

THE MIGRATIONS OF THE OGHUZ
IN THE EARLY MEDIEVAL PERIOD: CAUSES,
DIRECTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

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In the 10th to 11th centuries, the process of formation of the Oghuz tribes was under way in Central Asia. It was accompanied by the disintegration of kinship ties and the emergence of statehood. A new type of ethnic community was being formed, based on territorial and economic ties. The formation of the Oghuz Yabgu state with its political centre in the lower reaches of the Syr Darya¹ played an important role in this process. The Oghuz state, like many other nomadic empires, was not monolithic and its borders were not permanent or strictly defined. As a result of extended social conflict, the Syr Darian Yabgu state collapsed and did not withstand the attack of

¹ A river in the territory of modern Kazakhstan.

the neighbouring Kipchak tribes in the middle of the 11th century. This caused a new migration wave directed westward. The paper analyses the preconditions and peculiarities of the Oghuz tribes' westward migration. In addition, a comparative analysis of its economic and political consequences is carried out.

Keywords: migration, Oghuz tribes, Central Asia, Western Asia, Asia Minor, Yabgu, Seljuks

In world history, the Oghuz problem is not limited to the local history of Central Asia but is instead one of the general historical problems of Europe and Asia. The time when the Oghuz tribes entered the stage of world history was a time of turbulent events. The Persian state of the Samanids and the Turkic Ghaznavids, who ruled in Central Asia during this period, were in decline. The Byzantine Empire in Asia Minor was also deprived of its power. The main events of this era were the creation of the Seljuk state and the beginning of the Crusades. Meanwhile, the formation of the Seljukid state was inextricably linked to the migration of the Oghuz to the lands of Asia Minor. The process of reviving the Seljuk state in Asia Minor undoubtedly paved the way for the creation of the Ottoman Empire.

In assessing the above historical processes, we can assume the significance in world history of the Oghuz ethno-political association, which was formed on the banks of the Syr Darya River.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the features of the political structure and economic and cultural types of the Oghuz tribes, with the aim of identifying the causes and characteristics of the preconditions that prompted their migration to the west in the 11th century. Given that the Oghuz tribes adhered to nomadic customs and traditions, it becomes clear that the phenomenon of migration during this period was not something out of the ordinary. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that their migration to the west in the 1130s had its own specific features. The consequences of subsequent historical events are a clear example of this. The migration that took place at the beginning of the 11th century can be compared to the era of the "Great Migration of Peoples", which began with the migration of the Huns to the west in the 4th century. It has long been known that the waves of migration of that period produced major changes in the ethnopolitical map of Europe, which led to the fall of the Roman Empire. And the fact that the migration of the Oghuzes to the west was the direct cause of the fall of the Byzantine Empire, is evidenced by world history.

For a more in-depth consideration of this problem, it is necessary to make a broad assessment of the history and structure of the cultural and economic traditions of the Oghuz tribes.

1. Scientific Approaches to the Study of the Origin of the Oghuz Tribes and their State Experience

A significant amount of scientific literature has been accumulated on the etymology of the ethnonym “Oguz”. The most detailed review on this problem can be found in A. N. Kononov’s commentary to his critical edition of Abulgazi.² There are two major theories which we might consider:

(1) Oguz - «*oq*» + «*uz*» (collective suffix) ; «*oq* / *arrow*» taking on the meaning of “*tribe, tribal organization*”, perhaps related to the use of the arrow as a symbol of command. The difficulty with this formulation, however, lies in the absence of a *q* > *g* shift in intervocalic position (so common in modern Turkic) in the attested Turkic monuments of this time.³

(2) Another approach has been proposed by Kononov who posits an initial form *og* «*rod*», “*plemia*” which he connects to *og* «*mat*», «*ogul*» «*potomstvo*», «*syn*», *ogus* «*sorodich*». Somewhat better meanings for the latter can be offered here: *ogus* connotes not only «*sorodich*» but also «*narod*», «*rod*», «*tribe*». *Ogul* «*son*», has numerous derivatives: *oglan* («*children*», «*sons*», «*rebenok, syn*» in Ancient Turkic), *oght* («*children, sons*»)⁴

From analysing the above information it should be clear that the word “oguz” is a term meaning “union” or “association of tribes”. The fact that it acquired ethnic significance under the influence of later historical events is supported by many researchers. According to the historian of the post-Soviet period T. I. Sultanov, many terms of Central Eurasia, which are now considered as ethnonyms, originally had a political and social meaning. They had nothing to do with the speakers of any ethnic group.⁵

In the era of the Turkic Khaganate (Empire), founded by the Bumyn Khagan in 552, the Oghuz were one of the numerous tribes in its composition. In 630, as a result of internal strife, the Turkic Khaganate was weakened and divided into the Western and Eastern Khaganates. The Eastern Turkic Khaganate, located on the lands of modern Mongolia, was a vassal of the Tang Dynasty for about fifty years. The Western Turkic Khaganate, which was established on the territory of Central Asia, developed trade relations with Iran and Byzantium.

² KONONOV, A. N. *The Turkmen Family Tree*.

³ GOLDEN, P. The Migrations of the Oğuz. In *Archivum Ottomanicarum*, 1972, Vol. 4, pp. 45–84.

⁴ KONONOV, A. N. *The Turkmen Family Tree*.

