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## MAIN INDEXES TO ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF TURKIC TRIBES AND NATIONALITIES

**Abstract:** In this article it is enlightened the significance of folk traditions, including clan names and tamgas as the signs of ethnic composition of the Turkic tribes.

**Key words:** tamga, language, borrowed words, interpret, experience, history, foundation, anthropology, translation.

**Language:** English

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### Introduction

The investigation of folk traditions, generic names and tamgas<sup>1</sup> as indexes to ethnic composition of Turkic tribes and nationalities is important. About 26 million Turks inhabiting in vast area beginning from the sea of Okhotsk and the Antarctic ocean till the Adriatic Sea, speak the same language differentiating only in dialects existing in the system of the language, therefore a Central Asian Turk can understand both a yakut and a *turk-ottoman*. Of course with considerable attention, cleverness and the exception of words borrowed from other languages. Academic Betling probably exaggerated the importance of dialect peculiarities in the Yakut language suggesting even to name the Turkic language the family of Yakut-Turkic languages and quite abruptly rejected the opinions of a famous scientist traveler along the north of Siberia Erman, who claimed that: “a Yakut who was born on the banks of the Lena or the Aldan without any difficulties inter-explained with a citizen from Constantinople” [16, p. 415; 433-434].

However Middendorf, getting a little introduced with the Yakut language in the north-east of Siberia

within 1844 and 1845 and delivering Mr. Betling a part of materials for his Grammar and Dictionary, after more than thirty years could inter-explain with the Turks of Central Asia, in Fergana with the help of scanty remnants of forgotten Yakut words: “When the interpreter left me, I, in the last resort was able to inter-explain with my Kara-Kyrgyz, if I could remember necessary Yakut words for it.” [15, p. 406]. On another point, Vambéry assures, from his own experience, that a Turk from Anatolia with a little attention understands a Turk from East Turkestan [13, p. 466].

On the contrary, physical types of Turkic tribes and nationalities are very various and in the experience of south-western Turks have very little common with the Turkic tribes in Central Asia and even more so the east Siberian. Of course, changes in types of race and nationalities happen, in some extent, under the pressure of climate and other environmental conditions and under the influence of culture, and also, probably in the result of evolution composing every of this anthropological type of elements, but such kind of changes, with the exception of rare cases, generally insignificant or at least, require very long

<sup>1</sup> The generic name taken from the Turkish word, “tamga” meaning seal or cattle brand.

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period of time. Incomparably faster, abrupt and deep are those changes in national and tribal types that are the result of crossbreeding with other races and nationalities. If we don't doubt that various types of Turk-ottaman is the result of crossbreeding of the Turks who arrived at Asia Minor from Central Asia no less than nine centuries and later at Balkan Peninsula with the local Kurds, Greeks and Slavs and etc. than it can be assumed that other Turkic tribes gained their anthropological differences from each other also, mainly, in the result of crossbreeding with different nationalities, not only under the influence of natural and cultural conditions that were for them monotonous enough. In view of all this, explanation of the origin of the Turkic tribes and nationalities in considerable degree corresponds to the definition of outside admixture, crossbreeding with which gave peculiarities to the Turkic tribes.

**DISCUSSION:** Historical information about northern and Central Asia begins some centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ and doesn't differ in abundance in later times. For this, they thought of finding explanations to the origin of Turkic tribes, especially to old ones in folk traditions.

According to the finest and one of the oldest national traditions, a record in Chinese nearly at the same time with emergence in the history the name of Turks itself, forefather of Turks by birth from "the lands of So lying in the north of the lands of the Huns". One of his descendants I-tchi-ni-sse-tou who was born by she-wolf and he was gifted with supernatural qualities, had two wives: Heaven Spirit's daughter and Winter Spirit's daughter. He had four sons born by the former and one of his sons turned into a swan; the other one named Chi-ko established a state between the rivers A-pou and Kien; and the third one laid the foundation for a kingdom on the banks of the river Tchou-tche; and the fourth son No-tou-lou-che lived in the mountains Tsien-sse-tchou-tche-chi; and in this mountains inhabited a Horde descended from the above mentioned general Turkish forefather; people of this Horde would suffer hard from cold of dew; No-tou-lou-che taught to make a fire to this Horde, heated and nourished, and this way saved the lives; for this the above mentioned Horde obeyed him, recognized as the Head and took the name of toukioue. His generation Tou-muen VI was the first ruler of the Turk (toukioue) who entered into relations with China in the first half of the VI<sup>th</sup> century. F. Iakinf Bichurin giving right enough Chinese transcription of *toukioue*, and even more so often writes this name as *dolga*, because, together with Schmid they took the *toukioue* for Mongols and produced their name from the Mongolian *dodolga*, i.e. a helmet. Klaprot and Abel Remus unsuccessfully compared the name *toukioue*

