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Early Torks In The Steppes Of The Northern Part Of The Sea Of Azov Region

The author of the article supports the O.B. Golovko's hypothesis according to which after the fall of Khazar Khaganate in 965 first Oguz conquerors settled in the basin of the Don and the Donets making the Allanian population leave their territory. Perhaps Oguz-Torks destroyed the Allanian settlement only in the upper stream of the Siverskyi Donets. The Torks have been living for a long time in the steppe part of the basin of the Donets river as a part of Polovtsi tribe confederacy.

Key words: *Torks, Khazars, the northern part of the Sea of Azov, source evidence, Saltiv culture, burials.*

In the history of medieval nomads, who lived in the northern part of the Black Sea region there are a lot of “blank spots”. Among them the questions, which are connected with the appearance of Tork-Oguzes in the steppe remain uninvestigated. Unfortunately, lack of written and archeological sources doesn't give us confidence to explain a lot of aspects of the given problem.

We know, that in the late X and early XI the process of migration of the bulk of the Turk-oguzes from the steppe of the Caspian to the West in the Black Sea steppe took place. They were speaking the Turkic language, also known as “Guzy” in Moslem sources and “Uzy” in the works of Byzantine authors,. In addition, in X century the split of the bulk of the Oguz tribes began. The bulk of the Oguz migrated from the Central Asia through the Iranian upland region to the Asia Minor, where in the second part of the XI century the state of Turk-Seljuk were formed. The rest of the Oguzes went to the South-Rus'ian steppes, where they are known as “Torky” in our chronicles (from the own name Turk) and pressed the “Pechenegs”. The majority of the researchers connected the reason of such important migration of Oguz with the pressure of Kumaniv-Polovtsiv from

the East on their western neighbours – Oguzes, which took place at the beginning of XI century.

According to this traditional approach, the ruling period of the Tork-Oguzes in the steppes of the Eastern Europe was not long – only the beginning of the XI century. Such vision of the history of steppe of the Black Sea region researchers expressed in XIX century. P.Golybovskiy considered that the Torks were already known in Rus' in 985, but they became the southern neighbors only at the beginning of the XI century. But soon, after 1055, torch period in steppes finished, because Polovtsi came. This conception became demonstrative for the followers in XX century. What is interesting, even at the end of XX century is the fact that a lot of competent researches considered, that the Torks have been living in south rus' steppes only for a few decades of the XI century.

So, S.O. Pletniova in 1981 said categorically: “У східноєвропейських степах за письмовими джерелами можна виділити два етапи: печенізький (X – початок XI ст.) й половецький (середина XI – перша половина XIII ст.). Торчеського періоду не було, оскільки цей народ недовго кочував у донських та придніпровських степах. У торків метою було завоювання Візантії. Переслідуючи її, вони по-суті тільки пройшли Причорномор'ям на Балканський півострів”³. But in time, their views has changed.

So, in 1990, in her monograph "Polovtsi" S. Pletnyova indicated that the Oguz-Torks could appear in the Khazar period at the end of the IXth – at the beginning of Xth century near the Khazar fortress Sarkel on the Nyzhniy Don. But according to the researcher's thought they couldn't move further to the west in the X century. According to S. Pletnyova, even at the beginning of XI century. “торки-гузи кочували ще, можливо, у східних регіонах східноєвропейського степу”⁴.

P. Tolochko followed similar views but he was more cautious in his conclusions. Yes, he believed that the first mention about the Torks in the ancient chronicles of 985 is not a testament of their staying in the steppes in the South of Rus'. Speaking about the

migration of the Torks he expressed himself traditionally: “Лише на початку XI ст. кочові орди торків, відомих у візантійських хроніках під іменем узів, а в східних творах – гузів, масово підуть до земель, зайнятих печенігами, та посунуть їх”⁵.

Strangely enough but even the researchers in Turkmenistan were inclined to adhere to such a late date. In 1998 O. Gundogdiev in his monograph "The past Turkmen" said: “Приблизно у 30-ті рр. XI ст. відбулася друга велика битва між огузами-язичниками і бечене (печенігами. – О.Б.) у причорноморських степах, після чого бечене були розчавлені новою хвилею кочівників. Усе Північне Причорномор’я підкорилося огузам. Навіть Азовське море почало називатися “Гузьким морем”.”. У 40-і рр. із степів Азії прибули нові огузькі племена, точніше, їхні рештки. Затиснуті з обох боків – кипчаками та огузами-мусульманами, вони шукали порятунку в європейських степах”⁶.