⁵ SULTANOV, T. I. On the Historiography of the Ethnopolitical History of the Jochi and Chagatai Uluses. In *Zolotoordynskoe obozrenie*, 2017, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 74–92.

During this period, some Turkic tribes that had learned from the negative results of intertribal conflicts began to form alliances. Around the 630 – 640s, a union of “nine tribes” emerged, which became known as the “Toquz-Oghuz”. That is, there was a union of nine Turkic tribes, weakened by wars, into an alliance. According to written sources, this process took place along the Selenga river.⁶ The unification of the Toguz-Oghuz tribes took place under the Eastern Turkic Khaganate, and many of them sought an independent policy. The main political problem for nomadic states and empires during this period was the non-payment of taxes and the settling of mutual disputes between tribes over economically advantageous territories. The Toquz-Oghuz were also characterized by refusal to pay regular taxes and attempts to violate the established borders between the tribes.

In this regard, there were constant conflicts between tribes over centralized power. That is, it can be seen that Oghuz tribes often resorted to separatist actions. However, written sources confirm that their conflicts with the central government were not successful, which forced them to maintain a vassal position.⁷ In general, the process of conflicts with the central government in the history of the Oghuz and other Turkic tribes is considered as a conditional event that was often repeated. This is clearly seen in the examples from the history of the Seljuk, Ottoman, and Karakhanid states. For example, the organization of an uprising by the Oghuz tribes against the Seljuk Sultan Sanjar, who came to power with the help of the same Oghuz tribes.

In 716 – 718, there was a major uprising of the Oghuz tribes against the Eastern Turkic Khagans.⁸ To suppress their revolt, the rulers and generals of the Eastern Turkic Khaganate Bilge, Kultegin, Tonyukuk repeatedly undertook military campaigns. Medieval historical sources indicate that the union of Toquz-Oghuz tribes, was dealt a heavy blow by these campaigns, resulting in a forced migration in several directions. Summarizing the historical data and opinions of the authors-researchers, we can assume (hypothesize) their migration in three directions (Table 1):

⁶ AGADZHANOV, S. G. *Turkological Collection*.

⁷ AMRAKHOV, M. *The Emergence of Statehood and Forms of Land Tenure among the Turks*

⁸ In the Old Turkic language, it means “ruler”.

Table 1. Migration Routes of the Oghuz Tribes, Inhabited Mongolia in the 8th Century

#	Name of the Tribe	Migration Routes
1	The Oghuz	Several groups remained in the vicinity of the Tolga and the Selenga rivers in Mongolia
2	The Oghuz	Some groups moved towards the Chinese border
3	The Oghuz	The remaining large groups migrated west from Mongolia and settled in the territories of the modern republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

In the course of analysing the data from the table above, it is clear that the first historical migration of the Oghuz to the west took place in the middle of the 8th century. Moreover, it should be noted that this migration was influenced by various factors, which are systematized below, in table 2.

Table 2. Factors Influencing the Migration of the Oghuz to the West in the 8th century

#	Types of Political Factors	Types of Economic Factors
1	Greater exposure to separatist actions and opposition to strong political systems, caused by an underdeveloped general state consciousness and lack of state experience among the rulers of the Oghuz tribes	The lack of pastures for hundreds of thousands of cattle of the Oghuz tribes leading a nomadic economic lifestyle, the violation of intertribal borders in order to search for new virgin lands and attempts at expansion led to internecine wars
2	It is known that the leading role in the Oghuz communities was played by warlords (<i>syubashi</i>) and warriors. Their leading positions often forced tribes to make military raids. Wars led to a weakened society and new migrations	There was a strict form of dependence on the privileged class. Methods by which the privileged class exploited the labour of free people in society and sometimes enslaved them, leading to internal social divisions. This could have resulted in protest riots

The rationale for these factors in the above table is formulated as follows:

1) Political factors. We can critically comment on the complexity and weakness of the political system of Oghuz society. The reason for this complexity was the slow development of Oghuz conscious subordination to a central government. That is, the desire of the head of each tribe to put their interests above state policy and the desire to implement it was common. Secondly, in Oghuz society, the powers and mandates of the tribal leader were greater than those of the heads of state. The tribal leaders played a leading role in passing new laws concerning the members of the tribe. Sometimes tribal rulers used this pattern for their own purposes. The combination of the above factors gives reason to conclude that there was anarchy among the Oghuz tribes. The military held high positions in Oghuz society. Therefore, the dominance of the military in the communities of the Turkic tribes was considered a natural form. The meetings of the tribal leaders were dominated by the number of military men and the latter played a leading role. It became a common practice to elect people of great authority among the warriors as the head of the tribe. For military people, wars and invasions (expansion) became an effective source of livelihood. They were looking for greater benefits from the war effort. Military leaders benefited from military campaigns. According to medieval sources, the main economic resource of the Oghuz tribes was the spoils from military raids. However, this method of development could not provide stable income.

The conditions caused by the need for human and material resources to wage continuous wars hampered the sustainable development of society. Without a doubt, an economic system based on invasions and wars could not fully meet the internal needs of society. It follows that the short-term decline of more than ten Turkic states that existed in the Middle Ages was overwhelmingly facilitated by the above-mentioned political-economic factors.

