

## The Turkmen

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Being a family in the large Turkic race, any article about the Turkmen will be in short supply if it does not present information about the other two related terms; Turks and Oghuz.

## Turks

By referring to the excavation of the Russian archaeologists, the Turkish historian Y. Oztuna relates the origin of Turkic peoples to the Brachia-cephalic Andronovo Man who lived 2000 years BC on the widespread lands between Tanri and Altay mountains.<sup>1</sup>

The historians, who are specialized in pre-Islamic Turkish history such as W. Eberhard, B. Ögel and L. Rasonyi state that the Hsiung-nu (Asian Huns) are the Proto-Turks.<sup>2</sup> J. Klaprothe, J.V. Hammer, W. Schott, A. Vambéry, E. Oberhammer reports that the Turks were originally a vassal tribe of a people called the Jouan-Jouan, who might have been a remnant of the Hsiung-Nu, at some point thought to be approximately 522 BC. Kafesoglu identifies the Turks with the Hsiung-nu. According to him the ethno Turk was derived from the "Tu-ku" or "Tu-k'o", the family or tribal name of Mo-tun (Turkish Teomen).

In Zent-Avesta and Old Testament, the grandchild of the prophet Noah is called "Turk". Turac or Tur was the son of a ruler in Avesta, which was reported as a tribe named Turk.<sup>2</sup>

The Chinese Sources state that the Gokturks, Uygurs, and Kyrgyz are descended from the Hsiung-nu people.<sup>3</sup> In their correspondences from 1328 BC, they use the name "Tik" for Bozkir Tribes. The classic Greece source, Herodotus treatise, reports "Yurcae" by referring to the people who were living between the Volga and Ural rivers. The Latin sources Plinius Secundus and Popenius called "Turcae" to the same people.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand it was supposed that, the Targita in Herodotus' treatise (Togharma), the grand child of Yafes in Old Testament, Turukha and Thrak in Indian sources, the Turukku's in hieroglyphs of front Asia were Turkish tribes.<sup>2</sup>

In one of the Persian texts which date to 420, the word Turk was used for the Turanians and the people of the Altay region. Annals of the 6th century AC of both Chinese and Byzantine named them as the Tu kiu and Tourkoi, consequently.<sup>5</sup> Another source dates back the first record of the Turk as "T'u-chüeh", which means in Chinese "transcription" to 552 AC.<sup>6</sup>

The first Turkish civilization according to N. Kosoglu is Sakalar state which was founded in the 8th century BC at the middle of Tanri Mountains. This is supported by Aristov, Mayer and Togan.<sup>7</sup> According to Oztuna the Huns, who are the first Asiatic nomads to make the trans-continental expeditions, had founded the first Turkish civilization at 220 BC by the emperor Teoman.<sup>8</sup> This is supported by J. de Guignes, J. Klaproth, J. Marquart, P. Pelliot, R. Grousset, O. Pritsak, G. Clauson.<sup>9</sup> The Göktürk state is considered as continuation of the Great Hun State.

The name Turk has no any sense in the contemporary Turkish Dictionary, other than the peoples of Turkish race. M. Kashgarli in the "Divanü Lügat-it-Türk" defined the word Turk as a "Strong" or "time".<sup>10</sup> It is used in the international literature as a synonym to the word Turkic peoples which refers to all the Turkish race. In another occasions, it is used to refer to the citizens of Turkish Republic. Kafesoglu translated the word Turk as originally meaning "force, power" i.e. "a man of power". In the Persian Literature, it meant beautiful.

The origin of the name Turk is supposed by A. Wembrey and J. Deny to be the Turkic word türemek, which means reproduction. The first Turkish sociologist, Z. Gökalp (1886-1924) related the name Turk to the Turkish word "Törelî" which means conservative.<sup>2</sup>

The name Turk in the today's form was used for the following Turkish tribes until before the 6th century; Hun, Avar, Tabgaç, Kırgız, Karluk, Yağma, Çigil, Oğuz, Türkeş, Uygur, Hazar, Bulgar, Peçenek and Kıpçak.<sup>7</sup>

As the name of a nation and state, it is firstly used in 557 in the annual record of Chou family, in 582 in the treatise of historian Agathias, in 600 in the divan of N. Zubyani and in XII century in the first Russian chronicles.<sup>2</sup> According to Barthold the name Turk as a Nation name was used for the first time by Arabs. When the Arabs were fighting Turks at 7th and 8th century, they found that many tribes talked the same language and the biggest group was called Turks, they named all this tribes, as Turks.