with *takia* i.e. a cap, but it turned out there is a quite suitable Turkish equivalent *terk* meaning *a helmet* [5, p. 383; 3, p. 72]. According to Vambery, "it would be logical enough if the the word "*turk* meant *a man or creation*", but this wish has no etymological foundation [11, p. 21].

The cited legend is placed in the Chinese "The history of northern Wei dynasty" (from 386 till 558) and (according to the interpretation by Stan. Julien'a), generally agreeing with the translation of F. Ia. Bichurin outlined with some abbreviations from which Russian transcriptions of names are taken [2, p. 327-328; 6, p. 258-259]. The dynasty history was compiled by the Chinese on the basis of annals and documents and current events, and therefore it should be supposed that the legend introduced in the history of Wei Dynasty was recorded within the years of 535-558, probably from the words of Turkish messengers. Accuracy of the records is seen by apparent misunderstanding By the Chinese, some at least in geographical and ethnic with details.

The reign of So, lying in the North of the Huns country i.e. current Mongolia must have been situated in the North side of the Altai, for its southern slopes were part of the Huns' lands. Nowadays one of the two genera of which consist of the upper Kumandi *vòlost* (*vòlost* means "small rural district") on the Bi river near the fall into it the Lebed river, carries the name of So and the other does Kuban or Kumand [7: 211-212]. From it it can be concluded with enough probability that legendary forefather of Turks was from the tribe So living in the North of Altai and the clan So is a small reminder of it, probably, in prehistoric times a tribe with no few number. Further, the Turkic word *cu* means "swan". The Turks living on the river Lebed call themselves *cu-cshi*, i.e. the people of "Lebed River" [7: 212].

It is not difficult to deduce from this that Chinese historians made a son of I-tchi-ni-sse-tou turn into a swan in vain: he as his other three brothers who settled in known places and founded their kingdoms (tribes), settled on the River Ku (a swan) and became the ancestor of the tribe Ku, whose remnants have been inhabiting so far on the Lebed River and in the *vòlosts* of Upper and Lower Kumand. So, *Chi-ko* is one of the Chinese transcriptions of the name of Kirghiz, (for instance, we can discover the Chinese names of the Kirghiz as Ki-ko, Kie-Ko in Degin) in the second there omitted the letter "r" that does not exist in the Chinese<sup>2</sup> and the last consonant as it was often done in Chinese till the time of Manjurian dynasty; besides, the A-pou river is probably the Abakan river and it was the main settlement of the Kirghiz, and the river *Gien* or *Kien* is really the river *Kem*, i.e. the remaining from the old times indigenous name of the River Yenisei [1, p.

<sup>2</sup> So, instead of tu-r-k in Chinese occurred tu-kyu; kyu for not having a sign for a sound k without a vowel.

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379]. The river Tchou-tche must be the river *Chu* (in Russian “Chuya”) the inflow of Katun serving and currently as lands of nomads of Chuy Turks (chukshi). And at last, Basi-Chu from the Turkish is translated as “upper (river) Chu”: because, if *chi* from Chinese means “stone”, then the place where the eldest son settled, is the essence of pasture with “stone (or rocky) mountains in the upper river Chu”.