2) Economic factors. The main livelihood of the Oghuz tribes depended on cattle breeding. Among the types of cattle, the cow and the horse were of great importance. The sources say that in the Oghuz revolt against the Eastern Turkic Khaganate in 716 – 718, the Oghuz warriors went out riding on bulls. From this we can deduce that cattle were highly valued by the Oghuz. Since the main subsistence base depended on livestock production, ensuring its condition was the main task of nomads. A large number of livestock required fertile land. The Oghuz nomads had to travel distances of up to a thousand kilometres to gain access to fertile land. However, the boundaries of the pastures belonging to each tribe were clearly defined. During the period of these migrations, the causes of conflict were cases of livestock and violation of borders by tribes. The alliance of

the oppressed tribes with other smaller tribes and the wars against the invaders took on the form of civil wars. Especially frequent were the phenomena of violence, violence against small tribes by large tribes.

There were two categories of slavery in Oghuz society: 1. those who were captured in war. 2. The formation of slaves from the weaker members of the society.⁹ It is well known that the first form was inherent in all ancient and medieval states. And the fact that the second form corresponds to the natural development of society is obvious. To find an answer to the second argument mentioned above, we need to pay attention to the structure and origin of the tribal system in a nomadic society. The tribe, as in any society, was a product of the historical development of Oghuz society. In this regard, it is obvious that the structure of the tribe in the Oghuz community consisted of different clans.

The purpose of uniting the various clans into a tribe was to ward off attacks by neighbouring tribes. But subsequent kinship relations brought the inner core of the tribe even closer together and gave them an ethnic character. That is, cultural, economic, and political management began to differentiate from other tribes. At the same time, the tribe can be characterized as a key category characteristic of the specific socio-economic history of any nomadic society. All members of the tribe performed various functions depending on their socio-economic activities.¹⁰

That is, each tribe within the society had its own cultural, social, political, and economic specificities. At the same time, the tribal divisions occupied their respective places in the tribal system. One tribe performed administrative and political functions, other military ones and the third economic ones. Thus, the mechanisms of functioning of the tribe as a whole organism were involved. But the violation of these mechanisms led the society to a crisis. The process of strengthening the members of the tribe responsible for the military sphere led to the redistribution of common property (land, livestock, taxes) corresponding to the tribe. This led to the fact that the legal status of people in the tribe was re-examined, and those who prevailed by force turned into the ruling elite. Thus, historically, the process by which weaker members of the tribe fell into slavery occurred. Dependent tribes, being subordinate to other tribes, had a tendency to revolt, which led to internal decline within the tribes or, conversely, to a new revival.¹¹

Nevertheless, in our opinion, the conditions for the formation and development of statehood among the Oghuz and other Turkic nomads depended

⁹ VRYONIS, S. Nomadization and Islamization in Asia Minor. In *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 1975, Vol. 29, pp. 41–71.

¹⁰ AGADZHANOV, S. G. *Turkological Collection*.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

on the emergence of a stronger tribe. It should be noted that this development process is typical only of the Turkic nomads. The above arguments can be compared with the tendencies of the formation of the Karakhanid, Seljuk, and Ottoman states. For example, the political and military core of the Karakhanid state, which was formed at the end of the 10th century, was considered to be the “Bogra” tribe.¹²

In general, analysing the arguments justified in this section, we have taken a step towards identifying the preconditions and reasons for the first-ever western migration of the Oghuz. Like many migrations of the Turkic tribes, the Oghuz movement led to a change in the ethno-geopolitical maps in these regions.

2. Settlement of the Oghuz Tribes in Central Asia and the Response to New Challenges

The first appearance of the Oghuz tribes in Central Asia is mentioned in historical sources as 765. In 775, the Arab historian Ibn al-Asir wrote that the Oghuz approached the borders of Maverennahr¹³ during the time of Caliph al-Mehdi (775 – 785 BC).¹⁴ In other words, it can be assumed that Oghuz groups migrated from the coast of the Selenga river in Mongolia to Central Asia over a period of between 30 to 40 years. The analysis of geographical descriptions of historical sources indicates that the Oghuz, who migrated from the central regions of Mongolia, crossed the famous Gobi desert, the Altai Mountains and settled in the southern regions of modern Kazakhstan.¹⁵

Arab sources confirm that the Oghuz settled in the Semirechye region¹⁶ in the second half of the 8th and early 9th centuries and made frequent raids on the settled population of Maverennahr.¹⁷ From the records of the Arab historian al-

¹² OMARBEKOV, T., KHABIZHANOVA, G. Central Asian Turkic Tribes: Karakitay Period in Their Cultural and Ethnic History. In *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 2013, Vol. 25, No. 11, pp. 1589–1594.

¹³ The Arabic meaning indicates “region beyond the sea”, the historical and geographical territory between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers in Central Asia. In Greek sources, it is referred to as “Transoxiana”, see TOLSTOV, S. P. *Along the ancient deltas of the Oxus and Jaxartes*.

¹⁴ SUMER, F. *Oguz (Turkmen). History - Tribe - Epic*.

¹⁵ SHAFIYEV, F. *Ethnogenesis and Migration History of Turkic Nomads: Patterns of Assimilation Process*.

¹⁶ A historical and geographical region in the south-east of modern Kazakhstan.

