

**Talgatbek MANASH,**

*Doctoral student at the University of Seged (Republic of Hungary)*

*E-mail: manash77vko@mail.ru*

*Phone: (93) 447 62 05*

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## ORIGIN AND ETHNIC HISTORY OF THE KIPCHAKS

### Annotation

This scientific article examines the issue of the origin of the ethnic history of the Kipchaks. The study of the historical processes of the Kypchaks that took place on the territory of the steppe strip of Eurasia in the era of late Antiquity and the Middle Ages demonstrates the complexity of the social and political organization of nomadic peoples. In recent years, publications have appeared in which the question of the need and possibility of studying the history and culture of the medieval peoples of the steppe Eurasia is increasingly raised. And the article also examines a wide range of issues on etymology, the origin of the people, as well as the early history of the Kipchak issues. The Kipchak issue still remains relevant for modern science.

**Key words:** ethnic history, Kipchaks, steppe strip of Eurasia, nomads, Desht-i Kipchak, Polovtsian field, ethnic group, ethnonym.

## ПРОИСХОЖДЕНИЕ И ЭТНИЧЕСКАЯ ИСТОРИЯ КЫПЧАКОВ

### Аннотация

В данной научной статье рассматривается вопрос о происхождении этнической истории кыпчаков. В изучение исторических процессов кыпчаков протекавших на территории степной полосы Евразии в эпоху поздней Древности и Средневековье, демонстрирует сложность общественной и политической организации кочевых народов. В последние годы появляются публикации, в которых все острее встает вопрос о необходимости и возможности изучения истории и культуры средневековых народов степной Евразии. И так же в статье рассматривается широкий круг вопросов по этимологии, происхождению народа, а также ранней истории кипчакской проблематики.

**Ключевые слова:** этническая история, кыпчаки, степной полосы Евразии, кочевники, Дешт-и Кипчак, половецкое поле, этническая группа, этноним.

## QIPCHOQLARNING KELIB CHIQISHI VA ETNIK TARIXI

### Annotatsiya

Ushbu ilmiy maqolada qipchoqlarning etnik tarixining kelib chiqishi masalasi ko'rib chiqiladi. Oxirgi antik davr va o'rta asrlarda Yevrosiyoning cho'l zonasida sodir bo'lgan qipchoqlarning tarixiy jarayonlarini o'rganish ko'chmanchi xalqlarning ijtimoiy-siyosiy tashkilotining murakkabligini ko'rsatadi. So'nggi yillarda Evrosiyo cho'llarining o'rta asr xalqlari tarixi va madaniyatini o'rganish zarurati va imkoniyatlari to'g'risidagi masala tobora ko'proq ko'tarilayotgan nashrlar paydo bo'ldi. Shuningdek, maqolada etimologiya, xalqning kelib chiqishi, shuningdek, qipchoq muammolarining ilk tarixiga oid keng ko'lamli masalalar ko'rib chiqiladi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** etnik tarix, qipchoqlar, Evrosiyoning dasht zonasi, ko'chmanchilar, Deshti Qipchoq, polovets maydoni, etnik guruh, etnonim.

**Introduction.** The Dasht-I-Kipchak steppe, also known as the Kipchak, Great or Polovtsian steppe, has been from time immemorial a home to nomad peoples of Eurasia. In the territories of modern Kazakhstan, the Volga region, the Caucasus and Eastern Europe, states formed and dissolved, heroes and legends were born. According to European and Byzantine historic sources, the Kipchaks, Cumans – Polovtsy in the Russian chronicles – were such a nomad, Turkic people who became an integral part in the formation of modern nations such as Kazakhs, Nogais, Kumyks and many others. The Kipchak ethnic community, the collective name of which is the Kazakhs, is one of the largest medieval tribal associations that determined the course of historical events of the great belt of the Eurasian steppes in a period spanning more than one and a half millennia. In this regard, the study of ethnic processes that took place among the Koman-Kypchaks, the determination of their ethnohistorical contacts, their role in the history of neighboring peoples continue to be the focus of interests of scientists and young researchers.

