphasised, served simultaneously as a Bulgar stronghold from which attacks on neighbouring Udmurt tribes were launched. The Rozhdestvenskiy and Kylasovskiy ancient towns were founded upon the ancestral lands of the Komy-Permyaks because trade there was beneficial for the Bulgars.

Thus, the thesis concerning the various ways in which medieval cities might arise can be proven on the basis of materials dating from the pre-Mongol period in Volga Bulgaria.



## 2. Great City on the Cheremshan and the town of Bulgar on the Volga

Fayaz Khuzin

*Bilyar/the Great City* is located almost in the centre of western Trans-Kama in the basin of the Maly Cheremshan River, the tributary of the Bolshoy Cheremshan, which flows into the Volga. The distance from Bilyar to Kama is 50 km, to the city of Bulgar on the Volga it is around 100 km, and it is 75–80 km to the town of Suvar.

The territory of the ancient town, a flat surface with a slight slope from north-east to south-west, is circled by concentric earthen walls and ditches, which divide it into inner and outer town. The inner town is surrounded by two lines of walls and ditches. The length of the main line of walls, according to aerial photographs from 1973, is 4,800 m, while the secondary line, unfinished in some parts, is 5,400 m. The inhabited area outside the fortifications stretches up to 116 ha, while the fortifications extend to 130.6 ha. The outer town is surrounded by three lines of fortifications. The inner, or main, line of the walls has a total length of 9,125 m. The length of the middle line of walls (with some unfinished parts) reaches 9,375–9,400 m, with the outer one—standing 80–100 m from the first two—being 10,200 meters. The inhabited area of the outer town without the fortifications is 374.1 ha and 489.6 ha with the fortifications

Thus, the total area of the archaeological site with the fortifications included constitutes 620.2 ha, and without them, 490 ha. At present the four-element topographic structure of the ancient town of Bilyar is rather clear. A 'citadel' [using A. Khalikov's terminology], surrounded by a light wooden wall, stands out approximately in the middle of the inner town, and beyond the town walls—almost adjoining to it—are located suburban settlements. The total area of the Bilyar complex counting the unfortified suburbs reaches about 800 ha. There are all grounds to consider it one of the largest cities of the medieval world.

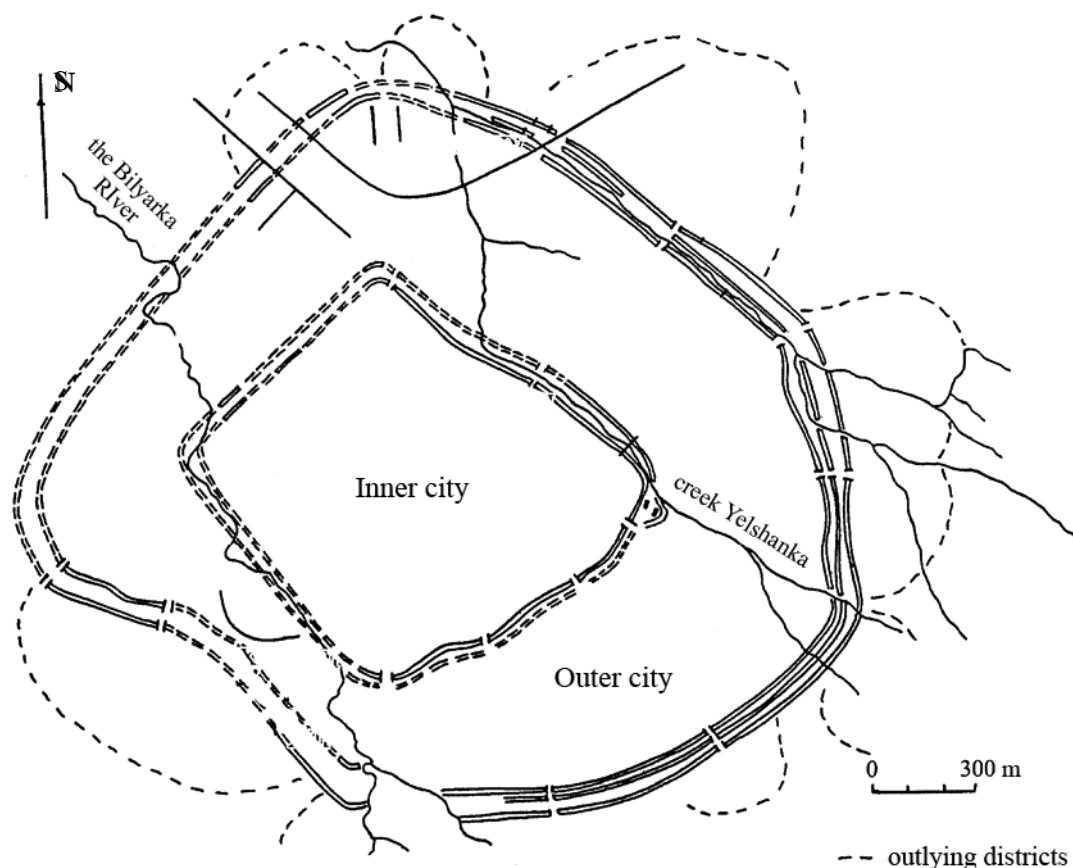
In written sources of the pre-Mongol period the city of Bilyar was never mentioned under this name. Only one source, the so-called 'Hungarian Anonym,' in its account of the arriv-

al of a Muslim to Hungary, during the reign of Arpad's grandson Takshon [Takson], from the land of *Bulgar*, contains a mention of Bilyar, or to be more precise, the land of Bilyar [*terra Bular*] and its inhabitants [*the Bilers*]. Around 970, 'having heard of the kindness of the Leader Takshon the son of Zolt..., the great noble men Bylla and Baksh came from Bulgar land. The Leader granted them land in different parts of the country and, furthermore, gifted them the castle named Pesht for all time' [Khvolson, 1869, pp. 108, 109; Tardy, 1982, p. 237].

Ancient Russian chronicles make up an important part of the written sources, which contain information on the military and political history of Volga Bulgaria of the 10–first half of the 13th centuries, about its trade, as well as its economic and cultural relations with neighbouring states and people.

Bilär, under the name of *Great City* is mentioned for the first time in the Laurentian Chronicle in the year 1164, when Prince Andrey Bogolyubsky with his son Isyaslav and his brother Yaroslav, together with the Prince of Murom Yury, undertook an enormous and successful campaign against the Bulgars. 'God and the Holy Mother of God help the Bulgars, a multitude of whom were cut down, and their flags taken, and the Bulgar Prince with a small company barely escaped and reached the Veliky Bulgar' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, columns 352–353].

We come across the mentioning of the Veliky Bulgar for a second time in the year 1183, in the description of the largest campaign of the Rusessian princes against the Bulgar capital. The Prince of Vladimir, Vsevolod the Big Nest, at the head of a united detachment that included, apart from his own troops, troops from Vladimir, the son of Kievan Prince Svyatoslav, Izyaslav Glebovich, brother of [southern] Pereyaslavsky Prince Mstislav, the son of Smolensk Prince Davyd, Vladimir Muromsky, and the Glebovichs of Ryazan,' 'came to the land of Bulgar, stepped ashore, and went to the Veliky Bulgar.' Having stayed for two days near the townlet of Tukhchin, he moved in the



The general plan of the Bilyar ancient town

direction of the city on the third day. Here the Rusessian army met the Polovtsians of khan Yemyak, who desired to join them for cooperative actions, and after that, 'having crossed the Cheremisan land, he prepared his regiments and stopped with his družina' near the Great City. Of interest is the message of a chronicler concerning the actions of the Bulgars, who, when the enemy approached the capital, 'came out of the city and made a solid stronghold' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, column 390]—that is, they put forward an additional defensive line. Vsevolod and his allies continued the siege of the Great City for ten days, but, upon seeing that it was impossible to storm the city, made peace on the conditions offered by the Bulgars.

Around the year 1220 a military campaign of the Rusessian Prince Svyatoslav against Oshel, who received help from the inhabitants of the capital with a small delay is also described. 'The Bulgars in the Great City, who heard... that

their town of Oshel had been captured, gathered with their princes, some on horses, others on foot, and came to the bank.' Oshel was burnt, the Bulgar army was defeated and soon 'prayed and pleaded for peace' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, IXX, p. 84].

After the events of 1220 and the conclusion of peace, the Bulgars established peaceful relations with the Rusessian princes, which was absolutely necessary because of the threat of the Mongol invasion, looming over all of Eastern Europe.

From the chronicle records of a different character, of interest is a story from the year 1229 in the Laurentian Chronicle on murder by Bulgar inhabitants of the Great City of a certain Avraam. This Avraam, portrayed in the chronicles as a 'new martyr,' was Christian by faith and allegedly refused to apostatise and therefore was killed. His fellow believers, most probably Russian people living in the capital, buried him in the city cemetery, 'where all

Christians lie' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, column 452]. Soon after this event, continues the chronicler, a great fire started in the city, and it almost burnt the whole city to the ground in a few days. 'And God made a favour soon for his blood [the murdered Avraam.—*F. Kh.*]. more than half of the Great City was burnt, and then the remaining areas caught fire two and three times during the day, also fast and for many days, little was left of the city, all was burnt, and much merchandise was burnt for the blood of the martyr of Christ' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, column 452–453].

Later accounts from written sources concerning pre-Mongol Bulgaria and its capital are connected to the campaigns of the Mongol armies, which undertook repeated attempts to conquer Bulgar lands.

After the victory over the Rusessians and Polovtsians at the Kalka in 1223, the Tatar-Mongols, according to the account of the Arab historian Ibn al-Athir, went to Bulgaria but were there defeated for the first time [Tiesenhausen, 1884, pp. 27–28]. The next campaign of the Mongols occurred in 1229 on the eastern borders of the country on the Yaik River. The Mongols met persistent resistance from Bulgar guard detachments, who in the end were defeated [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, column 453]. In 1232 the Mongols undertook another attempt to break through the Bulgars, but after once again not having achieved their desired goal they were forced to winter, as the chronicle says, 'not having reached the Great City' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, column 459].

The Great City is mentioned for the final time by the written sources in the description of the tragic events of 1236, when the capital of the Bulgars was burnt and robbed [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, column 460].

Systematic and regular excavations of the Bilyar site began in 1967 by a combined archaeological expedition of the Ibragimov Institute of Languages, Literature, and Arts, the Kazan Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and Kazan State University headed by professor A. Khalikov. Over the course of twenty years of active research, the stratigraphy and chronology of the archaeological strata of the ancient town were established, and the earli-

est brick buildings in northern Eastern Europe were uncovered, so were the ruins of the most ancient cathedral mosque known to date, numerous residential and commercial structures, wells, the remains of the only 10th century yurt to have been uncovered in Bulgar archaeology, production facilities, burial sites of common city dwellers, the necropolis of Bulgar nobility, and other items [Collection of Articles, Research on the Veliky Bulgar, Moscow: Nauka, 1976; Collection of Articles, New in the Volga Region Archaeology. Archaeological Research on the Centre of Bilär Ancient town. Kazan, 1979; Culture of Bilär, 1985; Crocker of Bilär, 1986; Khuzin, 1995, and other.]. The medieval archaeological sites in the surrounding area of Bilyar have been studied more actively in recent years.

In the history of Bilyar's development two main stages are singled out, which chronologically correspond to the beginning of the 10–first half of the 11th centuries [the time of accumulation of the substrate of the archaeological stratum] and to the latter half of the 11–first third of the 13th century [the time of accumulation of the upper layer of the stratum].

The first stage began from the moment of Bilyar's founding and includes the first century of its existence. During the period of the city's formation it already occupied an impressive area of 600 ha. All later development up until the city's fall occurred mainly within the limits of this territory. From the very beginning Bilyar had a two-part structure [an inner and outer town]. Additionally, the ruler's residence was located in the centre of the inner town, surrounded by a light wooden wall. Beyond the external fortifications lived a small number of suburban dwellers. Such 'circular' planning was characteristic of ancient nomadic settlements. This was how the 'settlements' of the Hunnic tribal leader Attila looked like according to the descriptions of Jordan, along with some towns of the Khazar Khaganate, including its capital Atil' [Magomedov, 1983, pp. 37, 42, 142–143; Pletneva, 1982, pp. 45, 51, 52]. We shall also note the close similarity of the planning of Bilyar and the towns of the so-called First Bulgarian kingdom on the Danube: Pliska, Preslav, and also Amurtag aul [Khalikov, 1976, p. 38].

Early Bilyar was fortified sufficiently strong. The defensive constructions of the inner town

with a total length of about 5 km, initially consisted of a low earthen mound with additional wooden constructions at the top. In front of the mound was a ditch. The natural riverbed of the River Yelshanka played the role of the latter in the north-eastern part of the fortification. Early fortifications of the outer town, which have a total length of more than 9 km, were close in their design to the similar fortifications of the inner town. They consisted of a wooden palisade with a ditch in front. In some areas the remains of a small mound were observed [Khuzin, 1995, pp. 66, 89–90].

One of the most important events in the history of early Bilyar should be considered the construction of several large buildings in the inner town. The central place among them belongs to the remains of the cathedral mosque, which was built of wood at the very beginning of the city's life. Some time later it was significantly widened by a stone annex with a high separate minaret [Khalikov, Sharifullin, 1979]. Architectural historians point out that this monument served as a model for building the famous cathedral mosque in the latter half of the 13–beginning of the 14th century, the so-called 'Quadrangle' at the Bulgar archaeological site [Aydarov, 1990, p. 20].

The appearance of a large religious complex in the centre of a newly founded city is very symptomatic. The presence of the cathedral mosque with the preacher's pulpit [mimbar] in the city, as specialists believe, is not a formal sign but an indication of its administrative position. The khutbah with the name of the sovereign was read from the mimbar, the judge was received in the mosque, and the state treasury was located there as well [Bolshakov, 1984]. In other words, the cathedral mosque with all its religious and political functions existed only in the administrative centre of the state—that is, in the capital.

Not far from the mosque a two-story brick building was being constructed at the same time. It was a rich residential house belonging to a representative of the highest clerical elite. The outbuildings and houses of common people were arranged around it, although a wide space in the centre of the city remained partially unbuilt.

A small necropolis [4th Bilyar burial site] appeared at the walls of the Cathedral

Mosque in the first half of the 10th century [Sharifullin, 1984]. The unusual features and peculiarity of this burial site, including its location in the central and richest part of the city, special brick burial constructions, and double or collective graves [possibly family vaults], should be directly linked to the nobility and socially privileged position of the interned. Thus, we have ample grounds to consider that from the moment of the city's founding an aristocratic area began forming in its central part, most probably an administrative, political, and cultural centre. It is evident that the residence of the Bulgar ruler was located in this area as well.

Yet in the 10th century the main body of the city's population consisted of craftsmen. Traces of artisan production were discovered both in the inner and the outer towns. A manor of blacksmith-metallurgists was studied to the north-west of the above-mentioned feudal lord's house, beyond the administrative centre. A district of metallurgists was located 300–400 m to the south-west of the mosque. Its earliest metallurgic furnaces were found in the lower part of the archaeological stratum. A large area with pottery shops and kilns, which began functioning no later than the latter half of the 10th century, was situated in the outer town on the right bank of the Bilyarka River. Traces of jewellery and bone-carving craft, nonferrous metallurgy, and other products were discovered in different areas of the city. All of this convincingly shows that even in the early period of its existence Bilyar was gradually turning into a large artisan centre of the Bulgar state, with its products being steadily sold not only to the townspeople but also to the farming neighbourhood and far beyond.

Tradesmen constituted a special social group within the population in early Bilyar, as in any medieval town. Scales with a beam and two suspended cups, intended for weighing silver bars, coins, precious stones, and metals, cubic iron, spheric bronze, and barrel-shaped weights were found in the strata of the 10–first half of the 11th centuries and were necessary attributes of the tradesmen. They are represented in large numbers in museum collections and are found during excavations [Crockery of Bilär, 1985, p. 104

ff.]. Data exists that testifies to the gradual establishment of international trade relations between Bilyar and, first of all, the cities of Middle Asia [glazed pottery, sphero-conical vessels, camel bones] and with the Kievan Rus' [slate spindle whorls]. Still the level of trade development, especially of the international kind, in early Bilyar should not be overestimated. 'The main trade point' of the Bulgar state at that time, according to information from written sources [al-Balkhi], was Bulgar on the Atil' and settlements in the Lower Kama.

During more than three centuries the city continued to grow not as a result of broadening its territory but by means of denser housing construction. It should be acknowledged that relatively scarce population density of both the outer and inner towns was characteristic of early Bilyar. The outer town was especially poorly constructed. Its main inhabitants were most likely craftsmen and small traders. There are no doubts that a significant number of semi-peasants lived there, including farmers and herders, which is proven by rather frequently found agricultural tools. The scarce population density of the outer town in the 10–11th centuries was due to the necessity of keeping large herds of domestic animals—cattle and horses. Summer houses, gardens, a vegetable garden, and perhaps even fields for the townspeople were located in the outer town. This was a common phenomenon in medieval towns of Rus', Middle Asia, and Western Europe.

Almost simultaneously with the foundation of the city, suburban settlements, which played a peculiar role in the history of Bilyar, started to appear beyond its outer walls. Regular surveys, carried out by the archaeologists, showed no signs of artisan production there. These settlements were inhabited mostly by people brought here from different parts of the country for the construction of the city and its fortifications. It is clear that such a grand construction was only possible using the forced labour of a significant portion of the population. After the completion of the main works, these builders were most likely sent home, but some of them stayed and habitually worked as farmers and herders, living at Bilyar's walls. The feudal-dependent population of the coun-

try, or rather a certain part of it, fit for construction works, showed up at the city walls again and again, every time when big repair works or building additional defensive lines were required.

The next (second) stage of Bilyar's development [from the middle of the 11th century and until its fall in 1236] is characterised by great changes in the appearance of the city, the further strengthening of its economic and political power and an increase in its population.

The first extensive reconstruction of the existing fortifications was carried out not later than the middle of the 11th century. The height of the inner mounds was increased, earth and timber structures replaced the old palisade.

An additional [outer] defensive line of the outer town, which consisted of a deep ditch, a strong earthen mound, and wooden constructions [gorodnya] at the top of the mound appeared in the first half of the 12th century. The inner fortification mound probably underwent minimal repair, though any traces of this were not reflected in the archaeological materials. The inner town was even more fortified. The height of the mound at that time reached 2.5 m, while the width of the base was 16 m [Khuzin, 1995, pp. 68, 90 ff.].

The last three to four decades of Bilyar's existence—that is, the period from the end of the 12th century until 1236, was a time of utmost prosperity for Volga Bulgaria. At the same time, it was marked by a tense international situation caused, on the one side, by the ongoing struggle between Bulgar and the Vladimir and Suzdal princes for trading hegemony in the Volga Region and along the Great Volga Route, by the military campaigns of the Rusessians against Bulgar towns, including the Great City [1183], and on the other, by the Mongol-Tatar invasion into Middle Asia and Eastern Europe.

Occupied with military concerns, the period demanded above all else a corresponding development of the level of military and defensive preparedness. Bilyar provides an example of the energetic activities the state undertook to strengthen the defensive capabilities of some towns of the country and most notably of its capital.



Aerial photo plan of the Bilyar ancient town Filming from 1973

The fortifications of Bilyar underwent great changes at the end of the 12–first third of the 13th centuries. The strength of the walls was increased even more, and the wooden parts of all existing land fortifications were reconstructed. Furthermore, an additional [external] line of bulwarks was being built around the inner town. Around the same time a third [middle] line appeared between the internal and external circles of walls of the outer town, which remained unfinished. At the end of the 12th century, during the period of or straight after the events of 1183, on the place of the 'caravanserai' a well-fortified 'fort' was built, where a small military garrison was placed with the purpose of guarding one of the most important parts near the main gates

to the inner town of Bilyar. The caravanserai itself was most likely moved to another area, perhaps even taken outside the city's limits. Here, in the eastern suburb, about 600 m from the city walls, the ruins of a brick building were discovered.

In the 12th century the housing density in Bilyar significantly increased. This is especially characteristic of the inner town. By preliminary estimates, 67% of all examined buildings in the central excavations appeared in the 12–beginning of the 13th centuries, while the other 33% appeared earlier. Not a trace was left of the spacious square around the cathedral mosque and 'feudal lord's house' that had existed before. The houses of common townspeople engaged in serving the nobility, out-

buildings, barns, granaries, wells, and other buildings were built close to the mosque's walls and the cemetery of the nobility. The cathedral mosque with its high minaret was still majestically rising above this part of the city, and somewhere nearby, most likely to the west, where according to aerial photographs stands a complex of big brick buildings, was located the palace of the Bulgar 'tsar' [emir]. There is every reason to place the central market of Bilyar in the area of the cathedral mosque. Al-Muqaddasi, describing the capital of the Bulgars in the 10th century, pointed out that 'the main mosque stands in the market' [Khvolson, 1869, p. 84].

The brick houses of the feudal nobility and rich merchants as well as other large constructions, as clearly seen on the photomap of 1973, were built around it. It is clear that most of them were built no earlier than the 11–12th centuries. Among them are, for example, the ruins of a brick building with central heating which were identified as those of a bathhouse on the basis of characteristic features [Sharifullin, 1999]. In immediate proximity to these rich constructions there were small log-houses, some above ground, but also partly built below ground as well, where the lower classes of the city lived. These were craftsmen of different kinds, builders, feudal servants, small traders, mosque attendants, and others. The outer town, as before, was not distinguished by its housing density. However, one and two-story brick buildings appeared here as well, but this part of the city belonged mainly to the middle and lower classes of the population. People living in the region of the 'caravanserai' and potters' quarter on the right bank of the Bilyarka River led the most active lives.

The population of the suburbs also increased, and their territory expanded, especially in the east. This was primarily connected with the major and time-consuming tasks of strengthening the defensive system of the city. For that purpose an additional labour force, consisting mainly of carpenters and diggers, was brought in from other parts of the country. Here in the suburban villages a part of the agricultural population lived who were worked in the nearby agricultural districts, providing the city with agricultural products and cattle.

The city's necropolises were located outside the city's limits. On the place of the earlier south-western suburb the first Bilyar burial site appeared, and almost at the opposite end of the city, occupied by the north-western suburbs, in the 11th century the first burials of the fifth burial site emerged, later turning out to be under the embankment of the outer wall. By the beginning of the 13th century their area reached 20 ha or more. There the canonical Islamic burial ceremony dominated. The necropolis of the nobles, crowded from all sides by buildings of the city, still functioned at the walls of the cathedral mosque.

The dynamics of Bilyarsk ancient town is seemed in that way after new discoveries from the 10th to the beginning of the 13th centuries.

In autumn 1236 Volga Bulgaria was attacked and terribly devastated by the Mongol-Tatar troops invading Eastern Europe. The main blow was aimed at the Great City, the country's capital.

The top layer of the ancient town is a sandy ashy and carbonaceous mass, mixed with fragments of human bones that are especially numerous near the fortifications. Many arrowheads used by the Mongols in the 13th century have been found. There are known collective graves with a large number of fallen soldiers that were created hastily without observing traditional rituals [Khuzin, 1988].

All the material culture of Bilyar reflects the distinctive and highly developed culture of the Volga Bulgars of the pre-Mongol period. The widespread point of view concerning Bilyar's existence on the ground of the similarly-named ancient town from the Golden Horde and Kazan periods is not supported by historical accounts. The population of Bilyar that survived after the Mongol pogrom continued to reside directly in the environs of the destroyed city on both banks of the Maly Cheremshan River, and they certainly occasionally visited its ruins.

### **Bulgar on the Volga. About the capital of the pre-Mongol Bulgaria**

The city known by medieval written sources as *Bryakhimov* [an entry in the Laurentian Chronicle in 1164], *Bolgar* [Russian chronicles

and Eastern authors] and *Great Bolgar* [the only reference in Russian chronicles in 1374] is one of the few historical landmarks of the Volga Bulgars, which is known worldwide. The ruins of the city located in the Spassky District of the Republic of Tatarstan, 30 km from the mouth of the Kama River and 6 km from the Volga [before its flooding by reservoir] on the edge of a native Volga terrace with a height of about 30 m, have long become a place of mazar as well as a kind of Mecca for several generations of orientalist scholars and archaeologists.

The extant great architectural monuments of the famous city are well-known to many people, such as the Small minaret, the Black, White, and Red Chambers, the Khans' mausoleum, the Cathedral Mosque, stone mausoleums, and other sights. All these buildings were constructed no earlier than the second half or the end of the 13th century, although mainly in the 14th century—that is, in the period of the Golden Horde, when having lost its political independence, Volga Bulgaria existed as a dependent or more likely a semi-autonomous ulus in the vast Mongol Empire.

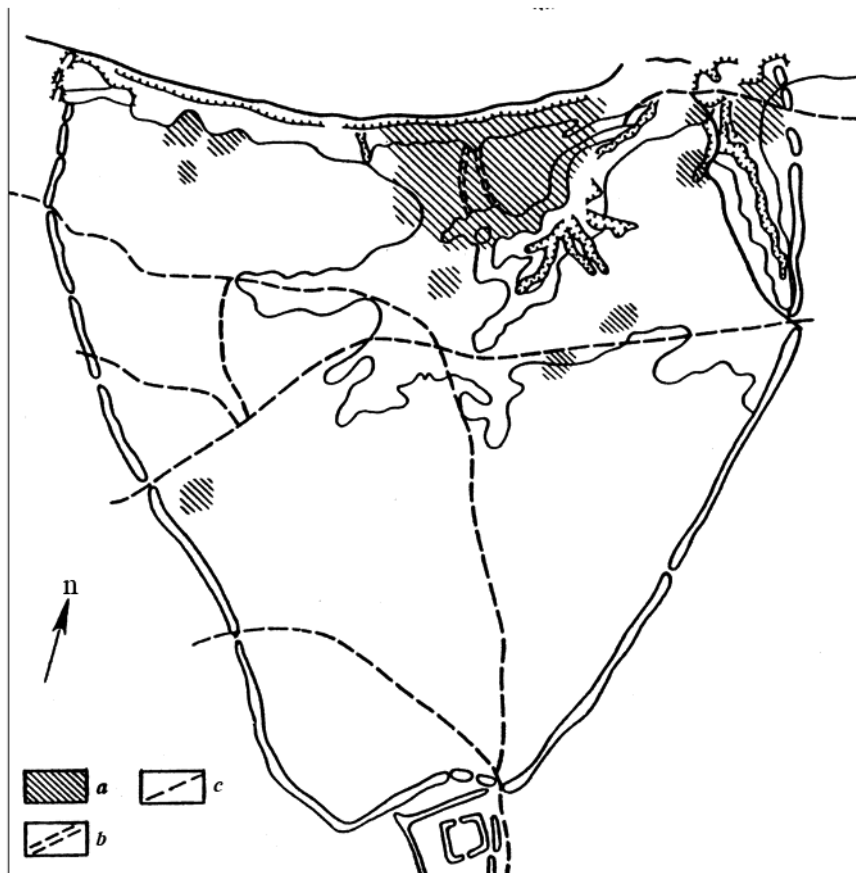
The ancient town has a subtriangular shape, bounded from the west, south, and east by mound of earth and ditch over 5.5 km long, and from the north, by a riverside of the Melenka River flowing here. Its area within the fortification reaches 380 ha. However, the above-mentioned mounds and ditches emerged only in the 14th century. How did the city look like in pre-Mongol times?

Fortifications of the pre-Mongol ancient town have not survived to the present. Their archaeological traces were revealed by excavations in 1967–1980 as two lines of trenches 2.6–2.9 m deep and 4–7 m wide. They started at the northern edge of the Volga terraces approximately 450–460 m to the west of the Jerusalem ravine inflow and further east than the Cathedral of Dormition. Then they stretched to the south–south-east and bumped into deep spurs of the ravine, spreading about 40 m apart. The estimated length of the ditches is about 200–220 m [Krasnov, 1987, p. 101]. The small poleholes, whose diameter and depth are up to 10–15 cm, were discovered on the eastern

slope of the western ditch, arranged in several rows in the direction of the other ditch, which scholars consider as signs of the stakes that supported the structure in order to strengthen the slope of the ditch from erosion [Ibid, p. 103]. Traces of wooden walls in the form of pillars standing at a distance of 1.8–2 m from each other were uncovered on both sides of the eastern ditch. The usage of naturally fortified headlands along with the creation of additional protection from the ground are common to many Bulgarian and Old Russian cities of the 10–13th centuries. Rather unusual are the walls [moreover on both sides of the ditch], which 'can be reconstructed as logged and deeply buried poles' at a very close distance from each other. These fortifications, which appeared no later than the 10th century, functioned until the Mongol invasion in 1236 [Khlebnikova, 1975, p. 124]. Initially Bulgar, spreading over an area of 9 ha within the fortifications, was a kind of headland like many other ancient towns of pre-Mongol Bulgaria. It can be compared to a number of fortified ancient towns. According to T. Khlebnikova, early Bulgar in a number of unique features 'is similar to the stone castles of Saltovo-Mayaki [type II]'; in the period of its formation it 'looked like a castle, whose owner wanted to make it an impregnable stronghold of his power in the region.' Beyond the walls of the fortified areas, which scholars call the 'citadel,' was located the unfortified trading quarter. The total area of Bolgar ancient town in the 10–11th centuries, taking into account the territory of the trading quarter, reached 12 ha [Khlebnikov, 1987, pp. 48, 52].

The construction of a new additional fortification system, which has been archaeologically identified as a ditch and ramparts with loamy grounds, was begun in the pre-Mongol period. These fortifications began at the upper edge of the Volga terraces, located about 200 m to the west of the ancient ditches, then stretched further and to the south, they rounded in a semi-circle around the south-eastern part of the trading quarter and continued to the north-west, where they encountered the steep slopes of the Large Jerusalem ravine. The estimated length of the fortifications is less than 1,000 meters. Thus,





The plan of the Bolgar ancient town from the 10–14th centuries:  
 a—expansion of layers from the 10th to the beginning of the 11th centuries,  
 b—ditches, c—roads [Poluboyarinova, 1993, p. 53]

at the end of the pre-Mongol period Bolgar ancient town had a double fortification system, with its ditches and wooden walls in the form of 'citadels' having been constructed as early as the tenth century and covering a part of the trading quarter, and its outer line of protection having been built in the form of a rampart and ditch. Scholars estimate the fortified area of the ancient town in the pre-Mongol period to be around 24–25 ha. Including the territory of the sparsely populated trading quarter, it was probably about 35–40 ha [Ibid, p. 55].

The cultural layers of the town's pre-Mongol period remained fragmentary and thus cannot always be detected. According to the stratigraphic scale of Bolgar, layers V and VI refer to the time of our interest.

Layer VI reflects the first (initial) phase of the history of the city, when, according

to scholars, it became not only a powerful 'tribal centre' but the capital of the Bulgarian state [Ibid, pp. 46, 52]. Its thickness ranges 10 to 20–35 cm and reaches 60–70 cm in its holes. The saturation of discoveries is very low, and in some excavations the layer is almost sterile or contains only a few fragments of pottery.

Speaking of the chronology of layer VI, it should be noted that for many years some researchers [A. Spitsyn, A. Bashkirov, M. Khudyakov, V. Smolin, P. Ponomarev] generally denied the existence of the pre-Mongol layer in the ancient town's strata, arguing that Bulgar emerged only in the 12th century or even in the 13th century. Based on the accounts of Ahmad ibn Fadlan and numismatic data, A. Yakubovsky believed that until the middle of the 10th century there was no city of Bulgar, although there were the khan's camp

and a market near the Volga [Yakubovsky, 1948, p. 262 ff.]. At present it can be argued in accordance with Bolgar scholars that the discoveries of dated materials from the excavations does not contradict 'the possible formation of a layer at the end of the 9–beginning of the 10th centuries' [Khlebnikova, 1987, p. 51].

Unfortunately, the question of Bulgar's time of origin has not been developed thoroughly by archaeologists, and for the meanwhile the turn of the 10th centuries has been adopted as the founding date *a priori*. It should be noted that the complex of discoveries from the early Bulgar layer was practically the same as the complex of discoveries from the lower level of the Bilyar site's cultural layer. Dated finds from Bilyar are more numerous and significant.

It is clear that Bulgar as a centre of world trade in the 10–11th centuries should have more imported materials and trade inventory in its cultural layer than Bilyar. In reality though, this is not the case. Coins from the 10–11th centuries have never been found in excavations. Among the known materials, there are no bronze weights typical for that time, and the trade inventory is completely missing. However, lead weights, resembling Middle Asian antiquities of the 10–12th centuries, a silver belt plaque made in Iran or Middle Asia, and an equal-armed brooch and pendant with a likeness of a human on the background of the plaiting imported from Scandinavia were found. Of special interest is a Carolingian sword from the 10–11th centuries with the inscription 'ULFBERHT.' 'All these objects serve as a great addition to the general accepted characteristic of Bolgar as a centre of international trade' [Polyakov, 1996, p. 256].

Early constructions have been preserved in a fragmentary state. Huts, underground pits of homes, household pits and storage, as well as granaries have been uncovered on the territory of the fortified area of the archaeological site—that is, in the 'citadel.' The traces of similar objects have been found in the fortified trading quarter as well.

There are no production facilities either in the 'citadel' or outside the fortifications; however, 'discoveries in a layer of iron slag

and ball indicate the presence of black metal in the initial period of the archaeological site's life' [Khlebnikova, 1987, p. 50].

The available archaeological materials of the Bolgar site of the 10–11th centuries represent the town as a most ordinary fortified settlement, beginning to become involved in international trade due to its convenient geographical location on the banks of the Volga. These sources do not prove that it was 'the political centre of the state union among multicultural and multi-ethnic population of the Middle Volga Region and Lower Cis-Kama Region' [Ibid, p. 52]. Researchers who believe that 'in the initial period of its existence the city of Bolgar was semi-agrarian and almost indistinguishable from the villages of the same time' are correct [Akchurina et al., 1970, p. 8]. As A. Smirnov wrote in one of his last works: 'All the materials that we possess allow us to believe that the city of Bolgar in the pre-Mongol period was not a major artisan centre but rather mainly a trade centre of the state, as has been indicated by eastern authors' [Smirnov 1974, p. 8]. It is true that among all the archaeological materials from the 10–first half of the 11th centuries, discovered over years of work, it is difficult to find any signs of Bulgar as a capital city. Furthermore, the absence of such signs cannot be explained only by the poor preservation of early city cultural deposits.

The next stage in the development of Bolgar ancient town is the second half of the pre-Mongol period, reflected archaeologically by layer V of the stratigraphic scale. The average thickness of the layer is 30–40 cm, the central areas sometimes are more, up to 60–70 cm, and the fringes are 10–25 cm. It ends with a scorched layer in the form of decomposed coal, supposedly connected with the Mongol-Tatar pogrom of the city in 1236.

The layer is properly dated to the middle of the 11–beginning of the 13th century. The dated materials are numerous and expressive, including glass and stone beads, coloured metal ornaments, iron arrowheads, flints, locks and keys, slate spindle whorls, etc. The layer is well traced in all the excavations located within the city of the 10–beginning of the 11th centuries. In addition, it has been marked outside this area, mainly to the south and the

west of the boundaries of the earliest unfortified trading quarter. The former fortifications of the 'citadel' in the form of deep ditches continued to be used, and they simply periodically cleaned and restored them. An area of the city of about 24–25 ha was already protected by the new fortifications at the end of the pre-Mongol period, no later than the beginning of the 13th century. The trading quarter, which just as earlier was not defined by high-density developments, was noticeably expanded. In some areas of the quarter the cultural layer is marked only by 'a small strata containing rare discoveries' [Khlebnikov, 1987, p. 55]. Given the whole territory, the size of Bulgar in the 12–beginning of the 13th centuries is defined within 35–40 ha.

The nature of construction in the central part of the city in the second half of the pre-Mongol period is difficult to estimate since few structures have been uncovered. The remains of two huts, three cellars of wooden houses, 'signs' of another adobe building, and several burnt ground structures have been discovered over the period of study of Bulgar. Facilities such as granaries, cellars, and pits are more numerous. Traces of artisan activities in the form of individual pieces of iron slag and its accumulation near the inner line of fortifications have been noticed during the excavations.

The remains of a semi-hut facility, 16 above-ground buildings (usually containing cellars lined with wood) and 40 facilities (mostly pits of different sizes, shapes, and purposes) have been studied on the territory of the trading quarter. The information presented here was taken from the survey work 'The City of Bulgar,' published in 1987 [pp. 56–57]. Excavations of recent years have not resulted in a significant increase in the number of identified structures from the pre-Mongol period.

The remains of artisan production in the quarter are more significant, such as Catalan hearths for heating ferrous metal, features of copper-smelting crafts, leather workshops, etc. [Efimova, 1958, p. 292 ff.]. The city cemeteries were located in the trading quarter near the fortifications of the 'citadel' ['Quadrangle'] and in the tract 'Baby bugor' [Yablonsky, 1987, pp. 125–126].

In general, the pre-Mongol layers of the Bulgar site are characterised by a small num-

ber of discoveries, structure, and construction remains. A. Smirnov many times wrote that in the 10–first half of the 13 centuries 'the city of Bulgar was less economically developed than Bilyar or Suvar, where archaeological stratas of the pre-Mongol period are very rich and highly saturated with different cultural remnants' [Smirnov, 1954, pp. 22–23]. 'The city of Bulgar did not play a large role in the economy of the region in the pre-Mongol era,' Smirnov wrote in 1970, 'the cultural layer of this time in the cities of Suvar and Bilyar indicate their primary role in the economic life of the region. These considerations, based on archaeological material, are consistent with historical information' [Akchurina et al., 1970, p. 8].

Thus, the available data does not give us reason to disagree with the well-established stereotyped notions of Bulgar as an enormous city that played a crucial role in the history of Volga Bulgaria and Eastern Europe in the 10–13th centuries. The city began to play this role in the period of the Golden Horde, when its real golden age occurred. Its territory expanded almost tenfold, and with it the population increased as well, monumental buildings were built, part of which have survived up until the present, while still retaining their former magnificence.

\* \* \*

The question on whether it was the capital, or an administrative centre, the permanent residence of the Volga Bulgar ruler of the pre-Mongol period, or merely a headquarters has interested scholars for a long time. It was first raised in an article by the famous Russian orientalist A. Grigoriyev that was published in one of the volumes of the 'Encyclopedic Lexikon' by Pluchart [1836]. Grigoriyev believed that the city of Bulgar in its capacity as the capital of the Volga Bulgars was moved from Bilyar-Bulgar to the place of the Bulgar site only in the 13th century. 'Bulgar and Bilyar,' he wrote, 'are only two different dialectal pronunciations of the same word' [Grigoriyev, 1836, pp. 292–293; see also Grigoriyev, 1876, p. 95 ff.]. A similar idea relating to the equivalence of the ethnonyms 'Bulgar' and 'Bilyar' was expressed earlier by B. Tatish-

chev [1962, 1, p. 269], later by N. Zolotnitsky [1884, p. 38], and in contemporary times by M. Adamovic [Adamovic, 1998, p.153 ff.].

In the second half of the 19th century a point of view emerged that offered that the two capitals of the pre-Mongol Bulgaria consistently replaced each other during the 10–13th centuries. V. Shpilevsky, the author of this concept, based on an analysis of the available sources at the time, suggested that the first capital of the Bulgarian state was the city of Bulgar on the Volga. In his opinion, in the second half of the 12th century due to the changed socio-economic conditions and military-political order, the capital transferred to 'Great City of Bolgar' on the Cheremshan River, archaeologically represented by the Bilyar site, and once again after the Mongol invasion in 1236 Bulgar allegedly regained its status as the capital [Shpilevsky, 1877, pp. 124–126, 137–139].

S. Shpilevsky's concept was supported by the majority of Russian and Soviet historians studying the Bulgars, and it became widely accepted in historical and archaeological literature as well as in textbooks and encyclopedias.

Shpilevsky's arguments did not convince everyone. At the end of the 19th century one of the most important Russian archaeologists of the time, A. Spitsyn undertook a special survey in search of Bulgar's remains from the 10th century to the south of the Bolgar site. In P. Ponomarev's opinion, Bilyar is the first Bulgarian city to be built at the beginning of the 10th century as the capital of the state [Ponomarev, 1919, p. 45]. In this regard, he was supported by M. Khudyakov [1921, p. 78 ff.], A. Bashkirov [1928], and V. Smolin [1925 p. 145; 1925a, pp. 34, 52]. The latter was convinced that 'the centre of Kama-Volga Bulgaria was the city of Bulgar, the traces of which are within the current town of Bilyarsk,' and in the 13th century the capital was transferred to the city of Bulgar on the Volga, founded as early as the 12th century and formerly known under the name Bryakhimov [Smolin, 1925a, pp. 34, 52, 55, 63]. A distinctive feature of the material discoveries from this ancient site, according to V. Smolin, lies in the fact that they all were of a latter origin than the main discoveries of Bulgar [Bilyar] of the previous era. The Bolgar site 'is a famous cultural landmark of Kama-Volga Bulgaria of the end of the 13th and mainly the

14th century,' V. Smolin wrote in one of his works. We mistakenly began to search on its territory for traces of Bulgarian architecture of more ancient time' [1926, p. 10].

The academician Yu. Gotye in his book 'The Iron Age in Eastern Europe,' in reference to the question of the location of the capitals of Volga Bulgaria of the 10–14th centuries, pointed out that the Bolgar site was undoubtedly the remains of the main city of the Bulgars of the 13–14th centuries. But was this Bulgar the same Great City that was the capital of the state at an earlier time? He hesitated concerning this question but was inclined to see the first capital in Bilyar. Summarising the works of the previous historiography on this problem, Yu. Gauthier correctly concluded that 'the idea that specifically Bilyar was the capital of the ancient Bulgars has many supporters, and the final decision can be achieved by a thorough investigation of the Bilyar site' [Gauthier, 1930, p. 164].

Due to the large-scale archaeological research at the Bilyar site that began in 1967, the controversy surrounding the capital of Volga Bulgaria resumed. Relying on the original interpretation of the accounts of medieval Arabian and Persian authors and the analysis of new archaeological materials, A. Khalikov supported the hypothesis of his predecessors on a single capital of the Bulgarian state in the pre-Mongol period, situated on the site of the ancient town Bilyar [Khalikov, 1973]. He drew the conclusion that the city of Bilyar, which was called simultaneously Bulgar [*Bilär*; meaning 'great, 'an epithet], was founded in 922 near the Dzhaushyr River [M. Cheremshan]. For more than three centuries, prior to the Mongol-Tatar invasion of 1236, Bilyar-Bulgar remained the only capital of the state. The ancient Bulgar town on the Volga, according to A. Khalikov, represents the remains of External Bulgar, the city of Ibrahim [Bryahimov] from the Rusessian chronicles.

A. Smirnov [1972], R. Fakhrutdinov [1974; 1975], and T. Khlebnikova [1975] defended the traditional point of view.

The debate surrounding the pre-Mongol capital of Bulgaria has been caused by the scarcity of written sources. Information from the writings of Arabian and Persian geographers and Russian and West European chron-

icles is very fragmentary and contradictory, which opens a wide scope for various interpretations and requires a researcher to be very careful. A comparison is obligatory of these data with the findings of other sciences, especially archeology.

In Russian chronicles, in descriptions of the events of the 10–first half of the 13th centuries, for example, the cities of Bulgar, Suvar, Bilyar were never mentioned under their own names. Why? It is true that the chronicler mentioned the city of Bulgar on the Volga only one time in 1164, under the name *Bryahimov*, and Bilyar was mentioned six times since 1164 under the name *of the Great City*. Arab and Persian sources mentioned practically only two cities, Bulgar and Suvar. How can this be explained? Why is Bilyar, one of the largest and richest cities in medieval Eurasian civilisation, stubbornly passed over by sources?

As we know, the information by Ibn Rustah concerning large Bulgarian villages with mosques and primary schools refers to the end of the 9–beginning of the 10th centuries [Khvolson, 1869, p. 23]. It is also true that Ibn Fadlan personally visited Bulgaria in 922 but left no mention of any cities. This does not mean however that they did not exist. Even settlements extending over a large area might have appeared as simple villages and not the cities that the eastern traveller is accustomed to seeing in the East. The analysis of his writings leaves no doubt in the readiness of the Bulgarian 'tsar' Almush not only to strengthen Islam in the country with the assistance of the having been invited preachers from Baghdad but also to build a fortress, 'to shelter in it from kings, his opponents.' He asked Caliph Muqtadir from Baghdad for assistance in the construction of the fortified city [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 121, 133, 141]. Even after not getting the money promised to him, Almush did not abandon his original plan, hoping to build it 'on his own budget of silver and gold.' Where was this fortress built, on the Volga River or the Cheremshan River?

It firstly should be noted that the traditional point of view that places the location of 'tsar' Almush's camp on the Volga and the meeting place of the Baghdad embassy in the region of the Three Lakes near the Bulgar site does not

match the descriptions of Ibn Fadlan. Here is how he marks the route of his journey to the Bulgars: 'And we left the country of these people [the Bashkirs.—*F. Kh.*] and crossed the Dzharamsan River [B. Cheremshan], and then the Uranus River [Uren], then the Uram River, then across the Baynakh River [Mayna], then the Vatyg River [Utka], then across the Niyasna River [Bezdna], then across the Dzhavshyz River' [ibid, p. 131]. Tracing the route on a map, one can easily be assured that the embassy successfully passed the district of the modern Bolgar site and stopped somewhere in the Akhtai-Bezdna area, near the Atil-Atil River [as the Arabian geographers named the Kama River and later the Volga up to its confluence with the Caspian Sea], where there are several major trade and artisan settlements of the 10–11th centuries known to archaeologists [Kazakov, 1991]. Among them is the extensive [about 60 ha] Izmerskoe settlement with extremely rich finds of the early pre-Mongol period. There is certain reason to locate Almush's camp and the place of his meeting with the embassy from Muqtadir in this area.

As for the well-known fact of the migration of Bulgarian tribes headed by Almush to the Dzhaushyr River [Dzhaushyz] and the goal pursued by the Emir, it is again traditionally believed that the migration was connected allegedly with the political and ideological task of carrying-out the nationwide acceptance of Islam [Kovalevsky, 1954, p. 32]. This point of view exists in our historiography in the present as well [Fakhrutdinov, 1984, p. 16]. In any case, first, the two months during which the Bulgar ruler and his men stayed on the Dzhaushyr River was 'a period too long to carry-out the work of the adoption of Islam' [Kovalevsky, 1954, p. 32], and second, it can hardly be considered to have justified the need to collect a huge number of people from across the country only for the formal adoption of the new religion. We do not know any other comparable examples in history. Additionally, it is not clear why the small and practically in the summer dried-up River Gaushirma became the gathering place for the Bulgar tribes according to A. Kovalevsky and his followers. Moreover, it is located almost on the outskirts of the Bulgarian state and is a tributary of the

Bakhta River near the village of Kutlushkino in the contemporary Chistopol District of the Republic of Tatarstan. For this purpose, the place of Tsar Almush's [Jafar ibn Abdallah] camp, located at a distance of one parasang from Atil, could have been good enough.

A. Khalikov's hypothesis concerning the likely meeting place of all tribes subordinate to Almush in the area of the Maly Cheremshan River and founding here a city-fortress, the capital of the country, easily removes all the contradictions and unclear points in the interpretation of the facts reported by Ibn Fadlan. Indeed, the Bilyar Region is the most populous [about 200 Bulgarian landmarks within a radius of 20 km. For comparison, near the Bolgar site there are no more than 20 landmarks]. It is possible that on the territory of the future city a small settlement had existed before the arrival of Ibn Fadlan.

It is extremely curious that about 3 km to the north-west of the ancient site at the bend of the right bank of the Maly Cheremshan River, in a picturesque place at the foot of the mountain 'Khuzhalar tauy' ['The mountain of the lords'] is a plot of land, 'Svyatoy klyuch,' which is still revered by the Islamic population and widely known in the Turko-Tatar world. Believers visit it on Wednesday of each week—that is, on 'The Day of Blood' [*kan kön*] in accordance with the ancient Bulgar calendar, and make sacrifices [Davletshin, 1990, p. 169]. There is an ancient Bulgarian settlement of the 10–13th centuries not far from this place. It is likely that even in early Bulgar times the tract served as a pagan sanctuary. In literature there is an attempt to etymologise the name of the Dzhaushyr River as 'a place of sacrifice.' Wasn't 'Svyatoy klyuch' ['Holy Key'] one of the ancient sacred centres of the Bulgarian tribes?

The composition of the embassy of Ibn Fadlan, to be more precise, of Susan al-Rasi, originally including about 5 thousand men, may indirectly indicate the beginning of the construction of a city near the Dzhaushyr River [Maly Cheremshan] in 922. Evidently it included, in addition to security, servants, Islamic law experts, and master builders. Many authors, including Sh. Marjani [Märcani, 1989, p. 124], V. Bartold [1968, V, p. 512], A. Yakubovsky [1948, pp. 267–268], A. Smirnov

[1951, pp. 137, 252], and others, wrote with reason about the presence in the embassy of 'skilled builders for the construction of the fortress.' Some of these builders of course reached Bulgaria. In this regard let us turn to some archaeological facts.

As mentioned above, the building of Bilyar was begun immediately on a vast territory and according to a premeditated plan. In full agreement with the written information of Ibn Fadlan, the archaeological materials clearly document the presence among the builders of Bilyar of eastern, Khorasan-Middle Asian craftsmen. All scholars unanimously isolated the Middle Asian and Middle Eastern elements in the architecture of Bulgarian cities. According to R. Sharifullin, 'the foundations of Bulgarian monumental architecture were inherent not later than in the 10–11th centuries and were formed under the direct influence of the traditions of 'pre-Seljukid' architecture of the Middle East and Middle Asia' [Sharifullin, 1976, p. 51]. The fact that builders and architects from eastern centres were living in Bilyar, in our opinion, can be illustrated by the remains of ground dwellings with frame-pise walls, discovered only in the lower horizon of the cultural layer of the central areas of the ancient town. In these houses, or next to them in the yard, there were spherical ovens of the Middle Asian tandoor type [Khuzin, 1979, p. 63 ff.]. For heating portable tandoors were used as well. The tradition of wattle and daub constructions was foreign to the Bulgars. Obviously, it was introduced in Bulgaria from the Islamic East, where this kind of structure with furnace-tandoors had been used widespread since ancient times.

The suggestion that the construction of the young Bulgarian state had begun in 922 was expressed by H. Fraehn, Sh. Marjani, P. Ponomaryov, A. Yakubovsky, and many other scholars. Most of them assumed under the name 'capital' to mean of course not Bilyar but Bulgar on the Volga. Yet even more reasons to connect this type of construction with Bilyar. The absolute date of the city's founding, based on Ibn Fadlan's 'Notes,' the year 922, corresponds with archaeological data and seems close to the truth.

Let us return to the data of the written sources.

The very first reference to the cities of the Volga Bulgaria we find in the book of the Arabian geographer of the first half of the 10th century Abu Zayd al-Balkhi. His work was created, as is commonly believed, in 920–921 (most likely, a little later), was not preserved in its original form, and came down to us in the broadcast of al-Istakhri [Zakhoder, 1962, pp. 50, 75]. Al-Balkhi wrote: 'Bulgar is the name of the country, the inhabitants of which profess Islam, and the name of the city in which the main mosque is located. Not far from the city another city, Sivar (Suvar) is located, where a main mosque is as well. An Islamic preacher said that the number of residents of both cities extended to 10 thousand men' [Khvolson, p. 82].

The information from another author al-Jayhani (in the broadcast al-Marwazi) is as follows: 'They (the Bulgars) have two cities, one of them is called Suvar, and the other is called Bulgar; the distance between the two cities is of two days of going along the bank in very dense thickets in which they are strengthened against enemies' [Zakhoder, 1967, p. 37].

The report of a large contingent of the Arabic geographical school of the 10th century al-Istakhri, relating to 930–933, has almost no differences from its predecessor al-Balkhi: 'Bulgar is the name of the city, and they (the Bulgars) are Muslims; there is a cathedral mosque in it (in the city); nearby there is another city, called Suvar, it also has a cathedral mosque: I was told by the one who made the khutbah in them that the number of men (inhabitants) in both cities was about 10 thousand men' [ibid].

That is actually all the basic information about the eastern authors of the Bulgarian cities dating back to the first half of the 10th century. They report on the two main cities of the Volga Bulgaria that existed at the specified time, the cities were fairly large in size, with a population of 10 thousand people. As we see, it contains no data on the location of these cities of Bulgar and Suvar. Where can the city of Bulgar be localised? Our sources do not answer this question. Based on the data above about its size and considering the archaeological data, it seems preferable to locate it at the place of Bilyar ancient town. The location of

Suvar is fairly certain and does not cause any controversy.

Among eastern authors, there is another equally important information about the Bulgarian cities. Let us refer again to al-Balkhi: '... Outer Bulgar is a small town that does not take up more space, and is known only by the fact that it is the main trading centre of this state' [Khvolson, 1869, p. 82]. Almost the same information is given by Ibn Hawqal, the author of the latter half of the 10th century: 'Bulgar is a small town that does not have any possessions; it was known because it was the harbour of these states' [Garkavi, 1870, pp. 218–219]. The evidences of the Arabic geographers logically prompted A. Khalikov to the thought of the existence of another town called Bulgar, more precisely the Outer Bulgar, located on the bank of the Volga River and being a trading centre of the state [Khalikov, 1973, p. 96]. However, many others under Outer Bulgar meant Aga Bazar—a tract located 6–7 km (1 farsakh) from the ancient Bulgar town, where, according to legend, the marketplace of the ancient Bulgars was located. Such identification is not justified because Aga Bazaar of the pre-Mongol period was a settlement too insignificant for this. The area of distribution of the cultural layer is here not more than 0.2 ha. Pre-Mongol strata have little power and contain single findings in the form of fragments of ceramic. Excavations have shown that the heyday of the Aga Bazar was at the end of the 14–early 15th centuries. A large number of Jochid coins was found here [Zhiromsky, 1954, p. 327], and not one from the 10–11th centuries. Therefore, the definition of it as a trade and handicraft small town, which served as the harbour town of Bulgar in the 10th century, can hardly be justified, as well as the resting places of the Ruses, as it was urged in by A. Smirnov in his time [1952, p. 173].

'Hudud al-'Alam' compiled in 982 with the use of the information of the preceding authors states: 'Bulgar is a city with a minor area located on the shores of the Atil River. All of them (the inhabitants) are Muslims; about 20,000 horsemen come from it ... Suvar is a city near Bulgar: in it there are fighters for the faith as well as in Bulgar' [Zakhoder, 1967, p. 38]. There is little new information by

the anonymous author. Using the data by al-Balkhi or al-Istakhri and perhaps by al-Jayhani, he simply corrects them lightly—arbitrarily doubles the number of the population of Bulgar because a considerable time has passed after the previous writers' lives, and the city proper he locates on the Atil River, because, in his proper representation, the country itself is in the Atil Region. This interpretation of the text of 'Hudud al-'Alam' is quite feasible.

In the work of al-Muqaddasi created at the end of the 10th century there is the following message: 'Bulgar lies on the both banks (of the river), and the buildings there are of trees and rushes. Nights are short there. The main mosque is situated at the market. The Muslims have conquered it long ago. Bulgar is near the river of Atil and is closer to the sea than to the capital' [Khvolson, 1869, p. 84]. The city of Suvar is, according to al-Muqaddasi, also located on the Atil River. Analysing this rather mixed text in the aspect of the theme under question, scholars have made different sometimes conflicting conclusions.

The city of Bulgar was referred to by one more author of the 10th century, by al-Masudi, but it was placed on the shore of the Sea of Azov, according to him [Ibid, p. 80].

So we have undertaken a quick overview of the information of the Bulgarian cities by the Arab authors of the 10th century, and it shows that they being largely compilative, fragmentary, and contradictory, do not provide solid reasons for placing the city of Bulgar, the capital of the state, on the Volga. They testify the existence of the Bulgarian two major cities—Bulgar and Suvar, and another town called the Outer Bulgar, had been known as the trading wharf of the country.

Highlighting the large size of the first two cities, the Arab sources give the number of the population as 10 thousand people (al-Balkhi), 10 thousand men (al-Istakhri, Ibn Hawqal), 20 thousand horsemen (the author of the 'Hudud al-'Alam'). These numbers are hard to believe in, but they are quite revealing: such a population could only live in Bilyar with its enormous size and not in Bulgar on the Volga River, located in the 10–11th centuries on an area of 9–12 ha.

Eastern writers of the 11th century did not leave the original information about the cities of Bulgaria. Mahmud Kashgari put Bulgar and

Suvar on his map practically near the Caspian Sea, al-Biruni marked them as those cities of 'the seventh climate.'

Reports of the authors of the 12th century are noteworthy. Data by al-Idrisi date back to the 10th century: 'Bulgar is the name of the city inhabited by Christians and Muslims: the latter have a large mosque' [Fakhrutdinov, 1987, p. 12]. Al-Jawaliqi, who called himself an eyewitness of the Bulgars, reports the following: 'Their buildings are similar to the buildings of Rum. They are a great people, their city is called Bulgar. *It is a very big city.*' [Fakhrutdinov, 1987, p. 17; see also Grekov, Kalinin, 1948, p. 153; emphasised by us—*F. Kh.*]. The original information is available by Abu Hamid al-Gharnati who personally visited in the middle of the 12th century the Volga Bulgaria and who sought to describe in his book, first of all, the miracles and wonders he had seen and heard during his travels. He describes briefly the capital of the country as follows: '*And Bulgar is also a huge city*, all built of pine, and the city wall is made of oak. And around it there are a lot of (all sorts of) peoples, they are outside the seven climates' (emphasised by us—*F. Kh.*). This city is located, according to al-Gharnati, on a river (the name is not given), on which ships float. In this country, as he writes, there are a thousand such rivers and 'each river is the size of a mile' (1,800–2,000 m). 'And between Sajsin and Bulgar is 40 days (to sail) across this river' [al-Gharnati 1971, p. 30]. The location of the city of Bulgar on the river seems to correspond to the topography of the Bolgar archaeological site. But then the phrase 'Bulgar is also a great city' in relation to this archaeological site causes mistrust. Why was the city of Bilyar, the largest city of medieval Europe, never mentioned in the above-mentioned sources of the 10–12th centuries? The answer, it seems, is simple: it appears in the eastern sources under the name of Bulgar (Bolgar). Only under this assumption do we find a complete correspondence of the written and archaeological sources. This assumption is perfectly confirmed by the story of the Persian historian of the 13th century al-Juwayni about the conquest by the Mongols in 1236 of Volga Bulgaria and its capital: '... Within the Bulgar limits (the country—*F. Kh.*) princes have united. First, they took by them force and storm *the*



*city of Bulgar, which was famous in the world by the inaccessibility of the locality and large population'* [Tiesenhausen, 1884, pp. 22–23; emphasised by us—*F. Kh.*]. It is here near the city of Bulgar, where undoubtedly the capital of the state of that time—Bilyar, the Great City on the Cheremshan—is meant.

Let us dwell on one group of sources—the data of numismatics. It is believed that the city of Bulgar (Bolgar ancient town) is a place where coins were minted, and the coins had been minted in Bilyar in the 10th century and are allegedly unknown.



The most complete set of the Bulgarian coins of the 10th century in Eastern and Northern Europe was compiled and published by V. Kropotkin [1986]. According to his information, including the findings from the territory of Poland, Finland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, by now there are about 600 Bulgarian coins from the 10th century from 101 places (85 treasures, where they had been found, and 16 separate locations). Of these only 5 coins had been found in the territory of the former Volga Bulgaria, by the way in the neighbourhood of Bilyar: 3 coins from the Tatar-Tolkish treasure from the Chistopol District of the Republic of Tatarstan and 2 more as a part of the treasure of Staroal'metyevsk from the Nurlat Region of the Republic of Tatarstan. In the cultural layer of the ancient town of Bolgar as well as in the vicinity of this monument such coins have not been found. Consequently, the specific location of minting the first Bulgarian coins proper has not been proved by archaeologists. By this right, if not more, Bilyar-Bulgar can make this claim.

The earliest known Bulgar coin in a single specimen of Nerevsk treasure was found in 1956 in the excavations of Veliky Novgorod. This fragment of the dirham with the name of Jafar ibn Abdallah—the Muslim name of Emir Almush, the son of Shilka—contains neither the date nor the place of minting. However, S. Yanina clearly dated it 289–295/902–908 [Yanina, 1962, p. 182].

A significant number of coins is associated with the name of the son of Jafar ibn Abdallah (Almush), Mikail ibn Jafar, who is believed to have reigned in the 920–930s. The place of minting (the city of Bulgar) is marked on some coins, but the date is not defined. The coins

of Mikail's son Abdallah ibn Mikail are also known (the 40–50s of the 10th century). At approximately the same time (337/948–949) in Suvar the issuance of coins on behalf of Talib ibn Ahmed had begun. The next series of coins from 360–370/970–980 is associated with the name of Mumin although with different patronymics—Mumin ibn Hasan and Mumin ibn Ahmed. As shown by S. Yanina [1962, p. 192], the first of them belonged to the coinage of Bulgar, and the second, to the coinage of Suvar. The latest coins of the 10th century, without specifying the name of the Emir and minting places, are from 376/986–987 [Kropotkin, 1986, p. 40]. In the 11th century and up to end of the 12th century coins were not minted in the Volga Bulgaria.

Thus, the numismatic data is in full compliance with the data of the written sources that indicates the two major cities of the Volga Bulgaria that minted their own coins: the city of Bulgar, the administrative and political centre of the state, and the city of Suvar, the principal centre having been, as it is believed, a vassal of the former.

The material of the coinage seems to once again reinforce, however, indirectly, the lawfulness of identification of the ancient town of Bilyar with the capital city of Bulgar. On the majority of coins of 366/976–977 of Mumin ibn Hassan, minted in the city of Bulgar, there is a sign A (the letter 'B' in the runic writing), and on the coins of the city of Suvar there is a symbol  [Yanina, 1962, p. 192]. Presumably these are the tamgas of the Bulgars and Suvars [Kovalevsky, 1954, p. 48]. The fact that among the pottery stamps of the Bilyar ancient town the most widespread (more than half of all stamps) are symbols in the form of  is hardly accidental. [Kochkina, 1983, p. 7,880, Fig. 1–3; 5]. According to the researchers, this sign is a tamga of 'the ruling princely family of the Volga Bulgaria and the main group of the Bulgarian population' [Kokorina, 1989, p. 93]. Such symbols are not found on the vessels of the ancient town of Bolgar.

Thus, a complex approach to the sources—archaeological, written, and numismatic—let us state that the only capital of the Volga Bulgaria of the pre-Mongol period was the city of Bulgar (The Great City), as presented by the ancient town of Bilyar.

### 3. Cities: centres of principalities

*Fayaz Khuzin, Anna Kochkina*

**Suvar** belongs among the ranks of the outstanding landmarks of our past, which bore witness to the rich and multifaceted history of the once flourishing medieval civilisation of the Volga Bulgars. The city's ruins lie 4 km to the west of the village of Kuznechikha in the Spassky District of the Republic of Tatarstan. Suvar's significance in the history of the Bulgar state is due not only to the large size of the ancient settlement, which makes it stand out among the other Bulgar landmarks found in the region. It is also due to the economic, political, and cultural potential it did possess, firstly as the centre of an independent principality existing in the system of an early feudal state in the process of formation, and then as the centre of an extensive district with a considerable number of rural and urban settlements.

Almost as soon as it was founded, the rich and flourishing city, widely known in the 10–13th centuries beyond the borders of Volga Bulgaria, drew the attention of Arab travellers and merchants interested in expanding their trade ties with the northern peoples.

As stated above, the earliest mention of Suvar along with Bulgar is found in an account by the Arab geographer Abu Zaida al-Balkhi [Khvolson, 1869, p. 82]. In 'The Book of Roads and States' al-Jayhani, an author living in the first half of the 10th century, also made mention of these 2 Bulgar cities, adding to the already known accounts new information: 'the space between the two cities extends for two days along the river bank through the thickets where they fortify their positions against their enemies' [Zakhoder, 1967, p. 37]. A letter from the Khazar tsar Joseph addressed to Cordova Caliph Abd-ar-Rahman III [mid 10th century] makes a brief mention of Suvar, rather of the Suvar people. The Khazar tsar wrote that they, the Suvars, 'serve him and pay tribute to him' [Kokovtsev, 1932, pp. 88–89]. In the writings of al-Istakhri [Zakhoder, 1967, p. 37], al-Muqaddasi [Khvolson, 1869, p. 84], and of an anonymous Persian source called 'Hudud al-Alam' [1930, p. 32], all written in the 10th century, practically the same information as

that known to us from al-Balkhi can be found. The information provided by later authors is very meagre. For example, Mahmud Kashgari in his famous work 'Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk' [1074] only mentions the city of Suvar and incorrectly places it on the right bank of the Atil River, not far from the Caspian Sea. The well-known geographer of the 12th century al-Idrisi placed it among the Burtases' cities. The 13th century authors Zakhariya Qazwini, Yakut, and Fakhr al-Din Mubarak Shah do not give any new information concerning Suvar either. The latest records of Suvar are found in writings from the 14th century by Hamdallah Qazwini and Ferheg [Shpilevsky, 1877, p. 49] who did not use the latest accounts while writing their works but rather the earlier works of their predecessors.

This is, as such, the whole body of written sources on the history of Suvar. As we can see, it is very small, and in addition, the accounts it contains are fragmentary and hardly informative. For some reason, Abu Hamid al-Gharnati, a Spanish Arab from Andalusia, who visited Bulgaria in person in 1135 and who left a rather detailed account of the Bulgars for his descendants, never mentioned the name of Suvar. Even old Russian chronicles contain no mention of it.

However, another interesting group of sources is available. They are numismatic materials whose study sheds light on the pages of Suvar's 10th century political life, which has as of yet been insufficiently studied. Coins minted by two Suvar emirs, Talib ibn Ahmed and Mumin ibn Ahmed, in 948–976 have been accurately identified. Based on this information, scholars believe that between these years, most probably even as early as its founding, Suvar had been the centre of a separate 'principality' or sovereign state, which lost its independence only at the end of the 10th century [Mukhammadiyev, 1990, pp. 113, 116; Yanina, 1962, p. 191]. There is no knowledge of any later Suvar 'princes.'

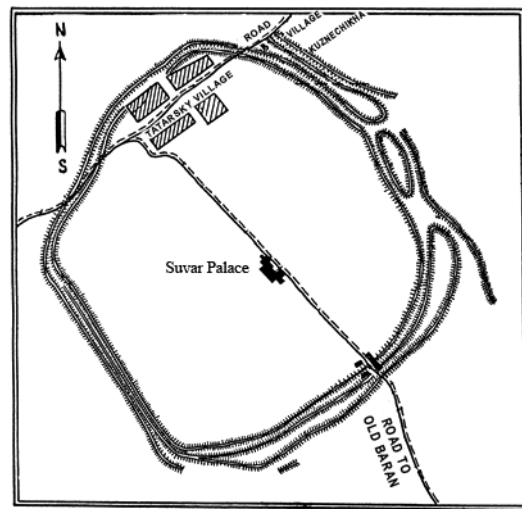
It is the well-known Tatar scholar Shigabutdin Marjani who is given credit for the

discovery of Suvar's ruins. In his fundamental work 'Mustafad al-akhbar fi akhvali Kazan va Bulgar' ['Sources on the History of Kazan and Bulgar'], first published in 1885, he mentioned that the neighbouring communities still call the archaeological site fortified with dirt walls not far from the village of Kuznechikha, in the Spassky Uyezd of Kazan Guberniya, by its original name of Suar [Merzhani, 1989, 91 b.]. This localisation was finally confirmed by Gainetdin Akhmarov, another Tatar historian, who made a special journey to the ruins of Suvar in 1893 [Akhmarov, 1893, pp. 478–481]. Later I. Iznoskov plotted this settlement on an archaeological map [Iznoskov, 1895].

At present, the remains of Suvar constitute a huge sub-quadrangular archaeological site surrounded by strong walls and ditch of nearly 4.5 km in length. On the northern side of the archaeological site, along the left bank of the Utkha River, where a small village called Tatarsky Gorodok is located, traces of ancient fortifications are hardly visible as they have been destroyed with time. The area of the ancient city inside the fortifications is 64 ha, and together with the fortifications it exceeds 90 ha. Outside the walls, almost along the whole perimeter, there are vast ancient suburban settlements, such as Pokrovskoye, Tatgorodskoye I and II, which are villages of pre-Mongol times. The whole area of the monument, except for the walls and ditches, has been ploughed for years, the result being the destruction of the cultural layer and the remains of the ancient buildings.

The history of the archaeological investigation of the landmark is not rich. The largest excavations on the Suvar site were carried out in 1933–1937 by A. Smirnov. It was the first systematic investigation of a large Bulgar city conducted on the territory of Tatarstan. The outcome of A. Smirnov's five-year-long work is impressive. In the centre of the archaeological site they investigated the remains of a brick building and the buildings adjacent to it, and they also located defensive fortified structures and examined about ten Muslim graves in the two newly revealed city necropolises.

As was discovered over the course of excavations, there were remains of a wooden wall

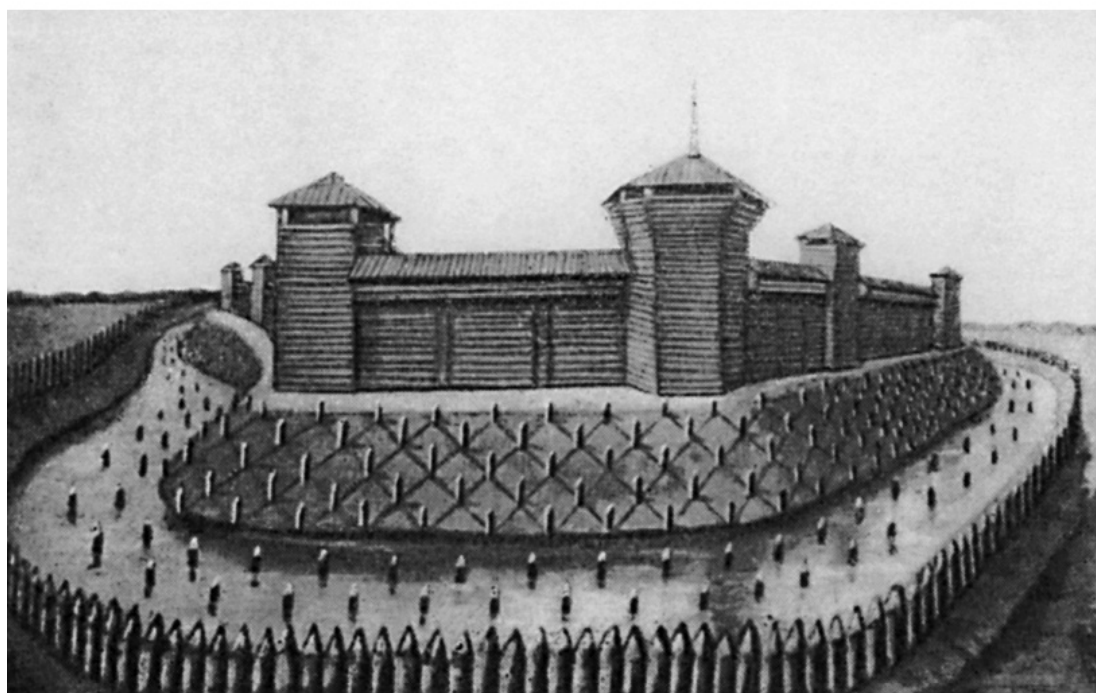


Plan of the Suvar ancient town

within the dirt walls of the archaeological site, which was made of log frames with dimensions of 4 x 5 m installed next to one another. Inside, the logged storerooms were filled with rammed clay and broken brick. Along its whole length the fortified walls had military towers located at an even distance from one another. The initial depth of the ditch dug on the outer side of the wall reached 5 m. Its slopes were strengthened with horizontal ledgers, while the bottom, with vertical stakes with V-shaped heads. The graphic reconstruction of these fortifications was completed by Smirnov himself.

Two types of dwellings were investigated: wattle and daub houses and log cabins with cellars under the floor. They were heated by arch and cylinder-shaped stoves. Around them there were household pits, mainly granaries and cellars of different types. Sometimes they contained seeds cultures of various grains [ibid, pp. 141–149].

The brick building uncovered by A. Smirnov in the central aristocratic part of the city was of extreme interest for studying the formation of Bulgar monumental architecture of the pre-Mongol period [ibid, pp. 150–159]. All that remains of the building is the foundation and the basement with a floor and under-floor heating system. According to Smirnov, the building had two floors and was of an extended rectangle shape with a donjon-type tower.



The defensive fortifications of Suvar. Reconstruction by A. Smirnov

It was built between the end of the 10th the beginning of the 11th centuries and existed, according to A. Smirnov, until the end of the 14th century, undergoing several capital repairs and reconstructions overtime. The graphic reconstruction of the building, which was later done by the well-known Tatar art historian F. Valeyev [1970, p. 87, Fig. 5], shows it looking like a real palace, whose main entrance is nicely built as a portal with a pointed arc and decorated with coloured tiles. In scientific and popular science books this object is mentioned under the name of 'Suvar palace', the estate of a rich feudal, although one cannot rule out its other function [Khuzin, Sharifullin, 1999, p. 93]

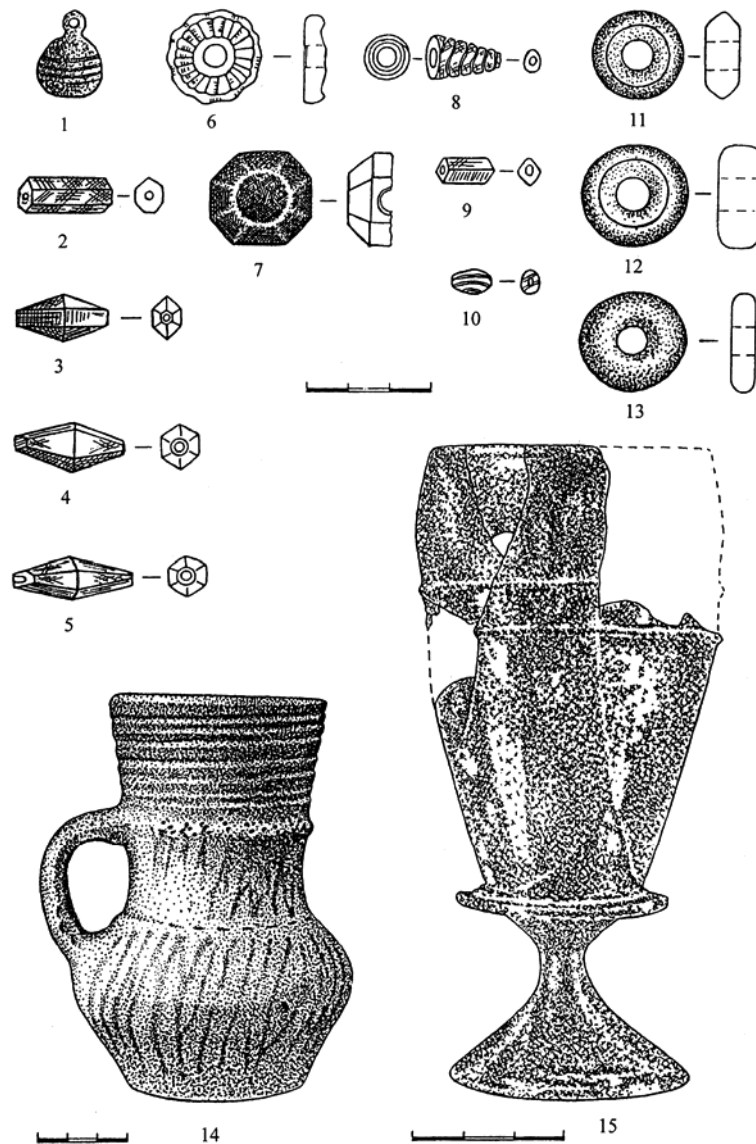
A. Smirnov's expedition collected many objects in connection to which the landmark was dated to the 10–14th centuries. However, items of the Golden Horde period that can be dated well are practically absent here. Such finds as 'red hard-baked ceramics,' sphericonical vessels, several pieces of blue-gazed wares, separate fragments of glass bracelets, two arrowheads, and pieces of glassware were numbered among the later objects. It is easy to see that the specified finds have a wide time-

line and are not characteristic of only Golden Horde times.

Comparing Suvar ceramics with those made in Bilyar, A. Smirnov pointed out their 'complete identity.' According to him, 'only a small quantity of the material belongs to the Mongol epoch, namely, a small quantity of glazed ware widespread among the Tatars.'

About 40 years after A. Smirnov's excavations, in 1974–1975, an expedition headed by T. Khlebnikova worked on the Suvar site [1977]. Minor excavations, begun in order to obtain new materials and to specify the stratigraphy and chronology of the monument's cultural strata, did not reveal large objects, although this made it possible to record the complete absence of finds belonging to the Golden Horde period.

In 1990–1993 an expedition from the Komi Branch of the Institute of Language, Literature, and History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR conducted some minor research at the Suvar site. The dig started in the central part of the site, where there was the brick building [the 'Suvar palace'] investigated by A. Smirnov in the 1930s. The maximum thickness of the cultural layers outside the building was 120–140 cm.



Suvar. Finds from the 4th excavation from 1990–1993: 1–bronze, 2, 8–10, 15–glass, 3–5–carnelian, 6–lead, 7–'geshir,' 11–13–slate, 14–clay

They investigated about a dozen outbuildings, a number of post-holes, grooves, the remains of brick structures, and some other objects.

In historical and archaeological literature it is common to believe that after the 1236 Mongol massacre, Suvar as well as Bilyar continued to exist and were only lost at the end of the 14th century [Smirnov, 1941, p. 171; Fakhrutdinov, 1975, p. 121; Yegorov, 1985, p. 96]. However, among the Suvar finds, including many hundreds and thousands of objects, there is not a single item that could be dated to the

Golden Horde period without reservation. This is undoubtedly an indication that Suvar existed only from the 10th century until the first third of the 13th century.

The new excavations showed that in terms of the pre-Mongol layer's thickness and its saturation with buildings and rich finds, Suvar can only be compared to Bilyar. These two major monuments of the pre-Mongol Bulgars are also similar to each other in their inner topography: the vast blacksmithing and metal-making quarters were located practically in



Murom townlet A fragment from the foundation of a brick building.  
Excavations by V. Holmsten, 1928

the centre of the town and not on the river bank as was assumed they would be. The material culture of the Suvar and Bilyar communities also shows resemblance, though only the former has fewer moulded ware, which is mainly made from a batter with an admixture of plants.

**The Murom townlet** is located in the central part of Samarskaya Luka, where two very large ravines—Yablonevy in the north and Sukhaya Brusyana in the south—are most nearest to each other. The site of the town is a weakly prominent plain, which is broken by numerous ravines from the north-west to the south-east containing streams.

The length of the site from the north to the south is almost 1.5 km, while from the west to the east it is 1 km. The area within the fortifications is about 150 ha. The city consisted of an inner and several parts of an outer city, fortified with dirt walls and ditches, which came close to the ravines and served as natural fortifications.

An important element of its spatial organisation was the presence of a suburb and a neighbourhood, whose topographical fea-

tures were determined by the local landscape. Beyond the city fortifications, on the north-western side, traces of ceramics are spread over another 200–250 m, though with less prominence than in the ancient town. On the south-western side, beyond the walls, there was a large necropolis. Another burial site was revealed on a cape between the ravines in the north-eastern part of the ancient town. On the eastern part beyond the ravines stretched a suburb in which several villages were uncovered archaeologically [Murom settlements II–IV]. Thus, the total area of the city, including the suburbs, is no less than 400 ha.

Additionally, over ten settlements are known to be within the radius of 5–10 km from the ancient town. About as many settlements are at a distance of 10–15 km. They have their own 'centres' but are influenced by the large city. Taking into consideration the fact that the whole of Samarskaya Luka has a length of about 30 km in diameter, the part where Murom townlet is the centre can be regarded as an agglomeration. Its stability is augmented by the link between the Murom townlet and Mezhdurechenskoye ancient

town [Zubov and others, 1995]. The latter was positioned on the Volga and acted as a checkpoint to monitor the water traffic and security on the Volga Trade Route, practically serving as a port for Murom townlet.

The layout of the town itself goes back to the traditions of three-part planning characteristic of great Bulgarian cities [Bilyar, Starooleykinskoye ancient town], as well as of Oriental cities [Samara State Agricultural Academy, 1973, pp. 132–210].

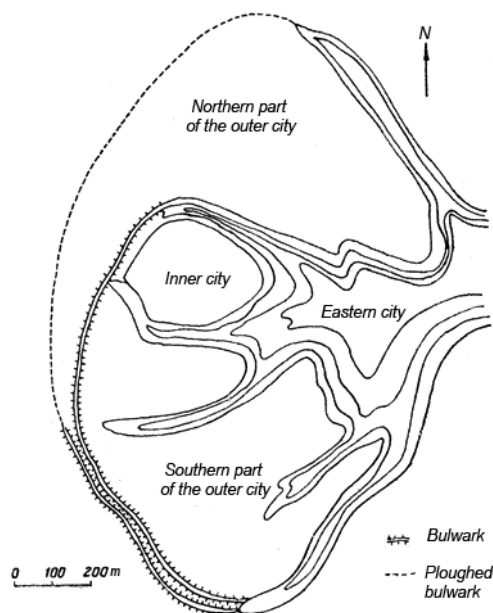
The most ancient part of the city was the inner city lying between the two spurs of the ravine. Here the cultural layer is much thicker, and objects are found in abundance. The inner city was protected to the south and north by the ravines. On the western side there was originally a ditch of up to 3 m deep. Later it was filled in, and in its place an inner ditch was dug [Vasilyev, Matveeva, 1986, pp. 170–171].

Around the inner city was an outer city, which was divided into northern, southern, and western quarters. The main territory of the northern town had been settled no earlier than the 11th century, and life here continued on until the town was destroyed.

The southern part of the outer city is the most extensive. In the 11th century, in its eastern part near the ravine, there was a handicraft quarter where a pottery furnace was uncovered and investigated [ibid pp. 186–187].

The most ancient defensive construction, which dates to the 10th century, is the ditch that connected the ravines to serve as the inner town's borders to the north and south [ibid, p. 170]. Its current depth, measuring from the modern top, is 2.2 m, with its width being 8–8.4 m. The ditch was filled in at the end of the 11th century, and in its place a wall was built along with a new ditch 3.1 m deep and 5.3–7 m wide. It is probably that the ditch was filled with water as the water-bearing bed here lies high. At the same time, it could have served as a water reservoir supplying the metal manufacturing located in the western part of the town.

The formation of the various quarters of the city did not occur simultaneously, and the build-up of fortifications in the outer town was completed only when the town existed at its maximum size. It seems that the fact that the



A schematic plan of the townlet of Murom  
(according to V. Holmsten)

small town of Murom was located in a relatively safe place, the fortifications of the outer city began to be built only when there was a real threat to the town, which could have been at the beginning of the 13th century.

On the site of Murom the remains of foundations of several buildings built of brick and limestone were studied. Two such buildings adjoining each other were partially investigated already in 1928–1929. For brickwork they used bricks with dimensions of 25 x 23 x 5 cm in size placed on a clay mortar. The furnaces, whose sides were heavily burnt and covered with slag, were located on the outer side of the buildings and were connected by long-distance channels with a system of chimneys. Segments of a watertight floor made of limestone and alabaster cement remained in the buildings there.

In 1973 G. Matveeva investigated the building in the northern part of the outer town near the ravine separating the outer town from the inner one, not far from the north-western entrance. Rectangular in shape, the building contained dimensions of 10.8 x 10 m, was oriented from the north-east to the south-west, and had all characteristic features of Bulgar buildings of the pre-Mongol period,

namely, brick dimensions, underfloor heating, inner layout, etc. Judging by its layout, the building was most likely a bathhouse, similar to most brick buildings in Bulgar towns. G. Matveeva finds its closest analogy in Bilyar buildings. The researcher dated its construction to the second half–end of the 10th century [ibid, pp. 175–178].

The above-ground wooden buildings on the Murom site are poorly preserved. Log cabin buildings were uncovered in the central part of town. At archaeological site No. 18 there is the first row of beams with the dimensions of 3.9 x 3.5 m which has remained intact. In the north-eastern part of the dwelling was an oval stove. To the west and east the dwelling was joined by two areas covered with clay, apparently indicating that the yard had been paved with clay.

Another dwelling had dimensions of 4 x 4 m. All that remained of it was a layer of rotten wood dust and a rectangular-shaped stone stove. A path, daubed with light yellow clay, led to the entrance. A millstone, a scythe in a wooden case, and a spindle whorl were found inside the dwelling.

Besides the wooden dwellings, buildings made of clay and adobe were also discovered. These dwellings were very poorly preserved, making it impossible to reconstruct their structure.

Remains of dwellings were found in the northern town as well. A foundation pit [3.5 x 3 m] in the subsoil with an entrance in its northern side remained from the house, located almost at the town walls. There was a stone stove in the north-west corner. On the southern side the remains of the stove that heated the stove-bench, set along the south wall, were examined. Numerous pieces of clay plastering and filling with many clay inclusions allow us to assume that wooden framing, covered with clay, was used for building the walls. The structure's construction is peculiar, as nothing like it had been uncovered before at other Bulgar sites. Further development of similar structures with heated couches [sufas] can be observed in the Golden Horde period.

Traces of different artisan production, including metallurgy, metal-working, ceramic,

carpentry, bone-carving, jewellery, etc., were uncovered in Murom townlet. It was one of the largest artisan centres in the south of Volga Bulgaria and supplied the countryside with its products.

Furnaces for melting iron have not been discovered yet, although there is evidence of making iron in a simpler way, for example, by boiling it in pots on a home stove.

Numerous items of iron testify to the level of blacksmith's craft in the ancient town. Metallographic analysis of these items confirms that the blacksmiths knew different techniques [Tolmacheva, 1982].

Copper-smelting furnaces in the southwestern part of the inner town were studied as well [Vasilyev, Matveeva, 1986]. A copper-smith's workshop, where the remains of a furnace were found as well as cuts of foliated copper, a fragment of a measuring bowl, and a weighting plummet were collected, was located at the same place. There were also found a small measuring cylindrical jar and a small bronze plate with semi-spheric dents—a template for making balls of golden foil or foliated copper, which served as elements of decoration [Vasilyev, Matveeva, 1986].

The remains of several production facilities, remnants of the furnaces, located in deepened pits and probably intended for melting metal, have been researched in recent years in the eastern quarter of the northern town.

Murom townlet is so far the only ancient Bulgar landmark where a brick kiln has been studied [Vasilyev, Matveeva, 1986; Vasilyeva, 1993, p. 156, Fig. 29: 1]. Only the furnace chamber in the shape of a square foundation pit of 2.2 x 2.2 m has remained. The kiln contained two levels, with the furnace at the bottom and the baking chamber at the top. It was made of bricks with standard dimensions of 25 x 24 x 5 cm. Similar to this kiln are those furnaces which were used for producing tiles in Chersonesus in the 11–12th centuries.

The second kiln for baking ceramic ware was studied in the south-eastern part of the southern town. It was round and two-leveled and conformed to all the standards of potter kilns found in other Bulgarian sites.



The vessels of Murom potters are standardised and represent all the main forms typical for mass crockery. They feature a linear, waved, or toothed pattern, and there are even items with zoomorphic decor. The almost absolute absence of unglazed items, even among the crockery, is a special feature. The colour of most vessels is red or brown, and brands can be seen on the bottom, though less frequently as compared to, for example, those in Bilyar.

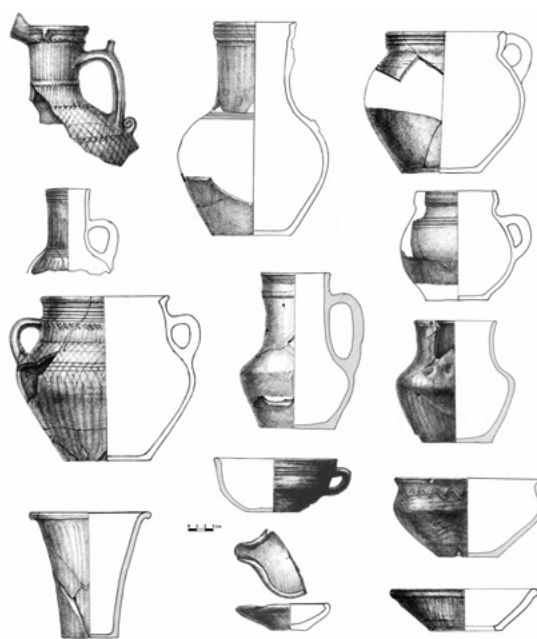
The ceramic ware of the Bulgars was not limited to crockery. A significant number of them had other domestic purpose. There were clay spindle whorls, weights, smoke and water tubes, bricks, as well as toys, ceremonial items, etc.

Among other crafts bone-carving was the most developed, and its traces are clearly reflected in the blanks, filed bones, and production waste.

The production of tar was known to have occurred in the ancient town as well. The remains of an open stone fireplace were discovered together with the lower part of a big kitchen pot, at the bottom of which were three small holes and some burnt matter, which turned out to be tar. Another two bottoms of dishes with holes in the middle and traces of tar were found nearby.

Trade played an important role in the life of the inhabitants of Murom townlet. Many items of eastern origin were found, including glazed crockery of Middle Asian and Caucasian origin, Iranian faience crockery with patterns of lustre golden paint, spheric cones, various beads, fragment of glass crockery, etc.

Relations with Rus' on the far southern border of the Bulgar state are confirmed by various finds, the most frequent being slate spindle whorls. A fragment of stone mould, found in the northern town, is of particular interest. It was intended for casting two types of bracelets, which are well-known from Russian antiquities [Sedova, 1981, pp. 103–119]. Connections with Rus' were not only carried out through the distribution of artisanal goods but also through the exchange of human resources. The presence of Russian craftsmen in Bulgar towns has been documented in archaeological materials [fragments of ancient ceramics, pig bones].



Samples of pottery from the townlet of Murom

Items of Baltic and Western European origin were found at the archaeological site [amber, a German coin, or denarius, of the 11th century]. Articles of Byzantine and Black Sea Coast origin have also been found, among them being a fragment of a deep-blue glass vessel with a turquoise glass inlay in the form of a floral pattern and fragments of amphorae.

The inhabitants of Murom, as in all medieval towns, were engaged in agricultural activities. Agricultural tools were uncovered in the archaeological stratum, among which were plough shares and colters, sickles, scythes, hoes, millstones, and other tools, while in grain pits charred millet, wheat, rye, and spelt grains were found. Large cylindrical pits, paneled with wood or clay, were used for storing grain. A big grain storage was located near the fortifications in the northern town.

One of the main characteristics among the largest towns in pre-Mongol Volga Bulgaria is the availability of several town cemeteries. At present two burial sites have been found and partially researched in Murom townlet.

They are located outside the ancient town's fortifications, with one to the south-west and the other to the north-east. The area of the first burial site is presumably 10 ha [Kochki-



The fortifications of the Yulovsky ancient town

na, 2002, p. 125]. Thirty-four Islamic burials were examined, including burials in coffins, according to discoveries of wood dust and iron nails.

The second necropolis of Murom was discovered beyond the north-eastern border of the archaeological site, on separate territory between the ravines. Fifteen Islamic graves were excavated at the burial site. A peculiar detail of the burial rite is the presence of small pieces of coal within the grave. The depth of burial pits is 50–60 cm from the subsoil on average, but 70 cm ones can also be found. Judging by the stratigraphic data, this burial site is of an earlier period, synchronous with the initial period of the town's existence.

The town existed only until 1236—that is, until the Tatar-Mongol invasion. No signs of the town's existence during the Golden Horde period have been found. Evidently it was completely destroyed by Batu's armies and never rebuilt, similar to Bilyar and other

towns of Volga Bulgaria. A thick layer of fire remains and human skeletons with arrowheads stuck in their bones testify to the town's tragic fall.

**The ancient town of Yulovka** serves as the remains of the only Bulgar town along the Upper Sura at present to have been examined by archaeologists. It is located in the centre of Gorodishche, a town in the Penza Region, at the edge of a high right bank of the Yulovka River at its confluence with the Kichkileyka River. It consists of two topographic areas. The small townlet, or 'detinets', protected by three lines of walls and ditches with two passages, occupies the top of the cape. The 'okolny gorod' [outskirts], partially destroyed, once comprised 'detinets' on the western low-ground side. It was fortified by a single wall with a ditch. The total area of the ancient town is 22 ha. It can be considered one of the smaller towns of Bulgaria. In spite of this, scholars suppose that it held a role as the administrative, political, cultural, and

economic centre of the south-western lands of the state.

The ancient town has been discussed in historic and archaeological literature since the latter half of the 18th century, when it was researched by G. Petersen, A. Krotkov, P. Stepanov, M. Polesskikh, and A. Khalikov [Belorybkin, 1995, p. 46]. Archaeological excavations have been conducted here since 1985 by an expedition from the Penza State Pedagogical University under the supervision of G. Belorybkin.

The remains of residential, household, and production facilities, including a pottery kiln and bone-carving workshop, have been uncovered on the site. A significant amount of

the items is connected with the iron-making, copper-smelting, wood-processing, and jewellery trades. The goods of jewellers are also represented in the buried treasure of silver items [twisted bracelets, neck torc, temporal pendant, and other], found in 1968 [Ibid.]. The existence of trade relations with ancient Russian lands is demonstrated by the discovery of slate spindle whorls, glass bracelets, and Russian ceramics. In the opinion of A. Khalikov and G. Belorybkin, the Yulovka archaeological site, which they consider to have been the centre of the Burtas Principality, was located on an overland road from Bulgar to Kiev [Motsya, Khalikov, 1997, pp. 167–168].

#### 4. Other urban centres

*Fayaz Khuzin, Nail Nabiullin,  
Albert Nigamayev, Ayrat Sitdikov*

**Juketau on the Kama** is archaeologically represented by the same name as the ancient town, Krutogorskoye and Donaurovskoye ancient settlements, and two burial sites.

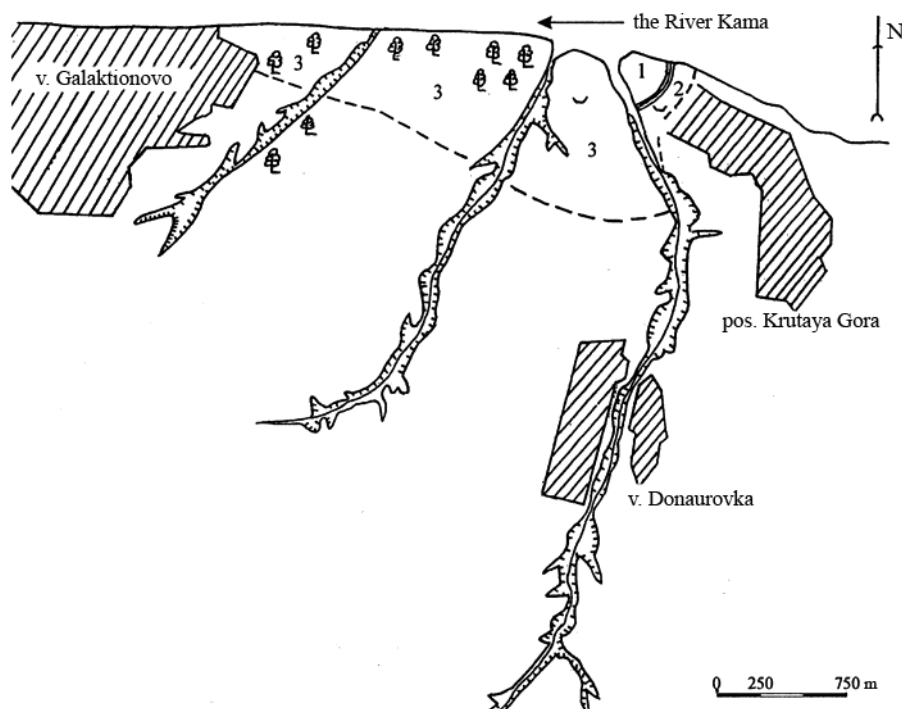
The ancient town is located 3 km west of the town of Chistopol [250 m to the north-west of the village of Krutaya Gora] on a high promontory, formed by the left bank of the Kama River and the right bank of its tributary, the Kilevka River, which before was called the Zhukot or Zhukotinka. From the ground level of the south-eastern side remains of the fortifications have been preserved in the form of three rows of earthen bulwark about 2.5–3 m high and two trenches between them 2.5 m deep. The archaeological site has a subtriangular shape with a relatively flat surface that rises slightly towards the centre. The total fortified area, partly occupied by the Chistopol grain elevator, is 5.8 ha.

The Krutogorskoye ancient settlement, eastern Juketau trading quarter, is located to the east and south-east of the ancient town fortifications. A significant part of its territory is currently developed with new houses of the village of Krutaya Gora and a grain elevator. Surface material has been recorded on an area of 6.5 ha. Located practically on the territory of the ancient settlement closer to the fortifi-

cations is an early Islamic burial site partially examined in 1999.

Donaurovskoye ancient settlement, the western suburbs of Juketau, occupies the lower platform opposite the ancient town on the left bank of the Kilevka. As surveys have shown, the surface material is spread over a wide strip along the bank of the Kama up to the village of Galaktionovo, which is 1.5 km west of the ancient town. On this territory, covering an area of about 100 ha, a cultural layer was documented with an average capacity of 35–40 cm, and traces of two production centres—for pottery and metallurgy—were also uncovered. Thus, the territory of the western suburbs was much more extensive than it was previously thought [35 ha]. The whole archaeological complex of Juketau is located on an area of 150 ha.

Written sources on the history of the city are very scarce. Those that do exist are brief reports in ancient chronicles. In one of the earliest chronicles, which is available today thanks to the 'History of Russia' by V. Tatischev, Juketau was mentioned among the cities taken by Mongol-Tatar troops in 1236: 'The Tatars came to conquer the great Bulgar people, took all their land, and upon taking the cities of Veliky and Zhukotin during fierce



The general project of the Dzhuketau archaeological complex:  
1—ancient town, 2—the Krutogorsky ancient settlement, 3—the Donaurovsky ancient settlement

battles, slew all their men and women' [Tatishhev, 1964, III, p. 405]. If Tatishhev's source is authentic, then the reference of Zhukotin-Juketau on par with the city of Veliky Grad [Great City] obviously points to its significant role in the history of Volga Bulgaria of the pre-Mongol period.

In the time of the Golden Horde Juketau was known, as one might say, on the international level, as is evidenced by 14th century maps of the Old World. Some of them, such as the famous Catalan Atlas of 1375 and a map from 1367, made by the brothers Francesco and Domenico Pizzigano, contain an 'image' of the city called Fachatim and Sacetim on the left bank of the Edil River, the modern Kama [Brun, 1873, p. 2].

Significant work on the territory of the monument was carried out in the early 1970s by T. Khlebnikova. Over the course of three field seasons Khlebnikova investigated residential and household outbuildings, several ancient graves on the territory of the urban necropolis in the Donaurovskoye ancient settlement and gathered rich material items, which allowed for the characterisation of the main stages of de-

velopment of the city from its founding to its fall [Khlebnikova, 1975].

In 1991 the study was resumed by a squad of the Bilyarsk Archaeological Expedition.

The emergence of the city dates back to no later than the second half of the 10th century. This is proved by the presence among the finds from the early pre-Mongol layer of molded ceramics of the Cis-Kama, Cis-Uralic and Saltovo-Mayaki groups as well as pieces of silver dirhams minted in the first half of the 10th century [Khuzin, Nabiullin, 1999, p. 94]. The maximum date of the third layer is limited to 1236, which is proved in particular by iron arrowheads of the Mongol 'shears' variety in the interlayer of the conflagration.

Excavations on the site uncovered mud huts, semi-mud huts, above-ground dwellings with underground constructions and household outbuildings [granaries, cellars] similar in structure to other Bulgarian cities. The area of the eastern trading quarter remains archaeologically unexplored. 50 m to the south-east of the line of bulwarks the 11th century Krutogorsky burial site was discovered, in the graves of which pa-



The banks of the Dzhuketau ancient town

gan remnants in the form of the 'cult of fire,' sacrificial meals, as well as traces of Muslim burial rites were evident. Extremely interesting is the presence of a significant amount of moulded ceramics with crushed bowl in the clay [up to 30% of those found] in the lower horizons of the cultural layer, which serve as an indication of the complex ethnocultural processes taking place in the region in the early stages of the history of pre-Mongol Bulgaria.

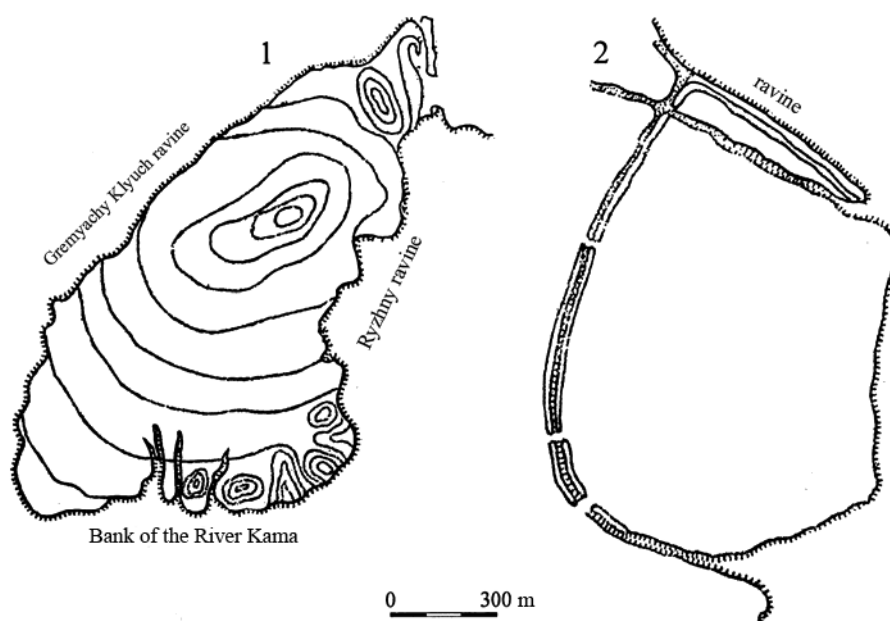
The fortified part of the city—that is, the ancient settlement-fortress, only functioned up until the Mongol invasion. The Golden Horde layer is not traced here. This fact is perfectly consistent with the known policy of the Mongols, which prohibited subject populations from rebuilding the ruined fortifications of cities and from occupying strategically important areas, though at the same time it contradicts the popular belief among scholars concerning the restoration of the fortress Juketau in the middle or latter half of the 13th century.

But even in pre-Mongol times a significant part of the city's population lived on the territory of the western trading quarter. The banks of

the Kilevka and the Kama were predominantly populated. The layers of the 10–the beginning of the 13th centuries have been traced on an area of about 10 ha. The excavations have uncovered houses and household outbuildings, while clear traces of handicraft production have not yet been identified.

Beyond the pre-Mongol trading quarter there was an Islamic burial site, about 30 graves of which have been studied by T. Khebrikova and N. Nabiullin.

The material culture of Juketau's population was quite peculiar. All archaeologists who have studied the Bulgars are familiar with the so-called 'Juketau' type ceramic round-bottomed vessels of a cup or pot shape and a conspicuous admixture of sand, which are decorated with a multi-lane steep wave around the rim. About a half [from 30% to 65%] of the total number of ceramics found during the excavations of Juketau consist of these types of dishes. There is quite a lot of it in the surrounding villages, but it is absolutely not characteristic for the Bilyarsk and the more distant Suvar districts. According to experts, Juketau ceramics show signs of Cis-Kama and Cis-Uralic pottery traditions related to the Finno-



Plans of the ancient towns of Kashan I (1) and Kashan II (2)

Ugric population. In recent years a view was expressed concerning the development of a separate local cultural variant of the pre-Mongol Bulgars, on the foundation of which the Juketau 'principality' was later formed during the period of the Golden Horde [Nabiullin, 1998, pp. 44–45].

**Kashan**, or rather its alleged archaeological remains in the form of the 1st Kashan settlement, is located 1 km east of the village of Shuran in the Laishevo District of Tatarstan, on the terrace of the right bank of the Kama up to 90 m high. The site of the trapezoidal landmak [1,800 x 300–950 m] drops from the north-east to the south. It is bordered by the Gremyachy Klyuch ravine to the north-west, by the Ryzhny ravine to the east, and the Kama bank to the south [AK, 1981, p. 119, No. 569].

On the basis of meagre reports by Russian chronicles, old songs and the legends of the Tatars, scholars pictured Kashan as a large and wealthy Bulgar city which existed in the 10–14th centuries. In one of the ancient songs it is said that Kashan is the 'mirror of the world,' 'a great fortress'; a city where rich traders exporting their products to India and Khorasan live, so do the skilled craftsmen such as metallur-

gists, steel makers, and goldsmiths [Garipova, 1991, p. 159].

This landmark has been written on in archaeological literature since the beginning of the 19th century. Archaeologists were set on the trail of Kashan by toponyms preserved from the Bulgarian era, such as 'Koshan Mountain' on the right high bank of the Kama River near the former ferry from Soroichi Gory to Murzikha, the fishery 'Koshan zavod' [backwater] in the same area, and 'Koshan doroga' [road].

A thorough archaeological survey of the entire coastline from the village of Shuran to Soroichi Gory was conducted in 1879 by P. Ponomaryov.

The results of the study were prepared by Ponomaryov. He wrote: 'In the vastness of the space occupied, judging by the quantity and quality of finds, it seems not only to surpass all other Bulgarian settlements in the described area but also to stand out among the towns of Kama-Volga Bulgaria, being second only to Bulgar and Bilyar' [Ponomaryov, 1893]. The scholar came to the conclusion that this ancient town is the Bulgarian city of Kashan, known from chronicles of the 14th century.

After the work of P. Ponomaryov the Kashan I settlement lost the attention of archaeologists for quite some time. They occasionally remembered the site in connection with accidental findings by peasants during excavation work on the site of the vanished city. Among these findings, of due note is a treasure of coins and silver objects [discovered in the late 1880s], which included a silver pendant, a wire bracelet, a ring with a dragon, and two other rings. In the treasure of 1938 were found gold earrings in the form of rings with chains with several oblong beads, a silver braided bracelet and chain, and a golden ring [Kalinin, Khalikov, 1954, p. 95].

In 1948 at the sites of Kashan I and II an archaeological expedition worked under the leadership of N. Kalinin. He confirmed the observations of his predecessor P. Ponomaryov on the absence of a cultural layer on the Kashan II site and admitted Ponomaryov's ideas concerning the localisation of the analistic Kashan on the place of the extensive [108 ha] site near the village of Shuran to be convincing.

According to N. Kalinin, Kashan was founded in the 12th century—perhaps at the end of the century—and existed until 1396, when it was finally devastated by Novgorod ushkuyniks. He emphasised that the rapid rise of Kashan, the single largest Bulgarian city on the right bank of the Kama, can be explained by the accommodating natural and geographical conditions of the area. It stood at the intersection of two main arteries of transportation, the waterway along the Kama and the overland road from the south to the north of Bulgaria with the crossing of the Kama near Kashan. Based on his research, N. Kalinin came to the following conclusion: 'We should assume a large and strong fortress sat on the site of Kashan II, controlling the movement of vessels on the Kama River, which served as a guard of the Kama crossing and the residence of the Kashan prince. Kashan I was a big artisan and commercial trading quarter and the main economic centre of the principality' [Kalinin, Khalikov, 1954, p. 96]. This point of view, expressed by an authoritative scholar, rapidly gained adherents due to its originality and has since undergone minor modifications, though it still occupies

a place in historical and archaeological science today.

Since 1990 Kazan archaeologists [A. Gubaydullin, K. Rudenko] have made repeated inspections of the two sites, making sweeps of the outcrops of the cultural layer, trenching and collecting scant surface material. Scholars were once again convinced that there was no cultural layer nor any findings on the site Kashan II. Consequently, the existing point of view concerning this site as the remains of a fortress, the prince's residence, or a shelter for trade caravans has not been archaeologically proven.

In 1995–1997 excavations on the site of Kashan II were conducted by K. Rudenko. The fortifications on the floor side and on the side of the Kama as well as cultural deposits in different parts of the settlement were studied.

By nature of the findings and the absence of clear traces of crafts, scholars concluded that Kashan I has little in common with a large city, as it is described in written sources and folklore.

K. Rudenko has an interesting hypothesis concerning the possible location of Kashan on the spot of the 'Gorodok' settlement, located on the opposite bank of the Kama River, but this requires additional support.

The site is located in the Alekseyevsky District of Tatarstan near the village of Gorodok on the broad promontory of a high terrace on the left bank of the Kama. To the north and the south it is bordered by a deep ravine, to the east, by the edge of the terrace, and on the floor side it is fortified with an earth wall and a ditch. The area is 45.5 ha. To the north from Gorodok, across the ravine, is located an ancient settlement of 12.4 ha. On the floor side of Gorodok is another ancient settlement with an area of 26.5 ha. In general, the whole complex of Bulgarian landmarks near Gorodok occupies almost 85 ha [Rudenko, 1999, p. 134; 2001, p. 29].

There have been no excavations of the site, although enough rich surface material has been collected, including molded pottery and ceramics, iron plates for the horse harness, a metal matrix for the manufacture of pads, hinged locks, including early forms, keys for cylinder locks, arrowheads, an iron

plate of armor, a fishhook, and other items. These materials serve as the basis for dating the monument to the end of the 10–beginning of the 13th centuries. The site requires targeted research for its possible identification with Kashan.

**Kazan** has remained poorly investigated archeologically until recently. Because of this, the age of the city has not been determined. A. Khalikova's attempt to archaeologically confirm the founding date of Kazan [1177], mentioned in some copies of 'Kazan history,' the historical and publicistic work of an unknown author of the second half of the 16th century, was not very successful due to the insignificant number of finds.

Large-scale excavations in the Kazan Kremlin and beyond, in the historic part of the city, began in 1994. As a result, a considerable amount of material was accumulated, which clarified and expanded our understanding of the earliest stages of the history of modern Kazan. The archaeologists managed to: 1) expose a pre-Mongol layer in the cultural strata of the Kremlin and determine the time of its accumulation based on the findings of the complex to the end of the 10–beginning of the 11th or the first half of the 13th centuries; 2) explore facilities [remnants of residential and household outbuildings, fortifications] and the remains of the necropolis, which are stratigraphically associated with this ancient layer; 3) justify the city status of the original settlement, which consisted of a fortress on a high promontory of the Kazanka and the adjacent tenements; 4) trace the continuity of the accumulation of layers from the initial development of the Kremlin hill by the Bulgars up to the present day.

The collection of discoveries from the ancient layer proving that the city was founded at the end of the 10–beginning of the 11th centuries [1005 is a tentative date] includes: red clay pottery ceramics with all the signs of manufacturing in the pre-Mongol period, molded ceramics of Saltovo-Mayaki sources [8–beginning of the 11th centuries], women's jewelry [glass and stone beads, bronze bracelets, a buckle of a lap belt, etc.], a pad on the belt of horse bridles of the so-called early Hungarian type, some types of arrow-

heads, Old Bohemian denarius of Prince Wenceslaus of 929/930 and a chip of a dirham of first quarter of the 10th century. The proposed date of the emergence of Kazan was also confirmed by information obtained through natural science methods [radiocarbon analysis of charcoal, ceramics and thermoluminescent analysis] [Khuzin, 2000, pp. 14–15].

Findings related to the early Bulgarian settlement, as shown by their mapping, are concentrated on the northern half of the Kremlin hill: in excavations on the territory of the 'Gun Court,' to the south and the east of the Cathedral of the Annunciation, in the yard of the residence of the president of the Republic of Tatarstan, as well as in low-lying north-eastern part of the hill [outside the ancient fortress]. This area, which occupies approximately 6 ha, has been fortified since the beginning of Bulgarian settlement here.

On the south floor side the city was protected by the deep Tezitsky ravine, about 14 m wide and 4 m deep, where the gentle slopes were scarp, and an earthen bulwark with additional wooden structures on top. Traces of ancient fortifications along the eastern and northern edge of the Kremlin hill were revealed as a line of pole holes with a diameter of 15–20 cm and a depth of 20–40 cm; the remains are apparently of a wooden palisade or fence. It should be noted that the stockade fence, with a ditch in front, arranged with the maximum use of the natural protective properties of the relief, relates to the earliest type of defensive structures of Volga Bulgaria [Khuzin, 1995, p. 94]. A similar system of fortifications is known to have existed in particular in Bilyar and Bulgar in the 10th century.

The fortification of a city of pre-Mongol times—that is, the latter half of the 12–beginning of the 13th centuries, had a completely different look. In the conditions of the deteriorating military-political situation in Volga Bulgaria, caused by its prolonged confrontation with the Vladimir-Suzdal Rus' on the most important trade routes of the Volga, the Kazan fortress was strengthened.

The exiting timber and earth fortifications gave way to strong stone walls with a 2 m base width, which were either built 'dry'



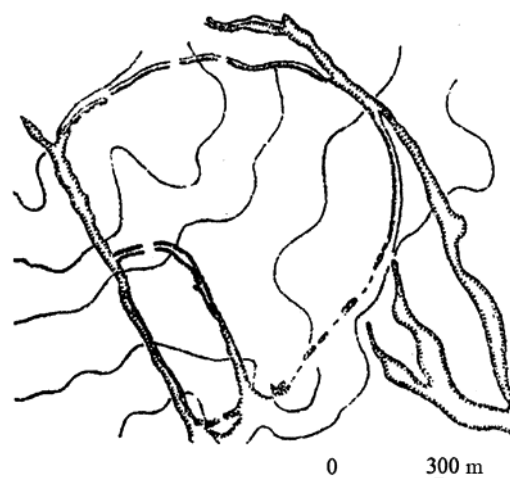
from untreated limestone or using a clay and limestone solution. The construction horizon of the white-stone wall is clearly visible in the form of small lime rock particles in the pre-Mongol stratum. The wall was built on level ground without a pit—that is, right on firm ground or otherwise on the leveled surface of an earlier existing earth-mound. The remaining height of the masonry varies from 0.8 m to 1.5 m, in some places up to 2 m; however, only its lower tiers refer to the pre-Mongol period. The wall covers over 200 m of ground. It is not rectilinear in plan since it follows the topographical relief, or to be more exact, the curve of the cape edge. There are no traces of towers along the eastern and northern lines of the walls. The passage from the southern side has been traced in the form of a tower pier and a cobblestone road.

In the centre of the ancient fortress-city a big watchtower soared up, obviously made of white stone as well. The incredible foundation of this structure was discovered during excavations in 1977 and 2004, near the Süyümbike tower.

In view of recent discoveries, ancient Kazan is imagined as a small but well fortified fortress on the northern border of the Bulgarian state intended to protect one of the critically important strategic sections of the Great Volga Route. It is evident that a small military garrison was stationed here, while the larger trade and artisan population lived outside the fort walls, closer to the Kazanka River. The survey excavations of 1999 carried out in the city streets towards the east and west of the Kremlin revealed traces of an early trading quarter-suburb. Particularly of interest were materials associated with iron metallurgy and metalworking.

There is every reason to regard the initial Kazan settlement as one of many in the system of trade and artisan settlements that functioned in the 10–11th centuries along the Great Volga Route. This proved by the nature of findings consisting of a considerable amount of imported goods brought from the West and the East, the Baltic countries, as well as Ancient Rus'.

The development of the ancient city was sporadic and did not conform to any system. Household outbuildings of various functional



Plan of the Bogdashkinsky ancient town

purposes have been recorded, while very few residential dwellings have been uncovered. The only through street, which remains the main street in the Kremlin today, was most likely the one that led from the southern gates to the north towards the watchtower. Some Islamic cemeteries were situated to the south-east of the city fortifications, beyond the ditch [one was discovered in the yard of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Tatarstan, while another, on the south-eastern side of the Preobrazhensky tower].

The results of recent successful historical and archaeological research made it possible to not only prove the city's age to be around a thousand years but also to include the city, or to be more exact, the ensemble of the Kazan Kremlin into the list of UNESCO World Heritage Monuments.

**Oshel** is another Bulgarian town described in Russian chronicles. It is situated on the right bank of the Volga. At present its archaeological remains are located at an archaeological site that is 0.9 km to the north of the village of Bogdashkino in the Tetyushi District of the Republic of Tatarstan, on level high ground between ravines stretching from the north to the south of the Kilne River, a tributary of the Sviyaga River. The ancient town had a square plan with rounded corners pointing in the four cardinal directions and overall occupies an area of around 77 ha. The fortified citadel [500 x 200 m] is located in

the south-western corner of the town and is separated from it by a deep ravine and an earth mound.

The town of Oshel is mentioned only once in Russian chronicles around 1220 [1219], in connection with the campaign of the Vladimir and Suzdal prince Svyatoslav against the Volga Bulgars, when it was taken by assault and burnt to ashes [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, X, pp. 83–85]. The chronicles describe in detail the movements of the amphibious army to its landing in Isady, the warriors' coming on shore, the preparation for the battle, and the attack on the town that took place on 15 June. The chronicler writes the following about the town and its fortifications: 'Prince Svyatoslav hurried to the town, it was stockaded by an oak fence with two additional fences around it and an earth wall between them, and warriors were rushing and fighting along this wall.' Only after several assaults from different directions was the town finally taken and destroyed, and only one Bulgarian 'prince' managed to escape to the Great City [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, X, pp. 83–84]. The town was not able to recover from those events and finally ceased to exist in 1236.

Many scholars were interested in the question of Oshel's location. As early as 1821 an article by the Orientalist F. Erdman was published, in which for the first time he identified the Kirel [Yantikovo] ancient town as the remains of Oshel [Erdman, 1821, p. 292]. The location suggested by F. Erdman was further supported by nearly all the scholars who specialised in the history of Volga Bulgaria: S. Shpilevsky [1877, pp. 152, 319], P. Ponomaryov [1892, p. 273 ff.], A. Smirnov [1951, pp. 265–266], etc.

In the course of archaeological research in the Volga Region conducted in the late 1940–early 1950s, N. Kalinin focused his attention on the remains of the Bogdashkino ancient town, which was first investigated by G. Akhmarov as far back as in 1909. The comparative study of several ancient Bulgarian towns of the region based on written information allowed N. Kalinin to conclude the possibility of identifying Oshel not with Kirel but with Bogdashkino ancient town [Kalinin, Khalikov, 1954, pp. 92–93]. This viewpoint still

prevails in historical and archaeological literature.

The first archaeological excavations at the Bogdashkino site were performed by an expedition of the Galimdzhan Ibragimov Institute of Language, Literature, and Art of the Kazan Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences from 1988–1990 [Izmaylov, Yakimov, 1994, pp. 62–66]. The excavations of the inner town, or 'citadel,' particularly along the line of fortifications, provided interesting material that enables the dating of its to no later than the 11th century. Among these materials the remains of a pagan burial site are of exceptional interest. It resembled the funeral rites used at the Tetyushi and Bolshetarkhan burial sites. According to findings from the main stratum of the inner town, it dates back to the 12–beginning of the 13th centuries. The material items found in the excavations included clay dishes, along with glazed ones, tools and weapons [an iron hoe, knives, arrowheads], jewellery [beads, linings], and trading items [a set of weights and scales, Cypraeidae shells, slate spindle whorls, etc.]. In the outer town with a stratum width varying in different places from 20 cm to 70 cm, household outbuildings were studied, and in the suburbs of the ancient town, 300 m to the west from the fortifications, the remains of an Islamic necropolis were discovered. According to scholars, the lower level of the cultural strata of the external town can be dated back to the 10–11th centuries, and the upper level with clear traces of a fire, to the end of the 12–the first third of the 13th centuries. They believe that the fall of the town 'occurred catastrophically' [Ibid, p. 65].

**Alabuga** is one of the oldest towns in the Republic of Tatarstan. The medieval town consisted of two topographical parts. Yelabuga [Chertovo] ancient town is situated on the south-western outskirts, on the high right bank of the Kama River, and occupies the large cape of the rock terrace rising above the river at 52–60 m. In 1990, in the historical part of the modern town, a suburban settlement and trading quarters [posad] were discovered, archaeological research of which has been carried out recently.

The area of the settlement [around 3 ha] is fortified from the field side with three lines of

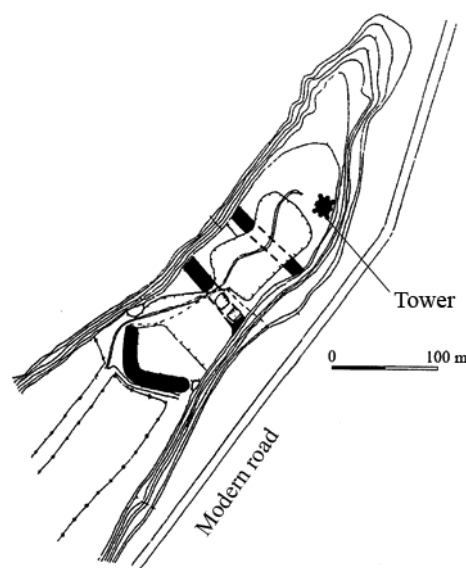
earth walls and ditches. The famous stone Bulgarian tower rises at the eastern slope of the cape. In documents of the first half of the 17th century this landmark is named 'the ancient hill fort that is located in Yelabuga' [Nevostruyev, 1871, pp. 62–64].

The first detailed description of the ancient town and its stone ruins can be found in an essay by N. Rychkov, who personally visited Yelabuga in 1769. He was the first scholar to identify the ruins of the stone building as the remains of 'a pagan temple,' or rather a mosque built by Bulgars [Rychkov, 1770, pp. 45, 51].

An interesting book on Yelabuga was written and published in 1871 by I. Shishkin, the head of the town, by whose efforts the tower was restored and repaired in 1867 almost to its original appearance. He believed that on the territory of ancient Yelabuga was initially located the Scythian town of Gelonus, and later, the Bulgarian town of Bryakhimov. His viewpoint was supported by other scholars. Thus, K. Nevostruyev assumed that 'the town of Yelabuga was previously included into the ancient Volga-Bulgarian and later Kazan tsardom; ...here was the famous and renowned town of Bryakhimov from Russian chronicles, which was desolated by Andrey Bogolyubsky in 1164' [Nevostruyev, 1872, p. 183]. However, the placement of Bryakhimov at the Yelabuga site turned out to be erroneous.

Significant excavations at the archaeological site were carried out by A. Spitsyn in 1888. Having identified the time of construction of the stone tower as the Bulgarian period [not later than the 13th century], he assumed that this building was either a part of an ancient caravansary or the tomb of an Islamic holy man [Spitsyn, 1893, pp. 88–91].

Materials from Yelabuga ancient town drew the attention of the premier Soviet archaeologist and Bulgar historian A. Smirnov. He said that 'it was a military citadel, the most northern point of the Bulgarian principality, beyond which there was a sparsely-populated zone making up the border with northern tribes' [Smirnov, 1951, p. 29]. According to Smirnov, the ancient town of Yelabuga together with the citadel were built in the 10–11th centuries and served as 'the backbone of the Bulgars' rule



Plan of the Yelabuga ancient town

over the Udmurt tribes; from here they conducted raids in the villages, imposing tribute' [Smirnov, 1952, p. 248].

In 1981 M. Kaveev carried out some excavations at the Yelabuga archaeological site. He managed to show when the fortified Bulgarian settlement was active [the 10–13th centuries]. In his opinion, this archaeological site was not a place of permanent residence for Bulgars—it served as a military fortress or a shelter used by the neighbouring population only in case of military threat [Kaveev, 1984, pp. 18–27].

In 1993, on the instruction of the Yelabuga State Historical Architectural and Art Museum-Reserve, research at the excavation site was continued by professor A. Khalikov. The main purpose of the expedition was the complete archaeological and architectural examination of the white stone building.

The Bulgarian-Tatar cultural stratum in the landmark was dominant, as A. Khalikov stated. In this stratum were found the remains of a stone building erected on a strip foundation as wide as the walls. In order to lay it, a pit was dug out to a depth of 35–40 cm. The building was almost square in form with the sides measuring 21 m; and in its corners were the foundations of rounded towers with an average diameter of 5 m. There were also wall-adjacent towers, including a triangular



The south-western part of the white-walled mosque in the ancient town of Yelabuga  
(after conservation)

buttress with its peak oriented exactly in the direction of Mecca. There were no doubts as to the functional use of the examined site. This was an Islamic mosque serving as a fortress-shelter at the same time [Khalikov, 1997, p. 14]. Obviously, at the Yelabuga site one of the station-dwellings [manzils] along the trade-caravan road was located. This road led in the 9–13th centuries from the Bulgar-Great City to the Middle and Upper Cis-Kama and further to the Urals and Siberia. 'The location of the mosque at the Yelabuga site was not an accident; most likely it was situated at the place of the former pagan sanctuary and served as a prayer house for merchants after successfully crossing the Kama River,' wrote A. Khalikov [Ibid, p. 15].

When the white stone building was being studied along with its structures and related strata, material of the latter half of the 10–first half of the 13th centuries was found. This material indicates a remarkable number of Ugric or Finno-Ugric elements among the population.

Since 1994 research of the landmark has been conducted by an archaeological expedi-

tion of the Yelabuga Pedagogical Institute under the supervision of A. Nigamayev. Outside the south-western part of the ancient town Nigamayev uncovered the remains of a female burial site with adornments consisting of two copper noise-making pendants and a silver temple ring with a spherical pierced item dating to the 10–11th centuries. A cemetery was located at this spot with graves originating from the Ugric-Turkic world [Nigamayev, Khuzin, 2000, p. 23].

Other excavations at the archaeological site provided ordinary material from the Bulgarian-Tatar period, which proved that the settlement on the cape functioned permanently from the 11th till the 16th centuries. However, the main bulk of the population did not live here, but elsewhere.

In the old part of Yelabuga several tombs of an Islamic cemetery, which were destroyed in the course of construction work, were studied. On the sites between the Spassky and Pokrovsky Cathedrals the remains of a Bulgarian settlement of the 11–13th centuries and of a later period were uncovered. The original ceramic complex of this suburban settlement

consists of utensils moulded from shell material of Perm origins, which make up more than half of all ceramics layers accumulated during the pre-Mongol and Golden Horde period [Nigamayev, 2001].

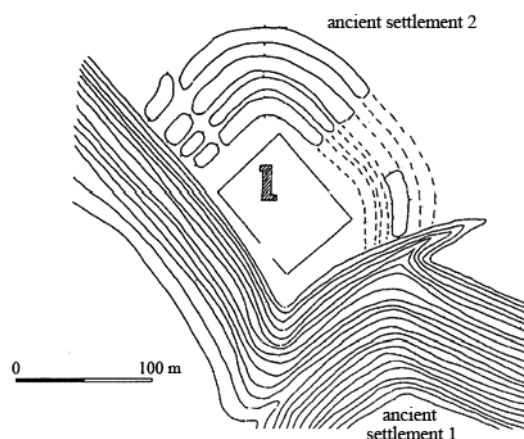
The archaeological materials found during the last ten years make it possible to define more exactly the time of origin Alabuga. As is well known, there were several viewpoints on concerning this question, which were primarily based on written documents. The most widely accepted was the idea that the history of the town began with a decree by Catherine the Great renaming the village Trekhsvyatskoye and the fortress of the same-name into the uyezd town of Yelabuga in 1780. In modern encyclopedias the town's founding is attributed to the middle or the latter half of the 16th century when the above-mentioned Russian village appeared on the territory of modern Yelabuga [The Cities and Towns of Russia, 1994, p. 133; Tatar Encyclopaedic Dictionary, 1999, p. 184].

These proposed dates for Yelabuga's founding have always caused disputes, for there were well-known facts proving that an earlier ancient settlement existed in the area of the town. Thus, in written documents of the 16–18th centuries the village Trekhsvyatskoye is mentioned alongside the name Yelabuga: 'Trekhsvyatskoye is Yelabuga,' 'the village Trekhsvyatskoye that is on Yelabuga,' 'the monastery of the ancient stone town that is on Yelabuga,' etc. There is no doubt that these facts speak of the existence of Yelabuga before the village Trekhsvyatskoye appeared in the latter half of the 16th century. Indeed, in 'the List of Settlements of the Kazan Khanate Period,' compiled by the famous historian Ye. Chernyshev using the cadastres of the 16–17th centuries and all other possible sources, there is mention of 'the village Yelabuga-Alabuga, of the Zyuri road on the Kama River' [Chernyshev, 1971, p. 285]. Obviously, after the Kazan Khanate was conquered by Ivan the Terrible, Alabuga was simply renamed into Trekhsvyatskoye, but this name did not become naturalised among the local Tatar and Russian population, and the more common 'Alabuga' was used alongside it. Thus, the earliest and most reliable information in written sources was confined to the period of the Kazan Khan-

ate [apart from information on the town, there are also accounts on the Yelabuga khans Urazbakty and Ilbakty, etc.].

The excavations on the Yelabuga archaeological site and in the historical part of the modern town substantially enlarged the number of archaeological sources that can be used for proving the date of the town's founding. The Bulgarian pottery and various groups of moulded ceramics, taking into account a variety of other findings [slate and clay spindle whorls, carnelian and glass beads, other jewelry, iron arrow tips and spears, keys for cylinder locks, etc.], make it possible to consider the origin of the Bulgarian fortress on the high bank of the Kama River to be the end of the 10–first half of the 11th centuries. The Yelabuga fortress was not only a shelter for the neighbouring population at the time of military threats but also a cult place, administrative and political centre of the Eastern Cis-Kama Region, from where the power of the Bulgarian emir extended over the neighbouring Finno-Ugric lands. Almost at the same time, in the 11–12th centuries, the main settlement [suburban trading quarter] appeared. It was situated in the historical part of the modern town and structurally connected with the above-mentioned fortress. It is since this time that ongoing development of this settlement has been observed up until the present-day.

The emergence of the Yelabuga fortress and adjacent suburban settlement at the turn of the 11th century is quite logical and supported by the analysis of the general historical and political situation in the lower Cis-Kama Region at the beginning of the second millennium. As justly noted by Ye. Kazakov [International Ties, Trade Routes, and Cities of the Middle Volga Region of the 9–12th centuries. Materials of the International Symposium, Kazan, 1999, p. 101 ff.], the fall of the Khazar Khaganate and relative weakness of the North-Eastern Rus' made Volga Bulgaria the only strong state present in the huge territory expanding from the Urals to the Upper Volga Region. Bulgaria experienced economic boom, with a lot of competing trade centres functioning in the country that produced various and high quality products, a considerable part of which was intended for export. These products were sold mainly in the lands of the northern and eastern Finno-Ugric neighbours of Bulgars. The con-



Plan of the Challynsky ancient town

struction of a new military and trade outpost on the north-eastern borders of the country was elicited, first of all, by the economic needs of the country.

In the 10th century, from the Middle Urals and Upper Cis-Kama Regions, a wave of Ugric people penetrated into Volga Bulgaria. To a considerable degree they were Turkified and made round-bottomed dishes with a cylinder neck decorated with combed and knotwork ornamentation. A part of the alien population settled down in the modern Yelabuga area and took part in the construction of the fortress, which later became one of the major strongholds of the Bulgarian state in the eastern Trans-Kama Region.

**Chally** and the related Chally ancient town in Rybnaya Sloboda District of the Republic of Tatarstan until recently was considered to be the remains of a major urban settlement of the Kazan Khanate period. New research provided more insight into these traditional considerations.

The archaeological remains of the town are located 0.8 km to the south-east of the village of Tyaberdino-Chally on the left bank of the Shumbut River [the right tribute of the Kama] on a high cape formed by a steep precipice to the river on the south-west and a deep wide ravine on the south-east. On the floor side a complex system of artificial earthworks was preserved, which consisted of four lines of arched mounds and ditches. There is a road from the north-western side. The site form is a sub-square with dimensions 100 m x 115 m [1.15 ha]. The archaeological site is surround-

ed by ancient suburban settlements and trading quarters [posads] adjoining the site with a total area of around 60 ha. There were two Islamic burial sites discovered on this territory.

There are very few reliable sources about this landmark and even those are fragmentary. The first accounts of the 'Chelmats,' who were directly identified by scholars with the 'Challynians,' a population of the Kama River Region, are found in ancient Russian chronicles. Here they are mentioned in connection with the campaign of Vladimir and Suzdal princes against the Great City in 1183 [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, II, p. 626]. These Cis-Kama Region tribes—that is, the Chelmata-Challynians, as far back as the pre-Mongol period possessed their own town. In several chronicles there is information on Bulgars from the town of Chelmata [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 390; IX, p. 10; XV, p. 269]. However, no details on this town have been preserved in sources from the 13–15th centuries. The city of Chally *is mentioned for the final time* in sources around 1556 when the government troops of boyar-voivode P. Morozov destroyed it completely [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XIII, p. 269].

Chally ancient town has been known since the 19th century, as shown in the works of K. Nevostruyev, S. Shpilevsky, M. Zaitova, N. Tolmacheva, I. Iznoskova [Ancient Chally, 2000]. However, the first excavations were only carried out in 1955 by an archaeological expedition of the Institute of Language, Literature, and History of the Kazan Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences under the supervision of N. Kalinin. Several sites were investigated on the territory of the ancient town, including grain storage pits, cellars and other household outbuildings, a construction pit for a half-earth dwelling. Kalinin determined that the town existed over the period of the 14th to the first half of the 16th century and considered it to be one of the outstanding landmarks of the Kazan Khanate period, the centre of the feudal Chally 'principality' [Ibid., pp. 48–49].

In 1983 this landmark was investigated by an expedition of the Tatarstan State Museum under the supervision of N. Kokorina. The excavation near the Eastern outskirts of the an-

cient town revealed traces of an above-ground dwelling with remains of an adobe oven, and several household outbuildings. Based on new excavation materials, the researchers determined the period of the formation of the ancient town to be the end of the 12–beginning of the 13th centuries [Ibid., p. 7].

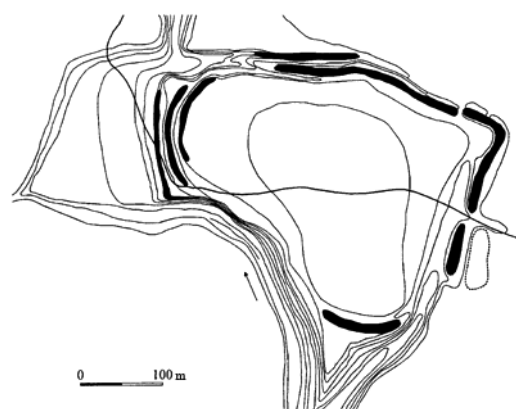
In 1989 excavations of Chally ancient town and one of its suburbs were carried out by an archaeological expedition from the Museum of Local History of the Udmurt Republic under the supervision of T. Ostanina. Numerous household storage pits and stone ovens were discovered in the south-eastern part of the ancient town. Similar items were encountered in the suburban settlement. This landmark dates back, according to Ostanina, to the Golden Horde and Kazan Khanate era [Ibid., p. 7].

New research studies of the Chally ancient town and its suburbs were conducted in 1993–1997 by an expedition from the Galimdzhan Ibragimov Institute of Language, Literature, and History [since 1996 the Institute of History] of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences under the supervision of F. Khuzin. The expedition set the goal of addressing the chronology and nature of the landmark through the study of the ancient town itself and its fortifications as well as suburban ancient settlements and burial sites.

The fortifications of the ancient town have been studied many times. As was concluded by A. Gubaydullin, during the pre-Mongol period the first, the second, and the third lines of earth mounds were built, which were later reconstructed twice during the Golden Horde and Kazan Khanate era [Gubaydullin, 2002, p. 73 ff.].

The most active period of the Chally ancient town was in the 12–14th centuries. Among the objects investigated archaeologically were living, household, and facility buildings [the alleged remains of forge shops and potteries]. Of interest are the open ovens and sacrificial pits, which are evidence that a small Finnish population lived here.

A variety of the following findings are evidence that the principal stratum was accumulated during the pre-Mongol period: iron arrow tips, a lyre-shaped buckle, lyre-shaped fire-steel, a bronze pear-shaped bell-pendant,



Plan of the Khulashkinsky ancient town

a prismatic octagonal carnelian bead, a zone bead made of black opaque glass encrusted with two undulated lines from white paste, a fragment of a bead made of yellow glass with a black slightly prominent eye, rock crystal bead, slate spindle whorls, etc. [Ancient Chally, 2000, p. 180 ff., Fig. 4; 9]. These findings give certain reason to assume that the Chally settlement was founded in the 11–12th centuries.

During the Bulgar period Chally was one of many ordinary towns with a primarily trade and artisan population, which was not yet completely independent of agriculture. In the latter half of the 15th century it turned into the centre of an ulus ['principality'] of the same name within the confines of the Kazan Khanate.

**Khulash** refers to the number of minor Bolgar cities situated on the right bank of the Volga. The site is located on the high bank of the Kilny River [a tributary of the Sviyaga River] in the Tetyushsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan. The fortified area is 11.3 ha, with a suburban settlement of about 30 square ha adjoining the ramparts.

N. Kalinin conducted the first comprehensive investigation of the archaeological site in 1949. According to his information, at some places the cultural layer—rich in pottery fragments, animal bones, etc.—was 150 cm deep. Among the finds collected over different years, Kalinin mentioned gold and silver ornaments, metal utensils, pieces of an elegant horse harness, a great number of slate spindle whorls, millstones, and other objects, which

indicated that 'Khulash cannot be counted as one of the common towns—it was the rich residence of princes' [Kalinin, Khalikov, 1954, p. 88]. Outside the walls, in the trading quarter of the town, N. Kalinin discovered traces of a brick building and industrial remains such as blooms and slags

He established the timeline of the monument correctly. Kalinin believed the main period of Khulash's existence to date back to the 10–12th centuries. According to him, 'Obviously, Khulash's demise was due to a catastrophe, which is proven by the extensive charred ruins and numerous finds of human bones on the archaeological site itself.' This is also proven by 'highly probable' legends recorded from among the local people that the 'lost town was destroyed during the Mongols' devastating invasion.'

Archaeological excavations of the monument were carried out in 1962–1965 by a Chuvash team of the Povolzhye Archaeological Expedition headed by A. Smirnov and V. Kakhovsky. Examinations of the site showed that the town had a powerful fortification system for the time, consisting of ramparts and ditches, and a wooden wall with rectangular towers at the bottom. The defensive fortifications in Khulash are very similar to those in other Bulgar towns of the pre-Mongol period. [Kakhovsky, Smirnov, 1972, pp. 14–17].

The excavations of the archaeological site revealed the remains of wooden dwellings, wattle and daub structures, one brick building, a great number of utility pits, production buildings [forging and pottery furnaces, a smithy], and a number of other facilities. Interesting data was likewise obtained on the town's social topography. As the scholars observed, the central part of the archaeological site, which was not strictly planned, contained wooden dwellings, where townsfolk lived, with and outbuildings around them. In the western and eastern parts they uncovered utility buildings, and in the south-eastern part, artisan workshops. The only brick building was located outside the fortifications in the trading quarter. The researchers wrote that the cape in the south-western part of the archaeological site 'was used as a place of public sacrificial offerings and various religious rites.'

Along with artisan facilities, the urban status of Khulash is confirmed by the remains of its citizens' material culture. A wide range of high quality earthenware, a rich collection of nonferrous glass and semi-precious decorations, a set of armaments [different arrowheads, battle axes, fragments of chain armor, etc.], tradesmen's tools [scales and sets of weights], including the presence of camel bones among the osteological materials all form a typical set of finds uncovered from the layers of urban-type settlements.

*The Krasnosyundukovskoye I archaeological site* is another example of a minor Bulgar town situated in the Cis-Volga Region of Volga Bulgaria. It is situated on a gentle slope on the right bank of the Sviyaga River [the Ulyanovsk Region] and consists of two fortified areas, a citadel [the central fortified area], and a trading quarter whose total surface area is around 50 ha. The first area is surrounded by a wall and a ditch with a passage in its western part, while in the eastern part of the trading quarter there is a double row of walls. Any other parts of the fortifications have not survived.

This landmark has been known since the late 19th century. In 1991 extensive archaeological excavations of a preservative character were carried out in the trading quarter of the town by expeditions from Samara University headed by A. Kochkina and from the Ulyanovsk Regional Museum of Local History headed by Yu. Semykin [Kochkina, Stashenkov, 1993; Semykin, 1993]. Due to these archaeological investigations, and first and foremost, to the seemingly unexpected discovery of brick building remains, convincingly interpreted by Yu. Semykin as a public [or private] bath, the Krasnosyundukovskoye I archaeological site became widely known among Bulgar experts. Also of great interest were buildings of various functions, several burial sites, and a rich collection of clothing, which made it possible to form a general impression of the typical character of an ordinary Bulgar town of the pre-Mongol period.

Among the uncovered structures, of interest are the remains of a storage room where finished pottery items were kept, and whose traces were identified by the fragments of melted bricks and pieces of puddle, supposedly be-



longing to the pottery furnace. The other structures were used for housekeeping [pit-cellar, storerooms, granaries] and living.

Two Muslim graves of the 10–early 11th centuries which, however, are not connected with the burial site, have also been explored.

In terms of the time when the archaeological site appeared and its ethnic composition, of exceptional interest is the earthenware complex which was uncovered. The earthenware, moulded and improved by circular grinding, is numerous and various, which, according to A. Kochkina, 'looks quite archaic.' Among it there are groups of earthenware that particularly stand out, including those with roots in the Saltovo-Mayatsky culture, and a group with Cis-Kama and Cis-Uralic [Finno-Ugric] roots. 'A fragment of the wall of a cross-glazed vessel made on a wheel from grey clay is an exceptional find, being similar to the ceramics found in the burial sites of the early Bulgar period in the Middle Volga Region' [Kochkina, Stachenkov, 1993, p. 193]. Based on the finds indicated above along with a number of others, scholars consider the Krasnosyundukovskoye I archaeological site to belong among the number of earliest Volga Bolgar settlements, which appeared in the early or the first half of the 10th century.

Separate finds, which include a cubic iron weight, two lead weight-seals, fragments from glass vessels, a slate spindle whorl, and a collection of glazed earthenware of local, Middle Asian, and Byzantine production, indicate that the examined settlement was urban. The other finds [arrowheads, single-cylinder locks of 'Bulgar' type, a silver ring, a billon pendant imitating Arab dirhams, glass, amber and jet beads, etc.] are characteristic of rural and urban Bulgar culture in the 10–11th centuries.

It is interesting to note that only 800 m to the east of the explored landmarks is another archaeological site, *Krasnosyundukovskoye II archaeological site*, which also belongs among the ranks of small towns. Both of these cities are surrounded by suburban [villages] that practically adjoin each other and make up a common complex of 177 ha in area. Unfortunately, neither of these has been excavated; therefore, it is impossible to judge their social

status nor is it clear the kind of relationships that existed between the two towns and their suburbs.

*The Staroaleyskoye archaeological site* represents the remains of one of the largest cities of Volga Bulgaria. Its fortified area is about 130 ha. The monument is situated on a high, upland fringe on the right bank of the Sviyaga River in the Ulyanovsk District. In different years the site was repeatedly studied; however, it was practically never excavated.

In 1996 a small dig was begun in the central part of the site where there were sediments of iron slags. The cultural layer here is about 60 cm thick. Several buildings were studied, including the remains of a smithy with a broken forge chimney made of stones laid with clay mortar. Near the smithy there was a cup-shaped pit dug up in the clay ground which served, according to scholars, as a water reservoir [Semykin and others, 1997, p. 79]. Among the finds, apart from the pottery [including glazed pottery produced locally] and earthenware, were pieces of iron slag and bloom, iron knives, sickles, a cauldron eye, keys to cylindrical locks, and parts of a bow made of bone.

There is no doubt concerning the urban character of the site.

*The Rozhdestvensky archaeological site* is located in the Karagaysky District of the Perm Region. It is situated on a high bedrock terrace, on the left bank of the Obva River and occupies a 260 x 125 m sub-rectangular site [about three ha in area] protected by a dirt wall. Behind the northern wall there is an unfortified suburban trading quarter, 3 ha in area. The settlement's eastern fortifications were joined by a burial ground that occupied three capes of the bedrock terrace, on one of which Muslim Bulgars buried their dead.

The remains of one bone carving workshop and three potteries with double-level furnaces of the Bulgar type, storing pits, and other outbuildings were investigated. Among the objects found during the excavations were fragments of crucibles, earthen foundry ladles, casting molds, defective bronze wares, as well as defective beads and a piece of glass paste, which points to traces of bronze casting and probably glass making. As observed by A. Belavin and N. Krylasova, 'inside the settle-

ment there were workshops, storerooms and such, which its inhabitants considered most important, while dwellings were removed outside the fortifications' [Krylasova, Belavin, 2000, p. 326]. The researchers believe that the settlement existed from the 9–10th centuries until the 14th century. Its golden age falls in the 11–12th centuries, when there was a Bulgar trading and artisan outpost, which had appeared even earlier. 'The Bulgar craftsmen provided the local community with decorations, earthenware, iron work tools, and the like. The fragments of scales, weights, coins as well as a great number of Bulgar jewellery, waistband details, fragments of locks and keys, military weapons, and armour are indicative of the Bulgar merchants' vigorous activity' [ibid]. The scholars suppose that they had a mosque of their own in the town. 23 burials were examined in the Muslim part of the necropolis, which were performed by observing kybla.

Judging by the materials available, the ancient settlement was built by the local—mainly Ugrian and Finnish—population. Bulgar merchants settled here no earlier than the 10th century. In the 11–12th centuries they made up a considerable part of the population, and the town became a commercial and artisan centre, which was constantly in touch with its metropolis, Volga Bulgaria. A. Belavin rightly believes that in Arab sources of the 13–15th centuries the town is mentioned as 'Afkul' [Avakol, Afkula] [Belavin, 2000a, p. 123].

***Kylasovo archaeological site (Anyushkar)***, which existed from the 10th until the 15th centuries, stands on the high right bank of the Inva River, the right tributary of the Kama.

The investigation of the ancient settlement was conducted mainly by M. Talitsky, O. Bader, V. Oborin, G. Lents, and A. Terekhin. The total excavated area is about 4 thousand square metres. The materials have not yet been fully published [Lents, 2000, pp. 328–332].

The settlement was built by the local Rodanovo community. 'Until the middle of the 12th century the fortified part of the settlement, with an area of about 16 thousand square metres, occupied the narrow part of the cape surrounded by a low wall and a ditch'; however, by the 11th century the settlement had already grown beyond the wall, and 'a powerful defensive system—uncommon for Rodanovo settlements—was being built there' [ibid, p. 330]. Most probably, these fortifications were built by the Bulgars whose traces are found in the archaeological material [Bulgar unglazed and glazed ceramics, silver beads, finger rings, pendants carnelian and crystal beads, arrowheads, flints, etc.]. Aside from this evidence, production buildings were also uncovered on the site, such as a pottery and blacksmith's forges very similar to those found in ancient Bulgar settlements of the Middle Volga Region, in addition to a Muslim burial site with some pagan relics [Belavin, 2000, p. 54; Lents, 2000, p. 331].

G. Lents places the Kylasovo archaeological site among 'the rare multifunctional proto-towns of the Cis-Kama Region, connected with Volga Bulgaria by firm trade relations' [Lents, 2000, p. 331]. According to A. Belavin, it can be identified with the town of *Chulyman* recorded in Arab sources [Belavin, 2000a, p. 123].

## CHAPTER 2

### Urban development: houses, household outbuildings, and public facilities

*Fayaz Khuzin*

It is difficult enough to reconstruct the image of the Bulgar cities due to the scarcity of sources. Eastern authors wrote about the wide existence of felt yurts and timbered houses built 'from a pine tree,' among Bulgars. This data complements the archaeological materials, but the integrity of such facilities does not allow one to present their original appearance completely.

The works by A. Smirnov at Suvar first identified archaeological remains of the skeleton-clay (*turluchny*) houses and wooden log houses with an underground, with the breakdown of the vaulted furnaces, including the Middle Asian type of *tandoors*. The researcher suggested the following reconstruction of one of the Bulgar homes according to the materials from Suvar: 'The construction of the size of 7.1 x 7.16 m with a wooden floor and an underground of the depth of about 0.7 m. The floor was laid on joints resting on the beams: there was a furnace near the wall, and on its sides there were two underground pits for storing grain; apparently here by the furnace the hole leading to the underground was located. The walls of the house were wicker, coated on both sides with clay ... It is more difficult to talk about the roof, but it is believed that it was level, judging by the discovery of pieces of a clay cornice in a small part of the roof' [Smirnov, 1941, p. 142].

The research of the Bolgar ancient town also revealed log houses and wattle and daub houses of rectangular or practically a square shape with a furnace and an underground-grain storage. The ceiling of the log houses were gable, and the wattle and daub houses had a level roof [Smirnov, 1951, pp. 78, 139].

In the latter half of the 1950s a number of Bulgar homes were opened up by G.Fedorov-

Davydov on the Tigashevskoye archaeological site-sanctuary in Chuvashia. The earliest of these was a half-dugout, the underground part of which was a rectangular pit (3.6 × 4.4 m) 0.7 m deep. The remains of nine other homes, studied on this site, are connected with the third building horizon when the inland of the ancient town was built-up by various economic, craft, and residential buildings of log construction with a small recessed into the ground. Unfortunately, they are hardly preserved, mostly only underground pits with traces of wooden structures collapsed and disintegrated stone furnaces with earthen floor [Fedorov-Davydov, 1962, pp. 69–73].

A half-dugout in the suburbs of the Kriushsky II ancient town, examined by the expedition of the Ulyanovsk Museum in 1957, was interesting. Relatively good preservation and careful observations made it possible to fairly accurately restore the original look of the house. The foundation of the rectangular half-dugout building (2.9 x 7 m) with rounded corners was orientated nearly on the cardinal points and deepened into the ground at 0.7 m from the surface. The walls of the underground part were lined with wood pressed by vertical pillars. The entrance was located in the west wall, and next to it in the north-west corner, adjacent closely to the walls, there was a destroyed clay oval-shaped furnace with the mouth facing the east. Some structural details, recorded while clearing the half-dugouts, gave reason to believe in a gable roof of the ceiling [Tukhtina, 1960, pp. 145–146].

The ancient town of Khulash is a sufficiently well researched monument that has provided a number of residential buildings. Here the remains of 19 wooden houses, 17 buildings of



Bilyar ancient town. General view of the yurt-shaped dwelling in the outer city.  
Excavations by F. Khuzin

clay, 2 half-dugouts, and a large number of household pits were opened up. Unfortunately, the preservation of the majority of them is poor [Kakhovsky, Smirnov, 1972, p. 10].

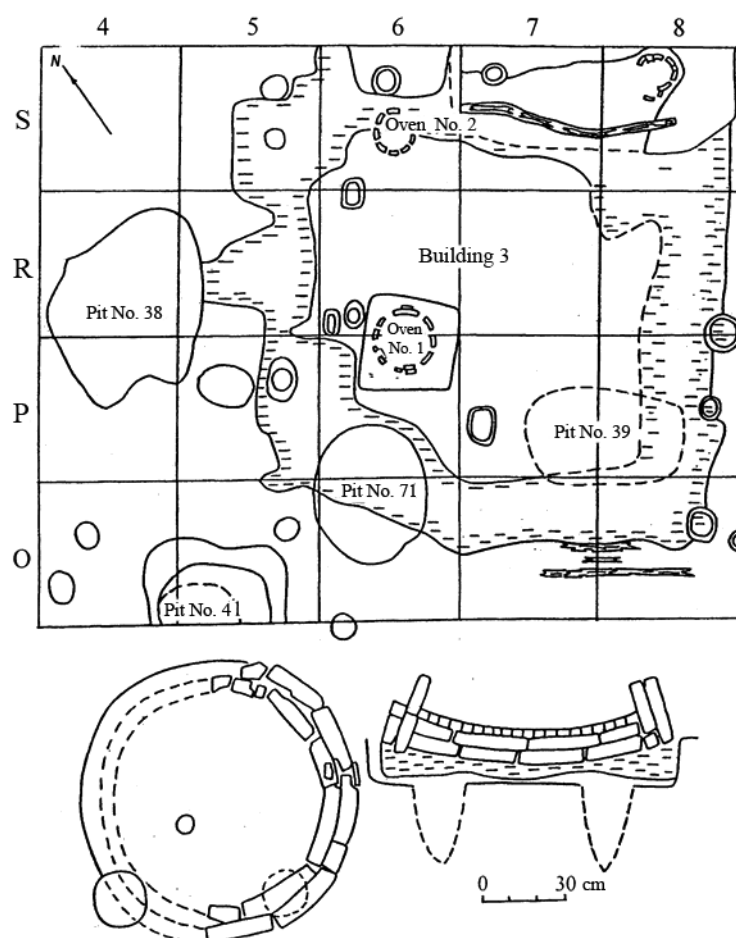
The remains of a wooden house with a clay furnace and the walls covered with a clay coating were opened up in Andreyevsky ancient town in the Ulyanovsk Region; four houses of oval and rectangular shape with rounded corners were studied by M. Polesskikh in Zolotarevsky ancient town in the Penza Region; terrestrial and half-ground dwellings were opened up by T. Khlebnikova in Alekseyevsky and Tankeyevsky ancient towns.

In the 1970–1990s the dwellings of ordinary citizens, many household buildings were studied in Bilyar, Dzhuketau, Suvar, Oshel, Murom townlet, on the Yulovsky archaeological site, and some other monuments.

In the western suburbs of Dzhuketau the remains of a large log house of a ground type of the 10–beginning of the 11th centuries were opened, the vague outlines of which are traced

on sub-rectangular area with the dimensions 6.4 x 6 m. In the north-east corner of the house there was a stove-fireplace, two household pits had been dug under the floor, in one of which was found a warehouse of stone fishing sinkers in the amount of 19 pieces [Khuzin, Nabiullin, 1999, p. 96, Fig. 3]. Dwellings of the type of dugout or half-dugout were studied at the ancient town itself. The dugout with a columnar structure of the walls had a half-square shape (5.4 x 5.65.8 m) with a recess from the surface of 1.7 m. A vertical pole stood in the centre that allowed for the reconstruction of the tent overlapping of the dwelling. The entrance was traced from the south-west side [Khlebnikova, 1975, pp. 241–242, Fig. 5].

The materials of the Bilyar dwellings are published in sufficient detail [Khuzin, 1979]. The remains of a very expressive and still unique for the Middle Volga Region yurt-shaped construction in the outer city and skeleton-clay (clay-covered) dwellings in the central part of the inner city, dating back to the 10–first



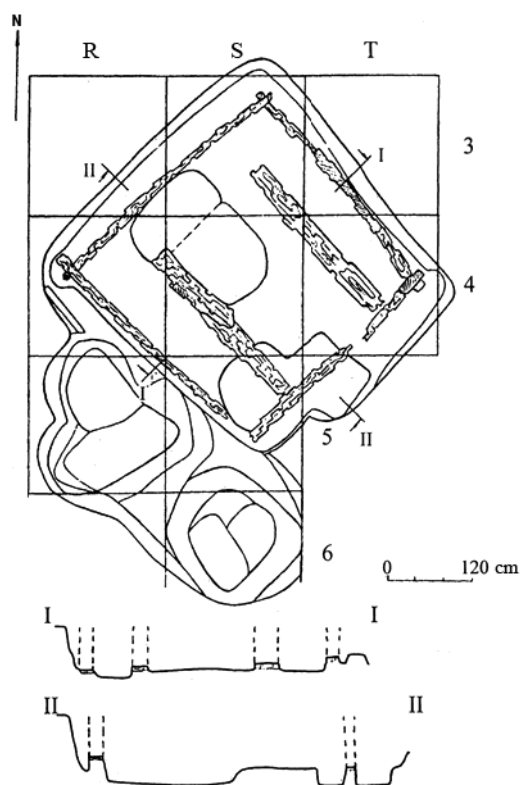
Bilyar ancient town. The plan of the building No. 3 with the remnants of a tandoor-oven, the plan and section of the tandoor

half of the 11th century, are of great interest among them.

The pit of the yurt-shaped dwelling was of a round shape with a diameter of about 4.4–4.8 m deepened only to 20–25 cm. A projection of a width of 1.2 m and a length of 1.4 m, which can be interpreted as an input, is marked out on the south side. Along the walls of the pit, some distance from them (only 10–20 cm), holes from vertical bars or poles with a diameter of about 10–12 cm were located. There was an underground pit for storing food in the dwelling, but there were no traces of the hearth. However, traces of a powerful burning interspersed with coal and burnt clay were traced about 2 m to the north from the dwelling. Obviously, the hearth was located in the yard, and the building was used as a temporary dwelling only in summer. This is plausible because, according to Eastern writ-

ers, the homes of the Bulgars were mostly 'wooden and serve as winter dwellings; in summer the residents move to felt yurts' [Khvolson, 1869, p. 82].

The remains of clay covered or adobe-framed dwellings with furnaces-tandoors were opened in the centre of the ancient town of Bilyar to the north-east of the Cathedral mosque. They usually come out in the form of sub-rectangular spot of the clay mass (6.8 x 6.6 m) mixed with the remnants of over-rotten wood and occurring traces of burning. A thin clay floor coating can be traced on the base of the layer almost in the entire area of the spot, on the coating there are the remnants of tandoor type furnaces. The most well-preserved cylindrical furnace was built of bricks—that is, clay blocks of a curved form 23 cm long, 8 cm high, and 7 cm wide, plastered inside and outside with clay 7–9 cm thick.



Bilyar ancient town. Building number 9 at the 22nd excavation (plan and sections)

By their construction and cylindrical furnaces of tandoor type, the adobe-framed dwellings are very interesting phenomena in the culture of the Volga Bulgaria of the pre-Mongol period. Clay-covered housebuilding is connected by its origin, perhaps, with the culture of the population of the Khazar Khanate. It is also possible that in such houses lived the eastern builders who came to Bulgaria together with the Embassy of Caliph Muqtadir in 922 (or later) and participated in the design work and construction of public buildings made of brick.

In Bulgar cities mostly built more adapted to local environmental conditions log houses with shallow undergrounds, as well as dugouts and huts were mostly built in Bulgar cities. The complex of these dwellings included household pits and cellars.

Building No. 9, studied in the north-eastern part of the Cathedral Mosque, differs from among the objects of residential use in Bilyar by its relatively good preservation. Its

contours were revealed at a depth of 50 cm from the modern surface in the form a sub-rectangular spot with abundant inclusions of coal and wood decay. At a depth of 60 cm from the day level a significant number of large pieces of charcoal, charred boards, the remains of bast, or tree bark have been found. Even lower on the entire area there was a strongly rammed layer of humus with abundant remains of straw (millet?) and leaves. After removal of the array, which is obviously the remains of a collapsed during the fire a wooden frame of the house and roof, covered with straw, the remains of the lower crown of a log house made of logs 25 cm in diameter were clearly revealed, in the southern corner of which a dog's skeleton had been buried as a talisman. Two floorboards 270 cm and 285 cm long, 26–30 cm wide, and 3.5–4 cm thick, respectively, were parallel to the north-east and south-west walls. The smooth floor of the construction was deepened to 75–85 cm from the edges of the pit, which was nearly square in the plan well (4.2 x 4.1 m) with steep walls. In the east and west corners of the pit there were small semicircular hollows, entreing the wall at 20–22 cm, specially made for the protruding angles of the log-house. A wooden frame with internal dimensions of 3.4 x 3.3 m, of which only the lower crown with logs had survived, fastened to each other 'in a cup' with the release of endings by 10–20 cm was lowered into this pit.

The only dwelling of the 12th century with preserved remains of a furnace was studied also at the centre of Bilyar more to the south of the mosque. The lower part of the rectangular frame construction of the sizes 4 x 3.3 m had been deepened into the ground only to 50 cm. The front door was located on the east side, the furnace was to the right of the entrance in the north-east corner of the house. The base of the furnace rested on a bed of clay, which occupied a small rectangular area (60 x 75 cm). An accumulation of stones interspersed with fragments of bricks and pieces of clay plastering, as well as ash and coal were found out on this site. Preserved was a part of the hearth in the form of highly calcined clay coating 3–4 cm thick. Unfortunately, it was impossible to trace the design features of the furnace due to severe



Bilyar ancient town. General view of the underground dwelling with the remnants of a furnace at the 39th excavation

damage. Almost in the centre of the room a round household pit 1.2 m in diameter and 0.8 m deep was found out.

All in all, in the central part of Bilyar more than 20 one-chamber log houses were studied, they were most likely of a ground type (judging by the lack of furnaces in 'pits'), with cellars or with a small section deepened to the ground. In some buildings a wooden floor was lying on a kind of water-absorbent stratum of sand and small pieces of iron slag 5–10 cm thick, which had served probably to protect dwellings from excess of moisture and dampness [Khuzin, 1979, pp. 77, 79].

In addition to single-chamber dwellings, two-chamber ('pyatistenki') dwellings had been built in Bilyar as well. An underground of one of these buildings of a rather compli-

cated construction was the building number 5. The pit had in plan a shape of a rectangle (6.5 x 4.6 m) 65 cm deep and was divided into two parts. Into the first of them (the main one) a wooden frame (3.7 x 3 m), the lower crown of which had left at the bottom the prints in the form of shallow grooves, strips of rot wood, was let in, the second half (3.7 x 3.2 m) had a columnar construction, it consisted of horizontal logs, taken into the slots of vertically set poles. More affluent groups of the population had lived in such houses, as evidenced by a rich set of findings, including fragments of glassware, irrigation lamps, some clothes, and women's jewellery.

There is not enough information for the reconstruction of the Bulgar dwellings of mass building. Because of this, there are many questions, the solution of which is im-

possible without additional research studies. One such question concerns the definition of the type of the above-described constructions. Researchers still traditionally consider them to have been half-dugouts, the floor of which was located below the day surface. In the light of new approaches to the reconstruction of the ancient Russian dwellings [Tolochko, 1981], such a simplified point of view seems to be untrue. The predominant type of residential buildings of the Bulgar cities the terrestrial log houses should be recognised that have been investigated in many Bulgar sites. As a rule, such houses had the lower underground sections, were used to store food supplies and other things of everyday life. The latter, but not the ground wooden constructions, often reach our days and are excavated by archaeologists defining them as half-dugouts. The half-dugouts, of course, had been built if one can call dwellings with the floor deepened only to 40–60 cm from the ancient surface level, and even temporary dugouts had been built, but the houses that had only two or four-ramp roofs sticking out of the ground were hardly characteristic of cities, especially of large ones, like Bilyar, Suvar, Murom townlet, and some others.

Thus, in the Bulgar cities there were different types of mass dwellings that are singled out arbitrarily on the basis of their vertical development—that is, with respect of the floor to the ground surface:

type I. Dugouts are single-chamber constructions of rectangular and square shapes (3.5 x 3.2 m; 4.2 x 3.1 m; 5.4 x 5.6 m) deepened into the ground to 1.4–2 m. They can be found practically in all urban areas, but relatively rarely so. They were heated predominantly by open fires or adobe furnaces of a black type. Dugouts apparently were used as temporary dwellings (or by the poorest part of the population?). According to the construction of the walls and the building techniques, they can be divided into several subtypes: log houses (the basis of the construction was a frame dropped into a deep pit) and pole houses (the frame of the house consisted of vertical columns, with the help of which the walls of the pit were lined with planks laid horizontally or hunched);

type II. Dugouts of a rectangular shape plan with average sizes of 3 x 4 m to 5 x 6 m, a floor of which is deepened to 0.4 to 1.4 m from the daytime surface. Some of them revealed adobe vaulted furnaces or open hearth-fireplaces. Subtypes: log houses (the lower part of the frame is deepened into the pit, the upper part is above the ground level) and pole houses (horizontal beams or slabs were mounted in slots of the supporting poles standing in the corners of the pit, or they were clung to the earth wall);

type III. Terrestrial houses: log houses (single- and two-chamber), pole houses, clay covered or framed-adobe houses, yurt-shaped houses.

The most numerous among the various objects that were studied during the excavations of the Bulgarian cities are household buildings: grain-storage pits, warehouse pits, rooms, cellars, granaries, and wells.

Ibn Fadlan in one fragment of his 'Notes' on the journey to the country of the Bulgars noted that they had 'no space where they could keep their food, so they dug pits in the ground and placed the food there, so it took only a few days for it to spoil, to stink (of rot), and it could not be used' [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 136]. The archaeological data does not correspond with this statement. At the same time one can think that the author from the 10th century correctly noted some primitive wells, granaries, constituting the vast majority of household buildings of the early pre-Mongol and even of a later period. The wooden constructions of a terrestrial type—granaries specially constructed for the storage of grain—appeared later among the Bulgars.

Household pits, which had been used in the Bulgar cities, are divided into the following basic types:

1) cylindrical-circular (oval) in terms of a form 0.6–2.5 m in diameter with vertical or slightly sloping walls and a flat bottom deepened from the day level to 1.7–2 m; 2) rectangular (square) in terms of a form 1 x 2.2 m to 1.5 to 2.5 m in size with a flat bottom 0.9–1.8 m deep; 3) truncated-conical (a bell type): generally of a rounded shape 0.5–0.8 m in diameter at the mouth and 0.8–1.4 m in diameter at the bottom with a smooth



bottom usually 0.8–1.8 m deep. A few of the pits of this type, having an almost straight or slightly sloping walls at the top and gradually widening towards the bowl-shaped bottom, received the name 'pear-shaped'; 4) cup-shaped: usually round in plan 0.6–1.4 m in diameter with sloping walls tapering slightly to a rounded bottom at the depth of 0.8–1.2 m.

These pits represent the simplest type of household buildings in Bulgar cities. Their walls were usually pre-baked for strength, carefully coated with clay, and often lined with planks. In some constructions there are steps from one of the walls, but for getting down a wooden ladder was mainly used. On the top the pits were covered with wooden lids. In order to protect them from precipitation, light sheds or conical huts made of poles covered with straw or reeds were built.

Grain and other products were mainly stored in such specially prepared pits. During excavations of the ancient town of Bilyar, in pit constructions some grains and large accumulations of grains of wheat, millet, peas, and raspberry were found. There are findings of eggshells, bones, and fish scales. So, some pits could have been used as a cellar.

Cellar-pits with a complex internal structure were studied mainly in Bilyar. One of these constructions functioning even in the 10th century was of a half-square shape (1.8 x 1.9 m) with a rectangular projection from the north-west side. At the depth of 1 m the projection ended in a flat bottom, on the edges of which small holes from the columns were located, and the main part of the pit continued to the depth of 1.5 m. Thus, the construction represented a deep cellar with a wattle cage of a half-dugout type. In the filling, highly-saturated by the wood rot from the internal structures of walls, millet grains occurred, and at the bottom the bones of cherry and hazelnut occurred.

Another construction of a square in a plan form (1.7 x 1.8 m) had smooth walls and a flat bottom at the depth of 90 cm. On all the four edges the bottom of the pit was mounted with 44 small pits from the stakes. The similar construction of internal walls was found out in the pit 126a of the 23rd excavation. In the plan it is square (2.45 x 2.45 m) with ver-

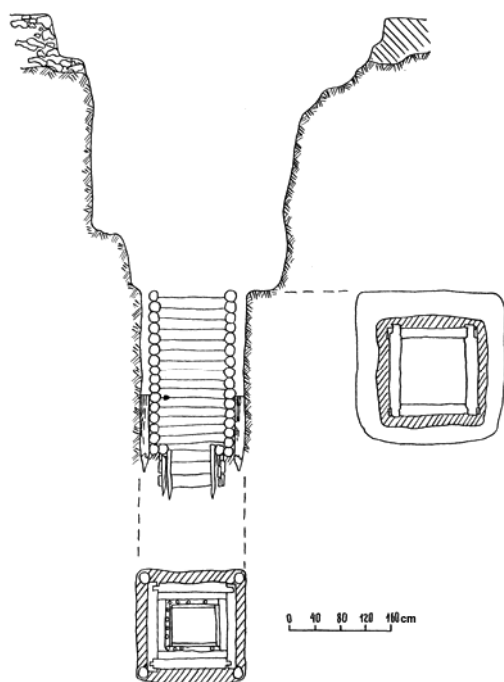


Bilyar ancient town.  
A household pit at the 22nd excavation

tical walls. Along the edges of the pit located were the poles-stakes of wattle construction. Judging by the clay edging around the pit and the finds of pieces of a clay coated with prints of thin rods, the cellar walls were coated with clay. In it were found an iron socketed opener, a whole bowl, pieces of a glass vessel, a slate spindle whorl, and other findings of the 11–12th centuries.

The same nature of the internal construction had about two dozen objects from the excavations of the central part of Bilyar. Clusters of fish scales and raspberry seeds were found in them. There were apple seeds, hemp seeds, eggshell.

In the household constructions of the type described mainly food supplies, particularly perishable food, had been stored: fruits, berries, eggs, fish, meat, milk and some other beverages. The significant depth of the pits (1.2 to 2.8 m) and additional



Bilyar ancient town. A section and plan of the well number 1 of the 22nd excavation

ground facilities in the form of single-ended canopies or light tents, covered with straw, defended the cellar from the sun and rain in summer, and from the bitter cold and snow drifts in winter.

Cage-half-dugouts are a type of household constructions that are different from dwellings only by smaller sizes. The Bulgars had simultaneously half-dugout wooden cages of two types—log and pole mounted. The small size of log cabins and pole constructions (4 to 7 sq. m), no traces of furnaces and characteristic of dwellings findings allow us to consider them as the underground constructions of the household destination. They probably served as cages that contained the productive and household inventory and other things of daily necessities as well as food supplies.

The Bilyar terrestrial granaries, destroyed in the fire of 1236, were preserved in the form of carbonaceous golden seals, rich in wood rot. In the area of these objects large concentrations of charred grains of wheat, oats, barley, millet were found. In the process of

clearing of one of the buildings more than 50 kg of wheat was harvested.

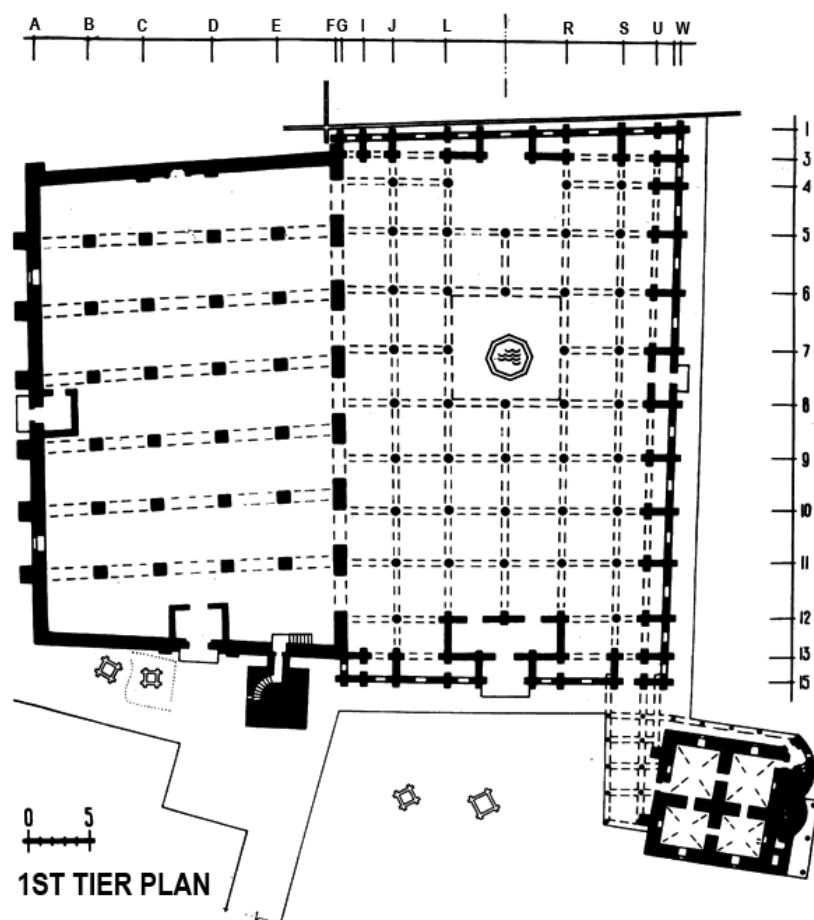
In the other pre-Mongol Bulgar settlements of an urban type household constructions of complex structures (half-dugout cages, terrestrial granaries, and others) have not yet been found.

Let us briefly dwell on one more group of constructions of the ancient town of Bilyar missing in other monuments. They are wells, with the help of which the inhabitants of the central part of the city far from natural water sources provided themselves with drinking water.

At the 22nd–26th excavations 18 pits, the lower parts of which were sufficiently well preserved due to the fact that they had been in the water, were studied. Well frames or boxes in the form of a tapering down shape made of oak were lowered into the deep (4.6–7.6 m) circular pits. Under the lower row of beams typical of the pits of the 12–beginning of the 13th centuries small catchment chambers in the form of square plank boxes were arranged. The latter ones are absent in earlier pits, 'frames' of which were made mainly of thin boards or thick oak timbers [Sharifullin, 1979, pp. 112–113].

Among the earliest pits there is the well number 6 located to the north of the Cathedral mosque and abandoned after the completion of the construction of the white-stone building at the end of the 10th century. At the level of the ancient surface a circular in plan (about 3 m in diameter) spot of the well pit occurred, which was gradually narrowing and became almost of a square form at the depth of 2 m (2.4 x 2.2 m). At the same level the contours of the well box were formed (1.2 x 1.2 m). The well-preserved box of oak boards has come to light at a depth of 3.4 m, where the well mine narrowed even more (1.5 x 1.5 m). The preserved height of the box was 1.35 m. A water-bearing horizon was opened at the depth of 4 m, the total depth of the well reached 4.75 m [Ibid, pp. 107–108].

The well No. 1 functioned in the 12th century. Initially, it has come to light in the form of a large circular spot of a well (5.4 x 5.2 m), which was almost twice reduced in size to the depth of 4.6 m. At this level in the middle of the spot the contours of the original mine (1.9



Reconstruction of the architectural plan of the Cathedral mosque complex.

Authors: S. Aydarov, F. Zabirowa

x 1.8 m) came out, and an oak frame 1.25 x 1.25 m in size and built of logs 15–18 cm in diameter was lowered into it. The frame has been preserved to the height of 16 rows of beams. The grooves between the logs were covered with clay and coated with plaster. In the lower double row of beams of the frame, located at the depth of 7.1 m from the surface, a drainage box of oak timbers was lowered into it. The total depth of the well was 7.6 m [Sharifullin, 1979, pp. 102–103].

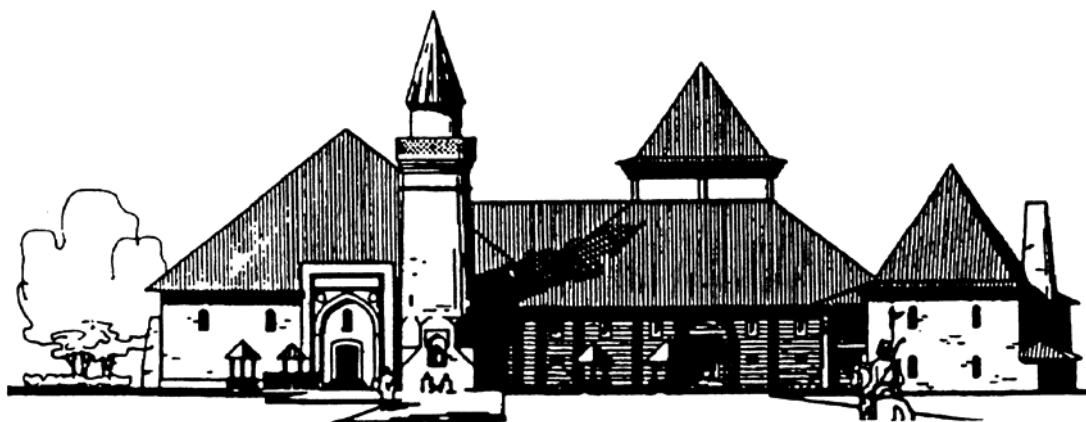
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An integral part of a highly developed urban culture of medieval states are *stone monuments and brick architecture*. In the last century the vestiges of buildings from the 10th and the beginning of 13th centuries

were uncovered and explored in the archaeological sites of Bilyar, Yelabuga, Svuar, Khulash, Krasnoye Syundyukovo, and in Murom townlet.

In 1973–1977 the remains of a mosque—a monumental building consisted of a white-stone and wooden parts—were explored by the Bilyar archaeological expedition led by A. Khalikov.

Traces of the wooden mosque were revealed in the form of multiple holes from posts serving as underground supports ('chairs') for the laying of logs and the joist floor [Aydarov, Zabirowa, 1979, p. 47]. These holes were arranged in parallel rows over a rectangular area more than 1,400 sq. m. They are round-shaped 50–80 cm in diameter; their depth ranges 50 to 120 cm. In some holes the remains of decayed wooden posts were



Bilyar. General view of the cathedral mosque of the second construction period  
(with a nearby standing 'house of a feudal lord')

detected. The stone part of the mosque—of which left only the remains of the foundation in the form of lime-rubble strips—consisted of a large spacious hall, with 24 columns arranged symmetrically in six rows supporting the ceiling (the same as the wooden part). At a distance of 1.2 m from the north-western corner of the building a deep foundation pit of a minaret was examined, in the base of which the remains of wooden piles intended for the sealing of soil under the stone foundation were revealed. The total area of the wooden part of the mosque was 1,076 sq. m. The explored complex is the largest monumental structure of Bulgar architecture in the pre-Mongol period.

The facilities related to the constructions of the mosque are revealed directly under the layer of farmland on buried soil or against the mainland loam. What is striking within the building site of the mosque is the total absence of any objects, both early and late, unlinked constructionally to the building itself. The absolute majority of post holes, untouched by later excavations, were filled up in a sterile manner. These facts strongly suggest that the mosque was built in earlier times. Construction likely began during the founding of the city—that is, when this district was not built up and, to all appearances, was designated for construction of the religious building of state importance. At the same time, it is evident that the wooden half

of the mosque was erected earlier than the stone one: the north-western wall of the latter weighs down on the first line of post holes. This indicates that during the first reconstruction the 'south-eastern wall of the wooden mosque was completely demolished and replaced by a new mutual wall of the two premises connected... by apertures to the common space of the interior' [Ibid.].

According to researchers, this kind of reconstruction—that is, the expansion of the original mosque by means of a white-stone annex—was completed not earlier than the middle of the 10th century. The available material does not conflict with the early date of the mosque, in particular its wooden part, the construction of which may be related to the official adoption of Islam, recognition of the Bulgar state on an international scale, and the founding of the city in the Ibn Fadlan's time.

The graphic reconstruction of the mosque implemented in accordance with eastern analogues presents an early mosque as a bulk wooden building with corner towers of a fortress type and a low minaret adjoining the north-eastern wall. During the rebuilding the corner towers were demolished, and by the main entrance a separately standing stone minaret appeared instead of the wooden one.

The architects S. Aydarov and F. Zabiroya [Ibid., p. 55] also include in the Cathedral



Bilyar. The reconstruction of the original view of the wooden mosque  
by S. Aydarov

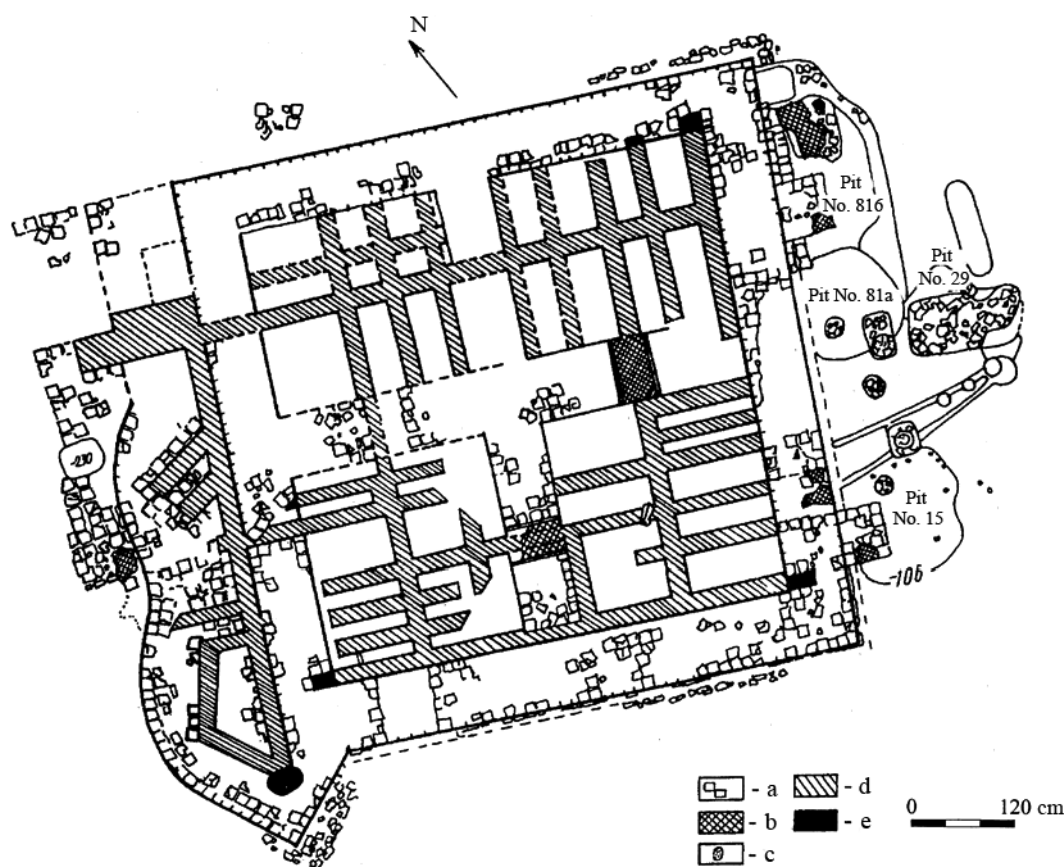
Mosque complex a brick building studied by the Bilyar expedition in 1971–1972. All that remained is the foundation and a pedimental part. The foundation trench was dug to a depth of 1.2 m; the constructional horizon is traced 'almost to the level of buried soil' [Khalikov, 1979, p. 11]. The brickwork was done using standard square bricks (26 x 26 x 5 cm) glued by mud and clay mortar with some lime or alabaster. At the bottom of the foundation there are the remains of an anti-seismic cushion consisting of two rows of adobe and semi-adobe bricks typical for the architectural tradition of the Middle East and Middle Asia. This building technique is a vivid example of the activity of Middle Asian masters who in 922 arrived in Bulgar cities together with the embassy of Caliph Muqtadir [Smirnov, 1976, p. 4].

The main part of the building formed a square 11 x 11 m divided by an internal cruciform partition into four equal parts, with each room of the lower floor being 16 sq. m on average. Outer walls constructed with four rows of bricks were quite thick (90–100 cm), but the walls of the internal partition were thicker (up to 110 cm). This indicates that the building had two stories and most likely a domed ceiling, the weight of which was carried on inner rather than outer walls [Khalikov, 1979, pp. 12–13].

All four rooms on the lower floor were connected with each other by 65–70 cm wide passages. Their walls were plastered and faced with limestone tiles near the floor. A brick floor (two bricks thick, 10 to 11 cm) was covered from the top in lime-cement mortar 5–6 cm thick.

An interesting system of centralised heating was found in the building. A common furnace, the foundation of which laid at a depth of 120 cm from the floor, was situated in the north-western corner. Judging by incomplete remains, the right-angled furnace (250 x 200 cm) consisted of two parts—a combustion chamber (80 x 60 cm) and a heat accumulating chamber (150 x 90 cm), both of which were calcined at high temperature. The heat accumulating chamber with two main flue channels, each 35–45 cm wide and over 9 m long, was connected to a divided under-floor heating system. Some extra channels, as A. Khalikov thought, were intended for the removal of heat to the upper floor of the building.

This system probably springs 'from the Roman-Byzantine architecture, in which an underfloor heating system like hypocausts was developed during Roman times' [Ibid., p. 15]. In the opinion of A. Smirnov, it is also found in Middle Asia, Transcaucasia, and the Crimea 'and could have been introduced in



Bilyar ancient town. The plan of a brick building on the 17th excavation. According to A. Khalikov:  
a—bricks, b—coating of lime, c—wood, d—horizontal chimneys, e—vertical chimneys

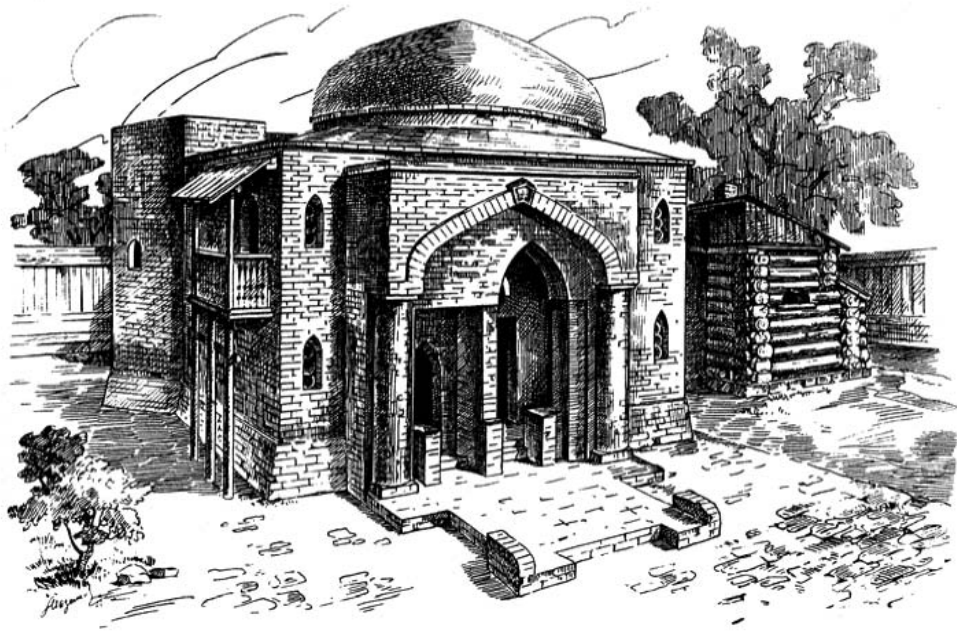
the Middle Volga Region by Middle Asian masters' [Smirnov, 1986, p. 5].

What is important for the reconstruction of the building's general appearance is the details revealed in its outer north-eastern wall, in the middle of which was a broad entrance with two passages. At the distance of 120 and 210 cm from the building's outer corners, bases of pilasters—on which the flat-topped arch framing the entrance lied—are cleared. The pilasters had a rectangular base (100 x 80 cm) and passed in steps into semi-columns. 'Such an entrance design is also typical of the early brick buildings of Middle Asia and Iran' [Khalikov, 1979, p. 15].

By the front door 6 postholes were revealed—the remains of the porch's base from which the broad pavement made of stone and brick fragments led to the mosque.

The south-western wall of the building first goes as a straight line and then—closer to the western corner—widens in the form of a projection, with a through passage 90 cm wide lying ahead. In this district a series of pits 30–40 cm in diameter were uncovered that, according to A. Khalikov, remained from the pillars supporting the balcony terrace of the second floor, whereas S. Aydarov and F. Zabirowa [1979, p. 57] suggested that they are traces of a covered gallery that connected this building to the wooden mosque situated nearby.

The building's north-western part, which had a complicated construction in the form of two small semi-circular rooms or tower-like projections, is not easy to understand. Their outer walls are two times thinner than the main ones (50 cm), but their foundation has a



Bilyar. The reconstruction of 'the house of a noble feudal lord' by A. Khalikov.  
The artist is A. Mazanov

greater depth (up to 150 cm). The north-eastern wall of the building was poorly preserved, but a 90 cm wide doorway into a kitchen complex (3.6 x 3 m) with remains of two furnaces—brick and stone (brazier)—was found.

Things discovered by the excavations of the building's interior (crocery, glassware, decorations made of glass and nonferrous metal, iron knives, locks and keys, cubed plummets, a drove, a scraper, a mattock, etc.) indicate its residential character. In all likelihood, a noble person lived in it, a high-ranking minister of the nearby mosque. In literature this building received the code name 'house of a noble feudal lord.' However, E. Zilivinskaya made an alternative and well-founded assumption that the building possibly served as a public bath [Zilivinskaya, 1989, pp. 228–230].

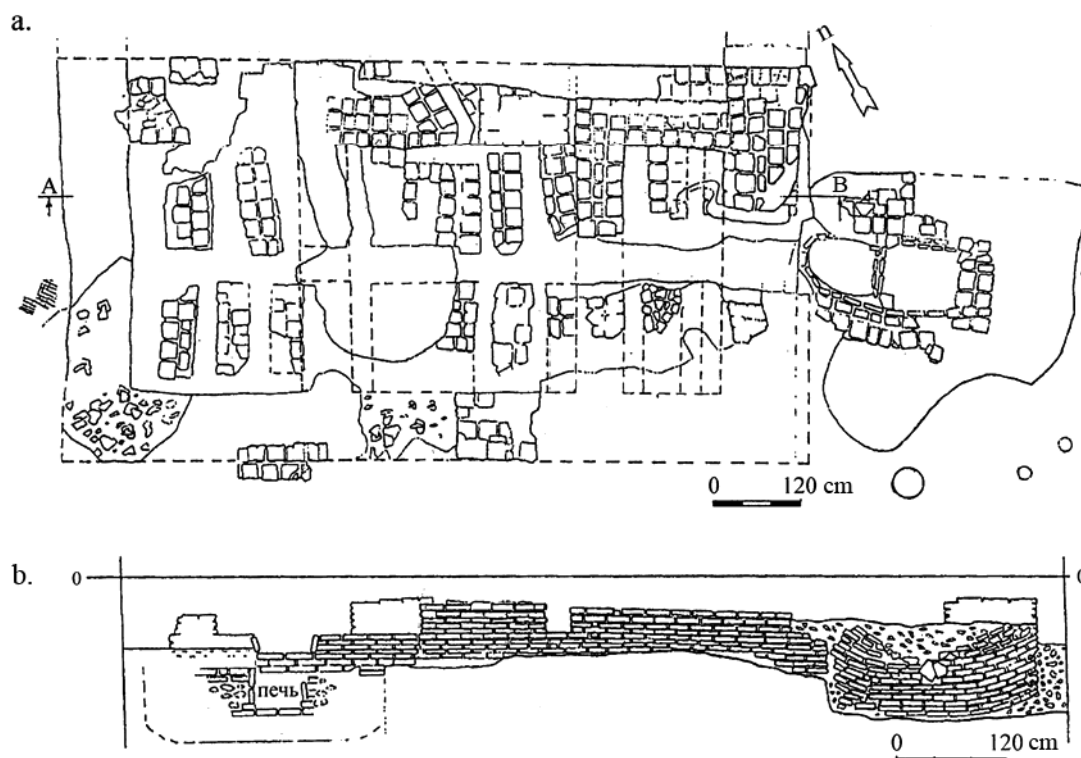
On aerial photographs from 1973, approximately 200 m to the north of the Cathedral Mosque, a spot of a brick building clearly stood out in the place where the 1979 excavation was dug [Sharifullin, 1999]. The poorly preserved vestiges of the brick building equipped with the underground heating system and made of baked square bricks (26

x 26 x 4.5–5.5 cm), which were glued by mud and clay mortar with some lime or alabaster, occupied a square area 10.4 x 11.6 m in size. From the south-east a wooden annex (3.2 x 4.5 m) with a two-chamber furnace was adjoining to the building, which functioned as a bath house. The absence of a solid foundation, with the building being erected almost on an occupation layer, accounted for the fact that even during operation some of its parts deformed due to differential settlement of soil and early holes with friable filling under the building.

The north-eastern wall 110 cm wide (4 bricks) is preserved to the height of 7–9 rows (in the eastern corner, up to 14 rows); the south-eastern wall is the best preserved to the height of 89 brick rows. The south-western and north-western walls are almost completely demolished and traced only in the remains of clay bottom.

The building consisted of two main parts divided into several chambers.

The south-western part was separated from the north-eastern one by a load-bearing wall about 120 cm wide. Thin (60–65 cm) partitions divided it into three chambers. The



The second brick building in the centre of the ancient town of Bilyar.  
The general plan (a) and sections (b) (according to R. Sharifullin)

first one (3.4 x 1.4 m) with two pairs of heating channels was situated in the south-eastern corner of the building. During the last years of the building there was a furnace, with the chamber itself serving as a tank. The second chamber (3.4 x 3.2 m)—also with flues channels belonging to the underground heating system and bearing traces of the rebuilding—adjoined the first one from the north-western side. The third chamber (2.5 x 2.4 m) occupied the south-western corner of the building.

The north-eastern half of the building (8.3 x 4.6 m), which has likely been built more recently, is poorly preserved; therefore, its internal layout and scheme of the heating system were not identified.

With the analysis of design features of the explored object in mind, R. Sharifullin's come to the conclusion that we can consider its south-western part 'a bath house that in the initial period consisted of the three heated chambers: a hall, a bathroom, and a hot bathroom, to which an annex with a furnace and a tank platform linked on from the south-east-

ern side' [Ibid., p. 85]. Later the north-eastern half was attached to it, and the furnace was moved to the aforementioned first chamber.

Another public bath house of the 10–12th centuries that was previously considered a 'caravanserai,' or rather a building of a hotel type for visiting merchants, was explored beyond the borders of the inner city of Bilyar, not far from the eastern gate of the natural 'fort' [Khalikov, Sharifullin, 1976].

The building with the corners orientated in the cardinal directions formed a rectangle (16.8 x 14.8 m) and was erected from square baked adobe bricks with dimensions of 26–27 x 26–27 x 5 cm glued by bonding mortar of clay with some lime. Its foundation was inserted into a vast foundation pit 115–120 cm from the floor level and laid on a clay bottom and a platform from two rows of bricks arranged horizontally. The building had thirteen chambers, five of which (I, IV, V, VII, VIII) were equipped with flue channels connected to a furnace camera (VI) in its north-eastern part. The outer walls 100 cm



thick are made of four bricks; the inner walls are thicker, four to five rows of bricks 125 cm thick, which suggests, according to researchers, that the building had a dome ceiling. The walls of the main chambers were plastered and even covered with different patterns in brownish red paint.

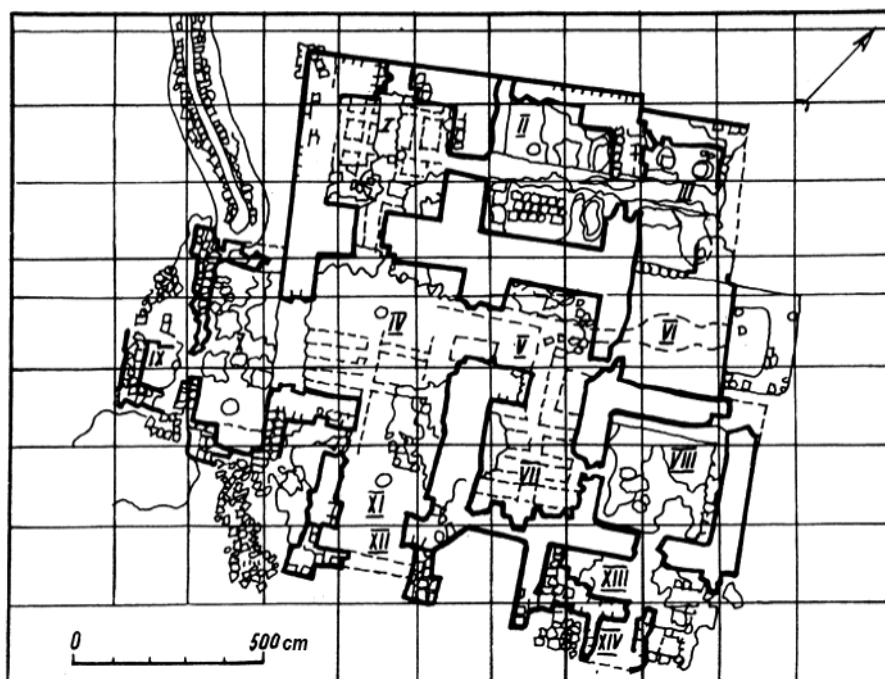
The entrance was on the south-eastern side and consisted of a portal and an unheated inner porch with a sufa (low sitting used in tea-drinking) along the wall. The remains of an outflow channel were found in the floor. The same entrance led to the chamber VIII in the eastern corner of the building.

Opinions differ as to the purpose of the different rooms. According to A. Khalikov and R. Sharifullin, the chambers I, V, VII are dwelling; the chamber III is a kitchen with the remains of cellars and braziers; the chamber II is its auxiliary room; the chamber VIII is an unheated warehouse. Relying on her own understanding of the building's purpose, E. Zilivinskaya defines them in quite a different way: 'In the south-eastern part of the building there was an entrance tambour (XII) followed by an unheated changing room with a sufa (XI). From there a passage led to a

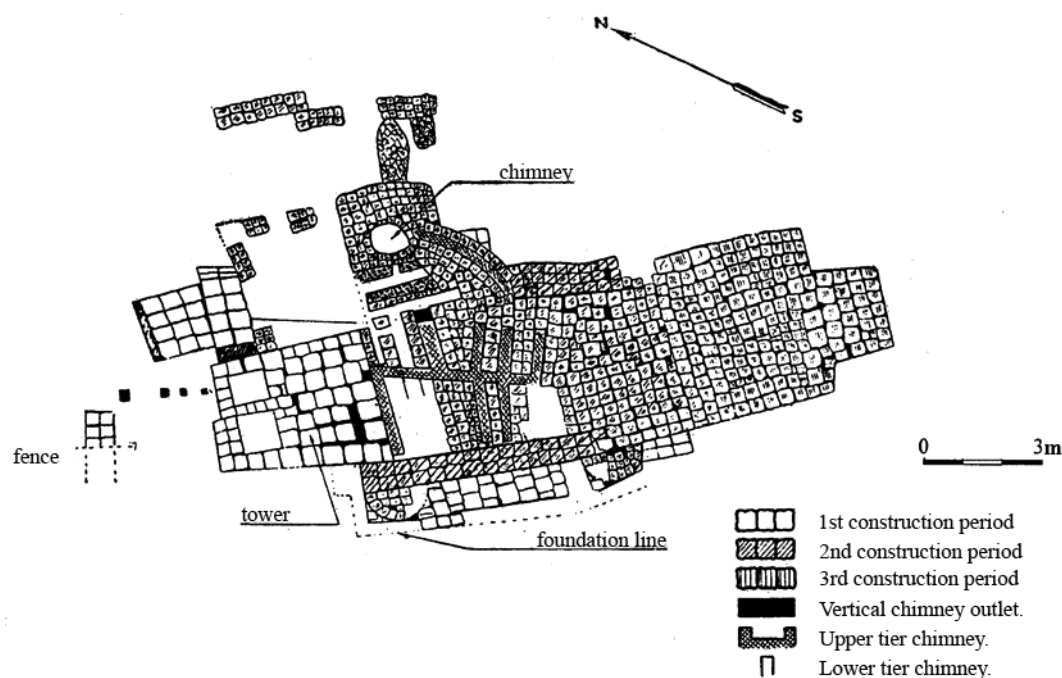


Bilyar ancient town.  
The laying of the wall of a brick building  
on the territory of a 'Caravanserai.'  
Excavations by A. Khalikov.

warm bathroom (IV), in the south-western wall of which a door leading to a similar dressing-room with a sufa and an entrance tambour was later made (IX, X). One could



The general plan of a brick building on the territory of the 'Caravanserai' (according to S. Aydarov).  
I–XIV are the numbers of buildings



Suvar ancient town. The plan of a brick building  
(according to A. Smirnov)

get from the chamber IV to the hot bathrooms (V and VII) or to the next warm chamber I' [Zilivinskaya, 1989, p. 226]. The purpose and structure of the rooms II and III are not completely clear; it is likely they served as cool bathrooms or rooms for procedures. It is possible that the intensively heated chamber VIII not connected to the others, or even the whole south-eastern block consisting of a tambour, checkroom, and a hot bathroom, was a special women's compartment of the bath house.

A later annex behind the south-western wall of the building is interestingly treated. A. Khalikov entertained a possibility that a part of the annex (X) and the chamber IV were used as an adjacent mosque with a small mihrab (IX); S. Aydarov and E. Zilivinskaya consider this annex to have been the entrance to the house. It is notable that from the western corner of the annex goes a drain—an essential element of bath-like buildings.

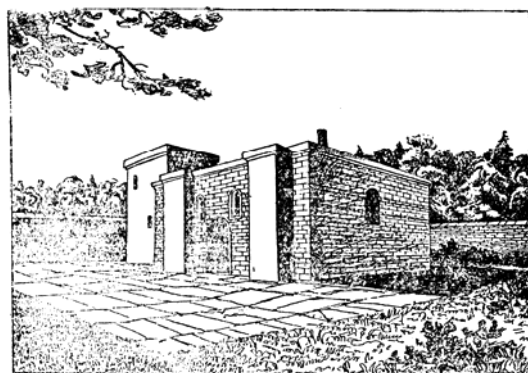
Overall, the arguments of E. Zilivinskaya to acknowledge the remains of the above-mentioned construction to have been a public bath and a part of the caravan-shed are more persuasive.

A famous 'Suvar Palace' is the first brick structure of the pre-Mongol Bulgar city. It became well known thanks to the papers by scientist A. Smirnov, who emphasised the apparently conditional nature of treating it as a 'palace' or rich house of a feudal lord [Smirnov, 1941]. It was discovered in the central part of the archaeological site of Suar and explored in 1934–1937 by the expedition of the State Historical Museum. The object represents the vestiges of the brick building preserved at the foundation and pedimental part, with a system of flue channels from the underground heating, a 'tower' in the north-western side, and a small annex in the south-eastern one. A brick wall with the entrance on the eastern side fenced in the building from all angles. The ground in front of the building was paved with adobe bricks arranged horizontally in one row.

The foundation of the main building made of adobe bricks with clay mortar was in the pit 1 m deep; the foundation of the 'tower' was inserted into a deeper pit (up to 2 m). The base of the walls laid on a cushion of adobe bricks—an anti-seismic technique of Middle Asian architecture.

Adobe and baked bricks of various sizes were used in the construction: 35 x 35 x 5, 30 x 30 x 5, 28 x 28 x 5, 25 x 25 x 5, 25 x 20 x 5, 24 x 24 x 4–5, 23 x 23 x 5 cm. Clay with some lime and alabaster served as bonding mortar. In some places of the wall 70–75 cm thick there are remains of plaster, sometimes with traces of blue paint. Bricks of different sizes apparently indicate that separate parts of the building were erected at different times, and the building itself was multiply rebuilt and repaired. Indeed, study of brickwork allowed 'identifying the remains of the three construction periods, between which the significant term likely elapsed. These construction periods differ in the type of bricks, technique, and stratigraphic data' [Ibid., p. 150]. In the opinion of A. Smirnov, the building functioned from the end of the 10–beginning of the 11th centuries to the 14th century.

The descriptions and reconstructions by A. Smirnov suggested that the building was two-storied and formed a rectangle (7 x 4 m) with a small tower (4 x 3.5 m) from the north-western side. Its main facade was brightened up by two pylons, of which there remained the bases with a lancet arch in the upper part. The building had a divided system of underground heating, the flue channels of which were repaired from time to time. In the excavations water-pipes were also found. After a complete overhaul (the second construction period), carried out approximately in the middle of the 13th century, the building looked like a construction of irregular shape with the three rectangles: the first one (5 x 6 m) had two stories and was adjoined by the second (8 x 6 m) on the east and a low tower on the south-east. After the destruction the building was restored again in the 14th century (the third construction period). From the south-east a small annex with a projection for the entry was made, and simultaneously the north-eastern rectangular part of the building was demolished. Unfortunately, judging only by published materials, there is absolutely no way to check whether the stages of construction and operation of the 'Suvar Palace' reconstructed by A. Smirnov are accurate. We can only notice that the archaeological site dates only to the pre-Mongol period, and the building itself does not essentially differ in its key



The reconstruction of 'Suvar Palace'  
by A. Smirnov

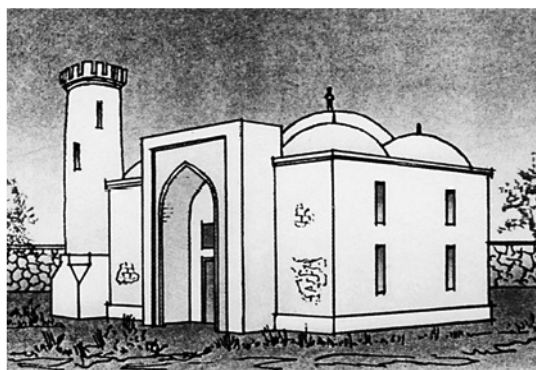
design features from the above-mentioned Bilyar's, which specialists defined as bath house constructions.

In 1962 V. Kakhovsky and A. Smirnov discovered one more brick house with an underground heating system during the excavation of Khulash, a small town of the pre-Mongol Bulgar [Kakhovsky, Smirnov, 1972, pp. 29–33].

The remaining foundation of the building made of large adobe and baked bricks 18 x 18 x 5 to 27 x 27 x 5 cm in size are embedded into the subsoil at 95 cm. The sub-rectangular building (8.8 x 3–3.5 m) consisted of two main chambers. Bricks of the walls and the floor were fastened by clay and lime mortar and put directly on an occupation layer. The walls are no more than 50 cm thick—that is, the size of 1.5–2 bricks. The remains of the floor made of brick and sandstone and covered with a thick layer of lime mortar are revealed in the southern part of the building.

The underground heating system consisted of a furnace (1.1 x 1.6 m) embedded below the floor and made of stone and brick, a hole near the furnace, and flue channels located between 'rectangular supports where the floor plates were based. Along the major axis of the building went the main flue from a furnace chamber. Side branches, part of which were connected in pairs or ended with vertical flues laid inside the walls, arose from it' [Zilivinskaya, 1989, p. 231].

Researchers who examined the monument considered that the Khulash house had a residential purpose and belonged to a



The reconstruction of 'Suvar Palace'  
by F. Valeyev

rich merchant. E. Zilivinskaya presented arguments in favour of defining it as a small public bath house that had direct analogues in the medieval bath houses of Chersonesus and Armenia.

Back in the 1920s professor V. Holmsten studied the two buildings of the 11–12th centuries located in the western part of the Murom townlet, near the defensive fortifications. Unfortunately, she did not manage to publish the full results of her works [Matveeva, 1975, p. 136]. As judged by the extant materials, the both constructions were built of baked brick 25 x 25 x 5 cm in size, adzed stone slabs or coarse stones bonded with a clay solution. At the floor level there were discovered flue channels of the heating system slightly embedded into the ground and capped by limestone slabs. The main channels were adjacent to the furnace located outside the building [Vasilyev, Matveeva, 1986, p. 180].

In the south-west part of the inner town in 1971 G. Matveeva pried open another brick building of the 12th century, which was poorly preserved and only partly studied. The building's foundation infixed into the pit consisted of big limestone bricks, and its stones were of burnt brick (25 x 24–25 x 5 cm) glued by a limestone solution. In the south-eastern angle there was a combustion chamber in the form of a sub-square furnace (84 x 80 cm) with an overlap in the shape of a hollow arch. Seven chimney channels—each square in section (45 x 30 cm)—extended away from this chamber. The walls of the chimney chan-

nels were made of brick and capped by stone plates from above. A fragment of a ceramic tube was found near the combustion chamber, thus it helped to define the building's purpose, which used to be a bath house.

The fourth examined building in the Murom townlet was located in the northern part of the outer town near the verge of a ravine, close to the north-western entrance into the inner town. It had a square form (10.8 x 10 m), and only its foundation was preserved; its inner planning could not be determined. The building's foundation, which mostly consisted of large adzed stones sometimes interspersing with large bricks, was put in the pit 1.1 m deep from the floor level. The latter had a limestone-alabaster cover above. The walls are made from the baked bricks of different size (25 x 25 x 5 cm to 29 x 29 x 5 cm). They were bonded with a clay mortar.

The heating system included two main chimney channels 50 cm wide with narrower branches (25–30 cm) and a furnace that was adjacent to the north-eastern wall from the outside. The extant furnace, which was preserved in a good condition only at the height before 84 cm, had a four-square form (1.5 x 1.5 m) and a vaulted orifice.

On the north-west side the building was adjoined by a small brick annex (6 x 1.5) that likely served as the entrance, judging by the fact that it had not been heated, and its foundation had been built on the surface of earth. The door was in the south-western wall and faced south to the ravine. A staircase with the steps made of large limestone plates led to water.

The building's functional purpose can be identified on the basis of the closest parallels with the Bilyar bath house 'caravanserai.' Its construction may be dated to the latter half of the 10th century, which is proved by both the stratigraphic information and the peculiarities characteristic of the architecture of Middle Asia and the Middle East of the pre-Seljuk epoch [ibid, pp. 177–179].

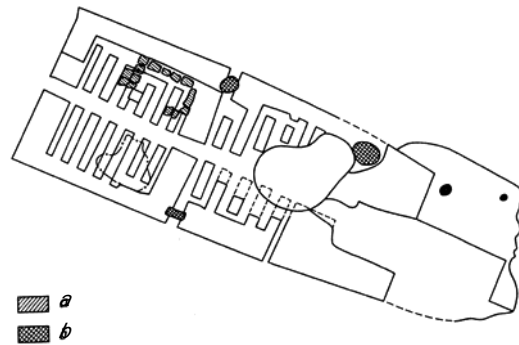
The original example of a manorial banya [steam house], in Yu. Semykin's opinion, is the brick building found in the Krasnosyundukovskoye I archaeological site, which was examined in 1991 [Semykin, 1993, pp. 219–223].

The building was of a square form (6.6 x 3.6 m). Its foundation were located in a superficial pit. The width of the walls made of baked square bricks (28 x 28 x 4.5–6 cm) with a clay solution was about 60 cm. The inner planning of the building is interesting.

A small room (an anteroom) adjoined from the outside to the north-western part of the building. Its northern wall was constructed of bricks put on their edges (25 x 25 x 4 and 24 x 18 x 5 cm in size); lime with sand was used as a binding solution. The floor and walls lie immediately on the ancient surface.

The northern half of the main part of the building was occupied by the second room that serves as a washroom (its inner size is 2.4 x 2.4 m). In this room 20 trumeaus made of brick were located. They had square foundations and were placed symmetrically in four rows, with 5 columns in each row. The brick floor rested on them. From above the floor was covered with a waterproof lime solution. In the northern wall there was revealed a vertical smoke flap that was in intercommunication with the underground system of heating, and in the eastern wall there were found the remains of a rectangular water reservoir.

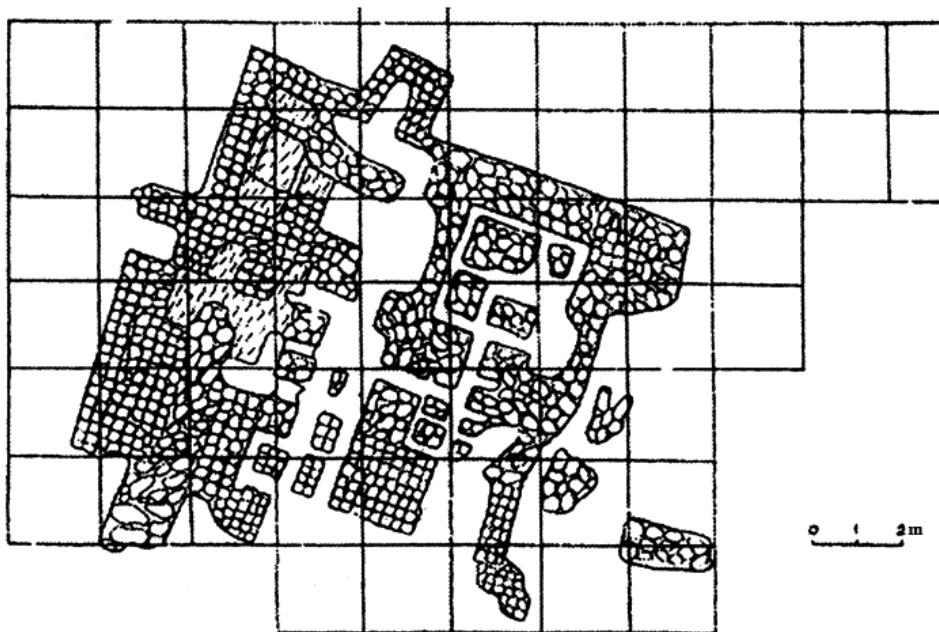
In the southern part of the building the room 3 was placed, which was of an octan-



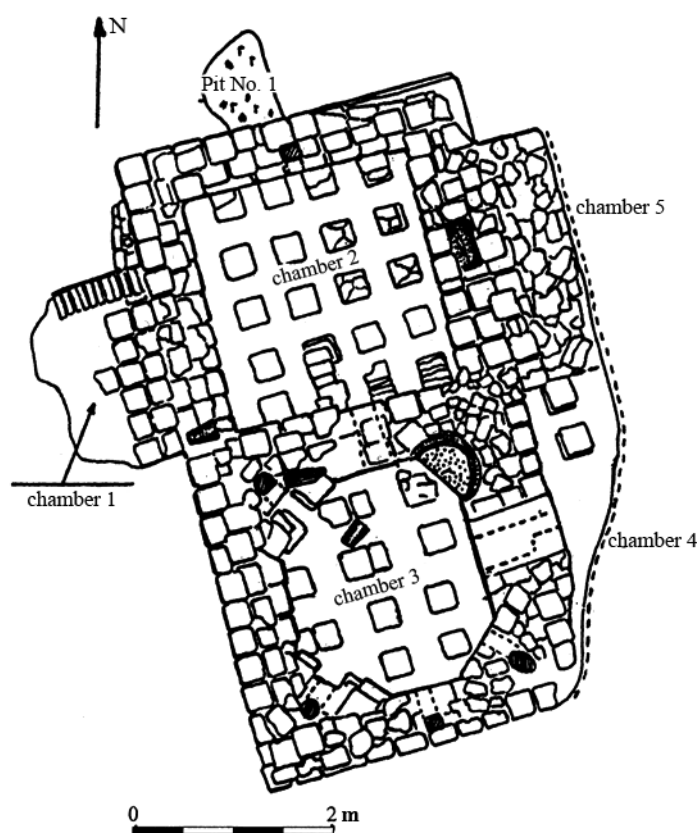
A brick house in the ancient town of Khulash (according to V. Kakhovsky and A. Smirnov):  
a—a chamber of very hard-fired brick,  
b—vertical chimneys

gular shape. Trumeaus were found also in its underground part (10 overall) which were arranged in three rows parallel to walls. A semi-circular reservoir for water embedded in the wall was located in the north-eastern corner.

Room 4 was in the north-eastern part of the building, but it was almost completely destroyed by the present-day construction works; only two trumeaus and a small moulding hung at the eastern wall at the floor level are extant. The fifth room located northwards from the previous one was also preserved in fragments.



The plan of a brick building in the townlet of Murom (according to G. Matveeva)



The plan of a brick building in the Krasnosyundukovskoye 1 archaeological site (according to Yu. Semykin)

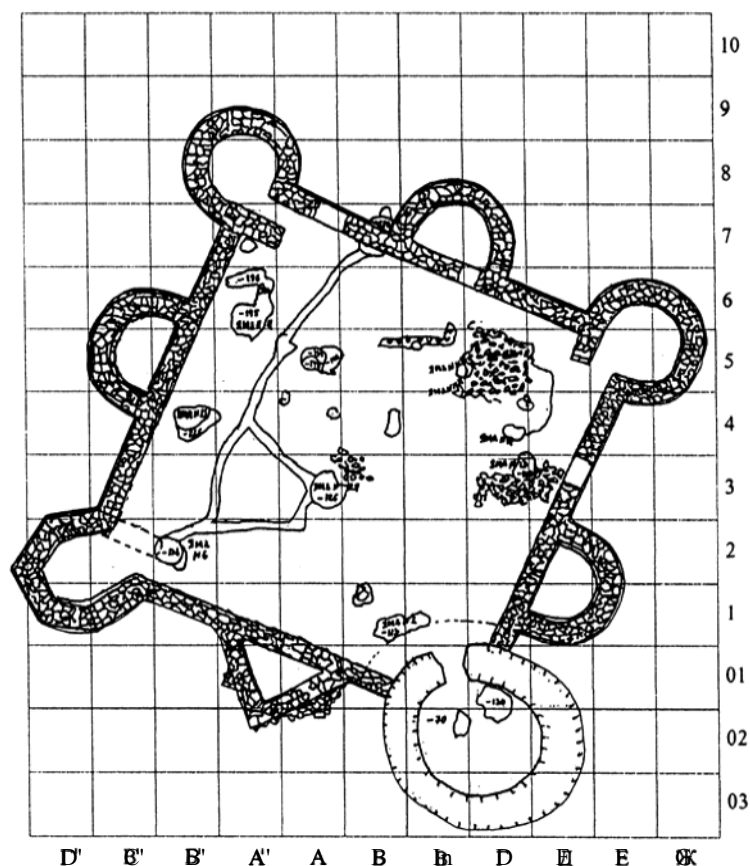
The remains of the underground heating system in the form of chimney channels were discovered in the rooms 2, 3, and 4; however, the heating furnace had been destroyed, and even its location could not be detected. Ceramic tubes and its fragments indicate of a developed system of water supply and sewer system. Draining of water was also carried out by means of wooden troughs embedded in the brick floor. An interesting collection of discoveries has been created within the building. Among them are iron knives, an adz, arrowheads, fragments of cylinder locks, jewellery, multiple splinters of crockery and especially window glass. The latter, in Yu. Semykin's opinion, is an evidence that the light into the bath house penetrated through glazed windows, which hardly corresponds to reality.

The comparative examination of the basic peculiarities of the medieval bath houses of the Volga Region, the Caucasus, Crimea, and other Eurasian regions allowed Yu. Semykin

to conclude that craftsmen from the Transcaucasia—who had taken into account Middle Asian traditions conditioned by Islam—had taken part in the building of the Krasnosyundukovskaya bath house.

In conclusion, let us say several words about the original architectural structure which is extant since the Bulgar times and is located in the ancient town of Yelabuga ('Chertovo') and has been well known historical literature since the end of the 18th century. The extant is a round stone tower of this building, which in 1867 was restored by city head I. Shishkin, a father of the famous landscape painter.

In 1888 A. Spitsyn's excavations revealed the plan of this construction that was four-squared in shape (21 x 21 m) and had round corner towers and semicircular wall-mounted towers. Analysing the architectural peculiarities of Yelabuga's white-stone 'citadel,' based on A. Spitsyn's data, professor A. Smirnov noted that it reflected the traditions of the



Yelabuga ancient town The plan of a white-stone building, revealed in the excavation of 1993 (according to A. Khalikov)

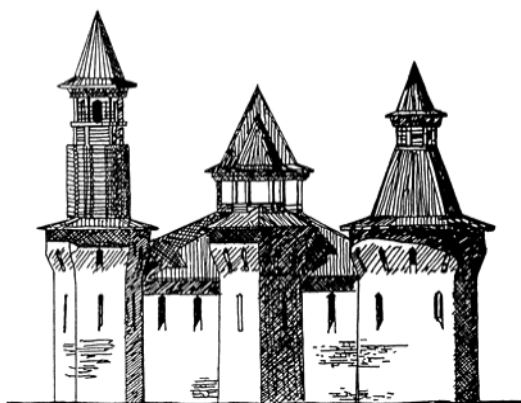
Byzantine construction schools that had penetrated into Bulgaria through the Khazar Khaganate [Smirnov, 1976, p. 3].

Detailed studies of the monument were carried out in 1993 by professor A. Khalikov. He dissected the building everywhere at the level of the foundation that had been deepened into the ground by 35–40 cm from the ancient surface. All the building was made of plate limestone and lime mortar. The corner towers were about 5 m in diameter on average; the south-eastern observation tower, which has been preserved until today, was 14 m in diameter and a little higher than others. The south-western tower (possibly a minaret) appeared to be hexagonal. Among the triangular wall-mounted ones, the point of which faced straight towards Mecca, stood out the tower of the south-western wall. According to the sufficiently reasonable opinion of A. Khalikov, the examined construction

had originally been built by the Bulgars as a mosque-fortress on the Kama Trade Route [Khalikov, 1997, pp. 13–14]. Variants of its graphic reconstruction were suggested by F. Valeyev and S. Aydarov.

Thus, not only log or adobe-framed houses were built in Bulgar cities. Large constructions of a public character were often made of white stone or brick. Almost all brick constructions studied in Bulgar cities are the remains of public or manorial bath houses. The biggest and perfectly planned of them were located in Bilyar and Murom townlet.

The elements of welfare are hardly traced in archaeological materials; however, there is evidence of the routes paved with wood, stone, or brick rubble which are found in the central part of Bilyar. The city's inhabitants not only took water from natural sources, but also drew it from deep wells. Well-water was also used in the bath houses.



A white-stone walled mosque-fortress  
in the Yelabuga ancient town.  
Reconstruction of S. Aydarov

In general, the architectural image of Bulgar cities was not monotonous and primitive. Large cities were surrounded by strong fortifications with fortress towers and gateways, some of which, as judged by folk tales, were called 'golden.' There were caravanserais for visiting merchants in these cities, there were also mosques with high minarets and religious schools-madrasahs at them. The central squares were enlivened by bazaars with their peculiar constructions—benches, small workshops, warehouses, etc. From the mass of ordinary homes, stood apart rich houses (often two-storeyed), public bath houses, and other buildings constructed from stone and brick.



## CHAPTER 3

### The Bulgar Village

*Konstantin Rudenko,  
Evgeny Kazakov*

#### **The formation of rural settlement structure and its dynamics in the 11–beginning of the 13th centuries**

The formation of the settlement structure in Volga Bulgaria occurred in several stages. The first stage began at the end of the 9–beginning of the 10th centuries and continued for an entire century. It is characterised by the emergence of a network of trade and craft centres—the foundations for the sedentarisation and urbanisation of the Bulgars. The most part of this period falls within the reign of the Jaffarids' dynasty. The second stage spans the whole 11th and the beginning of the 12th centuries. It mainly includes the emergence and development of the Bulgar agglomerations as the basis of the country's economy, the central of which was Bilyar; the formation of the domestic market with the zoning of the leading economic vectors (production, raw, etc.) , as well as the formation of areal groups of the population at the Bulgar frontiers. The third stage falls within the 12th and the first third of the 13th centuries. This period marked the development of the inner settlement structure, which was accompanied by parceling of large households and densification of the inhabited territory at the cost of developing of non-arable lands and partially water sheds. Let us observe these periods in detail.

Originally, the territory of the Bulgar tribes' resettlement was the floodplain of the Volga (the Ulyanovsk Area). Then the bulk of the population moved northwards to the area of Tankeyevka—Bulgar where the first stationary settlements emerged. Today one of the most ancient settlements to be archaeologically studied is in the area of the ancient town of Bolgar dated by the discovery of coins from the end of the 9th century to the first quarter of the 10th centuries. On the basis of this and a few other

similar settlements, the fortified centre and the posad of the future city of Bulgar were formed.

Active trading activity along the Volga and Kama Rivers and their tributaries in the first half of the 10th century prompted development of a net of trade-craft factories that mostly gravitated towards the mouths of these rivers' small tributaries. The most thoroughly examined among them are the settlements near the village of Izmeri. Not later than the second half of the 10th century early settlements-factories emerged in the basin of the Maly and Bolshoy Cheremshan in the Central Trans-Kama Region, at the tributaries of the Myosha and the Volga in the Cis-Kama Area. Similar ancient settlements on the Sviyaga River before the Volga are dated to the third quarter of the 10th century. The Penza group of settlements in the Sura region (the village of Zolotarevskoe, Vasilievskoye ancient settlement, and others) were formed simultaneously.

Internal settlement in different areas bore a different character and length. Thus, the Chistopol's Cis-Kama area was scarcely inhabited by the Bulgars until the mid-10th century. Apparently, it was the impact of the close neighbourhood of the Ugrian, and to the south, the Oghuz-Pecheneg tribes. The second half of the 10–beginning of the 11th centuries was the period of the active development of the region. Multiple fortress-outposts with villages adjoining them emerged. The formation of the rural population in the interfluvium between the Maly Cheremshan and the Kama River may be considered as finished by the mid-11th century.

The system of villages, castles, and fortresses became the basic settlement structure of the region almost during the whole medieval epoch. Over 70 fortified and non-fortified settlements are known in the interfluvium between the Maly Cheremshan and the Sheshma Rivers. Among them were found such strong castles protected by several rows of ramparts with ancient settlements



General view of the Belogorsk ancient settlement

(posad) surrounding them, as the Utyakovskoye archaeological site. There were also known small tribal outposts founded on the sites of large non-fortified villages, for example, Malotolkishskoye archaeological site, or strengthened frontier posts with a circular defence line like Izgarskoye archaeological site. Fortifications were often built in secluded places, in ravines, and capes. The Malopolyanskoye and Staroromashkinskoye archaeological sites were like this.

Convenient waterways went along small rivers—the Tolkishla, Bakhta, and Shental—to the central parts of the state, its large cities. No wonder many big and small villages were discovered in this area. Coin and items treasures have also been found here.

The main tendency in the formation of the settlement structure of the second stage became development of the system 'city-village' (agglomeration) with the centre in the city and a metropolis together with a rural area and a system of fortified settlements-satellites which could have had or not have had the rural basis. The extensive development of territory led to the taking of vast spaces, including croplands, pastures, the zones of manor households.

The consequence of this being an event which was characteristic of the Middle Ages—the agricultural character of many Bulgar cities. Farming and cattle breeding were an indivisible part of the urban population's occupation. Rural residents of the urban neighbourhood were also a source of replenishment of the urban population itself. Typical examples of this are the ancient settlements around Bilyar ancient town, the settlement complexes of the Maklasheevsky, Voykinsky, and Romodansky archaeological sites.

Economic zoning started progressing since the time when the system of domestic markets began its development. The ancient settlement of Laishevo (Chakma) may serve as an example of this, as basing itself on local iron industry and blacksmithing, it became one of the biggest centres of domestic exchange in Kashansko-Murzikhinsky micro-region. Its market place on average amounted to 30–40 km. The high density of the population on the territory surrounding this settlement limited the possibilities of active agriculture and cattle breeding and put forward the occupations among which there were hunting and fishing. Simultaneously this stimulated

handicraft production. To a large extent this was facilitated by the active construction of fortified zones in the strategic areas of water and land routes of regional or national significance, especially in areas of the crossings (for example, the system of ancient towns Kashan I—Kashan II—a small town and an observation post in the Sorochy Mountains). The fortified zone would often limit the residential area of the rural territory as, for example, in the system of Maklasheyevsky rampart of the I and II ancient towns.

At the same time, settlements' peculiarities were preserved as they had been formed due to multiple factors, the leading of which were the processes of formation and evolution of the village itself, for example, out of several manors (Murzikhinskoye ancient settlement), which formed a single village with a street structure, or one manor growing into multiple with the formation of daughter manors (Ostolopovskoye [River] ancient settlement), and the territorial dynamics of the settlement's size.

A peculiar subculture—generally similar to the Bulgar one—was formed on the outskirts of the state, in the places of resettlement of the Finnish and Ugric tribes. Its integration into the main array in the course of inclusion of these territories into the zone of the Bulgar state policy influence led to changing of a range of settlement characteristics, especially in the Cis-Kama Region (in Kazaklarskoe, Cheremyshevskoye, and other settlements).

The third stage is characterised by different processes in separate districts of the state. Thus, in the basin of the midstream of the Bolshoy Cheremshan and its tributaries extensive development of the territories convenient for a household use led to the deficit of croplands and to separation of small households, which had occupied terraces above floodplains with natural irrigation and drainage-basin divides with the area limited from irrigation conditions needed for watering (a spring, headstreams, etc.). Insufficient archaeological exploration of small-size ancient settlements does not allow us to identify the character of their emergence and desolation, which in turn does not provide a possibility to make ultimate conclusions on this issue.

The general tendency towards an increase in settlement size in the central regions of the state, which had been noticeable during the previous stage, was pressed out by the detachment

of daughter settlements, smaller in size and number of inhabitants (for example, the settlements on the Kurnalinka River in the central Trans-Kama Region). The tendency towards an increase of fortified settlements on the site of former villages (for example, Staromatakskoye archaeological site) became noticeable.

### **Rural settlements of the pre-Mongol period**

A large part of the Bulgar state's population inhabited rural settlements before the Mongol invasion. The ancient settlements, which are their archaeological remains, constitute the most numerous category of medieval archaeological monuments found on the territory of the Republic of Tatarstan. As a rule, they were located on the banks of rivers and ravines close to water areas. Often small in size, the ancient settlements were usually located near a bigger ancient settlement or a nearby ancient town, thus forming a distinctive cluster of archaeological monuments. The intensive destruction of the coastal strip by the Kuybyshev Reservoir predetermined the quantitative prevalence of the items and materials extracted from the eroding monuments in this area. At present, the Izmersko-Semenovsky, Murzikhinsky, and Laishevsky monument clusters in the lower reaches of the Kama River and its estuary part are fairly well examined.

Based on the results of archaeological surveys, the central areas of the Bulgar state were distinguished by a high concentration of rural settlements. By the end of the 12th century these areas were well developed and inhabited—not only the banks of large rivers, such as the Bolshoy Cheremshan and the Maly Cheremshan, but also their smaller tributaries as well as the ravine network. Medium type ancient settlements (13 ha) and small type ancient settlements (up to 1.5 ha) were found in this area. The high density of settlements and the comparatively small size of land suitable for extensive farming became the reason for the short term of their existence. The characteristic features of small type ancient settlements are an insignificant cultural layer and a small number of archaeological artifacts. The population of such settlements was few in number, corresponding to the number of people found in a large patriarchal family—not more than 20 people.

Medium type ancient settlements had a well-defined cultural layer, which had been accumulated by two or three generations of their inhabitants. As a rule, these settlements came out of one or two original manors and branched out to form secondary manors. Over time the original manor itself could also become bigger in size due to the addition of living quarters, the reconstruction of farm buildings, their renovation and rebuilding, etc. In borderline areas, even in large type ancient settlements (over 3 ha), the cultural layer was insignificant, and artefacts can be found in areas where residential and farm buildings were located. Another typical feature of these areas is the location of their non-fortified settlements close to ancient towns: to fortresses or castles (settlements of the Sheshma basin). To some extent this was a reflection of the earlier processes of internal Bulgar colonisation, which was entrenched in the settlement tradition. The size of a settlement-satellite could vary from 0.5 ha to 7 ha. This system gained the widest development in the zone of agglomerations, where an archaeological metropolis was formed. The basis of the metropolis was a rural district that was included into the urban infrastructure both territorially and economically. The agglomeration involved the ingrowth of ancient settlements into the structure of a minor town (Voykinsk ancient towns) or the development of a significant area, which included the trading quarter (posad) of a large town together with countryside manors, outposts and castles, as well as settlements of nearby districts (the Bilyar agglomeration).

There is also a correlation of the topography of settlements to the natural geographical conditions of an area. This is clearly seen in the areas near the Kama River where part of the ancient settlements occupied the sections of the fertile floodplain of small river tributaries. In some cases settlements were located on high capes in the vicinity of streams or springs.

The floodplain had few settlements located far from the original bank. Such settlements emerged along trade routes and near crossings. Some well-known floodplain ancient settlements are the remnants of water mills.

By nature of origin, the following may be observed: neighbouring and territorial communities in relation to the common centre (an-

cient town or ancient settlement), individual households in relation to fortified manors (in smaller ancient settlements), or a multilevel system of fortification (castle type) with a wide non-fortified trading quarter (posad) and craft workshops.

The general trend of settlement development was extensive land exploitation, free growth, and the development of the ancient settlements. Exceptions were settlements limited by natural borders (Kozhaevskoye and Alekseyevskoye VI ancient settlements).

Villages and settlements were formed in different ways. They could be trade and craft settlements (Izmerskoye, Semenovskoye, and Kriushskoye ancient settlements, Aga-Bazar), which later turned into predominantly agrarian habitations. The second way of forming villages was by several family-related collectives or even by groups of different ethnicities (Murzikhinskoye ancient settlement). The third way was the creation of military settlements (Ostolopovskoye ancient settlement). The fourth way was a sloboda settlement with craft-type functions (Laishevo ancient settlement). The fifth way was the formation of independent, small-yard settlements, which usually had a single yard through the resettlement of some families from large villages. The sixth way was the emergence of a village on the site of a temporary (seasonal) station as a result of the non-stable sedentism of the population (Maloiyerusalimskoye ancient settlement in Bolgar). The seventh way was the creation of possessory villages in a district fortified by a rural manor or a small town (Alekseyevskoye VI ancient settlement). The eighth way was the restoration of a village on a new site after a military defeat or fire (Rozhdestvenskoye I).

The main occupations of the rural population were agriculture, animal husbandry, hunting, and catching fish. The role of these activities was big enough, although the proportion of hunting for subsistence was not great. Fishing was widely spread in areas where rivers and lakes were located. Beekeeping and trapping were popular in woodland areas. It is not improbable that the practice of these activities had a market basis since, according to written sources, wax, isinglass, and furs were important items of the Bulgar import.

### Countryside manors

The construction of Bulgar villages and rural areas was mostly manorial. There were mainly tufted buildings (Alekseyevskoye VI, Izmerskoye) or linear ones (Rozhdestvenskoye V). In the former case the buildings had separate yards, which were adjacent to one another and divided by plank fences. The relative density of the building was conditioned by a fairly small-sized cape in the river bend chosen for the settlement. In the latter case we can observe free linear buildings, when each yard, territorially detached, was an autonomous farming unit within the village. The evolution of manor estates cannot be excluded. Over time the linear buildings could change in proportion to the growing number of household buildings, their reconstruction, and renovation.

A Bulgar manor consisted of a residential house with a yard and outbuildings. In a number of cases the yard could be divided (as the ethnographic literature suggests) into front and back parts. The front part of the yard was an open area without any buildings, and the back part was reserved for sheds, drying-barns, granaries, etc. The centre of the manor was a residential house. It is likely that the residential building did not come out into the street but was located deeper in the heart of the territory. Apparently, this is explained by a comparatively small size of inner yards and a sufficiently large density of buildings in the ancient settlement of Alekseyevskoye VI.

The quarters for storing raw materials and food were situated immediately near the dwelling, both at the front and back yards. Their relative impermanence contributed to the creation of a whole system of pit-depth storage rooms or deepened cellars with a wooden ground frame and an overlap. With peeling and dilapidation, some of these buildings were abandoned and turned into a place for disposal of household and food waste. This was also conditioned by the territorial growth of the settlement—when free spaces that previously served as dumping grounds became less and less.

The front yard had storages for perishable products such as fish, milk, and meat. Vegetables and root crops could also be stored

there. Such storage facilities were relatively small. The cellar would be built into the ground (100–170 cm) with the foundation 150–160 cm in diameter. These storage pits would have a cylindrical shape. People would descend into them using small wooden ladders. Also, they must have had wooden coverings. Judging by the fact that all these facilities were located near residential buildings, it is possible that there was a common canopy above them, thus allowing using these buildings in the winter period. In some cases steps were arranged near the bottom of these pits on which vessels with food were placed. These could be clay, birchbark, and wooden vessels.

Granaries and barns were bigger in size. As a rule, granaries for storing crops had storages (pits) built into the ground having a cylindrical or bell shape 270 cm in diameter with an overall depth of 250–270 cm. In order to get to them, special steps were built on which wooden ladders could be placed. The walls of such pits were either burnt or dried. The bottom was covered with straw. Often there would be two pits, and they were located next to each other. Such an arrangement usually allowed repairing and renovating the storage. The construction of the granary itself represented a log cabin. The pits had a wooden covering. Wooden lockers for flour could be placed inside granaries. Iron nails and clamps were used to construct them. The building would be covered atop. Large storages effectively substituted several smaller ones, which were arranged in a chess-board fashion in the back yard. This system prevented the penetration of rodents into the same storage and the decay of resources.

Sheds for storing equipment had a log cabin construction with an earthen floor. Drying-barns for drying crops were also located in the back yard. Cattle were kept in an inner yard, and during the winter, in heat-insulated stalls. In winter young stock were kept in residential buildings.

Fences of the yard or manor could be different: a plank fence (Alekseyevskoye VI ancient settlement), a wicker fence (Izmerskoye, Rozhdestvenskoye V), a fence made of poles, which was attached to dug-in pillars (Ostolopovskoye ancient settlement).

So far no wells have been discovered at any examined ancient settlement: it seems that water was taken straight from the river, although the aquifer was not located deep.

Expansion of the manor and its reconstruction were carried out every 10–15 years or even more frequently. Farm buildings were reconstructed first of all, whilst residential buildings were renovated at least once in a century. That is, if the manor was not harmed by fire or affected by the environment.

**Rural dwellings** of the Bulgars from the 10–beginning of the 13th centuries are presented in several types. The main type of dwelling since the latter half of the 10th century was a wooden stationary construction. Portable dwellings (resembling yurts) could also be found next to the wooden construction. The presence of such dwellings is confirmed by information provided by both written sources (Ibn Fadlan) and archaeological materials (Bilyar ancient town). Yurts were usually summer dwellings. Externally, it could be a tent with a wooden frame covered with skins or felt. According to ethnographic data, the interior of the yurt was divided into the left (male) section and the right (female) section. The fireplace was located in the centre, and there was an opening in the ceiling straight above it. The yurt's inhabitants and guests sat on carpets, felt, or skins spread on the floor. Small wooden tables could be used for meals.

The floor of the yurt was covered with a felt carpet, and its walls were ornamented with woollen or felt carpets. Red Armenian carpets were especially popular. The walls were curtained with cloth. The cloth was also used to make drapes dividing the male part from the female one. Rich and noble persons had silk cloth, which was Chinese or Byzantine. There were probably certain differences found in the size and design between inhabited yurts and those intended for guests and receptions.

Pine and reed were the basic materials used for building the stationary dwelling. Archaeologists have made records of a single-chambered house without a subfloor space, with an earthen floor and open fireplaces coated by lime stones. The walls of such dwellings were wood-framed. The dwellings themselves con-

sisted of two halves, one of which was residential (Izmerskoye ancient settlement). Such dwellings were widespread in the second half of the 10th century and continued to appear later. They were inhabitable both in winter and summer. The living space on average amounted to 35 sq. m.

Single-chambered above-ground houses with underground pits begin to appear in the beginning of the 13th century (Rozhdestvenskoye V ancient settlement, construction VII). These rectangular structures were 3x4 m in size, with a furnace in the north-west corner and a small pit-storage area. The living space amounted to 12 sq. m. This type of dwelling had appeared back in the 11th century, according to data provided during excavations of Alekseyevskoye ancient town, where a similar construction was carefully examined.

Another type of dwelling was a single-chambered above-ground house with a deepened earthen floor without a storage space underneath. This building was mostly used in the autumn-winter period (Ostolopovskoye ancient settlement). It had an earthen floor with a depth of 1 m and a nailless roof where planks were placed on horizontal logs. Earthen steps solidified with stones and twigs led inside the rooms. The entrance, having a doorframe, could have had a wooden door if the width of the door opening did not exceed 1 m, and in cases where the width of the entrance was bigger it could have been closed with skins or felt. The latter method was mentioned in written sources of the 12th century (al-Gharnati). Wooden benches were placed along the perimeter of the foundation pit, and in front of the entrance there were plank beds placed upon special pillars. There were no internal storage pits in these houses. The floor was covered with specially woven mats (from willow twigs). Evidently, such floors had felt covers as well as other types. Household items were stored on wall-mounted shelves. Lighting existed by means of grease clay lamps—candelabras and torches mounted on iron rushlight holders. The area of the dwelling amounted to approximately 12.5 sq. m. The interior was divided into a female section (near the stove) and a male section.

From the end of the 11th century two-chambered five-walled houses (log cabin type) begin to appear in rural settlements (Alekseyevskoye VI ancient settlement). The walls of such houses were made of logs and the joints between them were smeared with clay. The lower joists were placed on special logs or other wooden constructions. Such houses had a wooden floor. The roof was flat and covered with earthen banking in order to make it warmer. Inside the room a staircase, installed near a special manhole, led to the roof. A thin partition of a wicker fence, smeared with clay, divided the internal space into two parts: the western part and the eastern one. The western half, judging by the abundance of independent artefacts and tableware, was inhabitable. A clay furnace, which served for heating during the winter, was placed close to the very centre of this part. A hole was made in front of the furnace.

The building's eastern part was a kitchen with a utility room. There was a cellar with a wooden covering, supported by a number of small logs (15 cm in diameter), which were attached to the walls of the foundation pit. The area of the cellar was approximately 4 sq. m, and its depth was from 40 up to 160 cm. The entrance to the cellar was located in the northern side where special steps had been made. Near the cellar there was a fireplace that was used for cooking meals. The cellar could be lined with wooden planks, which were fastened into special mortices in corner logs up to 20 cm in diameter (the building of Laishevo IV ancient settlement). An earthen step could be made sometimes at the bottom of the cellar, upon which vessels were placed.

The entrance to the house was most likely in the eastern part. The useful space of such a house would usually amount to 42 sq. m. The remains of the 4th and 6th buildings examined in Alekseyevskoye ancient town may be referred to this type of dwelling.

The interior of such houses was mostly simple. Household furniture included benches, shelves attached to walls, possibly coffer, and small caskets. The presence of felt items and woven goods presupposes the existence of curtains, warm coverings, and decorative details. More wealthy villagers could allow themselves

to use metal tableware in their households, particularly boilers which were fixed with metal chains to a ceiling beam or were placed on special bridging pieces near the fireplace. Glazed dishes as well as decorative ceramics also served as ornamentation.

The room had lighting with the help of open clay lamps filled with melted grease and a wick. Ventilation of the rooms and their periodic full-scale cleaning were often necessary due to the soot from the fireplace and lamps.

Another type of rural dwelling was a half-dugout. Unlike above-ground houses, their walls consisted of only two-three groundsills, their roofs were based on corner columns and could be single-sloped or tent-shaped. Half-dugouts with trumeaux and subfloors were widely spread. The remains of such a dugout, 3.2 x 3.7 m in size, sub-rectangular in shape, deepened into the ground by 67 cm, were discovered in the western part of Staro-Kuybyshevskoye V ancient settlement [Izmaylov, Gazimzyanov, 1992, pp. 89–105]. The examiners of the excavations suggest that it was a half-dugout with two household pits. A clay furnace was inside of it, its floor was covered with a wooden mat, and its walls had their main frame made of vertical pillars. The roofing in the centre was backed by an extra column. The entrance could be located in the northern and southern sides. Similar constructions were discovered in Laishevo ancient settlement [Starostin, Kazakov, 1992, pp. 125–142; Rudenko, 2001]. The dwelling's interior consisted of wide plank beds, caskets, and coffer. The room was lightened by torches which were attached to rushlight holders or hand-made clay supports. The living space of such constructions usually constituted 12–30 sq. m. They date from the end of the 11–12th centuries.

Half-dugouts with a central trumeau had a similar construction. Having no fundamental differences from houses of the previous type, they could have had a tent-shaped roof. Such constructions were examined in Rozhdestvenskoye V ancient settlement, dating from the beginning of the 13th century [Sharifullin, 1993, pp. 69–70]. Dugouts also existed [ibid, pp. 65–66]. Open summer fireplaces and bonfires for cooking were located in the yards of dwellings of various types.

Heating devices (furnaces) had several types of construction design. They could be adobe stoves, the walls of which were made of clay (Alekseyevskoye VI, Laishevskoye, Staro-Kuybyshevskoye IV). The second type represented stone stoves made of limestone rocks and shell rocks mixed with clay mortar (Ostolopovskoye, Murzikhinskoye). Adobe stoves would usually be constructed on a forehearth casing. The latter were square shaped. Their foundation was in the form of a wooden casing made of small half-beams 4,550 cm long and up to 10 cm thick. They were fixed into the mortices of corner pegs.

One side of these stone stoves would almost always be burnt into the foundation pit's earthen wall of that part of the house which was deepened into the earth. Fireplaces constructed of stones and fragments of millstones were used for cooking. Furnaces had no chimneys. There possibly existed constructions like *chuals*—that is, open wall-adjacent stoves usually made of logs or stones covered with clay with a cap and a flue. The furnace was usually placed near the entrance on the right. Furnaces were rarely installed closer to the centre of the room (Laishevo ancient settlement). However, in the case known to us, it could have been a non-residential structure.

### **Bulgar cities and the countryside**

The emergence of cities in Volga Bulgaria led to the actual beginning of the division of settlements into urban and rural areas, although such splitting would not be completely accurate since Eastern authors of the 10th century, when writing about Bolgar, meant both the city and its outskirts—that is, its surrounding region. The rural environment was the basis of existence of a medieval city in general and a Bulgar one in particular. It was the village areas that supported the life of medieval towns, and the population of such towns would never stop communication with the rural community. Farming and animal husbandry were natural both for townsmen and villagers. We can say that Bulgar towns were mainly agrarian. The specifics of every Bulgar town was defined first of all by its rural district.

The role of rural settlements in the system 'town-village' may be identified through the example of well-examined archaeological complexes. Thus, the rural district played a decisive role in the formation of the city of Bulgar. At the beginning of its history we may see several non-fortified settlements in the Maly Iyerusalimsky ravine. Then, not far from them a small fortified castle (around 9 ha in size) emerged on a cape spit [Khlebnikova, 1987, p. 52]. The territory near its backside, behind the town's ditches, was also inhabited later. The city further develops by means of fortifying the trading quarter from its backside and the widening of the surrounding inhabited space. This is the leading tendency in the Bulgar of the pre-Mongol period.

The biggest Bulgar ancient town of the Trans-Kama Region—Bilyar—is surrounded by ancient unfortified settlements almost all around. The excavations showed that a part of these ancient settlements represented economically developed habitations with urban-type crafts. It is possible that a number of other Bilyar settlements are the remains of agricultural farmsteads and manorial clusters, which were interspersed with undeveloped areas used for ploughing. It seems that by the end of the 12th century the whole Bilyar complex limited with the system of Gorkinsky, Balynguzsky, and Nikolayevbaransky fortified localities was a single agro-industrial zone with a developed system of land use. Outside this zone a new agricultural areal spread southwards from the city behind the water shed of the Bolshoy Cheremshan (at its small tributaries) and the northern watershed heights behind the Gorkinsky ancient towns.

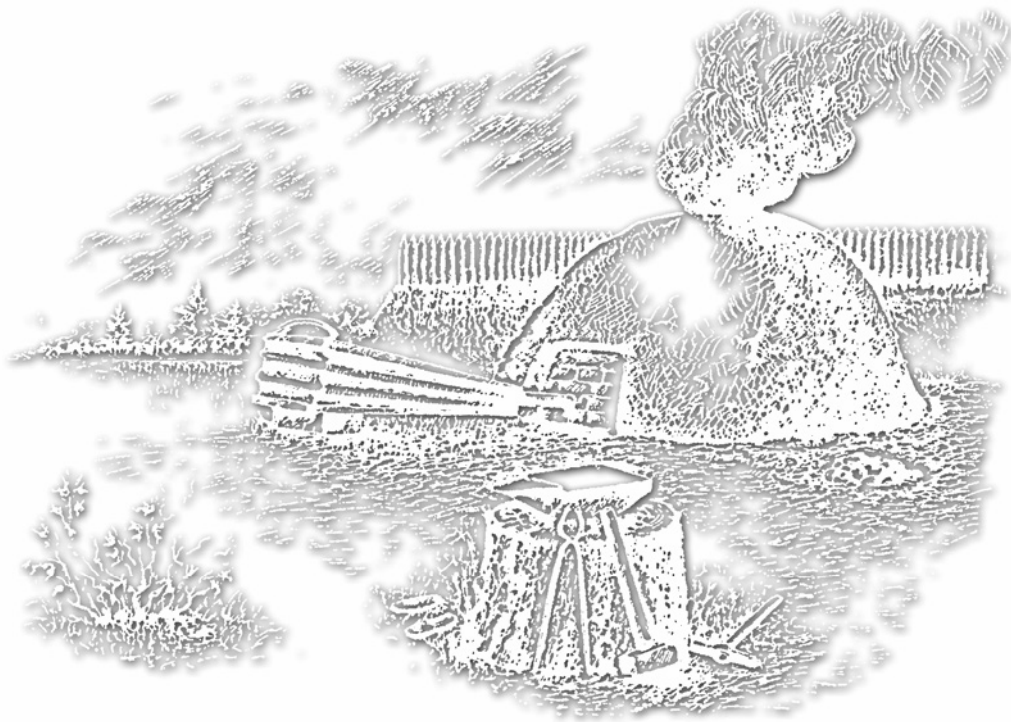
The development of territories in large ancient towns (like Kashan I) went on through the formation at its beginning of a system of several small villages, the main occupation of their inhabitants being agriculture.

Therefore, without taking into account the rural area, it is impossible to properly understand the genesis and evolution of the Bulgar city, its economic and administrative essence.



Section 4

# **Volga Bulgaria: Agriculture, Urban Craft and Trade**



## CHAPTER 1

### Agriculture. Industries

#### 1. Arable Farming

*Nail Khalikov*

The developed economy of pre-Mongol Volga Bulgaria was based on a variety of industries, the leading place among them, along with animal husbandry, crafts and trade, had agriculture, in the first place farming. Ibn Rustah (10th century) wrote: 'The Bulgars are an agricultural people, and they cultivate all kinds of grain, such as: wheat, barley, millet, and other' [Khvolson, 1869, p. 21]. The scale of farming in Volga Bulgaria is shown in the Rusessian chronicles as well, in particular, describing the events in Suzdal in 1024: 'And there was great and smooth rebellion in all that land... All people went along Volga to Bulgaria, and they brought grain and began to live' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, 1, p. 147]. The Nikon Chronicle includes one more news of the famine in Rus' in 1229 [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, 10, p. 98]. According to V. Tatishchev, 'The Bulgars went with grain along the Volga and Oka to all Russian towns, and they sold it, and hence great assistance was provided. The Prince of the Bulgars sent a gift of 30 flat-bottomed boats with grain to the Grand Prince Yury, which the Grand Prince received with thanksgiving' [Tatishchev, 1964, 3, p. 225].

The agriculture was based on their own traditions, that were inherent in Bulgars before they moved to the Lower Kama and the Middle Volga, and on the use of local agricultural experience, especially of Imenkovo population.

In the second half of the first millennium, Imenkovo culture tribes had a plough farming with the usage of draft animals and ploughing tools in this area. The finds of iron tips of an ard with long trubitsa indicate that they belonged to the tools without a sledge runner and with an inclined position of the working part,

suitable for the treatment of soft alluvial soils of the river valleys.

As the Imenkovos, the Bulgars tried to settle in the fertile black earths, mainly in the Trans-Kama region, which indicates their economic orientation. They used advanced, for that time, farming systems, cultivated a large number of various field and vegetable crops, used quite sophisticated arable tools, methods and techniques of processing and storage of the crops.

The main settlement area of Bulgars in the pre-Mongol period was in the Western Trans-Kama region and Volga region. These areas are located mainly in the forest-steppe zone with a favourable agricultural temperate continental climate (average temperature in January were 13–14°; in July, 19–20°; the sum of the temperature was higher than 10°, that is, the vegetation period was 2250–2270; annual precipitation was 420–470 mm). Fertile black earths (eluviated soil, clay, and loamy) soils predominated. The plant formation is represented by fescue and mixed grass steppe; forests and stands are made of oaks and lindens with a part of maples, aspens, birches, elms, elm trees, pines, and shrub undergrowth; along riverbanks there were willows [Physical-geographical..., 1964, pp. 116–118, 142–143, 144–148].

The development level of agriculture (farming) primarily depended on the applied cropping systems (methods of soil fertility restoration). According to paleobotanical materials and other circumstantial evidence, a fallow-fallow system of agriculture prevailed in pre-Mongol Volga Bulgaria in the Western Trans-Kama region, between the Volga and Sviyaga.

It was closely connected with tools such as plough, adapted for cutting sod layers and

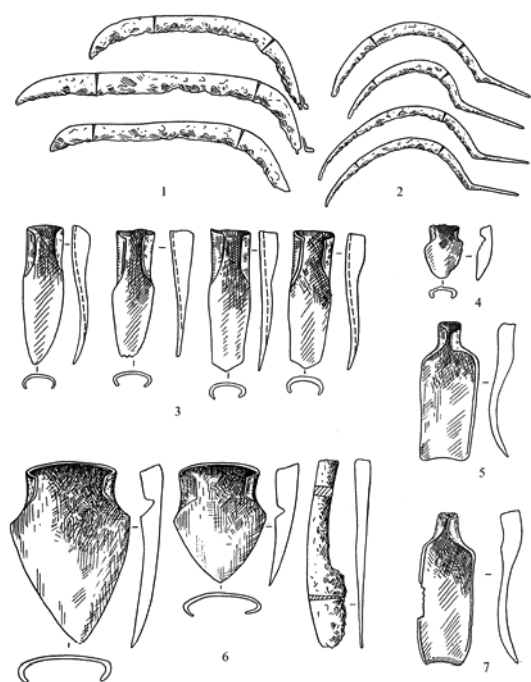
turning the soil. The discoveries of metal parts of such ploughs—ploughshares and gouter knives—are well known in the Bulgar records [Kazakov, 1991, pp. 58, 64, Fig. 20, 21, 24; Culture of Bilyar, 1985, p. 16, Table 1]. They were dragged by several pairs of animals, horses, or oxen. In general, a Bashkir plough has not survived to today, because for centuries the wooden parts were not preserved. However, heavy wooden ploughs recorded by ethnographers prevailed in the Middle Volga Region and the Cis-Ural region in the 18–19th centuries. It is characteristic that it was then noted: 'Tatars are especially willing for wooden ploughs'. Almost complete similarity of metal parts of the Bulgar plough and late Tatar wooden plough evidence their genetic relationship, constructive and physical resemblance. It should be noted that wooden ploughs in the forest steppe and steppe zone of the Volga Region and Cis-Ural in the 18–19th centuries were used almost exclusively for raising deposits and old fields. A. Smirnov thinks that a similar plough is characteristic for the Bulgars. But it is a highly questionable assumption that harness ploughing tools, particularly ploughs, were borrowed by outside settling nomads from local people [Smirnov, 1951, pp. 84–85]. Such tools were known to Bulgars, as evidenced by the similarity of the plough tips from sites of Volga Bulgaria and Saltovo-Mayaki culture of the Lower Volga Region, Don Region, and the North Caucasus. The prototype of such a tool could be tools similar to the Middle Asian 'omach' ard. The find of small ploughshares and gouters at Laishevo ancient settlement is of particular interest in this respect. They could belong to the tool similar to ard [Rudenko, 2001a, pp. 59–60]. Consequently, the process of formation of Bulgar-Tatars wooden plough occurred most likely in the Middle Volga and the Lower Kama at the turn of the first millennium. Additionally, the ard, as in Slavic lands [Levashova, 1956, p. 25], for a long time could accompany the plough as auxiliary tools designed for cultivating of seams.

Long fallow-swidden method of soil fertility restoring was typical for settling nomads, since free from ploughing lands (swidden

lands) were used as pastures (a combination of animal husbandry and agriculture, known to descendants of the Bulgars—Kazan Tatars of the Southern Cis-Urals).

The farming in the densely populated central districts of Volga Bulgaria, particularly in the Western Trans-Kama region, was different. For such an extensive farming system as the long fallow-swidden system, there was probably not enough land already in the pre-Mongol period. Bulgarian towns such as Bilyar, Bulgar, Oshel, etc. with near trading quarters were not only craft and trading centres but also agricultural districts. This practice goes back to the tradition of the ancient polises, and it was characteristic of medieval towns in the Western and Eastern Europe. It is understood, first of all, that there were numerous agricultural villages surrounding cities [I. Mukhametshin, 2004, p. 132]. Therefore, there was the steam system already in pre-Mongol period (contrary to the opinion of V. Tuganayev, based on the analysis of palaeobotanical materials (lack of winter rye, prevalence of spring pests), who came to the categorical conclusion about the absence of a steam system in pre-Mongol Bulgar [Grigoriyev, 1976, p. 245]), most likely in the form of two-field crop rotation. In the conditions of continental climate the rotation of spring-steam was practiced (the finds of rye caryopsis on the records of Volga Bulgaria belong to spring forms) [Krasnov, 1987, p. 221], as it often was in the Cis-Urals at a later time [N. Khalikov, 1995, pp. 26–27].

The evidence of the steam system spread is proved by finds of metal shares and politas, as plough is a tool that is not suited for heavy black earth soil deposits and is intended for the treatment of cultivated soils. Simple symmetrical shares and more sophisticated feather tips (asymmetrical?), according to Yu. Krasnov [1987, p. 212], appeared among the Bulgars in the late 12th or early 13th century; according to recent data, shares appeared in the region in the 11th century [Rudenko, 2001a, p. 58]. They are not much different from similar share tools of Russian farmers in the forest and forest-steppe zone; from there they could have spread to the agriculture of the Bulgars. The latter proposal



Iron scythes (1), sickles (2), plough socks (3), harrow point (4), shelves (5), ploughshares (6) and a colter (7) from the Bilyar archaeological site

may be supported by the name of the plough in Volga Tatars—*suke*—clearly proceeding from the Russian language [Krasnov, 1987, pp. 212–213, 217]. However, we can not completely exclude the independent appearance of such tools among the Bulgars from a local ard. According to the not unreasonable note of D. Zelenin, there is a direct relationship between an ard and a plough, as evidenced by the common for the Russians name 'naralnik' used for shares [Zelenin, 1908].

The Bulgars did not batten old arable fields. This is evidenced by the absence of sheds and other buildings designed to collect manure. Fertile soils were maintained by periodic leaving of arable land to go fallow in the short term. This practice was well-known in the 16–19th centuries in the Volga and Cis-Ural regions. This is so-called 'pestropol'e', which is, at first glance, an unsystematic crop rotation, for example: spring-spring-steam-spring-fallow. However, here a general scheme existed: as arable land depleted and soil fertility

degraded, the areas were abandoned for a few years to lie fallow.

We have no direct evidence of the existence of slash-and-burn agriculture in pre-Mongol Volga Bulgaria, which existed in the forest areas of the region even much later. It should be suggested that forest clearing for cultivation by burning or cutting down (swidden) trees was still practiced as a way of arable land expansion. This may be indirectly indicated by numerous finds of quite perfect felling axes. Swidden and forest fallow were still widely practiced a few centuries later (early 17th century) in the Kazan region [Piscovaja kniga, 1978].

The range of crops was diverse (over 15 species). Bulgars, except for mentioned spring rye, cultivated oats, wheat, spelt wheat—emmer wheat, barley, millet, peas, lentils, flax, and hemp. It should be also noted that barley and millet were the characteristic crop species for settling nomads. It is no surprise that Ibn Fadlan wrote: 'Their food is millet and horse meat, but they have a large quantity of wheat and barley' [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 136]. Spelt wheat, even later widespread among their descendants—the Kazan Tatars (Mordvinians, for example, call it 'Tatar bread'), was also characteristic crop of the Bulgarian agriculture [Markelov, 1922, pp. 192–193]. It was so deeply absorbed into the cultural tradition of the people that for the Kryashens-Tatars, who have retained many pagan traditions, it became an important product of the ritual food [Mukhametshin, 1977, p. 36].

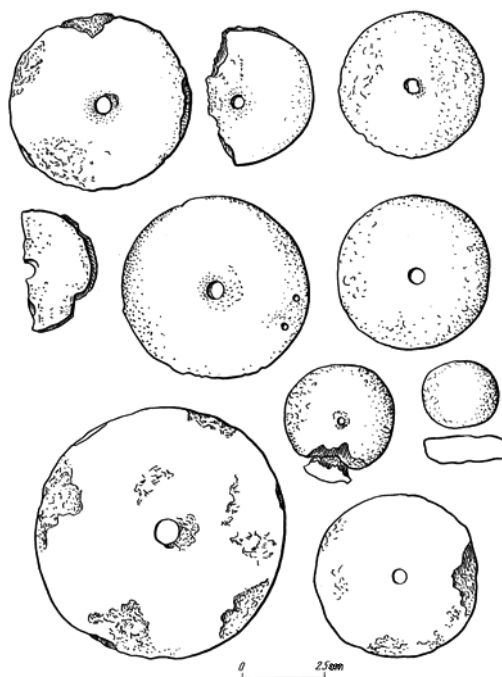
The Bulgars' main tools for harvesting were sickles. According to their form, proportions, and size, they came from the North Caucasian and Middle Asian traditions, and they have remained almost unchanged to this day (home-made sickles). V. Levashova consequently identified them as a special 'Bulgar' type [Levashova, 1956, p. 73]. The common for all sub-ethnic and territorial groups of the Volga Tatars name *urak* (by the way, similar to the Middle Asian 'orok, orak') makes it reasonable to assume that the sickle had a close or identical name among the Bulgars. For hay making, Bulgars used scythes, similar to late scythes.

We do not find the evidence of treasures of sheaves for drying and after-ripening of wind-row in the time of Volga Bulgaria. But by using the extrapolation method, it can be assumed that they were shook-shaped or oblong, like the *chume'le*, *zurat* of the Kazan Tatars of the 19th century, characteristic and typical of them. The same can be said about the large treasure for long-term storage of sheaves *kiben*. The last name, just like *chume'le*, is widely known in the Turkic world in the corresponding meaning. The fact that the form and name *kiben* are specific to the Tatars particularly was written about by P. Rychkov [1767, p. 164] and I. Lepkhin [1821, p. 154] in the 18th century.

By the same principle of extrapolation, it should be considered that the Bulgars, as well as their descendants, threshed crops by whipping, padded stick, and the hooves of animals, horses and oxen. The first two methods are generally characteristic of the early stages of agriculture [Krasnov, 1971, p. 41], the latter is typical of settling nomads in transition to agriculture; later it was also characteristic of agriculture of Tatars and Middle Asian and Kazakhstan peoples [N. Khalikov, 1995, pp. 95–96].

Stone handed or dragged by animals (maybe water, like the later whorls) stationary rotary mills, millstones of which are known to the Bulgarian records (Bilyar, Bulgar, Hulash; Alekseevskoe, Russian-Urmatskoe, Laishevo, Murzihinskoe etc. ancient settlements), were used for the processing of grain into flour and grits [Kalinin, Khalikov, 1954, Fig. 32: 1, 2; Smirnov, 1951, Table 1, Fig. 1; Yovkov, 1976; Culture of Bilyar, 1985, Table 5]. Perhaps wooden mortars existed, particularly for decortication of panic (let us remind that this was one of the main crops of the Bulgars) into millet. And this is also proved by the single name for all the Tatars and many Turkic peoples—*kile*.

Ground harvest storage did not survive, though there seems to be no reason to deny their existence [Khuzin, 1979, p. 81 et seq.]. Perhaps the sheds examined in Laishevo ancient settlement, where objects for household purposes were found, were used for this



Millstones from the Bilyar excavations

[Rudenko, 2001a, p. 112]. We can suggest that they were called *klet'*, because everywhere and later similar stores were known among the Volga Tatars by this name. The grain in them was most likely stored in large ceramic pots and large earthenware ewers [Grigoriyev et al, 1976, p. 211; Khuzin, 1979, p. 82, Fig. 33A]. We only know for certain that there existed numerous grain pits, pit stores with clay and burnt walls, and cellars with reinforced wood walls and ceiling, studied at the sites of Volga Bulgaria [Khuzin, 1979, pp. 69–71, 81 et seq.; 2001, pp. 268–274].

The Bulgars were also engaged in vegetable gardening and horticulture. The finds at the excavations of vegetable beetles (cucumber) and fruits (apple, cherry and plum) are evidence of that; apple trees which have run wild have been frequent on the embankments of the Bulgar archaeological sites up to the present time. The scythes and shovels, metal parts of which have been found at Bulgarian archaeological sites, were seemingly used for those purposes [Kazakov, 1991, pp. 83–84, Fig. 24, 31; Culture of Bilyar, 1985, p. 18, Table P; Yovkov, 1978].

## 2. Animal Breeding

*Aida Petrenko*

Animal breeding is one of the most important areas in the economy of Volga Bulgaria. The main source to study the historical issues about the animal breeding and hunting of the ancient population of any regions are archeozoological materials from the ancient towns, ancient settlements and burial sites.

The most complicated in telling the history of hunting and housing (cattle breeding) is the early Bulgar periods, as the basis of the osteologic materials of the archaeological records within this time frame is the remnants of the ritual animals from the burial sites. They fixed the ritual of burying a man with a horse—in fur with the head and four legs. His personal horse was killed at the age of 5–9 years. The given ritual demonstrates the huge role of horses, thus, also horse breeding in the ancient Bulgar life, which is proven by written sources ('their food is millet and horse meat', see: [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 136].

The osteologic material from the Ust-Jerusalem settlement on the Bulgar archaeological site reveals a great deal. The main constituents of animal breeding are cattle (38.0%) and horse (34.9%), followed by sheep (25.4%). It is surprising that there are no bones of domestic pigs in the kitchen scraps of the population from the forest-steppe Volga Region during the pre-Islamic period. It is also interesting that in the kitchen scraps from the territory of the ancient settlements, there are a lot of bones of such animals as a beaver, a badger, a wild boar, a bear, a marten, a roedeer, a saiga, an elk. There are few bones of birds and fish. Although hunting wild animals, by the data of the early ancient settlement, had a high significance, the most important place in housing was breeding domestic animals (98.5%).

The Tankeyevka early Bulgar horses show a significant similarity with the indigenous horses of Western Kazakhstan. In comparison with the ancient Russian forest ones, they differ in head structure. The majority of the horses was represented by the 'middle' and 'short'

groups (the classification of V. Vitt) with an average height in the shoulders of  $137.8 \pm 0.38$  cm. The tall ones, with height in the shoulders of 144–151 cm, were in the minority. By the 'thin-legged' attribute (the classification by A. Brauner), a predominant part of the horses was 'semi-thinned-legged' and 'medium-legged' animals. 'Thin-legged' and 'semi-thick-legged' animals were rare.

In the 10th century, the Volga Bulgar had large towns such as Bilyar, Suvar, Bulgar, Juke-tau, Oshel and the town on the Samara Bend, known in literature as the townlet of Murom. We have diagnosed osteologic materials, which are the kitchen scraps from the cultural layer of these towns.

The osteologic material of Murom townlet allows to assert that the main domestic animals in herds were goats and sheep, up to 80%. The second place by number of animals belonged to cattle (about 11%). Horses do not exceed 5%. Moreover, in almost all of the excavations, there were bones of the domestic camel. The appearance of this animal in the Middle Volga Region dates to the period of the Imenkovo tribes (5–7th centuries) and it was likely related to regular trading caravans from the East.

The absence of the pig bones in kitchen wastes of the settled population is explained by the adoption of Islam in Volga Bulgar (922), which prohibited the eating of the meat of this animal.

Sheep were used in households for meat, wool and leather, which is proved by the finds of spring clippers in the archaeological materials. The relatively low percentage of horse bones allows us to suppose the decrease in its role in the nutrition of the population in comparison with the early Bulgar period, as there was a intensification of the use of horses in home and military life. After the bull and ox, the horse was becoming the main beast of burden in cultivating the land. Its role as a mount animal also grew. The osteologic material



Iron curry-combs, scissors and fetter locks from the Bilyar excavations

proves the leading role of animal breeding and the modest ratio of hunting in the economic life of the Volga Bulgar, despite the fact that Samara Bend remains famous today for being rich in animals to hunt.

Fishing played a far more important role than hunting, as evidenced by significant finds of fish bones and mainly sturgeon marginal rays of considerable sizes.

Osteological collections from Bilyar, the pre-Mongol capital of Volga Bulgaria, are the only factual evidence of the character of animal breeding activities of the forest-steppe population of the Bulgar state of the 10–beginning of the 13th centuries.

Hunting animal species found in the excavation materials are represented by bones of beavers, martens, foxes, hares, wolves, boars, reindeer and moose. However, these listed species do not seem to be abundantly represented in bone finds. This means that hunting products were of little importance in the life of urban population. However, some written sources give reliable information on the extensive export of fur pelts from Volga Bulgaria. This contradictory data can be explained: in reality the urban population of Bilyar was not actually engaged in fur animal hunting, but rather received them from people farther north peoples as barter products.

The correlation between wild and domestic animals by the number of bones and species proves that hunting was less significant than animal breeding, the latter together with arable farming, and crafts and trade make up the basis of the economic life of the state.

It should be acknowledged that the main meat food of Bilyar population was cattle, because beef yield from each butchered cow was on average nine times greater (by weight) than that from a sheep. Therefore, taking into consideration that the percentage of goats and sheep prevailed to some extent, we can say that more sheep were butchered but we cannot say that these species were more significant in the nutrition of the town population.

The number of butchered horses and age analyses of bone remains indicate that this animal specimen was rarely eaten by the Muslim population, but was mainly used for household and military purposes.

Some domestic pig bones are worthy of note. It was not a livestock specimen for raising in the town area or even neighbourhood, but was a food product specially imported in this case, and also an additional evidence of the presence of some Slav craftsmen among the Muslim urban population [Khuzin, 1979, pp. 78–79].

The frequently found camel bones which undoubtedly was eaten by the Bilyar elite are solid proof of extensive trade connections of the city with countries of the Black Sea area and Middle Asia from where numerous caravans of these animals arrived.

The results of morphological studies support the above said opinions that in the livestock husbandry of Bulgars there were horses of 'steppe' type, and large breed sheep which had no parallel in the whole territory of the Middle Volga Region.

New craniological materials make it possible to single out, among the existing series of metacarpal bones of the cattle, ox bone remains, apart from the cow and bull species noted earlier. Serial measurements of bones of the cattle give grounds to assume that there were two breed groups of this animal. The first group was significantly smaller in height, light-boned, with relatively smaller circumference of the rod base of horns and their length. The other quantitatively dominant group with long solid horns, with height at the withers up to 135 cm, of a more strong-boned primitive type, has a true resemblance with cattle from monuments of Khwarezmian Middle Ages, Kievan Rus' and Scythian Black Sea area of the early Iron Age.

A few available written sources permit us to expand our understanding of the breed properties of Bulgar horses.

Noted scholar of aboriginal horse breeds Yu. Barmintsev, in his summary work on the evolution of horse breeds, summarised the materials on the horse raising history of Kazakhstan of the 6–12th centuries. He provides osteological and craniological materials from the archaeological sites of the Ile Valley and Taldy-Kurgan region which show what the common horses of Turks were like [Barmintsev, 1958, p. 21]. All this data replicates early Bulgarian (Tankeyevka) horses: height at the withers of 136–140 cm, bull-headed and medium-boned. Such were the horses before Chinggis Khan's campaigns, as noted by the author. 'Horses resembling the "southern" type disappeared during this period due to the factors related to the conquest of Mongols. At the same time the proliferation of the "steppe" type horses occurs which are adapted to year-round pasture management. Horses of this type predominated in Kazakhstan for the next six centuries' [Barmintsev, 1958, p. 33]. Taking into account all the above, as well as the results of osteological studies, it appears that the major type of Bulgarian horses were horses with medium-sized heads, a straight profile, and very mobile ears of various shapes and sizes. However, despite their medium size, their heads looked heavy due to their mas-

sive jaws. The latter quality was caused by hard plant food rich in fibre, which required a strong teeth system and well-developed jaw muscles for chewing. Its neck is distinct for its 'deer-like' shape. It is not long due to relatively short legs of the horse. The average height at the withers was often between 136 cm and 142 cm. The horse's hind legs were sickle-hocked. The horses' movements were quiet, flexible thanks to a relatively oblique shoulder, significant bending of legs in hock joints and sufficient slant of pasterns, with tough hooves. One of the practical reflexes was *tebenevka* ability—shovelling snow to dig for food. The likely conditions of horse herding, using horses for long-distance rides, participation of the population in equestrian competitions developed in the horses physical endurance and high agility in races against time and long-distance races. The constant conditions of feeding and management from generation to generation allowed for sustainable preservation of the breed qualities of these 'steppe' type horses. However, changing management and feeding conditions caused changes in quality of the horses even during the first two to three generations.

The ongoing influx of horses from Middle Asia regions to Bulgarian markets facilitated the breed-forming process and constant in-flow of fresh blood of high-bred animals which explains few but reliable finds in excavations of horses of higher-bred qualities with the height at the withers of about 150 cm. The remarkable variety of Bulgarian horses, noted here, can be explained as follows:

firstly, Volga Bulgaria was a cosmopolitan state. Later, when many ethnic peculiarities disappeared only some specific traditions could be preserved in horse breeding;

secondly, Volga Bulgaria was a state with a complex social structure which affected the economic life in many respects including horse breeding. The wealthy elite were able to purchase and keep the best horse breeds. The common population seemingly possessed smaller, though very enduring horses;

thirdly, Volga Bulgaria traded heavily not only with the population of neighbouring ter-



ritories but also with Caucasus, Middle Asia, China, and India. It resulted in an ongoing influx into the Middle Volga region of not only 'steppe' Kazakh horses, but those of improved Asian breed which undoubtedly did not end up in the kitchen midden.

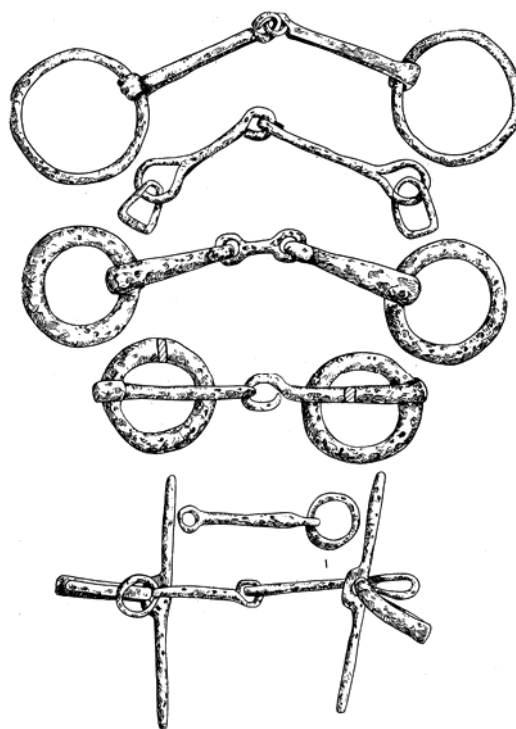
In the materials of the third pre-Mongol stratum of the Juketau ancient town, the average percentage of cattle leftovers was the biggest—around 49.0%, goats and sheep—31.8% and horses—around 19.2%.

The largest part of meat eaten by the population of Juketau both during the pre-Mongol and Golden Horde periods belonged to cattle, which means that the population preferred beef. Considering the same factor, it should be noted that the second most important food was horse meat, and only then lamb meat. However, sheep livestock butchered for meat undoubtedly outnumbered the horse livestock in all layers of the ancient town.

The species analysis of the osteological material by age provided equally interesting data, which allow us to assume that a significant part of the major meat products was received from the neighbouring rural area, which was abundant in cattle livestock. Notably, it was used as meat livestock and was intended for slaughter when it was less than 2 years old. The other group was slaughtered after being used in the household for milking purposes. Old species were not found in the kitchen midden. The available data on the use of oxes and bulls in the household of Bilyar [Petrenko, 1979] and absence of such data in Juketau give no evidence that the livestock in the area was not used for work-related purposes. Obviously, meat of the work stock just was not supplied for sale to this city. Sheep meat mostly was received from animals at the age under 1 year or 1–2 years. But the presence of bones of animals over two-years-old implies that these species were raised also for wool shearing, not only for meat.

The bone remains of horses mainly belong to young animals, because only high-quality horse meat was supplied to the town. Of course, there were old species, too, but they were left in the midden of rural areas.

Based on the examples of well-preserved bones with fused epiphysis and diaphysis,

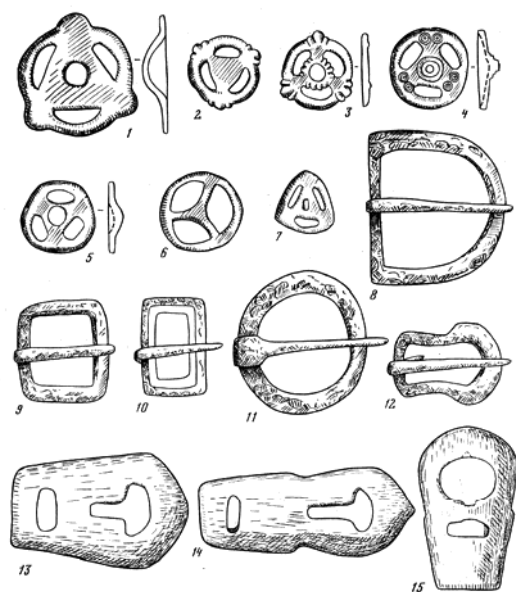


Iron bits from the Bilyar excavations

some data on breed morphology was obtained. In the area of Juketau ancient town, a cow metacarpal bone with the biggest length of 210.0 mm and the smallest width of diaphysis of 35.0 mm was found. After recalculation of these parameters, the height at the withers of the cow was ascertained—125 cm. The largest measured length of the astragalus bones was 60.0–65.0 mm.

The measurements of metapodium bones (metacarpus, metacarpal bones) gave evidence that cows and bulls kept in the western trading quarters (posad) of Juketau (in Donaurovoskoe ancient settlement) had height at the withers of 115.1–121 cm.

When the above data was compared with similar measurements of livestock from towns of Ancient Rus' and Volga Bulgaria, it was noted that Bulgar livestock shared a resemblance with Juketau livestock, on the one hand, and significant difference, on the other hand, in height with old Russian 'forest' type, since the height at the withers of the majority of old Russian livestock species varied between 95 cm and 105 cm, and only occasionally would one



Checkstrap fixing bronze plates (1–7),  
iron (8–12) and bone (13–15) girth buckles  
from the Bilyar excavations

encounter species with height over 110 cm [Tsalkin, 1956]. Among Bulgar and Juketau livestock there were no occurrences of species shorter than 95 cm, which was typical of old Russian 'forest' livestock. Moreover, the greater part of Bulgar and Juketau livestock in average was 110 cm, and some animals were 125 cm, which speaks for quite significant differences and can be explained by a number of reasons. The major reasons were a more attentive approach to versatile breeding and management, and use of these agricultural animals by the Bulgarian population, and constant and more frequent trade relations between the Bulgarian forest-steppe population and southern nomads in whose herds larger and stronger-boned livestock was raised.

The horse bones necessary for morphological breed studies were found in the excavation materials of both early and later years. The known emerging differences between horses of Juketau, Bulgar and old Russian horses are especially obvious when measurement data of metacarpal bones is compared. Thus, among Bulgar horses species with relative diaphysis width from 14.5 up to 16.5% are com-

mon, among horses of Donaurovskoe ancient settlement—from 15.2 up to 17.2%. Though there are occurrences of the aforementioned species among horses of Ancient Rus' forest area, there are species among them with relative diaphysis width of less than 13.5% which are not available in the monuments of Volga Bulgaria in general, that is 'with extremely thin legs'. The main livestock population of horses of Volga Bulgaria consisted of 'medium legged' and 'semi-thin legged' animals with height at the withers (according to V. Vitt) of 135–137 cm.

Among bone remains of goats and sheep the metacarpal bones were managed to be measured which were 141 and 134 mm long and indicated the height at the withers of the sheep of 65 cm and 69 cm. These figures are far cry from those of the heights of the sheep raised in the 10–16th centuries in forest areas of Ancient Rus', because the upper limits of their variability are identical to the measurements of bones corresponding to the lower limits in Bulgar sheep. This confirms that the population of Volga Bulgaria kept and raised in their households sheep of far larger sizes than the old Russian population did, which were closest to modern aborigine Turkmen sheep. By studying fragments of long bones, we can assume that the Golden Horde sheep of Juketau were larger-boned than old Russian forest sheep which is indicative of more active and close trade relations and commodity exchange between the Golden Horde population and southern regions.

The bones of one saiga specimen (a fragment of metapodium, a horn rod) indicate that these wild animals intended for hunting inhabited the steppe areas of the Middle Volga Region relatively recently.

Since the content of kitchen midden from Juketau is indicative of the traditional meat food of the population, we can compare, by implication, identical data with other medieval towns of forest, steppe-forest and steppe areas of the Volga region.

There is interesting data in the osteological materials that we diagnosed during the last decades, as well as in publications of scientists, which permit us to compare the investigated

material from Juketau with archaeological-zoological collections received from northern Finno-Ugric ancient towns.

Thus, among monuments of the northern taiga districts of the Cis-Kama region the ancient town Anyushkar (Kylasovo) is the most abundant in bone remains. It is dated back to the 10–14th centuries by V. Oborin and was abandoned by Finno-Ugric population of the Rodanov culture [Andreyeva, Petrenko, 1976, p. 150]. The significant finds of remains of hunting-trade fauna (42%) recorded among osteological materials of wild species emphasise the special role in the life of the ancient town, on the one hand, of such animals as moose (20.7%), reindeer (12.6%), beaver (32%), reindeer (5.7%), boar (3.5%), hare (2.3%), but on the other hand, they serve as evidence of active engagement of the population in hunting not only for meat products but also for furs which were the main good exported to the markets of Volga Bulgars and the south.

Among the remains of domestic animals which constituted 57.1% of all the bone material diagnosed, remains of cattle (37.6%) and horses (32.5%) predominated. Bones of pigs made up 12.8%, and those of sheep—10.9%. In terms of breed, the cattle was homogeneous and had a small height at the withers (up to 105 cm).

Equally interesting in terms of comparison are the archaeological-zoological materials from another Finno-Ugric landmark located in the northern taiga area of the Cis-Kama region, but closer to the Bulgarian ancient town of Juketau and Volga Bulgaria in general. This ancient town was Idnakar of the 9–13th centuries investigated by M. Ivanova in Udmurtia.

Though the amount of diagnosed materials was significant (6877 bones from 549 species), among domestic species having 5291 bones from 256 species the fragments of domestic pig remains are occasional and make up only 7 bones from 4 species. The percentage of the remains of wild hunting-trade fauna in relation to domestic animals by the number of species amounts to 53.4%, among which beaver makes up 65.2%, moose—13%, reindeer—7.8%, and hare—4.4%.

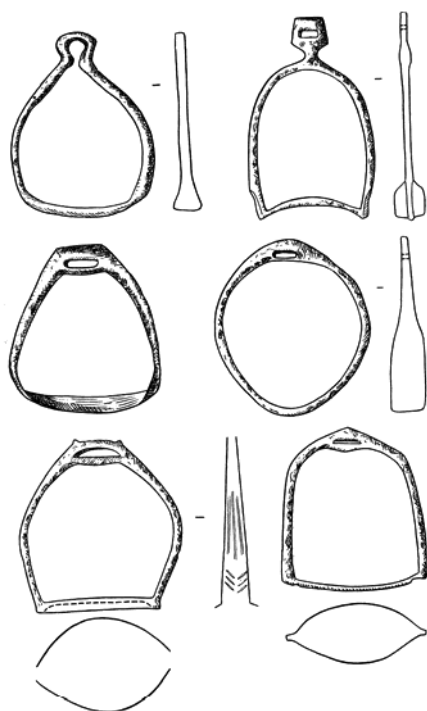
In the osteological materials domestic species prevail, as in northern Anyushkar, cattle—49.2% and horses—30.1%.

Some crushed bone remains (1/3) from the Idnakar ancient town gave an idea of certain peculiarities of domestic species in terms of breed, and the measurement data give evidence that in the cattle herds of Idnakar suburbs polled and relatively short-horned cattle with height at the withers of 103.5–118.4 cm prevailed. In this respect, also interesting was the data on the forest old Russian livestock with especially small bone sizes from excavation sites of Grodno and with larger bone sizes—from the towns of Staraya Ladoga and Staraya Ryazan, which were close in breed morphology to Idnakar.

Goats and sheep from Idnakar both by craniological traits and by long bones are also represented by relatively smaller species than Bulgarian sheep, for their height at the withers makes 63.5–66.4 cm (minimum sizes for large pre-Mongol Bilyar sheep). Thus the data obtained from Idnakar points to the presence in herds of even smaller sheep was typical of these regions (Anyushkar, old Russian towns).

Also of note are the studies of Idnakar's horses, where we found osteological remains of both rather small species with height at the withers of about 129 cm and larger ones of 146 cm. However, the percentage of 'undersized' horses was larger (62.9%) than those of 'medium height'. It is noteworthy that in towns of Volga Bulgaria (including Bilyar, Bulgar, Juketau), in farther south districts (Murom townlet) such 'small' horses are not found at all.

In terms of comparison of morphological specific and breed data of agricultural animals of Volga Bulgars, their comparison with southern livestock is of as much interest. The main livestock population of horses of ancient Khwarezm (with height at the withers from 128 cm up to 144 cm) belonged to animals which were very close in sizes to dimensions typical of Scythian-Sarmatian, old Russian, Bulgarian horses, despite the fact that among them, in smaller amounts, there were bone remains of dearer and rarer breeds—Akhal-Teke and Yomut breeds.



Iron stirrups from the Bilyar site

The sizes of Khwarezmian sheep from medieval Kunya-Urgench and Toprak-Kala are also remarkable for the very high variability of the height at the withers—from 54.3 cm up to 81.5 cm, though sheep which were shorter than 55 cm and taller than 80 cm at the withers were quite rare. The main livestock population was about 70 cm and close to two groups from the territory of the modern Karakalpaks—fat-tailed and Karakul sheep.

Regarding the breed peculiarities of the cattle of Ancient Khwarezm, it is known that within Eastern Europe of the Middle Ages there was no 'cattle which would have as large sizes as that of Khwarezm' [Tsalkin, 1966, p. 119]. Its population had oxes which were used primarily for arable farming.

The comparison data of specific morphology of Khwarezmian and Bulgarian livestock is noteworthy. The orientation of livestock husbandries in monuments of the second mil-

lenium AD of Southern Khwarezm is identical to that of the Golden Horde city of Bulgar. The major meat food in these towns was lamb (80.3%), in smaller quantities beef and horse meat (7.8% and 3.0%). Occasionally camel meat was eaten. Pork is absent in the meat diet of the population.

The provided analysis of extensive archaeological-zoological materials from Bulgarian towns in comparison with the northern Finno-Ugric and old Russian forest materials on the one hand, and on the other hand with Turkic southern (including nomadic) ones, permits us to make the following conclusions.

The osteological materials provided can be considered from several viewpoints: as a history of meat nutrition of the population of medieval towns, a history of animal breeding and rural suburban hunting, and as a history of mutual influence and trade. And these are, undoubtedly, interrelated between each other and with the regions' nature.

The domestic economic activity of the majority of suburbs of all the medieval towns considered was of a mixed nature. Apart from arable farming and animal breeding, their population was engaged in hunting. Notably that the significance of any given household sector varied across peoples.

Hunting was common for the medieval Finno-Ugric population of the taiga forest area, and fur-trade products were the major exported good to the markets of towns of Volga Bulgaria whose population had limited interest in hunting.

The major agricultural domestic animals were cattle, sheep and goats, and horses. Pigs were only raised in suburban area of Finno-Ugric Anyushkar and old Russian towns. Even in Finno-Ugric Idnakar the remains of these species are occasional, which is indicative of strong influence of the Bulgarian population professing Islam which was the reason why eating pork was prohibited and, consequently, keeping pigs in the household was also prohibited.

### 3. Crafts

*Nail Khalikov*

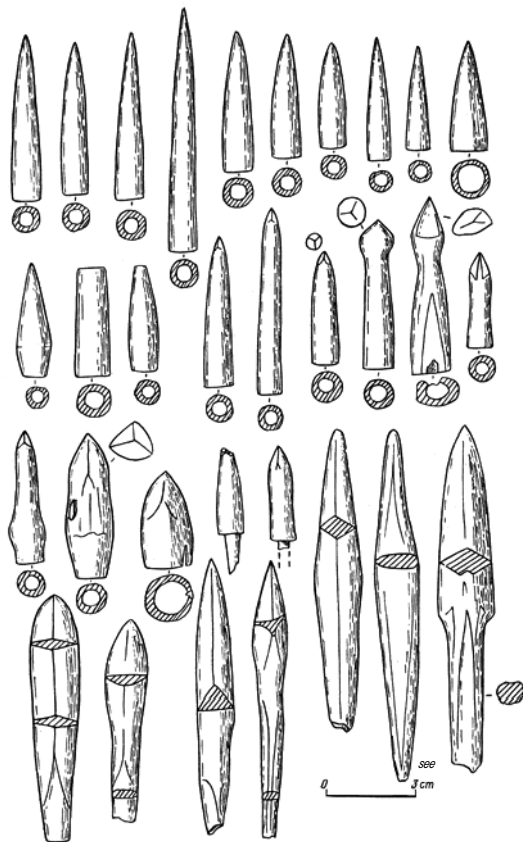
An important role among the Bulgar activities belonged to hunting and fishing, which is proved by the archaeological finds of the tool details. Since many of them were found in Bilyar, Bulgar, Suvar, etc., it is obvious that fishing and hunting were done not only by the rural population or the inhabitants of the periphery, but also by urban people (as it was in history much later, too).

Hunting was of two types: meat and fur. However, taking into account the finds of wild animal bones (elk, deer, wild boar, hare, sable, marten, beaver, otter, fox, and squirrel) on the archaeological sites of the Middle Volga Region and the Cis-Kama region), hunting was

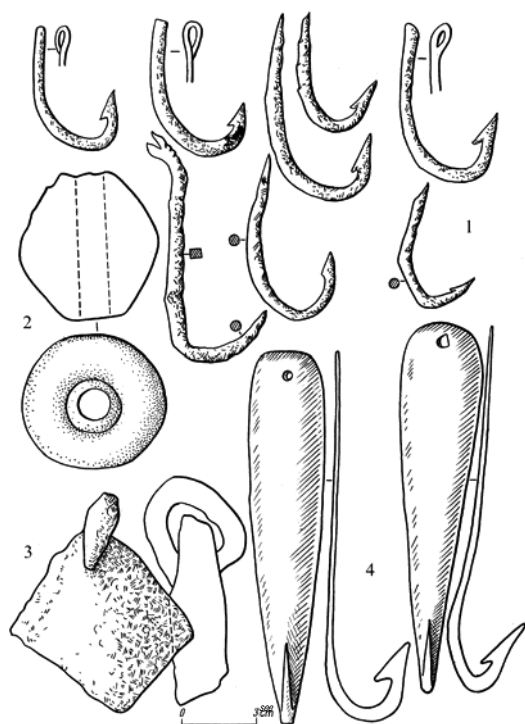
done mostly by people of villages and sparsely populated lands. There were opportunities for it: Al-Marwazi reports that on the Bulgar land, '...in the deep woods, there are animals valuable for fur, such as: squirrels, sables and others' [Zakhoder, 1967, p. 39]. It is no coincidence that even in the excavations of the towns (Bilyar, for example) there are numerous finds of specialised bone arrowheads—to-mars, aimed at hunting fur-bearing animals, especially squirrels [CB, 1985, p. 33]. However, there is no reason to overestimate the significance of hunting for urban people [Petrenko, 1999, p. 138]. A lot furs taken from the Burtas and neighbouring lands, to the north from Bulgaria were exported from Bulgaria to Khazaria, to the Arab East, to Middle Asia, and Byzantium. So, on the archaeological site of Indakar (the Cheptsy River, a tributary of the Vyatka River), the bone remnants of wild animals outnumber the units of cattle; and among the wild animals, beaver bones take up to 65% [Petrenko, 1984, p. 135].

Bulgar hunting, its ways and techniques were most likely of the 'steppe' type: they did not use the structure of stationed traps (holes, loops, snares, gins, etc.) as in the forest, but they were active in using horses, dogs and hunting falcons. Incidentally, these latter were called 'panthers' and exported to the East. Stalking and horseback hunting were widespread. However, it is not necessary to exclude the use of passive hunting for animals and birds, widespread among the Finno-Ugric peoples: loops, snares, gins for fur animals ('klepets' type, etc.), nets, buck stalls, and perhaps hunting holes, etc. It is no coincidence that some centuries later (at the turn of the 16–17th centuries), in the Middle Volga Region, there are mentions of 'the beaver run' belonging to the Tatars.

An important role in the economy was played by fishing. In the housing pits of the Bulgar monuments, there was a great deal of scale and fish bones, especially of sturgeons, catfish, and pike-perches [Kazakov, 1991, p. 89; Khuzin, 1980, pp. 76, 88, etc.]. Dried



Bone arrowheads  
from the Bilyar site



Iron hooks (1), clay (2) and iron (3) sinkers,  
bronze spoon baits (4) from the Bilyar  
excavations

fish and fish glue were items of Bulgar export [Fakhrutdinov, 1984, p. 36].

There were different methods and tools of fishing. As it was before the pre-Bulgar period, they fished with seine and casting nets, which is proved by the finds of clay and stone weight leads. It is highly likely that in small rivers there was stop-net fishing—arranging fish-garths as well as using pots (traps, tyke nets), as it was widespread in the land later. Large hooks were used for ground fishing and building cross lines. Bronze and lead spoon baits were designed to catching some huge predatory fish. Judging by the heads of the spears [Kazakov, 1991, Fig. 20], this method of fishing had also been widely used there since ancient times.

Beekeeping was quite typical of the Bulgars, and honey and wax were one of their most exported products. Ibn Faldan noted that 'in their forests, there is a great deal of honey in the bee houses, which they know and go to collect it' [Ibn Faldan, 1956, p. 138]. Apiculture among the Bulgars can be indirectly proved by the finds of the heads of sticks used to widen old hives and set new ones. It is no coincidence that later researchers noted many times the special attitude of the Volga Tatars towards beekeeping; and honey was included in the ritual 'bal-may'.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Craft: organisation of manufacture and craftsmen products**

Written sources do not contain direct information about urban crafts. We know of them only on the basis of archaeological material. At the excavations of the towns, discoveries of the remnants of the production objects (metallurgic and pottery kilns, blacksmith, jewellery, bone-carving workshops, etc.), numerous craftsmen's tools, the rests of the production (for example, iron and glass slag), semi-finished articles, and, in the end, different categories of the articles made, with hundreds and thousands of units, enable us to broadly imagine the level of the development of the main crafts. Applying some modern analytical methods when studying crafts—metallography, spectroscopy, chemical and structural analyses with a wide use of the data of stratigraphy and the chronology of archaeological objects—really expanded our ideas about the production technologies of Bulgar craftsmen.

#### **1. Ferrous Metallurgy and Blacksmithing**

*Yuri Semykin*

Ferrous metallurgy and forging were the most important industries in ancient and medieval societies. Their level of development directly determined the state of other branches of the economy and public life: arable farming and cattle breeding, various crafts and trades, military science and defence capability of society.

The written sources left mostly by Arab travellers and geographers testified that iron processing had reached a rather high level of development in pre-Mongol Volga Bulgaria. Sources mentioned Bulgar foreign trade in weaponry items made of ferrous metals. For instance, according to al-Muqaddasi, arms and chain armour, along with other foreign trade products, were exported from Volga Bulgaria. Quite interesting is the record by Ibn Fadlan about the importation of ferrous metals in Volga Bulgaria from Khwarezm in the early 10th century [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 123]. This fact may indicate certain deficit of quality ferrous metals (high-carbon steel) experienced by the young Bulgar state in the period of its formation.

Since the very beginning of its development by humanity, iron metallurgy has remained one of the most complex and mys-

terious branches of public production. Iron production-related works include a number of independent operations: 1) exploration and extraction of iron ore; 2) fuel stocking—wood cutting and preparation of charcoal; 3) making of a metallurgical furnace, its drying and baking; 4) kindling and heating of the furnace, loading it with charcoal and ore (charge mixture); 5) control of air supply and of the bloomery metallurgical process; 6) removal of the iron bloom from the furnace, its initial shingling to consolidate the iron and drive out the slag.

The bloomery process of receiving iron from direct reduction of iron ore was one of the greatest achievements of a man. Two simultaneous processes were taking place in the working area of the bloomery. The ore (ferric oxide), being at high temperature and reacting with carbonic oxide released from the charcoal, was reduced (converted) into metallurgical iron. Simultaneously the waste ore turned into a liquid slag and separated from the direct reduced iron [Kolchin, Krug, 1965].

In the course of the metallurgical process the pre-enriched ore was fed in the heated furnace upon a layer of burning charcoal and

the air was pumped by bellows inside the furnace through a special aperture in the furnace 'chest'. In the ancient and medieval iron making practice there existed furnaces with and without slag outlet. The air required for the metallurgical process could get inside the furnace either by natural draught or forced with bellows. Either metallurgical conglomerate (mixture of the reduced iron and scorified rock) or a porous iron bloom, consisting of iron and some quantity of slag and nonmetal impurities, were received. In furnaces of different design (with or without the slag outlet). The product resulting from the iron ore reduction, after being removed from the furnace, was to be additionally consolidated—hammered or shingled in order to be further used in the forging production. That was an independent operation requiring several additional high temperature heatings of bloom in the furnace, availability of blacksmithing equipment and tools.

Bog, lacustrine and meadow iron ores were the main raw material for the ferrous metallurgy in Volga Bulgaria, as elsewhere in the Middle Ages. This fact is confirmed by chemical analyses of ferrous slag with a high phosphorous content (from 2 to 5 %) [Efimova, 1958, p. 159]. Possible use of red and brown iron ores is not excluded. According to geological surveys of the Middle Volga and the Kama river regions, deposits of bog ores were discovered there already in the pre-war years [Batyr, Trofimchuk, 1932]. At present there are known exposures of bog and meadow ores on the territory of the Ulyanovsk region and Tatarstan.

In the ancient and medieval times metallurgists of the Middle Volga region used also other types of iron ore raw materials encountered in the Volga banks outcrops. The absence of archaeological materials, however, does not allow us to reliably specify, which particular iron ore deposits and exposures were actually developed by medieval Bulgarian metalworkers. It may be assumed that the exposures of brown iron ores in their various versions were developed not by a mine method, but by means of ore collection from un-

derneath the turf or river bank outcrops, bog bed and peatlands.

Bog ore extraction was mainly conducted in winter time, through ice-holes in boggish water basins. Meadow ores were developed during warm seasons of the year. To this day lenses of such ore still bed underground in up to 30 cm thick layers. In the Middle Ages it was dug out with the help of a sharp ice picks and a shovel. Prior to smelting iron, the extracted ore was enriched being washed and roasted in a fire [Rybakov, 1948, p. 125]. In this process the ore was losing substantial quantities of silica and moisture. Special roasters for ore drying were discovered in the townlet of Murom.

As suggested by A. Korolev and T. Khlebnikova, Bulgar metalworkers could use nickel ore brought from the Southern Urals as alloying elements for obtaining a higher quality steel [Korolev, Khlebnikova, 1961, p. 160]. It seems, however, unlikely that medieval metalworkers were able to carry out steel alloying in the conditions of the bloomery iron smelting. The nickel present in some blacksmith's products could originate from the ore.

Charcoal was used as fuel. This is evidenced by the incorporations of small pieces of coal in metallurgical slag and blooms, as well as by the discovery of charcoal burning pits at the Bulgar archaeological sites. Rich forestry in the region created favourable conditions for charcoal burning. The burning was done in special pits or in piles, with air inflow being checked and regulated. High-caloric fuel was generated approximately within two days. A charcoal burning pit was discovered at the Samara Bend in the townlet of Murom. With the pit method the charcoal output came to 30–33%, by weight not exceeding 12% of the initial wood weight. B. Kolchin supposed that in the bloomery process the ratio of the charcoal to the bloom weight reached a factor of 8–10 [Kolchin, 1953, p. 40].

Apart from ore and fuel, an important component in the iron smelting process were fluxes, which assisted attainment of low-melting



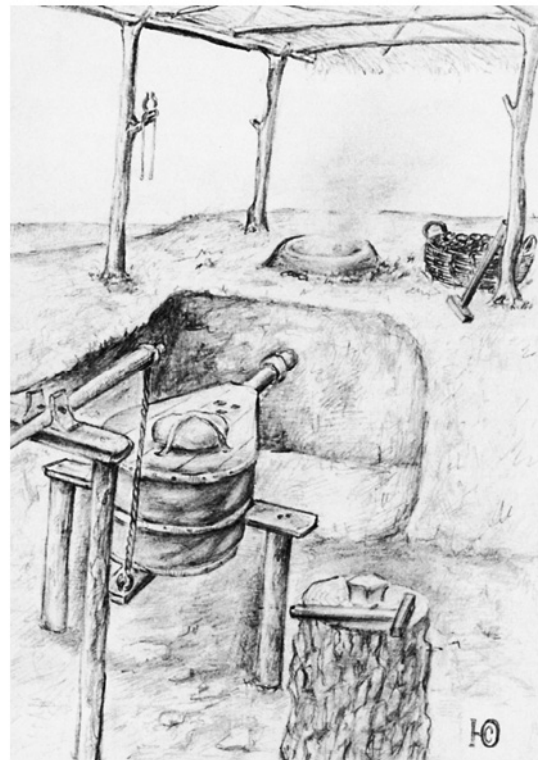
alloys inside the working space of the furnace and reduction of slag melting temperature. Lime and bones were usually used as fluxes. The use of fluxes in the Bulgar ferrous metallurgy is evidenced by the chemical analyses of the iron slag from Bulgar [Efimova, 1958, p. 162].

The Bulgars' penetration in the Middle Volga Region opened up the period of their mastering of the region's natural resources. Metalworkers of the Khazar Khaganate, which comprised the Bulgars prior to their resettlement to the Volga, knew various ways of iron production, with their forging processing being based on a developed ferrous metal industry [Tolmacheva, 1989, p. 149]. Bulgar metallurgists of the Saltovo-Mayaki culture operated pit type bloomeries with forced draught [Koloda, 1992]. Furnaces of such type can be also met at some early pre-Mongol period archaeological sites, for example in Khulash [Kakhovsky, Smirnov, 1972].

Scholars suppose that nomad associations of the early Bulgars in the Middle Volga Region used ferrous metal items mostly produced in major metallurgical and iron processing centres of the Khazar Khaganate [Tolmacheva, 1989]. Technological similarity of the manufacture of various categories of blacksmith's products testifies to this fact. At the same time, the early Bulgar nomad groups had their own blacksmiths, who carried out current repairs of broken iron items and executed small orders in the conditions of temporarily set small smithies. These purposes required anvils, hammers, forge tongs and files, being found at burial site excavations.

The technology of production of blacksmithing items from the early Bulgar archaeological sites is reconstructed on the basis of metallographic analyses of 175 articles originating from the Novinkovo, Bolshie Tarkhany, Bolshie Tigany, Tankeevka and some other burial sites of the late 7–early 10th centuries.

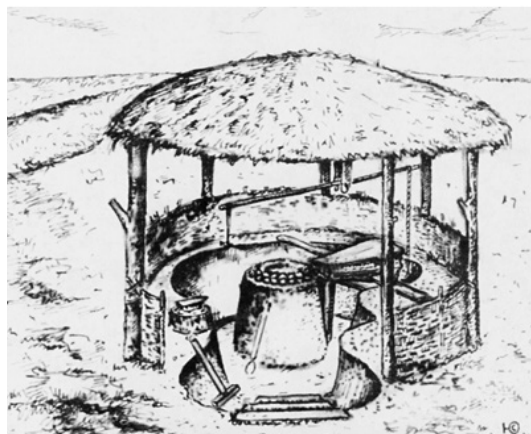
The examined collection of blacksmith's items of the early Bulgar period includes: knives (31 items), axes (20 items), hoes (6 items), sickles (1 item), scrapers (2 items),



Graphic reconstruction of a blacksmith's shop of the early Bulgarian period

arrowheads (32 items), spearheads (4 items), sabers (9 items), saber crosses (1 item), quiver hooks (4 items), 'knives' with volute pommels (2 items), stirrups (11 items), bridle bits (19 items), bridle bit rings (3 items), bit clamps (1 item), buckles (18 items), flints (5 items), rods (2 items), quiver clamps (1 item), clamps (1 item).

Eleven technological schemes of production have been identified: 1) forging of iron blooms, 2) of non-uniformly carburised raw steel, 3) of all-steel billets, 4) case-hardening (that is artificial carburisation) for finishing steel items, 5) forging of fagotted blanks (that is mechanically forging together of iron and steel strips in one block), 6) forging of a three-layer package (that is mechanically forging together of one steel strip in the centre and two iron strips at the sides), 7) of blanks with a steel blade welded in the iron or fagotted base (a steel wedge is welded at the tip of the blade in the iron base of such blank), 8) of blanks with welded V-shaped



Reconstruction of a Volga Bulgarian summer forging shop of the pre-Mongol period (based on the studies of the Ulyanovsk State Pedagogical University expedition to the Staroe Aleykino ancient town)

steel plates (a V-shape bent steel plate was welded on the iron blank base), 9) of blanks with steel plates welded on the butt-ends (the main body was usually of iron, and a steel plate was welded on at the very edge of the working part), 10) of blanks with a side and oblique welding of a steel plate (a steel plate was welded obliquely on the iron base), 11) of two-strip iron-steel blanks.

The leading methods of manufacturing quality products in the technological arsenal of blacksmiths of the Novinkovo tribal group included forging of all-steel and fagotted blanks, accounting for 15.21% each, carburisation (8.69%) and forging of two-strip blank stacks (4.43%). Heat treatment accounts for 17.39%, and exceeds fifty percent in relation to quality products.

The leading technological schemes of blacksmiths from the Bolshie Tarkhany tribal group were the forging of fagotted (22.85%) and of all-steel (20%) blanks. Technological methods including various versions of welding steel plates in or on the base of iron bloom or fagotted metal were used less frequently. The items produced under these technological schemes in total accounted for 20% in the collection. Technological modes of a three-layer package, butt-end, side and V-shaped plate welding, noted in some cases,

were not frequently used. The specific feature of the technological arsenal of the Bolshie Tarkhany collection was the absence of carburisation of the finished products, although this method was applied by this group blacksmiths for making all-steel through-hardened blanks. The share of heat treated items is high (37.14%), with heat treatment reaching 86.7% among quality products.

Forging of all-steel blanks was the leading scheme (40.7%) in the technological arsenal of blacksmiths of the Bolshie Tigany tribal group in the production of quality items. Other methods included forging of two-strip blanks and shallow hardening. At the same time, 33.3% of smithery was made of an ordinary iron bloom and non-uniformly carburised raw steel. Heat treated items accounted for 25.9% (among quality products—for up to 60%). Note is taken of the high quality of the blacksmith welding work. More than half of the items, however, were made of poorly forged metal.

Over 80% of the forged pieces from the Tankeevka burial site were made to achieve improved operational characteristics by means of applying more rational technologies. The leading technological schemes in the production of quality items (axes, knives, hoes) included the forging of all-steel blanks (24.59%), shallow hardening (19.67%) and forging of fagotted blanks (18.03%). The quality items—axes, knives, hoes—bear the indication of the use of the steel plates welding-in and welding-on technology. The share of the heat treated items equals 50.81%, with the same among the quality products coming to 70.27%. The characteristic feature of the Tankeevka collection is a relatively substantial share of case-hardened items (19.67%).

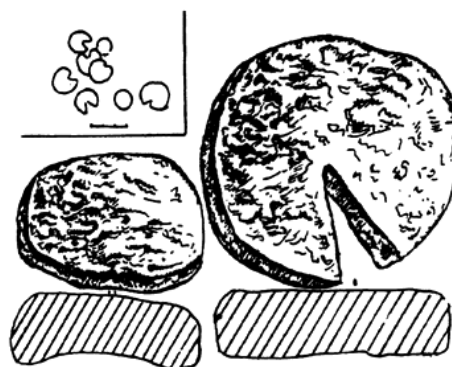
Requirements of the shaping state in ferrous metal products spurred the development of metallurgical and forging industries. Further mastering of iron ore deposits in the Middle Volga and the Lower Cis-Kama regions was taking place. The wide spread of bog and meadow ores, availability of forests and limestone outcrops provided iron production and forging processing with the required

raw materials: ore, fuel (charcoal) and fluxes. These factors created favorable conditions for the successful development of metallurgy and iron processing in Volga Bulgaria.

The remains of iron and steel works at many archaeological sites of Volga Bulgaria demonstrate extensive development of metallurgy both in urban and rural areas. Large iron work shops, which kept functioning throughout the life period of the towns, were noted in some centres (in Bulgar and especially in Bilyar). Such workshops, comprising metallurgical and forging furnaces, conducted manufacturing of reduced ball iron and its initial shingling and forging. Experimental physical modelling tests allow today to differentiate the products of various bloom processing stages identifying intermediate items (furnace bloom or sponge iron, wrought iron, commodity iron balls, semi-finished product, blank) [Rozanova and others, 1989].

There is a basis for speaking about the existence of industrial-scale iron production in some Bulgar settlements in the lower Kama river, where commodity iron balls are found stocked for sale. The commodity nature of the iron production was most probably characteristic for steel works of Bilyar, Bulgar, Murom townlet, Khulash and some other industrial centres.

Separation of iron production from metal processing took place already in the early pre-Mongol period. Volga Bulgaria metalworkers of the pre-Mongol period used pit type bloomeries with forced draught, which had their origins in the bloomery steppe (Bulgar) version designs of the Saltovo-Mayaki culture. However, already since the 10–11th centuries due to the technological progress and the search for new, more effective modes of production of scarcely available and highly demanded metal, there appeared signs of a transition to the above-ground bloomery furnaces with bodies in the shape of a cup turned upside down and with forced draught. An established type of a bell-shaped above-ground iron furnace with uniform parameters was set in the 12th to early 13th centuries. It was on its basis that the Volga Bulgar iron industry



Semi-finished iron blooms from the Starokuybyshevskoe IV ancient settlement (per E. Kazakov)

continued to develop further up till the Mongol invasion.

The development of above-ground furnaces mostly went towards the expansion of their work area. Enlargement of the overall dimensions of furnaces with vertical sidewalls and a dome cover allowed to obtain substantially larger quantities of iron bloom.

We can form an opinion about the design of iron furnaces in the pre-Mongol Volga Bulgaria on the basis of the data received from the archaeological researches of Bulgar, Bilyar, Murom and Khulash ancient towns and some rural settlements.

The 10–12th and late 12–early 14th centuries' metallurgical industrial zone has been researched and examined in the Bolgar ancient town [Efimova, 1958]. A concentration of furnaces has been registered in a certain area, indicating the industrial character of the iron production in that town. Early furnaces formed part of the industrial complexes of iron making workshops.

Bilyar, the Great City, was one of the biggest iron production centres in Volga Bulgaria of the pre-Mongol period. A special iron works district also existed here, known at present as 'Kuznechnyj Mar' (blacksmith's mound). An industrial complex consisting of one iron smelter and two forging furnaces was explored and studied at the archaeological site [Khalikov, 1976c]. The iron smelter of this complex belongs to the type of above-ground crucible bloomeries with a slag pit

and, apparently, force draught. It was made of adobes on the clay mortar basis.

A special iron manufacturing, as well as copper and bronze smelting district was discovered in the townlet of Murom [Vasilyev, Matveeva, 1986, p. 181]. A large scale iron bloom production also existed here, with iron smelters being of an above-ground design with dome covers.

In the ancient town of Khulash one bloomery was located next to the dwelling of the metalworker, who also performed blacksmith's work. It is worth noting that the household oven was at the same time used for heating forged items. Pieces of metal slag and bloom were discovered at its ruins [Kakhovsky, Smirnov, 1972, p. 36].

The remainder of the iron processing works was also examined at the Tigashevskoe archaeological site. A dwelling of a bronze smelter and a blacksmith was excavated here [Fedorov-Davydov, 1962].

Thus, already in the 10–11th centuries the iron bloom in Volga Bulgaria was produced in specialised workshops consisting of several proper bloomeries and a forging furnace. Commodity iron balls were the end product of these workshops. Such complex workshops comprising iron smelters and forging furnaces with the necessary equipment and tools (bellows, anvils, forge tongs, hammers, sledge-hammers, etc.) continued to exist in Volga Bulgaria up to the Mongol invasions.

In pre-Mongol Bulgaria iron was also produced at metal workshops of rural settlements. Thus, practically in all Bulgar ancient settlements of the lower reaches of the Kama river there are traces of local ferrous metallurgy in the form of iron slag clusters, and sometimes of iron bloom stocks [Kazakov, 1990, pp. 43–44]. The signs of the specialisation in the production of iron have been noted in respect of the population of the Starokuybyshev IV ancient settlement, where huge clusters of iron bloom (measuring 10 m by 5–7 m and up to 40 cm high), apparently stored for sale in the market, were discovered.

The working tool set of metallurgists included big size forge tongs, capable of grip-

ping red-hot bloom, a sledge hammer, a chisel for bloom chipping and an anvil.

The staff of metal workshops consisted of members of particular families engaged in the trade of iron production for the market needs. It is doubtful that skilled metal workers were interested in passing on their professional expertise outside their family group. The complex trade of metal production was taught and the work experience from father to sons was transferred within such groups.

There is a possibility that some metallurgical and blacksmith's workshops existed at the courts of Bulgar feudal lords, providing for the needs of their local economy and armed squads. Examples of such workshops may include the iron production works, which remainder was discovered on the territory of relatively small ancient towns of Tigashevskoe and Khulashskoe type.

In the pre-Mongol period there were significant changes in the development of blacksmithing production. Its role and importance increased significantly. The assortment of blacksmith products increased dramatically. Iron-craft ensured the development of the whole economy of the state, supplying all the necessary products of black metal to the population. The technological complexity of blacksmith production, as well as the need for special equipment and tooling, led to the separation of blacksmith production from metallurgy very early, probably in the early pre-Mongol period.

Blacksmiths became isolated as an independent production group of the population, primarily engaged in the processing of ferrous metals. The ever increasing demand for various types of blacksmith production stimulated a narrow specialisation among craftsmen of ferrous metal processing. We can talk about allocation of specialists in the manufacture of ploughshares and coulters for ploughs, as well as knives, scythes and sickles, axes, nails, locks, armor and so on. This is indicated by numerous series of forging products in archaeological materials, with obvious signs of external and technological standardisation. These include, first

of all, quality products—knives, axes, locks, weapons and some others.

Narrow specialisation is observed, in the first place, among the blacksmiths of urban centres, because they felt the pressure of market demand for their products. Specialisation led to increased productivity, as it limited the set of techniques in production and contributed to finding the most optimal ones.

However, specialisation did not mean the extinction of industrial groups such as all-round blacksmiths. Most blacksmiths, if it was necessary, could be engaged in the manufacture of various products. Predominantly rural craftsmen were forced to take on the production of all feasible orders and became all-round blacksmiths. Naturally, such a wide profile craftsmen could not compete in skill with the city smiths with specialisations. This can be traced quite clearly when comparing the products of rural and urban centres.

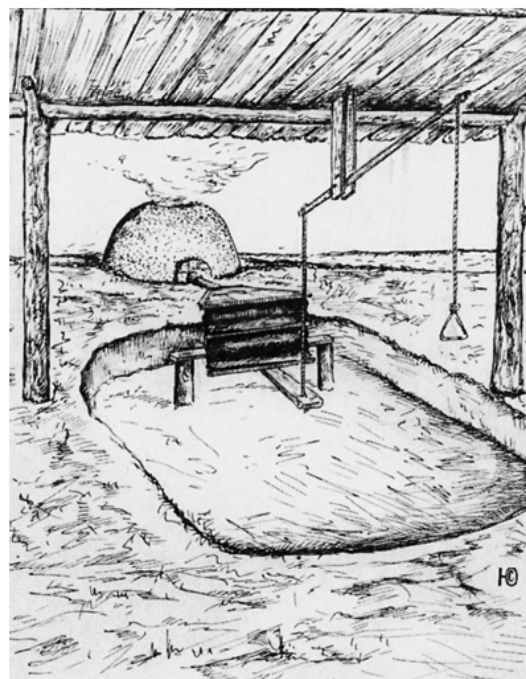
Our judgments about the technological features of forging production in pre-Mongol Bulgaria are made on the basis of 358 metallographic analyses of forging products, splitting into 54 categories. 61 subject of those belong to agricultural sites such as the lower Kama, and the remaining 297—to urban centres (Bilyar, Bulgar, Murom townlet).

8 technological schemes have been identified on the products of rural blacksmiths: 1) forging of iron bloom and evenly carburised raw steel, 2) cementation of the products, 3) forging of the all-steel blanks, 4) of the fagotted blanks, 5) three-layer package, 6) welding of steel into the iron base, 7) side welding of a steel plate to the iron base 8) welding of a V-shaped steel plate to the iron base.

Archaeological evidence suggests that cities were the main craft centres of metallurgy and iron processing. We turn now to the technology of forging products from the urban centres of Volga Bulgaria in separate categories.

On the 74 copies of metallographically studied knives 9 technological schemes have been identified.

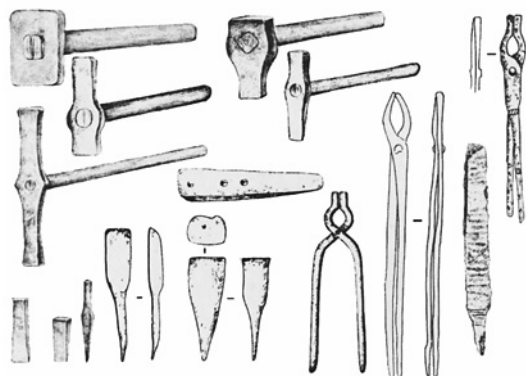
The total majority of knives from the urban sites was forged in the technologi-



Graphic reconstruction of an above-ground type metallurgical furnace of the pre-Mongol period  
Volga Bulgaria

cal scheme of welding of steel into an iron or fagotted base (33.8%). The second highest frequency of occurrence had the knives of forging technology of the all-steel blanks, as well as from a simple iron bloom and raw steel (by 12.16%). Less common are the knives, forged by the technology of three-layer package and butt-end welding (by 10.8%). The knives with the technological scheme of side welding made up 9.5%. Forging of knives of fagotted blanks in urban collections of pre-Mongol Bulgaria was 8.1%. The technological scheme of cementation of the finished products was detected on 4.05% of the knives. The rarest were the knives with the technological scheme of forging of the two-strip blanks (1.35%). Heat treatment was marked on 70.27% of the knives.

8 technological schemes were revealed on 26 axes of the urban centres of the pre-Mongol Bulgaria: 1) of iron bloom and raw steel (19.23%, 2) cementation of the working part of the blade (11.53%) and 3) of steel blanks (15.38%), 4) of fagotted metal (3.84%) 5)



Blacksmith and locksmith tools from Volga  
Bulgaria archaeological sites

three-layer package (11.53%), 6) welding of a steel plate (26.92%), 7) side welding (7.69%), 8) oblique side welding (3.84%). 60% of axes were heat-treated.

Adzes were made by 7 technological schemes. The basic processing methods is forging from solid steel blanks (36.4%). In second place was forging from fagotted blanks (27.3%). Less frequently adzes were made of iron bloom and soft raw steel (18.2%). Forging of adzes of the two-strip blanks is 18.2%. Forging technologies of three-layer package, welding of a steel strip on the basis of iron and cementation of the working part of the tool on the adzes of urban collections were 9.09% each. Heat treatment was undergone by 64.28% of the investigated adzes. Chisels, used for gouging various grooves, were made of simple bloomery iron, of all-steel blanks, by welding in of a steel blade and welding a steel strip. Scrapers needed in carpentry for removing bark from logs, were forged of steel and iron blanks. Drills for making circular holes in wooden structures were forged from fagotted metal and by welding a steel plate.

Agricultural tools were investigated by the example of 5 sickles, 7 scythes, 3 harrow points, 1 plough sock, 2 ploughshares and 10 adzes.

Sickles were forged of unevenly carburised raw steel, a steel blank, a fagotted blank and by technology of riveting a steel strip to an iron base. 3 of 5 sickles underwent

heat treatment. Scythes are made: of bloomery iron, with carburising of the blade, of fagotted blanks, by welding of a steel blade. 5 tools underwent heat treatment. On the plough cutters cementation and welding of steel plates on the iron base were identified. Harrow points were forged using cementation and batch metal. The cemented harrow points underwent heat treatment. The plough sock was forged of unevenly carburised raw steel with mild heat treatment. Ploughshares were forged of bloomery iron and by welding a V-shaped steel plate on the iron base with heat treatment. Adzes were forged by two technological schemes: of bloomery iron, soft raw steel and fagotted metal. Only 2 adzes were thermally treated.

Among the weapons 57 arrowheads, 7 spearheads, 2 triggers for crossbows, the lower part of a spear shaft, a mace and a tribol were metallographically investigated.

Arrowheads of the Volga Bulgars in the pre-Mongol period were forged by 6 technological schemes, mostly of bloomery iron and raw steel (73.7%), and of the all-steel blanks (12.28%). Almost all of them underwent heat treatment. Spearheads are made of bloomery iron and soft raw steel, by carburising of combat brink, of all-steel blanks. The lower part of a spear shaft was forged of soft raw steel. Combat skramasak knife was forged by welding technology. Tribol is a little tool with 4 sharp spears, used against cavalry; it was forged from raw steel. Battle mace, which is a hammer melee weapon, was forged of all-steel blanks with subsequent heat treatment. Crossbow triggers, indicating the use of this formidable ranged weapons by the Volga Bulgars, were forged from soft bloomery iron and raw steel followed by heat treatment.

Among horse equipment and horse breeding tools 2 stirrups, 1 ice spike and 1 groomer were investigated. Stirrups were forged from steel and non-uniformly carburised fagotted metal. At one stirrup heat treatment has preserved. The groomer, a tool for cleaning the horse's coat, was made from fagotted metal. The ice spike, serving to facilitate walking on slippery ice, was forged of bloomery iron.

One of the most difficult categories of forging and locksmith products of the Middle Ages was spring locks. The difficulty of their manufacturing was the need to connect a plurality of different parts in a single unit (the housing and the spring unit). At the same time various forging and locksmithing operations were applied; they required the use of special tools and equipment. The main difficulty was in skillful operating the forge hearth soldering of the parts of the lock with copper solder. All this required co-operation of at least two workers in the production process—a locksmith and an apprentice.

In Volga Bulgaria, the same types of locks have been distributed, as on the territory of Ancient Rus': cubic, cylindrical, mortise with a spring mechanism of varying complexity. However, some types of locks, such as the locks of type E (according to B. Kolchin), were more widespread in Volga Bulgaria than in Rus', which was the reason for their separation under the name of the 'Bulgarian' type locks. Cubic locks did not receive wide distribution on the territory of Volga Bulgaria.

Among the Bulgarian locks a certain standardisation of products was observed, which, along with evidence of the existence of specialised lock workshops (in Bilyar and the Murom townlet) suggests allocating lock manufacturing industry in particular branch of market-oriented forging and plumbing craft. Bulgarian locks of the pre-Mongol period became the basis for the evolution of the locks of the Golden Horde period in Volga Bulgaria.

A comparison of the technologies of blacksmith production from urban and rural sites suggests quite a marked difference in their quality, which gives grounds to speak about a higher level of urban forging industry compared to agricultural. There are grounds to say that the city smiths were provided with a high quality raw material (specially prepared steel). At the same time there is a noticeable difference in the skill level of the capital city smiths of Bilyar and peripheral smiths of the Murom townlet. The blacksmiths of Bilyar were of a higher skill level.

Summarising the research of forging production of Volga Bulgaria of pre-Mongol period, we note that among technological methods aiming to improve the performance of blacksmith products, the following have been identified: 1) cementation, 2) all-steel products, 3) fagotted metal, 4) welding of steel blade 5) V-shaped welding 6) oblique side welding, 7), frontal welding, 8) two-strip welding of steel and iron strips, 9) three-layer package. Among these technologies the leading place is taken by forging entirely from steel and welding of steel blade into an iron of fagotted blank. They are: 13.8%—all-steel and 13.28% welding of a steel blade, which in the pre-Mongolian period became one of the leading technological methods of manufacturing high-quality products. This scheme had probably a common Bulgar character, as it is evidenced by its uniform distribution in the collections of urban and rural sites: 12.4% in rural sites, 11.4% in Murom townlet and 14.7% in Bilyar. Products of fagotted metal in total amounted to 10.14% in the pre-Mongol collections. More actively forging of fagotted metal was used by the smiths of urban centres (10.1% in the Murom townlet, 10.6% in Bilyar); less actively—by the rural blacksmiths (1.55%). Technological scheme of the three-layer package in the pre-Mongol Bulgaria was 4.8% total, and was distributed among various sites as follows: 6.2% in rural sites, 1.2% in the Murom townlet and 5.5% in Bilyar. The three-layer package was not a traditional technology of blacksmith in Volga Bulgaria, and its presence in the pre-Mongol collections, perhaps, is the result of trade contacts with the Cis-Kama area and the Northern Rus', where this technology has occupied a significant place at the beginning of the 10th century. The technological scheme of the side oblique welding of a steel strip on an iron base in the pre-Mongol period is spreading on agricultural sites (7.75%), as well as in the urban centres (5% in the Murom townlet, 7.54% in Bilyar). In total, this technological scheme was 5.35%. The technological scheme of the V-shaped welding was 0.84% in total. In the collections from the settlements the scheme amounted to

1.55%, in Bilyar—0.92%, and it was not recorded at all in the townlet of Murom. Frontal welding was marked on 3.1% of products in total. This technology is not marked on the products of the rural sites. In the Murom townlet it is marked on 6.3% of products and in Bilyar—on 2.7%. Forging from two-strip blanks in pre-Mongol period was not widespread. It was noted in the Bilyar collection (0.46%), amounting to a total of 0.84% in pre-Mongol collections.

Heat treatment was marked on 40.3% of the products: rural monuments—35.6%, the

Murom townlet—37.9% and Bilyar—43.7%. In the capital craft centre—Bilyar—the amount of heat-treated products was larger than in the peripheral Murom townlet and rural sites. This indicates a higher level of development of forging in the metropolitan centre—the city of Bilyar compared to the peripheral and rural handicraft centres. In most cases, the blacksmiths of Volga Bulgaria of pre-Mongol period successfully coped with the forge welding operation.

## 2. Non-ferrous Metal Working

*Sergey Kuz'minykh, Yury Semykin*

Among the industries of the Volga Bulgars throughout all of history, non-ferrous metalworking played an important role. Absolutely different products were produced of copper and bronze in Volga Bulgaria decorations, domestic and religious goods, weapon details, crockery, and etc. Especially important within jewellery production were non-ferrous metals. The products of non-ferrous metalworking, along with silver-working and gold-blacksmithing, became an important part of Bulgar commerce. The products of Bulgar export travelled to many lands and countries, but were especially popular in the north (primarily jewellery and decorations); traces of Bulgar trading stations are also known here [Belavin, 2001; Khuzin, 2001, pp. 237–252].

It is known that copper metalworking both in antiquity and in the Middle Ages was developed in mining and smelting districts where there was an appropriate mineral base, including fuel and fluxes. The main trans-Eurasian copper and ligature trade routes went, first of all, into the regions with highly developed metalworking. One such region of the Middle Ages, of course, was Volga Bulgaria. Specialised centres for producing various goods from non-ferrous and precious metals had already developed in early Vol-

ga Bulgaria [Kazakov, 1991, pp. 159–162]. However, non-ferrous metalworking underwent large-scale development only in the pre-Mongol period, especially with the formation of the Volga and Kama trade routes. The objects themselves from metallurgic and metalworking production of the early Bulgar period within the territory of Volga Bulgaria are not known. At the same time, in burial sites of nomadic groups of early Volga Bulgaria (Bolshetarkhansky, Tankeevsky, Tetyushsky etc.), a vast number of non-ferrous metal goods is concentrated. These are different decorations, parts of a costume and horse harness, domestic and household items, and weapons. The representatives of the Finno-Ugric ethnic groups, which penetrated the Middle Volga region from the 9th century and entered into the population of early Volga Bulgaria, had especially many goods of non-ferrous metals.

One may suppose that the nomadic population of Volga Bulgaria received the majority of various bronze decorations from stationary metalworking centres of Eastern Europe active at that time, primarily from workshops of the Khazar Khaganate and the Cis-Kama region. At the same time, blacksmiths and smelters, who laid the foundations of local



metalworking, were likely part of nomadic groups of early Volga Bulgaria.

The main raw material of non-ferrous metallurgy and metalworking among the Volga Bulgars was copper, but its sources remain undiscovered.

In antiquity—that is, during the period of early metal and the early Iron Age, the production of copper in the Uralic mining and smelting district was concentrated, as is well known, in two mining and smelting centres—in the Trans-Ural and Cis-Ural regions [Chernykh, 1970; Kuzminykh, Agapov, 1989]. Prospectors of the 17–19th centuries, discovering fields and ore deposits, were guided solely by traces of ancient developments, which were called 'of the Chud' (in the Cis-Kama region and in the Middle Urals) and 'of the Horde' (in the Cis-Uralic steppe). The fact, that the 'Chud' and 'Horde' mines were developed in antiquity was proved by the archaeological study of mines, and also of the many settlements of miners and metallurgists located on them, containing remains of copper smelters together with examples of ores, slag, semi-finished products, goods and their scrap. Among them, the monuments of the Kargalinsky copper and mining centre in the Southern Cis-Urals are especially marked [Chernykh, 1997].

The Ural despoits are well-studied from a geological and geochemical standpoint. They are subdivided into two types. The first—the Ural deposits themselves—is related first of all to the original rocks of the Ural mining country, especially along the eastern area of the Tagil-Magnitogorsk caving. The second type—copper sandstones and shales of the Cis-Ural region ore province. That type of sedimentary desposit occupies vast spaces in the basins of Kama, Vyatka, Belaya, Ika, and the middle flow of the Ural river [Gorozhanin et al, 2002, Fig. 1:1]. Smelting cooper sandstones resulted in especially 'pure' copper resembling modern electrolytic copper. Also 'pure' copper was mainly smelted from of the original Ural despoits, but with another geochemical set of admixtures. As a result of years of spectrum-analytical studies of the natural methods laboratories at the Institute

of Archaeology RAS, both coppers were discovered in the majority of the Volga-Ural archaeological cultures of the early metal era and the early Iron Age [Kuzminykh, Agapov, 1989, Fig. 1–7].

Limited spectrum analyses of metal of the Middle Volga Region and the Cis-Urals of the medieval period made it possible to identify goods of 'pure' copper, but the link between them with the copper sandstones or the original Ural deposits is still provisional. However, T. Khlebnikova [1996, p. 280] assumed that mineral sources of the Bulgar copper localised in the Trans-Urals (even supply craft centres of Volga Bulgaria with copper ore from the Urals could be), but at the same time, the usage of the local Cis-Ural sources of raw minerals—copper sandstones—is not excluded. This last argument will be used many times as proof of the fact that Volga Bulgaria had a significant copper ore base [Polyakova, 1996, pp. 154–156; Rudenko, 2000a, p. 1214; Eniosova et al, 2005].

The fields of copper sandstones within the territory of Volga Bulgaria are inherent to its north-east and east boundary—there is Ik-Bugulma-Belebeevsk height along the line of Vyatka-Zay, and farther to Common Syrt [Gorozhanin et al, 2002, Fig. 1:1]. Among copper minerals, carbonates and oxides predominate—malachite, mineral blue, and copper; much rarer minerals are sulphides (chalcopyrit, chalcosine, couvelline), silicates (chrizcolla) and free elements (native copper). Copper mineralisation have a bent for red and gray sandstones and red-brown marls. The most productive outputs in that area were found on the Kargalinsky mineral margin near Orenburg, but they belong to the era of early metal and to the 18–19th centuries [Chernykh, 1997].

We are entitled to assume that some deposits of this district could be developed during the Middle Ages, but there is still not any proof of this theory. Considering the great demand and metal consumption of commercial copper on the Bulgar market, its procurement should have been quite significant, and so would the scope of mining activity in this copper area. However, large-scale mining

activity is impossible without the appropriate infrastructure: settlements of miners and metallurgists, manufacturing sites for sorting and primary processing of ore, etc. However, objects of such a type were not discovered in this area. When transporting ore to the central regions of the country and smelting copper in urban and rural workshops, we would encounter a rather noticeable number of metallurgic, but not only smelting and firing furnaces. With rare exceptions, those objects that are given in the literature as metallurgical ones, belong to the last ones (see below). In addition, smelting copper was impossible without a great number of charcoal and fluxes which also needed to be supplied. Burning charcoal in the central forest steppe regions of Bulgaria and in copper ore zone in the north-east of the country could be accomplished on quite a limited scope. Otherwise, sooner or later, it would have led to an ecological disaster, akin to that observed in the Southern Cis-Urals in the 18–19th centuries [Chernykh, 1997, pp. 113–119].

In general, the production of copper in Volga Bulgaria (if it indeed took place) hardly was able to satisfy a market with a sufficient volume of metal. Bulgar metalworking was mainly based on imported commercial copper. Moreover, the supply lines went seemingly not from the Trans-Urals, but from the Upper and Middle Cis-Kama region, primarily from the craft centres of the Rodanov culture. In the monuments of this culture, copper smelters with finds of ore (copper and sandstones) and metallurgic slag, special rammed grounds of clay and a small river pebble were studied, on which the concentration and decomposition of ore for smelting took place [Belavin, 1987]. The Rodanov miners and metallurgists were able to supply Volga Bulgaria not only with ore concentrate, but above all, with commercial copper. In particular, casting molds for moulding copper bars in the form of sticks—the raw material for jewellery—were found in the ancient towns of Anyushkar and Rojdestvensky [Belavin, 2001, p. 145]. Such bars were discovered in many urban and rural workshops of Volga

Bulgaria. In the taiga Cis-Kama region, there was no need for wood for burning charcoal. Pits with charcoal here are an integral part of the metallurgical and blacksmith complexes [Ibid., p. 142].

The process of metallurgical redistribution of copper, as well as iron, was complex, multi-stage, and demanded a number of successive operations. Among them—mining copper ore; their concentrating; producing a metallurgic forge and air bellows; burning fuel—charcoal; warming a forge and laying a charge mixture; realising own metallurgic process, including adding gradually burning charcoal as appropriate; accomplishing a metallurgic process, extracting a bar of reconstructed copper and removing slag from a lower part of forge.

The forges found in Bulgarian monuments and considered to be metal forges by researchers, do not fully match this characteristic. Objects, which are concerned with smelting copper from ore, usually are saturated with finds of ore and, especially, of slag. In particular, these findings (along with technical heating structures) document the traces of iron production, and they are abundant in the Bulgarian monuments. Clusters and even single pieces of copper ore and copper slag, on the contrary, are extremely rare in them. Apparently, those technical heating structures, which appear metallurgic, are forges and smelting pits for refining copper.

Blister copper came in considerable amount in Volga Bulgaria. In particular, in different parts of the Bilyar ancient town, bars of copper in the form of a pastille weighing up to 3 kg were found [Khuzin, 2001, p. 225]. In the Bulgarian ancient town, bars of a quadrangular outline with the bulging surface that served as semi-finished products for miners and casters were found; there are also casting moulds for their casting here [Polyakova, 1996, pp. 156–157]. Blister copper required further purification (refining) in an oxidising environment. After that operation, the metal was released from slag and other unnecessary admixtures. Archaeologists often called these scorified re-

mains metallurgical slag. Only after fining did the copper become pure and malleable, suitable for forging and moulding, and also for preparing alloys. It should be noted that in the examples of the copper Bulgar vessels studied using spectral and metallographic analyses, the concentration of non-metal inclusions is pronounced [Khlebnikova, 1996, pp. 278, 284; Eniosova et al, 2005], proving that the purifying of the initial raw material was insufficient.

The technology of non-ferrous and ferrous metallurgy and metalworking of copper and bronze of the Volga Bulgars based on the usage of charcoal as fuel. Pits for storing coal are not rare in Bulgar cities and settlements [Khuzin, Nigamayev, 1999, p. 129].

The chemical composition of non-ferrous and precious metals of Volga Bulgaria has been insufficiently studied, but the available information [Khlebnikova, 1964; 1996; Valiullina, 2004a; 2004b; Eniosova et al, 2005] gives us a rough idea of the main alloy recipes. The analytic sample included goods of monuments of different periods: Tankeevsky and Izmersky XII burial sites, Izmerskoe, Laishevskoe, Semenovskoe, Balynguzskoe III (Toretskoe) ancient settlements, Bulgar, Bilyar, Grokhansky ancient towns, and others. The determined percentage of alloys in the sample is quite provisional: their true correlation will be determined only during mass analytical series.

Bulgarian blacksmiths, jewellers, casters had several recipes for alloys. The leading one was tin-lead and tin bronze (more than 40% of the sample products) [Eniosova et al, 2005, Table 1.]. The main alloying admixtures—tin and lead. Within low-alloyed alloys, their content is from one to a several percent, in high-alloyed ones, they can achieve 40% of one or another element.

A quarter of the studied sample is goods of silver, including billons. Analytical findings say about predominance among them of things of quite a high test (more than 80%) [Valiullina, Khrumchenkova, 2001, p. 270], frequently alloyed only by 'pure' copper. It is mainly a decoration with a complex design using minting, carving, and encrustation, and

also silver bars, which are widespread in the monuments of Volga Bulgaria [Khuzin, 2001, p. 225]. Such products and bars with a high silver content (83–98%), and also copper (1.2–1.5%) [Vinnichek, 2000, p. 14; Belorybkin, 2001, p. 63] were primarily an important part of the Bulgar import.

About a third of the sample falls under other types of alloys: multicomponent bronze (in which tin, lead, zinc, rarer—arsenic and antimony—are mandatory base alloys), different sorts of brass and tombac (a base metal is zinc), 'pure' copper, and also easily melted metals (tin, lead) or alloys on their basis [Eniosova et al, 2005, Table 1].

The traditions of using multicomponent alloys originate from the early metal period, but they became especially widespread in the Middle Ages, including in Volga Bulgaria, and then in the Golden Horde. 'Pure' copper was a base for the majority of alloys, but its significant volume was used in copper smithing, mainly for producing vessels. Copper vessels of Bulgarian production have been found far from Volga Bulgaria in large numbers [Rudenko, 2000a]. Perhaps, it was also one of the forms of importing raw copper, but more expensive than the removal of metal in bars or semi-finished products.