¹⁷ BOLSHAKOV, O. G. *Countries and Peoples of the East. V–XXII*. p. 4

Tabari¹⁸ we learn about an Oghuz attack on the city of Ushrusana¹⁹ in 820 – 821. Thus, a new threat emerged in the lives of Sogdians²⁰ who adhered to the traditions of the settled culture of Central Asia. As a result of the ongoing historical and cultural clash, the balance between nomadic and sedentary cultures was disturbed. During this period, we see the emergence of new challenges in the life of the nomadic Oghuz tribes and their desire to find effective ways to respond to them. Obviously, before this time, nomadic Turkic tribes lived in Central Asia, mainly settled in the Semirechye region. The Turkic tribes that lived in Semirechye include the Turgesh, Karluk, Dulu, Usun, etc. The migration of the Oghuz people to Central Asia led to an increase in the number of related tribes, and revealed the incompatibility of their interests in material and economic terms within the same area. Undoubtedly, the Karluk tribes, who supported the Arab forces in the battle of Atlakh²¹ between China and Arab forces in 751, began to influence the geopolitical map of Central Asia. The political and administrative centre of the Karluk tribes was located in Semirechye. In this regard, we assume that the Karluks exerted various pressures on the Oghuz people, and that the Oghuz people were in a vassal state.²² Because, in the sources, the Karluk confederation is mentioned as the most influential force in Semirechye.²³

The geographical position of the Oghuz tribes of the 8th – 9th centuries, who migrated from Mongolia to Central Asia, is shown on the map below (illustration 1).

¹⁸ SOOFĠZADEH, A. Turkmens who Founded the Seljuk State. In *Oġuz-Türkmen Arařtırmaları Dergisi* (OTAD), 2019, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 158–170.

¹⁹ Near the ancient city of Samarkand.

²⁰ Ancient settled inhabitants of Central Asia. Culturally, it is close to Persian society.

²¹ The war between the Chinese Tang Dynasty and Arab troops who arrived to promote Islam had a religious and political significance for the lands of Central Asia.

²² SVETLOV, R. *The Great Battles of the East*.

²³ BOLSHAKOV, O. G. *Countries and Peoples of the East. V–XXII*.

Illustration 1. Geographical Position of the Oghuz tribes in the 8th to 9th Centuries



The above map shows that the Oghuz inhabited the upper reaches of lake Balkhash in the south-east of modern Kazakhstan. The Oghuz, who inhabited Semirechye in the 8th to 9th centuries, were under the rule of the Karluks for several years and paid tribute. There is no doubt that they were in a vassal position towards the Karluk tribes. Obviously, this political and social phenomenon did not suit them. According to modern Turkic researchers, the Oghuz migration to the vicinity of the Syr Darya, the Aral sea and the Caspian Sea occurred before the middle of the 9th century.²⁴ This is due to the fact that in the 11th century the Oghuz language of the population of the Syr Darya and the Aral Sea, in its speech and pronunciation, differed from that of the eastern Turks (who inhabited Mongolia and Semirechye).²⁵ The main reasons for the differences between the language and culture of the Syrdarya Oghuz and the eastern Turks were the following: 1. important trading cities on the Great Silk Road were located along the Syr Darya river, and the Oghuz began to undergo their integration into urban culture; 2. the process of assimilation of the Toguz-

²⁴ GÜNDÜZ, T. *Articles on Turkmen Lords of the Steppe*.

²⁵ OMARBEKOV, T., KHABIZHANOVA, G. Central Asian Turkic Tribes: Karakitay Period in Their Cultural and Ethnic History. In *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 2013, Vol. 25, No. 11, pp. 1589–1594.

oghuz language and culture to that of the Turkic tribes that had long inhabited the Aral and Syrdarya regions.²⁶

There is reason to believe that the development of the processes of ethnic formation of the Oghuz tribes was formed on the Syr Darya river. Along the Syr Darya river, the mechanisms of organizing the internal tribal structures of the Oghuz reached a new level, which led to ethnic integration. Its development reached the stage of the creation of a state. It is known that the Syrdarya region posed new historical challenges to the Oghuz tribes. The Oghuz tribes learned how to build cities in this region and experienced periods of internal political and cultural integration. The difference between the Oghuz in terms of language and religion was much greater than that of the Eastern Turks, since the Oghuz began to accept Islam in the 10th century. This is evidenced by several historical facts. Moreover, since the end of the 10th century, the Oghuz rulers had Muslim names. Most likely, the reason lies in the name of the Oghuz ruler Musa ibn Seljuq, who was born in the 10th century. Researchers clearly believe that other Turkic tribes, such as the Karluks, Kimaks, and Kipchaks, converted to Islam later (around the 12th – 13th centuries). Linguistically, the Oghuz were slightly assimilated into the Iranian-like tribes of Central Asia and linguistically separated from the related Turkic tribes.²⁷

In addition, trade relations with the cities of Central Asia developed, and they also adopted various forms of government and state structure practices. It should be noted that Oghuz was considered one of the states that mastered and implemented the political, administrative and economic methods of nomadic and sedentary societies. A distinctive feature of the Oghuz people differentiating them from the eastern Turks (Karlucs, Kimaks, Naimans) was that they began to engage in agriculture on the banks of the Syr Darya river. During this period, the exact number of tribes in the Oghuz became known in historical sources. For example, the medieval Turkic historian Mahmud Kashgari (11th century) claimed that the Oghuz consisted of 24 tribes. He wrote that 12 of its tribes were called “Buzuks” and 12 tribes were called “Uchuks”.²⁸

Arab travellers wrote about the fact that at the beginning of the 10th century Oghuz tribes inhabited the Syr Darya and the adjacent cities of Karadzhuk (Farab, Otrar), Sairam. According to the *Hudud al-Alam* and the descriptions of geographers of the Islamic era, such as Al-Balkhi, Istarkhi, Ibn Haukal, the territory of the Oghuz extended in the west to the Caspian Sea, in the south to

²⁶ KHODZHAYOV, T. K. *Turkmens in the Central Asian Interfluve*.