**Literature review.** The nomadic people called “Kipchaks” in Muslim sources, “Cumans” in Western European chronicles, “Polovtsians: in Russian annals played an important role in the history of Eurasian steppe in the 10th – 14th centuries. The origin and history of the Kipchaks is complicated questions of ethno-political history. The aim of this dissertation is to study the image and role of the Kipchaks in the contemporary Russian annals (Primary Chronicle) and late Moscowite annals (Nikon chronicle) and later in the formation of historiography of Russian intellectual centers from the 18th century. Kazakh scientists Kumekov B.E. proved the origin of Kipchaks, its ancestor Se (Sir IV-VII centuries) were inhabitants of the east side of Ordos, it was their neighbor yanto tribe, which Kipchaks' subdued and together these two tribes called themselves as Seyanto. Kumekov says that Seyanto kaganat subdued Kyrgyzs in the north of the Yenisei and in 646 9-Oguzs' defeated Seyanto country. However, soon in 691 Seyanto tribe in Sire changed the name of the state to Kipchak and in 760 the ethnonym was fully adopted [1].

The Soviet period brought new tendencies in the formation of the image of the Kipchaks/Polovtsy. The fall of the Sovietunion and the birth new states in Central Asia is a starting point of a new stage. The new independent nations, first and foremost Kazaks started to another nation-building and their history must be reevaluted. The focus of the dissertation is the process and changing image of the Kipchaks in these periods. In Muslim requisite information, Kipchak Ethnonym mentioned for the first time in the IX century Arab explorer Ibn Xordadbeq work and commented that they belong to one of Turkic-speaking tribes. From second half of the VIII century and until X century Kipchak ethnic association was developing further from the east of Altai and the Irtysh River to the west through the South Ural and Volga. At first, they were neighboring with Kimek tribe then became part of Kimek state and was politically subordinate to Kimek kagan, and was in close connection with other Turkic tribes like Oguz, Bashkir, Pesheneg, Qarluq and Kangly[2].

**Research Methodology.** The term Kipchak can be interpreted in different ways nowadays. It is used as a denomination of a nomadic people living in the Kazak steppe and Eastern Europe between the 11th – 13th centuries. At the time of the Golden Horde it is connected with the geographical name Desht-i Kipchak. In modern linguistic it is a subgroup within the common

Turkic language group including three sections: western Kipchak languages: Crimean Tatar, Kumyk, Karachay, Balkar; Volga Kipchak: Tatar and Bashkir and eastern Kipchak: Kazak, Karakalpak, Nogai, Kirgiz. The second data record about Kipchaks was Rashid-ad-Dinn's "Djami - at Tauarihi". The book was formed in the period between 1300-1311 years. There we can see two different data points to the origin of the ethnonym Kipchak. The research work uses a holistic approach to solving the problem, the methodological validity of the original theoretical rules of the study, the use of modern methodological approaches to the research topic, based on the principles of historicity and objectivity. Methods such as systematic, periodic and historical-logical, comparative analysis were also used.

Analysis and results. The first one presents that ethnonym came out when a boy named Kipchak was crossing the river on wooden boat, second one is about way back journey after failed attack to Itbaraq country, Kipchak was found in tree cavity. According to the historical chronicle, the word Kipchak has a meaning given above. This word's root comes from "word kobuk", in Turk language it means "rotten wood core" [3].

The first period of the history of the Kipchaks According to S.G. Klyashtorny [4], the word qipchaq can be found in the Turkic runic inscriptions. The Kipchaks called themselves Sirs originally, but after a crushing defeat from the Uighurs and the Chinese, they renamed themselves Kipchaks. The reading of the name Kipchak is uncertain.

The Kipchak grouping of tribes was originally a sub confederation of the Kimek Kaganate.

First of all, we are faced with a variety of ethnonyms, under the first Kipchaks appear in contemporary sources. Obviously this indicates the mixed origin of their union. Of these names, the most commonly used is Kipchak.

The formation of the Arab Caliphate gave an impetus to the representatives of commerce and religious and scientific figures to explore the regions beyond edges of their common empire. They gathered information about northern and eastern Europe, as well as Central Asia. They were accumulated in the Muslim geographical literature. This information about various peoples was accumulated which included data information about the Kipchaks.

