

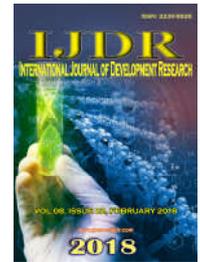


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## URBAN CULTURE IN THE TURKIC KHAGANATE

**\*Munira Khatamova**

Institute of History Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan

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### ABSTRACT

The article discusses the opinions of scholars regarding the urban processes in the Turkic Khaganate. The cities and settlements existed in both part of Turkic Khaghanate, which are confirmed by the written sources and archeological materials.

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### INTRODUCTION

Until recently statement of such a topic has faced to insuperable difficulty, first of all, because of the extreme poverty of sources and little study of the problem. In the fact of the matter that the traditional "formula" of a Chinese chronicler, in accordance with the Turkic people who "live in tents and felt yurts, move from place to place, depending on the sufficiency of plants and water" (Бичурин Т. 1. С. 229-230), was one of the reason that did not enable to deeply study this problem. Until recently there has been an idea among the scientists that there wasn't any large city which was built by the Turkic people, although in the written sources mentioned about the existence of the cities, settlements and fortresses of the Turkic people, and even about the foundation of khaganate cities. Linguistic data confirm that in order to denote the city in the ancient Turkic language besides the word *baliq* the word *kerman* was also used by the Turks of Eastern Europe, and *tura* was characteristic for all the Western Siberian Turkic language people (ДТС, С. 80, 587; Clauson, 972. P. 335-336; СИГТЯ, 2001. С. 485, 487; СИГТЯ, 2006. С. 443-450). Based on the title of the topic, it can be said with certainty that most researchers tell one opinion: what kind of speech can go about the urban culture of Turkic people who dealt with

livestock breeding from the ancient times? In fact, the ancient Turks were one of the few nations of Central Eurasia, whose town building was reliably unknown. Until recently statement of such a topic has faced to insuperable difficulty, first of all, because of the extreme poverty of sources and little study of the problem. In the fact of the matter that the traditional "formula" of a Chinese chronicler, in accordance with the Turkic people who "live in tents and felt yurts, move from place to place, depending on the sufficiency of plants and water", was one of the reason that did not enable to deeply study this problem.

### Historiography

For the first time the evidence about the Turkic cities was found in Chinese chroniclers and travelers, and later in Muslim geographers. A scientific study of this problem shows that for the first time the problem of the origin of a settled way of life and cities in Mongolia was put forward by DA Klemenets (Letter from D.A. Clementz, 1892. P. 20-22) and again, already in the middle of the last century, it was returned on the agenda of the famous Soviet archeologist S.V. Kiselev (Kiselev, 1951, Kiselev, 1965). But it should be noted that the first of the Soviet scientists who seriously approached the issue of the cities of the Turkic peoples from the scientific point of view was L.R. Kyzlasov (Kyzlasov, 1989. S. 400-406, Kyzlasov, 2006). The urban culture of the Turkic people was

**\*Corresponding author: Munira Khatamova,**  
Institute of History Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

widely studied by Turkish scholars. Particularly, T. Baykara wrote his doctoral dissertation on the topic "Turkic city until XI century" which was dedicated to a number of his scientific articles (Baykara, 1971). The art historian E. Esin, in her many years of research, carried out a great work about the genesis and evolution of the cities of the Turkic peoples (Esin, 1972; Esin, 1983). Besides that, a special monograph was published by the Turkish scientist F. Sumer "Urban planning of ancient Turks", covering the period of VI-XIII centuries (Sumer, 1994). Today, two specialists dealing with this problem are known to us. One of them is the Buryat nomadologist and archeologist S.V. Danilov (Danilov, 2005), the other is the Turkish researcher K. Ozcan (Özcan, 2005; Özcan, 2008). As it is known, most researchers, mainly, under the Turkic khaganate suppose the territory of the Eastern khaganate including Mongolia, Southern Siberia, Northern China with a prevailing cattle breeding way of life. Consequently, they saw the establishment of their own cities of Turks only in the steppe spaces. However, it is appropriate to mention here that the cattle-breeding farm, fully adapted to the conditions of the sharp continental climate of these zones, was adapted to year-round nomadism and did not require long-term stationary settlements (Danilov, 2005, p. 275-276). Therefore, here the settlements and cities are relatively rare, and were built only in the period of powerful state formations in relatively favorable conditions of the steppe - foothills, oases, river valleys.