²⁷ SOOFĠZADEH, A. Turkmens who Founded the Seljuk State. In *Oġuz-Türkmen Arařtırmaları Dergisi* (OTAD), 2019, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 158–170.

²⁸ RUSTAMOVA, A. R., KORMUSHINA, I. V. *Makhmud al-Kashgari. Divan lugat at-turk (A set of Turkic words)*.

the city of Urgench²⁹, Bukhara, in the north to the city of Sauran³⁰ and the Karatau mountains^{31 32}.

In the text of the *Hudud al-Alam*³³, dated 975, it is said that the state of the Karluks, who inhabited Zhetysu, borders on the east with the tribes of the Yagma, and the Oghuz and in the north with the Tukhsi, Chigil and Toquz-Oghuz.³⁴ In general, the inaccuracy of geographical data in the work of *Hudud al-Alam* is confirmed by a number of Orientalists. Based on this, the residence of the Oghuz to the north of the Karluks, who inhabited the Semirechye, is quite impossible. The fact that the author of the work was not a traveller and wrote down the information that he heard from other travellers and merchants, is also confirmed by the orientalist scholar V. V. Bartold.³⁵ Rather, he was an armchair scholar who systematized, but did not process, the information from previous travellers.

The geographical location of the Oguz territory near the Caspian Sea is determined by researchers by the following fact: until the 20th century, the peninsula in the Caspian Sea in Kazakhstan was called “Mangyshlak”. Soviet researchers came to the conclusion that the word “Mangyshlak” came from the transitional form of the word “Myn kishlak”³⁶ (thousands of kishlaks) in the old Turkic language.³⁷

²⁹ The medieval city located on the land of the modern Republic of Uzbekistan. It was the capital of the state of Khorezm.

³⁰ The medieval city that was in the south of modern Kazakhstan. It is located along the Great Silk Road.

³¹ A mountain range in the south of modern Kazakhstan.

³² AGADZHANOV, S. G. *Essays on the history of the Oguz and Turkmens of Central Asia*.

³³ A compilation written in 982 – 983. The author is unknown. The work was written for the Emir of Guzgan (the territory of modern Afghanistan), Abul-Haris Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Fariguni.

³⁴ MINORSKY, V. V., BOSWORTH, C. E. *Hudud al-'Alam: The regions of the world – a Persian Geography*.

³⁵ BARTOLD, V. V. *Records on the Aral Sea and the Lower Stream of the Amudarya Since the Earliest Times to the 17th Century*.

³⁶ “Myn” means a thousand in the Turkic language. The root of the word “kyshlak” (kishlak) comes from the meaning of “kishlak” (wintering). Settlements in regions with favourable and warm weather, inhabited in winter by nomadic Turkic tribes, were called “kishlak” – “wintering”. See AYDARBEKOVA, G. B. “Torah” and “Yosun” as norms of customary law of the Turkic nomadic civilization. In *Bulletin of KazNPU named after Abai*, 2011, No. 3, pp. 41–52.

³⁷ BEIHAMMER A. Die Ethnogenese der seldschukischen Türken im Urteil christlicher Geschichtsschreiber des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts. In *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 2009, Vol. 102, No. 2, pp. 589–614.

At the beginning of the 10th century, the Oghuz managed to create their new state in the Syrdarya region. In addition, they founded the first cities in their history. The new Oghuz state and the capital city were called Yangikent.³⁸ According to archaeologists, the city of Yangikent does not correspond to the city conquered by the Oghuz but was the first city founded by the Oghuz in history.³⁹ The leader of the Oghuz had the title “Yabgu”. While the functions of the deputy of the yabgu were performed by the “kul yerkins”, the army was headed by the “syubashi”. The Oghuz state coordinated a confederation of many tribes. Each tribe had its own leaders, and they put their interests first. It was believed that the interests of the state should match the interests of all the tribes. The appearance of internal wars in such a political and historical situation became a conditional phenomenon. The main responsibility in the political and administrative management of the state was assigned to a dynasty from a certain tribe. Despite the fact that the data were not recorded, in our opinion, the Kynyk tribe played a leading role in the affairs of state administration. The point is that at the start of the Oghuz migration to the Iranian steppes at the beginning of the 11th century, the presence of the leaders of the Kynyk tribe at the head of the Oghuzes was not an incidental fact.