To all appearances, Bulgarian craftsmen did not need the main base metals—tin, lead, zinc—or alloys with the high content of these elements used as base metals. In ancient towns and ancient settlements, there are the numerous examples of bars and pieces of tin and lead, but more often—the products of a lead-tin alloy. So-called 'plummet seals', which can be found on the monuments of all the periods of Volga Bulgaria, draw attention. Casting moulds for their moulding are known in the Bolgar ancient town, Chemodanovskoe ancient settlement, and other monuments [Polyakova, 1996, p. 158; Vinnichek, 2000, p. 14]. It is believed that they were used in the non-monetary period in a commodity-money circulation. With a weight system oriented to a mithqal at 4.095 g, the finds of lead tin bars are also linked [Belorybkin 2001, p. 65]. However, the traces of felling both 'weights', and bars, say that they were

used not only as a money equivalent, but in metalworking as well.

Within the territory of the Volga-Kama region, there is no any mineral source of lead, tin, zinc, and also precious metals—silver and gold. Without any doubt, these metals arrived in Volga Bulgaria through the Trans-Eurasian trading routes. In particular, in the mineralogical treatise of al-Qashani of 1301 Volga Bulgaria is not observed as the main mediator in tin trading between the Far East and countries of the Near East and the Middle East [Eniosova et al, 2005].

T. Khlebnikova [1996, p. 280] supposed that lead and zinc ore came into the Volga-Kama region from the Urals, and tin minerals—from Eastern Kazakhstan. But according to the archaeological and geological information, the Ural mineral sources of lead and zinc, which were available for elaborations in antiquity and the Middle Ages, are unlikely. Placers and primary fields of tin in the Kalbinskiy and Narymsky ridges in the Rudny Altai were developed in the early metal period and early Iron Age. But by the 3rd–1st centuries BC in the Rudny Altai, according to the archaeological information [Chernikov, 1960, pp. 118–136, 172–178; Rozen, 1983, pp. 19–30], the extraction of tin, copper and, probably, gold, ceased. More likely are supplies to Volga Bulgaria of tin, lead, silver and gold from Middle Asia, where in the Middle Ages, a sharp increase of the extraction of these minerals is observed [Buryakov, 1974; Bubnova, 1975; Islamov, 1976; Novikov, Radililovsky, 1990]. Being on the crossroads of medieval trade routes, Volga Bulgaria had established supply lines of these metals seemingly from other producing centres as well.

According to archaeological information, technical heating structures used by the Volga Bulgars in non-ferrous metallurgy and metalworking were subdivided into two types: smelting pits and forges. They were found in Bulgar, Bilyar, Murom townlet, Tigashev, and in a number of other monuments.

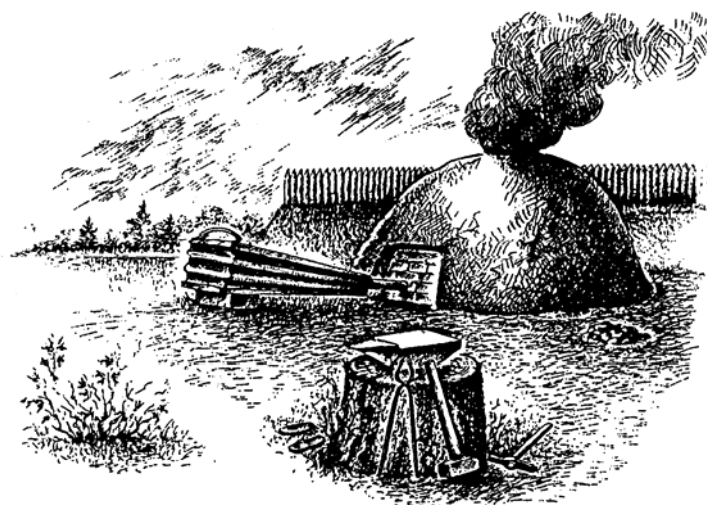
The forges with a round and oval foundation had a ground-based construction. They were formed of clay and raw brick which was

laid on a clay solution. The foundations of smelting pits were also daubed with it. Some catalan forges were used for melting and smelting copper as well as for producing iron. The finds of fragments of ceramic nozzles near them indicated artificial air supply into the forge cavities. The same bellows as in iron-producing workshops were used.

In the Murom townlet, the copper-smelting complex of the pre-Mongol period of two forges, four furnaces and several pits, was investigated. In the upper part of the half-spherical forges (165x120x100 cm), there was the hole for loading a bowl or vessel with blister copper and charcoal. They were assembled of tabular stones or fragments of bricks and stones on a clay solution. A stove and pit (with the burnt walls under the first forge) were filled with ashes and coal. In a central part of the second forge, the small hole was preserved for fixing a nozzle. It is noteworthy that near forges, there were rectangular constructions—peculiar braziers formed of adobe bricks or clay. They were used for burning and supporting the constant temperature of a smelted metal in crucibles during moulding, for that, there were special hollows or cups in them [Matveeva, 1973, pp. 11–13].

In 1967–1968, in the inner city of Bilyar, the estate of the metal craftsmen was studied (Excavation V). Here, together with residential houses, a bathhouse and a store of spherical cones, there was a site of a catalan forge and two complexes of workshops with the remains of blacksmith forges. A. Khalikov [1976, p. 74] supposed that the workshops specialised in cylinder locks. F. Khuzin [2001, p. 224] does not exclude (taking into account the finds of moulds and numerous crucibles) that non-ferrous metal processing was also carried out here.

It was previously thought that some of these forges were also used for primary copper production. [CB, 1985, p. 84]. The basis for this conclusion was the pieces of coked mass with a layer of ground copper ore and charcoal considered as the rest of fusion mixture from copper-melting kilns. However, another purpose of the fusion mixture has not



Reconstruction of a copper smelting furnace from the Murom townlet excavations

been ruled out. Placed in a container or a bowl of big volume, it could be that reducing environment, where all the details of iron locks are fused with copper, and, moreover, there was a copper coating to prevent corrosion (while fluxes could also be used). The metallographic analyses of the locks from Bilyar revealed evident traces of their fusion with copper; many of the locks contain traces of copper coating.

A relatively small copper-melting forge was found outside the internal fortifications of Bilyar ancient town (Excavation XV); near the forge there were pieces of crucible slag [Khalikov, 1976, p. 117].

In Bulgar, the remnants of technical heating structures are represented by smelting pits (60–80x20–30cm) and forges, and also concentrated in some points of the ancient town. In addition, they are well-studied in the northern part near the administrative centre (including the pre-Mongol period), and also on the western edge of the town near Lake Gollandskoye [Polyakova, 1996, p. 155]. According to the chemical analyses (copper oxide—up to 23%), the slags found in smelting pits and forges were formed not as a result of metallurgic limiting line but during black copper refining or its crucible fusion [Ibid., pp. 155–157]. A part of a thick-walled crucible with stuck slag was found directly in one

of smelting pits (Excavation XVIII, 1949) together with coal and copper ingots. It is also significant that near these pits and forges, there were finds of dozens of stone and clay moulds, a great number of oxidised and deformed copper and bronze objects and their scrap, semi-finished articles, copper scissels and wires [Ibid., pp. 156–158].

The tools of Bulgar casters consisted of ceramic and metal casting forms, crucibles of different volumes, moulds, pliers and pincers for clamping crucibles during their warming in forges and flowing melted metal in casting forms and moulds. Relatively small balanced weights were used to weigh alloying metals.

Massive casting forms placed in smelting and blacksmith forges were, first of all, used to refine black copper. Smaller forms served for casting ingots of semi-finished articles. In the townlet of Murom, near the smelting forges, were finds of the remnants of ceramic and iron casting forms, the latter ones were deformed due to overheating.

Among the tools and special equipment of foundry and jewellery production by the Volga Bulgars, clay crucibles are the most frequent among the discoveries. An especially big series was revealed in the ancient town of Bilyar (over 200 units), notably over 100 remnants and entire crucibles were found in the metallurgic district (Excavation V)

[Khalikov, 1976, p. 74]. Crucibles found on the sites related to glass-making and pottery, could be used in production, in particular, to make dyes for glass and glazing. At the fracture point, crucible pieces are typically black. The external surface is porous, slagged, glass-like, dark grey, sometimes with copper drops. There were coal pieces stuck to the bottoms of some of them. A lot of unbroken crucibles have been found with the snouts for pouring metal into casting forms. Pouring copper into small forms was likely to be carried out directly from crucibles. The so-called ladles were not found in Bilyar.

The crucibles of the Bilyar ancient towns are of three types. Type 1, the most frequent—sub-cylindrical, with a rounded bottom, 2.7–8.2 cm in height, and with wall thickness of 0.1–0.6 cm. Its variations are crucibles with widening walls (Type 1a) and walls narrowing at the top (Type 1b). On the Bulgar archaeological site, there were crucibles predominantly of Type 1a [Polyakova, 1996, pp. 159–160]. Type 2—cup-shaped, rare. Type 3—scaphoid; known from the ancient settlements on the Bilyar suburb [Begovatov, 2001, Fig. 4:1]. Sub-cylindrical crucibles are especially typical of the Middle Ages. Air access to the melted metal was reduced to a minimum, which slowed down corrosion. Cup-shaped and scaphoid crucibles were widespread mainly at the monuments of earlier periods, when metal smelting took place over open fires.

The Bulgar casters thinned up copper and bronze in crucibles in blacksmith forge on charcoal by forced air. Clay air applicators are known in the materials of the Bilyar archaeological site and other Bulgar monuments.

Special crucible pincers with long handles were used for clamping crucibles. Long pincers with a special bend of bites to embrace rounded walls of crucibles.

The volume of melted copper in the Bilyar crucibles is between 25g and 670g in case of the total filling of a crucible's working volume. The sizes of the crucibles indicate their specialised purpose. Smaller ones were

used in jewellery for casting decorations; bigger ones were used for pouring bronze into several forms at the same time, or for casting more metal-heavy articles.

Most of the Bulgar articles are from non-ferrous metals, especially jewellery, made by pouring metal into stone casting forms. Their local production is confirmed by the finds of blanks, especially numerous among the materials of the Bilyar and Bulgar archaeological sites.

Analysis of the forms allows to reconstruct not only the casting technology but also gives a weight to the conclusion that among the Volga Bulgar craftsmen there was a specific type of stonecutters—cutters of casting forms. This specialisation is testified by the complexity and exceptional delicacy of the patching of some stone casting forms from the Bulgar archaeological collections. Casting form cutters must have had a high skills for working with stone, to know the qualities of different stones, and to possess special tools at their disposal—well-edged and tempered steel nippers. Moreover, casting form cutters were likely to have a subtle artistic taste. The cutters who carried out the orders of the casters and jewellers were often trendsetters for articles made from non-ferrous metals, as they were the first to create the experimental accessory for further productions of articles. Customers definitely oriented them in terms of following certain technological features in the process of developing forms.

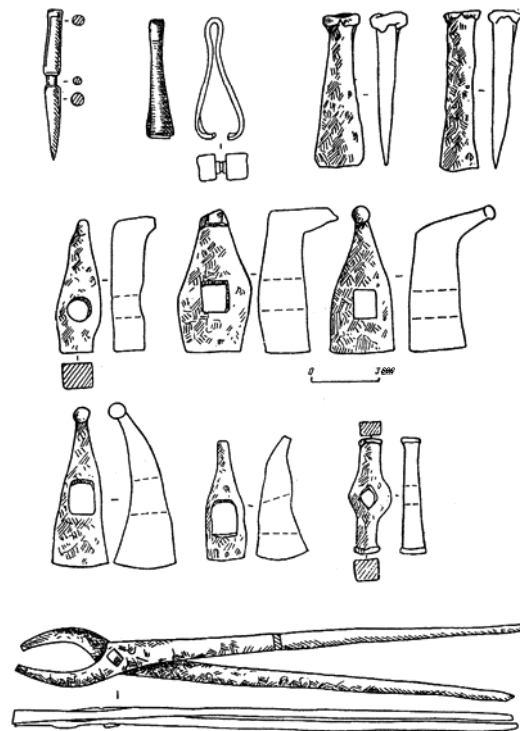
For studying Volga Bulgar casting and jewellery production, the casting forms from the biggest cities of Volga Bulgaria—Bilyar and Bulgar—are important. In the first city, there were over 30 casting forms excavated [Khuzin, 2001, p. 227]; in the second—over 60, mainly from the Golden Horde period [Polyakova, 1996, p. 161]. Different types of stone and clay were the material used to produce them. On the Bulgar archaeological site, casting forms from soft rocks, limestone and slate are predominant (54 units). Meanwhile, four casting forms [Polyakova, 1996, Fig. 55: 2; 56: 2; 57: 6; 58: 6] are carved from the remnants of pot stone containers imported

from Khwarezm. Ceramic forms in Bulgar are not numerous (8 items), and not found in Bilyar at all. All the casting forms of the Bilyar archaeological site are carved from slate, limestone, tuff and shiver [CB, 1985, p. 97].

The peculiarity of the forms from the latest stone types from Bilyar is the absence of the canal on them for fume extraction ('vented steam'). It appears that the craftsmen—cutters and casters—knew about gas permeable features of this stone type. At the same time, pouring into closed forms without 'vented steams' was quite complicated and could end up producing articles with defects. They were caused by air bubbles that had not been able to leave the internal space of the negatives of the forms.

By construction, the Bulgar casting forms are closed, multi-disposable, usually with the traces of the effects of high temperatures. All the shutters are dismountable, relatively thin, usually subrectangular and subsquare, consisting of two, three, four and more matrices and covers. The majority is composed of matrices (that is shutters with negatives), a lesser part is made up of matrices and covers. On the wide surfaces of matrices there is usually one negative carved, sometimes 2–3 negatives placed for casting decorations of small sizes. Narrow lateral surfaces were used to formate negatives, mainly on the forms of battery construction (with three or more shutters).

The absence of feed-heads and holes for pins on matrices with 2–3 negatives gave a ground to the assumption that there were open forms and that metal was poured precisely in the nests of horizontally-lying shutters [Polyakova, 1996, p. 162; Khuzin, 2001, p. 227]. There are a lot of similar examples in ethnography. At the same time, they usually cast pro-formas of the plates that required further blacksmith processing. Casting small articles of jewellery in open forms was not productive. At least, it is not possible to produce high-quality articles by this method. The gating system could actually be joined to the negatives in the covers or to the nests of doubled shutters. In addition, it is quite possible that some of the shutters were simply not

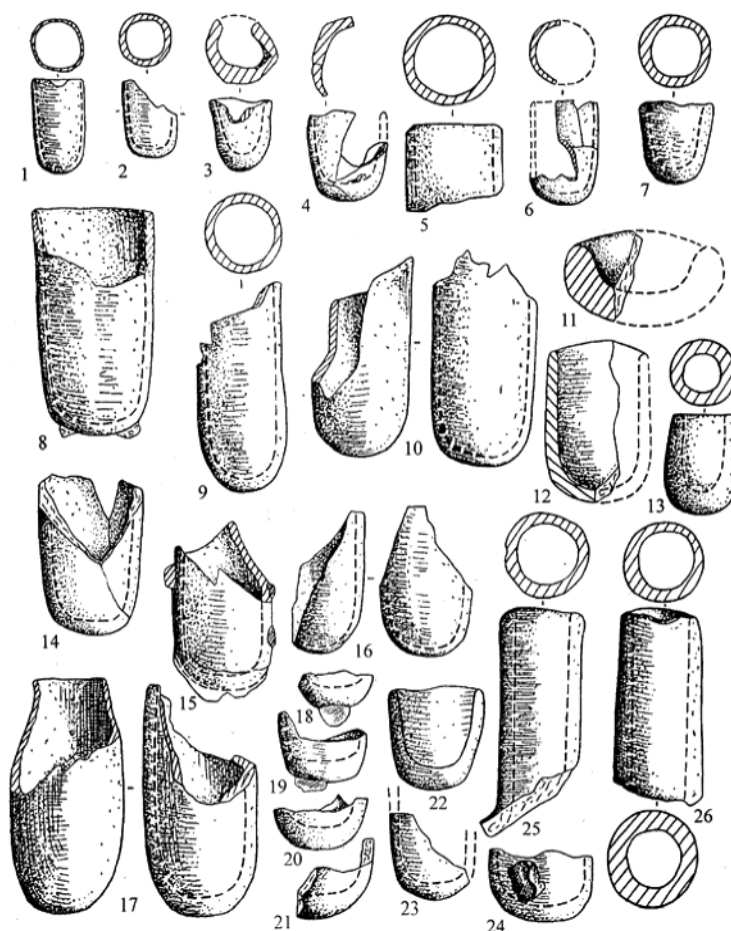


Blacksmith and jeweller tools and instruments from the Bilyar site

finished by a cutter or thrown away as being defective during carving the negatives (most of these forms do not have traces of high temperature use).

Combining the two-shutter and battery forms demanded extreme precision. It was necessary to combine gating canals coming out to the end of the shutters, and gating nests, to carve 'vented steams', to bore the holes for a permanent fixation of all the parts of the forms during casting with the help of metal pins, nails or brackets. The shutters without the holes for pins could be fixed in special nests made from stone, clay or wood, as well as with the help of braces or metal yokes.

Two-shuttered and battery forms could be used simultaneously to cast a series of flat, high-volume and hollow objects of high quality with a relief design, with the imitation of granulation and filigree. In such forms, there could be hollow loops or joints with open holes for fixation with the parts of the same object or other articles. Of interest within this is the casting form with negatives of movable



Earthen crucibles (1–24) and air supply tuyeres (25–26) from the Bilyar archaeological site

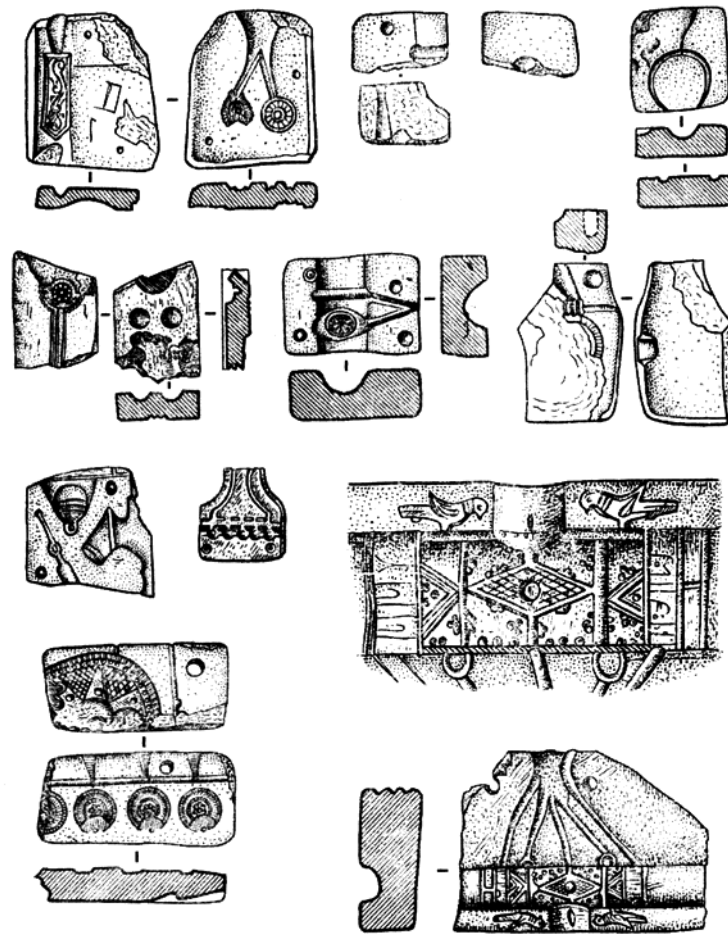
rectangular ornamented plate bracelets, with loops on all the four sides of the bar. Casting was carried out with the help of flat covers. The mouths of three gating canals are directed at one of the narrow ends, the four—at the opposite side. It implies that at least three bracelets could be cast at the same time. The matrices of this type helped in mass-producing jewellery and were definitely valuable for casters.

Casting plate-like bracelets that consisted of several rectangular ornamented plates made for certain difficulties. The main one was in creating hollow bars with holes for setting up arbours. Hollow bars were made by setting up in the forms round narrow cores made from fire-resistant material,

equal in diameter to the metal arbours connecting separate plates of the bracelet. We suppose that such arbours are cut from soft stone such as glauconite. The small size of arbours as well as their fragility meant using the cores only once in the casting process. After casting, the arbours were broken to release the holes. The craftsman had to have a stock of them for the entire period of using the form.

In the collection of Bulgar monuments, there are cast articles that could be made only with the help of poly-constituent casting forms. Among them are headwear finials from the collection of the Bulgar site. This object is a many-sided flat ornamented socket, in the centre of which there is a high





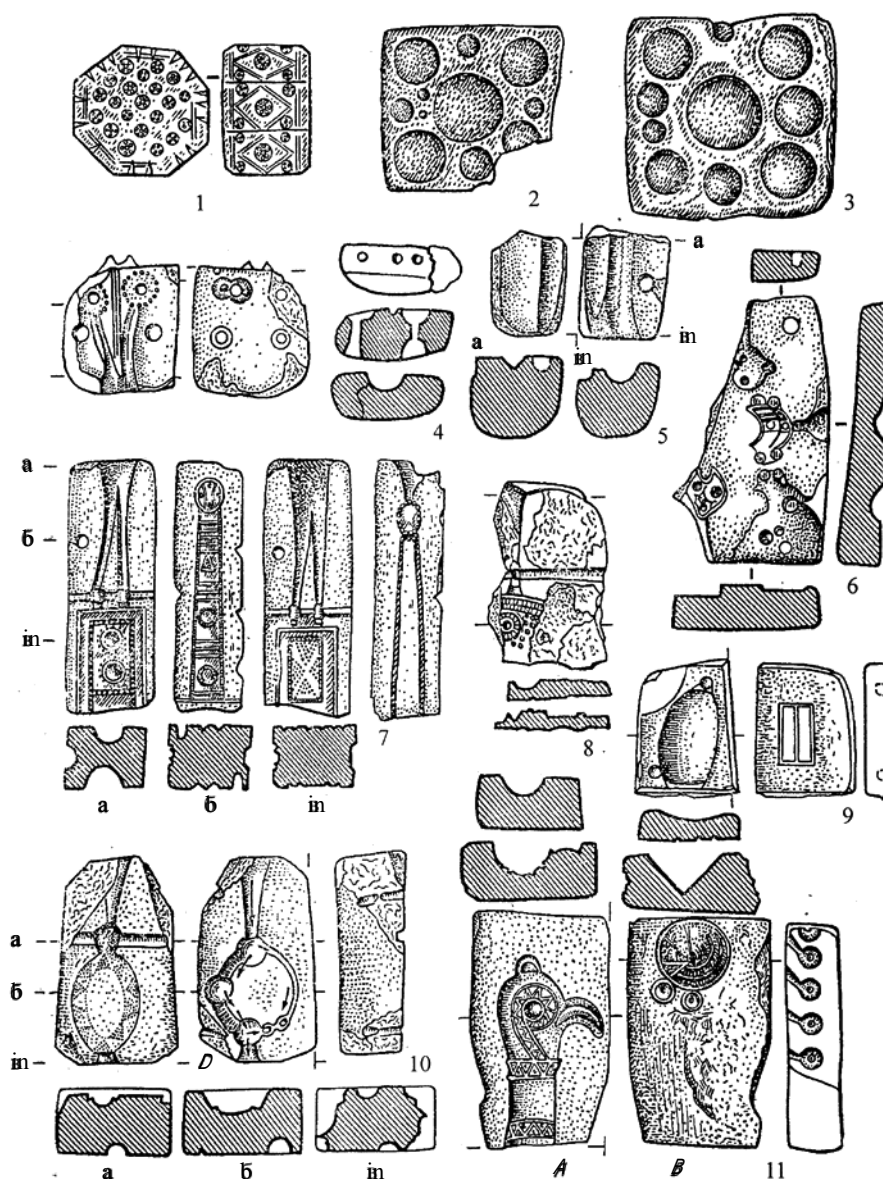
Stone casting moulds from Bilyar

plug with a rounded flare. In Bulgar, there are also parts of stone casting forms where the similar finials were cast. In the working position, they should have three joining matrices.

Notable among the casting forms of Bilyar and Bulgar are the matrices implying that the Bulgar casters and jewellers were acquainted with a casting technology called 'outsplashing' during the pre-Mongol period [CB, 1985, pp. 91–94; Polyakova, 1996, p. 163]. They are used to cast, first of all, temporal three-bead rings with ornamentation of granulation or filigree. According to B. Rybakov [1948, p. 270], 'imitating forms were aimed at reproducing in a simple way such subtle jewel techniques as embossing, granulation and filigree, demanding a great deal of long and

thorough work over each article.' Researchers of old Russian crafts date the invention of imitating casting forms to the 12th century [Ibid., p. 278; Ryndina, 1963, p. 260]. During the pre-Mongol period, the 'outsplashing' casting technology was employed also in Volga Bulgar.

The 'outsplashing' casting is a specific technology, in the process of which a melted metal excess was rapidly eliminated from the form. This technology demanded two gating canals of optimal size and shape. The length of the entrance canal had to be larger than that of the exit canal. N. Ryndina [1963, pp. 260–261] notes that during the 'outsplashing' casting, the main difficulty is in choosing the moment of removing the melted metal from the form while it is not yet hard. It was also



Metal matrices (1–3) and stone casting moulds (4–11) from Bilyar

essential to take into account the metal melting temperature. The higher it was, the faster the metal hardened. Holding metal in the forms had to be minimal, but long enough for hollow casting to be formed. It was empirically determined by the jewellery caster and the size of feed-heads directly depended on this circumstance. In accordance with these requirements, one of the Bilyar casting forms was made.

Among the non-ferrous metal Volga Bulgar articles from the early-Bulgar period there are numerous boom sheets fixed to a leather belt with clenched pins. Casting these boom sheets was quite complicated for the casters, but they did it well. Boom sheets could be cast in two-shuttered forms with the help of feed-heads. However, making thin pins was quite difficult. We suppose that the latter ones could be produced separately. Prepared pins

were placed in the nests of the forms. Separate parts of the form were joined and poured with melted metal through a gating hole.

One of the requirements that improved casting quality was rubbing the vugh of the negative with the dust of charcoal or soot. Before pouring the metal, the form was heated to a high temperature. Otherwise, condensed water on the walls of the form could tear it apart when it was rapidly heating by the melted metal.

While producing non-ferrous metal articles, the Bulgar craftsmen widely used different techniques of processing metal with pressure—that is, embossing and stamping. Among them is producing different decorations with stamps and matrices, which are known among the finds of the Bilyar, Bulgar, Zolotarevo archaeological sites and other monuments. Stamps and matrices were cast from bronze in specific forms, and later for mass production of ornamented decorations. The working face was convex with a relief plant pattern, the reverse was smooth. Sometimes, there were images of animals and horsemen on the matrices.

The basis of the articles were copper and silver blanks. In shape, they were equal to the matrix, though with a little lap. They were cut with scissors or chisels in advance. Then, the blank was put on a lead plate on a wooden anvil made from the trunk of a hard tree. Above the blank, the matrix was placed. Above the matrix, there was an iron plate. In order to prevent the matrix from being deformed. After a powerful single blow with a hammer or a sledge over the blank, a stamp of the relief decoration image is produced.

In the collections of the Bilyar archaeological site, the Murom townlet and other monuments, there are flat bronze rectangular plates with numerous semi-spherical hollows of different diameters. Such matrices were probably used to make bulged rounded blanks. The second part of this tool were metal swages with a sphere-like working part, equal to the diameter of the hollow [Belorybkin, 2001, Fig. 49: 2–4].

In the arsenal of technological techniques of the Bulgar craftsmen that processed non-

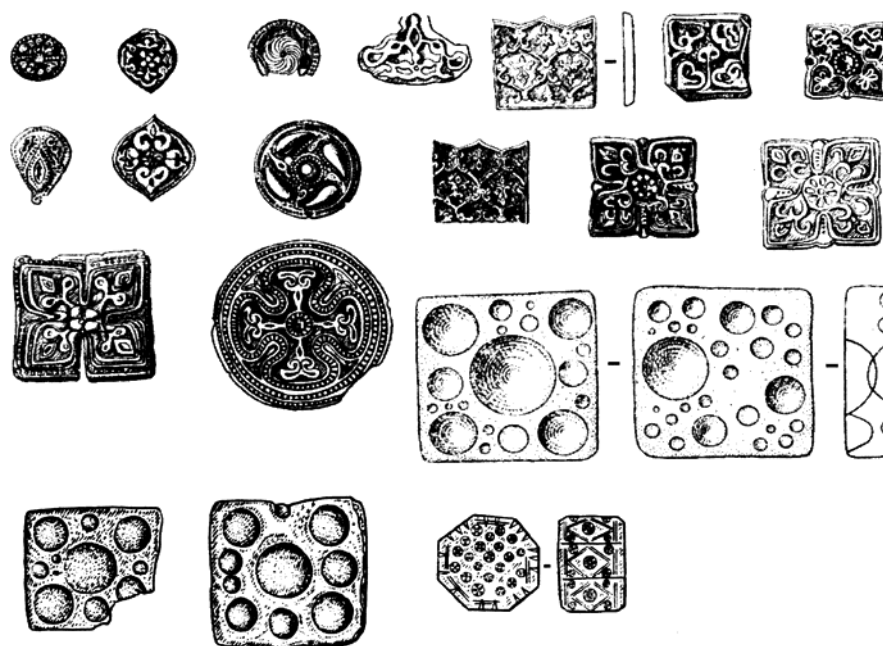
ferrous metal, an important place belonged to the operations of drawing for producing round wires. Popular among the Bulgars were wound wire bracelets made from copper or silver wire. Drawing in the Bulgar articles from non-ferrous metals was noted by the results of metallographic analyses [Khlebnikova, 1996, p. 292].

Although in the archaeological materials of Volga Bulgaria the tools that could be used in drawing copper wires are not known, it is possible to suppose that special steel calibres with holes diminishing in diameter were used. They were increased copies of draw planks used for drawing a thin golden thread. Such patterns are known from the excavations of the Bulgar archaeological site [Smirnov, 1951, p. 121]. At first, cast copper blanks were hammered, then after heating they were drawn with pincers through the holes of calibres. Judging by the edges of the wire on the Bulgar bracelets, the internal surface of the calibres was polished off.

An independent area in non-ferrous metal processing in Volga Bulgaria was a copper craft related to producing metal dishware—pots, bowls, jars, mugs, lanterns and other things.

K. Rudenko [2000a] came to the conclusion that the copper craft was set up among the Bulgars in the latter half of the 10th century, without direct sources in production activities of the tribes of the early Volga Bulgaria. At the same time, the archaeological materials prove that the nomads in their daily life used wooden dishware bound with copper strips (Bolshiye Tarkhany burial site). Although such finds are rare today, they nevertheless prove that the early Bulgars were acquainted with the techniques of using non-ferrous metals for producing dishware.

The formation of the copper craft among the Volga Bulgars, according to K. Rudenko, was strongly influenced with a stream of imported metal dishes of eastern Iranian production. At the turn of the 11th and the 12th centuries, processing copper faced sufficient technological changes that simplified and accelerated the process of producing dishware. The Bulgar craftsmen employed



Metal matrices from Bilyar ancient town

the technology of fillistering. That was the time of the formation of the main categories of the Bulgar copper dishware (pots, buckets and, possibly, jars), but the imported articles from the East (buckets, lanterns, cups) are still numerous among the finds. At the same time, metal dishware from Volga Bulgaria started being imported to the north-east and to the east. As a result, local production centres for copper dishware were set up. At the same time, the Bulgar copper craft was influenced by the technologies of the craftsmen from Ancient Rus' and the nomads [Rudenko, 2000b, p. 83]. At the end of the pre-Mongol period, copper dishware became habitual among both rural and urban people. After the Mongol invasion and the inclusion of Volga Bulgaria into the Golden Horde, the copper craft went through significant changes and, later, fell into decay. Copper dishware at that time fell out of fashion.

K. Rudenko points to a set of independent technological techniques employed by the Bulgar copper craftsmen. These are, primarily, mechanical assembly, casting and making dishware by pressure. In Volga Bulgaria, me-

chanical assembly was predominant. Casting was used mainly in the production of imported vessels. Pressure technology was used for making small containers, mainly during the Golden Horde period.

The first stage of producing copper containers by mechanical assembly was hot hammer forging of cast sheets. Their average sizes are 40x23 cm and smaller. Further operations for making containers required hammer welding, folded joints (when two sheets were joined with forward-bent fens, stuck to each other tight) and staves. The metallographic analyses showed that some containers had the traces of pretinning [Khlebniova, 1996, p. 280]. K. Rudenko supposes that the majority of the Bulgar copper dishware was produced with cold hammer welding, however, this assertion has not been documented.

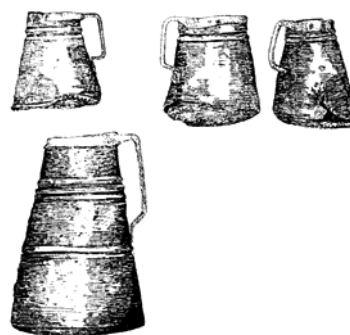
Mechanical assembly of the copper dishware of the Bulgar craftsmen was made with shaped 'in split' or 'in claw' edges. It is likely that cutting out of the parts of the metal sheets was performed in advance of mechanical assembly. The assembly itself could be carried out on round cylindric wooden one-

piece male punches (cuts of tree trunks). The edges of the copper joined metal sheets were cut with iron scissors or chisels. The cut edges of the blanks were open by every other one to the opposite sides, engaged together and hammered on the anvil. We experimentally studied the joining of copper sheets using the 'in split' technique. As a result, the closeness of the join depended on the size of the surface deformation at the joining spots. At the folded joints, the edges of the metal sheets were bent at an angle of 90° many times in one direction. After close hammering, there was a solid weld that could be additionally soldered for hermeticity.

The technique to join the parts of the article with staves was used mainly for joining the tags of the container and during repairs. The Bulgar copper and jewellery craftsmen employed the technology of soldering, that is, joining the details of metal articles with metal solders, the melting temperature of which was below the melting temperature of the main parts of the articles. Copper was mainly soldered with tin solder. Tin metal was used to solder the handles and nose of the jars. With harder solders, copper and silver, the details of iron articles such as spring locks were joined. It required a special agent of fusion, which protected the surface of the joining parts against corrosion. In the case of copper, a good agent of fusion is a borate of soda. It was well known to antique jewellers. Borate of soda can be found on the Taman peninsula in the places of active mud volcanoes and it was likely known to the Azov Bulgar nomads.

The birth and development of non-ferrous metallurgy among Volga Bulgars went through a series of stages. During the early Bulgar period of the nomadic unions in the Middle Volga Region, the main demands for non-ferrous metal articles were fulfilled, first of all, with the supplies from the craft centres of the Khazar Khaganate and the Cis-Kama region.

The formation of the sovereignty in Volga Bulgaria urged the growth of the crafts, including non-ferrous metallurgy. After the



Products of the Bulgar coppersmiths.  
Copper pitchers (per K. Rudenko)

inclusion of Volga Bulgaria in the system of international copper trade and production, in the Upper and Middle Cis-Kama region the supplies of black copper and alloy metals were established. Export of copper ore was quite small. Major urban centres played host to the growth of the workshops, the production of which supplied not only the domestic market of the state but allowed to enter the international market with a wide range of articles (dishware, locks, decorations from bronze, silver and gold, etc.). The Bulgar blacksmith, casters, jewellers employed all the main blacksmith and casting technology of that time. The development of production brought about the need to single out a specific occupation—cutters of stone casting forms.

The notable and independent part of the metallurgic production was copper craft. The articles made by the Bulgar copper craftsmen, to a large extent, were aimed at importing. It influenced the development of this field among the Volga and Cis-Kama Finns. At the same time, Volga Bulgar non-ferrous metal processing experienced the influence of the technological traditions of the Eurasian nomadic world, the Khazar Khaganate and Ancient Rus'.

In general, Volga Bulgar non-ferrous metallurgy became a vibrant and unique cultural and technical phenomenon of the Medieval world, thanks to its high level of development.

### 3. Glassblowing

*Svetlana Valiulina*

The first attempts to manufacture glass products in Volga Bulgaria were recorded on the Semenovskoe I ancient settlement. It is located on an island of the left bank of the Kama river at the confluence into the Volga. The settlement, as well as other sites of this area, are annually destroyed by the Kuibyshev Reservoir, and after the recession of water in the shallows there is a numerous surface material, including glass beads.

The collection of glass beads of the Semenovskoe I ancient settlement consists of 1338 exhibits.

The bulk of the beads is made of commercially drawn tubes and is represented by the following types: chopped beads (107 pieces), one-part yellow lemon-shaped and a longitudinally-striped (728 pieces), golden glass (1 piece), multi-part lemon-beads (23 pieces), necklace supply (11 pieces).

100 pieces of individually manufactured beads, mainly made by winding, were found. Those are mainly zone eye glass beads of alabaster glass, yellow, green, liver brown, monochrome or with eyes; large black ones (in a thin layer of dark manganese and dark olive green) with eyes in white loops; one cylindrical mosaic bead.

A special group is composed of two-part beads (48 pieces) of sloppy, unrefined forms made individually by moulding. All of them are yellow, the majority of them (39 pieces) has coloured spots that echo the colours of the beads' eyes of the second group. Obviously, this necklace is made of beads of the first two groups—lemon beads and eye beads. There are known examples of using this type of raw material in the process of adopting glassmaking in a new territory. At the time of the beads' production, the manufacturers were not yet aware of the properties of the glass nor issues of technology. The glass for the beads was not sufficiently melted and stirred until smooth, resulting in the former clear eyes with eyelashes turning into form-

less stains smeared on the body of the beads. These beads can be seen as evidence of the first, the earliest acquaintance of the local population with the new material. Confirmation of this conclusion can be seen in the finds of this new production waste and the chemical composition of the products [Begovatov, Valiullina, 1997, p. 7]. Such beads have been found on some sites in Finland. In the case of Semenov 'ugly beads' we see an example of passive use of imported products [Lichter, Shhapova 1991, p. 255]. Here, at the Semenovskoe I ancient settlement, a few inserts for rings were found, which the Bulgarian craftsmen tried to make out of rounded transparent glass beads by warming them slightly on a plane. As a result, the former beads gained a flat convex shape, the channel deformed, but remained visible.

The chronology of the collection of the Semenovskoe I ancient settlement beads is determined by concomitant numerous numismatic material and the overall chronology of beads. As a result, a fairly narrow time span of functioning the settlement was established—the last quarter of the 10th to the beginning of the 11th century; and it also its clear business orientation; the production of the Middle East specialised workshops, performing beads of tubesis, dominated. To a much lesser extent there are products of Byzantine and Western European workshops, made by winding.

The rapid development of Volga Bulgaria at the end of the 10th and 11th centuries clearly reflected the material of the Izmersky complex of sites. Izmerskoe ancient settlement occurred in the area of the Kama mouth in the key area of the Volga-Baltic trade route. Trading and craft factory of a proto-urban type was not only an international trade fair, but also the largest crafts centre in Eastern Europe, primarily metallurgical [Kazakov, 2000, pp. 87–99]. The extensive collection of Izmersky beads a large part is taken the so-called 'triangular'.

The origin of Izmersky beads should be associated with the Byzantine tradition of craft and consider a Byzantine import. But, considering the unified technology and chemical composition, the narrowness of the range and a clear uniformity of products, as well as the presence of defects and waste of the production, we can assume that the production of most of the beads was held locally by visiting craftsmen using semi-finished products, which means in workshops with incomplete production cycle. This production actually also needs to be considered as one of the articles of import. As the materials of Bulgar cities show, primarily Bilyar, lead-silica glass does not receive further development.

The qualitative leap in all spheres of life of the Bulgar society, which took place in the 11th century, was also manifested in the production of glass products. The nature of the materials of the Izmersky complex is an example of craft reception or import. This stage in the development of glassmaking took place in many proto-urban centres in Western and Eastern Europe of the 8–11th centuries. Similarly, as many trade and handicraft factories-protocities did not transform later into the developed feudal cities, the early glass-making workshops, working on imported raw materials, did not find the continuing of local glassmaking school.

Glassmaking is a special kind of urban craft, for the formation and development of it some additional conditions are needed, first and foremost, a major social order, a big investment. For the reception of craft in a new region a certain level of development of local material production is required, as well as the availability of qualified specialists in the crafts related to glassmaking (especially in non-ferrous metallurgy and metalworking) [Shhapova, 1990, p. 140]. Thus, glassmaking is a reflection of the high level of development of the society's productive forces. The emergence and development of the Bulgarian glassmaking became possible thanks to the development of urban crafts and was a manifestation of the growth of the city as a handicraft centre. Glassmaking is a kind of indicator of the level of urban culture development.

In Volga Bulgaria all the prerequisites for the emergence and development of new and expensive technological industries were the most concentrated in the metropolitan Bilyar, where in the 12th century its own glassmaking developed as a specialised craft with a full production cycle. Just as the city and its material culture is a benchmark for Bulgarian culture in the pre-Mongol period in the most typical, striking manifestations, glassmaking in Bilyar is characteristic of the Bulgarian glassmaking school in general.

The new school shows a complete lack of continuity with all prior experience in glassmaking in the region. At the same time in the separation of the Bulgarian school of glassmaking not only economic, but also political factors played a role. Volga Bulgaria, as a part of the Islamic world, has maintained close relations with the largest cultural and handicraft centres of the East. A special place in these contacts belongs to the Middle East and Transcaucasia. Bulgarian glassmaking should be considered as a part of the Middle Eastern tradition.

The most reliable evidence of the former existence of glassmaking in a given country are the finds at the excavations of glassmaking workshops with the remains of ovens, refractories and semi-finished glass products.

Some remains of glassmaking ovens of Volga Bulgaria of the 12–beginning of the 13th centuries, are known only in Bilyar.

Archaeological excavations in the central part of the inner city of the Bilyar ancient town, in the area of 'blacksmith mar', revealed the remains of an industrial complex—an alchemist, a jeweller and a glassblower workshops (excavation XLI, S. Valiulina). Of particular interest are the remains of a small furnace hearth in the central part (No. 2 and 3) and at the western wall of the excavation (No. 1).

The furnaces we studied were not specialised and were part of the alchemical and jewellery shops, where glassmaking was auxiliary, a related industry working on semi-finished products.

Manufacturing of the glass, identified by F. Khuzin on the close located excavation

XXXVIII, was of another character. Here, on the 280 square meters along the western wall of the monumental brick building a full production facility was obviously located, which consisted of three furnaces, two wells, and commodity pits.

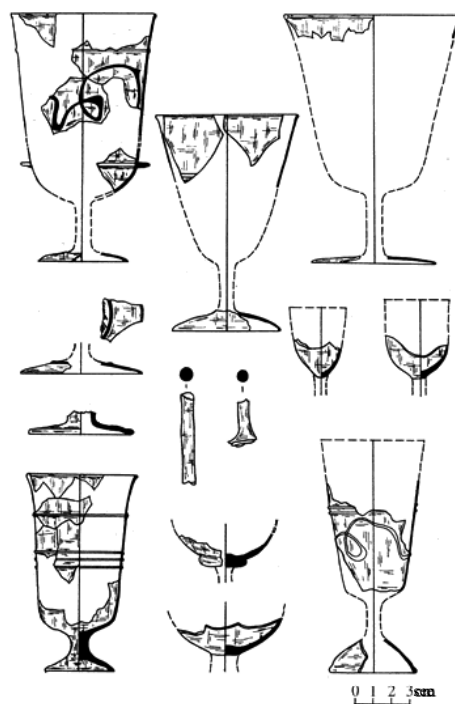
In the stores of Bilyar kilns and next to them, the frequent finds are small bricks, sometimes straight-shaped, of gray and dark gray with a dirty green glassy coating on one side—so-called silica refractories. Pieces of sandiver (frozen chloride sulfate foam) were found large quantities.

Particularly important are the discoveries in the workshop are semi-finished products—many shapeless pieces of glass of different sizes, often with traces of drawing in the form of scraps of bundles, threads, bands, droplets, which are accompanied by glass defects and breakage. On the excavation XXXVIII there was mostly window glass that reflects the workshop's specialisation; the workshop, located next to a large brick building obviously functioned during its construction. And all of this specified material is present in large quantities and over a large area around the kilns.

The similarity of the products and forms of technological processes of glassmaking was common to many countries of the East. However, establishing a close relationship of Bulgarian glassmaking with the major Islamic handicraft centres of the Middle Ages, it should be noted that from the very beginning glassmaking in Volga Bulgaria developed on local raw materials.

Despite the poor quality of one of the main glass-forming components—quartz sand of the Kama sandy province, containing a large amount of harmful impurities (compounds of iron, titanium, etc.)—the optimal calculation of prescription standards, the required temperature regime of the glass oven and other technological advances allowed Bulgarian glassmakers to produce quality products, which today is characterised by high chemical resistance.

Thus, the history of the new School of glassmaking fits well into the economic structure of the Bulgar state.



Wineglasses from the Bilyar excavations

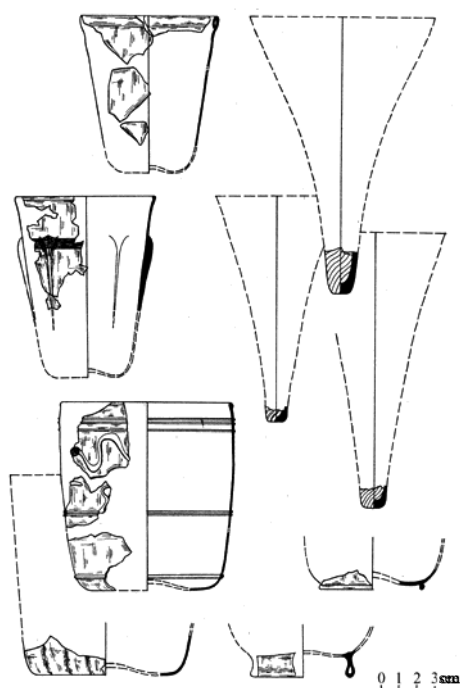
All Bilyar products of the categories under consideration, such as tableware and window glass, were produced in the traditional medieval technique—blowing. The primary method of this technology is a glass extension directly from the crucible. Blowing the vessels from simple composition of liquid glass, pre-taken by a glassmaker from the crucible at the end of the tool (blowpipe).

The secondary hot glass processing techniques of the Bilyar collection include blowing and rotation.

Methods of surface treatment of hot glass of Bilyar products are fire polishing and welding. All Bilyar finds were fire-polished. As a result of this operation, there is smoothing of the outer surface of the almost finished product by its melting, the product takes on a rounded shape and a glossy shine [L'vova, 1979, p. 100].

When welding two surfaces, they tightly pressed them against each other. The examples are alembics, which are welded to the main volume and the pre-formed hole.





Glass goblets from Bilyar excavations

A method of processing with a sharp decrease in temperature is wetting-off. For making a neck, a corolla, edges, for the implementation of the decor while the product is hot, a pontil is attached to the bottom of the product on the opposite side of the master glass-tube—an iron stick with a small portion of glass, which is taken on a pre-incandescent tip of the pontil. After joining of the pontil to the product it is wetted off the tube. Wetting-off, that is separation of the product from the tube, is produced with an iron plate, pre-soaked in water, or with wet wood, weakly hitting the glass-tube [Abdurazakov, 1963, p. 217].

Besides the main identified methods of manufacturing glass products found in Bilyar, all other techniques characterise the technique of glassware and window glass decoration.

Most of the glass products are made by free blowing. The surface of such vessels has the best fire polishing. A subtle defect of the shape appearing while blowing a vessel, gives a special attraction to its silhouette.

The techniques of stopper rings manufacturing do not vary significantly. Most often, the stopper ring is a continuation of the wall

and has a rounded 'melted' polished edge. The stopper rings of flasks could be drawn up by folding out the edges or by folding and compression to the surface, stretching and expansion, pulling, compressing the upper part of the neck with forceps.

The neck manufacturing techniques depend on the type of vessel. In jugs the neck was made together with the body, by blowing, or, like in different type of bottles—by stretching [Lichter, 2000, p. 189].

The legs could be formed simultaneously with the base (elongated) or made separately, followed by welding it to the body. Thin leg and conical base of the body were blown at once. The rod, put later into the tubular base, made the leg monolithic.

All the lower parts of a jug were made by compressing to a template. For the manufacturing of tubes and alembics they used the method of blowing through pulling, which is based on a sequential combination of processes of blowing and pulling [Abdurazakov, 1963, p. 226]. Bubbles on these products are in the form of strongly elongated ellipses. In this way the body-base, and the nose-tube were made. The difference between the two components in the first stage was a different diameter of the tubes. Then, in the upper part of the body a hole was made, which with an additional portion of glass a separately fabricated drain pipe was welded by re-melting. The edge of the nose-tube is cut. At the point of attachment of the tube to the body of the alembic a significant thickening at the expense of unused glass is preserved. With additional heating of the tube of the already finished alembic was bent; the free end of the tube at the same time got the upward direction relative to the horizontal line of the edge of the stopper ring of the alembics. It was noted above, that Bilyar alembics were very standard. The tubes of the Bilyar alembics are always bent in one direction, only the angle of inclination is varied. The bodies of some alembics are made in a different way; they were blown into the mould with rotation. The surface of such vessels is matte, not shiny, has traces of rotation; the form of the bubbles is cylindrical. As a mould for blowing vessels

clay crucibles could serve. On the excavation XLI, in the workshop of an alchemist, such alembics and crucibles were found, the shape and size of which are in line. Blowing in the mould with a rotation was used to make alembics in Middle Asia [Ibid., p. 219].

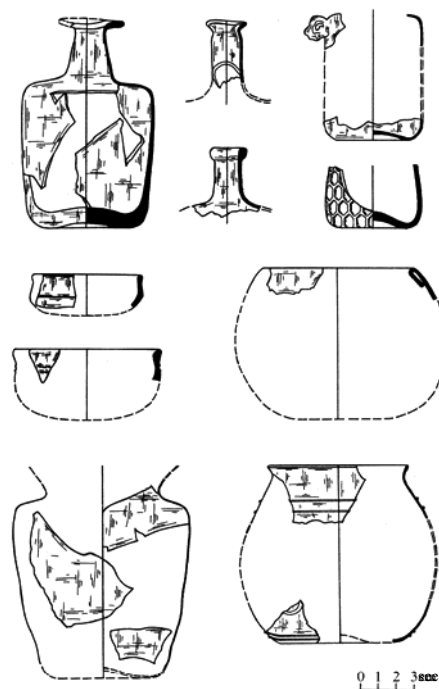
Method of manufacturing window glass is similar to the one of manufacturing glass vessels. By free blowing along with simultaneous rotation a glass gathering first acquires a regular spheric shape then the one of the laterally positioned ellipsoid. To the opposite end of the blowpipe there a pontil is being attached whereupon the volume of glass gets cracked off the pipe. The edges of the aperture caused by the pipe get expanded by means of the repeated heating and rotation. Subsequently one gets something like a basin that due to intensive spinning acquires the shape of a flat disk.

The disks edges 3 to 8 mm wide are loop-flanged. Windowpanes manufactured in this way always bear the pontil's marks that is the incrassated central area and slightly concentric pattern smoothing out towards the disk limb while the shape of the air bells also reflects the concentric direction of the glass melt centrifugal forces.

The decorative components practice is also pretty straightforward. The overwhelming majority of the workpieces are garnished hot by application of strands or stripes of the same or otherwise colour (4%).

The glassware mix of the pre-Mongol Volga Bulgaria is limited to goblets, glasses, phials, cups, alembics, glass jars, lamp and window glass, unsophisticated shapes and ways of ornamenting, practical purposes thus manifesting stable standardisation as to both the morphological characteristics index and specific chemical makeup features.

Volga Bulgaria never boasted of glass beads and armlets as popular adornment. In all pre-Mongol Bulgar towns and settlements there'd been observed just a few such artifacts as distinct, for example, from the Rusessian archaeological sites. It is clear that Bulgarian ladies preferred decorations of gems, first and foremost, of sard, amber and quartz crystal. Apart from the Early Bulgar there are the mass



Glass decanters, phials and bowls  
from the Bilyar excavations

occurrences of glass beads in the Semenovskoe I and Izmerskoe sites of ancient settlements, main trading areas of the mid-Volga Region in the 10th to 11th centuries. Here the beads by quantity production from the Middle East serve as cash-equivalent item in furs and miscellaneous trade. They are represented in hundreds and thousands of items.

The primary resources profile analysis of the regions of Middle Volga and Cis-Ural gave explanations to the specific features of glass chemical makeup—the type Na-K-Ca-Mg-Al-Si (+Mn+Fe). That glass was made of the ternary fusion mixture: ashes-lime-sand. Ashes from halophytic vegetation of alkaline and saline soils of the West Trans-Kama region were used as alkaline agent, as alkali-earth agent there was used either dolomite limestone or local dolomites. The third component for the mixture was sand from the Kama sand province containing much high-melt separates (Fe, Ti etc. aggregates) unfit for producing high-quality glass. Nonetheless, the glass of Bilyar, on the whole, is not-

ed for its high quality that met all technical and aesthetic requirements of that time. Due to the optimum main components content profile as well as aluminium oxide the glass of Bilyar possesses the high-level chemical endurance evidenced by its integrity—non-present superficial iridescence, insignificant patina blush. There is definitely astonishingly precise selection of the local that is cheap and available batch materials within the framework of common craft tradition. The Bilyar glass-making should be regarded as an integral part of the Middle-East tradition. It should be noted that the fledging period of the craft in question during the 12th century was largely influenced by the scholarly traditions of Transcaucasia and, probably, Middle Asia. Revealing the proximity to the aforementioned centres of glass-making, the chemical makeup of the Bilyar glass, but for the alkalis ratio (sodium to potassium) and pretty substantial aluminium content, is characterised by stable and constant evidence of

iron and manganese compounds. The two latter elements along with other showings are unique indicators of Bilyar glass.

The availability of glassmaking shops, the large volume of archaeological glass finds, their assortment, specific character of shapes and setting, chemical composition correlating with the local raw materials particularities are solid evidence of the existence of Bulgar glassmaking in pre-Mongol Volga Bulgaria. The emergence of that advanced craft in the pre-Mongol period seems to be a profoundly natural phenomenon corresponding to the generally high standards of economics of Volga Bulgaria, its urban culture, in particular, and the flourishing of its urban crafts.

The glassmakers in Volga Bulgaria had a masterful command of glassmaking throughout the whole of that sophisticated production run, starting with refractories manufacturing, selecting the raw materials, monitoring the specific melting features up to the end product of window panes and glassware.

#### 4. Pottery production

*Nina Kokorina*

In Volga Bulgaria, pottery was one of the developed urban manufacturing industries. There was broad agreement among the researchers about movement to the Volga-Kama region and the later founding of their own state, the Bulgars had extensive experience and knowledge, brought from the most ancient centres of handicraft development in the Northern Black Sea area, Caucasus, Central and Middle Asia.

The development of pottery in the Early Bulgar period has not yet become a topic of special study. Studies in the 1980s–90s of the Upper Trans-Kama, Ulyanovsk and Samara Volga regions written sources provided new materials on the settlements and burial sites of Early Bulgar period. The earliest among them was cookware from the Novinki I and II burial sites.

Study of the cookware technology from these written sources showed its similarity to that of Imen'kovo. Imen'kovo and Early Bul-

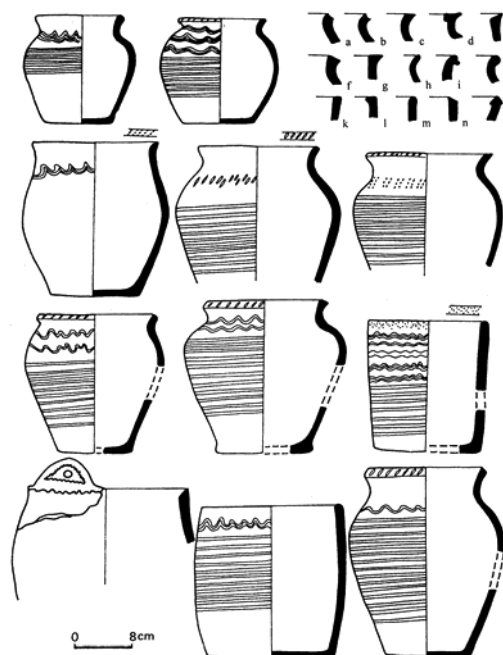
garian settler cookware in the form of modelled pots with a trim of finger dents around the edges was discovered together on a range of settlements (Sevryukaevskoe, Staro-Majnskoe archaeological site, II Maklasheevskoe, Baly'merskoe, Devichij townlet and others). The technological similarity of these cultures' cookware was a confirmation of long cohabitation, the influence of handicraft and, maybe, the partial intermingling of populations [Vasil'eva, 1995, pp. 75–83].

On the settlements of Saltovo-Mayaki culture of the 8–10th centuries two types of pottery kilns were known: 1) double-chamber with leaning post (with origins in the late antique and medieval kilns of Crimea); 2) double-chamber kilns without a prop and pole. Building materials for them varied according to the local conditions and calcinable products. It is clear that these kiln types were used by the population of the Middle Volga Region in the

Khazarian period. So far, known pottery kilns in Volga Bulgaria date to the 10th century at the earliest. Remnants of the earliest workshop was the construction No. 3, researched on Malo-Ierusalimskoe (Provoberezhnoe) settlement near the Bulgar archaeological site.

The workshop is a blockhouse type structure, sunken into the ground with an earth floor, two chimneys of the same structure and a large pole between them. Fireplaces were oval-shaped (130x140, 150x110 cm). The foundation, 30 cm sunken into the natural ground, had a calyx shape covered with pieces of red sandstone. The upper part of chimney walls were preserved for 25–30 cm, and the walls inside and out were cemented with clay mortar. Similar kiln furnaces were known in the settlements of the Don [Vinnikov and others, 1995, pp. 130–132, Fig. 2] and refer to kilns of the Tandy'r type. This type of kiln was multipurpose. Availability of ceramic, iron ashes and puddle, and in this case, probably, the remnants of brass manufacturing were characteristic for this type of workshop. By analogy with the pottery workshops on the settlement of Dronikha in Eastern Don this type of workshop from the Bulgar should be considered as seasonal pottery, in winter time it was used for work with non-ferrous metal. The traditions of Saltovo-Mayaki culture were also common for the items of kitchen, moulded and round cookware. Along with the vessels, which were characteristic for the 10th century, this ceramic complex had vessels of Early Saltovo-Mayaki appearance of the 8–9th century. In this settlement and also the settlement of Babij Bugor and in the central part of the Bulgar archaeological site were found vessels of the Cherepets type with cord extruded pattern that prevailed up to the middle of the 9th century.

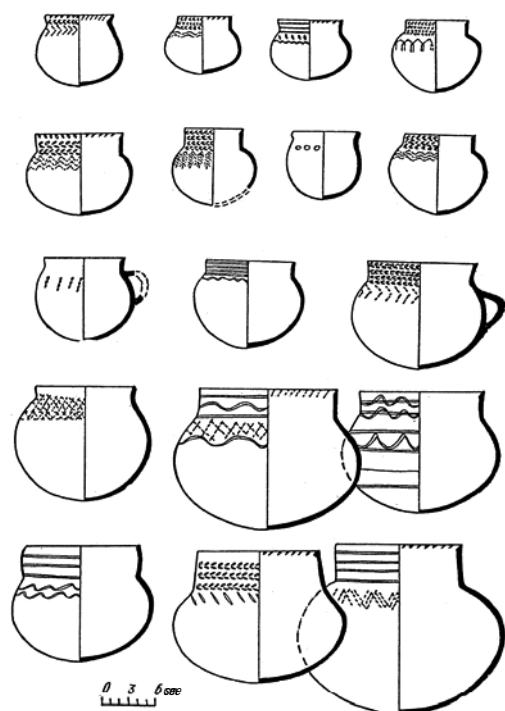
The fragments of earthenware Tankeevka jars date to the 9th century, moulded bottom flattened pots with chamotte, sand and shell with circular ruffles on the cusp of the 9–10th century. Pots of Saltovo-Mayaki origin (11th group), similar to Bilyar, manufactured in that workshop, should be attributed to the end of 9–the beginning of the 10th centuries.



Crockery of Saltovo-Mayaki sources  
from the Bilyar site (according to F. Khuzin)

During the rule of the Kievan prince Oleg (882–912), after military actions, a significant part of the population of the Khazar frontier re-settled on the Volga. For the complexes of the 9–beginning of the 10th centuries of the Volga Bulgar, the spreading of crockery with the new Bulgar-Pecheneg and Khazar (Saltov-Mayaki) traditions is typical. The examined complex of the settlement in the Jerusalem ravine is linked to the Saltov-Mayaki population of the Don region, the complexes like Malo-Paltsynskoe ancient settlement of the 9th century belong to the Bolgar-Pecheneg circle of monuments. The most expressive example of interaction of those components with the Cis-Kama and Cis-Ural region groups of the Ugric people are the monuments like Kaibelskoe ancient settlement of the 10–11th centuries [Khlebnikov, 1962, Fig. 17: 1, 3, 6, 711; 17: 2, 6, 12, 13, 15]. In the complexes of Bulgar earthenware of the 10th century, the patch decor of sculpted vessels is replaced with decor of "commas" and wide grooved lines, which are typical of early Bilyar.

The development of urban pottery in Bilyar during the pre-Mongol period is connected to the formation of the state.



Crockery of the Cis-Kama and Cis-Ural sources  
from the Bilyar excavations (per F. Khuzin)

Bilyar is being founded in the second quarter of the 10th century in the depth of the Trans-Kama region as a common governmental, common tribal centre with regular construction of brick buildings, local arrangement of separated handicraft Slobodas [Khuzin, 1995]. Fast development was going on with using works of masters from different centres, including ones who arrived with the embassy of Ibn-Fadlan. Accounting for the multi-tribal and multi-confessional composition of the population of the state demanded a new form of the organisation of craft.

The first workshops with kilns, unfortunately, were not preserved in Bilyar. The traces of ruinous tillage of early brick kilns along a bank of the Yelshanka river near the caravanserai were marked in the South-East part of Bilyar [Khalikov, 1976, p. 36 and next page]. Goods of that workshop of mainly the first part of the 10th century are represented in a ritual complex of the early burial site near the caravanserai (pit No. 5). The crockery of that complex (pitchers,

pots, basins, mugs) has a red-brown burning, quite thick walls, all-around glossing. Among them, there are water-carrier jars with a pear-shaped stocky trunk, channeled sink like jars of the Tankeevsky burial site. Made on a circle, in other formulation, they combine different traits into a new look. The second type of narrow-neck jars with protruding sides and sink-stria is typical for the Islamic-Khwarezmian complexes. Jars from of the early complexes of Bilyar often have white and red engobe. Apparently, goods of an early workshop were made to suit the tastes of Muslims from Khwarezm (merchants and manufacturers).

In the second quarter of the 10th century, an entire block of potters arose in the south-west edge of Bilyar along the Bilyarka river in the outer city. Simultaneously several potter workshops were being built here. The layout of the block has an united direction with the street—with a passage along the river.

The Sloboda square occupied by the potter is about 8–10 ha. Within this area, the remains of kilns and accumulation of ceramic slag and ceramics were discovered. In the examined north district, the remains of 9 kilns were researched, which had an oval form of four construction types: type 1—two-tier one without a rod post, with a low combustion chamber (from 20–40 cm), long (about 90–110 cm) or middle (about 60 cm) heating flue; type 2—one-tier one with a pear-shaped, deep furnace (60 cm) and long heating flue (to 120 cm); type 3—one-tier one of a cylinder shape, with a long heating flue (about 1 m), a shelf of a clay pins; type 4—one-tier one, ellipse-shaped, with a brick C-shaped shelf and heating flue about 80 cm [Kokorina, 1983, pp. 50–69].

All the kilns are dipped in a continental clay by its furnace part. The upper part of the kilns was spherical and had smoke and charging ports. A partition was supplied with different quality of blow-out mechanisms, through which the required temperature was regulated.

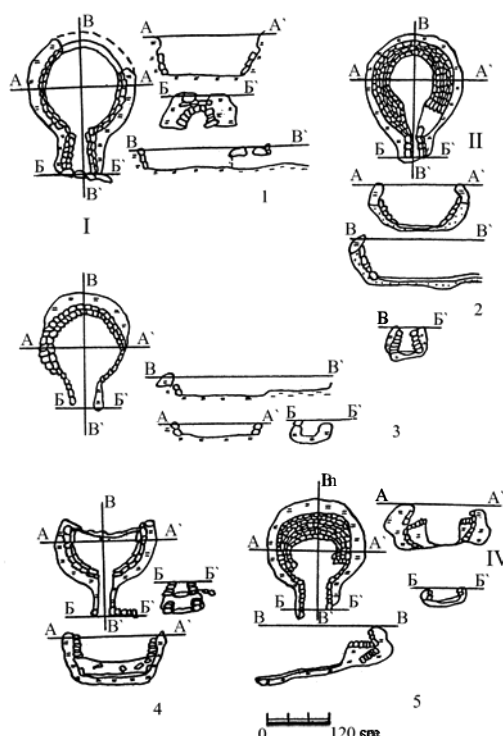
Type 1 kilns were universal. Various tableware, including glazed items, was fired in them. The objects of a stove stock were found near them (clay chimneys, oven doors, supports of different shapes). The second type kilns were used for firing particularly heat-resistant goods

(boilers, pots, and etc.), and also glazed goods, and, probably, for boiling glass and for beads. The third type of kiln served for firing glazed crockery, including a dish-shaped pieces. Charcoal, providing smokeless firing, was the fuel in them. The fourth type of kiln was used mainly for firing small goods: lamps, mugs, and etc., including glazed items.

Workshops were structures with a sunken manufacturing part. Mouths of heating flues of one or two pottery kilns were a part of a pre-kiln pit. Judging by remains, a workshop room was rectangular (9x6; 10x8 m) with twin-wheel or lean-to roofs with solid (40 cm in diameter) "tsar"-pillars near kilns. This is a Middle Asian feature of potter workshops [Peshhereva, 1959, p. 211]. In addition to providing a sacral function, the 'tsar'-pillar was a support for a chimney. In Bulgar workshops, tile pipes were used not only as smoke and gas flues, but also as a heating system. In the workshop with kiln No. 7 (11th century), a domestic stove of rectangular form was connected with a clay-wood dais (sufa) flue of pipes with the kiln and then, probably, a flue went out onto the roof. Entrances were situated in the end walls of buildings. In the workshops with kilns No. 5, 6 and 7 along the long walls of apartments, they raised 40–60 cm from pre-kiln shelves-sufas of boards coated with clay. An awning or annexe, in which goods were dried a little and maintained, joined to the workshop with kiln No. 5 (end of the 12th century–beginning of the 13th century)



Reconstructed 10–11th century ceramics from pit No. 5 in the caravanserai area

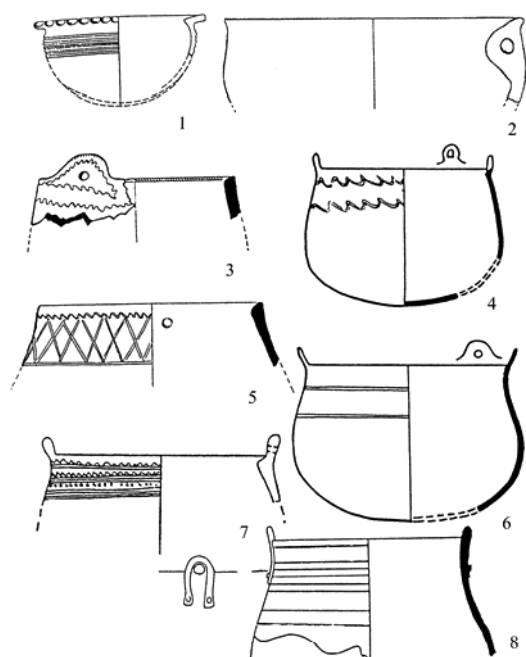


Pottery kilns of Bilyar town. 1–kiln No. 4; 2–kiln No. 8; 3–kiln No. 7; 4–kiln No. 1; 5–kiln No. 5

ries) from the north side. A great number of a finished crushed crockery was found there.

The workshops of Bilyar had a specialisation that was demonstrated in the unique features of the equipment and clothing material. A number of workshops with kilns was situated along a precipice of the right-bank of Bilyarka. Pre-kiln pits were faced with a brick of a clay solution from the mouth side of furnaces. Sets of stove trimmings were found in them: clay tile slab over doors for opening in a kiln, fragments of pipes with diameter in 8–10 cm, gaskets, pin supports. Near several kilns of the 10th century–first half of the 11th century, in a pit, there was a charcoal as a fuel reserve, used for a smokeless firing of glazed crockery. Crockery of different shapes was found in those workshops. It was fired in those kilns, but mainly produced, seemingly, in other workshops.

The next row of workshops with kilns was across the road. In those workshops, along the walls, the remains of clay-wood flooring



Earthenware pots from Bulgar (1), Izmeri (2)  
and Bilyar (3–8)

shelves were observed, on which a great part of ceramic goods, intermediates and tools was found. Those finds were linked to the placement of the potters' work stations. During breaks when the kilns were not fed, the workshops were heated by domestic wattle and daub stoves. They were situated in the north-east and north-west corners of workshops. Intermediates of clay and iron were found in under-stove pits. In the workshop with kiln No. 7 in the north-east corner, the remains of a collapsed wattle and daub base of a hand mill were found. Near it, among the remains of a large earthenware pot, a sheet of burnt wheat was laid. Similar same mills together with millstone are known in Volga Bulgaria [Yovkov, 1976, p. 251]. They could have been used in pottery, which is proven by the ethnographic materials of Middle Asia. Meal of low-grade wheat was added during producing enamel, and was also used in boiling crockery. Enamel was added to the puddle of some goods. Pots with a vegetable admixture with a design of 'commas' and wide grooved lines along the body are in Bilyar in the 10–11th centuries, and among them, the earliest

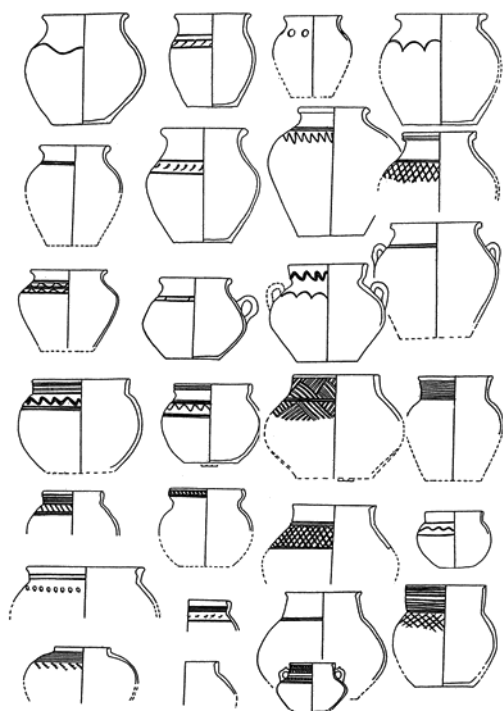
examples with brands in form of the letter A were found.

Small (about 1 m in diameter) kilns were used for firing cookware and for partially firing more simple tableware. Kiln No. 6, which was ruined during a blaze in the 10th century, was loaded with crockery. In a firing batch, 25–26 vessels were counted, one of which has the brand in the shape of an A. Kiln No. 5 (12–13th centuries) contained at the moment of death a batch of spindle whorls, glazed lamps, cups, basins, and an ink-pot.

The majority of tools was made by potters. So, on the way in the traces on the donetses, usually with traces of goldish bedding course, imprints of wood supports for a potter's wheel, on which vessels were made, were observed. They were wood disks engraved with tamga-brands. In a several cases, this was specially made and fired plates with a graven brand on a damp surface. In pottery workshops, one may often find knives of different forms, chisels, miniature adzes, tongs, burnishers, mano, crib-ornamenters, stone and iron boilers, in which admixtures were reduced to paste and ingredients in glaze.

Pottery wheels in Volga Bulgaria were wooden. It is possible to judge the type of wheel by the traces on vessels. On the bottoms, the traces of a butt-end of an oval form of an axis of a wheel (kiln No. 4) and a square section of kiln No. 5. On the basis of traces on the bottoms of Bulgar crockery, one can talk about the presence of a hand mushroom-shaped wheel of a light type, and a pedal wheel with an axial bearing of the Middle Asian type (axial bearings of different materials) [Bobrinsky, 1978, pp. 42–43]. A pedal wheel with a movable axis and quadrangular butt-end, discovered by I. Vasilyeva [1993, p. 125], was also used in Bilyar workshops, at least, from the 12th century (a vessel with an imprint of axis was found in the filling of kiln No. 5).

Thus, according to the Bilyar materials, wheels of three construction types existed during the pre-Mongol period: 1) a hand wheel with a mushroom-shaped disk; 2) a pedal wheel with an axial bearing of the Middle Asian type; 3) a pedal wheel with an axial bearing and movable axis of the East European type. A ped-



Pot-shaped vessels from excavations  
of ancient Bulgar sites



Types of pitchers from Bulgar settlements

al wheel of the Middle Asian type relied on an axial bearing on its lower end, strengthened in a stone millstone or stone. Axial bearings were made from a scapular bone of cattle and, more rarely, from iron.

Bulgar potters widely used bones of animals in tools and different devices. A sheep scapula was used as a scraper for purifying a circle of clay, as a scoop, there were also knife rulers of cattle ribs, axial bearings of a cow scapula, ornamenters combs, and etc. Bone tools originated from the Hun-Sarmats' ancestors of the Bulgars [Davydova, 1995, Fig. 45: 28, 29; 50: 10, 11].

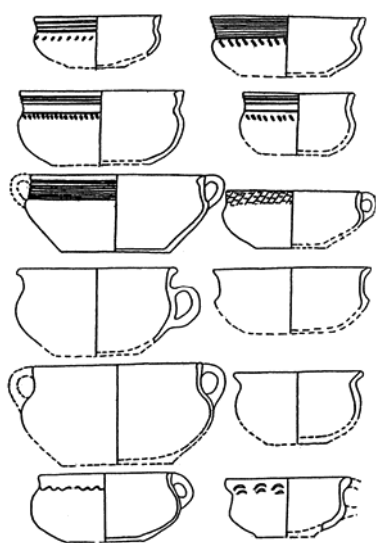
The knives with a long scape and rounded end were used for turning the surface of vessels, the large widely-blade knives with a sharp or rounded end—for carving and engraving, including cutting out a brand; the knives with declinate perpendicularly to a blade by its end and heft—for turning the bottoms of dish-shaped, falcated form—for survey a device from a circle.

Burnishers were made of the walls of vessels, river pebbles and sheep ribs were used. Wooden spoons were used for smoothing the surface, clay anvils of a mushroom-shaped form—for sealing seams in vessels and tan-holes.

The things of a stove store included sepoi of different sizes, parietal pins, and support pins. Support pins with a wide base and mushroom-shaped top were put with glazed goods on under-stoves. They were discovered together with parietal pins in early kilns. Clay sepoi—the most numerous supports—were used as packing during firing glazed dish-shaped vessels in kilns of the 10–13th centuries.

Parietal pins (15 cm long) were attached to the kiln walls, forming a shelf for establishing and hanging jars, mugs and lamps. Clay pins were related to the kilns of the 10–11th centuries in Bilyar. The same method of arrangement of items is known in Khwarezm of the end of the first millennium [Peshhereva, 1959, p. 232].





Bowls from Bulgar settlements

One may find firetube pipes about 8 cm in diameter fragmentarily in all the workshops. The pipe-shaped end has a diameter of 18–22 cm. Inside they are covered with soot. Plugs of 8 cm in diameter relate to firetube pipes. The main part of them was found during the clearing of kiln No. 5 of the pre-Mongol period. The goods with a high-quality dense green and green-brown glaze with a metallic shine were fired in it. The majority of goods from the kiln—lamps, mugs, spindle whorls—had a reconstructive firing. The final type of stoves, sepoi and glazed items of the same glazes are typical for pottery of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan [Peshhereva, 1959, pp. 151, 172, 200; Rakhimov, 1961, p. 69].

An assortment of goods of workshops of Bilyar consisted of dinning, kitchen, container crockery, and vessels for toilet, medical, and technical purposes. The production of fired building bricks was one of the trends. However, the larger stoves were probably used for their production. It is possible that sets of bricks for kilns were fired in pottery stoves.

The crockery of Bilyar includes all the variety of types and forms that existed during the pre-Mongol period. It reflects the rich traditions of different ethnic groups of Volga

Bulgaria. This can be observed in the form and decoration of the crockery.

From the 10th century, in pottery workshops, ceramic boilers were produced that reflected traditions of ethnic groups of the Turkic-speaking population. The production of boilers of the pre-Mongol period mainly in workshops of Bilyar (10th century–beginning of the 13th century) and the concentration of their finds in the Bilyar ancient town are evidence of the status of that city as a capital from its founding [Kokorina, 2004, pp. 34–44].

Pots from workshops of Bilyar are represented by seven ethnic-cultural types of different sources [Kokorina, 2002] that may be observed through the materials of written sources of Volga Bulgaria of the pre-Mongol period [Khlebnikova, 1984]. Among them, types relating to the main groups of the Turkic population predominate. These came the districts of the Khazar Khaganate and Saltov-Mayaki culture the Bersuls, Bulgars, Suvars, Turks-Magyars, Baranjars, Bajinaks, known by the beginning of the 10th century from written sources.

The pots of the 4th type are varied and widespread especially in Bilyar, Juketau and the Lower Cis-Kama region from the middle of the 11th century. They are connected with the inclusion in the 10th century of the Kipchak groups of the population originating from Altai, Central and Eastern Kazakhstan into the Oguz-Cumans and Kipchaks-Shars [Kokorina, 2002, Fig. 15–17]. Those Turkic-speaking groups from the south-east, from the 6th century at the very least, were in contact with the Finno-Ugric groups of the Cis-Urals and Volga-Kama region, forming a category of the population of Volga Bulgaria called an 'esegel' in the written sources of the 10th century. The 5th, 6th, 7th types arose as a result of contact and mixing of those ethnic groups and are distinguished by their small number among mass crockery.

An ethnic variety of the separated districts of Volga Bulgaria was notably revealed in the predominance of different types of pot-shaped forms. On the Volga region monuments of the pre-Mongol period, from Murom townlet to Bulgar, the pots with a line wave design and the 'commas' of the Turk-Pecheneg traditions

predominate. There are also pots with pits continuing the early-Bulgar, 'paltsinsky' type, and pots with corrugated necks, imprints in the form of half moon, and 'caterpillars' along the shoulder of the Turk-Ugoric image [Khlebnikova, 1984, Fig. 57, 58, 85, 94, 95; 1988, Fig. 49, 50]. Along with the mentioned types in Suvar, there are cylinder-shaped pots with a peculiarly pictured wave—a 'snake' of the Kushnarenkovsk-Turbalinsk traditions [Khlebnikova, 1984, Fig. 115].

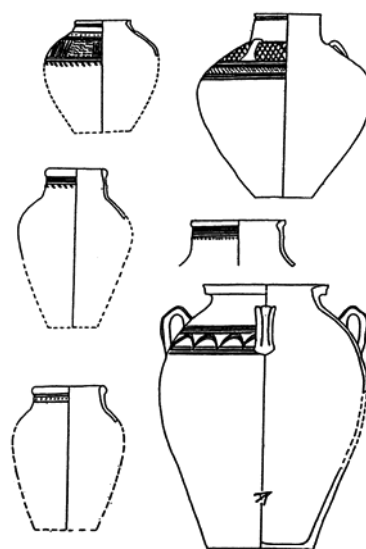
Among jar-shaped ones, there are about 20 types of different origins and traditions. The greatest number of types relates to the 12th century—beginning of the 13th centuries.

There are various sets of mugs (8 types), pots (12 types), large earthenware pots, hums (6 types), and dish-shaped basins and cups. Along with crockery, vessels for spices, ink-pots, palettes (a triple vessel of the Sarmatian tradition) are produced. In the workshop with kiln No. 5, fragments of red-clay polished spherical cones of local production were found, which imitated the gray clay of Caucasian and Middle Asian examples.

In the 10–13th centuries, there are pot-shaped tripods, cup-shaped tripod censers, lamps with a spout, 'coal' cups and tuvaqs. The pot-shaped tripods were produced according to the tastes of different groups of the population and were likely linked to some sort of rituals. On the handle of one was engraved a wish 'to drink sour milk' in Turkic runes.

The three-legged censers with a handle for transporting coals are unusual. They are introduced along with the population of south-eastern origins from the districts of Talas, north Karatau, together with wide-neck jars with a red engobe and pear-shaped mugs with zoomorphic handles [Levina, 1971, Fig. 60: 4, 5, 10, 11, 56; 61: 7, 18, and others].

The zoomorphic vessels are also typical for the pre-Mongol period. They include vessels, stoppers and salt cellars in the form of ducks, horses heads, Caucasian goats, sheep, cocks, hawks; and mugs with bear-shaped handles. The bear-shaped handle was found in the workshop with kiln No. 5. These images demonstrate through sculpture and ornament



Korchagas (large earthenware pots)  
from Bulgar settlements

abstract images of sacred ancient totems [Kokorina, 2001, pp. 85–94].

The mentioned goods demanded high skill and in-depth knowledges of folk culture. Among the Bulgar potters were craftsmen who were relatively well educated for the time: they had knowledge of Arabic written language, Turkic runes, and the signs and laws of the pictographic fine arts of antiquity. An example of solitary inscriptions of Arabic is the inscription 'Allah' on the cover of the jar or mug from 12th century Bilyar. The entire compositions of sign symbolism on mugs from 10th century Bilyar and 12–13th century Bulgar are interesting.

Among goods of pottery workshops of Bilyar, marked vessels are abundant. More than one thousand marks on crockery of Bilyar and other cities and settlements of Volga Bulgaria of the pre-Mongol period has been counted [Kokorina, 2002, pp. 201–217]. Studying the distribution of signs—crockery marks in the objects and layers of the Bilyar ancient town made it possible to conclude that they were family or dynastic tamgas and belonged to famous and noble clans [Kokorina, 1983, p. 69; 2002].

47 groups and 236 types of signs were identified in total. Tamgas from Bilyar pottery workshops are the most numerous (about 700

signs were counted, 300 of them with fully preserved graphics). The majority of tamgas on crockery along with goods were produced on demand. Hence the variety of types of tamgas discovered in workshops. The instance of marking in kiln No. 6 of one vessel with an A-shaped tamga out of a whole batch of simultaneously fired vessels may be evidence of paying a share in pottery products to the workshop owner.

The signs A and 'branch' are the most typical for the early workshops of Bilyar in the 10–11th centuries. Those signs imitated tamgas from coins of Bulgar (Bilyar) and Suvar of the 10th century belonging to the ruling clans. The predominance of the A-shaped tamga on the products of potters in the 10th century—beginning of the 13th century, and its variability are common in Bilyar, more rarely are such tamgas observed in Bulgar, Iski of Kazan (Russko-Urmatskoe ancient settlement) and other settlements in Volga Bulgaria, that reflects the patronage and the concentration of pottery workshops in the hands of a ruling clan [Kokorin, 1989, pp. 89–97, Fig. 106–110].

The finds of clay 'loaves' and clay balls (baursak?) in hearths and stoves of the Bulgar

pottery workshops similar to the Middle Asian customs of potters of workshop unions [Jabbarov, 1959, pp. 379–396] may be considered sacrifices to honour an ancestor spirit. The presence of this custom denotes the continuity of pottery, transferring it by right of succession, and only through the male line, that does not exclude relationships: master—student from the outside.

The formation of a feudal state, intensive town building were a stimulus for the rapid development of pottery in Volga Bulgaria. The construction of expensive specialised workshops had gained national importance in Bilyar already in the 10th century. Craftsmen arriving from the Middle Asia and the Arabic East influenced the organisation of craftwork and the creation of merchant-craftsmen unions of the Bulgars.

The high level of specialisation of pottery workshops in Bilyar and other cities may be observed at all stages of the organisation of the given craft and supports the existence of a workshop union. The mass standardised product range of workshops is produced according to different ethnic traditions and religious features.

## 5. Other Crafts

*Fayaz Khuzin*

On the basis of a pottery or under its influence a new segment of handicraft was born—**manufacturing of building bricks**. In essence, it was no different to pottery. This handicraft appeared against the backdrop of widespread urban planning carried out by the first Bulgarian rulers, when a tremendous amount of bricks for construction of homes for rich citizens, public baths and other buildings, whose number in Bilyar reached almost fifty, was required. Brick kilns were seemingly present in every city where brick structures were built. But so far they have been opened only in Bilyar and Murom townlet.

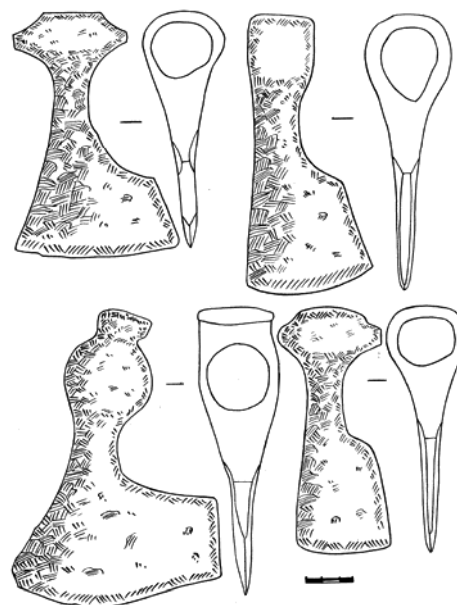
The kiln from Bilyar with the rounded base greater than 250 cm in diameter is located in an area of brick construction location in the exca-

vation XXXVIII, in the inner city south-west of the cathedral mosque, but not one excavated object was uncovered. The aforementioned rectangular furnace, discovered by G. Matveeva in Murom townlet, was originally made for a brick kiln. It had a two-tier construction. Only the combustion chamber of the furnace was preserved, which comprised the cauldron (220x220 cm), somehow immersed into the mainland ground, the walls of which were covered with standard bricks of almost square form (25x24x5 cm). In the eastern wall of the cauldron was the stoke hole of the combustion chamber, the walls and lower part (bottom) of which were covered with clay. The interior of the combustion chamber was divided into three parts: in the middle there was the central

channel ranging in width from 68 to 103 cm, on both sides there were brick platforms 30 cm in height. There were back posts one brick wide on them. There were five posts on each side, the bricks of which, starting with the third row, were bulged out in relation to the lower ones, thus forming a false vault. In front of the combustion chamber there was pre-furnace, 50 cm deep, filled with brick debris. Only a small amount of ceramics was discovered. In all likelihood, the furnace had a long service life, as evidenced by the hardened walls and scoraceous clay covering of the platform surface and back posts [Vasilyev, Matveeva, 1986, pp. 186–187].

As G. Matveeva indicates, rectangular and square furnaces of similar construction were known in Crimea, Middle Asia and in towns of the Golden Horde. They served mainly as kilns for firing brick and shingles, although sometimes they were used for pottery [Vasilyev, Matveeva, 1986, p. 187].

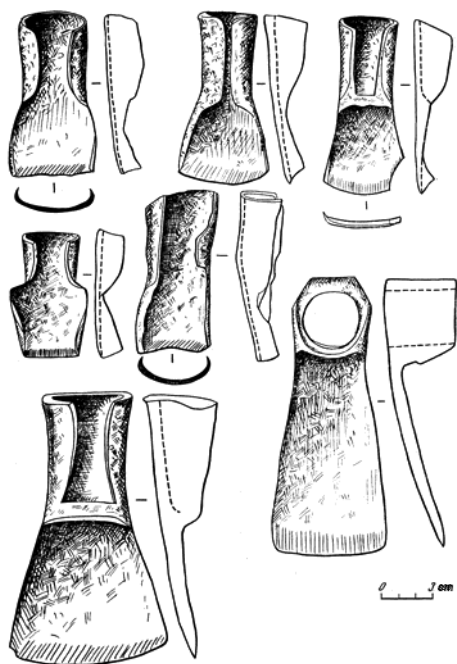
**Bone carving** is considered one of the traditional industries of agricultural sector, originating in ancient times. Traces of this production have been identified practically in all Bulgarian settlements as semi-fabricated forms or manufactured goods, but so far no specialised workshops have been found. In the north-eastern neighbourhood of Chally archaeological site in 1994 we have examined rectangular (310x250 cm) ground facility with shallow cellar, in the filling of which there were a lot of animal bones (252 pieces), including a moose antler, among them blanks cut with a knife and a special file (17 pieces) [Nigamayev, 1999, p. 124]. It is possible that the remains of a bone carving workshop are in front of us, what's disconcerting is the lack of finds from the structure of special work tools. A. Khalikov believed that there were special areas of bone carvers in the inner city of Bilyar [Xalikov, 1976, pp. 41–42]. At the same time he relied on the reports of V. Kazarinov about local citizens selling a huge number of bones to negotiants, which were extracted in two areas of the archaeological site—near north-east fortifications and south-east of 'Kuznechnyj mar'. In some stockpits, peasants gathered up to 200 poods of bones,



Iron axes from Bilyar

part of which had visible signs of processing [Kazarinov, 1884, p. 105].

Sets of bone carving tools found during excavations of town settlements, included knives, drills, saws, files, two-pronged incisors for applying a circular design, and also a simple lathe, the characteristic traces of which were identified on many items. The list of bone items is most extensive: household items (knife handles, spoons, piercing, needles etc.), combat and hunting gear (arrowheads, bow lining, quiver loops, whips handles etc.), clothing gear and decorations (combs, cure-oreilles, buttons, snaps, necklaces etc.), dice (chessboard pieces, blocks with 'points', alchiks for games of Babki etc.), ceremonial objects (amulets of various forms and purposes, scapulas with signs) and others. They were made, mainly, of cattle bones and also of elk and deer antlers, sometimes of wild animal teeth. Even fossil bones were used. It is appropriate to cite, in this connection, some words of al-Gharnati on the production and use by Bulgars of mammoth tusks: 'And under the ground there are mammoth tusks, white as snow, heavy as lead... And they transport them to Khwarezm and Khorasan. They make of it



Iron adzes from Bilyar (per R. Sharifullin)

combs and boxes and other, the same as make of elephant bone, but only that is stronger than it. It does not break' [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 31].

**Tanning** is the processing of animal hides and preparing leather to be used for producing different products, and it is also a traditional industry in the Bulgarian commodity economy. Many eastern and western countries highly valued the fine leather (yuft) called 'bulgari'. In 985, The Tale of Bygone Years reported on Bulgarian warriors, who were 'all of them in leather shoes' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 65].

Leather products of Bulgarian masters had a wide assortment: children's and adult's footwear of multiple forms and sizes, headwear, jackets, belts, bota bags, wallets, bags, items of horse gear and more. Unfortunately, leather is poorly preserved in cultural layers, which is why archaeologists find only individual details of the aforementioned products during excavations of Bulgarian cities, predominantly, soles, heels and pieces of bootlegs. On craft trading quarters near the historic centre of the Bulgarian archaeological site, traces of leather shoes

production were detected (up to 800 pieces of leather), emerging starting with the stratum of the pre-Mongol period [Bulgar City, 1988, p. 250]. Pieces of leather items were frequently spotted at the digs in Bilyar [Khuzin, 1985, p. 69]. In one of the 12-century wells, the pieces of half-moon plate strips of a leather armor base (shield) were found [Sharifullin, 1979, p. 103, Fig. 41]. Tanning tools were frequent archaeological discoveries: bristle knives, similar to normal kitchen knives but shorter, with a wide blade and curved razor, awls, piercers and needles.

V. Tatishhev pointed out at the time that the Bulgars were a nation 'famed for building cities' [1962, I, p. 358]. The remnants of brick and stone buildings, wooden houses, household structures and fortress buildings documented the high level *of construction* in Bulgarian towns. The diverse toolbox of construction workers underscored that point: axes, addices, saws, chisels, drills, scrapers, gouges, spoon makers and other. We do not have direct evidences about the existence of construction communities of the artisan model, though it may be presumed.

The existing sources helped also to reveal the other types of urban dwellers' economic activities—spinning and weaving, wood and stone processing, etc. However, we do not have enough evidence to suggest their separation into autonomous handicraft industries. As in later times, they spun and wove almost in every house, as evidenced by the clay and spindle whorls of a spinning wheel, widely seen at digs of Bulgarian urban and rural settlements.

The material outlined above provided the opportunity to look at Bulgarian cities as handicrafts centres, some branches of which, in particular, nonferrous metal working, including jewel-crafting, and also slip glazing and brick manufacturing, especially glass-making were purely urban craft types. Other craft types such as blacksmithing, pottery, bone carving and tanning were also extensively developed in cities, but the traces of these industries have also been archaeologically detected in rural settlements.

### CHAPTER 3

## The Bulgars on the trade routes of Eurasia

The study of Bulgarian cities characterizes them as large centres of internal and external trade. The role of trade—one of the key factors in the establishing of medieval cities—in the state economy was so significant, that in the past Volga Bulgaria was seriously treated as a country entirely populated with merchants and traders.

Internal trade activity was determined by the development of craft industry and its separation from agriculture. As a result of the social division of labour between city and village, manufactured products became goods, the sale of which was carried out by special middlemen—qualified traders, composing a separate social group of citizens.

The incredibly advantageous geographical location of Bulgaria at the confluence of the Volga and Kama—arterial waterways in Eastern Europe—boosted external trade. The researchers unanimously agree that the Bulgarian state turned into a leading centre of transit trade as early as the 10th century, or possibly before. Bulgarian rulers actively pursued a policy in favour of external trade, because it brought in a huge income to the state treasury: a tenth of the value of imported goods was chargeable. Ibn Fadlan reports on it as follows: 'If a ship comes from the Khazar country to the Slav country [the Bulgars], then the tsar will come on horseback, count everything in there and take the tenth part of it. And if the Ruses come or some [people] from any other tribes with slaves, then the tsar, really and truly, picks from each dozen of heads one for himself' [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 140–141]. Similar information can be found in works by Ibn Rustah: 'If Islamic boats come to them for trade, then they are charged with tithe' [Khvolson, 1869, p. 24].

So far we have been largely unable to imagine the forms of organisation of the Bulgars' domestic and foreign trade. Standing city markets, like bazaars situated typically in the city central square and international fairs held once or two times a year, played an important role in trade. Al-Muqaddasi, describing the capital of the Bulgars of the 10th century, pointed out, that 'the main Mosque stands in the market' [Ibid., p. 84]. As we know, bazaars and mosques or auctions and churches located close to each other was a common feature of eastern, old Russian and west European cities. As Ibn Fadlan points out 'market place... can be bust at any [prosperous] moment. Numerous valuable things are sold there' [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 138]. Ibn Fadlan reports also that the Ruses lived in large wooden houses along the banks of the Atil not far from the place of summer fair.

In the cities there were caravansarais for arriving merchants. The caravanserai complex usually included dwellings, storage buildings, stalls for horses and camels. In one of the Bilyar regions, where the caravansarai is supposed to have been located, the remains of the sauna brick building have been studied.

## 1. Monetary and Weight Systems

*Rafael Valeev*

### Trading tools and weight system

Trading tools (scales and their details, iron and bronze weights, lead weight seals), coins and their fragments, silver ingots and so on clearly indicate merchants' presence in Bulgarian cities. The most numerous finds representing citizens trading activities were discovered at Bilyar archaeological site, Izmerskoe I and Semenovskoe I settlements. They are known from Suvar, Murom townlet, Khulash and many other towns. It is quite strange that collections of the pre-Mongol layer in the Bulgarian site lack trading equipment, except for lead weights [Polyakova, 1996, pp. 246–248]. Bell weights from the set exhibited in the National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan and published by G. Fedorov-Davydov originate from mixed collections [Fedorov-Davydov, 1957, pp. 247–248].

Trading tools from Bilyar archaeological site include iron carrying poles and bronze folding scales for small weights, as well as scale pans from 4 to 10 cm in diameter—more than two dozen finds according to data in 1985 [The Culture of Bilyar, 1985, pp. 112–113, Table P]. More than ten folding scales and their details frequently found at the sites of the 9–10th centuries along the Volga Trade Route were gathered at trade and craft settlements on lower reaches of the Kama river [Valeev, Kazakov, 1993, p. 185].

The most numerous category of the trade equipment findings are bell weights—quite valuable resource for verifying theoretical calculation of values in trade-monetary systems used in trade operations. Moreover, initially weight and monetary units coincided due to the fact that weight units were used for weighing precious metals, above all gold and silver.

Bell weights of two main groups were widely used within the territory of Volga Bulgaria, which can be characterised based on the material of Bilyar archaeological site (80 items), Izmerskoe and Semenovskoe settlements (more than 200 items).

Group I comprises iron cube-shaped bell weights, which can be divided by their weight indexes into two types.

Type 1. At first Kufic coins were minted on the basis of the weight of Iraqi ratl at 409.512 g [Yanin, 1956, p. 194]. This measure of weight was also used when Bulgarian coins were minted in the 10th century. Bell weights of this type show the widespread nature of this weight standard. They make up a portion of Iraqi ratl. Bell weights of 1.34 g, 3.48 g, 13.7 g, 51.6 g, 136.5 g were equal to 1/300, 1/100, 1/8, 1/3 of a ratl at 409.512 g. 1/30 of a ratl has the largest number of bell weights. Small bell weights weighing 1.34 g and 3.48 g (taking into account that part of it is chipped) allow us to suppose that there was a weight at 4.095 g. The average weight of Samanid coins minted in the mid-10th century was 3.27–3.49 g [Ibid., pp. 136–139]. Therefore, the coins were minted in the amount of 204.756 g per 60 coins, and 409.512 g per 120 coins. So if a bell weight from Izmerskoe settlement weighing of 3.48 g is considered, then we can suppose that the weight of the Iraqi ratl was quite widely spread. Among Samanid coins found at Semenovskoe settlement are ones weighing 3.03 and 3.34 g (Mansur ibn Nuh, ash-Shash, 975/976), as well as 4.06 g (Mansur ibn Nuh, Samarkand, 976/977) and many others. In the book of Bulgarian coins dating back to the 10th century from the SHM (State Historical Museum) collection, there are coins weighing 3.22 g (al-Muqtadir, Nisabur), 3.16 g (Mikail ibn Jafar, Samarkand, 928/929), 3.71 g (Talib ibn Ahmed, Suvar, 949/950) and so on [Yanina, 1962, pp. 201–204, Table 6]. It is interesting to note that silver 'round' and 'Novgorod' ingots were cast at the rate of the weight 409.512 g. It is to be assumed that the Iraqi ratl acquired its local name 'qadaq' during the pre-Mongol period within the territory of Bulgaria. That was its name in Middle Asia, where it was recorded in written sources [Davidan, 1970, p. 83].

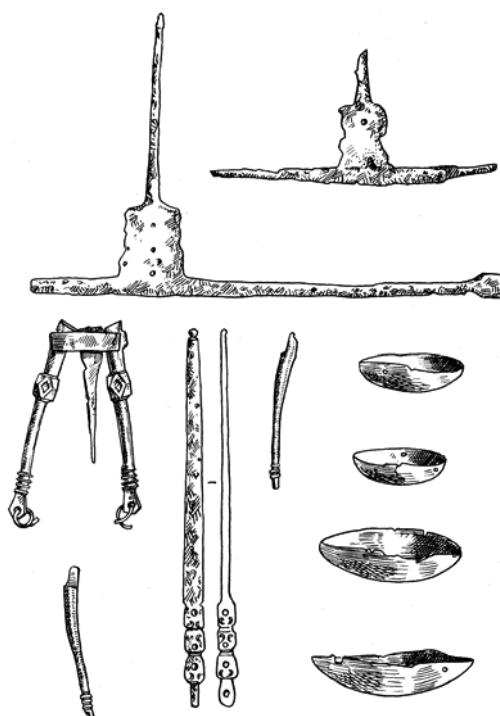
Type 2. 1/96 part of the Iraqi ratl at 409.512 g equals one mithqāl at 4.26 g (standard 4.235

g), which was also widespread in Bulgaria. Bell weights equal to one mithqāl are of greatest interest. A 8.75 g bell weight was equal to two mithqāls. Bell weights of 20.16 g, close to 42.25 g, 46.16 g, 127.8 g amounted to 5, 10, 11 and 30 mithqāls respectively. The 4.26 g weight was known earlier within the territory of the Middle Volga region. It was used in minting coins featuring the name of Nasir-lid-din in the Volga region after the 'coinless' period. Dirhams minted in unit 200 coins per standard mass of 426 g. [Mukhamadiyev, 1983, p. 32]. Mithqāl weighing 4.68 g enjoyed widespread use during the pre-Mongol period.

Type 3. 7/10 of mithqāl weighing 4.26 g is equal to a dirham at 2.9645 g. According to the accepted ration of 10: 7, V. Khints determined the weight of a classic silver dirham at 2.9645 g, which is proved by findings of stamped bell weights dating back to the latter half of the 8th century [Khints, 1970, p. 12]. Among the materials of Izmerskoe and Semenovskoe settlements, as well as Bilyar, there is a significant number of dirhams at 2.9645 g. Bell weights of 2.97 g can be found. Two bell weights from Izmerskoe settlement weigh 1.48 g each, which is equal to half of one dirham at 2.9645 g. Bell weights close to 5.93 g, 11.75 g, 14.7 g, 16.7 g, 29.7 g, 58.7 g, 234.0 g, 292.7 g, are equated with 2, 4, 6, 10, 20, 80, 100 dirhams respectively at 2.9645 g. A number of dirhams found at Semenovskoe settlement weigh between 2.94 and 2.97 g (Mansur ibn Nuh, ash-Shash, 975/976, 976/977).

Type 4. When minting Kufic dirhams, the ration of mithqāl: dirham = 3 : 2 was commonly used. In our collections, 31 bell weights equal 2.82 g, and 14 of them are from Bilyar. Bell weights of 2.82 g, 5.66 g, 23.2 g, 55.8 g, 277.17 g are equated with 1, 2, 10, 20 and 100 dirhams respectively at 2.82 g.

Type 5. Bell weights of 1.61 g and 3.12 g equal the so-called 'dirham-al-kayl'. 7 Bulgarian bell weights, including 4 from Bilyar and 3 from Izmerskoe settlement, are equated with this weighing standard. Two of them have weight within the scope of 434 g—assuming 'dirham-al-kayl' at 140. It had a net market weight and was used as a weight. 'Dirham-al-



Scales parts from the Bilyar excavations

kayl' was rarely used for weighing monetary units [Ibid., p. 13].

Type 6. A danik (dang, unit of weight) is equal to 1/6 of a mithqāl at 4.26 g [Ibid., p. 20]. In our collections, there are 13 bell weights represented that are equal to a danik. Two bell weights of 0.71 g and 0.69 g amount to 1 danik. Bell weights of 1.42 g, 3.57 g, 7.14 g amount to 2, 5, 10 daniks respectively.

Type 7. A qīrāt (0.176 g) equals 1/24 of mithqāl at 4.26 g. Bell weights of 0.87 g, 1.68 g, 5.18 g, 6.68 g amount to 5, 10, 30, 40 qīrāts. During the examined period, a qīrāt weighing 0.195 g was widely used in the system of mithqāl weighing 4.68 g. Bell weights of 1.98 g and 11.52 g amount to 10 and 60 qīrāts at 0.195 g.

Type 8. The smallest, mostly coin measure of weight is the habba ('barley-corn') amounting to 1/96 of a mithqāl at 4.26 g [Ibid., pp. 41–42]. In Bulgarian collections, there are 6 bell weights equal to the weight of a habba. Bell weights of 1.54 g equal 35 habbas at 0.044 g.



Weights of the first group are represented not only at the sites of Volga Bulgaria, as from here they penetrated into neighbouring lands. They were discovered together with scales in the settlements of the Rodanov culture [Belavin, 2000], as well as in old Russian cities [Yanin, 1956, p. 174].

Group II is represented by so-called 'spherical' (barrel- and puck-shaped, semispherical and octangular) bell weights made mainly of iron and encased in bronze. They contained different images and symbols such as multiples, cutting, points, lines, crescents and so on. Weight norms can be divided into the following types:

Type 1. Bell weights approximate to 13.65 g, 39.71 g, 82.75 g, 140.97 g, represent 1/30, 1/10, 1/5 and 1/3 respectively of the Iraq ratl at 409 g and 512 g.

Type 2. Bell weights approximate to 23.30 g, represent 5 mithqāls at 4.26 g. Bell weights approximate to 4.65 g, 93.6 g multiple of 5 + 5 gave the unit of weight equivalent to 1 and 2 mithqāls at 4.68 g, which precisely equals 1/72 of the ancient Egyptian-Roman pound [Xints, 1970, p. 13].

Type 3. Bell weights constituting a fraction of a dirham at 2,9645 g. Bell weights of 5.92 g, 14.5 g, 29.0 g and 44.45 g represent 2, 4, 5, 10 and 15 dirhams respectively.

Type 4. Bell weights equal to one dirham at 2.82 g. Bell weights of 2.79 g, 31.8 g and 54.5 g represent 1, 11 and 20 dirhams.

Type 5. A bell weight of 23.6 and multiple of  $3 + 3 = 3.94$  g was similar to the weight of the 'legal' dirham adopted by Caliph Umar during the regulation of the dirham system. V. Yanin believed that a 'legal' dirham was not involved in the monetary circulation of Eastern Europe [Yanin, 1956, p. 177]. According to A. Mongait, at the weight core of the spherical bell weights was the weight of the 'legal' dirham [Mongait, 1947, p. 67].

Type 6. Bell weights of 3.50 g and 94.9 g were based on the calculation of 1 and 30 'dirham-al-kayl'.

Type 7. One bell weight equals a danik. A bell weight of 47.1 g with multiple of 6;  $47.6 : 6 = 7.85$  g;  $0.71 \times 10 = 7.1$  g.

Type 8. A bell weight of 1.97 g equals 10 qirats at 0.195 g of the mithqāl system of 4.68 g.

The second group of bell weights was particularly widely disseminated not only in Volga Bulgaria, but also throughout all the Great Volga Route in the territory of Eastern and Northern Europe. They date predominantly to the 10–11th centuries.

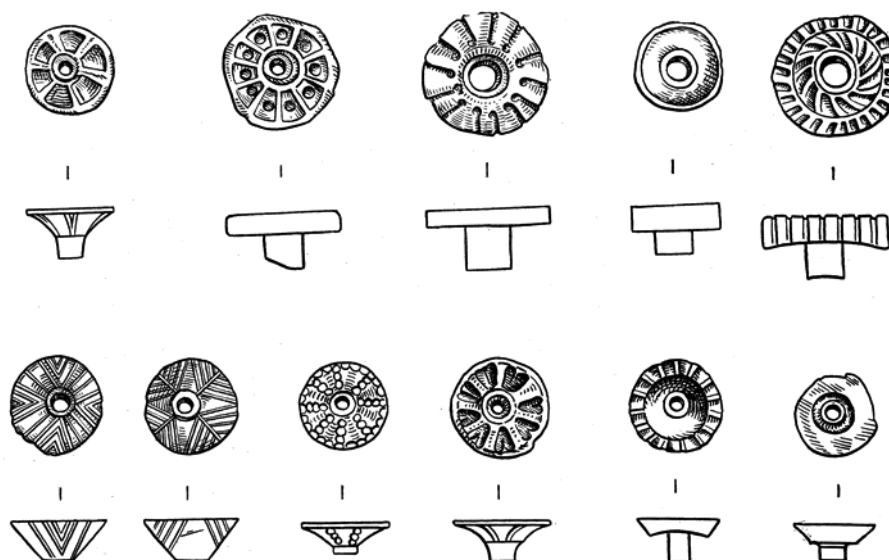
The extensive trade and cultural links between Bulgaria and the countries of the East resulted in the system units of measurement being transposed by Bulgarians from Eastern countries, but it is not a case of simple transposing, but an adaptation to the requirements of local trade.

Lead weight seals, considered one of the key indicators of monetary circulation, are also among the finds in Bulgarian urban settlements (over 80 items in Bilyar alone). Their purpose is not yet fully understood. It was suggested on the use of such weights as seals, which were appended to bundles of furry animal skins [KB, 1985, p. 110].

### Payment tokens and their distribution

In various stages of the country's history different items served as payment tokens. One of the crucial indicators of the nature and level of trade development is the issue of monetary circulation and its alternatives.

The best known trade object linked to the history of Bulgaria from the 9th century to the beginning of the 13th century, for Eastern authors, was animal furs. The sources estimated them not only as an important trade article but also emphasised the use of furs as a medium of exchange. Ibn Rustah, describing events of the 9th century, stated: 'The main possession of Bulgars were marten furs; the Bulgars had no gold or silver coins, and they payed with marten fur, one fur equal to two and a half dirhams' [Zakhoder, 1967, p. 34]. The dissemination of furs (skins) of furry animals as the role of the medium of exchange and an item of commerce was related to the natural and geographical characteristics of the area—an abundance of forests with many fur-bearing animals. The role of Volga Bulgaria as one of



Lead plummet-seals from the Bilyar site

the centres of the intermediate fur trade began in the last decades of the 9th century. Starting with Ibn Rustah's message, the references to the Bulgar fur trade became constant among the representatives of the classical school of Arabic geography. The use of furs for money was shown also in Rus' and also in local Finno-Ugric tribes. Arab authors have left many reports on trade between neighbours with the Bulgars, where the fur trade was a major component. The most common equivalent of small currency units were, obviously, squirrel furs (Tian) in this trade, as the case of language and folklore demonstrates. To this day, 'Tian' ('squirrel') in Tatar means a small bargaining chip. In the Tatar saying, 'Tian agachtan agachka, Tian (akcha) kuldán kulga sikere' ('A squirrel jumps from tree to tree, and money—from hand to hand', the same thought is emphasised.

Wide use of furs as currency units was a feature of the 9–10th centuries, but in the 11–12th centuries they continued to serve as the medium of exchange. There is an explicit reference of al-Gharnati, who pointed out that the Bulgars and the Ruses undertake trade transactions among themselves by means of old squirrel fur. Every 18 pieces in their count was worth one silver dirham, and you could buy

anything with this: gold, silver, a slave woman and other goods [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 28].

The development of internal and international trade required a metal coin system, which was more convenient as the medium of exchange. During the pre-Mongol period, Bulgaria used three main groups of foreign coins and their own coinage for money.

A particular group of coins is the *Sasanian dirhams*, which were minted on the basis of two weight standards: the early standard, the average weight of which ranged from 3.55–3.88 g, and slightly later standard, which approximated to the so-called Attic drachma at 4.25 g. The weight of these coins varies between 4.10–4.30 g, approaching 4.26 g [Lukonin, 1969, pp. 153–154]. On the territory of Volga Bulgaria, only the coins of a second type were known, the deposit of these coins by the local population came from a weight of 4.26 g. In the future, a weight of 4.26 g became the major weighing system in the territory. Many scholars believe that Sasanian coins appeared in the territory of the Cis-Kama region as early as the 6th century, and from there along with the Kufic dirham, not earlier than the last quarter of the 8th century, penetrated into Rus' and Western Europe [Yanin, 1956, p. 85]. There are numerous famous finds of Sasanian coins

in Volga Bulgaria, including those in burial sites of the 8–9th centuries. Their weight standard lies within 4.0–4.2 g.

The largest group contains Kufic dirhams, penetration of which into the territory of Eastern Europe started in the 770s–780s [Yanin, 1956, p. 84]. The major flow of Kufic dirhams into Northern Europe passed through Bulgaria.

The circulation of Kufic coins in Volga Bulgaria was demonstrated by written sources and archaeological-numismatic sources, in particular, by the topography of the dirhams themselves. In the well-known report of Ibn Rustah it was stated that the dirhams came from Muslim countries [Khvolson, 1869, p. 25]. Al-Gardizi has the same message [Zakhoder, 1967, p. 34].

Kufic coins that were involved in the commodity-monetary circulation of the Bulgars can be provisionally divided into two groups: Arabic coins, which were largely used at the end of 8–9th centuries, and Samanid coins, whose circulation was recorded in the 10th century.

V. Yanin at the time offered the following periodisation of the circulation of Eastern coins for Eastern Europe: Phase I—monetary circulation at the end of the 8–first third of the 9th century; Phase II—monetary circulation in 833–900; Phase III—monetary circulation in 900–938; Phase IV—monetary circulation from 938 up to the end of the 10th century [Yanin, 1956, pp. 86–136]. In relation to Bulgaria, this periodisation is also correct, but in view of the scarcity of treasures and single coins, it seems reasonable to unite the first and second phases into a uniform period with a predominance of Abbasid coins (the end of the 8–the end of the 9th century). It is linked to the early Bulgar period in the history of the country.

Among the Arabic coins, the Umayyad and Abbasid were highlighted, appearing to be in temporary circulation in the territory of Bulgaria. The first were minted during the Umayyad dynasty (661–750), the second during the rule of the Abbasids (750–1258). In the treasure of 1853 found near Bilyarsk, there were an Umayyad dirham of 121/738–739 and 11 Abbasid dirhams of 146–263/763–877 [Markov, 1910, p. 10, No. 62]. The same

situation existed across the entire territory of Eastern Europe. Except for the fact that Umayyad dirhams could have appeared earlier, but in treasures they are typically found together with Abbasid dirhams. The weight standard of Umayyad coins is within the limits of 2.7–2.9 g.

The influx of Kufic coins into Europe intensified during the rule of the Abbasids. Their weight standard lies within 2.8–2.9 g.

One of the oldest treasures in Volga Bulgaria is Almet'yevsk treasure hoard, found 20 kilometres from Bilyarsk. It contained 150 dirhams of the 8–9th centuries [Kropotkin, 1971, p. 88, No. 123]. In the lands of Bulgaria they didn't find treasures from the 9th century, but individual finds did occur.

In the 10th century the most powerful state in Middle Asia was the Samanid state, which had a great influence in many areas of Bulgarian life. The predominance of Samanid coins was characteristic of the second period of monetary circulation in Bulgaria (Phases II and IV according to V. Yanin). The adoption of Islam and the convergence of culture of the Arab East and Middle Asia dramatically increased the revenue of coins. 19 treasure hoards and numerous separate finds date to this period. According to the weight standard, Samanid coins were somewhat different from Abbasid coins; there was the increasing neglect in their coinage and it was reflected particularly in the widening of the range of weight variation. For instance, dirhams during Ismail's rule weighted on average between 2.7 and 3.1 g. Negligence of Samanid coin minting somewhat increased under the rule of Ahmed ibn Ismail (907–914)—the weight of coins varies between 2.7 and 3.2 g.

In the 10th century, in monetary circulation along with Samanid coins, there were also coins of other dynasties—Ziyarid, Julaid, Sallarid and Abbasid as evidenced by the composition of treasure hoards. In latter half of the 10th century, a group of coins of the Buwayhid dynasty was selected (only 6 treasures are known). A special group of second period treasures represent the so-called Kufic imitation of dirhams. These imitations made up for the metal coin shortage and at the same time they



10th century Volga Bulgaria coins from the collection of the State Historical Museum  
(according to S. Yanina)

indicate significant development in domestic monetary circulation.

Weight standards for coins in the two periods in Bulgaria, including Kufic dirham imitations, were 2.82 and 2.97 g. At the core of these coins' coinage was the weight of an Iraq ratl—409.512 g.

In Bulgaria, Western European coins were used in significantly lower amounts. It was believed until recently that Western European denarii were not used in Bulgaria, while from the latter half of the 11th century throughout Rus' the dirham was fully eliminated from circulation and the primary role was passed to the denarius [Yanin, 1956, p. 155]. There were no known West European coins in Bulgaria, and only over the past two decades at digs of Bulgarian settlements of the 10–11th centuries has a small number of them been found. The oldest among them was a Czech denarius of Prince Vaclav, coined in Prague in 929/930. [Khasakova, 1999]. It was discovered in the pre-Mongol (V) layer of the Kazan kremlin. During excavations of the Semenovskoe I ancient settlement, a silver denarius from 1047–1075, coined in Denmark, was discovered. The four coins of Earl Albert III (1037–1060) originate from Izmerskoe I ancient settlement, coined in Namyur, a copper forgery modelled on Groningen's denarius and Deventer Bernold's denarii (1027–1054) and another two German coins from the first half of the 11th century [Begovatov, 1998, pp. 40–41; Kazakov, 1991,

pp. 28–30]. Single western European coins of the end of the 10–11th centuries come from Bulgar, the vicinity of Bilyar (Kreshhyonyj Baran, 1905 hoard), Murom townlet, Dubovo burial site, and also are known in medieval records of Upper Kama [Ivanov, 1998, p. 165].

But there is no need to overestimate the possibility of wide dissemination of the western European dinarius in Bulgaria.

Most likely, the reduced influx of Kufic dirhams to the country resulted in the resurgence and the expansion of silver bars as the medium of exchange.

Russian and foreign researchers studying the trade relations between Eastern Europe and the East have long been interested in the coins minted by the Bulgars themselves. Academician Kh. Fraehn in his work 'Three Coins of Volga Bulgars in the 10th century' was the first to identify these group of coins for the first time [Fraehn, 1816]. Systematic and serious study of these coins has continued since that time.

With the practice of Kufic coin circulation and coining of imitations of Samanid dirhams, Bulgars were well prepared for minting their own coins, aided by the formation of the state, the building of cities and the feudalisation of society. The new state manifested through the minting of coins because 'in the Islamic world, coins played two roles, serving not only as a means of monetary circulation but also as a tool of political propaganda' [Yanina, 1962, p.

185]. G. Fedorov-Davydov emphasised that Bulgars own coinage pursued mainly prestigious, political aims [Fedorov-Davydov, 1987, p. 158]. The beginning of minting coins on behalf of the Bulgarian rulers is evidence of the emergence of a new state.

Alongside the political rationale, the economic purpose of issuing coins should not be forgotten. The number of Kufic coins in monetary circulation within Bulgaria was obviously not enough. Otherwise there would have been no dirham imitations.

Kufic dirham imitations is a fascinating but under-explored topic. It is yet to be established who coined these imitations. This has been hampered by the fact that 'to define a border line between the dirhams of Barbarian coinage and poor Samanid coinage is extremely difficult, precisely because standards of minting excellence varied across Samanid cities' [Fasmer, 1925, pp. 39–40]. Kh. Fraehn, V. Grigor'ev, A. Markov, P. Savel'ev, R. Fasmer and V. Yanin considered that these coins were minted by Volga Bulgars. E. Tsambur, T. Arne, V. Kropotkin and A. Bykov categorise these imitations as the coinage of Khazars.

The composition of treasure hoards found in the territory of Bulgaria clearly demonstrates a large amount of 'Barbarian' imitations: from 52 dirhams of the Chistopol treasure of 1885 there were 2 bracteates, from 167 coins of Staro-Almetyevo treasure of 1906 there were 8, from 300 coins of Kokryatovo treasure of 1890 there were 40 imitations. In the treasure hoard of 1853 found near Bilyarsk (researchers found 31 coins) there were 6 imitations. In the Danilovo treasure of 1902, 117 out of 137 dirhams were coined only on one side. Imitations are found in coin hoards from the Tatar Tolkish, Suvar, among the finds from Izmerskoe and Semenovskoe settlements and others.

The discovery of a brass stamp that served for coining 'Barbarian' imitations of Mansur ibn Nukh's dirhams points to the Bulgarian origin of these coins. This stamp was undoubtedly 'Barbarian', but high quality [Fasmer, 1925, pp. 4–45]. It is intriguing that above the first line of stamp inscription there was the 'A' symbol that is found on all

known dirhams of the Bulgarian tsar Mumin ibn al-dasan. And the exact same sign can be observed on numerous ceramics from Bilyar [Kochkina, 1983; Kokorina, 1989]. The discovery of a stamp bearing the name Mansur shows that the Bulgars continued to mint imitations of Samanid dirhams, even after they began issuing their own coins.

Finds of imitation Kufic coins minted by the Bulgars have been noted in the territory of Rus', Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and on the island of Gotland. The question around the date of beginning of coinage remained contentious for a long time. 'The first Bulgarian coins date to 918, were implemented unskillfully and imitated Samanid ones, by copying in its inscriptions even the names of Middle Asian cities: Shasha (Toshkent), Balkh, Samarkand, Nisabur, where they never coined,' wrote B. Grekov and N. Kalinin in 1948 [Grekov, Kalinin, 1948, p. 134]. V. Kropotkin also believed that the earliest coin was from 306/918–919. [Kropotkin, 1986, p. 40]. According to A. Kovalevsky, since the ruler of the Bulgars recognised the power of the sovereign of faithful above himself, it was made possible to inscribe on coins the name of local emir next to the name of relevant caliph [Kovalevsky, 1954, p. 47]. However, there is no numismatic data to confirm the beginning of the coinage or the fact of inscribing the names of local rulers on coins after 922.

In the second Nerevsk treasure hoard of Kufic coins from the 10th century found in 1956 during the excavations of Novgorod, 4 coins of Volga Bulgars were found. Among them there was unique fragment of a dirham with the name of the first ruler of Bulgaria, Al-mush son of Shilka. According to S. Yanina, this coin represents the earliest type of Bulgarian coinage and dates to 902–908 [Yanina, 1962, pp. 179–205].

There are several known coins made during the rule of Jafar ibn Abdallah. R. Fasmer and S. Yanina also dated the imitation coins with the as yet unestablished title of Barman (Barsal) and with the unclear name of one of Jafar's sons to the early stage of Bulgarian coinage [Fasmer, 1925, pp. 53–56; Yanina, 1962, pp. 186–189].

Mikail ibn Jafar's coins mark the subsequent development of Bulgarian coinage and there are the greatest number of them in the treasure hoards. They also imitate the Samanid dirham, but with superior results. Some of them bear in the endorsement a spot for coinage 'Bulgar', and the rest were coined with names of major cities of the Samanid state.

The subsequent development of Volga Bulgarian money coinage is evident through the coins of Abdallah ibn Mikail, coined in Bulgar in 336/947–948, Talib ibn Ahmad, coined in Suvar in 337/948–949 and 347/958–959, Mumin ibn Ahmad, coined in Suvar in 366/976–977, Mumin ibn al-Hasan, coined in 366/976–977 and one coin from Bulgar. We have no coins minted after 376/986–987. Coin weight varies between 2.7–2.9 g, approaching the weight of dirham of 2.82 and 2.97 g. Thus, even on the norms of weight, there is no significant difference between Bulgarian and Samanid coins.

Bulgarian dirhams, when included in the total flow of Kufic dirhams in the 10th century, were involved in the goods-monetary circulation in the territory of Eastern and Western Europe. They were exchanged for various goods.

In the territory of Volga Bulgaria, Bulgarian-minted coins were discovered in two hoards of Kufic coins. One was found in the settlement of St. Almetyevo (today's Chistopol district of TR) in 1906 and consisted of 167 coins, also including 2 Bulgarian dirhams with the name of Mumin ibn al-Hasan. The younger coin was minted in 984/985. The second treasure was discovered in 1907 in the village of Tat. Tolkish (Chistopol district of TR) and consisted of 957 coins, including 3 coins of Volga Bulgars [Kropotkin, 1971, No. 120, 122].

It should also be pointed out that Bulgarian coins were in circulation among the population of Rus', Baltics and Western Europe on an equal footing not only with Kufic, but also with Western European and Byzantine coins in the 11th and even in the 12th century. A treasure of Kufic, West European coins and silver objects with a weight about 7 kg was found in Starydvorsk (Poland) in 1878. 1 Bulgarian coin of Talib ibn Ahmed, coined in Suvar in

951/952 was identified. The hoard was buried after 1025 [Kropotkin, 1986, p. 50]. A treasure hoard near Kohtla town (Estonia), found in 1957 consisted of 779 coins, including a Suvar coin of Mumin ibn Ahmad, coined in 975/976. The hoard was buried in 1130, meaning that in the 12th century Bulgarian coins were still in circulation in the Baltic region [Ibid., p. 40].

The development of commercial production in Bulgaria in the 11–12th centuries at a time of the Kufic dirham withdrawal and a low influx of West European denarii led to silver ingots becoming the main medium of exchange during that period. These ingots, without entering the area of the small goods-monetary circulation, were a highly convenient form for the implementation of major commercial transactions.

What could serve as the raw material for their casting process during the 'silver' crisis? It is known that there were no silver deposits developed on the territory of the Middle Volga Region. Nevertheless, there are arguments for discussing local silver ingot production. The main base material was seemingly the huge mass of Kufic coins in circulation in Bulgaria. Damaged coins were smelted down, and silver ingots were made from them. Later. In the territory of Volga Bulgaria no silver vessel from the East of the 9–11th centuries has been found. Where could these Eastern vessels have disappeared to, after being imported in large quantities in the growth period of Arab trade? They were most likely turned into ingots. The raw material could also be Ural silver mining sites, from where Bulgaria received ore through trade.

All the ingots found on the territory of Bulgaria can be divided into three groups. The first group consists of silver fragments of multiple forms: triangular, circular, irregular shape, which when necessary were cleaved into different parts. Silver pieces were taken not by piece, but by weight, as evidenced by the significant finds of bell weights and weights in Bulgarian written sources from the end of the 10th century, and also the wide variety of these ingots' weight norms. Weights and bell weights were designed for weighing pieces of coin silver.

The second group of ingots has a circular shape. Researchers have noted two centres where such ingots were found: Sirdarya region and the Middle Volga Region with Trans-Urals region. Only one treasure hoard is known in Sirdarya region, which contained these ingots along with coins from the 10–11th centuries, and in the territory of Bulgaria 11 treasure hoards were found, pointing to the likelihood that Bulgarians produced circular ingots.

Their weight norm was near the theoretical weight of 204.756 g. In the composition of treasures from Spassk and Laishevo there were ingots with a weight of 200.22 and 204.256 g. A weight of 204.756 g amounted 409.512 g of Iraq ratl. An interesting case in this vein was the discovery of two ingots in Cherdyn Uyezd, one of which had a weight of 409.512 g. Also of note is that the so-called 'Novgorod' ingots were also made from the calculation of 204.756 g. This weight would subsequently form the basis for the weight norm of Jochid coins, coined from the calculation of 100 coins to the weight of an ingot.

The third group of ingots—the 'Novgorod' ingots—owes its name to a place it was first discovered. In Bulgaria they were most likely in circulation from the 12th to the 14th centuries. These ingots are elongated silver bars with a roughly triangular section. They were discovered in Bulgaria largely as part of hoards (Bulgar, Bilyar, Tankeevka, Malye Atryasy). They were also made from the weight calculation 204.756 g. Silver ingots in Volga Bulgaria received the name of 'saums' or 'soms'.

As very large currency units, they typically had a slow circulation, which is why they were used mostly for large payments. This resulted in the need to use a wide range of items the 'no-coin' period, the hallmark of which was their standardisation, and also the possibility of various goods being equaled to them. A wide range of products performed that function. Lead 'weight seals' assume a special place among them.

Most researchers hold the opinion that lead weight seals were a substitute for money and are evidence of monetary circulation. This is well supported by al-Gharnati's accounts. He reported to Saksin: 'They have a tin in the cir-

culation, every eight Bagdad manns cost a denarius, they cut it to pieces and buy for it what they want of fruits, bread and meat' [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 28]. Another account by the same author is also interesting: 'When they (furs) rot in their houses, they carry them in bags (sometimes even) ripped, heading with them to the familiar market, where there are some people, and workers before them. And so they put them in front of them and workers spear them onto strong threads, eighteen in a single bundle, and put a piece of black lead on the end of a thread and stamp it with a seal bearing the image of the tsar. They take one skin for each stamp until all have been stamped. And no one can refuse them, they sell them and buy them' [Ibid., p. 36]. A. Mongajt suggests that this information applies to all Eastern Slavic lands, and that this was archaeologically confirmed by the lead seals found in many ancient cities of Rus', and the quantity of which estimated to be more than 15,000 pieces in museums [Mongajt, 1961, p. 177].

The emergence of leaden weight seals in the territory of Bulgaria dated back to the early Bulgarian period. They are found in the settlements from the 10–11th centuries and later. These 'seals' number in the dozens in the collections of Bilyar, Bulgar, Suvar and other pre-Mongol archaeological sites. These items were manufactured by local Bulgarian masters, as illustrated by the discovery of a casting mold from excavations of Bilyar (in total, Bilyar collections contain 86 leaden seals).

We can also assume that during the 'no-coin' period in Bulgaria, spindle whorls were also used instead of money. These began to arrive in Bulgaria from the end of the 10th century through the trade with Rus', necklaces, mainly gold glass and silver glass, crystal and carnelian (Eastern import), and also 'Kauri' shells (*Cypraea moneta*) delivered, according to al-Idrisi (12th century), from the Maldives, where they were used as currency units.

Therefore we have reason to believe that goods-monetary relations in pre-Mongol Bulgaria significantly matured and without regard to this it is impossible to understand the social and economic situation of Bulgarian society.

## 2. The Great Volga Route.

### Trade relations with Northern Europe and the East

*Anatoly Kirpichnikov, Fayaz Khuzin*

The Great Volga Route in the early Middle Ages was of key geopolitical, cultural, transportation and trade importance, as well as an international and interstate phenomenon. It facilitated contact and intercommunication between Slavic, Finno-Ugrian, Turkic and other peoples and tribes of the Old World for better understanding each other, enabling them to enrich themselves with the blessings of human civilisation and common achievements in economic, technical and cultural spheres. At that time, the Volga Trade Route encouraged the unprecedented progress of the Eurasian communities, accelerating social and economic processes in numerous countries and regions, and contributing to the creation of a common supranational economic space within a sizable part of Eurasia. The run of the above Route in the 8–11th centuries had a decisive impact on the rise of the phenomenon which was novel for those times that could be specified as the globalisation of international economics.

The Great Volga Route played a crucial part in the development of Slavic, Finno-Ugrian, Turkic as well as Scandinavian peoples of the then Europe as concerns economics, transportation, crafts, routes of communication, people-to-people trading facilities and, in the end, rise of states and government institutions.

Judging by finds of eastern silver, the Volga and its biggest northern tributary stream, the Kama, in the 7th to 8th centuries were more and more intensively used for the sake of long-distance boat traffic. In the final quarter of the first millennium the importance of the Volga Trade Route increased to such an extent that it became the main waterway connecting Europe and Asia. There were solid reasons for this. Due to Arab expansion, the access of Europeans to the Mediterranean Sea in the 7th to 8th centuries was barred, which fatally affected links with the Byzantine Empire and

the Middle East whereupon trade had to seek the alternative routes. And such a thoroughfare across Eastern Europe to the regions of Asia, well known since the old days, came to be used for heavy and ever increasing traffic. The overpopulation of Scandinavia squeezed out the surplus to look for new territories fit for settling, commerce and plunder. Along with this there grew a demand for monetary resources and wares from the East [Nosov, 1999, pp. 162–163].

The turbulent period of rising states, armies, navies and government institutions was attended by the ruling leadership's proclivity for repartition of the world and military expeditions. Specialisation of labour in the then known world, maldistribution of primary resources in both East and West, prime cost differentiation for distant regions pushed towards wealth accumulation and merchantable goods exchange. The fellowships of chapmen re-energised the caravan trade. The waterways fit for not only seacraft but also for large river boats up to 2 metres wide and 8 metres long received top priority. Arranged regional as well as transcontinental communications required the existence of riverside settlements, ship stations, and permanent or seasonal trade spots.

The length of the Volga, the longest river in Eastern Europe, is 3690 km. It flows across the Rusessian Plain from the Valdai Hills to the Caspian Depression, passing by the forest, forest-steppe and the steppe areas. The Volga as a great river was mentioned in the Tale of Bygone Years as having had taken off from the Okovsk forest and flowed through its 70 arms into the Caspian Sea—'that way one can proceed along Volga to the Bulgars, Khvalisses, Khwarezm and farther eastwards until Shem's lot' [The Tale of Bygone Years, 1996, I, p. 9] that is to the confines of Asia given, according to the Bible, to Shem and his posterity.



The Great Volga Route as it was in the final quarter of the first millennium can be imagined as being divided into several sections. Naturally, the Volga formed the main part, there also belonged the basin-related rivers as well as its overland extensions. It wouldn't be too much to extend the total mileage of the Volga system with due regard to its overt or covert running from Britain and Holland as far as Iran and Iraq. Below we mention the side system branches.

The northern part of the Volga Trade Route lay beyond its limits. That included the North and Baltic Sea, the Gulf of Finland, the Neva River, Lake Ladoga, the Volkhov River and Lake Ilmen. Then there came a convenient cross cut (even taking into account the portages), the 'Seliger Route', to the Volga source along the rivers Polya and Yavon' until Lake Seliger, thereafter down the Selizharovka River as an outlet to the Volga. The transition from the Volkhov to the Volga should not be excluded either. That could come down the rivers Msta, Tsna, Tvertsa [Nosov, 1976, p. 97 ff.]. Subsequently, the voyage was exercised along the main part of the route that is the number one river up to its estuary. The southern part of it included the Caspian Sea up to its southern coast (Jurjan region). Then overland travel to the city of Ray or still farther to Baghdad. The major waterborne part of the voyage fell at the stretch of Eastern Europe. Travellers had to overcome portages and on the Neva and the Volkhov—rapids.

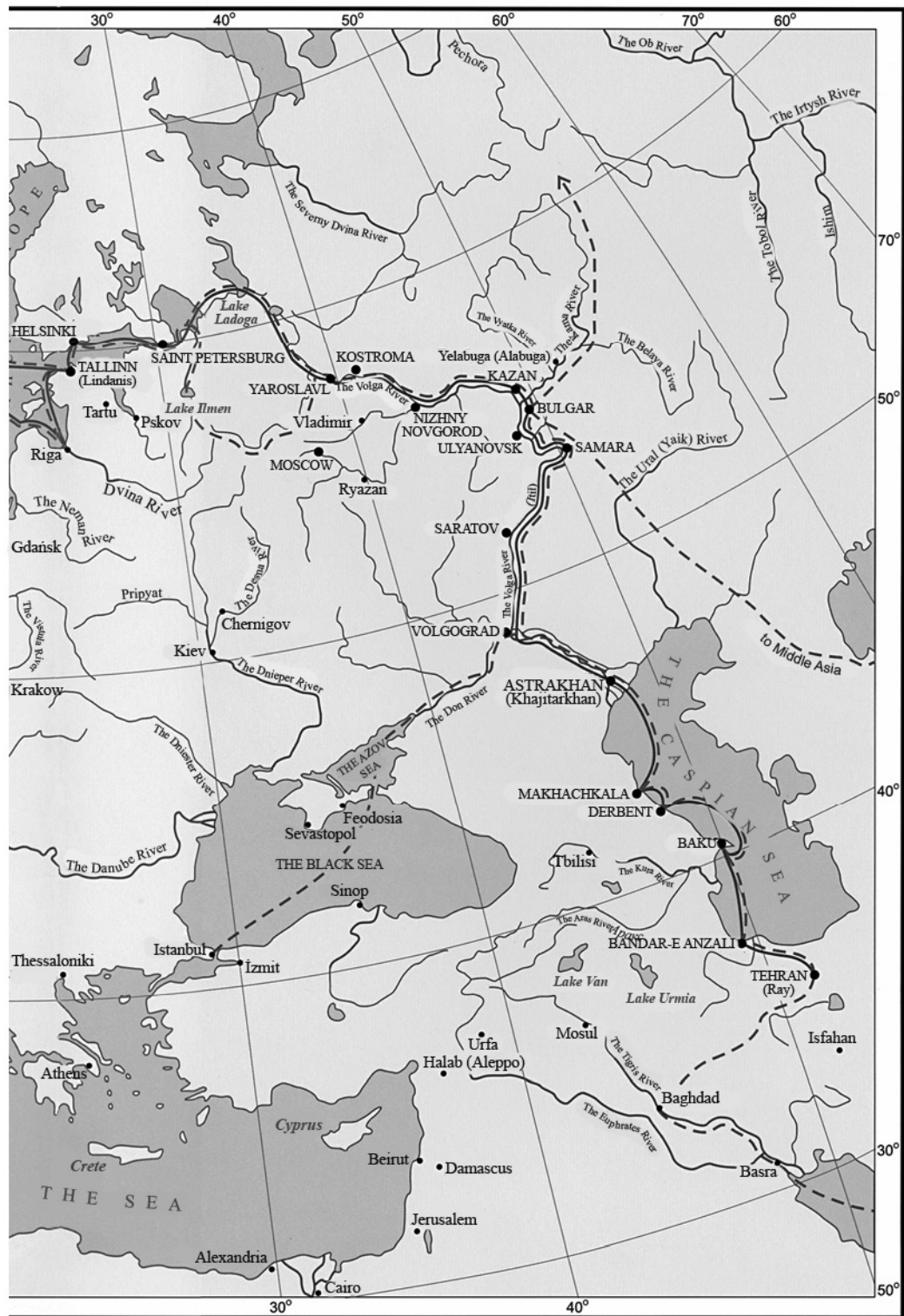
It took caravans from the Baltics (say, from the port of Birka) to the Caspian region (presumably to Derbent), given that the distance was nearly 5500 km, some two months there and longer back. In the latter case as concerns the river part of the voyage, it was upstream while the average speed of the vessels was 25 km a day. Thus, vessels that had visited towns of the Caspian Sea region were unlikely to come back to their home ports in the Baltic region. In other words, sail and oared vessels of the same flotilla could accomplish a turn-around cycle once a year, at best. The cargo transportation network encompassed the Kama (the so called 'Furs Route'), Vyatka, Oka, Klyazma, Kotorosl', and Msta. The Don and

Neman-Donets routes enjoyed independent significance [Bulkin, Machinsky, 1986, pp. 13–26]. From the Volga headwaters there existed an outlet to the Western Dvina and 'up the Dvina to the Varangians, and from the Varangians to Rome' [The Tale of Bygone Years, 1996, I, p. 9]. Both the Volga and the Don routes closed with each other at the town of Kalach (with an overland distance of about 60 versts). In the middle reaches of the Volga south-eastward there reached out the overland routes to Khwarezm and westward to Kiev (according to al-Idrisi, about 20 stations for 1400 km to 1500 km distance) [Rybakov, 1969, p. 189 and the following page] to Bohemia and southern Germany. Of all the water routes of the Rusessian Plain, the Volga Trade Route with branches finds itself among the most developed and important, whereas its mainstream for the West–East vector is considered the primary one.

From a historical perspective, the Volga never encouraged separation of peoples, on the contrary, it attracted new settlers to its banks. It was a kind of axis around which, at different times, grouped Alans, Khazars, Magyars, Pechenegs, Oghuzes, Burtases, Bulgars, Mordvins, Muroma, Meshchera, Veps, Chud, Slavs (including Severyans, Radimiches, Vyatches, Novgorod Slovens), and Yugra. Arabs, Persians, Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Jews, Balts, Scandinavians, Friesians, Saxons, West Slavs also knew the Volga Trade Route well. They all belonged to different religions: ... there were Pagans, Christians, Jews, and Muslims, which never stood in the way of establishing long-term contacts and negotiations. In the history of world civilisation it proved to be a golden period of religious tolerance and inter-ethnic coexistence between communities consolidated by trade. The existence of the Volga and other rivers related to its basin facilitated population diffusion and the agricultural development of both North-Eastern and North-Western Rus' by the Slavs. That process was most intensive in the interstream area of the Volga and the Oka. It was no coincidence that major cities such as Murom, Suzdal, Rostov and, somewhat later, Vladimir

The Great Volga Route





were set up right here. The situation in the steppe part of the Volga river changed. Upon reaching the river, the nomads, as it happened, transitioned to part or full sedentariness and set up permanent camps.

The progress of regional, in particular, long-distance trade in the eastern part of Europe was the pivot point that was accompanied by a burst of urbanisation. Urban expansion made trade a common phenomenon [Brodel, 1986, pp. 509–510]. Eurasian trade, on par with this, resulted in the setting up of new and reformation of existing townships within the related river and marine routes. It was here, within the framework of the Volga Trade Route, that the majority of the Early Medieval townships and trade outposts emerged. Those settlements were not inevitably stretched along seashores or riverside and lake banks, some of them were located deep in dry land for safety and better links with agriculture and raw materials. Settlements of those times were predominantly multi-functional: they were simultaneously administrative, military, crafts, trade and religious centres. Regional and in-transit freight storage facilities, dockyards and seasonal fairs, hostels, ship, service and customs stations were also established there. In the northern part of the Volga Trade Route there appeared specific river-port townships similar to the west European viks. The structure of those centres prioritised trade interests, crafts, proximity to water transport and availability of merchant transport. Apart from the unique features, they had much in common: they were not of the agrarian type but, instead, of the trade-and-craft type with various craftshops fit to meet the needs of the townfolk and the outside population, there existed with separate districts for artisans, merchants and warriors.

Among townships within the Volga Trade Route network there emerged key towns which, for each single territorial unit, controlled certain sections of the water routes. They were situated on the crossroads, transload points, at havens which facilitated trade, stevedoring cargoes and commercial contacts with townfolk and surrounding population.

We list the names of those towns directly or indirectly related to the Great Volga Route in the course of the 8th to 9th centuries and later. From West to East and further South as follows: Dorestad in Frisia, York in Britain, Hedeby in Denmark, Nidaros and Kaupang in Norway, Åhus and Birka in Sweden, Starigrad (Oldenburg), Rerik (Mecklenburg), Ralswiek and Arkona (the Rugen island), Menzlin, Szczecin, Wolin Kołobrzeg, Truso at the Lake Drużno—all in the realms of the West Slavs, Paviken on the Gottland island, Saltvik on the Åland Islands, Grobini in Latvia [cf: Callmer, 1994, pp. 53–72]. As for the Eastern European population clusters (mostly of the 9–10th centuries) one should mention Ladoga in the lower course of the Volkhov River that was the predecessor of Novgorod, the Riurik archaeological site at the source of the above river. Then downstream on the Volga there are the archaeological complexes of Timerevo and Mikhailovskoe, which gave start Yaroslavl its start in life. The early-medieval centres of the Zalesk area also had definite ties to the Volga: Sarsk archaeological site—predecessor of Rostov, Suzdal, Kleschin—predecessor of Pereslavl-Zalessky. The next point is Murom on the Oka River. In the Volga middle reach there were: a township that existed on the site of modern Kazan, Bulgar, Suvar, Bilyar, Oshel and other trade and craft sites. Prospering in the Volga Delta was Atil, the capital of Khazaria. We also point to Sarkel—Belaya Vezha, built in 834 or 837. In the Caspian area there were located the cities of Samandar, Belenjer, Derbent, and Baku. The south-east of the Caspian Sea enjoyed the company of the Jurjan province with the port of Abeskun, as a contemporary noted, 'the best known port on the Khazar Sea'. From there the overland caravan routes lead to Ray, the 'trade centre of the world', and on up to Baghdad. Another route from Abeskun via Balkh and Transoxiana lead to Central Asia and China [Zakhoder, 1962, pp. 14–17]. The above list contains far from all the ancient townships around the time of the Great Volga Route. Some have not yet been established, while the location of others is in doubt. Some settlements are just an ar-

chaeological notion, with no names to attach to them. For all that, the more or less major trade sites of the 8th and 9th centuries onward were relatively small number, they were the mainstays determining the state of the people-to-people trade relations.

The population of the market towns consisted of the titular ethnic group and the newcomers who underwent seasonal fluctuations. For safety reasons, maintenance of certain public relations and regulation of trade and transactions, there were undoubtedly regulations and behavioural legal standards in force. The status and position of the market townships were often ahead of their time: when they existed they were the first open and 'free' towns in Europe. Socially, the inhabitants of those centres were diverse: the nobility, subordinate house serfs or slaves were divided into social classes. However, the majority of citizens enjoyed civil liberties. Their hallmarks were the ethnic variety, inter-ethnic tolerance, mixed communities including quite people of exotic origins, all of whom seemingly had equal rights, uncommon religious liberality and racial tolerance.

The description of conditions under which the multilingual community of the early port sites flourished provided with reliable details was given in *Chronicle of the Archbishops of the Hamburg Church* by Adam of Bremen (around 1075). 'The renowned town of Yumna (Wolin)—the excellent port site frequented by the Greeks as well as the barbarians from the vicinity... It is the greatest city in Europe. Inhabited by the Slavs along with other peoples, Greeks and barbarians. Even the Saxons, who came there, enjoy equal rights with the natives provided they do not parade their Christianity. As for their morals and hospitality, one could not find people who surpass them in honesty and cordiality. This city is full of goods from anywhere so one who seeks whatever that is costly and rare is not disappointed [Khrestomatiya (Anthology), 1949, pp. 42–43]. The described peculiarities of urban life were undoubtedly inherited by the Wolins from earlier times and could be applied as exemplary to other market towns of Northern and Eastern Europe. Thus, from the record 'Life

of St. Ansgary (the noted German missionary visited Sweden in 829 to 830 and in 852) we learn that in Birka there were 'many wealthy merchants, abundance of multifarious goods and valuables' [From the *Early History*, 1999, p. 40].

The difference in ethnic, cultural, economic and geographical conditions never barred township communities of the Baltics and Eastern Europe from cooperation in form of some specific commercial and economic fellowships consolidated by common interest in terms of international trade. More often than not, the state as represented by its institutions did not interfere with that free enterprise. The development of trade centres progressed based on the communicating vessels principle. The progress achieved in one place was spread to another one, and the distance between them was irrelevant. The production of marketable goods to attained high technical standards fully met the requirements of the global demand for jewellery, toiletries and weaponry. Furs, leather items, incenses and slaves were universally recognised in the global market. The priorities of recognised high-quality goods from certain cities and workshops were being set in the system of distant trade. The blacksmiths of the Rhineland region which perhaps were the first weapons manufactories in Europe supplied the whole world with swords and armor of unsurpassed quality. The furs of the northern people were concentrated in the north Russian towns originally in Ladoga and then they were sold at a huge profit in the eastern markets. According to the archaeological excavations the people in that very Ladoga had been producing jewellery made of glass, bone, bronze and amber for three centuries. Then they were spread among the local Finns and other buyers.

Merchants who often acted as soldiers, sailors and masters all in one formed consolidated associations bound by a fellowship oath hired oarsmen and started out on a journey on several ships.

The road became familiar to them. Suffering from cold, they were not afraid of spending the winter somewhere along the way waiting for spring to come. Always having their

belts with coins, the merchants used cash and exchange. For instance, upon finding themselves in areas rich in furs, they would barter the imported goods for furs. Later on the furs which were bought were sold for money in eastern markets [L'vova, 1977, p. 108]. The merchants' trips went with the mediation. It is known that the Bulgarian merchants sold to the Arabs furs which were bartered with the northern peoples. Islamic writers reported that the Arabic merchants did not travel farther than Bulgar, as they were satisfied with rich local transit and in many respects overbought market.

The commodity-money relations within the zone of river routes and neighbouring settlements of the European continent gained unprecedented momentum during the early Middle Ages due to export-import operations. Large commercial capital was accumulated. Evidently it was used for organising new transfer, for ship's equipment and hire of ship's company, paying duties, purchasing oriental and European goods and also slaves and female slaves, for paying tributes and taxes, for building dwellings, warehouses, timbers and for keeping guard. A part of the surplus money was hidden 'until better times' and sometimes was sacrificed to gods. The growing enrichment of certain groups of people contributed to the social stratification of the society and at the same time to the development of its economic basis. Conditions occurred for capitalist relations which were not put into practice at that time [Bolshakov, 1984, p. 271].

The global market was formed under the action of different circumstances in many respects spontaneously but in a progressive tendency. There were no prohibitions and restrictions of trade in most areas. Travelling expenses and duties, and also dangers en route, did not stop merchants. The travels of those people took place at populated but mostly uninhabited areas including those through if one can say so no man's 'stateless' lands. At portages, overnight stops and while moving on the water as well merchant were caught by the attacks of outlaws and pirates. It is clear that such a trip made on one's own was doomed

to failure. The flotilla of a caravan must have been guarded with warriors acting as rowers at the same time. The figure of a courageous enterprising itinerant merchant acquired some kind of a heroic aura. Written in an eastern source: 'who due to cupidity goes to the West over the mountains and the seas, endanger the life and the body and the property, do not fear of outlaws and vagabonds, predators who devour people and of unsafe roads and who brings goods from the East to the people from the West and goods from the West to the people from the East is definitely contributes to the prosperity of the world and it is none other than a merchant'. [Zakhoder, 1962, p. 43].

The states which were founded along the Volga Trade Route promoted its intensive operation. In this respect, their role remains undervalued. Primarily it refers to Khazaria, situated in the lower reaches of the Volga, the foothills of the Caucasus, the Kuban, the middle reaches of the Don, the Seversky Donets basin, the northern Azov Sea region and a part of Crimea. Atil, as the capital of the Khazars, was the largest market and custom city in the East Europe where immigrants from different countries including the Slavs lived in separate blocks. According to M. Artamonov 'the Khazars played a progressive role in history. They stopped the onslaught of the Arabs, opened their doors for Byzantine culture, established order and safety in the steppes of the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea regions which gave a powerful impetus to the development of the economy of those countries and caused the settlement of the Slavs in the forest area of Eastern Europe' [Artamonov, 1962, pp. 457–458].

Volga Bulgaria strongly developed from the end of the 9th century. In the middle of the 10th century it became independent from Khazaria and inherited an unusually progressive trade mission. The main water and land routes met at the territory of that country which joined it with the main trade partners of the East and West. The prosperity of Volga Bulgaria was reflected in an extraordinary density of settlements founded in the pre-Mongol period. They number about 170. Un-

like Khazaria, which was sacked in the 960s, Bulgaria retained its importance as an economic and cultural centre and transit centre up to the Mongol invasion in 1236.

Northern Rus', which was founded in the 9th century with its capital in Ladoga, later in Kholmgorod that is Prednovgorod exerted a fundamental influence on the use of Volga Trade Route, especially its Baltic part. The authorities of the newly formed country considerably expanded Baltic-European relations. Ladoga and other northern Russian cities became centres which made economic and transport links between the West and the East more active. It is most likely that during the rule of the first representative of the ruling dynasty—prince Rurik—a system of safe sailing was established which was called 'trade peace'. Consequently the most favorable conditions were created for the free navigation in a significant part of the Baltic-Volga route.

The country of Riurik was founded on prepared ground. Here let us point out first of all a report about a Khaganate of 'Ros people' which was founded no later than the 830s. According to the 'Annales Bertiniani' in 839 Byzantine emperor Theofilos sent a group who called itself 'people of Ros' whose ruler called himself 'khaganus' as a member of Embassy to King Louis the Pious in Ingelheim. When ascertaining the ethnicity of those people they turned out to be the 'Sweonas' (the Swedes) and intended to go back from Constantinople to their own country by a roundabout route because the straight road was dangerous as it 'ran amongst the barbarian tribes which were especially cruel and unprecedentedly savage' [Novoseltsev, 1991, p. 8]. This report of 'Annales Bertiniani' may be corroborated by the information of Ibn Rustah, who at the beginning of the 10th century wrote according to the information arising by the middle of the 9th century that for instance 'they had a tsar called the khagan of the Ruses' [Novoseltsev, 1965, p. 397].

According to the 'Tale of the calling of the Varangians' Ladoga had been the main centre of the inter-tribal confederation of the northern and Finn tribes before the enthronement of Rurik in 862 [Kirpichnikov, 1988, p. 46 ff.].

This confederation may be compared with the Khanate of the Ruses', which declared itself in the first half of the 9th century.

The location of the political formation of the Ruses in the northern part of Eastern Europe has its own reasons [Novoseltsev, 1990, pp. 207–208]. It is no coincidence that the Ruses are neighbours of the Baltic peoples and the northern Finno-Ugrians in an undated part of 'The Tale of Bygone Years' [The Tale of Bygone Years, 1996, 1, p. 8]. The centre of this formation initially could have been in Ladoga. A report from 839 contains a mention of the northern address of the Ruses. As has been mentioned, the Ruses turned out to be the Swedes. Their presence as ambassadors of the 'Khaganus' reminds us of a similar situation with the composition of the embassy of Rus' to Byzantium in 911 and 945. At that time there were ambassadors who bore Scandinavian names among those who signed the appropriate agreements of 'the Rusessian kin' [cf. Sedov, 1999, p. 73]. It is evident that the tradition of integration of the Scandinavians in diplomatic missions goes back to the first half of the 9th century. In that period as it can be stated according to the data from the written and archaeological sources, the presence of the Normans in Eastern Europe was limited by the lower reaches of the Volkhov river. In other words, the most appropriate place for their residence at that time was Ladoga and later probably Rurikovo ancient town.

The neighbourhood of the peoples within the Volga Trade Route gave birth to a phenomenon of Slavic presence in considerable areas of this system. There were many permanent residents from amongst the Slavs and the Ruses in Volga Bulgaria. There were blocks of Slavic-Russian settlers in Atil, the capital of Khazaria. Those people served in the cavalry of the Khazarian tsar and had a special judge and their own temple. As reported by the Arab geographer Ibn Hawqal, there was a maritime harbour in the 'Slavic part' of the city. That 'part' seemed more populated and splendid than an Italian city of Palermo [Garkavi, 1870, pp. 221–222].

The Ruseses are usually mentioned together with the Slavs *in the sources*. M.

Artamonov justly believed that that name 'could have been borne by the Norman-Slavic military and merchant *druzhinas* just because they were formed in the Rusessian state and originated there' [Artamonov, 1962, p. 383]. Eastern authors write of the Ruses as fur sellers, warriors who sailed along the Volga (and other rivers) and went down the river on their ships somewhere from its upper reaches. They are professionally defined as a special group of merchants. That is why persons of different origin can be represented among them: Scandinavian, Slavic and, quite possibly, Finn.

Let us refer to highly informative, yet complicated with respect to its textual criticism, report by Ibn Khordadbeh, which was in his 'Book of Ways and Kingdoms' written in 846/847 and supplemented in 885/886. The paragraph discussed below is included in the original author's edition: 'The Ruseses merchants looking as the Slavs export beaver and silver fox furs and swords from the distant parts of the Slavic country to the Sea of Rum and the ruler ar-Rum (of Byzantium) takes a tithe from them. If they want, they go down the river of the Slavs (?) and enter Khamlij, the Khazar city. Their (the Khazars') ruler also takes a tithe from them. Further on they move to the Jurjan (Caspian) Sea and disembark on a shore where they have been going to. The circuit of the sea is 500 farsangs. Sometimes they bring their goods on camels from Jurjan (a province in the south-east of Caspian) to Baghdad and the Slavic eunuchs translate for them. They (the Ruses) call themselves Christians' [Novoseltsev, 1965, pp. 384–385; Zakhoder, 1967, pp. 84–85].

Here are mentioned not one, as it's sometimes believed, but two routes of the Ruses merchants. One led to the Sea of Rum to Byzantium. The details are not present, but there is no doubt that they went down one of the rivers of modern-day southern Russia, probably along the Don. Another route marked by Ibn Khordadbeh allows different interpretations as the Slavic river names are so much distorted in the manuscripts that they cannot be reconstructed by means of textual criticism

[Novoseltsev, 1965, p. 384, comm. 168; Kalinina, 1986, p. 79]. If Tanais was considered to be there, then the route passed through the Don, then moved to the Volga river, probably in portage zone went to its lower reaches, and then there was the Caspian. There are still insufficient details to prove precisely such a route with the passage from one river to another. It is clear only that the merchants turned out to be in the lower reaches of the Volga in the Khazar city of Khamlij (Atil) when finishing their route. And that after having paid the tithe, they were allowed to move to the Caspian Sea.

The Don, or more precisely in this instance Don-Volga route, in comparison with Volga route, was shorter and safer from the nomads for the merchants going from the north. Speaking about Don Route, it was very convenient for the Black Sea trade. This route is considered to be connected with the Oka and the outlet to the upper reaches of the Volga [Leontiyev, 1986, p. 65 ff.]. Travelling along this route was difficult due to long land passages, the longest of which at the source of the Don ran up to 150 km. The Don Route went in the Crimean-Black Sea direction. If it was used when reaching the Caspian countries, then it was inferior to the Volga route in its through-going passability. The latter one, due to the foundation of the Bulgarian 'tsardom' at the end of the 9–beginning of the 10th centuries, was seemingly considered more preferable in comparison with Don Route.

If one imagines the name of the river Atil in the unclear passage of the text by Ibn Khordadbeh, then a quite logical Volga route will be seen. It was clarified in the book by Ibn Khordadbeh that the Khazarian city Khamlij, where merchants paid their duties, was situated 'at the mouth of the river which flew from the country of the Slavs and fell into the Jurjan Sea' [Kalinina, 1986, pp. 70–71], and then it was reported that that river was an outlet to the Caspian. The given data proves that the Volga could have been called 'the river of the Slavs', and the city of Khamlij (Ibn Khordadbeh calls it the main city of the Khazars in his work) is nothing but Atil.



No matter how the travel reports described by Ibn Khordadbeh are interpreted, they testify to distant trade in furs and weapons conducted by the Rus along different water routes oriented to Byzantium and the caliphate. The reports of the Arab official are also significant because they date Rus trading to no later than the first third of the 9th century. The Rusese language was most likely Slavic, as their interpreters were the Slavic eunuchs. Here 'The Tale of Bygone Years' and the citation 'the Slavic and the Rusessian languages are one thing' come to mind [The Tale of Bygone Years, 1996, p. 16].

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Beginning with the 8th century, the development of land trade and of other kinds of trade was accompanied by the introduction of the unified payment unit, that is, a dirhem. Up to the beginning of the 9th century, the oriental silver coinage served as an international currency. The number of dirhems found in hoards and separately in Eastern and Northern Europe counts more than 160,000 [The

Slavs, 1986, p. 218]. These finds show the trade sites, mark the merchants route, and the travel routes of the toll collectors. Sometimes the discovered treasures let us reconstruct the war upheavals which had taken place in one or another regions, though the written sources do not make mention of them. Concrete reasons for the closing of the treasures are, of course, diverse. It is important to us that the subterranean treasures with all their specific arbitrariness and abruptness reflected the activity and the scope of the commercial and monetary operations, including within the system of the Baltic-Volga Route. Subsequent hiding of unclaimed treasures and also the use of dirhems in making jewellery withdrew some cash capital from circulation and thus narrowed trade but did not stop its development and further flourishing in the second quarter of the 10th century.

In this respect, the following chart is distinctive (according to the estimates of T. Noonan; 223 treasuries of the 8–11th centuries found at the territory of European Russia have been used. Each of them contains more than five dirhems [Noonan, 1992, pp. 223–249]:

Centuries	Number of treasures	Number of dirhams
8th	7 (3.1%)	1,156 (1%)
9th	75 (33.6%)	22,551 (24%)
10th	121 (54.3%)	58,804 (61%)
11th	20 (9%)	13,121 (14%)

The given data are indicative of a steady increase of monetary receipts to the territory of Eastern Europe. Treasure troves illustrate an increase in trading activity in the 780s–810s, its further decrease in the 820–850s and a sharp surge during the following thirty years (in the 860s, 870s and 880s). The second quarter of the 10th century marks another rise in activity which was possibly related to the increased volume of transactions. After 1025, a decrease of kufic coins receipt came. The

above given comparisons precisely reflect the real environment. In particular, they show a landmark increase in coin revenues to Rus' between the 860s–880s. This period corresponds to the activity of the founder of the new dynasty—prince Rurik. The dynamic activity of the new dynasty are seen here, which were directed to widening of the international trade which reached its golden age in the 925–950s and approximately corresponds to the time of reign of Olga and Igor.

Territorially, these treasures are related to the functioning of the water and other routes, though they are not always congruent with them. The Great Volga Route may serve as an example. If its northern part stretching from Yaroslavl to Staraya Ladoga was accompanied by a number of treasures in the 8–9th centuries, the Middle and the Lower Volga region are almost completely empty of them. This can be explained by the fact that there was no necessity to hide treasures on this part of the road which passed along the territory of the Khazar Khaganate, since the capitals were probably brought to other places. In the period under consideration, there indeed were no treasures beside Atil, or they were found rarely. As A. Fomin has rightly noted, the degree of a region's saturation with coin discoveries is not always directly proportional to its involvement into trade. 'With the significant increase of silver import (from the Caliphate) and its quick transfer, treasures are either found more rarely, or completely disappear. The number of discoveries is great where the coin stream gets slower and special conditions are created for its distribution in the district' [Fomin, 1988, p. 112]. The given interpretation helps to explain the existence of spaces that are empty of treasures along the streams of the Don and Volga, as well as the appearance of treasure deposits in the upper reaches of the Don, for example, in the lands of the Vyatichi, in the upper Volga Region—the area of Northeastern Rus'. Coin discoveries are found at the sites of settled population's residences and vice versa—in steppe regions where stable settlements have not been observed, treasures are rarely found [Kropotkin, 1968, p. 73]. The Volga flows in the steppe area where settling was either absent or weak during that period, or was broken by such nomads as the Pechenegs and then—the Polovtsians. Let us add here that the lower Volga has not been sufficiently examined, because the place of Atil is not accurately identified yet. Therefore, the absence of coin discoveries requires explanation, but does not necessarily evidence the absence of monetary circulation and trade shipping traffic on one territory or another.

Scholars attribute the beginning of the dirham trade to the 70s–80s of the 8th century. At present, more data are being accumulated, which allow to push the initial period of this global phenomenon to 50–60s of the 8th century. In the aforementioned period, the political circumstances favourable for economic development were formed during the given period. After 737, the Arab-Khazar war was over. A mostly peaceful period in the relations between the two states began [Artamonov, 1962, pp. 218–225]. Military confrontation decreased also thanks to the fact that in that year, a part of the Khazars adopted Islam. Already in the 730s merchants from Khazaria and Derbent began widening their trading contacts. Necessity in the search for furs and other valuable items made them move northwards. In the zone of the Great Volga Route, a new urban situation emerged. At the northern and southern poles of the Volga trade route, there emerged: after 723– Atil; no later than 753– Ladoga (in the river Don area in the 830s—Sarkel). In 762, the Abbasids, having consolidated their power, moved the capital from Damascus to Baghdad, where a new stamping of fully valid silver coins at a newly-built mint was launched. Within the first half of the 8th century, a number of new cities were built in the area of the Baltic Sea (Ribe, Birka, Ralswiek, Rerik, Paviken and others). It is no coincidence that the almost simultaneous creation of a range of cities along the trading route marked the extension of stable 'world-wide' merchant operations.

In order to evaluate the influence of the dirham trade in the Slavic lands of Eastern Europe, or to be more precise, in the Khaganate of the Ruses in its initial period (pre-830s), the following observation is noteworthy. The use of Abbasid dirhams of African coinage which weighed circa 2.73 grams—it was these which prevailed in the treasures of the first third of the 9th century—influenced the composition of the Rusessian system of money and weights. A ten-kopeck coin weighing 68.22 grams had 25 such dirhams: 25 kunas according to the Rusessian system. Dirhams of Asian coinage weighing circa 2.85 grams became widespread

in the later period [Archaeology of the USSR, 1985, p. 364].

The time of movement of Arabic dirhams into Eastern Europe in the 9–10th centuries has been calculated to be from 14–17 to 30–40 years. At present, without rejecting the chronological duration of coins' spread, we come to the conclusion that the speed of their movement across fairly large distances could amount to a few years. The latter became especially typical during the periods of mass dirham coinage in the caliphate in the 770s, 810s, 820s and several following decades. In such periods, bank notes flooded the internal market of the caliphate and were actively exported both to neighbouring and distant countries including to the region of the Baltic sea [Kirpichnikov, 1995, p. 40].

Ladoga should be mentioned among the major early communication, market and transit centers which concentrated an inflow of kufic silver. This key city, connecting the Volga and Dnieper trade routes, as well as the land roads to the northern peoples, can give an exact and fair view on the functioning of trade routes in medieval Eurasia, including of the Great Volga Route. In the lower reaches of the Volkhov River in an area of rapids 65 km long a special Ladoga volost with fortified towns, road stations, port pilot services, warehouses, merchant guest houses and docks was established. No later than the mid-8th century Ladoga became the main centre of the Slavic and Finnish tribes and then the state residence and family domain of the Rurik dynasty (Rurikids). Ladoga is associated with the pre-Varangian 'great city' mentioned in the Ioachim chronicle [Tatishchev 1962, I, p. 284]. As if following this tradition, in one Icelandic-Norse saga (of events around 1034) Ladoga was referred to as a 'great trade city' [Jackson, 1999, p. 22].

It was through Ladoga where the main caravan trade route ran, and from a third to a half of all kufic coins occurring in Rus' in the 9–10th centuries were re-exported to the countries of the Baltic region. For example, on the island of Gotland and in Sweden 10,261 dirhams were discovered which had been brought there in the latter half of the 9th century. As compared to the period of 770–790 the number

of dirhams increased almost 8 times [Noonan, 1994, pp. 226–227]. This suggests that after the year 850 tributes and occasional contracts gave way to growing regular, direct and intermediary trade between Rus' and Scandinavia, mostly through Ladoga. Flows of coinage through this city kept on increasing. Taking into account the entire amount of imported silver coinage to the countries of Baltic Europe, according to T. Noonan, the rate of the Ladoga-Baltic trade increased 3 times in the early 10th century when compared to the end of the 9th century, and in the 940s it increased at least 10 times [Noonan, 1994, p. 392, table V].

The archaeological finds in Staraya Ladoga acquire a particular importance for the identification of the first dirham use on the Great Volga Route. So, during excavations in 1950 at this settlement, Umayyad dirham, minted in Damascus in 699/700, was extracted from the layer dated to 750–760. These coins, among those found in the settlement layers of old Russian cities, are one of the oldest chronologically, but not exclusively. Umayyad *dīnār* dated to 738/739 was also found in Staraya Ladoga in 1966 not far from the church of St. George [Kirpichnikov, 1995, p. 40, No. 20]. In 1972 in the Novyye Duboviki settlement, located about 9 km to the south of Staraya Ladoga, in the cultural layer dated back to no later than the 9th century, a dirham dated to 746/747 was found [Ibid., p. 41, No. 34]. It is obvious that early dirhams were frequently found in layers of latter periods, but was this always accidental? After analysis of the treasure belonging to the earliest period of dirham expansion in the modern European Russia (780–816) and containing 5 or more coins, it was discovered that 10–12% of them related to the years 750–760 [Noonan, Kovaleva, 2000, p. 210]. These samples were found in the treasure of the latter period, but their constant presence may suggest that certain dirhams could find their way into Eastern Europe, as well as Ladoga, in the mid-8th century.

Different finds testify to initial multi-stage trade and other interactions between the Northern Rus' and the East in the latter half of the 8th century. As is known, southern imports from the 5–8th centuries were found in Finland, the

Cis-Kama region, and other places in the north of Eastern Europe. In this respect, samples of Ladoga archaeology are the most demonstrative. In Staraya Ladoga, in the layer dated to 750–760 and associated with its original inhabitants, mosaic and ocellated glass-bead necklaces were discovered, as well as cylindrical and multiply pierced beads of Near East or Mediterranean origin. Next it is worth noting the carnelian bead necklaces, brought—or so it is considered—from the Caucasus [Davidan, 1995, p. 157, fig. 1]. According to Y. Kal'mer, the Europeans' demand for Eastern bead necklaces was so great, that in the caliphate in the mid-8th century their manufacturing for export increased 10 times when compared with earlier periods [Callmer, 1995, pp. 49–53]. There appeared to be a shortage of imported bead necklaces. Going by defective bead necklaces and fragments of glass making workshops, in the last quarter of the 8th century in Ladoga they turned to large scale manufacturing of glass beads and multiply pierced beads, which were in great demand. And again in Ladoga, among the remains of a blacksmith-jewellers workshop dated back to 750, a bony plate featuring a boat with a jib-headed sail was found. This graffito is the earliest drawing of a sail of similar shape among those which are known in northern and eastern Europe. Apparently, the people of Ladoga could learn about these sail designs in the mid-8th century, dealing with sailors either at home or during travels across the river Volga catchment.

In the 780s and the first two decades of the 9th century the situation in Eastern Europe was getting complicated. It was directly or indirectly influenced by the Vikings' plundering raids, which first affected the coastal regions of Western Europe. The Scandinavians were attracted by the rich and mysterious countries of the East and the only way to get there went through the river routes of the Rusessian plain. In the Middle and Lower Volga Regions the Magyars started moving to the West, followed by the Pechenegs. The Khazars' power and 'fear' of their military force in the steppe area between the Azov Sea and the lower reaches of the Volga were weakened by the joint op-

position of peoples trying to get free of the Khazar yoke. When Rurik's successor prince Oleg captured Kiev and united the north and south of the Ruses' in one state, by so doing he weakened the Khazars, depriving them of the tribute paid by the Severians and Radimiches. In 907, Oleg launched a victorious raid against the Greeks. This ruler also campaigned in other regions. Unstable conditions temporarily disrupted Eurasian trading along the Great Volga Route.

Although the impact of even the most notable military events on the economy should not be exaggerated. Sources carefully recorded the plundering raids of the Ruses on the Caspian and in Transcaucasia. They took place between 864 and 884, in 909–912 (two raids), 912/913 and 943/944 [Artamonov, 1962, p. 370 et seq]. Consequently, in about a century there were around 5–7 years of war, while the rest left plenty of room for peaceful trade relations. Corrections for unrecorded conflicts would hardly change this situation.

Along with the announcement of Kiev as a new capital the Baltic-Dnieper trade route became the main route in the country. Henceforth, the trade flows and relations of the Ruses' were directed not only to the cities of Western and Middle Asia, but also to Byzantium. At the same time, during the 8th and most of the 9th centuries the Great Volga Route was actually the main trading artery in Eastern Europe, and during the 10th century it did not lose its importance for trade and transport [Yanin, 1956].

Around the year 900, a geographic reorientation of Islamic trade in Eastern Europe took place. The former leaders—Iraq and Iran—gave way to the Samanid state in Middle Asia. Consequently, the inflow of Samanid dirhams to the territory of modern European Russia increased.

Through Khazaria and Bulgaria, which rose in the 10th century, the Ruses' and Baltic countries in Europe continued receiving eastern goods and Arabic silver. The amount of these valuables increased noticeably compared to the 9th century. The main transit center of Islamic trade with the European world

became the city of Bulgar on the Volga, and other cities of Volga Bulgaria.

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Volga Bulgaria was at the forefront of international trade. Being the northernmost outpost of the medieval Islamic world, it maintained close relations with Eastern countries. Along the Volga, the Kama and their tributaries, merchant vessels headed towards the north-east of the Ruses', Khazaria (Atil), Saqsin, the Crimea and the Caucasus. Commercial caravans moved along well-known land roads controlled and guarded by the state across whose territory they ran. Al-Balkhi wrote: 'Atil is one month away from Bolghar across the steppes; by water, up the river it takes about two months, down the river about 20 days' [Khvolson, 1869, p. 105]. Al-Masudi told of caravans which constantly made trips with goods between Bulgar and Khwarezm [Ibid., p. 163]. Along this route, described by Ibn Fadlan in detail, the Baghdad embassy rode in 921–922. Eastern geographers preserved valuable evidence of a direct route from Bulgar to Kiev. 'There were 10 halts from Bulgar to the border of the Ruses', and from Bulgar to Kuyaba there were 20 halts', in such a way this land route was described by al-Jayhani and al-Idrisi, spread along the weakly wooded and little populated watershed areas of the Volga and Sura, Oka and Don, Desna and Dnieper rivers for a distance of about 1,500–1,600 km [Rybakov, 1969, p. 189]. Commercial caravans completed this route in 60 days, making stops every two days at special inns, called in Arabic 'manzili' [Motsya, Khalikov, 1997].

Which goods were imported and exported by the Bulgars? Written sources give quite detailed answers to this question. Ibn Rustah in the early 10th century wrote: 'The Khazars carry on a trade with the Bulgars; the Ruses' also brings its goods to them. All of them (that is the Ruses) who live along both banks of the mentioned river (the Volga), bring to them (that is the Bulgars) their goods, such as: sable, ermine, squirrel furs and others' [Khvolson, 1869, p. 23]. Al-Balkhi reported: 'Goods exported from Khazaria, like honey and wax,

are brought to them from lands of the Ruses and the Bulgars. Likewise beaver furs, exported (from Khazaria) to different countries, are found in those rivers which flow in the countries of Bolghar, Rus' and Kuyaba, and beyond that they can be found nowhere, so far as I know' [Ibid., p. 169].

Al-Masudi, as previously noted, mentions Khazar and Bulgarian boats, sailing along the Volga above the tributary of the Kama on a trade mission. From the land of the Burtases, he continues, 'furs of black and red foxes were exported, which were called Burtas furs. This fur, especially the black, sometimes cost more than 100 dinars a piece; red is cheaper. Arab and Persian tsars consider this black fur to be more precious than marten, sable or any other fur, and make hats, kaftans and fur coats, so there is hardly a tsar who does not have a fur coat or kaftan with a fur lining of black fox' [Ibid., p. 163].

A large variety of goods exported from Bulgaria to Khwarezm and other countries are listed by the Arabic geographer of the latter half of the 10th century al-Muqaddasi: 'Furs such as: sable, squirrel, ermine, marten and baum marten, fox and beaver; hares, goatskin, wax, arrows, large fish, hats, isinglass, walrus tusk, castoreum, amber, yuft, honey, nuts, leopards (*or* hounds), swords, chain armor, birch timber, Slavic slaves, sheep and cattle' [Garkavi, 1870, p. 282; Khvolson, 1869, p. 181].

The list of imported goods found in written sources is short, but it becomes more complete, as we can see below, with archaeological materials.

Ibn Rustah reports on the import of coins of Islamic mintage: 'White, round dirhams are brought to them from Islamic countries by exchanging them for goods' [Khvolson, 1869, p. 34]. Ibn Fadlan mentions a tsar yurt laid with Armenian carpets and the throne covered with Byzantine brocade [Ibn Fadlan, 1956]. Further mentions of expensive fabrics and carpets from Jurjan, Tabaristan, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Byzantium being brought to Bulgaria are provided by other medieval authors [Khvolson, 1869, p. 169, 222]. Writing paper came from Samarkand to the Bulgars [Davletshin, 1990, p. 116]. Armament supplies were in

great demand throughout all times. Ibn Fadlan reports that Bulgar swords 'were wide undulant blades of Frankish manufacture'. According to al-Gharnati, merchants brought high quality swords from Islamic countries where they 'are produced in Zanjan, and in Abhar, and Tabriz, and Isfahan in the form of blades without hilt or ornament, just iron as it comes from the flame. And those swords are tempered hard, so if a sword is hung with a thread and hit by a nail or something iron or wooden, then one can hear a long clink' [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 33].

Among archaeological materials from pre-Mongol Bulgar cities—major trade centres—items of old Russian, eastern and Western European import are the most notable.

Eastern imports from Bilyar are represented by a great number of materials reflecting the trade relations of Bulgaria and its capital with Middle Asia, Middle East, Byzantium and Transcaucasia. These are the findings of eastern coins, crockery with luster patterns, glazed ceramics, sphero-conical and glass vessels, jewels and articles made from coloured metal, as well as camel bones which testify to the existence of land routes connecting Eastern countries and the cities of Volga Bulgaria.

A few coins, minted by the Abbasids, belong to the early stage of eastern trade [Begovatov, 2000, p. 237; Kropotkin, 1971, pp. 87–88; Markov, 1910, p. 10].

In the list of above mentioned goods one unique thing is a richly decorated faience cup on a saucer, attributed by S. Valiullina as a work manufactured in Iran or Mesopotamia in the 11th century [Valiullina, 1999, pp. 126–131]. Contacts with the manufacturing centres of Iran (Ray, Kashan and others), parts of Middle Asia (Khwarezm) and Transcaucasia of the 12–early 13th century are illustrated by fragments of luster pottery (more than 150 samples), which mostly originated from the central excavations in Bilyar. In Iranian cottage industries, in the city of Ray, vessels of the type called 'minai' were manufactured and later 4 samples were discovered in Bilyar. It is most likely that they were brought as presents. The list of Iranian luxury items can be com-

pleted with glassware in the shape of a pear or cylindrical bottle and tiny ribbed bottles used to keep perfumes, aromatic substances and medicine [Valiullina, 1997, p. 172]. Iran together with its nearby regions could act as a supplier of semi-precious stones and ready-made items (for instance, necklace beads, pendants, inlays) to Bulgaria and through it to the neighbouring lands. According to R. Valeev, from Iran to Bulgaria 'Yemeni carnelian came; from more southern countries came Madagascar mountain crystal, Sogdian crystal and Middle Asian turquoise from Mawarannahr, from Khwarezm came carnelian, from Sindh (India) came clear quartz, and from Badakhshan (Northern Afghanistan) lazurite was brought' [Valeev, 1995, p. 65]. In the central part of city of Bilyar was discovered a Carnelian intaglio of a signet ring with the Arabic inscription 'blessed by the authority [vested] by God'.

Special mention should go to the interesting collections of Georgian windowpanes and dishware glass, as well as touchstones used to test the quality of gold which, according to petrographic sample analysis, are of Caucasus-Caspian origin [Valiullina, 1999, p. 148]. Findings of glass bracelets, glazed vessels, and glass-ware reflect relations with Byzantium and its provinces. The Byzantine origin of these items was confirmed by spectral and chemical analysis of the glass [Ibid., p. 146]. Among a huge collection of ceramic material A. Kochkina emphasized the goods of Black Sea cottage industries: pink pottery vessels, glazed dishes ornamented with sgraffito and pear-shaped amphoras with rounded bottoms decorated with fluted surface decorations (more than 100 fragments and pieces of vessels). Such amphoras, used as containers for the transportation of olive oil and all sorts of wines, were produced mainly in pottery workshops in Taurica and Kherson [Kochkina, 1999, pp. 134–136].

The trade relations of Bilyar and Volga Bulgaria with the states of Western Europe as well as with Scandinavia were sporadic and performed through the brokerage of the Rus'. Among the materials from the archaeological site there are pieces of Western European

stained glass [Valiullina, 1991, pp. 111–112]. Such items also can be seen in Vladimir and Suzdal, where they could be brought, in the opinion of M. Rodina, through Volga Bulgaria [Rodina, 1991, pp. 114–119]. Also worth mentioning is the handle of a bronze vessel which seems to have been manufactured in one of the cities in France in the 12–13th century (identified by M. Sedova), as well as details of so-called Frankish swords and a bronze fibula of a Scandinavian type [The Culture of Bilyar, 1985, pp. 173–174; NAP (New in archeology of the Volga Region), 1979, table 10: 7], which happened to be found in Bilyar not without the involvement of the Varangians (Vikings)—warriors and merchants.

The Bulgarian archaeological site—the archaeological remains of the External Bulgar or Bryakhimov written sources—is well-known as the biggest centre of international trade and the part it played in this sphere has never been disputed. And archaeological finds indeed demonstrate it. Among them there are two treasures of Kufic coins [Markov, 1910, pp. 10, 137] and individual finds from surface material.

Some groups of bead necklaces from the early series of finds, as M. Poluboyarinova points out, 'put the Bulgars in the same ranks as large settlements of Northern and Eastern Europe of the 10–early 11th century in the sphere of Middle-Eastern trade... Goods from Syria or Egypt were delivered to Constantinople or Trebizond, from there to the Northern Caucasus and then along the Volga moved to the North' [Poluboyarinova, 1988, p. 212]. A silver belt plaque with Arabic inscription, according to G. Polyakova, is a work of Iranian or Middle Asian craftsmen; an equal-armed fibula and a pendant with a human cover on the background of the plait may be considered Scandinavian [Polyakova, 1996, p. 256]. At Aga-Bazar as a surface material an imitation of west-European silver *dīnār* dated back to the 11th century was discovered [Fedorov-Davydov, 1987, p. 160].

Compared to Volga Bulgaria, early settlements in the lower reaches of the Kama river—the ancient settlements of Izmerskoe and Semenovskoe, materials from which have been

partly published by E. Kazakov—seem to be bigger trade centres. At these trade and craft settlements of the 10–11th centuries, usually compared to sites like Gnezdovo or Birka, as well as at 'Devichy townlet', hundreds of Arabic *dirhams* were discovered, and among other things treasures containing a number of Eastern coins, and some Western-European *dīnārs* dated back to the 11th century [Kazakov, 1991, pp. 28–30]. Among the imported items Middle Asian and Old Russian items prevail. The later ones are represented by fragments of pottery, dozens of slate spindles, glass rings and bracelets, a five-pointed temple ring and some other items. Bronze fibulas of Balto-Scandinavian origin were discovered, as well as amber bead necklaces and pendants. In pieces of waist-band fittings Middle Asian parallels can be clearly traced. There are belt tips with Arabic inscriptions [Ibid, pp. 127, 151–154].

In the pre-Mongol strata of ancient Kazan a fragment of Samanid coin and a Czech *dīnār* from the first half of the 10th century, slate spindles, a bronze plate of Hungarian type, pieces of glass bracelets of old Russian manufacture and fragments of crockery with luster, from Iran, were found.

Traces of foreign merchants were also found in the Murom townlet. Among the Eastern imports researchers point out glazed vessels and glass-ware, spherico-conical vessels of Middle Asian and Transcaucasian production, fragments of crockery-ware with luster, glass bead necklaces and so on [Vasilyev, Matveeva, 1986, pp. 200–203; Matveeva, 1976, pp. 39–40]. Amongst goods brought from old Russian cities one must note glass bracelets, slate spindles, and fragments of glazed pottery. Items of Baltic and Western European origin are small in number: amber and jeweleries made from it; a German coin of the 11th century. There are also a few items imported from Byzantium and the Black Sea regions. They are a fragment of dark blue glass bracelet with a turquoise glass inlay of a floral pattern, as well as fragments of glazed and unglazed ceramics, and amphoras used as containers for the delivery of different kinds of liquids [Kochkina, 1999, pp. 133, 136; Matveeva, Kochkina, 1998, pp. 39–40]. The latter were found at other Bulgarian settle-

ments as well, in particular at the Krasnosyundukovsky, Staromaynsky and Mezhdurechensk archaeological sites.

Besides, at the Krasnosyundukovsky I archaeological site there are iron weights, lead plummet-seals, slate spindles, glass vessel fragments and glazed ceramics imported from Middle Asia [Kochkina, Stashenkov, 1993, pp. 190, 196, 199–200].

During the excavations of the ancient town of Xulashsky were found fragments of glass vessels, glazed ceramics, pieces of white clay vessels with stamped ornament, slate spindles, and glass and stone bead necklaces originating from the cottage industries of Transcaucasia, Middle Asia and the Ruses' [Kaxovskij, Smirnov, 1972, pp. 60–62]. These foreign goods were most likely brought into this town by Bulgarian merchants, who had bought them wholesale from foreign sellers, who did not have direct contacts with local people, from the neighbouring city (for example, from Ashli).

To conclude, let's briefly dwell on the issue of the trade routes along which the goods were brought to Bulgarian cities.

According to the common notion based on the studies of the topography of the treasure of Kufic coins and of data from written sources, the Volga was the major route for the entry of silver into the northern Rus', the Baltic states, and Scandinavia in the 9th century or before. The route from Middle Asia and Transcaucasia along the Volga and further up along the Kama to the Northern Dvina basin, and the Pechora river has been marked by treasures of Sasanian and Byzantine coins since the 7th century. This route was testified to by reports of Arabic authors mentioning the relations of Volga Bulgaria with faraway Northern peoples.

According to A. Leontiyev's observations, 'Along the route up to 700 km distance from the Kama mouth up along the Volga and the lower reaches of the Oka there are no finds of imports dated back to the 9th century', although in the lands of the Vyatichi people in the Oka's middle and upper reaches we know up to two dozen coin hoards [Leontiyev, 1986, pp. 3–5]. In view of this, he suggests the main route through which the Kufic coins of the 9th

century came to the Northern Rus': the Upper Volga and Yaroslavl Volga Region along the Don to the Middle Oka, or along the Sever-sky Donets, then across the Desna along the Dnieper, passing the Volga Trade Route which started to function actively only in the 10th century [Ibid., pp. 5–8]. At the same time researchers (A. Leontiyev, D. Machinsky and others) do not doubt the fact that in the 9th century the Volga Trade Route was active and was used mainly as the traditional route to the Cis-Kama region.

Discussing this issue one cannot forget the Khazar state that existed at this time and kept under strong control all the trade routes from Western Asia to Eastern Europe. A. Novoseltsev is sure that 'one of the most important routes, if not the most significant route, was the one running along the western coast of the Caspian Sea to the Volga delta, and further up this river. Somewhere around the modern Volgograd region it forked into two: one went ahead up the Volga river, the other across Perevolok went to the Don. In the 7–the first half of the 10th century both routes were under the Khazars' control. Up the Volga the merchants reached the Volga Bulgar, and there there was a trading post, apparently since the 9th century, where Muslim merchants met Russian ones' [Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 114]. These observations proved to be correct. Indeed, It is difficult to imagine out of the Volga routes documented close ethnocultural and political contacts of Khazaria with the related Volga Bulgars of the 8–9th centuries, or with the Bulgarian state established in the late 9–early 10th centuries, which had been a protectorate of the Khazars for a long time.

Eastern goods were brought to Khazaria by two well-known routes of the Silk Road, which actively functioned until the end of the 9th century and maintained its importance later than that. One way was from China to Middle Asia, then through Khwarezm to Atil, the other road of the same route initially was parallel to the first one, and then led not to Khwarezm, but to Sogd and continued further along the southern coast of the Caspian Sea to Western Asia. From this route the road split



off to the north through Caucasian Albania to Derbent, which led through Khagan's lands to the capital of the Khazars. It was sometimes easier for Eastern merchants to come to Bulgaria not through Atil along the Volga route, but along the steppe caravan route, which started from Khwarezm and across the deserted Ustyurt Plateau and led to the Trans-Volga steppes, ending in Bulgar. The Baghdad embassy of the caliph al-Muqtadir travelled along this route to the country of the Volga Bulgars in 922.

Apparently, the Great Volga Route and the land route from Khwarezm to Bulgar laid to the east of the Volga were both something of a branching of the Silk Road, playing an im-

portant role in the system of East-West international relations. The Bulgar (Bilyar)—Kiev caravan route and the Kama (fur) route, which led to the northern peoples should also be considered in terms of these relations. From Bulgar along the Volga goods were transported to the northern regions of the Ruses'. The extremely branched river network in the north of Eastern Europe enabled an unhindered withdrawal from the Upper Volga to the Volkhov and Ladoga regions, as well as to Lake Beloye, and thence to the Baltic states and Scandinavia. The Varangian *druzhinniki* and traders moved towards the south along this road, whose traces in Bulgaria were documented by written and archaeological sources.

### 3. The way from Bulgar city to Kiev Trade ties with Kievan Rus' and ancient Russian principalities

*Marina Poluboyarinova*

Geographical position of Volga Bulgaria determined its wide trade relations throughout the history, including its closest neighbour, Rus'. Both states were situated in similar natural conditions and were on practically similar stages of social and political development. Together with inevitable armed clashes, there were peaceful trade contacts, which are indicated both in the written sources and archaeological finds.

The writings by Arab author al-Istakhri (10th century) say that the closest people to the Bulgars were the Ruses, whose tsar '... was in a city called Kuyaba (Kiev); it [that city] was bigger than Bulgar... People reach Kuyaba on trade affairs' [Zakhoder, 1967, pp. 101–102]. Ibn-Rustah (beginning of the 10th century) reports that 'all of them (the Ruses) who live on the both sides of the mentioned river bring them (the Bulgars) their goods, such as: sable, ermine, squirrel furs and others' [Khvolson, 1869, p. 23]. According to another Arab author of the 10th century, Ibn Hawkal, 'the Rusessians sold [furs] in Bulgaria, until this city was destroyed' [Garkavi, 1870, p. 219].

The main source on the Rusessian-Bulgarian relationships throughout their history is the Rusessian chronicles. The undated geographical part of the 'Tale of Bygone Years' contains testimonies of early Russian contacts with the road to the East via the lands of the Bulgars: 'From the same forest [Okovsky], the Volga flew to the East into the Khvalinskoye Sea, the same road from Rus' lead along the Volga to Bulgaria and Kvalisy and to Simov, to the East...' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, 1908, 2, Column 6]. The author knows the Volga Route and that it is used as a road to the Bulgars and to the Arab world.

Russian chronicles report on several campaigns of Vladimir, Prince of Kiev, against the Bulgars in 985 [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, 1908, 2, Column 7], 994, and 997 [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, 1965, 9, pp. 65–66]. According to V. Tatishchev, those armed clashes resulted in a trade agreement in 1006 between Vladimir and the Bulgars. It provided the Bulgarian merchants the right to trade all around the Rusessian towns, and the Rusessian merchants

received the right to trade in Volga Bulgaria 'with no fear' [Tatishchev, 1963, 2, p. 69].

Later chronicles touch upon the relationships of the Bulgars with the north-eastern principalities of Rus'. Under the year of 1024, it is reported that the 'corn brought by the Bulgars' saved people from the famine in Vladimir-Suzdal Principality which caused the rebellions [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, 1908, Vol. P, p. 135]. There are testimonies, according to V. Tatishchev, of sending by the Bulgarian 'prince' to Prince Yuri Vsevolodovich (also because of the famine in Rus') in 1229 a gift of 30 ships loaded with corn. While the Bulgarian merchants sold corn in all Russian towns [Tatishchev, 1964, 3, p. 225]. This action resulted in a peace treaty for 6 years, which gave the merchants the right to move in both directions and to pay duties according to the rules of each town.

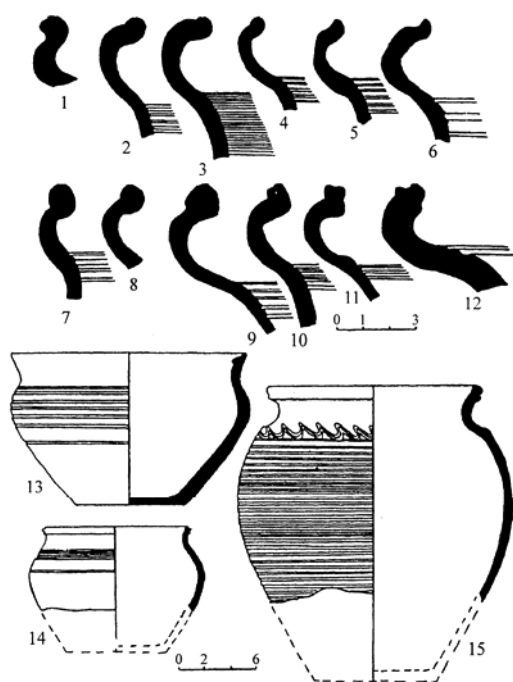
After military actions by both sides in the 12th century until the beginning of the 13th century, according to the chronicles, peace was concluded time and time again: in 1183 [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, 1962, 1, p. 390], in 1220 [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, 1856, 4, p. 128], and in 1229 [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, 1965, 10, p. 98]. The terms of peace treaties determined trade relations. In the opinion of V. Tatishchev, the reason of Bulgarian military campaign against Gorodets, Ryazan, and Murom in 1183 was a Russian attack on the Bulgarian merchants who traded in towns along the Volga and Oka rivers [Tatishchev, 1964, 3, p. 12]. Thus, trade contacts were intermingled with military clashes. The Rusesians and the Bulgars were connected by reciprocal trade interests. Military campaigns were episodic, and trade relations always existed.

It is clear that most of the goods that both states exchanged have not left any archaeologically recorded traces. Agricultural products could come to the markets of the neighbouring country depending on harvest or poor harvest, on market condition as was the case with the delivery of Bulgarian corn

to Vladimir-Suzdal principality, stated in the chronicles. Precious kinds of fish could be supplied from the Middle Volga region. The Bulgars were famous for their skills in processing leather, which they exported both to the East and to the West. These types of leather were called 'yuft' in Rus'. Both sides could sell products from beekeeping and honey harvesting. Linen, walrus tusks, and fish glue were delivered from Rus'. However, the main goods that made both states the participants of the global trade were furs and slaves.

The slave trade was flourishing at that age of humanity. Ibn Rustah reports: 'They (the Ruses) used to attack the Slavs, board the ships, go to them, capture them, take them to Khazaran and Bulgar and then sell' [Zakhoder, 1967, 2, p. 81]. These testimonies are stated by al-Gardizi, too [Ibid., p. 82]. Slaves from not only Russian principalities but also from Yura (according to al-Gharnati), from Scandinavia (according to Ibn Fadlan) were brought to slave markets in Volga Bulgaria. Some slaves were left with the Bulgars, but most of them were resold to the caliphate, Khwarezm and other eastern countries. It is known that the cavalry of the Baghdad caliphs was recruited from among the Slav slaves. People were sold into slavery for their debts. Also prisoners taken during military clashes were sold. During the Golden Horde period, Novgorod ushkuiniks took their compatriots prisoner in their plundering raids and then sold them to the Bulgars.

Several Slavic temple rings have been found in the territory of Bulgaria. It is likely that owners of that cheap tribal jewellery came to the Bulgars as slaves. In Alekskeevskoe 6 ancient settlement, Vyatichi seven-bladed temple ring of the 11th century has been found [Rudenko, 2000, p. 11, Fig. 8: 11]. In Semenovskoe 1 settlement, a rhomboid panel temple ring, characteristic for Novgorod Slavs, has been found. According to the form of corselets, it is dated to the 12–13th centuries. Close to there, in Semenovskoe 2 settlement, a piece of one more rhomboid panel ring has been discovered. It



Old Russian ceramics from the Bilyar excavations (according to A. Kochkina)

can be dated to the turn of the 10th century.\* Radimiches' five rays temple ring dated to the 10–11th centuries comes from Semenovskoe 1 settlement.

Furs obtained in the forests of Rus' and Volga Bulgaria were traded internationally. According to al-Gharnati, 'in the Slavic river [Oka?] lived an animal, water sable [otter?]. Its furs were brought to Bulgar and Sajin' [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 35]. Those furs were exchanged for Arab silver in the form of dirhams and sometimes utensils at the Bulgarian markets. Eastern merchants got precious sable, marten, beaver, ermine, blue fox, fox, squirrel, and hare furs, which were sold as special luxury goods to Arab nobility. Furs were supplied to the Middle Volga region from the north, that is, the Cis-Kama region and Cis-Ural region. They were sold both by Slavic and by Scandinavian merchants. At the Bulgarian markets, furs could be exchanged not only for Arab coins but also for precious Oriental fabrics,

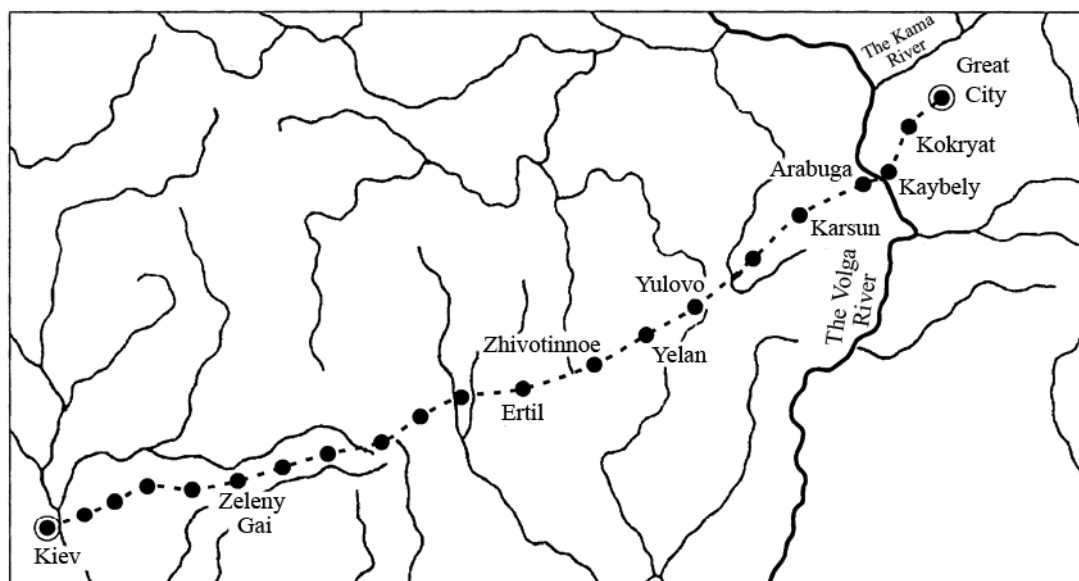
Persian carpets, incenses, Indian and Middle Asian stone beads, and glass beads from the Middle East. Numerous stone and glass beads are usually found in ancient Russian mounds and settlements. In the kurgans of Vladimir-Suzdal Rus', Iranian and Central Asian silk fabrics have been discovered.

The participation of Rus' and Volga Bulgaria in global trade as intermediaries served as their main source of income. The possibility of this participation was determined by the geographical position of both Rus' and Volga Bulgaria. Kievan Rus' had an outlet to the Baltic states and the Black Sea via the Dnieper Route. Northern Rus', connected with the Baltic and Scandinavian states by the Volga Route, was communicated with the countries of the East via the lands of Bulgaria. Volga Bulgaria was situated at the crossroads of trade routes from the south (Caspian Sea regions, Arab East, and Middle Asia) to the north (Cis-Kama region and the Cis-Urals) and to the north-west (down the Volga, via the northern Russian principalities to the Baltic and Scandinavian states). This offered huge opportunities for intermediary involvement in the global movement of goods at that time.

Baltic states amber was brought to Volga Bulgaria via Russian merchants. This fact is confirmed by the find of several kilograms of amber during the excavations in Bilyar in a dwelling owned by a Russian merchant and, likely, craftsman [Khuzin, Valiullina, 1986]. The amber was distributed among the Bulgar settlements and was also resold further to the East, where it was used not only as a jewel but also as an incense. Most likely, Russian linen was also popular with eastern buyers. Since the 12th century, Byzantine glass vessels, beads, and bracelets had been brought to the Bulgars via southern Russian merchants. Al-Gharnati reports that the Slavs and the Bulgars were supplied with dressed dolphin skins used for making belts [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 54]. This merchandise was also transported via Southern Rus' to the Middle Volga region.

In the stratum of the period from the end of the 12th century until the beginning of the 13th century, an article made of mammoth bone was found in Vladimir [Zharnov, 2003,

\* In cases where there is no reference to the publication in the text, see: [Poluboyarionova, 1993].



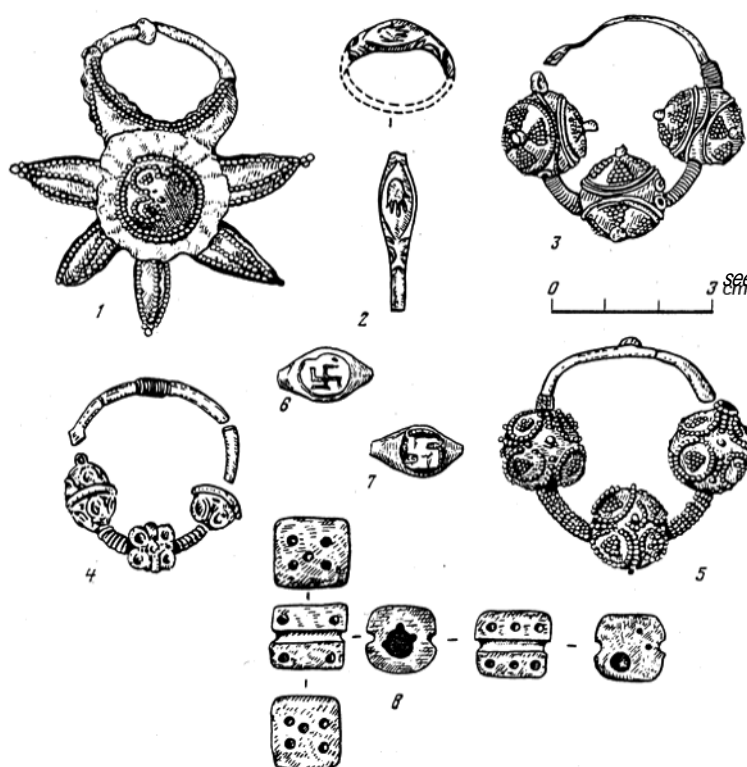
The route from Bulgaria to Kiev (according to A. Khalikov)

p. 41]. According to account of al-Gharnati, mammoth bone was used by the Bulgar, who got it from Western Siberia. In the 12th century and the beginning of the 13th century, quite a large number of Iranian glazed vessels, including lusterware, appeared in Russian towns, especially in the north-east and north-west. In Southern Rus', this is rarer [Koval, 2003, p. 362]. This indicates that the lusterware was delivered from Iran to Rus' by the Bulgars via the Volga Route. Several finds of crystal inserts for rings are known in the pre-Mongol stratum in ancient Russian towns. Such inserts had been produced in India for several centuries and were transported to Rus' via its eastern neighbour, just like a fragment of a Middle Asian stone boiler and sphero-conical vessels which were found in the stratum of the period from the 12th century to the beginning of the 13th century in Vladimir [Rodina, 1997, pp. 149, 150].

What is the archaeological evidence of the trade in their own goods between Kievan Rus' and Volga Bulgaria? A list of such finds is not long, but the articles themselves are highly significant. Slate spindle whorls are the most frequent at the Bulgar archaeological sites of the middle of the 10th century. Deposits of

rose slate have still not been found anywhere in Eastern Europe except Obruch district in Volyn. That is why the finds of slate spindle whorls, which probably were very popular among women of that time, including Bulgarian women, indicate trade relations with Kievan Rus. By the 1990s, more than 400 finds of slate spindle whorls had been recorded in the historical territory of Volga Bulgaria. Annual excavations and investigations of urban settlements and rural villages bring new finds of these spindle whorls. In archaeological sites such as Bilyar, Bulgar, Izmeri 1 and Semenovskoe 1, which were once major trade centres, dozen of spindle whorls have been found and occasionally even during a single season. In addition to spindle whorls, some other slate items are known: a button, a game piece, a casting mould for false-twisted rings, a grindstone, and a bead. The southern Russian slate spindle whorls were likely brought via the Bulgars to the Cis-Kama region, where such finds are also recorded.

Probably among the products of the Kievan craftsmen, there were many items of glass, found in the Bulgar archaeological sites of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th centuries. Mostly they were jewellery such as bracelets,



Russian items from Bulgar: 1, 3–5–silver temple rings; 2, 6, 7–copper signet rings; 8–a slate gaming die

rings, and certain kinds of beads. Judging by the composition of the glass in the glass bracelets found in the pre-Mongol strata (12–early 13th centuries), they were manufactured in Rus'. Several fragments of such bracelets have been found in Bulgar, Bilyar, and in the pre-Mongol stratum of Kazan [Valiulina, 1999, p. 144; Khuzin, 2001, p. 196, Fig. 86: 3, 4]. A certain number of glass bracelets and rings probably made by the Rusessian jewellers have been found in Semenovskoe 1 settlement. Spherical and zone beads made of transparent light-yellow glass, probably some fish-shaped, black, and blue, and also the so-called beads 'with flexible ornament' came to the Bulgars from Russian towns from the 12th century. Before that, glass beads had been transported to the Middle Volga region mainly from the Middle East, and huge numbers of them were resold to Rus'. Vessels made of transparent light-coloured glass were brought (most likely from Kiev) to the Bulgars.

Women's jewellery and other articles made of non-ferrous metals have been found in the territory of Volga Bulgaria. Thus, two silver temple rings and a stellar kolt have been found in Bulgar. Temple rings include three-beads, hollow beads with granulated and filigree ornament. They have found counterparts in the Kiev hoard dating to 1885 and Staroryazansky treasury hoard to 1887. Analogues of the stellar kolt decorated with granules have been found in Kiev hoard in 1903 and in Tver hoard in 1906. These decorations represent examples of ancient Russian jewellery art of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th centuries.

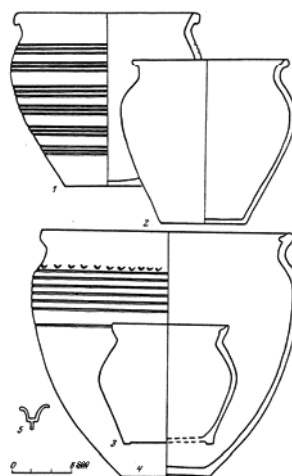
Some noble Russian boyar or his wife owned primarily a neck-piece found in Bulgar among the treasure. The neck-piece consisted of nine silver medallions with gilt and four hollow beads. The ornament, engraved in one case with niello, was a bloomed cross of a different shape. Such neck-pieces have

often been found in the Rusessian territory in hoards and as separate finds. They are dated from the 1170s to the beginning of the 1200s. Medallions most similar to Bulgarian ones have been found in Novgorod region in the area of Suzdal and in Vladimir, where researchers believe the main production centre of such medallions was situated.

It is hard to say how the neck-piece came to Bulgar. The Christian symbols make it difficult to consider it a piece of merchandise, but on the other hand, the article is so attractive and opulent that it was probably bought from an owner who found themselves in difficulties in an alien country. One can not exclude that the neck-piece was a war trophy. Nevertheless, the neck-piece was not smelted but kept together with similar Bulgarian jewellery.

Among the finds from Bilyar ancient town, the most important is the prince's sloping seal depicting the Saints Demetrius and George, which is skillfully made. Similar seals have been found in Novgorod and Suzdal. According to V. Yanin, the seal belonged to Prince Vsevolod Yurievich, who ruled for a short period of time in Novgorod and was killed by the Mongol-Tatars in Vladimir in 1240. The seal dates to the beginning of the 13th century [Yanin, 1979, pp. 100–101]. According to M. Sedova, the seal refers to the Great Prince Vsevolod the Big Nest and dates to the last decades of the 12th century. The seal could have come to the that time capital of Volga Bulgaria together with some charter. It is the evidence of the diplomatic relationships between Vladimir-Suzdal principality and the Bulgarians, probably during the siege of the Great City in 1183 [Sedova, 1997].

A complex of two constructions where the stamp have been found contained other finds which indicate the trade relations between Bulgaria and the Rusessian principalities. It is a huge number of amber pieces (more than 9 kg), among which there are several product blanks, Russian-structured glass bracelet, fragments of funnel-shaped vessels from icon-lamps or choroses of the 12th century, two pysankas, three slate spindler whorls, some ancient Russian ceramics, and



Old Russian vessels from Bulgar

pig bones [Khuzin, 1979, pp. 78–79; Khuzin, Valiullina, 1986]. The amber belonged to a Russian merchant. It was delivered from the Baltic states, most likely via Novgorod, and was distributed among the towns of Volga Bulgaria and probably further to the East. The other finds of this complex characterise the southern Russian import.

The following metal jewellery made in Rus' have been found in Bilyar: platycerous and crescent lunnitsa, three-bead temple ring, ribbed ring, isomorphic amulet-pendant in the shape of a bird, that is, 'Vladimir-Suzdal cock'. The researchers place the manufacturing centre of these pendants in Yaropolch-Zalessky, the date is the 11–12th centuries or late 12–early 13th centuries. Three hollow ridge pendants with rattling appendages have been found in Bilyar. Two of them are dated the 12th century–beginning of the 13th century. To all appearances, they have been made in the Kostroma Volga region. The jewellery of such shapes have been sold to the Finno-Ugric people of Volga Bulgaria.

A number of jewellery made in Rus' are found at the Izmerskoe 1 settlement. A round cellular pendant with a composition of the cross in the circle is dated back to the 12–13th centuries in Rus'. Despite the image of the cross, the pendant could be perceived by Bulgars simply as a decoration with a solar

sign, but possibly belonged to a Russian woman as well. Threefold signet ring with a bezel was found at the same record, similar one existed in Suzdal kurgans of the 10–11th centuries. Another signet ring—tabulate unclosed broad medial one with ornament of false grain and circular ornament—also dates to the 10–11th centuries. Platycerous bronze lunnitsa with imitation of filigree and granulation dates to this time as well (11—first half of the 12th centuries). In addition to the mentioned tribe temple rings, coin-like pendant made of white metal, having a radial composition of the ornament, with pearls along the edge and in the centre was found at the Semenovskoe 1 settlement. Similar things have been found in Novgorod (the second half of the 10–11th centuries) and in the kurgan of the Gomel Region (11—middle of the 12th centuries).

Two duck-pendants with cast relief ornament are found in ancient settlement of Murzikhinsk [Rudenko, 2002, Table 57C: 22, 23]. Such pendants, according to L. Golubeva, were made in Kostroma, Ivanovo and Kineshma Volga Region, and from these places were exported to Volga Bulgaria. Two coin-like pendants are from the record: with falsely granulated ornament in the form of pyramids and cross shaped [Kazakov et al, 1993, Fig. 8: 36; 9: 57]. Both of them have their analogues in the Rusessian craft.

In the Alekseevskoe 6 ancient settlement, besides the aforementioned Vyatich temporal rings, a round cellular pendant of tin-lead alloy (composition 'cross in a circle') was found, it is Russian, 11–12th centuries, according to the same discoveries in Rus' [Rudenko, 2000, Fig. 8: 13].

The territory of Volga Bulgaria is a home-place for a ceremonial axe found in 1913 in Simbirsk guberniya. This axe is copper with iron blade, military by its design, but it is richly ornamented with engraving, niello, incuse and silver inlay. The ornament in the form of blossomed crosses and Russian letters make us recognise its Russian origin—from Suzdal of the 13th century or earlier (according to A. Spitsyn), or from Kiev of the end of 11th or the first half of the 12th century (according to

B. Gorodtsov). A. Kirpichnikov dates the axe to the 12th century.

The Rusesessian, judging by its ornament, axe of the same type comes from Bilyar. It has scales and double arcs portrayed on its blade in silver inlay [Izmaylov, 1992, p. 106]. These axes were found inside Old Russian druzhina tombs, as well as in the Volga region and the Baltic states. These axes on Bulgarian land can be considered as goods purchased and the spoils of war.

The list of Russian items found in Volga Bulgaria, as well as written sources, provides insight into the trade links of the Bulgars with different Old Russian principalities.

The trade, of course, was mutual for both states. By now we have accumulated quite a lot of archaeological material attesting to the fact that Bulgarian handicrafts were in demand in Rus'. The most striking example is bronze locks for jewel boxes and coffers made in the form of animal figures. Zoomorphic locks were made in the pre-Mongol period in Volga Bulgaria, and later they were found throughout the territory of the Golden Horde. They were probably taken from Iran but were used in Middle Asia, and Western Europe, and in the Black Sea area.

One such lock, depicting a fantastic beast with a horn on the back of the head and with rich ornamentation, was found in Moscow in the 12th century stratum. A small lock in the form of a horse or a dog was found in Staraya Ryazan. Another bronze lock, depicting a hobbyhorse, even as though it is straddled, comes from Ryazan land, from Pronsk. A lock in the form of a hobbyhorse with an ornament, depicting rich harness, was also discovered in the stratum of the 11–12th centuries in Serensk. Two bronze and one iron zoomorphic hobbyhorse locks come from Beloozero; bronze locks were found in the 13th century stratum, while an iron one is undocumented. The discovery of the undocumented hobbyhorse lock was made along the Vaga River in Arkhangelsk region. Two similar locks come from Novgorod: bronze one is in the form of a leopard (end of 11th century), these are unknown in Volga Bulgaria; the other, iron undocumented one, is similar to the Beloozero

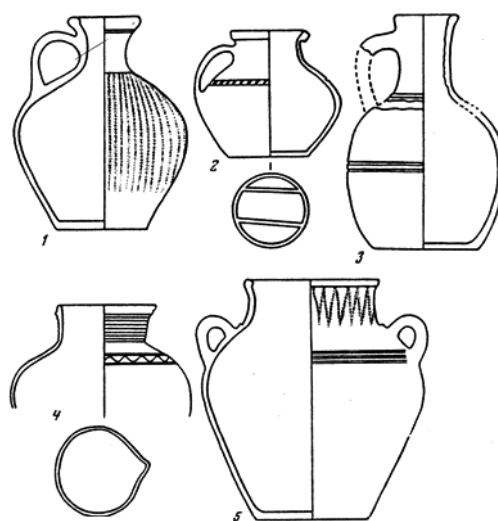
type. More recently, half of a figure bronze lock in the form of a hobbyhorse, covered with ornaments, was found in a trenched layer in Vladimir. The hobbyhorse in its basic contour is similar to the Serena find.

Several zoomorphic locks were found in the western and southern Russian lands. A lock in the form of a bull with a circular ornament comes from a settlement near Kashenko village of Pinsk district, Belarus. A lock in the form of a dog was found in Gomel. Bronze locks in the form of a hobbyhorse and a sheep were discovered in Kiev, Vyshgorod, and Voin in the 10–11th century strata.

Zoomorphic Bulgarian locks are very typical but quite a rare find.

Bulgar pottery, which is found in different lands of Rus', in the pre-Mongol layers of settlements, is no less impressive but a mass material. The finds of Bulgarian earthenware should mean that the Bulgars lived in this settlement for a long time; most likely, they arrived there on trade business. Bulgar ceramics that have been found on Old Russian sites are divided into kitchen and tableware, which Bulgars could use themselves: on the one hand, tare (jugs, pots), in which they could bring some goods (perhaps, products); on the other hand, stone beads, etc. However, red and brown Bulgarian vessels could also serve as a commodity, because they were manufactured from perfectly levigated clay, were impressively burned and decorated, in addition to the ornament, by polishing the surface. They looked much more festive than Russian pottery. The discovery of ceremonial imported vessels set in the dugout of Suzdal of the pre-Mongol time—two Bulgarian pitchers and a large pot with Iranian irrigated jar—shows the way Bulgar pottery was prized in Rus'. It is also evidenced by the fact that the Bulgar ceramics sparked imitations.

Finds of Bulgarian ceramics are made in the cities of Kievan Rus'. In Kiev, it accounts for up to 3% of the ceramic material in the layers of the 11–13th centuries in certain estates of Podil. This crockery is found in Vyshgorod in the layers of the 11–12th centuries. Archaeologists have documented that ceram-



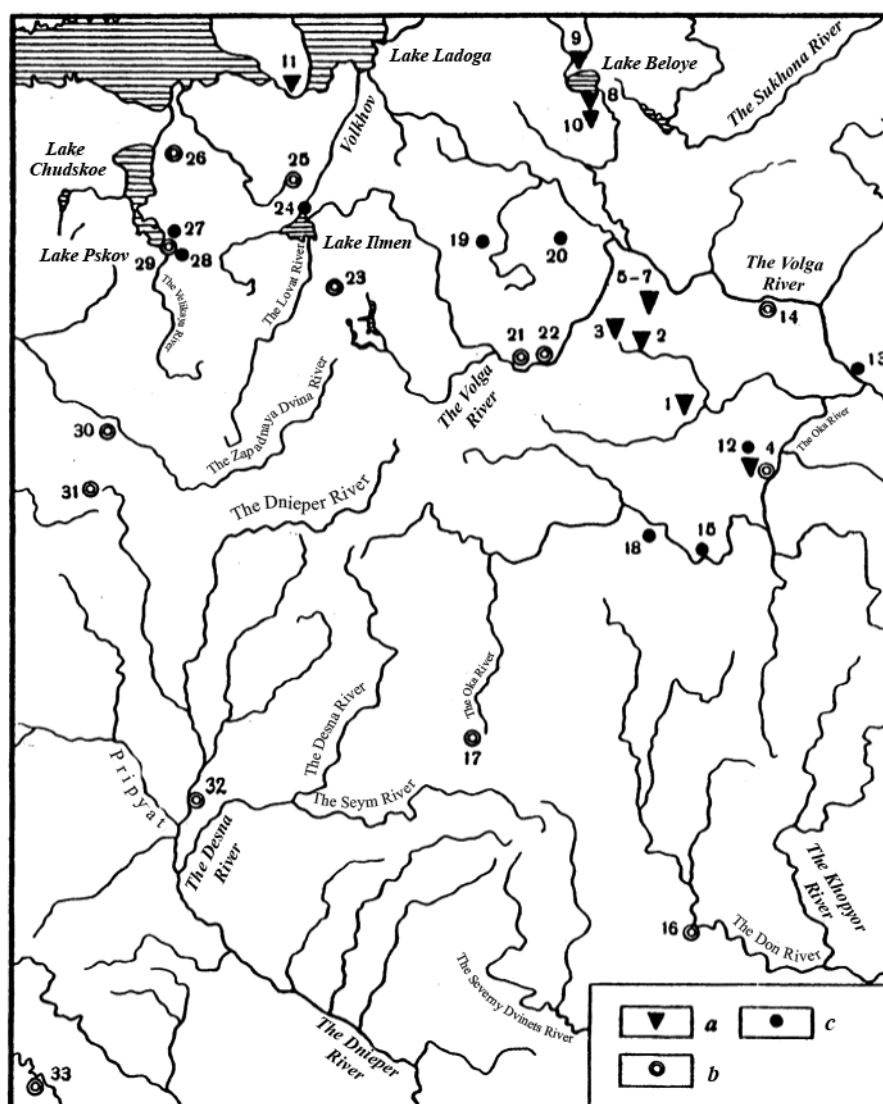
Bulgar ceramics from the territory of Rus'.  
1, 2, 4, 5—Suzdal; 3—a mound at the village  
of Nyubinichi (Oyat' River)

ics from perfectly elutriated dough appeared in the pottery districts of Kiev, Vyshgorod, and Knyazhna mountain in the layers of 11–beginning of the 12th century; according to all indications, it is similar to the Bulgar one of 10–11th centuries, which can be regarded as the result of the influence of Bulgarian pottery on Russian pottery.

Small amounts of Bulgarian ceramics are found in many sites of North-Eastern Rus'. In Vladimir and Suzdal, it appears in the 10–11th centuries; in the 12th century, it amounts to a fraction of a percent. Bulgarian pottery fragments are also found in the layers of 10–12th centuries in Gnezdilovo 2 ancient settlement near Suzdal. It can be found in Yaropolch Zalesky and Rostov Veliky in the layers of the end of 10–11th centuries and near surrounding ancient settlements. In Sungirsky ancient town, this pottery dates back to the 12th century; in Gorokhovets, the turn of 11–12th centuries and 13th century; in Murom, from the second half of the 10th and 11th centuries. Bulgar ceramics are found in Moscow (Zaryadie area) in the pre-Mongol layer and in Gorodets-on-Volga of the same time.

Bulgarian vessels have been found in the mounds of Yaroslavl Volga Region of the 10–11th centuries: at Timerevsk, Mikhailovsk,





The spread of Bulgar coins and articles on the territory of Rus' in the 10–11th centuries:

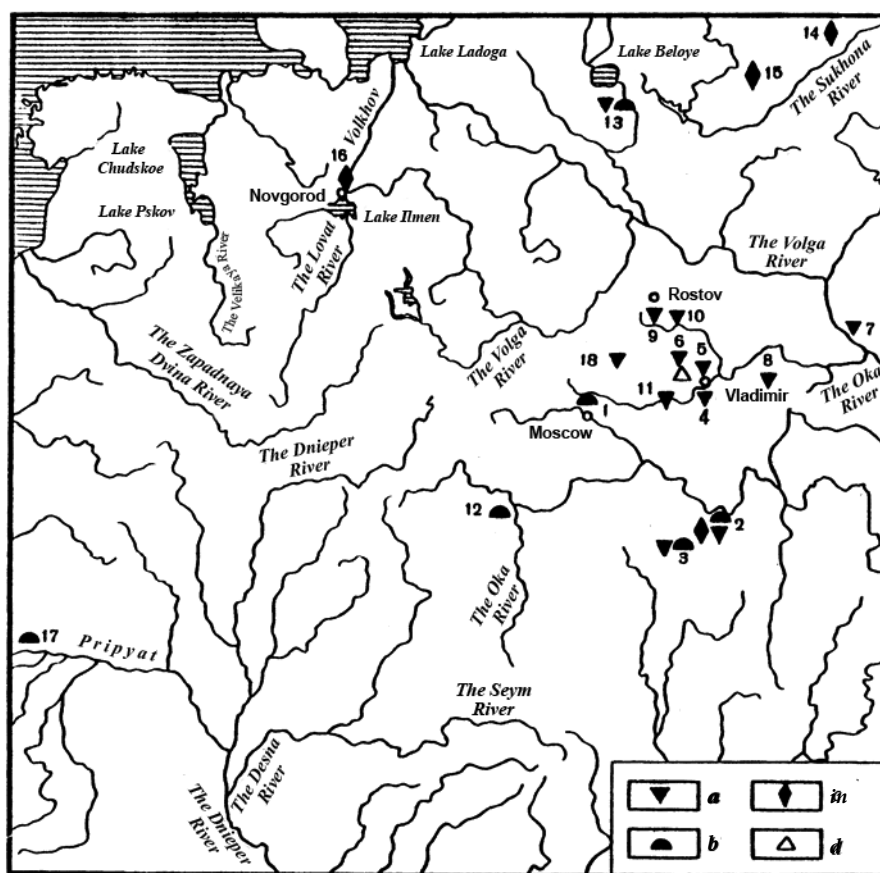
a—ceramics; b—coins of the 10th century (up to the 970s); c—coins of the 970s–80s ;

- 1—Gnezdilovo; 2—Rostov; 3—Schurskol; 4—Murom; 5—Timerevo burial site; 6—Petrovka burial site; 7—Mikhaylovskoe burial site; 8—Beloozero; 9—Nikol'skoe V; 10—Krutik; 11—Nyubichi burial site; 12—Malyshhevo; 13—Semenovo; 14—Kubasovo; 15—Borki; 16—Maloe Borshevo; 17—Bereza; 18—Bely Omot; 19—Kabozha; 20—Kurevanikha; 21—Izbrizhye; 22—Kurovo; 23—Bokovo; 24—Novgorod; 25—Khotyn'; 26—Verholyany; 27—Demshino; 28—Erilovo; 29—Pskov; 30—Koz'yanki; 31—Rakovtsy; 32—Lyubech; 33—Alchedar

and Petrovsky burial sites. Beloozero area also provides a number of Bulgarian ceramics, including that in pre-Slavic settlements of Ves' of the 10th century. Two fragments of Bulgarian sphero-cones have been found in the layer of the 11th century in Beloozero; and Bulgar crockery, in the layer of the 12th century. It was also in Krutik ancient town of

the 10th century, in Nikolskoe ancient settlement. Among all of these finds, tare vessels dominate, indicating the commercial interests of the Bulgars staying on Russian territory.

The art of the Bulgarian craftsmen-jewelers was at a very high level. Some of their handicrafts were found in Old Russian territory. A bronze breastplate suspension of the



The spread of Bulgar items on the territory of Rus' in the 12–early 13th centuries. a—ceramics; b—locks; c—plummet seals; d—sledge flints; 1—Moscow; 2—Ryazan; 3—Pronsk; 4—Vladimir; 5—Suzdal; 6—Butovo; 7—Gorodets; 8—Yaropolch; 9—Rostov; 10—Shurskol; 11—Sungir; 12—Serensk; 13—Beloozero; 14—Dvinets; 15—Alferovo; 16—Novgorod; 17—Kashenka; 18—Kinobol

arch form was found in Kiev in the layer of the 11th century; it is one of those that are found in the Middle Volga Region, in the Upper Kama, in Bashkortostan and Trans-Urals of the 9–10th centuries, and suspensions of this type were probably made by Bulgars, who spread it to the Dnieper region. Bronze button in the form of a pitcher is known from Leskov district of Chernigov Oblast (10–11th centuries). A button of the same shape and composition of the metal is found in Izmerskoe ancient settlement. It is likely that the button comes from Volga Bulgaria and appeared in the Southern Rus' through it, but now they are only two finds.

In Novgorod, a brass temple ring with two of the three survived mock beads has been

found in the strata of the beginning of the 12th century. One of the beads is biconical with granulation and filigree; another is spherical with a filigree pattern. The ornament made by filigree and granulation on copper jewellery is extremely rare in Rus'. M. Sedova categorises the adornment as Bulgarian imports.

It is not entirely clear question about the export intensity of copper crockery to Rus', the production of which was highly developed in Volga Bulgaria. Researchers defined the form of copper vessels inherent in the Rusessian sites, but metal crockery similar to Bulgarian can also be found here. Perhaps it was sold to the Rusessians. The copper as a metal (raw material) came to Rus' allegedly from the Bulgars, or rather, by the Bulgars, as

medieval development of copper in the territory of Volga Bulgaria is not found.

The role of both partners in Eastern European trade, the functioning of trade routes at different stages of history, the level of economic development of the two states—Volga Bulgaria and Rus'—in the 9–11th centuries are marked by topography of coin finds. It was H. Fraehn who found that the main stream of Arab dirhams of the 9th to the beginning of the 11th century flowed along Volga, and Don River and Seversky Donets. According to V. Yanin, Bulgar was the only bridge to the East throughout the period of the Eastern trade of Rus' [Yanin, 1956, p. 105]. It received masses of Arab silver coins, and from there they were spread along the Oka to Vyatichi land and further in Kiev, to the Upper Volga, in the northern Russian land, and into the Baltic region. V. Yanin, having considered the topography of the treasures of Arab coins over four periods defined by R. Fasmer, has found that in the 9th and the beginning of 10th centuries (the second period) the Volga Route of dirhams motion predominated. Most of the coins left for the south-west along the Oka route to Kiev. An equal stream flowed from Bulgar, across the Oka and the Klyazma, to the Upper Volga, to Novgorod and Krivichi lands, and Western Europe. In the third period (first two-thirds of the 10th century), the role of the Volga Route and Bulgaria in spreading of Arab coins in Rus' intensified. In the fourth period (end of the 10–beginning of the 11th century), the main direction of movement of silver was from Volga Bulgaria to the Upper Volga, Lovat in Novgorod and Pskov lands. It did not spread to the Kiev region: coin finds are not observed above the middle reaches of the Oka River.

It is believed that it was Bulgars who minted Kufic imitation coins in the 9th to the beginning of the 11th centuries and added them to the total weight of eastern silver. These imitations are noted in treasures found in the Old Russian territory. In Rus', there were namely Bulgarian coins minted in Bulgar and Suvar in the 10th century. They are found in the treasures of the third and fourth periods, mainly in the Northern Russian territories—in Novgorod and Pskov lands, as well as in

Belorussian flow of the Dnieper and Western Dvina. In Kievan Rus', their finds are few and relate only to the third period.

There were a small number of Western European denarii that came through Rus' to the Bulgars in the 10th to the beginning of the 11th centuries. They are found in Bulgar and its surrounds, on Izmersky and Semenovsky settlements, near Krasny Baran village, in the oldest layer of Kazan. They could get through Kiev or through Beloozero, Staraya Ladoga to the Middle Volga Region.

When the flow of Arab silver had ended and Volga Bulgaria and Rus' came into the coinless period, large commercial operations were paid with silver ingots. The ingots of the northern weight (about 196 g), so-called 'Novgorod grivna', were used both in the North-Eastern Rus' and the Bulgars from the 12th to the 15th centuries. Some of them, longer ones, relate to the pre-Mongol period.

They could have been imported from Rus' and cast in Volga Bulgaria according to Russian patterns.

The study of ancient trade involves the definition of trade routes, where products were promoted in one or another direction. Volga Bulgaria and Kievan Rus' were linked by both water and land routes. The waterway was described in the middle of the 12th century by al-Gharnati, who sailed from Bulgar along the Volga, Oka, Desna to the Dnieper and Kiev, and further to Hungary. The route existed before, at least from the 10th century, when campaigns of Kievan princes Sviatoslav and Vladimir opened free access to the East for Russians.

Al-Gharnati was aware of the existence of caravan routes by land from the Middle Dnieper Region to the Lower Volga steppes. The overland route, known to al-Idrisi in the 12th century, was on the watershed of the Volga, Chopra, Vorona, Don, Dnieper, and Desna rivers. Using the information of the Arab road guides, B. Rybakov reconstructed the direction of the route, calculated and mapped locations of alleged caravan stops. In 1989–1991 a joint Tatar-Ukrainian expedition carried out field studies on the possible routes of the medieval route, the eastern part of which was through

the territory of Bulgaria; the western, through the Rusessian lands; and the middle (Tsninsk-Don interfluve), through interstate space, where the risk of attacks on the caravans by nomads was especially high. In the places of possible stops, the records have been studied, and supposed crossings of the major rivers have been mapped. Caravans could cross the Volga to the south of the modern Ulyanovsk (Krestovo-Gorodishche and Kriushi ancient towns) through Sura (near Penza), across the Don—to the north of Voronezh (Zhivotinnoe ancient town). The date of the many records that could serve as stops, especially in the Rusessian territory, is marked in the 11–12th centuries, indicating the time of the most intensive functioning of the route, shorter than the path along the rivers.

In the same centuries, there existed a link between Volga Bulgaria and the northern Russian lands. Here the main role was played by the Volga, passing through the Bulgarian

and Russian territory, and its confluents—the Oka, Klyazma, and Nerl. Later, the way to the north-west, to the Baltic states was open. Without a doubt, all these trade routes continued even further to the west and east directions. They functioned in earlier eras and later in the era of the Golden Horde.

Perhaps there was also a land road from the Bulgars to North-Eastern Rus'. Finds of camel bones in Suzdal and some other Russian cities show how far caravans travelled.

The trade between Volga Bulgaria and Rus', which lasted more than half a millennium, played a very important role in the economic development of both countries. It stimulated the development of handicrafts, enriching craftsmen with new techniques and skills. In an area such as jewellery, this interinfluence is very noticeable. Tools of production and weapons of the Rusessians and Bulgars are very similar, indicating the close links brought about by trade.

#### 4. The Kama trade route

*Andrey Belavin*

The Bulgars believed that there were three regions in the North: the area and the people called Visu (Isu), the people and country of Yura after that, and further northward was The Dark Country, which was surrounded by the sea and impassable Northern mountains. Arabic sources did not have a stable idea about the borders of the seventh climate. Thus, works written by al-Biruni, one of the most reputable developers of the climate theory in Arabic medieval geography, contain different interpretations of these borders, as well as the countries and peoples neighbouring this climate. In the work "Geodesy" which describes the seventh climate he points to the following: '...right up to the middle of the seventh [climate], where the longest day is sixteen hours. Inhabitants, who live beyond [the middle of the seventh climate], are few and similar to savages. The farthest point where they live in cooperation is the country of Yura. It is reached from Isu

within twelve days, and it takes twenty days to get from Bulgar city to Isu' [Biruni, 1966]. In another work, Biruni localizes the cities of Bulgar and Suvar in the seventh climate, as well as the lands the Bulgars, Rus and Magyars: 'few people inhabit the territory beyond this climate—the Isu, Varangians, Yura and those similar to them' [Biruni, 1973]. Therefore, in the first case, the Isu (Visu) and the Yura are named as peoples inhabiting the seventh climate, and in another that they lived beyond its borders. However, not completely accurate ideas about this cold climate did not frighten multiple eastern (Arabic, Persian, Indian and other) merchants who repeatedly went to trade in Volga Bulgaria, and many others even beyond its borders. Islamic Bulgaria was an extremely convenient place for organizing large transfer bases in the international transit trade. A high degree of control from the side of the government, which was

extremely interested in development of this trade, allowed to make the Bulgarian part of the international trading system fairly safe which in turn attracted a great number of merchants.

The reasons of active trading communications between Bulgaria and the Cis-Urals require explanations. Even if we get acquainted with archaeological and folklore sources superficially, it becomes clear that the Bulgars had not only an economical interest in the Cis-Urals, but also a military-political one. It is likely that by the 11th century almost the whole Cis-Kama region (except for the basin of the Middle Vyatka river, where already in the 12–13th centuries a Russian province—the Vyatka land—appeared) became a part of Volga Bulgaria's territory, its peculiar Finnish-Ugric periphery. Here, Bulgarian trade factories emerged and the Bulgarian townlets of Afkula, Ybyr and Chulyman appeared and functioned until the 14th century. A list of exchange products expanded: not only furs, but also copper and bronze ingots, choice grain and a product of high value for the early Middle Ages—salt—were imported from the Cis-Kama region to Bulgaria and then further to the East. The Kama and its banks served as the main transport artery connecting Bulgaria's central regions with its northern areas.

The Bulgars were the main trade partners of the Cis-Urals' inhabitants in exchange with the Ruses' and Northern Europe, while the Kama trade route served somewhat as a branch of the Trans-European Volga Trade Route. The Volga-Kama Great Trade Route was between the 9th and the 14th centuries the main trunk-line, via which products of European and Asian urban craft penetrated beyond the Urals. Specialists unanimously note that as a rule, the Bulgarian import to the Trans-Urals and Siberia was found together with Cis-Ural items which directly points to the Permian Cis-Urals not only as the main trading mediator of the Trans-Ural Ugric people, but to the special role in such trade of the Cis-Ural 'Chulym merchants' and the Kama trade route. The Cis-Ural Ugrians' trade bloomed under the influence of the Bulgars. Inhabitants of the Cis-Kama region known as 'Chulym merchants' became trade in-

termediaries of the Bulgars in their interactions with northern and western Siberian tribes.

It is interesting that during excavations of the pagan part of the Rozhdestvensky burial site, a grave of such a 'Chulym merchant' was discovered. In the grave #37 of this burial site, a unique item discovered in the Cis-Urals—a trapezoidal silver pendant, on the front side of which Vladimir Svyatoslavich's tamga was depicted, and on the reverse side, the sign of his contemporary, Olaf Tryggvason. It is a credential sign of a merchant, 'a carry seal' which were given to Bulgarian merchants in accordance with the trade agreement between the Bulgars and Vladimir Svyatoslavich in 1006 [Krylasova, 1995].

By the end of the 12th century, the Kama trading way became a 'stumbling block' in the relations between Northeastern Rus' and Volga Bulgaria. Rus' was approaching closer to the Kama headwaters. In 1212, a Russian fortress was built in the estuary of the Yug river. Twice, in 1218 and 1219, Bulgarian troops launched military campaigns against it, thus spurring a retaliatory campaign of the Vladimir-Suzdal army in 1220.

This trading war did not have consequences for the functioning of the Kama route, but the Mongol invasion which happened soon, the destruction of Bulgaria and the ancient Russian lands, as well as their further integration into the Horde suspended disputes about the control over the Kama way for a while.

The Kama river route was the main road which Bulgarian and Eastern merchants used to reach the Visu and other peoples of the North. Direct references to the fact that the Kama (Chulman) river route was used by caravans, which went upstream during three months, are contained in sources (Ibn Fadlan, Yakut, Qazwini). The distance from the capital of Bilyar to the Rozhdestvenskoe ancient town on the Obva river—the largest trade factory of the Bulgars in the land of the Visu and Chulman (Kasaba Afkula)—along the river routes (Cheremshan–Kama–Obva) amounts to nearly 1220 km. A day of journey up the river was equal to 20–30 km, and down the river—70–75 km. Therefore, the way from the Bulgarian capital to Kasaba Afkula up the Kama amounted to

approximately 60 days in motion with rests every 2–3 days, which means 3 months. The way down was equal to 20 days (a reference to this distance may be found in al-Marwazi's works of the 12th century and in Afi's works of the 13th century): 15 days in motion with 5 days of rest every 3 days. What is interesting is that Kasaba Afkula (the archaeological complex of Rozhdestvenskoe) was located approximately three days away from the Obva estuary on the right bank of the Kama and two days away from Ilyinskoe ancient town, where fragments of Bulgarian ceramics were found and which could be used as a site of a guarded day's rest.

To the Kama (Chulman) country of Visu, merchants also moved along the Kama coast, and this way through the basin of the Izh and Cheptsia rivers led to the Obva banks. According to al-Gharnati, it took 1 month to go along this way; a figure of 40 days was also given [Zakhoder, 1962, p. 29]. This diversity of data could be explained by different ways of reaching Visu. Discoveries of camel bones at the ancient town of Anyushkar evidence the arrival of Eastern merchants' caravans in the Permian Cis-Urals. In his 'Caspian Collection', B. Zakhoder presents the following data: 'The Bulgars bring goods by sleds to the countries of Visu and Yura. The sleds are dragged by dogs through snowbanks, while people themselves go on skis'. Abu Hamid and al-Gharnati also provide descriptions of skis in their works. Bone details of dog sleds were found during excavations of Anyushkar (Kylasovo ancient town) on the Inva river, as well as Rozhdestvenskoe, Solomatovskoe and other monuments in the Uralic Cis-Kama region. Details of deer sleds were found at the same places. The best winter road in the forest zone is a frozen river.

The shortest way by land is a month. According to the formulated opinion (B. Rybakov, A. Khalikov, A. Motsa), one day of a journey by land was equal to 40–45 km, while movement of a caravan of dog sleds allowed to lengthen a day's journey to 60–65 km. Therefore, one month of journey constituted one winter way of a caravan consisting of dog or deer sleds, which took roughly 20 days and 10 day's rest at manzils or special dwellings every two days.

A way taking 40 days implied the journey of a baggage caravan along a summer land road with day's rests every 2 days.

Arabic sources of the 14th century describe northern geography with more detail. Thus, the Arabic geographer and encyclopedist al-Umari mentions Kasaba—a small town of Akikul (Avakol, Afkula) 20 days away from Bulgar city northwards, i.e. within the land of Chulyman (Julyman), the town of Chulyman located to the north from the Akikul, as well as the towns of Sibir and Ibyr. Al-Umari states: 'The merchants of our lands... do not go beyond the city of Bulgar; Bulgarian merchants reach the Chulyman river, and Chulyman merchants proceed to the Yugra lands which are at the Northern edge' [Tiesenhhausen, 1884, p. 240]. Besides, the Chulyman was located at the same place where Visu used to be. 'When a traveler comes from the Chulyman towards the East, he reaches the city of Karakorum. When a traveler goes westwards, he reaches the Rusessian lands...'. The Chulyman land, according to al-Umari, has one side adjacent to the Bashkirs' lands and another to Siberian lands. Kasaba Afkula is its capital city. The data provided by al-Umari have a great degree of authenticity. This is proved by his original triple method of oral data verification, as well as examination of archive materials which the position of state secretary at the Egyptian sultan allowed him to do.

The name 'Chulyman' which substituted 'Visu' is also familiar thanks to Maghrib traveler Ibn Battuta (the latter half of the 14th century). Ibn Battuta, just as al-Gharnati had previously done, visited Bulgar city himself in order to see the shortness of night in this latitude which seemed unbelievable to him. He evidenced that the Bulgars come to the Chulyman and then goods are brought further by Chulyman merchants themselves. Therefore, 'Chulyman merchants' turn from the Bulgars' trade partners into their intermediaries when the latter cooperated with the peoples from the North (the Dark Country and Yura), where 'Chulyman merchants' now brought Bulgarian goods.

Thus, the Kama trading route was used by merchants during all seasons throughout sev-

eral centuries, and besides, the journey was made both by water by land in summer, and in winter, merchants could use the frozen Kama (Chulman) as a winter road. If journeys by water were seasonal and had certain restrictions (a boat caravan could only move where the draft, river width, and other factors permitted), journeys by land and river ice provided fewer obstacles.

Trade in Bulgaria was a state affair and it was distinguished by fairly strict regulations and control from the side of the authorities. The definite number of journey days and day's rests can roughly determine the location of stops of ship and land caravans. This technique allowed, for example, to accurately trace the trade route from Bilyar to Kiev (see above).

There was a trade route between Bulgaria and Kievan Rus' which was strictly regulated, divided into parts, had stations, regulated points of day's rests and night's rest, and was guarded by military garrisons both on the ancient Russian and Bulgarian territories [Motsa, Khalikov, 1997]. It is most likely that the Kama trade route was especially regulated. The most important trading station could be Alabuga where a military garrison was deployed. A. Smirnov considered Yelabuga's ('Chertovo Gorodishche') ancient town a fortified stronghold built in the 10–11th centuries. Excavations in the 1990s confirmed this suggestion by an abundance of archaeological material.

Alabuga was possibly the initial station both of the river and land parts of the Kama trade route. Unfortunately, in general, the Kama route has not been thoroughly examined yet, and we only have enough evidence to judge the presence of regulated stations here only at certain parts. Bulgarian container dishes were found between the Vyatka estuary (the Nukrat river) and the Belaya estuary (the Ak-Atil river) on the right bank of the upper Kama, when the ancient towns of Blagodatskoe I and Cheganda were examined. Bulgarian ceramic items were also found on the sacrificial site of Chumaytlo (the basin of the lower Vyatka river). Discoveries of Bulgarian ceramics in the basin of the Izh river (Blagodatskoe and Bobauchinskoe ancient towns) are indicative of possible caravans' stations at the arm of the Kama trade route in the

area of settlement of the proto-Udmurt tribes of the Chepetskaya culture. There, in the basin of the Chepets river, Bulgarian ceramics were found in 11 monuments. According to researchers' estimates, the mass quantity of Bulgarian ceramics in the upper layers of the Chepets ancient town of Idnakar (up to 33.7% in the layers of the 12th and 13th centuries) are indicative of the fact that some number of the Bulgars inhabited this place for a while, and that their trade posts were present along the Kama trade way.

We may speak about the presence of medieval settlements with Bulgarian pottery ceramics in the outskirts of Sarapul city (the right bank of the Kama). Fragments of Bulgarian ceramics were found in Saygatinskoe ancient town in the area surrounding the city of Chaykovsky. It is possible that these rare discoveries may be observed as evidence of 'dnevkas-manzils'—dwellings used for a one-day rest. Bulgarian ceramics, waist linings and bronze clippers similar to the findings in Bilyar extracted from materials of Ust-Bubinskoe settlement in the upper reaches of the Siva (Perm oblast) evidence of the fact that a land route was continued here from the basin of the river Cheptsy. Therefore, the caravan road from the Izh river to the concentration of Southern monuments of the Rodanovskaya culture (the land of the Visu) was significantly shorter than the river route along the Kama, Obva and Inva rivers. Beginning with the estuary of the Chusovaya river and to the Usolka river (suburbs of Solikamsk town), the movement of river and winter (on the ice) caravans is marked by discoveries of Bulgarian ceramics, bronze and silver items as well as coins throughout almost thirty settlements on the right and rarer on the left banks of the Kama, near estuaries of medium and small rivers, which represented convenient bays (the ancient towns of Yagoshikhinskoe, Maykorskoe, Romanovo, Nazarovskoe, Rodanovo, Ostraya Griva, Esperovo, Volodin Kamen, the ancient settlements of Chashkinskoe II, Ogurdinskoe and others). As a rule, these were rare fragments of container dishes; spherical cones which were used to transfer mercury for jewelers (discovered in Ostraya Griva and Chashkinskoe II ancient settlement) are of a special interest. Strongholds of Bulgar-

ia's international trade in this part of the Kama route were, as we have already stated earlier, Rozhdestvenskoe archaeological town on the Obva river, Anyushkar on the Inva river and, possibly, Gorodishchenskoe ancient town on the Usolka river.

An arm of the main Kama river route along the Chusovaya river led to the Middle Urals and to the Trans-Urals. Here, the ancient settlements of 'Za Uralom', Telyachy Brod, and Ust-Koyvinskoe could serve as strongholds. Here, fragments of Bulgarian container dishes along

with other Bulgarian, Eastern and ancient Russian items were found. The biggest monument with multiple discoveries of imported items and ceramics is Solomatovskoe ancient town, where weight coin plummets and dirhams-re-zanas were discovered.

The Bulgars within the Horde and then people of Kazan maintained stable economic and political connections with the Cis-Urals and Trans-Urals until the 15th century. In the meantime, the Kama trade route was still used as the major artery.

## 5. The way from Bulgaria to Siberia

*Yuly Khudyakov*

The geographical location of Volga Bulgaria at the confluence of the major waterways of Eastern Europe, the Volga and the Kama, on the border of different landscapes and cultural-economic regions, determined its prominent role in the exchange of goods and transmission of cultural achievements between the different peoples inhabiting neighbouring regions of Eurasia. The works of researchers, studying trade and cultural ties of Bulgaria in the periods of early and developed Middle Ages, emphasized the importance for trade, spread of technical achievements and rational knowledge, spiritual currents and literature of the Baltic-Volga route connecting Northern and Central Europe with the regions of the Caucasus, Near East and Middle Asia through the Middle Volga Region [Khuzin, 1997, p. 85, 90–91]. This route may be considered one of the Northern meridians of the Transcontinental Eurasian Trade Route or the Silk Road.

The fur trade occupied an important place in the structure of Volga Bulgaria's trading volume. The fur trade considerably strengthened the intermediary role of Bulgarian merchants in transit and trading connections between the population of the northern region of Eastern Europe and the Urals with the countries of the Middle East, as well as contributed to the development of crafts in Volga Bulgaria itself. In exchange for the furs acquired from the Finn-

ish and Ugric tribes, the Bulgars supplied their northern neighbours with imported metal items, weaponry, foodware, and jewelry made in Western Europe, in the Caucasus, Byzantium, Iran and Middle Asia. Keeping in mind the taste of the neighbouring Finnish-speaking tribes, Bulgarian craftsmen produced a great number of their favourite silver jewelry in accordance with the samples which were characteristic of the culture of the Upper Cis-Kama river region. If we trace the spread of the Bulgarian craft, we will get an idea about the direction and borders of the spread of the Bulgarian merchants' trading operations. [Valeev, 1995, pp. 46–52].

A great interest for furs and a quick reduction of valuable fur livestock in the taiga zone of Eastern Europe forced Bulgarian merchants to search for new sources of obtaining this saleable article. Trade expeditions were equipped and sent to the far northern "Dark Country", which was possibly situated in the Northern Urals and in Yura, the name of which is similar to Yugra—known from Russian chronicles. Yugra lands lied behind the eastern slopes of the Ural mountain range, in the northern regions of Western Siberia. There are reasons to suppose that Bulgarian merchants in pursuit of "soft gold" were one or two centuries ahead of the Scandinavian Vikings and Novgorod ushkuiniks (pirates) in their visits to the taiga zone of the Trans-Urals.



Trade relations between the Middle Asian countries and tribes of the taiga zone of Western Siberia had been established before the formation of Volga Bulgaria, in the 7–8th centuries, when Khwarezmian and Sogdian merchants had imported their goods to the Cis-Kama region, and from there, through the relay exchange, brought to the Ugric people of the Trans-Urals. The military equestrian culture penetrated into forest tribes from southern steppe areas, and shaft and blade weapons, decorated military armour and horse trappings, as well as expensive women's jewelry became widely spread. Trade stimulated excessive trapping and contributed to military confrontations between individual ethnic groups for hunting grounds [Marshak, 1996, pp. 8–9].

In the Middle Ages, silver or stannous foodware and imported swords or sabres used for religious ceremonies were especially popular among the Ugric peoples of Western Siberia.

Certain decorations and convivial foodware were imported through the Middle Volga Region and the Cis-Kama Region to Western Siberia back at the beginning of the 1st millennium AD. After the nomads of the Eurasian steppe zone united under the power of rulers of the so-called First Turkic Khaganate who subdued trading and craft centres of the Middle Asia, Sogdian and Khwarezmian merchants were able to bring goods from their own lands, Iran and Byzantium to inhabitants of the taiga zone of Northern Eurasia and thus provide a fail-safe exchange for furs. A part of the handicraft products of Sogdian, Iranian and Byzantine craftsmen was imported to Siberia through the lands of the Volga Bulgars [ibid., pp. 8–9].

In the period when Bulgaria was dependent on the rulers of the Khazar Khaganate, products of Khazarian craftsmen were brought through its territory into the Trans-Ural area. A Khazarian silver scoop with pictures of the heroic epos—made in Khazaria in the 9th century—was discovered in the Ob river area [Darkevich, 1974, p. 31].

After the Khazar Khaganate lost control over the Middle Volga Region in the second half of the 10th century, the trade with Northern and Siberian tribes passed to the hands of Bulgarian merchants. Multiple products of

Bulgarian craftsmen and jewelers discovered in the taiga and the forest-steppe zone of Western Siberia are attributed to the 13th century. It was a period of a real golden age of the Bulgarian trade. Apart from foodware, jewelry, and shields for archery made at workshops in Bulgarian cities, merchants brought through the Urals silver and bronze foodware of the Western European, Byzantine, Iran and Middle Asian production [Marshak, 1996, pp. 9–10]. The adoption of Islam strengthened trade and cultural connections of Volga Bulgaria with the Islamic world, which contributed to activation of the fur trade and import of handicraft products from the Middle East countries through the Volga Region to Western Siberia.

In the opinion of many researchers, at the turn of the early and developed Middle Ages, the Bulgarian fur trade with the Ugric nations of the Trans-Urals faced rivalry from Scandinavian sailors and Novgorod ushkuiniks (pirates) [Darkevich, 1966, p. 68; Marshak, 1996, pp. 9, 10]. The Vikings sailed around northern seas all the way down the Ob estuary which is evidenced both by Scandinavian sagas describing voyages to legendary Bjarmaland and by the discovery of a shell-like fibula characteristic of a Scandinavian outfit in the outskirts of Salekhard [Krenke, Makarov, 1995, p. 208]. In the opinion of B. Marshak, since the 9th century the Scandinavians mastered sailing in the Barents sea, and the discovery of the fibula of the 10th century in the lower Ob is indicative of a possibility of their visit to the northern coast of Western Siberia. An important piece of evidence of the Vikings' visits of settlement areas of the Permian and Ugric tribes is a mention about their robbery of a rich sanctuary—which was characteristic of these ethnoses [Marshak, 1996, p. 11]. The Scandinavians' voyages continued until the beginning of the 13th century, when the cooling of the climate hampered their ability to reach the lower Ob river, the farthest from Scandinavia. The remoteness of the Scandinavian Peninsula from Western Siberia and difficulties of inland navigation on rowboats could not make the Vikings' voyages regular. Therefore, the Scandinavians' trading operations could not compete with the trade of the Bulgarian merchants. It is most likely, that

the voyages of Scandinavian mariners in the lower reaches of the Ob were of an episodic nature. As a result of an exchange, the locals obtained items of not only Scandinavian but also European crafts. In the Ob's lower reaches, several richly decorated silver cups and their covers were discovered, which were made in workshops near the island of Gotland in Sweden and in the city of Limoges in Aquitaine. These goods could have been brought by the Scandinavians in exchange for furs [Borisenko, Khudyakov, 2001, p. 91].

In the 11–12th centuries, campaigns by the Novgorod ushkuiniks beyond the Urals, against 'the Samoyad and Yugra', began [Marshak, 1996, p. 11]. A number of researchers suggest that they played an important role in the import of items of Western European and Eastern crafts to the peoples of Western Siberia which were then exchanged for furs [Darkevich, 1966, p. 68; Drboglav, Kirpichnikov, 1981, p. 532; Kosarev, 1984, p. 131; Mogilnikov, 1987]. However, in O. Malozemova's opinion, Novgorod soldiers came to the lower reaches of the Ob river in order to impose tribute upon the locals and take sable furs and silver from them [Malozemova, 1997, p. 81]. It is surely possible that certain items were obtained by the Ob Ugrians as a result of contacts with Novgorod inhabitants, however, this source of import of expensive weapons and festive foodware to the Trans-Ural area in the epoch of the developed Middle Ages was not the main one.

A large part of the imported goods, silver and bronze banquet tableware, bracelets, pendants and other types of jewelry, and bladed weapons were brought to the Ob Ugric people by Bulgarian merchants. According to the reconstruction of the trading volume mechanism, merchants from different countries brought and sold similar goods at bazaars and cities of Volga Bulgaria. Bulgarian merchants took items of weaponry, jewelry and tableware they had bought to the Upper Cis-Kama region through the Volga-Kama route, and then, beyond the Urals, these goods were brought by local merchants. Discoveries of bronze objects characteristic of the Rodanovsky culture of the Cis-Kama region within complexes containing

imported things speak in favour of the existence of such a relay trade [ibid., pp. 80–81].

Such a relay trade scheme functioned in the initial period of the development of trade connections between Bulgaria and Western Siberia. However, after the main routes which merchants had used to pass through the Ural mountains were explored, Bulgarian merchants started taking independent trade expeditions to the Trans-Urals. This is evidenced by the geography of the spread of imported and Bulgarian items in Western Siberia which included a vast range from the lower reaches of the Ob river to the head stream of the Irtysh. No goods characteristic of the cultures of the Kama River region have been found on many territories where Bulgarian, Western European and Eastern handicraft items were discovered.

It is most likely that the trading route from Volga Bulgaria to Western Siberia began in the lower stream of the Kama and then branched into two or three separate roads. One of them came along the Kama to the Northern Cis-Ural region and passed through the Ural mountains in the area of the lower Ob. This region was also reached both by Scandinavian sailors and by Novgorod ushkuiniks. In the lower Ob area, a significant part of discoveries of Oriental, Western-European and Bulgarian silver items is concentrated on the territory of Western Siberia. The silver bowl and covers made in Northern European countries come from this region [SP, 1996, pp. 165–174]. Iranian bowls, a Khwarezmian silver tray, Byzantine silver foodware, and a Syrian silver bowl belonging to the items made in the possessions of crusaders of the 12th century were all discovered in the lower reaches of the Ob [ibid., pp. 124–127, 145–162]. In the monuments, sanctuaries and treasures discovered in the lower reaches of the Ob, there were plenty of items of Bulgarian handicraft production. They included silver bowls with an ornate floral ornament and a picture of a horseman shooting a bow; small silver panels for protecting an archer's arms from the impact of a bowstring ornamented with a floral decor in the form of a sprout of grape-vine with curls, intertwining lilies and pastiched pictures of wild animals;

silver laminar ochelyes (frontal rigid headbands) decorated with dry point ornaments and spherical bulges ornamented with granulation and filigree; temporal pendants and laminar bracelets decorated with granulation, filigree and gilt; and a two-fold laminar bracelet ornamented with intertwining lines and niello with reel-type filigree along its edge [ibid., pp. 98–106]. Several silver cups with pictures of horse soldiers with weapons and in armour, or wearing a crown and holding a bird on an arm, attributed to the Hungarian production before their resettlement to Central Europe in the 9th century were discovered in the lower reaches of the Ob [ibid., pp. 114–120]. Nomads themselves could hardly carry out trading operations with Yugra. It is most likely that banquet tableware could have been brought to the Yamal Peninsula as a result of mediator trade by Bulgarian merchants.

Among treasures and sanctuaries in the Ob's lower reaches, the products of artisans of the Cis-Kama region's medieval population may be found. They included ten-kopeck coins, noisy pendants, curled three-blade temporal pendants, a plate with a picture of a horseman holding a hunting bird and a geometric ornament [ibid., pp. 107–110].

Among the findings originating from places of worship of the Ob Ugrians at the Lower Ob, there are items of bronze casting characteristic of the Ugrian and Samoyed population of the taiga zone of Western Siberia. It is likely that these items got into the northern areas as a result of an exchange between the tribes of forest and tundra areas [ibid., pp. 50–69].

According to the cultural background of the metal products from the places of worship of the Ob Ugrians of the Lower Ob, objects of Bulgarian handicraft and things from Middle Asia and the Near East, brought by merchants from Volga Bulgaria, significantly dominated the composition of these findings. However, the fur trade with foreign merchants activated the exchange between the taiga tribes and inhabitants of the tundra in the Cis- and Trans-Urals.

Another vast region where Bulgarian imported goods were sold was the taiga zone of Western Siberia which claimed a part of

the lower and middle Ob area, as well as the lower Irtysh area inhabited by the Ugrian and Samoyed tribes. New Western European handicraft products were discovered on the territory of this region: bronze and richly ornamented bowls with pictures of Old Testament characters, bronze water-carriers representing a centaur, a horseman and an allegorical figure of a kneeler symbolizing the biblical river Tigris [Darkevich, 1966, p. 38; Borisenko, Khudyakov, 1998, pp. 198–199; Brentjes, Vasilievskiy, 1989, S. 25, 171].

Silver jewels of Parthian and Bactrian production, a plate made in Mesopotamia, a silver picture of a dragon head of Sogdian production, a Khazarian scoop were found in the taiga zone of Western Siberia [ibid., pp. 46–49, 70–71, 74]. Products of these countries were not found in the Lower Ob area, therefore, they had been brought to the Trans-Urals by another way, not through the Northern Urals. It is likely that this way lied along the rivers through the Middle Urals and ran into the Ob at a lower point than the Irtysh estuary. As judged by the composition of the findings, the route had started functioning back at the beginning of the 1st millennium AD and continued to serve for goods transportation in the period of active trade with the Bulgars between the 10th and 13th centuries.

In the taiga zone of Western Siberia, imported silver jewelry of the Tokharistanian, Iranian and Byzantine origins that had been brought for exchange by Bulgarian merchants were found. Among them were silver bottles, jars, trays, bowls with covers and a sculpture of the sphinx. All the items are richly ornamented, decorated with pictures of people, animals and plant shoots [ibid., pp. 128–161]. The population of the taiga areas of the Ob region were the major consumers of products made by Bulgarian jewelers. A great number of Bulgarian craftsmen's silver goods was found in these lands. The first discoveries of these items were made back at the end of the 17th century.

At the monument to Samarov Yam, the Siberian voivode boyar F. Golovin discovered a medieval female burial containing silver jewelry, the description and picture of which were made by N. Vitzen in his book [Borisenko,

Khudyakov, 1999a, p. 170]. Silver tableware of Bulgarian production was discovered in settlements and burials in the midstream of the Ob, at Barsova Gora in the Surgut suburbs, at the Kintusovsky burial site, Sosvinsky townlet and other places [SP, 1996, p. 80].

Stockpiles of weapons which used to be sanctuaries in honour of Mir-Susne-Hum, one of the main personages of the Ob Ugrians' divine Pantheon, were discovered in Western Siberia. The Parabel and Yelykaev collections were found in the taiga areas of the Ob area and the Tom region, while the Ishim collection was found in the Chulyum region [Plotnikov, 1987, pp. 121–122]. The Kholmogor collection was discovered in a swampy area of the water-shed of the Ob and Pur rivers [Zykov, Fedorova, 2001, p. 50]. The Ugrians acquired expensive imported sword blades, spears and banquet food ware for exactly these sanctuaries. These sacrificial places are dated from the Hun-Sarmat period and the epoch of the early Middle Ages, including the period of active trade among Bulgar merchants.

A number of findings of imported blades, silver jewelry, feast tableware and small items of plastics comes from the forest-steppe zone of Western Siberia, the Irtysh area, as well as the Ob-Irtysh interfluvium. They were also discovered in steppe areas near the upper Irtysh, where the Ugrian ethnic group lived. The findings of objects of Western European and Bulgarian craft provide a reason to suggest, that those things penetrated the steppe and forest-steppe areas of Western Siberia and Altai with the mediation of Bulgarian merchants via the trade route through the Middle Urals to the Irtysh river, which can be called "Bulgarian" [Borisenko, Khudyakov, 2001, p. 93]. Then, this trade route passed along the Irtysh valley till the Rudny Altai merging with one of meridian branches of the Great Silk Road which came from Semirechye to the Irtysh area and Western Siberia. Several items of Western European craft were found along this route. At the Preobrazhenka monument in the suburbs of Lake Chany of the Barabinsk forest-steppe

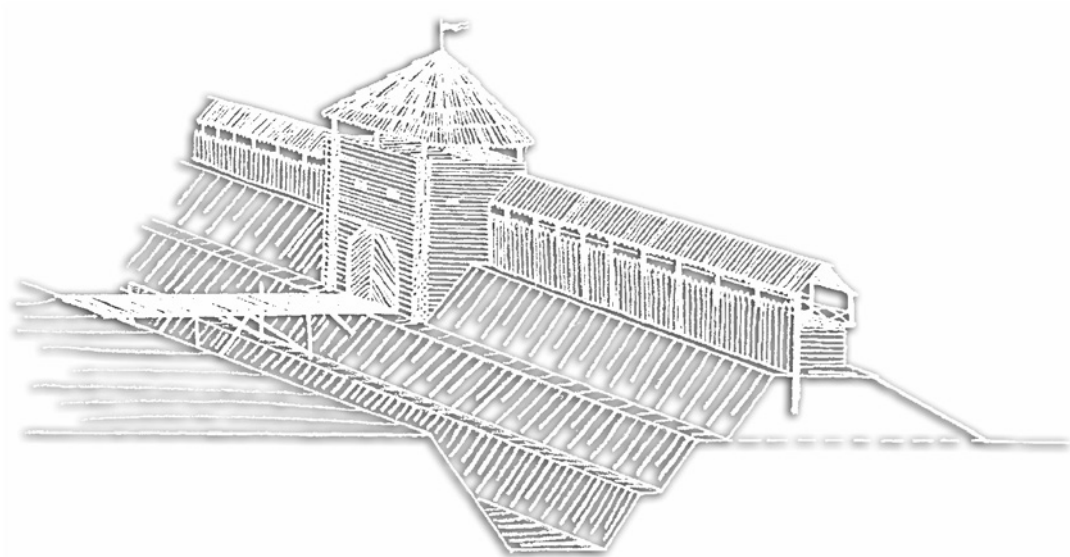
area, an iron sword was discovered with an encrusted handle and a stamped Latin inscription with Christian abbreviations, made in ordnance workshops near the Rhine [Molodin, 1976, p. 125; Drbohlav, Kirpichnikov, 1981, p. 532]. Another Western European blade was found in the cage on the mount Kyzyltas in the Irtysh's upper reaches [Plotnikov, 1990, p. 150]. In the Rudny Altai, one of Western European bronze water-carriers in the shape of a horse-knight was found [Borisenko, Khudyakov, 1999b, pp. 38–41; Borisenko, Khudyakov, 2003, pp. 123–124]. In the upper reaches of the Irtysh, a Western European candlestick in the form of a statute of a Roman emperor riding a horse was discovered [Knyazhetskaya, 1989, p. 27]. These blades could have been brought to Western Siberia and the Altai through the Baltic-Volga Route to Bulgaria and then through the "Bulgarian" road to the Irtysh area. These items are indicative of the presence of trading connections with Western Europe throughout several centuries during the epoch of the early Middle Ages.

The discoveries of Middle Asian and Iranian products on this territory cannot evidence trading connections with the Middle Volga Region, because they could have been brought there not only through the Urals, but also from Semirechye. However, items of Bulgarian craftsmen were found near the Irtysh. In the Irtysh area, a silver bracelet of Bulgarian production was discovered. It was ornamented with intertwined lines and pictures of people on boats. It was made in accordance with the tastes of hunters and fishermen from a number of the Ugrian tribes [SP, 1996, p. 102].

The examination of archaeological discoveries from monuments referring to the epoch of the early and developed Middle Ages on the territory of Western Siberia and neighbouring regions provides evidence that there were stable trading connections with the population of the Trans-Urals during the period of the Bulgarian state's existence. They were conditioned by the interests of both sides in exchange for necessary goods.

Section 5

# **Volga Bulgaria: Warfare, Foreign Policy**



## CHAPTER 1

### Warfare

*Iskander Izmaylov*

For the inhabitants of Volga Bulgaria, the Middle Ages were a time of searching for new types of weapons, organising the military and developing the corresponding battlefield tactics and defense mechanisms.

Bulgaria played a leading role in the history of the Volga-Ural region of the Middle Ages and was one of the largest feudal states in Eastern Europe. Its significance in military and political events was great. Sporadic military clashes with the Ruses' people, which intensified markedly in the 12th century after the emergence of the Vladimir-Suzdal principality, repulsion of the encroaching Kipchaks and Kimaks, as well as the thirty-year-long struggle against Mongol troops all provided the background against which warfare developed in Bulgaria.

#### 1. Weaponry

##### Close Combat Weapons

*Sabres* were the most widespread type of cut-and-thrust weapons. In total, 22 sabres and 35 metal crossguards were found in the territory of Volga Bulgaria, which date back to the 10–13th centuries. All the Bulgarian sabres can be divided into two types, depending on the length and curvature of the blade. Sabres of the first type are characterized by a length of 85–90 cm and a curvature of 1.5 cm; they date back to the 10–12th centuries. Sabres of the second type are more than 90 cm long (usually 93–110 cm), with a blade curvature of 3–6 cm; they date back to the middle of the 12–beginning of the 13th centuries. The development of Bulgarian sabres saw an increase in length and curvature of the blade, and a move towards double-edged blades. One notable feature in the development of Bulgarian sabres is the absence of wide and highly curved blades.

A characteristic feature of blades at the end of the 12–13th centuries was the presence of a metallic clip with a lug going down (for the length of 4–5 cm) along the blade. Such binding was intended to protect the sheath edge from being cut and was likely related to a special fencing move. Its appearance in Eastern Europe is associated with the movement of tribes from Central Asia, caused by Chinggis Khan's invasion. In the middle of

the 13th century, this component became an integral part of almost all of the blades in Ulus of Jochi.

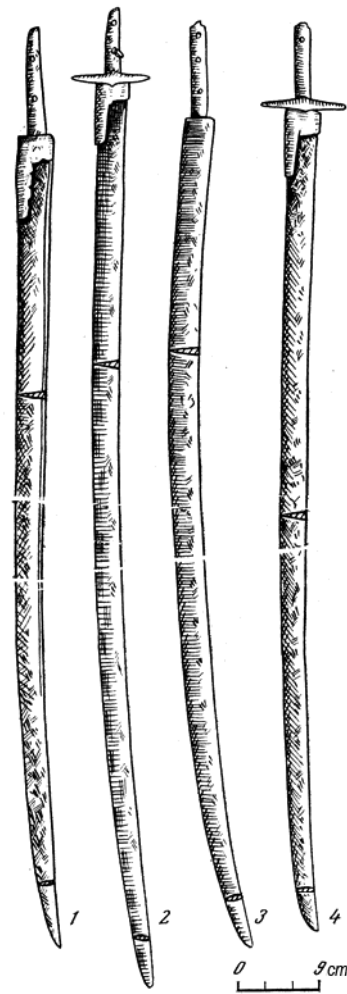
An interesting group of 13th century blades originating in Bulgaria includes sabre sheets with stamped inscriptions. One of them contains a difficult-to-read inscription in the form of Kufic graphemes or similar characters, and another includes an Armenian-graphic inscription surrounded by crosses potent. R. Dzhanpoladyan interpreted it as an Armenian cryptogram. It is important to note that another sabre with an Armenian inscription originates from the Polar Urals; it contains a form bearing its master's name, 'Khachatur' [Dzhanpoladyan, Kirpichnikov, 1972, pp. 23–29]. Judging by historical analogies in the field of weapons-studies, blade epigraphy had always played a role in indicating the quality of a weapon and its sacral sign. The inscriptions contained either the name of the master (which sometimes became the name of a family workshop passing from one generation to another), or a magical protective spell: both of them had (by virtue of special miraculous connections between the master and supernatural forces) an auspicious and God-secured nature. The discovery of these Armenian production marks in Bulgaria demonstrates the close ties that existed between the Volga Region and Transcaucasia and somehow confirms, along with other data, the fact that there was an Ar-

menian colony in the Bulgarian territory as early as in the pre-Mongol period. It is likely that the blades were produced there and were then exported to other regions, in particular, north-east Europe.

Changes in the sabre were brought about by the increasing value of cavalry battle which required the development of fencing techniques. As a result of this process, the sabre handle was modified. Its curve in relation to the blade axis almost did not change, but its details changed. The pommel of the sabre began to take a cylindrical shape as well as a pear-shape. Most importantly, the guards, or crossguards, of sabres were changed. Crossguards in the 13th century (about 40 of them were found on the territory of Bulgaria) began to include new elements with down-curved ends and long projecting rods, in addition to traditional types (straight with spheres at the ends). The developments reveal the constant process of constructive changes aimed at adapting more reliable protection for the hands in the context of developing fencing techniques and the increased value of maneuverability in multi-stage cavalry battles.

The condition of the source documents does not allow us to properly decipher the place of sabres in the culture of medieval Volga Bulgaria or the owner's social status. Nevertheless, we should point out that the sabre was a symbolic weapon with an attribute of power, and its use had a special sacred sense. No wonder *elteber Almysh* said, when threatening the enemy: 'I will strike with a sword all those, who will oppose me'. In Bulgaria, sabres were mainly a weapon used by the privileged strata of the society.

%%A sword was a cut-and-thrust weapon with a double-edged straight blade. In the collection of Bulgar weapons, it played a less important role than the sabre, and appeared in Bulgaria during the active functioning of the Great Volga Route. In total, 15 whole swords and their fragments have been found in Volga Bulgaria, as well as 4 sheath tips that can be attributed to the Carolingian and Romanesque types. The vast majority of these swords is quite standard and differs only by the crossguard type. Based on these findings, swords from Bulgaria were



10—early 13th centuries sabres found in Bilyar (according to F. Khuzin).

of the Carolingian type. Thanks to the work of Kirpichnikov, the stamps of the blades have almost all been identified. Four cases contained the stamp 'ULFBERHT', one contained 'LEUTFRIT' or 'LEUTLRIT' and one had an infinity-shaped loop surrounded by two curls. There are stamps on the reverse side of the blades as well. This usually consists of a sign depicting an oblique wicker surrounded by three pillars; one stamp contained a unique pattern—a running beast surrounded by vertical pillars. The signs made it possible to ascertain with confidence that all of them were made in Carolingian sword smith workshops in the Rhine cities of the Empire of Charles the Great and his immediate descendants.



A Bulgar spearman. 12–early 13th centuries Reconstructed by M. Gorelik

It is known that the handle was the most variable element of a medieval sword. In Carolingian swords, a finial served as a counterweight that balanced a long and wide blade in hands, which allowed to deliver blows with great strength and intensity. The typology of European sword guards was developed by J. Petersen based on European sources, and by A. Kirpichnikov based on old Russian sources. In the territory of Bulgaria, swords of the H, S and E types have been found.

In addition to blades, some bronze sheath tips have been found on the territory of Bulgaria. One of them contained a slit and was decorated in the ELLING Scandinavian style. Others included tips from the end of the 10–11th centuries which were decorated according to local ornamentation techniques, demonstrating the development of local weapons workshops.

All the swords found in Bulgaria can be chronologically divided into two groups. The

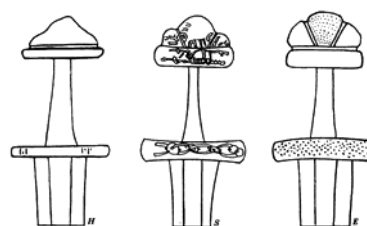
earliest one represents ‘close-meshed’ swords of the E type from Bilyar and Balymer, which were widespread in the 9–beginning of the 10th centuries and demonstrate the beginning of the weapons’ proliferation in the Volga Region. The latter group (H, S, and the ‘wide-meshed’ E type) dates to the 10–beginning of the 11th centuries and comprises all other swords from Bilyar, Bulgar and Central Bulgaria, which, according to analogies found in the countries of the Baltic region and Russia, were rare and expensive weapons, and were mainly used by noblemen and professional warriors. The discovered Carolingian swords were mainly concentrated in large cities. All of them were related to the general military-druzhina European lifestyle.

The Bulgarian *druzhina* that started to apply swords along with traditional armaments was quite heterogeneous in its composition. There is no reason to link the appearance of swords exclusively to the Scandinavians,



although they naturally played a key role in spreading these weapons, particularly in the early history of Central and Eastern Europe, including Rus', Hungary, Poland, Prussia, and a number of other regions where the Vikings served in armies of local rulers as hired warriors. A huge role in the appearance of swords, as well as the entire military and cultural complex in the Volga Region, was played by the formation of the Baltic-Volga or Great Volga Route, and close trade ties between Bulgaria and the countries of the Circum-Baltic region. Most likely, the owners of this weapon consisted of a multi-ethnic stratum of soldiers and merchants (who were probably Swedish by origin), whose lifestyle was rich in Scandinavian cultural elements and who were called 'Rus' by their Arab contemporaries. The presence of this trade and druzhina stratum was recorded, in particular, by Ibn Fadlan in his notes, who marked a whole colony of Rus people near the quarters of the Bulgarian leader and described the funeral of one of their leaders [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 25–26]. It is quite possible that some of these Rus people were subsequently included in the Bulgarian army as hired soldiers, as evidenced by some indirect data in Scandinavian sources describing a country called *Vulgaria/Vulgarland*.

New types of weapons, not known in Bulgaria in the 8–9th centuries, demonstrate the distribution of general European combat techniques that were characteristic of feudal societies. It is significant that such a concentration of socially prestigious products near early urban centres was typical of both Rus' and Hungary, as well as a number of other countries during the period of statehood formation. At the same time, as it was fairly noted by A. Kirpichnikov, 'the findings of swords indicate not only the presence of druzhina members, but also trade places', thus emphasizing the connection between the centres of social activity and the key points of international and regional trade [Kirpichnikov, 1966, p. 49]. The appearance of swords in Bulgaria demonstrates the profound social changes that occurred in Bulgarian society in the 10th century, as well as the formation of new social and military traditions that were typical of the super-ethnic druzhina culture.



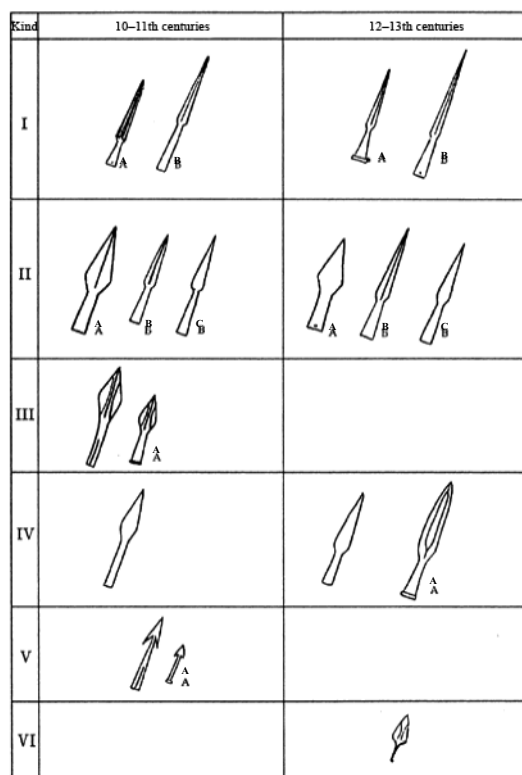
Swords from the 10–11th centuries.  
Diagram

Daggers and *combat* knives were an additional weapon for heavily-armed Bulgarian soldiers. They were of two types—one with a long and rather narrow blade and one with a wide wedge-shaped blade. The former appeared approximately in the 11th century, and the latter, the 'classic daggers' at the end of the 13th century. Such daggers were quite typical of the Bulgarian weapons system, as such weapons were not known among the neighboring Finno-Ugric peoples, and were rare among Turkic nomads. Rus' was the only region where daggers were actually widespread.

In addition, long knives were a traditional weapon (usually 20–40 cm long), which served as part of a combat warrior's general field equipment. A *spear* signifies a thrust pole weapon. The origins of its development date back to the 8–9th centuries, when its main forms appeared, and it was further improved in the pre-Mongol period. In total, 76 spearheads and their fragments have been found on the territory of Bulgaria.

The spear is a weapon designed to defeat the enemy at medium-range. The thrusting function has always been the main use of the spear since ancient times. According to the size of spearheads and poles (about 1.5 m), a special group of spears was comprised of throwing spears or darts (in Russian, they were called 'sulitsa' or 'jerd' in the Islamic world) aimed at defeating the enemy at a distance.

Pole length and thickness play an important role in differentiating spears between cavalry and infantry types. Judging by the diameter of the hub, the thickness of the pole in infantry spears increased (in the 12–13th centuries it was typically 3–3.5 and sometimes 5 cm), while the length ranged from 1.5 to 3 m.



Spears from the 10–13th centuries.  
Diagram

At the same time, cavalry spears were 2.5–3 cm thick and could be 3.6 m long.

All spearheads are divided into two chronological groups. 10–11th century spears are characterized by lances and a leaf-shape. In terms of their background, all of them are connected with the previous period of Bulgarian history and have a Don-North Caucasus origin. New forms such as wide elongated triangular and asymmetric rhombic forms with a projecting verge emerged in connection with the inclusion of Rus and Finno-Ugric peoples of the region in the Bulgarian regiments.

A significant upgrade in spear-making became apparent in the 12–13th centuries, when the number and quality of various specialized spearheads were increasing. In this period, many spear types were improved, which made them a more effective weapon for cavalry battle. The general trend of the period is the prevalence of narrow elongated blades with a reinforced neck and thickened hub. Judging by the number of discoveries,

spire-shaped four-sided lances (with a blade of up to 21 cm) and narrow-blade elongated rectangular spears were the most popular weapons in the spectrum of spearheads. Such spearheads were clearly intended for powerful ram-attacks with a spear, and their development was brought about by the thickening of defensive equipment and the use of cavalry knight *druzhinas* as a decisive force in battles. The same causes required improvement of infantry spears. Having processed and rejected archaic forms, the Bulgars decided to use three types of spears: broad elongated rectangular, elongated leaf-shaped and laurel-leaf spears. The modification of these universal spears allowed soldiers to successfully fight against both armoured infantry and cavalry. At that time, throwing spears also appeared, which allowed the infantry to hit the enemy at a distance. A battle axe is a close-combat pole weapon, which judging by the number of findings and the diversity of types and forms, predominated over all other types of weapons among the Bulgars. The axe consisted of an iron head and a wooden handle, the length of which was up to 80 cm.

The relative ease of manufacture and versatility of axes with different blade forms (in combat and in the household) made them a popular and widespread weapon. At the same time, the use of an axe during combat did not require special skills or long-term training (in fact, the methods of using an axe were known to any peasant).

All the axes found on the territory of Volga Bulgaria (more than 240 items) are divided into three groups—workers', universal and battle axes.

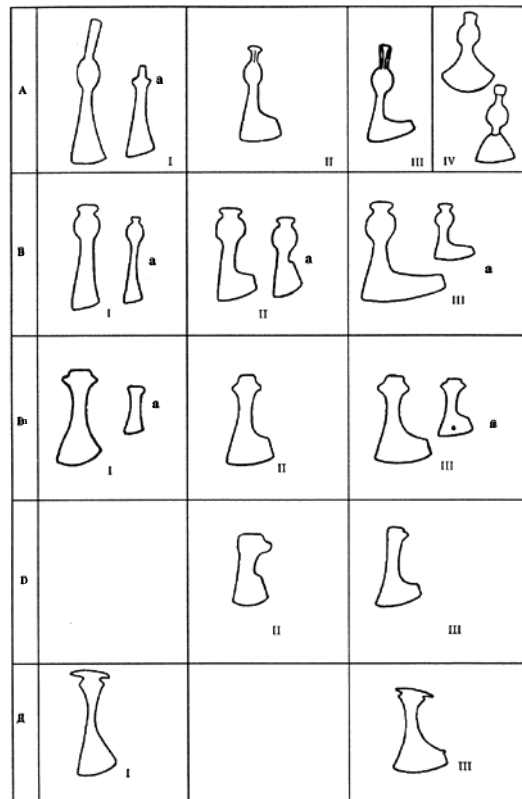
Workers' axes are identified by their size, weight (0.8 kg) and thick solid handle (3.5 cm); universal axes are differentiated from them by a smaller size and weight (0.55 kg) but were similar in terms of their head structure. We can say that universal axes were a smaller copy of the workers' ones and were a necessary element of field and fighting equipment. Given historical parallels, it is likely that 'small' pole axes were often the only weapons of militia and ordinary warriors. The differences in the forms and methods of use of different groups of battle axes predetermined the differences in their evolution.

Heads with two pairs of round schekavitsas and a low tetragon butt were the most common forms of universal field and battle axes. Their blade shape varied from elongated wedge-shaped to elongated wide-bladed. Such a construction of the butt has not been discovered in any area of the Volga-Ural region except for Bulgaria, and can be considered a specific Bulgarian axe form. These axes originated in the Northern Black Sea region, where they have been known since late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Simultaneously with them, the Bulgars used hatchets with a couple of triangular schekavitsas that were typical of the local peoples of the region.

Along with the field battle axe, there was a group of battle pole axes—the so-called chekans or bec de corbin. The construction of their blades (narrow wedge-shaped or peaked) and a long hammer-shaped butt provided them a blow-thrust effect against which no armours could defend.

Other axes include some examples that were similar to chekans in their form, but whose blades were plated with gold and silver. One such chekan was discovered at the end of the 19th century near Musorka village in Samara guberniya as part of a treasure finding from the end of the 10th century. The blades of this silver plated chekan were decorated with figures of animals surrounded by vegetable patterns. This weapon is a remarkable work made by medieval Bulgarian masters. Undoubtedly, all of these axes were a symbol of nobility and leadership positions.

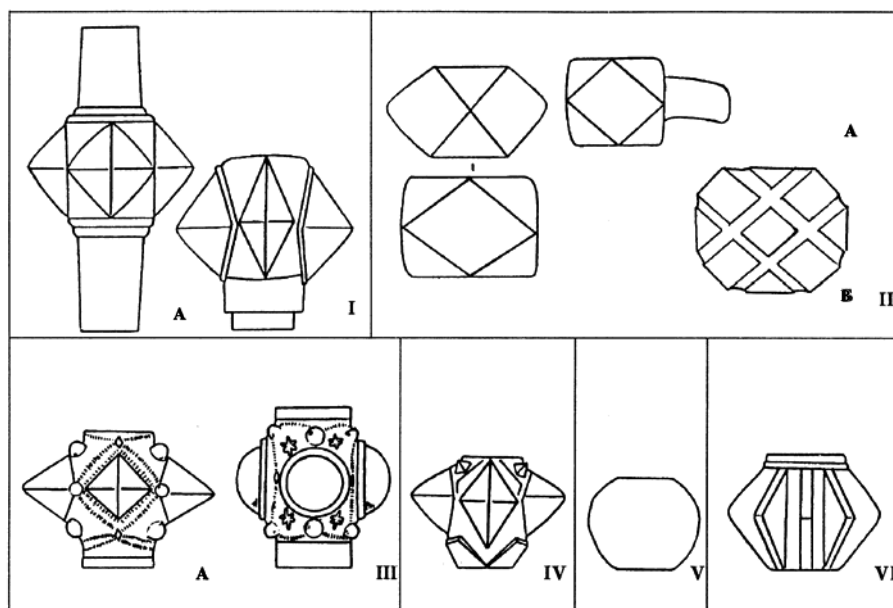
Based on the example of axes, we can point out a general trend in the differentiation of weapons. While in the 10–11th centuries the group of axes consisted of wide blade axes along with chekans hatchets, at the end of the 12th century, archaic forms of chekans disappeared and were replaced by narrow-blade pole axes and diverse universal axes, the prototypes of which are found in workers' forms. At that time, battle axes were highly specialised. Chekans rose in importance, for they could, by virtue of diminishing the impact surface, cut through chain mail or a cuirass and leave a deep wound; this made them especially effective in the hands of heavily-armed warriors in close cavalry battles. From an historical perspective, this allows differen-



Battle axes from the 10–13th centuries.  
Diagram

tiation between axes related to the equipment of a professional warrior (horseman's picks, ornamented hatchets) and marching battle axes—the massive weapons of ordinary warriors. Bulava is a strike weapon in the form of a metal tip with a hole for mounting it on a handle. As a symbol and weapon, bulavas were known in early medieval Eastern Europe among the Khazars. At the same time, their combat value was secondary to that of axes and flails. But in the conditions of the 12–13th centuries when heavy-weight armour came to be used by cavalry on the battlefield, the superior combat characteristics of bulavas turned out to be in demand. The chief advantage was their ability to penetrate armour and wound or contuse ('bewilder') an enemy in blitz fast-moving battles of dense masses of men-at-arms, when combat time was minimal, whereas the defeat of an enemy had to be maximal.

Overall, 17 bulavas were found on the territory of Bulgaria. They appeared among the



Maces from the 10–13th centuries.  
Diagram

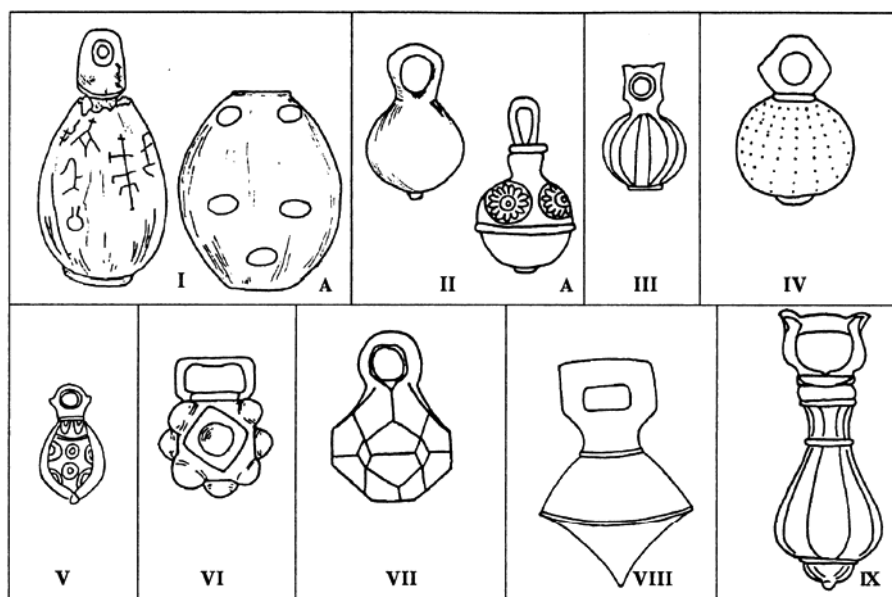
Bulgars in the 11th century, but their value rose significantly in the 12th century, when the number of their varieties sharply increased. Modification of this weapon, as evident from an analysis of Bulgar findings, was directed towards multiplying its bulges and spikes together with making it heavier, without an increase in size. Notably, bronze bulavas were replaced by iron and bronze bulavas with lead filling, octahedral pins, and decoration. In the 13th century, new types of combat tips appeared which could focus striking power on a small area (bulavas-klevets and flanged maces), thus allowing successful combat against an armoured enemy.

While determining the place of bulavas in the Bulgar collection of weapons, it's worth noting that this type of weapon was almost unfamiliar to the Finno-Ugric peoples of the Volga-Ural region and was only sporadically used by the Kipchaks of the Trans-Volga Region. Rus' and Bulgaria were the only regions in Eastern Europe where this type of professional armament was widespread, which, besides the similarity of tactical options, also had to do with the similarity in the development of military equipment. A chain mace is a striking weapon consisting of a bone or metal weight attached to a shaft with the help of a

long strap. Researchers associate the appearance of the chain mace in Eastern Europe to steppe areas in which the earliest examples of medieval chain maces were detected. The Bulgarian-Turkic tribes also used this weapon in the Middle Volga Region as early as the 8th century.

Later, it became widespread and played a significant role in the military equipment of the Bulgar population. In the Bulgar historical monuments of the 10–13th centuries, 33 chain maces have been found. They gained utmost importance in the 13th century, when new types and forms of chain maces appeared. At that, changes affected not only the material (from bone to metal) but also the case construction (from smooth to faceted, bi-conical, and covered with ridges and bulges). The weight of this weapon also dramatically increased (to 240–300g). All these modifications made the chain mace a popular secondary weapon, which could have been, depending on the situation, successfully used both against a mobile lightly-armed warrior and an armoured cavalier.

Owing to its flexibility and striking power, the chain mace was used by various types of troops, but gilded and ornamented striking heads were mainly used by men-at-arms.



Kisteni (bludgeons) from the 10–13th centuries.  
Diagram

### Protective Armour

Protective armour was intended to protect a warrior from getting injured in military clashes and single combats. It traces its origin back to the same period of antiquity as offensive arms. Chain mail—a piece of armour consisting of woven metal rings—was a popular means of protection in both the West and the East. For a long time, due to its relatively low weight, flexibility, and decent protective characteristics, it became the most popular form of protection among soldiers in Europe. The first examples of chain mail appeared in Western Europe at the end of the 1st millennium BC and later spread across all of Eurasia. In early medieval Eastern Europe, chain mail was widespread in the steppes.

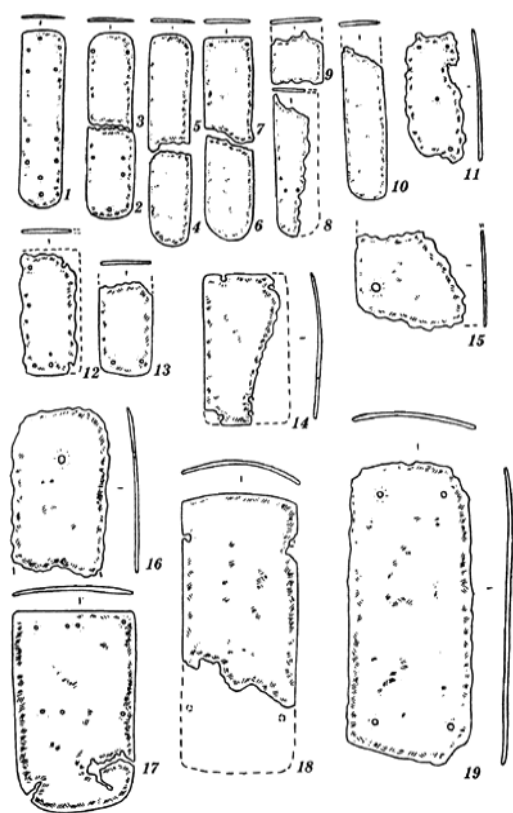
Chain mail was also traditionally popular among the populations of early medieval Volga Bulgaria. Judging by graphic materials and analogues, Bulgar samples of chain mail, of which more than 14 were found, were designed as short-sleeved shirts. The braiding of rings was combined. Findings of flat rings of mailed armour, which became widespread in the 13th century, are of particular interest. Written sources also suggest that chain mail was produced locally and

was quite popular among the Bulgars in the 10–13th centuries.

Chain mail was, of course, an expensive type of armour. According to researchers, at least 20,000 rings were used to produce one mailed shirt. Made of iron wire 600 m long, they were then carefully joined (riveted or brazed). It's obvious that only affluent people could afford such protection.

Written sources prove that mails were widely used by Bulgar warriors. According to Arabian-Persian authors, above all Ibn Rustah and al-Gardizi, Bulgar cavaliers had chain mail and other armament [Bartold, 1973, p. 58; Khvolson, 1869, p. 24]. The presence of armature in sufficient quantities is also evidenced by al-Muqaddasi's report about the export of chain mail from Bulgaria to Islamic countries. Cuirass is a piece of armour consisting of separate metal or leather plates. Lamellar armour appeared much earlier than chain mail and had a long history, constantly changing according to the conditions of combat in one or another region. In early medieval Bulgaria, cuirasses were quite a popular means of protection. Based on the materials from which plates were made, they can be divided into leather and iron types.

Apparently, the Bulgars used leather armour as early as the 10th century. Actual find-



Armour-clad plates  
from the 10–13th centuries.

ings of plated leather armour are dated to the end of the 12–13th centuries and were discovered in excavations in Bilyar. Wide rectangular plates with a rounded bottom edge were, judging by the seams, sewed 'with an overlap'. It's hard to judge the construction of this armour but it's likely that the leather plates were attached to each other laterally 'with an overlap', the upper ones being embedded into the slits of the lower level by their roundish edges, after which the plates were tightly sewed, maybe even in several layers. This kind of armour was durable and elastic at the same time, and in case it was damaged, separate plates could easily be replaced.

There is much more information of the iron armour of the Bulgars, which includes the findings of more than 30 plates (from approximately 15 cuirasses). They all fall under two types of armour: lamellar and scale. Their construction consisted of a backplate and a short-sleeved breastplate with a split hem. A lamellar cuirasse consisted of differ-

ently shaped iron plates which were directly attached to each other by straps or wires. Sometimes they were sewed on a base made of leather or cloth.

A characteristic of the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th centuries is an increase in the size of plates and the introduction of scale armour. A cuirasse of this type consisted of subrectangular plates attached to a base made of leather or cloth. Plates were attached to a sub-base by means of central rivets and slightly overlapped by their edges. They were often fastened together by straps or wires through openings on the edge. Protective properties of cuirasses of this type were enhanced by the absence of a rigid interconnection of plates and by firmer fastenings to the foundation, which made armour more reliable and flexible. The high combat qualities of scale armour contributed to its development and survival in the Golden Horde era. A helmet is a protective headgear designed to protect a warrior's head, consisting of a steel conical body. It almost always included a frame along the bottom edge which held a long barmica (cmail) to protect the neck and throat (and sometimes even face); a steel visor (scutcheon) was also sometimes used for facial protection.

Written sources, including al-Gharnati, indicate the presence of helmets among the Bulgars. Miniatures of the illuminated Radziwiłł Chronicle also depict the Bulgars in full armament in helmets.

Unfortunately, an intact Bulgar helmet has not yet been discovered. Judging by graphic and archaeological data (pieces and details of helmets), this was a spherangular lamellar helmet, widespread among many Eurasian nomadic peoples during the Middle Ages. The popularity and centuries-old existence of similar protective headgear are primarily attributable to the fact that vertical and side strikes made by an enemy slid across the crown, softening the force of the strike.

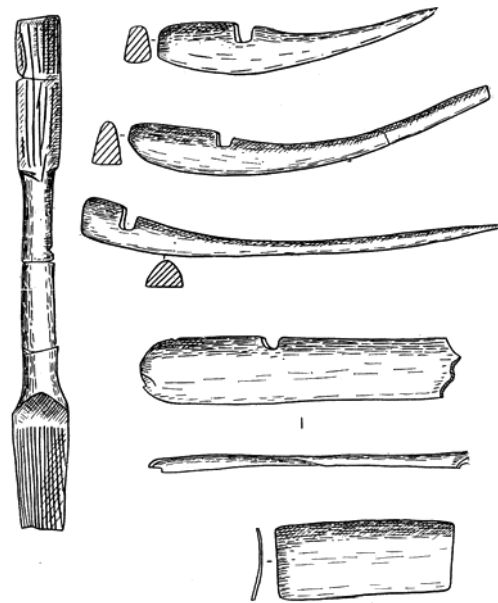
A number of findings suggest the use of helmets with a visor mask by the Bulgars in the pre-Mongol period. The origin of this type of facial protection is not clear, but we have established its relation to the spherangular low-cut helmet, the dissemination of which was driven by the search for the most com-

plete protection of the head and face and, at the same time, a desire to avoid the heavy helmets of the West European type. The military culture of the Middle East, where similar visor masks were widespread at the end of the 12th and the first half of the 13th centuries, had a strong influence on the appearance of visor masks in Eastern Europe. It's therefore no accident that Volga Bulgaria, having extensive cultural, economical, and political ties with the East, became a distribution area of spherangular helmets with a visor mask. Shields were used by Bulgar warriors as maneuverable body protection. Archaeological materials show that in the 10th century, the Bulgars had round shields with iron umbos of Western origin. The introduction of such shields is most likely attributable to the incorporation of Rus regiments into the Bulgar forces.

Simultaneously, the Bulgars, judging by graphic sources, used round convex shields without umbos, as well as small almond-shaped shields. Shields were most likely a universal weapon for a cavalier and an infantryman, a feudal lord and an ordinary warrior.

An analysis of defensive armaments suggests that all changes to them were attributable to the realities of combat techniques and mostly impacted the gear of men-at-arms. Changes in Bulgar defense armaments in the pre-Mongol period are the most noticeable, with the appearance of lamellar armour with round plates, scale cuirasses, almond-shaped shields, sphero-conical helmets with visor masks, and chain mail made from flat rings.

Among the melee weapons of medieval Bulgaria's population, the arsenal of druzhina armaments stands out. In the 10–11th centuries, it consisted of sabres, swords, pikes, chekans, and bulavas. In that period, there was a trend for refining druzhina armaments which included, besides traditional weapons, a whole range of new elements of Western origin. In the 12–13th centuries, the weapon gear of a noble warrior consisted primarily of a pike, sabre, bulava, and chain mace. The conditions of combat were the main determinants for the gear of noblemen, at a time when combat was decided in a clash of men-at-arms making ramming strikes with spears.



Ivory elements of a composite bow. Bilyar (according to A. Medvedev and F. Khuzin)

### Ranged Weapons

Missile weapons were not only one of the most important elements in the system of weapons of early medieval people in Eurasia, but also considerably shaped the military culture of entire societies. Bows and arrows were one of the most ancient and perhaps most common type of weapons which allowed wounding an enemy from a significant distance. At the same time, they were often an 'instrument of war' simple enough in production and use, and were also used for hunting.

The bow, as a manual weapon intended for shooting arrows, was widely used by medieval tribes in the Volga-Ural region, as suggested by a wide range of historical and archaeological data. In domestic literature, bows were usually divided into three types. Simple bows were those made of a single piece of wood; complex bows were those with a solid wooden foundation but complemented with various materials; composite bows were those whose wooden foundation consisted of several parts (usually of different types of wood) amplified by a horn, bone onlays, birchbark, sinew, and leather.



A Bulgar archer—a lightly-armed warrior. 12–13th centuries. Reconstructed by M. Gorelik

In terms of construction, composite bows consisted of a wooden core (kibit) serving as a lever to multiply muscle power, and a load-carrying part (string), providing acceleration to the arrow. In its turn a kibit, which could either be solid or combined from different types of wood, consisted of a middle part (or a handle) used for grabbing it with a hand, tips, to which a string was attached, and curved, lithe limbs (or horns), which connected them to each other. The defining feature of this construction was the armouring of the middle part and tips with bone and elastic horn onlays, serving as extra fixing for the limbs. This turned a kibit into a combined weapon with both immobile and flexible parts, which drastically increased the reflexing force of the limbs. Generally bows had symmetrical limbs. Such bows, judging by surviving samples and

graphic materials, reached 120–160 cm in length (about 130 cm with a stretched string).

Sources on the history of the bow in the Middle Volga Region and Kama River region in the 8–10th centuries suggest that the process of active modification of missile weapons took place in that period. In the latter half of the 8th century, composite bows of the 'Hunnish-Bulgarian' type common in the previous period and reinforced by 7 bone onlays [Izmaylov, 1994] were replaced by bows of a new design; bows complemented with a pair of central onlays on the lateral side enjoyed the greatest popularity. This 'Turkic' type of bow was characterized by the usage of a flexible horn on the rear limbs, strengthened with side plates on the handle. These refinements allowed the creation of a powerful stiff knot in the middle and increased the flexibility and



elasticity of the limbs, making them longer and more elastic, and probably even more asymmetric. Such a bow was more adapted to quick shooting at short distances and more reliable in use [Khudyakov, 1980, p. 74]. At the same time, we should note that together with this 'Turkic' bow, faceted armour-piercing arrowheads first entered the Middle Volga region and began to be actively used, which could testify in favour of the sufficient power of this type of bow. Three-bladed arrowheads gradually fell out of use. The introduction of 'Turkic' bows in the Volga-Kama region can be linked to penetration of new waves of Turkic and Ugric (Bulgarian-Oigur) tribes from the Cis-Kama region, the Trans-Urals and Middle Asia, as well as changes in Eurasian projectile weapons.

Written sources repeatedly point out the usage of bows and arrows by the Bulgars during hostilities, which leaves no doubt about the widespread use of the weapon. In medieval Bulgaria, the same 'Turkic' type of composite bow continued to prevail. Findings include those with central onlays on the lateral side (no less than 3 samples have been discovered). They are all fairly standard, having wide sub-rectangular plates with tips slightly beveled in one direction or designed in the form of ovals.

Simultaneously, bows with end frontal onlays with a cut for a string appeared in the service of Bulgar bowmen (9 samples discovered). It's possible that such a design appeared among the Bulgars under the influence of the Trans-Volga Yemeks, in addition to a range of military technical novelties in armaments and caparisons at the end of the 12th and the first third of the 13th centuries. Later, in the 13th century, in Bulgaria (as in all of Eurasia), the 'Mongolian' type of bow with a frontal onlay of 'oar-like' appearance on the lateral side became predominant. Well preserved samples of such bows were discovered during excavations in Novgorod and Eastern Turkestan.

Strings for bows were woven from horsehair, silk threads, or rawhide. Loops were diverse, judging by the discovered samples. Bows were carefully protected and transported before combat with their string removed in special cases—long leather bags protecting a kubit from moisture. In different Bulgar historical sites, dozens of bone loops for bow

cases were found. With their help, bow cases with quivers were carried on a special belt around the waist.

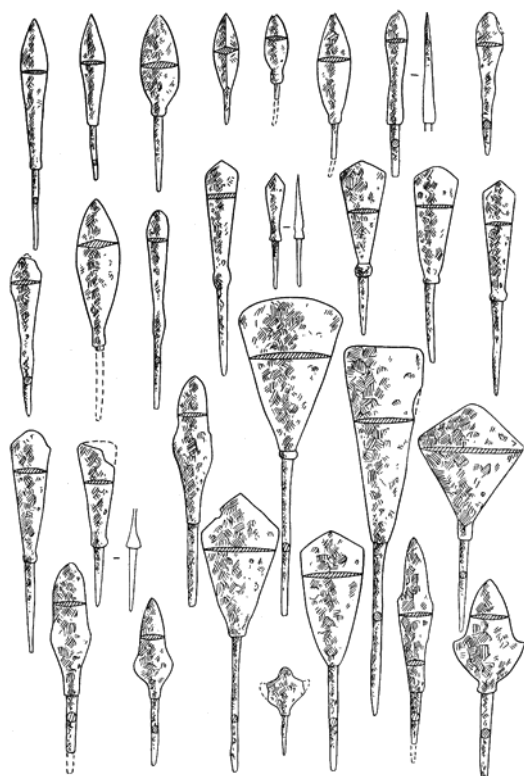
Judging by historical evidence, the power of medieval bows reached 80 kg; an optimal bow had a power of 20–40 kg. For instance, modern sport bows for men have the power of up to 20 kg—that is, at the level of the weakest medieval bows. The usual firing distance was 60–150 m, although the most powerful bows could send an arrow for distances of more than 400 m. The firing speed of medieval bowmen reached 10–12 shots a minute, especially when shooting packed masses of warriors, rather than precision shooting.

Tightening up of a composite bow required much effort. Special devices were used to protect the fingers and arm from possible injury by a bowstring. First of all, arm shields in the form of a wide oval plate attached to the wrist of the left hand by belts were used. A whole range of perfectly ornamented protective bone plates survived to the present day in the historical sites of Volga Bulgaria.

Bowmen were not only light-armed cavaliers but were also noble warriors possessing fairly expensive and decorated armaments. An arrow is a projectile intended to hit an enemy from a distance. The arrow's components are a shaft, an arrowhead, and feathering. A shaft is a 75–90 cm long load-carrying part used to fasten an arrowhead and feathering, which in its turn stabilised the arrow in flight and ensured accuracy when hitting the target. Feathering was made of two to four feathers 12–15 cm long and set back 12–15 cm from the nock to make it easier to hold in the hand.

An arrowhead was the most important and variable part of an arrow and generally consisted of a feather, its combat and penetrating part, and a haft, its load-carrying part. Judging by the method of fastening to a shaft and the form of a haft, arrowheads belong to two groups: socketed and tanged. The first were mounted on a shaft and the second were embedded into the shaft's butt.

Over 1,500 iron arrowheads of very different shapes were found at Bulgar archaeological sites [see: Medvedev, 1966; Culture of Bilyar, 1985, pp. 143–171]. The size, form, and weight of a tip depended on the purpose of any given arrow. Small flat sector-shaped



Iron arrowheads found in Bilyar  
(according to F. Khuzin)

arrowheads were intended for hitting masses of lightly-armed warriors and infantrymen, whereas small arrowheads with massive faceted tips were designed to be armour-piercing. All other tips were to a greater or lesser extent universal, combining impact and cutting qualities.

During the 8–13th centuries, the population of Bulgaria used several dozen arrowhead types. Among them were those which were used for several centuries; others were used for a relatively short period of time and fell out of use when more functional and effective means of shooting replaced them. During the period, all types of arrowheads evolved in size, weight, form of driving edges, shoulders, and points.

Between the 10th and the first half of the 12th centuries, a number of arrowheads continued the tradition of the previous time period. Socketed and three-bladed arrowheads of various forms were still sporadically used but were obviously archaic. V-shaped and

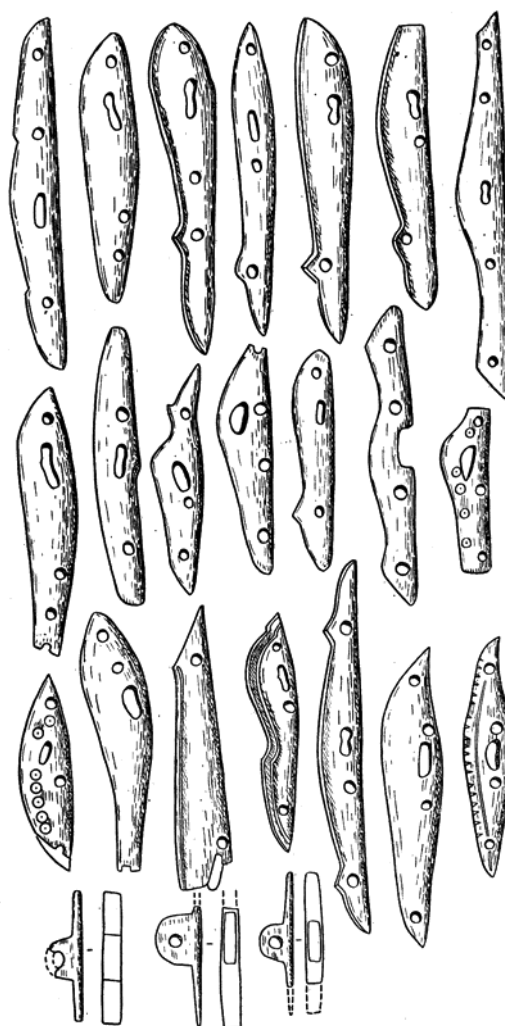
oblong rhombic arrowheads of various sizes and shapes, as well as narrow sector-shaped and furcate ones, became widespread. Small faceted arrowheads are also prominent. This archer's equipment demonstrates that the Bulgars' enemies didn't have a full set of armour, which is why arrowheads intended to hit lightly-armed enemy prevailed; shooting was most likely carried out by Bulgar archers over long distances and with high intensity. Besides that, many arrowheads were also designed for hunting.

Core changes to the archer's equipment were made in the latter half of the 12th and the first third of the 13th centuries. There was an especially sharp increase in the variety of faceted arrowheads, which grew and became pyramidal; additionally, chisel-shaped, awl-shaped, and cylindrical types appeared. Together with that, sector, awl and sesame shaped forms, many of which had their analogues in the archer's equipment of the peoples of Central Asia, increased in quantity and improved in quality. It's also worth highlighting massive heavy pyramidal arrowheads which, judging by historical evidence, served as projectiles for large mounted arbalests. The changes showed the importance the Bulgars began to attribute to means of hitting an armoured enemy within that period.

A quiver is a case designed for the carrying and storage of arrows. Judging by surviving bone and metal parts, it had a wooden base—a bottom with a diameter of 15–25 cm—to which four wooden bars of a framework covered in birchbark or leather were attached. In the upper part of the quiver, there was a notch—an opening for the convenient extracting of arrows—covered by a special cap. Around the mouth and bottom, the quiver was slightly wider. The general form of quivers was semicylindrical, with a flattening at the inner side. The height of a quiver depended on the length of arrows and varied from 60 to 80 cm. It was seldom decorated with narrow vertical bone onlays on the outside. The rim of the opening was set off with the same onlays. Bone or iron loops were attached to the wooden slats of the frame, and a metal hook on a belt for fastening the quiver while riding was attached to the bottom. A quiver was carried near a belt on the right

side in a slanted position—for the sake of conveniently extracting arrows and removing obstacles during walking and riding. Arrows in such a quiver were transported with their points up. The standard capacity of quivers was, according to the written sources, 30 arrows. As a rule, each warrior had two quivers of arrows in a campaign.

Assessing the weapons system of the Bulgar army in the pre-Mongol period as a whole, we should emphasise its radical difference in almost all types of weapons from the arsenal of the neighbouring Finno-Ugric peoples. The Bulgar and nomadic military equipment differ primarily in the types of *druzhina's* weapons (swords, pikes, bear spears, bulavas, defense armament) and *caparison* (spurs, trapezoid stirrups). The Old Russian system is the most similar to the Bulgar, both in terms of development patterns and separate elements. All this, despite some relativity of analogues, suggests a synchronous development of these regions. For example, sabres and their cross-guards, swords, pikes, triangular elongated spears, bulavas, chain maces, iron armour, and part of the equipment of a riding horse turned out to be almost identical. The differences manifest themselves in the types of details: In Rus' they preferred spurs, in Bulgaria lashes; in Rus' Romanesque swords prevailed, and sabres among the Bulgars. Bulgar warriors were armed, apparently, somewhat lighter than Old Russian warriors—no use of horse armour, long-sleeved chain mail shirts, mail stockings and gloves, arm shields, greaves etc. were detected in Bulgaria. The relatively lighter armament of the Volga Bulgars is likely due to the necessity of struggling against the horse cavalry of the nomads and infantry of the Finno-Ugric tribes. The similarity between the Rusessian and the Bulgar arsenals became especially noticeable at end of the 12th and the first half of the 13th centuries, expressed in the use of Romanesque swords, fancily shaped combat bulavas, chain maces, scale armour, helmets with visor masks, and spurs with a jagged mobile roller. All this clearly demonstrates that the similarity between the weapon systems isn't occasional but arises from comparable levels of social and political, economic, and military and technical development.



Ivory hanging loops for quivers and bow cases.  
Bilyar (according to F. Khuzin)

The problem of the introduction and development of missile artillery among the Bulgars, including arbalests and stone fougasses, remains controversial.

The use of some catapults by the Bulgars could be testified by the finding of a sprocket of a rotation gear, (the archaeological site of Tigashev) usually associated in Europe with the use of arkbballists and stone fougasses. As already mentioned, part of the massive and heavy tetrahedral pyramidal arrowheads clearly were projectiles intended for cross-bows rather than bows.

There is also some indirect evidence. A. Kirpichnikov writes, 'In terms of source studies, the use of siege missile equipment

around the year 1200, which apparently is significantly hidden from us, is determined by the novelties in physical defenses of Central and South Rus'—fortresses, usually with a 3-row system of ramparts and ditches.' [Kirpichnikov, 1976, p. 72]. According to him, with such defenses, the first obstructive line was pushed back 60–80 m from the main wall and was situated on the site of the supposed installation of stone and arrow-hurling catapults. The outward adjustment of the leading edge of fortress defense exactly corresponded to the most convenient firing range for catapults, as well as bows and crossbows, and was equal to around 75 m, which made attackers start a battle against the front barrages, being twice the distance from the main walls and under double attack by defenders. Thus, the combat zone around fortresses with the 3-row defense system

extended to 150 m. The scientist arrives to the conclusion that 'such a system owes its origin to the activation of far-range missile weaponry'.

This very defense system of fortresses became characteristic of Volga Bulgaria in the latter half of the 12th and the first third of the 13th centuries. The well-explored fortifications of various Bulgar archaeological sites show that the erection of additional fortifications coincides exactly with this time period. Simultaneously, there appeared towers overhanging the walls (for example, the archaeological site of Kuralovsk) and allowing flanking enfilade along the walls.

In other words, Bulgar military equipment was at an advanced level, not inferior to the Old Russian and largely superior in terms of defensive structures and tactics to the neighboring peoples.

## 2. The organisational structure of the military

The issue of the organisational structure of the Bulgar army structure and its military science is complex and has not yet been definitively interpreted, both due to the fragmentary and incomplete nature of the available sources and the unsatisfactory amount of research on the structure of Bulgar society at large. Practically all of the researchers who have taken up these issues have mentioned that Bulgar society was feudal in character with the corresponding institutions and a system of social relations that reached its zenith in the 12–early 13th century.

The primary source used to characterise the organisational structure of the 10th century Bulgar military is 'The Account' by Ibn Fadlan, who visited Bulgaria as a member of the embassy of the Caliph of Baghdad in 992. Its text supports the conclusion that the early feudal state was forming and becoming consolidated in Bulgar society during this period. The Bulgar ruler Almush, son of Shilka, had the title of 'Elteber' (sub-autonomous ruler). Inside his state, he had full administrative and military authority. He did not only rule the country, but was also in command of its troops and was also entitled to a certain portion of the war booty, even if he himself did not take part in

the military campaign. The ruler's power was exercised and implemented through the institute of the feudal *druzhina*. At a certain stage in history, military *druzhinas*, which had arisen during the era of the tribal system, became the stronghold of the prince's power and opposed the tribal militias. Apart from pure military functions, the *druzhina* in service of the prince also performed administrative and judicial functions and were partially represented in the court of the Bulgar ruler, providing for his socio-political and economic activities.

The *druzhina* itself was not homogeneous, and certain differences among its members could be observed even at the early stages of its formation. On one end, there was a cluster of noble *druzhina* members, who were gradually becoming feudals with their own vassals, and on the other end, there were 'junior *druzhinniks*' (professional soldiers), military servants, etc.

What name Ibn Fadlan used to describe the Bulgar ruler's *druzhina* is still a matter of controversy. The ruler's *druzhina* can most realistically be discerned among the group of people designated by the term 'quwwad'/'friends, associates', who received gifts and offerings after

the tsar [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 131, 195]. These are most likely the people who should be understood as representing the nobility—that is, ‘senior druzhinniks’. The bulk of the military nobility was a step lower on the class ladder, but it too maintained a privileged position as a group of professional warriors who served as personal bodyguards and military servants to the Bulgar ruler. According to Ibn Fadlan, the functions performed by this druzhina included, among others: participation in campaigns and wars, presence in the ruler’s headquarters, participation in feasts and receptions and escorting the Elteber during his trips around the country [Ibid., p. 139].

The ethnocultural composition of the Volga Bulgarian druzhina, especially at the early stage of its formation, was rather complex. In addition to ethnic Bulgars, it included representatives of other Turkic-Oghur and Finno-Ugric tribes. There is good reason to believe that the Bulgar ruler’s druzhina consisted of a certain proportion of Rus’ peoples, a group of warriors and merchants of Slavic-Finno-Scandinavian descent, that lived near his headquarters. It was in this mixed ethnocultural environment, one rich with the elements of various traditions and innovations, that a single druzhina culture and a distinct assortment of weaponry were forming.

One indicator of 10th century Bulgaria’s highly developed druzhina culture and military organisation is the Bulgars’ widespread use of military and tribal banners. Their use by the Bulgars is recorded in several written sources. For example, Ibn Fadlan, in describing the burial of a noble Bulgarian, remarked that the relatives of the deceased ‘are hoisting up a banner at the door of his yurt’ [Ibid., p. 140]. This account emphasizes the great role a banner played in the lives of Bulgars as well as those of many other Turkic peoples. It was ‘not only an external expression of tribal unity or the main sign of social power, but also a precondition for the ultimate and sacred guarantee of the leader’s influence and domination over all other members of the organisation’ [Okladnikov, 1951, p. 152].

After the Bulgars adopted Islam, the sacral meaning of the banner was reinterpreted in accordance with Islamic symbolism. One event marking the beginning of this process was the

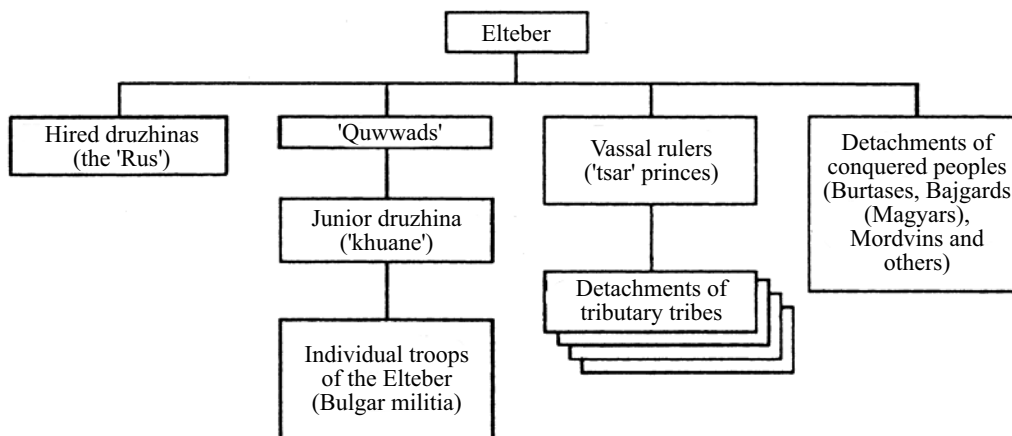
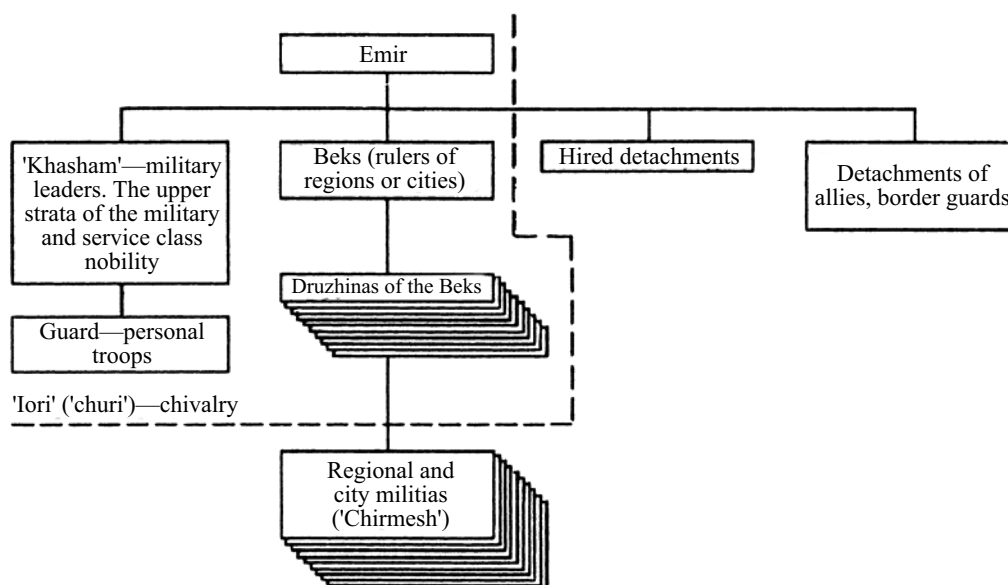
caliph and his embassy’s presentation to Al-mysh of two banners along with several other gifts [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 131]. According to medieval customs, the exchange of banners was a symbolic act of investiture, one that conferred upon Bulgaria’s ruler secular and religious powers ordained by the Caliph of Baghdad. It can be observed that as Islam spread among the Bulgars during the first half of the 10th century, the images on the banners also changed, gradually becoming more Islamic in appearance, particularly on national symbols. Judging by their Middle Eastern counterparts, the Bulgarian banners of the 10–11th centuries were rectangular in shape with the cloth attached to the staff along its longer side. Though they varied in colour, they were most often black (the colour of the Caliphate), red, brown, and, more rarely, green. As a rule, the cloth was embroidered in gold or other contrasting threads with surahs from the Quran, slogans, and sometimes simple arabesques or emblems.

The Bulgar Elteber had four subordinate ‘maliks’ [Ibid., pp. 131, 195]. These rulers were most likely ordered by him to send their detachments to the Bulgar troops.

In addition to these units, the Bulgar troops included detachments from neighbouring vassalised peoples. Among them, the ‘Majgards/Bajgards’ (Magyars), who were ‘subject to the Bulgars’, stand out [Khvolson, 1869, pp. 83, 105]. The Burtases had also been incorporated into the Bulgarian state. Sources from the first half of the 10th century indicate that the Burtases were subject to the Khazars, that there were reciprocal raids and wars between the Bulgars and the Burtases, and that the Burtases were gradually incorporated into Bulgaria [Ibid., pp. 19, 24; Zakhoder, 1967, p. 31]. All of these vassalised peoples would send their tribal militia to the Bulgarian borders to act as *foederati*.

The radical changes that occurred in the socio-economic life of Bulgar society from the latter half of the 12th century to the beginning of the 13th century significantly affected the Bulgars’ military organisation.

Internecine strife decidedly increased during this period, and the number of internal conflicts grew. Despite the scarcity of written sources, there are reasons to think that Bul-

*A. Organisation of the Volga Bulgar military during the 10–11th centuries**C. Organisation of the Volga Bulgar military during the 12–13th centuries*

The organisational structure of the Volga Bulgar military in the 10–13th centuries.

garia was able to retain its internal unity and did not disintegrate into separate domains. This was perhaps due to the sparse ruling class, the relatively small size of Bulgaria as well as the inability of small 'principalities' to resist pressure from their neighbours—first and foremost, from Vladimir-Suzdal Rus'.

In the 12–13th centuries, the emir remained the supreme head of the Bulgar military establishment. His duty was to exercise command over the combined army, to organize its campaigns and to summon the troops. Qol Ghali, a contemporary Bulgarian poet, describes this event in vivid poetic form:

*'And once a month, Yusuf would pick a certain day  
 To muster all his troops; a horse would start to neigh,  
 As he did feel his trappings on his unruly mane,  
 Thus calling each and everyone to mount a campaign.  
 <...>  
 And warriors, old and young, both rabble and elite,  
 Would assemble, joined by a host of begs and their suite.  
 The Imagrib ambassador was ordered to appear, A  
 nd help Yusuf review the troops, the front and the rear.  
 And everywhere they looked—left and right, up and down—  
 There faces of the solders were all around.  
 Two hundred thousand men stood on every side,  
 On saddle and on foot, All of their own kind'.*

[Qol Ghali, 1983, pp. 206, 208].

Naturally, it is futile to search for any specific instance of an assembly of the Bulgar forces in this passage, but at the same time, the mere fact of a military parade and the assembly of the most distinguished beks (chieftains) and the rulers of the country's cities and regions leaves no room for doubt. Moreover, describing in such poetic form the summons of the noblemen and their military detachments to the capital, the author invoked images which were recognisable and familiar to his readers, as if referencing Bulgar day-to-day realities so as to bring them closer to understanding the epic reality of a mythical country called Misr (Egypt).

In general, the military system of feudal countries was characterised by regular troop summons, which made it possible not only to assess the combat-readiness and size of the army, but was also a token of vassals' loyalty to their suzerain. In Volga Bulgaria, as in Ancient

Rus' and the medieval East, armed forces assembled in capital cities—namely, Bilyar.

An important element of military culture and an indicator of the army's level of organisation was the proliferation of the system of rank-specific banners in the Bulgar army. According to numerous Bulgar sources and similar materials from Islamic countries from the 12–13th centuries, banners differed in size and meaning. They can all be conventionally divided into three groups. The largest flag was the emir's banner (according to Arabic tradition, it was called 'rayya', and in Turkic tradition, it was most probably called 'gelem'). This banner, like those of the beks (and flags of the military nobility in general) was paraded, as a rule, during ceremonies. The banner was usually revealed when the troops were assembled. Qol Ghali illustriously described how the detachments paraded with the unfurled banners:

*There's no end to all these banners, embroidered, silk and green,  
 Where needlework in gold and silver can be seen.*

[Ibid., p. 168].

The Emir's main banner accompanied him into battles; it was usually placed at the center of the battle lines of his regiment.

Aside from the Emir's banner, each Beg and his detachment presumably had their own flag (evidently, in Turkic tradition it was also called a 'gelem', and in Arabic, 'alam' or 'laiva'). The medium-sized banners of various military detachments are prominently displayed in some of the pictorials of the Radziwiłł

(Königsberg) Chronicle. The battle flags of Bulgar troops are also mentioned in a number of accounts from Russian chronicles [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 352]. Small detachments (hundreds, tens) also had their own military symbols—small banners and guidons (in Turkic, 'zhalau'/'jalau').

Bulgarian banners were green, according to a report by Qol Ghali; it is possible that they were also black, red, brown, blue or a

combination of different colors, as in the previous era. Like all other Islamic banners, they were covered with inscriptions (most often, these were surahs from the Quran and the mottos of knights) and embroidered with green or silver threads.

All of these banners and small flags, apart from the sacred ones, were of great military significance in that they helped the commander direct the course of battle—their position allowed him to assess the arrangement and position of his detachments and the regiments of the enemy from a distance and to respond quickly any time they shifted. The banners also designated the place where the commander was located and the position of assembly of the soldiers after the battle.

The basis of a ruler's military power lay in his *druzhina* and his guard. The part of the *druzhina* that belonged to the service class was called the '*khasham*'. This term is recorded in a poem by Qol Ghali [1983, p. 46]. It was widely known in the Near and Middle East in the Seljuk era and was used to describe collectively a *druzhina*, the guard, the highest ranks of the Sultan's military and his rulers. This service aristocracy ('wielders of the sword and the pen'), whose functions often had both a military and an administrative character, comprise the command staff of the army.

Another term most likely used to describe the service class of the Bulgarian nobility is the title '*iori*' ('*churi*'), which is found in epitaphs of the 14th century, but on the basis of genealogical trees that are provided on them, we can establish that it was used as early as the 12–13th centuries. According to many Turkologists, this term, whose roots trace back to ancient Turkic titulature, was used to describe the military nobility and Turkic chivalry, and it was used with this meaning during the 15–16th centuries.

Thus, it is possible to reconstruct the ruler's *druzhina*—*khasham*—as a composite of its noble commanding officers and the guard, which consisted of professional soldiers. In addition, the highest ranks of the *khasham* had their own *druzhinas*, which were most likely subordinate to the supreme ruler. All of the nobility were linked through a system of vassalage and subvassalage. Some informa-

tion about this system can be derived from Russian chronicles, in which there are mentions of local 'princes' with their *druzhinas*, which were mostly mounted: '... their prince barely manages to escape with a small *druzhina*', '... the Bulgarians and their prince atop their horses' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 352]. Very illustrative of this fact are accounts that can be found in several chronicles concerning the events of 1220, when after the capture of the Bulgarian city Oshel by Russian troops '... the Bulgars in the Great City and in other cities heard... and gathered together with their princes on horseback, the others on foot...' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XV, p. 331], and other accounts of the siege of the 'Great City' by Russian army in 1183, when the militias of several of cities and regions assembled [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, II, pp. 625, 626]. Judging from all of this information, the Bulgars had a well-established system by which the vassals carried out the orders of the suzerain.

The aforementioned leads us to the conclusion that the base of the Bulgarian army consisted of co-subordinated feudal *druzhinas*, which were composed of mounted professional warriors under the command of a hierarchically structured nobility. Local feudal lords, depending on their rank in the state hierarchy and the amount of land they held, fielded militia armies. Moreover, these militias often belonged to specific regions or cities. It is possible that military detachments that consisted of both Bulgars and neighboring peoples, were called '*chirmesh*'.

The Bulgarian military also included militia armies from the surrounding tribes and peoples. There is a particular abundance of information about the Hungarians, who lived to the east and southeast of Bulgaria. The Hungarian Friar Julian, who visited them in 1236, wrote that they are 'rich in horses and arms and very brave in war', and later noted their victory over the Mongols 14 years previously and the constant battles with them in the ensuing years [Anninsky, 1940, p. 81]. This bears witness to the participation of these Hungarians alongside the Bulgarian troops in the crushing defeat of the Mongolian troops' first campaign, which, according



to Ibn al-Athir, was inflicted upon them by the Bulgars in 1223 [Tiesenhausen, 1884, I, pp. 27–28].

Among the other allies and vassals were the Kipchak (Kimek) tribes, who lived on the southern and southeastern borders of Bulgaria. Their role in the history of the Bulgars, including in the military sphere, was particularly notable. Kipchak (Yemek) hired detachments were repeatedly used in internecine and external wars, which is evidenced by the campaign of a Yemek regiment against the Great City in 1183 under the command of a Bulgarian 'prince', as well as the combined struggle of the Bulgars and the Kipchaks-Saksins against the Mongols in 1229 [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 339]. Generally speaking, Kipchaks were well-known as military allies and vassals in several Eurasian states: Khwarezm, Rus', Byzantium and Georgia.

Concluding of our study of the organisational structure of the Bulgar military, it is worth mentioning that it bore the greatest resemblance to the military structure of the Khazar Khaganate. The internal system of the Bulgar troops was almost analogous to the structure of the Samanid state, the early Seljuk state, the Kimak Khaganate, and the Hungarians in the 10–11th centuries. At the same time, the Bulgar military structure differed significantly from the military systems of the nomadic Turkic, Kyrgyz and Uighur Khaganates, in which the ruling class was a unified army whose primary occupation was war.

By the middle of the 12th century, Bulgar feudal society was flourishing, which effected a change in the entire organisation of military science in the country. Despite the fact that the ruler continued to play a significant role in the military system, the main forces are concentrated in the hands of the military and service class nobility, who are interconnected through a hierarchical system of feudal vassalage. The ruler carried out his military policies by proxy of the 'nearby' druzhina and guard—the khasham. The top ranks of the khasham and local nobility, in whose hands the primary levers of state power were concentrated, formed the base of the Bulgar military establishment in the 12–13th centuries.

### Field strength

A number of sources dated to the 10–11th centuries show that the Bulgar state had two cities that fielded 10 thousand soldiers each, and the author of an anonymous Persian writing from the end of the 10th century titled 'Hudud al-Alam' explains that these soldiers were 'horsemen' [Zakhoder, 1967, p. 37]—that is, the strength of the Bulgar army in the 10–11th centuries could apparently reach 20,000 horsemen. The Bulgar ruler's druzhina was presumably 500 people strong. The strength of the average druzhina of a Kievan prince was the same at that time.

Naturally, the above number of Bulgar troops is only theoretical, as it does not account for the presence of hired detachments or the militias of conquered tribes. However, it does indicate the country's high mobilisation capacity in the 10–11th centuries.

In the 12–13th centuries, the Bulgarian population grew dramatically, but it is unlikely that the number of troops also increased. Based on the fact that the territory of Volga Bulgaria was about 86,000 square kilometers, and that the average population density (given the population's sedentary agricultural lifestyle and the Bulgars' high levels of urbanisation) could reach 5–10 people per square kilometer, the total population of Bulgaria apparently fluctuated from 430,000 to 850,000 people. It can thus be concluded that the overall maximum mobilisation capacity of the country was unlikely to exceed 45,000–55,000 soldiers. Under normal conditions, the maximum strength was, most likely, up to 15,000–25,000 soldiers (assuming 1 warrior for each 5 families). The military and service class ('iori'), if we calculate its numbers based on the average (in Western Europe, it accounted for 2% of the population, and in the East, up to 10%), apparently consisted of 15,000–20,000 people, including their family members.

To some extent, these estimates are confirmed by a few incomplete figures, most of which refer to clashes between the Rusessians and the Bulgars and indicate the number of soldiers from the individual Bulgarian regions. Data from 1172 mentions a Bulgar detachment consisting of 6,000–7,000 soldiers [Complete

Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 364]. In 1183 a considerable Bulgarian army had been raised against the Rusessian armies: 'Near a Bulgarian city... Sobkulyane and Chelmata along with other Bulgarians, which are called the Temtyuzi, and their 5000 ships' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, II, pp. 625–626]. During this army's battle against the Rusessian regiments, from 'over 1000' to 3500 Bulgars died, according to various chronicles. Scrutinising these numbers, we can say, despite their approximate nature, that there was a clear downward trend in the strength of certain troops. The reason for this can most likely be found in the increase in the number of druzhinas themselves and, as a consequence, age-related fragmentation of the troops. It is significant that in 1183 three cities (perhaps, the centers of their regions) were able to field only 5,000 soldiers—most likely a formation consisting of druzhinas and feudal militias. Only under extreme conditions—for example, in the face of the Mongol invaders—were the Bulgars able to raise a considerable army in 1236, the strength of which, according to Friar Julian, an eyewitness of those events, reached 50,000 soldiers [Anninsky, 1940, pp. 81, 85]. It is clear that the mobilisation of this army demanded unprecedented efforts, although it did not likely deplete all of the military resources of Bulgaria, as evidenced by the Bulgar uprisings following the Mongols' departure to the west. Summarising all of this data, we can conclude that there was a downward tendency in the number of individual troops (from 10,000–20,000 in the 10th century to 3,000–4,000 soldiers in the 12–13th centuries) in the pre-Mongol period, an increase in the number of druzhinas and in troop fragmentation, as well as a general reduction of the armed population. Considerable number of soldiers were gathered only to conduct extensive, long-distance campaigns and to repel strong opponents.

### The cavalry

Heavily-armed horsemen were a symbol of the Middle Ages. Cavalry detachments not only dominated the battlefields, but they also guided the development of armaments and military science. At the same time, horsemen made up a privileged layer of soldiers—the

military and service class nobility. Under these conditions, the formation and development of the medieval cavalry was inseparable from the processes by which the chivalry—the aristocracy and their military servants—emerged and consolidated its position.

Bulgars were traditionally cavaliers, and in the Don region they had a complicated tribal and class structure. The distribution of weapon discoveries in the tombs of early Bulgars tells us about the initial stage of the formation of the feudal militia from the end of the 8th century. The direction of these processes shows a change in the number of burials with weapons and an increase in the degree of the isolation and consolidation of the druzhina. Analysis of the weapon sets allows to conclude that there was a certain degree of specialisation in the use of combat tools. Sabres, spears and battle axes, along with throwing weapons and defensive weapons, as well as horse equipment, were most likely used by professional soldiers: members of the druzhina and nobles. Axes (often all-purpose ones) along with throwing weapons and horse equipment were used by the rest of the army, which consisted at the time of the people's militia; this, of course, does not mean that they too did not use spears and even sabres. All of this information points to the beginning of the process of differentiation in the Bulgar army.

On the cusp of the 9th and 10th centuries, the most important complex of weapons becomes the equipment of the professional soldier, who at that time was the foundation of the Bulgar army and its striking force. Arab historians Ahmad ibn Rustah and Abu Sa'id noted that the Bulgarian soldiers 'ride on horseback, wear chain armor and have a full set of arms' [Khvol'son, 1869, p. 24]. The set of arms used by druzhinas most clearly stands out from the bulk of weapons, which is due not only to its specificity (it included almost all types of weapons: sabers, swords, pikes, chisel, maces, chain-mail armours and metal armor suits), but also its relatively ubiquity among the discoveries of military equipment (more than 74 out of 152 items of weapons dated to the 10–11th centuries).

Traditional weapons played an important role in this complex of weapons from the 10–11th centuries: sabres, spears and battle



A heavily-armed Bulgarian warrior. 12–early 13th centuries Reconstructed by M. Gorelik

axes, which changed in form under the influence of changing combat conditions. Sabre crossguards—both curved in form with spherical protuberances at their ends as well as straight, diamond-shaped ones—were developed. Sabre blades, compared with earlier ones, became longer, thinner and deeply curved. Among the new types of spears, the ones with elongated and broad triangular shapes stand out, as do pikes. New types of battle axes began to appear, including an increasingly popular type with a rounded head and small quadrangular butt. Complex bows with medial side plates are replaced by bows

with end plates (rarely, they appeared alongside the medial side plates).

At the same time the traditional set of weapons and ammunition used by members of the *druzhina* underwent a transformation. It was augmented by types of weapons that were not widespread before the 10th century: pear-shaped flails made of bone and metal, bronze maces with large tetrahedral spikes and protective equipment. Particularly noteworthy is the increase in the use of plate armor, chain-mail armour and helmets. There were also new developments in the equipment of horses: new types of bits, spurs and ice spikes emerged.

The appearance of weapons of Western origin in 10th century Bulgaria is of particular interest: Carolingian swords and their fittings, round shields with hemispherical umbos, elongated triangular spears and spurs. These weapons demonstrate the proliferation of pan-European means of warfare among the Bulgars. The emergence of Western weapons in Bulgar society is related to the functioning of the Volga-Baltic trade route, the strengthening of Bulgaria's relations with the countries of the Circum-Baltic region as well as internal societal causes. The question of how the Western-style weapons were incorporated into the Bulgar weapons arsenal is more complex. The initial stage of this incorporation was brought on, most likely, by the integration of multi-ethnic layer of Rus people into the Bulgar *druzhina*. According to some sources, hired *druzhinas* were concentrated in the high command of 'princes' located in cities where a syncretic *druzhina* culture was forming. Gradually, they assimilated and integrated into the ruling class.

Thus, the set of arms used by the Bulgar *druzhinnik* in the 10–11th centuries included both traditional and imported weapons; it was quite homogeneous and limited to the bare minimum of weapons and equipment (given the lack of Scandinavian lance-shaped spears and Russian versions of the poleaxe). The selectivity that the Bulgars exercised in importing weapons while at the same time improving their own weapons shows a certain degree of independence and originality among the Bulgar *druzhina*.

The bulk of the Bulgarian *druzhina* consisted of horsemen. The development of the horseman's equipment was characterized by the combination of two methods for controlling the horse and a change in the corresponding position of the rider in the saddle: the 'eastern' method—using a horsewhip (there are around 50 remaining pommels) and the 'western' method—using spurs (of which there are only 5 that have survived to this day). Although the latter was evidently not widespread, it demonstrates the influence of various cultural centers and the incorporation of innovations from the pan-European system of warfare into Bulgar military science.

The mounted *druzhina* continues to maintain the leading position in the military or-

ganisation of Volga Bulgaria in the 12–13th centuries. During this period, the complex of professional weapons changed completely, becoming more sophisticated and specialised. Among the hacking and cutting weapons, the sabre, whose blade length and curvature had increased, continued to play a major role, and crossguards with good protective qualities dominated. Swords, just as before, were not widespread.

The specialised tips of spears gained particular importance. There was a clear tendency towards making them more effective: the length of the blades increased and they became narrower; many spears acquired an elongated wedge shape. Gradually, there began to appear double-edged pikes and sharp-bladed, elongated triangular spears, which clearly dominated over the other forms. Battle axes now played a less important role in the arsenal of professional weapons. War hammers with narrow wedge-shaped blades and ornamented ceremonial axes have been discovered. If the transformation of the first group of weapons was related to a desire to increase the effectiveness of the blow they were capable of issuing, the latter group evidently served more as marks of distinction, indicators of the social rank of their owners. Weapons specific to cavalry warfare such as maces and flails flourished. In short, by the beginning of the 13th century, 6 new forms of clubs and 6 new forms of flails had emerged, including forms that were ideal for the time, such as maces with cut corners, *becs de corbin*, *shestopyors*, complex-shaped casted maces with protrusions and spikes, as well as battle flails, including pear-shaped, studded ones, multifaceted ones, flattened ones with ornaments, and cube-shaped ones with hemispherical projections on the corners and sides.

