

Indo-European indications of Turkic ancestral home

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Significant for archaeologist engaged in studying atavisms of early medieval cultures of South Siberia, indirect data are illustrative of the two ancient stages in the history of their bearers that first experienced the West and later Central Asia.¹

The Great Migration of Peoples caused by the Hun invasion took no place in Europe, 4 century. We are interested in migrations typical for in the Central Asia in the 2 century B.C. and tended northwards, not westwards. It was these migrations that first ever put in the forefront authentic Turkic-speaking peoples. Titled Tashtyk and Shurmak, these cultures are traced back to the north and south from Western Sayan ridges – in Khakassia with the adjoining right bank of Yenisei, and in Tuva (their succession has never discontinued), and possibly in Mountainous Altay. Prior to the reviewed period, local residents spoke South Samodian, Ket and Ugric languages. Historical data are unproductive in defining names of ancient Turkic peoples. We know a single name only: Gyanguni (according to Sinologists' interpretation) – the old Chinese version of Kyrgyz ethnonym. So, we are unaware of how Turkic-speaking residents of Tuva and other southern Siberian lands were titled.

The most important thing is as follows: the origination of Turkic peoples in the history is not attributable to the name or the people of Turk that appeared in the south, near the Great Wall of China 7 centuries later - in the 5 century A.D. It'd be wrong to derive ethnic and cultural history of all ancient, medieval and contemporary peoples speaking languages of the Turkic group from this people only.

It has to be kept in mind that the name of linguistic family is none other than a conventional term. If linguists had introduced numbers of linguistic families, not names, what should we have done with habitual vocabulary? The first thing to remember is that the linguistic family above has recently been titled in the Russian science as Tatar and Turkish. When identifying historiographic changeability of the terminology applied in the Russian science, it is essential to be conscious of the fact that a term Turks is noted for summarizing scientific meaning within linguistics only. It has to be kept in mind that in the history and archaeology a term Turks bears no summarizing meaning, for this name was typical for a medieval people known from annals.

The second peculiarity that has to be taken into account when dealing with the early history of the Turkic peoples is widely spread hyphenation of a name from one people to another. In general, there are three sequentially changing stages in the history of ethnonyms. The people's name is different on each of them. On the first, scientifically significant, a name emphasizes the ancient people proper (ethnonym); later on, it became a name of ever subordinated multi-tribal country (i.e. ethnonym grows into polytonym), and then the people's name turns into ethnonym again, but of another people that

lived in the same country. When a name hyphenates into a new capacity, the language of the people makes no matter; a new bearer of old name may go back to absolutely different linguistic ancestors.

These include Slavs, Bulgarians that experienced a stage of common polytonym with Turkic-speaking Bulgarians in the Balkans; Russians that shaped under the sway of Russia; contemporary Kyrgyzs that had common political history with ancient informants of the name in the early Middle Ages that established an enormous state in Siberia and adjoining Asia in the 9 century. There is a lot of examples. It is essential for us to understand that the coincidence of ethnonyms in science makes it no possible to retrace the people's origin, though enables researchers to identify stages of its political history.

Khakassia and Tuva examples are evidence of ancient migration of Turkic peoples and dissemination of their languages. The point is not about reproduction of new settlers but the rise in the number of people well-versed in their speech. Later on, Turkization of this kind spread to the Eurasia; that's why the Turkic-speaking peoples are numerous; origination of each of them was dependent upon population's factor that initially spoke no Turkic. From this it follows a diversity of anthropological type of Turkic peoples.

These processes are traced back to the north from Sayan. Kyrgyzs-Gyangu that came from an unknown south to the Middle Yenisei, had taken leading position in the region under Huns. In an effort to sum up chronicles' data² and follow precise L.R. Kyzlasov's³ source studies, one can conclude that Kyrgyzs merged with local Dinlins to form a new people Khakass. Archaeologists are indicative of the fact of merging between these two peoples that initially differentiated by language and culture. This proceeded in the 2-1 centuries B.C. and resulted in the formation of a new and uniform Tashtyk archaeological culture and a new related people (ancient Khakasses). Kyrgyzs comprised its aristocracy that reigned in Yenisei till the first third of the 20 century. It was the very name of Khakasses, as distinct from ethnonym Kyrgyz and unknown to the Chinese that aroused special explorations of Tan scholars.⁴ In the new and newest history, the ethnonym Khakass is extant in the form kakhas among Bashkirs (along with other Sayan-Altay newcomers – Kyrgyzs and Tabyns); in South Siberia – in the contracted form khaas (Russian kach, kachinets). Of interest is the fact that an area of khaas name and its Mongolized form khaasut coincides with the land of Dinlins mentioned in the sources from Kuztents Alatau to Baykal.⁵