Gardizi wrote a chapter on the Kimeks and he stated that the Kipchak tribe was a member of the Kimek tribal confederation in the 9th century. One of the few authors of the 11th century who provide sufficiently valuable information about the Kipchaks and Kimaeks and other Turkic-speaking tribes is the Ghaznavid historian Gardizi, who wrote in Persian. Gardizi using earlier sources, such as al-Muqaffa' has mentioned Kipchak as, fifth which he lists among the seven tribes of the Kimaek union: Imi (Eymur), Imak, Tatar, Bayandur, Kipchak, Lanikaz, Ajlad. Gardizi's notice undoubtedly reflects a much earlier period when Kipchak had not yet gained the semi-autonomous status. In Gardizi's historical work "The Decoration of the News". Written around 1050, "the Kipchaks are first mentioned as one of the seven Kimak tribes - Imi (Eymur), Imak, Tatar, Bayandur, Kipchak, Lanikaz, Ajlad. In the genealogical legend about the origin of the Kimaks from the Tatars, the Kipchaks are called relatives of the Tatars [5].

The Persian geographer from Khorasan Ibn Khordadbeh also mentioned as the first to write about the Kipchaks in his "The Book of Roads and Kingdoms". In describing the ways to the east, the author described touched on the territory of the Turkic tribes. He writes: "The country of the Tuguzguz (tokuz-oguz) is the most extensive of the Turkic countries. They border with as-Sin (China), at-Tubbat (Tibet) and Karluks. Then there are al-Kimak (Kimaks), al-guzz (Oguz), al-Dzhigir (Chigil), at-Turkash (Turghesh), Azkish (Azkish, azs), Hifshah (Kipchaks), Hirkhiz (Kirghiz), al-Kharlukh (Karluk) Alkhalaj (Khalaji), who live on the other side of the river». We may note that like most Eurasian nomadic confederations, the Kimeks consisted of a variety of ethnic and linguistic elements [6]. They were predominantly Turkic-speaking but some of them were certainly Mongol. They most probably had been part of the Turk empire - although we do not have any concrete data on that other than the fact that certain political forms and titles associated with that empire are reported among them as well. In addition, they are lumped together by the Islamic authors with the other Turkic peoples, Uygurs, Karluk and Oguz, who were most certainly part of the Turk Kaganate.

In the 10th century was accounts for the highest the flowering period of Arab Muslim geographical literature. One of the outstanding representative is A striking representative of this era is the Arab geographer and traveler, al-Istakhri (first half of the 10th century), a native of Central Iran who wrote .

His work "The Book of the Ways of States". It was an adaptation and addition to the earlier, not extant geographic work of al-Balkhi. The book contains interesting information about Eastern Europe, where the Rus, Khazars, Bulgars, Burtases are described. There is considerable factual material about the Kimaeks, Oguz, Karluk, settled in the territory Kazakhstan. "As for all Turks," al-Istakhri states, as Tokuz-Oguzes, Kirghiz, Kimaeks, Oghuz and Karluks, then they have one language, and each of them understands each other.

Here we can note that The Muslim authors list the Kipchaks among other Turkic-speaking tribes similarly to Ibn Khordadbeh, thus referring them to the Turkic group of tribes.

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In connection with the development of the problems of the ethnic history of the Kipchak tribes, the problem of the tribal composition of the Kipchak union of tribes is considered. An extremely important period associated with the scientific activity of V.V. Barthold [7]. The significance of the Kimeks was determined: "The historical significance of the Kimeks consists in the fact that from their midst came a numerous people of the Kipchaks (called Cumans in Europe, and Polovtsians in Russia), who were originally only one of the Kimek tribes".

The Kipchaks were one of the most important Turkic peoples of the Middle Ages, dominating the western and central Eurasian steppe lands, the "Desht-i Kipchak" of the Persian sources. The history of the appearance of the geographical term

“Desht-i Kipchak” in the Eastern literature was also considered by V.V. Barthold [7]. According to the Orientalist, the term was first used by the Persian poet Nasir-i Khusrau in the 11th century instead of the former term “Oghuz Steppe”, the same transition in terms of the Muslim authors Afifi, which could mean the transfer of power in this territory into the hands of the Kipchaks.