Even more noticeable progress was made in improving protective weapons. In addition to chain-mail armours, plate and leather armours, new types of equipment also became widespread in the pre-Mongol period: scaled armour and chain-mail armour with flat rings. At the same time, it is evident that dome-shaped, round and almond-shaped shields appeared in the Bulgars' arsenal. Battle headgear also took on a new appearance: no later than the 13th century, it was augmented by a *nasel*. At the same time a new type of head protec-

tion begins to be used—a sphero-conical helmet with a visor-mask.

Horse equipment underwent serious changes as well. As in Rus', arched, annulate and trapezoidal stirrups became widespread, the diversity of bits increased and bridle gear began to be decorated in the Middle Asian style. A distinctive type of spur with a movable gear wheel could be found.

The heavily-armed Bulgar horseman was armed with a sabre, or, more rarely, a sword, a pike, or a sharp-bladed spear, a mace or a battle flail; sometimes he carried a battle axe, a dagger or a bow and arrows, as well as metal or chain-mail armour, a helmet, a shield, stirrups, horse bits, saddles and, rarely, spurs.

These spearmen formed the core of the army and were able to determine the outcome of a battle with the force of their ram attacks. The important role of the Bulgar mounted *druzhina* in military actions was noted by the authors of Russian chronicles, who referred to it repeatedly around 1164, 1183 and 1220. These feudal *druzhinas* acted as united masses on the battlefield and were able to react flexibly to changing combat situations. Such *druzhina* detachments might be called knight detachments, considering their distinct Eastern European character. These troops were not numerous, certainly, but their importance in the battle was much more important than that of the rest of the troops, making them the leading force of the Bulgar army that defined the trajectory of all military affairs.

While the set of weapons used by the Bulgar mounted *druzhina* is quite easy to distinguish, the weapons used by other troops are more difficult to single out. It is quite clear that the bulk of the troops had only a few types of melee weapons and protective equipment. It is not yet possible to identify their equipment more precisely, but it evidently included the entire range of basic weapons in various combinations, among which throwing weapons were the most significant. What set the weaponry of the *druzhina* apart from that of the rest of the troops is clearly not that ordinary soldiers did not use any combat weapons (there is no doubt that they used spears, battle-axes, and even sabres), but the former's systematic use of bladed weapons and regular use of metal protective equipment.

Another feature that distinguished the weaponry of the non-noble troops from that of the *druzhina* was its great versatility. In general, the arsenal of lightly-armed horsemen and infantrymen consisted of a bow and arrows, a combat knife, a battle axe, possibly a spear, a battle flail and a shield, and their armour most likely consisted of a coat of mail and a helmet.

Lightly-armed detachments of horsemen in the Bulgar army, as mentioned previously, existed from the 9–10th centuries, and in the 12th century their participation in military operations was recorded in ancient Russian sources [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XV, p. 330]. It is possible that their significance on the battlefield during this period increased in large part due to the proliferation among the Bulgars of complex bows which had end, middle, side, and medial front plates. Alongside bows, the variety of arrowheads also increased, especially armour-piercing types, which significantly strengthened the shooting power of the lightly-armed cavalry. It had a supporting role in combat (engaging in battles, pursuing enemies, etc.), and by the end of the 12th century, as we can assume, it gradually began to break out into separate units, which intercepted the communications of the enemy, conducted reconnaissance-in-force, etc. A special role was given to these soldiers during confrontations with the nomads.

They were evidently able to determine the outcome of such battles if they had the support of a *druzhina*.

### Infantry

During the Middle Ages, the infantry was a militia made up of common villagers or members of dependent tribes and performed supporting functions.

It is evident that similar practices were common in Bulgaria in the 10th century. These units were recruited from agricultural communities whose members made up auxiliary infantry detachments. However, in the 10–11th centuries, these detachments were not of great importance on the battlefield. Their weaponry included polearms: *sulitsas* (javelins) with staves, asymmetrical rhombic, leaf-shaped and long, broad triangular spears, as well as all-purpose poleaxes of 'small forms'

that were made to imitate the ones that were actively in use. Some kinds of infantry weapons could be found in the Bulgars' arsenal owing to military and political contacts with the neighbouring Finno-Ugric peoples.

In the latter half of the 12th century, the weaponry used by the infantry changed significantly. It included long, broad, triangular spears, long, leaf-shaped and laurel-like spears, axes with wedge-shaped blades, axes with notched, tapered blades and small heads, as well as battle poleaxes similar to those that were actively in use. In addition, Bulgar infantrymen had throwing and defensive weapons.

As throwing weapons and crossbows became more widespread, long-range weapons began to play a greater role at the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries. The transformation of infantry weapons during pre-Mongol times was not arbitrary. It reflected the overall increase in the value attached to unmounted detachments. There is some evidence supporting the idea that weapons such as bear-spears, *sulitsas* (javelins), some types of axes and almond-shaped shields might have belonged to infantrymen with more diverse and specialised equipment. It is possible that mounted *druzhinas* also sometimes dismounted during battles.

Describing military confrontations with the Bulgars during the latter half of the 12th through the beginning of the 13th century, Russian chroniclers began to record the Bulgar infantry's participation in military operations. It is also noteworthy that unmounted Bulgars were frequently depicted in the pictorials of the *Radziwiłł Chronicle*. The infantry played a particularly prominent role in defending cities, which was vividly manifested during the Rusessian army's siege of Bilyar in 1183,

when Bulgar 'foot soldiers... upon leaving the city, stood firmly like a bastion' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 390; II, p. 626; XV, p. 268]. The infantry was becoming more and more active on the battlefield. For example, in 1220, Bulgars advanced towards the Rusessian army, 'some (of them) on horseback, others unmounted' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, pp. 444–445]. However, even during this period, unmounted contingents played a passive role in combat, mostly reinforcing the combat order of the other troops, blocking the advance of the Rusessian unmounted regiments. Infantrymen were also utilised during river operations as shipboard soldiers [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 390; II, p. 626].

The increasingly prominent role of the infantry was due to a number of factors, which, undoubtedly, included the feudalisation of the country, the increasing number of internal conflicts, the cities' growing economic and political independence and the demands of defensive wars. It is the large cities which seem to have recruited the largest number of infantry forces to serve in the army, which was especially evident during the struggle against the Mongol invasion. Of course, during the 10–13th centuries, the infantry could not withstand heavily armed cavalry on the battlefield, but it was successful in defending fortifications, on uneven terrain and in river battles. Its decisive importance during engineering works and in the transportation of important cargo, both by land and by sea, is undisputed. Thus, at the end of the 12th to the beginning of the 13th century, the infantry generally played a supporting role. At the same time, it is evident that its importance on the battlefield had begun to rise.

### 3. Military science

The main sources that characterise the military strategy and the tactical capabilities of the Volga-Bulgars are Russian chronicles, Arab-Persian historical and geographic writings and the reports of Western European travellers. All of these reports are rather fragmentary and incomplete, and the Rusessian chronicles

unambiguously glorify the successful operations of their own troops, keeping silent about their failures or glossing over them. However, applying a certain critical approach to the sources, it is quite possible, despite their incompleteness and tendentiousness, to glean information about certain elements of the

strategies and tactical techniques used by the Bulgars on the battlefield [for more details, see Izmaylov, 1977, pp. 149–164].

A study of the Bulgar wars and military campaigns makes it possible to draw some conclusions about their basic strategies. In military offensives, they concentrated their forces so as to capture and subordinate enemy territory. This was especially characteristic of the 10th century wars. In the 11–13th centuries, forces were used to strike suddenly at important strategic enemy targets (Murom, 1088; Suzdal, 1107; Yaroslavl, 1152 Ustyug, 1218), followed by a swift retreat. In defensive campaigns, the strategy was to rely on a fortified centre of defense (Bryakhimov, 1164; Bilyar, 1183; Oshel', 1220) and assemble forces in order to push back the enemy. The fact that military operations were conducted in summer and were usually short-lived and fast-moving was conducive to these strategies.

The strategy of dealing a 'direct blow' and waging a short-lived war was a consequence of how the Bulgars' military was organised. It consisted of feudal *druzhinas* subordinated to the military and service class nobility. For obvious reasons (the size of the country and comparatively small population), the Bulgar forces in the latter half of the 12th century barely exceeded 10–15 thousand soldiers. This was why country's ruler was unable to wage any long and bloody wars. As a result, the Bulgars would typically avoid frontal clashes with Rus' detachments during offensive wars and military campaigns, and tried to derive political advantages from attacks on the important administrative and commercial and economic centres of northeastern Rus'. When fighting defensive wars, the Bulgars made use of strong fortresses and manoeuvred quickly to strike enemy communications. This forced them to dissipate their forces, depriving them of their strategic initiative. Simultaneously they would direct a decisive blow on the main enemy forces. This was in evidence in the campaigns of 1172, 1183 and 1223.

Naturally, plans and strategies were selected based on an assessment of the strength of the enemy's forces and troop movements, as well as their own strengths and capabilities. It is clear that reliable, detailed information on the enemy could not have been obtained

without organised military intelligence and a developed network of spies. The close trade links between the different peoples provided ample opportunity for them to operate. The timings of some Bulgar campaigns in Rus' can be attributed to this. One particular example was the attack on Yaroslavl in 1152. Among the reasons to advance was solid intelligence that the prince and his major military forces were absent at that time, as they were fighting in the south.

Sources provide a much more vivid picture of the Bulgars' activities during defensive operations. As a rule, the choice of defensive tactics can be explained by the specific situation, whether there was a sudden attack launched by sizeable Rus' prince forces (1164, 1172, 1220), or an advance made by superior numbers of enemy troops (for example, during the Ruses' campaign of 1183, or the Mongol attacks of 1223, 1229, 1232 and 1236). It is interesting that information regarding tactics appears from the middle of the 12th century onwards. This, along with other factors, can probably be accounted for by the weakening of Bulgaria, which resulted from the escalation of internal conflicts. Be that as it may, the increased frequency of the Vladimir and Suzdal princes' campaigns in this period forced the Bulgars to develop suitable defensive tactics. They proved their efficacy during the combined Rus' campaign on Great City in 1183.

Active defense lay at the heart of the Bulgars' tactics. The aim was for the defenders, devoid of strategic initiative, to do their best to stretch the enemy rear and engage with its separate detachments. A defensive centre and active military operations in the enemy rear were crucial to the success of such operations. With a strong fortress in the rear, the Bulgars could successfully engage the enemy as it left options for manoeuvring their main forces open. Bilyar (Great City) is a good example of what a key central point of defense was meant to be. Bilyar was protected by large walled embankments surrounded by ditches: the outer line of defense consisted of three embankments, while the inner one had two. In front of the outer wall was a lath fence. A distinctive feature of this system of defense was the increased range of projectile

weaponry up to 100–150 metres around the city, and the concentrated use of such weaponry, which included crossbows and catapults. The walls and the lath fence were protected by infantrymen. At the end of the 12th century this system of defense was new to Rus' troops, while for the Bulgars it formed part of their defense tactics. It is little wonder that the attempt to storm a fortress as strong as Bilyar's was unsuccessful. Launching a violent attack, the most advanced Rus' *druzhina* successfully charged the lath fence but then came under heavy fire from the walls, fell prey to a sudden counterattack and was pushed back, suffering losses. After that, the Ruses' troops lost the operational-strategic initiative, laid a passive siege and retreated when they were at risk of being surrounded by Bulgar forces. Later, in the early 13th century, after having improved their storm tactics, Rus' troops occasionally did take Bulgar fortresses 'by spear'.

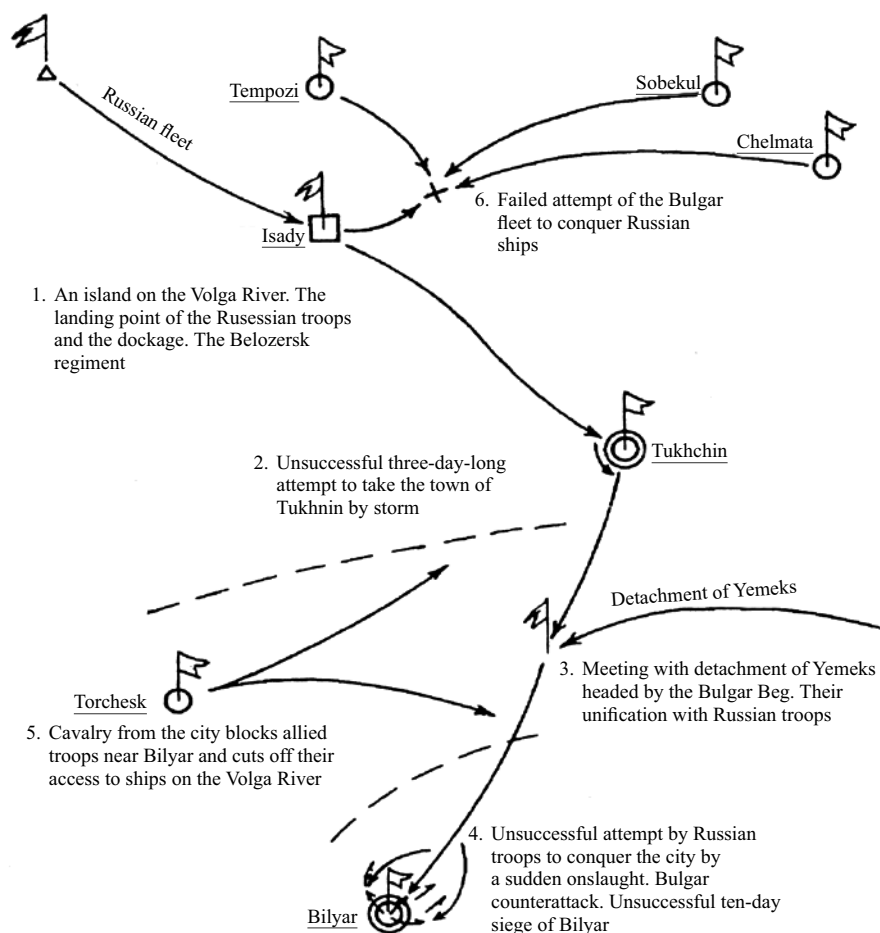
Integral to defensive operations were tactical and operational manoeuvres aimed at exhausting the enemy in minor battles, severing their communications, and, having paralyzed their forces, disrupting an active offensive. Manoeuvres made to outflank the enemy were undoubtedly a progressive aspect of the Bulgars' military craft in the 12–13th centuries. A vivid example of these manoeuvres is provided by the Bulgar military operations conducted in 1183, when, taking into account the concentration of the Ruses' princes' main forces at Great City, where they had laid a passive siege, the Bulgars dealt a series of blows to their communications: a raid on the enemy rear disrupted communication between Rus' units ('... and from Tor'tskij they came on horseback to attack those on the boat' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, II, p. 626]). At the same time, their river flotilla cut off the allied *druzhinas*' retreat back to Rus' along the Volga, and several Bulgar naval detachments tried to attack a strong militia composed of Beloozersk residents who were guarding the river flotilla ('...near the Bulgar cities of Sobekul and Chelmat, joining other Bulgars known as Temtyuzi, 5,000 of them went to attack... they went to the Ruses' boats, and on the land they went out against them and clashed with them' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 390; II, p.

626; XXV, p. 90]). The Bulgars also used a manoeuvre and diversionary strike in 1164 [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, pp. 352–353] and in 1220 [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, pp. 444–445]. Sometimes, as in the winter of 1172, having assembled their forces the Bulgars tried to encircle the enemy and mount a cavalry attack at the same time ('...on hearing of the arrival of Prince Mstislav's small *druzhina*, the Bulgars quickly took their armour and went to them, 6000 men strong' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 364; II, pp. 564–565]).

Along with a diversionary attack, the Bulgars would draw a superior enemy into an ambush, then outflank, attack and defeat them. Tactics such as these are particularly characteristic of nomadic peoples, but were also quite often used by the armies of settled states (Hungary, Danube Bulgaria). The most effective encirclement strategy was used by the Bulgars against the Mongols in 1223, when the latter, under the command of their most experienced generals Subutai and Jebe, advanced on Bulgaria after their victory on the River Kalka. This is how this operation was described by the contemporary Arab historian Ibn al-Athir: on learning of the Mongols' approach, the Bulgars 'laid ambushes for them in several places, advanced towards them, and once they had been lured into the ambush, attacked from the rear, so they were trapped in the middle. The sword attack came from every quarter, many were slaughtered and only a few survived' [Tiesenhausen, 1884, pp. 27–28]. A successful operation of this kind, where the enemy was ambushed and surrounded, demonstrates the Bulgar army's high level of skill. Such a victory over a well-disciplined and strong Mongolian army who were aware of false retreats and ambushes and employed them successfully themselves, couldn't have been accidental.

The advantages of the Bulgars' well-organised system of defense were clearly in evidence during the Bulgar-Mongol wars. Unfortunately, sources spare their descriptions of this conflict and fail to record all its details. It is worth mentioning the campaigns of 1223, 1229 and 1232, when the Mongols were successfully repelled. There is no doubt that these





The Bulgars' active defense tactics (as illustrated by the Rusessian-Bulgar war of 1183)

operations were aimed at exhausting the enemy. Cavalry detachments would manoeuvre on the country's borderlands, basing themselves in remote cities and fortresses. Thus, with regard to the events of the 1229 frontier war, Russian chronicles mention fierce battles between Mongol forces and militias from the Lower Volga and the Trans-Volga Kipchaks (Kimeks), the Saqsins and the Bulgar outpost regiments near the Ural (Yaik) River ('...the Saqsins and the Polovtsians ran to the Bulgars against the Tatars and Bolgar outpost guards ran, staying against the Tatars near a river, whose name is Yaik') [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 453]). According to the chronicle, only in 1232 were the Mongols able to invade Bulgaria, but even then they were stopped ('...and they passed the winter without reaching Bulgaria's Great

City') [ibid, p. 459]). It was only in 1236 that the Mongol army was able to break through the Bulgars' defenses and storm the capital, Bilyar ('they came from the eastern lands onto Bulgarian soil, the ungodly Tatars, and took the glorious Great City of Bulgaria' [ibid, p. 196; XXV, p. 48]), which inevitably led to the conquest of the whole country [Khalikov, Khaliullin, 1988].

These records make it possible to conclude that the Bulgars developed effective active defense tactics. They consisted of using a centre of defense as a key point, while their remaining troops, making sweeping manoeuvres, prepared counterattacks. Judging from studies of the fortifications, which revealed evidence of crossbows, projectiles and other defensive weaponry, those defending were fairly well equipped militarily. With regard to the defen-

sive tactics employed by the Bulgar army in the 12–13th centuries, it should be noted that generally-speaking they differed from Old Russian tactics. During the internecine wars in Kievan Rus', where campaigns, as a rule, would be decided by battles in the open countryside: 'weakness was the only reason that one of the enemies would "shut themselves" in a city, doomed to passive defense' [Kirpichnikov, 1976, p. 51].

Bulgaria's rulers also conducted offensive military operations and campaigns. Of note in the middle and latter half of the 10th century is the conflict with the Burtases and the conquest of their land, which apparently developed into a full-blown military campaign [Zakhoder, 1967, pp. 31, 36]. Thanks to chronicles, much more information has survived regarding the Bulgars' campaigns against Rus' in the 11–13th centuries: those of 1088, 1107, 1152 and 1218. The routes, chronology and circumstances of these campaigns are quite well known [Kuchkin, 1975, pp. 31–36], which means it is possible to dwell on the purely military aspects, analysing them in more detail. A characteristic feature of all these offensive operations was the aim of capturing a certain strategic objective, often an important economic centre (Murom, Suzdal, Yaroslavl and Ustyug in different years) and the destruction of rural villages. These campaigns were conducted along the rivers on various military transport boats by small, mobile *druzhina* detachments. It is likely that they operated alongside war horses ('...the Bulgars came along the Volga to Yaroslavl in secret on boats' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XXIV, p. 77]) or combined river flotilla and mounted regiment offensives ('...Bulgar forces came to attack Suzdal' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XXIV, p. 72; XXX, p. 21]). In military terms, it was a swift and sudden raid on the city and an attempt to take it by surprise. Murom (in 1088) and Ustyug (in 1218) were taken in this way. If they were unsuccessful, the Bulgar troops would block the garrison, then lay siege to it for a certain amount of time while they ravaged the local area. This happened during the siege of Suzdal in 1107, '... surrounded the city and committed much evil, fighting in villages and churches, killing many peasants' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles,

XXIV, pp. 72–73] and in Yaroslavl in 1152, '...they surrounded the town on boats, as the town was small, and the people in the town suffered from hunger and thirst...' [ibid, p. 77]. In both cases, there were militia in the towns, but the prince's *druzhinas* were absent ('...the folk in the town could not oppose them without telling the prince about them...' [ibid, pp. 72–73]). After a short siege, which was more a case of blocking the active military forces in the area, the Bulgars would retreat with loot and prisoners without storming the besieged town. As a rule, the Bulgars would leave a rearguard near the city, which was to suppress the charging Rus' regiments in an active 'suburban' or 'peripheral battle' [Kirpichnikov, 1976, pp. 57–58]. In a number of cases the attack came from the city garrison ('...and the Bulgar warriors were blinded, those who came from the city beat them all' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XXIV, p. 72; XXX, p. 21]) or from reinforcements who came from other cities ('...when those from Rostov came, they defeated the Bulgars' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XXIV, p. 77]). It is hard to say how convincing this defeat of the Bulgar regiments was, but as there is no mention of prisoners being liberated, it may be supposed that it was a rearguard battle that could not have significantly affected the general success of the campaign. In principle, such offensive techniques were characteristic of a majority of the people in 12–13th century Europe, including Rus', where it would seem using battle tactics on the approach to a city became military practice from the 1170s onwards, and where by the 12th century direct military assault became the most important tactical siege technique [Rappoport, 1967, pp. 157–162; Kirpichnikov, 1976, pp. 57–60].

The Bulgars' battlefield tactics were very diverse and evolved considerably. In the 10–11th centuries, when the traditional system of tribal militias existed alongside feudal-territorial military organisations, it's likely that tactical combat battlefield formations were made up of a combination of feudal *druzhinas* and tribal detachments. It was at this time that many features of the Bulgars' troop structure and battle tactics shared much in common with nomadic battle techniques. Undoubtedly, military systems in the 10–11th centuries, which

were composed of heterogeneous elements, also had a great influence on battle formations, as they forced them to become less fragmented and more integrated. Nevertheless, sources mention separate detachments that undertook independent campaigns, and possibly solved their tactical objectives as a part of larger military units on the battlefield. The Arab traveler Ibn Fadlan used the term 'saria', to refer to a detachment of four thousand riders [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 100, 136]. This is roughly equivalent to the modern idea of the number of men in a militia, and a *druzhina* of one of the rulers of a region ('principality') subordinate to the Bulgars' ruler.

There is little data about the features of the combat experience of the Bulgars in the 10–11th centuries. Therefore, in order to more fully recreate their battle tactics, it is necessary to use analogues of combat methods and use of weapons by similarly developed societies.

During battles, the combat formation of the troops was apparently divided into three parts, namely an advance guard, centre (sometimes, there were flanks) and sometimes a reserve. The advance guard included a light cavalry followed by the main forces, in whose centre there was the ruler's *druzhina*, and the reserve included a *druzhina* of the most devoted vassal. With some variations, such battle formation was characteristic of almost all early medieval peoples. It would be enough to mention the Turks, the Uyghurs, the Kyrgyz and the Danube Bulgars.

Such formation required different density of the battle lines of the troops, which usually operated as compact masses in a battle. Obviously, it was difficult to lead such an army. In order to better control the actions of the various detachments and command more successfully, banners and flags of regiments, detachments and *druzhinas* were used as landmarks. The raised banners were used to count the troops, the ruler's flag was used to find the centre of the battle formations. Management goals were also achieved with the help of battle trumpets, which were used by the Hungarians, Pechenegs, Seljuks and Russians at this time.

The battle of that time apparently represented sequential introduction of light and heavy cavalry for the purpose of breaking the

enemy's front. The advance guard consisting of cavalry archers was the first to enter the battle, they raced in front of the enemy formation, surging at it 'wave after wave', shooting arrows and trying to inflict as much damage to the enemy as possible and to disorder its ranks. The same tactic was known to many Eurasian nations (see: [Khudyakov, 1980, p. 144]). The advance guard's task was to make the enemy retreat or force it to attack, and then the main forces entered the battle, while cavalry archers probably retreated to the flanks. At the same time, the decisive blow was inflicted by the heavily-armed *druzhina*, who broke up the enemy's combat formations and put them to flight. The fleeing or retreating enemy was pursued by the lightly-armed cavalry. Such combat techniques of the Bulgars can be judged by the records by al-Masudi about the destruction of Rus detachments after their defeat in a battle on the Volga River in 912 and an attempt to retreat [Garkavi, 1870, p. 133].

Weapons were used in such a battle in a logical sequence. At the first stage, the main role was played by missile weapons, the successful use of which depended directly on the quality of bows and the variety of arrowheads. The greatest damage from this fire was undoubtedly incurred by the warriors, who had no protective arms, that is, as a rule, ordinary warriors, and infantrymen. The battle's climax was at the second stage, when its outcome was decided by a fight with melee weapons. The battle was joined by the heavily armed cavalry with a full set of various combat tools. And, judging by the prevailing nature of lances, they were often used during the battle. The first knock-down in such a battle often predetermined the outcome of the fight, if the enemy could not withstand the blow and retreated. In case where a head-on collision of advanced formations did not bring a victory, the battle was divided into separate fights between various detachments that were often mixed with each other, as well as individual riders using all types of close-combat weapons. At this stage of the battle, it involved all the forces, received a universal character and, therefore, was rarely long, and inevitably resulted in a victory of one of the parties.

Almost nothing is contained in sources regarding the Bulgarian infantry of that time.

However, it does not mean that there was no infantry at all or that it was composed only of conquered tribes' militias. As the weapons analysis shows, there was a Bulgarian infantry, which used a variety of weapons. During the battle, it most likely played a secondary role and was responsible for protecting the camp, carts and was a garrison in fortresses. In the field battle, infantry detachments were a kind of a living non-mobile bastion that closed and maintained battle formations of the troops.

From the middle of the 12th to the first third of the 13th centuries, due to the final formation of the feudal hierarchical military system in Volga Bulgaria, the manner of the army disposition and its internal division was reformed, which could not but result in changes in the tactics of the field battle. It has been already noted that the nature of the armed struggle sharply changed at that time; it became more transient, intense, the power and diversity of weapons increased, the number of feudal *druzhinas* grew, and their structure became more complicated—all this led to reduction in the number of military detachments and growth of their tactical independence during tactical maneuvers and the field battle. This is proved by operations involving small units (3–6 thousand soldiers) during Russian-Bulgarian campaigns (1164, 1172, 1183 and 1220). The expanded independence of actions of individual detachments contributed to a gradual increase in the number of units in combat formations.

We can assume the use of battle formations consisting of large units—regiments by the Bulgars in the 12–13th centuries. This is to some extent confirmed by the use of the term 'regiment' in Russian chronicles in relation to the Bulgarian combat units ('Yuri Dolgorukiy attacked the Bulgars... and defeated their regiment' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, pp. 292, 389; II, pp. 285–286; XXX, p. 25]). The Bulgar combat formation obviously consisted of 3–5 regiments: an advance guard, centre, flanks, and sometimes a reserve. Such a combat disposition was used at this time by many peoples, whose military art was highly developed: the Seljuks, Khwarezmians and Russians. By analogy with the organisational structure of these nations' armies, we can assume that there were smaller

units within these regiments like the Rusessian and West-European 'flags' ('banners'), who had certain tactical freedom and were divided into smaller units—'lances'. Although there is no direct evidence now as to the presence of such a battle structure in Volga Bulgaria ('regiment'—'flag'—'lance'), but the presence of a whole range of indirect data (along with the undoubted knowledge by the Bulgars of such eastern and ancient Russian structure) makes this assumption very probable. These data include a direct reference in the Rusessian chronicles of the Bulgars' defeat during the Rusessian campaign against Bulgaria in 1164 and of the capture of their units' flags ('they captured their banners' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, pp. 292, 352; II, pp. 285–286; XV, p. 235]).

The formation of regiments in a real battle, of course, varied and depended on the specific circumstances. The Bulgars' battle formation was rarely described in synchronous sources, including the Rusessian chronicles. The description of a battle between a Russian array and a Bulgarian militia under the walls of Oshel in 1220 is an exception. Various chronicles dating back to the Grand Duchy of Vladimir-Suzdal at the beginning of the 13th century, characterise the Bulgar battle formations in detail: the main forces were composed of infantry soldiers and prince cavalry guards ('the Bulgars headed by their prince were on horsebacks, and positioned a regiment on the field' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 444; XV, p. 330]). If we take into account that the Rusessian troops opposing them consisted of four elements (a centre, flanks and a reserve), it becomes apparent that the Bulgars should have formed their troops respectively. There was apparently a light cavalry ahead, which '...shot arrows towards our soldiers...' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XV, p. 330] and then retreated. It was followed by other troops, who were ready for a battle, 'some of them were on horses, and others on foot' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 444]. In other words, the Bulgarian army was headed by an advance guard—a light cavalry armed with bows and arrows, which was followed by the main forces: a cavalry on the flanks and horse and foot detachments in the centre of the battle forma-

tions. Perhaps, these regiments were followed by a reserve—a *druzhina* of the *Bek*—the region's ruler.

Methods of running the battle and use of weapons at the battle stage, when there was a collision of the main forces—heavily armed knights—underwent major changes. They attacked each other in a close order with spears at the ready going in gallop to gain momentum for a strike. Such a method of combat, according to an analysis of a weapons complex, was characteristic of both the Bulgars, and a number of peoples of the Eastern Europe and the Middle East. After the first fight, the battle was divided into separate fights, which varied in terms of transience, bitterness and quick change of the combat situation. The increased intensity of the battle is largely connected with the flexibility of combat formations and divisibility of troop units, which allowed introducing more and more detachments into the battle. At this decisive phase of the battle, a variety of close-combat weapons were used: sabers, swords, maces, bludgeons and battle axes. According to written sources, the Bulgars used not only front, but also flank attacks and campaigns in a battle.

The role of the infantry in the battle in the 12–13th centuries further increased. This is largely determined by the fact that the militia began to regularly use more innovative, universal and professional weapons, and in extreme cases, to strengthen the army with the help of infantry *druzhina* knights. The data contained in Russian chronicles evidences the actions of the Bulgarian infantry in attacks, and especially in defensive warfare during the

Rusessian campaign against Bulgaria (1164, 1183, 1220). It is known that it staunchly defended the field and fore-wall fortifications ('the infantry came out of the town and defended the fence' [Ibid, p. 390]), and fought in specific conditions during river battles and campaigns ('went by boats' [Ibid, p. 390]). The increased role of the infantry is confirmed by a considerable replenishment of the infantry weapons and equipment.

The Bulgarian army considerably developed and improved its tactical formations and techniques from sufficiently solid battle formations to mobile regiments, whose gradual introduction in a battle decided the outcome. Especially noticeable and profound changes of the military art occurred in the 12th century. It was contributed by changes in the weapon complex (appearance of specialised knightly weapons and universalisation of 'mass' weapons), which led to the dismemberment of the internal structure of the combat formations. During this period, maneuvers, ambushes, false retreats and sudden attacks were widely used in the field and defensive battles, which were supported by persistent defense and intense blows in an open battle. This helped the Bulgars to win various opponents many times. In each particular case, the Bulgars tried to use the best features of their combat formation, applying an active defense, ambushes, sudden raids and a powerful decisive blow of the *druzhina*. The Bulgarian military thought led to the development of their own tactics of active defense, the use of which met the conditions of their combat practices and demonstrated a high level of combat skills.

## CHAPTER 2

### Foreign Policy of the Bulgar State

*Iskander Izmaylov*

#### **Ideology of the Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Institutions**

The creation of a single Bulgarian state, consolidation of its territory and military and political institutions led to the development of a public policy in relation to neighbouring nations and countries. Both, foreign and domestic policies of Bulgaria were determined, on the one hand, by the country's key position on the Great Volga Route, and on the other hand, by its belonging to the world of Islam and a boundary position among heathens and Christians.

Despite the relatively high level of social development, the country managed to avoid long feuds and disintegration into individual small states. The Bulgarian emirate was quite resistant to internal and external shocks. Special resistance was ensured by the Islamic ideology, the sense of isolation from the rest of the Islamic world and the idea of its 'historical burden' consisting in defending the 'Iskander's Walls' against the Yajuj and Majuj, guarding the faith on the border with the 'Sea of Shadows'. These factors were an important ideological basis for the development of a single idea of the world and their place in it, and also provided a universal ideology to Bulgarian politicians.

We have very little evidence about the institution of ambassadors and diplomatic ceremonial. Key facts about it can be drawn from the 'Notes' by Ibn Fadlan and some fragmentary indications in later sources.

It is obvious that diplomatic contacts involved Bulgarian aristocrats, the Emir's trusted people. However, residents of other countries were apparently used as advisers and interpreters [Khalidov, 1998, p. 82]. Russian sources also mention Bulgarian ambassadors, but do not specify their status. It makes us conclude that, like in other medieval countries, diplomatic

negotiations were led by representatives of the highest nobility, who were trusted by the ruler.

The very procedure of meeting an embassy, as it is described by Ibn Fadlan, looks as follows: at a certain distance from the ruler's headquarters, it was met by Bulgarian representatives, whose rank and nobility depended on the rank of the embassy, and escorted it to the ruler's headquarters. Those meeting the embassy brought bread, meat and millet with them. At some distance from the ruler's headquarters, the ambassadors were met by the Bulgar ruler himself. At the sight of the Baghdad embassy, he got off the horse and bowed down and showered all the ambassadors with silver dirhams. The reception was held four days later, when all noble people of the state gathered. At the reception, they exchanged gifts and read welcome speeches, after which the ruler's immediate environment showered him with dirhams. In the evening, a feast in honour of the embassy was held, representatives of which were sitting in the places for honoured guests. Such a scheme of receiving embassies was quite typical of Turkic and Islamic countries in the Middle Ages. The only feature that suggests certain Bulgarian specifics is showering with dirhams, which obviously meant wishing good and protecting the guests and probably dates back to ancient Turkic-Ogur traditions.

Later, Russian chronicles indicated that the Bulgars swore an oath when concluding a contract: 'and the Bulgars swore their oath' [Priselkov, 1950, p. 311]. According to the details given in another chronicle, Russian ambassadors were sent 'to make their princes and their lands swear an oath according to their law' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XXV, p. 117]. According to later realities of the Kazan Khanate, we can assume that the 'rota' (oath) 'according to the law' was sworn on the Quran, according to Muslim traditions.

Unfortunately, nothing more certain can be said about the Bulgars' diplomatic etiquette, but it was obviously close to Turkic and Islamic rituals.

### **Relations with Islamic Countries**

Bulgaria's contacts with the east were developed using the land route from Middle Asia (Khwarezm) through the Southern Urals to Bulgaria, which was a northern branch of the Great Silk Road. The embassy of the Baghdad Caliph with Ibn Fadlan moved along this very way, and there was obviously a regular trade exchange. According to the available written evidence, Islam was brought to the Bulgars by merchants and preachers from Middle Asia.

It was thanks to the Baghdad Caliph's embassy of 922 that Bulgaria was diplomatically recognised, and the Islamic civilisation expanded its borders far to the north. Since then eastern diplomats and historians began to take a closer look into the political processes occurring in bustling Eastern Europe, where the northernmost Islamic state had emerged—the single and natural ally for any eastern country having interests in the Volga Region as well as a reliable trading partner for all merchants selling northern goods. Since the times of Ibn Fadlan all geographical works have mentioned the Bulgars. Their descriptions became a tradition, and information about them was rewritten, complemented and changed, especially after Bulgaria got stronger and became a powerful medieval state. Its relations with Islamic countries also developed and strengthened.

Having become an Islamic country, Bulgaria entered the Islamic civilisation. From that moment on, its connections with the countries of Western Asia and the Middle East became a constant factor in history. These extensive and active contacts left numerous material evidences in the form of archaeological finds.

Undoubtedly, trade links were complemented by regular diplomatic connections with Islamic countries. First of all, the Bulgars' activity was directed at maintaining a stable relationship with the state of Samanids, and after its fall—with the Seljuks and Khwarazmian dynasty. Moreover, at the end of the 10th century, they got common enemies—various tribal associations of the Kipchaks, and at

the middle of the 12th century—the ethnic and political association of the Kimeks in the Northern Aral Sea region and the Trans-Volga Region. The contacts were very different in nature and were apparently too ordinary to record them in chronicles all the time. However, some of these contacts were so extraordinary that they were described in chronicles.

Typically, they were associated with major religious and charitable affairs. For example, 'Tarikh-i Bayhaqi' by Bayhaqi contains information about the Bulgar ruler, Emir Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn B.l.t.var, who sent money to Beyhaq, Nishapur region, in 415 (1024/1025) to build two mosques in Sabzevar and Craguerde. According to Bayhaqi, the Bulgar Emir 'sent a lot of money and amazing gifts to the Khorasanian sovereign, which no one had ever seen before...' inspired by his dream, in which he saw that he 'should send some money to Beyhaq'. 'At that time,' he adds, 'the money was spent on the construction of these two mosques' [Zakhoder, 1967, p. 46].

It is clear that whatever the reasons for sending the embassy of the Bulgar Emir to Khorasan were, this fact itself was significant. It evidences regular religious, political and cultural connections between Bulgaria and the states Samanids and Ghaznavids, shows that it was a unique event in terms of its scale, but not its direction.

A lot of information about the movements of Sufi religious preachers, indications of the origin of a number of outstanding theologians, jurists and medical workers from Bulgaria, who were recognised in the entire Islamic world, and even the connections of the literary language used in Bulgaria - all these show that the Bulgarian Emirate's trade and diplomatic contacts with eastern countries were regular and stable.

### **Relations with Turkic-Speaking Nomads of the Volga and Southern Ural Regions**

The formation of the Bulgarian state and the establishment of its borders promoted orderliness of the Bulgar connections with Turkic-speaking nomadic tribes of the Volga and the Southern Ural regions. Relations with them had always been regular and quite peaceful. It is known that Etrek, one of the Oghuz

leaders, was Almysh's matchmaker (or son-in-law), and the archaeological funerary monuments of Bulgaria include graves that are close to Oghuz-Pecheneg ones in terms of the burial ritual. Only some eastern sources indirectly report on Oghuz raids against the Bulgars. However, these conflicts were unlikely long or more or less permanent, because they interrupted the caravan trade, which promoted mutual enrichment.

The situation did not change much at the beginning of the 11th century, when Bulgaria expanded its influence to the Eastern Cis-Kama region, and the Kipchaks began to dominate in southern steppes. Various Turkic-speaking tribes comprising this vast ethnic and cultural world, became allies of the Bulgars and were culturally and religiously influenced by them. As an example, Ibn al-Athir's report can be cited, who noted that in the autumn of 435/1043, '10 thousand nomad tents of disbeliever Turks converted to Islam, who sometimes undertook raids against Islamic cities in the regions of Balasagun and Kashgar, robbed them and raised riots... They spent the summer in Bulgaria, and the winter in Balasagun, but when they converted to Islam, they scattered throughout the country...' [Ibn al-Athir, 1973, p. 60].

The aggravation of the relations between the Bulgars and the Kipchaks occurred at the beginning of the 12th century, when the Don Kipchaks greatly strengthened their position. They held several successful campaigns against Rus' and reached some parity with the Kievan princes under the conditions of preserving peace. In 1107 the peace treaty was sealed with the marriage of Yuri, son of Vladimir Monomakh, the Kievan Prince, and the daughter of Aepa Khan. We must say that this union was quite strong - Yuri Dolgoruky, the Prince of Vladimir-Suzdal, and his descendants always maintained good relations with the Kipchaks and never undertook raids on their lands.

However, the Don Kipchaks obviously decided to expand their sphere of influence to Bulgaria, and in 1117 Aepa Khan undertook a campaign against the Bulgars. According to Russian chronicles 'the Polovtsians came to the Bulgars, and the Bulgarian Prince sent them a drink with poison; Aepa Khan and others drank it and died' [Complete Collection of

Russian Chronicles, II, p. 285]. In other words, the Bulgars did not want to be involved in open confrontation and preferred a more insidious, 'Byzantine' way to get rid of the troubled Khan. But revenge was not long in coming, and it came from a different side, where the Bulgars did not expect it: Yuri Dolgoruky, Aepa's son-in-law, undertook a campaign against the Bulgars in 1120 and opened a whole series of Russian-Bulgarian Wars of the 12th century.

The Bulgars continued to strengthen their position in the Volga Region. At least since the second third of the 12th century, they spread their influence up to the Lower Volga Region, where the city of Saqsin - the heir to the traditions of the Khazar Atil, essentially became a centre of their influence in the region. Al-Ghar-nati, an Andalusian merchant and diplomat living in Saqsin in the 1130s-1150s, wrote that 'the Bulgarian Emir lives in the centre of the city; they have a large cathedral mosque, where they serve the Friday prayer, and the Bulgars live all around. And there is another cathedral mosque, where other people pray, who are called "Suv-ar residents" and who are also large in number' [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 27]. There are also 'forty Oghuz tribes' and the Khazars. It is interesting that archaeological findings from the territory of the Samosdelka settlement, which is associated by scientists with the ancient Saqsin city, include ceramics, which are close to the Bulgarian crockery in terms of their shape and methods of production. In other words, the Bulgars' political, trade and economic influence in the region clearly prevailed over that of the Kipchaks, and participation in a mutually beneficial trade was the general basis for developing relations on the Volga. It is possible that the Kipchaks concluded peace treaties with the Bulgars and guarded their borders, like in the Khwarezmian state, Georgia, Hungary and Bulgaria.

By the end of the 12th century, Bulgaria's military and trade power did not allow to question the safety of its borders. However, internal strife could break the stability of the Bulgarian borders and open the way to its cities for the Kipchak detachments. Based on some indirect data, it can be assumed that this happened in 1183, when one of the Bulgarian sultans ('princes') was expelled from the country and fled to the Trans-Volga steppes. There he received the



support of the Yemeks leading nomad life in the Southern Ural and Trans-Volga steppes, who were one of the main Kimek tribes. They once belonged to the Kimak Khaganate but migrated to the Trans-Volga Region after its collapse. Their power and influence in this region were so great that allowed them to attack the surrounding areas of Saqsin city located in the delta of the Volga river almost every year. The Yemek leader, who came from a famous Kipchak clan of Ilbari, had a splendid title of the 'Khan of Ilbari and Shah of the Yemeks' and, according to eastern sources, dominated over 10 thousand families. The Yemek history has only begun to reveal its secrets, but it is already clear today that they played an important role in international relations of the pre-Mongol time. Thus, thanks to their support, the Khwarazmshahs' state threw off the yoke of Qara Khitai and subdued the entire Transoxiana. Assisting the rebellious Emir, the Yemek Shah apparently sought to get a strong and obedient ally in the struggle for the unification of Desht-i Kipchak. According to Russian chronicles, a large detachment of the Yemeks headed by the Bulgarian Emir moved to the Great City using the shortest way, where it met a strong Russian army under the command of Vsevolod the Big Nest and concluded an alliance with him. As a result of further fighting, the allies were defeated. Russian princes concluded a peace treaty with the Bulgars and retreated, and the fate of the rebellious sultan remained unknown. In any way, this episode clearly shows, on the one hand, obvious contacts between the Yemeks and the Bulgar leaders, and on the other hand—their episodic involvement in the internal affairs of the Bulgarian state.

Another episode that characterises the Bulgars' participations in the political life of the Lower Volga Region and their allied relations with the Kipchaks and Yemeks, happened in 1229, when Mongol forces invaded the region. The Rusesessian chronicle reports that 'Saqsins and Polovtsians came to the Bulgars from the bottom before the Tatars; and the Bulgar guards came and fought with the Tatars near the river called Yaik' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 453]. So, it can be assumed that allied troops of the Bulgars, Saqsins and Yemeks were defeated in the Lower Volga Region by the Mongol army, who began the

conquest of the Trans-Volga Region. However, the conquest of the region did not go smoothly. In 1237–1240, there was a rebellion of the Yemeks under the leadership of the Bachman Khan, to suppress whom the Mongols were forced to use an army led by Möngke Khan. It is interesting that at the same time, Bayan and Jiku Emirs, who obviously coordinated their actions with Bachman, rebelled in Bulgaria. But this was the last episode of contacts between the Bulgars and the Kipchaks.

### **Military and Political Connections with Rus'**

Thanks to Russian chronicles, historians can, although episodically, but in sufficient detail, chronicle the relationships between Bulgarian Emirate and Rus'. The Volga River and the territory of the Oka-Sura interfluvium was the core of these trade and military relations. The struggle for control over the trade and these territories defined the foreign policy of these countries for nearly two centuries.

The way to the Volga Region was opened for Rus' since the final defeat of the Khazar Khaganate. According to fragmentary and vague information by Ibn Hawqal, the Ruses' people defeated the Bulgars and Burtases during the attack against Atil, but Russian chronicles, primarily the Tale of Past Years, tell nothing about this major military and diplomatic success, although describe Svyatoslav's campaign against Sarkel and Atil in detail. It might be that those historians, who doubt Svyatoslav's campaign along the Volga River and his victories over the Bulgars and other nations of the Volga Region, are right. The records provided by Ibn Hawqal are obviously a not correctly perceived compilation of various data, including the defeat of the Khazars, Svyatoslav's campaign against the Danube Bulgaria, and his war in the North Caucasus.

The first fact of a real military and diplomatic collision between the Bulgars and Kievan Rus' dates back to 985, when Vladimir Svyatoslavich 'went ... against the Bulgars with Dobrynya, his uncle, by boats, and the Torks came along the bank on horses: and defeated the Bulgars. Dobrynya told Vladimir: 'I have examined the prisoners; the matter is in the boots. They will not pay tribute to us, so let's

go to search for lapti-makers'. And Vladimir and the Bulgars concluded peace and swore an oath: there will be no peace between us only if stones start swimming, and hops sinking' [Tale of Past Years, 1950, p. 59]. Thus, the Principality of Kiev and Bulgaria concluded a peace treaty with equal rights - the fact of mutual recognition of the two states.

The relations between Bulgaria and Kievan Rus' developed quite successfully and in general, they were obviously quite peaceful and based on mutually beneficial trade along the Volga River.

The first records about the war for hegemony in the Middle Volga Region, which would subsequently unfold in all its force, dates back to 1088, when Russian chronicles briefly reported: 'That year, the Bulgars seized Murom' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 207; XV, p. 176; Priselkov, 1950, p. 165]. Neither the circumstances, nor the reasons, nor even the consequences of this conquest are known. However, its connection with the following military collisions is obvious. Most likely, the seizure of Murom by the Bulgars was an attempt to strengthen their influence in the Oka-Sura region and to stop the expansion of Kievan princes' power to the territories, the population of which paid tribute to the Bulgars. This event clearly indicates the limits of the Bulgars' influence in the region, which would further decrease in the following century. And the fact that Murom was restored and continued to develop in the future demonstrates that the Bulgars' attack on the Rusesian princes' position was not very successful. However, the struggle for Murom did not abate. In 1103, one of Mordvin 'princes' also attacked it and defeated Prince Yaroslav [Tale of Past Years, 1950, p. 185]. It can be assumed that this 'prince' leant on the latent or explicit support of the Bulgars. At least, subsequent events, especially those of the 20s of the 13th century, make this assumption very probable.

A new stage of relations between Bulgaria and Russian principalities began after the emergence of Vladimir-Suzdal principality, which began to carry out an active foreign policy and expand its hegemony to the entire Volga Region. This struggle was rather severe and uncompromising. It began in the first quarter of the 12th century and was caused by

Yuri Dolgoruky's desire to expand his principality in the Upper Volga Region. The Kipchaks were his allies. The wars of this decade began with the Bulgars' campaign against Suzdal in 1107: 'The Bulgarian army came to Suzdal, surrounded the city and did major harm to it, destroyed settlements, churchyards and killed many peasants. People living in the city were not able to resist their power, turned to the God and His Holy Mother with a prayer, confessed their sins, cried and remained in the city. And the all-merciful God, having heard their prayer and confession, and as He forgave the heathens in the ancient times, He saved those people from their troubles, blinded the Bulgarian army, and they left the city' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XXIV, p. 73]. This was obviously a successful campaign for the Bulgars, which demonstrated the vulnerability of the principality's first capital and showed the power balance in the Upper Volga Region.

Later, in 1117, the Kipchaks, Yuri Dolgoruky's allies, under the leadership of Aepa Khan, undertook a campaign against the Bulgars, but were stopped, and the Khan was killed. Yuri himself undertook a campaign against the Bulgars in 1120, 'and took many prisoners, and defeated their army' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 292; II, pp. 285–286]. After this, peace was likely established, which confirmed the approximate equality of the parties and lasted for nearly thirty years.

Peace in the Volga Region was maintained for a long time, and the mutually beneficial trade, which opened the way to the Rusessian market for eastern goods, expanded. However, the times were changing. As the Vladimir-Suzdal Rus' was strengthening, and its hegemony increasing among other Russian principalities, as well as when it began its expansion to the Middle Volga Region, the 'eastern question' started to be treated in another way. This striving for hegemony was especially clearly evident during the reign of Andrey Bogolyubsky and Vsevolod the Big Nest. They did not only implemented an aggressive offensive policy against Bulgaria, but also created an ideological justification of such an aggressive policy.

With their blessing texts were created, which were directed against Muslim Bulgars. This is seen especially clearly from the treatise 'Word of Idols', where the author, condemn-

ing superstition, belief in idols, and speaking against the remnants of paganism among people, however, furiously opposed the Volga Bulgars, who, in his words, were the followers of the 'impious Bokhmit' (that is Muhammad). The author was undoubtedly familiar with Islam, but his description of Muslim Bulgar customs contains such offensive insinuations that cannot but cause disgust in any normal person, and their religion is represented in quite false colours, devoid of any real traits. This interpretation of the Islamic religious practice, which was later included in some chronicles, excluded the Bulgars from 'the human race' and was aimed at justifying the Christians' duty to lead a war against the 'devil-incited' Muslims under the banner of a cross. The negative representation of 'Saracens' contributed to the development of Russian Christian self-consciousness and played an important role in the ideology and policy of the ruling elite of Vladimir Rus'. This is most expressively evidenced by introduction in Rus' at the beginning of the 1170s of a cult of the Mother of God, especially the icon of the Theotokos of Vladimir, which was directed against the Bulgars as a 'weapon to be used against our enemies and opening fire on our opponents, who want war with us' [Tale, 1878, p. 23]. No wonder that the main miracles worked by the Mother of God were during the Rusessian campaigns against Bulgaria, and the most important 'miracle of the Holy Mother of God', namely assistance in defeating the Bulgars and taking their city of Bryakhimov in 1164 was reflected in a special story 'The Legend about the Miracles of the Theotokos of Vladimir', which was partially included in the Vladimir Grand Prince's Chronicles written by Andrey Bogolyubsky. Later, the chronicles were constantly updated with new stories about the miracles of the Mother of God, but their anti-Bulgarian and anti-Islamic orientation remained unchanged.

The increased anti-Bulgarian activity of Vladimir-Suzdal princes made Bulgarian Emirs seek allies. Izyaslav, the Grand Prince of Galich and Kiev, was one of such allies, who led an exhausting struggle for the Kiev throne with Yuri Dolgoruky. In this struggle, he relied on the support of the Hungarian king and some Polish princes. There is no convincing evidence of the existence of a Kiev-Bulgaria

union in sources, but some military and political events show that even if there was no such a union, the Bulgars actually acted in common interests with it. Thus, during Yuri Dolgoruky's general attack on Izyaslav in 1152, which resulted in his defeat, the Bulgars undertook a great campaign against Yaroslavl. The chronicles describe this event as follows: 'This year, Bulgars came to Yaroslavl along the Volga River without any notice and surrounded the town on boats, as the town was very small, and the people living in the town suffered from thirst and hunger, and no one was allowed to leave the town to inform Rostov residents. One young man from Yaroslavl left the town in the night, crossed the river, got to Rostov and told them that the Bulgars had come. Rostov warriors came and defeated the Bulgars' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XXIV, p. 77]. Even if the information about the final victory of Rostov warriors is not a free interpretation by the chronicler of a local success of the Rusessian troops, as was often the case, but a reflection of a real military victory, the Bulgars' success is evident. They showed the ability to act synchronously or even in alliance with other anti-Suzdal forces, as well as their military power. The lesson for Russians was not in vain. To prevent such Bulgarian invasions, they erected the Gorodets fortress on the Volga River near the mouth of the Oka River, which actually demonstrates that no one paid much attention to the Rostov local victory over Bulgarian rearguard detachments. Military strategists from Vladimir required more serious guarantees that similar invasions would not repeat in the future. At the same time, these events showed that the Bulgars were quite serious opponents and that significant military forces were needed to defeat them. However, the war for the Kiev throne did not allow Russian princes to concentrate considerable military forces on the Volga River.

Changes occurred during the reign of Andrey Bogolyubsky, the son of Yuri Dolgoruky, when the Rusessian pressure on the east sharply increased. In 1164, a large united army under the command of Prince Andrey himself stormed and burned the large city of Bryakhimov on the Kama River and several small towns: 'In 6672... That year, Prince Andrey attacked the Bulgars with his son Izyaslav and

his brother Yaroslav, and Murom Prince Yuri, and the God and the Holy Mother helped them, killed many Bulgars and caught their flags, and the Bulgarian Prince escaped and fled to the Great City with a small družina. Prince Andrey returned with a victory, having killed many vile Bulgars... and went to seize their glorious city of Bryakhimov, and burn many other towns' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, pp. 352–353; XV, p. 235]. This was the first really big success of the Rusessian troops over the Bulgars. Developing this success in the winter of 1172, the sons of this Grand Prince and their allies from Murom and Ryazan inflicted a sudden blow - their armies invaded Bulgaria. But this raid, yielding to the campaign against Bryakhimov in terms of its scale, scarcely ended in a complete defeat of the Rusessian troops. Having ravaged several villages and towns, princes learned that the Bulgars had come to their senses after the sudden invasion and were going to attack them with an army. The allies turned their backs. According to the participants of the campaign, who managed to cross the Oka River, only a miracle saved them. This campaign caused the displeasure of Vladimir-Suzdal nobility, - 'This way was not pleasant for those people, because bad weather hampers to defeat the Bulgars in winter' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 346]. And only the death (or rather, a well-planned murder) of Andrey, who stopped taking into account not only his neighbours, but also his own boyars, saved the Bulgars from new ruinous campaigns. No wonder that one of the chronocles directly writes that Prince Andrey was killed by conspirators, including his own wife, who 'was Bulgarian by origin and nursed a grievance against him', as her husband 'was much at war with the Bulgars... and did much evil to Bulgaria' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XV, pp. 250–251].

The new Prince Vsevolod the Big Nest continued the policy of offensives against Bulgaria. In 1183, 1185 and 1205, his regiments invaded its territories. The campaign of 1183 was especially large. Under the command of Vsevolod, it involved almost all the strongest Russian principalities. Along with the troops of the prince of Vladimir, the campaign also involved družinas of his nephew Vsevolod Izyaslav Glebovich from Pereyasavl Yuzhny,

Mstislav Davydovich from Smolensk, Vladimir Muromsky, the four Gleboviches brothers from Ryazan and even Vladimir Svyatoslavich from Kiev. Trans-Volga Yemek Kipchaks joined as allies of the prince of Vladimir. The task of the campaign was unprecedented—to capture Bilyar, the Bulgarian capital. For the first time, Russian princes decided to undertake not just a ravenous raid, but a thought-out action to capture the political center of Bulgaria.

As a result of rapid movement, Russian troops reached the walls of Bilyar, but they failed in an assault against the city's fortifications. As a result of nearly two weeks of fighting, the parties concluded a peace treaty, which meant a defeat for the prince of Vladimir, as it fixed the existing situation and provided no advantages to him. After that, Vsevolod, the Grand Prince of Vladimir, undertook only small raids on Bulgarian outskirts (1185 and 1205) and fought with Mordvin 'princes'. Evidence of the diplomatic activity towards the eastern direction during the reign of Prince Vsevolod the Big Nest can be seen in the discovery of a lead seal containing his stamp, which was found during excavations in the ancient settlement of Bilyar, at the estate of a Russian merchant, craftsman and, likely, a diplomat.

In the first third of the 13th century, before the Mongol invasion, the confrontation between Volga Bulgaria and Vladimir-Suzdal principality continued at the most important trade routes of the Volga region. A new outbreak of military activity occurred in 1219–1220. According to Russian chronicles, the Bulgars were the initiators; they moved up the Kama river, seized Ustyug, and besieged Unzha, but did not manage to capture the latter. In response, Yuri, a prince from Vladimir, sent an army led by Svyatoslav, the brother of the grand prince. It was accompanied by regiments from Vladimir, Rostov and Murom, which went down the Volga and Oka rivers 'by boat' and landed 'in front of Oshel'. They were met by the Bulgars 'on horses with their prince, who placed their regiment on the field; while Svyatoslav immediately moved towards the city' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XXV, p. 116]. The Bulgars, 'having shot arrows, ran into the city and closed it' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XV, p. 330]. After the first success, Russian troops began to storm the outer line of fortifi-

cations: 'and the battle between them was very severe; they hewed the fence, cut it and burned it, and they ran... to the city'. Soon after that, the besiegers 'surrounded the city from all sides and burned it, and the smoke was very heavy, and the wind blew it from the city', and then 'they rushed to the city, cut the fence from that side as well, and burned it'. A terrible fire began in the city, 'and Svyatoslav was standing until the entire city burned in full. They seized the city of Oshel on June 15' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XXV, pp. 116–117]. At the same time, another detachment, an Ustyug regiment, went down the Kama river and sacked several towns in the Lower Cis-Kama region. Once united, the two armies moved by ship back to Gorodets. The campaign caused serious damage to the Bulgars and showed that the country was vulnerable to attack from two sides. It is apparent that due to certain circumstances, the Bulgars were unable to organize a successful resistance to the military campaigns of the prince of Vladimir.

Inspired by this success, in the next year the Grand Prince Yuri Vsevolodovich decided 'to undertake campaigns against the Bulgars himself; the Bulgars sent their ambassadors with a supplication and a petition to spare them and let them go'. While preparing for the campaign, 'the Bulgarian ambassadors came to him with a petition; but he did not listen to them and let them go without promising peace'. The Bulgars sent their ambassadors for the third time 'with many gifts and a petition, and the (Prince) granted their petition, accepted the gifts from them, and established peace as it was earlier, during the reign of his father Vsevolod and his grandfather Yuri Vladimirovich' [Ibid]. Thus, major military actions led to the recovery of the order that existed before the beginning of the struggle, which suggests that although the Bulgars were defeated, this was a local defeat which could not result in a radical shift in the interstate confrontation. In addition, the Grand Prince Yuri himself was bound by various alliance obligations to other princes in the major war unfolding in southern Rus'. He obviously understood that in spite of this success, the Bulgar forces were significant and that he could not get involved in a big war, since his forces could be needed by his allies in the south. As a result, a peace treaty was

concluded, which stopped the unfolding war and gave Yuri a free hand to intervene in the struggle for the Kiev throne.

However, though it was not an open war any longer, the confrontation between Vladimir-Suzdal Rus' and Bulgaria continued in other forms and by other means. Ideological confrontation became one of such forms. It flared up because of a Christian merchant named Abraham, who was killed in the Great City by those who spoke 'another language, not Russian'. He was allegedly tortured by the Bulgars for refusing to convert to Islam. After his death, Abraham was buried in a Christian cemetery in the Great City, but a campaign for his recognition as a 'new martyr' for the faith flared up in Vladimir, and there were calls to rebury him there. A year later, in 1230, 'the new martyr for Christ Abraham was transferred from the Bulgarian land to the glorious city of Vladimir', where he was immediately canonized and declared a saint [Complete collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 352; XV, p. 86]. The anti-Bulgarian orientation of this canonization and the deployed political campaign was obvious. It is possible that this was a form of ideological pressure on the Bulgars in the context of a 'local conflict' unfolding in Mordovia.

The territories of the Mordvinian tribes were long a stumbling block between Bulgaria and north-eastern Russian principalities. Bulgaria, which had subordinated the Burtases in the Upper Sura region, established its influence over vast lands of the Oka-Sura interfluvium inhabited by various Mordvinian communities. Bulgaria received significant volumes of various products therefrom—honey, wax, and furs. According to al-Gharnati, the Mordvinians were strongly involved in Bulgaria's political activities in the 12th century.

Being on the stage of forming a class society, various Mordvinian tribal alliances were forced to establish vassal relationships partially with Russian principalities, and partially with Bulgaria. The emerging historical situation predetermined the behaviour of Mordvinian princes from the very beginning. At the beginning of the 13th century, some Mordvin communities were united by 'Prince' Purgaz. Based on the study of geographical place names, historians supposedly localize 'Purgaz's Volost' or 'Purgaz's Rus'' to the basins of the Sura, Alatyr,

and Pyana rivers and the middle reaches of the Moksha river. 'Purgaz's Rus' was probably named so because its 'prince' was a vassal of Rus'. However, he later withdrew his oath and became an ally of Volga Bulgaria, according to Russian chronicles. During the 1220s, Purgaz successfully fought not only against Vladimir and Murom princes, but also against another Mordvinian association which was an ally of the Ruses—the 'Puresh's Volost'. In 1227, Sviatoslav undertook a campaign against it on the orders of his father, Grand Duke Vsevolod the Big Nest, but he did not manage to defeat it. Significant military operations unfolded in the Mordvinian lands in 1229, when Purgaz, acting in alliance with a Bulgarian detachment, attacked his rival in the struggle for hegemony in this part of Prince Puresh's Mordvinian lands and apparently defeated or even killed him. The ally was supported by Yuri, the Grand Prince of Vladimir, his brother Yaroslav, Vasilko and Vsevolod Konstantinoviches, as well as the Murom Prince Yuri Davidovich. They invaded Purgaz's Volost and ruined it, forcing Purgaz to flee. Having pulled himself up, Purgaz besieged Nizhny Novgorod with his troops and burned surrounding monasteries and churches in the same year. But later, Puresh's son, together with the Kipchaks, who were acting in alliance with the Vladimir princes as always, defeated Purgaz, once again forcing him to flee. These events show that the Bulgars, skillfully stirring up conflicts on the Ruses' borders and drawing Vladimir and Murom troops into a struggle against Purgaz, averted the threat to their possessions from the Upper Sura region. The successful struggle of Purgaz, who was supported by Bulgarian troops, distracted military forces of the Vladimir-Suzdal principality from plans to conquer the territories of the Oka-Sura interfluvium.

On the whole, a parity of military forces had been established in the Middle Volga Region by the end of the 1220s. Recognition of this fact resulted in the conclusion of a new peace treaty in 1229 between Vladimir-Suzdal Rus' and Volga Bulgaria, which was initiated by the Bulgars. The chronicle says as follows: 'That year,

the Bulgars submitted to the Grand Prince Yuri a petition for peace for 6 years, and he established peace and promised to maintain it' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XV, p. 86]. This means that peace was concluded on the condition of maintaining the current situation; there was an exchange of prisoners and all grievances and complaints were forgotten. In the context of the recent attack of Vladimir princes and an increase in their expansion in the Oka river basin, the conclusion of a peace treaty can be regarded as a significant success for the Bulgars. If we, following A. Khalikov, assume that the purpose of the Bulgars' peace proposals lied in establishing a union and concluding an agreement on mutual military help in the face of a potential future attack by Mongol troops, whose attacks had already been experienced by the Bulgars in the Lower Volga Region, the conditions of the treaty can be called loyal but clearly insufficient. They did not manage to establish a union. Moreover, Vladimir clearly had enough forces ready to ignite a new war using the 'crusade' ideology. Nevertheless, describing this peace treaty, V. Pashuto, a historian of Ancient Rus' foreign policy, noted: 'The Gorodets peace could hardly solve all the problems. The "Word on the Ruin of the Rusessian Land" contains an expressive allusion to the fact that the days when the peoples of the Volga region—the Cheremises, Mordvinians, Burtases and Vyada, were submissively involved in wild-honey farming for the benefit of Vladimir Monomakh, and then of Yuri Dolgoruky and Vsevolod Yurievich, had already passed by the 30s of the 13th century' [Pashuto, 1968, p. 274].

This peace was not interrupted until the Mongolian invasion, when both Bulgaria and Rus' were wiped off the political map by the troops of Batu Khan.

In general, it can be said that the relationship between the two countries reflects the complex and restless environment which had developed on the border of the Christian and Islamic civilizations. There was mutually beneficial trade and mutual sharing of ideas, but a tribute was also paid to severe ideological and military confrontation.

Section 6

# **Finno-Ugric Tribes and Volga Bulgaria**



## CHAPTER 1

### Perm and Ugric peoples

#### 1. Population of the Vyatka-Kama region during the Bulgarian period

*Sergey Belykh, Leonid Makarov*

##### **The basin of the Cheptsä River in the Bulgar era**

According to the view dominant in archaeology today, the upper and middle streams of the Cheptsä River (the left tributary of the Vyatka River) had been inhabited by an agricultural population at the end of the fifth-first half of the sixth century—that is, before the Bulgar tribes appeared on the Middle Volga Region. A. Ivanov has recently suggested that settlement of the Upper Cheptsä could have begun even earlier, at the end of the fourth or in the first half of the fifth century. [Ivanov, 1999, pp. 36, 52]

It is generally accepted to distinguish two successive and genetically related, but still different, cultures in the mediaeval archaeology of the Cheptsä basin: *the Polom*, from the end of the fifth to the first half of the ninth century, and *the Chepets*, dated from the latter half of the ninth to the thirteenth (fifteenth) century. [Gening, 1990, p. 26; Semenov, 1982; Ivanova, 1994; Goldina, 1999, p. 342; Rozenfeldt, 1987, et al.] By now, over 200 sites pertaining to these cultures have been discovered, though we should note that the extent of each one's investigation is different.

In the past few years, Ivanov has provided detailed arguments and established a perspective according to which it is more appropriate to speak not of two, but of one culture. In his view, the Polom and Chepets cultures described above should be seen as two chronological stages of a single culture of the Upper and Middle Cheptsä in the fifth to eighth centuries, a suggestion for whose name is *Polom-Chepets*. There are fairly strong reasons for this conclusion. For example, we may definitely say that

there is no strict chronological border between the Polom and Chepets cultures; a significant number of Polom and Chepets sites functioned during both eras; and any data which would be indicative of a cardinal change of population in the late Polom or early Chepets eras is absent. Quite the opposite, sites pertaining to the Polom and Chepets cultures demonstrate chronological, territorial, and cultural continuity, and thus may indeed be regarded as two large chronological stages of one culture [Ivanov, 1998, pp. 7, 14–15].

In the opinion of Ivanov and other researchers, from the very beginning, several cultural components of eastern and southeastern Cis-Kama—origin contributed to the settlement of the Cheptsä basin: Late Glyadenovsky, Kharinsky, and Mazuninsky. Migrants penetrated into the upper stream of the Cheptsä River from the basin of the Middle and Upper Kama through its right tributaries (the rivers Siva, Ochyor, and others) [Ivanov, 1998, p. 42]. R. Goldina suggests that migrants got to the Upper Cheptsä right from the Kama's upper reaches (so-called Zyuzdino, the present-day Afanasyevo region in the Kirov region). [Goldina, 1987, pp. 17–18; 1999, p. 364] In the middle to the latter half of the sixth century, the Late Azelinsky (western) component, which had penetrated into the Upper Cheptsä from the Vyatka and the lower reaches of the Cheptsä, joined the Cis-Kama migrants. Archaeological materials of the Cheptsä basin from the fifth to seventh centuries vividly demonstrate the cultural heterogeneity and mixture of the population. In this period, there had still appeared no distinctly Chepets element of culture and, possibly, the ethnic community itself of the Chepets population was forming. The culture's earliest known



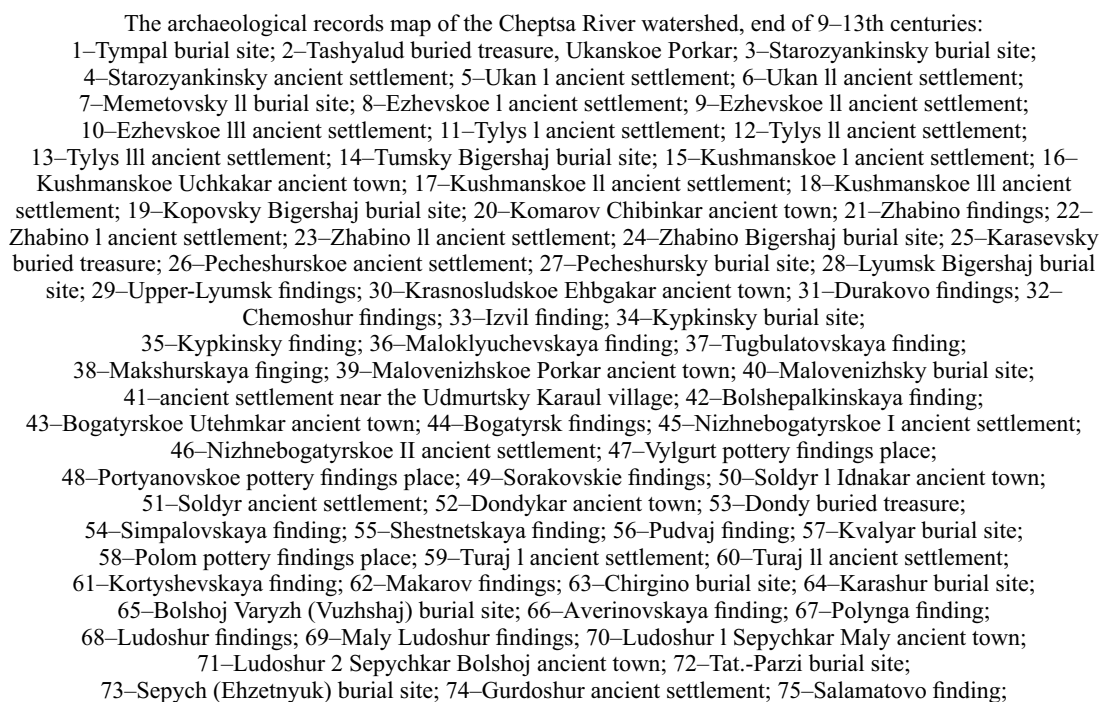
sites are concentrated by two groups in the upper reaches of the Cheptsá on its right bank: in the area of the village of Varna, Debyosky district, and the village of Polom, Kezsky district, Udmurtia. The relative scarcity of Chepets archaeological materials from the fifth to seventh centuries does not allow a sufficiently complete characterization of the population's economic structure. We may tentatively say that slash-and-burn farming and cattle-breeding were the basic occupations of the Chepets population. Foraging, hunting, and fishing played a substantial role in the economy. The Polom-Chepets population was familiar with the iron and non-ferrous industries, production of moulded ceramics, rough-hewing of bones and wood, weaving, spinning and, most probably, beekeeping.

In the eighth and ninth centuries, the Chepets population grew significantly, which is reflected first in a higher amount of sites in the areas of the original settlement (on the Upper Cheptsá), and second, in the gradual expansion of the population down the river. Thus, this period saw the beginning of the active development of the Middle Cheptsá. The largest Polom-Chepets towns, with the strongest cultural element, were established. They were mostly situated along the Middle Cheptsá: Guryakar, Vesyakar, Idnakar, Dondykar, Uchkar, and others. The basis of the Chepets economic structure in this period continued to be slash-and-burn agriculture. Multiple discoveries of bones of domestic animals in the sites of this period are evidence of developed domestic livestock breeding. The main domestic animals were horses and large horned cattle. It seems that the breeding of goats, sheep, and especially pigs was not very popular on the Cheptsá River, because far fewer bones of these animals have been discovered. Fairly developed agriculture and cattle breeding provided a stable existence for the society and sustained population growth. Apart from these two principal economic activities, foraging, hunting, and fishing continued to play a significant role in the life of Chepets society. A gradual intensification of the role of the fur industry is evident. In excavated settlements of the time, bones of fur animals on average amount to fifty to seventy

percent of all wild animal bones. The spread in the eighth and ninth centuries of special blunt-pointed arrowheads is also connected with the development of the fur industry [Ibid., p. 64].

The period between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries may be seen as the golden age of the Polom-Chepets culture. The centre of Chepets settlement then became the Middle Cheptsá, the location of the biggest concentration of archaeological sites, including the largest towns (see above). Archaeologists see these ancient towns as territorial and craft-trade centres of the region which, in times of military threats, became shelters and defensive centres for the local population, though we should not miss another evident function: that of a kind of trading post, centres of the collection of fur, which served as a means of exchange and, possibly, tribute. Around each of these ancient towns were grouped non-fortified ancient settlements. Besides the middle region of the Cheptsá itself, its middle tributaries both on the right and left banks were also actively developed. Notable changes occurred in the Chepets economic structure in the tenth–thirteenth centuries. Along with slash-and-burn agriculture, tillage on the deforested lands started playing an increasing role. The Chepets in the tenth to thirteenth centuries had fairly developed pastoral agriculture. Horses and cattle dominated the herds. Non-ferrous and iron metallurgy achieved significant success. It has been suggested that the products of foundries and forges not also responded to local demand, but could also be objects of trade and barter. Local production of jewellery from precious metals developed in the towns: so-called Glazov silver torcs, hoop earrings, temporal pendants decorated with granulation and filigree, etc.

The most important economic activity in the tenth to thirteenth centuries was hunting and trapping, because furs were the main product which the Chepets offered in trade with their neighbours. Naturally, the main consumers of Chepets furs were Volga Bulgars, though we cannot exclude the possibility that furs came to Bulgar territory through the collection of tribute, in which trading posts in Chepets towns must have played an important role. Osteological material from the settlements dating



- 76–Soldyr Chemshaj burial site; 77–Soldyr II Sabanchikar ancient town;  
 78–Adamovka Bigershaj burial site; 79–Adamovka I ancient settlement; 80–Adamovka II ancient settlement;  
 81–Kachkashur ancient settlement; 82–Kachkashur findings; 83–Kachkashur burial site;  
 84–Zabolotnaya Gopul Gurez ancient town; 85–Vesyakar Bigershaj burial site; 86–Vesyakar ancient town; 87–  
 Vesyakar ancient settlement; 88–Omutnitsa burial site; 89–Omutnitsa ancient settlement;  
 90–Podbornovo Vuzhshaj burial site; 91–Podbornovo ancient settlement;  
 92–Gordino Izdyn ancient settlement; 93–Gordino finding; 94–Gordino Guryakar ancient town;  
 95–Gordino rock; 96–Pochtoshurskaya finding; 97–Yagoshur Bigershaj burial site;  
 98–Yagoshur findings; 99–Yagoshur (Kestym) buried treasure; 100–Balezino Uzyakar ancient town;  
 101–Balezino pottery findings place; 102–Burino buried treasure; 103–Sedyar findings;  
 104–Sazonovo finding; 105–Korshunovo findings; 106–Dyrpa burial site; 107–Polom burial site;  
 108–Kushya burial site; 109–Lesagurt buried treasure; 110–Bajgurez pottery findings place;  
 111–Bogdanovsky buried treasure; 112–Malomedlinskaya finding;  
 113–Kuzmino burial site [Finno-Ugrians of the Voga Region and Cis-Urals in the Middle Ages, 1999, p. 213]

to this period serve as direct evidence of the predatory hunting of fur-bearing animals, especially beavers, because a large part of the bone remnants came from pre-pubescent animals. [Ivanov, 1998, p. 122] A likely explanation is not ordinary trade, but rather extreme need, possibly in order to render tribute.

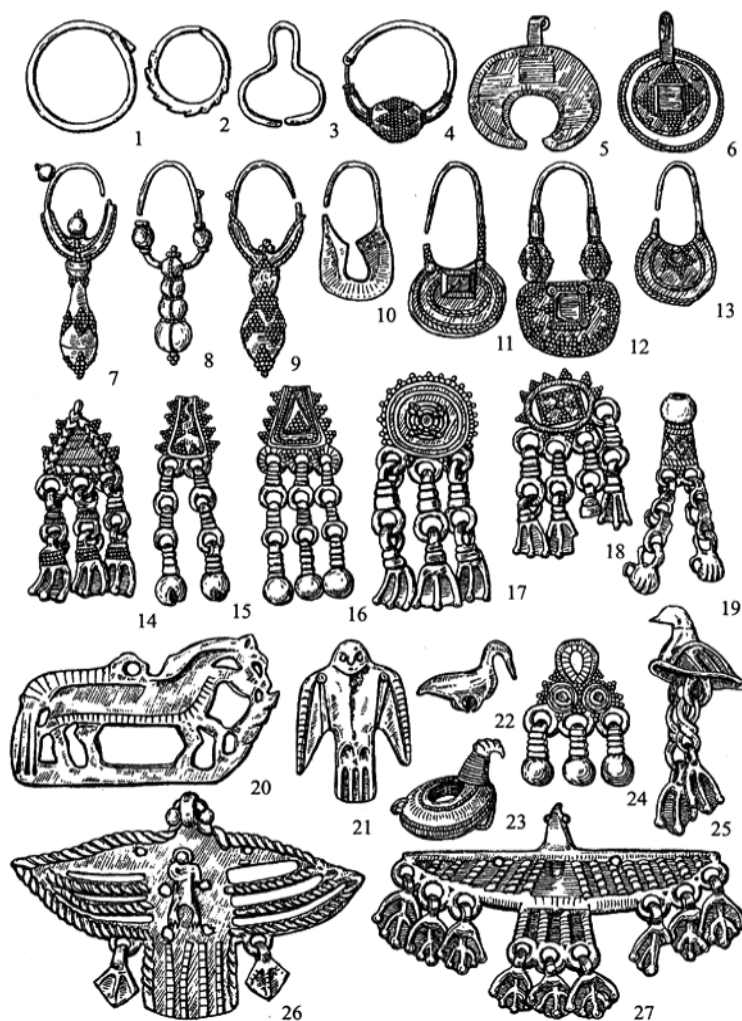
Archaeological materials show that in the tenth to thirteenth centuries, the Chepets were actively involved in trade and other economic relations with their neighbours. The main trading partner of the Chepets in that period were the Volga Bulgars. A considerable number of Bulgar-produced items have been discovered in contemporary archaeological sites of the Chepts River basin. Moreover, products of Arabian, Persian, Byzantine, and other non-Bulgar sources comprised a notable part of the Bulgar exports to the Chepts River basin, so the Volga Bulgars were the most important trade link between Eastern countries and Europe and Eastern Europe's forest zone.

A large quantity of copper and silver coins minted in Middle Asia, Persia, and Arab East were found in material from the tenth to thirteenth centuries. Byzantine and Eastern silver dishes and jewellery with precious stones appeared in the Chepts River basin in the same period [Ibid., pp. 128–129]. The Bulgar imports themselves in the archaeological material found on the Chepts were works of silver jewellery, often gilded, which were richly decorated with filigree and granulation [Ibid, pp. 131–133]. The discovery of such a piece in Idnakar in a damaged foundry mould [Ivanova, 1992, p. 75], as well as a foundry mould for produc-

ing Bulgar-style pendants in the ancient town of Kushman [Ivanova, 1976, pp. 105–106], is reliable evidence that some Bulgar-style jewels could have been produced along the Chepts.

Among other imported products from the Volga Bulgars, or carried through their lands, which appeared along the Chepts in the tenth to thirteenth centuries were locks and their corresponding keys, multiple beads of Middle Eastern, Middle Asian, Byzantine, Old Russian, and other origin [Ivanova, 1992, pp. 48, 72], expensive Byzantine and Middle Asian cloth, and other products [Ibid.; Ivanov, 1998, pp. 135–136].

It is noteworthy that a significant amount of Bulgar ceramics were discovered in the Chepets settlements of the tenth to thirteenth centuries, along with local moulded crockery. The quantity of Bulgar ceramics in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century layers of the larger towns, such as Idnakar and Guryakar, was especially high. For example, in the Idnakar layers, Bulgar ceramics amounted to 33.7% of all the crockery discovered. [Ivanova, 1990, pp. 118–120] These large numbers allowed some researchers to suggest that the Bulgar population could have lived in the larger Chepets towns, either temporarily or even permanently [Ivanov, 1998, p. 140]. Taking into account the sharp increase in the capture of fur animals near the Chepts, it would be logical to suggest that the main part of the Bulgars living along the Chepts consisted of merchants, and possibly tax collectors, who founded their own trading posts on the purchase and the collection of furs and other local goods.



Metal ornaments complex of Chepetsk records: 1, 4, 7–13, 20–23–silver; 2, 3, 5, 6, 14–19, 24–27–bronze. Archaeological sites: Kuzmino burial site (1–6, 10–13, 19, 24–27); Varni burial site (7); Soldyr burial site (8); Malovenizhsky burial site (9); Kypkinsky burial site (15); Omutnitsa burial site (14, 16, 17); Guryakar ancient town (18); Idnakar ancient town (20); Uchkakar ancient town (21); Kachkashur burial site (22, 23)

[Finno-Ugrians of the Volga Region and the Cis-Urals in the Middle Ages, 1999, p. 227]

On the whole, there are reasons to believe that in the tenth to thirteenth centuries, the Upper and Middle Cheptsy, along with most of the Kama-Vyatka area, was within the sphere of economic, cultural, and political domination by the Volga Bulgars, and was probably treated as the northern periphery of their state: a commodity appendage, first and foremost a fur supplier. Connections between the Chepets and the Volga Bulgars were so firm that they did not end even after the Mongols destroyed the Bulgar state. Finds of Bulgar items in fourteenth-

century Chepets sites [Ibid., p. 141], as well as the discovery of a Bulgar gravestone, dated to 1323, with an Islamic epitaph in the village of Gordino (Guryakar) in the Balezinsky district of Udmurtia, affirm this.

The second most intensive cultural and economic influence upon the Chepets population was that of the Russified Slavs. The earliest Old Russian items found in material excavated from the Cheptsy basin date to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which conforms to information in written sources about

the beginning of the trade and political expansion of Veliky Novgorod and Old Russian principalities to Povyechegodye, the Cis-Kama region, and the Urals. The first Old Russian settlements on the Middle Vyatka appeared at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Materials from these centuries found in the Chepets sites contain a sharply higher number of Old Russian objects. The main imports were jewellery, cloth, various kitchen utensils, etc. [Ibid, p. 166]. These items were given to the population of the Cheptsas in exchange for local goods, primarily furs. The character of relations between the Cheptsas inhabitants and the Vyatka River Slavs at the end of the twelfth and into the thirteenth century likely fluctuated from peaceful trade connections to raids by the Vyatka Slavs.

At the same time, the discovery at Cheptsas sites of Old Russian ceramics (as at Idnakar) and Slavic pagan and Orthodox cult items may, according to L. Makarov, bear witness to the appearance of Slavic migrants immediately within the Cheptsas basin. These findings attest that peaceful contacts prevailed between the Slavs and the Chepets. [Makarov, 1999, pp. 115–116; 2001a, pp. 22–38]

In the thirteenth century, the majority of Chepets sites ceased to operate. Almost all researchers see the reasons for this in the dramatic and tragic events which befell the nations and states of Eastern Europe at the time of the Mongol invasion and the foundation of the Golden Horde. At the same time, different researchers see the specific reasons of the Chepets culture's death differently. R. Goldina, for example, suggests that Chepets ancient towns and other settlements were swept away by the Tatar-Mongol invasion itself [Goldina, 1999, p. 374], which is almost completely unproven. A. Ivanov thinks that a possible reason for the Chepets culture's collapse was the Vyatka campaigns in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries [Ivanov, 1998, p. 170]. However, one must note that the period of the Chepets culture's decline strictly coincides with the time of the Volga Bulgar state's destruction by the Mongols. The fall of this economic and political centre, connections with which were of the utmost importance and probably formed the

basis for the development of the Chepets towns, could and must have led to their collapse.

For Goldina, the part of the Chepets population who remained there after the invasion either left the Cheptsas basin or moved to the Upper Kama (to Zyuzdino area). At the same time, she finds it likely that some of the Chepets did not leave the territory, but changed their type of settlement, dispersing in small groups into more distant areas of the Cheptsas basin [Goldina, 1999, pp. 374–375]. Indeed, some population outflow from the Middle and Upper Cheptsas to other areas in the 13th century cannot be excluded. However, it can also be suggested that at least some part of the bearers of the Polom-Chepets archaeological culture did not leave the Cheptsas basin, but abandoned former towns and other permanent settlements, which had become too easy a target for invaders and robbers since the stabilizing Bulgar power was absent. We may assume that after their dispersal, inhabitants of the Upper and Middle Cheptsas started living in small groups scattered around more distant and secluded areas of the Cheptsas River basin. Slash-and-burn agriculture was their main economic occupation, and therefore they should have often moved from one area to another, constantly changing the places of their farmlands and settlements.

The end of the bulk of the Chepets sites in the thirteenth century was thus a consequence of the destruction of the Volga-Urals area and, first and foremost, of the Volga Bulgar state by the Mongol invasion. The fall of the Volga Bulgar state marked the end of political stability in the Volga-Urals region, because this state was in fact an important political, economic, and cultural centre of the region, whose existence and wealth provided stable development of the region as a whole. Indicative of this is the fact that the Chepets culture reached its golden age in the exact period of the rise of the Volga Bulgar state—that is, in the thirteenth century, and ceased to exist almost simultaneously with the state's fall.

The question of the ethnic affiliation of the Polom-Chepets population deserves special attention. Although it is still controversial, it can be said that most researchers involved in the study of the mediaeval archaeology of the Ka-



Different versions of reconstructed costumes based on materials from Chepetsk burial sites:

A—Kuzmino, grave 91; B—Kuzmino, grave 133; C—Soldyr, grave 13

[Finno-Ugrians of the Volga Region and the Cis-Urals in the Middle Ages, 1999, p. 230]

ma-Vyatka region are inclined to define the ethnic affiliation of bearers of the Polom-Chepets archaeological culture as Permian. That is, in the linguistic and ethnic spheres, they observe the Polom-Chepets as related or possibly directly connected to the present-day Udmurts and Komi [Gening, 1967; Goldina, 1987; 1999; Semenov, 1989; Ivanova, 1989; 1994 et seq.]. The hypothesis proposed by A. Khalikov about the 'Old Turkic' ethnic affiliation of bearers of the Polom and Lomovaton cultures [Khalikov, 1989, p. 48] did not find support amongst most of his colleagues due to lack of factual evidence [Belykh, 2002, pp. 35–36]

It is necessary to note especially that a reliable ethnic identification of bearers of one or another archaeological culture based only upon archaeological materials is usually difficult and, sometimes, simply impossible. More convincing usually are the results of an investigation of various regions' ethnic histories and the ethnic affiliation of diverse archaeological cultures based upon an integrated approach, with the use of data, conclusions, and developments of several disciplines: archaeology, linguistics, ethnology, physical anthropology, etc. Such an investigation of some aspects of the Volga-Urals' ethnic history, which touched on the ethnic identification of the Polom-Chepets population, has recently been carried out by S. Belykh [1999; Belykh, 2002].

Based on an integrated analysis of materials and conclusions from archaeology, comparative historical linguistics, and linguistic palaeontology, Belykh placed the Permians' ancestral home in the Middle Cis-Kama region, and came to the conclusion that among the archaeological cultures formed in the Cis-Kama region in the post-Ananyin period, the Glyadenov culture of the Middle and Upper Cis-Kama (third century BC-fifth century AD) may most probably be related to the *community of the Endo-Permians*,—that is, the direct linguistic and ethnic ancestors of the present-day Udmurt and Komi people. *Additionally, the Polom culture* (on the Cheptsá River), *the Lomovaton culture* (on the upper Kama River), and *the Nevolino culture* (in the basin of the Sylva River) of the fifth to ninth centuries *may be genetically related to or have originated from* the Endo-Perm-

ians. The proximity of the Polom, Lomovaton, and Nevolino cultures, along with some data of Permian linguistics, allows us to conclude that the proto-Permian ethnic-language community had not yet collapsed during the Polom-Lomovaton era. Nevertheless, it is possible and even likely that the beginning of the ethnocultural and language differentiation of various parts of the proto-Permian group began in that period, caused by gradual widening of the territory of the Endo-Permians' settlement, as well as their contacts with various neighbouring ethnic groups and diverse sub- and superstratum components which took part in the formation of different proto-Permian tribal groups.

With the arrival of the Old Bulgars to the Middle Volga region and further development of the first-ever state formation in the region—the Volga Bulgar state—extremely important events occurred for the Cis-Kama Permians, which had an impact upon their further destiny. From the eighth to the tenth centuries, many groups of the Permians migrated far from their historical homeland. Evidently, it was then that a part of the Endo-Permians moved to the Vycheġda basin and some adjacent areas, where, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the culture of Vycheġod Perm (the Vym archaeological culture) took shape. This part of the proto-Permian population later served as a basis for formation of the Komi-Zyrians. Another part of the Endo-Permian tribal groups, possibly under Bulgar pressure or other influence, moved to the Lower Kama and the Lower and Middle Vyatka rivers. The mixture and multi-century co-operation between this part of the Endo-Permians and the local post-Azelin and other populations resulted in the formation of the Udmurt people. The Endo-Permians who remained on the Upper Kama and created the Rodanovo archaeological culture in the tenth to fifteenth centuries served as the foundation of the Komi-Permyak people.

It follows to suggest that the descendants of the Polom-Chepets played a significant role in the formation of the Udmurt nationality, and especially in its northern (Chepets) sub-ethnic group. Otherwise, it is hard to explain why, almost before the turn of the twentieth century, heroic legends about the knights Dondy, Idna,

Gouria, Vessia, and others were widely spread among the northern Udmurts. These heroes' names were directly connected to names of the villages near to which mediaeval archaeological sites of the Polom-Chepets period—Dondykar, Idnakar, Guryakar, Vasyakar, etc., were discovered.

At the same time, it is important to note that it is wrong to call the Chepets of the fifth to thirteenth centuries the Udmurts, as some researchers do. Firstly, we do not know the name of this population and do not know whether they called themselves Udmurts. Secondly, there is a significant chronological gap between the end of Chepets culture (the thirteenth century) and the first written mentions of Udmurts on the Cheptsá (the sixteenth century)—circa 300 years. The gap is poorly filled by archaeological sites. Therefore, it is impossible to trace the connection archaeologically between the Polom-Chepets culture and the northern Udmurts.

Here we should especially note that the mechanical transfer of modern ethnonymic terminology to the past—particularly the usage of present-day names of peoples to denote bearers of different archaeological cultures—is a widespread methodological mistake. In this case, the bearers of the Polom and Chepets cultures are too often called Udmurts, and sometimes Komi-Permyaks. The technique may be called nothing less than methodologically incorrect. It is more correct and appropriate to say that the ancestors of the bearers of the Polom-Chepets culture played a definitive role in the formation of the northern (Chepets) group of the Udmurts, and thus are the ancestors of the northern Udmurts.

### **The South of the Kama-Vyatka Inter-River Region in the Pre-Mongol Era**

The early mediaeval archaeological sites of the southern Kama-Vyatka inter-river region, which were mainly discovered in southern Udmurtia and some neighbouring areas of Tatarstan, are consolidated by T. Yutina, R. Goldina, and some other researchers into the special *Upper Utchansk* culture from the sixth to ninth centuries. At present, around 100 such sites are known, mostly situated along the right

tributaries of the Kama—the rivers Izh, Toyma, and others, as well as on the upper reaches of the Vala River and the left bank of the Kilmez River [Yutina 1994, p. 14; Goldina 1987, p. 20; 1999, p. 283]. However, many archaeologists rightly stand against the delineation of any distinct Upper Utchansk culture, and characterize these sites as something left by a population which was heterogeneous in its culture and probably ethnicity (See: [Ostanina, 1997, p. 179]).

The region's sites from the tenth to fourteenth centuries are consolidated by Goldina under the name the *Chumoitlin* culture [Goldina 1999, p. 297]. At the same time, she is forced to admit that very few of these sites have been discovered, and they have been insufficiently examined. All this raises doubts about the appropriateness or at least timeliness of the delineation of a distinct Chumoitlin culture.

As we have already mentioned earlier, the archaeological material of the 6–9th centuries [the Verkhne-Utchansky culture, according to T. Yutina and R. Goldina] brightly demonstrates its extreme inhomogeneity and complexity.

This is especially noticeable as exemplified in ceramics. T. Yutina and R. Goldina distinguish several complexes of crockery, including '*the Verkhne-Utchansky proper*', which is in fact a continuation of the Mazunino ceramic tradition; *the Bakhmutinsky* which arrived in the right bank of the lower Kama from the territory of Bashkiria in the 6th century; *the Imenkovsky* which came from the Middle Volga areas and lower reaches of the Kama and left multiple traces in 14 landmarks; *the Kushnarenkovsky* appeared in the basin of the River Belaya and has been discovered in 9 sites in the southeastern part of the 'Verkhne-Utchansky' areal [Yutina, 1994, pp. 9–10; Goldina, 1999, pp. 285–290]. It is important to note that in each case what is meant is not single, but rather large scale discoveries. This allowed R. Goldina to conclude that the Bakhmutinsky, Imenkovsky and Kushnarensky ceramics penetrated into the southern Kama-Vyatka interfluvium together with bearers of the Bakhmutinsky, Imenkovsky and Kushnarensky archaeological cultures respectively [Goldina, 1999, pp. 285, 289].



The archaeological materials extracted from sites in the south of Udmurtia show that those inhabitants who remained there were involved in agriculture, cattle-breeding, hunting and fishing. They were familiar with blacksmithing, bronze casting, woodworking and other types of industrial activities. The basis of their economy was likely a slash-and-burn agriculture, the role of which was constantly increasing. The most important agricultural crops in the Cis-Kama areas and the Vyatka in the first half of the 1st millennium C.E. became spelt wheat, millet, barley and hemp. Connected with the arrival in the Middle Volga and Lower Cis-Kama areas of an incomer population, who left the landmarks of the *Imenkovsky* archaeological culture [the 4–7th centuries], is connected with the proliferation of new agricultural crops in the Kama and Byatki basins, including wheat, rye, oats and peas. The medieval cattle-breeding of the Vyatka-Kama region featured the cultivation of bovine and small cattle, horses and pigs. Here, the Imenkovo influence played a significant role in improving the breeds of domestic animals. It seems that the native population of the Cis-Kama area also adopted the domestic cat from the Imenkovo people [Ibid., pp. 254–256]. The Imenkovo cultural influence was also favourably reflected in the development of forging and bronze production among the locals [Ibid., p. 289].

In the epoch of the appearance of the Bulgars in the Middle Volga area [the 8th century] and formation of the first state entity in the Volga-Ural region, Volga Bulgaria [the turn of the 9–10th centuries], noticeable changes were occurring in Nizhnekamsk district. Another component was added to the already variegated, in the cultural and ethnic sense, population of the lower Kama basin in the 8–10th centuries. Archaeologists note that in that epoch, elements of material culture appeared on the lower Kama and in some other adjacent regions. They were inherent in the population living further to the north, the bearers of the Polomskaya-Chepetsky, Lomovatovsky and Nevolinsky archaeological cultures. The influx of this population to Volga Bulgaria's territory and to adjoining areas was so significant that at some

early Bulgarian landmarks the ceramics of the Polomsko-Lomovatovsky cultures numerically prevail over the Bulgarian kind [Khlebnikova, 1984, pp. 223–224]. Based on the analysis of the material items of these early Bulgarian landmarks, A. Belavin came to the conclusion that 'the foundation of the Cis-Kama tribes who moved to the future territory of Volga Bulgaria had been the Nevolino tribes' [Belavin, 1990, pp. 125–126]. The items extracted from southern Udmurtia's 10–14th century landmarks vividly demonstrate the influx of a part of the upper-Kama and Chepets population to this region [Goldina, 1999, pp. 303–304].

We may only build hypotheses concerning the reasons why a part of the carriers of the Lomovatovsky culture migrated to the south and southwest. In one of his papers, V. Ivanov carefully hints at the possible relation of this migration to the necessity of the forming Bulgarian state to strengthen its economic and political power through the influx of people [Ivanov, 1990, p. 115]. Having expressed doubts that this migration was voluntary, R. Goldina said she saw its possible reason in the fact that 'after finding themselves in the new geographic conditions of the forest-steppe, the nomadic Bulgars needed a work force in order to supply themselves with food, and thus committed several attempts to resettle the Permian population: firstly, from the southern part of the Lomovatovsky culture [the latter half of the 8th century] and then, another wave from the same territory and the coast of the River Cheptsas [the latter half of the 9th century] and from the Kungur forest-steppe [the 9th century]' [Goldina, 1999, p. 295].

V. Gening and A. Ivanov consider it possible to suppose that the Polomovo-Lomovatovo-Nevolinsky population was forcefully removed by the Bulgars from their original territory during raids on the lands of the Chepets, Upper Kama and Sylvino [Gening, 1988, p. 222; 1989, p. 13; Ivanov, 1997, p. 15; 1998, p. 108].

In L. Makarov's opinion, one of the reasons of the Chepets-Upper Kama population's migration could have been demographical problems—that is, a kind of overpopulation in the basins of the Cheptsas, Upper Kama and Sylva rivers which chronologically corresponded to

the Imenkovsky population's departure to the west. In this situation the empty fertile lands could have been eagerly occupied by migrants from the Cheptsá, Upper Kama and Sylva rivers. At the same time, the Bulgars did not have to use violence, as it was enough to notify them about the vacant lands of their northern neighbours and the latter could voluntarily resettle in the new territories.

Such a possibility seems probable, because it is obvious that in order to continue building their new state, the recent Bulgars nomads needed a settled agriculture population, fairly numerous and capable of becoming one of the most important economic and social pillars of the state. In the meantime, the Upper Kama-Chepets population could have seen a new partner in the newly formed Bulgarian state, and a protector against raids from militant neighbours and a backer of political stability in the region, which is why they could have considered it to be more beneficial for themselves to settle in the immediate proximity of city centres. Regardless of whether this migration was voluntary or forced, it is impossible to completely reject the relationship between the appearance of the Bulgars in the Middle Volga region, the formation of their state and the above-mentioned migrations of the Chepets-Upper Kama population.

According to data provided by R. Goldina, among the 'Chumoytlin'sky' ceramics, a number of Bulgarian dishes were discovered which may prove the existence of trading contacts between the local population and Volga Bulgaria. However, the archaeological material of the 'Chumoytlin'skaya' culture, due to poor study, makes it impossible to speak about any presence of Bulgarian trading factories or other stable settlements in that epoch, while such factories were present on the Cheptsá river and the Upper Kama [Ivanov, 1998, p. 140; Belavin, 1991, pp. 9–10]. A possible explanation of this fact is the suggestion that the Volga Bulgars did not need such stationary settlements in the southern part of the Kama-Vyatka interfluvium, because this region was located within the immediate proximity of the state's main territory, unlike the remoter Upper-Kama and Chepets areas.

There are no doubts that in most cases, luxury items, silver dishware, jewels, coins and other imported items from Byzantium, the Northern Black Sea region, Syria, the Caucasus, Middle Asia and other areas, discovered in medieval settlements and burial sites in the Cis-Kama area were brought here through Bulgarian mediation already beginning in the 9–10th centuries.

The Bulgars' cultural and economic impact upon the indigenous population of the Cis-Kama regions was not limited to trade. The Bulgarian influence upon agricultural development was also measurable. It is possible through the Bulgarian mediation, the local population became acquainted with such agricultural crops as buckwheat, vetch, flax, lentil, radish, rutabaga, onions, apples and others. The Bulgarian cultural impact played an essential role in spreading the tillage form of farming throughout the Cis-Kama area at the turn of the 1–2 millennium C.E. [Goldina, 1999, p. 379].

Still unclear, is the question concerning the ethnic affiliation of the population of the southern Kama-Vyatka interfluvium in the 6–14th centuries, the bearers of the 'Verkhne-Utchansky' and 'Chumoytlin'sky' archaeological cultures. Despite this obvious ethno-cultural heterogeneity of this region, R. Goldina considers it possible to suppose that the major part of this population was Permian, while its offspring played an important role in the formation of the southern groups of the Udmurts [ibid, pp. 304–306].

At the same time we should mention that there is a gap of around three centuries between the latest 'Chumoytlin'sky' landmarks [no later than the 14th century] and those of southern Udmurtia [since the 17th century]. This fact hampers the proclamation of a direct and immediate succession between the bearers of the 'Verkhne-Utchansky' and 'Chumoytlin'sky' cultures and the southern Udmurts.

In general, the archaeological materials point to the fact that in the epoch of the early and developed Middle Ages, the southern part of the Kama-Vyatka interfluvium was somewhat of a contact zone inhabited by various groups of ethnically and culturally diverse populations. It is quite possible that these groups

included Permian-speaking peoples. S. Belykh [1999, p. 270] proposes that among the population which left behind these landmarks, *Para-Permian* groups can be identified—that is, those Permians, who according to language groupings, did not leave direct language successors, but after detaching themselves culturally and linguistically from the *Endo-Permians* [see below], they as a result became assimilated with the latter, or with some other linguistically relative or non-relative population. It is also possible that the *Exo-Permian* groups—that is, those original non-Permian groups who at last absorbed Permian speech and constituted one more important component in the history of the Permian community.

At the turn of the I and II millennia, the incomer Chepets-Upper Kama component was imposed upon all these Para-Permian, Exo-Permian and other groups. S. Belykh suggests seeing in this component the *community of the Endo-Permians*,—that is, the direct language and ethnic ancestors of the present-day Udmurts, Komi-Zyrians and Komi-Permians who served as the basis for the formation of these three Permian peoples [Ibid., pp. 271–272]. The details concerning the interaction between these components are not yet clear; however, we may presume that as a result of this process, groups of Udmurts inhabiting the southern areas of Udmurtia and the northeastern districts of the Republic of Tatarstan had mainly formed by the 17th century.

### **The Vyatka River Basin during the Pre-Mongol Period**

The collection of archaeological sites in the Middle and Lower Vyatka basin, the upstreams of the Bolshaya and Malaya Kokshaga, and the River Vetluga of the latter half of the first millennium has been singled out lately by R. Goldina as an independent *Emanaevsky* archaeological culture of the 6–9th centuries [Goldina, 1987, pp. 22–23; 1999, p. 311]. It is commonly believed that the Emanaevsky culture is actually a direct extension of the *Azelinsky culture* [the 3rd–5th centuries], which was discovered in the Vyatka river region as early as the 1960–1970s by V. Gening [1963; 1970].

Some time later R. Goldina significantly expanded the time frame of this latter culture and proposed to name it *the Khudyakovsky culture* of the 2nd century BCE—the 5th century CE [Goldina, 1987, p. 13–14; 1999, p. 227].

The 10th and 13th century landmarks found in the Middle and Lower Vyatka river regions have been grouped by R. Goldina as part of *the Kocherginsky* archaeological culture which she believes to be a successor of the preceding Emanaevsky culture. According to her data, during that period a significant number of ancient towns and other landmarks of the Emanaevsky period kept functioning, however, their southwestern areas fell into a state of neglect [Goldina, 1999, p. 325]. The latter fact can be considered as evidence of an influx of a new population into the Vyatka and Vetluga interfluvial region and of the beginning of serious changes in the ethnicity of the population of this region at the cusp of the first and second millennia [see below].

The key features of the economic set-up of the population of the Lower Vyatka region and Vyatka and Vetluga interfluvial region in the early and late Middle Ages began to form in the early half of the first millennium C.E., during the period of the khudyakovsky archaeological culture [according to R. Goldina]. It was during this period in particular, that iron became the leading raw material in the production of tools and weapons, and bronze began to be used generally in the manufacturing of adornments. There is a common viewpoint among scholars of the archaeology of this region [R. Goldina, N. Leshchinskaya, L. Markarov, S. Perevoshchikov, etc.] that during this period metalworking became a highly specialized trade in the Vyatka river region. In their opinion, this is evidenced by materials from the Vyatka settlements and burial sites of the early half of the first millennium C.E. —Thus, for example, a treasure-trove of iron and bronze items including 186 iron hoes, 9 iron spearheads and 6 bronze grivnas was discovered in Buyskoye ancient town in a pit of the 2nd–3rd centuries which may be indicative of the beginning of the mass production of these items for further sale and exchange. The fact that special graves of blacksmiths and foundry

workers were found in several burial sites give evidence that metalworking was singled out as a specialized industry of high demand [Goldina, 1999, pp. 254–255; Perevoshchikov, 2002, pp. 34–35].

Discoveries of iron axes, hoes, pestles, quern stones and the remains of grain material known in the Vyatka river basin of that period demonstrate the growing role of agriculture, which obviously was of a slash-and-burn nature. The main arable crops of the early half of the first millennium in the Vyatka region were spelt wheat, panic grass, barley and hemp. At the same time the economy of the Vyatka population remained complex. Along with arable farming, animal breeding played a significant role, in breeding horses, cattle, goats and sheep, pigs. Hunting was just as important as before [first of all, targeting fur animals—sables, martens, squirrels, beavers], and the same remained true with fishing and gathering [Goldina, 1999, pp. 255–256].

The processes of progressive economic development in the Vyatka river basin were intensified during the early Middle Ages. In many respects this expedited development was due to the cultural influence exerted on the indigenous population of the Volga and Kama region in general, and on the population of the Vyatka river basin in particular, by incomer groups who left landmarks in the Middle Volga region and Lower Kama river region of the *Imenkovsky* archaeological culture of the 4–7th centuries. As is well-known, the Imenkovsky people, in addition to traditional agricultural crops, brought to the Cis-Kama region new high-yielding sorts of grains, such as wheat, rye, oat and pea. The Imenkovsky people were the first to introduce to the Cis-Kama region a new advanced method of farming—arable farming. The Imensky's influence on the economy of the Vyatka river basin's population as concerns animal breeding was also apparent, as they borrowed more productive and larger livestock breeds from the Imensky people [Ibid., pp. 379–380].

Of particular note is the proportion of domestic animals in the herd of the Vyatka population of the early Middle Ages which was deduced through archaeological excavations.

Thus, it was reported that at the Emanaevo site in the 7–10th centuries, domestic pigs [58.8%] absolutely prevailed, while cows were raised in far less quantities [15.7%], as well as horses, goats and sheep [11.8% each] [Leshchinskaya, 1988, pp. 103–104; Goldina, 1999, p. 380]. This data differs drastically from the corresponding figures of the Chepetsky settlements where the prevalence of cows [about 48%] and horses [over 31.4%] was obvious, while sheep and goats and especially pigs were much fewer [about 14.5% and a little more than 2%, respectively] [Goldina, 1999, p. 380]. The improvement of livestock breeds was obviously due not only to Imenkovsky, but also later Bulgarian influence, as well as to the spontaneous breeding activities being carried out. Among other domestic animals, the local population in the Middle Ages also kept cats, dogs and poultry [chickens and geese].

Hunting played a significant role in the economy of the Emanaevo and Kocherginsky population. Moose, reindeer, beaver and roe deer were actively hunted [Leshchinskaya, 1988, pp. 103–104]. Fowling was also practiced on ducks, geese, wood grouses, black-cocks, hazel grouses etc. The discovery of fishing gear [fish-hooks, trolls], fish bones and scales show a well-developed fishing industry [Goldina, 1999, p. 381].

Artisan production among the Emanaevo and Kochergino population continued developing. In the early Middle Ages specialized settlements of craftsmen emerged in the Vyatka river region, one of which was the ancient town Emanaevo [the 7–10th centuries]. Here, in a relatively small area [1500 sq. m.], two buildings were discovered which had an approximate area of 100 sq. m. each. They contained the remains of metalworking complexes concentrated, including hearths, pieces of clay coating, cinders, numerous metal fragments [655 pcs], plenty of whole ladles for pouring non-ferrous metal [67 pcs], 221 fragment and 29 whole crucibles, casting molds, a piece of earthen nozzle, tools and ready-made metal products [Makarov, 1978, pp. 22–23; Leshchinskaya, 1988, pp. 79–107]. Analysis of the ferrous metal at the site demonstrated a high level of its hammering and the discovery of

the use of complicated welding technologies by blacksmiths, including three-fold welding and targeted application of heat treatment. Much resemblance with the metal working technologies of the Imenkovsky people is observed which may be indicative of steady relations between the Vyatka population and that of the Lower Kama river region [Perevoshchikov, 2002, pp. 66–71]. Traces of bronze casting were discovered at the Vikharevo site [Leshchinskaya, 1984, pp. 41–43]. There is evidences of developed woodworking and bone-carving trades.

Further development was seen in the direct and indirect trade relations between the Vyatka population and both neighbouring regions [the Cheptsya basin, the upper Kama river region, Vychegda territory, Vetluga river region, Mari Volga river region] and more remote lands [the upper Volga river region, Ladoga lake region, White Lake region, the Baltics, the Dnieper river basin area, the Northern Black Sea region, the Caucasus, etc.] [Goldina, 1999, pp. 384–393]. Beginning with the turn of the second millennium, one of the most crucially important partners for the population of the Vyatka river basin became Volga Bulgaria.

It is assumed that during this period the social differentiation of the population of the Vyatka river basin deepened, especially intensifying after the 9th century, when states with a well-developed class structure emerged nearby—Volga Bulgaria and Kievan Rus'.

In 1960–1980s, there was heated discussion among scholars of the history of the peoples of the Volga and Kama region regarding the ethnic affiliation of the landmarks in the Azelinsky and Post-Azelinsky [Emanaevsko-Kocherginsky] circle. Some scholars regarded these landmarks as ancient Mari sites [Arkhipov, 1973; Khalikov, 1976; 1989, etc.], while others considered the bearers of these cultures to be Permians, ancestors of the Udmurts [Gening, 1967; Kozlova, 1978, pp. 45–46; Goldina, 1987]. Relatively recently T. Nikitina has thoroughly formulated and given good reasons for a concept according to which up to the latter half of the first millennium the ancestors of the Mari had inhabited lands in the Vetluga-Volga-Oka interfluvial area, that is to the southwest of the

territory where the modern Mari people live. However, in the latter half of the first millennium they moved into the Vyatka and Vetluga interfluvial area and gradually moved on further to the east. In the Vyatka and Vetluga interfluvial area the Mari's ancestors came into contact with the local ancient Perm [post-azelino] population and began forcing them to the east, at the same time partially assimilating with it. The mixed nature of objects found in some sites in the Vyatka and Vetluga interfluvial area of the turn of the second millennium, according to T. Nikitina, serves as evidence of interaction between the ancestors of the Mari and the post-azelino people [Nikitina, 1996; 2002]. The fact that by the 10th century the southwestern part of post-azelino [Emanaevsko-Kocherginsky] landmarks ceased to exist can be considered a result of the gradual removal of the post-azelino population by the ancient Mari from the Vyatka and Vetluga interfluvial area [Goldina, 1999, pp. 325].

This concept conforms very well to toponymy, folklore and historical linguistic materials. There are pretty many Mari placenames in the north and northeast of the Republic of Mari El and in neighbouring districts of the Kirov region, which contain the formant *odo-* [Mari *odo, odo-mariy* 'udmurt, udmurtsky'] including about ten medieval towns referred to by local Mari people *odo-ilem*, literally 'Udmurt dwelling'. Among the Yaransko-urzhumsky Mari and Russian people can be found written accounts concerning the ousting of Udmurts by the Mari people from the right bank of the River Vyatka. Among the Udmurts of the Kalmezh territorial entity who lived in the Kilmezh river basin area [the left tributary of the Vyatka river] were tales that once their ancestors had lived on the right bank of the River Vyatka, but after a conflict with the Mari people they were forced to leave this area and move to the left bank of the river [Aktosin, 1980, pp. 4–5; Arkhipov, 1982, p. 67]. Certain peculiarities of the Mari language indicating the presence of a Perm substratum, give evidence that assimilation occurred in the past of some Perm groups by the Mari's ancestors. This substratum is revealed in the vocabulary, morphology and phonetics of the Mari language. The Permian

influence is especially notable in the dialects of the Mari people of the former Urzhumsky and Malmyzhsky uyezds of the Vyatskaya guberniya [Bereczki, 1977; Kazantsev, 1985, pp. 52–55, 102].

The above data can be interpreted as follows. In the early Middle Ages, in the Vyatka and Vetluga interfluvium region, the territories of modern Malmyzhsky, Urzhumsky, Lebyazhsky, Sovetsky, Pizhansky and Yaransky districts of the Kirov region and the Mari-Turetsky, Sernursky, Novo-Toriysky, Orshansky districts of the Republic of Mari El were inhabited by groups speaking the Perm language, among which the following ethnonym was used as a self-designation: *\*odo[-mort]*, literally meaning 'a person [from the tribe] *odo*'. In the latter half of the first millennium and at the turn of the second millennium, the Maris' ancestors gradually removed and partially assimilated with these Perm groups. It was then when the Mari people borrowed from the language of these Permian peoples their self-designation—*\*odo*. The Permian [ancient Udmurt] groups which had been ousted to the left bank of the River Vyatka inhabited its left tributaries, first of all the Kilmezi river basin, gradually penetrating to the north up to the Cheptsa river basin [today the Uninsky district of the Kirov region and the Glazovsky district of Udmurtia], and to the south, up to the Izh river [today the Malopurginsky district of Udmurtia]. These groups brought along the ethnonym *\*odo* to places where they settled, thus spreading it gradually across the whole ancient Udmurt areal. Eventually, the ancient ethnonym *\*odo* > *ud[murt]*, literally 'a person [from the tribe] *ud*' became widely used across all Udmurtia and became a self-designation of the consolidating Udmurt people [Belykh, Napolskikh, 1994].

On the cusp of the 12th and 13th centuries a new page opened in the history of the Vyatka territory with the penetration of the first Slavic-Russian migrants. The question as to when the Slavs emerged in the Vyatka basin has long been debated. The key point of contention in this discussion was the degree of credibility of the famous 'Tales about the Vyatka country' a literary monument of the chronicle type which was compiled not earlier than the 17th century,

although most probably using older documents which have not been preserved to the present. According to 'Tales... ', a detachment of Novgorod ushkuiniks [pirates] came through the Volga river to the River Kama in 1174, and later went down along the River Cheptsa to the River Vyatka where the Novgorod people conquered the 'Chud and Otyaki' who lived along those rivers, built 'the town of Khlynov to protect themselves from invasion of non-Christian foes Chud and Otyaki, and Cheremis' 17 versts [18,139 km] down from the Cheptsa's estuary and 'began settling in and ruling' [Lupov, 1958; 1999, pp. 19–20]. The scholars who considered the information from this source to be quite credible referred the time when Slavic settlers emerged on the Vyatka river to the end of the 12th century, but those scholars who denied the credibility of the information contained in 'Tales... ' dated the time when Russians appeared on the Vyatka river back to the 14th century, that is the time when the Vyatka territory was first mentioned in the Rusessian chronicles.

The only use of archaeological materials which were discovered as a result of large-scale excavations of old Russian settlements and burial sites on the Vyatka river in the latter half of the 20th century made it possible to specify the date of the beginning of Slavic-Russian colonisation of this region. In the collection of findings from Russian sites in the Vyatka river basin, objects dating to the 12–the first half of the 13th centuries are considered to be the oldest. It is noteworthy that the majority of findings are of a general Russian nature which prevents them from being associated with any specific region of Rus'. Obviously, this speaks an influx of the Slavic population from different Russian lands, but first of all, from the territories of Novgorod and the Rostov and Suzdal principality [Makarov, 2003, p. 40].

The end of the first beginning of the second millennium in the history of the ancient Rus' is characterized by the intensive expansion of territories lying to the east and north-east of its borders. The ever growing need for fur animals served as a good incentive for large campaigns to the European northeast and Trans-Urals organized by Veliky Novgorod in

the 11–13th centuries. By the beginning of the 12th century Novgorod settlements spread out to the northern Dvina region, and beginning in the latter half of the 12th century Russian settlers begin to reach the basins of the Rivers Yuga, Vychegdy, to settle in the Volga and Vyatka interfluvial region and even appeared on the territory of Volga Bulgaria. The expansion of territory was accompanied by competition between Novgorod and Rostov in the course of which Rostov's inhabitants managed to secure a footing in the upper reaches of the Northern Dvina where in 1178 they built the fortress Gleden, and some time later, the town of Veliky Ustyug. The Slavic penetration into the Vyatka river region was, for all intents and purposes, a continuation of this colonisation. The Rusessian Vyatka settlements of the 12–13th centuries covered the basin of the middle reaches of the Vyatka from the estuary of the River Letka to the Rivers Voya and Urzhumka. Along with the well-targeted expansion of territory accompanied by the construction of towns and fortresses, a spontaneous peasant colonisation was also occurring [Ibid.].

Based on a number of written sources and numerous various folklore, toponymic, linguistic and archaeological materials, the conclusion can be made that initially the relationship between incomers and the local population was tense and even hostile at times. Tales of Vyatka Russians and Udmurts and some written sources tell about military clashes between Russians and the ancestors of the Udmurts, sometimes even connecting them to specific archaeological sites [Vyatka, Nikulchino, Podchurshinskoye, Kotelnich and others]. According to L. Makarov, Russian settlers later on managed to establish primarily peaceful relations with the indigenous population, which has also been reflected in archaeological materials and written sources. One of the results of this interaction was that by the 17th century a significant part of Vyatka Permians (Udmurts and, probably, some other Perm-speaking groups) had mixed with the local Russian-speaking population [Makarov, 1999, pp. 115–116; 2001a, pp. 22–38; 2003, p. 41].

The fact that the Vyatka territory was remote from native Russian land along with its isolation, inevitably placed it into a special

situation in comparison with other Russian territories. It is safe to assume that during the pre-Mongol period, the Vyatka territory did not have strong ties with any Russian principalities or lands. Evidently, such as distance from the rest of the Rusessian world during the ensuing years (the 14–15th centuries) contributed to a rather independent and often hostile attitude of the Vyatka people towards other Russian lands and the centralized Russian state which was being formed. The Rusessian population of the Vyatka river region during the pre-Mongol period was not united under any common state or political structure, but rather grouped primarily around the two relatively independent volost centres—the towns of Nikulitsyn and Kotelnich. The third centre of Russian settlements in the Vyatka river basin which was singled out according to archaeological data, was the Pizhma river basin [the right tributary of the River Vyatka] [Makarov, 2003, pp. 40–41].

It was only after the Mongol invasion into Eastern Europe and the significant influx of the Rusessian population into the Vyatka territory which followed that a relatively unified political and economic organism—Vyatka was formed here. Based on the information in 'Tales about the Vyatka country', as well as on some archaeological observations, L. Makarov came to the conclusion that Vyatka was formed as a result of an agreement between the towns of Nikulitsyn and Kotelnich on the consolidation and construction of the capital of this territory—the town of Vyatka [Khlynov] in the middle of the 13th century. According to him, Vyatka was a feudal *veche* republic (of the Veliky Novgorod type) which was ruled by local boyars, territorial voivodes and *vata-mans*. However, it is difficult yet to estimate the governance structure and social composition of Vyatka, because these aspects were only mentioned in passing in a single source—the charter of the Metropolitan Iona sent to Vyatka around 1452 [Ibid.].

In contrast to L. Makarov, who assumed a *veche* structure of Vyatka, V. Napolskikh, taking into account the absence of sources on the feudal organisation of Vyatka society and on republic institutes, suggests that the in regard to the population of Vyatka and its social

and political structure, *the term 'pre-Cossacks' should be used*. In his opinion, sources of the formation of the population (emergence in uninhabited lands in the border regions of the Ruses'), their way of life (a combination of farming with military activity and the corresponding organisation which encompassed, it seems, the entire male population), and the political organisation (little is known about it but it means that the Vyatka people did not have a single governor and had leaders who relied on the approvals of freemen) of the Vyatka people of the 14–15th centuries and the Cossacks of the 15–20th centuries were very similar. The difference explaining the prefix *pre-*, was that the Vyatka people did not serve a sovereign because they did not have one.

The agricultural activities of the Vyatka people did not differ essentially from the ones of other Russian lands of the forest belt in Eastern Europe. Farming and cattle breeding formed the basis of agriculture. Judging by the materials from excavations in Vyatka, rye, wheat, oats, barley, spelt wheat, buckwheat, peas, beans, bast fiber and hemp were cultivated there. At the excavations of the Vyatka settlements, numerous bones of domestic animals were found. Among the bone material, those of cattle and pigs prevail, while the bones of horses, goats and sheep are fewer in number. Apart from agriculture and cattle breeding, hunting (for fur animals most of all), fishing and perhaps beekeeping played an important role in the economy of the inhabitants of Vyatka [Makarov, 1995, pp. 27–29; 2001a, picture 51: 16]. Among the archaeological materials of cities in the Vyatka region and some rural settlements, traces of different trades were found, including metallurgy, smithing, woodworking and pottery. Very little is known about the literature and written culture of the Vyatka region. Although, three metal styluses dating to 13–15th centuries found at the Kovrovsky and Nikulchino archaeological sites suggest that some inhabitants of the Vyatka could read and write, or at least those among the urban population [Makarov, 1995, p. 31].

Proceeding to the question of trade, economic and other relations between the Vyatka people and Volga Bulgaria, it should be first noted that it this remains an understudied subject. As there are nearly no written sources related to this issue, only archaeological materials remain to be examined. First, it is necessary to clarify that there are very few Bulgarian materials that have been discovered in the course of archaeological research at the settlements of the Vyatka lands. A large part of them relate to the later, Golden Horde period of history. Just a few finds of Bulgarian origin, as well as those which appeared in Vyatka possibly through Bulgarian mediation and dating back within a wide time frame from the 10th to 15th century, may theoretically be associated with items of Bulgarian import of the pre-Mongol period. Archaeologists believe such items as the copper plate decorated with Arabic script and floral ornament, found in the area of the Khlynov kremlin to date to about the 13–14th century, while the fragments of bronze locks from the Kovrovsky archaeological site were manufactured in Volga Bulgaria and used there in the 10–14th centuries, and the fragments of ceramic ware of the Bulgarian and the Lower Volga region date back to the 13–15th centuries or earlier, as well as some other findings [Makarov, 2001b, pp. 143–147]. All that is left is to acknowledge the fact that the Bulgarian archaeological material of the Vyatka lands is much poorer when compared to the Polomo-Cheptsas cultures of the same time, where in the layers of the 12–13th centuries, Bulgarian finds compose quite a significant part of the excavated items.

Therefore, contacts between the Slavic population of the Vyatka region and Volga Bulgaria during the pre-Mongol period are very hard to trace. It may be assumed that unlike the inhabitants of the Cheptsas and the population south of the Kama and Vyatka interfluvium, the inhabitants of Vyatka maintained complete economic and political independence from the Bulgarian state.



## 2. Peoples of the Upper Cis-Kama region and Volga Bulgaria

*Andrey Belavin*

In the Middle Ages, the Upper Cis-Kama region (Uralic Cis-Kama region or Permian Cis-Ural region) was inhabited by a mixed Finno-Ugric people. In the south, (in the Sylva, Obva and Inva Rivers basins) Ugric tribes played a key role in ethnic symbiosis, while in the north, (in the Vishera and Upper Kama River basins) the leading role belonged to the Finno-Permians.

Consequently, Nevolinsky culture, as well as the southern Lomovatovsky and early Rodanovsky cultures, represented an Ugric population in terms of ethnic and culture. The cultural affinity between the Makushinsky sites in the Tura and Iset river basins and the Kharsinsky sites in the Kama river region indicates the settlement of closely related groups in the Cis- and Trans-Ural regions in the 5–8th centuries, which was frequently pointed out by V. Viktorova and other scholars. As a result the most closely related groups among the Ugric people in the Ural region became the Lomovatov-Nevolinsky and Yudinsky tribes. This is proved by common features in the material and spiritual cultures, such as clothing and decorations, cult molding, the use of burial masks and ornamentation of ceramic foodware. Early enough, at the time of the Bulgars' settlement in the Middle Volga area, economic, cultural and ethnic contacts between the people of the Uralic Cis-Kama region and the Bulgars were established.

In the first half of the 9th century the early Bulgars were joined by the tribes of the Nevolino, Lomovatov and Polom cultures, who had descended from the Middle and Upper Cis-Kama regions and Vyatka-Kama interfluvium and brought along round-bottomed ceramics of the Cis-Kama region type admixed with pounded shells and numerous jewelry of Cis-Ural-Siberian look [Khalikov, 1989, pp. 77–78].

The ceramics in the sites of Volga Bulgaria are represented by the utensils of ethnocultural group IV dated to the 9th century, and ethnocultural groups V and VI of the early 10th century

[Khlebnikova, 1984]. All items of such utensils are admixed with pounded shells and fire-clay grog and contain forms typical for the Cis-Kama region—round-bottomed pot- or cup-shaped vessels. The vessels' inlets are sometimes high enough. Ceramics of this type are characterized by carved ornamentation, while a cord, prints of combs and holes are more rare. The most popular type of ornament is the 'herringbone' design, while certain techniques occasionally blend in different combinations.

In Volga Bulgaria such ceramics has been emphasized due to the materials of the Tetyushsky, Bolshe-Tarkhansky and early part of the Tankeevsky burial sites, as well as Chakma, Ostolopovo (Rechnoe) ancient settlements, Chally archaeological site, Bulgar, Bilyar and other city centres. Ceramics of group IV from the Bolshe-Tarkhansky burial site (between the 8th and first half of the 9th century) reflect the earliest penetration of the Cis-Kama Ugric people into the borders of future Volga Bulgaria.

In general the utensils belonging to the above-mentioned groups have analogues by shape, dough and types of ornament among the utensils of Nevolino sites in the Sylva river basin which were studied in 1980 by archaeologists from Udmurt University. Ceramics of groups V and VII dating to the 9–early 10th centuries also have analogues among the materials from the Yusvinsky and In'vensko-Obvinsky territory of the early Rodanov time (Telyachy Brod ancient settlement; Solomatovsky, Kudymkarsky, Rozhdestvensky, Kylasov ancient towns and other sites) and the Sylva river basin. This is probably due to both the migration of the former Nevolino people and the following development of a ceramics tradition in the Cis-Kama region.

The amount of Cis-Ural ceramics in the materials of Volga Bulgaria settlements ranges from 20 to 77% (the 10–11th century layer in Ostolopovsky ancient settlement) from a number of moulded ceramics, which provides evidence of a powerful migration wave from the

Kama river region in the 9–10th centuries. Pendants and other jeweleries of Lomovatov and Nevolino types are represented in the materials of the Tankeevsky burial site and other Bulgarian sites. All this indicates that the Nevolino Ugric tribes formed the basis of the Cis-Kama tribes who migrated to the territory of the future Volga Bulgaria.

Nowadays, it is clear that the settlement of the Nevolino, Lomovatov and Polom people on the territory of future Volga Bulgaria was more or less even. Items and ceramics of the Cis-Kama and Cis-Ural type can be found in the Kama, as well as Volga settlements, both small and large, including Bilyar, Suvar and other big city centres [Belavin, 1990, pp. 125–129].

Most scholars of Volga Bulgaria antiquities believe that specifically these Cis-Kama region migrants (possibly the Nevolino people) went down in historical records as 'the Bulgarian Esegels' [iski el—old tribes]. A. Khalikov believed them to be the Turkic-speaking population of the Cis-Kama region inhabiting it since the 4–5th centuries, however, it is more possible that their language and cultural identity may be defined as Ugric or Ugric-Finn. The causes of the mass migration of the Esegels to future Bulgaria remain unclear. Although, it is appropriate to recall the large-scale conflict between the Bulgars (Barsils) led by Aydar khan (according to Sh. Marjani) and already having adopted Islam, and the old Magyar tribes, as a result of which the latter ones were defeated and were forced to leave the Cis-Urals and move to Levedia and then onto the Danube. At this time the old Magyars carried on a war on two fronts, not only with the Bulgars, but also with the old Khakas state, which had begun its expansion into the steppe and forest steppe zones in western Siberia and the Cis-Ural region [Ivanov, 1994, pp. 82–83]. The Esegels seem to have been involved in the conflict as allies of the Bulgars', and acquired in return for their aid to the Barsils a number of privileges, which is testified by the extensive settlement of the Cis-Ural tribes along the Bulgar area. The special position of the Cis-Kama region tribes, especially in the early stage of formation of the Bulgaria state, is testified by the recipient by their leader of such an award as being named

daughter of the Bulgar 'tsar'. When the Khazar Khagan demanded from the ruler of the Bulgars his second daughter instead of the one, who died in Khazaria, then the Bulgar emir 'married her off to the prince of the Eskel tribe, who was under his rule' [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 139]. In the 10th century these tribes assimilated into a Bulgarian Turkic-speaking ethnic group.

It is possible that migration of the Cis-Ural tribes was in some way forced. It is likely that the Bulgars' military campaigns were a major factor in the mass migration of the Nevolino, Polom and Lomovatov tribes to the forming Volga Bulgaria state. And this explains why Bulgarian arrowheads and other armaments have been found in some settlements of the Ugro-Finnic tribes in the Uralic Cis-Kama region. The process of Bulgarian land reclamation along the Volga and Kama was most likely accompanied by raids on neighboring areas, aimed at robbing the residing population, land consolidation and submission of the neighboring tribes. According to experts in the history of steppe tribes, such raids, during the course of which a large number of the settled population was captured and resettled to lands already acquired by the steppe-dwellers and women were captured for harem families, were typical during the formation of various Eurasian states [Klyashtorny, Savinov, 1994].

In future, the children of those women-captives became freemen of the forming ethnic group of the establishing state, while in some countries in the early Middle Ages young and strong men-captives were turned into the most effective units of the army—the guards. This also occurred in Spain during the reign of the Umayyad caliphs, these were the Egyptian Mamluks, the 'Turkic' guards in Baghdad, 'Slavic' guards in Byzantium and so on [Gumilyov, 1989, pp. 130–131]. No wonder that many eastern authors also mention slaves in the list of goods from Bulgaria.

Children from marriages between Ugric and Finnish Cis-Ural slaves and Bulgar warriors learned the language and culture of their fathers, and then looked for wives during raids on their mothers' native lands. Their descendants—already rightful Bulgars, having

learned the language and customs of their new motherland, used in everyday life the available mass products of Bulgarian rural and urban trades, however they preserved Cis-Ural moulded ceramics made by their wives, mothers and grandmothers, and they refrained from putting such pottery into the graves of the cherished departed only due to the spread of Islam. It is probable that the same phenomenon encouraged the preservation of trends in adornments, belts with decorated plates and other items of the Cis-Ural type. Evidently, the Bulgars managed to quickly and successfully settle in the usual forest steppe and steppe regions of Volga Bulgaria owing to the work of Cis-Ural migrants [voluntary and forced], who rearranged agricultural and handicraft industries in the relatively underpopulated lands of the Lower Kama following the departure of the Imenkovo people and Magyars.

Part of the Nevolino people continued living at the same sites in the 10–11th centuries, which is testified to by some material dating to this time and which was found in the Verkh-Sainsky archaeological site and other Nevolino sites, although it could be that they are just traces of a short visit to the old places of residence by the descendants of the Nevolino people. Another part of the Nevolino tribes migrated to the late Lomatovo tribes from the Chusovaya River basin who were closely related to them. Here their arrival is marked by the large scale appearance of vessels with carved ornamentation in the Solomatovsky and Lisyenorsky archaeological sites and Telyachy Brod ancient settlement. Excavations at a row of sites in the Chusovaya river basin allows us to suggest that a large scale appearance of the carved ornamentation on the ceramics belonging to the sites of this group dates back to the early 10th or latter half of the 9th century. Later, as a result of cultural seepage, carved ornamentation of the Nevolino type, as well as some shapes of vessels, appeared in the sites of the southern variant of the Rodanov culture.

It is obvious that the wide and differently directed migration of the Nevolino tribes resulted in a situation, when the quite closely related and resided population settled along the immense territory and continued to maintain

contact. As the migrants were settling down in the Bulgarian community, Bulgarian ceramics, adornments, belts with decorated plates and other items began moving back as interchangeable goods, presents to relatives and with some return settlers. It might be, that the first contacts targeted to trade had been established long before the mass migration of the Bulgars and Nevolino people to the River Volga and River Kama. This is proven by the wide spread circulation of Saltov-type items in the Cis-Kama region: the Cis-Kama region inhabitants were familiar with the Bulgarian tribes as trade partners when they were still a part of Khazaria.

Before the mass migration of Cis-Kama tribes to Bulgaria, in the 8th century, the inflow of Saltov-type items into the Cis-Ural region began. The most extensively studied part of the Saltov and early Bulgarian import are the belt sets found at numerous Nevolino and Lomovatov burial sites and settlements [Goldina, 1985, pp. 132–133]. A converging point in such contacts were lands of the southern Urals, full of such findings possessed by the steppe population, as well as Udmurtia, where the Saltov items were also found [Semenov, 1981, table 2: 8]. Together with the belt set ornaments, other items of Saltov and early Bulgarian-type items penetrated into the Cis-Ural region. They were first of all swords of a specific Saltov look. The discovery of such weapon, sometimes unsheathed, ornated with silver plates or appliques, were recorded at the Telyachy Brod, Plesinsk, Averino, Demenkovsky and other burial sites.

It is interesting to note that in the 9th century along with the Saltov copper, bronze and silver belt plates mentioned above, decorations typical for early Bulgarian costume began their inflow into the Permian Cis-Ural region, such as, pendants in the shape of small samovars, which were used as amulets by the early Bulgars and Saltov people (Malo-Anikovsky burial site, Anyushkar archaeological site), temple rings with clusters of beads or molded clusters and pyramids (Demenkovsky, Kaneevsky, Telyachy Brod and other burial sites), charm-pendants in the shape of bronze molded claws (Malo-Anikovsky, Bayanovsky and other burial sites), arc-shaped noise-making pen-

dants decorated with granulation, filigree and sometimes depicting the tree of life. In the Ci-Kama region such pendants were used, as in Bulgaria, for braid adornments (Plotnikovskiy, Bayanovskiy and other burial sites, Redikarsk archaeological site). Materials of the same type are represented at burial sites of the early Bulgarian period, such as Tankeevskiy, Bolshetarkhanskoy, Bolshtiganskoy.

Temporal pendants with a pear or pin-shaped tip, that is the ones introduced in the materials of the Bolshtiganskoy burial site, are of particular interest. Those pendants made of silver and richly decorated with filigree, granulation pyramids and clusters represented probably one of the earliest types of silver jewellery, which were imported into the Perm lands from Volga Bulgaria. In the Cis-Kama region, such pendants were found at burial sites, such as Telyachy Brod in grave No. 20 (8th century), Brodovskiy, Averinskoy, Kanevskiy and others, at Rozhdestvenskoy, Kudymkar and some other archaeological sites and ancient settlements, in a number of treasure hoards of both early and late periods (Redikarskoy and others). Samples of such pendants were also found in Udmurtia, where they date to the early Bulgarian period. Most likely, such pendants were the developed variant of the ones with clusters of hollow beads and were brought by the Perm people to the territory of Bulgaria and were further developed there in the 9–14th centuries. Later samples (11–14th centuries) differ by their large size and abundance of granulation and filigree.

In addition to the essential signs of trade and potential early ethnic contacts, equally important are the findings of ceramics of early Bulgarian and Saltov types, similar to the vessels from the Tankeevskiy burial site and early layers of settlements in Volga Bulgaria. Such utensils were found in layer at the Nazarovskoy archaeological site on the Obva river (not later than the early 10th century).

Jugs with a low puff shape and crosshatch glazing were found at the Verkh-Sainskoy archaeological site on the River Shakva, as well as cups, amphoral vessels known among the complex of utensils of the early Bulgars. Cups of the Bulgarian type became the basis for the

new type of Cis-Kama utensils—cups with a C-shaped handle and flat bottom. This type of utensils was especially numerous at the sites in the Chusovaya river basin and was also recorded at the sites of the southern type of the Rodanov culture (Rozhdestvenskoy, Kudymkar archaeological sites).

Consequently, in the 9–10th centuries the Perm Cis-Urals became one of the closest regions of the Urals to be connected to Bulgaria. At that stage, apart from mutual acquaintance and defining partnership relations, specific political cooperation was also established. Apparently, the Ci-Kama region tribes were treated by the Bulgars as allies dependent on their militarily and economically stronger neighbor. Such attitude of the Bulgars toward the Cis-Kama region greatly simplified further extension of contacts, which resulted in an increase in the dependency of the Cis-Kama region on Volga Bulgaria.

In the ensuing time, the Perm Cis-Urals occupied one of the leading positions in trade with the peoples from the north, trade contacts turned into a system of trade and political relations, not only regular merchants' visits became possible, but also Bulgarian craftsmen and traders could reside in some of the big settlements of the Rodanov tribes.

Since the 10th century regular trade contacts were established between Volga Bulgaria and the Perm Cis-Urals, known in Arabic written sources as 'Visu country', and since the 13th century as 'Chulyman country'. The Bulgars and Arabs called the River Kama the Chulman [Chulyman] up the inflow of the River Belaya (Ak Atil), down to its inflow the Kama was called Atil or Black Atil (Kara Atil). Ibn Fadlan, who visited Bulgaria in person in the 10th century, wrote the first records about the northern neighbors of Bulgaria. He also mentioned Visu country, which was 20 days away by land and 3 months away by the Kama [Atil] and considered by many Arab medieval geographers to be the true extension of the Volga river. The famous traveler from Arab Andalusia Abu Hamid al-Gharnati, who visited Bulgaria in the middle of the 12th century, and, according to scholars, visited not only Bulgar but possibly lands further north, gives a detailed description

of the people of Visu and their neighbors. He wrote the following: '... there are a numerous people living upstream, they pay jizya to the Bulgar tsar. It (Bulgar) had a region, (the inhabitants of which) pay kharaj, and is located a month's journey from Bulgar and its name is Visu. And there is another region named Aru, where people hunt beavers, ermines and wonderful squirrels... Behind Visu, in the Sea of Darkness, there is a region named Yura' [al-Gharnati, 1971]. All of al-Gharnati's notes are reliable enough, he was generally recording only his own observations or the words of only credible and trustworthy people. For instance, he left an ethnographic description of the people of Visu: 'I have seen their group in Bulgar in winter: they are red with blue eyes, their hair is white like flax, in such cold they wear flax clothing. Some of them wear coats made from beaver fur, and the fur is turned outward. And they drink a barley beverage, sour, like vinegar, it suits them well because they are hot-tempered, which is explained by the fact that they eat beavers, squirrels and honey' [Ibid.]. The country of Visu was mentioned for the last time in the compilations of the Arab cosmographer Zakaria Qazvini, dating to the middle of the 13th century.

Arabic sources of the 14th century describe northern geography with more detail. For instance, the Arab geographer and encyclopedist al-Umari (1331) mentions Kasaba—a small town of the Akikulas (Avakols, Afkula) 20 days journey from Bulgar northwards, that is within the land of Chulyman (Julyman), as well as the city of Chulyman located to the north of Akikulas, as well as the towns of Sibir and Ibyr.

Seeking to get hold of the Kama trade route, the Bulgars hampered the penetration of foreign merchants into these regions by spreading rumors about wild areas and the awful character of the local population in the north; by scaring them with cold. They were involved in intermediary transit trade between Middle Asia, the Caucasus, Rus' and the Cis-Kama region, which more and more involved products of Bulgar craftsmanship. The exchange equivalent was valuable fur. The discovery of steel-yards, scales and weights for weighing goods and determining the weight of coins in the

Bulgar weighing system in Rodanov, Anyushkar, Gorodeschensk and Kudimkar, indicate the trading activity of the Bulgars in the Upper Cis-Kama region.

'The Tale of Per' (Komi-Permyak) tells about his trip to the Lower Cis-Kama region and about paying the purchase tax to the Bulgar feudal lord. 'The Tale of Kudim Osh' tells about trade with the Bulgars. But archaeological materials are the most vivid with more than 250 medieval archaeological sites with items of Bulgar craftsmanship being found in the Upper Cis-Kama region (Uralic Cis-Kama region).

Pottery ware of the so called 'general Bulgar type' comes forward among those items of Bulgar craftsmanship found in 44 settlements of the Lomovaton and Rodanov period; it is found in the majority of Lomovaton-Rodanov settlements in the southern regions of their distribution and in a number of northern landmarks.

This include reduction-fired ceramics of a gray color (relatively little) dating to the 9th century and ceramics of a brown, yellow and red color oxidized by roasting, dating to the 10–13th centuries. In the lower layer of Anyushkar in Inva (the 9–11th centuries) they comprise up to 12% of all vessels rarely being polished and having ornamentation like waved and contoured lines, 'herring-bone', 'grid', rows of short picot stamp and acute-angled holes. Such ware is typical of the pre-Mongol layers of Bulgar cities.

More of it was found at the Gorodishchensk site on the River Usolka (16,5%) together with highly decorated Khwarezm ware. Apart from ceramics, it contained some other Bulgar items, which led to the assumption concerning the existence in the region of a trade factory of Bulgar merchants concerned about getting not only furs, but also salt, deposits of which were found in the region.

Apparently, the same factories were founded in two more ancient towns of the Rodanov culture—Anyushkar, where the ratio of Bulgar ceramics in layers of the 11–13th centuries increases up to 15%, and in Rozhdestvensky, where three two-staged pottery furnaces of the Bulgar type were excavated buried in the ground, and the amount of Bulgar vessels (jars,



Antiquities of Rodanov culture. Weapons, tools, houseware, jewels  
[Finno-Ugrians and Balts in the Middle Ages, 1987, p. 313]

large pot, pots, bowls, frying pans, lamps) was close to 80%.

In terms of the ratio of moulded ware to pottery, the Rozhdestvensky site can be correlated with actual Bulgar ancient settlements of central Volga Bulgaria, where the ratio between the Cis-Kama and Cis-Ural and general Bulgar pottery ware is approximately the same. Pottery ware contains parts of glazed ceramics painted with brown-green, green

and yellow-green glazes. Such ceramics were popular both in pre-Mongol Bulgaria and the Golden Horde period of Bulgaria. However, the main bulk of Bulgar ceramics from the Rozhdestvensky site were represented by unglazed ware. The outer surface of the main bulk of unglazed ceramics is very smooth and contains traces of polishing, as well as wide intersecting lines and thick parallel bands. Apart from polishing, the outer surface of

ware has traces of soaking, and as a result, 4% of the ware with a red-brown body has a gray surface. The potters of Bulgar city trade centers adopted this rare way of surface processing in the 12th century. About a quarter of all the unglazed vessels are ornamented. The majority of the ornamented vessels are decorated by a linear ornament of one-three lines. The second large group of vessels is decorated with a 'notched' multiple-line wave and also by a more sharp one, three-line wave. Apparent drop-shaped patching and short notched ornaments were also noticed. Around twenty vessels are corrugated. The collection also contains parts of vessels with ears decorated with button-shaped plates.

Kitchenware (pots, milk jars) constitutes up to 1/3 of the unglazed vessels, dish-ware (bowls, saucers, mugs, frying pans and their covers) up to 13%. The rest of the ware is represented by jars, large pots, lamps, sphaerocones. Properly processed jar lids are of much interest. It is hardly possible that kitchenware was used as package ceramics and, probably, to a lesser degree than ceremonial ware and that jars could have been a commodity. The presence of a large amount of Bulgar ware, especially kitchenware, obliges us to consider it as a local product. This is supported by the discovery of the aforementioned pottery furnaces at the site.

All three furnaces found at the Rozhdestvsky site represent a double-staged buried construction without a storey post and with an extended head for the furnace chamber. These furnaces are very similar to the simple double-staged furnaces with horizontal partition but without any support, known as the first type of furnaces in Volga Bulgaria. According to observations by N. Kokorina, such furnaces were wide-spread among urban and rural craftsmen [Kokorina, 1983, p. 63–67].

The planigraphic distribution of Bulgar ware in Rozhdestvsky is of great interest. Most of it was collected during excavations near the ramparts of the ancient town. This circumstance can be associated with either the localisation of Bulgar settlement in the ancient town or the presence of a residential sector. Only the household and production facilities

were excavated at the corner of the area near the contemporary cliff.

The Rozhdestvesky and Anyushkarsky burial sites contain separate necropolises where burials were handled according to Islamic rules [Belavin, Krylasova, Lents, 2002, pp. 106–124].

For instance, 23 burials which were completed according to Islamic rules were discovered at the Rozhdestvsky burial site. The heads of skeletons were oriented to the west or west/southwest, and the faces were turned to the south. Skeletons were placed according to the burial posture 'in a supine position turned to the right', legs slightly folded at the knees, the remnants of foot bones turned to the right, the right arm stretched along the thigh or slightly folded, the left arm folded at the elbow and placed upon the pelvis. Such burial posture corresponds to the Qibla, typical of pre-Mongol burials of Muslim Bulgars.

According to the observations of E. Khalikova, the most explicit (archaeologically speaking) features of Islamic burial traditions in pre-Mongol period Volga Bulgaria were the following. Firstly, it is position of the deceased with the face towards the Qibla (Mecca), taking into consideration the latitude of Volga-Kama and the Cis-Ural regions means that head is to face the west with a deviation to the north or south, the body slightly turned to the right and head turned to the right with the face towards the south. Deviations from this orientation may reach 20–30°, as a result of the inaccuracy of geographic measurements or the errors of astronomic tools. According to the observations of E. Khalikova, the turn of the body might be explicit or very slight, and it is determined by the general 'supine' position of the skeleton, with slightly folded legs, the right arm stretched along the body (its hand might be upon pelvis or arm might be folded at the elbow and lie upon the chest, etc.). The position of the hands doesn't depend on gender, age or affiliation with any stream of Islam of the deceased. The variety of their positions is especially typical of Islamic cemeteries in Bulgaria in the first half and middle of the pre-Mongol period (10–12th centuries). Especially this slight turn to the right had become a

regular posture in Islamic necropolises of pre-Mongol period Bulgaria [Khalikova, 1986, pp. 45–46, 58].

Thus, the position of the deceased on the right is stipulated by Islamic canons and might be considered by archaeologists of the Volga-Kama region who analyze aboriginal burial sites dating to the 10–15th centuries, as the possible influence of Islamic canons, but not as a feature typical of pagan rituals or its vestiges. Generally speaking, compliance with the Qibla in the majority of burials is a typical feature of Islamic necropolises.

Some Islamic graves in the Rozhdestvesky burial site contain iron L-shaped nails lying across the grave on the bottom. Nails represented 5–7 cm long narrow triangular plates with a 1–2 cm long bend at the base. This type of nail was widely used in Volga Bulgaria in the middle and latter half of the pre-Mongol period (end of the 11–13th centuries) for nailing together coffins.

The Islamic burial site itself is located on the ancient town outskirts, right at the outer side of the rampart and ditch (gully), separating the settlement from the uninhabited part. Generally speaking, the graves and structure of the necropolis have analogies with pre-Mongol Islamic cemeteries in Volga Bulgaria, the most complete analogies, including details of ceremony, topography, nature of burials are traced to the I, II and IV Bilyar necropolises. All this combined surely serves as a record of the direct presence of Bulgars in the aforementioned settlements.

The remnants of a Islamic pre-Mongol necropolis were also found at the mouth of the River Inva near the outer border on the spit of another large Rodanov site in Anyushkar (Kylasov). Thus, the topography of the Islamic necropolis in Anyushkar is congruent with the topography of the Rozhdestvensky cemetery, just as the character of the settlement does. In total, 9 partially or entirely preserved graves were studied here by G. Lents and A. Terekhin. All the graves are located in the clay and loam layers which formed as a result of the reconstruction of the defensive fortifications of the ancient town most likely at the beginning of the 12th century. The skeletons were lying in a

supine position turned to the right, their heads facing to the west or west/south-west, their face towards the south, while the right arm was either stretched along the body or folded upon the pelvis or chest, and the left arm was slightly turned, shifted to the right and lying upon the stomach. The legs were stretched or crossed and the feet bones turned to the right. One of the graves contained the remnants of a wooden coffin. Wrought-head nails, scattered across the grave, and the brackets of coffins were found at the bottom of the majority of the graves. Similar nails (T- and L-shaped) and brackets were widely present in Islamic cemeteries of Volga Bulgaria in the latter half of the pre-Mongol period.

Apparently, there is good reason to localize the kasaba of Afkula ('Fortress at the turn') located on the banks of River Obva and consider the largest medieval landmark of the Perm Cis-Ural region the Rozhdestvensky archaeological complex as its remnants. 'Kasaba'—from Persian meaning 'a small town'. According to written sources, the kasaba of Afkula was the capital of Chulyman, that is Kama country. The last reference to the 'kasaba of Afkula' is dated to 1412 in the work of the Egyptian encyclopedist al-Qalqashandi: 'The country of Aftakun, the northern neighbor of the country of Bulgar. Their main city is the small Aftakun'. At the same time (turn of 14–15th centuries), the country of Jolman (Chulman) is mentioned by Maghrebian Ibn Khaldun.

The ancient town of Rozhdestvensky that has an unusual sub-rectangular form, in comparison to other such sites, is a center of this complex. According to the description of captain N. Rychkov, who visited the ancient town in the 18th century, the territory of the town was full of processed limestone, pieces of bricks and green tiles, and in rampart there were 'gates made from wild stone', which were later stripped by the local population for the foundations of their izbas. The western side of the sub-rectangular area of the Rozhdestvensky site borders with the minor Filippovsky site which contains a powerful rampart and deep ditch, traces of gates through the rampart and remnants of an earth tower base on the ditch



side facing the deep but narrow stone ravine separating the two sites.

The bone-carver workshop, remnants of the Bulgar type pottery furnaces and traces of an underground route leading from the area of the landmark to the Obva river bank, were studied by A. Belavin at the Rozhdestvensky site. It is revealing that the osteological material from this complex doesn't contain pig bones, but contains camel bones. On the ground level of the Rozhdestvensky site and on the fresh tillage is a vast spot of the cultural layer—the remnants of unfortified trading quarters. The total area of the two simultaneously existing ancient towns and trading quarters is about 6.5 hectares.

Fortifications around the border of the Islamic burial site of the pre-Mongol period on the east, and across a small ravine is the Finno-Ugric burial site, typical of the Lomovaton and Rodanov cultures. The total area of the necropolis is around 3.5 hectares. Taking into consideration the density of the burials (around 4 square metres/per grave), we can assume that around 8.5 thousand people were buried there. Apparently, this is not the only necropolis of the largest locality in the Perm Cis-Ural region with a so complicated early-city structure. There was a pagan sanctuary around 1.5 km away from the complex of settlements, its remnants scientifically known as the 'Volgin treasure' (dated 1852).

By Chulyman it is reasonable to see the second largest and important medieval ancient town in the Perm Cis-Ural region—Anyushkar (Kylasov), located at the point where the River Inva meets the Kama. It is typical that during excavations at this site, V. Oborin studied a pottery furnace similar to the two-stage furnaces at Rozhdestvensky.

A lot of jewellery, household items and weaponry associated with Bulgar material culture were found in the Uralic Cis-Kama region. Plates and silver articles of luxury (temple rings, plates, lunulas, torcs, bracelets, rings, etc.), sometimes gilded, decorated with granulation, filigree, incrustation and mint, as well as items of bone-carving (crests, fasteners, hilts), stone-cutting, glass-making (necklace) and forging (weaponry, shaped and cylindrical locks, some

tools, etc.) circulated in the Upper Cis-Kama region in the 9–12th centuries. Casting molds found in the cities of Volga Bulgaria show that Bulgar foundry-men manufactured brass-ware upon the orders of the Finno-Ugric population.

Bulgar jewelries represented in the Uralic Cis-Kama region by numerous discoveries in various areas, burial sites and treasure hoards. Often treasure hoards consist entirely of Bulgar jewellery (Vilgortsky, Piskorksky, Anninsky). In general, their geographical distribution coincides with the distribution area of other items of Bulgar trade and illustrates the penetration route of Bulgar silver and other goods into the Ob River and the northern Cis-Ural regions (Perm Vychegodskaya). According to the existing typology, Bulgar jewellery discovered in the Cis-Urals can be divided into the following types: head and neck-pieces, pendants, pins, bracelets, rings, belts, and various clothing accessories.

Head-pieces among the Bulgars are represented by temple rings and pendants. 24 single beaded, 5 double beaded, 19 triple beaded and 4 multiple beaded temple ring of Bulgar manufacture were found in the Perm Cis-Urals. Overwhelming majority of them were made from silver, but there were also items made from gold and bronze. Some rings had traces of blackening, while some rings are silver or gilt. According to the position of rings in grave No. 20 in the burial site of Telyachy Brod (the river Usva), temple rings were worn on a headband with 2–4 pieces around the temples.

Of particular interest are golden triple beaded temple rings with a duck, discovered in 1895 at the Maikar site in the center of the village Maikar at the mouth of the River Inva. The rings contain pendants in the form of balanoid beads and are highly decorated with granulation, filigree (they are now kept in the State Hermitage Museum, Stroganov's collection). They are absolutely identical with rings discovered in Bilyar and kept in the State Historical Museum, and evidently, were manufactured in the same jeweler's workshop.

According to scholars, this kind of jewellery was also used as amulets and reflect the cosmogonic and even pagan beliefs of the Bulgars [Valeeva, 1983, pp. 43–44]. Triple beaded sil-

ver rings at the Anyushkar site were found in a birch-bark box together with other silver jewellery, which indicates their special social significance. Discoveries of temple rings at Antybar (the River Chusovaya) and in the burial sites of Selyanino Ozero and Kishertsy (the River Silva basin) show the penetration route of this kind of jewellery into the Trans-Urals, and discoveries on the River Vishera basin show the distribution route of this kind of jewellery to Vychegda.

The temple pendants with pear-shaped (pin-shaped) tips bear the same significance as temple rings. According to scholars, these pendants are derived from the temple rings of the Lomovaton period (R. Goldina) and were manufactured locally (M. Ivanova). More convincing is the argument of F. Valeev, who believes that this kind of pendant comes from the Saltovsky antiquities (Valeev, Valeeva-Suleymanova, 1987, pp. 46–47). These pendants have a broad chronological range (9–13th centuries). The earliest examples were found in the Tigansky burial site [Khalikova, 1976, pp. 120–140], later examples were discovered at the Bilyar, Semenovskiy sites and other areas. The described pendants are widely present in the Cis-Ural region, where more than 60 items were found in burial sites, treasure hoards and areas only on the territory of the Perm Cis-Ural region, while in the Udmurt Cis-Ural region they were found in the graves of the Maloveniysky, Chemshai, Varninsky burial sites. It is indicative that these kinds of pendants weren't found in the northern Rodanov landmarks, and consequently, there is a lack of them in the landmarks of the Vym culture. The main direction of movement of this jewellery is to the east through the lands of Cis-Ural Visu to Trans-Ural Yura. The most eastern point of discovery of pendants with a pear-shaped ending in the Cis-Ural region is the Vashkursky burial site on the river Chusovaya. A lack of them in the northern Trans-Ural region might have one more explanation. These kind of pendants were popular among the Ugric people of the Trans-Ural and Trans-Ural regions, which is evidenced by limited discoveries of them in the Udmurt Trans-Ural region where a Finnish-speaking population was prevailing, and also

by widespread use among the proto-Magyars (Tigan burial site). Discovery of such pendants within the Arkhangelsk treasure hoard of the 12th century is of great interest. However, it is possible that these pendants, like multiple beaded rings, might be the products of some jewellery center in the Kama river region.

Braids were one of the most interesting and typically Bulgar head-pieces, such as the chulpi and tezme. The chulpi was a braid that was either braided or fixed at the bottom, while the tezme was located a bit higher. Both types of braids were often combined with amulet boxes (Quran boxes), and were connected to them and between each other by chains. We need to mention that this element of head-dress was typical of Bulgar women and the Old Hungarians since the 8–9th centuries and was in circulation up until the 18th century. The braid as a mandatory part of the Bulgar female dress, and couldn't be a mass object of exchange. Rare examples of such braids in the Perm Cis-Ural region came here together with Bulgar women living in the trade factories. In total, 5 braids like the chulpi and tezme were found in the Perm Cis-Ural region. Pieces of silver braids and tezme were discovered at the Redikarsky and Rozhdestvensky sites.

Another type of Bulgar head-piece is the takiya [skull cap], which is highly decorated with silver plates. Round, square, cross-shaped and multi-lobe plates with granulation, filigree and insets from such caps are widely seen in the Cis-Ural region. They have a very wide geographical distribution—from the Udmurt Cis-Ural region to the Vym burial sites. Most of them were found in the Perm Cis-Ural region. A wonderful example of such work is displayed by one of the redikarsky treasures, with 7 multi-lobe and round plates, as well as the Vilgortsky treasure with multi-lobe, square and round plates.

'Samovarchik' [small samovar] shaped pendants that circulated among the Bulgars in the 9–13th centuries were used as amulets. Apparently, these pendants were used as aromatic amulets. It should be noted that 'samovarchiks' were manufactured by Bulgar craftsmen. An excellent example of such a pendant made from silver, decorated with filigree and big granula-

tion pyramids was found during excavations in Kylasov; bronze 'samovarchiks' were found in the Malo-Anikov, Rozhdestvesky, Redikarsky, Ogrudinsky, Stepanovsky burial sites, Rozhdestvensky, Solomatovsky, Gorodischensky sites and at Vakinsky. 'Samovarchiks' were also found in landmarks in the Udmurt Cis-Ural region (Varninsky burial site).

A part of the imports from Volga Bulgaria to the Cis-Ural region contained plate-pendants with a 'hunting' subject. 14 of such plates were found in the Uralic Cis-Kama region. The question of their Bulgar origin was resolved by A. Smirnov. Traditionally, plates with a 'hawk' were considered to be items associated with hunter magic and shamanism, and they were recognized as distinctive marks of shamans. Usually, the cult significance of the plates was explained by solar marks, but they could have had not cult, but rather heraldic significance which adds special legal character to this item. This items can be considered a symbol of the high social status of the owner and as a sign of a leader or elder. The circulation of plates with 'hawks' at the stage of formation of class society in the population of the Cis-Ural region amid economical and political cooperation with feudal Volga Bulgaria forces scholars to consider them as some kind of credentials, proving the special rights and authority of their holders. Besides pictures of hawks and solar signs, several animals are depicted on the plates. A bear is depicted on at least six plates, a moose or deer is depicted on three plates, a beaver is depicted on one plate and fur animals are depicted on almost all the plates. It is possible that they represent totemic symbols of clans subordinated to the plate owner.

Given the information that the 'people of Visu' and Chuliman payed kharaj and jizya to the Bulgar 'tsar', that is they were politically and economically dependent on the latter, it ought to be seen the symbols of vassalage in those plates and the symbols of officials [credential signs] who were entitled to represent the interests of the Bulgar administration in some areas of the Cis-Ural and the Ob River regions.

Thick bracelets, made from 4–6 braided silver wires, were popular among the Bulgar nobility. Such bracelets are the most typical for

the period of the 11–12th centuries, that is the age of progress of the Bulgar jewellery trade. In the Perm Cis-Ural region, these bracelets were found in the Obva river basin, in the Cherdinski region, on the territory of the Komi-Permyak okrug and at the Solomatov site on the River Usva (the Chusovaya river basin). Quite often these bracelets form a part of treasure hoards.

The multiplicity and explicit uniqueness of the granulated and blackened jewellerys found in the Uralic Cis-Kama region is explained not only by imports from Bulgar jewellery centers, but also by the possible rise of their own jewellery and silver forging center in the trans-Ural region under Bulgar influence and with the involvement of Bulgar craftsmen. Many details of beaded rings and ring decorations found in the Cis-Kama region are a bit different from similar items found in Volga Bulgaria, however, their overall appearance reveals products of Bulgar craftsmanship. The location of this center[s] is still unknown. It could had been located in one of the large settlements of the Cis-Kama region, for instance, at the aforementioned Rozhdestvensky, Gorodischensky or Kylasov archaeological sites. Discoveries of jewellery tools also indicates the presence of a Bulgar jewellery center in the Cis-Kama region. 2 Bulgar matrices for lettering were found in the Cis-Kama region, along with a brass stamp for belt plates with a figure of two lions in the eastern style dating to the 11–13th centuries was found in the village Ruchib of the Cherdynsky uyezd [Report of the Imperial Archaeological Commission for 1911, p. 89]. Jewellery pincers of complex form similar to those in Bilyar were adopted from the Bulgars. Spherical cones that can be used both as a vessel for the transportation of mercury and in combination with glass alembics for silvering and amalgamation were found in some sites (for instance, at Gorodishchensky). Casting molds for pseudo-granulated triangular blocks were found at the Rozhdestvensky and Kylasov sites, and silver drops were found in the cultural layer in the Kylasov site. Apart from the production of silver and bronze (cheaper and more widespread) jewellery, under Bulgar influence there might had been bead production in the Cis-Kama region. Traces of this, includ-

ing unused bulk glass, were found at the Rozhdestvensky archaeological site.

As a result of contacts with the Bulgars, parts of weaponry, locks, keys, bowls, scales and other products of Bulgar craftsmanship were penetrating the various localities of the Perm Cis-Ural region.

Bulgar weaponry is represented in the Perm Cis-Ural region mainly by arrowheads and shear tips. The most commonly observed tips are armour-piercing, which replaced all other types of arrowheads from Bulgar military practice in the 11–13th centuries. Pyramid-shaped arrowheads with massive square or rhombic war tips with an interception on the neck and chisel-shaped are the most typical for Bulgar weaponry of the pre-Mongol period, and other types of arrowheads significantly differed from the arrowheads used by the population of the Cis-Ural region. Bulgar arrows found on the outer parts of the fortifications of ancient towns in the Cis-Ural region indicate possible military operations on the part of the Bulgars. Legends about Bulgar-led raids on local villages have been around the Rozhdestvensky and Gorodishchensky site.

Other items of Bulgar weaponry, including sabers, maces and axes have been found in medieval sites of the Lomovaton and early Rodanov cultures. The discovery of a ceremonial axe in the locality of Pyanteg of the Cherdynsky region is of special interest. It has a wide blade and the surface of the axe is encrusted in silver: the fringe is corrugated, and the saw back and trimming are made of braids of floral ornament. This is typical of Bulgar weaponry widely used in the 12–14th centuries.

Of special note are the quite numerous discoveries of bronze, iron and bone whip handles. Two of them, in the form of a bronze griffin's head, found in the localities of Fedorovo and Mikhaylovo, have analogues with items from Bilyar where a casting mold for these handles was found [The State Museum of the Tatarstan Republic–5427–94, Bil. 95]. The three handles in the form of a horse's head are of much interest, as the bronze one is from the Teploukhov collection, the bone one from Anyushkar and the iron one from Kudymkar. This type of handle also has a lot of analogues with items found

in Bulgaria, first of all in Bilyar. Also interesting is the bronze whip handle in the form of a camel's head. This item was discovered inside a treasure hoard in the locality of Maikar.

Household items are mostly represented by iron locks and their keys. Many locks are brass encrusted and have close analogues with discoveries from Bilyar and other Bulgar localities.

Among items of Bulgar origin are round bone buttons with circular ornaments, square amulets with circular ornaments around the edges and carved head, which were found in the Kudymkar, Rozhdestvensky, Anyushkar and Idnakar sites in layers and constructions of the 12–14th centuries. According to I. Zakirova, who specifically studied the bone-carving trade of the city of Bulgar, such pendants-amulets were popular among the Bulgars following their adoption of Islam. They had Arab prototypes and served as bead dividers [Zakirova, 1988]. It is probable that the presence of such items in localities of the Uralic Cis-Kama region, just like the aforementioned Islamic burial sites, indicates that Muslim-Bulgars lived on this territory.

Bulgars had a significant impact on the development of the economy, trade and lives of the ancestors of the Cis-Ural region's population. Driven by the Bulgars and in order to exchange with them, the population of the Cis-Ural region began to cultivate millet, a popular crop among the Bulgars, which wasn't observed in the Cis-Ural region up until the 11–13th centuries. The Bulgar impact on the development of agriculture among the Perm tribes is to some extent proved by the famous legend about the Chulman pam (prince) Kudym-Osh, who went to the Volga and brought back a grain which the people of the prince began to cultivate and spread around the Cis-Ural region. The legend stresses that before then, the local population did not know about bread and at first considered it an original foreign marvel. Iron tipped ploughs found in many sites in the southern part of the early Rodanov distribution area and dating from the 10–13th centuries, are of Bulgar (or identical) origin. In a later period in the Cis-Ural region, large symmetrical ploughshares begin to appear along with 'horned'

shares, shares with welded plates. Bulgar type coulters were found in the Anyushkar archaeological site. Around the cities of Berezniki and Solikamsk coulters of steppe type heavy plow were found which is again associated with the influence of Bulgar agricultural methods. Thus, it must be acknowledged that farming among the population of the Perm Cis-Ural region rose and developed under the influence of the Bulgars.

The Cis-Ural Ugrians' trade likewise bloomed under the influence of the Bulgars. Inhabitants of the Cis-Kama region known as 'Chulym merchants' became trade intermediaries of the Bulgars in their interactions with northern and western Siberian tribes. Al-Umari states: 'Merchants of our countries, says No-man, do not go beyond the city of Bulgar; Bulgarian merchants reach the River Chulyman, and Chulyman merchants proceed to the Yugra lands which are on the edges of the North'. It is interesting that during excavations of the pagan part of the Rozhdestvensky burial site, a grave of such a 'Chulym merchant' was discovered by N. Krylasova. In grave No. 37 of this site, a unique item for the Cis-Ural was discovered—a trapezoidal silver pendant, on the front side of which Vladimir Svyatoslavich's tamga was depicted, and on the reverse side the symbol of his contemporary, Olaf Tryggvason. According to the reasonable opinion of the author of the discovery, the pendant with these symbols is the credential sign of a merchant, 'bearing seal', one of those given to Bulgar merchants in accordance with the trade agreement between the Bulgars and Vladimir Svyatoslavich in 1006 [Krylasova, 1995, pp. 192–197].

Thus, the period of the 10–the first one third of the 13th centuries is characterized as a period of intensive cooperation between Volga Bulgaria and the peoples of the Upper Cis-Kama region. By the 11–12th centuries Volga Bulgaria almost entirely conquered the lands of the Cis-Ural region. This entitled the Bulgar ruler to collect taxes from the Cis-Kama region: *jizya* and *kharaj*. The role of commer-

cial and political representatives of the state was undertaken by local elites, members of which were authorized to safeguard merchants' interests, thus those of the Bulgar state, and received special credential badges. These badges, round with a depiction of a hawk, have been found in quite large numbers in archaeological sites of the Cis-Ural region (interesting in this respect is the unique, for the Cis-Urals, 'bearing seal' with a symbol of the Rurik dynasty from the Rozhdestvensky burial site). Through such actions, Bulgaria promoted the formation of the foundations of a new society among the population of the Cis-Ural region, to move away from the principles of a primitive society. Bulgars became a part of the local population and their legacy survived for a long time. Two villages in the Perm and Ocher regions are called as 'Bulgars'. In the Inva and Obva basin, where the Anyushkar and Rozhdestvensky sites are located, scholars of the Cis-Kama region's toponymy notice many names of Volga-Turkic origin, which have been formed from Turkic anthroponyms as well. Indicative in this respect is the second name of the Anyushkar site—Kylasovo (named after the village located nearby).

The later fates of both the Bulgars in the Upper Cis-Kama region and the local Ugric-Finn population are closely connected. In the 10–12th centuries, part of the Ugrians of the Cis-Kama region migrated to Volga Bulgaria, while part of them moved beyond the Urals to the Ob River region. Another groups of them died under the blows of Mongol detachments and as a result were assimilated by the ancestors of the Komi-Permyaks who actively penetrated this region in the 11–13th centuries. A group of Bulgars from the Cis-Kama region moved to the area of the Ob River, and somewhere in that area is a center of original 'Bulgar' jewellery trade which was still functioning even during period of the Golden Horde. Evidently, certain groups of Bulgars of the Cis-Kama region were involved in the formation of the contemporary Perm Tatars.

### 3. Ugric tribes in the Eastern Trans-Kama and Cis-Urals regions

*Vladimir Ivanov*

Almost simultaneously with the arrival of the Bulgars in the Middle Volga, Ugrian tribes started moving to the forest-steppe areas situated between the Kama and the western slopes of the South Ural mountain range. They moved there from the east, from the Trans-Ural and Western Siberian forest steppe which since ancient times—the Iron Age—had been the ethnic territory of the Old Ugrians. Researchers have identified with a fair degree of accuracy that already by the first millennium AD, the forest-steppe zone of the Trans-Urals and Western Siberia was an areal of tribe settlements from the Sargat (the Ob-Irtysh interfluvium) and the Gorokhovo (from the Irtysh to the eastern slopes of the Southern Urals), and together their archaeological cultures represented the Ugric-Samoyedic ethno-cultural areal (ECA) [Mogilnikov, 1992, pp. 284, 294 et seq.].

Those were the half-nomadic tribes of cattle-breeders and hunters who, though leading an active life, relied upon multiple small but well-fortified settlements/ancient towns with a circular design. The ethnic culture of the Old Ugric-Samoyedic people involved tight relations, including at the ethno-genetic level, with the Saka-Massagetae nomads from the Khazakh and South Siberian steppes. The latter circumstance took its heaviest toll upon the image of the material culture of the 'Sargat people' and the 'Gorokhovo people', mostly in the sphere of armaments and horse gear which were almost completely identical to the Saka-Massagetae. Secondly, the ethnic/cultural proximity to the Saka-Massagetae contributed to the processes of socio-cultural differentiation between the Sargat and Gorokhovo tribes, which was reflected in the presence of large burial mounds which were similar to the 'tsar' mounds of the Saka and the Sarmatians regarding the complexity of graveside constructions and by the composition of the burial equipment. Lastly, as part of the ethnic/political orbit of the Saka-Massagetae world, the 'Sargat people' and the 'Gorokhovo people'

founded a rich, prosperous civilisation in Middle Asia for themselves, Sogdiana, Bactria, and Khwarezm.

Accordingly, what was known as the Epoch of the Great Migration of peoples also touched the Trans-Ural and Western Siberian Ugrians and Samoyeds. A portion of them were involved in the Huns' campaign to the West<sup>1</sup> and dissipated throughout the space of the Great Zone of the Eurasian Steppes (tribes of the Oghurs-Onogurs in the Huns' army).

In the mid 6th century, Western-Siberian Ugrians came under the ethnic/political orbit of the Great Turkic Khaganate, 'a colonial empire' controlling vast spaces of the Great Steppe Zone from Mongolia to the Crimea. But the basis of this 'empire' was formed by control over the Great Silk Road, which became a stumbling block between the Khaganate and Iran. The endless wars between these states in which the Ugrians undoubtedly participated 'led to the exhausting of powers of not only the Khaganate's social system, but also the Turkic ethnos itself, because only Sogdian merchants and Turkic khans were at an advantage because of the silk trade, not the people in general' [Gumilyov, 1990, p. 93]. As a result, the passionate split occurred, which led to the civil war ending in 604 with the collapse and split of the Great Khaganate into Eastern and Western halves, as well as the destruction of the Old Turkic ethno-political system [Gumilyov, 1990a, pp. 402–404].

One of the consequences of this destruction might also be seen via analogous processes in the ancient Ugrian environment (according to L. Gumilyov's system, their and the Turks' ethnogeny phases were close chronologically [Gumilyov, 1990, p. 77]) which led to a split of the

<sup>1</sup> This is quite natural and logical, especially if we take into account that in the opinion of S. Botalov and S. Gutsalov, since the 2nd century AD 'the territory of the Ural-Ishim interfluvium became the zone of the Hun-Sarmat (Kangju) population's residence over the next two centuries' [Botalov, Gutsalov, 2000, p. 80].

Old Ugrian ethnos and movement away from its most 'passioner' part [The term 'passionarny' was introduced by Russian historian Lev Gumilyov and means a special type of elite who are keen on working in order to achieve certain objectives and attract people into joining them using their charisma], the Old Madyars westwards, to the Cis-Ural area. It was not difficult to complete this transition because according to the results of the newest historical and geographical research, the short mountains of the Southern Urals at the time provided for the existence of a 'Trans-Ural route' 'leading from the upper reaches of Miass to the southern point of the insular Mesyagutovskaya forest-steppe, and further along the valley of the Sim river to its influx into the Belaya river. In other words, it was the narrowest place of the ridges in the area of present-day transportation arteries connecting Chelyabinsk and Ufa' [Savelyev, 2001, p. 140 et seq.].

The Ugrians, moving in two splitting directions—westwards and to the northwest—settled in two different areas of the Cis-Urals: in the Kungur-Mesyagutovskaya forest-steppe (the Nevolino culture) and in the basin of the middle and lower stream of the Belaya river (the Kushnarenkovo culture). They represented two relative, yet ethnographically different, groups of Ugric tribes. Members of the 'Nevolino', as judged by the extant archaeological material, led a settled way of life. This is clearly evidenced by the geography and topography of Nevolino burial sites and their settlements: their arrangement by groups with an ancient town in the centre, their large size, access points protected by several guards, multiple ancient settlements surrounding it consisting of log houses sunk slightly in the earth or half-dugouts with stone furnaces, as well as household and industrial premises—smithies or foundries—and pit cellars [Goldina, 1987, p. 16]. Farming based upon agriculture and sheep breeding contributed, in the opinion of researchers, to the separation of patriarchal families and the separation of neighbouring communities within Nevolino society [Goldina, Vodolago, 1984, p. 33].

The 'Kushnarenkovo' people had a more flexible way of life evidenced by the absence

of stationary settlements among them. Moving around from river bank to river bank, mostly on the Belaya river and its large tributaries, they reached the Kama. It is hard to say how they managed to cut across the Kama and end up settled on its right bank. Its vivid evidence is presented by a respectable collection of the peculiar Kushnarenkovo ceramics at the ancient towns of Blagodatskoe I and Kuzebaevskoe in Southern Udmurtia.

But these are the most western from the Kushnarenkovo monuments of the Cis-Urals presently known. On the assumption of the geography of monuments belonging to the culture we are studying, one of the areas of the most compact and thus dense settlement of the Kushnarevo Ugrians in the region was the lower reaches of the Belaya and Ik rivers, or the Kama-Belaya-Ik floodplain located in the east of present-day Tatarstan, where at present we know roughly fifty Kushnarenkovo ancient settlements, burial sites and places where ceramics were found (short-term camps) [Kazakov, 1981]. In terms of the population of this region, residents did not simply choose it on accident: vast floodplains had intensive summer herbage (the main pasture is still situated in the lower reaches of the Belaya river), reeds abounded with game (even today a great number of breeding grounds for hunting are there), and it contained excellent fishing spots. All of this provided great opportunities for the stable life of Ugrian migrants. Moreover, the region's conditions in the sense of landscape and geography were of an incredible similarity to their original ethnic territory.

However, the Ugrians' further advance into the Kama's lower reaches stopped at the northern territory of the settlements of the Imenkovo culture. After developing the territory around the Kama estuary, the 'Imenkovo' people insulated themselves in the east, north and west with a chain of ancient towns that became an insuperable barrier for the advance of other tribes to the Middle Volga Region. They seemed to have been reluctant to make contact with their neighbours themselves. In any event, research carried out by G. Matveeva show extremely weak traces of an active cultural exchange between bearers of the Imenkovo cul-

ture and the Cis-Ural Ugrians and Cis-Kama Finno-Ugrians [Matveeva, 2003, pp. 62–65]<sup>2</sup>.

And vice versa, the material culture of the Kushnarevo and Nevolino populations have vivid traces of relations with the South, meaning Middle Asia and the Caucasus. This is evidenced by exemplars of belt sets of what are known as the 'heraldic' type, Iranian metal plastic items and seamlessly forged 8-shaped stirrups discovered at Kushnarevo and Nevolino burial sites.

'Heraldic' belts are a product of Byzantine decorative art, and they were popular in the 6th and 7th centuries in the Northern Caucasus and the Black Sea region. Nomads of the Aral Sea area and ancient Turks were also familiar with them. It is quite possible that as a result of Turkic-Ugric relations (joint campaigns in Middle Asia or the Ugrians' participation in the conquest of Crimea in 577), belts of this type became firmly ingrained in Ugrian culture.

The characters of Iranian mythology became a part here in a similar way, such as the winged lions/simurghs which decorated the belt buckle found at the Manyaksky burial site, the dragon decorating the belt buckle discovered at the Bartymsky burial site, birds of prey tearing deer heads to pieces (pendants from burials of the Nevolino culture) and others, as well as 8-shaped stirrups, which were a generally recognised product of Old Turkic equestrian culture.

In the mid 8th century, the Turks, who had already reached the level of an ethnic consortium or a sub-ethnos (the Bulgars, Khazars, Uighurs, Kyrgyz) [Gumilyov, 1990a, p. 111, 344], or to put things simply, experienced the split of the Turkic super-ethnos, could not already have an essential impact upon the ethnic-cultural processes of neighbouring territories. Most often, they served as external catalysts causing chain reactions of movement both within the ethnos (the Khazars pressed the Bulgars out from the Northern Caucasus, and the Uighurs pushed out the Kyrgyz away from Altai), and

among its neighbours (the Bulgars who came up the Volga ended the existence of the Imenkovo people in the Middle Volga region).

Apparently, this is how the mechanism of ethnic movement worked in Western Siberia, where another wave of Ugric-Magyar migrants known in the region as bearers of the Karayakupovo culture came to the forest-steppe Cis-Urals at the specified time.

The genetic proximity of the 'Karayakupovo' people with the preceding 'Kushnarenkovo' people who had also inhabited the territory of the Cis-Urals can be vividly traced by the main morphological features of their archaeological cultures, and first and foremost by their burial ceremonies [Ivanov, 1999, p. 66]. Therefore, it is quite natural that new aliens in the Cis-Urals got settled almost on the same territory as their fellow 'Kushnarenkovo' people. The areal of the Karayakupovo culture included the basin of the middle and lower stream of the Belaya river, the mountain-forest areas of the Southern Urals (Lagerevsky and Karanaevsky burial sites), and the Eastern foothills of the Southern Urals (I and II Bekeshevsky and Novo-Muraptalovsky burial mounds). In the west, the 'Karayakupovo' people almost reached the Kama estuary (Bolshe-Tigansky burial site), but we should assume that their further advance to the Volga-Kama area was also stopped by the Old Bulgars. It seems that a Bolshe-Tigansky burial site marks the outermost western borders of Ugric-Magyar expansion in the Cis-Urals. The distance between this one and the synchronous Tankeevsky burial site of the Old Bulgars is roughly 80 km away by land—that is, a two-day journeys on horse. Despite intensive archaeological examination of Eastern Tatarstan, other similar monuments have not been discovered along this route. This allows us to suggest that there was no ethnic-cultural merger or symbiosis between the Bulgars and Ugric-Magyars of the Cis-Urals at the initial stages of the formation of their nationhood in the Volga-Kama area. The reason for this was likely the equivalence of the military and social structures of the two ethnoses which emerged on adjacent territories at the same time and due to similar ethnic-political collisions. It would have been logical for the Ugric-Magyars and

<sup>2</sup> The researcher believes that 'Imenkovo tribes maintained tight contacts with both their closest neighbours and the population of extremely remote zones'. But the archaeological material she uses to prove this statement does not seem to be sufficient.



the Old Bulgars to have started a struggle for hegemony in the region. However, the extant archaeological material does not provide us ground to opine on military confrontations between the two peoples. One exception is, however, the fact that most of the known Karayakupovo burial sites are localised in the Eastern part of the Cis-Urals, while the few ancient towns (Staro-Kalmashevskoe, Taptykovskoe, Chukralinskoe, Karayakupovskoe) are vice versa protracted westwards, in the direction of the Old Bulgarian territory.

We may also assume that the situation was eased by the fact that the closest northern neighbours of the 'Karayakupovo' Ugrians were their relatives, the 'Nevolino' Ugrians, who by the time under discussion had already firmly settled in the north of the Kungursko-Mesyagutovskaya forest-steppe. It appears that they were the ones who determined the direction and composition of the ethnic/cultural connections established between the tribes who in the 8–9th centuries inhabited the territory between the Kama and the Ural mountains.

If we compare the image and components of the 'Nevolino' people and the 'Karayakupovo' people's material culture, especially in such categories as costume decoration, women's jewelery, armaments and horse harnesses, we are convinced of their exclusive proximity and even equivalence. Both cultures are first of all characterised by the prevailing belt sets of what is known as the Turkic type, the garniture of which consisted of oval-framed buckles with a flexible tongue and a seamless square or oval panel, square, segmental and figured coverings with cut-outs, round or heart-shaped coverings, belt buckles of a half-oval shape or with sharp endings that were either plain or ornamented. It is interesting that both in the Nevolino and Karayakupovo cultures, belts decorated with plates are equally characteristic both for women's and men's outfits. They are actually even more common for women.

Women's jewelery includes bracelet styles identical in both cultures (laminar and faceted), rings, temple pendants with additional appendants (pendants of the 'Saltovo' type), noisy arch-like and horse-like pendants/splints, trapézoidal jour pendants and so on.

The same may be said about the accessories of horse harnesses, where there was an abundance of 'Turkic' 8-shaped stirrups, arch-like stirrups with a bent footstep and a protracted loop for stirrup leather and a bar-bit with a stalky or S-shaped psalia (such stirrups and bar-bits have been determined as items of the Saltovo type).

Thus, three ethnic/cultural components may be distinguished in the material culture of the Cis-Ural Ugrians in the 8–9th centuries: Cis-Kama, Cis-Ural (Ugrian, we might assume), and the Turkic and Saltovo (Alanian-Bulgarian). The latter, at first glance, suggests that the source of this ethnic/cultural impulse is in the Volga-Kama Bulgars themselves. However, the results of comparative typological analysis of components belonging to the Old Bulgarian and Ugrian material cultures show that in the sphere of armaments, horse harnesses and belts decorated with plates, the Bulgars, in whose material culture said categories of items occupied an unimportant place [Ibid., p. 74], can hardly be presented as 'trendsetters' for the Cis-Kama and Cis-Ural tribes.

It is natural that the question of how Turkic and Saltovo products penetrated into the Cis-Ural exists. In regards to the first set, it is fairly straightforward. Firstly, in the 8th and 9th centuries, the traditions of the Turkic-Ugrian ethnic/cultural connections continued to be maintained. Secondly, the archaeological material allows us to speak about the presence of a Steppe trade route during this period—an alternative to the Volga route—leading from Middle Asia to the Cis-Urals and Cis-Kama area. This route, in V. Morozov's opinion, came from Middle Asia along the plateau of Ustyurt, through the Kazakh, Orenburg, Bashkir steppes, and the Belaya river to the influx of the Ufa river and through the Ufa river to the upper reaches of the Iren and Sylva rivers and then further, to the 'Permian' region [Morozov, 1996, p. 152]. Several facts point to this, first of all the 'Turkic' belts decorated with plates widely spread among the Cis-Ural Ugrians, which the Turks themselves had adopted from the Sogdia. The areal of these zones in the north-west was limited by the forest Cis-Kama area. However, sometimes they were found among

the Old Mordvins (Zhuravkinsky, Kryukovo-Kuzhnovsky burial sites), but were still absent among the Volga-Kama Bulgars. The latter circumstance gives us the foundation to assert that these types of products could have penetrated into the Middle Volga region through the Cis-Kama area.

The cartography of discoveries of Sasanid coins from the 6–8th centuries, mainly in the form of jewelry, indicates the way of their penetration into the Cis-Kama area through the territory of bearers of the Karayakupovo (Sterlitamaksky burial site, Bekeshevo II burial mounds) and the Nevolino (Verkh-Sainsky and Nevolinsky burial sites) cultures<sup>3</sup>.

However, what is most important, discoveries of items of the Iranian (Sogdian) toreutics definitely point to the presence of the Steppe trade route, which passed through the lands of the Cis-Ural Ugrians: these items include a plate with a picture of tsarevich Bakhram Gur hunting ghazals found in Orenburg oblas, a cup from the Sterlitamaksky (Levashovsky) burial site, plates, bowls and a rhyton found in the Avryuztamaksky treasure in the upper reaches of the Demä river, and a bowl with a picture of the tsar hunting from the Ufa treasure.

In general, at present there are 73 items of imported toreutics, among which dominate Sasanid and Sogdian items, that are known in the forest and forest-steppe Cis-Urals. The former are characterised by the set of plots typical for Sasanid Iran: scenes of a tsar hunting, a tsar on the throne, incarnations (embodiments) of Zoroastrian deities as well as scenes of Zoroastrian feasts. The latter is represented by plates and bowls ornamented with pictures of mountain goats with scarfs on their necks (the incarnation of the Zoroastrian god Khvarenah), winged camels (the incarnation of the god Verethragna), scenes of a tsar feast but framed by the typical Sogdian floral ornamentation (the 'A' Sogdian artistic school according to B. Marshak) [Marshak, 1971].

<sup>3</sup> Throughout the Volga, from its estuary to the Kama estuary, 18 Sasanid drachms from the end of the 5–mid-9th centuries have been found [Morozov, 1996, p. 149 et seq.], while in the area of the Karayakupovo, Nevolino and Lomovatovo cultures 210 have been discovered, 10 of which were extracted from Karayakupovo and Nevolino burial sites.

We can distinguish a small group of Khwarezmian bowls decorated with the picture of a four-armed goddess (Shiva?) and Byzantine plates, jars and bowls ornamented with pictures of the Christian cross, and pictures of naked female dancers and female musicians [Barynina, 2001, p. 32 et seq.].

Thus, Middle Asia was the source from which items of artistic silver, including belts decorated with plates, penetrated into Cis-Uralic Ugrian culture<sup>4</sup>.

Silver is a metal that the Ugrians traditionally considered to have a sacred significance. Thus, it is obvious that the collection of scenes drawn on the imported housewares was not random, and in any event the Ugrians simply treated its characters through the prism of their own religion and mythology.

It is a more difficult task to interpret the presence of multiple elements of the Saltovo-Mayaki (Alanian-Bulgarian) culture in the Cis-Ural Ugrians' culture. In order to do this, several moments in the Khazar Khaganate's history must be mentioned.

In the 7th century, Khazaria represented a fairly complex and ethnically variegated state which, apart from the Khazars themselves (the Turkic clan of Ashina), included the Alans, Kavars and Bulgarians who remained in the Northern Caucasus and in the Azov Sea area after the collapse of Great Bulgaria of khan Kubrat [Pletneva, 1986, pp. 21–23]. The section of Bulgarians who detached from the Khazars (the 'Kutrigur clans' according to G. Vernadsky) and moved to the area of the Samara Bend, where there have been found monuments of the Novikovo type, were potential rivals and represented a northern threat despite the fact they paid tribute to the khan. From the South, in the Caucasus as early as the beginning of the 7th century, the energetic Arabians who accomplished their conquest of Iran in 651 started to press down on the Khazars. What options did the Khazars' Khagan have in these circumstances? He had to look for allies. And the arrival of the Ugrians in the Cis-Urals, who

<sup>4</sup> In V. Morozov's opinion, both Sasanian and Byzantine artistic metal penetrated the Cis-Kama region as a result of the intermediary trade of Middle Asian merchants [Morozov, 1996, p. 159 et seq.].

threatened the Bulgars from the East, was just in time.

We do not know yet when and how the Khazars contacted the Cis-Ural Ugrians. But the archaeological material shows that beginning in the mid 8th century, exemplars of Saltovo-Mayaki jewelry (earring pendants and clasp nails), harnesses and armaments become widely spread throughout Karayakupovo and Nevolino complexes. Besides, in the Karayakupovo (burial sites in the southern part of the Karayakupovo areal) and Nevolino armament complexes, there is a predominance of Saltovo weapon types [Ovsyannikov, 2000, pp. 19–23].

Contact must have existed between the Cis-Ural Ugrians and the Khazars, because before the end of the 9th century (before the arrival of the Pechenegs and Oghuzes), the Trans-Volga steppes of the South Cis-Urals had been controlled by the Khazars. Archaeological materials also point to the same thing: Volgograd archaeologist E. Kruglov distinguishes a series of Saltovo (Khazar) burials among all the Trans-Volga nomadic graves dating from the end of the first millennium AD, including Sokolovskaya Balka, Gorshkovks, Dzhangar and others [Kruglov, 2003, p. 14]. It is logical to suppose that these were the graves of Khazar people who guarded and possibly serviced the Steppe Trade Route.

By analogy with the Turks, in the latter half of the 1st millennium AD, the Ugrian ethnos was in a phase of collapse where there was a sharp decrease of 'passioner' [energetic, passionate] tension accompanied by a split in the ethnic field [Gumilyov, 1990a, p. 499]. In other words, the super-ethnos represented by the Ugrians was split into independent relative ethnoses (sub-ethnoses) before the beginning of their migration to the Cis-Urals.

Today, few researchers doubt that one of the Ugrian subethnoses in the Cis-Urals at the end of the 1st millennium were the Ugrians-Magyars, the bearers of the Karayakupovo culture. This has been proven by an extensive range of archaeological data previously extracted by E. Khalikova from the materials of the Bolshe-Tigansky burial site. Here we mean parallels in the elements of the burial ceremony, as well as item complexes of the Bolshe-Tigansky burial

site compared to the ancient Hungarian burials of the Carpathian-Danube basin from the epoch when the Hungarians were starting to inhabit their Motherland (like Tiszaeszlár-Bashalom): shallow and square burial holes, the row layout of burials, the Western orientation of the buried, the presence of horse skulls and bones in graves placed at the feet of the buried person, fragments of the belt-set decorated with a dome-shaped floral ornament and a border at its edges.

Medieval Eastern authors (Ibn Rustah, Bakri, al-Gardizi) obtained basic information about the Magyars from Volga Bulgaria and Khazaria [Zakhoder, 1967, p. 47]—that is, from the territories neighbouring the Magyars, so their historical accuracy can be trusted. Most of all we are interested in the localisation question regarding the Old Magyars within Eastern Europe, about which the above mentioned authors are in agreement that: 'The first Magyar land lies between the land of the Pechenegs and the land of the Bulgarian Esegels' [Ibid., p. 48]. If we take into account that these authors belonged to the Khorasan-Middle Asian geographical school, they perceived the surrounding world from the side of Khwarezm and Transoxiana. Therefore, for them 'the Bulgarian Esegels' were tribes who either lived within Volga Bulgaria, or inhabited the territory that was adjacent to it. From these positions, 'the land of the Pechenegs' was the area of 'Trans-Volga Pechenegia', the borders of which at the end of the 9—the beginning of the 11th centuries spread from the Samara Bend in the West to the Southern Urals and the Mugojar Hills in the east, and also covered the southern steppe areas of present-day Bashkortostan. Finally, judging by the data provided by Hungarian Anonymous, the area of the Magyars ('the Hetumoger') was situated to the east of the Atil-Volga [Erdeli, 1967, p. 175].

This means that 'the first Magyar lands' occupied the area between the Cis-Kama and the steppes of the Southern Cis-Urals—that is, modern Bashkortostan in the Cis-Ural forest-steppe part.

Another factor shedding light on the issue of equivalence between Magna Hungaria and the Bashkir Cis-Urals is how Eastern authors

describe the Old Magyars' nomadic way of life: 'They are people possessing pavilions and tents, they head to places where there is rain and greenery' [Zakhoder, 1967, p. 50]. It is not difficult to be persuaded that exactly this (half-nomadic, to be more precise) way of life was inherent in bearers of the Kushnarenkovo and Karayakupovo cultures in the Southern Urals and Cis-Urals. This is evidenced by the results of the cartography of burial sites and settlements of these tribes (the relation of 'a settlement with a burial nearby' was almost completely absent among them), the very character of Kushnarevo-Karayakupovo settlements (their placement on the dunes or short terraces located above the floodplains, their small size, the thin or poorly-saturated cultural layer), the abundant locations of Kushnarenkovo and Karayakupovo ceramics, especially in the Western Cis-Kama areas, at the edges of the vast Kama-Belaya-Ik floodplain, the absence of traces of stationary dwellings in ancient towns and their equally thin cultural layers and small sizes, and the equestrian cultural image borne by the Kushnarenkovo and Karayakupovo population.

Thus, every source at our disposal (archaeological and toponymic data, information provided by medieval authors) definitely proves E. Khalikova's conclusion about the equivalence of the Magna Hungarias territory with present-day Bashkortostan. A specification here that is not considered essential, but remains rather important, lies in the fact that the ethnic/cultural content of this area was not defined by the Hungarians, but by their ancestors, the Magyars, who were a 'pure' and more 'Ugrian' ethnos if we compare them to the Danube Hungarians.

It may seem improbable at first sight that few (as we see from the extant archaeological monuments) 'Karayakupovo' people could not just cross whole Eastern Europe, but regain Pannonia from the plenty of militant Avars. But as it turns out, apparently the 'Karayakupovo' people did not come to the West alone. Firstly, by the end of the 9th century the Nevolino culture ceased to exist in the Kungursko-Mesyagutovskaya forest-steppe, which as we have already stated, was ethnically relative to the Karayakupovo one. What comes to mind is the

hypothesis that the 'Nevolino' Ugrians could have also migrated together with their 'Karayakupovo' brethren to the West and been one of the ethnic components of the Old Magyar tribal union. Secondly, an analysis of Volga Bulgaria material culture conducted by E. Kazakov supposes that 'in the middle-second half of the 9th century a significant movement of some kind took place in the Kama river region and the Cis-Urals, which was the reason why plastic round-tray ceramics and other related elements of culture appeared in the Middle Volga region' [Kazakov, 1992, p. 247]. This thesis may be developed in the respect that according to the results of the comparative typological analysis of the Cis-Kama and Cis-Urals burial sites, as well as Old Hungarian graves dating from the epoch when the Hungarians started to inhabit their Motherland, the latter are closest to the burial sites of the Nevolino and Polomsky cultures [Ivanov, 1999, p. 66]. This definitely points to the fact that the 'Nevolino' and 'Polomsky' tribes took part in the Old Hungarian Magyars' ethnogeny.

This hypothesis has the right to exist, as not all researchers share R. Goldina's point of view that the 'Polomians' belonged to the Finno-Ugrian (the Old Udmurt) ethnos [Kazakov, 1992, p. 248].

Therefore, the 'seven tribes of the Hetumoger' named by Hungarian Anonymous, who in 884 had cut across the Volga from the east, must have included the 'Karayakupovo', 'Nevolino' and 'Polomovo' people. And they represented a strong power, especially if we take into account the militant character of the Karayakupovo and Nevolino cultures.

With the departure of the Ugrian-Magyar tribes from the Cis-Urals, the Ugrian ethnic-cultural dominant did not cease to inhabit the region. Convincing evidence of this fact can be found in the burial mounds of the 10–11th centuries in the mountain-forest areas of the Southern Urals and the Trans-Urals (Mryasimovsky, Murakaevsky, Karanaevsky, and Sineglazovsky burial sites). Following Karayakupovo monuments chronologically, these also reveal a high coefficient of typological similarity with them, which in our opinion is nothing less than a reflection of the ethnic rela-

tionship with the population who had left these monuments [Garustovich, Ivanov, 1992, p. 24].

The typological similarity to the Karayakupovo burial sites was not the only indicator of the Ugrian affiliation of inhabitants who left burial mounds in the Southern Urals in the 10–11th centuries. Moreover, the ceramics extracted from the Mryasomovo, Karanaevo and Idelbaevo burials mounds (round-tray pots, jars and squat bowl) are also worth mentioning. Judging by the cord and cog ornamentations of the necks and shoulders of these bowls, the vessels find their closest analogues in the ceramics of the Yudino, Makushkino and Petrogrom monuments of the 10–13th centuries in the forest Trans-Urals, the ethnic affiliation of which is defined as Ugrian (Old Mansian, according to V. Mogilnikov).

The same can be attributed to the features of the burial ceremony in the monuments we are considering. Although moundless burials (the Yudino culture) prevailed among the burial sites of the Trans-Ural Ugrians of the 10–13th centuries, mound ceremonies continued to be held (the Makushino type). Horse bones (skulls and legs) were always present in the banked earth of Makushinsky burial mounds. Horse skulls and jaws were found in graves with laid corpses and cremated corpses in the Likinsky burial site of the Yudino culture. The orientation of burials of the Yudino culture is mostly Southern and Southeastern (the Likinsky burial site), but in the Pylaevsky burial site of the same culture there were only found Western and South-Western orientations, while Makushinsky had Western and Northwestern ones, which were the same as the mounds of the 10–11th centuries in the Southern Urals. The positions of the buried were also equal: apart from those placed on their back with outstretched or bent arms, bodies were also found lying on their sides with their legs bent (Murakaevo, c. 3, grave 2; Mryasimovo, c. 15, grave 1; c. 22).

Burial mounds of the 'Mryasimovo type' of the 10–11th century evidence, in our opinion, the start of the penetration of the Ugrian tribes into the Cis-Urals of the group, which in the 12–14th centuries was represented in the region with Chiyalik-type monuments, the bulk of which are located in the lower reaches

of the Kama and Belaya river [Kazakov, 1978, pp. 67–75]. Chiyalik burial sites do not have mounds, and the buried lie in simple square holes on their backs with their arms either outstretched or bent at the elbows. The prevailing orientation is Western or Northwestern. The remains of coffins with traces of fire can often be found in graves (the Kazalarovsky burial site), and coals and fragments of burnt clay can be come across in mounds (Taktalachuk). Most of the burials were made according to Islamic ceremony—that is, without accompanying items and following special canons. However, multiple remnants of pagan Ugrian rituals were also discovered in Chiyalik burial sites, including round-tray vessels with unique plicate-cord ornamentation placed at the top of graves, the remains of horse skin and plaques-blinders (Kushulevsky, #1, 65; Azmeteyevsky I, #44, 50, 93), and women's bracelets, among which pendants with acorn-like beads were the most frequent.

The borders of the areal of monuments belonging to the Chiyalik culture extend over both slopes of the South Ural mountain ridge within the forest-steppe zone. In the West, they tightly adjoin the eastern borders of Volga Bulgaria (the Ik, Tok and Ust-Belsk local groups), and in the east they proceed along the upper reaches of the Ural and Bolshoy Ik rivers (the Ural group) [Garustovich, 1998, p. 9].

The 'Chiyalik' people led a nomadic way of life, which is archaeologically expressed in two settlement types: winter and summer. Summer camps were open settlements built along river banks and consisting of light, wood-framed dwellings. According to the materials extracted from the most investigated summer nomad camps—Gornovo, Tukmak-Karan, Verkhne-Spasskoe, Ishkulovskoe—dwelling types such as yurts and round conical huts, as well as square, frame-pillar constructions with a portal can be distinguished. Winter nomad camps were fortified towns (Chertovo Gorodishche, Kara-Abyz, Turnalinskoe, Gumerovskoe, Nagaevskoe II and others) built up with square half-dugouts or above-ground logged houses with heated stone furnaces, or 'suvals'. In addition, both summer and winter camps featured pit cellars with wood-coated walls,

banyas (?) and cowsheds. In the Gornovsky settlement on the Dyoma river, fragments of a furnace for baking bread were also found [Ibid., pp. 11–13].

Chronologically, monuments belonging to the Chiyalik culture may be divided into two groups: 'Mryasimovo' (the 10–the beginning of the 13th centuries), and the Chiyalik itself (the 13–14th centuries). The former consists of burial mounds of the 'Mryasimovo' type we described above, which were localised in the northern areas of present-day Bashkortostan. They precisely outline the Southern border of the ethnic-cultural areal of the Cis-Ural Ugrians, which during the Mongol period followed along the right bank of the Ufa and Belaya rivers. In the more southern regions of the Cis-Ural forest-steppe between the lower reaches of the Kama, Volga and Southern Ural mountains, no Ugrian monuments of the pre-Mongol time have been identified. This can be explained by the fact that during the period under consideration (beginning with the mid 11th century), the Volga-Ural steppes experienced another wave of nomadic migrations caused by the arrival of the Polovtsian-Kypchak tribes. After battling the Oghuzes away from the Trans-Volga and destroying the Trans-Volga Pechenegia, the Polovtsian-Kypchaks made the Pechenegs and their allies Bashkirs partially retreat to the West and partially escape to the North, the southern outskirts of Volga Bulgaria, and to the territory of present-day Bashkortostan<sup>5</sup>. The movement of nomads out of the steppes could have possibly defined the western direction of the Ugrian migration to the Cis-Urals in the 10–beginning of the 13th centuries. During this period, ceramics decorated with plicate-cord ornamentation characteristic of the Cis-Ural Ugrians could be found throughout all Bulgarian settlements. This indicates that its bearers inhabited the entire territory of Volga Bulgaria [Kazakov, 1992, p. 304].

Volga Bulgaria at this time became a cultural and areal-forming factor for the population of the Middle Volga, Cis-Kama and Cis-Ural

regions. The Kama trade route contributing to the 'Bulgarisation' of the material culture of the Middle and Upper Cis-Kama populations started to be actively used [Belavin, 2000]. Products from Bulgarian craftsmen were brought beyond the Urals to the Ob Ugrians, who were the ancestors of the present-day Khanty and Mansi [Fedorova, 1991]. The ethnic borders of the Volga Finns—the Mordvins, Mari, Meshchera, and Kama Finno-Permians—that is, the Udmurts, started to acquire definite shape.

One of the most meaningful expressions of the cultural and political influence of Volga Bulgaria upon the region's neighbouring tribes was the Islamisation of the Cis-Ural Ugrians. Already in the 11–12th centuries, Chiyaklin-type burial sites (Azmetyevsky, Novo-Sasykulsky, Kushulevsky, Selyaninsky) appeared along Volga Bulgaria's borders. Their burial ceremony was Islamic, though there was some inclusion of paganism as well. Here, the Islamic burial traditions included the buried's stretched position with their head facing westwards, but with their face to the south, towards Mekka, while pagan traditions included placing specific clay vessels with special burial food into the graves of women and children, as well as the presence of personal jewelry, including beads, earrings, pendants, and rings.

The adoption of Islam apparently contributed to the general Turkic-Ugrian ethnic/cultural alignment in the region. This was especially noticeable in the ethnogeny of the Old Bashkirs who, as we said above, escaped from the steppe pressured by the Kypchaks-Polovtsians.

In R. Kuzeev's opinion, the Old Bashkir tribes settled mostly around the territory of the Bugulma-Belebey Upland—that is, in the central, Western and Southwestern regions of present-day Bashkortostan [Kuzeev, 1974]. This point of view does not seem to be beyond all argument, as first of all, it is still weakly backed by archaeological materials.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, the natural conditions of the Bugulma-Belebey Upland almost entirely exclude the pos-

<sup>5</sup> The nomadic (Turkic-Pecheneg) ethnic-cultural component can be traced in the ceramics of Bulgarian settlements of the 10–11th centuries (T. Khlebnikova, E. Kazakov, N. Kokorina).

<sup>6</sup> Apart from several later burials of the Syntysmakansky burial site located in the north of the Bugulma Upland, no other monuments from the 11–12th centuries which differ from those of their neighbours or the Chiyalik have been discovered here.

sibility of possessing an active cattle-breeding household, such as rugged terrain, the absence of large water sources, thick and long-lasting snow cover and, finally, the forests that in the mid-19th century covered the basins of the Ik and Syun rivers like an endless carpet from the lower reaches of the Belaya river to the present-day cities of Belebey and Davlekanovo [Kuzeev, 1968, p. 274].

In addition, medieval written sources point unabashedly to the fact that in the 11–12th centuries, the present-day Bashkir Cis-Urals was the ethnic territory of the Old Bashkirs. In particular, on the map compiled by Muhammad al-Idrisi in 1154 based on the earlier geographical works and tidings of merchants, the land of the Bashkirs ('Ard Basjirt') was located to the east from Volga Bulgaria ('Ard Bulgar'), and to the West from the Ural mountains ('Jebel Oskaska') [Bayliss, 1982, p. 217]. This means that based on the historical realia according to which the Eastern border of Volga Bulgaria went from the highest point of the Samara Bend through the midstream of the Sheshma and Zay to the Vyatka estuary in the 12th century [Fakhrutdinov, 1984, p. 10, Fig.1], at that time the Bashkirs were occupying the Western and Southwestern territories of present-day Bashkortostan along the Belaya river valley and adjacent to the Cis-Ural Ugrians.

This gives the impression that when the Turkic-speaking nomadic Bashkirs arrived in the Cis-Urals, the Cis-Ural Ugrians were in a phase of ethnic obscurity which, according to L. Gumilyov, is characterised by the absence of 'passioner', or the passionate and energetic tension of striving to get used to the landscape and social environment. 'Two things are possible here: either those left alive led a wretched existence as an obsolete ethnos, or they got melted down and in the case of certain favourable conditions were smelted into a new ethnos whose members would only have a muddled memory of their origin, as the new date of their birth was much more important' [Gumilyov, 1990a, p. 434]. Indeed, in the 11–12th centuries we see neither the vivid Ugrian equestrian culture that showed through strongly in the materials and monuments of the 8–10th centuries, nor the peculiar pagan burial traditions gradu-

ally 'undermined' by Islam, nor large tribal centres like the ancient settlement of Idnakar of the Old Udmurts. However, the Ugrian ethnic substratum with its marker of ceramics with plicate-cord ornamentation was widely represented throughout the Cis-Kama area in the pre-Mongol period. But we should still clear up the question of whether it defined the ethnic culture of the region's population.

By that time, the Bashkirs had already managed to withstand two ethnic collapses. The first was the destruction of the Pechenegs and their Bashkir allies by the Oghuzes in the Aral sea area in the latter half of the 9th century, and the collapse of the Pechengo-Bashkir 'ethnic field' (part of the Bashkirs together with the Pechenegs remained in the Trans-Volga and the Cis-Urals, what was known as 'Trans-Volga Pechenegia', and another part along with the Pechenegs went to the West, first to the Black Sea area,<sup>7</sup> then to Hungary<sup>8</sup>). The second is the destruction of the Oghuzes in the middle of the 11th century by the Polovtsians-Kypchaks and their exile from the Ural-Volga steppes. A result of this was the departure of the Cis-Ural Bashkirs to the north towards the forest-steppe.

As they adapted to the new landscape conditions, the Bashkirs adopted their neighbours' household and cultural features traditional for the Ural forest-steppe population, including hunting skills with bows made of different kinds of wood glued together, crossbows and special wooden traps used for animals living in lodges, game tracking skills, river and lake fishing with a lance and torching, dugout canoes ('keme'), conical hut-chums and others. All these cultural elements were absorbed, according to ethnographers V. Vasilyev and S. Shitova, during the earliest stages of the Bashkir-Ugrian ethnic-cultural cooperation, and by the 16–17th centuries became inseparable and traditional features of the South Ural Bashkirs' way of living and household.

<sup>7</sup> Information on this issue is presented in al-Masudi's works and a number of Bashkir historical legends.

<sup>8</sup> Data presented by Yaqut al-Hamawi about the Bashkirs he met in the Syrian city of Aleppo between 1227–1229.

## CHAPTER 2

### Eastern-Finnish tribes of the Middle Volga Region

#### 1. Mordvinians and Volga Bulgaria

*Gennady Belorybkin, Olga Zelentsova*

Long before the Bulgar migration to the Middle Volga Region, the areas to the west were predominantly inhabited by ancient Mordvin tribes. They resided in the basins of the Sura, Moksha, Tsna and Tyosha rivers. In the early Middle Ages this region was populated unevenly, with river valleys being mostly occupied, while some lands remained practically uninhabited. For example, after the departure of the Imenkovo tribes in the 8th century, the Middle Sura region was only again inhabited in the 12th century by the Bulgars, and only in the 17th century by the Mordvins. Apart from the Old Mordvins, other tribes and peoples—the Muroma, Burtases, Russians, Bulgars—came and settled in the Western Volga region, exerting a significant influence on the history of the region.

The period from the 2nd–3rd to the 7th centuries is regarded as the time of the formation of the Old Mordvin culture, when the basic elements of material and spiritual culture, set to last for several centuries, were laid down. In the north in the Oka-Sura interfluvial region, basic elements of the Old Erzya culture were formed, and in the south in the Upper Sura region, the elements of the Old Moksha culture were formed [Vikhlyayev, 2000, pp. 98, 112].

Considerable changes were taking place in the 8–13th centuries in the life of the population in the western part of the Middle Volga Region, connected both with internal developments and the arrival of new tribes into the region. This resulted in a change in population density and commencement of the latter's movement and migration to new territories. The internal development of the Old Mordvins in the region had a certain stability, in spite of territorial changes. Among the most enduring elements of the culture are burial ceremonies, tools and

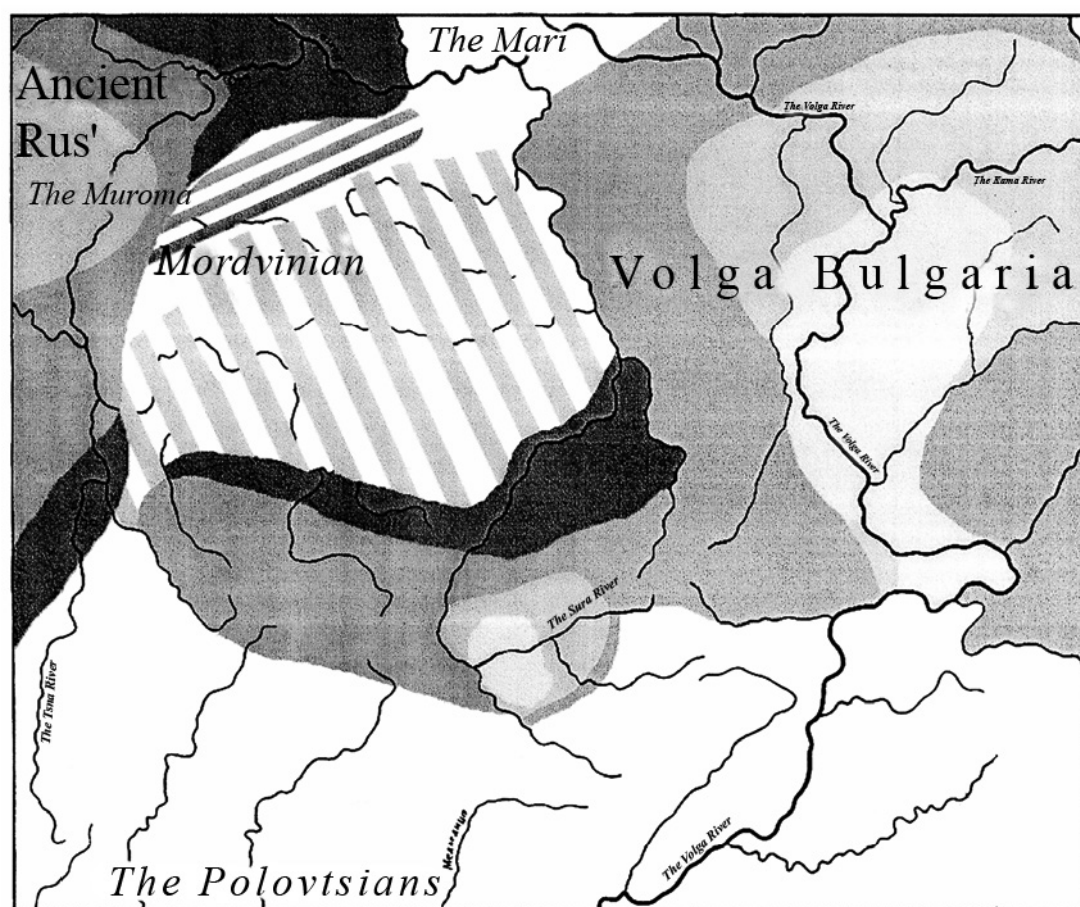
jewellery collections and can be described as the main occupations of the population. At the same time these elements were not static and underwent evolution without going beyond the boundaries of cultural traditions. This first of all related to alterations in certain types of tools (for example, axes), jewellery (syulgamas, temple pendants and plait pendants) or burial practices (new practice of crouched body burials), etc. These processes were taking place at various times and depended on external factors as well as internal.

The external influence had more definite parameters and consisted of three periods. The first period in the history of the region (latter half of the 7th to 9th centuries) is defined by the strong influence of the Khazar Khaganate, as well as the emergence of historical sites attributed to the Burtases. The second period (10–11th centuries) is marked by the start of the intensive penetration of Volga Bulgaria and Rus' into the region. The main goal of these states was to establish control over trade routes: For Volga Bulgaria, over land from Bulgar to Kiev [Motsya, Khalikov, 1997], for Rus', by water, along the Oka river [Rybakov, 1993; Dubov, 1989]. During the third period (the 12th to beginning of the 13th centuries) practically the entire Sura and Moksha regions were integrated into Volga Bulgaria, while the Mordvin population became split between the two states.

In order to picture better the dynamics of the changes taking place in the region, let us review it century by century starting with **the 8th century**.

Diversity of the population in the Sura and Moksha regions was the characteristic feature of this and the preceding time. A large group





State territorial expansion

[light gray box] - the 10 c.    [dark gray box] - the 12th c.    [diagonal hatching box] - Volga Bulgaria's zone of influence  
 [medium gray box] - the 11th c.    [black box] - the 13th c.    [cross-hatching box] - Ancient Rus' zone of influence

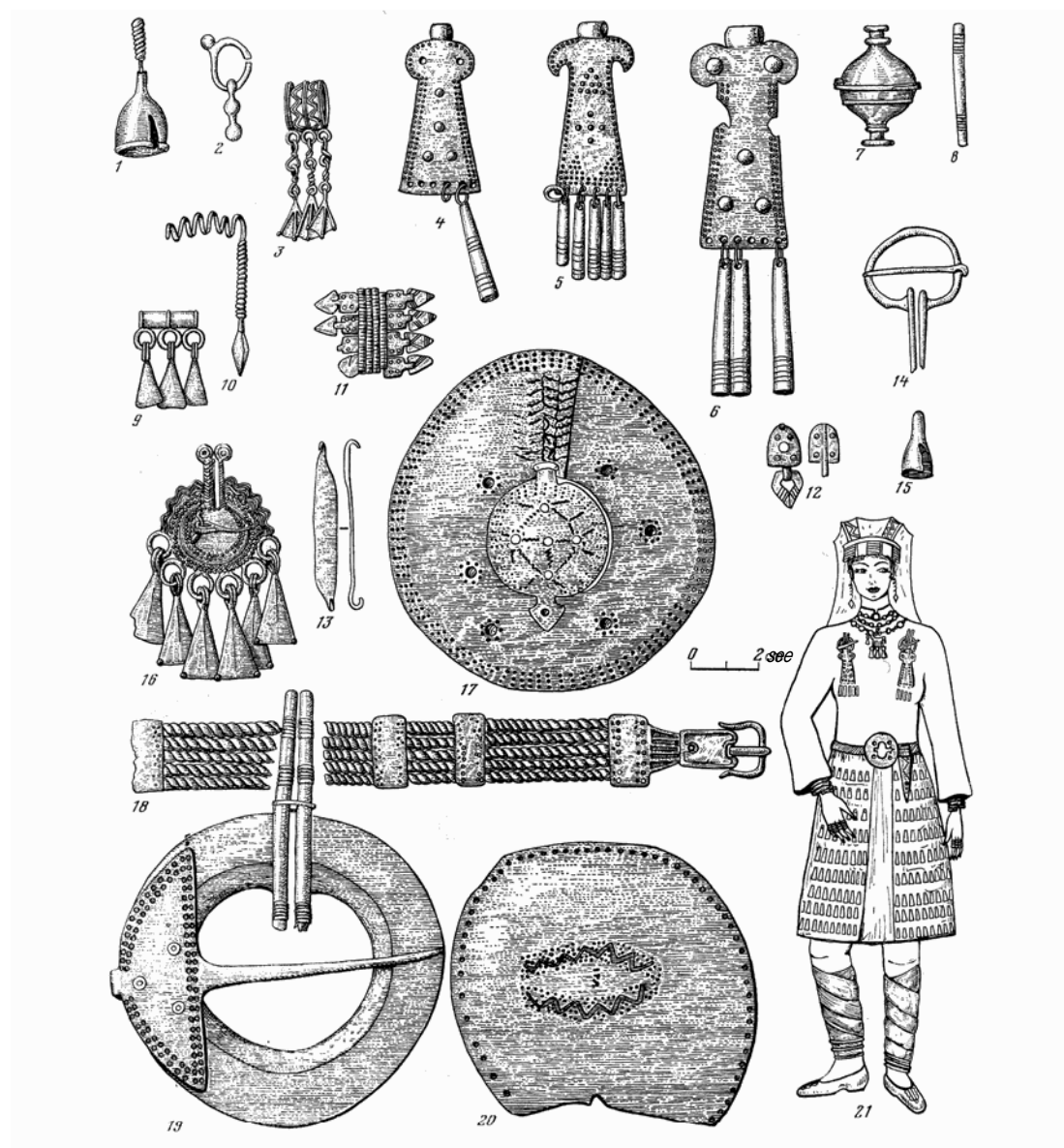
Volga Bulgaria and its neighbors

of archaeological sites containing elements of different cultures was recorded on the right bank of the Volga, at the mouth of the Sura River, along with the Old Mordvin ancient sites. These included not only ancient towns and settlements, but also burial sites (Ivankovo and Volchikha sites) [Finno-Ugric peoples, 1999]. The considerable number of cremations (52–60%) and graves positioned along a north-south axis, with deviations to the west and east were a distinguishing feature of the burial ceremonies in these sites.

The Osh-Pandinsk group of the Imenkovo settlements continued to exist in the Middle

Sura region. They had appeared in the region as far back as the middle of the 1st millennium AD [Stepanov, 1967].

The Imenkovo sites were laid out in small compact groups, usually, around the ancient town. Such a layout is typical for agricultural settlements, which is also confirmed by the discovery of cereals and harrow points. Beyond this, hunting (of bear, elk or boar) and fishing played an important role. Arrowheads, mostly made of bone, and fishing hooks also testify to this. Tools found at the settlement sites include adzes, chisels, forging instruments, spoon making tool, weaving tools, clay ladles and spindle



Ornaments of the 8–9th centuries from Mordvinian burial sites  
[Finno-Ugrians and Balts in the Middle Ages, 1987, p. 294]

whorls. A specific feature of the pottery at the Imenkovo sites was the large number of pans and tiny vessels.

Muromian settlements and burial sites started to appear at the mouth of the Tyosha river, on the left bank of the Oka [Grishakov, Zelenev, 1990]. Animal husbandry was the main occupation of that population. Bones, predominantly of pigs and horses were found in the settlements. Among the tools typically found are adzes, chisels, socketed axes and

knives, foundry supplies, sickles and scythes. Shaft-hole axes and ice picks started to become common.

Earthenware crockery are all molded and modelled in the form of pots, bowls and jars.

The Old Mordvin population are linked by majority of researchers with Mordvins-Moksha, and continued to remain in the upper Sura area in the latter half of the 7–8th centuries [Pollessikh, 1979; Vikhlyayev, 2000]. On the 'Sura Shishka' upland on the right bank (in the area

of the present day villages of Kizhevatovo and Stepanovka) a group of unfortified settlements with adjacent burial sites were located on the territory of 70 x 40 km in a forested area of rugged terrain bordering an uninhabited steppe to the south [Polesskikh, 1977]. Socketed axes, adzes, knives, earthenware molds and spindle made of clay were common in these ancient settlements. Many fragments of brown molded clay pottery have also been found.

Burial sites were also situated on the left bank of the Sura (Armiyovo 1, Krivozerie). Graves were typically laid out in rows. Burial was the prevailing practice, while cremations are rarely encountered. Burials were made in ordinary grave pits. The deceased were buried in a stretched-out position, their head facing south or south-west. Temple pendants with a short bar and a large bi-pyramidal plummet have been found in female graves. Female head-wear included plaited headdresses of small leather straps with threaded bronze beads ending with bottle-shaped appendages. Female attire included sickle-shaped torc plates, round-ribbon torcs thinning at the ends with a clasp in the form of two hooks, disc-shaped chest plates with a hexagonal overlay and syulgamas with short 'mustaches' [Vikhlyaev, 1977]. Belt sets, weapons and household items are found at male burial sites. It was customary for Upper Sura tribes to place flat-bottomed moulded vessels in male graves [Vikhlyaev, Peterburgsky, 1999].

By the end of the 7th to the beginning of the 8th centuries the Upper Sura territories were deserted. Part of the population apparently left north-westwards between the Tsna and Moksha rivers, where the Middle Tsna burial sites start to appear. Like the Upper Sura region, the Tsna-Moksha interfluvial area was covered with forests. The dominating feature of the territory was a flat terrain with numerous wide river valleys and an abundance of marshes. On the whole, the natural conditions of the region were favourable for a fishing economy, which was characteristic of the Mordvins at the turn of the 1st and 2nd millennia. The fact that hunting and fishing were widespread is evidenced by the arrowheads, fishing hooks and harpoons discovered in the region. Foundry

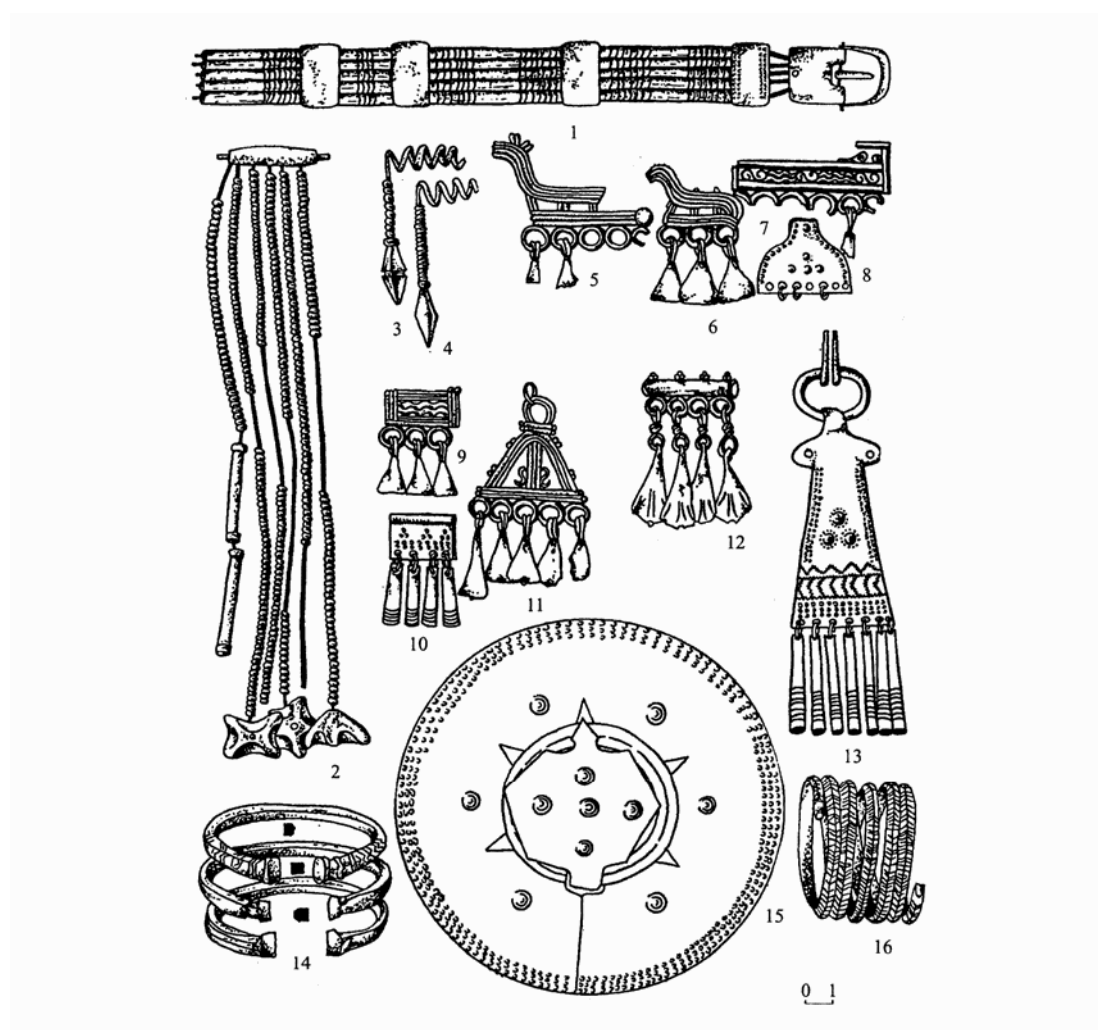
equipment, socketed axes and adzes, knives, earthen spindle whorls and crockery were also characteristic.

The Ancient Mordvins began to develop these territories in the mid-7th century (early burials of the Staroe Badikovo 2, Elizavet-Mikhaylovka and Serpovoe burial sites). In their funeral rites (northward and westward facing, vessels placed in male graves, large burial chambers) and inventory (temple pendants, sickle-shaped torcs with rings, armlets with spiral bead strings and plate clips, etc.) the Tsna-Moksha burial sites displayed, at an early stage, a great similarity to those of the Ancient Mordvin Tyosha group, such as the Abramovo, Starshy Kuzhendeevo and Vypolzovo I. It may be assumed that the culture of the population of the Tsna and Moksha region in the middle and latter half of the 7th century was formed with the participation of the Ancient Mordvin tribes of the northern region [Zelentsova, 2000].

As mentioned earlier, the Upper Sura tribes migrated to this area at the beginning of the 8th century, setting up burial sites of the Armiyovo type. They brought with them the southward and south-westward orientation and a set of decorations, which was not unfamiliar to the local population either.

The traditional female dress of the time typically included such decorations as temple pendants with a massive bi-pyramidal plummet with a cross-cut groove and plait pendants with bottle-shaped and box appendages. Coronas also started to appear, which were not previously characteristic of the Ancient Moksha headware. Chest plates with a hexagonal cover and triangular slots in the body and plate torcs with separate semicircular onlays with rings or a whole one-piece figured onlay were common. Early burial sites contain syulgamas with short bent ends and bulky hexagonal bonnet-end bracelets. Everyday items, axes, heraldic waistband sets, and weapons have been found at male grave sites. Of particular interest is the fact that Nevolino-type waistbands were widespread. Buckles with a 'winged' needle, evidently indicating the special status of their owners, may be found occasionally.

The Volga-Tyosha basin was the area of the formation and settlement of the Ancient Erzya



Item complex of female burials, 8–11th centuries. Burial sites: Zhuravkino 2 (1, 3–7, 9, 11, 12, 13); Starobadikovsky 2 (2, 8, 10, 14–16) [Finno-Ugrians of the Volga Region and Cis-Urals in the Middle Ages, 1999, p. 131]

people [Martyanov, 2001]. In geographical terms, this was a forested area with a furrowed terrain, convenient for various trades and occupations.

A combination of inhumation and cremation was typical of the Ancient Erzya funeral rites. A distinctive feature of these archaeological sites was the large number of cremations. Joint burials were encountered, including those involving cremations of men together with inhumations of women in one burial chamber. Bodies buried according to the inhumation rites are laid out stretched on the back, with the arms of males lying alongside the body, and crossed in the pelvis area in the case of females. North-

ward and north-westward orientation was the most common [Ibid.]. Male burials occasionally contained female decorations, placed there as a gift or as a kind of symbolic female burial. Female dress included forehead coronas, temple pendants in the shape of a bar coiled by thin wire with a spiral on one end and a bi-pyramidal plummet with a 'collar' on the other end. This pendant is an ethno-distinguishing decoration, characteristic only of the Mordvins. With some modifications, it remained part of the Mordvin dress until the end of the 11th century.

The headware included tassel-shaped plait pendants in the form of a leather strap cut into long stripes, on which bronze beads

were threaded. The tassels had bottle-shaped appendages at their ends. Common forms of female dress decorations included simple sickle-shaped torcs and those with separate semi-circular onlays with rings, necklaces of glass beads and bronze bead strings and pendants, chest disc-shaped plates with a round hole covered by a hexagonal cover-lid [Vikhlyaev, Peterburgsky, 1999]. Female burial grounds contained moulded modelled pottery.

Presumably, in the mid and latter half of the 7th century, part of the northern Mordvin population migrated to the south, where the Tenishevsky and 'Meshchansky Forest' burial sites appeared in the Moksha river basin and the Serpovoe and Elizavet-Mikhaylovka burial sites in the Middle Tsna river.

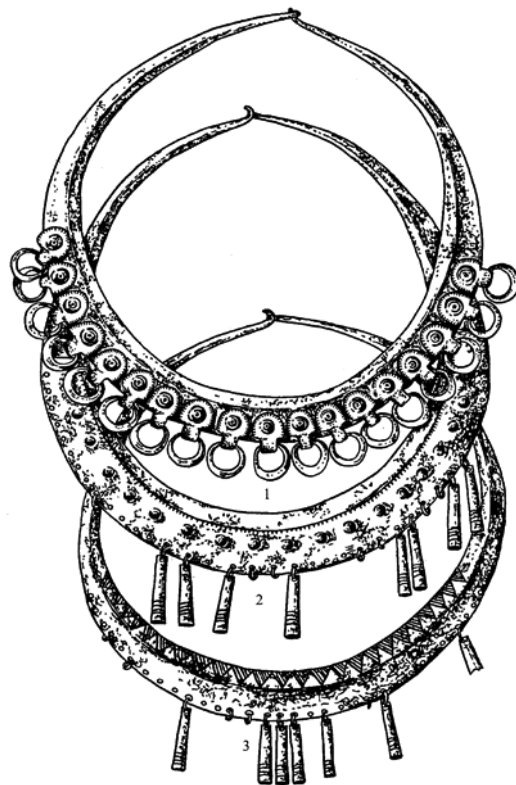
Thus the 8th century was marked by a relative stability in the region. The Ancient Mordvin tribes gradually settled down in the new territories within the region. The likely cause of these migrations was the arrival of new groups of populations in the west (the Muroma), the south (the Burtases), and the east (the Bulgars).

In the 9th century, the situation drastically changed.

The most important changes occurred in the Middle Sura region. The Osh-Pandinskaya group of the Imenkovo historical monuments located here completely ceased to exist, while its area of habitation became totally deserted.

On the right bank of the Volga in the Lower Sura there still existed a group of settlements with a mixed population, which included both ancient settlements and towns. Their number, however, sharply decreased. Burial sites also ceased to exist. The number of Muroma sites doubled in the lower reaches of the Oka, and they started to appear on the right bank of the river too. On the whole, however, there was a significant decline in the population of the right bank region of the Volga.

A new group of settlements (ancient settlements, towns and a mound-ground burial site), which scholars link to the Burtases, started to spread along the middle course of the river Usa in the left bank area of the river Sura as the Ancient Mordvins left the area [Khalikov, Valiullina, 1984; Belorybkin, 1995]. And they ap-



Item complex of female burials, 8–11th centuries, Starobadikovsky burial site 2 [Finno-Ugrians of the Volga Region and the Cis-Urals in the Middle Ages, 1999, p. 133]

peared in practically the very areas where the Mordvin sites had existed before (near the village of Armiyovo). As a result, a mixed culture was formed, which consisted of those newly arrived from the steppes and local forest elements. The new settlers' characteristic feature was the construction of ancient towns and a special funeral ceremony [Osipova, 2000]. The river Sura served as a kind of dividing line between the Mordvins' and Burtases' territories of habitation. A distinguishing feature of the settlements on the left bank of the Sura was their compact, clustered arrangement, similar to the earlier Imenkovo settlements in the Middle Sura. From an analysis of the soil underneath the ground swells of the ancient town of Armiyovo I, it could be established that slash-and-burn, no-till cultivation was common practice in this area. Shaft-hole axes started to be utilised as tools, and knives, adzes and clay spindle whorls

were still in widespread use. Amongst the latter there started to appear spindle whorls, made of the side walls of vessels. Earthenware crockery was also undergoing changes. Pans, bowls, and dishes were produced. Ornamentation in pots and bowls gave way to sharp edges and engobing. Khazar items, including decorations, started to come into fashion. However, highly artistic original articles were practically nonexistent, although there was an abundance of imitations cast in sample form moulds, and tin bronze was in use in addition to silver. These were decorations such as earrings with beads, amulets (claw, wheel, cross-shaped), pendants, and details of waist belts and bags. A great many Mordvin decorations were still being produced, some of which were distinguished by their sheer size, for example, syulgamas with 'moustaches'.

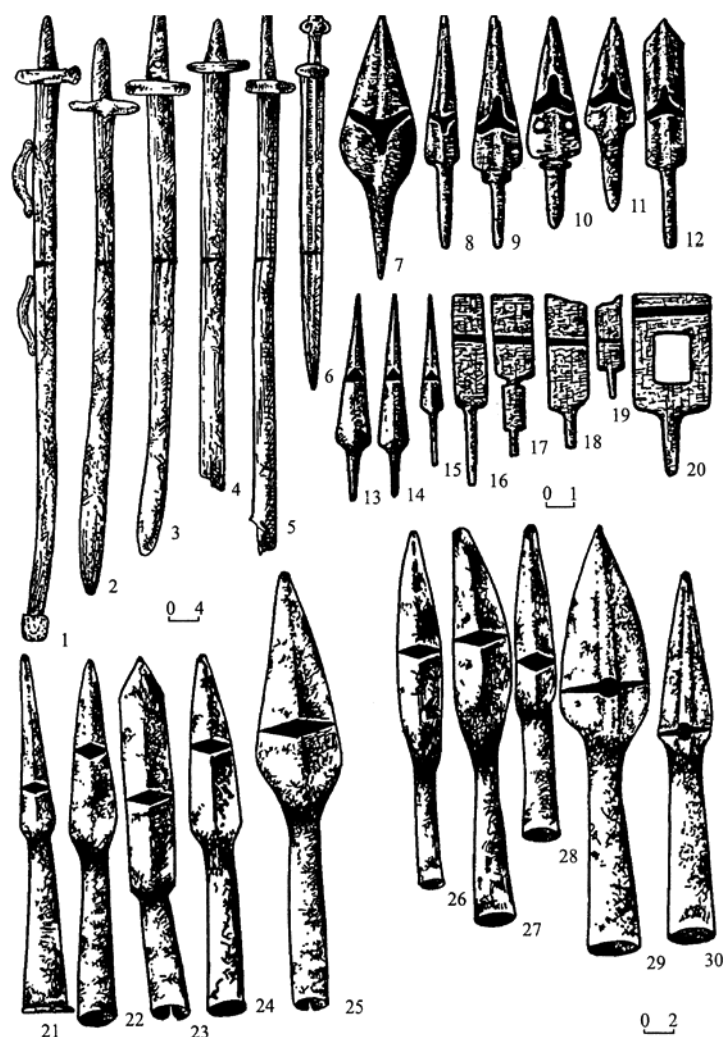
The relations between the new population and the Mordvins developed peacefully. Nonetheless, it is probable that the majority of the Mordvins migrated to the west in the 8–9th centuries, while the remaining part were actually assimilated by the newly arrived tribes, the Burtas.

There was a sharp fall in the Mordvin population the Upper Sura region, whereas its population density in the Tsna-Moksha interfluvial area increased. A group of 15 old Mordvin burial sites was discovered in the Middle Tsna area, which scientific literature associates with the so called 'Middle Tsna Mordvins' [Alikhova, 1969]. The population increased in the Vad-Vysya interfluvial area and in the Middle Moksha region. All these historical sites are traditionally linked to the Mordvins-Moksha [Vikhlyaev, Peterburgsky, 1999]. Old traditions continued to develop and common types of jewellery continued to evolve in their burial ceremony and material culture. The bi-ritual burial ceremony was maintained. Inhumation was common. The deceased were buried in an extended position with the head facing the south, with minor deviations towards the west and the east. Men's arms were laid out straight and women's hands were placed near the pelvis. Approximately 15–18% of burial ceremonies were carried out according to the custom of cremation. Most

burials that involved cremation were accompanied by male items [Zelentsova, 1998]. The deceased were cremated on their side and on special platforms [Vikhlyaev, Peterburgsky, 1999]. The incinerated bones, cleaned of ash and coal, were strewn in one or two heaps in the area where the head and legs were assumed to be, in a burial chamber of usual form. Jewels and other items do not have traces of burning. They were interred after cremation. Items were placed randomly upon the incinerated bones, sometimes they were arranged in the manner in which they had been worn.

The earlier known jewels continued to evolve at this time, while women's costumes became more uniform. Headwear included a forehead wreath consisting of long and short flat metal tubes interspersed with hoops. Temporal pendants in old shapes continued to be used, but they were less bulky, with no hollow in the bi-pyramidal plummet; pendants of an unusual kind—with a flattened plummet in the form of a 'leaf' made from a white alloy—were also found. Headwear also included a splint in the same form—with bottle-shaped, box-shaped and other pendants. Syulgamas with long 'moustaches' were fashionable, however, cast ones of a usual form, but bigger and solid, were more common. Neck jewellery was in the form of necklaces of mosaic and 'oculate' beads, appendages that produced sounds, bugles and torcs. Torcs were distinguished by their variety: ribbon-like with a spiral winding and a locking piece in the form of a bulky multi-faceted bonnet and loop, false-twisted with the same clasp, as well as crescent-like laminar ones—simple and with pendants. Although modified, badges with a rounded top and six prominences on the body were still in use. Bonnet-end bracelets acquired a style that was less bulky [Zelentsova, 1998].

Round-ribbon torcs for the neck and bracelets were common amongst the implements found in men's graves. A large bronze or, more rarely, iron syulgama served as a military fibula. The male outfit of this time was noticeably influenced by the culture of the Khazar Khaganate—bearers of the Saltovo-Mayaki archaeological culture. Saltovo belt sets were widespread, as were items of armoury, amulets



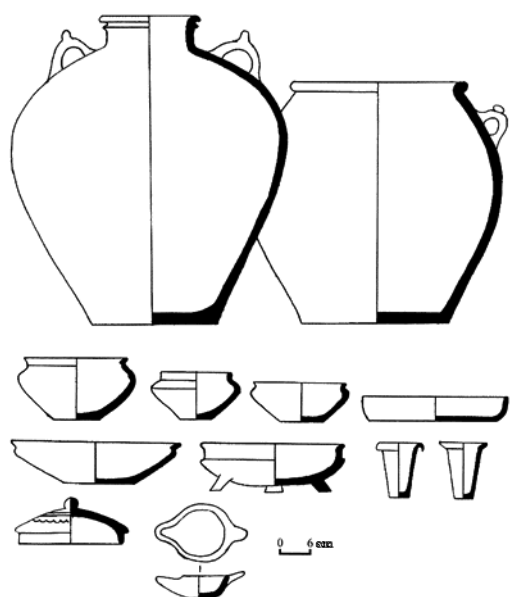
Mordvinian weapons of the 8–11th centuries. Burial sites: Starobadikovsky II (1–5, 7–30); Zhuravkino 2 (6) [Finno-Ugrians of the Volga Region and the Cis-Urals in the Middle Ages, 1999, p. 137]

and earrings, which, to judge from the discovery of a cast form in the Elizavet-Mikhailovka burial site, were produced in situ. Innovations in women's burial customs were observed. In particular, crouched burials appeared for the first time.

It is not likely that the fashion for the Saltovo items of the male outfit and the new phenomena in the burial ceremony can be explained solely by the territorial proximity of this group of early-Mordvin burial sites to the monuments of the upper-Don. The Tsna-Moksha population, clearly, lived within the sphere of the Khazar Khaganate's control and,

according to written Khazar sources, paid tributes to the Khazars [Kokovtsov, 1932, pp. 98–99].

Hence, the general situation in the region was characterised by a surge in the growth of the Mordvin-Moksha population in the Tsna-Moksha interfluvial region, and a reduction in their habitable territory, caused by their migrating from the upper reaches of the Sura and the arrival of the Burtas in the area. A reduction in the number of monuments in the Poteshye region and the migration of the Muroma towards the east are evident. It is also apparent that the Khazar Khaganate exercised a great influence



Bulgarian-type crockery from the Upper Sura Valley and the Moksha Valley.

on the population of this region, part of which succumbed to a status of dependence upon it.

In the **tenth century**, a situation characteristic of the previous epoch was maintained in the lower reaches of the river Sura. Bulgarian settlements appeared on the opposite left bank of the Volga. Virtually the entire right bank of the Volga from the Oka estuary to the Sura estuary was abandoned.

The Old Mordvin tribes continued to occupy the same territories as they used to. A compact cluster of ancient Erzya monuments was concentrated in the midstream of the river Tyosha. Along with the burial sites and settlements, new towns (Sakony, Khokhlovka, Nadezhdino) or 'firmaments'—according to Russian chronicles—appeared here [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, 1965, X, p. 95]. The cultural level observed in the ancient towns was small and extremely poor, which is indicative of the fact that they were probably used as shelters [Martyanov, 2001]. We can observe a process by which these monuments became segregated from those of the Moksha and, to judge from the emergence of fortified settlements, this was accompanied by confrontation with both the Mordvins-Mokshas and the Muroma.

The monuments of the Muroma approached the Ancient Mordvin settlements on the Middle Tyosha river from the west. Their number continued to grow intensively (five burial sites on the right bank and nine monuments on the left). Most of them were concentrated near the river Oka, in the area of the Tyosha river estuary. The distinctive features of this time were the presence of iron-smelting furnaces and smithies in settlements, a shift from the use of socketed axes to shaft-hole axes, as well as the appearance of black-glazed ceramics with trays. Trade along the river Oka was actively developed, which is evidenced by the multiple treasures of silver dirhams found there.

In the area of the Tsna-Moksha the Ancient Mordvin population continued to grow. The southern border was pushed back towards the upper reaches of the river Tsna, where the Lyada burial site was built [Gotye, 1941]. The Moksha-Vad interfluvial area was developed completely, with the construction of new settlements, ancient towns and burial sites (18 ancient settlements and one ancient town, Karmaly). As a result, the previously uninhabited expanses of this area became populated. The main occupations were related to forestry. Numerous implements of foundry work were also found. Socketed axes were replaced by shaft-hole axes. At the same time, various types of weaponry became widespread. The introduction of sabres in the area near the river Tsna and Carolingian swords in the Lower Moksha area is particularly noteworthy.

In the upper reaches of the Sura, the Mordvin population disappeared almost entirely. Settlements of mixed Bulgar-Burtas culture appeared in this territory [Polesskikh, 1981; Belorybkin, 2003]. These populations were spread along both the right and the left banks of the river Sura. This was the site of the construction not only of open settlements but also of well-fortified strongholds. The basic form of agriculture was plough farming. Tools of the Alanian and Bulgarian types were soon in widespread use around the region. A peculiar feature is the distribution of eastern types of arrowheads.

Dirhams and various objects started to make their way from the east via the Sura and



Moksha rivers. Slate spindle whorls from the west were widely utilised. All of the above was made possible by the existence of major trade routes in the region: by water—along the Volga and Oka rivers, by land—from the city of Bulgar to Kiev.

In the 11th century, there were substantial changes in the geography of the settlement of the Sura and Moksha river areas.

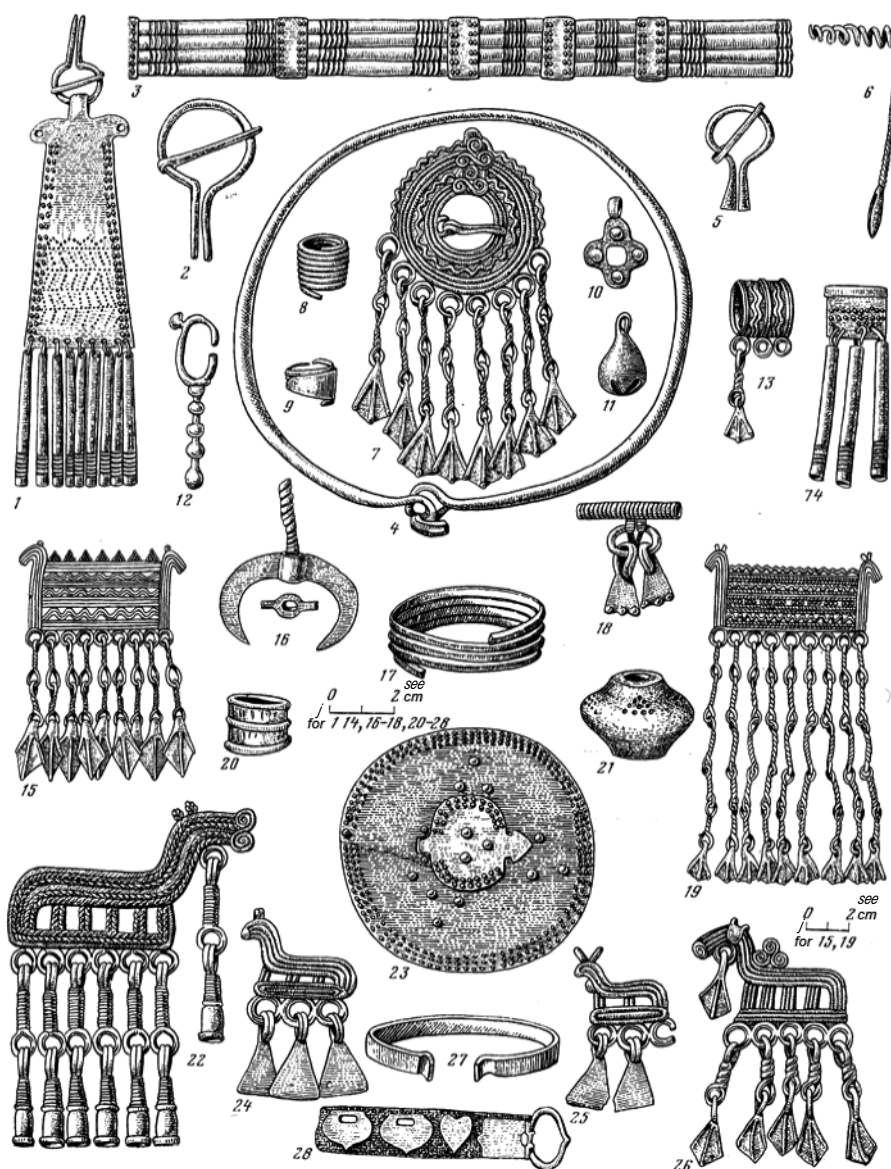
Bulgarian settlements cover the entire Sura-Sviyaga interfluvial region. They also appeared in the middle and lower stream of the Sura. The upper Sura area was occupied by settlements of the Bulgarian type, inhabited by a mixed population. The region was densely populated. New towns and settlements emerged both in previously unpopulated areas and on the site of former Mordvin settlements. Characteristic of these was their nest-like arrangement, with a concentration of village settlements around the ancient town-fortress. To a large extent, this was conditioned by the agricultural character of the economy. Iron ploughshares, plough coulters, millstones, crop holes and barns provide an indication of its level and yield.

The structures of the ancient towns bear traces of Bulgarian traditions of defensive architecture. Three groups of settlements may be distinguished: the Neklyudovskaya on the river Uza, the Verkhnesurskaya (Upper Sura) on the upper reaches of the river Sura and the Pravoberezhnaya (Right Bank) on the right bank of the Sura. The latter was the most populated of the groups. A distinctive feature of all of these settlements was the spread of the material culture of the population of Volga Bulgaria with some territorial and cultural features. In literature, the monuments of the Upper Sura area were given the name of the red pottery monuments [Polesskikh, 1970]. Furnaces discovered in the settlements bear witness to the production of crockery items in the locality. Locally moulded crockery was also used alongside them. Such features of moulded crockery as stumpiness of form, sharpness of edges and the use of limestone chippings as an admixture were also characteristic of this group. This crockery was also engobed with red clay [Belorybkin, 1990].

Apart from the crockery found in the settlements of the Upper Sura river area, Bulgarian agricultural and crafts tools, and a variety of products were also discovered. Most of these were produced in the locality in accordance with Bulgarian technologies (for example, locks and axes), but some had been transported from the central regions of Volga Bulgaria along the Bulgar-Kiev trade route, which passed through the upper Sura area [Belorybkin, 1986]. The mass production of both Mordvin and imitation Bulgarian jewellery was launched here. A variety of ingots of tin, lead and silver were brought in from Volga Bulgaria. These were measured in *mithqāls*, one being equal to 4.095 grammes.

The Moksha area also underwent certain transformations. On the one hand, the territory populated by the Mordvins-Moksha peoples diminished (the Lower Moksha area became entirely desolated), on the other hand, the number of Mordvin burial sites on the river Tsna decreased by half. The population density of the Moksha-Vad interfluvial area continued to grow, thanks, most probably, to the population of the Middle-Tsna. As a result, the density of the population between the Moksha and Vad rivers reached the level of that of Volga Bulgaria. At the same time, the Moksha-Sura watershed remained unpopulated. The basic industries were still crafts and artisanal production.

Women's clothing of the Ancient Moksha people during this period included jewels, which were a direct continuation of the earlier well-known types, including temporal pendants with a long bar and a thin bi-pyramidal or drop-shaped plummet. Sets of such pendants often included *syulgamas* with a long 'moustache' measuring two diameters of a ring, *syulgamas* with a bent 'moustache' and *stenolobate syulgamas*—prototypes of the later, bladed ones. The headwear typically consisted of wreaths of older types: instead of botryoidal splints, there appeared 'pulokers' in the form of a bast case for a plait wound with a belt which was in turn enwrapped by a bronze wire. Laminar bracelets with bent edges (the latest in the evolution of bonnet-ended jewels) and with straight-cut ends were the fashion. False-twisted torcs with flattened multi-sided bonnets were popular, as



Ornaments of the 10–11th centuries from Mordvinian burial sites  
[Finno-Ugrians and Balts in the Middle Ages, 1987, p. 295]

were laminar bladed torcs with and without pendants. In the 11th century, the evolution of breast disc-shaped plaques came to an end - at the time they were quite small and finished in a bronze or silver plate, the corpus being undecorated.

Women's dress in the 10–11th centuries included ridgy jewels that produced sounds, and which, in the opinion of a number of researchers, were produced within Volga Bul-

garia [Khlebnikova, 1996]. Jewels made in the workshops of Volga Bulgaria became an essential part of women's accessories. These were rings with an oval shield and engraved Arabic inscriptions [Polyakova, 1996, p. 17, Fig. 61: 12–13], laminar bracelets with a longitudinal recess and an oval shield with a floral rosette at the ends [Ibid, p. 185, Fig. 63: 3]. The men's outfit included belt sets made in Volga Bulgaria, with ornately shaped cov-

er pieces joined to the belt in the form of a 'snake', with a floral ornament, etc. Leather bags with metal frames were hung from belts. All these samples of Bulgarian craft were extremely popular among the Ancient Mordvins. In the 11th century, items were imported from Bulgaria as a result of a trade exchange. Undoubtedly, products of Arab craftsmen reached the Mordvins through trade with Bulgaria. A bronze bucket with an Arabic inscription was found at the Lyada burial site, and silk cloths were discovered in graves of the Kryukovo-Kuzhnovo and Zhuravkino II burial sites [Golye, 1941; Ivanov, 1952; Peterburgsky, 1979].

Items of Slavonic import were also found in burial sites: slate spindle whorls, certain kinds of belt sets, temporal pendants, and crockery. Connections with the Slavs were not limited to trading contacts alone, which is evidenced by the grave #507 (Kryukovo-Kuzhnovo burial site) with western orientation where temporal rings of the Radimichs type were found.

The river Tyosha was also a site of changes. Ancient towns ceased to exist, but the number of burial sites increased. The surrounding territories, especially to the north and east of the Tyosha, were uninhabited.

There were also significant changes in the area of the river Oka. By the 11th century, no monuments could be found in the estuary of the Tyosha, and the territory was inhabited by the Rusessians, whose main stronghold was the city of Murom, on the right bank of the Oka, not far from the mouth of the Tyosha. Part of the Muroma people continued to live to the north of the city of Murom, while the rest either became mixed with the Rusessians or departed to the east—to the territory of the Erzya.

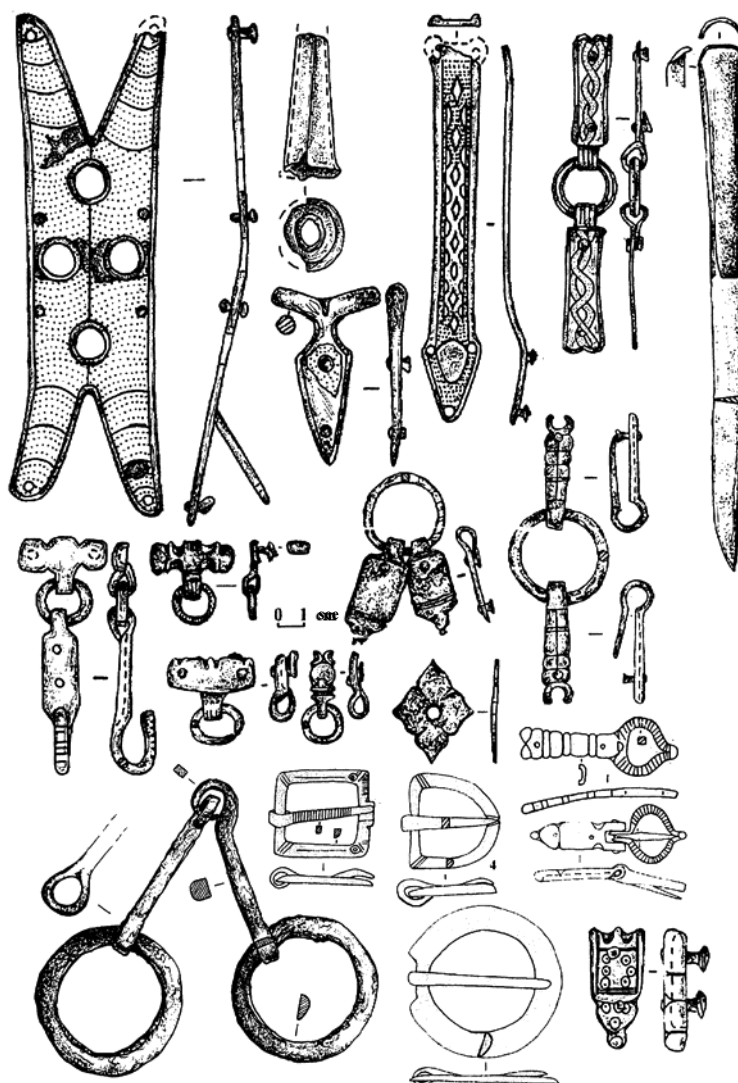
In the 12th century, the number of settlements continued to increase and crafts continued to be developed in the region of the Upper Sura. Pottery furnaces became widespread, while the copper industry was developed to form an independent branch. Jewellery workshops flourished. A peculiar feature of this time was the large amount of horse equipment and belts of the Askiz type with a golden covering as well as the spread of local imitations of products of the Askiz culture. At the same time, jewellery from Vladimiro-Suzdal Rus',

mostly with Christian ornamentation, became popular here.

Intensive transformations occurred in the Tsna-Moksha interfluvial area. At the turn of the 11–12th centuries, Ancient Mordvin burial sites on the Middle Tsna ceased to exist. There are as yet no reliable explanations of the reasons for the disappearance of the Ancient Mordvin population in this area. It might have been the result of an invasion by the Polovtsians, which led either to the annihilation of the population or to the annexation of these lands to the Ryazan principality and the migration of the Ancient Mordvins to the east. However, newly-built Slavonic settlements on the river Tsna were fairly rare.

The Ancient Mordvin population maintained their area of habitation and basic occupations on the Vad and Moksha rivers. Settlements with crockery production—close to that of the Upper Sura in its basic features—appeared on the right bank of the Vad and on the Vysha rivers. Most of these settlements were fortified ancient towns (Narovchatskoe, Skanovskoe, Seropolivanovskoe, Zhukovskie I–III, Vyshinskie I–III, and others). They were mostly situated along the major rivers of the region—along the southern and western borders of the Mordvin settlement [Belorybkin, 1995]. These ancient towns were adjacent to Russian settlements, which extended further eastwards. There emerged mixed settlements as well as separate Mordvin and Bulgarian-Burtas settlements, which were often situated close to each other. The nest-like type of settlement is encountered here—just as in the Upper Sura river area. Ancient towns with crockery making and burial sites were situated around strong fortress-towns. The reason for this was the spread of the farming traditions of Volga Bulgaria, which is evidenced by the discoveries of ploughshares and millstones.

Crockery production serves as the most important indicator of these processes. Red crockery was introduced from the Upper Sura river in the east, and black and white crockery from Ruthenia in the west. The banks of the river Moksha were the scene of particularly interesting processes. Both in burial sites and settlements, crockery has been found which is



Askiz and Askiz-type wares from the Upper Sura Valley and the Moksha Valley.

similar to both the moulded Mordvin crockery, and moulded ceramics imitating round crockery [Begovatkin, 2004]. Axes of the Bulgarian type with wide blades, locking devices and jewels were also widespread. All of this bears witness to an active penetration of Volga Bulgaria's material culture to the Moksha river region. Horse jewels of the Askiz type also appeared.

Features of earlier times were preserved in the burial ceremony of the Mordvins-Moksha people of the Moksha-Vad interfluvium: ground burial chambers of a quadrangular shape, most-

ly southern, with slight inclinations, orientation of the deceased, the presence of ceramic fragments and animal bones in the backfilling of the deceased; 'donated' women's articles in men's graves; a vessel at the head or legs in women's graves and so on. At the same time, new customs emerged, such as the crouched—usually on the right side—positioning of women in graves [Belyayev, 1987]. The two earliest women's and men's burial sites with the deceased lying on their side date from the first half of the 8th century and were found in the Mid-Tsna burial sites. Burials with the cus-

tom of the 'crouched position' are also known there. They date back to the 10–11th centuries [Zelentsova, 1998]. Thus, this custom had ancient roots and its origin probably lies in the close contacts between the Ancient Moksha population and the Saltovo tribes [Alikhova, 1959]. The new burial custom of horse burials was discovered at the Kelgininsky burial site [Belyayev, Vikhlyaev et al., 1998].

The decorations of women's outfits was gradually starting to change. Headwear included a splint-'puloker' in the shape of a bast case tightly wrapped with a bronze strip, ring-shaped temple rings and earrings made of a bronze wire with a curl at the end [Peterburgsky, Pervushkin, 1992]. Neck jewelery was represented only by glass beads. Hands were ornamented with rings and bracelets of various types. In that period, loop-ending bracelets twisted with several wires, as well as twiggen bracelets with glass insets at the ends were widespread. They were extremely popular among the Mordvins-Moksha, and it is possible they were made special for them in the workshops of Volga Bulgaria. Syulgamas remained the most expansive category of dress ornamentation. At that time, ring-like syulgamas with slightly curled beaked 'mustache' were popular. Certain exemplars had a spiriling around the edges. Syulgamas with a 'mustache' that was bent into thin laminar planks were also characteristic.

The situation was changing in the Oka-Tyosha region. By that time, the Rusessian population almost completely inhabited the Oka's right bank, and had begun developing the right bank of the Oka's estuary. Specific monuments of the Muroma were gradually disappearing.

In the Tyosha basin, the Mordvin population doubled thanks both to the increasing density and widening of their territory southwards and eastwards. This could have been a result of the arrival of part of the Muroma here. The wide spreading of adzes with a square hole and carpenter's axes with a long (under 40 cm) blade, which received the name 'apicultural', is likely connected with it.

It is apparent that we should connect the group of burials from the 9th century with this population. Here, burials with featuring

a Western orientation of the deceased (Lichadeyevo 5, Vypolzovo 2, 6 and Peremchalinsky) were often found. In other burials of the Tyosha basin, the custom of burying the deceased with their bodies lain northwards and to the northwest (Pyatnitsa 7, Zarechye 2, Mladshy Kuzhendeevsky, Pogiblovsky and others) was maintained. The burial ceremony of these graves, similar to the Mordvin-Moksha people in general, maintain their earlier known customs, but new elements were added as well. Burial ceremonies included the presence of a great number of paired burials of warrior men stretched on their backs with women in a crouched pose with their heads turned towards the men [Martyanov, 1988]. Ritual burials were documented in these burial sites that involved 2–3 moulded vessels or animal bones being placed in the pit, while the backfilling contained many calcified bones. It is possible these are cenotaphs. The burials of horses can possibly be attributed to ritual ceremonies. As a rule, horse graves had an orientation opposite to the one accepted for each of the burial sites, and were accompanied by harnesses. The emergence of the custom of horse burials is usually linked with the integration of the alien Muroma population into the Mordvin habitat [Ibid.; Vikhlyaev, 1997].

Women's outfits of the Mordvinians-Erzya had the same types of jewelery as those that were known among the Mordvin-Moksha people of the same time: splints-pulokers, ring-shaped smooth-wired syulgamas with a winding on their rings; carnelian and crystal beads, as well as bracelets.

As for the male population, the burials of neighbourhood guard-men may be distinguished. In their complexes equestrian equipment, copper bowlers and wooden bowls, and shields with iron umbos were found along with weapons [Martyanov, 2001].

A group of fortified ancient towns were once populated on the southeastern border of the Oka-Tyosha monuments (Khozinskoe, Fedorovskoe, Ponetaevskoe and Sarovskoe) [Martyanov, 1976]. Among them, the ancient town of Sarovskoe stands most prominently with its size and closeness to Volga Bulgaria's monuments. Round dishes of the Bulgarian

type can be found here as well, which was characteristic of the Upper Sura area, along with various handicraft products, beginning with locks and keys and finishing with jewelry [Gribov, 1997; 1999]. In addition, more Mordvin items may be found here than in any other settlements of the Bulgarian type in the Cis-Moksha. The locals migrated from the Tyosha river eastwards, to the Pyana river, and northwards to the Volga's right bank and lower reaches of the Oka river.

The 13th century If at the beginning of the century, the situation was stable in the Sura river area, the intensive intrusion of Bulgarian and Rusian settlements in Mordvin territory was characteristic for the area of the Volga-Moksha interfluvium. As a result, Volga Bulgaria's influence became more significant in the south, the centre of which became the ancient town of Narovchatoe (the city of Nurijan or Naruchad?) [Korotkov, 1928].

The Rusesian city of Kadom (first mentioned in the Nikon chronicle in an entry on 1209) [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, 1965, X] is founded, and mixed settlements were also built. As a result of the Rusesians' active development of the Oka river area, the Mordvins left the lower Tyosha, and the large ancient city of Nizhny Novgorod (1221) appeared in the Oka estuary, possibly on the site of an earlier Bulgarian settlement. Mixed Russian-Mordvin settlements popped up in the city's outskirts, and Russian and Mordvin villages co-existed in an intermingled way similar to how Bulgarian-Mordvin villages co-existed in the Cis-Moksha area.

The political environment in the region in the 12–the first third of the 13th centuries is characterised by confrontations between Rus' and Volga Bulgaria, as well as each side's goal of annexing the Mordvin land into their own sphere of control. The main reason for this opposition was striving to gain control over the Volga Trade Route, which gradually started to prevail in the East with the consolidation of the Vladimiro-Suzdal principality and the Polovtians' conquest of the Black Sea area.

In view of this, the territory of the right bank of the Volga fell under the political, economic and cultural influence of North-Eastern Rus' and Volga Bulgaria, and often became an arena for the military confrontations of these states. The chronicle states the following regarding the events of 1228: 'On the war against the Mordvins. After entering into the Mordvin and Purgasov volost, burning and poisoning crops, beating cattle, setting fire to villages, mercilessly slashing with swords all those living in Purgasov, and after capturing everyone who remained alive, they returned home. Meanwhile, the Mordvins heard of that and escaped to the forests, and those who did not manage to escape were beaten' [Ibid., X, pp. 94–95]. At the same time, this passage was the first to mention the Mordvins' occupation as farmers and cattle breeders.

The territories of the Upper Sura river and the Upper Cis-Moksha area were in the zone of influence and depended upon Volga Bulgaria, which was expressed in the spreading of settlements and the emergence of Bulgarian-type products in Mordvin settlements, as well as the orientation of Bulgarian workshops towards the Mordvin market. We may make judgments about the population's occupations based on the text of 'The Tale of the Ruin of the Rusesian Land' dated from the mid-13th century: '...the Burtases, Cheremises, Veda, and Mordva kept wild bees for grand prince Volodimer...' [The Tale, 1957, p. 253]. This is proven by the discoveries of wax fragments at these settlements.

The Oka-Tyosha interfluvium fell under the sphere of influence of the Vladimir-Suzdal, Murom and Ryazan principalities.

But all of those processes were put to a stop by the Mongol invasion. In 1237, according to Rashid al-Din, after the conquest of Volga Bulgaria 'the Mongols fought the Moksha, Burtases and Erzya, and conquered them in a short time' [Rashid al-Din, 1960]. The active migration of the Bulgarian population westwards and northwards, and the Mordvin population to the south and southeast, was a consequence of these events.

## 2. The population of the Mari Volga Region in the Bulgarian period

*Tatyana Nikitina*

Mari were the northwestern neighbors of Volga Bulgars; they lived on both sides of the Volga River from the Sura River to the Kazanka River, the bottom and middle stream of the Vetluga River, and the right-bank tributaries of the Vyatka river. Thanks to many years of productive work by A. Smirnov [1952], A. Khalikov [1976; 1993], G. Arkhipov [1973, 1986, 1991] and active archaeological research in recent decades [Nikitina, 2002], striking materials on the distinctive culture of the Mari people in the Middle Ages were obtained.

Nearby tribes knew Mari by the ethnonym, 'the Cheremis', up to the 20th century. The ancestors of Mari tribes gained control of the territory mentioned earlier from the middle of the 6th to the 8th centuries, choosing big riversides as places of residence, such as the Volga, Vyatka, Vetluga, Bolshaya Kokshaga, and Ilet rivers. Trying to make the most of the terrain, they originally settled mainly at ancient towns, which they arranged on the promontories of high main coastal terraces with steep slopes difficult to climb on. Promontories occupied by ancient towns had a triangular, and rarely, rectangular shape. Ancient towns were additionally strengthened from their unprotected side with moats and ramparts of a cone, or more often, arched shape. Sometimes they used ancient towns of the early Iron Age for settlements, with pre-made ramparts that were only renewed.

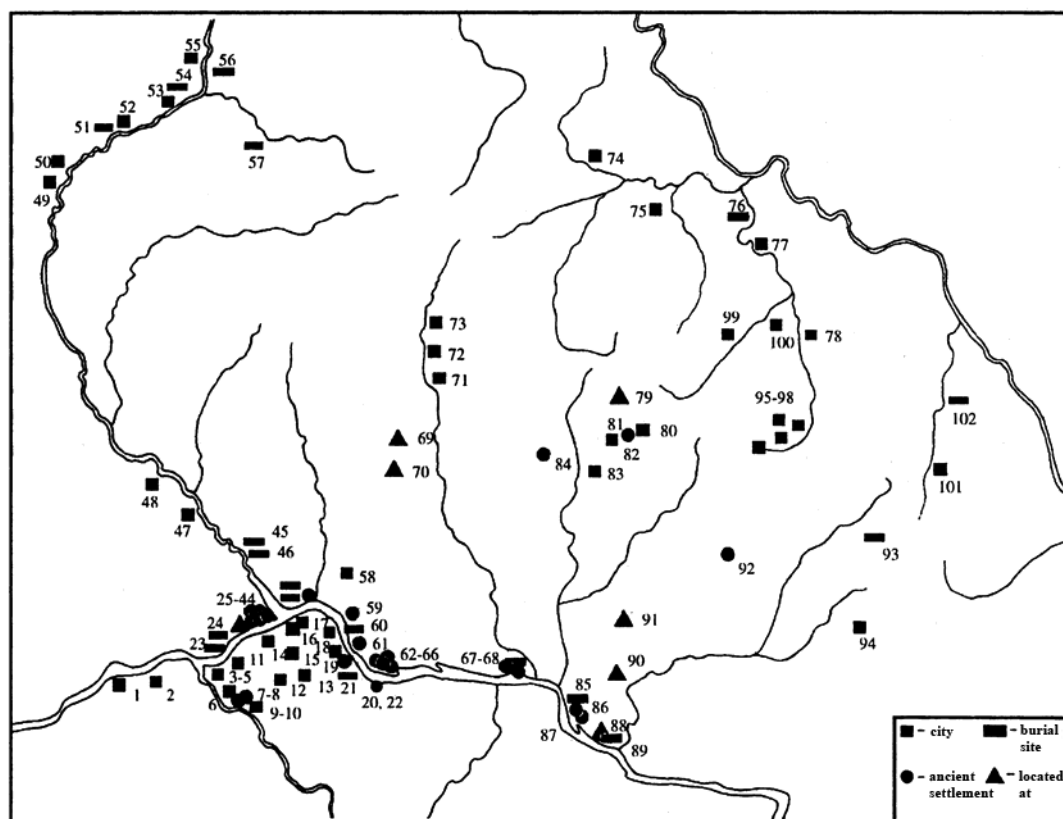
The period of the flourishing and ethnic consolidation of the Mari people in the Vetluga-Vyatka interfluvial area occurred in the 9–11th centuries. The first mention of them as neighbors of the Bulgars was made in a letter of the Khazar Khagan Yosef in the 10th century [Kokovtsov, 1932, p. 98]. One of the major factors contributing to favorable conditions for this process was the presence of the large neighboring state of Volga Bulgaria, which 'during the time of its flourishing, was the cultural, economic, political and, to a certain

extent, ethnic center, in the wide area from the Cis-Urals to the Upper Volga Region' [Kazakov, 1997, p. 33]. Bulgars started trading with local tribes, which gave impetus to their economic development. They experienced population growth, which is evidenced by an expansion of territory, increase in the number of archaeological sites (there were 39 ancient towns and ancient settlements and 11 burial sites in the late 8–11th centuries) and cultural layers in settlements. More complicated systems of fortifications using complex wooden structures appeared in ancient towns. A striking example of this is Vasilsursk 5 settlement (Repishche), which appeared in the 11th century and was surrounded by two ramparts and two moats. Each rampart had additional fortifications on its top and slopes.

A typical indicator of the consolidation process is the strengthening of the cultural homogeneity of archaeological sites left by Mari, which is indicative of basic differences in nationality 'in the sphere of ethnic characteristics' [Bromley 1982]. There are stable features determining the ethnic background of the material culture and burial ceremony based on sources from the Veselovsky, Cheremis, Dubovsky, and Nizhnyaya Strelka burial sites, among other written sources.

The Mari burial ceremony had three types: cremation, inhumation, and cenotaph.

Inhumation was the predominant burial method. The buried were placed on their back in an extended position, head in the northern direction, with a turn to the west or east. There were small differences in the orientation of the buried, depending on the geographic location of the records. A northern orientation of the buried prevailed in the Vetluga burial sites of the 9–11th centuries (65.8%), 50% of the buried in Vyatka River's watershed are also orientated to the north, and only 30.7% of buried have this orientation in Volga burial sites. But there were absolutely no bodies buried



- The archaeological records map of the Mari Volga Region: 1–Somovo II ancient town; 2–Somovo I ancient town; 3–Vasilsursk I ancient town; 4–Vasilsursk II ancient town; Vasilsursk V ancient town; 6–Anninsk ancient town; 7–ancient settlement I near the village of Krasnoe Selo; 8–ancient settlement II near the village of Krasnoe Selo; 9–Krasnoe selishche I ancient town; 10–Krasnoe selishche II ancient town; 11–Barki ancient town; 12–Pajgusovo ancient town; 13–Krasnogorskoe ancient town; 14–Emangashi ancient town; 15–Siukhino I ancient town; 16–Vladimir ancient town; 17–Ivanova Gora; 18–Maorsurdynskoe ancient town; 19–Yulyaly ancient town; 20–Yulyaly ancient settlement; 21–Yulyaly findings; 22–Yulyaly burial site; 23–Nizhnyaya Strelka Burial site; 24–Pochinki burial site; 25–Udelno-Shumetskoe location; 26–Udelno-Shumetskoe ancient settlement; 28–'Kryvoo Ozero' ancient settlement; 29–Galankina Gora ancient settlement; 30–Galankina Gora II location; 31–Maidanskoe I ancient settlement; 32–Maidanskoe II ancient settlement; 33–Maidanskoe III ancient settlement; 34–Maidanskoe IV ancient settlement; 35–Yurino ancient settlement; 36–Sutyrsкое I ancient settlement; 37–Sutyrsкое II ancient settlement; Sutyrsкое III ancient settlement; 39–Sutyrsкое IV ancient settlement; 40–Voloconnoe ancient settlement; 41–Rutkinsky burial site; 42–Younger Akhmylov burial site; 43–Akhmylov I ancient settlement; 44–Akhmylov II ancient settlement; 45–Vyzhum II burial site; 46–Vyzhum III burial site; 47–Uspenskoye ancient town; 48–Bogorodskoye ancient town; 49–Shilikhinskoe ancient town; 50–Osetrovskoe ancient town; 51–Efanikha burial site; 52–Spasskoe ancient town; 53–Chertovo ancient town; 54–Chertovo ancient town burial site; 55–Odoevskoe ancient town; 56–Cheremis cemetery; 57–Veselovsk burial site; 58–Arda ancient town; 59–Dubovskoe ancient settlement; 60–Dubovskoe burial site; 61–Otarskoe ancient settlement; 62–Paratskoe ancient settlement; 63–Paratskoe 16 ancient settlement; 64–Paratskoe 17 ancient settlement; 65–Paratskoe 18 ancient settlement; 66–Urzhumkinsk I ancient settlement; 67–Urzhumkinskoe 2 ancient settlement; 68–Urzhumkinskoe burial site; 69–Kilemary findings; 70–Yuvanur findings; 71–Osinovskoe ancient town; 72–Kubashevskoe ancient town; 73–Tsekeevoo ancient town; 74–Emanaevskoe ancient town; 75–Izhevsk ancient town; 76–Kochergino burial site; 77–Buryginskoe ancient town; 78–Kuznetsovskoe ancient town; 79–Solonersk findings; 80–Ernurskoe ancient town; 81–Greater Poland ancient settlement; 82–Staroselskoe ancient town; 83–Yushkovo ancient town; 84–Mazarskoe ancient settlement; 85–Yasak burial site; 86–Yasak ancient settlement; 87–Zvenigovo ancient settlement; 88–Pekozinsk findings; 89–Mari-Lugovaya burial site; 90–Lushmorskij burial site; 91–Nikolayevsk findings; 92–Nursharinskoe ancient settlement; 93–Shor-Unzhinskij burial site; 94–Ajshiyaz ancient town; 95–Verkhny Regezkh ancient town; 96–Iksolinskoe ancient town; 97–Shorsola ancient town; 98–Yuledur ancient settlement;



99–Bolshetanakovskoe ancient town; 100–Bolshaya gora ancient town;  
101–Kushko-Bilyamor ancient town; 102–Lopyal burial site [Finno-Ugrians of the Volga Region  
and Cis-Urals in the Middle Ages, 1999, p. 169]

in a northwestern direction in Vyatka burial sites; in Vetluga burial sites this accounted for 18.4%, and 54.9% in Volga burial sites. A western orientation of the skeleton was recorded only in the Vetluga (5.3%) and Volga (10.4%) burial sites.

There was also partial inhumation, which occurred in rare cases in all the burial sites of the Mari, and consists of the burial of skulls or collections of bones. Infant bones, wrapped with items in furs, were found in rounded pits on the wooden underlay of tombs 13 and 39 at the Nizhnyaya Strelka burial site of the 9–12th centuries. Tomb 33 of the same burial site consist of a skull, placed together with female jewellery on a wooden underlay at the feet of a skeleton from grave No. 32. The skull was covered with boards. Partial or secondary burials of dismembered skeletons were also found in the Vasilsursk V ancient town (Repishche).

Secondary burials were likely a transition between the surface burial rite for deceased tribesmen to the 'land of death' and underground burials. A complete disappearance of this method of burial was recorded in the 16th century.

Cremation in medieval burials occurred from the 6th to the 12th century and ranges from 16% to 50% of burials: calcined bones are placed at the bottom of a grave pit in disorder, items are placed as during inhumation or carelessly scattered all over the grave; bones are concentrated compactly in the center or in one of the grave's ends, and items are scattered all over the grave along with the bones; bones are placed in two piles, items are all over the grave. Judging by its features, the rite of cremation in Mari sites inherited the Volga-Finnish tradition. Calcined animal bones were found with human bones in the Nizhnyaya Strelka burial site. The majority of cremations in the 9–11th centuries were for females. There were mostly women younger than 25 buried by cremation in the Nizhnyaya

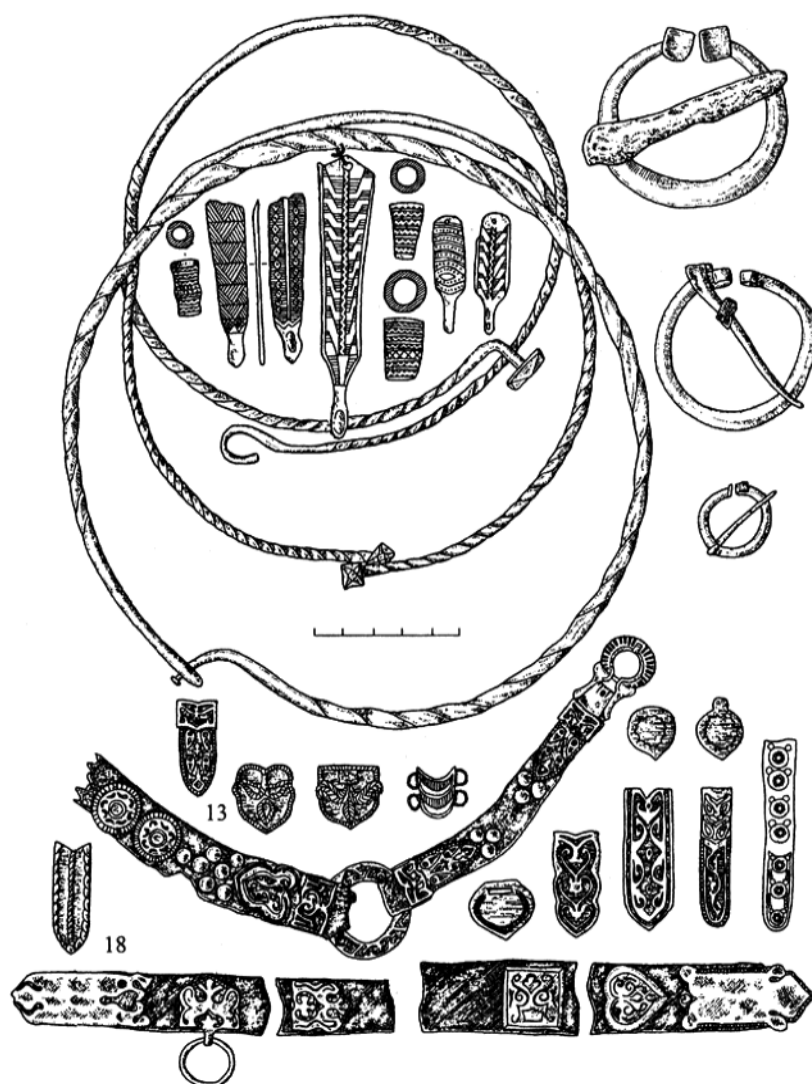
Strelka burial site (71.4%); burial of men only accounted for 14.3%.

There were also very peculiar cenotaphs, which contained buried items and parts of clothes in graves of normal forms and sizes, but without skeleton parts. Cenotaphs with items, placed at the bottom in order of wearing, copy the inhumation rite (Nizhnyaya Strelka—4, Dubovskoe—1, Kocherginsky—1 example); cenotaphs with items placed compactly in one or two piles, are similar to the cremation rite (Nizhnyaya Strelka—4, Veselovo—3, Zagrebino—1 example).

Sacrifice-ritual complexes are very important for determining the ethnic background of Mari burial traditions. Such complexes usually consist of several items placed compactly in unusual locations, or arranged in a cavity, as well as animal bones in vessels, cauldrons, tues, etc.

Such complexes were placed in a grave next to the buried in the grave pit grist or in the space in between the graves.

Collections of items and dishes turned upside down and tues were usually placed near the head and legs of the buried. Of particular interest is the location of the complexes in the spaces in between graves in small pits of rounded or square shapes, mostly at a depth of 15–20 cm, or on the surface of cemeteries. In their content and form they copy sacrificial complexes in grist burial pits and can be divided into three basic types: items grouped in a pile (tools, parts of harnesses and also particular female jewellery); items or sacrificial food in copper or iron cauldrons or under the cauldrons; items wrapped in fabric, fur, or sometimes clothes, strapped with a belt, placed in a bark tues or bast barrel, lined with bark on top, sewed together with leather and belted in two rows of leather belt with bronze plates. Tues and barrels mostly contained sets of female jewellery of almost all categories: head ornaments, pectoral ornaments, shoe ornaments, etc.



Ornaments, 9–11th centuries. 1–8, 10, 11, 13–25–The Nizhnyaya Strelka burial site;  
9–Cheremis cemetery, burial. 4; 12–Veselovsk burial site, grave 1.  
[Finno-Ugrians of the Volga region and Cis-Urals in the Middle Ages, 1999, p. 184]

The most prominent of the ornaments are head-wear, consisting of a forehead corolla and copper chains; temporal rings with overlapping ends, one of which is bent and has a different forms such as a thickened, mushroom or polyhedral head; trapezoidal patterned plate pendants with horse heads; arched pendants with a solid foundation [Arkhipov, 1973, pp. 17–40; 1991, p. 18]. Trapezoidal pendants were used in Mari costumes as a pectoral ornaments; they were used in pairs connected to each other by a copper chain or a leather

strap. The tradition of Mari women to wear trapezoidal ridge pendants as pectoral ornaments on both sides of the chest also spread to other types of pectoral ornaments: arched, triangular pendants, and also rectangular patterned pendants or Kama cast ridge ornaments borrowed from Mordovians, took their place in the Mari costume.

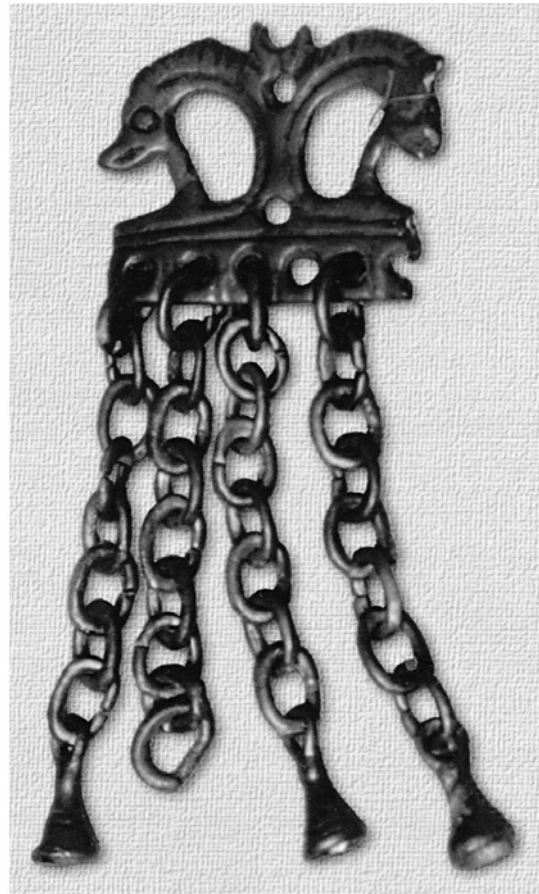
Another feature of the Mari costume is the use of arched and triangular pendants as temporal ornaments. In these cases, they are found in the temples and have long chains

(20–25 cm), ending with glass-like or bell-like pendants.

Pottery is mainly represented by pot-like flat-bottomed vessels of elongated and medium proportions with a truncated sphere-conical form, bowls of similar shapes and squat vessels with warped tight mouths, made of clay mixed with fire-clay grog and gravel. In general, ancient Mari crockery inherits the pottery traditions of the Volga Finns established in the first millennium AD. Vessels with organic impurities and stamp ornaments appear on some exemplars in burial sites, indicating multilateral relations and contacts of the local population with surrounding ethnic groups.

Geographically the Mari tribes occupied the territory that extended by its southern part to the Volga-Baltic road, along which the communications of Bulgaria with the lands of Northeastern Ruthenia were made, and the Eastern boundary of the Mari population settlement overlapped the zone of the Volga-Kama road.

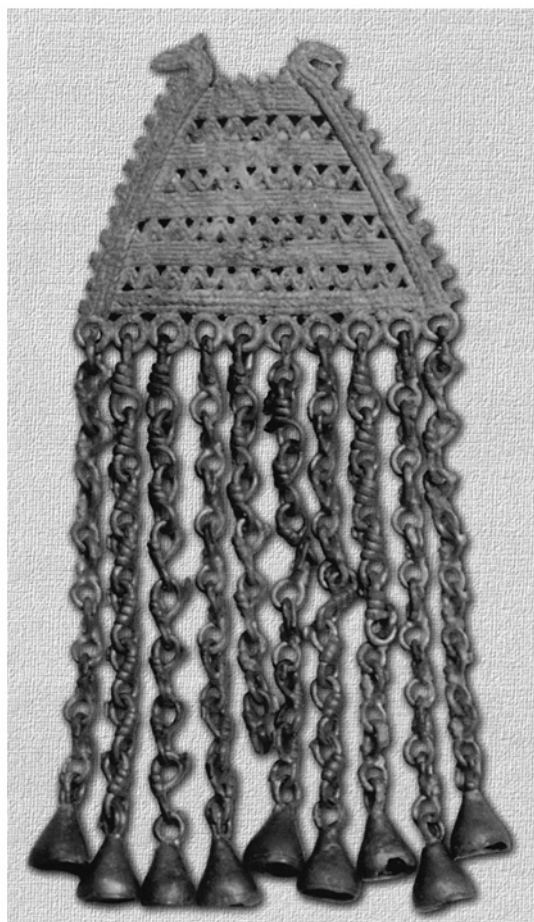
The first contacts of the Bulgars and the Mari were established back in the early period. At that point, earrings of the Saltov type and certain types of belt set overlays found their way into the region. The highest activity of Bulgarian merchants occurred in the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century, when a strong craft-making potential required the sale of their products not only to domestic but also to foreign markets from Volga Bulgaria [Kazakov, 1985, p. 27; 1987, pp. 37–40; Khuzin, 1997, pp. 71–90]. The majority of Bulgarian products and dirhams in Mari burial sites are dated to this time. The Kufic dirhams of the Samanids epoch minted in Middle Asia predominate among the coins. There are coins of the Buveyhids, Ziyarids, and Simdzhurids dynasties minted in Iran and Iraq [Fedorov-Davydov, 1984]; dirhams of Volga Bulgaria have also been found. A coin minted by Mikail ibn Jafar in Bulgar, probably not before the end of the 920s and no later than the end of the 950s, was found at the Dubovsky burial site; two coins minted in 952/953 in Suvar belonged to Talib ibn Ahmed [Ibid., pp. 162–163]. In the Nizhnyaya Strelka burial site



Pectoral jewellery. Bronze.  
The Nizhnyaya Strelka burial site.  
9–the beginning of the 12th centuries.

a dirham from Burial 36 refers to the reign of Abdullah ibn Mikail (940s, Bulgar); another one from Burial 31 refers to the reign of Mumin ibn al-Hasan (970s, Bulgar); also some one-sided impresses of Bulgarian coins (item 20—from coins of the Bulgar coinage, 988–989; items 24 and 27—from Mumin ibn al-Hasan coins minted in Bulgar in the 970s) had been found.

Imports of jewellery production item, developed in Volga Bulgaria, were relatively high. Round, pear-shaped, ornamental cast bells and woven bracelets with precious stones at their ends were found in burial chambers dating from the 9–11th centuries [1984, picture 11: 24; Nikitina, 1990a, picture 7: 7, 8]. Belts with overlays, spacer rings and buckles made in Volga Bulgaria are especially common among the discover-



Pectoral jewellery. Bronze.  
The Nizhnyaya Strelka burial site.  
9–the beginning of the 12th centuries.

ies. Overlays from the Dubovsky and Nizhnyaya Strelka burial sites are identical to the overlays of the Izmersky trade and handicraft center located at the mouth of the Kama River [Kazakov, 1999, p. 66]. The ‘Mednitskoye’ (‘coppersmith’) craft [Rudenko, 2000, pp. 82–83] took shape in Volga Bulgaria in the latter half of the 10th century; the flow of Bulgarian metal utensils was seized near the border zone. Copper kettles and bowls of white bronze are frequently found in Mari burial sites of 10–11th centuries. Non-ferrous metals used for the manufacture of jewellery, silk fabrics, cowrie shells entered the region through Bulgarian traders.

Products of from other tribes and peoples of the steppes came into the region through the brokerage of Bulgarian merchants.

A bridle set from the 66 Dubovsky burial site [Arkhipov, 1984, p. 155] has a large heart shaped brow band, brass bells and end-brass bells with recesses of non-ferrous metal, which is largely typical of the nomads of near-Irtysh and Altai steppes [Mogilnikov, 2002, p. 89]. Similar horse brass has been found in the Bykovo burial site (11th century) in the Lower Volga Region [Fedorov-Davydov, 1966, picture 1: 1], but, according to V. Mogilnikov, they are the result of the Western migration of the Kimaks [Mogilnikov, 2002, p. 90].

A large proportion of the belt decorations are similar to Hungarian antiquities. Ye. Khalikova believes the crescent-shaped belt decorations left in the Bolshetigansky burial site [Khalikova, 1976, p. 146] to be specific items, characteristic of the proto-Hungarians and are similar to those at the Bashkhalom and Ban burial sites. Identical belt decorations were discovered in the Yumskoy and Nizhnyaya Strelka burial sites. A belt decoration bearing the image of Simurgh has been found in the Dubovsky burial site [Arkhipov, 1984, picture 14: 9]. The head shape, wings and body design display similarities to images on belt decorations from the Bolshetigansky burial site [Khalikov, 1976, picture 11: 15], as well as to an ear pick from Eger and a bag cover from Bezded [Ibid., p. 148]. They display images of animals, as do other buckles from the Dubovsky burial site.

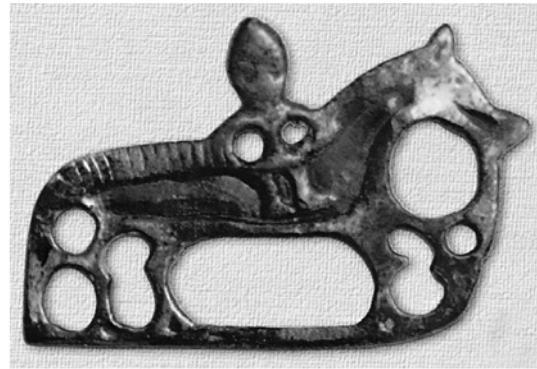
Wallets from the Veselovsky burial site are of considerable interest, with a decorative plate depicting the tree of life or a sophisticated floral pattern similar to Hungarian items [Arkhipov, 1973, pp. 47, 49; The ancient Hungarians, 1996, pp. 126, 178].

Trade was carried out largely through the exchange of goods. Of 77 finds of dirhams or imitations of them, 20 are damaged by varying degrees, which does not rule out their circulation as money by weight content. However, dirhams were perceived by the local population primarily as a raw material for manufacture of jewellery. Therefore, it was no coincidence that most of them had one or two bored holes for hanging and had been used as components for jewellery. Often the coins were used for the manufacture of new items;

they were cut into small platelets as bordering for the edges of wooden bowls.

The imitation coins or coined minted on one side were no less popular among the local population. 21 examples of these had been found at the Dubovsky burial site and 15 examples at the Nizhnyaya Strelka burial site. In the analysis of the numismatic material of the Dubovsky burial site G. Fedorov-Davydov noted an interesting detail: two impressions from Burial 33 are made from a single dirham; two impressions made from a single dirham have also been found on site L/3. Two rare dirhams from the Emir of Volga Bulgaria minted by a pair of stamps have been found in Burial 36; Burial 40 contain five cast, coin-like pendants made as one piece and two pendants made into another piece [Fedorov-Davydov, 1984, p. 166]. Most likely, the production of stamps and coin-like pendants was carried out in a single center located nearby (perhaps at the border between the Bulgarian and Mari lands) with a limited number of artisans serving a specific area. Non-ferrous metal bowls that may also have been produced here receive the most attention in Mari written sources [Nikitina, Rudenko, 1992]. Semenovsky (1–3) and Izmersky trading-craft centers played a significant role in the development of trade relations between Bulgars and the local population [Kazakov, 1999, pp. 64–65]. Two 10–11th century Bulgarian settlements (Otarskoe and Mari-Lugovskoye) in the Mari region are also known of. Here, it was possible to exchange good or carry out trading operations. A. Khalikov considered the Mari-Lugovskoye settlement to be the remnant of a trading post [Khalikov 1962, pp. 182–183].

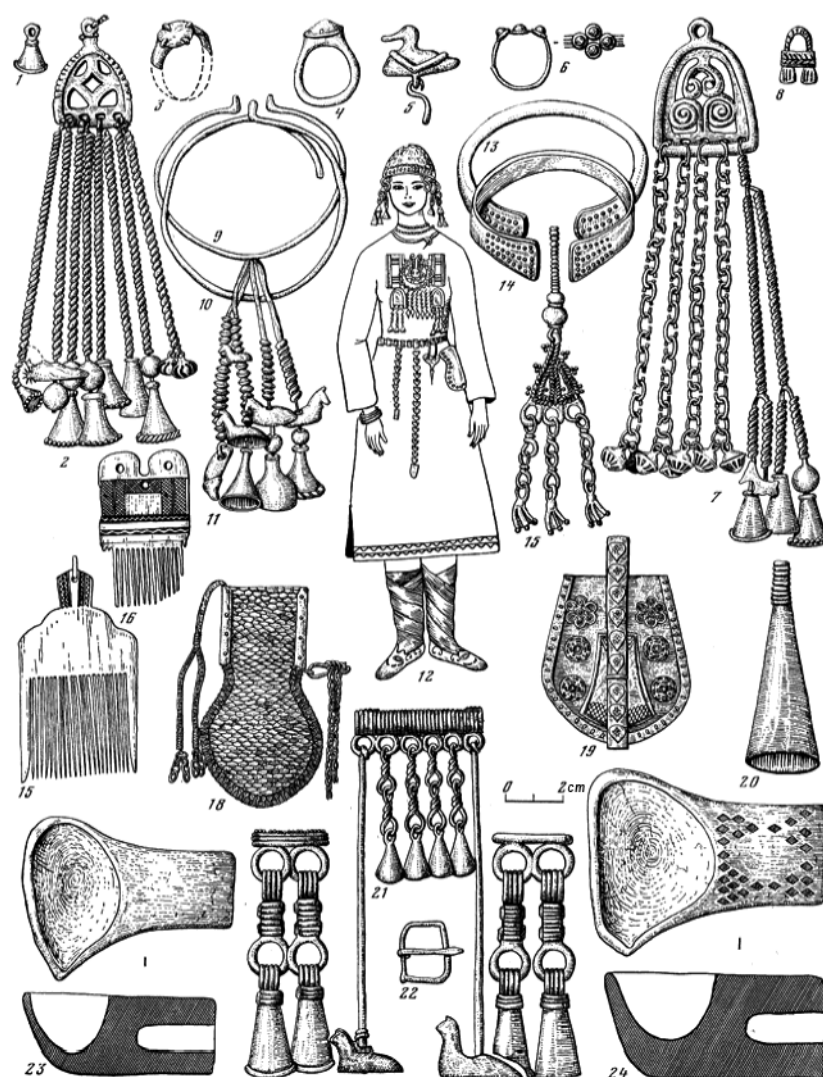
Goods from Rus', the Baltic region and Europe entered Mari lands via the Volga-Baltic waterway. The first entry of Russian goods into Vetluga-Vyatka confluence area took place at the turn of the first and the second millenniums. A jewellery collection with Slavic-Russian origins was found in 9–11th century burial sites: open bracelets with loop-ends, twisted ten-kopeck coins with hammer-flattened ends, one of which has a C-like finish (Nizhnyaya Strelka, Veselovsky burial sites), twisted ten-



A pendant for pectoral jewellery. Bronze.  
Dubovskoe burial site. 10–12th centuries.

kopeck coins with cut ends (Veselovsky burial site), ten-kopeck coins with overlapping ends in a form of heads of various shapes and with a surface with decorative 'wolves teeth', known as radimichi (Nizhnyaya Strelka burial site) [Nikitina, 1990, picture 3]. Western specimens can also be identified among the clothing and equipment items: a ring clasp with poppy head-like open ends [Arkhipov, 1973, picture 24: 1, 2, 5], the clasps are triangular in cross-section with circular ornamentation on the surface, fibulae with heads decorated with multidimensional spikes or octagonal studs at the ends [Kivikoski, 1939, table 81: 652; 80: 662; Brivkals, 1959, table SH: 3; Brandenburg, 1895, table 2: 1, 2, 3, 4; Ravdonikas, 1890, table 6: 22]. The denarius of Duke Ordulf (1059–1071) were found at Burial 34 of the Dubovsky burial site [Fedorov-Davydov, 1984, p. 165], and the denarius of Knut (1017–1023) were found at Burial 23 of the Nizhnyaya Strelka burial site.

The most important sectors of economic activity for the Mari population were hunting and farming until the middle of the second millennium. The bones of fur-bearing animals (squirrels, foxes, hares) have been found in the ancient settlements. A. Khalikov believes that by the 9th century hunting had become a craft that was intended for commerce and the payment of tribute in the form of furs [Khalikov, 1976, p. 103]. Bulgarian merchants also actively exported furs. In this regard, the observations of A. Khalikov for identification of names 'squirrel' and 'kopeck'



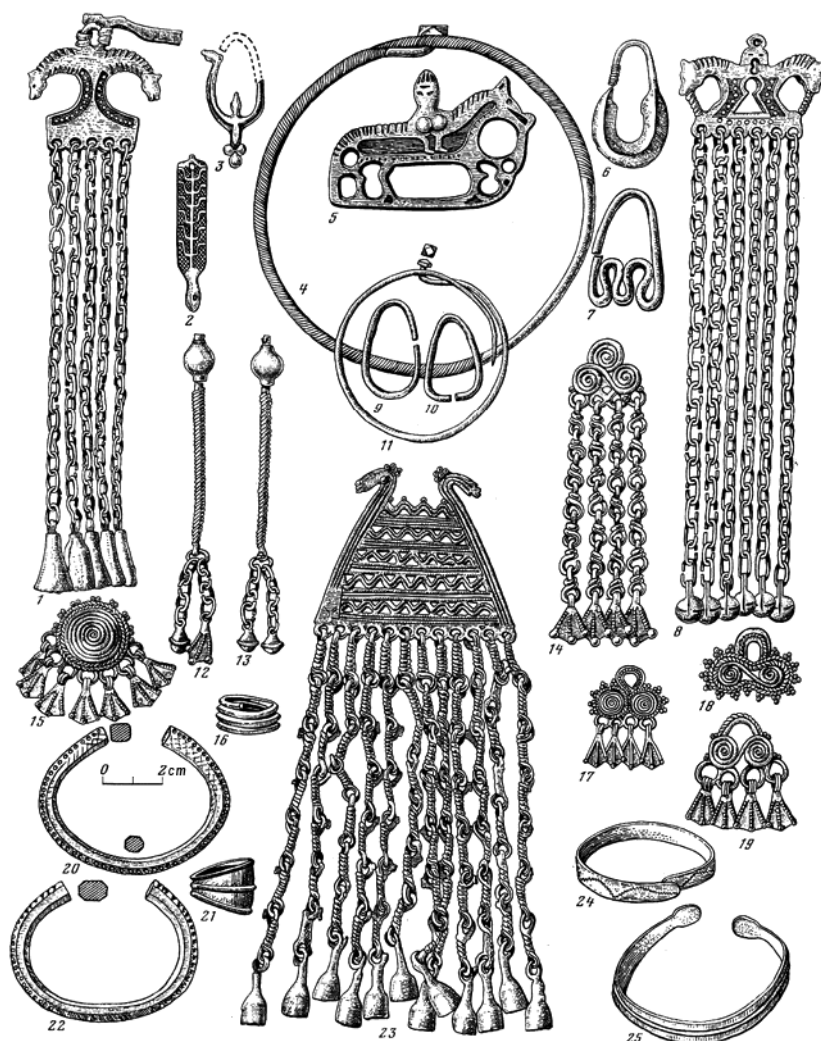
Mari tools and ornaments, 9–10th centuries.  
[Finno-Ugrians and Balts in the Middle Ages, 1987, p. 298]

(penny) in the languages of the peoples of the Volga region are interesting as they reveal the nature of their trade relationships [Ibid., p. 104]. In Tatar language, the smallest monetary unit (kopeck or penny) is called a 'Tian' (squirrel). In Mari language, 'ur' correspondingly means both squirrel and kopeck. However, in Tatar language, one kopeck is equal to one squirrel ('ber Tian'); but in Mari language, one kopeck is called a 'Kumyr', that is 3 squirrels or 2 kopecks, 'Shamir', that is 7 squirrels and 3 kopecks and 'Lur', that is 10 squirrels [Vasilyev, 1948, pp. 49–50]. In

addition to fur-bearing animals, big-game hunting was also practiced: elk, brown bear and wolf bones have also been found at the archaeological sites.

Lynxes and wild boars became the prey of ancient hunters, as their claws and tusks were used in the production of necklaces and amulets. A skeleton of a duck was discovered in a pot at sacrificial complex 1 at the Nizhnyaya Strelka burial site.

Arrowheads used for hunting, of which the vast majority were diamond-shaped pedicellate, were in some cases placed in wooden



Mari ornaments, 9–first half of the 11th centuries.  
[Finno-Ugrians and Balts in the Middle Ages, 1987, p. 299]

or leather quivers. Special bone arrowheads with a blunt ends, called 'tomari', were used for then hunting of fur-bearing animals. They were in use until the 17th century, according to contents of Mari burial sites. Bone, rhomboid shaped arrows have been found at Cheremis cemetery, Yumskoy and Kocherginsky burial sites of 9–11th centuries.

Rich osteological matter at Mari archaeological sites of the first and beginning of the second millenniums (Somovskoye II, Vasilurskoye V, Repyshche and Vetluzhsky archaeological sites) indicate the breeding of

domestic animals. Fishing was a subsidiary industry.

Agriculture was obviously of extensive nature; and in the second millennium its role only increased. Taking into account the highly forested terrain, slash and burn was the only possible type of agriculture. The sowing conditions of the forest clearings were extremely short-lived (1–3 years), after which the cleared land was abandoned. With a small population and a vast forestland in the region, a new clearings were created at a considerable distance from both the dwellings and the oth-



Reconstruction of a female costume based  
on materials from grave 12  
of the Veselovsk burial site

er clearings. This system involved the use of land without manure until it yielded a harvest and abandoning it when it became exhausted. As a result it was necessary to trek from place to place. This lifestyle caused, according to researchers, a so-called 'incomplete agricultural settlement' [Shennikov, 1971, pp. 76–93] and therefore, the continual resettlement of short-term villages. This is evidenced by the nature of Mari villages: The small area of the ancient settlements did not have a strong cultural layer and were rather sparse.

Axes, found in ample quantities during excavations became the main tool with which to prepare land for slash and burn agriculture. From the 9th century the most common axes were shaft-hole axes with elongated proportions. The axe head length was equal to one third of the instrument length. In the 9–11th

centuries, according to G. Arkhipov, one of the tangible forms of ethnic Mari cultural expression were bladed lug-shaped axes with a hammer-shaped axe heads and rounded sides [Arkhipov, 1986, p. 51]. Based on the findings of both fragments and whole towels (Burial 19 of the Nizhnyaya Strelka burial site) made of flax and hemp fabrics it is possible to talk about the cultivation of industrial crops (flax and hemp).

In general, the Mari farming was of organic nature. Village-based handicrafts were mainly associated with the processing of raw materials at home.

The archaeological sites provide only fragmented information about the processing of ferrous metals. None of the well-known medieval archaeological sites display any traces of the processing ore or coal. Multiple references in publications and reports about findings of slag are not yet sufficient grounds to conclude that ore was developed in the local area [Arkhipov, 1973, p. 76]. The amount of slag is insignificant and many of described findings are simply ferruginous concretions. It is probable, that in this period ferrous metal was brought into the region in the form of semi-finished products [Shadrin, 1994, p. 26]. A similar method for producing ferrous metals was used by many peoples [Rybakov, 1948, pp. 94–96; Kolchin, 1953, pp. 111–112]. The processing of imported semi-finished products into local produce took place in ancient towns. During this process, the iron smelting was carried out in vessels [Shadrin, 1994, p. 24]. Slagged vessels have been found in large numbers at the Somovskiy II archaeological site, and on other sites.

The manufacture of copper and brass products from solid billets by adding pressure, targeted hammering with subsequent bending on an 'arbor', as well as techniques of stringing, soldering and polishing were widely practiced in industrial processes of the population. Many disk-shaped items were carved out from a single plate.

Casting had become widely used by the turn of first and second millenniums. The analysis showed that the raw materials necessary for manufacture of jewellery were



alloys of copper and zinc, pure copper and brass. The most widely used practice in the production of jewellery was a set technique of soldering together smooth twisted, braided wires, plates, balls and other small details. Metallographic analyses have shown that the spectacle-shaped shoe pendants from the Dubovsky burial site were made by winding wire of a conical object and hammering. Triangular frame pendants, almost all trapezoidal and solar breast ornaments were made with set technique using patterned wire with subsequent bending and welding. The analysis of a temple ring from Nizhnyaya Strelka burial site [Nikitina, 1990, picture 1: 6] showed that the ring was made of wire subjected to bending and stretching, and then soldered onto a separately casted head. A ten-kopeck coin from the Dubovsky burial site was made of three wires of equal diameter that had been twisted together under hot conditions.

Castings produced using the lost-wax method in molds are much more common in the 9–11th century burial sites. Casting with the use of a wax mold was used for volume, mostly of hollow jewellery. Analyses of a number of items from the Dubovsky burial site showed that the interior branded mark was produced from leather additionally soaked in organic solutions. Bells, bottle-like appendages and loop-shaped shoe pendants were made this way.

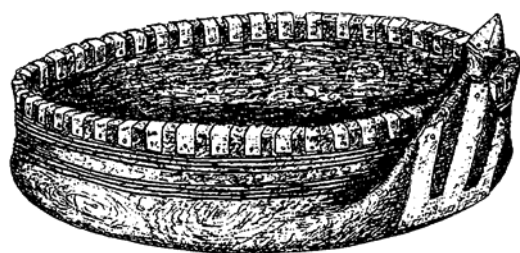
Casting in soft molds was also used for the production of jewellery. Fragments of clay ring-shaped molds were discovered at the Ivanova Gora (Ivan Mountain) archaeological site. The clay molds were fragile and could be used for a limited number of castings. With wax knitting and hollow pieces made using a wax mold could be used only once and thus we can find very few copies of these pieces. These facts indicate that jewellery was made in limited quantities and the craft was developed within the household.

Evidence for numerous archaeological sources confirm that the majority of the items were not imported but were manufactured locally. Smelting ladles with a rounded or V-shape form of a scoop with a conical bottom and a drain to one side and with a robust

rectangular handle located on the same level with the edge of the scoop are among the most common manufacturing equipment. Twelve discoveries of casting and smelting tools have been found at ancient Mari burial sites: smelting ladles, crucibles and casting molds. In all cases, these were female burials. At first glance, Burial site 11 at the Nizhnyaya Strelka burial site seemed to be an exception. Here a smelting ladle was found together with women's jewellery and burnt bones at head of a male grave. During the processing of anthropological data at the Institute of Ethnology of Russian Academy of Sciences by G. Rykushina it was revealed that the remains of female cremation were preserved there.

According to B. Rybakov, 'Finno-Ugric women were engaged in foundry production as the "noise-making pendant" style spread across North-Eastern Europe. These pendants were made using the wax-mold casting technique. Preparation of a mold from wax threads ('wax knitting') is close to long-standing women's needlework such as knitting, weaving or embroidery, so it was natural that the casting of jewellery was taken over by women' [Rybakov, 1948]. The greatest flourishing of Finno-Ugric women's foundry, including Mari, took place in the 9th century, according to L. Golubeva. Male founders appeared in the 10th century, however, foundry production remained the domain of women for a long time [Golubeva, 1984]. Burials of women founders at Mari burial sites occur up to the 13th century.

Probably, foundry-women had a special social status in society. Their burials were usually distinguished by richness of their burial clothes, clearly demonstrated by Burial site 5 at the Nizhnyaya Strelka burial site. Locally produced items, rather than imported, were mainly found in the burials of foundry-women. Thus, the women became the bearers and guardians of folk traditions. Awls and flints are typically found in the graves of foundry-women, corresponding to their working environment. The processing of metal is always associated with fire, and therefore flint is essential. Awls could be used for the creation of the wax molds with which the metal



Wooden bowl, 12–13th centuries  
(reconstruction by G. Arkhipov)  
[Finno-Ugrians of the Volga and Cis-Urals  
regions in the Middle Ages, 1999, p. 193]

casts were made. Richly ornamented bone awl handles, decorated with the stylized heads of animals, indicate that the process of making jewellery had magical significance.

Axes were found in 9 out of 12 foundry-women burials. Although they are not uncommon in female burials, they are found with foundry-women almost without exception. It is likely that the axes are indicators of the stable position of foundry-women in society.

Metal craft remained in the domain of woman for so long as it was being developed within the household. This is the nature of domestic craft in the 10–13th centuries as observed in the Mari Volga region. There are no deposits of non-ferrous metal in the region. Raw materials were imported here in small amounts, such as a silver wire, plates, tokens and ingots.

In addition to these crafts, weaving, the processing of leather, bone and birch bark had a significant position. Ceramic and stone whorls are found in almost all of the historical sites and have different shapes: bi-conical with a rib in the center, truncated conical, barrel- and disc-shaped. Fragments of woollen clothes wool and linen fabrics have also been preserved.

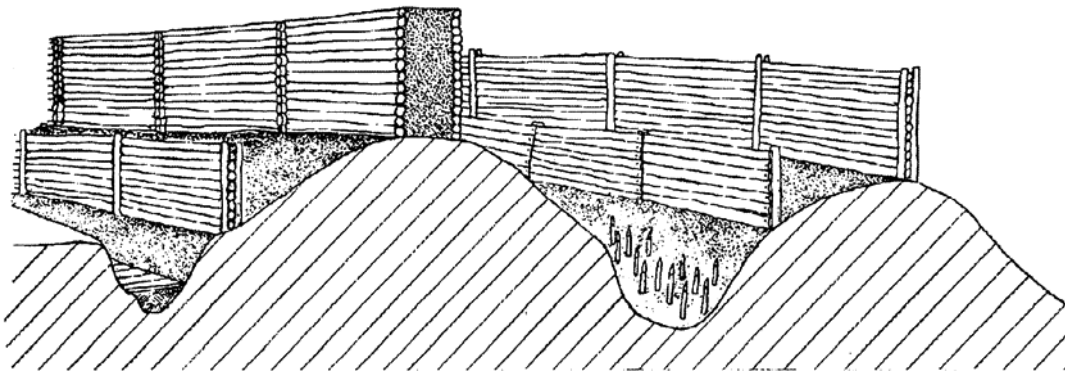
Artifacts made of bone include, arrow-heads, awl and knives handles, combs, amulets-‘ear-picks’, decorative horses and ducks with carved geometric patterns on polished surfaces. A similar geometric pattern is imprinted on cylindrical birch bark boxes with tight-fitting lids (‘tueski’).

Certain changes in the development of the Mari ethnic group took place in the first half of the 12th century, which are reflected in archaeological finds. These changes were likely caused by the political situation in the Middle Volga Region. The expansion of the borders of the Vladimir-Suzdal principality to the west and the intensive development of the Vyatka River basin by the Rusessians in the north-east and the confrontation between the Ruses’ and Bulgar states, which took the form of repeated raids against each other through the territory inhabited by Mari tribes. This forced Mari tribes to look for new, safer lands and other forms of settlement.

The population predominantly switches to ancient settlements. In the 12th to early 15th centuries the majority (65.4%) of ancient settlements were transferred to rock terraces, where the bulk of the agricultural population settled (Nosely II and III, Vazhnanger, Sautkino, Krasnoe selishche IV, etc.).

Large settlement clusters became an important part of the population distribution system by the middle of the second millennium. Ancient towns, usually surrounded by a number of ancient settlements, acted as the centers of such clusters: ‘for they have villages placed by great fortresses’ [Kurbsky, 1833, p. 18]. Industrial, burial and prayer sites were located nearby. An example of a such a layout is the Vazhnanger (Malaya Sundyr) ancient town and its surroundings in the river estuary. Malaya and Bolshaya Sundyr comprise of Nosely II and III, Vazhnanger, Shartnejka, Yandush-evo, Klyuchevo, Sautkino and Yulyaly ancient settlements, the forge and the Vazhnanger altar. A similar distribution of sites in the high Middle Ages can also be seen in other areas of the Mari settlement: at the mouth of the Sura river, on the left bank of the Volga, between the Vetluga and Dorogucha Rivers, between the Nemda and Lazh rivers, on the right bank of the Vyatka river tributaries around the Shorsola ancient town.

The number of ancient towns decreased sharply and their functions changed; from simple shelters to regional military and administrative centers. Judging by the Vazhnanger ancient town of the late 13th to early



Vasilsursk 5 ancient town—Repishche. Reconstruction of rampant fortifications.

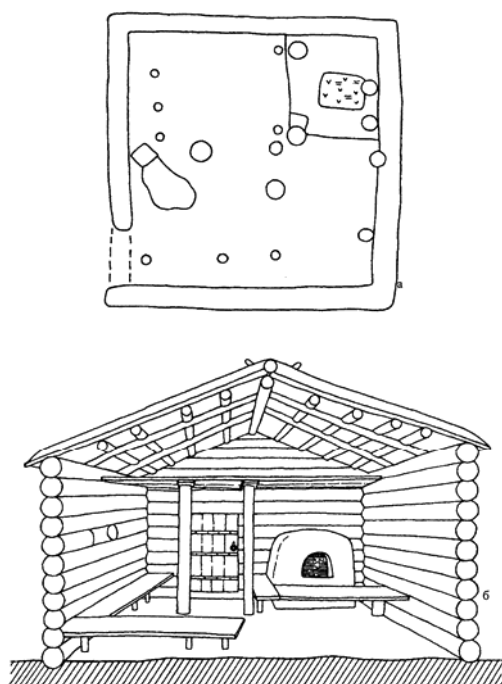
15th centuries, it is clear that they had strong and complex wooden and earthen fortifications. The strong internal rampart structures consisted of frames of horizontal logs of up to 15 cm in diameter and cross poles with a thickness of 8–10 cm which were laid to the height of up to 80 cm and densely packed with clay. Information about additional fortification structures is quite limited, due to the substantial deformation of the rampart: only some parts of the wooden wall remained, traces of an octangular building, probably a watchtower, was discovered on the northern tip of the rampart, with a perimeter length of 260 cm and 150 cm on each side. Remnants of the gates structures were found in the passage area.

On the basis of the calculations on the amount of labour needed to construct a fortress, proven by P. Rappoport, using data from Old Russian archaeological sites [Rappoport, 1961, pp. 213–215], it has been established that to construct the fortifications of Vazhnanger ancient town it would have been necessary to engage, on average, 80 workers for the duration of one construction season (150 days a year). It should be noted that the cultural layers of the ancient town are characterized by a low thickness and poor concentration of cultural remains. It is therefore unlikely that the town had a large, permanent population. Nonetheless, nearby ancient settlements have layers saturated with archaeological finds, indicating a rather active life in the region. Judging by the size of Mari an-

cient settlements, they could accommodate no more than three homesteads, which was confirmed by travellers' and ethnographers' reports [Miller, 1781; Troitskaya, 1893]. Thus, the construction of defense structures required the participation of (male) residents from the whole region, who could be involved in this duty. This could be the case if the ancient town functioned as an administrative center for a particular region.

Mari dwellings of that period constituted of square log cabins with an area ranging from 20 to 30 square metres. The walls were oriented in four cardinal axes. The lower log row was dug into the ground. In most cases the exit was hacked through one of the walls and was not marked on the ground layout. Heating was provided by ovens, which were mainly installed on the forehearth casing (Krasnoe selishche II, Vazhnanger-Maly Sundyr ancient towns, Yulyaly ancient settlement), and in exceptional cases on the ground (Vasilsursk V ancient town, Repishhe). A characteristic feature of Mari above-ground dwellings was a complete absence of permanent household pits. The main production activities were carried out outside living quarters, in outbuildings for various purposes: storage barns, cold cellars, 'kudo' kitchens and sheds.

A storage barn was an building with a cellar for storing household goods, clothes and foodstuffs. All constructions had a rectangular above-ground layout of 12–16 square metres area and a cellar usually found on the northern side. The above-ground parts in the



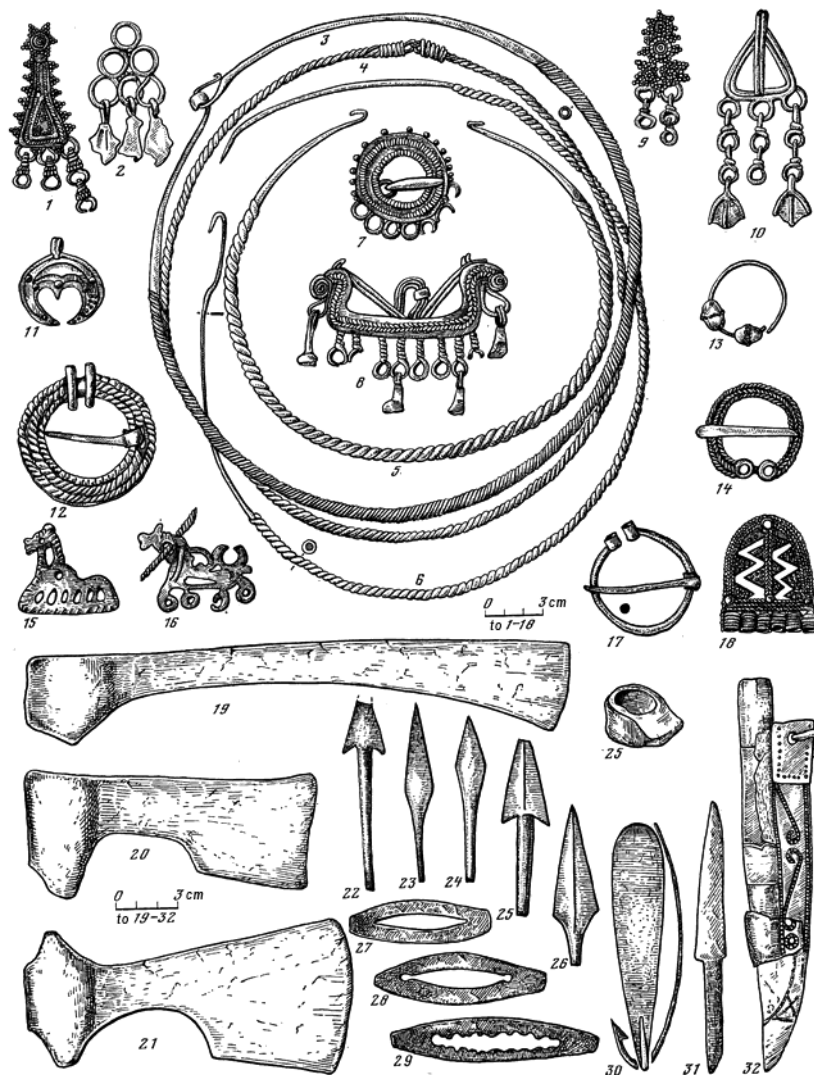
Ancient settlement Krasnoe selishche 2:  
a—dwelling plan; b—dwelling reconstruction 1  
[Finno-Ugrians of the Volga region  
and Cis-Urals in the Middle Ages, 1999, p. 173]

Yulyaly and Krasnoe selishche ancient settlements consisted of log cabins. Cellar walls in some cases were further strengthened by planks (Sautkino ancient settlement and Ashiyaz ancient town). The above-ground part was separated from the cellar by wooden planks or pole flooring, plastered with clay on their upper side. The Mari are known to use storage barns to this day [Kozlova, 1958, pp. 116–117; Sepeev, 1982]. According to ethnographic data, these structures had two storeys and were not only used for storing foodstuffs, but also as lodging during the summer. It is impossible to ascertain from the archaeological findings whether the structures that were discovered were indeed two-storeyed, but the above-ground part could also be used as a summer dwelling.

The 'kudo' kitchen played an important role in the Mari homestead. This is a special building with a big hearth in the center, used for cooking food and conducting family rituals, sacred ceremonies and prayer. Large

hearths totaling 1–1.5 m in diameter containing kitchen waste were found in the second millennium archaeological sites (Yulyaly, Krasnoe selishche II and Nizhie Shelabolki ancient settlements and Vazhnanger-Maly Sundyr ancient town). Usually, chain links for hanging up cauldrons are found around these hearths. The majority of materials found are pottery items.

There was a growing inflow of items from the Kostroma and Yaroslavl Volga regions at the end of the 11th and beginning of the 12th centuries. This was clearly reflected in the material culture of the Mari population, left in the burial sites of the 12–13th centuries. The 12th century burial sites contained temple decorations in the form of bracelet-shaped temple rings with slightly overlapping ends, typical for the burial sites in the Kalinin and Yaroslavl Volga regions, Rostov-Suzdal land and north-western districts of the Novgorod region [Sedov, 1982, pp. 194–195]. Convoluted rings made of two twisted wires with tied ends, signet-ring shaped with overlapping ends, beady, particularly one- or three-bead temple rings, appeared in this period. Banded bracelets were most common, of which new shapes were becoming popular; with bent and drawn out ends, and having extensive similarities to Slavic antiquities and the Kostroma Volga region archaeological sites [Levashova, 1967, p. 236]. 'Mustache' plate signet-rings of the 9–11th centuries were replaced by ribbed and false-twisted ones, most popular with the rural inhabitants of the Kostroma Volga region and Rus' in the 10–13th centuries [Ryabinin, 1986, p. 66; Nedoshivina, 1967, p. 264]. Frame pendants with a triangular base of braided wire from the 9–11th centuries gave way to pendants of the same shape but which were made of wire rings or soldered pyramid coils, which were, as E. Goryunova observed, the distinguishing jewellery of the Meryan ethnic group, widely used in the 12–13th centuries on lands of present-day Kostroma and Ivanovo regions and Yaroslavl Volga region [Goryunova, 1961, p. 244; Ryabinin, 1986, p. 77]. Oval or oblong extended anvils with jagged or flared ends and triangular axe heads were quite



Inventory of the Pochinki Mari burial site, 12–13th centuries  
[Finno-Ugrians and Balts in the Middle Ages, 1987, p. 301]

popular at that time in Kostroma and Yaroslavl Volga regions [Ryabinin, 1986, pp. 86, 88]. Keys from Novgorod style spring-loaded locks, pottery and Christian cult items came into common use in the 12–13th centuries.

Mari antiquities from this period also include a collection of objects related to north-western Finns: syulgamas with soldered heads, a series of ornamental funeral items, metal beads-phials, etc., which reached the Mari Volga region most probably via the Slavs as a result of trading or the Slavic colonization of the Kostroma Volga region.

Nonetheless, regardless of the clear similarities between the historical sites of the 9–10th and those of the 12–13th centuries, the objects of the latter have significantly different features. For example, cremation at funeral sites disappeared and inhumation became the only burial practice, clothing started to include a substantial number of items from the east, primarily in Meryan style. Particular specific features distinguish the Pochinki burial site. Despite its obvious proximity to the above mentioned burial sites, its ethnic and cultural interpretation demonstrates a number

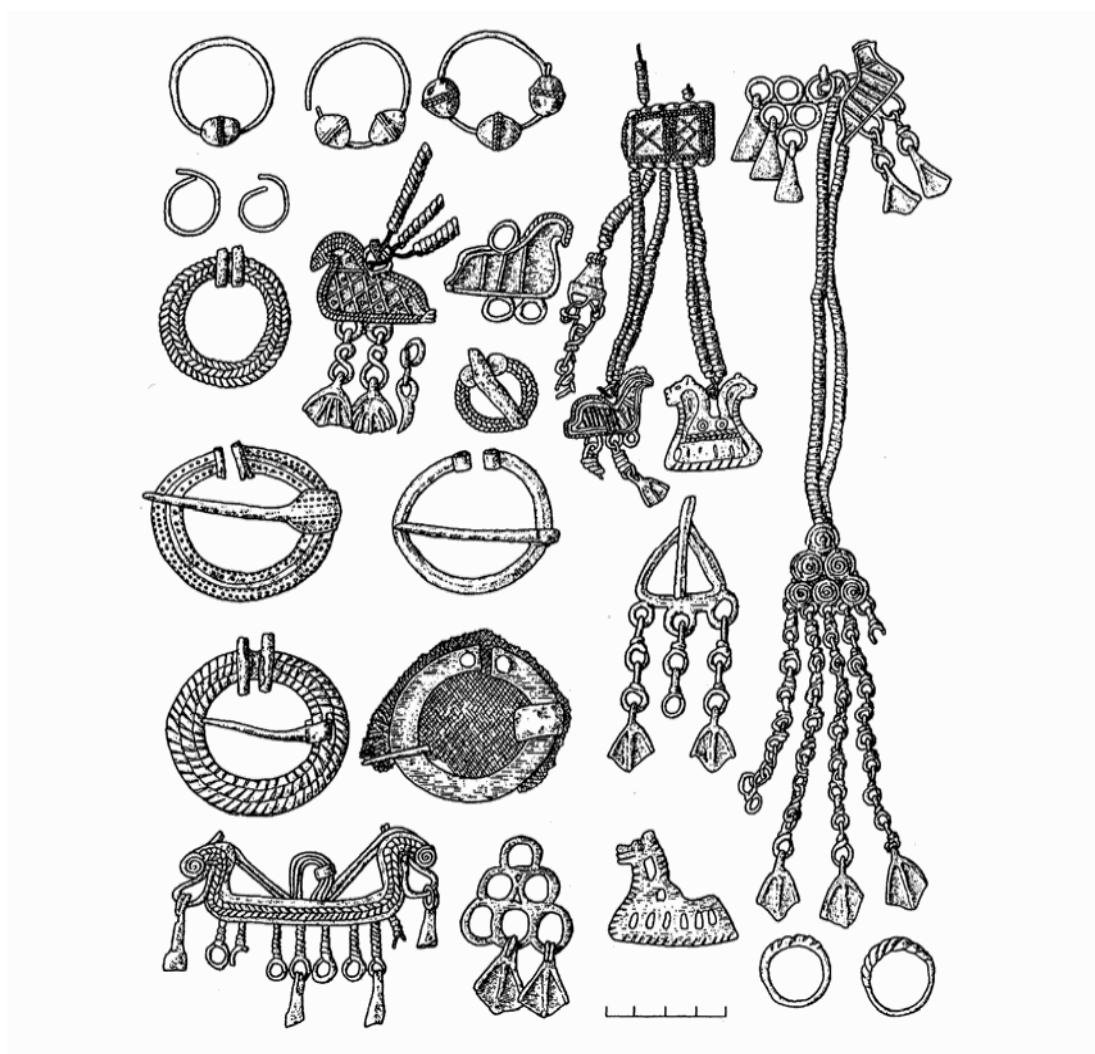
of features which sets it apart from the ancient Mari burial places of the 12–13th centuries. Firstly, it is of special interest that the Pochinki burial complexes do not contain any jewellery. This reflects a continuity with the previous period and are the ethnically defining features of ancient Mari culture, such as, for instance, head chains, bracelet-like temple rings, plait pendants, round flat and teardrop-shaped pendants; noise-making pendants and pear-shaped bells with a cruciform slot. At the same time, this archaeological site provides a variety of categories of Meryan jewellery (two-headed patterned horses, triangular frame pendants and pendants rings soldered in the form of a pyramid, flat buckles-syulgamas with the soldered ends), as well as items characteristic of Slavified Kostroma Finno-Ugrians (coin pendants, 'lunulae'-crescents, braided torcs with flat bent ends) [Kostroma region archaeology, 1997, picture 37: 39].

Sharp increases in the presence of Meryan articles and Slavic objects in the Vetluga region in the 12–13th centuries cannot be fully explained by cultural or trade relations between the two regions [Goryunova, 1961, pp. 244–248; Arkhipov, 1986, p. 93; Ryabinin, 1986, pp. 192–193] or even to the traditional links attributed to the Vetluga and Kostroma Volga regions since the epoch of the early Iron Age [Ryabinin, 1997, p. 195; Patrushev, 1992, p. 148]. It is more probable that this development was directly related to the migration of settlers from the Kostroma Volga Region to the Vetluga region. E. Kazakov has confirmed evidence of an eastward migration of a certain group of Volga-Finns with data gathered from pre-Mongol Bulgar ancient settlements and Tankeevka burial site [Kazakov, 1985, p. 32].

At the end of the pre-Mongol or at the beginning of the Golden Horde period a part of the Bulgar population migrated to the left bank. The burial sites of Gorny Shumec (12 graves) and Mari-Lugovaya (35 graves) are of significant interest as they clarify the ethnic situation in the region. Both burial sites have practically no inside inventories, while the burial ceremony is similar to that of the Bulgar burial grounds of the 12–14th centu-

ries. To this period also corresponds to Bulgar ceramics repeatedly found in the Vasilsursk V and Vazhnanger (Maly Sundyr) ancient towns and Sutyri and Yul'yaly ancient settlements located on both sides of the Volga. The finds of Mari-Chuvash tableware, dated in the same period, were also recorded at various archaeological sites of the Cis-Kama region: Syukeevo V, Rozhdestveno and Kaybely ancient settlements, Juketau ancient town, Bulgar, etc. [Khlebnikova, 1984, pp. 200–201; Poluboyarinova, 1993, pp. 35–52; Kokorina, 1994, p. 191; 2002, pp. 30–31, 95–96]. According to researchers, this indicates that the Mari population did, in fact, inhabit these ancient settlements. Apparently there were no strong ethnic links between the Mari population and the Bulgars. This was not helped by the different religions of the two peoples. It is, however, impossible to deny economic and cultural contact, evidenced by the findings about burial ceremonies [Mikheev, 2000a] and innovations in the economic activities of the local population, already apparent in the subsequent period of Mari ethnic development. Strong trading links with the Bulgars also continued up to the 14th century. Copper, horse-shaped locks discovered in the Vazhnanger (Maly Sundyr) ancient town and the Krasnoe ancient settlement, display a rectangular overlay of nonferrous metal with decorative ends and a prominent lozenge in the center. Mini-weights made of nonferrous metal from the Vazhnanger ancient town are similar to the goods manufactured in Bulgar ancient settlements in the Golden Horde period. Bulgar ceramics were found in all the Mari Volga region settlements of the middle of the second millennium: Vasilsursk V ancient town, Repishhe, Yulyaly ancient settlement and Krasnoe selishche II.

By the middle of the second millennium a substantial growth had taken place in the role of animal husbandry in the economic life of the Mari people. It became one of the main sectors of the economy, as evidenced by the remains of animal bones at the Vazhnanger archaeological site, Krasnoe selishhe and Yulyaly ancient settlements. Analysis of the osteological data from a settlement near the vil-



Jewellery of the 12–13th centuries. 1, 3–5, 7, 12–Vyzhum 3 burial site; 2, 6, 8, 11, 15–Vyzhum 2 burial site; 9, 10, 19, 20–Rutkinsky burial site; 12, 14, 16–18–Pochinki burial site [Finno-Ugrians of the Volga region and Cis-Urals in the Middle Ages, 1999, p. 185]

lage of Krasnoe selishhe in the 13–mid 15th centuries shows that livestock bones constitute an overwhelming majority of the remains (around 90%), predominantly belonging to pigs (50% of livestock bones), cattle (13.2%), small cattle (31.6%) and horses (5.3%). A small quantity of poultry bones were also found (analyst, G. Asylgarayeva).

Fishing was a subsidiary industry. Findings of fishhooks, spoon baits and weights for nets, various types and sizes of fish bones (catfish, tench, sturgeon) in ancient towns and settlements, fish scales in household pits in the Krasnoe selishche II archaeological site

and Vazhnanger (Maly Sundyr) ancient town (second millennium) are concrete evidence of the existence of this industry throughout the entire Middle Ages.

There was a marked growth in the share of agriculture in the economic activity of the population. A vivid illustration of the development of arable farming was provided by the discovery of millstones in the Vasilsursk V archaeological site (Repishhe) of the 11–13th centuries, Vazhnanger (Maly-Sundyr) ancient town, Nosely II and Krasnoe selishche II settlement of the 12–13th centuries. Together with ethnographic data these allow us

to approximately reconstruct the grindstone mill and assign it to group 1 according to the classification of R. Minasyan [1978, p. 104]. It appeared in the forested zone of Eastern Europe in the 8–9th centuries and continued to exist for an extended period. According to ethnographers, the grindstone mill was used by the Mari, Chuvash, Mordvins and Udmurts until the 20th century [Kryukova, 1956, p. 22]. Sickles with notched blades and scythes were used for harvesting.

There are found in Siukhino and Yulyaly blacksmiths which dates them in the 13th century. Fragments of clay crucibles, pieces of earthen plastering, slag and 197 iron articles, concentrated in three piles, were discovered at the Siukhino archaeological complex in the 12–13th centuries' layer.

Hunting kept its role until the 18th century, whilst traditional forms of economic activity: leather and bone processing, weaving, etc. continued to be further developed.



Section 7

# **Eurasian Steppes in the 10–Beginning of the 13th Centuries**



## CHAPTER 1

### The Pechenegs, the Ghuzes and the Torks

*Vladimir Ivanov*

The ethnic and ethnopolitical history of the Pechenegs and Uzs (Oghuz) began on the far east of the Great Steppe Belt of Eurasia. The 'Historical Records' of Chinese historian Sima Qian dated 99 BCE mention the nomadic tenure of Kangyui located between Fergana and the Northern (Caspian) Sea. Modern researchers traditionally associate the 'Kangyui tenure' with 'Kangar-Kengeres' tribes, who in the works of medieval Arab-Persian authors are referred to as 'Bajinaks,' while in Russian chronicles they go by 'Pechenegs.' According to the later 'History of Northern Courts' (by Lee Yan-Sei), which covers the period from 386 to 681, the Kangyui was for some time under the rule of Huns-Hephthalites, and in 641 it was conquered by the troops of Dulo Khan, ruler of the Western Turkic Khaganate.

The next sources of information about the Ghuzes and Pechenegs are found in Old Turkic runic monuments dating to the first half of the 8th century, including monuments to Kul Tegin, Mogilyan, and Tonyukuk. In these texts the Oghuzes and Pechenegs (Kengeres) are represented as two separate peoples and the closest neighbours and political opponents of the 'Blue Turks,' against whom the Turkic Khagans had been fighting for several years. According to the geographic realia in descriptions of Turkic campaigns against the Ghuzes, in the period currently under discussion the Ghuzes were nomadising around the north of modern Mongolia along the Orkhon and Selenga. During this time the Kengeres-Pechenegs were nomadising to the west of the Turks in the Middle Asia.

However, as recorded by Arab authors Ibn Hordadbekh, al-Baladhuri, and al-Tabari, even at the beginning of the 9th century the Ghuzes had been conducting raids to Ustrushana (the Tashkent, Fergana, and Samarkand Region) and were living side by side with the Pech-

enegs in the upper reaches of the Sirdarya [Garustovich, Ivanov, 2001, pp. 9–11]. As a result, this adjacency spiraled into a series of wars between the Ghuzes and Pechenegs and between the Karluks and Kimaks for lands 'around the Jurjan Sea' (the Aral Sea) that are mentioned in the work of al-Masudi (the middle of the 10th century).

Since extant medieval sources reveals neither the reasons nor the tide of war, the hypothesis of American historian P. Golden, supported by Hungarian researcher A. Palocz-Horvath, that the Ghuzes and Pechenegs migrated west because of the continuous wars of the Karluks and their allies, the Ghuzes, against the Uyghurs and the Kyrgyz in the 820–840s, seems to be the most probable. As a result of these wars, the Karluks and Ghuzes, who were being squeezed out of Mongolia, in turn exiled the Pechenegs from Eastern Turkestan to the Aral Sea Region. There Pechenegs (Bajinaks) allied with the Kangars who were at the head of the confederation of the Pechenegs' Hordes [Golden, 1972, pp. 59–60; Palocz-Horvath, 1989, p. 13].

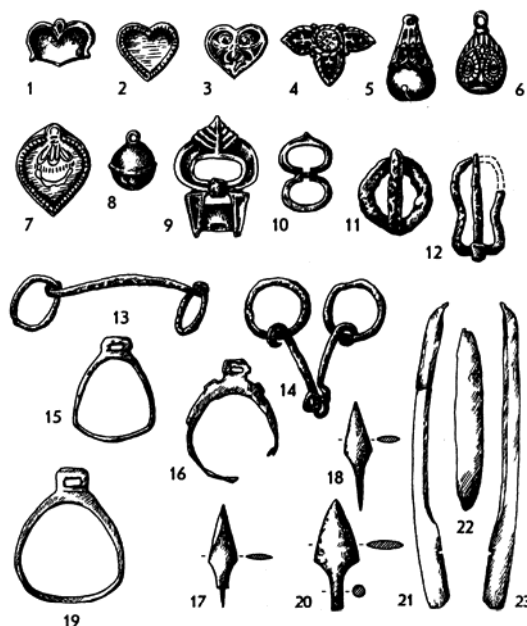
However, it is hardly possible that dry Aral semi-deserts cut off by sand from the borders of rich Asian states seemed to the Pechenegs and Ghuzes as the 'land of the Covenant' worth fighting for to the last drop of blood. It appears as though the Pechenegs continued to move west until they bumped into the Volga and the eastern border of the Khazar Khaganate, where the Ghuzes following them arrived soon after.

Later on national historiography traditionally describes the following picture: 'the Khagan entered into an alliance with the Ghuzes in hopes of beating the Pechenegs with their help, but the result of this alliance was exactly the opposite. The Ghuzes started a war with the Pechenegs and seized their best pastures, following which the Pechenegs had to cut

across the Volga and invaded the main territories of the Khazar Khaganate in search of new lands. The route of the Pechenegs across the lands they conquered was marked by the fires and destruction of many steppe and forest-steppe localities and fortresses' [Pletneva, 2003, p. 113].