The methods of political, legal and civil administration in the Oghuz state were regulated by unwritten customs called “Tore”. In the election of candidates for power to govern a tribe or state according to the “Tore”, special importance was attached to the people’s origin. Of course, it cannot be denied that the personal merits of people in society were also taken into account. However, it should be recognized that in the philosophical views of medieval society, the influence of mythical legends was great. Therefore, it was important that the origin of the person, who managed the state, had a certain status. This process was a characteristic phenomenon for the ideology of the Turkic-Mongolian tribes. For example, the rulers of the Turkic Khaganate in the 6th century highly valued their origin from the sacred Ashina tribe, and Genghis Khan from the Borjigin tribe. Some researchers argue that the aforementioned phenomenon of special origin did not play a role in the election of tribal leaders. That is, they believe that this practice was implemented only in the management of the state or the union of tribes.⁴⁰

There is no reason to assume that the Oghuz state maintained stable political and diplomatic relations with its neighbours. In fact medieval sources written by al-Masudi and ibn Fadlan state that the Oghuz were in constant conflict with the

³⁸ In Turkic, it means “new city”.

³⁹ ANDRIANOV, B. V., MANTELLINI, S. *Ancient Irrigation Systems of the Aral Sea Area: The History and Development of Irrigated Agriculture*.

⁴⁰ AGADZHANOV, S. G. *Turkological Collection*.

Pechenegs and the Khazars. From European and Arab sources, it is clear that the Oghuz were forced to fight against the Khazar state in geopolitical confrontations for influence on the coast of the Caspian Sea. The Oghuz state had unstable political relations with the Karluks in the east and the Kimeks⁴¹ in the north. The geo-economic interests of the Oghuz and Pechenegs, who sought to control the trade and caravan routes of the Great Silk Road to the north of the Syrdarya, Aral and Caspian Seas, led to the weakening of the Khazar state. The capture of the trade routes between Khorezm and Itil⁴² by the Pechenegs had a particularly negative impact on the trade and economic situation of the Khazar state. Realizing the situation, the attempts of the Khazar state to conclude an alliance with the Oghuz against the Pechenegs led to new migratory movement. According to sources, the Pechenegs, who lived between the Ural mountains and the Emba river,⁴³ were driven into the steppes of Europe by the combined forces of the Oghuz and Khazars in the first half of the 11th century. The migration of the Pechenegs was directed to the banks of the Don river and the Black Sea and contributed to the neighbourhood with Byzantium. According to sources, in 968/969, the Oghuz, acting in alliance with Kievan Rus, defeated Itil and Semender. This moment is considered the end of the independent Khazar state.⁴⁴

In general, according to domestic and foreign researchers,⁴⁵ the weakening of the Khazar state led to a change in the balance of geopolitical and ethno-territorial forces in the Eurasian steppes. Among the nomadic states, the Khazars, who had reached a significant level of development in the art of war, were considered a state structure that demonstrated advanced experience in political and military diplomacy. In other words, it was a strong political system that kept trade and cultural relations between Europe and Asia in balance. The collapse of the Khazar state, which contributed to the violation of the borders between the nomadic states, created a new migratory movement.

The reason for this can be called the approach of the tribes belonging to the ethnoconfederation of the Kimeks, who inhabited the West Siberian plain, to the

⁴¹ The tribe of Turkic origin that inhabited the northern steppes of modern Kazakhstan and Western Siberia in the 8th to 9th centuries.

⁴² The city that served as the capital of the Khazar state in the 8th to 10th centuries. It is difficult to identify its location for sure, due to the fact that archaeologists have not found it. However, based on medieval sources, researchers claim that the modern Volga is located in the lower reaches of the river. See FLEROV, V. S. "Cities" and "castles" of the Khazar Khaganate. "Archaeological reality".

⁴³ The river in the west of modern Kazakhstan.

⁴⁴ ARTAMONOV, M. I. *History of the Khazars*.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Aral and Caspian Seas and the Syrdarya coast, as well as the phenomenon of geopolitical confrontation with the Oghuz. The large-scale migration of Cumans and Kipchaks from the areas of the Irtysh and Ishim rivers in the western and southern directions, which were part of the union of Kimek tribes, hurried the collapse of the Oghuz state. Thus began the era of the Kipchak state, which included the area between the rivers Irtysh and Dniester.

At the end of the 11th century, the process of migration of the Oghuz, who could not withstand the opposition of the Kipchaks with their high degree of internal ethno-political cohesion, began to the areas adjacent to the Iranian border.⁴⁶ At the end of the 10th century in the steppes of Central Asia, there was a tendency to weaken two states: 1. The Oghuz. 2. the Persian state of the Samanids. Undoubtedly, the weakening of the Samanid state allowed the Oghuz to migrate freely to the west. The reason was the collapse of the Samanid state, when its vassal Khorezm opened the doors of Khorasan to the invasion of nomadic tribes. It is known that the Khorezm region was an important bridge between Central Asia and Khorasan.

It is clear that for any Central Asian ruler who wanted to open up the way to the Iranian civilization, it was historically natural that the first political step began with the conquest of Khorezm. During this period, the Khorasan region, which was part of the weak Samanid state, could not resist the new newcomers. The displacement of the Oghuz people by the Kipchaks from the Syrdarya, Aral, and Caspian regions led to their migration to Khorezm, crossing the Amu Darya. For the cattle of the Oghuz tribes, the insufficient natural resources of the Khorezm region was an understandable problem. A number of researchers have provided conclusive evidence of this.

The Oghuz, who had stayed for a short time in the vicinity of the Amudarya, took advantage of the poor internal integration of the Khorasan region and began to penetrate the Iranian steppes at the beginning of the 11th century.

