

## ON THE ARMENO-KIPCHAK

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The Golden Horde, the Kazan, Crimean and other khanates were established on a predominantly Kipchak-Turkic population.<sup>1</sup> Kipchaks founded states also in India (the Delhi Sultans) and Syria and Egypt (the Mamlûks). Kipchaks could not be as effective and permanent as the Western Turks in state administration, science, culture and arts due to some reasons such as the enormous width of the area where Kipchaks lived and the lack of foundation of long-standing dynasties as in the Saljukids and Ottomans. Kipchaks confessed to the old Shamanistic rituals, Buddhism, and Christianity before Islamization. Their Islamization occurred in relatively later periods, compared to the Oğuz or Karluk, for ex. Togan states that “*with the Christian-Turks Çıldır-atabeks who appeared in the Akhaltsikhe region during the Abaka Khan’s period, Islamization of the Kipchaks started*” (1946: 258).

Kipchaks, after the Mongolian expansion in the Eurasian steppes, lived under the Chingizid rule, established good relationships with them and formed kinship bonds. A significant amount of the Mongolian army under Chingis Khan’s and his sons’ control was Turks. In the following periods Mongolians were assimilated among Kipchaks, and became Turks. In turn, some Kipchaks were assimilated among the Rus’, Hungarians, Caucasian nations and even Arabs.

The last Kipchak minority remaining in Egypt was destroyed by the Mehmet Ali Pasha administration in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many Kipchaks in the area of Poland, Rumania and Ukraine were min-

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<sup>1</sup> Kipçaks are mentioned by different nations and in Medieval sources with a variety of names and their forms, such as Kipchak, Kybchak, Kyfdjak, Khyfchak, Khyfchakh, Kyvchak, Kypchak, Kuman, Kun, Palocs, Polovets, Palladi, Plauci, Valvi, Falben, Valven and Khartesh. For detailed survey see: Arat 1977, 713-716; Caferoğlu 1984, II. 156; Öner 1998.

gled with the native people; in Eastern Europe a significant number of Kipchaks/Muslim Tatars preserved their existence until the Second World War.

Kipchaks, while being assimilated among the nations mentioned, left an important number of words in the languages of the nations, with whom once they co-existed, and many place names at the areas they lived. Many Turkic linguistic elements in Indian, Urdu, Tajik, Bulgarian, Russian and Hungarian were loaned during the Kipchak period (Johanson 1996; 1998). Even in the 1950's some prayers and hymns of some Hungarian villagers were in Kipchak, taken from Codex Cumanicus (Bodrogligeti 1992). Today in many Russian surnames (Baskakov 1997) and Hungarian names and surnames (Berta 2002), there are traces of the Kipchak entity. The same pattern is valid also for the Kipchak-Arabic relations. Even though Turkish's effect on Arabic or its lending names and concepts gained intensity after the conquest of Istanbul and especially after Egypt, Hejaz and North Africa passed to Turkish rule, it is observed that some forms, words and concepts in Arabic dialects (for ex. Bardja < barcha in Kipchak "complete, all of it"; kishlak < kishlak "barracks") passed even at Kipchak period (Aytaç 1994; Yahya 1984).

Kipchak is a historical dialect of the Turkish language (Bodrogligeti 1992; Eckmann 1986; Eren 2000; Karamanlioğlu 1994; Pritsak 1959). Armeno-Kipchak is studied in Middle Kipchak. Instead of Kipchak, some terms like terms Kuman and Tatar are also used. Modern Kipchak dialects, which are the continuation of Kipchak and used as the writing language only from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, according to common acknowledge are Bashkir, Karachay-Balkar, Karaim, Karakalpak, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Kumyk, Noghay and (in the Crimea, Tatarstan and South Siberia) Tatar languages (Öner 1998).