The first use of the name Turks, as a political term, by the Turks to describe themselves in a recognizably Turkish alphabet occurs in a set of runic inscriptions discovered near the Orkhon River, in northern Mongolia. These inscriptions date from the 8th century (732 AC).<sup>2, 11</sup>

The homeland of the Turkic speaking peoples is believed to be somewhere on the eastern side of the Altay. Depending on the Chinese histories J. Klaprothe, J.V. Hammer, W. Schott, A. Vambery, E. Oberhammer pointed to the Altay Mountains as a homeland of Turks in the beginning of 6th century BC. They gathered together some other vassal tribes and began to spread west and southwest. Tabgac, Avar and Gokturk Turkic states were all founded around Orkhon River which ends at the Baykal Lake. Ý. Zichy points to the land between Irtysh and Ural. W. Radloff points to the west of the Altay. In 885, at the time of Uygur state they started to move toward Central Asia at the southwest. The Qarakhanids who is considered the first Turkish people who embraced Islam, moved further toward west to the Western Turkistan. Toward end of the first millennium and in beginning of the second millennium they moved massively to the south and west when they founded two large Empires; Seljuk and Ottomans Empire. If the theory, that the Sumerians were of Turkish origin, is established anthropologically then the southwest movement of Turkic peoples can be dated back to the 3 millennium BC.

## Oghus

The first use of the name Oghus is returned back by some historians to the Hun Empire (220 BC – 216 AC). It is reported that the title Oghus was given to the founder of Hun Empire Mete, who is the son of Teoman.<sup>12</sup>

In the Chinese sources from the 2nd century BC, a clan called O-kut who lived at the Tarbagatay – Kobdo region is expected to be Oghus. According to the same sources, Huns are the ancestors of Göktürks and the Oghus is considered from the largest Göktürk ruler families: Tardush, Uygur, Onok, Qarluq, Oghus, Basmýl, Kýrgýzlar and Qitan. Radloff, Kafesoglu, Thomsen and Barthold are not differentiating Oghus from the Gokturks.<sup>13</sup>

During the establishment of Gokturk state, it is expected that Oghus tribes lived at the northeast along the Tula River.<sup>14</sup> The name Oghus is reported in Yenisey inscriptions, which was written in 6th and 7th century, as a group of 6 tribes lived along the Barlik River.<sup>15</sup> At the Feterrat period (630 - 680 AC), which is the interval between 2 Gokturks reigns; several tribes were united and formed the Dokuz-Oghus principality at the region of Tula – Selenga rivers.<sup>16, 17, 18</sup>

Gumilev in his book “Ancient Turks” who uses the Russian work and Rene Grousset who bases his conclusion on the Persian geography of “Hadud al-Halam” date the appearance of the name Oghus back to the 10th century. They doubt if Dokuz Oghus, which was mentioned by the Yenisey and Orkhon inscriptions in the 8th and 9th centuries, whose homeland was Mongolia is the same Oghus mentioned in the Persian geography “Hudad al-Alam” in the tenth centuries whose the homeland was Syr Darya.<sup>19</sup>

The Oghus clans who lived at Syr Darya in the 10th century and founded latter Seljuk and Ottoman Empires moved westwards through the Siberian steppes to the Aral Sea and to the Volga and southern Russia towards the end of the 8th century. Some of them also moved into the Daghistan steppe north of the Atrak River, and other took over the existing settlements at the mouth of the Syr Darya, where the Islamic sources of the 10th century mention 3 Turkish town; Cend, Khuvar and Yengi Kent.<sup>20</sup> At the end of the 10th century the ruler of the Oghus was the Yabghu, who had a winter capital at Yeni Kent in the Syr Darya Delta, and whose authorities ranged over the steppes from there to the Volga. The lower Syr darya was at this time in the zone where Islam and Paganism met, and where Muslim fighters were active.<sup>21</sup> During the period of Abbasids Caliph al-Mamum (813 – 833), the name Oghuz starts to appear in the works of Islamic writers, by which they refer to the people inhabited Daghistan plain at the southeast Caspian as Oghus.<sup>22</sup>