Other factors, along with the phenomena of changes in political, military and ethno-territorial forces, had the potential to influence the migration of the Oghuz from the Syrdarya and the Aral regions to the Khorezm and Khorasan regions as well. This is because, according to contemporary American researchers who have studied the ecological history of Central Asia,⁴⁷ climate change might have contributed to the weakening and decline of the civilizations that inhabited Central Asia in the Middle Ages. The American geographer Mark McLean, studying the place of irrigation systems of the cities located in Syrdarya, in the vicinity of the Aral Sea between the 8th and 14th centuries,

⁴⁶ GÜNDÜZ, T. *Articles on Turkmen Lords of the Steppe*.

⁴⁷ WILLEM H. J., TOONEN, M. G. et al. Hydromorphic reevaluation of the forgotten river civilizations of Central Asia. In *PNAS*, 2020, Vol. 117, No. 5, pp. 32982–32988.

attributes the cities' decline and weakening not to external invasions but to the impact of climate change (drought, reduction of water, etc.).⁴⁸ The above arguments do not disprove the results of the research of the famous Orientalists V. Bartold⁴⁹ and Y. Gulyamov.⁵⁰ It is quite probable that these arguments also apply to the migration of the Oghuz to the west. Certainly, a great influence on the migration of the Oghuz was exerted by the Kipchaks from the North. Since the 11th century, historical sources have referred to the territory between the Syrdarya and the Caspian Sea as the «Kipchak Steppe» (Persian: Dashti-Kipchak).

There is no information in the historical sources about wars between the Oghuz and the Kipchaks. Among the Turkic tribal unions, the largest number of tribes were part of the Oghuz confederation. For instance, the historical sources record that the Kimak confederation included 16 tribes, while the Karluks included 9 tribes. The Oghuz Confederation consisted of 24 tribes. That is, the Oghuz could prevail in terms of the number of its people. Therefore, it should not be denied that the influence of internal and natural-economic factors on the migration of the Oghuz to the west was stronger than the pressure of external political and military forces. That is, we suggest that disputes over power and land between the Oghuz tribes and climate-induced drought factors led to a weakening of the economic system. Obviously, the decline of the economic system (farming, cattle breeding) complicated people's lives. We wish to argue therefore that the process of migration of the Oghuz to the west was undertaken in order to find new resources for living.

In addition, the migration of the Oghuz to the west was also influenced by the absence of political and military barriers in the west and the availability of free territories without owners. At the beginning of the 11th century the Iranian lands constituted from the political point of view an empty space. The Samanid state, which ruled the Iranian lands, had entered an era of decline. The Ghaznevid state, after the death of Mahmud Ghaznevi (1030), lost support and was forced to give up its influence from Khorasan.⁵¹ In this regard, the entry of the Oghuz into the lands of Khorasan, and Iran from the 1030s and the consequences of the transient processes of establishing the Seljuk state came at an opportune moment in history.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ BARTOLD, V. V. *Records on the Aral Sea and the Lower Stream of the Amudarya Since the Earliest Times to the 17th Century.*

⁵⁰ GULYAMOV, Y. G. *The History of Irrigation of Khorezm from the Ancient to Present.*

⁵¹ KHODZHAYOV, T. K. *Turkmens in the Central Asian Interfluve.*

3. A Retrospective View of the Historical Consequences of the Migration of the Oghuz to Asia Minor

In 1035 the Kynyk tribe of the Oghuz settled in Khorasan under the leadership of the brothers Chagra, Togrul, and Musa ibn Seljuk. There, they encountered resistance from Masud, the viceroy of the Ghaznevid state. The battle of Dandanakan (1040) between the Ghaznevids and the Oghuz over Khorasan was decided in favour of the Oghuz, and Khorasan came under the rule of the Oghuzes. The capture of Khorasan subsequently paved the way for the mass migration of the Oghuz to Asia Minor. In 1040 – 1045 waves of migration of the Oghuz to the interior of Iran began, which resulted in a new state structure. The process of formation and development of the state system of the Oghuz reached its peak in the time of Togrul bey (1038 – 1063). The new state system was named after Seljuk, the leader of the great dynasty of the Kynyk tribe. During the time of Togrul bey, the Oghuz finished conquering the Khorezm, Khorasan, and the west Iranian lands and in 1055 they subjugated Baghdad.⁵²

The Abbasid caliph al-Qaim was forced to declare Togrul bey the «Sultan» and «King of the East and the West». From this period the ruler of the Oghuz received the title of a Muslim ruler, «Sultan». Under the Sultans Alp-Arslan (1063 – 1072) and Melik-Shah I (1072 – 1092) the processes of penetration of Oghuz into the lands of South Caucasus and Asia Minor began. This geopolitical action led them into conflict with Byzantium, the ruler of these territories. The battle of Manzikert against Byzantium in 1071, was decided in favour of the Seljuks, and opened the door to their mass migration to Asia Minor. Thus, the period of conquest and exploration of Asia Minor by the Oghuz tribes went down in history.⁵³

Taking a retrospective approach to the historical consequences of the migration of the Oghuz to Western Asia and Asia Minor, it will be seen that it contributed to the realization of state structures that caused a large-scale problem concerning the history of three continents. As a result of the political-military and ethno-territorial cooperation of the Oghuz, a Seljuk state was established in Iran. Undoubtedly, the emergence of the Seljuk state formed the preconditions for the process of Turkization in the lands of Asia Minor, Iran and the South Caucasus. The Oghuz tribes resettled en masse, by creating perfect assimilation mechanisms for local peoples. This phenomenon was characteristic of the history of the nomadic Turkic-Mongolian peoples. Since we know that

⁵² GÜNDÜZ, T. *Articles on Turkmen Lords of the Steppe*.