Commenting on this assumption, it is worth adding, that the first clash between guzy and Pechenegs we should see the events at the end of the 9th century, as a result of which, according to Constantine Bagrianorodnyi, driven by the Khazars uzy from Volga attacked the Pechenegs and those forced to cross this river, attacked lebedinsky madiars in the Sea of Azov. At the same time, under the "Oguz-Muslims" we should see the Turkmen. Usually the list of researchers who followed the similar views is not exhaustible.

However, conflicting data of written sources allowed O. Golovko to come to the conclusion that the Oguz tribes established in the northern part of the Black Sea region much earlier than the beginning of XIth century. The author described his hypothesis in details in 2001 in a special article "Torky in the history of the Black Sea steppes (IX-XII centuries)"⁷. There were significant reasons for it.

Thus, O. Golovko considers that remnants of saltivska culture in Podonni were destroyed by the Torks-Oguzes as a result of events of 965: “...носії салтово-маяцкої археологічної культури ... перебували на стадії переходу від скотарства до

землеробства, мали розвинуті ремесла й промисли. Безумовно, вторгнення печенізьких та торчесько-огузьких орд (а через деякий час і половецьких) завдало великої шкоди “салтівцям”. Значну частину останніх було знищено, а інша відійшла на північ”⁸. Thus, a researcher underlined, that not all Saltiv population was killed by newcomers. Moreover, the carriers of Saltiv culture „справили позитивний вплив на етнічні процеси у кочівників, сприяли становленню нових рис в їх господарському та суспільному житті”⁹.

We can't but mention that this approach became innovative in the decision of the given problem. Besides, researchers diversely explained the reasons of disappearance of remnants of Saltiv culture in Podonni forest-steppe. There are even a few hypotheses. According to the first, at the end of IX century the settlement of alans in forest-steppe of Podonni was killed by Pechenegs. U.V. Gotie, S.O. Pletnyova and some other researches followed this supposition. Despite it, M.I. Artamonov considered that settlement of Alaniv-Asiv on the river Don were liquidated by Khozary, because local Alani-Asy rebel against the Khozary at the beginning of X century according to the document of Cambridge¹². However, these hypotheses did not get wide support among researchers. The most popular hypothesis is the hypothesis according to which the settlements of Alany in forest-steppe of Podonn were defeated by Slavs during the march of Svyatoslav in 965. V.O. Babenko¹³, B.A. Shramko¹⁴, O.V. Ichenska (Parkhomenko)¹⁵, G.E. Afanasev¹⁶ and others agree to it.

However, modern data allow us to agree exactly to the hypothesis of O.B. Golovko, because we already know, where Saltivtsi moved from the forest-steppe of Podonnya in the second half of X century. So, this hypothesis coincides with the observations of researchers about the migration of one part of Saltivsk population in this period from forest-steppe of Podonnya to the north-west to the territory of Slavonic Siveryan¹⁷, the second part moved in the reverse direction from Podonnya to the tops of Kuban, to their motherland¹⁸, and the third part moved to the northeast, to the territory of

Mordvy-Mokshi¹⁹. Such direction of migrations of Don Alany may indicate that the defeating power was going from the southeast, but not from some other territories. Consequently, hypothesis of O.B. Golovko suggests that the Turks appeared in the Northern Black Sea Region not at the beginning of XI century, but a few decades before. Thus, at the end of X century the Tork-Oguzes could populate the territory of steppes, released from the Khozars, in the Volgo-Donskyi basin, while in the steppes to the west of the Siverskyi Donets, the Pechenegs continued to migrate. Clearly, that the Torks aimed to populate the steppes which were located to the west of the lower Don. In order to confirm of O.B. Golovko's hypothesis there are a lot of information of both writing and archaeological sources, which one should investigate more thoroughly.