In the Islamic Georgian, Armenian, Mongol and Chinese sources, they are called Kipchak, a term that over the years, there have been a number of attempts to present a satisfactory etymology for this ethnonym. It fell within the category of Turkic ethnonyms that denoted strength, power and force. It has also not lent itself to easy etymologies - although there has been no lack of effort.

According to S.G. Klyashtorny [8], the word Kipchak in the language of ancient Turkic monuments is translated as unsuccessful, ill-fated, unhappy. According to the scientist, before that, the Kipchaks called themselves “Sirs”, but after a crushing defeat from the Uighurs and the Chinese, in order to avert trouble or a curse from themselves, they renamed themselves Kipchaks.

In the legend of the Oghuz-kagan given by Rashid al-din, the Kipchaks were one of the 24 Oghuz tribes. It says that the Kipchak, Kalach, and Agach-eri tribes were descended from the people who united with the Oghuz and mixed with his family. The mythical boy, who was named Kipchak by the Oghuz-Kagan and named after his tribe, was born during the unsuccessful campaign of the Oghuzs against the It-Barak tribe. The boy was found in a tree, which is reflected in his name. The name Kipchak comes from the word “kabuk”, which in Turkic means a tree with a rotten core.

According to another legendary version from the circle of the Oghuz-Kagan epic, the events preceding the birth of a boy named Kipchak took place on a land that was extensively overgrown with trees. To cross the river, Oghuz-Kagan ordered the trees to be cut down. During the crossing, he allegedly told the child, who had just been born on a raft made of trees, to be a prince and gave him the name Kipchak.

Bayhaqi, whose history covers the early 1030s, notes the Kipchaks together with the Kujat(Kochat?) and Cugraq, as active in region of the Xwarazmshah state.

From the above, an unambiguous conclusion follows: Kipchaks are associated with the Turkic-speaking environment from the earliest mentions on the pages of historical sources.

Mahmud Kashgari, who in the XI century wrote about himself that he was one of the best experts of their Turkic language, in the chapter word to explanation of the languages of the Turks noted that the Kipchaks and Oghuz were one pure Turkic language. In the chapter Word to explain the difference between languages, the medieval philologist does not mainly distinguish between the languages of the Oghuz and Kipchaks, but sometimes speaks about it by giving examples[9].

Based on them, it can be concluded that even then there were linguistic features characteristic of the suspected group of Turkic languages, which were noted both among the Kipchaks and Oghuz. So, in their languages, Mahmud Kashgari notes the elements of words with the “Je” phoneme.

On the question of the linguistic identity of Kipchaks, N.A. Baskakov writes: Polovtsian (Cuman or Kipchak) language it belongs to the Kipchak-Polovtsian subgroup of languages, retaining Kipchak features at its core, and also acquired some common features with the Oghuz and partly Bulgar languages as a result of the absorption of other related languages by the Kipchak language[10].

The presence of common phonetic features in the Oghuz and Kipchak groups of languages, reported by Mahmud Kashgari, explains not only the kinship of the Turkic languages, but also a number of historical moments. The long-term mutual influence of the two language groups began in the Central Asian period of their joint historical life.

Mahmud al-Kashghari, who completed his Compendium of the Turkic Languages in 1077 and was a native of the Turkic world with first-hand knowledge of the Kipchaks and their language, writes Kijchak\ Kifchak. He has some uncertainties in his comments relating to the Kipchaks. He notes the Kanli as “the name of an important man of Kifchak”, when our sources all report it as the eastern branch of the Kipchaks. He appears to be alert to some distinctions among the “Kifchak.” Thus, with regard to the Yemek, one of the constituent tribal groupings of the old Kimak union that had become part of the Kipchaks, he comments that “they are considered by us to be Kifchak, but the Kifchak Turks reckon themselves a different party” and points to slight differences in speech between the two. Elsewhere, however, he remarks without further comment that the Yemek are “a tribe of the Kifchak” Of the various dialects of the Turkic peoples from which he cites examples, aside from his native “Xaqani” he cites 51 kipchak examples (as compared to 250 taken from Oghuz, the best represented of the non-“Xaqani” dialects). Between Oghuz and “Xaqani,” he observes, there exists “an absolute and consistent dialectal cleavage”. His focus on Oghuz Turkic is understandable, as the Seljuks, who had recently become the leading military-political power in the ‘Abbâsîd Caliphate, were Oghuz in speech. With regard to its usage, he notes that the letter fâ’ is pronounced “between the points of articulation for Arabic fâ’ and sound bâ’” to which Dankoff adds “w,” with which he distinguishes “Xaqani” from Oghuz which pronounces this letter as “v”. “Xaqani” has âw “house” while Oghuz has äv. This indicates that Kashgari distinguished v from other sounds. Throughout his text, he has without the use of. Nonetheless, bearing in mind his comments on the pronunciation of fâ’ in rendering Turkic words, he appears to be writing not Kifchak, but something closer to Kivchak/Kivchak. In any event, it is not Kipchak.