Although such steppe cities existed before the Turks and after them, but since there hasn't been a single settlement in the era of the Turkic Kaganate in the steppe zones (ie, in the eastern wing of the Kaganate). In this regard researchers give different opinions. In particular, if the archaeologist S.V. Kiselev connected it to the poor study of Central Asia in an archaeological sense (Kiselev, 1957, p. 93), then S.A. Pletneva believed that enriching nomads raids and long trips, as well as those included in the Kaganate Central Asian farmers were the reasons that prevented the development of the nomadic Turks in the Kaganate in the process of settling and developing agriculture (Pletneva, 1982. P. 69). On the contrary, other researchers believe that, although ancient Turkic fortresses or cities have not yet been found, there is a reason to believe that the Turks were familiar with the construction of defensive structures. The evidence of this is the memorial monuments of the Turkic Khagans, which included shafts and moats, a rectangular layout characteristic to the fortresses (Voitov, 1989, pp. 21-23; Khudyakov, 1995, p. 64; Danilov, 2005, p. 243). However, one of the most powerful arguments in favor of having their own cities among the Turks of the Eastern Wing is the information from narrative sources. Despite the fact that it was noted in Chinese sources that Tonyukuk advised Bilge Kagan not to build cities, the Turkic Khagans still paid attention to urban planning and the development of their own farming. Thus, Mukan Khagan (553-572) always lived near the Otuken mountains (Chinese *Yudujin*, *Yudujun*), who personally built a courtyard and a capital near the mountains. The southern city-headquarter Kutlug Elterish kagan (682-691) was the Karakum-balyk (Chinese *Heishacheng*) at the Chugai-yish (Chinese *Tsung-tsaishan*) mountains, etc. (Bichurin T.1, P. 230, Kyuner, 1961. P. 327, Mau-tsai, 1958. P. 119, 153, 204). The information of a Chinese chronicles is also confirmed by the data of ancient Turkic epitaphs. In particular, on the stela of Kul-tegin, the following expression is met "urban dwellers (other Turkic *baliqdaqı*) went up to the mountains, and the inhabitants of the mountains went down". On the stela Bilge kagan the name

Togu-balyk, which was located on the coast of the Tola River, and Magy Kurgan, was given. There are also reports that Kapagan Kagan (691-716), demanded grain and agricultural implements from the Chinese (Bichurin, T.1, P. 269). Some researchers, based on this information, believe that perhaps this kagan planned to grow bread on Ordos, but his plans were not destined to come true due to China's opposition (Drobyshev, pp. 17-18). In fact, that the Turks cultivated the land, was confirmed by the discovery of hand mills and characteristic terms in inscriptions and other written sources (СИГТЯ, 2006. С. 436-437), but they didn't have wide development of agriculture, mainly due to the continental climate. Thus, all the above written facts indicate that in the eastern part of the Kaganate there were fortresses, settlements and cities, as some Soviet scientists rightly believed (Kiselev, 1957. 93, Kyzlasov, 1969. P. 46-47 Kyzlasov, 1989. P. 400, Klyashtorny, 1977. pp. 64-65). All that was remained is only to identify exactly where these cities and fortresses were located. In our opinion, the information in the written sources can be confirmed by the archaeological materials. Mongolian archaeologists referred to the period of the Turkic and Uyghur Kaganates only in the territory of Mongolia there were 14 fortifications (Klyashtorny, 1977. S. 65, Maidar, 1971. P. 122, 227-228). In particular, the Mongolian scientist D. Maydar noted that in the 7th-8th centuries, in the lower reaches of Ezni-gol there was a fortress of Tung-cheng – the oldest part of Har-hot (Maydar, 1971. p. 125). In the Uyghur times, the ancient settlements of an early time of Bazhyn-Allak, Shaganor and others were also used on the territory of Tuva (Khudyakov, 1995, p. 64).