New cultural distinctions brought by Turkic-speaking Kyrgyzs to Siberia in the 2 century B.C. are illustrative of their initial connection with Indo-European world. Extremely significant are three features: 1) burning of dead (typical for ancient Hittites, Greeks, Germans and other Indo-Europeans), extant among Khakassians only before earlier 19 century;⁶ cow worshipping and primogenitor's origination to the marriage between a deity and a cow (Juang tzatzu, 8 century; Gardizi, 11 century);⁷ 2) age counting by space of time in 20 years (“no person, aged not 40, is entitled to sit down in the

presence of sovereign”: Abu Dulaf, 942),⁸ not by 12 years of animal cycle, though “years are considered to be twelve signs”.⁹ In this connection, deserving a special attention is A.N. Samoylovich’s reference to the North Caucasian counting distinctions: “As for names of tens, – the Turkologist wrote in 1927 to V.V. Barthold, – the Kumyk common people, like Karachays and Balkars, instead of ordinary Turkish (i.e. Turkic – I.K.) names of tens, use twenties typical for some peoples of Caucasus: eki jigirmi – 40, uch jigirmi – 60, tört jigirmi da ön – 90”.¹⁰

When looking for primordial habitation of Kyrgyzs-Gyanguns, it is essential to associate two historical factors: southern lands assaulted by Huns not later than in the 2 century B.C. and neighborhood with powerful Indo-European people. It is not possible to identify these lands today. The Chinese named Tohars as Yuechji – Indo-Europeans that moved into Eastern Turkestan in the Bronze Age. An analysis says that not all Yuechji left Huns for the west, for Tohars and texts in their language were kept on site till the 10 century. Also, the Indo-European impact on ancient Kyrgyzs goes no back to Tohars, for the latter was unaware of cadaver incineration. Note that westwards the Indo-Europeans of the Central Asia discontinued this rite in the 3 century B.C. Hence, it is essential to look for contacts of Turkic peoples with cultures of older and wider Indo-Aryan circle that had possibly existed before the Hun epoch. Perhaps, communications of this kind were unrelated to the Central Asia.

In the history of Ashina people (as referred to by the Chinese) we are faced with the same regularities.¹¹ According to a legend, in the 5 century Ashina moved from an anonymous country Co (“from Huns in the north”) or from the region of Pinlyan (to the south-west from Ordos) via Turfan to South Altay. After merging with local tribes (as was with Kyrgyzs and Dinlins) they formed a new people – Turks (cf. with the formation of Khakass people) and transferred, like Kyrgyzs, a previous ethnonym to the ruling kin. Similarly to the name of Khakass, the name of Turks was new and inexplicable for the Chinese (they originated it to the Mongolian Dulga “helmet”). Obviously, the both ethnonyms came to new peoples from previous residents Prisan and Altay. While a name of Khakas goes back to South Samodian origin, the very nature of ethnonym Turk is unclear. An initial language of Ashin is also unknown. Annals term them as “mixed Barbarians”. Our historians link them to Huns on general considerations only.

A previous relation of Ashin to the Indo-European world, like ancient Kyrgyzs, is obvious. The ethnonym is bound with Eastern-Iranian languages (“heavenly, blue”). As for the origin of Ashin, there is a legend about brothers brought to Altay by a cow (Yuan tzatzu).¹² Mentioning by chronicles that dead bodies were ordinarily burnt confused archaeologists, since the historical science is aware of a rite of Turks only: burial of the deceased together with his horse. A thorough analysis of written sources and works of predecessors makes it possible to guess a riddle,¹³ for the point is about incineration of deceased kagans: in the 6-7 centuries, the ruling kin maintained primordial custom of Ashin; the rest of population kept on burying in its own manner.