Generally, it goes out according to geographical and ethnic data of the legend the Turk toukioues (more precisely according to F. Iakinf, “dulgak house”, i.e. actually Khan’s clan) descended from the tribe So inhabiting in the North of Altai, after their relocation in Altai and in the result of breeding they separated into four branches: one of them affirmed on the North slope of the Altai with the name *Chu* (*ben* or *men* meant perhaps “land”, “country”, subsequently turned into a prefix having collective meaning, as for example the nouns *turkman* or *turkmen*), the second branch founded on the Yenisei and Abakan with the name of Kirghiz, the third one remained roaming within the Altai on the river *Chu*, and the fourth formed a tribe taking the name of Turk. And the last who became known among Chinese in the second quarter of the VI<sup>th</sup> century coming into political intercourse with them, in 536 subdued the Gaogean in the number of 50 thousand nomad tents, then put the end the dominion of the Juan by 556 had taken possession of all Mongolia and Central Asia to Hindikush and the Black sea [6, p. 266-268]. Tomashek who passingby touched the legend under discussion, not satisfying of turning “the eldest son” into a Swan, made him to fly “far away” to the Yakuts who worship Kuba-khatun. But the Swan’s worship to the queen is not quite enough to ascribe such a connection to the Yakuts with the most ancient Turkic legend moreover in the legend there is no any word about or a hint at any fly of a swan. It is true, then guessing in “Tchou-tche” the river Chui, Tomashek supposes in the name of the youngest son “No-tou-lou-che” Turkic “the fourteenth” (ондурчи), but the number of the sons was only four, not fourteen and No-tou-lou-che was the eldest son not the youngest one [10, p. 64-65].

With all the interest, through the presented by the legend under consideration it can be seen that it serves only as the picture of the Turk toukioues in the VI<sup>th</sup> century regarding their origin of their own and the closest neighboring Turkic tribes from whom only some had historical future. In the legend the absence of various information and even mentions about such kind of old and numerous Turkic tribes as the Huns, the Changli, the Gaogean who had come onto the history stage a lot years earlier than the appearance of toukioues makes the story only a legend about the origin of the Turk toukioues, but not about all the Turkic people and its main tribes. Perhaps, of course, in the legend in is pictured remote and vague memories about ancestral home of all the Turks in the

North of the Altai, but the legend mainly presents only the tradition of the origin of the Khanate clan or rather dominant generations who united the disparate Turkic genera living in the southern slopes of the Altai and gave their unions and tribes admitted or given name of Turk.

This legend given with some details about the origin of the Turks is not a single and the most ancient one. A century before it, in the V<sup>th</sup> century by the Chinese a legend about the Gaogean was recorded, as it narrates this Turkish tribe is the generation of a wolf and a daughter of one of the Huns’ rulers [6, p. 248-249]. At the same time with the above mentioned legend created in the VI<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese have also a heritage and as it recorded there the Turk toukioues are the descendant born by a she-wolf and a boy of ten who was from the tribe of the Huns that had been exterminated by the enemies of the clan. The boy’s legs and arms had been chopped off. A she-wolf fed him, until the enemies found out about miraculous conservation of the boy’s life and killed him; then the she-wolf had to escape in a valley surrounded by the impassable mountains from all sides (Altai) and there gave birth to twelve sons of whom the Turk toukioues originated [6, p. 256-257]. All these legends as a legend about the Mongolians origin from “the sky born by a brown wolf and a grey doe” and other ones like that don’t give for determining the origin of the nations and tribes and their ethnic structure besides vague and mysterious allusions representing echoes of that remote evolution phase of human society when primitive clans worshiped different animals considering themselves their descendants.

Folk legends kept for us by Muslim authors Juvaini, Rashiddiddin, Abulgozi Bahadir-khan and others in the XIII and XIV<sup>th</sup> centuries is much richer in fit ethnic materials. To these authors didn’t reach ancient folk legends about the origin of Turkic tribes that have historical, ethnic and social foundation; they were content with naïve etymology: the Uighur is the essence of a tribe that was allies or followers of legendary Oguz-khan, for the word “uighur” must mean “follower”, “united” from the Turkic language; the Changli come from those warriors of Oguz-khan who made carts to carry prey and reserves, for “changli” means “a cart” in Turkic; the Quarlique went from Oguz-khan’s people showered with snow for “quarlique” means “a snowman” and so on [17]. The later is a written legend about the origin of the Turkic tribes and the more it undergoes literary processing the less value it has as a reliable material. With interest but with no quite success attempt was made by a mayer H. G. Raverty to systemize these legends by the muslim authors in the article “On the Turks, Tatars and Mughals”. The author of the article stopped at some sort of partly agreement with a lot of contradictions between versions the authors had, but he didn’t approach critically to legendary stories and study additives and fictions raising the question how

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much the data in the legends corresponded the truth [9, p. 74].