⁵³ VRYONIS, S. Nomadization and Islamization in Asia Minor. In *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 1975, Vol. 29, pp. 41–71.

the Mongols, who came to conquer the Turkic peoples in Central Asia, were themselves Turkicized. History proves that their language, culture, and religion underwent the Turkization process.

The migration of the Oghuz, who conquered Iran and Asia Minor, contributed to the expansion of the ethnic map of Turkic peoples from Eastern Turkestan (China) to the Aegean Sea. The Asia Minor Peninsula became the host location for Turkic tribes subjected to political and social pressures in their historic homeland. This historical situation may be compared with the tendency in the 16th and 17th centuries for Europeans subjected to various political and social restrictions, to emigrate to America in search of a livelihood.

Although the ethnic core of the Seljuk state was initially in Iran, it later moved to Asia Minor. Yet it left the traces of a process of strong Turkization in the western regions of Iran. As its manifestation we may mention the existence of about 10 million ethnic Turks who inhabit areas on the border of modern Iran with Azerbaijan, Turkey, and a chain of Turkish toponyms.

The Oghuz, who settled in Asia Minor, had unstable relations with the Byzantine state until the Ottoman period. However, their purpose was clear: to subdue the Byzantine Greek cities, if possible, and to become the most influential force in the region. They were driven to this goal by two motives: 1. survival by any means in difficult times; 2. the waging war against other believers and the spreading of Islam. It is well known that the first motive mentioned changed to the mission of becoming a world power in the Ottoman era. In many medieval sources describing the actions of the Seljuks, we find the judgment of “survival by any means”. It is no coincidence that Byzantine historians called the Seljuks “the Great conquerors seeking a new homeland”.⁵⁴ That is, their actions show that they sought to establish themselves in a particular new homeland and live there forever.

The historical processes of the Ottoman era determined the pattern of migration of the Oghuz to Asia Minor. The Ottoman Empire, which reigned for more than six hundred years, concretized the progression of the ethnocultural and ethnopolitical consequences of the Oghuz migration.

4. Conclusions

The internal and external migrations of the Turkic tribes, who inhabited the centre of Eurasia, led to cultural transfer and the renewal of ethnic, cultural and

⁵⁴ VOLINA, A. Yu., YAKUBOVSKY, A. Yu. *Materials on the History of Turkmens and Turkmenistan.*

educational values. Although the general form of the migration of the Oghuz tribes, who made three historical migrations between the 8th and 11th centuries, is similar, there were nevertheless internal differences. Undoubtedly, the migration turmoil that beset them at different periods of history was a test of time or a “challenge” for the Oghuz. They sought to meet these challenges through their accumulated life experiences and skills. In addition, in each migration had a definite consequence. In the course of the research we have

Table 3. Differences Between the Westward Migrations of the Oghuz

#	Duration of Migration	Destination	Reasons	Results
1	The middle of the 8th century	Alakol, Balkhash lakes (Semirechye)	Wars between tribes inhabiting Mongolia, lack of internal unity, the guiding force was disobedience to the central power	The Oghuz tribes migrated from the Mongolian region and approached the semi-nomadic and semi-settled areas of Central Asia
2	The beginning of the 9th century	The Syrdarya, the Aral Sea, and the Caspian Sea	The pressure of the Karluks, Uighur tribes, search for new natural and economic resources, etc.	The process of cultural synthesis began. The formation of the stages of state development
3	The beginning of the 11th century	Western Asia (Iran), Asia Minor, and the South Caucasus	The arrival of the Kipchak tribes, the possibility of depletion of natural and economic resources, and the change in geopolitical forces in the Khorezm and Khorasan regions.	It opened the way to the process of Turkization of the territories of the West Asia, Asia Minor, and the South Caucasus. It contributed to the emergence of the Ottoman Empire, which played a huge role in the history of the European, Asian and African continents.

analysed and systematized the preconditions and consequences of the migration of the Oghuz from the steppes of Mongolia to Semirechye. Their life in Semirechye was not much different from the previous period. Obedient to the strict law of nomadic society – “the strongest will survive” – the Oghuz went through the stage of being a vassal state. The second wave of migration brought the Oghuz to a new level of political and cultural development. On the Syrdarya River, the Oguz achieved their independence and improved their cultural and social infrastructure. The internal social division of society manifested itself in a new form. By mastering the methods of government, it defined its role in the international political arena. We shall present summarily the preconditions and consequences of the three westward migrations of the Oguz in the following table (table 3).

The third of the last great migrations to the west, shown in the table, seemed to define their subordination to certain historical and temporal patterns of long-standing migratory tendencies. Compared to the migration trends of other Turkic tribes, the political-ethnic and cultural-social consequences of the migration of the Oghuz are closely intertwined with the present day. As a reflection of the traces of the migration of the Oghuz in Western Asia and Asia Minor, there exist today such states as Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Turkey. The descendants of the Oghuz, who live in the above-mentioned states, are inseparable from their genetic and cultural codes, and this is reflected in their attempts at mutual integration.

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