At the same time, one should take into account the fact that there have not been enough archaeological studies on the territory of Mongolia and Northern China, and in this regard, S.V. Kiselev appears to be right, pointing to this as one of the main reasons that did not reveal the ancient Turkic cities. In general, as noted by D.Maidar, during the rule of the Turkic Kaganate on the territory of Mongolia, the summer and winter headquarters of kagans were highly developed. And stationary settled cities and settlements of this period were on the outskirts of the Turkic kaganate (Maidar and Pyurveev, 1980. p. 79). However, not on the outskirts of the Kaganate, as this scientist believed, but on the outskirts of the steppes. Meanwhile, almost all sedentary settlements came into existence on the banks of rivers or near mountainous areas – especially, in such favorable places bordering on the steppes. The western wing of the Kaganate, on the other hand, abounds in ancient cities and settlements that developed on the basis of irrigated agriculture, but in historical science the opinion to connect their origin with the Sogdians is dominated. In our opinion, this is not the correct idea, since VI - VIII centuries in the territory of the Western Wing there have no "pure" Sogdian or Turkic cities. Representatives of both ethnic groups actively participated in the town-planning process in this territory. Therefore, it is archaeologically difficult to trace such a Turkic-Sogdian symbiosis (Suyab Ak-Beshim, 2002, p. 170). In fact, it is very difficult to determine which ethnic stratum a city belongs to. Firstly, the representatives of various ethnic groups always participated in the construction of cities, although the initiative of construction could belong to a representative of another ethnic group<sup>1</sup>. Secondly, as a rule, in

<sup>1</sup> Например, шаньюй хуннов Чжичжи с целью своей защиты на берегу реки Талас построил одноименный с рекой укрепленный город. Исследователи выдвигают мнение, что в строительстве города наряду с

cities, especially in large cities, various ethnic group representatives lived and were engaged in various professions, so it is difficult, and in many cases even it is incorrect, to talk about a particular ethnic stratum affiliation. As many researchers confirmed, the emergence of the city is connected with different reasons, for example, a city comes into existence when an association acts as an economically and politically powerful and centralized state (Yegorov, 1969. S. 39-49, Grach, 1984. S. 121, Tkachev, 1986. P. 219, Danilov, 2005. p. 266-267, Legrand, 2005. p. 331-336, Drobyshev, 2005. p. 53). In the period of VI-VIII centuries. in the region the formation and development of new cities and settlements were observed, which can be seen in the archaeological materials. Therefore, palourbanologists agree with that with the transition to the period of early Middle Ages, a new wave of urbanization was observed (Margulan, 1950, Kozhemyako, 1959, Baypakov, 1986, Belenitsky, Bentovich, Bolshakov, 1973, Kyzlasov, 2006. pp. 219-346; Buryakov, 1982). As it is known, in the VI-VIII centuries the Turkic kaganate ruled in the region. But all the cities in that period, as it is confirmed by the researchers, were built by Sogdians (Klyashtorny, 2001, pp. 92-93; Khazanov, 2004. pp. 318-330; Haeshi, 2004. P. 219-227), and the Turks, majority of whom were the nomads, began to settle and live in cities only in the Karakhanid era (IX-XII centuries) (Belenitsky, Bentovich, Bolshakov, 1973. P. 133 134).

Today there is no need to prove that the center of the Western Wing of the Kaganate was the city of Suyab, which is identified with the ancient settlement of Ak-Beshim, the peak of development of which falls on the period of the reign of the Turkic Khaganate (Kyzlasov, 2006. p. 219-346). Xuan-tsang, who personally visited the city, left very valuable information about it in his notes (Beal, 1990, p. 42, 45). According to a Byzantine Ambassador Zemarh (568), the most developed in political and commercial relations the city of Talas was one of the headquarters of the Turkic Khagans. After Zemarh, who visited the city of Talas, located at a distance of 150 li (70-75 km) from Ming-bulak, Xuan-tsang also left valuable information about this city. At the same time, there was a city of Jabguket (Ak-ata fortress, Tashkent oasis) in the city of Chach, and next to it there was Khatunket (Tugaytepe), the origin of which the researchers connect with the Turkic rulers (Хатамова 2009). In general, in the Western Wing the urban culture was developed much higher.

## Conclusion

Thus, numerous data from written and archaeological sources testify to the intensive development of towns and settlements of the Turkic Kaganate. We hope that further research, including special archaeological research, will help to give a more complete and clear picture of them. It is necessary to cardinally reconsider about it from the view point of the rooted world historiography that the Turkic Khaganate was a "pure" nomadic state and the establishment of cities was not the merit of the nomadic Turks, but the Sogdians, the Chinese and other settled peoples of Central Eurasia.

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местным населением участвовали также мастера, прибывшие из Ферганы, Парфии и Рима.

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