As it is generally known, before the second half of the 10th century. the Oguz Turks were the Khazars' vassals. In the writings of the oriental authors Ali ibn al-Athir and Mir Khvand there is a legend about the ancestor of the Seljuq Torks, and the chief of the Oguzes, Duqaq, who was in jabgu's (Khazar leader's) service. Duqaq's son Seljuq became particularly close to the Khazar leader. But as a result of court intrigues Seljuq was forced to retire from the Khazar leader's service, and with his sons Isrâîl (Israel), Mikâîl (Michael), Yûnus (Jonah) and Mûsâ (Moses) led his tribe to the lowlands of Syrdarya where they have captured Bukhara and founded their own state of the Seljuq Torks²⁰. These facts: the Oguzes' dependence on the Khazars, and the further struggle between them reflected in the writings of the other authors. So, Kostiantyn Bagrianorodnyi reports that in the middle of the 10th century. the Oguzs Torks go out of control of the Khazars, and together with the Volga Bulgars begin the struggle for full independence²¹ Arabian historian Ibn Miskawayh reports that in 965 the Torks (Oguzes. – *O.B.*) attacked Khazaria²². The latter report allows us to think that in 965 the Prince Sviatoslav of Kyiv coordinated his activities with the Oguzes, and together they took part in the destruction of the Chazarian Khanate.

That's why, it is worth noticing that the first record of "the Torks" in the Old East

Slavic chronicles refers to 985: “Иде Володимир на болгары с Добрынею, уем своим, в лодьях, а торки берегом приведе на коних, и так победи болгары”²³. Concerning this the thoughts of the researchers have divided.

So, S. Pletniova, holding the opinion of the emergence of the Oguz Turks in the South-Rus'ian steppes just at the beginning of the 11th century, thought, that the Kyivan Prince Volodymyr was fighting against the Volga Bulgars, while the Oguz Turks were moving north along the left coast of the Volga²⁴. The academician P. Tolochko considers that Volodymyr had made a campaign against the Volga Bulgaria. Concerning the Turks' part in this campaign, Tolochko gives the following view: “Припущення про участь у поході 985 р. саркельських гузів виглядає більш природним, ніж висновок про їхніх нижневолзьких соплемінників, розташованих від кордонів Русі на багато сотень кілометрів”²⁵. That's why A. Novoseltsev's opinion is of particular interest. He considered that the Kyivan Prince had attacked the Pryazovia Bulgars not the Volga²⁶. If it is written about the Pryazovia Bulgars in this report, it means that already in 985 the Oguz Turks must have been living near them.

The researchers tend to see first of all “Black Bulgarians” in the Bulgarians who lived in the the Sea of Azov region. They are mentioned by the author of “Tale of Bygone Years”, and also by Kostyantyn Bagryanorodnyi. S.A. Romashov, who investigated the question of the “Black Bulgarians” location, considers that they lived in the eastern part of the Sea of Azov region.²⁷ However the analyses of the written sources makes us hesitate that “Black Bulgarians” lived in the eastern part of the Sea of Azov region. Thus, in “Tale of Bygone Years” there is a text of agreement between Kyiv knyaz Ihor and the Byzantines of 945 in which the following is said: “А о сих, иже приходят Черънии Болгаре, и воюють въ стране Корсуньский, и велим князю Рускому да ихъ не пускаеть и пакостять стороне его”²⁸ If we take into consideration only the location of “Black Bulgarians” in the eastern part of the Sea of Azov region then it is difficult to understand how the Prince of Kyiv could be on their way in their movement towards

Kherson which is situated in the south-western Crimea. Besides another obstacle for the Black Bulgarians must have been the Kerch Strait. Kostyantyn Bagryanorodnyi's message lets us define the location of Black Bulgarians in the Sea of Azov region. In the middle of Xth century the Byzantine author in his treatise "About Empire Government" indicated that to the north of the Sea of Azov there was the Dnieper river "от которой росы продвигаются и к Черной Болгарии, и к Хазарии, и к Мордии"²⁹.

There is also a thought that the campaign conducted by Volodymyr in 985 is depicted in the work by Yakov Mnih "Memory and Praise to Prince Volodymyr The Great" (XI century). "Тако же пребывающю князю Володимерю в добрых делех, благодать божия просвещаше сердце его, и рука господня помагаше ему. И побежаше вся врагы своя, бохутся его вси. Идеже идяше, одолеваше Радимици победы и дань на них положи, Вятичи победы и дань на них положи на обоих, и Ятьвягы взя, и сребныя Болгары победы, и на Казары шед, победы я и дань на них положи. Умысли же и на Гречки и град Корсунь..."³⁰. Mentioned here Khazars were likely to live in Tmutorakan or the Sea of Azov region.