As we can see from the ethnic and political side, the Kipchaks are a union or confederation of various tribes that were united by one language.

The original works on the history of the nomadic peoples of Asia, in particular the Kipchaks, include a collection of documents compiled at the court of Khorezm Shah Tekesh, dated 1182-1184. The author of these documents, the head of the Khorezm Shah office al-Baghdadi, called the collection “A book of search, access to business relations”. Several documents contain interesting information about the relationship between Tekesh and the Kipchaks, important material about the marriage ties between the Kipchak family and the house of Khorezm Shahs, about the entry of Kipchak detachments into the service of the Khorezm Shah and their entry into the bosom of Islam, about the internecine struggle between the Kipchak khans for power in the steppe.

The most recent example of Seljuk court historiography of the 12th century is the work of al-Husayni on the Seljuk state, which sets out the true history of the ruling Seljuk dynasty. Despite its compilative nature, the work of al-Husayn does not contain original information on the history of the neighboring Seljuks dynasties (Karakhanids, Khorezm Shahs) and peoples, including the Kipchaks.

The famous Syrian scholar-encyclopedist Yakut, who lived in Syria, then in Baghdad, spent part of his life traveling. His large geographical dictionary “List of Countries” contains quite extensive information on geography, history, ethnology,

linguistic and descriptive geography, folklore in literature, material and spiritual culture of the peoples of the East and West. The facts from the life of the nomadic peoples of Turkestan and the Volga region before the beginning of the XIII century, including the Kipchaks, are quite detailed and interesting, based mainly on the lost works from the Mere manuscript collections. It was Yakut who first described in some detail the campaign through Derbent and Western Desht-i Kipchak of the Mongol troops, the capture of the land of the Kipchaks, Alans, Bulgars, and Saxins, up to the Crimea.

A contemporary and close acquaintance of Yakut was the Arab Historian Ibn al-Asir. He was born in Mesopotamia, then moved to Mosul, traveled to Arabia, Syria, and Palestine. He wrote a number of historical and bibliographic works, including the capital historical chronicle "Complete Description of History", which describes the history of the Muslim world before the Mongol invasion. The author collected a huge amount of factual material, in some cases he used written sources that have not come down to us. It contains the first dated references to the Kipchaks, dating back to 722.

**Conclusion/Recommendations.** In our opinion, in the conditions of modern globalization, the possibilities for joint projects and research are expanding, which will allow us to obtain a holistic view of all aspects of Kipchak studies. Collections of many archives from different countries are opened for researchers, and close mutually beneficial relationships are established. Based on this, it is possible to carry out a qualitative comparative analysis at a higher level. The most fruitful area of cooperation is the Kazakh-Hungarian one. As part of bilateral cooperation, many dialogue platforms have been held. For example, the International Scientific Conference "Kipchaks of Eurasia", dedicated to the 1100th anniversary of the Kimek state, which was held in 2013 in Astana. In 2020, an international online conference "Hungarian Turkology" was held on the basis of the International Turkic Academy, dedicated to the 130th anniversary of the birth of the famous Turkologist Gyula Németh.

Today it is quite obvious that a comprehensive study of the historical process is impossible without the effective work of comparative interstate research. With the progressive development of scientific knowledge in this direction, interest in them only intensifies, and the works of scientists play an increasingly important role in the study of the past.

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