Kononov has an idea that the origin of the ethnic name of the Oghus is "og". This is directly linked to Old Turkish name "o" which means "mother". The word "o ug" which means "son" is also stems from the same word. Nemeth thinks that the name Oguz is a modification of the name Okuz, which means in Turkish the tribes. The word Ok means tribe and the "z" in Turkish used for prurel. The combination of them is Ok+u+z.<sup>23</sup> Gumilev expects that the word Oghus could initially mean tribes, tribal confederations. Later it transformed into an ethnic name and then lost its original meaning and became the name of the well-known pro-father of Turkmen - Oghus Khan.<sup>24</sup>

## Turkmen

Linguistically the name "Turkmen" as a whole word has no implication in the Modern Turkish Dictionary other than a Turkish clan. As a compound name, it can be divided into two words; Turk and men. The word Turk is used as synonym to the word "Turkic" of the international literary. The word Men means "I". Figuratively it refers to the braveness. Accordingly the word Turkmen can be explained as: "I am a Turkish man" or "We are Turkish brave men". Y. J. Diny and K. Kahin supported these explanations, respectively.<sup>25, 26</sup> Other scholars have proposed that the element man / men acts as an intensifier and have translated the word as "pure Turk" or "most Turk-like of the Turks".<sup>27</sup>

There are several theories over the development of the term Turkmen:

The Ghaznavids were of servile origin, but their steppe beginnings were speedily overlaid by the Iranian culture and administrative technique which they adopted.<sup>28</sup> The Qarakhanids were also influenced at the same way; their elites were quickly assimilated to the traditions of the Iranian-Islamic states.<sup>29</sup> The Oghus lived at the southeast coast of Caspian Sea did not influenced by the Persian culture. Therefore, they remained less mingled and pure Turkish blood. So, they called themselves or were called by other groups as a Turkmen.

According to Kashgari, who lived in the 11th century, the word Turkmen means Turkish similar people, which was used by Zulkarneyn (Iskander the great) when he named the powerful Turkic army under the leadership of Shu whom he met after the congruence of Samarqand as Turkmen.<sup>30</sup>

Other sources considered the name Turkmanend as a precursor of the name Turkmen. Turkmanend is a compound name formed from the word Turk and the Persian word Manend, which means "they are Turks".<sup>31, 32</sup>

Ibn al-Kathir and Muhammed Neshri reported that the word Turkmen can be developed from the word Turk and Iman. Iman is Arabic word which means faith and used in the same meaning by the Turks.<sup>33</sup> It is reported by Neshri that at the Abbasids period 912 - 913 when the leader Canakhan with his 2 thousands people embraced Islam, they were called Turki iman which is later changed to Turkmen.<sup>34, 35</sup>

Another word which is supposed to be the predecessor of the name Turkmen is the Arabic word "Turcuman". This is an Arabic word, means Translator and used by in Turks in the same meaning. In begin it is supposed to be used for those of the Oghus tribes who embraced Islam and acted as a translator for the non-Islam Oghus or other Turkish clans then generalized to include all Oghus people.<sup>36, 37</sup>

Dequigne believes that the name Turkmen was developed from the name Koman, which was one of the non Oghus Turkish tribes.<sup>38</sup>

It is doubtful if the name Tukumenk in the Chinese Tung Tin Encyclopedia of 8th century carried the same implication of Turkmen.

Almost all the sources date appearance of the name Turkmen to the 10th century. The first nomad communities of Oghus tribes, who embraced Islam in Ordu region at south of the Middle Asia on the frontier of expanding Islam world, were Turkmen or named Turkmen is still the matter of discussion. In the 11th century the name Turkmen was politicized and expanded to cover karluk and Halac communities. The term was later restricted to only the Oghus clans until the 13th century.<sup>39</sup>

According to the Turkish historian Y. Oztuna, the name Turkmen appeared with conversion of nomad

Oghus tribes to Islam. At the end of first half of the 11th century and when all the Oghus people were embraced Islam, the term was used an alternative to Oghus. In the following century, Turkmen seems to have been used for the Oghus people who remained nomad and townsmen were mentioned Oghus. It was during the Mongol period that the name Oghus was finally discontinued. Thereafter, the name Turk had totally replaced Oghus.<sup>40</sup>

Kafesoglu did not agree with the statement that the name Turkmen is appeared with the Turkish embracement of Islam. This can also be assumed from the descriptions of Turkmen by Kashgarli:<sup>39</sup>

- "Karluk are a division of Turkmen"
- "They are a clan from the nomad Turks"
- "They differed from the Oghus"
- "They are Turkmen as Oghus".