It is well-known that the borders of Khazar Kahanat in the west were passing the lower stream of the river Don and alongside the stream of the Siverskyi Donets. Thus, the "Black Bulgarians" were supposed to live in the steppes between the Dnieper and the Don i.e. in the northern part of the Sea of Azov region. It was easy for them to move to the Crimea from this point through the Isthmus of Perekop where Korsun was situated. Thus, the Turks were supposed to live in this region already in 985. So, in the last decades of Xth century western territories of the political aggregation of Oguz tribes reached the steppes of the northern part of the Sea of Azov and they were one unity with Oguz massive in the steppe part of the Volga-Don region as well as the steppes to the east of the Volga. At the beginning of XI century in the so called "Seldzhutskyi period" this massive was divided into two groups: Eastern Oguzes who settled in Middle Asia and were known as "Seldzhuky" and western who settled in the steppes of the northern part

of the Black Sea region and were known in old Rus chronicles as “Torks”.

Thus, in the period between 965-985s, advanced detachments of Tork-Oguzes could populate the steppes in the middle stream of the Siverskyi Donets River, where their north-western neighbors had to be the Pechenehs and southern ones were the "Black Bulgarians" of the Sea of Azov region who could unite into the military-political alliance with the Pechenehs against their neighbors³¹. The neighborhood of the Pechenehs and the "Black Bulgarians" forced the Torks to keep alliance with Rus'. In 965 this alliance contributed to the fall of the Khazar Khaganate. That is extremely significant, that joint campaign of Prince Volodymyr of Kyiv and the Torks of the Don region was exactly in 985, before the adoption of Christianity. For comparison, it is worth mentioning the text of agreement of Prince Igor with Byzantium, from which followed that "Black Bulgarians" were bothering the Crimean Byzantine Kherson (Korsun) by their raids. Therefore, it was supposed that Rus' had supported Byzantium in this conflict³². It is obvious enough that the Torks tried to capture the Northern Azov steppes for the pastures in this period, where the "Black Bulgarians" were nomadizing. Thus, on the eve of 985, a coalition was formed; it consisted of Byzantium, Rus' and Tork-Oguz against the "Black Bulgarians", who obviously were allies with Pechenehs. It is likely that during the campaign against the "Black Bulgarians" in 985, the troops headed by Volodymyr were floating along the northern shore of the Sea of Azov, and the Torks equestrian army was simultaneously moving overland across the steppe. After these events, there were no reminiscences of the "Black Bulgarians" in written sources. It means that in 985 the "Black Bulgarians" were completely destroyed as a political force, but instead of them, Tork-Oguzes settled in the steppes of Northern Azov. Thus, at the end of the XXth. century, one of the nomadic Oguz tribes finally settled in the steppes of modern Eastern Ukraine, where the northern borders of their territories reached the middle stream of the Seversky Donets River, and southern reached the shores of the Sea of Azov.

Facts from the ancient chronicles suggest that in the second half of the XIth.

century, the Torks did not leave the steppes of Northern Azov for the Balkans, but they were included as a constituent part of the tribal groups of Prydonetsko-Azov Polovtsians. According to the observation of O.B.Holovko, "Tale of Bygone Years" may indicate these facts. In the chronicle of 1103, Kyiv Prince Svyatopolk Izyaslavich and Pereyaslav Prince Volodymyr Vsevolodovych Monomah realized the campaign to the bottom of the Dnipro river, to the island Khortytsia after Prince leaving to Dolob's'k: "И поидоша на коних и в ладьях, и придоша ниже порогъ, и сташа в Протолочех в Хортичем острове". Then Old Rus' army went on foot and horseback and reached the Sutin river: "и вседоша на коне, и пешеци из лодей выседавше идоша в поле 4 дни, и придоша на Сутинь". Because of the well-planned military action Old Rus' army defeated Polovtsians and their allies. Rus' had captured a great profit and many captives, "Печенеги и Торки с вежами"³³ were among them. A few decades ago K.Z. Kudryashov had found that the name of the River "Sutin", which is mentioned in the chronicles, is derived from the Turkic word "syut " - "moloko". This is quite rightly related to the name of the river "Molochna", which flows into the Sea of Azov. The river "Molochna" is situated in the Northern part of the Sea of Azov region ³⁴. This gave O.B. Holovko grounds to come to its logical conclusion: "Великий масив торків наприкінці XI ст., вірогідно, перебував постійно в степах і знаходився під контролем половецьких ханів"³⁵.