In reality, their developments were not in the least bit so epic. It seems more probable that it was the Ghuzes who initiated the Khazar-Ghuz alliance (the opposite initiative is difficult to imagine because it did not matter much for the Khazars who would be a threat to their east border, the Pechenegs or the Ghuzes, but the Ghuzes, on the other hand, were very worried about whether they would rule the Volga Region alone or together with the Pechenegs), thus sticking the Pechenegs 'between a rock and a hard place.' For the latter the only way out of this situation was to go further west in search of more peaceful lands. This most likely meant not straight through the hostile Khazaria territory but round its northern boundaries. Otherwise, it seems hardly possible that the Pechenegs, despite being on the first stadion (unit) of pastoralism, had fought through all of Khazaria yet did not bury any of their dead along the way. This is corroborated by the fact that even today neither Pecheneg burial sites nor graves have been found on former Khazarian territory [Pletneva, 1982, p. 25; Garustovich, Ivanov, 2001, Fig. 1].

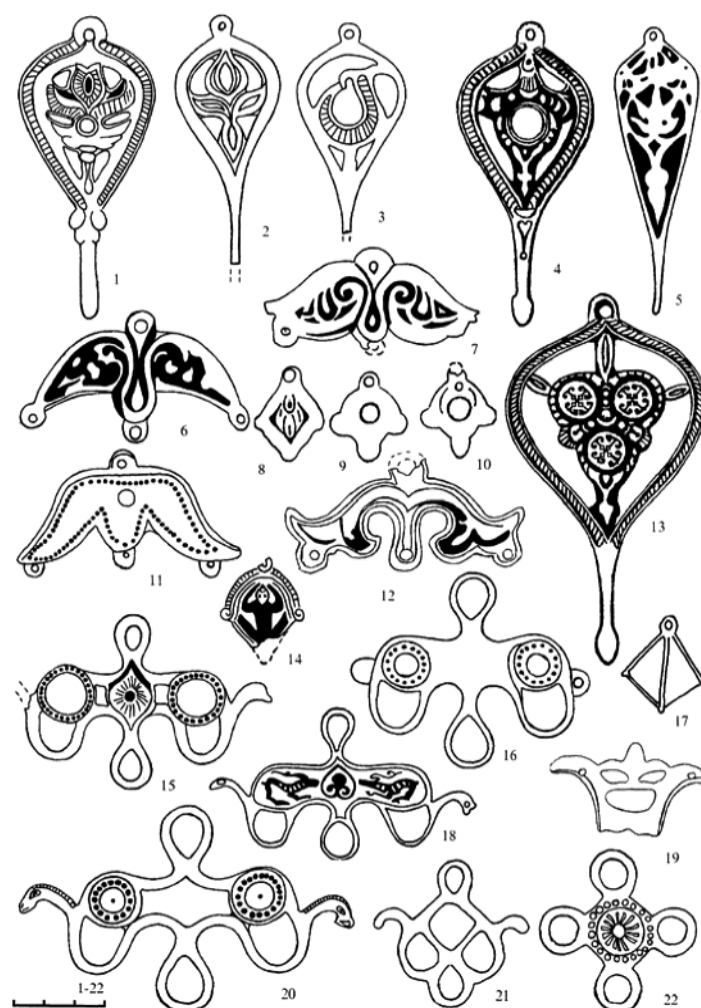
The migration of the Pechenegs across the Volga occurred shortly before 895, the year when the Pechenegs attacked the Old Magyar province Levedia (Lebedia) in the Dnepr-Northern Donets interfluvium [Garustovich, Ivanov, 2001, p. 109]. It was exactly this second river, on the banks of which the walls and towers of such Khazar fortresses as Verkhneye Saltovo, Mokhnach, Sukhaya Gomolsha, etc., were located, that became the eastern boundary of the European Pechenegia at the beginning of the 10th century. Evidenced by the discoveries of respective graves, the northern boundary of this region ran along the Orel and Vorskla Rivers, to the north of which, along the Sula River, ran the first line of defense of Kievan Rus'. The Pecheneg's western migration grounds reached the lower reaches of the



Set of items from Pecheneg graves found in the Trans-Volga Region and Cisurals.  
1–4—cover plates for belts (silver, bronze);  
5, 6, 8—pendants-bells (bronze); 7—plate-reshma;  
9, 10—bronze buckles; 11, 12—iron buckles; 13,  
14—bellbits; 15, 16, 19—stirrups; 17, 18, 20—iron  
arrowheads; 21–23—bone lining of a bow [The  
History of the Samara Volga River Basin, 2000,  
p. 291].

Bug, Dnieper, and Kogilnik, the upper reaches of which were occupied by Old Russian ancient towns/fortresses.

In the 10th century the Pechenegs were a strong military and political power that actively influenced the course of Balkan-Mediterranean policy at the time [Kargalov, 1967, p. 23 ff.; Sakharov, 1991, p. 159]. Not to mention that their power was well organised. This is supported by the presence of a clearly defined territory of residences and an internal congeneric, in fact, already administrative structure (the division of European Pechenegs into 'eight themes,' or eight tribes, with specific migration zones marked by Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus) [Pletneva, 1958, p. 192]. According to Pletneva, what was just mentioned already describes the second stage of pastoralism, which might be well considered the first step on the way to the formation of statehood among nomads.



The main ethnicity associated items found in Oghuz graves in the Northern Caspian Sea Region.  
1–5, 13–ear picks I–VI; 6, 7, 11, 12–wing-shaped patches; 15, 16, 18, 20–bird-shaped patches;  
19, 21, 22–patches; 8–10, 14, 17–camails [Fedorov-Davydov G., 1966; Gavrulina L., 1985;  
V. Kriger, 1993]. 1–22–bronze

In the first decades of their Eastern European history the Pechenegs together with the *druzhinas* of prince Svyatoslav were actively attacking the northern, Danubian regions of Byzantium and Bulgaria, which was a stable component in the anti-Byzantine coalition created by Svyatoslav up until 972 [Sakharov, 1991, p. 159 ff.]. However, already in the early 970s the development of the political situation in European Pechenegia was not in favour of a Russian-Pecheneg alliance. This can be explained by several reasons: first, the intrigues of the Byzantine envoys that were trying to use the Pechenegs against the offensive policy of

Svyatoslav in the Black Sea Region (Circum-Pontic Region); second, the policies of the Khazars that were pitting the Pechenegs against the Uzs, who, according to some researchers, supported Svyatoslav in his Khazar campaign in 965 [Artamonov, 1962, p. 433 ff.]; and finally, growing internal distractions among the Pecheneg *Ordas*/*themas*. In fact, in 968, when Svyatoslav together with the western Pechenegs 'was showing his heroism' in Danube Bulgaria, a different Pecheneg horde attacked Kiev. And it is well known that in 972 the Pecheneg khan Kurya waylaid Svyatoslav on the banks of the Dnieper and killed him.

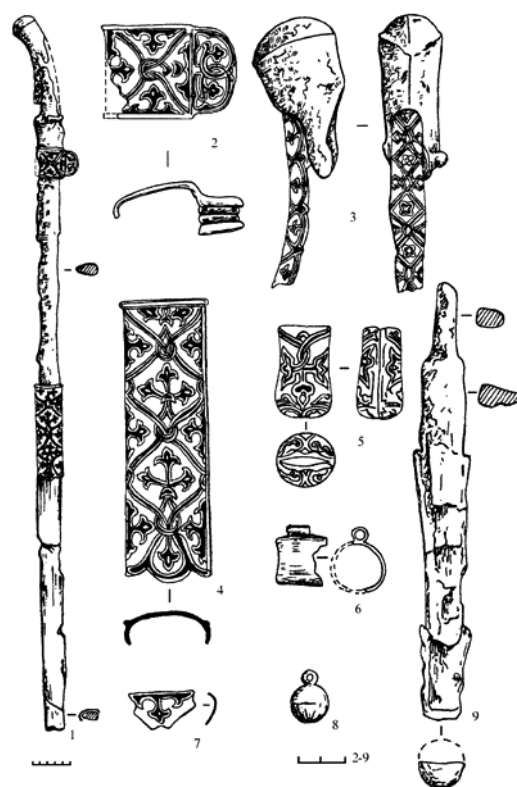
The Pechenegs who stayed in the Trans-Volga Region and Cis-Urals adjacent to or perhaps an autonomous part of the 'Oghuz (Ghuz) yabgu state' (according to S. Tolstov), 'the Trans-Volga Pechenegia,' found themselves in the worst position [Ivanov, 2000]. By forcing back the Pechenegs to the northern periphery of the Volga-Ural steppe with the help of the Khazars, the Ghuzes gained control of a territory not so rich in its natural potential but extremely advantageous from the perspective of cultural and economic contacts between the nomadic and settled worlds.

The area occupied by the Ghuz burials' areal in the steppe Trans-Volga Region and the Cis-Urals allows us to outline the borders of the Ghuzz steppe (Desht-i Oghuz) in the 10th century: in the west it was the Volga separating Desht-i Oghuz from Khazaria. The only violation of this boundary was the winter raids of the Ghuzes to Khazar localities in the Volga Region. The southern border almost completely coincides with the boundaries of the Caspian Depression or the Caspian deserts, which due to natural conditions could not provide food for large nomadic hordes. In the north one of the Ghuz migration grounds was the Ileik River basin and the left bank of the Volga on the border of today's Volgograd and Saratov Regions [Garustovich, Ivanov, 2001, p. 99].

This territory had direct access to the major city centres of Eastern Europe and Middle Asia. Most importantly, the Ghuzes received the opportunity to control Khazar-Khwarezmi trade, as the part of the Great Silk Road, by which in 922 the Baghdad embassy led by Ahmad Ibn Fadlan came to Bulgar from Khwarezm, passed through their territory.

Moreover, it seems that the Ghuzes controlled Ustyurt plateau with its wells and caravanserais. Even though no archaeological records that could be definitely correlated with the Ghuzes have ever been found in Ustyurt plateau, on a map of the Caspian Sea created at the end of the 970s by Ibn Hawqal its eastern coast is marked entirely as the 'Ghuzes' desert.'

Finally, the middle of the 10th century was marked by the formation of a large trade and craft centre of Volga Bulgars known as the townlet of Murom in the Samara Bend, not far

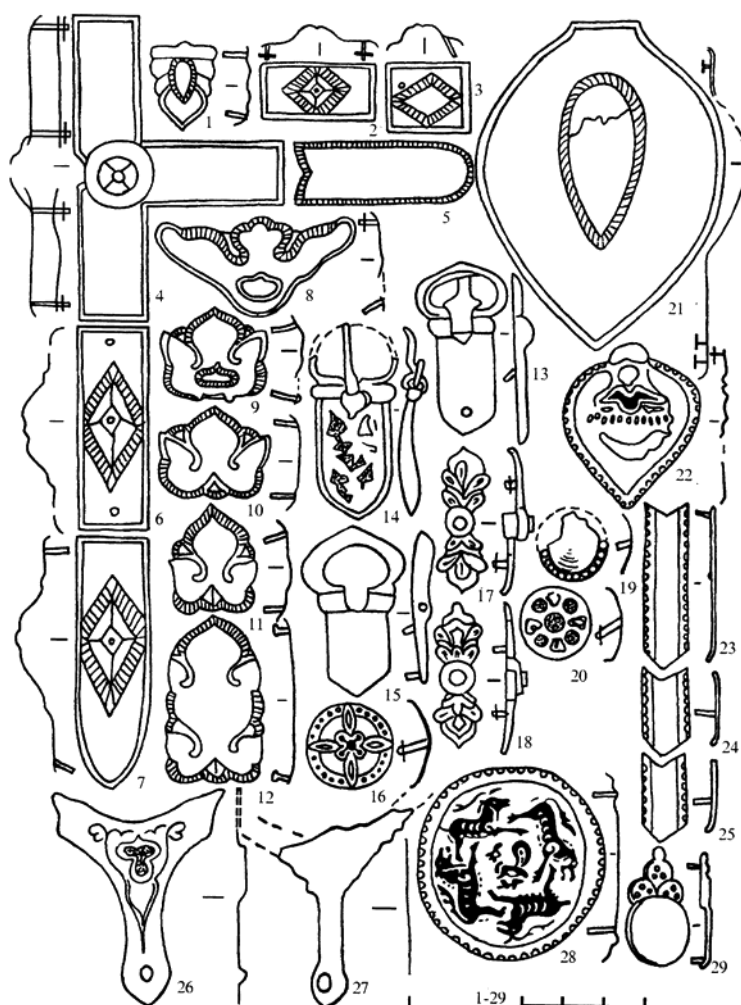


Sample burial site of the Oghuzes dating to the latter half of the 10th century. Burial site in Chenin village, Pallasov District, Volgograd Region. Borrow No. 8, grave No. 4. 1—saber; 2, 4, 7—lining of saber sheath; 3—pommel hilts of saber; 5—clip; 6—cover; 8—bell; 9—dagger. 1, 3, 9—iron; 2–5, 7—silver, blacking, gilt; 6, 8, 9—bronze

from the northern boundaries of Desht-i Oghuz. Its geographic location 'secured it the role of an important trade, craft, and cultural centre' [Matveeva, 2000, p. 253].

These circumstances boosted the welfare of not only Ghuz nobility but also many ordinary nomad soldiers. It is not a coincidence that the item complexes of the Ghuz burial mounds found in the Trans-Volga Region and the Cis-Urals contain sets of different types of women's jewellery, including bracelets, rings, luxurious pendants and pendant ear picks, footwear plate-pads, and belt and bridle sets.

Compared to them, the Trans-Volga Pechenegs, forced back to the southern boundary of the forest-steppe, appeared poor, which is supported by contemporary researchers. 'They



Sample burial site of the Oghuzes dating to the latter half of the 10th century. Burial site in Chenin village, Pallasov District, Volgograd Region. Barrow No. 8, grave No. 4. 1–7, 13, 21, 22—harness decorations; 8, 16–20, 23–25, 28, 29—leather bag decorations; 9–12, 14, 15, 26, 27—two belts decorations. 1–29—silver, bronze, blacking, gilt

are poor in contrast to the Ghuzes,' Ibn Fadlan observed about the Pechenegs he met on the shore of Shalkar Lake. To a certain degree his words are echoed in Constantine Porphyrogenitus' book, who states that the Pechenegs from the Dnieper Region are referred to as 'kangar' ('the bravest, the most honourable'), whereas the Trans-Volga Pechenegs are not called anything, but they wear shortened kaftans showing that 'they are separated from their tribesmen and congeners' [Constantine Porphyrogenitus, 1934, p. 16]

This information is also supported by the archaeological material: the burial mounds of

'The Trans-Volga Pechenegia' contain very limited sets of items consisting mainly of bar bits, stirrups, iron knives, and arrowheads [Garusovich, Ivanov, 2001, pp. 86–94]. Presumably, this was due to the fact that the Trans-Volga Pechenegs did not have access to the Khazar-Khwarezmian trade route, and their closest northern neighbour, Volga Bulgaria, a potential partner for commodity exchange and a patron of political affairs,<sup>1</sup> was actively developing its relations with the tribes of the forest Cis-Ka-

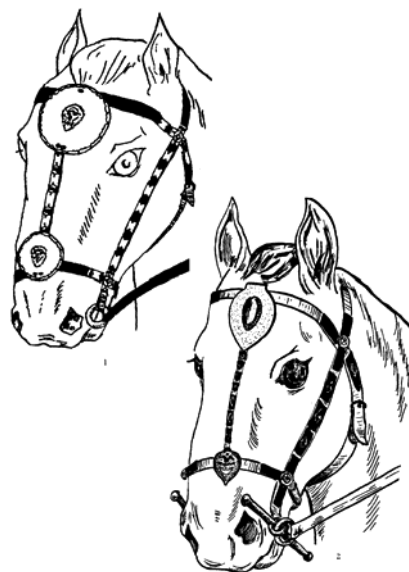
<sup>1</sup> As happened later between Kievan Rus' and the Ghuz-Pechenegs (Torks or Black Klobuks).

ma Region during that period of time [Belavin, 2000, p. 43]. However, it is possible that some groups of Pechenegs sought and found refuge among the Volga Bulgars. This can be proven by the flat-bottomed houseware found in localities of the southern regions of Volga Bulgaria, which researchers typologically correlate with houseware found in monuments of the nomadic group of Saltovo-Mayaki culture left by various tribes in one way or another associated with the Khazars—that is, the Bulgars, Pechenegs, and Ghuzes [Khlebnikova, 1984, p. 216 ff.].

According to the geographical grid system of Turkic-Mongol nomads, where azimuth was measured from the southern point, the classification of Pecheneg and Ghuz tribes (typical for all Eurasian nomads) into two wings can be clearly traced through the written and archaeological data: left = eastern, right = western. In terms of the Pechenegs, this accordingly means the Trans-Volga and European Pechenegias. In the 10th century the right wing of the Ghuzes consisted of Volga-Ural (or Caspian) tribes, whose migration grounds in the east were most likely bordered by Mugojara's mountains. This was an independent region with its own economic and political orientations resulting from its geographic position: in the west, the neighbouring Khazaria, in the south, Khwarezm. What is more, Khazaria was certainly at the forefront of the Volga-Ural Ghuzes' geopolitics. For this reason it does not seem accidental that they participated in the 965 campaign of prince Svyatoslav, which then consisted of a part of the nomad (Pecheneg-Ghuz) garrison of the Sarkel-Belaya Vezha Fortress [Artamonov, 1962, p. 433 ff.; 1958, p. 77 ff.].

The left wing of the Desht-i Oghuz was made up of the Syr Darya Ghuzes, the core of the Turkmen-Seljuk ethnopolitical alliance. These were nomadic tribes mainly inhabiting the middle stream of the Syr Darya River, near the Sygnak Region and Karatau foothills [Agadzhanov, 1969, p. 174]. The events of the 11th century showed that the area of the political and economic ambitions of the left wing Ghuzes ran south towards Khwarezm and Mawarannahr.

And these events were not late in coming. Based on data from the Rusessian chronicles,



Horse harness decorations. Reconstruction by V. Klepikov based on the field reports of A. Skripkin and A. Lukashov for 1980.

1—Verkhni Balikli-II, barrow 5/1;

2—Chenin barrow 8/4

researchers date the mass migration of Ghuzes (Torks) to the steppes of Eastern Europe at the middle of the 11th century [Fedorov-Davidov, 1966, p. 141]. S. Tolstov considered this process a manifestation of the socio-political crisis of the Ghuz State expressed in the almost simultaneous movement of the Ghuz-Torks from the Volga-Ural steppes to Eastern Europe, and the Ghuz-Seljuks from the Aral Sea Region to Western Asia. According to said researcher and the similar opinions of S. Pletneva, this is considered a purposeful action on behalf of a single tribal alliance of the Ghuzes [Tolstov, 1947, p. 85 ff.; Pletneva, 2003, p. 119].

Such interpretation seems to be overcomplicated because existence of single Ghuz State (or single tribal alliance) on a vast territory from the lake Balkhash to Volga (according to S. Tolstov) in the light of the available sources seems to be quite problematic. At the present time, it is more precise to speak about two independent tribal alliances of Ghuzes: the actual Ghuz alliance in the Volga-Ural steppes [Agadzhanov, 1975, p. 15] and the Turkmen-Seljuk alliance in Middle Asia to the east of the Aral Sea. By the beginning of the

11th century, as previously mentioned, both of these alliances had clear political and economical ambitions. For this reason, when the Kimak-Kipchak tribal alliance made up of Kuns and Kais originating from Irtysh and Altai [Agadzhanov, 1969, pp. 154–158] appeared as a new ethnopolitical power in the history of the Asian steppes, possible ways of escape for the Ghuzes were already defined.

Kimak-Kipchaks started to put pressure on the Ghuzes at the beginning of the 1020s, when, according to Islamic historians, the first four thousand Turkmens crossed Amu Darya and settled in Northern Khorasan. Following them, the Kipchaks themselves approached the boundaries of Khwarezm around the year 1030 [Zakhoder, 1945, p. 137; Bartold, 1968, p. 401]. The middle of the 1040s is marked by a new spate of Ghuz-Pecheneg wars triggered by pressure from the Kipchaks-Polovtsians coming from the east. In winter 1046–1047 European Pechenegs attempted a large-scale invasion into the boundaries of Byzantium. The attempt was unsuccessful and defeated by the army of emperor Isaac I Komnenos, the Pechenegs moved west to Hungary. The Ghuz-Torks followed suit and arrived at the banks of the Dnieper.

Yet this was a forced maneuver as they were being chased by Kipchak (Polovtsian) sabers. Armenian historian Matthew of Edessa states that in 1050–1051 the Ghuzes and Pechenegs were defeated by the 'red-headed nation of Khardesh,' whom modern researchers consider to be the Kipchaks-Polovtsians [Agadzhanov, 1969, p. 158; Pletneva, 2003, p. 152]. Five years later in 1055 the Ghuz-Torks and Polovtsians simultaneously approached the boundaries of Kievan Rus'. They started to rob Russian localities on the outskirts of the town of Voina and as a result were exiled to the steppe by prince Vsevolod Yaroslavich. Polovtsians, who were worried about cleansing the steppes of Ghuzes and Pechenegs, preferred to make peace with Vsevolod and 'return back.'

Driven back from the boundaries of Rus', the Ghuz-Torks intensified pressure on the Pechenegs, forcing them to travel beyond the boundaries of the Eastern European steppe.

However, since moving beyond the Danube could result in war with the Bulgars and Byzantium, the Pechenegs started a massive migration to the boundaries of the Kingdom of Hungary (1067) [Paloczi-Horvath, 1989, p. 37].

Following the Pechenegs, the Ghuz-Torks arrived in Danube and attempted to break through to Byzantium and the Balkans in 1064–1065. Unlike the planned and purposeful expansion of the Ghuz-Seljuks, which resulted in the formation of the Seljuk Empire in Western Asia, the 'Balkan campaign' of the Ghuz-Torks was a mere plundering inroad aimed at robbing and most likely, an attempt at escaping from the pressure of the Poovtsians. The Uz detachments scattered around Thrace and Macedonia died because of sudden cold and illnesses, and part of them were killed by the archenemies of the Oghuzs—the Pechenegs and the population of conquered regions.

The military and political hegemony of the Pechenegs was restored again on the banks of the Danube to the extent that in 1086 they managed to start and wage a war against Byzantium that lasted five years [Anna Komnina, 1859; Lyubarski, 1966]. As for the Oghuzes, the consequences of the 'Balkan campaign' were apparently catastrophic and first and foremost negatively affected their population. This can be clearly traced from the quantitative ratio of Pecheneg and Oghuz monuments in Right-Bank Ukraine.

The remnants of Oghuz-Tork tribes were seeking salvation from Polovtsian sabers under the sovereign hand of the Kievan prince, who since 1060 had been putting a stop to regular Polovtsian raids. Interested in the formation of an anti-Polovtsian 'buffer' along their southern boundaries, Russian princes installed nomads in lands that were almost empty on the right bank of the Dnieper [Pletneva, 1973, p. 24]. In 1080 there were already several compact settlements of Ghuz-Torks along the closest boundaries of Rus'. Apparently, one of these settlements was located on the territory of the principality of Pereyaslavl because according to the chronicler: 'In summer 6588 the Torks invaded Pereyaslavl, in Rus', and Vsevolod sent his son Volodimir.



Volodimer defeated the Torks.' In 1093 'The Town of Torks' already exists (the ancient town of Sharki on the Ros River 80 km south of Kiev) [Ibid, p. 25], and its foundation would be hardly possible without the proper arrangement of vassal relations between the Torks and the Kievan Prince.

The Ghuz-Torks defeated in Byzantium found salvation from complete destruction under the shelter of the Kievan Prince by establishing the 'Town of Torks' and laying the foundations of the union of the 'Black Klo-buks,' where the mass of Pechenegs defeated by Byzantines near the Levunion after 1091 flocked to (which was the end of the five-year-long Pecheneg-Byzantine war started in 1086). Afterwards, a period of psychological 'adaptation' of the Torks and Pechenegs to one another set in (which was absolutely necessary

after years of hostility) so they could jointly attack the Don Polovtsians under the leadership of young Russian princes Yaropolk and Vsevolod. This campaign ended with the defeat of the Pecheneg-Tork forces and their latest salvation under the sovereign hand of Vladimir Monomakh. However, according to S. Pletneva, the Pechenegs and Torks did not feel comfortable under the rule of the tough Kievan prince and rebelled in 1121, leading to their exile from Rus'. This was the last year these two peoples were mentioned separately in Russian chronicles. Russian chroniclers did not mention anything about the Pechenegs in the latter half of the 12th century, and the Ghuz-Torks were mentioned only once (before 1173) as an auxiliary force in the campaigns of Russian princess on the Polovtsian steppe [Ibid, p. 27].

## CHAPTER 2

### The Kimaks and the Kipchaks. The Kimak Khaganate<sup>1</sup>

*Bulat Kumekov*

Nomadic and semi-nomadic Turkic-speaking tribes established three powerful states on the ruins of the Western Turkic Khaganate in the territory of today's Kazakhstan: the Karluk ethno-social union in Semirechye, the Oghuz State in the middle and lower reaches of the Syr Darya and the Aral Sea steppe, and the Kimak Khaganate in the Northern, Eastern, and Central Kazakhstan.

The early stage of the Kimak history involved the Yanmo tribe, which is mentioned in Chinese sources in connection with the West Turkic events of the 7th century. Chinese scholars believe the Yanmo tribe to be the Yemeks (Iemeks), which name most researchers believe to be a phonetic variant of Kimak (Kimek). The opinion that the Kimaks and the Kipchaks are the same is incorrect, because information in medieval written sources clearly indicate that they are two separate, though related, Turkic-speaking ethnic groups. The Yanmo people, a Tele tribe, lived in the Kobdo Basin in North-West Mongolia in the early 7th century. To the east of them there were the Oghuz, and the Tyurgesh and Karluk lived to the South. By the mid-7th century, the Imeks (Kimeks, Kimaks) had moved to the area north of the Altai Mountains and the Irtysh River Region. The tribe came to stand apart after the fall of the Western Turkic Khaganate in the year 656. It must be the time when the nucleus of the Kimak tribal union arose. The Kimak tribal head was titled Shad Tutuk. The titles 'shad' and 'tutuk' were widely known in the Turkic environment and mentioned many

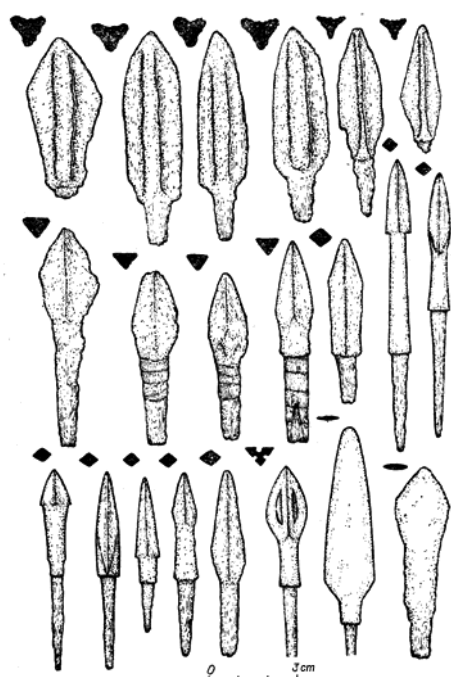
times in ancient Turkic runic inscriptions dating back to the 7–9th centuries.

In the latter half of the 8–early 9th centuries, Kimak tribes moved in three directions: north-westward to the South Urals (mostly the Kipchaks), south-westwards to the Syr Darya Basin and the Southern Kazakhstan, and southward to the North-Western Semyrechye. Between 766 and 840, the Kimaks occupied the territory of the Western Altai, the Tarbagatai Mountains, and the Alakol Basin, reaching the northern border of the Toquz Ghuz people, who lived in Eastern Turkestan. The border between them ran along the Dzungarian Mountain Range.

Following the dissolution in 840 of the Uighur Khaganate in Central Mongolia, part of the tribes constituting it (the Eymurs, the Bayandurs, the Tatars) joined the nucleus of the Kimak union. It was the time when the Kimak federation of seven tribes formed. Now the head of Kimak tribes was titled Baygu (Yabgu). The title Yabgu was superior to Shad. The ruling elite of various Turkic-speaking nations, such as the Karluks, the Oghuz people, the Uighurs, etc., is known to have been titled Yabgu.

Sources contain no direct indication that the Kimaks could be but Turkic, either ethnically or linguistically. On the contrary, authors were unanimous in presenting the Kimaks as one of the key Turkic tribes. Chronologically, the first mention of the ethnonym *Kimak* in written sources is connected with the events of the 8th century and deals with the list of politically and socially influential Turkic ethnic groups according to Arab geographer Ibn Khordadbeh (the 9th century), whose work mentions the Kimaks along with the Toquz Ghuz, Oghuz, Pecheneg, Karluk, Kipchak, Azkish, and Tyurgesh people.

<sup>1</sup> The following source editions were used by B. Kumekov in this chapter: [Bartold; al-Ya'qubi; Ibn al-Faqih; al-Istakhri; al-Khwarizmi; Mahmud al-Kashgari; Arslanova, Klyashtorny, 1973; al-Idrisi; Ibn Khordadbeh; al-Masudi, 1894; Klyashtorny, 1986; Kumekov, 1972].



Kimak iron arrowheads  
[Khudyakov, 1986, p. 184]

The initial composition of the Kimak federation is presented by al-Gardizi. The union included the following seven tribes: the Eymurs, the Imeks, the Tatars, the Kipchaks, the Bayandurs, the Lanikazes, and the Ajlars. Gardizi provides no information on any of the tribes. They all appear as old and long-known ethnic groups. He does not mention their origin either. By studying the history of tribes in the Kimak union we can assume that they moved to the territory of Kazakhstan from Central Asia.

The first Kimak tribe, *the Eymur*, was also known among the Oghuz people. It was mentioned in the 8th century and as one of the twelve Uighur tribes. The fact that the Eymurs appeared in the Kimak tribal union and among the Syr Darya Oghuz people is indicative of the Eymurs' westward and north-westward movement. The Eymurs did not assimilate into either the Kimak environment or the Oghuz one but entered them as a tribe.

The ethnonym mentioned by al-Gardizi, *Imek*, is associated with the Turkic tribe Yanno which appears in Chinese chronicles of the 7th century. The first time the tribe's name

appeared in an Islamic source was in *Hudud al-'Alam*, in the name of the Kimak capital Imekia, though other sources use the word Kimakia (Kimekia) to refer to the same Khagan's residence. Al-Gardizi reported the title of the head of the Kimak confederation to be known as Imek Baygu, while al-Masudi claimed it to be Kimak Baygu. Mahmud Kashgari called the Kimaks Yemeks.

The third Kimak tribe, *the tatars*, initially appears in ancient Turkic inscriptions dating back to the 8th century in connection with the events of the 7th century, under the name *Otuz-Tatars*. In other Turkic inscriptions they were known as *Toquz Tatars*. The fact that the Toquz Tatars were engaged in constant political interaction with the key Oghuz tribes suggests that the group of Tatar tribes inhabited the north-eastern part of Mongolia in the 8th century. In 740–840, the Tatars were part of the Uighur Khaganate. After the collapse of the Uighur Khaganate the Tatars along with Oghuz Uighur tribes migrated to Eastern Turkestan. The anonymous author of *Hudud al-'Alam* directly included the Tatars in the Toquz Ghuzes. Mahmud Kashgari also mentioned the Tatars among Turkic-speaking tribes. Most probably, the Tatars appeared in the Kimak federation with Eymurs as part of the Toquz Ghuz (Uighur) tribes, who had been defeated by the Yenisei Kyrgyz people and fled to Eastern Turkestan after 840.

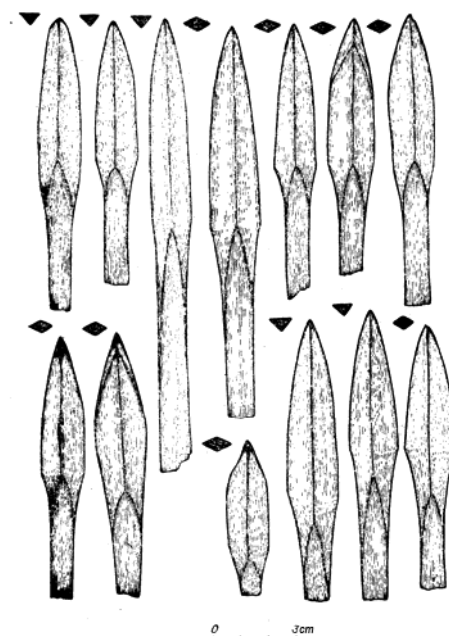
The first appearance of the name of the Kimaks, who were related to *the Kipchaks* is in historical sources dates back, supposing that the Chinese Qushe (Kyushe) was reconstructed correctly, to the late 3rd century BCE in connection with the narrative on the conquest of five northern territories by the founder of the Hun state Mode Chanyu. A. Bernshtam located the Kipchak (Qushe) land in North-West Mongolia. The next mention of the Kipchaks is contained in the runic inscription of Khagan Bayanchor (Line 4), which dates back to the mid-8th century. The first Islamic source to mention the ethnonym Kipchak was Ibn Khordadbeh, who included it in the list of Turkic tribes, also dated the 8th century.

S. Klyashtorny believes the early medieval Kipchak history to be connected with the

tribal name 'Syr' (or 'Se' according to Chinese sources). In the mid-6th century, the Se (Syr) tribe conquered its neighbours. Having annihilated them, the ruling clans came to rule the new confederation. The term used to denote it from the 4th to the 7th centuries in Chinese historiography is *Seyanto*. In the mid-6th century, the Seyanto were politically dependent on the Turkic Khagans. They largely lived in the Khangai Mountains, the rest having moved to the the East Tian Shan. In the early 7th century, the Seyanto headed the union of ten Tiele tribes in North Mongolia. In 630, the Seyanto separated from the union to establish their Syr State in the centre of Ötüken Jyş (the Khangai Mountains). The Altai and the Khingan River, the Gobi and the Kherlen River formed its borders. In the north, the Seyanto Khagan subjugated the land of the Yenisei Kyrgyz. In 646, the Toquz Ghuzs defeated the Seyanto, and the Syr state fell. However, the Syrs soon allied with the Turks to become a menacing power in Middle Asia. They cooperated with the Turks to win the Ötüken Steppe from the Uighurs at the head of the Toquz Ghuz confederation in 691. The Turks and the Syrs (Kipchaks) ruled the Toquz Ghuzes for fifty years until their land in Central and West Mongolia fell in 742. In the 8th century, the ethnonym 'Kipchak' first appeared in an ancient Turkic record and in an Islamic source.

Ibn Khordadbeh already mentioned the Kipchaks as separate from the Kimaks. According to *Hudud al-'Alam*, the Kipchaks were people who had separated from the Kimaks and led a more primitive life. Having occupied the territory west of the Kimaks, the Kipchaks still remained politically dependent on them. It was the Kimak Khagan who appointed the Kipchak ruler. Emphasizing the relatedness of the Imeks and the Kipchaks, Mahmud Kashgari noted that the Kipchaks did not view themselves as Imeks but believed them be their relatives by origin.

Thus, all early medieval data concerning the Kipchaks, though they indicate that they were politically connected with the Kimak tribal union (later state) in the 8–9th centuries, suggest that the connection was weak and



Kimak bone arrowheads  
[Khudyakov, 1986, p. 187]

their ethnic territories different, also emphasizing differences in economy and everyday life. Therefore, it would be incorrect to view the Kimaks and the Kipchaks as the same, since information in medieval Islamic historiographic sources only indicates their relatedness as tribes.

The formation of the Kipchak ethnic community in the territory of Kazakhstan in the 8–10th centuries was a process both complex and long. Its development falls into two stages.

The first stage was marked by migration of large group of Kipchak tribes from Inner Asia to the Irtysh River Region following their defeat, in alliance with the Turks, by the Toquz Ghuz people, who conquered the ancient Turkic domain in North Mongolia, in 742. The Kipchaks were included in the nucleus of the Kimak federation in the Middle Irtysh River and Altai regions. The aspiration of the key Kipchak tribes for self-determination caused them to eventually separate from the Kimaks in the late 8th century.

The second stage lasted from the end of the 8th century to the beginning of the 11th century. Kimak tribes played a consolidating part in the

interaction and integration of the key ethnic communities. During that period the Kipchak had close ethno-cultural connections and interactions with confederations of ancient Bashkir, Pecheneg, Karluk, and, most importantly, Oghuz tribes. However, the internal ethnic development of Kipchak tribes was aimed at assimilating ancient inhabitants—local Oghuz, Ugro-Finnic, and Sarmato-Alan ethnic groups.

The first narrative source to use the ethnonym 'Bayandur' was al-Gardizi, who used it to denote a Kimak tribe. Mahmud Kashgari and Rashid al-Din then mentioned the Bayandurs as an Oghuz tribe. Obviously, part of the Bayandurs belonged to the Kimaks, while the rest were the Oghuz.

The sixth and seventh tribes to be mentioned are *the Lanikaz* (V.Minorsky reads the name as Nilkaz) and *the Ajlar*.

An analysis of the tribal composition revealed that the defeat of the Uighur Khaganate by the Yenisei Kyrgyz in 840 had a great impact on the history of the Kimak. It was most probably the time when the Eymurs and the Bayandurs appeared both in the Kimak tribal union and in the Oghuz one on the Syr Darya, and the Tatars appeared among the Kimaks.

As the Kimak State developed, the quantitative composition of Kimak tribes changed. Hudud al-'Alam and al-Idrisi reported 12 tribes to have become the nucleus of the Kimak State. Apart from the Kipchak union, the *Cumans*, whose groups were included in the tribal composition of the Kipchaks in the 11–12th centuries, are mentioned to live in the Kimek-controlled territory. Medieval Arab geographers mention the Cumans as an independent ethnos, which is noteworthy, as it is widely believed by domestic and foreign historiographers that the Kipchaks and the Cumans are the same. Written sources in the 9–10th centuries, reported the Cumans to have lived in the territory of Western Kazakhstan as the western branch of the triple union of Kimak, Kipchak, and Cuman tribes. It should be assumed that the Cumans initially inhabited Southern Siberia and the Northern Altai Region. After the Western Turkic Khaganate fell in the mid-7th century, a number of Turkic-speaking tribes separated, though the complex process of their consoli-

dation also took place. A Kimak and Kipchak ethno-cultural community emerged in the territory of the North-Western Altai Mountains and Eastern Kazakhstan. In the late 8th century, large Kipchak groups, apparently along with the Cumans, separated from the Kimaks to occupy the land west of the Irtysh River up to the Southern Cis-Urals. Until the end of the 10th century Kipchak and Cuman tribes remained politically dependent on the Kimak Khaganate and included in the state covering a vast territory from the Irtysh River to the Volga.

### The Kimak Khaganate

The tumultuous events of the latter half of the 8–9th centuries, when Kimak tribes became well-established across the territory from the Irtysh to the Dzungarian Gate and moved westward up to the South Urals and the Syr Darya Basin, stimulated the development of Kimak state organizations.

The first time that a Kimak state formation was mentioned was in Arabic historico-geographical works dating back to the late 9–early 10th centuries. For instance, the 9th century historian and geographer al-Ya'qubi, who had outstandingly wide knowledge and provided quite accurate reports, mentioned the Kimaks and other Turkic-speaking people to have states: 'Turkestan and the Turks fall into several ethnic groups and states (mamalik), including the following: the Karluks, the Toquz Ghuz people, the Kimeks, and the Oghuz people. Each Turkic tribe has a separate state of its own, and some of them fight against each other.' Interesting testimony about the Kimaks was provided by Ibn al-Faqih (10th century), he wrote that the Oghuzes, the Toquz Ghuzes, and the Kimaks were the strongest of all the Turks and had tsars. The classical Arab geographers al-Istakhri and Ibn Hawkal reported that 'within the Turkic domain, (their) kings differ depending on the state.'

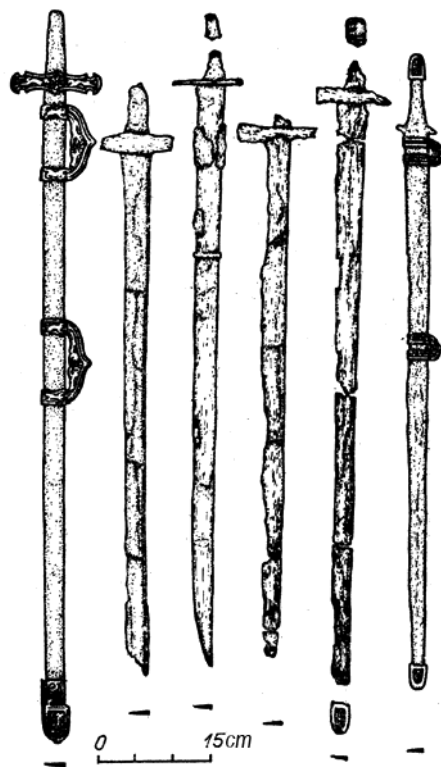
The Kimak ruler had great power. From the time the Kimak Khaganate formed in the late 9–early 10th centuries, their 'king' received the highest Turkic title of Khagan (Khakan). 'The khahan is the superior Turkic king. Khakan is the khan of khans, that is, the leader of leaders,

what the Persians call Shahanshah,' wrote the 10th century Middle Asian scholar al-Khwarizmi. The title Khagan was two steps higher than Yabgu.

Thus, as the Kimak community developed socially from a tribe to a state formation, the leaders' titles evolved from the bottom step to the top, from Shad Tatuk and Yabgu to Khagan. In terms of comparison, the ancient Turks had the following aristocratic hierarchy: Shad, Yabgu (Ulug Shad), Kichig Khagan, Ulug Khagan. As is evident, there undoubtedly is a connection between the Kimak and ancient Turkic title systems, which indicates a continuity between the Kimak environment and the ancient Turkic ancestral homeland.

The Kimak Khagan had real power to appoint rulers, who represented the tribal nobility, within his state. The institution of the hereditary transmission of power was not confined to the Khagan's family and the Khan's clan but also applied to the tribal nobility. For instance, the appanages of 11 administrators of the Kimak Khagan passed down to children of these administrators.

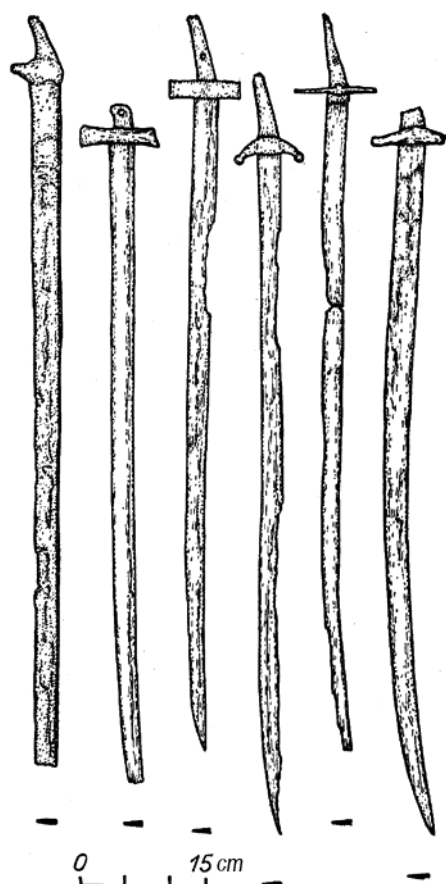
Military institutions played a major role when the Kimak Khaganate was being formed, as they had done when tribal unions developed. Administrators were also military leaders, whom the Khagan awarded appanages for their services. Each appanage had to provide a specified amount of troops to the Khagan. The ethnic environment of the appanages most probably consisted chiefly of representatives of one tribe. The development of the appanage tribal system resulted from major changes in the social order. As usual, appanage owners were subordinated to the Kimak Khagan. As the military and administrative branches were united, administrative leaders heading large tribal unions wanted to reinforce individual nomadic households and improve their political standing. Some of them turned into semi-dependent khans and wanted to get superior power over the state when the situation favoured them. Arab geographer al-Idrisi (12th century), who used a book by son of the Kimak Khagan Janah ibn Khakan al-Kimaki (10th or 11th century), born in the steppes of Eastern Kazakhstan, to describe the Kimak



Kimak broadsword  
[Khudyakov, 1986, p. 191]

land, mentioned the Kimaks to have a number of autonomous domains controlled by rulers. They resided in walled towns, well-fortified castles, often lying on a rise. The rulers kept large armies in such towns and fortresses. Their treasures and storage items were kept in towns and fortresses in unapproachable mountainous areas, which were guarded thoroughly on the khan's (malik's) order. The Kimak Khagan had his headquarters, his horde, in the city of Imekia (or Kimekia, Kimakia), which has already been mentioned, which was surrounded by a fortified wall with iron gates. The city hosted his large army and treasury. In fact, there was no difference between the Khagan's power and that of the government.

Sources report the Kimaks to show a continuity of the title tradition with the legacy of the ancient Turks: Khagan, Jabgu (Yabgu), Shad, Tutuk. The characteristic tradition administrative territorial structure of the ancient Turkic state—the wing system—was also applied to



Kimak sabres  
[Khudyakov, 1986, p. 193]

the Kimak Khaganate. According to al-Masudi, in the 10th century the western part of the Kimak state was ruled by the Kimak Yabgu (Mamlaka Kimek Yabgu), centered in the interfluvium of the Ural and the Emba, while the eastern (principal) part remained on the Irtysh.

The information on 11 administrators by the Persian anonymous author of *Hudud al-'Alam* as well as the report by al-Idrisi that 'the Kimek Khakan has a hajib, viziers, a fair and wealthy state' suggest there was an administrative apparatus. Governmental power primarily results from social stratification of society. Indirect data in medieval sources provide unambiguous evidence of social differentiation in the Kimak social structure. Persian historian al-Gardizi (11th century) reports nomads in the Kimak environment to have 'pastured their masters' herds' and notes, 'they (the Ki-

maks) make dried meat, mutton, horse, or beef, depending on their financial standing, for the winter.' According to al-Idrisi, only noble people could wear clothes of red and yellow silk to emphasize their superiority to the common nomad. The same author reported unmounted troops along with cavalry to have been present in Kimak towns. It is beyond doubt that the infantry contingent was, as usual, represented by two categories of people: bankrupt nomads and prisoners. Archaeological material obtained in Kimak burials also clearly indicate differences in the value and amount of accessories interred with the dead body.

On the one hand, the profound inequality of wealth in the Kimak society caused a nomadic aristocracy to form. On the other hand, it ruined a large number of common nomads. Part of the nomads who lost their livestock apparently had to switch to the sedentary lifestyle (yatuks, or zhataks), as the expert in the Turkic environment Mahmud Kashgari reported. Yatuks did handicrafts, fishing, got settled in winter camps, or lived in small settlements around nomadic camps, which gradually grew to become towns. Medieval towns soon became not only military and administrative centres but a place where commerce, handicrafts, and arable farming were concentrated.

What indicates that tax collecting was practices in the Kimak State is that the 'king' would have a specified share of all gold collected by the Turks along the Kimak (Caspian) shore, while the owner had the rest.

The Kimaks did have a writing system, of which the following phrase by Arab traveler Abu Dulaf (10th century) is evidence: 'They grow reed, that they use to write.' Most probably, the Kimaks used reed quills and the ancient Turkic alphabet. Written records are proven by bronze mirrors with an ancient Turkic inscription, dating back to the 9–10th centuries and attributed to the Kimaks by S. Klyashtorny, which were discovered in the Irtysh Region and the Tarbagatai Mountains.

In the 9–10th centuries, the Kimaks professed ancient Turkic religious faiths, among which the Tengri cult and ancestor worship were especially important. Certain groups worshiped fire, the Sun, stars, the river, and

the mountains. Shamanism was a wide-spread form of religion. At the same time, some Kimak groups professed Manichaeism—a religion of Christian profession. Perhaps Islam was to some extent spread among the Kimak aristocracy. At least the name Janah ibn Khakan al-Kimaki seems to indicate it, as does his book in Arabic. It is also important in this respect that certain features of Kimak burial sites are attributed to Islamic influences. It is a common fact that conversion to a world religion (Islam, Christianity) is an indicator of a certain level of socio-economic development.

Both socially and culturally, the Kimaks largely inherited and developed the traditions that formed in the ancient Turkic environment of the 6–9th centuries, while from the late 9th century until the beginning of the 11th century they had a well-established state of their own.

Medieval sources report the Kimaks to have had political relations with the neighbouring nations. The Kimak Khagan was quite active in terms of foreign politics. For instance, to quote al-Idrisi, 'The tsar of the Kimeks is one of the greatest tsars and one of the most honourable... Turkic kings fear the khakan's power, fear his revenge, and are wary of his force and his raids as they have already learnt this the hard way and have suffered from his actions.'

To prove the Kimak rulers' southward military expansion, which resulted in their conquering part of the Toquz Ghuz land, the Kimak town Karantia on the south-eastern bank of Lake Gagan (contemporary Alakol) used to belong to the Toquz Ghuz people. The Kimaks raided Jamlekes in Eastern Turkestan, a boader town of the Toquz Ghuz people, who were able to keep only the north-western part of their land in the 10th century.

At the same time, which is very important, sources report that the Kimaks nomadised to the Oghuz land in time of peace, while the Oghuzes nomadised to the Kimaks. Wars were not the determining factor in relations between them. Thus, it is not a coincidence that the close connections between Kimak-Kipchak and Oghuz tribes influenced their language, everyday life, and culture.

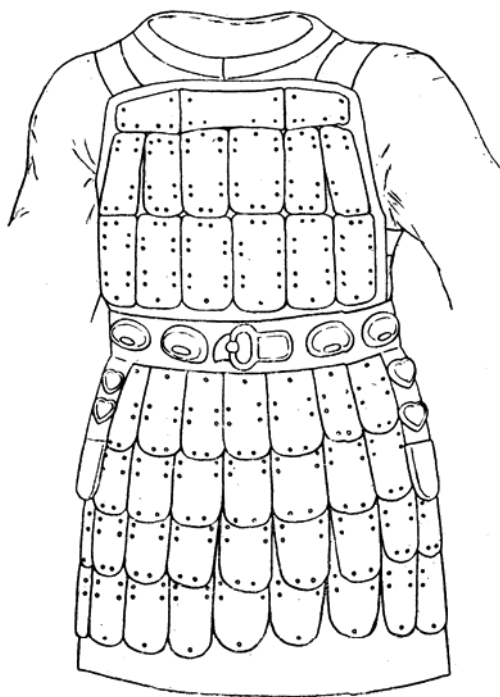
Indirect data by al-Idrisi suggests that the Kimak Khagan also invaded the Yenisei Kyrgyz land. 'All towns in the Kyrgyz land,' al-Idrisi reports, 'are situated within a three days' trip. There are four of them, large, walled, and inhabited by hard-working and brave people, who should beware of the artful Kimek king, the pugnacious ruler who is nearly always at war with his neighbours.' On the other hand, it is only close ethno-cultural connections between Kyrgyz and Kimak tribes to what their common everyday practices are attributable. For instance, the Kimak region named Kyrkyrkhan was famous for its population, whose customs were similar to those of the Kyrgyz people.

In turn, neighbouring dynasties and nations would attack Kimak camps. The Kara-Khanids undertook military campaigns into the Kimak land, sometimes reaching as deep as the Irtysh Region.

In the early 10th century, the borders of the Kimak Khaganate stabilized. Mutual military raids by the Kimaks and their neighbours were increasingly replaced by peaceful communication. To prove it, many trade routes to the Kimaks led from Bulgaria to the Volga Region, from the Samanids from Middle Asia, from the Oghuz, Karluk, Toquz Ghuz, and Kyrgyz people. A network of caravan roads leading to the Khagan's camp on the Irtysh branched out from the Silk Road.

At the end of the 10–beginning of the 11th centuries, the Kimak State fell apart. It was brought about by two reasons: internally, it was chiefly attributable to the centrifugal tendencies of the Kipchak khans, who wanted self-determination and a state of their own. Externally, it must have been the influence of the migration of nomadic tribes in Central Asia in the early 11th century. Scholars believe that the main cause of the migration was the establishment of the Liao state by the nomadic Khitan people in North China in 916. As the state extended westward, it forced nomadic tribes to migrate further. Echoes of the grand tribal migration were reflected in many medieval sources: Arab-Persian, Russian, Armenian, Hungarian, Byzantine, and Syrian ones. From this it should be noted, first of all, the testimony





The reconstruction of Kimak armour  
[Khudyakov, 1986, p. 198]

of the Arab scholar al-Marwazi (12th century), in whose composition the most information on this movement is preserved: 'There is a group of tribes among them (Turks) called Kun, they ran from the Chinese lands in fear of the Chinese Khan. They are Nestorian Christians. They left their lands as their pastures were too small. One of them is Khwarasm Shah Ikindji ibn Kochkar. They (the Kuns) were chased by a nation called Kai. They were more numerous and stronger than them. They chased them out from those pastures. The Kuns moved to the land of the Shares, while the Sharws took the lands of the Turkmen. The Turkmen moved to the eastern lands of Oghuzes, and the Oghuzes moved to the lands of the Pechenegs near the Armenian sea.' The Armenian Sea means the Black Sea. Thus, the migration affected nations from China to the Black Sea.

A number of scholars analyzed the data to reveal the following: the Kai and the Kun tribes pressed groups of Kimak-Kipchak tribes in the North-Eastern Semirechye and in the Irtysh Region and launched a blow at the Kimak State. The Kai people thus put in commotion

the Kipchaks, who forced the Oghuz people of the Syr Darya basin, the Western Aral Sea Region, and the Northern Caspian Sea Region to the so-called 'Southern Russian' and Black Sea steppes.

Following the conquest of the Oghuz land, the Kipchak khans became much stronger and came to dominate the basic territory where Kimak-Kipchak and Cuman tribes had previously lived. The Kimaks not only lost their political hegemony but became dependent on the Kipchaks. Part of the Kimaks was able to stay on the Irtysh, while another part found itself in the area of Turkestan and Middle Asia, the third one moving westward to the East European steppes within Kipchak tribes. The Kipchaks became the successors to the Kimak state.

#### **The resettlement of the Kimaks, the Kipchaks, and the Cumans**

Until the mid-8th century, the Kimaks, the Kipchaks, and the Cumans inhabited the steppe Altai Region, the Altai Mountains, and the Irtysh Region. The Kimaks' neighbours in the south were the Karluks, who lived on the Irtysh between the Southern Altai and the Tarbagatai Mountains. In the east, the Kyrgyz people centred on the Minusinsk Hollow. From the latter half of the 8th century the Kimaks began to move southward and settle in the Karluk land. In the early 9th century, separate Kimak groups moved to the territory of the North-Eastern Semirechye, thus becoming neighbours with the Toquz Ghuz people, the border running along the Dzungarian Mountain Range. The Toquz Ghuz state lay to the south of the Dzungarian Mountain Range.

While the Kimaks were moving southward in the latter half of the 8th century, the Kipchaks were migrating westward from the Irtysh. Data contained in al-Idrisi's work and the cartographic material in it have enabled scholars to localize certain groups of Kipchak tribes in the interfluvium of the Irtysh and the Tobol. At the turn of the 8th century, the western part of the Kipchaks settled north of the Pechenegs. The Pechenegs are known to have inhabited the Syr Darya Basin and the Aral Sea steppes from the 8th century to the first half of

the 9th century. Thus, the border between the Kipchak and Pecheneg territories ran between the south-eastern part of the South Ural and the northern area of the Aral Sea steppes. At the beginning of the 9th century, Kimak tribes approached the Middle Syr Darya regions. The alliance of the Oghuz, Kimak, and Karluk people defeated the Pecheneg confederation in the mid-9th century. The events caused the Oghuz people to conquer the land of the Pecheneg tribal union along the Syr Darya and in the Aral Sea steppes. Under the circumstances, tribes of the Pecheneg confederation migrated to the grazing land between the Zhaik (Ural) and the Atil. However, in the late 9th century the Oghuz people allied with the Khazars to defeat the Pechenegs and conquer the interfluvium of the Yaik and the Atil. Most of Pecheneg tribes had to migrate to South-East Europe, while the rest entered the Oghuz group and the Kimak-Kipchak tribal union.

By that time (the end of the 9–beginning of the 10th centuries) al-Idrisi includes details of the resettlement of the Cumans. In al-Idrisi's map 'Surat al-ard' the Askasia Mountains lie north of the Caspian (Bakhr al-khazar) and Aral (Bukhairat al-Khwarizm). They are described as stretched meridianally from north to south with a slight incline to the east. Several rivers originate in the mountains, in particular the Atil, which falls into the Caspian Sea, which is especially important for the identification of topographic objects.

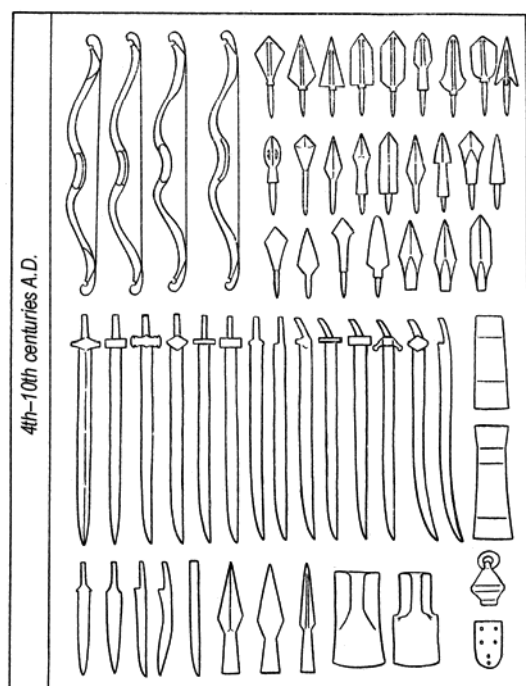
The description of the mountains clearly indicate that the Askasia Range is the Ural Mountains. Arab geographers Ibn Said and Abu'l-Fida mentioned the Cumans to have lived in the foothills of the Askasia, south of the mountains. A short distance south-east of the Askasia, the map shows the Tagura Mountains, where the citadel of the Cuman land with its capital Cumania lay. According to the actual geographic scheme, the Tagura is associated with the Mugodzhar Hills. Medieval texts suggest that the Mugodzhar Hills were the key Cuman-populated area. Such records report the Cumans to have inhabited the territory between the northern Aral Sea steppes and the foothills of the Southern Urals. South of them there were

the Oghuz people (according to al-Idrisi) and the Kimaks; the Pechenegs lived in the west; the Bulgars in the north-west; the Kipchaks in the north-east. A textological and cartographic analysis indicate that the Cuman-related data by medieval authors should be dated the 9–10th centuries. The Cumans constituted the western branch of the Kimak-Kipchak union.

In the early 10th century, the Kimaks and the Kipchaks along with the Oghuz people moved within the Ural Basin, in the Aral and Caspian Sea steppes. The resettlement of these tribes is reflected in the medieval maps of the Arab geographers. For instance, the 'Map of the World' by al-Istakhri shows the Kimaks to inhabit the land north and north-west of the Aral Sea.

Within the Southern Urals, the Kipchaks bordered on ancient Bashkir tribes. Arab traveler Ibn Fadlan reported the Bashkirs to have lived in the region, in particular near the river Bagnady, which most probably is today's Yavindy. The Kipchaks' direct contacts with the Bashkirs eventually led to cultural and linguistic inter-penetration. According to legends and historical narratives, western Bashkir tribes had separated from the Kipchak union and inhabited the Cis-Ural region long before the Mongol invasion.

Al-Masudi reported a group of nomadic Kimak tribes to have moved along the Emba and the Ural. Concerning the White and Black Irtysh, which flows into the Caspian Sea, al-Masudi wrote, 'their mouths are about a ten days' trip apart; Kimak and Oghuz winter and summer camps lie on them.' The rivers are identified as the Emba and the Ural. No satisfactory explanation of the origin of the placenames *the White* and *Black Irtysh* at such a considerable distance from the actual Irtysh has been received. We believe the unique information to be representative of a trend characteristic of the early Middle Ages, namely an ethnic self-consciousness reflecting the geographic environment. That is, the landscapes of the ethnic territory were impressed upon its inhabitants' minds as sacred concepts of 'homeland'. When an ethnic group moves to another territory, it brings along the names



Typological and chronological matrix  
of Kimak weaponry  
[Khudyakov, 1986, p. 200]

of its sacred mountains, lakes, and rivers from its previous habitat. To quote al-Gardizi, 'the Irtysh River is a god of the Kimaks.' Only the Kimaks could name the Emba and the Ural the White and Black Irtysh by their previous habitat. Al-Masudi apparently obtained the information from native Kimaks.

The author of 'Hudud al-'Alam' also provides evidence that the Kimaks migrated on the Ural. To quote the source, 'the Artush River flows between the Kimak and Oghuz lands.' V. Minorsky associates the Artush with the Urals. The vague idea of the hydrography of the areas far from the Muslim world, inhabited by 'disbelievers', is represented in an anonymous 10th century's work. Shared borders and close ethno-cultural connections between the Kimaks and the Kipchaks, on the one part, and the Oghuz people, on the other part, affected certain ethnic and social processes, the material and spiritual culture. According to a Persian source, some part of the Kimaks were similar to the Oghuz people in terms of customs.

If we rely on the 'Round Map of the World' by an unknown Arab geographer, we can spec-

ify the western borders of the Kimak habitat rather accurately: They are the north-eastern part of the Caspian Sea steppes, the Ural and Emba Rivers' Basin, and the areas north of the Aral Sea up to the Southern Urals. The map reflects the resettlement the Kimaks in the 10th century.

The Kimak section of 'Hudud al-'Alam' contains significant data as of that time. It reports of three territorial units within the Kimak land. The first one is 'Andak al-khifchāq', the area of some part of the Kipchaks adjacent to the Kimak territory in the west. Most probably, Andak al-khifchāq covered the north-western and western part of Central Kazakhstan and the northern fringe of the Aral Sea Steppes, that is, the areas directly adjacent to the Oghuz domain. Centuries-old close connections between Kimak-Kipchak and Oghuz tribes influenced their language, everyday life, and culture. Mahmud Kashgari reported the dialect of the Kipchak language to have the same phonetic feature as the Oghuz dialect—the so-called zhekanie (the sound 'zh' appears instead of some other sounds). The Kipchaks' ethno-cultural connections to Oghuz tribes can also be traced in ancient Kazakh legends. 'Yagsun-yasu' is another Kimak region lying between the rivers the Atıl (Volga) and the Zhaik (Ural), had more favourable and moderate climatic conditions. As the Kimak tribes moved westward, they brought about the names of places that they worshipped. 'Kyrkyrkhan' is a third Kimak region. The customs of its population somewhat resemble those of the Kyrgyz people. The region was apparently far closer to some Kyrgyz groups than to other neighbouring Turkic tribes. A comparison and collation of this historico-geographic term with reports found in other written sources indicate that Kyrkyrkhan was located in the area from the Tarbagatai Mountains to the Kalba Range, including the Shyngystau Range.

Certain groups of Kimak tribes reached the Caspian Sea shore. Nearly each town, river, or desert had several names in a certain historical period. The names are representative of the common place naming practice: Seas are called by the names of the countries around it, cities on its shores, rivers flowing into it, and

nations inhabiting the shore. The fact that the Caspian Sea was, though for a short period, known as the Kimak Sea, which name appears in 'Shahnameh', indicates that the Kimaks once entered the Caspian Sea steppes.

In the latter half of the 10th century, certain Kimak and Kipchak groups were at the border of the Muslim areas of Turkestan. The town of Sawran, according to al-Maqdisi (10th century) was a fortification on the border between the Oghuz and the Kimaks. The author also mentioned the large and wealthy city of Shagljan 26 km north of Turkestan as a border fortress to ensure protection against the Kimaks.

Lake Balkhash in the south was a natural border between the Kimaks and the Karluks in Semirechye.

In the north, Kimak nomadic camps reached the forest-steppe belt. The north-eastern borders of the Kimak land covered the Western and Northern Altai Mountains and the adjacent northern regions of Western Siberia within the Kimak Srostkin archaeological culture. The easternmost discoveries pertaining to Srostkin culture were in the western branches of the Kuznetsk Alatau.

The trip of Abu Dulaf, whom it takes 35 days to cross the Kimak land, must date back to the time in question.

Thus, the Kimak political hegemony covered the following vast territory during the early Volga Bulgaria period: from the Altai Mountains to the Irtysh in the east to the Atil and the Southern Urals in the west, from the Kulundia Steppe in the north to Lake Balkhash and the Dzungarian Alatau in the south. The ancient land of the Kimaks lay on the Irtysh, where the two capitals of the Kimak Khakan—the old and the new one—were situated.

The Kipchak khans inherited the large territory in the early 11th century.

### The Kimak Economy

The Kimaks were primarily engaged in nomadic animal husbandry. The nomads regularly undertook long migration to seasonal pastures. Formed over centuries, their migration routes included famous river fords, convenient moun-



Images of Kimak warriors  
(according to V. Mogilnikov, L. Yevtyukhova)  
[Khudyakov, 1986, p. 201].

tain passages, abundant grazing lands, and good watering places. The use of pastures, suggested that the nomads had to be aware of the grass condition in this or that area depending on the season. Stable routes could only change under the influence of major economic and political circumstances.

Some Kimak groups would come to the steppes between the Ural and the Emba for the winter and spend the summer in the Irtysh Region. Medieval authors report that the Kimaks were horse, sheep, goat, cow, bull, and camel breeders.

Sheep breeding was crucial to their economy. 'They used liquid sheep fat instead of vegetable oil, while solid fat was used for lighting'. Horse breeding was a key element of the nomadic economy. It is highly mobile and sturdy horses that enabled nomads to use remote pastures. Horses were used for war and for round-up hunting. To quote poet al-Jahiz (9th century), 'the Turk spent more time on horseback than on the ground.' Ibn Fadlan and al-Gardizi report that the Kimaks bred enormous herds of horses in the 10th century. Turkic horses were well-accommodated to the local nature and year-round pasturing; they yielded a lot of milk and meat. Nomadic Turkic tribes preferred horse meat to beef and mutton and used mare's milk to make the drink known as kumis.

There were two horse breeds—short horses with big heads, thick short necks, and tall, thin-legged riding horses with small heads. Tamim ibn Bahr, who noted the Kimak king and his

army to use 'thin-hoofed' horses, most probably meant the riding breed.

Some sources mention that the Kimaks also bred cows and bulls. It must have been mainly semi-sedentary groups who bred cattle, though nomads also used bulls in carts.

Although the Kimaks bred goats too, they played a minor role in the nomadic economy.

Meat and milk were consumed as food, wool used to produce felt, woolen clothes, carpets, and other items. They not only used animal produce to meet their own demand but sold them to the neighboring agrarian areas.

Hunting was another Kimak source of subsistence. Al-Ya'qubi wrote in the 9th century that the nomadic Turks 'mostly feed on game.' Al-Jahiz provided a curious description of Turkic hunting techniques. He reported them to be enthusiastic hunters who would hunt on horseback even during raids. They were extremely enduring as hunters, especially when chasing goitered gazelles and onagers.

Apart from individual hunting, roundup was practiced. It was not only economically important but served as military exercises.

Some Kimaks hunted fur-bearing animals—foxes, martens, beavers, sables, ermines, and large predators, such as tigers and snow leopards. In the Cis-Irtysh a bronze plate depicting a Kimak horseman wearing typical short-skirted clothes, striking a tiger with a spear was found. Peltry was among the Kimaks' export goods.

Separate groups of the Kimaks, mostly poor, lived on fishing in the Irtysh and other rivers. 'Divan lugat at-turk' and Arabic-Kipchak glossaries contain the following Kimak-Kipchak terms for fishing tools: argak—hook; ag—net, uzhan (uluk)—small boat, kemi (karab)—large boat. Archaeological findings in the Irtysh Region prove the narrative reports. Fish-shaped sculptures have been found in burial sites dating back to the 8–9th centuries.

There were compact semi-sedentary and sedentary groups of population among the Kimaks. Describing the Turkic tribes, al-Idrisi wrote, 'They are nomadic people... But they cultivate land, sow and reap crops.'

Many Arab-Persian authors mentioned sedentary Kimak settlements. Tamim ibn Bakhr,

who had seen the Kimak Khakan with his army, reported that there were settlements and plots of cultivated land near his headquarters. The Kimak section of 'Hudud al-'Alam' begins with the words 'a reflection on the Kimak land and their cities', followed by information on Imekia (Kimekia)—the Khakan's summer residence—and the settlement Zhubin. In contrast to the basic mobile dwelling type suitable for nomadic life, the yurt, Iskhak ibn al-Ḥusayn and al-Marwazi report the Kimaks to live in dugouts.

The most extensive information on the Kimaks' urban life can be found in works by al-Idrisi. He refers to a book by the Kimak prince Janah ibn Khakan al-Kimaki to mention 16 Kimak towns along lake shores and river banks, in unapproachable mountainous areas, and in mineral production places. Many of them were located on trade routes. Kimak towns were well-fortified. Sources also mention Kimak fortress castles in the hills with water-filled moats around their base. Ancient towns with walls of air brick and turf with reed bunches inside have been discovered in Central Kazakhstan. There are many ancient ruins of settlements and irrigation canals there.

Half-sedentary and sedentary Kimak groups cultivated land, sowing mostly millet. Abu Dulaf reports the Kimaks to have eaten peas, beans, and barley. According to al-Idrisi, the Kimaks had areas of fertile land where wheat and barley were cultivated. He also mentioned them to grow the effort-consuming rice, which is only possible with irrigation.

The farming economy was natural and barely secured the needs of their own consumption. There is no information concerning their selling or exchanging their agricultural produce. Thus, the Kimaks had several economic and cultural types determined by the dominance of nomadic or semi-nomadic livestock breeding, arable farming combined with semi-sedentary livestock breeding or commercial hunting and fishing.

The Kimak towns developed and grew as political and economic centres combining the economic and cultural traditions of the local Turkic population of Middle Asia and Kazakhstan.

The most well-developed Kimak home industries and handicrafts were animal product and raw material treatment and processing. Leather was used to produce various kinds of footwear, tableware, quivers, bow covers, horse harness, and sacks; felt was used to cover yurts and produce clothes. To quote al-Yaqubi, 'the Turks are the most masterful producers of felt, since they make their clothes from it.' Wild animal skins and fur of fur-bearing animals were also used to make clothes.

Simple community members mostly made their arms as well as household items on their own. In this respect, the testimony of al-Jahiz is interesting: 'The Turk does all the handicraft by himself, he does not ask for help from friends, and does not consult a friend for advice: they (Turks) produce arms, arrows, saddles, quivers, spears.'

Wooden articles like saddles, tableware, boats, yurt parts, and even skis, as reported, were widely used.

The Kimaks also produced pottery in their settlements. Besides this, iron, silver, gold, copper, and gemstones were produced in the area where they lived. 'The masters there,' al-Idrisi wrote about the Kimaks, 'use iron to make items of striking beauty.' Silver and gold were used to make luxury items and jewelry. Al-Idrisi reported that the Kimak 'tsar' wore gold-embroidered clothes and a crown of gold. He described the Kimak gold melting technique: 'The (Kimak) custom is to collect gold and wash it in water, then mix grains of gold with mercury and melt the mixture in cow dung. This yields a considerable amount of gold.'

Archaeological evidence confirms the existence of handicraft production by the Kimaks. Excavations in their settlements and mound-



Reconstruction of a heavily armed Kimak warrior [Khudyakov, 1986, p. 201]

type burials revealed iron articles, jewelry of gold, silver, and bronze, remnants of koshma and leather, wooden tableware, arms, and various earthenware. It is very important to highlight that a large part of these items were clearly of local production.

Strong Khagan's power and the demands of the noble nomadic elite became attributes of a social mandate that stimulated the development of high-standard handicrafts and the production of prestigious household items. For instance, in the Kimak town of Gagan there was a shop that produced clothes of red and yellow silk, which only noble people wore. The poet al-Jahiz praised Kimak wooden tableware, which was generally sought-for, as were Chinese articles of the kind.

Close connections between the urban and steppe culture in the nomadic society brought about new urbanization trends. Craft and commercial towns specializing in export production began to appear. The above-mentioned Gagan was famous for high-quality fur clothes, and 'merchants took great amounts of them to other countries' (al-Idrisi).

## CHAPTER 3

**The Kipchaks: economy, social system, tribal structure<sup>1</sup>***Bulat Kumekov***Resettlement**

In the early 11th century, in the territory of the former settlement of Kimak, Kipchak and Cuman tribes, military and political hegemony passed to the Kipchak Khans. The Kipchak's dynastic nobility, having come to power, began taking active steps in southern and western directions leading to direct contacts with the countries of Middle Asia and South-Eastern Europe.

In the second quarter of the 11th century, the Kipchak tribal aristocracy supplanted the Oghuz Jabgu from the lower and middle reaches of the Syr Darya river, of the Aral-Caspian steppes. The seizure of the territory inhabited by the Oghuz aristocracy by the Kipchak rulers was caused by both economical and political reasons. The political factor was mainly associated with external events, paired along with the migration of Middle Asian tribes in the western direction at the beginning of the 11th century. In addition, of considerable importance were the centrifugal tendencies of the Kipchak dynastic groups striving for independence and creation of statehood. In the first half of the 11th century, in all likelihood, Kipchak tribal leaders experienced a shortage of pastures and tried to take under control the most important trade routes passing through the Volga region, Ustyurt and the lower reaches of the Syr Darya. This part of the route, connecting Asia and Europe, had a great attraction as one of the important paths of enrichment.

Following the changes in the ethno-political situation, related to the extension of Kipchak power in the Aral and the Syr Darya River regions, at the beginning of the second quarter of the 11th century the term 'Oghuz steppes' (Mafazat al-Ghuz) was replaced by the term 'Kipchak Steppe' (Desht-i Kipchak). Having seized Mangystau and the adjacent regions, the Kipchaks came close to the northern boundaries of Khwarezm. Thus, the boundaries of political influence of the Kipchaks significantly expanded. Under the power of ruling clans of Toksoba and Burjogli, the main part of the Cumans and large groups of Kipchak tribes migrated to the 'southern Russian' and Black Sea steppes up to the boundaries of Byzantium in the middle of the 11th century. As a result of these developments, the Kipchak tribes split into two ethno-territorial associations: The eastern Kipchak and western Kipchak tribes, the boundaries of which were on the river Atil. A large part of the territory of modern day Kazakhstan was ruled by the khans of the eastern Kipchak ulus.

The relative centralization and unity of the Kipchak khans in the latter half of the 11th - the beginning of the 12th centuries, facilitated the further advancement of the Kipchak tribes towards Khwarezm and the regions of the North-Western Semirechye and Southern Kazakhstan. In the early latter half of the 11th century the Kipchaks were entrenched in Mangystau and Ustyurt, who were leading a nomadic life together with the remaining groups of Oghuz tribes (Kechat and Chagrak). On the 'Small map' by al-Idrisi was noted the geographic name 'Kipchak Steppe' (Sahra al-Kyfchak). This ethnotoponym was located between the Caspian and Aral seas and dates back to the latter half of the 11th century. Regarding historical maps as the most valuable sources, it should be said that, a cartographic representa-

<sup>1</sup> The following source editions were used by B. Kumekov in this chapter: [Bartold; al-Ya'qubi; Ibn al-Faqih; al-Istakhri; al-Khwarizmi; Mahmud al-Kashgari; Arslanova, Klyashtorny, 1973; al-Idrisi; Ibn Khordadbeh; al-Masudi, 1894; Klyashtorny, 1986; Kumekov, 1972].

tion most accurately highlights the nature of reflected objects or phenomena. The method of comparison of medieval geographical maps allows us to highlight the differences between these maps which reflect the results of the processes of geographical resettlement in the corresponding time period.

The advancement of the Kipchak and Cuman tribes to the west of the Atil was the most successful, as a result, the Oghuzes and Pechenegs were supplanted from the wide steppes of Atil and Dnieper, where the Kipchak and Cuman tribes resettled.

The initial stages of movement of the Kipchaks to the west was reflected on the geographical map by Mahmud Kashgari, where their area of settlement is marked as an area to the west of Atil and north-west of the Caspian sea (Bakhr Abiskun). The Atil river itself was attributed by the medieval researcher to the Kipchak country. However, the Saksin region with center of the same name in the lower Volga maintained independence until it was conquered by the Kipchaks in the first half of the 12th century.

Data from historical map in the work 'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat' by Zakariya al-Qazwini (13th century) surely relates to the second half of the 11th century, it depicts the Kipchaks to the east of the Ruses whose regions of compact settlement at that time were located within boundaries of modern Central Russia. According to the map by al-Musta'fi (14th century), the Kipchaks were localized among the Bulgars, living in the Atil River region, and the Circassians, living in the North Caucasus, thus, this data can be dated as the second half of the 11th century.

Kipchak khans expanded the boundaries of their state to the south and reached outskirts of Taraz, where together with Karakhanids they built the Kenjek Sengir fortification. The natural boundary between the central Desht-i Kipchak and appanages of the rulers of Karakhanid state was Lake Balkhash and Lake Alakol. In the 11th century the eastern boundaries of the Kipchaks encompassed the right bank of the Irtysh and the slopes of the Altai Mountains. Mahmud Kashgari localized the Imeks (Kimak) in the Irtysh river basin, in their main an-

cient territory that called 'Imek steppes'. In the 12th century the Kipchak tribes in Altai shared borders with Naimans, Kangly and Kereits.

In the south-east, the Kipchaks were associated with the Altai-Sayan cradle of civilization and culture carried by the Kyrgyz, the Khakass, and other tribes. The northern boundaries of the Kipchak Khanate follow the forest-steppe zone separating the Kazakh steppe from Western Siberia. In the north-west the Kipchaks entered into ethno-cultural and political contacts with population of the Volga and Cis-Ural regions. Interaction of Kipchak tribes with Bulgars and Bashkirs in the latter half of the 11–the early 13th centuries developed primarily in the direction of the Kipchak linguistic and cultural influence. Meanwhile, according to Mahmud Kashgari, up until the middle of the 11th century the Old Bashkir language was the closest to the Kimak language. During the era of the rise of the Kipchaks, the process of Kipchakisation of ethnic groups in contact with them went up.

The ethnic territory of Kipchak tribes within the boundaries of their ethno-political union in the Eastern Desht-i Kipchak was relatively stable with the exception of their south-western boundaries, where, beginning from the 30s of the 12th century Khwarezm-Shahs started to carry out quite active policy. Representatives of Khwarezm-shahs dynasty made every effort to get hold of the southern Aral Sea region, the Syr Darya River region cities and Mangystau which were in the hands of the Kipchak khans. Khwarezm-shah Muhammad managed to take under control Kipchak lands in the Syr Darya River region and conquer the southern residence of their khans, the city of Sygnak. These victories coincided with the period of the highest rise of the State of Khwarezm-shahs laying claims to the leadership in the vast Islamic world. However, further course of confrontation between Kipchak khans and Khwarezm-shahs was suspended by coming from the east formidable Mongol power.

According to Islamic written sources, the Kipchak tribes of the 10–12th centuries were the most numerous among all the Turkic-speaking peoples with the widest distribution range. Thus, medieval authors pointed to the



important aspect of civil and social life of nomads and that is the presence of the hierarchy of ethnic groups. The hierarchy of ethnic groups corresponded to the hierarchy of their ethnic territories. With respect to strength and power, the Kipchaks were the leaders in Central Asia in the period under consideration.

On the territory of modern Kazakhstan camping grounds of the Kipchaks were located on the banks of Ishim and Tobol, Nura, Ilek and Sary-su. From winter camp locales in Mangystau and Ustyurt groups of the Kipchaks for summer camps were moving to valleys of the rivers Emba, Sagyz, Uil, Khobda, Zhaik, from the northern bank of the Caspian Sea for summer camps they were migrating to valleys of the rivers Atil, Maly and Bolshoy Uzen and foothills of the Southern Urals. Information from the Arab geographer al-Umari testifies to the history of the nomadic routes of the Kipchaks: 'The Kipchak khans spend winter in Sarai, and their summer camps, like the one-time summer camps of Turan, are located in the Urals'. Large groups of Kipchak tribes were spending winters in the Aral Sea and the Syr Darya regions, but in summer they were moving to the north and central regions of modern day Kazakhstan. But not everywhere did they make up the majority of the population. For instance, the Imeks (Kimaks) compactly settled on the Irtysh, camping grounds of numerous Kangly tribes were located in the Aral Sea region, large groups of the Cuman tribes settled in the area between the Yaik and the Atil. Apart from the Kipchaks, Western Kazakhstan was inhabited by the remaining groups of Oghuz and Pecheneg tribes, the lower Syr Darya and Mangystau were camping grounds of some Turkmen groups, the east of ethnic territory—by the Naimans, Kereis and Argyns, and south of Kazakhstan was inhabited by representatives of nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes of the Imeks, Karluks, Chigils, Urans, Kais.

Strengthening of ethnic identity is usually combined with desire of the members of the ethnic group to have their own territory and state organization, which in turn provides a feedback—the stable existence of the ethnic group.

A tight connection between the territory and the ethnic group that populated and economically developed this territory was well recognized by its population. The belief of the Kipchaks in the historical rights to their settlement territory were recorded by external observers through the concept of 'Desht-i Kipchak' that covered lands from the Irtysh up to the Black Sea. In fact, the Desht-i Kipchak encompassed the ethnic territory that formed the Kipchak ethnic group.

One of the phenomenons of the nomadic civilization in Kipchak society was the high level of communication. The communication system in the Kipchak country met the highest standards of the 'technical' progress for that period of time. In connection with this, suffice it to say, that the vast expanse of the ethnic territory of the Kipchaks in the 11–to the beginning of the 13th centuries conformed with the communicative capabilities of their society.

Mobile animal husbandry groups of Kipchak tribes completed significant migrations—to the hundreds or even more than a thousand kilometres. The range of their migrations was different depending on historical traditions, level of prosperity, and natural conditions.

Key grazing areas and migration routes were formed with reference to the experience of many generations. In this perspective, understanding the concept of a 'homeland' (ethnic territory) comes from the concepts of the 'grazing area', 'summer camping grounds', and 'winter camping grounds'. Established migration routes could have been changed only by serious economical, social, or political reasons. The allocation of nomadic routes and grazing areas was the chief prerequisite of the pastoral nomadic system, which ensured a normal life for the society. The encroachment of cattle was severely punished.

### **Economy**

The basic economic activity of the Kipchaks was animal husbandry. From written medieval sources we know that the Kipchaks, like many other nomads, bred horses, sheep, cows, bulls and camels. The herded livestock of the

Kipchaks was made up of mainly horses and sheep, more adapted to grazing in winter.

In a nomadic lifestyle the horse was the most valuable animal for its exceptional mobility and endurance, allowing to develop remote pastures, it served in war, and in hunting raids. Therefore, the Kipchaks paid special attention to the breeding of horses that were exclusively pasture fed. 'The features of this steppe (Desht-i Kipchak.—*B.K.*) are that unlike any other country, plants here are fed to livestock instead of barley. That is why there is a lot of livestock',—was recorded by Arab traveller Ibn Battuta. The wealth of horses has always been the basis of economic power of herdsmen.

Some written sources contain information about a presence of many herders owning ten thousand wonderful horses in the Kipchak country. The burial mounds in the settlement territory of Kipchak tribes in Central Kazakhstan contain traces of two horse breeds—tall riding horses with small head and thin legs (bones of this breed were found in rich graves on Turkic-speaking nobility), and also very hardy and undemanding riding animals: short, with massive head, and thick and short neck.

Kipchak horses were highly valued, they were in high demand in neighbouring and remote countries. For instance, horses exported to India from Desht-i Kipchak were sold at the price of 100 dinars of silver for an ordinary horse, while the cost of a good horse was 500 and more dinars.

The Turkic steppe horse was well adapted to local natural conditions of severe continental climate, horses had high milk production capacity and good meat-fat quality. The Kipchaks preferred horse meat to beef and lamb, while horse milk was used to produce perfect, healthy drink—kumis.

According to written sources, Kipchak society paid attention to the development of breed features of riding horses. They were breeding pedigree horses as draft animals, food source and for riding. Many generation's experience helped to achieve significant results in this field. For instance, depending on the affiliation with one of numerical tribal units, horses were distinguished by original colour.

Sometimes, names of one or another tribes were defined by the color of horse. In this respect, it is interesting to note that within the west Kipchak alliance there was a tribe called 'cream-colored horse people' (*kulabaoglu*). As an example, it is pertinent to note that in 1223 the Mongol military leader Jochi presented to his father Genghis Khan 20 thousand white Kipchak horses brought from Desht-i Kipchak. Valuable information about economic activity of the Kipchaks, relating to the empirical selection, reveals one of the main ways of improving productivity of pastoral community.

Sheep breeding, as a quick replenishment of sources of meat and fat, was very important in their pastoral economy. Sheep also provided wool and sheepskin used to produce warm clothes. The Kipchaks bred two breeds of sheep. The majority of sheep were non-fat-tailed sheep well adapted to long-term migrations. Apart from them, there were fat-tailed sheep; they tolerated the pre-vernal lack of feed relatively well.

In addition to horse breeding and sheep breeding, the Kipchaks bred beef cattle, but quantitatively it was much less. Cows and bulls could not travel long distances during migrations. This fact points to semi-nomadic lifestyle of some groups of Kipchak tribes with permanent winter camping grounds. Ethnographic researches show that cows were mainly bred by the poorest part of nomads. Large, horned livestock often served as draft animals. Ibn Battuta noted that the Kipchaks were harnessing a horse to a cart, however, added that 'they (carts) are also drafted by oxen and camels, depending on heaviness or lightness of the cart'.

Following advancement of the Kipchaks to the zones of arid and semi-arid lands in the Caspian Sea region some of their groups started camel breeding. In sandy and infertile areas a camel was the most favorable and convenient animal.

Vast pastures were required to feed livestock, and the Kipchaks migrated along defined routes dating back centuries. The traditional migration system included winter and summer camping grounds with reference to the experience of many generations. 'Everybody

knows,—notes Italian traveler and ambassador William of Rubruck (13th century),—where he (a Kipchak) shall graze herds in winter, summer, spring and autumn'.

Hunting was one of the sources of existence for the Kipchaks. According to al-Jahiz, 'nomadic Turks are highly tough hunters, especially in the pursuit of gazelles and onagers'. Mahmud Kashgari mentions a big wild animal—bulan (apparently, a moose), living in the Kipchak steppes, whom the Kipchaks are hunting.

The Kipchak tribes were using falcons, hawks, eagles and hounds in hunting. The Arab-Kipchak dictionaries mention hunting dogs—kylbark, tazi and hunting birds—karakush (imperial eagle), balaban, lachin (falcon).

In addition to individual hunts, the Kipchaks also organised stalking, which had not only economical, but also a military nature, for it was a kind of manoeuvre, military exercise, training.

In the forest-steppe and forest regions, the Kipchaks were also hunting fur animals: sables, ermines, foxes, martens. Fur was one of the most important commodities that they exported to other countries. According to Mahmud Kashgari, Turks called fur *idjuk*, but according to the data from the Arab-Kipchak dictionary 'Tardjuman'—*kurs*. Generally speaking, hunting wasn't a separate field, but it was just an addition to the main economic activity—animal husbandry.

The Kipchaks, mainly the poorest, living on the banks of rivers and lakes were partly engaged in fishing.

A part of the medieval narrative sources tells about the growing of grains and legumes by the Kipchaks. The Kipchaks were mainly sowing millet. Al-Umari noted: 'They sow (the Kipchaks)—*B.K.*) little, and least of all wheat and barley. Most often they sow millet, they eat millet and according to the size of sowed land it is their main food'. Traveling around Desht-i Kipchak in the 12th century Petachiah notes that 'bread is not consumed in this land, only rice and millet'. Apart from millet, in a very limited amount the Kipchaks were sowing wheat and barley. In exchange for animal husbandry products they received bread from the

farmers of Middle Asia. Some groups of Kipchaks were engaged in irrigation farming, it is proved by the remnants of irrigation systems, numerous dams, wells and ponds in the Ulatau and Torgai regions.

The traditionalism of some grain crops in the economy of the Kipchaks, speaks the fact that special terms were used by the Kipchak tribes for their designation and have been preserved in medieval dictionaries. It should be mentioned that these terms are originally Turkic: *ekin*—sowing, *bugdai*—wheat, *arpa*—barley, *tutargan*—rice, *mardzhamak*—lentil, *taru*—mentil, *irdan*—barn-floor, *thrashing-floor*, *ashlyk*—products, etc.

Thus, the vast spatial extension and specific geographic environment of the territory of settlement of the Kipchak tribes enhanced the development of several economic-cultural types—from nomadic animal husbandry to farming, making up the single production system of the medieval Kipchak society.

### Social System

The specifics of the nomadic lifestyle determined a distinctive social order. What mattered most in a nomadic society was the population and not land. Nomads could move, change locations, and migrate, which does not apply to land-bound agrarians. The nomadic principle said, 'where there are people, there will be land', while sedentary agrarians were guided by the opposite, 'where there is land, there can be found a population.' The priority factor of the population in the Great Steppe is the key to understanding the peculiar development of the nomadic society and fathoming the steppe civilization as an important notion in global history. In their social and state development, nomadic livestock breeding tribes relied on tribal structures, which acted intensely as social and socio-psychological factors. Thus, the Kipchak Khanate in terms of succession to the Hun and ancient Turkic stages of development should be viewed as a confederation of tribes arranged to form a strong and well-structured nomadic state.

Tribes acted as administrative units arranged by the authorities to represent econom-

ic and territorial relations. Socially, tribes fell into aristocratic, subordinate, and vassal. They were interrelated to form a rigid hierarchy.

The schematic structure of the society was as follows: family—nomadic community—tribe—tribal union. The grassroots unit of the structure, known as a patronymy, formed as the result of national subdivision of a large patriarchal stem family.

Kipchak khans transferred power from father to son. Only representatives of the dynastic Elborili clan could become supreme khans. As has been mentioned above, the khan's headquarters were called a Horde. According to ancient Turkic tradition, the Kipchak Khanate was divided into two wings. In the Eastern Desht-i Kipchak, the right wing had its headquarters on the Ural River (city of Saraychik), while the left one resided in the city of Sygnak. As the Kipchak habitat extended from the Irtysh to the Black Sea steppe, the Kipchak land was divided into the following two parts to ensure a more efficient administration: The Eastern Part (the main one) and the Western Part, the Atil acting as the border. The military organization and the military administrative system of management were the most convenient for the nomadic lifestyle.

The hierarchy of the ruling aristocratic elite was still adhered to—khans, tarkhans, baskaks, beks, bays.

The Kipchak society was one of social and class inequality. The Kipchak nobility, khans, and beks owned a large amount of livestock. The number of horses was the main criterion for wealth. Many Kipchaks owned thousands of wonderful horses; some enjoyed herds of ten and more thousands. Ordinary members of the community were free, but became dependent on the nobility by coming under the protection of a strong patron and bringing along their possessions. Livestock breeder who went bankrupt transferred to the dependent class; they had to resort to arable farming and handicraft. However, as soon as a poor zhatak (yatuk) had enough livestock, he became a nomadic livestock breeder.

Slaves formed the most rightless group in the Kipchak society, replenished with prisoners

of war. Slaves were mostly sold; only a small part of them was used as household servants.

Wealth inequality in the Kipchak society was based on private ownership of livestock. Punishments for offense against property were severe. For instance, a criminal who returned a stolen horse to its owner was to provide him with 9 similar horses. If he was unable to do so, his children were taken away from him.

Family and tribal tamgas were used to brand livestock. Having giant herds of livestock, the Kipchak aristocracy also owned the pastures where the livestock was kept.

Key grazing areas and migration routes were formed with reference to the experience of many generations. Kipchak khans and tribal aristocrats had the right to dispose of grazing areas and regulate migration. The allocation of nomadic routes and grazing areas was the chief prerequisite of the pastoral nomadic system, which ensured a normal life for the society.

The Kipchaks adhered to their ancestors' law of custom. Capital crimes included murder, mutiny, treason, and adultery. Other crimes against person, property thefts were penalised with ninefold compensation for the stolen property.

The Kipchak law was more well-developed than written sources report it to have been. In this respect, the statement by Kipchak sultan Baibars to the Mongol ruler Abaga Khan that 'our (Kipchak) Yasa is superior to that of Chinggis Khan' is of interest.

Women played a major part in Kipchak social life. Kipchak women had a high status. To prove it, a large number of stone statues were erected in honor of women.

Paramount importance was attached to military organisation, combat tactics, military techniques, and ruse. Each military detachment had a colour of its own. The Kipchaks were good at conquering fortified towns and fortresses, for which purpose they often used burning arrows, catapults, ceramic vessels with burning liquid (apparently oil).

The Kipchaks professed differed faiths. Tengrism—worship of the only god named Tengri—was widespread. At the same time, ancestor worship was important. Apart from

this, certain Kipchak groups in the south of Kazakhstan, the Volga Region, and the Black Sea Area converted to Islam and became Muslims. Certain Kipchak groups in the Western Desht-i Kipchak were Christians because of close contacts with the neighbouring East European countries (Rus', Byzantium, Georgia, Armenia).

As a result of inter-generation adjustment to the geographic environment and predominantly livestock-breeding economy, nomadic tribes developed the steppe cultural traditions, the most stable unit being associated with the steppe lifestyle as a special phenomenon. It originated in the Bronze Age. The standards were established in the Saka historical and cultural community. Further development in terms of continuity took place in the Turkic period. The steppe lifestyle is generally characterized by a high level of continuity in time and space. Though many ethnic and local variants existed, cultural stereotypes were developed and preserved during long historical periods. They were especially vivid in the material and spiritual culture, the ethical and behavioural standards of Turkic ethnic groups.

At the same time, the steppe civilisation was an open society which constantly interacted with agrarian sedentary civilisations, both using their achievements and enriching them.

### **Tribal and Ethnic Structure**

From the former half of the 11th century until the early 13th century, the formation of the Kipchak ethnic community entered a whole new stage of development, which is chiefly attributable to the growth of their territory, the Eastern Desht-i Kipchak, and the power of the Kipchak khans, whose power was legitimized by the mighty dynastic Elborili family within their own state.

The tribal composition of the Kipchaks of the Eastern Ulus gives a good insight into the extent of development and extension of ethnic connections in the Eastern Kipchak union formed in the territory of Kazakhstan as well as the level of formation of the Kipchak ethnic group.

Works by Arab scholars Ahmed at-Tini (1235–1318) and ad-Dimashki (1301–1349) contain accurate data on the tribal composition of the Kipchak community of the Eastern Ulus. It consisted of 16 ethnic components. Eight of them were key tribes, the remaining 8 ethnic components being smaller subdivisions. Importantly, the list of sixteen tribes within the Kipchak confederation was itself by no means random. In fact, the information was presented in strict accordance with the dynastic, social, and political status of each ethnic unit.

The first leading elite tribe was *the Borili* (according to other sources, *the Elborili*), from which the Kipchak khans originated from generation to generation. The semantic meaning of Borilis is related to 'wolf'. Historical and ethnographic literature provides a wide coverage of the cult of the wolf as a legendary founding ancestor of a number of Turkic ethnic groups and the totemic role of the wolf at the early development stages of Turkic tribes. The Borili (Elborili) was an ancient Turkic tribe of Middle Asian origin. The second tribe, *the Toqsoba*, also belonged to the elite, meaning 'nine tribes'. It was followed by *the Ietioaba*, meaning 'seven tribes' (seven clans), then *the Durtut* (Durtoba), meaning 'four tribes'. The fifth tribe was *the al-Ars*, which is associated with the Ases, an Iranian tribe related to the Alans. Certain groups of turkicized Ases (Arses), who lived near to the Aral Sea, were included in the Kipchak tribes. There followed the *Burdjogly tribe*, which also belonged to the Kipchak elite in the 'southern Russian' steppe and formed the Egyptian Mamluk sultan dynasty. The seventh tribe mentioned is the *Mankuroglu*, which apparently belonged to a Kimek tribe. A number of sources report a mountain range named Mankur to be situated in the Kimek country. The name of the mountains was apparently assigned to a certain group within the Kimak confederation as a totem. The last large tribe to appear is the *Imek tribe*, that is, the Turkic-speaking Kimak ethnic group. Beginning from the 11th century, essentially after the fall of the Kimak Khaganate, the name *Kimek* ceased to appear in written sources and was completely replaced by its dialect form 'Imek'. The close ethno-political and ethno-cultural relations

between the Kipchaks and the Imeks brought about such consolidation that in the time of Mahmud Kashgari, the Imeks were referred to as the Kipchaks, though the latter were aware of themselves as a different ethnic subdivision. In the context of the considered list of tribes, ad-Dimiashqi noted the following content about the Imeks: 'they (the Imeks) have already become Khwarazmians.' It is possible, that what was primarily meant was, the contingent of ten thousand Imeks serving in the army of the Imek Khan's daughter Terken Khatun, the wife of Khwarazmian Shah Tekesh.

The first ethnonym in the list of smaller subdivisions is the *Tag*. Judging by ancient Oghuz legends, the Tag tribe was of Oghuz origin. It is followed by the ancient Bashkir tribe called *the Bashkurt*, separate groups that in the 10th century resettled in the Aral and Caspian steppes. The next ethnonym is the *Cumanlu* (the Cuman tribe + -lu as a possessive or relative affix). These must be the groups of Cuman tribes that stayed in the territory of Kazakhstan after the larger part moved to East Europe. Two tribes follow: *the Bazanak* (Bajanak) and *the Bajna*, belonging to the Pecheneg tribal union along with the Bashkurts. In the first half of the 9th century they were defeated by an alliance of the Oghuz, Kimak, and Karluk people and had to largely migrate from the Aral Sea, Emba, and Ural Area to the west. Written sources report certain subdivisions of the above three Turkic-speaking tribes to have stayed in Western Kazakhstan as part of the Kipchak union. These are followed by the *Karaboriklu*, who also belonged to Pecheneg tribes in the Aral Sea Region. The tribe's name is semantically the same as the Karakalpaks. There follows the *Uz tribe*, the Oghuzes, as this was the way they pronounced the name. The last tribe within the Kipchak group is *the Djortans* (Shortans). Semantically, the word means 'a pike', which is suggestive of its Turkic stem.

The confederation thus contained the following tribes: Kimak tribes (the Imek, the Mankuroglu), Oghuz tribes (the Uz, the Tag), Pecheneg-Bashkir tribes (the Bashkurt, the Bajanak, the Baja), Ass tribes, Cuman tribes (the Cumanlu and the Djortan) and Kipchak tribes

proper (the Borili/Elborili, the Toqsoba, the Ietioaba, the Burjoglu, and the Durtoba), to classify which is essential, in terms of the ways in which the Kipchak ethnic community formed.

The tribal structure of the Kipchak confederation dating back to the 11–12th centuries, clearly indicates a complex and heterogeneous composition. Apart from the Kipchaks themselves, the Kipchak confederation included Turkic-speaking Kimak, Cuman, Pecheneg, ancient Bashkir, and Oghuz tribes, as well as turkicized elements of the Iranian-speaking ethnic unit. Those were social organisms subjected to hierarchy and subordination. Consolidation and integration apparently caused the transition from an alliance of related Kipchak tribes to a Kipchak nation. At the stage of nation formation, the Kipchaks as the state known as the Kipchak Khanate were often able to extend themselves to cover great areas, assimilating the subordinate population.

Apart from the aforementioned tribes, numerous Kangly tribes, compact groups of which formed an ethnic territorial union within the Lower Syr Darya River and the Aral Sea Steppe in the latter half of the 12th century, contributed to the formation of the Kipchak community. A number of different opinions of the origin of the ethnonym 'Kangly' exist in literature. Some researchers associate the Kangly people with the Kangars (the elite of the Pecheneg community). Another hypothesis is that the Kangly people resulted from the Kipchaks assimilating some of Pecheneg tribes. There is a third idea that the ethnonym 'Kangly' is connected to the conquest of ancient Pecheneg-Oghuz tribes on the Syr Darya and in the Aral Sea Region by Kimak-Kipchak tribes. Taking into account the mention of the ethnonym 'Kara-Kangly' (or 'Kara-Kanglyg') by Uighur ambassadors in the Altai Region, near the Basmyls, the Toquz Ghuz people, and the Karluks in the latter half of the 9th century, the above theories that the ethnonym appeared relatively late, in the 11th century, are hard to justify. The cycle of historical narratives about Oghuz Khan mentions the Kangly people along with the Kipchaks, the Uighurs, and the Karluks as the most ancient Turkic nations. As a personified ethnonym, the

name Kangly is mentioned in the 11th century by Mahmud Kashgari: 'Kangly is the name of a great Kipchak man.'

At the same time, the Kipchak ethnic composition included such Turkic-speaking tribes as the Urans, who came to the territory of Kazakhstan from Eastern Turkestan in the 10th century, and the Bayats, as well as the Azkish and Turgesh people. The appearance of the latter two tribes in the Black Sea Area in the 12th century is most probably attributable to the fact that Kipchak tribes moved there. The Karluks, the Chigils, and the Kai people could also be an ethnic component of the Kipchaks.

As a catalyst for the formation of the Kipchak nation in the territory of today's Kazakhstan, ethno-cultural features were leveled down, an ethnic territory, a uniform economy, social regulations, and a shared language all favoring the process. The Kipchaks' close interaction with various ethnic groups influenced their ethnic community. As the political standing of the Kipchaks improved, many tribes and ethnic groups became aware of themselves as a part of an ethnos, accepted the ethnonym 'Kipchak', and came to call themselves the Kipchaks. However, the Mongol invasion interrupted the final stage of the Kipchak national formation.

In the mid-11th century, Kipchak and Cumans began to move westwards. Persian historian Ḥamdallāh Qazvīni noted the political and ethnographic changes in the so-called South Russian steppes in the latter half of the 11th century, reporting the Desht-i Kipchak to be the same as the Desht-i Khazar. In the 10th century, the 'Southern Russian' steppes were known as the Desht-i Khazar. The ancient Russian chronicles used the loan-translation 'Polovtsians' to refer to the Cumans from 1055. The term 'Polovtsians' apparently has two meanings: the specific one, referring to the Cumans proper, and the wider one, which applied to the entire union of Kipchak tribes. However, the chronicles did not distinguish between the two meanings. This complicated the interpretation of information in written (ancient Russian) sources. The situation was the same with medieval Byzantine historiography. In 1078, the Byzantines were ahead of their western

neighbours in learning the Cumans by their true ethnic name, which they applied to all the Turkic tribes Desht-i Kipchak. This tradition was maintained in Byzantine literature until the 14th century.

The Rusesessian chronicles defined the borders of the 'Polovtsian Steppe' as between the Volga and the Dnieper. However, Islamic sources reported the Western Desht-i Kipchak covered a much larger territory. For instance, the data by Arab geographer al-Idrisi suggests that the Cumans proper had their camping grounds between the Dniester and the Dnieper, while the hordes of Kipchak tribes lay east of the Dnieper.

The tribal composition of the western Kipchak union included eleven tribes: *the Toqsoba, the Ietioba, the Burdjogly, the Elborili, the Kangarogly, the Anjogly, the Durut, the Kulabaogly, the Djartan, the Karaborikli, and the Kotan*. The union was quite homogeneous ethnically. It included Turkic tribes only—Kipchak, Cuman, and Pecheneg ones. The leading dynastic tribe of the western confederation of Kipchak tribes was the Toqsoba and the Burdjogly.

Unlike the eastern Kipchak tribal composition, the western part included the Kangarogly, the Anjogly, the Kulabaogly, and the Kotan.

*The Kangarogly or the Kangar*, belonged to Pecheneg tribes. It was the self-designation of some of their elite groups 'as the bravest and noblest of all.' Al-Idrisi noted, the resettlement of the Kangars as part of Oghuz tribes in the Aral Sea steppes in the 10th century. Of great interest is the mention, though relatively recent, of the Kangar tribal name in the Kipchak environment of the Mamluk state. Medieval Egyptian historian Ibn al-Furat (15th century) provides information about Emir Saif ad-din Kangar.

The idea that the Kipchak tribe *Andjogly* can be associated with the Kazakh clan of the Junior Zhuz Kandjigaly was presented by N. Aristov and supported by S. Amanzholov. T. Zhdanko applied it to the Karakalpaks issue. It appears that the form Kandjigaly is phonetically (or dialectically) a variant of the name Anjogly, taking into account the historical phonetics, which was marked by initial k reduction at that time (Kechki—echki, Kimek—Imek, etc.)

To associate *the Kulabaogly* according to Russian chronicles the name of the Polovtsian tribe, Kulobichi seems entirely correct. The semantic aspect of the term 'Kulabaogly' is most probably related to the word kula/light-bay (horse color) + oba/tribe, which gives, literally, 'the tribe of light-bay horse owners'. Characteristically, the *Kotan* as a tribe was never again mentioned in written Arab-Persian sources. Mahmud Kashgari mentioned Kotan as a well-regarded Turkic male name. In the first half of the 13th century, Kotan was used to refer to the 'tsar' of the Cumans. This curious fact definitely reveals a connection between Kotan and Cuman which is deeper than earlier literature presented it. Most probably, Kotan should be interpreted as an anthroponym, the name of the founding father of the Cuman tribe.

All the eleven names semantically have Turkic roots, which sheds light on the generation of names of Turkic tribes. As is evident, ethnonyms were assigned by the quantitative value of united clans or tribes (Toqsoba, Ietioba, and Durut (oba)); by plant and animal cults, in this case that of the wolf (Elborili), the pike (Djartan), by equine coat colour (Kulabaoglu, meaning light-bay horse own-

ers), by headgear colour (Karaborikli), by the name of the tribe's founding father (Cuman), as in Kotan, by geographic location (Burjogli, Anjogli), by a quality (Kangar, meaning courageous, brave).

The thesis, represented in domestic and foreign historiography, that the Kipchaks of the Desht-i Kipchak in the pre-Mongol period included Central Asian Mongol groups, is not proven.

The Kipchaks' interaction with various ethnic groups was not one-sided. Other tribes influenced the Kipchaks, affecting their ethnic community. However, as the political standing of the Kipchaks improved, many tribes and ethnic groups accepted the ethnonym 'Kipchak', and came to call themselves the Kipchaks.

The Kipchaks became the ethnic nucleus of the Kazakh nation, which formed much later. At the same time, the Kipchaks played a major part in the formation of a number of Turkic-speaking nations. Those are, most importantly, the Tatars, the Bashkirs, the Kyrgyz people, the Karakalpaks, the Uzbeks, the Nogais, the Karachay people, the Balkars, the Kumyks, as well as the Azerbaijani people, the Turks, the Khakas people, and the Altaians.



## CHAPTER 4

### **The Kipchak tribes of Western Siberia in the 11th to the first half of the 13th centuries.**

*Yuly Khudyakov*

Many scholars of the 19–20th centuries were fascinated by the history and archaeology of the Kipchaks, who played a major roll in the historical events of the early Middle Ages in the Eurasian steppes.

V. Radlov contributed to its study by collecting valuable information concerning the clan and tribal composition of many Turkic nations in Central and Middle Asia. He noted the presence of tribal and clan subdivisions referred to as Kipchak among the Altaians, the Altai-Kizhi, the Telengit and the Teleut, the Middle Zhuz Kazakhs, to whom he attributed certain clans, and the Kitay-Kipchak people as part of the Uzbeks [Radlov, 1989, pp. 96, 103, 111, 124–125]. N. Aristov collected certain information concerning Kipchak clan and tribal subdivisions as part of the Kazakhs, along with historical evidence from eastern sources regarding the Kipchaks during the Mongol conquest of Middle Asia [Aristov, 2003, pp. 187–189]. He proposed that the Kipchaks were of 'ancient Altai origin'. V. Bartold summarised the information on the Kipchaks during the pre-Mongol period found in medieval Arab and Persian sources [1963, I, pp. 236, 382, 392–393]. In his voluminous work, G. Grumm-Grzhimaylo presented his own concept of the Kipchaks' origin. Relying on written sources, he believed them to be descendants of the ginger-haired, blue-eyed Dingling people and agreed with N. Aristov that the Kipchaks originated in the Altai-Sayan Highlands [Grumm-Grzhimaylo, 1926, pp. 57–59].

The hypotheses that the Kipchaks might have originated in the southern areas of Siberia in ancient times resulted from indirect conclusions, in particular the misinterpretation that the ancient Russian name for the Kipchaks, 'Polovtsians', was possibly derived from 'polovij',

meaning fair or pale-haired, which suggested a connection to the Dingling people.

Works by Kazakhstani scholars on the Kipchak issue published over the recent decades have become an important impetus to the study of the Kipchak's role in the ethnocultural genesis of Western Siberia. Translations of information on the Kimaks (Kimeks) from Arab sources by B. Kumekov and the reconstruction of the historical events of the steppes of Kazakhstan in the 9–11th centuries have been of particular importance [Kumekov, 1972, pp. 92–94; 1981, pp. 16–19]. F. Arslanova used the data to attribute the nomadic articles dating back to the 9–10th centuries, which were discovered in the Irtysh River, to the Kimaks [Arslanova, 1963, p. 84]. Burial sites dating back to the High Middle Ages in Kazakhstan were attributed to the Kipchaks [Akishev, Baypakov, 1979, p. 105].

D. Savinov's identification of the Srostki culture as that of the Kimaks was essential for the study of nomadic records discovered in the steppe and steppe-forest areas of Western Siberia. He believed that multivariance of customs was characteristic of the Kimaks [Savinov, 1976, p. 101]. His idea was that Kipchak archaeological records dating back to the 9–10th centuries could be classified as part of the Srostki culture. Kipchak records as such in Western Siberia should thus pertain to the pre-Mongol and Mongol periods. D. Savinov believed that the Sukhiye Grivy burial site in the Upper Ob Region was the 'easternmost' record of Kipchak culture. The underground individual men's and double (woman and child) burials from this site were studied based on the inhumation ceremony and including characteristic accessories from the 8–14th centuries [Savinov, pp. 69–70]. D. Savinov's opinion on the ethnocultural genesis of the Kimaks and the Kipchaks in West-

ern Siberia influenced many scholars who excavated the monuments of medieval nomads in the Western Siberian Plane, the Ob Region, and Kuznetsk Hollow. Records pertaining to the early and high Middle Ages that had been provisionally defined as Turkic and Mongol, were in turn revealed as Kimak and Kipchak [Savinov, 1988, p. 167; Adamov, 2000, p. 84]. Scholars came to view the Kimak-Kipchak component as a major participant in the ethnogenesis of a number of Turkic-speaking nations in Southern and Eastern Siberia. However, V. Mogilnikov did not agree with attributing the Strostki culture to the Kimaks alone as an ethnic group [USSR Archaeology, 1981, p. 45]. He further classified the materials of excavated monuments in the Altai Steppe into four ethnic groups of medieval nomads. He attributed inhumation burials with horse skins or the stuffed body of a horse to the Oghuz people, cremation burials to the Yenisei Kyrgyz people, inhumation burials to the local 'Kimak-Kipchak ethnos', and horse-type burials to the Turks of the Altai Mountains. V. Mogilnikov assumed that Mongol ethnic groups had also appeared in Steppe Altai [Mogilnikov, 2002, pp. 123–125].

S. Akhinzhanov and Yu. Trifonov made significant contributions to the study of Kipchak history and culture. In his works, S. Akhinzhanov challenged the well-established practice of identifying the Kimaks as the Kipchaks. He believed that the Kimaks, the Tatars, and the Bayandurs within the Kimak union, unlike the Turkic-speaking Yemeks and Kipchaks, were Mongolian-speaking tribes [Akhinzhanov, 1983, p. 122]. S. Akhinzhanov studied the pre-Mongol history of the Kipchaks in the steppes of Kazakhstan in great detail [Akhinzhanov, 1989, pp. 198–202]. S. Akhinzhanov and Yu. Trifonov undertook large-scale excavations of medieval nomad monuments in the Upper Irtysh River. When identifying the records from ethnic and cultural perspective, the researchers attributed inhumation burials with a horse and fence sculptures to the Kipchaks, and single inhumation to the Azes [Akhinzhanov, Trifonov, 1984, pp. 156–161]. Yu. Trifonov maintained that cremation burials in underground graves covered with stone mounds could actually be-

long to the Kimaks proper, as a Mongol-speaking tribe different from the Kipchaks.

S. Klyashtorny presented his own, interesting hypothesis concerning the origin of the Kipchaks. After studying certain ancient Turkic and Uighur runic inscriptions in Mongolia in detail, he suggested that some tribal names that had been interpreted as consisting of two parts—the 'Turk-Kipchaks' and the 'Turk-Syrs'—should in fact be interpreted as the names of two allied tribes—'the Turks and the Kipchaks', 'the Turks and the Syrs' [Klyashtorny, 1986, pp. 154–155]. S. Klyashtorny inferred that the Syrs had been the second most important group in the ethnopolitical hierarchy after the Eastern Turks, and that the Turks and the Syrs were allies that jointly ruled Oghuz tribes. He believed that the Syrs are the Seyanto people of Chinese sources, as they were actively involved in the military and political history of Central Asia. In the 7th century, they founded the Syr Khaganate and were defeated by rebellious Uighurs and Oghuz tribes but still managed to preserve their power and support the Turk rebellion against the Tang Empire, acting as their allies during what is known as the 2nd Eastern Turkic Khaganate. S. Klyashtorny assumed that the ethnonym 'Syr' was replaced by 'Kipchak' after the Khaganate fell in the 8th century. This new name was assumed to deceive supernatural forces and put an end to the misfortune that had been plaguing Syr tribes [Ibid., pp. 156–161]. The hypothesis ties the Kipchaks' origin and that of their culture with the history of Central Asia.

Scholars have traced the events the Kipchaks participated in as part of the army of the Yuan Mongol Empire in Central Asia in the 13th century. Their assumptions state that the single inhumation burials in the Middle Yenisei and the horse skin burials in Mongolia and the Trans-Baikal Region belong to the Kipchak culture [Kyzlasov, 1980, pp. 90–91].

To geographically localise the assumed ancestors of the Kipchaks, analyse and describe the key components of the Kipchak culture and search retrospectively for its origin among the Turkic-speaking nomadic nations of the early Middle Ages is important for an accurate re-

construction of the early history of the Kipchaks and their culture.

Identifying the Kipchaks's ancestors as the Kyueshe or Qushe in Han sources (A. Bernsh-tam) and localising them in the Upper Ob Region appears a doubtful claim. The tribe is mentioned among ethnoses that Xiongnu Chanyu Maodun subordinated 'in the north' in 201 BCE. Among all the tribes, only the Giangun or Jiangun—the ancient Kyrgyz people—have been successfully localised in Central Asia with sufficient accuracy. L. Borovkova positioned the Jiangun land north of the Borohoro Mountains and west of the Dzoosotoyn Elisen Desert in the Eastern Tian Shan Region. The Dinlings were their neighbours to the north of the Jiangun people [Borovkova, 1989, pp. 61–62]. If we follow the assumption that the army of Xiongnu Chanyu Maodun undertook their campaign in 201 BCE starting from Ordos, where the Chanyu's headquarters were located, and provided that the list of tribes in the source refers to them chronologically as they were conquered, it is evident that it was a westward campaign to the Tian Shan Region, that followed in the footsteps of the Yuezhi, who had previously withdrawn. First, the Xiongnu conquered the Hunyu and Kueshe-Qushe tribes, then the Dingling, the Gegun, and the Caili. This means that the Qushe land must have been situated east of the Giangun and Dingling land in the Eastern Tian Shan Region, and not on the Upper Ob [Bichurin, 1950, p. 50].

Information related to the conquest of the Qushe by Dulo Khan, one of the contenders to the throne of the Western Turkic Khaganate in the mid-8th century, is very debatable. G. Grumm-Grzhimaylo referred to Chinese chronicles translated by É. Chavannes and N. Bichurin to mention the following tribes among those conquered by Dulo Khan in 641: Ju-Yue-She, Bo-Ma, Ge-Gu, Huo-Xin, and Chu-Mu-Gun [Grumm-Grzhimaylo, 1926, p. 259]. It was G. Grumm-Grzhimaylo who identified the Ju-Yue-She as the Qushe or Kueshe in Han sources. N. Bichurin mentioned only that the domain referred to as 'Xiaomi and Gysgu [Hyagyasi]' was conquered [Bichurin, 1950, p. 287]. But these reports do not seem to be reliable. Ibi Dolu Khan Yugu She was declared Khagan by the 'western

generations' of the Khaganate, in opposition to the then-ruling Khagan Shabolo Hilishi Khan. Both contenders fought 'a long war', and 'many people fell on both sides'. Following this draining war, 'they singed an agreement near the Ili River, under which the land westward from that river was to belong to Dolu, and east of it to the Hilishi' [Bichurin, 1950, p. 286]. The Khaganate deteriorated into two hordes. The internecine feud continued in the following years. It is unlikely that Dolu Khan was able to undertake a distant campaign to the Upper Ob and the Yenisei to conquer the Qushe, the Boma, and the Yenisei Kyrgyz people, and then march 'against the Kangju and the Daomi' and defeat them as well [Bichurin, 1950, p. 187]. Most likely, the report on the campaign against the Boma, the Kyrgyz people, and the Kangju appeared in the source as an anachronism.

The theory that the Kipchaks are the same as the Syrs and the Seyanto is also challenged. Seyanto is a double compound ethnonym consisting of two tribe names, *Se* and *Yanto*. The Turkic variant must also consist of two ethnonyms, like 'Turk-Syrs', 'Turk-Kipchaks', and 'Kytay-Kipchaks'. However, the name Syr is obviously not a double name like this. The Seyanto were 'the strongest' of all the Teles tribes [Ibid., p. 339]. It was the Seyanto who led the Teles rebellion against the Eastern Turks in 628, causing the Eastern Turkic Khaganate to collapse, after which a Seyanto state was established. The Tang Empire artfully played the Seyanto and the Turks against each other, alternately supporting either side. The ruling clans of both nations were the key contestants for domination in the Central Asian steppes. Seyanto Khagan Inan even offered to exterminate the Turks completely for Emperor Taizong of Tang. A Turkic ancillary army led by Commander Ashina Shezhy helped crush what remained of the Seyanto state during the period of internecine feud and the dissolution of the Seyanto Khaganate [Ibid., p. 343]. This all must have instilled mutual mistrust and suspicion in the Eastern Turks and the Seyanto. It seems impossible that only several decades after these events the Eastern Turks and the Seyanto allied together to dominate the Second Eastern Turkic Khaganate.

The origin of the Kipchak culture of the 9–14th centuries, with monuments that have been studied in Kazakhstan, the Urals, Western Siberia, and Eastern Europe, can be traced back to the Western Turks of the Tian Shan and Semirechye. The commemorative monument cycle presents convincing evidence of this fact. Unlike the Eastern Turks, whose commemoration ceremonies were centred on praising heroic warriors who had killed many enemies with rows of balbal stone poles arranged in their memory, the Western Turks showed a preference for the other type of ceremony, which generally consisted of commemorating both male and female ancestors. About a quarter of all sculptures in the Tian Shan and Semirechye depict women, and even sculptures of children have been found [Tabaldiev, 1996, pp. 68–69].

Female sculptures are sometimes discovered in East Turkic commemorative complexes, but only in monuments to high aristocrats. The worship of clan ancestors through both male and female lineage was even more sophisticated in the Kipchak culture when compared to the Turkic custom. They started to erect sculptures of men and women in stone as couples or larger groups, surrounded with stone fences forming family or clan sanctuaries; multiple commemorations and offerings to ancestors took place in this area [Ermolenko et al., 1985, pp. 138–139, 143–144]. Such sanctuaries are also characteristic of the Kipchaks in East Europe [Shvetsov, 1979, pp. 201–207].

Apart from commemorative monuments with stone sculptures, burials with a horse were widely spread in the Upper Irtysh River in the early Middle Ages [Trifonov, 1987, pp. 170–176]. D. Savinov proposed that these pertained to the Yemeks, one of the leading tribes of the Kimak confederation, after whom the entire union was named. He believed the Yemeks to be descendants of a Teles tribe, namely the Yanmo [Savinov, 1976, p. 95]. G. Grumm-Grzhimaylo believed the Yan-Man or the Yan-Me to be one of the Tele tribes inhabiting the Tian Shan [G. Grum-Grzhimaylo, 1926, pp. 256, 269]. S. Akhinzhanov believed that the Yemeks, or the Yanmo, were a 'native Turkic' tribe that came to live in the upper reaches of the Irtysh

in the 7th century [Akhinzhanov, 1976, p. 89]. However, neither the Yan-Man nor the Yan-Mo are mentioned among Teles tribes in early medieval Chinese sources [Bichurin, 1950, p. 301; Kyuner, 1961, p. 38]. Therefore, the horse type burials and the fenced sculptures in the Upper Irtysh Region can be associated with the culture of the ancient Turks of the Western Turkic Khaganate.

The Upper Irtysh Region, along with Semirechye and the Tian Shan Region, was included in the First Turkic, West Turkic, and Turgesh Khaganates as the northern periphery of these state formations. Most likely, Turkic nomads appeared in the area back in the time of the 1st Turkic Khaganate and remained in the upper reaches of the Irtysh during the rule of the West Turks and the Turgesh people. In 711 a battle took place on the Boluchu River in the Irtysh Region, in which the East Turkic troops headed by commander Tonyukuk crushed the Turgesh people. Turgesh Khagan Soge, his brother, and another contender to the throne named Zhenu, were captured and executed. The Turgesh Khaganate then ceased to exist for several years [Klyashtorny, 2003, p. 186]. Records pertaining to the ancient Turkic culture, stone sculptures of warriors holding a vessel in their right hand, with a sabre or a dagger in their belts, indicate that a Turkic population was present in the Irtysh Region at that time [Charikov, 1979, pp. 179, 181]. Burials with a horse dating back to the 7–8th centuries have also been discovered in the Upper Irtysh Region [Savinov, 1984, p. 104]. In the 8–9th centuries, the Irtysh Region witnessed a large inflow of new nomadic groups, who brought with them new records and burial ceremonies previously unrepresented in the territory, and thus forming the Kimak culture characterised by a combination of several burial ceremonies.

Part of the nomads must have come from the Semirechye and the Tian Shan Region, which were the centres of the Western Turkic and Turgesh Khaganates. These nomads were Western Turks in the On Oq Budun system who would not put up with their subordination after the Karkul conquest of their former homeland. Instead they moved northward to form the ba-

sis of a new tribal confederation and the new state known as the Kimak Khaganate. Out of the seven tribes in the Kimak union, the Imaks, or Yemeks, and the Imis, or Eymurs, were Western Turks [Savinov, 1984, p. 103]. The ancestors of the tribes must have gone under the names Chui, Chumi and Chumugun within the military and administrative system of On Oq Budun [Grumm-Grzhimaylo, 1926, pp. 259, 265, 269]. When the Yemeks and the Eymurs came to the Upper Irtysh Region and settled there, burials with a horse and commemorative structures with stone sculptures started to appear and gradually spread. One feature that is characteristic of the multi-ethnic Kimak culture is that in their cemeteries there is evidence of burial ceremonies different from inhumation with a horse under long mounds in East Kazakhstan. Moreover, the set of articles discovered there includes arms, harnesses, belt accessories, and jewelry typical of nomadic cultures from the 8–10th centuries.

In the mid-9th century after the Kyrgyz people defeated the Uighur Khaganate, the Upper and Middle Irtysh Region and the forest-steppe Ob and Tom Regions witnessed an inflow of large nomadic groups of different ethnic origins. Part of the Uighurs and their Teles allies fled from West Mongolia to the upper reaches of the Irtysh in fear of the Kyrgyz people. The Kyrgyz military detachments chasing them entered the Ob Valley, the Altai Mountains and Steppes, and the Irtysh Region through Kuznetsk Hollow. The Kyrgyz people brought their allies and Kyshtym subjects, the Boma tribes they conquered in the early 9th century, to settle along the Tom, Ob, and Irtysh rivers. The Middle Asian migration of tribes also affected the Mongol ethnoses. The Tatars, and probably other ethnic groups as well, migrated to the Irtysh. The military action between the Kyrgyz people and the Uighurs affected some of the tribes in the Irtysh Region, who then moved to the Baraba forest-steppe, the steppes of Central Kazakhstan, and the Southern Urals.

These events brought about changes in the culture of the forest-steppe and steppe population in Western Siberia and the Upper Irtysh River. In the 9–10th centuries, stone burial

mounds where cremation was performed elsewhere, which were linked to the Yenisei Kyrgyz culture, became wide-spread in the Tom and Ob Regions as well as in Steppe Altai [Alekhin, 1990; p. 65; Mogilnikov, 2002, p. 123]. Monuments like this are not common in Altai and Western Siberia, as the chief Kyrgyz aspiration in the war against the Uighurs was to conquer Tuva and Mongolia, crush the Mongol statehood, and control the Teles tribes. The Kyrgyz people might have entered the Upper Irtysh Region in their pursuit of the Uighurs and Teles tribes. Apart from the Kyrgyz military departments, contingents consisting of the Kyshtym Boma people, whom the Kyrgyz Khagan had conquered shortly before the Kyrgyz-Uighur war, entered the Ob and Irtysh Valleys within the Kyrgyz army as it moved from the Achinsk-Mariinsk forest-steppe to Kuznetsk Hollow. Horizontal and in-grave cremation burials, with diverse accessories that included round-bottomed vessels with patterns around their collar and upper parts, belonged to them. Such monuments have been studied in Kuznetsk Hollow and in the Ob and Irtysh Regions [Ilyushin et al., 1992, p. 35; Ilyushin, 1997, p. 61; Arslanova, 1980, p. 98; Khudyakov, 1995, p. 60].

To ethnically and culturally identify inhumation burials containing a horse skin or stuffed body or single inhumation burial is somewhat more difficult, as several medieval nomadic ethnoses practiced ceremonies of this type. Horse skin burials in the Sayan-Altai might pertain to the Uighurs [Khudyakov, 1985, p. 98]. But similar burial sites in the Upper Irtysh Region and Steppe Altai might have Uighur origin. Such attributions of the ceremony are unlikely to apply to the forest-steppe areas of Western Siberia. According to E. Kazakov, multiple types of inhumation burials with a horse skin were typical of Turkic and Ugric nomadic tribes in Eastern Europe, the Urals, and Western Siberia in the early Middle Ages [Kazakov, 1984]. The assumption that similar monuments in the Steppe Altai can pertain to the Oghuz people has no evidential basis [Mogilnikov, 2002, p. 123]. The attempts to single out Mongol ethnic and cultural com-

ponents from the population of the Steppe Altai by bow-shaped or rectangular fences above graves have been rather unsuccessful [Ibid., p. 125]. Burial sites of the nomadic population of the Eastern Trans-Baikal Region dating back to the early Middle Ages, which were interpreted by researchers as belonging to the Mongol-speaking Shiwei tribes, the Tatars' ancestors who established state formations in the east of Mongolia in the early 2nd millennium CE, have no parallels among the records of the Upper Irtysh Region [Aseev et al., 1984, pp. 124–126]. No records pertaining to the Mongol-speaking Bayandur and Tatar tribes within the Kimak union in the Irtysh Region have been so far singled out.

Speaking of the ethnocultural identification of various ethnic groups within the Kimak federation of seven tribes, to single out Kimak and Kipchak complexes has been a serious challenge. The name Kimak is never mentioned among the seven Kimak tribes. Most researchers identified them as the Kipchaks, which resulted in the wide-spread usage of the term 'Kimak-Kipchaks'. As stated above, S. Akhinzhanov believed the Kimaks to be the Mongol tribe mentioned in Chinese sources as the *Kumohi*, or *the Hi* [Akhinzhanov, 1983, p. 117]. However, *Kumohi* is the Chinese term for another medieval nomadic ethnos that lived in the east of Mongolia and in the south-west of Manchuria. Ancient Turkic sources mention them under their self-designation—the *Tatabs* [Grumm-Grzhymaylo, 1926, p. 290, Note 4]. D. Savinov followed the opinion of B. Kumeikov and identified the Kimaks as the *Yemeks* [Savinov, 1984, p. 107].

The statement found in Arab and Persian sources that the Kipchaks are one of the Kimak tribes, though the two groups are contrasted as wild and civilized, indicates that the differences were of an ethnosocial nature. Different sources provide different descriptions of the Kimak land. Some present the Kimaks as nomads who live in tents, claiming that there was only one town in the entire country [Hudud al-'Alam, 1973, p. 44]. Other sources report the Kimak 'kings' to have had 10 or 16 towns, including the capital, called Khakan. The resi-

dents of the towns and their outskirts reportedly cultivated land to grow wheat and rice, and craftsmen produced iron articles 'of stunning beauty'. In towns there were temples, residential houses, and markets. The Khakan had 'castles, magnificent buildings, and pleasant places of entertainment'. The residents of the towns were referred to as 'Turks' or 'Kimaks', and reportedly 'professed the Sabaen religion. They worship the sun and angels' [Kumekov, 1981, pp. 17–18; Karayev, 1973, pp. 45–48]. In contrast to this data on the Kimaks, which included urban dwellers, craftsmen and farmers, the Kipchaks were reported to be 'wilder than the Kimaks'. They were nomads and hunters living in wooded places. A folk etymology of the word 'Kipchak' interprets it to mean 'a hollow tree' [Savinov, 1994, pp. 75–76].

The contradistinction of the 'civilised' Kimaks, urban citizens and farmers, and the 'wild' Kipchak nomads and hunters, is utterly characteristic of the ideology of the ruling elite of nomadic states, where the part of their population in towns and agrarian settlements was currently being sedentarised. Having adopted certain stereotypes of urban culture, the higher aristocracy of such states wanted to be culturally separated from their nomadic tribesmen by converting to proselytic religions, inculcating standards of the urban culture, and sometimes prohibiting traditional religions, names, and even their mother-tongue, as was the case with the originally Xianbei empire of North China. A negative image of nomads was imposed on the public, in particular through derogative epithets.

It may be the origin of the term 'Kipchaks', which in the Kimak Khaganate literally meant 'worthless' and metaphorically 'nomads'. The higher aristocracy resided in towns, while another part of the population was becoming sedentary and culturally isolated from their tribesmen. The term 'Kimak' was probably extended to the sedentary part of the population and high aristocrats, urban citizens and farmers as the result of urbanisation and agricultural development in the Kimak Khaganate. The term 'Kipchak' may have initially applied in the 8–9th centuries to the then-indigenous Turkic nomads of the Irtysh River, who were less well-

developed than the Yemeks and the Eymurs, who were Western Turks who had migrated to the Irtysh River from the culturally advanced areas of the Western Turkic and Turgesh Khaganates—Semirechye and the Tian Shan foothills. When the Kimak Khaganate was founded to unite Western Turkic, endemic Teles and Mongol nomadic tribes in the 9th century, taking into account the military threat posed by the powerful Kyrgyz Khaganate and the emergence and development of towns, the term 'Kipchaks,' meaning 'wild, worthless nomads', was extended to the entire nomadic population of the state, including the Turks themselves and the turkicised population of the forest-steppe area of Western Siberia and the steppes of Kazakhstan. This interpretation explains why the Kimaks and other tribes within the union, except for the Kipchaks, disappeared after the fall of the Kimak Khaganate. The new military and political rise of the nomads referred to as the Kipchaks naturally removed the derogative connotation of the name, making it a politonym for all the tribes included in the Kipchak confederation in the 11–13th centuries, in particular those who had called themselves Kimaks.

It is thus correct to apply the term Kipchaks to the native Turkic and turkicised nomads of the steppe-forest Altai region, Kuznetsk Hollow, and the interfluvium of the Ob and the Irtysh of the early Middle Ages and to identify their culture as the Western Siberian variant of Kipchak culture [Adamov, 2000, p. 84], provided that the term Kipchak is interpreted not only as an ethnonym but as the name of a large political union of nomadic tribes.

The burial sites of Bekovo and Shandra in the Bachat Valley, as well as Toropovo in the Kasma Valley in Kuznetsk Hollow, can be identified as records pertaining to the Kipchak culture of the 11–13th centuries [Ilyushin, 1993, p. 39; 1999, p. 68]. The burial complexes A. Ilyushin described in detail are characterised as relatively small burial sites of 10 to 20 mounds along terraces above the floodplains of small rivers. The mounds form several uneven chains along the river banks. They look like round or oval low-sloped, partly collapsed soil mounds fringed by shallow ditches. In some cases such

ditches were found to form an opening at the east or north-east. Some of the ditches at the Toropovo burial site were rectangular and the area fringed by them was significantly wider than the round mound. A Shandra mound could contain one to five graves, and at the Bekovo burial site, there were two to four. Those are shallow, oval-shaped single inhumation burial pits that contained the dead bodies of adult men, women, and children. Only in one Shandra grave were two dead bodies buried together. The bodies lay supine, stretched, their heads pointing to the west. Bodies were buried in ground pits, birch-bark boxes, and timber structures. The graves had a wooden covering. Men were buried with arms and military munitions, and women, with jewelry and clothing accessories. Most of the mounds had ground pits with separate horse burials, and most mounds excavated contained only one horse grave.

Only two Bekovo mounds contained two horse graves each. The horse bodies were prostrate with legs bent. The horses' heads pointed to the west, opposite the direction where the humans had their heads placed. The horses were also harnessed and saddled. Even though horses were buried in separate graves in all mounds, they were more likely to be an attribute of the men's burials.

A single Toropovo mound contained one to eight burial pits. These were mostly oval-shaped ground burial pits covered with wooden structures. Birch-bark flooring and mats were found in some graves. A. Ilyushin mentioned wooden poles dug into the ground on the eastern or north-eastern sides of the mounds [Ilyushin, 1999, pp. 87–88]. Most of the graves contained single inhumation type burial. One grave contained two children's bodies, laid supine and stretched. Body orientation differed depending on the mound. In most of the graves, the heads pointed to the north-east. However, eastward and southeastward orientation is also represented. Apart from inhumation, some of the mounds contained burials for which cremation was performed in the burial pit or elsewhere. Horse burials were found in several mounds. Riding horses were buried with harnesses and saddles attached in separate burial pits, their

heads pointing in the direction opposite to the buried humans', that is, to the south-west or to the west. Cremation burials are characterised by a shallow pit where a horse lay with its head pointing westward. In one of the mounds, the horse lay in a grave for which cremation took place in the burial pit, its head pointing south-west. The burial accessories are quite diverse. Arms include single-edged broadswords and sabres, daggers with single-edged blades, adzes, arrowheads with three-blades and three-edged, four-edged, round, lens-shaped or flat feathers. Harnesses include two-part bridle-bits with ring and rod cheek-pieces, stirrups with a round loop or a cut in the flat bail, iron and bone buckles, and iron plates and onlays. Jewelry and toilet articles include bronze pendant earrings, beads, and bronze looking-glasses preserved as fragments. Moulded ceramic round-bottom vessels are relatively rare.

The set of articles include items characteristic of the Kimak and Kipchak culture, iron broadswords and sabres, bone plate quiver loops, iron hooks with rings for boot-top fastening, bronze pendant open-work plates and bells, and rings with spherical pendants. In the Kaltyshtino monument, burials containing one or two horse skins have been studied [Savinov, 1997, pp. 87–88]. The materials available suggest that after the Kimak Khaganate dissolved and the Kyrgyz influence in the Sayan-Altai weakened, the turkisation of the sedentary population of the Tom Region intensified in the 11–13th centuries when compared to the previous period. Kuznetsk Hollow might have witnessed an inflow of Turkic, Kipchak population from the Upper Ob River and the Steppe Altai. The materials pertaining to the Toropovo monument shed light on the assimilation process of the local Samoyed population, which was influenced by the Kyrgyz culture.

In the Upper Ob Region, the advanced Middle Ages are represented by the Osinki ground burial site studied by D. Savinov. The dead bodies lay supine and stretched on the bottom of shallow ground pits, their hands pointing northward and northwestward. Internal grave structures were composed of laterally covered wooden frames. Some graves contained accom-

panying dog burials. The following arms were found in men's burials: remnants of bows with middle and end front onlays, iron and bone arrows, spearheads, adzes, and daggers [Savinov, 1981, p. 156]. Women's burials contained earrings, beads of carnelian, chalcedony, and lazurite, remnants of clothing resembling a beaded breastpiece, fragments of looking-glasses, and ceramic tableware. According to V. Mogilnikov, the monument pertains to the culture of the turkicised Samoyed population [USSR Archaeology, 1981, p. 192]. Osinki-type monuments in the Ob Region include Sanatory and Tashara-Karyer, where soil mounds with a large number of burials and evidence of funeral feasts have been found (multiple animal bones and fragments of ceramic tableware). The accessories discovered in the burials are diverse, including pieces of horse harnesses, bronze belt accessories, earrings, rings, mother-of-pearl and lazurite dangles, a carnelian cabochon with a Sogdian inscription, and a Chinese bronze looking-glass [Novikov, 1998, pp. 326–329].

Apart from these records, a large number of complexes attributed to the Srostki and Basandayka cultures have been studied in the Middle and Upper Ob Region. A. Adamov attributed a number of ancient towns with moats on the field side and densely located residential structures of various types in the court, unfortified settlements, and five mound-type burial sites in the Novosibirsk Ob Region to the 10–12th centuries. These were characterised by round, oval, or irregular rectangular mounds. Some of the mounds were fringed by ditches. The mounds contained remnants of fire pits and animal bones suggestive of funeral feasts. Under the mounds there were single adult and children's inhumation-type burials in ground burial pits. The Beryozovy Ostrov burial site contained a group burial. Certain burials in the burial sites Krokhalyovka and Bystrovka were at the level of the ancient horizon and embankment. Wooden or birch-bark covers and coffins were found in the graves, and some of the dead bodies were wrapped in birch-bark. A mound at the Vysoky Borok burial site contained remnants of an incinerated wooden structure. The dead bodies lie supine and stretched, with their



heads pointing north-east or east. A separate grave at Beryozovy Ostrov contained the buried body of a harnessed horse. It was buried next to the grave of an adult and oriented towards the opposite direction. A burial pit at the burial site Bystrovka contained a horse skin [Adamov, 2000, pp. 11, 17–18]. Burial accessories included arms, horse harness, jewelry, and tableware. Graves contained double-edged swords, sabres, three-bladed and flat iron arrowheads, bone quiver loops, adzes, lamellar iron armour plates, two-part bridle bits with ring cheek-pieces, stirrups, buckles, hooked rings, steels, bronze open-work plates clasps, dangles, bells, round and flat-bottomed moulded vessels with patterns around their collar and upper part, and bored astragals with signs on them. Among these, the edged weapons, quiver loops, and hooked rings for fastening soft boot-tops, open-work plates and clasps are characteristic of the Kimak and Kipchak cultures.

V. Romantsova dated the Sedova Zaimka burial site, where there were inhumation-type burials in burial pits under soil mounds with ditches around them, to the early 2nd millennium. The graves were covered with half-beams. Traces of fire were found in the burial mound area. The dead bodies lay supine and stretched, with their heads pointing to the north, north-east, and east. Some of the graves contained an end bow frontal onlay, flat iron and bone three-sided and diamond-rhombic arrowheads, knives, buckles, bridle bits, bone plates, glass beads, and a moulded round-bottomed vessel [Romantsova, 1983, pp. 89–92].

Soil burial mounds belonging to the Basandayka culture have been studied. They contained inhumation-type burials with accompanying horse burials. The dead bodies lay supine and stretched in burial pits, their heads pointing to the north, north-west, or north-east. The double burial contained two horses, and each single burial contained one. Women's and children's burials were single. Horses lay in recesses or on a shelf in the burial pit, separated from the burial with a wooden wall, their head oriented in the direction opposite where the human's head was pointing. The dead bodies lay on birch-bark mats. Accompanying accessories in the buri-

als included iron broadswords, iron and bone arrowheads, adzes, iron bridle bits with ring cheek-pieces, bone belly buckles, bronze belt buckles, plates, onlays, clasps, beads, and round-bottomed ceramic vessels [USSR Archaeology, 1981, p. 191]. The mound and underground single inhumation-type burials, as well as burials involving cremation performed in the burial pit or elsewhere, that are related to the Basandayka and Ust-Kirgizka monuments have been studied. Group inhumation burials are relatively rare. The deceased lay supine and stretched in the graves, their heads mostly pointing to the south-west. Some of the burials contained a horse or a horse skin. Accompanying accessories included sabres, spearheads, iron and bone arrowheads, bridle bits, stirrups, belly buckles and ringed saddle hasps, Chinese looking-glasses, lazurite pendants, carnelian and glass beads, moulded round-bottomed vessels with patterns around their collar and upper part.

L. Pletneva believes that a change of culture resulting from a migration of nomads from the steppes of Kazakhstan took place in the Middle Ob Region in the early 2nd millennium. When the Kimak-Kipchak population entered the Tom Ob Region, they formed the Basandayka culture; the local population was turkicised during the pre-Mongol and Mongol period [Pletneva, L., 1997, pp. 123, 126].

Records pertaining to the Vengerovo culture were wide-spread in the territory of forest-steppe Baraba in the early 2nd millennium. Burial mounds fringed by ring-shaped ditches with openings on the eastern, north-eastern, or multiple sides have been studied at the Vengerovo 7 and Osintsevo 4 monuments. Burials were arranged at the level of the ancient earth surface level. Only several mounds had shallow recessions. Most of the burials were of the single inhumation type. The dead bodies lay supine and stretched, their heads pointing to the west, north-west, or south-west. Several mounds contained cremation burials. Timber constructions were mounted on the horizon in some of the mounds. According to the expert reconstruction, some mounds contained structures up to 1 m high, with a hipped cover and a support pole in the centre. The constructions

were incinerated following the burial and commemorative ceremony, after which mounds of soil and turf were piled up. Accompanying accessories in the burials included iron and bone arrowheads, knives, an adz, bridle bits and stirrups, a bronze plate with a human figure in an oval ring, an open-work bronze pendant, a silver ring with a spiral pattern, moulded round-bottomed pots and cups with a stamped pattern of oblique continuous or dash lines and round impressions around their collars and upper part [Molodin et al., 1988, pp. 96–101].

These monuments have a number of characteristic features pertaining to the design of the structures above the grave, burial ceremony, and accessories, which has enabled researchers to identify them as belonging to a particular archaeological culture. Most importantly, the complexes pertain not to the Turks but to the Ugric or Samoyed population of the Baraba forest-steppe zone. However, the set of articles relating to the population of the Vengerovo culture includes certain items characteristic of the cultures of many Turkic-speaking nomadic tribes in the Eurasian steppe belt, including the Kipchaks. The bridle bits, stirrups, open-work pendant, and ring suggest that the steppe-forest Ugric and Samoyed tribes were involved in cultural interactions with and were influenced by the Kipchaks.

The key event in the ethnic and political history of the population of the forest-steppe belt of Western Siberia in the early 2nd millennium was the dissolution of the Kimak Khaganate, the weakening of the Kyrgyz state, and the rise of the Kipchaks and their unification within the Kipchak confederation of Turkic and turkicised Ugric and Samoyed tribes. In the 11–13th century, the Kipchaks, who had at one point been given their derogative name by the Uighurs and the Kimaks, united all the related nomadic tribes inhabiting the forest-steppe and steppe of Western Siberia, the Urals, Kazakhstan, the Volga Region, and East Europe. Among them there were ethnic groups originating from the Western Turks and Turkic-speaking nomads from the western area of the Eurasian steppe belt, to whom the term Kipchaks extended based on the name of the union they were a

part of. Turkisation and acculturation, along with the adoption of the Turkic language and culture were especially intense in the Western Siberian region in the 11–13th centuries due to the re-settlement of Turkic ethnic groups who migrated from the Irtysh Region and the Steppe Altai to the northern forest-steppe areas of the Ob and Tom Regions and due to the fact that the tribal aristocracy of the local Ugric and Samoyed tribes actively adopted the prestigious elements of the Kipchak military *druzhina* culture. The nomads that went under the name of Kipchaks were able to travel far to the north, up to the Tom Ob River, by moving along the Ob and Tom Valleys. The Turkisation of the local population most probably acquired its peaceful form of small nomadic Turkic groups infiltrating in the environment of turkicised Ugrians and Samoyeds in the early 2nd millennium. The rivalry between the Kipchaks and the Kyrgyz people subsided in that period. The Yenisei Kyrgyz people limited their activities in Western Siberia to entering the Chulym Region and Kuznetsk Hollow.

A number of researchers believe that this was in the early 2nd millennium during the Turkisation of Ugric and Samoyed ethnic groups, contemporary Turkic-speaking ethnoses of Western Siberia and various ethnic subdivisions within the nation, who were later known as the Siberian Tatars and constituted the greater part of the population of the Siberian Yurt, began to form. The migration to the forest-steppe area was a catalyst for a new cultural and economic type, forcing the nomadic population to change their occupations and lifestyle. Apart from livestock breeding, the Turkic-speaking steppe population was significantly engaged in arable farming, hunting, and fishing. Part of the population became sedentary and began to live in fortified settlements with stationary dwellings.

As the Kipchaks and tribes related to them moved into the forest-steppe areas of Western Siberia, the cultural connection between the local/northern taiga tribes and the nomadic world intensified their exchange and trade with countries belonging to the sedentary agricultural civilizations of the Middle and Far East.

## CHAPTER 5

### The Kipchaks in Eastern Europe

*Vladimir Ivanov*

#### The Kipchaks' Migration to East Europe

The chronology of nomadic records based on archaeological material has not yet provided scholars with detailed enough information to trace the course and speed of the Kipchaks' migration to East Europe. However, written sources are helpful, as the information they contain gives insight into what stages the process consisted of.

Researchers who study medieval nomads in East Europe traditionally refer to Armenian historian Matthew of Edessa, whose 1050 record mentions a rivalry between 'the ginger-haired Khardesh people' (the Shary-Sary) and the Kun and Kai (the snakes) tribes for grazing land in the North Caucasian steppes. Five years later, a Russian chronicler reported in a 1055 entry the first time that the Polovtsians, lead by khan Blush, approached, at the time peacefully, the borders of Kievan Rus'.

The Rusessian practice of applying the ethnonym 'Polovtsians' to the new nomadic tribes in the East European steppes was maintained by the Poles and the Czechs ('Plauci'), the Germans ('Valewen'), and the Hungarians ('Palóc'). However, the Hungarians often referred to the Polovtsians as Kuns-Cumans. S. Pletneva believes this to be attributable to the geographic location of two closely related ethnoses—the Kun-Cumans and the Shary/Sary-Kipchaks (Polovtsians). The former led a nomadic life west of the Dnieper and were more familiar to the Byzantines, the Hungarians, and other European nations. The latter nomadised westward and were therefore more familiar to the Rusessians, who referred to them as Polovtsians [Pletneva, 1990, p. 40].

S. Pletneva localises the territory of the Kipchak-Polovtsian nomads by the area in which stone statues known as Polovtsian Balbals ap-

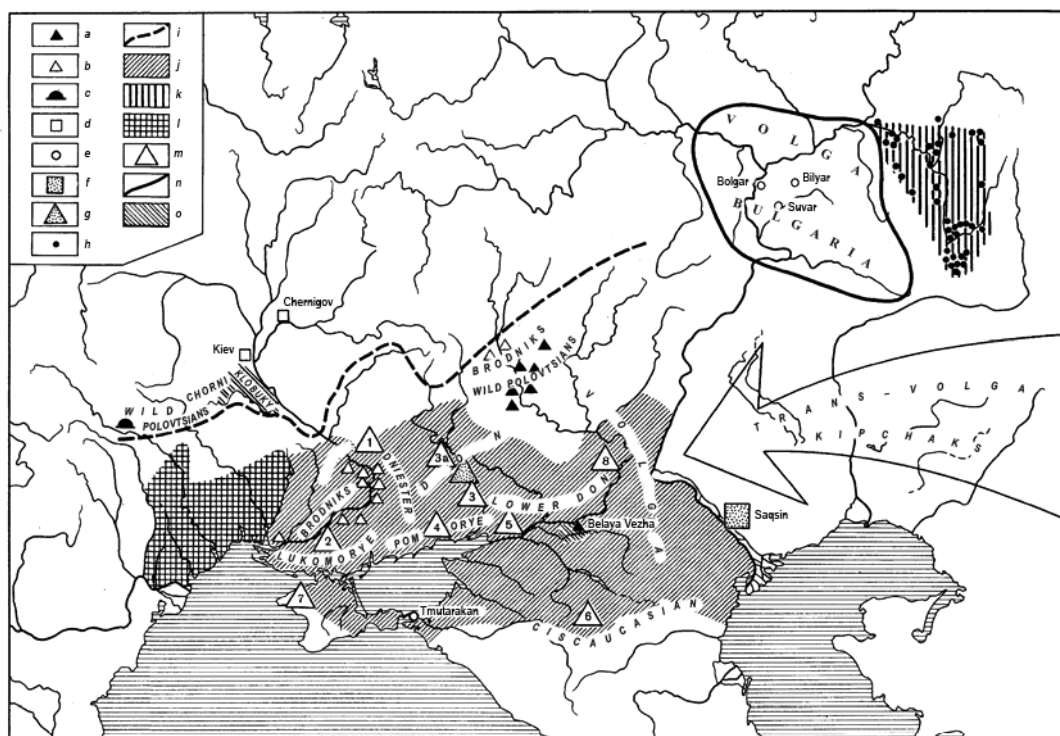
pear. Among them she singled out the oldest ones—stela-like flat bas-relief sculptures with faces and some other details (hands, women's breasts, vessels in the hands), similar to the Kimak-Kipchak sculptures of Semirechye. The vast majority of them (around 50 statues) is concentrated in the steppe triangle formed by the right bank of the Seversky Donets and the lower reaches of the Don and the Azov Sea [Pletneva, 1974, p. 63; 2003; p. 153].

This territory is currently known to contain 181 Polovtsian burials, the vast majority (66.8%) of which are arranged as inlets to older burial mounds. Most of the burial mounds are made of soil, but some burials (10%) lie under mounds made with stone. Over half of the burials are arranged in simple burial pits, and 24% of the burials are arranged in more sophisticated pits with steps along long walls and wall niches.

A large part of the burials (46%) were accompanied by horse burials in the form of skin—skull and leg bones—(34%), or the whole body—full skeleton—(11.6%). Most of the horses were harnessed and saddled, as indicated by the bridle bits and stirrups found along with the horse bones. In more than half of the horse burials, the horse is oriented in the same direction as the human (54.7%), while in 34.5% of the burials, the buried horse and its owner have their heads oriented in opposite directions.

The deceased lay supine and stretched on the bottom of the grave, their heads pointing to the west (44%) or to the east (36%). Domestic historiographers traditionally consider the latter orientation to be a Kipchak-Polovtsian feature [Pletneva, 1958, p. 179].

The fact that the area of east-oriented burials on the banks of the Seversky Donets, the Don, the Samara, the Orel, and the Manych is the same as where early Polovtsian sculptures



East European steppes during the Polovtsian period. a: Polovtsian nomad camps; b: Brodnik settlements; c: 'Wild Polovtsian' burial site on the Dniester; d: Russian towns; e: Bulgarian towns; f: proposed location of the Polovtsian city of Saqsin; g: proposed large Polovtsian settlement (Russian ceramic fragments discovered); h: 12–14th century's discoveries in Bashkiria; i: border between steppe-forest and forest; g: Polovtsian-occupied land; k: land occupied by nomads in Bashkiria; l: land occupied by nomads (remnants of Pecheneg-Tork hordes); m: numbers of the Polovtsian horde unions defined by mapping stone sculptures; n: border of Volga Bulgaria; o: the land of the Chorni Klobyky and other nomadic vassals of Rus'.  
Compiled by S. Pletneva [Eurasian steppes in the Middle Ages, 1981, p. 257]

have been found clearly indicates the territory as the 'area first inhabited by the Polovtsians of the Southern Russian steppe'. From there, they began to actively extend to the 'Southern Russian' steppes. In the late 11–early 12th centuries, Polovtsian camping grounds reached the Middle Dnieper and Ciscaucasia, and in the first half of the 12th century, they had extended to the Lower Dnieper Region and the Crimean Steppes [Pletneva, 1985, p. 253].

It is no coincidence that experts pay the greatest attention to the geographic location of stone sculptures to identify the borders of the 'Polovtsian Field', as 'being part of sanctuaries built to commemorate dead ancestors, [they] were naturally placed where more or less

stable Polovtsian camps (summer and winter) appeared and permanent roads were made in the steppe'. That is to say, the concentration of sculptures in this case is also indicative of the Polovtsians' transition into the second stage of pastoralism [Ibid., pp. 249, 255].

The Kipchak-Polovtsians were rather assertive in establishing themselves in the East European steppes. Already six years after khan Blush, another Polovtsian khan, Sokal, brought his horde 'to the Rusessian land to fight the first war' (Hypatian Chronicle). From that time until 1235 (the date of a major battle between the Polovtsians and the troops of Prince Daniil of Galich near Torchesk), it was the Rusessian-Polovtsian opposition that determined the political history of the 'Southern



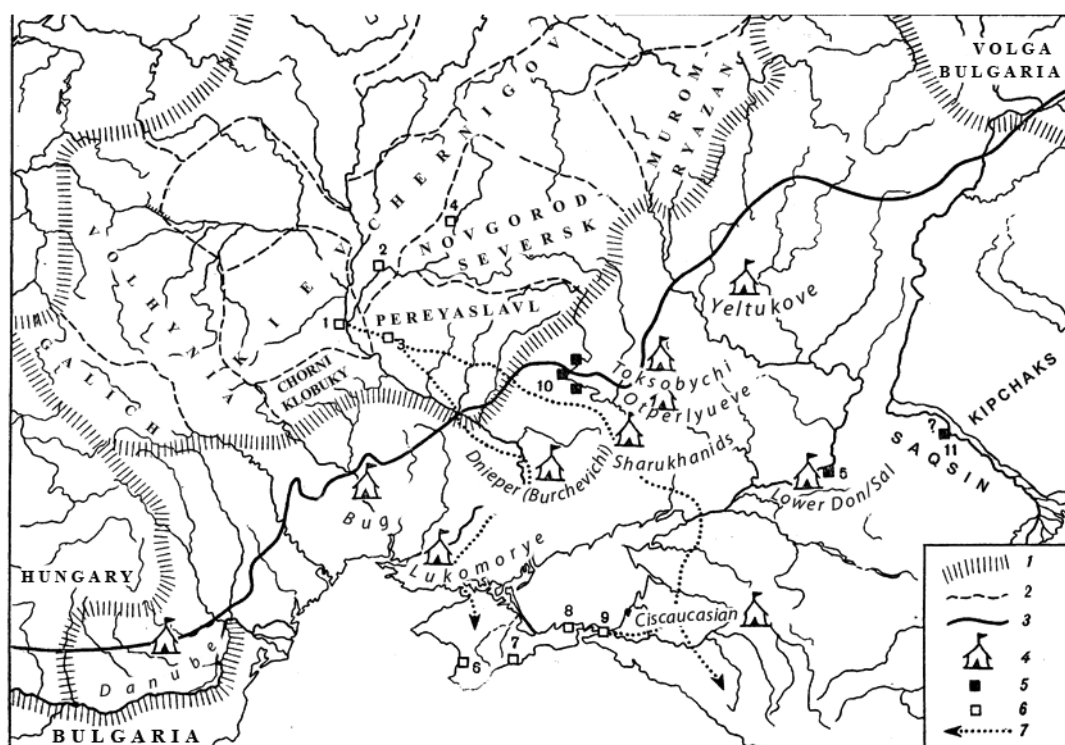
Polovtsian ruler. The first half of the 8th century.  
Reconstructed by M. Gorelik

Russian' steppes. Regular Polovtsian raids on Russian borderline territories were followed by years of peace and even alliance. The latter is especially typical of the early period of feudal disunity in Rus'.

Polovtsian raids on Rus', which became especially frequent in the 12th century, were aimed specifically at establishing tributary relations [Egorov, 1994, p. 192]. The ambition was based on the current military and political situation in the Desht-i Kipchak (the 'Polovtsian Field'). By the end of the 11th century, the territory of the Desht-i Kipchak was divided between large hordes, with each having a khan of its own. Russian chronicles have passed down to us the names of the Polovtsian khans. Hordes of the Dnieper Polovtsians (the 'Burchevichi'), headed by khans Bonyak and Tugorkan, lived in the Middle Dnieper Region; their southern

neighbours were the Lukomorye Polovtsians of khan Urusoba, who occupied the steppes of the Lower Dnieper Region and the Crimea; and east of them along the right bank of the Seversky Donets, there lived the nomadic horde of khan Sharukan, son of Osen. The khan had his towns (headquarters) Sharukan and Sugrov in the upper reaches of Seversky Donets, very close to the Rusessian borders [Pletneva, 1985, p. 257; 1990, p. 60].

The Dnieper, Lukomorye, and Donets Polovtsians irritated the princes of Kiev more than anyone, because the former occupied the trade route from the Varangians to the Greeks, which was of special importance for Rus', and the latter actually severed the Principality of Tmutarakan in the lower reaches of the Kuban from Kiev. It is thus quite natural that, when Vladimir Monomakh, who understood the na-



Location of certain Polovtsian hordes in the steppe following the campaigns of Vladimir Monomakh.  
 Legend: 1: state borders; 2: borders of Russian principalities; 3: northern border of the steppe; 4: hordes;  
 5: nomadic camp towns; 6: Russian and Byzantine cities; 7: trade land routes through the steppe; mapped  
 numbers: 1: Kiev; 2: Chernigov; 3: Pereyaslav; 4: Novgorod-Seversky; 5: Belaya Vezha; 6: Chersonesus;  
 7: Surozh; 8: Korchev; 9: Tmutarakan [Pletneva, 1990, p. 69].

ture and tactics of steppe wars, decided to strike a preventive blow at the Polovtsians, his *druzhinas* crushed the Dnieper Polovtsians in 1103. Khans Tugorkan and Urusoba fell when trying to beat back the Rus' attack. Given the situation, khan Bonyak hurried to ally with the head of the Donets Polovtsians, khan Sharukan, for further joint actions against Rus' [Pletneva, 1985, p. 259]. The parties exchanged blows for the following seven years until Vladimir Monomakh undertook a large-scale campaign of united Russian *druzhina* detachments deep in the steppe in 1111 to destroy the Polovtsian hordes on the Donets and scatter most of the Polovtsian hordes across the steppe<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Khan Atrak's horde went as far away as Georgia, and 'many hordes were crushed and scattered, with what remained of them forming the groups that the chronicler calls 'Wild Polovtsians' [Pletneva, 1985, p. 261].

As the result, kinship-based relations were broken, and the Polovtsian hordes dissolved into smaller ones, which were not based on kinship. After the steppe campaign of Vladimir Monomakh, a Polovtsian horde of Toksobyches and Oterlyuevyches formed on the left bank of the Seversky Donets; the Lower Don Polovtsians settled near the former Khazar town of Sarkel (Belaya Vezha), and the Yeltukove occupied the interfluvium of the Don, the Khopyor, and the Medveditsa [Pletneva, 1990, pp. 63–70]. What makes this last part so interesting is that it seems that it was their northern border that were marked with stone sculptures and burial sites along the Bitug and Khopyor rivers [Tsybin, 1999]. The monuments are territorially adjacent to similar and synchronous monuments along the right bank of the Volga River within today's Saratov Oblast, as well as in today's Samara Oblast, south of the Samara

Bend [Garustovich et al., 1998, pp. 217–228], which is very close to the southern borders of Volga Bulgaria. That is, the Yeltukovich Polovtsians were the nearest steppe neighbours of Volga Bulgaria, distinguished through their raids on the Principality of Ryazan in the latter half of the 12th century [Tsybin, 1999].

Quite naturally, the almost permanent war prevented the Kipchak-Polovtsians from having commercial connections with Rus'. The relevant archaeological material presents convincing evidence of this fact [Pletneva, 1991, p. 90]. However, the same archaeological material indicates that there was no intense trade exchange between the Yeltukovich Polovtsians and the Volga Bulgars. This can be attributed to the ethnopolitical situation in the Ural-Volga Region in the 11th century. The ceramic articles of Groups 13 and 21, which are of special importance in the ceramic complex of Bulgarian towns of the latter half of the 11–13th centuries, indicate that the population genetically related to the nomads of the Ghuz-Pecheneg circle formed a considerable diaspora in Volga Bulgaria [Kokorina, 2002, p. 46 et seq.]. It is unlikely that the descendants of 'migrants of necessity' from the Volga-Ural steppes were loyal to the Kipchak-Polovtsians.

Even though there are sparse jewelry items of clearly Bulgar origin—pendant earrings with a protruding type bead—scattered across the 'Polovtsian Field', they are hardly indicative of any close commercial relations between the 'Field' and the Bulgars.

But the Polovtsian-Byzantine relations in the period in question were different. S. Pletneva relies on archaeological data, albeit scattered, to infer that the Polovtsians would mostly receive gifts or plunder in the form of costly fabrics from Byzantium, remnants of which can be found in certain Polovtsian burials. Moreover, Byzantine influence gradually came to affect Polovtsian social relations as a result of regular contact between the Polovtsians and Byzantine merchants and diplomats in cities on the Black Sea [Pletneva, 1991, p. 103].

In the late 12th century, separate hordes that had formed following Vladimir Monomakh's campaign in the Polovtsian steppes began to merge into larger unions. The largest

of them were Togly Khan's Lukomorye Horde, which roamed in the bends of the Azov and Black Seas and in the lower reaches of the Dnieper, the Dnieper Horde (the Burcheviches), lead by Osoluk and Izay Khans, which roamed along the Dnieper banks south of the Samara River,<sup>1</sup> and the Don union of Konchak Khan. The latter was the largest in the steppes [Pletneva, 1990, pp. 146–170]. One might feel tempted to include the Upper Polovtsians, the Yeltukove, in this union. However, the Hypatian Chronicle reported Konchak Khan to have raided Kiev Porosye in 1187, while the other Polovtsians undertook a successful raid on Ryazan (the Nikon Chronicle svod) [Tsybin, 1999, p. 130].

The Eastern Polovtsians achieved maximum unity at the very beginning of the 13th century when two large unions of Polovtsian hordes—the Dnieper Horde and the Don Horde—finally formed near the southern border of Russia 'two large state unions that were undoubtedly to merge into one state' [Pletneva, 1982, p. 60]. However, the Mongol troops, which soon appeared in the west of the Great Belt of the Eurasian steppes, pre-determined further Polovtsian-Kipchak history.

### **The Kipchaks in the Trans-Volga Region. The Yemeks**

In terms of historical studies, the epoch before the Mongol invasion of East Europe has the poorest coverage, both archaeological and written, for the Trans-Volga Region and the Southern Cisurals. But the issue here is not just about the region, at least its steppe part, being poorly studied. A total of 717 nomadic burials dating back to the 10–14th centuries, of which only 5.57% pertain to the post-Ghuz, or pre-Mongol-Kipchak period, have been discovered and studied in the Southern Ural and Trans-Volga steppes.

The relevant written data is just as poor. In fact, it is confined to two sources: the world map made by al-Idrisi in 1154, and the letter by Hungarian Friar Julian about his trip to the Volga in 1235–1237.

<sup>1</sup> The left tributary of the Dnieper.



Heavily armed Polovtsian spearman. The 12th century.  
Reconstructed by M. Gorelik

Al-Idrisi's map is indeed the first relatively detailed geographical description of the Ural Volga Region. Researchers have been able to name several sources to which al-Idrisi referred for information on the Volga Region and the Cisurals. These are primarily the reports by Ibn Khordadbeh and al-Jayhani on Sallam at-Tarjuman's trip to the East, then narratives from other travelers, and finally, the ancient geographic tradition. It was the latter (Ptolemy) al-Idrisi referred to for the geographical coordinates of the Askaska (Ural) Mountains, where he believed the Atil River (the Volga) originated [Konovalova, 1999, p. 88; Psyanchin, 2001, p. 17]. The map by al-Idrisi depicts the Atil River with three sources, namely the Belaya, Ufa, and Ay rivers, which flow from the

Askaska Mountains [Rybakov, 1952, p. 27; Konovalova, 1999, p. 89 et seq.]. In addition, al-Idrisi mentioned two unnamed tributaries of the Atil that flow out of the Ayani Mountains north-east of the Askaska Mountains, reporting one of the tributaries to have two sources in the Ayani Mountains. Elaborating on B. Rybakov's idea that the unnamed tributary is most probably the Kama, I. Konovalova assumed that the double source of the tributary should be identified as the Kama and its right tributary Vyatka, while 'the second unnamed tributary Atila, flowing out from the western part of the Ayani, might be the Vishera River' [Konovalova, 1999, p. 91].

The area under the tributary, near a bend in the Atil, is reported to be inhabited by Tur-



kie people known as the Bulgars ('bulgar min al turk'); the area near the mouth between the river (the Kama?) and the Askaska mountains is reported to be inhabited by the Bashkirs ('arë basgirt min al atvak'), and on the left bank of the Kama River, there reportedly were the towns of Kastr and Mastr, while Karakia (Karkia) lay south of the Bashkirs on the left bank of the Atil River. The map depicts the Pechenegs ('baginak min al turk') north of the Bulgars and north-west of the Bashkirs, which to quote B. Rybakov 'appears to indicate that all the geographic objects must be relatively close to the Pecheneg (Zhiguli) Mountains, which is true' [Rybakov, 1952, p. 31]. Al-Idrisi also referred to authors of the 9–10th centuries for information on nations in the Volga-Ural Region. Whatever new data there is pertains to Basjirt towns: 'Of the internal Basjirt towns, we should mention Mastr and Kastr. Both are small and rarely visited by merchants. Nobody has been there for the indigenous people kill any foreigners who want to travel through their country. Both towns lie on a river that flows into the Isil' (quoted by: [Konovalova, 1999, p. 192]). The reliability of this data is rather doubtful, as the author of al-Idrisi's reference had hardly been to the Bashkir 'towns' himself and most probably spoke of them meaning the Bashkir tribes named Kese and Mishar [Ibid., p. 193; Psyanchin, 2001, p. 17].

Al-Idrisi reports the distance from the Pechenegs (Bajanaks) and Bulgar to the Bashkirs in days of travel: 'The internal Basjirts (*Basjirt ad-dahila*) are a ten days' trip from the Bajadanks, while the former are a twenty-one days' trip from Bulgar'. The latter is curiously consistent with the data provided by the Bashkir historical narrative 'The Bulgars and the Bashkirs', according to which, the Bashkir tribes lived a 15–20 days' trip away from the Volga Bulgars [Bashkir Folklore, 1987, p. 164].

Shortly before the Mongol invasion of East Europe, ethnic groups of the Ural Volga Region first started to appear in the works of European travelers, who, unlike their eastern colleagues, travelled through the steppes of the Lower Volga Region and the Southern Cis-Ural Region in the 1230s–early 50s. It should be taken into account that when referring to European

reports, their authors had specific political missions regarding learning about the military and political situations in the east of the Eurasian steppes, which were invaded by the Mongols. Just like in the case of Ibn Fadlan, who had a similar mission, they thus mentioned only general geographical coordinates pertaining to their routes, focusing rather on the description of the ethnic groups that they came across. For instance, Friar Julian in the letter about his travel to the east in search of the so-called Old Hungary (Maior Hungaria) in 1235–1237 reported having found a Hungarian (Magyar) population 'near the large river Etil'<sup>1</sup> and provided a relatively detailed description of their lifestyle and everyday activities [Anninsky, 1940, p. 81]. The description of Julian's second trip to 'Great Hungary' in 1237–1238, known to us in the form of primary source, is largely focused on the Mongol conquest of East Europe and reports, in particular, that it took the Mongols 14 years to conquer 'Great Hungary' [Ibid., p. 85].

Thus, the ethnic map of the Southern Ural Region and the adjacent territories in the Volga Region as presented by the medieval authors of the 12–early 13th centuries includes the Bulgars, the Magyars, the Bashkirs, and the Pechenegs (the latter rather echoing old data).

However, archaeological material pertaining to the period in question reveals records from the steppe Trans-Volga Region and the Cis-Ural Region to morphologically indicate the presence of other ethnocultural groups in the region. They can be identified and their appearance explained here only in terms of the ethnopolitical processes among the nomads of the Great Belt of the Eurasian steppes. The generator of these processes lay far east of the Volga River.

The dissolution of the Kimak Khaganate, weakened by internal conflicts, was catalyzed in the early 11th century by pressure from the Middle Asian Kuns (Cumans) and Kai tribes in the east. This brought about ethnopolitical changes in the areas adjacent to the Khaganate in the west, meaning the steppe Cis-Ural Re-

<sup>1</sup> Located near the Belaya River according to the note by editor and translator S. Anninsky.

gion and the Trans–Volga Region. Relying on medieval authors such as al-Marwasi, al-Biruni, Ibn al-Athir, and others, researchers present the process as follows: the Kun tribes living in North China suffered a Khitan attack in the 1030s, ceded to the aggressor, and moved westward. On their way, they were attacked by the Kai tribe and had to retreat further, in the course of which they descended upon the Shary (Sary) tribe or the Kipchaks. Moving further to the west, a Kun and Shary group came to Kipchak land during their migration and started integrating with the Kipchaks. As a result, the political domination of the Kipchaks within the nomadic union was established, though the Kuns (Cumans) and the Shary remained the actual military force [Klyashorny, 2002, p. 346]. A Kun-Shary-Kipchak group attacked the Ghuz people in the Aral Sea and Trans–Volga Regions, forcing them to cross the Volga [Kumekov, 1972, pp. 124–126; Klyashorny, Sultanov, 1992, pp. 136–138]. The Shary (Sary)-Kipchaks thus came to dominate the Cis-Ural and Trans-Volga steppes.

A total of 40 burials dating back to the latter half of the 11–early 13th centuries (what is known as the Kipchak pre–Mongol period) have been found in the Trans-Volga and Cis-Ural Regions [Ivanov, Kriger, 1988, p. 39]. Most of them were discovered in the area of today's Saratov, Volgograd, and Ural oblasts (62.5% of the burials), and along the Volga, Yeruslan, and Uzen rivers. The vast majority of the burials (77.5%) are beneath dedicated soil mounds arranged above the grave<sup>1</sup>.

Simple even-bottom burial pits with vertical walls are the most prevalent (47.5%). But graves with a niche along one of the long walls are also numerous, coming in at 22.5% (the Belozerskoye, Wiesenmüller, Zmeiny Dol, Kurpe-Bai, Kainsay, Politotdelskoye, Rovnoye, Solntse, and Trety Ples burial sites). Characteristically speaking, the latter have no clear localisation in the area.

Dead bodies lay on the bottom of the grave (or in the niche), supine and stretched, their heads pointing westward (62.5%) or eastward

(30%). The remnants of a board coffin or a hollowed-out log were found in four (Belokamenka, Mound D–48; Belozerskoye; Pokrovsk (Engels), Mound 11; Politotdelskoye, Mound 2) and one (Berezhnovka 1, Mound 4) burials respectively.

Among the pre–Mongol burials in the Trans-Volga and Cis-Ural Regions, 55% clearly belong to horsemen, as they contain horse skin remnants including skulls and leg bones laid to the left of the deceased (22.5%) or right (12.5%), or horse harness items (stirrups and bridle bits) at the feet of the deceased. Three of the burials contained a horse skin laid at the human's feet (Bakhtiyarovka 2, Mound 68; Bazar-Tobe 1, Mound 8, and Buranchi, Mound 1), and one burial contained a whole accompanying horse carcass to the right of the deceased (Belozerskoye).

Characteristically speaking, horses in most of the burials are oriented in the same direction as the deceased. If we imagine them standing, the horse and its owner would appear as if preparing for a horseback ride, as the horseman approaches the horse from the left while facing it.

Most of the burials (45%) contained accompanying arms such as iron arrowheads, bone coatings, and birch-bark quivers. Three of the burials contained sabres.

Burials where the set of accompanying articles (bead necklaces, looking-glasses, scissors, etc.) would suggest that they are of women are few.

At present, scholars do not question the Kipchak ethnic affiliation of the monuments in the steppe Trans-Volga and Cis-Ural Regions dating back to the latter half of the 11th century–early 13th centuries. Back in the 1960s, G. Fedorov-Davydov referred to medieval authors, in particular Rashid al-Din, to attribute the 12–13th centuries burial mounds in the Lower Volga Region to the Polovtsians-Cumans [Fedorov-Davydov, 1966, p. 150]. Then R. Kuzeev referred to historical ethnographic data to infer that a mass Kipchak migration to the territory of today's Bashkortostan began in the 13th century [Kuzeev, 1974, pp. 171 et seq., 184].

<sup>1</sup> Only 30% of the burials are part of older mounds.



Polovtsian archer. The 12–13th centuries.  
Reconstructed by M. Gorelik

However, data contained in the written sources (in particular, those by Ibn al-Athir) enabled S. Akhinzhanov to develop another hypothesis concerning the date of the Kipchak's re-settlement in the Southern Ural steppes. In particular, the author believes that back in the 11th century, the Kipchaks, who 'owned the land of nearly all of Central and Western Kazakhstan,' had jailau summer pastures in the lower reaches of the Kama River, from where they travelled to winter camps near Balasagun [Akhinzhanov, 1980, p. 51].

On the whole, data on the tribes living east of the Volga in general, and the Kipchaks in particular, is so sparse and scattered that re-

searchers have had to resort to the cross-analysis of different documents in order to obtain the relevant information.

The first mention of the Kipchaks as an autonomous ethnocultural formation different from any synchronous and neighbouring tribes appeared in the mid-8th century among the political opponents of ancient Turkic (Turkut) tribes. In the late 9–10th centuries, Arab-Persian authors (Ibn Khordadbeh, 'Hudud al-'Alam') mentioned the Kipchaks among the key ethnopolitical units (the Kimaks, the Oghuzes, the Pechenegs) settling in the eastern part of the Eurasian steppes.

In the early 11th century, following a period of rapid socio-political development, the Kipchaks became neighbours to the Khwarezm (Beyhaki) and succeeded in wars against the Khwarezm-shahs for grazing lands in the Aral Sea Region, forcing their opponents to make concessions and even agree to dynastic marriages with the nomads [Akhinzhanov, 1973, p. 61]. At that time, Kipchak tribes formed a confederation with a uniform material culture and social development. The confederation was headed by khans belonging to the Olbulik (Elbari, Ilbari) clan who occupied an area known as Yuyliboli, localised by scholars in the steppes of today's North-western Kazakhstan and Southern Urals and corresponding to the Southern Cis-Ural Region's territory of the spread of the 12–13th centuries' mounds.

Apart from the Kipchaks, the important members of the confederation included Yemek (Kimak) tribes living in the western part of the Southern Ural steppe, including steppe Bashkortostan [Akhinzhanov, 1976, p. 89]. Despite using different ethnonyms, medieval authors (M. Kashgari) emphasised the genetic and linguistic affinity between the Kipchaks and the Yemeks [Kumekov, 1972, p. 43]. In addition, the Yemek territory was the same as the area marked by the records under discussion in the Trans-Volga and Cis-Ural Regions.

Medieval authors mention two directions the nomads migrated in when the Kipchaks gained power. The Kipchaks moved west and north-west, and the Yemeks (Kimaks) went south and south-west [Ibid., pp. 43–47].

A number of scholars believe that the nomadic Mongolian-speaking tribes (the Bayandurs, the Tatars, the Eymurs) who became a part of the Kimak and Oghuz union as soon as the Uighur Khaganate fell in 840 were also included in the Kipchak confederation [Ibid., p. 47; Akhinzhanov, 1976].

Thus, medieval written sources reported the steppes of the Southern Cis-Ural Region (in particular, Western Kazakhstan) and the Trans-Volga Region to have long been the territory where Kipchak tribes lived and were concentrated. By no coincidence, it was Western Kazakhstan where the state of nomadic

Uzbeks began to form after the dissolution of the Golden Horde [Akhmedov, 1965]. Later, it became part of the Middle Zhuz, where most Kazakh families in the Kipchak tribe (13,500) were concentrated [Mukanov, 1974, pp. 70–75]. It was there in the foothills of the Southern Urals along the Sakmara River Basin where Bashkir Kipchak clans such as the Kara, Ak, Sankem, and Suuni Bushman-Kipchaks got settled in the late 14–15th centuries [Kuzeev, 1974, p. 185].

If we use the historical ethnographic data available to compare the tribal composition of nomads in the eastern part of the Eurasian steppes from the latter half of the 7th century to the 14–16th centuries, we can see that the largest, most significant tribes (among which the Kipchaks seem to have been the most stable ethnocultural unit) were permanently represented, while smaller ethnic units alternated their presence. The Kipchak percentage in any of these ethnopolitical unions might change, but they never assimilated into other ethnic groups.

To sum things up, the written and historical ethnographic sources clearly indicate that the Kipchaks were the dominant substrate determining the ethnocultural situation in the Southern Urals and Cis-Ural Region in the 12–16th centuries. To discover how consistent the data is with the archaeological material, we need to estimate the typological similarity between the records of the Southern Urals and the synchronous records in adjacent territories, most importantly those records that appear to be undoubtedly Kipchak.

To start, we shall consider the design of above-grave structures in the monuments in question in the Trans-Volga and Cis-Ural Regions. As already mentioned above, most burials pertaining to the period are arranged under soil burial mounds. However, some burials are arranged under stone or mounds of stone and soil (Kainsay, Zmeiny Dol, Lebedevka 7). These are similar to the typical Kimak burials under soil and stone mounds [USSR Archaeology, 1981, p. 43].

G. Fedorov-Davydov noted that the materials discovered before the 1960s reveal that



Polovtsian horsewoman. The 12th century.  
Reconstructed by M. Gorelik

niche-type graves were wide-spread in the Trans-Volga Region during the Golden Horde Period, suggesting that they should be viewed as a local feature of the region [G.Fedorov-Davydov, 1966, pp. 157, 160 et seq.]. The scholar attributed the appearance of such burials to the arrival of the Mongols and other eastern tribes. Excavations in the following years revealed niche grave burials more eastwards, in the steppes of the Southern Cis-Ural Region, that pertained to the pre-Golden Horde period, meaning the Oghuz-Pecheneg and Kipchak pre-Mongol periods. Similar burials have been discovered in the Kimak (Yemek) burial mounds in the Upper Irtysh Region dating back to the 9–10th centuries [Arslanova, Samashev, 1985].

The Kimak-Kipchaks are also known to have performed burials with horse skins laid to the right of the deceased [Mogilnikov, 2002, pp. 17 et seq., 52; Adamov, 2000, p. 18].

Some burials in the Trans-Volga Region contain a whole horse carcass to the right of the deceased oriented in the opposite direction (the Belozerskoye burial on the Samara River), similar to Kimak-Kipchak burials [Adamov, 2000, p. 17].

There is thus clear archaeological evidence to support medieval written sources that describe the Kimak-Kipchaks as the dominant ethnocultural component of the nomadic union of the steppe Trans-Volga and Cis-Ural Regions in the latter half of the 11–early 13th century.

The geographical distribution of Kimak-Kipchak monuments in the area is uneven. Most of them (60%) were discovered in the steppe Trans-Volga Region, in today's Samara, Saratov, Volgograd, and Astrakhan oblasts. Forty-five percents of them lie on the banks of the Volga River and its right tributaries—the Samara, the Yeruslan, and the Akhtubia. The rest of the burials are scattered across the Orenburg, Ural, and Chelyabinsk oblasts.

The burials in question are almost exclusively single, except for the Wiesenmüller and Raim Lake burial sites, each containing two Kimak-Kipchak burials. If we distributed them across the steppe part of the Trans-Volga and Cis-Ural Regions, the total area of which is about 560,000 square kilometre, we would only have one burial per 14,000 square kilometres! What is the implication here? Merely that the Kimak-Kipchak tribes got settled in the Trans-Volga and Cis-Ural Regions during the first (camping) stage of pastoralism, which is characterised by 'single burials scattered across the steppes, usually occasional and thus discovered by experts in an untouched condition' [Pletneva, 1982, p. 17]. They probably even covered this territory without making any long stops while chasing the retreating Ghuzes and Pechenegs.

As indirect evidence of this, the item complex of the Trans-Volga and Cis-Ural Kimak-Kipchak burials contains no Bulgar-made handicraft and jewelry articles. In addition, the range of items suggests that only 17.5% of the burials that contain jewelry like multicoloured bead necklaces or necklaces and a temple pendants with a protruding bead can be interpreted as women's.

The absence of Bulgar articles among the items of nomads in the Trans-Volga and Cis-Ural Regions is strange because of the following. Firstly, Volga Bulgaria had already made it clear that it was a well-developed trade and handicraft state, with its jewelry production supplying not only domestic but also foreign markets in the pre-Mongol period (the 12–early 13th centuries). Secondly, by becoming an Islamic country, Volga Bulgaria 'turned into the centre of monopoly trade in North-eastern

Europe, controlling the northern trade between the West and the East'. One of the routes used for such trade, the Bulgar–Gorgan one, led through the steppes of the Trans-Volga and Southern Cis-Ural Regions [Khalikov, 1992, p. 13 et seq.]. This is known to be the time when a mass inflow of Bulgar-made articles made its way into the forest Kama River Region [Belavin, 2000].

Therefore, the only possible explanation for the absence of any archaeological evidence of commercial contacts between the Kimak-Kipchaks and the Bulgars is this: while fighting against the Ghuzes and the Pechenegs, they conquered the steppes in the Trans-Volga and Cis-Ural Regions and, in large part, moved to East Europe.

The Kimaks (Yemeks), the Cuman-Sary people, and the Kipchaks, who remained in the Trans-Volga and Cis-Ural Regions, formed the eastern periphery of the Desht-i Kipchak and were few in number in the Ural-Volga steppes as suggested by the available materials. It would be entirely reasonable to assume that the Trans-Volga nomads had no material involvement in the political life of those who ruled the Desht-i Kipchak. In any event, the archaeological material discovered within the region, which is surprisingly homogeneous and unimpressive when compared to the synchronous records in the Desht-i Kipchak, only indicates that they were there.

It is entirely possible that the Trans-Volga tribes were undergoing their transition to the second stage of pastoralism, which is characterised by permanent seasonal—summer and winter—camps [Pletneva, 1982, p. 36]. Such places might have been in the area near the mouths of the Yeruslan and Uzen rivers, where over 30% of all nomadic burials dating back to the 12–13th centuries are concentrated.

The Kimak-Kipchaks' immediate neighbours in the north were the tribes that left behind in the area *Mryasimovo-type monuments* (as identified by N. Mazhitov) dating back to the late 10–early 13th centuries. They are located in the northern areas of today's Bashkortostan (the burial mounds of Karanayevo, Bakaly, Mryasimovo, and Burlin) and in the

Trans-Ural Region (the burial mounds of Smolino Lake), that is, in the forest-steppe area, and appear as relatively small soil mounds with a diameter of 5–8 m and containing 2 to 32 burials. An important ethnographic feature of Mryasimovo-type burial mounds are horse skulls and leg bones buried on the bottom of mounds. Some burials contain the remnants of a birch-bark wrap on human bones. Horse shoulder bones are common in graves, which, as G. Garustovich believes, are a tribal feature of the population that made the monuments in question [Garustovich, 1998, p. 16].

All the archaeological features (plicate-cord ornamented ceramics, elements of the burial ceremony) suggest that the Mryasimovo people should be ethnically identified as Ugric

[Garustovich, Ivanov, 1992, p. 25]. By the end of the 12th century, Mryasimovo-type records in the region disappeared as a result of the mutual assimilation of the Mryasimovo Ugrians and their related tribes representing the Chiyalik culture, who had come to the Cis-Ural Region from the Cis-Kama Region from the north, and the ancient Bashkirs, whom the Kimak-Kipchaks had forced out of the Cis-Ural steppes. The process brought about mound-type burial sites dating back to the 14th century in the forest-steppe Cis-Ural Region, which 'are by no means different from other underground early Islamic burial objects from Cis-Ural tribes' in terms of ceremony features' [Garustovich, 1998, p. 20], and most probably pertain to the Bashkirs.

## CHAPTER 6

### The culture of the nomads of the Eurasian steppes

*Yuly Khudyakov, Vladimir Ivanov*

The key stage of the cultural development of the nomads of the Eurasian steppe belt was the early Middle Ages, that is, the period from the 6th to the 10th centuries, which is termed 'ancient Turkic time' in historical and archaeological literature as a reference to the crucial role that the ancient Turks and their culture played in that region's ethnic and cultural genesis [Grach, 1966, p. 189]. In the mid-6th century, the ancient Turks were able to ensure political and military control over nearly all nomadic tribes in the Eurasian steppes from the Black Sea Area in the west to the Yellow Sea in the east, and from the taiga belt in the north to the Chinese, Iranian, and Byzantine borders in the south within the so-called First Turkic Khaganate. When the entire nomadic world united as part of the same state formation, it caused the ancient Turks to extend their habitat to a wide territory in the Eurasian steppes, which stimulated turkisation, the adoption of the Turkic language and culture by non-Turkic nations, and brought about the widespread usage of the Turkic administrative system and military structure, weapon types, and military techniques both in the nomadic world and beyond. The ancient Turks had enough military power to set the standards for nomads and, to some extent, sedentary farmers and taiga hunters. The nomadic nobility of other tribes and nations wanted to adopt the prestigious elements of the ancient Turkic military *druzhina* culture. This caused increased uniformity in the types of weapons, munitions, horse harnesses, jewelry, and special tableware across the early medieval nomadic world. Key items pertaining to the ancient Turkic article complex spread far beyond the archaeological culture of the ancient Turks. They were readily adopted by both the adjacent and distant Turkic, Iranian, Mongolian, and Ugric-speaking nomadic tribes, as well as the sedentary population of the

neighbouring regions that had contact with the ancient Turks.

After the nomadic states headed by the ancient Turks collapsed, the ancient Turks culture did not cease to exist but rather continued to develop. Certain key elements of that culture were adopted and developed by other Turkic-speaking nomadic nations and states in the Central Asian historical cultural region, including the Uighurs, the Kyrgyzs, the Kimaks, and the Karluks.

Records pertaining to the ancient Turkic, Kyrgyz, and Kimak cultures—stone sculptures, burial mounds, stelae with runic inscriptions, and toreutic works—were discovered and studied in the Altai and Minusinsk Hollow back in the early 18th century. At that time, scholars attributed the records to the mythical Chud people, the Scythians, the Mongols, or the Tatars.

They became considerably more enthusiastic about the culture of the ancient Turks and other nomadic Turkic-speaking nations after runic written sources had been discovered in Mongolia and deciphered in the late 19–early 20th centuries [Klyashtorny, Livshits, 1978, pp. 43–46]. The 1920s were marked by considerable success regarding the study of the history and culture of Turkic nomadic nations. V. Bartold summarised the data on the history of the Kyrgyz people and other nations that lived in Middle and Central Asia in the early Middle Ages provided by Arab and Persian sources [Bartold, 1963, 1, pp. 479–510]. The classification of records found in the Minusinsk Hollow by S. Teploukhov enabled scholars to single out ancient Turkic and Kyrgyz complexes and pave the way for the further chronological and ethnocultural identification of early medieval nomadic cultures [Teploukhov, 1929, p. 55].

Ancient Turkic records in the Altai Mountains, along the Yenisei River, and in the Tian Shan were studied in the 1930s–1940s [Kiselev,



1949, pp. 277–314; Yevtyukhova, 1952, pp. 72–120; Bernshtam, 1952, pp. 87–89]. These included stone sculptures, burial mounds with different types of burials, and their accompanying burial accessories. The key features of early medieval nomadic culture and art were described.

In the latter half of the 20th century, monuments pertaining to the culture of the ancient Turks, the Kyrgyz, Uighur, Kimak people, and other Turkic-speaking ethnoses were studied in the Sayan-Altai Region, Mongolia, the Cis and Trans-Baikal Regions, Western Siberia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the Xinjiang Uighur Region (China). Monographic reports on ancient Turkic sculptures in Tuva, the Altai Mountains, Semirechye and the Tian Shan, Mongolia, and Xinjiang have all been published.

The considerable efforts on behalf of many scholars based on the excavations of burials, commemorative monuments and archaeological sites, and studies on rock drawings and inscriptions in Central and Middle Asia and West Siberia have yielded a large collection of material, as well as artistic and monumental sources regarding the history and culture of Turkic nomadic ethnoses in the early Middle Ages. The script, rock drawings, arts and crafts, material culture, military science, social and political order, and religion of early medieval Turkic-speaking nomads have been studied.

The cultures of early medieval Turkic ethnoses formed within the framework of the cultural traditions of nomads of the Hun-Sarmatian era. The sources of the 'Turkic nomads' burial and commemorative ceremonies; visual, monumental, and applied arts; material culture and article complex; and religions can be found in the nomadic cultures of the first half of the 1st millennium CE.

A. Gavrilova has identified the Berel grave type from the 5–6th centuries as the oldest burial complexes of the formative period of ancient Turkic culture in the southern Altai Mountains [Gavrilova, 1965, pp. 54–57]. Sites of this type are mostly small stone mounds, latitudinal burial pits, inhumation burials with one or three horses on a shelf in the burial pit. The items from Berel sites included bows with long end and middle onlays, flat studded iron arrows, broadswords with a cross guard and a ring pommel, and pieces

of chest armour [Khudyakov, 1986, p. 132]. Accompanying accessories found in Berel burials include iron bridle bits with ring cheek-pieces, onlays, a bone belly buckle, silver plates, a nephrite disk with a hole in the centre, and bone heads [Gavrilova, 1965, p. 55].

The ancient Turks, headed by the ruling Ashina clan, borrowed the practice of burying their dead with a horse from the nomads of the Altai Mountains, bearers of the Bulan-Koba culture, after the Rouran Khagan forced them to move from Gaochang to the South Altai Mountains. Chinese sources report the ancient Turks practiced cremation of their dead along with an accompanying horse body [Bichurin, 1950, p. 230]. Ancient Turkic records that have been studied give no evidence of such a ceremony. Perhaps it was the Ashina-lead Turks, who moved to the Altai Mountains from Eastern Turkestan, who practiced it. The ceremony is known to have been used with the Eastern Turkic Khagan Heli, whose body was 'cremated according to the nomadic custom'. The burial mound above the burial was 'arranged on the eastern side on the Ba River' [Ibid., p. 250].

The Berel sites contained no records of commemorative rites. However, the Turks could have borrowed the commemorative ceremony, as well as the practice of burying their dead with a horse, from the local nomads of the Altai Mountains, since commemorative structures with fences and balbals are found at sites pertaining to the Bulan-Koba culture of the Xiongnu-Sarmatian era [Mamadakov, 1994, p. 59].

The key elements characteristic of the ancient Turkic articles were formed in the nomadic environment of Central Asia in the Xiongnu era. Most importantly, this applies to the military *druzhina* subculture, arms, munitions, horse harnesses, jewelry, and feast tableware. The nomads widely used long-range complex bows with bone inlay, three-blade iron whistling arrows, broadswords with one single-edged blade, scale chest armours, and plate belts with iron buckles and plates [Konovalov, 1976, pp. 173–200]. The types of arms developed further under the Xianbei rule in Central Asia. The Xianbei preferred melee weapons, protection devices, and the technique of ram-attacking the enemy with close-order cavalry detachments using

such weapons and equipment [Khudyakov, Yu Suhua, 2000, pp. 38–41]. By the time the ancient Turkic culture formed, the set of articles characteristic of nomadic cultures in Central Asia had changed. However, it was the striking power of the armoured cavalry and its advantage over other nomadic troops in close combat that made the Turks led by the ruling Ashina clan militarily successful in the Central Asian power struggle.

When the Rouran State was crushed and the powerful Turkic Khaganate, which united the entire nomadic world, was established, the ancient Turkic culture itself was changed greatly, while its elements were borrowed and imitated by other nomadic cultures.

The period of the First Turkic Khaganate in the Altai Mountains and Tuva includes sites dating back to the so-called Kudyrge stage. Ancient Turkic sites dating back to the 6–7th centuries were wide-spread in Semirechye and the Tian Shan. The stone burial mounds and inhumation burials with horses with varying internal grave structures and human and horse orientation pertain to this time. Accompanying accessories are predominantly weapons and munitions, horse harnesses and jewelry. Ceramic tableware is present too. Early-type stirrups and heraldic style belts and harness accessories are characteristic of the period.

In the 6–7th centuries, ancient Turkic commemorative barriers with stelae and balbals became wide spread in Middle Asia. In the period when the ancient Turks had the greatest military power, their commemorative cult acquired a pronounced military *druzhina* nature. This is reflected in the stelae erected to commemorate heroic warriors and balbal standing stones symbolizing enemies killed by the warriors. Prestigious elements pertaining to the Chinese imperial burial cult—dragon-top stelae on a turtle sculpture pedestal—were introduced as a privilege of high aristocrats. A stela pertaining to the Bugut record bears inscriptions in Sogdian and Brahmi scripts praising the deeds of the late ruler [Klyashtorny, Livshits, 1971, p. 123]. The ancient Turkic culture witnessed a large influx of innovations from sedentary agricultural civilizations of Iran, Sogd, states of Eastern Turkestan, and China during the time of the First Turkic

Khaganate. These included important technical inventions and advanced technology, such as saddles with rigid frames and stirrups, new types of weapons, and toreutic items. The Sogdian script was borrowed and used to a limited extent for issuing proclamations [Ibid., pp. 143–144].

Rock pictures of battle and hunting scenes depicting ancient Turkic horsemen, warriors, and hunters began to appear in the Sayan-Altai region and Mongolia during the time of the First Turkic Khaganate. The petroglyphs changed stylistically with increased use of anthropomorphic images, silhouette hammered and engraved outlined figures. The carved engraving technique enabled artists to make more detailed drawings, accurately depicting warriors' weapons and harnesses [Khudyakov, 1987, pp. 187–189]. The ancient Turkic commemorative practice of making anthropomorphic stelae to symbolise the dead probably dates back to the First Turkic Khaganate. Otherwise it would be hard to explain why very similar commemorative ceremonies, during which stone sculptures were erected near fences, existed in both the Eastern and Western Turkic Khaganates—two states that were hostile to each other. D. Savinov attributed stelae and sculptures with additional drawings, hunting and worshiping scenes on their surface to the Kudyrge stage [Klyashtorny, Savinov, 1994, pp. 99–101]. Stylistic features of the drawings suggest that they could pertain to different stages of the ancient Turkic culture.

In the following period of the two Turkic states—the Western and Eastern Turkic Khaganates—another stage took place in the development of the ancient Turkic culture. It was then that it became characteristic for ancient Turkic burial rites to bury male warriors with one or, less frequently, two or three horses, and bury women and children with a horse or a sheep in burial pits with a separating wall, sometimes with a wall niche. Men were buried with arms and military munitions; women, with jewelry and household items. The set of articles found in this period is mainly bows with middle side inlays and arrows with three-bladed and faceted, armour-piercing arrowheads. Other types of weapons, spears, broadswords, and sabres, fragments of scale and lamellar armours are rare in ancient Turkic war-

rior burials, as these were very expensive items. The ancient Turkic culture of the 7–8th centuries is characterised by iron bridle bits with rod and ring cheek-pieces, ring or platy loop stirrups, and belt and harness accessories with Katanda-style smooth unpatterned surfaces [Gavrilova, 1965, p. 64]. Local differences between the western and eastern ancient Turkic cultures can be attributed to the different foreign cultures with which they had connections. The Western Turks were much more connected with the culture of the Iranian-speaking, Sogdian population living within the Western Turkic Khaganate than the Eastern Turks were. The Eastern Turks identified more with the prestigious elements of the Tang Chinese imperial cult.

After the Eastern and Western Turkic and Turgesh Khaganates fell, the ancient Turkic culture did not cease to exist but flourished instead. Sites in the Sayan-Altai Region and Mongolia from the ancient Turkic culture of the 8–10th centuries, when the Turks were politically dependent on the Uighur and Kyrgyz people, include a broad range of accompanying accessories. The key elements of ancient Turkic burial rites were preserved throughout the period termed the Kuray stage in the development of the ancient Turkic culture [Savinov, 1982, p. 118].

The Turkic commemoration rite was transformed significantly at the Kuray stage. When the Ashina and Ashide aristocratic clans lost their statehood and dominant standing, the ancient Turks stopped erecting imposing commemorative complexes, that had been characteristic of monuments to high aristocrats. They largely ceased erecting balbals near commemorative fences, as the ancient Turks had become much less militarily active. At the same time, they started to make more detailed stone sculptures and gave them a third dimension. Statues started to reflect more accurately everyday life, racial features, hairstyles, clothing details, and weaponry belts. The ancient Turkic burial rite largely ceased to be of a military *druzhina* type and became more like a clan ancestor cult.

In the 8–10th centuries, the Uighur and Kyrgyz influence on the ancient Turkic culture brought about a golden age of metal arts. This time shows the greatest diversity in patterns of belt and harness accessories, ceremonial

weapons, jewelry, and feast tableware. Plant, zoomorphic, and anthropomorphic images, as well as religious symbols, were widely used in ornamentation. The new ornamental motifs and themes, as well as new decorative techniques, came from intensified commercial and cultural contacts with sedentary agricultural countries and nations, most importantly the Sogdians, and from the nomads adopting new technology and toreutic ornamentation themes. An important factor in the development of the ancient Turkic culture was the world proselytic religions that spread across nomadic Central Asia in the early Middle Ages. As a result, there were material changes in the ceremonies, and religious symbols and cultural practices were borrowed.

Uighur cultural sites in Central Asia pertaining to the period of the Uighur Khaganate in the 8–9th centuries are distinctively complex. Architectural structures and ceramic pottery bearing stamped designs as well as toreutic ornamentation themes originated with the Sogdian cultural tradition. The burial and commemorative rites, inhumation with horse skin, and commemorative structures including a stela with an inscription originated with local nomadic cultures in Central Asia. The Uighur nobility largely wanted to imitate the imperial traditions of their predecessors—the Eastern Turks—and the Tang imperial cult. Richly ornamented metal articles, buckles, plates, inlays, belt caps, harness decorative elements of metal, and silverware were characteristic of the Uighur culture of the 8–9th centuries [Gavrilova, 1974, pp. 178–182; Khudyakov, 1985, p. 57].

In the 6–8th centuries, sites from the Kyrgyz culture spread out over Minusinsk Hollow. The Kyrgyz people, who had moved to the Middle Yenisei from the Cis-Tian Shan Region at the beginning of the early Middle Ages, became the dominant ethnic group. They adopted certain components of the local tribes' material and spiritual culture.

Burial sites pertaining to the Yenisei Kyrgyz culture of the 6–8th centuries include stone burial mounds with round, square, rectangular, or polygonal fences of stone slabs that are surrounded with vertical stone stelae. Inside these fences, there were burial pits with cremation burials and commemorative food and drinks.

Apart from *chaa-tas* burial mounds, Kyrgyz cemeteries contain small round stone mounds with adult cremation and children's inhumation burials. The set of articles pertaining to the Kyrgyz culture of the 6–8th centuries includes weapons, horse harnesses, munitions, tools, and ceramic tableware. The so-called 'Kyrgyz' vases, gray earthenware pottery articles decorated with strips of a stamped ornament, were most characteristic of Kyrgyz culture in that period. Apart from pottery, the Kyrgyz people used moulded ceramic tableware in everyday life [Yevtyukhova, 1948, p. 93]. Kyrgyz aristocrats used imported metal tableware; gold and silver jugs, plates, and cups; and small lacquered Chinese cups [Ibid., pp. 40–45]. Few *chaa-tases* contain weapons. A birch-bark quiver and three-bladed iron arrowheads have been found in settlements. Double-edged swords, spearheads, combat axes, and scale plates also date back to this period [Khudyakov, 1980, pp. 131–133].

Horse harnesses included bridle bits with twisted links, stirrups with broad footsteps and a ring or plate loop, buckles, inlays, plates, and bells. The Kyrgyz people wore plate belts and earrings. Women's jewelry included earrings, bead necklaces, bracelets, and Chinese coins. Some of the burials contained amulets depicting horse heads and sheep figurines covered with gold or silver foil [Yevtyukhova, 1948, pp. 6, 58].

The set of articles pertaining to the Kyrgyz culture has a broad range of borrowings from nomadic cultures and the Sogdian and Chinese cultures that were adopted via the ancient Turks. The Kyrgyz people could have borrowed their runic script and the tradition of composing epitaphs from the ancient Turks [Khudyakov, 1995, p. 95]. The Uighurs and Sogdians living in the Uighur Khaganate could have influenced Kyrgyz culture to some extent. Evidence of such influence is the characteristically fortified and designed wattle-and-daub fortresses built in Minusinsk Hollow in the 8–early 9th centuries. The fact that plant-ornamented toreutic articles were widely spread in the Kyrgyz culture is attributable to the Uighur fashion. Katanda-style toreutic articles, which are characteristic of the ancient Turks, never became particularly popu-

lar with the Kyrgyz people. They used belts and harness accessories decorated with cut-work ornaments, plant shoots combined with rosettes, fig blossoms, and clusters of grapes. On plates, predator animals, fish, and birds were depicted [Khudyakov, 1998, p. 54]. The Kyrgyz toreutics of the 6–8th centuries were richly and diversely ornamented as compared to those of the ancient Turks.

The Kyrgyz culture went through major changes in the 9–10th centuries, when the nation was truly a great power. Their sites are spread across the Irtysh, the Trans-Baikal Region, the Tian Shan, and the Angara. Major innovations were introduced in the burial ceremony. The structure of burial mounds was greatly simplified. Mounds acquired a crepidoma of large stones. A stela bearing a tamga or a runic epitaph was erected near the mound. Cremated remains of the dead were buried along with commemorative foods, weapons, and harnesses in shallow pits beneath a mound or on level ground. The simplification of structures erected above and inside the graves is attributed to the increased mobility in the everyday life of the Kyrgyz people and the severe conditions of their war against the Uighurs, which prevented them from erecting monumental but highly effort-consuming *chaa-tas* burial mounds. The Kyrgyz people inhumated their dead children. The belief was that they were too young to be sinners, so their dead bodies needed no purification in fire.

In the course of their conquests, the Kyrgyz nobility became acquainted with urban life. Kyrgyz khagans tried to build fortresses and towns and foster agriculture, handicrafts, and trade. There were also changes to their set of accessories. 'Kyrgyz vases', moulded pots, and jar-type vessels are rare in Kyrgyz burial mounds dating back to the 9–10th centuries [Kyzlasov, 1969, p. 99].

Kyrgyz weapons became much more diverse. Some 9–10th century burial mounds contained broadswords, sabres, spears, combat axes, daggers, bow and quiver parts, iron arrowheads, armour plates, and chain mail fragments. Kyrgyz weapon makers had more diverse forms of arrows, especially armour-piercing arrowheads, than any other nomadic people. Many horse har-

ness items, bridle bits, stirrups, plates and buckles, and inlays have been found in Kyrgyz burial mounds and settlements. Belt and harness accessories were richly decorated with plant, zoomorphic, and anthropomorphic ornamentation. Some plates bear Buddhist, Manichean, and Nestorian symbols, such as a flaming pearl, fig blossoms, lotus flowers, and crosses [Kyzlasov, Korol, 1990, pp. 105–108].

Many Kyrgyz petroglyphs carved on rock appeared in the 9–10th centuries. The famous Sulek rock drawings depict heavily armed horsemen wearing armour, hunters with bows on horseback, fighting camels, camels pulling arbas, wild hoofed animals and predators [Khudyakov, 1998, p. 57]. The armoured horsemen are especially meticulously drawn. The images contain plumes, helmets, armours, shield pads, spears with heads and flags, combat axes, bows, and quivers. The carvers were able to make very precise images and add greater distinctiveness. The Kyrgyz petroglyphs are characterised by a great diversity of themes. Apart from the typical nomadic battle and hunting scenes, they depict scenes from everyday life, genre scenes, camel trips to other camps, and camel fights. Point-hammered images are far less common. At the Barun-Chichigt site a man is depicted carrying a cased bow and riding a horse with its mane cut in spikes. [Ibid., p. 58].

Sites pertaining to the Kimak culture are characterised by syncretical and multi-variant burial ceremonies. Stone and soil burial mounds in burial complexes near Irtysh River and in Western Siberia include inhumation burials with a horse or horse skin, single inhumation burials, and cremation burials. The diversity is attributable to the multi-tribal composition of the Kimak union, which included Western Turkic, Uighur, and Kyrgyz tribes, as well as turkicized Ugric and Samoyed groups. The Western Turkic Yemek and Eymur tribes as well as the Kipchaks practiced a burial ceremony that included sanctuary building and erection of stone sculptures.

The Kimak set of articles was quite diverse. It included pole-arms, bows and arrows, quivers, and lamellar armours. Horse harness included various types of bridle bits and stirrups and bridle and harness buckles. Jewelry and clothing included plate belts, earrings, bead neck-

laces, and mirrors. Kimak toreutic ornaments were very similar to Kyrgyz ones. The Kimaks widely used plant ornamentation, grapevines, rosettes, and palmettes. Some plates and inlays depict flying birds, geese, ducks, cocks, or phoenixes; winged lions and dogs; and human faces. The image of an armoured horseman or a dismounted warrior was an essential element of Kimak arts and crafts. They were depicted wearing helmets and armour and carrying spears, swords, and bows, with shields behind their back. Manichean and Buddhist symbols are rarely seen in Kimak toreutic ornaments. Kimak toreutic works rather show evidence of Sogdian influence. Toreutic ornamentation must have changed as Islam spread [Ibid., p. 59]. The petroglyphs found in the Upper Irtysh Region are an example of Kimak art. The rock drawings were point-hammered. Engravings are rarely seen. The most common images were fighting and hunting warriors and wild animals.

Kimak monumental sculptures depict a wide variety of realia. These include headgear, robes with chest lapels, plate belts, daggers, earrings, and bracelets. Women are depicted wearing three-horned headgears. Their style and details as shown in the sculptures are similar to those of the Western Turks [Charikov, 1980, p. 223]. In spite of different origins, constituents, and external connections to other cultures, nomads in the south of Western Siberia, Central and Middle Asia had the same major elements, since they all had economies based on livestock breeding, and were characterised by a nomadic life in which military activities played a major role.

Early medieval nomads made a considerable contribution to the development of the global cultural process by developing portable dwellings, means of transport and carriage that were the best options for their time. The nomads influenced the development of weapons, military organisation, and military art of nations and states that had other types of civilisations. In the early Middle Ages, the nomads readily adopted many material and spiritual cultural advances and helped to distribute them among tribes and nations living on the periphery of the nomadic world. The medieval nomadic civilisation united many neighbouring states and nations.

Artistic works representative of the culture of medieval nomads in the western part of the Eurasian steppes—the Ghuzes, the Pechenegs, and the Kipchak-Polovtsians—that we can perceive and evaluate are mostly handicraft archaeological artifacts.

Handicrafts are known in archaeology, first of all, for the fact that they come down to us in very fragmentary condition. We can only work with those artifacts that can resist the pressure of time, such as items made of metal, stone, and bone. Weaving, embroidery, application, and wood carving are handicrafts that carry the most ethnocultural information, but they are very rarely available to modern researchers.

All nomadic handicrafts that we know from archaeological digs fall into two categories, namely jewelry and clothing accessories (pendant earrings, bracelets, rings, belts, mirrors, headgear, pendants) and horse harness adornments. They are essentially universal for the entire medieval nomadic culture of Eurasia. The only difference is the type of articles in each category.

*Jewelry and Clothing Accessories.* Medieval nomads in Eastern Europe—the Ghuzes (Torks), the Pechenegs, and the Kipchak-Polovtsians—did not produce very sophisticated earrings. They are essentially open rings of round copper or silver wires. That is how men's earrings looked. Women's earrings, which are rarely found, are large (up to 5 cm in diameter) open rings of round wire holding a biconical or acorn-shaped bead. The bead has raised twisted cord ornamentation. The set from Burial Mound 37 from the burial site of Sarkel-Belaya Vezha, which contains typical women's belongings, including a pair of scissors, proves that these earrings were designed for women. The fact that similar earrings are mostly found in Russian hoards [Fedorov-Davydov, 1966, p. 40] suggests that they came to the steppe from the territory of Rus'. Therefore, the semantics of their decorative elements should be viewed in the context of ancient Russian art and beliefs.

In the context of the pre-Mongol Kipchak-Polovtsian clothing, earrings clearly became the adornment of women. Firstly, they show a stable connection to objects that were meant specifical-

ly for women, such as mirrors, bead necklaces, and headgear accessories. Secondly, it is shown by the iconography of Polovtsian stone sculptures, where only female statues have earrings [Pletneva, 1974; Geraskova, 1991].

The social semantics of this type of jewelry are beyond doubt. First of all, this is supported by the fact that about one-third (29.6%) of all graves with earrings also contain weapons such as arrowheads and sabres. Men's graves contain one earring each. Such earrings are shaped as simple open rings of copper or silver wire<sup>1</sup>. In addition, as has been mentioned above, Polovtsian stone sculptures, which are of great social importance in the nomadic culture, depict sophisticated earrings.

Another element of the clothing of medieval nomads that can be traced throughout the history of their material culture is belt accessories.

Medieval nomads of the Eurasian steppes viewed the belt as an integral part of military clothing. It symbolises a warrior's courage, signifies the social organisation he belongs to, and is a symbol of his manhood [Kovalevskaya, 1970, p. 144; 1984, p. 160; Lipets, 1984, p. 67]. The belt is one of the most often-mentioned parts of military clothing in Turkic-Mongol heroic epic narratives. For instance, the heroine of a Khakas heroic epic Pichen-Aryg addresses her people, who have become confused and disorderly, with the words, 'Do not wear your clothes without a belt! Do not be a people without judges or laws!' [Altyn-Aryg, 1988, p. 254].

The fact that belt accessories were traditionally combined with weapons in Turkic burials indicates that the belt was a social symbol, evidence of which can also be found in Turkic-Mongol epic narratives. The hero Kuskun-Karamatyr of the Altai epic 'Kogutei' 'wraps a gold belt around his body six times' while preparing for single combat. The protagonist of the Altai heroic narrative 'Altyn-Bize' does the same before setting off on a military campaign [Kogutei, 1939, p. 118; Altyn-Bize, 1965, p. 25]. The

<sup>1</sup> This was similar to the Cossack custom, where an earring in a man's ear indicated the cossack's status in the kinship-based social structure—the only son, the last man of the clan, etc.



A Polovtsian khan's kaftan discovered in a grave under the Chingul Kurgan (Zaporozhye Oblast) [Pletneva, 1990, p. 116].

above-mentioned heroine of the Khakas epic Pichen-Aryg wears a gold belt over her clothing (hep). Alamzhi Mergen and his sister Aguy Gokhon, heroes of a Buryat epic, wear 'a belt of pure silver' over their deel kaftans meant for military campaigns [Alamzhi Mergen, 1991, pp. 111, 172], while Maaday-Kara, the hero of another Altai epic, wears 'a gold-decorated belt of bronze' for a campaign [Maadai-Kara, 1973, p. 257]. Therefore, a belt was expected to be shiny and eye-catching. Multiple metal inlays were used to achieve this. The number of inlays on a belt apparently differed depending on how wealthy and noble a male warrior was. Firstly, stone sculptures always depict complete plate belts. Secondly, burials with complete plate belts make up about 30% of all burials containing belt accessories in archaeological materials. Rich and noble people could not make up the majority of society in real life.

The first thing one notices when studying belt accessories of East European nomads as a handicraft category is the absence of any standard design. For instance, Ghuz-Pecheneg complexes contain round smooth and ornamented inlays; segment-shaped inlays with rectangular cuts and heart-shaped inlays; also smooth and

ornamented, lunula inlays with round projections and X-shaped inlays. The belt found in a rich Oghuz grave in the mound of Uspenka, Astrakhan Region (excavations by E. Shnaidshstein, 1984) is especially expressive. It is decorated with symmetrically arranged round rosette plates, larger lunula plates, three-chain plates, and two ornately shaped caps. The belt had three hanging straps, each bearing five rosette plates and a triangle cap with double bosses on the bottom.

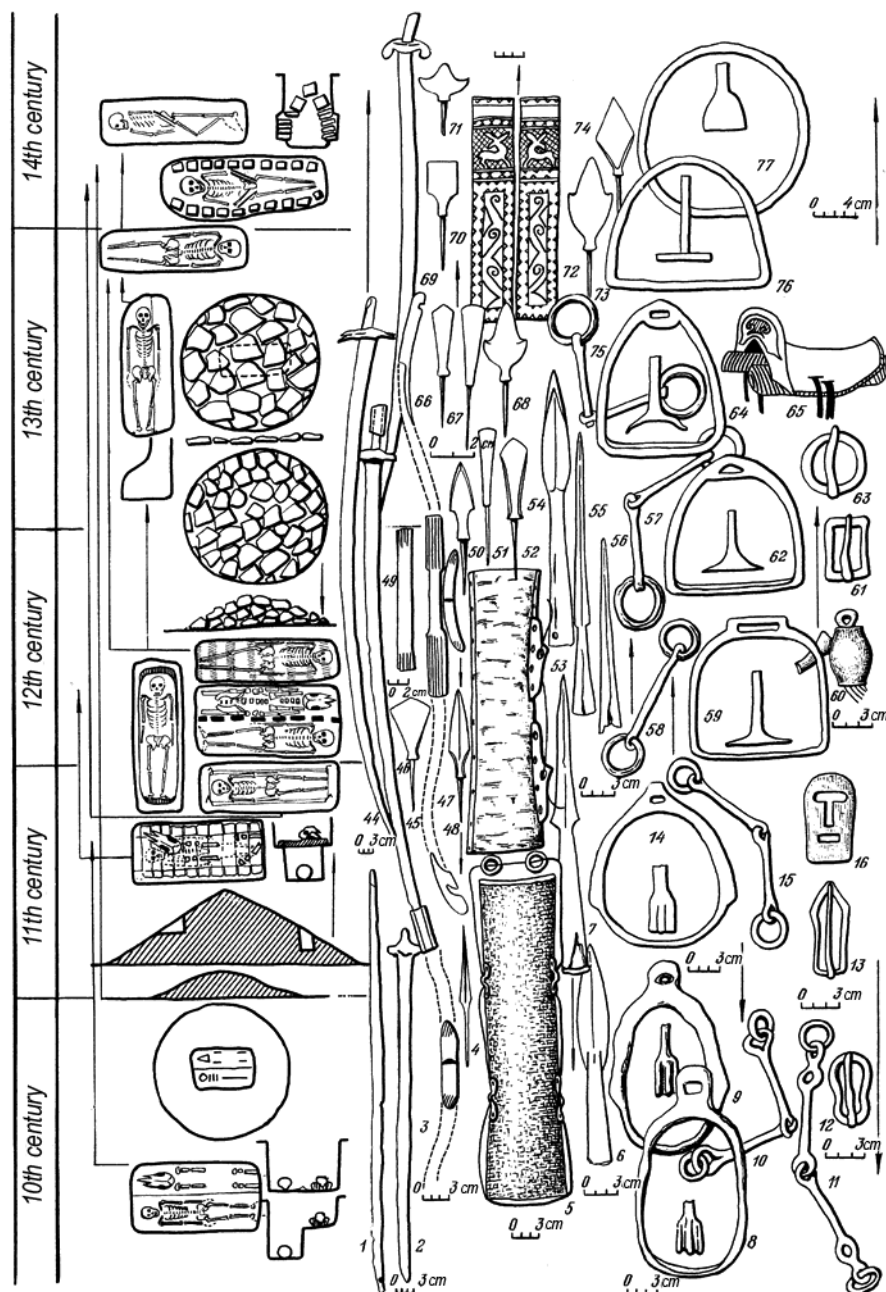
The shapes of belt buckles and caps are no less diverse, though their distribution shows certain ethno-territorial patterns. In the Volga-Ural Region, complexes dating back to the 9–10th centuries are dominated by oval frame buckles with a solid-cast semi oval, pointed-arched, or ornately shaped pads, which are combined with semi-circular or ogive ornamented caps. Those found west of the Volga River (European Pechenegia) consist predominantly of buckles with an almost triangular frame, an ogive or solid-cast ornate pad, a rectangular frame and a rectangular solid-cast pad, lyrate, oval, or round padless and oval-frame buckles with a solid-cast pad having a semi-circular end where it is connected with the frame.

The Ghuz and Pecheneg custom of wearing plate belts was apparently maintained through their connections with Khazaria<sup>1</sup>. Just like there, nomads viewed belts decorated with metal adornments as appropriate for men's clothing. They rarely occur in burials as complete sets, and no identical belts have been found in any grave [Khabarova, 1998, p. 189].

In one case, fragments of a belt decorated with ornate gilded palmettes and seven-petal rosette plates were found. The belt had a granulated cap. There was a shoulder belt holder decorated with a plant design that was apparently connected with the belt. Heart-shaped plates and an arch-shaped belt cap decorated with trefoils and granulated along the edges have also been found.

By analogy with the hoard belt found in Sarkel that dates back to the latter half of the

<sup>1</sup> The Alan tribes in the Khazar Khaganate are known to have viewed the plate belt as an integral part of a man's clothing.



Chronological Table of East European Nomad Antiquities. According to the materials excavated from burial sites in Porosye, the nomadic burial site near Sarkel—Belaya Vezha, discoveries in the Sarkel—Belaya Vezha layer, and individual burial mounds in the Lower Don and Lower Volga steppes [Eurasian steppes in the Middle Ages, 1981, pp. 258–259].

10th century [Makarova, Pletneva 1983], it would be reasonable to assume that the nomads of the Oghuz-Pecheneg period also had such opulent belt accessories. However, this has not been observed. The only exception is the belt

set from the Kalinovsky burial site (Mound 1, Burial 7). It is a composition of 16 symmetrically arranged shield, heart, or scroll-shaped bronze plates. The plates have plant-themed silver inlays. The belt cap and buckle have the



same design. In other cases, only single inlays and buckles are present.

It generally appears that the belts of nomads in the Ghuz-Pecheneg period mostly had ornate buckles and caps. That is, they had little decorative and most probably symbolic importance as part of clothing.

This tradition became dominant in the pre-Mongol Kipchak-Polovtsian culture. This is clearly evidenced by the fact that belt parts rarely appear in burial complexes and evident in the semantics of Polovtsian stone sculptures. These sculptures seldom included belts. When there was a belt, it was depicted in such a way that one could not imagine either the buckle or any other belt adornments: 'They are hardly visible on the front and sides; one can only see them on the back, which was a very rare place to depict a belt (a total of 17 cases). It usually looks like two parallel lines with a smooth and even surface between them. It appears that belts were not ornamented on the back side. Only in some rare cases the belt was depicted as several thin parallel lines or ornamented as a zigzag and multiple cuts' [Pletneva, 1974, p. 36].

Anyway, the absence of adornments on Polovtsian belts is entirely understandable, as in this case, the belt acts not as a decorative but as a functional part of the clothing on which household objects like knives, combs, steels, bags, and pouches were hung (there were no pockets) and to which girth straps were attached.

Thus, the symbolic nature of the belt in the medieval nomadic cultures of Eurasia did not remain unchanged. While the Turkic warrior used the belt to symbolise his social status, and thus it had to be eye-catching and boldly decorated, the tradition declined with the Oghuz and Pecheneg people and nearly fell into oblivion with the Polovtsian-Kipchaks. The decorative techniques used in Ghuz-Pecheneg or Kipchak belts are not stylistically uniform.

Rings and bracelets as an external decoration are very rare in Ghuz, Pecheneg, and Polovtsian graves. The ones found are not very sophisticated. There is archaeological evidence that the Ghuzes preferred rings with large bug-shaped inlays of the so-called Saltovo type, while the Kipchak-Polovtsians wore simple copper or silver rings with a plated structure, with a flat rect-

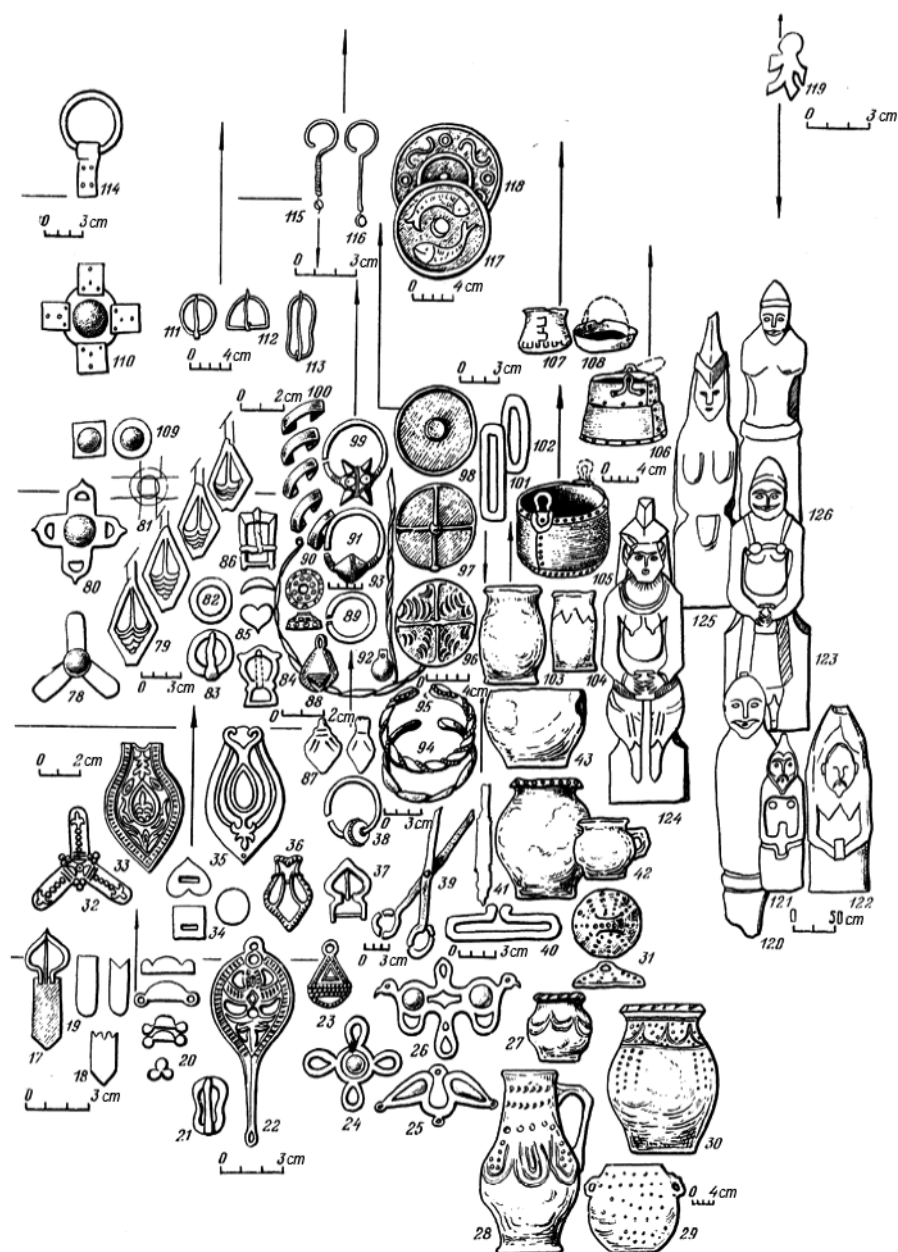
angular pad, sometimes decorated with dots or plant designs.

Similarly, while the Ghuzes are known to have used three bracelet types, namely bracelets of round smooth glass rods, plate bracelets decorated with cuts and false granulation, and woven bracelets of thin bronze and silver wire, the Kipchak-Polovtsians used simple smooth wire or single narrow copper plates without any ornamentation.

Bronze sewn-on pendants shaped as bird figures and ear picks with an openwork pad are characteristic of the Ghuz material culture of the 10–11th centuries. Two types of bird-shaped pendants have been found. The first type depicts a bird's wings spread to a varying extent. The second type is a stylised figure with bird heads and rosettes on its 'wings'. The former have loops for additional disk, grape, trefoil-shaped or goose feet pendants along their bottom edge. Ear pick pads are oval or heart-shaped frames with a stylised ornamentation with solar or bird symbols. Bird-shaped pendants and ear picks were apparently copied, as identical articles have been found in sites situated far away from each other (Uralsk, Sarkel, Istria).

Parts of headgears (boccas) have only been found in Kipchak-Polovtsian complexes. In every case the only fragments that have been preserved, of course, are from a complex hat, hairstyle, and adornments set, which is depicted vividly in Polovtsian stone sculptures [Ibid., p. 38]. The so-called horns—hollow birch-bark cylinders 38 cm in diameter, bent in a bow and attached to the headgear—that were meant to contain braided hair were apparently one of the key structural elements of the headgear. Such 'horns' were textile-covered and sometimes decorated with metal inlay rings or gilded silver foil with ornamentation impressed on it (Novotitarovskaya, Mound 6).

Footwear adornments in the form of small ornate inlay plates of bronze or silver are a characteristic ethnographic feature of Ghuz women's clothing. They mostly pertain to complexes in the Southern Cis-Ural and Lower Volga Regions, though some were found west of the area, namely on the Don banks, in Left and Right-Bank Ukraine. The material that was available suggests a high diversity of decorative buckles



Chronological Table of East European Nomad Antiquities. According to the materials excavated from burial sites in Porosye, the nomadic burial site near Sarkel—Belaya Vezha, discoveries in the Sarkel—Belaya Vezha layer, and individual burial mounds in the Lower Don and Lower Volga steppes [Eurasian steppes in the Middle Ages, 1981, pp. 258–259].

for leather boots. However, the types that appear to be the most wide-spread are round semi-spherical buckles with finely graduated edges, semi-lunulas with round projections on the ends, and double semi-spherical buckles connected with a fine granulation cross-piece. In addition, some buckles have decorative elements sugges-

tive of plants. Buckles shaped as irregular triangles, rectangles, ovals, and X-shaped items have been found too.

The material of three graves (Uvak, Kilyakovka, and Antonovka), where shoe buckles have been preserved in situ suggests that they were arranged on the footwear in a specific way.

Large buckles and those with the most sophisticated outlines were placed along the central axis of the toe piece, edged with smaller buckles, sewed on as a gap-free string. Larger buckles (semi-lunulas or round ones) were attached to the ankle piece as a gap-free cross-string.

Most burials with footwear adornments also contained hand jewelry—bracelets or a ring.

It is noteworthy because ringed or bracelet-ed hands and boots with metal buckles on them are as eye-catching as headgear. Unfortunately, no information is available concerning Oghuz headgears. It is therefore reasonable to assume that rings, bracelets, or boots with metal buckles were not merely decorative elements of the clothing but details that symbolised the individual's social status. This is demonstrated by the fact that the woman buried in the Uvak burial mound was 'wearing a luxurious blouse of thin, uniformly dyed yellow silk and thicker red silk with a black print on it' [Fedorova-Davydova, 1969, p. 262], while the woman buried in Mound 4, Kilyakovka burial site, had fragments of a thick, golden-colored fabric with a plant pattern on it on her chest. We can therefore assume that both women were wearing clothes made of expensive fabrics, which few people could afford.

Horse harness items are a special category of handicrafts in the culture of the medieval nomads of the Eurasian steppes. The harness is the second most often described item in heroic epic narratives after the belt. Lofty exaggerations are always used to emphasise its beauty and value. The heroine of the Buryat epic 'Alamzhi Mergen' puts a silver-edged saddle cloth and a silver saddle on her horse and uses a silver crupper to hold them in place<sup>1</sup>. The horse of the Kalmyk epic hero Jangar wore a silver-stitched saddle cloth and a shiny black saddle with a silver cushion. In preparing a battle horse for the Buryat epic hero Abai Geser, batyrs

*Put on a saddle cloth of the finest silk,  
a saddle with a silver bow, and fixed the  
saddle with a peytral of pure silver for  
uphill riding; they used a silver crupper  
to fix the saddle for downhill riding...*

<sup>1</sup> The crupper is a strap from the back of a saddle passing under the horse's tail.

The hero of the Altai epic Maadai-Kara also had splendid horse harness:

*He stroked his precious dark bay horse on  
the face and put a bridle of gold on him.  
Having wiped his back, he put a saddle  
cloth of white cotton over it, covered it with  
a saddle of bronze and gold, tightened fifty  
straps well; he counted ninety straps as he  
tightened them.  
He attached a double strap crupper under  
the horse's tail and a peytral with three  
rings, which he tightened around the horse's  
chest, to the saddle.*

The nomads attached special importance to harnesses. They maintained them with great care; every dzhigit wanted to have not only a good horse but a high-quality, impressive harness [Lipets, 1984, p. 192].

Epics mention harness items that were especially important for a warrior dzhigit and probably indicated his valour and wealth, such as the head harness, the saddle, the peytral and crupper straps, and the neck tassel known as the mantsog, or mantsok. Archaeological findings suggest that these items were the most carefully decorated as they were the most visible on the horse.

However, sets of harness adornments are rather rare in archaeological complexes pertaining to medieval nomads in Eurasia. There is no evidence that there were any common rules in combining decorative harness elements; however, the ethnographic features are distinct. For instance, Ghuz harnesses were decorated in a more sophisticated way, mainly because of the bronze and silver plates called reshmas and falars. The bridle sets found at the burial sites of Bykovo (Mound 16/9), Nikolskoe 5 (Mound 5), Bolgarka 1 (Burial 3), and Verkhny Balykley (Mound 5) are the most representative of Ghuz harness decoration techniques. The materials suggest that head harness straps were decorated with round or irregular rectangular plates with a smooth or ornamented surface that were sewn on the straps in a symmetric and very dense pattern. Strap crossings were decorated with three or four-foiled inlay plates, often with ornamented blades.

Most plates were geometrically decorated with endlessly intertwining ribbons, spirals, and

meanders. Plant ornamentation of flowers and palmettes was also common. It is characteristic that geometrically ornamented harnesses are mostly found in the western parts of the Eurasian steppe (Gaevka, Novo-Kamenka, Saraylı Qiyat, Pervokonstantinovka).

The head harness composition consists of reshma or falar plates that connect the brow and nose straps. Materials from the burial mounds of Saraylı Qiyat and Novo-Kamenka suggest that head harness buckles formed a set and had the same decorative design. Reshma plates are leaf-shaped or round with an umbo boss in the centre. The boss sometimes contained a jingling ball. It was the boss, sometimes also the edges of the reshma, that was ornamented. The ornaments were geometrical and plant-themed, which sometimes made the boss look like a flower that is about to blossom (Tuzla, Mirnoe, Pervokonstantinovka, Bolgarka 1). In one case (Verkhny Balykley 2, Mound 5/1) a reshma had a boss shaped as a female face.

Falar plates are uniform round discs with a boss in the centre (the burial sites of Bykovo, Verkhny Balykley, Kalinovsky). Such discs usually have a smooth surface; only the boss is decorated with plant designs.

The silver falar found at Nikolskoe 5 burial site (Mound 1, Burial 4) with a horseman engaged in falconry depicted on its front side appears to be an original article. The falar was used to decorate the brow strap.

The nomads maintained the tradition of decorating the front saddle-bow with bone and metal inlays, which dates back to the ancient Turkic epoch during the Ghuz-Pecheneg period. The front saddle-bow discovered at Nikolskoye 5, Mound 1 is representative of the trend. It is decorated with an irregular rectangular bronze plate consisting of four palmette sprouts with two dome-shaped round plates with cord-pattered edges and four small silver nails arranged symmetrically on its sides. The saddle tree bars were also edged with silver nails. Remnants of a bone saddle-bow inlay shaped as a narrow strip with equally spaced drilled holes have been found in Mound 15, burial site Urkach 1, West Kazakhstan.

Metal plates were used to decorate cruppers. The plates found at the Bolgarka 1 burial site are rectangular with semi-spherical bosses in the middle and were arranged in groups of five on the sides. The horse harness (crupper) on the Sassanid plate depicting King Shapur II during a lion hunt, found near the village of Turushevo on the Vyatka River, is decorated in a similar way.

Apart from a head harness strap decorated with round, semi-spherical and ornately shaped plates, the harness found in Mound 3, Settlement 15 burial site (the Lower Volga) contained a crupper decorated with flat, ornately shaped plates (six plates on each side).

It would be entirely reasonable to assume that in the Ghuz culture, richly decorated horse harness with reshma and falar plates indicated that the owner belonged to the military class, since a statistical analysis revealed the articles to have a strong connection to plate belt elements and weapons.

The Kipchak-Polovtsians continued to use harness sets decorated with metal plates in the pre-Mongol period, though they are almost never found in burial sets. However, fresco paintings illustrating the legend about King Ladislaus (from Bichakov and Kraskovo (Czech Republic)) depict Polovtsians on horses wearing plate harness. In the first case, the head harness, the reins, and the breast straps are decorated with X-plates. In the second case, they are decorated with small, round plates attached to form a zigzag. There is also a three-leaved reshma plate on the brow strap of a Kraskovo horse [Paloczi-Horvath, pp. 86, 90].

The Kipchak-Polovtsians also maintained the tradition of decorating the front saddle-bow with bone inlays without gaps. The saddle-bow inlay found at Zelenki burial site (Mound 303) is in the form of an ornately shaped plate imitating the outline of the so-called Mongol saddle-bow, with an ornate cut in the middle and interlaced carving on the edges. A similar inlay, probably from the pre-Mongol period, decorated with interlaced carving and round rosettes, was found near Podluzhny khutor in the Stavropol Region. However, saddle inlays in the form of narrow bone bars decorated with inter-

laced carving are more common (Chernyavshchina, Mound 4 and others).

The stone sculptures known as the Polovtsian Balbals are a unique phenomenon in the artistic culture of the nomads in the East European steppes. *They have captured the attention and stirred the imagination of all who have traveled across the Polovtsian Steppe since the Middle Ages. Some, like medieval Persian poet Nizami (late 12th century) had mystical and religious associations with the stone sculptures scattered across hills and mounds in the steppe, which he expressed in the following poem:*

*The Kipchak tribes come this way, And  
the Kipchaks bend their backs to the idol.  
Whenever a traveler comes on foot or on  
horseback, Their ancient deity captivates him.  
The horseman hesitates in front of it, Before  
he bends to shoot an arrow into the grass.  
Every shepherd driving his flock knows, That  
he should leave a sheep in front of the idol...*

[Pletneva, 1974, p. 5].

Others, like European travelling monk William of Rubruck (mid-13th century) paid more attention to the ethnographic aspect of the stone balbals: 'The Cumans make a large mound over the dead person and erect a commemorative statue with its face directed eastward, holding a cup in its hand in front of its navel...' [Ibid.]. Both the first and the second descriptions suggest that the Kipchak-Polovtsian stone statues were part of their sacred cult of ancestor worship.

In fact, the tradition of erecting stone statues began to spread across the steppes west of the Ural Mountains in the mid-11th century when the Kipchak-Polovtsians came there. S.Pletneva, who studied the Polovtsian stone statues, classified them into seven types by artistic techniques. The simplest composition and technique were used for the oldest of them, low relief stela-like statues made of flat stone slabs. Their faces have eyebrows, noses, eyes, moustaches, and sharp chins (for male statues). The hands and a vessel are depicted on the flat body. No clothing or jewelry details are visible. The statues are typologically related to Kimak statues of the 10–11th centuries and are representa-

tive of the artistic traditions in the sculpture of East European nomads [Ibid., p. 61].

According to S. Pletneva, the stone sculptures were a part of Polovtsian sanctuaries erected at the more or less permanent Polovtsian winter or summer camps [Pletneva, 1985, p. 249]. Therefore, their distribution indicates the key areas where Kipchak-Polovtsian tribes were located in Europe at the initial stage of their resettlement. About 20 stone sculptures of these types have been discovered in the Southern Cis-Ural Region, in the southern part of present-day Chelyabinsk Region, south-eastern Bashkortostan, and the Turgay Plain. Several early Kipchak-Polovtsian sculptures have been found in Volgograd and Saratov Regions; over 20 statues have been found on the steppes of the Azov Sea Region, and the middle and lower reaches of the Seversky Donets.

S. Pletneva dated the appearance of Kipchak-Polovtsian realistic three-dimensional sculptures, which developed up until the Mongol invasion, to the first decades of the 12th century [Pletneva, 1974, p. 70]. Those depict standing or sitting men and women. Characteristically, their face are presented in great detail and have individual features. Their clothing, headgear, footwear, and jewelry are also depicted in detail. Gender characters are emphasised. Male statues have weapons such as sabres, quivers, and bow cases. Female ones wear bocca headgears, 'horn' hairstyles, necklaces and torques, and earrings in their ears. Both hold vessels against their stomachs.

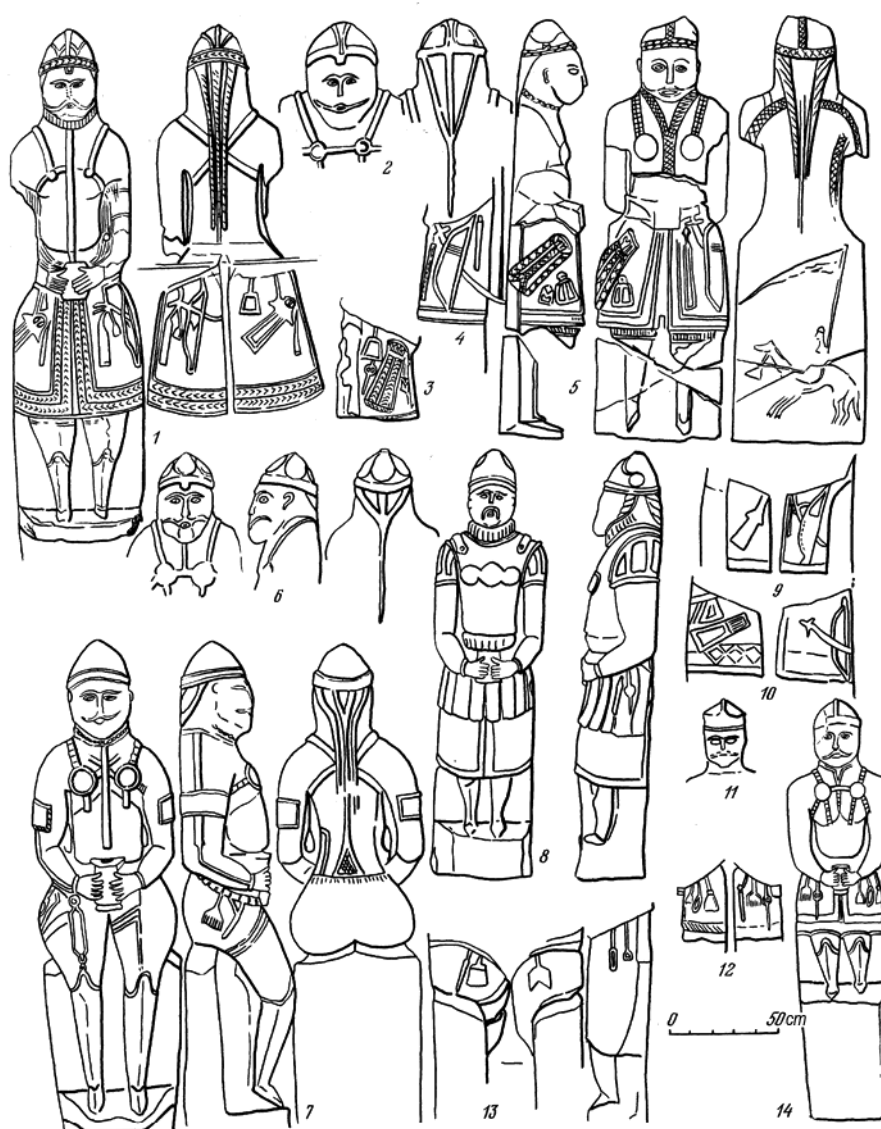
Most of the statues appear on the steppes of the Dnieper-Don interfluvium area known as the 'Polovtsian Field', or the 'Wild Field'.

The evolution of Kipchak-Polovtsian sculptures ends with statues shaped as semi-circular stelae (without arms or legs) with their heads and faces meticulously detailed. This is the latest type of Kipchak-Polovtsian statues that survived on the periphery of the Desht-i Kipchak until the Mongol invasion.

Experts are unanimous in interpreting the semantics of Kipchak-Polovtsian stone sculptures as one of the most expressive manifestations of ancestor worship. In fact, they worshiped their tribal leader ancestors (male statues) and their wives (female statues). S. Pletneva sug-

gested a novel interpretation of the positions of the statues, which are either standing or sitting. She believes that the former statues depict the Kipchak military aristocrats, conquerors, and defenders, while the latter represent heads of wealthy families and clans, those who owned and accumulated property [Ibid., p. 75 et seq.]. After the Mongol invaders entered the steppes

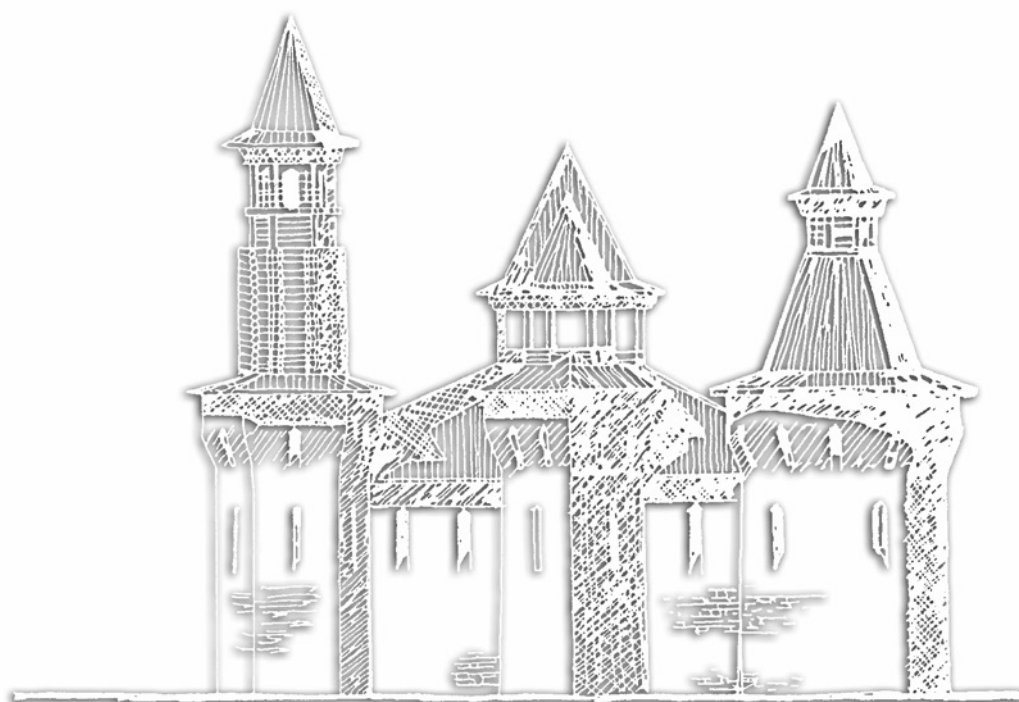
of Eastern Europe and the mass extermination of Kipchak-Polovtsian aristocrats began, 'there were no more tribal leaders to dedicate statues to. The Polovtsians only preserved their cult of family and clan ancestors, the idols of which they kept in yurts. The stone sculptures were left to fall apart in abandoned, dilapidated sanctuaries...' [Ibid., p. 76].



Sculptures of Polovtsian male warriors (1–14). From the museums of Zaporozhye, Dnepropetrovsk, Kherson, Moscow, and Krasnodar. The standing statues (1–5) possess complete sets of characteristic nomadic arms, meaning a bow with a bow cover and a sabre (on the left), and a quiver with arrows (on the right). The standing and sitting statues all have identical protective armour [Eurasian steppes in the Middle Ages, 1981, p. 265]

Section 8

# **Islamic Civilization in the Volga-Ural Region**



## CHAPTER 1

### The Islamic World in the 7–Beginning of the 13th Centuries

*Oleg Bolshakov*

Caliph al-Muqtadir's embassy arrival to Bulgar in 922 symbolised the recognition of the spiritual suzerainty of the Caliph and was merely the formal recognition of the already close relationship between the Volga Region and the wider Islamic world. The formation of ideological unity helped to extend not only economic but also cultural relations that, in one way or another, reflected the changes taking place in the Muslim world. The latter had itself gone through a significant period development, from a relatively small community of followers of the prophet of a new religion in West Arabia to the largest global power by the beginning of the 10th century; the Caliphate surpassed the Roman Empire at the height of its power and disintegrated from the pressure of unsolved internal problems.

#### **The Birth and Formation of the Caliphate**

The emergence of the Caliphate is unique in the sense that it is the only case in which the birth of a great power was caused by the birth of a new religion.

At the end of the 6th century, in the vast zone of ancient civilisations between 30° N and 45° N, from the Mediterranean to the borders of India, two powers had dominated for five centuries: First, the Roman Empire and Parthia, then their successors—Byzantium and Sasanian Iran. The centuries-old rivalry between them for ultimate domination over the Middle East did not lead to major changes in the border dividing them, which gave way to the steppes and deserts of Arabia in the south.

The beginning of the 7th century was marked by a new clash between the giants, the preponderance in which was on the side of Iran: In 714, after the occupation of Syria, the Iranians besieged and captured Jerusalem,

resulting in a massacre, and moved towards Egypt. Simultaneously, the Byzantines were forced to fight off Iranian encroachment in Asia Minor.

Against the background of this battle between giants, the events taking place in Arabia seemed unimportant. In about 610, in the small trading and pilgrimage centre of Mecca, a poor trader of skins Muhammad began preaching monotheism and prophesying and proclaiming the impending end of the world. His calls for the observance of justice and repentance before the Last Judgment found no response, even in his native tribe of Quraysh. Even after he made hijrah—that is, broke with his native tribe, made a pact with the inhabitants of Yasrib (Medina), moved there in September 622, repulsed two attacks of the Quraysh on Yasrib (in 625 and 627), and extended the power of the new religion of Islam over a large area, the activities of Muhammad were limited to a narrow and local significance.

Throughout this time a system of ideas about the place of Islam in the history of monotheism developed, so did ritualism and new ethical and legal concepts. A particularly important factor for the formation of the principles of statehood had been the introduction of the charitable tax—zakat, which after 628 had become the fourth prerequisite of Islam together with the profession of monotheism, five daily prayers, and fasting during Ramadan. Disposing the funds, mainly in kind, was the responsibility of the Prophet himself, who had also defined a number of persons and purposes the funds could be spent for. Together with zakat, the first state commissioners also appeared—the collectors of the tax. They did not serve permanently and were only called upon at the beginning of the year, during the collection of the tax, and they did not receive a salary. For the Bedouins paying taxes was not



an established custom, and the collectors were often met with hostility.

Meanwhile, some major changes had taken place in the world at large, and the progress of the war between Byzantium and Iran had undergone some sudden and dramatic transformations. The Byzantine Emperor Heraclius had defeated the Iranian army at Nineveh and arrived at the residence of Shahanshah Khosrow, Dastagird. The shahanshah fled to the capital Ctesiphon and prevented further advancement of the Byzantine army, but dissatisfied courtiers overthrew him and enthroned his son Kavadh, who made peace on the conditions of withdrawal of Iranian forces from Egypt and Syria and return of prisoners and Christian relics taken from Jerusalem. This humiliating peace seemed to usher in a series of misfortunes for Iran: an outbreak of plague in Mesopotamia that same year, which killed the shahanshah himself, was followed by infighting, which disrupted political stability and Iran's unity.

Almost simultaneously with the victory of Heraclius, Muhammad, too, considerably strengthened his position, concluding a nonaggression treaty with the Meccans that allowed him to expand his dominion over the territory to the north of Medina. By the end of 629 he had enough power to organise a march on Mecca on a specious pretext. The Meccans were unable to resist Muhammad's large army, and on 12 January 630 he victoriously entered his hometown. They accepted Islam and took the oath of allegiance to Muhammad. The Kaaba became Islam's main sanctuary, whose worship was established as the fifth pillar of Islam. All the idols in Mecca were destroyed, including all the pagan shrines in the area. The capture of Mecca and the following defeat of numerous Bedouin militias in Wadi Hunayn turned Muhammad into a major political figure in Arabia.

In the spring of 631, during the Hajj, Muhammad announced through his cousin Ali that pagans had been given an extension of four months to convert to Islam, after which a war for their extermination would begin: 'And when those four months is over, then fight the polytheists wherever you meet them, take them captive, besiege, and ambush them....' [Quran, IX, 5] This phrase, commonly used by Mus-

lim extremists as a justification for war with all whom they consider enemies, had in fact a very specific meaning as a call to fight pagan Arabs.

By the beginning of 632 the whole of Arabia, with the exception of Yamamah (modern-day Riyadh) and the territory between Yamamah and the Persian Gulf, one way or another recognised the supremacy of Islam. The main force on which Muhammad drew for control of this vast territory were the Muhajirs ('those who performed Hijrah'), the first Muslim Meccans who had emigrated to Medina, and the Ansar ('helpers'), Muslims of Medina. These 3,000 to 4,000 people, unconditionally devoted to their prophet and ready by his orders to fight to the death, were reinforcements in an otherwise loose mass of a newly born Muslim state. Their small detachments, sent out to major cities and oases for instruction in the matters of faith and to ensure the receipt of the zakat, symbolised the power of the prophet with their presence, but the main thing was his personal authority.

In March 632 Muhammad led the Hajj in Mina and delivered a speech in which he articulated the basic tenets of Islam. A new ban prohibited the addition of an extra month every three years to balance out the difference between the solar year of 365 days and the lunar year of 354 days. The Islamic calendar had become purely lunar.

Upon his return from the Hajj, Muhammad fell ill and by the beginning of June could not go to a common prayer, instructing his friend Abu Bakr to lead it on 8 June 632. Muhammad died in the hands of his beloved wife Aisha, Abu Bakr's daughter.

Muhammad's death pulled out the rod that had held together the disparate parts of the newly formed state. The community, accustomed to receiving indisputably authoritative decisions on any matter, had been suddenly left on its own. The very fact of the death of the person through whom Allah had spoken to the Arabs was a shock. The main question was about who should stand at the head of the community. Muhammad evidently had not thought about his death, or had hoped to get last-minute instructions from above, and had not appointed a successor. He had had no son; moreover, none of his 12 wives after Khadija had given birth.

There remained only two grandchildren, the sons of Muhammad's youngest daughter Fatima and his cousin Ali ibn Abu Talib—Hasan and Husayn, both still little boys. But most importantly, the principle of the succession of power after the prophet was unclear.

A struggle for power began. A claim to power was made by the Ansar, who had faithfully served Muhammad and received less tangible rewards from him than the Muhajirs. Their dominant position in Medina fully ensured the achievement of this goal, but a long-standing rivalry between the two tribal groups interfered with the selection of a candidate acceptable to all. Approaching Muhajirs, led by Abu Bakr and Umar, exploited these differences. Abu Bakr had been elected head of the community and obtained the title 'khaliphatu rasuli-l-Lahi' ('the successor of the messenger of Allah'). The Medinans' resolution was recognised only in the area adjacent to Medina. The Meccans decided to wait. The rest who had sworn allegiance to Muhammad believed that, with the death of the prophet, the commitments made to him had also come to an end—in the first place, the payment of the zakat. Some agreed to remain Muslims if they were made exempt from the zakat. Abu Bakr did not go into any compromises but repulsed an attempt by Bedouins of Central Arabia (Najd) to attack Medina. He sent Khalid ibn al-Walid, who severely punished the apostates; moreover, in the spring of 633 he defeated the Yamamah prophet Musaylimah and conquered the hitherto independent Yamamah. Meanwhile, one way or another, the rest of Arabia also acknowledged Abu Bakr's power.

The stability of the restored state, which could now be called a caliphate, was highly questionable, but something had happened that overshadowed the intra-Arabic problems.

Unexpectedly for the caliph and his entourage, the war with the rebels had turned into a conquest outside Arabia. By all accounts, Muhammad did not intend to bring the ideas of Islam to other peoples. The Quran says that each nation is sent a revelation in its own language, and that the revelation made to Muhammad in Arabic was given specifically to the Arabs. It is unlikely that the Caliph, who could barely

cope with the rebellion in Arabia, could have conceived of attacking the two great powers at the same time had their weaknesses not been inadvertently exposed.

In early May 633 Abu Bakr sent Khalid ibn al-Walid in response to a request for help against the Persians from the leader of one of the Arab tribes that roamed in the Trans-Euphrates Region. Having gained the upper hand in several clashes with Arab-Persian detachments, al-Walid went up to the main town of the Cis-Euphrates Arabs, Hira, and after a brief siege bowed local Christian Arabs to surrender. The Arabs did not accept Islam but agreed to pay the usual poll tax for non-believers (jizya) in the amount of one dinar per year for each adult male.

This success brought Abu Bakr to the idea of invading Byzantine territory inhabited by Arabs. Such a daring proposal initially met resistance from the Caliph's retinue, but then it was nevertheless decided to raise an army, and at the beginning of 633 three detachments totalling about 9,000 soldiers invaded South Palestine and Syria. Able to cope with the forces of the local militia in the field, this army could not take a single fortified city, and only after the transfer to Syria of al-Walid, appointed commander-in-chief, was it able to put to surrender its first major city, Bostra (Busra). After that regular troops were sent against the Arabs and were defeated by the significantly expanded Arab army.

Abu Bakr was not destined to see the further fruits of his risky decision: he died in August 634, passing power to Umar ibn al-Khattab. It had not caused any conflicts, but even this time no rules had been worked out for the inheritance of supreme power.

Byzantium, exhausted by the previous war, was able to send out a second, larger army only at the end of 635. It pushed the Arabs to the Yarmuk River in the south of Syria but suffered a crushing defeat in the summer of 636, after which Heraclius gave up the attempts to defend Syria, leaving this task to local forces. The same thing happened in the Cis-Euphrates Region: Muslims were first driven out of Hira, then the army gathered in Arabia defeated the Sasanian army in December 636 at Cadiz,

south of Hira, and in the spring of 637 entered the capital of the Sasanian Empire, Ctesiphon. In 642 the Arabs defeated the assembled Iranian army in Nahavand, entered Western and Southern Iran, and in the west completely took over Egypt.

The conquerors, whose total number was about 80,000–90,000, posted up in Syria in cities, in houses abandoned by refugees, in camps in Kufa, near Hira, and in Basra, on the lower reaches of the Tigris. In Egypt slightly above the beginning of the delta the camp Fustat arose (in the south of modern Cairo). The soldiers returned there after the conquests.

The Arab conquests were not more violent and bloodier than conventional wars of the time. They were even more lenient than the military conquests of the Middle East by the Persians—nothing like the massacre of the civilian population in Jerusalem in 614 had been heard of at the time of the Arab conquest. The Arabs did not take a fortified city by storm, for which they had neither the experience nor the siege equipment. Usually after a longer or shorter siege citizens entered into an agreement under which they pledged not to harm the Muslims and pay an annual tribute, which theoretically should have been a poll tax on non-believers (*jizya*) of 1, 2, or 4 dinars (12, 24, or 48 dirhams) per adult male, depending on a person's wealth. In fact, it was a redemption tax on the city and the administrative district subordinate to it. Hence, this tribute is sometimes referred to by Arab historians as a *kharaj*, which was a land tax. In return, the citizens received a guarantee of safety for themselves and their property as well as of the preservation of religious buildings, city walls, and other municipal or city property. All community bodies as well as administrative and fiscal structures were also preserved.

Most of all, rural populations suffered during wars, not enjoying protection of property and falling victim to looting and violence prior to conclusion of a peace treaty by the administrative centre.

The staggering size of the spoils of war, the arrival of huge amounts of money per agreements, and the large areas of arable land in the conquered territories set before Umar the ques-

tion of their reasonable use. Clear instructions of Muhammad concerned the *zakat* and military spoils, four-fifths of which had to be divided amongst the campaign participants, and one-fifth (*khums*) made available to the head of the community, but for the rest of the returns it was necessary for the caliph himself to decide. It was especially difficult to find the right solution regarding the lands that had no owners.

The final solution to the problem of how the revenue from the conquered countries should reasonably be spent was found in 639 or 640. The vacant lands left over from enemies fleeing or killed in battle were declared the property of the whole community, and the revenue from them began to be distributed in the form of a remuneration (*ata*) paid to soldiers and persons rendering services to Islam, including all the Muhajirs and Ansars. The first on the list were the widows of the Prophet, who received the highest salaries of 10–12 thousand dirhams a year, those participating in the first battles, including the Caliph himself, and the grandsons of the Prophet, Hasan and Husayn, were apportioned five thousand dirhams each, and the rank-and-file fighters who had contributed to the Yarmouk and Qadisiyyah victories each received one thousand dirhams. The smallest salaries of rank-and-file soldiers constituted 100–150 dirhams. All soldiers registered in the lists (*Divans*) began to receive food rations (*Rizk*). The differences between the categories receiving the salaries were accentuated by the fact that the privileged ones received additional benefits for their wives and children.

In spite of all this, very simple patriarchal relations were maintained within the Muslim community: the Caliph continued to live in a modest house and walked easily about the Medina bazaar with a whip in hand, ready to punish anyone for disorderly behaviour or swindling. Anyone could approach him direct with a question or a request. Of his vicegerents, too, he demanded that they kept their houses open and did not fence themselves off from the people. Despite the absence of any punitive bodies, the viceregents of the large provinces, possessing armies of several thousands (which the Caliph did not have at his disposal), obeyed his orders absolutely. In the community of the

Islamic old guard the original spirit of brotherhood was still alive.

Umar fell victim to this simplicity: in a mosque a Persian slave, whose request he had refused to fulfil, gave him three blows with a dagger, from which Umar died three days later. Before his death he appointed a council of six people worthy of leading the community to elect a Caliph from amongst themselves. It was the first attempt to somehow regulate the transfer of power in the caliphate.

The main candidates were Ali ibn Abu Talib and Uthman ibn Affan. The electors had a preference for the latter, and the different character of the third Caliph, gradually moving away from the earlier simplicity of behaviour, had no effect on the continuation of the Arab conquests. Eight years later the Caliphate absorbed the remains of Sassanid Iran, and its last shah Yazdigerd III died an inglorious death at the hands of an assassin. In the west the borders of the Caliphate stretched as far as present-day Tunisia, and only the area of Carthage remained under Byzantine rule.

In the 650s the offensive spirit of the Caliphate abated considerably. The Arabs, very few in number compared with the subjugated population struggled to cope with the vast conquered territories. The necessity to send troops from Kufa, Basra, and Fustat over a thousand kilometres or more and then bring them back made campaigns too burdensome. In addition, in North Africa and on the Khorasanian borders they had to deal with the nomads, who had the same advantages over the Arabs that they had recently had with respect to the Byzantines and the Iranians: mobility, independence from food provisions, and a good knowledge of local conditions.

At the same time, there was growing internal tension within the Muslim community, generated by the painful process of breaking the usual social relations in the new conditions, the increase in social inequality, and the fact that the highest authorities had become detached from the interests of the public. The warriors in the conquered countries considered these lands their spoils, and the Caliph began to regard the caliphate as his own property, which he could manage as he saw fit, and enrich himself with

the money that was considered to be community assets ('mal al-Muslimin' or 'mal Allah'—that is, 'Muslims' money' or 'money of Allah'). All this gave rise to hostility and suspicion with regard to all his activities. The restructuring of the primitive mosque building in Medina received general reprobation because this had been regarded primarily as the destruction of an edifice created by the Prophet. Discontent was even caused by the codification of the Quran, which until then had existed in fragments in people's memories and in disparate records, which were not always consistent with each other. After a consolidated text had been drawn up, an order was given to destroy the old records, and this was what most angered the owners of the records, which they had made from the words of the Prophet.

Behind the frequent causes of discontent there was a more important general reason—the change in the balance of power between the capital and the new military and political centres, to where the striking force of the Caliphate had been moved. Medina ceased to be a source of reinforcements, it only consumed the spoils won by the soldiers of Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, who considered this situation unfair.

Matters developed into open conflict in the spring of 656, when disaffected detachments from Egypt and Iraq arrived in Medina demanding that Uthman either leave his post or start to rule in accordance with the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. After lengthy and difficult negotiations Uthman signed the required undertaking but then secretly tried to do away with the rebels. Uthman's insidious plan was disclosed, and the discontented people returned to Medina, besieged him in his home, and eventually killed him, not allowing him afterwards to be buried in the common Muslim cemetery. It was as if this murder annulled the most important ethical precept of the religious teacher: all Muslims are brothers and must not kill each other. The murder of Uthman unleashed the first civil war in the Islamic world.

Only a week later, after difficult negotiations with two other contenders, Ali ibn Abu Talib was elected Caliph by members of the electoral council appointed by Umar, Talhah, and az-Zubayr. He was recognised by all the

provinces, except for Syria, which for one and a half decades had been ruled by a relative of Uthman, Muawiyah, who accused Ali of the murder of Uthman. Ali was not immediately able to pacify the unruly viceregent as Talhah and az-Zubayr, offended by the lack of attention from Ali, made a stand against him and seized Basra. They could only be dealt with the help of the Kufians.

Ali did not return to Medina but stayed in Kufa, which would be able to provide more help in the fight against Muawiyah. This step was quite consistent with the new alignment of forces in the Caliphate, although Ali did not realise it himself and, on the contrary, sought to return the Muslim community, which was already enjoying the living conditions of a developed state, to the primitive order of the community at the time of Muhammad.

Ali's idealism prevented him from winning the decisive battle against Muawiyah at Siffin in July 657, prompting him to accept the offer of Muawiyah, who anticipated defeat, to cease fighting and resolve the dispute over power 'according to the Book of Allah' with the help of two arbitrators. The sacrifices made in this battle turned out to have been in vain, and his consent to arbitration had turned the most militant supporters of Ali into his sworn enemies. This group, who had received the name of Kharurites or Kharijites, claimed that the court belonged to Allah and not the people, and that Ali and Muawiyah were enemies of Islam.

The defeat of the Kharijites in open battle (658) did nothing to destroy this movement but only made it even more militant and directed against the existing order in general. The most important element in the ideology of Kharijism was the assertion that any righteous Muslim can be elected a caliph, not only the Quraysh.

The desire to limit the appetite of the tribal leadership deprived Ali of support to such an extent that he was no longer able to raise an army to fight against Muawiyah. The outcome of this, which was already clear, was accelerated by the murder of Ali by the Kharijites in 661.

Thus the struggle between the retrospective representative of the old guard of Islam and the politician positioning himself on existing realities was naturally won by the latter. The per-

sonal qualities of the rivals could only speed up the outcome of the struggle.

As a result of the first civil war in the Islamic world, the caliphate's political centre was moved from Medina to Syria, and two opposition movements came into being: the irreconcilable Kharijism and the more peaceful Shiism, a movement of adherents of the opinion that the power should belong to the descendants of Ali (Shiites, from 'Shi'a Ali,' 'followers of Ali'). The centre of Shiite opposition was Kufa fuelled by the memory of its short reign as the capital. For the Kufian leadership these were purely political beliefs, but for the masses, especially non-Arab Muslims (the Mawla), Ali and his descendants were associated with messianic hopes for the establishment of a kingdom of prosperity and justice.

Muawiyah's long reign, lasting almost twenty years, finally confirmed the new concept of power—an autocratic power, not dependent on the will of the community but coming direct from Allah, and demanding the absolute obedience of the subjects—to the Caliph himself as well as his viceregents. The logic of this concept was to lead to the establishment of the principle of the dynastic succession of power, a principle that was comprehensible and natural for both the Muslims and the many Christian Arabs of Syria, on whom Muawiyah relied.

Muawiyah had been faithful to the agreement with Hassan, but Hassan's death on 13 April 669 untied his hands. In 676 Muawiyah decided to swear an oath of allegiance to his son Yazid as his heir. By fair means or fowl, he attained the consent of the sons of the first four caliphs to swear (or pretend to swear) an oath and thus ensure that the oath-swearing ceremony in Medina and Mecca went unhindered. The oath of allegiance to a successor during the reign of a living ruler embarrassed even the supporters of Muawiyah because it was perceived as a breach of faith with respect to the previous oath.

The death of Muawiyah provoked the beginning of the second civil war: Husayn and Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr refused to swear allegiance to Yazid and took refuge in Mecca. The Shias of Kufa appealed to Husayn promising him all manner of support, but when he was still

making his way to them, with a small group of relatives and their families, the attempted uprising was suppressed. Husayn continued on his way, but near Karbala he was greeted by an army sent by the vicegerent of Iraq; he refused to surrender or to return to Mecca, and on 10 October 680 he was attacked and killed, and his headless, naked body was ignominiously thrown onto the battlefield, along with the bodies of 26 relatives.

The killing of Husayn, who became the principal heroic martyr of Shiism, which from that moment began to turn from a political into a religious movement, did not cause any violent reaction amongst the Muslim community at the time, nor were there any public appearances by Shiites, and even Husayn's brother (from another mother) Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya took it seemingly calm and remained loyal to Yazid.

Attempts to suppress the rebellion of Ibn az-Zubair, who had been supported by the Kharijites, were unsuccessful until in the summer of 683 a great army of Syrians was dispatched, who—with unprecedented violence towards their fellow believers—suppressed the uprising of the Medinites and besieged Ibn az-Zubair in a mosque in Mecca. The atrocious siege, with attacks on the main Muslim holy place, as a result of which it was set on fire and destroyed, ceased immediately following news of the death of Yazid (November 683), who had fallen from his horse while hunting. As soon as his ailing and untalented heir died, the Caliphate was faced with anarchy and internal strife. Ibn al-Zubayr declared himself the Caliph and was recognised by a number of provinces; Kufa and Basra were devastated by fighting between different tribes and groups, the Kharijites conquered southern Iran and a significant part of Arabia, and Syria and Palestine fell into the hands of different tribal groups. Elected as Caliph by the Umayyads, Marwan ibn al-Hakan managed with great difficulty to unite Syria and then regained Egypt. His son Abd al-Malik (from 685) continued the struggle for power in the Caliphate.

In these circumstances of unstable power, the Shiites at last became active, seeking revenge for the death of Husayn. In October 685

there was a serious uprising by al-Mukhtar against the vicegerent Ibn al-Zubayr in Kufa. Al-Mukhtar was authorised by Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, the leader of the Alids, who in reality kept well away from any fight. The rebellion by al-Mukhtar revealed for the first time a new power—that of the non-Arab Muslims (Mawlas) and slaves, who deified Ali and, to the indignation of the Muslim Arabs, worshipped his throne as a shrine. Their participation in the rebellion drove the highest ranks of Kufa against al-Mukhtar, but the revolt was suppressed, and a great many of the participants were found guilty of the death of Husayn and executed. The Kufa aristocracy, which had fled to Basra, prompted its vicegerent Mus'ab ibn al-Zubayr to arrange a campaign against al-Mukhtar.

The army of al-Mukhtar, split by the malevolent attitude of the Arabs towards the non-Arabs, was defeated. Al-Mukhtar defended himself for four months in the fortified palace of his vicegerent and died in April 687, with a weapon in his hands. A direct consequence of the rebellion by al-Mukhtar was the seizure of power by the Mawlas and slaves in Nusaybin. They held out for two years after the death of al-Mukhtar and then joined the army of Abd al-Malik, to fight against Mus'ab ibn al-Zubayr. In autumn 691 Mus'ab was defeated and died in battle. After conquering Kufa, Abd al-Malik sent his police chief al-Hajjaj against Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr. The latter held out in a mosque in Mecca for some months until provisions ran out, came out with a group of followers, and died with his weapon in his hands on 5 November 692. However, it took several more years to suppress the Kharijites in southern Iran and restore the position in the borderlands.

In this war the ideological basis for rectitude in different situations played a huge role. Aware of this, Abd al-Malik tried to reinforce his authority not only with words but also with visible actions. In the midst of the war he began the construction of a unique dome mosque in Jerusalem, the Qubbat al-Sakhrah ('The Dome of the Rock'), in an attempt to convince non-Muslims of the greatness of Islam and his power. At the end of the war he initiated a monetary reform: in 77/696–697 he started the minting of

dinars and then dirhams, with Muslim symbols of faith and a quotation from the Quran, which were to replace coins with symbols hostile to Islam. This was followed by changing the language of documentation in Syria from Greek to Arabic.

Abd al-Malik continued along the line of Muawiyah in keeping the supreme power separate and prioritising its interests over all others. This policy met with opposition from both the highest ranks and common Muslims, who considered the caliph the creation of their will. The antagonism between the authorities and the people was particularly bitter in the eastern part of the caliphate, of which al-Ḥajjāj was made vicegerent in 694. The dissatisfaction of the Iraqis with this policy also manifested itself in an insurrection started in his camp by the tribal elite, in the unwillingness to fight against the Kharijites, and also in a rebellion by the army headed by Ibn al-Ash'ath. The situation was so serious that Abd al-Malik considered dismissing his faithful vicegerent at the demand of the rebels. The defeat of Ibn al-Ash'ath at Dayr al-Jamal and the suppression of the rebellion were only made possible by the support of the Syrian warriors.

Many of the prominent participants of the rebellion by Ibn al-Ash'ath were executed, while others, intimidated by the executions, calmed down. It did nothing, however, to increase their affection towards al-Ḥajjāj. The Syrians, who had been sent to his aid, became his guard, with whom he settled down in a new residence, which had been rebuilt in the city of Wasit between Kufa and Basra. Thus, outwardly, the authorities were separated from the society, and the Iraqis became subordinate to the Syrians. Of the unity of the Muslims in Iraq there could be no question.

The establishment of a stable power in the Caliphate allowed it to reinstate its position in Transcaucasia by cruelly suppressing an Armenian uprising in 702–703, to renew the endless war with Byzantium, and, with the support of new military bases in Merv and Kairouan, to start a new wave of large-scale conquests in the east and the west. By 713 the lands beyond the Amu-Darya up to and including Fergana and Khwarezm had been conquered, and in

the west, the whole of northern Africa as far as Wadi Dra (the southern border of present-day Morocco).

In the summer of 711 the Arab-Berber army landed in Andalusia, defeated the Visigothic King Roderic, and conquered almost the entire Iberian Peninsula and even crossed the Pyrenees. The success of this campaign, which increased the area of the Caliphate by approximately 3 million sq. km, was achieved to a large extent through the participation of a considerable number of Berber nomads, who had adopted Islam a short time earlier. In 716–718 the Arabs besieged Constantinople.

For all the obvious military achievements of the early 8th century and the stability of the central power within the Caliphate, there were growing complications related to the increase in the number of non-Arab Muslims. Equal in theory to the Arabs as brothers in faith, in reality they were second-class people. This was demonstrated by the dependence of the emancipated slaves on their former masters, the contemptuous attitude of the Arabs towards the non-Arabs (*uluḡ*), even if they had not been slaves before adopting Islam, and by material conditions: those who had taken part in military operations alongside the Arabs did not receive any salary or rations; while those who had remained on the land or in the cities continued to pay a high land tax (*kharaj*), and sometimes even a *jizya*.

Umar II (717–720), the Caliph-Reformer, whose aim was to reform the state in accordance with his understanding of what an ideal Islamic state should be, abolished a number of taxes that had not been prescribed by the *Sharia*, restored tax immunity for the leaders of other faiths, and made non-Arab Muslims equal to Arabs with respect to salaries for service and tax liabilities. This had an immediate effect on the amount of taxes collected, especially when there was an increase in the number of people adopting Islam. In Middle Asia the vicegerent wanted to limit the number of conversions by demanding mandatory circumcision, but Umar forbade this stating that Allah had sent Muhammad to deliver a sermon, not circumcision. The contradictions between the ideal and the practical demands of the state would undoubtedly

have lead to a deficit in the means for paying salaries in the future and, hence, to serious political conflicts. However, Umar died soon afterwards, and things returned to how they used to be. Only the memory of the righteousness of 'The Second Umar' remained.

For 80–100 years since the beginning of the conquests, the Islamic society outside Arabia underwent vital changes under the influence of the new conditions of existence. The most important factor that defined many other sides to life was the transformation of the nomadic and semi-nomadic masses, who had started their conquests, into city-dwellers. It was only for the first decade that Kufa, Basra, and Fustat remained a chaotic camping ground of tents, shacks, and temporary constructions. Afterwards they were transformed into regular cities with monumental edifices. The only difference between these cities and the others was the fact that the majority of the population lived off a salary. The Arabs considered the crafts industry and hired labour humiliating (a soldier with a minimum salary could enjoy, without having to work, the same standard of living as an average craftsman's), but any kind of trading was regarded as noble. Income from property was, of course, even better, but not everyone was able to achieve this.

The consumption of advanced achievements of material culture was soon mastered by the Arabs. Better utensils, more sophisticated food, and new types of clothing (for example, the Iranian sirval—that is, wide trousers, which the Arabs had never worn before) came into common use. An excellent illustration of the new demands are the palaces in Syria and Palestine erected at that time.

Naturally, a lot of people were reluctant to leave their trouble-free life and go off to take part in military campaigns. They avoided conscript or hired substitutes from the amongst the poor.

While enjoying the material benefits of the conquered countries, the Arabs showed little interest in their spiritual culture. Unlike the non-literate pagan peoples of Europe, who had invaded the Roman and Byzantine Empires, the Arabs brought with them their literacy and monotheistic religion, and in this respect they

were more independent. They did not feel there was any need to learn the local languages; for this they had translators from amongst the slaves and the Mawlas, who had learnt Arabic. The Arabs divided all the fields of their knowledge into two groups: the 'Greek sciences': philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and the 'Arabic sciences': the science of Islam, genealogy, poetry. For a long time the 'Arabic sciences' existed in parallel with and independently of the 'Greek sciences.' All of the sciences, except for the study of the Quran, were passed down by word of mouth.

The Quran was the principal and indisputable source of the legal and ethical Islamic norms, but it did not embrace all the diverse life situations in their entirety. Hence, the actions and decisions of Muhammad, preserved in the memory of his followers (in the form of the so-called hadiths), acquired a special significance. They became the precedents on which Islamic law was built. The truth of these reports was defined by the authority of the informant. At first this involved, in specific cases, essential analogies from the actions and customs of the Prophet (Sunnah); these were then communicated to interested listeners as material in their own right. Knowledge of the hadiths was a mark of good education, and some listeners became collectors of hadiths. In the first half of the 8th century there appeared the third and even fourth generation of hadith researchers (muhaddiths), who not only transmitted the hadith itself but also informed the entire chain of transmitters, the *isnad*. The elimination of evidently untrue reports required a knowledge of the biographies of the transmitters, whether they had been able to meet each other, etc. In such cases, when there was a break in the *isnad*, the hadith was rejected as inaccurate. A wealth of literature about the hadith researchers, characteristic only of Islam, subsequently developed from this. Such memories of the followers of Muhammad provided the material for commenting on the Quran.

Arab history was born at the turn of the 7th and the 8th centuries, also from the accounts of eye-witnesses of and participants in the events from the period of Muhammad and the first conquests. The close similarity of their



memories to the hadiths gave rise to a similar form: an account of an episode or event with an indication of the informant and the names of transmitters. The collectors of the historical accounts did not work on them to ensure coherence of narration but mechanically united them into a collection. Early Arab history was formed absolutely independently, without any Byzantine and Sasanian influence. In essence, it constitutes collections of memories; contradictory, chronologically not always accurate, but containing a great many vivid details.

The collection of the hadiths and historical accounts was enriched by the active contributions of the non-Arab Muslims, who in this way had become more familiar with Islam, and, with this knowledge, had raised their status in the eyes of Arabs. Among them were Abu Hanifah an-Nu'man, founder of the first school of law (madhhab) in Islam, Hanafi, and the first important hadith researcher and historian Ibn Ishaq, author of the biography of Muhammad and the history of the Caliphs.

It was just such people who, on account of their origin, were intermediaries in ensuring that the Islamic society perceived those elements of the Mediterranean and Iranian culture that were not easily acquired by the Arabs themselves.

The convergence of the Arabs' cultural practices with those of the peoples they conquered did not lead to a unified society because there was economic inequality along ethnic lines. In any case, even a century later, the total number of Muslims and converts in the conquered countries was an insignificant part of the entire population, 5% at most (if those in outlying regions are not counted as their only conversion to Islam was their recognition of the suzerainty of the Caliph and the paying of tributes). In this situation it was only possible to hold onto power by keeping Arab interests unified. However, unity was eroded by the lack of territorial integration and local conflicts between tribes. The Arabs of Northern Africa and Middle Asia were no longer in contact, except for chance meetings during the Hajj. Second and third generation immigrants felt at home in their adopted lands, and local interests were their primary concerns.

Unity also suffered as a result of internal feuds, usually referred to as 'intertribal,' which often led to conflict between northern and southern Arab tribes. In reality there was no age-old conflict between northern Arab and southern Arab tribes but a struggle between various groups seeking precise material or political benefits. Rivalry between leaders was often the cause. Each time various alliances were formed. Their composition would of course be determined by tribal affiliation. The numbers of grievances and conflict victims would grow, and sometimes the hostility would become permanent. For example, such was the attitude of the Iraqi Arabs towards the Syrians, upon whom the vicegerents had been dependent since the beginning of the 8th century.

By the middle of the 8th century the situation in the Caliphate had become a powder keg. All that was needed to set it off was some ideas and the will to unite all those who were dissatisfied. Kharijism was not attractive to the majority due to its intolerance and harshness. Shi'ism was able to contribute one idea: that of giving power to a righteous and just caliph, an imam, who could be only a descendant of the prophet. However, the majority of the Alids were not up to the task of organising a fight for power. The rebellion by Husayn's grandson Zayd ibn Ali in Kufa in 738 relied not on a long preparation period but a conviction that the Kufa people would support him as Husayn's grandson. Emotions on their own were not enough, and the rebellion failed. In skillful hands, the same Kufa Shiites would prove to be deadly to the ruling dynasty. At the end of the reign of al-Walid, or during the time of Suleyman, Abu Hashim Abdallah, the son of Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, for the sake of whom al-Mukhtar had raised the rebellion in Kufa, spoke to Ali ibn Abdallah, the grandson al-Abbas, the uncle of the prophet, while dying in his residence. He told him the names of his loyal followers in Kufa and ordered them to obey a new imam. With their support, Ali ibn Abdallah and his son Muhammad had gradually spread propaganda and recruited followers in Khorasan, an out-of-the-way region. Recruitment was carried out in secret. No one, except the highest ranks, knew the identity of

the figure, known as the 'imam from the family of the prophet,' whom they were encouraged to follow, and to whom they secretly sent the sadaqah (voluntary charitable contributions) that they collected. The most important thing that the Abbasids demanded of them was not to give themselves away and to wait for an order that would come at the most auspicious moment.

The time was right after the death of Caliph Hisham in 743. He was followed by three caliphs in succession within a year. However, even a fourth, the energetic Marwan II could not succeed in stabilising the situation.

In 744 in Khorasan there was a power struggle between the vicegerent Nasr ibn Sayyar and the head of the southern Arab Azd tribe Juday al-Kirmani. In 745–746 it became a full-blown war. The leader of the Abbasids Ibrahim ibn Muhammad sent his authorised representative, Abu Muslim, to Khorasan to prepare the rebellion. It started on 9 June 747 at the Merv Oasis. The rebellion, having been initiated by the Arabs, was supported by non-Arabs of different social ranks, from slaves to large dehqan landowners. Abu Muslim conquered Merv with the son of Juday, who had been killed by Nasr. Waiting in vain for help from Iraq, Nasr tried to organise resistance against Abu Muslim's army in Khorasan but soon died. Abu Muslim became the ruler of Khorasan. Only after that did the vicegerent of Iraq Umar ibn Hubayr realise the threat and try to stop the Khorasan people as they headed west. However, his two armies were reluctant to fight and were defeated in 748 and at the beginning of 749. In summer 749 Umar ibn Hubayr was forced to personally lead an army that stood on the road from Iran to Kufa. It was also defeated. Umar fled, and the Khorasan rebels entered Kufa in August 749.

The Imam Ibrahim was arrested and sent to prison. He was succeeded by his brother Abu al-'Abbās. He and his family were moved to Kufa in secret, but Abu Salamah, the head of the Abbasid Shia, was in no hurry to reveal their identities as he intended to hand power to one of the Alids. However, when two of the clan's elders refused power, the brothers were unveiled to the Kufa people, and on 28 November they swore an oath of loyalty to the new ca-

liph. In his speech he promised to govern justly and to abolish forced labour. He ended by saying that he would 'spill welfare' (as-saffah) for those who obeyed and 'spill blood' of their enemies. Part of this epithet became the regnal name of the new Abbasid caliph Abu al-'Abbās 'Abdu'llāh as-Saffāh.

Marwan II headed a large army that stood in the way of Abbasid's troops, who were going to Syria on the Great Zab River. On 30 January 750 there was a fierce battle, and the Syrians were defeated. With no support in Syria, Marwan went back to Egypt, where he was caught and killed. The victors committed an unheard-of atrocity by executing all the men in the clan, totalling several dozen people. Not even the dead were left in peace. They were disinterred and burnt. Revenge for the arrest and murder of Ibrahim is an insufficient explanation for such hatred. A more likely reason is that they wanted to obtain the Umayyads' huge tracts of lands by exterminating their owners.

One of the few survivors was Abd al-Rahman ibn Mu'awiya, Caliph Hisham's grandson, who fled from Egypt to Andalusia. In 756 he became its emir and founder of the dynasty of the emirs of Cordoba, and then of its caliphs.

It soon became clear that the new dynasty had not delivered on its promise of justice. In 751 Abu Muslim had to suppress a rebellion in Mawarannahr, disposing of his recent supporters, only to be killed by the second Caliph Jafar al-Mansur at the beginning of 755 for becoming too influential and independent.

### Internationalisation of Islam

The events of 747–750 are known as the Abbasid Revolution, which implies the rebellion and violent overthrow of the ruling dynasty. However, this is only part of the truth. The coup did not simply replace one dynasty with another but caused radical changes in the character of the Islamic state itself. This was not the Abbasids' aim.

The rallying cry of Abu Muslim's movement was not only the overthrow of a hatred dynasty but also the restoration of a just Islamic state and a form of Islam that did not discriminate by race. The Iranians, in swearing allegiance to

Abu Muslim, had also sworn allegiance to this form of religion. Fighting against those who oppressed it turned it from being the religion of their enemies and conquerers into their own religion. There are no sources that reveal how this happened. However, it can be supposed that, along with many other factors, this form of Islam was attractive to former Zoroastrians as it contained no formalised class inequality. This was important for those who were from the lower classes of Iranian society, while, by adopting Islam, the Iranian aristocracy was permitted to govern a huge country. In such a way, the son of the main sacrificer in the temple of fire in Balkh, Khalid ibn Barmak, was included in the court of the second Abbasid Caliph, al-Mansur (754–775). He became the first vizier, the head of the Caliphate civil administration (this position itself was taken from the administrative practices of Sasanian Iran).

Radical changes in the life of the Caliphate that resulted from the Abbasid movement were clearly perceived and set down by Abu Tahir ibn Tayfur in the middle of the 9th century: 'The power moved from the Umayyad sons to the al-Abbas sons under this [alignment of stars], and the dehkans lost the faith of the sorcerers, and they adopted Islam during the time of Abu Muslim, and this change was akin to the beginning of a new community [of believers] (millah).'

The major changes that occurred in Islam at that time resulted not only in the global Islamisation of non-Arabs and the loss of the Arabic monopoly on Islam, its character was also changing: people from other religious and cultural backgrounds introduced views such as mysticism and sectarianism, which were unlike those of 'Arabic' Islam. The killing of Abu Muslim gave birth to the belief that his soul (which previously would have been present in Ali ibn Abu Talib) had transmigrated into other spiritual leaders. In 776–778 one of these leaders, Abu Hashim al-Muqanna,' led a rebellion that took place in the valleys of Zeravshan and the Qashqadaryo. Sometimes under the umbrella of Islam clan system ideas would persist.

The founding of a new capital by al-Mansur in the market town of Baghdad was the symbol of the new era in Islam and the change of

culture. It was officially named Madīnat as-Salām, 'The City of Prosperity' (not 'The City of Peace'). Built in the centre of Mesopotamia, not far from the Sasanian capital, the new city broke both from the Arabic Kufa on the steppe border, and the Syrian residences of the Umayyads. This highlighted the split from the Mediterranean Byzantine culture and the link with the Iranian world. Madīna as-Salām itself was a circular city, about a kilometre and a half in diameter. At the centre of two strong adobe walls stood a palace and mosque. Palaces for the caliph's inner circle and trade and craft quarters located between two walls quickly expanded into suburbs. By the end of the 8th century Baghdad had become the largest megalopolis in the Muslim World.

It also rapidly became an important cultural centre, immediately attracting academics from Kufa and Basra. The bringing together of people from different regions gave rise to a new syncretic form of Islamic culture and arts.

For a long time after the founding of Baghdad, the Muslim World, culturally and economically, can be considered a static object, despite the instability and fluidity of the states formed in the caliphate after the 8th century.

The first Abbasids attempted to turn the Caliphate into a unitary state, one which was to be ruled from the centre with strong bureaucratic apparatus and subordinated to the caliph by the army, which the Umayyads did not have. To that end, many practices were borrowed from Sasanian Iran. Khalid ibn Barmak was instrumental in this, and he became al-Mansur's right-hand man. For the first time, the Caliphate had a defined budget and allocated spending in accordance with budgetary items. For that purpose, a dozen bureaus or secretariats, Divans, were set up. They were responsible for supplying the army and the Caliph's court and for governing the kharaj lands and the Caliph's property. A special Divan, part of the postal service, became a centre that informed the supreme authority of the local administration's activities. All this was headed by a vizier, a position that did not exist in the Umayyad era.

The Caliphate ceased to be a state for a conquering people and became a patrimony for the caliph's ruling dynasty. The Abbasids estab-

lished a huge, luxurious court with thousands of courtiers, servants, slaves, and guardsmen. One single palace in the 'Round City' became insufficient. Outside its walls new palaces surrounded by gardens began to spring up. Unfortunately, we do not have records of the Caliphate's spending and cannot estimate what part of the state's income the caliphs spent on themselves either directly or indirectly. Medieval Islamic historians did not like to quote normal statistics, only those that would impress the reader. For this reason, their statements about fantastically lavish festivals and gifts are hard to believe. One reasonably trustworthy source relates that the caliphate's budget in 179/795–796 was 338.91 million dirhams, equivalent to 24,208 million dinars, at an exchange rate of one dinar to 14 dirhams. In 199/814–815 (admittedly, this is taking into account Iraq's future harvest, which could be equal to 3,555 million dirhams, depending on the harvest), the budget was 417.922 million dirhams.

According to the only detailed records of the court expenses in 306/918–919, when the territory that was directly subordinate to the Caliph significantly decreased in size, keeping the court was estimated at 1,560,960 dinars from an overall budget of 14,829,840 dinars.

The tax collection regime was constant and cruel. Arabs and non-Arabs suffered equally. Various regions rebelled against especially cruel tax collection practices. Forces were insufficient to control remote provinces with authority, and in the late 8th century, only 30–40 years after the Abbasids had acceded to power, the Caliphate began to gradually fall apart.

The far west was the first area to separate. In 789 Alid Idris, great grandson of Hasan ibn Ali, who had fled to Northern Africa after the defeat of the Alid rebellion in Medina, founded an independent Berber state on the territory of modern Morocco. In 800 Ibrahim I ibn al-Aghlab, son of one of Abu Muslim's supporters, was allowed govern the Maghreb *ad vitam* (it was later made heritable), after he brought order to the region, with the condition of paying a 40,000 dinar annual charge. In 806 Sogdia also revolted because of oppressions by the vicegerent. The rebellion only calmed down in 810, when al-Ma'mun introduced a less harsh

policy. Ten years later a significant part of Middle Asia, which had been given to four sons of the recent Zoroastrian convert to Islam, Saman, to govern, ceased to be directly subordinate to Baghdad. Azerbaijan spent two decades caught up in the Babek rebellion.

Al-Ma'mun, who came to power supported by the Khorasan nobility and, it would seem, suffering from his dependence on them, began to create a sizable nobility of his own from ghilmen slaves who had learnt military arts. They were mostly Turkic and Saqāliba people (an unclear ethnonym at that time, one which could be used to describe Slavs, Finno-Ugrians, or Northern Turkics). Buying slaves to be guards was a practice started by his brother and successor al-Mu'tasim, who wanted to be rid of the inconveniences of the crowded and bustling Baghdad and founded a new capital on the site of the ancient settlement of Samarra. This also soon turned into a huge city. It stretched along the Tigris for over forty kilometres and proved to be an even more hectic capital than Baghdad. Here the caliphs were hostage to the commanders of the guard, which had grown out of all recognition. Their increased ambitions and the lack of money to pay their salaries often led to riots. Five caliphs in a row, from al-Mutawakkil (847–860) to al-Muhtadi (860–870), were killed. Caliph al-Mu'tadid (870–902) was happy to leave ill-fated Samarra and return to Baghdad. The territory of the caliphate that was directly subordinate to the Caliph had shrunk significantly by that time. Egypt, then Palestine, and Syria had all fallen under the rule of a vicegerent who was effectively independent. He was Ahmad ibn Tulun, a former ghilman. Sistan, Khorasan, and Iran had been conquered by Ya'qub ibn al-Layth. The Caliph had to validate the legality of his rule by creating a charter to govern the conquered regions as a vicegerent.

The centre of the Caliphate was also in danger. When in 870 the Zanj, African slaves, rebelled in the Lower Tigris and Euphrates, free labourers joined in. They took Ahwaz and made attacks on Basra. By using a great deal of force and expense, by 883 the rebellion was suppressed. At the same time, the Shia Isma'ilites became very active in spreading

propaganda in Syria and Iraq. In 889 supporters of Hamdan Qarmat created an independent state in Bahrain (between modern-day Riyadh and the Persian Gulf coast). They announced their capital al-Akhsa as 'Dar al-Hijrah,' likening it to Medina at the time of Muhammad. The Qarmatians were supported by the Bedouins, who had no interest in religious subtleties. They assisted in raids on the Euphrates Region and robbing caravans of pilgrims on the way to Mecca. The peak of hostilities was the attack on Mecca during the Hajj in the middle of January in 930. The emir of Mecca and dozens of pilgrims were killed. During the pillage the Kaaba was plundered, the Black Stone was stolen and taken to al-Akhsa.

The followers of the other branch of the Isma'ilites, the Fatimids, were supported by the Berbers in the central part of Northern Africa, where they defeated the Aghlabids. In 910 in Kairouan the Isma'ilite (Fatimid) Caliph al-Mahdi was set up. He started a campaign to conquer Egypt and then the rest of the Islamic World. The Abbasids retained direct control only over Iraq, part of Western Iran, and the sacred cities of Arabia. They also succeeded in winning back Egypt and Syria for a limited time. Over the rest of their territory, with the exception of the Shia lands, the Abbasid caliphs were recognised as suzerains. They received a charter making their governance legitimate in the eyes of their people and neighbours. The Caliph would be mentioned at Friday prayers, his name embossed on coins, and he would be sent small tributes and gifts. As mentioned earlier, contributions to the caliph's treasury halved. However, the guard and the court remained just as numerous. The state's inability to pay salaries to the highest ranks in a timely fashion led to them being given the right to collect taxes independently in some areas, keeping part of the money collected themselves. The right to keep what remained of the total tax collected after an agreed sum had been given to the treasury was called the *igâr*. Receiving the difference between the rate of *kharaj* and *ushr* (1/10 of the harvest) was known as *the iqta*. 'The *iqta*' of the vizier in 927 was 190,000 dinars. This system of self-sufficiency, which saved the state some problems, destroyed the state finances and the

power of the Caliph once and for all. Their inability to control the various armed forces and maintain order in the capital at the very least, while being torn apart by the conflicts between the Sunnis and the Shiites, meant that the Buyid governor of Western Iran, Mu'izz al-Dawla, was able to take the capital without resistance in 946. Caliph al-Mustakfi was overthrown and blinded. His place was taken by a caliph who was more useful to Mu'izz al-Dawla. Now the sum of his nominal power outside the palace was limited to being represented at receptions and to his issuing investitures to governors who were independent of him. In the 970s these limited powers were reduced geographically after the conquest of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria by the Fatimids.

The political split of the Islamic World into a set of states fighting against each other did not divide its cultural union formed in the 8th and 9th centuries from three cultures that had little been in contact before—the Mediterranean, Iranian, and Arab. The role of proper Arabs in creating this union was important in presenting the language that became a linking factor. However, it should be taken into account that if Arabic had been only a state language or the language of the Quran, its destiny would have been different. The disappearance of the state it served would have led to its disappearance outside the territory inhabited by Arabs, and its religious function only would have limited the area of its use. The importance and necessity of the language is defined, first of all, by the volume of cultural values that access to it opens.

For the first decades, this 'key' opened non-Arabs to only the way to religious knowledge. For those who did not adopt Islam it remained only the language of orders. The introduction of Arabs to new values went faster in Syria and Palestine, where the local Arabs were used to the Byzantine culture before Islam to this or that extent. That is why it is not a coincidence that the first known Arab, who got interested in the 'Greek sciences,' in particular, in chemistry (al-chemistry), and even wrote a treatise on this topic, was Khalid ibn Yazid, a grandson of Caliph Muawiyah. Nor is a coincidence that he was considered an initiator of the reforms of Abd al-Malik. Perhaps, it was also his initia-

tive to translate scientific literature from Greek, Syrian, and Coptic into Arabic. A contribution was made also by the Iranian part. In the second quarter of the 8th century the Persian Rōzbih, known as Ibn al-Muqaffa', translated from Pahlavi to Arabic the fables 'Kalīlah wa Dimnah,' passed down until our days, and the Khwaday-Namag ('Book of the Kings'), from which later the Arab historians took the information about the ancient and medieval history of Iran.

Material for Islamic history was accumulated. During these years the Medina Hadith researcher, a grandson of the Iranian prisoner Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, collected information that allowed him at the time of the Abbasids to write 'The Life Story of the Prophet' and 'The History of Caliphs.' The latter half of the 8th century was a period of intensive development of a cultural phenomenon that is known as medieval Arab culture or Arab science. The peculiar feature of that period was a serious lexicological and grammatical study of Arabic, born and developed in Kufa and Basra. It demonstrated the beginning of the separation of new fields in Arabisation from the homeland of the Arabic language and a diversity of language variants such as tribal dialects and corrupted Arabic in multi-ethnic surroundings in densely populated centres, which demanded the creation of a normative grammar and explanatory monolingual dictionaries. The dictionary of Halil (d. ca. 791) and the grammar of his follower Iranian Sibawayh (d. ca. 796) became an irreplaceable basis for further development of the Arab philology and, undoubtedly, promoted the Arabic language among non-Arabs, setting up a base for teaching Arabic.

At the reign of al-Mansur, there was already a huge caliphate library that was inherited and enlarged by his successors. For that purpose there was a significant number of copyists. Under al-Rashid (786–809) translations were being done especially for this library, called then the 'House of Wisdom' (Dar al-Hikma). The peak of translation activities was reached during the reign of al-Ma'mun (913–933), who showed sincere interest in mathematics and astronomy. Meanwhile, the 'House of Wisdom' placed outstanding scientists of that time, who

studied and translated the essays of all the sciences of the age. Translation activities helped in developing terminology for transmitting new concepts.

Al-Ma'mun actively encouraged astronomical research. They founded the observatories in Baghdad and in Damascus, they tried to measure the grade of the meridian with measuring on the site and with the trigonometric method. These changes set up with a stunning accuracy of that time the quantity of grade at 56 miles (110–112 km). To assess the level of research, conducted in the 'House of Wisdom' at the reign of al-Ma'mun, it is enough to note that at that time Muhammad al-Khwarizmi was working in Baghdad. He worked out the mathematical method called algebra *in Europe*, named after his essay, where this method was described; and its name by the place of origin al-Khwarizmi was eternalised in mathematics with the term *algorithm*. Owing to the translations, the logic of Aristotle, the philosophical ideas of Plato processed by his followers, the medicine of Galen, and others became the inheritance of all those speaking Arabic. This basis started a fast development of proper research in the Islamic World. The translations done in the 'House of Wisdom' helped to form one of the most prominent philosophers who wrote in Arabic, al-Farabi (870–950).

Simultaneously (mostly independently) there was a development of the fundamentals of the Islamic theology and the methods of the Islamic law. The pioneer of it was a Kufa silk merchant, a theologian and a lawyer called Abu Hanifah an-Nu'man (699–767). His followers, having detailed the legal views of Abu Hanifah, set up the first school of the Islamic law (a madhhab) called 'Hanafi.' Some decades later in Medina, another centre of the Muslim research, Malik ibn Anas, also a silk merchant, set up the second school of the Islamic law, 'Maliki.' Then his follower Muhammad al-Shāfi (767–820) set up the third school, the Shafi'i one, which consolidated sets of statements belonging to the previous madhhabs.

One of the main contradictions in Islamic theology was an issue of the degree of the pre-determinacy in events and human behaviour. The classes of kalam and law were a private

case, and the independence of thought was mainly determined by the material independence of the researcher. Their opinions were not mandatory to anyone. Everything depended on a personal reputation defined also by erudition and by a number of followers. The judge could follow this or the school of law, although appointing him depended on which school was accepted by the majority of influential people. The state did not interfere in theoretical activities but tried to support itself by giving positions to the researchers with a good reputation. A lot of them considered a state service as not decent for a researcher and not quite 'clean.' Abu Hanifah persistently rejected all the positions and was sent to prison by al-Mansur.

The first decisive interference of state power in the theological issues took place in 831, when al-Ma'mun declared adherence to the school of the Mu'tazilites about freedom of will and the Quran creation a religious dogma and ordered to verify the creeds of authorised people, especially judges. The dissidents lost their positions, and those extremely hostile to the Mu'tazila were punished. Even while exchanging prisoners with the Byzantines, there was a question about the attitude towards the dogma. The ones who did not accept it were left in Byzantine imprisonment. At the time of al-Mutawakkil (847–861), the Mu'tazila was condemned. Power was taken by the followers of the literal understanding of the Quran and the Hadith without any argument. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, a hadith expert and legal scholar, became a principled leader of Mu'tazila's opponents. His literal approach to the Quran and the hadiths as the only sources of law laid the foundation for the fourth legal school, the Hanbali school. He himself became remarkably consistent in his rejection of any analysis, so much so that he did not leave any description of his legal views in order not to accidentally distort indisputable sources by a subjective judgment.

The presence of four legal schools, despite some differences, did not change the fact that a Muslim, regardless of in which Islamic country he was in, remained subject of one legal system, unlike in Western Europe where there were differences in the legal status of citizens of different cities. These conditions favoured

the exchange of people and ideas across the entire Islamic world. What is more, adherents of other faiths, citizens of Islamic countries, although being somewhat limited in their rights, were also under the same legal rules across the entire space of the Islamic world. The political collapse of the caliphate did not hamper this position. First, legal schools were not territorially isolated (although personal authority of this or that legal scholar could cause a predominance of their madhab in some city or country). Second, the state did not have the right of legislative initiative, the Quran and Sunnah were the only sources of law. What came from the state or ruler were only perishable administrative decisions. They had to be obeyed, but the legality or illegality of those decrees was established by legal scholars who could prejudice the inhabitants of the capital against a decree and even incite a riot. Important decisions were usually discussed preliminarily with religious authorities.

Intensive intellectual activity gave birth to numerous written products, first in the form of papyrus scrolls and then, after paper became widespread in the 9th century, in the form of the books we are accustomed to. Book production came out of the Caliphate libraries to the market. In the markets of big cities there appeared scribes and booksellers (warraqs) who created real bookstores where scientists and authors came to get acquainted with new works. Written products were so numerous that in the 10th century one of the warraqs of Ibn an-Nadim composed a genuine bibliography. From it we now know how many things did not survive down to our days.

The unification of the Afro-Asian provinces of Byzantium, Iran, and Arabia into the caliphate created unprecedented long-distance economic ties. And a concentration of large money supplies in the capitals of the Caliphate intensified far trade of luxury items and different rarities along with long-distance trade in general.

Intensive land cultivation, particularly in the zones of artificial irrigation—in Egypt, Iraq, Ahwaz, and some smaller oases—was the primary source of the Caliphate's wealth. Here long-standing irrigation systems, which underwent only insignificant renovations, continued

to operate. In the plain part of Mesopotamia and Akhvaz the network of channels below the main capital canal gates changed in the course of time, whereas in Egypt, by virtue of geographical features, the network remained constant. Maintenance of main channels with all their constructions was the responsibility of the state, which kept a large staff of supervisors and repairers who seasonally engaged peasants. For instance, 170,000 people took part in irrigation work in Egypt annually amounting to every fifth adult farmer. When the state somehow estranged itself from these concerns, drains and canal gates deteriorated, dams silted, channels became clogged and ceased to transmit water, as happened in Iraq in the latter half of the 10th century.

Expense and efforts at ensuring the functioning of large irrigation systems were quite high but compensated by heavy crop yields. In the best lands of Egypt and Iraq they reached up to 30 hundredweights from a hectare, with the average crop yield of about 18 hundredweights from a hectare. Thus, significantly, the harvest was 15–20 times larger than expended seeds, while in Europe this ratio was 3–4 times smaller. A significant part of the crop was taken from the village, first, as tax and, second, as rent to large landowners who mainly lived in cities. In the areas with artificial irrigation the majority of farmers were tenants and rented land for half of the crop. From the second half they had to pay a tax. The calculation was de facto done on large public threshing floors, where tax collectors measured grains, at a time, not in two stages. The above-mentioned shares of crop in reality significantly varied since in taxation the labour-output ratio of different irrigation systems was taken into account, and in payments between farmer and landowner who had such holdings, as equipment, draft cattle, and the like. Besides tenants who cultivated land by their own means, there were pure farm labourers who as a rule received one-tenth of the crop. Industrial crops, being mainly commercial, were taxed at fixed rate.

The largest monopolistic grain dealer was the state. In 203/818 in Iraq (that is, the central part of modern Iraq) 77,300 kurrs of wheat and 102,750 kurrs of barley (231.5 thousand tons

and 300 thousand tons, respectively) were collected as tax. A significant part, of course, went to supply the army and court, but still plenty of it remained for sale, not to mention income from the caliph's own lands.

The high productivity of agriculture, which allowed condemning a considerable part of its produce as tax and rent, enabled the existence of a large population unoccupied with agriculture and urban dwelling. Citizens in the main crop-producing areas accounted for about 15% of the total population.

A high level of urban life was inherited by the Caliphate and further developed in other exterior forms. From the 6th to the 10th centuries the number of cities in Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia changed little; by contrast, from the 9th century in Middle Asia an explosive growth of big cities began, mainly by means of concentrating population in large centres.

The nature of urban life was, of course, largely determined by the biggest capitals where tax revenues were accumulated, at the expense of which trade and crafts, science and art developed. And the volume of taxes and land rent, which went to a particular city, depended on its position in an administrative-political hierarchy. The wealthier the consumers, the more traders and craftsmen serving their needs were required to serve their needs. The number of pure industrial cities independent of this pattern was small, mainly related to cloth production, so far as we can tell. Tinnis was undoubtedly the largest of them, whose specific location on a small island in the middle of a lake determined the nature of occupation of its inhabitants. In this perhaps third biggest city in Egypt there were around 5 thousand weaving looms producing particularly thin linen fabric, which spread across all the Middle East. Shata and Domyat, the adjacent cities, were also specialised in weaving. Linen and spun silk yarn was exported to Europe. In Middle Asia and Iraq there were several cities that grew through the processing of metals from the adjacent mines, particularly silver.

The predominance of information that we have about the capitals gigantic by the standards of the Middle Ages make researchers suggest a burst of urbanisation in the Islamic



East in the 9–10th centuries. In our national science this suggestion was strengthened by the dominance of studies of Middle Asian cities, the growth of which in this period is sufficiently noticeable. However, leaving aside the cities that emerged on the basis of camp cities in the 7th century, and Baghdad, which grew on the basis of resources of all the Caliphate, the picture becomes less certain.

The total number of cities in the Middle East changed little (we will consider North Africa and Andalusia neither now nor later because they bear little relationship to the Volga Region), with large centres growing through the degradation of the former ones. For example, Fustat grew, whereas Alexandria lost its population and former significance; Kufa, Basra, and later Baghdad grew at a time of Ctesiphon's and Seleucid decay. In Middle Asia a growth of region centres was to a great extent paralleled by the desolation of small Dehkan residences, but a growth of Middle Asian cities was partly caused by the involvement of Middle Asia in closer economic relationships with the Middle East and Iran. In certain cases the relocation of the population from other cities to new centres was accomplished through outright violence: Al-Hajjaj, having founded Wasit Governorate in the first years of the 8th century, relocated there craftsmen and traders from Kufa, Basra, and small adjacent cities, which after that fell into decay.

The urban life developed not in the form of an increase in the number of cities but through the concentration of population in large centres and the activation of trade and craft activity. Particularly noticeable changes occurred in the social structure, inner and spiritual life. An Islamic city, unlike a former Byzantine and a Western European one contemporary to it, did not have a special legal status, nor did its citizens. It was determined by a very important principle of Islamic law—an equality of rights of all Muslims regardless of their residence and occupation. Certainly, this equality was theoretical. There existed real wealth inequality and an everyday common notion about this inequality. An average citizen treated weavers and wipers with contempt, but the rules of law were the same for everyone. The only excep-

tion were the Alids as the descendants of the prophet; their exceptional position was recognised by all.

The Christian and Jewish people constituted a special group of the population with a lower status. Not only did they pay capitation tax for the right to freely practise their religion, but they also gave twice as much money as sales tax and duty. But they belonged to other legal systems.

Within a context of theoretical equality of all Muslims, citizens were in a more privileged position than villagers due to more advantageous terms of taxation for craftsmen and workers: they did not even pay zakat as they did not have enough money savings or property above the sum from which payment of zakat began.

Such a situation was attributable to the fact that specific rules of Islamic law were developed by legal scholars-citizens, many of whom were prosperous traders preaching that achieving prosperity was a Muslim's duty in order to remain independent and follow a righteous path, and that trade and receipt of righteous (that is, not speculative) profit were the worthiest of activities. That is why in the Islamic world citizens did not petition for municipal autonomy and special urban law, for which the citizens of Western Europe began to struggle in the 12th century. They designed a convenient legal system; all they had to do was to ensure that the supreme power did not violate these rights while governing a city.

This exact governance could be implemented by different representatives of the administration: vizier or other persons of the same rank in capitals, and deputies of different titles in provincial centres. Their key task was to preserve order in the city and ensure tax collection. For that there was a police squad as well as supportive squads of armed citizens. This is where government concern about the city and its citizens generally ended. If necessary, the government talked to the citizens through the city's elite and qadi. In his activity the qadi combined judicial duties with the functions of a notary and prosecutor's supervision of compliance with the laws. In different periods and in different countries his competence could differ,

but he usually, in addition to judicial work, controlled public funds, targeted aid to needy people, kept money and other valuables assigned to it, had custody of the property of minors and incapacitated. The specific position of the qadi was in the fact that, as a person appointed by the authorities and receiving a salary from them, he was part of the state apparatus, but as a servant and guardian of the law, he was treated as a man standing up to the community and representing their interests with the authorities. Therefore, in the early period many people, in particular pious faqihs, considered it shameful to receive a salary in this position. Over time such perceptions weakened, and the qadi more and more turned into one of the top officials. In the period under review the qadi was still a representative of the urban community and as such sometimes acted as a community organiser. For instance, one of the Bukhara's qadis supervised the construction of the famous wall around an oasis.

In huge Baghdad one qadi could not cope with all the chores, so two qadis were appointed there: for the western and eastern parts of the city, with the chief qadi (qadi al-qudat) being above them. To all appearances, his responsibility was to appoint judges in the entire state, but some specific data on this point is absent.

A representative of the administration who poached on citizens' lives on a daily basis was a mukhtasib. His responsibility was to 'enjoin the good and restrain the condemnable'—simply put, to watch over morality, which generally came down to the control over trade, correctness of measures and weights, quality of goods, and even the norms of weight that loaders should lift. That is why a mukhtasib was sometimes referred to as 'sahib as-suk' ('chief of a bazaar'). He perambulated the city with a couple of assistants armed with sticks and lashes, who punished delinquents on-site. He watched the cleanliness of the streets and punished those Muslims who appeared intoxicated. The concern for bread supply and control over grain reserves and delivery in the city was the key task of the mukhtasib. Price fixing was considered unacceptable, for their level was determined by Allah, not the amount of goods in the market. However, during off years or

under the conditions of growth in speculative grain prices and, consequently, bread prices that reduced the population to starvation, the authorities faced food riots. The mukhtasib had to intervene to coerce grain dealers to sell hoarded grain and even set a price limit. It happened that those who stubbornly resisted were subject to corporal punishment and even carried over the city in a shameful state, with the public display of their guilt. Sometimes the Caliph or another ruler intervened in this situation, throwing some part of grain from his reserves to the market at a slightly lowered price.

When controlling trade, the mukhtasib relied on the heads of relevant specialities, who had to control their fellows in profession. Unfortunately, we know very little about the organisation of citizens at this level. One can imagine the existence of some professional corporations, but who became their head or what their charters were is unknown.

The city had no municipal organisation and seemed to be totally dependent on the state apparatus ruled by an unorganised mass of citizens, defenseless before him. But this was not really the case. Besides professional groups that acted in solidarity, as indicated, *inter alia*, by festive processions when craftsmen and traders in organised groups demonstrated their products or even some of their corporate banners, there were separate armed groups of citizens, *mauna*, which likely lived on city's self-taxation but subordinated to the chief of police. Finally, there were also associations of urban youth called sometimes *fityan* and *ahdas* and sometimes *ayyars*. In the sources the latter are sometimes referred to as legal alignments (together with organisations of craftsmen, they participated with their banners in the meeting of a Chinese ambassador in Bukhara in the 10th century) and sometimes as ordinary bandits and muggers (during city riots in Baghdad). There was, however, a true forum of citizens where they could express their attitude towards the government, same as the Byzantines at the racetrack or in the circus—the *Jameh Mosque*. From the beginning it had a different function than just to serve as a place of festive praying—it was also a kind of a political club that gathered men from all over the city. Here in the

mosque or near it, as in the most public place, there was a treasury; one could spend the night here; it also served as centre of education, in the galleries of which students and colleagues gathered around scientists, and lectures and debates were held. Here from the pulpit called minbar a salutary speech to the Caliph and the local ruler was proclaimed, and the rulers talked to the citizens with specially-delivered speeches. During the prayer the Caliph or other ruler, in order to avoid a possible assassination attempt, was in a special enclosed place—a maqsurah.

The Jameh Mosque symbolised the city status of the settlement. Al-Muqaddasi, geographer of the end of the 10th century, considered the presence of the Jameh Mosque to be a hallmark of the city; in the geographical literature the word 'minbar' is sometimes used as a synonym for a mosque. In very large cities, due to the large population and long distances, two or even three Jameh Mosques were founded. Usually in one mosque both the Sunnis and the Shiites prayed, but there and when the relationships between the two became strongly hostile, there was a separation.

The Jameh Mosque was where the majority of city riots sprang up. Indignant at the inactivity of the authorities or the introduction of new taxes, the citizens overturned the minbar, from which the preacher who refused to condemn the government spoke, broke it, and went into the street and to the prison to release prisoners, looting and setting fire to individual shops or entire markets along their way.

We know nothing about the participation of adherents of other faiths in citywide disturbances; mostly they suffered from them, when the excited crowd burst into their quarters and smashed up a church or synagogue. In Baghdad, however, bloody battles usually occurred between the Shiites and the Sunnites. Supreme authorities tolerated adherents of other faiths, particularly because there were people among them from whom they sometimes sought help—doctors and financiers. Only sometimes especially pious rulers forced them to wear dishonourable clothes, different from those of a Muslim, or introduce some other additional restrictions.

The Jameh Mosque as a spiritual and political centre of urban life marked as well the centre of economic life: next to it there were shops of people of the most prestigious and influential professions—jewellers and sarrafs (money changers). The latter did not merely exchange one small change for another or dinars for felses; many of them were major financiers, and their banking-houses were prototypes for banks. Their letters of credit or exchange bills (suftadja, hawala, sukuk) were accepted as hard money in other cities and countries, saving merchants engaged in long-distance trade from carrying onerously large sums of money.

Next to jewellers and sarrafs there were spice and incense dealers and then clothiers. Next came shops and workshops of less prestigious and lucrative professions.

In bazaars, like hawkers, there were resellers—dallals—who informed about possible bargains and the availability of new products. They were particularly important in yarn trade since women spinning at home could not sell at the market themselves.

The seat of power was getting more and more isolated and separated from the town life fencing itself off by fortified walls, escaping to citadels or poorly populated suburbs. The residency of the Abbasid Caliphs was a real town inside a town surrounded by a fortified wall with all attributes of a town, except for markets, of course. Fatimid Cairo was also a residency designed to isolate caliphs from the crowded and tumultuous Fustat.

This isolation was also observed in terms of religion which was due to the absence in Islam of a centralised religious organisation. What was common was the religious doctrinal foundation in the Quran and Hadith (the selection of which also differed), but the understanding of these foundations was not regulated, no common system of religious teaching was available. Distinguished scientists gathered voluntary listeners around them in the mosque, and an attendee who completed a certain course could receive from his teacher a certificate that he acquired this knowledge and is entitled to transfer it to others (ijazah). Such training could be received multiple times and in different towns. In this case, social origin was of no

importance, though, it is known that in percentage terms among faqis drapers prevailed. These people were well-off enough to have free time for learning and thinking, and at the same time they kept being a part of the townsfolk. Some of them, those from among the jurists and theologians, rose to a higher level and became qadi, or, thanks to wealth and learning, were admitted to the court. Others stayed in their community and, certainly, had different conceptions of the same things. A decision on any new levy or tax approved by the court faqis could receive zero tolerance on the part of those who had to pay, which was supported by a conclusion of some trustworthy experts on the possible unlawfulness of the decision made by the authorities.

Different attitudes to those who earned their living one way or another by their work and to those who received money without any effort and spent it thoughtlessly gave rise to a difference in interpretation of ethical norms sanctified by the authority of religion. Representatives of the middle class who, using the European terminology, could be called bourgeois or burghers disliked and criticised the luxurious way of life of the ruling leaders and, of course, considered sinful such manifestations of luxury as use of utensils made of precious metals, engagement in art, music, various games. This gave rise to respective prohibitions which became generally acknowledged. In general, the views of the middle class citizens of a medieval town can be compared to the mindset of Protestants who appeared in Western Europe about five hundred years later. Political power was regarded as inevitable evil, which one should submit to, but needs to keep away from, the key is to show personal piety based on the knowledge of the Sharia law.

There is one more line of contradiction which should be noted and which has been ignored by researchers: if for the middle class the most important virtue was the integrity of one's professional activity, and commitment to it was called jihad, then for militant groups of population, extreme fighters for faith in ribats at the borders of the Islamic world the main virtue was to prove their virtue in ruthless struggle with the infidel.

The caliphs rarely tried to canonise certain views. This was only the case with canonisation of Mutazilism in the reign of Ma'mun and with approval of the Sunni creed named 'al-Qadiriya' by al-Qadir in 1012. In the absence of sacerdotalism with the hierarchy of dedication any Muslim could undertake to convert a person of another faith simply explaining the fundamentals of the religious doctrine and the form of prayer. This way of spreading Islam was common on active trading routes outside the Islamic world. Trading with distant countries was dangerous but profitable, and this attracted venturesome merchants to far away foreign lands where they could not manage without close contacts with local population.

Trade was carried on in all provinces of the Caliphate, but there were several especially important sectors. In the far west this was trade with the gold-bearing districts of Black Africa, from where cheap gold was exchanged for salt. This gold ensured financial power of the Fatimid state for a long time. Voluntary missionaries went to the South after the caravans, and already in the 10th century Islam advanced up to Senegal.

But perhaps the most important direction was sea trade with India and Far East from where merchants carried Chinese craft products, Malaysian tin, and various spices, which were later taken to Europe. In the overland trade with China the famous Silk Road was secondary.

There was also specific trade with Eastern Africa carried on in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, from where black slaves, bought or just captured in coastal villages, were carried.

The field of permanent trade contact was a wide steppe border zone with Turkic nomads from where such important goods as slaves and such luxury articles as furs were supplied. In Middle Asia the area of these contacts stretched out seamlessly from Issyk-Kul to the Aral Sea, and farther to the west of the latter from Khwarezm the caravan route ran to the Southern Urals and Volga Region. Another route was across the Caspian Sea. This road was used to carry to the South the same goods, slaves, furs that were paid for by Islamic countries mainly with dirhams in the 9–10th centuries, and the

main routes of trade relations between the Islamic South and the North were marked with numerous treasures of dirhams from Volga to Scandinavia.

In the 11th century the flow of silver from the Islamic South decreased because of drastic reduction of pure silver coinage, now dirhams came into monetary circulation which contained mostly around 1/3 of silver. This phenomenon, which is usually called the silver crisis and explained by shortage of silver caused by depletion of the richest mines of Middle Asia, was actually caused by political instability giving rise to chronic budget deficits of many states which was attempted to cover themselves by the rise of income from coinage. This would bring one time income but did not allow keeping the forced rate of exchange stable—dirhams kept being exchanged for gold based on the actual content of silver in them: putting this into perspective one dinar was equal to 14 silver dirhams and 37–40 dirhams containing 30% of silver. Buwayhids' coinage of dinars containing from 1/2 up to 1/3 of gold also gives evidence that it was not because of silver deficit that the coin got spoiled.

The conformity of the exchange rate of deficient dirhams to the amount of silver they contained did not disrupt the sustainability of monetary circulation in the countries with developed commodity-money relations, but in locations where money was primarily means of accumulation the deficient coin was not desirable.

After the major Caliphate territory had been formed by the 720s and 730s, Islamisation by force of arms over large territories and ethnic groups began to take place. However, this was in most cases a formality, an acknowledgment of political dependence irrelevant of religious beliefs. Such was Marwan ibn Muhammad's conquest of Khazars somewhere near the Don in 737 after which the Khakan consented to be converted into Islam. Even assuming that part of the testimony provided by Arab historians is true, after Marwan had left the Northern Caucasus Khazars forgot their conversion into Islam, and for 200 years more their religion remained Judaism. Similarly this can be said about campaigns of Samanids across the Syr

Darya against nomads, which in case of their victory ended up formally in conversion of the latter into Islam.

At the same time in the border areas where Muslims and non-Muslims lived side by side and had constant contacts, Islam was spreading almost without being noticed. Some were attracted by a possibility of more profitable trade which Islam provided. Others found in it a solution to spiritual inquiries and a door to the Arab-Muslim culture which was by that time already rich. Along with this, some voluntary propagandists, certainly, contributed into the spread of Islam. In remote regions intentional or unintentional promoters of Islam happened to be merchants who brought expensive, wonderful articles for sale and told about the wealth and power of the countries they came from. Usually such merchants had contacts with local governors.

The political benefits received from conversion of these governors and tribe leaders into Islam were also of importance, which is only anyone's guess. Anyway, when the united Islamic state was gone, and spreading Islam by force of arms stopped, peaceful and ideologically grounded proselytisation of this monotheistic religion and the high culture associated with it began.

In 308/920–921, which was a hard period for the Caliphate and no good time for nurturing ambitious plans of ideological and political expansion, when Iraq needed to be protected from Quarmatians' attacks, and Egypt from Fatimids' incursions, a ruler of some dukedom in Sind (Western India) arrived in Baghdad and was converted into Islam by Caliph al-Muqtadir himself. The Caliph could hardly affect the situation in Sind, but still the authority of Islam obtained from the caliph was of some importance.

And in the beginning of 921 Baghdad received a letter from the sovereign (elteber) of Bulgars Almas who wanted to be converted into Islam and asked to be sent spiritual mentors and money for building a fortress (or a wall around the residency). This event, which was politically more important than conversion of the ruler of one of numerous dukedoms of Sind, nevertheless did not appear on the pages

of historical writings, which can be explained by the fact that Baghdad experienced some troubles at that time. In spring of the second year, whether due to negligence of the authorities or blatant speculation, prices on bread rose drastically. The citizens rebelled in spring of 920, also revolted in 921, evidently in May, because the story about it that begun during 308 AH ends during 309 AH. The indignant citizens devastated the house of the chief of police on the Eastern bank of the Tigris, got across to the Western bank where its inhabitants joined them, and together they headed towards the gates of 'The Round City.' The chief of police managed to repress the revolt only resorting to arms. Fixed prices were introduced. However, they did not make any difference. The Caliph sent the wazir, who farmed the procurement of the capital, to Wasit to arrange for the supply of new-yields of grain. The wazir only returned to Baghdad in a month after the embassy had moved to Bulgar. Alamas was sent the appropriate in this case presents in the form of ceremonial brocade dresses, which were always available in the treasury, and various expensive articles; the embassy did not receive any money—either it was not available or carrying a big sum was considered to be dangerous. The ambassador was instructed to receive it in Khwarezm from the administrator of the estate of evicted wazir Ali ibn Isa, which was located there. The Caliph had no hope to receive the money from his vassal, Samanid Emir.

After conversion to Islam, Bulgar begins to be mentioned by Arab geographers, although any information about it was obscure, and they mixed in their reports Volga Bulgars and Balkan Bulgars.

The embassy in Bulgar not recorded by historians was preserved in some verbal stories, and one of them brought al-Masudi to 'Muruj az-zakhab...' ('The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Germs'): 'And the tsar of Bulgars at the present day—that is, in three hundred thirty (941–942)—is a Muslim, he was converted in the reign of al-Muqtadir Bi-Allah—that is, after three hundred ten (922–923). And here is the story about it: He had a son who performed the hajj, he arrived in The City of Prosperity (Baghdad), and al-Muqtadir sent with him the

banner and signs (bunud) and money. And they had a Friday mosque there.' Further al-Musudi flounders and says: the tsar of Bulgars undertakes campaigns on Constantinople, which is clearly related to Balkan Bulgars.

As for other geographers the most accurate information about the country of Bulgars is reported by Ibn Rustah whose writings are dated back to within 903 and 913; but this date, however credible I. Krachkovsky is, appears to be incorrect: According to Ibn Rustah, Bulgar had long been Islamised, what it was not even in 922 according to Ibn Fadlān, so either the whole work was written later than 920s of the 10th century, or all information on Eastern Europe was included therein later by an editor.

However, up to the 11th century Bulgar, separated from the Islamic world by Khazaria, remains an unknown country where 'the nights are very short in summer, and it is very cold in winter.' It is specific that al-Muqaddasi, who described the world within Islam boundaries, did not mention Bulgar.

### The Turkisation of the Islamic World

In the latter half of the 10th century the two-century process of gradual forced and peaceful Islamisation of the Turkic nomadic periphery was completed when in 960 the Kara-Khanid Khakan Satuk Bogra Khan, who had been converted into Islam, converted hundreds of thousands of his subjects in Semirechye. Regardless of whether or not this conversion was total, Islam became the state religion of the Kara-Khanid Khanate.

By the end of the 10th century the Samanid State, which lost support of the dikhkanate, became easy pickings for the Karakhanid state. A typical example comes from 999 when a Karakhanid band of warriors, after they had defeated the Samanid army, approached Bukhara. The preachers in mosques announced the Emir's appeal to the citizenry for help in protecting the capital. The citizens turned to faqis, and the latter replied that their participation would have been mandatory had they to protect the city from enemies of Islam. However, since the Karakhanid state consisted of good Muslims, and the fight was for power not faith, there was

no sense in shedding their blood. And this conclusion decided the fate of Bukhara.

The lands to the West and the South of Amu Darya were included into the state of Mahmud ibn Sabuk-Tegin, the governor of Samanids, who now became an independent sovereign. Mahmud, a son of a Turkic slave, who was brought up at the Samanid court, preserved the centralised control of the state and, in an attempt to model himself on someone educated and providing protection to sciences and arts, brought to his court in Ghazni scientists and poets from conquered countries. Among them there was an outstanding scientist of the Islamic Middle Ages Abu Raihan al-Biruni. However, Mahmud failed to create a cultural centre out of Ghazni. His priority was not the joy of intellectual communication but hunger for power and wealth, which made him, under the guise of fight for faith, perform campaigns to North-East India where he devastated treasuries of Hindu temples and took away thousands of captives.

A huge army created by Mahmud and trained in discontinuous wars did not help to force back another wave of Turkic movement from Middle Asia to the West when Turkmen-Oghuzes started a fight with an aim to conquer Khorasan in the late 30s of the 11th century. In 1040 they defeated the outnumbering and better equipped army of Masud of Ghazni and, encountering no resistance, conquered Iran in no time. The citizens, who learnt from the preceding leaders that war was a matter of sovereigns, and their lot was only to pay taxes to keep the war going, did not demonstrate any resistance, and disjointed forces of Buwayhids competing between each other failed to hold back the growing crowd of nomads. At the end of 1055 the Seljuq sultan Togrulbeg approached Baghdad paying deference to the Caliph, but peaceful negotiations were disrupted by a small conflict between the citizens and Turkmen warriors which eventually spiraled into a mass bloody battle. Togrul punished the offenders of his warriors, and then the Eastern part of Baghdad was devastated, the inhabitants escaped into the vast protected residency of the Caliph. Atrocities of the Seljuk warriors in towns and rural area re-

sulted in soaring of prices and famine. Again Baghdad turned out to be under double control, and caliphs became dependent rulers of the Sunni world.

Going forward to the West, in 1071 Seljuks encountered a Byzantine army headed by the emperor Roman near Manzikert (near Lake Van). The treachery of the emperor's attendants and his captivity secured victory for Seljuks. Now they had a way paved for them to Asia Minor, which was conquered within several years by separate tribal groups that reached Nicaea at the Sea of Marmara. And in the East the Seljuk sultans spread their power on Middle Asia subjecting the Kara-Khanid state.

Seljuks preserved bureaucratic machines in the conquered countries, but supporting the idea of a state as a possession of the ruling family, they divided it into appanages that corresponded to the hierarchy of kin relations by significance. Inside these appanages tribal leaders received plots of land to keep their people by number of warriors. Traditionally these plots of land were called *iqta*, though the fundamental difference from the former ones was that the owner of an *iqta*, *iqtadar*, exercised his political power in it with the help of his warriors.

Such structure of authority made it possible to preserve the unity of the huge country only by way of keeping close kin relations inside the ruling family. Otherwise, significant military and political independence of appanages inevitably would lead to collapse as was to happen in the late 1190s, when an internecine war broke out inside the dynasty, and on the periphery of the Seljuk state independent Turkmen dynasties emerged.

After Seljuks had come to power, Sunni positions strengthened in the Middle East, and the fight between Sunnites and Ismaili Shi'a took a turn for the worse. In 1059 devotees of Fatimids had managed to conquer Baghdad almost for a year before the Seljuk army returned from Azerbaijan. The first madrasah in the Middle East, which was established in Baghdad by the Seljuk wazir Nizam al-Mulk and opened in 1067, was a significant step in the ideological struggle against Ismaili propaganda. Teaching religious sciences begins to turn into a public affair.

An especially dangerous opponent of Sunnism and Seljuk power was the branch of Nizari Ismaili headed by Hasan ibn al-Sabbah, who organised training of terrorists-suicides in his mountain fortress Alamut (fida'is), by the hand of one of them Nizam al-Mulk died in 1092.

The Seljuk expansion in Asia Minor directly threatened Constantinople and existence of Byzantium itself, and the emperor Alexios Komnenos sought help in the Christian West. In early 1097 in Constantinople a troop of knights-crusaders from France and Norman Italy gathered. It was blessed by Pope Urban II to liberate the Holy Sepulchre from Muslims. After the Crusaders had defeated Turkmen of Asia Minor, they proceeded to Jerusalem through Syria. Small Seljuk dukedoms in Syria failed to make a stand, and the sultans involved in internecine feud did not come to help with the main body. The Crusaders founded the Antioch and Edessa principalities on their way and in summer of 1099 took Jerusalem by storm having perpetrated slaughter in which all non-Christians were killed. Jerusalem became the capital of the Kingdom of Jerusalem founded in Palestine, and Asia Minor again got into the hands of Turkmen.

The most remarkable thing about the history of the First Crusade was that a strong opponent, undoubtedly hostile to Islam that appeared in the Islamic territory, did not cause any notable reaction in the Islamic world. Neither then nor a bit later, when slow military actions were going on in Syria between the Muslim leaders and Crusaders, there was an appeal to stand up and fight together for faith. Neither the Abbasid Caliph nor the Fatimid Caliph responded to the invasion of Crusaders, at least this was not reflected in historical writings.

Obviously, after the first bloody stage of the Crusaders' invasion the situation of their Muslim subjects outside Jerusalem was not harder than in Islamic states. In any way, no united front of the fight between the Islamic world and the intruding enemies of Islam was formed, and the fight against them remained a matter of the nearby neighbours, vassals of Seljuks who ruled small principalities in Northern Syria and Mesopotamia. One of them, Imad al-Din Zengi (1127–1146) in 1144–1146 destroyed the

Edessa county, which gave rise to the Second Crusade of 1148 that, however, did not make any change, and his son Nur ad-Din in 1164 inflicted a cruel defeat on crusaders in the Antioch direction, having captured the prince of Antioch and count of Tripoli.

During this period Fatimid Egypt was degraded by the leaders' fight for power. In order to keep his office, Wazir Shawar requested help now from Nur al-Din, now from the Jerusalem king. Things came to such a pitch that Shawar ordered to burn Fustat to prevent its treasures from getting into hands of the crusaders and undertook to pay a million dinars. The arrival of 8 thousand Kurdish horsemen from Nur al-Din led by Shirkuh forced the Crusaders to leave. Shirkuh was appointed as the wazir, and after he died in 1169, his nephew Salah al-Din took up his post, who in half a year was done with Fatimid Caliphate, without bloodshed, by simply proclaiming in a Friday prayer the name of Abbasid Caliph. In the Islamic world the supreme power was again in the possession of one caliph. This coincided with regaining authority by caliphs over a part of Iraq and strengthening of their influence on interstate relations.

Salah al-Din, who gained power after he had annexed the lands of Zengids to his state, inflicted a crushing blow on the Crusaders. In response to the attacks of the count Renaud de Chatillon on the trading ships in the Red Sea, intrusion into the territory of his state and caravan of pilgrims in 1187 Salah al-Din in the beginning of July of the same year encountered the consolidated troop of Crusaders near Hattin (to the West of the Sea of Tiberias) and put it to rout. Nearly all the knights were killed or captured. The Jerusalem king with his brothers, the Grand Master of the Order of Knights Templars, and Renaud de Chatillon were taken captive. Salah al-Din cut off Renaud's head with his own hand and ordered to execute all the Templars, the remaining captives had to buy themselves out.

The Jerusalem kingdom could not make a stand after that. Jerusalem was conquered without any difficulty. All Western Christians were announced captives and had to buy themselves out. The ones who did not have this possibility were reduced to slavery. This cruel measure,



when taken in comparison with the slaughter perpetrated by Crusaders when they were taking Jerusalem, can be considered an act of medieval humanism, especially taking into account that Salah al-Din paid the shipowners (Christians) for those exiles who had no money to pay passage.

Western Europe responded to this defeat by the Third Crusade (1189–1192), which returned to the Jerusalem kingdom's towns on the sea. While retreating, Salah al-Din destroyed town fortifications and led the population outside the town. His intention to create a 'dead area' between Palestine and Egypt came to a point that at his order all the population of one of the major cities of Egypt, Tinnis, was evicted, and the city was destroyed. The division of Salah al-Din's state between his sons after his death prolonged existence of Crusaders on the territory of the Middle East for another half a century. The annihilation of the consolidated army of Crusaders near Gaza in 1244 and failure of Louis IX's campaign on Egypt in 1248, which ended up in capture of the king, finally decided the fate of the Jerusalem kingdom. Insignificant remains of the lands of the Crusaders in the coastal area, which existed for two decades more, were of small importance in the Middle East.

The crusades, which played a great role in facilitation of cultural development of Western Europe and contributed to growth of Genoa and Venice, for the Middle East turned into devastation of Palestine and loss of an active role for the Arab fleet on the Mediterranean Sea. Some borrowings in fortification and military science could not compensate for the harm done. The period of Crusades can be considered to be a tentative landmark, after which the tempo of development of Western Europe surpassed that of the Middle East.

The Crusades, which were important for Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, in no way involved countries outside the lands of the Zengids and later the Ayyubids. There a fight was being waged between numerous semi-independent and independent descendants of Seljuk and their protégés.

Frequent changes of the political map did not change much in the economy, administra-

tion or ideology—everything was set by the experience and practice of the united Seljuk empire.

Turkic conquest of Middle Asia, Iran, and the Middle East, in contrast to the Arab one, did not bring along a new written language. Turkic languages remained on the spoken level, for 'internal use,' Persian-Tajik became a language of an office, literature, and elevated poetry, the Arab language kept being a language of religion and science in the whole territory giving place to Persian in the field of history. In the Iranian speaking territory the Persian language was used not only to write new historical compositions but also to translate those which had been written earlier in the Arabic. With this said, it is typical that there were no translations from Persian into Arabic, partly because all educated people knew the Arab language, and when they considered something to be noteworthy for general public, they wrote in Arabic. But still the isolation of the Arab literature from the Persian one made it scanty.

From the 11th century to the early half of the 13th century was the golden age of literature in the Persian language, especially poetry. The names of Ferdowsi (934–1020?), who finished in the beginning of this period his great epic 'Shahnameh,' Omar Khayyam (died in 1122), Nizami (1141–1203), Saadi (1203–1292), Jalal ad-Din Rumi (1203–1273) are well-known nowadays outside the Iranian speaking world. During that period a rich fund of historical literature was formed, and eventually the Persian language intruded into the religious sphere in the form of commentaries on the Quran and religious ethic writings.

The Turkic elites were bilingual, and Persian was in most cases the second language. The wave of Seljuk intrusion brought along influence of Persian culture up to Asia Minor, Jalal ad-Din Rumi being an example. The Turkic language remained a spoken language for a long time being enlarged with Persian and Arab vocabulary.

In contrast to literature, the advance of science during this era looks meagre. In the Kara-Khanid lands the development of natural and exact sciences actually ceased. Due to the fact that the Kara-Khanid state did not

have any intellectual needs in these areas, one of outstanding scientists of the Islamic Middle Ages Abu Ali ibn Sina had to leave Bukhara, and no famous doctor or philosopher appeared in Transoxiana thereafter. The apogee of scientific idea followed by notable decline or, at the best stagnation, was the creation of Abū Rayḥān Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Bīrūnī, who was known for inquisitiveness and courage of thought that in most cases scientists of the next generations lacked.

One reason for this can be considered strengthening of spiritual censorship. An outstanding religious thinker of the end of the 11–beginning of the 12th centuries al-Ghazali concisely articulated the disapproval emerging at that time of free-thinking 'philosophers' whose judgments on the structure of the world went beyond the traditional boundaries set by the theology which had by that time developed significantly. In the 12–beginning of the 13th centuries only in the far west of the Islamic world, which we here leave aside, appeared an outstanding thinker in the person of Ibn Rushd (1126–1211), who had a great influence on the development of Western European philosophy and who, along with Ibn Sina (Avicenna), was ranked among the greatest wise men of medieval Europe.

As noted above, in the 12th century madrasahs were being established on a large-scale. In Damascus at the end of the 12th century there were 66 madrasahs in the city itself and 20 in the suburbs, in Khaleb, over 40. Even in relatively small towns several madrasahs functioned at that time. This did not rule out the former tradition of teaching in mosques and even in homes, but reputed scientists preferred to teach in a madrasah, especially since their work there was paid. The main source of funding was donations of the founder in the form of an endowment (waqf).

Waqf (Arab 'stop,' 'suspension') is a pious bequest of income from any property that loses the main attribute of property—the right and possibility of alienation—as if being 'stopped' (vakafa). The founder determines how the bequest will be distributed (for repair, lighting purposes, to pay for personnel, etc.). Venerable training centres or medical institutions as

well as shelters accumulated a considerable number of additional bequests. A benefactor could even bequeath the position of administrator to his son and to all his descendants, thus creating a kind of insurance fund. Waqfs were devised even to tombs honouring saints (mazar).

Thus, in the 12–beginning of the 13th centuries a significant stratum of people was being formed: those who were paid a salary for performing certain functions related to religion, who were economically independent from the state and therefore could have their own opinions (which was not an obstacle for the sovereigns if they wanted to dismiss from teaching and management of a madrasah people undesirable for the authorities).

Simultaneously with development of traditional theology and complication of perception of huge volumes of theological literature, a mystic and ascetic movement was being developed, which encouraged to learn god through self-perfection—Sufism. This movement, the origin of which dates back to almost the 8th century, actually announced itself aloud in the preaching of al-Hallaj in the beginning of the 10th century and became a mass phenomenon at the turn of the 11th century. Without going into detail it can be noted that an essential distinctive feature of Sufism was learning the truth with the help of a teacher, sheikh-mentor, who experienced the mystery of communication with a divine soul in an ecstasy of self-denial. The followers—murids—comprehend the truths of faith not from much reading but thanks to the sheikh's directions. The one who experienced God receives from the sheikh instead of a document (ijazah) special clothing, khirqah, which entitles him to become a mentor. The difference in viewpoints and methods of achieving an ecstatic state resulted in emergence of various movements, paths (tariqah), called by European researchers either 'orders' or 'brotherhoods.' The increase in number of followers and desirability of isolation resulted in emergence of special cloisters (dervish lodge or zawiyah) in which murids, who lived sticking to strict rules, under the sheikh's supervision mastered the skills of letting their spirits soar.

Representatives of traditional (or official) Islam fought against Sufism, they felt especially indignant at rejoicing with music, songs, and dancing. Yet among the general public the authority of sheikhs, who personally and not through books established a connection with God, only grew up in course of time. Absolute monotheism does not give to the majority of people emotional satisfaction, and people seek intermediaries. This is the reason for the cult of Saints in Christianity that is an absolutely pagan worship of human remains. This is the reason for worship of tombs of saints in Islam, which contradicts with its fundamental principles but is itself ineradicable. Sufi sheikhs happened to be just such intermediaries between the incomprehensible coessential God and people. Rich people considered it to be an honour to bring them gifts, and the wealth of sheikhs, who helped poor people, increased their influence.

In the beginning of the 13th century (maybe even earlier) a certain connection was established between Sufism and craft organisations in towns. These were organisations of some rather poorly understood futuvva (heroism). Caliph an-Nasir decided to use them for strengthening his influence and joined a futuwwa in 1185, encouraging other leaders to follow his example. This unexpected step evidently did not have any consequences.

Sufism affected the spread of Islam on the steppe outskirts of Middle Asia where there was an ongoing influx of pagan nomads from the north-east. Here, in the town of Yasa Ahmad Yasawi successfully carried out propaganda, his tomb is still revered.