Self-consciousness of dynastic kin of early Turks is underestimated by modern science: in the 9 century the power of Kyrgyzs was reckoned from earlier 1 century B.C.; while in the 5 century Ashins declared about 10 generations of rulers, i.e. from mid-2 century.

Cadaver incineration spread among Kyrgyz, Ashins and nameless residents of Tuva in the 2-4 centuries reveals a common feature of the culture of Turkic-speaking peoples who came to the South Siberia from the south.

Another distinction, contrary to the Chinese descriptions, comes from the etymology of aboriginal vocabulary of runic scripts. The world of primordial Turks was not nomadic; it was settled: army was an infantry armed with spears; economy – irrigational; habitation - wattle and daub houses.¹⁴ The science has still to identify roots of this culture. Common traces of early Turkic cultures lead to the Western Asia, not the Central.

It would be appropriate to supplement the indications above with the Western Asian (Semite) origin and rather archaic (syllabic) alphabet structure of runic scripture – common ancestor of Yenisei and Orkhon scripts,¹⁵ as well as types of documents in writing originally incidental to the Asian runes. Mirrored in Yenisei epitaphs, rough drafts of carvers proved to be archaic sets of wooden rods and planks, while compilation and reading of a text – movement fro lower to upper line.¹⁶ Paleographic taxonomy classifies steppe runic characters into two independent categories: Eurasian and Asian unrelated to each other.¹⁷ Hence, Turkic peoples behind them had of yore been divided into two large and different cultural groups that shaped in an unknown epoch of perception and formation of the scripts above.

Laying early medieval migrations and influences aside, one makes certain that it is no mere chance that the Eurasian part (Kuban, Don and Achiktash scripts) belongs to the Bulgar-Khazar area, while the Asian group (Yenisei and Orkhon) – Eastern Turkic peoples: division into western and eastern ones took place rather early. This is vividly echoed in the well-known linguistic distinctions: Chuvashes, Bulgars, Khazars, on the one hand, and other peoples, on the other. Preservation of linguistic and paleographic antiquity makes it possible to think that the Khazar-Bulgar component was sorted out of proto-Turkic nucleus and remained isolated off contacts with other Turkic peoples. Since the early Middle Ages, the Eastern Turkic world moved westwards and devoured once separated old believers; just Chuvashes survived.

Thus, a stage of early history of Turkic peoples that came to the Central Asia and revealed itself in the Hun epoch does not seem to be the first, but rather subsequent, second link in their ancient cultural development; and is not indicative of the former ancestral home. Pertaining to this are Far Eastern distinctions of Turkic archaeological cultures of Sayano-Altay and Mongolia going back to Pre-Khan and early Khan (early Hun likewise) epochs: Tashtyk and Shurmak styles of engraving, Kyrgyz and

Uygur round vases (unaware of which was the people of Turk that came to the Great Wall of China later), horizontal zithers (musical instruments of Khakass chatkhana type), funeral miniature articles (stirrups, bridles, umbrellas) and small sculptures of people and animals, etc., as referred to in the works of S.V. Kiselev.¹⁸ When dealing with the last categories of products (particularly, umbrellas), one has to take into account an impact of aristocratic culture of China at the Syr stage of Tashtyk culture, i.e. non-initial nature of the phenomenon, the very relation to Gyangun is indisputable.¹⁹

According to information available, the secondary, Central Asian stage of culture-genesis was typical to the Eastern Turkic peoples who came to the Medial Asia from their western ancestral home, i.e. later than pre-Khazar Bulgar exodus.

It is essential to comprehend and adopt (in terms of Russian etymology and semantics), i.e. introduce the following into my intellectual worldview: features and, hence, the second stage of Turkic culture-genesis established themselves by the time of the Hun expansion into the Central Asia, for in the 2-1 centuries B.C. the Turkic-speaking peoples with the features above had already been displaced into the boundaries of Sayan-Altay area.

It is obvious that archaeologically the western Asian stage of early cultural history of the Turkic-speaking peoples that we adopt as initial dates back to the Bronze - early Iron Ages.

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