### Works in Kipchak

It is possible to examine the works remaining from Kipchaks in four sections: According to what Arat conducts, "*In 1338 the Franciscan priest Pascal de Victoria says that Kuman language is a language spread to the entire Central Asia, and is understood everywhere to China and written with Uyghur alphabet*" (1977, 715). The only Kipchak work in Latin alphabet is Codex Cumanicus (Caferoğlu 1984, II, 156-187; Gabain 1959, 46-73). This work, which was composed by European priests for European traders, missionaries and similar groups of German, Italian, French etc. using Latin alphabet, to ease their learning the Kipchak language, and to let them establish commercial and cultural relations with

the Kipchaks in their own language, and especially to propagate Christianity among them. It was written or copied in 1303, and later on additions were made. In the dictionary, which is the most important part of the book, German, Italian, Latin and Persian references of the Kipchak words are given. Besides, it includes prayers and hymns made by the Christians, even Kipchak proverbs, riddles and terms belonging to various professions. Caferoğlu defines the importance of this work by saying: "*This work, which collects quite rich and various dictionary wealth enlightens the cultural lives and mental levels of the Kipchak Turks, as well as denoting the features of their accents* (1984, II, 159)."

Muslim Kipchaks or non-Kipchak authors wrote about their language in the Crimea, the Western Steppes, Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Mamlûk countries (Egypt, Syria and its vicinities), where they migrated and existed firstly as mercenaries, prince tutors, commander and ruling dynasties. These are superior to those Kipchak works in the Uyghur alphabet mentioned above, and the works in the Armenian script, which will be mentioned below in terms of quantity, protection, contents and publication (Bodrogligeti 1992; Caferoğlu 1984, II. 156-194; Eckmann 1965; 1986).

Kipchak texts in the Armenian script mostly date from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and belong to descendants of a Crimean Armenian community that had adopted the Kipchak language and migrated to the territories of Ukraine and Poland (Berta 1998, 158). Kipchak works in the Armenian script, which entirely belongs to themselves in terms of contents, form this group, which will be examined in detail below.

#### **Formation of Armeno-Kipchak**

In 1064, after the Saljukids conquered Ani (once a fortified town in Northeast Anatolia), a significant part of the local Armenians migrated to the north of the Black Sea, mainly the Crimea. During and after that, there happened many Armenian migrations in important numbers not only from the Ani area, but also from the East Black Sea vicinities. The fact that Armenians gave importance to trade and arts, the idea of attaining a better life, besides, that there occurred big earthquakes in the regions where they lived, especially at Ani and around, were all effective in their northward migration to Crimea and north of the Black Sea. There happened such an enormous migration to Crimea that the terms *Armenia Magna* or *Armenica Maritima* were used for Crimea at that time (Pritsak 1959, 81; Deny 1957, 7). Haçikyan, depending on European sources states that "*this peninsula called sea Armenia had established close eco-*

*conomic relations with the coastal areas in the south of the Black Sea and generally with Asia Minor since very old times*" (1997, 67). Armenians lived in the Crimea as a crowded community. After the Crimea's entering into Ottoman suzerainty, a significant Armenian group knowing Turkish (especially from Keefe) were located in Istanbul by Mehmet II (Schütz 1998).

Starting from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Crimean Armenians got in close contact with the Kipchaks. As mentioned above, a significant number of Kipchaks living in the Crimea, around the Black Sea and the Caucasus at that time were already Christians. Cahen, depending on Ibnu'l-Esir, conveys that even at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Kipchaks coming from the north of Black Sea had intensive commercial relations with North and Middle Anatolia (1988, 123). Main factors that made the Christian Kipchaks and the Armenians closer were trade, religion and (fostering depending on those) culture.

There were intermarriages among Georgians, Russians, Kipchaks and Armenians. Kipchaks, Georgians and Armenians, who were of the same religion and who lived in the same region fought together against the Arabic and Saljukid raids for the sake of their religion, administrations and states. It must be also remembered that there was an intensive activity of trade, production and agriculture in the Caucasus and around the Black Sea, and this region was a mosaic of races, languages and religions. Ibn Batuta states that in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century he came across with Mongolian, Kipchak, Russian, Byzantine, Syriac and Iraqi communities in and around Volga, Crimea and Black Sea. He writes about the Crimea: "*The day after we arrived at the harbor, a merchant among our journey friends applied to the Kipchaks, who were the natives of the area, and who had adopted Christianity, and rented a chariot. We got on that chariot, and reached the city of Keefe. Here is a big city at the coast which has a rectangular plan and dwelled mostly by Christians. A significant part of its population are from Genoa and name of the ruler of the city is Andora. When we came to the city, we found it suitable to go to mosque*" (1971, 68).