It is difficult to say how big the influence of Sufism was in the Volga Region of the 12th century.

The well-established, though unquiet, life style of the Eastern half of the Islamic world was broken in the 1220s by the Mongol conquest. Its consequences are well-known, and there is no need to go deep into detail. Mongols covered all the territory of Middle Asia ruthlessly repressing any resistance. No matter how the number of victims was exaggerated by Muslim historians, many tens of thousands were counted. The capital of Khwarezm Gorgan was annihilated, the destroyed Merv would never recover, in order to take Samarkand, the conquerers destroyed the aqueduct supplying water to the city, which none of the preceding conquerers had done. Further movement of Mongols to the west dragged on for 35 years, and most probably this was the reason why it looked less destructive.

Conquests of Mongol khans, which united Iran and Middle Asia with the nomadic steppes of Eurasia, created a different situation in the Islamic world, which will be described in some other place. It should only be noted here that lands of the caliphs remained intact until the 13th century, and only after Northern Mesopotamia had been conquered, Hulagu sieged Baghdad in the beginning of 1258. Caliph al-Mustain, accompanied by his wazir and notable citizens, went out for negotiations and was arrested by Mongols. Two weeks later the city ended resistance. The Caliph was forced to give away all the treasures, and then he was strangled, after that all his male relatives and many people of his circle were killed. On the next day, 11 February 1258, the city was handed over for plunder. Having been severely harmed, Baghdad did not disappear, unlike Gurganj and Merv, but it lost its role of the intellectual capital of the Islamic world which now passed to Cairo. Here a new page in the history of the Islamic world opens.

## CHAPTER 2

### Islam and Islamic Culture in Volga Bulgaria

*Iskander Izmaylov*

#### Religious Situation in the Middle Volga Region in the 8–9th Centuries

The power of the Turkic khagan had weakened in West Eurasia by the mid-7th century, and a state known as the Great Bulgaria had emerged in the Black Sea steppe as the first Bulgarian ethnopolitical association.

Even though Great Bulgaria historically did not exist for a long time, it was the period when a unique ethnopolitical self-identification was developed, as various Bulgarian groups preserved their ethnonym and characteristic elements of their spiritual culture, which apparently included the dynasty history (the Nominalia of the Bulgarian khans), even after the state was dissolved, and they had to move to new territories. It is commonly assumed that the Bulgarian people were pagans when they came to the Volga-Ural Region. Many scholars also insist that Bulgarian mythology and beliefs were based on the Turkic Tengrism [Klyashtorny, 1981, pp. 117–138]. Characteristic features of the cult of Tengri as the ruler of the Upper World in Ciscaucasia and apparently among proto-Bulgarian tribes included worship of his symbols and incarnations—the Sun, Moon, thunder, and tall trees. They also worshiped a female deity, the apparently Turkic goddess Umay, as well as the holy Water and Land. Beliefs and rituals recorded for various Turkic tribes in Ciscaucasia and the Northern Black Sea Region in the 7–8th centuries clearly share some features with those of the Turks of Middle Asia [Klyashtorny, 2000, pp. 120–125]. It is beyond doubt, however, that the religious situation was not simple even at that time. Kubrat is known to have been baptised. It is also clear that some of the proto-Bulgarian nobility were Christians. It is unclear how widely spread the religion was, but there is no doubt

that there were Christians in the population of the Don Region. Islam began to spread to the region a little later. It really gained momentum after the Arabs conquered Middle Asia, and the Arab-Khazar wars began.

Kubrat's five sons found themselves in different lands as the heads of their tribes after Great Bulgaria fell. There are many written records of the Bulgarian dispersal. Similar archaeological materials found in the Lower Danube Region, Pannonia, the Middle Volga Region, the Don Region, and the North Caucasus provide further evidence. Some of the Bulgarians migrated to the Middle Volga Region.

The early Bulgar and other Turkic-Ugric tribes of the Volga-Ural Region in the 8–9th centuries were politically dependent on the Khazar Khaganate, where Judaism began to spread back in the late 8th century [Novoseltsev, 1990, pp. 148–154]. However, sources indicate that the religion never became the faith of the Khaganate's general population and even caused an internecine war (the 'Kabar Rebellion').

Even though a significant number of archaeological records dating back to the 7–early 10th centuries have been studied, there are no convincing facts to estimate how widely world religions spread among the Turkic-Bulgar tribes of the Middle Volga Region in that period. It is beyond doubt, however, that their beliefs were quite far removed from the Tengrism of Middle Asia and complicated due to the influence of multiple religions. Besides, different clans and tribes could profess different cults and faiths.

Thus, the religious situation at the time the Bulgarian ethnopolitical association was established was complicated, while the spiritual culture of the Turkic-Bulgarian tribe was a syncretic combination of various Turkic cults influenced by world religions.

### **The Spreading of Islam in the Volga Region: Causes and Early History**

Scholars have provided different dates for when Islam began to spread in the Volga Ural Region, generally within the 8–10th centuries. It seems that any speculation on the exact time that Islam entered Bulgaria would be merely hypothetical unless there are new reliable sources. It is clear that the connection to the Muslim world grew stronger and more regular as soon as the Bulgars began to establish systematic commercial and economic contacts with the Orient (starting in the late 7th century), and the crucial Volga-Baltic route, including dedicated infrastructure and its influence area, emerged. However, it does not seem possible that a stable Muslim community developed at that time. It might have been the 8–9th centuries when the first proselytes appeared, and the period of initial acquaintance with Islam began.

Undoubtedly, the spread of Islam among the Bulgars was connected to the consolidation of different tribes under the auspices of the Bulgars headed by Šilki and, more importantly, his son Almiš. Their key political motivation was to become independent from the Khazar Khaganate. Almiš and other leaders of Turkic-Ugric tribes in the Volga Ural Region were vassals of the Khazar Khagan and had to pay a tribute of fur to him, while Almiš's son was kept in Atil as a hostage. The Khazar dominance was generally merciless and humiliating. For instance, when the Khazar ruler heard about Almiš's beautiful daughter, he wanted to have her in his harem. When the Bulgar elite refused, he sent troops to make him obey the order. When Almiš was dead, the Khagan demanded his sister [Ibn Fadlan, 1956]. Intending to revolt against the Khazars, Almiš wanted to consolidate all the tribes in the Middle Volga Region under his power.

Yet, it was not only military-political but also ideological unification of tribes and clans with tribal cults and faiths of their own that the ruling Bulgar clan had to address when subjugating different tribes. To create a supra-tribal ethnopolitical association, they had to establish a unified, universalist, and integrating religious

system that had no roots in the local environment. Only world religions could provide such a faith. At the same time, the ruler could use the new faith to assert more power, as it would ensure greater legitimacy. It would not only make him superior to tribal dynasties but to some extent would dismiss them as having no divine sanction to rule.

We have factual evidence that the formation of the Bulgar state gained momentum in the late 9–early 10th centuries, meaning that this was the time when Islam spread. It is no coincidence that the oldest archaeological traces of Islam date back to the latter half of the 9th century. Rings with inscriptions in Arabic were found in the Tankeyevsky burial site, apparently indicating that Islam was beginning to enter the Bulgar environment [Kazakov, 1985]. Thus, the main reason why Islam spread among the Bulgars was a set of internal factors, the consolidation of different tribes under Bulgar power.

But why was Islam, of all world religions, the one to spread in the Volga Region? It can be explained by the interaction of various external and internal factors. On the one hand, neither Christianity nor Judaism could be attractive to the Bulgars since the nearest Christian state of the time, Byzantium, was allied to Khazaria and did not exert any intense influence on the Volga Region, while the Judaic Khazaria was the enemy that the Bulgars were going to fight. Thus, the political situation favoured Islam.

The active commercial and economic contacts between the Volga Region and such countries in Middle Asia as Khwarezm and the Samanid Empire were particularly important. The direct trade route to the Middle Volga Region enabled Muslim merchants to access northern goods without entering Khazaria. The numerous hoards of Arab dirhams, Cufic- and African-coined, dating back to the 840s in Bulgaria (Staroye Almetyevo, 821) and the Upper Kama River Region (Leleki, 802/803, Vyatka, 835, Yagoshury, 842/843, Lesogur, 841/842) present vivid evidence of it, while Samanid dirhams dominated the monetary flow in the late 9th century and later on [Yanin, 1956].

The smooth development of Bulgar society, which Islam was infiltrating slowly in the

9–10th centuries, eventually led to their statehood and to the Almiş and some nobility converting to Islam. The account of the emergence of the Bulgar state and its first rulers given by Arabian merchant and diplomat from Andalusia (Spain) Abu Hamid al-Gharnati in his literary work is a brief and rather corrupted piece of evidence. It should be noted that al-Gharnati did not just retell a legend that he had heard but retold an extract from 'A History of Bulgaria,' copied (written?) by Bulgar capital qadi Yakub ibn Nugman that he had read. The retelling being quite close to the original text, it represents the formal historiographic tradition. 'The word bulgar,' the Andalusian traveller wrote, 'means a 'learnt man.' The thing is that a Muslim merchant came to us from Bukhara; he was a faqih with good knowledge of medicine.' Al-Gharnati then tells how the Bulgar emir/'king' and his wife fell ill, the faqih cured them, and the Bulgars converted to Islam. The Khazar 'king' was outraged by the conversion. He waged war against the Bulgars but was defeated because of 'big men on gray horses' ('the troops of Allah, great and glorious,' to quote the source of al-Gharnati) [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 31]. This is most likely not the first version of this story but the only authentic one that has been preserved in written sources. The general message of this 'introduction' to Bulgar history is that the Bulgars converted to Islam during the period of the Khazar Khaganate, and the proselytes from the Samanid Empire made a major contribution.

Another more recent version, which has come down to us as legends written down in the 18–19th centuries, presents the story in more detail, attributing the promulgation of Islam in Bulgaria to three askhabs (companions) of Prophet Muhammad. One of them cured the ruler's daughter of a deadly disease and founded a new Muslim dynasty by marrying her [Galyautdinov, pp. 162–163]. The story is legendary in terms of historical reality. This was clear to the realistic thinker and illuminator Sh. Marjani, who criticised the version sharply. He was right. However, the legend does hold a kernel of truth. It can be essentially viewed as an attempt by medieval Bulgar historians to invent older roots for their faith and instill in Bulgarian people a sense of superiority to their neigh-

bours, who could not claim to be related to the prophet's companions. Thus, the historical and folklore versions are rather similar, suggesting that the latter has preserved some of the Bulgar historical traditions, though in a modified form.

As we can see, no formal Bulgar tradition mentions the Baghdad caliphs in relation to the conversion. This is no coincidence. The Bulgars have a very clear and unambiguous idea of the origin of Islam in the Volga Region and the religious connections that remained important for the Bulgars throughout centuries—Middle Asia and Bukhara. It was no coincidence that the first Bulgar coins imitated the Samanid design, including the minting dates and centres (Bukhara, Samarkand, Çaç) [Mukhamadiyev, 1990, pp. 104–117]. However, the tradition seems to have been revised much later, the priority in promulgating Islam being associated not with an anonymous faqih from Bukhara but directly to the prophet's companions. This plays a crucial determining role in the purely theological aspect. The thing is, Hanifi madhhab was dominant in Middle Asia, especially in the Samanid court, in the 9–10th centuries, while the Shafi'i and Hanbali ones were well established in Baghdad. A number of notes by Ibn Fadlan, who described 'mistakes' in the Bulgars' religious practice (khutbah delivery, double iqama, avoiding saying the caliph's name, etc.), suggest that they followed Abu Hanifah. It is strong evidence that the Middle Asian centre of Islam was a priority for the Bulgars when they chose their faith. It is also entirely possible that the Muslim community of Atil, which had an influential 'Muslim party' consisting of the city's ruling elite and guard ('alarsiyya'), did influence the Bulgar conversion to Islam [Novoseltsev, 1990, pp. 121–122]. The Bulgars allied with them, for instance, to fight against the Ruses in 912/913, but it is hard to tell how important it was.

The exact date Almiş converted to Islam is unknown, it is safe to attribute it to the 1st decade of the 10th century. Ibn Rustah reported that a 'Bulgar king named Almush professes Islam,' while 'a large part of them (the Bulgars) profess Islam and have mosques and primary schools with muezzins and imams in their settlements' [Khvolson, 1869, pp. 22–23]. Al-

Masudi reported that *Muslim Bulgars* acted against the Ruses, who raided Caspian Samanid provinces in 912/913 [Garkavi, 1870, pp. 131–133]. The Bulgar ruler was also reported to be Muslim by Ibn Fadlan, though he tried to downplay the fact to emphasise his role in Islamising the Bulgars and their 'malik.' However, the Arab author, who had travelled to the Middle Volga Region, reported a delegation arrived in Baghdad in 921 to deliver a letter by 'al-Hasan son of Baltavar, the king of the Slavs (sakaliba),' to the caliph, meaning that the Bulgar ruler (the elteber and the elteber's son) Almiş signed letters with the Muslim name 'al-Hasan' and apparently was Muslim, as was his daughter. The delegation included Almiş's confidant, also a Muslim, named Abdallah ibn Bashtu al-Khazari.

There were Muslim communities in Bulgaria, too. Apart from Almiş's headquarters, which had a dedicated clerical staff, including a muezzin, and, according to Ibn Fadlan, contained a lot of Muslims (he even describes their burial ceremony), there were other significant Muslim communities. For instance, Ibn Fadlan described a 'family member' community (kinsmen?) named al-baranjar, 'consisting of five thousand men and women already converted into Islam... A wooden mosque was built for them so that they could pray' [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 138]. Thus, it is safe to say that in the second and third decades of the 10th century large Bulgar Muslim communities already existed. What is more, the Bulgar nobility, headed by Almiş, adopted the new faith.

Islam was gaining strength in the confrontation with the tribes who apparently wanted to remain independent from Almiş's Bulgars rather than preserve their traditional faiths. Ibn Fadlan described a most vivid example when Almiş ordered for 'a change of location and called for the Suwaz people, ordering them to migrate with him. (They) refused him. (They) split into two parties. One party, with (different) scum of society, whom a Vyryg (had) claimed to rule. The (Bulgar) king sent messengers to them, saying: 'Indeed, Allah, the great and powerful, gave me Islam and the supreme authority of Ruler of the Faithful, and I am his (Allah's) slave, and this is the mission

that he has entrusted to me, and I shall smite whoever resists me with my sword.' The other party clung to the Esgil king. He was in obedience to him, although he had not converted to Islam yet. When he (the Bulgar king) sent them (the first party) this message, they became afraid of his intention and followed him to the Dzhaushyr River [Ibid., 1956, p. 139]. Unfortunately, we have no other facts at our disposal, describing the promulgation of Islam among the population of Bulgaria. It is obvious, however, that in addition to preaching the new faith the Bulgar rulers also resorted to force.

The key event that marked the establishment of Islam in Bulgaria was an exchange of embassies between Almiş and caliph of Baghdad al-Muqtadir. The political history of these contacts as well as the course of the embassy's trip from Baghdad to the Volga River banks are well-studied [Novoseltsev, 1990, pp. 197–199]. In this case, it is essential to note that, regardless of certain remarks by Ibn Fadlan, Islam was quite wide-spread in the Volga Region, and the embassy had no success in promulgating the religion, while the Bulgar ruler's expectation to use the caliph as an influential ally against Khazaria and the Samanids remained unmet. However, the Baghdad embassy played a decisive role in the diplomatic recognition of Bulgaria as a Muslim country, thus boosting the spread of Islam among Bulgars and opening up a huge country for the civilised world, thereby extending the Islamic oecumene to the Middle Volga. Since then eastern diplomats and historians began to take a closer look into the political processes occurring in bustling Eastern Europe, where the northernmost Islamic state had emerged—the single and natural ally for any eastern country having interests in the Volga Region as well as a reliable trading partner for all merchants selling northern goods. Since the times of Ibn Fadlan all geographical works have mentioned the Bulgars. Their descriptions were included in tradition, and information about them was rewritten, complemented, and changed, especially after Bulgaria got stronger and became a powerful medieval state. Its relations with Islamic countries also developed and strengthened. They were formalised during the visit of Almiş's son, who was on his Hajj pil-

grimage to Baghdad to see Caliph al-Muqtadir (908–932), to whom he presented a banner, a sawad, and money [Ibid.].

### **Bulgaria as a Medieval Muslim Country**

In the late 10–early 11th centuries Volga Bulgaria became a country of 'classical Islam' (term by G. von Grunebaum). Its territory stretched from the Oka-Sviyazh interfluvium in the west to the Southern Urals in the east, from the Sura River Region and the Samara Bend in the south to the Cis-Kama Region in the north. The political and economic influence of the Bulgars also covered the Upper Cis-Kama Region and the Lower Volga Region, where the city of Saqsın lay in the Volga Delta. The state's capital at that time was Bilyar (*the Great City* in Russian chronicles), which stood out due to its size (about 800 ha) and population (up to 50,000 people).

In the early 10th century the Arab-Persian historical and geographical tradition (Ibn Rustah, al-Marwazi, al-Gardizi, etc.) established that the Bulgars had two major cities: Bulgar and Suvar. Both cities had a cathedral mosque and a Muslim population of 10,000 people, who fought against disbelievers [Zakhoder, 1967, p. 36].

The indication that the Bulgars were at war with disbelievers is characteristic of this tradition. The circumstances of these wars are unknown, but what is important is the general opinion that the Bulgars adhere to Islamic laws and fight against disbelievers. For example, the Persian source *Hudud al-'Alam* (982/983) reports: 'Bulgar is a city with a minor area located on the shores of the Atıl River. All of the residents are Muslims; the city has around 20,000 horsemen. They fight and defeat any army of kafirs, however large it is' [*Hudud al-'Alam*, 1930, p. 32].

The Bulgars tried to spread Islam to Rus' as well. A peace treaty was signed in 985 following the Bulgarian campaign of Vladimir I. The Rusessian Primary Chronicle contains a faith-choosing story dated 986, when the Bulgars tried to persuade Vladimir to convert to Islam. It also presents the features of Islam that the chronicler found to be most essential.

When Vladimir asked: 'What is your faith?' the Bulgars answered: 'in God we trust; God says that we must do circumcision, eat no pork and drink no wine; after we die... we shall indulge in lust with our wives.' Extended or abridged, the story can be found in almost any edition of the Rusessian Primary Chronicle [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 84; II, pp. 71, 72; XV, p. 77; XXV, p. 359]. The 'faith-testing' story (dated 987) then presents a more or less complete account of the Bulgar religious practice as seen by the Rusessians: 'we went to the Bulgars to watch how they worship in the church, namely in a mosque. They stood there, wearing no belt, and sat down on the floor after making bows and look around like mad, and there is no mirth about them but great sadness and awful stench, and their law is no good' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 108]. In contrast to this, the Rusessian Primary Chronicle presents a detailed description of the Orthodox Byzantine divine service, the splendour and opulence of which impressed the ambassadors greatly, which allegedly motivated Vladimir to convert into Eastern Christianity. The story contains a dramatic description of how the Rusessians became aware of Muslim Bulgaria, which became one of the most important states in Eastern Europe in the late 10th century.

Bulgaria was also active in establishing contacts with countries of Islam. For example, 'Tarikh-i Bayhaqi' by Bayhaqi contains information on how the Bulgar ruler Emir Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn B.l.t.var sent money in 415 (1024/1025) to Beyhaq, Nishapur Region, for the construction of two mosques in Sabzevar and Craguerde. According to Bayhaqi, the Bulgars' Emir 'sent a lot of money and amazing gifts to the Khorasanian sovereign, which no one had ever seen...' because of his inspiring dream, in which he saw that he 'should send some money to Bayhaq.' 'At that time,' he adds, 'the money was spent on the construction of these two mosques' [Zakhoder, 1967, p. 46]. It is clear that whatever the reasons for sending the embassy of the Bulgars' Emir to Khorasan were, this fact itself was significant. It is indicative of regular religious, political, and cultural relations between



Bulgaria and the Samanid state. Evidence that it was, if at all, unique in terms of scale but not in terms of direction is provided below. In 433/1041–1042 'a Bulgar man, who enjoyed great influence over the people, accompanied by fifty men, went on his Hajj pilgrimage' and visited Baghdad on his way. It is significant that the Bulgar aristocrat was accompanied by Yala ibn Ishaq al-Khwārizmī, who negotiated in the caliph's Divan [Khalidov, 1998, p. 82].

All these sources indicate that in the late 10th century Bulgaria operated in the international arena as a Muslim country that had numerous commercial, cultural, and political connections to Middle and Western Asia as well as the Middle East.

Unfortunately, there are very few written records concerning the domestic life of Bulgaria and how popular Islam was among its population. To some extent, archaeological data can compensate for this absence of information. For instance, Bulgarian archaeological sites dating back to the 10–13th centuries contain no swine bones. For example, none were found among the osteological materials of the archaeological site of Bilyar within the excavation period of 1967–1971. Other sites also contain no swine bones [Petrenko, 1976; 1979]. The few exceptions available only prove the general rule. Separate swine bones found in the archaeological site of Bilyar during the excavation of 1974–1977 are concentrated around a Russian craftsman's estate [Petrenko, 1984]. The highly statistically meaningful sample of the materials and its astonishing sterility in terms of swine bones in both urban and rural settlements indicates that the Bulgars were generally adherent to the laws and prohibitions of Islam.

Volga Bulgar burial grounds provide an even clearer insight into the distribution and nature of Islam since they are indicative of the Islamic funeral rite. Bulgar burial grounds, as an archaeological source, have undergone a scrupulous and all-round analysis by researchers. They suggest that Islam began to spread in Bulgaria in the late 9–early 10th centuries, while the Islamic burial ceremony had come to fully dominate the urban environment by the former half of the 10th century and by the latter half of the 11th century in certain regions

[Khalikova, 1988, p. 137 ff.]. It should be emphasised that no pagan burial grounds are present on the territory of Bulgaria starting from the 10–11th centuries. Around 59 burial grounds have been discovered across the territory of Bulgaria (the Cis-Volga Region, the Cis-Kama Region, the West and Central Trans-Kama Region, the Maly Chermshan River Basin), with over 970 Islamic burials disinterred. Not a single pagan burial ground or interment has been found.

What makes these materials important is that they allow scholars to assess how real the ideas expressed in the historical tradition are. In fact, the complete dominance of Islam and the disappearance of various pagan cults that were prevalent in the preceding period as well as strict adherence to Islamic prohibitions indicate the dissolution of various ethnocultural and tribal traditions in the general Islamic environment and the formation of a new ethnocultural community.

The opening of a wooden mosque and a white stone mosque in the archaeological site of Bilyar is a unique testament to the prevalence of Islam in Bulgar towns [Khalikov, Sharifullin, 1979]. What makes the mosque complex outstanding is its size (the wooden one is 44/48x30 m, and the white stone one is 42x26 m), which was typical for large temple buildings in that period, while regular neighbourhood mosques and churches were much smaller. The grand nature of the building confirms its location in the city centre, with a brick house situated near it [Khalikov, 1979], as well as a large city cemetery with a family tomb or mausoleum containing two bodies, arranged like an overground tomb, which was unique for the Bulgaria of the 10th century [Sharifullin, 1984].

Taking into account the date of the complex (the first half of the 10th century), it provides essential evidence not only of the prevalence of Islam but also of the emergence of regular Islamic institutions, including mosques, cemeteries, and the relevant ministers of faith. Even though little information is available on the organisation of the Muslim community in Bulgaria, the very fact of its existence, according to eastern references, is beyond doubt. The

earliest records of muezzins and imams in Bulgar cities date back to the early 10th century [Khvolson, 1869, p. 23]. An institution of judges, known as city qadis [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 31], who belonged to the top elite of the society and took part in diplomatic contacts, is reported to have existed in the Bulgar country. Indirect information concerning the structure of the Bulgar ulama is provided by al-Gharnati, who, when describing the population of Saqsin, noted that the Bulgars and Suars there had emirs and cathedral mosques, where they prayed on Friday, as well as 'qadis, faqihs, and khatibs, all adherent to Abu Hanifah' [Ibid., p. 27]. The report also confirms the idea that Hanifi madhhab was traditional for the Bulgars not only in the early 10th century, which Ibn Fadlan claimed, but also much later.

When Islam became popular, eastern education and literacy began to spread among Bulgars, too. Having converted to Islam, the Bulgars found themselves rather remote from other Muslim countries and in cultural isolation, which they were able to overcome. Scholar and encyclopaedist al-Biruni noted in his work that the Bulgars are isolated 'from the original Muslim countries'; however, 'they are aware of the caliphate and the caliphs but, on the contrary, say the khutba with their names' [Biruni, 1957, p. 55]. However, the very sense of isolation of the Bulgars in their hostile environment could not but influence their social conscience. It has already been mentioned by a number of Arab-Persian authors, who spoke of Bulgar campaigns against their neighbours as of jihad/the holy war: 'they fight and defeat any army of kafirs, however large it is' [Zakhoder, 1967, p. 31]. Al-Gharnati reported that the Bulgar king conducted regular campaigns against the northern pagans and imposed a tribute (kharaj) on them [1971, pp. 30–31]. This information is so traditional and symbolic that it suggests Bulgar roots or at least their influence upon this tradition. Western European historians (Julian, Giovanni da Pian del Carpine, William of Rubruck, et al.) also shed some light on the subject. The brightest characterisation of the Bulgars may be found in the work of William of Rubruck: 'The Bulgars are the most fierce of the Saracens, more adherent to the

law of Mohammed than anyone else' [Travels, 1957, p. 119].

Unfortunately, no sources are available to assess the nature of the Bulgar theological school. There is no doubt, however, that the entire territory of Bulgaria was dominated not only by one Madhhab (basically the Hanifi school) but also by a unified ulama, which interpreted certain issues of law and religious practice in accordance with the well-established traditions, undoubtedly leaning on secular power. Thus, this was the tradition taught at madrasahs and reproduced while preserving succession and stability of Islamic legal standards for over two centuries, as evidenced by Bulgar burial monuments dating back to the 10–first third of the 13th centuries. The orthodoxy of the Bulgar burial ceremony may be attributable to their idea of themselves as the Chosen Ones due to their marginal situation on the edge of the oecumene and at the northern border of the Islamic world. It is quite possible that this was the reason for their intolerance towards pagans and paganism. Anyway, the canonicity and uniformity of the burial ceremony across the state indicate powerful religious regulations, which were not only maintained with the state's authority but deliberately imposed on society.

### Islam and Bulgar Culture

Medieval Bulgaria was the northernmost country of the Islamic oecumene, and Islam became the language of Bulgar culture. Information is available concerning the development of monumental architecture, arts and crafts, music, and literature in Bulgaria. All large communities within the country had schools and madrasahs. The education system ensured basic literacy and religious knowledge for the population. There is evidence of the development of various branches of science and knowledge, including astronomy and astrology, medicine and alchemy, theology and law, as well as geography. There was a special historiographical tradition known as *Tawarikh-i Bulgar* (History of Bulgaria) by Yakub ibn Nugman. Many influential scholars and theologists lived and worked in Bulgaria. These included writers, theologists, and philosophers Suleiman ibn

Daud as-Saqsini as-Suwari, Abu-l-al Hamid ibn Idris al-Bulgari, Burhan ad-din Ibrahim ibn Hyzr al-Bulgari, hoja Ahmed al-Bulgari, pharmacist Tajaddin ibn Yunus al-Bulgari, et al. A literary source dating back to the era of Bulgaria, the poem Qíssai Yosíf by Qol Ghali (The Tale of Yusuf, 1233), has been preserved. Many biographies of Bulgarians, who became famous scientists in the East, indicate that the Bulgars were part of the Islamic cultural world, in which they were brothers in faith, although somewhat isolated from it. Countries of the East and the Middle Volga Region exchanged information continuously in spite of distance. It should be taken into account that to participate in the exchange of thoughts and ideas, the Bulgars had to make great efforts, most importantly, to create and maintain an education system. Apparently, it is not coincidental that travellers from the east were surprised to see maktabas and madrasahs in Bulgar auls and towns.

The exchange of ideas also affected the development of theology and religious practice. There are several scattered pieces of evidence that suggest the presence of the Islamic movement known as Sufism. Al-Gharnati reports the above-mentioned Yakub ibn Nugman to have been a disciple of the famous faqih from Nishapur Abu-l-Maali al-Juwayni, who was not only a faqih but also a sufi [Davletshin, 1990, p. 173]. Another report by Sh. Marjani indicates that, according to Ibn Daud as-Saqsini, a disciple of Khalid al-Bulagi, 'who was the qadi of Bulgar' (he was alive in 1106), the 'qadi of Bulgar adhered to the tariqa of Ahmad Yesevi' [Davletshin, 1990, p. 173]. There is some literary evidence that the ideas of Sufism were promulgated in the Volga Region. For instance, Persian poet of the 12th century Khakim Sanai (1048–1141) described in one of his poems the

son of a Bulgar prince who had become a dervish [Abilov, 1984, p. 361].

By becoming a Muslim country and accepting the Islamic culture, Bulgaria became part of the Islamic civilisation. From that moment on, its connections with the countries of Western Asia and the Middle East became a constant factor in history.

Bulgaria lay rather far away from major Islamic cultural centres. It seems that the fact was traditionally referred to in the East. For instance, the prominent philosopher, preacher, and traveller Nasir-i Khusraw wrote to emphasise the might of Allah:

*'One in the entrance hall can hardly hear you shout from your room, but his voice travels easily from Balkh to Bulgar'* [Semyonov, 1953, p. 17].

If we paraphrase the quote, we can say that however far Bulgaria was from the countries of Islam, Islam and its culture easily spread across the Volga Region to form a unique area of Turkic Islamic culture.

Thus, the Bulgars began to get acquainted with Islam in the early to mid-9th century, while in the early 10th century Bulgaria became a medieval state that had Islam as its official religion. At the same time, this religion spread among the widest strata of the Bulgar society, and by the late 10th century the Islamic burial ceremony and other Islamic standards had become absolutely dominant among the population. There is reason to believe that Islam in Bulgaria, taking into account its marginal position on the 'fringe of the Islamic oecumene,' was more orthodox and stricter in comparison to many other Muslim countries. As a result, a distinct culture developed as well as unique arts and crafts, combining Turkic and Eastern traditions.

## CHAPTER 3

### Writing and Education in Bulgaria

*Gamirzan Davletshin*

The history of runic and Uighur scripts is not limited to the era of Turkic Khaganates. While the Uighur script was confined to its former domain until the early 13th century, the runic script followed the ancestors of the Khazars and the Bulgars to Eastern Europe. It was wide-spread among the population of the Khazar Khaganate and the Great Bulgaria. Volga Bulgaria used the script until the Arabic alphabet came into use there and even later.

Runic inscriptions in the form of separate words or letters can be found on stones in the defensive wall of the archaeological site of Mayaki on the Don River, on clay and metal dishware, other everyday objects, some jewellery, and weapons of the population of Khazaria. Inscriptions on everyday objects and their content indicate a high literacy rate even among common people—builders and craftsmen. Still, they were not the population of the Turkic and Uighur Khaganates with their rich written culture. We have no information on any monuments like memorial stones to Kul Tegin and Tonyukuk by the ancient Khazars or Bulgars. The general trend was clearly that ancient Turkic runes gradually fell out of use in the Bulgar-Khazar world. The Bulgar-Khazar script gradually shifted to the use of symbols.

Different monotheistic religions co-existed in harmony in the Khazar Khaganate, where the Jewish, Arabic, and Greek alphabets, as well as the Greek-based Cyrillic alphabet became naturally popular. Greek letters were used as various symbols in the Khaganate [Flerova, 1997, pp. 72–73].

The Bulgars, living in the Middle Volga Region and in the Cis-Kama Region, continued to use the runic script. The script that was wide-spread here rather resembles the Bulgar-Khazar or Turkic runic script of the North Caucasian variant, which pertains to the popu-

lation of the Saltovo-Mayaki Archaeological Culture.

A Bulgar silver cup bearing a runic inscription, which P. Melioransky tried to read, on its handle was found near the town of Glazow, Vyatka Guberniya [1902, pp. 21–22]. Recently, Kh. Kurbatov has provided a more accurate translation [1990, p. 17]. The text reads as follows: *'Kägu däg gälunçäy kavuşu gümuüşi'* ('To the swan-like princess—the bride—silverware in honour of her marriage'). The tradition of decorating exquisite tableware with beautiful sayings, which still exists today, dates back to the ancient Turks. Such exquisite tableware with beautiful ornamental patterns has always been a valuable gift on important occasions in people's lives.

In 1958 a thin 8x12 stone slab bearing a runic inscription was discovered in Yurino settlement, Mari ASSR. The inscription was first read by E. Tenishev [1971], who dated it to the 10–11th centuries, and then by Kh. Kurbatov [1990, p. 15 ff.]. The stone reads: *'Küç üzä daşum'* ('Against violence is my stone').

In 1967 professor V. Khakov discovered another inscription-bearing stone in the village of Sarabikkulovo, Leninogorsk District, RT. The stone, dug firmly into the ground to a depth of 40 cm, bears the runic inscription *'subaş,'* which apparently signifies the title of an army commander [Khakov, 1988].

V. Zausaylov's collection in the National Museum of Finland (Helsinki) contains two Bulgar sabres with runic inscriptions dating back to the 11–12th centuries. They were found near the village of Imenkovo, Laishev District, RT. Kh. Kurbatov read the inscription on one of the sabre blades as follows: *'Imän kiskä üzä bākū alkuyş kişi küçlüş Cikügin cumuş kaluçu'* (Battle sabre of the glorious bek Imen-kiske, a prominent man, a strong Dzhikug') [Starostin,

1988, pp. 14–15]. The inscription on the other sabre is illegible.


A pot fragment bearing a runic inscription was found in the village of Troitsky Uray, Rybnaya Sloboda District, RT in 1987. Kh. Kurbatov read it as '*Sulu iç*' ('Drink (a vessel) with water'). The inscription, or to be more accurate the pot, dates back to the 5–6th centuries—that is, the Imenkovo period [Starostin, 1990, p. 19].

The tradition of writing on clay and stone spindle whorls originated in the ancient Turkic period. It was maintained for centuries, passing on from generation to generation. The inscription on the clay spindle whorl discovered near the former village of Murzikhino on the left bank of the Kama River reads: '*Berke Erkeñä*' ('A gift for Erke'), or '*Baguş kübäzi*' ('Joy for the eyesight') [Begovatov, 1988].

In 1983 a zoomorphic, shaped as a moose head, tripod handle dating back to the 12th century and bearing an excellently preserved inscription made with a sharp object on wet clay was found in the central part of the archaeological site of Bilyar (excavation site XXVIII, director F. Khuzin). The inscription presents another piece of evidence that Volga Bulgaria was heavily influenced by ancient Turkic runic script, essentially similar to the North Caucasian (proto-Bulgarian) variant [Kochkina, 1985, pp. 75–80]. Kh. Kurbatov read it as '*Açutkan*,' meaning 'Fermentation utensils.' I. Kyzlasov believes the inscription to be genetically related to the Kuban variant of the runic script [Kyzlasov, 1994, p. 29].

The above-mentioned objects with runic inscriptions dating back to the 11–12th centuries indicate that the graphic system was not completely out of use even after the Arabic alphabet spread in Volga Bulgaria following formal Islamisation in 922. However, the fate of the ancient script had already been decided. The more Islam became widespread, the more resolutely the runic script, as a pagan vestige, was forced out of Bulgar life until certain letters were only used as symbolic marks.

Earthenware excavated from Bulgar towns bear over 20 types of symbolic marks, almost totally repeating the Turkic-Orkhon alphabet. Among them, the character A is most widely

used, denoting the sound B in the Turkic-Orkhon alphabet. According to A. Kovalevsky, the character A denoted the Bulgar clan, while the character '' (it is the S sound in the runic alphabet) denoted the Suar clan [Kovalevsky, 1954, p. 48]. Similarly, N. Kokorina believed the character A to belong the princely family that was ruling Bulgaria at that time [Kokorina, 1989, p. 93]. This character can also be found on coins minted in Bulgar.

As the Bulgar state developed, the need for a uniform and universally accessible script increased. Only a uniform graphic system and a universally understandable script could truly serve the purpose of accumulating cultural experience and developing the official and literary artistic language. Now that a state possessing a certain territory had been formed, transactional and private correspondence became a necessity.

The centralised state apparatus needed a unified state script, especially for tax collection and accounting, financial affairs, judicial proceedings, when entering into agreements with neighbouring countries, etc. International relations, most importantly diplomacy, also required people responsible for such affairs to be literate. We know of a number of peace treaties concluded between Bulgaria and Rus'. They were undoubtedly executed both in Bulgar and in Russian, as they represented the interests of both parties. To prove it, a Russian-Bulgar agreement dated 985 contains a Bulgar proverbial saying.

Governmental correspondence was extensive. We know that King Almış/Almush sent a letter to Baghdad, as a response to which an embassy was sent to Bulgaria in 921. Another letter was sent to the Caliph by the ruler's son [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 81]. We also know of Almış's correspondence with northern nations.

With the establishment of feudalism in Bulgaria, private ownership began to increase, which was legalised in written documents. Newly converted Muslim Bulgars attached special importance to written wills since the pre-Muslim custom of inheritance passed from brother to brother in contrast to the Islamic father-to-son system [Ibid., p. 137].

The poem *Qıssai Yosıf* by Qol Ghali is in itself believed to be a mastership of not only Bulgar but also generally Turkic pre-Mongol written culture. The plot depicts a society with a well-developed written culture. It contains important information regarding private correspondence, the reading of books, stationery and transactional papers, in particular, the registration of purchase and sale contracts in written form (*kabala*), etc. [Qol Ghali, 1983, p. 98].

Without a uniform script, an all-Bulgarian language would not form and develop split into various written and family dialects. A uniform script smoothed out these differences and paved the way for an all-Bulgarian language, in which literary fiction, scientific treatises, etc., were later created.

Numismatic material, dating back to the early 10th century, confirms the reports of written sources on the early introduction and prevalence of the Arabic graphic system. Famous numismatist S. Yanina, who studied 10th century Bulgar coins, noted that the coiners were extremely skillful and 'possessed a splendid handwriting of a particular style' [Yanina, 1962, p. 193]. Archaeological materials also suggest an early introduction of the Arabic script. As has already been mentioned, the Bulgars were acquainted with the Arabic graphic system from the days when they lived on the shore of Azov and bank of Don. Since the very beginning, when the Bulgars came to the banks of the Volga and Kama Rivers, they used the Arabic alphabet. Inscriptions in the Arabic script on metal and bone, dating back to the earliest period of Volga Bulgaria, the turn of the 10th century, were published by Ye. Kazakov [1985]. Among them, a processed bone, bearing the following inscriptions, is of particular interest: '*fatiha*' ('blessing') and '*Bismillahir-rahmanir-rahim*' 'In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful').

As academician V. Bartold rightly noted, the initial introduction and spreading of the Arabic or Iranian graphic system 'were caused only by commercial relations and was by no means connected to any religious propaganda' [Bartold, 1965, p. 27]. The main reason why

the Arabic alphabet entered Bulgaria was that part of the Bulgar population, who had arrived in the Volga Region, already knew the Arabic alphabet. Besides, it resulted from close commercial ties with Middle Asia. Naturally, Islam as a religion with a well-developed written culture had a crucial influence on its further promulgation.

The Bulgars apparently used both wax-covered wooden boards and well-processed birch bark for writing at the initial stage. The well-known proverb '*Tuzga yazmagannı söylämä*' ('Do not say what is not written on birch bark') indicates, on the one hand, that the Turkic-Tatars used birch bark as writing material, and on the other hand, that they had an immense respect of everything in writing—that is, writing in general (a word not written on birch-bark is a lie, a tall tale). Even the Tatar word '*yazmış*' (fate) is connected with writing as it literally means 'what is prescribed.'

Bone sticks like ancient Russian styluses were used to write on wax-covered boards and processed birch bark. They are common in archaeological materials, especially those pertaining to the archaeological site of Bilyar. Such sticks were worn on the belt, as evidenced by holes at their end. However, runes were more common on birch bark than Arabic letters. The primary writing material was paper, which was more convenient for the Arabic graphic system. In the 9–10th centuries Middle Asia, with which Volga Bulgaria had strong economic ties, already produced paper. Samarkand becomes a paper production and sales centre [Samara State Agricultural Academy, 1973, p. 293]. In the 10th century paper production plants existed in Damascus, Tripoli, etc. [Mets, 1973, p. 372].

Following the conversion to Islam and the spreading of the Arabic graphic system, literature on paper entered Volga Bulgaria. Clay and bronze ink-pots found during the excavation of pre-Mongol towns also confirm that the Bulgars used paper as a writing material. They also had paper books. Such books were beautifully designed. Those in Bilyar collections have metal covers with pretty wave patterns and inlays. The books look like caskets with knowledge inside them. Having obtained

the knowledge, one could use special hooks to lock the book. Such hooks were discovered by Ye. Kazakov [1991, p. 155]. Thus, books were handled with care as they were really of great value.

Literacy was widely spread in all strata of Bulgar society. It was not uncommon for craftsmen to try and decorate their works with inscriptions. Embossed or printed inscriptions can be found on jewellery, arms, and everyday objects made of metal as well as earthenware. Such items primarily had the name of their producer or owner. Ceramic fragments bear the names of *Daud*, *Tahir*, *Adam*. Sometimes there are runic letters next to them.

Among women's jewellery with inscriptions, bracelets, rings, and brass looking-glasses are of special interest. The ancient Turks and later their descendants, the Azov and Volga Bulgars, used name signet rings as a symbol of power [Gumilyov, 1993, p. 239]. One of the rings bears the name of *Arslan*. It appears that the famous Tatar quatrain folk song 'Kulimdagı yözegemneñ isemnäre...' ('The name of my ring...') dates back to the Bulgar times. In ancient times our ancestors believed the rings and inscriptions on them to have magic power. Tatar fairy tales often mention magic rings that play a major role in the lives of heroes. The carnelian inlay in a 9–10th centuries ring from the Tankeyevsky burial site bears the word '*Bismillah*' ('In the name of Allah') [Kazakov, 1985, p. 181]. A silver ring from Bilyar reads (as translated): 'Allah is eternal, may he give me health.' The carnelian inlay of a ring belonging to the same site bears the Arabic inscription: 'Happy with the power (given) by God' [Valiullina, 1999, p. 148].

It was especially common to write on tableware of metal, clay, and even glass. Such inscriptions include both letters and words, mainly names (of the owners?). A bronze vessel from Bilyar bears a wish on its handle: 'Constant respect, good health.' A bronze lock made by craftsman Abu Bakr from Bilyar in 1146 is widely known. The body of the lock is decorated with an Arabic inscription wishing well to the owner [Malov, 1926].

It can be inferred from the above that the Arabic graphic system as an attribute of Islam

was widely used in Volga Bulgaria. Pre-Mongolian Bulgar inscriptions found in the Middle Volga Region are relatively few. However, the fact that most of them were made by craftsmen indicates a high literacy rate.

The Islamic clergy was also interested in increasing literacy among the population since the ability to read and write in Arabic enabled people to get directly acquainted with the Quran, religious books, study anti-pagan didactic literature. Thus, the promotion of elementary literacy and the Islamisation of the Bulgar society were parallel. This also applies to other medieval states that converted to a world religion in that period. Researcher in the history of science in the medieval Rus' V. Kuzakov wrote: 'At the early stage of the Christianisation of Rus' literacy and knowledge improved adequately to how the new faith became deeper and wider rooted. Knowledge, literacy (reading worship literature) were counterbalance to the Rusessian paganism, a support in the struggle against it' [Kuzakov, 1978, p. 20].

People would learn the Arabic alphabet, letters of which were believed to be almost as holy as the Quran written in these letters, by heart as if they were prayers. Surahs of the Quran began to appear on former pagan amulets. The Tatars had a custom of carrying talismans with sayings from the Quran in them, which allegedly protected the owner against evil forces. The Tatar name of such talismans, 'böti' (derived from the Ancient Turkic 'bitig,' meaning 'writing'), emphasises the protective power of writing as such.

A Bulgar family described by Ibn Fadlan is a vivid example of how the Bulgars wanted to fathom Islam: 'A man named Talut converted to Islam under my guidance... His wife, his mother, and his children followed him and went under the name of Muhammad. I taught them two surahs from the Quran: 'Fatiha' and 'Ikhlas.' When Talut was able to read the two surahs on his own, his joy was greater than if he had become a king' [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 138].

Back in the early 10th century, Persian traveller Ibn Rustah reported the Bulgars to 'mostly profess Islam and have mosques and primary schools with muezzins and imams in settlements' [Khvolson, 1869, p. 23]. It was the

lowest stage of schools, or 'primary' schools, as the geographer emphasised. The teachers were muezzins and imams. They taught literacy—that is, the ability to write and read the Arabic alphabet, along with some rules of the Arabic language, which were necessary to read the Quran, hadiths, and religious books.

Madrasahs, which began to appear in Muslim countries in the 9th century, were secondary and higher education establishments. They were mostly situated in the capital and in large cities.

We have no information concerning their syllabus, instruction form, or subjects. It appears that they were largely similar to such educational establishments in other Muslim countries. Theology was the primary focus. Instruction was provided in the form of interpreting the Quran (*tadris*) and partly dictation (*imla*) [Mets, 1973, pp. 154–155; Bartold, 1966, pp. 621–622]. Besides, a certain scope of secular knowledge was provided, including mathematics, geography, history, astronomy, and medicine. They were essential in the training of public officials, merchants, healers, etc. This is proved by the extant information about the Bulgarian and Oriental medical scientists, astronomers, poets educated in Bulgarian madrasahs. However, madrasahs chiefly trained influential religious officials—*mudarrises*, imams, *mullahs*, *qadis*, et al.

The highest stage of Islamic education in Volga Bulgaria was to obtain education at scientific and cultural centres in the East: Bukhara, Samarkand, Nishapur, Balkha, Baghdad, Merv, Ghazna, etc. Here *Shakirds* could directly study the advanced science and culture of the East. Many of them took special training at eastern madrasahs instructed by famous scholars. For instance, Tajaddin al-Hasan ibn Yunus al-Bulgari studied at the madrasah of Mosul, Iraq. The all-round scholar Burhan ad-din Ibrahim ibn Yusuf al-Bulgari also pursued education in eastern countries. The *qadi* (judge) of the city of Bulgar (*Bilyar*), historian Yakub ibn Nugman was a follower of the prominent scholar Abu-l-Maali Habdul-Malik al-Juwayni. Another Bulgar *qadi* Abu-l-Ala Hamid ibn Idris al-Bulgari (still alive in 1106) learnt from scholars in Bukhara and Nishapur.

For the Tatars and other Muslim nations, those centres largely remained the model until the mid-19th century.

A number of Bulgar theologians and scholars stayed in the East after they had completed their education to work on high religious and administrative positions. For instance, Khoja Ahmed Bulgari was the teacher and sheikh of the famous sultan Mahmud I of Ghazni (967–1030).

The capital of Volga Bulgaria, which had a madrasah that was famous in the East, became one of the best scientific centres. Many eastern scholars are known to have wanted to pursue education in Bulgar. Ibn Hajar reported an Iraqi to have pursued education in Bulgar and then resided in Anatolia and Syria. The tradition was preserved during the Golden Horde period.

Well-educated people who grew up and studied in Bulgaria were known in the East under the name 'al-Bulgari,' meaning 'Bulgarian,' though they pursued education also in other centres in the East. For example, scholar Gubaydallah Sadr-ash-Shariga ibn Masuda from Bukhara characterised Hasan Bulgari as 'our sheikh Hasan Bulgari.' The *tahallus* was apparently meant to describe the popularity and prominence of Bulgarian madrasahs and their teachers.

Great importance was given to Oriental languages, namely Arabic as the language of the Quran, science, and poetry, and Persian, which became the main literary and poetic language in the Near and Middle East. Merchants who maintained close commercial connections to these countries also needed to speak Oriental languages.

Many people came to Bulgaria from Oriental countries—Muslim proselytes, merchants, builders, craftsmen, et al. For instance, Ibn Fadlan mentioned a tailor from Baghdad, a man from India, a Khwarezmian [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 135, 137, 140]. Apart from experts in Islam, the Baghdad embassy included architects, builders, and representatives of other trades. Researchers believe part of them to have been engaged in the construction of the capital on the Cherevshana River. It is beyond doubt that these people influenced the mastering of Arabic



and Persian by the Bulgarian population. The extent to which well-educated people knew Arabic and Persian can be estimated by their works on complicated philosophical, theological, medical, and other issues.

Most probably, part of the craftsmen also spoke Oriental languages, of which Abu Bakr's castle dated 1146 is evidence. The Arabic inscription on it translates as follows:

*'By Abu Bakr son of Ahmed.  
May the owner of this (castle) enjoy eternal glory and peaceful success,  
and enormous happiness, and splendor, and wealth!  
The year five hundred forty-one.'*

[Malov, 1926, pp. 156, 158].

Many Bulgar merchants also spoke Russian. Ambassadors who attended negotiations and prepared agreements between Rus' and Volga Bulgaria also needed to know it. Russian-Bulgar relations were multifaceted and made contributions to influencing and enriching the Rusessian and Bulgar languages.

There is folklore evidence that the people wanted to learn languages in the past. For instance, there is a Tatar saying: 'Cide yortnıñ telen bel, cide törle belem bel' (Speak the languages of seven countries and know seven branches of science). One of the best qualities about the hero of the poem Qıssai Yosıf is his ability to speak 72 languages.

## CHAPTER 4

### Occupational Knowledge and Science in Bulgaria

*Gamirzan Davletshin*

Science was already dawning in the states of the Huns and the ancient Turks. Broad geographic ideas, high-quality iron and cast iron production, efficient arms and tools, military devices, etc., would be all impossible without a certain level of scientific development. However, it was in the Muslim Volga Bulgaria where a shift in the Turko-Tatar science development took place.

In the Muslim Orient science developed in accordance with the rich local traditions and by mastering the achievements of other nations [Bartold, 1966, p. 165]. Cities in the Muslim Orient turned into scientific centres. Scientific academies founded there, such as the 'House of Science' (Dar al-Ilm) and the 'Treasury of Wisdom' (Khizanat al-Hikma) in Bukhara, attracted scholars from all across the Muslim world. As the Arab Caliphate began to dissolve, the scientific and cultural centres of the Muslim Orient gradually moved to the margins of the state [Bartold, 1966, pp. 165, 183].

Volga Bulgaria's strong economic, commercial, and religious connections with these areas paved the way for close scientific and cultural cooperation. Trading in Volga Bulgaria favoured the distribution of scientific treatise as markets in Middle Asia attended by Bulgarian merchants and shakird were also book trade centres.

When back in their homeland, Bulgarian scholars would write scientific works like the ones by their Eastern teachers, they would comment on their works and promulgate their scientific ideas in Volga Bulgaria (see [Khvolsen, 1869, p. 89; Märjani, 1, p. 85]).

Versatility, encyclopedic knowledge of medieval Oriental scholars was also typical among those in Volga Bulgaria. Burhan ad-din al-Bulgari is famous for his works in pharmacology, rhetoric, and theology. Abu-l-Ala Hamid ibn Idris al-Bulgari is believed to be an

incomparable expert in several branches of science [Märjani, 1, p. 79].

Bulgarian scholars and theologians who wrote in Arabic were quite well-known beyond Volga Bulgaria. Eastern scholars referred and quoted works by theologian Ahmed Bulgari 'al-Jami' and 'al-Fawaid,' dedicated to al-Fiqh, while poets praised him in verses. The above works by sheikh Burhan al-Din Bulgari have been included in eastern bibliographic databases.

Various branches of science developed in Volga Bulgaria, including mathematics and astronomy, chemistry and medicine, geography and history, etc.

#### Mathematics

Like in other countries of the East, computational mathematics, which was necessary for commerce, construction, crafts, and clerical work, progressed considerably.

Architecture also required complex mathematical computations. Foundations of brick and stone buildings and wall remnants discovered in Bilyar, Suvar, and Alabuga reveal a sophisticated structure, precise proportions, elaborate proportionality, and a strictly logical architectural concept, which would have been impossible without mathematical computations, including geometry and trigonometry.

Among archaeological discoveries pertaining to the pre-Mongol-Bulgar period of special interest are drafts in the form of inscribed rectangles, the so-called 'babylons' on a 37x29 mm rectangular fragment of a ceramic vessel and a lead plate (43x33 mm). Such drafts, which are sometimes viewed as the 'mill game' [Polyakova, Fekhner, 1974, p. 441], were discovered by archaeologists studying ancient Russian towns. We think that academician B. Rybakov found

the key to the purpose of the objects [Rybakov, 1949; 1957].

Lines and parts of lines within these rectangles formed numerous relations that could be used for various mathematical calculations and geometrical constructions. They resemble plans of buildings to be erected. They are also representative of the measurement system. Thus, to speak metaphorically, they carried the ancient architect's wisdom.

The dimensions of these rectangles are quite representative of the features of the 'babylons.' Lines connecting the middle points of the short sides make one-fourth of the long side and a half of the short side of the external rectangle. Irrational relations are not uncommon. The short sides of the external rectangle and the long sides of the next rectangle, which are equal to them, make half of the double length of the external rectangle, multiplied by 2, etc.

There are many more relations like these. Indeed, such 'babylons' for Bulgar architects were a kind of multipurpose sliding rules. When applied to architectural items under construction, the geometrical relations and harmonious lines of the 'babylons' made the sitems symmetrical and well-proportioned, turning them into 'frozen music.' But to apply the symbolic lines to practical geometry required a universally intelligible and accessible system. The metric systems of the time played this part. Bulgar measurement science developed to be a special branch. Material measures in the form of weights, rules, etc., made a large number of similar measurements (fractional, multiple, etc.) possible. This enabled scholars to use mathematical operations. When measures were divided into proportionate parts, object measurement became a mathematical activity (see [Davletshin, 1990, pp. 33–45]). A metric analysis of archaeological materials suggests that the Bulgars used several measurement unit systems based on different ell types: 25–27, 36–38, and 52–54 cm.

For their measurements the Bulgars referred to an adult of a medium build—that is, their metric units and actual dimensions at that time were identical or similar. This is the first important conclusion concerning the practical function of the 'babylons.' The thing is

that the relations among anthropometric units of measurement are the same as those among the 'Babylonian' lines. Thus, the key architectural proportions of the time underlay the very length measurement system.

In Bulgar they used a unit of measurement known as 'quarter' (chetvert). It was a unit of measurement equal to one quarter of a larger unit—sazhen, ell, etc. Thus, the Bulgar measurement system was based on consecutive division of units by 2, 4, 8. This is the second conclusion. The 'babylon' line is also based on consecutive division by 2.

Pre-Mongol Bulgar structures were mostly discovered at the level of foundations, sometimes with 1–1.5 m high walls partly preserved. Studying even those few objects that remain allows for interesting conclusions. Bulgar architects used several units of measurement to build one and the same structure. For instance, 'ells' 37–38 and 52–53 cm long or 152 (38x4) and 212 cm sazhen were used to build the Cathedral Mosque in Bilyar. That is, the Bulgars used at least three ell types (arshins), namely 27, 38, 53 cm and their derivatives for construction. The measurements are geometrically related to each other ( $27\sqrt{2} = 38$ ;  $38\sqrt{2} = 53$ ).

Besides, one of the construction Bulgar ells was found to equal 75–78 cm. Arshin is the Persian for elbow. It is also geometrically related to the 53–54 cm ell ( $53\sqrt{2} = 75$ ). At the same time, the unit is close to the dimensions of three Bilyar bricks ( $26 \times 3 = 78$  cm).

Thus, Bulgar architects used several geometrically related measures to ensure harmony and proportionality for their structures. They could use the lines in their 'babylon' models to choose specific geometric relations between measurement units.

The 'babylon' lines represent a number of relations, which are very close to the 'golden section.' Its principles underlay many outstanding medieval pieces of architecture. Bulgar architects were aware of it. The golden section is a division into extreme and mean ratio. The ratio of wall dimensions of the stone and wooden parts of the Bilyar mosque complex makes the proportion of 'utter harmony'—the golden section having the following formula:  $A : B = (A + B) : A$ . The external dimensions of the stone

part are as follows.  $A = 41.7$  m;  $B = 26.2$  m.  $41.7 : 26.2 = (41.7 + 26.2) : 41.7$ . The external dimensions of the wooden part are as follows.  $A = 48$  m;  $B = 30$  m.  $48 : 30 = (48 + 30) : 48$ .

Fortifications in the ancient Pliska and the archaeological site of Bilyar in plan resemble a 'babylon' (a rectangular one in Pliska). 'Babylons,' their shapes, and proportions were reproduced not only in Bulgar buildings; even the fortifications of the town as a whole present a square 'babylon' (inscribed rectangles). The first line of the giant 'babylon' is external fortifications. The second one is internal fortifications. The third one is the citadel walls found in aerial photos and discovered archaeologically. The angles of these inscribed rectangles are situated to accurately represent the cardinal directions.

The geographic location and dating of such 'babylons' suggest that the earliest of them pertain to the so-called First Bulgarian Empire on the Danube as well as Sarkel of the Khazarian period. These are the two points where most of the known 'babylons' are concentrated. Figures dating back to the 11th century are known with in archaeological records that were shortly before (mid-10th century) related to the Khazar-Bulgarians (the archaeological site of Taman). All these suggests that the spreading of the 'babylons' in the ancient Rus' and Volga Bulgaria originated in the Khazarian-Bulgarian world.

Besides, sacred structures, temples, white palaces in the capitals of the First Bulgarian Empire on the Danube—Pliska and Preslav—as well as in Madara (9th century) are designed to form inscribed rectangles and squares. Their dimensions agree with the features of the 'babylons.' We know the ancient Turks to have had temples and memorial complexes designed as inscribed rectangles. Thus, they can be interpreted as an ancient Turkic tradition.

The Khazarian-Bulgarian 'babylons' were to last long. There are also 'babylons' on bricks in 14th century towns of the Golden Horde in the Lower Volga Region. Even there some buildings form 'babylon' lines in plan.

### Astronomy, Geodesy

Astronomy, which was the most popular science in the Islamic world, was also develop-

ing in the Bulgar society. Its development was closely related to Islam, its rites, and requirements. Bulgar Muslim burials are amazingly precise in terms of their orientation, quite often with an accuracy of one degree. Researchers believe that the Bulgars even had a device like the gnomon, which was widely used in the East at that time [Khalikova, 1986, p. 63]. Gnomon development made it possible to solve a lot of complex mathematical and astronomical problems.

Watching the motions of the Sun, the moon, the stars, and the planets resulted in the development of astronomical calendars. For its time, it was a theoretical generalisation of the observation of nature and celestial objects (see [Davletshin, 1990, pp. 24–32]).

Middle Asian astronomy, one of the most developed natural sciences in the Near and Middle East countries, exercised a significant influence on the development of the Bulgar astronomical science. In Baghdad, Damascus, and other cities there were large observatories. The universe and the firmament were studied by several sciences. One of them, cosmography (gyil'me-haizet), described the firmament and its luminaries. The second one, the science of the stars (gyil'mel-nezhum), the third one, the science of the sky (falakiyat), etc. It is clear that Bulgar educated people were knowledgeable in these sciences.

The short summer nights in Bulgar and, consequently, difficulty of completing the 5 prayers prescribed by Sharia had been bothering the Islamic world at least since the times of Ibn Fadlan. During the Golden Horde period this problem acquired additional shades. Now it is all the more substantiated by astronomical knowledge. To find a solution to this problem, they began to use astronomical instruments. Bulgar became a centre where exact time could be told by watching the celestial luminaries. By using instruments like the astrolabe or quadrant, Bulgarian astrologers observed the celestial bodies that were far in the north.

### Geographic Conceptions

Geographic conceptions of the Volga Bulgars were closely related to the geography of

their habitat. The Arab-Persian authors of the 9–10th centuries located the country of the Bulgars in the seventh climate (only some of them, for example Ibn Khaldun, located them in the north-eastern corner of the sixth climate). During its initial period Bulgaria occupied a relatively small territory, at the confluence of the Kama and the Volga Rivers. But already in the 11th century, and especially in the 12th century, the country's main domains were beginning to significantly expand and the Bulgars quickly populated the new territories. After the collapse of the Khazar Khaganate the whole Volga-Baltic waterway was ceded to the Bulgars. The Caspian Sea, which used to be called the Khazar Sea, practically became the Bulgarian Sea. The country's central lands lay at the confluence of the Kama and the Volga Rivers—that is, on one of the most important trade waterways of Eastern Europe. It was a place where one could meet merchants from different corners of the globe. As back as in the 10th century Volga Bulgaria turned into one of the most important trade points on the Volga-Baltic Waterway, which connected Middle Asia, Iran, the whole Arab East, Rus', the Baltic States, Scandinavia, and Central Europe [GDP, 2000].

Bulgar cities had Russian, Khwarezmian, Maghrebian, and other trade colonies. In the terrible years of 1222–1223, after the Mongol conquest of Armenia, some of its population took refuge in Bulgaria. In their turn, Bulgarian trade colonies functioned outside the country. One such example is the Bulgarian colony in the city of Saqsin, lying at the mouth of the Volga River, whose people sought refuge in Bulgaria during the hard times of the Mongol invasion [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, p. 453; II, p. 455].

Volga Bulgaria's location in a geographically convenient place, at the intersection of the most important trade routes and the country's quite high level of cultural and economic development, favoured close economic, cultural, and political contacts with both neighbouring peoples and distant countries. All this enriched the Bulgars' geographical ideas. Judging by archaeological finds and written sources, in their early periods the Bulgars maintained close relations with the tribes of Merya, Mu-

roma, and others. During the whole pre-Mongol period they kept in close touch with Rus', the Oghuz, the Kypchaks (Polovtsians), the Bashjards (Majards), ancestors of the Mari and the Mordvins, the tribes of Visu (Isu), Yugra (Yura), peoples of Western Siberia, and others. The Bulgars' relations with Eastern countries were of special kind. While at first they had closer ties with Iraq, Tabaristan (the Caspian Sea Iran), Armenia, Khwarezm, Transoxiana (Western Middle Asia), Khorasan (Eastern Iran), Tokharistan (Eastern Middle Asia), India, later in the 12–13th centuries they strengthened their ties with Syria, Egypt, Maghreb (Northern Africa), and Spanish Andalusia.

The Bulgars' intensive and close communication with peoples from other countries certainly enriched their geographical conceptions.

Owing to the geographical writings of such Islamic geographers as al-Balkhi, Ibn Khaldun, al-Masudi, al-Marwazi, al-Idrisi, and others, widely known in the 10–11th centuries, Bulgarian scholars and merchants were well familiar with many countries of the Old World, which by tradition was divided into seven climates (aklim) [Bartold, 1966 b, pp. 44–45]. At the same time, the Bulgars themselves contributed to a certain extent to the development of the geographical knowledge of the time. For example, better than anyone else, they knew their own territory and the neighbouring lands, the region of 'the seventh climate,' and all the lands situated behind it to the north, west, and east. Without exaggeration one can say that the information about different peoples and lands of the North and in some measure about Rus', the Ural Region, and Western Siberia, contained in the Islamic geographical books of the 10–11th centuries, is to a considerable degree Bulgarian information. Many travellers received such information about the countries of the North, the peoples of the Volga Region, the Ural Mountains, and further about the Arctic Ocean in Bulgaria: Ibn Fadlan (10th century), al-Gharnati (12th century), Ibn-an-Nugman (13th century), Ibn Battuta (14th century). For example, Khwarezmian Ibn an-Nugman openly writes that it was in Bulgar that he heard of Rus' and Yugra for the first time [Polyak, 1964, p. 33].

In the Bulgars' conception there were three domains in the north. The first was the domain of Visu, whose people the Bulgars kept in close touch with. Al-Gharnati notes that the Visu country was actually part of Bulgaria, and that its people paid *kharaj*—that is, Muslim tributes to the state. The distance between Bulgar and Visu was also known: an overland route to the nearest point took 20 days, while a route up the Chulman (Kama) River took 3 months [Talitsky, 1951, p. 78].

Beyond the land of Visu, further on to the north, in a 20 day caravan route (in winter on a dog sledge), there lay the Yugra, or Yura land, and further to the north, by the shores of the Gloom or the Dark Sea (the Arctic Ocean), there were other lands. The Bulgars thought that the Northern tribes living by the Gloom Sea were savages and barbarians. On one side, they were surrounded by the sea, and on the other, there were impassable mountains [al-Gharnati, 1971, pp. 32, 34].

All this information can be regarded as Bulgarian for it is known that the Bulgars, who held a monopoly on the trade with the Northern peoples, did not let Eastern merchants go there until the 12th century. With this in mind, they spread fantastic rumours about many troubles awaiting the newcomers from the Northern lands in Bulgaria or about the disasters that might be caused by the Northerners to more southern lands. Al-Gharnati wrote with astonishment 'that when one of them (that is Northern people) entered these areas even in very hot weather, the air and water became as cold as in winter, and the people's crops died' [Ibid. p. 34]. The lands where the Northern peoples lived were described as 'a Never-ever Tsardom,' where different fabulous events happened, and where mythical creatures lived. For example, a giant described by Al-mush came from the north by boat [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 138–139], there also lived a big bird on a big tree [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 32]. By the way, it is not hard to see that these conceptions bore the influence of Islamic geographical science based on the theory of climates. According to this theory, the fourth climate, where Islamic centres lay, was equidistant from too hot and too cold countries, combining the best conditions for human life.

The farther was the climate from the middle, the more separated was its population from civilisation, and the peoples living behind the seventh climate were considered to be savage.

Similar conceptions about Northern peoples were also spread in Rus', where merchants were no less interested in advantageous relations with the North. These legends coincide in certain details with those known in Bulgar. For example, both Bulgar and Russian legends describe Northern peoples as savage tribes locked up behind a mountain, trying to get out of there; both legends say that they traded in animal skins and furs, and Bulgar and Russian merchants brought them swords and iron; neither Bulgar nor Russian merchants understood their language; the former considered them dumb, the latter carried on trade with them without saying a word [Tatishchev, 1963, II, p. 106], and so on.

It is interesting to note that the mythological mountain *Cafcu*h (the impassable mountain in Bulgar legends) was thought by some peoples of Middle Asia and the Bashkirs to be situated somewhere in the North. No doubt, they drew this information from the Bulgar legends about Northern peoples. And not only from there. The legends of the land of Gloom and the tribes living there are often found in writings by medieval Eastern authors.

The Bulgars enriched their geographical knowledge mainly by travel and journeys to one or another country or with the help of travel books as well as through stories told by strangers. Sometimes geographical knowledge was oddly interwoven with mythological images. They also show a marked influence of Quranic narratives. For instance, the Bulgars identified northernmost peoples with the Quranic peoples of *Yajuj* and *Majuj* [al-Gharnati, 1971, pp. 20–59].

Most probably, the Bulgars knew the basics of geodesy and could spot geographical coordinates, azimuths, etc. An indirect proof of that is record by a Bulgarian scholar who carried out astronomical observations in the north, 700 versts (746 km) from Bulgar—that is, at a certain geographical point. A perfect meteorological system that they had made it possible to calculate the distance between geographical

coordinates with fair precision. Gnomon type devices were used to show the cardinal points.

### Chemistry

The Bulgars were faced with the necessity of acquiring knowledge in the field of chemistry, first of all, in craft trade and pharmacology.

According to archaeological materials, the Bulgars were familiar with such metals and metalloids as iron, copper, lead, tin, mercury, silver, gold, antimony, sulphur, etc. Some of them were extracted and then processed. Bulgarian smiths in the 10–11th centuries produced higher quality steel due to melting iron from ores of various chemical compositions, for example, with the addition of ore containing nickel. The basic technique of manufacturing high-quality tools and weapons was to combine a steel blade with an iron base by welding; they also used iron and steel cementation. To improve the mechanical properties of steel blades, Bulgar craftsmen used various processing conditions of thermal metal working. The smiths made different copper-based alloys: bronze, brass, etc. Specialisation of metal working (blacksmiths, coppersmiths, silver- and goldsmiths) made it possible to master its chemical and physical features. All this required a considerable level of chemical knowledge.

The archaeological materials often mention spherico-conical vessels made of fire clay. There has been a difference of opinions as far as the purpose of the spherico-conical vessels is concerned. Some considered them to have been fire bombs, others, architectural components. However, it was found out that these vessels were used to store precious liquids. The majority of the spherico-conical vessels, which were found, had been made in Middle Asia and the Caucasus. Basically, they contained mercury or liquid nickel amalgam, which were necessary in metallurgical production. The majority of the spherico-conical vessels uncovered on Bilyar archaeological site were found in the places where there had been production buildings, which dealt with metal working, first of all, of nonferrous metals [Khalikov, 1986a, pp. 73–73].

Mercury was used to extract metals or their concentrates from ores. Judging by the written sources, the spherico-conical vessels and the liquids inside them found a much wider application. The writing by Abu'l-Fazil Tiflisi (12th century) 'Bayan as-san'at' ('The Description of Techniques') tells how various chemicals and potions were obtained and kept in these vessels [Vilchevsky, 1961, p. 212].

S. Valiullina's research [1997] shows that the Volga Bulgars had well developed glass production, which would be impossible without sufficient knowledge of chemistry. Kama River quartz sands, the local raw materials, were low-grade for glass production. In spite of this, by achieving the required composition standards, temperature, and other process qualities, it was possible to produce high quality items. Glass-melting furnaces were made of refractory materials. But the Cis-Kama Region and the Middle Volga Region were poor in semi-acid refractories. The Bulgars managed to master the production of refractories of a new type—silica refractories made of quartz rock with lime bond. Such a high quality material was still practically unknown in other regions.

The Bulgars used glass to make various things: window glass and glassware of different kinds: long-stemmed goblets, wine glasses, cubes, pitchers, drinking bowls, cups, fragrance phials, etc.

Pottery, especially glaze production, also required a certain knowledge of chemistry. The peak of artistic glazed ceramics made in pre-Mongol Bulgaria fell on the 12–13th centuries. The glaze that covers Bulgar tableware of that period is green with different shades ranging from light-green to brown. Spectral analysis of Bilyar glaze showed that the glaze was made of glass of very simple chemical composition, which belonged to the oxide lead-silicon class. Lead oxide made glaze more fusible, glossy and transparent; iron and manganese admixtures added a brown shade. While lead-glazing, they also used a copper pigment [Makarova, 1986, pp. 57–60]. On the plaster found in Bilyar one can often see paintings made with the help of pigments of different chemical compositions.

The Bulgars seem to have possessed a knowledge of Eastern treatises on chemistry. Since chemical knowledge was kept a secret in those times, few manuscripts have come down to us: a chemical craftsman communicated all his knowledge to his apprentices by word of mouth. In those times the notion of chemistry was broader and at its base lay the belief that one metal could be transformed into another—that is, alchemy. Similar views were also popular in Volga Bulgaria. Mercury, one of the most important bases in alchemical practices, played an important role in Bulgar metal production: only in one metalworking workshop in Bilyar they found 28 spherico-conical vessels with mercury residual. It looked like a laboratory of an alchemist rather than a metallurgist's workshop. Besides, in recent years, during the excavation of the Bilyar archaeological site, they have uncovered quite a lot of chemical utensils made of glass, which are commonly called alembics. An alembic is a small vessel shaped as a tapered cylinder. Its crown is straight and bent inwards; a little below the crown there is an outlet opening and a spout-tube. Alembics were used to pour mercury into other vessels and to recover vapour [Valiullina, 1997].

Despite the fact that alchemy was far from real science, it was a herald of chemistry and served as an important and necessary stage of real chemical knowledge. Sometimes scientific discoveries were made while running experiments: the researchers discovered mineral and vegetable dyes, glass and glaze of various compositions, acids, salts, and drugs.

### Medicine

The medical knowledge in Volga Bulgaria was based on advanced traditions of folk medicine. The Bulgars knew natural remedies (honey, birch twigs, castoreum, different animal and bird meats, belemnites, etc.). Al-Gharnati writes that when a Bulgarian 'tsar' and his wife fell ill, 'they were treated with drugs common among them' [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 30]. Consequently, the Bulgars used a certain range of natural remedies (vegetable, mineral, biological, of animal origin), which to some

extent had been centuries-old and time-tried. For example, in the 'Dictionary' by Mahmud Kashgari the word 'ot' means grass and remedy, and the word 'ottachi' means 'doctor' (literally: herbalist [Kashgari, 1960, 1, 70 b.]. From ancient times until later times, the Bulgars called medicine 'ot,' 'ut' ('grass'), and a doctor was called 'otchy, utchy' ('herbalist'). And in Yusuf Balasaguni's famous poem called 'Wisdom That Brings Good Fortune,' written in Uyghur in the Karakhanid state in 1070, one can find similar in meaning expressions: 'Keshe avyrsa, utachy (tabil) ut (daru) birer' ('If a man falls ill, the herbalist will give him medicine'). Besides 'utchy' ('otchy') meaning 'doctor,' there was the word 'bakshy' ('baguchy') (literally, 'he who examines'). In modern Tatar the word 'ut' meaning 'grass' is not found. But its derivatives, primary words, are used in practice: 'utau' ('weeding'), 'utlyk' ('trough'), 'utlavyk' ('pasture'), etc. Bulgarian legends mention medicinal properties of birch twigs, by which Bulgarian Tsarevna (queen) Tuybike was healed. Al-Gharnati says that honey was widely used to heal colds; he also mentions that bits of dried meat of a bird with a crossed bill (crossbill, *Loxia*) were used to remove kidney and bladder stones [al-Gharnati, 1971, pp. 30, 35]. These birds were found in coniferous forests, and they fed on fir-cones. Therefore, their bodies were filled with resin and would not decompose for a long time after their death.

They also used the so-called castoreum, a valuable medicine extracted from the castor sacs of a river beaver. Besides, this yellowish-and red-brown liquid was used in the making of expensive semi-liquid perfume and soap. It was even on the list of goods exported from Bulgaria to Middle Asia [Khvolson, 1869, p. 182]. This remedy helped to treat paralysis, hand and leg tremor, blackouts, and women's diseases.

Invertebrate cephalopods of Cephalopoda class, which are extinct now, were also used as biological remedies for different diseases. Petrified remains of the back of their inner shell, popularly called 'devil's toenail,' were used in the form of powder. It was taken pre-mixed with rain water, or it was applied to wounds. Belemnites are frequently found in burial plac-



es and in cultural layers of archaeological sites, quite often with traces of their use (scraping).

Since old times the ointment called 'charme-i-bulgkhar' ('Bulgarian skin') had been known to be used in medical practice in Afghanistan, Northern India, and in some parts of Iran as a remedy for skin diseases, mainly to treat severe wounds. It was made using ash as the base, which remained after old skin had been burnt. The ashy powder was mixed with the marrow of a freshly-skinned animal, or at least with any organic substance. [Koledarov, 1974, p. 73].

As it is known, in his letter written to the Caliph of Baghdad, King Almush asks him to send him medicines [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 121]. Almush's request is a fact of turning to medicine as a science.

No doubt, the development of medical knowledge in Volga Bulgaria was influenced by the works of Oriental medics, who had achieved great results at that time. Special mention should be made of Abu Ali ibn Sina, the greatest scholar of the 10–early 11th centuries, whose works were written in a language intelligible for the broad masses of population. There are a lot of legends about him, where he is mainly described as a gifted tabib, a magician, who could even revive a dead person. There is a good reason why Ibn Sina's work 'Alkanun-fi-t-yib' ('The Canons of Medical Science') was copied and published over and over again. For Tatars this book became a source of truly folk medicine. It is also known by the name of 'A Book of Traditional Medicine.' Ibn Sina's popularity with the Bulgars is rooted in the pre-Mongol period [Khairullin, 1980, p. 77].

As is seen from the poem 'Kyssa-i Yusuf,' one of Bulgar medics' main methods of diagnosing was feeling the patient's pulse [Kol Gali, 1983, 150 b.] Oriental medicine attached great importance to this method. It was detailed in special medical treatises. In particular, 'The Book of Pulse' (Kitaby nabz') was popular among Muslims [History, 1964, p. 193]. Bulgar tabibs, in all likelihood, knew of these works.

The poem 'Kyssa-i Yusuf' makes mention of a medical instrument, a lancet. Lancets, small knives with reversible blades, are known to exist in Bilyar collections. There are also pincers that were also used in medical prac-

tice. Phial-tubes made of thin silver foil and covered with a delicately embossed ornament were found at the Tankeyev burial site. One of them was corked with a wooden plug, and near it there was a pair of bronze pincers with flared ends [Kazakov, 1971, p. 107, Fig. XIV: 16]. The phial and the pincers were most likely intended for doctoring, and the buried person might have been a medic.

Occasionally, among the archaeological finds, one can see bulky surgical knives. One of them, over 20 cm long, has a massive handle tapered to the blade. The blade has a rectangular-like shape and is tilted towards the top in relation to the handle axis [Bilyar Culture, 1985, p. 61, Table XXV: 7]. It is probable that it is a surgical knife used for amputation. Similar knives are known to have been found during the excavation of the ancient Novgorod site [Kolchin, 1959, p. 56, Fig. 43].

The information that came down to us about Bulgar medical researchers' works, which were popular in Oriental countries, is indicative of the level that professional medicine had achieved.

The whole East praised the name of the healer Khoja Bulgari. On receiving his initial education in Bulgar (in the Great City), he continued his education and lived in the capital of the Ghaznavid state for years. The peak of the country's highest development, including the flourishing of culture, falls on the rule of the renowned sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi (999–1030). Many educated people of the Islamic world, researchers, and poets preferred to live and work here.

Poets praised him in their poems, and legends were told about him. One of them says that the sufi poet Hakim Sanai took him under his guidance and adopted him as his son. When Khoja Bulgari died at the age of 39, Hakim Sanai had him buried and put a tombstone on his grave. He is believed to be the same Khoja Ahmed Bulgari, who was a teacher and sheikh to the sultan Mamud Ghaznavi. Khoja Bulgari is buried where Rauda settlement is currently situated, at the foot of Mount Topa, about 5 km from the centre of Ghazna, not far from the ruins of the sultan's palaces. There is 'Khoja Bulgari spring' with pure mineral water;

bathing huts and a hotel have been built nearby. Nowadays, Muslims from all over the world, especially from Pakistan, arrive to see the tomb of the Bulgarian healer and the spring named after him in the hope of getting rid of their ailments. In 1971 a mausoleum of white marble was built on his grave [Koledarov, 1974].

Another Bulgar medical researcher is known from the works of Suleyman ibn Daud as-Saksini-Suvari (11th century), which contains information about medical science borrowed from the works of Abu-l-Alya Khamid ibn Idrisi al-Bulgari. In particular, it contains knowledge of embryology: how an embryo in the womb is born, and what the stages of its development are; how after a forty-day period a drop changes into a blood clot and then into an embryo, and how the embryo comes to life [Märjani, 1989, 81 b.].

Bulgar medics were especially famous for pharmacology. Medicines were divided into simple and complex (universal). For example, Burhan ad-din Ibrahim ibn Yusuf al-Bulgari wrote the treatise 'Of Simple Medicines,' which was popular among Muslims [Khvolson, 1869, p. 89].

Universal compound medicines were called 'tiryak.' Tajaddin al-Hasan ibn Yunus al-Bulgari was a well-known expert in this field. In the early 13th century he lived and worked in Mosul (Iraq). He devoted his work 'At-tiryak al-kabir' ('The Large Tiryak,' or 'The Great Antidote') to the science of medicine—that is pharmacognosy, its most difficult branch dealing with the preparation of a universal remedy (tiryak) [Tajaddin al-Bulgari, 1997]. The original meaning of tiryak is an antidote from a snake bite and those of other creatures. Later its meaning became a bit more general: the word 'tiryak' came to be known as a universal remedy for healing. The work of Tajaddin al-Bulgari is the explanation of the prescription which was known only to him. Tiryak preparation was a complex and time-consuming process. Medicinal agents that occur naturally were carefully selected and processed beforehand, each one separately. The prescription of Tajaddin al-Bulgari's tiryak gives a detailed description of the volume and quantity of substances needed. He divides the medicinal agents included into the

'large tiryak' into seven categories-stages, each of them consisting of different quantities of medicines. The treatise enumerates the ingredients of tiryak: wine, copper, and three types of small flat cakes (the first is andrukhrun, the second is made from a viper's meat, and the third is made from kale). Only those who possessed traditional knowledge and the secrets of medicine were able to prepare tiryak. The Bulgarian tabib specifies in the third part of his work what diseases and when tiryak is used for. The range of its uses was very wide. It provided a cure from cough, winds and stomach-ache, skin disease, jaundice, nausea, blood spitting, aphonia, tumours, indigestion, cardio-arrhythmia, epilepsy, kidney disease, depression, etc. Tiryak was also used as a preventive drug.

Tajaddin al-Bulgari's treatise is now kept in the library of Iran's Majlis along with the works of such outstanding medics of that time as Zakaria ar-Razi, Abu Ali ibn Sina, Nasyr ad-din Tusi, and others. According to experts, the medicinal prescriptions set out in the work of Tajaddin al-Bulgari are very similar to the prescriptions of those medics. It is also very likely that they were borrowed from Indian or Greek medicines as ready-made prescriptions. It is worth mentioning that Tajaddin al-Bulgari's recommendations were also used at later times.

There is another work by Tajaddin al-Bulgari called 'Fi-l-al-viyatel' ('The Healing Properties of Medicinal Herbs—Simple Medicines'), which also excited great interest among educated people and experts of that time. Rashid-ad-din Abu-l-Mansur ibn Abi-l-Fazyl ibn Ali as-Suri (1173–1243), a famous Arab doctor and author of numerous books on medicine and natural science, wrote a work in which he criticised Tajaddin al-Bulgari's treatise. But Ibn al-Baitar, who had been collecting all information available about both treatises on simple medicines and famous authors, spoke in defence of Tajaddin al-Bulgari [ibid].

Tajaddin al-Bulgari's work called 'Mokhtasar fi magrifatal-advia,' devoted to simple medicines, is kept at present in the city of Manis (Turkey). Tajaddin al-Bulgari dictated this work (80 pages) in the city of Mosul in 1219; the extant copy was made in the city of Konya in 1222 by a doctor whose name is Abu

Yahya Zakaria ibn ash-sheikh as-seid Bilal ibn Yosuf al-Maragi Amiri al-Mutabbib. He calls Tajaddin Abu Mukhammad Ali ibn al-Husain al-Bulgari (this is how he writes the name of the Bulgarian doctor) 'a favourite of kings and sultans' meaning that he belonged to the court.

### History

Professional historical knowledge played an important role in strengthening the state of the Turks and its development as well as in the formation of a single ideology with the aim of maintaining ethnic unity. Subsequently, historical knowledge developed in the Uighur and Khazar Khaganates, the Bulgarian state, Jochid Ulus, and the Kazan Khanate. However, none of them ever reached such a height, played such an important role in society, or conveyed such a political message as in the Turkic Khaganate.

Genealogical legends, common amongst the ancient Turks, continue to exist in later times. They had certain changes in the context of the adoption of monotheistic religion, and totemic traces gradually disappeared. Biblical stories and characters came to the forefront. Historical stories about the origin of Khazars were among them. In those stories tribe, race, and ethnicity were presented in a personalised way. In the Khazar Khaganate the origin of Khazars was related to Togarmah, the son of Japheth (son of Noah). Amongst ten sons of Togarmah (Turk?) the seventh was Kozar; the ninth, Bulgar; the tenth, Suvar (Savar) [Kokovtsov, 1932]. As seen from the pedigree, the latter are close to Kozar. In some legends there are only three brothers—Kozar, Bulgar, and Suvar (sometimes there's Barsil instead of him). Legends also emphasise their close kinship. It is important that these legends are presented in written sources as the Khazars' own views of their origins.

But it is not only within them that the official view on history in the Khazar Khaganate is represented, as evidenced by the Khazar-Jewish correspondence. In his response letter to Hasdai ibn Shafrut, Khazar king Joseph tells the story of Khazars based on legends. Joseph lists 12 kings who ruled before him. He starts from the first Khazar Khagan converted to Ju-

daism—Bulan. The letter details the Khazar conquests and their conversion to Judaism as an official religion. Joseph writes about what lands were bordering Khazaria, which areas were included in it, and which nations were subject to it. Volga Bulgaria, Bulgars, and Suvar people are mentioned among them. This source contains information about the economy, social relations in the Khaganate, its capital, and the Khagan's palace (see Appendices to the text). All this reflects the official historical views of the Khazar Khaganate.

'The Nominalia of the Bulgarian khans' is an interesting written source, containing the Hun-Bulgarian genealogy of the ruling family of Danube Bulgaria. It contains a list of Bulgarian khans with the time of their reign and their familial lineage. The years of reign are written in Turkic-Mongol 'animal cycle.' The records start from 153 AD. The 'Nominalia' consists of two parts. The first part was created in the 7th century during the reign of khan Asparukh. It evidences the ancestry of the clan Dulo. The genealogy starts with Attila (Avitohol in 'Nominalia') and his son Ernak (Irnik). The second part of the 'Nominalia' lists the heirs of Asparukh until the mid 8th century [Popov, 1866].

Volga Bulgaria was subject to the Khazar Khaganate until the end of the 10th century. Genealogical legends similar to Khazar ones existed in Volga Bulgaria as well. Some of them have their roots in the era of the Ancient Turks. For example, the legend about the Turks' origins from the marriage of a Xiongnu heir with a wolf. Although, this legend undergoes certain changes with Volga Bulgarian telling. In particular, instead of a Turkic wolf totem Bulgars take the horned leopard, an image that becomes kind of symbol of the Bulgarian lands.

Genealogical legends in which the race begins with a human ancestor appear. Thus, the Khazar legend about the sons of Japheth (son of Noah) is updated with new links: Alp and his sons Bulgar and Burtas, founders of tribes or ethnic groups of the same name. Different versions of this legend are known from 12th and 15th century sources.

In the 11–12th centuries Bulgaria began to have its own professional historians. One of them is Yakub ibn Nugman, who wrote 'The

history of Bulgaria.' According to al-Gharnati, he was 'one of the year 450 (1058/1059) people,' as he was born in that year [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 31]. In the 'Encyclopaedia of Islam' the year 1164 is mentioned as the year of his death [Kurat, 1920]. The scholar was a follower of the famous Nishapur theologian Abu-l-Maali Abd al-Malik ibn Abu Muhammad al-Juwayni (1028–1086) [Ibid., pp. 31, 72], the author of numerous books on the interpretation of the Quran, Hadith, and literary works. Al-Juwayni was the son of a famous Nishapur scholar Abu Muhammad 'Abdallah ibn Yusuf. He got a general education from his father. After his father's death (year 1042/1043) he became the mudarris who replaced him. He studied in Iraq and lived in Baghdad for some time. He gave lessons in Mecca and Medina and received a honourable title 'Imam al-Haramayn,' meaning 'Imam of the two holy cities.'

Bulgarian scholar Yakub ibn Nugman, being in Khorasan, was educated by this mudarris directly, or perhaps upon learning from his works, claimed himself his follower. But it is with these lands (Bukhara, Samarkand, Balkh, Ghazna, Merv, Nishapur, Sabzevar, etc.) that Volga Bulgaria had close ties. It is through those lands Islam was spreading into Volga Bulgaria. As a sign of gratitude, in the year 415/1024–1025 Bulgarian emir Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Muhammad donated funds to build a mosque in Sabzevar and Hosrudzhird [Zakhoder 1967, 2, p. 46].

About Yakub ibn Nugman we first of all know from works of al-Gharnati, who arrived in Volga Bulgaria from Arabic Spain (Andalusia) and met the Bulgarian historian and qadi there. In his work the Arab traveller and merchant exemplifies some excerpts from the book of the Bulgarian historian, in particular, the history of the Bulgar adoption of Islam. Although this story has legendary character, base historical moments are described correctly (the adoption of Islam from Bukhara, the original dependence of Bulgars on Khazars, etc.).

Is Yakub ibn Nugman the author of 'the history of Bulgaria' or just a scribe? Al-Gharnati writes that this book 'was rewritten by a Bulgar qadi' [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 31]. But, as we

know, in those days every scribe, especially of historical treatises, added a lot from himself too, commented on, and corrected things. Therefore, even if Yakub ibn Nugman was only the scribe, still there are certain grounds to call him a co-author of 'The history of Bulgaria.'

According to historical books popular in Islamic world, Bulgars were familiar with the history of other nations and countries. Same as in the Islamic East, the foundation and construction of the big cities, buildings, and certain events were associated with Alexander the Great Builder or Dhul-Qarnayn. This emphasised their ancestry. The thing is, according to eastern authors, Greek history started with Alexander the Great's father, Philip [Bartold, 1966, 6, p. 165]. It is likely the ancient Turkic tradition. There were legends of Alexander the Great (Iskander) founding the city of Bulgar, his victory over the northern peoples and the construction of insurmountable walls [al-Gharnati 1971, p. 59; Märjani, 1, 8 b., etc.]. The Bulgarian tsars genealogy was also associated with the name of Dhul-Qarnayn. Najip al-Hamadani said that the Bulgar's Sultan was one of the descendants of Dhul-Qarnayn [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 61]. Thus, the Bulgarian kings tried to emphasise the ancestry of their birth.

We do not know if the Bulgars had chronicles. But, according to Sh. Märjani's genealogical table of Bulgar kings [Märjani, 1, 90–97 b.], it can be assumed that the Bulgars had some chronographs of at least a dynastic character. There is a reason to believe that the history of the Bulgars in the pre-Mongol period was fit to a specific world view, gaining a scientific character.

Therefore, professional knowledge and scientific practice in Volga Bulgaria were ahead of their time. Their development, in the first place, was due to the influence of science in the Islamic world. Bulgar scholars wrote in Arabic, that is why their works were known in the common Islamic world. This is evidenced by the fame of the scientific works of Bulgarian scientists in the Islamic East. The development of science itself was kind of a Bulgarian response to the Eastern Renaissance.

## CHAPTER 5

### Oral Folklore and Literature in Bulgaria

#### 1. Oral Folklore

*Gamirzan Davletshin*

Studying ancient oral folk poetic works and deciphering their peculiarities are encumbered with great difficulties. This is explained by the absence of texts recorded during the period of their formation and description. Extant folk materials represent only fragments of separate plots and, unfortunately, in a distorted form. Travellers, who visited the country of the Bulgars, in an attempt to make their works more attractive and portray the described tribes as barbaric ones, presented fairy tale plots as reality. However, as researchers have already emphasised, these extracts should only be considered as written folklore sources [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 60–61; al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 19].

Long before the appearance of writing among the Turkic tribes, including the Bulgars, different genres of folklore had been formed.

The power of the word was a real power for the Bulgars, which is especially apparent in the transformations, incantations, and conjurations, which are based on faith in their magic power. They were associated with daily activity, primarily with care for the prosperity of man.

The Bulgars sought to influence the sun and rain by appealing to them with magic words. In Tatar children's games a sheep is promised to the rain as a sacrifice, and an ox, to the sun. The depictions of sheep are widespread in Bulgar fine arts. Sheep are related to the cult of Tengre, the Sky. Rain is the gift of Tengre, so he was offered a black sheep as sacrifice, which looked like the sky with black clouds. In this case it is interesting that a ceramic watering-pot in the form of a sheep from the Bilyar ancient town served as a magic tool for summoning rain.

Ritual calendar songs are associated with incantations. Many of them are dedicated to

meeting the spring and sending off the winter, among others.

Both the wedding and funeral rituals of the Bulgars were accompanied with lamentations, songs, and incantations. Ibn Fadlan reports on funerals that were accompanied with the weepings and lamentations of men [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 140]. The hero of a poem from the beginning of the 13th century 'Kyssa-i Joseph' performs a ritual weeping over his mother's grave. Weeping as a ritual genre was typical for the Oguzes and Kypchaks [Khisamov, 1979, pp. 107–113].

Riddles, according to their original character and social role, are related to spells and taboos. In the transition to a class-based society, the genetic role of riddles as a method of manipulating different events, preventing diseases, etc., gradually became secondary, while its cognitive and aesthetic functions grew in importance. There are Tatar legends about Bulgar tsarevnas, who chose a husband based on the latter's correct answering of a riddle. Among them, there is the interesting tale-riddle 'Sarvinaz,' which says that in Bulgaria a Riddle Day was declared, on which the Khazar Khagan son won the competition and became the husband of a daughter of the Bulgar Khan, Taimas [THT, 1970, 29, 33, 439–444 bb.].

Proverbs and sayings relate to gnomic genres of folklore and are methods for maintaining and transferring a working and living experience to descendants. They arose a long time ago and were called 'boringılardan kalgan süz' ('a word coming from ancestors') and 'atarlar, bablar süze' ('the words of great-grandfathers'). 'Our grandpas said,' as cited by the Bulgar tsar Almysh, when explaining celestial events to Ibn Fadlan [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 134].

Proverbs served as a moral codex and were an unwritten law, reflecting regulations of relationships between people and the aesthetic ideals of the nation. In a situation in which the official laws were not perfect and did not have a strong influence upon the collective mind (according to Ibn Fadlan's notes, we observe such a situation in Bulgar society at the beginning of the 10th century), they played a significant role in society and were held in high esteem by the population. No wonder the following proverb read: 'Kartlar süzen iŧetkändä, burkeñne kyyeniña kuy' ('When you are listening to the words of grandfathers, take your hat under your arm' [THM, 3, 563 b.]. This proverb probably existed among the Bulgars because here we may observe the Bulgar custom of holding a hat under the arm during a meeting with respectful people (Ibn Fadlan writes about such respect for the Bulgar Tsar Almysh). Proverbs were also decorations for colloquial language, which admitted and strengthened an expressed thought. Many proverbs became a part of literature, as seen in the Kul Gali poem 'Kyssa-i Joseph' [Kul Gali, 1983, 284–294 b.].

Bulgar proverbs may also be found in diplomatic language. For example, in 985 such a peace treaty was concluded between Kiev Prince Vladimir and the Volga Bulgars. 'To make peace, Volodimir and the Bulgars and their company started discussing. And the Bulgars made a decision: 'There will be no peace between us unless the stones start swimming, and the hops start to sink' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, 1962, II, p. 84]. Here the proverb became something like a 'seal,' consolidating the concluded agreement between the states. The Tatars had the same proverb, which was used as a means for underpinning words and deeds: 'Kayçan kem kolmak suga batar, taş suga kalkır, bu vägdä şunda bozılır' ('When a stone floats to the surface, and a hop begins sinking, then this agreement will be broken') [THM, 3, 780 b.]. It is interesting that the motif of a floating stone is also found in the poem of Kul Gali, 'Kyssa-i Joseph' [Kul Gali, 1983, 76 b.].

Dreams of the nation and its aspiration for an ideal were revealed in fairy tales. Unfortunately, when considering the written sources,

today we only have the fragments of Bulgar tales. They include stories about a northern giant, a bird-animal living on a great tree, a girl-fish emerging from a large fish ear, enormous snakes, rhinos, etc. Let's consider some of them.

Ibn Fadlan writes about an animal with a camel head, ox tail and hooves, a mule body, a long horn (up to three elbows long) like a spearhead, feeding on leaves and living in the forest not far from the Dzhaushyr River. It struck horsemen with its horn throwing them up in the air. People hunted for it with poisonous arrows from the tops of trees. Locals claimed that it was a rhino [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 139]. Of course, the Bulgars could not have seen a real rhino. But they could have found a rhino skeleton or its picture; the latter is supported by later evidence.

The image and its accompanying folklore and mythological stories were wide-spread among other Turkic peoples. In the mythological portion of the Uighur manuscript 'Oguz name,' the struggle of Oguz Khagan with a unicorn is depicted as the collision of two contrary forces—good and evil. Both in the Bulgar and in the Uighur plots this struggle happens in a forest. This semi-mythological animal, according to the Bulgar imagination, was one of the strongest and most terrible animals. On a silver plate cover from the 10th century it is opposed to the king of the animals, the lion. On it a lion and a rhino are depicted standing in opposition to one another on their back paws as if ready to fight. One may assume that the rhino described by Ibn Fadlan implied evil, as in the depictions of the Oguz tribe.

It is clear that certain popular plots and motifs from Bulgar folklore changed with historic circumstances and sometimes received a sociopolitical colouring.

For example, there is a plot about a snake or dragon living in water (a lake or river) which demanded a girl in exchange for using the spring. This story originated a long time ago and existed among different nations. The written sources testify that the Bulgars also had it. Ibn Fadlan writes about the fact that a great number of huge snakes lived in the Bulgar lands. Their thickness is comparable to

the thickest tree trunks, and their length, to the height of the tallest trees. Tsar Almysh indicated that they did not harm people [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 135–136], which reveals the totemic attitude of Bulgars towards snakes. Another traveller al-Gharnati writes that he saw a huge black snake in a black river while he was travelling by boat from the Bulgars to the Slavs [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 35]. Both travellers relate fragments of the same plot.

In the folklore of the peoples of the Middle Volga Region, including the Tatars, this plot is one of the most widespread. Studying it opens the semantics of the Bulgar folk motif. A typical plot is the following: somewhere in a lake, not far from the capital city, a monstrous snake lives and annually demands to have the princess. The day of sacrificing the tsar's daughter to the snake turns into a day of national mourning.

A comparison of the fabulous plot with the historic reality of the 9–10th centuries is interesting. As is well known, until the second part of the 10th century Volga Bulgaria was under the control of the Khazar Khaganate, to which it paid taxes. The Khagan regularly devastated and looted the Bulgar lands. Additionally, the tsar's daughter was required to go to the Khagan as a concubine, and the tsar's son, as a hostage. The latter was not only a private sorrow but also the sorrow of the whole nation because the Bulgar state was constantly on the brink of losing their crown prince. Such a loss usually led to a struggle for the throne, which obviously made the population unhappy. Almysh put all his effort towards getting rid of the shameful submission, which had turned into a custom over time. He hastened to marry off his daughters before the Khagan could take them. To put an end to the custom, Almysh appealed to the caliph with an aspiration to strengthen and raise the authority of the national religion of the Volga Bulgars—Islam. As a result, he not only received an ideological weapon against the Khaganate, the highest ranks of which professed Judaism, but also the patronage of the most powerful state of the period. The tsar asked for builders and architects to construct strongholds and defend against the Khazar raids. The effort was successful; in

one of the battles the Khazars were defeated by the Bulgars [Ibid., p. 31].

Let's also remember the topography of the Khazar capital: the city Atil was situated on the Volga Delta and consisted of two to three parts. The Khagan palace was located on an island which had a bridge across the river [Zakhoder, 1962, I, p. 186], which is largely reminiscent of the dragon or snake living on the water.

Other elements of Tatar legends are also associated with this folk story. The legend 'Ay-bike' tells about an evil thief by the name of Churakai, who inhabited one of the isles located on the mouth of the Volga and kidnapped a daughter of the Bek of Alabuga, at the location of a Bulgar outpost and stone fortress-mosque. A brave dzhigit defeats Churakai and returns the girl to her father [THT, 1970, 450–452 b.].

Besides, in Tatar legends the Khazar Khaganate is called 'the country of the Dragon' [Ibid., 440 b.].

A number of plots from Bulgar folklore is observed over a long period of time. There are, for instance, plots about epic hero giants (alyps).

As part of an ancient-Turkic, proto-Bulgar tradition, these plots were preserved and enriched during the formation of the Volga Bulgar state—that is, in conditions under which the traditions of military democracy were still strong.

At the time of the arrival of the Baghdad embassy raids on neighbouring tribes still took place, and military income was one of the profit sources for the emerging state, the 'tsar,' and members of the armed force.

The embassy secretary Ibn Fadlan heard about Ayp on the way to the Bulgars, or even in Baghdad from Tekin. Ayp, who arrived by river from the North, was built like a giant, possessed enormous strength and supernatural traits. For this reason, he was hanged by a heavy chain from a high tree, where he died. The traveller had only seen his remains—the skeleton [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 139]. Al-Gharnati also writes about the giant's bones that anyone could find in the Bulgar land [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 30]. Belief in the existence of people-giants in the past and stories about discovering parts of their skeletons still occurred among the Tatars and Chuvashs.

In Ibn Fadlan's characterisation, Alyp is remarkable for his strength, giant stature, and mythological traits, while in the notes of al-Gharnati made two centuries later he obtained the traits of a real epic hero in the prince's armed forces. 'And the tsar of Bulgar,' al-Gharnati writes, 'produced a chain armour for him, which he took along in a wagon to the war. And his helmet is of iron in the form of a great cauldron. He fought with a vast bludgeon made of solid oak, which even a strong man could not lift, but in his hands—it looked like a little stick in our hands' [Ibid, pp. 43, 61]. Here is an obvious mixing of folklore and reality. Abu Hamid is familiar with him in person, the epic hero has a personal name.

The theme of simultaneous fear and worship of Alyps, recorded in the notes of Ibn Fadlan, continues in the notes of al-Gharnati: '...But at the same time, he was polite, virtuous, and peaceful... And he was kind, humble; when he met me he greeted me respectfully, though my head was lower than his belt was...' [Ibid].

The fragmentariness of the above plots, their motifs and distortions in the travellers' retellings make determination of their genre quite difficult. It is likely that the authors who consider these plots to be the fragments of old epic literature are right [Zhirmunsky, 1974, pp. 116–119]. It is not difficult to find motifs from the Turkic epic poem about Alpamysh in them, which is widespread among the Turks from the foothills of Altai to the Middle Volga and Asia Minor. The existence of the story about Alpamysh, for example, among the Khazars, is confirmed archaeologically, in particular by depictions found on a pitcher in the small town of Kotsky dated to the 8th century [Darkevich, 1974]. V. Zhirmunsky considered the Tatar and Baskhir variants of 'Alpamysh' to have originated from more ancient versions of the story. The Tatar variant has details which are present in the tales of other nations. They include references to cities and agriculture—details which are typical for Bulgar society in the 10–13th centuries.

It should be noted that stories about alyps were composed in different genres of folklore: legends, heroic tales, and songs. The alyps de-

scribed by al-Gharnati repeat details ascribed to heroes of Tatar legends and tales. Many heroic tales of the Turkic peoples say that the result of a battle was often determined by the appearance of alyp-horsemen at the crucial moment. Heroic alyp feats differ significantly from ordinary feats of heroes, who struggle primarily against evil spirits and fantastic animals, usually embodying an element of nature. Folklore alyp-heroes are closer to reality. They are the product of folklore created in the conditions of military democracy and its traditions. Real heroes are often hyperbolised in them.

The aforementioned motif of the appearance of an Alyp at the crucial moment in an important battle was also present among the Bulgars. In this regard there is an interesting note by al-Gharnati, which he picked up from 'History of the Bulgars' by Yakub ibn Nugman, about the fact that in revenge for the Bulgars adopting Islam without permission the Khazar tsar attacked them with a great army. The Bulgars could defeat him only due to the sudden appearance of giant-horsemen.

The feats of alyps were likely praised in the song genre. 'The warrior baits of the city of Bulgar' (Şähre Bolgar gazıları bätläre), which Sh. Marjani ascribed to Bulgar written records [Märcani, I, 15 b.], are likely to have developed before the 13th century—speaking about Bulgar warriors, and especially praising them in songs, would only have been possible with the existence of an independent Bulgar state.

Legends comprise the majority of extant examples of folklore in the written sources. Let's consider some of them.

The problem of the unity of the state and population was one of the fundamental considerations in the official ideology of the Turkic Khaganate. This problem remained vitally important even in successor states. It was subsequently reflected in folklore. There is a well-known legend about the dying Kubrat Khan, who bequeathed his sons to live together in peace so as not to allow the disintegration of the state that he had formed [Chichurov, 1980, p. 52]. To make his words more effective, he ordered a flexible broom to be brought and gave it to his sons to break it in turn. When they could not, he untied the broom, and his



sons easily broke it by breaking the twigs it was made from. Kubrat said that the same thing would happen to them if they would not hold together. This legend, reminiscent of a parable, is known worldwide, but its most ancient variant was established among the ancient Bulgars.

Cosmogonic legendary theories about the creation of the world are reflected in the typical Bulgar temple ring with three threaded ovoid or acorn-shaped beads. In the centre of the ring there is a figure of a duck holding a small ball in its beak. Three ovoid beads are hung on a chain from the ring. On the ring, found near Bilyarsk, there are also ovoid pendants on the figure of the duck itself. Two of them are attached to its wings; one is attached to the tail.

The world's origin from a duck egg swimming in the primordial world ocean and the conception of the universe and its parts in the form of an egg were one of the most widespread cosmogonic plots among different peoples of the world, including Turkic peoples. The depiction of the plot on Bulgar decorations is evidence of the existence of this cosmogonic legend among the Bulgars. According to their conception, the Earth, the Sun, and the Moon arose from three eggs laid by a duck, which are reflected in the three ovoid beads on the temple ring [Khalikov, 1981, pp. 5–8].

Temple rings in which the golden duck holds a ball in its beak correlate to another variant of this legend, according to which the Earth and Mainland arose from a patch of land brought up by the duck from the bottom of ocean. This legend is widespread in Eurasia from the Evanks in the east to the Finns and Letts in the west. It appeared somewhere in Asia, among the Mongol tribes.

Totemism, as a complicated religious pagan system, was already dying out. But its relics were still significant, especially in the re-thought myths and genealogical legends. One widespread legend among the ancient Turks, recorded in the Chinese sources, reads that the clan of the House of Xiongnu by the name of Ashina was defeated in a battle and absolutely destroyed. The only survivor was a ten-year-old boy. The enemies felt sorry for him because of his age and, after cutting off his leg

and arm, threw him into a swamp. A she-wolf found him and brought him up. After ten years the boy was killed, and the she-wolf hid in a valley surrounded by mountains, where she gave birth to ten sons, who became the ancestors of the ten Turkic tribes. In other versions relating to the origin of the Uighurs, the boy was replaced by a girl, and she is saved by a wolf.

Evidence of the proliferation of the legend among the Bulgars is found in bronze figurines of so-called 'freaks' [Ibid, p. 8 ff.]. Such figurines are wide-spread among the early Turkic tribes. As a rule they picture a mutilated figure of a man or woman sitting on a beast (a wolf or panther). The most expressive of them is the so-called 'Maklasheyevskaya horsewoman' (from the village of Maklasheyevka of the Spassky District of RT), a lock in the form of a woman holding a child in her arms on a horned panther. She has a defective right side: a swollen eye, short-cut arm, and leg. She cuddles the child to her breast. Among the findings there is an analogous lock with a horseman.

Later on the Volga Bulgars started connecting their origin with Alyp. One of the legends reads that Yefes (Yafet), the son of Nukh (Noah), had three sons: Gazi, Turk, and Alyp. Turk and Alyp settled down near the great river in a distant cold country. The locality where they had settled down was swampy and covered with a primeval forest. While Alyp passed through the forests, he shook soil out of his bast shoes from time to time, thus forming hills near the roads.

Once during a hunt Alyp went so far away that he got lost and could not get back to his brother Turk. After long wanderings he got to the bank of a great river, which Alyp's sons later called Itle. People of another clan lived on the bank, but they could speak Alyp's language. Afterwards Alyp became one of them and married a girl of their clan. He had two sons and gave them the following names: Bulgar and Burtas. When they became mature, they founded cities and gave them their names [Vakhidov, 1926, pp. 82, 84].

During the Middle Ages (at least from the 10th century) different variants of this legend can be found in a number of Arabian-Persian-

Turkic historical works. 'The Short Tales and Stories' written by an anonymous author in 1126 [see Korogly, 1976, pp. 21, 85, 88] and report written by the Persian author Mirkhond [THI, 1987, 294, b.] are the closest to the Tatar variant. 'Yafet had eleven sons: Chin, Saklab, Gomari, Turk, Khallah, Khazar, Rus, Sadesan, Ghuzz, Baraj, and Nimshaj,' the legend begins. Here the place of Ayp is taken by Gomari, and the events are precisely concerned with Bulgaria.

As is well known, despite the richness of imagination, heroic pathos, and the personification of ethnos and historic events, there is a historic reality at the heart of legends. In our legends Gazi is represented as the leader of the Ghuz-Oghuz tribes—the nearest South-East neighbours of the Bulgars. According to Mirkhond, the legend has this to say: 'Ghuzz ibn Yafet came to the boundaries of Bulgar and started living there building cities.' According to the notes of Ibn Fadlan, they lived in peace with the Bulgars. A daughter of the Oghuz commander Etrek, the son of Katagan, was married to the ruler of the Bulgars Almysh, the son of Shilki [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 129].

The kinship between the Bulgar and Burtas tribes does not contradict historical reality. The Burtases, the south-western neighbours of the Bulgars, are mentioned in the written sources until the middle of the 10th century as independent tribes, who paid taxes to the Bulgars and probably in the course of time became a part of Volga Bulgaria and assimilated with the Bulgars [Khalikov, 1985a, p. 30].

The similarity of legends with their sources from the 12th century speaks for their presence in the time of the Bulgars. Al-Gharnati, while describing the power of Ayp, writes: 'he took a horse under his arm like a man takes a little lamb.' The Tatar legend reads the same: 'he could lift horses and cows just by one hand' [Vakhidov, 1926, p. 83].

The famous Tatar scholar and illuminator K. Nasyri wrote: 'In our Bulgar home (in the meaning of motherland—'Bulgar yort'— *G. D.*) you can hear the tale about Ayp everywhere. It is known in many villages that if they have some noticeable hillock, they say that Ayp shook out his bast shoes here. It shows that

a huge person lived in the Bulgar home. After 800 years he has not been forgotten' [Nasyri, 1974, 1, 83 b.].

Those motifs were well-known even among the Bulgars of the 7th century, who lived in the Azov Sea Region and the North Caucasus. 'The Tales about the Narts' talks about the graves of giants and about giants in general, who roam in the forest, leaving vast traces in the form of hillocks-barrows [Dyumezil, 1976, pp. 21–22].

The Hungarian legend about the twins Gunor and Mogor, the sons of the giant Nimrat, who got lost in an unfamiliar locality while they were hunting, is concordant with this plot. After long wanderings they finally got back home. They were really fond of the country where they had hunted, and by the approbation of their father they lived there for 5 years. One day they met women and the sons of Belar in the steppe and captured them. Among the hostages were daughters of the Alan 'tsar,' Dulo, who married Gunor and Mogor. It is said that they became the ancestors of the Hunns and Hungarians [Poppe, 1927, p. 8]. These legends replicate events from the history of the Bulgars and Magyars.

Now, let's consider the widespread legends about women-giants and women-warriors also called amazons. Al-Gharnati recorded the Bulgar parable about the woman-aly: 'And judge Ya'kub ibn Nugman said to me in Bolgar: That tall Asian woman killed her husband named Adam who was one of the strongest men of Bulgar: she cuddled him to her breast and broke his ribs, and he died right away' [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 61].

The legends about amazons are present in the works of the ancient Greeks [Kosven, 1947, pp. 2–3, 33–59, 111]. Gradually they spread worldwide. It is not difficult to find traces of the past epoch of matriarchy in these legends. At the same time, the more significant and freer position of women in the ancient Turkic, Hunnic, Bulgar, and Oghuz societies as well as among ancient nomads in general was likely conducive to the spread of the legends. They rode horses together with their husbands, sometimes participated in military operations, and took part in resolving important questions in the clan and tribe. The reign of women oc-

curred even among the ancient Hunns-Bulgars [Artamonov, 1962, p. 211].

Ancient Turkic and proto-Bulgar traditions are evident in Ibn Fadlan's notes. He is extremely surprised by the fact that Bulgar women took baths together with men. According to the custom and law of the Bulgars, as Ibn Fadlan emphasises, Almysh's wife sat on the throne together with her husband. During funerals men wept instead of women. Ibn Rustah tells us about the Burtas girl who, having become an adult, ceased to obey her father, became free, and chose a husband for herself [Hvolson, 1869, p. 21].

Echoes of the Bulgar legends about amazons are even found among toponymic materials. For example, there are widespread toponyms such as 'Kız kala' ('The Girlish City') or 'Kız tau' ('The Girlish Mountain') among the Tatars in the Middle Volga Region. They are usually connected with archaeological sites related to the Volga Bulgars. Toponyms reflect one of the significant points in the legends: the presence of cities, in which supposedly only women and girls lived.

Plots about girl-warriors are an integral part of different variants of the epic poem 'Alpamysh.' The girls combat their grooms before their wedding, and afterwards they fight together with their husbands against enemies [THI, 1984, 79–87 b.]. This motif was popular as early as the 8–9th centuries. In the depictions of a dipper from the small town of Kotsky the struggle of women and men alyps takes a central place, reflecting the plots of the epic poems of the Oghuz-Kypchaks [Darkevich, 1974].

There are many other legends praising Bulgar women, but it is possible that some of them are of later origin and may be the result of transformations. The legend 'Forty Girls' says that after Tamerlane's devastation of the city of Bulgar women headed by the daughter of the Khan disguised themselves in military clothes and set out to Bilyar to guard the city. They perished in battle with enemies after the coming of Aksak Timur. Their grave is not far from Bilyar.

Another legend focuses on 12 beautiful and smart girls from the Bulgar town of Marjan.

While the war for Bilyar was taking place, they weakened the enemy by loudly cursing them. The daughter of the Khan and 12 other girls set up an ambush for the enemies. However, the forces were unequal. Escaping from their enemies, they rode into the city on quick horses. Marjan was destroyed. The enemies captured the girls and forced them to build up a mountain near Bilyar. The enemies wanted to bury them alive at the top of the mountain. But suddenly the 12 girls turned into 12 stars and rose up to the sky [THI, 1987, 37–38 b.].

Several more legends of this type can be found in Tatar folklore during the period of the Golden Horde and the Kazan Khanate [THI, 1987].

Bulgar legends about the adoption of Islam, which supposedly occurred after the tsar's family was cured of a mortal disease by a Muslim preacher, are also of interest. Al-Gharnati recounts the plot referring to the 'History of Bulgaria.'

The healing of the tsar's daughter and her marriage to the doctor was one of the widespread motifs in Tatar tales. This is, of course, related to Bulgar legends in the pre-Mongol period.

Stories of a number of Eastern authors about the 'tsar' of the Bulgars adopting Islam because of a prophetic dream are related to the legends [Zakhoder, 1967, II, p. 46]. That plot occurred even earlier because of the adoption of Judaism by the Khazars and is present in later Tatar legends [THI, 1987, 26 b.].

Legends about the founding of cities were widespread because they were perceived as important events which were worthy of being retold.

One of the ancient legends, included in the collection of works from the 17th century, 'Daftar-i Chingizname' gives an account about the clan of Baraj. As if in passing, in connection with the narration about the campaign of Aksak Timur on Bilyar, it explains: 'The population of Bilyar was called baradj. Their ancient locality was on the mouth of the Zay River. It was the time of the alyps. Azhdaha—a snake by the name of Baraj—came to their land and began harming inhabitants of the city. The inhabitants, having gone out

of the city, battled ajdaha but could not defeat it. In the end they escaped and left the city, and, having settled down on the Bulyar River, founded a city. They called the city Bulyar, and their population, Baraj' [Usmanov, 1972, p. 175].

Legends about battles with dragons, terrible snakes living in places where capitals and great cities were meant to be built relate to the pre-Mongol period. The founding of a number of Bulgar cities of the pre-Mongol period are related to the legends, such as Kazan, the Bulgar city near contemporary Yelabuga, and Juketau on the Kama [Khalikov, 1976].

The roots of such legends arose a long time ago. These legends are based on the idea that great cities and capital cities play an important role in the history of peoples and cannot be built by usual means. The process of building is connected with legendary or extraordinary deeds, events, and occurrences. They are holy from the very beginning—the future place of the city is purified of evil spirits by means of

burning, or 'treatment' by fire. Their subsequent fate is predetermined at the moment of founding.

It is obvious that P. Denisov's theory is right: through a comparative analysis of Tatar, Chuvash, and Siberian Turkic legends he concluded that they have roots in the ancient Turkic period [Denisov, 1984, pp. 50–51].

It is interesting that the cities of Kazan and Alabuga, which are both founded through a struggle with snakes, are situated on the boundaries of Volga Bulgaria. They arose as fortresses. Stemming from this, A. Khalikov proposed the idea that a dragon embodies a creature standing guard over national safety in the Bulgar imagination [Khalikov, 1976].

To emphasise the antiquity and greatness of a city, its founding is often connected with the legendary name of Alexander of Macedon—Iskander. In this regard there is an interesting historical song about the foundation of the city of Bilyar.

*Shähär dime bonı, bilkä,  
Bilänä kaldımı ilgä?  
Iskändärdän miras kaldı  
Bilär atlig cihangirga.*

*Oh ruler, does the country  
still have this city, the land?  
The ruler named Bilyar  
has the legacy of Iskander*

[Yakhin, Bakirov, 1979, p. 98].

It is curious that the name of the city is associated with that of the man who rules the world (Cihangir). It reminds us of the legend presented by al-Gharnati: 'Their word for a learnt man is balar, so they called the country balar and arabised it into Bulgar.' As we can see, it also associates the name of the city and country with a man's qualities, education, learning.

Medieval sources use the ethnonyms Bulgarian and Bilyar as synonyms. V. Tatishchev also

mentioned it: 'the name Bilyar is used as a general term for all Bulgarians' [Tatishchev, 1962, I, p. 269]. Tatishchev viewed the ethnonym Bilyar as being somewhat broader than 'Bulgarian.' Back in the 19th century, it was proposed that the capital of Volga Bulgaria on the Chermshan River was called Bulgar, which most of today's scholars support [Khuzin, 1991]. It even receives confirmation from folklore. The following historical song indicated that Bilyar and Bulgar mean the same:

*'Bolgär-Bilär diyasez, Bolgärdänmı kiläsez?  
Bolgär eklıların häydäp, hind illären gissez.*

*Bulgarian-Bilyar, are you from Bulgar?  
You travel across India on Bulgar Akhal-Teke horses*

[Yakhin, Bakirov, 1979, p. 106].

'Bulgar-Bilyar' was considered as the name of one city.

In the national oral tradition we can observe the close connection between these main Bulgarian cities. In these types of legends Bilyar and Bulgar are often mentioned together.

There are numerous legends about Bilyar as the glorious capital city of Bulgaria. The name of the capital was not identified in some legends, through by some characteristics it is easy to identify Bilyar.

Legends talk about dramatic events that refer to the Bulgar struggle with a foreign invader and the protection of the city of Bilyar. They mention the capture and destruction of the city of Bulgar on the Volga in passing: 'After the destruction of Bolgar, Tamerlane went to Bulyar...' [TFA, 1987, 37b]. As befits a capital, Bilyar had fought to the end, and the enemy seized it only after the destruction of other cities. The population from other Bulgarian cities came to protect the capital city.

In some legends the conquests of Bilyar are presented as God's retribution for the sins of the population. It is not difficult to connect this with later ideological developments, when Aksar Timur became exalted as a saint khazrat [Ibid, 32 b.], which in a way excused him for the conquests.

Tamerlane appears approximately in all of the legends about the conquests. However, the majority of them originate from the period of the Mongol invasion, and the name of Timur is a result of later changes and reconceptualisation. It should be emphasised that the Tatar legends do not mention the main conquer of the country of the Bulgars and its capital—Batu Khan and his commanders. Collective memory has not saved their names, but the tragedy of the nation, which is associated with later conquerors, is not forgotten.

In the Bilyar legends there is an obvious connection between times and cities relating to different periods. The legend about the Bulgar clan Baraj says that Jadash Bek's sons, Insan and Ikhsan, left Bilyar; the elder brother went to Taw yağı, where he established a city,

and the younger Ikhsan went to the homeland of his ancestors, on the Zay River [Ibid, 33 b.].

Another version says that the Khan's wife, together with her sons, Altynbey and Galimbey, went from Bilyar to the North and established Kazan there [Ibid, 47 b.].

Legends about the power of Bilyar-Bulgar are created in the following centuries.

Thus, an analysis of even a small part of the scenarios allows certain conclusions to be made. According to legends, the city of Bilyar was founded a long time ago. It was a great, glorious, rich, capital. The Khan lived there; there was a palace and a mosque. Bilyar is often confused with, or is used as a synonym for, the city of Bulgar. Bilyar fights to the bitter end against an enemy that could only destroy it after vanquishing the other Bulgar cities. The inhabitants of other settlements go to relieve Bilyar. In the image of Bilyar we see a link between Bulgar and Kazan, the Bulgars and the Tatars.

There are many legends about the city, respectfully called 'Shahri Bolgar,' in Bulgar-Tatar folklore (the city of Bulgar on the Volga). However, as we have already said, part of them relates to the first capital of Bulgaria—to Bilyar or the Great City. Having disappeared already during the conquests of the Mongols, Bilyar gradually leaves the memory of the population, and information about it is transferred to the city of 'Shahri Bolgar,' which reached its prime during the Golden Horde period. The very name 'Şähri Bolgar,' formed through a typical Persian 'izafa,' apparently is taken from the written literary sources.

Thus, during the existence of the Bulgar state, a wide range of legends formed an integral part of the spiritual life of the population. They could be divided into genealogical, cosmological, mythological, historical, and toponymical legends, which are methods of reflecting the ideology of a nation. With the help of this folk genre, the population expressed its attitude towards history and to contemporaneity. All the legends were kept alive among the Tatar nation, which had a highly developed written culture from ancient times.

## 2. Literature Qıssai Yosıf by Kol Ghali

*Nurmukhamet Khisamov*

Bulgar culture was an integral part of the Islamic East culture. Be it a theological and scientific thought or cultural discoveries, it all was developed based on the common achievements of global Islamic culture. If theology was based mostly on Arabic sources, literature was developing in close cooperation with Persian traditions. Actually, until the beginning of the 13th century Turkic literature had accumulated a very solid grounding in artistic and philosophical research. The 'Kutudgu Bilig' poem written by Yusuf Khas Hajib (11th century), a poetic anthology from 'Divan' by Mahmud al-Kashgari (11th century), the poem 'Hibat al-hakaik' by Ahmed Yugnaki, and the lyrics of the great Sufi of the 12th century. Ahmed Yassawi and Suleyman Bakyrghani provided a powerful foundation for new artistic discoveries.

Turkic literature, and Bulgar literature being integral part of it, keenly watched the development of Persian literature and perceived every significant achievement in it as an impetus for new pursuits. In the beginning of the 13th century the major achievement of the Islamic East literature was the works of the great Persian-Azerbaijani poet Nizami, who created a poetic model of humanism by establishing the story of his poems on a love drama of two handsome youths.

Still not mastered in Turkic poetry was the experience of Ferdowsi (11th century), the author of the great epic 'Shahnameh' and a poem 'Yusuf and Zulaikha.'

In the context of the troubling era of the first third of the 13th century in the Volga Region, the Bulgar poet Qol Ghali chose Yusuf's story for his poem, interesting and gracious in its consecration by the Bible and the Quran. The impetus for this choice was the poem of Ferdowsi. This story, with its particular social and historical relevance, prompted the poet as Bulgar society received an alarm about the oncoming threat of a steppe-dwellers invasion. The most basic protection for the country in

such circumstances was the unity, and a story with a judging collision of brothers' strifes suited perfectly as an instructive lesson for a country awaiting the enemy invasion.

Qol Ghali, a well-educated philosopher of his time, had a large set of sources on hand, ranging from al-Tabari's 'Tafsir' (9th century) to Ferdowsi's poem and Ansari's writing. 'The Tales of the Prophets' in Persian and prose works of Herat Sheikh Abdullah Ansari 'Anis al-myuridin wa shams al-majalis' ('Friend of mureeds and sun of assemblies') supplemented the Quranic source with a variety of specific details and stories—that is, 12th Sura called the Creator 'Ahsan ulkasas' ('the fairest of tales'). The listed sources are pointed out by western researchers, in particular, the Dutch scholar M.T. Houtsma [Houtsma, 1889, p. 76]. Our textual analysis also confirmed that he was right. But we were obliged to discover the main source of the poem by Qol Ghali in the wake of assumptions by the academics A. Krymsky [NES col. 52–53] and Y. Bertels [1994, p. 168]. It was the writing of Abdullah Ansari 'Anis al-mureedin,' encyclopedic work, containing many legends and versions of episodes and details. Following Qol Ghali, all the authors of eastern poems about Yusuf appealed to it: the Turkish poets of the 13–15th centuries, the Uzbek poet Durbek, the Persian-Tajik poet Jami (15th century), and the Kurdish poet Selim Sleman (16th century).

The poem of Qol Ghali is remarkable in many aspects. 'Kyssa-i Yusuf' ('The Tale of Yusuf') is in fact the first plot story of medieval Bulgar-Tatar, or more broadly, Turkic-Tatar poetry. This fact initially provided with entertaining features. It is not for nothing that the poem became the most beloved book of the Tatar people throughout its long history. It was completed on 12 May 1233.

In the Middle Ages it was not a plot to solve the problem of originality but rather its interpretation, which was embodied by nuances. 'Kyssa-i Yusuf,' being the first Turkic ver-

sion of the plot, had a largely Turkic flavour and so set the tone to the entire development of poetry in all three regions of the Turkic cultural world: in the Volga Region, Middle and Minor Asia.

Since the Turkic literature, including Bulgaria, did not have an experience of creating a large canvas of storyline, the poet turned to the experience of the Turkic epic in search of an example. This was reflected in the composition structure of the story (dialogue), the model of characters' relationships, the conflicted start of plot development, in ethnographic nuances of heroes' appearance and their deeds, and in other ways. The boldest features of poetic form construction are prosody and strophic form. Qol Ghali chose traditional folk prosody and

strophic form that consists of a quatrain and rhymes as **a a a b**, in that each twelve syllable line has three caesura nodes, and each node consists of four syllables. It was a decision rooted in his ingenuity. That construction provided measured story development, and transparency throughout the whole poem *radif*, or the refrain 'imdi' (already, now), strung all the text on a single strong thread. And reading or performing of the poem was, in the traditions of Dastan poetry, with a tune. It is possible that the composition was originally designed for this form.

As a guide for choosing the prosody and the strophic form, the poet used a strophe of Ahmed Yassawi. We provide two examples for clarity.

*Märkâb lâgır, yögem ağır, üzem gâmkın,  
Xäsrät berlä gakäl-hyşım kitte, tämkin,  
Üteb kârvan, küzdin belâşmäsmän kayan imdi.  
(My means of transport is scraggy, my burden, heavy, and I am sad;  
I grieve so hard that reason and calm have left me,  
The Caravan passed by, and the dweller disappeared from my view,  
How do I determine the direction where I should go?)*

(Ahmad Yassawi);

*Xälem dishvar, tänem mäcrux, küñlem mäğmum,  
Nagyah döşdem bu mixnätä män ber mäzlum,  
Äy dârığa, atam Yagkub kaldı mäxrüm,—  
Mondan soñra bänı kanda kürär imdi?  
(My situation is hard; my body is wounded and my soul grieving;  
I happened to be here, suffering and pained;  
What a pity it is that my father  
Yakub has lost me, for where can he see me after this?!)*

(Qol Ghali).

The book can be summarised as follows.

Prophet Jacob's eleven-year-old son dreamed that the sun, the moon, and eleven stars descended from the sky and bowed to him. His father interpreted it to mean that Yusuf was to become a king and a prophet, while his eleven brothers would serve him. Jacob's step-daughter overheard him speak and told Yusuf's brothers. Overwhelmed with envy, the elder brothers made up their minds to prevent the prophecy from coming true. They swore to

kill their father's favourite. They praised the beauty of the steppe to lure him to it. Having persuaded their father, they took him away to kill him but eventually, followed the advice of Yahuda, who was more merciful, to bind him hand and foot and throw him into a well. They sprinkled his shirt with lamb's blood and showed it to their father as evidence that Yusuf had been eaten by a wolf.

As a caravan was passing by the well, the merchant Malik Dugr sent his servants to fetch

water, and they brought out from the well a youth so handsome that he delighted Malik. Yusuf's brothers soon approached the well and demanded that the merchant give him to them. The merchant was eager to buy their 'slave,' and the brothers sold him for eighteen small coins.

Zulaikha, the daughter of the king of Maghreb, dreamed about the handsome Yusuf and fell in love with him. She told her father Taimus. She could not sleep, nor did she eat. She had another dream after a year. The youth only replied: 'I am yours. You are mine.' When a year had passed and the girl implored: 'Who are you? Where do you live?' the youth replied: 'I am the King of Egypt. Come to Egypt if you want to see me.' But he warned her: 'Do not hurry. Be patient, for patience is the only way to achieve your goal.'

However, Zulaikha did not obey. She told her father about her third dream and asked him to marry her off to the King of Egypt. Taimus entered into correspondence with the King of Egypt Kytfir (Potiphar, according to the Bible). He expressed willingness to receive the daughter of the King of Maghreb. Taimus sent his daughter off with an abundant dowry. Yet, Zulaikha was to suffer a heartbreaking disappointment. Instead of the handsome youth she had been eager to meet, she saw an unfamiliar man. However, her maids persuaded her to reconcile herself to her fate. Then they heard the rumour that the merchant Malik had put an incredibly expensive slave for sale. Seeing him, Zulaikha fainted. When she regained consciousness, she demanded the servants buy him for her at any price as she recognised him to be the jigit of her dreams. Kytfir bought the handsome slave for his entire treasury and said as he presented him to Zulaikha: 'We have no child, so let him be our son.'

Zulaikha treated the youth with more reverence than the ruler had ever enjoyed— she would give him new clothing every day, braided his hair herself, etc. At last she revealed her secret and acknowledged her passion. The youth was stoic and honourably answered: 'Aziz (the ruler's title.— *N. Kh.*) accepted me as his son. How can I betray my father!'

Desperate, Zulaikha revealed her secret to the nurse. She recommended that she build a

trap palace to captivate the youth's mind and make him submit to his mistress.

A palace was built on Kytfir's order with silver trees inside. On their branches sat birds of gold. There was a golden horse between the columns. Silver statues of bulls stood at the column pedestals. Zulaikha ordered that Yusuf be called. The youth found the view delightful and asked: 'Why is not Aziz with the mistress?' The Queen confessed the palace was meant for Yusuf and began to praise his virtues. She gave a very vivid description of the youth's inner and outer beauty. The hero was close to giving in after hearing the beautiful woman's ardent confessions. However, he heard God speak from on high and saw the shadow of his father. The jigit recovered his self-control and ran away. Zulaikha followed him. Kytfir met them at the door. Making excuses to her stunned spouse, Zulaikha put the blame on Yusuf. She eventually had the youth imprisoned in the dungeon, where he spent twelve years.

Kytfir died, and his brother Melik Reyyan succeeded him. A baker and a cupbearer were accused of scheming against him and sent to the dungeon. They both had a dream that Yusuf interpreted as auspicious for the cupbearer, who was to be released, but a bad omen for the baker, who was to be executed. The prophecy came true.

Once the ruler of Egypt had a disturbing dream. He dreamed about seven fat ears of grain and seven withered ones. The latter destroyed the former. The king then saw seven fat cows and seven lean ones. The latter devoured the former. Dream interpreters were unable to explain it. The cupbearer remembered Yusuf and told the king about him. He sent him to the dungeon. Yusuf interpreted the dream as seven years of abundance to be followed by seven years of drought. Reyyan ordered that Yusuf should be released. He and his people came to meet him. Yusuf would not accept liberation unless all prisoners were set free. Reyyan released everyone and ceded the throne to Yusuf, at which he said: 'You deserve kingship more than I do. You all must obey him.'

Then there was the question of a vizier. Speaking through the Archangel Jibrail, God ordered Yusuf to start off on a journey and appoint the first man he came across to be his vi-



zier. The first was a shabby, poor man. Yusuf appointed him to be his vizier. He was very hesitant at first, but Jibrail said that when the poor man was a child, he had testified to Kyt-fir that Yusuf was innocent when Zulaikha accused him of treachery. The vizier turned out to be wise, as was Yusuf.

Once the hero found an exhausted woman near a road, who turned out to be Zulaikha. Shocked, he asked: 'What has happened to your slender figure, your delightful beauty?' The woman replied: 'My passion for you took everything. Neither my wealth nor power remain, just love and suffering.' Jibrail ran his wing across Zulaikha's face, and she became as young and beautiful as before. The hero and the heroine had a spectacular wedding and lived happily as parents of 12 sons.

Yusuf took vigorous measures to prepare the country for the drought. He had granaries built and crops stored. When the drought came, he ordered that sowing be stopped.

The drought spread to the land of Canaan, where Yusuf came from. Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to ask the just Egyptian king for grain. Yusuf welcomed his wrongdoers warmly and gave them a generous amount of grain without revealing his identity. By the time they came again, he had built a palace with scenes of his brothers' abuse painted on the walls. It is a time-proven literary device. Think of Hamlet who staged his uncle's crime and watched his reception of the play. Yusuf pretended not to understand the guests' language and used an interpreter. They said to each other: 'These are our unseemly deeds,' and lost their appetites. Yusuf took them to another hall. Yusuf had asked them to bring along his full brother Benjamin. They met secretly. Yusuf promised his brother that he would make sure that he stayed with him. He put his golden cup into Benjamin's cart, then arranged for a search, and the cup was 'found' in Benjamin's cart. The Egyptian ruler detained him as a 'caught thief' and 'arrested' him. One of the brothers stayed in Egypt, too. Jacob interpreted the bad news as possibly auspicious and said: 'God willing, I will see my three sons together.'

When his brothers returned a third time, Yusuf produced the note from a box that his

brothers had written when they sold him into slavery. It stated that the man on sale had three bad habits: 'liar, runaway, and thief.' They pretended for a long time that they did not understand what he was talking about before they confessed having had a slave with those features. Yusuf exposed them severely. He had them blindfolded and threatened to cut off each brother's hand and hang them by the neck. They begged him to spare their lives for the sake of their long-suffering father. Yusuf began to cry and ordered that their blindfolds be removed. They were astonished to recognise the Egyptian ruler was their brother and flew into each other's arms.

The next time the brothers brought along their father. Yusuf introduced his wife Zulaikha and their twelve children to him.

Feeling that he would die soon, Jacob returned to Canaan. The story ends when the heroes pass away. Zulaikha is the first to die. The poet emphasises: 'Yusuf never married again, but lived to take care of his children.' Then Yusuf passed away.

How was this post-Ferdowsi Yusuf story updated? First of all, it is the key element to the plot—that is, the way in which the heroes' relationships are interpreted. For instance, Ferdowsi's heroine was born Egyptian. This gives an ethical twist to her perseverance to get the handsome slave Yusuf. In Qol Gali's variant, Zulaikha is the daughter of the king of another country (Maghreb). She falls in love with Yusuf seeing him only in her dreams. This is another turn of events and bears a different moral connotation. This type of relationship between the heroes originated with the dastan genre. The most important requirement for rulers in ancient Turkic (in particular, Oghuz) epics was that the Khagan needed robust male descendants. Yusuf's twelve sons are representative of this motif. According to the Bible, Quran tafsirs, and Ferdowsi's poem, Yusuf had two sons. The hero's appearance also bears Turkic features. Jacob, and then also Zulaikha, braided Yusuf's hair. It is an ancient Turkic ethnographic detail. Long braids indicated the person belonged to a noble family [Weinstein, Kryukov, 1966, pp. 177–178].

What makes the interpretation of the heroes' relationship really novel is the advocacy for

monogamy. The poet uses Jacob to illustrate the bad impact that polygamy has on children (the old man had four wives). When Yusuf saw his father, he emphasised: 'The children are all ours, all by Zulaikha.' This is clearly representative of several traditions. First, it is the folk tradition embodied in Turkic epics. Second, the personal example and references to Nizami's works indicate a deliberate advocacy for monogamy.

Patience is a central theme of the poem. The idea is embodied in Yusuf's advice, in Zulaikha's dream, in Jacob's self-comforting after he lost his son, in the admonition by Zulaikha's

*Gaklı kyamil, gylme xikmät kyamil belür;  
Möddägiylär dägva berlän aña küür;  
Xas vä gamä gadel, dörest xökem kılur;  
Hiç kemsägä cäür-cäfa kılmaz imdi.*

*(His mind is perfect; he possesses perfect knowledge of the philosophic science;  
The dissatisfied come to complain to him;  
He judges the chosen and common people fairly and in the right way;  
He does not hurt anyone nor make anyone suffer.)*

Later Turkic poets always referred to Qol Ghali's formula in search of their ideal of a fair king.

Its peaceful message ensured the poem would endure. The state ruled by Yusuf is no threat to anyone; it is never at war.

The poem soon became ingrained in the spiritual life of the Bulgar-Tatar people. Interestingly, a sepulchral monument bearing the name of Mamil, Yusuf's younger son, was erected in Bulgar sixty years after it appeared [Khisamov, 1979, pp. 23–24; 1984, p. 29]. Sixty years is the average life expectancy. A total of seven Bulgar epitaphs like that have come down to us.

There is every indication that the poet Qol Ghali died during the Mongol invasion. The poem itself is a piece of evidence. It contains incomplete strophes, repeated lines, phrases, and even strophes unworthy of the author's talent that slow down the plot. They are apparently variations from the poet's creative laboratory born in search of the best option and meant to be further refined. It seems that the author did not have the time or opportunity to do it. His disciples found it necessary to preserve whatever had been issued from the great master's sacred pen.

maids, and the aphorism: 'Patience is the way to achieve one's goal.' This saying seems to be meant for the long and troubled history of the Tatar people. It contains the formula for optimism. The three heroes (Yusuf, Jacob, and Zulaikha), are in fact, a personalisation of this maxim. The theme appears in dozens and hundreds of Tatar aphorisms. It has become a national feature, an essential element of the Tatar mindset.

The core value of the poem lies in the idea of a fair ruler, which gives insight into the issue of the ruler and the people's well-being. It is personalised as the sagacious Yusuf:

Qıssai Yosıf had a major impact on the development of Bulgar-Tatar and Turkic poetry in general. Its generally Turkic mission was to bring pre-Mongol Turkic poetry to master the accomplishments of the great Nizami, which the Turkic poetry of the Volga Region could not embark upon until 100 years later due to historical disasters.

The plot of Yusuf and Zulaikha, in the wake of Qol Ghali, became the engine of medieval Turkic poetry. Multiple naziras (imitations and competitions) began to appear as a response to Qıssai Yosıf in the same century. Mahmud Qırımlı presented a large poem in Crimea; Shayyaz Hamza and Suli Faqih wrote in Asia Minor. Several poems started to appear every century. In the 14th century the poem 'Yusuf and Zulaikha' by the Turkish poet Akhmedi appeared, to which Durbek referred. Poems by Hamdi, Kemal Pashazade, and Taşlıcalı Yahya Bey followed. The Kurdish poem 'Yusuf and Zulaikha' by Selim Sleman was written based on the poem by Suli Faqih. They all are representative of the bountiful artistic, ethical, social, and philosophical world of Qıssai Yosıf.

## CHAPTER 6

### The Architecture of Volga Bulgaria

*Liliya Sattarova, Iskander Izmaylov*

The great period of Bulgarian culture (latter half of the 10–first third of the 13th centuries) was a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon. Its brightest and most expressive features can be found in the remaining architectural ruins and handiwork items that have survived to this day.

Rapid urban development from the first third to the latter half of the 10th century was accompanied by the perfection of construction and the introduction of new building materials, techniques, and building types characteristic for the architecture of Islamic countries.

The natural and geographical conditions of the Middle Volga Region determined the use of wood by the Bulgarians as a base construction material. The existence of advanced civil engineering and the development of cities among the Bulgars is confirmed by the Eastern historico-geographical tradition [Zakhoder, 1967, pp. 36–40]. The Middle Age traveller al-Gharnati wrote that the city of Bulgar 'is built of pine' [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 30], and Yaqut ibn Abdallah (13th century), with reference to his predecessors, wrote about the details of construction equipment, pointing out that 'Bulgarians build their houses only of wood, one log put onto another, and connect them with strong also wooden nails' [The History of Tataria, 1937, p. 16]. Archaeological investigations confirm these records, supplementing them with information about the methods of wooden building construction and even about the specialised use of certain wood types. Thus, pine wood was used in the construction of dwellings, and oak was used for buildings where particular strength and endurance was needed (fortification walls, well frames, and so on). The use of oak pilings to bolster the soil beneath the stone foundation of the minaret in Bilyar was one interesting application [Sharifullin, 1981].

Wood was used extensively in the construction of religious and public buildings. The re-

marks of Ibn Fadlan about the community of Baranjars, 'for whom they built a wooden mosque for them to pray in,' refer to the early 10th century [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 138]. Apparently, the mosques mentioned by authors in the middle and latter half of the 10th century—al-Balkhi, al-Istakhri, al-Masudi, and al-Muqaddasi—were also wooden. The traces of wooden mosque construction found in Bilyar remain the only but eloquent proof of the written sources.

Unfortunately, we do not have any evidence of the external architectural character of buildings during the pre-Mongol period. A number of well-studied written sources allow us to create a visual reconstruction only by bringing up analogues. The grand mosque complex in Bilyar, which includes a wooden and white-stone mosque with a minaret, a cemetery with a brick burial-vault, and a brick bath, was illustrative in this regard. Studies of the archaeological remains refer it to the columnar (Arab) type, the most widespread in much of the Islamic world in that period, and make it the oldest Bulgarian monumental construction on the Volga.

The Bilyar mosque underwent a number of construction phases, as many other early columnar mosques in the centres of the Islamic world. Founded in the early 10th century, a wooden mosque (almost rectangular shape: 44.5–48 x 30–32 m) was rebuilt. Apparently, before the end of the 10th century a stone part was built on the eastern side (the external dimensions were 40.5–41.7 x 26.2 m; internal dimensions were 38–38.5 x 24 m; total area was 912 sq. m), which was divided into 5 naves in four rows of square columns (six in each row). The mosque space was singular; at a certain stage the wall between the halls was replaced by a range of pillars [Khalikov, Sharifullin, 1979].

Bilyar mosque had a detached minaret 1.5 m away from the north-western wall of the stone building. The existence of a strong foundation,

with a deepened pit strengthened with oak pilings, confirms the information related to the 18–19th centuries on the height of the minaret, which was 'much bigger than the Bulgarian' large minaret [Rybushkin, 1833, p. 197]. This 'Stone Pillar... had a huge size' already in the 30s of the 18th century and towered over the area of the ancient town. In the middle of the 19th century a scientific description had measured its foundation to be no more than two arshins [Khalikov, Sharifullin, 1979, p. 21]. 'An octagonally shaped foundation,' mentioned by an author from the 19th century, was no more than an eight-faceted transition from a quadrangular frame to a circular stem. The foundation of the tower was made of rubble, and the square foundation was apparently lined with smoothly drafted stone. The structural forms of the minaret are usually reconstructed (based on the foundation) by using analogues from the architecture of Transcaucasia [Aydarov, Zabirowa, 1979, pp. 54–44], particularly citing a number of Azerbaijani minarets of the 12–13th centuries. Their typological similarity to the monument places the construction (or last reconstruction) of the Bilyar stone minaret to no earlier than the 12th century. Other close parallels can be seen in the architecture of minarets of the 12th century preserved in the towns of Anatolia (Ulu Jami in Kayseri, Kharput, Sivas, Tepsi Minaret in the fortress of Erzurum). Their typical feature was a circular brick stem, which was put onto a cubic stone foundation with an octagonal transition. Bulgar stone architecture from the time of the Golden Horde provides two examples of the successors to this form—in the Great and Minor minarets, dating back to the 14th century, which makes it appropriate to assume that the builders in Bulgar during the Golden Horde period used the ruins of the pre-Mongol period as their model.

Speaking of the influence of Islamic architecture on the Bulgarian, it is customary to indicate the Middle Asian and Khorasanian analogues. The Arab historian al-Jawaliqi provided an interesting testimony on the topic; in regard to the Bulgarians he wrote that 'their houses are similar to Rum's buildings' [Fakhrutdinov, 1987, p. 17]. It should be noted that in this case the word 'Rum' means not only Byzantium but

Anatolia and the State of Seljuqids as well as the Rum (Konya, Seljuqid) Sultanate within its territory. Indeed, the unique stone used for Bulgarian construction in the building of mosque walls and pillars in Bilyar supported the theory that it was a received tradition, while the trade links with Anatolia and Transcaucasia provided the source of the common regional architectural practice. 'The complex of the cathedral mosque,' which included the ruins of several other constructions, is reminiscent of the central mosque in Konya, the capital of the Seljuq Sultanate, called the mosque of Ala ad-Din (1156–1220) since both monuments had a typologically identical initial core—a columnar mosque, the hall of which was increased in subsequent years.

In the complex of the major mosque in Konya there was also a necropolis of the aristocracy with mausoleums, which also had analogues in Bilyar, where remnants of a family shrine or mausoleum were found near the mosque complex. This is a unique structure for Bulgaria. It is situated on the Bilyar IV burial site, which borders the mosque complex on the south-eastern side. The mausoleum consisted of a brick rectangular building (inner dimensions of 2.05 x 1.3 m). The remnants of three walls were identified, with a height of 0.4 m and made of 5–7 masonry rows of burnt square bricks (28–30 cm, height of 5–6 cm) with clay mortar. The walls are one brick in width. The floor of the building was paved with debris and stood on sand gravel. Buried according to Islamic tradition, two deceased (a male and a female) were found inside the crypt. Based on stratigraphic observations, a shrine was constructed before the building of the stone part of the mosque and dated back to the first half–middle of the 10th century [Sharifullin, 1984, pp. 69, 72–73, Fig.1, 5]. It is hard to say what the nature of this construction was, whether it was a ground level shrine (makbara) or a semi-underground family tomb (sagana). But since the edge of the shrine was partly destroyed in the construction of a more recent grave, it appeared that it was deepened into the soil grave enclosure. Sagana, as a type of funerary construction, was a special Middle Asian funerary structure [Babayeva, 1993]; the emergence of such a tomb in Bulgaria was an important sign

of the religious and cultural ties with Eastern countries.

A reconstruction of the architectural forms of the wooden mosque in Bilyar are generally made in with an eye on the ancient Russian architectural experience [Aydarov, Zabirowa, 1979, p. 52, Fig.17]. However, for more information about the interior of the multicolumn prayer hall, Islamic architecture should be considered. At the same time, it is possible to assume the existence of wood carving and paintings in its artistic decoration, which were characteristic for Khwarezm and Mawaran-nahr, where mosques with wooden columns and stone masonry walls were widespread in the 10–12th centuries. They were likely the location from which this type of worship building entered Volga Bulgaria [Smirnov, 1976, pp. 4–5; Sharifullin, 1976; Khalikov, Sharifullin, 1977, pp. 199–202]. The surviving carved columns from the Bukhara and Khiva mosques of the 10–11th centuries and from Obburdan of the 9–10th centuries as well as the carved ceiling of the mosque in the settlement of Chorkukh of the 10–12th centuries in some point bring us closer to a vision of the possible nature of the decor in the wooden mosque in Bilyar. Comparison with the group of so-called 'wooden' mosques in Asia Minor of the 12–13th centuries—that is, mosques with wooden columns and flat wooden ceilings, which were richly decorated with carvings and ornamental paintings—also helps to recreate the interior of the Bilyar and other Bulgarian mosques made of wood.

There are indications to suggest that cultural ties with Seljuk Anatolia, which emerged in the stone architecture of Bulgaria during the Golden Horde, originate back to the pre-Mongol period and not to a later date, as it was considered earlier. These ties are also interesting in terms of the plan for reconstruction of the original cathedral mosque in Bilyar. Slightly trapezoidal in its plan, it represented a hall with six longitudinal naves divided into nine equal travees. In the middle of the hall, between the fifth and seventh column rows, there was a pool, over which a light tube was made; the space in front of the mihrab was also accentuated (there is no column opposite the mihrab). Such space allocation was especially characteristic of Asia Minor

mosques with stone and wooden columns because local architects had to give up the massive yard as a compulsory feature of the Middle East grand mosque, considering the harsh winters of the Anatolian highlands.

Other important semantic and decorative elements in the architecture of the prayer hall, mihrab and minbar, could also have been made of wood [Khalikov, Sharifullin, 1979, p. 27]. In this regard it should be pointed out that the surviving copies wooden mihrabs also originated in Middle Asia (the settlement of Iskodar, Transoxiana, 9–10th centuries) and Anatolia (the settlement of Damsaköy, Central Anatolia, beginning of the 14th century).

Unfortunately, the results of archaeological studies do not make it possible to present the full spectrum of Bulgarian architectural decor. To some extent, the data on window panes in Bilyar during the pre-Mongol period fills this gap. Among a number discovered one-type discs (18–22 cm in diameter), most likely of local production, glass fragments stand out that are characteristic of Caucasian craft centres [Valiullina, 1991]. The imported glass was covered with relief geometrical ornaments containing diamonds, stars, rosettes, and hexagons. Polyangular ornaments owe their origin to the widespread development of brick constructions and decor during the Seljuq epoch and were mostly typical for the architectural decor of Islamic countries in Middle Asia and the Near and Middle East since the 11th century. The discoveries of Caucasian glass testify for the extensive commercial contacts of Volga Bulgaria, and the findings of coloured stained glass—rare for Eastern Europe—highlight the highest level of urban culture and active trade and closer cultural ties with Western Europe.

Other techniques are also present in the decor of Bilyar public buildings. In particular, stone pillars of the prayer hall were completed with so-called stalactitic capital stone [Khalikov, Sharifullin, 1979, Table 8: 12]. The inner surface of the brick building walls in Bilyar was thoroughly plastered and covered, and as preserved fragments show, contained ornamental paintings.

Eight brick buildings have been discovered in total on the territory of medieval Bulgaria,

dating to the 10–13th centuries: three in Bilyar, two in Murom townlet (Samara Luka), and one each at the Suvar, Khulash, and Krasnosyundukovskoe (Cis–Volga Region) archaeological sites. According to their spatial characteristics, they can be conditionally divided into two types [Sharifullin, 1999, pp. 84–85].

*The first is* rectangular and simple. It had extended outlines and two-three interim premises, located enfiladely, apparently for the temperature there to rise gradually from the entrance to the heating stove. Similar constructions were researched by A. Smirnov and V. Kakhovsky at the archaeological site of Khulash and dated back to the 12th century.

*The second type is* subsquare multichamber. These constructions had more complex plans, different from the previous ones, because an enfilade plan was added to further the dimensions. This type of buildings is best exemplified by the brick construction in Bilyar that was, from the researchers point of view [Khalikov, Sharifullin, 1976], one of the main elements in the vast complex of the caravanserai, which consisted of a few brick and wooden buildings with public and religious purposes. The complex, situated on a small natural elevation in front of one of the key entrances to the city, was surrounded by a moat and palisade. The entire yard was paved with a wooden covering rough-casted with clay. A brick building (dimensions of 16.8 x 14.8 m) was located in the northern corner of the yard. The building, divided with inner walls into six spaces, had a system of vertical (inside the walls) and horizontal (underground) heating and an autonomous water supply as well as combustion chambers and input nodes. The Middle Asian origins of this tradition can be seen in the rectangular plan, the heating system arrangement, the size of the bricks (26 x 26 x 5 cm), the type of wall masonry, and the foundation built on unburnt clay brick with an anti-seismic cushion. The emergence of input nodes should be highlighted; this was required for heated buildings in the conditions of the Middle Volga Region.

Three similar buildings have been discovered in Bilyar (near the mosque, XXVII excavation and in the caravanserai)—two in Murom

(one with a vaguely studied plan, from the excavations of V. Holmsten in 1928–1929, another, from the excavations of G. Matveeva in 1973) and one at the Suvar archaeological sites. Some buildings had their own separate design and unique construction. During the construction of the bath house foundation, researched in the Valynskoye archaeological site, ragging lime stones were used along with brick [Matveeva, Kochkina, 1998, p. 27], and during the construction of the bath house in the centre of Bilyar (XXVII excavation) an undersized brick was used, enabling us to date the building to the pre-Mongol period [Sharifullin, 1999, p. 85].

It is clear that all these buildings were used as bathhouses [Zilivinskaya, 1989], as can be seen in addition by the walls, thoroughly plastered and covered with ornamental paintings, which was characteristic for eastern bathhouses. They were located inside of cities (Bilyar, Suvar, Murom townlet) and also near city walls (Bilyar, Murom townlet), where apparently they were a part of the caravanserai complexes of buildings. Based on their location and planning differences, Bulgarian bathhouses were for different social classes and were probably based by district. The bath house in the centre of Bilyar near the mosque complex was likely a waqf facility, the income of which contributed to the operation of the mosque and probably its madrasah and hospital. Such waqf institutions were characteristic and widespread in the Near and Middle East [Bolshakov, 1984, pp. 113–117]. The very existence of bathhouses in many cities of Bulgaria emphasised the Eastern nature of Bulgarian city and urban culture.

The brick construction method, seen in Bulgarian archaeological sites and several building ruins, originates to Middle Asian pre-Seljuq architecture, particularly to the tradition of large-scale brickwork, seen in the walls and foundation masonry of brick buildings in Suvar, Bilyar, and the Valynskoye ancient town. Since major public buildings in the Middle Ages were a demonstration of the economic opportunities and political ambitions of the state, the discovered architectural traditions rooted in the countries of the Islamic East are evidence of the direction of cultural ties and reveal the new stage of spiritual identity development.

## CHAPTER 7

### Bulgar Art

*Guzel Valeyeva-Suleymanova*

The term 'Bulgarian art' encompasses the artistic culture (crafts, arts and crafts, ornaments) of the Volga Bulgars, which passed these historical stages in its development: the art of the early Bulgar (end of 7–beginning of 10th centuries), the art of Volga-Kama Bulgaria of the pre–Mongol period (10–first half of 13th centuries), and the art of Volga-Kama Bulgaria of the Golden Horde period (latter half of 13–beginning of 15th centuries).

The genesis of Bulgarian art dates back to the ancient culture of Eastern and Middle Asian tribes, early medieval Eastern-European Hun-Bulgar Turkicised Sarmatian-Alans, the Western Turkic Khaganate population, Great Bulgaria, and Khazaria [History of the Tatars, 2002, 1]. The formation and development of Bulgarian art as a part of Eastern European civilisation is associated with the Saltovo culture distribution area, through processes of nomadic herding, and a settled agricultural economy interaction.

Saltovo-Mayaki archaeological culture developed as a result of the cultural interaction of different nations and has spread in the 8–9th centuries in wide territories of Eurasia steppes and forest steppes [Pletneva, 1967]. There, along with Turkic nomadic culture (Bulgar, Khazars) and Alans agriculture, a significant role was played by the culture of the Hellenistic cities of the Northern Black Sea Region, Transcaucasia, and Iran. However, the impact was pretty complicated and was not limited to the one-sided influence of Hellenistic Greek or Iranian art. The Bulgars' own ethnic aesthetics transformed achieved experience into art traditions with stable features of steppe nomadic culture. It is especially clear in the works of arts and crafts related to the rite of pagan burial. Harness, saddle, leather belt with metal plates, wood, clay and leather ware, bow, arrows in birch-bark quivers covered with leather, knives,

spears, ornaments for hats, clothes, and hair reflect the common nomadic artistic traditions.

The formation of Bulgarian civilisation in the Volga Region contributed to the creation of conditions for the flourishing of crafts, the building industry, architecture, and applied arts, those forms of sedentary culture that were perceived by Bulgars in the period of their nomadism and settling on the lands of the North Caucasus, the Black Sea Region, and the Azov Sea Region. Features of the so-called Middle-Volga version of Saltovo culture, disclosed in early Bulgar art, developed naturally. The continuity of its traditions is preserved in the art of the pre–Mongol period and is even enhanced by the appearance of new groups of Bulgars from Khazaria in the 10th century. It was already a partially Muslim population with rich traditions of agriculture and trade along with advanced elements of Saltovo culture, defined by archaeologists in the earliest layers of most Bulgar ancient settlements [Kazakov, 1992].

The Middle-Volga version of Saltovo culture at the stage of Bulgarian art traditions formed in a complex ethnic environment. Its creators were Volga Bulgars, a significant contribution to the formation of this culture specific features was made by Ugrian or Turkic-Ugrian tribes, natives from the Cis-Kama Region and Cis-Urals. It is important to note that Saltovo culture had a significant impact on the culture of Finno-Ugrian aborigines, who took some of its achievements.

The development of Bulgar art during the period of centralised city formation in Volga Bulgaria was in the conditions of Bulgar tribes unity and a common art style formation. It was the time when crafts and trading were flourishing as well as the time of the beginning of a single ethnic-aesthetic way of art formed as a result of feudal 'realms' and their culture con-

solidations in terms of a single state and a single religion of Islam.

The adoption of Islam included Bulgar art to the area of Islamic civilisation distribution, contributed to the development of new artistic values and development of Islamic art achievement in the local ethnocultural space. However, that process was gradual, and artistic traditions established in the previous art period continued to develop in Bulgar arts in the 10–12th centuries. They reflect the specifics of medieval Volga Bulgar state arts, related by its sources to the achievements of Saltovo culture and at the same time adopted Islamic ideological and artistic direction.

Bulgarian artistic phenomena are exactly that alongside new principles of arts brought by medieval Islamic aesthetics there still continued to exist images related to earlier cult, magical, and mythological traditions. However, the reason for it is not the preservation of the pagan views of the Volga Bulgars, which will be explained later, but one of the main patterns of folk art and related art craft—its life-giving tradition. It was thanks to the latest ornament images and motifs that technique and even the decor composition remained unchanged for centuries. Thanks to tradition arts and crafts live forever, maintaining the continuity of achievements from generation to generation.

In this light, proceeding only from the saving of certain images and scenes, ornamental motifs developed in pre-Islamic art, we must admit it is wrong to state that Bulgarian art of the pre-Mongol period was supposedly part of the pagan culture of Eastern Europe [Valeyeva, 1983, p. 8 ff.]. On the contrary, judging from remained archaeological records, the development of an art language in art and craft works of Volga Bulgars reflects the ideology of forming a monotheistic state. A unique Bulgarian style developed, bearing the commonness of art-aesthetic criteria and Islamic art and at the same time continually developing mythological imagery system, which was a folk, traditional line of development.

The central place is occupied by urban arts and crafts, reflecting the tastes of the ruling elite of society and expressing the interests of

the people who accepted Islam. In the works of urban artisans there reveals the influence of stylistic trends, characterised in the overall the development of Islamic culture and aimed at ornamental stylisation and symbolic conventionality of artistic language.

The ornamentality principle, the new world-view of the Islamic era artist, was forming in art. In the works of Bulgarian art of the pre-Mongol period we can see the gradual forming of the new imagery, as a result of which old myths of pagan thought have been cast aside, and a world-view associated with Islamic aesthetics has been perceived. Archaising motifs and themes, more stylised and summarised, included in the conventionally decorative system of Islamic art, show a loss of the content richness, typical for a pagan world-view.

The purpose of the essay presented to readers is to reveal the artistic content and specifics of Bulgarian art, which occupies a central place in the cultural history of Eastern European countries and at the same time serves as an important link in the evolution of Tatar culture. The author sees his task in identifying the artistic paradigm of Bulgarian art, which has had a noticeable influence on the medieval culture of the peoples and countries of Eastern Europe (Ancient Rus', the Baltic States, Finno-Ugrians, and others) and took a worthy place in the world culture treasury.

### Early Bulgarian Art

Before characterising the art of Volga Bulgaria of the pre-Mongol period it is necessary to introduce the reader into its prehistory to uncover the motifs and images of the art, technology and principles of decoration established in the Early Bulgar period. Earlier we mentioned the layering and complexity of the Early Bulgarian art associated in its origins with steppe cultures of Eurasia, especially with Saltovo-Mayaki [Pletneva, 1967, p. 188]. This means that the culture of the early Bulgars was not something from the outside, it was from the beginning in the area of its development and represented one of its regional versions. That is why we cannot agree with some scholars' statements that Volga Bulgarian arts had undergone



the 'levelling influence of Saltovo-Mayaki culture produced in the towns of Khazaria' [Izmaylov, Sattarova, 2002, p. 482]. This not entirely correct statement is related to lack of understanding of Saltovo culture and its founding processes, which was forming in the extensive Bulgar-Alan world, covering the whole of East-Southern Europe and was not only limited to Khazarian city culture. In addition, it was not a reflection of only 'common Khazar ornamental tradition' because it was not limited by the ornament-making field but was connected to the development of monumental architecture and art, pottery, jewellery, building, and others. This culture was much wider both in ethnocultural (formed as Bulgar-Alan-Khazar) and territorial boundaries (outside the Khazaria it has spread in the Danube Region, Crimea, and Volga Bulgaria). Moreover, even if it was influenced, then it was primarily so by the Hellenistic culture of the Northern Black Sea Region and the countries of the Middle and Near East. Along with the general phenomena mostly inherent of its artistic style, it bears an ethno-regional and local features, the originality of which revealed itself in its Middle Volga version.

A feature of the Middle Volga Region version of Saltovo culture was that, along with the Bulgars, whose art was represented with works from Bolshe-Tarkhan burial sites (mid 8–9th centuries), Turkic-Ugrian (from Cis-Kama Region and Cis-Urals) tribes with Tankeyevka burial sites (mid 9–beginning of 10th centuries) contributed to it. Moreover, the Tankeyevka burial site evidenced of merging these two ethnic groups' cultures, with the dominant role in this process played by Bulgar Saltovo culture, which was perceived by the Tankeyevka people [Kazakov, 1971, p. 154]. It is noteworthy that common nomadic features were strong in both components of the early Bulgar culture, and the art of that period could be described as a synthesis of nomadic art traditions with art born in settled agricultural environment. The closeness of nomadic traditions contributed to a harmonious merging of two ethnocultural components in early Bulgar art and lack of eclectic features in it.

Archaeological records revealing early Bulgar arts are mostly represented by items from

burial sites. Those are works by potters, artisan metalworkers, jewellers, and bone carvers. It gives the opportunity to reveal one or another types of applied arts, technology features, and ornamental specifics. Burials by ancient pagan rites were accompanied by a diverse set of items: horse equipment, weapons, parts of a warrior costume, pottery, wooden and leather crockery. Also ornaments for headdress, clothes, hair, and other things were found there. Ritual wares were decorated with images of flora and fauna, celestial bodies, zigzag, spiral and rhombus ornaments, and other motifs of art and non-art nature.

The most fully represented is the art of metalwork and such its types such as casting, printing, and stamping as well as embossing, engraving, notching, and gilding (in bronze and silver). Masters produced in mass and single copies bronze, copper, and silver wares: lining for clothing, badges for harnesses, horse forehead pendants, buckles and belts tips for set belts, pendants for women's pectoral and braids ornaments, lining for headdresses, bracelets, rings, etc. There are also rare examples of jewellery decorated with filigree, beading, and inlaid gems.

The most common types of metalworks were stripe details (plates, plaques, pendants, buckles, etc.) for set belts worn by warriors and Bulgar nobility. By the end of 8th century it was made casted, sometimes with a grooving pattern, then stamped plates made of thin sheet of silver, bronze, and copper decorated with pretty lash ornaments started to appear. Typical for Bulgar art cultural-historical parallels are revealed in female ornaments—pendants and items of toiletry sets (medallions, bottles for perfume, etc.), necklaces, temporal and braids ornaments, earrings, bracelets, rings, and others, compositions of which—same as the whole complex of Bulgar costume items—are described in detail in the book 'The Ancient Art of Tataria' [Valeyev, Valeyeva-Suleymanova, 1987; 2002]. We note only that these products in their forms and decor reflect the events that took place in the cultures included in the early Bulgar tribes. The vast majority of them appears to be similar to ornaments of Alan medieval female costume, items from

excavations of the Upper Don Saltovo people (Bulgar-Alans), there are also wares with patterns of Oghuz and Hungarian types. Moreover, early Bulgars made so-called sounding ornaments of Finno-Ugrian type, common for Bulgars too, for sale.

There are also archaic nomadic motifs, ancient Eastern and Middle Asian art represented in works of early Bulgar art. Ornament motifs from steppe nomads art are curls, spirals, leafs, shamrocks, tulips, four-leaf sockets, images of horses, birds, heads of sheep with curled horns, cat predators, and also two-headed creatures (birds, horses). The visual language of artists reveals the semantics of 'animal style,' flora, astral symbols, and a whole rich repertoire of Bulgar art motifs images. They are represented in rapport, single or scene image, they create a plastic form of item and are expressed as iconic images of the universe, beastly, astral symbols, and very rarely in the form of anthropomorphic gods (idols, images on flints) or the characters of the legendary stories such as 'Maklasheyevka horsewoman' [Khalikov, 1971, pp. 106–117].

The 'animal style' of the early Bulgarian art has iconographic features unique to it. In the art of Asia and Europe that style typical for a transitional period from the tribal system to the state goes back to the pagan worship of a beast-ancestor. It is typical for it to have styled images of real or mythical animals and birds (or protome parts of them). The phenomena of Bulgar 'animal style' were discussed in detail by the first professional Bulgarian art researcher F. Valeyev [1975]. He characterised iconographic features of this style and identified principles of its canonisation in art interpretation of animals: representation of them without detailed modeling, in mild dynamics (birds are usually flying, animals with a slightly turned head), peaceful and contemplative, without aggressiveness or anything predatory. Images of animals and birds are pictured with a language of the so-called 'generalised realism,' an echo of Saka-Massagetae, Scythian-Siberian art, and to some extent Permian tribes art. Principles of 'generalised realism' are expressed in the outline of the realistic character of the images, in their ornamental and decorative stylisation.

Popular images were of local fauna, including such birds as falcons, geese, ducks, roosters, cranes, and especially mythical ones—two-headed with outstretched wings (such images of birds are used lately in Tatar dwelling ornaments); such animals as moose, bear, hare, dog, and cat predators. Images of eastern mythology—lions and griffins—were also transformed by the influence of the local environment. Their artistic representation is different in one case because of its greater conditionality, and in the other, the realism (so-called generalised realism) that identifies the different ethnocultural origins of the Bulgarian 'animal style,' which reflected in the iconography of images and its heterogeneity. Obviously, it was also affected by the semantics of images, bearing either symbolic-mythical or decorative function. Iconographic features of the early Bulgar 'animal style' successively developed in the art of the 10–12th centuries, but they underwent substantial transformation associated with the new system of artistic values and the Islamic worldview (see below 'The Art of Volga Bulgaria' section).

Images of the pre-Islamic mythology in the arts and crafts of the Bulgars are pictures of animals, birds, sometimes people in decorative compositions or pictured as signs and symbols. A detailed analysis of iconic zoomorphic and rare anthropomorphic images that appear in mythology, epic, and folklore of early Bulgars is not a part of our task. First, special research on the issue has been done [Valeyev, 1975; Khalikov, 1981; Valeyeva, 1983; Davletshin, 1990, and others]; second, the content of many images got lost and obtained an interpretation different from their original meaning. Therefore, we dwell only on some of the reasons that allow characterising the whole system of the artistic and imaginative world of the early Bulgars and its genesis.

Each of them has its own ethnocultural origin and its semantic level. The artistic language of the early Bulgar art, of course, reflected images of ancient Turkic mythology associated with Tengrism and pagan beliefs. There are also symbols of Zoroastrianism, revealing the continuity of ancient Iranian traditions. However, mythological motifs refracted in the

works of the early Bulgar masters through the knowledge of the local environment surrounding them; their pantheon reflected the popular ideas of reincarnation in nature and its elements, which transferred to the graphic symbolism of the Bulgar masters.

Solar and astral motifs of ornament symbolically embodied the image of the sky god Tengre and the god of thunder and lightning Kuar; they also were signs of the sun, moon, and fire. The latter are interpreted as multiple-beam wheels, four-beam cross-shaped signs, systems of curls, motifs of a rhombus and a circle with a dot in the middle, and others. Paired figures of horsemen decorated with flints for striking fire are associated with the pagan gods Tengre and Kuar. Pictured in plane stylised interpretation, these images are considered religious and magical symbols and serve as amulets. These flints (the so-called Saltov type) are widely used among neighbouring Finno-Ugric tribes.

With the rites of worship to the pagan gods one can apparently associate a small sculpture of a four-faced idol cast in bronze and endowed with masculine traits as well as the remains of wooden (pole) idols found at the Tigashev archaeological site. A pagan rite also includes the worshipping of sacred trees, the cult of which was personified in the image of the goddess of fertility Umay. Its symbol was the motif of the 'tree of life' and the image of a fruit of the sacred tree—the oak. Acorn-shaped pendants made in the technique of the finest filigree, engraving and embossing, were used in women's jewellery such as necklaces and temporal pendants. They served as amulets symbolising fertility and were used as emblems of a happy marriage. Images of lotus flowers and motifs of lotus-shaped palmettes bearing the same symbolism were associated with the goddess Anakhita.

Religious and magical meaning was also common in images of animals. Figurines and heads of bears, sheep, horses, dogs, roosters, ducks, and other animals, replacing the whole by the principle of sympathetic magic, have been preserved through to the present day. Some of these animals are known as totems and ongons; they were revered as the pa-

trons of Turkic and Alan tribes. They served as amulets and were worn on the chest or sewn on clothes. A similar custom in vestigial form was stably preserved from the 18th to the early 20th centuries in the mode of life of the Tatars, for example, in a traditional decoration 'hasite' (chest ties), in which—instead of zoomorphic figures—they used finished products: coins with images of heraldic two-headed birds and winged lions and with Arabic inscriptions.

Solar signs and symbols of heavenly bodies are associated with certain animals and are often combined in a composition. For example, the image of the rooster was revered as a deity of the rising sun and as a symbol of life and resurrection. It was a sacred creature according to the Zoroastrian religion, so was the dog the ability to ward off evil forces was attributed to. The image of the dog was popular in Bashkir art in contrast, for example, to the image of the wolf.

The image of the horse, pictures of which were frequently carried out in pair compositions, as well as the two-headed birds, which had magical significance, were associated with the cult of water and sky. All of them, together with the motif of the snake, were typical of the ancient art of Iran, developed in the works of Sarmatian-Alan tribes, were reflected deeply in the art of Ugrians, and entered the mythological imagery system of the tribes-carriers of the Saltov culture.

The content and the symbolism of artistic images of early Bulgar art confronts us with the pagan 'model of the world' endowed with features of both steppe nomadic and sedentary agricultural cultures. This resulted in a non-uniformity inherent in the iconography of images, in the character of their representation. Some of the motifs are treated in a realistic manner, the others, in a stylized, schematic one. The reason for this can be seen in the fact that in the art of ancient agricultural cultures, associated with the traditions of the classical East, pictorial language was consistent with the style of 'mythological realism' and characterised by the similar-to-reality interpretation of zoomorphic motifs. In the art of the steppe nomadic tribes wildlife images were transformed into the tradition of 'animal style,' originating in the

art of the steppes of Kazakhstan, Gorny Altai, southern Siberia, and Mongolia. Conventional stylised and planar image transmission were typical for it. In the art of the Volga Bulgars it should apparently be attributed to the steppe culture of their ancestors before their appearance in South-Eastern Europe as well as to the phenomena of the Iranian and Turkic tribes of Saltov culture.

In general, the artistic language of Bulgarian art reveals the genesis and the community with a circle of work of Iranian-Sassanid and Greek-Persian art, on the one hand, and Turkic steppe art, on the other. The syncretic style, which arose in the era of eastern Hellenism and is called 'Greek-Persian' art by the researchers, has its origins in the civilisation of the Great Silk Road. As we know, the road was controlled by the nomadic Sarmatians, Huns, Turks of the Western Turkic Khaganate, Bulgars, and Khazars. As a result, there was a fusion of Hellenistic traditions with the Iranian and Turkic steppe art of Eurasia, and this was reflected in the Bulgar-Khazar-Alan (Saltovo-Mayaki) culture.

By the period of Volga Bulgaria a common artistic language had developed, in which realistic transfer images, with their freely stylised interpretation and without rigid rules, generally prevailed. Images are pictured in outline, in silhouette, and in plane. Images of animals are less conventional and metaphorically compared with the Scythian-Sarmatian and Sassanid styles and are more pictorial. In this we should see the significant role of artistic traditions of the steppe culture of the ancestors of the Volga Bulgars. We must not underestimate the role of the multicomponent nature of the Middle Volga offshoot of Saltov culture, particularly manifested in the system of images, composite schemes, and new semantic symbols introduced by the culture of the Ugric Turks. However, we must bear in mind that the latter also had been influenced by ancient Iranian culture and were carriers of the artistic traditions common with Bulgars.

Many images that personify nature and a pagan model of the universe, with the development of the Bulgar society and the emergence of the state, acquired a different content. The

specific mythological image was transformed into a symbol that embodies the idea of the forming state, although the continuity with the mythology, bypassing centuries and even millennia, were kept in the Tatar folk art.

### **Art of Volga Bulgaria of the 10–first Half of the 13th Centuries**

New events, associated with the penetration of Islam and the spiritual and aesthetic needs of Bulgar society, were embodied in the culture and art of a large centralised state that was Volga Bulgaria. Since its formation there was the stabilisation of the phenomenon of Bulgarian art based on Saltov culture with its ancient Turkic tribal traditions, which assimilates the achievements of Islamic civilisation with its ancient Eastern roots. It is characterised by advanced forms of construction and architecture, monumental-decorative and applied art, and urban and rural arts and crafts.

The formation of the Bulgar style of art occurred under the influence of religious and aesthetic views of Islam and through the familiarisation with the artistically perfect style of Islamic art. The ideals of the Bulgar Islamic community were aimed at the Arab and Iranian East, and this is reflected in the universal criteria of artistic merit, principles of creativity, and canons of depiction firmly established in the works of Bulgar artists. A significant role in the development of the similarity of the Bulgar art style and the Islamic art style was played by the spread of Arabic writing. The art of calligraphy developed on this basis, epigraphic ornament appeared. Arabic inscriptions were found in the works of applied art back in the early Bulgar period, where they were presented with Turkic runes [Kazakov, 1983]. By the end of the pre-Mongol period the Arabic inscriptions had become a part of an ornamental decor; decor in general became patterned.

The pre-Mongol period is significant because in the interaction of old and new, in the process of the gradual eradication of the mythological (legendary) tradition associated with polytheistic views, and because of its replacement with symbolic and conditional decorative imagery reflecting the aesthetic principles of

Islamic monotheism, there are artistic phenomena historically conditioned and inherent only to the system of the Bulgar art. Its ideological and stylistic content and image specificity form as a fusion of ethnic, cultural, religious, and aesthetic factors. It embodied the tastes of the ruling elite of the Bulgar society, with its trend towards centralization and thus the development of a unified ideological movement in art and tastes of the masses, which serve as a conductor of ethnic cultural traditions prevailing in the tribal environment. In the 10–12th centuries art developed in cooperation with a quite sophisticated urban craft and folk craft—the mass art of towns and villages. The city artistic craft formed patterned decorative style and principles inherent to Islamic aesthetics. Figurative representations, typical for folk traditions, remained in the folk archaising art.

As a result, a unique style of Bulgar art was formed, in which the high level of professionalism in the performance and ornamentation, inherent to the culture of urban crafts, combined with the free creative improvisation and emotional imagery inherent to folk aesthetics. Clear evidence of this are the recognised masterpieces of world art—the gold, silver, and electrum Bulgar temple pendants with figures of ducks. High craftsmanship, originality, composition, refined decor combining the techniques of filigree and granulation, and at the same time a folk image of the duck (based on mythology) embodied in its graphic form, with creative variations in the remaining samples, give rise to the artistic fusion that defines the style of Bulgar art. It is noteworthy that this stylistic trend is successively preserved in the arts and crafts of the Kazan Tatars (jewellery art, gold sewing, embroidery, and others).

In the artistic craft, religious and aesthetic views of the traditional cosmological and mythological ideas clashed. The latter preserved ancient images inherent to tribal culture and canonical (beyond time and space) motifs. With each epoch they underwent changes: those were changes in the style and manner of performance, interpretation of the content of images, and iconic semantic overtones. In Bulgar art, along with the leading styles, archaising stereotypical forms existed, particularly in

home crafts; they were characteristic for local traditions. However, the problem of local and regional centres and the characteristics of their art and culture remains largely unexplored.

The basis of Bulgar applied arts was artistic handicraft. The broad scope of handicraft production in the cities of Volga Bulgaria—in Bilyar, Suvar, Bulgar, Murom townlet, Oshel, Juketau, Kashan, and Hulash—is evidenced by archaeological materials and written sources. Crafts determined the look of the medieval city, being the indicator of its socio-economic and cultural development. Among the extant types of handicraft production the most developed were metalworking craft, jewellery, ceramics, and leather crafts, products of which not only met the needs of the domestic market but were also exported. Volga Bulgaria was situated on the Great Volga Route and was a major centre of international trade. Art pieces of the Bulgars were found in the cities of Rus' and the Baltic States, the peoples of the European North, the Urals and Siberia, in Sweden and Finland. The Atil River was one of the main routes connecting the State with the peoples who lived south of the Caspian Sea (Transcaucasia, Iran). The caravan routes led to Khwarezm, Bukhara, China and India, ensuring the exchange of cultural values.

Mass production of artistic craft products was established not only in the cities but also in the Bulgar villages. On the archaeological excavations of Semenovskoye, Izmerskoye, and other ancient settlements craft items of bronze smelters, copper minters, jewellers, potters, bone carvers, and stone carvers were found. The products of Bulgar smiths belong to the records related to a domestic way of life, elements of interior decoration, and costume. The materials of archaeological excavations reveal such types of arts and crafts of the Bulgars as artistic metal processing, jewellery, pottery, and bone carving. Separate fragments of products of carved stone and wood and embossed leather have been preserved.

Bulgar artisans perfectly mastered the techniques of artistic processing of gold, silver, copper, bronze, and iron and its alloys for the first time in medieval Europe and created a distinctive culture of filigree and granulation, pro-

ducing many kinds of jewellery, items of clothing decoration, harnesses, arms, and household products.

### **Artistic Metal Processing and Jewellery Art**

Among the products of Bulgar metal craftsmen the most numerous were the products of bronze smelters and coppersmiths. They made a variety of items, ranging from cast buttons and pins to minted and engraved vessels. Outstanding pieces were created by Bulgar jewelers, especially in filigree and granulation, in combination of these techniques with 'polychrome style' (inlaid with precious and semi-precious stones, coloured paste). Good results were also achieved in the technique of blackening on silver, stamping, gilding, and silvering. With the help of embossed metal matrices they produced multiple basma stamping on thin sheets of copper, silver, and gold. In the artistic processing of the mass of metal products they used casting and forging techniques.

Metal products are represented by individual clothing decorations, harnesses, weapons, and household items. In an unparalleled way, they provide insights into the style and content of the Bulgar art and into the changes that have occurred in it with the development of the state. Bulgar 'animal style,' the originality of which is defined in the early Bulgar era, in the pre-Mongol period was expressed more conventionally and schematically; images of animals were gradually transformed into motifs of zoomorphic ornament. The development of artistic language in the interpretation of images of animals and birds went towards the decorative, the most generalised form with elements of ornamental stylisation. Images of animals as a rule are pictured in a single, less often heraldic or plot composition; they are vivid but plane and in silhouette, with the identification of characteristic features and elements of decorative stylisation. They do not have a pronounced expression or fight scenes; images rather have a peaceful, contemplative character. The main aim of the artists was to express the external formal qualities of the portrayed animal as an integral element of ornamental and decorative

or of heraldic composition but not to reveal them as carriers of a certain (mythological or other) content.

In the art of the pre-Mongol period decorativeness was gradually prevailing, and it was the evidence of the penetration of new principles of depiction connected with the aesthetic system of Islamic art. Features of the artistic language of Bulgar masters are disclosed in subjects related to the decoration of costume (lining, belt buckles and straps for plate belts, badges and linings for female costumes), household products (locks, mirrors, seals for sealing products, tops of arms, and others), and armaments (ceremonial axes, handles of whips, maces, etc.). As decoration motifs, zoomorphic images fit perfectly into the contours of their shape and are pictured plane, graphically or in volume and sculpturally. In any case, they possess an element of decorative styling and conventionality.

It should be noted that the conventionality is largely determined by a system of artistic language typical of ancient Turkic nomadic art. In contrast to the ancient and Hellenistic art of agricultural civilisations of the East, where zoomorphic images differ with realistic interpretation (of course, with elements of decorative styling), in the art of nomadic ancestors of Bulgars 'animal style' images and generally zoomorphic images had always been pronounced plane and graphically, conditionally, schematically. This is connected to the principles of descriptiveness inherent to nomadic steppe culture and inherited in the artistic language of the Bulgar artisans.

Zoomorphic images reflect both the local fauna such as fox, marten, ferret, leopard, sable, duck, goose, stork, heron, and others as well as that of far eastern countries—lions, unicorns. There are also images of a griffin, a sphinx, and a dragon. Quite realistically and plastically expressive, in relation to the form of the item, are transferred, for example, heads of sheep, horses, and dogs in the decoration of bronze tops of weapons. At the same time, bronze locks were made in the form of stylised animal figures conventionally and without dynamics. And finally, as motifs of zoomorphic ornament, with contour and without modula-

tion, animal images are present on many items related to the decoration of clothing. At the same time, all this suggests a different interpretation of the artistic portrayal of animals, which took place in the language of Bulgar artists, reflects the different level of meaningfulness of these images and motifs of those or other items (from religious and magical to symbolic and ornamental-decorative).

An important role in the artistic portrayal of wildlife images is played by the ethnocultural origins of Bulgar art. For example, the image of the bird is one of the most characteristic and popular motifs in the work of Bulgar artists. Its image is found on the pommels of the maces also typical for early Bulgar period and finds kinship with similar maces from the excavations of the Upper Saltov and Sarkel [Valeyev, 1975, p. 92]. The origins of this image date back to ancient Iran and Khwarezm maces with bird sculptures. At the same time, the technique of decorating pommels with the heads of animals and birds was recorded in the art of the Altai people (Pazyryk burial mounds), in the art of the ancient Ananynskaya culture and the Ugric tribes of Western Siberia. Bulgar copper cheek-piece rods and spiral buckles decorated with bird heads have an affinity with Pazyryk antiquities. The image of the bird is also represented in various linings and pendants of a stereotypical form for many nomadic tribes of the Volga, Cis-Urals, and Siberia [Kalinin, 1946]. This way, its pictorial interpretation reveals the impact of the artistic culture of the tribes of different origin (nomadic and settled) on such a distinctive feature of Bulgar art as syncretism.

It is also proved by schematic representations of two-headed birds and horses, previously encountered on artifacts from Tankeyevskoye burial site. Two-headed animals is a phenomenon associated with the beliefs of the ancient Sarmatians and the art of the Finno-Turks. The two-headed horses were found on a Bulgar bronze comb and silver and bronze earrings. The latter, made in the casting technique, were made up of the ridge protomai motif of heraldry; in the central part they have a hole probably to insert a gem. The evolution of the earrings' shape gradually leads to the fact that as a result the stylised horse heads

lose their shape and become an abstract decorative motif [Valeyev, Valeyeva-Suleymanova, 2002, pp. 57–58].

It is necessary to include images of the horse, duck, rooster, and dog to the remnants of old religious beliefs. They were sacred beings according to the Zoroastrianism with its complex pantheon of deities and were popular in the Sassanid art. These images apparently reflected totemic beliefs of the Bulgars and at the same time were symbols of rebirth of nature and played the role of amulets. They were portrayed on the buckles of belts, earwigs, linings, and other items related to the costume complex; they underwent shape and figurative transformation in the tradition of the Saltov culture.

Images of the lion, the griffin, and the sphinx are associated with ancient oriental mythology. They were popular in the art of the peoples of the East ever since the existence of Assyria and Babylon. The Bulgar interpretation differs in that these images are less realistic and expressive but more decorative. It reveals the stylistics of folk art, folk tradition, under the influence of which animal images lose their shape classic to the East and get filled with new content. For example, the image of the lion is deprived of frightening features. It is rather a power symbol or an emblem of a noble family. Griffins and sphinxes are portrayed in contour, without graphical modelling of parts of their body, mostly with a turn of the head to the back in a still pose. They do not have the power and expression, plastic sophistication and compositional complexity specifics for the Scythian-Siberian 'animal style.' These images also differ from Sasanian toreutics with their inherent conceptual and planar portrayal, characteristic of the language of 'steppe' metal. The researchers noted the originality of the Bulgar griffin in particular analysing its image on one of the Bilyar bronze mirrors [Valeyev, 1975, p. 104; Khlebnikova, 1969]. Its image is endowed with a strong body and legs, it has an eagle's head, protruding ears, and wings raised high; the tail is curled behind its back. In its iconographic details the mythical Bulgar creature coincides with griffins of Greco-Roman art but differs with less expressive interpretation of the im-

age. It is noteworthy that later in the Golden Horde period, griffin images were missing in the works of applied arts, as well as the eastern mythology images disappeared over centuries from the folklore of Tatars.

A significant place, for example, in the decoration of items associated with the waist belt sets was taken by heraldry of the images of animals, which was also characteristic of ancient Eastern art (Iran, Byzantium, and others). The heraldry in it expressed mainly feudal symbols and emblems of feudal power elite. In the same way many animal images were interpreted in Bulgar heraldry: the lions, unicorns, sphinxes, etc., presented in plaques, linings, fasteners, seals. Among the heraldic motifs, other than animal images, images of birds are interesting: storks, chickens, and wood grouses, strong styling of which makes it impossible to determine their species. Typical for oriental art was writing heraldic images in a circle, while in Bulgar art they fit into a variety of forms of craft works [Valeyev, 1975, p. 99].

The portrayal of animals in the Bulgar interpretation differs from the eastern images by less expressiveness and less pronounced predatory traits. In addition, the images of local fauna portrayed by Bulgar artisans in a free creative manner appear in the heraldry; the rigid framework of the eastern canon did not influence them. A striking example of this is a composition on a copper strip in the form of heraldry of the images of a lion and a unicorn prepared to attack each other, which personified power and strength in the eastern art. The animals stand opposite to each other on their hind legs and are ready to attack, raising their front paws. However, in the interpretation of the Bulgar artisan the wild beasts are pictured without frightening features: The lion looks like a harmless dog, the unicorn is also portrayed in a peaceful manner. Between them, in the top of the lining, there is a beam of flame, and below there is a six-rayed rosette—the sign of the sun. And it is not a mere coincidence since in ancient art the lion acts in two ways: in the animal world it is the king of beasts, but in cosmogony it is the symbol of the sun (or its attribute). In the metaphor it is likened to the king among the sovereigns of the earth [Rem-

pel, 1987, p. 19]. Both the lion and the unicorn were sacred animals in ancient times, and apparently the symbol of it is the image of the flame beam. In the era of Islam the lion is a symbol of royalty and protection against evil. It is noteworthy that in Islamic art the lion loses its frightening features. It is rather an amusing animal or an emblem. In the later medieval records of Islamic architecture of Middle Asia lions are portrayed like dog-like predators [ibid, pp. 21–22].

Compositions of a plot nature on Bulgar metal products are not so numerous. Among them we must pay attention to an image of a scene of a dog attacking a snake in the design of earwigs, an image of two birds and an owl on copper seals, a mirror with an image of flying geese, and a mirror with a sophisticated but unfinished composition of schematic images of the heads of three animals, birds, and a human face with a crown, woven into an arabesque type of ornament. All these stories basically reflect mythology. However, judging by the nature of their graphic interpretations, they are outside the scope of folk images, serve as an emblem (seal) and metaphors (compositions on the mirrors), and acquire an ornamental value.

In the works of toreutics, along with the graphic plane interpretation of zoomorphic images, as it was already noted, there are small plastics of animal sculptures. For example, in the form of strongly stylised cast figures of goats, bulls, dogs, and horses small bronze locks were produced. These images, of course, were mascots. Previously, they apparently had a religious character and may have been associated with the remnants of totemism. However, over time these images acquired artistic value. This is strongly suggested by an ornament in the form of a floral ribbon border on their torso and a frequently seen motif of a circle with a dot—the archaic image of the solar sign, which once had a magical meaning.

Among cast items, the ornamentation of which reflects zoomorphic themes, lead and bronze seals for sealing the good, which were sent to the countries of the East and the West, are of interest. For some seals typical images were of the lion with a long tail curled behind its back, while on the others we could see



mythical creatures with a lion's body, endowed with narrow and short swallow-type wings, with sharp claws on animal legs, and a curved tail ending with a palmetto. The monster's head is expressed in the form of a woman's face with a unibrow and three stars in the forehead; it is tacitly impassive. The image is inscribed in a circle, it is contour; the shape of the feet and tail are expressed ornamentally.

In this image you can see a replica of the late Greek sphinx—a winged beast with the head of a woman—or the sphinx of the Hellenistic period with the body of a lioness and the face of a woman [Ibid, p. 61]. Its symbol was the fullness of life and the reality of fantasy. Indeed, the researchers have observed that in Bulgar art the border between mythical and real images was not so significant. Pictures of real animals had the same unreal (symbolic) meaning as did mythical creatures [Valeyev, 1975, p. 100].

Among the images, such as those that were found on the mirrors found in Bulgaria, another type of a sphinx with a human face was found, which was typical for Islamic art. In particular, it appears on the mirrors of the 11–12th centuries, located in Termez and in the North Caucasus. Usually paired figures of sphinxes are arranged back to back, with faces en face, on their heads they have something like a crown, their tails end with signs of the sun and the moon, but some Bulgar versions feature a more schematic representation—palmettes. Images of sphinxes are presented on a background of a swirling floral pattern. On the edges of the mirrors there is a benevolent Arabic inscription. According to L. Rempel, these figures were nothing but a horoscope, embodied in this being, and pointed to the favourable position of the stars [Rempel, 1987, p. 62].

As regards the mix of facts and fiction as an artistic expression of a mythological creature that became a heraldic symbol, the image of polymorphic beings is of interest, in particular on the bronze plaques, which were a part of the men's suit pectorals and discovered during excavations in Bilyar and Bulgar. They depict a creature with a dog's head, legs and eagle's body covered with fish scales and a snake tail. His head is crowned with saiga's horns, a long

tongue hangs out of the mouth. Images of a dog, an eagle, and a steppe saiga reflected the milieu of steppe-dwellers, probably were a totem of nomadic tribes, and possessed religious significance. At the same time, the unity of all the elements of the universe were represented in them: land, underground, water, and sky, and this mythical creature reflected the idea of omnipotence and invincibility.

Features of different animals in the same image perhaps mean the union of tribes by ruling family, the emblem of which became this image. At the same time, it was both a symbol of power, authority and served as the heraldic symbol of Volga Bulgaria and later of the Kazan Khanate [Valeyev, 1975, pp. 104–105]. When Kazan was conquered, it formed the basis of the Russian national emblem. Saiga's horns transformed into the crown, a body of an eagle into a body of a rooster, a snake tail and a protruding tongue preserved as attributes of the prototype taken as a basis [Valeyev, Valeyeva-Suleymanova, 2002, pp. 91–92].

The genesis of this polymorphous creature dated back to the East Asian winged dragon of the end of the 1st millennium BCE—early 1st millennium AD, but Hun-Bulgarians replaced them from the places of their former residence before they appeared in Eastern Europe. This mythical creature was depicted with the head of a chameleon, saiga's horns, bull's ears, and a snake's tail. Curved legs end with eagle claws, and the body is covered with fish scales. This dragon symbolises power and might, a blessing bestowed to the people. This image is near the Middle Asian Simurgh, which was echoed in the art of Byzantium, Rus', and later in a number of East Islamic countries art. The Bulgarian image, having passed through an age filter of the folk notions, got individual and distinctive interpretation in the pre-Mongol period as an artistic expression of the ancient mythological creatures, then it acquired an emblematic meaning. It has been preserved to this day in the folklore of the Kazan Tatars called 'azhdah.'

The consistent transformations of Bulgar artisans' visual language towards ornamentality are revealed by bronze and silver mirrors, whose massive archaeological originals show

the popularity of this kind of handiwork. In the early pre-Mongol period the images of animals on the mirrors had independent significance, carried a substantive (magic, cosmogonic) function, and were amulets and symbols of astral significance. Later they were assembled with floral and geometric ornaments, sometimes they merged in a coherent composition with the motifs and then lost their original symbolism, becoming ornamental motif.

Animal-astral symbols (hares, fish, dogs, foxes), as well as representatives of the local fauna (elk, deer, lynx, ducks, geese, cranes), assembled by cosmogonic representations and oral folklore, prevailed among zoomorphic images on the mirrors. There were images of wild animals, reflecting the oriental mythology of mythical creatures. They expressed the ideology of a feudal state and were symbols of might and power.

Narrative compositions on the mirrors were made up from motifs of animals, birds, and fish. Among these motifs there were animals marching one after the other, a plot similar to the Middle East 'beast pursuit,' developed in Islamic art, 'sun wheel' consisting of foxes running in circles or fish floating one after another that were inscribed in a round from a motif of stylised waves and expressed the ancient oriental symbols 'day and night,' flying wild geese—a plot that is aligned with the myth of Rome salvation by geese, etc. [ibid, p. 53]. There were also a bird and a snake among the images that reflected the cosmogonic and mythological representations of the Volga Bulgars. They personified the forces of heaven and earth and at the same time were associated with the patronage of home and hearth. These motifs are characteristic of Saltovo culture representatives, which have their origins in the art of the Scythian-Sarmatian and Alan tribes.

Geometric (integrated spiral, hexagrams and octagrams, harness, circle, etc.) and simple flower (lotus, tulip, grapevine, etc.) motifs were widespread along with zoomorphic ones. The set of items related to the belt set and horse and trappings ornament often includes handiworks in the shape of shamrocks, hearts, leaves, spirals, and other motifs that are typical of Eurasian steppe nomadic tribes.

Over the years, by the end of the pre-Mongol period, flower motifs predominated, their repertoire enriched, compositional solutions complicated, and constructions of arabesque nature that are common to the ornamental system of Islamic art appeared. The decor of the mirrors is complemented by Arabic inscriptions having auspicious contents, which were transformed into epigraphic ornament, which originally adorned only a narrow strip of a border, then it held almost half of the decorated mirror surface. In general, all these innovations in the visual language of the decor reflect the penetration of the ideological and artistic outlook associated with the aesthetics of Islam.

It is noteworthy that the ornamental motifs of Bulgar applied art, according to the nature of their interpretation and free pattern of composition with variability of the artistic language, are not constrained by the rigid framework of skills and visual canons that prevail in the Muslim artists works from traditional Eastern countries. It makes possible to talk about stylistic identity of Bulgar art and its ornamental language as a beautiful, but in the creative sense, rather than in colour sense. Picturesqueness is inherent in the system of folk art, distinguished by the creative improvisational character. It points to the deep connection of the Bulgar professional craft with live folk tradition, which persisted in the pre-Mongol period as the interpretation of zoomorphic ornament motifs (which replaced the 'animal style' of paganism era) as well as the compositions of flower patterns that are dominant in Islamic art.

Luxurious flower compositions, having ornament made from complex intertwined spiral curls, leafy shoots, tulips, lotus, and other motifs, are characteristic of the Bulgarian combat axes decoration. Patterns were made in the molding, engraving, and inlaying by silver techniques combined with solar and zoomorphic motifs. The latter (images of dog, horse, felidae predators) fit into round medallions and kept the magic meaning, being amulets. The images of the solar disk and crescent are placed on the handle of an axe under the medallion with a stylised horse motif, while the blade is decorated with branched 'tree' motif or 'steppe' floral bouquet. The auspicious content

of the theme can be easily read. It is significant that it preserved—a characteristic of Saltovo culture and Sarmatian-Alan art—the semantics of 'tree of Life' and a horse as the heaven and the 'solar' animal. New semantics is a crescent based on the content of the theme presenting well-being and prosperity. The decor of axes aside from meaningful symbolism also reflects a carpet ornamentation system that is characteristic of Islamic art. The decoration, in some instances it imitates arabesques, entirely fills the plane of axes.

The principle of continuous ornamentation, which is characteristic of Islamic art, was widespread in Bulgar metal products at the end of the pre-Mongol period. This is evidenced by the remains of the metal matrix—copper and bronze plates with moulded relief design, by means of which multiple stamping toreutic was performed on thin sheets of copper, silver, and gold [KB, 1985, p. 99, table XXXVII: 115]. They were used for the ornamentation of mass products, such as badges, plates, amulets or korannitsas, vessels, and other household items. The archaising motifs of late Hellenistic period tradition, interpreting Chersonesus samples, represented among patterns of ornament. There are also examples of Arabesque patterned compositions with geometric and floral motifs, confirming the style of Islamic art.

The figurative decoration system on the matrices has made the way from purely zoomorphic compositions of the 10–11th centuries (for example, a bronze matrix having the image of a dog from Bilär excavation) to relatively ornamental having abstracted 'flower style' motifs. This evolution of the figurativeness in the works of Bulgarian metal art in the 10–12th centuries reflects the seamless transition to the decorative principles of Islamic art.

The most evident achievements of Bulgarian artists were in jewellery, which had become famous far beyond the borders of the state. The achievements in the field of decoration techniques were associated with the satisfaction of mass demand for a various craft items, including jewellery that was actively involved in commodity production. The diverse products from the jewellers of Bilyar, Suvar, Bulgar, Juketau, and other craft centres have survived.

Their products were exported even outside the state. Women's' and men's jewellery of the Finno-Ugric type—grivnas, noisy filigrees, and grain pendant—were produced specifically for import. Handiworks of Bulgar jewellers were popular in the Lake Ladoga Region, Sweden, in the Urals, in Siberia, and in the Old Russian principalities.

The process of improving the forms of handicraft production contributed to the specialisation of labour. The technology imposed a typical complex of decoration motifs used in certain types of jewellery. Volga Bulgars reached high development in granulation art, punch filigree, which will be mentioned below. The engraving technique is no less difficult, artistically made samples of which date back to the early Bulgar period. In the pre-Mongol period boards of earrings were decorated with precise engraving in the form of leafy patterns motifs. Ornament usually filled the space between the molded or engraved images. The engravings were located in plate bracelet patterns along their length or at the ends. From the 12th century Bulgarian bracelets, besides geometric, floral, and zoomorphic motifs, had Arabic script.

Volga Bulgar jewellery art is characterised by the so-called polychrome style—incrustation from precious and semi-precious stones, and coloured glass, which was widespread in the first half of the 1st millennium AD among the Sarmatian-Alan and Hun tribes. The incrustation by semi-precious stones was developed in the early Bulgars jewellery, silver signet rings of Saltovo type having outputs on the board for fixing of carnelian and coloured glass, and later among Volga Bulgars. The latter widely used semi-precious stones, sometimes having an engraving (glyptic), colour paste and glass, in the decor of earrings, signet rings, hallmarks in the form of pendants, amulets, and other.

One of the survived handiwork models of the 10–12th centuries having glyptic is an amber insertion of the signet ring, or possibly hallmark-pendant in the shape of a truncated pyramid. The surface of the amber had cut Arabic inscription with the name of the owner—'Arslan.' The handiwork was found during excavations in Suvar [Smirnov, 1951, Fig.

155]. It is noteworthy that signet rings having glyptic on semi-precious stones were created in the 18–beginning of the 20th centuries by Tatar jewellers and widely prevailed among Islamic population, since they contained Arabic, often Quranic, inscriptions.

One development in Bulgar art was encrustation in gold and silver wire, which decorated the previously mentioned bronze suspended locks and ceremonial axes with exquisite geometric and floral ornaments and Arabic script.

Technical and ornamental complexes were created in the Middle Ages and were associated with orders for certain types of 'model' jewellery, created in urban centres or khan and prince workshops; their form and decoration were replicated. Examples of the handiwork of gold and silversmiths include twisted filigree grivnas and bracelets made from a complex web of 3 or 4 wires, temple rings with or without filigree figures of birds, pendants with pyramidal ornaments made from the smallest grain, the previously mentioned earrings with twin heads of horses and acorn-shaped pendants, amulets or korannitsas, pendants in the form of lunulas, and flat bracelets with lions heads at the ends, among others.

The example of bracelets engraved with images of lion masks reveals the evolution and transformation of such images and the Bulgar art of jewellery making from ancient times as a whole [Valeyeva-Suleymanova, 2002, pp. 187–198]. Most of the bracelets with lion masks, excluding those dated to the pre-Mongol period [Smirnov, 1951, p. 126], were created during the Golden Horde period. The image of the lion in Bulgar art was presented in the form of schematic images of lion masks on the belt buckles of the early Bulgars (8–9th centuries) from burials at the Tankeyevsky burial site [Kazakov, 1971, Table. XIX: 31], on bracelets, and as heraldic images on bronze seals and stamps in the 10–12th centuries. This motif is seen in the art of the Verkhnedonsk Bulgarians in objects found in the treasure from Khazar Sarkel (10th century)—belt buckles with silver and gold plating and niello as well as straps and carry straps from the belt set were decorated with schematic images of lions heads [Artamonov, 1962, p. 28; Makarova, 1986, pp. 26–27].

The evolution of the 'lion' motif in the works of applied art of settled and nomadic populations in Eurasia dates back to periods beginning with ancient times. Bracelets decorated with voluminous lion heads entwined in two silver or gold wires were made in jewellery workshops in Azov-Black Sea Region cities, which, according to researchers, were ruled by Bulgars from the Azov Region as part of Great Bulgaria in the 6–7th centuries, and later, by the Khazar Khaganate. Plain silver bracelets on a bronze basis decorated with large lion heads were made in the workshops of Panticapaeum, the former capital of the Bosporan Kingdom, which later became one of the main cities of Azov Region Bulgars. This tradition dates back to bracelets made in ancient times (6–5th centuries BCE). The latter were decorated not only by heads but also miniature sculpted figures of lions at their ends, or sometimes sphinxes, as in the rich royal burial mounds of Kül Oba [Galanin et al., 1964, Fig. 30, 31]. Gold bracelets from burial mounds at Bolshaya (Large) Bliznitsa with figures of lionesses at the ends combine realistic images with minute details and ornamental decorative motifs.

Panticapaeum was a major centre for crafts where for centuries jewellery was made for nomadic tribal unions that inhabited the steppes of the Northern Black Sea Region, including the Scythians, Sarmatians, Huns, Bulgars, and Khazars. The syncretic 'polychrome style,' in which the achievements of Hellenistic art were applied to Sarmatian creative work, was created in the Greek-Sarmatian workshops of Panticapaeum [Jakobson, 1964, p. 13]. At the same time, massive gold bracelets were found in Sarmatian sites from the 1st century BCE, the ends of which are decorated with sculptural reliefs in 'animal style,' which is typical for nomads. They are characterised by stylised decorative images that are inscribed in the linear contours of the bracelet and submit to their form [Galanina et al., 1964, Fig. 46].

The lion image was typical in earlier periods in Late Achaemenid and Sasanian Iran and is seen in jewellery decorations in the 5–4th centuries BCE, particularly in necklaces-grivna. The ends of the latter were decorated with voluminous sculpted heads of lioness with ex-

pressive decorations and stylised imagery. For example, the *grivna*, pertaining to Iranian art from the Late Achaemenid period and part of the Siberian collection of Peter the Great [Ivanov et al., 1984], was made in the form of a thick and smooth golden hoop with open ends. They were implanted with voluminous lioness head made from a wax cast, with round ears, elongated eyes, a split upper lip with dots above marking a mustache, and corrugation around the mouth and eyes.

There are interesting parallels between the images found in Ancient Iranian art and those engraved at the ends of the bracelets under consideration. The latter's similarities, but in a flat and schematic way, are the elongated eyes, split upper lip with marks of a 'mustache,' 'wool' shading by a chisel, and corrugation around the mouth and eyes highlighted by graphic lines. The only element missing is ears, which, when observed from the front, are lost in the line of sight. There is reason to suppose that the lion heads drawn on the Iranian *grivnas* are the most similar, in terms of details, to the images of lion masks on the Bulgarian bracelets under examination. The latter, in contrast, are completed in a flat style. This style was probably characteristic for the Sarmatians, who flooded the steppes of the Azov-Black Sea Region in the first centuries BCE. Later it spread from the Sarmatian-Alans to the art of the Bulgar-Alans—the representatives of Saltovo-Mayaki culture. F. Valeyev wrote about the 'direct transformation' of Bulgar bracelets from Sarmatian-Alan ones [1975, p. 79].

The decorative lion head motif for bracelets existed simultaneously in Iranian and ancient Greek art; it was common in the cultures of the ancient world, being a fashion established in Western Asia, Asia Minor, and cross-border regions. Later in the Eastern Hellenistic period a syncretic style emerged, called the 'Greco-Persian' art style by researchers. It was associated with the civilisation of the Great Silk Road from the 2nd century BCE linking China, Asia Minor, and Greece. A curious combination of Iranian, Greek, and Han Chinese artistic features were used in the monuments of this civilisation [Ivanov et al., p. 7]. As we know, the road was controlled by the nomadic Sarmatians,

Huns, Turks of the Western Turkic Khaganate, Bulgars, and Khazars. As a result, there was a fusion of Hellenistic traditions with the Iranian and Turkic steppe art of Eurasia.

A retrospective analysis of the evolution of the lion mask motif reveals its genesis and unity with a number of works from Iranian-Sasanid and Greco-Persian art, on the one hand, and Turkic steppe art, on the other hand. This motif, being transformed in the culture of the Sarmatian-Alans and later the Saltovo culture of the Bulgar-Alans and Volga Bulgars on the territory of the Eurasian steppes, was further developed in the art of the Golden Horde and remains part of the decoration of Kazan Tatar bracelets to the present day.

The ancient origins and high artistic traditions of Bulgar culture allowed craftsmen to achieve impressive results in jewellery technology. Bulgarian jewellers, and later Tatar jewellers, were exceptional masters in the creation of complex cellular filigrees, which combined with beading and jewels in the most exquisite jewellery [Valeyeva-Suleymanova, 1995, pp. 67–100]. Bulgar filigree is characterised by graceful and thin wires that tightly cover the surface of the article or create a cellular pattern. The masterpieces of Bulgarian filigree art are gold or electrum temporal pendants with the figure of a duck holding a pea grain in its beak. They were developed on the basis of the simplest ring-shaped temporal pendants, to which one two or three acorn-shaped beads were attached, decorated with granulation and filigree. Three-bead rings were later enriched by one to three pendants on chains, which also ended in acorn-shaped beads decorated with granulation. The latter were made of a thin metal sheet in the form of two halves, connected by three belts of filigree wire. Their surface was decorated with triangles and granulated pyramids.

The wings, neck, and chest of a duck on temporal pendants are entirely covered with fine filigree rope, while the pattern of acorn-shaped pendants and beads, worn on the ring, was made up of triangles and pyramids of the smallest granulation. A filigree rope—the symbol of a 'sacred' bandage, imparted the duck with a divine nature—was hung from the

necks of ducks in several samples. This fillet was common for the works of Iranian toreutics of the Sassanid period. Embodying family well-being, happiness, and hearth, the image of a duck with a lump of land in its beak is later recreated in an old Tatar legend, according to which the earth was created by a duck floating in the world ocean. At the same time, the image as a female ongon with a pea in its beak, which is a seed, goes back to the Zoroastrian symbol of 'the Tree of All Seeds.' Remarkably, Bulgarian temporal pendants with the duck figure have some similarities with Dagestanian temporal rings with the figure of a small bird. They reveal one of the regional variants of Saltovo culture—Dagestan [Pletneva, 1967, pp. 5, 185, 188]. However, they have no pendants, and in contrast to the subtle and complex filigree of Bulgarian goldsmiths, they are made by casting, enriched with engraving and niello.

Temporal pendants also include acorn-shaped ornaments decorated by granulation. They are represented by two varieties: the first, having acorn-shaped beads on an oval ring, were found as far back as in the art of the early Bulgars; the second include an additional fine pendant at the base of the bead with a curved rectangular ring and are of larger sizes. The subtle elegance of filigree ornamentation and refinement of forms are characteristic of other handiwork made by Bulgarian jewellers as well: necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and miniature korannitsas.

A typical Bulgarian style of neck attire and pectoral jewellery—the *grivna*—is made up of a hoop-like necklace made of several twisted wires. Silver and less often gold filigree twisted neck *grivnas* were created from 3 to 4 wires that were intertwined. Such complex intertwined *grivnas* and similar bracelets are a specific type and characteristic form of Bulgar jewellery in the pre-Mongol period.

This also applies to typical necklaces with pendants in the shape of acorns. The patterns on them were made up of tiny pea-shaped granulation soldered in the form of triangular and rhombic pyramids from thin wire or consisted of simple granulated strips located at the joints of hollow hemispheres. The more

complex pendants ended in large granulation or the same pyramid of small granulation at their base.

Exquisite decoration is a characteristic of preserved Bulgarian lunulas. The combination of small and large granulation lends them a supple expressiveness. Granulation patterns on them were created in the composition of linear and circular stripes of triangles and lozenges. Lunulas were decorated with semi-precious stones in the chatons, also ornamented in granulation.

The use of filigree and granulation distinguishes the decorative composition of Bulgar amulets from korannitsas. They are flat bronze boxes, the lids of which are richly decorated with a pattern of tiny granulation in conjunction with overlaid filigree and semi-precious stones. The stones are usually located at the corners of the inner lid frame formed by a wavy filigree line. At the centre of the amulets was a large semi-precious stone, and all the stones were set into high chatons, framed by wavy filigree wire. Fine entwined filigree in combination with the smallest granulation and semi-precious stones expresses the pictorial and colourful pliancy of the decor. Such a composition system of filigree patterns was typical for Tatar korannitsas in the 18th–19th centuries.

The combination of expressive elasticity of the filigree with the plasticity of large stones was typical for Bulgarian earrings in the pre-Mongol period. Among them the variant with a pear-shaped facia is of interest. At its centre is a faceted filling of amber and similar but smaller panels in the upper part of the facia. The plane around the central amber is filled with fine overlaid filigree on a silver plate. Zigzag-shaped filigree wires hung from the upper chatons with amber inserts. It should be noted that in the Bulgarian earrings decorated with cellular filigree and belonging to the end of the pre-Mongol period the plane of the facia is not decorated with semi-precious stones. Thin filigree covers the pear-shaped facia and leaf-shaped pendants. It is noteworthy that the pear-shaped facia and cellular filigree decoration are repeated in traditional classical Tatar earrings of the 18–beginning of the 20th centuries.

Bulgar flat filigree and granulation, according to the archaeological data, were developed since the early Bulgar period. The Volga Bulgars created a unique culture of filigree and granulation in medieval Europe [Rybakov, 1948, p. 355], and these traditions were enriched later by Tatar jewellers. The jewellery of the early Bulgar period and the initial stage of the pre-Mongol period is characterised by the predominance of granulated design patterns. They were used to create rich decorative compositions, while the filigree is used mainly as an overlay. Granulation in the form of a lozenge, a triangle, a rectangle and volume pyramids decorated the surface of ornaments. Sometimes it was soldered along the entire plane of the work, such as in an early Bulgar temporal pendant of a pyramidal shape [Shedevry, 1985, Fig. 7]. Later filigree and granulation were equally prized in jewellery decoration, whereas in the subsequent periods (the Golden Horde, the Khanate of Kazan) filigree gradually became more dominant.

Highly artistic examples of filigree can be seen in the previously mentioned temporal pendants. In the early Bulgar period they were decorated with pyramids of granulation and large drop-shaped peas, sometimes in the form of granulated bunches. It is noteworthy that one exemplar of such pendants was found in Dagestan, a territory which was in the zone of influence of Saltovo culture. Bulgar-like granulation technology is also found in Old Russian jewellery. However, the earliest samples are only dated to the 10–12th centuries, which rules out any arguments about their primacy.

Early Bulgar temple jewellery was made in the form of large drop-shaped pendants with two dolioform threads of beads and often contained a large bead on the ring. The body of the pendant was divided into three horizontal stripes, filled with prominent rhythmic granulation pyramids. The upper part of the pendants was fully covered with tiny granulation, forming a textured surface. Dolioform threads of beads on the ring and the decorations with the smallest granulation in the form of pyramids was typical for Bulgar jewellery art.

Excavations of archaeological and burial sites also discovered jewellery that was deco-

rated with delicate and plated filigree from the Early Bulgar period. Bracelets, wickered from two silver wires, were one variety of filigreed adornment. Their ends were made with chatons made from gemstones, amber or coloured glass; sometimes they were flattened and engraved with rows of fine cuts.

The discovery of the origins of Bulgarian filigree as well as the images found in jewellery art and artistic metals (for example, lion images) traces the historical development of Bulgar artistic criteria and stylistic identity in the decorative and applied arts, or the ethno-aesthetics of the Bulgars [Valeyeva-Suleymanova, 2004, pp. 157–159]. The closest chronological analogies of Bulgarian filigree were discovered in jewellery, similar to Early Bulgarian dolioform temporal pendants with granulation, from the so-called Hun burial sites of the 6–7th centuries in Crimea [Dmitriyev, 1982, p. 80]. However, it should be noted that the special granulation technology utilising tiny dots in the forms of triangles, pyramids, circles, stripes, edgings with chatons for precious stones and glass insertions as well as the general 'cloisonné style' of Bulgar masters were characteristic for Hun jewellery art discovered in burial sites in Eastern Europe. This technology was most pronounced in the jewellery items crafted in the workshops of Greek colonial cities in the northern Black Sea Region, which were found in the Alan-Sarmatian catacombs. There is a number of similar objects in the decorations found in the Serogozny mounds in the Dnieper Region [Efimova, 1960], which reflect the influence of ancient art in the northern Black Sea Region.

Filigree items, similar to Bulgar items, were also found in Taman and Chersonesos, in the barrows of Panticapaeum, Olbia, Feodosia, and other Crimean burial sites. Jewellery with acorn-shaped pendants are the most typical analogies. The similarities are evident in their composition, the ornamentation of pendants with pyramids and triangles made from tiny granulation, and the combination of surface decoration, with large pea, or pyramidal ends, or tiny granulations at their base. Such a system of granulated decoration was also characteristic for other adornments such as earrings,

temple pendants, and some types of rings and bracelets.

The problem of the genesis of Volga Bulgarian filigree technique is linked to answering the questions: was it based on the influence of Black Sea Region antiquity art; was the technology imported into the art of the Azov and Black Sea Region by nomads—either the Huns or Sarmatians; or did it have different origins?

An answer to these questions was given by the excavations of Sarmatian burial sites in western Kazakhstan and particularly archaeological findings of filigree adornments in barrows near the village of Lebedevka dated to the 2nd–4th centuries [Bagrikov and others, 1968, pp. 71–89]. Elegant jewellery from the women's burial sites included collar adornments, pendants, and rings made of gold leaf and ornamented with granulation soldered in the form of triangles. The pendants were also decorated with filigree, woven of golden wire in the form of a string. Individual decorations were encrusted with rubies and carnelians. Such items were also found in the Lower Volga Region, Northern Black Sea Region, and in the Caucasus [Bernshtam, 1951, p. 225; Vinogradov, 1963, p. 203] and date back to the 2nd–5th centuries.

A study of Sarmatian artefacts in the large areas of ancient nomadic tribal movements and the findings near the village of Lebedevka proved that the achievements in the art of jewellery making (the filigree technique) were the result of 'local Saka-Sarmatian culture genetic development since the 5th century BCE to the 4th century AD' [Bagrikov and others, 1968, p. 86]. In the cities of the Northern Black Sea Region, the closest to the Sarmatian-Alans massif of the Northern Caucasus, there was movement towards the Sarmatisation of the local Greek population and its culture, which was strengthened under the influence of the Hun campaigns in the 3rd century. Research on Bosphorus art culture gave rise to the conclusion that 'during the High Middle Ages (5–6th centuries) the element of Sarmatian-Alans was apparently the main one in the ethnic composition of Bosphorus' [Jakobson, 1964, p. 460]. It is noteworthy that the technique of filigree ornamentation in the form of triangles and pyramids was pre-

served in Kazakh adornments until the 18–19th centuries. In addition to the technique, the distinctive 'Barbarian' decorative style of the first millennium CE was also preserved [Orazbayeva, 1968, p. 86]. In contrast to Kazakh jewellers, Bulgarian and later Tatar jewellers enriched the technique of granulation with intricate filigree designs that gave rise to the heyday of Volga Tatar filigree art.

Thus, the significant achievements of Bulgarian jewellers in developing granulation techniques originated in the Saka-Sarmatian tradition. In regard to the manner, application, and techniques of ornamentation, the strongest artistic influence was made by the Hellenic cities of the Northern Black Sea and Azov Sea Regions, with their Greek-Sarmatian population and Kuban steppe areas. These high artistic traditions, rooted in the Ancient World in the art of the nomad Sarmatians, Huns, Bulgarian-Alans, and Khazars, were further refined in the jewellery art of the Volga Bulgar, and later the Kazan Tatars, becoming a set part of the culture's ethnic identity.

### Ceramics and Bone Carving

Ceramics was the most widespread type of applied and decorative art. Along with other kinds of Bulgarian artistic crafts (metal processing, jewellery), it was characterised by advanced technological and aesthetic features. Developed forms of ceramic art developed with the appearance of the pottery wheel after the resettlement of early Bulgars in Volga-Kama. They were taken from the places of their previous habitation in the Azov-Ciscaucasian steppes, marking a new period in the development of pottery in the Volga-Kama Region. The manufacture of decorative and generic mass produced items was established there. Along with handicraft pottery (made with the pottery wheel), there were also modelled handmade ceramics created in the home.

The heyday of ceramics occurred between the 11–beginning of the 13th centuries, when the Bulgarian craftsmen mastered the techniques of kilning, clay moulding, and the ornamentation of items. Mastering the technique of kilning allowed them to create peculiar lustrous



colour-tones on vessel surfaces, where, for example, a dark brown, almost black base seamlessly transformed into a red body and was finished off with an elegant smoke-coloured rim. The colours ranged from light and reddish yellows, grayish browns to reddish—practically black—dark browns. Already in the 10th century Bulgarian potters, who worked in large cities such as Bilyar, Suvar, and Murom townlet, were very familiar with coloured glaze and applied it in the decoration of bowls, dishes, pitchers, and luminaries. Slip glazed ceramics was one of the most popular art forms in Islamic countries; its appearance among the Volga Bulgar attests to their development of artistic forms specific to the Islamic culture.

Preserved artistic examples include moulded items and pottery ware with various applications: one and two-handed (amphoric) jugs, xums, kumgans, korchagas, platters, inkstands, luminaries, toys, as well as fragments of architectural ceramics [Bilyar's tableware, 1986]. Their forms differ in proportional symmetry, contour concision, squatness, and laconic decoration. Engobe coating—a thin layer of white or coloured (red, gray) clay and transparent enamel (from light green to dark green, almost black)—was used in the manufacture of the products; they also used a technique of pattern glazing (dashed, vertical and slanting linear stripes in different rhythmic and spacial variations). Slip glaze was often combined with incised counter-embossed ornaments, filled with a thicker enamel layer, and ornamental painting under the glaze.

The patterns on Bulgarian pottery were mainly comprised of geometrical forms and sometimes included floral motifs. These were mostly linear and linear-wavy ornaments, curls of various shapes, floral sprouts, scallops, flutings, shaded triangles, 'rolling wave' motifs, integral spirals, and others. Some of them were an imaginary depiction of water. The images of twigs and intricate trite patterns in the form of foliate sprouts were found among the floral motifs.

Special samples of Bulgarian pottery are vessels with protomes (the frontal view of a trunk) and animal heads (goat, horse, sheep with twisted antlers, dog, moose, duck, rooster,

and so on), modeled into the round sculptures that adorn the handles and spouts. Sometimes the images of animals and birds, which had protective and cult meanings and were of the remnants of totemism, were replaced by their reproduction in the forms of moulded hemispheric protrusions. These forms of vessels with zoomorphic handles and sprouts are characteristic of Sarmatian-Alan ceramics and are bearers of Saltovo culture, known to the culture of ancient Khwarezmian Saka (4th century BCE–1st century AD). Their dissemination on the territory of the Volga was related to the inclusion of a new Bulgar-Alan element, the Upper Don Saltoveans, to the Volga Bulgars in the beginning of the 10th century [Khlebnikova, 1984; Kazakov, 1992].

Zoomorphic images in Bulgar vessels of the 10–13th centuries lack the traits of 'mythological realism,' the characteristic of the pagan epoch. The images of animals are conventional; in their transmission there is an element of ornamental stylisation, and they are part of the vessels composition, commensurate with their proportions, and fit into their squat forms. At the same time, the images have a lively expression and exhibit the stylised characteristic features of an animal, whose habits are reflected. Over time in later ceramics zoomorphic images lost their pictorial forms, with the exception of the bird motif. In particular, in the excavation of the Kazan Kremlin, in layers from the 13–14th centuries and the 15–16th centuries, archaeologists discovered Tatar kumgans with gutter spouts in the form of roosters heads, which led them to conclude: the 'bird's head, and precisely the rooster's head, is likely an ancient form that is specific and predominately from Kazan' [Kalinin, Khalikov, 1954, p. 123]. Attention has already been given to the semantic image of the rooster in Bulgar art in the section on artistic metals.

Among the ceramic vessels, the samples with marks, or the signatures of craftsmen, appearing on the bottoms of vessels, attract the most interest. Many of these are the transformation of ancestral tamgas and can also be found on the vessels, bricks, and bone artefacts of archaeological excavations at Sarkel, Saltovo, and Mayaki and also at the burial sites of

North-East Bulgaria, the territory of Saltovo culture. Generally speaking, it should be stated that the discovered pottery art is a clear and convincing testimony in favour of the Saltovo basis of Volga Bulgar culture and reveals the important contribution of the North Caucasus Alans to this culture.

Among the discovered materials of Volga Bulgar artistic handicraft, only carved bone items were found. They generally include household items such as combs, knives and whip handles, clasps, quiver encasings, spoons, buttons, and so on. The technique of flat carving geometrical, floral, and zoomorphic ornamental motifs was used in their decoration. Bone items for mass production were decorated with the simplest patterns, including triangle, diamond, square, circular eyelet, interwoven cord, spiral and other motifs, which make up linear compositions. The finials of knives, whip handles, and spoons were made in the form of animal heads.

In terms of the combination of the naive realism of pagan art and the patterns of Islamic art, the specimen of a bone knife handle is of interest. Its form is comprised of the head and bended body of a marten decorated with a complicated structure of stylised palmetto motifs. The shape of the handle is very graceful, transferring the characteristic features of the animal vividly, while the ornament of a rug pattern fully fills the surface of the handle—the marten's body recalls the conditional nature of the image, interpreted only as a decor motif. The decorative function of carved bone items is also accomplished by pictographic representations of birds, which as a rule were present in heraldry.

Generally speaking, it should be noted that between the 10th and early 13th centuries the images of animals and birds in Bulgar art gradually lost the liveliness and expression, which was characteristic in the Early Bulgarian and early pre-Mongol periods. The works become dominated by pattern forms and acquire a purely decorative meaning. Nevertheless, the poetic meaning of the images continues unabated, moving into the sphere of metaphor. New figurative systems and ornamental styles are formed, which are characteristic of Islamic art.

### The Figurative System and Ornaments

The gradual evolution of pagan mythology and Saltovo cultural traditions towards medieval symbolism with Islamic aesthetics describes the figurative system of Volga Bulgar decorative and applied arts in the 10–12th centuries. As mentioned earlier, it was natural for the works of art to contain references to ancient Turkic mythological plots with images of animals, birds, creatures, and occasionally humans. All of them are represented in a conditionally-decorative style, characteristic of pictorial representations in Islamic art, and they become pattern-like. If in the Early Bulgar period an ornament was decorated mainly with arms, horse gear, clothes lining, and headgear, in the art of the 10–early 13th centuries it finds wider applications in almost all areas of Volga Bulgar material culture.

The ornament consisted of zoomorphic, floral, geometric, and distinct epigraphic motifs. It was characterised by a devotion to the principles of pattern, flatness, curvilinearity, circularity of form, and image contour (silhouette). From the end of the 12th century floral-plant patterns prevail, and epigraphic ornaments make their appearance as well as arabesque patterns.

Bulgarian patterns preserved their identity and uniqueness despite many commonalities with Eastern ornamental depictions. The originality of the Bulgar ornamental style lied in its free picturesque treatment based on creative improvisation and flexibility of composition structures. It is rooted in archaic motifs coming from the period of pre-Saltovo culture, which make up a large historically prevailing ornamental complex, dating back to the art of South Siberia and Middle Asia that is closely related to the art of Altai mountain tribes in the middle of the 1st millennium BCE (Pazyryk mounds). These include motifs such as lotus, heart-shaped, East Asian-like multipetalled palmettes and rosettes, integral spirals, tulip images, and others, prevalent in Bulgarian artistic metal and bone carving. These ornamental motifs were preserved in the later ornamental art of Kazan Tatars, including jewellery, embroidery, leather mosaic shoes, and stone and

bone carving. This can be seen in ornamental motifs as well as production techniques such as fur and leather mosaics, appliqué work and golden sewing; elements of clothing, for example, women's breastplates of the Tatar 'izyu' type, pattern quilt shoes, and others.

Other ornament styles, no less important in Volga Bulgarian art, are rooted in the cultures of the Sarmatian-Alan tribes, Transcaucasia, Iran, the cities of the Azov-Black Sea Region (with Hellenic-Byzantine traditions), and parts of Middle Asia, which made up the basis of Saltovo culture and its Middle Volga variant. Ornament styles influenced by the Ugrians are less evident in the art of Volga Bulgaria; however, they continue to be preserved in the later art of the Volga Tatars.

In Bulgarian ornamental art, as in the countries of the East, patterns become the all-encompassing principle of the artistic view of the world. Under the influence of Islam, zoomorphic subject matter and the 'animal style' inherent in pagan art gradually disappeared by the end of the pre-Mongol period, and the main artistic methods for depicting the surrounding reality became floral, plant, and geometric ornaments. In the figurative art system old plots and mythical motifs were neglected leading to the loss of their cult and magical functions, which are reworked into patterns and pagan symbols. However, individual ornament motifs continued to preserve their symbolism, especially those which depicted natural phenomena and the celestial bodies. These established images of the world were interpreted more as poetic metaphors in the works of Bulgarian masters in the 10–12th centuries.

Islamic art introduced metaphoric symbolism. For example, it is interesting to observe the evolution of the bird image. Its representation gradually evolved away from the natural and became a symbolic motif. Later the image of a bird loses its distinction by species and turns into a 'bird of happiness,' which is organically interwoven into decor compositions or ornament patterns. A bird becomes the metaphor for happiness and love.

In Islamic art aesthetics, images of all living things were considered to be imitations of Allah, to repeat the creation of whom was im-

possible. This is likely why there was no representationalism in the creative work of the Muslim artist; he meets the world provisionally and rethinks reality through a subjective world outlook in discrete and abstract forms. The depiction and reflection of reality took place within a medieval artistic consciousness, characterised by ornamentality and a provisional decorative effect—the basic principles of Islamic art.

In the art of the Volga Bulgars of the 10–12th centuries, as in the 'animal style' images from the Early Bulgar period, figurative treatments of zoomorphic motifs were not realistic but were characterised by conventionality and a certain schematicism, or a decorative stylisation of forms. These figurative principles of depicting life-forms, developed in the Bulgarian pagan cultural epoch, were further elaborated in the blossoming period of the Islamic arts, when a gradual transition happened in subject matter—from mythological imagery to symbolic and conditionally-decorative imagery. Thus, the development of the principles reflecting the natural world in Bulgar art was characterised by the transition from pictorialism, which was typical for the pre-Islamic perception of the world, to the ornamentation of Islamic art. The origins of conditional-stylised interpretations of images date back to the ancient Turkic nomadic and semi-nomadic culture.

Under the influence of the Islamic worldview, zoomorphic motifs and plots, intrinsic to pagan art, were gradually replaced by floral-plant and geometrical patterns towards the end of the pre-Mongol period. The 'floral style,' with its picturesque ornament system, expressed the poetic world view and reflected conditional depictions, rather than real substances, in forms of floral ornamentation. For centuries it defined the development of the Bulgar artistic language and was successively retained in Tatar folk ornaments.

\* \* \*

The art of Volga Bulgaria was a bright and original phenomenon not only in the history of the Tatars but also in world artistic culture. It brought us the ancient art motifs of the ancestors of the Tatars, with roots in the cultures of

nomadic, semi-nomadic, and sedentary tribes, from across the vast expanses of Eurasia. All the cultural achievements of these tribes are synthesised in Bulgarian art, and their common artistic motifs and images are manifested in this ethnocultural synthesis. The continuity of ancient Turkic tribal art traditions, the common Saltovo basis of Bulgarian culture, and new phenomena linked with the penetration of Islam produced a centralised governmental culture that united the Turkic tribal groups.

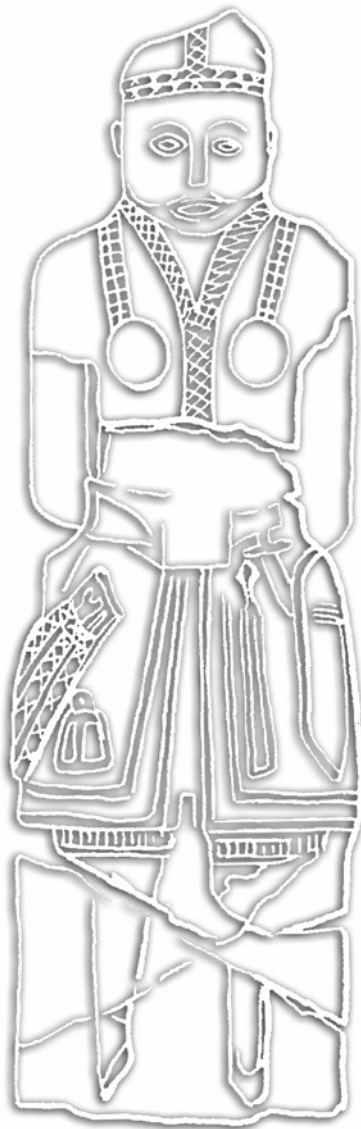
The pre-Mongol art of Volga Bulgaria reflected the makeup and tastes of various sectors of Bulgarian society. It included the art of masters from the khan's court and the 'duke's' workshops. Additionally, it was the art of urban and rural artisans close to the masses. However, it was dominated by the idea of the centralised state and the development of urban civilisation,

which was called upon to answer the material, spiritual, and other demands of the state. The figurative system of Bulgarian art underwent an evolution from mythology and pantheism to symbolism and monotheism.

Volga Bulgaria, being at the crossroads of trade and cultural influences, developed in the same artistic direction as Eastern Islamic countries. Bulgarian masters' artistic preferences were revealed through the values of Islam, and their art appeared in entirely new forms, thus transforming the progressive impact of Islamic art by its own system of ethno-aesthetics. Volga Bulgarians created their own aesthetic ideal and artistic style in art. It what would later become the basis of the art of the Golden Horde and the Kazan Khanate, as well as the traditional decorative art of Kazan Tatars, becoming the core of Tatar national culture.

Section 9

# The Medieval Bulgar Ethnicity



## CHAPTER 1

### The anthropological content of the Bulgarian population

*Ilgizar Gazimzyanov*

There are only scant descriptions of the appearance of the Volga Bulgars by Arab-speaking travellers that have come down to us. What makes them valuable is the fact that these brief 'anthropological' characteristics were recorded by authors who visited the country in person and saw its inhabitants.

The famous 'Notes,' written by the secretary of the Embassy of Baghdad Ibn Fadlan, gives short descriptions of the 'physical' type of the people he met on his way to the country of the northern Muslims. For example, in describing the country of the Turks (present-day western Kazakhstan, the Orenburg Region, and Bashkortostan), he pointed out that the people of this country do not 'wear' beards. He wrote the following: 'All Turks pluck out their beards, except their moustache. I would sometimes see a decrepit old man amongst them who had plucked out his beard but left a little bit under his chin' [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 128]. Ibn Fadlan observes the same thing amongst the Pechenegs and the Bashkirs: 'They are dark-haired men... completely clean-shaven' [ibid, p. 130]. Thus, the special facial features noted of the representatives of the Turkic-speaking tribes are no other than characteristic traits of the Mongoloid race, namely: the dark colour of their hair and scant hair-covering (beard, moustache, etc.). For, as the secretary thought, plucking out a beard is in fact an indication of its poor growth. An indirect proof of this fact can be found in the 'stone men,' stylised figures of warriors.

Ibn Fadlan's 'Notes' lacks a description of the appearance of the Bulgars themselves. However, in later Persian versions of Ibn Fadlan's 'Notes' there is a phrase that might be of interest to us: 'I have not seen amongst them (the Bulgars—*I. G.*) a [single] man who might be red [ruddy-faced], but the majority of them are ill' [ibid, p. 140]. At first glance, the phrase sounds quite odd, but we shall try to decipher it.

Who did Ibn Fadlan mean when he mentioned the absence of people amongst the Bulgars with a reddish tint in their face? The same accounts of later dates include several mentions of people with reddish faces, where this epithet acts as an indicator of ethnicity. They are referring to the Ruses. 'I have seen the Ruses when they arrived to do their trading and settled near the Atyl River. I have never seen [people] with more perfect bodies than theirs. They are like palm-trees, fair-haired, *red in the face* (our italics—I.G.), white in the body. The Ruseses are a tall people with a white body and *a red face* (our emphasis—I.G.)' [ibid, p. 141]. The Ruseses (synonyms: the Varangians, the Vikings, the Normans) were those very merchants who came from the north and who were distinctive for their red faces, which, according to Ibn Fadlan, were not characteristic of the local people—the Bulgars.

Thus, to conclude from the descriptions given by Ibn Fadlan, we may assume that a red (or reddish) face was not typical of the Bulgars. This epithet is most probably an 'occupational' sign of the people sailing the cold and windy northern seas in search of profitable trade or rich spoils. Hence, their red (sunburnt and weather-beaten) faces became their 'visiting card.' Ibn Fadlan himself speaks in their favour, laying particular emphasis on the phrase: red in the face but white in the body.

Let us return to the deciphering of the second half of the phrase 'the Bulgars are not red in the face, but most of them are ill.' This can be interpreted both in the literal sense and as a reference to the facial hue, which is pale. It may also be a symbiosis of two interconnected concepts: ill = pale. What Ibn Fadlan implied by these words can only be guessed at. However, the latest anthropological research shows that the human life span in the Middle Ages was very short; about 40 years. This was due to many factors, primarily, diseases and the absence

of comprehensive medical care. The quality of food (if the words of Ibn Fadlan are to be believed, the Bulgars did not always consume food made of good grain as this was kept in storage pits in the ground), and periods of starvation (owing to droughts, floods, etc.) also affected life expectancy. Therefore, there might have been an element in truth in the assertion that Bulgars were ill.

Al-Gharnati, an Arab merchant-traveller from Spain, in his 'memoirs' also keeps quiet about the issue of interest to us here, although like Ibn Fadlan he describes a group of people he met in a Bulgar market as red-skinned, blue-eyed, and with hair like white flax. He observed the same facial features (most probably, these too were merchants and warriors from distant northern countries) that sharply distinguished them from the Bulgars.

How is it possible to explain the fact that a description of the Volga Bulgars' appearance is lacking in the narrations of both Ibn Fadlan and al-Gharnati, who so vividly and fully (with a certain degree of truth, of course) tell of the peculiar and wondrous customs and everyday life of the people and the natural phenomena that they saw so far from their homeland? It can only be explained by the fact that the Bulgars, being similar in appearance to the people of the Near East, were of no interest to them in this respect. In this connection, it is appropriate to quote an extract from Karl Fuchs' famous work entitled 'The Tatars of Kazan in Statistics and Ethnography,' which describes the appearance of the Kazan Tatars of the early 19th century: 'In general, the Kazan Tatars are elegantly built (referring to men). They have a rather long face, their eyes are large, black or grey, with a penetrating look; their nose is long and aquiline, *oriental* (our italics—I.G.); the lips are thick, and the upper lip is rather long, the cheekbones are insignificant, the beard is black, skilfully trimmed and shaven near the lips; the skull is oblong and thin, always clean-shaven and covered with a skullcap; the ears are long and protruding from the head; the neck is very thick; the shoulders are very broad, the chest is high... Whenever I spent time in their mosques, I would often gaze admiringly at the elegant, important faces of their old men, and, in my opinion, the old Italian famous painters could use them as the finest specimens to de-



A graphic reconstruction based on a male skull from the I Starokuybyshevsky necropolis dated from the 11–13th centuries By A. Nechvaloda

pict historical subjects from the Old and New Testaments' [Fuchs, 1991, pp. 32–33]. Such a detailed anthropological description made by K. Fuchs is important to us in that the Kazan Tatars are to some extent direct descendants of the Volga Bulgars, and, looking at the portraits of the Bulgars reconstructed according to the method of M. Gerasimova, we come to the conclusion that a comparison of their appearance with the characters from the Old Testament does not seem entirely unreasonable.

Owing to their scarcity, nor can the iconographical sources give a full picture of what the Volga Bulgars looked like. Of particular interest are the small iron figures of monsters, which, according to A. Khalikov, are associated with the religious rites performed by their ancestors [Khalikov, 1971, p. 106 ff.]. The most expressive specimen is the so-called 'Woman Rider of Maklasheyevka,' found in the Spassky District of the Republic of Tatarstan, in the former village of Maklasheyevka. The hollow bronze figure of a woman with a child in her left arm sits on a large bronze lock shaped like a horned snow leopard. Such locks in the form of different animals were quite common in Volga Bulgaria, both before the Mongol period and later. Despite the fact that the figure is simplistic and stylised, certain features can

still be discerned: a rounded face with a little pointed chin, a retreating forehead, protruding ears, big eyes, a prominent aquiline and slightly hooked nose, and rather broad and sloping shoulders. The 'anthropological' features of the 'Woman Rider of Maklasheyevka' mentioned above coincide in many ways with the description of the Kazan Tatars given by K. Fuchs: the oriental nose, long protruding ears, and broad sloping shoulders. Of course, analogies of this kind should be treated very cautiously as they are separated by a long time span, the artistic and aesthetic taste of the craftsman, as well as the religious and mythological charge of such things. Nevertheless, we are convinced that in their depictions of people the old masters attempted to give a realistic reflection of their appearance (or used a set of traits characteristic of a Caucasian or Mongoloid face) since facial features of one kind or another coupled with others could serve as an 'ethnic passport.' An eloquent testimony to this is the depiction of people on the famous ivory plates found in the Shilovsk burial mound in the Ulyanovsk Region. The burial place where these finds were uncovered dates back to the second half of the 7th century and correlates ethnically with early-Bulgar monuments. In his pictorial scenes involving people, the craftsman contrasts the nomadic inhabitants of the steppe regions, with a clearly Mongoloid appearance, with city dwellers, whose appearance is characterised by Caucasoid features.

Thus, our attempts to reconstruct the appearance of the Volga Bulgars, based solely on an analysis of written and iconographic sources, remain a matter of guesswork and supposition. Palaeoanthropological materials provide a stronger factual basis for an objective reconstruction of the physiology of the population of Volga Bulgaria.

An extensive fund of palaeoanthropological data has been accumulated to date with regard to the medieval population of the Middle Volga Region, including the Volga Bulgars of the pre-Mongol period. The research carried out by G. Debets, N. Trofimova, M. Akimova, M. Gerasimova, N. Postnikova-Rud, S. Efimova, R. Fattakhov, and others has enabled us not only to give a description of the physical type of the Volga Bulgars but also to trace the stages of its development and determine the anthropo-

logical elements contributing to its formation, which are directly connected with the ethnogenesis of the peoples inhabiting in the Middle Volga Region.

It is commonly believed that, after the disintegration of Great Bulgaria, which was due to the death of khan Kubrat and the invasion of the Khazars (the latter half of the 7th century), a number of Bulgars migrated and initially led a semi-nomadic way of life on the banks of the Volga, in its forest-steppe region. Owing to scant factual material, it is difficult to picture the actual physical appearance of the Bulgars living during the era of khan Kubrat. Nevertheless, by using the materials retrieved from later burial sites, which place the settlement of the early Bulgars—in archaeological terms—in the Middle Volga Region (Bolshetarkhansky and Kaybelsky), on the Danube (Novi-Pazar, Pliska), and in the Don Region (Zlivinsky), we are able to reconstruct it. In this respect, it should be noted that all groups of Bulgars, despite their geographical remoteness from one another, are close in their anthropological composition. They comprised representatives of the Caucasoid and mixed Caucasoid-Mongoloid types. The Caucasoid component is characterised by a brachycranial shape of the skull and an average-sized face with some flatness at the level of the eye sockets and a nose of average prominence. In scientific literature this morphological complex is commonly referred to as the 'Zlivinsky' anthropological type. This mixed Caucasoid-Mongoloid component is described as having the following set of traits: brachycranial, with a short or tall but slightly flattened and broad face. In terms of proportion the Caucasoid component prevails noticeably in all the groups mentioned. The question of the place and time of the formation of the early Bulgar anthropological type naturally arises. In the opinion of M. Akimova, the early Bulgars' physical appearance was formed on the territory lying east of the Urals, and in all probability their racial genesis was based on a type similar to the race inhabiting the Middle Asian interfluvial area (Caucasoid with a face and head of average proportions). With the rise of the Huns and the Ancient Turkic tribes, this type started to become mixed with Mongoloid features [Akimova, 1964].



As the early Bulgarian tribes migrated during the so-called Great Migration of Peoples from the east to west, the Mongoloid component became less pronounced, the direct cause of which was their integration into the local, more Caucasoid and varied groups of the population. However, there is one interesting observation worthy of mention. Amongst the richest and most complex—in terms of structure—finds of implements uncovered from the graves of nomads buried on the territory of the Eurasian steppes in the second half of the first millennium, items with anthropomorphic depictions are often discovered. These images clearly reveal facial features of a distinctly Mongoloid type: a rounded and broad face with slight beard and moustache growth, a flattened and slightly prominent nose, etc. The anthropological type of those buried was as a rule characterised by the same Mongoloid traits. It is possible that in this case the Mongoloid appearance of the deceased person is curiously indicative of his higher social status amongst his fellow tribesmen. In our opinion, the nomadic Ancient Turkic tribal aristocracy, including the early Bulgars, for a number of reasons mixed with the surrounding Caucasian population less intensively, and thus 'the original features of their ancestors' and the right to continue their glorious deeds were preserved for a longer period of time. In this connection, the anthropological materials uncovered from a necropolis in the city of Bilyar (the Bilyar IV Necropolis) are of interest. Its location in the centre of a medieval city and certain details of the sepulchral rite (the burials were in stone mausoleums in accordance with Muslim norms) suggest that this necropolis was probably a burial place for representatives of supreme authority not only of the capital city but the whole of the state of Volga Bulgaria [Khuzin, 1995, pp. 130–131].

According to R. Fattakhov, the anthropological type of the Bulgar nobility with their Mongoloid features (broad, long, and flattened face) differed widely from the rest of the city population, which was generally of the Caucasoid type [Fattakhov, 1979]. The same interconnection between the anthropological type of the buried person and its social status can be observed in an examination of the materials of



A graphic reconstruction based on a male skull from the Izmersky necropolis dated from the 11–13th centuries By A. Nechvaloda

the Bulgars from the time of the Golden Horde (the necropolis near the Khan's Burial Vault and the Small Minaret) and the Kazan Kremlin (the mausoleum of Kazan khans).

Thus, the formation of a mixed racial composition amongst the early Bulgars had occurred long before their arrival in the Middle Volga Region.

Alongside the Bulgars, researchers attach great importance to the role played by the tribes of the 'local' Volga-Ural genesis (principally, the Finno-Ugric layer) in the formation of the state's population. Archaeologists associate the origins of this population with the Polomsko-Lomovatovsky monuments, discovered throughout the Cheptsy River basin and in the Upper and Middle Cis-Kama River Region [Kazakov, 1992]. In anthropological terms this group was not homogeneous either; however, it was predominantly Caucasoid. Though certain features such as the flattened face and the prominent nose point to a shift towards Mongoloid types. On account of the narrow and short face, coupled with the meso-brachycranial head, this morphological complex is commonly denoted as a variety of the Ural race—that is, the sub-Ural type. It was mainly formed in the forest zones west and east of the Ural mountains, and by the beginning of the first millennium it had become the determining feature in the racial composition

of the Finno-Ugric tribes. The sub-Ural component clearly stands out amongst the items retrieved from the pagan burial grounds (Tankeyevsky and Tetyushsky) and early Muslim burials in Bilyar. These include monuments reflecting a phase when the early Bulgars and related groups (primarily Turkic-speaking) mixed at random with the masses of the Volga-Cis-Ural population. Later, as the state itself and state relations developed, the mechanical symbiosis of the multi-ethnic and multicultural elements transitioned to a phase of biological miscegenation and the formation of a new ethnicity—that of the Volga Bulgars. The adoption of Islam as a state religion and its wide spreading throughout all strata of the population of Volga Bulgaria, urban as well as rural, also played a significant role in the unifying process. Islam facilitated the elimination of ideological and cultural obstacles in intertribal relations and raised them to a higher level of consolidation—genetics. In anthropological terms this was expressed in the fact that the physical traits of the Volga Bulgars became less pronounced, which led to the formation of a racially unified type; the mesomorphic Caucasoid with a slight Mongoloid admixture. Biological miscegenation was undoubtedly the most active in the large cities and densely populated areas, but the rural districts (especially the central regions of Volga Bulgaria) were also involved in the process. This is confirmed by the fact that the rural inhabitants did not differ essentially from

the city dwellers in their morphological status [Rud, 1991; Efimova, 1991].

At the same time it should be noted that, despite the relatively homogeneous anthropological composition of the pre-Mongol Bulgars, certain physical differences were preserved in some regional (mainly frontier areas) and social groups. While the question of the preservation of Mongoloid features in the morphotype of representatives of the Bulgar nobility has been discussed above, the tangible Mongoloid component found among the peoples inhabiting the southern territories of Volga Bulgaria (Samar-skaya Luka and its adjacent regions) is due, in our opinion, to the periodic infiltration and settlement of steppe nomadic groups, who in the Middle Ages were carriers of the (principally) Mongoloid morphological type. Variety was added, but the overall anthropological picture of the pre-Mongol Bulgars was not affected by groups of the population arriving in the Middle Volga Region as members of trade caravans, diplomatic missions, princely *druzhinas*, etc.

Thus, the anthropological materials provide a clear indication that the Volga Bulgars' racial genesis in pre-Mongol times developed along the lines of a mixed racial type. This type (mesomorphic with some degree of Mongoloid admixture) was the result of extensive marital ties within the confines of a centralised feudal state and of the biological mixing of two major ethnocultural groups participating in the formation of the Bulgar people: the Turkic-speaking Bulgars and the 'local' Volga-Ural tribes.

## CHAPTER 2

### The languages of the Volga Bulgaria's population and the problem of the 'Bulgarian' language

*Farid Khakimzyanov, Iskander Izmaylov*

#### **The language situation in the Middle Volga Region in the 8–13th centuries and the 'Bulgarian' language**

The problem of the character, peculiarities, and the development of language (or languages) of the population of the Bulgarian state is one of the most controversial in Turkology. This problem even exists in the terminology itself. Inasmuch as it is accepted in Turkology to call 'Bulgarian' one of the Turkic languages, which was spread throughout Danubian Bulgaria (represented in 'The Nominalia of the Bulgarian Khans' and inscriptions on stone steles made in the Greek language, etc.), the Ciscaucasia (recorded in Northern Caucasian runic monuments and borrowings from the Hungarian language), and in the Middle Volga Region (preserved in epitaphic monuments of the 13–14th centuries and borrowings) [see Khakimzyanov, 1997, pp. 47–52], historians very often are mistaken, either willingly or unwillingly, and put the terms 'Bulgarian language' and 'language of the Volga Bulgaria population' on equal footing. However, the language of Volga Bulgaria's population cannot be narrowed down to a singular 'Bulgarian' language. Evidently, the name of a disappearing language by some ethnic group is not entirely accurate insofar as it permits a contamination of the concept of ethnic group. The confusion increases even further when researchers simultaneously use the terms 'Bulgarian' and 'Kipchak' languages for the linguistic situation in the medieval Volga Region, which directly points to a simple and ultimate path to solving the problem—a shift of one ethnic group (Bulgarian) into another (Kipchak) occurred and with their respective languages. We also consider that it could be methodologically correct to call this group of languages Oghur as it was offered by US Turkologist P. Golden [Golden, 1980], which could somehow remove a number of misapprehensions.

Another problem lies in the fact that linguists dispose of only fragmentary data about the character of the linguistic situation and its peculiarities in the period from the 8th to the first third of the 13th centuries in Bulgaria. Meanwhile, the basis of its reconstruction is an extrapolation of the linguistic situation, which is constructed based upon the analysis of epitaphic monuments of the 13–14th centuries and on even earlier ones. Besides this fact, the language of epitaphs itself, due to its formulaicity and supra-dialectical nature, is not really representative as a description of the vernacular language of the country's population, the language situation in the period of the Ulus of Jochi in the Volga Region clearly and by the most radical way differed from earlier ones, which is connected to both purely linguistic and extra-linguistic factors.

Sharpness of this generally trivial linguistic problem is added to by the fact that the only contemporary language which could have been a successor to the Bulgarian one is the Chuvash language. As a result, it is not only a dispute about the change of one ancient language by another but about the ethnogenesis and the ethnic history of modern nations, which spurs multiple extra-scholarly allusions. And if it was exusable both for Kh. Faizkhanov, who first identified in the Islamic epitaphs of the 13–14th centuries the words of 'R'--language, which have parallels with the Chuvash language, to call the language of these epitaphs 'Chuvash,' especially if we take into consideration the state of the that-time linguistics and comparative studies, and for N. Ashmarin, who created the Bulgarian concept of the Chuvash ethnogenesis in an ideological struggle with the concept of the Tatar history developed by Sh. Marjani, such attempts are doubtful for contemporary Turkologists.

However, attempts have been undertaken to solve this problem with the help of simple conclusions. Thus, in the opinion of linguist

N. Yegorov, 'the earliest dated monuments contain clear Kipchak language features, but already by the latter half of the 13th century the Bulgarian language epitaphs begin to be accompanied by Kipchak language ones,' by the 'beginning of the 14th century the Bulgarian language occupies the dominant position in epitaphs, and the Kipchak traces disappear' [Yegorov, 1984, pp. 97–98]. In the meantime, in our view, since the evidential base of this conclusion is weak, the general linguistic situation in the Bulgarian lands of the Ulus of Jochi was absolutely different. And it is hardly appropriate to compare a vernacular language with a literary one, although existing in an interrelated way, they are nevertheless on different cultural planes.

The statement that texts in one language or another were dominating is without foundation. However, from the general number of monuments found 'R'-languages are more than the 'Z'-languages, but it is only formally. The general amount of monuments in existence is not yet known and is unlikely to be known [Khamkimzyanov, 1983, p. 17]. Even if we suppose that the contemporary selection from extant texts reflects the actual correlation of the languages, which appeared when these monuments were erected, it may be decisive proof because it namely reflects preferences (but we do not know whose because there are different opinions—they fluctuate from craftsmen-stonemasons to customers) in the production of epitaphs and not the real language situation. If we accept the version that the correlation of language styles used in the epitaphs reflects the actual language situation, then we will have to admit that the German-speaking population of Western Europe mostly spoke Latin. This example only underscores how complicated the language situation was in real life in medieval communities and how different the vernacular dialects and the literary language could be.

The main problems that arise when studying the language situation in the Bulgarian Emirate are: a) whether the Bulgars (in the narrow-ethnic sense) prevailed in number over the rest of the population of the country; b) what data linguists have at their disposal in order to judge about the functioning of the Bulgarian (with rhotacism) language as the language of interethnic communication.

### **The History of the Bulgars in the Volga-Ural Region and the Linguistic Situation**

Historical literature often contains contradictions with respect to the Bulgars' numerical composition. Here the fact that researchers often mix the two notions catches the eye: the Bulgars (tribe) and the Bulgarian ethnopolitical community (formed as a result of the consolidation of many tribes within the Bulgarian Emirate). In order to give a complete response to this question, we should briefly present the general picture of the penetration of the Turkic languages into the territory of Europe, as it is reconstructed in works of contemporary linguists and historians [Golden, 1980; Róna-Tas, 1999; Zimonyi, 2002 et al.].

From at least the 3rd century AD Turkic tribes began infiltrating the Volga-Ural Region. There are reasons to suppose that among them were representatives of various tribal dialects—'R'- and 'Z'-languages, but with a clear prevalence of the former. In the mid 3rd century the Huns became more powerful, and after turning into a real force, in 375, they approached the borders of the Roman Empire defeating the Alans and Goths, partly conquering them and partly 'pressing' them back into the borders of the Empire. Thus they gave the last push to the so-called Great Migration of peoples that destroyed the ancient world, on the ruins of which various 'Barbarian' kingdoms arose. The state of the European Huns that had emerged in Pannonia included evidently the European steppes up to the Volga. The conglomerate of different nations (speaking different languages) was unstable. Soon after the death of their leader Attila (452) the state collapsed, and the rebelling peoples defeated the Huns at the Battle of Nedao (454), forcing the Hun tribe of Akatzirs to retreat to the Volga Region, where they were absorbed by a new power—the Bulgars. It is possible that it was at exactly that time or even earlier when one of the groups of the Oghur-Turkic tribes (bearers of the special 'R'-language) defeated in the steppe, retreated to forests of the Oka-Sviyaga interfluvium, thus giving birth to the formation of the present-day Chuvash and even possibly to the Upper Cis-Kama Area where borrowings from the Turkic 'R'-language into the Finno-Permian ones were recorded.

The movement of the proto-Bulgarian tribes—the Oghurs (Urogs), Saragurs, and Ono-

ghurs—was prompted by the pressure from the side of the Savir people in the mid-5th century, who had been pressed as a result of the Avars' movement to Europe (*the Rourans* in Chinese sources) who were defeated by the Turks. Judging by retrospective data, the Oghur-Bulgarian tribes were bearers of the Turkic language with rhotacism, lambdaism, and lexical peculiarities (*the 'R'-language*). The Oghur Union, in which the Bulgars became stronger, started dominating the Northern Black Sea Region after the collapse of the Hun state led by Attila. Written sources described this event quite definitely in 480, when the Byzantine emperor Zeno addressed the Bulgars for help against the Ostrogoths. In the latter half of the 6th century the Kutrigurs and Utigurs, who had undermined their power in the wars with Byzantium and internecine feuds, were conquered by the Avars, who created their Khaganate in the Danube River Area. The tribe of the Savirs (Suvars) appeared in the Northern Caucasus at the beginning of the 6th century. Circa 515 Byzantium and the State of the Sasanids already competed for control over them. There is information that the Savirs had ethnic contacts with the Oghur tribes [Golden, 1980, pp. 34–36]. Arabic sources also mention the Balanjars/Baranjars [Gadlo, 1979, pp. 120–126; Golden, 1980, p. 38]. With the arrival of the Avars in 558, the union of the Savirs was struck a powerful blow, and they lost their supremacy in the steppe, later becoming part of the Khazar Khaganate. The rule of the Avars appeared to be short-lived, and in 568 they retreated to Pannonia under pressure of the Turks, who conquered the steppes of the Northern Caucasus. During the period of weakening of the Turkic Khaganate the Bulgars, who had lived in the steppes of Kuban and the Black Sea Region, united around the year 603 by the tribe of the Onoghurs led by the Dulo clan, formed their own ethnopolitical union. It collapsed splitting into a number of unions, which resettled in the Danube River Area, the Middle Volga and partly settled in the Don Area and the Western Ciscaucasia where they fell under the power of the Khazars.

The Bulgars, who came to the Middle Volga, found a variegated linguistic situation here. Apart from tribes and tribal groups speaking different dialects of the Turkic languages, the proto-Hungarians were located here, having

remained in their motherland after a part of the Magyars had left to the Danube River Region, as well as different Finno-Permian tribes. It is noteworthy that the Bulgars and other bearers of the 'R'-language did not prevail in the quantitative ratio over bearers of other variants of the Turkic language (the so-called 'Z'-language or the language of the common Turkic type). The comparatively new ethnic unit obviously formed along with the formation of different tribes under the power of the Bulgarian Eltebers and strengthening of state institutions and trade connections with Islamic countries.

Undoubtedly, there was a struggle both among the Turkic languages (ethnic dialects) and between the Turkic and non-Turkic languages simultaneously with the process of formation of the new ethnic group constituting the Volga Bulgars. In such a complex ethnic-language environment, a means of interethnic communication, was needed at least within the ethnic-territorial framework. Undoubtedly, this language formation could only serve as a supra-dialectal koiné, at the core of which the principle of the mutual understanding lied. At the beginning, naturally, intermediate language formations could have appeared on the bases of dialects. Their borders are always unstable, and they change in accordance with the condition of development of a concrete dialect in the ratio of the literary language and change of historical living of the given linguistic group [Khakimzyanov, 1983, pp. 4–6].

However, was the Bulgarian language (with the 'R'-feature) a means of interethnic communication? If so, can we define its functional (and typological) borders? It is thought that the 'R'-language, due to its peculiarity, could be not only some kind of a supra-dialectal form but also a basis in the formation of intermediary forms. It is obvious that it would be appropriate to observe it in a concrete period of the historical-economic development of the society as a territorially marked unit.

We have no data at our disposal which would allow us to reveal the structural peculiarities or the character of languages of at least those basic tribes who were known in the 10th century, that is: the Barsils, Suvars, Esegels, Burtases, and others—we can only analyse these ethnonyms. Their examination shows that a part of them is

originally connected to the region of the Northern Caucasus—like the Suvars, Bersula (Barsils), and Baranjars; some, to Semirechye and Eastern Turkestan—the Esegels (Chigils), and there are still doubts in respect of others—the Burtases [Gadlo, 1979; Golden, 1980; Zimonyi, 1990]. Among these ethnic groups we may definitely distinguish the Esegels as bearers of the 'Z'-language because the Karluk clan of Chigils along with the Yagma was the founder of the Kara-Khanid state where the language of the common-Turkic type was spoken. Although the languages of the Suvars and Barsils could have been of the 'R'-type, we cannot exclude that already the Baranjars, as settled and urban inhabitants, could have been bearers of the common Turkic supra-dialectal koiné. During the 10–11th centuries the influx of the Turkic population keeps rushing to Bulgaria—both from the Don River Area, the Ciscaucasia, and Middle Asia. That is why in this case we may put the question both about independent languages and a group of dialects, which bore the feature of territoriality.

With the strengthening of state centralisation, the emergence of cities and urban infrastructure as well as widening of trade connections along the Great Volga Route and the caravan route to Khwarezm, state development and its necessities contributed to emergence of various forms of supra-dialectal speech, which are traditionally called a supra-dialectal koiné. That circumstance is important for us that after losing the ethnic-linguistic affiliation all tribal languages started being named Bulgarian, and thus, interethnic borders were erased. In particular, we may judge about its based on information provided by al-Biruni, who when characterising Bulgarian population wrote about 'the Bulgars of Suvar' (it could have been a scribe's mistake, but traditionally it should be Bulgar and Suvar), that 'they do not speak Arabic, but their own languages, which is a mixture of the Turkic and Khazar' [Biruni, 1957, pp. 49, 54].

We could only guess about the character of this supra-dialectal language if we did not have a unique source at our disposal, which characterises the ethnic-language situation in the Bulgarian state already in the mid 11th century—the Compendium of the languages of the Turks 'Divanü Lugati't-Türk' written in 1074 in Arabic by Mahmud al-Kashgari. In it

the author reflected information about 31 Turkic dialects. He gathered interesting evidence also about languages of the Bulgarian state's population the Kara-Khanid state maintained political, cultural, and trade ties with. The fact is known that some Turkic tribes (evidently related to the Chigils) lived a nomadic lifestyle from the borders of the Kara-Khanids' state to 'the frontiers of Bulgaria' in the 1040s. M. Kashgari provided evidence about the dialects of the population of Bulgar and Suvar. However, at the same time, his examples showed that these dialects were not different from each other, and it is possible that he separated them paying a tribute to the Islamic historical-geographical tradition. Thus, he provided 8 examples from the Bulgarian language, 1—belonging to the Argu and Bulgars, 1—to the Yemeks, Kypchaks, and Suvars, 4—to the Kypchaks, Oghuzes and Suvars, 1—to the Bulgars, Yemeks, Kypchaks and the Suvars, and 1—the one 'except for the language of the Oghuzes, Kypchaks, and the Suvars' [Nadzhip, 1989, pp. 36–37]. Among the concrete examples he provided there are: 'bal' ('honey') in the Tatar, Bashkir, Karaim, Uighur, Kirghiz, Kazakh, Kkalp, Nogai, Turkmen, Uzbek languages; 'bal'—in the Uzbek, 'bol' in Turkic; 'bal' in the Chuvash, and 'pyl' as well. This example shows us that this lexeme is general Turkic, besides M. Kashgari considers it to be common for the Kypchaks, Oghuzes, and Suvars. See also the words 'adaq' ('leg') (common for the Kypchaks, Oghuzes, and the Suvars)—'azaq' ('leg') (common for the Kypchaks, Yemeks, Bulgars, and Suvars), 'jalnuq' ('slave-girl') (common for the Kypchaks, Oghuzes, and the Suvars), 'teva' ('camel') (common for the Kypchaks, Oghuzes, and the Suvars), 'toz' ('to be full') (common for the Yemeks, Suvars, Bulgars, and some Kypchaks). Several words are distinguished as especially Bulgarian: 'avuz' ('wax'), 'lav' ('wax for a seal'), 'kökläš' ('become relative with'), and 'qanäq' ('cream') (the last word was also used in the Argu language). Among the words used in the Turkic languages that are used to convey the meaning 'cream' (compare: *kaiak*—*kaimak*—*khaiakh*—*khoimokh*—*khaima* and others) we should also mention the Tatar dialectic *kan'ak*.

As it is seen from M. Kashgari's instructions and examples he brought, both languages (or dialects)—the Bulgar and Suvar—have a clear general Turkic character, it is no wonder

the author every time compares them exactly with the Kypchak (and Yemek) and the Oghuz ones. We have all reasons to suppose that in this case we are dealing with supra-dialectal types of speech, which play the key role when changing language situations. In other words, these are samples of speech spoken by the inhabitants of the cities of Bulgar and Suvar, which in essence were not ethnically marked.

In recent years an opinion has consolidated that since M. Kashgari never visited Volga Bulgaria, he was never an expert in the complex linguistic situation of the Volga Region, and since his examples of the Bulgarian language have no elements characteristic of the proto-Bulgarian language, its value is low [Pritsak, 1959]. Even if we do not take into consideration the evidence of connections between Bulgaria and Middle Asia, we still cannot help suggesting that based upon Kashgari's data his informers included people from Bulgaria (particularly from the cities of Bulgar and Suvar) that had an ordinary Turkic speech of the Oghuz-Kipchak type. If it is true, it proves that at the beginning of the 11th century Bulgaria was also a home for the Turks speaking the language of the common Turkic type, and they constituted a significant amount of people if Kashgari considered their language to be an archetype. Still, the sociopolitical environment in the country and presence of late graveside monuments of the 13–14th centuries with 'R'- and /elements allow us to interpret this phenomenon not just as the author's erroneous recording of the Kipchaks' speech instead of the one spoken by the Bulgars. There are almost no doubts that there was developed a language of the inter-dialectal communication in Bulgaria, and, as M. Kashgari's examples show us, it was of a common-Turkic nature.

It is widely known that the main factor that spurs the necessity in a koiné is a practical necessity in it, and it is formed in case of existing essential dialectal differences. The common-Turkic character of the koiné was apparently conditioned by a number of factors:

1) Presence of such ethnic-language groups among the Bulgarian emirate's population who spoke the common Turkic language, which is evidenced by independent facts recorded by Ibn Fadlan; the title 'elteber' of the Bulgarian tsar is known in the Turkic world since the 6th century,

it was also born by tribal leaders in the Turkic Khaganate as well as pointing to the tribes of the Esegel/Chigil as part of the population. 2) Tight ethnic-cultural, trade, and political connections between Volga Bulgaria and tribes speaking the language of the Oghuz-Kipchak type and living in adjacent territories. It is enough to provide the fact of constant contacts between the Bulgars, Oghuzes, and Turkic tribes from Southern Siberia and Eastern Turkestan. 3) Penetration of the Western Kipchaks into Volga Bulgaria since the beginning of the 11th century (small independent groups had possibly been part of the Bulgarian union of tribes both in Great Bulgaria and Volga Bulgaria). Here they were involved in crafts, trade, agriculture and were enlisted in the army [Dimitriyev, 1984, p. 35]. The brightest episodes of such contacts—the invasion of the Kipchaks in Bulgaria in 1117 and participation of the Yemeks in domestic political feuds of the Bulgars in 1183. 4) The arrival of the clergy and their successors from Middle Asia after the Bulgars had officially adopted Islam. We should suggest that cleric representatives (sheikhs, imams, mullahs, and others) occupied a high status in the aristocratic hierarchy of the society, and since the language of their communication is usually characterised by the highest developed supra-dialectal forms of their native language, due to its condition it had a significant impact upon the forming koiné.

5) Getting acquainted with literature written in the Turkic literary language of that period and its spread. We cannot help agreeing with G. Tagirdzhanov [Tahirçanov, 1979, pp. 46–48] that the traditions of A. Yasawi and S. Bakırgani were extremely popular in the Bulgarian land. We may also suggest the application of materials of literary monuments at madrasahs for teaching reading and writing. As a result, a literary sample in the 'polished' language, adjusted for imitation, appeared.

It is natural that not all the above described conditions influencing the character of the language's supra-dialectal form could have had an equal significance. Neither can we exclude the possibility of the appearance of other conditions, which played certain roles in concrete historical and historical-cultural situations, as well as the choice of a necessary complex of language means.

As a rule, the language of some locality or city is considered to be exemplary. The research of scholars convincingly proves the city's significance in the country's life as it stands for a fireplace of craft production and trade, a cultural and economic centre as well as provide multiple conditions for developing a special form of a generalised speech [Desnitskaya, 1970, pp. 5–8]. In this respect, Bulgaria's cities were not an exception, that is why there are all reasons to suggest that a special generalised supra-dialectal form of the language was formed exactly here. Since we do not have materials at our disposal that would shed light on the character of the linguistic situation in other cities of the Volga Bulgars, we should base ourselves upon the epitaphs of the 13–14th centuries (though we are aware of the possibility of changing the language situation in relation to the migration of the tribes constituting the Golden Horde), which allow us to suggest that such different monuments in the territorial sense were relatively close in their language basis.

In the Golden Horde period of Volga Bulgaria's history there were no significant changes in the nature of the common national koiné formed by the 12th century due to the fact that the socio-linguistic basis was kept. In the latter half of the 13th century Bulgaria economically recovered as an independent region of the Ulus of Jochi, and the minting of khan Batu's coins was even started in Bulgar. All this spurred an influx of a new population (craftsmen, trading people, Islamic preachers) mostly from Middle Asia. In these conditions a further development of supra-dialectal language forms was natural. As a result of this, the koiné widened its borders of use and started functioning in different public spheres. The designing of epitaphic texts in structurally different languages containing 'R'- and 'Z'-elements (there are cases of their application both in a single text and in various inscriptions, for example, monuments of a father and a son) is a convincing proof of the necessity to take into account the presence of supra-dialectal language forms as well [Khamkimzyanov, 1983, pp. 15–24, 98; 1987].

#### **The Supra-Dialectal Koiné in Bulgaria and the Problem of the Literary Language**

In recent years there has emerged a tendency in Tatar linguistics to a broader examination of

the history of the language based on peculiarities of the socio-public sphere in which it could function. Its functional paradigm, especially during medieval times and before the period which is defined by the term 'Old-Tatar,' has to some extent a presumable or hypothetic character. It is no secret that in order to reconstruct the functional paradigm of the most ancient periods of the history of any concrete language, we should first of all address a great number of cultural-historical and socio-historical data.

However, when a unified normalised multitudinary literary language is lacking, we still cannot raise the question of connecting a written monument with an exact ethnic affiliation—we have no documentary sources that would shed light at least upon the borders of the Volga Region literary language before the epoch of the formation of the Bulgarian ethnic-political community. The general typology of language arch-systems allows us to express some thoughts, though they are of a hypothetic nature.

Undoubtedly, the basic form of existence in the early-feudal Volga Bulgaria was constituted by territorial dialects as well as the city koiné and other possible forms of oral communication—that is, the types emerged as a result of an independent spontaneous development. The literary language, having been developed and selected, evidently represented the language of written communication of the elite part of the society. There are all reasons to suggest that in the period of development of the society the role of the literary language was played by the 'foreign' (Arabic) and Turkic languages, which functioned in the Turkic world. It was not even the Turkic literary language but the language of the Turkic written-book literature.

What kind of language was it? After the fall of Turkic Khaganates, a new Turkic Islamic state appeared in Middle Asia run by the Kara-Khanids, where two Karluk clans dominated—the Chigil and the Yagma—while 'the Chigil language was apparently the basic official language of the Kara-Khanid state' [Tenishev, 1970, p. 30]. As we have stated earlier, the name of the former is definitely associated with the name of the Esegel tribe (Eskel/ Iskil/Ishkil), which was part of Volga Bulgaria. If we take into consideration later more developed trade-monetary relations and political-cultural interrelations between Bulgaria and Middle Asia, we may as-



sume that the literary-book language of the Turkic Middle Ages was borrowed from this place.

At the beginning the Kara-Khanid written-literary language Turkí in the Volga Region was possibly not multi-functional but was used in order to satisfy aesthetic requirements. With the formation of a united Bulgarian ethnopolitical community in the 12th century, the situation of the language itself changes. The basic communicative function in the sphere of socialisation was born by territorial dialects and generalised types of oral speech in the form of a koiné. Researchers of the history of literary languages noted that the pre-national stage of language development is distinguished by the presence of several written-literary regional variants, and this is the most important feature of the language situation. The literary Turkí, was functionally coloured by the framework of its use, was not completely isolated but interacted with other regional language forms. The vernacular basis of the koiné started having a strong influence upon the internal structure of the formation of the literary language, which naturally spurred a responsive reaction. Structural changes in the literary language gradually began to appear.

Still we do not have to think that the literary language (or languages) of this period possessed all types of variations—functional-stylistic, genre-stylistic, time, etc. Even if it did possess them, they were not equally developed and spread, taking into account the interrelation of various levels. At the modern stage of examination of the Volga variant of the Turkic literary language (i.e., before the period when the Old Tatar literary language was formed), we cannot identify the specifics and volume of different types of variation. Undoubtedly, we need to realise that the amount and features of possible types of various literary types are not equal; moreover, there could be different expressions of these types in different historical periods of one and the same literary language.

Researchers unanimously noticed that the language of science in Volga Bulgaria was Arabic. However, its functions were not limited to that: it was the language of religion and was also used in texts of such utilitarian things as works of applied art. These were Arabic inscriptions on locks [Malov, 1926, pp. 155–162], mirrors, bracelets, and other items of artistic metal

[Mukhametshin, Khakimzyanov, 1996]. Moreover, coins minted and spread around Volga Bulgaria also contained inscriptions in Arabic language legends. Later during the Golden Horde period there appeared copper coins which mainly circulated within the region and were addressed to the local population. Inscriptions on such coins were already made in Turkí, for example, 'Qutluḡ bolsun' ('In a good hour') (coin dated 1284) [Mukhamadiyev, 1980, pp. 122–135]. This phrase also contains such phonetical-morphological features adherent to the language of Kara-Khanid-Uighur written monuments as the ending *-y* and the imperative form ending with *-sun* [Tenishev, 1981, pp. 266–273]. A more fascinating inscription is dated 1220. It was made on a golden bowl, and its peculiarities allowed L. Tugusheva [1975, p. 80] to attribute it to a Volga-Turkic areal: 'Sənätü hāzrät Məkkədin Mədinəgə bargalı altı jür un jeti' ('In the year: since hazrat [Muhammed] came from Mecca to Medina, it has been six hundred and seventeen [years]').

The peculiar placement of diacritic marks (three dots under 'sin' and a rotative variant of the word 'hundred') known from the texts of Volga Bulgaria's epigraphic monuments define the uniqueness of this inscription. The use of the 'inceptive' form of an adverbial participle ending with *-galı* is also demonstrative. The ablative case ending and the formant *-din* are characteristic of the literary language of the Kara-Khanid state and taken from *the runic koiné*. All this points to formalisation of a peculiar style of the Volga Region literary language based upon the literary language of the preceding period.

The functional-stylistic variation within the frames of the literary language is first of all conditioned by the sphere of application of this language. The quatrain brought by M. Kashgari [Atalay, 1939, p. 70], in our opinion, reflects the literary language by the Kara-Khanid state of the 11th century used in the new territory as a prestigious supra-dialectal literary language, compare:

Etil suwı aqa turur,  
Qaja tübi qaqa turur,  
Balıq telim baqa turur,  
Kölüng taqı küşerür.

(Flow the waters of the Atil River  
and they break against rocks.  
Many fish and frogs are there.  
The floodlands are also filled.)

According to researches of Medieval Europe's literary languages, they were first of all characterised by a narrowness of their social base because they satisfied tastes of ruling classes of the feudal society. The Turkic regional literary language should have had a similar narrow sphere of use. Moreover, its supportive basis was foreign for this region. Such a situation usually spurs emergence of several written-literary variants in one and the same language environment.

In our opinion, one of these variants is the language which was reflected in the 'Qıssai Yosıf' written by Qol Ghali (the 13th century). If we rely only upon the peculiarities of the poem's internal structure, then we indeed may discover more Oghuz features and on this basis proclaim the work as an Oghuz one, we may also search for the place of writing of this poem in places inhabited by the Oghuz, etc. In the poem the additive and accusative cases have an Oghuz colouring in the form of endings *-a* // *-ä* and *i* // *-i*, past participles are expressed by affixes *-an* / *-än* and *mış* / *-miş*, at the initial position, we come across the voiced 'd' - (döbe ('its bottom'), döş 'dream,' dağ ('mountain'), dārān ('deep'), diz ('knee') and others) and fricative *v*- (*var* ('to go'), *vir* ('to give')), there is a number of words characteristic of the Oghuz areal (*çok* ('many'), *ol* ('to be, to become'), *ajlā* ('to do'), *ağla* ('to cry'), *jarin* ('tomorrow'), etc.). At the same time, we should not forget that the Oghuz elements are an irreplaceable part of the Volga Region (Old Tatar) literary language. For example, *kort* ('wolf'), *chuk* ('many'), *ol* ('to be'), *var* ('to go'), a voiced range of the anlaut (*desh*, *datly*), the affix of the dative case is *-a/-ä*, the accusative case is *-y/-e* for participle forms *-mysh*, *-aly*, *-an* etc. [Nadzhip, 1989, pp. 57–79; Kuzmina, 2003, pp. 48–136]. Oghuz forms have their own historical roots interlinked not only by written traditions but also by the colloquial influence of Oghuz tribes, who had come from southern steppes and arrived in the Volga Region already in the 10–11th centuries. Oghuz tribes who significantly influenced the general condition of the literary language and dialects

(idioms) were located on the territory of the Bulgarian state itself and regions adjacent to it.

According to its lexical composition, grammar structure, stylistic traditions, the work of Qol Ghali reflects the Turkic literary language of the Volga Region, which is characterised by its own specific features and formed in this area before the Mongol invasion. The beginning of consolidation of local lexical, phonetic, and grammar peculiarities of the Tatar written-literary language happened in the period of existence of the Bulgarian state in the 10–13th centuries and the formation of the Bulgarian ethnic-political community.

We should outline that in the early-feudal period of the society development, a significant role was played by the degree of strength and prestigiousness of earlier literary languages—to be more precise—the retention of literary traditions. Due to its prestigiousness, the foreign written language started being used in the Volga and Cis-Ural Region and thus began to function in the language system of the region. In other words, a variant of the regional Turkic literary language had appeared [Tenishev, 1987, pp. 133–143]. It was exactly the literary-aesthetic tradition that defined the choice of the poem's language and artistic means used. In such cases addressing differential features of the internal language structure is not fruitful, and we have to observe the language as a total of functional styles (forms of existing, etc), besides this variant of the literary language penetrated 'as is.' Therefore, there were not a single common or normalised Bulgarian literary language in the period of society development we study but several written forms (variants) of the literary language functioned.

Another possibility, although a specific literary language, was probably actually the Bulgarian language. Unfortunately, there is no reliable data about its linguistic peculiarities and functioning as a literary language in the 10–beginning of the 13th centuries. All information about it is obtained through the analysis of epitaph monuments of a later period—the end of the 13–first half of the 14th centuries. There are reasons to consider that already by the 11th century this archaic 'R'-language was a supra-dialectal form of the Bulgarian elite's specific language, which later turned into a sacred ritual language used in epitaphs in the 13–14th centuries.

## CHAPTER 3

### On the Interaction of the Volga Bulgars with the Finno-Ugrians

*Evgeny Kazakov*

The Finno-Ugrians took part in the formation of the ethnic group and culture of the Volga Bulgars as their lands were surrounded north, east, and west by the Bulgars' land. The level of interrelation and its character depended upon the socio-economic development of the Bulgarian society itself and the forming of military-political situation in North-Eastern Europe.

Already in the early Bulgarian period, due to the danger of raids caused by the Magyar-Pecheneg confrontation, Ugrian tribes migrated to the Bulgars' country from the regions of the Polomskaya, Lomovatovskaya, Nevolinskaya, and Kushnarenkovskaya cultures of the Ural Cis-Kama Region. They got settled mostly in the western Trans-Kama Region where in the 9th century Bolshetigansky, Izmersky XII, and Tankeyevsky necropolises of a vivid pagan Ugrian culture appeared. Among them plastic round-bottom ceramics with a cord-plicate ornament, burial masks, cult crafts, complexes of animal bones, and other items were found.

Initially Ugrian population in this region dominated. However, very soon it underwent Bulgarisation. This is proved by multiple materials found in Tankeyevsky burial site where 1,200 graves were examined. Out of the 580 clay vessels in this necropolis, 44% of them are Ugrian round-bottom vessels, 36% are round Saltovo dishware of the Bulgars, 9% are represented by plastic flat-bottom pots, and 10%, by one-handled jugs. According to the elements their paste included, the cord-plicate ornament, and round-bottomness, the latter were made by the settled Ugrians as an imitation of similar in the shape but round one-handle jars of the Bulgars. The discovery of Ugrian masks, noisy pendants together with the Bulgarian-Saltovo round dishware, earrings with put-on beads, etc., in many burial sites dated from the 10th century evidences about the beginning of the formation of a new ethnos out of the two groups of population. They thoroughly characterise the dynamically changing authentic

culture of the population on the Middle Volga, not soundly settled and pagan in its core. Undoubtedly, the entity which they formed may be characterised as a Turkic-Ugrian community [Kazakov, 1997, p. 36].

In the last third of the 10th—beginning of the 11th centuries processes of the formation of the Bulgars' as a new nationality seem to end with the participation of new Bulgarian migrants from South-Eastern Europe. The formation of all basic elements of the Bulgars' Islamized culture, which kept existing throughout the whole pre-Mongol period, is dated to this time. Traditional connections of the Volga Bulgars and Ugrian population of the Ural-Cis-Kama Region continued that time. The arrival in the 10th century of a new wave of the Ugrian migrants in the Volga Region from regions of the Petrogromskaya culture of the Middle Urals contributed to this. Findings of plastic round-bottom ceramics, or Post-Petrogromskaya ceramics with corded-cristate ornamentation, is evidence of their multiplicity. It is met at almost all Bulgarian settlements amounting from 1.5% to 3% of the entire ceramic material. Groups of hybrid ceramics combining features of round-bottom and round dishware speak in favour of participation of the Post-Petrogromsky population in the Volga Bulgars' ethnogeny. It constitutes from 3% to 12% of the clay dishes found in Bulgarian monuments [Kazakov, 2004, pp. 120–128; Khuzin, 1986, pp. 19, 21, Fig. 6: 13–15; 7: 1, 4–5; 8: 4–11].

Written sources are also evidence of the Ugrian participation in the ethnogenesis of the Volga Bulgars. Before the Mongol invasion the Hungarian Friar Julian, in his search for Magna Hungaria—that is, Great Hungary, as a servant of one Islamic merchant, arrived in a great Bulgarian city, and most likely it was the country's capital, the city of Bilyar. Here he met a 'Hungarian woman' who was married to the inhabitant of the city from the country the Friar was searching for. According to her,

Julian after 'two days' journey' found his fellow pagan tribesmen 'near the large river of Etil'. The meeting place was apparently in the lower reaches of the Zay River close to present-day Nizhnekamsk on the banks of the Kama.

Julian left important information about these closest Ugrian neighbours of the Bulgars, noting that their language was 'completely Hungarian,' and they understood him. He said that these 'Hungarians' have villages and homes, but they do not cultivate lands, they 'eat horse meat, drink horse milk, and blood. They are wealthy in horses and are quite courageous in wars' [Anninsky, 1940]. This data is completely confirmed by the materials extracted from monuments of the Post-Petrogromskaya culture left by the cattle-breeding Ugrian population and occupying a vast territory of the Ural-Cis-Kama Region to the east of Bulgaria's main lands.

The Ugrians, Volga and Permian Finns also participated in the Bulgars' ethnogenesis, though to a lesser degree. They were hospitably welcomed in the country, which was caused by the Bulgars' sharp need in trade with them. Already by the 9th century, judging by the materials of the burials Nos. 1101, 1042, and others of the Tankeyevsky burial site, the Bulgars' country was a shelter for representatives of the annalistic tribe of Meshchera—that is, the Oka Finns [Kazakov, 1994]. In the pre-Mongol period representatives of the Volga Region Finns, including those from the Upper Volga, penetrated into Volga Bulgaria. The migration of the latter was in many ways conditioned by the active Christianisation and Slavisation of the local pagan population in the 11th century. It seems that it was the situation described by the author of 'The History of Kazan' when he treated about the Bulgars' settlement in the Kazanka River basin: 'It was filled by these people because the Cheremisa called the Otyaks, who are also named the Rostov black people, those who escaped from the Rusessian baptism to Bulgarian dwellings...' [The Tale of the Kazan Tsardom, 1959, p. 27]. This is evidenced by multiple discoveries of the Finns' bronze cult pendants of the 11–12th centuries in the

shape of roosters, 'ducks,' noisy pendants of women's outfits, etc. [Kazakov, 1985, p. 32].

In the Golden Horde period, because of the migration of part of the Bulgars to adjacent lands, groups of the so-called 'outskirts Bulgars' were created as a result of the continuous Turkisation of the local Finno-Ugrian population [Kazakov, 1997, pp. 33–53]. Such ethnic-cultural groups as the Besermyan, 'Arsk Chuvash,' and others started forming on their basis. They played an important role in the ethnogenesis of the Kazan Tatars.

Therefore, the Ugrians and Finns directly participated in the formation of the ethnic group and culture of the Volga Bulgars as a new nation in the Middle Volga Region. Throughout centuries the Bulgars were in tight contacts with the Finno-Ugrians. Archaeological and written sources allow us to speak not only of trade and political relations but also of the mass residence of the Finno-Ugrians in the Bulgarian land. Multiple hybrid cultural elements evidence of the direct penetration of the Finno-Ugrian components into the Bulgarian nationality.

The Bulgars' influence upon their neighbours was also strong. In the Golden Horde period many of these neighbours adopted Islam and were Turkicised, which in fact made them and the Bulgars a single nation. This is proved by archaeological materials of the Chiyalik culture, which occupied a vast territory of the Cis-Urals to the east from the Volga Bulgars, as well as written sources [Kazakov, 2003, pp. 79–87]. Giovanni da Pian del Carpine and William of Rubruck call this area 'Great Hungary' pointing out that here, in the land of Pascarts, the Pascatirs, or shepherds, lived who did not have any city [Journey, 1957]. The local Chiyalik population relative to the post-Petrogromsky Ugrians of the pre-Mongol period continued its tight communications with the Bulgars, many of whom after leaving the country's central areas devastated by the Mongols settled among the local population [Kazakov, 1978]. The essential elements of interrelation between the Bulgars, Ugrians, and Finns were maintained in the culture of contemporary Turkic speaking and Finno-Ugrian people of North-Eastern Europe.

## CHAPTER 4

### The Medieval Bulgars: the Ethno-Political and Ethno-Confessional Community

*Iskander Izmaylov*

Questions of the origin and ethnic history of the Tatar people are fairly complicated and are still among the most debatable. Controversies are especially spurred on by the general and particular problems of the Bulgars' ethnic history in the 10–13th centuries—the period when foundations of the medieval ethnic group were formed, which later played an important role in the rise of the present-day Tatar nation. This problem has been studied already for about two hundred years, but its relevance not only does not decrease—just as a fever pitch around it—but it is getting higher. It is connected to a great extent with scientific problems of examination of ancient and medieval ethnic histories: a complex and insufficient source base, a poorly developed theoretical base, and also to some degree extra-scientific processes—addressing a heroic and great past.

The Soviet historical-archaeological scholarship asserts an accurate scheme, at the core of which lied a postulate that an archaeological culture corresponded to a definite ethnic group, the essentialist concept of an ethnic group. The absence of a definite concept of *archaeological culture* and its correlation to an ethnic group (for example, the Bulgarian archaeological culture = the culture of Volga Bulgaria's population = the Bulgarian ethnic group), as well as an uncontroversial description of the method of their comparison led researchers to blurred characteristics, which as a rule were neither archaeological nor precisely ethnological. Unclear definitions lead to arbitrariness in the arguments and evidence of ambivalence, and ultimately to questionable and incorrect conclusions.

An alternative method of study of medieval ethnic communities is represented by paleontology interacting with ethnic archaeology [Schnirelmann, 1984; 1993]. A basis

for such a systematic methodology is study of medieval Bulgarian mentality as a source of data on the key aspects of the ethnic political and ethnic confessional identities. After understanding the ethnic context, we may distinguish elements in it, which are of an ethnic-cultural and ethnic-social significance, and among them those features and artefacts that may be archaeologically recorded. Only after this a reverse way of examining typologisation of the archaeological culture's ethnic cultural phenomena becomes viable, but only from the perspective of the identified ethnic context and as a means of its specification. But not vice versa.

Examination of the whole complex of these problems is impossible without identifying the phenomenon of ethnicity and structure of ethnic peculiarities based on the accepted in a number of ethnological works principle of opposition, on the one hand, of ethnicity-forming factors, which conditioned the very appearance of this ethnic group, and on the other, of ethnic features themselves. The latter may in turn be divided into two levels. The first mostly refers to the sphere of culture in its wide sense, and the second—its derivative—is expressed when the ethnic community itself is aware of its differences from other collectives and ethnos.

This idea about the structure of the ethnos makes us think that, despite the opinion shared by a number of historians and archaeologists, not the emergence of some cultural peculiarities of a definite ethnic-cultural group allows us to speak about the end of the ethnicity-formation process but a clear awareness of their community and differences from others. Thus, in the most general sense, the process of ethnic group formation may be presented in the following way: a new cultural-historical community emerges under the influence of

some external factors (nationhood, economic and cultural ties, a common religion, etc.) out of several (often dissimilar) ethnic (often relative) components. At the same time, a process (unintentional in potestary societies and clearly articulated in state-political societies) of formation of an idea about its internal unity and community is going on, which at the end of the day results in a self-name (an ethnonym). Usually, a ruling ethnic-political community bearing an aristocratic (military-serving) status carried out the function of uniting and formation of the common self-name, attribution, and identity of the state. Besides, it could be both really alien-ethnicity towards the rest of the population as, for example, the Rajputs in Hindustan, and local formed as a mythologema, for example, about the Sarmat origin of the Polish gentry.

The theoretical research show a complex hierarchal character of the ethnic self-awareness which is defined, though fairly indirectly, by the factors, which form an ethnos and its features at the same time being the community's awareness of its national (ethnic) features (culture, language, territory, history, religion, nationhood, way of life, and customs) and interests, as well as their evaluations. Researchers distinguish a whole range of elements in the structure of ethnic awareness itself: the ethnic identity (in the Middle Ages it was often inseparable from the ethno-political, ethnic-social, and confessional identification), which is often treated as the most important and even only indicator [Kryukov, 1976; Drobizheva, 1985; Kozlov, 1974, 1999; Bromley, 1983], since it (though indirectly and electively) relies upon basic mental categories of the society such as a 'world view,' ideas about typical features of their own community and its peculiarities, awareness of their common historical destiny, as well as an idea about the 'Motherland,' state (and/or ethno-political, ethnic-social, and confessional) unity and specific interests of their community, its place in the works, and the 'image of others.' All these structures of mentality at the ethnic level are not a sum of images and notions—they represent an integral phenomenon while at the same time expressing a holistic attitude to them. The resultant of all these ideas identifying all the members of the com-

munity is the ethnonym—the peculiar subconscious naming themselves (*We*), a distinction among ourself and from others (*They*) [Kryukov, 1976, pp. 60–63; Bromley, 1983, p. 181]. The theory of social reconstruction makes the identity (both personal and collective) the key element in distinguishing and separating oneself from others, and in this regard it is a part of a more common mental universum with its archetypes of consciousness and theoretical legitimations of the reality (real or imaginary) that changes together with it.

It is the analysis of the ethnonym and the self-awareness backing it—and not a subconscious linguistic tightrope-walking or a non-scientific attempt to explain the ethnonym by some 'imposition' from outside—which gives a researcher a key to understanding a successive evolution of the ethnos as its gradual transformation or a succession of 'explosions' of the ethnicity leading to its core change and the formation of a new ethnic group.

Keeping in mind a complex systemic character of the Medieval mentality, it is hardly possible to accurately separate ethnic and political aspects of the self-awareness, which in fact was entire and syncretic [Kubbel, 1988, pp. 26, 67, 105–106]. Undoubtedly, determination of this alleged plot scheme of ethno-political terms is an application to the medieval consciousness of the terms not adherent in it as they were developed based on a different empirical ground. But despite the vivid incompleteness, the scheme we provide below possesses sufficient epistemological possibilities, which allow reconstructing the collective self-awareness of a people, a look of a definite society at its ethnic-political community.

### **Representations of the Bulgars of Themselves as a Single Ethno-Political Community**

The historiographical base of the study of ethno-political aspects of the Volga Bulgarians' self-awareness in the 10–13th centuries is utterly poor because of almost a total absence of authentic Bulgarian sources and is also quite syncretic because the information needed to carry out an analysis must be extracted from works of foreign authors, which still have fragments of the Bulgars' ideas about them-

selves, and from some Tatar folklore and historical works, which—though they were created later—have kept relics of older Bulgarian cultural traditions [Usmanov, 1972, pp. 23–27].

All fragmentary and dissimilar data provided by written sources taken as they are, are incomplete; however, their complex analysis and systematisation into separate semantic blocks allows us not only to partly reconstruct the Bulgarian historiographic tradition but also determine the key aspects of their ethnopolitical identification. The most important information is presented by the following topics: the historiographic tradition, ideas about its place in the world history, about themselves as a political subject, the actual political auto-stereotype, the awareness that the nation is related to the ruling dynasty, ideas about the 'sacredness' of their state's territory, and awareness of their place in the hierarchy of peoples [Ronin, 1989].

*The historical tradition.* This block of auto-stereotypes is quite important and in many ways serves as a source of other aspects of the population's political awareness. It somehow concentrates the society's idea of its unity and connections (and even relation) with some other great nation of the past. Its political significance is determined by the direct dependence between the degree of relation (sometimes spiritual) or political contacts (acquisition of investiture) with the character of the state's real ambitions, and thus determining of its rank among other nations who do not have this tradition.

This explains the appearance and development of the Bulgars' idea of themselves as heirs and successors of Alexander the Great's work (Iskander Dhul-Qarnayn). This is evidenced by records of Andalusian merchant and traveler Abu Hamid al-Gharnati who noted the following when telling about his visit of Bulgaria: 'As it is said, Dhul-Qarnayn passed through Bulgar to Yajuj and Majuj, and Allah, great and glorious, knows it better' [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 59]. Since al-Gharnati not only visited Bulgaria several times in the middle of the 12th century but also lived in Saksin together with the Bulgars-Muslims, in this context we surely speak not about the

Arabic book tradition (i.e., not the Arabs telling stories to other Arabs) but about Bulgarian tales told by the Bulgars themselves.

A more detailed narrative about it may be found in al-Umari's work, who quoted the story written by sheikh Sheikh Ala al-Din ibn al-Noman al-Khwarizmi, who knew about it during his trip to the Bulgarian lands in the 14th century. 'They say, said Noman, that Iskander, when passing by the 'Dark' foothills located close to inhabited areas, saw people of the Turkic tribe there who were similar to animals; no one understood their language... He (Iskander.—*I. I.*) passed by them and did not touch them [Tiesenhausen, 1894, p. 241]. He also wrote about a 'large tower built by the example of a tall lighthouse,' which stood on the edge of the inhabited world near the Bulgarian borders [ibid, p. 240]. In this tower (=fortification) we should see a repercussion of the Bulgars' ideas about the Islamic tradition of the famous 'wall of Iskander' or separately standing towers, which had to protect the inhabited world from the invasion of the pagan Barbarians (Yajuj and Majuj) or notify travellers approaching the lands inhabited by wild nations. Anyhow, these legends are related to the name of Dhul-Qarnayn, and the story is told about the borders of the Bulgarian country. Since this information refers to a later Golden Horde time, it is only an echo of earlier ideas and evidences that legends about Iskander Dhul-Qarnayn, 'the wall of Iskander,' and 'towers of Iskander' were traditional in this region.

A mention in the Rusessian chronicle that the city of Oshel was built by Alexander the Great stands in the same row [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XV, p. 331]. Apparently, it reflects penetration of Bulgarian legends into the chronicle's pages told by immediate participants of these events. Tatar folklore also preserved information about the establishment by them of the cities of Bulgar and Bilyar [Davletshin, 1991, p. 63].

The plot about their nation and the ruling dynasty originating from Iskander Dhul-Qarnayn was popular among the Bulgars. Its echoes found reflection in works of Eastern authors of the 12th century Najib al-Hamadani and Nizami Ganjavi and may also be found

in the Tatar folklore [Davletshin, 1991, p. 63; Ganiyeva, 1991, pp. 34–36]. In other words, the image of Dhul-Qarnayn in the Bulgarian interpretation undoubtedly bears a mythological character and is only indirectly referred to the ancient world (despite R. Ganiyeva's opinion that Iskander's image in the Turkic literature is a 'Renaissance' revival of ancient plots [Ganiyeva, 1991, pp. 36–38]). In this case, we see a clear example of a revision of not the Hellenic 'Romance of Alexander the Great' but the Quran plot (Surat al-Kahf) about Dhul-Qarnayn, who was led by Allah, punished disbelievers, was a benefactor to the righteous, and built a wall thus protecting the world from the peoples of Yajuj and Majuj hostile to people [Piotrovsky, 1991, pp. 147–149]. From the Bulgarian perspective, the Quran tradition of portraying of this character was rethought and acquired features of not only a city founder but the father of the dynasty, which therefore obtained the legitimacy from one of Islamic characters, a fighter against 'infidels.' Such an 'approximation' of the Bulgarian rulers to the pantheon of the Quran and the receipt of the already 'ennobled' furnished country and cities as its inheritance made the ruling dynasty and thus the whole nation (and their contemporaries) see themselves not just equal to the most 'kingly' nations but to a significant degree consider themselves successors to its glory and vast empire. This particularly concerned that part of its mythological deeds like the struggle with the pagans, the expansion of the borders of the 'righteous world,' and its arrangement.

Simultaneously with these ideas, a plot develops in the historical tradition of the Bulgars about an ancient connection between the Bulgarian ruling dynasty and an Islamic holy man—saints and first followers of the Prophet. In one of his works, al-Gharnati told a story about the beginning of the Bulgarian state and its first rulers. We should especially note that al-Gharnati rendered not just a legend he had heard but a fragment of the book 'Bulgarian History' he had read. The book was rewritten (written?) by the qadi Yakub ibn Nugman from the Bulgarian capital—that is, an official historiographic tradition. ...'The meaning of the word Bulgar,' wrote the Andalusian traveller, is an educated man. The thing is that a

Muslim merchant came to us from Bukhara; he was a faqih with good knowledge of medicine. And the tsar's wife fell ill, and the tsar was severely ill. And they treated them with medicines traditional for them. And their malady grew worse so that they both started fearing death. And this Muslim told them: 'If I begin to treat you and you regain your health, then will you adopt my faith?' Both of them said: 'Yes!' He treated them, and they regained their health and adopted Islam, and the people of their country adopted Islam as well. And the Khazar tsar came to them at the head of a big army and fought them and said to them: 'Why did you adopt this faith without my order?'

And the Muslim told them: 'Do not be afraid, shout: 'Allah is great!' And they began to shout: 'Allah is great!' And they fought with this tsar and forced his army to flee, so that this tsar concluded a peace with them and adopted their faith, and said: 'I saw huge men on grey horses who killed my warriors and forced me to flee.' And the theologian told them: These men are the army of Allah, the great and glorious' [al-Gharnati, 1971, 31]

The main canvas of this peculiar 'introduction' in the Bulgarian history thus consists of a number of elements: an Islamic holy man arrived in Bulgaria from Bukhara (it is noteworthy that Bulgarian Islam had Middle Asian roots, which possibly played an important role in the eyes of the Bulgars of the 12th century)—the tsar's illness—a miraculous recovery—adoption of Islam—the Khazars' attack (in the past the 12th century—a great 'kingly' nation)—a victory and triumph of Islam. This most likely is not the version first of this specific plot, but it is the only authentic one preserved in the written sources. Despite the fact that al-Gharnati especially noted that he had read the book written by Bulgar city's qadi himself, in which he had found (or even copied out) the quoted fragment, some historians try to question the history of the Bulgarian state's emergence and present it as a suspicious, fragmentary, and only one. These doubts are understandable but not justified. Undoubtedly, the Arabian merchant al-Gharnati was hardly interested in the way the Bulgars treated themselves and their self-awareness, but being a fan of wonders



and rarities, he could not have helped skip the legend about the spread of Islam among the Bulgars and the formation of the Bulgarian state because those were 'live' and original data, which was not narrowed down to obvious rendering of the Arabic historical-geographic tradition. It is the details of difference from this tradition that make us consider that we deal with the real Bulgarian historical narrative and not a usual Arabic tale a-la Sindbad the Sailor. Unfortunately, there are very few extant authentic versions of the official historiography of medieval states, for example, we know the only detailed version of the history of Kievan Rus—'The Tale of Bygone Years,' of the Hungarian history—anonymous 'Gesta Hungarorum' included in late chronicles, and 'The Secret History of the Mongols' for the history of the early Chinggisids. Al-Gharnati himself does not elicit doubts as a source of information because many of his observations are proved by other independent sources, including archaeological ones (for example, tidings about 'fur' money, the city of Saksin, diplomatic relations between prince Izyaslav and the King of Hungary, etc.). This means that in most cases the information provided by this author is accurate and reflects the reality, which makes us trust his rendering of the content of 'The History of Bulgaria.' But the most important which make us treat his data with trust is the fact that they are reflected in another independent tradition—folklore.

Folklore stories are quite diverse but are generally similar to the version described by al-Gharnati: three saints, the Prophet's followers (ashabs), arrive in Bulgaria to khan Aidar, one of them (Abdurrahman ibn Zubayr) cures Tuybike, the khan's daughter, marries her, and founds the Bulgarian Islamic dynasty. The graves of these saints have been preserved till the 18th century [Märcani, 1989, pp. 114–117; Usmanov, 1972, p. 142 ff.]. The presence of reliable historical information in this legends was questioned back in the 70s of the 19th century. Sh. Marjani [1884, p. 42] and since that time this opinion has been generally accepted [Usmanov, 1972, p. 136 ff.]. At the same time, we cannot fully reject the presence in them of some reminiscences taking root in the lost Bulgarian historiography.

Moreover, the very absurdity and unreliability of the people's ideas (it is more likely that the people's memory experienced a determining influence of concepts of the official history writing) from the perspective of modern sciences do not evidence of a 'falsity' of the people's knowledge but signals of an insufficiency of our knowledge about the mechanism of its formation and functioning. When we compare versions of this text (both authentic medieval and folklore) it is impossible not to notice their doubtless uniformity and adherence to a single schematic: the arrival of an Islamic saint (or several of them)—disease of the ruler and members of his family (it is possible that contemporaries treated it as a peculiar godly punishment)—miraculous (with the help of a godly power) cure—the ruler's adoption of Islam—its spreading throughout the whole country. Only the last part of this schematic is absent in the folklore tradition: it does not include a struggle with foes-adherents of a different faith (the Khazars) and victory over them with an interference of godly powers. The lack of this episode in the folklore is, on the one hand, explained by the obvious detailing, which was unacceptable for texts of the oral folk art, and on the other, by the loss of a political relevance in the 17–18th centuries, when even a memory of the Khazars' strength disappeared, and other stereotypes eclipsing the former ones came forward.

There seem to have been multiple ideas that the Bulgars had been connected with the Khazars' ruling dynasty. No wonder that a fragment of this legend was preserved in the Tatar folk art as a tale about khan Ilbaris marrying his daughter Gaukharshat to a Khazar tsarevich [Davletshin, 1990, p. 132].

Therefore, we may distinguish an auto-stereotype in the sphere of understanding of the Bulgars' political awareness through their historical tradition, which directly connects the origin of the Bulgarian ruling dynasty with Islamic saints and even followers of the Prophet (thus somehow touching the version of its relation to Iskander Dhul-Qarnayn), with Khazaria and its dynasty. We may definitely say that this stereotype pointed to the Bulgars' desire to integrate into the circle of Islamic countries simultaneously maintaining

connections with great Turkic empires and thus acquiring a legitimacy from two 'kingly' nations—the Arabs and the Khazars.

This stereotype emphasised one important detail: the Bulgars in the eyes of the official history's author were a united nation. This is related not only to the absence of a live memory about the nation's complexity but also with the underscored unity of the ancestors (Adam, Dhul-Qarnayn and others), the commonness of historical destinies.

The idea about several features of their nation as an ethnic-political community should be distinguished. Sources show that the most important of them were related to the religion and loyalty to its canons. It is no coincidence that a number of genealogical Bulgarian legends multiple times underscored that the Bulgars' ancestors adopted 'the genuine faith' of Islam for several times but quickly abandoned it, which led to the death and conquests of their lands. These genealogies, which in their plots are quite similar to the history of the humanity described in the Quran [Piotrovsky, 1991, p. 26], are aimed at outlining the fact that Bulgaria's genuine history and its dynasty as a political community begins only after adoption of Islam from the Prophet's agents. It thus means that while the Bulgars keep their faith strong, they would be invincible and that is why the Bulgars' most outstanding auto-stereotypes were loyalty to Islam, the ability to struggle with a powerful foe for the faith, love of freedom and desire of independence, as well as invincibility in the wars consecrated by Islam. We may observe another motive in this auto-stereotype—the nation's unity projected into the past is mostly revealed not in the genetic but spiritual unity. In other words, only after the final adoption of Islam, the Bulgars were formed as a real people.

*The awareness of equality and connections to the great nation of the past* An emphasised desire to confirm their superiority over it co-existed in the nation's memory. It is expressed in a prominent way in the mythological version of the victory over the Khazars. A people hitherto great and powerful (it is implied that it had a control over the Bulgars) were defeated, and even if did not become dependent on the Bulgars, it definitely got in a humiliated position in comparison with the Bulgars be-

cause they adopted Islam after them and from them since the order of adopting a religion undoubtedly played an important role in the hierarchal medieval mentality, in which the role of a donor was always more preferable than the role of a recipient. No wonder that in this context the Bulgars desired to implement into the historical consciousness the idea about adoption of Islam not from an anonymous faqih from Bukhara but directly from the Prophet's followers.

Here such a moment should be noted: the historical-geographic tradition presents 'the wall of Iskander' to 'contemporaries' of the 12–14th centuries as a destroyed or fragmentarily preserved tower [Tiesenhausen, 1894, p. 240]. Can this tiding hide echoes of the Bulgarian tradition or even attempts of the Muslims living at the edge of the civilisation to prove that despite the greatness of Iskander's deeds, they now approached a collapse, and only the efforts of Bulgaria and its successors did not let the Barbarians break into the inhabited world? Here we can definitely see the Bulgars' desire not only to equal themselves to great empires (peoples and heroes) of the past as a subject of history but also to confirm their supremacy over them, which is emphasised by either victories over them (the Khazars) or preservation and multiplication of their efforts, which had once sunk into degradation.

Sufficiently widespread were the apparent representations, underscoring *the rights of the Bulgars on the territory of their country*. Indeed, if Dhul-Qarnayn drove away wild Barbarian tribes of pagans and pressed them beyond the wall to the 'Dark' side, the Bulgars are direct successors of Iskander—they have unquestionable 'historical' rights for the territory at the edge of the inhabited world they had reclaimed. All the more, the fighter for the faith not only left this area to the Bulgars but developed it creating cities and founding the dynasty. The both were later again consecrated by the Prophet's followers who confirmed the Bulgars' place in the Islamic civilisation. Plots maintained in Tatar shajares (genealogies) lie in the stream of such ideas. They treat about the Bulgars' arrival in various areas of the Cis-Kama and Cis-Volga Regions, into a 'wild' Barbaric locality and about founding of an Islamic city here [Akhmarov, 1910;

Vakhidov, 1926; The History of Kazan, 1954], which is not simply the beginning of a historical countoff—it also marks a 'cultivation' of the land, thus determining the Bulgars' rights for them. Besides, not only by the right of the first settlement (some legends indirectly mention some 'fire worshipers'), but by the right of the first introduction of these lands into a civilised Islamic oecumene.

The singular realisation by the Bulgars of their *destination in history* (*'the burden of history'*) that is already outlined in the initial point: with the adoption of Islam and fighting the infidels. It is no coincidence that this moment was also mentioned by al-Gharnati because it most vividly demonstrated that the Bulgars themselves put the most important emphasis on in their history (besides, the historical realness of this episode elicits doubts). The programme of the Bulgarian Messianism is given in a conceptual form in the introduction to 'This History of Bulgaria' written by Yakub ibn Nugman: it is the awareness of that their position in the Islamic world is limited and the desire to expand it. This may also be found in legends (remnants of the historical tradition?) about Iskander—no wonder the Bulgars considered themselves to be not only his successors but continuators of his deeds and guards, who protected the borders of the civilised world he had set from the Barbarians' raids. If we judge by some extant data, this aspect was spread fairly widely among the Bulgars. Thus, already the first traveller to the Middle Volga Region Ibn Fadlan notes that the Bulgars' ruler Almiş said the following when getting prepared for the war against unconquered tribes: 'Indeed, Allah the great and powerful gave me Islam and the superior power of the ruler of the faithful, and I am His (Allah's) slave, and this is the mission that he has entrusted to me, and I shall smite whoever resists me with my sword.' [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 139]. This fact is also proved by various Arabic-Persian sources when talking about the Bulgars' campaigns against neighbours as a 'jihad' or a 'sacred war': 'they fight and defeat any army of kafirs however large it is' [Zakhoder, 1967, p. 31; Bartold, 1973, p. 545]. The 'tsar' of the Bulgars regular campaigns against the northern pagans and their taxation

(kharaj) are described by al-Gharnati's works [al-Gharnati, 1971, pp. 30–31]. This information is so traditional and symbolic that it suggests Bulgar roots or at least their influence upon this tradition.

Western European sources (Julian, Giovanni da Pian del Carpine, William of Rubruck, and others) also touched upon this topic. The brightest characterisation of the Bulgars may be found in the work of William of Rubruck: 'These Bulgars are the most evil Saracens who more strongly adhere to Mohammedan law than anyone else' [Journey, 1957, p. 119]. Later it constituted part of the famous geographical treatise 'Opus Majus' by Roger Bacon (in the 60s of the 13th century) [Matuzova, 1979, p. 215] and became the most important element of the forming Western European ideas about countries and peoples of the East, which were later transferred to the Golden Horde population.

It is most likely that the ideas of messianism and *of jihad* / 'the sacred war' were quite popular among the Bulgars, especially the military elite, where the cult of sacred knight Ali was spread and turned into Turkic epic poetry in an Islamic manner [Izmaylov, 1997, pp. 138–149]. It is quite possible that the arrival itself of some saints and their successful preaching of Islam in Bulgaria also served as a reason for the Bulgars to see their historical destiny as militant missionaries of this religion.

The motive of the 'burden of history,' which weighed upon the people, was not only an important political doctrine of the Bulgarian political ideology but also notably influenced mass consciousness. It formed the Bulgars' opinion about themselves as a community bound not simply by the common destiny but the ancestors' struggle for Islam's ideals. The vivid antagonism towards the neighbours noted by Oriental and Western European authors, which served not as permanently functioning realia but as a political ambition and a prosperous aim, was promoted in the national consciousness as a vibrant unity of Muslims in front of the threat of pagans' invasion, the real possibility of which was proved by the historical tradition. We may say that this idea 'dropped' in history meant that the course of

Bulgaria's history in the eyes of its population and its starting point anticipated the division of the Volga River Region's peoples into the Muslims (i.e., the Bulgars) and foes (present, future, open, and potential). Therefore, the victory over Khazaria was treated as a common victory of the Bulgars-Muslims over disbelievers and a promise of their invincibility in the future in case of following Islam's canons, which made the Bulgars' ethno-political identification strictly determined in respect of the confession.

*The people's idea of themselves as a subject of political relations.* This aspect is the most complicated and unrepresented. However, if we judge by a number of mentions, the people realised (or, to be more precise, medieval ideologies realised) its active influence upon policy-making in a number of fields:

*the adoption of religion.* This is evidenced by the phrase of al-Gharnati referencing 'The Bulgarian History': '...and the people of their country adopted Islam' [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 31] and analogous data provided by a number of late Tatar sources, dated from the 17–18th centuries, which apparently relied upon an earlier tradition [Galyautdinov, 1990, pp. 131–132; Marjani, 1884, p. 42].

*War.* The text of 'The History of Bulgaria' also convinces us in it as it particularly treats about 'them' (i.e., the Bulgars) as active participants of war and fully legitimate winners [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 31].

*Diplomatic relations.* In this official history, the nation is shown as a participant of negotiations with the Khazars along with the ruler: 'the tsar' of the Khazars 'told them,' 'reached a peace with them' [ibid].

*The participation in governing.* This topic is revealed in the ruler's presentation as an expresser of the nation's will, which is reflected in the facts of Islam adoption and leading wars not only for the sake of the nation but also with its support. It is typical that several late sources somehow emphasise it through the whole course of history—adoption and rejection of Islam (due to the fault of 'bad' rulers) from time to time [Galyautdinov, 1990, pp. 125–132], which serves in authors' eyes as a proof of a high 'anticipation' of Islam and the people's long-time inclination to it. Besides, Islam's entrenchment supported by

people is tightly connected to strengthening and longevity of the Bulgars' state.

The representation of the 'silent majority' of medieval society is hardly identified and studied [Gurevich, 1990, pp. 7–14]. Thus, it is not coincidence that our knowledge of their ethno-political ideas are utterly poor and laconic. Moreover, we cannot always draw a line between the opinion of the author coming from the elite about the national consciousness and this consciousness itself. However, these fragmentary ideas are extremely important for understanding of the general picture of the Bulgarian identity.

*The latest political auto-stereotype.* In the sources we know the political auto-stereotype addressed both the past and present. This aspect of the representations associated with the characteristic of the people themselves as a community, which is particularly expressed in the awareness of the prestige of their own ethnic group. It finds a reflection in the translation of the name 'Bulgar' as 'Balar,' the meaning of which is an 'educated man' [al-Gharnati, 1971, p. 31]; in the idea of their changeless loyalty to Islam (an uncompromising attitude to its foes, even powerful ones); its fearlessness when traveling to the 'Dark' country, which other people fear to visit [Tiesenhausen, 1894, pp. 240–241]. To some extent, all these ideas are axiological definitions of the nation's features; therefore, the study of the political ideology of Bulgaria in general (especially by extra-chronicle sources) could help to develop this topic. In this case, suffice it to say that general Islamic ideas about mutual responsibilities of the ruler and people, about the nation's loyalty to their ruler, and setting themselves against other nations on this ground were also popular among the Bulgars.

*The awareness of the people's connection with their ruler.* The essential significance of this stereotype is determined not only by the character of mentality of a medieval man, who considered sovereigns to be genuine subjects of history and policy-making, but also by the realisation of the people's subordinate position in comparison with the ruling dynasty as a sacred tradition consecrated by God. This suggested a range of responsibilities between them: people were obliged to be obedient to the sovereign, and he in turn, to protect and

estimate their efforts—that is, complete the responsibilities, which in the East were connected to the notion of 'the ideal ruler—the ideal people.' There is a whole range of indications in written sources pointing to the popularity of such stereotypes in Bulgaria: the perfect consent when adopting Islam, loyalty and dedication in the struggle with external enemies, a complete harmony of mutual relations, etc.

The view of the rise of people's status in the eyes of the world thanks to the choosiness of the ruling dynasty was entirely topical and standard for the Middle Ages. The Bulgars' ideas of their dynasty originating from Iskander—a Quranic hero, a legendary ruler and fighter with disbelievers, or from successors of the Prophet's saint ashabs (sometimes both of these versions were combined together or with the 'Khazar version'). Anyhow, these perceptions of the dynasty served an important means of the Bulgars' self-identification as a united community.

Genealogy contributed to the nation's awareness of a connection with the ruling dynasty, as it was an extremely important and developed science in the Middle Ages, including among the Bulgars. Unfortunately, there is almost no data about genealogies for the 10–13th centuries, and the main extant sources are dated from the 14–19th centuries [Yusupov, 1960; Khakimzyanov, 1978; Akhmetzyanov, 1991; Usmanov, 1972], although we should emphasise that a number of genealogies dated from the 13–14th centuries have their origin in the pre-Mongol time [Yusupov, 1960, pp. 103, 176; Khakimzyanov, 1978, pp. 126, 156, 168], thus allowing us to infer the existence of this tradition in the Bulgarian state. In general, they allow us to determine that one of their details was an indication of the clan's nobility (which was evidently defined according to its proximity to the ruling dynasty) and its right of possession, which was clearly recognised as a connection with the rulers' dynasty.

*The people's connection to a specific territory.* The people's very existence in a specific territory had led it for many years to believe in a deep inalienable connection to the Motherland (i.e., as they considered it to be). On the one hand, it was considered a trans-

fer of rights of 'the Bulgarian dynasty' (and through it, the nation) for this land by way of succession from great rulers of the past (Dhul-Qarnayn, the Khazar Khagan). On the other hand, present-day lands were treated as Bulgarian by right of their conquest and 'cultivation' (special rituals, adoption of Islam). In both cases, the people believed there had been a process of taking possession of this land consecrated by religion, which made the connection between the people and the land sacred. Legends about the founding of cities reflect this stereotype in an especially vivid way [Akhmarov, 1910; Vakhidov, 1926] since they preserve very ancient archetypes of consciousness: the struggle against evil (a dragon, snakes, pagans), its destruction (= a sacred sacrifice), a wedding with a local woman (usually the ruler's daughter) (=wedding with the land) and giving birth to a child—a real ruler (with two bloods mixed in him).

Similar motives can be seen not only in the legends of oral folk art but also in historical texts. Thus, 'a faqih from Bukhara' and holy ashabs marry the daughters of the Bulgars' ruler, and their children create a new dynasty. In the same way, the theme of a war against people of other faiths (the Khazars, 'fire worshipers,' etc.), which also has a deep connection with the archetype of the struggle between good and evil and fulfills the role of a key element in legends about 'finding the Motherland,' is seen in a number of historical texts.

This whole range of images is convincing evidence of the wide popularity among the Bulgars of the ideas of a blood relation between them and their lands. In their opinion, the 'rootedness,' which is expressed by a whole range of texts of diverse genres (historical and legendary), was defined by carrying out rituals in remote ages (conquest, sacrifice, wedding, plowing fields, etc.). Apart from these general ideas, differences in the level of understanding of this unity are clearly set out in local legends and historiography. In the view of the general public, ideas of a connection between communities and their lands had a fundamental meaning, while the elite and city dwellers absorbed the idea of the unity of the people with whole country Obviously,

both of these levels often intertwined, but the leading, core line was the idea of 'sacredness' of common Bulgarian rights to their country.

*Awareness of their place in the traditional hierarchy of peoples.* Although we have almost no authentic sources at our disposal, late historical works contain information about the Bulgars' own vision of their place in the Turkic hierarchy of peoples. These are legends about the Bulgars' relation to the Burtases as personified sons of the mythological warrior giant Alp (or Gomari) [Vakhidov, 1926, p. 83; Shpilevsky, 1877, pp. 23–24]. A Turk is also mentioned among the Bulgars' ancestors [Vakhidov, 1926, p. 82]. It is typical that already in these genealogies Turkic names are only specks in the Quranic tradition, in which the proto-ancestors are Adam, Noah, and Yafet [Shpilevsky, 1877, pp. 23–24; Vakhidov, 1926, p. 62].

These messages obviously reflect the process of transformation of the 'Turkic' genealogy into an 'Islamic' one, which is an indicator of the Bulgars' aspiration to perceive themselves as an Islamic (or more likely 'historical' in the Eastern tradition) nation with the corresponding set of legends and canons. We can likely interpret their presence in the Bulgars' genealogy as the great influence of the Islamic tradition, rather than is usually stressed, because the term 'Turk' closely matches the Arabic-Persian list of peoples rather than the general Turkic self-awareness.

### **The Bulgars as an Islamic Ethnopolitical Community**

This awareness of the history of the people means understanding the adoption of Islam as a 'turning' point, which influenced all aspects of people's life. It was not so much about recognising Muslim ancestors as the only ones but about the idea that since that time all nations that became part of the Bulgarian state lost their ethnic identity. They were somehow 'melted' into a new 'Bulgarian' community recognising the Bulgarian 'tsars' as their rulers, adopting Islam, and participating in wars for their Motherland. At the same time, it is quite possible that at the level of ordinary consciousness the terms *bulgar* and *Muslim* were presented as synonyms, both among the

Bulgars and their neighbours. The absence of other genealogical versions also possibly attests to its orthodoxy (at least in official history writing) and rooting of 'defining' moments in the nation's consciousness (adoption of Islam, the common tradition, dynasty, etc.).

This raises the question about the approximate time of formation of these elements of self-awareness and this Bulgarian ethnopolitical tradition itself. Due to the absence of specific source data, it is difficult to do this, but we still can make some conclusions. In this context, al-Biruni's report is extremely important: 'They say that the tales about Dhul-Qarnayn in the Quran are known and understandable to anyone who has ever read verses [of the Quran] dedicated to the narrative about him. They describe him as a virtuous and powerful person to whom Allah gave a great power and strength and made him able to achieve his goals in the east and west: invade cities, conquer countries, enslave servants [of God], and combine power [over the world] in the same hands. [Allah helped Dhul-Qarnayn] to enter [the tsardom] of Darkness in the north and [pass through it] completely, see the remotest edges of the inhabited world, carry out campaigns against people and nasnases, stand between Yajuj and Majuj and [the rest of the world], enter the countries adjacent to their place of residence in the east and north, repulse their raids, and turn their evil away by making a rampart of pieces of iron bonded by melted copper in the ravine from which they came.' Then, quoting the reports of al-Ṭabarī and ibn Khordadbeh, he wrote about different attempts to find this wall and briefly described the journey of Sallam al-Tarjuman, who had allegedly found a city inhabited by Muslims north of the Khazar land, who watched whether the locks of 'the wall of Iskander's gates were safe. However, expressing doubts in this report, al-Biruni wrote: 'However, there are [details] especially in the latest report, which rob it of likelihood—that the inhabitants of these countries professed Islam and spoke Arabic, although they were isolated from the cultural world and lived in the center of a black stinking land, many days away from the Arabs. They are also said to have no knowledge of the caliph and caliphate—who and what it was. But we do not know of any

Islamic nations isolated from the [root] countries of Islam apart from the Bulgars of Suvar, but they live close to the border of cultural areas at the end of the Seventh Climate. Then, [the Bulgars] say nothing about the rampart and do not lack information about the Caliphate and caliphs; on the contrary, they read khutbah with their names; they do not speak Arabic but rather their own language, which is a mixture of Turkic and Khazar' [Biruni, 1957, pp. 49, 54]. The author, who was born and lived for a long time in Khwarezm and Khorasan (973–1048) and was apparently familiar with realities of the Bulgars' country not only from historical geographical literature but also from contemporaries, nevertheless points to the absence of legends about Iskander among them. If his judgments are based not only upon book information (which is quite possible), then we may assume that this tradition had still not formed by the beginning of the 11th century. As we already know from al-Gharnati's references, at least by the mid 12th century information about Dhul-Qarnayn was already known in Bulgaria, while at the beginning of the 13th century information from the Bulgars entered into Russian chronicles. This makes us think that the formation of this system of ideas goes back to the 11th and the first half of the 12th centuries.

Therefore, an analysis of various aspects of the Volga Bulgars' ethnopolitical self-awareness in the 11–13th centuries preserved in the historical tradition (historiography and folklore) shows their relation to realities of the nation's existence as well as the level of its political ambitions. Their investigation allowed us to make a conclusion about strong integration tendencies, moreover on a new basis as an Islamic nation. This is proved by the fact that pagan and tribal elements are almost completely ignored in the extant tradition, while reminiscences present in them (eponyms, elements of archetypal ideas, etc.) are no more than granules in the structure of Islamic ideas. At the same time, such components of a new political system move to the forefront as awareness of its relation to the ruling dynasty, which was widespread in the whole population, connection with the country's land, which was understood as the fa-

therland for all inhabitants, the unity of whom was recognised not simply as blood (from the common ancestor; and the Quranic, not the common Turkic pantheon stands out in these traditional archaic images) but as spiritual. It was clearly understood as a community that had emerged in the past thanks to 'rebirth' of the people after the adoption of Islam, state formation (gaining independence in the struggle, appearance of a new dynasty, etc.) and awareness of their place in the Islamic world. This means that ethnopolitical unity was not realised within tribal categories but rather sharply opposed them by stressing the social community. Its bearers were undoubtedly the most socially and politically active members of the new society: the feudal nobility, constables, and city dwellers. It was the emergence and formation of these classes of society that symbolised the integration processes in the policy, economy, and culture in the era of development of the feudal state, growth of cities, and formation of a literary (generally comprehensible) language. Self-determination of new classes of society expressing these progressive tendencies found a conceptual reflection in the works of philosophers and historians serving their culture, whose main concepts in turn had a defining influence on the forms and nature of wide mass mentality.

The known difficulty of understanding of these processes' mechanisms lies in syncretism of the ethnopolitical self-awareness of early medieval peoples [Kubbel, 1988, pp. 23, 67]. The community was recognised by the people not separately as ethnic or political but as a unity of both. The process of separating these types of consciousness expanded throughout almost the whole Middle Ages.

#### **The Social Stratification of the Bulgars' Ideas of their Unity**

As the ruling clan, around which other diverse peoples and tribes united, the Bulgars gave their name to the country; and later, as their unity strengthened, centripetal forces and information capabilities increased, the name of the ruling class spread through the whole population of the country. In any case, its neighbours knew them under this name.

These processes developed successfully in Rus' in the same period, where the name of the Varangian Rus became the name of the country and then of the whole population. Similar processes had occurred earlier in Gaul, where the Frankish conquerers became the ruling class, and later the whole population, which up to the 18th century did not consider themselves to be French, borrowed their name.

Due to the limited character of the sources, we cannot always accurately trace the correlation of ethnic and social processes in the Bulgarian state. We can distinguish several key points in the dynamics of this correlation. The Bulgarian state was formed as a union of different tribal groups under the rule of the Bulgarian clan. Thus, like other early Turkic state entities, the Bulgars simultaneously became an ethnic tribal group and a class of the supreme aristocracy. With the development of nationhood, inclusion of new tribes, and complication of the potestary political structure, the Bulgars started including representatives of various new ethnic groups, both Turkic (for example, the Suvars, Esegels, Bersula/Barsils) and foreign (the Ruses). It is obvious that all of them entered into relationships with representatives of the Bulgarian aristocracy through marriages, brotherhood, and ritual 'adoption' (the institution of *imildyashes*, fosterage). All of this contributed to the fact that the military and service class nobility gradually broadened but did not cease to be Bulgarian. However, the Bulgarian aristocracy included a clan which to a certain extent remained endogamous. Traces of it were discovered during study of a fairly large (about 50 graves) Bilyar IV burial site located in the city centre near a large mosque, which researchers associate with the Jami Mosque of Bilyar. The unique nature and noble rank of the people buried in this cemetery is also proved by the fact that a *sagana*-type mausoleum and gold jewellery were discovered there for the first and only time in Bulgaria. The anthropological series from this burial ground shows its differences from other burials of the Bilyar archaeological site and has similarities with series from a number of early Bulgarian and Middle Asian burials in their degree of Mongoloid origin. This lead us to consider that this burial site could have been left by the high Bulgarian

aristocracy [Khuzin, 1997], who traditionally preserved an endogamous character and some rituals, and possibly a language of an 'R'-type (with rhotacism and lambdaism).

Gradually, non-Bulgarian representatives and migrants from Middle Asia (merchants, religious missionaries, especially representatives of Sufi Tariqas) started penetrating into the nobility and urban upper classes. They contributed to the formation of a supra-dialectal urban koiné based on 'Z'-language and created an environment for functioning of the literary language on the basis of the Kara-Khanid-Khwarezm traditions.

There was a process of slow widening of the class of Bulgarian nobility, and ethnopolitical symbols and mythologems started appearing among them. Over time they started being reflected in the official written historical tradition. From then on, we can say that not only their neighbours started calling the whole population of the Bulgarian emir by the name of the ruling ethnic and social aristocratic class, but that the population of this state also started borrowing some elements of these ideas and mythologems. They stopped being an appanage only of the Bulgarian nobility and spread through the urban and possibly village communities because many of them had a folklore origin (the idea of opening and 'becoming native' to the new land, etc.).

Can we apply the aspects of self-awareness we have identified to the whole population of Bulgaria? If the answer to this question is yes, we would like to emphasise several important points. Although the ethnopolitical ideas of the 'silent majority' of the people are poorly known, judging by genealogies of the 12–19th centuries, they did not go beyond the ideas of the unity of their clan (the aggregate of families, inhabitants of a specific locality, etc.), and the influence of the official historical tradition is already seen in them (self-identification as migrants from Bulgarian cities, relation to the ruling dynasty—entry of Bulgarian rulers into the Shajare, etc.). Apart from that, we should also take into account that turning to tradition was important for a medieval person in order to define their individual spiritual and empirical experience—that is, to determine their experience within categories of the collective consciousness consecrated in



a social ritual, within examples of behaviour and the literary tradition [Gurevich, 1981, p. 207]. In the same way, an individual clan or a family turned to official historical tradition consecrated by the religion in order to understand their own place in society (the state). It is understandable that this did not always happen by becoming familiar with historiographical texts. Clearly they were much more often forms adapted for perception by the people (legends, tales, parables, etc.); but at the same time, they strictly followed a unified conceptual system.

Obviously, self-awareness of people and elites cannot be treated as identical. The people undoubtedly considered themselves to be politically subject to some extent (ideas of their role in adopting and preserving religion, participation in wars, etc.). However, when speaking about the Volga Bulgar population, including its ethno-political aspects, we should remember that it was multi-layered and paradigmatic. Its structuring ascended from private ideas to general ones. At the same time, the level of understanding of its unity in many ways depended on the social status of its bearers: general political and national thinking was more characteristic of the social elites, while local and communal thinking was for the lower classes. In other words, popular awareness played an active role in defining a local society for whom ideas of relation, connection, and differences from other communities ('the communal microcosm') were natural, while among the nobility, religious figures, and the merchant class official (professional) national concepts played the most important role. Both of these levels had paradigmatic character, but whereas the former, including the whole diversity of local cults, community practices, and ideas (conscious and subconscious), contributed to a person's recognition of their place inside 'the communal microcosm,' the latter, consisting of the most important historiographical and philosophical theories, served not only for self-determination of communities within the country but of the state within the world. It was this theme of the Bulgars' ethno-political and confessional unity, as the foundation for the store of ideas of the integration tendencies in society, pene-

trated all components of the common Bulgarian world view. All this allows us to say with certainty that the aspects revealed as a result of the analysis of ethno-political self-stereotypes (the relation to the dynasty, belief in a common past and their mission in the Islamic world, etc.) to some extent were widespread among the population of medieval Bulgaria, especially its most socially active part.

At the same time, the most peculiar ethno-political ideas were attributed to the military service aristocracy, to whom it was important to identify themselves as subjects of Bulgarian emirs and even apparently to emphasise their belonging to the Bulgarian clan and treat Islam as a spiritual and military struggle to protect the Islamic oecumene from pagans; the mythologems about the world-forming functions of Iskander Dhul-Qarnayn and Bulgaria as his heritage were evidently coincident with these ideas. As for the main village population, we may assume that it identified itself by *fai*—that is, they called themselves 'Muslims.'

#### **The Bulgars and their Faith in Light of Foreign Sources**

Examination of authentic information about the Volga Bulgars provided by neighbours—Eastern (Persian-Arabic), Russian, and Western European (Latin)—shows that for them the Bulgars were first of all a separate nation with their own state, a specific feature of which was profession of Islam. The exact date of the adoption of Islam by the Bulgars is unknown, but we may assign this event with confidence to the first decade of the 10th century. Thus, Ibn Rustah, who, in the opinion of most scholars wrote between 903 and 913, reports that 'the tsar of the Bulgars, named Almış, professes Islam,' 'most of them practice Islam, and there are mosques and primary schools with muhazzins and imams in their villages' [Khvolson, 1869].

In the Rusessian medieval consciousness, the name of the Volga Bulgars was almost inseparable from the notion of 'Islam.' The story of 'Doctrines of Faith,' which is already found in one of the earliest editions of the *Tale of Bygone Years*, mentions 'the arrival

of the Bulgars of the Bokhmitsa faith' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, III, p. 132]. A number of chronicles, apparently dating from the Vladimir edition of the TBY, call the Bulgars' faith 'Saracen' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, XV, p. 77; p. 359; XXIV, p. 31]. This is characteristic not only of chronicle tales but also of church literature. Thus, there is a passage in the work 'About Fasting, to Barbarians' (13th century), in which 'demons' (apparently, some pagan gods or spirits) complained: 'We came and visited the Bulgars, the Polovtsians, and the Chud [Finno-Ugrians]... and we visited other lands, and not all people could find a way to good and honour and obedience as these people do (that is, the Rusessians.—I. I.)' [Galkovsky, 1913, p. 15]. The Bulgars' religion is identified more accurately in the so-called 'Tale of Idols,' the author of which expresses a clear understanding of the subject. He writes that the Bulgars borrowed their religion from 'Arvit writers' created on 'the devil's instruction' and 'Mamed, a cursed Saracen priest' [ibid, p. 22]. Without going into details, we can say that all reports about the Bulgars written by Russian authors always, directly or indirectly, are accompanied by an image of Rus' as the antithesis. It is sufficient to compare epithets which were used towards the Bulgars. Apart from stereotypical 'pagan,' 'godless,' the images created when describing their rituals and customs are typical: the Bulgars followed the instigations of 'Mamed, a cursed Saracen priest,' who worshiped 'false and filthy' books. Their rituals are 'evil' and 'bad' ('there is no joyfulness among them, but a great sadness and stench, nor is their law good'), or they cannot be described 'for the sake of shame.' No wonder the author of the Tale of Bygone Years does not describe their characteristics in his own name but puts them into the mouth of a Greek jurist ('The Philosopher's Speech'). The dark and 'impious' image of the Muslim Bulgars is clearly and unambiguously opposed by 'righteous' and 'Christ-loving' Rus'. This image of Islam is undoubtedly rooted in the Orthodox tradition, while the very ideas about the Bulgars were formed under the influence of church stereotypes, which penetrated into the pages of chronicles through hagiographi-

cal and publicist works of sons of the Church. Among these popular stereotypes are tales of the militant nature of the Muslim Bulgars, their oppression of Christians, the falsehood of the Islamic faith itself, which is attributed to the 'false and malicious books of Osirid,' as well as the 'hateful,' 'dark,' and 'hostile' rituals the Muslims practiced. The whole set of information provided by Russian chronicles leaves no doubt that in the eyes of Russians the Bulgars were Muslims, who carried out all rituals and led an Eastern way of life.

From the 11th to the early 13th centuries various sources repeatedly noted the Bulgars' religiousness and their wars with neighbouring peoples under the banner of 'holy war.' No wonder that in his geographical review included in his work *Opus Majus*, the distinguished 13th century English thinker and encyclopaedist Roger Bacon mentioned the country of 'Great Bulgaria' inhabited by the 'most evil Saracens,' when describing Eastern European nations and possibly relying on data provided by European ambassadors.

There is another narrative which is rarely used as a source on the ethnic cultural and confessional characteristics of Bulgarian society. These are epitaphic monuments of the 13–14th centuries, a number of which contain genealogical chains dating back in the 12–early 13th centuries. Analysis of these monuments shows that already at the end of the 12–early 13th centuries Volga Bulgaria's Islamic population was ethnically homogeneous because there are no indications of the tribal affiliation of the deceased. Only the names of Bulgarian cities (Bulgar city, Bilyar, and Suvar) are present as surnames (tahalluses). Moreover, it is clear that the aristocracy had an obvious ethno-political self-identification and clan (family) divisions.

### **The Muslim Bulgars in the Light of Archaeological Data**

Apart from written sources, we have extremely important archaeological materials at our disposal, which allow us to judge how widespread Islam and its rituals were among the Bulgars.

As we have already mentioned, the almost complete absence of pig bones is characteris-

tic of Bulgarian archaeological monuments of the 10–13th centuries.

Burial sites of the Volga Bulgars allow us to judge the extent and character of Islam even better. About 59 burial sites have recently been discovered in Bulgaria (the Cis-Volga and Cis-Kama River Regions, the Western and Central Trans-Kama River Region, and the Maly Cheremshan River basin); more than 970 of the graves researchers opened were accompanied by Islamic rituals. No pagan burial sites or even a single pagan grave have been discovered. All of these facts are clear and unambiguous evidence of the pervasiveness of Islam and the depth of its penetration into the national culture.

What makes these materials important is that they allow scholars to assess how real the ideas expressed in the historical tradition are. In fact, Islam's complete domination and the disappearance of various pagan cults that were widespread in the previous period as well as adherence to Islamic prohibitions (absence of pig bones, etc.) indicate that various ethnic cultural and tribal traditions were merged with the common Islamic environment to form a new unified Bulgarian ethnos. At the same time, some small groups of alien confessions (Orthodox Russians and Monophysite Armenians), who had their trade colonies in Bulgaria, remained outside the Bulgarian ethnos. As 'people of the Book,' with rare exceptions, they were not subject to forced Islamisation. Pagan tribes of the ancestors of the Chuvashes, Eastern Finns, and Ugrians, who lived on the periphery of Volga Bulgaria and suffered from constant pressure of the Muslims, and thus were partially Islamized (for example, some Islamized and Turkicised groups of Permian ethnic groups, such as the Besermyans, etc.) are a different story.

**The Medieval Bulgarian Ethnopolitical Community: the Dynamics of the Correlation between the Ethnos, Religion, and Archaeological Culture**

We can conclude from the above that there is important material at our disposal that shows the broad extent of Islam in the 10–13th centuries in the Volga-Ural Region.

The most important evidence of the extent of Islam is from burial sites found in Volga Bulgaria. We can definitely say that those burials carried out according to *Salat al-Janazah* (with the deceased lying in the direction of Qiblah) are Islamic. The distribution of all these archaeological sites are coincident with other fairly definite cultural and archaeological parameters (red-brown circular pottery, large ancient towns, well-developed farming tools and handicraft trades, etc.), which define the territory of the Bulgarian archaeological culture [Fakhrutdinov, 1975]. This allows us to state that elements of the Islamic culture in the Middle Volga Region were adjacent to the geographical area of Bulgarian culture, thus verifying the data of written sources. The coincidence of Bulgarian culture and elements of Islamic culture makes it the most important ethnocultural indicator because, as we have been able to determine, the Bulgars associated their ethnic (ethnopolitical) identity with Islam and Islamic nationhood. In other words, all Muslims who, judging by the information from archaeological sources (the Bulgarian archaeological culture), constituted the absolute majority of Bulgaria's population in the 10–13th centuries and may be considered Bulgars. Since there is no reason to believe that pagan or non-Islamic graves were actually present in Islamic burial sites, or that the mass of pagan population was bearers of Bulgarian culture, there can be no doubts about this accurate and concise interpretation of materials. Other household and economic elements (moulded ceramics, jewellery, etc.) were apparently not identified by the population as ethnically different and did not have any ethnic meaning at that time.

This situation does not mean that these elements cannot be used to describe the features of Bulgaria's archaeological culture; that is, we are only attempting to free these cultural aspects from an ethnicity that is alien to it. The Bulgars' characteristic tangible antiquities indeed defined the image of its culture, but at the same time we should keep in mind that the same items (round pottery, adornments, bronze and silver dishes, household items, etc.) could have been used and were used by neighbouring ethnoses. For example, Bul-

garian ceramics are found in large amounts in medieval monuments of the Sura-Sviyaga interfluvium and the Upper Cis-Kama River Region, while adornments and jewellery were widespread all the way to North-Eastern Europe and the Trans-Urals.

At the same time, since the formation of state institutions and the introduction of Islam occurred during a specific period, the archaeological parameters of the Bulgarian ethnos were not unchanged but underwent significant shifts, the same as qualitative parameters of ethnicity. At the early stage of the Bulgars' penetration into the Middle Volga Region, they formed only a separate group among the Turkic and Ugrian tribes who had a fairly similar culture in the archaeological sense. However, the way of life, household type, the Saltovo-Mayacki traditions, and cultural impulses had a levelling effect on this culture. This situation may be portrayed graphically (Fig. 1) as a partial overlap of an archaeological culture (dotted line) and a population who in the future identified itself as the Bulgars (continuous line). The mismatch of squares is due to the fact that a large number of bearers of this archaeological culture (it may provisionally be called *Bulgarian*, although there are other terms, such as 'early Bulgarian' or 'proto-Bulgarian') did not consider themselves as the Bulgars (tribes of the Suvars, Esegels/Chigils, and others). At the same time, since a significant part of the Bulgars continued to live in the Don River Region and Danube Bulgaria, not all Volga Bulgars/Bulgars were bearers of this culture.