Only simple, plain, mostly oral, genealogical legends that can be found in those Turkic tribes who still kept nomadic and firm genera lifestyle playing the most important role in their life haven't lost their great value. These tribes still hold firmly on to the memory of degrees of consanguinity or the blood ties and relationships between generations that they imagine.

In the VIII<sup>th</sup> century the Turk toukious forgot these legends that had been written by the Chinese two centuries before. At least in the memorial Kultegin in 732 their history begins straightly with Tou-muen-khan. "When the blue sky established above and the dark earth below, between them appeared Sons of Man. Between the Sons of man Chumpai Bumin-Khagan, the famous khan rose. He established clans (Stämme) and laws of the Turkic people and ruled them all" [8, p. 17-22]. At the top of heroic works of Bumin-Khagan is put organization of clans. Though we had to alter the presented translation, (Later V.V. Radlov gave such a look to the part of his initial translation: "Between the Sons of Man my forefather Bumin-khan, the famous khan rose as a ruler. Er hielt die Stämme und Gesetze des Türkenvolks in Ordnung and verbesserte sie" [17, p. 439]. According to prof. Thomson: Au-dessus des fils des hommes selevrent mes ancêtres Boumin khagan et I-tèmi kagan. Après être devenus maitres, ils gouvernèrent et tixerent l'empire et les institutions du peuple ture [4, p. 97].

According to prof. Thomson's interpretation: *киси оглында бзе ечюм апам бумын каган истеми каган олурмыш, олурыпан тюрк будынынг илик тюрюсин тута бирмие ити бирмис* – the closest translation form is: "As the head of the Sons of man rose my ancestors Bumin-khagan and Istemi-khagan. Becoming the rulers, they established and strengthened independent (*state*) governing (*ilin*) and traditions (*laws*) of the Turkic nations." – "il" in this and other places of the records, as in the title "il-khan" which according to the words of the Chinese was adopted by Tou-muen-khan, expresses the meaning of independent governing tribe or state living in genera nomadic lifestyle. Such kind of tribes are called in the records "illig" for example: *иллигиг илеиретмис, каганлыгыг кагансиретмис*, i.e. those who gain independent governing, who gained khagan would deprive them from it [4, p. 102]. As for Istemi-khagan, in different places of "Tien-shu" the name of Che-tie-mii [6, p. 354] is mentioned as the ancestor of the western-turkic khanates, from what it can be with probability concluded that this Che-tie-mii [1, p. 463], (he-tie-mi, is a brother of Tou-muen-khan; according to the opinion of Visdelou, Che-tie-mii or Se-ti-mii was the second son of Tou-muen-khan [14, p. 109]) was a brother of the powerful founder of the Turk and Che-tie-mii, Se-ti-mii or Istemi-khan in the records and his generation got the western half of the

possessions of the Turk toukious, as the eastern part was the possession of Tou-muen-khan's generation) but with the patriarchal tribal life of nomads, clans and the combination of clans and their parts in genera and tribal unions really had predominant role in every way. A strong, numerous, friendly clan had a great opportunity to occupy better pastures, to protect their members from external enemies, to create an opportunity to their chief for firm political influence in tribal and state affairs and to provide bigger amount of prey and tribute incoming for the benefit of the tribe or state.

Though numerous of the clan gave it strength, because of the household terms of using pastures and other reasons didn't give the way to the clan to keep its unity for indefinite period of time and sooner or later made it divide more or less independent parts. In the result of it in every clan there stood, from one point, the terms demanding to keep genera unity, and from the other point there existed much or little strong aspiration to division. The struggle of these opposing currents usually complicated and intensified because of the rivalry between the chiefs and people in the clan, the one from which wishing to keep the whole powers of the clan they ruled, defended the clan unity, and the other ones counting on supremacy in falling parts of the clan, sought fragmentation. Aspiration to division would often take over, but too small and powerless units finding no benefit would call to form much bigger genera units usually consisting of various clans or even tribes. But such kind of units having weak blood ties were inclined to disintegrate with even greater speed and ease. V. V. Radlov rightly deduced from his observations over the Russian and Chinese Kyrgyz - Kazakh of whom the last took advantage of almost independence, because the Chinese government didn't interfere their internal affairs, as the structural movement within the clan and tribe is "a vital need of nomads" and in these regular structural changes "the vitality of the whole nation is supported". Impossibility of making up new genera and tribal units among nomads deprived from their independence, to his mind, causes "stagnation undermining their well-being"[12, p. 72].