It is natural that there occurs a tolerant society among each other and a rich people, where there is a multilingual and multi-confessional atmosphere. The Crimea, which is an ancient cultural center, had all kinds of intensive relations with Byzantium, Egypt, and Anatolia. Moreover, there were French, Italian, German and Genoese groups of merchants and missionaries at this region. Thus, the Armenians in such an atmosphere established with the Kipchaks, who were the dominant power of region,

very close and friendly relations, and as conserving their religion, scripture and a lot of Armenian words and concepts, by the way, they adopted the Kipchak Turkish.

This situation is written form of the level Kipchak-Armenian and cultural relations attained, the main documents of the Kipchak-Armenian friendship which are written by the Armenians' own desire and endeavors. Armenians throughout the intensive relation lasting for centuries adopted Kipchak, spoke Kipchak at their homes, prayed in Kipchak at their churches and produced Kipchak works by using their own alphabet. Haçikyan says about this subject: "*Unfortunately, Armenians were already speaking Kipchak as a community even in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries*" (1997, 68). Kipchak Turks also produced works by using the Armenian script. Rona-Tas describes this situation by saying that "*members of the Armenian diaspora in the Crimea came into contact with Kipchak Turks in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Some Kipchak groups became Christians and used the Armenian script for writing ecclesiastical and secular texts. After the great migration of the Armenians to Asia Minor, some Ottoman groups also adopted the Armenian script*" (1998, 135).

#### **Kipchak works with the Armenian script**

There are a lot of manuscripts in Kipchak written in the Armenian script remaining from the Armenians of the Crimea and from those who migrated to Ukraine and Poland by accepting the invitation of Leos I. (1280). Most of them are Kipchak documents with the Armenian script such as religious literature, hymns, prayer books, sermons, biographies of Christians saints, church records as the 1636-1680 registers, annals of the Kamenez-Podolsk Armenian colony for the years 1604-1613, the Armenian Regulation for the year 1519, Armenian-Kipchak dictionary for the Armenian community, etc. (Caferoğlu 1984; Eren 2000; Pritsak 1959; Garkavets & Khurshudian 2001; Schütz 1998). An important part of these works were burnt during the Second World War. Those that could be protected are kept in the libraries of Vien, Paris, Poland, Germany and Ukraine. A very small part of them have been processed and published. It is also necessary to mention the quite valuable works by Garkavets in the last years<sup>2</sup>

During the Ottoman era, Kipchak works with the Armenian script antedates the Ottoman and Turkey Turkish works with the Armenian script, which were especially written as manuscripts in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and

<sup>2</sup> See [www.qypchaq.unesco.kz](http://www.qypchaq.unesco.kz)

printed from the 18<sup>th</sup> century until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some words and forms observed in the Middle Age Armenian and modern East Armenian show that Kipchak-Armenian language relations existed before the Western Turkish (Saljukid, Ottoman) (Karaağaç, 2001).

The Kipchak works with the Armenians script are very important for the history of Turkic language. As it is known, Turkic has been written with various alphabets throughout different ages of history as in the K k T rk, Uyghur, Arab and Latin etc. (Tekin, 1997). The majority of the Turkic language and history researchers agree that Turkic can be written more easily in the Armenian scripture system than the Latin one, in terms of protecting sound values. Deny says that "*among those the most suitable one is the Armenian script, it is even more suitable than the Russian and Latin scripts, which Turkologists use in their transcriptions*" (1955, 17).

People who produced Kipchak works with the Armenian script are those, who were born and raised among Kipchaks, and to a great extent, used the Kipchak as their maternal language. It is quite probable that they pronounce the Kipchak originated works very close to Kipchaks and write in that form. This without doubt has a significant value for the decipher of the sound values of historical Turkic.

The histories of the Armenians are very valuable sources for enlightening many historical, lingual and social events such as the situation of the Kipchaks.

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