As we have mentioned earlier, Islam started penetrating into Bulgarian society at the turn of the 9–10th centuries. Islamic rituals already prevailed in urban necropolises in the first half of the 10th century, and it spread to villages in the second half of the 10th century. Individual groups of the population on the margin of the historical development preserved the pagan burial ritual. A new archaeological culture started to form at the same time in cities (circular pottery became widespread, new socially prestigious weapons, adornments, household items, etc., appeared). This situation may be visually presented (Fig. 2) as the integration of three elements: the archaeological culture (dotted line), the popula-

tion of Bulgarian ethnicity (continuous line), and Muslims (bold line). Mutual overlap of the three squares is given by the urban Islamic population, which identified itself as Bulgars, but on a new ethnopolitical basis. In reality it is more likely that communities of Muslims and Bulgars coincided; but in theory we cannot exclude the existence of several groups of Bulgars, who remained loyal to former traditions, at least till the middle of the 10th century. Groups of other Turkic Bulgarian tribes, who adhered to earlier forms of culture and burial ceremonies, remained outside of the Bulgarian Islamic community.

The spread of Islam and a new ethnopolitical consciousness faced opposition from individual tribal communities, who adhered to the traditional world view and burial rituals, which, however, were destroyed by the mid 10th century. In the latter half of the 10th century all groups of Turkic Bulgarian tribes were part of the Bulgarian state, had entered into the Bulgarian ethnopolitical system, and had converted to Islam. According to archaeological materials, the confirmation and spread of Islam were made simultaneously by the leading centres of social, ethnopolitical, and religious activities, which were cities and their nearby district, where new social relations were formed, first of all the military and service class nobility, which had formed at the early stage from members of the Bulgarian clan and later included other foreign ethnic groups. At the same time, we should take into account that the highest class of the Bulgarian aristocracy (the ruler's clan—the Silver Bulgars?) was obviously a closed endogamous group. The most important consolidating factor for both the aristocracy and the whole population of the country was the spread of Islam, which explains why a single burial ceremony dominated throughout the country up to the latter half of the 13th century. The new situation may be shown in the form of a diagram (Fig. 3) as an almost complete overlap of Volga Bulgaria's archaeological culture (dotted line) and the Bulgarian ethnos, which identified itself with Islam and the Islamic state (bold line). The remaining fields that are not overlapping designate groups of tribes and peoples adjacent to Bulgaria, who used elements of

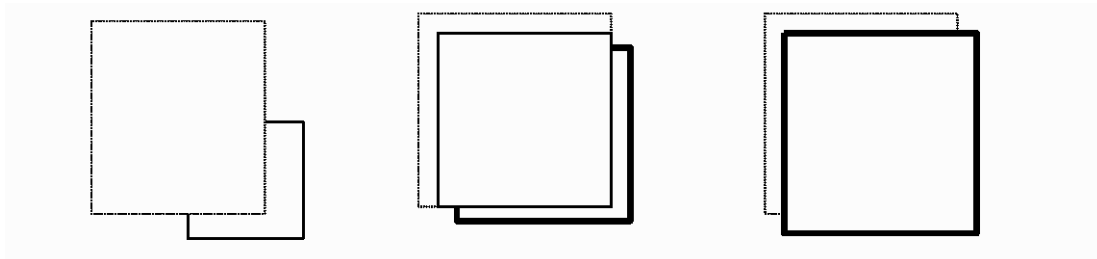


Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

the Bulgarian archaeological culture in their households (the Upper Cis-Kama River Region, the Trans-Urals, North-Eastern Europe, the Sura-Sviyaga interfluvium, etc.), and part of the Bulgars, who used some elements of alien origin or traditional forms of dishes and ornaments in their households (it is quite possible that groups of Bulgars lived in Rus' and used ancient Russian material culture).

This conclusion clearly contradicts the hypotheses about the structure of Bulgarian self-awareness, which were constructed according to quasi-materialistic schemes of the economic and cultural community; but at the same time they force us to pay close attention to a powerful integrating factor such as the state and its institutions. In the process of its development a state creates a new reality and a new community of people where the leading elements are not ethno-lingual and economic but sociopolitical and religious categories of relations, transformed by the social consciousness into historical and actual stereotypes. If a group of tribes becomes a definite society after passing through a crucible of objective changes, the ethnonym may not be 'imposed' on the ethnos because it becomes a self-designation only after being rethought in the people's collective consciousness and after acquiring a set of definite ethnopolitical stereotypes assigned to it. In turn, a change in the self-designation is evidence not of an 'alien influence' but of shifts within the society causing a change in ethnopolitical stereotypes. The mechanism of these changes was specially studied and generally understood by the example of formation of the Tatar ethnopolitical community in the time of the Ulus of Jochi (the Golden Horde) [Izmaylov, 2002].

All foreign ethnic migrants, both individuals and groups, became Bulgars after entering

into the Bulgarian environment and adopting Islam. It is possible that it was more complicated and ambiguous in real life, but separate nuances, both micro-ethnonyms and local elements of self-awareness, are not identifiable, nor are they recorded archaeologically. Other communities living in Bulgaria had their own cemeteries (except for pagans, of course, who could have hardly formed a stable community because they were subject to immediate obligatory Islamisation). For example, written sources contain information about a Russian Christian cemetery. It is possible that some other necropolises of Bulgar city could have been used by communities of other confessions [Yablonsky, 1987].

The orthodoxy of the Bulgar burial ceremony may be attributable to their idea of themselves as the Chosen Ones due to their marginal situation on the edge of the oecumene and at the northern border of the Islamic world. It is quite possible that this was the reason for their intolerance towards pagans and paganism. It is highly unlikely that migrants from neighbouring Cis-Kama River Regions settled in Bulgaria in some compact masses because conditions of their tribal life in the Motherland were dispersed; moreover, there are no reasons apart from some archaeologists' fantasies to believe that these migrants represented a certain 'ethnos' and had their own 'ethnic craft.' No pagan community could exist independently in an Islamic state like Bulgaria. At least, there is not a single fact in favour of this hypothesis, while all data shows the opposite—their absence. The uniformity of the burial ceremony throughout the state, which resembles a local regional canon, is evidence of strong religious norms that were not simply backed by the state's authority but were sown in society, and es-

pecially among migrants. Undoubtedly, to a large extent this contributed to the quick and traceless 'dissipation' of the alien identity of small groups of migrants from neighbouring regions in the 'furnace' of the Bulgarian ethnic confessional identity. There is no reason to suppose that mythical groups of Finns and Ugrians could oppose the power of the Bulgarian state and manage to keep their authentic 'ethnos' and paganism. The simple example of the Besermyans, a considerable part of the Southern Udmurts, as well as Cheremises (meaning a conglomerate of patrimonial groups of communities of the Middle Volga Region) shows that even in places of compact settlement these groups adopted Islam en masse, became Turkicised, and gradually assimilated into the Muslim Turkic Bulgars and the Tatars.

The Bulgars' strength lay in this orthodoxy, but it was also their weakness. The strict standards of Bulgarian orthodoxy, which formed the basis for consolidation of state's political structure and the main feature of ethno-religious identification of the Bulgars, became vague and subdued in response to the decline of Islam and the division of Bulgaria in the time of the Ulus of Jochi. This resulted in a crisis of former Islamic and thus Bulgarian ethno-religious identification and its gradual transformation. The new Tatar aristocracy ruling in the Ulus of Jochi admitted only insiders, or those considered to be insiders, to their circle. The ethno-political and ethno-class Tatar community gradually but implacably ground down previous local self-awareness. This process intensified in the Bulgarian emirates after Islam had been established in the Ulus of Jochi.

## CHAPTER 5

**The Bulgar-Kipchak stage in the Ethnogenesis of the Tatar People***Iskander Izmaylov, Damir Iskhakov*

Arguments concerning the ethnogenesis and ethnic history of the Tatar people and role of the Bulgarian and Kipchak components in it have quite long history. It may be said that they started as early as the 18th century from the start of historical studies. There are several classifications of opinions on the ethnogenesis of the Tatar people and the role of the Bulgars in this process (for example, see [Mukhamedyarov, 1968; Fakhrutdinov, 1984, pp. 166–187; Zakiyev, 1995, pp. 12–16], which, however, cannot be accepted for a number of reasons. All the works on this problem can be roughly divided into a number of main basic concepts [Iskhakov, Izmaylov, 1999, pp. 14–22].

**The Bulgar-Tatar theory** is based on the idea that the Bulgarian ethnic group originating in the Middle Volga Region and the Urals in the 8th century formed the ethnic basis for the Tatar people. The most important theses of this concept are formulated as follows. The main ethnocultural traditions and special features of the present-day Tatar (Bulgar-Tatar) people formed during the period of Volga Bulgaria (10–13th centuries), and in the ensuing time (Golden Horde, late Golden Horde, and Russian periods) they underwent only minor changes in language and culture. The Volga Bulgar 'principalities' (emirates), as parts of the Ulus of Jochi (Golden Horde), had considerable political and cultural autonomy, while the impact of the Horde's ethnopolitical authority and cultural systems (including literature, art, and architecture) was of an external nature, which did not have great influence on Bulgarian society. The most important result of the Jochid ulus' rule was dissolution of the Volga Bulgaria state in several domains, and a single Bulgarian nation, in two ethno-territorial groups (the 'Bulgar-Burtases' from the Ulus of Mukhsha and the 'Bulgars' from the Volga-Kama Bulgarian 'principalities'). During the period of the Kazan Khanate the Bulgarian ('Bulgar-Kazan') ethnic group established early

pre-Mongolian ethnocultural features, which were traditionally preserved (including self-designation 'Bulgars') up to the 1920s, when it was forced to accept the ethnonym 'Tatars' by the Tatar bourgeois nationalists and the Soviet regime.

All the other groups of 'Tatars' appeared independently and are not directly related to the Volga-Ural Bulgar-Tatar ethnic community, being actual ethnic groups with their own ethnogenesis and ethnic history (such as the Siberian, Crimean, and Polish-Lithuanian Tatars).

This concept was mainly developed in 1920s together with the theory of stagewise evolution of language and indigenous origin of peoples ('Marr's theory on the origin of language') (N. Firsov, M. Khudyakov). Starting in the mid-1940s (after the statement of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) dated 9 August 1944 and the Scientific Session on the origin of the Kazan Tatars held in Moscow on 25–26 April 1946), this theory was stated in Soviet historical and linguistic sciences as the basic concept of the ethnogenesis of the Tatar people and was actively developed in the 1950s to 1990s (A. Smirnov, Kh. Gimadi, N. Kalinin, L. Zalyay, G. Yusupov, T. Trofimova, A. Khalikov, M. Zakiyev, A. Karimullin, S. Alishev, to some extent F. Valeyev, N. Tomilov, and others).

**The theory of the Tatar-Mongol origin** of the Tatar people is based on the migration to Europe of nomadic Tatar-Mongol (Middle Asian) ethnic groups, who—after they had assimilated with the Kipchaks and adopted Islam during the Jochid ulus' (Golden Horde) period—created the basic culture of the modern Tatars. Followers of this theory deny or downplay the role of Volga Bulgaria and its culture in the history of the Kazan Tatars, considering Bulgaria as an underdeveloped state without urban culture but with a formally Islamised population. During the Jochid ulus' period the local

Bulgarian population was partly extirpated or moved to the periphery and preserved paganism, while most were assimilated by foreign Islamic groups, who brought urban culture and the Kipchak language. The theory emerged in the early 20th century (N. Ashmarin, V. Smolin) and was actively developed in the works of Tatar (Z. Validi, R. Rakhmati, M. Akhmetzyanov, recently R. Fakhrutdinov), Chuvash (V. Kakhovsky, V. Dimitriyev, N. Yegorov, M. Fedotov), and Bashkir (N. Mazhitov) historians, archaeologists, and linguists.

**The Turkic-Tatar theory** of the Tatar ethnic origin emphasises the Turkic-Tatar ancestry of the present-day Tatars and notes the important role in their ethnogenesis of the ethnopolitical tradition of the Turkic Khaganate, Great Bulgaria, and the Khazar Khaganate, Volga Bulgaria, Kipchak-Kimek, and Tatar-Mongol ethnic groups of the Eurasian steppes. The key component in the processes of ethnogenesis and ethnic history is considered by its followers to be the aspects of formation and development of self-awareness (expressed in ethnonym, historical presentation, and traditions), religion, statehood, written culture, and the education system, which indicate wider ethnocultural roots of the Tatar nation than the Ural-Volga Region.

This theory studies the Jochid ulus' period as a key moment in the ethnic history of the Tatar ethnos, when the new statehood, culture, literary language arose on the basis of the alien Mongol-Tatar culture and former Bulgarian and Kipchak traditions. New historical traditions and the Tatar ethnopolitical self-awareness appeared in the Ulus of Jochi, primarily among the Islamised military and bureaucratic nobility. After the breakup of the Ulus of Jochi into several independent states the division of the Tatar ethnos, whose groups started their own development, took place. During this period, and especially after the conquest of the Tatar Khanates by the Rusessians, religious (Islamic) self-awareness became of primary importance.

In the latter half of the 19th century, during the period of accelerated development of bourgeois socio-economic relations, most noticeable among the Volga-Ural Tatars, and the rise of the ethnic culture, the concept of cultural and historical unity of the Tatar ethnos

was updated, and the historical tradition was recreated in terms of the Tatar ideology (Sh. Marjani, I. Gaspraly, Kh. Atlasi, G. Iskhaki, and others). By virtue of the cultural transformation, the Volga-Ural Tatars became the centre of attraction for the Turkic Muslim peoples of Russia and development of the Tatar nation. The result of the cultural integration processes was the formation of the modern ('ethnopolitical') nation, expressed in formation of Tatar self-awareness and adoption of the common name 'Tatars.'

In the 20th century this theory was developed in various aspects by G. Gubaydullin, G. Battal-Taymas, A. Kurat, M. Safargaliyev, E. Nadzhip, N. Baskakov, Sh. Mukhamedyarov, R. Kuzeyev, M. Usmanov, N. Devlet, D. Iskhakov, Yu. Schamiloglu, A. Kappeler, A. Rorlikh, A. Frank, I. Izmaylov, and others.

In the history of the medieval Tatar ethnos the development stages of the main ethnic components (3rd to mid-13th centuries) and formation of a single Tatar ethnopolitical community (mid-13th to first quarter of the 15th century) can be distinguished. The main ethnic aspects of the nation formed during the first period. During the second period a single Tatar ethnos was consolidated on its basis, and then, as a result of feudal disunity, split into a number of related ethnic communities, and achieved their final form within separate late Golden Horde states. The main point of the first stage was gradual formation of the basic components of the Tatar community, which developed independently. At this stage of history Tatar ethnic self-awareness was a local phenomenon typical of Middle Asian and Western Siberian ethnic groups developing far from the regions of historical consolidation of the Tatar ethnos; and the features that became the defining ones at the next stages for the Tatar ethnocultural characteristics (Islam, urban culture, citywide koine, literary language, and so on), developed in the Volga-Ural Region. At the second stage separate ethnocultural aspects merged with elements of the ethnopolitical community, which led to the formation of a single medieval Tatar ethnos inside the Ulus of Jochi.

The main aspects of the medieval Tatar ethnos were formed during the Middle Ages within steppe and forest steppe part of Northern Eurasia (southern and eastern parts of



Eastern Europe, Trans-Volga Region, the Cis-Urals, Western Siberia and Aral Sea Region, as well as Eastern Turkestan). All of them may be combined in some cultural historical areas—Middle Asian (the Tatars and other tribes—Merkits, Naimans, Keraites, and others), steppe Eurasian (Pechenegs, Oghuz, Kipchaks, Kimaks, and others), and Bulgarian (the Bulgars). They had a common language, some common episodes of ethnocultural history, as well as a single Turkic ethnopolitical tradition. In general, this period in the history of the Tatar people may be called *the Bulgar-Kipchak*.

### Middle Asian Area

Within its borders there were groups that may be assigned to Tatar ethnic ancestors. The Tatar (Otuz-Tatars) ethnopolitical community was formed on the steppes of Mongolia after the breakup of the Rouran Khaganate caused by the union of a group of Turkic and Mongolian tribes. The Otuz-Tatars were mentioned for the first time in the inscription on the monument to Kul Tigin, which is evidence of their submission to the Khagan of the Turks, Bumyn, in the latter half of the 6th century. Later in the 8th century the Otuz-Tatars community split into several tribal alliances under military and political pressure of the Chinese and Turks. The best known and powerful of them was the alliance of the Toquz Tatars. There is not enough reliable information about the language and culture of the old Tatars (6–8th centuries)—some linguists consider them to be Turkic (P. Pelliot), and others regard them as Mongol (M. Munkuev, Zh. Zhele). During the political events in Middle Asia the Toquz Tatars united with the Kyrgyz people against the Turks (the war of 723–724).

The breakup of the Turkic Khaganate allowed the Tatars to establish their own national union in Eastern Turkestan, which in alliance with the Oghuz, fought against the Uighur Khaganate. After the defeat part of the western Tatars were merged in the Uighur Khaganate, while separate Tatar groups migrated to South Siberia, where they formed the Kimek Khanate together with the Kimek-Kipchak tribes (according to the Kimek historical tradition recorded in the work of al-Gardēzī 'Zayn al-akhbār' (The Ornament of Histories) (11th

century), the ruler of the Khaganate originated from the Tatar tribe). In 842 the Uighur Khaganate was defeated by the Kyrgyz people, and the Tatars were included in their domains (inscription in the valley of the Tes River). In the latter half of the 9th century, after the expulsion of the Kyrgyz, the Tatars were merged in the Uighur 'principalities' (Ganzhou, Turfan, and others) and later established their own ethnopolitical alliances on the border of Eastern Turkestan and the Chinese province of Gansu. In the 10–12th centuries some Tatar states and large tribal alliances occupied a large territory in Southern and Eastern (steppe and mountain steppe) Mongolia and Northern China. All this territory east of Eastern Turkestan was called 'Desht-i Tatar' ('Tatar steppe') in Islamic Eastern historiography, and the term 'Tatar' was assigned to the non-Muslim population on the steppes of Mongolia. Several states (principalities) of the western Tatars were established in Eastern Turkestan between the states of the Kara-Khanids and Tanguts (the Hsi-hsia). As they controlled part of the Silk Road, they were active in international politics in Middle Asia (embassies to China in 958, 996, 1039, 1084 and Middle Asia in 965, 981) and made political and military alliances with Ganzhou and Turfan Uighur principalities; and at the end of the 11th to early 12th centuries they became part of them. The rulers of these Tatar states had the title 'apa-Tekin/Tegin.' In the 10–11th centuries the language of the Tatars of Eastern Turkestan was documented as Turkic (M. Kashgari), and the official religion was Buddhism (partly Manichaeism and Islam). In 1130s the 'principalities' of the western Tatars and the Uighurs were conquered by the Qara Khitai state (the western Kidans) [Klyashtorny, 1993; Kadyrbayev, 1993, pp. 25–46].

### The Eurasian Kipchak Area

One of the most powerful Turkic tribal federations that inhabited Eastern Europe and Middle Asia in the 9–11th centuries were the Pechenegs. The origin of the Pechenegs is associated with the territory of the southern Aral Sea Region and the middle course of the Syr Darya River, the location of the country of 'Kanga' in the middle of the first millennium, as well as the ethnosocial group, the Kangar

(Kanga/Kangli) [Klyashtorny, 1964, p. 177], who became the dominant clan of the Pecheneg tribal federation.

In the latter half of the 9th century, under pressure from the Ghuzzes (Oghuzes), these tribes, who had moved to Eastern Europe, retreated to the Trans-Volga Region, where they became the neighbours of the Khazar Khaganate [Artamonov, 1962, p. 336 ff.]. In an attempt to secure their frontiers, the Khazars made an alliance with the Hungarians (the Magyars), who, however, were defeated by the Pechenegs and retreated to the Dnieper-Dnestr interfluvial area [Kristo, 1966, pp. 107–138]. In order to weaken the Pechenegs' pressure, the Khazars made an alliance with the Oghuzes.

Defeated by the Oghuzes, the Pechenegs flocked relentlessly to the eastern European steppes. Having laid waste to the lands of the Khaganate, they established themselves in the region of the Black Sea, between the Danube and the Don Rivers [Pletneva, 1958, pp. 214; 1990, pp. 1–13]. The invasion by the Pechenegs in the early 9th to mid-10th centuries gave rise to a mass migration of the Bulgars (the Barsils, the Suvars, the Baranjars) from the Don River Region to the Cis-Caucasus and the Middle Volga Regions. In Eastern Europe the Pechenegs defeated the Hungarians (the Magyars) in 898, expelling them to the Danubian lowlands and Pannonia [Kristo, 1996, pp. 138–158]. In pursuing the Hungarians, the Pechenegs encountered Rus' and in 915 entered into their first treaty with it [Pletneva, 1990, pp. 9–23].

During the period of their settlement of the north Black Sea Region the Pechenegs were divided into two wings (parts) which included a number of tribes: the western wing: the Yula/Gyla, Kharavoi/Kharaboi, Irtim/Iavdiertim, Khopon/Giazikhopon, the eastern wing: the Tzur/Kuartzitzur, Koulpei/Sirukalpei, Talmat/Vorotalmat, Tzopon/Vulatzopon [Constantine Porphyrogenitus, 1989, p. 155; for their etymology see Baskakov, 1969, pp. 49–56]. The Pechenegs were ruled by khans, who were supported by their armed *druzhinas*. In the mid-11th century the Pechenegs were united under the authority of one khan—Tirakh. At the time of the struggle against the Torks a new khan, Kegen, rose to prominence. He tried unsuccessfully to overthrow Tirakh, suffered de-

feat, and retreated towards the frontiers of the Byzantine Empire. According to Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the khan's authority was not hereditary: 'After their (i.e., the khans'—D. I., I. I.) death either their cousin or their cousin's sons were to be chosen, so that the title would not run in one family lineage at all times but would be inherited and conferred to kinsmen of the lateral line. An outsider cannot be made an archon' [Constantine Porphyrogenitus, 1989, p. 155].

The Pechenegs always interacted closely with the Volga Bulgars. Besides the political (the Bulgar elteber Almysh was married to a sister or a daughter of the Oghuz leader Etrek) and military (raids on the Bulgars, a military campaign by the Torks in alliance with Rus' against the Bulgars in 985) contacts noted in the written sources [Agadzhanov, 1969, pp. 79–84], there is archaeological information of the Pechenegs' infiltration into the midst of the Bulgars, to which the elements of the southern culture found on Bulgar monuments can testify [Kazakov, 1991; 1999, pp. 70–71].

In the 1040s the Oghuz Turks (the Torks, as recorded in Russian chronicles) invaded the steppes of the Don River and the northern Black Sea Regions; they were a Turkic tribe who lived in the Aral Sea Region, where they had established a state as well as settlements and cities. In the 11th century the Oghuzes began moving westwards in two directions: part of them, under the command of the Seljukid clan, moved to Middle Asia, Iran, and Asia Minor, while the other part migrated to eastern Europe [Agadzhanov, 1991, pp. 19–26]. In the 1050s the Torks practically conquered the steppes of the northern Black Sea Region and started raids on Rus', but in 1055 they were defeated by the Rusessian princes and retreated to the steppes.

In the early 11th century the pre-eminence of the Kipchaks (the Cumans) in the Trans-Volga Region was reinforced. The earliest record of the Kipchaks is an inscription on the Sengga Stone devoted to Al-etmish Bilge Khagan (747–759), the ruler of the Uighur Khaganate. Prior to this period they were known, according to some researchers, by other ethnonyms and formed part of the tribal structure of the Turkic Khaganate [Klyashtorny, Savinov, 1994, pp. 41–51].

In the 6–early 8th centuries the Kipchaks formed part of the ethnopolitical federation of the Kimaks, vassals of the Western Turkic and later the Uighur Khaganates. After the collapse of the latter (840) the Kimaks, who comprised such tribes as *the Yemeks, the Yemurs, the Tatars, the Bayandirs, the Kipchaks, the Azhlyads, and the Lanikazes*, moved to the west and around the year 859 started to exercise control over the steppes of southern Siberia. As already stated, according to al-Ghardizi, the Kimaks' ruling house was of Tatar origin. By the mid 9th century the Kimaks occupied the territories of the southern Urals, the Irtysh River Region, and the north Aral Sea Region, where they founded the Kimak Khaganate in the early 10th century. The main occupations of the Khaganate's population were semi-nomadic cattle-breeding, farming, and crafts production. According to archaeological data, the funeral rite of this people included burial underneath a burial mound covered with stones, and interment together with the deceased's dead horse and certain objects (weapons, the horse's harness, decorations, earthenware, etc.) [Savinov, 1984, pp. 103–118; Klyashtorny, Savinov, 1994, pp. 133–148].

Fairly well-founded opinions have been expressed in Chinese sources that the Kipchaks and the Yemeks were known by the name of the *Xueyantuo* (*Seyanto*) and in the 7th century led a nomadic life in Eastern Turkestan and the south-east of the Altai. The Seyanto group is usually believed to belong to the ethnopolitical community of the Teles, who in their turn descended from the confederation of the Huns. It would seem that the earlier Turkic name (endoethnonym) of this confederation was *the Siry/the Shary* [Dobrodomov, 1978, pp. 102–129; Klyashtorny, Savinov, 1994, pp. 42–45]. In the 6–7th centuries the Sirs formed part of the Turkic Khaganate, but in 619 they rebelled and established the Sir Khaganate in northern Mongolia ruled by the Ilter dynasty, but in 646 they suffered a crushing defeat by the Uighurs, who destroyed their state. The Syrs later supported a rebellion by the Turks and joined the so-called second Turkic Khaganate, following the collapse of which they were compelled to migrate to the Irtysh River Region and the northern Altai. It would appear that the remaining tribal groups changed their ethnonym. Af-

ter 735 the term 'Sirs' is no longer mentioned, but in the latter half of the 8th century a number of sources record the appearance of a tribal federation known as *the Kybhaks/Khyfchaks* [Klyashtorny, Savinov, 1994, pp. 41–49].

The Kipchaks' other name, *the Cumans/Comans*, which has become traditional for Byzantine and western European historiography, can be traced back to the confederation of the Pechenegs and the Oghuzes, which included the Kangli, who inhabited the Aral River Region and the Syr Darya basin and who had clearly joined the Kipchaks. It is possible that the Kipchaks' other ethnonym 'Kun' is also derived from the ethnonym 'Kangli' (most probably forming the basis for their European designation 'Cuman.') According to the 11-century Middle Asian scholar Mahmud Kashgari, the 'Kangli' is a Kipchak term to denote a person of distinction. The connection between these two ethnonyms can be distinctly traced in various sources. For example, a Georgian chronicle of the 12th century mentions 'the land of the Cumans, who are Kipchaks.' Guillaume de Rubrouck (13th century) informs us of the Comans, who are called the *Capchat*. It is possible that among the Cumans (Kuns) there were also Mongolian-speaking groups. Moreover, the neighbours of the Eastern Kipchaks were the Basmyls, or the so-called Sary-Uighurs, which is reflected in some sources. The Kipchaks were sometimes also referred to as *the Sary* (*Shary*). In general, the Kipchak confederation consisted of the ethnic groups that had previously been part of the Kimak federation, but it was the Kimaks and the Kipchaks who dominated the new federation.

In the late 10–early 11th centuries, following the Karakhanid rulers' conquest of the Khitan (Liao) Empire and their 'sacred wars,' which they waged against the Basmyl-Shars, the latter's movements in the lands of the Kipchaks intensified considerably. The pressure of the retreating Shars, Kuns, and Kais was so strong that the Kimak state collapsed, and the Kipchaks moved westwards. It was clearly this situation that the anonymous writer of 'Hudud al-Alam' (late 10th century) was referring to when he wrote that 'the Kipchaks' southern borders adjoin those of the Pechenegs, whereas all the other borders adjoin the northern lands, where no one lives.' At any rate, by the early

1030s the Kipchaks had established themselves on the borders of the state of the Khwarazm Shahs, and M. Kashgari wrote that the Aral Sea Region was 'the dwelling place of the Oghuzes and the Kipchaks.'

The movement of the Kipchaks in this direction is confirmed in legends: according to one legend, Oghuz Khagan, an ancestor of the Turks, sent the Kipchaks to settle in the lands between 'the country of the Itbaraks (the Kyr-gyz? – *D. I, I. I.*) and the Yaik River.' According to one version of this legend, recorded among the Bashkirs, 'Oghuz, having given the Kipchak an army, sent them to the valley of the Atil River.' The legend goes on to say that Oghuz Khagan sent the Kipchaks to fight against the rebellious peoples, such as the Majars, the Khazars, the Ruses, and others. After the uprisings had been put down, the Kipchaks 'reigned for 300 years' ('from the time of Oghuz-Kaghan until the time of Chinggis Khan') (see [Kononov, 1958, pp. 40–44]).

As a result of this movement, the Kipchak tribes, comprising the Shars, the Kais ('Aepiches = Kaepiches'), and the Kuns, spilled out into the Black Sea Region [Dobrodomov, 1978]. The Turkic ruling dynasty, the Ashina, also survived and became a noble clan among the western Kipchaks living along the Danube River, from the midst of whom appeared tsars who restored the Bulgarian kingdom of Aseni/Oseni. In 1055 the earliest information about the Kipchaks (*the Polovtsians*) appeared in the Rusessian chronicles [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, II, p. 150]. This was the start of the history of the Kipchaks in Eastern Europe.

In the late 11th century the Oghuzes were defeated by the Kipchaks, who had pursued them after partially conquering and partially driving out the former population of the steppes. The Pechenegs, thrown back by the Oghuz-Turks to the Lower Danube Region and trailed by the Kipchaks, invaded the Balkans (1048), where they waged continuous war with the Byzantine Empire (1040–1090), which was only able to crush them after forming an alliance with the Kipchaks. The Khans Bonyak and Tugorkan, leaders of the Kipchak Dnieper confederation, defeated and destroyed the Pechenegs' main forces at Constantinople (1091). Following this defeat, the Pechenegs ceased to play an in-

dependent role in the history of Eastern Europe and were absorbed by the Kipchaks. Some of the Pecheneg clans retreated to the borders of settled countries, where they became a frontier army people in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Rus' (known as the 'Chorny Klobuky' as they were last mentioned in the Rusessian chronicles of around 1169).

After a brief period of 'conquering their homeland,' the situation in the steppes became stable, and the 'second' consolidation of the Kipchak tribes started. There is an opinion that the Kipchaks were divided into two groups: the 'wild,' who were first mentioned in the Rusessian chronicles in 1146 [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, II, p. 319] (as suggested by some historians, the western-most Kipchaks consisted of the Kun/Cuman tribe [Pletneva, 1990, p. 40]), and the 'non-wild' [Golden, 1979/1980, pp. 297–298; Golden, 1997, p. 14]. Some historians associate these names with al-Idrisi's account of the so-called 'Black Cumania' and 'White Cumania' [Rybakov, 1952, pp. 42–44; Golden, 1979/1980, pp. 297–298; Pletneva, 1990, p. 101; Golden, 1997, p. 14]. It should be pointed out, however, that the terms 'Black' and 'White' Cumania are not entirely clear. On al-Idrisi's map, where they are mentioned, they are designated as several cities within the lands of the Kipchaks, and the author's comprehensive study of all accounts of the Kipchaks leaves no doubt that he regarded 'Cumania' as an integral unit [Konovalova, 1999, pp. 180–181].

In the mid-11–early 12th centuries a number of tribal federations were formed amongst the Desht-i Kipchak tribes: the Altai-Siberian, the Kazakhstan-Ural (Yemek), the Don (including the Cis-Caucasian), the Dnieper (including the Crimean), and the Danube (including the Bulgar-Balkan) federations [Fedorov-Davydov, 1966, pp. 142–150; Pletneva, 1990, pp. 95–110].

At around the 1130s the eastern Kipchaks themselves began to subdivide into two parts; the more easterly (the Altai-Siberian), located in the former area of habitation of the Kimaks and evidently consisting of these very tribes (in summer the nomadic peoples of this group moved as far as the Irtysh River, and in winter they descended to the lower reaches of the Sarysu, Chu, and Talas Rivers),

and the more westerly (the Kazakhstan-Ural), who had their summer nomads' camps in the Southern Ural Region and winter camps in the lower reaches of the Volga and Ural (Yaik) Rivers and in the Aral Sea Region (the dominant tribe of this group were the Yemeks led by the Ilbari/Ilburi clan.

In the Eastern European steppes the most influential federations were those of the Dnieper Riever and the Don River. In the summer they led a nomadic life, reaching the borders of Rus' and the forests of the Upper Don in the north, and in the winter they headed for the foothills of the North Caucasus, the Crimean steppes, or the Lower Dnieper River Region. Within these largest federations, other smaller federations stand out: those of the River Bug, Lukomorye, the Cis-Causasus, and others.

The following Kipchak clan-tribal federations are well-known: Ai/Kai-Oba (Ayepichi/Kayepichi in the Rusessian chronicles), Alp-Erli (Alberli, Il-berli, Olberli, *Otperlyueviches*), Vadadj, Barat (Barag), Bayaut, Burch-Ogly (Burcheviches), Bzangi, Chakrag, (Chokrag/Sokrat), Chitai-Ogly (*Chiteyeviches*), Chirtan (Chortan), Durut/Durt (evidently the Terter-Oba, *Tertrobiches*), Ench-Ogly (*Ilanchuk*), It-Oba (*Etebiches*), Kitayi-Oba (Khitans), Kuche/Kuch-Oba (*Kouchebiches*), Kuchet, Kor/Koor, Kara-Burkli, Kol/Kul-Oba (*Kolobiches/Kulobiches*), Komandy/Konadi, Kongor/Kangu-Ogly, Merkits (Bekruts), Mingiz-Ogly, Oringu(t), Uran, Besene/Peseneg, Targil (*Targolove*), Toksoba (*Toksobiches*), Tguzkut, Ulash-Ogly (Ulasheviches) Urus/Yrys-Oba (*Urusobiches*), Yemeks (Yemyakove Polovtsians), Uogur/Ui-ghur (Baskakov, 1985; Golden, 1992, pp. 278–279). According to the calculations of historians, there were all in all up to 12–15 Kipchak hordes roaming in the Eastern European steppes, and their total number reached 500–600 thousand (Pletneva, 1990, p. 115).

The language of the Kipchaks, according to M. Kashgari, was 'pure Turkic.' He also referred to the pronunciation of the sound [dj] as a peculiar feature of this language: 'the Kipchaks, just like the Oghuzes, replace the initial *ya* with *alif* and *jim* at the beginning of names and verbs...' The Kipchak language also had features that were characteristic of the Oghuz language. For example, according to Makhmud Kashgari, the initial *mim* is changed

by the Oghuzes, the Kipchaks, and the Suvars to *ba...* the Turks say '*man bardum*,' meaning *I went*, while the Suvars, the Kipchaks, and the Oghuzes say '*ban bardum*.' Judging by their linguistic features, the Kipchaks were by origin a conglomerate of Turkic-speaking, Mongol-speaking (or Turk-assimilated Mongolian), and Iranian but evidently already Turkicised ethnic groups, whose language did not have any archaic features (lambdacism, rhotacism, etc.) [Baskakov, 1985].

The Kipchaks, occupying a vast territory from the Danube in the west to the Irtysh in the east and to the Muslim states of Middle Asia in the south, never managed to establish a unified state-like formation. One of the reasons for this is the fact that the Kipchaks were drawn into the sphere of influence of states that were already well established (Rus', Volga Bulgaria, Khwarezm).

By the late 12–early 13th centuries one of the largest centres of the Kipchak federation was a group of Don Kipchaks ruled by Khan Konchak, son of Sharukhan (Shary-khan?). The ruling clan of this group had connections with the Toksoba tribe [Golden, 1979.1980, pp. 304–307; Golden, 1997, pp. 18–19]. During this period the Don Kipchaks became the most powerful federation of the Kipchaks in Eastern Europe and on numerous occasions fought against the Rusessian princes. Under Yury, the son of Konchak, relations with Rus' had already become more peaceful and even friendly. Yury Konchakovich died during battle on the River Kalka (1223), fighting the Mongols in alliance with the Rusessian princes. After this the Don federation disintegrated [Pletneva, 1990, pp. 151–171].

The steppes of the southern Urals and the Trans-Volga Region were the site of the nomads' camps belonging to the Yemeks, one of the main Kimak tribes. They once belonged to the Kimak Khaganate but migrated to the Trans-Volga Region after its collapse. Their power and influence in this region were so great that they enabled them to carry out raids on the environs of the city of Saksin, situated in the delta of the Volga, almost every year. The Yemek ruler, who was descended from the famous Kipchak clan of Ilbari, bore the pompous title of 'Khan Ilbari and Shah of the Yemeks' and, according to eastern sources, ruled over

ten thousand families [Akhnizhanov, 1989, pp. 93–146, 198–207]. The Yemeks played a significant role in the international relations of the pre-Mongol times. For example, thanks to their support, the state of the Khwarezmshahs threw off the yoke of the Karakitais and conquered the whole of Maverannakhr. As a result of their contacts with the Middle Asian states, they had already started to adopt Islam in the 11th century. Missionaries from the Sufi order of Yasawi played a significant role in this.

Undoubtedly, the Volga Bulgars were forced to interact with the Kipchaks and the Yemeks. At the same time, the active political and ethnocultural interaction between the Bulgars and the Kipchaks was hindered by the fact that the Kipchaks were slow to adopt Islam and, in parts (especially in the Black Sea Region), became Christians.

We regard the Kipchaks as another major ethnic component of the Tatar people, which was formed as far back as the pre-Mongol period. It differed from the Bulgar component in that it was less consolidated and had a more complex ethno-political structure and a wider area of settlement. Despite the fact that the Kipchaks comprised many tribes, within them there already existed certain ethno-genetic lines, which is evidently reiterated in an account by Ibn Khaldun (14th century): 'the Durut tribe derives from the Kipchaks, and the Toksoba tribe from the Tatars.' Unless this is a belated re-examination of the Golden Horde realias, then it is possible that some clans with the ethnonym 'Tatar' would have appeared among the Kipchak tribes of the Volga and southern Ural Regions as far back as the pre-Mongol times.

## Conclusion

Volga Bulgaria and the Bulgars, numerous peoples and tribes from the Great Steppe and North-Eastern Europe, who had active contacts with them, have an important role in the history of the medieval Tatars. Not all aspects of this history have been studied properly so far. Nevertheless, in view of the available sources, studies have been able to outline the main features of the unique history of Volga Bulgaria as one of the largest states of the far northern Islamic civilisation. As we have seen, the Bulgarian state was never isolated from the outside world but always maintained active contacts—not only trade but also diplomatic, military, political, and ethnocultural, both with their close neighbours and with faraway countries in the West and East.

This is quite natural since Volga Bulgaria was first of all an economically strong state, and it was at the same level of socio-economic and cultural development as other states of the medieval Eurasian civilisation. Agriculture (crop farming and cattle breeding), urban crafts, and trade formed the basis of the economic power of the state. Outside their country the Bulgars were known for being excellent leatherworkers, jewellers, potters, builders, and skilled traders. Products of the iron, nonferrous, and bone-carving industries as well as furs, fish, honey, and wax were also found on foreign markets.

Of course, development of foreign trade was encouraged by the country's favourable geopolitical position—at the confluence of the Volga and Kama Rivers. Not only exchange of goods was carried out along the Great Volga Route, which is rightly considered by researchers as the northern branch of the famous Silk Road. Large trade and craft settlements grew up along this route and later turned into cities, where religious tolerance and interethnic unity of its residents united by interests of trade prevailed. According to the reasonable opinion of professor A. Sakharov, 'the decline of the Rusessian civilisation axis eastwards started at the very time when north-eastern Russian lands came close to the Volga Trade Route. The Volga Trade Route was actually the start of Russian Eurasianism' since it effectively con-

tributed to peaceful contacts and communication primarily between the Slavic and Turkic peoples [Volga Trade Route, 2001, p. 37].

Active urban development started in Volga Bulgaria as early as the 10th century. Foreign merchants and travellers called Bulgaria 'a country of cities.' Almost from the moment of their establishment, the cities served as centres of crafts and trade of broad agricultural districts. The largest of them (Bilyar-Bulgar, Suvar, Ashli, Murom townlet, and others) had administrative and political functions and were the heart of the country's cultural life. Some cities such as Bulgar, Kazan, and Alabuga (Yelabuga) still exist.

During the period under consideration, as a result of centuries-long development and relationship within one state between the Turkic peoples (including the Tork-Oguzes, Pechenegs, Kipchaks), partly the Ugrian Majars, Volga Finns, and even the Slavs, the Bulgarian ethnopolitical entity, or Bulgarian nation, formed as one of the main elements in the ethnogenesis of the present-day Tatars. Unfortunately, many aspects concerning the formation of the Bulgarian ethnopolitical entity are still at the stage of development and discussion. The Bulgars' future was associated with the history of the Golden Horde (Ulus of Jochi) and will be included in the next volume of the present edition. ...In 1236 Volga Bulgaria, like many other states and peoples in Eurasia, was invaded by the armies of Mongol khans.

The Volga Bulgars were aware of the Mongol-Tatar invasions and violence in Asian countries and their rapid expansion in the steppes of Eastern Europe long before the events of 1236. They encountered the invaders within the country in 1232, when 'the Tatars came and made winter camp, having barely reached the Great City of Bolgar' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, col. 459]. Under these circumstances the Bulgars actively attempted to fend off the uninvited visitors with dignity.

The time filled with military alarms demanded, first of all, the corresponding development level of military and defensive art. Bilyar is an example of the energetic actions

of the Bulgarian emir to strengthen the defensive capacity of some cities in the country, first of all, its capital. Archaeological excavations show [Khuzin, 1985; Khuzin, Kaveev, 1985] that in the first third of the 13th century fortifications of Bilyar underwent major changes: the earth ramparts were strengthened, wooden walls were rebuilt, new lines of ramparts and ditches were built around the city, and so on. Bilyar turned into one of the most defensible cities in Eastern Europe, with fortifications meeting the high standards of military art of that time. The 13-century Persian historian al-Juwayni wrote that the city of Bulgar, as the capital of the country was called in the East, 'was known in the world by its inaccessible location and dense population' [Tiesenhausen, 1941, p. 23].

Nevertheless, Bilyar was destined to share sad fate of dozens of cities and villages literally wiped off the map after Mongol invasion and ravage.

About a year after the historic kurultai held in 1235 in Karakorum, where 'a decision was made to conquer the countries of Bulgar, the Ases, and Rus,' a combined army of the Mongol khans set out on the campaign: 'the earth was moaning and roaring under thousands of troops, and wild and carnivorous animals were petrified by number and noise of the horde' [ibid., pp. 22–23]. As al-Juwayni reports, the Mongols first 'captured the city of Bulgar (that is, the capital of the country) by force and assault.' The author of the Laurentian Chronicle stated the same facts: 'That same autumn (1236–*ed.*) the godless Tatars came from Eastern countries to the land of the Bulgars and captured the glorious Great City of Bolgar...' [Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, I, col. 460].

The sources are full of reports about cruel treatment of the local people by the conquerors and about complete destruction of the cities. '... They killed everybody from old and young to babies and took great quantities of goods, and they set the city on fire, and captured the whole land,' as an old Russian chronicler described how the Mongols treated the Great City (of Bilyar) and its inhabitants [Complete Collec-

tion of Russian Chronicles, I, col. 460]. 'Its citizens (of Bilyar-Bulgar.—*F. Kh.*) were [partly] killed and [partly] captured,' al-Juwayni reported tersely [Tiesenhausen, 1941, p. 23]. These facts prove that the Bulgars offered strong resistance. The Mongols as a rule treated rebels cruelly.

Archaeological materials fully confirm the above-mentioned data of the written sources. Traces of a burned area—a sandy ashy-gray layer mixed with fragments of human bones, which are especially numerous in the area of the fortifications and large buildings—were recorded at the Bilyar, Bolgar, and Dzhuketau archaeological sites, at Bulgarian sites of the Samara Bend, Upper Sura, and Moksha Regions. Armament supplies are frequently found in the layers of burned areas, including arrowheads in shapes which are commonly found in the settlements in Eastern Europe destroyed by the Mongol-Tatars [Medvedev, 1966, pp. 50–60]. Archaeologists associate the autumn events in 1236 with communal graves on the site of Bilyar. Twenty-six skeletons were discovered in, and 12 skeletons (5 children and 7 adults) in another. According to craniological data, all victims belonged to the local population [Khuzin, 1988, pp. 46–49].

Everything suggests that the citizens violently opposed the conquerors. Cities surrendered after stubborn battles. It was nowhere near an immediate victory of the Mongol-Tatars over the Bulgars, as is sometimes stated in the sources. The complete conquest of the Volga Bulgars took several years. The cruel destruction of the flourishing capital, 'the glorious Great City of Bolgar,' and other cities is explained to some extent by the Bulgars' valiant resistance. After the tragic events of 1236 dozens and hundreds of populated areas were never revived.

However, life did not entirely come to an end. When Bulgaria lost its political independence, it became a part of the Ulus of Jochi. The next, so-called Golden Horde age, started in the history of Eastern Europe. Volga Bulgaria had one of the leading roles in the Ulus of Jochi system in both the economic and cultural sense.



# Appendices



### Joseph's letter

(the letter of response from Khazar 'tsar' Joseph to Hasdai ibn Shafrut / Shafrut, the Jewish dignitary at the court of the Spanish Umayyads)

A part of the diplomatic correspondence between Hasdai ibn Shafrut and Khazar ruler Joseph, which is known to modern scholars, is published below—Joseph's letter of response in two editions (concise and extended), originating from one initial text. In his letter Hasdai told the Khazar ruler about his country and its geographical and economic position, expressed his genuine joy on receiving the news of an independent Jewish state on the banks of the Volga, and asked the tsar to give him full information, when the possibility arose, about Khazaria and its official religion.<sup>1</sup> In his response, Joseph wrote—naturally, in the author's interpretation—about the Khazars' origins, their conversion to Judaism, the borders of the state, the tribes inhabiting it,<sup>2</sup> etc., at the same time completely ignoring Hasdai's request to report the strength of Khazar army and the like. The exact date of the correspondence cannot be determined. Apparently, it was carried out in the 950–960s. To the present day all Jewish-Khazar correspondence has survived in the form of Yiddish copies with mistakes and additions from scribes.

The earliest information about this correspondence appears in the first decade of the twelfth century, when Judah ben Barzilai, a Catalan, in his legal Book on Festive Times mentioned the letter from Joseph and gave a brief account of his part. He also reported that Joseph's letter was written in response to

Hasdai's message. In the third quarter of the twelfth century Abraham ibn Daud wrote in his chronicles: 'You find Israelite communities, which were spread from the city of Sala in the end of Maghreb... until the Atil River because the Khazar people, who converted to Judaism, lived there. Joseph, their tsar, sent a message to Prince Hasdai, the son of Isaak, ibn Shafrut, and informed him that he and all his people supported the views of the rabbinites'<sup>3</sup>.

The mediaeval copy of Hasdai's letter to Joseph has not been found. The oldest extant copy is contained in a sixteenth-century manuscript from Oxford. A brief version of 'Tsar' Joseph's response is also found in this manuscript.

A longer version of Joseph's response has survived to the present day as a medieval manuscript, probably from the thirteenth century (dated by D. Khvolson, supported by P. Kokovtsov). This manuscript is now kept in the Public Library in Saint Petersburg, where it was brought by<sup>4</sup> Abraham Firkovich in the 1860s from Cairo. The first publisher of the letter's extended edition was Abraham Harkavy<sup>5</sup>.

The Jewish-Khazar correspondence was probably completely forgotten in the late Middle Ages, which is why many scholars doubt its authenticity. Johannes Buxtorf the Younger was one of the first to express his doubts in 1660. He was later supported in various degrees by other researchers, in particular such famous Orientalists as Christian Martin Joachim Frähn and Josef Markwart. However, this correspondence is definitely authentic, which has been proven by eminent modern scholars (for more details, see N. Golb and O. Pritsak, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century* (1982). Critical scholarly analysis of the Jewish texts men-

<sup>1</sup> The letter of Hasdai ibn Shafrut to the king of Khazars see, for example: A. Garkavi *Skazaniya Yevreiskikh Pisatelei, o Chazarah* (Tales of Jewish writers about the Khazars). – Saint-Petersburg, 1874. – pp. 84–119; K. Kokovtsov. *Evrejsko-chazarskaya perepiska v X veke* (Jewish-Khazar correspondence in the 10th century), Leningrad: Publishing House of the USSR Academy of Sciences, 1932. – pp. 7–19 (Hebrew text), 57–71 (Russian translation).

<sup>2</sup> About the geographical places and tribes, mentioned in the letter of Joseph, see more in the main text of vols. 1 and 2 of 'the History of the Tatars.' Scholars have different interpretations of ethnic and geographical titles, mentioned in the letter of Joseph, so we refrain from commenting in these cases.

<sup>3</sup> See: K. Kokovtsev *Mentioned works*, p. 134.

<sup>4</sup> Many valuable Jewish texts have been preserved in this city.

<sup>5</sup> A. Garkavi mentioned the finding of this work in the journal 'Hazezirah' in 1874, No. 16 on 28 October, p. 127. He published the text in 1875 (in German) and in 1879 (in Russian).

tioned above gives the researchers a lot of interesting and useful information on many issues in the history of Eurasia (particularly the Volga Region), Turkic peoples and states (first of all, the Khazars and Khazar Khanate), the Jewish people and Judaism, the Slavic and Finno-Ugric peoples, and interethnic, interstate, and inter-confessional relations. This analysis has also led to an active discussion on the issues of conversion of the Turkic Khazars to Judaism, on their use of Yiddish, on the character of their religion, etc. An essential question still remains open: was the Judaisation of the Khazars limited only to the court and some representatives of the society elite, or did it touch all the Khazar population? For more details about all of the

above, see, for example, the monographs and scholarly articles of M. Artamonov, S. Pletneva, A. Novoseltsev, and A. Arkhipov in the main text of the first and second volumes of *The History of the Tatars*.

Thus we have before us an undoubtedly unique and very interesting source, worthy of further wide scholarly research.

The text of Joseph's letter is quoted according to the edition: K Kokovtsev *Yevreisko-Khazarskaya perepiska v X veke* (Jewish-Khazar Correspondence in the Tenth century), Leningrad: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk Soyuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik (Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR), 1932, pp. 72–112.

### Concise edition

'And this is the answer of Joseph, Togarmah tsar.

The letter of Joseph, son of Aaron, Togarmah tsar,<sup>6</sup> to Rab Hasdai, the head of the diaspora, son of Isaak, son of Ezra, Sephardim,<sup>7</sup> dear to us and respected by us.

Herewith I inform you that your honourable letter came to us via Jacob, son of Eliezer, from the country of N-m-ts, and we rejoiced and were delighted with your comprehension and wisdom. I found in it diverse information about your country's position, about its length and width, about the origin of Tsar Abd-al-Rahman, who rules it, about his honour, grandeur, and greatness, and about the help God provided him so that he subjected the areas of the East and that all the world heard about his state's power; and how envoys from Constantinople started coming<sup>8</sup> with gifts, and how they told you the truth about our state and our faith, because earlier you considered that information false and did not believe it. Then you asked for information on the exact details about our state and our origins, about how our ancestors adopted the religion of Israel, and how God enlightened our eyes, lifted up our strength, and defeated our enemies. You also wanted to know about the size of our country, its length and breadth, and about the peoples who live around us, those we are friends with, and those we are at war with; and if our messenger happens to come to your country to curry favour with your majestic king, beloved by all, who with his good behaviour has made every heart love him and with his straight deeds bound them to himself, you asked for a report due to what people say to them, that there is no trace of Israel and that there is no place where it would have power and a state; and because Israelites were pleased with this news, it raised their spirit and allowed them to speak more freely, boast and brag before those who tell them that Israel has no trace, and that there is no place where it would have power and a state.

We reply, giving you an answer on each subject of your enquiry which you are asking about in your letter, giving you our answer in delight with you and in happiness with your wisdom, with which you refer to your country and to the origin of the one who reigns over it. A long time ago, letters with good wishes came to us and were written amongst our ancestors. This has been preserved in our books, known to all our country's elders throughout the East, as you

<sup>6</sup> Togarmah is a descendant of the Biblical Japheth, from whom, according to medieval historiography, some nations have their origin, including Khazars. See below in the source text.

<sup>7</sup> That is Spanish: *Sefarad* is a name of Spain common in Jewish literature.

<sup>8</sup> Constantinople.

mention. We will revive that which our ancestors had and will hand it down as a legacy to our descendants.

You ask in your letter of what nation, what clan and tribe we come. Know that we are descended from the sons of Japheth, the sons of his son, Togarmah. We found in the genealogical books of our ancestors that Togarmah had ten sons, and here are their names: the first was Agiyor, then Tiras, Avar, Ugin, Biz-l, T-r-na, Khazar, Z-nur, B-l-g-d, and Savir. We are descended from Khazar's sons; he was the seventh son. It is said that in his days, my ancestors were few in number. But the Holy One—blessed be He—gave them strength and power. They waged war against nations who were more numerous and more powerful, but with the help of God they drove them out and took their country. Those fled, and they chased them and forced them to cross the big river called Runa. To this day they are located on the Runa River near Constantinople, and the Khazars occupied their country. Generations passed until a certain king appeared amongst them, whose name was Bulan<sup>9</sup>. He was a wise and God-fearing man, trusting in God with all his heart. He expelled the fortune tellers and idolaters from the country and sought protection and patronage from God<sup>10</sup>. An angel appeared to him in a dream and told him: 'Oh, Bulan! God sent me to you to say: 'I have heard your prayer and your plea. So I will bless thee and multiply thee, continue thy kingdom until the end of the ages, and deliver into your hand all of your enemies.' Now get up and pray to the Lord.' He did so, and the angel visited him again and told him: 'I saw your conduct and approved your deeds. I know that you will follow me with all your heart. I want to give you the commandments, laws, and rules; and if you keep my commandments, laws, and rules, I will bless you and multiply you.' He answered the angel who spoke to him: 'You know, my Lord, the thoughts of my heart, and you investigated my innermost thoughts, you know, I put my trust only in you. But the people whom I reign over are infidels. I do not know if they will believe me. If I have found favour in your eyes, and your mercy has descended upon me, reveal yourself to one man, their chief prince, and he will help me in this matter'. The Holy One—blessed be He—fulfilled his wish and went to that prince in a dream. When he woke up, he told his king about it, and the king gathered all the princes, and his servants, and all his people and told them about it. They approved it, adopted the new faith, and began to dwell under the protection of the Shekhinah<sup>11</sup>. And the angel visited him again and told him: 'This heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain me, but you still build a temple in my name.' He answered and said: 'Lord of the world, I am very ashamed before you that I have no silver nor gold to build it as it should be, as I want to.' He told him: 'Be strong and take courage! Take all your armies and go to the country of Rud-lan and the country of Ardil. I will put fear and dread of you in their hearts and give them into your hand. I prepared two warehouses for you: one of silver and one of gold. I will be with you and will protect you wherever you will go. You will take that property, return safely, and build a temple in my name.' He believed him and did as he was told. He fought, utterly destroyed the *cityor* (region), and returned safely. Then he dedicated all the property to God and set up a tent, an ark, a lamp, a table, altars, and sacred vessels with it. To this day they are unbroken and preserved at my disposal. After that the rumour of him spread all over the Earth, and the king of Edom and the king of the Ishmaelites heard of him and sent their messengers to him, carrying great goods and numerous gifts along with their sages to convert him to their religions. But the king was wise and ordered to have brought to him a sage of Israel, learned from him, examined him, asked him questions, and after that he gathered them together to find the truth about their religions. They denied each other's words and did not agree on anything. When

<sup>9</sup> According to American professor Norman Golb, 'except for the name of the first king of Khazars, who converted to Judaism, BWLN (the letter of King Joseph), all the others mentioned in Hasdai correspondence have Hebrew names.' See N. Golb, O. Pritsak, mentioned works, p. 37. In the app. 31, p. 51, N. Golb says: 'Bulan is more likely a tribal name (eponym) than a proper name...'

<sup>10</sup> Literally 'and he hid in the shadow of His wings' (well known biblical metaphor).

<sup>11</sup> That is to say God's.

the king saw this, he told the priest<sup>12</sup> of the king of Edom and the Ishmaelites: 'Go home,<sup>13</sup> and I will send for you on the third day, and you will come to me.' The next day the king sent for the priest and told him: 'I know that the king of Edom is greater than these kings, and his faith is a respected faith. I am already interested in your faith. But I am asking you to tell me the truth: if the Israelite faith and the Ishmaelite faith are to be compared, which one is better?' The priest answered and said: 'May our lord, the king, live forever! Know the truth that there is no faith in this world like the faith of Israel as the Holy One—blessed be He—chose Israel of all the people; He called them 'My firstborn', gave them signs and performed great wonders before them, brought them out of the slavery of Pharaoh, led them through the sea on dry land and drowned their pursuers, sent down to them manna and gave them water from a rock, and gave them the law from the fire, He gave them the land of Canaan as an inheritance, and built them a sanctuary to dwell amongst them. After that they sinned before Him, and He was angry with them, cast them out from His face, and scattered them in all directions. If not for that, there would be no faith in the world such as the faith of Israel. The faith of the Ishmaelites has no Sabbath, no holidays, no law, and no *Urim*;<sup>14</sup> they eat all scum, all filth, and all reptiles.' The king answered him: 'So you spoke your words to me. Truly know that I will honour you.' On the second day the king sent for the qadi of the Ishmaelites, asked him, and said: 'Tell me the truth: What is the difference between the faith of Israel and the faith of Edom, and which one is better?' The qadi answered him and said: 'The faith of Israel is the best faith, and it is all true. They have the law of the Lord and fair regulations and rules. But due to the fact that they sinned against Him and fell away from Him, He was angry with them and gave them into the hands of their enemies. What is the faith of Edom? They eat all scum and worship the work of their own hands.' The king answered him: 'You told me the truth, and I will truly honour you.' The next day he called them all together and told them in the presence of all his princes and his servants and his people: 'I want you to make a choice for me: which of the faiths is the best and the most truthful?' They began to talk but could not prove their arguments until the king finally asked the priest: 'To take the faith of Israel and the faith of the Ishmaelites, which one is better?' The priest answered and said: 'The faith of Israel is the best faith.' Then he asked the qadi, too, and said to him: 'To take the faith of Israel and the faith of Edom, which one is better?' The qadi answered him and said: 'The faith of Israel is the best faith.' Then the king replied: 'You have already recognised with your own mouths that the faith of Israel is the best and the most proper of all faiths, and I have already chosen the faith of Israel for myself as it is the faith of Abraham. May the Almighty God help me! Silver and gold you said you would give me, He can give me without pain. And you, go with peace to your country.' From that day forward the Almighty God helped him and strengthened his power. He himself and his servants have been circumcised, and after that he sent messengers and brought some Israelite sages to himself, and they explained to him the Law (of Moses) and presented him all the commandments in order. To this day we keep this venerable faith and truth. May the name of the Holy One—blessed be He—be blessed for ages. And from the day our ancestors stepped under the protection of the Shekhinah, He conquered all our enemies and overthrew all nations and tribes that lived around us, so that no one to this day has stood before us. They all serve us and pay tribute to us: kings of Edom and kings of the Ishmaelites. After these events a king by the name of Obadiah, from the sons of Bulan's sons, acceded to the throne<sup>15</sup>. He was a righteous and just man. He reorganised<sup>16</sup> his kingdom and strengthened the faith according to the Law and Rule. He built houses of assembly (synagogues)<sup>17</sup> and houses of study (yeshivot), collected many Israelite sages, gave them a lot of silver and gold, and they explained to him 24 books of scripture, the Mishnah,

<sup>12</sup> Here and further on in the text a Hebrew term is used, denoting a priest—not a Jew.

<sup>13</sup> Literally 'to their tents.'

<sup>14</sup> Specific biblical term whose precise meaning is not clear.

<sup>15</sup> According to Norman Golb, he ruled in about the year 800. See N. Golb, O. Pritsak, mentioned works, p. 38.

<sup>16</sup> Literally 'renewed.'

<sup>17</sup> That is synagogues.

the Talmud, and the whole order of the prayers taken from chazzans. He feared God and loved the Law and the commandments. He was succeeded by his son Hezekiah, and Hezekiah was succeeded by his son Manasseh; after Manasseh was Obadiah's brother Hanukkah, followed by his son Isaac, followed by his son Zebulun, followed by his son Manasseh, followed by his son Nisi, followed by his son Menachem, followed by his son Benjamin, followed by his son Aaron and then I, Joseph, son of Aaron. We all are kings and sons of a king. An outsider cannot sit on the throne of our ancestors, and only a son can succeed to his father's throne. This is our custom and the custom of our ancestors. May the One who makes kings always protect our kingdom in His Law and His commandments.

As for your question of the size of our country, its length and breadth, then know that it is located near the river<sup>18</sup> adjacent to the Hyrcanian<sup>19</sup> Sea, an eastwards journey of four months. There are numerous peoples beyond count near that river; they live in settlements and towns and in fortified cities with walls. They are nine nations, which do not lend themselves to precise identification or counting. They all pay tribute to me. From there the border turns and reaches Gorgan. All living on that sea coast within the distance of a journey of one month pay tribute to me. From the south to Bab al-Abwab 15 nations live, strong and numerous beyond count<sup>20</sup>. They live in the mountains. All inhabitants of the countries of Basa and Tanat, living within the distance of a journey of two months, they all pay tribute to me. From the west 13 nations live, strong and numerous, settled on the coast of the sea of Constantinople. From there the border turns to the north up to the big river named Yuz-G. They live here in open areas, not protected by walls, and they move across the steppe reaching the borders of the country Khin-diyim. They are numerous as the sand by the sea, and they pay tribute to me. Their country extends to the distance of a journey of four months. I myself live by the mouth of the river and prevent the Ruses, coming on ships, from entering<sup>21</sup> their country. Likewise, I do not let any of their enemies, approaching by land, to enter<sup>22</sup> their country. I wage a stubborn war with them. If I had left them alone, they would have destroyed the whole country of the Ishmaelites as far as Baghdad. I also tell you that I dwell beside this river with the help of the Almighty, and I have three cities in my kingdom. The queen, with her handmaids and eunuchs, dwells in one of them. The length and breadth of it, with all the suburbs and surrounding villages, are 50 by 50 parasangs,<sup>23</sup> and Jews, Ishmaelites, and Christians live there; other people from other nations also live there. The second city with its suburbs is eight by eight parasangs in length and breadth. I live in the third city with my princes, servants, and all my attendants. It is small and is three by three parasangs in length and breadth. The river flows between its walls. We live in the city during the winter, and in the month of Nisan<sup>24</sup> we leave the city and each one goes forth to his fields and gardens and to his work. Each of our families also has a known hereditary possession, which they received from their ancestors. They go there and settle within its bounds in joy and singing; no one hears the voice of any oppressors, there are no opponents and no bad accidents. And I, my princes, and servants go for 20 parasangs until we reach the big river named V-r-shan, and from there we go around our country until we reach the end of our city. That is the size of our country and the place of our rest. There are not many rains in our country. It has many rivers, which are home to a lot of fish. It also has many springs. The country is fertile and rich and consists of fields, vineyards, gardens, and parks. All of them are irrigated from the rivers. We have a lot of different fruit trees. I will also inform you of the bounds of my country. It extends for 20 parasangs to the east to the Hyrcanian Sea, for 30 parasangs to the south, and for 40 parasangs to

<sup>18</sup> Of the Volga River.

<sup>19</sup> To the Caspian.

<sup>20</sup> Of Derbent.

<sup>21</sup> Literally 'to cross.'

<sup>22</sup> Literally 'to cross.'

<sup>23</sup> In the source text here and further a Jewish term 'parsa.' 1 parsas, or parasang is approximately 6 km.

<sup>24</sup> The seventh month of the Jewish civil year.

the west. I dwell within an island. My fields, vineyards, gardens, and parks are within the island. The country extends for 30 parasangs to the north and has many rivers and springs there. With the help of the Almighty I live in peace.

You also asked me about the 'end of miracles'<sup>25</sup>. Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, our God, and on the sages of Israel, on the Academy which is in Jerusalem, and on the Academy which is in Babylon. We are far from Zion, but we have heard that the calculations of the plenty of our sins have been confused, so we do not know anything. But let it be pleasing to God to do it for the sake of His glorious name; let the destruction of His temple not be insignificant in His eyes,<sup>26</sup> the abolition of service to Him in it, and all the troubles that have come upon us, and may He carry out the words of scripture against us: 'and suddenly come into His temple,' etc. We have only the Book of Daniel in our hands. May God, the God of Israel, hasten salvation and gather our exiles and our scattered countrymen within our lives and yours and of all the house of Israel, who love His name!

You have also mentioned in your letter that you yearn to see my face. I would also very much like to see your pleasant countenance, your wisdom, revered by all, and your greatness. Would that it were according to your word, and I was granted to talk to you and see your honourable and coveted countenance. You would be as my father and I as your son, all my people would submit to your voice, and according to your order and judicious counsel would I conduct all my affairs<sup>27</sup>. May you have a lot of happiness!"

### Extensive Revision

'The letter of King Joseph, son of Aaron the king of Togarmah—may the God, his creator, save him—to Hasdai, the Head of Academic Senate, the son of Isaac, son of Ezra.

Much happiness from King Joseph, son of Aaron, the mighty king, who does not flee from any armies and does not retreat from any hordes, the one who fears God, trembling before his words, the wise one, who honour the wise, the humble one who takes the downcast close to him, the one who chose the law and tried with all his heart to earn the favour of his Creator for his beloved, dear Hasdai, son of Isaac, son of Ezra, desired and worshiped—may God save him—and crowned with wisdom.

I have to inform you that your letter has come to us, crowned with the beauty of your language, brought by one Jew from the country N-m-z, named Isaac, the son of Eliezer. And we were overjoyed about you and admired your mind and your wisdom. And the location of your country was written in it and how the place where the night and the day are equal is far from it; about the origin of Abd al-Rahman who reigns over it<sup>28</sup>, about honour and glory of his kingdom and his greatness, and about the assistance provided to him by God for conquering the eastern lands as they were previously under the authority of his ancestors; about the difficulties due to which your letter arrived late due to the remoteness of all the nations from hence and stopping the arrival of merchants; and about your concerns until the power of your kingdom was known at all ends of the Earth, and all the kings began to bestow honours to your king; how the messengers of Constantinople king started to arrive in your country with the gifts from their king, and how they told you the truth about our kingdom and our faith, the information you thought false and did not believe in before. You asked to give you correct information about our kingdom and our origin and about how they<sup>29</sup> adopted the religion of Israel, whose God enlightened our eyes, lifted up our strength, and crushed our enemies. You also wanted to know about the size of our country, and about people who live here, those we are friends with and those we are at war with, and if our messengers happen to come

<sup>25</sup> See: K Kokovtsev Mentioned works, p. 70. App. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Literally 'his house.'

<sup>27</sup> See: K Kokovtsev Mentioned works, p. 89. App. 4.

<sup>28</sup> The matter concerns the Spanish ruler of the Umayyad dynasty, Abd al-Rahman III (912–961).

<sup>29</sup> Thas is 'our ancestors' (see the brief reduction).

to your country to curry favour with your majestic and beloved by anyone king—may his Creator preserve him!—who with his good behavior made every heart love him and with his straight deeds bound them to himself; you asked to report it due to the fact that people of Israel were very pleased with it, and it adorned their hearts and let them speak more freely, boast and brag before those who tell them that Israel has no trace, and that there is no place where it would have power and a state.

We give you an answer on each subject as a reply to your letter, as we are delighted with you and your wisdom, with which you speak of your country and the origin of the one who reigns over it. For a long time letters arrived and were written between our ancestors with happy wishes. It has been preserved in our books, known to all the elderly in our country. And we constantly hear of your country and the greatness of its king—may his Creator preserve him and return the kingdom of his ancestors to him, which was in his possession in the eastern country, as you say! We will revive that which our ancestors had and will hand it down as a legacy to our descendants.

You ask me in your letter: 'of what nation, what clan and tribe we come?' I inform you that I am descended from the sons of Japheth, descended from Togarmah. So I found in the genealogical books of my ancestors that Togarmah had ten sons and here are their names: the first was Aviyor, the second was Turis, the third was Avaz, the fourth was Uguz, the fifth was Biz-l, the sixth was T-r-na, the seventh was Khazar, the eighth was Yanur, the ninth was B-lg-r, the tenth was Savir. I am descended from the sons of Khazar, the seventh son. It is said, that when my ancestors were few in number, the Holy one—blessed be He—gave them force, strength, and power. They waged war after war against many nations, who were more strong and more powerful than they. With the help of God they drove them out, took their country, and forced some of them to pay tribute to them until today. The country in which I now live was formerly occupied by the V-n-n-t-r's. Our ancestors, the Khazars, fought with them. These V-n-n-t-r's were more numerous, as numerous as the sand on the shores of the sea, but they could not withstand the Khazars. They left their country and fled while the Khazars pursued them as far as the 'Danube' River. Up to this very day they camp along the 'Danube' River and are close to the Black Sea, and the Khazars have occupied their land up till now. Several generations passed until a certain King arose whose name was Bulan. He was a wise and God-fearing man, servant of the God, trusting in his Creator with all his heart. He expelled the fortune tellers and idolaters from the country and sought protection and patronage of the God. An angel appeared to him in a dream and told him: 'Oh, Bulan! God sent me to you to say: 'Oh, my son! I have heard thy prayer so I will bless thee, and multiply thee, and continue thy kingdom until the thousand generations, and I will deliver all of your enemies in to your hand.' He woke up in the morning and prayed to God and started to worship him and serve him even more. And the angel appeared to him again and told him: 'Oh, my son! I saw your conduct and approved of your deeds. I know that you will follow me with all your soul and all your strength. I want to give you the laws and rule if you will follow those commandments and laws.' He answered the angel he spoke to: 'Oh, my Lord! You know the thoughts of my heart and you investigated my interior, you know, I put my trust only in you. The people who I reign over are nonbelievers. I do not know if they would believe or not. If I have found favour in your eyes, and your mercy descended upon me, reveal yourself to one man, the chief prince of them.' The Holy one—blessed be He—fulfilled his wish and came to that man in a dream. He woke up in the morning and told his king about it, and the king gathered all princes and servants of his and all his people and told them about it. They adopted the new faith and came under the protection of the Shekhinah. For 340 years already<sup>30</sup>. And the angel appeared to him again and told him: 'Oh, my son! The heaven and the Earth cannot contain me. But still build a temple in my name, and I will dwell in it.' He answered him: 'Lord of the world! You know that I have no silver nor gold. How will I build the temple?' He told him: 'be strong and take courage! Take your people and the whole your host and go to 'D-ralan,' to the country of Ar-d-vil. I will put fear and dread of you in their hearts and give them into your hand. I have

<sup>30</sup> This dating is not in the summary reduction of the letter and considered the latest insertion in the text.



prepared two storehouses for you: one full of silver and one full of gold. You will take them, and I will be with you and will protect you and help you, you will return safely with that property and build a temple in my name with it.' He believed the Lord and did as he was told. He went and waged many wars and succeeded with the help of the Almighty. He ravaged that city, took the property, and returned safely. He dedicated all the captured goods to the God and set up a tent, an ark, a lamp, a table, altars, and sacred vessels with it. With the blessing of the Almighty God to this day they are unbroken and preserved at my disposal. After that the rumour of him spread all over the Earth, and the King of Edom and the King of Ismaili heard of him and sent their messengers to him, carrying great goods and numerous gifts along with their sages to convert him in their religion. But the king was wise—may his soul be bound in the convolution of life with the Lord, his God! He ordered to bring a sage of Israel to him as well, learned from him, asked him questions, and after that he gathered them together to find the truth<sup>31</sup> about their faiths. They denied the words of each other and did not agree with each other on any faith. When the king saw it, he told them: 'Go back to your house now, on the third day you will come to me.' They returned home. On the next day the king sent for the priest of the King of Edom and told him: 'I know that the King of Edom is greater than these kings, and his faith is a respected and beautiful faith. I am already interested in your faith. I only ask you to answer one question. Tell me the truth and I will have mercy on you and honour you; what say you: if the Israeli faith and the Ismaili faith are to be compared, which one is better according to you?' The priest answered and said to him: 'May the king live forever! If you are asking about the faith, there is no faith like the faith of Israel in this world. The Holy One—blessed be He—chose Israel of all the people and called them 'my firstborns,' performed omens and great wonders before them, brought them out of the Egypt and saved them from the Pharaoh, led them through the sea on dry land, and sank their pursuers, sent down to them manna and gave them water from a rock, and gave them the law from the fire, until he delivered them into the land of Canaan and built them a sanctuary. After that they rebelled against him, they have sinned and twisted the faith, and he was angry with them, cast them out from his face, and scattered them in all directions. If not for that, there would be no faith in the world such as Israel. What is the faith of Ismaili compared to the faith of Israel? There are no Saturdays, no holidays, no law and no commandments; they eat anything unclean, the meat of camels and horses, the meat of dogs, all abominations, and all reptiles. The faith of Ismaili is not the right one but similar to all other faiths of people of the Earth.' The king answered him and said to him: 'you spoke your words to me, and I will show you mercy and send you with honour to the King of Edom.' On the second day the king sent for the qadi of Ismaili and told him: 'I will ask you one thing. Tell me the truth and hide nothing from me: if the faith of Christians and the faith of Jews are to be compared, which one do you think is better?' The qadi answered him: 'The faith of Israel is the true faith, and they have the commandments and laws, but when they sinned, the Holy One—blessed be He—was angry with them and gave them into the hand of their enemies. But redemption and salvation are theirs. The faith of Christians is not the true faith: they eat pigs and all manner of unclean things, worship the work of their own hands, and have no hope for salvation.' The king answered him and said: 'You told me the truth and I will show you mercy.' The third day he called them all together and told them: 'Speak and argue with each other and find out for me which faith is good.' They began to talk and argued with each other but could not prove their words until the king finally asked the priest and told him: 'What say you? If the Israeli faith and the Ismaili faith are to be compared, which one is more respectable?' The priest answered and said: 'the faith of Israel is more respectable than the faith of Ismaili.' Then the king asked the qadi and said to him: 'What say you? If the Christian faith and the Israel faith are to be compared, which one is more respectable?' The qadi answered him and said: 'the faith of Israel is more respectable.' Then the king answered and told them: 'If so then you have already admitted with your own mouth that the faith of Israel is the most respected and I already

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<sup>31</sup> Literally 'adduced proof.'

has chosen the faith of Israel for myself as it is the faith of Abraham, by the mercy of the God and with the power of the Almighty. If God helps me, then the silver and gold you said you would give me, my God, in whom I trust, and to the protection and patronage of whom I take refuge, can give me without pain. And you, go with peace to your country.' From that day forward the almighty God helped him and strengthened his power and lifted up his strength. He himself and his servants have been circumcised, and after that he sent messengers and delivered some sages from Israel to himself, and they explained to him the law (of Moses) and presented him all commandments in order. To this day we keep this faith. May the name of the Holy One—blessed be He—be blessed for ages! And from the day my ancestors adopted that faith, the God of Israel conquered with him all their enemies and overthrew all nations and tribes that lived around them, Kings of Edom and Kings of Ismaili, and all the other kings, so that no one has stood in front of them, and all of them served and paid tribute to them. After those events Obadiah from the sons of the sons of Bulan acceded to the throne. He adjusted his kingdom and strengthened the faith according to the law and rule. He built assembly houses and houses of study and collected many sages of Israel, gave them much silver and gold, and they explained to him 24 books of scripture, Mishnah, Talmud, and the whole order of the prayers taken from the Khazzans. He was a God-fearing man and he loved the law, one of the true servants of God. May the Divine Spirit give him rest! He was succeeded by his son Hezekiah, and Hezekiah was succeeded by his son Menasseh; after Menasseh was Obadiah brother Hanukkah, followed by his son Isaac, his son Zebulun, his son Menasseh, his son Nisi, his son Menahem, his son Benjamin, his son Aaron and I, Josef, son of Aaron, all are kings and sons of kings. An outsider cannot sit on the throne of my ancestors, and only the son can succeed his father. This has been our custom and the custom of our ancestors since they have come to that land. May it be the gracious will of Him who appoints all kings that the throne of my kingdom shall endure through all eternity.

You have also asked me about the affairs of my country and the extent of my empire. I wish to inform you that I dwell by the banks of the river known as the Atil<sup>32</sup>, at the end of the River G-r-gan. The beginning of this river is turned east, a journey of four months' distance. Alongside the river dwell many tribes in cities and towns, in open places, as well as in fortified walled-cities. Here their names: Bur-t-s, Bul-g-r, S-var, Arisu, Ts-r-mis, V-n-n-tit, S-v-r, S-l-viyun. Each nation cannot be precisely recognised and counted. They all serve me and pay tribute to me. From there the border turns toward Khwarezm<sup>33</sup>, up to Gorgan. All living on that Sea coast in a journey of one month' distance pay tribute to me. On the South there are also S-m-n-d-r in the end of the country T-d-lu, until the border turns to the 'Gates'—that is, Bab al-Abwab, and it is located on the sea coast. From there the border turns toward the mountains. Azur on the end of the B-g-d country, S-ridi, Kitun, Ar-ku, Shaula, S-g-s-r-t, Al-bus-r, Ukhus-r, Kiarus-r, Cig-l-g, Zunikh, located on the very high mountains, all the Alans as far as the border of Af-kan, all who live in the Kasa country and all Kiyal tribes, T-k-t, G-bul as far as the Black Sea, a distance of two months' journey, they all pay tribute to me. From the West: Sh-r-kil, S-m-k-r-c, K-r-c, Sug-rai, Alus, L-m-b-t, B-r-t-nit, Alubikha, Kut, Mank-t, Bur-k, Al-ma, G-ruzin. Those areas are located on the Black Sea coast, on its west side. From there the border turns toward the North, the country named B-c-ra. They are located by the river named Va-g-z. They dwell in open areas with no walls. They wander and remain in steppes until they reach the border of the Kh-g-riim area. They are numerous as the sand by the sea. They all serve me and pay tribute to me. They dwell there a journey of four months' distance. Bear in mind that I dwell at the delta of the river by God's help. I guard the mouth of the river and do not permit the Ruses who come in ships to enter into the Sea so as to get at the Ismaili, nor do I allow any of their enemies who come by land to reach the 'Gates.' I wage war with them. If I left them alone for one hour, they

<sup>32</sup> The Volga River.

<sup>33</sup> Khwarezm.

would have waste the whole country of Ismailli as far as Baghdad and as far as...<sup>34</sup> This is how far my borders and the power of my kingdom reach.

You have also asked me about the place where I live. Know that, by the grace of the Almighty, I dwell alongside this river on which there are situated three cities. The queen dwells in one of them; this is the city I was born in. It is quite large, built round like a circle, 50 parasangs in diameter. Jews, Christians, and Ismaili live in the second city, and besides them there are many slaves of all nations in it. It is of medium size, eight square parasangs in length and breadth. In the third I dwell myself with my princes, slaves, servants, and cupbearers who are close to me. It is round in shape, and its diameter is three parasangs. A river flows within its walls. This is my residence during the winter. From the month of Nisan on we leave the city, and each one goes to his vineyard, to his own field, and to his own work. Each of our families also has a hereditary possession, which they had received from their ancestors, the place they dwell in; they go there and settle within its boundaries. And me, my princes, and servants go for 20 parasangs until we reach the big river named Varshan, and from there we go across our country until we reach the end of our city without any fear; in the end of the month of Kislev<sup>35</sup>, during Hanukkah, we arrive to our city. Such is the size of our country and of our resting place. There are not much rain in our country, but there are many rivers and springs and from its rivers (caught?) very many fish. The country is fertile and rich and has a lot of fields, grasslands, and ...<sup>36</sup>which are beyond numbers; all of them are irrigated from our river. I will also tell you limits of my country, the county in which I live. It extends for 20 parasangs to the East until the Hyrcanian Sea, for 30 parasangs to the South until the big river named 'Ug-ru'; for 30 parasangs to the West until the river named 'Buzan,' which flows out of the river 'Ug-ru'; for 20 parasangs to the North until the river 'Buzan' and the Hyrcanian Sea. I dwell within the island; my fields, vineyards, and all I need are within the island. With the help of the Almighty I live in piece.

You also asked me about the 'end of miracles.' Our eyes are fixed on ...<sup>37</sup>.

*Material prepared by Bulat Khamidullin*

<sup>34</sup> Missed in the source text.

<sup>35</sup> The third month of the Jewish civil year.

<sup>36</sup> That word has been erased in the manuscript.

<sup>37</sup> Here the manuscript breaks down. The continuation is preserved in the brief reduction of the letter (see above).

### Anna Comnena on the Pechenegs, Ghuzzes, 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. Lubarsky. / Series 'Pamyatniki srednevekovoj istorii narodov Central'noj i Vostochnoj Evropy.'—Moscow: Nauka, 1965.

'... I now intend to relate a second attack on the Roman Empire, more terrible and greater than the first,<sup>1</sup> and I again resume the story at the beginning,<sup>2</sup> for one subject has come up after another as wave follows wave. A certain Scythian tribe,<sup>3</sup> who were daily harried by the Sauromatae,<sup>4</sup> left their homes and travelled down to the Danube<sup>5</sup>. 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<sup>6</sup>. 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<sup>7</sup>.

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 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

<sup>1</sup> Anna Comnena wrote earlier about the war between Byzantium and the Seljukid Turks.

<sup>2</sup> By 1086, the beginning of the Pecheneg war, The *Alexiad* was virtually the only source of information about those events.

<sup>3</sup> The Pechenegs.

<sup>4</sup> From the side of the Oghuz.

<sup>5</sup> To the Danube.

<sup>6</sup> Their ethnic affiliation is not clear.

<sup>7</sup> I emphasise, this once again refutes the thesis about the Pechenegs being 'pure' nomads. — *B. Kh.*

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 Taticius<sup>8</sup>.

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 armor, 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<sup>9</sup> (over whom the man called Solomon was leader), 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 ... 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

<sup>8</sup> Taticios is the most active and loyal commander to Alexius; by 'Celts' as well as by 'Latins' Anna Comnena means 'people from the West' in general.

<sup>9</sup> Dacians – here refers to Hungarians.

Scythian horde ... As they all urged him to do so 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. When 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 Hæmus 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 Manichæans 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 Distra (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 ambuscades 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 chieftains were seen in the distance<sup>10</sup> 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,

<sup>10</sup> The Greek term 'lochagos' denotes a commander of a troop of 16 men.

and of captives,<sup>11</sup> 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 is located beyond the Hundred Hills.<sup>12</sup> and wide and very beautiful rivers fall into it. 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 was once quartered nearby (the name 'Huns' became 'Ouzi' in the local patois) making their camp on its banks, and thus the lake was called Ouzolimne... Let these remarks about Ozolimne be published once and for all in the true spirit of history. Now when their provisions ran short, the Comans returned to their homes to get new supplies, and then move against the Scythians once more.

In the meantime, the Emperor recuperated at Beroë and fitted out the captives he had redeemed<sup>13</sup> and all his hoplites with arms... Afterwards the Emperor left Beroë with the troops he had amassed and entered Adrianople. The Scythians came down the narrow valley 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 Emperor<sup>14</sup>. And he stayed there for some time and courted their favor, thus removing every possible cause of offense.

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 who promptly broke the treaty, reverted to their former cruelty and laid waste the neighboring 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 force which he expected<sup>15</sup> 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

<sup>11</sup> Captured by the Pechenegs during the battle.

<sup>12</sup> The Hundred Hills are in Dobruja.

<sup>13</sup> That is, the Byzantines whom Alexius ransomed from captivity.

<sup>14</sup> The exact date is not known, but we can generally refer to the autumn of 1087.

<sup>15</sup> Robert I, the count of Flanders, Zeeland, and Holland promised to send 500 horsemen to help the Romans.

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 Scythians did not keep the peace treaty long... When the troops entrenched at Chœreni learned 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<sup>16</sup>. 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 river<sup>17</sup>, 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 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.... This is how th Emperor acted. 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 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 armor, 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

<sup>16</sup> V. Vasilyevsky in the work 'Byzantium and the Pechengs' published in Saint Petersburg in 1908 marked the identification of Togortak and Maniak with Tugorkan and Bonyak of the Russian chronicles.

<sup>17</sup> Here the River Maritsa is in view, on whose right bank the Khirin fortress stood.



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 week, the twenty-ninth of April<sup>18</sup>. Hence the Byzantines made a little burlesque song, 'Because of one day the Scythians shall not see 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*

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<sup>18</sup> The six-year war between the Byzantines and the Pechenegs ends with the battle on 29 April 1091. Anna's statement about the death of the whole Pecheneg people is not correct.

### Arabic Geographers and Travellers on Volga Bulgaria

The study of the facts about pre-Mongol Eastern Europe given by the Arab authors is 'an inescapable topic since its earliest formation' [Bolshakov, Christian East]. Amongst its considerations are the uncovering and edition of the related texts as well their translations. The results of generations of native and foreign researchers in the late 20th century were still not readily available to a wide academic audience, concerned to get access to the materials on the peoples of Eastern Europe and neighbouring areas. The research was published in various publications at home and abroad, in Oriental and European languages (including Latin). Besides, most of them are rare (including the relatively recent translations from Ibn Fadlan and al-Gharnati) and went out of date, some are restricted (exclusively the Ruses and Slavs, to Khazars or Dagestan), some referred to a single writing or a single author.

The experts have called repeatedly for 'The Complete Set of Translations of Showings of the Arab Authors on the Peoples of the USSR in Recent Translations'. This idea was first delivered in 1932 by I. Krachkovsky at the Academic Board of the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad [Krachkovsky, 1955. pp. 149–156; Bolshakov, Cristian East]. At that time, there was also the timely release of the microfilm of the Mashhad manuscript, with<sup>1</sup> 'The Account' by Ibn Fadlan, 'The Second Account' by Abu Dulaf, and 'The Book of Kingdoms' by Ibn al-Faqih. However, the idea suggested by I. Krachkovsky (1883–1951), supported by his junior partners and colleagues, was not enacted in full. Scientific interest concerning that idea proved to be volatile and used to dissipate as the material depleted and return as a new source emerged. That way translations of the complete texts by Ibn Fadlan, Abu Dulaf and

al-Gharnati, earlier known only by their fragments, were published [Ibn Fadlan, 1939; Ibn Fadlan, 1956; Bulgakov, Khalidov, 1960; al-Gharnati, 1971]. In a small way, the idea of creating the collection of insights from the Arab authors about the Peoples of the USSR came to life in some of the Republics (in particular, 'The Materials on the History of the Turkmen and Turkmenia' as well as translations of the sections on Dagestan and the Caucasus were published) [Materials on the History of the Turkmen and Turkmenia; Buniyatov; Shikh-saidov; Aytberov; Beylis, 2000; and others].

The present materials are the first attempt for 'the long smouldering idea of the Leningrad Arabists' of such collection of insights to come true [Bolshakov, Christian East]. The sum total of this information is not large; most of it pertains to the Volga Region.

The current selection of translations contains the principal (though not the entire) part of the information on Eastern Europe from the writings of the leading early Arabian and Persian (who wrote in Arabic) geographers and travellers (of the 10–13th centuries)—Ibn Khordadbeh, Ibn al-Faqih, Ibn Rustah, al-Biruni, Iskhak ibn al-Husain (?), al-Idrisi, al-Gharnati, Yaqut al-Hamawi.

The structure of the works of the Arab geographers was largely given by the practical purposes of those books that were frequently meant for travellers and merchants. This is because they were kinds of road maps, providing details on the routes and roads, with tips regarding post houses (alias caravanse-rais) as well as the distances between them. The materials on the Volga Region are usually divided into moderate-size stories, with the 'title' names of 'Al-Bajanak', 'Al-Bashgard', 'Bulgar', 'Ar-Rus', 'As-Saqaliba', 'Al-Khazar', etc., where the writings are interrelated and complementary. They are usually grouped in one unit, with materials on the Northern Caucasus (including the Low Volga Region) and Transcaucasia, since the caravan routes led from the Near East to the Volga Region and as

<sup>1</sup> The government of Iran gave a full microfilm copy of the Mashhad Manuscript to the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences on the occasion of the 3rd International Congress on Iranian Art in Leningrad (1935).

far as the Northern 'Unforeknowable Lands of the Gloom' and the Land of Yajuj and Majuj, along the Caspian coast to the Volga estuary and up to the North by water or along its bank.

Information about Bulgar and the Bulgars alone without context usually omits part of the information, while the overall context of information on neighbouring peoples says more than the direct rendering of insights on the Bulgars. At times, the interpretation of very short and often bland citations was complemented with the understanding of the writing's structure. Therefore, bearing these thoughts in mind, we included the entire bulk of the materials by Arab geographers (even though this writing contains no mentions of the Volga Bulgaria). We tried to preserve the continuity of those works and, whenever necessary, reveal their structure.

Geographical texts are less difficult linguistically than in their interpretation of (non-Arabic) placenames and names that are alien to us. Omitting or replacing the diacritics is the common error, while the inclusion of characters similar to those in words of other languages is a significantly complicating factor. Only Ibn Fadlan and al-Gharnati took care to ensure names were written correctly, while the rest of the authors of the treatises on geography were satisfied with second- or even third-hand information: misheard from being orally delivered, they were written approximately, which led to further implausible transformations of these 'dark' words. Reconstructing those damaged and badly-formed words was only possible by their gross outline. Most of those damaged words, specifying lands and peoples, occur in corresponding sections of the geographic works by Ibn Rustah and al-Idrisi [Ibid.].

Most experts are well aware that any translation, let alone translations from Arabic, restricts the scope of interpreting the source or, which is worse, see phantom aspects [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 54]. One of the standard ways to reduce faults in translations is transliteration of<sup>2</sup> proper nouns, personal titles, tribes, places,

physical features, terms, and other words that are not originally Arabic. For example, the first most controversial ethnonym *as-Saqaliba* / *as-Saqlabi*, is frequently interpreted as 'the Slavs' / 'the Slav'. In our opinion, it should have been left untranslated, because here we mean all the inhabitants of the Eastern European forest zone.

Our selection is based on the already revealed and mostly published evidence (the more complete selection of the relatively recent materials is followed by translations into Polish [Żrodla, 1956–1985]). Attempts to apply recent best practice in interpreting the source data make one reconsider the earlier translations, which inevitably results in quite a new translation. Concurrently, part of the evidence is published in Russian for the first time (Ibn al-Faqih, al-Masudi, and others), while the translation of Ibn Hawqal's notes on the Khazar Sea is the first translation of that work from Arabic into a foreign language.

Materials in our selection are chronologically arranged as per each author. Despite certain correlations among some materials, the texts of most authors are delivered unabridged, except for some pieces. Thus, the work of Ibn Hawqal and al-Istakhri are given in one unit: places where al-Istakhri's material was identical to that of Ibn Hawqal were not singled out, apart from his translation of the chapter 'The Khazar Sea' from 'Kitab al-Masalik wa-mamalik'. In the same way, the story by Sallam at-Tarjuman about the Land of Yajuj is delivered in full in a separate chapter only in Ibn Khordadbeh's treatise. Every other text copies Sallam's work either with reference to Ibn Khordadbeh (though abridged or damaged) or to similar works from, it would seem, another source (for example, in al-Idrisi). Also, every other author after Ibn Khordadbeh incorporated Sallam's evidence within various parts of their works. Therefore, their use of Sallam at-Tarjuman's work is only marked but not included in our translations.

<sup>2</sup> The transliteration (unlike a transcription, which renders the sounds accurately) is representative of the graphic

image of the word, which is mostly consonants for the Arabic language; vowel marks in foreign (Turkic) words are mostly assumed, as the pronunciation is usually unknown.

Our selection contains translations of materials by Yaqut al-Hamawi because all his 'articles' concerning the Volga Region from his *'Mu'jam al-buldan'* have not been published in Russian in one volume, although studies of the Eastern European peoples started with Yaqut's works. Ibn Fadlan's notes written in his *'The Dictionary...'* primarily drew the attention of researchers. After the original of *'The Account'* emerged, the interest in Yaqut's works decreased, especially because the information from *'The Account'* that was not retained in the Mashhad manuscript and was known only owing to *'The Dictionary...'* by Yaqut was noted and published in the second edition of *'Risali'* [Ibn Fadlan, 1956]. Yaqut's texts, aside from lengthy quotations from Ibn Fadlan's *'The Account'*, reproduce extracts of other authors (al-Balazuri, al-Masudi, al-Istakhri, etc.), but it has emerged that the proportion of the identical pieces to the original works had never been examined. In our translations of quotations from Ibn Fadlan, the 'articles' on the Volga Region from *'The Dictionary...'* by Yaqut have been italicised and conform to the translation of *'The Account'* in our edition. His quotations from other authors are also noted in the comments; if the original versions were incorporated into our selection, they are translated identically with the original text in our edition.

The scope of this edition does not presume the commentaries evolved into translations and are narrowed down to editorial remarks tracing specifications, especially when the already published translations were used (for example, Ibn Fadlan, al-Biruni) separately, specifying the most recent interpretations (conjectures) of the damaged placenames, misinterpreted titles, etc. (Ibn Rustah, al-Idrisi, Ibn Fadlan). Brief historical-geographical explanatory notes follow the first mentions of placenames, names, or events in our translations of the work of Arabian geographers, mostly related to Ibn Khordadbeh's material. The numbering is uniform for the entire section.

The exception to this is the fresh work by O. Bolshakov, the revised translation of al-

Gharnati's *'Travel...'*, to ensure the new edition's structural continuity.

In the design of the texts of translations, the following techniques have been observed.

Since in the original version the placenames and the names of the peoples are given in the same form, the translation also adopts it (ar-Rus, al-Khazar, and the others), and they are given as the names of the peoples only in undoubted cases. Transliteration of the same placenames, physical features, tribes, proper names, and the titles in the texts of various authors is given as per the edition of each single work<sup>3</sup> with no unification even when there were no doubts on what was meant (Bulgar—Bulkar—Burgar; al-Majar—al-Majariya—al-Majgar, etc.), but at the first mention the commonly recognised use is given in plain brackets (sometimes vice versa, due to the need to observe the Russian language's grammar: the recognised name comes first, while in plain brackets, transliteration as per edition). The Atil river is spelt in the generally accepted manner—'Atil'—along with versions of vowel marking (Atil, Atul, Asil, Isil) as suggested by publishers of the Arab texts, quoted in plain brackets when first mentioned. In the cases when there are no vowel marks and the reading is unclear, only consonants are given. The suggested new conjectures are in the translated text followed by an explanatory footnote.

The translation bears features specific to Arabic texts: iterations of personal pronouns, multiple repetitions of the coordinating conjunction 'and'. Transliteration cannot render the entire diacritics of the Arabic language except for <'> in <'aina>. As accepted in the Arabic studies, the use of the double 'yy' (most frequently applied for Arabic adjectives) is kept in the titles of treatises, while in placenames it is rendered through a single 'y'. According to the translation methodology for medieval Arab texts, words that are absent but essential for translation are given in square brackets,

<sup>3</sup> Other graphic variants found in the copies of the work that were used to prepare the critical edition are not taken into account.

while plain ones are used for explanations and terminology.

We highly appreciate the good and useful advice and assistance in our work from Professor O. Bolshakov, DS (History), Professor S. Klyashtorny, T. Kalinina, CS (History), I. Konovalova, SC (History).

We note finally that this volume's work is a preliminary for further translations into Russian of the entire work of the Arab geographers concerning the peoples of European Russia. We regret that we failed to include all of the known materials (for instance, from al-Idrisi and others), while finding no traces of the works of other authors (for example, al-Ya'qubi, al-Maqrizi, the anonymous author of 'Hudud al-'Alam', etc.). At this stage, we failed

to maintain the necessary stylistic uniformity required in textual work with historical records, when translating the identical pieces; the same punch items could be found in some commentaries; as far as the translations proper are concerned, we also failed sometimes to distinguish between the country name and the ethnic people (that in Russian is rendered by way of using majuscules and minuscules), for the Arabic texts do not recognise this difference, and the context is frequently of little help. Based on this work, we hope to make a single edition of the records of Arab geographers on Eastern Europe, with the hope to make improvements as well as, on the whole, to execute the intended project in due volume and with due quality.

### Ibn Khordadbeh

Abu'l-Qasim Ubaydallah ibn Abdallah ibn Khordadbeh (c. 820–c. 890), an Arab scholar, authored numerous works in history and genealogy, and wrote entertainment books that are known only by their titles and quotations from them. He is best known for his geographic treatise 'Kitāb al Masālik w'al Mamālik' ('The Book of Roads and Kingdoms'). He was descended from a noble Persian family of the hereditary officials, who were in the service of some of Iran's rulers. Thanks to family connections, he received a good education and could be found within the Court circles. Ibn Khordadbeh acquired the high position of Chief Postmaster in Iran, with the access to written sources, including the times of the Sasanian dynasty. He wrote in Arabic. He wrote

his 'The Book of Roads and Kingdoms' in the 880s. The book survived as two manuscripts kept in Oxford and Vienna, and as a fragment also found in the Oxford Library.

In 'The Book of Roads and Kingdoms', there are records of the Eastern European territories, rivers, lakes, and trade routes.

Below are extracts from Ibn Khordadbeh's treatise based on the translation by N. Velikhova [Ibn Khordadbeh, 1986].

Edition: BGA, VI, 1889. Translations: Ibn Khordadbeh, 1889 (French); Ibn Khordadbeh, 1986. About him: Bartold, 1973, pp. 513–515; Krachkovsky, 1957, pp. 147–150; Bulgakov, 1958; Ibn Khordadbeh, 1986, pp. 3–52, El 2, vol. 2, pp. 839–840.

**Kitab al-Masalik w'al-Mamalik**  
(The Book of Roads and Kingdoms)

[p. 5] ... **The kibla of residents of each country**

The kibla of residents of Armenia<sup>4</sup>, Azerbaijan<sup>5</sup>, Baghdad, Wasit, al-Kufa, al-Madain, al-Basra, Hulwan, ad-Dinawar, Nikhawand, Hamazan, Isbakhan, ar-Rey, Tabaristan, the entire Khurasan, the country of al-Khazar, Indian Kashmir are aimed at the wall of al-Ka'bah—there where its gate is. ...

[p. 16] ... **The List of the Lords of the World**

The Lord of Iraq, also referred to as Kisra<sup>6</sup>, [bearing the title of] Shahanshah<sup>7</sup>; the Lord of ar-Rum, also referred to as Kaysar<sup>8</sup>,—the Basil<sup>9</sup>; the Lords of the Turks, Tibet, Khazars—they all are the Khakans<sup>10</sup> ... [p. 17] the Lord of as-Saqaliba<sup>11</sup>—the Knaz<sup>12</sup>...

**The outlook of the Berberian [tribes] (al-Barbar)**

[p. 92] Rumiya<sup>13</sup>, Burjan<sup>14</sup>, of the lands of as-Saqaliba and al-Abar (the Avar, the Iberians)<sup>15</sup>—north of al-Andalus<sup>16</sup>. [Here is] what comes from the Western Sea (the Mediterranean Sea?): the servants (eunuchs)—as-Saqaliba, ar-Rumi (Rumiyan, Byzantine), Franks (al-Ifranja), and Langobard (al-lungubardiyyun), maidens (neifes) from ar-Rumi and Andalus, fur skins of hares, beavers, of fragrances: Styrax tar, of medicines: mastic. From the mouth of that sea near the Land of Franks, they obtain al-Busazz (corals) which is the item popularly called coral (mardjan).

<sup>4</sup> Arminiya (Arminia) is an area in Transcaucasia that was included in the Northern Vicegerency of the Arab Caliphate, which was founded in the early 8th century after the campaigns of commanders Habib ibn Maslama and Muhammad ibn Marwan. The Arab administration adopted the Sassanid model and divided the Province of Arminiya into four parts, which covered different territories in different periods. Overall, the province covered a territory much greater than that of Armenia as such.

<sup>5</sup> Azerbaijan means the areas of the Eastern Transcaucasian Region that were conquered by the Arabs in 639–643 during the reign of Caliph 'Umar and were part of the Northern Vicegerency of the Arab Caliphate in the 8–9th centuries.

<sup>6</sup> Kisra is the Arabic form of (the Persian variant of) the Iranian name of a Sassanid dynasty, Khosrow.

<sup>7</sup> Shahanshah means the 'king of kings.'

<sup>8</sup> Kaysar is the Arabic form of the Latin word 'Caesar.'

<sup>9</sup> Basil is the Arabic form of the Greek name of the supreme ruler of Byzantium 'Basileus.'

<sup>10</sup> Khakan is the title of supreme rulers in Turkic Khaganates, and then of smaller associations, like the Uighur, Avar, Khazar rulers; rulers of Ancient Rus' sometimes adopted the title [Novoseltsev, 2000, pp. 367–379].

<sup>11</sup> Arab geographers used the term 'as-Saqaliba' in a variety of meanings. For instance, when contrasted with 'at-Turk,' which means Turkic peoples, 'as-Saqaliba' could mean non-Turkic peoples, which would probably include the Slavs; or 'as-Saqaliba' is the people inhabiting the woods, in contrast to those in the steppe [Garayeva, 2002, p. 461].

<sup>12</sup> Knaz is the editor's conjecture, with which a majority of scholars agreed; in manuscripts it is *k.nan* and *k.bad*.

<sup>13</sup> Rumia, or Rumiya, usually means Byzantium or Italy in Arab sources. It is most probably Italy in this case.

<sup>14</sup> The term Burjans here refers either to the Burgundians—the population of a large area in the south and south-east of modern-day France and Switzerland, or to the Danube Bulgars.

<sup>15</sup> The Avars were Turkic- or Mongolian-speaking tribes originating in Middle Asia, which are mentioned in Chinese sources as *the Ju-Juan*. Starting in the 4th century they moved westward, sometimes along with nomadic Turks and sometimes alone; Byzantine sources report them to have colonised some areas in the Northern Caucasus in the 6th century, after which they reportedly sent embassies to Byzantium, which was forced to enter into an alliance with them. They gradually reached the Elba River and occupied Pannonia, then Dalmatia in the early 7th century, and they waged war with Byzantium, the Lombards, and the Franks. Having established a state of their own in the Danube Region, known as the Avar Khaganate, they conquered the land of the as-Saqaliba, who temporarily allied with them against Byzantium. In 626 the Avars, allied with the as-Saqaliba, made an abortive attempt at conquering Constantinople, after which the Avar Khaganate began to grow weaker. The as-Saqaliba united to form an independent state and allied with the Franks against the Avars. In the late 8th century the Franks routed the Avars, and the Avar union ceased to exist. The Slavic and Avar regions may have been mentioned together because of their having reportedly co-existed within the Avar Khaganate.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Andalus is the Arabic name for Spain.

[p. 93] As for the sea [that spreads] past [the lands of] as-Saqaliba and on the shore of which the town of Thule is situated<sup>17</sup>, it is not navigated by either ships or boats, and nothing comes from there. The sea where the Isles of Bliss are is the same (Jazair as Su'ada)<sup>18</sup>. This is also not navigated and nothing comes from there. That [sea] is also in the West.

### Darb as-Salama and the route to the Gulf of Kustantiniya

... **Another route** ... [p. 103]... then... [go] to Abidos that stands on the pass<sup>19</sup>, then to the Strait of Kustantiniya<sup>20</sup>, and this is the sea called Buntus (the Pont, Pontos Euxeinos)<sup>21</sup>, which is part of the al-Khazar Sea (issues from the Khazar Sea)<sup>22</sup>, its estuary there is six miles<sup>23</sup>. At the entry of [the rass], there is the town of Musanna<sup>24</sup>. The Gulf (al-Khalij) spreads westwards and passes by Kustantiniya sixty miles far from its entry<sup>25</sup>...

[p.104]...<sup>26</sup> The entire Gulf from the Khazar Sea up to the ash-Sham Sea<sup>27</sup> is three hundred and twenty miles long. The ships went down into [the gulf] from the islands of the Khazar Sea<sup>28</sup> and from there up along from the ash-Sham Sea up to Kustantiniya.....

[p. 105] ... They say that Muslim ibn Abu Muslim al-Jarmi<sup>29</sup> told that the provinces (the themes)<sup>30</sup> of ar-Rum, where there were the rulers appointed by the tsar, are fourteen [in all]; the three of that number are past the pass. The first of them is the theme of Tafilah<sup>31</sup>; it belongs to Kustantiniya; its limits from east are the pass [up to] the ash-Sham Sea, and from west, the wall<sup>32</sup> built between the Khazar Sea and the ash-Sham Sea... From south [the theme's border], the ash-Sham Sea; from north, the Khazar Sea. The next province, which lies past the above [Tafilah], is Tarakiyya (Tarakiya)<sup>33</sup>. Its borders are: from east, the wall; from south, the Province of al-Makaduniya<sup>34</sup>; from west, the Burjani land;<sup>35</sup> and from north, the Khazar Sea... The third province—al-Makaduniya—neighbours the wall from the east; from the south, the ash-Sham Sea; from the west, the Land of as-Saqaliba;<sup>36</sup> and from the north, Burjan...

<sup>17</sup> Thule was one of the last islands of the inhabited part of the Earth in the north-western part of the Atlantic according to the ancient Greek geographical tradition. Ibn Khordadbeh called the island a 'city,' on which basis some scholars have identified Thule with Toulon, which is hardly likely. The mention of 'the sea beyond the Slavs,' in which Thule lies, as well as the further statement that the Fortunate Isles lie in the same sea, suggests that the Baltic Sea was probably known to be part of the Atlantic.

<sup>18</sup> The Fortunate Isles are the Canary Islands in the Atlantic (the Arabs learned about them from the ancient Greek geographical tradition).

<sup>19</sup> Abidos on the strait is a city on the Asian shore of the Dardanelles, 100 miles away from Constantinople.

<sup>20</sup> This means the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara, and the Bosphorus.

<sup>21</sup> The Pontos here means the Greek Propontis—that is, the Sea of Marmara.

<sup>22</sup> The Khazar Sea here means the Black Sea. 10th century geographers used the term to refer to the Caspian Sea.

<sup>23</sup> This refers to the entrance to the Dardanelles from the Sea of Marmara.

<sup>24</sup> Musanna is a city on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus, opposite Constantinople.

<sup>25</sup> This may refer to the Golden Horn.

<sup>26</sup> After the description of the road from Baghdad via cities in Western Asia and Asia Minor.

<sup>27</sup> The Sea of Syria (*as-Sham*) is the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea; this included the Aegean Sea. Ash-Sham was the province of the Caliphate that included the territories of present-day Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan.

<sup>28</sup> The Arabic word *al-Jazirah* (plural: *al-jaza'ir*) can also mean a peninsula. It may refer to Taurica or the Taman Peninsula [Novoseltsev, 2000-1, p. 366].

<sup>29</sup> Muslim ibn Abu Muslim al-Jarmi was an Arab who bought himself out of captivity in Byzantium in 845 and wrote a book on Byzantium and the neighbouring peoples. The 'Book of Admonition and Revision' by al-Mas'udi contains information about this.

<sup>30</sup> A theme (Arabic: *al-band*) was a province or a military or administrative district. The theme system in Byzantium was established in the 6–9th centuries; the borders of the themes changed with time.

<sup>31</sup> Tafilah is the theme of Tafdos (or Thrace).

<sup>32</sup> Emperor Anastasius I of Byzantium (491–518) built a wall about 75 km long, which started 50 km away from Constantinople near the Black Sea and stretched to the Sea of Marmara, in about 512. It was called the Long Walls.

<sup>33</sup> Most scholars identify this theme as Thrace; some suggest it is the theme of Dyrrachium.

<sup>34</sup> Maqaduniya is the theme of Macedonia, which had the same territory as present-day Macedonia.

<sup>35</sup> The Burjani land here means Danube Bulgaria.

<sup>36</sup> The as-Saqaliba land here means the Southern Slavic land.

### On al-Jarbi (about the northern side)

[p. 118] Al-Jarbi<sup>37</sup> is the lands of the North, a quarter of [tilled, inhabited] land... Here belong Armenia, Azarbaijan, ar-Rei, Dumawand... [p. 119]...<sup>38</sup> Also al-Babr<sup>39</sup>, at-Taisalan<sup>40</sup>, al-Khazar (land of the Khazars, the Khazars), al-Lan, as-Saqaliba, and al-Abar (the Avars)<sup>41</sup>.

### The route to Armenia<sup>42</sup>

From Varsan to Barza'a<sup>43</sup> it is eight sikks<sup>44</sup>, then to Mansura<sup>45</sup> in Armenia it is four sikks.

From Barza'a to Tiflis<sup>46</sup> it is ten sikks, while to al-Bab wa-l-abwab<sup>47</sup> it is fifteen sikks.

From Barza'a to Dabil<sup>48</sup> it is seven sikks.

From Marand<sup>49</sup> to al-Wadi<sup>50</sup> it is ten parasangs<sup>51</sup>, then to Nashawa<sup>52</sup> ten parasangs, then to Dabil twenty parasangs.

From Varsan to Darman<sup>53</sup> it is three parasangs, then to al-Bailakan<sup>54</sup> it is nine parasangs, then to Barza'a it is fourteen parasangs, and finally from Barza'a to al-Bazz it is thirty parasangs.

Armenia prima<sup>55</sup>: as-Sisajan<sup>56</sup>, Arran<sup>57</sup>, Tiflis, Barza'a, al-Bailakan, Kabala<sup>58</sup> Sharvan<sup>59</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Jarbi is a northern vicegerency of the Arab Caliphate, which included Azerbaijan, Arminiya, al-Jazirah (Upper Mesopotamia), as-Sugur (the Arab-Byzantine frontier area), and a number of Ciscaspian territories.

<sup>38</sup> A list of regions on the south-western shore of the Caspian Sea follows.

<sup>39</sup> Al-Babr (also can be read as *al-Hir*) is an area in the mountains between Ardabil and Zanjan; it was known as Tarom and Halhal [Minorsky, 1937, p. 391].

<sup>40</sup> At-Taylasan is a region on the south-western shore of the Caspian Sea.

<sup>41</sup> The fact that the as-Saqaliba and the Avars are mentioned after the areas and peoples of the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea Region, and the Lower Volga Region suggests that it refers to the Eastern Slavs and the part of the Avars (*Obres* in ancient Russian chronicles), which stayed in the Northern Caucasus for some time after the majority of them had moved to Pannonia. The fact that similar lists are combined to talk about the peoples of the Balkans and the Northern Caucasus is suggestive of Ibn Khordadbeh's traditional approach to presenting reports on peoples in the East European and Central Regions contained in different sources. This schematic presentation and adherence to a single tradition when combining reports of various natures is typical of the medieval thinker.

<sup>42</sup> Modern-day Armenia does not have the same territory as the historical Arminiya; part of its territory was later included in modern-day Turkey.

<sup>43</sup> Barza'a is the main city of Arran (Caucasian Albania); it was the largest city of the Transcaucasian Region. The ruins are not far away from the modern-day city of Barda, Azerbaijan, near the place where the Terter River (as-Sursur in sources) flows into the Kura River.

<sup>44</sup> The sikk (plural: *sikak*) is the average distance that one relay of horses covers between two post stations.

<sup>45</sup> Mansura—the location of this Transcaucasian city is difficult to determine for lack of data on it.

<sup>46</sup> Tiflis was already a Muslim city at that time.

<sup>47</sup> *The Main Gate*. The Arabic name of Derbent. The name could be written in several ways: al-Bab wa-l-abwab, Bab wa-l-abwab; Bab al-abwab (the most widespread variant, especially in historical sources), sometimes simply al-Bab.

<sup>48</sup> Dabil, Dwin (Dawil)—the capital of Arminiya.

<sup>49</sup> Marand is a small city in South Azerbaijan, north-west of Tabriz.

<sup>50</sup> This refers to the valley of the Araxes River.

<sup>51</sup> The parasang is the distance covered in a day of travel on foot or on horseback.

<sup>52</sup> This means the city of Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan.

<sup>53</sup> Darman is the assumed pronunciation.

<sup>54</sup> A famous medieval city destroyed by the Mongols. Its ruins lie in the area known as Orenqala in Azerbaijan.

<sup>55</sup> Administrative units of the historical Arminiya.

<sup>56</sup> As-Sisajan (Sisaqan, Suniq) is a historical region in the Transcaucasian Region between the Araxes and Lake Sevan; it was included in the first Arminiya by Habib ibn Maslama.

<sup>57</sup> The Arabic name of Caucasian Albania. It covered nearly the same territory as the Albanian Kingdom before the Arab conquest.

<sup>58</sup> The ancient capital of Caucasian Albania, whose ruins lie between the rivers Karachay and Gøjalaichay, east of the village of Chukhurbakala (Qutqashen District, Azerbaijan). It was destroyed completely and abandoned in the 18th century.

<sup>59</sup> Such vowel marks are present in the text of the edition. Sharvan, or Shirvan, is a historical region in Arran; it covers the north-eastern part of Azerbaijan between the Caspian Sea, the Kura River, and Derbent.



Armenia secunda: Jurzan<sup>60</sup>, Sugdabil<sup>61</sup>, Bab Firuz Kubad<sup>62</sup>, al-Lakz<sup>63</sup>.

Armenia tertia: al-Busfurrajan<sup>64</sup>, Dabil, Sirajk Tair<sup>65</sup>, Bagravand<sup>66</sup>, Nashava<sup>67</sup>.

Armenia quarta: Shimshat<sup>68</sup>, Hilat<sup>69</sup>, Kalikala<sup>70</sup>, Arjish<sup>71</sup>, Bajunais<sup>72</sup>.

The provinces of Arran, Jurzan, and as-Sisajan were in possession of the Khazars [prior to the Arabs]. The provinces [p. 123] of Dabil, Nashava, Siraj, Bagravand, Khilat, Bajunais were in possession of the Byzantines. The Persians conquered those lands up to Shirvan, where the Rock of Musa towers above,<sup>73</sup> along with the Well of Life ('ain al-haiwan), and up to Shimshat, where between it and Hisn Ziyad<sup>74</sup> there is the tomb of Safvan ibn al-Muattala as-Sulami, the companion of the rasul Allah—may Allah bless him. Not far from [Hisn Ziyad] there is a tree, and nobody knows what kind of [the tree] it is. It bears fruit similar to nuts but eaten together with the shell. They are sweeter than honey.

Kubad erected the towns of al-Bailakan, Barda, Kabala, as well as the wall of the sun-dried earth bricks.

Anushirvan built ash-Shabiran<sup>75</sup>, Karkara<sup>76</sup>, al-Bab wa-l-abwab, strongholds on the upland roads—all in all three hundred and sixty in number. He built Balanjar<sup>77</sup> and Samandar<sup>78</sup>. In the Jurzan land, he built the town of Sugdabil. He also erected a stronghold called Bab Firuz Kubad, Huwayy<sup>79</sup>, as-Sanariya<sup>80</sup>, al-Baq<sup>81</sup>, Kisal (Kasak)<sup>82</sup>, Abkhaz<sup>83</sup>, Kal'at al-Jardaman<sup>84</sup>, Hai-zan, Shakki,<sup>85</sup> as well as the town of al-Bab<sup>86</sup> [also included in] Armenia.

<sup>60</sup> The Arabic name of the Georgian-inhabited territory (al-Qurj or its Arabised form Jurz).

<sup>61</sup> A medieval city on the eastern bank of the Kura River, opposite Tiflis.

<sup>62</sup> A castle in Firuz Qubad, not far from Derbent, built by Anushirvan (Kubaz, or Kavadh, was the name of Anushirvan's father).

<sup>63</sup> A mountainous region north of Shirvan, inhabited by tribes that Muslim sources call the Lakz people (Lezgins).

<sup>64</sup> Al-Busfurrajan (Basfurjan, Armenian: Vaspurakan) is a historical region in Arran.

<sup>65</sup> Siraj Tayr (Armenian: Shirak) is a historical region of Arminiya, west of Lake Sevan and north of the Araxes River.

<sup>66</sup> Bagrevand is a historical region of Arminiya in the Armenian Highlands, south of the Araxes River.

<sup>67</sup> The context suggests that this refers to Nashava-Nakhchivan from Kağızman (Kars Vilayet, Turkey)

<sup>68</sup> An ancient city on the Euphrates. It was already ruined and desolate in Yaqu't's time.

<sup>69</sup> Modern-day Ahlat, a city on the bank of Lake Van; it was conquered by 'Iyad ibn Ganam, who imposed a capital tax on it.

<sup>70</sup> Ancient Theodosiopolis, modern-day Erzurum (Turkey), not far from the head of the Araxes River.

<sup>71</sup> This is the same as modern-day Erziş on the northern bank of Lake Van.

<sup>72</sup> An ancient district, like Arciş, which was included in the Hilat Region.

<sup>73</sup> According to legend, the Rock of Musa (the Rock of Moses) was situated in Shirvan [Quran, translation, 18:62]. It can probably be identified with Khidirzin Peak on Besh Barmag Mountain in Shirvan.

<sup>74</sup> Hisn Ziyad (Armenian: handzit) was an ancient city and fortress in Malatya. It is the same as Harput (Elazığ Region, Turkey).

<sup>75</sup> One of the border cities of Arran on the Caspian shore near the influx of the river of the same name. The ruins are in the territory of the village of Shahnazarli, Divichi District, North-East Azerbaijan.

<sup>76</sup> Probably located in Kurak on the Kurah River, South Dagestan.

<sup>77</sup> Balanjar was a Khazar city north of Derbent, the ancient Khazar capital. Located at the site of the ancient town of Verkhny Chiriyurt.

<sup>78</sup> Samandar (Sedmender) was the capital of the Khazar Khaganate, north of Derbent, built by Anushirvan. The capital was later transferred closer to the mouth of the Volga River, to Itil (Atil).

<sup>79</sup> Assumed to have been situated in the foothills of the Greater Caucasus.

<sup>80</sup> A mountainous area north (or north-east) of Tiflis, between Tiflis and Dar al-Lan (the Darial Gorge).

<sup>81</sup> Identified with Agpag (Albak) in Vaspurakan; it is located in the foothills of the Greater Caucasus.

<sup>82</sup> Qisal, or Qasal (Qasak, Qazak, sometimes Qisar), is the same as modern-day city of Qazakh (Azerbaijan).

<sup>83</sup> A mountainous area in the Caucasus (al-Qabh) with difficult mountain paths and a passage to the country of the Alans (the Daryal Gorge); it probably refers to the Kingdom of Abkhazia.

<sup>84</sup> Qal'at al-Jardaman (Jardman or Jirdman), literally meaning Jardman Fortress, is the same as Gardman Fortress, the capital of an Albanian principality of the same name.

<sup>85</sup> Shakki was a historical region and city in Arran (Albania); the modern-day city of Shaki, Azerbaijan.

<sup>86</sup> Derbent.

### As for the gates (al-abwab),

they are entries in the ravine of the mountain al-Qabk<sup>87</sup>. The fortresses are erected there, including Bab Sul<sup>88</sup>, Bab al-Lan<sup>89</sup>, Bab ash-Shabiran<sup>90</sup>, Bab Lazika<sup>91</sup>, Bab Barika<sup>92</sup>, Bab Sam-sahi<sup>93</sup>, (p. 124) Bab Sahib as-Sarir<sup>94</sup>, Bab Filan-shah<sup>95</sup>, Bab Karunan<sup>96</sup>, Bab Tabarsaran-shah<sup>97</sup>, Bab Liran-shah<sup>98</sup>, Bab Liban-shah<sup>99</sup>, Bab Anusharvan<sup>100</sup>. The Samandar city is situated behind al-Bab. All that are behind this [city] are in the hands of the Khazars. In the stories about Musa (Moses)—may peace be upon him—it is said: 'You see, when we hid near the rock, I slaughtered the whale which came to life. The rock is the rock of Sharvan, the sea is the sea of Jilan, the settlement is the settlement of Bajarvan. And when they met Gulam, he killed it in Haizan.

Kharaj of Armenia is four thousand thousand dirhems<sup>101</sup>.

### The road between Jurjan<sup>102</sup> and Khamlij<sup>103</sup>, the main city of the Khazars

This is a northern city, so I mentioned it in this part of [the book]. From Jurjan to Khamlij, located at the end of the [mouth of] river<sup>104</sup> which runs from the country of as-Saqaliba and falls into Jurjan, along the sea with a fair wind, it is eight days [of journey]. The Khazar cities are: Khamlij, Balanjar, al-Baida<sup>105</sup>.

Al-Buhturi said:

The respect in al-'Iraq increased to that who concluded  
a treaty ('akhd) in Khamlij in Balanjar.

<sup>87</sup> The Arabic name of the Caucasian Mountains.

<sup>88</sup> The 'Gates of Chor' were known even before the Arabs. The name was derived from the Albanian city of Sul (Chor, Choga) near Derbent. It is located at Toprakkale, the ruins of which still remain near Derbent.

<sup>89</sup> The Daryal Gorge.

<sup>90</sup> The Fortress of Shabaran.

<sup>91</sup> Bab Lazika meant the ancient Lazica, which covered a large territory on the Georgian shore of the Black Sea.

<sup>92</sup> Bab Barika is mentioned among the fortresses built by the Sassanids in West Georgia on the shore of the Black Sea (Bakhr Trabzund).

<sup>93</sup> Bab Samsahi (also known as Bab Samisjan) was one of the fortresses conquered by Arab commander Habib ibn Maslama; the Samaxi Region is adjacent to Jurzan. Bab Samsahi presumably lay near Akhaltsikhe on the left bank of the Kura River.

<sup>94</sup> A fortress of the ruler of Sarir, an Avar-populated area that lay above Derbent.

<sup>95</sup> A fortress guarded by troops of the ruler of Filan, supposed to have been situated south of Samur and west of Masqat.

<sup>96</sup> This is the assumed pronunciation; it may be associated with Qarah, a territory west of Khaydaq towards Sarir.

<sup>97</sup> A fortress guarded by the ruler of Tabarsaran (Tabasaran).

<sup>98</sup> Bab Liran-shah (also Layran, Layzan, Ayran-shah, Iran-shah) is the modern-day Lahij Valley and was a Sassanid vassal principality that was later united with Shirvan.

<sup>99</sup> Bab Liban-shah is associated with the Albanian Lbinan (Lpin, Lupen) tribe in the Alazani Valley.

<sup>100</sup> The name of a fortress (not mentioned by other geographers). It may have been the original name of the city of Shirvan, which is mentioned in 10th century sources. The city, built by Anushirvan and named after him, was later known by the abbreviated name Shirvan (Sharvan).

<sup>101</sup> That is, four million.

<sup>102</sup> Jurjan is Hyrcania; Gorgan is the modern name of a city and river in Mazandran, also applied to the whole province.

<sup>103</sup> Hamlij is the name of the eastern part of the more recent Khazar capital, Atil.

<sup>104</sup> This refers to the Volga River.

<sup>105</sup> Al-Bayda (literally 'white') is the Arabic name of the western part of the city of Atil.

Al-Bayda was a Khazar city traditionally placed in the Lower Volga Region. Since no exact location of al-Bayda in the Lower Volga Region has been established, it could have been a nomadic camp of the khagan with no permanent location, which moved along a specific nomadic route over the course of the year. The name translates from Arabic as 'White,' which may have been a description of the khagan's tent or banner: 'White Tent' or 'White Banner' [Garayeva, 2002, p. 449].

Outside al-Bab, [there are lands] of the lords of Suvar<sup>106</sup>, Lakzs, Alans, Filan, al-Mascāt<sup>107</sup>, Sahib as-Sarir, and the Samandar city. (p. 125). Let us finish with the facts about al-Jarbi<sup>108</sup>, and they are the countries of the North.

[p. 153]. **The post roads in the countries [of Islam]**

[All together, in all the countries,] there are three hundred and ninety post roads (sikk). An annual expenditure for buying road horses (ad-davab), wages of chiefs of posts and messengers (al-furanik) is one hundred and fifty nine thousand dinars.

The ways of Jewish merchants ar-Razaniyya<sup>109</sup>, who speak Arabian, Persian, Romanian, [the language] of Franks, al-Andalus, [the language] of as-Saqaliba. They really travel from al-Mashriq to al-Maghrib and from al-Maghrib to al-Mashriq by land and by sea. They deliver from al-Maghrib servants (hadam), captives, boys-slaves (gilman), brocade (dibaj), hare furs, pelts (al-fira'), sable fur (as-sammur), and swords. They travel from Firanja by the West Sea, disembark near al-Farama, and deliver their goods by land in al-Kulzum<sup>110</sup>. There are five parasangs between these [cities]. Then they travel from al-Kulzum to al-Jarr and Juddu (Jiddu?) by the East Sea. Then they move [further] to as-Sind, al-Hind, and as-Sin. From as-Sin, they export musk, aloe, camphor, cinnamon, and other goods, [p. 154] which are typical for these regions (an-navahi), whereupon they return to al-Kulzum. Then they deliver these [goods] to al-Farama. Then they float by the West Sea and sometimes turn with their goods to Kustantiniya and sell them in ar-Rum. Sometimes they visit with their goods the lands of Firanja and sell them there. If they desire, they take their goods from Firanja by the West Sea, disembark near Antakiya and make three transitions, until they approach al-Jabiya. Then they float along the Euphrates to Baghdad and along Tigris to al-Ubulla. From al-Ubulla they [go] to Oman, as-Sind, as-Sin. All these [countries] are connected one with another.

Speaking about the merchants of ar-Rus, and they are a type of as-Saqaliba<sup>111</sup>, they export beaver and black fox furs, and swords from<sup>112</sup> the distant [lands] of as-Saqaliba to the Rumi Sea<sup>113</sup>. The possessor of ar-Rum takes the tithe ('ushr) from them<sup>114</sup>. If they go by [Ta?]nis<sup>115</sup>,

<sup>106</sup> Suar was one of the cities of the Volga Bulgars. The text suggests that the term here refers not to the city, but to the Suvar ethnic group.

<sup>107</sup> The area between Shabaran and Samur, which was inhabited by the Maqsuts (Massagetae) in ancient times. The text suggests that it is not a geographic name but an ethnonym.

<sup>108</sup> A synonym to al-garbi (western).

<sup>109</sup> Ar-Razaniya Jewish merchants. The word *ar-razaniya* is the Arabic equivalent of the Persian term *ar rahdaniya* (see Ibn al-Faqih). The collocation *ar-rahdaniya* was derived from the Persian *rah-dan*, meaning 'those who know ways,' which applied to travelling merchants. Another widespread opinion is that the name originated with Iranian and Iraqi toponyms as there are numerous settlements with such populations that have 'razan' in the roots of their names—three regions in the eastern part of as-Sawad (modern-day southern Iraq), Fars Province, several regions along the Euphrates, etc.

<sup>110</sup> Al-Qulzum was a port city on the African shore of the Red Sea at the mouth of a canal from the sea to the Nile, which dates back to before the common era. The name of the city has been preserved in the name of the Red Sea (Bakhr al-Qulzum) and the ruins Qum al-Qulzum north of Suez.

<sup>111</sup> Arab geographers usually did not identify the Ruses with the as-Saqaliba. Ibn Khordadbeh believed them to be the same because of the intense commercial activities of the Ruses in the Slavic world and the political connection between the elite of the Ruses and the Slavic nobility. The fragment on the ethnic background of the Rus merchants has a big historiography. In the last century it was widely referred to by historians discussing the origin of the Ancient Russian State. The extract was also used by scholars interested in the history of commercial contacts of Ancient Rus [Zakhoder, 1967; Novoseltsev, 2000; Velikhanova, 1986; Kalinina, 1986].

<sup>112</sup> This refers to Frankish (Carolingian) swords, which were popular in the Near East. They were produced in Germany and Flanders, then exported to Western Slavic countries, from where they reached the Eastern Slavic lands via Krakow.

<sup>113</sup> This refers to the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmara, on which Constantinople lay, as part of the Mediterranean Sea.

<sup>114</sup> On the outskirts of Constantinople, about 2 km from the western walls of the capital, on the European bank of the Bosphorus where it flows into the Sea of Marmora and the Golden Horn, lay the Quarter of St. Mammes, for ambassadors and merchants from Rus'; it was named after a nearby monastery.

<sup>115</sup> Conjectured by the editor. One manuscript preserved the form nis, while another contains a combination of letters without any diacritic signs.

the river of as-Saqaliba<sup>116</sup>, they pass Khamlij, the Khazar city, and their ruler (sahib) takes the tithe ('ushr) from them. Then they go by the Jurjan Sea and disembark everywhere, and a circumference of this sea is five hundred parasangs. Sometimes they export their goods from Jurjan to Baghdad by camels. The translators [for] them are servants-eunuchs (hadam) from the as-Saqaliba, and they say that they are the Christians, and pay jizya<sup>117</sup>.

Speaking about their way by land, the merchants who go from al-Andalus or from [the kingdom] of Franks (Firanja) go such a way; they cross to the Far Susu [p. 155] (as-Sus al-Aksa)<sup>118</sup>, move to Tangier, then to Tunis, then to Egypt, then to ar-Ramlah<sup>119</sup>, then to Damascus, then to al-Kufu<sup>120</sup>, then to Baghdad, then to al-Basrah, then to al-Ahwaz<sup>121</sup>, then to Fars<sup>122</sup>, then to Kirman<sup>123</sup>, then to as-Sind<sup>124</sup>, then to al-Hind, then to as-Sin. Sometimes they go along that side of ar-Rum<sup>125</sup>, to the country of the as-Saqaliba<sup>126</sup>, then to Khamlij, the city of al-Khazar, then to the sea of Jurjan, then to Balkh<sup>127</sup>, to Mavarannahr<sup>128</sup>, then to Vurtu (Urt—Jurt ?) of the Toguzghuzes<sup>129</sup>, then to as-Sin (China).

The tilled (inhabited) land is divided into four parts.

Among them **Arufa** (Europe), in which the following lands are located: al-Andalus, [lands of] the as-Saqaliba, ar-Rum (Byzantium), Firanja (the country of Franks), and Tanja, and so to the boundaries of Misr. [Among them also] **Lubiyya**, within it: Misr (Egypt), Qulzum (the Red Sea), al-Habash (Ethiopia), al-Barbar and all that is adjacent to them, and al-Bahr al-Janub. There are no boars, onagers, and goats within those territories (al-bilad). [And also] **Ityufiya**, [in this part there are]: Tihama, al-Yaman, as-Sind, al-Hind, as-Sin. [The fourth part is] **Askutiya** (Scythia), and within it Armenia, Khurasan, the Turks, and Khazars<sup>130</sup>.

<sup>116</sup> A number of scholars believe that the name of the river should be interpreted as the Atil, though this is not likely geographically because the river is described as flowing into the Caspian Sea. One should keep in mind, however, Ibn Khordadbeh's poor knowledge of the river system of Eastern Europe and his distorted view on the subject [Novoseltsev, 2000, p. 123; Kalinina, 1986, pp. 79–80; Konovalova, Communication Routes, p. 129]. One might presume that the signs preserved in manuscripts mark the typical Arabic ending of the Greek name of the river, *nishell*!'. Taking into account the fact that Ibn Khordadbeh was familiar with the ancient Greek geographical tradition, we can assume the name to have been Tanais-Tanis, but not the conjectured form suggested by M. de Gue, nor the completely real Tanais-Don that was well-known among ancient Greek authors, but a water route from the 'Slavic land' to the Caspian Sea—a trade artery of which the Arabs had only a vague idea, unfamiliar to the author of 'The Book of Routes and Realms,' who knew it only from hearsay and literature.

<sup>117</sup> The jizya is a capital tax levied on non-Muslims for protection by Arab governments. This is why Ibn Khordadbeh emphasised that the Rus merchants claimed to be, or were, Christians. Otherwise they would have to pay a tithe of their income as merchants, the 'ushr, which would be much more [Hrbek, 1968].

<sup>118</sup> Sus al-Aqsa is the Far Sus, a port on the Atlantic shore of Morocco.

<sup>119</sup> Al-Ramla is a city in Palestine, east of Jaffa.

<sup>120</sup> Kufa is a city in Iraq.

<sup>121</sup> Al-Ahwaz is a city in south-west Iraq.

<sup>122</sup> Fars is a province in the south-west of Iran.

<sup>123</sup> Kerman is a province in south-west Iran.

<sup>124</sup> As-Sind is a region west of the lower reaches of the Indus River.

<sup>125</sup> That is, north of ar-Rum. This is the variant from the Vienna Manuscript: ar-Rumiya—that is, Italy, or Byzantium. In the Oxford Manuscript: Arminiya—that is, on the other side of Arminiya.

<sup>126</sup> The 'country of the as-Saqaliba,' or the 'region of the as-Saqaliba,' that is, of the Slavs: the text contains the word *balad*, which renders both meanings. If we assume the previous sentence to refer to a route beyond Arminiya, this should apparently refer to the Eastern Slavs and the route from the Transcaucasian Region along the Black Sea shore, the Azov Sea Region, the Don and Severn Donets Rivers, by portage to the Volga River, then to the Caspian Sea and Middle Asia. If we accept the variant represented by the Vienna Manuscript as referring to a route 'beyond Byzantium,' or Italy, it appears to be the road after Western European countries, via Regensburg–Krakow–Kiev, then to Khazaria and the Caspian Sea.

<sup>127</sup> Balkh was a large commercial centre in the eastern part of Khorasan (near modern-day Wazirabad, Afghanistan).

<sup>128</sup> Mavarannahr (Arabic, literally 'what is beyond the river') is the territory between the rivers Syr Darya and Amu Darya.

<sup>129</sup> Wurt at-tuquzghuz: Wurt, or Yurt, is a conjectured form suggested by the editor. It is traditionally viewed as containing a Turkic root, meaning the 'city' or 'capital' of the Toquz Oghuz people [Validi-Togan, 1937, p. 7].

<sup>130</sup> The fragment is representative of the ancient tradition of dividing the Earth into four inhabited and uninhabitable quarters. The inhabited part was reported to include Europe (*Urufi*), in which notions contemporary to the author, including

### Some of the Earth wonders

[p. 156] ...In the country of ar-Rum, on the coast of the sea of al-Khazar<sup>131</sup>, there is a city (balad) called al-Mustatila. It rains uninterruptedly there in winter and summer, so the inhabitants can neither thresh nor spread their cereals, they put it together in lodgements unthreshed and take from there as much as they need, grind by hands, then mill, and bake bread. There are many hawks in their country, as many as there are crows in our country. They [live] in flocks, and because of their great number, [people] cannot have poultry.

### The description of the wall Yajuj and Majuj<sup>132</sup>

[p. 162] This story was told me by Sallam at-Tarjuman<sup>133</sup>: [The caliph] al-Wathiq<sup>134</sup> bi'llah, after he saw in his sleep<sup>135</sup> that the wall erected by Dhul-Qarnayn<sup>136</sup> between us and Yajuj and Majuj was destroyed, started looking for someone who would go into position and get the information about that. Ashnas said [to the Caliph]: 'There is nobody appropriate for this trip except [p. 163] Sallam at-Tarjuman. He speaks thirty languages'.

[Sallam] said, 'al-Wathiq called me and said: "I want you to go to this wall, observe with your own eyes, and bring me the information about it". Al-Wathiq gathered for me about fifty young and strong people, gave me five thousand dinars, and also paid me ten thousand dirhems as "a price of blood". He ordered to award everyone among the fifty people one thousand dirhems and wages per year. He also ordered to produce for the people felt hats covered with leather

the Slavs, were represented. One of the four parts is called by the ancient name *Scythia*, but the peoples there, including the Khazars, are described as contemporary to the author.

<sup>131</sup> This refers to the Black Sea.

<sup>132</sup> Yajuj and Majuj are the Biblical Gog and Magog, legendary tribes, which medieval geographers believed to have lived somewhere in the East, beyond the Khazar lands. According to the Quran, Dhul-Qarnayn waged war with these tribes and built a wall to protect civilized people from their attacks. Vague ideas of the Great Wall of China were associated with the mention of the wall of the Yajuj and Majuj in the Quran. This suggests that historical concepts were confused in the time of al-Biruni since the wall appeared after the death of Alexander the Great.

<sup>133</sup> Sallam at-Tarjuman was an Arab traveller (mid-9th century), who travelled to northern countries during the reign of Caliph al-Wathiq, who supported various geographical expeditions.

Sallam undertook his travels in approximately 842–843. He crossed the Caucasus (Armenia and Georgia) into the Khazar land to the east, then returned to Khwarezm via Barskhan, Taraz (Talas), and Samarkand (or round the Caspian Sea to Balkhash and Dzungaria, then back to Samarra via Bukhara and Khorasan). Sallam did see a wall or a mountain passage that looked like a wall during the trip (doubtless he could have seen the Caucasian wall near Derbent; it is also not impossible that he reached the Great Wall of China). According to Hungarian scholar E. Zichy, who believed the wall to be one of the Ural passages allegedly fortified by the Bulgars, his travel was not confined to the area between the Crimea and the Ural Mountains [Zichy, pp. 191–200].

Having returned home, Sallam wrote a literary work about his travels and gave messages to the caliph that he had heard in the places he had visited. The account of Sallam at-Tarjuman has come down to us as presented by Ibn Khordadbeh, who emphasised the fact that Sallam initially transmitted (that is, told) the account to him and then dictated it from the note that he had prepared for the caliph. This edition of the description became greatly popular in Arab geographical literature and was retold, in varying degrees of detail, by early and more recent geographers: Ibn Rustah, Yaqt, al-Gharnati, al-Idrisi, al-Qazwini, al-Nuwayri, and others. Al-Idrisi preserved some details omitted in the copy by Ibn Khordadbeh, which has come down to us.

The confusion in the description of both walls is attributable to the ambiguous representation of Dhul-Qarnayn, according to which it was located either in the East or in the North. Most likely, in addition to his own impression of what he had seen, Sallam tried to reflect in literary form the details of the wall of Yajuj and Majuj mentioned in the Quran [Quran, translation, 21:96; Krachkovsky, 1957, pp. 138–140; BGA, VI, p. 162, line 15].

<sup>134</sup> Al-Wathiq was an Abbasid caliph (227–232/842–847).

<sup>135</sup> The pretext on which Sallam set off on his travels was fantastic: Caliph al-Wathiq had dreamed that the wall built by Dhul-Qarnayn to imprison the Yajuj and Majuj was open (much as astronomer Muhammad ibn Musa set off on his travels to examine a cave with seven sleeping youths). The actual reason why he had such a dream might have been rumours of Turkic migrations in Middle Asia (which resulted from the Kyrgyz routing the Uighurs in Mongolia in 840).

<sup>136</sup> Dhul-Qarnayn ('two-horned') was an epithet applied to Alexander the Great. The source of the Quranic narrative [Quran, translation 18:82, 85, 93] about Alexander the Great is a Syrian legend from the 6th century AD, according to which Alexander had two growths like horns on his head. In Arabic, 'zu' means 'owner, master,' which yields 'owner of two horns, one who has two horns.'

and also to produce for them fur cloaks and wooden stirrups. He gave me two hundred mules for transporting provisions and water. We left Surra man ra'a<sup>137</sup> with the letter from al-Wathiq bi'llah to Ishaq ibn Isma'il<sup>138</sup>, the ruler (sahib) of Armenia, who is in Tiflis, to be received by him. Ishaq wrote about us to the possessor of as-Sarir, and the possessor of as-Sarir wrote about us to the tsar (malik) of al-Lan, the tsar al-Lan wrote about us to Filan Shah, who wrote about us to Tarkhan, the tsar of the Khazars. We stayed with the tsar of the Khazars for a day so that he would send five guides with us. We went from them twenty six days and approached the black land with an unpleasant smell. Before entering that [land], we provided ourselves with vinegar and smelt it to take away the disgusting scent, and went ten days in that way. Then we approached the cities located among the ruins and went through those places twenty more days. We asked about the reason of such condition of the cities, and we were informed that those cities are cities which Yajuj and Majuj once invaded and destroyed. Then we reached the fortresses [built] near the mountain, along whose ravens the wall was situated. In those [p. 164] fortresses, the nation lives which speaks Arabian and Persian. They asked us where we are from. We informed them that we are the messengers of the emir of believers. They approached us, and they were astonished [by our words] and [asked again, "The emir of believers?" We said, "Yes." Then they asked us, "Is he old or young?" We said, "Young." They were very surprised again and asked us, "Where does he live?" We said, "In Iraq, in the city called Surra man raa." They said, "We have never heard of that." [The distance] between each fortress is from one to two parasangs, less or more... Then we approached the city called Ika<sup>139</sup>. It takes the area which is equal to [a square] with the side of ten parasangs. [The city] has iron gates, ploughed fields around it, and mills inside. It is exactly that city where Dhul-Qarnayn settled down with his army. Between [the city] and the wall, there is a distance of three-day walking. [Over the way from the city] to the wall, which may be reached on the third day, there are fortresses and settlements. [This wall is like] the mountain of rounded form. It is said that the Yajuj and Majuj live there. There are two types of them (sinfani). It is also said that the Yajuj are taller than the Majuj—with the difference of from one to one and a half cubit, more or less.

Then we approached the high mountain, on which the fortress and wall rise, built [p. 165] by Dhul-Qarnayn. There is a ravine between two mountains, width of which is two hundred cubits. It is the road through which [the Yajuj and Majuj] went out and settled down throughout the land. The foundation of wall was laid at depths of thirty cubits with the help of iron and copper, and [it was erected] in such way until it reached the surface. Then two supports were established on both sides of the ravine. Each support is twenty five cubits in width and fifty cubits in height. All this construction consists of iron plates covered with copper, [the size] of one such plate is one and a half cubit. Thickness of the plate is four fingers. Between these two supports, there is an iron lintel (darvand) one hundred and twenty cubits long, ten cubits thick, and five cubits in width; it is established on both supports. Above the lintel, there is a construction of the same iron plates covered with copper, which rise up to the top of the mountain; they are as high as your eyes can capture. This building rises about sixty cubits over the lintel. Above [the construction] there are iron terraces. Along the edges of each terrace, there are two horns, which turn up over each other. Each terrace is five cubits long and four cubits wide. There are thirty seven terraces above the lintel. The iron gates have two flaps attached to them. [p. 166] The width of each flap is fifty cubits, the height is seventy five cubits, the thickness is five cubits. Both supports, when rotating, are proportionate to the lintel. [This construction is built in such way] that wind cannot

<sup>137</sup> Surah mann ra'a (Arabic, literally 'happy is he who has seen'), from an abbreviated form of which the name Samara was derived, was a city built by Caliph al-Mu'tasim (833–842) at the site of the ancient city of Samir, which became the capital during his reign. Caliph al-Mu'tamid (870–892) transferred the capital back to Baghdad.

<sup>138</sup> Ishaq ibn Ismail was a ruler of Tiflis, who seceded from the caliphate. He was defeated by the troops of Arab commander Buga al-Kabir and executed in 851.

<sup>139</sup> De Gue identifies the city of Ika at the border with Yajuj and Majuj as Igu-Hami, the former Uighur capital.

penetrate neither through the gates nor from the side of mountains; it looks like it was created by nature itself. There is the lock (kifl) seven cubits in length, and it is one ba'a in arm's span. It cannot be clasped by two people, it raises twenty five cubits above the ground. Five cubits higher the fold, a catch (galak) hangs—it is longer than the fold itself. Each of two [lock] catches is two cubits. The blade of the lock key is one and a half cubits long. [This key] has twelve merlons, each of the merlons looks like a pestle of mortar. The arm's span of the key is four inches; it is attached to the chain soldered to the door. The length of the chain is eight cubits; it has four inches in arm's span. The ring, attaching the chain to the door, is like the ring of a catapult. The threshold of the door, not including parts buried under the two jambs, is ten cubits wide and one hundred cubits long. A prominent part of [the door] is five cubits. All [the sizes], "zira", are estimated at [long measure] named "zira' as-sauda".

There are two fortresses near the gates, each is two hundred square cubits. Two trees grow [p. 167] near the gates of these two fortresses. Between these two fortresses there is the sweet spring. In one of the fortresses, tools are [preserved], which were used for building the wall, including iron boilers and iron scoops. On each tripod (dikdan) there are situated four boilers, like boilers for boiling soap. The remains of iron bricks [of which the wall was built] are there. They stuck to each other due to rust. A superintendent (rais) of those fortresses rides every Monday and Thursday [to the iron gates]. They (raises) obtain these gates by right of succession, as caliphs inherit the caliphate. He rides [to the gates] together with three accompanies, and every one among them [wears] a pestle. The staircase [is put] against the gates. He climbs up to the highest step and knocks on the lock one time at dawn, and they hear a sound like [boom] of the disturbed beehive, then the [sounds] are damped down. They knock on [the lock] one more time at noon. [The rais] puts his ear to the gates: the second sound is stronger than the first one. Then [the sounds] are damped down again. When the afternoon time comes, they knock one more time. The same boom appears. It remains here until the sunset and only after that goes away. The purpose of knocking on the catch is that he (the rais) can hear whether there is someone behind the gates, and [if someone is there], then they will know that it is guarded. And also to make [people in the fortress] aware of that so they will not make [p. 168] any efforts against the gates.

Not far from that locality there is a great fortress of size of ten parasangs by ten, [that is], the square of it is one hundred square parasangs.

Sallam said, 'And I asked a person among the present people of the fortress: "Do these gates have any weakness?" They replied, "Not any, except this crack. The crack goes along the width like a thin thread." I asked, "Do you worry about the gates at all?" They replied, 'No! These gates are five cubits wide in cubits of al-Iskander; one cubit of al-Iskander is one and a half cubit of as-saud"<sup>140</sup>.

[Sallam] said, 'I went to [the gates], extracted from my shoes the knife, and started scraping the crack, and took out from there a piece of size of one and a half dirhem, tied it in the kerchief in order to demonstrate to Wathiq bi'llah. On the right side of the gates, above, in the ancient language (al-lisan al-avval), the following phrase is written in iron [letters]: "And when the promise of my Lord comes, he will make it powder; the promise of my Lord is the truth"<sup>141</sup>. We observed the construction which mainly consisted of stripes: one row is yellow, of brass; another one is black, of iron. On the mountain there is the special place dug for moulding the gates, the place for a boiler, in which copper is stirred, and the place where tin and copper are boiled. These boilers are of yellow copper. Every boiler has three handles. There are chains and hooks, with which copper was lifted on the wall. We asked the people who were there, "Have you seen at least one of those Yajuj and Majuj?" They recalled that once they had seen some quantity of

<sup>140</sup> The text suggests that 1 al-Iskandar cubit equals one and a half as-saud cubits, the so-called black cubit, which equals 54.04 cm; thus, one al-Iskandar cubit equals 81.06 cm.

<sup>141</sup> Quran, translation, 18: 98.

them on the mountain. [Then] blew a horrible wind and threw [the Yajuj and Majuj] to their side. They are approximately an inch and a half tall. The mountain on the outside [p. 169] has neither plateau nor slope, and there are no grass, nor any tree, nor something else. This mountain is high, smooth, and white.

When we went out, the guides led us to nahiya Hurasan. That possessor was called al-Lub<sup>142</sup>. Then we left that locality and approached the lands, the possessor of which was called Tabanuyan<sup>143</sup>. He is a collector of kharaj (sahib al-kharaj). We stayed there for [several] days, then left that place and went until on the eighth month we approached Samarkand. [Then] we arrived in Isbishab (Isfijab), crossed the Balkh river, then went through Sharusana (Usrushana), Bukhara, Termez, and, finally, reached Nisabur. [During the trip], many people who were with us died. On the way there, twenty two people became sick. We buried the dead in their clothes, and left sick men in some settlement. On the way back, fourteen people died. And when we arrived in Nisabur, there were just fourteen people among us. The possessors of fortresses provided us with everything we needed. Then we went to Abdallah ibn Tahir. He awarded me eight thousand dirhems, and each of my companions was awarded five hundred dirhems. He set to each horseman five dirhams, and to each pedestrian three dirhams per day to very Rey. Among the mules, [p. 170] which we took along, there were only twenty three survivors. Finally, we approached Surra man raa, and I went to al-Wathiq, reported him on the whole story, and showed the piece of iron that I had scraped from the gates. He praised Allah, ordered to make the requital, and gifted the people, having given to everyone one thousand dinars. Our way to the wall was sixteen months, and our way back, twelve months and [several] days'.

Sallam at-Tarjuman told me this story in general, then dictated it to me from the message that had been written for al-Wathiq bi'llah.

### About miracles of the mountains

[p. 172] The al-'Arj Mountain<sup>144</sup>, which is between Mecca and Medina, extends to ash-Sham<sup>145</sup> (Syria), until it connects in Hims with the mountains of al-Lubnan, and in Damascus with [the mountain of] Sanir. Then [the mountains] stretch further to [p. 173] Antakya (Antioch)<sup>146</sup> and the mountains of al-Massis<sup>147</sup>, called al-Lukam there<sup>148</sup>, where they connect with the mountains of Malatya, Shamishat (Shamshat)<sup>149</sup> and Kalikala<sup>150</sup>, and approach] the sea of al-Khazar<sup>151</sup>, and where al Bab wa-l-abwab is situated. There [this mountain] is called al-Qabk (the Caucasus)<sup>152</sup>.

*This material was prepared by Nuriya Garayeva*

<sup>142</sup> Al-Lub, according to the text, is the title of one of the rulers; it may be the same as Lob (Lop, Lob-Katak), which sources locate in the lower reaches of the Tarim (cf. [Bartold, III, pp. 497–498]).

<sup>143</sup> Tabanuyan, according to the text, is a ruler's name or title; it is apparently the same as Turfan.

<sup>144</sup> Al-'Arj Mountain is a mountain passage between Mecca and Medina.

<sup>145</sup> Ash-Sham was a province in the Arab Caliphate; it covered a territory larger than modern-day Syria.

<sup>146</sup> Antioch is a city in Syria, on the Orontes River.

<sup>147</sup> The al-Massisa Mountains are in the northern part of Syria.

<sup>148</sup> Al-Lukam is a mountain in Syria.

<sup>149</sup> Shamishat was ancient Arsamosata, on the left bank of the Euphrates Basin.

<sup>150</sup> Kalikala was the ancient city of Kari (Karnu-Kalak); hence the Arabic corruption Kalikala (modern-day Erzurum in eastern Turkey).

<sup>151</sup> The al-Khazar Sea: in all previous cases Ibn Khordadbeh used the term Khazar Sea to refer to the Black Sea. However, this fragment refers to the Caspian Sea. The author apparently obtained data from different sources.

<sup>152</sup> The Arabic name of the Caucasus was derived from its Sassanid name *Kust-i Kapkohhell*!"

The whole fragment is meant to render the idea, typical of Arab geography, that there is a single mountain ridge around the inhabited Earth.



### Ibn al-Faqih

From the biography of Ibn al-Faqih, all we learn is his full name—Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Hamadani Ibn Al-Faqih. There is no additional data. By nisba one could presume that he or his ancestors were originated in Hamadan (Iran). In about 903, Ibn al-Faqih composed 'The Book of Lands' ('Kitab al-Buldan'), kept as edited by 'Ali ash-Shaysari in the 11th century. The three manuscripts as they were collated by 'Ali ash-Shaysari provided the basis for the critical edition in the *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum* (BGA), set up by the Dutch orientalist M. J. De Goeje. Early in the 20th century, in Mashhad, a manuscript from the 13th century of the second part of Ibn al-Faqih's treatise was revealed (published in parts, we have no evidence of a complete edition). This contains a chapter on the Turks.

'Concise Book of Lands' contains an edited and amended version of the narrative about the journeys of the Jewish and Slavic merchants, as

compared to the original work by Ibn Khordadbeh, even though the al-Faqih's treatise is based either on the same source as Ibn Khordadbeh's or he just benefited from the latter's 'Kitāb al-Masālik w'al-Mamālik'. In the Russian translations there are only the individual chapters of Ibn al-Faqih's book concerning the regions of Iran and Iraq, alongside the fragments referring to Slavic merchants. The entire part on Eastern Europe from 'Mukhtasar Kitab al-Buldan' ('Concise Book of Lands') by Ibn al-Faqih was translated into Polish by T. Levitsky [Żrodla, 1977]. Below are the Russian translations of his entire text. Our translations retain Ibn al-Faqih's numbering, in Roman numerals, of the text fragments.

Edition: BGA, V, 1885. Translation: Masse, 1973; Żrodla, 1969, II/1. About him: Krachkovsky, 1957, p. 262; Żrodla, 1969, P/1, pp. 9–16. EI 2, vol. 3, pp. 761–762.

### Kitab al-buldan

(The book of kingdoms)

#### 1.

[p. 6] The fifth iklim—Kustantiniya, ar-Rum, and al-Khazar. Its width and length are the same as the width and length of the first [iklim].

The sixth iklim—Firanja (the country of the Franks) and other nations. There [is] [the nation of] women who have the tradition to cut off their breasts in childhood and to sear it by iron in order to make them non-growing. Its width and length are the same as the width and length of the first [iklim].

The seventh iklim—the Turks. Their men and women have [typical] Turkic faces because of predominant (at-Turk) cold. There [are] wild animals, and they are small. There are no insects (gadflies) and no lions. They (the people) live under the roof which is made of boards, exported on wagons harnessed by oxen. Their cattle pasture in deserts (steppes). They do not have many children.

#### 2.

[p. 6] The tilled land is divided into four parts: Arufa (Europe), and within it: al-Andalus, as-Saqaliba, ar-Rum, Firanja, and Tanjar, to the boundaries of Egypt; Lubiya, and within it: Egypt, Kulzum, al-Habash, [the country of] Barbar, and that goes after it; [the third part is] the South Sea (al-Bahr al-Junubi). Within those territories (al-Bilad), there are no boars, donkeys, or goats. In this [part], there are Tihama, al-Yaman, as-Sind, and al-Hind. [The fourth part] is Askutya (Scythia), and within it: Armenia, Khurasan, the Turks (at-Turk), and al-Khazar.

### 3. The talk about the seas and land [that] surrounds them

[p. 7] The third sea is the Khorasan, Khazar, [called this way] because the Khazars are located near it. Along the sea, there is [the way] to Mukan (Mugan), Tabaristan, Khwarizm, and Bab al-abwab. From the sea of Jurjan to the gulf of al-Khazar it is ten days of [journey], and if they have [a fair wind], then it will be eight days of [journey] along the sea and two days of [journey] along the land. This sea is called Khorasan. Its side is one hundred parasangs, and its circle is one thousand five hundred parasangs.

The fourth [sea] is the one between Rumiya and Kwarizm, there is the island called Tuliya (Apulia)<sup>153</sup>, which no ship can approach.

### 4.

[p. 77] An-Nuba (an-Nubiya) are the yakovits. The as-Saqaliba have a cross. Thank Allah for Islam!

### 5.

[p. 83] Burjan (the Danube Bulgaria) and the countries of the as-Saqaliba and al-Abar (Avar) are located in the North from al-Andalus.

### 6.

[p. 84] [The following things] are exported from these areas: servants from as-Saqaliba, the Rum and Frank boys (gilman), girls from al-Andalus (al-Andalusiyat), furs of a rabbit, beaver, sable, among perfumes: tar and mastic. Al-busazz is extracted from their sea, and it is called coral by the population<sup>154</sup>.

### 7. Vine

[p. 125] [Vine], a great number of sorts and heterogeneity of its types is difficult to imagine. [Among them, there are such types] as as-Sunaya and al-Hamri in the area of<sup>155</sup> Kutrubbul, al-mulahi is in Bagdhah, as-Saklabi and the red [sort] is in Surra man raa (Samarra).

### 8. The talk about ar-Rum

[p. 136] The land of ar-Rum is located in the north (daburiya)-west. It [stretches] from Antakya (Antioch) to Sicily and from Kustantiniya to Buliya (Apulia). [The languages of] ar-Rum and as-Saqaliba are predominant among them. Al-Andalus, as-Saqaliba, and ar-Rum, all of them are the Christians-Melchanits. They read the Gospel (al-Indjil) in German (bi-l-Jarmakaniya). They have cows, horses, and sheep. They judge their legal disputes relying on the laws of Tore (at-Tavriya)<sup>156</sup>. They [are] craftsmen, sages (hikam), doctors (tibb). They are the best nation in depicting [icons].

### 9.

[pp. 145–146] The sea of ar-Rum [stretches] from Antakya to Kustantiniya, then turns, gathering [the lands] from the North until it goes out behind al-Bab wa-l-abwab<sup>157</sup> from the side of al-Khazar<sup>158</sup> until it reaches [from the other side] Qayrawan<sup>159</sup> of Ifriqiya<sup>160</sup>, [then] Andalusia [and approaches] the Far Susa, the Happy Isles.

<sup>153</sup> Sometimes Tuliya. Apulia is a city on the Adriatic shore.

<sup>154</sup> The fragment is almost the same as the quote from Ibn Khordadbeh (see above).

<sup>155</sup> Translation suggested by T. Lewicky [Żrodla, 1969, p. 22]. In the Arabic text it is 'tassuj' (plural: *tasa-sij*). The historical tassuj is a weight and monetary unit equal to 1/4 danīq.

<sup>156</sup> This is what it says in the text, but it apparently refers to the Bible [Żrodla, 1969, p. 22].

<sup>157</sup> Another spelling form of the Arabic name of Derbent; the most common spelling is Bal al-abwab.

<sup>158</sup> The sea 'beyond Derbent' is usually interpreted as the Caspian Sea. However, this probably refers to the northern and western parts of the Black Sea, 'on the Khazar side.'

<sup>159</sup> Qayruwan is a major commercial, political, and military centre in Tunisia.

<sup>160</sup> Ifriqiya was a medieval province mostly coinciding with modern-day Tunisia.

The land of ar-Rum—in the north-west—is from Antakya to Sicily and from Kustantiniya to Buliya (Apulia)<sup>161</sup>. The majority of the population are the ar-Rum, as-Sakaliba, Andaluses.

As-Saqaliba consist of two types: the dark and light (swarthy) ones, who live near the sea, and as for the light ones, they are beautiful and live on the land<sup>162</sup>. [The main] city of the tsar of Kustantiniya, Antakya (Antioch), is situated on the coast of sea; [there is] the residence (majma') of the patriarch. From Tarsus to the gulf of Kustantiniya it is one hundred miles; there is the mosque of Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Maliq [in Kustantiniya]<sup>163</sup>, built when he laid siege to Kustantiniya. The gulf of Kustantiniya runs until it falls into the sea of ash-Sham. The width of the gulf in [the place of] Abidus is of a size of the distance of an arrow flying, and when it reaches the sea of ash-Sham, its width in the place of falling into is also of a size of the distance of an arrow flying. [There is] the great rock, and the tower on it. [In the place of falling into], there is the chain that blocks Muslim ships' entry into the gulf. [The place of] 'Ammuriya [is located] before the gulf, between it and Kustantiniya it is sixty miles.

It is said that the patriarchs of ar-Rum—and together with the tsar (al-malik), there are twelve patriarchs—are located in Kustantiniya, and that the cavalry [of Kustantiniya] consists of four thousand people, and the infantry numbers four thousand.

#### 10.

[p. 147] Kharaj of ar-Rum from a square each two hundred mudda<sup>164</sup> is three dinars every year. The tenth of the harvest is collected, which is the livelihood for the troops. He collects one dinar every year from each person among the Jews and admirers of fire (al-majus). He collects one dinar every year from each house which has smoke.

#### 11.

[p. 148] [The population] of ar-Rum have cows, horses, sheep. They have a queer baz (al-bazziya)<sup>165</sup> and Byzantine (ar-Rumi) brocade. They have fragrance of the styrax resin, mastic, captivates of ar-Rum (ar-Rumiyat) and young men-[servants]. There is coral at depths in their seas.

#### 12. The talk about Iraq

[p. 162] An observant person noticed that the inhabitants of Iraq are people with a sensible mind, with commendable aspirations, and calm temper, also skillful in all the crafts. The parts of their bodies are proportional, and they have a good mood. Their skin colour is swarthy, that is, the smoothest and the most moderate [colour]. They ripen in the bosom [of their mothers], who do not give them birth [with a hair color] between red and blond, bland (dingy, dull) white, and white, as have [children] born by women of as-Saqaliba. They look like their babes. The wombs of their women spoil the foetus before [it] ripens, so babies are born with hair between black and dark, as resin, and emit a stinking stench. Its [foetus'] hair is twisted in the form of a pepper grain, [it] also has an underdeveloped mind and criminal inclinations [as well] as az-Zinj, and Ethiopians (al-Habasha), and similar to them black people [have]. They are something between dissolved dough, which begins rising, and baked [bread], burnt on the coals.

#### 13. The talk about ar-Ray and Dubnavand

[p. 270 (pp. 281–282)] Muhammad Ibn Iskhag<sup>166</sup>: 'ar-Ray has a nice climate, astonishing build-ings; [it] is the gates of merchants and asylum for liars; it is a decoration of the Earth, the station

<sup>161</sup> Apulia is a city on the Adriatic shore.

<sup>162</sup> The 'dark and swarthy' Slavs living near a sea were apparently the population of the Adriatic shore. The 'fair' Slavs who live 'on land' means the rest of the European Slavic population [Kmietowicz, 1959, p. 370].

<sup>163</sup> Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik was a son of Omayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (65–86/685–705), a commander who actively participated in Caucasian campaigns, vicegerent of the Caliph in the Caucasus in 107–111/725–730 and 113–114/731–733, and before that a vicegerent in Iraq and Khorasan in 102/720.

<sup>164</sup> The mudd (plural: *amdad*, *midad*) is a unit of measurement for granular materials equal to 18 3/4 l.

<sup>165</sup> Arabic: coarse calico, cotton or linen fabric—al-bazz.

<sup>166</sup> Muhammad ibn Iskhag (died 151/768) was an Arab historian, the author of a biography of the Prophet Muhammad ('Sirat rasul li-l-lah) and 'The History of the Caliphs' ('Tarih al-hulafa'), which has not come down to us.

of the [whole] world, and the centre of Khurasan, Jurjan, Iraq, Tabaristan. It is the best place in the whole world for any creature'. It possesses suburbs and aqueducts. Goods from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Khorasan, al-Khazar, the country of Burjan (the Danube Bulgaria) arrive to it. To trade by the sea, merchants float from the East to the West and from the West to the East. They deliver a good brocade and silk from [the lands] of the Franks (Firandja) to al-Farama. [Then these merchants] sit down [on ships] in the sea of al-Kulzum and transport this brocade to China (as-Sin), exporting [in return from there] cinnamon, swallow's nests (?), and some [other] Chinese goods. They arrive with these goods in al-Kulzum, then go again to al-Farama. And merchants are the Jews, who are called ar-Rahdaniya; they speak Persian, Greek (ar-Rumi), Arabian, Frank (al-Ifranji). They depart from al-Farama. They sell musk, lute (al-'ud), and all that they have among the goods of Franks (Firanja). They go to Antakya, then to Baghdad, then to al-Aballah. As for the merchants of as-Saqaliba, they transport fells of foxes and rabbits from the edges of [lands] of as-Saqaliba and go [p. 271] to the sea of ar-Rum, and tithe ('ushr) is collected from them by<sup>167</sup> the sovereign of ar-Rum. Then they approach Samkarsh of the Jews by the sea<sup>168</sup>, then they go to as-Saqaliba<sup>169</sup>; or they go from the sea of as-Saqaliba<sup>170</sup> into the river which is called the as-Saqaliba river<sup>171</sup>, until they reach Khamlikh (Khamlij) of al-Khazar<sup>172</sup>, and tithe ('ushr) is taken from them by the possessor of al-Khazar. Then they go to the sea of Khorasan<sup>173</sup>. Sometimes they stay in Jurjan and sell everything they have. And all the goods are delivered to Ray. The interesting fact about that is that [ar-Rey] is the harbour of the world of the Danube.

#### 14. The talk about Armenia

[pp. 286–287] Abu al-Mundhir Hisham ibn Muhammad ibn as-Saib al-Kalbi said<sup>174</sup>: Armenia is called by the name of Armeniy ibn Lantiy, and he is a son of Yunan ibn Yafis<sup>175</sup>. The borders of Armenia are from Barza'a to al-Bab wa-l-abwab, and [further] to the edge of ar-Rum along the [other] side, along [the chain of] mountains of al-Qabk (the Caucasus), through the kingdom (mulk) of as-Sarir and the kingdom (mulk) of al-Lakz. From the end of the province of Azerbaijan to the beginning of the province of Arran it is eight sikks. From Barza'a to Tiflis it is ten sikks. Armenia first, and it is as-Sisajan, Arran and Tiflis, it was conquered by Habib ibn Maslam<sup>176</sup>; he conquered Barza'a there, and it was built by Kubaz the Great. He built al-Bab wa-l-abwab; he built [in Armenia] fortresses, and they were called gates, because they were built on the roads to the mountains. [In general,] there were three hundred and sixty fortresses. [Towards] Bab al-Lan, [there are] one hundred fortresses. Ten fortresses are in [the possession] of the Muslims within the land of Tabaristan. The other fortresses are within the land of Filan, the possessor of as-Sarir [and so] to Bab al-Lan.

<sup>167</sup> A tithe, usually levied on the Muslim population.

<sup>168</sup> Samqarsh, variant: Samqush. Most scholars accept the form 'Samqarsh,' which is similar to the one that appears in a Jewish inscription in the Crimea and a letter by Khazar King Joseph. It is identified with Tamatarha, or *Tmutarakan*, in Russian sources.

<sup>169</sup> This refers to the Eastern Slavs.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibn Faqih mentions the as-Saqaliba Sea* once; there is no direct equivalent in the works by Ibn Khordadbeh, where a 'sea beyond the as-Saqaliba' is mentioned. This may refer to the Baltic Sea, as in Ibn Khordadbeh's work.

<sup>171</sup> The as-Saqaliba River usually means the Tanais River (or *Tanis* in Arabic sources). However, this seems to refer not to any specific river, but to the generic concept of a water artery connecting the northern and southern regions of East Europe.

<sup>172</sup> This is how it appears in the text of the edition. This is sometimes read as 'Halij al-Khazar' (the al-Khazar Inlet (Strait?)), which is identified with the Sea of Azov.

<sup>173</sup> The Sea of Khorasan is another name for the Caspian Sea.

<sup>174</sup> Hisham ibn Muhammad al-Kalbi (Ibn al-Kalbi) (died not later than 822) was an Arab historian, a famous expert in genealogy and legends and the author of 'Tarih' ('History').

<sup>175</sup> Arminius ibn Lantius and Yunan ibn Yafis are Biblical characters.

<sup>176</sup> Habib ibn Maslama al-Fihri as-Qurashi (died in a military campaign in 41/661–661 or 42/662–663) was an Omayyad military commander; he carried out military operations in Syria and the Caucasus as the head of an army gathered in Syria.

The settlements of the Turks [are] behind the city of al-Bab; they were destroyed by Salman ibn Rabi'a<sup>177</sup>; he and his successors, and there were four hundred people, died as martyrs for the faith. 'Abd ar-Rahman al-Bahili said<sup>178</sup>, remembering Salman ibn Rabi'a, he buried him on that side of the Balanjar river behind al-Bab wa-l-abwab,

Verily we have two graves: the grave of  
Balanjar and the grave of Sin Astan...

Armenia the first [comprises] al-Bailakan, Kabala, and Sharvan. Armenia the second: Jurjan, Sugdabil, Bab Firuz Kubaz, and al-Lakz. Armenia the third [consists] of al-Busfurrajan, Dabil, Siraj Taira, Bagravand, and an-Nashav. Armenia the fourth: there is the grave of Safvan ibn al-Mu'attala as-Sulam, and he is the successor (sahib) of the prophet of Allah, and may Allah bless him, and may Allah greet him. There is the tree between [Armenia the fourth] and the fortress of Ziyad, which bears unknown fruits, which are similar to almond, and their taste is better than comb-honey. [Armenia the fourth comprises] Shimshar, Khilat, Kalikala, Arjish, Bajunais. The area of Arran and as-Sisajan within the kingdom (mamlak) of al-Khazar.

### 15.

[pp. 287–288] Kubaz also built the city (madina) of al-Bailakan, the city of Barza'a, the city of Kabala, built the wall of non-burnt brick, and on this wall built three hundred and sixty cities of non-burnt brick, which were destroyed after building al-Bab wa-l-abwab. Then his son, Kisra (Khosrow) Anushirvan (Anu Shirvan), reigned after him<sup>179</sup>; he built the city of ash-Shabiran, the city of Mascat, and the city of Karkaru; then he built the city of Bab al-abwab. They were called the gates (abwab), because they were built on the roads to the mountains. Within the land of Arran, he built the gates (abwab) of Shakki and the gates (abwab) of ad-Dudanya. [Ad-Dudanya,] Nyurod topping (leading), they were among the descendants of Dudan ibn Usaid ibn Hazim<sup>180</sup>. [Kisra Anushirvan] built ad-Durzikiya and twelve gates inside it, and [there is] a stone fortress near each gate. Within the land of Jurzan, [Kisra Anushirvan] built the city which is called Sugdabil; he settled people from as-Sugda and the Persians there and made [Sugdabil] a watch garrison. He built Bab al-Lan (Gates of the Alans), Bab Samsahi, built the fortress of Jardaman, the fortress of Shmshuld. He [Kisra Anushirvan] built Balanjar, Samandar, Jurzan, and Shakki. He conquered all the countries which were under the control of ar-Rum. He constructed the city of Dabil and strengthened it. He built the city of an-Nashava, and it is the main city of the region of al-Busfurrajan; built the fortress of Vais; the fortresses within the land of as-Sisajan, and among them, there were the fortress of al-Kilab (the fortress of dogs) and [the fortress] of Shahbush; he settled them by [people] from an-Nishasitajiyyin, [known] for their courage and bravery. He built the wall (al-hait) between them (the fortresses of al-Kilab and Shahbush) and the Khazars of rock and lead; its width is three hundred zira<sup>181</sup>, [it stretches] until it connects with the tops of mountains, then he erected it in the sea. He made the iron gates in it. After that, one hundred warriors started guarding it, considering the fact that fifty thousand warriors were required [for guarding it earlier].

<sup>177</sup> Salman was the commander of an Arab army gathered in Kufa, one of the commanders who participated in the Arab campaign to Derbent during the rule of the 'virtuous' caliphs 'Umar and 'Usman (13–35/634–656).

<sup>178</sup> 'Abd ar-Rahman was an Arab commander, the first to undertake a campaign from Derbent to Balanjar and al-Bayda during the rule of the virtuous caliphs 'Umar al-Khattab (13–23/634–644) and 'Usman ibn 'Affan (23–35/644–656) (as reported by Sayf ibn 'Umar, one of al-Tabari's sources). His brother, Salman ibn Rabi'a al-Bahili, who actively participated in the Caucasian campaigns and succeeded to 'Abd ar-Rahman's office of vicegerent, when the latter was killed near Balanjar, accompanied him on the campaign. The circumstances surrounding the death of 'Abd ar-Rahman are sometimes associated with Salman ibn Rabi'a [Garayeva, 2002, pp. 440–460].

<sup>179</sup> Kisra (Khosrow) Anushirvan (Anu Shirvan).

<sup>180</sup> Dudan ibn Usayd ibn Hazim, judging by the name, was a brother of Yazid ibn Usayd ibn Hazim as-Sulami, vicegerent of the Abbasid Caliph in Arminiya in 135/752–753. Several generations of the al-Sulami family occupied the position of the Caliph's vicegerent in the Caucasian provinces and probably owned land.

<sup>181</sup> The zira' is a unit of length varying locally from 0.56 to 0.75 m.

**16.**

[p. 289] According to the information of the Persian [authors], when Anushirvan had finished [building] the wall (as-sadd) on the boundary of Balanjar and surely strengthened its foundation in the sea, he was very happy.

**17.**

[p. 289] As for Balanjar, it is deeply situated within the land of al-Khazar. It was built by Balanjar Ibn Yafis<sup>182</sup>.

**18.**

[p. 289] When Anushirvan had finished strengthening the foundation of the [wall] (al-fand), which was situated in the sea, he asked about that sea. They said, 'Oh, tsar, this sea is called Kirdbil. It is about three hundred parasangs. Between us and Baida of the Khazars it is four months of going along its coast. From Baida of the Khazars to the wall (as-sadd), by which Isfandiyar blocked the way, having made it of iron, it is two months of going.'

**19.**

[p. 290] Ahmad ibn Vadi' al-Isbahani said that [his] staying in the country of Armenia was delayed. And he wrote to some of its tsars and vicegerents that he had not seen the richer and more beautiful country, in which animals were small.

It is said that the number of kingdoms [of Armenia] is one hundred and thirty kingdoms. Among them, there is the kingdom of the possessor of as-Sarir (throne), [which is located] between al-Lan and Bab al-abwab. There are only two ways: [one] road to the country of the Khazars, [another] one to the country of Armenia, and there are eighteen thousand villages along it. Arran is the first kingdom of Armenia, which has four thousand villages. Most of them are the villages of the possessor (sahib) of as-Sarir.

**20.**

[p. 293] Shamkur is an ancient city, where Salman ibn Rabi'a, who conquered it, was directed to. He did not settle down [there], but destroyed it. As-Savardiya is the nation which assembled several days after Yazid Ibn Usaida's leaving<sup>183</sup> from Armenia. And their deeds were barbaric, and the miseries related to them were numerous. Then Buga, mavla (a libertine) of al-Mu'tasim<sup>184</sup> bi'llah built up and strengthened [Shamkur]; merchants arrived there and started calling it al-Mutavakkiliya. Salman ibn Rabi'a conquered al-Bailakan peacefully; he sent his cavalry, and it conquered Sisar, al-M.s.k.van, Uz, al-Ms.r..ani al-Mahrjilyan, which were the populated regions (rustaq). He [also] conquered some other lands of Arran. He appealed to the Kurds of al-Balasajan to adopt Islam, but they battled with him, and he defeated them. A part of them had to pay jizya, and a part of them were given charity (sadaka).

Then Salman moved out to the place of junction of the rivers al-Kurr and ar-Ras on that side of Bardij; he crossed [the river] of al-Kurr and conquered Kabala, and [Kabala] concluded a piece treaty with him, Shakki, al-Kamibaran, Haidak, the tsar of Shirvan and the other tsars (muluk) of the mountains, [and also] the population of Mascat, ash-Shabiran, the cities of al-Bab. Then everything that was further turned out to be closed by this wall.

The Hakan met him at the head of his cavalry; [Salman ibn Rabi'a] crossed the Balanjar river but was killed, may Allah have mercy on him; four thousand Muslims, at the head [of whom he was].

<sup>182</sup> Balanjar ibn Yafis is a Biblical character.

<sup>183</sup> Yazid ibn Usayd as-Sulami was his father's successor to the position of the Caucasian vicegerent of the Abbasid Caliph. His father, Abu Yazid Usayd ibn Zafir as-Sulami, was appointed vicegerent of Arminiya in 135/752–753. He married a daughter of the Khazar Khakan on the order of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur (136–158/754–775).

<sup>184</sup> Al-Mu'tasim was an Abbasid caliph (218–227/833–842).

## 21.

[p. 294] Al-Mugir ibn Shu'ba was assigned as ruler of Armenia<sup>185</sup>, then he was displaced, and al-Qasim ibn Rabi'a as-Sakafi was assigned as a new ruler. During [the reign] of 'Ali ibn Abu Talib<sup>186</sup>, al-Ash'as ibn Kais was assigned as ruler of Armenia and Azerbaijan<sup>187</sup>. Then other rulers reigned there, until Marwan ibn Muhammad started reigning.<sup>188</sup> He conquered the country of the Khazars and ultimately controlled them<sup>189</sup>. Then, when the Abbasids' reign began, Abu Ja'far was appointed the governor of al-Jazira and Arminiya during the rule of his brother Abu al-Abbas; then he became the latter's successor and Yazid ibn Asid ibn Zafir al-Sulami was appointed the governor, and he conquered Bab al-Lan.

## 22.

[p. 295] The mountains of al-Kabk (Caucasus), with seventy two languages there, and no-one knew the tongue of their ruler except for the translator. Their length (of the mountains) is a hundred and five parasangs, they border the land of ar-Rum until the boundaries of the Khazars and Alans and reach the land of as-Saqaliba. The as-Saqaliba type (cins) is also there, with the rest being the Armenians. And it is said that these mountains are the al-'Arj mountains, which [run] between Medina and Mecca, stretch till ash-Sham and link up [p. 38] with Lubnan in Hims (Homs) and Sanir in Damascus. Extending further on [the mountains] reach the mountains of Antioch and al-Massisah. Here [they] are called al-Lukam, then they reach the mountains of Malatiya, Shimshat, Kalikala up to the Sea of the Khazar, where al-Bab wa-l-Abwab is [located], and [the mountains] are called al-Kabk.

## 23.

[p. 297] Behind al-Bab are the tsar of the wall, al-Lakz, the al-Lan tsar, Filan tsar, Tsar Mascata [p. 298], the as-Sarir lord, the city of Samandar. [The way] from Jurjan to the gulf (khalij) of al-Khazar, with robust fair wind, [takes] eight days. All al-Khazars are Jews, and recently turned Jews. From the land of the al-Khazar to the point, [where] the wall (as-sadd) is, it is a two-month [trip]. The Glorious and Great Allah said in surah 'The Cave': 'And they ask you about Dzhul-Qarnayn. Say, "I shall relay to you by mentioning him." Surely We made him strong in the earth and granted him means of access to everything. So he followed one course. When he reached the setting place of the sun, he found it setting in a spring of murky water,...'<sup>190</sup> untill his words: '... Verily Yajuj and Majuj (Gog and Magog) make mischief in the earth'.<sup>191</sup>

He said, They set out to their lands with the coming of spring. They allowed [to themselves] only herbs they ate, and of the dried stuff only what they took [with themselves]. He said, '[He said]: "That in which my Lord has strengthened me is better. Therefore, (you) only help me with a force. I will make a fortified barrier between you and them".'<sup>192</sup> They asked: 'What do you need?' He said:

<sup>185</sup> Al-Mughira ibn Shu'ba was a famous Omayyad commander, a participant of early Arab conquests.

<sup>186</sup> 'Ali ibn Abu Talib was the fourth 'virtuous' caliph (35–40/655–661).

<sup>187</sup> al-Ash'as ibn Kays was a famous Omayyad commander, a participant of early Arab conquests.

<sup>188</sup> Marwan ibn Muhammad ibn Marwan al-Himar was an Arab commander who attained great success in campaigns to Transcaucasia and the Northern Caucasus in 119–121/737–739; he began to participate in campaigns with his first cousin once removed, Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik. Later the last Omayyad caliph (127–132/744–750). His father, Muhammad ibn Marwan ibn al-Hakam, son of Caliph Marwan (64–65/684–685) and brother of Caliph 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (65–86/685–705), was a famous commander known because of his campaigns to Asia Minor (Byzantium), Syria, and Arminiya. [Garayeva, 2002, pp. 460–471].

<sup>189</sup> This refers to the events of the 119/737 campaigns.

<sup>190</sup> Quran, translation, 18:83–86. The corresponding fragment in the text by Ibn al-Faqih is incomplete. We repeat the full text with the text omitted by Ibn al-Faqih in square brackets: 'And they ask you about Dzhul-Qarnayn. Say, "I shall relay to you by mentioning him." Surely We made him strong in the earth and granted him means of access to everything. So he followed one course. When he reached the setting place of the sun, he found it setting in a spring of murky water, [and found by it a people. We said, 'O Dhul-Qarnayn, you either torment them or treat them with kindness'].'

<sup>191</sup> Quran, translation, 18:94. The corresponding fragment in the text by Ibn al-Faqih is also incomplete here. We repeat the full text with the text omitted by Ibn al-Faqih in square brackets: '[They said: 'O Dhul-Qarnayn,] verily Yajuj and Majuj make mischief in the earth. [Shall we then pay you a tribute that you should raise a barrier between us and them?].'

<sup>192</sup> Quran, translation, 18:95.

'... blocks of iron...'<sup>193</sup>, that is blocks of iron. Then he ordered [to bring] iron, to make big blocks of it and have copper molten and then make adobe [and] copper plaster. He built it [the wall—pass] (blocked up the ravine therewith) and leveled the space between the two mountain sides...

[p. 301] Sallam at-Tarjuman narrated: 'Al-Wathiq, by will of Allah,... [and so on up to the end]. We set out... from Ray from al-Wathiq and we came back to him twenty eight months later after the departure.

#### **24. About the at-Turks (the Turks)**

[p. 329 (p. 337)] Turkic peoples: at-Tuguz-ghuz, with the largest country among the at-Turks (Turks), with its frontiers [reaching] as-Sin; at-Tubat (Tibet), al-Kharlukh, al-Ghuzz, al-Bajanak, at-Turgesh, Arkash, Khifjah and Khirghiz.

#### **25.**

[p. 330] Iphlatun (Plato) said<sup>194</sup>: 'Unknown to the Turks is commitment [to words], to the ar-Rums—generosity, to the al-Khazar—modesty, to the az-Zinjah (Africans)—sorrow, to the as-Saklaba—bravery, to the as-Sind [people]—restraint'.

#### **26.**

[p. 166] It is known from some books of the Persians that the tsars of the land divided it in four parts. One of these [parts] was the western al-Hind, the land of the Turks till the eastern (mashrik) ar-Rum. Their [another] part was ar-Rum and its western region, the land of the Copts and Berbers. One more their part was as-Sudan, which is located between the land of the Berbers and al-Hind. Their [last] part was from the river Balkh to Azarbaijan, Arminiya, al-Qadisiyah, Amman, Kirman, the lands of Tabaristan and Tokharistan. And that was the land which the Persians called the conquered country. That part was of selected lands, with not a flaw in their midst and nothing to dispose of as unfit [lands], therefore all types of its population were balanced, with bodies well proportionate, they got rid of the fair hair of the ar-Rum and as-Saqaliba, of the black (skin) of the Ethiopians (al-Habasha) and az-Zinji (the Africans), corpulence of the Turks, ugliness of the Chinese, they combined in themselves all the best features of all the countries.

#### **22. A story about some Turkic towns and miracles therein**

[p. 349] Among their towns there is a town (madinah) called Dana. Men are tall there, while women are of low stature. Their [capital] city [is located] between [the country of] the al-Khazar and ar-Rum. They [Dana residents] are at war with both of them, but they fight with more thrust against the al-Khazars than against the ar-Rum.

They divide the land in four parts. The land of the Copts and Berbers. One of the parts is the land of Sudan, and it lies between the land of the Berbers and al-Hind.

*This material was prepared by Nuriya Garayeva*

<sup>193</sup> Quran, translation, 18:96. The text by Ibn al-Faqih contains only two words of the relevant ayah of the Quran. We repeat the full text of the ayah: 'Bring me blocks of iron. When the space between the two mountain sides is levelled, blow!' When he had made it fire, he said: 'Bring me molten copper that I may pour over it.'

<sup>194</sup> Plato (ca. 427–347 BCE) was an ancient Greek philosopher, a disciple of Socrates (469–399 BCE).



### Ibn Rustah

Abu Ali Ahmad ibn 'Umar Ibn Rustah, an Arab geographer, Persian by origin, lived in the Iranian town of Isfahan from the late 9th century to the first third of the 10th century. He was the author of the multi-volume treatise titled '*Kitāb al-A'lāk an-Nafīsa*' ('The Book of Precious Records'), written between 903 and 925. The sole manuscript that has survived is the seventh volume, concerning Astronomy and Geography. Part of that book contains the earliest mentions in Arab geographic literature concerning the Khazars, Bulgars, Magyars, Slavs, and the Ruses.

The related fragments of the Ibn Rustah's writing, translated into Russian by St. Petersburg orientalist D. Khvolson, were published in 1869 (mistakenly under the name of Ibn Dast) [Khvolson, 1869]. The most important manuscript of the treatise of Ibn Rustah was discovered

in the late 19th century within the *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum* [BGA] (Library of the Arab Geographers) of M. J. De Goeje. The complete selection of details on Eastern Europe from '*Kitāb al-A'lāk an-Nafīsa*' was translated into Polish by T. Levitsky [Żrodla, 1977, II]. Below are the Russian translations of his entire text. Our translations retain the numbering, in Roman numerals, of the fragments of Ibn Rustah's text added by Levitsky.

Edition: BGA, VII, 1894. Translations of the fragments: Ibn Rustah, 1869; Garkavi, 1870, pp. 260–268; Ibn Rustah, 1955; Żrodla, 1977, II/2, pp. 23–47; Novoseltsev, 2000, pp. 294–295, 303–304. About him: Żrodla, 1977, II/2, pp. 7–20; Krachkovsky, 1957, pp. 159–160; Maqbul, pp. 944–945; EI<sup>2</sup>, vol. 3, pp. 920–921.

#### **Kitab al-A'laq al-nafisa** (Book of Precious Records)

##### 1.

[p. 85] The Sea of Buntus stretches from Lazica, over the other side of Kustantiniyah. Its length is one thousand three hundred miles and the width is three hundred miles. The river called Tanais flows into it, coming from the north from the lake named Mavutash. It is a huge sea, though in truth they call [it] a lake, its length from the west (al-maghrib) to the east (al-mashrik) is three hundred miles, and its width is a hundred miles. A gulf flows out of it nearby al-Kustantiniyah, which runs like a river stream and flows into the Sea of Egypt, its width at al-Kustantiniyah is three miles, and al-Kustantiniyah was built beside [the gulf].

##### 2.

[p. 86] The Sea of Tabaristan and Jurjan, and this is the Sea of al-Bab. Its length from the west to the east (al-mashrik) is one thousand eight hundred miles, its width—six hundred miles. There are two islands [in the Sea] situated near Tabaristan, on which a lively [life] existed.

##### 3.

[p. 89] The al-Kurr river<sup>195</sup>: it flows out from the land of al-Lan, passes by Tiflis and Bardha'ah and flows into the Sea of Tabaristan.

##### 4.

[p. 98] The sixth iklim (district) commences in the east (al-mashrik) and extends till the Majuj country, then untill the al-Khazar land, crosses the Sea of Tabaristan, and [stretching] to the ar-Rum country, passes via Djurzan, Amasiya, Hiraklah, Chalcezun (Chalcedon), al-Kustantiniyah and Burjan (Danube Bulgaria), and reaches the Western (al-maghrib) Sea.

The seventh iklim begins in the east and stretches till the Yajuj country, then proceeds through the land of Turks (at-Turk), then along the shoreline of the Sea of Tabaristan from its northern

<sup>195</sup> This refers to the Kura River.

side, then crosses the Sea of ar-Rum, continues through the land of the Burjan and as-Saqaliba and reaches the Western Sea.

As for what lies beyond this iklim, to the end of the inhabited areas, of which we know, then [such lands] commence in the east (al-mashrik) by the Yajuj country, then extend across the country of at-Tuguz-ghuz and the land of Turks (at-Turk), then the land of al-Lan (Alans) and al-Abar (Avar), then the [country] of Burjan and as-Saqaliba and reach the Western Sea.

## 5.

[p. 126] Kustantiniyah has a water channel, to which [water] flows from the country called Bulgar<sup>196</sup>. This river flows to [this channel] covering the distance of a twenty day [trip]. When [the river] reaches the [capital] city (al-madinah), it divides in three thirds. One third passes through the estates (dar) of the tsar (al-Malik). [Another] third goes to the dungeons (khubus) of the Muslims. The third one flows to the baths of the Patriarch and other residents of the town (al-madinah). They drink water which is half sweet and half salty.

The residents of Bulgar are at war with ar-Rum, and ar-Rum fights against them.

## 6.

[pp. 126–128] Harun narrated that monk monasteries were [situated] nearby Kustantiniyah. By the gates of Kustantiniyah [there is] the monastery called Satira<sup>197</sup> (Satara), accommodating five hundred monks. As for the river, which flows into the town, it is divided in three parts and passes through its (town) center. Within a parasang to the north of the city there is the monastery called Munus<sup>198</sup>, with a thousand of monks in it. Within four parasangs to the east from Kustantiniyah there is a place, in which! four monasteries are located housing twelve thousand monks: one of them is Munas<sup>199</sup>, the second is Fusadir<sup>200</sup>, the third is Kukayay<sup>201</sup> and the fourth is Dayr Mariyam<sup>202</sup>. Two monasteries, in which six thousand monks [dwell], are located to the west of the town.

Afterwards, [having left that area], have a twelve-day trek via flat steppes with cultivated fields and villages and reach the town called Saluqiyah<sup>203</sup>, and this is a stately ('azim) and big (kabir) town. Mountains rise to the east of the town, and the sea lies to the east of it. The [town has] four rivers (channels), which irrigate it (supply water). There (in the town) is a monastery, which is called Markush<sup>204</sup>, with twelve thousand monks in it. Leaving [from there] and moving across the [steppe] plains along the sea shore there are no any cultivated lands (al-'Imran) for [the expanse of] three stopovers (manazil)<sup>205</sup>. And this is a grand ('azim) town with its bazaars and numerous rivers (channels) around. The Mutran rivers<sup>206</sup> provide it with water. There are two walls and a moat (khandak) surrounding the town. Once out you move across the forest of [high] trees in the midst of the land of as-Saqaliba. They have houses of wood and they live in them. They are Christians, they adopted Christianity during the rule of tsar (al-Malik) Basus<sup>207</sup>. They preserve allegiance to the Christian religion to this day.

If you take a month-long journey across their country through forests, you reach the town named Balatis<sup>208</sup>.

<sup>196</sup> This refers to Danubian Bulgaria بلغار.

<sup>197</sup> ساطرا

<sup>198</sup> مونس

<sup>199</sup> مونس

<sup>200</sup> فسادر

<sup>201</sup> قوقياي

<sup>202</sup> دير مريم

<sup>203</sup> سلوقية

<sup>204</sup> مرقوش

<sup>205</sup> That is, there are no traces of human activities.

<sup>206</sup> مطرن

<sup>207</sup> بسوس

<sup>208</sup> بلاطيس

### Al-Khazar (Khazars)

[p. 139] Between [the land of] the Pechenegs (al-Bajanakiya<sup>209</sup>) and the al-Khazar the distance is of a ten-day [trek] through steppes and woody thickets. There does not exist a trodden track or big roads between [the country of the Pechenegs] and the al-Khazar. Their [road] resembling route [through] woody thickets and forests until the land of the al-Khazar.

The land of al-Khazar is a vast country, which on one its side borders on great mountains. And these are the mountains, which at their farthest end lower themselves until Tulas<sup>210</sup> and Luger<sup>211</sup>, and these mountains extend till the country of Tiflis.

They have a tsar (Malik) called Inal<sup>212</sup> and a supreme lord (Malik), named Khazar-Hakan. However the Khazars (al-Khazar) obey him only nominally, and the whole power is in the hands of the Inal, as in the army he holds a position, by virtue of which he has nobody [appointed] above him to reckon with.

Their supreme head practices the Jewish religion, the same [religion] as of the Inal and those among his military commanders and grandees, who try to imitate him; and the rest [practice] religions like the one of the Turks (al-Atrak).

Saqsın is their major city (al-madinah)<sup>213</sup>. And there [is] another city called Khab n.l.' or Kh.n.b.l.<sup>214</sup>. These two [p. 140] cities are the places where his people (the Khazars) stay for winter. With the coming of spring days they leave for steppes and stay there till winter. The population of these two cities consists of Muslims, there are mosques, imams, muezzins and schools<sup>215</sup>.

Their tsar, the Inal, imposed on the rich and wealthy among them the duty to supply horsemen in quantity] depending on their property and the level of prosperity. Each year they make raids on the Pechenegs (al-Bajanakiya). The Inal himself is involved in organising campaigns and sets off for his military expeditions together with his warriors. They look magnificent; when they appear somewhere [for a campaign], fully armed with banners, spears, [wearing] strong chain armour. [The Inal] rides at the head of ten thousand horsemen, a part of which constitutes a regular army, being on allowances; while the others belong to those [warriors], who were appointed [for this, him?] to a duty by the [aforementioned] rich. When [he] marches to some direction [some kind of] a shield of the sun, shaped like a drum, is formed around him. This shield is carried by a horseman, who rides [with it] in front of [the Inal]. Then goes [the Inal] himself, followed by his army who sees the glitter of that shield. When they capture some booty, they assemble it in their camp; then the Inal selects from it what he likes and takes it for himself, leaving the remaining booty, so that [the warriors] distribute [it] among themselves.

### Burdas (Burtas)

[p. 140] The country of Burdas<sup>216</sup> (Burtas) lies between al-Khazar and Bulkar<sup>217</sup> (Bulgar). The distance between [the country of Burtas] and the Khazars is of a fifteen-day [trip]. They are obedient to the tsar (Malik) of the al-Khazar. They supplied ten thousand horsemen.

<sup>209</sup> البجا ناكية

<sup>210</sup> طولاس

<sup>211</sup> لوغر

<sup>212</sup> In the Arabic text: Isha. Since the arrangement of diacritic signs in the edition, which apparently relies on the manuscript, does not contain any obvious meaning, we can revise the diacritics. The general outline of the word ايشا is the closest to the Turkic 'inal,' a title also inferior to the supreme Khagan, whose bearer acted as a commander. The initial spelling could have been اينال or اينل. The second spelling is probably a corrupted variant of the first, when the 'tail' of the lam could have been reduced enough to turn it into an alif when the text was copied [Bolshakov, HV]. Ibn Fadlan calls the same title 'yinal.'

<sup>213</sup> In the edition: Sar'sh.n. Graphic changes to the word سار عشن turns it into ساكسن, Saqsın, when the diacritics are changed [Bolshakov, HV].

<sup>214</sup> In the Arabic text هب نال and a second word without diacritic marks (transliterated as 'Khab n.l.' or 'Kh.n.b.l.' which may be Khanbaliq—that is, 'Khan City' [Ibid.]).

<sup>215</sup> This refers to primary religious schools, which, among other things, taught reading of the Quran.

<sup>216</sup> برداس

<sup>217</sup> بلكار

There is no head (rais), who would govern them and whose authority would be recognised everywhere among them.

In each settlement (mahallah) they had one or two sheikhs, whom they turned to for resolving problems between each other. However, essentially they remain subjected to the Khazars' (al-Khazar) tsar.

Vast lands in a wooden area belong to them. [These lands] are replaced by the [lands of] Bulkar (Bulgar) and the Pechenegs (al-Bajanakiya). They are enduring and brave. Their religion is similar to the faith of the Ghuzzes (al-Guziya). They are well-built, handsome and stately (portly).

If one of them offends another, insults him or injures with a blow or [spear] puncture, [and if] they don't reach an agreement or reconciliation, then the offended one does not [p. 141] avenge.

When a girl becomes an adult, she ceases obeying her father, she herself chooses a man, whom she wants. And the fiancé goes to her father to ask for her hand. She would marry him, if she wanted [to be his wife].

They [have] camels, cattle and plenty of honey. Martens comprise a large part of their property. They [the Burtases] are of two types: one [type] cremates the deceased, the other type buries them.

Their lands are flat, most of the trees are birches. Their fields are cultivated. The major part of their property consists of honey, marten fells and [other] furs. The expanse of their lands measures a seventeen-day [trip] in breadth and depth.

### **Bulkar (Bulgar)**

[p. 141] Bulkar is bordered with the country of Burdas. They lie on the banks of the river called Atil, which flows into the Khazar Sea. They are between the al-Khazar and as-Saqaliba.

Their tsar's name is Almish<sup>218</sup>, he converted to Islam.

Their lands comprise forests and dense woody thickets.

They [consist of] three groups. One is the Barsila<sup>219</sup>, the second group is the Asgal<sup>220</sup>, the third one is the Bulkar. They all live in one place.

The Khazars trade and exchange with them. The ar-Rus (ar-Rusiya) were also coming to them to trade. Traders were coming to each of [the peoples] staying on both sides of the river to buy sables, ermines, squirrels and other items.

They are the people [engaged] in [land] cultivation and arable farming: they cultivate such [types of] cereals as wheat, barley, millet and others.

The majority of them converted to Islam. [There are] mosques and schools in their settlements (mahallah). They [have] muezzins and imams. A faithless (al-kafir) from their [midst] worships anything that appears charming to him from what he encounters.

The distance between the Burdases and these Bulkars (al-Bulkariya) is of a three-day [trip]. They are being raided, invaded, and captured. They [have] wild horses (davabb), chain mail and good weapons.

They give riding-animals as a payment to their tsar. If a man among them gets married, the tsar takes a saddle-horse [and] a wild horse (davabb). If a ship of Muslim merchants arrives, they take a tithe ('ushr)<sup>221</sup> and their clothes from them [p. 142], similar to the clothing of Muslims.

Their graves are similar to the graves of Muslims.

Marten fells are their main wealth. They do not have [their own] money of precious metals, [it is] the marten fells that are used as their dirhams. For them one marten fell is worth of two and

<sup>218</sup> The editor read it as Almush. The correct variant is Almish (Almiş). See Ibn Fadlan, our notes.

<sup>219</sup> برصولا

<sup>220</sup> اصقل

<sup>221</sup> 'Ushr (tithe) is a tax on one-tenth of an income (including that levied on a harvest), usually levied on Muslims.

a half dirhams. And white round dirhams are brought to them from Muslim countries through exchange of their goods. They have in circulation white dirhams minted in Islamic states.

### Al-Majgariya (the Majars)

[p. 142] The first of the bounds of the Majars (al-Majgariya) lies between the land of the Pechenegs (al-Bajanakiya) and Askal country, related to the Bulkars (al-Bulkariya). Al-Majgariya are a type (jins) of Turks (of a Turkic tribe). Their commander rides at the head of twenty thousand horsemen. The commander's name is K.nda (?), the name being the title of the tsar (al-Malik), and that is because the name of the man, who reigned over them, sounds like J.la<sup>222</sup>.

All Majars obey the orders (slogans) given by their military leader, called J.la, in all matters of war, defence and the like.

They use tents and wander in search of food and abundant lands. Their country is vast. One of its bounds reaches the Sea of ar-Rum. Two rivers flow into this sea. One of them is bigger than the Jayhun, and the [al-Majgariya] habitation area lies between these two rivers...

And when winter comes, all move to that (one of those two) river, which is the closest to them, and stay there for winter, fishing. Their sojourn there during winter is more convenient for them [than in any other place.] The country of al-Majgariya comprises forests, waters, their land is damp; there are also many cultivated (ploughed) fields.

They dominate over all the neighbouring as-Saqaliba, impose heavy duty on them, [as-Saqaliba] being in their hands as prisoners [forcedly called up for service for military campaigns].

The Majars worship fire.

They make raids against the as-Saqaliba, convoy their prisoners along the sea shore until they reach the port called [p. 143] K.r.x, located in the country of ar-Rum.<sup>223</sup>

It is reported that in the earlier days the Khazars used to surround themselves with ditches to defend themselves against the Majars and other peoples bordering their country.

When the Majars (al-Majgariya) together with their captives (prisoners of war) get to K.r.kh., the ar-Rum come out to meet them and arrange the bidding there, [the Majars] give away the captives and take from them Byzantine brocade, woolen blankets (az-zalliyyat) and other ar-Rum goods.

### As-Saqalibiya<sup>224</sup> (as-Saqaliba)

[p. 143] The distance between the country of al-Bajanakiya and as-Saqaliba [amounts] to a ten-day journey. The main city (al-madinah), which is called Voin, is [situated] at the beginning of the bounds of as-Saqaliba<sup>225</sup>. And you ride towards it across wilderness and unbeaten lands through streams and dense forests. [And continue so] until you get to their country. The country of the as-Saqaliba is a flat and woody territory, and they live there. They do not have vineyards or arable fields.

And they have [something] like kegs, made of wood, in which beehives and honey are kept, they are called ulishj<sup>226</sup> and up to ten jugs of honey is received from one such keg. They are the people, who tend pigs as [we pasture] sheep.

If one of them dies, they cremate the deceased, and their women, if they had belonged to the one, who died, tortured themselves with knife cuts on their arms and face. The next day after

<sup>222</sup> جلّه

<sup>223</sup> كرخ

<sup>224</sup> الصقلبي

<sup>225</sup> The name of the city is unclear in the edition because its graphic spelling contains no diacritic signs, which makes multiple readings possible: Wa.t, or Wa.it, or Wa.ib واء، etc. Attempts at graphic reconstruction alone do not help unless we have an idea of what territory it refers to. The Pecheneg lands spread from approximately the middle of the large bend of the Don to the area of modern-day Krivoi Rog Region. Travelling up the Pecheneg land on the left bank of the Dnieper, the first city near the place where the Psel flows into the Dnieper would be Voin [Bolshakov, HV].

<sup>226</sup> Possible interpretation: uleh.

the cremation of the deceased they would go to the place, where it was done, collect the ashes from there, put them in a clay jug and place it [the jug] on a hill. A year after the death [of the deceased], they would take some twenty, perhaps some more or less, kegs with honey (mead) and go to the hill, where the whole family of the deceased gathered (akhl al-mayyit), they would eat and drink there, then walk away. If the deceased had three wives, and one of them claimed that she had loved him most, she would bring to the [deceased] husband two posts, which are hammered upright [p. 144] into the ground, then they would put a third pole across, fasten a rope in the middle of that crossbar, she would step onto a bench and tie the end [of the rope] around her neck. After she does this, the bench would be removed from under her feet, and she would remain hanging until she suffocated and died. After she dies, her body is thrown into the fire and is cremated. All of them are fire-worshippers.

They mostly cultivate millet. When the harvest days came, they gathered the millet grain in a scooper, raised it to the sky and said: 'Oh Lord! You, who has [up till now] given us food! [So] give it to us amply [this time as well]!'

They have [various] lutes ('ud), guitars (gusli) and reed-pipes. Reed-pipes have the length of two cubits<sup>227</sup>, and a lute has eight strings. Their heady (alcoholic) drink is made of honey. During the cremation of a deceased they engage in revelry, expressing joy for the mercy bestowed upon him by God.

They have few pack animals, and no-one, except the above mentioned man, has saddle-horses. Their weapons include lances, spears and shields and they have no other [arms].

Their head [rais] is crowned, they obey him and take his words for granted. His place of residence is in the middle of the country of as-Saqaliba. Among them the mentioned and popular is the one, who is called the head of the heads (Rais ar-Ruasa) and whose name is S.v.y.y.t. B.l.k. (Svyatopolk?)<sup>228</sup>. He is more famous than Subanj<sup>229</sup>. Subanj is his deputy (caliph). This tsar has wild horses (davabb) and has no other food except mare's milk. He has wonderful, strong and precious chain mails. The main city, where he lives, is called J.r.vab<sup>230</sup> and [in this city] they have a three-day [long] bazaar [each] month, where they trade.

Cold prevails in their country and it is so strong that [each] man digs a kind of a cellar for himself (dugout), above it they make a wooden roof (planks) [p. 145] similar to [the roof of] a church and cover [the roof] with earth. The man settles with his family in [such cellars]. They bring firewood and small stones, then make fire and heat the stones in the fire until they are red-hot. When the stones are heated [to the required degree], they throw water [on the stones], causing steam to spread, warming up the dwelling to such a degree that they even take off their clothes. They stay in such houses till spring sets in.

Their tsar exacts tributes from them every year. If one of them has a daughter, then [the tsar] takes from her clothes [as a gift for himself] once a year. If he has a son, then [the tsar] picks from his clothes [as a gift for himself] again once a year. If there is neither a son or a daughter, then [the tsar] takes [as a gift for himself] from the dresses of his wife or concubine.

If [the tsar] found a thief in his country, he ordered to have him strangled or placed under the supervision of one of his governors in the most remote part of his country.

### the ar-Rusiya

[p. 145] As for ar-Rusiya, it is [situated] on an island surrounded by a lake. In order to get to the island it is necessary to cover the distance of a three-day [trip through] forest thickets and depths. [Ar-Rusiya] is an unhealthy and damp [territory]. If a man puts a foot on the ground, the earth trembles (sways, sinks) because of the dampness (abundance of water in it).

<sup>227</sup> The cubit is a unit of length.

<sup>228</sup> In the Arabic text: سويت S.w.y.t. B.l.k. or S.w.y.y.t. B.l.k. (Sviatopolk)

<sup>229</sup> سوبنج

<sup>230</sup> جوارب

They [have] a tsar called Hakan-Rus<sup>231</sup>. They make raids against the as-Saqaliba. They embark and head towards them, take them prisoner, bring [the captives] to Khazaran and Bulkar and [there] they sell [the prisoners]. They don't have cultivated lands, they eat food brought to them from the land of as-Saqaliba.

When one [of the Ruses] has a baby, he (the father) brings (presents) a naked sword to the new-born, puts it in front of him and says: 'I won't bequeath any property to you: you'll have only the things you'll get yourself with your sword'.

They have no manors, villages and cultivated lands. Their occupation (trade) is the sale of sable, squirrel and other fur-coated animals. They sell it to the interested, taking (receiving) in payment minted coins (of money), which they keep in their waist belts.

They are tidy in clothes. A man [of the Ruses] wears bracelets. They treat their slaves well<sup>232</sup>. They are exquisite in their clothes as they are engaged in (?) [p. 146] trade. They have many towns and they have increased their [wealth] (live in abundance).

They respect their guests and treat foreigners well who seek refuge (patronage) from them. It is not allowed for any [of the Ruses] to offend and oppress those, who visit them from time to time. They help and protect those, who are the victims of evil and injustice.

They have swords—as-Sulaymaniyah. If one of the clans [of the Ruses] asked for help, they all came out together, not being separated into detachments, all in concert, till they gained a victory over their enemy.

If one [of the Ruses] accuses another, both of them are summoned to appear before their tsar, and they are at odds [at that time]. He settles [the quarrel] between them as he deems [right] (at his own discretion). If they (the two parties) do not agree with his word (decision), then he orders them to be judged by their swords. The one, whose sword turns out to be sharper, is the winner. Relatives [of both parties] come out, stand up with their weapons and engage in fight. The one, who defeats his counterpart (sahib), gets in this dispute what he wants.

They (the Ruses) have their own doctors, who govern over their tsar like their sovereigns, who order them to sacrifice to their Creator what they choose from among women, men and horses (?). When doctors command, it is absolutely impossible not to execute their order. A doctor takes a man or an animal, throws a rope around his (it) neck and hangs him (it) from a tree, until he suffocates, and says: 'This is a sacrifice to God (Allah)'. [The Rus] are manly and brave. When they come out in the open field [of battle] [against] other troops, they do not step back until they kill them. They assault their women and enslave them.

They have [beautiful] bodies, they are handsome and brave. But they do not have courage [to fight] on horseback, they [conduct] their raids and campaigns on ships.

They wear [wide baggy] shalwars<sup>233</sup>. One [pair] of them takes around a hundred cubits. While putting them on, they gather them around their knees and tie up.

None of the Rus is alone when in need: He is accompanied by three men, a group of his friends, who (standing around him) protect him

Each of them [all the time has] a sword with him because of the low trustworthiness [of the Rus] and the treacherousness possessed by the Rus. [So,] if someone [had even] a small property, this tempted his brother or a [close] friend [so much], that they killed or robbed him.

When a nobleman [of the Rus] died, they would dig a grave for him similar to a spacious house, place him inside with clothes for his body and his golden bracelets [p. 147] that he used to wear. They also [put down] a lot of food, jugs with drinks and minted coins<sup>234</sup>. Together [with

<sup>231</sup> The title 'tsar' (king) of the Rus looks strange, especially in the context of a description of northern marshy wooded lands. It is doubtful that Khazar influence on these regions was so strong that the local prince would assume the authoritative title 'Khakan.' It may be the Norwegian name Haakon, which a Varangian tribal leader could have had. For instance, a Varangian tribal leader named Haakon I is known to have ruled in 936. In general, the description of the everyday life of these Rus suggests the Varangians rather than the Slavs [Bolshakov, HV].

<sup>232</sup> In the Arabic text it appears in the singular form—'ar-raqiq' (slave).

<sup>233</sup> سراويلات

<sup>234</sup> مالا صامتا

the deceased] they also put in the grave his beloved wife, even though she was still alive. The entrance of the grave was closed behind her, and she died there.

### As-Sarir

[pp. 147–148] The way from the Khazars to [as-Sarir] takes twelve days through steppes, then you climb a high mountain and [cross] river valleys, [so] you travel for three days and [finally] reach the fortress of the tsar (Qal'at al-malik). This fortress is located on the top of a mountain, [and has an area] of four to four parasang; a stone wall surrounds it. The tsar has a golden and a silver throne.

The residents of the fortress, the bigger part [of its population] are Christians, while the rest of the inhabitants of their tsardom are disbelievers (kuffar).

Their tsar has twenty thousand ravines inhabited by different type of people, having in possession land allotments and villages. They all worship a dried up head.

If [one] of them died, the deceased was laid on the bier and carried to the square. He was left on the bier for three days, then the residents of the town (al-madinah), wearing armour (plastron) and chain mail, mounted horses, rode to the edge of the square and attacked the deceased lying on the bier: they surround the bier and direct their lances [at the deceased], without stinging, however. He said, I asked them [what they were doing]. They replied, 'A man had died and had been buried, but after three days he shouted from his grave. Therefore we leave [each of] our deceased for three days and on the fourth day frighten him with our armour and weapons so that his spirit, if it has left him, could return into his body'. They have been practicing this rite already for three hundred years. The name of their tsar is Avar.

To the right (that is to the sunrise) of that fortress there is a road, which leads amidst steep mountains and woody thickets of twelve stations (stopover quarters, manazil) to the town called Khaydan (Khaydak). They have a tsar named Azar Narsi. He is a follower of three religions: on Fridays he prays with Muslims, on Saturdays—with Jews and on Sundays—with Christians. To everyone who comes to him, explaining [his position], he says: 'Each group [of followers] of these religions encourages [people] to convert to their religion and claims that they own the truth and apart from their faith [any other] is deception. I, however, practice all the three religions in order to perceive the truth in them all'.

At a distance of ten parasangs from this [town there is another] town, called R.n.h.s. (R.n.j.s.), and a very big tree was growing there, without producing any fruits; each Wednesday residents gathered around it and hanged from [the tree various] types of fruits, they worshiped it and laid donations [under it].

Tsar as-Sarir has a fortress, called Alal, and another one, strongly fortified, called Gumik, there (in Gumik) he keeps his treasures. It is said that [the treasures] were given to him as a gift by Anushirwan.

### Al-Lan

[p. 148] [When] you go to the left (that is to the west) from Tsar (Malik) as-Sarir, passing through mountains and pasture fields, after a three-day journey you reach the tsardom of the al-Lan tsar (Malik). The al-Lan tsar himself (deep in his heart) is a Christian, though all the residents of his tsardom (mamlak) are pagans worshiping idols. [The way] to the fortress called Bab al-Lan takes a ten-day trip through rivers and a [high timber] forest. It is on the top of a mountain, below which there is a road. That fortress is surrounded by high mountains, day and night it is continuously guarded, by a thousand men from the fortress residents.

The al-Lan consist of four tribes. The title and power of the tsar are [related] to the tribe called D.h.sas, and the al-Lan tsar is called B.gayir, and this is the name for everyone, who rules them.

The town of Bab al-Abwab extends from the top of mountain al-Kabk to the Sea of al-Khazar, and [the town] juts out into the sea for three miles.



[p. 148] **Some information about the Yajuj and Majuj**

[p. 149] Ibn Khordadbeh said: Sallam al-Tarjuman, who translated the messages (letters) of the Turks sent to the ruler (sultan) al-Wathiq bi'llah (by Allah's will, told me, 'When al-Wathiq learned that the wall built by Dhul-Qarnayn between us and the Yajuj and Majuj, was opened (breached), he called me and said, "Make sure of this and come back and let me know [what you have seen]".

He completed [the whole story] up to the end...<sup>235</sup>

Ibn Khordadbeh said: Sallam al-Tarjuman told me the information with one phrase: Then he dictated to me from a letter in which he wrote about it to al-Wathiq. We wrote to him to inform that [the information] about this was a [mixture] of confusion and exaggeration, because things like that should not be regarded as truth. But I found that this corresponded to [the truth].

*This material was prepared by Nuriya Garayeva*

**Tāhir al-Marwazī**

Sharaf al-Zaman Tahir Marwazi lived from the late 11th to the early 12th century; he was a doctor at the Court of Seljukids. He was the author of the treatise 'Taba'i al-hayawan' ('The Nature of Animals'), several manuscripts of which have survived. Thanks to one of them, V. Minorsky translated into English fragments referring to the peoples of India, Tibet, and China, while the chapter dedicated to China contained partial records about the East Slavic peoples. Alongside information that is already known from other sources, al-Marwazi offers unique informa-

tion on the Northern tribes of the Ves and Yugra, as well as unique details of the adoption of Christianity by the Rus in 912/913 and their subsequent transition to Islam.

Our translations are based on the materials of al-Marwazi, published by V. Minorsky [Marwazi, 1942].

Edition and translation of the section: Marwazi, 1942, pp. 20–23, 32–36. About him: Krachkovsky, 1957, p. 270; Zakhoder, 1967; Novoseltsev, 1990, p. 21.

**'Taba'i al-hayawan'**  
(Nature of animals)

**Chapter Nine. About the Turks**

[p. 20]...**Al-Bajanakiya** (The Pechenegs) are nomadic people who travel along watering places and pastures. The length of the Pechenegs' territory (Bajanak) [makes up] a thirty-day journey in all directions. Numerous nations surround by from all sides. To the north of them, there is a country of Hifjak (Kipchak), to the south-west (al-Janub fi-n-Maghrib), there is a country of the al-Khazars in the east, there is a country of the al-Guziya (Ghuzes), and [p. 21] in the west, there is a country of the as-Saqaliba. All these peoples undertake campaigns against the Pechenegs (al-Bajanakiya), and the Pechenegs (al-Bajanakiya) undertake campaigns against them. The Pechenegs are rich in: wild horses (davabb) and herds, utensils, gold, silver, weapons, banners, dams (tarradat; lands). The distance between the [lands] of the al-Bajanakiya (Pechenegs) and the al-Khazar makes up ten days [of journey] through steppes and woody thickets. There is no any well-trodden (beaten) path between them (the al-Bajanakiya) and the al-Khazar, and they cross [their lands, relying] on stars, landmarks and sometimes at random. As for the al-Khazar, their country is vast and borders (reaches, joins) the great mountains on the one side.

<sup>235</sup> The ellipsis is contained in the text of the edition.

These are the mountains, the far end of which two types of Turks settled in (al-Atrak): one of them is called Tulas, and the other—Lu'r<sup>236</sup>, and these mountains extend till the country of Tiflis. Saqsin is their major city<sup>237</sup>. And there is another city, which is called H.n.b.l.<sup>238</sup>. They live in these two [p. 140] cities in winter. When spring days come, they go out into the steppes, where they spend all the summer. When their king acts, he rides at the head of ten thousand horsemen. According to their custom, if they ride [anywhere], each rider takes twenty pegs made of tamarisk, each of the pegs being two ziras long. When they set up a camp, each of them sticks his pegs into the ground... and presses them against their shields... and thus they make a wall (which can be pierced (cut) by no one) in a [time] less than an hour around their troops (camp).

Out of the [Turks] and **Burdas**<sup>239</sup> (Burtases). The country of the Burdas is a part of the country of the al-Khazar. The distance between them (Burdas) and al-Khazar makes up fifteen days [of journey]. They are obedient to the tsar (Malik) of the al-Khazar. They supplied ten thousand horsemen. They have no head (rais), who would regulate their [affairs]. The authority (power) of the [head] was exercised among them. In each quarter (mahalla) they had a Sheikh whom they applied to for regulating what happened between them. They own vast lands in a woody area. [These lands] are followed by the [lands] of the Bulkars<sup>240</sup> (Bulgars) and the al-Bajanakiya (Pechenegs). They have brilliant appearance, beautifully shaped face and body.

When a girl becomes an adult, she ceases obeying her father, she herself chooses a man, whom she wants. And the groom went to her father to ask for her hand. She would marry him, if she wanted [to be his wife]. They have pigs, [black] cattle, and a lot of honey. Martens comprise the largest part of their property. They are of two types: one [type] cremates the deceased, the other type buries them. Their lands are flat; [p. 22] birches comprise the largest part of their trees. Their fields are cultivated. The vastness of the lands [is] seventeen days of journey in all directions. They have no fruits, their drink is made of honey.

**Al-Majgariya** (the Majars) are Turkic people (at-Turk). They possess large territories [reaching] a hundred of parasangs in all directions. Their head (rais) rides at the head of twenty thousand horsemen. They call their general K.n.de,<sup>241</sup> and this name is a distinguishing royal sign. They [live] in tents moving to pastures and fertile [lands] (hisb). One of the country's borders reaches the ar-Rum Sea. And there are two rivers that flow into this sea. One of them is greater than the Jeyhun. Its inhabitants (the al-Majgariya) live between these two rivers. These two rivers are called Ru.a<sup>242</sup> and Itil (Atil). The country (bilad) of the al-Majgariya has forests, and the people living there cultivate crops (mazari). They raid against those who originate from the as-Saqaliba and the ar-Rus, take prisoners, bring them to ar-Rum and sell there. They have brilliant appearance: with a beautiful face and heavy physique. They are rich, and the property they possess is clearly obtained due to the large scale of their trade.

As for **the as-Saqaliba**, they are a big nation. The distance between their country and the country (bilad) of al-Bajanakiya [is] ten days of journey through steppes and lands (areas) without roads. There are dense forests (closely standing trees) and water sources. [And this continues] until you reach those forests. They have no vineyards, but have a lot of honey. They graze pigs. They cremate the dead, because they are fire-worshippers. They mostly cultivate millet. Their wine is made of honey. They make various pipes (reed pipes, trumpets—mazamir). They have a pipe of two ells long<sup>243</sup>. There are eight strings on the 'uda, and no hitch pin (bunjuk), since its ('uda) hitch pins are straight. They live in prosperity. Spears, pikes and good [small

<sup>236</sup> In the Arabic text it is **لوعر**, possibly a corrupted variant of **اوغر** (according to other copies of the work).

<sup>237</sup> Conjecture by O. Bolshakov [Bolshakov, HV]. In the Arabic text: **سار عس** 'Sar.'s., read by V. Minorsky as 'Sar'ashin.'

<sup>238</sup> The word appears without diacritic marks in the Arabic text. Various letter combinations are possible: Kh.n.b.l.', or Kh.b.n.l.', etc. The letter combination Kh.b.n.l.' can be read as Khanbaliq. In our opinion, the graphic outline makes possible the reading Kh.m.l.j.—that is, Khamlij.

<sup>239</sup> **حنبل**

<sup>240</sup> **بلكار**

<sup>241</sup> **كند**

<sup>242</sup> There are no diacritic signs; a number of readings are possible: Runa? Ruta? or Duna.

<sup>243</sup> The cubit is a unit of length.

round shields] are their weapons. Their supreme head is called Sh.v...,<sup>244</sup> he has a deputy, called Sh.r.h... Their tsar has wild horses (davabb), and his meals are prepared of their milk. The main city, where he lives, is called H.j.rat. There is a bazaar, which [operates] three days in each month. Their winters are so cold that they dig a deep tunnel, cover it with a tree, then warm it up with steam (heat) [by burning] dung and firewood. Here they spend their winters. In winter, al-Majgariya undertake campaigns against them. As a result of undertaking campaigns against each other they (both, al-Majgariya and as-Saqaliba) [p. 23] have many slaves.

As for **the ar-Rusiya** (the Rus people), they inhabit an island in the sea. The length of the island is three days [of journey] in either direction. On [the island], there are forest brushwood and thickets, surrounded by a lake<sup>245</sup>. They are very numerous. They relied (looked) on the sword to [obtain] the means necessary for life and [other] income. If one of them died, who had sons and daughters, his property was transferred to daughters, while sons were given a sword saying, 'Your father used the sword to get property. You should do the same and follow him!' It continued till they converted to Christianity in [one of] the months of the three hundredth [/912–913] year. When they converted to Christianity, the faith made them put their swords in the sheaths, and without [swords] the door (source) to income was closed. This caused them losses and inconsistency, and limited their means of living. They sought to adopt Islam, in order to get a permission to undertake campaigns and lead a holy war (jihad) and regain what they used to have. They sent ambassadors (messengers) to the ruler (sahib) of Khwarezm and four relatives of their tsar (and there were four of them—they were all relatives of their tsar). The ruling tsar was independent. Their (of the Ruses') tsar (malik) was called (lakab) Buladmir<sup>246</sup> (Vladimir), just as they called the tsar (malik) of at-Turk—Hakan, and the tsar (malik) of Bulgars—b.l.t.var<sup>247</sup>. Their (of the Ruses) ambassadors arrived in Khwarezm and delivered the message (risala). The Khwarezm Shah was glad to hear [the message], by which they were asking to convert them to Islam. He sent to them those who could teach them the Islamic laws (sharia) And they adopted Islam. They are strong and sturdy people, who travel with the infantry to distant places to make raids (campaigns); moreover, they sail to the al-Khazar sea by ships, take away their ships by force and seize property. They undertook campaigns to Kustantiniya across the Buntus sea and to the chain (al-Salasil) in its bay. Once they raided the Khazar sea and took Barza'a for a while. For their bravery and courage one of them is believed to correspond in strength to several men of other nations. And if they had horses (davabb) and rode, they would be a disaster (whip) for all people (the mankind).

*This material was prepared by Nuriya Garayeva*

<sup>244</sup> سويت بلك Svyatopolk.

<sup>245</sup> The phrase can also be read as follows: near them (the trees) there is a lake.

<sup>246</sup> بولاددير Buladmir or Buladimir

<sup>247</sup> In the manuscript it is بطلوار, t.l.tu. V. Minorsky suggests reading it as بطلو, b.l.t.war. However, it is usually read as 'yiltiwar,' according to Ibn Fadlan.

### Al-Masudi

Personal and background details of Abu'l-Hasan al-Masudi are scarce: born in Baghdad, supposedly around 896; died in 956; a distant descendant of one of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad. He was an extensive traveller. Authored numerous literary works, a professional man of letters. The works of al-Masudi are full of details about the history and geography of many of the countries of what was the known World. These are based on his personal experience and stories from his predecessors' books that he sometimes mentions. Researchers have called al-Masudi 'the Arab Herodotus', or the successor of al-Tabari, placing his writings on a par with 'The History' by al-Ya'qubi. Unfortunately, most of his works were not preserved. Only two of his works are known to exist today: one of them is 'Muruj adh-dhahab wa ma'adin al-jawahir' ('The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems'); sometimes it was referred to as 'The Meadows of Gold' owing to an error by its primary editor.

Another one is 'Kitab at-Tanbih wa-l-'Ishraf' ('The Book of Admonition and Revision') [Mikulsky, 1998, p. 11]. Both contain information about the tribes of Eastern Europe, their lands and their customs and practices; about the campaigns of the Ruses beyond the limits of the Eastern European region, etc.

Translations of the related materials from 'Muruj adh-dhahab...' were published in 'The History of Shirvan and Derbent from the 10th to the 11th centuries' [Minorsky, 1958; Minorsky, 1963], which were reproduced in line with that edition in volume 1 of 'The History of Tatars' [History of Tatars, 2002, pp. 472–477]. Here are translations of the corresponding fragments from the 'Kitab at-tanbikh va-l-ishraf'.

Editions and translations: BGA, VIII, 1894; Maçoudi, 1897. About him: Gibb, 1960, p. 58; Krachkovsky, 1957, pp. 171–182; Khalidi, 1975; Rotter, 1978; Shboul, 1979; EI<sup>2</sup>, vol. 6, pp. 111–112, 784–786; Masudi, 2002, pp. 6–44.

### Kitab at-Tanbih wa-l-'Ishraf (The Book of Admonition and Revision)

#### About the Third Sea, that is the Khazar Sea (al-Khazari)<sup>248</sup>

[p. 60] The Khazar Sea is a sea of the al-Khazar, al-Bab wa-l-Abwab, Armeniya, Azerbaijan, Mukan (Mugan), al-Jil, al-Daylam, Abaskun, and [they] live on the coast of Jurjan, Tabaristan, Khwarezm, and, moreover, in the settlements (countries) of al-A'ajim<sup>249</sup> and their habitats located around [the sea].

The length [of the sea] is eight hundred miles, and its width—six hundred miles. It is said to be even more than that. [This sea] has the shape of an intestine, and [it is elongated]. [Some] people call it the sea of al-Khurasani because of its vicinity (neighbourhood) to Khwarezm in the land of Khurasan. Near [the sea], there are numerous peoples, who [inhabit] the valleys (the valley), [and] the Ghuzzes from among the Turks [lead nomadic lifestyle] in steppes<sup>250</sup>. Moreover, near [the sea], there is a place known as Bakukh, and this is an oil-rich land (oilfield) in the kingdom of Shirvan, in the [land] that stretches [towards] (nearby) al-Bab wa-l-Abwab. They produce white oil there, and there [are] volcanoes (al-atam), which are the sources of fire, emerging from the ground. In [this sea], there are islands [located] in front of the oil-rich lands (oilfields). There [are also] sources of great fire, which can be seen from a great distance at night.

<sup>248</sup> Only information on the Khazar River is presented from this chapter; the information on Caucasian and Middle Asian rivers is not included.

<sup>249</sup> Al-A'ajim are non-Arabs.

<sup>250</sup> Possible translation: 'Many Turkic Ghuzz nomads live in the surrounding steppes.'

In the book 'Muruj adh-dhahab wa ma'adin al-jawhar' (Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems), we have already mentioned the information about other volcanoes, (al-atam) which are located in the habitable [part] of the Earth. The aforementioned volcanoes are Atma (volcano) Sikkilliya and Atma (volcano) Wadi Barhut in the country of al-Shihr and Hadramaut, the volcanoes of the al-Khazari Sea and al-Bab [p. 61] wa-l-Abwab and Atma (volcano) Asuka in the al-Hinjijan region (bilad), which is located in the country (bilad) of Fars and al-Ahwaz. [This volcano] is seen at night from a distance of more than forty parasangs, and its functioning is well known due to a large number of travellers on this road. Moreover, [there is] Atma (volcano) Arbujan nearby al-Sayravan in Masabazan country, and it is known as Hamma Tuman<sup>251</sup> (Blackness of the [principality] of Mist), near Manjilan: this can be seen at a distance of forty parasangs from Baghdad on the way to al-Bandanijin and Abraz ar-Ruz. Such is the huge volcano (al-Atma), [located] in the kingdom of al-Maharaj, of the tsar (malik, sovereign) of the al-Zabaj islands and other islands in the al-Sini sea, including (among them) [such islands as] Kalah and Sarbuza. Al-Maharaj is the name of each of their tsars (maliks). His kingdom is very large in size; his troops are innumerable; none of the people (no one) can go around his islands over two years even by a high-speed vessel. This ruler possessed a variety of incenses and spices: none of the tsars had what he possessed<sup>252</sup>. For example, they produced camphor in these lands, as well as aloe, carnations, sandalwood, nutmeg, cardamom, al-kubaba<sup>253</sup> and other [spices]. [The aforementioned] volcano (al-Atma) [is located] in the mountains in a remote [part] of his islands. During the day it is black because of the sunlight, and at night it is red, as its flame rises so high that it reaches the clouds in the sky. The flame erupts out of it with a noise like the strongest possible thunder, and sometimes it produces a terrible and surprising sound, which is heard at a very great distance: it warns of the death of one of their tsars, and sometimes this [sound] is quieter, when it warns of the death of one of their leaders (ruas). Due to the long-existing customs and experience [accumulated] since ancient times, they distinguish between the warning of a tsar's death and [warning about the death of] others, although they hardly differ. Near these mountains [p. 62], [there is] an island, from where continuous sounds can be heard like the sound of lutes and flutes,<sup>254</sup> drums and various other musical instruments, entertaining [people] with the sound of dances. The one, who hears it, distinguishes the sounds of the instruments. Voyagers from Siraf, 'Aman, as well as others, sailing near these places claim that ad-Dajzhal (Antichrist?) [lives] on that island, and everybody knows about it. [We have mentioned] other volcanoes (al-atam) as well.

The Black Irtysh and the White Irtysh rivers, which are among the great ('azim) famous rivers, flow into that sea. Both of them are huge ('azim). Each of them is larger than the Tigris and Euphrates, and the [distance] between their mouths is about ten days [of journey]. There are winter huts and summer [camps] of the Kimek Turks (al-Kimakiya) and the Ghuzzes (al-Guziya) on both rivers. There is [also] the al-Kurr River,<sup>255</sup> which flows through the Tiflis regions (bilad) and the major city (madina) of Sugdabil in the lands of Jurzan, and then [through] the territories (bilad) of Barza'a. The [al-Kurr River] joins the ar-Rass River,<sup>256</sup> which is the river of Varsan, and together they flow into the sea. Moreover, there is [another] Isbizruz River,<sup>257</sup> and its source in the side [of such rivers] as the Sisara and Shahrüz, and they both flow through the country (bilad) of Azarbaijan and ad-Daylam. [Moreover], there is the Khazar River that flows through the main city (madina) called Itil—the capital (dar) of the Kingdom (mamlaka) of the Khazars at that time. Prior to this, the city of Balanjar was the capital (dar) of their kingdom (mamlaka). The Burtas river flows into [this river]. The Burtases are a large ('azim) Turkic nation located between Khwarezm and the state of the Khazars,

<sup>251</sup> Possible interpretation: 'Bani Tauman.'

<sup>252</sup> Possible translation: 'no king has the amount that he has.'

<sup>253</sup> الكباية

<sup>254</sup> السرنايات — as-surnayat.

<sup>255</sup> The Kura River.

<sup>256</sup> Ar-Rass is the Araxes River.

<sup>257</sup> Possible interpretation: 'Ispidrud.'

but attributed to the Khazars. Huge ships with goods and various [p. 63] items float along this river, which goods [are delivered] from the country of Khwarezm and other [countries]. And they deliver leather (skins) of silver foxes from the country of Burtas. It (the fur of silver foxes) is the noblest and the most expensive fur of all. It consists of two types: red and white. There is no preference between them, the fur of al-Fanak fox and that of [fox?] al-halanji (birch one). The worst [fur] of them is that known as al-a'rabi, and black [foxes] live only in this place of the world and [places] close to it. Tsars of the nations from al-A'ajim boast to each other about clothes made of fur. They produce hats and coats (?) of it. The fur of black foxes is the most expensive of all [furs]. Because of this fur, they brought them in the direction of al-Bab wa-l-Abwab, Barza'a and other [places] of the country of Khorasan. And sometimes they brought them to the country of al-Jarbi (to the west) located in the lands of as-Saqaliba [to establish] relations (connections) with al-Jarbi. Then to the country of al-Ifranja and al-Andalus, and with these skins of black and red [foxes], they traveled to the Maghreb countries, where people thought (those who thought about it) that [this fur] was from al-Andalus and the [places] close (which are adjacent) to it located in the countries of al-Ifranja and as-Saqaliba.

Their main feature is in the fact that [they are] warm and dry. The degree of [their] warmth is evidenced by the [degree] of the [animals'] meat bitterness. Their fur is the warmest compared with the rest of the fur-coated animals. In terms of its properties, it is similar to fire as it maintains warmth and dryness. Clothing made of this fur is suitable for those who got wet, as well as for elderly people.

During his stay in Ray, al-Mahdi<sup>258</sup> loved to ask which fur was the warmest (hot). Then he took a few bottles, filled them with water and tied their heads with [different] kinds of fur. The next morning, he asked to bring these bottles to him. It was in the year, [when it was] very cold and lots of snow fell. He saw that [all] of them were frozen, except for the [bottle] head wrapped with a skin of a black (silver fox?), because it does not freeze. It is known that it is the warmest and driest. [p. 64] The [rivers that flow into this sea] include the Khazar river, known as Aum,<sup>259</sup> which is greater than the Tigris and Euphrates.

Moreover, the [rivers that flow into this sea] include a huge river known as the Kizil Ruz<sup>260</sup> that means 'the Wolf's River'. It receives the water flowing from the al-Kabk mountains (Caucasus) and flows into the sea nearby al-Bab wa-l-Abwab. There is a huge bridge across it, which is amazing in terms of the [skillfulness] of its construction and is similar to the Sanji Bridge. The Sanji Bridge is one of the wonders of the world: it is located in the vicinity of Sumaysat at the border of al-Jazira, and the Sanja, that is the river, after which the bridge was named, flows into the Euphrates.

The [rivers that flow into the Khazar sea] include the Caliph river, and this is Jayhun—the river of Balkh, al-Tirmidhi and Khwarezm. Its source consists of the springs for the fifth iqlim across ribat called Badahshan, and it is nearly twenty days [of journey] from the main town (madinah) of Balkh.<sup>261</sup>

#### About the Fourth Sea, Namely the Buntus<sup>262</sup>

[p. 66] The fourth sea, namely the Buntus sea, the sea of al-Burgar (al-Bulgar), ar-Rus and other peoples. It extends from the north from the side of the city, which is called Lazika, which is located beyond Constantinople. The length of the [sea] is thirteen hundred miles, and three hundred miles in width. [p. 67] This is connected with the Maytas lake,<sup>263</sup> which is three hundred miles long, and one hundred miles wide. This is located in the direction of cultivated lands (al-'imara) in the north, some of them being near the North Pole, and near them (the cultivated lands), there is a city,

<sup>258</sup> Al-Mahdi was an Abbasid caliph (158–169/775–785).

<sup>259</sup> اوم, possibly a corrupted spelling of Atil.

<sup>260</sup> Vowel marks by the publisher. Possible interpretation: 'Kurk-Ruz.'

<sup>261</sup> The following two pages [pp. 64–66] of this section present information on the Turks and the geography of Middle Asia and regions adjacent to the Caspian Sea.

<sup>262</sup> That is, Pontos, the Pontian, or Black Sea. This chapter is presented in the translation in full.

<sup>263</sup> The Sea of Azov.

beyond which there is no cultivated land and which is called Tulya<sup>264</sup>. There the al-Kustantiniya strait<sup>265</sup> begins (starts), which flows into the ar-Rum sea. Its length is about three hundred and fifty miles, which will be mentioned later in subsequent sections of this book. The stream of the strait and the way it flows [into the sea] are clearly visible in narrow places, and its water is cold.

Some people believe that the sea and the lake are a single sea. This sea joins the sea of al-Bab wa-l-Abwab on the one side through the strait and great rivers flowing there. This misled some authors of books about seas and cultivated (habitable) lands, and they argue that the Buntus sea, the Maytas Lake and the al-Khazar Sea are a single [sea].

Great rivers that flow into that sea include a great river called Tanais<sup>266</sup> originating in the north. Its residents include many as-Saqaliba people and representatives of other nations, who deeply penetrated to the north. Along with this river, large rivers [flowing into the Buntus sea] include such rivers as Danuba<sup>267</sup> and M.lava, which is called this in [the language of] as-Saqaliba as well. This is a large ('azim) river, which is about three miles wide and which [is located] several days' [journey] beyond al-Kustantiniya and there are settlements (habitats) of an-Namjin<sup>268</sup> and al-M.rava, who belong to as-Saqaliba. Many al-Burgar settled there after they had accepted Christianity. And they say that the Turk river originates from it, that is the ash-Shasha river mentioned above.

#### About the Ukiyanus Sea, Namely the al-Muhit<sup>269</sup>

...[p. 190] The third ransom—Hakan's ransom [held] in Muharram 231/7 of September–6 October 845, during the reign of al-Wasik<sup>270</sup> at al-Lamis, and Michael, Theophilos's son (Michael ibn Theophil) was the emperor (al-Malik) of ar-Rum [at that time], and the ransom was headed by Hakan—a Turk eunuch (at-Turk). The number of Muslims ransomed over ten days made up four thousand three hundred and sixty two [persons], including men and women. And according to the data contained in 'Kitaab as-Savaif' (Book about Summer Trips), there were four thousand and forty-seven ransomed people. Some say, there were fewer of [them]. During this ransom, Zibatra's<sup>271</sup> residents were released, and Muslim ibn Muslim al-Jarmi was released (freed) at that time as well, who occupied a high position in the borderlands (as-Sugur)<sup>272</sup>. He knew much about the inhabitants of ar-Rum and its territories. His works [p. 191] contain information about ar-Rum's residents and its tsars, their bureaucrats, their country, their roads and routes, dates of campaign against them and their conquest, as well as their neighbouring countries: Burdjan, al-Abr, al-Burgar, as-Saqaliba, al-Khazar and others.

During this ransom, there was a man along with Hakan, named kunya Abu Ramla from the side of Ahmad ibn Daud, the chief qadi (qadi al-Kudda), who subjected prisoners to a test [questionnaire] during the ransom: those who thought the Quran had been created and rejected [the doctrine] of its transmission were ransomed and treated well. And those who refused to [recognise] this were left in the land of al-Rum. Some prisoners chose to return to the Christian land rather than to say this. And Muslim also refused to obey it, and he was subjected to ordeals and humiliations until he was finally released.

*This material was prepared by Nuriya Garayeva*

<sup>264</sup> تولىة. Possible interpretation: Sulya.

<sup>265</sup> The Bosphorus.

<sup>266</sup> The Don.

<sup>267</sup> دنابة, the Danube.

<sup>268</sup> The Germans?

<sup>269</sup> Only this fragment of the chapter is presented.

<sup>270</sup> Al-Wathiq was an Abbasid caliph (227–232/842–847).

<sup>271</sup> Zibatra was a city in the direction of ar-Rum between Malataya, Sumaysat, and al-Hadasa; it was named after Zibatra bint ar-Rumi ibn al-Yafiz ibn Sam ibn Nuh, may peace be upon him [Yaqt, 1866–1873, Bd.2, p. 614].

<sup>272</sup> A province at the border of ash-Sham and ar-Rum.

### Ibn Fadlan

The 'Note' ('Risala') by Ahmad ibn Fadlan (there is still little data about him [Bartold, 1927, p. 398; Bartold, 1973, p. 596; Canard, p. 759]) contains a description of the embassy of Caliph al-Muqtadir to Bolghar for official adoption of Islam by the Bulgarian leader and his entourage in 921–922. The Risala has not been maintained in full: it was long known only due to long quotes contained in the Yaqt dictionary first collected and studied by M. Fraehn [Fraehn, 1823; 1832]. The most complete text of the 'Risala' was found by A.-Z. Validi-Togan (1923) in a rolled up manuscript stored in the library of Mashhad (mosque?) (the modern city of Tus, Iran)<sup>273</sup>. The work on preparing the text of 'Risala' and its translation for publication was simultaneously done by A. Kovalevsky in the USSR and A.-Z. Validi-Togan in Germany. Both studies were published in 1939 (it was published in the Soviet Union a little bit earlier than in Germany): A.-Z. Validi-Togan published the text of the 'Note' in type, with a German translation, researcher's notes and comments<sup>274</sup> [Togan, 1939], while in the USSR, 'Risala' by Ibn Fadlan was published [Ibn Fadlan 1939] in the form of a manuscript facsimile, with a Russian translation, researcher's notes and comments of A. Kovalevsky, although his name was not on its title page due to the fact that he had been repressed.<sup>275</sup> The text of 'Risala' in the Mashhad manuscript ended with Ibn Fadlan's stay in Bulgar. A. Kovalevsky added an excerpt from the Yaqt 'Dictionary...' About the Khazars. The second edition [Ibn Fadlan, 1956] was complemented by A. Kovalevsky with an extensive historical and ethnographic research and translations of some materials by later authors, citing or retelling the materials of the 'Note'.

In 1942, an article by H. Ritter was published [Ritter, 1942, pp. 98–126] amending the text of 'Risala' by Ibn Fadlan published by A. Validi-Togan. However, due to the war, the publication of 1939 and the article by H. Ritter remained almost unnoticed in Europe. Therefore, the study of 'Risala' by Ibn Fadlan was again started by K. Czeglédy [Czeglédy, 1951, pp. 217–260]. A little bit later 'Risala' was published in a French translation by M. Canard [Canard, 1958, pp. 41–146] with detailed commentary that took into account prior publications, including clarifications made by H. Ritter, K. Czeglédy, D. Dunlop, as well as widely using the materials of 'Hudud al-Alam' published by V. Minorsky. In 1959, Dr. Muhammad Sami ad-Dahan again published the Arabic text of 'Risala' by Ibn Fadlan (reprinted in 1978)<sup>276</sup> [Ad-Dahan, 1959; 1978], which was designed to take into account the inaccuracies of A.-Z. Validi-Togan's publication in the Arabic text [Blake, Frye, 1949; Dunlop, 1949]. His study of 'Risala' and comments on the Arabic text largely take into account the publications of A.-Z. Validi-Togan, A. Kovalevsky and I. Krachkovsky, as well as subsequent studies of western scholars, to use which he was helped by a French colleague and friend, a famous orientalist and arabist N. Eliseev,<sup>277</sup> who fluently spoke

<sup>273</sup> The Mashhad Manuscript, a unique copy of a collection of works dating back to the 13th century, contains both 'Notes' by 10th century Arab traveller Abu Dulaf (the second one was unknown until it was found in the Mashhad Manuscript) and part of the geographical work by Ibn al-Faqih 'Kitab ahbar fi-l-buldan' ('Book of News about Countries'). 'Risala' by Ibn Fadlan is the last work in the collection. The manuscript consists of 212 sheets with 19 lines per page in the Naskh script. It bears a waqf mark: 'Waqf Ibn Hatun of the year 1067 [1656–57]'. The manuscript does not have an end; there are holes in the paper that damaged the text of 'Risala' [Kutubkhane Tus, 1926, III, pp. 237–238] (the manuscript titled 'Akhbar al-buldan' No. 2 in the section 'Mathematics'). The first photocopy of the manuscript was made in 1923 by E. Herzfeld for the State Library of Prussia. The second one was made in 1935; the Iranian Government presented a full photocopy of the manuscript to the USSR Academy of Sciences on the occasion of the 3rd International Congress on Iranian Art in Leningrad (Saint Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Microfilm 37, photocopy (23x18 cm): pressmark: V-202; new pressmark: FV123). A third one was made in 1936 for Professor L. Ligeti during his travels in Afghanistan.

<sup>274</sup> The Arabic text of 'Risala' is provided in the supplement, the text and pagination (in Arabic numerals) are right to left: pp. 1–45.

<sup>275</sup> A. Kovalevsky (1895–1969) was sentenced to five years at a corrective labour camp by the Special Council of the NKVD under Article 58; he served his sentence in the Komi ASSR, then in exile in Mordovia.

<sup>276</sup> For information of the Damascus Edition, see [Zäynullin, 1986].

<sup>277</sup> Nikita Eliseeff worked at the French Institute of Damascus for many years.



the German and Russian languages. In this publication, there are three illustrations in the form of facsimile photos of the 'Note' manuscript published in the USSR, as well as a copy of the typed text of 'Risala' taken from the publication of A.-Z. Validi-Togan [Ad-Dahan, 1978, pp. 83–89]. In 1985, T. Levitsky published a typed text of 'Risala' by Ibn Fadlan, together with a Polish translation and commentary [Żrodla, 1985] in the framework of a series of publications of Arab geographers' materials on Eastern Europe with Polish translations and commentaries prepared under his editorship by a team of author [Żrodla, 1985].

'Risala' by Ibn Fadlan translated by A. Kovalevsky was widely used in Russia and abroad, and the publication itself has long become a bibliographical rarity over the years after its release. There were no new Russian translations, although there appeared several Russian publications clarifying understanding of the text of 'Risala' [Smirnov, 1981, pp. 249–255; Klyashtorny, 1998, pp. 54–63; Bolshakov, 2000, pp. 55–57; Bolshakov, Kh. V.]. Since the 'Note' by Ibn Fadlan is the only early written monument relating to the history of the Volga Region, interest in it has not waned, and there are now a number of popular adaptations of A. Kovalevsky's translation [Shamsi, 1992, p. 92; 1996, pp. 12–72], as well as a translation of 'Risala' into Tatar [Mamedov, 1972, 152–159 b.; 2003]<sup>278</sup> prepared on the basis of a manuscript facsimile.

This 'Appendix' offers a new edition of A. Kovalevsky's translation published in 1956 with some modifications and corrections suggested by O. Bolshakov (in our translation, these places of the publication are enclosed in angle brackets <> at the beginning and the end of the amended text). Extensive comments of A. Kovalevsky that mainly refer to justification of the translation, features of writing of individual places in the Arabic text, etc., that were important in the original edition of the parallel text and the translation, are now superfluous when reprinting the translation without the Arabic text, and therefore have been omitted. Insertion of individual words and phrases from the Yaquut 'Dictionary.' Made by A. Kovalevsky and indicated in the comments are marked by italics in this publication, comments clarifying ambiguities in the text have been replaced for editorial notes based on the materials of A. Kovalevsky's publication, and in some cases completely wrong conclusions have been replaced for brief remarks of O. Bolshakov (also enclosed in angle brackets <> or specified). Transliteration of proper names, including use of nisbas ('al-Hashimi' instead of 'Hashimid') has been brought in correspondence with modern academic standards, and a number of terms and ethnonyms provided in the translation have been replaced for their equivalents according to the original text (for example, 'customer' has been replaced for 'Mawla', 'the Slavs' for 'Saqaliba', etc.). In our publication of A. Kovalevsky's translation, vocalization in the transliteration of foreign (mainly Turkic) names and placenames has been changed, as it was based mainly on assonances in the modern Chuvash language in his translation. These foreign words were not accorded in the text of Ibn Fadlan, and we do not know how they sounded, so their transliteration has been brought into correspondence with modern standards and verified with the relevant explanations.

The translation of dates from the Hijrah calendar to the Christian chronology is indicated in footnotes.

The attempts to localise the points of the embassy's route to the Volga Region are apparently prospectless, as the mentioned toponyms and hydronyms are completely inconsonant with modern names (with rare exceptions), and there are no clearly recognisable descriptions of areas in sources. These examples of identification in the commentaries are rather conventional.

<sup>278</sup> A facsimile photo reproduction was made using the edition [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 138–170].

# 'Risala'

(Note)

(reedition of A. Kovalevsky's translation [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 121–156], revised and corrected;  
editorial notes to the translation of the text)

[sheet 196b]<sup>279</sup> **This is a book of Ahmad ibn Fadlan ibn al-'Abbasa ibn Rashid ibn Ham-mad**, a mawla<sup>280</sup> of the Commander of the Faithful, and mawla of Muhammad ibn Sulayman,<sup>281</sup> al-Hashimi<sup>282</sup>, an ambassador of al-Muqtadir<sup>283</sup> to the tsar (malik) of as-Saqaliba<sup>284</sup>, where he informs what he had seen in the country of the Turks, Khazars, Rus, as-Saqaliba, al-Bashgard<sup>285</sup> and other peoples in terms of the differences in their beliefs, [sheet 197a] information about their tsars (muluk), and the state of their affairs.

Ahmad ibn Fadlan said, 'When the letter of<sup>286</sup> <Almish (Almysh)><sup>287</sup> ibn [Shilka]<sup>288</sup> yiltyvar<sup>289</sup> the tsar of as-Saqaliba,<sup>290</sup> was received by al-Muqtadir, a leader of the faithful, in which he

<sup>279</sup> The boldface text that follows is the text of 'Risala' in the Mashhad Manuscript. The text not in boldface is additions from Yaqut as translated by Kovalevsky, which we believe obscures understanding of the text of 'Risala.' It may be that Yaqut added notes of his own, but not from a more complete copy of Ibn Fadlan's 'Risala.'

<sup>280</sup> Mawla means a client (protégé); wali means a patron. It is not the same as the relations between slave and master; a mawla could have a high social status. The mawla status does not become ineffective when the wali dies. Some mawlas continued to be under the wali's protection even after they were set free.

<sup>281</sup> Here Muhammad ibn Sulayman, or Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Hashimi, is an unknown person. If we do not take into account Yaqut's insertino, it was Muhammad ibn Sulayman who was the ambassador; however, he is not mentioned further in the text. Ibn Fadlan says more about himself in relation to carrying out ambassadorial duties.

Another Muhammad ibn Sulayman is known, a commander who conquered Egypt in 905 and died in Iran, near the walls of Ray, in 919. Therefore, he could not have been part of Ibn Fadlan's embassy of 921. Since the mawla status remains effective after the wali dies, Ibn Fadlan could have remained Muhammad ibn Sulayman's mawla and be the mawla of the caliph at the same time; in that case, Ibn Fadlan could have headed the embassy. It cannot be ruled out, however, that this was a different Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Hamishi.

<sup>282</sup> Grammatically, al-Hamishi here could pertain either to Ibn Fadlan or to Muhammad ibn Sulayman.

<sup>283</sup> Ja'far ibn 'Abdallah al-Muqtadir was an Abbasid caliph (295–320/908–932).

<sup>284</sup> As-Saqaliba was an ethnonym that was somewhat vague at that time and could refer to both the Slavs and the Finno-Ugrians. Arab travellers and geographers used the term 'as-Saqaliba' in a variety of meanings. For instance, when contrasted with 'at-Turk,' which means Turkic peoples, 'as-Saqaliba' could mean non-Turkic peoples, including the Slavs; or 'as-Saqaliba' are the people inhabiting the woods, in contrast to those in the steppe.

In its extended meaning the term was applied to most of the northern peoples, in particular the Finns, the Bulgars, and the Germanic peoples; as-Saqaliba could mean any of the inhabitants of the forest belt of Eastern Europe [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 159; Bolshakov, 2000, p. 54; Bolshakov, HV; Garayeva, 2002, p. 461]. In this case, the usage of the word as-Saqaliba varies depending on the author and the region described.

Ibn Fadlan and probably some other authors applied the ethnonym to the peoples of the Middle Volga Region, including the Bulgars [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, Note 34, 651a, 961].

<sup>285</sup> Instead of the traditional spelling of the ethnonym as Bashjird, where 'g' is rendered with a jim, Ibn Fadlan here used the letter ghayn الباشغرد, which would sound like 'Bashgird.' He apparently transmitted the name of the people as he had heard it. In the translation of Ibn Fadlan's 'Risala,' the ethnonym 'Bashkirs' has the vowel marks suggested by A. Kovalevsky [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, Note 12, 300, 321], though the ethnonym is usually pronounced as 'as-Bashgird.' The pronunciation 'al-Bashgard' is based on the systematic vowelisation of the Mashhad copy of Yaqut's 'Mu'jam al-buldan,' which probably originated with a copy of Ibn Fadlan's 'Risala' (older than the known one). According to A. Kovalevsky, the vowelisation may be more ancient than 'al-Bashgird' or 'al-Bashgurd' (Bashqort), the latter of which appears to be connected with Turkic folk etymology: 'bash'—'head' and 'qurt'—'wolf' [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 160, 191, 192].

In medieval Arabic reports al-Bashgird (al-Basjird and other vocalisations) are correlated and even identified with al-Majar, for example, by al-Gharnati (12th century), who had been to Hungaria and Volga Bulgaria. The correlation with 'al-Majar' suggests that 'al-Bashgard' is the more ancient form.

<sup>286</sup> It is clear from the material below that there were three letters in total [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, Note 203b].

<sup>287</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: Almush. The correct pronunciation is: Almish (Almysh). The name is of Old Turkic origin and is formed by the fusion of the two words 'el' (or 'il') and 'almysh'—that is, 'he who accepted (took) the state.' Fusion of these two words yields the abbreviated Almysh or Almish [Smirnova, 1981, pp. 249–255].

<sup>288</sup> In the 'Risala' manuscript the name of Almish's father is al-Hasan; Yaqut reports it to have been Shilki.

<sup>289</sup> Yiltyvar (eltyvar) is the western form of the ancient Turkic title elteber (ilteber). (Yiltyvar is the Khazar-Bulgar pronunciation.) This was the head of a tribal union, inferior to the khan but superior to all others in the ancient Turkic administrative hierarchy. As diacritics was absent, the title could also be pronounced with a 'b' as 'byltyvar' (biltivar), which has been shown to be incorrect above.

<sup>290</sup> Ibn Fadlan calls the Bulgar 'king' the king of the as-Saqaliba, which testifies to his influence on the northern peoples inhabiting territories adjacent to Bulgar, making the embassy to the Bulgar ruler more important.

asked him to send him someone who would guide him in religion,<sup>291</sup> teach him the laws of Islam, build a mosque for him and erect a minbar,<sup>292</sup> in order for him to arrange [from the minbar] proclamation of a prayer for the health of the caliph<sup>293</sup> in his [own] country (bilad) and in all regions of his state (mamlaka), and asks him to construct a fortress to strengthen the country against the tsars (al-muluk), their enemies—he gave his consent to what he asked. Nasir al-Harami (al-Hurami) was an intermediary in this issue<sup>294</sup>. And I was authorised to read him (the tsar) the letter and to present the items that were sent to him [as gifts], as well as to control faqihs<sup>295</sup> and mu'allimams<sup>296</sup>. And he was granted the money required to construct the above-mentioned buildings and to pay [salary] to faqihs and mu'allimams, [charging] from a manor called Arsahushmisan<sup>297</sup> located in the land of Khwarezm and belonging to [manors] of Ibn al-Furat<sup>298</sup>. A person called 'Abdallah ibn Bashtu al-Khazari was an ambassador to al-Muqtadir from the ruler (sahib) of as-Saqaliba, and<sup>299</sup> Sausan al-Rassi, a mawla Nazir al-Harami (al-Hurami) was an ambassador from <al-Sultan>,<sup>300</sup> who was [accompanied by] Takin<sup>301</sup> al-Turki and Baris as-Saqalabi,<sup>302</sup> and I was with them, as I have already

<sup>291</sup> Here the word 'din,' which A. Kovalevsky translated as 'faith,' means 'religion' because the concept of 'faith' corresponds to the word 'iman.'

<sup>292</sup> The minbar is a pulpit used to deliver sermons in a mosque.

<sup>293</sup> Kovalevsky uses 'khutbah' in this phrase, but he is entirely mistaken in believing that the caliph establishes the khutbah. In fact, vassals say it to the caliph's health. Ibn Fadlan did not give permission to say the khutbah but indicated its form—that is, approved the text. The phrase literally means 'so he could deliver a prayer for him from it (that is, from the minbar).' Of course, it is the khutbah that is meant here, but the word is not used in the text (which means that it should not be present in the translation either, so it should be 'prayer' and not 'khutbah') [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 55].

<sup>294</sup> Some editors vowelise the nisba in the name of Nazir al-Harami as al-Hurami. Nazir al-Harami (al-Hurami) was the main initiator of the embassy. According to A. Kovalevsky, in 911 he managed the inner chambers of the palace and was the third most important person in the state [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 161, Note 21]. Sources do not describe the position, but the nisba al-Harami (or al-Hurami) is indeed associated with working in the inner chambers (though not as the chief eunuch of the harem). The functions of the position can only be presumed from historical reports of the activities of two persons: Nazir, mentioned by Ibn Fadlan, and especially his predecessor Safi al-Hurami, who was the representative of the Caliphs al-Muqtafi and al-Muqtadir and was entrusted with arresting and even executing influential people. Safi left a lot of property (a hundred thousand dinars and a rich house), which he willed to his ghulam, which suggests that Safi had no family and most probably was a eunuch. The information available on Nazir is much more meagre. Apart from the report on his appointment, he is known to have been entrusted with arresting Vizier Ibn al-Furat in 912. Most probably, he was a Turk, which explains his interest in the Turkic North and the fact that he wrote a personal letter to the Bulgar king, though the embassy brought a letter from the caliph and the vizier [Bolshakov, 2000, pp. 59–60].

<sup>295</sup> A faqih is a lawyer, an expert in Islamic law (fiqh).

<sup>296</sup> A mu'allim is a scholar, a teacher, or simply an educated, knowledgeable person.

<sup>297</sup> Arsakhushmisan was a city on the left bank of Khwarezm. The correct spelling is Ardakhushmisan [Belenitsky, Bentovich, Bolshakov, p. 173, Fig. 71].

<sup>298</sup> Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn al-Furat (855–924) was appointed vizier three times (908–912, 917–918, 923–924); he was very rich. In 918 he was removed and demoted, and all his property was confiscated. In 918 his eastern estates alone brought 95,278 dirhams to the Abbasid treasury. However, his estates in Middle Asia apparently had not been sold by 921. This refers to the money allocated by the caliph to the Bulgar king (in response to his request), which the embassy was to receive at one of Ibn al-Furat's estates in Khwarezm.

<sup>299</sup> This is the way it appears in the Arabic text; it is rendered as 'sovereign' in A. Kovalevsky's translation. The original meaning of the Arabic term 'sultan' is the authorities or government (in the general sense). The differentiation between the terms 'sultan' (secular authorities) and 'caliph' (spiritual authorities) was established during the rule of the Seljuks. This differentiation did not yet exist in the time of Ibn Fadlan. Ibn Fadlan applies the term 'as-sultan' to the caliph or to the supreme ruler of the Turks.

<sup>300</sup> Sawsan (Arabic for 'lily') is a more accurate spelling. The name indicates that Sawsan ar-Rassi was black as it was fashionable at that time to give black slaves names that formed a contrast to their skin colour. A. Kovalevsky identifies Sawsan ar-Rassi with Sawsan al-Jasassi, a eunuch of al-Husayn ibn al-Jasass, Baghdad's richest jeweller. Sawsan al-Jasassi reported that his master was hiding Ibn al-Mu'tazz in his house in 907, for which he apparently was accepted at the court, became Nazir's mawla, and adopted the nisba ar-Rassi [p. 20]. Several nuances make this identification dubious. It was not common practice to adopt a nisba not connected with the patron's name. It would be thus more natural to assume it to be an original nisba. Furthermore, Sawsan ar-Rassi was married, while Sawsan al-Jasassi was a eunuch.

<sup>301</sup> The Turkic pronunciation of the name might be Tekin or Tegin.

<sup>302</sup> Baris as-Saqalabi *الصقلابي* is obviously a Turk, as he has the Turkic name 'Bars' and, as is shown below, speaks to the Bulgar king in his native language. The Arabic spelling of the name with a long first vowel and an implied second short vowel does not mean that it was pronounced with two vowels and not as Bars in the Turkic community.

Baris as-Saqalabi has not been identified, though several ghulams in the first third of the 10th century are known to have had this name. One Baris was the hajib of Isma'il Samani, whom he appointed vicegerent of Jurjan. After Isma'il's

said. So, I was entrusted to present gifts to him (the tsar), his wife, sons, brothers, leaders, and medicines, about which he had written to Nasir and which he had asked him to bring.

So we left the City of Welfare (Madinat al-Salam)<sup>303</sup> on Thursday, upon expiration of eleven nights [of the month] of Safar of the year three hundred and nine<sup>304</sup>. We stayed in Nahrawan<sup>305</sup> for one day and left it going quickly until we reached Daskara<sup>306</sup>. We stayed there for three days. Then we quickly drove without stopping until we reached Hulwan<sup>307</sup>. We stayed there for two days. [Leaving it] we went to Qirmisin<sup>308</sup> and stayed there for two days. Then we left and went until we reached Hamadhan<sup>309</sup>, and stayed there for three days. Then we went until we reached Sawa<sup>310</sup>, and stayed there for two days, and left it and went to Ray<sup>311</sup>. There we stayed for eleven days waiting for Ahmad ibn 'Ali, the brother of Su'luk (Sa'luk)<sup>312</sup>, as he was in Khuwar<sup>313</sup> of Ray.

Then we went to Khuwar of Ray and stayed there for three days. Then we went to Simnan,<sup>314</sup> and then left it and went to Damghan<sup>315</sup>. We unexpectedly met Ibn Qaran there,<sup>316</sup> who belonged to

death Baris, accompanied by a detachment of 4,000 horsemen and carrying 80 horse-loads of money, arrived in Baghdad in 907 to serve the caliph soon after Ibn al-Mu'tazz's rebellion. Al-Muqtadir appointed Baris, a powerful adherent, vicegerent in Mosul; but his rivals bribed Baris's servant, who soon poisoned him and gained possession of his property.

Another ghulam named Baris was mentioned in 921, when the embassy was sent. However, he could not have accompanied Ibn Fadlan because he was killed for mutiny in the same year.

The name Baris was popular among the Turks. Baris, hajib of Ruqn ad-Dawli, was mentioned in 950/951; Baris-Tugan, hajib of Jalal ad-Dawli, was mentioned in 1037.

A. Kovalevsky's suggestion that Baris was born in Bulgar (p. 20) complements the report by Ibn al-A'sam al-Kufi that the name of the son of the khakan who defeated al-Jarrah ibn 'Abdallah al-Hakami in Arran in 111/730 was Narastik, which easily could be read as Barsbik (Barsbek) with altered diacritics. The name was also common among the Bulgars who had migrated to the Balkans. Accordingly, the name was widespread in the territories from the Lower Volga Region and the Northern Caucasus to the Balkans, which corresponds to the area where Khazar-Bulgarian tribes lived.

A. Kovalevsky's identification of the name Baris with the name of Tsar Boris of Bulgaria, who was baptised around 864 [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 164, Note 34], gives rise to no doubt.

The origin of the Russian name Boris is not connected with that of the Bulgarian tsar. He was baptised Mikhail, while the name Boris was confined to 'domestic' use. It was preserved even after the Christianisation of the Bulgars as an ethnically specific name. This was the name that Vladimir Monomakh's Bulgarian wife gave to her son, though he was baptised Roman. It was not until Boris had been canonised as a martyr that the name Boris appeared in the Russian Menaion and became widespread (Boris's Christian name was ignored) [Bolshakov, 2000, pp. 60–61].

<sup>303</sup> Madinat as-salam—'City of Prosperity' (not 'City of Peace') is the official name of the new capital built by Caliph al-Mansur (136–158/754–775).

<sup>304</sup> 21 June 921.

<sup>305</sup> Nahrawan is a city four parasangs from Baghdad.

<sup>306</sup> Daskara is a city on the way to Iran, 72 kilometers away from Nahrawan.

<sup>307</sup> Hulwan is a city on the river of the same name, 25 parasangs away from Daskara; here the mountainous regions start.

<sup>308</sup> Kirmisin, which today is called Kermanshah, is located 30 parasangs away from Hulwan across a pass in the Zahra mountains.

<sup>309</sup> Hamadan (old Ectabana, the capital of Media) is located 35 parasangs away from Kirmisin.

<sup>310</sup> Saveh is a city 41 parasangs away from Hamadan; here the roads from the north to the south of Iran crossed: Qazvin, Saveh, Qom.

<sup>311</sup> Ray is a large city 24 parasangs away from Saveh; 8 kilometers south of modern Tehran; the road from west to east went through Ray as well as a road towards the north to the Caspian Sea. The Caliph of Baghdad, the Samanids and Iranian all claimed sovereignty over Ray. Starting in 902 Ray was ruled by the Samanids.

<sup>312</sup> The ruler of the Samanids, Nasr ibn Ahmad, appointed Muhammad ibn Ali, who was called Suluk (in Arabic literally: robber, hobo), as vicegerent of Ray, and he ruled there from 913 until 915, having declared himself independent. In 915–916 Ray was conquered by the forces of Caliph al-Muqtadir, who appointed his own vicegerent, but soon he was followed by the brother of Muhammad Suluk, Ahmad ibn Ali, who is mentioned by Ibn Fadlan as Ah Suluk (brother of Suluk).

<sup>313</sup> Huwar is a city east of Ray (20 or 24 parasangs). There were several cities in Iran with that name.

<sup>314</sup> Semnan is a city 22 parasangs away from Huwar of Ray, located at the foot of the Alborz mountain range at the edge of a large desert in eastern Iran.

<sup>315</sup> Damghan is a city (of apple orchards) located 17 parasangs away from Semnan.

<sup>316</sup> Bin Karan (Sharvin II bin Rustam bin Suhrab) is a feudal lord of Tabaristan, the ruler in the town of Firrim in the mountains, the descendant of an ancient dynasty from the times of the Sassanids. His dynasty ruled during the time of Khosrow II and until 1319. They converted to Islam in 227/841–842; an adherent of Ali bin Abu Tolib. Meeting with Bin Karan—a rebellious ruler and an active and faithful Alid—was dangerous for an embassy representing the Caliph of Baghdad.

supporters of 'the Calling for [the Truth]'<sup>317</sup>, and therefore we hid ourselves in a caravan and went quickly until we reached Nishapur<sup>318</sup>. Laili ibn Nu'man<sup>319</sup> had already been killed, and we found Hammuya Kusa there, a head (sahib<sup>320</sup>) of Khorasan troops<sup>321</sup>. Then we went to [p. 197b] Sarakhs<sup>322</sup>, and then to Merv<sup>323</sup>, and then to Qushmahan<sup>324</sup>, which is the last point in the Amula Desert<sup>325</sup>. We stayed there for three days to give the camels a rest before the desert. Then we crossed the desert to Amul<sup>326</sup>, and then we crossed Jayhun and came to Afirabr<sup>327</sup>, a ribat<sup>328</sup> of Tahir ibn 'Ali<sup>329</sup>, then we went to Baykand<sup>330</sup>, and then entered Bukhara<sup>331</sup> and came to al-Jayhani<sup>332</sup>. He is a secretary of the Khorasan emir. He is called 'the Sheykh's Support' (al-'amid) in Khorasan. He ordered that we should be given a house and appointed a man for us, who would satisfy our needs and eliminate our difficulties in respect of what we wanted. So, we stayed [rested] for a few days.

Then he asked for an audience with Nasr ibn Ahmad for us<sup>333</sup>, and we went to him. And it turned out that he was a beardless ghilman<sup>334</sup>. We welcomed him as emir, and he invited us to sit down. And the first thing we started with was that he said, 'In what condition did you leave my master, the Commander of the Faithful, let Allah prolong his life [in this world], and his well-being,—himself, his troops and his entourage?' We said, 'We left him in well-being'. He said, 'Let Allah grant peace on him!' Then they read a letter regarding the transfer of Arthakhushmithan from al-Fadl ibn Musa al-Nasrani (a Christian),<sup>335</sup> an agent of Ibn al-Furat, to Ahmad ibn Musa

The ambassadorial caravan from Baghdad to the Volga Region came at quite tumultuous times for the Abbasids, when they were at risk of losing power. In 920 the supporters of the Qarmatians fought very hard with the Abbasids (robbed commercial caravans and even attacked cities; for example, in 929 they attacked Mecca, robbed and killed many pilgrims; took the Black Stone out of the Kaaba, and took it to al-Hasa. Such Isma'ili detachments were very dangerous for the authority of the Caliph. That's why retaining power was much more important than organising and maintaining contacts with peripheral countries of the Caliphate.

<sup>317</sup> 'He Who Summons to the Truth' was the regnal name of the Alid ruler of Tabaristan, Hasan ibn al-Qasim (916–928).

<sup>318</sup> Nishapur was the largest medieval city of Iran (79 parasangs away from Damghan), the capital of the Tahirids, which reached its height in the 10th century.

<sup>319</sup> Layli bin Nu'man is an old Alid commander from Deylam, the governor of Jurjan, who occupied Damghan and then Nishapur (here in April–May of 921 he pronounced the Khutbah for the Alid imam). The Samanid ruler Hammuyi bin Kusa campaigned against him, defeated him, and put him to death in Rabi' al-awwal 309/10.07–8.08 921—that is, by the time the embassy came, the danger had passed.

<sup>320</sup> The word 'Sahib' is difficult to translate due to its multiple meanings.

<sup>321</sup> Khorasan is a historical region in north-eastern Iran.

<sup>322</sup> Serakhs is a city (now the territory of Turkmenistan) located 40 parasangs away from Nishapur. The embassy's route from Serakhs lay along a secure roadway with customs (border) posts, postal stations, and hostelrys that were most likely located at one place, at one station.

<sup>323</sup> Merv (Royal Merv) is a city (now the territory of Turkmenistan) located on the Murghab River, 30 parasangs away from Serakhs; in the 10th century it was a centre for the production of silk and cotton fabric that was probably used for making the 'Mervi clothes' or 'Mervi kaftans' mentioned subsequently by Ibn Fadlan.

<sup>324</sup> Kushmahan is a settlement on the edge of the Mervi steppes (5 parasangs away).

<sup>325</sup> Amula desert is the eastern Karakum Desert.

<sup>326</sup> Amul—here Amul of Jeyhun (as distinct from Amul in Tabaristan), modern-day Chardzhou—is a city located 31 parasangs away from Merv. The name of the Amu Darya (Amul Darya) originates from it.

<sup>327</sup> Afirabr (sometimes Firabr) was located near Merv.

<sup>328</sup> Ribat is originally a military border post; a hostelry or caravanserai for travellers.

<sup>329</sup> The place named 'Ribat Tahira bin Ali' was mentioned in 'Mu'jam ul-Buldān' by Yaqut.

<sup>330</sup> Baykand is a large trading town 12 parasangs away from Merv. The ancient town of Paykend is well-known. Ribats around Paykend were not hostelrys, but fortifications where ghazis were stationed.

<sup>331</sup> Bukhara is a city whose walls were 2 parasangs away from Baykand. Ibn Fadlan mentioned the wall that surrounded the Bukhara oasis, but not Bukhara itself, which was surrounded by its own wall. The distance between the walls was 3 km.

<sup>332</sup> Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Jayhani is a famous geographer who held key positions in Khorasan at the Samanid court.

<sup>333</sup> Nasr ibn Ahmad is a Samanid emir (301–331/914–943); in autumn of 921 he was 16–17 years old.

<sup>334</sup> A. Kovalevsky translates this as 'a boy'; in most cases Kovalevsky translates 'ghulam' as 'otrok.' It is more appropriate not to translate the Arabic 'ghulam' as it is a term (as is the word 'otrok' for Russian sources). First, otroks as members of a družina were free, while ghulams were slaves or freedmen. Second, otroks were junior members of a družina, while ghulams often became commanders.

<sup>335</sup> At that time religious affiliation was apparently not a determining factor in appointing an administrator for the manor of Ibn al-Furat.

al-Khwarizmi, regarding sending us and the letter to the ruler (*sahib*<sup>336</sup>) in Khwarezm eliminating [all sorts of] obstacles for us, and a letter to the Turks' Gate (*Bab al-Turk*)<sup>337</sup> to provide us with an escort, and [also] to remove obstacles for us. He said, And where [is] Ahmad ibn Musa?' We said, 'We left him in the City of Welfare (*Madinat al-Salam*), so that he would follow us in five days.' Then he said, 'I hear and obey what my lord ordered me, the Commander of the Faithful, let Allah prolong his life [in this world].'

He said, 'Information about this reached al-Fadl ibn Musa al-Nasrani, the agent of Ibn al-Furat, and he resorted to his tricks against Ahmad ibn Musa. He wrote to the police chiefs of the Khorasan road [in charge of the area] from the garrison town (*jund*) of Sarahs to Baykand to send spies against Ahmad ibn Musa al-Khwarezmi to inns and outposts, [that] he is [allegedly] a person with [such] appearance and [such] features, so that someone who grabs him should hold him under arrest until he receives our letter, which he should follow. So he was caught in Merv and placed under arrest. We stayed in Bukhara for twenty-eight days. Meanwhile, al-Fadl ibn Musa had previously agreed with 'Abdallah ibn Bashtu and other of our companions, who began saying, 'If we stay, winter will come, and we will miss [the time] to enter [Khwarezm], and Ahmad ibn Musa will catch up when he fulfills its obligations to us.'

He said, 'I saw dirhams of different kinds in Bukhara, including dirhams that are called *al-ghitrifi*. They consist of copper, red brass and yellow copper. They cost a certain number of other coins irrespective of the weight—a hundred of them [p. 198a] for one silver dirham. But these are their conditions regarding wedding gifts<sup>338</sup> for their wives: 'So-and-so gets married, the son of so-and-so, with so-and-so, the daughter of so-and-so, for so many thousands *ghitrifi* dirhams.' And they purchase property and slaves in the same way: they do not mention other dirhams. They have [also] dirhams, [for which] only yellow copper is used. Forty of them are taken for one *danaq*<sup>339</sup>. They also have dirhams made of yellow copper called Samarqandian (*al-Samarqandi*). Six of them are taken for one *danaq*.

So, when I heard the words of 'Abdallah ibn Bashtu and the words of others, <who frightened me<sup>340</sup> with the coming winter>, we left Bukhara and returned to the river and hired a ship to Khwarezm<sup>341</sup>. And the distance between it and the place where, we hired the ship, was more than two hundred farsakhs<sup>342</sup>. We were on the way only for a part of the day—we could not travel the whole day due to severe colds, until we reached Khwarezm. We came to its emir. It was Muhammad ibn 'Iraq Khwarezm-shah. So he welcomed us, made us his friends and arranged accommodation for us.

In three days, he told us to come to discuss the [issue] of the Turks' entry into the country, and said, 'I do not permit you to do this, and it would not be acceptable for me to let you blindly risk your lives. I know it's a trick created by that *ghilman* (*al-Ghilman*)<sup>343</sup>—that is Tekin,—as <he traded hard (metal) products><sup>344</sup> in the country of the disbelievers. It was he who deceived

<sup>336</sup> Here the word '*sahib*' was translated this way because Khwarezm Shah Muhammad ibn 'Iraq was not a co-regent (as A. Kovalevsky supposed) but a vassal (though mostly independent) of the Samanids.

<sup>337</sup> The name or epithet '*Bab at-Turk*' is known in relation to several placenames. In this case, it probably referred to the Zamdjan ribat, a post on the Ustyurt Plateau, on the border with Khwarezm. The capital of Khwarezm, Khas, is called 'the Gates of the Turkic land of the Oghuz' in '*Hudud al-'Alam*,' and in another part of the text the city of Gurganj is called 'the Gates of the land of the Turks.'

<sup>338</sup> Kovalevsky translates this as '*kalymy*' (*mahr*), but it is better to translate it here as 'wedding gifts'; 'wedding gifts' and '*kalymy*' are different concepts.

<sup>339</sup> *Danak* is one-sixth of a silver dirhem.

<sup>340</sup> Kovalevsky's translation: 'warning me of the coming winter.'

<sup>341</sup> This refers to the capital of the province Khwarezm, Khas (Kesh or Afrasiabz located to the south of Samarkand), which was often called Khwarezm.

<sup>342</sup> This part of the embassy's route has not been located. Kovalevsky suggested that the embassy embarked not in Farabra but downriver, closer to Khwarezm. The distance from Chardzhou to Shabbaz is about 400 km. According to Ibn Fadlan, it was a lot more [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, Note 94].

<sup>343</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: '*otrok*.'

<sup>344</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: 'he was a smith and sold iron.'

Nazir, prompted him to apply to the Commander of the Faithful, and give him a letter of the tsar (malik) of as-Saqaliba. The great emir—that is the emir of Khorasan—would have more rights to arrange proclamation of the khutbah on behalf of the Commander of the Faithful in the country, if he found [it] appropriate<sup>345</sup>. Moreover, there are a thousand infidel tribes between you and the country, of which you are speaking. And [all] this means a fraud with respect to the sovereign. So, I give you this advice: you need to [send] a letter to the great emir to inform that he should communicate with the sovereign by correspondence—let Allah help him—and you should stay [here] until you receive a response.’ So we left him on this day. Then we came back to him and did not stop wheedling and flattering him saying, ‘This is an order of the Commander of the Faithful and his letter, why should we communicate with him about this?’—until he granted his permission. So we left Khwarezm<sup>346</sup> and went to al-Jurjaniya. The distance between it and Khwarezm by water is fifty farsakhs<sup>347</sup>.

I saw that Khwarezmian dirhams were cutoff, lead, underweight and copper. They called the dirham ‘tazja’. Its weights made up four danaqs and a half. Their money changers sell bones, whip-tops<sup>348</sup> and dirhams. They [Khwarezmians] are the wildest people of all [p. 198b] in terms of their talks and natural qualities. Their conversation is similar to how starlings cry<sup>349</sup>.

It [the country of Khwarezm] has a village at a [distance] of one day [of journey] from Jurjaniya, which is called Ardakva<sup>350</sup>. Its population is called Kardalians<sup>351</sup>. Their conversation is similar to the croaking of frogs. They renounce the Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib<sup>352</sup>—let Allah be happy with him—at the end of every prayer.

So we stayed in al-Jurjaniya for [many] days. And the Jayhun river was frozen from the beginning to the end; and the ice was seventeen quarters thick. Horses, mules, camels, and carts went through it like a road—it was firm and did not shake. And it remained in that form for three months. And we saw a country that we thought—it is probably the gates of Zamharir<sup>353</sup> that were opened for us from this country. Snow falls there only with a rough and violent wind. If [any] person from among its inhabitants wants to make a nice gesture to a friend and to [show] his generosity, he says to him, ‘Come to my house where we can talk—because I have a really good fire.’ This is the case when he wanted to show special generosity and [express] special favour. However, the All-Mighty Allah was merciful to them and gave them much wood—he made it cheap for them: a full cart of ‘tagh’ firewood [wood]—which is al-ghada<sup>354</sup>[in Arabic]—cost two dirhams of [those] dirhams, determined at the rate of three thousand [pieces]—ritl<sup>355</sup>. It is customary for their beggars [taks] not to stop at a door, but to enter the dwelling of any of them and sit by the fire for a while to get warmed. Then he says ‘pakand’, which means ‘bread’, and [then] they give him something, and if not, then he goes.

<sup>345</sup> A paraphrase from the Quran: ‘their retreat is in hell, and they won't find any escape from there’ [the Quran, translation, 6:120; Validi-Togan, 1939, p. 11, Note 2].

<sup>346</sup> This refers to the capital of Khwarezm province, Kyas.

<sup>347</sup> This part of the embassy's route has not been located. A. Kovalevsky considered it greatly exaggerated. According to the modern map, the distance between Shabbaz and Kunya-Urgench as the crow flies is 150 km. It is much greater along the river's circuitous course [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, Note 109].

<sup>348</sup> الدوامات - this word is unusual in its form and it can only be translated hypothetically: if dice are intended for gambling, then obviously the unknown word should mean an accessory for some game for adults.

<sup>349</sup> According to Najib al-Hamadani, ‘the citizens [of Jurjan or Khwarezm?] have an unpleasant language—the most frequent [sound] in their words is ‘z’ [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, Note 113].

<sup>350</sup> اردكوا (or Ardaku)—a town located on the road from Jurjan to the south through the Karakum Desert to Northern Iran (towards the city of Nis); the first post station from Jurjan.

<sup>351</sup> Al-Kardaliya الكرذلية are residents of the above-mentioned town of Ardakva.

<sup>352</sup> ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib was the fourth ‘righteous’ caliph (35–40/656–661).

<sup>353</sup> Part of hell characterised by bitter cold.

<sup>354</sup> The Arabic name of a bush that grows in the desert and heats well when burned; here saxaul is probably meant.

<sup>355</sup> Here there is apparently an inaccuracy or gap in the text of ibn Fadlan and Yakut which disrupts the meaning of the phrase: it is unclear whether it means that the weight of the cart is 3000 ritls, or if that is the weight of the Khwarezm dirhams. A ritl is a measure of weight, equal [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, Note 120].

Our stay at al-Jurjaniya got long, namely—we stayed there [many] days of Rajab, Sha'ban, the month of Ramadan and Shawwal<sup>356</sup>. The duration of our stay there depended on the severity of cold.

I have really heard [a story that]...<sup>357</sup> twelve camels, in order for them both to carrywood from a forest on them. These two [people] forgot to take a flint and tinder, and spent a night without fire. When they both got up in the morning, the camels were dead as a result of the severe cold. Indeed, I saw the cold in the air, and that bazaar and streets there [in al-Jurjaniya] get empty to such an extent that a person can go along most of the streets and markets and find no one, not a single person. I went out of a bath several times, and when I entered the house I looked at my beard, and it was a solid piece of snow, so I stood at the fire to have it thawed. And, really, I sometimes slept in a 'house' inside the house<sup>358</sup>. Namely—there was [placed] a Turkic yurt made of felt<sup>359</sup>, and I had many clothes and furs on, and [yet] sometimes my cheek got frozen to the pillow. Indeed, I have seen [p. 199a] them <to cover [large clay] vessels with water><sup>360</sup> with coats made of sheep skins to maintain them not cracked or broken, but it did not help. Truly, I have seen the ground torn, and huge ravines [appeared there] due to the severe cold, and [moreover] that a great giant tree got really split into two halves.

When a half of the month of Shawwal<sup>361</sup> of the year three hundred and nine had passed,<sup>362</sup> the season changed, the Jayhun river melted, and we started to prepare items needed for the trip. We bought Turkic camels<sup>363</sup> and ordered to make travel bags made of camel leather to cross rivers, which we will have to cross in the country of the Turks. We prepared bread, millet, and dried meat for three months. Those people of this country that were our friends offered us to use [their] assistance in preparing clothes and trying to multiply their number. They presented this venture in a terrible form and portrayed this business as very difficult, but when we saw [all] this ourselves, it was twice as large as what they described. So, each of us had a jacket on, a khaftan over it, a fur coat on the top of this, a kobeniak and a burnous on the top of it, so that only two eyes were visible from inside this, single-layer trousers and other ones with lining, leggings, boots made of shagreen leather and other boots on the top of them, so that while going by a chamber, none of us could move due to the clothes that were on. And a faqih, mu'allim and ghilmen (al-ghulman) were left behind us, who left the City of Welfare (Madinat al-Salam) with us, but were afraid to enter this country. And I, the ambassador, his brother-in-law<sup>364</sup> and two ghilmen (al-ghulaman): Tekin and Baris went to this country<sup>365</sup>. When the day came, when we decided to go, I said to them, 'Listen! The tsar's ghilman is with you, and he knows all the business. You have the king's letters, and I have no doubt that [they contain] information about sending four thousand musayyabi dinars to him. You will arrive to a king speaking a foreign language, and he will demand it from you. And they said, 'Do not be afraid of this. Really, he will require this.' I warned them and said, 'I know that he will require it from you.' But they did not listen to [my warnings].

<sup>356</sup> The period of time from the beginning of Rajab until the end of Shawwal of the year 309 corresponds to 5 November 921 to 2 March 922. It is clear from the text that the month of Shawwal was included in that period. The ambassadors departed in the beginning of March.

<sup>357</sup> Here there is a gap in the text [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, Note 125].

<sup>358</sup> بيت جوف بيت - or 'room inside the house.'

<sup>359</sup> The word 'yurt' is a translation of the Arabic word قبة (kubba), one of whose meanings is 'tent.'

<sup>360</sup> The text in angled brackets is translated by A. Kovalevsky as 'cisterns.' In Middle Asia such vessels for water, grain, and other free-running substances are called *khumhell*! Ibn Fadlan is clearly speaking of such clay water vessels that are wrapped in order to prevent the water from freezing and the vessels from cracking.

<sup>361</sup> The middle of Shawwal is meant here, when according to the lunar calendar the full moon had occurred, and the moon was on the wane.

<sup>362</sup> Shawwal 15 – 16 February 922.

<sup>363</sup> It may be that the two-humped Middle Asian camel is meant here.

<sup>364</sup> Arabic صهر (sihr) means relatives by marriage (usually the wife's male relatives).

<sup>365</sup> In the Arabic text 'Faris' (horseman, knight); the graphic form (without diacritics) allows the interpretation 'Baris,' which is more suitable in this context.



The caravan was prepared;<sup>366</sup>we hired a guide called Falus from among the inhabitants of al-Jurjaniya. Then we relied on the All-Mighty and Great Allah, entrusted him with our venture and left al-Jurjaniya on Monday after two nights of the [month] of Dhu-l-ka'da of the year three hundred and nine<sup>367</sup>.

We stayed at a ribat called Zamjan<sup>368</sup>[p. 199b] and this [is] the gate to the Turkic state. The next day we went and stopped in a place called Jit. Such snow started that the camels sank to the knee in it. So we stayed there for two days. <Then we travelled fast, without any delays><sup>369</sup>, and we met no one in the steppe—a [lonely] desert without a single mountain. So we drove along it for ten days and met disaster, difficulties, extreme cold and continuous snowstorms, so that the cold in Khwarezm<sup>370</sup> was like a summer day in comparison to it. We forgot everything that had happened to us [before], and were close to death of [our] souls.

One day we were really attacked by severe cold. Tekin was riding next to me, and next to him, there was a man from among the Turks, who spoke to him in Turkish. And Tekin laughed and said, 'Really, this Turk tells you, "What does our Lord want from us? He is killing us with cold, and if we knew what he wants, we would certainly give it to him". Then I said to him, "Tell him, He [Allah] wants you to say: "There is no god but Allah". He laughed and said, "If somebody taught us this, we would necessarily do this".'

After that we reached a place where there was a huge amount of 'tagh' firewood [wood]. We stopped there. The caravan set a fire; [the people] warmed up, took off their clothes and laid them out to dry. Then we left this place and did not stop travelling intensely every night from midnight until the sunset or until midday. Then we made a stop. When we had travelled for fifteen days, we reached a large mountain with a lot of stones; there [were] springs there—a spring breaks out, and water appears in a pit. When we crossed it [the mountain], we reached a [nomadic] tribe of Turks, known as the Oghuz (al-Ghuziyya).

And the nomads are as follows—their houses are made of wool, and they either stop [in a camp] or depart. You can see their houses in one place, and then the same houses elsewhere, in accordance with their nomadic way of life and their movement. And they are in a pitiful condition. Additionally, they are like wandering donkeys and do not submit to Allah, do not refer to reason and do not worship anything, but call their elders 'masters.' When one of them asks any advice from their leader, he says to him, 'God! What should I do in such-and-such [business]?'.

'Their affairs are [solved] by a counsel between them.' However, when they agree on anything and decide to do this, the most insignificant and the most miserable of them comes and annuls what they have already agreed. I heard them saying, 'There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah', trying to approach those Muslims who ride past them with these words, [p. 200a] but not expressing any conviction with it. And if any of them faces injustice or something

<sup>366</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: 'The equipage of the caravan was set up well.'

<sup>367</sup> Monday, 4 March 922. In 922 3 March was on a Sunday. According to the Islamic system, the new day starts in the evening. Of course, the travellers departed in the morning—that is, on 4 March.

<sup>368</sup> Zamjan – Gates of the Turks 153.

<sup>369</sup> Kovalevsky translates the italicised phrase as 'Then we headed off to the land of the Turks, not turning away for anything' [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 55].

<sup>370</sup> Ibn Fadlan's message about the severity of the winter may be true-to-life (though it may seem to have been exaggerated by a southerner unused to the cold) as the beginning of the 10th century was marked by low temperatures not only in Khwarezm, which cold arctic winds reached unobstructed through the West Siberian Plain, but also in Iraq, which is well defended from cold winds by the mountains. For example, in mid-November 902 in Baghdad there was an abrupt cold snap (so much in one day that water started freezing); that same winter, on 24 January 903, it snowed in Baghdad; in January 908 a layer of snow four fingers (8–10 cm) deep fell. July of 919 was so cold (instead of usual +45–50°) that the people of Baghdad left the roofs and started sleeping at home under blankets; it snowed that winter, and many palms and fruit trees were killed by frost. On 11 January 926 it became very cold in Baghdad, and on 17 January the snow and frost became stronger. Water and vinegar froze in homes, and the main canals from the Tigris river froze; the Euphrates in the Raqqah area was covered with ice, and in Mosul there was such a thick layer of ice on the Tigris river that one could ride across it on horseback. Thus, it is quite possible that the winter of 921–922 in Khwarezm really was severe [Bolshakov, 2000, pp. 62–63].

unpleasant happens to him, he will raise his head to the sky and say, 'Bir Tengri', which means in Turkic '[I swear] by the One and Only God', as 'bir' means 'one' in Turkic, and 'tengri' means 'God' in their language.

They do not clean themselves from excrements or urine and do not wash the genitals and do nothing like that. They have nothing to do with water, especially in winter. Their women does not cover themselves from men or foreigners, and she does not cover anything of her body from the sight of any people. Indeed, one day we stopped at the home of [one] person from among them. We sat down, and the wife of this man [was] with us. And talking to us, she opened her 'farj' and scratched it, while we were looking at her. We closed our faces with our hands and said, 'Lord, have mercy.' Then her husband laughed and said to the interpreter, 'Tell them: she opens it in your presence, and you see it, but she protects it so that no one can access it. It's better than closing it, but [yet] granting the use of it.' They [the Oghuz] do not know fornication. But if anybody opens a secret to somebody, they tear him into two parts, namely: they tie together several branches of two trees, then tie him to these branches and release both trees, and the man gets torn when the trees straighten<sup>371</sup>.

One of them said, 'Let me hear the recitation.' He liked the Quran, and he began to tell the interpreter, 'Tell him, "Do not go silent". This man once told me through the interpreter, 'Tell this Arab: has our all-mighty and great God got a wife?' I was stunned by that, and proclaimed, 'Glory to Allah' and 'Allah forbid'. And he proclaimed, 'Glory to Allah' and 'Allah forbid' in the same way as I did. And this is typical for a Turk—whenever he hears a Muslim saying, 'Glory to Allah' and 'There is no God but Allah', he says the same words.

They have the following marriage customs: if one of them asks another one for marriage with a woman from his family—either his daughter, or sister, or any of those whom he controls—for a certain amount of Khwarezm clothes, and if he pays, he takes the woman to his house. Sometimes camels, or horses, or anything else can serve as bridal money. And no one can come to his wife until he pays the bridal money agreed with her 'guardian'. And if he pays it to him, he does not hesitate to enter the dwelling, where she lives, and to take her in the presence of her father, her mother and her brothers, and they will not interfere.

And if a man having a wife and sons dies, the eldest of his sons will marry [p. 200b] his wife if she is not his mother.

None of the merchants or anyone else can perform ablutions from uncleanness in their presence, only at night, when they cannot see him. And that is because they get angry and say, 'This one wants to bewitch us, as he is staring into the water'—and fine him with money.

And none of the Muslims can cross their country without making friends those, in whose house he stays. He brings clothes from his Islamic country for him, a bed cover for his wife, as well as some pepper, millet, raisins and nuts. When he comes to his friend, the latter will set an yurt for him and bring as many sheep as possible, so that the Muslim should just slaughter them as the Turks do not slaughter sheep—really, any of them just hits the sheep's head, until it dies. And if a man from among them [the Muslims] wants to cross the country, and some of his camels or horses stop, or he needs money, he will leave the stopped [animals] at his Turk friend's home, take his camels, his horses and whatever he needs and go. <When he returns back from the place where he went><sup>372</sup>, he will refund him his money, and bring back his camels and horses. Similarly, if a Turk man sees a person passing by him, whom he does not know, [and] he [suddenly] says to him, 'I am your guest, and I want you to give me some of your camels, horses and your dirhams'—he will give him what he wants.

<sup>371</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: 'They narrow the gap between the branches and release both trees, and the one between them is torn apart when the trees unbend.'

<sup>372</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: 'When he returns from the route he laid a course for...' [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 56].

If the merchant dies on the way, and the caravan comes back, the Turk will meet them and say, 'Where is my guest?' And if they say, 'He has died', he will make the caravan unload. Then he will go to the noblest merchant from among them, open his belongings in his presence and take as much dirhams as that merchant owed him <not a habba more><sup>373</sup>. Moreover, he will take horses and camels and say, 'This is your cousin, and you are obliged to pay for him'. And if he runs away, he [the Turk] will do the same with the [second merchant] and tell him, 'He is a Muslim like you, take the debt from him'. And if this Muslim does not consent [to repay the debt] for his guest, he [the Turk] will ask where he has fled, where he is, and if he is sent to him, he will travel in search for him [many] days until he reaches him and takes away that which belongs to him, what he [sometimes] grants him.

The following is also a Turk custom: if he comes to al-Jurjaniya, he asks about his guest and stays at his place until he goes [back]. And if the Turk die at his Muslim friend's home, and [then] a caravan passes, where there [is] his friend, they will kill him and say, 'You have killed him because you have kept [p. 201a] him [in prison]. If you had not kept him, would he have died?' The same happens, if he makes him drink nabiz, and he falls down from a wall—they will kill him [in retaliation] for him. And if he is not in the caravan, they will take the most outstanding of them and kill him.

The act of pederasty is [considered] a very severe [crime] there. Indeed, once a man from among Khwarezm inhabitants stopped in the Kudarkin's settlement<sup>374</sup>—this was a vicegerent of the Turk king—and stayed at the host's home for a time to buy sheep. The Turk had a beardless son, and the Khwarezmian did not cease to seek his love and persuade him to be with him, until he yielded to his request. The Turk came and found them together. Then the Turk filed a complaint to the Kudarkin. So he told him, 'Gather the Turks'. And he gathered them. When they gathered, he told the Turk, 'How do you want me to judge, rightly or falsely?' He said, 'Rightly'. He said, 'Bring your son'. He brought him. He said, 'Both the merchant and he should be killed'. The Turk was filled with indignation and said, 'I will not give my son'. And he said, 'The merchant will give a ransom for himself then'. He did it and gave the Turk sheep for what he had done with his son, paid the Kudarkin four hundred sheep for the fact that he had released him from the [punishment] and left the country of the Turks.

Yinal <Junior> [was] the first of their kings and leaders, whom we met. He had previously [accepted] Islam. But he was told, 'If you accept Islam, you will not control us any longer.' Then he renounced his Islam. When we arrived at the place, where he [was], he said, 'I will not allow you to cross this territory, because it is something we have never heard of or thought could happen.' Then we wheedled to him, so that he was satisfied with [obtaining] a Jurjanian khaftan costing ten dirhams, a piece of pay-baff [fiber], cakes, a handful of raisins and a hundred nuts. When we gave him all this, he bowed to us [to the ground]. And this is their rule—if a person honours [another] person, he bows down to him to the ground. He said, 'If my houses were not far from the road, I would surely give you sheep, and [friendly] gifts.' And he departed from us.

We went, and the next day we were met by a Turk man with miserable appearance, ragged, thin and pitiful. A heavy rain began. And he said, 'Stop! And the whole caravan stopped, specifically, about three thousand horses and five thousand people. Then he said, 'None of you will pass!' And we stopped, obeying his order. We told him, 'We are Kudarkin's friends'. He began [p. 201b] to laugh and said, 'Who is Kudarkin? I defecate on Kudarkin's beard'. Then he said, 'pakand',

<sup>373</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: '...without a spare grain.' Here, 'habba' stands for a definite troy weight—1/48 of a dirham [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 56].

<sup>374</sup> Kudarkin is a derivative of two ancient Turkic words: 'kul' (or 'kyul'), which in aristocratic names means 'glorious, worthy of glory, famous'; and 'erkin' (or 'irkin'), a title of ancient Turkic leaders, in the administrative hierarchy, the leader of a tribe in the Oghuz state (thus, kudurkin or kuzirkin or kyul-erkin – title) is a leader worthy of glory, one of the high officials [DS, p. 325].

which means 'bread' in the Khwarezmian language. Then I gave him cakes. He took them and said, 'Go, I have mercy on you'.

He said, If one of them gets ill and if he has a slave or slaves, they serve him and none of his family members can approach him. They set a tent for him near the house, and he will remain there until he dies or recovers.

If he is a slave or a poor man, they bring him to the wild and leave him there.

And if a man from among [them] dies, they will dig a big hole in the form of a house for him, take his body, put his jacket, his belt, and his bow on him... and put a wooden cup with nabiz in his hand, leave a wooden vessel with nabiz in front of him, bring everything he has, and put it in the house with him. Then they will set him in it, and cover the house with flooring <and will make><sup>375</sup> a kind of a clay dome. [Then] they take his horses and, depending on their number will kill one hundred of them, or two hundred of them, or just one of them and will eat their meat, except for the head, legs, tail and skin. And, really, they stretch [all] this on a wooden construction and say, 'That's his horse, on which he will go to heaven.' If he once killed a man and was courageous, [they] will carve wooden images according to the number of those whom he killed, put them on his grave and say, 'Here is his ghilmen (gulmanih), who will serve him in paradise.' Sometimes they neglect killing the horses for one or two days. Then an old man from among their elders encourages them to do it and says, 'I have seen so and so, that is the deceased, in a dream, and he told me, "You see, I was already left behind by my comrades, and sores were formed on my feet due to my attempts to follow them. I did not manage to catch up with them and was left alone." And then<sup>376</sup> they took his horses and killed them and spread them across his grave. And in a day or two the old man comes to them and says, 'I saw so and so, and he said, "Tell my family and my comrades that I truly caught up with those who had left me behind, and that I found rest from my tiredness."

He said, All Turks pluck their beards, except for their moustaches. Sometimes I saw a decrepit old man among them who had plucked his beard and left some of it under the chin, and [wore] a fur coat, so that if a person saw him, he would absolutely think it was a goat. [p. 202a] The king of the Oghuz Turks is called yabgu, and this is the title of master. Everybody who is the king of the tribe bears this title. A deputy king is called Kudurkin. And everyone who substitutes anyone of the leaders is called Kudurkin.

After that, when we departed from the territory of the [Turks], we stopped at the house of their army commander. His name is Etrek, the son of Katagan. He set up Turkic yurts for us and settled us there. And he has servants, a suite, and large houses. He brought sheep and horses to us, so that we could slaughter the sheep and ride the horses. He called his family members and the sons of his [paternal] uncle and killed many sheep for them. And we had already previously presented him a gift: clothing, raisins, nuts, pepper and millet. I saw his wife, who had previously been the wife of his father. She took [some] meat and milk and some [of the items] that we had given him, went beyond the [limits] of the 'houses' to the wild, dug a hole, buried what she brought with her and said [some] words. I said to the interpreter, 'What is she saying?' He said, 'She says, "This is a gift for Katagan, Etrek's father, presented by the Arabs to him."

When the night came, the interpreter and I came to him while he was sitting in his yurt. We had a letter written to him by Nazir al-Harami, in which he invited him to accept Islam, and encouraged him to do this. [Moreover], he sent him [a gift] in the form of fifty dinars, including a lot of Musayyabi dinars, three mithqals of musk, red skins, two Merv clothes, from which we tailored two jackets for him, boots of red leather, brocade clothing and five silk suits. Thus we gave him the gift and gave his wife a bed cover and a ring [as well]. I read the letter to him, and he said to the interpreter, 'I will not tell you anything, until you go back and [then] I will write the king

<sup>375</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: '...and they will put on it something like a cupola' [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 56].

<sup>376</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: 'In these circumstances' [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 56].

what I have decided'. He took off the brocade clothes that were on him to adorn the mentioned honourable gifts. And I saw the jacket that was under it—it was torn [to rags] because of the dirt, as their rules [prescribe] that no one can take off clothes so close to the body until the clothes go to pieces. So he plucked his entire beard and his mustache and was like a eunuch.

I saw the Turks saying that he is their most skillful rider. And Indeed, one day, while he accompanied us on his horse, <a goose was flying by><sup>377</sup>. He drew his bow, rode his horse under it, and then he shot at it, and knocked it down.

In one of the days he sent for the commanders who obeyed to him, following: Tarkhan, Inal...<sup>378</sup> and Bagliz. And it was [p. 203b] Tarkhan the most notable of them and the most prominent of them, and he was lame, blind and with withered arms. Therefore, he spoke to them: 'Truly, these are the ambassadors of the Arabic tsar (malik) to my son in law<sup>379</sup> <Almish (Almysh)> ibn Shilki, and it would be unwise on my behalf to release them without listening to your advice.' Then Tarkhan said: 'This is something we have seen and never heard of, and [never has] an ambassador of any <sultan> come to us while we and our fathers have lived. I think that it is nothing less [than] the tsar [caliph] is arranging some trick and has sent those [people] to the Khazars to raise war against us. And the best thing to do is to slice each one of those ambassadors in half and take all they have with them. And the other one said: 'No! But we take all they have with them and leave them naked so they return [to] where they came from.' And another one [as well]: 'No! But Khazar tsar (malik) has some of our men captive. Let's send these to as an exchange for them'. And they kept arguing between themselves about those things for seven days, while we remained in a dangerous situation, until they had decided that they would let us go and we'd continue [on our way]. We, in return, presented Tarkhan with a Merv khaftan and two pieces of [fabric] pai-baf and his companions [each] with a jacket and Inal also. We gave them [also] pepper, millet and bread, and they walked away from us.

We left [on our way], until we arrived to the River Yaganda<sup>380</sup>. People pulled out their road bags—which were [made] of camel leather—and layed them out. They took female Turkic camels, as they were round, <and placed them inside the bags so the [bags] would stretch><sup>381</sup>. Then they filled bags with clothes and items, and when they were full, each road bag was sat on by a group [of people] of five, six, four, eight—more or less. They took up Hatanga poles<sup>382</sup> and <used them as oars><sup>383</sup>, rowing continuously, and the water carried [the road bags], and they twirled until we had crossed over. As for the horses, they were yelled at and crossed by swimming. It is necessary, before any part of the caravan to cross, to send over the warrior detachment, so they serve as an avant-guard. [This was] because of fear of the al-bashgard, who would attack those crossing without warning.

Thus we crossed the River Yagandy the way we described. Then, after it, we crossed the river called Jam<sup>384</sup>, also in road bags, then we crossed the River Djahysh<sup>385</sup>, then the River Uzil<sup>386</sup>,

<sup>377</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: '...and I saw a flying goose rushing by' [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 56].

<sup>378</sup> Here the text of the manuscript is damaged.

<sup>379</sup> Here also the Arabic word صهر (sihr) is used, which means relatives by marriage (usually the wife's male relatives).

<sup>380</sup> Yagandy (or Bagandy) may possibly be identified with the Chagan River, which flows out of the southern spurs of the Mugodzhaz Hills and flows at the bottom of the Northern Cliff.

<sup>381</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: '...and placed them in their cavity, so that they [the sacks] stretched out' [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 56].

<sup>382</sup> This spelling may be a corruption of the word 'khalanj'.

<sup>383</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: '...and put them down like oars' [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 56].

<sup>384</sup> Jam (or Jem) may correspond to the Emba River.

<sup>385</sup> جافش - possibly Sagyz.

<sup>386</sup> May correspond to Uyil (?) – Uil.

then the River Ar.d.n ('Ehrdehn'), then the River Var.sh ('Varysh'), then the River Ankhaty<sup>387</sup>, then the River 'Vabna'<sup>388</sup>, and those were all big rivers.

Then, after it, we arrived at al-bajanak (Pechenegs), And so they stopped near the water, which seemed to be a real sea. They were dark haired [p. 203a] with completely shaved beards, poor as opposed to al-Ghuziya (Ghuzzes). After all, I saw people among al-Ghuziya (Ghuzzes), who owned ten thousands of horses and hundred of thousands of sheep. Mostly, the sheep grazed on what was in the snow, punching with their hooves and looking for dry grass. And if they'd not find it, they would eat the snow and grow tremendously fat. The fat rumps of those sheep dragged on the ground. And when it is summer and they eat grass, [then] they grow thin.

We stayed with al-Bajanak (Pechenegs) for one day.

Then we settled down and made a stop near the River Jaykh<sup>389</sup>, which was the biggest river we [ever] saw, the most enormous and with the strongest current. And truly I saw a road bag that turned upside down in its waves and those who sat inside had drowned. And many of [our] men died and [some] of our camels and horses drowned. We crossed that river with only with enormous effort.

Then we rode for [many] days and crossed the River Jaykh<sup>390</sup> then after it the River Irkhiz<sup>391</sup>, then the River Bachag<sup>392</sup>, then the River Samur<sup>393</sup>, then the River Kinal<sup>394</sup>, then the River Sukh<sup>395</sup>, then the River Kyunjyulyu<sup>396</sup> and arrived in a country of [a] Turkic tribe called al-Bashgard. We avoided them with great caution, because they are the worst of the Turks, the dirtiest of them and prone to murder more than others. A man meets a man, separates his head from his body, takes it [with him] and leaves [the body].

They shave their beards and eat lice. [Here] one of them carefully examines the seams of his jacket and cracks the lice with his teeth. Truly, one of them was with us, already converted to Islam and serving us. Once I saw him catching the louse in his clothes, he crushed it with his nails, then licked it and upon seeing me, said: 'Splendid'.

Each of them cuts a stick the size of a phallus and hangs it on himself. And if he wants to set off on a journey or when he meets an enemy, he kisses it, bows to it and says: 'Oh Lord, do so-and-so for me.' I said to the translator: 'Ask one of them, what is their justification [for that] and why do they treat it as their God?' He [the respondent] said: 'Because I came from a thing similar to this and I don't know any other creator than this.'

Some of them say they have twelve Lords: 'winter has a Lord, summer has a Lord, rain has a Lord, wind has a Lord, the trees have a Lord, people have a Lord, horses have a Lord, water has a Lord, night has a Lord, day has a Lord, death has a Lord, earth has a Lord and the Lord in the sky is the biggest of them all. However, he unites with them in harmony and each of them approves what his companion does.' Our Lord is above what the wicked say with his exalted greatness.

We saw that [one] group of them worships snakes, [another] group worships fish and [one more] group worships [p. 203b] cranes. I was told that they [once] had a war with [some] enemy group, and they [their enemies] put them to flight and that the cranes started to scream behind them [their enemies] so that they got scared themselves and put to flight themselves after scaring

<sup>387</sup> May correspond to the Yuzhnaya River or the Bolshaya Ankaty, which flows into Lake Chelkar.

<sup>388</sup> May correspond to the Malaya Ankaty River, which also flows into Lake Chelkar to the north of the Bolshaya Ankaty.

<sup>389</sup> Another variant of pronunciation of this name is 'Yaykh' or Yaik—that is, the Ural River.

<sup>390</sup> Possibly the Chegan River, a right-bank tributary of the Ural River.

<sup>391</sup> Irgiz.

<sup>392</sup> Possibly the modern-day Mocha River.

<sup>393</sup> Possibly the Samara River. The graphic form echoes the name of Samur River in Dagestan.

<sup>394</sup> Possibly the Kinel River.

<sup>395</sup> Possibly the Sok River.

<sup>396</sup> Possibly the Kundurcha River.

off [the al-Bashgard]. So they [these al-Bashgard] began to worship cranes and say: "They [the cranes] are our Lord for they put our enemies to flight." For that reason they worship them.

He said, [And we] left the country of [these] men and crossed the Jaramsan river<sup>397</sup>, then the River Uran<sup>398</sup>, then the Uram River<sup>399</sup>, then the River Baynakh<sup>400</sup>, then the River Vatyg<sup>401</sup>, then the River Niyasna<sup>402</sup>, then the River Dzhavshyz<sup>403</sup>. The distance between the rivers we mentioned is two or three or four days, more or less. When we were only a day and a night away from the king of as-Saqaliba, to whom we were going, he sent four kings under his command, his brothers and sons, to meet us. They met us, carrying with them bread, meat and millet, and rode with us. When we were two parasangs [away] from him, he met us himself and when he saw us, he came down [from his horse] and fell down, bowing with gratitude to Allah, the great and mighty. He had dirhams in his sleeve and he scattered them onto us. He put up yurts for us, and we dwelt in them. Our arrival to him was at Sunday, when twelve nights had passed of Muharram [month] of the year 310<sup>404</sup>. And the distance between Jurjani and his country was 70 days [on the road]...

So, we stayed for Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in yurts put up for us, while the tsars of his land, rulers and inhabitants of his country, were gathering to hear the letter [from Caliph]. And when Thursday came and they gathered, we unfolded the two banners we had with us, saddled the horse with a saddle sent to him [as a gift], dressed him with a shroud<sup>405</sup> and put a turban on him. Then I took out the letter of the Caliph and told him: 'It is unworthy of us to sit when we read this letter'. And he rose, he himself and the nobility of his citizens, and he was a man very fat and with a big stomach. I started to read and read the beginning of the letter when I came to this words: 'Prosperity to you, and truly I praise, [appealing] to you, Allah as he is the only one true God'—I told him: 'Respond with the wish of peace to the Lord of faithful'. And he responded and they all responded together.

The translator never ceased translating for us [i.e. our reading] to the letter. And when we finished the reading, they cried 'Great Allah' with such a cry that made the ground shake. Then I read the letter of wazir Khamid ibn al-Abbas while he was standing. Then I offered him to sit, and during the reading of the Nazir al-Kharami's letter he was sitting. When [p. 204a] I finished it [the reading], his companions scattered numerous dirhams over him. Then I took out the gifts [consisting] of incense, clothes, pearls for him and his wife, and I never ceased to present him with item after item until we were done with it. Then I clothed his wife [in the robe of honour] in the presence of men while she was sitting next to him — that is their law and tradition. And when I clothed her [in the robe of honour], the women scattered dirhams over her, and we left.

When a mere hour had passed, he sent for us, and we came to him when he [was] in his tent. The tsars (muluk) [sat] at his right hand, and we were invited to sit at his left, while his sons sat in front of him, and he alone [sat] on the throne, covered with a Byzantine brocade. He sent for the table [with viands], and it was served to him. It had nothing but grilled meat. And so he began: took a knife, sliced a piece and ate it, and the second, and the third. Then he cut off a piece and gave it to Ambassador Sausan. And when he got it, he was presented with a small table, which was put in front of him. And that was the rule, that no one was to reach for food until the king had given him a piece. And the moment he got it, he was already served with a table.

<sup>397</sup> Possibly the Bolshoy Cheremshan River.

<sup>398</sup> Possibly the Uren River.

<sup>399</sup> Possibly the River Urym or Urem, Uram.

<sup>400</sup> Possibly the Maina River.

<sup>401</sup> Close to the Tatar Udga, from which later the Russian name of the Utkha River originated.

<sup>402</sup> May correspond to the name of the Neyaslovka River.

<sup>403</sup> According to Kazan archaeologists, the Dzhavshyz River (Jaushir) most likely corresponds to the Maly Cheremshan River. The identification with the Gaushirma River (Malaya Batakha) in the modern-day Chistopol district of the Tatarstan Republic suggested by A. Kovalevsky is unlikely [Khuzin, 1997, p. 148].

<sup>404</sup> 12 May 922

<sup>405</sup> The name of the official black clothing of officials at the Caliph's court.

Then he gave [meat] to me, and I was served with a table. Then he cut off a piece and gave it to the tsar (malik) who was on his right, and he was served with a table, then to the second tsar, and he was served with a table...<sup>406</sup>, then he gave it to the fourth tsar (malik), and he was server with a table, then to his sons, they were served with tables, and thus [this continued] until every one of those who was in front of him had been served with tables, and each of us ate from his own table, not sharing a table with anyone, and nobody but him took anything from his table. When he was done with the food, each of us took the rest of the food from our tables to take back to our residences. When we finished eating, he sent for a honey drink, which they called sujuw [and made] the same day and night. Therefore, he drank a goblet. Then he rose and said: 'It is my joy for my Lord, the Lord of the faithful, let Allah prolong his stay [in this world]'. And as he stood up, so did the four tsars and his sons, and we also stood up while he did that three times. Then we left him.

From his minbar, even before my arrival, a khutbah had been proclaimed in his name: 'Oh, Allah! Save [in prosperity] our king (al-Malik) Yiltyvar, king of the Bulgars!' I said to him, 'The true king is Allah, and nobody shall be called with this title from the minbar but him, the Great and Mighty. He is your master, Lord of the faithful, for he himself is satisfied that he is proclaimed from his minbars in the east and in the west like this: 'Oh, Allah! Save [in prosperity] your servant and your vicegerent Ja'far, imam al Muqtadir-bi-Allah, the Lord of the faithful'. And in the same way, as his ancestors, who were caliphs, [did] [p. 204b]. And the Prophet said, may Allah honour him and grant him peace: 'Do not praise me beyond measure as the Christians (an-nazari) praised Jesus the son of Mary, for I am, truly, a servant of Allah and his messenger'.

And he said to me: 'How fitting is it to proclaim a khutbah in my name?' I said, 'With the mentioning of your name and your father's name'. He said, 'But my father was a disbeliever and I do not want to mention his name from the minbar; and I also [used to be a disbeliever], and I do not want my name to be mentioned, because the one who gave it to me was a disbeliever. However, what is the name of my Lord, Lord of the faithful?' I said, 'Ja'far'. He said, 'Is it proper for me to be called by his name?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, '[So], I have already given myself the name Ja'far and have given my father the name 'Abdullah, so give the order to the khatib about it'. I did so and he [the khatib] began to proclaim a khutbah in his name: 'Oh, Allah! Save [in prosperity] your servant Ja'far ibn 'Abdullah, Lord [emir] of the Bulgars, mawla of the faithful'.

When three days had passed after the reading of the letter and giving of the gifts, he sent for me. He had learned about the four thousands dinars and the trick of en-Nasrani (Christian) in [regard to] their delay. They were mentioned in the letter. So, when I entered, he invited me to sit, and I sat, and he threw the letter from the Lord of the faithful to me and said, 'Who brought this letter?' I said, 'I'. Then he tossed me the letter from wazir and said, 'And this one?' I said, 'I'. He said, 'And the money mentioned in both of them, what has been done [with it]?' I said, 'It was complicated to collect it, as we had little time, and we were afraid to lose the [opportunity of] leaving [for the north], so we left, so [they] would catch up with us'. Then he said, 'Truly, you all arrived, and that my master has spent on you he spent to bring [me] this money, so I would build a fortress with them which would protect me from the jews, who enslaved me. As for the gift, my <ghulam> could have perfectly delivered it [on his own]'. I said, 'It is completely correct, but honestly, we put forth all our efforts'.

Then he said to the translator, 'Tell him, "I do not recognize those [people]. Truly, I recognize [only] you, and it is because those people are not Arabs. And if the mentor [Caliph]—may Allah help him—had known that they would tell [me] what you have told me, he would have not sent you to keep [his orders] for me: to read [his] letter for me and hear my answer. And I will not ask even a dirham from anyone except you, so give me the money, and this is the best for you'. So, frightened, dejected,<sup>407</sup> I left him. This man had [an impressive] appearance and stateliness,

<sup>406</sup> Damaged text in the manuscript.

<sup>407</sup> That is, <left him>.



he [was] fat, wide, as if he spoke out of a large jug. So, I left him, collected my companions [p. 205a] and told them what had happened between us. And I told them, 'I warned [you] about that'.

His muezzin<sup>408</sup>, calling for a prayer, proclaimed iqama<sup>409</sup> twice. I told him, 'Truly, your master, lord of the faithful, proclaims iqama only once'. Then he said to the muezzin, 'Take [to fulfill] what he tells you and do not disagree with him'. So, muezzin held that for [many] days while he interrogated me about money and argued with me about it, and I drove him to despair about it and justified myself for it. When he lost his hope for it, he gave the order to the muezzin to double the iqama, and he did so. And he [the tsar] wanted to use it as an argument to dispute with me.

So, when I heard him doubling the iqama, I forbade him to do it and yelled at him. The tsar (al-malik) learned about it and ordered me and my companions to come. And when we gathered, he told the translator, 'Tell him,—that is, me—"What do you say about two muezzins, one of whom proclaimed [the iqama] once, and the other twice, and then both of them prayed with the people? Is this prayer allowed or not?"' I said, 'The prayer is allowed'. Then he said, 'With the disagreement [of mujtahids<sup>410</sup> on this question] or by [their] common consent [ijma]?' I said, 'By common consent'. He said, 'Tell him, "What will you say of a man who gave money [meant] for the poor, besieged, and enslaved to some people, and they fooled him?"' I said, 'This is unacceptable, and those people are foul'. He said, 'With disagreement or by common consent?' I said, 'By common consent'. Then he said to the translator, 'Tell him, "Do you know if the Caliph—may Allah grant him piece—sent an army for me, would he overcome me?"' I said, 'No'. He said, 'What about the emir of Khorasan?' I said, 'No'. He said, 'Is it because of the great distance and the number of tribes of disbelievers between us?' I said, 'Yes.'

He said, 'Tell him, "So, I swear to Allah, truly, in my distant whereabouts in that you see me, I am truly afraid of my master, the lord of the faithful. And I am afraid exactly that he will learn something about me that will disgust him, and he will curse me, and I will die here while he will [stay] in his country, and vast countries will be between me and him. And you, who eat his bread, wear his clothes, see him at any time, you fooled him about the size of [that] package he sent with you to me, to the poor people; you fooled Muslims—I will not accept your [leadership] in my faith, until a man who is sincere in his words comes to me. And if such a man comes to me, I will accept his leadership"''. That way he stopped us from speaking, and we left him without giving an answer.

He said, 'After this conversation, he began to show me a [special] preference and began to approach me to himself, removing my companions and calling me Abu Bakr the Truthful (as-Siddiq)<sup>411</sup>. [p. 205b] In his country, I saw so many marvelous things that I will not be able to enumerate them, for instance, the [very] first night we stayed in his country, I noticed that before the [final] disappearance of the Sun [shine] at the usual time of prayers<sup>412</sup> the celestial horizon turned red. And I heard loud sounds and a strong babble [up] in the air. Then I looked up and saw a fiery red cloud near me, and these sounds and babble [were coming] from it. And I saw images of people and horses, and some figures of people were holding bows, arrows, spears, and drawn swords. One moment they seemed completely real, and the next they were just phantoms. And nearby I saw another similar detachment, a black one, in which I also distinguished men, horses,

<sup>408</sup> One who proclaims the adhan, a call to prayer.

<sup>409</sup> Iqama is a portion of the adhan. The doubling of the iqama corresponded to the Hanafi madhhab, which was widespread in Middle Asia. A single recitation of the iqama was typical for the Shafi'i madhhab, adhered to at the court of Caliph al-Muqtadir. Even though in Islam both madhhabs are equal, the adoption of one or the other form of iqama predetermined the introduction of the entire system of rites and legal norms of that madhhab.

<sup>410</sup> A mujtahid makes decisions based on analogy, relying upon his vision of the decision and not a specific religious text. His authority makes the decision proposed by him mandatory.

<sup>411</sup> 'as-Siddiq' (The Truthful) is the honorary epithet of the first 'righteous' caliph, Abu Bakr (11–13/632–644).

<sup>412</sup> This means the time of sundown, which determines the evening prayer that was read after it. The sun is considered to have gone down when it becomes so dark that one cannot see the difference between a white and a black thread [The Quran, transl., 2:187].

and arms. And this detachment started to attack the other one as one troop attacks another. We were scared by this sight and started praying and beseeching, and they [citizens of the country] were laughing at us and wondering what we were doing.

He said, [For a long period of time] we were looking at these detachments fighting each other. They both blended for a moment, then detached, and this phenomenon lasted for part of the night. Then it vanished. We asked the tsar about it, and he responded that his elders used to say that those [horsemen] belonged to the faithful and infidel genies<sup>413</sup>. They fought every evening, and it was true that as long as they existed [in this world], they would wage this [battle] every night. 'And we have always seen this battle in such manner'<sup>414</sup>.

He said, A tailor of the king (malik) from Baghdad, who [coincidentally] was in this region, came into my yurt to talk with me. So we spoke long enough to read less than half the seventh part [of the Quran]<sup>415</sup>. Herewith, we were looking forward to the night adhan<sup>416</sup>. And then the adhan began. So we left the yurt, and dawn had already come. Then I said to the muezzin: 'Which adhan have you called out?' He said, 'I called out the adhan of dawn'. I said, 'What about the final adhan at night?' He said, 'We pray this prayer together with [the adhan of] dusk'<sup>417</sup>. I said, 'And at night?' He said, 'As you see! It used to be even shorter than this, but only now has it become longer'. He said that it had been a month already that he did not sleep at night afraid to miss the morning prayer, and this is because [if] a man puts a pot on the fire during the sunset [prayer] and then reads the morning prayer, it [the pot] does not have time to boil.

He said, I saw, that their day is not that long, that during some part of the year, it is long and the night is short, then the night is long, and the day is short. So, then the second night began, I sat outside of the yurt and watched the sky, and I saw in it [p. 206a] only a small number of stars, I think, maybe fifteen scattered stars. And so the red dawn which happens before the night [prayer] was here, never disappears [completely], and so the night was here with [so] little darkness that a man could recognize a man at a greater [distance] than an arrow shot.

He said, I saw that the moon did not reach the middle of the sky but appeared on its edge for about an hour, then the dawn came, and the moon hid.

The tsar told me, that there were a people called Visu behind his country, at a distance of about three-month journey. Their night was no longer than an hour.

He said, I saw that in this country, at sunrise, everything becomes red: the ground, the mountains, and everything a man looks at. And the sun rises as big as a cloud, and the redness stays until [the sun] reaches the highest point in the sky.

The inhabitants of this country told me that, truly, 'when it is winter, the night is as long as a [summer] day, and the day is as short as a night, so, really, if anyone of us goes to the place called Itil—there is a distance less than a parasang—during the morning dawn, he will reach it by the full night, when all the stars appear and cover the sky'.

And we [the ambassadors] did not leave [this] country until the nights had become long and the days had shortened.

I saw that they considered the dogs howling a very good omen for them, enjoyed it and spoke of a year of abundance, blessing, and prosperity.

<sup>413</sup> In Arabic-Muslim mythology it was believed that some jinns converted to Islam, and such jinns who worship Allah are meant here.

<sup>414</sup> It is believed that this is a description of the northern lights, which could have been frequent due to increased solar activity at the time when the embassy was in the Volga Region. However, some Kazan scholars are inclined to see in this description a severe thunderstorm of the kind that frequently happen in the area and its interpretation in the cosmogonic terms of the Bulgars [Davletshin, 1990, pp. 49–50; Khuzin, 1997, p. 148].

<sup>415</sup> This refers to the division of the Quran into seven portions, according to the days of the week.

<sup>416</sup> Adhan is a call made five times a day immediately before a prayer.

<sup>417</sup> Adhan of the evening, evening prayer *عشا* is made after the sundown; late at night another prayer *عصر* is read, accompanied by the last nighttime adhan.

I saw that there were so many snakes that [sometimes] there were truly a dozen of them or more wound round the branch of a tree. They [the inhabitants] did not kill them, and they did not harm them. Actually, in one place I saw a long tree, whose length [was] more than a hundred ells. It had already fallen. And its trunk was extraordinarily huge. I stopped to look at it, and suddenly it moved. It frightened me. I looked at it closely and saw a snake similar to it in its length and thickness. And when it saw me, it came down and hid between the trees. I became terrified and told [about it] to the tsar and [those] who were with him at the reception. They did not attach any importance to this, and he said, 'Do not be afraid, it will not harm you'. [Once] we stayed with the tsar at one stop. And I and my companions, Tekin, Sausan, and Baris, and a man from the tsar's suite entered [the space] between the trees. And he showed us a small stalk, green, thin as a spindle, very long, and [he showed us] green shoots on it. At the end of every [such] shoot [there was] a wide leaf, stretched out on the ground, [and] on the ground there was stretched something looking like a plant [adherent to it]. Between them [the leaves], [there were] berries. Those who ate them had no doubt that it was [p. 206b] an imlisi pomegranate<sup>418</sup>. So we ate them and found the they [were] very pleasing, so we did not stop looking for them and eating them.

I saw apples, very green and very sour; girls eat them, and thus [they] are called.

I did not see in their country anything more numerous than the hazel trees. Truly, I saw [such] great woods of these trees that [each] wood was forty parasangs long and wide.

He said, I saw some trees in their land, but I do not know what they were: these trees were extremely tall; their trunks were free of branches, and their tops were like those of palm-trees, with thin, compound but converging [leaves]. They take the known place of the tree trunk, drill it and place a vessel under it, into which a liquid, more pleasant than honey, flows out of the hole<sup>419</sup>. If a man drinks a lot of it, it intoxicates him as the wine intoxicates and [even] more.

Their food is millet and horse meat, but [they] also have wheat and barley in abundance, and whoever sows something will take the harvest for himself. The tsar does not have any right to take it, apart from the sable fur that they pay him every year from each house. <When he sends a detachment to raid a country, and the detachment seizes spoils, he retains the right to take a share of it><sup>420</sup>. <And everyone who makes a wedding or holds a feast should give a gift from the table depending on the size of feast and a sakhray (an earthen pot) of honey nabiz><sup>421</sup> and [a certain amount] of poor wheat. Since their land is black and smelly, <and they do not have a place to store wheat, they dig holes and store wheat in them><sup>422</sup>, so after just a few days, it is spoiled, begins to stink [of rot], and it cannot be used any more.

They do not have olive oil, sesame oil, animal fats, and really and truly, instead of these oils, they consume fish oil, and everything that they consume with it stinks [because of the oil], and they [themselves] stink [because of the oil].

They make a soup out of barley, that is eaten by girls and <ghilman>. Sometimes they prepare the barley with meat, and the men eat the meat, while the girls eat barley. But if [the meat] is the head of a goat, then [the girls] get the [opportunity] to eat meat.

All of them wear hats<sup>423</sup>. When a tsar rides a horse, he rides on his own, without a <ghulam>, and there is nobody around him. So, when he rides along the market, nobody remains sitting,—[everybody] takes off his hat and puts it under his arm. [p. 207a] When he is gone, they again put

<sup>418</sup> A sweet seedless pomegranate.

<sup>419</sup> Apparently birch sap is meant.

<sup>420</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: 'But if he proposes that a detachment [of the army] [make a] raid on one of the countries, and it takes plunder, then he [the king] will have a share along with them' [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 56].

<sup>421</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: 'Everyone who holds a wedding or a feast must make a contribution to the king, depending on the size of the feast—[give] a sakhray of honey nabiz...' [Bolshakov, 2000, pp. 56–57].

<sup>422</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: '...and they do not have rooms where they would put their food, so truly, they dig holes in the ground and put their food there.' The word طعام *ṭaʿām* is used twice also means 'wheat,' and since the previous phrase spoke of wheat, then this also should be translated as 'wheat' [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 57].

<sup>423</sup> Al-Kalanus—Turkic hats.

on their hats. The same thing applies to anyone, young or old, who goes to see the king, including his sons and brothers: as soon as they look at him, they take off their hats and put them in their arms. Then [they] nod their heads towards the king, bow and remain on their feet until he offers them a seat, and truly everyone kneels in front of him and does not take out a hat nor even shows it until he leaves the room, putting it on [only] at that time.

They all [live] in yurts, with the only difference being that tsar's yurt is very big and may accommodate one thousand people or more, and is decorated with Armenian carpets. The centre of the yurt is occupied by a throne covered with Byzantine brocade.

One of the rules [states] that if the son of [any] person has a baby, then the baby is first picked up by his grandfather before his father, and the grandfather says the following: 'I have more rights to bring him up than his father until he becomes a [mature] man'.

And if one of them dies, his brother receives the inheritance prior to the deceased's sons. I told the tsar that this is not allowed and explained to him ['the right'] rules of inheritance until he understood them.

I have not seen so much lightning in [any] other country. If a lightning strikes a house, they do not approach the house but leave it as it is, and [also] everything that is inside [it]—people, and property, and all other things—until time destroys it. They will say, 'This is a house [of those] who bear wrath'<sup>424</sup>.

And if one of them intentionally kills another one, they will execute him [in retaliation] for him. If he kills him accidentally, they make a box from khalanj (type of oak) for him<sup>425</sup>, put him inside [that box], [nail] the box and along with him, put inside the box three flat breads and a cup of water. They erect three timbers for him, similar to sticks of a camel saddle, suspend him in-between and say the following, 'We put him between the sky and land, so that the rain and sun [act] upon him. May Allaah have mercy on him'. And he remains suspended until he is worn by time and blown away by winds.

And if they see a resilient and clever person, they say the following, 'This one, more than anyone else, deserves to serve our Lord'. So, they take him, tie a rope around his neck and hang him on a tree until he falls into pieces. Truly, the translator of the tsar told me that an as-Sindi (Syndhian) had come to this country and served the tsar for a short period of time. And he had been clever and intelligent. And a group [of people] from their number had decided to leave to trade. [Sheet 207b] This Syndhian man (as-Sindi) had asked permission from the tsar to go with them. But he [tsar] had forbidden him to go. But he [as-Sindi] had insisted [on that] until he was given permission. So, he had joined them, and they had headed out by ship. So, they had seen that he had been resilient, clever, and they had agreed on the following, "This [man] is excellent to serve our Lord, so let us send him to him". They had been advancing on their way and passing by a forest. So, they had come closer to the forest, tied a rope around his neck, hung him at the top of a tall tree, left him there, and went on.

If they are traveling somewhere and one of them wants urinate and he urinates with his weaponry on, he will be robbed. They will take his weapons, clothes, and everything he has on him. That is their practice. But if a person takes his weaponry off, puts it aside, and [then] urinates, then they do not disturb him.

Men and women go down to the river and bathe together naked. They do not cover themselves nor commit adultery in any way or in any case. But if somebody commits adultery, it does not matter who he is, four <stakes> will be driven into the ground<sup>426</sup>, both his arms and legs will be tied to the stakes, and he will be hacked with an axe from the back of his head to both his hips.

<sup>424</sup> A rephrasing of the words of the Quran [Quran, transl., 1:7].

<sup>425</sup> Al-Halanj, or al-hadang, or al-hazank—different authors offer different spellings.

<sup>426</sup> In the translation of A. Kovalevsky: 'ploughshare' [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 57].

And they do the same with a woman. Then each piece of his or her body is hung on a tree. I took great pains to try to make women cover themselves from men when bathing, but I did not succeed.

They will kill a thief in the same way as they would an adulterer.

Bee hives in the forest contain lots of honey; they know them and go [there] to collect this [honey]. Sometimes their enemies attack and kill them.

They have a lot of merchants who go to the lands of Turks and bring back sheep, and they go to the country called Visu and bring back sables and black foxes.

We have seen here a household [of one family] with five thousand souls of women and men, who have already adopted Islam. They are known as [the name] Barandzhar<sup>427</sup>. A wooden mosque was built for them; they pray there. They do not know how to [pray], so I taught [a] group [of them] what words to use to pray.

Truly, under my guidance a man called Talut adopted Islam, and I gave him the name of 'Abdallah. And he said, 'I want you to give me your [own] name of Muhammad'. And so I did. His wife, mother, and children also adopted Islam, and everybody started to call them Muhammad. I taught him [surahs] 'Praise to Allah' and 'Say, he is Allah the only one'. And his joy from [knowing] these two surahs was greater than his joy [in the case] if he would have become the tsar (malik) of as-Saqaliba.

When we came [fol. 208a] to the tsar, we found him standing near the water called Khelleche<sup>428</sup>, but actually there were three lakes, two of which were big and one small. However, you could not reach the bottom in any of them. Between this place and [their] big river that flows to the country of the Khazars—the river is called Atil—[the distance] is about a parasang (a Persian unit of distance, equal to about four miles). There [is] a market place on that river<sup>429</sup> that becomes lively during <every flood><sup>430</sup>. Lots of valuable things are sold at that market.

Some time ago, Tekin told me that there [is] a very big man living in the country of the tsar. So, when I arrived in the country, I asked the tsar about him. And he said, 'Yes, he lived in our country [earlier] and died. He was neither local nor from among the [ordinary] people. His story is as follows: Merchants approached the river Atil as they [usually] do. The river had risen and overflowed its banks. And once, I had not had time to learn it yet, a crowd of merchants came to me and said, 'Oh, king! A person swam up to us on the river; if he is from the people living close to us, then we cannot live in this place, and we have no other choice but to migrate'. So, I rode with them to the river. And that man is standing in front of me, he is twelve elbows, if to measure in my 'elbows'<sup>431</sup>, his head is like the biggest pot, his nose is bigger than a quarter, large eyes and fingers—every finger is bigger than a quarter. When I saw him, my blood ran cold, I was very afraid, like those people. And we began to talk to him, but he did not say [anything]; he was just looking at us. I took him to my house and wrote to the people of the country of Visu, who are [at a distance of] three months [travel] from us, and asked them about him.

<sup>427</sup> The Baranjars are an ethnic group within the Bulgars whose origin is connected with the Belenjers of the Khazar Khaganate on the territory of the Northern Caucasus [Khuzin, 1997, p. 149].

<sup>428</sup> Starting with A. Kovalevsky, this place has been identified with the village of Tri Ozera (Three Lakes) in the Spassky District of the Republic of Tatarstan. It is believed that this was where the headquarters of the ruler of Bulgar was located [Khuzin, 1997, p. 149].

<sup>429</sup> The market mentioned here can be identified with Aga-Bazar, located at a distance of 6–7 km from the Bulgar archaeological site. Archaeological studies completed during the past decade in the lower reaches of the Aqtay and the Bezdna have disclosed a number of trading and craftsman settlements that make it possible to attribute the market mentioned here to this area as well [Kazakov, 1991; Khuzin, 1997, p. 149].

<sup>430</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: '...at any favourable moment' [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 57].

<sup>431</sup> A. Kovalevsky believed this story of Ahmad ibn Fadlan about a giant to be merely a reflection of the legend of northern giants living in unknown northern reaches. If these fantastic and improbable facts are compared to the story of Abu Hamid al-Gharnati (another witness who had spent a considerable period in Bulgar) about a 'tall man, a descendant of the 'Adites, whose height exceeded seven cubits, called Danki' [see Note 794], then the giant mentioned by Ahmad ibn Fadlan could have been a very real person, whose height increased from story to story.

They wrote back to me that the man was one of the Yajuj and Majuj, 'They are [at a distance] of three months [travel]. We are separated from them by the sea, because they [live] on [the other?] shore of it. They are like [wild] beasts, naked, barefoot, and they copulate with each other [like beasts]. Every day Almighty and Great Allah pulls out [one] fish from the sea for them, and every one of them comes, having a knife on him, and cuts as much of it for himself as he and his family needs. If one of them takes more than [the amount] he needs, then he will have a stomachache, and his family will have a stomachache, and in some occasions he will die, and all of them will die. Once they have taken from it [the fish] what they need, it will turn around and dive back into the sea. So, they [live] day by day in this way. The sea [lying] between us and them [surrounds] them from one side [fol.208b], and from the other side they are surrounded by mountains. A barrier [also] separated them from the gate [singular] that they usually used to exit. If the Almighty and Great Allah wants them to go to inhabited lands, he will open the Barrier, the sea will go into the ground, and the fish will stop coming'.

He said, Then I asked him [the tsar] about [that] man, and he said, 'He stayed with me for some time. Sometimes a boy would look at him and die instantly, a pregnant woman would [look] at him and have a miscarriage. Sometimes if he took a person in his hands, he would squeeze him until he died. When I saw this, I hung him from a tall tree with a strong chain until he died. If you want to have a look at his bones and his head, I will go with you to let you see them'. And I said, 'I swear to Allah, I want it very much'. So, he rode with me to a big forest with big trees. He took me to a big tree... and his head was under it. And I saw that his head was like a big tub, and his ribs were similar to the biggest dry fruit branches of a palm, and the bones of his shins and both his elbow bones were the same. I was astonished at that and went away.

He said, The tsar had gone from the water called Khelleche towards the river called Javshyr and stayed there around two months<sup>432</sup>. Apart from that, he wanted [the tribes] to migrate, so he sent a messenger to the people called Suvaz, ordering them to migrate together with him. [They] refused to migrate, however. And [they] split into two parties. One of the parties consisted of [various] dregs of society, of which a [self-proclaimed] tsar [prince], [a certain] Vyryg [had] proclaimed himself ruler. The [Bulgar] tsar sent a messenger to them, saying, 'Indeed, the Almighty and Great Allah gave me Islam and supreme power of the ruler of believers, and I am his [Allah's] servant, and this is the work that he laid upon me, and if anyone resists me, I will strike him dead with the sword. The other party was together with the tsar [prince] of a [nomadic] tribe, who was called the tsar of the Eskel [tribe]. He was obedient to him, even though he had not adopted Islam. When he [the tsar] sent them [the first party] this message, [they] were scared of his intention, and all together they headed to the river Javshyr together with him.

This river is not wide. It is five elbows wide. Its water [goes up] to the navel, in some places up to the collarbone, and its deepest [point] is of human height. It is surrounded by trees, and most of them are Khadang trees (poplar tree)<sup>433</sup> and others. There is an extensive wilderness not far from it, it is said that an animal [lives] there<sup>434</sup> that is smaller than a camel but bigger than a bull. Its head is a camel's head; its tail is a bull's tail; [fol.209a] its body is a mule's body; its hooves are similar to bull's hooves. It has a thick round horn in the middle of the head. As it goes higher up [approaching the tip], it becomes thinner and thinner until it turns into a spearhead. Some of them [horns] are from three to five elbows long; some are longer or shorter [than that]. It eats the

<sup>432</sup> Kazan archaeologists connect this migration with the beginning of the construction of the Bilyar fortress—the capital of the Bulgarian state—in the area of Maly Cheremshan [Khalikov, 1973; Khuzin, 1991; 1997, p. 149].

<sup>433</sup> Hadang – poplar, aspen.

<sup>434</sup> The description of this animal by Ahmad ibn Faldan corresponds to the description of the common elk, which inhabits the forests of that region of the Eastern Europe. The only thing that seems to differ completely is the description of the horn on its head. Nevertheless, this description rather precisely communicated the shape of elk antlers—a single thick base and narrowing branches. Ahmad Ibn Faldan simply did not understand from the story of the Bulgars, all the more so as retold by the interpreter, that the antlers of this animal are branched [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 59].

leaves of the khalanj tree<sup>435</sup>, which has excellent greens. If it sees a horseman, it moves towards him, and if the horseman is on a trotter, then [the trotter] escapes from it with difficulty, but if it catches the horseman, it grabs him with its horn from the back of the horse, throws him up and [again] grabs it with its horn and continues [doing] it until it kills the horseman. It does not harm a horse in any way nor in any case. And they hunt it in the wilderness and forests to kill it. They [do] it the following way, [they] climb up tall trees, where the [animal] is. For that they take several bowmen with poisoned arrows, and when the animal is between them, they shoot at it until they wound and kill it.

Truly, I have seen the tsar's three big bowls, similar to Yemen onyx, and he said that they are made from the base of this animal's horn.

Some people in [this] country say that it is a rhino.

He said, I have not seen [anyone] pink-cheeked [ruddy] among them, but most of them are ill. In [that country] they mainly die from gripes; so, [even] babies suffer from gripes.

And if a Muslim dies, and there [is] a Khwarezm woman, he will be washed according to Muslim ablution. Then they take him on a cart that carries him, and they [go] in front of him with a banner until they reach the place where he will be buried. When they reach the place, they take him from the cart and place him on the ground. Then they draw a line around him on the ground and put him aside. They dig out a grave in the outlined area, make a side niche for him, and bury him.

[People of this country] use the same procedure with all the dead. Women do not cry over the dead, but men cry over the dead; if they come on the day he died, they stop by the doors of his yurt and give the most wretched and wildest cry possible. These are free [people]. When they are done crying, slaves come [carrying] braided leather <whips><sup>436</sup>, and they constantly cry and beat their sides and projecting parts of their bodies with these belts until there are [marks] from <whip> blows on their bodies. And they [locals] always hang a banner by [Sheet 209b] the door of his yurt. They bring his weapons and put them around his grave, and continue crying for the next two years. After two years, they take down the banner and take [a part] of their hair... Relatives of the dead will hold a feast, which means that the mourning is over, and if he had a wife, she will marry. This is if he was [one] of the leaders. As for the ordinary people, when one of them dies, they do [just] some parts of this [ceremony].