The history of the Turkic nomads, succeeded in Mongolia shows that they arose as a result of the reinforcement of one of the tribes at the head stood brave, clever and lucky in their work founders who could subjugate the clans of his tribe to their influence and conquer the rest of the tribes. They succeeded in consolidating their power through putting at the head of their clans and tribes their relatives or righteous who would be obliged for their promotion before them. The fall of the Turkic tribes usually happened during internal feuds in a khanate house, but always under the predominant influence of aspirations of clans and tribes to independence when their chiefs already united their interests with the clans' interests. After the fall of the dominant tribe more or less time

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duration of isolation of clan unions came, until one of the tribes grew stronger and subjugated the rest to its influence, founding a new state. This way arose and fell in Mongolia the state of the Huns, the Turk toukioues and the Uighur. The same aspiration of the clans and tribes to independence played predominant role in the fall of uluses juchi and jagatay based by the Mongolians and their political weakness and insolvency of Kyrgyz-Kazakh union arose in their place.

In this way the clans not only took advantage of universal significance in everyday life of the Turkic nomads, but played quite important role and in their political history. It is natural that with such importance of a clan, when the whole life and fate of a nomad was determined by his affiliation to a clan, clan names should have been extremely firm. The clans could join different unions wholly or partly, but they were to keep their original name firmly. And in fact, as we can see, names of clans recorded many centuries ago by the Chinese historians, of course in the result of political significance of clans carrying them and nowadays exist partly. This condition gives opportunity of finding out, to a large extent, ethnic composition of those of currently existing Turkic tribes and nationalities who have kept a nomadic and tribal lifestyle, and at the same time generic names. Among the Turks who long before had gone over to settled lifestyle and lost tribal one, generic names have disappeared also that's why in order to find out the ethnic composition of these settled Turks one has to use only those data about their genera composition belonging to the time when happened their settled lifestyle.

Besides generic names another index to ethnic composition of Turk-nomads and also related to tribe genera can serve clan tamgas, i.e. signs of clan property, primarily imposed on cattle but also found on other property of the clan and its members and used in the form of emblems, seals instead of signs and so on. It seems the oldest mention about tamgas among Turks (especially among the Gaogeans) goes back to the V<sup>th</sup> century: "Mainly on the domestic livestock they put signs, and though it clings to someone else's, nobody takes it" [6, p. 250]. But no doubt that clan tamgas existed incomparably more distant times

among Turk cattle breeds. Very likely clan tamgas initially were the description of generic gods or patron spirits and only later turned into clan property signs, for this accepted forms of the simplest geometric figures as the most comfortable to cut up or burn. According to numerous observations among the East Finnish tribes whose tribal life began to fall long time ago a tamga for a new family separated from the old one is created through adjoining prefixes to the tamga of the former family. This case leads to a thought that in this way went creation of tamgas of separated branches at their initial separation. If it is true then existing clan tamgas must introduce from which clans the current generic units come from. So in the Dulat branch of the Big Horde the main tamga (of the Dulat generation) is a circle **○**.

Genera of the mentioned tribes have tamgas from the main tamgas with different additional lines or impose general tribal tamga on the special part of animals for every clan.

**It can be summed up** that in the result of historical events in the multi-centennial life of the Turkic tribes there aren't thoroughbred tribes and clans and the unions of different origins consisting of units from various blood ties prevail.

If the tamgas, especially of the Turkic tribes and nationalities that have kept their tribal and nomadic lifestyle, were collected and investigated, they would serve as the most important means giving much information about ethnic composition of the tribes and nationalities.

Specific peculiarities of lifestyle, dialects, observation of physical features, general ethnographic, archeological, linguistic and anthropological investigations, of course, can be considerably conductive to explore ethnic composition of various nationalities, but regarding the Turkic tribes, the amount of our knowledge in these fields of science is so little (though it was done much), that at the time being ethnography, archeology, linguistics and anthropology cannot provide with enough information about it. Therefore, only clan names and tamgas are remaining to be the main indexes to ethnic composition of the Turkic tribes and nationalities.

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