It can be concluded that the name Turkmen was first used mainly for the nomads of Oghus, who were the first Oghus people embraced Islam.

Sumer and Boyle claim that the near eastern Muslims gave the name Turkmen to the Oghus.<sup>41</sup> The term "Turkmen" appears for the first time in the islamic sources in the 10th century; about 980 AC, the geographer Maqdisi speaking of two strongholds in the province of Isfijab, calls them "frontier posts against the Turkmen". In the 11th century, it was applied to southwestern Turks; the Oghus and Kipchak, whereas the term Turk is used for the more easterly Turks of the Karluk group. Ghaznavid sources frequently call the incoming Oghus "Turkmen". In his "Mirror for Princes" Nizam al-Mulk considers the nomad Seljuks with in Iran and the lands to the West as Turkmen.<sup>42</sup>

In the 11th century, Oghus Turkmen tribes dominated by the Seljuk clan entered the Caucasus region, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. They defeated Byzantine army, drifted through Iran and into Anatolia. The chieftain Ottoman of Kayi tribe established in the 13th century the sprawling Ottoman Empire that lasted into the 20th century. The other two Turkmen states were the Qara Qoyunlu (Black Sheep) from 1378 until 1469 and the Aq Qoyunlu (White Sheep) from 1387 until 1502.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica the name Turkmen is a synonym of Oghus which includes all the Turkish (Turkic) population who live to the southwest of Central Asia:<sup>43</sup>

1. Turkey
2. Azerbaijan Republic
3. Azerbaijan of Iran
4. Turkmenistan
5. In other countries:
  - a. Afghanistan
  - b. Iraq, Syria and other Arab countries
  - c. Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Gagavuz, and other European countries

The worth noting is that with the exception of the Turkmenistan and Afghanistan all the Turkmen communities can easily understand each other.

The Turkish historian Y. Oztuna presents almost the same definition of Britannica for the name Turkmen. He calls Turkmen Oghus or western Turkish populations:<sup>44</sup>

1. Ottomans
2. Azerbaijan
3. Turkmen (Turkmenistan)

However, the name Turkmen is now used in different meanings by the Turkish peoples or their neighbors. At the time being, the name Turkmen is mainly used for the following Turkish peoples:

1. Turkmen of Republic of Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan is located in Central Asia between Iran and Kazakhstan. The Caspian Sea border Turkmenistan from the west. Its total area is 488,100 km<sup>2</sup>. The population is estimated 5,110,000 in 2009.

There are stocks of Turkmen in the neighboring countries to Turkmenistan for example, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

## 2. Turkmen of Turkey

Many groups of people are called Turkmen in Turkey. Their number is higher than in Turkmenistan. They are living in many governorates at the middle and east of the Turkey, for example, Gaziantep, Afyon and Kirshehir. They were nomadic Turkish tribes who firmly attached to the traditions, but they have almost no difference from other citizens.

## 3. The Turkmen of Iran

They live along the northern border of Iran across Turkmenistan.<sup>45</sup> They numbered about 2 millions. Their main cities are Gunbde Kaus, Bender Turkmen and Kalala.

## 4. The Turkmen of Iraq.

They live mainly at the north and middle of the Iraq. They are generations of different Turkish clans, who entered Iraq since the Sasanian era, for example, Oghus, Kipchak, Azerbaijanian and Mongols. The Iraqi statistics had severely underestimated them. Their number can be approximated from 2 to 4 million.

## 5. The Turkmen of Syria.

The Turkmen of Syria live mainly in the Aleppo, Leticia and Damascus provinces in considerable concentration and in the basin of the Euphrates River. They share the Turkmen of Iraq their history and origin. They are exposed early to assimilation and deportation policies. Their number estimated to be between 250,000 and 1 million.<sup>46</sup>

6. According to Sara the Turkmen of Jordon estimated to be 25,000.<sup>47</sup> Turkmen are found in smaller number in Lebanon and Palestine, around Baalbek and the capital in Lebanon and in Jenin, Haifa and Gaza in Palestine.

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