The question of cultural attribution of the Torks in the steppes of Northern Black sea region, is a separate problem, because the funeral ceremony of Turks could undergo the transformation, as the result of including some family groups from the environment of former Pecheniz'kiy and Saltivskogiy population into the complement of the tribal associations of Oguzes- Torks. S.O. Pletnyova considered that the Torks had been living on the territory of Ukrainian steppe for a short period of time, approximately till 11th century, and that's why they left after themselves a very small number of funeral complexes. Thus, S.O.Pletnyova distinguished not numerous Turks funeral mounds in the

steppes of Northern Black sea region. They have the following features: the burial was held under a small earthwork; there exist only isolated instances of burial in rather deep pits; there are places where women are buried; placing head and feet of a horse not alongside of the deceased, but on the step or above him in filing up of the grave; in case, the deceased was buried without a horse, the grave pit, as a rule, had steps from both sides for building some overhead cover.

However there is a district in Northern Black sea region, where funeral submounds of nomads of Chozars'kiy period could be found, which almost fully correspond to the description of funeral place of huza, described by Ibn Fadlan. They mean the basin of the Sivers'kiy Dinez' in its middle stream.

Exactly in this district near the villages Tors'ke and Marchenky at least, three funeral places of nomads were discovered in funeral mounds. The burial ceremony in many details coincides with the description of traditions of huziv's funeral place in the work of Ibn Fadlan. He left us the description of the funeral of a noble huz, that must help the archaeologists. According to Ibn Fadlan, the deceased-huz was buried with things in grave pit above which the wooden ceiling was arranged. The Arabic traveller reports that during funerals they could kill from one to several hundred horses, and the skin of slaughtered animals was stretched on the wooden ceiling above the deceased. Above this the funeral mound from earth was built. In addition, Ibn Fadlan remembered about one very interesting feature of huz's funeral ceremony: “Если же он (покойник. – **О.Б.**) когда-либо убил человека и был храбр, то они вырубают изображение из дерева по числу тех, кого он убил, поместят их на могиле и скажут: “Вот его отроки, которые будут служить ему в раю””³⁷.

We can see the same funeral ceremony near Torske and Marchenky villages in the Seversky Donets basin. Buried here under the burial mound Oghuz – Torquay were in the pits, covered on the top with wooden ceiling, above which the horse bones were put, and in one case even bones of 8 calves, 2 sheep and a cow. The deceased were laid head to

the west and accompanied by a set of things that could indicate their wealth. Remnants of horse harness (bits, stirrups), two knives, one arrowhead and jugs were found in the poorest burial. In the richest burial (Mound number 27, a funeral at Farm Marchenko), besides harness and utensils there were: saber of direct fragment and round knob handle, remains of wooden covered with leather holster decorated with round convex copper plates, leather quiver in which there were arrows with iron tips, iron clasp and remnants of leather boots. In the same grave at the feet and head of the deceased there were also found roughly carved wood figurines of people which, apparently, depicted the enemies killed by him, who had become servants of the deceased in his Afterlife. As a result, we can see that the described burial barrows in the middle stream of the Siverskyi Donets virtually coincide with the information of Ibn Fadlan about the Huzes' burial ritual. So, these funeral monuments of Torky are the earliest in the steppes of the Northern part of the Black Sea region.

Not only excavations of mounds, but also numerous toponyms and hydronyms: the River Tor (Great Tor, Kazenyi Toretz) Suhyi Toretz, Kryvvyi Toretz, village Torske on the River Zherebets, the Torskyi and Toretskyi settlements on the river Kasenyi Torets, settlement of Torks near Slovyanivka town prove that Torks really lived in the middle stream of the Seversky Donets. Pretty typical that most of these hydronyms and toponyms are focused on the right bank of the Seversky Donets. So, Torks were supposed to live in the steppes to the west of the Donets. Existence of these names in the Seversky Donets basin up to present days, can be the evidence of the fact that Oghuz-Torks population had been present on this territory for decades and could have lived there for a long time during Polovetskyi period. Thus, there is a good reason to include the steppes between the Dnieper and the Don to the Torks area of inhabitation, where they could appear directly after the events of 965.

Переклад на англійську Мамчур Надії Олександрівни