The tsar of as-Saqaliba pays a tribute to the tsar of Khazars: a sable pelt from each house in his kingdom. If a ship comes from Khazar country to as-Saqaliba country, then the tsar will come on horseback, count everything that [is] in it, and take a tenth of it. And if the Ruses come or some other [people] from any other tribes with slaves, then the tsar, really and truly, picks one head for himself from every ten.

The son of the tsar of as-Saqaliba is kept as a hostage by the Khazar tsar. The Khazar tsar [learned] about the beauty of the daughter of the tsar of as-Saqaliba, and he sent to seek her in marriage. But he spoke against him and refused him. Then he sent [an expedition] and took her by force, even though he is a Jew, and she is a Muslim. So, she died [when she was] with him. Then he sent for and demanded the second daughter. When the tsar of as-Saqaliba learned this, he was afraid that he would take her by force, just like he did with his first daughter, so he wanted to prevent it, and he gave his daughter in marriage to the tsar [prince] of the Eskel [tribe]. And, truly, fear of the Khazar tsar forced the tsar of as-Saqaliba to write to the ruler [caliph] and ask him to build a fortress for him.

He said, Once I asked and told him the following, 'You have a vast state, [money] in abundance and various sources of income, then why did you ask the ruler to <build a fortress for a

<sup>435</sup> Khalanj – birch.

<sup>436</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: 'skins' [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 57].

small amount of money><sup>437</sup>". And he said, 'I thought that an Islamic state brings luck, and their [money] is earned from sources allowed by [religious law]. That is why I asked him to do me this favour. Truly, if I had wanted to build a fortress at my own expense, for silver or gold, then, of course, that would not have been a problem for me. Truly, the only thing I wanted was to receive blessing from the money of the ruler of the faithful, and that was what I asked for.

He said, 'I saw the Ruses when they came to trade and disembarked along the Atil river. I have never seen [people] with bodies more perfect than theirs. They are like palm trees, blond, ruddy (pink-cheeked), fair-skinned. They do not wear either coats or kaftans, but their men wear a kisa, with which they cover one side of their bodies with one arm sticking out. And each [p. 210] of them has an axe, sword, and knife, [what is more] he is [never] without them. <Their swords are a clever piece of work><sup>438</sup>, fluted, Frankish. Some of them [the Ruses] [have] depictions of trees, images, etc. from their toes to the very neck. <Every woman there has a box on her chest><sup>439</sup>, either iron, or silver, or copper, or gold, or wood, depending on the amount of [money] their husbands have. This box has a ring and a knife attached to the ring, both fastened to the chest. They wear gold and silver necklaces, because when a man has ten thousand dirhams, his wife has one necklace; if he has twenty thousand dirhams, his wife has two necklaces; so for every ten thousand dirhams that a man earns, he gives his wife a necklace. That is why some women have many [rows of] necklaces.

They [the Ruses] [consider] the ceramic green beads that are on boats to be the best jewellery. They make exceptional efforts [to acquire them]; they buy one bead for a dirham and string them as necklaces for their wives.

*The dirham of the Rus is a gray squirrel without fur, tail, front or rear paws, or a head, [also] sables. If something is missing, the pelt is considered a defective [coin]. They use them for trading, and it is impossible to take them out, so they are only exchanged for other goods. There are no scales, just standard ingots. They buy and sell using a measuring cup.*

They are the dirtiest of Allah's creatures. They do not wash themselves of excrements nor of urine; they do not wash themselves of sexual uncleanness, and do not wash hands after eating but are like wandering donkeys. They arrive from their country and moor their boats on the Atil, which is a big river, and they build big wooden houses on its banks. [There are] between ten and twenty people living in such houses, approximately. Every one [of them] has his own bench that he sits on, and beautiful girls for the merchants sit with them. And when one [of them] copulates with his girl, his companion looks on. Sometimes they form an [entire] group, one against the other, and when a merchant comes in to buy one of the girls, he sees them copulating. But he does not leave her until he satisfies his urge.

Every day they always wash their faces and heads with the dirtiest possible water. This [happens] in the following way: a girl comes every morning to her lord with a big tub of water. He washes his hands, face, and hair in it. He washes it and combs it out into the tub. Then he blows his nose and spits into the water and leaves no dirt whatever he does [fol. 210b] into the water. When he finishes, the girl takes the tub to the one sitting next to him, and [he] does the same thing that his mate did. And she takes the tub from one to another until she has passed it to everyone in [the] house, and everyone blows his nose, spits, and washes his face and hair in it.

As soon as their boats arrive at this mooring dock, all of them come out, [holding] bread, meat, onions, milk, and nabiz, and approach a tall post stuck in the ground that [has] a face, similar to a human face, with small images around it, and there are long posts behind it stuck in the ground. So, he comes up to the big image and bows, then he says, 'Oh, my lord, I came from a remote

<sup>437</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: '...so that he might build a fortress using the money [delivered] from him, which is beyond counting' [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 57].

<sup>438</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: '...their swords are flat' [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 57].

<sup>439</sup> In A. Kovalevsky's translation: 'And as for their women, [each] has a box attached to her chest' [Bolshakov, 2000, p. 57].



country, and I have this many girls, this many heads, this many sables and pelts', until he counts everything he has, 'and I came to you with this gift'. Then [he] leaves everything he had in front of [this] post, 'and I want you to grant me a merchant with many dinars and dirhams, that will buy things that I will want to sell and will not contradict what I say'. Then he goes away.

If trade is hard for him and he stays a long time, he will come again with the second and third gifts, and if [he] has some difficulties in achieving what he wants, he will take gifts to every small image, ask them to do him a favour, and will say the following: 'These are the wives of our lord, his daughters and sons'. So, he continues asking for a favour and intercession from one image, then from another image, groveling in front of them. Sometimes trade goes well, and he sells everything. Then he says, 'My Lord satisfied my needs, and I should reward him'. So he takes several sheep or cows, slaughters them, and distributes part of the meat, and the rest of the meat is left between that large post and small ones around it, and he hangs heads of cattle or sheep on the tree stuck [in the back] in the ground. When night comes, dogs come and eat everything. And the person who did it, says, 'My lord is satisfied with me and ate my gift'.

If one of them falls ill, they will pitch a tent for him away from the group, and will put him in the tent with some bread and water. They neither approach nor talk to him, especially if he is poor or a slave, but if he has a crowd of relatives and servants, people visit him all these days and take care of him. So, if he recovers, he will come back to them, but if [fol. 211a] he dies, they will burn him. If he was a slave, they will leave him, [until] he is eaten by dogs and predatory birds.

If they catch a thief or robber, they will take him to a tall wide tree, tie a strong rope around his neck and hang him on that tree until he falls into pieces because of wind and rain.

I have been told many times what do they do with their leaders when they die, among which the least is cremation, that is why I was always eager to see it, when I found out [about] the death of one outstanding man from them. So, they put him in a grave and covered it for ten days with a canopy while they cut and stitched his garments.

So it was that if [he] was a poor person among them, they would make a small boat, put him into the boat, and burn his [boat]. But if he was rich, they would collect everything he had and divide it into three parts. One third goes to his family; one third goes to cut and sew his garments; and one third goes to prepare the nabiz that they drink until the day his girl commits suicide and is burned up together with her lord. They overindulge in nabiz, drink it day and night, [so] some of them die holding a mug in the hand.

During those ten days, they drink and copulate with women and play the saz. And the girl that will burn herself with him drinks and has fun during these ten days, puts on headpieces, and wears different dresses, and dressed like this, she gives herself to men.

If a leader dies, his family asks his girls and <ghilmen>, 'Which one of you will die with him?'. One of them replies, 'I'. And once they say that, it is mandatory. There is no way back. Even if they wanted to change their mind, they would not let them do it. Most of those who do it are girls. So when that man whom I mentioned died his girls were asked, 'Which one of you will die with him?' And one of them said, 'I'. So, they told two girls to guard her, to go with her wherever she went, to the extent that sometimes they were [even] told to wash her legs with their hands. And they [the relatives] began the work, cutting out clothing for him and organizing everything he needed. The girl was eating and drinking every day, having fun and looking forward to the future.

On the day when he and his girl were to be cremated, I came to the river where his boat was [located]. They had already pulled it [ashore]; four abutments made of the khadang and other trees [khalanj] were set up for it, and around them there was some kind of big wooden scaffolding. Then [the boat] was pulled onto this wooden structure. And they began to guard it, walking back and forth, and speaking a language I could not understand. But he [the deceased] was still in his grave, [because] they had not taken him out [yet].

*They set up a wooden hut in the middle of the boat and covered it with various red 'buntings'.* Then they brought a bench and put it on the boat, covered it with a quilted mattress and Byzantine brocade, and pillows also made of Byzantine brocade. Then an old woman came, whom they call [fol. 211b] the angel of death, and she spread the covers over the bench. She oversees the cutting and sewing of the clothing, organizes his burial, and also [she] kills the girls. And I saw that she was an old woman warrior, muscular and grim-looking.

When they came to his grave, they removed the dirt from the wood [cover], removed the wood, and took him out in the bed-cover that he had died in. And I saw that he had turned black from the cold in this country. They had already put nabiz, [some kind of] fruit, and a lute into his grave. Now they took it all out. He was not stinking, nothing about him had changed except his color. Then they dressed him in baggy pants, spats, boots, a coat, a brocade kaftan with golden buttons. They put a brocade hat on his head, with sable, and carried him to the tent on the ship, seated him on the quilted mattress, supported him with pillows, and brought nabiz, fruit, *different kinds of flowers* and aromatic plants, and put it all around him. And they brought bread, meat, and onions and left it all in front of him. Then they brought a dog, slashed it in two, and threw it onto the boat. Then they brought all the weapons and put it them all around him. Then they took two horses and rode them until they perspired. Then they slashed them with swords and threw the meat onto the boat. Then they brought two cows, slashed them, and threw them onto the boat. Then they brought a cock and a hen, slaughtered them, and put them on the boat.

*A lot of men and women gathered. They played the saz, and every relative of the dead set up a tent away from his tent.* The girl that wanted to be killed *put on makeup and went to the tents of the relatives of the dead*, came and went, entered every tent, every tent owner copulated with her and told her *in a loud voice*, "Tell your lord, "Truly, I did it because of my love and friendship to you". *In this way, she visited each tent until the last, and all the rest copulated with her.*

*When they finished, they slashed a dog in two, threw it onto the boat, and also behead a cock and put [it and its] head on the right and left side of the boat.*

By sunset, on Friday, they brought the girl to something that had been made earlier, something like a gate door. She put her feet on the palms of the men and raised above that door [looking down from its top], and said [some] words in their own language, and then they lowered her. Then she was raised for the second time, and she repeated [what] she had done the first time. Then she was lowered and raised again for the third time; she repeated the same actions that she had done the first two times. Then she was given a hen; she beheaded it and threw its [head] away. They took that hen and threw it onto the boat. So, I asked the interpreter what she was doing, and he said, "When she was lifted for the first time, she said, "I see my father and mother", and for the second time she said, "I see all my dead relatives, sitting", and for the third time she said, "I see my lord, sitting in a beautiful, green garden; he is surrounded by men and ghilman (al-ghulman), and he is calling me, [Sheet 212a] so take me to him".

So, they took her to the boat. She took off two bracelets and gave them both to that old woman, called the angel of death, that was going to kill her. Then she took off two rings and gave them both to those two girls that served her [all the time], and they both were daughters of the woman known as the angel of death.

*After that the group [of people], that had copulated with her, made a path with their arms for her, so the girl, putting her feet on their hands, boarded the boat.* But they did not take her to the tent [yet]. Men came, [holding] shields and sticks, and she was given a cup of nabiz. She sang and then drank it. And the interpreter said that she was saying goodbye to her friends this way. Then she was given another cup; she took it and started to sing a long song while the old woman was pushing her to drink it and enter the tent of [her] lord.

And I saw that she was confused; she wanted to go into the tent, but stuck her head between the tent and the boat. Then the old woman grabbed her head and pushed her [head] into the tent and

entered along with her, and the men started banging sticks on the shields to drown out the sound of her cries, because it would have scared the other girls, and they would not have wanted to die with their lords. Then six of the male relatives *of her husband entered the tent, and all [of them] copulated with her in the presence of the dead. Then, as soon as they had exercised [their] rights to copulate*, they laid her next to her lord. Two of them grabbed her legs; two of them grabbed her arms; the old woman called the angel of death came and tied a rope with fraying ends around her neck and gave it to two [men] to pull it, and she began her job, holding a big knife with a wide blade [in her hand]. So, she started to stick it between the girl's ribs while the two men strangled her with the rope until she died.

Then came the closest relative of the dead, took a stick, and lit it from the fire. Then he started to walk backwards, with the back of his head to the ship and his face to people, [holding] the lit stick in one hand with the other hand covering his anus, being naked, in order to light the wood which had been piled under the boat. Then some people with firewood [for kindling] came up to the boat. Each of them had a stick with a burning end. Then they threw them to the wood [placed under the ship]. And the wood caught fire, then the boat, then the tent, as well as the man, and the girl, and everything [located] on the ship. Then a strong, terrible wind started blowing; the flame intensified and flared up stronger. One Rus was standing next to me. And I heard him [p. 212b] talking to the interpreter that was with me. I asked him what he had said. He said, 'Truly, he said the following, "You Arabs are foolish"'. And I asked him about that. He said, 'Indeed, you take the person that you love and respect the most and leave him in dust; insects and worms eat him, but we burn him in a split second, so that he immediately goes to paradise'. Then he laughed with an excessive laughter. I asked him about that, and he said, 'Our God loved him; he sent the wind, so it [the wind] will take him in one hour'. Indeed, in less than one hour the ship, firewood, girl, and lord turned into cinder, then into [the finest] ash.

Then in the place of that boat, which they [at one time] pulled out of the river, they built something like a round hill and set a big post of a khadang tree in the middle of it, wrote on it the name of [that] man and the name of the Ruses tsar and went away.

He said, One of the customs of the Rus tsar is that together with him in his *very high* castle *permanently* live four hundred male bogatyrs, his brothers in arms, and his reliable men among them die when he dies and are killed because of him. Each of them [has] a girl that serves him, washes his head and prepares his drinks and food for him, and another girl [whom] he uses as a concubine *in the presence of the tsar*. These four hundred [men] sit *and at night sleep* at the foot of his bed. His bed is large and encrusted with semi-precious stones. Forty girls sit with him on the bed. Sometimes he uses one of them as a concubine in front of his brothers-in-arms, whom we have mentioned [earlier]. *And they do not consider it shameful*. He does not leave his bed, so if he needs to fulfill a certain need, he does it into a basin; if he wants to ride a horse, he brings the horse right up to his bed so that he can get on the horse right from the bed, but if he [wants] to get off [the horse], he will take the horse to the bed so [close] that he can get off the horse straight onto the bed. *And he has nothing else to do but copulate [with girls], drink, and have fun*. He has a deputy who commands the troops, attacks the enemies, and takes his place in front of his subjects.

*Good ['right-minded'] people among them lean towards the leather craft and do not consider this dirt disgusting.*

If two people start to quarrel and argue, and the king is unable to reconcile them, he rules that they have a sword fight, and the one who wins is right.

As for the Khazar tsar who holds the title of khakan, truly, he [shows] himself in front of the people once every four months at a [respectful] distance. He is called 'the Great Khakan', and his deputy is called khakan-bekh. He leads and commands the troops, runs state affairs, rules the state, shows himself [in front of the people], does campaigns, and the surrounding kings express their obedience to him. And every day he presents himself humbly before the greatest khakan, expressing humility and peace. He goes to him only barefooted, holding firewood in his hands,

and when he greets him, he lights the firewood. When he is done with fuel, he sits together with the tsar [w. 438]<sup>440</sup> on his throne. He is substituted by the man called khundur-khakan<sup>441</sup>, and he is substituted by the man called javshungar<sup>442</sup>. The custom of the greatest tsar is that he does not give audiences and does not talk to people, and only the aforementioned people can go to him; his deputy khakan-bekh is entitled to manage the affairs, punish [criminals] and rule the state.

Another custom [of] the greatest tsar [is that] if he dies, a big court is built for him, consisting of twenty houses, with a grave for him in every house. Stones are ground to the extent that they become like powder for eye makeup<sup>443</sup>, and then they are spread in the grave and covered with caustic lime<sup>444</sup>. There [is] a river under [this] court, and the river is large, and they [locate] this river over this grave and say, 'So that [w. 439] neither the devil, nor a person, nor worms, nor insects can reach it'. When he is buried, they behead those who buried him, so that nobody knows which of the houses his grave [is] in. His grave is called paradise, and they say, 'He has entered paradise'.

And all [these] houses are lined with golden, satin tissue.

[One] more custom of the Khazar king is [that] he has twenty-five wives, [and] each of them is a daughter of the neighbouring kings, which he takes for himself, willingly or unwillingly. He has sixty concubines for his bed, and they are all true beauties. And each of the free ones and concubines [live] in a separate palace; each of them has a room in the form of a dome<sup>445</sup> covered with ticking, and around each 'dome' [there is] a trampled space. And each of them has a eunuch watching over her. So, if [the Khakan] wants to use one of them [as a concubine], he calls for the eunuch that is watching over her, and [he] comes with her in a split second to put her on his bed, and the eunuch stops at the door of the king's 'cupol'. When [the king] is done with her [as a concubine], he [the eunuch] takes her by the hand and goes away without leaving her there for a single moment.

When the highest king goes horseback riding, he is followed by all his troops, and the escort follow a mile away from him, and the only way his subjects can see him is prostrated on the ground, bowing to him, and none of them raises his head until he passes by.

The length of the reign of their king is forty years. If he lives longer than them [even] for one day, then the subjects and his entourage *dismiss him or kill him* and say, 'His mental capacity decreased and his judgment [became] confused [vague]'.

If he sends a [detachment] on [a campaign], it will not return under any circumstances and by no means, and if they flee, then everyone from the detachment that returns [to the king] is killed. As for the leaders and his deputy, if they flee, they [themselves] will be brought back, and their wives and children will be brought, and they will be given to other people in their presence as

<sup>440</sup> This and subsequent designations repeat the pagination of A. Kovalevsky for data that supplemented the text of the Mashhad manuscript of 'Notes' [Ibn Faldan, 1956].

<sup>441</sup> كندرخاقان Kundur-haqan—the vowel marks in the first portion of this combination are tentative. The term 'Kundur,' after repeated unsuccessful attempts to explain its origin, remains unexplained based on Turkic languages [Klyashtorny, 1997, p. 23].

<sup>442</sup> The term جاشيغر or جاشيغر — A. Kovalevsky renders it as 'javyshgyr.' The interpretation of this term was further complicated by the lack of certainty in its reading (javshigar, javishgar, javishgir, yavishgir, yavashigar, chavyshgyr, etc.). However, the reading 'Jav shungar,' which does not violate the graphic form of the word, can be translated. The Turkic word 'falcon, gyrfalcon' is encountered in the form of 'shunkar/shonkar' in works by al-Khwarazmi (10th century), 'shunkar' in works by Mahmud al-Kashgari (11th century), and 'shunkur' in 'Muhabbat-name' (13th century). The principal portion of the word 'Yav' or 'Jav' goes back to the ancient Turkic 'javli' (falcon, hunting bird) and is fixed in one of the Yenisey inscriptions (8–9th centuries), and later by Mahmud Kashgari. 'Kutadgu bilig' (9th century) mentions the title of a courtier, 'javli beg' (verse 4068). Ibn Faldan gives this title in its abbreviated form, while the full form can be reconstructed as 'jav shunkr [beg]' (the head of the royal falcon hunt), which was identical to the title of 'javli beg' mentioned in 'Kutadgu bilig' by Yusuf Balasaguni among the senior dignitaries of the ileq-khans. The context of the passage by Ibn Faldan, in which this term is used, enables us to suppose that the deputies of the khakan-beg—the Kundur-Khagan (khakan) and the javshungar beg—performed duties similar to those of military leaders and hajibs in the Kara-Khanid Empire [Klyashtorny, 1997, pp. 23–24].

<sup>443</sup> Antimony.

<sup>444</sup> Lime, a preparation for removal of hair on the body.

<sup>445</sup> قبة (kubba), one of the meanings of which is 'tent' or 'dome.' A. Kovalevsky also translated it as 'yurt.'

they are watching; their horses, household goods, weaponry, courts, manors are given away, and sometimes he [the king] cuts each of them into two and kicks them away, and sometimes hangs them on trees by their necks. Sometimes, if he shows mercy, he will make them stable boys.

The Khazar king [has] a big city on the river Atil. It is divided into two sides. One side is [inhabited] by Muslims, and the other side is the residence of the king and his entourage. A man called khaz [from] the entourage <of ghilmen> of the king is [in charge] of the Muslims. He is Muslim himself, and this <ghulam> Muslim is given judicial authority over the Muslims living in the country of the Khazars and any of them temporarily coming to them to trade, so nobody deals with their affairs and nobody judges them except him. There [is] a jameh mosque in the city; Muslims pray there [w. 440] and go there on Fridays. It has a tall minaret and several muezzins.

So, when in 310<sup>446</sup> the Khazar king found out that Muslims had destroyed a synagogue in the al-Babunaj Manor, he ordered the minaret destroyed and the muezzins executed, and said, 'If, truly, I had not been afraid that there would be no synagogues left in Islamic countries, I would surely have destroyed the mosque [too]'.

The Khazars and their king are all Jews, and as-Saqaliba and everyone who shares a border with them submit to him, and he treats them as slaves, and they submit to him with humility.

*This material was prepared by Nuriya Garayeva*

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<sup>446</sup> The year started 1 May 922.

### Al-Istakhri—Ibn Hawqal

Kitab al-masalik wa-mamalik ('The Book of Roads and Kingdoms') by Abu-l-Kasim Muhammad ibn Hawqal an-Nasibi, otherwise referred to as 'Kitab surat al-ard' ('The Book of the Picture of Earth'), is an extended version of 'Kitab masalik qa-l-mamalik' by Abu Ishaq Ibrahim al-Istakhri, which was written in the middle of the tenth century. In about 951 a by-that-time experienced traveller, Ibn Hawqal, (on trade business?) met al-Istakhri in West India, got acquainted with his work and pointed out some mistakes, whereupon al-Istakhri authorized him to liberally use that work as his own, rewrite it, make additions to it, and sign it with his own name. Along with this, al-Istakhri retained the authorship of this work, thus being responsible for two cognominal texts. Ibn Hawqal presented the first augmented version to the ruler of Haleb, Sayf al-Dawla (944–967), but the manuscripts of that edition no longer exist. All known manuscripts are from a further edition, where Ibn Hawqal's material only amounts to a sixth (apart from insignificant stylistic modifications).

This work of Ibn Hawqal was first published in 1938–1939, based on the two comparatively more recent manuscripts by M. de Goeje in 1873 [Ibn Hawqal, 1873]. I. Kramers undertook the publishing of a new edition based on a previously unknown ancient manuscript (1086), from the library of Iski Sarai in Istanbul. This incorporated a representation of all of the maps, with all previously missing fragments, preserved in the three other manuscripts [Ibn Hawqal, 1938–1939]. In 1964 he, in cooperation with G. Vieue, published a French translation of that text [Kramers, 1964].

This translation is based on the edition of 1938–1939, with related pages indicated in the body of the text. Additions by Ibn Hawqal are enclosed in angular brackets <>, smaller stylistic discrepancies with al-Istakhri's text are indicated only when they radically change the sense of the phrase [Ibn Hawqal, 1938–1939].

#### 'Kitab al-masalik wa-mamalik' (The Book of Roads and Kingdoms)

#### Khazar Sea

[p. 386] As for the Khazar Sea, its eastern side is part of ad-Daylama, and Tabaristan, and Jurjan,<sup>447</sup> and part of the desert located between Jurjan and Khvarizm, while its western side is ar-Ran<sup>448</sup> and boundaries of as-Sarir<sup>449</sup>, and the land of the Khazars, and part of the Ghuzz desert, and its northern side is the Ghuzz desert and the region of Siyakh Kukha<sup>450</sup>, its southern side is al-Jil<sup>451</sup> and ad-Daylam, <and everything around them> [p. 388]. And this sea does not have any connection with any other sea on the face of the Earth <by flowing into or confluence except what flows into it from the river of the Ruses<sup>452</sup>, known as Atil, which is connected by an arm flowing out of it with a strait originating from the land of al-Kustantiniya to the Surrounding

<sup>447</sup> Deylam is a mountainous region to the north of modern-day Tehran; Tabaristan is the eastern portion of the Southern Caspian Sea Region, whose principal city was Amul (Amol); Jurjan (Gurgan), with its centre in the city with the same name (modern-day Gorgan).

<sup>448</sup> Ar-Ran, Alvank, Caucasian Albania is a region mostly corresponding to Azerbaijan.

<sup>449</sup> As-Sarir is a region in the north-west of Dagestan.

<sup>450</sup> Siah Kuh, Pers. 'Black Mountain' is the Mangghyshlaq Peninsula. Medieval Arabic toponymy did not have the concept of a peninsula; both true islands and peninsulas were described as islands.

<sup>451</sup> Jilan is Gilyan, the western portion of the Southern Caspian Sea Region.

<sup>452</sup> In Arabic geographical sources 'the river of the Ruses' was a name for the Don. This is clearly shown by the text and map of Muhammad al-Idrisi. This mistake of Ibn Hawqal can be explained by the idea popular at the time that there is a branch connecting the Don and the Volga.

Sea<sup>453</sup>.> If somebody went around this sea, he would come back to the place that he started from, and there would not be any obstacle, and nothing would stand in his road except rivers flowing to it (the sea) and emptying into it.

The sea is salty and it does not have tides. This sea has a dark bottom unlike the Kulzum Sea<sup>454</sup> and others <because its bottom is rotten and spoiled clay>. Because of the brightness of the white stones below, the bottom of the Fars Sea shines in many places. That sea provides nothing but fish<sup>455</sup>. Merchants from the Islamic lands use this sea to go to the Khazar lands, <and it is><sup>456</sup> located between the ar-Ran and al-Jil and Tabaristan and Jurjan.

Unlike other [seas] <with inhabited islands and cities>, it does not have inhabited islands. The islands in the sea contain water and trees, but nobody lived on them during the Islamic times. One of them is Siyakh Kukh. It is big; it has springs and trees, vegetation, and wild horses<sup>457</sup>. They include the islands opposite al-Kura <and close to al-Baba.> It is also big; it is covered with vegetation and trees; common madder is harvested there. People from the region of Barda'a go to the island, find traces of madder and work there for long days because the madder is in abundance, and they export it to Varasan and Barda'a<sup>458</sup>. And they make money from it, and they bring horses to the al-Baba island from the regions of Barda'a and Varasan, and many [other] regions. They graze there and grow fat because of pastures and meadows found in abundance.

On the bank of this sea to the right from Abeskun to Khazaria, there is neither settlement nor city, except a place 50 parasangs away from Abeskun, called Dikhistan. <It is like a settlement with some people; the water is deep, but the sea is not deep enough.> It juts out into the sea, and during storms, ships anchor near it. A lot of people from [different] places go there for [fishing].

And I do not know any other [p. 389] place where someone lives except Siyakh Kukh, but that place is [inhabited] by a group (taifa) of Turk-Ghuzzes that settled there recently because of a quarrel between them and [other] Ghuzzes. They split off from them and made it their dwelling place and refuge. There are <expansive> pastures, and they have springs. This place is located on the sea to the right of Abeskun; to the left from Abeskun to Khazaria, the lands are continuously inhabited ('imara) except a small area between Bab al-abwaba and Khazaria. This is because if you go from Abeskun through the boundaries of Jurjan and Tabaristan and ad-Daylam and al-Jil, you will enter the boundaries of ar-Ran when you pass al-Mukan to the Bab al-abwaba region in two-day journey from the state of Shirvanshahs, and his possessions extend to Samandar, again four-day journey along an inhabited area. It is a four-day journey from Samandar to Atil through the desert. And this sea, located near the Siyakh Kukh, is narrow, and [people] are afraid for ships that will be wrecked in windy weather, and if they are wrecked there, they will not be able to save anything from them because the Turks will seize the wrecked ships.

As for the al-Khazar, that is the name of a country (iklim) with the capital called Atil, and Atil is the name of the river that flows to them from ar-Rus and Bulgar <and flows into the Khazar

<sup>453</sup> The idea of the existence of a channel from Kustantiniya (Constantinople) to the 'Surrounding Sea' (the Arctic Ocean) likely arose from the study of primitive early Byzantine maps, where the Don was particularly highlighted as the border between Europe and Asia. As we will see later, Ibn Hawqal believes the Dnieper to be that channel.

<sup>454</sup> The Red Sea; the Sea of Fars is the Persian Gulf.

<sup>455</sup> According to al-Istakhri [p. 218]: 'and they do not extract from this sea anything precious [such as] pearls and corals or anything else from the sea, and nothing is usually taken from a sea besides fish.'

<sup>456</sup> In al-Istakhri's work [p. 218], instead of 'and it is' (va huwa), there was only the conjunction 'and,' which gave the phrase a very different meaning: 'they sail to the Khazar land and to what is between ar-Rahn.' A list of regions, between which the sea is located, compiled by Ibn Hawqal, seems unsuitable here.

<sup>457</sup> The Arabic word 'dawabb' used here means not only 'horse,' but beasts of burden in general; in this case, it cannot be ruled out that it refers to wild horses, or tarpan.

<sup>458</sup> Al-Kurr—the Kura River; Barda'a—is the capital of Arran (the modern-day city of Berd on the Terter River, the right tributary of the Kura, upstream from its confluence with the Aras); Varsan is a town on the right bank of the Kura, where it crosses the road from Barda'a to Ardebil; the part of the lowlands that projects out into the sea to the right of the Kura's outflow could be considered the island close to the outflow of the Kura. It is not improbable that the coastline could have been somewhat different due to fluctuations of the sea level. According to al-Istakhri [p. 218], 'horses were delivered there on ships.'

Sea. It is said that this river originates from the [country] of gloom; nobody knows where it begins, and nobody has reached its source.<sup>459</sup> >.

And this city (al-balad) consists of two parts: one of them, to the west of this river, is called Atil, it is bigger; and the second part is to the east. The tsar (malik) lives in the western part, <called Khazaran, while the eastern part is called Atil<sup>460</sup>>. And the tsar is called [p. 390] 'Bek' in their language<sup>461</sup>. These two parts are about a parasang long; both are surrounded by a wall, but buildings are scattered around; their houses are <similar> to tents, wooden, covered with felt, except a few built of clay. They have markets and baths. They have a Muslim population (khalk); it is said that there are more than ten thousand Muslims and around thirty mosques.

The tsar's palace is located away from this river; it is made of fired brick, and no one else has buildings made of fired bricks—the tsar does not allow anyone but himself.

The city wall has four gates: one of the gates faces the river, and the rest face the desert beyond the city. The tsar is Jewish. It is said that he has four thousand palace (khashiya) men. There are Muslims, Christians, and idolaters in both of the sides<sup>462</sup>, and the smallest community (firak) is the Jews, and the largest one is the Muslims, but the tsar and nobility are Jewish. The idolaters' customs prevail in their customs, such as bowing to each other when they meet<sup>463</sup>. Judging there is based on ancient customs that are different from the Islamic religion and Christianity and the Jewish religion.

It is said that the army of Khazaran consists of twelve thousand people, <and it is confirmed;> when one of them dies, he is replaced by another one; they do not have a fixed salary <nor specific allowances in a specific month;> they get little for a long time, at an unspecified time; when they are afraid or war brings them together, then they rally and go to him. The sources of income (abwab al-mal) of this tsar are customs duties and sales tax ('ushur) from the goods according to their traditions from each road leading to them. Residents of districts and regions pay him a mandatory share from each type of food and drink.

The tsar has nine judges, among them there are Jews, Christians, Muslims, and idolaters. And when somebody <from the nobility or general public> presents a case, it is judged by these judges. Nobody brings his issues to the tsar himself, but they come to these [people] and lay their needs and wishes before them. These people and tsar communicate by means of a messenger, who describes what is going on [p. 391], what is happening between them (in litigation with each other), and reports to him what will happen, and he expresses his opinion and decision what to do. <Sometimes unbelievable things happen in the court. One of them is the story told by al-Mu'tadid<sup>464</sup>, who said that this story was told in his presence, and the narrator was laughing at it. Al-Mu'tadid said, 'Not a bit. It is said that the Prophet, may Allah bless him, said the following, Allah, may his name be glorified, will not let a person govern the people without providing him with some kind of insight, even if he is not a believer'.> One of the incredible stories is that one of the residents of Khazaran had a son who was engaged in trading, good at buying and selling. And he sent him to Internal Bulgaria, but [he himself] continued to trade after his son departed, adopted one of his own slaves, taught him, and he understood well what he was taught about trading, so he announced his adoption because of the affinity to him in obedience and skill. The son was gone for so long and the ghulam served the father so long that the person died. And

<sup>459</sup> Medieval Arabic geography called the polar regions 'darknesses,' and the Arctic Ocean, 'the sea of darknesses.' Ibn Hawqal traces the Dnieper from this sea, making this river into a channel connecting this portion of the ocean (the Surrounding Sea) with Constantinople.

<sup>460</sup> In al-Istakhri's work (p. 220) the western portion is known as Atil, and the eastern one is left without a name; Ibn Hawqal left al-Istakhri's text unchanged, but in his insert he called the western portion Khazaran.

<sup>461</sup> Il-Istakhri [p. 220] offers two variants for spelling this term: with short vowel (both *begand* and *bikare* possible) and with a long 'a' as an option. Ibn Hawqal left the second form.

<sup>462</sup> According to al Istakhri [p. 222]: 'And the Khazars – Muslims and Christians, and Jews...'

<sup>463</sup> According to al Istakhri [ibid.]: 'showing deference.'

<sup>464</sup> An Abbasid caliph (892–902).



the son presented a statement of expenses (jihaz), unaware of the death of his father, and this ghulam added up what he (the son) owed, and, on the other hand, did not take into account what had come in from him. The son wrote to the ghulam and asked to write a report according to the rules and hand over affairs to him when he comes back, and report on what he possesses, and he (the son) would take from him everything he got that had belonged to his father. And the son got a note that made him rush to his father's residence in Khazaran. And they started litigation; they began to give evidence. When the arguments of one of them were considered, they were found sufficient. When the second one put forward something similar, backing his position, and the majority of their decisions were based on the following practice. Their argument lasted a whole year. When this litigation dragged on, and the case did not move forward because of disputes and quarrels, the tsar decided to arbitrate the litigants himself. He arranged a meeting, and attendance was compulsory for all judges and citizens. They had been repeating their complaints since the very beginning of the litigation, and the tsar did not see any obvious advantage that one had over the other. And then the tsar said to the son, 'Do you know the exact location of your father's grave?' He said, 'Yes, I do, but I was not present at the funeral'. And he (the tsar) accepted his veracity. And said to the claiming ghulam, 'Do you know the grave of your father?' He said, 'Yes, I organized the funeral'. And he said, 'Bring me the remains if you find them!' And the ghulam went to the grave, took out one rotten bone, and brought it to him [p. 392]. And [the tsar] told the ghulam who was claiming to be the son of this merchant, 'Slit your wrist'. And he slit it. Then, as ordered, he dripped his blood on the bone, and the blood ran down the bone, and nothing stuck to it. Then the son slit his wrist, dripped his blood on the bone, and the blood moistened it and stuck to it. The ghulam was punished, disgraced; he and his wealth were given to the son.

This city does not have <numerous> villages; <however,> it has vast pastures. In summer they <all> leave for <the place that they are going> to sow, <they till and cultivate both close and remote lands> at a distance of approximately twenty parasangs. When they harvest what they have sown, they take it on carts <to the river or places near it>, and goods that have been accumulated by the rivers are shipped on boats, while goods closer to the city are taken on carts. Their main food is rice and fish.

The honey, wax, and <furs> that they export from them to all regions in reality are brought to them from ar-Rus and Bulgar regions, just like beaver pelts, which are exported to all regions and are not found anywhere else but on these <northern> rivers, which are the lands of the Bulgars and ar-Rus and Kuiab<sup>465</sup>. <The beaver pelts [sold] in al-Andalus<sup>466</sup> are from the rivers located in the regions of as-Saqaliba and flowing into the gulf, where the country of as-Saqaliba, described earlier, is [located]<sup>467</sup>. The majority and the best part of these pelts are in the country of ar-Rus, including those that are brought to their region and also those coming from the region of Yajuj and Majuj<sup>468</sup>, and then are brought to Bulgar. This continued up until the year of three hundred fifty eighth (25 November 968–13 November 969). And thus, the Ruses ruined Bulgar and Khazaran and brought beaver and [other] valuable furs to Khwarezm because of frequent visits of Khwarezm people to Bulgar and as-Saqaliba. They attacked, plundered, and captured them (the Khwarezm people). Goods of the Ruses always flowed into Khazaran, and they had to pay approximately a tenth of what they brought in. <As it was mentioned before,> the tsar lives in the western half of these two sides, together with his entourage [p. 393] and entirely Khazar

<sup>465</sup> The medieval name of Kiev.

<sup>466</sup> The medieval Arabic name of the Iberian Peninsula.

<sup>467</sup> In this case, this channel is obviously the same as the Dnieper, but the furs arriving in al-Andalus were, of course, originating not from there but from the Slavic lands.

<sup>468</sup> Legendary wild tribes in the far north-east of the populated world who were walled off with a strong wall by Alexander the Great so that they would not destroy humankind. This legend was treated so seriously that Caliph al-Wathiq (842–847) sent a special expedition to check the strength of the wall.

troops<sup>469</sup>. The al-Khazar language is neither at-Turk (Turkic) nor a Persian language, and there is no related language among the languages of all peoples.

The river Atil has a tributary from the east side, originating from the region of Khirkhiz<sup>470</sup>; it flows between the Kimakiya and Ghuzziya, serving as the border between the Kimakiya and Ghuzziya, then flows west beyond Bulgar, then turns back east, bypasses ar-Rus and Bulgar, then the Burtas people, and flows into the Khazar Sea. It is said that this river splits into more than seventy rivers, but the main river course continues to flow towards Khazaran and flows into the sea. And it is said that if these rivers were combined in their upper part into one river, it would be bigger than Jayhun<sup>471</sup> by the amount and abundance of water and by the width on the surface of the earth. This is so much the case that due to the abundance of water, when they reach the sea and flow into it <close to each other,> they flow in the sea inside its water at the distance of a two-day journey, and overpower the sea water so much that in the winter they are covered with ice in the middle of it because they are fresh and sweet, and its (Atil) water stands out from the sea water by its colour.

There is a region in Khazaria with the [main] city called Samandar; it is located between it (Khazaran) and Bab al-abwab. There are numerous gardens; it is said that there were about forty thousand vineyards<sup>472</sup>. <I asked about it in Jurjan in three hundred and fifty eight<sup>473</sup> a person that had been there recently, and he said that, 'Any garden or vineyard there was alms for the poor as long as it had at least one leaf on its stem; but following the attack of the Ruses, neither a grape nor a raisin was left in the city'. This city was inhabited by Muslims, people of various religious communities, and idolaters; [all] of them resettled. But in less than three years, because of the quality of land and wonderful pastures, everything returned as it had been. There were mosques, churches, and synagogues in Samandar; during their raid they attacked everyone on the river Atil, Khazars, Bulgars, and Burtas and captured them. People of the Atil fled [p. 394] to the island of Bab al-Abwab and entrenched themselves there, and some of them fled to the island of Siyah Kukh, living there in fear>.

The dwellings in Samandar are tents; their buildings are made of braided tree, and their roofs are humped. Their tsar is a relative of the Khazar tsar<sup>474</sup>. It is two parasangs between them and the boundary of the as-Sarir. There is a truce between the ruler of as-Sarir and the tsar of Samandar. As-Sarir is inhabited by Christians. It is said that this throne (of as-Sarir) belonged to one of the tsars of Fars (Persia). Their tsars were continuously bringing there jewellery and decorating it. It was brought by one of the sons of Bakhram<sup>475</sup>. They still call the tsar by this throne. It is said that the throne was made over many years by one of the Khosrow. There is a truce between the people of as-Sarir and the Muslims. Samandar has the largest population of any city in the entire country of Khazar.

<sup>469</sup> In al-Istakhri's version [pp. 221–222] this passage is worded differently: 'In the eastern half of al-Khazar most merchants and Muslims and trade are located, while the western half [is designated] exclusively for the king and his troops and pure-blooded Khazars. And the language of the Khazars...'

<sup>470</sup> Khirkhiz – the Kyrgyz; Bashjirt – the Bashkirs. Al-Istakhri, followed by Ibn Hawqal, did not understand the information that they had on a large eastern tributary of the Atil (the Belaya River, and the Kama River after the Belaya flows into it) that was probably believed to be the source of the Atil and connected it to the source of the Atil located in the land of the Ruses. This was how the fantastically curving upper reaches of the Volga appeared.

<sup>471</sup> The medieval name of the Amu Darya.

<sup>472</sup> According to al-Istakhri [p. 223], 'about four thousand.' This is more plausible; Ibn Hawqal likely increased the number tenfold so that the story of the devastation of the city would be more striking.

<sup>473</sup> 358 AH started on 25 December 969.

<sup>474</sup> According to al-Istakhri [pp. 222–223]: 'And their tsar is a Jew, a relative of the tsar of the Khazars.'

<sup>475</sup> Al-Istakhri is more specific: Bahram Jur. Bahram V Gur is a Sasanian ruler (421–438) with whom many historical legends are connected in Arabic historiography. The ruler of this district in north-western Dagestan was given a (silver?) throne by the Byzantine emperor, and the Arabs started calling representatives of this dynasty 'sahib sarir' ('holder of the throne'), and the region became known as simply Sarir.

Burtas are a people (amam) that share a border with Khazaria (al-Khazar). Their language is the only one between them and Khazaria. They are people distributed along the Atil river. Burtas is also the name of a region, just like ar-Rus, while al-Khazar and as-Sarir are the names of a country and region but not of a people or tribe.

Khazars do not look like Turks, because all Khazars have black hair. There are two types of them (sinfani). One type is called black Khazars: they are swarthy; their extreme swarthinness is close to blackness as if they are from India. [The other] type is blond, pleasant, and beautiful. The Khazar slaves who come [to us] are idolaters, who consider it permissible to sell their own children, to enslave each other. As for the Jews and Christians, they do not believe in enslaving each other. Nothing is exported from Khazaria neither to neighboring [countries] nor beyond, except fish glue. And as for slaves, honey, wax, beavers, and furs, they are brought there. Khazars and those around them wear coats and kaftans (akabiya); they do not have any clothes exceeding their needs, indeed, [p. 395] clothes are brought from the regions of Jurjan, Tabaristan, Azerbaijan, ar-Rum, and other provinces.

As for their administration and state affairs, the final decision belongs to the sovereign ruler, called 'the Khakan of Khazars'. He is more powerful than the tsar of the Khazars, because the tsar of the Khazars makes agreements with him, and the Khakan appoints him and watches over him. When they want to appoint a new tsar following the death of the former, they bring him to this khakan, <and he reminds him about Amara and advises him, introduces him to the rights and obligations of the tsar and his hardships, explains to him what kind of sin and burden he will carry for that which he has undertaken if he makes a mistake or acts not as he should and makes wrong and unjust decisions<sup>476</sup>. And it happens that the one whom they seek to put into power does not accept their offer because of piety, abstinence, or unwillingness to get what he has heard Allah will do with him if he has power and he is unable to use it. Then the power is offered to another one, better in soul and mind.> And when they take him to the khakan <in order to enthrone him,> <the khakan of Khazars> strangles him with a silk [cord], and when his breathing is almost interrupted, they say, 'How long do you want to reign?' and he says, this much and this much. And if he dies <earlier, he dies in honour of Allah>, but if he stays longer than he said himself,> then he is killed as soon as he fulfills his period of reign. The Khakan neither allows nor prohibits the Khazars from anything. Everyone, including the tsar, when he comes to him, accords him respect and bows to the ground. Nobody is allowed to go and see him, except as necessary, and when a <person> comes to him, he is covered with dust, he bows to the ground and does not rise until he is allowed to sit. When a war breaks out or a severe calamity happens, the khakan goes there, and as soon as a Turk or any other pagan sees him, the khakan leaves and does not fight against them because of respect for them. When the khakan dies, and a funeral is held, nobody passes by his grave without stopping, bowing to the ground and rides horseback only after passing the grave.

They are so obedient to the tsar that sometimes somebody must be killed, but he is <one of the most respected, dignified, and distinguished people and occupies high position,> and the tsar does not want to kill him openly, and orders him [p. 396] to commit suicide, and he goes to his dwelling and commits suicide. <I have already mentioned that> the khakanship belongs to a famous <family and> clan (kaum). Nobody questions their right, whether he is rich, poor, or stingy; when it is time for him to become a khakan, they confirm him irrespective of his position. A person that I trust told me that at one of the markets he has seen a lad who sells junk, and people were saying that if the khakan dies, no one would have more right to the khakanship than him, only if he is a Muslim. Only Jews are appointed to the khakanship. There are golden throne

<sup>476</sup> The extensive insert by Ibn Hawqal is unlikely to have any connection with the real admonitions to Khakan Beg: it reflects Muslim ideas about a ruler's responsibility before Allah for the subjects entrusted to him; therefore, it fits the context to leave the word 'Allah' untranslated.

and tent, that is set up only for the khakan when he heads out on a [campaign], and the place where the tent is set up when they go to war or in [other] cases when they are forced to leave is higher than the place where the tsar's tent is set up, and his dwelling in the city is higher than the tsar's dwelling. <He gets taxes-in-kind (jariyat) and taxes (kavanin), paid by everyone according to the rules.> The Burtas is the name of a region. They have wooden houses. They are scattered over all regions because of their great numbers and power.> And Bashjirt <is also the name of a region.> There are two types of them. One of them lives on the outskirts of Ghuzzia, beyond Bulgar. They number around two thousand men. They hide in forests and are inaccessible. They are subject to Bulgar. Bashjirt is a region neighbouring the Bajnaks; they and the Bajnaks are Turks; they share a border with ar-Rum<sup>477</sup>. The language of the Bulgars is similar to the language of the Khazars, while Burtases have another language, and the language of the Ruses is different, too, from the languages of the Khazars and Burtases.

And Bulgar is the name of the region and the city. They are Muslims, and the city has a Friday mosque, and in their vicinity there is another town called Suvar, and there is a Friday mosque there [too]. And one who read a sermon in it told me that the number of inhabitants of these two cities is about ten thousand men. And their buildings are wooden; they find shelter in them in winter, and in summer they are scattered around the country in tents [p. 397]. A preacher of the city told me that in the winter a man does not have enough day to walk two parasangs, and in summer the day lengthens and the night shortens, so that the night in the summer becomes like the day in the winter. <And I witnessed that what points to this, [being] in the vicinity of their country: that the day was enough for us to say four prayers, one after another, with four rak'ats and with breaks between the adhan and iqama<sup>478</sup>>.

And there are three kinds of the Ruses (asnaf). One of them is the closest to Bulgar, and their tsar is in a city called Kuyaba, which is bigger than Bulgar; and the kind above them is called as-Silaviya, <and their tsar [is] in Sila<sup>479</sup>,> their [main] city; and there is a kind called al-Arsaniya, and their tsar is in Arsa<sup>480</sup>, their [main] city. People trading with them reach Kuyaba and its region. Concerning Arsa, I have not heard anyone mention that any stranger has ever entered it, because they kill every stranger who steps on their land. They [themselves] go by water and trade but do not report anything about their affairs or trade and make no mention of anyone who would have any dealings with them. And they take black sables and foxes, lead and a little mercury out of Arsa.

And Ruses are a people who burn their dead, and burn them together with their captives and those female captives who themselves express a desire <as do the people of India and the people of Ghana and Gavg, and others.> Some Rus shave their beard; others twist it like a horse's mane, or braid it. Their clothing is short coats, but the clothes of the Khazars, Bulgars, and the peoples neighbouring them are full-length coats. And the Rus constantly trade with Khazars and ar-Rum. And the Great Bulgars, who border ar-Rum to the north, are numerous and have been imposing kharaj and taxes on the regions neighbouring ar-Rum for a long time. Internal Bulgars are Christians and Muslims. <And the Rus left [p. 398] to the Bulgars, Burtases, and Khazars only ruins after the raids, while they all went to the neighbouring areas and seized [spoils] beyond what they had already had. And now I have heard reports that many of them (the fugitives) returned to Atil and Khazaran supported by Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Azdi's soldiers and people; and they ask and hope that they will make a treaty with them, and they will be in submission for a part

<sup>477</sup> Only the Magyar tribes that migrated eastwards and reached the territory of Hungary is meant here.

<sup>478</sup> Rak'ah is one of the repeating portions of Muslim prayer accompanied by a low bow to the ground; iqama is the second call to prayer after the adhan.

<sup>479</sup> As-Silaviya is the Novgorod lands inhabited by the tribe of Slovens. The name of the capital was obviously invented by Ibn Hawqal by analogy with the name of the region.

<sup>480</sup> These people were likely mistakenly believed to be Slavs. It may be that the name Arsa was somehow related to the ethnonym Erzya (cf. Arzamas).

of their (the Khazars') land on which they will live.> List of distances between al-Khazar and its regions. To the right from Abeskun to the Khazars' country is about three hundred parasangs, and to the left from Abeskun heading towards al-Khazar is also about three hundred parasangs. From Abeskun to Dikhistan to the left (?) is about six transitions. And they cross this sea with a favourable wind, across from Tabaristan to Bab al-Abwab in a week, but from the Khazars' country to Abeskun the way is longer than the way across because it is oblong. And from the Atil to Samandar is eight days, from Samandar to Bab al-Abwab is four days. And from the kingdom of as-Sarir to Bab al-Abwab is three days. And from Atil to the Burtas border is twenty days, and from the beginning of Burtas to its end is about fifteen days, and from Burtas to badzhnaks is ten days, and from Atil to badzhnaks is a month journey. And from Atil to Bulgar along the steppe road is about a month, and by water, going up is two months, and down is about twenty days. And from Bulgar to the beginning of the ar-Rum border is about ten days, and from Bulgar to Kuyaba is about twenty transitions. From badzhnaks to internal bashdzhirts is ten days, and from internal bashdzhirts to Bulgar is twenty-five transitions.

*Translation and commentary prepared by Oleg Bolshakov*

### Al-Biruni

Abu Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni al-Khwarizmi (973–1048) was born in a suburb of the capital city of Khwarezm, the city of Kyat (frequently referred to simply as Khwarezm). His name's ending (nisba) means 'a man from the outskirts'. We know nothing about his parents; nonetheless, al-Biruni received a good education and enjoyed the backing of local benefactors. Abu Nasr Mansur ibn 'Ali ibn 'Iraq (by the end of the tenth century, he was around 50 years old), in whose family al-Biruni was brought up, was his initial instructor—the nephew of the Khwarezm-Shah Muhammad ibn 'Iraq, whom Ibn Fadlan met in Khwarezm.

Due to a change in the dynasty, he had to flee Khwarezm and settle at the Court of the emir of Jurjan (Gurgan). In around 1010, al-Biruni came back; however, after Khwarezm had surrendered to the Turkic ruler Mahmud Ghaznavi in 1017, he had to follow the latter to Ghazni—the then capital of Afghanistan. The active phase of literary production falls for al-Biruni during the period of rule of Mahmud Ghaznavi (997–1030), at whose court he spent 30 years of his life. Several years, by the regal assent of Mahmud, al-Biruni spent in India. He died in Ghazni in 1048.

The academic legacy of al-Biruni amounts to nearly 150 works, which cover practically all academic disciplines; however, his main activities were astronomy and mathematics. The most prominent works of al-Biruni are: 'The remaining signs of past centuries', 'India', 'The Mas'udi Canon', 'Mineralogy', 'Pharmacy' (Saydana), and others.

Our selection includes extracts from five of al-Biruni's works: 'Al-Asar al-bakiyya min kurun al-haliyya' ('The remaining traces of past centuries') or 'Chronology'; 'Tahdid nihayat al-amakin li-l-taskhih masafat al-masakin' ('Des-

ignation of borders for areas to adjust distances between the inhabited localities') or 'Geodesy'; 'Kanun al-mas'ud fi-l-haya va-n-nudjum' ('The Mas'udic Canon of Astronomy and Stars'); 'Kitāb at-tafhim li avail sina'a at-tanjim' ('The Book of Instruction in the Elements of the Art of Astrology') or 'Astronomy'; 'Ifrad al-makal fi amr az-zilal' ('The Separation of Speech on the Problems of Shadows') or 'Gnomonics'.

The geographical data submitted by al-Biruni therein are not regarded as comprehensive descriptions but as examples confirming his astronomo-geodesical work. Therefore, to explain the context of these geographical commentaries, translations from these works are given a little more widely, with the purpose of showing with which examples these examples are linked.

The fragments of al-Biruni's works are presented based on translations published in 'The Collected Writings' [Biruni, 1957; Biruni, 1966; Biruni, 1973b; Biruni, 1987a; Al-Biruni, 1975]. To these translations from 'Chronology' and 'The Mas'udi Canon' adjustments and corrections have been introduced [Validi-Togan, 1940; Sachau, 1878]. In the cited fragments in square brackets there are written the edition pagination [p.] as well as the pages of the edition of the Arabic text [p.] (that is, 'page').

In the cited fragments there are indicated in square brackets the page numbers of the translation, as well as reproduced commentaries, followed by any necessary editorial notes.

Editions and translations: Write, 1934; Sachau, 1878, pp. 41–42; Biruni, 1973a; Biruni, 1973b, Al-Biruni, 1975; Biruni, 1957; Biruni, 1987b.

About him: Wiedemann, 1922; Zeki Validi Togan 1940; Krachkovsky, 1957, pp. 245–263; Biruni, 1950; EI<sup>2</sup>, vol. 2, pp. 1236–1238.

**'Asar al-bakiyya min kurun al-khaliyya'**<sup>481</sup>  
(Traces preserved from the past centuries) or **'Chronology'**

[p. 49] **A word about the disagreements of peoples about who the tsar is,  
who is known as Dhul-Qarnayn**

... [p. 54] ... In addition, the stories about him [Dhul-Qarnayn] are like those that are told about him in the Quran. As for the bulwark (ar-radm) built between two walls, the clear story [about it] in the Quran does not say where it is in the world.

In books containing references to countries and cities, such as 'Jugrafiyya' and 'The Book of Routes and Kingdoms',<sup>482</sup> it is said that these people, the Yajuj and Majuj, are part of the Eastern Turks who live at the beginning of the fifth and sixth climates. However, Muhammad Ibn Jarir at-Tabari<sup>483</sup> recounts in 'The Book of History'<sup>484</sup> how the ruler of Azerbaijan in the days of the conquest of this country [by Arabs] sent to [to that bulwark] a man from the [land of the] Khazars. This person [probably] saw it and said that it was a huge black construction behind a reliable, inaccessible moat. 'Abdullah ibn' Abdallah ibn Khurdadbikh tells from the words of al-Tarjuman<sup>485</sup> at the court of the caliph that the caliph al-Mu'tasim<sup>486</sup> dreamed that the bulwark (ar-radm) was discovered<sup>487</sup>. He sent fifty men to it so they could see it firsthand. The men went along the road to the Bab al-abwab through the land of al-Lan and the Khazars, and when they reached it, they saw that it was made of iron plates fastened with molten copper. [In the bulwark,] there is a gate with a lock, and the inhabitants of the land close to it are responsible for guarding it.

The men went back, and the guide brought them to the area right next to Samarkand<sup>488</sup>.

Judging by these stories, the [bulwark] should be in the north-west<sup>489</sup> quarter of the civilized world (al-'umran)<sup>490</sup>. However, especially in the last legend, there are [details] that make it less likely, namely that the inhabitants of these countries profess the faith of Islam and speak Arabic, although they are cut off from the civilized<sup>491</sup> world and are situated<sup>492</sup> in the midst of a black, stinking land, a long distance from the Arabs. Besides, they [are said to] know nothing about the caliph and caliphate: who and what he was. But we do not know any people that are cut off from the [indigenous] Islamic countries except<sup>493</sup> <Bulgar and Suvar, and they are cut off from the civilized world and are on the edge of the seventh climate. And [although they are on the edge of the seventh climate,] they do not mention anything about this wall, but at the same time, they

<sup>481</sup> 'Al-Asar al-baqiyya' is the first large-scale work by al-Biruni, devoted to a topic of current interest at that time: it is centred around the genealogy and chronology of Iranian dynasties and dynasties that had connected themselves to the Iranian world. However, it is not the history of the activities of kings and heroes or of political events; it develops against the broad, general historical background of the entire Middle East [Sachau, 1878 pp. 41–42; Beruni, 1957].

<sup>482</sup> 'Jugrafiyya' is the Arabic form of the word 'geography.'

<sup>483</sup> An Arabic historian (died in 923). For more detail, see [Garayeva, 2002, pp. 443, 463].

<sup>484</sup> Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk by al-Tabari is meant here.

<sup>485</sup> The translation by M. Salye has the word 'translator'; this refers to Sallam at-Tarjuman—that is, Sallam the Translator.

<sup>486</sup> An Abbasid caliph (833–842).

<sup>487</sup> In the translation by M. Salye: 'captured'; the Arabic text has the word **فُتِحَ**, the first meaning of which is 'to open.' It is obvious from the context that either a breach was made in the enclosure, or it was destroyed—that is, opened for passage, and the Caliph sent a detachment to check whether this was so.

<sup>488</sup> In the translation of M. Salye: 'lying opposite Samarkand.'

<sup>489</sup> A strange definition by al-Biruni of the location of the regions of Yajuj and Majuj, which, according to all descriptions, were located in the eastern part of the populated world.

<sup>490</sup> In the translation of M. Salye: 'inhabited land.'

<sup>491</sup> In the translation of M. Salye: 'cultured.'

<sup>492</sup> In the translation of M. Salye: 'dwell.'

<sup>493</sup> The text in angled brackets which follows has been changed. In the translation of M. Salye it was: 'the Bulgars of Suvar, and they dwell close to the border of cultured regions, in the end of the seventh climate. Then, [the Bulgars] say nothing about the rampart and do not lack information about the caliphate and caliphs; just the opposite, they read the khutbah with their names. They do not speak Arabic but their own language, which is a mixture of Turkic and Khazar.'

are not living in ignorance [p. 42] of the caliphate and caliphs, and say khutbah in their [caliphs] honour. At the same time, they do not speak Arabic, but their language is a mixture of Turkic and Khazar.> And if the evidence of these stories is of this kind, then we cannot wish to know the truth from them.

This is [all] that I wanted to tell you about Dhul-Qarnayn, and Allah knows it best!

**'Takhdid nikhajat al-amakin li-l-taskhikh masafat al-masakin'**<sup>494</sup>

(Determining the boundaries of places to better determine the distances between populated places) or 'Geodesy'

[p. 143] **A word on determining a city's latitude and full or partial declination [calculation] of one of these [values] from the other**

... [p. 156] ... They divided<sup>495</sup> the inhabited [part of the Earth] into seven climates in accordance with the most obvious difference [between them], namely [the ratio] of the day to the night, lines parallel to the equator, starting from the extreme limits of the habitable [Earth] in the East and coming to its end in the West. They started from the middle of the first climate and made with it [the places] where the longest summer day [lasts] thirteen hours; the middle of the second [climate], where the longest day is thirteen and a half hours, and, accordingly, they determined the middle of the [rest] of the climates at half-hour increases in [the length of the day] until the middle of the seventh [climate], where the longest day is sixteen hours, [where they stopped] because the people who are beyond [the middle of the seventh climate] are few in number and are like savages. The utmost point where they [live] together is the country of Yura. People come to it from [the country] of Isu<sup>496</sup> in twelve days, and to Isa from Bulgar in twenty days. [They travel] on wooden sleighs, in which they put their supplies and which they drag themselves or with the help of their dogs, as well as on other [sliding devices] made of bone, which they tie to the legs and use to cover long distances in a short time.

Residents of Yura, because of their wildness and timidity, trade this way: they leave their goods in any location and withdraw from it. The inhabitants of the Lanka land, located in the sea, sell cloves in the same way<sup>497</sup>.

<sup>494</sup> 'Tahdid...' is devoted to setting forth methods for specifying the coordinates of a randomly selected place in relation to Gazna (written in 1018–1025) [Beruni, 1966].

<sup>495</sup> That is, inhabitants of the West, in particular, the Greeks.

<sup>496</sup> In the manuscript ايسوا (Isu); Isu ايسو is the people of Ves, mentioned in Russian chronicles, who resided in the Beloozero area along the Svir River.

<sup>497</sup> The Indian name of Ceylon.



**'Kanun al-mas'udi fi-l-khaja wa-n-nudzhum'**<sup>498</sup>

(Masudi's canon about astronomy and the stars)

[p. 59] **Book One**<sup>499</sup> of the 'Masudi's Canon'[p. 61] **Chapter Two 'Briefly on evidence of the principles'**<sup>500</sup> of this art'[p. 66] **Principle Two**

... [p. 69] ... Before we proceed to the evidence of Ptolemy, we recall that the sky is not only what we, the people of each site on Earth, see. If you take it by longitude, then according to the conclusion of astronomers, the return [p. 70] in the movement [of the stars] requires the sky to be connected in a circle, so in the [longitudinal] direction it is bigger than what is seen. If we take it by latitude, the increase or decrease of the height of the pole [at different latitudes] does not deny but, on the contrary, requires confirmation that [in some places] [a part of the sky] appears that was hidden [from being seen in other places] or that [part] that was visible is hidden. This is proven with the Daughter [stars] of the funeral stretcher,<sup>501</sup> their rising and setting in the southern cities and constant visibility in the northern ones, as well as with the star Sukhayl<sup>502</sup>, which rises and sets in the southern cities and is never seen in the north.

As for [roundness] in directions between longitude and latitude, it is recognized by the very longest day in the mentioned cities. Consider the example of Bulgar, located in the far north, and the city [fol. 35] of Aden<sup>503</sup> which is [far] south of it. The fact is that Mecca still brings together people that reside in the two cities during the Hajj, and their stories vary between authentic and that what only seems to have been [observed] personally. This [longest] day near the borders of Aden is only slightly more than twelve hours, while near the Bulgar borders it is only slightly less than seventeen hours. But there is only a two-hour difference between the sunrises or sunsets in those two cities. Therefore, at the time the sun rises over Aden, it has already risen in Bulgar by the figure [passed by it] two hours ago. Thus, in Bulgar, in the directions of the sunrise and sunset in summer, the part of the sky is visible, corresponding to that figure, while in Aden, this part of the sky is not visible because it is located in a circle beneath the pole. In Aden the visible part of the sky is of the same figure, but in the directions of the sunrise and sunset in winter when it is not visible in Bulgar.

<sup>498</sup> The Mas'udi Canon on Astronomy and Stars, or the Mas'udi Canon (or the imprecise but widespread Canon of Mas'ud ), is the principal work of Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī on astronomy. The Canon of Mas'ud comprises 11 books and mostly follows the plan of the famous astronomical work of antiquity, the *Almagest* by Claudius Ptolemy (who worked in Alexandria in the 2nd century AD), which comprised 13 books. Similary to the *Almagest*, the Canon of Mas'ud offers a systematic representation of various areas of astronomy and associated sciences, along with complete mathematical proofs and descriptions of the experiments, on which the author's conclusions had been based.

Unlike most astronomy treatises written in the medieval Muslim East—'Zijs' (or 'Tables') containing chronological, trigonometric, astronomical, geographical, and astrological tables and a small introduction where the necessary definitions were given but no proofs—in this composition al-Biruni summarises the entire development of astronomy in the Middle East and Middle Asia and states his own achievements in this sphere. He laboured over its preparation during the period of 1031–1037 and devoted it to Sultan Mas'ud (reigned 1030–1041), the son and successor of Mahmud [Al-Biruni, 1954–1956; Beruni, 1973, vol. 5, part 1, p. 45; part 2].

<sup>499</sup> The first and second chapters of Book 1 of the Canon of Mas'ud deal with cosmology. There al-Biruni describes Ptolemy's geocentric system (according to which the motionless Earth is located in the center of the world, and the heavenly spheres of the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and fixed stars rotate around it) and substantiated Ptolemy's six principles listed by him in chapters 3–5 of the first book of the *Almagest*. Al-Biruni's arguments partially coincide with Ptolemy's arguments, while some of them are original. In defending Ptolemy's principle of the spherical shape of the Earth, al-Biruni argued with the righteous imams who believed that 'roundness is only characteristic of the populated part of the Earth but not its edges.'

<sup>500</sup> The art of establishing astronomical coordinates is meant.

<sup>501</sup> The daughters (maidens) of the Bier is the Arabic name of the constellations of Ursa Major and Ursa Minor (Banat na'ash).

<sup>502</sup> Suheyl is Canopus, the brightest star of the constellation Carina. This star cannot be seen in Europe, which explains its name—Canopus—after a suburb of Alexandria.

<sup>503</sup> A port on the southern shore of the Arabian Peninsula.

Since this is the case, we [further] contend that the line on the Earth, [going in the direction of] the latitude, [that is, the earth's meridian], must necessarily be one of these types: straight, concave curve, or [curve] convex...

[p. 413] **Book Five<sup>504</sup> of the 'Masudi's Canon'**

[p. 435] **Chapter Nine<sup>505</sup> 'About the general nature of the inhabited parts of the Earth and the determination of its climates<sup>506</sup> by longitude and latitude'**

[p. 436] ... The west sea Ocean is called the Surrounding because its coast starts from the extreme borders in the south, [goes] along the country<sup>507</sup> of the blacks [ard as-Sudan], passing the borders of Audagast<sup>508</sup>, Sus the Remote<sup>509</sup>, Tanjer, and Takhart<sup>510</sup>. Then [along the borders] of al-Andalus, al-Jalalik,<sup>511</sup> and the [lands] of as-Saqaliba.... [p. 437] Thus, the habitable land is among the water that surrounds it, connected by [the seas and oceans]. But on the land there are numerous bodies of water of different sizes, and some of them, because of their large size, deserve to be called seas. This is the Pontos Armenian Sea <sup>512</sup>, which is called there<sup>513</sup> [p. 438] the Khazar Sea. Around it [live] Armenians, Turk tribes, the Ruses, and as-Saqaliba. A bay called Constantinople branches off from it, because it is [a city] on its western shore; beyond this city, it flows into the Rum Sea, on the south shore of which there are Egypt, and Ifrikiya, and the Maghreb lands; on the east shore there are Syria and Palestine, and on the north there are the land of the Greeks, Rums, Franks, and al-Andalus. The sea flows into the ocean in the west. The Jurjan Sea is the same<sup>514</sup>, which is actually<sup>515</sup> the Khazar Sea. Their destroyed<sup>516</sup> <city is located

<sup>504</sup> Book 5 is devoted to mathematical geography and geodesy; it comprises 11 chapters. Materials on the Volga Region are contained in chapters 9 and 10 of the book.

The Arabic text of the ninth and tenth chapters of Book 5 of the Canon of Mas'ud was first published by A.-Z. Validi-Togan [Validi-Togan, 1940, pp. 1–9, 1–8, 142]. This edition, based on several handwritten copies of the work, still remains fundamental, and was used to prepare the first translation of the Canon of Mas'ud from Arabic to a foreign language (to Russian and Uzbek). The translation of the corresponding sections of the work was based on the Arabic text in the edition of A.-Z. Validi-Togan, which turned out to be more reliable than the Hyderābād edition of the Arabic text of the work (which had been intended to become a critical interpretation based on the seven best manuscripts of the work but failed to do so) [Al-Biruni, 1954–1956].

Certain revisions and elaborations in the translations of S. Siradzhinov and G. Matviyevskaya [Beruni, 1973, vol. 5, part 1; part 2] in the passages selected for our sample of materials were taken from the above-mentioned publication [Validi-Togan, 1940, pp. 1–9, 1–8, 142].

<sup>505</sup> The ninth chapter describes the arrangement of the populated portion of the Earth, in particular, the placement of the seas, which was presented in more detail in 'Al-Haya' ('Astronomy'); a table of the maximum and minimum altitudes of the Sun and the tangents of those altitudes at the boundaries of the seven 'climates' into which the populated part of the Earth (oecumene) was divided and in the middle parallels of the climates is also presented.

<sup>506</sup> In astronomical geography Arabic-speaking geographers, like those of antiquity, divided the Earth from the South to the North into seven latitudinal belts, or climates (iklīm, from Greek 'klīma,' inclination). In descriptive geography the term '*iklīm*' means large areas (for example, al-Istakhri, al-Muqaddasi, and others described Fare, Iraq, Egypt, etc., as iklīm).

<sup>507</sup> In the translation of S. Siradzhinov and G. Matviyevskaya: 'lands.'

<sup>508</sup> A medieval town in Africa on the modern-day Rkīs Plateau, founded by the Sonike people.

<sup>509</sup> Al-Sus al-Aqsa (Sus the Remote) is a medieval region in Morocco. Translated as: 'Sus the Uttermost.'

<sup>510</sup> Tahart the Lower is a town built by the Arabs somewhat to the west of the ancient Roman town of Tingurtia (Tahart the Upper), located 4 km to the west of modern-day Tiaret in Algeria.

<sup>511</sup> The galicians, galegos.

<sup>512</sup> This refers to the Black Sea.

<sup>513</sup> The translation of S. Siradzhinov and G. Matviyevskaya adds a word missing in the Arabic text: '[groundlessly].'

<sup>514</sup> Jurjan (Gorgan) is the name of a region in the north-east of Iran and its medieval capital located close to modern-day Gorgan, on both banks of the river of the same name.

<sup>515</sup> In the translation of S. Siradzhinov and G. Matviyevskaya: 'truly.'

<sup>516</sup> The subsequent text in angled brackets had been changed. The translation by S. Siradzhinov and G. Matviyevskaya reads: 'a destroyed [or abandoned] city is located close to the influx of the Atil River into it in the north. There on the northern bank is [now] the land of the Ghuzzes, and on the eastern bank is the land of Jurjan, and there [this sea] is called by the name of its port, Abaskun.'

near the confluence of the river Atil' on the north side, and here the north land of Ghuzzes adjoins with it, and in the east, the Jurjan land, and the sea is known for the port Abaskun [located there]<sup>517</sup>>. On its southern shore there are Tabaristan, the land of ad-Daylam, and Bab al-abwab, and on the west, between this sea and between the Pontos [Armenian] there are groups [or tribes] of Alans or Sarirs<sup>518</sup>, their lands, and their fortresses. And the [sea] goes back again to the land of the Khazars, not connecting with other seas...

[p. 442] **Chapter Ten**<sup>519</sup>

**'Fixing the longitudes and latitudes of cities in tables'**<sup>520</sup>

**From the fact that in the sixth climate**

[p. 472] ... The state of al-Khazar.

Samandar: Longitude: 72 zamans<sup>521</sup>, 30 minutes; latitude: 44 degrees, 40 minutes<sup>522</sup>.

Balanjar: Longitude: 73 zamans, 0 minutes; latitude: 44 degrees, 50 minutes. The main town of al-Khazar is the ruins on the banks of the river Atil': Longitude: 75 zamans, 20 minutes; latitude: 46 degrees, 30 minutes<sup>523</sup>.

[p. 473] **Based on the fact that in the seventh climate**

Areas of as-Saqaliba Unkar (Ungar)<sup>524</sup>: Longitude: 58 zamans<sup>525</sup>, 0 minutes; latitude: 48 degrees, 20 minutes.

The cities of Suvar<sup>526</sup> and Bulgar on the great river of the Ruses<sup>527</sup> and Saqaliba, and between them there is one-day journey: Longitude: 70 zamans, 0 minutes; latitude: 49 degrees, 30 minutes.

**Beyond the seventh climate**

Areas of as-Saqaliba the Land [people] of Isu, which trade with the Bulgars: Longitude: 69 zamans, 0 minutes; latitude: 55 degrees, 05.2 minutes. 9 Forests<sup>528</sup> of the [people] Yura<sup>529</sup>. And

<sup>517</sup> Abaskun (Abeskun) is a medieval Iranian port, located close to modern-day Gyumyush-tepe.

<sup>518</sup> The Sarirs were residents of Sarir, a medieval domain in the mountainous part of the Northern Caucasus.

<sup>519</sup> The tenth chapter of Book 5 is of most interest for history and geography. There al-Biruni offers a table of geographic coordinates for over 600 points, mostly towns in various countries and regions. In each of the seven climates and to the north of the 7th climate the points are enumerated from west to east. Apart from the coordinates of settlements of Islamic countries, al-Biruni provides valuable data on Eastern Europe and regions of the Eastern Turks. Next to some of the towns al-Biruni gives brief but important notes, for example, 'The main city of the Khazars—ruins on the banks of the Atil' (i.e., the Volga), 'Sutkand—on the Hasart River, known as the Shasha River' (i.e., the Syr Darya), 'Baku—the place of extraction of white oil,' etc.

<sup>520</sup> The coordinates given are difficult to correlate with modern ones since it is unclear where the zero meridian was located.

<sup>521</sup> Zaman is degrees in latitudinal measurements. (Zamans are degrees of the heavenly equator as well as of its parallels, whose arcs are the 'day arcs').

<sup>522</sup> The numbers of the degrees were denoted with letters (using the abjad system), and errors were made when copying, which usually caused variations. In this case, it is so in the Hyderābād edition and in the edition of A.-Z. Validi-Togan, while in the manuscript at the British Museum it is 15 minutes.

<sup>523</sup> It is so in the Berlin manuscript; in the Hyderābād edition it is 34 minutes.

<sup>524</sup> انكار, اونكار; it seems the Hungarians are meant here.

<sup>525</sup> It is so in the Berlin manuscript; in the Hyderābād edition it is 48 minutes; in the edition of A.-Z. Validi-Togan it is 108 minutes.

<sup>526</sup> In the edition of A.-Z. Validi-Togan (p. 52): اسوار

<sup>527</sup> 'The great river بحر of the Rus'—the Volga. The Arabic word 'bakhr' (بحر) can mean not only 'sea' but also 'large river.' Geographers of the 10th century and al-Idrisi call the Don the river of the Ruses.

<sup>528</sup> In the translation of S. Siradzhirov and G. Matviyevskaya: 'thickets.'

<sup>529</sup> Yura يوره is the Jugra (Yugra) people, the Ugrians who lived in the north of the Urals and in the North Trans-Ural Region, close to the lower reaches of the Ob River; they are the ancestors of the modern-day Khanty and partly the Mansi,

they are wild; they trade without showing themselves: Longitude: 63 zamans, 0 minutes; latitude: 67 degrees<sup>530</sup>, 30 minutes.

**'Kitab at-tafkhim li avail sina'a at-tandzhim'**<sup>531</sup>

(Book of explanation of the stars, or 'Astronomy') [p. 98] **Chapter Four**<sup>532</sup> **'Geography'**

[p. 99] **The Habitable Part of the Earth**

[p. 100] **Where are the seas of the habitable part of the earth located?** The sea, which is located in the west of the inhabited part of the Earth near the coast of Tangier and Andalusia, is called the Surrounding Sea<sup>533</sup>, which was called the Ocean by the Greeks<sup>534</sup>. One does not go deep in it but swims only near the shore. From Andalusia, it extends to the north of these countries along the lands of<sup>535</sup> the as-Saqaliba<sup>536</sup>. In the north of the land (country) of as-Saqaliba, a large bay near the country of the Bulgar Muslims departs from it; this bay is known as the Viking sea<sup>537</sup>; the people called Varangians (Vikings)<sup>538</sup> live on its shore. Beyond the country of the Muslim Bulgarians the sea turns to the east, and between its coast and the edge of the land of the Turks,<sup>539</sup> there are lands and mountains that are unknown, deserted, and impassable. The reach of the Surrounding Sea to the south is as follows: it encircles in the south from Tangier the western part of the land of the blacks<sup>540</sup> to the mountains, known as the Mountains of the Moon, where the source of the Egyptian Nile is found. It is dangerous for any ship to sail in this

related to the Hungarian Magyars. Other early geographers do not mention the 'Yugra' people.

<sup>530</sup> It is so in the edition of A.-Z. Validi-Togan; in the Hyderābād edition it is 60 minutes; in the manuscript at the British Museum it is 47 minutes.

<sup>531</sup> The name of the work 'The Book of Instruction...' is also briefly translated as 'The Science of Stars,' and sometimes also 'Astronomy' or 'Astrology,' since it comprises a textbook for initial training in the sciences that an astronomer and astrologer must know. Apart from astronomy and astrology proper, this circle of sciences also covers mathematics, geography, chronology, and the rules for using an astrolabe. The work was written in the format of 530 questions and answers in laconic language, comprehensible for a wide range of readers. The number of surviving manuscripts of the work and references to it made by later scholars indicates the popularity of the work.

'Tafhim' was completed in 421/1030. It was written in the Arabic language, and the author later translated it into Persian. In most manuscripts of the work all 530 questions of the work follow each other without being divided into chapters; in some of them chapters on geometry, arithmetic, the astrolabe, and astrology, as well as smaller sections are designated. The Tashkent edition of the treatise, for the users' convenience, is divided into eight chapters that in turn are subdivided into sections. The geographic portion of 'The Book of Instruction...' has been translated into Russian [Krachkovsky, 1957].

<sup>532</sup> In this chapter al-Biruni determines the size of the Earth and states his theory of the seas that would later become fundamental in the medieval geographic literature. In the same section he offers his famous round map of the Earth, showing its Eastern hemisphere. A material portion is devoted to mathematical geography and gnomonics, in connection with which definitions of tangents and cotangents are given. Then, al-Biruni describes the populated part of the Earth—the oecumene—and divides it into seven 'climates,' determined based on their latitudes in accordance with the medieval eastern tradition. When describing the distribution of countries among the climates, al-Biruni aims to be specific and includes the following caveat in order to adhere to scientific strictness: 'If the latitude of the city is known, since we have traced the beginning and end latitudes of the climates, the position of the city within the climate becomes known as well. However, the data on latitudes is in most cases far from the truth; so far we have been able only to determine approximately the correct latitudes; so when we describe countries in climates, we do so approximately and not strictly, even though naturally what we report here is closer to the truth than what is generally written in books.' When describing the seven climates, al-Biruni also provides information on the peoples and tribes dwelling there [Beruni, 1987a, p. 328].

<sup>533</sup> Or the Surrounding Ocean is the Arctic Ocean.

<sup>534</sup> The Greeks believed the Ocean to be a river flowing around the Earth.

<sup>535</sup> In the translation of B. Rozenfeld, A. Akhmedov, and M. Rozhanskaya: 'countries.'

<sup>536</sup> Al-Biruni differentiates between the as-saqaliba and the ar-Rus (Rus'), considering [in this case] the as-saqaliba to be the peoples of Europe neighboring Rus'.

<sup>537</sup> The Baltic Sea.

<sup>538</sup> **ورثك** variant **ورثك**.

<sup>539</sup> In the translation of B. Rozenfeld, A. Akhmedov, and M. Rozhanskaya: 'countries of the Turks,' **ارض الترك** is the land of the Turks—Turkestan and Siberia.

<sup>540</sup> In the translation of B. Rozenfeld, A. Akhmedov, and M. Rozhanskaya: 'countries of the black,' **ارض السودان** is Sudan.

sea. The eastern side of the Surrounding Sea is beyond the land<sup>541</sup> of China. It is also impassable. A bay goes from it, it forms a sea, it is called everywhere after the name of the country that it touches, so it is called the Chinese at first,<sup>542</sup> and then the Indian<sup>543</sup>. Two large bays go out from the Indian Sea, each of which is called a sea. Those are the Persian Sea and the Sea of Basra<sup>544</sup>. To the east of them there is Tiz in Mekran,<sup>545</sup> and to the west, across from them, there is a seaport of Oman<sup>546</sup>. Beyond it, it comes to the country of Shikhr,<sup>547</sup> from where they export incenses, and then it comes to Aden.

Here two large bays go from it, one of them is known as Kulzum,<sup>548</sup> it turns, encircling the Arabian country, which becomes sort of an island because of it. Since Ethiopia is opposite Yemen, it is named after the name of the two countries: the southern part is after Ethiopia, the northern part is after Yemen, and both together is name the Kulzum Sea, as this is the city at which it turns to the country of Syria, where it narrows, and the traveller goes around it by the shore on Buj land<sup>549</sup>. The other bay of this sea is known as the Barbara Sea<sup>550</sup> extending from Baden to Sufala of the Zinj<sup>551</sup>. Ships do not pass through it, as we mentioned, because it is very dangerous. Then the sea connects with the Western Ocean<sup>552</sup>. In the eastern part of this sea there is an island called Zabaj, followed by the islands Dibajat and Kumayr,<sup>553</sup> and then the Zinj islands. One of the largest of these islands is known as [Lanka], which the Indians call Sankal-dib, there they mine and export different varieties of rubies and sapphires. Then there is Kala island,<sup>554</sup> where they mine tin, and Sarir island,<sup>555</sup> where camphor is mined. Then in the middle of the habitable parts of the earth in the land (country) of as-Saqaliba and the Rus<sup>556</sup> there is a sea known to the Greeks as Pontus [p. 101]. We know it as the Trebizond Sea<sup>557</sup> as this is a harbor on its shore. From this sea comes a strait that passes along the walls of Constantinople. It becomes narrower and narrower until it flows into the Sea of Syria,<sup>558</sup> in the south of which there is the Maghreb,<sup>559</sup> to Alexandria and Egypt. Across from them to the north are Andalusia and Rum to Antioch, and between them there are Syria and Palestine. This sea flows into the Surrounding Sea near Andalusia through the strait, which in ancient books was referred to as the passage of Hercules and now is known as the Strait<sup>560</sup>. Water flows through it into the Surrounding Sea. We know the islands of Cyprus, Samos, Rhodes, Sicily, and the like. Near Tabaristan there is a sea

<sup>541</sup> In the translation of B. Rozenfeld, A. Akhmedov, and M. Rozhanskaya: 'countries.' ارض الصين.

<sup>542</sup> بحر الصين. The South China Sea.

<sup>543</sup> بحر الهند. The Indian Ocean.

<sup>544</sup> 'The Persian Sea' – بحر الفارس – the Gulf of Oman; the Sea of Basra – بحر بصرة – the Persian Gulf.

<sup>545</sup> A region in the south of Iran adjoining the Gulf of Oman. Tiz is the principal city of Makran.

<sup>546</sup> The coast of the Arabian peninsula adjoining the Gulf of Oman and the southern part of the Persian Gulf.

<sup>547</sup> Shihr is a port on the southern shore of the Arabian Peninsula.

<sup>548</sup> Kulzum is currently ruins near Suez, in antiquity it was the town of Klizma at the end of the channel connecting the Red Sea with the Nile ('river mouth' in Greek). 'Bay of Kulzum' is the Red Sea.

<sup>549</sup> Translated as 'countries of the Buja.' The Buja is cattle-herding tribes on the territory of Nubia, between the Nile and the Red Sea.

<sup>550</sup> 'Sea of Barbara' – بحر البربر – the Gulf of Aden. Barbara is the African coast of the gulf. The name has been preserved in the name of the town of Barbara, Somalia.

<sup>551</sup> Sufala zinjay is the southern part of Mozambique, the farthest point reached by Arabic seafarers along the eastern coast of Africa.

<sup>552</sup> The Atlantic Ocean.

<sup>553</sup> The islands of Zabaj, Dibajat, and Kumayr possibly correspond to the island of Java, the Laccadive Islands, and Cambodia (the country of the Khmer).

<sup>554</sup> Kala is apparently Keda, a port on the coast of Malacca.

<sup>555</sup> Possibly Sumatra.

<sup>556</sup> Al-Biruni did not include the peoples of Rus' among the Slavs.

<sup>557</sup> Pontos is the Greek name of the Black Sea. Trapezund – Arabic: Trabizund; currently the city of Trabzon in Turkey.

<sup>558</sup> The Mediterranean Sea.

<sup>559</sup> The northern shore of Africa, including the territories of modern-day Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya.

<sup>560</sup> The Passage of Hercules is the Strait of Gibraltar, in ancient times known as *the Pillars of Hercules*!!".

of the harbor Jurjan<sup>561</sup> on which there is the city of Abaskun, it is known as the Jurjan Sea<sup>562</sup>. It extends to Tabaristan, Daylem land<sup>563</sup>, Shirvan<sup>564</sup>, Bab al-Abwab and the area of Alans, and then to the country (?) of the Khazars at the point where the Atil River flows into it and then to the areas of the Ghuzzes and back to Abaskun. This sea also [p. 102] is called by the names of the surrounding countries, most often it is called the Khazar Sea (after the Khazars)<sup>565</sup>. The ancients called it by the name of Jurjan, as Ptolemy called it the sea of Hyrcania<sup>566</sup>. It is not connected with any other sea. In the habitable part of the earth there are other lakes, swamps, sometimes called seas, such as Afamiya Lake<sup>567</sup>, Tiberias Lake<sup>568</sup> and the Dead Sea in Syria, the small Khwarezm Sea,<sup>569</sup> and Issyk Kul<sup>570</sup> near Barskhan. This is the approximate image of what we have mentioned<sup>571</sup>... [p. 115] **How are the countries located according to climates?**

[p. 116] As for the fifth climate, it begins in the country of Eastern Turks and in the country of Yajuj and Majuj and goes through the land of Tktaks tribes, known by the names of those tribes, through Kashgar<sup>572</sup>, Balasagun, Tasht<sup>573</sup>, Fergana, Isfijab<sup>574</sup>, Shash<sup>575</sup>, Ustrushana, Samarkand, Bukhara, Khwarezm, the Khazar Sea to the Bab al-Abwab, Barda'a, Miyafarkin<sup>576</sup>, Arminiya<sup>577</sup>, Straits of Rum and the city of Rum, through the great Rome to Galicia and Andalusia regions and ends in the Surrounding Ocean.

As for the sixth climate, it begins in places of nomads of eastern Turks—Kay and Kun<sup>578</sup>, Kirghiz<sup>579</sup>, Kimaks<sup>580</sup>, Tokuz-Oguzes, through the country of Turkmen and Farabs<sup>581</sup>, through the city of the Khazars and the northern part of their sea, through [the country] of Alans [and Aces<sup>582</sup>], between this sea and the sea of Trebizond, goes through Constantinople to Burjan (Danube Bulgaria) and lands of Franks, through the north of Andalusia and ends in the Western Ocean.

As for the seventh climate, there is little cultivated land. In its eastern part there are only forests and mountains [p. 117] of the Bashkirs, the Pecheneg region, through the cities Suvar and Bulgar, and the lands of ar-Rus, as-Saqaliba<sup>583</sup>, Bulgars (al-Bulgariya), [and Maj'ar<sup>584</sup>] and ends in the Surrounding Sea.

Beyond this climate there are many nations—Isu, Varangians (Vikings), Yura, and the like.

<sup>561</sup> Tabaristan and Jurjan (Persian: Gorgan) are regions on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea.

<sup>562</sup> One of the names of the Caspian Sea.

<sup>563</sup> Translated as 'country of Daylem.' A mountainous region in Gilyan, in the north-west of Iran.

<sup>564</sup> Shirvan is a khanate that existed during the middle ages on the territory of modern-day Azerbaijan.

<sup>565</sup> *The Khazar Sea* is what modern-day Azerbaijanis call the Caspian Sea.

<sup>566</sup> Hyrcania is the Greek name of Jurjan (Gorgan).

<sup>567</sup> Afamia is a city in Syria, ancient Apamea, destroyed by an earthquake in the 12th century.

<sup>568</sup> Tabariyya.

<sup>569</sup> The Aral Sea.

<sup>570</sup> *ايسىكول* – 'issi-kul' (hot lake). Issyk Kul is a lake in Kyrgyzstan.

<sup>571</sup> This means that in the treatise a map is referenced to this place.

<sup>572</sup> Kashgar is currently a part of Xinjiang, China.

<sup>573</sup> *تاشت*

<sup>574</sup> *ايسىبجاپ* – Isfijab is currently the city of Sayram.

<sup>575</sup> Tashkent.

<sup>576</sup> Modern-day Farkin, near Diyarbekir (Turkey).

<sup>577</sup> The territory of historical Arminiyya was greater than modern Armenia; most of it is now part of modern-day Turkey.

<sup>578</sup> Apparently the Huns.

<sup>579</sup> *خرخيز*

<sup>580</sup> In the translation, 'Kumaks' *قماق*, and a supposition is made that the Kumyks of Dagestan are meant, but here it is obvious that the passage refers to the Kimaks of Middle Asia.

<sup>581</sup> Farab is a city at the influx of the Arys River into the Syr Darya (Kazakhstan).

<sup>582</sup> The As is another name for the ancestors of the Ossetians (Alans), from which the Georgian name for the people and the country, the Os and Ossetia, were formed; the Russian name is borrowed from the Georgian language.

<sup>583</sup> In the translation, 'the Slavs.'

<sup>584</sup> *مجعر*

**'Ifrad al-makal fi amr az-zil'<sup>585</sup>**(Isolating Speech on the Issue of Shade) or **'Gnomonics'**[p. 192] **Chapter Eighteen.****'On refining the meridian direction by two shades or two main azimuths'**

... [p. 195] ...<sup>586</sup> However, we contend that the nations in which we find more pious qualities that would have brought about for them the virtues of good laws [of life] or zeal for science are such that their villages are not found beyond the forty-eighth latitude. A supplement of this latitude is forty-two pieces, and the height of the beginning of Capricorn there is eighteen pieces and a quarter and one-sixth. Fingers<sup>587</sup> of its shadow there are thirty-six fingers and three-tenths of a finger. That's about a triple gnomon<sup>588</sup>. Therefore, it is obvious that if we make a gnomon equal to one-eighth of the diameter of the [circle] at this latitude, at the [time] of the winter solstice the shadow will not be sufficient to penetrate into the circle. It is not about the people, known as the Bulgars, who are Muslim and dwell so far north that the latitude there is at least forty-five [pieces], and the gnomon is equal to one-sixth [share] of the diameter<sup>589</sup>.

*This material was prepared by Nuriya Garayeva*

<sup>585</sup> 'Gnomonics' was written during the period of 1022–1030—that is, after al-Biruni's first journey to India and before the completion of 'India.' 'Gnomonics' is an encyclopedic work that composition-wise can be compared to 'Mineralogy.' The principal contents of 'Gnomonics' are the general characteristics and analysis of methods of using the shadow of a gnomon—a rod installed on a horizontal or vertical plane and used to determine trigonometric values, time, and the position of the Sun in a system of horizontal coordinates. In this treatise al-Biruni examines from a philologist's point of view the various gradations of meaning of the word 'shadow,' offers examples of its varied use, describes different optical phenomena of light and shadow in nature and, similarly to 'Mineralogy,' inserts passages from poetic works where 'shadow' appears, both in the figurative and proper sense of the word. 'Gnomonics' was written at the request of Sheikh Abu-l-Hasan Musafir, who was interested in matters of astrology, astronomy, and defining moments in time (al-Biruni wrote two more treatises for him that have not survived to the present day). 'Gnomonics' comprises an introduction and thirty chapters. Chapter 18 describes the dependence of the azimuth in a specific town on a specific day on the altitude of the Sun, the similar dependence between the altitude and the horoscope (the crossing point of the ecliptic and the eastern half of the horizon), and the method of determining the direction of the meridian using an 'Indian circle.' Here al-Biruni remarks that the size of a gnomon's shadow 'varies depending on the value of altitude' (of the Sun)—that is, he sees the shadow as a function of the altitude. Unlike most works of al-Biruni, only one copy of this treatise has survived in the Bankipur Manuscript.

<sup>586</sup> The selected passage speaks of measuring latitude based on the height of the shadow in a sundial

<sup>587</sup> 'Finger' (إصبع) – inch – a unit of measurement amounting to about 2 cm.

<sup>588</sup> Gnomon is the rod that casts a shadow in a sundial.

<sup>589</sup> This passage refers to the latitude of Volga Bulgaria, which is about 55 degrees North.

### 'Kitāb akam al-marjan fi zikr al-madain al-mashkhura fi kulli makan'

The book 'Kitāb akam al-mardjan fi zikr al-madain al-mashkhura fi kulli makan' ('A Pile of Pearls with a Description of Cities Elsewhere') is known thanks to the unique manuscript preserved within the collection of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan.

The author of 'Kitāb akam al-mardjan.' is not precisely known; it is considered to be written by either one of the sources of al-Idrisi, going by the name of Iskhak ibn al-Husayn al-Munajjim, or by Iskhak ibn al-Hasan al-Hazini, mentioned by Ibn Khaldun.

The text was reportedly composed between 262–454/875–1062, although most likely it was created in the 11th century. Some specific features of this writing allow some observations. For example, we can suppose that the author originated from the western part of the Islamic World (Spain?) or the author, apparently, used (directly or indirectly) the work by Ptolemy, which was converted and compiled by al-Khwarizmi, and 'Kitāb al-buldan' ('The Book of Lands') by al-Ya'qubi (died in 284/897 or 292/905). Ibn Khordadbeh's publisher revealed some isolated points of similarity (The Legends of Alexandria and the Seven Sleep-

ers). His writings are full of confusion and muddle; for instance, about the Khazars, he submits information that refers to the Burtas (Burdas) people.

On the whole, this compendium, apart from lacking ingenuity, reveals much factual knowledge about the towns of Islamic countries. The narration clearly favours historical details concerning the conquest of towns, local riots, etc. Two closing paragraphs on the Khazars and Turks seem to be isolated and separate, and in them there are vague descriptions, along with some confusing and incomprehensible forms of names.

V. Minorsky published the Arab text and an English translation of two extracts on the Khazars and Turks from the Milan manuscript of the 'Kitāb akam al-marjan' [Minorsky, 1937, pp. 141–150]. Below is found the English translation of the fragment 'Land of Khazars and Saksins' from the 'Kitāb akam al-marjan' according to the aforementioned V. Minorsky's edition.

Edition and translations: Minorsky, 1937, pp. 141–150; Kitāb akam al-marjan. About him: Umnyakov, 1939, pp. 1138–1145.

### **Bilad al-Khazar va-sh-Shavash**<sup>590</sup> (The Country of the Khazars and Saxins)

There are vast and extensive lands near the as-Sarir borders<sup>591</sup>. Their supreme tsar (malik) professed Judaism. [Khazars] fight against the Turks (at-Atrak), and they are attacked by the people of as-Sarir<sup>592</sup>. Their tsar (malik) has a huge army. In their country there are [many] cultivated fields, orchards, and fruit.

They have numerous cities, among them the city of Balanjar<sup>593</sup>, which is under the al-Khazars. [The Khazars] have [an army] of ten thousand men. Their appearance and shape are the same as the Turks. When their women become adults, they choose the man they want and no longer submit to their father and mother. [This country] is located on flat ground. Most of their trees are al-halanj (birch). They take it to Khurasan. And this makes up a big part of their wealth. They have cultivated fields. Most of them confess...<sup>594</sup> Among their cities is the city of al-Bayda—

<sup>590</sup> In the text of the manuscript 'ash-Shavash,' but V. Minorsky, based on the identity of these materials to corresponding data of Ibn Rustah, believes that in this placename graphic errors were made during the copying of the text and therefore reads it as S.r.g.sh.n. The graphic form of the placename 'S.r.g.sh.n.' allows it to be read as 'Saksin.'

<sup>591</sup> In the text: as-Sind.

<sup>592</sup> In the text: of as-Sind.

<sup>593</sup> In the text: بلکار Bulkar.

<sup>594</sup> A blank in the text of the edition.



Khab-balik.<sup>595</sup> It is big and beautiful, located on a great river that flows out of Lake al-Khazar<sup>596</sup> to Khorasan Lake. Their graves are like the graves of Muslims, but most of them cremate their dead, accusing them of unbelief.

*This material was prepared by Nuriya Garayeva*

## Al-Idrisi

Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah ibn Idris al-'Ali al-Idrisi, also called ash-sharif al-Idrisi, because he is a descendant of Idris, great-grandson of al-Hasan ibn 'Ali,<sup>597</sup> was one of the greatest medieval geographers. Little is known about his life<sup>598</sup>: He was born probably in Ceuta approximately in 493/1100, studied in Cordoba (hence his nisba al-Qurtubi), he traveled extensively in Spain and North Africa, was in Asia Minor and perhaps in some parts of France. He could have been a doctor, as he wrote a treatise on the pharmacology of simple medicines 'Kitab al-Jami' li ashtat anbat' ('Information about different plants')<sup>599</sup>. Around 1138 he came to the court of the Norman king of Sicily Roger II. The circumstances that led him to Sicily are unknown, so is the last years of his life and death, which occurred in about 560/1165.

By order of King Roger II (1130–1154) al-Idrisi wrote his famous essay on descrip-

tive geography 'Nuzhat Kitab al-Mushtaq fi al-Afaq ihtirak' ('Entertainment of an exhausted man travelling in the regions') or 'Kitab Rujar' ('Book of Roger) or 'al-Kitab al-Rujari.' The essay was completed 'in the first ten days of January (yanayra) corresponding to the month of Shawwal of the year 548' (1154).

'Nuzhat al-Mushtaq' was much more popular in the Islamic world than other geographical medieval writings. Ten copies of works of al-Idrisi are known.<sup>600</sup> These copies are valuable due to the extent in which they are filled in. The most complete maps are in a manuscript in Paris, the second most important in this respect is the manuscript of the Russian National Library. 'Nuzhat al-Mushtaq...' was one of the first Arabian books published in Europe [Oblectatio, 1592]. The complete modern critical edition, prepared by a team of Italian scholars, was completed in 1978 [al-Idrisi, 1970–1978]; unfortunately, it is not accompanied by maps, which are an integral part of the essay. The only reproduction of all the maps consisting of five manuscripts [Miller, 1926–1927] is unsatisfactory because the reproduction is so small. A comparative table of maps in this publication made by K. Miller was reprinted in colour with keywords in Arabic in Baghdad in 1951 and 1970 [al-Edrisi, 1951, 1970].

<sup>595</sup> In the text: a corruption during condensation of two Arabic names الطان بنو (at-Tan.y.nu) that may be restored as الببضا هب نلع.

<sup>596</sup> In the text: al-hard.

<sup>597</sup> Idris I (789–793), the great-grandson of the second Shi'ite imam, al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Abu Talib, made a claim for the title of the Caliph, but he was forced to flee the east of the caliphate to Morocco, where in 789 he founded an independent domain near Ceuta and became the founder of the Alid dynasty of the Idrisids (789–926) in Maghreb [Islam, 1991, p. 92].

<sup>598</sup> In the opinion of a number of researchers, this is connected to the fact that Arabic biographers considered him an apostate because he had lived at the court of a Christian king and praised him in his work.

<sup>599</sup> Other names of this work: 'Kitab al-mufradat' ('The Book of Simple [Medicines]') or 'Kitab al-adviya al-mufrada' ('The Book of Simple Medicines'). The manuscript of this treatise was discovered in 1928 in the Fatih Library in Istanbul. M. Meyerhof believes that one of al-Idrisi's achievements in the work was giving synonyms for each medicine in different languages; the number of languages sometimes reached twenty.

<sup>600</sup> Paris, National Library (ar. 2221), circa 1300, complete copy, 69 maps; Oxford (Poc. 375), 1456, complete copy, 71 maps; Istanbul, Köprülü 1 (955), 1496, complete copy, 69 maps; Sofia, People's Library (or. 3198), 1556, complete copy, 68 maps; Saint Petersburg, Russian National Library (Ar.n.s. 176), 14th century, 4–7 climates, 38 maps; Istanbul, Hagia Sophia (3502), 14th century, 1–3 climates, 30 maps; Oxford, Bodleian Library (3837–42), 16th century, 1–3 climates, 31 maps; Cairo, National Library (Cat.V, p. 162), 1438, 1–2 climates, 20 maps; other manuscripts do not have maps.

'Nuzhat al-Mushtaq...' in many respects exceeds the limitations of the Arab geographical tradition. It pays an unusual amount of attention to European territory beyond the limits of the Islamic world. This is what makes his work differ markedly from all previous geographical works. Al-Idrisi gives more detailed descriptions of Christian lands in Europe than the rest of the Arab geographers largely due to information obtained by inquiry.

In the essay the entire inhabited world known to the author is divided, as Ptolemy did, into seven latitudinal zones (iklim, plural, akalim), each of which is divided into ten parts (juz), numbered from west to east. Accordingly, the text of the essay is also divided, and a map was made for each section (juz). Thus, the essay had 70 maps, which, according to the author, can be assembled into a rectangular world map.

The numerous and detailed maps are of paramount importance in the essay—they compositionally organise its structure, whereas other geographical writings have maps that are primitive and of secondary importance. Al-Idrisi himself confirms that first he made a circular map of the world on a large silver planisphere (hemisphere), and the text appeared later as an explanation (the key) for it.

Setting aside the question of the main circular map, we can assume that a huge rectangular map was initially made in the Mercator projection that was divided into seven horizontal portions corresponding to climate zones. The most probable prototype of the map dates back to the cartographic tradition of al-Khwarizmi, and this excludes the use of any European maps when creating a map for European countries.

The boundaries of the iklims do not coincide with astronomical coordinates determined by medieval scholars, and iklims are not of equal sizes, as they should be.

The text of the essay is uneven with respect to its originality and level of detail in various sections. It is more original for the western world, especially for non-Muslim lands. Central regions of the Islamic world are described in more detail. Information about the Islamic east can be traced primarily

to geographic works of the 9–10th centuries, especially to Ibn Hawqal. Although al-Idrisi usually quotes Ibn Hawqal word for word, he ignores its detailed descriptions of major cities (Nishapur, Merv, Bukhara, Samarkand). Nevertheless, we can find some new information in al-Idrisi's works, dating back to the lost essays (for example, the unique description of Kimak lands, traced back to Ibn Janah ibn Hakan al-Kimaki).

Unfortunately, al-Idrisi describes the region of Eastern Europe in much less detail. His knowledge of Eastern Europe is limited to the Dnieper and is based on the descriptions of trade routes. He had no one to inform him about Bulgar, he tells very little, his map is the only (and earliest) for the region. The map shows the territories and their peoples (land of the Bulgars, Burtases, Basjirds/Bashjirds), the city of Bulgar is localised, Suvar is marked. Before al-Idrisi the map made by 10th century geographers al-Istakhri and Ibn Hawqal of the 'Khazar Sea' shows only the mouth of the Atil River and the city of Itil. The river is shown completely from its source to its mouth only on the full circular map of the world, but it is very conventional and schematic [Sezgin, 2002]<sup>601</sup>. Al-Idrisi's maps of Eastern Europe, including the Volga Region, are meagre in terms of their content, and it appears in the Paris and Saint Petersburg manuscripts they do not differ much.

The important topic of the correlation between the text and maps is still insufficiently studied. According to the latest research [Kenderova, Beshevliev, 1990], the later list, the most remote from the protograph, has less map content. The most complete maps, according to the number of topographic units on the map, have been acknowledged to be the maps in the Paris and Saint Petersburg manuscripts.

<sup>601</sup> p. 31: A round world map from 'Kitab al-masalik va-l-mamalik' by al-Istakhri (first half of 4th/10th century), copy from 589/1193; p. 32: A world map (round) from 'Kitab surat al-ard' by Ibn Hawqal (second half of 4th/10th century), copy from 479/1086; pp. 18–19: a round world map by al-Idrisi in copies from 906/1500 and 479/1086; p. 35: A round world map in 'Divan lugat at-turk' by Mahmud al-Kashgari (5th/11th century), copy from 664/1266.

Some sources mention another geographical work of al-Idrisi, 'Raud al-uns va nuzhat an-nafs' ('The garden of joy and delight for the soul'), written for William I (1154–1166), son of Roger II, which is known only by its name. It is assumed that the quotes of Abu'l-Fida in 'Takvim' ('Tables') referring to al-Idrisi's 'Kitab al-mamalik va-l-masalik' were adopted from 'Raud al-uns.'

A manuscript of al-Idrisi's essay called 'Raud al-furaj va nuzhat al-muhaj' ('The garden and delight') was discovered in the beginning of the 20th century in Istanbul. The list, dated 588/1192 and containing 73 maps, is commonly called (after the manner of K. Miller) 'small Idrisi'<sup>602</sup>. Most likely, this is an abbreviated or revised version of 'Nuzhat al-Mushtaq...'

The 'Nuzhat al-Mushtaq...' manuscript at the National Library of Russia, the second oldest (14th century) after the Paris one (1300)<sup>603</sup>, is the second half of the essay. It contains 4–7 climates and 38 maps. Three maps are given of the Volga and Ural Region [National Library of Russia, Manuscript collection, Ar. n. s. 176 fols.135b–136a; 38b–139a; 158b–159a]. The

Burtas, ard Bulgar' (The sixth climate, the sixth part), where the eastern part of the Black Sea and the Volga Region up to the mouth of the Atil River are marked, the cities of Bulgar and Suar are localised (see colour inset).

Besides these maps, on the Saint Petersburg list [National Library of Russia, Ar. n. s. 176] were maps of the Khazar land, Burtases and Bashkirs [fols. 135b–136a] <the land of?> Bulgars, the Urai mountain/the Urals [fols. 158b–159a], 'Bahr al-Khazar' (Khazar Sea) [fols. 51b–52a], 'Yajuj-Majuj' [fols. 66b–67a], 'Atil, Bahr al-Khazar' [fols. 104b–105a], 'Bab al-abvab, Samur, Samandar' [fols. 100b–101b], 'Bilad al-Rusiyya' [fols.132b–133a], 'Ard Yajuj Majuj' [fols.146b–147a].

Materials of al-Idrisi associated with Eastern Europe and the Turks: Lewicki, 1937, pp. 91–105; Lewicki, 1947, pp. 402–407; Lewicki, 1945–1954; Hrbek, 1957(1952), pp. 628–652; Rybakov, 1952, vol. 43, pp. 3–44; Volin, 1939, pp. 220–222; Kumekov, 1972; Baylis, 1984, pp. 208–288; Konovalova, 1999, p. 253.

### 'Kitab nuzhat al-mushtaq fi ihtirak al-afak'

(Entertainment of an exhausted man travelling in the regions)

#### The fifth climate

#### The seventh climate

[p. 831] Al-Hawqali states in his book that this sea [al-Khazar] (the Caspian Sea) is also not connected with other seas on the land's surface through either communications or mixing, and in addition it flows from thear-Rus River, known as Atil. This river begins on Turkish lands and flows, leaning slightly towards the east, until it reaches the [lands of] Bulgar where it splits into two creeks (kisms), the first of which flows into the Sea of al-Bab va-l-abvab<sup>604</sup>, which we have already discussed, while the second creek flows from the west to the Nitas (Buntus) Sea<sup>605</sup>, starting from the al-Kustantina lands and connecting with the outside sea<sup>606</sup> through the Zukak Strait<sup>607</sup>... [pp. 834–835] the Eastern creek (janib) of the Atil River [originates] in Basjirt Region,

<sup>602</sup> The text has not been published yet; maps can be found in the work by Miller [vol. VI].

<sup>603</sup> The seventh juz of the sixth climate from 'Nuzhat al-mushtak...' by al-Idrisi, containing the northern portion of the Caspian Sea (copy circa 700/1300) [Sezgin, 2002, p. 17]. The sixth juz of the sixth climate from 'Nuzhat al-mushtak...' by al-Idrisi, containing the eastern portion of the Black Sea and the lands of the Khazars and Bulgars. Copy from 874/1469 [Sezgin, 2002, p. 21].

<sup>604</sup> The Caspian Sea.

<sup>605</sup> The Black Sea.

<sup>606</sup> The Mediterranean Sea.

<sup>607</sup> The Strait of Gibraltar.

then flows between the al-Badjanak and Bulgar as the boundary between them. It flows to the west until it passes behind the Bulgars, then again it heads towards the east until it passes ar-Ruses, then Bulgar, then Burtas, then al-Khazar in order to join up with the al-Khazar Sea. It is said that if the water of these rivers unites, they would form a deeper river than the Jayhun or Balkh River. A creek (shu'bat) separates from this river and [flows] to the west up to the confluence with the Nitas (Buntus) Sea, as we have already discussed.

### The sixth climate<sup>608</sup>

#### The sixth part

[p. 914] This is indeed what this sixth part of [the sixth climate] from the al-Buntusi Sea (Black Sea) contains<sup>609</sup>: and this is the sea side [together] with the fact that there are towns on it (al-bilad). It also includes a part of the al-Kumaniya land (Polovtsian steppes) from the country (al-bilad) External ar-Rusiya, a part of the al-Bulgariya country, a part of Basjird country, al-Lan country, the land of al-Khazar, and [all] cities and rivers. We begin our narration about them and describe them according to the pace we move forward<sup>610</sup> and closer to the things we describe. And [in this] we ask Allah for help.

Then we tell: On this Black Sea from these cities: the city of Atarabzunda (Atrabzunda), which was mentioned above (before) because it is one of the capitals of ar-Rum<sup>611</sup>, known for its antiquity and consistently served as [the center] of [various] peoples' possessions. It is seventy-five miles from the sea side in the eastern direction to the [place] of the confluence of the Rushiyu (Rusiya) River. This river is a large one and originates (at high altitudes) beyond the al-Kabk (Caucasus) Mountains. Then it flows to the north and crosses the land of al-Laniy'a.

There is no known city (madina) on [the river], but on both its shores there are populated villages and numerous (abundant) fields under cultivation. Then the river flows to the West as long as it runs [into the sea] in the [aforementioned] place. Small boats sail on it that are used for the transportation of light goods and food [supplies] transported from one place to another [p. 915]. There are one hundred and fifty miles from the mouth of the river to the city of Ashkashiya (Ashkasiya). And it is a beautiful city (al-madinah), from the cities of al-Laniya (the countries of al-Lan) and one of their border areas.

There are twenty miles from the city of Ashkashiya to Ashkala in the land of al-Laniya. And about six miles between the city of Ashkala and the sea, and [the city] is small [in size], but it is a lively [city], and its districts have [just] enough to feed its inhabitants.

Twenty miles along the shore from it is the city of Astabriya (Istibriya), which is located at the isthmus of the sea. It is a populated city (madina) with crowded markets, extensive districts, and man-made buildings. Most of its residents are merchants, and their property is abundant.

There are twenty-four miles from the city of Astabriya to the city of al-Laniya. Its people (umam) are referred to as Alans after this main city (al-madinah). It is a city [with] ancient buildings, but it is unknown who built them.

There are forty-five miles from the city of al-Laniya to [the main] city of Khazariya (madina)], after which the Khazars (al-Khazar) are named. This is a large densely-populated city richly irrigated by water. It [is located] on the river.

<sup>608</sup> The text of the sixth juz of the sixth iklim explains the corresponding map of al-Idrisi. See the coloured insert. The publication of maps from the Saint Petersburg copy of the work is the first reproduction in the colour and size of the original.

<sup>609</sup> In the manuscript of the work 'an-Nitasi,' corrected by the editor in the edition to 'al-Buntusi'—that is, Pontos Euxeinos, or the Black Sea.

<sup>610</sup> Possible interpretation: 'as we used to do it before.'

<sup>611</sup> The Arabic name of Byzantium and its domains.

There are twenty-five miles from the city of al-Khazar to the city of Cyrus. From the [latter] (i.e., from Cyrus) to Kumaniya—Cumans are named (al-Kumaniyun) on its behalf, and the main city of this [Kumaniya]<sup>612</sup> is called Kumaniya as-sud<sup>613</sup> (Black Kumaniya), twenty-five miles. Large mountains, inaccessible (heavy-going) with high peaks are between al-Kumaniya and Cyrus. This main city (al-madinah) is named Black Kumaniya (Kumaniya as-sud) because here a river [flows], which first passes through its land, and then it loses itself (disappears) within the gorges of the mountains and then flows into the sea with its black water like smoke (like oil smoke). This is well-known and not denied [by anyone]

[p. 916]. From the main city of al-Kumaniya as-sud to the former (left—matluka) main city and what is called White Kumaniya (Kumaniya al-bayd, al-bayda') there are fifty miles. Kumaniya al-bayd is a great bustling city. There is a hundred swimming miles from it [Kumaniya al-bayd] to the city of Matrik, [also known as] Matrakh. And the city of Matrakh is a big busy city, many areas relate to it (al-akalim), vast land, stretching [one by one] villages, close [to each other] crops. It [is located] on the large river called Sakayu<sup>614</sup>, and this channel (the creek), which approaches the city from the Atil River, and its main [channel] flows to the city (madina) of the Atil, which [is located] on the sea of Tabaristan.

There is twenty-seven miles<sup>615</sup> from the city of Matrakh to Rushiya. There is a constant war between the residents of Matrakh and Rushiya. The city (madina) al-Rushiya [is located] on the large river flowing into it from the mountains (a mountain) Kukaya. There is twenty miles from<sup>616</sup> the city of ar-Rushiya to the city (madina) of Butar (Feodosia) Earlier we mentioned both of these [cities] (al-Rushiya and Butar).

And now we tell [further]: Among the cities of Kumanya relating to the Cumans there are Fira (Vyr'), Narus (Barush, Baruch), Nusha, and Kinyuv. As for the city of Nusha, it is in the north of Kumaniya al-bayd. Fifty miles separates them (Nusha and Kinyuv). It is a lively medium-sized city, there are crops and grain (gallate) in abundance. It is located on the river that irrigates most of its fields.

A hundred miles separates the city of Nusha and Kinyuv [towards] the north-east, and that is four crossings. Kinyuv is a large city at the base of a high mountain and has a vast, densely populated district that is very busy [p. 917]. Likewise, there is one hundred miles from Nusha to Narus (Barush) [towards] the north-west. The town is small and lively (muhadara), and there are markets and sales [taking place].

The city of Narus is one hundred thirty-five miles [towards] the east to city of Silav,<sup>617</sup> fifty miles from Narus to Fira [towards] the west, and twenty-five miles from Fira to Nabi<sup>618</sup> [towards] the west.

From Silav to Kuyaba<sup>619</sup> there are eight crossings in the land of the Bulgars, and Kuyaba is the [main] city (madina) of Turks called Rusa (the Ruses)<sup>620</sup>.

Ar-Rus is [composed of] three groups (asnaf). The first is one of their tribes called Ravas (?), and their king (malik) lives in the city of Kuyaba. Another one of their tribes is called as-Silaviya

<sup>612</sup> In this paragraph al-Idrisi's text is obviously shifted: this can be seen from the inconsistent repetitions, which go against the context and are difficult to translate. In particular, in the translation of the phrase: 'this main city is called Black Kumaniyya,' grammatically correct in Arabic but breaking the context of the paragraph especially badly, a deviation in favour of the context was made.

<sup>613</sup> Sometimes, Kumaniya as-sauda.

<sup>614</sup> Sakayu is the Kuban River, a tributary of the Don. V. Beylis interprets this as Sakir. Usually associated with the city of Korchev (Kerch).

<sup>615</sup> Rushiyya (Rusiyya) is generally identified with the city of Korchev (Kerch).

<sup>616</sup> Identified with Feodosia.

<sup>617</sup> صلاو Silav, Salava is Novgorod.

<sup>618</sup> V. Beylis interprets this as Nay (Kay).

<sup>619</sup> Kuyaba is Kiev. V. Beylis interprets this as Kukiyyana.

<sup>620</sup> Without an article in the text, in the objective case 'rusan,' which allows us to interpret it as the familiar ar-Rus, all the more so since the next phrase starts with the word 'ar-Rus.'

(as-Slaviya), and their ruler lives in Silav (Slav); this city is on top of the mountain. The third tribe is called al-arsaniy'a, and their king (malik) is located in Arsa.

And the city of Arsa is a beautiful city on the hill, which is fortified and located between the [cities] Silav and Kuyaba. There are four crossings from Kuyaba to Arsa, and from Arsa to Silav, four days [travel time]. Muslim merchants get to Kuyaba from Armeniya.

With regard to Arsa, according to sheikh al-Hawqali<sup>621</sup>, none of the foreigners dare enter there because they [the residents] certainly kill any stranger who reaches them, and no one dares to enter their land. [p. 918]. Black leopard skins (anmar), black foxes (as-sa'alib), and lead (or tin)—all of these [are taken] from them by Kuyaba merchants.

The Ruses (ar-Rus) burn their dead (deceased) and do not bury them in the ground. Part of the Ruses (ar-Rus) shave their beards, and part curl it like the mane of wild horses (ad-davabb) and braid it<sup>622</sup>. Their clothes are a short jacket (al-karatik), and the al-Khazar, Bulgars (al-Bulgariya), and Pechenegs (al-Bajanak) clothes are long, with long-skirted coats of silk, cotton, linen, or wool.

And the Bulgars compose numerous tribes (umam) and peoples (bashar). The places of their settlements are close to the settlements of ar-Rum. And the language of al-Rus [is not the same as] the language of the al-Khazar and Burtases<sup>623</sup>.

Al-Bulgar [is] the name of the main city (al-madina). Among [its residents] are Christians and Muslims. [The city] has a mosque for Muslims. Near it the city of Suvar is located, where its buildings are made of wood, in which its inhabitants dwell in the winter, and in the they summer dwell in their tents (al-harakahat). The day of Rus (ar-Rus) and Bulgars (al-bulgariy'a) is so short in winter that it lasts [only] three hours and a half. Al-Hawqali said the following: I witnessed this myself in the winter. The length of the day was such that it was sufficient only for four prayers, each of which followed one after the other with a small (kalail) raka'atami between azan and ikama<sup>624</sup>.

Al-Khazar is a vast country between the seas (ma'an ?). Al-Khazar is home to Muslims and Christians, and among them are idolaters. Regions and cities belong to them, Samandar among them, which is located on the other side of al-Bab al-Abvab, and [also] Balanjar, al-Bayda, Khamlij. All of these cities were built by Kasra (Khosrow) Anushirwan, and they still are inhabited and [exist] on their own.

[p. 919]. From the Bab al-Abvab to Samandar there are four days [of travelling], and between al-Bab va-l-abvab and the kingdom of as-Sarir there are eight days [of travelling], and from Atil to Samandar there are eight days [of travelling].

From Isil to the first boundary of Burtas there are twenty days [of travelling]. Burtas is on lands from the beginning to the end of which there are about fifteen days [of travelling].

From Burtas to Bajanak is ten days [of travelling]. From Atil to Bajanak is the distance of a month [of travelling].

From Atil to Bulgar on the steppe road (al-mufaza) is about a month, to the water upstream, two months, and downstream is about twenty days.

From the Bulgars to the first borders of ar-Rus is ten crossings. From Bulgaria to Kuyaba is about twenty crossings. From Bajanak to internal Basjirt<sup>625</sup> is ten days [of travelling]. From internal Basjirt to Bulgar is twenty-five days.

Al-Khazar is the name of the country (iklim)<sup>626</sup>, and its capital (kasaba) is Atil. Atil is [also] the name of the river that flows to (the capital) from the [land] of ar-Rus and Bulgar and runs into the sea of al-Khazar. The source of the river is in the east (al-mashrik) from the 'devastated country'

<sup>621</sup> The Arabian geographer Ibn Hawqal is meant here.

<sup>622</sup> The translation of V. Beylis, based on the Saint Petersburg copy, has the phrase 'and dye it yellow' instead of the words 'braid it.'

<sup>623</sup> برطاس

<sup>624</sup> The translation of V. Beylis [p. 216]: '...four prayers, each of which followed the other, with rika'ats, and there was no break between the adhan and the iqama.'

<sup>625</sup> In the Arabic text: Basjird.

<sup>626</sup> Here iklim means area.

side (al-bilad al-kharab)<sup>627</sup>, then [the river] flows through the 'stinking lands' (ard al-muntina)<sup>628</sup> to the west until it passes behind Bulgar, and then it returns to the east until it passes behind the ar-Ruses (the Ruses), then behind the Bulgars, then behind the Burtas (Burtases), [and flows further] until it is in the land of al-Khazar, and then runs into the sea. It is said that seventy-five rivers divide off of it [p. 920], and the depth of [the mainstream of] the river is maintained, [and] it flows to the Khazars.

The Burtas are also peoples (umam), [who are located] near al-Khazar, and between them and al-Khazar there are no other people. They are the owners (ashab) of wooden houses as well as felt tents (harkahat lubud). They have two cities—Burtas and Suvar. The Burtas language, which they speak, is not the same as the language of the al-Khazars. And the language of the Ruses (ar-Rusiya) is the same way<sup>629</sup>.

And there are two kinds of Rus (ar-Rusiya). The first kind is the one we are talking about here, and the other kind is [live] next to the Unkariya and Makzuniya countries.<sup>630</sup> And they (the Ruses), at the time we completed this book, have already defeated the Burtases, Bulgars, and al-Khazar and excluded them from their country. There are no other people (al-umam) [there] [except the Rus], only [their] names on [this] land.

There is a mountain Batira (meaning pointed) in the land of al-Khazar. This mountain, which stretches from the north to the south, has deposits (mines) of silver and a good source of tin (lead): there it is mined in large quantities and sent to all countries (al-jihad) and regions.

And elsewhere. Indeed, we report that in the Buntus Sea, the picture of which is included in this section, there are two islands: one of them is Anbala, and the second is Nunishka. Both of them are inhabited. On the opposite of Anbala island among a number of seaside towns there is Matrakh, between them is [the distance of] two sea crossings. [Also, there are two marine crossings] between the Anbala and Nunishka. The Nunishka is located on the opposite of Kumaniya al-bayd, from a [number of] countries (bilad) of the coast. There is a distance of three crossings (majra) by sea between them.

On the Nunishka the people hunt big fish (al-hut)<sup>631</sup> called Shahriya (monthly). This kind of [fish] is an as-sakankur, which they fish during storms (tempests) of the sea in the harbour (in the bay) to the west of the island (al-jazira). [This fish also acts as the [fish] as-sakankur [p. 921] in its mating habits and even stronger ...<sup>632</sup> When its guts are removed, it is sprinkled with salt and ginger, wrapped in lemon leaves, and served to the kings (muluk) living in those lands, and they consider it excellent. The amount that normally could be taken under the tongue is one kirat<sup>633</sup>, and nothing more. All this is true and [well] known: it is reported by many persons (muhbirun), those who travel by sea and have found many normal and wonderful things about it.

And all the sea, which is called Buntus, comes from the south to the country (bilad) of Lazik and [extends further] until it reaches Kustantiniya. Its length is thirteen hundred miles, and the width is three hundred miles, with the widest place on it being four hundred miles. From the north [part] the Danabris (Dniepr) River runs into it<sup>634</sup>. It arrives [here] from the back side of Tirma Lake<sup>635</sup>.

<sup>627</sup> This name is not encountered anywhere else in al-Idrisi's works.

<sup>628</sup> In the translation of V. Beylis [p. 217], based on the text of the Saint Petersburg manuscript of the work, this passage looks different: '...through the 'stinking lands' and the land of the Basjirts to the west until it passes beyond Bulgar, near the land of the Ruses, after which it returns to the east and flows through the Russian land (ard ar-Rusiyya), then through the Bulgarians, then through the Burtas, and flows [further] until it flows into the sea of al-Khazar, after passing through their lands in a southerly direction. After it deviates to the south, to the land of ar-Rus, a branch separates from it that approaches the town of Matrahah near the sea of Nitas (Buntus); it is known as the Sakir River (Tanais, Don?)...'

<sup>629</sup> That is, not like the language of the Khazars.

<sup>630</sup> Ungariyya (Hungary) and Macedonia.

<sup>631</sup> The Arabic word 'al-hut' means 'a large fish,' 'whale.'

<sup>632</sup> This is followed by a description of catching and cooking this fish.

<sup>633</sup> As a measure of weight, a kirat is equal to 0.195 g, or 0.223 g in Iraq; as a measure of volume (in modern metrology), 0.064 l.

<sup>634</sup> طرمي

<sup>635</sup> This lake corresponds to Ptolemy's Lake Meotis, and the name دنابرس Tirma is a corruption of the name of the city of Tiramba on the shore of the lake.

This is a large lake; its length from the west to the east is three hundred miles, and the width is one hundred miles. We will discuss it and depict it [on the map] so it is in the [appropriate] place, if this is acceptable before Allah with His strength and power, meaning in the seventh climate.

The sixth part of the sixth climate, thanks to Allah, is over. If Allah wills, it will be followed by the seventh part [of the same climate].

*This material was prepared by Nuriya Garayeva*

## Al-Gharnati

### Abu Hamid al-Gharnati's travel to Eastern and Central Europe (1131–1153)

The second edition, revised and enlarged

Abu Hamid al-Gharnati was one of the two Arab sources who compiled records of the pre-Mongol Eastern Europe based on his personal experiences. Although Abu Hamid, in distinction to Ibn Fadlan, did not aim to submit that knowledge in the form of a coherent and detailed report on his travels but, instead, to strike his Middle-East readers with what were for them exotic oddities of the unknown northern world, expressly neglecting to depict commonplace things (which would be the most interesting and valuable for us), there we find some unique evidence, along with his challenging outside viewpoint on the territory in question. Some orientalist had long mistrusted al-Gharnati's works, and one of his works, a key piece of his writing, went into academic circulation only after 1953, while its Russian translation,

accompanied by commentaries and historical characterisations of the period, entered into circulation in 1971 [Al-Gharnati, 1971].

34 years passed from that time. Since then enough new materials has accumulated for judgments to be made concerning the al-Gharnati's works and relating to this, there arose the necessity for the translation and commentaries to be corrected and updated. In themselves they were not of enough importance to merit republishing, however, in this corpus of narrations of the Arab geographers and travellers about Eastern Europe, in which translations from al-Gharnati have been incorporated, there appears an opportunity to introduce all these improvements. While retaining the general structure, the introduction, translations and commentaries, the editorial alterations are not specifically mentioned.

### Al-Gharnati and his works

Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rahim al-Gharnati al-Andalusi, who was born in Grenada<sup>636</sup> in 1080<sup>637</sup>. We do not know anything about his life in his native land. He probably received a theological and philological education typical for his time, could write schoolish verses of the model in the published translation, but did not feel a desire for poetry,

which can be seen from the fact that in his first essay there are almost no poetic quotations that were so lauded by his contemporaries. Islamic law was his specialty, fiqh, in which he also did not achieve much success. If al-Gharnati stayed in his home country, his name would have been forgotten.

Al-Gharnati at a young age, like many of his compatriots, left Andalusia in order to continue his education in the centre of the Muslim world. By sea along Sicily and Malta he arrived in Alexandria in 511/1117–1118<sup>638</sup>,

<sup>636</sup> In Arabic Grenada is known as Garnata, hence the attributive name (nisba) al-Gharnati (i.e., the Grenadian); he is also frequently called by a second nisba, al-Andalusi (the Andalusian).

<sup>637</sup> The only brief biography of al-Gharnati is given by the Andalusian historian al-Maqqari [vol. I, pp. 617–618], which gives us his date of birth, but the most information comes from the works of al-Gharnati himself. See Note 660.

<sup>638</sup> G. Ferrand [Ferrand, 1925, p. 21] and after him I. Krachkovsky [Krachkovsky, 1957, p. 299] believe that



listened to the lectures of scientists, and the following year he moved to Cairo, which was the second (after Baghdad) cultural centre of the Muslim world at that time.

In Cairo and Alexandria not only did al-Gharnati attend the lectures of scholars and grammarians, but he also became acquainted with the antiquities of Egypt with great interest, saw the Pharos of Alexandria, which soon afterwards collapsed, climbed inside the Cheops pyramid, and examined the obelisk in 'Ain Shamsa, which like the Pharos has not survived to our time. At the bustling bazaars of Cairo he came into contact with different peoples of Black Africa and its exotic products. At that time Egypt conducted brisk trade with the Far East, so one could meet people there who have been to India and even to China<sup>639</sup>. All these impressions would be reflected in the writings of al-Gharnati in a few decades.

After one or two years al-Gharnati went to Baghdad, the spiritual capital of the Muslim world at that time. He went through Askalon, Baal'bek, and Damascus and in the latter stopped for a while to teach hadiths<sup>640</sup>. He arrived in Baghdad from there through Tadmor (Palmyra) in 1122–1123. In Baghdad al-Gharnati lived for four years, taking advantage of the hospitality of Ibn Hubay'ra, the upcoming vizir for several caliphs. Here his first son was born, Hamid, for which he received the honorary nickname (kuny'a) Abu Hamid ('Hamid's father').

Such trips from town to town 'in search of knowledge' were common among Muslim scholars of the time, and there is no reason to be surprised at their behaviour. But Abu Hamid went beyond the usual routes. In 1130 we find him in Abhar on the road to Ardabil, the

capital of Azerbaijan (in that time the area to the south of the Kura), although it is clear that this city was not the purpose of his journey as in the same year he passed through the mountains to the Mugan steppe, and from there through the Absheron Peninsula he reached Derbent. In the following year al-Gharnati already lived in Saksin.

It is hard to say what prompted al-Gharnati to start this long journey. He certainly could not have been searching for teachers in the backwaters of the Muslim world after Cairo, Damascus, and Baghdad, and he was too old for this anyway. Perhaps it was curiosity combined with the desire to gain the greatest benefit he could from his knowledge in this region. Despite his considerable age<sup>641</sup>, Abu Hamid was full of energy and missionary zeal—everywhere he instructed the local Muslims who were not very knowledgeable in the intricacies of religion and Islamic law. In Derbent (or in one of the villages of the lower Derbent) he was taken in by the Emir, whom he taught lessons of Islamic law to, and in Saksin he held meetings with local jurists who came to him for resolutions of their most difficult cases.

Saksin became al-Gharnati's home for 20 years. From there he made trips to Bulgaria (1135–1136), where he stayed for at least the winter and summer, and he twice visited Khwarezm<sup>642</sup>. Frequent trips from Saksin raise the issue of who Abu Hamid was: a lover of travel or an enterprising merchant who simply

1117–1118 was the second journey of al-Gharnati, while his first visit to Alexandria took place in 1114. The basis for such a conclusion is the data of al-Maqqari [Ferran, *Tuhfa*, p. 14], which is likely based on the additions to the Tashkent manuscript of 'Tuhfat al-albab' [Belyayev, 1957, pp. 70–71], but the text of al-Gharnati's works does not confirm this.

<sup>639</sup> In 512/1118–1119 he met a certain man in Cairo called Abu-l-'Abbas al-Hijazi, who had spent 40 years in India and China [Ferran, 1925, p. 106].

<sup>640</sup> A hadith is a story about the words and acts of the prophet Muhammad, comprising one of the bases of Islamic dogmatics and law.

<sup>641</sup> Al-Gharnati's activity in the 1150–60s, when he was 70–80 years old, is amazing. Even if we allow that he was a very robust old man (he even had a child while in Hungary), it is still very strange that he only went to Egypt to study at the age of 37, and his first son was born when he was in his 40s. One might suppose that al-Maqqari [vol. I, p. 617] made a mistake in the date and wrote 473 A.H. instead of 493 A.H. (the Arabic numerals 'seven' and 'nine' are sometimes confused due to their similarity in form), but in this case al-Gharnati would have arrived in Baghdad at the age of twenty-three, and it is unlikely that Ibn Hubayra would have paid attention to him.

<sup>642</sup> It is customary to believe that in 530/1135–1136 al-Gharnati was in Balkh since he has a story about the 'discovery' of the grave of 'Ali in 530 in the place of the modern-day Afghani city Mazar-i-Sherif [Ferran, 1925, pp. 145–146], but when talking about the event al-Gharnati does not mention that he was there himself or saw the tomb.

left—fortunately for us—notes on the curiosities he had seen? Of course, he was first and foremost an Islamic jurist and preacher whose missionary work did not include asceticism. His authority as the 'expert from the centre' contributed to him obtaining generous grants from in-power Muslims, and Abu Hamid never missed an opportunity to buy and sell profitably when the occasion presented itself. Taking all of this into account, our author cannot be denied as an incurious, uninterested man when it came to visiting unfamiliar places as if he was not he would have never set out on a journey to regions that were so distant for him. There is the possibility that during some of his trips, especially to Khwarezm, he would perform diplomatic missions.

In 1150 al-Gharnati went to Rus' from Bulgar, travelling along the 'Slavic river'—Don. He was the only Islamic author to ever visit Rus', and he included information we do not even find in the Russian sources. One can only regret that here he was more interested in teaching Pechenegs in Friday prayers than about the unfamiliar life of Christian Kiev.

His familiarity with the Pechenegs, whose nomadic camps stretched from the Volga to the Danube, certainly played a role in his further route. Abu Hamid continued to travel to Hungary, where the nomads-Turks, Islamised to a significant degree, were the most important strike force in the hands of Hungarian kings<sup>643</sup>. Here al-Gharnati also acts as a mentor for Muslims-nomads: he teaches some in rituals, while others become his disciples. Perhaps he is exaggerating his role, but the fact that he was granted an audience with the king and attended to his business on the way back to Saksin speaks for the fact that Abu Hamid still was not just an ordinary traveller in Hungary.

Al-Gharnati spent three years (1150–1153) in Hungary, but as he reached old age it was time to fulfill the duty of all Muslims—to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. The king did not want to let him out of Hungary (al-Gharnati most likely really enjoyed his influence on the

Muslims of Hungary) and agreed to his departure only if he agreed to return to Hungary, the obligation of which he had to leave to his eldest son Hamid.

Al-Gharnati went on pilgrimage through Kiev, Saksin, and Khwarezm. However, from Mecca he did not go to either Hungary or to Saksin, where a part of his family lived, but returned to Baghdad where his longtime acquaintance Ibn Hubayra was vizier of caliph al-Muktafi for already the fifth year. Ibn Hubayra cordially met him and even got a letter of recommendation for Konya (Seljuk Sultan) with a request to assist al-Gharnati return to Hungary in order to retrieve his family. However, something prevented him from using the letter of the caliph, and he remained in Iraq.

During forty years of wandering al-Gharnati had seen as many extraordinary things as his interlocutors in Baghdad could ever dream: The Pillars of Hercules and distant Hungary, Bulgar frosts and short summer nights, log izbas and the huge Atıl River, bubbling over with extremely tasty fish. All of that was so amazing that the audience willingly believed the stories of the girl who walked out of a whale's ear, as well as all the other miracles. Admiring listeners had entreated Abu Hamid to record his stories about what he had seen and heard. He decided to finally do this after much deliberation: 'If not for these brave imams who asked me and wanted me to assemble this collection of works, I would not have started this collection because I do not consider myself capable of writing,' he wrote at the end of his first work 'Mu'rib 'an ba'd 'ajaib al- Maghreb' ('A clear presentation of certain Maghreb wonders') dedicated to Ibn Hubayra.

The book's success surpassed the expectations of the author, who stared skeptically at his abilities. Seven years later in 1162, while in Mosul, he wrote a second essay entitled first 'Tuhfat al-albab' ('Gift to minds'), and then in a somewhat more complete version it received the name by which it is best known: 'Tuhfat al-albab va nukhbat al-a'jab' ('A gift to minds and a selection of miracles'). A dedication to Mu'in ad-din Abu Hafs' Umar al-Malla, the head of the Sufis of Mosul, accompanied

<sup>643</sup> About the role of nomads in Hungary see [Rasovsky, 1933].

this version. The essay was read by the author in several lectures in the cell of Mu'in ad-din, ending 22 March 1162, and the listeners received the author's permission to distribute it on the basis of their own notes [Belyayev, 1957, pp. 70–71].

After graduating from the 'Tuhfat al-albab' al-Gharnati moved to Syria where he died in 1169–1170, 89 (or 69) years old. The simple writings of al-Gharnati have become very popular. 'Abu Hamid guessed the demand of future generations, and since that time the genre of cosmography combined with miraculous elements is becoming particularly popular' [Krachkovsky, 1957, pp. 302–303]. Perhaps that is why his first essay corresponding to such a demand to a lesser extent has been fully preserved in only one manuscript (in the library of the Academy of history in Madrid), while 'Tuhfat al-albab' has survived in at least 26 manuscripts [Tauer, *Annotationes*, pp. 299–300].

One of the 'Tuhfat al-albab' manuscripts was sent to the Asian Museum (now the Saint Petersburg branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies) in 1871 and, among other new additions, was described by B. Dorn, who detailed the content and translated into German a number of passages devoted to the Caspian and the Volga Regions [Dorn, 1873]. Subsequently, V. Bartold published a text passage from it about zirikhgarans. Knowing only 'Tuhfat al-albab,' V. Bartold had a low opinion about al-Gharnati and described him as a 'questionable' author [Bartold, *Op.*, Vol. IV, p. 121]. The same opinion was shared by many European orientalists.

Interest in this essay was growing in step with progress in Oriental Studies: in the early 1920s two orientalists named F. Tauer and G. Ferran, independently of one another and using different manuscripts, decided to publish critical texts on 'Tuhfat al-albab.' The edition by G. Ferran appeared in 1925, and F. Tauer had to unfortunately withdraw his plan, even though he took into account a greater number of manuscripts [Tauer, *Annotationes*, p. 298].

Ferran had used one of the five manuscripts of the National library in Paris as the basis of the publication, and ten other manu-

scripts, including the Leningrad one, which the publisher could only judge using the translations of B. Dorn for comparison. Ferran published a significant excerpt of the Algiers manuscript text omitted in other 'Tuhfat al-albab' manuscripts as an Annex<sup>644</sup>, as well as excerpts of the Zakaria al-Qazvini cosmography (13th century), which were quotations from al-Gharnati writings but missing in the 'al-Tuhfat albab'<sup>645</sup>.

G. Ferran's edition helped orientalists to familiarise themselves with this interesting written source, although they were not completely sure of its reliability. Much in the author's life remained unknown, and it was not always possible to distinguish his personal impressions between borrowing. A tinge of uncertainty in the assessment of Abu Hamid's information can be felt in those lines devoted to him by I. Krachkovsky [Krachkovsky, 1957, pp. 299–302].

The situation changed when in 1953 S. Dubler published a part of the al-Gharnati 'Al-Mu'rib 'en ba'd' ajaib al-Maghreb' manuscript he discovered in Madrid [Dubler, Abu Hamid], which before was known only by reference from a bibliographer of the 17th century the Hajji Caliph. The publication was accompanied by a Spanish translation and extensive research about Eastern Europe that is of little interest for us because of the abundance of well-known information but probably useful for a Spanish reader.

The new source containing fresh and sometimes unexpected information about Eastern Europe immediately attracted attention. In the following year an article by I. Hrbek was published, in which he introduced Czech readers to the content of the new work, included a translation of the most interesting passages, and suggested a number of amendments to the readings of S. Dubler [Hrbek, *Nový arabský pramen*]. A year later the same author completed a thorough review of the S. Dubler edition in terms of the methods of publication and the use of materials and provided an inter-

<sup>644</sup> These are mostly later inserts, some of them pointed out by G. Ferrand.

<sup>645</sup> As it has now been discovered, they were borrowed from 'Mu'riba.'

esting analysis of the al-Gharnati information used by Zakaria al-Qazvini [Hrbek, 1955].

The first article dedicated to the new source appeared in the USSR only in 1959. And it did not belong to the orientalist but to the archaeologist and Russianist A. Mongait, who in 1965 completed a detailed retelling of the content of al-Gharnati's works in a popular science magazine [Mongait, 1959; al-Gharnati, 1971]. In 1967 certain excerpts from this work were translated by B. Zakhoder [Zakhoder 1967, pp. 66–67, 16]. But it was obvious that the value of al-Gharnati's information on Eastern Europe required the complete annotated translation of the text published by S. Dubler, for which the author of these lines and A. Mongait took up their pens.

The first sentence, beginning clearly in the middle and featuring a definition without the defined, in the Arabic text's publication caused confusion. In the presence of some lacuna in the publication some leaner characters or clauses could be expected, but there was nothing like that. A summary of the unpublished part's content [Dubler, 1953, p. 133] only increased the confusion: there were descriptions of written sources and curiosities interspersed with topics clearly alien to al-Gharnati, such as astronomy and mathematics.

It was impossible to obtain a microfilm of this manuscript from Madrid. It was useful to briefly check the assumption of I. Hrbek that one of the 'Mu'riba' manuscripts might be hiding under a different name in the Gotha library. The catalog of the Gotha manuscript collection states: 'Description of the journey, the author, as he states in the introduction, was born in Grenada... The value of the journey's entire description is very low as he reported almost exclusively on miracles and therefore mostly meaningless fables' [Pertsch, p. 164]. The appraisal rating is not encouraging, but the catalog was composed of more than eighty years ago when al-Gharnati was considered as unreliable author, besides the appraisal is not important to us but for the fact that this manuscript is not of 'Tuhfat al-albab' but of some other works of the same author.

A microfilm of this manuscript appeared in our hands quickly through the kind assistance

of Dr. M. Robbe and S. Zerauki, colleagues from the former Academy of Sciences of the GDR. Even with a different title, the text of the works had much in common with the unpublished part of the 'Mu'riba' (without the astronomical and mathematical topics). Most importantly, it had a few pages covering the beginning of the S. Dubler edition and a preceding story in it.

The beginning of the essay read: 'This is the book 'Nukhbat al-azkhan'<sup>646</sup> fi 'ajaib al-buldan' ('A Selection of Memories on Wonderlands'). In the name of Allah, the Merciful and the Compassionate, and I trust in Him. Said the sheikh, the imam, the most learned, Abu Hamid ibn Abu-r-Rabi' 'Abd ar-Rahim ibn Sulaiman ibn Rabi' al Qaisi al-Andalusi al-Gharnati, Allah, have mercy on him! And then<sup>647</sup>: a group of people of science and faith asked me to tell them what I had seen of the wonders of other countries and seas, and what wonders I considered valid in messages suited to be taken authoritatively. And I agreed to what they asked for, asking for help from Allah, the great and glorious... And so I made this collection of works for the Abu'l-Muzaffar Yahya ibn Hubayra library.'

Later on the author says about himself: 'As for my name, it is Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rahim ibn Sulaiman ibn Rabi' al-Kaysi ibn Gaylan ibn al-Basir ibn Rida Abu Turab; as for the place of my birth, it is in the far West, on a [semi] island called al-Andalus—there are forty towns on it, and the place of my birth is in the one called al-Gharnata.' Then the story about the sights and wonders of Andalusia begins without any transition, about a cave with seven sleeping youths, about a copper town built by jinns to Sulaiman, about sea monsters and ocean tides. Most of this information is contained in the 'al-Tuhfat al-albab,' and there one cannot find any apparent order in their presentation. But from the descrip-

<sup>646</sup> In the Gothic manuscript, p. 1a, a dot above 'zāl' was missed [cf. GAL, I, p. 478, No.5, 2; SB I, p. 878; *ibid.* on other works of Abu-Hāmid; cf. Hrbek, 1955, pp. 112–113].

<sup>647</sup> A stylistic device signifying the transition from well-wishes and praises to the essence of the story.

tion of Sicily and Mount Etna's eruption<sup>648</sup> it is obvious that these are, if not travel notes, the memories of the journey presented more or less consistently that we have in front of us: Sicily, Malta [Goth. manuscript], Alexandria, Cairo, Ashkelon, Damascus, and there is nothing said about staying in Iraq as the notes were intended for al-Gharnati's Baghdad acquaintances, hereinafter Ardabil, Mugan, Baku, Derbent, and Saksin. The manuscript then breaks off at the description of Bulgar wooden houses. The manuscript is not very accurate, there are gaps restored in the margins, and some words are clearly distorted. There is no date of its rewriting; only the compilation date for this edition is recorded: 'The scribe of the book, whose name is Iskhaq ibn Caudal, is saying: 'I heard many such stories<sup>649</sup> when they led me captive into the country of Gurjies<sup>650</sup>, and I escaped from the Tartars and came out of Tiflis, heading to Baghdad' [Goth. manuscripts, pp. 16b–17a].'

The identity of the 'Mu'riba' and 'Nukhbat al-azkhan' Gothic manuscript is of no doubt because, fortunately, the end of the Gothic manuscript covers the Dubler edition text beginning (pp. 1–6). The discrepancies existing in this part are not so significant as to think that these are different essays—the same discrepancies occur, for example, in various manuscripts of 'Tuhfat al-albab,' and 'Mu'rib' and 'al-Nukhbat azkhan' are both devoted to one person, Ibn Hubayra.

This conclusion, based on a comparison of the Madrid and Gothic manuscripts, received additional confirmation in two manuscripts identified later in university libraries

of Damascus and New Jersey<sup>651</sup>. The first one contains text from the beginning (slightly abridged) to the mention of the Visu people's arrival in Bulgar. This essay is titled 'Al-Mu'rib 'an 'ajaib al-Mahib.' In the second one the beginning is missing, and the text begins with a description of the Mount Etna eruption and ends with a story of Saksin. All three additional manuscripts also had the types of mathematics and astronomic sections contained in the Madrid manuscripts that had nothing to do with 'Mu'rib.' The publication of the first half of the Madrid manuscript [Al-Gharnati, 1991] only allowed for a better idea of how that alien text had appeared.

In the published text of the first half this text explicitly breaks the narrative that we know from the three mentioned manuscripts. Moreover, it is obvious that the alien text had been included not by random passages but by certain blocks, notebooks of eight sheets each. For example, the text of 'Mu'riba' ends on the eighth page, then there is someone else's text after lacuna, on fols. 9a–33b, consisting of six pages. Furthermore, the text of 'Mu'riba' continues from fol. 40 to fol. 49b, ending with the words: 'And these are large pyramids in front of Fustat, they are three pyramids, and one of them is small and made from a marble cliff.' The next sheet with text from different content starts from the middle of the phrase: 'and after you had prayed to the [required] time, you should repeat it in due time ...' and then, instead of about ten pages with the end of Egypt's description, this foreign text continues up to fol. 95a, filling the space where the journey from Egypt to Derbent is described in 'Mu'riba,' and the text from the beginning of 'Mu'riba' about the wonders of Copper town appears on the reverse side of the sheet, while the text on the following sheet begins with the word 'large,' referring to the description of the Derbent mosque.

<sup>648</sup> I. Krachkovsky believed that al-Gharnati only asked one Sicilian in Baghdad about the eruption [Krachkovsky, 1957, p. 301], but al-Gharnati writes definitively in 'Mu'rib': 'I remained on the sea opposite this island for five days because there was no friendly wind for us, but on the sixth day we departed for Alexandria' [Gothic manuscript, p. 7a]; though there is no direct indication that he had been an eyewitness to the eruption, the text of the Gothic manuscript shows that only some pieces of information go back to the story of the Sicilian.

<sup>649</sup> Before this al-Gharnati tells about a village abandoned by its residents because of numerous snakes.

<sup>650</sup> That is, Georgia. *Tatars* here refers to Mongols that had invaded Transcaucasia.

<sup>651</sup> The manuscript 'ilm 8160 of az-Zahiriya library (currently in al-Assad National Library) comprises 10 pages, densely covered in small Maghreb-style handwriting, with an uneven number of lines (from 35 to 41). Manuscript of Princeton University [Garrett Collection, Yahuda Section. No. 3554, 44 fols.].

Such a strange composition of the first half of the Madrid manuscripts can be explained only by the fact that it was copied from a manuscript that was in poor condition, and they inadvertently added a few notebooks from the manuscript of another work as well. A more detailed analysis of this manuscript is only possible by being able to examine it directly.

The presence of four manuscripts provides the possibility to prepare the critical 'Mu'riba' text, but this is a future endeavour and does not relate to the purpose of this publication. The absence of any more information in these two manuscripts compared to those texts used for our translation allows us to leave it unchanged with just a few refinements.

The 'Mu'rib' is essentially a recording of the author's travel stories, of what he had seen and heard in distant countries. Its language is very simple with clear conversational intonations, and sometimes there are awkward repetitions characteristic of oral speech recorded by a listener but not for written works. In this work al-Gharnati is completely original and free of any literary borrowings as, excluding two verses from the author himself, there is not a single other verse citation in the text. The exception is an inserted story of the legendary tribe 'Ad, with a long mediocre poetic epitaph taken from the unknown work 'Siyar al-muluk' ('Biographies of tsars') of ash-Sha'bi.

But al-Gharnati came forth as a real writer in 'Tuhfat al-albab.' Its content is largely repeated from the 'Mu'rib,' but the composition and direction had changed a lot. Instead of travel notes, it was written as an essay about miracles and wonders. Even the table of contents emphasises this fact:

Chapter 1. Description of the world and its inhabitants of humans and jinn.

Chapter 2. Description of miracle countries and extraordinary buildings.

Chapter 3. Description of people and the strange animals in them.

Chapter 4. Description of caves and tombs.

A relatively coherent story from the 'Mu'riba' about the journey turned out to be scattered throughout different chapters, and the association between episodes was lost, some stories disappeared, and certain things were

added based on personal impressions not included in the 'Mu'rib,' but the main additions were drawn from literary sources. The essay 'Biographies of tsars' of ash-Shabi mentioned previously is the first of such sources. All the information about Shaddad ibn 'Ad, multicolour 'Iram, and people without heads living in the Sudan is taken from this essay [Ferran, 1925, pp. 46, 55, 124, 125]<sup>652</sup>.

Part of such fantastic information is borrowed from other books, for example, the halves of people living near San he wrote about referring to some work by the name of 'History of San' [Ferran, 1925, p. 45]. Some poems were added into the new book, which for the most part were included together with excerpts from the works that al-Gharnati used, as the poems that he introduced himself were of pious content. A poetic citation from al-A'shi was perhaps borrowed from the 'History of Yemen' together with the previous distich [Ferran, 1925].

It is these additions that made the 'Tuhfat al-albab' popular in the Islamic East. They caused a distrustful attitude to the information from al-Gharnati among orientologists. Descriptions of some marine animals, which actually had a very real basis [Jacob, 1892], were rejected as fabrications in the same way as notorious legends. Now it is easier than ever to separate the legendary stories that al-Gharnati heard in Eastern Europe from his literary borrowings.

It is, of course, important to us to know how much to trust the 'Mu'riba' messages of Eastern Europe, such realistic and easily allocated stories like a girl who came out of a whale's ear, or about a wonderful domed building in Khwarezm with inaccessible treasures, but other information is important as well, for example, the fur money. There can only be one answer: the story of al-Gharnati is so direct that there is no reason to suspect him of fabrications but of the fact that he borrowed these stories from unreliable informants. We can deal with his obvious exaggerations like a wondrous lizard he had seen somewhere in the Carpathian region, but we should not forget

<sup>652</sup> On 'Tuhfat al-albab' and al-Gharnati, see also [Matveyev, Kubbel, pp. 11–27].

that this is a typical man of the Middle Ages who is susceptible to the 'wondrous' and easily explains away everything incomprehensible to him. However, in all matters relating to everyday life, al-Gharnati was scrupulously accurate. This al-Gharnati, the old man who had already scattered so many wives and children throughout the world and was looking for new young slave-girls, is unpleasant to us because of his coarse and shameless practicality and his desire not to sacrifice profits, but this is a guarantee of the reliability of all the realities he reported. However, even the fantastic stories of al-Gharnati have some value to them. Some of them are already in the 'Note' of Ibn Fadlan, who visited the Volga Region in 922 AD. As shown by A. Kovalevsky, who exhaustively studied the 'Note,' these fantastic stories reflect the folklore of the Volga region's peoples [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, pp. 60–61] and in this respect can be considered their own kind of document. The repetition of the same stories by al-Gharnati, who visited here after more than two centuries (and we add—who knew nothing about his predecessor and his 'Note'), confirms once again the validity of A. Kovalevsky's conclusion.

A comparison of these two travellers' data is clearly in favour of al-Gharnati. If for Ibn Fadlan there are the legendary Yajuj and Majuj (Gog and Magog) just behind the land of Visu (whom Allah sends a giant fish to feed) [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 139], then al-Gharnati is discussing the very real Yura (Yugra) people, and in the story about the giant fish one can find frequent cases of whales beaching themselves on coastal shallows. A similar story about a giant fish beaching itself from being chased by an even greater one can be found in al-Gharnati in the description of the Atlantic coast of Spain and the Strait of Gibraltar [Goth. manuscr., sheets. 55a, b]. The size of these fish is a matter of the narrator's own caprice, but in that and in other cases everything is referring to very real whales. In defence of our author one can say that currently popular publications are guilty of tending to publish frequent fantastic posts on sea and lake monsters, so what could one demand from a person in the Middle Ages?

Similarly, the two authors tell the story of the giants in different ways. Ibn Fadlan's giant seems to appear out of nowhere. He comes by the river, is 12 cubit (6 m) tall, and eats humans and causes misfortunes with his evil eye. It is his skeleton but not him, that Ibn Fadlan reports to have seen [Ibn-Fadlan, 1956, pp. 138–139]. Al-Gharnati describes a real man who was extremely tall, whose name he knew and with whom he had met. Of course, al-Gharnati obviously exaggerated the giant's height<sup>653</sup> and probably also added some local legends about northern giants when speaking about him. It is hardly doubtable, however, that the man actually existed.

We will not analyse the information provided by al-Gharnati and their implications for ancient Russian and Bulgar history. Our purpose is to expound upon the general nature of al-Gharnati's works.

The intention was to only translate the text of 'Mu'riba' published by S. Dubler with a supplement from the Gothic manuscript, but it became apparent, as the work progressed, that it would also be reasonable to translate the relevant part of 'Tuhfat al-Albab.' Even though B. Dorn had translated almost the entire text into German, the translation had long become rare and hardly available. But the two works nevertheless complement each other, which justifies the idea of publishing their translations together. We translated as extracts from 'Tuhfat al-Albab' that deal with East and Central Europe apart from the 'Ad legend, which is in fact an exact duplicate of 'Mu'rib.'

The translation of 'Mu'riba' begins with the part from the Gothic manuscripts. The sheets of the manuscript are indicated in square brackets, followed by the relevant pages in S. Dubler's edition. 'Tuhfat al-Albab' was translated using G. Ferrand's edition, while the Leningrad manuscript was used as a reference for certain differences. Pages as per G. Ferrand are indicated in square brackets.

As the target audience is wide and includes nearly everyone who works in any way with

<sup>653</sup> According to Abu-Hamid, the giant was 7 cubits (3.5 m) tall, and he only came up to his waist. In this case the storyteller would have to be at least 2.2 m tall.

national history, the technical presentation of the translation is very simple. It does not contain many square brackets containing words that are implied in the text (although we were unable to fully avoid them) and is free of any transcription symbols in geographic and proper names, except for the apostrophe for the consonant Ayn (for a simplified transliteration of Arabic proper and common names and terms).

The notes were initially meant to be useful for those not professionally engaged in Oriental studies and therefore explained all the terms, legendary characters, concepts pertaining to Islamic law, etc. The text notes are aimed at clarifying unclear places so that historians not specialising in Oriental Studies can easily consider all possible interpretations and use the text for their research. The notes also mention differences from other translations, primarily the Spanish translation by S. Dubler. However, the requirements for the notes changed when the new manuscript appeared, and a large extract was translated using a text previously unknown and unpublished. In fact, it would be reasonable to present the critical text of the matching part of the two manuscripts and analyse the text of the

Gothic manuscript for the part preceding the text published by S. Dubler before completing the translation. But this supplement would not fit in the general style of the overall work.

The translator therefore limited clarifications to indicating differences and added new data concerning differences between the 'Mu'riba' and the 'Tuhfat al-Albab' to the preface. This made the notes more complicated, though they still remain inadequate for a special edition. Even though we realise this hybrid feature is a drawback, we do hope that its publication will generate the interest that the source deserves<sup>654</sup>. There is no doubt that a scientific edition of the entire text of al-Ghar-nati's new work will appear some day, either here or abroad.

In conclusion, the translator considers it his duty to express his sincere gratitude for all the remarks and corrections from his colleagues, employees of the I. Krachkovsky Arab Cabinet (Near East Sector, Saint Petersburg Branch of the Institute for Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences), and especially A. Khalidov, who kindly took the trouble of reading the proof-sheets and introduced a number of important corrections.

**Mu'rib an ba'd 'aja'ib al-Maghrib**  
(A Clear Account of Certain Wonders of Maghreb) or  
**Nubat al-azhan fi 'ajaib al-buldan**  
(Selected Memories from the Countries of Wonder)

[fol. 18b] On the shore of the Khazar Sea,<sup>655</sup> near the city known as Bakukh<sup>656</sup>, I saw an area where bitumen was coming up [from the soil]<sup>657</sup>; the area lies high above the sea; there is a lot of grass and a lot of game like gazelles and the like. People hunt them, chop their meat, and put it into their skins with salt and any cereals and other grains like rice, wheat, and more. Then they take a cane tube thick on both ends and use a rope to tie the skin around the game along with [an] end of the cane tube, after which they bury the meat in the ground<sup>658</sup>, leaving [the other] end of the cane outside. The meat boils in the ground, foam escapes through the tube, and when there is no more foam they know that the meat is cooked. Then they take it out of the soil and find it cooked like in a *harissa*<sup>659</sup>. Yet, there is no heat in the soil. A person sleeping on it does not feel it to be warm, they do not find the soil to be warm when they dig it [fol. 19a], but the food somehow emerges from the soil as hot as if it had been cooked over fire. It is one of the wonders of the world.

At night, flames like sulfur fire emerge right out of the grass in this area. When raindrops fall on the ground, the fire flares up and becomes more noticeable without burning anything or producing

<sup>654</sup> The translation of the 1971 edition into Hungarian [Abu-Hamid, 1985] and the translation by A. Khalidov into Tatar of the data from 'Mu'riba' concerning the Volga Region [Khalidov, 1976, pp. 148–152] testify to this.



heat. Oil is found in this area, so here the soil is as black as coal. They export local bitumen to other areas. It is a settlement on the shore of the Khazar Sea, which borders Derbent.

There is a mountain of black clay resembling bitumen in the sea, opposite to the oil and bitumen producing area, and the sea surrounds it. On its top there is a long fissure water oozes out from, and along with the water something like small stones used for scales<sup>660</sup> with a weight of *one danik*<sup>661</sup> or more emerge with it as well. The stones are used to make yellow beads that look like amber that people sell all over the world.

In the sea, not far away from the black land, there are two islands, and one of them is rife with snakes that cover it like grass. One cannot step onto the ground of that island because the snakes are so numerous that they lie on each other. But the snakes do not prevent birds on the island from laying eggs and breeding nestlings. When people get off their ships on the island to hunt for birds eggs and nestlings, they hold sharpened canes and sticks and use them to remove the snakes from their way so they can collect the eggs and nestlings from among the snakes [fol. 19b]. They harm neither humans, the birds, nor their eggs. Jinns own the other island. There are no animals there, but one can hear voices.

Description of Bab al-Abvab (Derbent)<sup>662</sup>. Its foundation is a cliff and a rock wall made from this cliff. It is long—three parasangs from the mountain to the sea—and as wide as an arrow flight; it has an iron gate. Maslama, son of 'Abd al-Malik—one of his sons—has conquered it<sup>663</sup>. He has many towers, and each tower contains a mosque, warrior homes, and upper rooms. On the wall there are guardians with bells on the side of the disbelievers' land who start to ring the bells as soon as night falls and praise Allah for the whole night. There are guardians on the towers throughout the day and night, and the guard changes often<sup>664</sup>.

Maslama's sword is outside of the city on a hill, where something like a *mihrab*<sup>665</sup> of a single piece of rock was built for the sword. The sword is propped against the wall of the *mihrab*, *un-sheathed*. Pilgrims only go there in white clothes. If somebody heads for the place while wearing dyed clothes, it starts to rain, and the wind begins to blow so heavily that the nearby villages can hardly survive it, so there are guardians in *rustaqs*<sup>666</sup> along the roads that lead to the hill to ban those who come to see the sword wearing coloured clothes.

There are two villages above<sup>667</sup> Derbent that lie on two large hills at the foot of the mountain, a day's trip away from there.

Outside of Derbent there is a spring in the woods, and [sheet 20a] a group of people come to sleep near it every night. Sometimes they see the water produce a light so bright that people can see one another. They call it Oblation Spring<sup>668</sup>.

I entered the Kalalat Mountains above Derbent, where many peoples [live]. They are all Muslims adherent to Islam, Allah have mercy on them! They speak different languages, and only Allah the Highest knows how many [peoples] there are. They live on high mountain tops where it is very cold and wear fur to protect themselves from the severe cold. They also wear heavy capes<sup>669</sup>. The people of this country live long, and they enjoy an abundance of honey, meat, and fruit in their valleys. They are generous people and have simple and cathedral mosques. There is a room near the *mihrab* of each mosque that they call the treasury<sup>670</sup>. When somebody who has no heir dies, they move their property to this room, which is intended for travellers. Part of zakat is also kept there<sup>671</sup>. In the opposite end of the mosque there is a large room<sup>672</sup> [4], which is meant for unlearned foreign guests. As for people of science<sup>673</sup>, they receive them in their houses. I was staying in the house of an emir of theirs known as Abu al-Kasim. His slaves slaughtered a ram for me every day. I would say to them, 'Is not there anything left of the previous ram?' and they would reply: 'Yes, [there is], but our master has ordered us to do this'<sup>674</sup>.

The emir was reading the 'Satisfying Book' by al-Mahamili<sup>675</sup> in *fiqh under my guidance*<sup>676</sup>; and he—Allah have mercy on him!—spoke different languages, such as [5] Lazgian, and Tabalan, and Filan, and Za'kalan<sup>677</sup>, and Kajtak, and Gumik, and Sarir, and Alan, and As, and Zarihkaran<sup>678</sup>, and Turkic, and Arabic, and Persian. People from these ethnic groups attended my classes, and he would explain [the content of the book] to each ethnic group in their language<sup>679</sup>.

Once when I was visiting the emir's sister, she said to her brother: 'Ask this man: If I am with my husband and he has a pollution, do I have to perform ablutions?' Bewildered by her, I said to him: 'Tell her<sup>680</sup> that an *Ansar woman*<sup>681</sup> asked the Messenger of Allah—Allah bless and save him!—a similar question, and he answered that if she sees water<sup>682</sup>, she should perform the ablutions. The Messenger of Allah—Allah bless and save him!—said that Ansar wives are the best wives. Their sense of shame does not prevent them from conceiving of<sup>683</sup> religion.' [5] I headed for the Khazar land by sea. I reached an enormous river which was many times larger than the Tigris, like a sea from which big rivers flow<sup>684</sup>.

There is a city known as Sajsin on it,<sup>685</sup> where forty Ghuzz tribes live<sup>686</sup>. Each tribe has an emir of its own. They [the Ghuzzes] have large yards with a felt-covered tent in each yard, very large, like a big dome large enough to host a hundred people and more. In the city there are merchants of different nations, along with foreigners, and Arabs from Maghreb.<sup>687</sup> There are thousands of them, more than one can count. There are cathedral mosques in the city where Khazars, who live in several tribes there, come for Friday prayers<sup>688</sup>. In the middle of the city lives the emir of Bulgar dwellers. They have a large cathedral mosque for Friday prayers, around which the Bulgars live<sup>689</sup>. There is another cathedral mosque, in which the people called Suvar dwellers<sup>690</sup>, who are also many, pray.

On holidays they carry out [sheet 20b] numerous *minbars*<sup>691</sup>, and each emir prays with many peoples. Each ethnic group have qadis<sup>692</sup>, *faqih*s<sup>693</sup>, and *khatibs*,<sup>694</sup>; and all are followers of Abū Ḥanīfah, except for the 'Maghrebis'<sup>695</sup>, who belong to the Maliki madhab, while foreigners belong to the Shafi'i madhab<sup>696</sup>, and my home is now among them, and [among them are] slave mothers<sup>697</sup>, and my sons, and my daughters<sup>698</sup>.

This area<sup>699</sup> is very cold. There are fishes in the river which I have never seen in the world. Only a strong man can carry one of the fish, and there is also a fish that only a strong camel can carry<sup>700</sup>. But some of them are also small<sup>701</sup>. There are no small bones in such fish; they do not even have head bones or teeth. It is like a fat mutton tail stuffed with chicken. No, it is even more enjoyable than fatty mutton and tastes better. They bake such fish and put rice in it, which makes it more delicious than fatty mutton and chicken<sup>702</sup>. People buy one hundred *manns*<sup>703</sup>, for *half a daniq of such fish*<sup>704</sup>. They produce enough fat from its belly to fuel a lamp for a month<sup>705</sup>, and a fish's stomach contains [7] half a mann or more of fish glue<sup>706</sup>. They dry-cure it in slices,<sup>707</sup> and it becomes better than any jerked meat in the world. It is red like transparent amber<sup>708</sup>; they eat it with bread as is without having to boil or fry it.

Tin is passable there; every eight Baghdad *manns*<sup>709</sup> cost *one dinar*<sup>710</sup>; they cut it into pieces and use it to buy whatever fruit, bread, and meat they want<sup>711</sup>.

Meat is cheap there. When the caravans of disbelievers arrive, they sell one ram for *half a danik*, while a lamb costs a *tassuj*<sup>712</sup>. They have more fruits than one can imagine, including extremely sweet melons<sup>713</sup>; there is a melon cultivar here that can survive the winter<sup>714</sup>.

Their winters are very cold, and<sup>715</sup>. their winter houses are made of large pine logs<sup>716</sup> arranged one on top of the other, with their roofs [8] and ceilings made of wooden boards<sup>717</sup>. They make<sup>718</sup> fire [inside] these houses. Their doors are small, and they use sheep skins with fur to cover them,<sup>719</sup> so it is as hot as in a bath inside. They have a lot of firewood.

When the river freezes, it becomes as hard as the ground, and<sup>720</sup> horses, calves, and other live-stock can walk on it<sup>721</sup>. They fight on this ice as well. I crossed the river width-wise when it was frozen, and it was one thousand eight hundred and forty-odd steps if measured using my steppes and not including its tributaries.

The Jinns have made<sup>722</sup> a thousand rivers near this river, each as big as a mile, for Sulayman<sup>723</sup>, and they removed the soil from them, and it seems like there is a mountain as wide as an arrow flight near the river, and there are a thousand similar mountains and a thousand rivers near it, deep rivers made with this river's water. Fish breed in them, and the fish become [numerous] like ashes. Any ship arriving to one of the rivers puts a net in the mouth of the river, [9] and they lead their

ships [to the mouth], filling them [with fish]<sup>724</sup>. Even if there were a hundred ships, one river would be enough to fill them with different types of fish, and the rivers would not be depleted. There is nothing like this.

There is land that would take several days to cross behind the rivers and the mountains all covered in salt<sup>725</sup>, red, and white, and blue, and many other colours. They fill ships with it and bring it to Bulgar along the river. It takes fourty days to travel from Sajsin to Bulgar along the river.

And Bulgar is also a huge city<sup>726</sup>, all built of pine, and the city wall is made of oak. And around it there are a lot of (different) peoples who are outside the seven climates<sup>727</sup>. When the day is long it lasts for twenty hours, and the night is four hours long. [10]. When winter comes, the night lasts for twenty hours, and the day is four hours long.

Summer middays are very hot there, hotter than in the rest of the world. But in the evening and at night air becomes so cold that they need a lot of clothes. I fasted there during the month of *Ramadan* in summer and broke the fast<sup>728</sup>, so I went to an underground room where there was water coming from underground. It can be very cold in winter, so cold that wood cannot stand the bitter frost and splits. The king starts campaigns against the disbelievers during the times of bitter cold and takes their wives, sons, and daughters as prisoners and steals their horses away from them. Bulgar citizens are the most enduring people in terms of the cold because most of their food and drink includes honey, which is cheap there.

In their land are the bones of the 'Ad tribe<sup>729</sup>; one tooth is two span wide and five span long. He [the giant] is five ba long from head to shoulder<sup>730</sup>, and his head is like a large dome. There are many of them in that place. [11]. Under the ground there are elephant tusks, white as snow and heavy as lead; one tusk weighs a hundred *manns* and can be heavier or less heavy. People do not know what animal it belonged to. And they export them to Khorasan and Khwarezm. They use them to make combs and boxes and other items. They are much like ivory, only stronger, for they do not break<sup>731</sup>.

'There are numerous people living above the land, and they pay *jizya*<sup>732</sup> to the Bulgar king. The meaning of the word *Bulgar* is a learned man. The thing is that a Muslim merchant came to them from Bukhara,<sup>733</sup> a *faqih* with a good knowledge of medicine. And the tsar's wife fell ill, and the tsar was severely ill. And they treated them with medicines traditional for them. And their malady grew worse so that they both started fearing death. And this Muslim told them: 'If I start treating you and manage to cure you, will you adopt my faith?' Both of them said: 'Yes.' He treated them, and they regained their health and adopted Islam, and the people of their country adopted Islam as well. And the Khazar king [12] came to them at the head of a large army and fought them, and said 'Why did you adopt this faith without my order?' And the Muslim told them: 'Do not be afraid, shout: 'Allah is great!' And they began to shout: 'Allah is great!' Allah is great! Praise Allah! God bless Muhammad and the clan of Muhammad!' and they had a battle with the king, and they made his army surrender. So the king concluded peace with them and adopted their faith, and he said: 'I saw huge men on grey horses who killed my warriors and forced me to flee.' And the theologian told them: 'The men are warriors of Allah the Great and Glorious.'

They call learned people *balar*; so they call the country Balar, meaning 'a learned person,' which they have Arabised into Bulgar. I read this in 'The History of Bulgar,' copied by a Bulgar qadi, who was a disciple of<sup>734</sup> Abu al-Ma'ali Juwayni<sup>735</sup>, may Allah have mercy on him.

[13] There is an area [in Bulgar] where [people] pay *kharaj*<sup>736</sup>, it is a month's travel away from Bulgar; they call it Visu<sup>737</sup>. There is another area, which they call Aru<sup>738</sup>, where people hunt beavers, and ermines, and excellent squirrels. The day there lasts for twenty-two hours in the summer. They export extremely good beaver skins.

The beaver is a fascinating animal. It lives in large rivers and builds houses on the river bank; they make something like a high sufa for himself<sup>739</sup>. On his right there is a step for his wife, a little lower than his, and on his left there is one for his children.

[14] His slaves live in the bottom part of the house. There is a door in the house that opens onto the river, and one a little higher than that that opens onto land. Beavers feed alternately on *khalanj trees*<sup>740</sup> and fish. They attack each other and take each other prisoner. Merchants in that country and in Bulgar can tell what skin belonged to a slave beaver because the slave beaver cuts *khalanj trees* for its master and uses its mouth to pull it aside, so the tree-cutter brushes its sides against the trees, and its fur falls out on the right and left sides of the skin. This is how [they judge] when they say 'This is a slave beaver.' The master beaver has no marks on its skin. Allah the Almighty says: '...And unchastity and the fear of God were instilled in her'<sup>741</sup>.

Behind Visu, in the Sea of Darkness, there is a region called Yura<sup>742</sup>. Their day can be very long. Merchants say the sun does not set for forty days, and the nights can be just as long in winter [15]. Merchants say that the people of Darkness are not far away from them, and that the people of Yura enter the Land of Darkness with torches and find a giant tree like a large settlement, and on it a large animal, they say it is a bird. And they bring goods, and [each] merchant places his items<sup>743</sup> separately and marks them before he leaves. Then they come back and find the goods that their country needs. Every person finds some articles near their goods, and if he agrees, he takes them. If he does not, he takes his articles and leaves the others. There is no deception in these transactions. They do not know who buys their goods.

And people bring swords from the countries of Islam, which are produced in Zanjan, and in Abhar, and Tabriz, and Isfahan in the form of blades without a hilt or ornament, just iron as it comes from the flame. And those sword are tempered [16] hard, so if a sword is hung with a thread and hit by a nail or something iron or wooden, the noise lasts on and on.

Those are the kinds of swords that can be imported to Yura. The people of Yura wage no war. They have neither riding nor pack animals, only giant trees and woods with plenty of honey and a lot of sables, the meat of which they eat. And merchants bring them such swords and ram bones, and they pay for them with sable skins, which is very profitable for the merchants.

The road that leads to them runs on land that is always covered in snow. People fashion foot boards and pare them, which are one *ba long* and one span wide. The front and end part of the board are elevated above the ground. In the middle of the board there is a place where the walker puts his foot, and there is an aperture in it where strong leather straps are attached to fix the walker's feet [17]. The two foot boards are connected with a long strap like a horse rein. They hold it in their left hand, and in their right they hold a stick as long as the man himself is. On the bottom of the stick there is something like a textile ball stuffed with a lot of wool that<sup>744</sup> is the size of a human head, but light-weight. They use the stick to push off the snow behind them like sailors do aboard ships<sup>745</sup>, and they move quickly atop the snow. Nobody would be able to walk there but for this invention, for the snow is like sand on the ground; it does not clump up at all. Whatever animal walks on the snow sinks into it and dies in it, except for dogs and light animals like the fox and the hare; it is easy for them to walk quickly on it. Fox and hare skins grow so white in this country that they look cotton, and wolves also become white. Their fur grows white in winter in the area of Bulgar. [18] The swords that they bring in from countries of Islam to Bulgar yield great profit. The Bulgars then take them to Visu where the beavers live, Visu dwellers then take them to Yura, and the people [there] buy them for sable skins and for slaves, male and female. Every person living there needs a sword every year to throw into the Sea of Darkness. When they throw in their swords, Allah gives them a sea fish like a huge mountain, which another fish, many times larger, chases to eat. The smaller fish tries to escape from it and approaches the shore, and it finally finds itself in a place from where it cannot return to the sea, and it stays there. The larger fish cannot get the smaller one, so it returns to the sea.

Yura dwellers board ships and sail out to the sea to cut off [flesh from] its sides. The fish does not feel this and does not move, they fill their houses with its flesh and climb its back; it is like a huge mountain. It stays there for a while until [19] they have finished cutting it. Everyone who

threw a sword into the sea gets his share of the fish. Sometimes the sea water gets high, and the fish floats back to the sea when a hundred thousand houses or more are filled with its meat<sup>746</sup>.

When in Bulgar, I was told that they made a hole in the fish's ear in one of those years, and put ropes through it, and pulled the fish. The fish's ear opened, and a girl stepped out of it, looking like Adam's descendants. She had fair skin and rosy cheeks, black hair and a fat bottom; she was the most beautiful of all women. The people of Yura brought her to shore, and the creature<sup>747</sup> began slapping herself on the face, tearing her hair and screaming. And Allah created something like white skin, which looked like strong thick fabric in her midsection, from waist to knee, covering her loins, like an *izar*<sup>748</sup> wrapped around her waist and covering her loins. They kept her until she died there. Indeed, there are no bounds to Allah's might!<sup>749</sup>

[20] They say that<sup>750</sup> if the people of Yura do not throw the swords that I have mentioned into the sea, they will not have fish and will die of hunger.

The people of Visu and Yura must not enter the Bulgar country in summer, for when any of them enter the area, even on a very hot day, the air and water gets as cold as in winter, and crops fail. They have tested this. I saw a group of them in Bulgar during the winter, rosy-cheeked and blue-eyed. Their hair is as white as linen, and in such cold weather they wear linen clothing. Some of them wear coats made from beaver fur with the fur turned outward. They drink a drink of barley, as sour as vinegar [21]. This is good for them because of their hot tempers, which they get because they eat beaver and squirrel meat and horse. There is a large long-beaked bird in their country, and such birds have their beaks turned right and left, namely the upper half is turned six spans to the right, and [the lower one] is turned six spans to the left, forming something like *lam-alif*<sup>751</sup>. When the bird eats or drinks, it closes its mouth to eat or drink. The meat of this bird is helpful for kidney and bladder stones. They bring it to town as slices of jerked meat. When its eggs fall onto ice or snow, it melts it like fire. It only lives on the ground or on a tree<sup>752</sup>.

When I traveled to the country of Slavs, I left Bulgar and travelled aboard a ship along the Slavic river. Its water is as black as that in the Sea of Darkness. It is like ink but tastes good and sweet; it is clear. There are no fish there but large black snakes, one on top of another. They are more numerous than fish but do not harm anyone. There also lives an animal like a small black cat known as the water sable. They export its skins to Bulgar and Sajsin, and they live in that river.

When I arrived in their country, I saw it to be large and rich in honey, and wheat, and barley, and large apples that are better than any other apples I have had. Life is cheap there.

They use old squirrel skins without fur on them [23], which are good for nothing and cannot be used in any way, as money. If the squirrel head, and leg skin is undamaged, the Slavs exchange eighteen skins for a silver dirham. They tie the [skins in] a bunch, which they call a *chakan*<sup>753</sup>. One skin like this is worth an excellent round loaf of bread, which is enough for a strong man.

Such skins are used to buy all kinds of goods, including male and female slaves, gold, silver, beavers, and more. In any other country they would not pay a *habba*<sup>754</sup> for a thousand bunches like this, and they would be of no use. When they [the skins] rot in their houses, they carry them in bags, [sometimes even] torn, and head with them to a famous market, where there are certain people, and workers before them. And so they put them in front of them, and workers put them on strong threads, eighteen to a bundle, and put a piece of black lead on the end of a thread and stamp it with a seal with an image of the king on it. They take one skin for each stamp until all have been stamped. Nobody can refuse them as they are used to sell and buy things.

[24] The Slavs have strict laws<sup>755</sup>. If somebody injures another person's slaves, or son, or livestock, or violates a law, a fine is imposed on the violator. If he does not have the money, they sell his sons, and daughters, and his wife to compensate for the crime. If he has not a family or children, they sell him. And he remains a slave to his master until he dies or pays what has been paid for him. Nothing is added to his value for his service.

And their country is safe. When a Muslim has a deal with one of them, and the Slav is bankrupt, he sells his children and his house<sup>756</sup> and repays the debt to the merchant.

The Slavs are brave. They profess Byzantine Nestorian Christianity and are surrounded by people who live in the woods and shave their beards. Their homes are on [the banks of] an enormous river, and they hunt beavers in the river. I have been told that there is a lot of witchcraft every ten years, and it is their old sorceresses who harm them. Then they grab all the old women in their country, tie up their hands and feet, and throw them into the river. If an old woman begins to drown, they leave her alive, for they know that she is not a sorceress. If she stays on the surface, they burn her<sup>757</sup>.

I stayed with their caravan for a long time, their country is safe. *Kharaj* is what they pay to the Bulgars. They have no religion but worship a tree, in front of which they bow to the ground. The person who told me this is well aware of their circumstances.

And I arrived in the Slavic city known as Gor Kerman<sup>758</sup>. There are thousands of 'Maghrebians' in it<sup>759</sup> who look like Turks, speak the Turkic language, and shoot arrows like the Turks do. In that country they are known by the name Bejn[ak]<sup>760</sup>.

And I met a man from Baghdad named Karim ibn Fayruz al-Jawhari, who was married to the [daughter] of one of the Muslims. I held a Friday prayer for the Muslims and taught them the *khutbah*<sup>761</sup>, and they were not aware of Fridays prayers. [26] Some of my companions, whom I had been teaching, stayed with them, and I went to the *Bashkird people*<sup>762</sup>, who live a forty-day travel up away from the<sup>763</sup> Slavic land, past numerous pagan peoples. They live among tall trees and gardens. I have not seen such [large] trees in the whole world; they do not bear fruit.

Once I looked at the foot of a tree and saw something like a lizard,<sup>764</sup> with legs and arms, [it looked] as if Allah the Almighty had brought it there from Heaven. It seemed to be made of red transparent corundum, so clear that you could see through it,<sup>765</sup> and of pure shiny gold; I have never seen everything like this in the whole world, [27] it looked like a flawless artistic masterpiece. I was bewildered by its beauty. My mounted companions rode up and surrounded it. It appeared as if there was magic in its eyes, turning its head right and left but without moving as if it were not afraid of us.

So I arrived in the country of Unkuriya (Hungary), inhabited by the people known as the *Bashkird*, the first to come out of the Turk country and enter that of the Franks. They [the Hungarians] are brave and very numerous. Their land, which is known as Unkuriya, consists of 78 cities. Each of the cities has a lot of fortresses, and districts, and villages, and mountains, and forests, and gardens. Thousands of 'Maghrebians' inhabit it<sup>766</sup>, there are more than one could count. There also live thousands of Khwarezmians, more than one could count<sup>767</sup>. While serving their kings, the Khwarezmians pretend to profess Christianity but are secretly Muslim. The Maghrebians only serve the Christians at wartime and profess Islam openly.[28] When I arrived to the land of the Maghrebians, they gave me a respectful welcome. I taught them some science<sup>768</sup> and taught some of them to speak Arabic. I made them revise and memorise mandatory instructions concerning prayers and other ways of worshiping Allah without sparing myself. I told them briefly what hajj is<sup>769</sup> and what inheritance rules exist, so they began to divide their heritage [in the Islamic way].

One of them said to me: 'I want to copy a book to study'<sup>770</sup> (and he could already speak Arabic well). I answered him: 'Try to memorise and understand it, and do not speak of books without an *isnad*'<sup>771</sup>, and you will reach success if you do so.' And he said: 'Did not you say: 'The Prophet, may Allah bless and save him, said one should use writing to reinforce their knowledge?' I answered him: 'There is no knowledge in the book. There is only script that leads to knowledge; they become knowledge when memorised for knowledge is characteristic of a learned man,' and quoted my verse to him:

Knowledge in your heart is not like that in books,  
And do not indulge in games and entertainment.

[29] And I quoted another poem of mine for him:

If you write down your knowledge and put it in a chest  
without memorising it, you will fail.  
Only one who memorises it through remembering  
and fathoming it can succeed by preventing errors<sup>772</sup>.

'When you have memorised it, write it down from your memory. This will be knowledge reinforced through writing. If you copy it from the book, it will be a copied manuscript and not knowledge. Bear this in your mind.'

They had not known how to pray on Fridays, so they learned the Friday prayer and *khutbah*<sup>773</sup>, and I told them: 'Indeed, the Prophet, may Allah bless and save him, said: 'The Friday prayer is *the Hajj* for the poor; those who cannot afford to perform the *Hajj* but attend Friday prayers will reap the reward of the *Hajj*.' Now they have over 10,000 places where they deliver *khtubah* on Friday, openly or secretly, for their area is enormous. I spent three years with them but was only able to visit four cities. This area<sup>774</sup> spreads from Great Rumia<sup>775</sup> to the borders of Kustantiniya<sup>776</sup>. There are mountains where gold and silver are produced. [30] This country is one of the most abundant and wealthiest. Some rams are sold for a dinar per twenty animals, lambs and goatlings cost a dinar per thirty animals, honey costs a dinar per 500 *ritls*, and a beautiful slave woman costs ten dinars. During raids they buy an excellent slave woman for three dinars, and a Rum male slave...<sup>777</sup>.

I bought a female slave who was born a slave<sup>778</sup>, whose father, mother, and brother were alive. I bought her from her master for eight dinar, [she was] fifteen years of age, more beautiful than the full moon, black-haired and black-eyed, as white as camphor, and could cook, sew, and count. And I bought another slave from Rum, aged eight, for five dinars.

Once I bought two full jars of honeycomb with wax for half a dinar and told her: 'You have to purify the honey by separating the wax,' and then went to the *sufa*<sup>779</sup> near the gate of my house, where people gathered, and spent some time with those people. Then I entered the yard and saw five wheels of wax, as pure as gold, and a large jar of honey that looked like rose water. The honey had been purified and poured into jars within one hour.

She gave birth [31] to a son, and he died. I set her free and called her Mariam. I wanted her to follow me to Saqsin, but I was afraid for her because of the Turkic mother slaves that I had in Saqsin.<sup>780</sup>

The king of the *Bashkird people* is constantly ravaging Rum. I told those Muslims: 'Enact *jihad*<sup>781</sup> with the king, and you will be rewarded for this *jihad*. They followed him to Kustantiniya and put twelve armies of the king of Rum to flight. And they brought a group of Turkmen from the army of Konya. I asked some of them: 'Why did you join the troops of the Rum king?' They replied, 'He hired each of us for two hundred dinars, and we did not know that there were Muslims in this land.' I sent them to the country of Rum so that they could go back to Konya.

And the ruler of Kustantiniya arrived to ask for peace, and he gave away a lot of money and [returned] a lot of captive Muslims. And some of the captive Muslims who had been to Rum told me that the king of Rum had asked: 'Why did the king of the *Bashkird people* wage war against my country and ravage it, which is not like he is known to do?' The reply was: 'The king of the *Bashkird people* has an army of [32] Muslims who he has permitted to profess their religion openly. It is they who brought him to your kingdom and ravaged your country.' And the king of Rum said: 'The Muslims in my land do not fight by my side.' They replied: 'You force them to convert to Christianity.' He said, 'I have never forced Muslims to adopt my religion and have [even] built mosques for them to make them fight by my side.'

The name of the king of the *Bashkird people* is *Kirali*<sup>782</sup>, and his kingdom is many times larger than that of the ruler of Rum, and his army is uncountably large. And his country is a twenty-days trip or even more larger than Rum. He professes the faith of the *Ifranj*<sup>783</sup> because he has an Ifranj

wife, and he undertakes campaigns against the *Ifranj* country and takes prisoners there. And all peoples are afraid of being at war with him because of his large army and enormous courage.

After finding out that I prohibit Muslims to drink wine and permit them to have concubines and four free wives, he said: 'This is unwise for wine reinforces the body, while [possessing] many women weakens the body and the mind; the religion of Muslims is unsound.' [33] I told the interpreter: 'Tell the king the following: The reason why the law of Muslims is different from that of Christians is because Christian's drink wine at mealtimes like water without getting drunk, and it reinforces him, while a Muslim who drinks wine only wants to get very drunk, and his mind fades away, and he becomes like a madman; He commits adultery, and murder, and blasphemy, so he is good for nothing, and he gives away his arms and horse and spends his money to enjoy more wine. They are here, they are your army. When you order them to set off for a campaign, they will turn out to have no horse, arms, or money, for they will have lost them because of drinking. Bear it in your mind that you will either kill them, or beat them, or send them away, or you will have to give them a horse and arms, which they will once again lose. As for concubines and wives, copulation is suitable for Muslims because of their hot temper. In addition, they are your army. If their children become numerous, your army will grow, too.'

And he said, 'Listen to the old man. He is truly wise. Get married the way you want; I will not prevent you from doing so.' The king opposed priests and permitted [people to have] concubines. The king had a love for Muslims. [34] So I left with them my eldest son Hamid, who was thirty-odd years old on the day that I left him, and he had two wives, the daughters of well-respected Muslims, and sons. And he was a decent [scholar]. When he was a child, I would give him *half a daniq of such fish* for each question that he memorised<sup>784</sup>.

In [the land of] Bashkird [there live] wild bulls the size of elephants. Two strong mules are used to carry the skin of one such bull, and people use a cart to carry its head. They hunt them and call them *saytal*<sup>785</sup>. This is one of the most wonderful animals. It has delicious, fatty meat and large long horns like elephant tusks. [35] When in that country, I saw a lot of graves of people from the 'Ad tribe. They pulled out half of the root of a front tooth from one of them; it is a span wide and weighs 1,200 *mithqals*<sup>786</sup>. And one of them had a shin so large that I could not lift the bone from the ground with one hand.

Ash-Sha'bi<sup>787</sup> mentions in his book 'The Book on the Lives of Kings' that when Shad-dad ibn 'Ad was building the columned 'Iram<sup>788</sup>, he sent the son of his fraternal uncle ad-Dahhak ibn 'Alwan ibn 'Iram ibn Sam<sup>789</sup>, accompanied by ten thousand giants, to Iraq and Khorasan. A faithful man, a follower of Hud,<sup>790</sup> may peace be with him, named Lam ibn 'Abir ibn 'Ad ibn 'Iram accompanied them. And [he reports] that ad-Dahhak threatened him and was apprehensive of him because Lam forbade Dahhak to be unfair, hostile, and vicious. And ad-Dahhak said to him: 'Indeed, you are opposed to the king and follow the religion of Hud.' And he went away to escape from ad-Dahhak. He went northward until he reached the desert area behind Great Rumia, where there were no people. There he found a lead mine and erected a building with a dome and with a circumference of four thousand cubits and a thousand cubits high, and he was buried in it. And [he reports that] when Lam ibn 'Abir was gone, ad-Dahhak sent two of his emirs to find him, and each emir was accompanied by an army of his adherers. One arrived in Bulgar, and the second in Bashkirs, and they looked for him in the northern countries but failed to find his trace. And ad-Dahhak was killed, and the giants remained in the land of the Bulgars and the *Bashkirds*, where their tombs are now. [36] There is a marble slab on the grave of Lam ibn 'Abir in the lead-domed building that he erected with the following verse on it:

I am Lam, son of 'Abir, who changed the darkness of polytheism for sincere faith,  
Saying, there is no god but Him my Lord, in whom is my refuge.  
And Ad-Dahhak and disbelievers wanted me to follow them, blind and mistaken,  
And I left the country with my people, vacating my home and land for him.



I believed in Allah<sup>791</sup>, the god of Idris<sup>792</sup> and Noah,  
 and was sure that revenge would come.  
 I lived in the desert for a long time,  
 fearing and hiding from the disobedient ones.  
 With the help of Allah, the possessor of might,  
 I built what you see from lead plates [37]  
 and ordered my sons to bury me inside it in my cloaks and shirts.  
 A century after me a Hashimid prophet will come<sup>793</sup>,  
 the superior and the best [of prophets],  
 god-fearing, pious, merciful,  
 and gracious to orphans and the poor who starve.  
 Oh If only I could live to see him in order to achieve  
 what I desire and [obtain] the dignity of the chosen ones!

When in Bulgar, I saw a descendant of the 'Adits who was over seven cubits tall; I came up only to his waist<sup>794</sup>. He was strong for he could take a slaughtered horse, break its bones, and tear its skin and sinews quickly, within a moment, while I would not be able to even chop it with an axe so quickly. And the king of Bulgar produced chain armor for him, which he brought to war in a cart. And his helmet was of iron and shaped like a large pot. He fought with a giant, very long club of strong oak, which a strong man cannot lift [38]; in his hands it was like a stick that any one of us could hold. The Turks had great respect for him, and they would run away if they saw him coming their way, saying, 'Our god is angry with us.' But at the same time he was polite, virtuous, and peaceful. There was no bath in Bulgar that would be large enough for him, except for a single high bath with a wide door.

So I asked the king of the *Bashkird people* to let me go to the Muslim land of Sajsin and said: 'My children and my wives are there. I will come back to you if Allah so wishes.' And he said, 'Leave here your eldest son Hamid, and I will send a Muslim messenger to accompany you so that he can bring me good archers from among the Muslims and the Turks.' And he sent a letter to the Slavic King along with me, sealed with red gold bearing an image of the king. And he sent a man named Isma'il ibn Hasan, one of those who had been reading under my guidance, with me. He was the son of brave Muslim emirs who professed the religion openly and accompanied by his *gulyams*<sup>795</sup> and a group of his acolytes<sup>796</sup>. [39] When I arrived in the country of the Slavs, the king received me with esteem for respect of his letter and fear of him [the Hungarian king]. And we spent the winter there and headed for the Turkic land, Sajskin being our destination, in the early spring. I was accompanied by 'Abd al-Karim ibn Fayruz al-Jawhari, who left the Slavic country along with his wife and son, left his wife in Sajsin, and returned to the Slavic country.

I gathered a group of Muslim archers for the messenger and sent along one of my disciples who was accompanying me, one of those who had learned some *Sharia*<sup>797</sup>, and said: 'I am going to complete *the Hajj* and will return home, Allah willing, through Konya.' When they had left for the Bashkird [country], I [started off] and travelled by sea for three months to reach Khwarezm, where I had already been.

The country of Khwarezm [covers] a hundred parasangs<sup>798</sup>, and there are many cities, settlements, and *rustaqs*<sup>799</sup>, and fortresses in it. There are fruits in it [Khwarezm] like I have never seen in any of the countries [40] that I have visited. There is a melon cultivar which is tastier and more pleasant than sugar and honeycomb. They also have a melon cultivar with green skin and black spots on it, while the flesh inside is as red as carnelian, and extremely sweet and dense. One melon weighs ten *manns*<sup>800</sup>, or less, or more. They hang them up in their houses for the winter and sell them on the market. They also have grape cultivars that are like dates, both red and white, which they hang up for the winter; they are cheap. There are also apples, and pears, and pomegranates,

and they always decorate their shops with them, especially in spring, and it looks as if they were freshly picked in the garden.

[41] The dwellers of Khwarezm are decent scholars, poets, and noble people. Their preacher al-Muwaffak ibn Ahmad al-Makki told me that he had met Vizier 'Awn ad-din<sup>801</sup>, and he said to me: 'Among the viziers that I have seen, there was not one more decent, virtuous, and generous than Vizier 'Awn ad-din.' One of the vizier's slaves, named 'Abd al-Wahid ibn Faruz al-Jawhari, would often visit me, and I could see that he was grateful [to the vizier]. Sheikh *Faqih* Mahmud ash-Safi'i, a *Sunni imam*, he said, 'When the preacher and I were visiting Vizier 'Awn ad-din, the vizier who rules the faithful, in Baghdad, the preacher praised the ruler of the faithful in verse in the presence of 'Awn ad-din. And they told him in Divan<sup>802</sup>: 'Stand while reciting verse to praise the ruler of the faithful.' So the preacher and I were standing while the verse was being recited to praise the ruler of the faithful in the presence of Vizier 'Awn ad-din, may Allah prolong his glory!'

There is a miracle near Khwarezm, on the way to Sajsin, eight parasangs away from Khwarezm. There is a large ravine in the mountain in which a high hill is situated. On the hill there is a building like a mosque with a dome and four large arched doors. The mosque is filled with gold bricks visible to eye, and everyone who stops near it sees them. Around the hill there is still water surrounding it, which cannot be refilled but with rain or snow during the winter. One can see the ground under the water, which appears to be two cubits or less deep; there is green scum on its surface, and the water stinks. Nobody dares step into it or stick a hand or foot into it. As soon as one puts something into the water, it is devoured and is gone, and one cannot see where it has disappeared. The water is about a hundred cubits wide.

Mahmud, the ruler of Ghazna<sup>803</sup>, who was a great and powerful king, once came to this place and spent some time there. And they brought boats; as soon as a boat touched the water, it sank. Then he ordered his troops to fetch soil, and cane, and wood, and rocks on all of their horses and camels. They began to throw it all into the water and could not understand where it kept disappearing to. And they inflated wineskins, and furskins, and cows' and ewe's bladders, and they disappeared without a trace upon breaking the surface.

And the king of Khwarezm, Khwarezm Shah 'Ala ad-Dawla<sup>804</sup>, may Allah have mercy on him, stayed there. He exerted a great effort for this treasure, but it would not yield anything to him.

They say that if an animal gets into the water, it can never get out, even if it is attached to something with ropes and there are people pulling it. It will disappear in the water anyway. If a strong man shoots an arrow, it will reach the gold. There is so much gold in it [the mosque] that it is priceless, and it lies there openly. Everyone who comes there from Khwarezm can see it, including travellers and unbelievers, but there is no way to get it unless Allah so wills. It is one of the wonders of the world.

One of the *faqih*s in Khwarezm told me that a *rustaq* dweller had come to Khwarezm<sup>805</sup> and produced a bowl of green emerald, which looked like nothing else in the market. People brought him to the Khwarezm Shah. And he said to him: 'Where did you find this?' And he replied: 'I went to look at the treasure and saw a large green dome like this cup, in which there was a tomb with a tombstone this green and large cups on it. I could not carry any of them because they were heavy and large, and this was the smallest one that I found there. I marked the door with a stone.' So the Khwarezm Shah set off with his troops and arrived at the place that the villager had described. And the Khwarezm Shah said: 'Jinns made it.' And he gave the villager a certain amount of money to cover his *Kharaj*. The cup is priceless; but Allah knows better.

The Khwarezm Shar dug a canal from Jayhun<sup>806</sup>, which he wanted to lead to that place, but died without finishing it.

This was a brief account of what I saw. if I explained it in detail, the book would be too long; a brief description is enough. If it had not been for the decent imams, who asked and wanted me to compile this collection of works, I would not have begun this collection of works for I do not believe that I am a gifted writer.

It was in the year 53 that I left the Bashkird [country]<sup>807</sup>, and I left Sajsin for Khwarezm in 54, and then I left Khwarezm to do the *Hajj c Rabi'* al-Awwal of the year 55 in *Shawwal*...<sup>808</sup>.

I completed *the Hajj* and returned to Baghdad. And Vizier 'Awn ad-Dawla, the glory of Islam and the chosen one of the *imam*, the honour of all mortals who glorifies his state, the patron of the community, the crown of kings and sultans, the head of viziers, the centre of the East and the West, chosen by the caliphate, the assistant of the ruler of the faithful, may Allah kindly prolong the suppression of any enemies of his state, supported me. And he gave me more clothes of honour and money and did more favours than I could count. And he took a letter for me from His Majesty Caliph—may Allah extend his shadow<sup>809</sup> over the two worlds from the East of the earth to the West and inflict shame on his enemies!—in which he wrote to the ruler of Konya, king Mas'ud's son,<sup>810</sup> may Allah save him, so that I could go to the Bashkird [country] via his land. Oh if Allah Almighty allowed my arrival and meeting with my family and children, for it is not hard for Allah, it is easy for him, as he can do anything!

I praise Allah, the Lord of the Worlds! May Allah bless our lord Muhammad, the seal of prophets<sup>811</sup>, and his family, and his companions, and his wives, and all of his descendants. Allah is sufficient for us; he is the ultimate protector!

**Tuffat al-albab wa nuhbat al-a'jab**  
(A Gift to Minds and Selected Curiosities)

[82] In the country of Derbent Bab al-Abwab<sup>812</sup> there are a people known as [83] *the Tabar-Salan*, they have twenty-four *rustaqs*; there is a high *commander, like an emir*, in each *rustaq*. They are Muslims who converted to Islam in the time of Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik, when Hisham ibn 'Abd al-Malik as the caliph sent him to conquer Bab al-Abwab<sup>813</sup>. And numerous peoples adopted Islam from his hands, including *the Lakzan*, and *the Filan*, and *the Khaydaq*, and *the Zaqlan*, and *the Gumiq*, and *and the Darhah*. There are a total of<sup>814</sup> seventy peoples, each of which has a language of its own.

When Maslama wanted to leave after visiting in Derbent 24 thousand Arab families<sup>815</sup> from Mosul, Damascus, Homs, and Tadmor, and Halab, and other cities in Syria and Jazirah<sup>816</sup>, the Tabar-Salan people told him: 'Oh Emir! We are afraid that these peoples will break from Islam when you leave, so being their neighbours will bring trouble upon us.'

Then Maslama [84] produced his sword and said: 'My sword will be among you<sup>817</sup>, leave it here, and none of these peoples will abandon Islam as long as you have it among you.' And they made something like a *mihrab* in a rock for the sword and placed it there on the hill where [Maslama's] camp was. It is still in that land, and people make pilgrimages to see it. It is not forbidden to wear blue and other coloured clothes if one goes to see it in winter. If one makes the pilgrimage during the harvest time, one must not wear clothes of any colour but white, and if somebody visits it wearing clothes that are not white, it begins to rain heavily, and the rain spoils the crops and fruit. This is a well-known fact for them.

Not far from Derbent there is a large mountain with two settlements at its base; they are inhabited by a people known as the *Zirihgaran*, meaning armour people. They make military munitions, such as coats of mail, and helmets, and swords, and spears, and arrows, and daggers, and various copper articles. All of their wives, and children, and daughters, and slaves, both male and female, do these crafts. Even though they have no arable fields and gardens, they have more wealth and money than others because people bring different goods to them from all across the world.

They have no religion but pay no *jizya*<sup>818</sup>. When one of them dies, if it was a man, they give him to men in underground houses. They cut off the dead man's limbs, remove the flesh and marrow from their bones, collect his flesh and feed black ravens with it, standing there with bows to prevent other birds [85] from eating any of his flesh. If it was a woman, they give her to underground men,

take out her bones and feed her flesh to kites, standing there with arrows to prevent other [birds] from approaching her flesh<sup>819</sup>.

When in Derbent, I asked Emir *Isfahsalar*<sup>820</sup> 'Abd al-Malik ibn Abu Bakr: 'Why do you permit the people to not adopt Islam and to pay neither *jizya* nor *kharaj*?' He said, 'They are the grief of kings. Once Emir Sayf ad-din Muhammad ibn Halifa as-Sulami, the ruler of Derbent, may Allah have mercy on him (I met him, and he received me with esteem, may Allah reward him with virtue), ordered me to,<sup>821</sup> and I set off [for a campaign], having collected many Turks<sup>822</sup> and other people, and the emir set off as the head of the people of Derbent, and the peoples from the mountains came, including the Lakzan, the Filan, and others. Our army was like a sea. And we headed for these two settlements, which had neither a fort wall nor a citadel, but merely locked their doors. I was the first to enter one of the settlements. Suddenly a group of unarmed men appeared from under the ground; they stood there pointing at the mountains with their hands and speaking a language<sup>823</sup> that I did not understand, then disappeared under the ground. Bitter wind began to blow, and all of a sudden snow began to fall, so heavy that we could not see a thing, and the sky was pouring snow and hail on us. We turned back, and neither I nor the others knew where to go. We were killing each other because stronger horses were crashing into weaker ones, making them fall down along with the horsemen [86], and people were walking on them, and both the horsemen and the horses were dying. Somebody—I do not know who it was—shot an arrow through my shoulder, and it came out of my armpit, and I nearly died. I had to endure until we were several parasangs away and the snowfall, and the hail, and the wind had died out (we had lost many of our warriors). Then I took the arrow out of my armpit, and it made me sick for four months. We did not get a single flatbread from them and failed to kill any of them.' It is nothing but the witchcraft of those people, who remove the bones from dead people and put them into bags. They put the bones of rich and noble men into bags of golden brocade from Rum, and those of slaves, into those of calico and similar fabrics. They hang them up inside their houses and write the name of the person in the bag on it. It is utterly unusual<sup>824</sup>.

Near Khwarezm, there is a mountain on which there are many fortresses and *rustaqs*. The mountain is large and long, it stretches through the country of unbelievers up to Balakhshan<sup>825</sup>. Not far away from Khwarezm, there is a ravine in the mountains with a hill in it, on which stands a large domed building [87] with four large arched doors. There are more bars of red gold stacked on each other there than one could count. The gold is over five cubits high throughout the entire area of the dome-shaped building on the mountain.

Around the hill where the gold lies there is still, muddy water that does not get refilled but from rain and snow, and the muddy ground is visible through it. Nobody can cross it. If anybody enters it, he will get stuck and drown and will never be able to get out. If a boat happens to get into this water, it will sink. Anything that gets into the water disappears, and nobody can get it back.

Mahmud, the ruler of Ghazna, came there and stayed there for three years. He made every single dweller of the *rustaqs* and Khwarezm and all of his troops fetch soil, and wood, and cane, and stones, and boats, and these all sank in the water without a trace. He left the place in despair. It is one of the wonders of the world.

I crossed the water from Sajsin in the land of the Khazars and the Turks [88] to Khwarezm<sup>826</sup> three times and saw this place. It is one of the wonders of the world. Khwarezm Shah 'Ala ad-Dawla spent forty days there [89] trying to get to it using many artful ways, but his cunning failed him<sup>827</sup>. A Khwarezmian scholar told me this. He also said: 'A man from a *rustaq* in Khwarezm came to the jewellery market and produced a piece of excellent emerald. Nobody had seen anything like it before. Jewellers took it [90] and brought it to the Khwarezm Shah, and said: 'Oh Master! A villager brought us this piece, which we think is unparalleled.' The Khwarezm Shah gave him a friendly reception, promised him a reward, and showed him grace by giving him clothing and comforting his heart. Then he asked him: 'Where did you find this piece?' He replied: 'I went to see that gold place and saw a large tall green dome made of stones like this one near it. I entered it and saw a

large grave in it with a tomb of stones and slabs that looked like this piece. There were large pieces and giant vessels of the same mineral as this piece. I could not lift any because they were too heavy, and this is the lightest one that I found. I took it and brought it to the market without knowing what it was. I marked the door of the dome and made a pile of stones near each door<sup>828</sup>.

The Khwarezm Shah rose to set off as the head of his escort and acolytes<sup>829</sup> led by the villager, who also went along. They arrived at the place and saw the place and the marks that he had mentioned, but not the dome. And the Khwarezm Shah said: 'This was made by jinns, with whose help Allah guards the treasure until the one to whom the great and glorious Allah will grant it.' This is also one of the wonders of the world. There are many wonders even more prodigious and amazing than the ones that we have described, but which we have not seen and of which we have not heard. What we have told is enough for one who is sensible. Praise to Allah for his kindness, his benefactions, his grace, and his generosity!

*(The following is stated at the end of the story about the strange tusked animal in the Rumian (Mediterranean) Sea—O. B.):* [100] The Rumians dress the skin of the fish, and it becomes white as snow, soft, and strong. They cut it into finger-wide [straps] like reins. Such a strap can be 20 *ba long*, or less, or more. They sell such straps to the country of the Bulgars and to the country of the Slavs<sup>830</sup>.

*(A number of a manuscripts contain a section titled 'A Description of Great Rumia' in the chapter on sea curiosities. A supplemental part on Abu Hamid's stay in Hungary and trade with Rus' and the Slavs is presented below—O. B.)*<sup>831</sup>.

When I was in the Bashkird country<sup>832</sup> [195] in the year 545/1150–51, I was a several day's trip away from Rumia. I asked a Muslim from the Bashkird country who travelled there to describe it to me, and he gave me the description that I present here<sup>833</sup>. He related that many cities<sup>834</sup> were ruined because emirs were fighting for territory<sup>835</sup>, and the supreme king was unable to<sup>836</sup> cope with them. He said, 'You will see<sup>837</sup> catapults<sup>838</sup> and ballistae on the kings' castles—they need it<sup>839</sup> to attack each other. The army of every region<sup>840</sup> attacks that of another region, and they kill each other and take prisoners. The people of every city open [separate] gates in the city walls to flee the city through them.'

When I was going to travel there to see it [Rumia], the Muslims prevented me from doing so and said that one of the brothers of our ruler had gone to Rumia and married the daughter of its king<sup>841</sup>; and if we let you go there we would be afraid, lest they tell the king that you have brought a lot of money for his brother to help him ruin the kingdom, which would lead to our certain demise. So I decided not to go.

There are many people in the country of Bashkird<sup>842</sup>, and there are 78 cities there<sup>843</sup>, each like Isfahan and Baghdad. It is too wealthy and abundant to even describe. My eldest son Hamid married two wives there, the daughters of noble Muslims<sup>844</sup>.

The people of Rumia are Christians known as the *Namis*<sup>845</sup>. They are the bravest of the *Ifranj* people and have the most beautiful appearance in Rum. There are many craftsmen among them who practice various crafts. They are unparalleled in their production of linen fabrics. If you take a hundred cubit piece, or even a larger one, you will see that its beginning, middle, and end are absolutely identical. Not a single thread is in any way different from any others. They export them to the Slavic land as 'Russian linen'<sup>846</sup>; Rus lies in the land of the Slavs. [112] As for the Khazar Sea, near which Tabaristan lies<sup>847</sup>, it stretches to Jurjan<sup>848</sup> [113] and to the country of the Turks, to the Khazars, and stretches to Bab al-abwab. Indeed, it is a small sea. It is said to have a circumference of 300 *parasangs* or so, and water flows into it from big rivers.

There are several islands in it. There is a jinn-inhabited island as well. People can hear their voices, and no animals live on it. There is also a jinn-inhabited island which is full of all kinds of snakes, and birds breed among the snakes, but they do not harm the birds. We approached it on a ship; sailors<sup>849</sup> came ashore to collect the eggs of those birds and nestlings from among the snakes and adders, and they did no harm to them...

There is an island which is black as coal; bitter and malodorous water flows out of it, and [114] quadrangular stones that look like excellent yellow copper break the surface. People use them as scale weights. Opposite to the island there is a patch of land that is as black as coal; grass grows on it, and various animals live there. Bitumen and oil, black and white, come out of the ground. The land lies not far away from Bakukh, an area of Shirvan. Blue fire like sulfur flames appear on the island at night, and it is aflame without burning the grass or producing any heat. When raindrops fall on it, it flares up and people can see it from far away. No trace of it remains in the daytime.

They hunt gazelles in that area. They chop the flesh of the killed animal and put it into its skin, tie the skin with a pierced cane in it, and bury the skin with the meat in the black soil. There it gets cooked, and foam escapes through the tube as if it were a pot. The meat is considered cooked when there is no more foam. They take the skin out intact with the meat, cooked and hot, inside of it. It is noteworthy that there is no heat in the soil. It is one of the wonders of the world! The fire is like that of the stomach.

There are many types of gold touchstone on the shore of the sea. I used to be friends [115] with a citizen of Astrabad<sup>850</sup> whose name was Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn 'Abidan. He was a famous man, and a slave of his travelled to one of the islands with touchstones and brought me many. Among them there was a stone that bore an inscription in white letters, written in a wonderful hand 'Muhammad' and 'Ali.' I offered him to exchange the stone for as much gold as it weighed, but he refused.

The giant river known as the Atil flows into the sea; it has its head above Bulgar<sup>851</sup> in the Area of Darkness. It is a hundred or more times larger than the Tigris. It has seventy branches, each as big as the Tigris, and still it is enormous near Sajsin<sup>852</sup>. I would walk on it during the winter when it was frozen and hard as the ground. People, and horsemen, and camels, and calves, and other domestic animals walk on it<sup>853</sup>. It was one thousand eight hundred forty-odd steps wide. There are various fishes in it, all of them very different. There is a kind of fish that weighs a hundred *manns*, or more, or less. It is long and has a trunk with a mouth so small that it can [only] hold a finger. There are no small bones in it, neither does it have teeth or large bones. People produce glue from its stomach, which they export to all countries. They roast it over rice like [116] meat, and it tastes better than any food that people eat in the world, and the rice beneath it tastes better than any rice cooked with fatty chicken. Its fat and flesh have no aftertaste or smell. It is one of the miracles of the world.

When I came to Saqsin in the year 525/1130–31, learned and other people came to<sup>854</sup> visit me. There was a very old man wearing shabby clothes among them, who put a gold bracelet that weighed 40 *mithqals*<sup>855</sup> in front of me and said: 'What shall I do with this bracelet?' I answered: 'I don't know what you should do with it for I am not a jeweller.' He said, 'I bought a fish for a *tas-suj*<sup>856</sup> and found the bracelet in its stomach.' I said, 'Show it [to people].' He answered, 'I have been showing it for three years. I have tied it up to my stick and carried it to mosques, bazaars, houses, roads, and emirs' palaces; I have found nobody who can recognise it.' I said, 'Keep it for it is acceptable property and spend it for yourself.' He was angry to hear this and said: 'By God, you won't see me squander it away.' I asked, 'What makes you utter such words?' [117] He replied: 'Because I am a working man. I make sandals and earn what meets my needs.' I told him: 'Use it to buy captives from the Turks.' He was happy to hear this and said: 'Allah bless you! You have relieved my burden.' I asked him: 'Is there no scholar that could have prescribed this to you here?' He said, 'Local scholars say: 'Give it to us, we know what to do with it.' But they want to appropriate it for themselves.'<sup>857</sup>

When in Bulgar<sup>858</sup>, which is a city on the margin of the countries of Islam, in the north, a forty-day trip<sup>859</sup> up from Saqsin, I heard that their day lasts for twenty hours and the night for four hours in the summer, while in the winter the night lasts for twenty hours, and the day, for four.

Cold can be so bitter there that when somebody dies<sup>860</sup>, they cannot bury him for six months because the ground is as hard as iron, so one cannot dig [118] a grave in it. My son died there in late winter, and I could not bury him, and I had to keep him in the house for three month until I was

able to bury him, and the dead one was like stone [*the Leningrad manuscript contains the following addition: hard from the bitter cold*].

Merchants from Bulgar travel to the country of unbelievers, whom they call the Visu. They export excellent beaver [skins] and import swords made in Azerbaijan as unpolished blades. One can buy four swords like that for a dinar in Azerbaijan. They temper them hard, so that it produces a long clank when they hang the blade on a thread and strike it. Those are the kind of swords suitable for them, and they sell them for beavers.

The people of Visu take the swords to a country near the Area of Darkness high above the Black Sea<sup>861</sup>, where they sell the swords for sable skins. When they throw their swords into the Black Sea, Allah the Almighty gives them a sea fish like a mountain, which another fish, many times larger than it is, chases to eat it, and the [first] fish gets so close to the shore that it cannot go back.

They approach it on ships and cut off its flesh for months until their houses are filled with it, and they smoke and dry-cure endless amounts of its flesh and fat. Sometimes the sea water rises, and the fish goes back to the sea when a hundred thousand houses or more have been filled with its flesh.

[119] When the fish is smaller, they fear lest it screams when they get to the bone while cutting off its flesh, and their children and women go to a place which is far away from the sea to not hear it scream.

A merchant told me that a giant fish arrived one year, and they pierced its ear and fed ropes through it to pull it. The ear opened, and an utterly beautiful young woman came out of it. She had fair skin and rosy cheeks, black hair, and a fat bottom. She was the most beautiful of all women. She had white skin from navel to mid-calf, which covered her private parts and rear—it was like clothes with a tight-fitting belt. It was as if she was wearing an *izar* wrapped around her. The people brought her to the shore, and she began slapping herself on the face, tearing her hair, biting her hands and breasts, and screaming; she behaved like women behave in this world until she died in their hands. Allah the Most Glorious created many wonders, and there are many that we have never seen nor heard about.

They say Dhul-Qarnayn travelled via Bulgar against Yajuj and Majuj, but Allah, great and glorious, knows better. It is but a small part of the larger picture that we presented here in brief. Allah knows better, he is almighty, there is no god but he who is praised and supreme... [131] Then the giants<sup>862</sup> settled in the land of the Bulgars and in the land of the *Bashkird people* I saw their graves when in the Bashkird land. A front tooth from one of them was four spans long and two spans wide. When in Bashkird, I had them remove half of an incisor root from a lower jaw bone for me, as the second half was long broken off. Half of the tooth was a span wide and weighed 1,200 *mithqals*; I weighed it, and now it is in my house in the country of Bashkird. The jaw of that 'Adit man had a circumference of 17 cubits. In the house of one of my disciples<sup>863</sup> in Bashkird there was a shoulder blade of one of them that was 8 cubits long. Their ribs were three spans wide each and looked like a slab of marble. They took out half of the shoulder bone joint of one of them. It had become partially rotten underground, but the part near the upper joint was intact. I could not lift it with one hand and could only pick it up with both. There are bones like that in [132] Bulgar as well. It is just as ash-Sha'bi described it in 'The Lives of Kings.' Allah the Most Great and Glorious said: 'The size of your created appearance is enlarged'<sup>864</sup>.

When I was in Bulgar in the year 530/1135–36, I saw a tall man, a descendant of the 'Adits named Danki. His height was over seven cubits<sup>865</sup>. He would carry a horse under his arm like a man carries a small lamb<sup>866</sup>. He was so strong that he could break a horse's shin-bone with his hand and tear its flesh and sinew like others tear herbs. The ruler of Bulgar made chain mail for him which they carried in a cart, and a helmet to fit his head which looked like a pot. When battles occurred, he fought with an oak club that he held like a stick, but he could kill an elephant if he struck it with the club. And he was kind, humble. When he met me, he greeted me respectfully, even though my head was lower than his belt was, may Allah have mercy on him.

There was no bath in Bulgar where he could go but for one bath with large doors, which he attended. He was one of the strangest sons of Adam. I have never seen anybody like him. He had a sister as tall as he; I saw her in Bulgar many times. And judge Ya'kub ibn Nugman said to me in Bulgar:<sup>667</sup> 'That tall Asian woman killed her husband, who was called Adam, and he was the strongest man in Bulgar. She pressed him to her chest and broke his ribs, and he died at once.'

## Notes

<sup>655</sup> The Khazar Sea is one of the medieval names for the Caspian Sea [cf. Bartold, Volume 3, p. 367].

<sup>656</sup> Bakukh بأكوه—Baku.

<sup>657</sup> The text is corrupted in the manuscript. جانب بخرالخرز بفرب من بلدة ارضا يقال لها باكوه ارضا يخرج منها القير. و رايت علـ. The word ارضا where it appears for the first time, 'land' was written by mistake. The word ارض is hereinafter translated as 'area.'

<sup>658</sup> In the manuscript اتراب 'ground,' 'soil' in contrast to the above ارض 'land' as 'area.'

<sup>659</sup> Harissa is an Arab dish, a kind of wheat porridge cooked with meat.

<sup>660</sup> In the manuscript: سنج الموازين. The first word is used to render the meaning of the Persian سنگ 'stone,' also meaning 'a weight.'

<sup>661</sup> The *daniq* is a unit of weight equal to 1/6 dirham—that is, 0.52 g.

<sup>662</sup> Bab al-Abwab literally means 'the gate of gates'—that is, the most important gate, which is the medieval Arabic name for Derbent [cf. Bartold, Volume 3, pp. 419–430]. Al-Gharnati always spelled the name with a 'd' دربند, but we hereinafter use the contemporary spelling 'Derbent.'

<sup>663</sup> Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik (died 739) was the brother of four Umayyad caliphs: al-Walid, Sulayman, Yazid II, and Hisham, a prominent military commander during their rule. He commanded many campaigns in Asia Minor and became famous after the siege of Constantinople (716–717). He conquered Derbent in 732 and inhabited it with Arabs, thus turning it into an outpost for the Islamisation of Dagestan. He became a semi-legendary hero in folklore [Novoseltsev, 2001, pp. 178–182; Shikhsaidov et al., 1993, pp. 74–84]

<sup>664</sup> واما اوقات كثيرة.

<sup>665</sup> The *mihrab* is a niche in the wall of a mosque indicating the direction to Mecca, which worshipers face during their prayers.

<sup>666</sup> A *rustaq* is a rural administrative district or the countryside in general.

<sup>667</sup> فوق 'above,' 'up' is a somewhat vague geographical term denoting a location to the north or to the south, as explained by S. Dubler [1953, p. 357]. G. Ferran [1925, p. 87, Note 1] and I. Hrbek [1954, p. 167, Note 37] believe that it means a southward direction (according to Arab cartography, south is up and north is down), which does not always appear to be justified. Here the word apparently has its direct meaning 'above'—that is, higher in the mountains.

<sup>668</sup> The narrative of the miraculous spring is presented by al-Qazwini [Asar al-bilad, p. 342]; the Russian translation of the relevant extract [Genko, 1941, pp. 103–104].

<sup>669</sup> فطيفة this probably means a burka.

<sup>670</sup> بيت المال

<sup>671</sup> *Zakat* is an Islamic tax for the poor and orphans, which was also used to raise money to support poor travellers. The end of the phrase in Arabic is vague: من الزكاة به ايضا.

<sup>672</sup> In S. Dubler's edition, the text begins with the adjective 'big' (in Arabic, the adjective follows the noun that it modifies). The noun was restored in square brackets in the translation ('un hospicio grande,' meaning a big hospitium). Before the previous text was found, it seemed that the emir visited by al-Gharnati lived in Saqsin, though it was strange that he then mentioned his arrival to Saqsin later.

<sup>673</sup> اهل العلم literally means 'people of science,' which can be translated as 'scholars'; however, given the fact that the medieval meaning of العلم 'science' was 'theology' [cf. the translation], اهل العلم can be interpreted as 'theologians' and not 'scholars' in general. This would be natural for al-Gharnati as he gathered people interested in Islamic religion and law in Saqsin [cf. the translation]. However, we would not like to impose any certainty that is missing in the text on the translation, so we chose the neutral 'people of science'

<sup>674</sup> This is different in the Gothic manuscript (sheet 20a): 'And he ordered his slaves to slaughter a ram every day. I told them: 'Do not slaughter a new ram, a small part of it will be enough for us,' but they replied: 'This is what our master has ordered us to do.' كان يامر عبيده ان يذبحوا كل يوم غنما فكنيت اقول لهم لا ترجعون تذبحوا من الغنم شيئا فانه يكفيننا من اليسير فيقولوا سيدنا امرنا بذلك.

<sup>675</sup> Abu-l-Hasan Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Mahamili ad-Dabbi (978–1024) was an Arab theologian from Baghdad, a Shafi'i like al-Gharnati [see Note 696]. The work referred to by al-Gharnati ('Kitab al-Mughni') is mentioned in the biographic dictionary by Ibn Khallikan [vol. 1, p. 56] and consists of one volume. K. Brockelmann names a different work with a similar title, 'Al-mughni bi-l-mazhab ash-Shafi'i' ('Sufficient Information on the Shafi'i madhab'), that is probably identical to it [GAL, I, p. 192, SB, I, p. 307].

<sup>676</sup> *Fiqh* is Islamic law, which also includes issues of religious rituals.



<sup>677</sup> apparently appears instead of طبرسلان 'Tabarsalan,' 'Tabarsaran' by mistake. The Tabarsalan people in the form طبرسلان (Tabarsalan) are mentioned in 'Tuhfat al-albab' by al-Gharnati and the Gothic manuscript [sheet 20a] طبرسلان instead of طبرسلان.

<sup>678</sup> زرهكاران is used by mistake instead of زرهكاران [cf. the translation, p. 50]; in the Gothic manuscript الزمهكارون appears instead of الزمهكارون. On the ethnic groups of Dagestan whose languages al-Gharnati mentioned [cf. Bartold, Works, Volume 3, pp. 409–410; Minorsky, 1953, pp. 504–529; Mashhiagi, 1903]. It is noteworthy that al-Gharnati mentions the Filan and Sarir languages as separate, while al-Mas'udi in 'Muruj' only mentions the Sarirs, whose king goes by the name of Filan shah, and Ibn Hawkal emphasises that 'Sarir is the name of the state and the area and not a people or tribe' [Ibn Hawkal, Publishing House of Kremers, p. 394]. The information provided by al-Gharnati is confirmed by one of the Cairo manuscripts of al-Istakhri (Cairo Edition, p. 109, Note 10), which mentions a small district named Filan that lies to the south or south-west of Derbent (Yakut offers the same information [1866–1873, p. 438] without referring to the source; the extract by Yakut with a Russian translation [see Karaulov, 1901, p. 17], while Ibn Hawkal reported [1938, p. 394] Sarir to begin two parasangs (12–15 km) away from Samandar.

<sup>679</sup> In the Gothic manuscript [sheets 20a–b] the phrase '...our master' is followed by the following text: 'who spoke different languages, including his native tongue, Tabasalan, Filan, Garkalan, Gumiq, Khaydaq, Sarir, Arnut, Zirihkaran, As, Kurdish, and Arabic; members of these peoples visited me, and he spoke to each in their own language.'

و كان يتكلم بلغات مختلفة فيها لسانهم لسان طبرسلان [طبرسلان] و لسان العلان [الفلان] [20] و لسان الغرقلان [الزغقلان؟] و لسان العميق [العميق] و لسان الخنداقي [الخنداقي] و لسان السنزير [السريير] و لسان الارنوط و لسان الزمهكارون [الزربهكارون] و لسان الاس و لسان الكردي و لسان العربي و كان يحضر عندي منهم امم و يتكلم مع كل منهم بلسانه.

#### fol. 20b

Despite a number of omissions and obvious corruptions, this variant provides another ethnic name, ar-Nut, enabling us to correct the unclear لسان الاس into لسان الارسا (the *Ases-Yases* of the Russian chronicles, which is another name for the Ossetians). Thus, al-Gharnati mentioned a total of eleven languages of the North Caucasian peoples aside from the emir's unnamed language. No other medieval author ever provided such a detailed list. A. Shikhsaidov [Shikhsaidov, 1976, p. 82] believes that the form 'Gurkilan,' which is used in the manuscript instead of 'Za'kalan,' is more correct.

<sup>680</sup> In the Gothic manuscript [fol. 20b]: 'and I told her.'

<sup>681</sup> *The Ansars*, literally meaning 'assistants,' are the Muslims of Medina who received Muhammad in 622. They were considered the most respected members of the community after the Qurayshites, who completed *the Hijra with him* (the Muhajirs).

<sup>682</sup> In the Gothic manuscript (fol. 20b): 'if a woman sees water...'

<sup>683</sup> In the Gothic manuscript (fol. 20b): instead of يتفقهون 'to understand,' ينتفعون 'to make use of' is used.

<sup>684</sup> The Gothic manuscript (fol. 20b) contains omissions that corrupt the text:

كانه يخر منه انهار عظيمة على مدينة يقال لها سخصين  
'It is like giant rivers flow out of it past the city named Sakhsin.'

<sup>685</sup> The traditional spelling in European literature is 'Saqsin' [EI, IV, pp. 88–89], which also occurs once in 'Tuhfat al-albab' by al-Gharnati [p. 117]. The fact that 'q' and 'j' were used alternately to render the second consonant sound may indicate that the local pronunciation of the name of the city was Sagsin.

<sup>686</sup> This extract is significantly different in the Gothic manuscript. It would be inconvenient from a technical standpoint to make a note every time there is a difference, so we provide the text of the extract as it appears in the manuscript: فيها من العرب اربعة قبيلة لكل قبيلة منهم نهر علي

حدثه و لهم دور كبار في كل دار جركاه [جركاه] كبيرة كالقبة العظيمة تسع الواحدة منها مائة رجل او اكثر مغشاة بالكبود [بالليبود] المعمولة و في المدينة امم من التجارة الغريبة و اولاد العرب من الغرب الذي لا يحصى عددهم الا الله تعالى و فيها جوا مع يصلي فيه الجمعة و في وسط البلدة امير من اهل البلغار كثيرين و جا مع اخر فيه امم يقال لهم اصل [اهل] سور هم ايضا كثيرين و يوم العيد يخوجون [21]. منابر كثيرة . و يصلي كل امير بامم و لكل امير قاضي علي حدثه و فقهاء و اطب [خطبا]

#### fol. 21a

'There are four Arab tribes (it should be 'forty Ghuzz tribes') in it, and each tribe has a river of its own. They have large yards, and in each yard there is a large tent like a giant dome—one could cover a hundred people or more—covered with treated felt. There are so many foreign merchants and sons of Arabs from the West in the city that nobody can count them but Allah Almighty. There are cathedral mosques in the city where Friday prayers are held. In the middle of the city [lives] the Bulgar emir. He has a cathedral mosque where Friday prayers are held. It is large, and many Bulgar people [live] around it. There is another cathedral mosque where people [pray] who are called 'dwellers of Suar,' and they are numerous as well. On holidays they put up (fol. 21a) many different minbars, and each emir prays with [his] people. And each emir has a qadi, and *faqih*s, and doctors (should be 'preachers') of his own.'

<sup>687</sup> In S. Dubler's translation: occidentales venidos del Magrib' ('people born in the West who come from Maghreb'). The phrase itself seems unambiguous, but the fact that ابناء المغرب—that is, 'sons of the Maghrebians' are mentioned in other parts of this work by al-Gharnati [Dubler, 1953, pp. 37–38], when they turn out to be the Pechenegs, motivates the search for other possible interpretations of the phrase. It is possible that the word غرب here means not 'west' but 'distance,' 'remoteness, withdrawal.' The meanings enable us to read ابناء الغرب as it is in the Gothic manuscript: اولاد العرب من الغرب 'sons of Arabs from the West.'

<sup>688</sup> literally 'they are also peoples.' امم plural 'nation, people,' but not 'tribe'—the Arabic for the latter is قبييلة. This is the term that al-Gharnati uses to denote Ghuzz tribes: قبييلة 'where forty Ghuzz tribes live.' However, in this case it is beyond doubt that various Khazar tribes are what is being signified, which is the way we translated it. It is entirely possible that al-Gharnati understood قبييلة only as a nomadic tribe, so he applied the word امم to the sedentary Khazars of Saqsin. The author generally tends to use the word in an unusual way, which is sometimes identical to the Russian word 'people' ('narod'), meaning 'persons,' 'many people.'

<sup>689</sup> In the text it is البلغاريين. This unusual spelling should be translated in a somewhat unusual way, but the usual 'Bulgars' was used throughout the translation for coherency purposes.

<sup>690</sup> other authors use صوار, سواز, سواز when speaking of the ancient city of Suvar and its excavations [Smirnov, 1951, pp. 230–265]. There is a hypothesis that the name of the city is connected with the ethnonym 'Chuvash' (the Arabic ص is often used to render the 'ch' sound, which is absent in Arabic, which yields the following: Suwaz -> Chuwaz -> Chuvash) [Kovalevsky, 1954, pp. 35, 101–103]. Al-Gharnati first reported a large Suvar colony (mostly merchants) to be located in the Lower Volga Region.

<sup>691</sup> Minbar is a pulpit in mosques used to deliver sermons.

<sup>692</sup> Qadi is an Islamic judge.

<sup>693</sup> Faqih is a lawyer who studies fiqh (see Note 657).

<sup>694</sup> Khatib is a preacher.

<sup>695</sup> literally 'children (descendants) of the Maghrebians'—a very unclear ethnic group mentioned by al-Gharnati. If the territory in question was the Near East, they could be interpreted as the Berbers, but it would be absurd to assume that they were present in the Volga Region.

<sup>696</sup> Abu Hanifah, Malik, and Shafi'i are the founders of three (out of four) 'orthodox' Sunni madhabs (Ibn Hanbal founded the fourth school).

<sup>697</sup> female slaves who had a child by their master had a higher status than other slaves, in particular, they could not be sold, given away as presents, etc. They became free upon the death of their master.

<sup>698</sup> The last sentence beginning with 'and my home is now among them' is absent in the Gothic manuscript.

<sup>699</sup> in the Gothic manuscript: بلاد 'country'

<sup>700</sup> السمكة واحدة حمل رجل قوي و منهم نوع السمك حمل جمل قوي .

S. Dubler translated this place in a different way: 'Hay una clase, de la cual un solo pez pesa como un hombre fuerte; y otra clase que pesa por pieza, como un camello robusto' [Dubler, 1953, p. 51]. 'There is a type of fish where a single one weighs as much as a strong man, and another type of fish weighing as much as a strong camel.'

The word حمل haml can be read in two ways: 'bearing,' 'carrying,' 'pregnancy,' and حمل رجل قوي himl, meaning 'burden,' 'load.' In this case the second version is preferable. Regardless of which option is used, it means 'the burden a strong man carries, what a strong man carries [or can carry]' and not 'the weight of a strong man.' This also applies to the second half of the phrase حمل جمل قوي (here there even seems to be a parallel): جمل يعبر 'the maximum weight that a camel can carry,' but not 'the weight of a strong camel.' With our translation it is clear why it is strength and not the heavy weight of the man and the camel that al-Gharnati emphasises.

<sup>701</sup> This extract from the beginning of the paragraph reads as follows in the Gothic manuscript: وهذه البلاد شديدة البرد وفي نهر انواع من السمك لم يشاهد في الدنيا قط مثله السمكة الواحدة حمل رجل و اثنين حمل رجل قوي و منها صغار ايضا .

'The country is very cold, and there are fishes in the river that people have never seen before in the world. One fish is a burden for a man, and two fishes are a burden for a strong camel. There are small ones among them too.'

<sup>702</sup> The extract beginning with 'it is like...' is different in the Gothic manuscript: كاتها جمل محشوة بعظم | لعة لحم دجاج طيب واعذب و اذا شويت هذه السمك يجعلون تحتها الارض فتكون احسن من لحم الجمل السمين و من لحم الضان و من لحم دجاج ولا راحة لها .

'It is like a camel stuffed with the bones [on the margins of the manuscripts: probably, meat] of a good chicken or even tastier. When they bake that fish, they put rice into it, and it tastes better than the meat of a fat camel, and mutton, and chicken, and it has no smell.'

<sup>703</sup> A unit of weight and volume equal to two *ritls*; however, given the local variations of the *ritl*, the weight of one *mann* varied between 800 g and 1.5–2 kg. This is used in the Gothic manuscript, as well as in the Madrid one, instead of the correct version.

<sup>704</sup> The *daniq* is 1/6 dirham, and one dirham is about 3 g of silver.

<sup>705</sup> In the gothic manuscript: 'for two months.'

<sup>706</sup> . و يخرج من بطنها غزا السمك نصف منا .

<sup>707</sup> In the gothic manuscript: و يقدد لحمه فيكون .

<sup>708</sup> In the gothic manuscript: في لون الكهريا و احمر .

<sup>709</sup> S. Dubler's translation is incorrect: 'que vale los ocho mann un dinar baghdad' [Abu Hamid, p. 51]—'eight *manns* of which cost one Baghdad dinar.' The Baghdad, or Iraqi, *mann* equals 810–816 g.

<sup>710</sup> A gold coin having a weight of 4.25 g. Its ratio to the dirham varied from 15 to 50 dirhams in the 11–12th centuries.

<sup>711</sup> In the Gothic manuscript it is و اللحم و الفواكه و يشترون بها ما يشاءون من الخبز 'and use it to buy whatever fruit, bread, and meat they want.'

<sup>713</sup> بطيخ means both watermelon and melon. The epithets 'red' (watermelon) and 'yellow' (melon) are mostly used to distinguish between the meanings. The word here and below (in the description of Khwarezm) most probably refers to a melon because it is melons and not watermelons that can be stored throughout the winter.

<sup>715</sup> In the Gothic manuscript: كثير البرد [and in winter] it is very frosty.

Abu Hamid undoubtedly means a pine tree that resembles such a bare-trunked palm. S. Dubler translates the word directly as *pino* (a pine tree) [Dubler, 1953, pp. 52, 53] and only includes the word صنوبر, which actually means 'a pine tree,' but is not used by al-Gharnati, in the 'Glossary.' In the extract on Bulgar, which al-Qazwini borrowed from 'Mu'riba,' the word صنوبر is replaced with صنوبر [Asar al-bilad, p. 412]. It is also this way in the Gothic manuscript.

و بيوتهم ف الشتاء من الخشب الصنوبر كبار بعضها على بعض .

<sup>718</sup> In the Madrid manuscript: **و يوقد ون النار** In the Gothic Manuscript: **و يوقد ون فيها النار**

<sup>720</sup> The text of the Gothic manuscript, which ends with a praise to Allah and Muhammad, breaks off here with words الناس عليه تمشي 'people walk on it.'

<sup>722</sup> According to Islamic mythology, Sulayman (Solomon in the Bible) was believed to be the patron of jinn spirits.

<sup>724</sup> S. Dubler translated this in a different way: '...y tos peces entran el barco hasta narlo' (Dubler, 1953, p. 62), 'and fish enter the ship until they have filled it.' However, *دخّل* does not mean 'enter' but, similarly to *أتى*, bears a connotation of compulsion. It is closer to 'bring in' than 'enter.' The word *الصيد* in this sentence is not an adverbial modifier of place but an object, so the only possible interpretation of the phrase is as follows: 'They [fishermen] bring ships [to the mouth of the river where fishing nets are set], filling their ships [with fish].' The sequence of actions is also understandable: they first set nets and then come back to collect the fish from them.

<sup>726</sup> The whole extract to the end of the paragraph is quoted by al-Qazwini [Asar al-bilad, p. 412].

<sup>728</sup> *Ramadan* is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. The religious instruction is that Muslims must abstain from food and drink from dawn to dusk during this month. Quite naturally, such a fast is extremely difficult in the north in summer.

<sup>730</sup> The *ba* is a unit of measurement equal to the distance between the hands when stretched sideways, about

<sup>731</sup> Unlike other Muslim authors, al-Gharnati definitely mentions mammoth tusks found in Bulgar.

<sup>732</sup> *The jizya* is a per capita tax imposed on non-Muslims, in a sense symbolising dependence on Muslims, so Muslim authors often apply the term *jizya* to any kind of tribute or contribution imposed on people of other religions; such is the case here. Al-Gharnati views a simple tribute as *jizya* because a Muslim ruler imposes it on non-Muslims.

<sup>733</sup> S. Dubler replaced the word *من تخارا* in the Madrid manuscript with *من تجاري*, although this is undoubtedly a corruption of *من بخارا*.

<sup>734</sup> *صاحب* (plural *اصحاب*) has many meanings and is therefore difficult to translate; it can mean 'companion,' 'comrade,' 'master,' 'owner,' 'ruler,' or 'adherent'; al-Gharnati also used it in various meanings in his text. It is difficult to tell in this case whether the author of 'The History of Bulgar' was a contemporary and disciple of Abu Ma'ali or just an adherent of his ideas.

<sup>735</sup> Abu-l-Ma'ali 'Abd al-Malik ibn Abu Muhammad al-Juwayni was a famous theologian born near Nishapur (1028–1085); for further information on him, see [GAL, I, pp. 388–389].

<sup>736</sup> *Kharaj* is a land tax in Muslim countries, imposed on both Muslims and non-Muslims; the term is sometimes used to denote taxes in general. There might have been a difference between the tribute imposed on the Ves' and on the peoples whom al-Gharnati reported as paying the *jizya* above, but this cannot be confirmed.

<sup>737</sup> *يسو* is the Ves' of the Russian chronicles; for more details see ['Historical Commentaries']

<sup>738</sup> *أرو*. About the Aru land, see [Al-Gharnati, 1971, pp. 101–104]. Asar al-bilad by al-Qazwini contains a narrative on the conversion of the Bulgar 'king' to Islam and on the Ves' and Aru [p. 418].

<sup>739</sup> *A sufa* (صفة) is a stone or clay elevation inside a house or in the yard, meant for sitting and sleeping, used instead of benches and beds, an essential feature of a house in the Near East and Middle Asia.

<sup>740</sup> A. Kovalevsky believes that *khalanj* means birch. Compare with [Ibn Fadlan, 1956b, p. 191, Note 297; p. 214, Note 539].

<sup>741</sup> Quran, translation, 41:8. In this surah Muhammad swears by the almightiness of Allah, who predetermines deeds and 'instills' them in the soul. The quote is essentially a traditional praise of the almightiness of Allah.

<sup>742</sup> *يورا* *Yugra* or *Ugra*, of the Russian chronicles [see 'Historical Commentaries']. Al-Qazwini retells al-Gharnati's reports on the northern peoples and the swords that they import in 'Asar al-bilad' [p. 418]; 'Tuhfat al-albab' contains a parallel passage, which does not, however, mention the Yura people. This is why Marquart, who was familiar with the latter work only, believed Qazwini to have added the name 'Yura' from later reports [Marquart, 1924, p. 303].

<sup>743</sup> *ماله*

<sup>744</sup> *مثل كرة من الثياب محشوة بصوف* Hrbeek translates this as follows: «V dolni částini tyče je jakási koule, upletena z mnozestvi vilny» [Novy arabsky pramen, p. 161]—'on the lower part of the pole there is something like a ball woven of a large amount of wool.' The translation by Ancis also mentions a ball woven of wool (Mongait, 1959, p. 178). However, *حشو* means 'to stuff,' and the preceding text clearly indicates that the ball was made of fabric. S. Dubler translated the passage accurately: 'Una plota de tela rellena de mucha lana' [Abu Hamid, p. 58].

<sup>745</sup> *بعمد علي تلك العصي علي الثلج و يد فع العصي خلف ظهره كما يصنع الملاح في السفينة* All the translations (Dubler, Hrbeek, Ancis) describe the movements of a skiing person as resembling those of a rower ('The skier uses the stick to push off the snow and throws it behind himself like a boat rower' [Mongait, 1959, p. 176]; «Como hace el remero en la barca» [Dubler, 1953, p. 58]; '...a stříká tyč za svá zadá jako kdiž vesluji namořnici na lodich' [Hrbeek, 1954, p. 161]. The text is not so exact; we could as well compare it to a sailor pushing off with a pole. B. Zakhoder's translation [Zakhoder, 1967, pp. 66–67] of the whole passage is inaccurate.

<sup>746</sup> Al-Qazwini presents the narrative about the giant fish in 'Asar al-bilad' [p. 418].

<sup>747</sup> *تلك الصورة* literally 'this picture, this image.' Al-Gharnati apparently could not think of a word to call the girl and therefore gave such a non-specific definition.

<sup>748</sup> *An izar*, in this case, is a piece of fabric wrapped around the hips, which was part of pilgrims' clothing; izaris were also to be worn in the bath. For other meanings of the word, see [Dozy, 1845, p. 37].

<sup>749</sup> Al-Qazwini presents the narrative about the girl who came out of a whale's ear in 'Ajaib al-makhluqat' [pp. 128–129].

<sup>750</sup> This passage, from the words 'they say' to the bird narrative, is included in 'Asar al-bilad' by al-Qazwini [p. 413].

<sup>751</sup> *Lam-alif* is a ligature of two Arabic letters. لا or ل. The phrase 'something like' in the manuscript is followed by a drawing (Fig. 2). The narrative is a vivid example of how real information was rewritten. It apparently relies on the description of the crossbill which al-Gharnati heard in Bulgar. The crossbill is the only northern bird that has a crooked beak with crossed tips and breeds in the middle of winter; the latter fact is reflected in the mention of hot eggs that melt snow. Al-Qazwini also presents this narrative [Asar al-bilad, p. 413].

<sup>752</sup> *الخشب* is wood [as a material].

<sup>753</sup> The first edition of the translation followed S. Dubler in representing the unclear word as *جفن* 'jukn.' I. Hrbeek tried to interpret it as 'hryvna' [Hrbeek, 1955, p. 124]; in examining the question of fur money in Rus', A. Mongait mentioned the Old Russian word 'sheven' (fur) without associating it directly with the unclear term in Abu Hamid's work. V. Polosin tried to interpret it as 'sheven' with the unusual rendering of 'sh' as 'j' and 'v' as 'f' [Polosin, 1976, pp. 141–144]. However, if one renders the 'ch' sound, which does not exist in Arabic, as 'j,' as would be most natural, the word *جفن* easily becomes ch-k-n (Russian 'chekan,' meaning 'stamp'). What remains unclear is whether the word meant the process of stamping the seal or the bundle with a stamped seal on it.

<sup>754</sup> *Habba* حبة literally means 'grain,' 'a seed'; this is how Hrbek translated it [Hrbek, 1954, p. 166]: 'You could not buy a single grain for a thousand bundles of those skins in another country'. Y. Ancis translated it in a similar way [Mongait, 1959, p. 176 and Note 41]. *The habba* (grain) is the smallest unit of weight, equal to the weight of an average grain of barley, used to weigh precious metals; also a monetary unit equal to 1/60 of a dirham, or 1/72 of a dinar. One usually specifies, 'so many *habbas* of silver' (or 'of gold'), as *the habba* did not exist as a coin.

<sup>755</sup> سياسة عظمى the usual meaning of سياسة is 'politics,' 'the art of ruling a state.'

<sup>756</sup> دار is a house with a yard and all outbuildings.

<sup>757</sup> Al-Qazwini ('Asar al-bilad') attributes the narrative to the Slavs; the editions by Ferrand and Dubler do not mention the borrowing.

<sup>758</sup> The first edition followed I. Hrbek in assuming that كرمآن is a corrupted spelling of كويآو (Kiev). According to the authoritative explanation by S. Klyashtorny, it is a somewhat corrupted spelling of the Turkic name for Kiev, 'Gor Kerman, meaning 'Big City.'

<sup>759</sup> اولاد المغاربة The text leaves no doubt that these people, as well as the 'descendants of the Maghrebians' mentioned in other places, are Turks. Hrbek tried to find a solution to this contradiction by assuming that the Pechenegs of Southern Rus' and Hungary had a legend about their western origin [Hrbek, 1954, p. 172].

<sup>760</sup> ي تلك البلاد نحن Dubler viewed the first letter as a preposition and transliterated the name of this people as *h-n-h*. He believed these to be Huns, who had come back from the west after Attila was defeated, which explains why they were called اولاد المغاربة 'descendants of the Maghrebians' [Abu Hamid, pp. 262–273]. The assumption of I. Hrbek that it is a corrupted [ب] [جن] [ك], where the initial 'Ba' was omitted during copying, and thus means the well-known Pechenegs, is more correct [Hrbek, 1954, p. 171]. In this case, the fact that they are referred to as 'descendants of the Maghrebians' appears very strange. Hrbek believes it to be connected with a legendary tradition associating their origin with the west [Ibid., p. 172]. It seems to me that the explanation ultimately lies in a peculiar derivative of the verb غرب 'to move westward.'

<sup>761</sup> *The khutba* is an essential constituent of the Friday prayer ritual preceding the prayer itself. It consists of a sermon, during which the Quran is read, and a prayer for all Muslims and the ruler. The latter was of great political importance; when a ruler's name was mentioned in the khutba, it meant the city or country officially recognised his power.

<sup>762</sup> باشكرد *Bashkird*; usually the Bashkirs; here and elsewhere meaning the Hungarians.

<sup>763</sup> فوق (cf. Note 667) Dubler translates this as 'above'; it is hard to tell what the author meant because Hungary lies neither north nor south of Rus'. The word probably has a more literal meaning here, as Abu Hamid had to cross the Carpathian Mountains.

<sup>764</sup> العظيمة

<sup>765</sup> In the text: الذي ينقد به البصر; we read it as follows: ينفذ.

<sup>766</sup> There is no doubt that اولاد المغاربة here means the same Pechenegs as those near Kiev. In the mid-12th century the Pechenegs played a major role in the life of Hungary [Rasovsky, 1933, pp. 17–50], making up most of the Hungarian royal army; they were especially prominent as archers [Ibid., pp. 44–45]. Al-Gharnati's data suggests that the importance of the Pechenegs did not decrease when Stephan I (1115–1131) died, as D. Rasovsky believed to have happened [Ibid., p. 43].

<sup>767</sup> Byzantine sources also mention Khwarezmians in the service of the king of Hungary during the war against the Byzantines in 1150 [Rasovsky, 1933, p. 45].

<sup>768</sup> علم here means 'theology' (cf. Note 673).

<sup>769</sup> Muhammad declared pilgrimage to the Kaaba to be a duty of Muslims following the conquest of Mecca in January 630, when almost all dwellers of Arabia could afford to visit Mecca at least once in their lives. As the Muslim world expanded, the Hajj became an unfulfillable duty for most Muslims, so Abu Hamid taught his listeners that Friday prayers could be a substitute for the Hajj.

<sup>770</sup> People mostly learned Islamic dogmatics and law through listening; they were supposed to know everything by heart. Abu Hamid took the same approach with his disciple, not letting him read on his own.

<sup>771</sup> *Isnad* literally means 'a support,' 'a source.' *Isnad* is a term referring to the chain of references to transmitters of religious and historical narratives that guaranteed that the report presented was accurate. Abu Hamid warned his disciple against omitting *isnads* when copying or writing down the main body of a text.

<sup>772</sup> These verses, cited by al-Maqqari, were taken by G. Ferran to be the verses of Ibn an-Najjar [1925, p. 14].

<sup>773</sup> See Note 761.

<sup>774</sup> ولاية is usually translated as 'area'; but here it obviously means a 'country,' namely the kingdom of Hungary.

<sup>775</sup> رومية العظيمة Some scholars believe 'Great Rumia' to be Constantinople [Lewicky, 1938]. However, they are clearly different here.

<sup>776</sup> قسطنطينية — Constantinople.

<sup>777</sup> There is an omission in the manuscript. S. Dubler [1953, p. 67] translates it as follows: 'una buena esclava o un muchacho rūmī por tres dīnāres.'

<sup>778</sup> مولدة means 'born in slavery.'

<sup>779</sup> See Note 739.

<sup>780</sup> فحشيت عليها من امهات الا ولا د الترك The phrase is not quite clear. S. Dubler translated it as follows: '...pero temi el recibimiento que la harian las concubinas turcas hechas madres'— '...but I was afraid of the reception that the Turkic slave mothers would give her'; however, only Forms V and VI have the meaning 'to be apprehensive

of' (in the sense 'to avoid,' 'to withdraw from'). The meaning of Form III, which according to Lane's Dictionary is applicable to Form I as well, appears to be preferable: *حشاه منهم* 'excluded him from them, did not include him among them' [Lane, Lexicon, s.v.]. However, it is possible that it should be not *فحشيت* but *فخشيت*, which would fully correspond to S. Dubler's translation. Al-Gharnati could be apprehensive lest the other *umm al-walads* (female slaves correspond to S. Dubler's translation. Al-Gharnati could be apprehensive lest the other *umm al-walads* (slave mothers) be jealous of Mariam because she was not formally an *umm al-walad*, as her child was dead.

<sup>781</sup> A *jihad* is a war of Muslims against unbelievers (though it is not uncommon for different Islamic movements to declare their wars against each other jihads). What is surprising about this situation is that Abu Hamid was teaching Muslims that fighting on the side of the Christian Hungarians against the Christian Byzantines is as much an act of virtue as *jihad*.

<sup>782</sup> كزالي S. Dubler [1953, p. 180] assumed that the first half of the word represents the name of the Hungarian king Géza (Géza II, 1141–1161), who was ruling at that time. Hrbek read it differently as 'kiraly,' which was apparently meant to render the Hungarian 'király,' meaning 'king' [Hrbek, 1955, p. 123].

<sup>783</sup> Here the word *Ifrañj* apparently means Western Christians, or Catholics.

<sup>784</sup> That is, for each question in Islamic law or theology.

<sup>785</sup> ثيتل means 'ibex,' 'mountain antelope,' although an aurochs is described.

<sup>786</sup> One *mithqal* equals 4.5–4.7 g; 1,200 *mithqals* is 5.5 kg.

<sup>787</sup> Abu 'Amr Amir ash-Sha'bi (640–721) was an expert in Islamic lore and poetry; he authored several historical works. His works have not come down to us, but are quoted by more recent authors.

<sup>788</sup> The columned 'Iram, the capital of the legendary Adit king Shaddad [cf. Note 689]. Al-Gharnati also presented a legendary description of 'Iram [Ferrand, 1925, pp. 55–59].

<sup>789</sup> Dahhak is a mythical character.

<sup>790</sup> Hud is a legendary prophet whom Allah sent to the 'Adits.

<sup>791</sup> Muhammad claimed that his religion was not novel, as Allah had proclaimed it many times through previous prophets (for instance, Moses and Christ), but people had been corrupting it. Lam ibn 'Amir is presented as one of those who believed in Allah before Muhammad.

<sup>792</sup> Idris is the Biblical Enoch; according to the Quran, he is one of the prophets who preceded Muhammad.

<sup>793</sup> This means Muhammad who came from the Hashim clan. The fictitious epitaph is one of many legendary prophecies of Muhammad's coming.

<sup>794</sup> 7 cubits equals 3.5 m. The figure is somewhat exaggerated. If al-Gharnati was waist-high to the giant (which is about 3/5 of human height), al-Gharnati would have to be 200–210 cm, which is obviously not true. It would be more correct to assume that our author was of medium height, about 165–170 cm, and calculate the height of the Bulgar giant as follows:  $165 : x = 3 : 5$ , based on which  $x$  (the giant's height) = 275 cm (this is the height of the world's tallest person today). If we take into account the fact that an estimate of height formulated as 'waist-high' or 'shoulder-high' is usually exaggerated and made at eye level (that is, 15 *see* lower than the height of the one estimating it), given al-Gharnati's height of 1.65–1.7 m, the giant could not have been taller than 2.5 m and may have actually been 2.2–2.3 m high if we take into account the natural exaggeration. 'Asar al-bilad' by al-Qazwini contains an almost verbatim presentation of this narrative [pp. 412–413].

<sup>795</sup> *Ghulams* were slaves, who often constituted Muslim rulers' guard.

<sup>796</sup> اصحابه جماعة من اصحاب; here اصحاب cannot be translated as 'adherents,' 'comrades,' 'or companions.' We chose to use the word 'prisnye' in its original meaning that was preserved until the 19th century: one's people who constantly accompany one.

<sup>797</sup> *Shari'at* combines Islamic theology and law; it is sometimes used in a narrower sense as a synonym of *fiqh* (See Note 676).

<sup>798</sup> One *parasang* equals 12,000 cubits (about 6 km), up to 7.5 km in Middle Asia.

<sup>799</sup> *Rustaq*—See Note 666.

<sup>800</sup> *Mann*—See Note 703.

<sup>801</sup> 'Awn ad-din Abu-l Muzaffar Yahya ibn Muhammad ibn Hubayra (1096/97–1165) was the vizier (starting in 1149) of Caliphs Muqtafi and Mustanjid, famous as a very learned man. Al-Gharnati stayed with him when in Baghdad in 1126 and enjoyed his patronage after he returned from his travels in 1155. As a token of gratitude, al-Gharnati dedicated his '*Mu'rib*' to him [Dubler, 1953, p. 133, Gothic manuscript, sheet 1a, see also our Preface]. Al-Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad al-Makki (died 1172) was a prominent Khwarezmian *faqih* [GAL, SB, I, p. 623, No. 8c, p. 642, No. 16a].

<sup>802</sup> The *divan* was a central authority similar to a ministry at that time.

<sup>803</sup> Mahmud Ghaznavi was indeed there when Khwarezm was conquered in 1017. However, the whole story has no historical basis.

<sup>804</sup> According to V. Bartold, 'Ala ad-Dawla is the Khwarezmian Shah Atsiz (1128–1156), though he does not appear under this name anywhere else [Bartold, Works, vol. 2, part 1, pp. 588–589]. S. Dubler assumes that it was influenced by the name of Ghaznevid 'Ala ad-Dawla Mas'ud III [Abu Hamid, p. 276]; however, the title Khwarezm Shah could by no means have been applied to the latter.

<sup>805</sup> The word Khwarezm was often applied to the capital of Khwarezm, first Kath, later Gurganj [for more details on this, see Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 68]; the latter is meant here.

<sup>806</sup> Jayhun is a medieval name of the Amu Darya.

<sup>807</sup> The dates are somewhat confusing. As we know from 'Tyhfat al-albab,' Abu Hamid came to Hungary in 545/1150–1151 [Ferrand, 1925, pp. 195–196] and spent three years there, which means that he left in about 548/1153–1154, and not in 553, if the year 53 here is an abbreviation of 553. S. Dubler believes that in this case al-Gharnati is indicating the years of the Christian era—that is, 1153, 1154, and 1155, respectively [1953, pp. 277–278]. This eliminates all chronological discrepancies.

<sup>808</sup> There is a lacuna in the manuscript. The month of *Rabi'I* in 1155 was 5 May to 3 June; *Shawwal* was 28 November to 26 December.

<sup>809</sup> The meaning of al-Gharnati's wish is: 'may Allah extend the Caliph's power from the East to the West.'

<sup>810</sup> *ابن ملك المسعود*. This can be interpreted in two ways: 'King Mas'ud's son' or 'the king's son Mas'ud.' Mas'ud I (1116–1156) was the ruler of Konya at that time, succeeded by his brother Kilij Arslan II. Given the fact that the latter was not Mas'ud's son, the letter was not addressed to him, which makes the second variant preferable. Perhaps Mas'ud's death prevented al-Gharnati from using the caliph's letter of recommendation and taking his family out of Hungary through Asia Minor.

<sup>811</sup> 'Seal of prophets,' meaning the last, final prophet, is a traditional epithet for Muhammad.

<sup>812</sup> *وفي بلاد دربند باب من الابواب*. An unusual combination of two names of Derbent. The latter may be a clarification: 'In the country of Derbent [that is,] Bab al-abwab.' The unusual spelling of *دربندا* is noteworthy.

<sup>813</sup> See Note 663.

<sup>814</sup> In the manuscript of the Saint Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences [p. 146a]: 'and they say there are seventy peoples in those mountains.'

<sup>815</sup> *بيت* 'house,' 'tent'; it is used in the sense of 'family' here.

<sup>816</sup> Jazirah is the Arabic name of the Upper Mesopotamia.

<sup>817</sup> *وهذا امر مستفيض عندي*. The passage about Maslama's sword has been translated into Russian [Henko, *The Arabic Language*, p. 103].

<sup>818</sup> *Jizya*—see Note 732.

<sup>819</sup> The passage on Zirihsaran burial rituals was published by V. Bartold according to the manuscript of the Asian Museum (the manuscript of the Saint Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences) in the article 'More on the Samarkand Ossuaries' ('Eshhyo o samarkandskix ossuariyax') [Works, vol. 4, p. 123]. Translated into German by B. Dorn [1873, p. 700].

<sup>820</sup> *Isfahsalar* means a military commander.

<sup>821</sup> The bracketed words belong to al-Gharnati.

<sup>822</sup> *و جمعة امما من الا تراك* See Note 688.

<sup>823</sup> *و تكلموا بكلام*.

<sup>824</sup> Al-Qazwini cites the narrative on the Zirihsarans and the campaign against them according to al-Gharnati [Asar al-bilad, p. 416].

<sup>825</sup> *بلخشان* that is, Badakhshan, for information on this spelling [see Bartold, Works, vol. 3, p. 343].

<sup>826</sup> Manuscript No. 2170 of the National Library has 'to the Khwarezm Shah' instead of 'in Khwarezm.'

<sup>827</sup> V. Bartold misinterpreted al-Gharnati's report as being about the Khwarezm Shah's attempts to conquer Saqsin [Works, vol. 2, part 1, pp. 588–589].

<sup>828</sup> *ثلثاء من الاحجار*, perhaps 'a small pyramid of stones.'

<sup>829</sup> *في خواصه واصحابه*; cf. Note 790.

<sup>830</sup> The description of this animal and what was produced from its tusks and skin is much briefer in the Gothic manuscript. However, it reports the name of the animal, which is the dolphin ('mereswine' *خنزير البحر*). The walrus and the dolphin are obviously combined in the narrative.

<sup>831</sup> To the best of my knowledge, this addition is found in the Algerian (I as classified by Ferrand), Copenhagen (H), Leningrad (F), and Tashkent (unknown to Ferrand) manuscripts. The text as presented in the Algerian manuscript was published as a supplement to 'Tyhfat al-albab' [pp. 193–199]; Dorn, who translated the entire section as presented in Manuscripts F and H into German, published a small extract (about fabrics) [Dorn, 1873, pp. 689–693]. In 1937 T. Lewicky translated a large part of the section (from the words 'When I was in Bashkird...' to the narrative about Hamid's marriage) into Polish [Lewicky, 1938, p. 109]. Our translation was done according to the text in Ferrand's edition; its placement among the other materials pertaining to sea curiosities is completely arbitrary, as the section is closer to the beginning of the chapter in the Leningrad and Tashkent manuscripts, while its position in the Algerian manuscript has not been identified.

<sup>832</sup> *با شغرد* instead of *با سغورد*.

<sup>833</sup> The passage translated here was preceded by a description of 'Great Rumia' [*رومية عظمية*], which is so generalised that there is no consensus among scholars as to which city al-Gharnati is describing: Rome or Constantinople. Dorn (1873, p. 693), followed by Ferrand [1953, p. 187, Note], believed it to be Rome. Lewicky, on the other hand [Lewicky, 1938, p. 112 ff.], maintained that it was a description of Constantinople. In our opinion, the text of Mu'riba provides a clear answer to the question [see translation].

<sup>834</sup> *اكثّر المدن* can be translated in two ways: 'many cities' (although *اكثّر المدن* would be more natural in such a case) and 'a large part of the city.' Therefore, the translations contain both variants; Dorn [1873, p. 692] translated it as: 'jetzt sei er nur bis zu der Stadt gekommen (?), weil die Grossen (الامراء) sich um den Hauptstadtheil stritten' (it is possible, however, that the Copenhagen manuscript, from which the translation was made, contains

a different Arabic phrase than that in Ferrand's edition), while Lewicky [1938, p. 109] translated it as 'a large part of the city' and translated the next phrase accordingly (see Note 835).

<sup>835</sup> بلا دات —it is not clear from what word this plural form is derived. The plural of بلدة 'city' is بلا د, while that of بلاد 'country' is بلدان; it is formally the plural form of بلا دة 'stupidity.' However, the context leaves no doubt that it should be either 'cities' or 'countries.' Translating أكثر المدينة as 'a large part of the city,' Lewicky translated بلا دات as 'quarter' (he used the same translation for محلة, which really has that meaning), which is by no means correct.

<sup>836</sup> الملك الاكبر —that is, emperor. The situation described by al-Gharnati's informer looks more like the Holy Roman Empire and Rome than Byzantium and Constantinople. Al-Gharnati might have mixed events into his account related to internecine feud in the Roman Empire and the struggle of Rome against the Pope and the emperor.

<sup>837</sup> ملوك

<sup>838</sup> مجانيق

<sup>839</sup> العرادات

<sup>840</sup> محلة

<sup>841</sup> Lewicky [1938, pp. 117–118] believes that this refers to Boris, a claimant to the Hungarian throne, who fled to Byzantium and was supported by Manuel Komnenos.

<sup>842</sup> امم عظيمة

<sup>843</sup> It is 70 in the Copenhagen manuscript. Lewicky assumes this to mean comitatus centres [Lewicky, 1938, pp. 121–122].

<sup>844</sup> كبار المسلمين

<sup>845</sup> تامس; Dorn [1873, pp. 695–696] interpreted this as نامس *Namis*, meaning the Germans; this is another argument for identifying Great Rumia as Rome and not Byzantium.

<sup>846</sup> الكتان الروسي some manuscripts (Leningrad, Copenhagen) contain another interpretation, namely الكتان الرومي, which is seemingly more correct in the context of fabrics produced in Rumia and not Rus'. However, it is then unclear why the author explains what 'Rus' is [cf. Dorn, 1873, pp. 696–698].

<sup>847</sup> Tabaristan is an area in the eastern part of the southern Caspian shore.

<sup>848</sup> Jurjan is an area south-east of the Caspian Sea, in the basin of the Gorgan River.

<sup>849</sup> اهل السفن, which can also mean 'passengers.'

<sup>850</sup> Astrabad is modern-day Gorgan.

<sup>851</sup> من فوق بلغار

<sup>852</sup> بحر عظيم literally means 'an enormous sea.' Ferrand [1925, p. 115, Note 3] agreed with Dorn that the interpretation of نهر as 'a river' is appropriate. However, this does not look like a translator's slip of the pen. 'Mu'rib' [see translation] compared the river to a sea because of its size. Besides, the term 'sea' was sometimes applied to big rivers, most often the Nile. It would be even more natural to apply it to the Volga, which in its lower reaches is many times wider than the Nile.

<sup>853</sup> و سائر الدواب. The translation is unambiguous here. We referred to it in translating the corresponding passage in 'Mu'rib.'

<sup>854</sup> See Note 673.

<sup>855</sup> 40 mithqals equals about 180 g.

<sup>856</sup> *Tassuj*—see Note 712.

<sup>857</sup> يريدون اكله literally means 'they want to eat it.' The message of the story is based on the fact that, according to Islamic law, the finder does not become the owner of found property. If the owner was not found after half a year or a year of searching, it was recommended that the property be used for charity. Al-Gharnati told the story to demonstrate his superiority to the lawyers of Saqsin.

<sup>858</sup> It is unclear why Abu Hamid provides a second-hand report of the length of day and night, given that he had been to Bulgar both in winter and in summer. It may be that the indirect speech appeared because a large number of copies of 'Tuhfa' were made based on a transcription of his words (see translation).

<sup>859</sup> سقسين in place of al-Gharnati's usual term سقسين.

<sup>860</sup> حتي اذا مات لاحد ميت.

<sup>861</sup> The Black Sea is the same as the Sea of Darkness—that is, the Arctic Ocean.

<sup>862</sup> Pages 129–131 in Ferrand's edition tell the story of Dahhak and Lam ibn 'Abil, including the latter's poetic epitaph, which is the same as the text in 'Mu'riba' [see translation]; thus, we are not presenting the legend for a second time.

<sup>863</sup> بعض اصحابي.

<sup>864</sup> Quran, translation, 7:67.

<sup>865</sup> Manuscripts contain the following variants of دنقي; دنقي; دنقي: d-n-k-i, d-f-'-i, v-n-k-i.

<sup>866</sup> The text reads جمل, meaning 'camel' [Ferrand, *Tuhfa*, p. 132]; it should be understood as حمل 'lamb.'

<sup>867</sup> B. Dorn [1873, p. 715, Note 59] hypothesised that the qadi authored 'The History of Bulgaria' (see translation and Note 734).



### Yaqut al-Hamawi

Yaqut ar-Rumi al-Hamawi (born approx. 575/1179, died in 628/1221) came from the Asia Minor, he was of Greek origin and was bought as a slave in his childhood by a merchant from a Syrian city Hama, who gave him a good education. Together with his master he participated in many trading trips, which broadened his geographical horizons. He gained freedom after his master's death. He decided to write a dictionary for travelers, which would explain unclear geographical names, and he called it 'Mu'jam al-buldan' ('The Alphabetical List of Countries' or simply 'The Dictionary of Countries'). The work is structured in the form of an alphabetical arrangement of the placenames. The research for this work involved studying works by many earlier historians and geographers, the originals of which had been lost or were found and published much later than Yaqut's. For instance, for many years his work was the only one which provided information on the works of Ibn al-Kalbi, Ibn Fadlan, Abu Dulaf, Ibn Butlan, and many others. The dictionary covered the territory of the whole Islamic world, including places where he had never been (for example, the West of the Islamic world) and which were known to him only from books he read in the best libraries of the time (in Halab, Merv, etc.). His dictionary was published in six volumes by F. Wüsteufeld in 1866–1870. The text was reprinted in Cairo in 1906. The 'Manjam al-umran fi-l-mustad-rak 'ala-l-mu'jam al-buldan' ('Repository of of Culture in Addition to the Dictionary of Countries') in two volumes provided a range of additions to the dictionary, although there is no mention of the Volga Region. The materials about the Volga Region from 'The Note' by Ibn Fadlan, which were preserved in 'The Dictionary...' by Yaqut were translated for the first time in 1814 by Rasmussen, and in 1823 by H. Fraehn. Yaqut's materials about the peoples living in the European part of Russia are without doubt broader than Ibn Fadlan's; he referred to al-Mas'udi and al-Istarkhi in his articles about

the Volga Region, and quoted historian al-Baladhuri in his articles about the Khazars and Khazar cities.

Despite the fact that Yaqut brought together the materials of his predecessors in one work, it is interesting to take note of his subjective choice of materials, as it reflected the attitude of his contemporaries to the materials provided by early Arabic geographers, as well as the trustworthiness and reliability of the sources.

Below are translated articles from 'The Dictionary...' about the Volga Region by Yaqut (Atil, al-Bashgard, Bulgar, Russ, Khazar, Saqaliba, Balanjar, Samandar, al-Bayda, Khaliij) as included in F. Wüsteufeld's edition. The translated articles are placed as per the structure of the 'Mu'jam al-buldan'—that is, following the Arabic alphabet. Due to the fact that most of these materials were taken from 'The Note' by Ibn Fadlan verbatim or with some abridgements, the translation of the corresponding passages is presented following our translation of 'The Note' by Ibn Fadlan, while the comments to Yaqut's text provide explanations required for the translation of the 'Mu'jam al-buldan'. The materials from 'The Note' by Ibn Fadlan which are not provided in the Mashhad copy and which are known only thanks to 'The Dictionary...' by Yaqut are also mentioned.

Since most of Yaqut's materials on the Volga Region were in fact mostly borrowed from Ibn Fadlan, they were generally not translated, assuming that, in the context of textual criticism, they were only accessible to arabists. However, from our point of view, they can become interesting to a wide range of historians, who will be able to reconsider the interpretation of early materials provided by the 13th century Arab geographer in new, modern translations.

Edition and translations: Yaqut, 1866–1873; Fraehn, 1823; 1832; Rasmussen, 1823; About him: Krachkovsky, 1957; Kovalevsky, 1939; 1956

**Mu'jam al-Buldan**  
(Dictionary of countries)

[Volume 1, p. 112] **Itil**:—its first and second [letters] with a 'kasrah', a 'lām' as in the word 'ibilu'.<sup>1</sup>[This] is the name of a great ['azim] river, which is similar to the Tigris, in the country of al-Khazar. Its waters flow from the ar-Rus and Bulgar lands (bilad). And it is said that (the) Atil is both the capital of al-Khazar country and the river.

I read the book by Ahmad ibn Fadlan ibn al-'Abbas ibn Rashid <sup>2</sup> ibn Hammad, the ambassador of al-Muqtadir to as-Saqaliba country, and they are dwellers (ahl) of Bulgar. I found out that there lived a man of an extremely large constitution. So, when I arrived in the country, I asked the tsar about him. And he said, 'Yes, he lived in our country [earlier] and died. He was neither local, nor from among the [ordinary] people. His story is as follows: Merchants approached the river Atil, as they [usually] do. The river had risen and overflowed its banks. And once, I had not had time to learn it yet, a crowd of merchants came to me and said, "Oh, king! A person swam up to us on the river; if he is from the people living close to us, then we can't live in this place, and we have no other choice than to migrate". So, I rode with them to the river. And then I saw this man, and he [p. 113] was 12 ells tall, if we measure in my 'elbows', and his head was as big as one of the biggest cauldrons, his nose was longer than a quarter, his eyes were huge and each finger was longer than a quarter. When I saw him, my blood ran cold, I was very afraid, like those people. And we began to talk to him, but he did not say [anything]; he was just looking at us. I took him to my house and wrote to the people of the country of Visu, who are [at a distance of] three months [travel] from us, and asked them about him.

They wrote back to me that the man was one of the Yajuj and Majuj, 'They are [at a distance] of three months [travel]. We are separated from them by the sea, because they [live] on [the other?] shore of it. They are like [wild] beasts, naked, barefoot, and they copulate with each other [like beasts]. Every day Allah the Great and Almighty pulls out [one] fish from the sea for them, and every one of them comes, each carrying a knife, and cuts off as much of it as it is enough for him and his family. If one of them takes more than [the amount] he needs, then he will have a stomachache, and his family will have a stomachache, and in some occasions he will die, and all of them will die. Once they have taken from it [the fish] what they need, it will turn around and dive back into the sea. Thus, they carry on their [living] day after day in this way. [Lying] between us and them, the sea [surrounds] them from one side, and from the other side they are encircled by mountains. A barrier (as-sadd) [also] separated them from the gate [singular], which they usually leave from. When Allah the Great and Almighty decides to lead them to inhabited lands, he will open the barrier (as-sadd), and the sea will turn into the ground, and no fish will be available for them'.<sup>3</sup>[The Atil] falls into the sea and opens the wall (as-sudd), which is [placed] between us and between [the Yajuj and Majuj].

After that, the king (al-malik) said: 'He stayed with me for some time. And then I hung him from a tall tree with a strong chain until he died. I stepped back, looked at his grand size and was greatly surprised.

The author, may the Almighty Allah have mercy on him, says: This story, and similar stories which I mentioned before are [like] a naive (ingenuous) [narration about the Yajuj and Majuj]. I won't guarantee the credibility of [the narration about the Yajuj and Majuj] and Ibn Fadlan's story, or of the fact that al-Muqtadir sent him to Bulgar, which are provided in well-known, famous [books]. I have seen several copies of such [compositions], according to which, the Atil is indeed a great and long river. It flows from the far south (aksa al-junub), bypasses (passes through) the al-Bulgar, ar-Rus and

<sup>1</sup> ايل – verbatim arab. collective: camels. Here Yaqt provides an example in order to explain the correct pronunciation of the name of the river; the sense of this explanation is the following: the vowel mark in 'Atil' is the same as in 'Ibil'

<sup>2</sup> In the text شد .

<sup>3</sup> See: [Ibn Fadlan, 1956, p. 208a].

al-Khazar, and flows into lake<sup>4</sup> Jurjan. Merchants find their way along [the Atil] to [the country of] Visu. They bring a lot of fur (al-vabar) [from there] similar to [the fur of] beavers,<sup>5</sup>sables, and squirrels.

And they say that [the Atil] flows from the land of Khirkhiz (Kyrgyz), which [lies] between al-Kimakiya and al-Ghuzziya, and it forms a barrier (al-hadd) between them. Then it goes to Bulgar in the west, before returning to the Burtas and the country (bilad) of al-Khazar and flowing into the Khazar Sea (al-bahr al-Khazari).

It is said that the Atil is divided into seventy-five rivers, and the depth of the river is maintained. It flows to the al-Khazar and then into the sea.

They say that when the [Atil's] waters gather in one place its height does not exceed [the height of the same place] of the Jayhun river, but it equals its (the Jayhun's) water volume and the width of the riverbed. When [p. 114] [the Atil] reaches the sea and flows into it, its [mouth] [requires] two days to cross. There is a difference between the colours of [the waters] in the river and the waters in the sea. [The Atil's waters] prevail over the sea waters, which even freeze up in the winter due to the lack of salt.

[Volume 1, p. 468] **Bashgird**<sup>6</sup>—a 'shīn' with a 'sukūn', a 'ghayn' and a dot. Others pronounce it bashjird<sup>7</sup> with a 'jīm', or bashkird<sup>8</sup> with a 'kāf [with a dot]'. A country lying between Kustantiniya and Bulgar.

Al-Muktadir bi-l-Lahi sent [as an ambassador] Ahmad ibn Fadlan ibn al-'Abbas ibn Rashid ibn Hammad, mawla emir of the believers, later (also) mawla Muhammad ibn Sulayman, to the king (malik) as-Saqaliba, and he and his country's population converted to Islam so that they could accept the clothes bestowed upon them and learn the Islamic laws. He described everything that he witnessed from the moment he left Baghdad to his return. His departure took place in safar 309/ 11 June–9 July 921. In his narration on the al-Bashgard, he said, 'We found ourselves in a country of the Turks, called the al-Bashgard. We were very wary of them, because these are the worst of the Turks, the dirtiest of them and far more treacherous and murderous than the others. A man will come across another, [p. 469] separate his head from his body, take it [with him] and leave him [the body].

They shave their beards and eat lice. [Here] one of them carefully examines the seams of his jacket and cracks the lice with his teeth. Truly, one of them was with us, already converted to Islam and serving us. Once I saw him catching the louse in his clothes, he crushed it with his nails, then licked it and upon seeing me, said: 'Splendid'.

Each of them cuts a stick the size of a phallus and hangs it on himself. And if he wants to set off on a journey or when he meets an enemy, he kisses it, bows to it and says: 'Oh Lord, do so-and-so for me.' I said to the translator: 'Ask one of them, what is their justification [for that] and why do they treat it as their God?' He [the respondent] said: 'Because I came from a thing similar to this and I don't know any other creator than this.'

Some of them say they have twelve Lords: 'winter has a Lord, summer has a Lord, rain has a Lord, wind has a Lord, the trees have a Lord, people have a Lord, horses have a Lord, water has a Lord, night has a Lord, day has a Lord, death has a Lord, earth has a Lord and the Lord in the sky is the biggest of them all. However, he unites with them in harmony and each of them approves what his companion does.' Our Lord is above what the wicked say with his exalted greatness.

We saw that [one] group of them worshipped snakes, [another] group worshipped fish, [and another] group worshipped cranes. I was told that they [once] waged a war with [some] people from

<sup>4</sup> This refers to the Jurjan Sea—that is, the Aral (Caspian?) Sea.

<sup>5</sup> In the arabic word *kundur*—that is, there is no dot above the 'rā', so kunduz is more precise.

<sup>6</sup> با شگرد . Vowel marks by the publisher. In the passages from 'The Risala' written by Ibn Fadlan, the vocalization provided by A. Kovalevsky must be preserved.

<sup>7</sup> با شجرد

<sup>8</sup> با ش فرد

among their enemies, and they [the enemies] made them flee, and cranes began to scream behind them [the enemies] so they got scared themselves and fled after they made them [the al-bashgard] flee. So they [these al-Bashgard] began to worship cranes and say: "They [the cranes] are our Lord for they put our enemies to flight." For that reason they worship them.

That is what is said about them. As for me, I found a numerous tribe in the city of Halab<sup>9</sup> called the al-Bashgardiya. [These people] are completely fair-haired and pale, they accept fiqh<sup>10</sup> as per the madh'hab of<sup>11</sup> Abu Hanif, may Allah be pleased with them. I asked one of them to tell me about their country and position. He answered, "As for our country, [it] is located on the other side of Kustantiniya in the land of the peoples from the al-Ifranj (Franks)<sup>13</sup> called the al-Khunkar. We are Muslims. We are lieges of the king [of the al-Khunkar]. In the area (taraf) of his country [there are] approximately thirty villages, each of which is almost a town (bulayda) [in size]. However, the king of the al-Khungar does not allow us to do anything with [the villages], [having protected himself] with a wall (suran) as he is afraid that we will rebel against him. We are in the middle of the country of Christians. To the north there is a country of as-Saqaliba, to the south there is the country of the Pope (al-Papa)—that is, Rumiya<sup>14</sup>. The Pope is the leader of the al-Ifranj (Franks), and he is a vicegerent of Christ for them (al-Masih). He is like the emir of the Muslim believers. His orders are fulfilled in all matters [p. 470] of their religion.

He said, "To the west there is al-Andalus, and to the east there is ar-Rum: Kustantiniya and its region". He said, "Our language is the language (of the Franks). Our clothes are [like] their clothes. We serve with them in the army (al-jundiya) and carry out raids on any community, if they are fighting against the opponents of Islam."

I asked him why they converted to Islam, despite the fact that they [are] in the middle of the country of infidels. He said that several (jama'a) of our ancestors (elders) said that a long time ago seven Muslims from Bulgar had come to their land and lived among us. They were so kind as to familiarize us [with Islam] and [explain to us] how deluded we had been; they showed us the path to God's grace in Islam. And Allah rewarded us. Allahu Akbar! And we all converted to Islam, and 'Allah cut out hearts for faith'<sup>15</sup>. We came to this country to learn the Islamic law. When we returned to our land, we gave honour to its citizens and started to deal with the affairs of their religion...

I asked, "What is the distance between us and your country?" He answered, "It takes approximately two and a half months to get from us to Kustantiniya, and it takes approximately the same period of time to get from Kustantiniya to our country." And al-Istakhri mentioned in his book [that] it takes twenty-five crossings to get from the Bashjirds to the Bulgars, and it takes ten days to get from the Bashjirds to the al-Bajanak (Pechenegs), who are a group (sinf) of Turks.

[Volume 1, p. 722]. **Bulgar**—with a dammah, a 'ghayn' and a dot. The central city (madina) of the as-Saqaliba which is [located] in the north. The power of frost does not allow snow to melt on its [Bulgar's] ground neither in summer nor in winter. Its population (ahl) rarely sees the ground [without snow]. [p. 723] Their buildings are made only of wood. It (a building) is built with logs placed one on the other, and is hammered with stakes also made of wood. Their land does not bear any fruit.

It takes approximately one month to get from Atil, the central city (madina) of the al-Khazar, to Bulgar [through] steppes, it takes approximately two months if you choose to go upstream along

<sup>9</sup> Halab (Aleppo) – a city located in a north-eastern part of Syria.

<sup>10</sup> Fiqh is the Islamic law.

<sup>11</sup> Madh'hab is a school of the Islamic law.

<sup>12</sup> Abu Hanifah, an-Nu'man ibn Sabit (699–767) was a theologian, faqih, muhaddis, founder and eponym of Hanafi Madh'hab in the Islamic law, whose followers were and remain to be the majority of Muslims in the Middle Asia and Volga Region,

<sup>13</sup> or al-Afranj. Here is a collective name for the Christian peoples of Europe.

<sup>14</sup> Rumiya – Rome, Italy.

<sup>15</sup> Rephrasing of the Quran.

the Itil, and approximately twenty days if you go downstream. It takes roughly ten crossings to get from Bulgar to the border territories of ar-Rum. You'll need twenty days to get from [Bulgar] to Kuyaba, the main city (madina) of the ar-Rus. It takes roughly twenty five crossings to go from Bulgar to the Bashjirds. The king (malik) of Bulgar and his population converted to Islam in the days of al-Muktadir bi-l-Lahi. They (the Bulgars) sent an ambassador (rasul) to Baghdad, letting al-Muktadir know about it and asking him to send a person who would teach them the prayers and [laws] of Shari'ah (ash-sharai'). However, he (the ambassador) did not explain the reason for their conversion.

I read 'The Account' (Risala) composed by Ahmad ibn Fadlan ibn al-'Abbas ibn Asad ibn Hammad, mavla of Muhammad ibn Sulayman, ambassador of al-Muktadir bi-l-Lahi to the king of as-Sakaliba, in which he reported what he had witnessed from the moment he had left Baghdad until his return. In it he said: In his letter <Almisha (Almysha)><sup>16</sup> ibn Shikli yltivar,<sup>17</sup> the king of the as-Sakaliba, addressed al-Muktadir, sovereign of the faithful, and asked him to send a person who would guide him in religion, teach the laws of Islam, build a mosque and erect a minbar, so that he would be able to proclaim prayers [from the minbar] in the name of the caliph in his [own] land (bilad) and all the regions of his state (mamlak), and asked him to build a fortress, to fortify his positions against the kings (al-muluk) of his enemies. These requests were met with approval. Nazir al-Harami (al-Hurami) was assigned mediator in this affair. And I started to read his (the king's) letters and lists of items sent to him [as gifts] and for surveillance over the faqihs and mu'allims. ...He said: Later, on Thursday, we departed from The City of Prosperity (Madinat as-Salām), as soon as eleven nights [of the month] of Safar, 309 [21 June 921] had passed. Afterwards he told me about the events which happened on his journey to Hvarism, and then on to the state (bilad) of as-Sakaliba, the description of which is long. Then he said: When we were only a day and a night away from the king of as-Sakaliba, to whom we were going, he sent four kings under his command, his brothers and sons, to meet us. They met us, carrying with them bread, meat and millet, and rode with us. When we were two parasangs [away] from him, he met us himself and when he saw us, he came down [from his horse] and prostrated himself, bowing with gratitude to Allah, the Great and Mighty. He had dirhams in his sleeve and he scattered them onto us. He erected yurts for us, and we settled down in them. [p. 724] We arrived on Sunday, when twelve nights [of the month] of Muharram, 310 [12 May 922] had passed. It took seventy days [to get] from al-Jurjaniya, the main city (madina) of Khwarism, to his country. So, we stayed until Wednesday in the yurts he had put up for us, while the kings of his land and the rulers [of his country] gathered to hear the letter [from the caliph]. And when Thursday came and they all gathered, we unfolded two banners that we had with us, saddled the horse with a saddle sent to him [as a gift], and put a turban on him. Then I took out the caliph's letter. I read the letter, and he stood in front of me. Then I read a letter from vizier Hamid ibn al-'Abbas, and he continued to stand, although he was rafat (stout, large). His companions scattered dirhams onto us. We took out the gifts and presented them to him. Then I clothed his wife [in the robe of honour] while she sat next to him—that is their law and tradition. Then he sent for us. We came to his tent, and he had his kings (muluk) [sitting] to his right and we were invited to sit to his left, while his sons sat in front of him and he alone [sat] on the throne, covered with a Byzantine brocade. He sent for the table [with viands], and it was served to him. It had nothing but grilled meat. So, the king began: he took a knife, sliced a piece and ate it, then a second, and a third. Then he cut off a piece and gave it to Ambassador Sausan. And when he got it, he was presented with a small table, which was put in front of him. And that was the rule, that no one was to reach for food until the king had given him a

<sup>16</sup> In Yaqut's arabic text *المس* (Al.m.s). The name is vocalized in accordance with Ibn Fadlan's text.

In A. Kovalevsky's translation: Almush. The correct pronunciation is: Almish (Almysh). The name is of Old Turkic origin and was formed as a result of the fusion of two words: 'el' (or 'il') and 'almysh'—that is, the one who accepted (took) the state. The fusion of these two words results in Almysh or Almish [Smirnova, 1981, pp. 249–255].

<sup>17</sup> *بيلتوار* 'Byltyvar' (biltivar) in Yaqut's arabic text, which is a conjecture of the publisher, based on a diacritical mark in one of the copies. As mentioned above, 'yltyvar' is more precise. See comm. to 'The Risala' by Ibn Fadlan.

piece. When he had received it, he was immediately presented with a table. Then he sliced a piece and gave it to the king (malik), sitting to the right, and he was given a table, then to the second king, and he was given a table as well..., and thus [it continued] until every one of those sitting in front of him was given a table, and each of us ate from his own table, not neighboring with anyone, and nobody but him took anything from his table. When he was done with the food, each of us took the rest of the food from our tables to take back to our residences. When we were full he ordered to bring us a honey drink called *sujuv*. He drank and we drank with him. From his minbar, even before my arrival, a khutbah had been proclaimed in his name: 'Oh, Allah! Save [in prosperity] our king (al-Malik) Yiltyvar, king of the Bulgars!' I said to him, 'The true king is Allah, and nobody shall be called with this title from the minbar but him, the Great and Mighty. He is your master, Lord of the faithful, for he himself is satisfied that he is proclaimed from his minbars in the east and in the west like this: 'Oh, Allah! Save [in prosperity] your servant and your vicegerent Ja'far, imam al Muqtadir-bi-Allah, Lord of the faithful'".

And he said to me: 'How fitting is it to proclaim a khutbah in my name?' I said, 'Upon mentioning [p. 725] of your name and your father's name'. He said, 'But my father was a disbeliever and I do not want to mention his name from the minbar; and I also [used to be a disbeliever], and I do not want my name to be mentioned, because the one who gave it to me was a disbeliever. However, what is the name of my Lord, Lord of the faithful?' I said, 'Ja'far'. He said, 'Is it proper for me to be called by his name?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, '[So], I have already given myself the name Ja'far and have given my father the name 'Abdullah, so give the order to the khatib about it'. I did so and he [the khatib] began to proclaim a khutbah in his name: 'Oh, Allah! Save [in prosperity] your servant Ja'far ibn 'Abdullah, Lord [emir] of the Bulgars, mawla of the faithful'. In his country I saw so many marvelous things that I won't be able to enumerate them, for instance, the [very] first night we stayed in his country I noticed that before the [final] disappearance of the Sun [shine] at the usual time of prayers the heavens turned red. And I heard loud sounds and a strong babble [up] in the air. Then I looked up and saw a fiery red cloud near me, and these sounds and babble [were coming] from it. And I saw images of people and horses, and some figures of people were holding bows, arrows, spears, and drawn swords. One moment they seemed completely real, and the next they were just phantoms. And nearby I saw another similar detachment, a black one, in which I also distinguished men, horses, and arms. And this detachment started to attack the other one as one troop attacks another. We were scared by this sight and started praying and beseeching, and they [citizens of the country] were laughing at us and wondering what we were doing.

He said, [For a long period of time] we were looking at these detachments fighting each other. They both blended for a moment, then detached, and this phenomenon lasted for part of the night. Then it vanished. We asked the king about it, and he responded that his elders used to say that those [horsemen] belonged to faithful and infidel genies. They fought every evening, and it was true that as long as they existed [in this world], they would wage this [battle] every night. 'And we always see this battle in such a manner'.

He said, A tailor of the king (malik) from Baghdad, who [coincidentally] was in this region, came into my yurt to talk with me. We spoke as long as it takes to read less than a seventh part [of the Quran] as we awaited the night adhan. And then the adhan began. So we left the yurt, and dawn had already come. Then I said to the muezzin: 'Which adhan have you called out?' He said, 'I called out the adhan of dawn'. I said, 'What about the final adhan at night?' He said, 'We pray this prayer together with [the adhan] of dusk'. I said, 'And at night?' He said, 'As you see! It used to be even shorter than this, but only now has it become longer'. He said that it had been a month already that he did not sleep at night afraid to miss the morning prayer, and this is because [if] a man puts a pot on the fire during the sunset [prayer] and then reads the morning prayer, it [the pot] does not have time to boil.

He said, I saw that their day [p. 726] is not that long, that is, for part of the year it is long and the night is short, then the night is long and the day is short. So, then the second night began, I sat

outside of the yurt and watched the sky and I saw only a small number of stars in it, I think, maybe fifteen scattered stars. And so the red dawn was here, which happens before the night [prayer], never disappears [completely], and so the night was here with [such] faint darkness that a man would recognize another man at a greater [distance], than an arrow shot.

He said, I saw that the moon did not reach the middle of the sky but appeared on its edge for about an hour, then the dawn came, and the moon hid.

He said, The king (al-Malik) told me that beyond his country, a three month journey away, there [lived] a people called the Visu. In their land, night lasted for less than an hour.

He said, I saw that in this country, at sunrise, everything becomes red: the ground, the mountains, and everything a man looks at. And the sun rises as big as a cloud, and the redness stays until [the sun] reaches the highest point in the sky.

Citizens of this country told me that 'when it is winter, the night becomes as long as a summer day, and the day becomes as short as a night, so if one of us goes out to the place called Itil—and it takes less than a parasang to get there from here—at dawn [in the morning], he will reach this place when the night comes, and [as soon as] the stars cover all of the sky'.

And we [the ambassadors] did not leave [this] country until the nights had become long and the days had shortened.

I saw that they considered dogs howling a very good omen, they enjoyed it and spoke of a year of abundance, blessing and prosperity.

I saw that there were so many snakes that [sometimes] there were truly a dozen of them or more wound round the branch of a tree. They [the inhabitants] did not kill them, and they did not harm them.

Their apples are very green, extremely sour, and the maidens eat those apples, so [correspondingly] they are called maiden trees.

Hazel trees are the most widespread in their country. And I saw [such] great forests of these trees, that [each] forest was forty parasangs long and wide.<sup>18</sup>

He said, I saw some trees in their land, but I do not know what they were: these trees were extremely tall; their trunks were free of branches, and their tops were like those of palm-trees, with thin, compound but converging [leaves]. They hold onto certain place on the trunk, drill it and put a vessel under it, and some liquid, more delightful than honey, will flow into the vessel. If a man drinks a lot of it, it will make him drunk, just like wine or even more.

Their food is millet and horse meat, but [they] also have wheat and barley in abundance, and whoever sows something will take the harvest for himself. The king has no right to claim it, apart from sable fur [p. 727] that is paid every year from each house. <And when he sends a detachment to carry out a raid into a country, this detachment shares a portion of the loot with him>.

They have no oil (fat) except for fish oil. They use it instead of olive or sesame oil. They smelly (dirty, untidy) because of this [oil].

All of them wear hats. When the king rides a horse, he rides on his own, without a gulyam (gulam), and there is nobody around him. So when he is riding through the market nobody remains seated: [everyone] takes his hat off and puts it under the arm. Once he has passed by, they put their hats back on. The same thing applies to anyone who goes to see the king, young or old, including his sons and brothers: as soon as they look at him they take off their hats and put them under their arms. Then [they] nod their heads towards the king, bow and remain on their feet until he offers them a seat, and truly everyone kneels in front of him and does not take out a hat nor even shows it until he leaves the room, putting it on [only] at that time.

Lightning is a common occurrence in their country. If lightning strikes a house, they won't come anywhere near it and leave it until time eventually destroys it. They will say, 'This place is marked by wrath'.

<sup>18</sup> Possible translation: 'I saw that this wood [included] forty parasangs of similar [hazel trees].'

And if they see a resilient and clever person, they say the following: 'This one, more than any-one else, deserves to serve our Lord'. So, they take him, tie a rope around his neck and hang him on a tree until he falls into pieces.

If they are travelling and one of them wants to urinate and he goes to do so while armed, he will be robbed: they will take his weapon, his clothes and everything he has on him. But if a person takes his weaponry off and puts it aside before urinating, then they won't disturb him. And they have the following tradition: men and women go down to the river and bathe together naked. they do not cover themselves nor commit adultery in any way or in any case. And if one of them commits adultery, whoever he is, he will be tied with his hands and legs to four <stakes>, prepared for him, and [he] will be cut with an axe from the back of his head to his thighs. And they do the same with a woman. Then each piece of his or her body is hung on a tree. I took great pains to try to make women cover themselves from men when bathing, but I did not succeed. They will kill a thief in the same way as they would an adulterer.

We have reduced reports about them [the Bulgars] to this summary.

[Volume 1, p. 729] **Balanjar**—the two [first letters] with a fathāh, the 'an-nūn' with a sukūn, a 'jīm' with a fathāh and a 'rā'. The main city is located in the land of the al-Khazar, beyond Bab al-Abwab. It is said that it was conquered by 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'a. Al-Baladhuri<sup>19</sup> says that it was conquered by Salman ibn Rabi'a [p. 730] al-Bahili. He approached the borders of [Balanjar] but the khakan [leading] his army met him beyond Balandjar, and he and his comrades perished in battle as martyrs [for their faith]—there were four thousand of them. This was the beginning of the events that followed. The Turks were afraid and said that these [people] were angels and weapons could not kill them. This belief was held until one of the Turks hid in the bushes and shot an arrow into a Muslim and killed him. He proclaimed among his people: 'They die just as you die. Don't be afraid of them'. So they grew bolder and attacked them. As a result, 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'a died as a martyr [for his faith]. His brother became the standard-bearer and continued to fight for as long as it was possible. He buried his brother on the outskirts of Balanjar and came back with the rest of the Muslims down the Gilan road. 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Jumana al-Bahili said<sup>20</sup>:

We have two graves: a grave in Balanjar  
and a grave in Sinistan—what glorious graves we have!  
The one in China completed his conquest,  
and the other is asked to send rain to water the wheat fields.

The Turks killed 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Rabi'a. They say that every night Salman ibn Rabi'a and his comrades saw some light over the battlefield. They took Salman ibn Rabi'a and put him in the coffin, and they ask him to send some rain when they are thirsty.

As for the one in as-Sin, there rests Kutayba ibn Muslim al-Bahili.

Al-Buhturi said the following in honour of Ishaq ibn Kundajik:

Respect for the person  
who signed a treaty ('ahd) in Hamlih (Hamlij) or Balanjar has grown in al-'Iraq.

[Volume 1, p. 793] Al-Bayda is also a [major] city in the country of the Khazars beyond Bab al-abvab. Al-Buhturi said the following in honour of Ibn Kundajik al-Khazari: ...<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Al-Baladhuri was a 9th century Arabic historian, the author of the 'Kitab Futuh al-Buldan' ('The Book of the Conquest of Countries'), in which he mentioned the Arabic military campaigns to the Northern Caucasus.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Baladhuri was called al-Bahili only by the name of his father, Ibn Jumana.

<sup>21</sup> The three preceding distiches are left untranslated. Two of them are repeated in the article 'Hamlih'.



Praise was given in al-'Iraq to the person  
who signed a treaty in al-Baida or in Balanjar.

They say that they reached an agreement with him in Hamlih (Hamlij).

[Volume 2, p. 436] **Khazaru**—vocalization [by a fathāḥ], a 'rā' in the end of [the word]<sup>22</sup>. [The word] means changes in the pupil near the external edge of the eye, this is the ugliest condition.

This is the land of the Turks behind Bab al-abvab, called Darband and located near Dhul-Qarnayn wall (as-sad). It is said that [the name] was given to it [after] al-Khazar ibn Yafit ibn Nuh, may peace be with him.

The 'Kitab al-'ayn' (Book of 'ayn') reports the following: 'The al-Khazaru is a tribe with slanted eyes (Khazar al-'uyun)'.

Di'bil ibn 'Ali said the following glorifying the clan of 'Ali [ibn Abu Talib], may Allah be pleased with him: ...<sup>23</sup>

Here are the words of Ahmad ibn Fadlan, an ambassador (ar-rasul) of al-Muktadir to the king of as-Saqaliba, provided in his 'Account' (Risala), in which he mentioned events which he had witnessed in this country.

He said,<sup>24</sup> 'Al-Khazar is the name of the country (iklima), [and<sup>25</sup>] the capital (kasaba) is called Atil, and the Atil is the name of the river which flows to the al-Khazar from the ar-Rus and Bulgars. Atil is the main city (madina). Al-Khazar is the name of the kingdom (mamlak), not the name of the city (madina). Atil consists of two parts: a larger one lying to the west of the river called the Atil [p. 437] and another part to the east [of the river]. The king (malik) lives in the western part. In their language the king is called P.L.K. (B.L.K.) or also known as Bek.<sup>26</sup> This western part is one parasang long. It is surrounded by a moat (as-sur)...

They have markets and bathhouses. Many citizens [of the city] are Muslims, and it is said that there are over ten thousand people, and have approximately thirty mosques. The royal palace [is located] far from the riverbank. This palace is made of [flamed] bricks; nobody else has a building made of [flamed] bricks, the king does not allow anybody except for himself to build with [flamed] bricks. This wall has four gates. One gate opens towards the river, and another opens towards the steppe [located] on the far side of the city. Their king (malik) is a Jew. His army (al-khashiya) is composed of four thousand warriors. The Khazars are Muslims and Christians, and there are also idolaters among them. The smallest group of people are Jews, the king being one of them. The majority of the Khazars are Muslims and Christians, but the king and his elite are Jews. The most widespread customs among their population are those of the idolaters, who bow to each other in reverence. The rules of taxation are different for Muslims, Jews, and Christians.

There [are] twelve thousand warriors in the king's (malik) army. When a man dies among them, another [man] replaces him...

The king has nine judges consisting of Jews, Christians, Muslims, and idolaters... There are no villages near this city, but its lands (fields, cultivated soil) are vast. In summer they go to the fields, which are twenty parasangs wide... [p. 438]. People from the lands ar-Rus, Bulgar, and Kuyaba gather there.

There are many merchants, Muslims and merchant travellers in the eastern part of the town. The language of the Khazars is not the language of the at-Turks, it's not Persian, it does not resemble

<sup>22</sup> 'Ra' in the arabic text is written in the 'tenvin dammah'—that is, the nominative case, with undefined status.

<sup>23</sup> Further on there are four distiches which have been omitted in our translation.

<sup>24</sup> Despite the reference to Ibn Fadlan, the text of the following two abstracts matches the summarized chronicles written by al-Istakhri, who is mentioned by Yaqut in other articles.

<sup>25</sup> The prefix 'min' ('from') in the arabic text appears to make no sense so we substitute it with a conjunction 'va' ('and') according to the text by Ibn Hawqal.

<sup>26</sup> به ك

anything else. They differ from other peoples, but they are not similar to the Turks (ar-atrak). They have black hair. There are two kinds of them, one is called the Kara-Khazar, due to their black skin, which is like as-samra (sumra), that is why they are called like that. The other kind is called the al-Hind, the kind with fair skin. They have pleasant, beautiful (appearance) which they inherited from the slaves of the al-Khazar, they are idolaters, and their [religion] allows them to sell their children and often enslave some of them for the second part. As for Jews and Christians, their faiths, just as Islam, forbid them from enslaving each other.

As for the king, he is called khakan. He appears only once every four months. He is called 'the Great Khakan', and his deputy is called khakan-bekh. He leads and commands the troops, runs state affairs, rules the state, shows himself [in front of the people], does campaigns, and the surrounding kings express their obedience to him. And every day he presents himself humbly before the greatest khakan, expressing humility and peace. He goes to him only barefooted, holding firewood in his hands, and when he greets him, the firewood is lit in front of him. When he is done with the fuel, he sits together with the king [p. 438] on his chair. He is substituted by a man known as the kundur-khakan, and he in its turn is also substituted by a man called javshungar.

Another custom [of] the highest king [is that] if he dies, a large court, consisting of twenty houses, with a grave for him in each house, is built for him. The stones are crushed so that they resemble eye powder, they are scattered inside each grave, and quicklime is placed on them. There [is] a river under [this] court, and the river is large, and they [locate] this river over this grave and say, 'So that [p. 439] neither devil, nor person, neither worms, nor insects can reach it'. When he is buried, they behead those who buried him, so that nobody knows which of the houses his grave [is] in. His grave is called paradise, and they say, 'He has entered paradise'.

And all [these] houses are lined with golden, satin tissue.

[One] more custom of the Khazar king is [that] he has twenty-five wives, [and] each of them is a daughter of the neighbouring kings, which he takes for himself, willingly or unwillingly. He has sixty concubines for his bed, and they are all true beauties. And each of free wives and concubines [is] in a separate palace, and each [has] a room in the shape of a cupol, covered with lacquer, and there [is] a well-trodden space around each 'cupol'. And each of them has a eunuch watching over her. So, if [the Khakan] wants to use one of them [as a concubine], he calls for the eunuch that is watching over her, and [he] comes with her in a split second to put her on his bed, and the eunuch stops at the door of the king's 'cupol'. When [the king] is done with her [as a concubine], he [the eunuch] takes her by the hand and goes away without leaving her there for a single moment.

When the highest king goes horseback riding, he is followed by all his troops, and the escort follow a mile away from him, and the only way his subjects can see him is prostrated on the ground, bowing to him, and none of them raises his head until he passes by.

The length of the reign of their king is forty years. If he lives longer than them [at least] for one day, then the subjects and his associates fire him or kill him and then say: 'His mental capacity decreased and his judgment [became] confused [vague]'.

If he sends a [detachment] on [a campaign], it will not return under any circumstances and by no means, and if they flee, then everyone from the detachment that returns [to the king] is killed. As for the leaders and his deputy, if they flee, they [themselves] will be brought back and their wives and children will be brought and they will be given to other people in their presence, as they are watching, their horses, household goods, weaponry, courts, manors are given away, and sometimes he [the king] cuts each of them into two and kicks them away, and sometimes hangs them on trees by their necks. Sometimes, if he shows mercy, he will make them stable boys.

The Khazar king [has] a big city on the river Atil. It is divided into two sides. One side is [inhabited] by Muslims, and the other side is the residence of the king and his entourage. A man called khaz [from] the entourage <ghilmen> of the king is [in charge] of the Muslims. He is Muslim himself, and this <ghulam> Muslim is given judicial authority over the Muslims living in the country of the Khazars and any of them temporarily coming to them to trade, so nobody deals with their

affairs and nobody judges them except him. There [is] a cathedral mosque in the city for Muslims, who pray there [p. 440] and go there on Fridays. It has a tall minaret and several muezzins.

So, when in 310<sup>27</sup> the Khazar king found out that Muslims had destroyed a synagogue in the al-Babunaj Manor, he ordered the minaret destroyed and the muezzins executed, and said, 'If, truly, I had not been afraid that there would be no synagogues left in Islamic countries, I would surely have destroyed the mosque [too]'.  
 The Khazars and their king are all Jews, and as-Saqaliba and everyone who shares a border with them submit to him, and he treats them as slaves, and they submit to him with humility.  
 Part of them reaches the Yajuj and Majuj, and they are the Khazars.

[Volume 2, p. 471] **Hamlih (Hamlij)** is the main city (al-madina) in the land of the al-Khazars. Al-Buhturi said the following in honour of Ishaq ibn Kundajik: ...<sup>28</sup>

[Volume 2, p. 834] **Russ**<sup>29</sup>—with a 'dammah' above the first [letter], a 'sukūn' above the second [letter], and a 'sīn' with no dots. They are called the Russ, without a 'wāw'. [They] are one of the peoples living in their country, and they border with the as-Sakaliba and at-Turk; they have their own language, religion (ad-din) and [religious] law (ash-shari'a). In accordance with this law, they have no idolaters among them.

Here is the narration of al-Muqaddasi<sup>30</sup>: They are on the island... They have no manors, villages or cultivated fields. They trade sable, squirrel furs and other pelts. They sell them to anyone and take minted coins for them, which they store in their belts.

When one [of the Ruses] has a baby, he (the father) brings (presents) a naked sword to the newborn, puts it in front of him and says: 'I won't bequeath any property to you: you'll have only the things you'll get yourself with your sword'.

These are the ones who reigned for one year in Barza'a. They plundered it until Allah drove them away and destroyed them.

I read 'The Account' (Risala) composed by Ahmad ibn Fadlan ibn al-'Abbas ibn Asad ibn Hammad, mawla of Muhammad ibn Sulayman, ambassador (ar-rasul) of al-Mukhtadir to the king of as-Saqaliba, in which he reported what he had witnessed from the moment he left Baghdad until he came back. I'm telling now what he had written about marvelous things in that country.

He said, 'I saw the Ruses when they came to trade and disembarked along the Itil river. I have never seen [people] with bodies more perfect than theirs. They resemble palm trees, have fair skin and hair, have rosy cheeks. They wear neither jackets nor caftans, but their men wear kisa's, and this garment wraps one side of the body, from where one arm comes out of it. [p. 835]. Each man has an axe, a sword and a knife on him, [moreover] he never parts with them. <Their swords are exquisitely forged>, they are grooved, Frankish. Some of them [the Rus] [have] pictures of trees, images, etc. starting from the edges of their nails to their necks.

<And each woman has a box fixed on her chest>, either made of iron, or silver, or brass, or gold, or wood depending on the amount of [money] her husband has. This box has a ring and a knife attached to the ring, both fastened to the chest. They wear gold and silver necklaces, because when a man has ten thousand dirhams, his wife has one necklace; if he has twenty thousand dirhams, his wife has two

<sup>27</sup> The year started on 1 May 922.

<sup>28</sup> Further on there are two distiches which are identical to those specified in the article 'al-Bayda'. The same poems are known via the texts by Ibn Khordadbeh, but they are specified in several articles of 'The Dictionary...' by Yaqut in a broader manner.

<sup>29</sup> There is a 'tashdīd' above a 'sīn' in a word 'russ', which indicates letter gemination.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Muqaddasi (395–approx. 390 / 946–approx. 1000) was the last representative of the classical school of 10th century geographers, the author of 'Ahsan at-taksim fi ma'rifat al-akalim' ('The best divisions for knowledge of the regions'), which was known in two revisions. It is considered that Yaqut used the second revision of the work, which focused on the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt (composed in 378 / 988–989). Yaqut used al-Muqaddasi's materials and referred to him as the nisba al-Bashshari, less often by other names, e.g. Ibn al-Banna [Krachkovsky, 1957, pp. 209–214].

necklaces; so for every ten thousand dirhams that a man earns, he gives his wife a necklace. That is why some women have many [rows of] necklaces.

They [the Ruses] [consider] the ceramic green beads that are on boats to be the best jewellery. They make exceptional efforts [to acquire them]; they buy one bead for a dirham and string them as necklaces for their wives.

The dirham of the Rus is a gray squirrel without fur, tail, front or rear paws, or a head, [also] sables. If something is missing, the pelt is considered a defective [coin]. They use them for trading, and it is impossible to take them out, so they are only exchanged for other goods. There are no scales, just standard ingots. They buy and sell using a measuring cup.

They are the dirtiest of Allah's creatures. They do not wash themselves of excrements nor of urine; they do not wash themselves of sexual uncleanness, and do not wash hands after eating but are like wandering donkeys. They arrive from their country and moor their boats on the Atil, which is a big river, and they build big wooden houses on its banks. [There are] between ten and twenty people living in such houses, approximately. Every one [of them] has his own bench that he sits on, and beautiful girls for the merchants sit with them. And when one [of them] copulates with his girl, his companion looks on. Sometimes they form an [entire] group, one against the other, and when a merchant comes in to buy one of the girls, he sees them copulating. But he does not leave her until he satisfies his urge.

Every day they always wash their faces and heads with the dirtiest possible water. This [happens] in the following way: a girl comes every morning to her lord with a big tub of water. He washes his hands, face, and hair in it. He washes it and combs it out into the tub. Then he blows his nose and spits into the water and leaves no dirt, no matter what he does into the water. When he finishes, the girl takes the tub to the one sitting next to him, and [he] does the same thing that his mate did. And she takes the tub from one to another until she has passed it to everyone in [the] house, and everyone blows his nose, spits, and washes his face and hair in it.

As soon as their ships arrive in this bay, [p. 836] every one of them comes out, [holding] bread, meat, onions, milk and nabiz, and approaches the post, fixed in the ground, which [has] a face, similar to a human face with small images around it, and there are long posts behind it, fixed in the ground. So, he comes up to the big image and bows, then he says, 'O, my lord, I came from a remote country, and I have this many girls, this many heads, this many sables and skins,' until he counts everything he has, 'and this is for you,' then [he] leaves everything he got in front of this post, 'and I want you to grant me a merchant with many dinars and dirhams, that will buy things that I want to sell and will not contradict what I say'. Then he goes away.

If trade is hard for him and he stays a long time, he will come again with the second and third gifts, and if [he] has some difficulties in achieving what he wants, he will take gifts to every small image, ask them to do him a favour, and will say the following: 'These are the wives of our lord, his daughters and sons'. So, he continues asking for a favour and intercession from one image, then from another image, groveling in front of them. Sometimes trade goes well, and he sells everything. Then he says, 'My Lord satisfied my needs, and I should reward him'. So he takes several sheep or cows, slaughters them, and distributes part of the meat, and the rest of the meat is left between that large post and small ones around it, and he hangs heads of cattle or sheep on the tree stuck [in the back] in the ground. When night comes, dogs come and eat everything. And the person who did it, says, 'My lord is satisfied with me and ate my gift'.

If one of them falls ill, they will pitch a tent for him away from the group, and will put him in the tent with some bread and water. They neither approach nor talk to him, especially if he is poor or a slave, but if he has a crowd of relatives and servants, people visit him all these days and take care of him. So, if he recovers, he will come back to them, but if he dies, they will burn him. If he was a slave, they will leave him, [until] he is eaten by dogs and predatory birds.

If they catch a thief or robber, they will take him to a tall wide tree, tie a strong rope around his neck and hang him on that tree until he falls into pieces because of wind and rain.

I have been told many times what they do to their leaders when they die, among which the most important one is burning, that's why I was always eager to see it, until [p. 837] I found out [about] the death of one outstanding man from among them. So, they put him in a grave and covered it for ten days with a canopy while they cut and stitched his garments.

So it was that if [he] was a poor person among them, they would make a small boat, put him into the boat, and burn his [boat]. But if he was rich, they would collect everything he had and divide it into three parts. One third goes to his family; one third goes to cut and sew his garments; and one third goes to prepare the nabiz that they drink until the day his girl commits suicide and is burned up together with her lord. They overindulge in nabiz, drink it day and night, [so] some of them die holding a mug in the hand.

During those ten days, they drink and copulate with women and play the saz. And the girl that will burn herself with him drinks and has fun during these ten days, puts on headpieces, and wears different dresses, and dressed like this, she gives herself to men.

If a leader dies, his family asks his girls and <ghilmen>, 'Which one of you will die with him?'. One of them replies, 'I'. And once they say that, it is mandatory. There is no way back. Even if they wanted to change their mind, they would not let them do it. Most of those who do it are girls. So when that man whom I mentioned died his girls were asked, 'Which one of you will die with him?' And one of them said, 'I'. So, they told two girls to guard her, to go with her wherever she went, to the extent that sometimes they were [even] told to wash her legs with their hands. And they [the relatives] began the work, cutting out clothing for him and organizing everything he needed. The girl was eating and drinking every day, having fun and looking forward to the future.

On the day when he and his girl were to be cremated, I came to the river where his boat was [located]. They had already pulled it [ashore]; four abutments made of the khadang and other trees [khalanj] were set up for it, and around them there was some kind of big wooden scaffolding. Then [the boat] was pulled onto this wooden structure. And they began to guard it, walking back and forth, and speaking a language I could not understand. But he [the deceased] was still in his grave, [because] they had not taken him out [yet].

They set up a wooden hut in the middle of the boat and covered it with various red 'buntings'. Then they brought a bench and put it on the boat, covered it with a quilted mattress and Byzantine brocade, and pillows also made of Byzantine brocade. Then an old woman came, they called her the angel of death, and she spread the aforementioned covers onto the bench. She oversees the cutting and sewing of the clothing, organizes his burial, and also [she] kills the girls. And I saw that she was an old woman warrior, muscular and grim-looking.

When they came to his grave, they removed the dirt from the wood [cover], removed the wood, and took him out in the bed-cover that he had died in. And I saw that he had turned black from the cold in this country. They had already put nabiz, [some kind of] fruit, and a lute into his grave. Now they took it all out. He did not smell bad, [p. 838] nothing had changed in him except his color. Then they dressed him up in baggy pants, spats, boots, a coat, a brocade caftan with golden buttons, put a brocade hat on his head and put a sable on him, and carried him to the tent on the ship, seated him on a quilted mattress, supported him by pillows and brought nabiz, fruit, different kinds of flowers and aromatic plants, and put everything with him. And they brought bread, meat, and onions and left it all in front of him. Then they brought a dog, slashed it in two, and threw it onto the boat. Then they brought all the weapons and put it them all around him. Then they took two horses and rode them until they perspired. Then they slashed them with swords and threw the meat onto the boat. Then they brought two cows, slashed them, and threw them onto the boat. Then they brought a cock and a hen, slaughtered them, and put them on the boat.

A lot of men and women gathered. They played the saz, and every relative of the dead set up a tent away from his tent. And a girl, who wanted to be killed, went all colored up to the tents of the relatives, walked to and fro, entered every tent, and each owner of each tent made love to her say-

ing loudly: 'Tell your lord, "Truly, I did it because of my love and friendship to you"'. In this way, she visited each tent until the last, and all the rest copulated with her.

When they finished, they slashed a dog into two halves, put them into the ship, and also beheaded a cock and put [it and its] head on the right and left sides of the ship.

By sunset, on Friday, they brought the girl to something that had been made earlier, something like a gate door. She put her feet on the palms of the men and raised above that door [looking down from its top], and said [some] words in their own language, and then they lowered her. Then she was raised for the second time, and she repeated [what] she had done the first time. Then she was lowered and raised again for the third time; she repeated the same actions that she had done the first two times. Then she was given a hen; she beheaded it and threw its [head] away. They took that hen and threw it onto the boat. So, I asked the interpreter what she was doing, and he said, 'When she was lifted for the first time, she said, "I see my father and mother", and for the second time she said, "I see all my dead relatives, sitting", and for the third time she said, "I see my lord, sitting in a beautiful, green garden, he is surrounded by men and gulams (al-gulman), and he is calling me, so take me to him"'.

So, they took her to the boat. She took off two bracelets and gave them both to that old woman, called the angel of death, that was going to kill her. Then she took off two rings and gave them both to those two girls that served her [all the time], and they both were daughters of the woman known as the angel of death.

After that the group [of people], that had copulated with her, made a path with their arms for her, so the girl, putting her feet on their hands, boarded the boat. But they did not take her to the tent [yet]. Men came, [holding] shields and sticks, and she was given a cup of nabiz. She sang and then drank it. And the translator explained that she was saying farewell to her girlfriends. [p. 839] Then she was given another cup, she took it and started singing a long song, while the old woman was pushing her to drink it and enter the tent of [her] lord.

And I saw that she was confused; she wanted to go into the tent, but stuck her head between the tent and the boat. Then the old woman grabbed her head and pushed her [head] into the tent and entered along with her, and the men started banging sticks on the shields to drown out the sound of her cries, because it would have scared the other girls, and they would not have wanted to die with their lords. Then six men who [were] the relatives of her husband entered the tent, and all [of them] made love to her in the presence of the dead. After that, as soon as they exercised [their] rights of love, they laid her together with her lord. Two of them grabbed her legs; two of them grabbed her arms; the old woman called the angel of death came and tied a rope with fraying ends around her neck and gave it to two [men] to pull it, and she began her job, holding a big knife with a wide blade [in her hand]. So, she started to stick it between the girl's ribs while the two men strangled her with the rope until she died.

Then came the closest relative of the dead, took a stick, and lit it from the fire. Then he started to walk backwards, with the back of his head to the ship and his face to people, [holding] the lit stick in one hand with the other hand covering his anus, being naked, in order to light the wood which had been piled under the boat. Then some people with firewood [for kindling] came up to the boat. Each of them had a stick with a burning end. Then they threw them to the wood [placed under the ship]. And the wood caught fire, then the boat, then the tent, as well as the man, and the girl, and everything [located] on the ship. Then a strong, terrible wind started blowing; the flame intensified and flared up stronger. One Rus was standing next to me. And I heard him talking to the translator who accompanied me. I asked him what he had said. He said, 'Truly, he said the following, "You Arabs are foolish"'. And I asked him about that. He said, 'Indeed, you take the person that you love and respect the most and leave him in dust; insects and worms eat him, but we burn him in a split second, so that he immediately goes to paradise'. Then he laughed with an excessive laughter. I asked him about that, and he said, 'Our God loved him; he sent the wind, so it [the wind] will take him in one hour'. Indeed, in less than one hour the ship, firewood, girl, and lord turned into cinder, then into [the finest] ash.

They pulled the ship out of the river [at one time], then they built something like a round hill and installed a big post of a khadang tree in the middle of it in the place where [p. 840] the ship used to be, and they wrote the name of [that] man and the name of the Ruses king on it and went away.

He said, One of the customs of the Ruses king is that four hundred men, his warriors and supporters, are always with him in his high castle, and these people close to him often die when he dies and sometimes are killed because of him. Each of them [has] a girl, that serves him, washes his head and prepares him his drinks and food, and another girl, [whom] he uses as a concubine in the king's presence. These four hundred [men] sit, and sleep at night near the king's bed. His bed is large and encrusted with semi-precious stones. Forty girls sit with him on the bed. Sometimes he uses one of them as a concubine in front of his brothers-in-arms, whom we have mentioned [earlier]. And they do not consider it shameful. He does not leave his bed, so if he needs to fulfill a certain need, he does it into a basin; if he wants to ride a horse, he brings the horse right up to his bed so that he can get on the horse right from the bed, but if he [wants] to get off [the horse], he will take the horse to the bed so [close] that he can get off the horse straight onto the bed. And he has nothing else to do but copulate [with girls], drink, and have fun. He has a deputy who commands the troops, attacks the enemies, and takes his place in front of his subjects.

Good ['right-minded'] people among them lean towards the leather craft and do not consider this dirt disgusting.

If two people start to quarrel and argue, and the king is unable to reconcile them, he rules that they have a sword fight, and the one who wins is right.

This is what I've read in 'The Account' (Risala) composed by Ibn Fadlan, word for word, and he [bears] responsibility for what is written in it. And Allah knows better whether it is trustworthy or not. But now we know that their religion is christianity.

[Volume 3, p. 143] **Samandar**—the first and second letters [in the word] are with a fathāḥ, followed by a 'nūn' with a sukūn and a 'dhāl' with a fathāḥ, finalized by a 'rā'. A city beyond Bab al-abvab, located eight days away in the land of the al-Khazar. It was built by Anushirvan ibn Kubad Kasra (Khosrow). Al-Azhari said the following: 'Samandar is a place, but it used to be the capital (dar) of the Khazar state (mamlak). When Salman ibn Rabi'a conquered the city, he moved [the capital] to Atil, and it takes seven days to get from one city to the other'.

Al-Istarkhi said: Samandar is a city between Atil, the main city of the Khazar leader, and Bab al-abvab. It has numerous gardens. It is said that there used to be approximately four thousand vineyards. It borders the territories which belong to the king of as-Sarir. Grapes are the most widespread fruit there. The majority of the population is represented by Muslims, there [are] mosques built for them. Their structures are made of interwoven wood and their roofs are humpbacked. Their king is a Jew, he is a relative of the Khazar king. The city is two parasangs away from the territories of as-Sarir. There is a truce between the city and the leader of as-Sarir. It takes eight days to get from Samandar to Atil, the main city of the Khazars. It takes four days to get from Samandar to Bab al-abvab.

[Volume 3, p. 405] **Saklabu**—with a fathāḥ [above a 'ṣād'], followed by a sukūn, a fathāḥ above a 'lām', and only a 'bā' in the end<sup>31</sup>.

Ibn al-A'rabi said the following: 'An as-Siklab has fair skin'.

Abu 'Amr said: 'An as-Siklab is an apple-cheeked (rosy-cheeked) man'.

Abu Mansur said: 'The as-Saqaliba is a tribe (group) of rosy-cheeked and red-haired [men]. They border with the Khazar land up in the ar-Rum mountains. A rosy-cheeked man is called saqlab because he resembles an as-Saqaliba in color'.

<sup>31</sup> 'Bā' with a 'tenvin dammah'—that is, the nominative case, undefined status.

Others say: 'As-Saqaliba is a country lying between Bulgar and Qustantiniyya'. The as-Saqaliba uplands are named after it. Saqlabi is one of them.

Ibn al-Kalbi said the following: 'The Yunan, as-Saqlab, al-'Abd.ri, Burjan, Jurzan, Faris and ar-Rum are among the descendants of Yafis ibn Nuh, may peace be with him; these are the peoples who [live] between these [as-Saqaliba] and al-Magrib'.

Ibn al-Kalbi also said: My father reported to me the following: 'The Rumi (Rumians), Saqlab, Armini (Armenians) and Ifranji (Franks) are brothers; they are the descendants (banu) of L.n.ti ibn K.s.luhim ibn Yunan ibn Yafis, and each of them lived in a location named after him'.

The Saqlab also [live] in al-Andalus, in Shantarin province. Their land is blessed. They say that [it] is fertile and if it is seeded, a hundred kafizes of grain<sup>32</sup> or more will grow on it.

There [is] also a place on Sicily called Saqlab, it is also called Harrat as-Saqlab (as-Saqlab hot place). It is known for its hot springs, which are mentioned in relation to Sicily<sup>33</sup>.

Al-Mas'udi said:<sup>34</sup> The as-Saqaliba is comprised of different peoples (ajnas), they live in non-Islamic states (al-harbi) on the edge (shalu) of al-Magrib (in the far west). These peoples are at war. They have kings (muluk). Among them are those who follow the Christian Jacobite church (al-ya'kubiyya). Among them are [also] those who have no 'Book' to guide them<sup>35</sup> and no Shari'ah; they are heathens. The bravest tribe among them is called the as-Sari. They burn themselves in fire, if their king (muluk) or leader (rais) dies, or they burn their horses (davabb). Some of their deeds are similar to those of the Hindus (al-Hind). A numerous group (sinf) of [the as-Saqaliba] lives in the land of the Khazars. The first of the as-Saqaliba kings is the head of a monastery (ad-dayr), he owns many cultivated, habitable lands. Islamic merchants come to his state with [different] types of goods. Later this state was passed on from the kings (muluk) of the as-Saqaliba [to] the king (malik) of the al-Faranj; he has gold deposits, towns, many cultivated lands, a numerous army, and goods from ar-Rum. This state then passed on from the as-Saqaliba [to] the king (malik) of the Turks, and this king (malik) came from the land of the as-Saqaliba. This tribe (jins) was one of theirs. They are more beautiful than the as-Saqaliba (they are the most beautiful among the as-Saqaliba). The as-Saqaliba look lovely, they are the most numerous ones and the bravest. They used to obey one king, but then their opinions divided, and each of these kings became independent.

[Volume 4, p. 944] **Visu**—its first [letter] with a 'kasrah', an 'as-sīn' without dots and a 'wāw'. A land beyond Bulgar. It takes three months to get from [Visu] to Bulgar. The nights in their land become so short that there is no [dark period of the day], but sometimes the [dark period] lasts [so long] that there is no light.

*This material was prepared by Nuriya Garayeva*

<sup>32</sup> Kafiz is a dry measure, equivalent to 14 ½ okks (1 okk: 1.248 kg); a linear measure, which equals 144 guz (1 guz: approximately 0.5 m).

<sup>33</sup> I.e. Yaqut specifies information about these springs in his article 'Sicily' (Sikiliya) in 'The Dictionary...'

<sup>34</sup> This passage summarizes information from 'Murudzh az-zakhab...' by al-Masudi and from al-Istakhri's (or Ibn Hawqal's) works,

<sup>35</sup> in particular referring to the following works: The Torah, the Bible, and the Quran.



## The works of Volga Bulgar scholars

The Bulgars of the Middle and Lower Volga Regions had entered into a trading and economic relationship with the Islamic world by the 9th century, and by the end of the century this relationship had turned into a religious and political one, leading to a peaceful conversion to Islam, first by the ruling elites, and shortly followed by the majority of the Bulgars. However, there is no documentary evidence that any Volga Bulgar scholar had adhered to the scientific traditions of the Islamic East and, therefore, of the Greek world. Written sources mention Volga Bulgar scholars and even their works, but up to the end of the 1970s, none of the works by the pre-Mongol Bulgar authors were known. H. Fraehn, Sh. Marjani, and S. Wahidi, among others, searched for these texts without success. For instance, the names of Islamic 'alims' (theologians) of the 12th century—Sulayman as-Saksini and his teacher Hamid ibn Idris al-Bulgari—up to the 1990s became known only thanks to Sh. Marjani, who, in the mid-19th century managed to gain access to as-Saksini's work 'Zukhrat ar-riyad...'. But, due to the fact that the work was clearly religious and philosophical, the prevailing ideological attitudes of the Soviet period impeded its systematic research, and for almost the whole of the 20th

century none of the copies of the work were publicly known.

The first discovery was made by A. Tagirdzhanov, an LSU professor, who published his finding in the monograph 'From History to Literature' published in 1979 [Tagirdzhanov, 1973, 19 b.]. He was able to find the names of a previously unknown Volga Bulgar scholar, Tadj ad-Din al-Bulgari, and his work 'At-tiryak al-kabir', whose priceless text has survived to the present day. While preparing to publish 'At-tiryak al-kabir', professor A. Khalidov found evidence of the second preserved work by the same author in specialised reference books on Islamic medicine [Tadjaddin al-Bulgari, 1997, p. 1213].

Research over the last decade aimed at finding the Bulgar written sources found over 20 copies of Sulayman as-Saksini's 'Zukhrat ar-riyad' stored in manuscript collections in Russia, Algeria, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, France, Turkey and other countries [Tatarstan and Turkey, 1999, pp. 3–6; Garayeva, 2000, pp. 147–150; 2002a, p. 146].

Included below are translations of extracts from Sulayman as-Saksini's and Tadj ad-Din al-Bulgari's works, preceded by final reviews of studies on these works.

### Hamid ibn Idris al-Bulgari

In Tatar historiography, the name of Abu-l-al Hamid ibn Idris al-Bulgari, a Bulgar scholar, is mentioned for the first time by prominent Tatar historian and theologian Shihab ad-din (Shigabutdin) Marjani (1818–1889) in his historical work 'Mustafad al-akhbar fi akhvai Kazan va Bulgar' ('Repository of information on Kazan and Bulgar affairs'). In the Chapter 'Information on manuscripts written by Bulgar people and scholars' ('Fasl fi asarahi Bulgar va 'ulamaiha'), Ya'kub ibn Nu'man is followed by qadi Abul-'Ala Hamid ibn Idris al-Bulgari, who was the teacher of Sulayman as-Saksini (the author of the 'Zukhrat ar-riyad') [Marjani,

1897, pp. 78–80]. So far, nothing is known about Hamid ibn Idris al-Bulgari's works. His approximate dates of birth and death and his fields of study can be derived from the references to Hamid ibn Idris al-Bulgari's teachers and students, which can be found in Sulayman as-Saksini's 'Zukhrat ar-riyad'. For example, based on a thorough analysis of the isnads mentioning Hamid ibn Idris al-Bulgari, Sh. Marjani established an approximate period for the life of the scholar (died after 500/1006–1007) and outlined the scientific environment he lived in, which allows us to imagine the historical period of Hamid al-Bulgari.

**Sulaiman ibn Daud as-Saksini 'Zuhrat ar-riyad wa nuzhat al-kulub li-l-mirad'**  
(*'Beauty of the Gardens and Consolation for Lost Souls'*)

The analysis of as-Saksini's work conducted by Sh. Marjani in the *'Mustafad al-Akhbar...'*, did not go unnoticed by researchers who sought to trace as-Saksini's composition either in his manuscripts or as they appeared in later Islamic literary tradition. Thus, information about a copy of the *'Zuhrat ar-riyad'*, preserved in the Top Kapi Museum in Istanbul, appeared under number '1420', [TƏT, 90 b.; Dəylətshin, 1994, sheets 112–113b.; STL, 1999, p. 47]. Until the end of the 1990s, however, this data could not be verified; Russian collections of manuscripts, including those held in Kazan, had not been thoroughly studied.

The first identified copies of the *'Zuhrat ar-riyad'* were found in manuscript collections in Istanbul, especially in the famous Suleymaniye Library [Tatarstan and Turkey, 1999, pp. 3–6; Garayeva, 2000, pp. 147–150]. At the present time, textological research on the *'Zuhrat ar-riyad ...'* by Sulaiman as-Saksini based upon the earliest copies of this work in the library's collection is being carried out, and a translation of it into Russian is being prepared for publication [Sharafutdinov, 2003, pp. 19–25; 2003a, pp. 121–123; 2003b, p. 79].

We know about Sulayman as-Saksini and his work mainly from his book in Arabic *'Zuhrat ar-riyad...'*, which, as he explained, is an expanded reworking of the Persian composition *'Kitab bahjat al-anvar...'* (*'On the Splendor of Rays of Light'*).

It became clear during the course of textual examination in the last few years that in addition to *'Zuhrat ar-riyad ...'*, as-Saksini wrote another work—*'At-Tabsir fi'ilm at-tadhkira'* (*'An Explanation of the Science of Recall'*), the existence of which was previously unknown [Sharafutdinov, 2003, p. 22].

Sulaiman as-Saksini's full name is Abu ar-Rabi'a Sulaiman ibn Daud ibn Abu Sa'id Taj al-Islam as-Saksini as-Suvari as-Sabti.

In addition to the laqab (honorary nickname), Taj al-Islam (*'Crown of Islam'*), in the manuscripts as-Saksini's name is accompanied by laudatory epithets such as: *'the greatest imam'*, *'the joy of imams'*, *'the pride of the*

*Muslims'*, *'the adornment of those who remind [of Allah]'*, *'the people's mentor'*, *'an example for Muslims to follow'*. Judging by the nisbas, he could be a native of Suvar (al-Suvari), who lived and worked, in all probability, in Saksin. At the beginning of the 12th century Saksin was one of the cultural centers of the Bulgarian state (the nisba as-Saksini appears in manuscripts more often than others). The origin of the as-Sabti nisba is unclear; it was used only by Hajji Khalifa [Lexicon, 1835–1958, no. 6918; Hajji Khalifa, 1982, p. 401]<sup>1</sup>. He lived and wrote in 550/1155 [Marjani, 1897, pp. 78–80; Ahlwardt, no. 8823; GAL SB I, p. 77b, 7a; Mukhtarat, 1997, p. 483]<sup>2</sup>.

The only existing essay by as-Saksini that has come down to us, the *'Zuhrat ar-riyad wa nuzhat al-kulub al-mirad'*, (*'Beauty of the Gardens and Consolation for Lost Souls'*) was created in Saksin, which is located on the Lower Volga and was inhabited mainly by emigrants from Bulgar and Suvar. At that time, there were grand mosques, many judges (qadis), Islamic law experts (faqihis) and preachers (khatibs) [Al-Gharnati 1971, pp. 27, 66; Fedorov-Davydov 1969, pp. 253–261].

In terms of its content, ideological and artistic orientation, *'Zuhrat ar-riyad ...'* by as-Saksini is a didactic literary and religious work. In the style of medieval literary traditions, the author's purpose is to influence the hearts and minds of his readers in order to guide them along the true path by calling for piety, virtue

<sup>1</sup> It can be assumed that Sulaiman as-Saksini was connected to the town of Sabta (now known as Ceuta), one of the largest harbour cities in the Maghreb at that time, where a whole host of eminent scientists appeared. They gained renown in the fields of numeracy, architecture, Islamic law and jurisprudence (fikha), inheritance law in Islam (faraid) and other disciplines. The possibility that the nisba *'as-Sabti'* was a reference to the city of Kafr-Sabt, situated on the territory of al-Sham, must also be noted. However, there are no records to support or invalidate these theories. Moreover, Haji Khalifa could simply have been mistaken by reading the name as-Saksini incorrectly in a damaged or illegible manuscript [Sharafutdinov, 2003, p. 21].

<sup>2</sup> Since Hamid al-Bulgari was alive in 500/1106, it can be assumed that as-Saksini was writing approximately in the first half of the 12th century.

and obedience to God. The work is not devoted to a particular topic. According to as-Saksini, he tried to gather into one volume well-known cautionary tales that were popular at the time edifying stories and parables 'to warn the wicked and caution the careless' [Sharafutdinov, 2003, p. 20].

Parallel to their ongoing textological examination, researchers continue to discover copies of his work in collections in Russia, Turkey and other countries. The largest number of his works was found at the Suleymaniye and Beyazit Libraries in Istanbul [Tatarstan and Turkey, 1999, pp. 3–6; Garayeva, 2000, pp. 147–150], at the Top Kapi Museum Library,<sup>3</sup> etc. Only in the Suleymaniye Library are there nine manuscripts by Sulayman as-Saksini from the 14–17th centuries<sup>4</sup>. More than ten copies of the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad' dating from the 15–17th centuries have turned up in the largest Arabic manuscript collections in the Islamic East, Europe and Russia [Ahlwardt, no. 8823; GAL SB I, p. 77b, 7a; SB II, p. 1010, no. 137]. The copies we know of at the present time date to the 14–19th centuries, and testify to the popularity of the work beyond the borders of the Volga region and throughout the Islamic East for many centuries.

Among five existing copies from the 15th century are a manuscript at the British Museum (809/1406–1407) [British Museum, p. 111], and two at the Suleymaniye Library: one of them has a specific date on it (828/1424–1425) [Rsd 545], while the other, according to paleographic data, is a 15th-century copy [Harput, p. 425];<sup>5</sup> a list of manuscript collections at the Dagestan Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Dagestan Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Jumada II 886 /July–August 1481) [Shikhsaidov, Saidov,

1980, p. 40];<sup>6</sup> a copy in a library in the Turkish city of Burdur (9th/15th cent.), which is related to a rare manuscript collection in Turkey [Ates, 1948, pp. 171–191, no. 1962; Mukhtarat, 1997, p. 483]. At the turn of the 15–16th centuries, a copy of the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad' was created from the manuscript collection at the St. Petersburg branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences [Archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies, p. 1622]. A manuscript at the Suleymaniye Library dates back to the 16th century [H. Besir Aga, p. 358]<sup>7</sup>. There are four copies of 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad' dating back to the first half of the 17th century: a manuscript at the National Library of France (1015/8607) [Paris, no. 4599 (Hds. Von 1015)];<sup>8</sup> at the Public Library of Algeria (1018 /1609–1610) [Alger, 896];<sup>9</sup> in the Marsilio Collection in Bologna (1039/1629–1630) [Bologna, p. 135];<sup>10</sup> as well as a copy at the State Library of Berlin (1050/1640) [Ahlwardt, no. 8823 (PM 556)].

In the 19th century, an abbreviated copy of the work was created. It was called 'Muntakhab min kitab zuhrat ar-riyad ...' (Selections from the book 'Beauty of the Gardens'). Among the three complete copies of the abbreviated version known to exist at the present time, one belongs to the St. Petersburg Collection of Manuscripts [Archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies, V1960], and two are in Kazan [Garayeva, 2002a, p. 416; Galimdzhan Ibragimov Institute of Language, Literature and Art, F39, D388; D4967].

Passages and quotations from the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad...' have appeared in the texts of other works. For example, a manuscript in the collection of the French National Library contains

<sup>3</sup> There proved to be another copy [Topkapi, 1964, Vol. I, s. 186, no. 2819; A.625] in the museum library of Topkapi in addition to the above-mentioned manuscript [Topkapi, 1966, Vol. III, s. 216, no. 5311; A.1420].

<sup>4</sup> Osman Huldi 47; Rsd. 545; Harput 425; H. Besir Aga 358; Pertev Pasa 271; H. Besir Aga 358, and others.

<sup>5</sup> In the colophon of this list, the date 1069/1658–1659 is marked, but a thorough inspection of the codex showed that the manuscript was restored and the date stated in the colophon relates to the restoration [Harput 425].

<sup>6</sup> A copy was compiled by Kharun ibn Ahmad ash-Shirini [f.14, inv. 1, no. 2355].

<sup>7</sup> Its creation date has been narrowed down to being between 999/1590–1591 to 995/1586–1587 (this is due to the unusual way the number '5' is written, which was read as a '9') [H. Besir Aga 358].

<sup>8</sup> The name of the work was given as 'Zakhra ar-riyadh va shifa al-kulub al-mirad' by Sulaiman ibn Daud as-Savari. It contains 60 majlises; the manuscript is dated.

<sup>9</sup> 67 majlises; 310 sheets, 27 lines per page; 205 x 195mm.

<sup>10</sup> Manuscript no. 3125; 67 majlises; 311 pages, there is no first page) [Bologne, p. 135, s. 37: no. 111].



Sulaiman ibn Daud as-Saksini 'Zuhrat ar-riyad wa nuzhat al-kulub li-l-mirad' ('Beauty of the Gardens and Consolation for Lost Souls'). Copy dating from the 15–16th centuries. St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. C1622. Collage is a sheet on which the text of the work and the seal of the owner of the manuscript are joined: 1 - text with Sulaiman as-Saksini's reference to his teacher—Abu-l-'Ala Hamid ibn Idris al-Bulgari, p. 6b; 2 - in the seal's legend: 'Al-'Abd al-Fakir Muhammad-Husayn al-Bulgari 12... / 18 ...' fol. IIa

the text of Majlis 29<sup>11</sup>. A manuscript in the collected works of Marsilio in Bologna (Italy) contains extracts from the 'Zuhrat ar-riyad ...'<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Tasawwuf section, manuscript 3967, Majmu'a/7, pp. 191–198; text corresponds to pp. 101v–106v in the manuscript 4599 [Vajda, 1952, p.19].

<sup>12</sup> See description 252/1; manuscript no. 3514; a copy of 1010/1691–1692; among Sufi short stories there were

Several quotations from the<sup>13</sup> 'Kitab ravda zuhrat ar-riyad ...' by Sulaiman as-Saksini as-Suvari appear in an anonymous 15–16th centuries treatise on logic belonging to the manuscript

citations from 'Zukhrat ar-riyad...' [Bologne, p. 135].

<sup>13</sup> An author and title are not stated because the copy has defects: it is missing a beginning and end.

collection in the Vatican Apostolic Library [Delia Vida, pp. 123–125: Vat. Arab.1747, fol. 130a]. The commentary to 'Forty Hadiths' by al-Nawawi, which was compiled in 978/1570, is kept in The Library of Cyril and Methodius in Sofia. There are also quotations from the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad' in the margins of a copy of Ahmad ibn al-Hijazi Fashni's manuscript 'Al-Majalis as-saniyya fi-al-kalam 'ala-l-arba'ina hadith an-navaviyya', which dates to 21 safar 1072/16 October 1661<sup>14</sup>.

Passages from the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad ...' were also used by Husain Va'iz al-Kashifi (died in 910/1504–1505) in his work, 'Tuhfat as-Salavat,' which was composed in Herat in Persian during the 15th century—the same period in which Husain Baykar was writing his essays on Islamic law (fiqh). A 15th-century Ottoman scholar, Ya'qub ibn Sa'id-'Ali, included four passages from the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad ...' in his commentary to the 'Mafatih al-Jinan fi sharh shir'atu-l-Islam'. Another 16th–17th-century Ottoman scholar, Muhammad Chukrakly-zade, while quoting from the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad', mentions it no less than ten times in his 'Alty Bar-mak' (or 'Dalail annubuvva') [T ÖT, 90–91 b].

Turkic and Tatar scholars also drew upon material from the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad' in their writings. For example, a 16th-century author mentions a story from the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad' in his compilation of essays composed in Turkish entitled 'Bustan al-Quds wa gulistan al-uns' (1591). Finally, individual passages from the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad' were used by copyists from the Volga region. Tatar 'alim at the turn of the 18–19th centuries. A story from the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad' was included in a work entitled 'Akidat as-sanusiyya', which was compiled by Muhammad Amin as-Sabavi in 1786. The manuscript collection compiled by Bik-Muhammad ibn Bikhav in the village of Kaval in 1813 includes the story Mi'raj ('The Ascension of [Muhammad]) from 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad'. A famous 19th-

century Tatar historian. Husain Amirhan also included in his work, 'Najm at-Tawarikh', ('The Star of Histories') a small passage from the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad' [T ÖT, 90–91 b].

The number of surviving copies of 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad' by Sulaiman as-Saksini in domestic and foreign manuscript repositories, and the many references to this work by other authors is evidence of its popularity in the Muslim world. The absence of extensively edited copies of the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad' in the Kazan collections (including copies compiled by the Tatars) is largely due to insufficient knowledge of these collections in Kazan. Of course, the work of Sulaiman as-Saksini was known not only to Sh. Marjani. For example, a 15th–16th century manuscript with a copy of lengthier editions of the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad' from the collection of the St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences belonged to a native of the Volga region, as evidenced by the legend on the ownership seal on which is printed, 'Al-'Abd al-Fakir Muhammad-Husain al-Bulgari'. The legend includes a date, which, unfortunately, one can only partially make out: imprinted numbers may be interpreted as 1275 / 1858–1859, or as 1278/1861–1862, or as 1285 / 1868–1869 [Archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies, S1622, fol.IIa] (see. Fig. p. 822).

This review of existing copies of the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad' demonstrates that the largest number of these copies dates back to the 17th century. The earliest reference to Sulaiman as-Saksini and his works in Arabic literature was made by the 17th-century Turkish historian and bibliographer, Hajji Khalifa in his work 'Kashf'<sup>15</sup>. He

<sup>14</sup> The title in the catalogue is given as 'Zakhra ar-riyadh...', the author is anonymous, it has been marked as 'unknown'. Haji Khalifa [Lexicon, 1835–1858, no. 6917] also mentioned another piece of writing, at the start of which there is a phrase 'Zuhra ar-riyadh [fi-l-khikam]', the author of which was not named [Kenderova, no. 208: OR 1807].

<sup>15</sup> The popular and authoritative 'Kashf az-zunun...' by Haji Khalifa, it would seem, still does not have a definitive text as slight discrepancies can be found in different editions. This can be explained by the use of different manuscripts, which may contain small variation in wording. Such is the case regarding Sulaiman as-Saksini: Information given in the Berlin and Beirut editions of 'Kashf az-zunun' varies, whilst also somewhat complementing each other. According to Berlin edition of 'Kashf al-zunun...', Haji Khalifa's information about Sulaiman as-Saksini and his writings is as follows: 'Zukhrat ar-riyadh' of ash-sheikh al-imam Taj al-islam Sulaiman ibn Daud as-Sabti is known as al-Va'iz [al-Kashifi – N.G.] in 'Tukhrat as-salavat'; [the author] translated it from his Persian manuscript named 'Bakhjat al-anvar va nuzkhat al-kulub

presents a curious review of as-Saksini's works: he writes that the 'Zuhurat ar-riyad ...' was well known, but not widely recognized. In all likelihood, he means that the work was not canonical, that it did not reflect the generally accepted interpretation of relevant ideas current in Sufi thought at that time. Relatively speaking, one might liken this to the apocryphal tradition in Christian literature.

The complete copies of this work are available in two versions: one extensive and short another. The extensive edition can be found in the copies that belong chronologically to the 14–17th centuries; the short one ('Muntahab zuhurat min kitab ar-riyad') appears in the copies from the 19th century.

A preliminary comparison of the text of the extensive version in eight copies held in the Suleymaniye Library shows that the texts of the seven manuscripts, including the text of the earliest copy (dated 728/1329), are relatively identical. However, several discrepancies were also discovered—for example, in the text of the unvars (the introductory part of the work) and in the number of chapters in the work's various copies [Garayeva, 2000, pp. 147–150; Tirnovali, p. 968]. The text of the eighth manuscript differs significantly from the text of the other copies: in some places it is significantly shorter; in other places, there are word-for-word matches. Such differences suggest that this copy contains a different version of the work (within the extensive version). What is noteworthy about this copy is that the as-Suvari nisba is written with interesting vowel marks, which are given in the name of Sulaiman ibn Daud alongside the as-Saksini nisba: as-Suvari nisba is presented with the unusual vowel marks as-Sivari (in other copies the as-

Suvari nisba is given without vowel marks) [Garayeva, 2000, pp. 147–150; Rsd 545].

The structure of the work's longer version is simple: it consists of a short introduction and 67 chapters (majlises). Most of the known copies include 67 majlises, so this number of chapters can be considered as the intended by the author, although in some of the copies the number of chapters fluctuates from 66 to 70. For example, the earliest copy, drawn up in Tabriz in 728/1329, contains 66 majlises [Garayeva, 2000, pp. 147–150].

In the introductory section, as-Saksini tells us the story of how he wrote the work: 'Before that, I wrote a book that I called "Kitab bahjat al-anwar min hafayat al-asrar" ("A Book About the Splendor of Rays of Light Emanating from Secret Corners of the Hearts"). Upon its completion, one of my friends, with whom I am in no position to argue, asked me to supplement it with statements from commentators of the Quran, stories of wise elders, and stories of those who remind of Allah, as well as to translate the existing Persian quotations into the Arabic language and give it another title. In response to his request, I wrote this book and called it "Zuhurat ar-riyad va nuzhat al-kulub al-mirada" ("The Beauty of Gardens and Consolation for Suffering Hearts") and included in it 66 majlises...'. In the introduction to 'Zuhurat ar-riyad', as-Saksini lists the names of the works that he referenced in writing 'Bahjat al-Anwar...'; among them are 'Al-Taj', 'Al-Lataif', 'Al-Mavaid', 'Ul-'Udda', 'Al-'Adad', 'As-Salwa', 'Ar-Rayhan', 'Ar-Ragaib' and 'Madjalis al-'Irak', which have yet to be attributed, something that will need to be taken up in further research on this work [Sharafutdinov, 2003, p. 21]. It also includes the work's table of contents. The title of each majlis (literally: the meeting—that is, a meeting of scientists who debate or polemicise on a certain topic) includes a verse or part of a verse (ayah) of the Quran, which determines, albeit rather arbitrarily, the topic of the chapter in question. Nevertheless, topics that were relevant among the theologians of the time were apparently chosen to fuel polemics and debate.

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al-mirad' and added a lot of useful information, dividing the book into 67 majlises (chapters). The work was among the most popular preaching books, but was not considered to be authoritative. [Lexicon, 1835–58, no. 6918].

According to Beirut edition of 'Kashf al-zunun...', as-Saksini's name and writings are presented differently: 'Sulaiman ibn Daud Taj al-islam Abu ar-Rabi' as-Sabti as-Suvari, is named as the author of the book, which is called 'Bakhjat al-anvar min khakikat al-asrar' ('The magnificent rays of light from the depths of the heart'). In the Persian and Arabic translation is it called 'Zakhr ar-riyad' ('Flowers of the gardens') [Haji Khalifa, 1982, p.401].

At the beginning of each chapter, as-Saksini quotes the relevant *hadith*<sup>16</sup> and cites that it came from the lips of his teacher, who was one of the most respected people of the time: 'He told us—the sheikh, the greatest imam,<sup>17</sup> the teacher, the pride of imams, the salvation of Muslims, the sun of the Sharia,<sup>18</sup> the warrior against *bid'at*,<sup>19</sup> he who revives the *Sunnah*,<sup>20</sup> the adornment of those who remind [of Allah], the crown of commentators of the Quran Abu-l-'Ala Hamid ibn Idris al-Bulgari, qadi of the Bulgar...'. Hamid ibn Idris as-Saksini is directly referred to in *majlises* 1, 4, 10, 12, 22, 44 and 56 of the work. Sh. Marjani, in analyzing the *isnads* of Hamid ibn Idris, identifies his circle of sheikhs, restores the full forms of their names, clarifies the reading of the *nisbas* by linking them to specific localities, and in some cases provides the years during which they lived. Thus, the translators upon which Hamid al-Bulgari relied included his contemporaries, Middle Asian scientists such as Husam ad-Din Abu-l-Mu'in Maimun ibn Muhammad ibn al-Mu'tamid Maqhuli an-Nasafi (d. in 508/1114 in Bukhara), whose words, as noted by Sh. Marjani, were used not only by Hamid al-Bulgari but also by Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Hakami; Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah as-Surhakati (d. 518/1124), who conveyed in his *isnad* the words of Ibn' Umar; Ibrahim Abu Isma'il ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Husayni (or al-Hasani), a contemporary of Abu al-Yasira al-Bazdavi and Abu-l-Mu'in an-Nasafi (d. 508/1114), conveyed in his *isnad* the words of Usbu' ibn Binan (?); 'Imad ad-Din Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Mansur al-Nasafi<sup>21</sup> al-Guydani (or al-Gawaydani, or

al-Guwaydani) (d. 505/1111 in Bukhara) in his *isnad* conveyed the words of 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Auf; Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn 'Umar al-Bazzaz (d. 500 / 1106–1107) in his *isnad* conveyed the words of Abu Dhar; Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn al-Fadl al-Budhdigari<sup>22</sup> (d. ca. 500/1106–1107) in his *isnad* passed on the words of Jabir ibn 'Abdallah.

Each *majlis* has the same structure (at least in terms of the design at the beginning of each chapter): the name, the *isnad* and a detailed explanation of the topic, followed by examples and arguments related to the topic, the structure of which varies from *majlis* to *majlis*. For example, 'The first *majlis* about the words of the Almighty: "We created Man from water that seeped from raw clay (seed)". He told us, al-Shaykh al-Imam of the later time, al-Ustaz (teacher), the pride of imams (Fakhr al-Aimma), the saviour of peoples (*giyas al-umam*), the sun of the Sharia, the crusher of innovations [in faith] (*kami' al-bid'ah*), the resurrector of *Sunnah*, the adornment of those who remind [of Allah], the crown of interpreters of the Quran, Abu-l-'Ala Hamid ibn Idris al-Qadi-al-Bulgari, let him be holy, the soul and the life..., who said: He told us, ash-Shaykh, the imam of the later time, the sword of justice (truth) Husam ad-Din Abu-l-Mu'in Maimun ibn Muhammad ibn Mu'tamid al-Makhuli an-Nasafi, may Allah have mercy on them all, conveys in his *isnad* the words of 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ud, who said: "And so said the Prophet, may Allah honour him and grant him peace, "Verily Allah made one of you, having gathered seed in the womb of your mother for forty days. Then a bundle like this was formed. Then came the embryo, which was like this. Then Allah revealed to him his property, apportioned his *rizq*..." etc.

<sup>16</sup> It recounted the testimony of witnesses to the words, deeds and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.

<sup>17</sup> The imam in prayer, the spiritual leader, the head of the Muslim community.

<sup>18</sup> Religious law, a set of orders, recorded in the Quran and the *sunnah*.

<sup>19</sup> Innovations in the field of religion. Here, it refers to reprehensible innovations, which contradict Sharia law.

<sup>20</sup> For example, a custom. Here: The example of the Prophet Muhammad's life as a guide for Muslims.

<sup>21</sup> In 'Mustafad...' the name of 'Imad ad-din Abu Bakra Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Mansur *nisba* an-Nasafi', is given as an-Nafasi. The first explanation this change is that it was a mistake. However, in the manuscript of an abridged version of 'Zukhrat ar-riyad...', the name of

Sulaiman as-Saksini *nisba* was also given as an-Nafasi [ILLA, F39, D388].

<sup>22</sup> One of the notable villages near Nishapur in Khorasan.

### Contents of 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad...' <sup>23</sup>

After a short introduction, Sulaiman as-Saksini begins his composition with a numbered list of majlises (chapters), whose headings reference ayat (verses) or part of ayat from the Quran. The sequence number of a majlis is part of its name which, as it is common in Arab texts, is written down not in figures but in words, for example: '(Al-)Majlis (al-)awwal fi-l-kauli ta'ala ...'. A comparison of the table of contents in different lists demonstrates the discrepancy in the length of the ayahs cited in the chapter titles.

Below is a translation of this table of contents, in which are indicated numbers of corresponding surahs and ayahs from the Quran. The numbering of the ayat corresponds to the numbering of the Cairo edition of the Quran adopted in the Islamic East; the translation corresponds to that in I. Yu. Krachkovsky's works [Flugel, 1842; Quran, trans., 1968 (1990)].

In several cases, the text of the Quran is not reflected precisely in 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad'. In majlis

14, apparently, there was a mixture of similar ayat from two different surahs (part from one, part from another). At this stage of research, therefore, it is difficult to determine with which surah this verse should be identified. In majlis 52 the word 'ikhsanan', which is missing in the Quran, was added in order to clarify the topic or a certain aspect discussed in the majlis. That is why angle brackets < > enclose the words in the translation that are not in the Quran but given in the text of the chapter titles of 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad'; square brackets have been used for words added to the translation for clarification or explanation of the text. The quoted text of the ayah retains the punctuation used in I. Yu. Krachkovsky's translation. In those cases in which the whole ayah was not used in the title, suspension points reflect the approximate position of the quoted ayah in the original ayah. The capital letter of a word in the ayah is also retained even if it does not appear in the translation.

1. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'We created Man from water that seeped from raw clay (seed)' [the Quran, trans., 23:12].

2. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And then your Lord took the offspring from the children of Adam, from their backs.' [the Quran, trans., 7:172].

3. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Then we gave the Book as an inheritance to those of our servants...' [the Quran, trans., 35:32].

4. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Allah witnesses that there is no god but Him, and the angels, and those of knowledge.' [the Quran, trans., 3:17].

5. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Say, "O, my Lord, the King of kings! You give power to whom You will, and You take away power from whom You will ..."' [the Quran, trans., 3:26].

6. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Evil has appeared on the land and at sea because of what you have acquired.' [the Quran, trans., 30:41].

7. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Say, "If you love Allah, then follow me."' [the Quran, trans., 3:31].

8. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'O, ye who have believed! Bow and prostrate, worship your Lord.' [the Quran, trans., 23:77].

9. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Is he whose breast Allah has expanded for Islam.' [the Quran, trans., 39:22].

10. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'O, Children of Israel! Think of My mercy, which I have bestowed upon you.' [the Quran, trans., 2:40].

11. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'So Moses asked for water for his people and We said, "Strike the rock with your staff!."' [the Quran, trans., 2:60].

12. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'We have tested you with something of fear and hunger.' [the Quran, trans., 2:155].

<sup>23</sup> A table of contents of the Berlin edition [Ahlwardt, no. 8823 (PM556)].



13. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And Ayyub, when he cried to his Lord, "Misfortune has befallen me."' [the Quran, trans., 21:83].
14. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'This is from Allah! Verily, Allah feeds whom He pleases without measure' [the Quran, trans., 3:37].
15. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Just look at the evidence of the mercy of Allah: how He revives the earth after its death!...' [the Quran, trans., 30:59].
16. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'O, ye who have believed! Repent to Allah with sincere repentance,—...' [the Quran, trans., 66:8].
17. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Allah is the friend of those who have believed: He leads them from darkness to light.' [Quran, trans., 2: 257].
18. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Verily, the number of months with Allah is twelve months.' [the Quran, trans., 9:36.].
19. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'They ask thee about the forbidden month, about fighting therein. Say, "The fighting therein [is great]."' [the Quran, trans., 2:217].
20. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And our Lord creates what He wants and chooses; they have no choice!...' [the Quran, trans., 28:68].
21. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Ha Mim. I swear by the clear book.'<sup>24</sup>[the Quran, trans., 44:1–2].
22. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'O, ye who have believed! Decreed upon you is a fast.' [the Quran, trans., 2:183].
23. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'The month of Ramadan, in which the Quran was revealed.' [the Quran, trans., 2:185].
24. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship and [wants] for you to complete the period.' [the Quran, trans., 2:185].
25. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And when My servants ask you about Me, then indeed I am near.' [the Quran, trans, 2:186].
26. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Verily, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women.' [the Quran, trans., 33:35].
27. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Verily, We sent it down on the night of power! And what will make you understand what the night of power is?' [the Quran, trans., 97:1–2].
28. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'He who purified himself and remembered the name of his Lord received the profits.' [the Quran, trans., 87:14-15].
29. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'I swear by the dawn, and ten nights, and the even, and the odd.' [the Quran, trans., 89:1–3].
30. Majlis about the words of the Almighty, 'Verily, the first house, which has been established for the people.' [the Quran, trans., 3:96].
31. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And here we have arranged the place for a house for Ibrahim.' [the Quran, trans., 22:26].
32. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: Today I have perfected your religion for you.' [the Quran, trans., 5:3].
33. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And when he reached the morning with him.' [the Quran, trans., 37:102].
34. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And when Moses arrived at Our appointed time.' [the Quran, trans., 7:143].
35. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'I swear by those who are lined up in a row.' [the Quran, trans., 37:1].
36. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Verily, Allah has purchased the souls of the believers and their property, because they will go to paradise..!' [the Quran, trans., 9:111].

<sup>24</sup> It is possible that, the given title, 'Divine mercy, benevolence...' can be also found in other surahs.

37. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Think not of those who have been slain in the cause of Allah as dead. No, they are alive!..' [the Quran, trans., 3:169].

38. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And do not think that Allah does not see what the wicked are doing.' [the Quran, trans., 14:42].

39. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell, wherein he will dwell eternally.' [the Quran, trans., 4:93.].

40. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And on the day when the wrongdoer will bite his hands, saying, "Oh, if only I had taken the path with the Messenger!"' [the Quran, trans., 25:27].

41. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth.' [the Quran, trans., 33:72].

42. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'What deceived you as to your generous Lord, who created you.' [the Quran, trans., 82:6–7].

43. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'O, ye who have believed! When the call for prayer is made on the day of assembly.' [the Quran, trans., 62:9].

44. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Raised high above ranks, the owner of the throne...' [the Quran, trans., 40:15].

45. Majlis about the words of the Almighty 'O people, there has come to you instruction from your Lord.' [the Quran, trans., 10:57]. 46. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Tell My servants that I am indeed the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful' [the Quran, trans., 15:49].

47. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Verily, Allah and his angels send blessings to the Prophet! O, ye who have believed! Pray over him and welcome him with greetings' [the Quran, trans., 33:56].

48. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'We have sent thee as a witness, a bearer of good news and warner' [the Quran, trans., 48:8.].

49. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'A messenger from among yourselves has come to you' [the Quran, trans., 9:128].

50. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Praise be to the one who carried His servant at night' [the Quran, trans., 17:1].

51. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Say, "I do not ask you to reward me for this, I ask you only to love your neighbor"...' [the Quran, trans., 42:22].

52. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And We have enjoined man to <honor> his parents' [the Quran, trans., 31:14].

53. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: '...Say, "The enjoyment of this world is not for long, and the Hereafter is better."' [the Quran, trans., 4:77.].

54. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'This is the final shelter. We give it to those who do not want.' [the Quran, trans., 28:83].

55. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Say, "Vile and good are not the same."' [the Quran, trans., 5:100].

56. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Verily those who say, "Our Lord is Allah", and then stand upright.' [the Quran, trans., 41:30].

57. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'It is He who has made the night and day in succession.' [the Quran, trans., 25:62.].

58. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And the one with the fish, when he left in anger.' [the Quran, trans., 21:87].

59. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And he who transgressed and preferred the life of this world, for him, verily, Hell is his shelter' [the Quran, trans., 79: 37–39.].

60. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And in the sky is your provision and that which you are promised' [the Quran, trans., 51:22.].

61. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'The hour has drawn near, and the crescent moon has split!' [the Quran, trans., 54:1].

62. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And We have fastened a bird to every man's neck.' [the Quran, trans., 17:13].

63. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'Allah will receive the souls at the moment of their death.' [the Quran, trans., 39:42].

64. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'When the help of Allah came and the victory' [the Quran, trans., 110:1].

65. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And indeed, hell is the promised place for all of them!' [the Quran, trans., 15:43].

66. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And the trumpet will be blown.' [the Quran, trans., 39:68].

67. Majlis about the words of the Almighty: 'And those who feared their Lord will be driven to paradise in crowds.' [the Quran, trans., 39:73].

'Zuhtrat ar-riyad ...' contains a legend about Jesus and the skull, which is well-known in Turkic and Eastern literatures. It served as the basis for creation of such famous literary works as the poem 'Jumjuma Name' by Farid al-Din 'Attar, a Persian poet (1119–1223), and 'Jumjuma Sultan' by Husam Katib (died in 1368/1369). A comparison and analysis of these three works demonstrates that Husam Katib was apparently well-acquainted with these authors, as he borrowed quite a bit from both as-Saksini and 'Attar. This is supported by the fact that episodes of his poem, which were absent in 'Attar's work, appeared in 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad ...'. Although he could have used other versions of the legend, which were widespread in the literature of the East, and beloved by medieval readers. In the 'Zuhtrat ar-riyad ...' this legend (based almost entirely on hadithes) is

imbued with the spirit of Islam. This is clearly evidenced by the description of hell and an episode in which a meeting with the prophets takes place. As-Saksini could not have rewritten 'Attar's poem so enlivened by the spirit of Islam, because he lived a few decades earlier. There is no doubt that this legend originally had no such pronounced Islamic coloring. Thus, although as-Saksini and 'Attar certainly could have been inspired by the same source, each interpreting it in their own way, as-Saksini tried to bring it in line with Islamic tradition, while 'Attar gave it poetic shape and artistic expression. This means that the foundation for Husam Katib's poem can be traced both to authors in the Arab-Persian East and the Volga region.

The following is a translation of this legend [Sharafutdinov, 2003, pp. 22–25; 2003a, pp. 50–56].

#### **Hadis al-jumjuma** (The Tale of the Skull)

[fol. 16b] **Majlis [Fourth] about the words of the Almighty: 'Allah witnesses that there is no god but Him...'**<sup>25</sup>. Ash-Shaykh, the most glorious (al-ajall) Teacher (al-ustaz) of ours, Abu-l-'Ala Hamid ibn Idris [al-Bulgari], may Allah have mercy on him, told us: He told us, ash-Shaykh, the most glorious (al-Adzhall) Teacher (al-Ustaz) of ours, Saif al-Haqq (the saber of truth) Husam ad-Din (the sword the faith) Abu al-Mu'in Mamun ibn Hajj ibn Muhammad ibn al Mu'tamid al-Maqqhul an-Nasafi, may Allah have mercy on him, according to his isnad from the words of Ibn 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both, who said, And so said the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: [fol. 19b] Hadis al-jumjuma is [conveyed] from the words of Wahb Ibn Munabbih, who said: "'Isa, may peace be upon him,<sup>26</sup> was walking along one of the valleys of Je-

<sup>25</sup> The name of this majlis according to Berlin manuscript: 'The fourth majlis on the words of the Almighty "Allah proclaims that there is no god but Him, and the angels, and those who have knowledge..." [Ahlwardt, no. 8823 (PM556)].

<sup>26</sup> Jesus.



Sulaiman as-Saksini 'Zuhurat ar-riyad...'. Copy dated 11 Sha'ban 729/10 June 1329, Tabriz. - Suleymaniye Library (Istanbul, Turkish Republic). Tirnivali 968, p.19b. 'Hadith al-jumjuma'

rusalem, when suddenly he came across the resting skull of a long-dead man. 'Isa, may peace be upon him, was amazed and said:

"O Lord! Let the skull speak to me and tell me which nation he belonged to, what religion he professed, from what disease he died, what torments he experienced when his soul was taken out, how he survived the dark and cramped grave, how he answered the questions of Munkar and Nakir,<sup>27</sup> and whether he saw suffering in hell." And he heard a voice from heaven:

"O spirit of Allah<sup>28</sup>! Speak to him!"

<sup>27</sup> Munkar and Nakir are the two angels who question man after his death about his faith (iman). They ask three questions: Who is your god? What's your religion? Who is your prophet?

<sup>28</sup> Ruh Allah is an epithet for Jesus. According to Islamic tradition, Jesus is given this name because Allah sent his spirit into the Virgin Mary and his birth occurred without conception.

And 'Isa, may peace be upon him, stood up and prayed two *rak'ats*,<sup>29</sup> put his hand on the skull, passed over the skull with his hand and proclaimed,

"O skull! I am listening to you, o Spirit of Allah!" "Ask me anything you wish," said the skull.

'Isa, may peace be upon him, said:

"In the name of Allah, in the name of Allah!"—"You pronounced the best of all names, and called upon the greatest of all the great," said the skull. 'Isa, peace be upon him, asked:

"Why did you turn to dust?"—"My brain oozed away, my hair fell out, and my skin was torn," said the skull. "I had to lie in an open expanse for a long time. We were wet by rain from the sky, scorched by the sun and blown upon by the wind." 'Isa, peace be upon him, asked,

"When did you die?"—"All I know is that I was tormented in the fire for seventy years," said the skull.—"Tell me, how did you die?" asked 'Isa, peace be upon him. "As I was sitting with the young people who were drinking wine, I was overtaken by an immutable sentence from above, and I suddenly felt weak in their midst, I was seized by sadness, I broke out in a sweat, and the spacious land suddenly felt too small. I came back to my family and said, "Cover me with clothes." Then the pain increased, my eyes started to water, my nostrils swelled, and my hands began to tremble. Relatives and neighbors gathered around me, children were crying at my bedside. They brought doctors, but they could not help me in any way. And then the angel of death, may peace be upon him, came to me, angry at me, the angels came with him, instead of faces they had the black muzzles of dogs and lions with their eyes turned blue, in their hands they held iron combs, with which they started to scratch into my flesh, saying, "Come out, o vile soul, come out of this vile body to the Lord, who is angry with you!"." 'Isa, peace be upon him, said,

"Describe the angel of death to me."—"I cannot describe him", said the skull, "But I saw this world before him, like the adobe bricks before you now, I saw that his head was in the sky and his feet on the ground, and I saw how fire was erupting from his eyes and mouth. When I saw him, my heart fluttered, and my body was abandoned. Then they put me in the grave, covered me with earth, and then the black sentinel came to me. He stood eighty ells high in the sky, and the same in width, he held a fiery club in his hand, around the end of which a snake was coiled; he also had a tablet with him that was covered with scribbles<sup>30</sup>. He put me near my grave, cried out to me and said, "O enemy of Allah! Who is your God? What is your religion? Who is your prophet?". And I replied, "I do not know." Then he struck me with his club, and the snake latched onto me and began to bite me [mercilessly]. Then he said to me: "Read what is written on the tablet." I answered: "I cannot." Yet he said: "Verily, today you can." I looked and [saw] that all of my deeds were [written] on it. Shivers ran over my skin, my body quavered. They led my soul for three days and three nights until I reached a throne where a voice behind a veil said: "Send it back to"<sup>31</sup>. And thousands of angels seized upon me, striking my head with iron clubs, and they led me past an old man who sat on the throne and had a beautiful face and beard. When he saw me, he cried out: "Woe unto you! Did Allah not warn you? Did you not hear this world is fleeting and that everybody shall return to Allah?" Those who had been leading me said, "Verily, this is your father, Adam." Then they led me [further], and, suddenly, I found myself before a man sitting on the throne. When he looked to the right, he laughed, and when he looked to the left, he grieved and cried. They said, "This is Noah,<sup>32</sup> may peace be upon him." Then they led me [further], and, suddenly, I found myself before a sitting old man. They said, "This is Ibrahim<sup>33</sup>". Then they led me [further], and I reached the guards of hell. Their faces were blacker than tar, and they held chains [in their hands]. They chained me up and brought me to the angel, who was standing at a pulpit that looked like a flame

<sup>29</sup> The cycle of prayer postures and actions are accompanied by recitations of strictly defined phrases.

<sup>30</sup> All the deeds of man are written on an inscribed tablet (*laukh maktub*). It is usually called a 'kitab'; various verses of the Quran described how on Judgement Day every person will be given their book either in their right hands (those bound for Heaven) or in their left hands (those bound for Hell).

<sup>31</sup> This is because Allah has said it.

<sup>32</sup> The Prophet Noah.

<sup>33</sup> The Prophet Abraham.

of fire, he was surrounded by lions, dogs, snakes and scorpions of fire, and he held a fiery lash in his hand. Never had I seen a fiercer being than him. He said, "You worshipped the golden calf but not Allah." [Then] he said: "Bring him to the abyss of hell (*Hawiyah*)". And they led me on until they thrust me into the first door of hell. And the fire there is not like the fire in this world; it is a thousand times hotter. I saw a tree whose fallen fruits were like the heads of shaitans. Stones of fire fell from it, like a mountain, there were people there, and angels stood above them and beat them with their clubs of fire, forcing the people to eat it. They said, "O miserable one, this is *the Zaqqum*<sup>34</sup>, and these people are the ones who unfairly ate that which belonged to orphans." Then they brought me to the second fire, where there was a bottomless well with people inside of it, and the flesh on their bodies was cut, their skin stripped off. They said, "This is *Zamharir*<sup>35</sup>, where they throw those who committed adultery." Then, they brought me to the third [fire], where I saw people hanging on a sulphur stone. Then, they brought me to the fourth [fire], and there [were] people there, [too]. They said, "Those are the people who lent and paid loans." Then they brought me to the fifth [fire], and then to the sixth one, which had scorpions and snakes in it, and each scorpion was one thousand ells long and five hundred ells wide, and they all bit me." Then they brought me in the seventh [fire], called *Hawiyah*<sup>36</sup>, and suddenly I found myself near a castle in which there were a thousand houses of fire, each of which had a thousand rooms, and in each room there were a thousand trunks made of fire, and in each trunk there were a thousand types of suffering. There I saw mountains, seas and trees of fire. I rested only on Friday night, as it is on that day that they turn down the fire for the inhabitants of hell. Then someone cried out: "Let this foul soul in his skull, as Allah's spirit wishes to speak to him!" 'Isa, may peace be upon him, asked:

"Which nation do you belong to?"—"To the nation of Elias, may peace be upon him," he answered. 'Isa, may peace be upon him, asked:

"What did you worship?"—"We worshipped the golden calf instead of Allah. He ate *khabees*<sup>37</sup>, he drank honey, he wore festive attire, and his horns were decorated with gold. Fifty servants took care of him by day and fifty by night", the skull answered. 'Isa, may peace be upon him, asked:

"Whom did you see [sitting] closest to the Allah the Almighty?"—"I saw three thrones to the right [of His], and three to the left", the skull answered. "As for the thrones on the right, the closest [to him] was for Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, the second was for Khalil<sup>38</sup>, and the third was for Musa<sup>39</sup> As for the thrones on the left, the first one was for Daud,<sup>40</sup> the second was for Maryam,<sup>41</sup> and the third one was for you, o spirit of Allah."

Then the skull said:

"O spirit of Allah! For the sake of Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, ask Allah to bring me back into this world and grant me obedience to Him and the words "*la illaha ilallah*" ("there is no God but Allah"), as I have never seen anything more useful for a believer than the words "*la illaha ilallah*" ("there is no God but Allah") words, and I have seen fire flee from the person saying them." 'Isa, may peace be upon him, invoked Allah, and thanks to the power of the Almighty and Great Allah, [the dead man] rose to his feet, and, having come to believe in 'Isa, he witnessed that there was no God but Allah and that 'Isa was a messenger of Allah. Then, he lived in Islam<sup>42</sup> until 'Isa ascended to heaven, and he lived for ten years after that and died as a Muslim<sup>43</sup>, may Allah be merciful upon him.

<sup>34</sup> Zaqqum is a tree that 'grows from the depths of hell' (Jahannam). Its fruits are shaped 'like devils heads' [the Quran, trans., 37:62–66; 56:51–56] and will be the food for the sinners who go to Jahannam.

<sup>35</sup> Zamharir is a part in hell which is terribly cold; icy torment is one of the forms of punishment for sinners in hell.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Hawiyah is another name for hell.

<sup>37</sup> A sweet mixture, made with figs, cream and starch.

<sup>38</sup> One epithet for the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), is translated from the Arabic as, 'the favourite'.

<sup>39</sup> The Prophet Moses.

<sup>40</sup> The Prophet David.

<sup>41</sup> The Virgin Mary.

<sup>42</sup> Here: devotion and obedience to Allah.

<sup>43</sup> Here: devoted and obedient slave of Allah.

### Taj ad-Din al-Bulgari

Taj ad-din ibn Husayn al-Bulgari was a well-known pharmacologist and medic during the early 13th century and the only Volga Bulgarian scientist whose two works have survived up to this day. These works are treatises on pharmacology titled "At-Tiryak al-Kabir" ("Great Tirjak", or "Great Antidote"), and "Mukhtasar fi ma'rifat al-advijja" ("Brief [Treatise] for the Knowledge of [Simple] Remedies"), which we know about from unique copies now stored in the manuscript collections of libraries in Iran and Turkey.

In the 1970s, a text called 'At-Tiryak al-kabir' by Taj ad-din al-Bulgari was known to exist, [Tahirjanov, 1979, 19 b.] but it only became available in late 1996, when M. Shaimiev, the President of the Republic of Tatarstan, made an official visit to Iran.

M. Usmanov, a professor of Kazan State University and a fellow of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences, initiated and arranged the acquirement of a photocopy of the text. A. Khalidov, an outstanding Russian orientalist and arabist, a senior researcher at the Saint Petersburg branch of the Institute for Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and professor at Saint Petersburg and Kazan State Universities, was the first to research and to publish the Arabic text and Russian translation of 'At Tiryak al-kabir' [Taj ad-din al-Bulgari, 1997]. While preparing the text for publication, he discovered one more work by Taj ad-din al-Bulgari, entitled 'Mukhtasar fi ma'rifat al-advijya', a copy of which is stored in a library in the city of Manis, Turkey. With the help of K. Iskhakov, the head of Kazan City Administration, Professor A. Khalidov was able to start work on the Russian translation of the latter treatise by Taj ad-din al-Bulgari<sup>44</sup>.

There is only one surviving copy of 'At Tiryak al-kabir' by Taj ad-din al-Bulgari. It is a unique Tehran manuscript, recorded as no. 38 in the first volume of the catalogue in the former Senate Library (Kitabkhane-yi Majlis-i Sana), which became known as the Library of the Islamic Council after the 1979 anti-shah revolution

(Kitabkhane-yi Majlis-i Shura-yi Islami) [Kitabkhane-yi Madjlis-i sana, 1936/1937, pp. 18–20].

The manuscript is 249 pages long and contains 21 writings<sup>45</sup> of similar content, including treatises written by more eminent authors, who are well known to specialists (Muhammad ar-Razi, Ibn Sina, the philosopher Nasir ad-din at-Tusi). This surviving undated collection of works is in fact a relatively late copy, probably made in the 11th/17th<sup>46</sup> century. An unknown scribe brought all the works (apparently using copies made at different times) together in one

<sup>45</sup> The collection of works mainly includes treatises on medicine and pharmacology.

Of these, the first nine belong to Muhammad ar-Razi: 'Al-Murshid' ('The Guide'), pp.1–50; 'Makala fi-khtilaf ad-dam' ('Article on blood circulation'), p.51; 'Manafi' as-sikanjabin' ('The useful properties of sekanjabin'), pp.51–57; 'Kitab ila man la jaxduruxu-t-tabib' ('A message to those who do not have access to a doctor'), pp.59–138; 'Kitab ma jukaddam min al-favakix va-l-agzija' ('A book on recommended fruits and food'), pp.140–145; 'Mikala fi ttixaz ma al-jubn' ('Article on eating serum'), pp.145–146; 'Min Kitab al-alban fi-manafi' ma al-jubn' (From 'the book of milk' about the benefits of serum'), pp.147; 'Fi l-mumijai' ('On Shilajit'), pp.147–150; 'Bur as-saa' ('On sudden healing'), pp.150–154.

The tenth treatise on pages 155–160 is the work of Taj ad-din al-Bugari's. The eleventh, is 'Al-Fasd' ('Blood-letting'), ascribed to ar-Razi, pp. 161–162.

The following four writings belong to Ibn Sina: 'Al-Khindiba' ('Endive'), pp. 163–167; 'Tadbir al-musafirin' ('Rules for travellers'), pp. 168–173; 'Sijasat al-badan va fadail ash-sharab va manafi'ukhu va madarrukhu' ('Body care, the merits of wine, its benefit and harms'), pp. 174–176; 'Al-Kunnash al-fakhir' ('Excellent doctor's manual'), pp. 177–233.

These are followed by three short texts under the name of the philosopher (but not doctor) Nasir ad-din at-Tusi (d. 1274): 'Fi amr an-najj' ('On the onset of maturity'), pp. 225–227, 'Javab-i sual al-Katibi' ('Response to al-Katibi's question'), pp. 228–231; and another writing under the same name, pp. 231–232.

The only writing in this Collection of Works in Persian is 'Tarjuma-yi tibb-i r-Riza' ('Translation of ar-Riza's medicine'), pp. 235–241 which is attributed to the imam Riza (ar-Rid).

The next text is 'Al-Adviya l-murakkaba' (Complicated remedies), translated by Shapur ibn Sakhla from Syriac into Arabic and edited by Yukhanna ibn Sirabiyun (Serapion) (pp. 243–248), and finally an anonymous treatise 'Zikr al-avzan al-musta'mala fi t-tibb va-tafsirukha' ('On units of measurement commonly used in medicine and their explanations').

<sup>46</sup> Catalogers date the collection in the 10th/16th centuries, which is doubtful as the penmanship more likely indicates the 12th/18th centuries [Kitabkhane-yi majlis-i sana, 1936–37, pp.18–20].

<sup>44</sup> However, the preparation of this translation was incomplete because of the sudden and untimely death of A. Khalidov on 1 December, 2001.

handwritten collection. 'At-Tiryak al-Kabir' by Taj ad-din al-Bulgari is the tenth work in the collection. In copying it, the compiler reproduced the text of an early 13th century proto-graph either in its entirety or close to its entirety.

The short treatise (just six handwritten pages) deals with one issue only, namely, an antidote (tiryak, or diryak).

Unlike the former, another treatise by Taj ad-din al-Bulgari, 'Muhtasar fu ma'rifat al-adviya', deals with many remedies in alphabetical order (86 handwritten pages). The manuscript of this treatise by Taj ad-din al-Bulgari was discovered by Albert Dietrich [Dietrich, 1966, s. 228–229]. In his work on Arabic medicine manuscripts held in the libraries of Turkey and Syria, he describes a collection of works kept in manuscript archives in the Turkish town of Manisa [Manisa, Kitapsaray, 1781]. 'Muhtasar fi ma'rifat al-adviya' was found among thirteen other works (fols. 225b–268a). Abu Yahya Zakariya ibn ash-Shaikh as-sa'id Bilal ibn Yusuf al-Maragi al-Amiri al-Mutatabbib, a practising doctor, spent months making a personal copy of the collection of works. It consists of 268 folios, the text, consisting of 23–26 written lines per page, contains no vowel marks and full stops are used only sparingly. First, he recorded Taj ad-din al-Bulgari's treatise as the author had dictated it (as it was written the 'Great Tiryak' as well) at the end of dhu-l-ka'da 615/February, 1219, in the al-Mujahidiya caravanserai (khan) on the outskirts of Mosul. The second surviving copy was completed in the town of Konya on Saturday 6 shawwal 619/13 November,<sup>47</sup> 1222.

According to the 'Pharmacognosy' section of 'Medicine in Islam', M. Ullman's comprehensive bibliography work, the treatise on simple remedies Taj ad-din al-Bulgari wrote in 615/1218, faced harsh criticism from another well-known doctor, his contemporary and probable rival—Rashid ad-din as-Suri (1173–1243) [Ullman, 1970, p. 278; Taj ad-din al-Bulgari, 1997, p. 13].

The sum of our knowledge of Taj ad-din al-Bulgari and his works is what is written in his manuscripts.

<sup>47</sup> Az-Dhirikli used this message incorrectly in the fifth edition of his biographical handbook 'Al-A'lam': supposedly Taj ad-din al-Bulgari moved to Konya himself, and not the scribe of his book.

The author's name is mentioned several times in 'At Tiryak al-kabir': his full name was Tadj ad-din al-Hasan ibn Yunus al-Bulgari. The author's usual name (his 'shukhra' in Arabic) was Tadj ad-din al-Bulgari. His given name was al-Hasan and his father's name was Yunus. His 'nisba' – al-Bulgari – indicated that he came from the Bulgars or from their country, or both, and his honorary surname ('lakab') was Tadj ad-din or Tadj ad-din (literally, 'The Crown of Religion'). In addition, the scribe adorns his name with adulatory epithets, such as 'honoured scholar', 'unique in his epoch', 'the only one of his time'. As was customary at the time, he characterises himself in a humble and disparaging way: 'the weakest of Allah's<sup>48</sup> creatures'.

Taj ad-din al-Bulgari did not write *At-Tiryak al-kabir* by himself. He dictated it, then read what was written and witnessed it with his own signature, recording where and when the dictation and the initial recording took place: in the town of Mosul, in one of the months of 617/1220–1221. According to him, Mahmud ibn 'Usman ibn Ahmad at-Tiflisi wrote the text. His name is also accompanied with epithets that honour and praise him. He may have been a senior colleague to whom al-Bulgari was demonstrating his knowledge, or a junior colleague who was eager to learn the trade secrets of the tiryak form of healing direct from a prominent authority. His nisba, evidence that he either came from Tiflis (now known as Tbilisi) or had some other connection to that city, can be explained by the fact that Tiflis was an Islamic city at that time. The Arab commander-vicegerent resided there as early as the 7th century. For a long time, it was the northernmost outpost of Islam. It was the birthplace of some noted scholars, doctors and faqihs.

However, the names Taj ad-din al-Hasan al-Bulgari and Mahmud at-Tiflisi were never recorded in bibliographic compilations or works on the history of medicine. This explains why

<sup>48</sup> In the second treatise, the name of Taj ad-din al-Bulgari was given as Taj ad-din Abu Muhammad 'Ali ibn al-Khusaynal-Bulgari'. This discrepancy in the naming attests to the confusion over the name of this one person, rather than the existence of two scientists known by one shukhra (Taj ad-din al-Bulgari), who lived at the same time, in the same city (Mosul), and moreover, worked in the same area of study.



the work of modern orientalist and historians of medicine contains no mention of them. We owe it only to the chance discovery of a unique Tehran manuscript that their names were rescued from oblivion.

The word 'tiryak' (occasionally 'diryak') is Greek in origin and was borrowed by Arabic in the 8th and 9th centuries, when the Hellenistic Middle East's scientific heritage was actively translated from ancient written languages (Greek, Syriac Aramaic, Middle Persian pahlavi, Sanskrit, etc.) It is the word used for a remedy of complex composition and wide, almost all-purpose use. The preparation of tiryak was a long and painstaking procedure, as the work of this author and other similar sources attest. Each of its ingredients—organic remedies that could be plant, animal or mineral in origin—was carefully chosen and prepared separately.

Taj ad-din al-Bulgari's work is a recipe for a large, or great tiryak. It is clear that this was the pinnacle of any doctor's career, one which could only be reached after continuous study and adequate practice. Only a thorough knowledge of the traditions and secrets of the art of healing could a doctor create his own tiryak and apply it. With no introduction, the author starts with a list of remedies (dava, advija), and it later becomes clear that these are the ingredients for his 'great tiryak'. He breaks them down into 'classes' or 'categories' (martaba) without explaining why. The reason for them is not clear from the text. It may be that this was a system of classification used by doctors or a sequence ('steps') for combining basic remedies into the complex tiryak. There are seven such classes ('steps') each composed of various remedies. Next, there are the instructions on the required quantities of particular remedies, methods for processing them and procedures to be performed at various stages of making tiryak.

Further to this, other tiryak ingredients are named: wine, honey and, most important of all, three types of small lozenges (kurs). He then explains the composition of the lozenges and how they are made. They come partly ready-made: andruhurun lozenges (two different recipes are given), viper (carpet viper) lozenges, and kelp lozenges.

The third part of the work is dedicated to the illnesses tiryak treats, the circumstances in which

it is prescribed, and in what dosages. Tiryak was mostly used as an antidote to poisoning by snakes and other creatures. This explains the original name for the remedy and its Greek etymology. However, tiryak had a wide spectrum of use. It was prescribed to many different illnesses.

From the point of view of its useful properties and composition, the formulation suggested by Taj ad-din al-Bulgari is very similar to the most important kinds of tiryak, as described by Ibn Sina in the second and fifth volumes of his 'Canon' [Ibn Sina, 1956; 1960]

In his 'Saidana' (meaning pharmacognosy), Abu Raihan al-Biruni described five kinds of tiryak, including one referred to as 'Turkic', and he noted: 'There is no place that does not have things the locals call teryak' [Beruni, 1973, No. 202–206, Note 2].

The place and importance of Taj ad-din al-Bulgari's short work in the general history of Eastern medicine is yet to be defined and assessed by specialists. The specificities of medical and pharmacognostical knowledge are marked by conservatism, as maintaining good health and treating the sick has long been one of mankind's main concerns. People turned to nature for remedies and found them there. Knowledge and experience were built up over centuries, learnt from the peoples and tribes of various latitudes. They were also recorded in writing. Greek authors made important and decisive progress in the recording and classification of medicines. Of particular note are Hippocrates (d. 377 or 355 BCE), Dioscorides of Anazarbus (from Cilicia, who was writing around 78 AD), Galen of Pergamon (d. approximately 200 AD), Oribasius (d. 403 AD) and Paul of Aegina (d. 690 AD). Works by these authors, which were translated into Arabic by Hunain ibn Iskhak (who died in 873 AD), his assistants and pupils, laid the foundation for medicine and pharmacognosy in the Islamic epoch. Works by Persian and Indian authors were also translated. The scientific heritage left by the Ancient East and the Mediterranean formed the basis for the work of hundreds of Islamic doctors (tabibs and mutatabibs), and wise men (hakims), mostly in Iraq (in the cities of Baghdad, Samarra, Basrah and Mosul) but also west as far as Andalusia, and east as far as Turkestan and India. Many of

them wrote works on medicine (tibb) and pharmacognosy (saidana) in which they rephrased the knowledge that had been passed down to them in books, and added a little of their own, based on their experiences or the traditions of their country and people.

From the materials contained in the works of three bibliographers on the history of science – Ibn an-Nadim (d. 995), al-Kifti (d. 1245) and Ibn Abu Usajbi'i (d. 1270)—we learn the names of 110 authors (alive before the middle of the 8th century) who recorded simple remedies [Ullmann, 1970, s. 257]. They include the following famous encyclopaedia writers: Muhammad ar-Razi (d. 925), Ibn Sina (d. 1037) and al-Biruni (d. 1048).

Taj ad-dina al-Bulgari managed somehow to get to Mosul, one of the largest medical centres in the Middle East. There, he wrote

his work and gained acceptance as a specialist. His 'At-Tiryak al-kabir' is documentary proof that Bulgar scientists were exposed to the scientific traditions of the Islamic East, and, consequently, of the Hellenistic world [Taj ad-din al-Bulgari, 1997, p. 11].

Below is the translation of three passages from 'At-Tiryak al-kabir' (the pagination of the original typesetting has been retained) that reveal the structure and content of the writing [Tad-zhaddin al-Bulgari, 1997, pp. 29–42]. The first passage contains the first two of seven 'divisions' (lists of ingredients) for simple remedies that are cited at the beginning of the composition. The second part of the composition presents the first recipe, which contains the preparation method for three types of 'lozenges', also ingredients for the 'tiryak'. The final part of the text is cited in full.

#### **At-Tiryak al-kabir** (A Great Tiryak or Antidote)

[p. 29] A Great Tiryak<sup>49</sup> as dictated by an honorable scientist, a person unique of his time, the only one of his epoch, Taj ad-din Ibn Yunus al-Bulgari.

First division. Two remedies: black pepper<sup>50</sup> and opium,<sup>51</sup> quantity of each remedy—<sup>52</sup> two *mithqals*<sup>53</sup>.

First division. Nine remedies, namely: Chinese cinnamon,<sup>54</sup> wild turnip seeds,<sup>55</sup> wild garlic,<sup>56</sup> blue resin from the doum palm,<sup>57</sup> blue flag iris rhizome,<sup>58</sup> agaric,<sup>59</sup> myrrh tree oil,<sup>60</sup> red rose,<sup>61</sup> concentrated licorice juice,<sup>62</sup> [c.30] quantity of each remedy—twelve *mithqals*<sup>63</sup>...

<sup>49</sup> Below this word is inscribed with a 'D': *diryak*.

A. Khalidov's translation and commentary was prepared on the basis of the annotated Russian translation of the 'Second book' and 'Fifth book' of 'The Canon' by Ibn Sina and 'Saidana' by al-Biruni [Ibn Sina, 1877; 1956; 1960; Beruni, 1973].

<sup>50</sup> *Fulful* (this word is derived from Sanskrit through Persian) *asvad* —a Piper. Black pepper.

<sup>51</sup> *Afryn* (Greek)—Opium. Dried milky juice, obtained from incisions onto the poppy head – *Papaver somniferum* L.

<sup>52</sup> In Arabic original it is unclear what *mkd* is. It is possible that it was shortened from 'mikdar kullidava' (quantity of every remedy), to its first letters.

<sup>53</sup> The unit of measurement is equivalent to 4.25 g.

<sup>54</sup> *Darsini* (Persian), literally—'Chinese tree'. *Cinnamomum Cassia* B. L., a synonym of *Cinnamomum aromaticum* Nees.

<sup>55</sup> *Shaljam* (Arabic)—turnip. *Brassica rapa* L.

<sup>56</sup> *Sum* (apa6.)—garlic. *Allium sativum* L.

<sup>57</sup> *Mukl* (Arabic)—bdellium. The resin, collected from *Balsamodendron africanum* Am. trees (synonym of *Commiphora africana* Engl.),

*Balsamodendron mukul* Hook. or from the doum palm and its fruits. *Hyphaene thebaica* Mart.

<sup>58</sup> *Sausan asmanjuni* (Persian)—literally 'the blue sausan', iris flower. *Iris florentina* L.

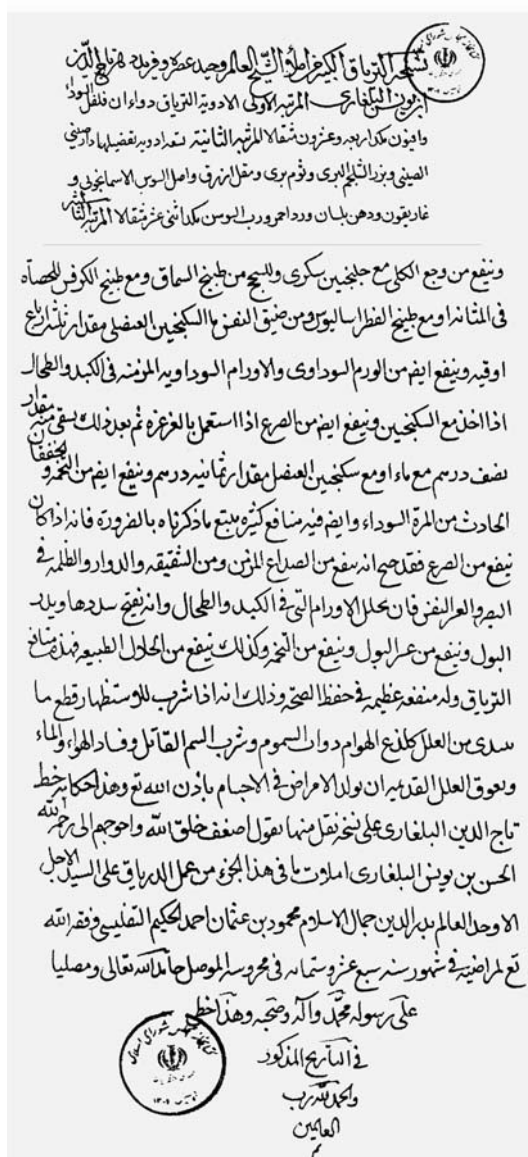
<sup>59</sup> *Garikun* (Greek) *Agaricum*. = *Polyporus officinalis* F.

<sup>60</sup> *Balasan* (Greek)—myrrhis tree, Mecca myrrhis tree. *Commiphora opobalsamum* Engl., synonym of *Amyris gileadensis* L. 'It's rarely mentioned by itself, it is [usually] mentioned along with tree oil, grain, or wood'. As well as Taj ad-din al-Bulgari.

<sup>61</sup> *Vard* (Persian)—rose.

<sup>62</sup> *Sus* (Aramaic)—licorice, licorice root. *Glycyrrhiza glabra* L.

<sup>63</sup> Ibn Sina listed eight ingredients, excluding doum palm resin; each having the same quantity. Only Chinese cinnamon had the option of using 24 *mithqals*.



Taj ad-Din al-Bulgari. 'At-Tiryak al-Kabir' ('Great Antidote'). Kitabhane-i Majlis-Shurayi Islami, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran. Copy of the 17th century. Fol. 155—the first lines of the treatise; fol. 160—the last page of the work.

[p. 35] How to make lozenges that are put in the *tiryak*

Among the lozenges of *andrukhrun*,<sup>64</sup> weighing 24 *mithqals*. According to one formulation, they use genista rhizome bark,<sup>65</sup> this is the root of the *kanda*<sup>66</sup> tree, and this is *javalī*<sup>67</sup>, but not a sumbul root, the genista rhizomes shall be used, six *mithqals*, the same amount of aromatic common reed,<sup>68</sup> and if it is not available, they say it can be replaced by sage<sup>69</sup> of the same weight, pulp of the myrrhis tree and a small asarum of rhum,<sup>70</sup> myrrh, amomum,<sup>71</sup> mastic,<sup>72</sup> white chamomile<sup>73</sup> separately and its yellow 'eye' [p. 36], as at-Tamimi also mentioned,<sup>74</sup> in the quantity of six *mithqals* for every remedy, as we have mentioned above, bulrush flowers,<sup>75</sup> pure Chinese rhubarb,<sup>76</sup> Ceylonese cinnamon,<sup>77</sup> Chinese cinnamon in

<sup>64</sup> The mixture of *andrukhrun* (Greek) was also mentioned in 'Canon' by Ibn Sina, although the term wasn't explained. Originally, this word refers to the medicinal herb, meadow saffron, which appears in Taj ad-din al-Bulgari's work under its Persian name, *saurinjan*. (Persian) *Colchicum autumnale* L., *Colchicum variegatum* L. The description of this formula is very similar to that in the text of Ibn Sina [Ibn Sina, 1960, text p. 314; trans. p. 25].

<sup>65</sup> *Darshisha'an* (Persian). *Calycotome spinosa* L. K., a synonym of *Cytisus spinosa* Lam. or *Ulex* (Genista).

<sup>66</sup> This name of this tree is unknown. It is possible that the text is corrupted. The word is written as *alkanduk* (?).

<sup>67</sup> The word was adopted into Arabic from Turkic and means 'a basket' or 'a box' made of twigs or bark.

<sup>68</sup> *Kasab az-zarira* (Arabic)—literally 'cane of zarira'; zarira is a yellowish-white powder, used as incense. It is made by grinding the cobweb-like substance contained inside of the *Calamus aromaticus* cane.

<sup>69</sup> *'Adas murr'* usually written as *'adas barry murr'*—'wild bitter lentil'.

<sup>70</sup> *Asarun* (Greek) *Asarum europaeum* L.

<sup>71</sup> *Aminun*—the Arabic form of the Greek word. *Anemone coronaria* L.

<sup>72</sup> *Mastaka* (Greek). Resin *Pistacia lentiscus* L.

<sup>73</sup> *Ukhuvan* (Persian). *Matricaria parthenium* L. and *Matricaria chamomilla* L.

<sup>74</sup> Unknown doctor-pharmacist.

<sup>75</sup> *Izkhirhell'*. *Andropogon schoenanthus* L.

<sup>76</sup> *Rivand* (Greek, Persian)—medicinal rhubarb. *Rheum officinale* Bail 1., or palmate rhubarb, *Tangutic rhubarb* = *Rheum palmatum* L. var. *tanguticum* Maxim.

<sup>77</sup> *Salikha*—(Arabic) *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* Nees. It is very difficult to precisely identify the dif-

quantity of 20 *mithqals*, myrrh 24 *mithqals*, Indian sambul, 16 *mithqals*, the same amount of Malabathrum,<sup>78</sup> and if none is available, the amount of sambul shall be doubled, – sage, 12 *mithqals*. Each remedy should be pounded and sifted separately, put [all] together after the weight of each is adjusted, and then mixed with a fragrant and flavoursome basil wine, one which has been aged and slightly sweetened,—in Iraq this wine is called '*kakhva*'. They are then shaped into lozenge form and dried in the shade.

### Dosages of *diryak* depending on the illness

[c.39] For protection against deadly poisons and venomous animal bites you should take one *bunduk*<sup>79</sup> [*diryak*] with four and half *ukiyas*<sup>80</sup> of wine. I consider opiates and sleep-inducing [drugs] to be deadly poisons, and these are jimson weed,<sup>81</sup> hemlock,<sup>82</sup> coriander<sup>83</sup>, *al-nfkh* (?), Spanish flies<sup>84</sup> and so on. Poisonous living creatures: vipers (*echis*), well-water snakes (?), that is to say, from wells (?), and snakes, that cause thirst, that is, their bite causes thirst from which the person who has been bitten may die, those are snakes with black spots, *soutanes*<sup>85</sup>, scorpions, water and steppe snakes, that live in dry steppes, 'oak' snakes, which wrap themselves around the lower part of an oak, have a protective (?) smell and have blood in urine, and poisonous spiders.

[p.40] Those whose bodies are contaminated, as from a deadly poison, or from a persistent chronic cough without any chest pain, should drink about a *tirmis of*<sup>86</sup> [*diryak*]. And if there is a fever also, then, with apple wine (juice?), and if there is no fever, then with *Persian cumin* and honey. This also helps with bloating, sharp intestinal pains, stomach pains and cramps. These illnesses are treated with a dose of one *tirmis* in the morning with water. It is also of use in reducing increased sensitivity and increasing weakened sensitivity.

*Diryak* can be given to take before an illness, that is to say, to someone who fears they may be falling ill. It should be diluted with either wine or water, *half a dirham* with four and a half *ukiyas* or or three *ukiyas of* wine or water. It works well on those who (?) are having a seizure or a sharp (?) stroke. It counteracts chills and vomiting at the onset, if the medicine is taken in a dose of one *tirmis*. It makes menstruation abundant, forcing out the dead foetus, if taken in a dosage of one *tirmis of* with reduced grape juice<sup>87</sup> or a honey beverage (wine?), where false dictamnus<sup>88</sup> or rue was<sup>89</sup> boiled.

*Diryak* is also useful against jaundice when taken with an infusion of<sup>90</sup> *asarum*.

It helps those who suffer with oedema, if it is prepared with one and a half *ukiyas* of wine vinegar.

ferent types of cinnamon, mentioned by Dioskorid and the Arab authors. In Russian edition of 'Canon' by Ibn Sina. *Darsini* (Persian), literally—'Chinese tree'. *Cinnamomum Cassia* B. I., a synonym of *Cinnamomum aromaticum* Nees, translated as Chinese cinnamon, *salikha*—Ceylon cinnamon, in other sources, vice versa.

<sup>78</sup> *Sazaj* (Persian). Malobathrum, the leaves of *Cinnamomum citriodorum* Thwait, or *Cinnamomum tamala* Nees. It grows in India.

<sup>79</sup> *Bunduka* from *bunduk* 'filbert or hazelnut', the measure of weight and volume is believed to be equal to 3.186 g.

<sup>80</sup> An *ukiya* according to Ibn Sina, an ounce was equal to 25.500 g, and according to Beruni, 29.75 g.

<sup>81</sup> *Javzmasil* (Arabic)—Indian *Datura metel* L. or common *Datura stramonium* L.

<sup>82</sup> *Shavkaran* (Persian). *Conium maculatum* L.

<sup>83</sup> *Kuzbura* (Sanskrit). *Coriandrum sativum* L.

<sup>84</sup> *Zararikh* (Arabic) *Litsea vesicatoria*, or *Cantharis vesicatoria*, or *Meloe fasciata*.

<sup>85</sup> In dictionaries the word signifies a snake, predominantly poisonous. Its precise meaning in this context is uncertain. Many nuances in the classification of poisonous snakes are incomprehensible, it is possible that the text contains mistakes.

<sup>86</sup> *Turmus* or *tirmis* (Akkadian)—lupine. *Lupinus tennisi* Forsk. Lupine seed was used as a unit of weight in apothecaries, the amount in which is uncertain.

<sup>87</sup> *Maybukhtaj* and *mayfukhtaj* (Persian *maypukhta*)—literally 'boiled wine'. Grape juice (or wine), boiled down to a third or a quarter of its original volume.

<sup>88</sup> *Mashkataramashir* (Persian). *Origanum dictamnus* L.

<sup>89</sup> *Sazabili sadab* (Persian). *Ruta graveolens* L.

<sup>90</sup> *Asarum* (Greek) *Asarum europaeum* L.

It is also used to treat those who have lost their voice, by giving it to them to drink with candied rose jam<sup>91</sup> or reduced grape juice. Someone who has nausea and faintness can be treated the same way.

It helps in coughing blood from the lungs and chest. If it is a recent illness, it is given with one *ukiya* of diluted vinegar; for chronic sufferers, with *Persian cumin* in four [p.41] and a half *fukiyas* of of water, in which cordia has been boiled,<sup>92</sup> in the morning and in the evening.

It helps with kidney pains, [if taken] with candied rose jam (see note 121); and for diarrhoea (liquid stool) with an infusion of tanner's sumac,<sup>93</sup> and with an infusion of celery<sup>94</sup> or parsley—<sup>95</sup> for kidney stones. And for depression—water (*diryak* with water?) of *sikanjubin*<sup>96</sup> from sea onion<sup>97</sup> in the quantity of three quarters of an ounce.

It also helps with black gall tumours and chronic black gall tumors in the liver and the spleen, if taken with *sikanjubin*.

It also helps with epilepsy when gargled (?),<sup>98</sup> then when they give it to take in a dose of half a *dirham* with water or *sikandjubin* of sea onion in the quantity of eight *dirhams*.

It also helps with indigestion and irregular heartbeat caused by the onset of black gall.

It has many other useful properties, following on from what we have mentioned. Indeed, if it helps with epilepsy, this also indicates that it helps with chronic headaches, migraines, dizziness, blurred vision and chest tightness. If tumors in the liver and the spleen are dissolved, then it (*diryak*) releases their obstructions and causes abundant urination, helps prevent urinary retention, indigestion and also over-relaxation.

These are the useful properties of *the tiryak*. It is of great use in preserving health. If taken as a prophylactic, then it stops the effects of poisonous reptile bites, deadly poisons, putrid air and water at an early stage, and [p.42] stops chronic causes of illness from fostering disease in the human body with the permission of the Almighty.

Here is a verbatim report of what Taj ad-din al-Bulgari wrote himself in the manuscript from which [this one] has been copied: 'Says the weakest of Allah's creatures, al-Hasan ibn Yunus al-Bulgari: I dictated what is written in this notebook on the preparation of *diryak*, to the most famed master and unique scientist Badr ad-din Jamal al-Islam (the Moon of religion, the Beauty of Islam) Mahmud ibn 'Usman [ibn] Ahmad sage at-Tiflisi—may Allah bless him—in the months of 617 [8 March 1220–24 February 1221] in the God-protected city of Mosul, while giving praise to Allah Almighty and calling for grace upon His messenger Mohamed, his family and his companions. It was written on the above-mentioned date. Praise be to Allah. Finished.

This material was prepared by Nuriya Garayeva

<sup>91</sup> *Julanjubin* (Persian *gul-angubin*—'rose-honey')—a rose jam.

<sup>92</sup> *Sabistan* (Persian)—sebesten plum, Cordia. Cordia Myxa L.

<sup>93</sup> *Summakh*, (Aramaic). Rhus coriaria L.

<sup>94</sup> *Karafs* (Aramaic)—celery or parsley (in the translation of 'Canon'). Apium graveolens L. or Apium petroselinum L.

<sup>95</sup> *Futrasaliyun* (Greek). Petroselinum sativum Hoffm.

<sup>96</sup> *Sikanjubin* (Persian)—oxymel.

<sup>97</sup> *'Unsal* (Greek)—one name for a sea onion. Scilla maritima L.

<sup>98</sup> *Gargara* (Arabic) This could be an error in the text which should be read and translated as juniper.

## Russian chroniclers on the nomads of the Eurasian steppes

The Russian Chronicles represent a unique source of information on the medieval history of Turkic speaking nomads in Eastern Europe.

We used the 14th-century Laurentian Chronicle as our original source. If textual information was not repeated in the Laurentian Chronicle, we selected the material closest historically and chronologically to the Chronicle. We replaced those letters of the Old Russian alphabet that are no longer in use and alphanumeric characters with modern letters and num-

bers that enable the contemporary reader to understand the Russian Chronicles. The most widely used Old Russian terminology has been decrypted in the footnotes. The Chronicles were formulated in blocks of information.

Sources for a particular chronicle appear immediately following the text (for ex.: RDC, pp. 12–13; SR p. 1, etc.<sup>1</sup>); following sources indicate different variants in collections described in the main text.

### The Vlakhs<sup>1</sup>

When the Vlakhs attacked the Danubian Slavs, settling among them and committing much violence, the Slavs left to make their homes by the Vistula, and became known as the Lyakhs<sup>2</sup>...

RDC, pp. 12–13; SR p. 1.

... The Slavs had been living along the Danube for a long time, in lands belonging today to the Hungarians<sup>3</sup> and the Bulgarians. The Vlakhs attacked the Danubian Slavs and settled among them, continuing to commit much violence against them. Thus, the Slavic race was divided...

VC p. 13.

### The Bulgars, Khazars, and White Ugrians

... While the Slavs dwelt along the Danube, there came from among the Scythians<sup>4</sup> that is, from among the Khazars<sup>5</sup> a people called Bulgars,<sup>6</sup> who settled along the Danube and oppressed the Slavs. Then came the White Ugrians,<sup>7</sup> who chased the Vlakhs back to their Slavic homelands. These Ugrians were led by King Irakli<sup>8</sup>... warring on Khosrow, Tsar of Persia<sup>9</sup>...

RDC, pp. 13–14; PNC p. 5; S1497 p. 13; UC p. 167; VPC p. 12; XC p. 12; SR p.167 (without reference to Irakli and Khosrow); IC p. 9; S1493 p. 175.

... The great cities of Slovensk and Rusa<sup>10</sup> were empty for many years; only wild animals lived and reproduced there. Some time later the Slavs came from the Danube again, bringing with them many Scythians<sup>11</sup> and Bulgars. They had begun to settle in Slovensk and Rusa once again when the White Ugrians invaded, destroying their cities and finally conquering them...

NC p. 140; MC p. 28.

<sup>1</sup> The abbreviation list is at the end of this appendix.

<sup>2</sup> The Volots (Voločki) were presumably Bulgats-Kuturgs who were led by khan Zabergan, in 559 they reached Thermopylae, Chersonesus of Thrace and Constantinople.

<sup>3</sup> The Lyakhs—the Polish people.

<sup>4</sup> The territory of modern day Hungary.

<sup>5</sup> Skuf—Scythians.

<sup>6</sup> The Kazars—the Khazars.

<sup>7</sup> Bulgar nomads, led by Asparukh invaded Thrace from beyond the Danube in 679.

<sup>8</sup> Chronicle *White Ugrians* correspond to the tribe of Ogres most of all. They lived nomadically in the steppes between the Volga and Urals.

<sup>9</sup> Byzantine emperor Heraclius, who ruled from 610 to 641.

<sup>10</sup> Khozdroy the Persian—king of kings of Iran Khosrow II Parvis, who ruled from 591 to 628.

<sup>11</sup> Slovensk and Rusa—towns in present day Novgorod region

<sup>12</sup> Sku—Scythians.

**The Avars<sup>12</sup>**

During this period the Avars attacked the Emperor Heraclius, nearly capturing him<sup>13</sup>. They made war upon the Slavs, and harassed the Duleby and violated their women even though they themselves were Slavs.<sup>14</sup> When an Avar made a journey, he did not ask for a horse or steer to be harnessed, but ordered, instead, that three or four or five women be yoked to his cart and that they be made to pull him. The Avars were large of stature and proud of spirit, but God destroyed them all—not one Avar survived...

RDC, pp. 13–14; VPC p. 12; SR pp. 167–168; PNC p. 5; IC p. 9; S1497 p. 13; UC p. 167.

**Pechenegs, Black Ugrians<sup>15</sup>**

... After them came the Pechenegs, and again the Black Ugrians passed by Kiev...

IC p. 9; VPC p. 12.

**The Khazars**

... After the death of the brothers, they were oppressed by the Drevlians<sup>16</sup> [and] other their neighbors. Then the Khazars came upon them living in the hills and forests, and demanded tribute from them. After consulting among themselves, the Polans<sup>17</sup> paid tribute of one sword per hearth, which the Khazars brought to their prince and elders, saying, 'Behold, we have found new tribute'. When asked where it came from they replied, 'From the forest on the hills by the river Dnieper'. And when the elders inquired what tribute had been paid, the swords were exhibited. The Khazar elders then protested, 'This tribute is evil, prince. We won it with a one-edged weapon called a sabre, but the weapon belonging to these men is sharp on both edges and is called a sword. These men shall impose tribute upon us and other lands'. So it has also come to pass that the Rus still rule over the Khazars...

LC pp. 16–17; PNC pp. 6–7; NC p. 12; UC p. 167; RDC p. 15; XC pp. 12–13; N1C MR pp. 105–106; TC pp. 25–26; VPC p. 13.

6367 (859). The Varangians from beyond the sea imposed tribute upon<sup>18</sup> the Chudes<sup>19</sup> and the Slavs,<sup>20</sup> the Merya<sup>21</sup> and all the Krivichi.<sup>22</sup> But the Khazars imposed it upon the Polans, the Severians<sup>23</sup> and the Vyatichians,<sup>24</sup> and collected a white squirrel-skin<sup>25</sup> from each hearth...

LC p. 19; RDC p. 16; IC pp. 13–14; PNC p. 8; XC p. 13; NC p. 18; CR p. 11; TC p. 29; VPC p. 15; C1P p. 173.

... This tribute was paid to the Varangians from beyond the sea by the Chudes and the Slavs, the Merians and Ves',<sup>26</sup> and the Krivichi. And the Polans gave the Khazars a a tribute of one white squirrel-skin from each hearth...

<sup>12</sup> The Obrs—the Avars—Turkic tribes founded the Avar Khaganate in the territory of Central Europe. They were fighting against Thrace and the the Byzantine Empire. The Greeks used the Greek fire against them for the first time.

<sup>13</sup> During the storm of Constantinople by the Avars in 620.

<sup>14</sup> The Dulebs are a Slavic tribe that had settled along the Bug River.

<sup>15</sup> Chronicle *Black Ugrians* are an equivalent of Magyars (Hungarians).

<sup>16</sup> The Drevlians—a Slavic tribe.

<sup>17</sup> Dym—a clan house in which several families lived.

<sup>18</sup> The Varyags—Normans, Vikings, Rus' people.

<sup>19</sup> The Chud'—one of the Finnish (Finno-Ugric) tribes dwelling the territory of modern day. Estonia, Pskov and Leningrad regions

<sup>20</sup> The Ilmen Slavs are meant.

<sup>21</sup> The Merya is a Finnish tribe that occupied the territory of the Upper Volga region.

<sup>22</sup> The Krivichi were a Slavic tribe occupying the territories of the Western Dvina, Volga and Dnieper (territory of modern day Belarus, Pskov and Smolensk regions).

<sup>23</sup> The Severians were a Slavic tribe living on the Desna River (territory of modern day Ukraine and the Bryansk region).

<sup>24</sup> The Viaticchi were a Slavic tribe living at the upper reaches of the Oka River (territory of modern day Kaluga, Tula, Orel, Moscow, Ryazan, Vladimir and Nizhni Novgorod regions).

<sup>25</sup> Literally that means 'a white squirrel', that is an ermine.

<sup>26</sup> The Ves'—a Finnish tribe living in the territory of modern day Vologda region

SR p. 3; S1497 p. 13 (858); UC p. 167 (852); (in S1497 and UL there was no mention of the Merians); VC p. 14 (without the Chudes and the Ves').

### **The Pechenegs**

6375 (867)... That same summer Askold and Dir scored victories over many Pechenegs<sup>27</sup>...

Nikon Chronicle, p. 9.

### **The Ugrians**

6406 (898). The Ugrians passed Kiev and stood on the hill now called Hungarian. Upon arriving at the Dnieper, they pitched camp.<sup>28</sup> They were nomads like the Polovtsians. Coming out of the east, they struggled across the great mountains<sup>29</sup> [since that period they have been called Hungarian]...

LC p. 25; IC p. 318; RDC p. 8; XC p. 14; S1497 p. 14.

... The Ugrians passed by Kiev... and upon arriving at the Dnieper, they pitched camp. They were nomads like the Polovtsians... Coming out of the east, they struggled across the great mountains called 'Hungarian' and began to fight against the former Slavs, the Vlakhs. For the Slavs had settled there first, but the Vlakhs had seized the territory of the Slavs. The Ugrians subsequently expelled the Vlakhs, took their land, and settled among the Slavs, whom they reduced to submission. From that time on this territory was called Hungarian...

CNC p. 16.; UC p. 168

6409 (901). The Emperor Leo<sup>30</sup> incited the Ugrians against the Bulgarians, so that they attacked and subjugated the whole Bulgarian country...

RC p. 13.

### **The Pechenegs**

6423 (915). When the Pechenegs first entered the land of Rus' they made peace with Igor,<sup>31</sup> and made their way to the Danube...

LC p. 42; S1497 p. 14; UC p. 169; NC p. 20; S1493 p. 180; VPC p. 17.

... Having entered the land of Rus' for the first time, the Pechenegs made peace with Igor, and made their way to the Danube. At this time, Simeon<sup>32</sup> attacked Thrace,<sup>33</sup> and the Greek voivodes wished to attack Simeon. Seeing this, the Pechenegs made for home...

RDC p. 24; VC p. 18 (914); MCR p. 347; TC p. 47; XC p. 17; IC p. 32.

... Having entered the land of Rus', the Pechenegs made peace with Igor and made their way to the Danube. And Simeon the Bulgarian captured Thrace and killed many Greeks and seized the city of Odrin...

RC p. 13.

6428 (920). Roman was appointed<sup>34</sup> tsar in Greece<sup>35</sup> but Igor waged war against the Pechenegs...

LC p. 43; VC p. 18 (919); S1493 p. 181 (919); TC p. 48; RDC p. 24; IC p. 32.

Roman was appointed tsar in Greece by Tsar Constantine, and Nikolas was made Patriarch. Igor waged war against the Pechenegs...

<sup>27</sup> The first mentioning of the Pechenegs

<sup>28</sup> Vezha—a tent, covered wagon, camping-ground.

<sup>29</sup> The Carpatian Mountains.

<sup>30</sup> Byzantine Emperor Leonid (867–1056).

<sup>31</sup> Kievan Prince Igor Ryurikid (912–945).

<sup>32</sup> Bulgarian Tsar Simeon (893–897).

<sup>33</sup> Thrace—territory of modern day Bulgaria.

<sup>34</sup> Tsr—caesar.

<sup>35</sup> Greko—Byzantium. In the 7th century Latin was superseded by Greek in Byzantium. That is why Byzantines were often called Greeks.



XC p. 17.

**The Ugrians**

6442 (934). The Ugrians entered Tsargrad for the first time<sup>36</sup> and captured Thrace. Roman made peace with the Ugrians...

RDC p. 24; IC p. 43 (without Roman); IC p. 33; XC p. 17; UC p. 169.

6451 (943). The Ugrians entered Tsargrad again and made peace with Roman...

LC p. 45; RDC p. 25; XC p. 17.

**The Pechenegs**

6452 (944)... After collecting many warriors among the Varangians, the Ruses, the Polans, Slavs, Krivichi, Tivertsy,<sup>37</sup> and the Pechenegs, as well as hostages,<sup>38</sup> Igor advanced upon the Greeks by ship and by horse, thirsting for revenge... When the Emperor heard this news, he sent to Igor his noblest boyars, who entreated him to come no closer. He offered Igor the tribute taken by Oleg, and to even add to it. He likewise sent the Pechenegs expensive silk fabric and<sup>39</sup> much gold. Now Igor, when he came to the Danube, called together his retinue, and after some reflection... Igor heeded them, and bade the Pechenegs ravage Bulgaria. He himself, after receiving from the Greeks gold and silk fabric sufficient for his whole army,<sup>40</sup> returned again to his native land...

LC pp. 45–46; IC p. 35; S1493 p. 182 (943); CR p. 14 (943); VC p. 19 (943); S1497 p. 15; RDC p. 25.

**The Khazars**

6472 (964). When Prince Svyatoslav<sup>41</sup> grew into a man, he began to gather together a huge army... and went to the Oka and the Volga. When he came into contact with the Vyaticians, he asked them to whom they paid tribute. They replied that they paid a silver-piece per ploughshare to the Khazars...

LC p. 65; PNC p. 31(963); NIC MR p. 117; IC pp. 52–53; NC p. 21; CR p. 14; TC p. 65; VPC p. 19; VC p. 22; RDC p. 33; XC p. 21.

6473 (965). Svyatoslav sallied forth against the Khazars. When they heard of his approach, they went out to meet him with their Prince, the Khagan. Svyatoslav defeated the Khazars and took their city of Belaya Vezha.<sup>42</sup> He also conquered the Yases<sup>43</sup> and the Kasogs.<sup>44</sup>...

LC p. 65; PNC p. 31; NIC MR p. 117; IC p. 53; RDC p. 33; XC p. 21; VC p. 22; S1497 p. 15; UC p. 170; NC p. 21; S1493 p. 189; S1495 p. 312; CR p. 14; TC p. 65; VPC p. 19.

**The Pechenegs**

6476 (968). The Pechenegs invaded Rus' for the first time<sup>45</sup> while Svyatoslav was at Pereyasavl. So Olga<sup>46</sup> shut herself up with her grandsons... in the city of Kiev. The nomads besieged the city with a great force. They surrounded it with an innumerable multitude, so that it was impossible to escape or send messages from the city, whose inhabitants were weak from hunger and thirst. Those who had gathered on the other side of the Dnieper in their boats remained on that side... Then one youth volunteered to make the attempt... So he went out of the city with a bridle in his hand, and

<sup>36</sup> Tsargrad—the Slavs called Constantinople this way.

<sup>37</sup> The Tivers—a Slav tribe dwelling the territory from the Prut to the Dniester (territory of modern day Moldova and a part of Ukraine).

<sup>38</sup> Tali—captives.

<sup>39</sup> Pavoloki—brocade.

<sup>40</sup> The campaign of 944 resulted in lost trade privileges gained by Kievan Rus' under prince Oleg. Now when buying goods costing more than 50 golden coins it was necessary to pay a tax, it was allowed enter the town only accompanied by guards, and it was prohibited to spend the winter at the mouth of the Dnieper.

<sup>41</sup> Prince Svyatoslav Igorevich of Kiev (945–972).

<sup>42</sup> Belaya Vezha, or Sarkel—a town at the lower reaches of the Don.

<sup>43</sup> The Yases—ancestors of the modern day Ossetians.

<sup>44</sup> The Kasogs—ancestors of modern day Adygeis.

<sup>45</sup> The Pechenegs entered the territory of Kievan Rus' for the first time under prince Svyatoslav Igorevich.

<sup>46</sup> Volga—princess Olga; she ruled the Russian state from 945 until her son Svyatoslav (964) came of age.

ran among the Pechenegs asking whether anyone had seen a horse. For he knew their language, and they thought he was one of them. When he approached the river, he threw off his clothes,<sup>47</sup> jumped into the Dnieper, and swam out. As soon as the Pechenegs saw him, they hurried in pursuit, shooting at him the while... The party on the other shore caught sight of him, and rowed out in a boat to meet him. They then took him into their boat, and brought him to their camp... That morning before dawn they embarked in their boats, and blew loudly on their trumpets. The people within the city raised a shout, so that the Pechenegs thought the Prince himself had returned, and accordingly fled the city in various directions. Thus Olga went forth with her grandsons<sup>48</sup> and her followers to the boats.<sup>49</sup> The Prince of the Pechenegs inquired whether he was the Prince himself. The general then replied that he was the Prince's vassal, and that he had come as a vanguard, but that a countless force was on the way under the Prince's command... The two shook hands on it. The Pecheneg Prince gave the other his spear, sabre, and arrows, while the latter gave the Prince his own breastplate, shield, and sword. The Pechenegs raised a siege, and for a time the inhabitants could no longer water their horses at the Lybed' on account of the retreating enemy. But the people of Kiev sent to Svyatoslav, saying... When Svyatoslav heard these words, he quickly bestrode his charger and returned to Kiev... There he raised an army and drove the Pechenegs out into the steppes. Thus there was peace...

LC pp. 65–67; PNC pp. 33–34; N1C MR pp. 118–119; IC pp. 53–55; NC p. 21; S1493 pp. 189–190; S1495 p. 312; TC pp. 65–67; VPC p. 19; VC p. 22; S1497 p. 15; UC p. 170; CM p. 40 (966); RDC p. 33; XC p. 21 (967); CR p. 14.

### The Ugrians

6477 (969)... Svyatoslav... I prefer to live in Pereyaslavl on the Danube, since that is the centre of my realm, where all my riches are concentrated—<sup>50</sup> gold, silks, wine, and various fruits from Greece, silver and horses from Hungary and Bohemia, furs from Rus',<sup>51</sup> and wax, honey, and slaves...

LC pp. 67–68; PNC p. 34; N1C MR p. 120; IC p. 55; S1497 p. 16; UC p. 170; RDC p. 34; XC p. 21.

### The Pechenegs

6479 (971)... and the tsar saw that there were few of us and we were going to surrender, as the Russian land was far and there was an army of the Pechenegs close to us. And he said that we would make peace with those who will help us. And after making peace,<sup>52</sup> we would go on boats with the Greeks to the borders, and voivode<sup>53</sup> Sveinald told him: 'You should go on horseback, Prince, because the Pechenegs are at the door'.<sup>54</sup> But the tsar did not listen to him [and] they left by boat and sent those from Pereyaslavl to the Pechenegs... after hearing that, the Pechenegs blocked the borders. So the tsar went to the borders but could not pass through them, and decided to spend winter in Beloberezhye. But they had no crops, and there was a great famine.<sup>55</sup>...

Laurentian Chronicle, pp. 72–73; Nikon Chronicle, p. 36; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension pp. 123–124; Hypatian Chronicle cols pp. 59–61; Nikanor Chronicler p. 22 (972); Brief Chronicle of 1493, p. 193; Vladimir Chronicle p. 23 (970); Uvarov Chronicle pp. 170–171 (970); Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 37; Kholmogor Chronicle pp. 22–23.

6480 (972). When the tsar dared to cross the border, Pecheneg prince Kurya attacked and killed him, taking his head and making a bowl out of his forehead and drinking from it<sup>56</sup>...

Laurentian Chronicle, col. 74; Nikon Chronicle p. 38; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 124; Hypatian Chronicle cols. 61–62; New Chronicler p. 22 (Krolya); Brief Chronicle of 1493 p. 193; Chronicle of 1495 p. 313; Rogozh Chronicle p. 14; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 20 (Klorya) (971); Pskov First Chronicle p.

<sup>47</sup> Porty—clothing.

<sup>48</sup> Ounuki—grandchildren.

<sup>49</sup> Re—saying.

<sup>50</sup> Blga—goods. Chroniclers often missed vowels when writing down texts.

<sup>51</sup> Skora—furs.

<sup>52</sup> St—abridged Svyatoslav.

<sup>53</sup> Power was of a hereditary nature in Kievan Rus'. So Sveneld was called the voivode of father.

<sup>54</sup> Porogi—stone sandbars.

<sup>55</sup> According to the Byzantine-Russian treaty of 944, the Russians were prohibited to spend winters in Beloberezhie. Therefore the Greeks refused to supply the troop of prince Svyatoslav with provisions.

<sup>56</sup> This tradition is mentioned by Herodotus concerning the Scythians.

174; Vladimir Chronicle p. 23; Chronicle of 1497 p. 16 (Kuryati); Uvarov Chronicle p. 171 (Kuryati); Mazurin Chronicle p. 38; Radziwiłł Chronicle, p. 37; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 23; Codex Suprasliensis p. 7.

6486 (978). Yaropolk defeats<sup>57</sup> the Pechenegs and imposes tribute upon them<sup>58</sup>...

Complete Novgorod Chronicles p. 39.

6487 (979). Pecheneg Prince Ildeya came and made obeisance to Yaropolk, who then took him into service and honoured him by granting him cities and power... and ambassadors from the Greek tsar came to Yaropolk... to pay tribute to him, as they did to his father and his grandfather...

Complete Novgorod Chronicles p. 39.

6488 (980)... and Yaropolk came [and] the Varangian said: 'Do not go, Prince, but escape to the Pechenegs and bring the army', but Yaropolk did not listen to him and came to Volodimer... (the Varangian saw how Yaropolk was killed) and escaped from the court to the Pechenegs, and fought for a long time together with the Pechenegs against Volodimer, but he managed to sway the Varangian to his side and made them part of his retinue<sup>59</sup>...

Laurentian Chronicle col. 78; Nikon Chronicle p. 40; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 127; Hypatian Chronicle col. 66; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 39; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 24; Chronicle of 1497 p. 17; Uvarov Chronicle p. 171 (977); Chronicle 1493 p. 195.

### The Torks

6493 (985). Volodimer attacked the Bulgars by boat<sup>60</sup> with Dobrynya and his army,<sup>61</sup> while the Torks went on horseback along the coast and defeated the Bulgars<sup>62</sup>...

Laurentian Chronicle col. 84; Nikon Chronicle p. 42; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 132; Hypatian Chronicle col. 71; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 41; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 25; Vladimir Chronicle p. 24; Moscow Chronicle p. 359; Chronicle of 1497 p. 17; Nikanor Chronicle p. 23; Tver Collection col. 77; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 21.

### The Pechenegs

6496 (988)... and Volodimer said: 'It is not good that there are very few cities around Kiev'. So he began to found cities along the Desna and Vostro [Oster] Rivers,<sup>63</sup> and along the Trubezh, the Sula and the Stuhna Rivers. The best men from among the Slavs and Krivichi, the Chudes and the Vyaticians started chopping wood and building cities to protect themselves from the Pechenegs, to fight them and defeat them...

Laurentian Chronicle col. 121; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 159 (989); Hypatian Chronicle col. 106; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 28; Vladimir Chronicle p. 37; Moscow Chronicle p. 365; Chronicle of 1497 p. 17; Uvarov Chronicle p. 172; Tver Collection col. 113.

... And then there came many Pechenegs, who harmed the Christians greatly. Volodimer fought them with a multitude of troops, and only a few got away. They then started building the city of Vladimir<sup>64</sup>...

Nikon Chronicle p. 58 (990).

6499 (991)... and Kuchug, the Pecheneg prince, who had taken the name Izmail, came to Volodimer in Kiev, where he adopted the Greek faith<sup>65</sup> and was baptized... and served Volodimer... and defeated<sup>66</sup> many pagans...

<sup>57</sup> Kievan prince from 972 to 980.

<sup>58</sup> Apparently Yaropolk managed to capture members of the governing Pecheneg clan and the Pechenegs had to pay tribute.

<sup>59</sup> Rota—an oath, a treaty.

<sup>60</sup> The Volga Bulgarian state is meant here.

<sup>61</sup> Uoyem—an uncle. Dobrynya was a brother of Vladimir's mother.

<sup>62</sup> The Volga Bulgars are meant here.

<sup>63</sup> Vostri—the Oster River.

<sup>64</sup> Frontier fortified are meant here.

<sup>65</sup> The Greek faith-Orthodoxy.

<sup>66</sup> *Nasty (pogany)* in Rus' pagans were called

Nikon Chronicle p. 64; Mazurin Chronicle p. 48 (990).

6500 (992). Having returned from the Croatian war, Volodimer went to battle the Pechenegs, who had come to the other side of the Sula River. He met them at the Trubezh River, at the ford, where today stand Pereyaslavl and Volodimer. Choosing not to cross it, he stood on one side while the Pechenegs remained on the other, neither attempting to cross it. The Pecheneg prince came down to the river and called for Volodimer. He suggested that they each choose a man to do battle against one another: if Volodimer's man should win, they would not do battle against them for three more years; but if the Pecheneg were victorious, then they would continue to attack them for three years... Volodimer's man threw the other upon the ground and beat him to death with his hands. Then a cry rang out from the Pechenegs, and they began to retreat, but the Ruses chased after them and cut them down... and a city was founded at that place, and it was named Pereyaslavl<sup>67</sup>...

Laurentian Chronicle, cols. 122–124; Nikon Chronicle, pp. 64–66 (In the same year, Volodimer marched against the Pechenegs and defeated them... [later events are described under the year 995]); Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension, p. 166; Hypatian Chronicle, pp. 106–108 (993); Chronicle of 1493, pp. 215–216 (993); C1495 p. 314 (993); Rogozh Chronicle col. 16 (993); Tver Collection cols. 115–116 (993); Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 31 (993); Moscow Chronicle p. 366 (993); Chronicle of 1497 p. 18 (993); Uvarov Chronicle p. 173 (993); Mazurin Chronicle p. 49 (993); Radziwiłł Chronicle, pp. 55–56 (993); Kholmogor Chronicle p. 29 (993).

6504 (996)... thus, the Pechenegs approached Vasylkiv (and Volodimer stood against them with a small army) and after entering the battle, he could not stand further and escaped and hid under the bridge, and then Volodimer promised to found the Church of Transfiguration in Vasylkiv...

Laurentian Chronicle cols. 124–125; Nikon Chronicle p. 66 (998); Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 166; Hypatian Chronicle col. 109; Tver Collection col. 117; Vladimir Chronicle p. 39; Moscow Chronicle p. 367; Chronicle of 1497 p. 18; Uvarov Chronicle p. 173.

6505 (997). Volodimer headed to Novgorod<sup>68</sup> in order to gather a great army to fight the Pechenegs. At the same time, the Pechenegs saw that the prince was absent and besieged Belgorod and did not let anyone leave the city, and there was a great hunger there, and no help was expected from Volodimer, while there was a great number of the Pechenegs and it was not possible to stand the hunger any further. And a *veche* [town's meeting] was gathered, and citizens were already on the verge of death, while no help was expected from the prince... and an old man told them to take a handful of oats or wheat or pollard, and told to dig a well and put there a tub with this mixture<sup>69</sup> and told to dig other wells and put there a *bast* basket with honey<sup>70</sup> which was taken from the prince's honey pantries<sup>71</sup> and ordered to put honey<sup>72</sup> into other tubs in other wells, and the next morning he ordered to send for the Pecheneg people so that they came to the town, at least '1' (10) men... and they dipped a bucket into the pit and poured *kissel* into their buckets and tubs, and they came to another pit and did the same and thus they had a meal, as if the land itself fed the people... and Pecheneg princes were extremely surprised and decided to lift the siege and return to their land...

Laurentian Chronicle cols. 127–129; Nikon Chronicle p. 67 (999); Hypatian Chronicle cols. 112–114; C1493 pp. 218–219; C1495 p. 314; Tver Collection cols. 119–120; Vladimir Chronicle p. 39; Moscow Chronicle p. 368; C of 1497 p. 18; Mazurin Chronicle p. 49; Radziwiłł Chronicle, p. 57; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 30.

### The Polovtsians

6508 (1000). Volodar came with the Polovtsians to Kiev... At that time, Volodimer resided in Pereyaslavets on the Danube River, and there was a great turmoil in Kiev, and Alexander Popovich came at night to meet with Volodar and he killed him and his brother, and beat many Polovtsians of

<sup>67</sup> The town of Pereyaslavl near the Dnieper.

<sup>68</sup> *Verkhovye* The Novgorod land was called

<sup>69</sup> *Kad'*—wooden tub.

<sup>70</sup> *Lukno*—a *bast*-basket.

<sup>71</sup> *Medusha*—a wine-cellar.

<sup>72</sup> *Rosytiti*—to blend.

his and drove others into the fields<sup>73</sup> ... That summer Ragdai the Bold died<sup>74</sup> and three hundred warriors came and Volodimer wept for him and buried him with his father metropolitan Leont...

Nikon Chronicle p. 68

### The Pechenegs

6509 (1001). Alexander Popovich<sup>75</sup> and Yan Usmshvets<sup>76</sup> having killed the Pecheneg bogatyr [hero] beaten many Pechenegs and brought to Kiev to Volodimer their prince Rodman with three of his sons...

Nikon Chronicle p. 68

6512 (1004). The Pechenegs advanced against Belgrade, while Volodimer sent Alexander Popovich and Yan Usmshvets with many forces to oppose them. After hearing that, the Pechenegs retreated to the field... Temir, the Pecheneg prince, was killed by his own fellows...

Nikon Chronicle p. 68

6523 (1015)... Volodimer fell ill, at the same time he sent Boris to fight the<sup>77</sup> Pechenegs who advanced against Ruthenia But Boris and his army did not find the Pechenegs

Laurentian Chronicle cols. 130–132; Nikon Chronicle pp. 69–70; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension pp. 168–169; Hypatian Chronicle col. 115 (... and they stood near the Alta River...); Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 58 (Olta); Kholmogor Chronicle p. 30 (Alta); Vladimir Chronicle p. 40; Moscow Chronicle p. 368; S1497 p. 19; Uvarov Chronicle p. 173 (Alta); Nikanor Chronicle p. 23; S1493 p. 224; Tver Collection col. 121 (1014) (... Boris, his son, came to him from Rostov.); Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 31.

### The Pechenegs

6523 (1015)... Stopolk heard<sup>78</sup> that Yaroslav was approaching<sup>79</sup> and deployed an innumerable army [Rous and Pecheneg] and advanced against him staying near Liubech—he was on one side of the Dnieper and Yaroslav—on the other...

Laurentian Chronicle article 141; Nikon Chronicle p. 75; Hypatian Chronicle articles 115–128; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 58–62; Novgorod Third Chronicle p. 209.

6524 (1016)... winter was coming, and Stopolk had his camp set between two lakes and feasted all night long with his army. In the morning, Yaroslav deployed his troop, ordered to cross the Dnieper and push boats away from the bank. They attacked Stopolk and it was a fierce battle. The Pechenegs could not help Stopolk, as they were behind the lake, and Yaroslav pressed Stopolk and his army to the lake and they stepped on ice and the ice broke under them, and Yaroslav began winning (as he saw Stopolk, Yaroslav ran and defeated him), Stopolk fled to Poland...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 141–142; Nikon Chronicle p. 75; Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension p. 15; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 175; Hypatian Chronicle article 129; C1493 p. 225; Tver Collection article 136; Novgorod Chronicle pp. 209–210; Vladimir Chronicle p. 42; Moscow Chronicle p. 372; C1497 p. 19 Uvarov Chronicle p. 174 Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 62.

6525 (1017). That same summer, the Pechenegs approached Kiev and attacked Kiev and by evening they had defeated Yaroslav and the Pechenegs won and ran off

Nikon Chronicle p. 75; Moscow Chronicle p. 372; C1497 p. 19; Uvarov Chronicle p. 174; C1493 p. 225; C1495 p. 315; Tver Collection article 136; Novgorod Third Chronicle p. 210.

<sup>73</sup> The chronicle date does not correspond to facts. The events described in 1123–1124 refer to the year 1000, when armies of Yaroslav Svyatopolkovich, Volodar and Vasilko Rostislavovich seized the possessions of Andrey Dobry (Monomakhovich).

<sup>74</sup> Ragdai belonged to the upper echelons of Pecheneg society serving the Russian state.

<sup>75</sup> The first mention of legendary epic hero Alesha Popovich.

<sup>76</sup> Yan Usmshvets—a representative of the major retinue of prince Vladimir Svyatoslavovich.

<sup>77</sup> Prince Boris of Rostov was killed by Svyatopolk I of Kiev in 1015 and canonized.

<sup>78</sup> Prince Svyatopolk of Kiev (1015–1019) called 'the Cursed' by the chroniclers.

<sup>79</sup> Yaroslav the Wise (1019–1054) was a prince of Novgorod during his father's reign. He became the prince of Kiev after Svyatopolk I of Kiev had been defeated.

6526 (1018)... and the Polish were beaten, and Boleslav<sup>80</sup> escaped from Kiev taking the treasury and Yaroslav's boyars and his sisters with him and he assigned Nastas Desyatynny to guard the estate as he had flattered him, and Boleslav took many people with him and towns of Cherven as well<sup>81</sup> and Stopolk arrived back in his land and started ruling Kiev and Yaroslav stood against Stopolk and the latter fled to the Pechenegs...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 143–144; Nikon Chronicle p. 76; Hypatian Chronicle article 130–131; C1493 p. 226; Rogozh Chronicle article 17; Tver Collection article 138; Vladimir Chronicle pp. 42–43; Moscow Chronicle p. 373; C1497 pp. 19–20; Uvarov Chronicle p. 174; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 62–63; Codex Suprasliensis p. 12.

6527 (1019). And Stopolk with Pecheneg warriors gathered great forces and Yaroslav gathered many troops and stood against him on the Lto [Alta] River<sup>82</sup>... and the fields near the Alta river were covered with fighters, and once the sun rose, there was a fierce battle which Rus' had never seen before and they fought with swords and head-to-hand, and they enter a battle for three times and rivers of blood flowed down the Udolye. By the evening, Yaroslav had won and Stopolk fled...

Laurentian Chronicle article 144–145; Nikon Chronicle p. 76; Hypatian Chronicle article 132; Vladimir Chronicle p. 43; C1497 p. 20; Uvarov Chronicle p. 174; Nikanor Chronicle p. 24; C1493 p. 226; C1495 p. 315; Rogozh Chronicle article 17; Tver Collection articles 138–139; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 32; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 63; Codex Suprasliensis p. 12; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 175 (1016).

6528 (1020). That same summer, the Pechenegs arrived and made much evil and returned to their lands...

Nikon Chronicle p. 77.

### The Khazars

6531 (1023). Mstislav advanced<sup>83</sup> against Yaroslav with the Khazars and Kasogs...

Laurentian Chronicle article 147; Nikon Chronicle p. 78; Hypatian Chronicle article 134; Vladimir Chronicle p. 44; Moscow Chronicle p. 374; C1497 p. 20; Uvarov Chronicle p. 175; Nikanor Chronicle p. 25; C1493 p. 228; Tver Collection article 143; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 41; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 64; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 34.

### The Pechenegs

6544 (1036). Yaroslav who stayed in Novgorod received a letter that the Pechenegs had besieged Kiev. Yaroslav gathered troops which included many Varangians and Slovenians and headed to Kiev and when he entered into the city he saw an innumerable amount of Pechenegs. Yaroslav came outside of the city and placed the Varangians in the centre, ordered the Kievans to stay on the right side and the Novgorod people—on the left side. And thus they stationed themselves in front of the city. And the Pechenegs stepped forward and came to the place where Saint Sophia's Cathedral was located, and the Pechenegs were encircled, and it was a fierce battle and Yaroslav managed to defeat them by the evening, and the Pechenegs retreated disorderly without knowing where to run, a part of them drowned in the Setoml River...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 150–151; Nikon Chronicle p. 80 (1033); Hypatian Chronicle article 138–139 (1034); Vladimir Chronicle p. 44 (1033); Moscow Chronicle p. 376; C1497 p. 21; Uvarov Chronicle p. 175; Nikanor Chronicle p. 25 (1034); C1493 p. 229 (1033); C1495 p. 316; Tver Chronicle article 147; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 42 (1034); Mazurin Chronicle p. 49; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 65; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 35.

### The Torks

6562 (1054)... That same summer, Vsevolod advanced against the Torks [in winter to Voin] and defeated the Torks...

Laurentian Chronicle article 162; Nikon Chronicle p. 91 (1055); Hypatian Chronicle article 151 (1055); Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 69; Vladimir Chronicle p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> Boleslav I the Brave (992–1025) was a Polish prince, the Polish king since 1025, and the father-in-law of Svyatopolk I of Kiev.

<sup>81</sup> A mountain between the Bug and the Dniester.

<sup>82</sup> L'to, ot Oloto—the Alta River.

<sup>83</sup> Mstislav Vladimirovich was a prince of Tmutarakan from 987 to 1024 and a prince of Chernigov from 1024 to 1036. Under him the Russian land was divided between them along the Dnieper according to the treaty with Yaroslav the Wise.

The Polovtsians 6562 (1054). In the same summer, Bolush came together with the Polovtsians and Vsevolod reached peace with them and they [the Polovtsians] returned from whence they had come...

Laurentian Chronicle article 162; Nikon Chronicle p. 91 (1055); Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 182 (1055); Hypatian Chronicle article 151 (1055); Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 69; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 36 (1055); Nikanor Chronicle p. 26 (1055); Tver Collection article 152 (1055); Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 43 (1055); Vladimir Chronicle p. 46; Moscow Chronicle p. 379 (1055).

### The Torks

6568 (1060). In seven years, Izyaslav and Stoslav and Vsevolod and Vseslav combined their innumerable forces and advanced on horses and boats against the Torks. After hearing that, the Torks were frightened and fled, and to this day they are hunted by the fury of God. Many of them died because of winter, others—because of plague or hunger...

Laurentian Chronicle col. 163; Nikon Chronicle pp. 91–92 (1059); Novgorod Chronicle of Late Recension p. 183; Hypatian Chronicle cols. 151–152; Mazurin Chronicle p. 53; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 70; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 36; Nikanor Chronicle p. 26; S1493 p. 231; S1495 p. 317; Tver Collection col. 153; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 43; Vladimir Chronicle p. 47 (1059); Illustrated Chronicle p. 380; Uvarov Chronicle p. 176; S1497 p. 21.

### The Polovtsians

6569 (1061). The Polovtsians were the first to lead a war on the Russian land. Vsevolod advanced against them in February, on the second day. After having a fight, they defeated Vsevolod and it was the first evil deed from the pagans and the godless, prince Iskal [Sokol] was their enemy...

Laurentian Chronicle article 163; Nikon Chronicle p. 92 (1060); Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension p. 17; Hypatian Chronicle article 152; Vladimir Chronicle p. 47 (1060); Moscow Chronicle p. 380; C1497 p. 21; Uvarov Chronicle p. 176; Nikanor Chronicle p. 26; Rogozh Chronicle article 18; Tver Collection articles 153–154; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 43; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 70. Kholmogor Chronicle p. 36.

6576 (1068). Foreigners came to the Russian land—many Polovtsians were among them. Izyaslav and Stoslav and Vsevolod stood against them on the Lto [Alta] River. And it was night, and Russian princes were defeated by the Polovtsians and escaped. Izyaslav and Vsevolod retreated to Kiev, and Stoslav—to Chernigov... but the people released Vseslav<sup>84</sup> from capture<sup>85</sup> on the 5th day of September... So the Polovtsians led wars around Chernigov Stoslav gathered some [several] troops and advanced towards the Snovska [Snovenska] River and the Polovtsians saw that the army was approaching and braced for the battle and Stoslav saw their great number and ordered his army not to flee as children so they rushed to them on horseback with only three thousand of warriors while their foe, the Polovtsians had a 12-thousand army... some of them were killed and others drowned in the Snova while their prince was captured on the first (1) day of November...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 169–172; Nikon Chronicle pp. 94–96; Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension p. 17; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension pp. 188–190; Hypatian Chronicle articles 156–161; Vladimir Chronicle p. 47 (1067); Moscow Chronicle p. 381; S1497 p. 22; Uvarov Chronicle p. 176; Nikanor Chronicle p. 26; S1493 p. 231; S1495 p. 317; Rogozh Chronicle article 18; Tver Collection article 159; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 44; Mazurin Chronicle p. 54 (1067); Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 71 (1067); Kholmogor Chronicle p. 37.

6579 (1071). The Polovtsians led wars near Rostovets and Yatin (Neyatin)...

Laurentian Chronicle article 174; Nikon Chronicle p. 96; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 191; Hypatian Chronicle article 164; Vladimir Chronicle p. 48; Moscow Chronicle p. 382; Nikanor Chronicle p. 27; Tver Collection article 160; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 44; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 74.

6586 (1078)... Oleg and<sup>86</sup> Boris<sup>87</sup> brought the pagans to the Russian land and, in cooperation with the Polovtsians, launched a campaign against Vsevolod. But the latter decided to repel their attack and came to the Sozhitsa river, and the Polovtsians defeated the Russians and killed many of them.

<sup>84</sup> Vseslav Bryacheslavovich—Prince of Polotsk (1044–1101).

<sup>85</sup> Porub—a cold hut (prison).

<sup>86</sup> Oleg Svyatoslavovich of Chernigov (1073–1115) was called 'Goreslavich' by the chronicles because of his frequent use of the Polovtsians in internecine feuds.

<sup>87</sup> Boris Vyacheslavovich (1057–1078), son of prince Vyacheslav Yaroslavovich from Smolensk and a German duchess of Staden.

Ivan Zhiroslavich, and Tuky, Chudin's brother [and] Porey, and many-many others were killed on the 25th day of August. Oleg and Boris then occupied Chernigov, whose citizens decided to support them, though they had done much evil to the Russian land...

Laurentian Chronicle article 200; Nikon Chronicle p. 107; Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension p. 18 (Oleg ran to Tmutarakan and brought along the Cumans and defeated Vsevolod near the Sozhitsa River); Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 210; Hypatian Chronicle articles 190–191; Vladimir Chronicle p. 49; Moscow Chronicle p. 11; C1497 p. 23; Uvarov Chronicle p. 177; Tver Collection articles 173–174; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 82; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 39.

... Vsevolod came to his brother Izyaslav to Kiev... and asked him to gather many warriors—from the youngest to the oldest, and Izyaslav together with Yaropolk advanced<sup>88</sup> with their armies toward Chernigov... Meanwhile, Volodimer approached the eastern gates from the river's midstream, broke through them and burnt neighbouring towns... and then they came to the village near Nezhatina Neva and joined the battle, and it was a fierce fight. Boris, son of Vyacheslav, who had boasted, was the first to die. Izyaslav was among those on foot, but someone harshly stuck a spear into his shoulder, and so Izyaslav was killed... And Oleg with a small troop escaped to Tmutarakan [to Roman, the Khazars and Polovtsians]...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 201–202; Nikon Chronicle p. 108; Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension p. 18; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 201; Hypatian Chronicle articles 192–193; Vladimir Chronicle p. 49; C1497 p. 23; Uvarov Chronicle p. 177; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 82; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 39.

6587 (1079). Roman came<sup>89</sup> with the Polovtsians to Voin. Vsevolod who stayed near Pereyaslavl had actually concluded a peace with the Polovtsians. And so Roman and the Polovtsians returned [and] he was killed by the Polovtsians on the second day of August.

Laurentian Chronicle article 204; Nikon Chronicle p. 109; Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension p. 18; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 201; Hypatian Chronicle article 195; Vladimir Chronicle p. 49; Moscow Chronicle p. 12; C1497 p. 23; Uvarov Chronicle p. 177; Nikanor Chronicle p. 27; Tver Collection article 175; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 44; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 83; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 39.

### The Torks

6588 (1080). The Pereyaslavl Torks rose against Rus'. Vsevolod sent his son Volodimer to fight them<sup>90</sup>. Volodimer came and defeated the Torks...

Laurentian Chronicle article 204; Nikon Chronicle p. 110; Hypatian Chronicle p. 49; Moscow Chronicle p. 12; Tver Collection p. 175; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 83; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 39.

### The Polovtsians

6590 (1082). The prince of the Polovtsians died in autumn...

Laurentian Chronicle article 205; Nikon Chronicle p. 110; Hypatian Chronicle article 196; Vladimir Chronicle p. 49; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 83.

### The Khazars

6591 (1083). Oleg returned from Greece and expelled Davyd<sup>91</sup> and Volodar Rostislavich from Tmutarakan<sup>92</sup> and occupied the throne himself [and] he beat the Khazars who advised to kill his brother and himself and released Davyd and Volodar...

Laurentian Chronicle article 205; Nikon Chronicle p. 110; Hypatian Chronicle article 196; Vladimir Chronicle p. 49; Moscow Chronicle p. 12; C1497 p. 23; Uvarov Chronicle p. 178; Nikanor Chronicle p. 27; Tver Chronicle article 175; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 45; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 83.

### The Polovtsians

<sup>88</sup> Yaropolk Izyaslavovich—prince of Vyshgorod, Turov, Vladimir and Volhynia (1077–1087).

<sup>89</sup> Roman Svyatoslavovich—prince of Tmutarakan (1077–1079), brother of Oleg Svyatoslavovich.

<sup>90</sup> Vladimir Monomakh (1066–1125)—prince of Rostov, Smolensk, Chernigov and Pereyaslavl. Kievan prince from 1113 to 1125.

<sup>91</sup> Davyd Igorevich (1081–1113)—prince of Tmutarakan from 1081 to 1083.

<sup>92</sup> Volodar Rostislavovich—son of Rostislav Vladimirovich of Przemysl and Galicia and a Hungarian queen. He tried to consolidate his grip in Tmutarakan where his father reigned in 1038.



6600 (1092)... and it was a great warrior-host from the side of the Polovtsians from everywhere and they conquered three (3) cities: Pesochen, Perevolok and [Priluk] and many villages, and many people participated from both sides...

Laurentian Chronicle, article 215; Nikon Chronicle p. 119 (1094); Hypatian Chronicle article 206; Vladimir Chronicle p. 50; Moscow Chronicle p. 14 (... that summer was hot, and soil was burnt, and many woods and swamps dried out and burnt, while the Polovtsians deployed a great army...); Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 87; Codex Suprasliensis p. 131.

That summer, Vasilko Rostislavich together with the Polovtsians fought the Polish<sup>93</sup>.

Laurentian Chronicle article 215; Nikon Chronicle p. 119 (1094); Hypatian Chronicle article 206; Vladimir Chronicle p. 50; Moscow Chronicle p. 14; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 87.

### The Polovtsians and Torks

6601 (1093). That time, the Polovtsians headed to the Russian land, because they had heard Vsevolod had died, and they sent their ambassadors to Stopolk<sup>94</sup> to negotiate about peace. However, Stopolk ignored their offer and captured the ambassadors. Although he released them later,<sup>95</sup> hearing this, the Polovtsians were furious and many of them came to fight him and besieged the city of Tortsinsk. This time Stopolk wanted to reach a peace, but the Polovtsians rejected him and went to war. So, Stopolk decided to gather troops... And he said: 'I have seven hundred (700) warriors and can resist them...' Meanwhile, Volodimer gathered his armies and sent his brother Rostislav to Pereyasavl ordering him to help Stopolk. Volodimer came from Kiev, and thus Stopolk and Volodimer and Rostislav headed to Trepol together<sup>96</sup> [and] so Stopolk and Volodimer and Rostislav came to the Stugna River and deployed their troops... so their troops cut across the river and Stopolk and Volodimer and Rostislav ordered their armies to stay on the flanks<sup>97</sup> Stopolk stayed at the right flank,<sup>98</sup> Volodimer—on the right flank [and] Rostislav—in the centre. Passing the city of Trepol, they advanced to the rampart, towards the Polovtsians and they managed to seize the initiative. Archers came in front of the Polovtsians. Our people stood between ramparts, installed their banners, and archers came from the rampart, and the Polovtsians went to the ramparts and set out their own banners, and they fought Stopolk and defeated his army. Stopolk stood strong, but his people did not withstand the attack and retreated and [then] Stopolk also surrendered. Then they launched an attack against Volodimer and it was a fierce battle, and Volodimer together with Rostislav retreated [and] Rostislav started to sink... Volodimer started to cut across the river with his small army, many of his warriors fell and many of his boyars died, and thus he managed to get to the other side of the Dnieper River... he was very sad when he reached Chernigov. Stopolk returned to Trepol and locked himself there till evening, and that night he headed to Kiev. Meanwhile, the Polovtsians saw that they won and started devastating lands and continued to besiege Trotsk... on May 23. But its citizens resisted and managed to kill many Polovtsians. The latter started to intensify their siege and took water away from the city's citizens, so that they started to suffer, and feel thirst and a great hunger. The city's citizens sent a messenger to Stopolk for help. Stopolk sent to them many of his troops who stood near the city for four (4) weeks. And the enemy's army split: one part remained near Trotsk and another headed to Kiev [and] started to prepare, remaining between Kiev and Vyshegorod. Stopolk came out to the Zhuliany River and decided to attack that part of the Polovtsians who had approached Kiev, and his army again surrendered [and] many were injured and many [were] killed, and this battle was even harder than that near Trepol. Stopolk was the third who returned to Kiev, while the Polovtsians came back to Trotsk, and it was on July 23... and our villages emptied out and our cities started to run before our foe... because the Polovtsians beat many of our people and returned to Trotsk and its citizens returned

<sup>93</sup> Vasilko Rostislavovich (1085–1124)—prince of Terebovl. Together with the Polovtsians he blocked the road connecting Western Europe, Rus' and Volga Bulgaria which contributed to the emergence of famine in Europe during unfavourable weather conditions that affected the first crusades.

<sup>94</sup> Svyatopolk II Izyaslavovich (1069–1113). After his father had died, Vladimir Monomakh passed onto him the Ki-  
evan throne according to the clannish law.

<sup>95</sup> Vystobka—a Russian sauna.

<sup>96</sup> Town not far from Kiev.

<sup>97</sup> Desnei—the right side.

<sup>98</sup> Shuei—the left side.

exhausted because of hunger and the next day capitulated. The Polovtsians took the city, burnt it [and] divided people, captured them and brought to the steppe—to their close people and relatives...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 218–225; Nikon Chronicle pp. 120–123 (1094); Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension p. 18; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 202; Hypatian Chronicle articles 209–215; Vladimir Chronicle p. 51; Moscow Chronicle p. 15; C1497 p. 23; Uvarov Chronicle p. 178; Nikanor Chronicle p. 27; Tver Collection article 122; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 45; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 87–88; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 39.

### The Polovtsians

6602 (1094) Stopolk concluded peace with the Polovtsians and married the daughter of Tugorkan,<sup>99</sup> the Polovtsians' khan...

Laurentian Chronicle article 226; Hypatian Chronicle article 216; S1497 p. 23; Uvarov Chronicle p. 178; Tver Collection article 182; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 90; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 39.

... That same summer Oleg came with the Polovtsians from Tmutorokan [and] headed to Chernigov. Volodimer locked himself inside the city. Oleg approached it and burnt all buildings and monasteries surrounding the city. Volodimer decided to conclude peace with Oleg and leave the city and thus went to Pereyasavl. Meanwhile, Oleg entered Chernigov and allowed the Polovtsians to rob it, because he had no money to pay them for the war [it was the third time when he brought the pagans to the Russian land]...

Laurentian Chronicle article 226; Nikon Chronicle; Hypatian Chronicle article 216; Vladimir Chronicle p. 51; C1497 p. 23; Uvarov Chronicle p. 178; Nikanor Chronicle p. 27; Tver Collection articles 182–183; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 45; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 90; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 39.

6603 (1095). The Polovtsians with Devgenevich advanced against<sup>100</sup> the Greek lands and the tsar captured Devgenich and ordered to blind him...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 226–227; Nikon Chronicle p. 123; Hypatian Chronicle article 217; Vladimir Chronicle p. 51; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 90.

### The Polovtsians and Torks

6603 (1095) That year, the Polovtsians Itlar and Kytan came to Volodimer to reach peace. Itlar came to Pereyasavl, while Kytan stood between ramparts with his army, and Volodimer gave his son Stoslav as a captive to Kytan, while Itlar came to the city with his best troops. At the same time, Slavyata came from Kiev, from Stopolk to Volodimer to do some task, and Ratibor's army together with prince Volodimer started to think how to defeat [I]tlar's troops... That night, Volodimer sent Slavyata with his small army and with the Torks to the place between two ramparts [and] after saving Stoslav they killed Kytan and beat his troop. It was a Saturday evening, and Itlar with his troop slept in Ratibor's hayloft and thus did not know what happened to Kytan that night. On Sunday morning, at the time of the morning prayer, Ratibor ordered a fellow-in-arms to prepare a banya [steam house]. Then, Volodimer sent his fellow Byandyuk to notify Itlar and his army that prince Volodimer called them to arrive at his place after having breakfast [and] enjoying the banya. Itlar agreed. But Itlar entered the steam house, they locked him there. Meanwhile, Volodimer's people got to the roof, made a hole in it and Olber Ratiborich took a bow and shot an arrow at Itlar's heart. Then, all of his army was beaten. And this is how joyless Itlar ended his life in the Cheese-Fast Sunday at around 1 pm, on the 24th day of February. Meanwhile, Stopolk and Volodimer ordered Oleg to join them in their campaign against the Cumans. Although Oleg promised to do it, he did not join the big campaign. Stopolk and Volodimer attacked tents [and] stole cattle, horse and camels and servants and brought them to their lands. Then they got angry at Oleg that he had not advanced against the pagans who had made the Russian land suffer. 'Why do you keep Itlar's son at your place?'—they asked,—'You should either kill him or give to us, as he is [our] enemy and the enemy of the whole Russian land'. But Oleg did not listen to them, and hatred ignited between them...

<sup>99</sup> Tugorkan—a Polovtsian khan. The land of the Polovtsians was at the peak of its power under him.

<sup>100</sup> Byzantine emperor Romanos IV Diogenes was betrayed by military leader Andronik Duka during the battle of Manzikert in 1071 and captured by the Turks-Seljuks. In the chronicle it talks about either Romanos himself, ransomed by the Polovtsians after a 20 years in captivity or about his descendants.

Laurentian Chronicle articles 227–229; Nikon Chronicle pp. 123–124; Hypatian Chronicle articles 217–219; Vladimir Chronicle pp. 51–52; Moscow Chronicle p. 15 (1093); S1497 p. 24; Uvarov Chronicle p. 178; Tver Chronicle article 183 (1094); Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 90–91.

... That year, the Polovtsians came to Yuriev<sup>101</sup> and stayed near it for the whole summer and almost conquered it. But Stopolk calmed them down and the Polovtsians came towards Ros, while Yuriev's citizens rushed to Kiev. Stopolk ordered to chop wood and found a city on the Vytechev Hill and name it after himself—Stopolch city, and then he ordered bishop Mrin [Murin] and Yuriev people and Zsakovets people and others to get settled there, while the Polovtsians burnt down Yuriev in the same summer...

Laurentian Chronicle article 229; Nikon Chronicle pp. 123–124; Hypatian Chronicle article 217–219; Vladimir Chronicle pp. 51–52; Nikanor Chronicle p. 28; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 45; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 90–91.

6604 (1096). At the same time, Bonyak came with the Polovtsians to Kiev. It was on Sunday evening. And he fought near Kiev and burnt the prince's court in Berestov. Meanwhile, Kurya and the Polovtsians devastated the areas surrounding Pereyaslavl and Ustye on the 24th day of May.

Laurentian Chronicle article 231; Nikon Chronicle p. 125; Hypatian Chronicle article 221; Vladimir Chronicle p. 53; Moscow Chronicle pp. 16–17; C1497 p. 24; Uvarov Chronicle pp. 178–179; Tver Collection article 184; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 91.

... In the same month, Tugorkan, Stopolk's father-in-law, came [to Pereyaslavl] on the 30th day of May. And he stood near the city, while the Pereyaslavtsy locked themselves inside. Stopolk and Volodimer went to fight him along the other side of the Dnieper and came to Zarub and waded the river over there, but the Polovtsians did not notice them... and they turned furious and came closer to the city. When citizens saw them, they [were] really happy and headed towards them. The Polovtsians stood on the other side of the Trubezh River and also turned furious. Stopolk and Volodimer waded into the Trubezh and came towards the Polovtsians. [Volodimer wanted to arrange his troops] but they did not obey and rode horses and hunted for the Polovtsians. After seeing that, the latter retreated, while our people chased after them beating them... This happened on the 14th day of July. And the foreigners were defeated, and many of their princes, including Tugorkan and his son, were killed. The next morning, Tugorkan was found dead...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 231–232; Nikon Chronicle p. 125; Hypatian Chronicle articles 221–229; Vladimir Chronicle p. 53; Moscow Chronicle pp. 16–17; C1497 p. 24; Uvarov Chronicle pp. 178–179; Tver Collection article 184; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 91–94; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 40 (1095).

... And Bonyak suddenly came for the second time... to Kiev and the Polovtsians almost penetrated the city, and they burnt<sup>102</sup> [the city's outskirts] and broke into the monastery and burnt down Stefan's monastery and German's monastery<sup>103</sup> and they came to Pechersky monastery... And they issued a call near the monastery and set two banners in front of the monastery's gates... and destroyed these gates and robbed everything they found in the monastic cells... then they set fire to the red courtyard which had been founded by righteous prince Vsevolod on the hill called Vydobych: the Polovtsians set fire to everything...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 232–233; Nikon Chronicle p. 125; Hypatian Chronicle articles 221–229; Vladimir Chronicle p. 53; Moscow Chronicle pp. 16–17; C1497 p. 24; Uvarov Chronicle pp. 178–179; Tver Chronicle article 184; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 91–94.

### The Polovtsians, Pechenegs, Torks

... They came from the Euphratian desert between the East and North, and there were four (4) clans: the Turkmen and Pechenegs, the Torks and Polovtsians. Methodius indicates that there were 50 clans, and when their Gideon was finished, 8 of them fled to the desert... and four were finished. Others say they were Amon's sons, but it is not true. Because Moav's sons are the Khvalises, and Amon's sons are the Bulgars, and the Saracens come from Ismail and they give themselves out for

<sup>101</sup> Gurgev—Yuriev.

<sup>102</sup> Bolonie—swamp.

<sup>103</sup> Apparently that was a German settlement on the outskirts of Kiev.

Sara's sons<sup>104</sup> 'Saracens' means 'we are Sara's'... and Ismail gave birth to 12 clans which gave birth to the Torkmens and Pechenegs, Torks and Cumans who call themselves the Polovtsian. They come from the desert and there are 8 clans of them so far...

Laurentian Chronicle article 234; Hypatian Chronicle articles 221–229; Moscow Chronicle p. 16–17; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 91–94.

### **Instruction of Vladimir Monomakh**

... he headed towards Novgorod, and I, together with the Polovtsian, headed to Odersk and then to Chernigov. And I again came to Chernihiv, to father, from Smolensk. And Oleg came there from Vladimir, and I invited him to dine with me and father in Chernigov at the Red yard, and I gave 100 gold hryvnas to father. And again, after coming from Smolensk, I broke through the Polovtsian troops and reached Pereyasavl and met with father who had just returned from a military campaign. Then, I again together with father and Izyaslav came to Chernigov to fight Boris and we managed to defeat Boris and Oleg. That winter, the Polovtsians devastated the whole city of Starodub and I, together with the Chernigov people and my Polovtsians, captured the princes Asaduk and Sauk on the Desna River, and we killed their army. And the next day, we defeated Belkatgin's strong army behind Novy Gorod, and we took all his captives and Semeches [all their swords? or possible people living near the Semya River]. And for two winters, we went against the Vyatichis, against Khodota [king of Vyatichis]... That year, behind Khorol we chased after the Polovtsians who had conquered Goroshin. In that autumn, we came to Minsk together with the Chernigov people and with the Polovtsians and with the Chiteevichi... On our way to Priluk city, we were met by Polovtsian princes who had an 8-thousand warrior army. We wanted to fight them, but our weapons were sent ahead on carts, and we entered the city; and the Polovtsians retreated to the Sula River that night. The next day, on the Dormition Day, we headed to Belaya Vezha... we beat nine hundred (900) Polovtsians and two princes Bagubarsovs:<sup>105</sup> the brothers Osenya and Sakz, and only two men managed to escape. And then we chased the Polovtsians till Stoslavl and then to Torchesk-town and then to Yuriev. And again, on the same side, near Krasen, we managed to defeat the Polovtsians, and then, together with Rostislav we took their tents near Varin... And again, after father died, we fought the Polovtsians till evening near Stopolts, and on the Stugna River, and near Khalep and then we reached peace with Tugorkan and other Polovtsian princes. And then we rescued our warriors from Gleb's army. And then Oleg came to Chernigov with all the Polovtsian horde, and my army fought it during eight (8) days behind the small rampart and<sup>106</sup> did not let them enter into the fortress... And I gave the throne to the brother of father, and I myself occupied the throne of his father in Pereyasavl. And we departed from Chernigov on the day of Saint Boris and we went through Polovtsian armies—there were around 100 people, together with children and wives... And I stayed in Pereyasavl for three (3) summers and three (3) winters with my army and we suffered much grief because of war and hunger... And we came to fight their warriors behind Rimov, and God helped us to defeat them and capture others. And we again beat Itlar's army and took their tents when heading to Goltav. And we went to Starodub to fight Oleg because he made friends with the Polovtsians. And we went to Bug together with Stopolk to fight Bonyak, behind the Russians. And we went to Smolensk once we concluded peace with Davyd. And we again came with the Voronins. That time, the Torks came to me together with the Polovtsians-Chiteevichi and we came to meet them on the Sula River. And then we came to winter in Rostov and for three consecutive winters we came to Smolensk. And I together with Stopolk again chased after Bonyak, but... killed and did not catch them. And then we hunted for Bonyak and chased him beyond the Russians. And we again did not manage to catch him. And I again decided to winter in Smolensk... Having returned to Pereyasavl by summer, I gathered my brothers. And Bonyak came with all the Polovtsians to Ksnyatin; we went after them from Pereyasavl beyond the Sula River, and with God's help we defeated their troops and captured their best princes and by Christmas we reached peace with Ayupo. And I took his daughter and headed toward Smolensk and then—to Rostov. After returning

<sup>104</sup> Sarini—the Saracens. Europeans called the Turks-Seljuks who were related to the Turk-Oguz this way. It is noteworthy that chroniclers distinguish the Volga Bulgars as Amon's sons from nomadic Turks—the Saracens.

<sup>105</sup> The first mention of the Turkic clan title 'bagu' (yabgu) is in the Russian chronicles.

<sup>106</sup> Greblya—a ditch surrounding a town.

from Rostov, I together with Stopolk again launched a campaign against the Polovtsians, against Uru-soba and God helped us. And Bonyak and Ayepa approached the Vyr River and even wanted to conquer it; me and Oleg and our children headed to Romn to fight them and when they found it out, they retreated. And then we launched a campaign against Gleb and headed to Minsk... And I reached peace with many Polovtsian princes—twenty minus one, both with father and without father, and presented much cattle to them and many clothes. And I released the best Polovtsian princes from prison: two brothers of Sharukan, three brothers of Bagubars, four brothers of Osen, one hundred best princes in total. God gave us the following princes alive: Koksul with his son, Aklan Burchevich, Tarev prince Azguluy and other fifteen young knights. I captured these ones alive, beat them and dropped to the Salnya River. Back then, I defeated nearly 200 best Polovtsian men.<sup>107</sup>...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 246–256.

### The Ugrians and Polovtsians

6607 (1099). (Volodar, Vasilko's brother fought against Davyd. Davyd escaped. Conflicts with Svyatopolk led to a war in which Svyatopolk was defeated and his son Yaroslav fled to the Ugrians)... Davyd returned from Poland and left his wife at Volodar's, while he himself went to search for help among the Polovtsians. Bonyak met him on his way and they together attacked the Ugrians. And those who had spent much time on the road, were accommodated to have a rest. And when it was a midnight, Bonyak went away from his troops and started to howl like a wolf. And wolves responded him with howling, and elsewhere wolves started to howl a lot<sup>108</sup>. When Bonyak returned, he led Davyd to fight the Ugrians. In the morning, Bonyak deployed his troops. He had only three hundred (300) of them, while Davyd—only 100, while there were many thousands of the Ugrians... And Bonyak decided to divide his troops into three parts and advanced towards the foe. He ordered young khan Altunapa<sup>109</sup> with fifty (50) warriors, and ordered Davyd to stay under the banner. And Bonyak divided his own troops into two parts by 50 warriors so that they remained at secluded spots of the road. The Ugrians became furious, there were a hundred (100) thousand of them. Altunapa with his troops rushed to the first rampart<sup>110</sup> and each shot one arrow at the Ugrians from their bows and turned their horses back. The latter started to chase after them passing by Bonyak and his warriors. Bonyak then attacked them from the left and right sides. Altunapa's warriors returned and Davyd started their attack, so to create the image of a multiple horde. Bonyak divided his troops into three (3) parts, confused the Ugrians and brought them down into a heap as if a falcon brought down a jackdaw. The Ugrians ran away and there was a great trample, and many drown in the Vagra and others in the Sana [those running near the Sana pushed themselves against rocks and dropped to the river] and the Polovtsians chased them for two days<sup>111</sup> and many boyars died, including their bishop Kupan.<sup>112</sup> They say forty (40) thousand warriors died. Yaroslav<sup>113</sup> escaped to Poland.

Laurentian Chronicle articles 270–271; Nikon Chronicle p. 135; Hypatian Chronicle articles 235–247; Vladimir Chronicle pp. 54–55; Moscow Chronicle pp. 22–23; C1497 p. 25; Uvarov Chronicle pp. 179–180; Tver Collection articles 187–188; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 95–99.

### The Polovtsians

6609 (1100)... That year,<sup>114</sup> Stopolk gathered Volodimer, Davyd, Oleg and Yaroslav in a brotherhood<sup>115</sup> at Zolotyichi where ambassadors from<sup>116</sup> Polovtsian princes came in order to reach peace with all Russian princes... 'If you want to achieve peace, come to Sakov yourselves' and thus Stopolk sent

<sup>107</sup> Lepshikh—the best.

<sup>108</sup> Apparently the wolf was a totem of Bonyak's clan.

<sup>109</sup> Altunapa—altyn (golden coin)—ayepa.

<sup>110</sup> Zastup—advance guard.

<sup>111</sup> Pspa—bishop.

<sup>112</sup> Glkhu—glagolyakhu (speaking)

<sup>113</sup> Yaroslav Svyatopolkovich (1100–1123)—prince of Volhynia.

<sup>114</sup> Tom le—in the same year.

<sup>115</sup> Yaroslav Svyatoslavovich of Murom—brother of Davyd and Oleg Svyatoslavovich of Chernigov.

<sup>116</sup> Slys—ambassadors.

for the Polovtsian princes, and they arrived, and after many conversations peace was reached. The sides exchanged representatives of the nobility and on 15th of September everyone returned home...

Laurentian Chronicle article 25; Nikon Chronicle p. 137; Hypatian Chronicle article 250; Vladimir Chronicle p. 55; Moscow Chronicle p. 24; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 100.

### **The Polovtsians, Pechenegs, Torks**

6611 (1103). (Stopolk, Volodimer, Davyd Stoslavich, Davyd Vseslavich, Mstislav, Igor's grandson, Vyacheslav Yaropolchich, Yaropolk Volodimerich)...and they went on horseback and by boat and headed downstream the Dnieper and stayed close to midstream near the isle of Khortich and from here, they went on foot and on horseback for four days to reach the Suten River. When the Polovtsians heard the Russians were on their way, a great number of them gathered and held a meeting. And Urusoba said: 'Ask the Russians for peace...' and the youths replied: "You are afraid of the Russians, but we are not..." and so the Polovtsians marched against them and sent Altunopa forward as a guard, because he was famous among them for his courage. And the Russian princes also sent their guards forward. And they chased Altunopa, caught and killed him and everyone who was with him. No one escaped—the Russians killed everyone. And the Polovtsian troops marched forward—as thick as a forest and a look could not grasp them. And the Russians went to oppose them. And God imposed much terror and fear in them, so that the Polovtsians became extremely scared of the Russian warriors. They were petrified, and even their horses did not ride fast. Meanwhile, our people—both on foot and on horseback—marched against them joyfully. When the Polovtsians saw that the Russians rushed fiercely towards them, they surrendered and started to run away. Our people hunted after them, cutting them. On the 4th day of April, God made a great salvation... 20 princes were killed in that battle: Urusoba, Kchiya, Arslanapa, Tanopa, Kuman, Asup, Kurtk, Chenegrepa, Surbar and other princes, while Beldyuz was captured... [and] Beldyuz was brought to Stopolk and Beldyuz started to offer gold, silver, horses and cattle in exchange for his life. Stopolk decided to send him to Volodimer. And when he arrived, Volodimer started telling him: 'Why, after you had sworn for so many times, did you anyway come to fight in the Russian land? Why didn't you teach your sons and your clan not to spill Russian blood? Let your blood be on your head!' and thus he ordered to kill him and his body was torn into pieces<sup>117</sup>... and then they took cattle and sheep and horses and camels, and tents with property and with kholops, and also the Pechenegs and Torks with their tents<sup>118</sup> and returned to Rus' with a great number of captives and with glory...

Laurentian Chronicle article 277–279; Nikon Chronicle pp. 138–139; Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension p. 19; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 203; Hypatian Chronicle articles 252–255; Vladimir Chronicle p. 55; Moscow Chronicle pp. 24–25; S1497 p. 25; Uvarov Chronicle p. 180; Tver Collection articles 188–189; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 101; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 40.

6613 (1105). That year, Bonyak came in winter to Zarub which was inhabited by the Torks and Berendei...

Hypatian Chronicle article 257.

6614 (1106). The Polovtsians came to fight near Zarechsk, and Stopolk sent Yan and Ivank Zakharich and Kozarin to fight them, and they pressed the Polovtsians to the Danube River and took their captives away...

Laurentian Chronicle article 281; Nikon Chronicle p. 140; Hypatian Chronicle article 257; Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension p. 19; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 203; Nikanor Chronicle p. 29 (1105); Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 47; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 102; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 40.

6615 (1107). On the 7th day of May Volodimer's wife died. In the same month, Bonyak came to fight in the Russian land and stole horses near Pereyasavl...

Laurentian Chronicle article 281; Hypatian Chronicle article 258 (1106); Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 102.

... That same year, Bonyak came together with old Sharukan and many other princes and stopped near Lubny. Stopolk and Volodimer and Oleg, Stoslav, Mstislav, Vyacheslav, Yaropol marched

<sup>117</sup> Ouds—parts.

<sup>118</sup> Apparently it was a struggle for the return of the Pechenegs and Torks to the Russian land.

against<sup>119</sup> the Polovtsians to Lubny and about 3 during the day they cut across the Sula River and caught them. Meanwhile, the Polovtsians became terrified and could not even set up a banner—as they were so much afraid. Some retreated on horseback, and others—on foot. Some were killed, others the Russians grabbed and the third were chased out almost to the Khorol. Taz, Bonyak's brother was killed, Sugor and his brother were captured, and Sharukan barely managed to escape. The Polovtsians even left their carts which the Russians took on the 12th day of August and thus returned home with a glorious victory...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 281–282, Nikon Chronicle pp. 140–141; Hypatian Chronicle articles 258–259 (1106); Vladimir Chronicle p. 56; C1497 p. 25 (1106); Uvarov Chronicle p. 180 (1106); Tver Collection article 189; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 40.

... In the same year, Volodimer and Davyd and Oleg<sup>120</sup> came to Ayepa and [to] another Ayepa and reached peace with them. And Volodimer took Ayepa's daughter,<sup>121</sup> Osen's granddaughter, for Yury, and Oleg took Ayepa's daughter, Girgen's granddaughter for his son. And it happened on the 12th January...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 282–283; Nikon Chronicle pp. 140–141; Hypatian Chronicle articles 258–259; Vladimir Chronicle p. 56; C1497 p. 25; Uvarov Chronicle p. 180; Tver Collection article 189; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 102.

6617 (1109). In the same month, on 2 December, Dmitry Ivorovich took the Polovtsians' tents near the Don River<sup>122</sup>...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 283–284; Nikon Chronicle p. 141; Hypatian Chronicle article 260; Vladimir Chronicle p. 56 (1108); Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 103; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 40.

6618 (1110). When spring came, Stopolk and Volodimer [and] Davyd went to fight the Polovtsians. They reached Voin and returned...

Laurentian Chronicle article 284; Nikon Chronicle p. 141; Hypatian Chronicle article 260; Vladimir Chronicle p. 56; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 103.

6619 (1111). When spring came, Stopolk and Volodimer and Davyd went to fight the Polovtsians.<sup>123</sup> They reached Voin and returned...

Laurentian Chronicle article 289; Vladimir Chronicle p. 56.

6620 (1112). Stopolk, Yaroslav, Vsevolod, Volodimer, Stoslav, Yaropolk, Mstislav, Davyd Stoslavich with son Rostislav, Olgovich, Davyd Igorevich went to fight the Polovtsians and reached the cities of Osenev and Sugrov.<sup>124</sup> After conquering the Polovtsians' tents, they fought the Polovtsians on the Salna River.<sup>125</sup> On the 24th day of March, the Russian princes defeated the Polovtsians...

Laurentian Chronicle article 289; Nikon Chronicle p. 142; Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension, p. 20 (1111); Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 203 (1111); Hypatian Chronicle articles 266–273; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 103; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 40; Nikanor Chronicle p. 29 (1107); Tver Collection article 190 (1111); Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 47 (1107); Vladimir Chronicle p. 57; Moscow Chronicle p. 26 (1105); C1497 pp. 25–26 (1111); Uvarov Chronicle p. 180 (1111).

6621 (1113). When hearing about the death of Stopolk, the Polovtsians gathered and came to the Vyr. Volodimer gathered his sons and nephews and marched towards the Vyr where Oleg joined them. The Polovtsians fled...

Hypatian Chronicle article 276.

<sup>119</sup> Svyatopolk II Izyaslavovich, Vladimir Monomakh, Oleg Svyatoslavovich and Vladimir Monomakh's sons Svyatoslav, Mstislav I, Vyacheslav, Yaropolk.

<sup>120</sup> Vladimir Monomakh, Davyd and Oleg Svyatoslavovich.

<sup>121</sup> Yurgya—Yuri Dolgoruki.

<sup>122</sup> This message is evidence of Polovtsian internecine feuds involving forces of the Russian princes. Apparently Dmitri Ivanovich was fighting against the Girgenev Cumans—opponents of the Osenev clan.

<sup>123</sup> Svyatopolk II Izyaslavovich, Vladimir Monomakh, Davyd Svyatoslavovich.

<sup>124</sup> Polovtsian towns Osenev (Sharukan) and Sugrov were named after Polovtsian khans mentioned in the chronicles of 1082 (Osen) and 1107 (Sharukan and Sugra). Osenev was the most ancient town. Polovtsian towns were renamed depending on the name of the governing khan.

<sup>125</sup> A tributary of the Don.

### **The Polovtsians, Torks, Pechenegs**

6622 (1114). That year, the Polovtsians fought the Torks and Pechenegs near the Don River and the battle lasted for two days and two nights, and the Torks and Pechenegs came to Volodimer<sup>126</sup>...

Moscow Chronicle p. 27; Hypatian Chronicle article 284 (1116).

### **The Polovtsians**

6624 (1116). In the same year, Yaropolk came to the Polovtsian land, to the river called Don and captured many people and took three (3) Polovtsian towns: Balin, Chevshlyuev<sup>127</sup> and Sugrov, and married the daughter of the Yas prince...

Laurentian Chronicle article 291; Nikon Chronicle p. 150; Hypatian Chronicle article 284; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 104; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 41; Vladimir Chronicle p. 57; Moscow Chronicle p. 27.

### **The Polovtsians, Bulgarians**

6625 (1117)... at that time, the Polovtsians came to the Bulgars<sup>128</sup> and the Bulgarian prince sent them a poisonous drink and, having drunk it, Ayepa<sup>129</sup> and other Polovtsian princes—all died...

Hypatian Chronicle article 285; Moscow Chronicle p. 28.

### **The Polovtsians**

6625 (1117)... in that same summer, Volodimer took for Andrey<sup>130</sup> the granddaughter of Tugrukanov<sup>131</sup>...

Hypatian Chronicle article 285; Nikon Chronicle p. 150 (1118); Tver Collection article 192; Moscow Chronicle p. 28; S1497 p. 26; Uvarov Chronicle p. 181.

### **The Polovtsians, Bulgarians**

6628 (1120). Yaroslav [Yaropolk]<sup>132</sup> marched against the Polovtsians beyond the Don River, but did not find them there and returned home, and his brother Georgy<sup>133</sup> marched against the Bulgars and captured many people and defeated their troops...

Laurentian Chronicle article 292; Nikon Chronicle p. 151; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 104; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 41 (marched against the Bulgars by the Volga); Vladimir Chronicle p. 58.

### **The Torks, Berendei, Pechenegs**

6628 (1120)... In the same year, the Torks and Berendei<sup>134</sup> fled from the Russian land and thus, wandering around, they died<sup>135</sup>...

Laurentian Chronicle article 292; Nikon Chronicle p. 151; Hypatian Chronicle article 286 (1121), Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 104; Vladimir Chronicle p. 58; Moscow Chronicle p. 28 (1121).

### **The Polovtsians**

6628 (1120)... that time, Volodimer sent Andrey<sup>136</sup> and the pagans<sup>137</sup> to fight Poland...

<sup>126</sup> The clans of Pechenegs and Torks subordinate to the Polovtsians started serving a new lord.

<sup>127</sup> When a Polovtsian leader changed, the name of the clan city centre changed as well. Chevshlyuev, according to the Russian chronicles was called Sharukanev. The indication of three Polovtsian towns is evidence of three Polovtsian tribes joining into a union.

<sup>128</sup> Volga Bulgars.

<sup>129</sup> In all likelihood it was Auepa Osenev related to the Monomakhovichi.

<sup>130</sup> Andrey Dobry (1119–1141), prince of Southern Pereyaslavl, son of Vladimir Monomakh.

<sup>131</sup> Vladimir Monomakh gained leadership over the Polovtsians by marriages between his sons and Polovtsian princesses from the governing dynasties.

<sup>132</sup> Yaropolk II Vladimirovich—Kievan prince from 1132 to 1139, son of Vladimir Monomakh.

<sup>133</sup> Yuri Dolgoruki

<sup>134</sup> The Berendeis represented a governing clan that came from the Tork ethnic group.

<sup>135</sup> The sedentary Pechenegs, Torks, and Berendeis' refusal to help was influenced by relations with the ruling Polovtsian clans.

<sup>136</sup> Vladimir Monomakh sent his son Andrey Dobry with the Polovtsians to the Polish.

<sup>137</sup> The Polovtsians are meant here. Andrey Dobry was a relative of the Osenev clan.



Hypatian Chronicle article 286.

### The Ugrians

6631 (1123)... prince Yaroslavets, son of Svyatopolk, grandson of Izyaslav... came to Volodimer city to fight prince Andrey, son of Volodimer Monomakh... and there were many Ugrians, Polish, Czech people, as well as both Rostislavs—Volodar and Vasilko—accompanied him. And so this great army surrounded Andrey in the city of Volodimer...

Nikon Chronicle p. 151; Hypatian Chronicle article 287 (1124); C1497 p. 26; Uvarov Chronicle p. 181; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 43.

### The Torks, Polovtsians

6633 (1125) (Vladimir Vsevolodich Monomakh died). And Mstislav, his eldest son, sat in Kiev... and Yaropolk, his brother, occupied Pereyaslav's throne. When the Polovtsians heard it... they gathered and rushed to towns of Baruch and Bron, the prince desiring to capture the cursed Torks and fight the Russian land<sup>138</sup>... Yaropolk found it out and hid the Torks in the city that night. And then the Polovtsians returned, but prince Yaropolk was strong with God's help... and did not await any help from his brother... he only gathered his men from Pereyaslav and marched towards Polkosten. The Polovtsians returned and attacked them... Yaropolk appealed to God, remembered his father and entered into battle. With God's help, he managed to defeat the pagans... some of them sank in rivers and thus Yaropolk returned home with glory...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 295–296; Hypatian Chronicle articles 289–290 (1126); Nikon Chronicle pp. 153–154; Vladimir Chronicle pp. 58–59; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 105; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 42.

### The Polovtsians

6635 (1127) That year, Vsevolod Olgovich exiled his uncle<sup>139</sup> Yaroslav from Chernigov and beat and robbed his army. Mstislav contacted Yaropolk and wanted to punish Vsevolod for what he had done to Yaroslav. But Vsevolod sent [an ambassador] to bring the Polovtsians and they came in the amount of seven (7) thousand together with Seluk [Oseluk] and Tash and stopped near Ratimir oakwood behind the Vyr. But their ambassadors sent to Vsevolod were caught by Yaropolk's people on the Lokna River, because the latter managed to occupy the whole stream of the Seim River en-throne his nephew Izyaslav Mstislavich in Kursk. And so, Polovtsian ambassadors were brought to Yaropolk. The Polovtsians became scared because there was no news from Vsevolod Olgovich and turned back. Meanwhile, Mstislav put Vsevolod under further pressure saying: 'So you brought the Polovtsians here, but did they help you?..'

Laurentian Chronicle articles 296–297; Nikon Chronicle p. 154; Hypatian Chronicle articles 290–291 (1128); Vladimir Chronicle p. 59; Moscow Chronicle p. 30; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 106.

### The Torks

6635 (1127)... That year, Mstislav ordered his brothers to march against the Krivichs in four ways. He ordered Vsevolod Olgovich to come to his brothers Boris and Ivan who were in Strezhev. He sent Voiteshich together with the Torks, while his son Izyaslav was to march from Kursk with his own army.

Laurentian Chronicle articles 297–298; Nikon Chronicle p. 154; Hypatian Chronicle articles 291–292; Vladimir Chronicle p. 59.

### The Polovtsians

6637 (1129)... And Mstislav became angry at them<sup>140</sup> and wanted to march against them, but the Polovtsians would then fight stronger in the Russian land and this opposition would linger...

Moscow Chronicle p. 31.

<sup>138</sup> Apparently the discontent of the Torks was used by the Polovtsian clans battling for power and was led by the Girgenevs.

<sup>139</sup> Stryia—an uncle on the paternal side.

<sup>140</sup> Mstislav I Vladimirovich, son of Vladimir Monomakh, Kievan prince from 1125 to 1132.

... Volodimer himself stood near the Don River and drove away the godless and wiped much sweat while protecting the Russian land. In the same manner, Mstislav sent his army to fight the Polovtsians and pushed them not only beyond the Don, but also beyond the Volga...

Moscow Chronicle p. 31.

6639 (1131)... The Princes of Ryazan and Pronsk and Murom beat many Polovtsians...

Nikon Chronicle p. 157.

6640 (1132)... Polovtsian prince Amurat was baptised in Ryazan...

Nikon Chronicle p. 158.

6643 (1135). That year, the Olgovichi came to fight the Volodimerovichi, while Yaropolk, Yury and Andrey<sup>141</sup> marched towards Chernigov against the Olgovichi, but they did not reach the city and stopped. After staying for several days, they turned back. This happened in November. That winter, the Olgovichi, together with the Polovtsians, came and conquered Gorodok [Gorek] and Nezhatin and burnt down villages and burnt down Baruch<sup>142</sup> and captured many people and took many horses and cattle.

Laurentian Chronicle article 303; Nikon Chronicle p. 159; Novgorod Chronicle of Old Recension p. 23; Novgorod Chronicle of Late Recension p. 208; Hypatian Chronicle articles 295–296; Nikanor Chronicle p. 30; Tver Collection articles 198; Vologda-Perm Chronicle pp. 48–49; Novgorod Fourth Chronicle p. 4; Vladimir Chronicle p. 60 (1136); Moscow Chronicle p. 32; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 108; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 42.

6644 (1136). Yaropolk brought his brother Andrey from Volodimer city to rule in Pereyasavl. In the same summer, the Olgovichi started a war and started attacking villages and towns along the Sula River. And they came to Pereyasavl and did much evil, and burnt Ustye and retreated and stopped near the Supa. And the Volodimeroviches went to oppose them and there was a fierce battle, and soon the Polovtsians ran from the Olgovichi, and the Volodimerovichi with their best troop chased after them and beat them when reaching. And they returned to the battlefield, but did not find their prince's army and were captured by the Olgovichi who had Yaropolk's banner. There were many boyars among the captured: Davyd Yarunov, a captain of a thousand from Kiev, and Stanislav Tudkovich Dobry and many others. And Volodimer's grandson, Vasilko Marchinits [Marchinich] was killed here. The Volodimerovichi came to Kiev. This happened on 8 August. And a feud was again ignited between them: the Olgovichi again colluded with the Polovtsians and conquered Trepol and Khalep which were left empty by their citizens. And they went to Kiev desiring to fight the Volodimerovichi. Meanwhile, Yaropolk together with his brothers gathered many troops, but decided not to fight them fearing God. So he made peace with them and returned to Chernigov again...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 303–304; Nikon Chronicle p. 160; Hypatian Chronicle articles 297–299; Vladimir Chronicle p. 60; Moscow Chronicle p. 33; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 108–109; Novgorod Fourth Chronicle p. 5.

### **The Pechenegs**

6644 (1136)... during the raid against Ryazan, the Pecheneg bogatyr Temirkhozyu was killed...

Nikon Chronicle p. 160.

### **The Polovtsians**

6646 (1138) That winter the Novgorod people expelled the Olgovichi from Novgorod and invited Rostislav Yurievich<sup>143</sup> to rule in their city. In the same year, the Olgovichi sent for the Polovtsians and started attacking towns along the Sula River, while Andrey could not resist...

Laurentian Chronicle article 305; Nikon Chronicle p. 161; Novgorod First Chronicle Old Recension p. 25 (1137); Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 210 (1137); Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 49 (1135); Novgorod Fourth Chronicle p. 5 (1136); Vladimir Chronicle p. 60; Moscow Chronicle p. 33 (1137–1138); Uvarov Chronicle p. 182; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 109; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 42.

<sup>141</sup> Yaropolk II Vladimirovich, Yuri Dolgoruki, Andrey Dobry.

<sup>142</sup> The territory of modern day Ukraine.

<sup>143</sup> Rostislav Yurievich, Yuri Dolgoruki's son.

... In the same year... the Olgovichs again began the war and brought a great number of Polovtsians with them and conquered Priluk wanting to attack Kiev. But Yaropolk saw it and called upon his brothers in a hurry and again came to Chernigov. Yaropolk managed to gather many troops—Rostov people, the Polochans, Smolyans, the Ugrians, Galich and Berendei people—in the total amount of 30 thousand people. The Kiev, Pereyaslav, Volodimer, Turov people were among them—and all this great army headed to Chernigov... and Yaroslav concluded peace with Svevolod [Vsevolod] Olgovich... In the same winter, the righteous prince Yaropolk Volodimerovich died on the 18th day of February and his brother Vyacheslav occupied the Kievan throne... And Olgovich with Vyshegorod people and with his brother came to Vyacheslav demanding that he leave the city. So Vyacheslav returned to Turov, while Vsevolod entered into Kiev on the 5th day of March. Yaropolk made Volodimer Davydovich prince of Chernigov...

Laurentian Chronicle article 306; Nikon Chronicle pp. 161–162; Hypatian Chronicle articles 301–302 (1139); Nikanor Chronicle p. 30 (1136–1137); Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 49 (1135, 1137); Novgorod Fourth Chronicle p. 5 (1136); Vladimir Chronicle p. 60; Moscow Chronicle pp. 33–34; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 109.

... In the same year, grand prince Vsevolod Olgovich of Kiev marched against the Polovtsians and beat many of them and captured many alive<sup>144</sup>...

Nikon Chronicle p. 163.

6647 (1139)... In the same year, all the Polovtsian land and all Polovtsian princes came to conclude peace, and Vsevolod of Kiev and Andrey of Pereyaslav came to him,<sup>145</sup> to Malotin, and reached a peace...

Laurentian Chronicle article 308; Nikon Chronicle p. 164; Hypatian Chronicle articles 303–308 (1140); Vladimir Chronicle p. 61; Moscow Chronicle p. 35; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 110.

### The Polovtsians, Ugrians

6652 (1144) Izyaslav married off his daughter Polotska to Rogvolod Borisovich<sup>146</sup> ... In the same year, Izyaslav... marched against Volodimerko<sup>147</sup> Volodarovich of Galich and from Galich he sent Izyaslav Davydovich so that he ordered the Polovtsians to march against Volodimer. After gathering all Russian princes and even the Ugrian king Ban, Vsevolod came to Trebovl. Volodimer went towards his army, but they could not fight, because the Seret River lay between their troops. And both armies went along the river heading to Zvenigorod. A week later, they reached Zvenigorod. But they could not fight on the Rozhy field. Meanwhile, Volodimer occupied a spot on bare rocks. Izyaslav Davydovich came there with the Polovtsians after he conquered towns of Ushitsa and Mikulin, and Volodimer returned to Zvenigorod... Volodimer asked Igor to mediate in negotiations and promised that if he helped to achieve peace between him and Vsevolod, Volodimer would do his best to enthrone Igor in Kiev... And Vsevolod listened to him and it was peace on the same day... And Volodimer gave a thousand and two hundred hryvnas of silver to Vsevolod... and Vsevolod returned Ushitsa and Mikulin to him and shared silver among his warriors...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 311–312; Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle p. 167; Hypatian Chronicle article 315; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 112; Tver Collection article 205; Vladimir Chronicle p. 62; Moscow Chronicle p. 36; C1497 p. 27; Uvarov Chronicle p. 182.

### The Berendei, Polovtsians

6654 (1146)... Igor entered Kiev<sup>148</sup> but the Kievan people did not want it and they invited Izyaslav from Pereyaslav to rule in their city<sup>149</sup> ... Izyaslav became sad, gathered his warriors and the Pereyaslav people and cut across the Dnieper River. And some Berendei people came to him and remained on the Zhelan River. Igor together with his brother Stoslav arranged his army to resist

<sup>144</sup> First of all Vsevolod Olgovich crushed Polovtsian supporters of the Monomakhovichi, representing the major force not only in the steppe but also in Rus'.

<sup>145</sup> Vsevolod Olgovich and Andrey Dobry concluded an alliance with all the Osenev and Girgenev Polovtsian clans.

<sup>146</sup> Rogvolod Borisovich, prince of Polotsk.

<sup>147</sup> Vladimir Volodarevich, prince of Przemyśl.

<sup>148</sup> Igor Olgovich, brother of Vsevolod Olgovich.

<sup>149</sup> Izyaslav Mstislavovich, prince of Volhynia.

Izyaslav. And when they reached Olga's grave, Igor with his brother fled without reaching Izyaslav. When escaping, some were killed, some—injured, some—drown in rivers. Others were captured in the city. It happened on the 13th day of August. And thus Izyaslav came to rule in Kiev. 4 days later, Igor was found in the swamp...

Laurentian Chronicle article 313; Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle p. 169; Hypatian Chronicle articles 319–330; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 43 (1147); Uvarov Chronicle p. 183.

### The Polovtsians

6654 (1146)... his brother Stoslav<sup>150</sup> escaped to Novgorod with a small troop. And when Polovtsian princes learned what happened to Igor, they sent their ambassadors to Izyaslav in order to conclude peace...

Laurentian Chronicle article 314; Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle pp. 169–170; Hypatian Chronicle articles 319–330; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 113; Moscow Chronicle pp. 38–39.

... Meanwhile, prince Svyatoslav Olgovich together with prince Ivan Yurievich<sup>151</sup> and with prince Ivan Rostislavich<sup>152</sup> and with prince Volodimer Svyatoslavich<sup>153</sup> and with Polovtsian prince Yemgazy and with the Polovtsians marched against prince Izyaslav Davydovich<sup>154</sup> and prince Svyatoslav Olgovich managed to defeat him. Prince Izyaslav Davydovich then went to the Grand Prince of Kiev Izyaslav Mstislavich<sup>155</sup> and his other brothers. And all of them gathered and advanced against Svyatoslav Olgovich. He surrendered and left his city of Karachev<sup>156</sup> to the Vyatichi...

Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle pp. 169–170; Hypatian Chronicle articles 330–335; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 43 (1147); C1497 p. 28; Uvarov Chronicle p. 183.

... at the same time, Rostislav Yurievich and Andrey marched towards Ryazan to attack Rostislav Yaroslavich. Rostislav fled Ryazan and went to the Polovtsians<sup>157</sup> to Yeltoukovi. At the same time, Stoslav let his warriors go to the Polovtsians and presented many gifts to them thus attracting many of them to his side...

Hypatian Chronicle article 339; Moscow Chronicle pp. 38–39.

6655 (1147). Izyaslav appointed Klim as the metropolitan and then reached peace with the Polovtsians near Voin...

Laurentian Chronicle article 315; Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle p. 173; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 114.

... In the same year, the Polovtsian Prince Saimchyug died.

Patriarch Nikon Chronicle p. 173.

... Gleb came to Svyatoslav Olgovich and began to gather troops. The Polovtsians also arrived to Svyatoslav Olgovich. They conquered the cities of Viatic and Bryansk and Oblovesk and Revyagorsk and Dorobinsk along the Desna River<sup>158</sup> as well as Domogoshch. And they came to Mechensk and then headed toward Krom...

Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle p. 173; Hypatian Chronicle articles 341–358; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 43; Moscow Chronicle p. 40 (1146); C1497 p. 28; Uvarov Chronicle p. 183.

... In the same year, they beat the Polovtsians... in Novgorod-Seversky...

Nikon Chronicle p. 176.

### The Khazars

<sup>150</sup> Svyatoslav Olgovich of Novgorod-Seversky, brother of Vsevolod and Igor Olgovich.

<sup>151</sup> Ivan Yurievich, son of Yuri Dolgoruki.

<sup>152</sup> Ivan Rostislavovich Berlandik, prince of Zvenigorod (1129–1145) and Galicia (1145).

<sup>153</sup> Vladimir Svyatoslavovich of Murom.

<sup>154</sup> Izyaslav Davydovich of Murom.

<sup>155</sup> Izyaslav Mstislavovich, son of Mstislav I, Kievan prince from 1146–1149 and 1151–1154. He was fighting against his uncle for the Kiev throne.

<sup>156</sup> Karachev is a town populated by Turkic people.

<sup>157</sup> An illustrative appeal of Rostislav Yurievich Dologoruky to his Polovtsian relatives.

<sup>158</sup> The territory of modern day Ukraine.

6655 (1147)... In the city of Ryazan, the Khazars saw many miracles and cures from the icon of Saint Paraskeva-Pyatnitsa...

Nikon Chronicle p. 176.

### **The Berendei, Polovtsians**

6655 (1148)... and when Izyslav heard it, he gathered his troops and the Berendei...

Laurentian Chronicle article 319; Hypatian Chronicle article 359–369 (... speaking to warriors and troops, to the Kiyans and Smolyans: 'Everybody, to the river! Once you reach it, we will head towards Chernigov'...). And Olgovich sent Davydovich with the Polovtsians to attack Bryachin... Mstislav gathered an army, left Pereyasavl and pressed them on toward Nosov, near the Rouda River, and captured some part of their army... Having heard of it, Izyslav advanced towards Chernigov with a great army including the Berendei and the Hungarians. He even asked his uncle Volodimer to provide his troops to help him. And so he went to Chernigov and stopped on Olga's field. He stood for three days waiting for the Olgovichi to come and enter into a battle. And then the Ryazan and Polovtsian princes joined the Olgovichi and proceeded to the river which flowed near Liubech. On Sunday, Izyslav decided to attack them, but his troops could not get to the other side of the river—only his archers could reach the adversary. But that night it rained a lot...); Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 116; Moscow Chronicle p. 43.

6657 (1149). Izyslav came to Novgorod to help Novgorod people to fight Yury... and their horses started to limp, while Izyslav himself together with the Novgorod people reached the Volga... and they started slandering him, saying that Rostislav Yurievich turned the Berendei and Kiyans against Izyslav... and after gathering his warriors and Polovtsians... he stood near Belaya Vezha [White House] awaiting the Polovtsians... when it was dawn, he passed the city and stood near the rampart... and Yury retreated and Izyslav followed him. At the dusk, the both sides started a battle, and it was a fierce fight. The first to escape were the Poroshans, then—Izyslav Davydovich; after them—the Kievans and Pereyaslav people. Many of them were killed and others—captured... and Izyslav arrived in Luchesk and started gathering the Ugrians and the Polish, because even the Polovtsians fled with their voivode Zhiroslav...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 320–323; Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle pp. 178–180; Hypatian Chronicle articles 371–390; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 116–118; Kholmogor Chronicle pp. 45–46; Tver Chronicle articles 213–214; Vladimir Chronicle p. 64; Moscow Chronicle pp. 46–47; C1497 p. 30; Uvarov Chronicle pp. 185–186.

### **The Polovtsians**

6657 (1149)... in that year, the Polovtsians conquered Torshin and attacked and burnt the neighbouring towns and villages...

Nikon Chronicle p. 182–183.

### **The Polovtsians, Turpeis, Torks, Berendei, Ugrians**

6658 (1150)... After settling himself in Kiev, Izyslav sent his son Mstislav to Kanev, ordering him to conquer Pereyasavl from there. Mstislav ordered to call the Turpeis from the other side of the Dnieper<sup>159</sup> ... and his troops, ordering them to come to him... Rostislav (son of Yury)... went to Sanov himself and chased Turpei to the Dnieper, caught him and returned to Pereyasavl. After Izyslav heard it, he sent an ambassador to his son Mstislav... so that he was in a hurry to arrive to his father together with the Berendei... When Izyslav arrived to Tumashch, archers from the both sides already started to exchange arrows across the Stugna River. But the foe's army exceeded the one of Izyslav and his warriors started to retreat, and the Berendei were among them... The Volodimirkovich [Volodimirkovi] reached the rear regiment. And killed some of them, and captured others...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 326–327; Hypatian Chronicle articles 394–408; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 119–120; Moscow Chronicle pp. 48–50.

### **The Polovtsians, Ugrians, Berendeis**

6658 (1150)... In that summer, the Polovtsians came to help Yuri to fight Izyslav. Meanwhile, Izyslav sent for the Ugrians and the Polish and Vyacheslav's people, and the Berendeis and the Kiyans... Andrey sent guards forward and then marched against them.

<sup>159</sup> The Turpeys are a branch of the Tork clan of founder Turpey.

Laurentian Chronicle articles 328–330; Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle p. 184; Hypatian Chronicle articles 394–408; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 119–120; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 46; Tver Chronicle article 217 (1151); Vladimir Chronicle p. 65 (1151); Moscow Chronicle pp. 48–50; C1497 p. 31; Uvarov Chronicle p. 186.

### **The Polovtsians**

6658 (1150)... That summer, the Polovtsians went to Kursk and after capturing many people, they returned home...

Nikon Chronicle p. 183.

... That winter, the Polovtsians came to Rus', did much evil and returned home...

Nikon Chronicle p. 185.

6660 (1152). Rostislav Yurievich died in Pereyasavl... then, the Polovtsians came to help Yury to attack Izyaslav<sup>160</sup> ... and set up tents in the meadows in front of Kiev. Izyaslav was not permitted to cut across the Dnieper—fighting warriors blocked his way... adversaries even fought on boats, near the river bank, and so Izyaslav was not let in. Olgovich decided to leave prince Yury with Davyd and Volodimer and carts opposite Vitichev, and he himself took the Polovtsians and headed to Zarub. Izyaslav stood guard at the other side of the river together with Koshvarny, unable to enter into the Dnieper. The Polovtsians—all on horseback, armoured, with spears and shields—started to cut across the Dnieper, ready to fight. And the whole Dnieper was covered with warriors. Izyaslav became frightened and retreated... Meanwhile, Stoslav reached the other side of the Dnieper together with the Polovtsians... Yury together with Volodimer and with the children arrived in Zarub and got to the other bank of the Dnieper and stood near the Lybed... That moment the Berendeis with tents and the Torks, and all the Black Klobuks rushed to the archers shooting at the Lybed and did much evil to them... and the armies collided and it was a fierce battle (Volodimer Davydovich of Chernigov was killed). Izyaslav Mstislavich was wounded in his hand and thrown from his horse and was killed while he was on foot. Yury's Polovtsians did not even shoot an arrow and ran away... many warriors drowned in the Ruta and when retreating, many were beaten and others—captured...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 330–334; Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle pp. 187–189 (1151); Hypatian Chronicle articles 420–445 (1151); Vladimir Chronicle pp. 65–66 (1151); Moscow Chronicle pp. 50–53 (1150); Uvarov Chronicle pp. 186–187 (1150); Tver Collection articles 213–217 (1151); Kholmogor Chronicle pp. 47–48; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 121–123.

### **The Ugrians**

6660 (1152)... At the same time, Mstislav Izyaslavich led the Ugrians to help his father and stood near Sapogyn... then Volodimer sent him and the Ugrians many drinks. While Mstislav was drinking together with the Ugrians... Volodimerko attacked them. He captured few and killed most of them.

Laurentian Chronicle articles 335–336; Hypatian Chronicle articles 420–445 (1151); Uvarov Chronicle pp. 186–187 (1150); Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 124–125; Kholmogor Chronicle pp. 47–48 (1150).

### **The Polovtsians, Berendeis, Torks, Pechenegs, Ugrians**

6660 (1152)... Izyaslav sent his brother Rostislav... when he saw multiple Polovtsian forces, he ordered all people to leave the burg and rush to the detinets [the central part of the ancient Russian town]... then the Polovtsian wave flowed to attack the city and after conquering the burg, they burnt the entrance and stood near the city of Chernigov in all their great number. Meanwhile, people were leaving the city. Andrey said the following: 'Let us make a raid: I shall take my troop and go out of the city fighting those on foot and shooting arrows at the crowd. And so they managed to fight many Polovtsians—many were beaten and others were expelled from the city... After coming to Vsevolozh, he sent his son Mstislav to attack the Polovtsians with the Berendeis and Torks and Pechenegs and some part of his army... And God helped to defeat the Polovtsians—they were thrown out, their tents—robbed and their horses and livestock—taken...

<sup>160</sup> Contradictions between the Dolgorukis and Mstislavovichs caused a schism among the Polovtsian governing clans and as a result the new Polovtsian clans of Konchak and Kobyak appeared, aspiring to power.

Laurentian Chronicle articles 338–339; Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle pp. 191–196 (Izyaslav... Vyacheslav gathered his whole army and all the Black Klobuks who call themselves the Cherkasses and Kiyans—the best warriors... Yuri came together with his sons and prince Rostislav Yaroslavich and his brothers and with his troops to accompany him. The Polovtsians, the Orplyuevs and Toksobiches and the whole Polovtsian land<sup>161</sup>—all of them—stood between the Volga and Dnieper and marched against the Vyatichi. After conquering them, they took Mechensk and Spash and Glukhov... The following day, Grand Prince Yuri Dolgoruky together with his children, Grand Prince Rostislav Mstislavich of Ryazan and Temir, Grand Prince of the Polovtsians, and with Svyatoslav and Dulep and Berdash—Polovtsian princes, and with all other Polovtsians... And all this numerous army waved as a sea, and it was scary to look at them—all armoured and shining like water under the sun. And this army marched towards the city and stopped before reaching the Semyn River... and after conquering the burg and burning... they stayed near Chernigov for 22 days... Vyacheslav Vladimerich Manomash, Izyslav Mstislavich, a grandson of Vladimir Monomakh, started quickly gathering warriors and went to help Chernigov to withstand the Polovtsians attack... and so they went against Temir, the Polovtsian prince, and all their princes and warriors... (Izyaslav) sent an army against the Polovtsians giving him many of his forces: the Pechenegs of Kanev<sup>162</sup> and Berendeis and Torks and the Izheslav people and Porosyans<sup>163</sup>... to prince Mstislav to son Izyaslav... and they burnt their tents and took much prey: horses and oxen and camels and sheep and returned home to their grand principality of Pereyasavl); Hypatian Chronicle articles 446–460; Vladimir Chronicle pp. 65–66 (1153); Moscow Chronicle pp. 54–58; C1497 p. 32; Uvarov Chronicle p. 186–187; Tver Collection article 220; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 124–125; Kholmogor Chronicle pp. 47–48 (1150).

### The Polovtsians

6661 (1153). Izyaslav sent his son Mstislav<sup>164</sup> against the Polovtsians to the Pesla, because they had heard the Polovtsians did much evil along the Sula River. But he did not manage to get to them and returned home...

Laurentian Chronicle article 340; Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle p. 197; Hypatian Chronicle article 465; Moscow Chronicle p. 58; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 125.

### The Berendeis

6661 (1153)... That autumn, Izyaslav II ordered Mstislav II with Volodimer Andreevich and the Berendeis to take part in a campaign. They reached Oleshye [the lower reaches of the Dnieper]<sup>165</sup> but they did not fulfill their task and returned home...

Laurentian Chronicle article 340; Moscow Chronicle p. 58.

### The Polovtsians

6662 (1154)... That autumn Izyaslav Mstislavich died... archers were shooting at the river... and Mstislav with his army turned back. They chased after the Polovtsians and beat many of them and captured others...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 342–343; Hypatian Chronicle articles 467–477 (... Yuri decided to send his son Gleb to the Polovtsians, while he himself decided to return to Suzdal [Vyacheslav granted Kiev to his son Rostislav]. At the same time, a message reached Rostislav that Gleb Yurievich with many Polovtsian troops went to Pereyasavl, that Rostislav with Stoslav marched from Kiev to Peresechnoe and here started to gather a Polovtsian army so that they could cut across the Sula... However, Rostislav was not in Kiev—with his forces he caught Stoslav Vsevolodich and Mstislav Izyaslavich and the Torks and Kiyans and cut across the Dnieper to reach Vyshgorod. Here, in front of Vyshgorod he stopped and started arranging his army... But Rostislav did not listen—he marched against Izyaslav Davydovich, to Chernigov. When the latter heard of it, he sent for Gleb Yurievich, so that he arrived with many Polovtsians and carts... When Rostislav saw an avalanche of Polovtsians, he was frightened... He started sending ambassadors to Izyaslav Davydovich asking him to sign a peace agreement and offering him to occupy the throne in Kiev and inviting Mstislav to take Pereyasavl. When Mstislav heard it, he replied: 'Neither will I have Pereyasavl, nor will you rule in Kiev' and after saying it, turned his horse back. And the Polovtsians surrounded his troop and fought them for two days and the Polovtsians confused everyone so that they started to surrender. Many of Rostislav's warriors were beaten, some of them were captured and others managed to escape... Vyacheslav died, Rostislav escaped, while Izyaslav Davydovich occupied the throne in Kiev, while Gleb ruled in Pereyasavl... Georgy went to Kiev and Rostislav—to Smolensk); Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle pp. 199–200 (1155); Vladimir Chronicle p. 67 (1155); Moscow Chronicle pp. 58–61; C1497 p. 134; Uvarov Chronicle p. 188; Nikanor Chronicle p. 31 (1157); Tver Collection articles 222–223 (1155); Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 50 (1157); Novgorod Fourth Chronicle pp. 8–9; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 126–127; Kholmogor Chronicle pp. 48–49.

<sup>161</sup> Apparently, by the middle of the 12th century power in the steppe between the left bank of the Dnieper and the Volga had been concentrated in the hands of the Polovtsian clans of the Orplyuevs and Toksobiches.

<sup>162</sup> Kanev was the capital of the settled Pechenegs.

<sup>163</sup> The Porsyans are a territorial community of the Torks, Berendeis, and Pechenegs that formed along the Ros River.

<sup>164</sup> Mstislav Izyaslavovich was a prince of Pereyasavl, son of Izyaslav Mstislavovich, the prince of Kiev.

<sup>165</sup> Oleshie was located in the lower reaches of the Dnieper.

### **The Polovtsians, Berendeis**

6662 (1154)... In that spring, the Polovtsians came to fight along the Ros River. The Berendeis repelled their attacks, chased them down, beat many and killed others.

Laurentian Chronicle articles 345; Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle p. 203 (1155); Moscow Chronicle pp. 58–61; S1497 p. 32 (1155); Hypatian Chronicle article 479 ((1155)... In the same autumn, the Polovtsians came to fight in Porosye, but Vasilko together with the Berendeis blocked them, beat them and captured others...); Uvarov Chronicle p. 188 (1155); Tver Collection articles 222–223 (1155); Kholmogor Chronicle pp. 48–49.

### **The Polovtsians**

6663 (1155). Georgy went to meet with Polovtsians near the town of Kanev. When the latter arrived, they started asking to release their brothers captured by the Berendeis. But the Berendeis refused and said 'In doing it, we die for the Russian land and lay our heads down'<sup>166</sup>...

Laurentian Chronicle article 346; Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle p. 203; Hypatian Chronicle articles 479–482; Vladimir Chronicle p. 67; Moscow Chronicle pp. 61–62.

... In that summer, the Polovtsians came to fight in Deminesk and did much evil near Pereyasavl—beat many people, captured others and then returned home to their lands...

Nikon Chronicle p. 203.

... In the same year, the Polovtsians once again came to conclude peace and stood near Dubinets to the upper reaches of the Supiy River. Yury agreed with his son Rostislav and with Volodimer and with Yaroslav Izyaslavich and was also given help from the Galich people, and headed to Kanev with these forces. And he sent for the Polovtsians so that they met with him to conclude peace. Few of the Polovtsians came and told that the next day everyone would come. But all of them fled overnight. Yury returned to Kiev and then decided to send an ambassador to Izyaslav Davydovich asking him whether he wanted to make peace with them... In the same winter, Yury visited Izyaslav Davydovich in Chernigov, and his daughter was married to Yury's son Gleb in Kiev...

Hypatian Chronicle articles 479–482; Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle, p. 204; Kholmogor Chronicle, p. 49.

### **The Tatars,**

6663 (1155)... The same summer the Tatars arrived<sup>167</sup> in Ryazan to the river Khaport. They did much evil and killed many people and put others in captivity...

Nikon Chronicle p. 205.

### **The Polovtsians**

6664 (1156)... The same summer the Polovtsians campaigned at Bystriye Sosny in the region of Ryazan and captured many people and departed for their camps. Before they arrived there, however, the [Russian pursuit] caught them while they were sleeping and killed them...

Nikon Chronicle p. 207.

... Then Yuri went and took along with himself Izyaslav Davydovich Svyatoslav Olgovich<sup>168</sup> to Zarub where the Polovtsians were and made peace with them and there were a great number of them...

Hypatian Chronicle article 485; Moscow Chronicle p. 61 (1155).

### **The Ugrians**

<sup>166</sup> The chronicle passage shows that the Berendei and all the Chorni Klobuki served a particular principality, but not the prince personally.

<sup>167</sup> By Tatars, they evidently mean Polovtsians.

<sup>168</sup> To obtain a victory over his nephew Izyaslav Mstislavovich, Yuri Dolgoruki concluded an alliance with the Olgovich, long-time adversaries of the Monomakh clan.



6664 (1156)... Mstislav Izyaslavich drove out his uncle, Volodimer, of the principality of Vladimir, captured his mother and wife. And he fled to Przemyśl and from there to the king, because his sister was wed to the Hungarian king.<sup>169</sup>...

Uvarov Chronicle p. 188.

### The Berendeis

6665 (1157). Yuri with his son-in-law Yaroslav Galitsky and his sons and Volodimer Andreevich and with the Berendeis went to Vladimir to campaign against Mstislav Izyaslavich...

Hypatian Chronicle article 486; Moscow Chronicle p. 62.

### The Polovtsians

6666 (1158). The same year Izyaslav went to Kanev to meet the Polovtsians and made peace with them and went back to Kiev...

Hypatian Chronicle article 490; Moscow Chronicle p. 63.

... Ivan<sup>170</sup> then, having fought, went to the steppe to the Polovtsians and, having gone with the Polovtsians, halted in the cities around the area of the Danube river. He captured two ships and took many goods in them, and did harm to the Galich fishermen. And many Polovtsians came to him, and (6000) people of the area of Berlad joined them. And he went to Kuchelmin and they were pleased with him; and from there he went to Ushitsa. And Yaroslav's garrison had gone into the city and the men of the garrison began to fight strongly from the city, but the peasants were jumping across the wall of the city to Ivan—(300) of them fled. And the Polovtsians wanted to capture the city. Ivan would not let them take it; and becoming angry, the Polovtsians left Ivan. Izyaslav began to seek Ivan and took him to Kiev and he found out that they wanted to launch a campaign against Ivan...

Hypatian Chronicle pp. 496–498 (1159); Nikon Chronicle p. 212; Moscow Chronicle pp. 64–66 (1159).

... take Chernigov with (six) empty cities of Moroviesk, Lyubesk, Orgoshsh and Vsevolozh, and in them are only huntsmen and Polovtsians. And he [Izyaslav] holds the entire Chernigov volost for himself... More help came to Izyaslav there at Belgorod, for Bashkord came to him with (20) thousands of his father's—Mstislav Volodimirovich—and the Cumans fled... There was treachery among the Berendeis, for they were being made to fight, having come to the city. And they negotiated, talking among themselves. At this the leaders were Tudor' Satmazovich, Karakoz' Mnyuzovich and Karas' Kokei. For they had med in the house of Kuzma Snovidich with a servant... The Polovtsians fled from Belgorod to the Gyurgev and Berendeis and the people of Gyurgev captured many of them. And the others drowned in the river Ros. Mstislav and Volodimer and Yaroslav went into Kiev in the month of December on the twenty-second. Mstislav captured a multitude of prisoners, and slaves and servants and horses and cattle and gave everything to Volodimir.

Hypatian Chronicle pp. 496–502 (1159); Nikon Chronicle pp. 212–213; Moscow Chronicle pp. 64–66 (1159); S1497 p. 33 (1159); Uvarov Chronicle p. 188 (1159); Tver Collection p. 227 (1159).

6667 (1159)... The same summer the Polovtsians fought near Nosov and up to the Lta<sup>171</sup> July on the twenty-third day more than 8 hundred people attacked Kotelnitsa and Shelomnitsa and took Mstislav's village... At the same time Oleg Svyatoslavich defeated the Polovtsians and killed Santuza, the Polovtsian Prince. That same year Rostislav sent Yuri Nesterovich and Yakun from Kiev in boats against the people of Berladnik, who had taken the Oleshye district. And having reached them at Dedtsin, they defeated them and captured many prisoners... In that same year Volodimir Andreevich and Yaroslav Izyaslavich and the people of Galich beat the Polovtsians and recaptured many people between Munarev and Yaropolch. At the same time the Berendeis were beaten in Oblazna... since Rostislav sent Zhiroslav Kashirovich with 600 Torks to him...

Moscow Chronicle pp. 67–68; Hypatian Chronicle article 505.

<sup>169</sup> The king of Hungary.

<sup>170</sup> Here Ivan Berladnik is being spoken of.

<sup>171</sup> Up to the Alta River.

... Izyaslav Davidovich came to Chernigov with many Polovtsians... burned down their villages and killed people. Izyaslav went into the land of the Vyatichi...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 349–350; Nikon Chronicle pp. 215–216; Hypatian Chronicle articles 505–508 (1160); Moscow Chronicle pp. 67–68; S1497 pp. 34–35; Uvarov Chronicle pp. 189–190; Tver Collection article 229; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 51; Novgorod Fourth Chronicle pp. 10–11; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 130; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 50.

... The same summer the Grand Prince Izyaslav Davydovich with the Polovtsians fought against the Smolensk authorities.<sup>172</sup>...

Nikon Chronicle p. 216; Hypatian Chronicle p. 505 (1160); Moscow Chronicle pp. 67–68; S1497 pp. 34–35; Uvarov Chronicle pp. 189–190; Tver Collection articles 229–233; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 130.

### **The Polovtsians, the Berendeis, the Torks, the Pechenegs, the Kouis**

6667 (1159)... The same summer the Prince Izyaslav Davidovich with the Prince Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich and the Prince Oleg and Svyatoslav Olgovich and many Polovtsians marched against the Prince Rostislav Mstislavich to Kiev and when came made a camp on the river Don opposite Vyshegrad (because Rostislav had fled from Kiev) ... Hearing that Rostislav Mstislavich locked himself in Belgorod, the Kievans marched against him with the Polovtsians and Berendeis and when they came, surrounded Belgorod and the Polovtsians went to destroy villages... The Berendeis, hearing that the Prince Mstislav Izyaslavich was coming with a numerous army, abandoned Prince Izyaslav Davydovich and joined Mstislav Izyaslavich and he was glad about it... Prince Mstislav Izyaslavich sent another force to Volodimer to help his uncle Rostislav Mstislavich. Then Ryurik Rostislavich came with the troops and with assistance from Galich, and Ryurik went out of the land of Torks with Vladimir Andreevich and Vasilko Yurievich and with Berendeis, Kouis, Torks, and Pechenegs.<sup>173</sup> and joined with Mstislav Izyaslavich and Rostislav Mstislavich and Yaroslav Izyaslavich and Yaropolk Andreevich and their army was numerous and they marched against the Great Prince Izyaslav Davidovich and launched to attack the Black Klobuks... and when they reached it, killed a small portion of his troops... and when started to hit his head with a sabre, Ivor Gedenevich hit his shoulder with a spear, and other wounded him above the knee and he hit his thigh and when escaping hit his underarm...

Nikon Chronicle pp. 219–220; Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension p. 31 (1160); Vladimir Chronicle pp. 68–69 (1160); S1497 pp. 34–35 (1160); Moscow Chronicle pp. 69–71; Uvarov Chronicle pp. 190–191 (1160); Nikanor Chronicle p. 32 (1160); Tver Collection articles 229–233 (1160); Novgorod Fourth Chronicle pp. 10–11 (1160); Kholmogor Chronicle p. 50 (1160); Hypatian Chronicle pp. 510–521.

### **The Polovtsians**

6667 (1159)... In the same year many Polovtsians came to Gyurgev and took many tents around Rota and Vibor and killed Izyaslav, there. All the Chornye Klobuki, having gathered, went after them and reached them at the Ros' district. And they killed many of them and recaptured all the prisoners they had, more than (500) of them. They also captured two princes' sons, Satmazovich and another prince's son...

Hypatian Chronicle article 510–521; Moscow Chronicle p. 72 (1162).

6668 (1160)... Prince Andrey, son of Yuri Dolgoruki, sent his son Prince Izyaslav with many allies princes and troops and Rostov and Suzdal and Ryazan and Murom and Pronsk... going against the Polovtsians in the field of the Don and further, they had a great and fast battle and killed many and Russian princes began to withstand the enemy. The Polovtsians scattered to all sides on the field. Russian warriors were chasing them and came to Rzhavtsy, and the Polovtsians gathered and struck the Russian army and killed many, but God helped the Russian princes and they were the victors... the Russian princes returned with their small forces after the battle with the Polovtsians...

Nikon Chronicle p. 222.

<sup>172</sup> Volosts.

<sup>173</sup> These peoples were part of the Chorni Klobuki.

6671 (1163)... The same year Rostislav brought a daughter of Beluk, Khan of Polovetsk<sup>174</sup> to marry his son Ryurik. The same year they made peace with the Polovtsians...

Hypatian Chronicle article 522; Moscow Chronicle p. 72.

6673 (1165)... In that same year Vasilko Jaropolchich defeated the Polovtsians in Rus'. Many of them he captured and his retinue was made rich with weapons and horses, and he received a great deal of ransom from them...

Hypatian Chronicle article 525; Moscow Chronicle p. 73 (Rsi); Nikon Chronicle p. 232.

6674 (1166)... The same summer the Polovtsians made war in Rus' and killed two bogatyrs, Andrey Zhiroslavich and his brother Shvarn near Pereyasavl, and their nephew, who was also named Shvarn...

Nikon Chronicle p. 233.

6675 (1167) ...The same year Stoslav Vsevolodich and Oleg took an army to war... Stoslav sent his brother Yaroslav to the Polovtsians to Novgorod and having reached the Molochna river and returned (15) versts from the city...

Hypatian Chronicle article 526; Moscow Chronicle p. 74 (1166).

... the Polovtsians, seeing that the Princes had conflicts amongst themselves, went to the rapids<sup>175</sup> and began to do a lot of harm to merchants and Rostislav sent Vladislav to Poland with warriors and the merchants went...

Hypatian Chronicle articles 526–527; Moscow Chronicle p. 74 (1166).

... In that same year Oleg Svyatoslavich fought with [the Polovtsian Prince] Bonyak, and Oleg defeat the Polovtsians...

Hypatian Chronicle article 527; Tver Collection p. 237 (1166); Moscow Chronicle p. 74 (1166); S1497 p. 36 (1166); Uvarov Chronicle p. 192 (1166); Kholmogor Chronicle p. 51 (1164).

... In that same year the Polovtsians captured Shvarn across from Pereyasavl, and they killed his retinue and took from him a great amount of ransom...

Hypatian Chronicle article 527; Tver Collection article 237 (1166); Moscow Chronicle p. 74 (1166); S1497 p. 36 (1166); Uvarov Chronicle p. 192 (1166).

6676 (1168)... In that same winter the Olgovichs went against the Polovtsians, for it was a very fierce winter. And Oleg captured Kozin's camp and his wife and children and silver and gold; and Yaroslav captured all of Beglyukov's camp<sup>176</sup> and having praised God and His Most-Pure Mother and returned to their own lands...

Hypatian Chronicle article 532; Moscow Chronicle p. 75 (1167).

### **The Berendeis, Torks, Pechenegs**

6676 (1168)... Volodimer sent for Mstislav (after Rostislav's death in Kiev) ... and came to Mikulin and all the Berendeis, Torks and Pechenegs and all the Chyornye Klobuki came there. And he made them take the oath and sent his brother with the Berendeis and later went to them himself... The same year the boyars refused to betray Volodimir Mstislavich began to send to him the Polovtsians from Chagrov, Chekman and his brother Toshman and Manachyuk. Volodimir was pleased with their plan and sent to Raguiilo Dobrynich and to Mikhail and Zavid, revealing his plan to them. And his retinue said to him: 'You have Vladimir said to his young retinue: 'These are my boyars'. And he went to the Berendeis and met with them below the town Rostovets; and they saw him riding alone and said to him: 'You say this to us, "All my brothers are with me", but where are Vladimir Andreevich

<sup>174</sup> Belukovna—Belkat-tegin's daughter. Ryurik from Kiev tries to be related to the Polovtsian governing clans. As a result the Mstislavovichs were supported by the Polovtsians from the clan of Belkat-tegin against the supporters of the Dologorukis—the Osenev Polovtsians.

<sup>175</sup> The Dnieper rapids

<sup>176</sup> Beglyuk vezhi—land of the Belkat-tegin Polovtsians.

and Yaroslav and David? You ride alone and without your men. And you have deceived us, and it is better for us to be under another leader than under you'. And they began to shoot arrows at him, and they struck the prince with two arrows. And the prince said: 'God prevent us from having faith in the pagans: I am already destroyed in soul and life and will go and kill near it...

Hypatian Chronicle articles 532–540 (1169); Tver Collection pp. 237–238 (1167); Uvarov Chronicle pp. 192–193; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 51 (1167); Moscow Chronicle pp. 76–78.

### **The Polovtsians**

6676 (1168)... God put a good thought about the Russian land into Mstislav Izyaslavich's heart... and he called for all his brothers and started to think with them... for they (the Polovtsians) take Christians every year to their camps, and they swear an oath with us, which they are always transgressing. And already they have taken away from us the Greek route to Saloniki and Zalizny... sent to Chernigov to all the Olgovich and Vsevolodichi for them to come there and then Olgovich and Vsevolodichi... The brothers all came together in Kiev: Ryurik and Davyd with all his regiment and Stoslav Vsevolodich and Yaroslav, Oleg Svyatoslavich and his brother Vsevolod, Yaroslav from Lutsk, Yaropolk and Mstislav Vsevolodovich, Svyatopolk Gyurgevich (Gleb from Pereyaslavl, his brother Mikhalko and many others...) ... and the princes went for 9 days from Kiev and heard the news from the Polovtsian slaves<sup>177</sup> from Gavrilko Islavich the Russian Princes chased quickly after them... And they captured [the Polovtsians] camps at Uglya river, and the others by the Snoporod river and they reached [the Polovtsians] themselves at the Black Forest. And there, having proceeded into forest, they killed (some of them) and captured others. Basti and many others pursued them and were fighting them across the Vorskla<sup>178</sup> river and they took such a multitude of prisoners that all the Russian forces were filled to abundance with prisoners (taken from the Polovtsians) and slaves and their children and servants and horses and cattle. Having rescued the Christian [prisoners of the Polovtsians], they set them all free. The brothers were all aggrieved at Mstislav because he had let his grooms and saddle-man go for plunder in secret... whether among all the regiments two brother Konstantin Vasilievich, and Yaroslav Izyaslavich's saddle-man and Konstantin was captured... At that time Mstislav [Andreevich] had sent prince Mikhalko Yurievich to Novgorod to his son with Kouli, Basti's kin<sup>179</sup>...

Hypatian Chronicle articles 532–540 (1170); Nikon Chronicle p. 235; Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension p. 33 (1167); Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 220 (1167); Nikanor Chronicle p. 32 (1167); Tver Collection articles 237–239; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 52 (1167); Moscow Chronicle pp. 76–78; S1497 p. 36 (1169); Uvarov Chronicle pp. 192–193 (1169); Kholmogor Chronicle p. 51 (1169).

### **The Polovtsians, Berendeis, Torks**

6676 (1168)... Mstislav threw Volodimer out of Kiev and he went to the Polovtsians (Mstislav Andreevich put his uncle Gleb in Kiev on the throne) ...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 355; Nikon Chronicle p. 236; Hypatian Chronicle articles 544–545 (1171); Novgorod Fourth Chronicle p. 12; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 131.

### **The Polovtsians**

6673 (1168)... That same summer the Polovtsians went to Rus' to make war and Grand Prince of Kiev, Mstislav Izyaslavich fought against them and many fell dead, and at the end Mstislav Izyaslavich, overcame the enemy and returned victoriously to Kiev... That same summer the Polovtsian Prince Ajdar came to Prince Mstislav Izyaslavich to serve him, and after being there a short time he was baptized there in the [Name] of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit...

Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle p. 236.

### **The Polovtsians, Berendeis**

<sup>177</sup> Koschey—a slave.

<sup>178</sup> Vskol—the Oskol River.

<sup>179</sup> The Kouis were part of the Chorni Klobuki.

6674 (1169). (The Polovtsians came and were divided into two groups. One went to Pereyaslav and halted at the city of Pesochen, and the other went along the other side of the Dnieper to Kiev and halted at the city of Korsun. Gleb went to Pereyaslav [The Polovtsians returned to their own lands again and Gleb Yurievich went to Korsun... with his retinue] ... The Polovtsians began to make war... and captured villages with people, men and women, horses and cattle and sheep took them to their own land... Gleb having gone and heard, wanted to go against the Berendeis himself... 'that's good for you to be in a large regiment after having come together with your brothers'. Gleb sent his brother Mikhalko and one-half thousand Berendeis with him... and the Berendei intercepted secretly the Polovtsians (300) hundred on the way. And decided many (7) thousand... and killed many and other captured and didn't miss a single man, and they continued their route. Mikhalko had a military leader, Volodislav, Jan's brother; the Polovtsians who were travelling with their prisoners met him. And having fought and having conquered cut down some and captured others... and then decided that a large regiment is coming... the pagans had (9) hundred spears and the Russian had ninety spears. And they attacked them suddenly (Mikhalko's troops) and raised their banner... And they captured one and one-half thousand of them and killed the rest. And their prince, Togli [Toggli], escaped...and after they defeated the Polovtsians, Mikhalko came with the Pereyaslavtsi and the Berendeis to Kiev...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 358–361; Nikon Chronicle pp. 236–245 (1169); Hypatian Chronicle articles 558–559 (1172); Nikanor Chronicle p. 33 (1168); Tver Collection articles 243–244 (1170); Novgorod Fourth Chronicle p. 12; Vladimir Chronicle p. 70; Moscow Chronicle pp. 79–81 (1168); S1497 p. 37 (1170); Uvarov Chronicle p. 193 (1170); Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 133–134.

### **The Polovtsians, Ugrians**

6675 (1170). Starting to gather troops against the Grand Prince of Kiev Mstislav Izyaslavich, the Grand Prince Andrey, son of Yuri Dolgoruky... and the Polovtsian princes with the Polovtsians and Ugrians, and Czech, and Poles and Lithuanians and a great number of troops went to Kiev...

Nikon Chronicle p. 237.

### **The Polovtsians**

6678 (1170)... In that same year many Polovtsians came to Rus' and did a lot of harm to the Christians. And Russian princes were unable to protect their subjects because they were fighting amongst themselves...

Nikon Chronicle p. 239.

6679 (1171)... In that same winter many Polovtsians came to Kiev and took many villages in the area, and many people and cattle and horses were captured by them... Hearing that Mikhalko... reached them near Bom river with the Berendeis and Torks, with his voivode Volodislav and blocked [the Polovtsians] way... and met them and had a fight with them... and some were killed and other were tied up... and Volodislav told: 'Keep these prisoners, and if you wish I will go and cut and kill them all on the way and when I will meet them again, I will clash with them'... the pagans were killed and others were captured, (40) prisoners...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 362–363; Nikon Chronicle p. 246; Hypatian Chronicle articles 562–564 (1173); Vladimir Chronicle p. 71; Moscow Chronicle p. 82; S1497 p. 37; Uvarov Chronicle p. 193; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 135–136; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 52; Tver Collection article 248.

6682 (1174). The same year Roman Rostislavich began his reign in Kiev... At that time Svyatoslav Vsevolodich ruled in Chernigov, and Roman ruled in Kiev and the Polovtsians began to do much harm in Rus' ...

Hypatian Codex coll. 568.

... In that same year on St. Peter's Day Igor Stoslavich gathered his troops and went to Vorskla and met the Polovtsians there and caught the prisoners. And the prisoner told him that Kobyak and Kon-

chak<sup>180</sup> went to Pereyasavl. Igor, hearing this, went against the Polovtsians, crossing Vorskla near Ltava, to Pereyasavl (Igor heard and) and saw the Polovtsian regiments, and that their forces were not large and attacked them. And the Polovtsians began to flee and left their ransom from Serebryany and Baruch. And Igor's retinue reached them and killed many and captured others...

Hypatian Chronicle articles 568–570.

### The Berlad

6682 (1174)... Andrey, distressed with their behavior... and sent his sword-bearer Mikhn to Rostislavich with a message: 'You, Ryurik, go to Smolensk to your brother and you, Davyd, go to Berlad and I forbid to for you to stay in the Russian land...

Hypatian Chronicle articles 572–573.

### The Polovtsians

6685 (1177)... In the winter prince Vsevolod went with people of Rostov and Suzdal and his retinue against Gleb to Ryazan... and set fire to boyar's wives and children and goods and captured pagans... prince Vsevolod returned from Kolomna... and found Gleb on the river Kolakhsha [Kolakhsha] with the Polovtsians and a ransom. And they both couldn't cross it for a month, because you can't cross the river by land. Prince Vsevolod on shrovetide sent his regiments and empty wagons to the other side of the river. And Gleb sent a regiment headed by Mstislav Rostislavich on wagons. Prince Vsevolod sent his son Volodimer from Pereyaslavets and some of his regiment with him. The wagons were lined up against Mstislav... and before they reached one arrow range to Vsevolozh regiment, immediately rushed before Mstislav to other side of the river... Prince Vsevolod chased after them with his forces, cut them off, then bound and captured Gleb himself... and captured all his retinue and bound his military leaders, Boris Zhidislavich and Olstin and Dedilets and many others. The pagan Polovtsians beat...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 383–385; Nikon Chronicle 10 p. 4, Vladimir Chronicle p. 73; Moscow Chronicle p. 88; S1497 p. 39; Uvarov Chronicle pp. 195–196; Radziwill Chronicle p. 145; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 54; Nikanor Chronicle p. 35; Tver Collection articles 262–263; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 55; Novgorod Fourth Chronicle p. 14.

... In that same summer prince Roman Glebovich of Ryazan killed many Polovtsians...

10 Nikon Chronicle p. 6.

... The Polovtsians arrived in the Russian land on Trinity week and Roman, ruling in Kiev sent his brother Ryurik and his son... and the Polovtsians took (6) towns of the Berendeis<sup>181</sup> and reached Rostovets. And Davyd was not there. And there was a discord between the brothers. And (Davyd) reached Ryurik and his son, Yaropolk and Boris and the Polovtsians reached Rostovets. The Polovtsians stood their ground and defeated the Russian regiments and captured many boyars and the prince rushed into Rostovets.

Hypatian Chronicle articles 603–604.

... At the same time Mstislav and his regiment came there and warded off the Rostislavichi; if God wants it to happen, I will fight against Stoslav. Stoslav knew that the Rostislavichi were going to give him a regiment and he crossed the Dnieper at the mouth of Lybed and many people drowned there and then they set off to the Polovtsians. The Polovtsians who knew that Stoslav had left Kiev come to Tortsky and captured many people there. The Rostislavichi did not want to plunder the Russian land and spill the blood of peasants, so they gave Kiev to Stoslav and Roman went to Smolensk...

Hypatian Chronicle articles 604–605.

6687 (1179). In August of the same year foreigners came... Konchak along with his associates came to Pereyasavl to avenge the many sins perpetrated by the peasants [they had captured or beaten

<sup>180</sup> An internecine feud broke out in the Polovtsian ruling dynasty among the Osenev, Belkatteginov (Beglyukov), and Girennev Polovtsians, which led to the strengthening of the Polovtsian clans led by Kobyak and Konchak.

<sup>181</sup> First of all, the Polovtsians aimed to have the most dangerous Chorni Klobuki withdraw from the battle.

many, including beating a baby]. At the same time Stoslav left Kiev not far from the place called Troyepolye waiting for the Rostislavovich gathering there. An ambassador from Pereyaslavl reported that the Polovtsians were fighting near the town, but when they knew that the Russian princes and their troops had headed in their direction, the Polovtsians scattered in all directions and the princes returned to their own lands...

Hypatian Chronicle articles 612–613.

6689 (1181). Prince Stoslav Vsevolodovich and the inhabitants of Novgorod and the Polovtsians and inhabitants of Chernigov came to attack Vsevolod Yurievich. Vsevolod decided to repulse them and their forces met on the banks of the Vlena River and they spent there 2 weeks. Vsevolod wanted to defeat Svyatoslav while Svyatoslav army did not want any bloodshed. As a result Dmitrov was passed to Rus' again and prince Vsevolod returned to Vladimir...

Laurentian Chronicle article 388; 10 Nikon Chronicle p. 7 (1180); Hypatian Chronicle articles 618–623 (1180); Vladimir Chronicle p. 74; Moscow Chronicle p. 89 (1180); Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 147; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 55; Nikanor Chronicle p. 35 (1180). Tver Collection article 266, Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 55 (1180), Novgorod Fourth Chronicle p. 15 (1180).

... Igor was there with Polovtsians Konchak and Kobyak and he waited for Svyatoslav near Vyshgorod.<sup>182</sup> ... Stoslav entered Kiev with his brothers. The Polovtsians questioned Stoslav if they were permitted entrance to Lobsk with Igor. Hearing this Rurik called Stoslav with the Polovtsians to him to help with Igor near Dolobsk. He sent Mstislav Volodimirich with the Black Klobuks and voivode Lazar along with his young ones, Boris Zakharich, Sdeslav Zhiroslavich, and Mstislav's regiment from Tripol. Boris Zakharich gathered the people of Vladimir and their prince and relying on God went to attack the Polovtsians. The Polovtsians were many and without fear, relying upon their strength and on Igor's regiment and guard. Mstislav and the Black Klobuks who had come to him, told Mstislav and his brothers, the Russian voivodes their apprehension then emptied their horses of supplies. The Russian voivodes could not last one more night without the supplies. The Polovtsians, seeing that the Black Klobuks were small in number chased after them and the Black Klobuks fled to the Russians, to Mstislav's regiment. The voivode Lazar with his regiment of Rurikovichi and Boris Zakharich and a regiment of prince Vladimir, Sdeslav Zhiroslavich and Mstislav's regiment remained to fight, relying upon God they attacked the Polovtsians. The Polovtsians seeing them did not want to fight with them, the Russians overwhelmed them and the Polovtsians fled before the [regiment] Russians, many went to Chertori and some were killed, and some were cut off. Igor saw the Polovtsians fleeing and so jumped into a boat with Konchak and escaped to Gorodets toward Chernigov. The Polovtsian princes Kozel Sotanovich and Yeltout Konchakov, the Konchakovichi and Totour and Byakobo and Kounyachyuk and Chyugay were killed... they returned to Rurik with a victory...

Hypatian Chronicle articles 618–623.

6692 (1184). Prince Vsevolod and his son Izyaslav Glebovich and Volodimer Svyatoslavovich and Mstislav Davydich and the Glebovichi, Roman and Igor of Ryazan and Vsevolod and Volodimer and Volodimer of Murom decided to head to the Bulgar land and they came there and went ashore and headed to the Great City... they saw our guards in the field... and five men from that regimen approached prince Vsevolod and turned to him... 'Yemyakov's Polovtsians bow to you, prince, we came here to fight against the Bulgars and Bulgarian prince... the prince and retinue took the company of the Polovtsians and headed to the Great City... The Bulgars sailed from Chelmat to Sobekul and then they rode horses and from Torsk our people came

Laurentian Chronicle articles 389–390; 10 Nikon Chronicle p. 9; Hypatian Chronicle articles 625–626 (1182); Moscow Chronicle p. 90 (1183); Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 147–148; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 55; Nikanor Chronicle p. 36 (1183); Tver Collection articles 268–269.

### **The Polovtsians, Berendeis**

6693 (1185). All the Russian princes, Stoslav Vsevolodovich, Rurik Rostislavovich, Volodimer Glebovich, Gleb Svatoslavovich, Gleb Yurievich, Gleb Turovsky Romanovich, Mstislav Davydov-

<sup>182</sup> According to this information, Igor Svyatoslavovich from Novgorod-Seversk was a friend of Konchak and Kobyak.

ich, Vsevolod Mstislavovich attacked the Polovtsians with the help of Galich, Vladimir and Luchsk. They crossed the Ougol River in five days... Vladimir Glebovich, Yuri's grandson, had already gone to Pereyasavl and there were 20 and 100 Berendeis with him... The Polovtsians saw the regiment of Volodimer approaching them... they fled from his regiment although there were 7 thousand arms at their disposal, 400 at the disposal of the Polovtsians and 31 at the disposal of Kobyak. Kobyak had Osoluk, Barak, Targa wounded, Bashukrt, Tarsuk, Izu, Gleb Tirievich, Yeksn, Alak and father-in law of Tolgy Davydovich<sup>183</sup> with his son Tetiy and Kobyak' son, Turunday's son-in-law<sup>184</sup> On 31 June... the Cumans who are called the Polovtsians... The retinue repulsed them and they managed to get weapons and horses...

Laurentian Chronicle cols. 394–396; 10 Nikon Chronicle pp. 11–12; Hypatian Chronicle cols. 628–633 (1183); Vladimir Chronicle p. 75; Moscow Chronicle p. 91; S1497 p. 40; Uvarov Chronicle pp. 196–197; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 150–152 (1184); Kholmogor Chronicle p. 55–56; Codex Supraliensis pp. 23–24; Nikanor Chronicle p. 36; S1493 p. 234; S1495 p. 320; Rogozh Chronicle col. 23; Tver Collection cols. 271–274; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 56; Novgorod Fourth Chronicle p. 16.

### The Polovtsians

6693 (1185). In the same year the grandchildren of Oleg thought to attack the Polovtsians... Igor and two his sons from Novgorod Seversky, Vsevolod from Trubech, his brother Stoslav Olgovich from Rylsk and the Chernigov forces... and they invaded their lands... The Polovtsians knew that their brothers and fathers were killed and friends were captured, so their enemies were going to attack them... they waited for their retinues to come but they failed to do so and decided to attack themselves and captured many people including women and children within 3 days... and then they headed in the direction of the Don to defeat them completely... The remainder returned to their retinue. The archers joined them and they were fighting for 3 days without dropping their spears and without letting them to go down to water and soon all the retinue arrived to help them... the warriors and their horses were suffering in the heat and sweat without water, so they went to it... Seeing the army moving toward them, they rushed to the water and began to battle fiercely with them and some of the army's horses ran off and the forces were weakened... the princes were captured, the boyars, nobles, the entire army were beaten and some of them were captured as well. The Polovtsians returned home with a great victory.

Laurentian Chronicle cols. 397–398; 10 Nikon Chronicle pp. 12–13 col. 2 (1186); Hypatian Chronicle cols. 634–646 (1184–1185) (6692) (1184); Vladimir Chronicle p. 75 (1186); Moscow Chronicle pp. 91–92; S1497 p. 40; Uvarov Chronicle pp. 196–197; Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 150–152 (1184); Kholmogor Chronicle pp. 55–56; Codex Supraliensis pp. 23–24; Nikanor Chronicle p. 36; S1493 p. 234; S1495 p. 320; Rogozh Chronicle col. 23; Tver Collection cols. 271–274; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 56; Novgorod Fourth Chronicle p. 16.

When the Polovtsians heard the Russians approaching, they fled beyond the Don. When the Polovtsians heard about this, they headed toward Pereyasavl and occupied all the towns along the Sula River and were fighting at Pereyasavl all day long and Volodimer Glebovich saw the stockaded town and left the town and his retinue and saw his citizens suffering and started battling and there were many human losses among the members of his retinue, so they returned, capturing many warriors... Prince Igor escaped from the Polovtsians...<sup>185</sup>...

Laurentian Chronicle col. 399; 10 Nikon Chronicle p. 14 col. 2 (1186); Vladimir Chronicle p. 75 (1186); Moscow Chronicle pp. 91–92; S1497 p. 40 (1186); Uvarov Chronicle pp. 196–197 (1186); Radziwiłł Chronicle pp. 150–152 (1186); Kholmogor Chronicle pp. 55–56; Codex Supraliensis p. 23–24 (1186); S1493 p. 234 (1186); S1495 p. 320 (1186); Tver Collection cols. 271–274 (1186); Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 56 (1186); Novgorod Fourth Chronicle p. 17 (1186).

6695 (1187)... Many Polovtsians came to Ryazan and plundered it and went away...

10 Nikon Chronicle p. 18.

<sup>183</sup> Evidence of kinship between the Polovtsian clans and Russians.

<sup>184</sup> Turundai—Turun-Dei, Polovtsian-Tork or Polovtsian-Pecheneg family ties can be traced back here. Consequently, the Torks and Pechenegs acted both on the side of Rus' as Chorni Klobuky and on the side of the Polovtsians.

<sup>185</sup> The escape of prince Igor Svyatoslavovich was organized by the Polovtsian prince Konchak.



6698 (1190)... There were three princes in the Polovtsian regiment: Koldechi, Koban Ourousovich and Begbars Akochaevich...<sup>186</sup>

Hypatian Chronicle article 671.

6699 (1191). Igor with his brother decided to attack the Polovtsians and went back taking their livestock and horses.<sup>187</sup>...

Hypatian Chronicle article 673.

6703 (1195)... Many Polovtsians came to Ryazan and plundered it and went away...

10 Nikon Chronicle p. 23.

6704 (1196)... Vsevolod gave Torchski to his son-in-law Rostislav Ryurikovich and assigned his vicegerents to other places... That same autumn Ryurik sent his messengers to the great prince Vsevolod and his brother David of Smolensk and everybody sent their ambassadors to Yaroslav Vsevolodovich and all his community and the prince of Chernigov. Nobody needed Kiev but they wanted to know how Chernigov had passed to his possession... Ryurik let the members of his armed force and the Polovtsians go...

Uvarov Chronicle pp. 198–199; 10 Nikon Chronicle p. 27; Tver Collection article 284 (1195); Moscow Chronicle p. 97; S1497 p. 42.

6705 (1197). That same autumn the great prince Vsevolod, Yuri Dolgoruky's son, and princes of Ryazan, Murom and Smolensk and prince Davyd and the Polovtsian princes headed to attack the Olgovichs in Chernigov and invaded their lands and took their volosts and towns and plundered them...

10 Nikon Chronicle p. 30.

... In the same year the great prince Vsevolod of Vladimir, Yuri Dolgoruky's son, headed to Chernigov with princes of Ryazan, Murom, Smolensk and Kiev and loads of the Polovtsians... They invaded the land of Chernigov and sowed much evil there. Local princes used the help of the Polovtsians and repulsed them and there was a struggle between them...

10 Nikon Chronicle p. 30; Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension p. 43 (1196); Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 235 (1195–1196).

6707 (1199)... The Great prince Vsevolod Yurievich, Vladimir Monomakh's grandson, and his son Konstantin organized a campaign against the Polovtsians... The Polovtsians fled in the direction of the seaside and the great prince was searching for them and finally decided to spend winter on the Don River.<sup>188</sup>... he came back on the third day...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 414–415; 10 Nikon Chronicle p. 31; Rogozh Chronicle article 24; Tver Collection article 288; Vladimir Chronicle p. 79; Moscow Chronicle p. 99; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 159; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 57.

6710 (1202)... Prince Roman of Galicia attacked the Polovtsians and took a lot of Polovtsian tents and captives<sup>189</sup>...

Laurentian Chronicle article 418; 10 Patriarch or Nikon Chronicle p. 34 (1201); Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 154; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 57 (1201); Vladimir Chronicle p. 79; Moscow Chronicle p. 100; Rogozh Chronicle article 24; Tver Collection articles 291–292.

6711 (1203)... Kiev was occupied by Ryurik and the Olgovichs and all the Polovtsian land...

Laurentian Chronicle article 418; 10 Nikon Chronicle p. 34 (1201); Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension p. 45; Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension p. 240; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 154; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 57; Vladimir Chronicle p. 79 (1202); Moscow Chronicle p. 100 (1202); S1497 p. 43 (1202); Uvarov Chronicle p. 200 (1202); Rogozh Chronicle article 24; Tver Collection articles 292–293.

<sup>186</sup> Koban Ourousovich and Begbars Akochaevich are representatives of governing Polovtsian clans.

<sup>187</sup> Prince Igor opposes the Polovtsians—the enemies of Konchak.

<sup>188</sup> Evidence of the fact that Vsevolod Yurievich had already dealt with the North Caucasian Polovtsians and not the Black Sea ones.

<sup>189</sup> In all likelihood, these are the Belkat-Teginovichs.

... On 16 February Roman arrived in Ovruch to take Ryurik away from the Olgovichi and the Polovtsians...

Laurentian Chronicle article 418; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 160 (1201); Kholmogor Chronicle p. 57; S1497 p. 43 (1202); Uvarov Chronicle p. 200 (1202); Tver Collection articles 292–292.

6713 (1205)... the Russian princes Ryurik of Kiev, Yaroslav of Pereyaslavl, the Grand Prince Vsevolod's son, Roman of Galicia and Mstislav and other princes united to attack the Polovtsians, it was a fierce winter and it was too hard to bear for the Polovtsians... So the Russian princes took many tents and captured a lot of people as well as their livestock and came back with their captives...

Laurentian Chronicle article 420; 10 Nikon Chronicle p. 36 (1201); Novgorod First Chronicle of late Recension p. 240 (1203); Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 161; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 57; Codex Supraliensis p. 25 (1203); Vladimir Chronicle p. 80 (1203); Moscow Chronicle p. 101 (1203); S1497 p. 43 (1203); Uvarov Chronicle p. 200 (1203); Rogozh Chronicle article 24 (1204); Tver Collection article 294 (1204).

6714 (1206)... In the same summer prince of Ryazan attacked the Polovtsians and took their tents<sup>190</sup>...

Laurentian Chronicle article 425; Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 163 (1205); Moscow Chronicle p. 104 (1205).

... In winter of the same year the great prince Vsevolod married his son Yaroslav to Girgeneva, Konchak's daughter<sup>191</sup>...

Laurentian Chronicle article 425; Vladimir Chronicle p. 80 (1205); Moscow Chronicle p. 104 (1205); S1497 p. 44 (1205); Uvarov Chronicle p. 201 (1205).

### **The Polovtsians, Berendeis**

6714 (1206)... All the Olgovichi gathered in Chernigov and Vsevolod Chernmy with his brothers and Volodimer Igorevich and Mstislav Romanovich from Smolensk and many Polovtsians and headed to Galich again... they reached Kiev. Ryurik and Rostislav and Volodimer were with them... And the Berendeis went with them and the Polish headed to Volodimer... The inhabitants of Galich knew about that... and they sent a messenger to ask the price for help... they were going to cross the mountains together... neither the king nor the Olgovichi headed to the mountains and the king went to the mountains making friends with th Polish...

Laurentian Chronicle articles 426–427; 10 Nikon Chronicle p. 50; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 58; Vladimir Chronicle p. 80 (1205); S1497 p. 44; Uvarov Chronicle p. 201; Tver Collection article 303.

... In winter of the same year Vsevolod Chernmy united with his community and the Polovtsians and they headed to Kiev, Ryurik could not repulse them and locked himself in Kiev. They stayed at the town walls for three weeks and then went away empty-handed...

Laurentian Chronicle article 428; 10 Nikon Chronicle p. 51; Vladimir Chronicle pp. 80–81; Uvarov Chronicle p. 201.

### **Polovtsians, Torks**

6715 (1207)... The Olgovichis headed toward Kiev to attack Ryurik again... they surrounded the town and there was a struggle between them... many people were dying from starvation... Mstislav Romanovich was hiding himself in Belgorod... They came to besiege it and there was a combat there and many people died in that town... The invaders broke into the town and started fighting and did much harm and captured and killed a lot of people...

Laurentian Chronicle article 429; 10 Nikon Chronicle pp. 53–54 (1208); Kholmogor Chronicle p. 58; Vladimir Chronicle p. 81; S1497 pp. 44–45; Uvarov Chronicle pp. 201–202; Tver Collection article 304.

### **The Polovtsians**

6715 (1207)... In the same year prince Yury Rostislavovich knew that Vsevolod Yurievich was waging war in Ryazan and he started collecting troops. The Princes of Chernigov and many Polovtsians came to help him in secret so that Vsevolod Svyatoslavich was removed from Kiev and he could

<sup>190</sup> The struggle was with the Volga Polovtsians.

<sup>191</sup> Alexander Nevsky's father is mentioned here. Yurjevna is evidently a transformed variant of Girgeneva. Konchak became related to Polovtsian khan clan of the Girgenevs becoming the leader in the Polovtsian steppes.

take up his place assigning his vicegerents everywhere and setting the Polovtsians free, rewarding them...

10 Nikon Chronicle p. 59 (1208); Kholmogor Chronicle p. 58; S1497 pp. 44–45; Uvarov Chronicle pp. 201–202.

### **The Ugrians**

6616 (1208)... The Ugrians expelled Volodimer Igorevich from Galich and put his brother Roman on the throne...

S1497 p. 45; Uvarov Chronicle p. 202.

### **The Polovtsians**

6717 (1209)... Oleg and Gleb and Izyaslav Vladimirovich and Mikhailo Vsevolodovich with the Polovtsians headed to Davyd, prince of Murom, and then in the direction of Pronsk asking, 'Why was it passed to Pronsk, not to us?' And Pronsk was besieged... So they arranged that Murom should go to Davyd and Pronsk—to Mikhail...

Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 163.

6718 (1210)... In the same spring the Polovtsians attacked Pereyaslavl, plundered many villages there and came back with lots of captives...

Laurentian Chronicle article 435; 10 Nikon Chronicle p. 62 (1211); Vladimir Chronicle p. 83 (1211); Moscow Chronicle p. 108; S1497 p. 45; Uvarov Chronicle p. 203.

Izyaslav Vladimirovich and Mikhailo Vsevolodovich and the Polovtsians headed to the Grand Prince Vsevolod. After Vsevolod had known about that, he sent his son Yuri and his troops and he repulsed them and defeated the regiment of Izyaslav, so Izyaslav himself and Igor and Mikhail fled behind the Oka River with rests of his retinue...

Radziwiłł Chronicle p. 163.

### **The Ugrians**

6719 (1211)... The Great prince Vsevolod married off his son Yuri. The inhabitants of Galicia took the Ugrians. They attacked prince Roman Igorevich and his community, beat them and fled...

Uvarov Chronicle p. 203; S1497 p. 45.

### **The Polovtsians**

6723 (1215). In the same year Volodimer, Vsevolod's son, knew that the Polovtsians were heading to Pereyaslavl... he met them at the river and there was a struggle. Both sides suffered great losses... The Polovtsians gained a victory, they defeated many Russians and even managed to capture Volodimer and take him to their camping-ground...

Laurentian Chronicle article 438; 10 Nikon Chronicle p. 69 (1211); Kholmogor Chronicle p. 60; Tver Collection article 315; Vladimir Chronicle p. 84 (1216); Moscow Chronicle p. 110; S1497 p. 46; Uvarov Chronicle p. 204.

### **The Polovtsians**

6726 (1218)... Volodimer, son of Vsevolozh came to his brother from the land of the Polovtsians and gave him Starodub...

Laurentian Chronicle article 42; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 61 (1217); Vladimir Chronicle p. 85 (1219); Moscow Chronicle p. 115 (1217); S1497 pp. 47–48 (1217); Uvarov Chronicle p. 205 (1217).

... prince Gleb of Ryazan and his brothers came to the tent with boyars and landlords; suddenly he started slashing them and Polovtsians... So he got rid of them in this internecine feud to concentrate power in his hands...

Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension p. 58; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 61 (1217); Tver Collection article 325 (1217); Vladimir Chronicle p. 84; S1497 pp. 47–48 (1217); Uvarov Chronicle p. 205 (1217).

6727 (1219)... In the same year the Illegitimate Gleb Vladimirovich and the Polovtsians came to Ryazan and Igor and his retinue there and they battled... Igor managed to defeat the fratricide Gleb and killed many Polovtsians, few of them managed to survive...

Laurentian Chronicle article 444; 10 Nikon Chronicle pp. 81–82 (1218); Kholmogor Chronicle p. 61 (1218); Tver Collection article 329; Vladimir Chronicle p. 85 (1220); Moscow Chronicle p. 116; S1497 p. 48; Uvarov Chronicle p. 205.

... In the same year prince Igor of Ryazan sent his messengers to the great prince George and his brother Yaroslav to ask for help against the Polovtsians and sent his troops and voivode Yakun Timofeevich to help them. Prince Ingvar of Ryazan supported them against the Polovtsians. They listened to them approaching so they beat them unmercifully and returned to their lands...

Nikon Chronicle p. 82 (1218); Moscow Chronicle p. 116.

### **Ugrians, Polovtsians**

6727 (1219)... Mstislav Mstislavich and Vladimir Ryurikovich headed to attack the prince of Galich, he decided to repulse and them and engaged the inhabitants of Galich, the Polish and Czechs and Mordvins and Ugrians and Mstislav defeated them and the prince and his wife and son were freed and the victor stayed in Galich... That same winter the Ugrians drove Mstislav away from Galich, so the prince stayed there...

S1497 p. 48; Uvarov Chronicle p. 205; 10 Nikon Chronicle p. 86.

### **The Ugrians**

6729 (1221)... Mstislav fought against the Ugrians and defeated them and beat many of them and their prince...

Laurentian Chronicle article 445; S1497 pp. 48–49; Uvarov Chronicle p. 206.

### **Tatars, Polovtsians**

6731 (1223). Pagans came... Sometimes they are called Tatars, sometimes—Taumens or Pechenegs... and we know that they captured a lot of Yases, beat them and killed them... went to Taurmenia, Cuman land, and reached the Polovtsian swell which is close to Rus'. Mstislav of Kiev and Mstislav of Toropich and Chernigov and other princes decided to attack them... And the Russian princes came and they were fighting against them and they were defeated, few of them managed to survive.. that happened on 30 May...

Laurentian Chronicle cols. 445–447; Complete Chronicle Archive cols. 503–509; Nikon Chronicle pp. 89–92 (1225); Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension pp. 62–63 (1224); Novgorod First Chronicle of Late Recension pp. 255–256 (1224); Vladimir Chronicle p. 85; Moscow Chronicle pp. 118–119; S1497 pp. 49–50 (1224); Uvarov Chronicle pp. 206–208 (1224); S1493 p. 234; S1495 p. 320; Rogozh Chronicle cols. 27–28 (1226); Tver Collection cols. 336–342 (1224); Vologda-Perm Chronicle pp. 66–67 (1224); Novgorod Fourth Chronicle p. 28 (1224); Pskov First Chronicle p. 177 (1224); Hypatian Chronicle cols. 743–744 (1224); Mazurin Chronicle p. 68; Kholmogor Chronicle pp. 62–64; Codex Supraliensis p. 28.

### **The Polovtsians**

6737 (1229)... Puresh's son and the Polovtsians defeated Purgas and beat all the Mordvins and Russians and Purgas hardly managed to escape...

Laurentian Chronicle article 452; Moscow Chronicle p. 123 (the Mordvins and Purgas reached Nizhni Novgorod and the inhabitants of Nizhni Novgorod defeated them... Puresh's son and the Cumans defeated Purgas and beat all the Mordvins and Russians, and Purgas hardly managed to escape; Hypatian Chronicle articles 755–760.

### **Polovtsians, Tatars**

6737 (1229)... In the same year the Saksins and Polovtsians appeared before the Bulgars and Tatars and the Bulgar guards came, near the river called Jayiq...

Laurentian Chronicle article 453; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 65.

### **The Tatars,**

6740 (1232)... That same year the Tatars arrived and spent the winter without reaching the Great Bulgar City...

Laurentian Chronicle article 459; Vladimir Chronicle p. 87; S1497 p. 52 (1231); Uvarov Chronicle p. 209 (1231); Tver Collection article 359.

### The Ugrians

6740 (1232)... Demian Tysyatsky went there with his troops and prince Daniel gathered his army as well recruiting the brave young men one could find at that time... seeing the flag of Vasilko and warriors driving away the Ugrians... then he saw two brothers fighting and covered with blood because of sword wounds... (1233)... and the prince picked up the flag... there were many victims among the Ugrians and a few of Daniel's boyars... (1234)... they came back to Galich and divided its lands between boyars and voivodes...

Hypatian Chronicle articles 767–771.

### The Polovtsians

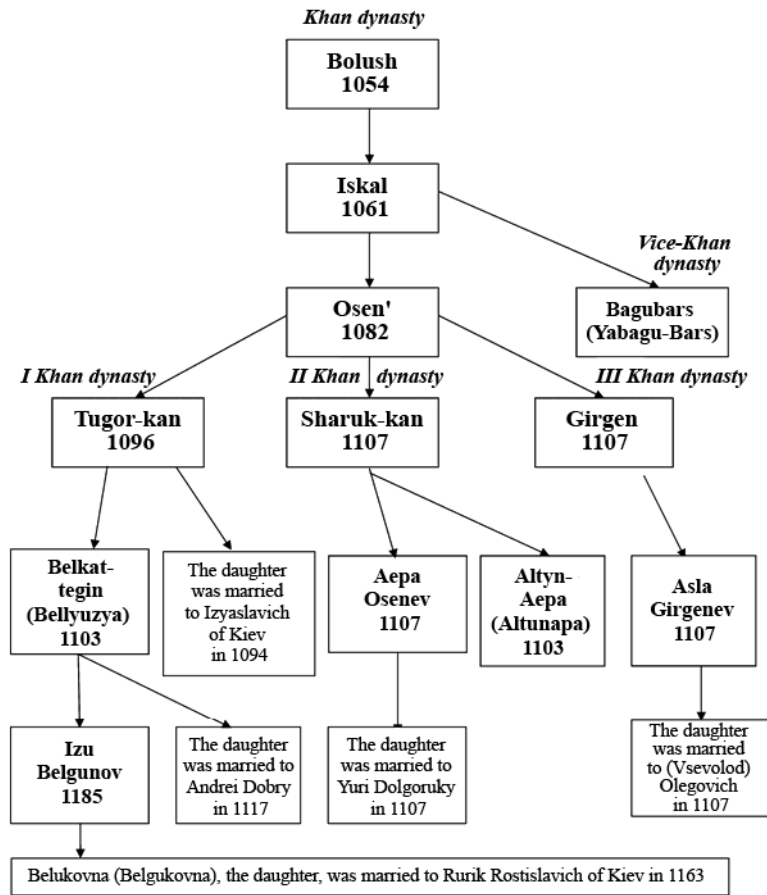
6743 (1235). Prince Izyaslav Mstislavovich of Smolensk, Roman Rostislavovich's grandson, and the Polovtsians and prince Mikhailo, Vsevolod Cherny's son, and inhabitants of Chernigov and Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich and the inhabitants of Novgorod went to Kiev with their armies and occupied it and Vladimir Ryurikovich of Kiev was captured by the Polovtsians and taken to their land... Then they accepted a ransom from him and let him return to Rus'.

Nikon Chronicle p. 104; Novgorod First Chronicle of Old Recension p. 73; Vladimir Chronicle p. 87; Moscow Chronicle p. 126; S1497 p. 52; Uvarov Chronicle p. 210; Nikanor Chronicle p. 42; Tver Collection article 363; Vologda-Perm Chronicle p. 70; Novgorod Fourth Chronicle p. 30; Kholmogor Chronicle p. 66.

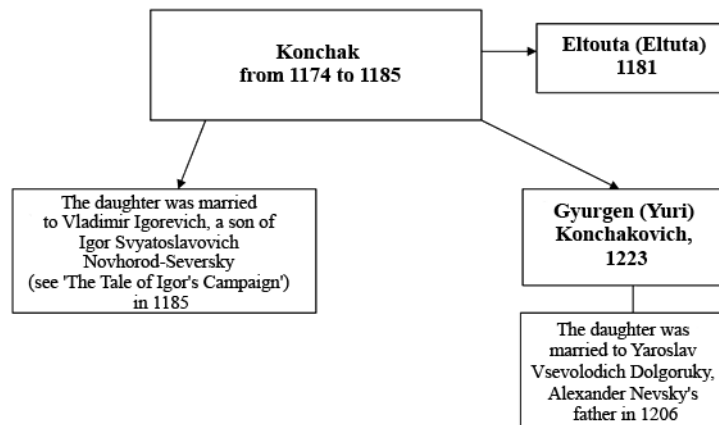
### Abbreviations

Vladimir Chronicle, Novgorod Second Chronicle-Vladimir chronicle Novgorod Second (archive) Chronicle // Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles.—Moscow: Science, 1965.—Vol. 30.—239 p.  
 VPL—Vologda-Perm Chronicle // Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles.—Moscow-Leningrad: Publishing House of the USSR Academy of Sciences, 1959.—Vol. 26.—413 p.—IC—Hypatian Chronicle // Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles.—St. Petersburg: Printing House of M. Alexandrov, 1908.—Vol. 2.—938 p. LC—Laurentian Chronicle // Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles.—St. Petersburg: Publishing House of the USSR Academy of Sciences, 1926.—Vol. 1.—578 p. MC—Mazurin Chronicle. Chroniclers of the 17th century // Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles.—Moscow: Science, 1968.—Vol. 31.—262 p. MLC—Moscow Chronicle of the late 15th century // Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles.—Moscow-Leningrad: Publishing House of the USSR Academy of Sciences, 1949.—Vol. 25.—464 p. N1C OR, N1L LR—Novgorod First Chronicle of Old and Late Recensions // Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles.—Moscow-Leningrad: Publishing House of the USSR Academy of Sciences, 1950.—Vol. 39.—640 p. N3C, N4C—3–4 Novgorod Chronicles // Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles.—St. Petersburg: Printing House of Edward Prats, 1841.—Vol. 3.—309 p. N4C, PC—4–5 Novgorod and Pskov Chronicles // Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles.—St. Petersburg: Printing House of Edward Prats, 1848.—Vol. 4.—360 p. NC, S1493, S1495—Nikanor Chronicle. Abridged Chronicles of the Late 15th Century // Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles.—Moscow-Leningrad. Publishing House of the USSR Academy of Sciences, 1962.—Vol. 27.—418 p. PC, SfC—5–6 Pskov and Sofia Chronicles // Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles. —St. Petersburg: Printing House of Edward Prats, 1851.—Vol. 5.—275 p. PNC—Nikon Chronicle // Complete Collections of Russian Chronicles.—Moscow: Science, 1965.—Vol. 9–10.—244 p.; 266 p. Radziwill Chronicle // Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles.—Leningrad: Science, 1989.—Vol. 38. — 178 p. RC, TC—Rogozh Chronicle. Tver Collection // Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles.—Moscow: Science, 1965.—Vol. 15.—186 p. S1497, UC—Chronicle of 1497. Chronicle of 1518 (Uvarov Chronicle) // Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles. Publishing House of the USSR Academy of Sciences, 1963.—Vol. 28.—410 p.—Novgorod and Kiev abridged Chronicles. Codex Supraliensis.—Moscow: Synod printing house, 1836.—172 p. KC, DC—Kholmogor Chronicle. Dvina Chronicle // Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles.—Leningrad: Science, 1977.—Vol. 33.—249 p.

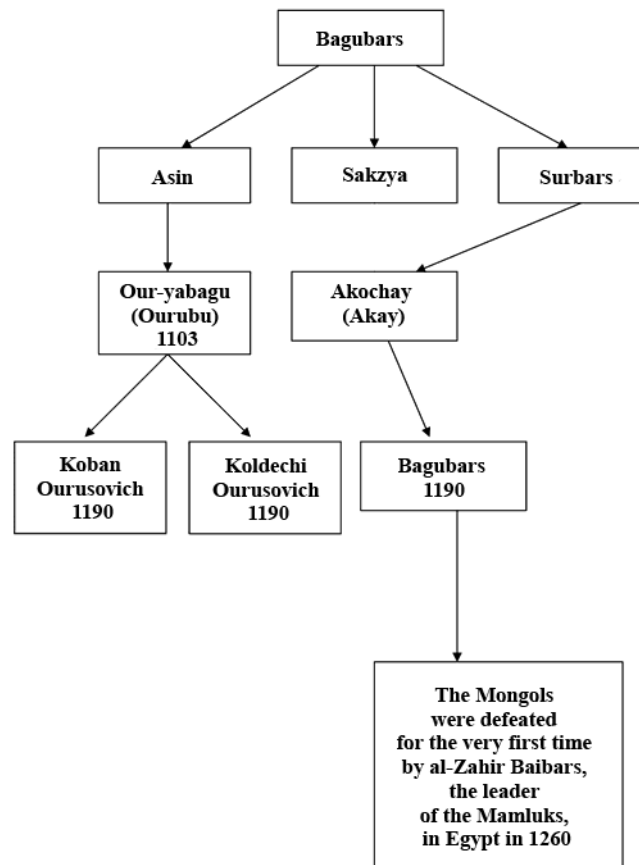
### Genealogy of the Polovtsians (the Kipchak people) according to the Russian Chronicles



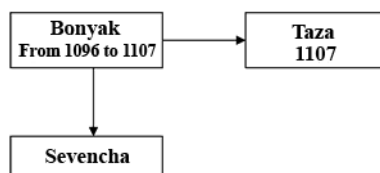
### The lineage of Polovtsian prince Konchak related to the III Khan dynasty of Girgeneviches



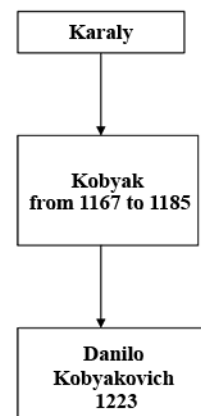
### The Yabagu (Bagu) Vice-Khan dynasty



### The Polovtsian prince Bonyak's lineage



### The Polovtsian prince Kobyak's lineage



*Valery Aksyonov prepared the material*

### Ibn al-Athir on the Mongol-Tatar campaigns

Ibn al-Athir Abu al-Hassan Ali 'Izz al-Din was born in 1160 in the region of Athir in Saudi Arabia. In his youth, he took part in the Egyptian Sultan Saladin's war against the crusaders. Later on, he took a high position at the court of the Baghdad caliphs. Ibn al-Athir died in 1232. He left several volumes of his work to his descendants, the most valuable of them being 'The History of the Syrian Atabegs' and 'General History', until the event of 1230.

The works of Ibn al-Athir are notable due to his integrity regarding veracity in the majority

of the data presented and they possess obvious literary merits. Other than his account of the Crusades, he skillfully described the Mongol-Tatar invasion of Western Asia and Eastern Europe, to which he was a contemporary.

We quote from Ibn al-Athir's account of the Tatar invasion of 'the Islamic countries' and Europe: Tiesenhausen V.G. Collection of Materials Related to the Golden Horde History. — Vol. 1: Excerpts from Arab Essays.—Saint Petersburg, 1884.

'... 617 AD<sup>1</sup>... Concerning the Tatar Invasion of Muslim Countries. For some years, I have resisted chronicling this event, considering it terrible and feeling too disgusted to tell it: I have started it and once again stopped. For whom is it easy to tell the world about the death of Islam and Muslims, and for whom is it pleasant to remember? Oh, that my mother had not given birth to me, that I had died before it and been faithful to eternal oblivion! Although many of my friends urged me to chronicle this event, I have stopped several times. I have realized, however, that leaving it incomplete would prove unbeneficial. The retelling of this case includes the memory of a great event and huge misfortune, which had never been seen by day or night, which enveloped all creation, especially Muslims; if anyone said that the world had not experienced anything similar since Almighty and Supreme Allah created man, he would be correct. Indeed, the chronicles do not contain anything similar or suitable. From the events that they describe, the most terrible is that which was done by Nebuchadnezzar to the Israelis by massacring them and destroying Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> But what is Jerusalem in comparison with those countries made empty by the condemned, where every city is twice as big as Jerusalem! And what are the Israelis in comparison with those whom they executed! Indeed, in one particular city, there were more residents killed than in all of Israel. Perhaps human beings will not see anything similar to this event until the End of Days and the end of the world, with only the exceptions of Gog and Magog. As for the Antichrist<sup>3</sup>, he will take pity on those who followed him, and will scathe those who come to resist him; those Tatars did not take pity on anyone—they beat women, men, and babies and ripped out the wombs of the pregnant and killed the unborn. Truly, we belong to Allah and will return to Him; there is neither might nor power, only that of Supreme and Great Allah!

This was how the event took place. The sparks of it spread to all sides and the evil of it spread over everyone; it covered everything like a cloud blown by the wind. A certain nation left the outskirts of China and headed for the lands of Turkestan, that is, Kashgar and Balasagun, and from there to the regions of Mawarannahr, namely to Samarkand, Bukhara, and others, conquering them and treating their residents in a way that we will tell of. Then, one detachment of theirs moved to Khorasan and cracked down on them, seizing, ravaging, beating and robbing; they then moved on to Ray, Hamadan, the Jebal lands and all other regions, stretching up to the borders of Iraq. Then, they moved to the lands of Azerbaijan and Arran<sup>4</sup>, pillaging and killing the majority of the population. Only a select few survived, having chosen the right path. Within less than a year, something unprecedented took place. Having dealt with Azerbaijan and Arran, they then went to the Shirvan Gorge and seized its cities; only one fortress remained safe, the residence of their king. From there, they made for the

<sup>1</sup> 28.03.1220–24.02.1221.

<sup>2</sup> Nebuchadnezzar was a king of Babylon from 605–562 BC, who conquered the territory of Syria and Palestine in 605 BC. In 597, 587–586 BC, he destroyed rebellious Jerusalem and liquidated the Kingdom of Judah.

<sup>3</sup> In the original, apparently, iblis.

<sup>4</sup> Arran is Caucasian Albania.



lands of the Alans, Lezgins and other nations that resided in those places, where they left massacre, robbery and destruction in their wake. They then moved into the lands of the Kipchaks, one of the largest Turkic tribes, slaughtering all who resisted them. Those who survived fled to the swamps and peaks of the mountains, leaving their land, which had been occupied by these Tatars. They moved swiftly, with nothing more than the time they needed to march delaying them. The other detachment went to Ghazni and its surrounding areas, as well as to its neighbours, India, Segestan, and Kerman. There, they acted in the same way as the first detachment had, but even worse. Nothing similar to this had ever been heard of before. As a matter of fact, Alexander the Great, regarding whom the chroniclers agree was the ruler of the world, was not able to take it over as fast, but took ten years to conquer it. He did not kill anyone and was satisfied with the people's obedience. Over the course of one year, these Tatars occupied a larger, better, more cultivated territory, populated with the most righteous people with regards to character and way of life on the earth. In the countries that they have not attacked, everyone spends their nights in fear, afraid and watching for them, wondering if they will come or not. They do not need to have foodstuffs or supplies in tow, as they always have cows, sheep, horses and other animals, and they eat nothing but their meat. The animals that they ride rake the land with their hooves and eat plant roots, not knowing barley. That is, by making encampments, the Tatars do not need anything external. Regarding their religion, they worship the sun at its rise and consider nothing forbidden. That is why they will eat any animal, even dogs and pigs, among others. They do not know marriage, and a woman does not know only one man. When children are born, they do not know their fathers<sup>5</sup>. At that time, Islam and Muslims came across different misfortunes that no nation had experienced. One of those misfortunes was the Tatars, may Allah disgrace them! They came from the east and performed acts that would be considered terrible by anyone who heard about them. These acts also<sup>6</sup> include—may Allah condemn them—the invasion of the Franks<sup>7</sup> from the west to Syria, where they attacked Egyptian lands, as well as their conquest of the harbour of Damiette. They would have conquered the countries of Egypt, Syria, and other if not for Almighty Allah's mercy and helping hand against them. Furthermore, swords were drawn as civil strife broke out between those who had survived these two detachments. We beg Allah to aid Islam and Muslims, as there is no better helper, supporter and defender of Islam...

### Concerning the Tatars' Actions with Alans and Kipchaks

Crossing the Shirvan Gorge, the Tatars went through these lands, in which there were many nations, including the Alans, Lezgins and other Turkic tribes. They robbed and killed many Lezgins, some of whom were Muslims while others were disbelievers. Attacking the people of this land through which they passed, they arrived to Alans, a populous nation, which had received word of them. The Alans made their best effort and, mustering a multitude of Kipchaks fought against the Tatars. Neither party defeated the other. Then the Tatars sent a message to the Kipchaks: *'We and you are of the same kinship'*,<sup>8</sup> while these Alans are not. Thus, you needn't help them; your faith is different from their faith, and we promise you that we will not attack you and bring you as much money and clothing as you want. Leave us with them'. A deal regarding money, clothes, etc. was made. The Tatars indeed brought them all that had been agreed upon, and the Kipchaks left the Alans. The Tatars then attacked the Alans and massacred the people. They rampaged, robbed, took prisoners and then rose against the Kipchaks, who had calmly disbanded based on the peace previously agreed upon. The Kipchaks only received word of them when the Tatars attacked and invaded their land. The Tatars began to attack again and again, taking twice as much as they had previously given the Kipchaks. Having heard the news, those Kipchaks living further away fled without conflict and retreated; they hid in swamps while others hid

<sup>5</sup> This message contradicts the information of other sources.

<sup>6</sup> That is, unfortunately.

<sup>7</sup> Of Western Europeans.

<sup>8</sup> Emphasis added; many sources testify the kinship of ancient Tatars and Kipchaks. For example, see the message of the Persian historian al-Gardizi in the 11th century.—*B. Kh.*

in the mountains, and some went to the land of Russians. The Tatars halted in Kipchak. This land is rich in pastures all year round. There are cool places in summer with numerous grazing fields while in winter it is warm, also with numerous pastures, that is, in the low-lying places on the coast. They arrived in Sudak, a city of Kipchak from which they received their goods. It was situated on the coast of the Khazar Sea<sup>1</sup> and hosted ships where clothing was sold as well as girls, slaves, Burtas furs, beavers, squirrels and other items from their land. The Khazar Sea is a body of water connected to the Constantinople strait. Upon arriving in Sudak, the Tatars seized the city and its residents scattered; some of them went up to the mountains with their families and belongings while others went to the sea and left for the Rum country, which was ruled by Muslims of Kilij-Arslan's family.

### **Concerning the Actions of the Tatars with Kipchaks and Russians**

As mentioned before, when the Tatars conquered the lands of the Kipchaks and the Kipchaks scattered, an enormous multitude of them fled to the land of the Russians. This neighboring country was vast, long and wide, and their residents followed the Christian faith. After their arrival, they joined forces with the Russians and decided by common consent to fight against the Tatars if they were to attack. The Tatars occupied Kipchak lands for some time, but then, in 620,<sup>2</sup> they made their way towards the land of Russians. Having received word of the Tatar advance, the Russians and Kipchaks (who had prepared for battle with the Tatars) made started for the Tatars as to meet and repel them before they could come to their land and attack. Having received word of the advance, the Tatars retreated. A desire to attack the Tatars arose among Russians and Kipchaks, stemming from the supposition that the Tatars had turned tail for lack of strength and fear of fighting them; the Russians and Kipchaks diligently began pursuing them. The Tatars did not stop retreating, and the Russians and Kipchaks followed them for twelve days. The Tatars then accosted the Russians and Kipchaks, who only became aware of their presence when they unexpectedly stumbled upon them. For the Russians and Kipchaks, it was completely unexpected as they had considered themselves safe from the Tatars, sure of their own superiority. They had hardly prepared for a battle when Tatars attacked them with superior force. Both sides fought with unheard-of perseverance and the battle lasted for several days. At last, the Tatars gained the upper hand and won. The Kipchaks and Russians retreated quickly after the Tatars severely defeated them. The majority of those retreating were killed. Only some of them managed to survive and everything they had previously possessed was looted. Those who survived arrived in their land looking miserable, owing to the long distance traveled and to their defeat. They were pursued by throngs of Tatars, who robbed and ravaged the country as most of it became deserted. Many of the noblest merchants and the wealthiest of Russians departed together, taking their valuables with them and sailing away in several ships as to cross the sea and move to the Muslim countries...

### **Concerning the return of the Tatars from the Lands of the Russians and Kipchaks to their King**

Having dealt with the Russians and ravaged their lands as we have said, the Tatars left and turned towards Bulgar at the end of 620. When the people of Bulgar caught wind of the Tatar approach, they set up ambushes for them in some areas. They rode against them, met them in battle, and, luring them to the place of ambush, attacked them from behind in such a way that the Tatars found themselves surrounded. They were attacked from all sides. Many were killed and few survived. There was said<sup>3</sup> to be up to 4000 of them. They left for Saksin, returning to their king, Chinggis Khan, and the land of the Kipchaks was liberated. Those who escaped from them returned to their land... In order to avoid a break in communication, we impart these tidings concerning the Western Tatars all at once... '.

*Material prepared by Bulat Khamidullin*

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<sup>1</sup> That is, the Black Sea.

<sup>2</sup> 4.02.1223–23.01.1224.

<sup>3</sup> Killed or survived?

### Julian's information on the Hungarians, Bulgarians and Tatars

In 1937, a book by L. Bendefy was published in Budapest where he presented two Hungarian records of the 13th century, describing the travels of Friar Julian, a Dominican missionary, to Eastern Europe.<sup>1</sup> One of these documents is a record of Julian's own recollection from his first journey, later recorded by brother Richard. The second is one of Julian's letters concerning his second journey. L. Bendefy, the aforementioned Hungarian scholar, devoted an enormous amount of time to researching these sources alongside Julian's travels, with the work being published in Budapest in 1936.<sup>2</sup>

It can be gleaned from Friar Richard's record that even before Julian, perhaps between 1231–1232, Hungarian Dominicans, aware from their chronicles that their fellow pagan countrymen were somewhere in the East,<sup>3</sup> sent 4 missionaries to look for them. Three of them died within the first three years of their wanderings, but the fourth, brother, Otto, returned, having discovered something. It seems that he visited some steppes close to the Volga river and received some information about 'Eastern Hungarians'. Although he died on the ninth day after his return, he managed to tell of the road to 'Greater Hungary'.

A new group of missionaries, consisting of 4 people (including Julian), followed in his footsteps.

The timing of this journey can be determined precisely by comparing different chronological indicators found in the descriptions of the first and second journeys. The title of Rich-

ard's record itself associates the 'discovery' of 'Greater Hungary' with the time of 'Pope Gregory IX', that is, from years 1227–1241. In a text about Hungarian king Béla IV, it reads: 'with the safe-conduct charters and funds from Béla, present king of Hungary', from which it can be concluded that the journey started before Béla came to the throne, that is, before September 1235.

During his second journey, Julian found the city of Bulgar ravaged by Mongol-Tatars (autumn 1237), but Suzdal still remained untouched (it was sacked in spring 1238). From that it is apparent that for the second time, Julian was in Bulgaria and Rus' in the winters of 1237 and 1238.

Calculations of the distances between individual points on Julian's route during his first journey and calculations of the duration of stops along the way allowed L. Bendefy to outline the following scheme of the journey: Hungary (departing from some sort of Dominican monastery in either Pest, Buda, Alba Regia or Strigonia, during first days of May 1235)—Stuhlweissenburg—Fünfkirchen—Belgrade—Niš—Sofia—Philippopolis—Adrianople—Constantinople—Tmutarakan (Matracha)—Alania—the 'Vela' country (?)—Greater Bulgaria (Julian arrived there on his own around 20 May 1236)—the country of the 'Eastern Hungarians' and 'Tatars' (Julian went back on 21 June, 1236)—the land of 'Mordovians'—Nizhny Novgorod—Vladimir—Ryazan—Chernihiv—Kiev—Galich... 27 December 1236. Julian crossed the Carpathians somewhere around 8 January 1237. He was in Buda to report to the king and in the spring of the same year he was in Rome, where his report to the Pope was recorded by Richard. In the autumn of 1237, Julian started his second journey and finished it before spring, 1238.

We quote Julian's messages, translated into Russian, from the manuscript: S. Anninsky The Hungarian missionaries bulletin of the 13–14th centuries concerning the Tatars and Eastern Europe // Historical archive.—Vol. 3—Moscow—Leningrad: USSR Academy of Sciences Publishing House, 1940.—pp. 71–112.

<sup>1</sup> These sources were also published earlier: in 1748, 1761, 1763, 1849, 1859, 1861, 1900, and others.

<sup>2</sup> Bendefy L. Az ismeretlen Julianusz. Az elzo magyar azsiakutato eletrajza es kritikai meltatasa.—Budapest, 1936.

<sup>3</sup> Modern researchers suppose that the ancestral homeland of the Hungarians is the legendary 'Greater Hungary', before their resettling to Pannonia, located in the Cis-Ural Region and the Lower Cis-Kama Region. An early Hungarian burial site from the latter half of the 8th and 9th centuries serves as vivid testimony—studied by Kazan-based archaeologists near the Bolshiye Tigany River in the Alexeyevsky District in the Republic of Tatarstan. It would also be useful to remind the reader of the etymological similarity of such ethnonyms as 'Magyar', 'Majar', 'Mishar'.

**‘Concerning the existence of Greater Hungary, discovered  
by Friar Richard during the reign of Pope Gregory IX’.**

It was found in the history of Christian Hungarians that there seemed to be yet another Hungary—the oldest, from which seven chieftains and their tribes had started to look for a new place to live, because their land was too small for all their people. After they moved through and ravaged a slew of tsardoms, they finally came to the land which we now know as Hungary. At that time, it was known as the Pastures of Rome. They preferred it to all other previous countries and chose it as their home. As for those already living there, they became their subjects. While there, the Greater Hungarians were finally converted to Catholicism by their first king, Saint Stephen,<sup>4</sup> while the original Hungarians, from whom these ones came, remained infidels and hitherto had remained pagan.

So, having learned of this from Hungarian history, the monks were concerned that the Hungarians were still under the delusion of disbelief. They sent four brothers to search for them in every corner of the known world, where they, with God's grace, would be able to find them. With the help of ancient descriptions, they knew that they could be found somewhere in the East—where exactly, however, they did not know.

The aforementioned brothers who had been sent searched for them for three years on sea and on land, but as their journey was a treacherous one, their search was unsuccessful, all but for one exception. A priest named Otto—under the guise of a merchant name—travelled further. In one pagan tsardom, he found someone who spoke his language and discovered which lands they lived in, but instead of going there, he went back to Hungary to gather more brothers as to then return with them and preach the Catholic faith there. Broken by his labors, however, he passed away eight days following his return, after he had imparted the route to find them.

The Friars, seeking the conversion of disbelievers, sent four more of their own to look for the above-mentioned tribe once more. Having received the blessing of their friars, they changed their monastic garbs for secular ones, dawned pagan beards and hairstyles, and made their way through Asen Bulgaria<sup>5</sup> and Romania<sup>6</sup> with the safe-conduct charters from Bela (the King of Hungary at that time), and reached Constantinople. After 33 days at sea, they arrived to the city of Matrika in a country called Sichia,<sup>7</sup> where the tribal leader and his people identified as Christians, using Greek letters and Greek priests. Their king, they say, had 100 wives. All men shaved their heads and carefully grew beards—except the gentry, who, as the sign of their nobility, left a bit of hair above the left ear, shaving the rest of the head.

There they made a stop for 50 days in hope of expected companions... Moving on from there... they crossed the desert over the course of thirteen days, where they found no trace of humanity and no dwellings. Eventually they arrived in the country of Alania<sup>8</sup> where Christians and pagans lived together. There were as many settlements as tribal leaders, and none of them were subject to one another. There was constant war between settlements and tribal leaders...

The friars found no companions with whom to continue their travels there due to a fear of the Tatars, who, as they heard, were nearby...

Crossing the desert without any road or trail, they arrived to the city of Bunda in the Saracen country of Vela on the thirty-seventh day of their journey.<sup>9</sup>...

After that, friar Julian remained alone<sup>10</sup> and not knowing how to continue his journey, became a servant to a Saracen priest and his wife, who were making their way to Greater Bulgaria. They arrived together.

<sup>4</sup> (He) ruled from 1000–1038.

<sup>5</sup> We are speaking about Danube Bulgaria and its ruler, Ivan Asen, who reigned II from 1218–1241 with the title of 'Tsar of all the Bulgars and Greeks'.

<sup>6</sup> The territory of The Byzantine Empire.

<sup>7</sup> The story concerns the Western Caucasus—the territory of the Circassians

<sup>8</sup> It was situated by the Caspian Sea. The borders were represented by the Terek, Kuma and Yaik rivers.

<sup>9</sup> According to L. Bendefy, the country of Vela was located between the Ural and Emba rivers.

<sup>10</sup> Two of his companions returned to Hungary, and one of them died on the way.

Greater Bulgaria was a large and powerful tsardom with rich cities, but its people were all pagans<sup>11</sup>. In the kingdom, they say that soon they ought to become Christians and obey the Roman Church, but they do not know the exact day, having heard that from their wise men<sup>12</sup>.

In one large city of the same region which apparently boasted 50,000 warriors,<sup>13</sup> a friar found a Hungarian woman, who had been married into those lands from the country he was looking for.

She showed him the roads that he needed to take, saying that in two days he would definitely find the Hungarians he was looking for. He did, for he found them near the large Etil River.<sup>14</sup> Seeing him and learning that he was Hungarian, many were very pleased by his arrival: they brought him through all of the houses and settlements, asking him about the king and the kingdom of their Christian brothers. And they listened carefully to everything he wanted to tell them concerning the Faith and other things alike. Since their language was indeed Hungarian, they understood him and he understood them. They were pagans and knew no God, but didn't worship idols either. However, they lived like animals. They didn't cultivate the earth, they ate horse, wolf, and the like, as well as drinking horse milk and blood. They had vast reserves of horses and arms and were very brave in war. They knew from ancient legends that those Hungarians were descended from them, but did not know where they were. The Tatar people resided<sup>15</sup> very closeby. And these Tatars, clashing with Hungarians in war, had been unable to win, but on the contrary were defeated in the very first battle.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the Tatars chose them for friends and allies, and in forming an alliance, they completely ravaged 15 tsardoms.

In this country of Hungarians, the aforementioned friar found the Tatars as well as the Tatar tribal leader's ambassador, who spoke Hungarian, Russian, Cuman, Teutonic, Saracen and Tatar languages. He said that the Tatar army, which was within 5 days distance from, wanted to go to war against Alamannia,<sup>17</sup> but they were waiting for another army, which had been sent to obliterate the Persians. He told them that beyond the country of the Tatars, there was an enormous nation, taller and bigger than any other, with heads so gargantuan that they didn't seem to fit on their bodies. It seemed as though this nation desired to leave their country, fight any who resisted, and destroy all kingdoms that they would be able to conquer<sup>18</sup>... when Julian wanted to return, the Hungarians pointed out another road to him—one upon which he could reach home faster...

### Friar Julian's Letter on the Mongol War

To the Father venerable in Christ, the Bishop of Perugia by divine right, legate of the Apostolic See. Friar Julian from the Order of Preachers in Hungary, the servant of your Holiness, sends his tribute, as well as his devoted respect.

When I, for my obedience, had to go to Greater Hungary with my brothers as companions, and we, willing to complete this journey, reached the far borders of Rus', we found out the real truth that all who were called pagan Hungarians, and Bulgars, and numerous kingdoms there, were completely destroyed by the Tatars.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>11</sup> In this case, the epithet 'pagans' is purposefully applied to the Islamic population.

<sup>12</sup> It is not clear what it is about.

<sup>13</sup> According to A. Khalikov and others, such a city in the Middle Volga Region could only have been 'The Great City'—Bilyar.

<sup>14</sup> In this case, the Belaya River is referred to as Ak-Idel in Turkic.

<sup>15</sup> The message is difficult to comprehend. We will recall the events at the beginning of the summer in 1236, when there was a small 'Tatar' force of no more than 30,000–50,000 soldiers.

<sup>16</sup> The following message (see the information of Ibn al-Athir) regards the loss of the Mongol-Tatars long before their aggression against Rus'.

<sup>17</sup> Alemania—Germany in general—Western Europe.

<sup>18</sup> It is quite possible that the legend existed to persuade the Europeans of the necessity of the 'Tatar' state as a buffer from a more serious aggressor.

<sup>19</sup> Concerning the conquest of Volga Bulgaria, we can read in the Laurentian Chronicle that: 'In the summer of 6746 (1236.—*B. Kh.*) ... In the same autumn. The faithless Tatars came from Eastern countries to Bulgarian land, overtaking

And who those Tatars are and in what they believe we will describe as best we can in this letter.

Some people told me that before now, the Tatars lived in the country where the Cumans live now, and truly they are called sons of Ishmael (hereof Ishmaelites), and now they desire to be called Tatars.

And the country where they came from is called Gotta, and Reuben called it Gotta.

The first Tatar war began this way. There was a Leader in Gotta, named Gurguta, who had a sister—a maiden, who after her parents death was the head of the family and, they said, conducted herself like a man. She attacked a neighboring tribal leader and robbed him of his possessions. And then, after some time, she and the Tatar people tried to attack the previously mentioned leader again. He warily started a war with her, defeated her in combat, captured her, put her army to flight and raped her as vicious revenge, took her virginity and shamefully beheaded her. When her brother, the above-mentioned leader of Gurguta heard of this, he sent an ambassador to that man, telling him: 'I have learned that you, after capturing and raping my sister, have beheaded her. Know that you have committed hostile acts against me. If, perhaps, my sister was troubling you, directing your revenge on movable property, you could have applied to me in looking for a fair trial for her. Or, if looking for revenge, you defeated her, captured her and took her virginity, you could have married her. If you wanted to kill her, you should not have taken her virginity. And now you have twice taken your revenge: you have both disgraced her virgin purity, and miserably put her to death. Thereupon, in revenge for the murder of this girl, you should know that I will come after you with all of my power'.

Upon hearing this and understanding that he could not withstand an attack, the murderous leader and his people fled to Sultan Ornach, abandoning their own land.

Thereafter, there was a leader in the country of the Cumans, named Vitut, whose wealth was rumored to be so remarkable, that even the cattle on his fields drank from golden trenches.

Another leader from the Buz River, named Gureg, attacked him for his wealth and was victorious. Defeated, he fled to the above-mentioned Sultan Ornach with two of his sons and a few other survivors of the war. But the sultan, recalling the offense he had once taken from him, hung him on the gate and subjected his people to his power. The two sons of Vitut fled at the same moment, and as they had no other refuge, they returned to Gureg, who had previously robbed them and their father. Gureg killed the oldest brother in a bestial rage, tearing him limb from limb with horses. The youngest fled to Gurguta, the Tatar leader, and asked him to take revenge upon Gureg for robbing his father and killing his brother, saying that Gurguta would gain honor, and he himself would gain retribution and vengeance for the death of his brother and the robbery of his father. It was done, and when they claimed victory, the youth again asked Gurguta to take revenge upon Sultan Ornach for the miserable death of his father, saying that his father's people were captured and apparently enslaved there, and that he would help him once his army began the offensive.

Gurguta, intoxicated by a second victory, readily agreed to the youth's request and rose against the Sultan, gaining a glorious and honorable victory for himself.

So, having received worthy praise for his victories nearly everywhere, the aforementioned Tatar leader, Gurguta, drove all his forces against the Persians due to previous strife which he had with them. He gained a most honorable victory there and utterly subdued the Persian kingdom.

After that, he became bolder and, considering himself the mightiest on Earth, he began to rise against tsardoms, intending to subjugate the entire world. In doing so, he came to the country of the Cumans, defeated them, and subjugated their land. From there, they returned to Greater Hungary, from where our Hungarians hail, and attacked them for fourteen years and in the fifteenth year, subdued them, as we were told by the pagan Hungarians themselves. Having subjugated them and turning to the west, the Tatars conquered five major pagan kingdoms over the course of a one year or slightly longer period. They took Sascia and Fulgaria as well as 60 highly fortified castles that

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the glorious Great Bulgarian city and assaulting anyone with their weapons—from the old to the young and even babies. They confiscated many goods, razed the city, and took all the land for their own... '.

were so crowded that one could hold 50,000 armed soldiers. They went on to attack Vedin, Mero-via, Poidovia and the tsardom of Mordans. There they encountered two kings: one king, along with his people and his family, bent his knee to the leader of the Tatars. The other and a few of his people made way to highly fortified places in order to defend themselves with all their might.

Being on the borders of Rus', we now know what is close to the real truth: the force moving towards the western countries was divided into 4 parts. One legion was nearby the Etil River on the borders of Rus', and they approached Suzdal from the East. The other part to the South had already attacked the borders of Ryazan, another Russian kingdom. The third part was camped opposite the Don River, nearby the Voronezh castle, also part of the Russian kingdom. As we were told by Russians, Hungarians and Bulgars who had fled before them, they waited for the land, rivers and swamps to freeze over in winter as it would be easy for the multitude of Tatars to then plunder the entirety of Rus' and all Russian land.

It must be understood that the first leader, Gurguta, who started this war, has died at this point. His son, Khan, rules in his place<sup>20</sup> and lives in the large city of Ornach, where his father had initially reigned. Such is his life: his palace is so big that a thousand horsemen can ride through one door and bow before him without dismounting from and then ride out through the other.

The leader has built himself an enormous bed, towering on golden columns—a bed, I say, made of gold with jewel coverings, on which he sits in his glory, clothed in precious garments. And the doors in this palace are gold, and through them his horsemen come freely and safely, bowing to him. And if foreign ambassadors, unmounted or ahorse, touch the threshold of the door, they are struck down with a sword at the same moment—every stranger must pass through in the highest of awe.

Sitting so pompously, he has sent troops to different countries, that is, across the sea, we believe; and you have also heard what he did there. He has sent another prestigious army to the sea against the Cumans, who have fled to Hungarian lands<sup>21</sup>. The third army, as I said, has besieged the entirety of Rus'.

I will tell you the following truth about the war. They are said to shoot farther than other nations do. From the first encounter at war, their arrows are said not to fly, but to rain. Rumour has it that they fight with swords and spears less skillfully. They create their formations in such a way that one Tatar commands ten people and a centurion commands a hundred. This is done shrewdly, so that approaching scouts cannot hide themselves among them, and if any man falls in battle, he can be replaced immediately, and so that people from different nations who speak different languages cannot betray them. In all conquered tsardoms, they immediately kill princes and noblemen who could one day pose a threat for rebellion. Those fit for war as well as simple villagers are armed and sent against their will into battle. Those less able to fight are left to cultivate the land. The wives, daughters and female relatives of those who have been killed or those sent to fight are divided between those who remain to work the land, appointing a dozen or more to each man, and are forced to further call themselves Tatars (emphasis mine—*B. Kh.*). The warriors sent to fight are not given much gratitude at all, even if they fight well and win; if they die in battle, they remain unburied, but if they retreat while fighting, they are mercilessly killed by the Tatars. Thus, they prefer death during battle to murder by Tatar swords. They fight more bravely, not to live longer but in order to die sooner.

They do not attack fortified castles, but first devastate the land, rob the people and then, by amassing the people of the country together, force them to besiege their own castles.

I will write nothing about the size of their army other than that they send all the warriors from all conquered kingdoms to fight in front of them.

Many believe, and through me, the Suzdal prince gave his word to the Hungarian king, that the Tatars are holding counsel day and night to come and conquer the Christian Hungarian Kingdom.

<sup>20</sup> Julian mistook the title of 'Khan' for a proper name; here it can be inferred that this Khan was Ögedei, a son of Chinggis Khan. Chinggis Khan himself is referred to as Gurgut for some reason.

<sup>21</sup> After being defeated by the Mongol-Tatars, some Kipchaks (a major part of the population remained) left for Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and the Caucasus.

For they say that they have an intention to make a course for the conquest of Rome and further. Therefore, the Khan<sup>22</sup> sent ambassadors to the Hungarian king. Passing through the territory of Suzdal, they were captured by the prince of Suzdal, and the letter sent to the Hungarian king was confiscated; I even saw the ambassadors with their companions.

I have brought the above-mentioned letter, given to me by the prince of Suzdal, to the Hungarian king. The message itself is written in the heathen letters of Tatar. Therefore, the king has found many who can read it but has not found anyone who can understand it. While passing through Cumania, we found a pagan who translated it for us. The translation is as follows: 'I, Khan, ambassador of the Kingdom of Heaven, whom He gave power over the land to raise obedience to me and to suppress resistance thereto, marvel at you, Hungarian King. Although I have sent ambassadors to you 30 times, you do not send any of them back to me, nor do you send your ambassadors with any letters. I know that you are a rich and powerful king, have many warriors, and you rule a great kingdom. That is why it is difficult for you to submit your will to me. It would be better and more useful if you submitted to me voluntarily. Moreover, I have learned that you keep my Cuman slaves under your patronage; that is why I order you to desist in keeping them for yourself so that I will not turn against you on their behalf. It is easier for Cumans to flee than it is for you—they are nomads without houses, living in tents. They can escape. You live in houses and have castles and cities—how can you escape my grasp?'

I will not fail to mention the following. While once again at the Roman court, on the way Greater Hungary, I was outrun by my four brothers. As they traveled through the territory of Suzdal, they met some Hungarian pagans who were fleeing from the Tatars on the border of the tsardom and were eager to adopt Catholicism and to get to Christian Hungary. Having heard of this, the previously mentioned Suzdal prince was angered and, having called upon the brothers mentioned above, forbade them to preach Roman law to the Hungarians, later expelling from the land, which happened, however, without issue. Not wanting to return, the brothers made way for the city of Recessue, looking for ways to go to either Greater Hungary, the Morducans, or to the Tatars themselves. Having left behind two brothers from their numbers and employing translators, they came to the second prince of the Morducans on the day of Apostles Peter and Paul. On the same day they arrived, the prince addressed all people and families, as we said above, swearing allegiance to the Tatars. The following later happened to these two brothers: it is entirely unclear whether they died or were sent to the Tatars by the prince.

The remaining two brothers, surprised at the delay of their compatriots, sent a translator on the recently-celebrated day of St. Michael, hoping to verify the lives of their brothers, but the Morducans attacked and killed the translator.

Seeing that the country was occupied by the Tatars, that the regions were fortified, and that success was impossible, we returned to Hungary with our comrades. And though we were among many troops and robbers, thanks to prayer and the merits of the saintly Church, we reached our brothers and the cloister safely and soundly.

However, when the Scourge of God comes and approaches the sons of the Church and the bride of Christ, may Your Majesty, with your great foresight, deign carefully to anticipate what the brothers must do and how they should act.

Furthermore, in order not to keep silent, I inform you, Father, that a Russian churchman who transcribed something historic for us from the Book of Judges, says that the Tatars are the Madi-anits who attacked Ketim, just as the sons of Israel were defeated by Gedeon, as read in the Book of Judges. Having fled, the aforementioned Madianits settled near a river called Tatar—that is why they are called Tatars'.

*Material prepared by Bulat Khamidullin*

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<sup>22</sup> In this case—Batu Khan.



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### Abbreviations

- AST (RT AS): Academy of Sciences of Tatarstan ADT: Archaeological Discoveries in Tatarstan AC: Archaeological Congress SHACS: State Hermitage Archaeological collected studies AEB: Archaeology and Ethnography of Bashkiria (Ufa) AEMR: Archaeology and Ethnography of Mari Region (Yoshkar-Ola) BSHAMR: Bulgarian State Historical and Architectural Museum-Reserve (Bulgar, Spassk region TR) SIBSHANMR: State Institution Bilyar State Historical and Archeological and Natural Museum-Reserve QUA: Questions of Urals Archaeology (Perm; Izhevsk) VSHCM: Volgograd State Historic-Cultural Museum HQ: magazine 'Questions of History' (M.) BSSKS: Bulletin of Scientific Society for Tatar Studies (Kazan) VMRS: Volgograd Museum of Regional Studies QFUL: Questions of Finno-Ugric Linguistics SAHMC: State Academy for the History of Material Culture SHM: State History Museum EPU: Elabuga State Pedagogical University MMIA: Magazine of the Ministry of Internal Affairs MMPE: Magazine of the Ministry of Public Education NEDRAS: Notes of the Eastern Department of the Russian Archaeological Society. Saint Petersburg
- BGA: Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum. Leiden.
- BSOAS: Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies
- CCRC: The Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles RA: magazine 'Russian Archaeology' (M.) RAS: Russian Academy of Sciences RARISS: Russian Association of Scientific-Research Institutes of Social Sciences RAS: Russian Archaeological Society NLR: National Library of Russia SA: magazine 'Soviet Archaeology' (M.) SAI: Svod arkhelogicheskikh istochnikov SOS: magazine 'Soviet Oriental Studies'.
- CSDRPC: Collected Studies of Descriptions of the Regions and Population of the Caucasus SB RAS: Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences SMHRS: Samara Museum for Historical and Regional Studies, named after P. Alabin SP IOS RAS: Saint Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences ST: magazine 'Sovetskaya tyurkologiya' (Baku) SE: magazine 'Sovetskaya etnografiya' (M.) TA: magazine 'Tatarskaya arkheologiya' (Kazan) PIE: Proceedings of Institute of Ethnography AS USSR WARLD: Works of the Ancient Russian Literature Department CWTS: Collection of Works in Turkic Studies UAM: Ural Archaeological Meeting USU: Udmurt State University FU: magazine 'Finno-Ugrian studies' KAEE: Khwarezm Archaeological-Ethnographic Expedition CE: Christian East
- EI2: The Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2d ed., 1960–1979–...
- GAL SB: Geschichte der Arabischen Litterature. Supplement Band.
- GSBH: Greek Sources of Bulgarian History. Sofia.
- IA: Institute of Archaeology RAS IOS: Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences Collection of Articles RVB: 'Research on the Great Bulgar'. Moscow: Nauka, 1976.
- ICTR: International Connections, Trade Routes, and Cities of the Middle Volga Region of the 9–12th Centuries. Materials of the International symposium. Kazan, 8–10 September 1998. Kazan, 1999.
- JA: Journal Asiatique. P.
- MS: Manuscript.
- MSFO: Memoires de la Societe Finno-Ougrienne. Helsinki
- MSNI: Moscow Society of Nature Investigators MPRRR: Materials on the protection, restoration and repair of the records of the TSSR Kazan.
- NAA: Narody Azii i Afriki M. NAV: 'New in the archaeology of the Volga region. Archeological contemplation of the center of Bilyar ancient town'. Kazan, 1979.
- PSAHE: Proceedings of the Society of Archaeology, History, and Ethnography at Kazan University IE: Institute of Ethnography M. ILLA F C: Depository of Manuscripts and Textual Criticism of Institute of Language, Literature and Art named after G. Ibragimov of AS of the TR, Fund, Case KSHPU: Kazan State Humanitarian-Pedagogical University KSHLU: Kazakh State Humanitarian Law University KSU: Kazan State University SMIA: Short Messages of the Institute of Archaeology (M.) SMIMC: Short Messages of the Institute of Material Culture KU: magazine 'Kazan Utlary' LSU: Leningrad State University LI OS AS USSR: Leningrad Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences USSR MSU: Moscow State University MRA: Materials and Researches on the Archaeology USSR MHTT: Materials on the History of the Turkmen and Turkmenia Vol. 1.—M.—L., 1939.
- PSTU: Perm State Humanitarian Teachers' Training University
- RIHLE: Research Institute of History, Linguistics, Literature and Economics NE: Numismatics and Epigraphics (M.)
- UCFR: Medieval Kazan: formation and development. Materials of an International Scientific Conference. Kazan, 1–3 June 1999. Kazan, 2000.
- ZDMG: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft.

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**THE HISTORY OF THE TATARS SINCE ANCIENT TIMES**  
In Seven Volumes

Volume 2  
**Volga Bulgaria and the Great Steppe**



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**Ring with a graph.** Gold. Shank and shield, polished. The shield is weld to the shank.  
Diameter: 2.7 cm. 7th century. Pereshchepina complex,  
Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.1930/187.  
Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Ring with a monogram of Kubrat the Patrician.**  
Gold. Shank and shield formed by two cut cones  
with their foundations connected and cast; polished.  
Diameter: 2.6 cm; shield diameter: 1.6 cm.  
Byzantium. 7th century. Pereshchepina complex,  
Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava.  
Inv. No.W-1053. Hermitage Museum,  
Saint Petersburg



**Ring with Kubrat's monogram.** Gold.  
Shank and shield formed by two cut cones  
with their foundations connected and cast;  
polished. Diameter: 2.7 cm; diameter of the shield:  
1.2 cm. Byzantium. 7th century.  
Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina  
village, near Poltava. Inv. No.W-1052.  
Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Part of a necklace of eight Byzantine coins.** Gold; chiselling, solder. Adorned with indents for insets. Diameter: 1.8–2.1 cm. Between 637–646. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava.  
Inv. No. 1930/184. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





**Byzantine coin (solid).**  
 737–741. Leo III. Gold, chiselling.  
 Diameter: 2 cm,  
 weight: 4.2 g, alloy 980o.  
 Nagavskaya Cossack village,  
 Volgograd oblast, mound 3, grave 1.  
 Excavations by A. Kiyashko, 1986.  
 Inv. No.24023/4, Volgograd Regional  
 History Museum, Volgograd



**Byzantine coin (solid).**  
 751–757. Constantine V. Gold,  
 chiselling. Diameter: 1.9x1.8 cm,  
 weight: 3.95 g, alloy 950o.  
 Baranovka village, Volgograd oblast,  
 mound 13, grave 1. Excavations  
 by I. Sergatsky, 1988. Inv. No.26735,  
 Volgograd Regional History Museum,  
 Volgograd



**Hand-washing station. Ladle with a rosette.** Silver; chiselling, gild. The ornament is chiseled on the reverse side; separate details on the front are finished with engraving. Length: 38.5 cm. Byzantium, Constantinople. Between 582 and 602. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.W-825. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





**Sasanian bowl with cosmological detailing.** Silver. Forging, background erasing, chiselling with a sharpened chisel and puncheons. The foundation is spoon-shaped, and the leg is soldered. Diameter: 14.9 cm. Iran. 5–7th centuries. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.S–271. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Cup/jar.** Silver. Two soldered parts — the upper and lower — form the body. A leg and round handle with a cushion are also soldered to it. Height: 24 cm. First half of the 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. Nos.S-259, 260. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg











**Hand-washing station. Faceted jar.** Silver, chiselling, solder, gild. The hand is cast separately and soldered to the coronet and body. The antique mask on the handle; dolphins near the coronet, the figure of a panther, and floral ornamentations were achieved through a combination of chiseling and background removal; some details are cut with an engraver. Height: 28 cm. Byzantium, Constantinople. Between 582 and 602. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.W-826. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





**Sasanian cup.** Gold. Forging. The foundation is spoon-shaped, and the leg is soldered to the foundation.  
Length: 33 cm. Iran. 5th–beginning of the 7th century. Pereshchepina complex,  
Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.Z–525.  
Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





**Sasanian jar.** Gold. The foundation is moulded on a rotating machine. The leg and handle are soldered, and the cover is hinged. Height: 36 cm. Iran. 5th–beginning of the 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.Z–524. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Composition of eight goblets.** Silver. Undecorated corpus with cannelures and entrelacs. Legs are soldered.  
Height: 10–11.8 cm. First half of the 7th century. Pereshchepina complex,  
Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. Nos.S–261–267, 269. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Goblet.** Silver. Height: 10–11.8 cm. First half of the 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.S–266. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





**Goblets.** Gold. Chiselling from the face. Complex legs with a small bell inside are soldered. Height: 9.8–10.5 cm.  
First half of the 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava.  
Inv. Nos.Z-529–536. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Goblet.** Gold. First half of the 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava.  
Inv. No.Z-534. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Rhyton.** Gold. Forging, soldering. Ornamental stripes are soldered on the foundation. Length: 29 cm. 7th century.  
Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.1930/6.  
Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





**Spoon.** Gold; forging, soldering. Adorned with indents for insets. Length: 20.5 cm. 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.1930/7. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Buckle and ferrule of a belt set.** 6th century. Byzantium. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. Nos.1930/77,78. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Buckle.** First third of the 7th century. Byzantium. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.1930/92. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





**Belt cap (reverse side).** First third of the 7th century. Byzantium. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.1930/91. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



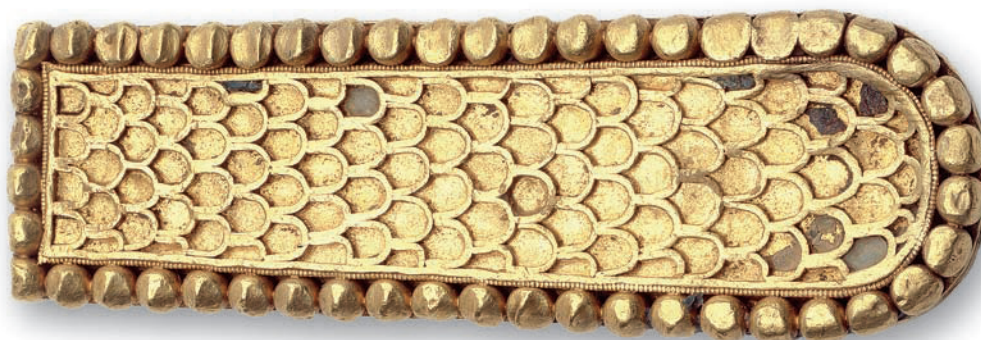
**Pseudo-buckles of a belt.** Gold, glass; forging, cast, false granulation. Holders, hollow beads, ornamental stripes and loops are soldered to the foundation. Adorned with glass insets. Length: 5.2 cm. 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. Nos.1930/36–40. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Oval belt badges with pseudo-buckles.** Gold, glass; forging, soldering, false granulation. Holders, hollow beads, ornamental stripes and loops are soldered to the foundation. Adorned with a glass inset. Length: 3 cm. 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. Nos.1930/59–61. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Belt badges.** Gold, garnet, amethysts; forging, soldering, granulation. Adorned with inlays of precious stone; garnet and amethysts housed in the indents. The inlays are framed by a flat-circled ornament soldered to the foundation and granulation, while two loops are attached to the reverse side. Size: 2.2x2; 2x1.9; 2.2x1 cm. Mid-7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. Nos.1930/51, 52, 53. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Strap tip from a belt set with pseudo-buckles.** Gold, glass, paste; forging, soldering, false granulation. Cloisonnes, hollow beads and ornamental stripes are soldered to the foundation. Adorned with a cloisonnes ornament with glass insets. Length: 11.7 cm. 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.1930/87. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Ornately shaped belt badge with pseudo-buckles.** Gold; forging, soldering, false granulation. Length: 2.8 cm. 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.1930/89. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Strap tips of a belt with pseudo-buckles.** Gold, glass; forging, soldering, false granulation. Cloisonnes, hollow beads and ornamental stripes are soldered to the foundation. Adorned with a glass inlay; cloisonnes ornament with glass inlays. Length: 2.4 and 2.7 cm. 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. Nos.1930/88, 90. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Belt clasps with pseudo-buckles.** Gold, glass; casting, forging, false granulation. Holders, hollow beads, ornamental stripes and loops are soldered to the foundation. Length: 4.5 cm. 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. Nos.1930/34, 35. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





**Double bracelets with inlays on the shield.** Gold, emeralds; forging, gem-cutting, polish, burnish.  
A flat ring is connected to the shield with a hinge. Diameter: 7.4; 7.9 cm. Mid-7th century.  
Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. Nos.1930/8, 9.  
Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Torc with an inlay on the shield.** Gold, emerald; forging. A ring of twisted wire rod is connected to the shield with a hinge. Diameter: 17.5–21.2 cm. Mid-7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.1930/15. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Necklace made from Emperor Heraclius coins.** 7th century. Byzantium. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.1930/24. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Bracelets.** 7th century. Byzantium. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava.  
Inv. No.1930/10. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Bracelet.** Bronze. Diameter: 7 cm. Southern Siberia. 9–10th centuries BCE.  
Inv. No.5531/1465. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





**Semi-spherical badge of a horse harness.** Gold, traces of bronze, glass, paste; forging, soldering, embossment, granulation. Holders and a granulated border are soldered to the foundation. Adorned with glass insets. The sidepiece of the foundation has a relief pattern. Diameter: 3.6 cm. 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.1930/137. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





**Strap tip from a horse harness.** Gold, glass, paste; forging, soldering, embossment, granulation. Cloisonnes and a granulated border are soldered to the foundation. Adorned with a cloisonnes ornament with glass inlays. The sidepiece of the foundation has a relief pattern. Length: 6 cm. 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.1930/145. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Strap tips of horse harness.** Gold, glass, paste; forging, soldering, granulation. Cloisonnes and a granulated border are soldered to the foundation. Adorned with a cloisonnes ornament with glass inlays.

Length: 9 cm. 7th century.

Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. Nos.1930/32, 33. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Strap tips of horse harness.** Gold, glass, paste; forging, soldering, granulation. Cloisonnes and a granulated border are soldered to the foundation.

Adorned with a cloisonnes ornament with glass inlays.

Length: 6.6; 6.5 cm. 7th century. Pereshchepina complex,

Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava.

Inv. Nos.1930/30, 31. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Fragment of a single-edged sword.** Iron, traces of wood, gold; forging, embossing.

Veneer is embossed and features a border of flat gold circles. Length: 21.4 cm. Mid-7th century.  
Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. No.1930/2. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





**Veneer of a pommel in the form of two cambered plates with a relief ornament.** Gold; embossment.  
Size: 46x2 cm. Latter half of the 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava.  
Inv. Nos.1930/97a, b. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg.



**Veneer of the upper side of the quiver.** Gold; embossment. Consists of a plate with a relief ornament and forge-rolled stripes. Size: 16.7x20 cm. Latter half of the 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. Nos.1930/95, 115. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

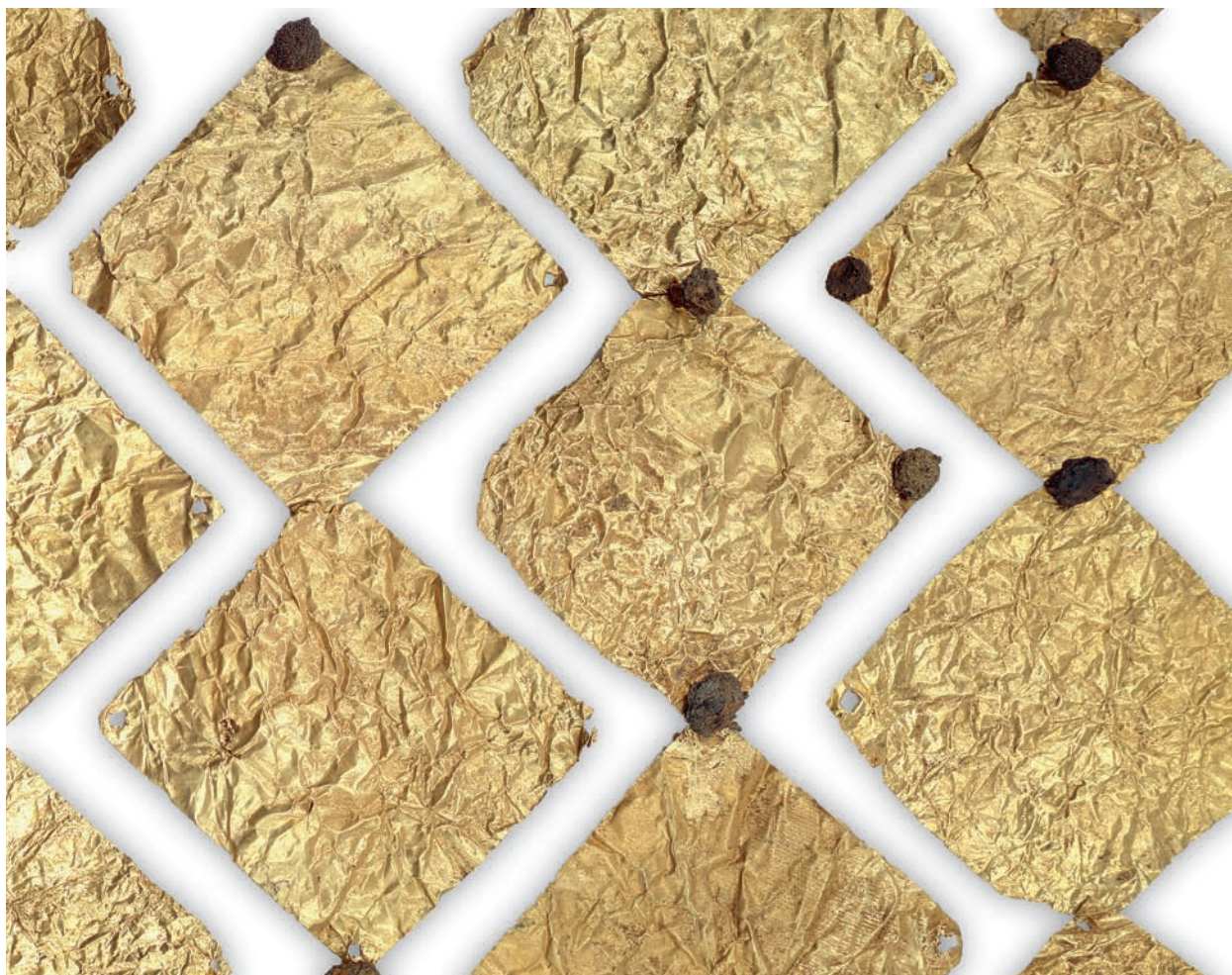


**Sword with a circular pommel in a golden scabbard, and without it.**

Gold, iron, glass; forging, roll forging, granulation. Holders, ornamental stripes, and granulation figures are soldered to the foundation; glass inlays.

First letters of the Greek alphabet are etched into the ferrule of the handle's veneer.  
Length: 94.2 cm. 7th century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava. Inv. Nos. 1930/1, 135, 136. Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg





**Veneer of a funeral construction with some remaining nails.** Gold foil, iron; forging.  
Length of plates: 6.8–7.2 cm. Latter half of the 2nd century. Pereshchepina complex, Malaya Pereshchepina village, near Poltava.  
Inv. Nos.1930/133, 134. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

**Amphora.** Clay. Height: 45.2 cm.  
7th century. Samara oblast.  
2nd Uren burial site, mound 4, grave 2.  
Excavations by R. Bagautdinov, 1988.  
Archaeological funds  
of Samara State University,  
Samara







**Flask.** Red clay, wheel, glassing. Latter half of the 8th century. Diameter: 18 cm; height: 27 cm. Volgograd oblast, accidental pre-war discovery. Inv. No.1551, Volgograd Regional History Museum, Volgograd





**Jar.** Clay. Height: 21.1 cm. End of the 7–8th centuries.  
Samara oblast. 1st Novinki mound earthen burial site.  
Excavations by D. Stashenkov, 1999.  
Inv. No.418/28. The P. Alabin Samara Regional History  
Museum, Samara



**Jar.** Clay. Height: 27.5 cm. End of the 7–8th century.  
Samara oblast. 1st Novinki mound earthen burial site.  
Excavations by D. Stashenkov,  
1999. Inv. No.418/17. The P. Alabin Samara Regional  
History Museum, Samara



**Vessel.** Clay. Height: 8.0 cm. End of the 7–8th century.  
Samara oblast. 1st Novinki mound earthen burial site.  
Excavations by D. Stashenkov, 1999. Inv. No.418/2.  
The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara



**Vessel.** Clay. Height: 14.7 cm. End of the 7–8th century.  
Samara oblast. 1st Novinki mound earthen burial site.  
Excavations by D. Stashenkov, 1999. Inv. No.418/1.  
The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara



**Sunak.** Bone. Length: 15.6 cm. End of the 7–8th centuries. Samara oblast. 1st Novinki mound earthen burial site. Excavations by D. Stashenkov, 1999. Inv. No.418/27. The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara



**Onlays.** Bone. Length: 9; 11.8 cm. End of the 7–8th centuries. Samara oblast. 4th Brusyansky mound burial site. Excavations by S. Zubov, 1996. KP–23249/29–31. The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara





**Onlay.** Bone. Length: 6.8 cm. End of the 7–8th century. Samara oblast. 4th Brusyansky mound burial site. Excavations by S. Zubov, 1996. KP-23249/29–31. The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara



**Plate.** Bone. Length: 11.4 cm. Shilovo mound burial site. End of the 7th–first half of the 8th century. Excavations by R. Bagautdinov, 1992. Archaeological funds of Samara State University, Samara



**Plates.** Bone. Length: 5.4 cm (part), 5.2 cm. Shilovo mound burial site.  
End of the 7th–first half of the 8th century. Excavations by R. Bagautdinov, 1992.  
Archaeological funds of Samara State University, Samara

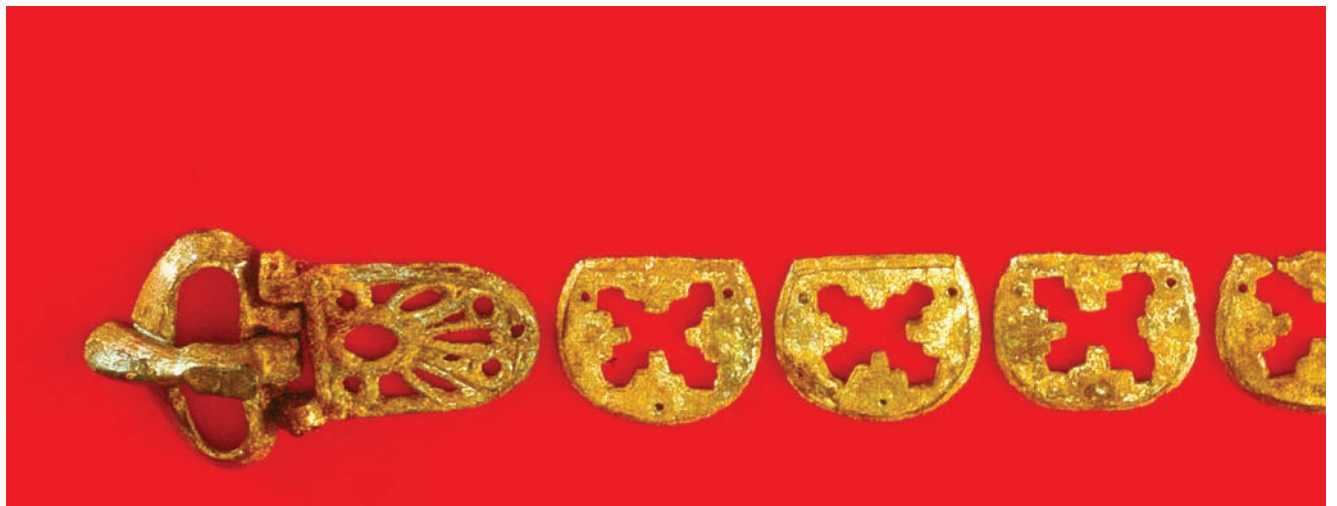




**Plate.** Bone. Length: 2 cm. Shilovo mound burial site. End of the 7th–first half of the 8th century. Excavations by R. Bagautdinov, 1992. Archaeological funds of Samara State University, Samara



**Bracelets. Ring.** Bronze. Diameter: 6.8, 7.2, 2.1 cm. End of the 7–8th century. Samara oblast.  
 1st Novinki mound earthen burial site. Excavations by D. Stashenkov, 1999.  
 Inv. Nos.418/18, 19, 20. The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara





**Belt set.** Silver. End of the 7–8th centuries. Samara oblast. 1st Novinki mound earthen burial site. Excavations by D. Stashenkov, 1999. Inv. Nos.418/7–16. The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara



**Belt set: buckle, onlays, strap cap.** Silver. Cap length: 6 cm. 7th–beginning of the 8th century. Samara oblast. 2nd Brusyany burial site, mound 22, grave 4. Excavations by N. Bogachev, 1991. Archaeological funds of Samara State University, Samara



**Necklace. Beads, clasp nail, buttons.** Glass, bronze. End of the 7th–8th century.  
Samara oblast. 1st Novinki mound earthen burial site. Excavations by D. Stashenkov, 1999.  
Inv. Nos.418/22–26. The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara



**Ear pick.** Bronze. Length: 8.5 cm. End of the 7–8th centuries. Samara oblast.  
1st Novinki mound earthen burial site. Excavations by D. Stashenkov, 1999. Inv. No.418/22.  
The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara



**Earring.** Gold.  
Height: 3.0 cm.  
End of the 7–8th century.  
Samara oblast.  
2nd Brusyansky mound  
burial site. Excavations  
by A. Bogachev, 1988.  
Inv. No. 389/1.  
Samara Regional History  
Museum named after  
P. Alabin, Samara



**Earring.** Gold.  
Height: 4.0 cm.  
End of the 7–8th century.  
Samara oblast.  
2nd Brusyansky mound  
burial site. Excavations  
by A. Bogachev, 1989.  
Inv. No. 390/1.  
Samara Regional History  
Museum named after  
P. Alabin, Samara



**Earrings.** Gold.  
Height: 4.2 cm.  
End of the 7–8th century.  
Samara oblast.  
1st Shelekhmet mound  
earthen burial site.  
Excavations by N. Lifanov,  
1999. KP-22976/34–35.  
The P. Alabin Samara  
Regional History Museum,  
Samara



**Stamp seal.** Lead. Diameter: 3 cm. 8th century.  
Samara oblast. 1st Malaya Ryazan burial site, mound 1, grave 6.  
Excavations by N. Bogachev, S. Zubov, 1990.  
Archaeological funds of Samara State University, Samara





**Belt cap.** Silver. Length: 4.6 cm; width: 2.4 cm. 8th century. Samara oblast. 3rd Osinovka mound burial site. Excavations by V. Myshkin, 1993. KP-23247/5.  
The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara



**Mirror depicting a rider on horseback.**  
Billon, casting. Diameter: 6.7 cm.  
8–9th centuries. Tsarev village,  
Volgograd oblast, mound 27, grave 1.  
Excavations by V. Mamontov, 1975.  
Volgograd Regional History Museum,  
inv. No.32770/19, Volgograd



**Bit.** Iron. Width: 21.7 cm; height: 14.7 cm. End of the 7–8th century. Samara oblast. 4th Brusyansky mound burial site. Excavations by A. Bogachev, 1991. Inv. No.419/1. The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara



**Stirrups.** Iron. Height: 21.0, 21.3 cm. End of the 7–8th centuries. Samara oblast. Mound burial site 1st Malaya Ryazan. Excavations by S. Zubov, 1996. Inv. Nos.387/2, 3. The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara



**Spear.** Iron. Length: 27.7 cm. End of the 7–8th centuries. Samara oblast. 1st Novinki mound earthen burial site. Excavations by D. Stashenkov, 1999. Inv. No.418/3. The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara



**Quiver hook.** Iron. Height: 4.2 cm. End of the 7–8th centuries. Samara oblast. 1st Novinki mound earthen burial site. Excavations by D. Stashenkov, 1999. Inv. No.418/6. The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara





**Axes.** Iron. Length: 14.8; 19.5 cm. End of the 7–8th centuries. Samara oblast. 1st Novinki mound earthen burial site. Excavations by D. Stashenkov, 1999. Inv. Nos.418/4, 5. The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara





**Burial mound with a stone talus.** End of the 7–8th centuries. Samara oblast.  
1st Novinki mound earthen burial site. Excavations by D. Stashenkov, 1999.



General overview of the eastern fortifications of Bilyar's outer town. 2005.  
Surroundings of Bilyarsk village, Alexeyevsky District, Republic of Tatarstan











Brick construction of caravanserai in Bilyar after conservation





Aerial photograph of the ancient town of Suvar. 2005. Suburbs of Tat village.  
Town of the Spassk District of the Republic of Tatarstan



Aerial photograph of the central part of the ancient town of Bilyar. 2005.



**Scythes and sickle.** Iron. Length of scythes: 57 and 62 cm, maximum width of blades: 7.6 cm; length of the sickle: 31 cm, width of its blade: 3 cm. 9th–beginning of the 13th century. The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by A. Khalikov, 1971, 1973, collection of 1981. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan

**Seeds of domestic plants from the Bilyar ancient town layer.**  
(top down: barley, hemp, millet, cucumber, wheat)  
Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve,  
Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan







**Whip pommels, belt separator ('tripharmacon'), ice-walking spikes.** Bone, bronze, iron. Size: length of the first finial: 5.3 cm; second: 8.4 cm; diameter of the belt separator: 3 cm. 10th–beginning of the 13th century. Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by A. Khalikov, F. Khuzin, 1972, 1976, 1983. Inv. Nos. B.p.m./132 (1); B.XVII/10223 (2); B.XXXVI/176 (3); B.XXVI/1002 (4); B.XXII/6620 (5). Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Arrowheads, fishhooks.** Bone, iron. Size: the length of arrowheads is from 3.2 to 8.3 cm. 10th–beginning of the 13th century. The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by A. Khalikov, F. Khuzin, collections of 1972, 1974, 1977, 1984. Inv. Nos. B.XXIII/5757 (1); P.m./23(2); B.XXII/17687 (3); B.XXVIII/3998 (4); B.XXIII/758 (5); B.p.m./97 (6, hook); (7, big hook); B.XXVI/3043 (8); B.XXII/20355 (9); B.XXIII/ 74 (10, hook). Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan

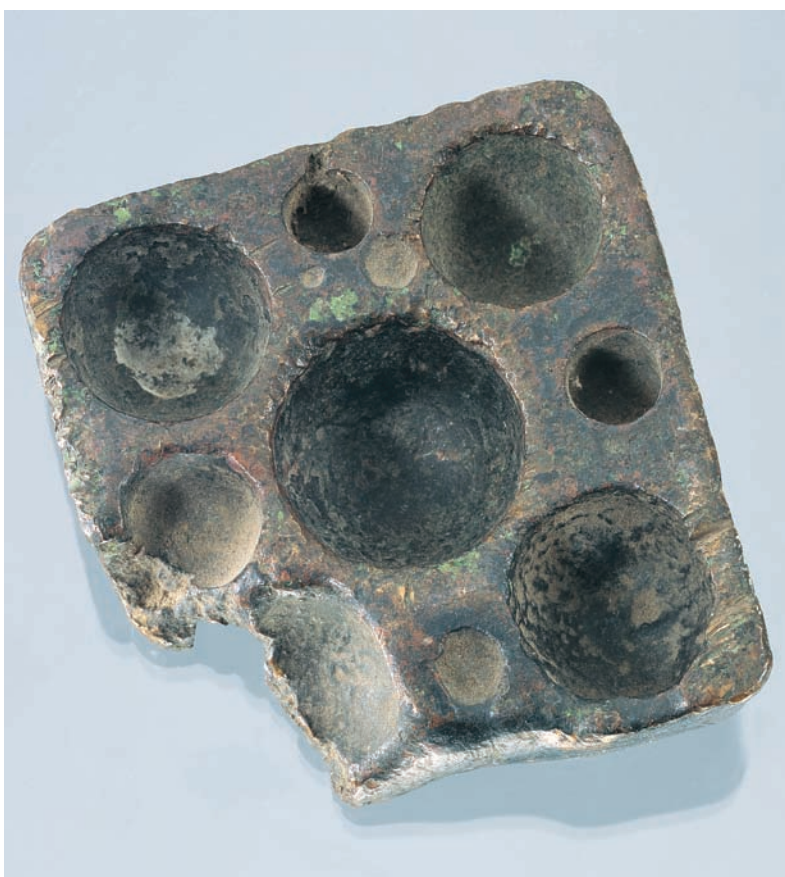




**Scissors, crucibles, hammers.**

Iron, clay. Length of scissors: 20 cm;  
height of the entire crucible: 6.5 cm,  
diameter: 3 cm.

9th–beginning of the 13th century.  
The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations  
by A. Khalikov, F. Khuzin, 1977, 1989.  
Inv. Nos. B.s.XV-75 (1);  
B.XXXIX/36 (2); B.XXXIX/11855 (3);  
B.XXV/168 (4), B.XXVI/792 (5);  
hammer without a code.  
Bilyar State Historical Archaeological  
and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk  
village, Alekseevsky District  
of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Metal matrix from Bilyar.**

Sizes: 5.8x6 cm. 9th–beginning  
of the 13th century. Inv. No. 5427–55.  
National Museum  
of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



**Foundry moulds.** Limestone, shale rock. 9th–beginning of the 13th century. The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by A. Khalikov, F. Khuzin, 1975, 1983. Inv. Nos. B.XXVIII/2261 (sizes: 4.5x4.7x1.5 cm); B.XXIII/1067 (sizes: 4.3x4x1.5 cm); AKU/2-198 (large mould, sizes: 8.8x6x2 cm); B.XXIII/5880 (sizes: 3.4x3.5x0.8 cm).

Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village,  
Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan





**Metal matrix from Bilyar.**  
 Sizes 4.3x4.3x0.3 cm. 12th century.  
 Inv. No.AKU. 2-180.  
 Archaeological Museum of Kazan State University, Kazan



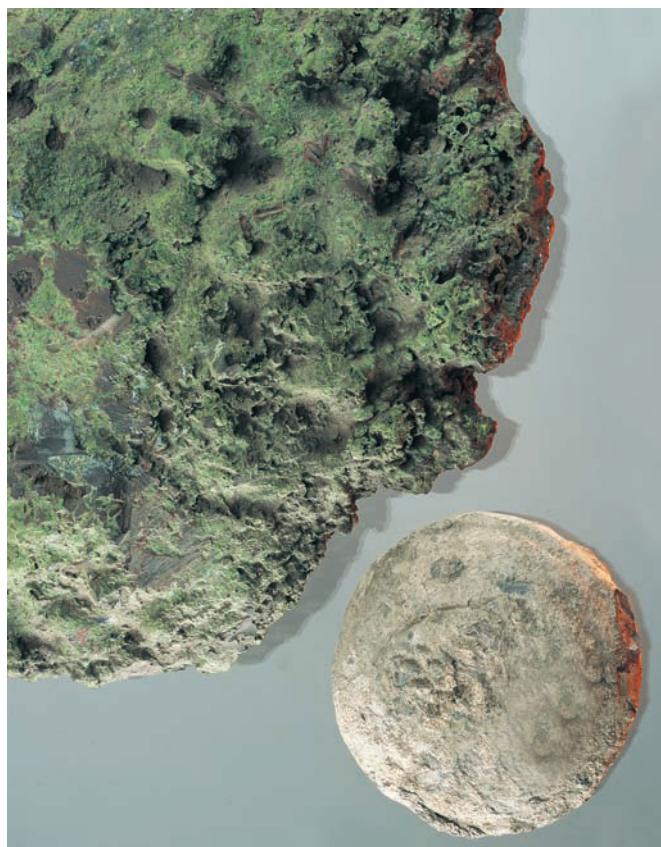
**Matrix.** Bronze. Diameter: 9 cm. 11–12th centuries.  
 Tatarstan. The Bilyar archaeological site and its surroundings.  
 Collection of A. Likhachev, No.5427-59/25,  
 National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



**Matrices to stamp jewellery.** Bronze, casting. Size: 5x5; diameter: 7 cm. 12th–beginning of the 13th century.  
 Kazan guberniya, Chistopol uyezd. Inv. No.34852. State Historical Museum; Inv. No.34849.  
 State Historical Museum, Moscow



**Axes.** Iron. Length: 16.6 cm, 14.4 cm. Tatarstan. Bulgar, Bilyar and other places.  
Pre-revolutionary collections (AKU-2). Inv. Nos.AKU-2/1-2, AKU-2/24, AKU-2/1-1.  
Archaeological Museum of Kazan State University, Kazan



**Copper and lead ingots'.**  
Size: diameter: 26 cm, thickness: 4 cm;  
diameter: 7.5 cm, thickness: 2 cm.  
12-13th centuries.  
The Bilyar archaeological site.  
Excavations by F. Khuzin, 1987.  
Inv. Nos.B.XXVI-D/528; B.XXXVIII/1122.  
Bilyar State Historical Archaeological  
and Natural Museum-Reserve  
Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District  
of the Republic of Tatarstan





**Locks and keys.** Iron, bronze. The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by A. Khalikov, F. Khuzin, R. Sharifullin. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Zoomorphic locks.** Bronze. Length: 8 (4, 5) and 4 (1–3) cm. 11–13th centuries Tatarstan. The ancient towns of Bilyar and Bulgar. Surface material. Collection of the Society of Archaeology, History and Ethnography at Kazan Imperial University and A. Likhachev. 1–3: No.5363; 4–5: No.5427. National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan





**Lunula.** Bronze. 12th–beginning of the 13th century. Tatarstan, the Bilyar archaeological site.

Accidental discovery by S. Valiullina, 1998. Archaeological Museum of Kazan State University. Inv. No.AKU 285/1730

**Pendant.** Bronze. Length: 14.1 cm. 12th–beginning of the 13th century. The Bilyar archaeological site, 23rd excavation site. Excavations by S. Valiullina, 1982. Inv. No.XXIII/13135. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Bronze items of the Volga Finns from 1st Murzikhino (1, 9) and Izmeri (2–8) ancient settlements.** 10–11th centuries. Research by E. Kazakov. 1: pendant, width: 3.7 cm, height: 3.8 cm. Inv. No.I Mur/154; 9: pendant, width: 3.5 cm, height: 2.4 cm. Inv. No.I Mur/82. Archaeological funds of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan





**Bronze covers of the belt set from the Izmeri ancient settlement.** Volga Bulgars, end of the 10th–11th centuries  
Excavations by E. Kazakov. 1970–1993. 1: cover with a perforation, width: 4 cm, height: 3.5 cm. Inv. No.IS–03.  
Archaeological funds of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan





**Garnish of coloured metal.** Bronze, silver. Chain length: 31 cm, lunula width: 4.3 cm.  
9th–beginning of the 13th century. The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by A. Khalikov,  
S. Valiullina, F. Khuzin, 1972, 1975, 1976. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve,  
Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan





**Buckles and caps of a belt strap.** Bronze. Length: from 2 to 4 cm. 10–13th centuries. The Bilyar archaeological site.

Excavations by A. Khalikov, F. Khuzin, S. Valiullina, 1972–1986.

Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village,  
Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Temporal ring with the figure of a bird and pendants.** Gold; forging, stamping, granulation, filigree. Length: 11.6 cm. 11–12th centuries. Tatarstan. Mokrye Kurnali treasure. Inv. No.14403. National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan





**Temporal ring with the figure of a bird and pendants.** Gold; forging, stamping, granulation, filigree. Diameter: 4 cm. 11th–beginning of the 13th century. Whereabouts unknown. Inv. No.12544shch. State Historical Museum, Moscow



**Temporal rings with pendants.** Gold; forging, stamping, granulation, filigree. Diameter: 4 cm, length: 8.4 cm. 11th–beginning of the 13th century. Whereabouts unknown. Inv. No.12546shch. State Historical Museum; Inv. No.12545shch. State Historical Museum, Moscow



**Temporal pendants.** Silver. Length: 8.6 cm. 11–12th centuries. Tatarstan. Imenkovo treasure.  
Inv. No.14576-42, 43. National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan





**Pecheneg belt set.** Silver; casting. Length: circa 26 cm. 10th–beginning of the 11th century. Voronezh guberniya, Vorobyovka village. Inv. No.35175. State Historical Museum, Moscow



**Torc and two bracelets of laced twining.** Silver; drawing, twining. Maximum diameter of the torc: 21.5 cm, maximum diameter of the bracelets: 8 and 8.5 cm. 11th–beginning of the 13th century. Kazan guberniya, Almetyevo village; Kazan guberniya, a more accurate location is not identified. Inv. No.44109. State Historical Museum; Inv. No.44110. State Historical Museum; Inv. No.45805. State Historical Museum, Moscow





**Round pendant badges in the form of rosettes, sewn-on (adornments of horse harness). Silver; forging, stamping, casting.**

Diameter of round badges: 13–13.5 cm, diameter of rosettes: 2.2 cm. 11th–beginning of the 13th century.

Kazan guberniya, near the villages of Staroye and Novoye Almeteyevo. Inv. No.34707. State Historical Museum, Moscow

**Quiver loops.** Bronze. End of the 10–11th century.  
 Izmeri ancient settlement, Republic of Tatarstan.  
 Collection of E. Kazakov.  
 Archaeological funds of the Institute  
 of History of the Academy of Sciences  
 of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



**Collection of adornments: earrings, pendants, beads.** Gold, lazurite, cornelian, glass. 10–12th centuries.  
 Burial near Novotroevka village. Samara oblast. Accidental discovery. KP-19646.  
 The P. Alabin Samara Regional History Museum, Samara





**Double bracelets.** Silver. 12th century. Inv. Nos.935/25, 26. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Mirror with a relief ornament and a loop in the centre.** Bronze. Diameter: 12 cm, a purchase in Maykop city. 12–13th centuries. Inv. No.935/46. Department of Archaeology of Eastern Europe and Siberia. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Mirror with a relief ornament and a loop in the centre.** Bronze. Diameter: 9.5 cm, in 6 fragments, 5 of which are glued up. 12–13th centuries. Zelenki village of the Kanev uyezd of Kiev guberniya. Burial mound 304. Excavations by N. Brandenburg, 1894. Inv. No.917/15. Department of Archaeology of Eastern Europe and Siberia. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





**Beads.** Pyramidal beads. Cornelian. Length: 1.5–2.0 cm. Bipyramidal bead. Cornelian. Length: 2.7 cm. Black pyramidal bead. Jet coal? Length: 2.5 cm. Black pyramidal bead. Jet coal? Length: 2.3 cm. 12–13th centuries. Kuban oblast, Apsheronskaya Cossack village. Excavations by D. Schulz. Inv. Nos. 937/24–25, 27, 28. Department of Archaeology of Eastern Europe and Siberia. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Flat-bottomed pot with ornamented shoulders.** Clay. Height: 12 cm. 12–13th centuries. Zelenki village of the Kanev uyezd of Kiev guberniya. Burial mound 294. Excavations by N. Brandenburg, 1894–1895. Inv. No. 914/1. Department of Archaeology of Eastern Europe and Siberia.

**Jar on an annular leg.** Clay. Height: 17.5 cm. 12–13th centuries. Area of villages Krasnopolka and Kadomka of the Kanev uyezd of Kiev guberniya. Burial mound 224/2. Excavations by N. Brandenburg, 1890. Inv. No. 922/27. Department of Archaeology of Eastern Europe and Siberia. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





**Onlay on the front pommel.**

Bone, carving. 12–13th centuries. Zelenki village of the Kanev uyezd of Kiev guberniya, on the left bank of the Rosava River, burial mound 303. Excavations by N. Brandenburg, 1894. Inv. No.17/12. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Details of harness adornments (forehead and two cheek badges and a buckle). Silver, bronze; forging, casting.**

Length of cheek badges: 10 and 10.5 cm, buckles: 3.5 cm; diameter of the headband: 9 cm. Last quarter of the 11–12th century. Orenburg guberniya, Nezhinsky village, burial mound in Alebastrovaya Gora; excavations by B. Grakov, 1927.

Inv. No.61881. State Historical Museum, Moscow



**Details of a snaffle set.**  
 Silver, gild, niello, stannary.  
 19th century. Gaevka hamlet  
 of Borshovskaya volost of the Valuyki  
 uyezd of Voronezh guberniya.  
 Accidental discovery of 1904.  
 Inv. No.999/4–29.  
 Hermitage Museum,  
 Saint Petersburg







'Kurgan stelae'. Limestone. Height: 165 cm. 12th century. Inv.No.2303/1. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Badges of a snaffle set.** Silver, gild, niello, stannary. 11th century.  
Inv. Nos.999/37, 40. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg





**Fragments of onlays for pommels.** Bone; carving. Size: 12x7; 10x5; 8.5x5.5; 13.5x10 cm.  
Last quarter of the 11–12th century. Kuban oblast, near Anapa city; excavations by N. Veselovsky, 1894.  
Inv. No.33616. State Historical Museum, Moscow



**Arrowheads.** Iron; forging. Length: from 5 to 10.5 cm. 13th century. Kuban oblast, Andryukovskaya Cossack village; excavations by N. Veselovsky, 1897. Inv. No.42398.  
State Historical Museum, Moscow



**Pommel of a mace.** Iron; forging. Sizes: 5.5x5.5 cm.  
12–13th centuries. Podolsk guberniya, Mezhirechka River;  
collection of Yu. Abaz. Inv. No.34794. State Historical Museum, Moscow



**Battle axes.** Iron; forging. Length: 13; 15; 14 cm. 12–13th centuries. Purchased in Maykop city, Kuban oblast.  
Inv. Nos.936/2, 3, 6. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Sabre.** Iron; forging.  
Length: 72.5 cm, width: 3 cm.  
10th–beginning  
of the 13th century.  
Yenisey guberniya,  
more precise location unknown;  
collection of Zgiersky-Strumillo.  
Inv. No.49439.  
State Historical Museum,  
Moscow



**Sabres.** Iron.  
Length: 112 and 108 cm.  
13th century.  
Inv. Nos.952/1, 953/8.  
Hermitage Museum,  
St. Petersburg





**Chain armour.** Iron; forging. Sizes: circa 50x80 cm. End of the 12th–beginning of the 13th century.  
Chernomorskaya guberniya, Glebovka village; accidental discovery, 1898. Inv. No.38135.  
State Historical Museum, Moscow

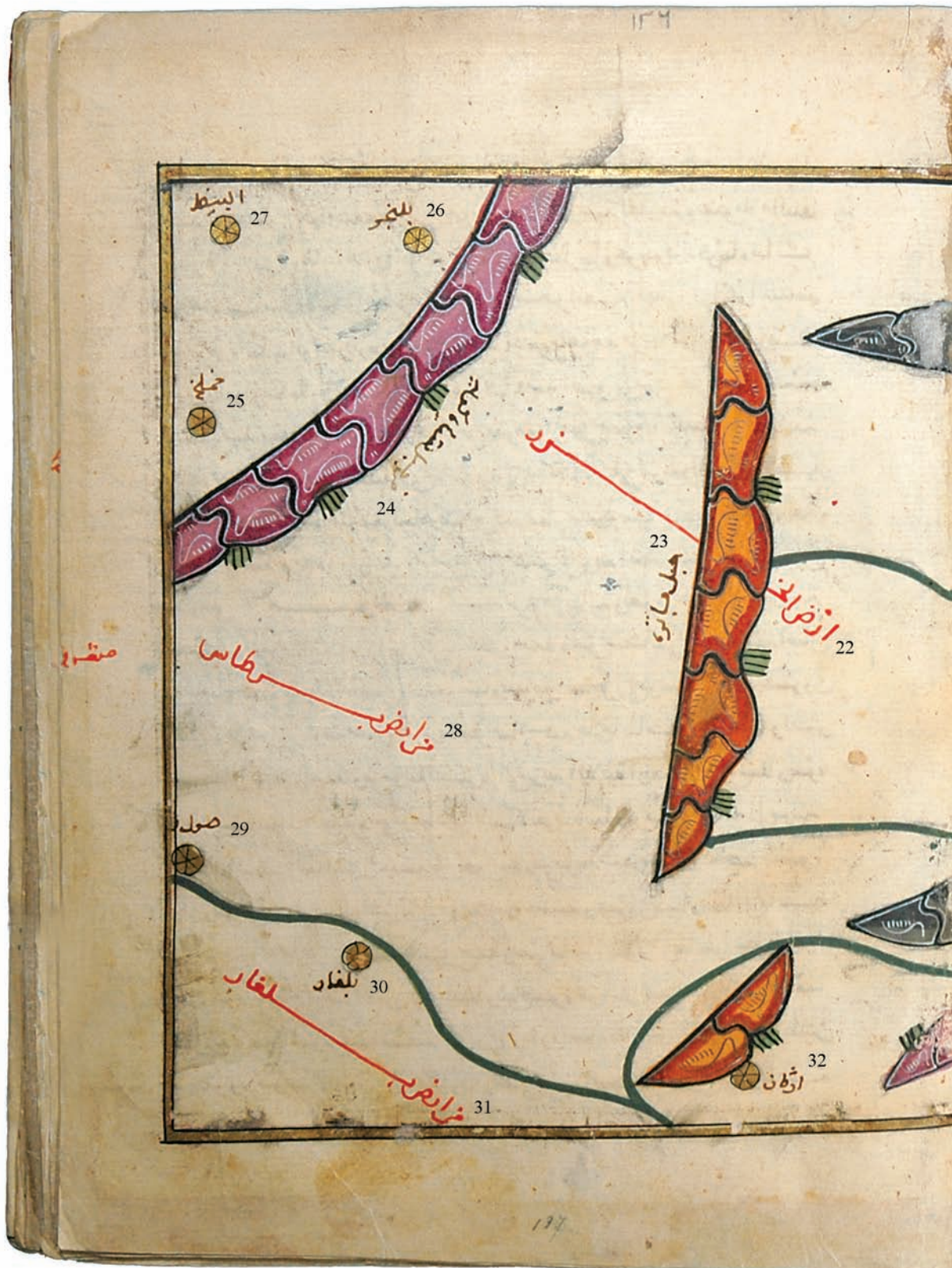


**Helmet.** Iron; forging. Height: 19 cm. End of the 12th–beginning of the 13th century.  
Chernomorskaya [Black Sea] guberniya, Glebovka village; accidental discovery, 1898. Inv. No.38135.  
State Historical Museum, Moscow





**Mask.** Iron. 12th century. Lipovets village of the Kanev uyezd of Kiev guberniya, on the left bank of the Rasava River, burial mound 1. Excavations and gift of O. Makarevich, 1892. Inv. No.904/12. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Al-Idrisi (12th century). 'Kitāb nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtirāq al-āfāq' ('Entertainment for he who Longs to Travel the World'). (Copy of the 14th century). Russian National Library, Ar.n.s. 176, pp. 138b–139a. 'Sixth climate. Sixth juz. Black Sea'.

Sheet size 255x185 mm. Map frame 190x160 mm. Map published from the Petersburg copy of the work, the first reproduction in colour. The map's nomenclature (given according to the Islamic tradition from right to left):  
 1. Sixth juz. Sixth clime. The end of the Black Sea (Muntahi bahr Buntis); 2. North (Shimal); 3. Saranba; 4. Azala;  
 5. Anbala; 6. Nunashaka; 7. Sultaya (Sudak); 8. Butr; 9. Rushiya; 10. Matrakha (Tmutarakan);









**Set of armature: chain armour, helmet.** Iron. 12th century. Lipovets village of the Kanev uyezd of Kiev guberniya, on the left bank of the Rasava River, burial mound 1. Excavations and gift of O. Makarevich, 1892.  
Inv. Nos.904/1, 2. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



**Beads and pendants.** Glass, amber, cornelian, calcedony, quishr, composite white frit material.  
10th–beginning of the 13th century. The Bilyar archaeological site.  
Excavations by A. Khalikov, F. Khuzin, R. Sharifullin, S. Valiulina, 1972–1989.  
Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village,  
Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan





**Bronze (1) and bone (2–4) ear picks from the Izmeri ancient settlement.** End of the 10–11th century. Research by E. Kazakov. 1998–2000. 1: bronze ear pick, length (without the loop): 6.4 cm, width of the handle with the picture of an animal: 1.9 cm. Archaeological funds of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan





**Touchstone, ring.** Slate, gold. Stone sizes: 5.5x3.4x1.4 cm; 5.2x3.4x1.3 cm; diameter of the ring: 4.5 cm. 12th–beginning of the 13th century. The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by A. Khalikov, S. Valiulina, 1973, 1990. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Window glass.** Glass. 12th–beginning of the 13th century.  
Tatarstan, the Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations  
by A. Khalikov, F. Khuzin, S. Valiulina. Inv. Nos.XXII/1181,  
XXXVIII/445, XVII/19220, AKU 285/3150.  
Bilyar State Historical Archaeological  
and Natural Museum-Reserve Bilyarsk village,  
Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Goblet.** Glass. Height: 9 cm.  
12th–beginning of the 13th century.  
The Bilyar archaeological site, 12th excavation site.  
Excavations by A. Khalikov, 1974. Inv. No.XXII/11628.  
Bilyar State Historical Archaeological  
and Natural Museum-Reserve Bilyarsk village,  
Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Window glass.** Glass.  
12th–beginning of the 13th century.  
The Bilyar archaeological site.  
Excavations by A. Khalikov,  
F. Khuzin, S. Valiulina.  
Inv. Nos.XXII/11632, XXXVIII/1212,  
XVII/19220, AKU 285/38.  
Bilyar State Historical Archaeological  
and Natural Museum-Reserve  
Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District  
of the Republic of Tatarstan





**Alembic.** Glass. Height: 7.6 cm. Diameter: 4.5 cm, tube length: 11 cm. Early 13th century.  
The Bilyar archaeological site, 59th excavation site. Excavations by S. Valiullina, 1993.  
Inv. No.AKU 285/4739. Archaeological Museum of Kazan State University, Kazan



**Candelabra.** Clay.  
Size: height: 2 and 3 cm,  
length: 11.5 and 13.5 cm.  
11–12th centuries.  
The Bilyar archaeological site.  
Excavations by F. Khuzin,  
1975. Inv. Nos.B.XXIII/8591;  
B.XXIII/8730.  
Bilyar State Historical  
Archaeological and Natural  
Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk  
village, Alekseevsky District  
of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Pot-like vessel.** Clay. Height: 20 cm. 12th century. The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by F. Khuzin, 1980. Inv. No.B.XXIX–1980/215. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Three-pods.** Clay. Height: 9 and 9.5 cm. 11–12th centuries. The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by A. Khalikov, 1972, 1977. Inv. Nos.B.XXIII/8619, B.XIX/7817. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan





**Vessel for storing liquids.** Clay. Height: 42 cm. 12th–beginning of the 13th century. The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by F. Khuzin, 1976. Inv. No.B.XXIII/8257. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan

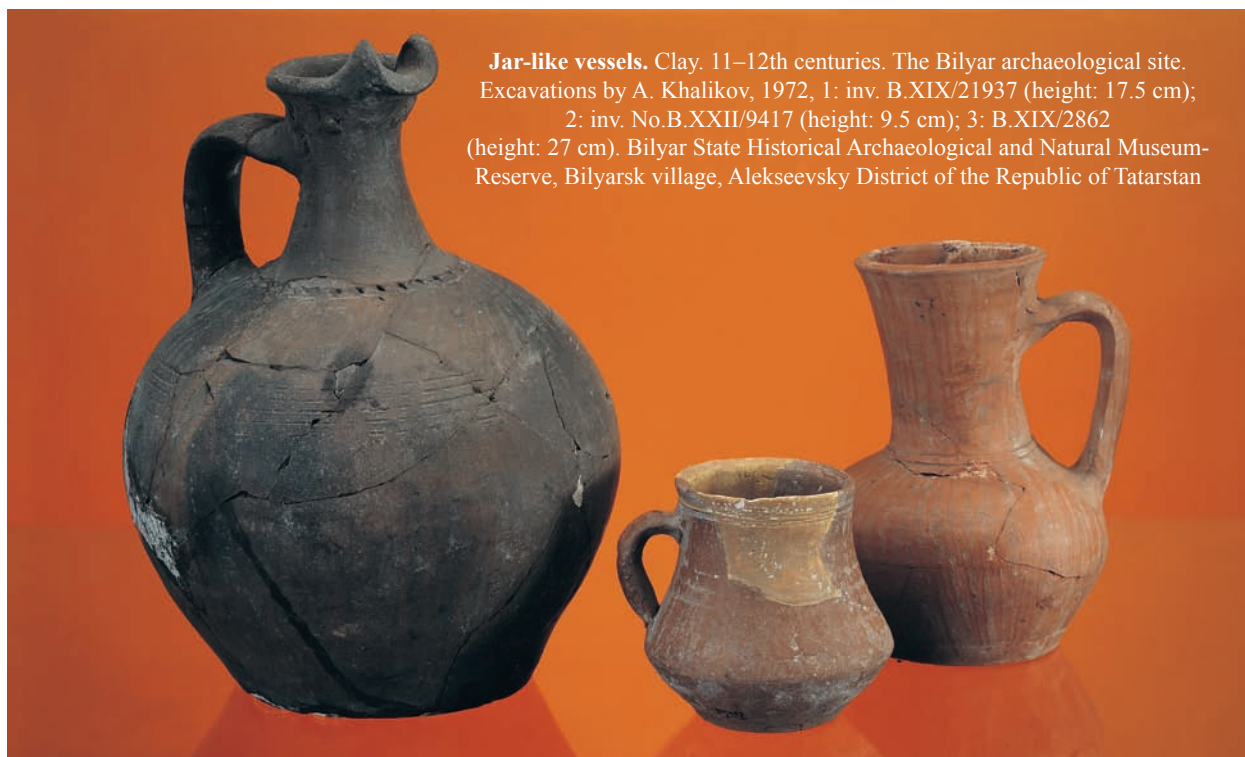


**Glass-like vessels ('night vases').** Clay. 10–11th centuries. The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by A. Khalikov, 1972 (1–2) and F. Khuzin, 1976 (3). 1: inv. No.B.XIX/7828 (height: 18 cm); 2: inv. No.BXXII/19493 (height: 14 cm); 3: inv. No.B.XXIII/9384 (height: 15 cm). Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Pot cover with a pistil-like handle.** Clay. Height: 20 cm, diameter: 30.5 cm. 10th–beginning of the 11th century. The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by F. Khuzin, 1984. Inv. No.B.XXVIII/11688. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan





**Jar-like vessels.** Clay. 11–12th centuries. The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by A. Khalikov, 1972, 1: inv. B.XIX/21937 (height: 17.5 cm); 2: inv. No.B.XXII/9417 (height: 9.5 cm); 3: B.XIX/2862 (height: 27 cm). Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Bowls and jars.** Clay. 11–12th centuries. The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by A. Khalikov and F. Khuzin, 1972, 1976, 1987. Inv. Nos.B.XXXIX/83 (height of the bowl: 7.5 cm, the neck diameter: 21.5 cm); B.B.XVII/15037 (bowl height: 6 cm, neck diameter: 15.5 cm); B.XIX/21922 (jar height: 29 cm); B.XXXVIII/76 (height: 10.5 cm); B.XVII/17286 (height: 22 cm). Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Vessel.** Clay. Height: 19 cm. 12th–beginning of the 13th century. The Bilyar archaeological site, 59th excavation site. Excavations by S. Valiulina, 1991. Inv. No. AKU 285/80. Archaeological Museum of Kazan State University, Kazan



**Threepod with a zoomorphic handle.** Clay. Height: 22 cm. 12th century. The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by F. Khuzin, 1982. Inv. No. Bolgar Reserve–1982/2–9. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan





**Vessel.** Clay. Height: 23 cm. 12th–beginning of the 13th century. The Bilyar archaeological site, 61st excavation site. Excavations by S. Valiulina, 1998. Inv. No. AKU 285/1046.  
Archaeological Museum of Kazan State University, Kazan



**Vessel.** Faïence, glaze. Height: 10 cm. 12th–beginning of the 13th century. The Bilyar archaeological site, 23rd excavation site. Excavations by A. Khalikov, 1978. Inv. No.AKU 307/1. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Vessel.** Clay, glaze. Diameter: 38 cm. Beginning of the 13th century. The Bilyar archaeological site, 59th excavation site. Excavations by S.Valiulina, 1989. Inv. No.AKU 285/3. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan





**Plate on a wrist. Bone.**

Length: 12 cm. 11–13th centuries  
The Bilyar archaeological site and its surroundings. Surface material.  
Collection of A. Likhachev. Inv. No.5427.  
National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



**Hair picks. Bone.**

Length: 4.5 and 3cm. 11–13th centuries  
The Bilyar archaeological site and its surroundings. Surface material.  
Collection of A. Likhachev. Inv. No.5427.  
National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



**Pendant amulets. Bone. Length: 12 cm. 11–13th centuries** The Bilyar archaeological site and its surroundings.  
Surface material. Collection of A. Likhachev. Inv. No.5427.  
National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



**Chess pieces.** Bone, horn. Height: 2 and 3.5 cm.  
11–13th centuries The Bilyar archaeological site  
and its surroundings. Surface material.  
Collection of A. Likhachev. Inv. No.5427.  
National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



**Handles of knives and their details.** 1: knife handle;  
length: 10.6 cm; 2: knife handle; length: 13.1 cm;  
3: knife handle; length: 11.2 cm; 4: onlay  
on the wooden handle; length: 2.5 cm. Bone.  
9th–beginning of the 13th century.

The Bilyar archaeological site  
and its surroundings. Collection of A. Likhachev,  
1: No.5427-40/19; 2: No.5427-40/34; 3: No.5427-40;  
4: No.5427-40, National Museum of the Republic  
of Tatarstan, Kazan

**Pommel of a whip.** Bone. Height: 8 cm. 11–12th centuries.  
The Bilyar archaeological site. Surface material.  
Inv. No.Bil.37. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological  
and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village,  
Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan





**Needle case.** Bone. Length: 12 cm. 11–13th centuries  
Tatarstan. The Bilyar archaeological site and its surroundings. Surface material.  
Collection of A. Likhachev. Inv. No.5427.  
National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



**Bone amulet (?).** Length: 12 cm.  
11th century. The Bilyar archaeological site.  
Excavations by R. Sharifullin, 1980.  
Inv. No.B.XXVII/937.  
Bilyar State Historical Archaeological  
and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village,  
Alekseevsky District of the Republic  
of Tatarstan



**Loaded dice.** 1: astragal with an ornament; the rest are peevers.  
Bone. Length: 3.3 cm. 12–13th centuries.  
The Bilyar archaeological site and its surroundings.  
Collection of A. Likhachev, 1: No.5427-24/5; 2: No.5427-24/3;  
3: No.5427-24/2; 4: No.5427-24/1, National Museum  
of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



**Trading tools: plummets (upper part), scales, and scale pans.** Bronze, iron. Length of the scales: 7 cm, diameter of the pans: 4.2 cm. 10th–beginning of the 13th century.

The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by A. Khalikov, F. Khuzin, R. Sharifullin, 1975–1980. Inv. No.B.XXIII/1068 (weigh-scales).

Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Iron and bronze plummets from the Izmeri ancient settlement,** the 10th–11th centuries. Research by E. Kazakov. 1–3: iron; 4–7: bronzed iron; 8–10: bronze. 5: diameter: 1.8 cm, thickness: 1.5 cm. Inv. No.Iz-93/521; 9: diameter 1.5 cm, thickness 1.0 cm. Inv. No. Iz-92/14. Archaeological funds of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan





**Plummets, trading stamps. Lead.**  
 Diameters from 2.6 to 3.2 cm.  
 11th–beginning of the 13th century.  
 The Bilyar archaeological site.  
 Excavations by A. Khalikov, 1973, 1977, 1978.  
 Inv.Nos. B.XXVI/964 (1); B.XXII/3327 (2);  
 B.XXVI/257 (3); B.XXVI/5669 (4); B.XXVI/857 (5).  
 Bilyar State Historical Archaeological  
 and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village,  
 Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Bronze buckle (1) and a fibula (2) of the Western Finns  
 from the 1st Semenovskoe ancient settlement.**  
 10th– 11th centuries. Excavations by E. Kazakov.  
 Fibula: width: 65 cm. Inv. No.I CC/47.  
 Archaeological funds of the Institute  
 of History of the Academy of Sciences  
 of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



**Glass (1–3) and bronze (4–6) Slavic items from Izmeri (1–5) and the 1st Semenovskoe (6) ancient settlements.**  
 End of the 10–11th century. Research by E. Kazakov. 1985–1995. 6: temporal pendant, width: 3 cm. Inv. No.I CC/79.  
 Archaeological funds of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan





**Cornelian and glass beads, amber, clay painted egg ('Easter egg'), slate spindle whorls.**  
 10th–beginning of the 13th century. The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by S. Valiulina, F. Khuzin, 1976.  
 Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village,  
 Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Amber from a dwelling/workshop** (constructions Nos.5 and 8, excavation site 23).

Total weight: 8 kg. The Bilyar archaeological site.

12th century. Excavations by F. Khuzin and S. Valiulina, 1976. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan





**Fragment of a vessel.** Clay, glaze. Diameter: 42 cm. Inv. No.AKU 262/12.  
**Handle of a lid (eagle's head).** Clay, glaze. Height: 7.1 cm. Inv. No.AKU 262/18.  
**Vessel fragments.** Clay, glaze. Diameter: 40 cm. Beginning of the 13th century.

The Bilyar archaeological site, 60th excavation site.  
 Excavations by S.Valiulina, 1989. Inv. No.AKU 262/21. Archaeological Museum of Kazan State University, Kazan



**Fragment of a vessel** (outer and inner sides). Faïence, glaze, lustre. Diameter: 11 cm. End of the 12th–beginning of the 13th century. The Bilyar archaeological site, 23rd excavation site. Excavations by S. Valiulina. 1982.  
 Inv. No.XXIII/12130. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Pendent seal of Vsevolod the Big Nest**

(front and reverse sides). Lead. Diameter: 2.4–2.5 cm. 12th century (1183?). The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by F. Khuzin, 1976. Inv. No.B.XXIII/1346. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Archer armaments and munitions.**

1: socketed arrowhead; length: 5 cm, 2: tanged arrowhead; length: 11 cm; 3: edge cap of a bow; length: 16.2 cm; 4: quiver loop; length: 11.6 cm; 5: loop of a bow case; length: 18.5 cm; quiver loop; length: 14 cm. Bone. 11–12th centuries. Tatarstan. The Bilyar archaeological site and its surroundings. Collection of A. Likhachev, 1: No.5427-22/25; 2: No.5427-8/14; 3: No.5427-128/2; 4: No.5427-29/1; 5: No.5427-39/6; 6: No.5427-39, National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan





**Pommel of a whip handle in the shape of a bird's head. Bronze, casting.**

Length: 5 and 4.5 cm. 12th–beginning of the 13th century.  
Kazan guberniya, Bulgar village;  
Sickler's collection. Inv. No.58456.  
State Historical Museum, Moscow



**Arrowheads. Iron.** Length: from 8.6 to 14.5 cm.  
10th–beginning of the 13th century.  
The Bilyar archaeological site. Excavations by A. Khalikov,  
F. Khuzin, 1972, 1976, 1983. Bilyar State Historical  
Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve,  
Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District  
of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Arrowheads. 1:** tanged, chisel-shaped; length: 8.7 cm.  
**2:** tanged, flat, rhombic; length: 9.6 cm.  
**3:** tanged, flat, rhombic; length: 6.7 cm. Iron.  
9th–beginning of the 13th century. Tatarstan.  
The Bilyar archaeological site and its surroundings.  
Collection of A. Likhachev, 1: No.5427-594;  
2: No.5427-597; 3: No.5427-7/5. National Museum  
of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan





**Iron items of armament from the Izmeri ancient settlement. Volga Bulgars 10th–11th centuries.**  
Excavations by E. Kazakov. Spears. Length: 29 and 23.2 cm. Inv. No.ITIC/47.  
Archaeological funds of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



**Sword.** Iron; forging.  
Length: 71.5 cm.  
10th century.  
Kazan guberniya,  
near the villages of Staroe  
and Novoe Almetyevo.  
Inv. No.34707.  
State Historical Museum,  
Moscow



**Sabre.** Iron; forging.  
Length: 74.5 cm.  
10–11th centuries.  
Kazan guberniya,  
Tankeevka village;  
accidental discovery, 1904.  
Inv. No.44307.  
State Historical Museum,  
Moscow



**Axe chisel.** Iron; forging. Size: circa 18 cm.  
10–11th centuries. Kazan guberniya, Tankeevka village;  
accidental discovery, 1904. Inv. No.44307.  
State Historical Museum, Moscow

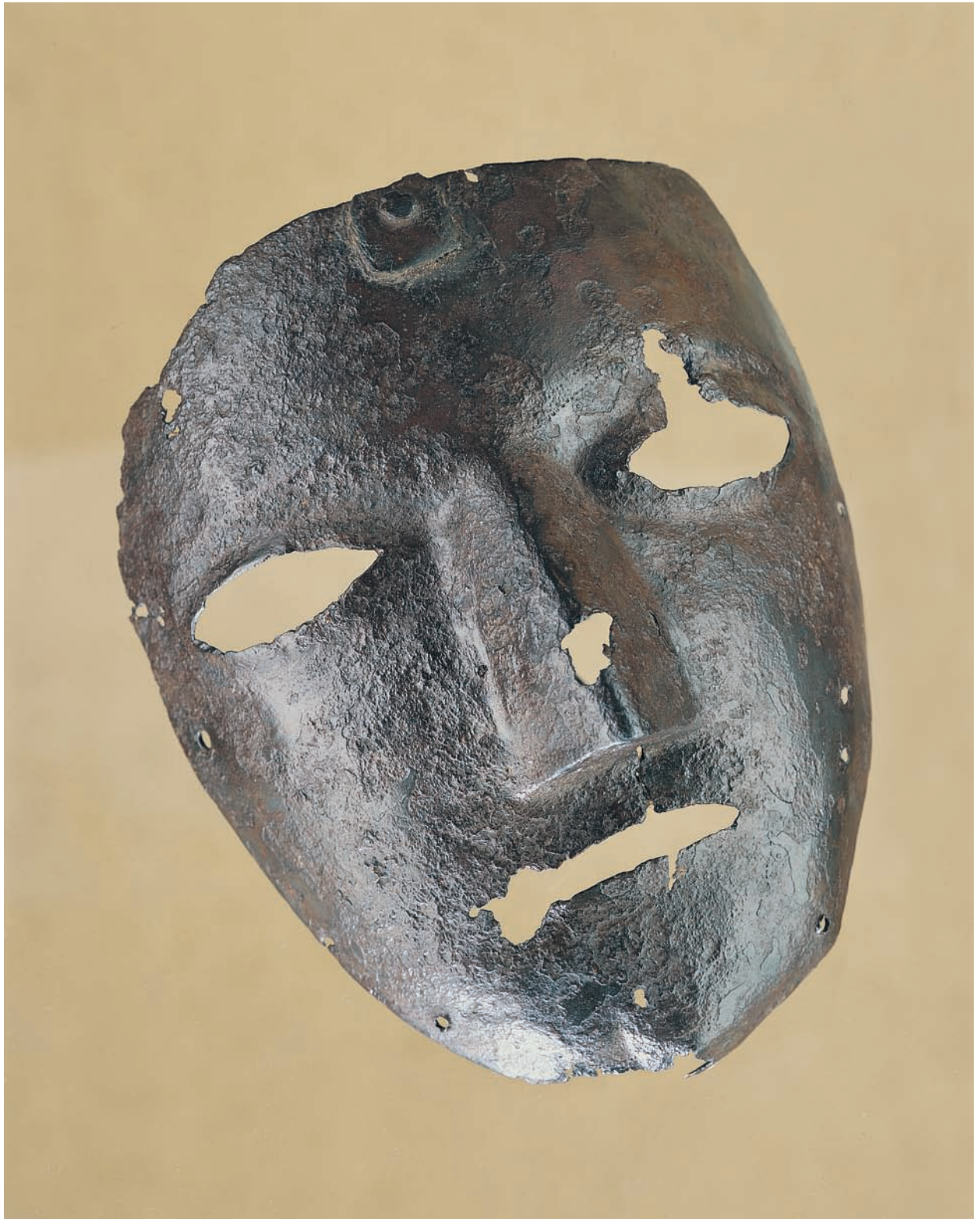


**Sabre.** Iron. Length: 76.5 cm. Tatarstan,  
the Bolshye Tarkhany burial site, grave 143.  
8–9th centuries. Excavations by A. Khalikov,  
V. Gening. Inv. No.AKU 269/316.  
Archaeological Museum of Kazan State  
University, Kazan



**Axe with a silver binding  
and gold incrustation.** Iron, silver; incrustation.  
Length: 14.5 cm. 11th century. Kazan guberniya,  
Bilyarsk village (?); accidental discovery, 1890s.  
Inv. No.34213. State Historical Museum, Moscow





**Battle mask/umbril.** Iron. Length: 19.8 cm, width: 16.2 cm. First half of the 8th century.  
Volga Bulgaria. Collection of L. Likhachev. National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan





**Mace with pyramidal protrusions and a beak.** Iron. 12–14th centuries. Inv. No.5654.  
**Mace pick.** Iron. Height: 3.5 cm. First half of the 8th century. The Bulgar archaeological site.  
Inv. Nos.7719-53; AA-45-23. National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



**Stamped bottoms of vessels.** Clay. 10th–beginning of the 13th century. The Bilyar archaeological site.  
Excavations by A. Khalikov, N. Kokorina, 1972, 1974. Inv. Nos.B.XX/1291; B.XXIII/7660;  
B.XXII/18804; B.XXIII/9453; B.XX/1694. Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve,  
Bilyarsk village, Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan





**Zoomorphic handle of a threepod with a runic inscription.** Clay. Height: 10 cm. 12th century.  
The Bilyar archaeological site.  
Excavations by F. Khuzin, 1983. Inv. No.B.XXVIII/706.  
Bilyar State Historical Archaeological  
and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village,  
Aleksievsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Stylus.** Bone. Length: 9.2 cm. 11–13th centuries  
Tatarstan. The Bilyar archaeological site  
and its surroundings. Collection of A. Likhachev,  
No.5427-126, National Museum  
of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan



**'Artist's palette', 'inkstand', and styluses.** Clay (1), bronze (2, 3), bone (4, 5), iron (6).  
 9th–beginning of the 13th century. Height of the 'palette': 5 cm, of the 'inkstand': 4.5 cm, length of the styluses': 6–11.5 cm.  
 Bilyar State Historical Archaeological and Natural Museum-Reserve, Bilyarsk village,  
 Alekseevsky District of the Republic of Tatarstan



**Padlock.** Bronze, iron. Foreman Abu Bekr. 1146/7. Tatarstan. The Bilyar archaeological site and its surroundings.  
 Surface material. Collection of A. Likhachev. Inv. No.5427. National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan