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**INTERPRETATION OF FRAGMENTS OF OLD TURKIC MONUMENTS
OF THE 10TH – 14TH CENTURIES WITHIN THE KARACHAY-BALKAR
LINGUACULTURAL CONTEXT**

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INTRODUCTION

Old Turkic manuscripts, such as the dictionary of the Cuman (Polovets, Kipchak) language titled *Codex Cumanicus* (the 14th century) and the book of divination called *İrq Bitig* (the 10th century), can hardly be overvalued as regards their significance for the history of Turkic peoples, their languages and cultures. These texts have compelled the attention of scholars from different countries for a long time, and they still do.

With respect to the *Codex Cumanicus*, a pioneer of Turkology in Russia A. N. Samoylovich remarked that the creation of this text signified the beginning of a European period in Turkic studies¹. According to the prominent Russian Turkologist A. A. Chechenov, the *Codex Cumanicus* is an outstanding literary monument of the Golden Horde era written in the Kipchak (Polovets, Cuman) vernacular language “which is a valuable source for comparative studies in the history of the formation and development of nearly all modern Kipchak languages”². Culturally, this text is valuable since, as the Turkish scholar A. Nigmet Kurat notes, its vocabulary represents various aspects of ancient Crimean and Caucasian Turks’ way of life³.

In regard to the *İrq Bitig*, according to many Turkologists, despite the complexity of translation and interpretation of its 65 chapters, it is the most important

¹ *Samoylovich A. N. Vilhelm Thomsen and Turkology // In Memoriam of V. Thomsen. To the death anniversary (a Collection of Papers). (Studies in the History of Scholarship.) – Leningrad: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1928. P. 15.*

² *Ulakov M. Z., Chechenov A. A. The Monuments Written in Turkic Languages as a Source of History of the Modern Karachay-Balkar Language (a Special Course). – Nalchik: The Institute for Humanities of the RAS’ Kabardian-Balkar Scientific Centre, 2001. P. 27.*

³ *Kurat A. N. Collected Writings: Book 2. Turkic Ethnic Groups and States in the Volga Region and the North Pontic Region of the 4th – 18th Centuries / Transl. from Turkish by Y. N. Karimov et al.; chief editors I. M. Mingalejev, D. M. Gaynutdinov. – Kazan: The Institute for History named after Ş. Märcani (Tatarstan Academy of Sciences), 2015. P. 102–103.*

text reflecting the beliefs of the ancient Turks⁴, and the memory of it has been preserved in the folklore texts of the Sayan-Altai peoples⁵.

The **relevance of the study** is determined by the general orientation of modern ethnic and international policies of the Russian Federation, which focus on creating optimal conditions for preservation and development of indigenous languages and cultures of the peoples inhabiting not only the Russian Federation, but also Central Asia, through dissemination of reliable knowledge about them, respect for their historical heritage and further development of ethnic identities, support for ethnic customs, traditions and rituals. It is well known that considerable attention in this regard is paid to the languages and cultures of the peoples living in Central Asia, in particular Turkic peoples, as well as of the Turkic peoples of the North Caucasus, one of which is the Karachays and Balkars. This academic field becomes increasingly important for our country, in particular for development of its international policies in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and it is frequently referred to in speeches given by Russian highest-ranking officials⁶.

The Old Turkic written monuments of the 10th – 14th centuries are part of the cultural heritage that unites the Turkic peoples of the Russian Federation with the peoples of the Central Asian republics (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,

⁴ *Kljaštornyj S. G.* Old Turkic Runiform Monuments from East Turkestan // Russian Expeditions into Central Asia in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries / Ed. by I. F. Popova. – St. Petersburg: “Slaviya”, 2008. P. 61.

⁵ *Kyzlasov L. R., Kyzlasov I. L.* Central Questions of the Khakas People’s History: Collected Papers / Chief ed. V. M. Torosov. – Abakan: “Khakasskoe knizhnoye izdatelstvo”, 2016. P. 84.

⁶ Putin highlighted the importance of the national school of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies in promoting interests of the Russian Federation in the world // URL: <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/5731750?ysclid=lwxlwxgm9s434660334> (accessed: 07.05.2024); Putin V. V. To the Participants and Guests of the International Congress Dedicated to the 200th Anniversary of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences // URL: The Kremlin: Official Internet Resources of the President of Russia: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/letters/58941> (accessed: 07.05.2024).

Turkmenistan). The latter experience a period of active development of national consciousness after gaining state sovereignty. Such written monuments as the *Codex Cumanicus* and the *İrq Bitig* are matter for national pride, and the idea of a Turkic people's contribution to their creation is often promoted for the benefit of state ideologies. For example, some updated translations and interpretations of the *Codex Cumanicus* and the *İrq Bitig* were published in Kazakhstan in 2019–2022⁷.

At the same time, it should be noted that the translation and interpretation of the monuments in question contain a number of inaccuracies and errors caused, first of all, by the fact that researchers limited themselves to a purely linguistic approach. The current situation requires further in-depth study of these monuments with the involvement of data from related disciplines.

The **material of this study** is the Old Turkic manuscripts of the 10th – 14th centuries, namely, the *Codex Cumanicus*, written in a mixed Oghuz-Kipchak language (the “Italian” part) and in the Polovets (Kipchak) language (the “German” part), and the Old Turkic oracle book *İrq Bitig*.

The **object of the study** is relations between lexical meaning of the words and word combinations found in these texts and their linguacultural context.

The **subject of the study** is the meaning, translation and interpretation of a number of words, phrases and textual fragments of the manuscripts using the data from the language, culture and history of the Karachay and Balkar peoples.

The **purpose of the study** is to clarify the translation of the fragments in question into Russian and their interpretation utilizing the interdisciplinary method and Karachay-Balkarian linguistic and cultural material.

This purpose entails the necessity to perform the following **tasks**:

⁷ *Garkávets A. N. The Codex Cumanicus. The Second Edition (Unabridged and Enlarged). – Almaty: “Almaty-Bolashak”, 2019. 1360 p.; Garkávets A. N. The İrq Bitig. The Old Turkic Book of Divination, the 10th Century. Type Composition, Transcription, Translation, Glossary. – Almaty: “Baur”, 2022. 96 p.*

- to summarize information pertaining to the manuscripts, the history of their discovery and research, and their significance for the cultural history of Turkic peoples;

- to substantiate the use of data on the Karachay-Balkar language, ethnogenesis, as well as spiritual and material culture of the Karachay-Balkars to clarify the reading and interpretation of the fragments in question;

- to describe and carefully examine opinions of Turkologists regarding the meaning of the fragments of the manuscripts;

- to clarify the meaning of individual words and expressions in the fragments using the data of Karachay-Balkarian folklore, history, ethnography and archaeology.

The **methodology of the study** is a combination of the descriptive method, comparative historical linguistic analysis, and the interdisciplinary approach; it also involves field research.

According to research works, the essence of the interdisciplinary method is based on synthesizing data from different fields of knowledge to perform a specific academic task. Interdisciplinarity helps to avoid methodological parochialism, to circumvent some negative consequences of disciplinary specialization and fragmentation⁸.

Nowadays the interdisciplinary approach is becoming increasingly popular in humanities as well as in natural sciences⁹. A growing number of special scientific events is devoted to this method¹⁰, and orientalists are persistently urged to take into

⁸ *Knyazeva E. N.* Transdisciplinary Research Strategies // Bulletin of TSPU. 2011, № 10 (112). P. 193.

⁹ “The Interdisciplinary Approach to the Neurosciences”. The International Conference in Memoriam of A. A. Frolov // URL: <https://ihna.ru/ru/institute/conf/frolov-2020> (accessed 19.01.2024).

¹⁰ “Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities.” The International Academic Conference (A. N. Kosygin State University of Russia, April 13–14, 2023) // URL: <https://istina.msu.ru/conferences/549266667/?ysclid=lrn4zsrz7583811737> (accessed

account not only linguistic data, but also data from ethnography, folklore, literary studies, archaeology and history¹¹. A significant difficulty of the interdisciplinary approach is that it requires that the researcher have deep knowledge of a variety of facts and modern scientific data, ensuring their comparison against a broad historical background.

The interdisciplinary method seems to be largely neglected in Turkology. Even if we take Oriental studies in general, it turns out that the share of interdisciplinary research in this field does not exceed 10% of the total number of studies¹². Meanwhile, a number of Turkologists did use folklore and literature data, although somewhat sporadically; among these scholars were V. V. Radlov (F. W. Radloff)¹³, W. Bang¹⁴, A. N. Samoylovich, S. G. Kljaštornyj, S. E. Malov¹⁵, Y. R. Dashkevich,

19.01.2024); “Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities” // Collected Papers Following the International Research-to-Practice Conference in Belgorod city, November 30, 2018. In 3 Parts. – Belgorod, 2018.

¹¹ *Goryaeva L. V.* An Interdisciplinary Approach to the Study of the Eastern Countries’ Written Legacy: The Results of Seminar “Textual Studies and Source Studies of the East” (IOSRAS, 2010–2019) // *Oriental Studies*. 2019, 2 (2). P. 449–456.

¹² *Alikberov A. K.* Oriental Studies as an Integral Field; its Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Perspectives // *Orientalistica*. Vol. 5, № 4. 2022. C. 722–733 [URL: <https://www.orientalistica.su/jour/article/view/711> (accessed 20.01.2024)].

¹³ *Radlov V. V.* On the Cuman Language: In Regard to a Cuman Dictionary Edition // *TISPAS*. Vol. 48. Book 2. № 4. – St. Petersburg, 1884. 53 p.

¹⁴ *Bang W.* Über die Rätsel des Codex Cumanicus // *SPAW*. – Berlin, 1912. P. 334–353.

¹⁵ *Malov S. E.* On the History and Critical Discussion of the Codex Cumanicus // *BSAS*. Series № 7: Humanities Branch. 1930, № 5. P. 347–375.

N. A. Baskakov¹⁶, I. V. Steblyova¹⁷, V. M. Yakovlev¹⁸ and L. Y. Tugusheva¹⁹. N. A. Baskakov emphasized the importance of this approach to the study of ancient Turkic written monuments: “Some archaic features of the Turkic languages of Altai and Eastern Siberia and of the Kyrghyz language, can be found in certain dialects of these languages, as well as in the richest heroic epic of these peoples²⁰”. N. A. Baskakov pointed out that the language of the heroic epic, mythology and archaic genres of religious and ritual folklore (from shamanic chants to funeral lamentations) of the Turkic peoples had not yet been subjected to thorough studies of the stages of its development, the composition of ancient layers of vocabulary, the oldest elements of morphology and syntactic constructions²¹. This observation is equally valid for the Karachay-Balkar mythology and heroic epic. Nevertheless, the well-founded remarks of one of the greatest Turkologists have been ignored, and today only the linguistic method has been used in the extremely difficult task of translating and interpreting written ancient Turkic monuments.

In our opinion, the use of data from the Karachay-Balkar language and culture, including data from folklore, history, ethnography, and archeology, shall help us to

¹⁶ *Baskakov N. A. Revisiting Codex Cumanicus (On a Riddle Yet Unsolved) // Hungaro-Turcica. Studies in Honour of Julius Németh / Ed. by Gy. Káldy-Nagy. – Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, 1976. P. 79–86.*

¹⁷ *Steblyova I. V. The Old Turkic Book of Divination as a Work of Poetry // History, Culture, and Languages of Eastern Peoples. – Moscow: Eastern Literature Publishing, 1970. P. 150–177.*

¹⁸ *Yakovlev V. M. Īrq Bitik: The Old Turkic Book of Divination. Translation, Introduction, Commentaries and Glossary // RAS. Bulletin of the Society for Oriental Studies. Appendix 4. – Moscow: IOSRAS, 2004. 272 p.*

¹⁹ *Tugusheva L. Y. [Review:] Īrq Bitik: Old Turkic Book of Divination / Transl., introduction, comm. and gloss. by V. M. Yakovlev // Eastern Written Monuments. 1 (6). Saint Petersburg, 2007. P. 309–311.*

²⁰ *Baskakov N. A. An Introduction to the Study of Turkic Languages. – Moscow: “Vys’shaya shkola”, 1969. P. 174.*

²¹ *Ibidem.*

reconstruct the Old Turkic cultural and historical environment, to make an attempt to “to see with a native eye” the relevant fragments of the monuments of the Old Turkic languages.

The **scientific novelty** of the dissertation is based on the fact that it is the first comprehensive interdisciplinary study of the Old Turkic written monuments which is carried out using the data from the language, material and spiritual culture of the Karachays and Balkars in order to clarify the translation and interpretation of the fragments in question.

No such research has been conducted before, and scholars have not used the richest Karachay-Balkar data. Meanwhile, back in 1932, the orientalist A. K. Borovkov, who collected unique and extensive material on the language and folklore of the Karachays and Balkars, noted in his work *Karachay-Balkar language*: “It is becoming increasingly clear that the Karachay-Balkar language is ‘a small spool, but very expensive and valuable one.’ <...> **The Balkar-Karachay language is more ‘ancient’, from the point of view of typology, than the ancient written dead languages of the Turkish (Turkic – A. G.) system that have written monuments left; the study of the Karachay-Balkar language will, in many cases, become the key to the study of ancient written monuments**” (highlighted by us – A. G.)²² Based on the above cited opinion of A. K. Borovkov regarding the Karachay-Balkar language and supplementing the linguistic data with facts from the field of cultural studies, archeology and ethnography, we have applied a new approach to the translation and interpretation of the written monuments. This approach can make a substantial contribution to their study and settle a number of debatable points, to become the key to a more accurate translation and interpretation of the fragments and deeper understanding of their meaning and content.

²² Borovkov A. K. *The Karachay-Balkar Language // Japhetic Papers. Iss. VII. – Leningrad: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1932. P. 39, 50–51.*

The **development of the research area**. Within the academia, the *Codex Cumanicus* and the *İrq Bitig* rank among the most famous Old Turkic written manuscripts. Scholarly attention has been focused on their historical backgrounds, linguistic characteristics and relation to the modern Turkic languages. A number of academics endeavored to translate and interpret the texts, each offering their own version.

The **theoretical foundation of the study** is formed by the works of Russian and international linguists who have studied the *Codex Cumanicus*, the *İrq Bitig* and other texts written in the Kipchak, Oghuz, Uyghur and Chagatai (Old Uzbek) languages, such as A. K. Borovkov's *The Vocabulary of Central Asian Tafsir in the 12th – 13th Centuries* (1963), E. N. Nadzhip's *Studies in the History of Turkic Languages of the 11th – 14th Centuries* (1989), V. M. Nasilov's *The Old Uyghur Language* (1963), the multi-author monograph *The Proto-Turkic Ancestor Language. The Worldview of the Proto-Turks According to Linguistic Data* (2006), L. Ligeti's *Prolegomena to the Codex Cumanicus* (1959), A. von Gabain's *Die Sprache des Codex Cumanicus* (1959) and *Alttürkische Grammatik* (1950), S. E. Malov's *Old Turkic Written Monuments* (1951) etc. Besides, we have relied on a number of definitive works on the history of Turkic languages: N. A. Baskakov's *Introduction to the Study of Turkic Languages and Modern Kipchak Languages*, O. A. Mudrak's *Turkic Languages and Dialects Classified with the Use of Glottochronological Methods and Questions Concerning Morphology and Historical Phonetics* (2009), A. V. Dybo's *Chronology of Turkic Languages and Linguistic Contacts of the Ancient Turks* (2007) etc. We have also referred to several studies addressing the linguistic features of the texts and their historical backgrounds (V. V. Radlov's *Das türkische Sprachmaterial des Codex Cumanicus* (1887), Y. R. Dashkevich's *The Codex Cumanicus: Issues of Origin* and *The Codex Cumanicus: Issues of Deciphering*, A. N. Garkavets's *The Codex Cumanicus: An Unabridged Edition in 4 Volumes* (2015) and *The İrq Bitig* (2022)), as well as to some works about the Karachay-Balkar language, folklore, epic, and Caucasian ethnography and archaeology (E. Siemieniec-

Golas's *Karachay-Balkar Vocabulary of Proto-Turkic Origin* (2000), A. K. Borovkov's *The Karachay-Balkar Language* (1932) and *Essays on Karachay-Balkar Grammar* (1935), K. G. Azamatov's *The Vestiges of Heathendom in the Balkars' Beliefs* (1981), M. Ch. Jurtubayev's *Karachay-Balkar Heroic Epic* (2003) and *The Balkars' and Karachays' Ancient Beliefs* (1991), A *Karachay-Balkar Grammar: Phonetics. Morphology. Syntax* (1976), a multi-author academic publication *The Karachays. The Balkars* (2014), an academic edition of *The Nart Sagas. The Balkar and Karachay Peoples' Heroic Epic* (1994) etc.).

The dissertation is **theoretically significant** inasmuch as it provides the conceptual groundwork for further textual studies in Turkology; this is achieved by employing the interdisciplinary approach and analyzing the data obtained from linguistics, folklore studies, ethnology, ethnography, archaeology and other areas.

As regards the dissertation's **practical value**, it presents a number of findings and introduces rich linguistic and ethnographical materials which can be useful for developing university courses in Old Turkic texts of the 10th – 14th centuries written in Uyghur, Oghuz and Kipchak languages. It can also contribute to the theory and practice of their translation into Russian, as well as to designing the specialized course “Introduction to the Study of Old Turkic texts of the 10th – 14th Centuries”, the fundamental importance of which was suggested by Prof. D. M. Nasilov²³. Teachers can also find the conclusions helpful for preparing practical lessons in the Uyghur and Uzbek languages, Kipchak languages (Kazakh, Kirghiz, Tatar, Karachay-Balkar), Oghuz languages (Azerbaijani and Turkish), for creating manuals on vocabulary, grammar and the principles of translation of old texts written in Uyghur, Oghuz, Old Uzbek and Kipchak languages. Furthermore, the results can be employed in

²³ *Nasilov D. M.* A Programme of the Linguistic Course “Old Turkic Languages” // Course Programmes in the Turkish Language and Theoretical Disciplines / Comp. by Y. V. Shcheka. – Moscow: Lomonosov MSU IAAC, 2005. P. 51–54.

compiling new dictionaries of Turkic languages or considerable updating the published ones.

Approbation of the results. The study materials, its progress and results have been discussed at the meetings of the Department of Turkic Philology (Lomonosov MSU), as well as at such international scholarly conferences as “Dmitriyev Readings” in 2020²⁴, 2021²⁵ and 2022²⁶ (Lomonosov MSU), “Kononov Readings” in 2023²⁷ and “Ivanov Readings” in 2024 (SPbSU)²⁸, “Tenishev Readings” in the Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences (2022)²⁹. The findings have been also presented in the academic journal “Russian Turkology”³⁰ and the multi-author monograph “Turkic Languages and Literatures in a Historical Perspective” (2022). Four papers outlining the study’s results have been published in the journals

²⁴ *Glashev A. A.* The Word *Bitig* in the Uyghur Script in the Codex Cumanicus // The Programme and Abstracts of the 28th International Academic Conference “Dmitriyev Readings” (Lomonosov MSU IAAC, October 2, 2020). – Moscow, 2020. P. 27.

²⁵ *Glashev A. A.* Old Turkic Monuments’ Translations Corrected in the Light of the Karachay-Balkar Language // The Programme and Abstracts of the 29th International Academic Conference “Dmitriyev Readings” (Lomonosov MSU IAAC). – Moscow, 2021. P. 27–28.

²⁶ *Glashev A. A.* Uyghur Legal Documents as a Source for an Old Turkic Dictionary // The Programme and Abstracts of the 30th International Academic Conference “Dmitriyev Readings” (Lomonosov MSU IAAC). – Moscow, 2022.

²⁷ *Glashev A. A.* The Runiform Monuments of Eastern Europe: Their Origin and the Issues of Deciphering // The Programme and Abstracts of the 38th International Academic Conference “Kononov Readings” (SPbSU). – St. Petersburg, 2023.

²⁸ *Glashev A. A.* An Interpretation of the Parrot Drawing in the Codex Cumanicus // The Programme and Abstracts of the 24th International Conference “Ivanov Readings” (SPbSU). – SPb., 2024.

²⁹ *Glashev A. A.* On the Language of the Khazar and Huns in the North Caucasus // Questions of Altaic Philology. In Memoriam of E. R. Tenishev. Iss. 3, Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences / Ed. A. V. Dybo, R. A. Tadinova. – Moscow, 2009. P. 34–55.

³⁰ *Glashev A. A.* The Word *Kara/Hara* and its Meanings in the Khazar Language // Russian Turkology. 2013, № 1 (8). P. 82–88; *Glashev A. A.* More About the Avar Language (According to Byzantine Sources) // Russian Turkology. 2021, № 3–4. P. 55–71.

recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission of the Russian Federation (“BAK” in Cyrillic)³¹.

Structurally, the dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and several appendices. The Introduction justifies the choice of the topic and its relevance, specifies the research object, subject, purpose and tasks, describes its methodology, scientific novelty, the materials investigated and the degree of the theme exploration. It also relates the theoretical and practical significance of the study and presents the major statements to be defended along with the information about the approbation of the results.

The First Chapter centres around the history of the *Codex Cumanicus* and the *İrq Bitig* discovery and research; it also examines the texts themselves, their linguistic features and the authorship question. The Second Chapter addresses evolution of the Karachay-Balkar language, its historiography and its relevance for Turkic studies; some aspects of the Karachays’ and Balkars’ ethnogenesis and culture (in a broad sense) are examined too. The Third Chapter focuses on several fragments of the *Codex Cumanicus* and the *İrq Bitig*; it discusses the previous translations and interpretations and deciphers the meanings of individual words as they are exemplified in Karachay-Balkar epic, mythology, ceremonial and everyday life, ethnographical and archaeological data being also taken into account. This lays the

³¹ *Glashev A. A.* On Translation of the Syro-Turkic Manuscript from Khara-Khoto // St. Tikhon’s University Review. Series 3: Philology. 2022, iss. 73. P. 29–36; *Glashev A. A.* About an Azerbaijani Miniature of the 16th Century in the Light of the Dictionary of Mahmud Kashgari and the Karachay-Balkar Language // Modern Science: Theoretical and Practical Issues of Current Interest. The Humanities Series. 2022, № 06/2. P. 53–57; *Glashev A. A.* The Karachay-Balkar Language and Translation of the Codex Cumanicus // Modern Science: Theoretical and Practical Issues of Current Interest. The Humanities Series. 2023, № 12/2. P. 159–162; *Glashev A. A.* The Karachay-Balkar Language and the Turkic Written Monuments of the 10th – 14th Centuries // Modern Science: Theoretical and Practical Issues of Current Interest. The Humanities Series. 2022, № 03/3. P. 124–127.

groundwork for proposing some amendments to translations and interpretations of the texts. The Conclusion summarizes the main findings and presents suggestions based on them.

The **major results of the research** are the following:

1. It has summarized the information concerning the two Old Turkic manuscripts, *Codex Cumanicus* and *İrq Bitig*, recounted the history of their research, and indicated a number of questions yet unanswered; this has been reflected in academic articles³².

2. The dissertation has examined the history of the Karachay-Balkar language and those distinctive features of Karachay-Balkar culture which suggest the idea of them being considered while interpreting the Old Turkic textual fragments and correcting their translation with the help of the interdisciplinary method; this is also reflected in academic articles³³ and the multi-author monograph written with participation of the author of this dissertation: *Turkic Languages and Literatures in Historical Perspective* (the chapter titled “Uighur version of the Buddhist legend about the demon Atavaka”)³⁴.

³² *Glashev A. A. The Karachay-Balkar Language and the Turkic Written Monuments of the 10th – 14th Centuries // Modern Science: Theoretical and Practical Issues of Current Interest. The Humanities Series. 2022, № 03/3. P. 124–127; Glashev A. A. The Karachay-Balkar Language and Translation of the Codex Cumanicus // Modern Science: Theoretical and Practical Issues of Current Interest. The Humanities Series. 2023, № 12/2. P. 159–162.*

³³ *Glashev A. A. The Karachay-Balkar Language and Translation of the Codex Cumanicus... P. 160–161; Glashev A. A. The Upper (Malqar) Dialect of the Karachay-Balkar Language // Questions of Turkic Philology. Proceedings of Dmitriyev Readings. Iss. XI. Lomonosov MSU IAAC. – Moscow, 2016. P. 56–65; Glashev A. A. Old Turkic Religious Terms in the Northern Caucasus // Questions of Turkic Philology. Iss. 13: Materials of Dmitriyev Readings / Chief ed. M. M. Repenkova, E. A. Oganova; ed. O. N. Kameneva, E. M. Napolnova, A. V. Chivrikova; Lomonosov MSU IAAC. – Moscow: Izdatelstvo MBA, 2020. P. 102–109.*

³⁴ *Glashev A. A. Uighur version of the Buddhist legend about the demon Atavaka // Akalın Ş. H., Alekseeva O. A., Verkhova K. A., Gibayeva M. A., Glashev A. A. et al. Turkic Languages and*

3. Implementation of the interdisciplinary method, which was not previously used in studies into the monuments, and consulting Karachay-Balkar linguistic, cultural, archaeological, historical, folklore, literature and ethnographical materials, have opened a way for individual words and phrases semantical clarification, as well as for resolution of several problematic questions which arose in the course of translation of some fragments of the Old Turkic monuments; this has enabled us to discern more precise meanings of the words and phrases, which is also reflected in published articles³⁵ and the above-mentioned multi-author monograph.

The statements to be defended:

1. For modern Turkology, the further detailed research of Old Turkic manuscripts proves to be a highly relevant topic.

2. The interdisciplinary method requires that the scholar use both linguistic and cultural (in a broad sense) data and helps to correct the translations and interpretations of the disputable fragments found in the manuscripts, to link their meaning with some characteristics of Old Turkic culture and everyday life, to trace the linguistic and cultural connection between the Old Turks and the contemporary Turkic peoples.

3. When compared to the data obtained from other languages, the history and modern state of the Karachay-Balkar language and culture (including beliefs, everyday life, material culture) enables the scholar to better comprehend the semantics and use of some words and phrases found in the Old Turkic manuscripts.

Literatures in Historical Perspective. A Multi-Author Monograph / Chief ed. E. A. Oganova. – Moscow: Lomonosov MSU IAAC, 2022. P. 205–206.

³⁵ *Glashev A. A.* On Translation of the Syro-Turkic Manuscript from Khara-Khoto // St. Tikhon's University Review. Series 3: Philology. 2022, iss. 73. P. 29–36; *Glashev A. A.* About an Azerbaijani Miniature of the 16th Century in the Light of the Dictionary of Mahmud Kashgari and the Karachay-Balkar Language // Modern Science: Theoretical and Practical Issues of Current Interest. The Humanities Series. 2022, № 06/2. P. 53–57

CHAPTER 1. THE İRQ BITIG AND THE CODEX CUMANICUS: CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE OLD TURKIC MONUMENTS AND THEIR RESEARCH HISTORY

One may broadly categorise the Old Turkic monuments written between the 10th and the 14th centuries into several groups: Kipchak, Oghuz, Karluk-Uyghur and Chagatai ones. Some manuscripts are bilingual, written in mixed Oghuz-Kipchak or Kipchak-Oghuz languages; there are also texts in the Old Uzbek and Chagatai languages; many are influenced by elements of Kipchak, Oghuz languages or the Uyghur language. These literary monuments have inspired a rich intellectual history and numerous works of scholarship. As regards Old Uyghur texts, there is a vast manuscript collection of the 9th – 14th centuries addressing wide-ranging themes (religion, legislation, medicine, housekeeping etc.). They are written in runiform, Uyghur, Kharosthi, Brahmi, Syriac, Manichaeic and Arabic scripts. V. V. Radlov pioneered their research; he studied a portion of this corpus. The scholar gathered a valuable collection of texts (mostly legal and religious ones) which was published posthumously, in 1928, by S. E. Malov. Only part of these manuscripts have been translated into Russian so far.

1.1. The İrq Bitig: problems of interpretation

The *İrq Bitig* manuscript is also known as *The Old Turkic Book of Divination* or *The Book of Omens*. Held in the British Museum (shelfmark Or.8212/161), the manuscript has the form of a booklet or small notebook, consisting of fifty-eight folios folded in half and glued together, each being approximately 13.5 x 8.5 cm in size; the text is written on 104 pages. The manuscript's pages are numbered in Chinese. The text is written horizontally from right to left, in Old Turkic runiform script, with a black ink brush; the colophon and word separation marks are written with red ink,

and punctuation marks in the form of black dots are encircled in red. Each chapter has a specific number of the red circles. The Turkic text begins at the 5v folio and finishes at the 57r folio. Other pages, originally blank, are filled with Buddhist devotional verses in Chinese; assumedly they were written later³⁶.

There was no original title for the book, but immediately before the colophon (folio 55r) one can read the following words: *amtı amraq oğulanım, ança biliñlär: bu ĩrq bitig ädgü ol* – ‘Now, my dear sons, know thus: this is a book of omens, which is good’ (i.e. a notably happy event in itself – A. G.). These are the manuscript’s final Turkic words written on the 56r folio and preceding the colophon on the 56v folio. Hence the title *İrq Bitig*, given to the text in research literature³⁷.

The colophon reads that the manuscript was composed for an influential person called İtaçuk in a year of the Tiger, on the 15th day of the second month. Reasoning from this fact, T. Tekin assumes that the manuscript for this man had been copied from an earlier version. The Turkish expert considers this hypothesis plausible because the text contains a number of the scriptor’s errors and lacunes³⁸.

In 1907 a number of manuscripts, including *İrq Bitig*, were bought by the archaeologist Mark Aurel Stein from a clergyman who served in a temple of “Thousand Buddha Grottoes”, located 25 km away from Dunhuang (present-day Gansu province of the People’s Republic of China). A year later the *İrq Bitig* manuscript was discovered by the French orientalist, public figure and foreign diplomat Paul Pelliot in the hoard of manuscripts acquired by M. A. Stein, known today as “The Thousand Buddha Grottoes Library”. A. N. Samoylovich quotes the Danish scholar V. Thomsen who wrote that “found in the ‘Thousand Buddha Temple

³⁶ Tekin T. *Irk Bitig. The Book of Omens.* – Wiesbaden: “Harrassovitz Verlag”, 1993. 133 p.

³⁷ Hamilton J. *Le colophon de l’irq bitig // Turcica. Revue d’études turques.* T. VII. – Paris-Strasbourg, 1975. P. 8; Bang W., *Gabain A. von. Tiirkische Turfan-Texte I // SPAW.* 1929, XV. S. 4 (242).

³⁸ Tekin T. *Irk Bitig. The Book of Omens...* P. 6.

Storage’, this manuscript can be regarded as the most remarkable, the most complete and the best-preserved landmark of Turkic runiform script.”³⁹

Vilhelm Thomsen was the first scholar to conduct a research into the *İrq Bitig*: he transcribed and translated it into English, and published an informative article with the manuscript facsimile attached⁴⁰. His publication was also supplied with a scholarly apparatus and a lexical index. V. Thomsen believed his work to be just a preliminary one, for he had not succeeded in translating all the words of the manuscript and in interpreting the meanings of its chapters⁴¹.

In the years to follow the full manuscript and its parts have been republished on a regular basis. The major editions were prepared by such scholars as A. von Gabain, H. N. Orkun, S. E. Malov and T. Tekin. In 1936 H. N. Orkun published his translation of the *İrq Bitig* into Turkish⁴². In the course of his work, the scholar frequently consulted Mahmud Kashgari’s *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, particularly in order to decipher the meaning of the words untranslated by V. Thomsen. H. N. Orkun’s translation methodology is fairly similar to that of V. Thomsen.

The first Russian edition, published in 1951 by S. E. Malov⁴³, contained his transcription and translation of the text, supplied with a brief bibliography.

Some problems of translation and interpretation were addressed by G. Clauson in his article *Notes on Irk Bitig* (1961)⁴⁴ and monograph *An Etymological Dictionary*

³⁹ *Samoylovich A. N. Vilhelm Thomsen and Turkology...* P. 29.

⁴⁰ *Thomsen V. Dr. M. A. Stein’s Manuscripts in Turkish “Runic” Script from Miran and Tun-huang* // *JRAS*. January 1912. P. 181–227.

⁴¹ *Samoylovich A. N. Vilhelm Thomsen and Turkology...* P. 30.

⁴² *Orkun H. N. Eski türk yazitlari.* – İstanbul: “Maarif Matbaası”, 1939. C. 2. S. 73–91.

⁴³ *Malov S. E. Old Turkic Written Monuments. Texts and Studies.* – Moscow, Leningrad: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1951. P. 80–92.

⁴⁴ *Clauson G. Notes on Irk Bitig* // *UJb*. XXXIII, 3–4. 1961. P. 218–225.

of *Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish* (1972)⁴⁵. Twenty years after S. E. Malov's edition, the second Soviet publication was released; translated into Russian by the literary historian I. V. Steblyova, the text was supplemented with introductory commentaries and a scholarly apparatus⁴⁶.

In 1977 the Turkish scholar M. Erdal published a paper titled *İrk Bitig Üzerine Yeni Notlar*⁴⁷ (*İrq Bitig Revisited*). M. Erdal continued the research and presented some of his new findings in English⁴⁸ in 1997.

T. Tekin's fairly informative book *Irk Bitig. The Book of Omens* was published in both English⁴⁹ (1993) and Turkish⁵⁰ (2004). This edition provides the manuscript facsimile, detailed commentaries and a word index. Furthermore, T. Tekin accurately describes the manuscript.

The article by V. Rybatzki and Hu Hong raises a number of fundamental, yet previously unexamined, questions concerning the structure and origin of the text⁵¹.

S. G. Kljaštornyj, the recognized expert on Old Turkic written monuments, also wrote several articles about the *İrq Bitig*. He was the first scholar who endeavoured to translate this text consulting some related disciplines (cultural theory, ethnography

⁴⁵ *Clauson G.* An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish. – Oxford, 1972. 990 p.

⁴⁶ *Steblyova I. V.* The Old Turkic Book of Divination as a Work of Poetry... P. 150–177.

⁴⁷ *Erdal M.* İrk Bitig Üzerine Yeni Notlar // Türk Dili Araştırmaları Yıllığı. Belleten. 1977, Cilt 25. S. 87–119.

⁴⁸ *Erdal M.* Further Notes on the İrk Bitig // Turkic Languages. 1997, Vol. 1. P. 63–100.

⁴⁹ *Tekin T.* İrk Bitig. The Book of Omens...

⁵⁰ *Tekin T.* İrk Bitig. Eski Uyurca Fal Kitabı. – Ankara: “Nurettin Demir-Emine Yılmaz”, 2004. 127 s.

⁵¹ *Rybatzki V., Hu Hong.* The İrq Bitig, the Book of Divination New Discoveries Concerning its Structure and Content // Interpreting the Turkic Runiform Sources and the Position of the Altai Corpus. – Berlin, 2015. P. 149–173.

and religious studies)⁵². In terms of current research, the aforementioned monographs of A. N. Garkavets and V. M. Yakovlev are the newest ones. V. M. Yakovlev's work was thoroughly reviewed by L. Y. Tugusheva⁵³.

The year 2015 saw the *İrq Bitig* translated and printed into French by the orientalist Rémy Dor.⁵⁴ Today, the manuscript seems to kindle a growing interest. In 2020 B. B. Vinogradskiy and F. V. Chernitsyn published a new Russian translation and a commentary⁵⁵ on the text. Noteworthily, there are also two thought-provoking articles by A. Kairzhanov, printed in 2013 and 2018 (the second co-authored)⁵⁶ and focused on the manuscript's origin and its Manichaean elements.

The works mentioned above are considered the seminal ones, yet the list is by no means exhaustive.

As regards the *İrq Bitig* origin, professional opinions differ. The consensus view is that the manuscript is deeply rooted in the old Turkic “Orkhon” cultural

⁵² *Kljaštornyj S. G.* A Manichaean Motif in the Old Turkic “Book of Divination” // Turkology Collection 2005. Turkic Peoples of Russia and the Great Steppe. – Moscow: “Vostochnaya literatura RAN”, 2006. P. 195–198; *Kljaštornyj S. G.* Mythological Storylines in Old Turkic Monuments // Turkology Collection 1977. – Moscow: “Nauka, GRVL”, 1981. P. 117–138; *Kljaštornyj S. G.* Old Turkic Runiform Monuments from East Turkestan... P. 60–62.

⁵³ *Tugusheva L. Y.* [Review:] *İrq Bitik: The Old Turkic Book of Divination...* P. 309–311.

⁵⁴ *İrq Bitig, jeu divinatoire turk-ancien / Traduit et présenté par Rémy Dor.* – Paris: “Éditions Espaces et signes”, 2015. 112 p.

⁵⁵ The Old Turkic Book “*İrq Bitik*” (“The Book of Divination”) / Transl. by B. B. Vinogradskiy and F. V. Chernitsyn. – Moscow: “Izdatelskiy dom Russkaya Filosofiya”, 2020. 391 p.

⁵⁶ *Kairzhanov A.* «*İrq bitig*» the philosophical book of reasonings and revelations ancient of Turki // VIII International Turkology Congress (Istanbul, 30 September – 04 October 2013). P. 65–66; *Kairzhanov A., Ayupova A., Shaldarbekova G.* The Ancient Turkic Book of Reasoning and Revelations «*İrq bitig*» of X Century // *Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana*. 2018, vol. 23, no. 82 (julio-septiembre). P. 100–109.

tradition. This manifests in a somewhat “shamanistic” character of the text, as well as in its compositional and stylistic patterns⁵⁷.

M. Erdal assumes that the manuscript was copied from a text written in Old Uyghur script; yet the scholar does not adduce any evidence in support of this assumption⁵⁸. Judging from the colophon, J. Hamilton believed that the manuscript was created in the Manichaean community of the Great Cloud Monastery on 17 March 930, by a junior clergyman who dedicated his work to a military leader called İtaçuk. A supposed confirmation of this hypothesis is provided by the manuscript final lines, declaring that it was addressed to a “junior dintar” (*dintar* – ‘a Manichaean clergyman’ < Sogd. *dynd’r* ‘a good omen’) and ‘burvaguru’, i.e. servants of the Manichaean community, as well as for its rank-and-file members⁵⁹. Furthermore, the manuscript contains the word *manystan* ‘an abode, monastery’, originating from the Pahlavi stem *m’nyst’n*. These terms can be found in the Turkic Manichaean literature as well. However, the text also includes the Sanskrit term *yuru* ‘a spiritual guide, gooroo’, traditional for Buddhist literature. Thus, the colophon itself is strongly suggestive of Manichaean and Buddhist influences.

I. V. Steblyova shares the opinion about the Manichaean element in the *İrq Bitig* and finds a manifestation of it in the dualistic view of virtue and evil⁶⁰. S. G. Kljaštornyj also believes that the ancient Turkic Manichaeans played a significant role⁶¹.

⁵⁷ Kljaštornyj S. G. Old Turkic Runiform Monuments from East Turkestan... P. 61.

⁵⁸ Erdal M. Irk Bitig Üzerine Yeni Notlar... S. 106.

⁵⁹ Hamilton J. Le colophon... P. 12; Kljaštornyj S. G. A Manichaean Motif in the Old Turkic “Book of Divination” ... P. 195.

⁶⁰ Kljaštornyj S. G. Old Turkic Runiform Monuments from East Turkestan... P. 61.

⁶¹ Ibidem.

A. von Gabain regards the manuscript to be indicative of both Manichaean and Christian literary influences, although reduced to purely formal components of the text⁶².

There is also an opinion expressed by a number of scholars that ancient Turkic mythology (i.e. Tengrianism and shamanism) was the primary source of inspiration for the *İrq Bitig*. The Manichaean, Christian and Buddhist influences being largely recognized, some authors also detect traces of ancient Greek philosophical traditions. Most importantly, these are Gnostic beliefs (such as the idea of battle between the light (good) and the darkness (evil) – see, for example, Chapter XV)⁶³.

J. Hamilton strongly argues that the Old Turkic text reflects some Tibetan teachings on omens and beliefs, then fairly popular in East Turkestan. Containing dualistic judgements (“bad” things markedly contrasted to “good” ones), the Tibetan teachings resemble those found in the *İrq Bitig*⁶⁴. That being said, analysis of the colophon vocabulary persuades the scholar of the Manichaean origin of the text⁶⁵.

Regarding the language of the manuscript, some researchers believe that the Uyghur element is the predominant one, and for this reason the *İrq Bitig* can be seen as an old Uyghur text⁶⁶. In her turn, L. Y. Tugusheva remarks that “according to the undivided scholarly opinion, the language the *İrq Bitig* closely resembles that of the Orkhon runiform inscriptions”⁶⁷.

⁶² *Kljaštornyj S. G.* Old Turkic Runiform Monuments from East Turkestan... P. 61.

⁶³ *Kairzhanov A., Ayupova G., Shaldarbekova A.* The Ancient Turkic Book of Reasoning and Revelations «İrq bitig» of X Century... P. 107.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem.* See also: *Hamilton J.* Le colophon... P. 9; *Arlotto A.* Old Turkic Oracle Books // *Monumenta serica.* 1970–1971, Vol. 29. P. 685–696.

⁶⁵ *Hamilton J.* Le colophon... P. 7–19.

⁶⁶ *Garkávets A. N.* İrq Bitig. The Old Turkic Book of Divination... P. 3.

⁶⁷ *Tugusheva L. Y.* [Review:] İrq Bitik: The Old Turkic Book of Divination... P. 309.

One of the most difficult to comprehend, the *İrq Bitig* manuscript, as already stated, is growing increasingly popular; this fact reinforces the importance of producing an accurate translation and interpretation of the Old Turkic text.

1.2. The Codex Cumanicus: fragments of the “German” part and their interpretation

The *Codex Cumanicus* manuscript was discovered in a special collection held by the Library of St. Mark Cathedral. Its first mention can be found in the Venice Library Manuscript Catalogue, made by the bibliographer Jacobus Philippus Tomasini. The *Codex Cumanicus* was regarded as one of the books Francis Petrarch allegedly presented to the Library in 1362; but later this assumption was repeatedly questioned. H. W. Leibnitz mentioned the manuscript in one of his books (published in 1768⁶⁸). In 1769 Daniel Cornides, secretary to the Hungarian count József Teleki, found the *Codex Cumanicus* in Venice and copied its first 22 pages. Later in Hungary he informed the historian György Pray about this text. Yet, it was only in 1826 when, after a period of oblivion, the manuscript was rediscovered for the academia by Julius Klaproth.

Today the manuscript is housed in the Marciana Library as before (shelfmark Lat. Z. 549 (=1597)). It consists of two texts bound together in the form of three notebooks. The total number of folios is 82 (approximately 19,5 x 12,5 and 20,5 x 13,5 cm in size); the font is Latin “bastarda”. Folios 1–59 are made of the “Realle” paper type, and folios 60–82 – of the “Recute” type; the book has a leather cover, decorated with blocking in the 18th – 19th centuries. One can find the “bull’s head” watermark on folios 60, 61, 63, 67, 70, 80 and 82 and the “bell” watermark on folio 77.

⁶⁸ *Leibnitii G. G. Opera Omnia*. – Genevae: Apud Fratres de Tournes, 1768. T. VI, Pars 2. P. 188.

The manuscript comprises the so-called “Italian” (folios 1–55v) and “German” (folios 56–82v) parts.

The “Italian” part is written in three columns (the first containing Latin words, the second translating them into Persian, and the third presenting their Cuman equivalents). Here are the first lines of the manuscript: “*MCCCIII die XI Juli. In nomine Domini nostri Iesu Christi et Beate Virginis Marie Matris eius et omnium Sanctorum et Sanctarum Dei Amen. Ad honorem dei et Beati Iohannis Evangeliste. In hoc libro contitentur persicum et comanicum rer alfabetum. Hec sunt verba et nomina de litera A.*” – “July 11, 1303. In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ and his Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, and all Saints and the Lord’s Servants. Amen. In the name of God and St. John the Evangelist. This book consists of Persian and Cuman dictionaries. Here are the words and names with the initial letter A.” (our translation from Latin – A. G.).

The dictionary in the Italian part provides some information about Cuman grammar, religious and astronomical vocabulary, and also words related to such themes as measuring time, people’s feelings and personal traits, body parts, household items and their qualities; goods, trade, stationary and desk job, perfumery and medicines, pharmacology and medical science, spices, metals and methods of their treatment, fur products, textiles, sewing, weaving, clothes, tailoring, metalworking, carpentry and hairdressing, law and legal professions, style, colours, jewels, military service, horse-breeding, primary commodities, food products, house and its furnishings, plants, trees, fruit and vegetables; names of birds, mammals, reptiles and insects.

Folio 30 of the Italian part contains the word *bitik* – the one and only Uyghur-language record in the manuscript; this is a particularly interesting fact⁶⁹, yet it was not previously commented by scholars.

⁶⁹ *Glashev A. A. On Translation of the Syro-Turkic Manuscript from Khara-Khoto... P. 33.*

In the “German” part one can find a Polovets-German (i.e. Cuman-German) dictionary (the 56–59 and 80v–82v folios), a Latin-Cuman dictionary (the 65v–66v and 79 folios), an outline of Cuman grammar (the 64–65v folios), a number of Polovets riddles (the 60r–60v folios) and some translations of Biblical passages into the Polovets (Cuman) language (the 61–63, 67–78, 82 folios). Cuman (Kipchak) words are rendered in the Latin script.

Folio 58 of the German part is especially interesting in that it is illustrated with a parrot drawing; largely neglected in research literature, this picture was discussed in our special conference report⁷⁰.

Professional opinions still differ as to when and where the *Codex Cumanicus* was written and who was its authors. In this regard, the Italian part is apparently less controversial. There is an assumption that the first copy was created in the monastery of St. John located a short distance from the Golden Horde Saray city, in 1303⁷¹. This view was advocated by such scholars as W. Bang⁷² and L. Ligeti⁷³. Another hypothesis suggests that it was after 1303 when the text was composed, but no later than in 1362 (the year when Petrarch supposedly gave it as a present to the Venice government)⁷⁴. An experienced researcher in the history of Polovets, Tork and

⁷⁰ *Glashev A. A.* An Interpretation of the Parrot Drawing in the Codex Cumanicus...

⁷¹ *Memetov A. M.* The Kipchak-Polovets (Tatar) Language in Crimea of the 13th Century // Development of Oriental Studies in Crimea (the 11th Century – the Beginning of the 20th Century). – Simferopol: “Arial”, 2019. P. 31.

⁷² *Argunşah M., Güner G.* Codex Cumanicus. – İstanbul: “Kesit yayınları”, 2015. S. 24.

⁷³ *Ligeti L.* Prolegomena to the Codex Cumanicus // Codex Cumanicus. Ed. by Geza Kuun. – Budapestini, 1981. P. 8.

⁷⁴ *Kuryshzhanov A. K., Repin B. I.* On the History of Studies in the Old Kipchak Monuments of the 13th – 17th Centuries // Bulletin of Kazakh SSR AS. The Social Series. 1966, № 4. P. 38–39; *Chechenov A. A.* The Language of Codex Cumanicus (the 14th Century) in the Areal Light: Methodological Materials / Chief ed. E. R. Tenishev. – Moscow, 1978. 55 p.; *Gabain A. von.* Die Sprache des Codex Cumanicus // Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta. – Wiesbaden, 1959. T. 1. S. 46–73.

Pecheneg peoples, D. A. Rasovskiy in his article on the *Codex Cumanicus*'s origin suggests that the manuscript might be a copy of an earlier text written in the 13th century⁷⁵. The scholar's assumption is supported by L. Ligeti's findings about discrepancies between Christian and Islamic months in the manuscript, which synchronize only in 1292–1294. L. Ligeti argues that the first copy, therefore, was made in 1303 from an original version dating back to 1294. The scholar's meticulous research into watermarks found in the Italian part demonstrates that the latest year possible was 1330. That being the case, the manuscript we study is a duplicate of the first copy made in 1303⁷⁶.

Whereas O. Blau supposes that the location where *Codex Cumanicus* originated was a trading post in the Ciz-Azov region, K. Irechek believes it was a place in the Northern part of the Azov coastal area, and Györffy and Drüll consider the Italian part to be written in Solkhat, Tana or Kaffa⁷⁷. D. A. Rasovskiy also believed that the manuscript was created in Solkhat. G. Güner hypothesizes that the first (Italian) part of the *Codex Cumanicus* could be written by the Genoese men of commerce who controlled the Kaffa and Trabzon markets. The Turkish expert's view is corroborated by the presence of an Italian-Persian-Cuman dictionary in this part of the manuscript, which seems practical in light of the fact that the Genoese sought economic cooperation with the Iranian Il-Khanid state⁷⁸. G. Kuun and D. Drüll expressed similar opinions⁷⁹. This hypothesis about the origin of the Italian part seems quite plausible

⁷⁵ *Rasovskiy D. A. Revisiting the Question of the Codex Cumanicus's Origin // Seminarium Kondakovianum. Vol. 3. – Prague, 1929. P. 193–214.*

⁷⁶ *Ligeti L. Prolegomena to the Codex Cumanicus... P. 6–7.*

⁷⁷ *Argunşah M., Güner G. Codex Cumanicus... S. 24.*

⁷⁸ *Argunşah M., Güner G. Codex Cumanicus... S. 24–25; Güner G. Türk Dili Tarihinde Codex Cumanicus'un Yeri ve Önemi // The Programme and Abstracts of the XXXI International Conference "Dmitriyev Readings" (October 6, 2023) / Chief ed. M. M. Repenkova, E. A. Oganova. – Moscow: MSU IAAC, 2023. P. 38.*

⁷⁹ *Ligeti L. Prolegomena to the Codex Cumanicus... P. 7.*

because, as the Treaty of Nymphaeum came into force (1261), the Genoese gained access to the Black Sea and established their first colonies in the North Black Sea Littoral, including the city of Kaffa; besides, they did maintain stable political and trade relations with the Il-Khanid dynasty ruling Persia⁸⁰.

As regards the “German” part of the manuscript, it eludes precise dating. Initially this part was regarded to be not a copy, but a collection of authentic texts, glosses and insertions, all of which were being written over quite a considerable time span. G. Györffy performed a thorough research of three paper types and three watermarks, which led him to the conclusion that the “German” part might date back to the period between 1340 and 1356. However, a careful study undertaken by G. Györffy and L. Ligeti revealed that this part was also written much later as a replica of an original, the latter supposedly authored by German missionaries to some Franciscan monasteries located in the South Russian steppes⁸¹.

J. Klaproth was the first scholar to describe the manuscript in French; in 1826 he spotted the above-mentioned catalogue entry by J. Ph. Tomasini, found the manuscript and copied its first (Italian) part⁸². Two years later the scholar published it under the title *A Latin-Persian-Cuman Dictionary from Francesco Petrarch's Library*⁸³. However, as A. N. Garkavets rightly observes, J. Klaproth's publications

⁸⁰ *Kamalov I. H.* The Golden Horde Relationship with the Hulaguids / Transl. from Turkish and ed. by I. M. Mirgaleyev. – Kazan: The Institute for History named after Ş. Märcani (Tatarstan Academy of Sciences), 2007. P. 46–47.

⁸¹ *Ligeti L.* Prolegomena to the Codex Cumanicus... P. 7–8.

⁸² *Klaproth J.* Notice sur un Dictionnaire persan, coman et latin, légué par Petrarque à la République de Venise // JA. 1826, T. 8. P. 114–117.

⁸³ *Klaproth J.* Vocabulaire latin, persan et coman de la bibliothèque de Francesco Petrarca // Mémoires relatifs à l'Asie. – Paris, 1828. III. P. 113–256.

contained some factual inaccuracies and typographical errors which precluded their academic use; this fact had been also recognized by O. Blau and G. Kuun⁸⁴.

In 1880 G. Kuun produced a revised Latin-language edition of the manuscript⁸⁵. This publication represented a milestone in the *Codex Cumanicus* research and in the Turkic studies as a whole; notwithstanding some errors, it still ranks among the best ones. L. Ligeti reprinted G. Kuun's edition in Budapest (1981) and wrote a lengthy and most valuable introduction to it in English⁸⁶. Unfortunately, L. Ligeti's excellent work was passed largely unnoticed by most Soviet and present-day Russian researchers in the field. As for G. Kuun's edition, there is another salient point adding to its significance. Prior to its release, Hungarian scholars (G. Pray, G. Györffy) tended to believe that the Cumans (i.e. the Polovets people) originally spoke in a Finno-Ugrian tongue akin to the Magyar language. This erroneous theory was completely disproved by G. Kuun's edition of the *Codex Cumanicus*. One year later, in 1881, the Hungarian linguist P. Hunfalvy published his research outlining some general characteristics of the manuscript, as well as of the Cuman (Polovets) history⁸⁷.

A substantial contribution to the studies of the *Codex Cumanicus* was made by the Russian scholar V. V. Radlov; his works also contain some errors, though. In 1884 V. V. Radlov presented the first Russian research into the manuscript: *On the Cuman Language: In Regard to a Cuman Dictionary Edition*⁸⁸. This article provides a brief description of the text and some extracts translated into Russian. As early as in 1887

⁸⁴ *Garkávets A. N.* The Codex Cumanicus: Polovets Prayers, Hymns and Riddles of the 13th – 14th Centuries. – Moscow: “Russkaya derevnya”, 2006. P. 6–7.

⁸⁵ *Kuun G.* Codex Cumanicus, Bibliothecae ad templum divi Marci Venetiarum primum ex integro editit prolegomenis notis et compluribus glossariis instruxit comes. – Budapestini, 1880. 395 p.

⁸⁶ *Ligeti L.* Prolegomena to the Codex Cumanicus... P. 1–54.

⁸⁷ *Hunfalvy P.* Der kumanische oder Petrarka-Codex und die Kumanen // *Hungarische Revue*. 1881. S. 602–632.

⁸⁸ *Radlov V. V.* On the Cuman Language: In Regard to a Cuman Dictionary Edition...

V. V. Radlov produced an almost complete German-language edition of the *Codex Cumanicus*, in the form of monograph with a dictionary attached⁸⁹.

Scholars interested in the manuscript included the prominent Russian Iranist Carl Salemann, who authored an extensive article titled *Zur Kritik des Codex Comanicus (Towards the Critique of the Codex Cumanicus)*⁹⁰. C. Salemann is sceptical about some of W. Bang's translations and advocates those of V. V. Radlov (which had been criticized by W. Bang). This article also indicates that the Persian dictionary in the *Codex Cumanicus* is immensely valuable for Iranistics, particularly for studies in the New Iranian languages.

The Hungarian orientalist J. Németh was another important contributor to the studies of the manuscript; two of his works in the field are especially noteworthy, as they closely focus on analysis of the Polovets riddles⁹¹. W. Bang also delivered a number of major papers addressing *Codex Cumanicus*⁹²; it is particularly remarkable

⁸⁹ *Radloff W.* Das türkische Sprachmaterial des Codex Comanicus // Memoires de l'Academie Imperiale des sciences de St.-Petersbourg. Classe des sciences historico-philologiques. Ser. VIII. T. 35. № 6. – St. Petersburg, 1887. 132 s.

⁹⁰ *Salemann C.* Zur Kritik des Codex Comanicus // Bulletin of the Imperial Academy of Sciences (St. Petersburg). Series 6. 1910. C. 943–957.

⁹¹ *Németh J.* Die Rätsel des Codex Cumanicus // ZDMG. B. 47. 1913. S. 577–608; *Németh J.* Zu den Rätseln des Codex Cumanicus // KCsA. Bd. 2. 1930. S. 366–368.

⁹² *Bang W.* Turkologische Briefe aus dem Berliner Ungarischen Institut. Erster Brief. Hegemonius Frage. KelejoV = kelepen des Codex Cumanicus. Eine unbekannte Quelle dieses Kodex // Ungarische Jahrbücher. 1925. S. 41–48; *Bang W.* Beiträge zur Erklärung des komanischen Marienhymnus // Nachr. Gesell. Wiss. Göttingen. 1910a. B. 1. S. 61–73; *Bang W.* Beiträge zur Kritik des Codex Cumanicus // BARB. 1911. T. 1. S. 13–40; *Bang W.* Über einen komanischen Kommunionshymnus // BARB. 1910. T. 5. S. 230–239; *Bang W.* Komanische Texte // BARB. 1911b. S. 459–473; *Bang W.* Die komanische Bearbeitung des Hymnus “A soils ortus cardine” // Festschr. Vilhelm Thomsen. – Leipzig, 1912. S. 39–43; *Bang W.* Über das komanische TEIZMAGA und Verwandtes // BARB. 1913. S. 16–20; *Bang W.* Über die Herkunft des Codex Cumanicus // SPAW. 1913. S. 244–245; *Bang W.* Der komanische Marienpsalter nebst seiner Quelle herausgegeben // *Bang W., Marquart J.* Osttürkische Dialektstudien. – Berlin, 1914. S. 239–276.

that he examined the Polovets riddles in detail, too⁹³. In 1911 the French orientalist and historian of Catholicism S. Salaville published a lengthy and insightful article titled *Un manuscrit chrétien en dialecte turc: le 'Codex Cumanicus' (A Christian Manuscript in a Turkic Dialect: The Codex Cumanicus)*⁹⁴. The scholar concurs with W. Bang in that the Italian part was authored by Catholic missionaries and not Genoese merchants who purportedly wrote it for commercial purposes. S. Salaville also believes that it is not only the Cuman and Turkic history in general, for which the *Codex Cumanicus* is deeply significant, but the history of Christianity as well.

At about the same time, two seminal works were published: A. N. Samoylovich's *On the History and Critical Discussion of the Codex Cumanicus*⁹⁵ and S. E. Malov's similarly-named paper⁹⁶. These well-researched articles explore translation and interpretation of the riddles from the German part of the manuscript.

One can hardly overestimate the contribution which the Danish scholar Kaare Grønbech made to the *Codex Cumanicus* research. The year 1936 saw the first facsimile reproduction of the full manuscript in a superior quality⁹⁷, and in 1942 a complete German-language dictionary of the text was published⁹⁸. The American Turkologist Omeljan Pritsak reviewed this dictionary in the German periodical "Der

⁹³ Bang W. Über die Rätsel des Codex Cumanicus...

⁹⁴ Salaville S. Un manuscrit chrétien en dialecte turc: le "Codex cumanicus" // *Échos d'Orient*. 1911, t. 14, № 90. P. 278–286.

⁹⁵ Samoylovich A. N. On the History and Critical Discussion of the Codex Cumanicus // RRAS. "B" Series. – Leningrad, 1924. P. 86–89.

⁹⁶ Malov S. E. On the History and Critical Discussion of the Codex Cumanicus...

⁹⁷ Grønbech K. *Codex Cumanicus: In Faksimile*. Herausgegeben mit einer Einleitung von K. Grønbech. – Kopenhagen: "Levin & Munksgaard", 1936. 12 s. + 164 s.

⁹⁸ Grønbech K. *Komanisches Wörterbuch. Türkischer Wörtindex zu Codex Cumanicus*. – Kopenhagen: "Einar Munksgaard", 1942. 314 s.

Islam: Journal of the History and Culture of the Middle East” (1952)⁹⁹. Since then, K. Grønbech’s edition of 1936 has become even more precious, for in the early 2000s several of the manuscript’s pages were spoiled, some parts becoming virtually illegible, due to St. Mark librarians’ unsuccessful attempt to copy the manuscript for a reader and restore it (as stated by A. N. Garkavets). The exceptional quality of K. Grønbech’s facsimile makes it absolutely priceless and indispensable.

In 1942, after a thorough research conducted in Venice, the Hungarian scholar G. Györffy published an extensive article presenting some of his fairly interesting findings about origin of the *Codex Cumanicus* and its authorship¹⁰⁰. In particular, he questions the assumption that the manuscript was given to Venice by Petrarch and provides some plausible counter-arguments. G. Györffy arrives to other surprising conclusions as well. For example, he refutes the prevailing opinion about two manuscripts and infers that there were initially three manuscripts; this conclusion was derived from his painstaking investigation into paper characteristics and watermarks found on each of the manuscript’s folios. Unfortunately, G. Györffy’s work was unavailable to Soviet experts, and it still remains largely unknown. Due to this, even today the idea of the manuscript being Petrarch’s gift to Venice, as well as of initial two manuscripts bound together, are regarded as axiomatic.

The seminal book “*Philologiae Turciae Fundamenta*” (1959) included A. von Gabain’s article *Die Sprache des Codex Cumanicus*¹⁰¹, addressing the manuscript’s language.

⁹⁹ Pritsak O. Grønbech K. Komanisches Wörterbuch (1942) // *Der Islam: Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients*. Berlin, 1952. T. 30-31. P. 111–113.

¹⁰⁰ Györffy G. *Autour du Codex Cumanicus* // *Analecta orientalia memoriae Alexandri Csoma de Koros dicata* (1942–1947). Ebendooperi praefuit L. Ligeti. – Budapestini, 1942. Vol. I. P. 110–137. (Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica. 5.)

¹⁰¹ Gabain A. von. *Die Sprache des Codex Cumanicus...*

Other interesting research projects were conducted by D. Monchi-Zadeh¹⁰² and A. Bodrogligeti¹⁰³, who made a considerable progress in the area by studying the *Codex Cumanicus*'s Persian vocabulary. In their monographs, the issues concerning the Latin-Persian-Cuman dictionary were advantageously supplemented with the fundamental question about Persian loanwords in the manuscript; the latter is highly informative in regard to early contacts and cross-interactions of the Turkic and Iranian cultures. Within this context, it should be noted that, as Y. R. Dashkevich rightly observes, an "Iranian" language found in the *Codex Cumanicus* never became one of the New Iranian languages, notwithstanding the fact that in the 14th century such records of Persian words in Latin script were truly unprecedented¹⁰⁴.

Other significant works published after 1950 include Y. R. Dashkevich's articles *The Codex Cumanicus: Issues of Origin*¹⁰⁵, *The Codex Cumanicus: Issues of Deciphering*¹⁰⁶ and *Is the Codex Cumanicus Indigenously 'Cumanicus'?*¹⁰⁷, as well as N. A. Baskakov's *Revisiting the Codex Cumanicus: On a Riddle Yet Unsolved*¹⁰⁸, S. K. Kenesbayev and A. K. Kuryshzhanov's *About a New Edition of the "Codex Cumanicus" Released in Kazakhstan*, etc.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰² Monchi-Zadeh D. *Das Persische im Codex Cumanicus*. – Uppsala: Uppsala university, 1969. 219 p.

¹⁰³ Bodrogligeti A. *The Persian Vocabulary of the Codex Cumanicus*. – Budapest: "Akadémiai Kiadó", 1971. 235 p.

¹⁰⁴ Dashkevich Y. R. *Is the Codex Cumanicus Indigenously 'Cumanicus'?* // TSL. 1988, № 2. P. 62.

¹⁰⁵ Dashkevich Y. R. *The Codex Cumanicus: Issues of Origin* // TSL. 1985, № 4. P. 78–83.

¹⁰⁶ Dashkevich Y. R. *The Codex Cumanicus: Issues of Deciphering* // TSL. 1986, № 5. P. 79–86.

¹⁰⁷ Dashkevich Y. R. *Is the Codex Cumanicus Indigenously 'Cumanicus'?* ... P. 62–74.

¹⁰⁸ Baskakov N. A. *Revisiting the Codex Cumanicus (On a Riddle Yet Unsolved)* ...

¹⁰⁹ Kenesbayev S. K., Kuryshzhanov A. K. *About a New Edition of the "Codex Cumanicus" Released in Kazakhstan* // Bulletin of Kazakh SSR AS. Social Sciences Series. 1964, iss. 3. P. 35–45; Kuryshzhanov A. K. *Cases in the Language of the "Codex Cumanicus": Forms and Meanings. The Author's Summary of the Diss. Subm. for the Degree of Cand. in Philology*. – Alma-Ata, 1956. 15

The Romanian Turkologist V. Drimba was another principal contributor to the studies of the *Codex Cumanicus*. Two of his articles are especially noteworthy, as they contain partial facsimiles and discuss chronological dating of the Italian part¹¹⁰. Besides, it is most important to mention V. Drimba's monograph "Syntaxe comane", the cover of which is somewhat misleading in that the book is much more informative than the title suggests¹¹¹.

In 1980 the German scholar Dagmar Drüll published her monograph focused on the origin of the *Codex Cumanicus* and its meaning¹¹². The American Turkologist Peter Golden also wrote a comprehensive article about the manuscript, in which he summarized the important questions concerning its research and outlined characteristics of its segments¹¹³.

A leading authority on Kipchak languages, A. A. Chechenov, also greatly contributed to the *Codex Cumanicus* studies. His in-depth article *The Polovets Language*¹¹⁴ is of particular interest, as well as his monograph *The Language of the Codex Cumanicus (the 14th Century) in the Areal Light*¹¹⁵, *The Monuments Written in*

p.; *Kuryshzhanov A. K.* On the Study of Coman Riddles // Questions of History and Dialectology of the Kazakh Language. 1960, iss. 2. P. 167–176.

¹¹⁰ *Drimba V.* Codex Cumanicus: edition diplomatique avec facsimiles. – Bucarest: "Editura Enciclopedica", 2000. 296 p.; *Drimba V.* Sur la datation de la première partie du Codex Cumanicus // Oriens. 1981, T. 27/28. P. 388–404.

¹¹¹ *Drimba V.* Syntaxe comane. – București-Leiden: "Editura Academiei", "E. J. Brill", 1973. 335 p.

¹¹² *Drüll D.* Der Codex Cumanicus: Entstehung und Bedeutung. – Stuttgart: "Klett-Cotta", 1980. 143 s.

¹¹³ *Golden P. B.* Codex Cumanicus // Central Asian Monuments / Ed. by H. B. Paksoy. – İstanbul, 1992. S. 33–63 / URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/20050307164248/http://eurasia-research.com/erc/002cam.htm> (accessed: 07.09.2023).

¹¹⁴ *Chechenov A. A.* The Polovets Language // World Languages: Turkic Languages. – Moscow: "Indrik", 1997. P. 110–116.

¹¹⁵ *Chechenov A. A.* The Language of the Codex Cumanicus (the 14th Century) in the Areal Light...

*Turkic Languages as a Source of History of the Modern Karachay-Balkar Language*¹¹⁶ and dissertation *The Language of the “Codex Cumanicus” and its Relation to Modern Western-Kipchak Languages*¹¹⁷. The value of A. A. Chechenov’s works is enhanced by the scholar’s being a native speaker of the Karachay-Balkar language, which enables him to find its interconnections with the language of the *Codex Cumanicus*.

In 2003 V. Stojanow published a Russian-language article titled *The Codex Cumanicus. A History of Research*, providing a comprehensive outline of the definitive studies in the field¹¹⁸.

A. N. Garkávets, the above-mentioned Turkologist from Kazakhstan, has also considerably advanced the field. In 2006 he published a monograph containing his partial translation of the manuscript and a part of its facsimile; eight years later, in 2015, it was succeeded by an unabridged edition supplemented with a translation, dictionary and facsimile. The over 1300-page volume was updated and republished in 2019. In his work A. N. Garkávets thoroughly reviews the *Codex Cumanicus* historiography and provides a comprehensive bibliography. Mention should be also made of the scholar’s monograph *Kipchak Languages: Cuman and Armenian-Kipchak*¹¹⁹, which touches on the language of the *Codex Cumanicus* as well.

¹¹⁶ Ulakov M. Z., Chechenov A. A. *The Monuments Written in Turkic Languages as a Source in History of the Modern Karachay-Balkar Language (a Special Course)*...

¹¹⁷ Chechenov A. A. *The Language of the “Codex Cumanicus” and its Relation to Modern Western-Kipchak Languages*. Author’s Abstract of Diss. for the Degree of Cand. in Philology. – Moscow, 1979. 19 p.

¹¹⁸ Stojanow V. *The Codex Cumanicus. Research History // MTAHE*. Iss. 10. – Simferopol, 2003. P. 481–505.

¹¹⁹ Garkávets A. N. *The Kipchak Languages: Cuman and Armenian-Kipchak*. – Alma-Ata: “Nauka”, 1987. 226 p.

In 2015 Mustafa Argunşah and Galıp Güner published an extensive monograph which made an outstanding contribution to the *Codex Cumanicus* studies¹²⁰. In large measure, this book is materially different from prior research. The Turkish scholars' collaborative work bespeaks a truly painstaking effort they invested into it. Their idea of providing separate vocabularies of the Italian and German parts should be particularly welcomed; this ensures that, apart from clearer understanding of distinctions between the two, a scholar can perform a facilitated research. The manuscript's complete facsimile attached to the book makes it still more advantageous. Somewhat compromised in quality as compared to K. Grønbech's edition, the facsimile is nevertheless most valuable, because 1936 edition has been long ranked as a rare book, and is virtually unavailable to most scholars.

Mention should be made of an extensive article written 2019 by A. G. Yurchenko and titled *The Last Riddle of the "Codex Cumanicus": a Drawing of Parrot*, which was published among the Collected Papers in honour of S. G. Kljaštornyj's 90th anniversary¹²¹. The scholar addresses a very interesting question hitherto neglected in scholarship: the picture showing a parrot on folio 58. In our view, however, the explanation offered in the article does not seem utterly convincing¹²².

There is a number of publications about modern Kipchak languages or medieval Kipchak and Oghuz monuments which touch upon the subject of the *Codex Cumanicus*'s vocabulary. First of all, it is the above-mentioned works by

¹²⁰ *Argunşah M., Güner G. Codex Cumanicus. – İstanbul: Kesit yayınları, 2015. 1079 s.*

¹²¹ *Yurchenko A. G. The Last Riddle of the "Codex Cumanicus": The Drawing of Parrot // The Turkic-Mongolian World: History and Culture. Materials of the International Scientific Conference Devoted to the 90th Anniversary of S. G. Kljaštornyj. – Moscow: "Nauka" – "Vostochnaya literatura", 2019. P. 221–239.*

¹²² *Glashev A. A. An Interpretation of the Parrot Drawing in the Codex Cumanicus...*

N. A. Baskakov (*The Karakalpak Language. Part I*¹²³), Besim Atalay (*Divanü Lugat-it-Türk Tercümesi*¹²⁴), A. Zajączkowski (*Słownik arabsko-kipczacki z okresu Państwa Mameluckiego*¹²⁵), M. T. Houtsma (*Ein Türkisch-Arabisches Glossar*¹²⁶), A. K. Kuryshzhanov (*A Study in the Vocabulary of an Old Kipchak Monument Written in the 13th Century: “Turkic-Arabic Dictionary”*¹²⁷). Undertaking comparative studies of the *Codex Cumanicus*'s rich vocabulary, these authors also make a significant contribution to the field.

The works mentioned above rank among the ones fundamental for the *Codex Cumanicus* research; nonetheless, the list is by no means exhaustive: as we have already remarked, the historiography of the subject is truly immense.

As regards the language of the monument, two opinions seem to prevail among contemporary experts. In the Italian part of the manuscript itself the language is repeatedly labelled as “Cuman” (*Comanicum, chomanicho*); as for the German part, there is a mention of the Tatar language (*tatarčä*, literally ‘in Tatar’)¹²⁸.

Some researchers assume that the language of the manuscript is related to the Crimean-Tatar, Karaim and Karachay-Balkar languages. For example, A. N. Samoylovich believed it to share many similarities with, first of all, modern

¹²³ Baskakov N. A. *The Karakalpak Language. P. 1. Materials on Dialectology (Texts and Dictionaries)*. – Moscow: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1951. 408 p.

¹²⁴ *Divanü Lugat-it-Türk Tercümesi*; I, II, III, IV / Çeviren: Besim Atalay. – Ankara, 1939–1941.

¹²⁵ Zajączkowski A. *Słownik arabsko-kipczacki z okresu Państwa Mameluckiego. Part II. Verba*. – Warszawa: “Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe”, 1954. 86 + 128 s.

¹²⁶ Houtsma M. T. *Ein Türkisch-Arabisches Glossar*. – Leiden: “E. J. Brill”, 1894. 188 s.

¹²⁷ Kuryshzhanov A. K. *A Study in the Vocabulary of an Old Kipchak Monument Written in the 13th Century: “Turkic-Arabic Dictionary”* / Chief ed. E. N. Nadzhip. – Alma-Ata: Kazakh SSR AS, 1970. 232 p.

¹²⁸ Garkávets A. N. *The Kipchak Languages: Cuman and Armenian-Kipchak...* P. 18.

Western-Kipchak languages, namely Kumyk, Karachay-Balkar and Crimean Tatar languages (he meant the Northern or Steppe dialects of Crimean Tatar)¹²⁹.

This opinion was shared by J. Deny¹³⁰ and T. Kowalski¹³¹. J. Deny was one of the first scholars to suggest a hypothesis about historical continuity between the language of the manuscript ('Cuman' in his view), modern Western-Kipchak languages (Karaim, Kumyk, the Steppe dialect of Crimean Tatar) and the language of the Armenian-Kipchak texts written in the 16th – 17th centuries. However, the researcher did not take into consideration that the Italian and the German parts are linguistically very different¹³².

In her article on the topic, A. von Gabain designates the *Codex Cumanicus*'s language as Old Tatar¹³³. T. I. Grunin highlighted some linguistic similarities between Armenian-Polovets (Armenian-Kipchak) texts and the *Codex Cumanicus*¹³⁴.

A. N. Garkávets regards the *Codex Cumanicus*'s language as a homogeneous one (without separating it into the "Italian" and "German" parts' languages), and the text itself as a unified manuscript. In one of his works he remarks that the *Codex Cumanicus*'s dialect characteristics allow identifying it as the oldest text written in

¹²⁹ *Samoylovich A. N.* The Caucasus and the Turkic World // Bulletin of the Society for Exploration and Study of Azerbaijan. Baku. 1926, № 2. P. 3–9; *Samoylovich A. N.* [Review:] Karaulov N. A. Grammar of the Mountain "Bolkar" Language: A Brief Outline (Printed in the Collection of Materials for Description of Caucasian Terrains and Peoples). – Tbilisi, 1912. Iss. 42 // NEDRAS. 1912, vol. 21, iss. 4. P. 0152–0161.

¹³⁰ *Deny J.* Les indications sur des textes inedits en turc-kiptchak ou kiptchak-coman // JA. Paris, 1921. Ser. II. T. 68. P. 134–135.

¹³¹ *Kowalski T.* Karaimische Texte im Dialekt von Troki: Eingeleitet, erläutert und mit karaimisch-polnisch-deutschem Glossar versehen. – Krakow: "Nakiadem Polskiej akademji umietjetności", 1929. S. 59–67.

¹³² *Deny J.* Les indication sur des textes... P. 134.

¹³³ *Gabain A. M. von.* Die Sprache des Codex Cumanicus... S. 47–48.

¹³⁴ *Grunin T. I.* Documents Written in the Polovets Language (the 14th Century): Judicial Acts of Kamianets-Podilskyi Armenian Community. – Moscow: "Nauka", 1967. P. 111–112.

the Crimean Tatar language¹³⁵. Besides, the researcher supposes that the manuscript's language is genetically related to the Armenian-Polovets (Armenian-Kipchak) language¹³⁶.

The Kazakh scholar A. K. Kuryshzhanov also regards the *Codex Cumanicus* as a unified manuscript and the most significant text written in the Old Kipchak language, common for all Northern Kipchak languages¹³⁷. In Y. R. Dashkevich's opinion, the *Codex Cumanicus*'s language is 'Tatar' not Polovets¹³⁸.

P. Golden believes it to be the Polovets language which was preserved in the Kipchak language of the Crimean and Kamenets-Podolskiy Armenian communities and the Karaim language (specifically, in Trokay and Galich dialects)¹³⁹.

As one can see, the scholars referred to consider the *Codex Cumanicus* to be a manuscript written in a unified language, which they call Cuman.

The Turkish experts M. Argünşah and G. Güner, meanwhile, suppose that each part of the manuscript is linguistically different from the other, the Italian part being written in a kind of adjusted "Kipchak" language, and the German part in the proper Kipchak¹⁴⁰. O. A. Mudrak performed a comparative research into the vocabulary of the Italian part, which led him to the reasonable conclusion that it is the German part that contains the pure Polovets (Cuman) language, while the Italian part is written in an Oghuz language mixed with the Cuman language. The latter may be provisionally

¹³⁵ Garkávets A. N. The Kipchak Languages: Cuman and Armenian-Kipchak... P. 18.

¹³⁶ Ibidem.

¹³⁷ Kuryshzhanov A. K., Repin B. I. On the History of Studies in the Old Kipchak Monuments of the 13th – 17th Centuries... P. 39, 43.

¹³⁸ Dashkevich Y. R. Is the Codex Cumanicus Indigenously 'Cumanicus'? ... P. 62–74.

¹³⁹ Golden P. B. Codex Cumanicus...

¹⁴⁰ M. Argünşah and G. Güner's report at the XXXI International Conference "Dmitriyev Readings" (October 6, 2023).

called “Seljuk” or “Rumelian-Seljuk” , the scholar suggests¹⁴¹. The second, German, part, can be regarded as linguistically ‘Polovets’, and the Oghuz influence here is drastically reduced; this part is a precious source of the lively vernacular language the Polovets people spoke, and it is closely related to such modern languages as the Karachay-Balkar and Karaim (the Trokay and Galich dialects).

Notwithstanding the widespread academic interest, this most interesting monument as a whole and its specific fragments seem to remain insufficiently explored. The central problem lies in the fact that those interpretations and translations of the *Codex Cumanicus*’s fragments which have been offered in scholarship are often rather debatable, due to some difficulties inherent in the translator’s job. This, meanwhile, brings another problem: namely, arbitrary conjectural emendations in the original text.

The situation concerning translation and interpretation of the two monuments discussed in this chapter makes it essential to apply the interdisciplinary method involving cultural data.

¹⁴¹ O. A. Mudrak’s report at the “Tenishev Readings” (2021). The Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

CHAPTER 2. THE KARACHAY-BALKAR PEOPLE'S LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND ETHNOGENESIS: A GENERAL OUTLINE

2.1. The Karachay-Balkar language and its place in the classifications of Turkic languages

The Karachay-Balkar language used to have a variety of designations in academic literature, i.e. “Mountain Turkic”, “Tatar-Chagatai”, “Mountain Tatar”, “Karachay” and “Balkar”. Some scholars believe there are two dialects in the Karachay-Balkar language: namely, the CH/J-dialect (including the Baksan-Chegem subdialect) and the TS/Z-dialect (Malqar). However, a more widely-accepted classification includes three dialects: the Karachay J/CH-dialect, the Baksan-Chegem-Bizengi CH/ZH-dialect and the Upper-Balkar (Malqar) TS/Z-dialect. In official terms, there is no unified literary Karachay-Balkar language so far. Instead, technically two standard languages exist: Karachay and Balkar. The literary Balkar is based on the CH/ZH-dialect. It is only an academic classification proposed within the framework of Turkology which considers the Karachay-Balkar language to be a unified phenomenon¹⁴². In respect to modern Turkic languages, Karachay-Balkar is genetically closest to Karaim, Crimean Tatar (Middle and Northern (Steppe) dialects) and Kumyk languages.

Two ethnic groups are native speakers of the language: the Karachays (the majority of which live in the Karachay-Cherkess Republic) and the Balkars (living mostly in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic). In research literature they are often united by the term “the Karachay-Balkars”. Small groups of the Karachay and Balkar people live in Central Asia, Turkey and the USA. The Karachay-Balkar language is estimated to have about 400 thousand native speakers.

¹⁴² *Baskakov N. A. An Introduction to the Study of Turkic Languages... P. 279.*

Prior to 1917, just a very limited number of studies addressed the language. These were conducted by J. Klaproth, N. A. Karaulov¹⁴³, A. N. Samoylovich¹⁴⁴, G. Németh¹⁴⁵ and W. Pröhle¹⁴⁶; the scholars focused on Karachay-Balkar dialects, vocabulary, grammar and phonetics. The years 1930s saw publications by U. B. Aliyev¹⁴⁷, A. K. Borovkov¹⁴⁸, G. P. Serdyuchenko¹⁴⁹ and V. I. Filonenko¹⁵⁰. A. M. Appayev published the first study into Karachay-Balkar dialectology¹⁵¹.

A pioneering effort to explore the Karachay-Balkar language was undertaken by the renowned orientalist and Turkologist A. K. Borovkov; he embarked on several

¹⁴³ *Karaulov N. A.* Grammar of the Mountain “Bolkar” Language: A Brief Outline // A Collection of Materials for Description of Caucasian and Terrains and Peoples. Vol. 42. – Tiflis: “Izdatelskoye upravleniye Kavkazskogo uchebnogo okruga”, 1912. 299 p.

¹⁴⁴ *Samoylovich A. N.* [Review:] Karaulov N. A. Grammar of the Mountain “Bolkar” Language...

¹⁴⁵ *Németh G.* Kumuk tanulmányok I, Resz.: Kumuk es Balkar szójegyzek (Kumukisches und Balkarisches Wörterverzeichnis) // KSz. Bd. XII. – Budapest, 1911. S. 91–153.

¹⁴⁶ *Pröhle W.* Karatschaisches Worterverzeichnis // KSz, Bd. X. – Budapest, 1909. S. 83–150; *Pröhle W.* Karatschaische Studien // KSz, Bd. X. – Budapest, 1909. S. 215–304 (I Karatschaische Laut und Formenlehre, S. 215–235; II Karatschaische Texte, S. 235–304); *Pröhle W.* Balkarische Studien I // KSz, Bd. XV. – Budapest, 1914–1915. S. 164–276; *Pröhle W.* Balkarische Studien. II // KSz, Bd. XVI. – Budapest, 1915–1916. S. 104–243.

¹⁴⁷ *Aliyev U. B.* A Karachay-Balkar Grammar (the Mountain Turkic Language). – Kislovodsk: “Krainatsizdat”, 1930. 197 p.; *Aliyev U. B.* A Malqar Grammar. Phonetics and Morphology. – Nalchik, 1958. 396 p.

¹⁴⁸ *Borovkov A. K.* The Karachay-Balkar Language // Japhetic Papers. Iss. VII. – Leningrad: USSR AS Publishing, 1932. P. 37–70; *Borovkov A. K.* On the Unified Karachay-Balkar Orthography // BSAS. Department of Social Studies, № 5. – Moscow, Leningrad, 1935. P. 501–518.

¹⁴⁹ The Karachay-Balkar Orthography (a Project) / Ed. by G. P. Serdyuchenko. – Kislovodsk: “Karloblnatsizdat”, 1934. 24 p.

¹⁵⁰ *Filonenko V. I.* A Balkar Grammar. Phonetics and Morphology. – Nalchik: “Kabbalkgosizdat”, 1940. 88 p.

¹⁵¹ *Appayev A. M.* Balkar Dialects Compared to the Balkar Standard Language. – Nalchik: “KBKI”, 1960. 76 p.

major research expeditions to Karachay and gathered a wealth of linguistic as well as cultural material. The 7th issue of “Japhetic Papers” (1932) contained the above-mentioned article *The Karachay-Balkar Language*, in which the scholar highlights the importance of studying this language in order to construe and interpret Old Turkic written monuments¹⁵². In 1935 A. K. Borovkov published a highly informative article titled *Essays on Karachay-Balkar Grammar*¹⁵³.

Other seminal works include those of Sh. H. Akbayev¹⁵⁴ and U. B. Aliyev¹⁵⁵ (both printed in 1963). In 1966 the Kabardino-Balkarian Research Institute published the first comprehensive study on Karachay-Balkar grammar, edited by N. A. Baskakov and titled *Къарачай-малкъар тилни грамматикасы*¹⁵⁶ (A Grammar of the Karachay-Balkar Language). Subsequent research was represented by the works of many prominent scholars, such as Zh. M. Guzeyev¹⁵⁷,

¹⁵² *Glashev A. A.* The Karachay-Balkar Language and Turkic Written Monuments of the 10th – 14th Centuries... P. 126.

¹⁵³ *Borovkov A. K.* Essays on Karachay-Balkar Grammar // Languages of the North Caucasus and Dagestan. Vol. 1 / Ed. G. P. Serdyuchenko. – Moscow, Leningrad: “SotcEkgIz”, 1935. P. 11–39.

¹⁵⁴ *Akbayev Sh. H.* Phonetics of Karachay-Balkar Dialects (Synchronic and Diachronic Perspectives) / Academic editor H. I. Hajilayev. – Cherkessk: “KChKI”, 1963. 166 p.

¹⁵⁵ *Aliyev U. B.* Dialectal Variations of the Karachays’ and Balkars’ Language // Issues in Turkic Dialectology / Chief ed. M. Sh. Sheraliyev. – Baku: “Izdatelstvo AN AzSSR”, 1963. 292 p.

¹⁵⁶ *Къарачай-малкъар тилни грамматикасы* (A Grammar of the Karachay-Balkar Language: Phonetics, Morphology, Syntax) / Ed. by N. A. Baskakov. – Nalchik: “K’abarty-Malqar kitab basma”, 1966. 340 p.

¹⁵⁷ *Guzeyev Zh. M.* Phonetic Properties of the Malqar Dialect of the Karachay-Balkar Language // Soviet Turkology. 1974, № 5. P. 62–66; *Guzeyev Zh. M.* On a Feature of Vowel Harmony in the TS-dialect of the Karachay-Balkar Language // TKBRI. Philological Series. 1975, vol. 27. P. 131–134.

A. H. Sottayev¹⁵⁸, V. I. Abayev¹⁵⁹, H. I. Suyunchev and I. H. Urusbiyev¹⁶⁰, H.-M. I. Hajilayev¹⁶¹ etc. The multi-authored work *A Karachay-Balkar Grammar: Phonetics. Morphology. Syntax*¹⁶² was published in 1970. The decades between 1970 and 2000 saw publications of the leading experts on the Karachay-Balkar language, such as I. H. Ahmatov, A. A. Chechenov, M. Z. Ulakov, A. Y. Boziyev, A. Zh. Budayev, H.-M. Hajilayev, A. H. Sottayev, M. A. Habichev, H. I. Suyunchev, Sh. H. Akbayev. Of particular note is the monograph by A. A. Chechenov *The Issues of the Karachays' and Balkars' Language Formation and Development*¹⁶³. The three-volume *Dictionary of the Karachay-Balkar Language (Къарачай-малкъар тилни ангылатма сѣзлюгю, 1996–2005)* may be regarded as the result of many years its compilers devoted to research into vocabulary of the language and its dialects¹⁶⁴. Special mention should be made of the works on Karachay-Balkar lexicology and toponymics. Most notably, these are B. H. Musukayev's *The Toponymics of Balkar*

¹⁵⁸ Sottayev A. H. Revisiting Subordinate Clauses in the Karachay-Balkar Language // The Languages of North Caucasus and Dagestan: Questions of Descriptive Grammar. – Nalchik: “KBKI”, 1963; Sottayev A. H. The Noun in the Karachay-Balkar Language. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 1968. 84 p.

¹⁵⁹ Abayev V. I. Common Elements in the Languages of the Ossetians, Balkars and Karachays // Language and Thinking / Ed. by N. Y. Marr. Vol. 1. – Leningrad: “AN SSSR”, 1933. P. 71–89.

¹⁶⁰ Suyunchev H. I. Karachay-Balkar and Mongolian Vocabulary Parallels. – Cherkessk: “SKI, Karachaevo-Cherkesskoye otd-e”, 1977. 174 p.; A Russian-Karachay-Balkar Dictionary / Ed. by H. I. Suyunchev and I. H. Urusbiyev. – Moscow: “Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya”, 1965. 744 p.

¹⁶¹ Hajilayev H.-M. I. Studies in Karachay-Balkar Lexicology. – Cherkessk: “SKI; Karachaevo-Cherkesskoye otdeleniye”, 1970. 159 p.

¹⁶² A Karachay-Balkar Grammar: Phonetics. Morphology. Syntax / Ed. by N. A. Baskakov. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 1976. 571 p.

¹⁶³ Chechenov A. A. The Issues of the Karachays' and Balkars' Language Formation and Development. – Moscow: “Institut Yazykoznaniiya RAN”, 1996. 173 p.

¹⁶⁴ Къарачай-малкъар тилни ангылатма сѣзлюгю (An Explanatory Dictionary of the Karachay-Balkar Language): In 3 Vol. / Ed. by M. Zh. Guzeyev. – Nalchik: “El-Fa”, 1996–2005.

*Highlands*¹⁶⁵, M. A. Habichev's *On Karachay and Balkarian Hydronymy*¹⁶⁶, M. Z. Ulakov's *Animal Breeding Terminology in the Karachay-Balkar Language*¹⁶⁷, I. M. Otarov's *Essays on Karachay-Balkar Terminology*¹⁶⁸, J. N. Kokov and S. O. Shahmurzayev's *A Balkar Toponymical Dictionary*¹⁶⁹. In 2003 S. A. Hapayev published his seminal work *Geographical Names in Karachay and Balkaria*¹⁷⁰, covering virtually every important toponym of these regions.

Characteristics of the Karachay-Balkar language have also interested international scholars, O. Pritsak¹⁷¹, S. Çagatay¹⁷², P. Golden and E. Siemieniec-Golas being the most notable contributors. The Polish Turkologist E. Siemieniec-Golas has greatly advanced the field by publishing *Karachay-Balkar Vocabulary of Proto-Turkic Origin*¹⁷³, in which Karachay-Balkar lexis is examined against the background of nearly all Turkic languages. Carefully describing Karachay-Balkar dialects, the researcher supplies each lexical entry with multiple examples from modern Turkic languages and Old Turkic written monuments, which ensures a systematic

¹⁶⁵ *Musukayev B. H.* The Toponymics of Balkar Highlands. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 1981. 168 p.

¹⁶⁶ *Habichev M. A.* On Karachay and Balkarian Hydronymy / Chief ed. Zh. M. Guzeyev. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 1982. 136 p.

¹⁶⁷ *Ulakov M. Z.* Animal Breeding Terminology in the Karachay-Balkar Language: Diss. Subm. for the Degree of Cand. in Philology. – Baku, 1983. 152 p.

¹⁶⁸ *Otarov I. M.* Essays on Karachay-Balkar Terminology. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 1987. 96 p.

¹⁶⁹ *Kokov J. N., Shahmurzayev S. O.* A Balkar Toponymical Dictionary. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 1970. 170 p.

¹⁷⁰ *Hapayev S. A.* Geographical Names in Karachay and Balkaria. – Moscow: Elbrusoid, 2013. 576 p.

¹⁷¹ *Pritsak O.* Das Karatschaische und Balkarische // *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta*. Vol. I. – Wiesbaden, 1959. S. 340–368.

¹⁷² *Çagatay S.* Karaçayca birkaç metin // Ankara universitesi. Dil ve tarih-cografya fakült. dergisi, IX, 3. – Ankara, 1951. S. 277–300; *Balkar türkçesi* // *Türk Ansiklopedisi*. Cilt V. – Ankara, 1951.

¹⁷³ *Siemieniec-Golas E.* Karachay-Balkar Vocabulary of Proto-Turkic Origin. – Krakow: “Księgarnia Akademicka”, 2000. 268 p.

comparative analysis. It would be no exaggeration to say that this is one of the deepest explorations of Karachay-Balkar vocabulary and phonetics.

Nowadays, both Russian and international scholars continue their studies in the Karachay-Balkar language, and it is not only philologists who find its linguistic material thought-provoking, but other experts (e. g. cultural theorists, ethnologists, historians) as well.

Special mention should be made of such academic editions which focus on Karachay-Balkar folklore, mythology and heroic epic. The earliest of such kind were printed in the second half of the 19th century. The Karachay-Balkar version of the heroic epic known as the Nart sagas, published by the Gorky Institute of World Literature in 1994, was a significant milestone in the history of Karachay-Balkar linguistic and literary studies. This edition features an extensive prolegomenon written by the acknowledged expert on Karachay-Balkar folklore T. M. Hajiyeva, in which she painstakingly analyses Karachay-Balkar epic literature in comparison to epic literature of other Turkic peoples and Old Turkic mythology and epic as well¹⁷⁴.

In terms of dialects, the Karachay-Balkar language is phonetically, morphologically and lexically varied. The clearest differences may be observed between the Upper Balkar (Malqar) dialect and other dialects of the language. For example, the Upper Balkar dialect (henceforth UBD) recurrently substitutes the phoneme *-ч* for *-ц*, *-дж/ж* for *-з*, and often replaces *-къ* with *-х* and *-б* with *-ф*. Thus, the literary Karachay and Balkar (henceforth LKB) *кѣчюб* transforms into UBD *кочүф* ('having moved', 'having resettled'), LKB *кѣрюб* – into UBD *корүф* ('having seen', 'having noticed'), LKB *джер* – into UBD *зер* ('soil', 'earth'), LKB *чыпчыкъ* – into UBD *чыфчых* ('a birdie'), LKB *акъ* – into UBD *ах* ('white'), LKB *кѣк* – into UBD *кохъ* ('blue', 'sky'), etc. Some lexical differences can also be spotted: UBD

¹⁷⁴ The Nart Sagas. The Balkar and Karachay Peoples' Heroic Epic / Comp. by R. A.-K. Ortabayeva et al. Transl. by T. M. Hajiyeva, R. A.-K. Ortabayeva; introd., comm. and glossary by T. M. Hajiyeva. – Moscow: "Vostochnaya literatura", 1994. 656 p.

цырца is the equivalent of LKB *табакъ* ('plate'), UBD *къумурица* corresponds to literary Karachay *къумурсха* and literary Balkar *гумулджук* ('ant'), UBD *кесельке* is the counterpart of literary Karachay *кеселекке* and literary Balkar *гургун* ('a lizard'). UBD speakers tend to use back vowels instead of front vowels found in other dialects: so, LKB *кѣль* metamorphoses into UBD *коль* ('lake'), LKB *кѣлек* – into UBD *коলেখъ* ('shirt, blouse') etc.

There is also a number of morphological distinctions which reveal the close connection between the Upper Balkar dialect, the Old Turkic language and the language of the *Codex Cumanicus*. For example, in the UBD one can notice the old form of the 3rd person pronoun in the dative case – *аһар* ('to him') instead of LKB *аһа*; speakers of the dialect also use an ancient form of the imperative-optative mood in the 1st person singular ending with *-һын* and *-айһын* (instead of LKB *барайым*) 'I will go', 'I'm willing to go'. V. G. Kondratyev considered the corresponding form of the 3rd person pronoun to be a phenomenon common for Old Turkic runiform monuments (such as the Monument in honour of Kul Tegin, the 11th line of the small inscription)¹⁷⁵ and presenting it as *аһар <ан+зару*¹⁷⁶. Both V. G. Kondratyev and V. M. Nasilov maintained that the above-mentioned form of the 1st person singular in the imperative-optative mood ending with *-һын* and *-айһын* instead of *-һым* and *-айһым*, e.g. *барайһын* (rather than *барайым*) was a characteristic feature of Old Turkic runiform monuments, as well as Old Uyghur written monuments¹⁷⁷. Interestingly in

¹⁷⁵ *Malov S. E. Old Turkic Written Monuments. Texts and Studies...* P. 28; *Radloff W. Die alttürkischen Inschriften der Mongolei. Neue Folge: In 3 Vol. – St. Petersburg, 1897. S. 79.*

¹⁷⁶ *Kondratyev V. G. Forms and Meanings of Cases in the Language of Turkic Runiform Writing // Issues of Asian Languages Grammar. – Leningrad: "Izdatelstvo Leningradskogo Gos. Universiteta", 1964. P. 84.*

¹⁷⁷ *Kondratyev V. G. Grammatical Structure of the Old Turkic Monuments of the 8th – 11th Centuries // Issues of Asian Languages Grammar. – Leningrad: "Izdatelstvo Leningradskogo Gos. Universiteta", 1964. P. 89–90; *Nasilov V. M. The Old Uyghur Language. – Moscow: "Izdatelstvo**

this context, the Karachay-Balkar language (especially its Upper Balkar dialect) has a number of similarities with some Azerbaijani dialects and subdialects, particularly with those preserving Old Turkic features (for example, the Ayrum subdialect, dialects and subdialects spoken in Nukha (Shaki) etc.)¹⁷⁸.

The contemporary Karachay-Balkar language has loanwords adopted from Caucasian languages (Adyg. *бужукъ* ‘a beam, girder’, *гюх* ‘a large timbered bowl’, *халыу* ‘a corn cake’, *баста* ‘millet porridge’, *зынтхы* ‘oat, oatmeal’, *либжэ* ‘a dish made of poultry with flour sauce, etc.’)¹⁷⁹; Ossetian (*кырджын* ‘unleavened bread’, *дон* ‘a river’ etc.), Arabic (*халк* ‘people, public’, *сурат* ‘a photograph, form, image’, *заман* ‘time’, *ассы* ‘an infidel, pagan’, *шагъат* ‘a witness’, *азан* ‘a call to prayer’, *джаннет* ‘the Paradise, Heaven’)¹⁸⁰, Persian (*дарман* ‘a medicine’, *падчах* ‘a king, ruler, padishah’, *дурус* ‘right, permissible’, *шантал* ‘an apricot’, *дин* ‘a religion’, *ауаз* ‘a voice’, *базар* ‘a bazaar, marketplace’, *боран* ‘snowstorm, blizzard’, *къагъыт* ‘paper’, *мухур* ‘a seal’, *багъа* ‘a price’, *кукурт* ‘sulphur’ etc.), Russian (*гиназ* ‘a prince, feudal lord’, *панкурт* ‘a bankrupt’, *бараза* ‘a furrow’, *печ* ‘a hearth’, *сорт* ‘a kind, sort’ etc.)¹⁸¹, Hebrew (*төре* ‘law, court of justice’, *хычын* ‘an unleavened griddle cake with cheese’, *лейсан* (*ай*) – the name of a spring month, *къысыр* ‘infertile, barren’ etc.)¹⁸².

Vostochnoy literatury”, 1963. P. 68; *Nasilov V. M.* The Language of Orkhon-Yenisey Monuments. – Moscow: “Izdatelstvo Vostochnoy literatury”, 1960. P. 58.

¹⁷⁸ *Glashev A. A.* About an Azerbaijani Miniature of the 16th Century in the Light of the Dictionary of Mahmud Kashgari and the Karachay-Balkar Language... P. 56.

¹⁷⁹ *Musukayev B. H.* The Balkar-Kabardian Linguistic Connections. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 1984. P. 69–71.

¹⁸⁰ *Miziyev K. A.* On the Arabic Loanwords in the Karachay-Balkar Language // Studies in the Karachay-Balkar Language. 1977, iss. 1. P. 101–106.

¹⁸¹ *Musukayev B. H.* The Balkar-Kabardian Linguistic Connections... P. 86.

¹⁸² *Tekuyev M. M., Misirova L. H.* Three Hebraic Loanwords in the Karachay-Balkar Language // Studies in Caucasian Languages and Turkology: Traditions and Modern Times. Proceedings of the 3rd All-Russian Academic Conference. – Karachaevska, 2004. P. 221–225.

V. I. Abayev pointed out that modern Karachay-Balkar retains a number of words which trace back to the Alanian language, but no longer exist in Ossetian, such as *дорбун* ‘a cave, cavern’, *лухдун* ‘a club, cudgel’, etc.¹⁸³ Mention should be also made of some other examples of Persian vocabulary in Karachay-Balkar: *фаиман* ‘to be confused, perplexed; to be upset’, *фарафара* ‘to break, to tear to pieces’ (these can be found in Armenian-Polovets texts)¹⁸⁴, or *деу* ‘an evil cyclop giant’, ‘emegen’, etc.

Expert opinions differ as to the place of Karachay-Balkar in the Turkic language family. According to A. N. Samoylovich’s classification based on phonetic and morphological features, Karachay-Balkar, along with Karaim, belongs to one of pre-Mongol groups of the Turkic family¹⁸⁵. The Polish Turkologists T. Kowalski and A. Zajączkowski suppose that Karachay-Balkar and Karaim constitute a group together with the extinct Polovets (Cuman) language and the language of Armenian-Polovets documents of the 16th – 17th centuries¹⁸⁶. Geographical proximity causes I. Benzig to associate Karachay-Balkar with Kumyk and Karaim, considering them to form a unified Kipchak-Cuman subgroup of Western Turkic languages¹⁸⁷. K. G. Menges believes that Karachay-Balkar represents the group he calls Trans-Caspian, which also includes Polovets, Karaim, Crimean Tatar and Kumyk¹⁸⁸.

¹⁸³ *Abayev V. I.* On the Alanian Substrate in the Balkar-Karachay Language // On the Balkars’ and Karachays’ Origin. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 1960. P. 133.

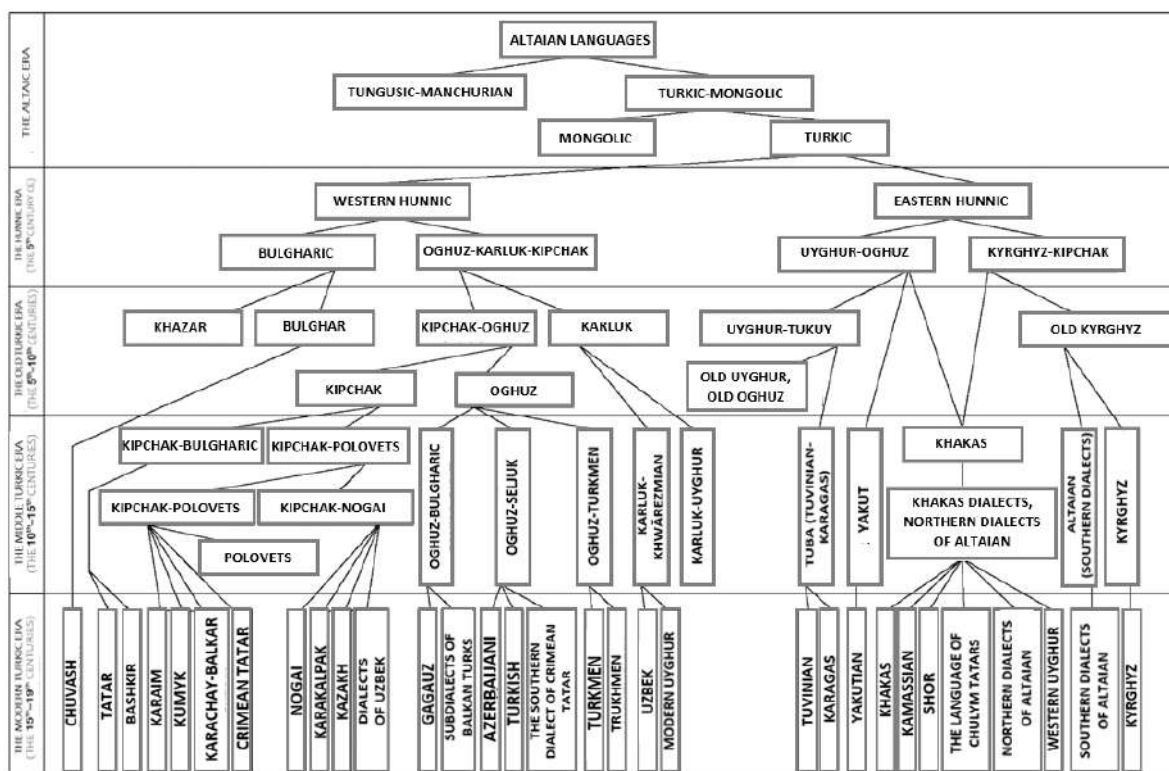
¹⁸⁴ *Schütz E.* An Armeno-Kipchak chronicle on the Polish-Turkish wars in 1620–1621. – Budapest: “Akademiai Kiado”, 1968. P. 70.

¹⁸⁵ *Aliyev U. B.* The Syntax of the Karachay-Balkar Language / USSR AS, The Inst. for Oriental Studies; Karachay-Cherkessia State Pedagogical Institute. – Moscow: “Nauka”, 1973. P. 9.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibidem; Ulakov M. Z., Chechenov A. A.* The Monuments Written in Turkic Languages as a Source of History of the Modern Karachay-Balkar Language (a Special Course) ... P. 35.

¹⁸⁷ *Aliyev U. B.* The Syntax of the Karachay-Balkar Language... P. 10.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibidem.*



Ill. 1. Development of Turkic languages: N. A. Baskakov's general scheme.

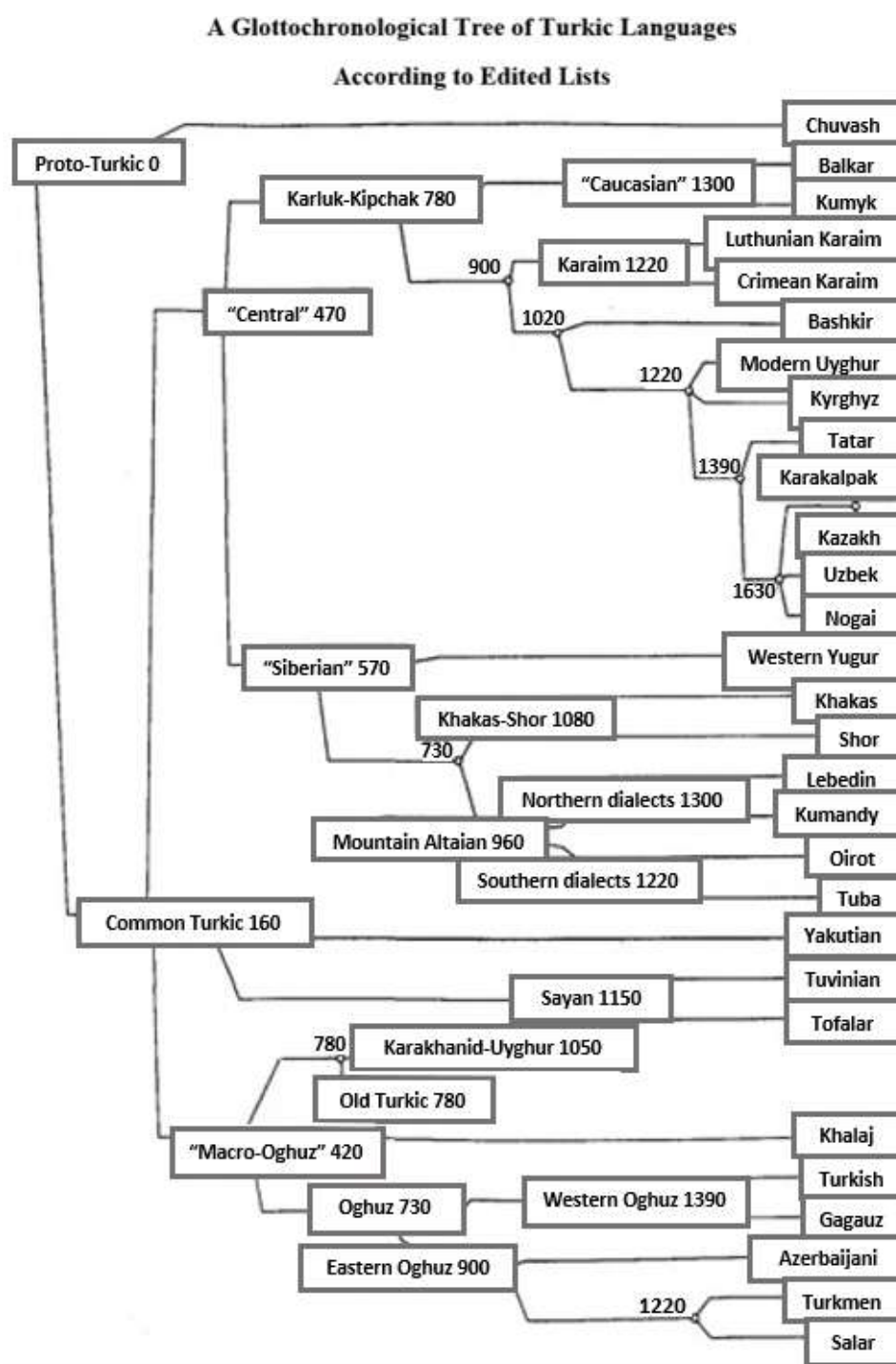
N. A. Baskakov proposed a classification based on historical sources, according to which Karachay-Balkar, as well as Karaim, Crimean Tatar, Kumyk and Old Kipchak (Polovets) languages form the Kipchak-Polovets subgroup of the Kipchak group¹⁸⁹. The scholar also remarks that originally Karachay-Balkar is related to the Kipchak language and has multiple similarities with the extinct Polovets language¹⁹⁰.

In modern comparative Turkology, classifications are made with regard not only to language dynamics in itself, but also to historical and cultural events which influenced development of Turkic languages and their interaction. According to A. V. Dybo's classification, based on lexicostatistical data (updated Swadesh lists),

¹⁸⁹ Baskakov N. A., Baskakov A. N. Modern Kipchak Languages / Chief ed. D. S. Nasyrov. – Nukus: “Karakalpakstan”, 1987. P. 52; Baskakov N. A. A Classification of Turkic Languages // Proceedings of the Institute for Linguistics. Vol. 1. – Moscow: “Izd. AN SSSR”, 1952. P. 7–57.

¹⁹⁰ Baskakov N. A. An Introduction to the Study of Turkic Languages... P. 280.

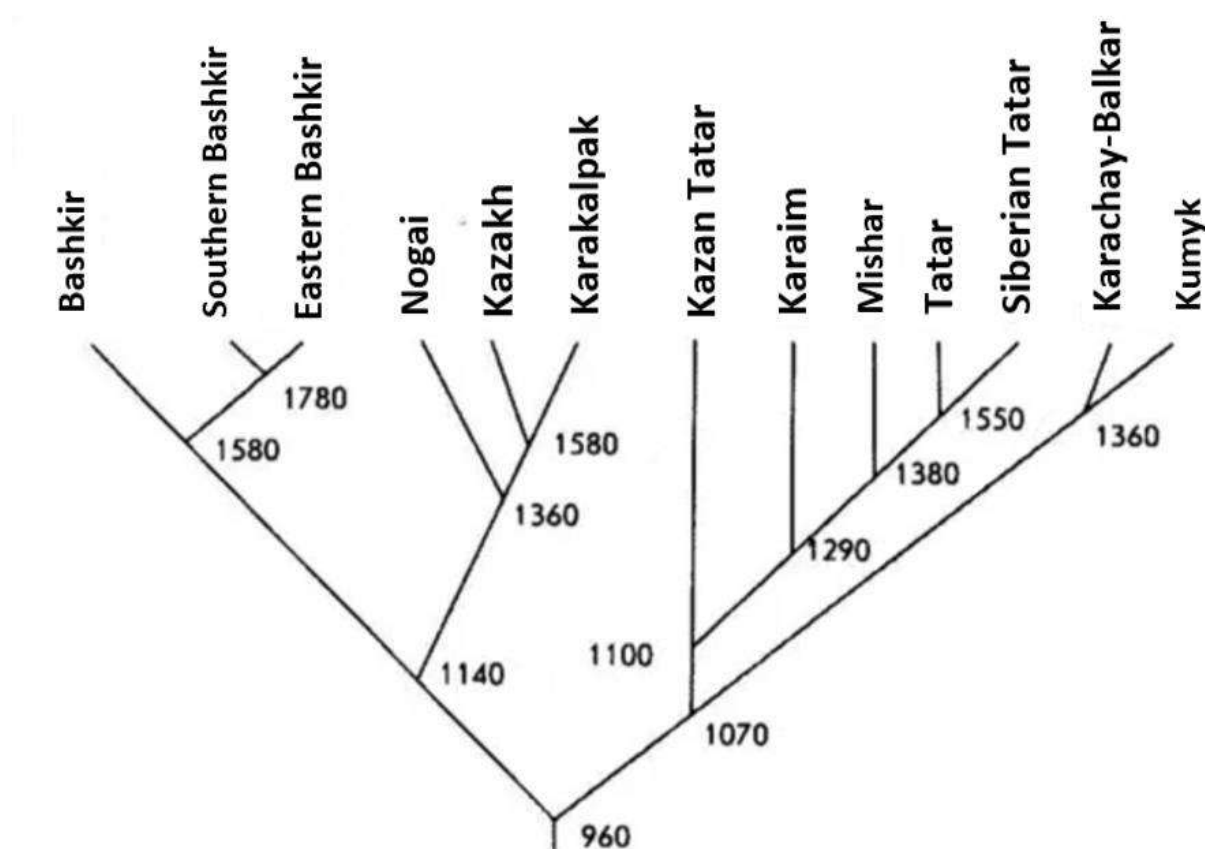
the Caucasian Turkic languages diverged from the unitary Karluk-Kipchak group circa 780, while the Balkar and Kumyk languages split circa 1300¹⁹¹.



Ill. 2. A. V. Dybo's scheme of Turkic languages' separation and development.

¹⁹¹ *Dybo A. V. A Chronology of Turkic Languages and Linguistic Contacts of the Ancient Turks. – P. 768 // URL: https://altaica.ru/LIBRARY/xronol_tu.pdf?ysclid=loyenvbug9602953930 (accessed: 21.09.2021).*

In his determining the time of Turkic languages' separation, O. A. Mudrak uses a grammatical questionnaire and studies considerable morphological and phonetic changes, which prompts him to think that Caucasian languages diverged from the Kipchak branch on the turn of the 10th and 11th centuries (1070). As for the split of Karachay-Balkar and Kумык languages, the scholar believes it occurred in 1380, the time of Tamerlane's military expansion, when the Kумыкs became subordinated to his empire, but the Karachay and Balkar people did not¹⁹².



III. 3. Separation of Kipchak languages according to O. A. Mudrak's classification.

¹⁹² *Mudrak O. A. The Language in Time. A Classification of Turkic Languages. Lecture from April 30, 2009* [URL: https://polit.ru/article/2009/04/30/mudrak/?ysclid=lnbmxcs_3dw152252973 (accessed: 21.09.2023)]; *Mudrak O. A. Turkic Languages and Dialects Classified with the Use of Glottochronological Methods and Questions Concerning Morphology and Historical Phonetics* ("Orientalia et Classica" Series, iss. 23). – Moscow: RSUH, 2009. 186 p.

Considerable disagreement among experts as to the history of Turkic languages' development results from two major factors. The first one is the abundance of contacts between related languages, which are still mutually intelligible¹⁹³; and the second one is that Old Turkic written monuments conformed to literary conventions of higher prestige and included foreign linguistic elements, which made them different from the language of their immediate cultural milieu¹⁹⁴.

The Karachay-Balkar language is unique in that for several centuries its native speakers lived in the high mountains of the Central Caucasus (the Balkars are one of the highest-settled peoples in the world) in a non-Turkic linguistic and cultural environment, out of touch with speakers of other Turkic languages. These circumstances determined an “autonomous” development of Karachay-Balkar and the preservation of Old Turkic elements in it. A. N. Samoylovich observes that Karachay-Balkar retains some pre-Polovets vocabulary (for example, weekday names) which traces back to Khazarian culture¹⁹⁵.

N. Z. Gajiyeva points out that the Karachay-Balkar language is also distinctive in that it has an unconventional form of infinitive, which cannot be found in any other Turkic language: when the affix *-гъа/-ге* joins the participial form *джазаргъа* ‘to write’, *келурге* ‘to come’. The scholar believes that this infinitive form conveys a meaning of purpose, resembling the Latin supine (i.e. *джазаргъа* ‘in order to write’), while the forms *-макъ*, *-мек* (with *-лыкъ/лик*) and *-у/-ю* (the infinitive forms common for the Turkic family) are used as verbal nouns¹⁹⁶. V. I. Filonenko regards this as an

¹⁹³ *Dybo A. V.* A Chronology of Turkic Languages and Linguistic Contacts of the Ancient Turks... P. 766.

¹⁹⁴ *Mudrak O. A.* The Language in Time. A Classification of Turkic Languages...

¹⁹⁵ *Samoylovich A. N.* Revisiting the Question of the Khazar and their Culture Successors // Jewish Antiquity. 1924, vol. XI. P. 200–210.

¹⁹⁶ *Gajiyeva M. Z.* The Karachay-Balkar Language // Newly Scripted Languages of Soviet Peoples / Chief editors E. A. Bokarev and Y. D. Desheriev. – Moscow, Leningrad: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1959. P. 103.

echo of the Turkic languages ancient state: "...what we observe here is either mixture of non-conjugated verb forms, i.e. blending of participle with infinitive, or a relic of the nominative nature of infinitive, a vestige lost by all Turkic languages except Karachay-Balkar"¹⁹⁷.

Authors of seminal works on general linguistics concur in the view that the North Caucasus has been a natural environment preserving and protecting various isolated dialects, which hardly had any chances of survival in other geographical context¹⁹⁸. Interestingly, the Karachay-Balkar language retains some vocabulary which can be found in Old Turkic monuments, but has disappeared from other living Turkic languages (an example of this is the *Dictionary* of Mahmud Kashgari)¹⁹⁹ or lost a number of its original meanings (i.e. Syro-Turkic monuments)²⁰⁰. It is therefore not surprising that world authorities on Turkic studies have recently published extensive monographs dedicated to the Karachay-Balkar language as the richest source of Old Turkic vocabulary; of particular note is the above-mentioned book written by the Polish Orientalist Ewa Siemienieć-Golas.

Modern Karachay-Balkar strongly resembles the language of the "German" part of the *Codex Cumanicus*; not only does it retain the vocabulary of the manuscript, but also the original meanings of certain words. Notably, some of the similitudes can only be found in the manuscript and the Karachay-Balkar language. For example, it is the use of the reflexive pronoun *кечси* (Kar.-Balk. *кесу*) which is absent from other Turkic languages²⁰¹; or, as we have already mentioned, the Karachay-Balkar 3rd

¹⁹⁷ *Filonenko V. I.* A Balkar Grammar. Phonetics and Morphology... P. 54.

¹⁹⁸ *Stepanov Y. S.* Fundamentals of General Linguistics. – Moscow: "Prosveshcheniye", 1975. P. 172.

¹⁹⁹ *Glashev A. A.* About an Azerbaijani Miniature of the 16th Century in the Light of the Dictionary of Mahmud Kashgari and the Karachay-Balkar Language... P. 57.

²⁰⁰ *Glashev A. A.* On Translation of the Syro-Turkic Manuscript from Khara-Khoto... P. 29–36.

²⁰¹ *Studies in the History of Karachay-Cherkessia. Vol. 1. From the Earliest Times until the Great October Revolution.* – Stavropol: "SKI", 1967. P. 121.

person pronoun being used in the same form as it was in the *Codex Cumanicus* (*аһар* – UBD ‘to him’). Part of the manuscript’s vocabulary has survived only in the Karachay-Balkar, Karaïm and Kumyk languages: i.e. Cum. *келенен* ‘castaway’, ‘leper’ – Kar.-Balk. *келенен* (UBD *келефен*), Cum. *кертме* ‘pear’ – Kar.-Balk. *кертме*, Cum. *кёнчек* ‘trousers’ – Kar.-Balk. *кёнчек* (UBD *концех*), Cum. *тегене* ‘wash tank’ – Kar.-Balk. *тегене*, Cum. *генесу* ‘quicksilver’ – Kar.-Balk. *гинасу* etc²⁰². Some of the words used in the manuscript still convey the same meaning in the Karachay-Balkar language, i.e. the word *bitig/bitik* (*bitic*) ‘The Holy Scripture’ (along with the meanings of a ‘book’, ‘letter, manuscript’)²⁰³.

The modern Karachay-Balkar vocabulary includes the Polovets word *бокка* as ‘a children’s hat’. Guillaume de Rubrouck (William of Rubruck), the 13th century traveller, visited the Kipchak steppe and the Golden Horde Khan; he noticed that “...(the Tatar women) wear a head-dress called *bokka*, which is made of tree bark or other material which seems to be more lightweight”²⁰⁴. Another famous explorer, Ibn Battuta, travelled to the Özbek Khan’s headquarters near the Majar city in the North Caucasus (1330–33) and wrote that “the hatun (the khan’s wife – A. G.) wears a *bugtak*, i.e. something like a small crown, encrusted with precious gems and peacock feathers”²⁰⁵. Experts on Karachay-Balkar material culture see this parallel as a trace of the Polovets culture and note that this kind of ladies’ head-dress, described in the writings of Rubrouck, Ibn Battuta, and also Giovanne da Pian del Carpine, was worn

²⁰² Studies in the History of Karachay-Cherkessia. Vol. 1 ... P. 121.

²⁰³ *Glashev A. A.* On Translation of the Syro-Turkic Manuscript from Khara-Khoto... P. 33–34.

²⁰⁴ Travels to Eastern Countries of Carpine and Roubruck / Ed., introd. and comm. by N. P. Shastina. – Moscow: “Gos. izdatelstvo geograficheskoy literatury”, 1957. P. 27, 100.

²⁰⁵ The Golden Horde in Documental Sources. Vol. 1. Arabic and Persian Writings / Comp., introd. and comm. by R. P. Khrapachevskiy. – Moscow: “Nauka”, 2003. P. 134.

by Karachay and Balkar women until the 18th century²⁰⁶. Scholars also draw attention to the fact that *bokkas* can also be found in Polovets people's burial grounds of the Golden Horde era²⁰⁷. In terms of vocabulary, morphology and phonetics, there is a particularly strong connection between the *Codex Cumanicus* and the Upper Balkar (Malqar) dialect of the Karachay-Balkar language.

This observation is congruent with the above-mentioned opinion of A. V. Dybo, who supposes that Karachay-Balkar, along with Kumyk, separated from the main Kipchak branch of the Turkic languages tree circa 1300. If this view is correct, then it properly explains the close connection between the Karachay-Balkar language and the languages of the *Codex Cumanicus* (written circa 1290–1303) and Armenian-Polovets documents. Indeed, isolated in the Central Caucasian highlands, with only non-Turkic languages as neighbours and out of touch with the related Turkic tongues, the Karachay-Balkar of the late Middle Ages (after Timur's expansion) could naturally preserve the ancient features, which made it fairly similar to the Polovets (Cuman) language.

Thus, the modern Karachay-Balkar language incorporates a number of Old Turkic features, as well as some features characteristic of the *Codex Cumanicus*'s language and the language of the Polovets (Cuman) people.

²⁰⁶ *Miziyev I. M.* Ethnographical Data About the Balkar and Karachay Ethnogenesis // *Ethnography and Modern Times. Materials of the All-Soviet Ethnography Session Dedicated to the 60th Anniversary of the USSR.* – Nalchik, 1984. P. 135.

²⁰⁷ *Fedorov-Davydov G. A.* Nomads of Eastern Europe under the Dominion of the Golden Horde Khans: Archaeological Evidence. – Moscow: “Izdatelstvo Moskovskogo Universiteta”, 1966. P. 157; *Narozhnyj E. I.* Medieval Nomads of the North Caucasus: Some Controversial Issues of Ethnocultural Relations in the Golden Horde Era / Ed. by V. B. Vinogradov. – Armavir: ASPU, 2005. P. 178.

2.2. Ethnogenesis of the Karachay and Balkar peoples

Currently, there is no scholarly consensus about the Karachay and Balkar peoples' ethnogenesis. A generally accepted theory suggests that the Karachay-Balkar ethnic origins can be traced back to the Proto-Bulgarians, the Khazars, the Western Kipchak (Polovets) people and some indigenous peoples of the Caucasus (descendants of the Koban culture tribes).

In 1959, a scientific session was held to discuss the problem of the Karachay and Balkar ethnogenesis, and the following conclusion was reached: "Summarizing the results of this topic studies, the session participants find it possible and necessary to draw some preliminary inferences about the Karachays' and Balkars' ethnogenesis. This is done in order to provide those scholars who study this subject today with more or less proper guidance. The Karachay and Balkar peoples' formation was a result of Northern Caucasian tribes intermingling with Iranian and Turkic tribes, the largest role being apparently fulfilled by 'the Black Bulgarians' and, particularly, one of the Western Kipchak tribes. Thus, the Balkar and Karachay peoples are ancient inhabitants of the North Caucasus; throughout the centuries, they have undergone the historical development similar to that of other highlanders, which contributed to the affinities between their housekeeping practices, their cultural proximity and psychological connectivity. This statement helps to find a clearer path for future research"²⁰⁸. Nowadays this approach to the problem of the Karachay and Balkars' ethnogenesis is the most widely-accepted one.

Scholars explain the presence of the Turkic element in the Karachay-Balkar people's formation by the Huns' migration from the Central Asia to the North Caucasus in the second half of the 4th century CE. Notably, a number of experts suppose that some of the Hunnic tribes reached the Central Caucasian mountains; this assumption is supported by such archaeological discoveries as a 4th-century cauldron

²⁰⁸ Proceedings of the Scientific Session Addressing on the Problem of the Ethnogenesis of the Balkar and Karachay Peoples (June 22–26, 1959). – Nalchik: "KBKI", 1960. P. 310.

found in the village of Habaz in Kabardino-Balkaria (see Appendix 1)²⁰⁹, which bears a striking resemblance to the Hunnic cauldrons excavated in Hungaria²¹⁰. It should be noted that today the Habaz cauldron ranks as the most high-altitude discovery among this type of cauldrons found in the geographical area between the Central Asia and Hungaria. Joachim Werner, the recognized expert on the history and archaeology of the Huns, considers this type of cauldrons to be a major element of the Hunnic culture²¹¹. The entombment of a Hunnic leader in the burial mound № 13 near the village of Kishpek (The Kabardino-Balkarian Republic) is another major monument which is regarded by historians as evidence of Hunnic presence in the North Caucasus²¹². The explorer of the burial mound № 13, archaeologist and specialist in Caucasian studies R. J. Betrozov, draws particular attention to a luxuriant laminated helmet (Appendix 2) encrusted with almandines, very similar to those which were discovered far away in Manchuria, in the monuments created by the Central Asian Hsiun-nu. R. J. Betrozov traces a connection between this burial mound and the Sabir Huns (who also participated in the Karachays' and Balkars' ethnogenesis) and believes it to be one of the first testimonies to Turkic peoples' expansion into the North Caucasus occurring as early as in the 4th century²¹³. Later, in the 7th – 10th

²⁰⁹ *Batchayev V. M.* The Hunnic Cauldron from the Village of Habaz // SA. 1984, № 1. P. 256–258.

²¹⁰ *Werner J.* Beiträge zur Archäologie des Attila-Reiches. T. I. S. 57. T. II, Tafel 28. – München: “Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften”, 1956. 44 s.

²¹¹ *Ibidem.*

²¹² *Betrozov R. J.* A Hunnic Chief's Grave Near the Village of Kishpek in Kabardino-Balkaria // The North Caucasus in Ancient and Medieval Time / Chief ed. V. I. Markovin; introd. by R. M. Munchayev. – Moscow: “Nauka”, 1980. P. 113–122.

²¹³ *Ibidem*; See also: *Glashev A. A.* Turkification of the Central Caucasus According to Archaeological Evidence // Abstracts of the 2nd Student Academic Conference on the History, Archaeology and Ethnography of Caucasian Highland Peoples (The State University of Kabardino-Balkaria). – Nalchik, 1991. P. 37; *Glashev A. A.* About the Huns in the North Caucasus // North Caucasian Turks: History, Archaeology, Ethnography: Collected Academic Papers. In Memoriam of H. H. Bijiyev / Ed. by A. A. Glashev. – Moscow: “Elbrusoid”, 2009. P. 10–53.

centuries, such Turkic peoples as the Avars, Bulgarians, Khazars, Turks from the Turkic Khaganate and Pechenegs, migrated towards the North Caucasus on an increasingly large scale. V. V. Bartold remarks in one of his works on Caucasus: “Thus, the Turks then governed the territories extending to the Caucasus, and it was this Turkic Empire (The Turkic Khaganate – A. G.) against which a new wall was built at the very end of Anushirvan’s reign”²¹⁴. These ethnic groups were highly significant in the Karachays’ and Balkars’ ethnogenesis. Of particular importance were the Proto-Bulgarian (Bolgari) tribes²¹⁵.

The theory of the Proto-Bulgarian or Bolgari tribes (the Onoghurs, Utigurs, Sabirs) playing a substantial role in the ethnogenesis of the Karachay and Balkar peoples was proposed by the Russian expert on the Caucasus P. G. Butkov; later he was supported by N. Khodnev, the author of *Notes on the Ancient Names of Caucasian Peoples*, published in the “Kavkaz” newspaper in 1867²¹⁶. Most contemporary scholars accept this theory as well²¹⁷.

The assumption that Proto-Bulgarian (Bolgari) peoples lived in the Caucasus, especially in the Central part of the North Caucasus – i.e. in the very region of the Karachays’ and Balkars’ formation – is fully accepted by specialists in the history of the ancient Turks in Eastern Europe²¹⁸. This is corroborated by a number of

²¹⁴ *Bartold V. V. The Role of Pre-Caspian Areas in the History of the Muslim World: Lectures Pres. by the Author in the Oriental Fac. of Azerbaijani State University in 1924 (Supplied with Brief Outlines of History of the Turks and of Azerbaijan). – Baku: “Krasnyj Vostok”, 1925. P. 23.*

²¹⁵ *Fedorov Y. A., Fedorov G. S. The Ancient Turks in the North Caucasus (Essays Historical and Ethnographical). – Moscow: “Izdatelstvo MGU”, 1978. P. 44, 140.*

²¹⁶ *Khodnev N. Notes on Ancient Names of Caucasian Peoples // Kavkaz. 1867, №№ 45, 67, 68, 81, 82.*

²¹⁷ *The Karachays. The Balkars / Chief editor M. D. Karaketov, H.-M. A. Sabanchiyev. – Moscow: “Nauka”, 2014. P. 35.*

²¹⁸ *Studies in the History of the USSR: Crisis of Slaveholding System and Rise of Feudalism in the Territories of the USSR (the 3rd – the 9th Centuries) / Chief ed. B. A. Rybakov. – Moscow: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1958. P. 586–615; *Smirnov A. P. Studies in the History of the Proto-**

archaeological discoveries. Kabardino-Balkaria is the territory where historians have found Bolgari monuments dating back to the 7th–9th centuries: specifically, a number of settlements encircled by earth walls in the vicinity of Kislovodsk city and three burial grounds in Balkaria²¹⁹. Some scholars argue that Proto-Bulgarian peoples arrived in Eastern Europe and the North Caucasus even earlier than the Huns did²²⁰. Apparently for that reason L. N. Gumilyov notes in his seminal work that, for example, the Balkars and the Chuvash people emerged as distinct ethnic groups prior to the ancient Turks themselves²²¹.

The North Caucasian Huns, i.e. the Sabirs (Savirs) have been categorized as one of Bulgari peoples²²²; in written sources they are identified as the Khazars²²³, and a number of scholars endorse this view. The Arab geographer al-Mas'ūdī remarks that

Bulgarians // Proceedings of the SHM (Moscow). 1940, iss. XI. P. 55–136; *Smirnov A. P.* The Volga Bulgarians / Proceedings of the SHM (Moscow). 1951, iss. XIX. 277 p.; An Armenian Geography of the 7th Century AD, Attributed to Movses Khorenatsi / Transl. by K. P. Patkanov. – St. Petersburg, 1877; *Patkanov K. P.* From the New Copy of the Geography Attributed to Movses Khorenatsi // JMNE. 1883, p. CCXXVI. P. 22–32; A History of Bulgaria / Ed. by P. N. Tretyakov, S. A. Nikitin, L. B. Valev. Vol. 1. – Moscow: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1954. 575 p.; *Nikitin S. A.* Formation of the Bulgarian People and State // Bulletin of Moscow State University. Social Sciences Series. 1952, iss. 1. P. 131–155; *Merpert N. Y.* On the Genesis of the Saltovo-Majaki Culture // BRIHMC. 1951, iss. XXXIV. P. 14–30; *Merpert N. Y.* Revisiting the Question about the Oldest Bulgarians. – Kazan: “Gos. Muzey Tatarskoy ASSR”, 1957. 37 p.

²¹⁹ A History of Kabardino-Balkarian SSR from the Earliest Times to the Present Day: In 2 Vol. – Moscow: “Nauka”, 1967. Vol. 1. P. 73.

²²⁰ *Merpert N. Y.* Revisiting the Question about the Oldest Bulgarians...

²²¹ *Gumilyov L. N.* The Ancient Turks. – Moscow: “Nauka”, 1967. P. 6.

²²² *Fedorov Y. A., Fedorov G. S.* The Ancient Turks in the North Caucasus... P. 53; *Baskakov N. A.* An Introduction to the Study of Turkic Languages... P. 233.

²²³ *Gadlo A. V.* An Ethnic History of the North Caucasus, the 4th – 10th Centuries. – Leningrad: “Izdatelstvo LGU”, 1979. P. 17; *Zakhoder B. N.* The Caspian Data Corpus about Eastern Europe. Gorgan and the Volga Region in the 9th – 10th Centuries. – Moscow: “Izdatelstvo Vostochnoy literatury”, 1962. P. 132–133.

the Sabirs are the Eastern Khazars, a group of sedentary Turks, called “hazaran” in Persian and “al-hazar” in Arabic²²⁴. The Dutch Orientalist M. J. De Goje comments upon this remark made by al-Mas’ūdī: “Itaque Hunni-Sabir et Chazari idem populus sunt”²²⁵, i.e. “Therefore, the Sabir Huns and the Khazars are the same people” (our translation from Latin – A. G.). V. V. Bartold wrote in the abovementioned work that “We have accounts of the Sabir people, later known as the Khazars”²²⁶. According to some written sources, the Sabirs lived in the North Caucasus²²⁷. One of the leading Soviet historians, V. V. Mavrodin, suggested the following hypothesis: “...Intermingling and migrations taken into consideration, one can assume that the ‘Black Bulgarians’ used to be called the ‘Savirs’, and are currently known as the Balkars. If that is the case, it answers the question about the role of the Saltovo-Majaki culture in the history of earliest Slavic inhabitants of the forest-steppe belt...”²²⁸. The ethnonym “Savir” is still used in the Caucasus. The Svans and the Mingrelians apply the name *saviyar* (i.e. “Savirs”) to their immediate neighbours, the Karachays and Balkars²²⁹. A. V. Gadlo highlights this fact as a highly significant for the North

²²⁴ Kitâb at-Tanbîkh wa’l- Ischrâf auctore al-Mâsudî. Ed. M. J. De Goje. Pars octava (VIII). BGA. Lugduni-Batavorum, “E. J. Brill”, 1894. P. 83 (ʌʳ); *Kalinina T. M.* Issues of Khazarian History (As Reflected in Eastern Documental Sources). – Moscow: “Russkiy fond sodeystviya obrazovaniyu i nauke”, 2015. P. 40, 109.

²²⁵ Kitâb at-Tanbîkh wa’l- Ischrâf, auctore al-Mâsudî...

²²⁶ *Bartold V. V.* The Role of Pre-Caspian Areas in the History of the Muslim World... P. 23.

²²⁷ *Procopius of Caesarea.* The Gothic War / Transl. from Greek by S. P. Kondratyev. Introd. by Z. V. Udaltsova. – Moscow: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1950. P. 407.

²²⁸ *Mavrodin V. V.* Formation of the Old Russian State. – Leningrad: “Izdatelstvo Leningradskogo Gos. Universiteta”, 1945. P. 186.

²²⁹ *Marr N. Y.* Ethnic Composition of the Caucasus’s Population: A Classification of Caucasian Peoples. – Petrograd: “Tipografiya RAN”, 1920. 64 p.; *Volkova N. G.* Ethnonyms and Tribal Designations in the North Caucasus. – Moscow: “Nauka”, 1973. P. 94; *Glashev A. A.* About the Huns in the North Caucasus... P. 25–26.

Caucasian ethnic history: actually, the Svans apply the ancient ethnonym “Savir” to the Karachay and Balkar people²³⁰.

Thus, the Karachays’ and Balkars’ ethnogenesis was markedly influenced by the Sabir (Savir) and Proto-Bulgarian peoples, and this thesis is supported by the geographic name *Къара Малкъар* (the Black Balkaria), which can be found in the modern Karachay-Balkar usage: «Мени биттеу Къара Малкъар биледы! Сен болмацы затланы айтаса!» – lit. “Why, everyone in the Black Balkaria knows me! You’re talking nonsense!”²³¹. It is not the whole of Balkaria, but only Upper Balkaria which is meant by “Black” (Large) Balkaria; once this community was the vastest and strongest in the upper Cherek river (the Cherek gorge). This part of Balkaria was the most influential in terms of politics (it hosted “The Big Tore”, i.e. the supreme court, the ultimate authority in settling disputes), the largest and the most populous, and it was also called *Уллу Малкъар* (Large Balkaria) and *Огъары Малкъар* (Upper Balkaria). Therefore, the previously examined hypothesis²³² that this is connected with the name of Black (Great) Bulgaria seems perfectly plausible.

Scholars agree that there was another essential component in the Karachay and Balkar ethnogenesis, namely, the Kipchak (Polovets) one. According to the conventional view, the Polovets people (i.e. Cumans, as known in Europe) migrated from east to west, displaced the Pechenegs and settled in South Russian steppes in the 11th century. Anyway, the earliest mention of the Polovets people in the Old Russian chronicles refers to their victory over the Russian prince Iziaslav in 1068²³³.

²³⁰ Gadlo A. V. An Ethnic History of the North Caucasus, the 4th – 10th Centuries... P. 90.

²³¹ The informant: Mariam Karabasheva (b. 1900), the village of Muhol, Upper Balkaria (the KBR). Field data.

²³² Glashev A. A. The Word *Kara/Hara* and its Meanings in the Khazar Language... P. 84–85.

²³³ The Russian Primary Chronicle / Transl. from Old Russian by D. S. Likhachev and B. A. Romanov. Ed. by V. P. Adrianova-Peretz. – St. Petersburg: “Nauka”, 1996. P. 73, 210.

The opinion about the Polovets playing a major role in the Karachay and Balkar ethnogenesis is shared by the ethnologist H. O. Laipanov²³⁴, archaeologists V. M. Batchayev²³⁵ and E. P. Alekseyeva²³⁶, historians L. I. Lavrov²³⁷ and K. G. Azamatov²³⁸, linguist A. A. Chechenov²³⁹, and others. L. I. Lavrov, the famous Soviet specialist in Caucasian studies, argued that ethnogenesis of the Karachay and Balkar peoples involved “that part of the Polovets who left their steppes during the Mongol invasion in the 13th century and found refuge in the Caucasian mountains. This could be only done by those who nomadised in the vicinity of the mountains. <...> Therefore, it seems reasonable to suppose that they had been in constant touch with Caucasian indigenous peoples”²⁴⁰. The scholar also observes that “one of the most important Polovets communities in the 12th century was located at the banks of the Sunzha river, near the Caucasian mountains”²⁴¹. Z. V. Anchabadze makes references to Old Georgian chronicles relating information about the crucial role which the Polovets (Kipchak) people played in the North Caucasus and documenting

²³⁴ *Laipanov H. O.* On the History of the Karachays and Balkars. – Cherkessk: “KChKI”, 1957. P. 24.

²³⁵ *Batchayev V. M.* The North Caucasian Polovets and the Questions of Medieval Balkaria Turkification // *Archaeology and Issues of Kabardino-Balkar Ancient History*. Iss. 1. – Nalchik, 1980. P. 79–95.

²³⁶ *Alekseyeva E. P.* The Karachays and Balkars: The Caucasian Ancient People. – Cherkessk: “KChKI”, 1963. 94 p.

²³⁷ *Lavrov L. I.* From an Expedition to Balkaria // *SA*. 1938, vol. II. P. 175–181; *Lavrov L. I.* Karachay and Balkaria Before the 1830s // *CEC*. 1969, iss. 4. P. 106–107.

²³⁸ *Azamatov K. G.* The Vestiges of Heathendom in the Balkars’ Beliefs. – Nalchik: “KBRI”, 1981. P. 146.

²³⁹ *Chechenov A. A.* The Language of the “Codex Cumanicus” and its Relation to Modern Western-Kipchak Languages... 19 p.

²⁴⁰ *Lavrov L. I.* About Some Ethnographic Data Concerning Formation of the Balkars and Karachays // *PSS*. – Nalchik: “KBKI”, 1960. P. 66–67.

²⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

the history of their migration from the North Caucasus to Georgia during the reign of David IV the Builder²⁴².

This view of the Polovets participation in the North Caucasian ethnic history is consistent with archaeological findings. A number of Polovets burial mounds, where warriors are entombed together with their horses, are found in the immediate vicinity of the mountainous part of Karachay-Cherkessia²⁴³. Remarkably similar burial mounds, as well as Polovets stone sculptures, are discovered in other parts of the North West Caucasus²⁴⁴. A. A. Iessen scrutinized North Caucasian archaeological evidence and drew the conclusion that the southern boundary of Polovets settlements coincided with the line Armavir – Pyatigorsk – the Kalmyk Steppe²⁴⁵.

Mention should be made that the territory of Kabardino-Balkaria hosts a most important monument of the Golden Horde, namely, the ancient settlement called Nizhny Julat, which assumedly bears evidence of the considerable role the Kipchaks played in these region in the 13th – 14th centuries²⁴⁶.

Material culture of the Karachay and Balkar peoples synthesizes Caucasian and Turkic elements. As regards food practices, Karachay and Balkar cuisine is heavily

²⁴² *Anchabadze Z. V.* The North Caucasian Kipchaks According to Georgian Chronicles of the 11th – 14th Centuries // PSS. – Nalchik: “KBKI”, 1960. P. 112–129.

²⁴³ *Alekseyeva E. P.* Notes on the Question of the Balkars’ and Karachays’ Origin in Light of Archaeological Findings // PSS. – Nalchik: “KBKI”, 1960. P. 100–101.

²⁴⁴ *Berezin Y. B., Korobitsyn M. N.* Excavations of “Solnechnodolsk–4” Burial Mound in the Izobilnensky District of Stavropol Krai // Materials and Studies in the North Caucasus Archaeology. Vol. 20. – Armavir, Karachayevsk, 2022. P. 202–206; *Narozhnyj E. I.* New Studies in Polovets Sculptures // Materials and Studies in the North Caucasus Archaeology. Vol. 20. Armavir, Karachayevsk, 2022. P. 212–216.

²⁴⁵ *Iessen A. A.* Archaeological Monuments of Kabardino-Balkaria (Significance of the Ancient Monuments Found in the Republic) // Materials and Studies on Archaeology of the USSR. – Moscow, Leningrad: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1941. № 3. P. 30.

²⁴⁶ *Zilivinskaya E. D., Chechenov I. M.* Nizhny Julat // Majar and Nizhny Julat. Excerpts from the History of the Golden Horde Towns in the North Caucasus. – Nalchik: “KBIH”, 2015. P. 109–112.

reliant on fermented dairy products, such as kumis and various sorts of ayran, both of which are fairly traditional for Turkic peoples²⁴⁷. Among other notable Old Turkic features of the Karachay-Balkar culture is the felt carpet weaving, i.e. *kiiz* carpets, decorated with the same ornaments as those used in the Old Turkic art. The recognized expert on Caucasus, ethnographer E. N. Studenetskaya believes *kiiz* carpets to amalgamate local Caucasian and Old Turkic cultures²⁴⁸. The scholar argues that “comparing the ornaments found on Kazakh and Kyrghyz felts with Karachay-Balkarian ornaments, one can notice they are fairly similar in 1) their compositional scheme (of particular note is combination and rotation of lozenges and triangles); 2) the proportions of background and pattern; 3) individual elements of the patterns and their combinations, which sometimes are absolutely identical; 4) the terminology and interpretation of the ornament; 5) the colour combinations (Kazakh and Kyrghyz ornaments preferring white backgrounds); 6) the technique employed for making appliqued patterns. All these elements of similarity can arguably be explained by the influence of the Kipchak (Polovets) component, which was essential in the Karachay and Balkar ethnogenesis, and played some role in the formation of the Karanogai, Kazakh, Kyrghyz, Kara-Kalpak, Bashkir peoples. They all use the ornaments closely akin to those of the Karachays and Balkars. The fact that these two groups of Turkic peoples are separated by a large distance, one living in Asia, and the other in the Caucasus, makes it very doubtful that they could have influenced each other directly, as neighbours do; it can only be explained by the presence of a common element – i.e. the Kipchaks”²⁴⁹. This being said, E. N. Studenetskaya believes that it were the

²⁴⁷ Pokhlyobkin V. V. Ayran / Our Peoples' Ethnic Cuisines (Major Cooking Styles, their History and Characteristics. Recipes). – Moscow: “Lyogkaya i pishchevaya promyshlennost’”, 1983. P. 287–288.

²⁴⁸ Studenetskaya E. N. The Karachays' and Balkars' Patterned Felt // CEC. Vol. 106. – Moscow, 1976. P. 202–221.

²⁴⁹ Ibid. P. 219.

Karachays and Balkars who, due to their early separation from fellow Turkic peoples, preserved the most ancient ornaments, similar to those of the Kipchak people²⁵⁰.

No less remarkable is the fact that the Karachays and Balkars follow ancient Turkic conventions in making belts decorated with plates; this was noticed by the renowned specialist in the Turkic material culture S. I. Vainshtein: “The resemblance between the belt from Upper Balkaria (the end of the 19th century) with the belt found in the burial site of Kara-Choga in Tuva (the 8th – 9th centuries) is striking indeed – these being the artefacts which are separated by eleven centuries and nearly 4 thousand kilometres”²⁵¹. Nowadays, Caucasian decorated belts markedly differ from their Old Turkic prototypes; this being so, the strong similarity of the Balkarian belt with the Tuvan one is truly unique (Appendix 3) and bespeaks the long-standing preservation of Old Turkic cultural legacy in the highland settlements of the Balkars²⁵². Furthermore, as S. I. Vainshtein observes, the Karachay and Balkar peoples communicated the owner’s social rank by using a particular number of plates and carving them in distinctive shapes – as did the medieval Turks²⁵³.

It should be noted that Old Turkic legacy also manifests in the monumental art of the upper Kuban river dating back to the 3rd – 9th centuries. The stone sculptures found in this region were created within this period according to the Old Turkic fashion and strongly resemble the Old Turkic sculptures found in the Southern Siberia, while differing from later Polovets sculptures (Appendix 4). The eminent

²⁵⁰ *Studenetskaya E. N.* The Karachays’ and Balkars’ Patterned Felt... P. 220.

²⁵¹ *Batchayev V. M., Vainshtein S. I.* On the Problem of Nomadic Influence in the Traditional Culture of Caucasian Highlanders (Balkaria and Karachay) // *Ethnography and the Modern World. Proceedings of the All-Soviet Ethnographic Session Dedicated to the 60th Anniversary of the USSR.* – Nalchik, 1984. P. 157–158.

²⁵² *Kuznetsova A. Y.* The Karachays’ and Balkars’ Folk Art / Introd. by S. I. Vainshtein. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 1982. P. 12.

²⁵³ *Batchayev V. M., Vainshtein S. I.* On the Problem of Nomadic Influence in the Traditional Culture of Highlanders (Balkaria and Karachay) ... P. 157.

scholar in North Caucasian archaeology V. A. Kuznetsov supported the thesis about Old Turkic, rather than Polovets, influence reflected in these statues; in his opinion, typologically the sculptures discovered in the upper Kuban river are remarkably close to some of the Old Turkic statues found in Central Asia. The basic patterns of representation of the figures, position of the arms holding a vessel close to the chest, and a belted sword – these, according to the scholar, are the Old Turkic elements linking these statues to the stone sculptures found in South Siberia, Mongolia and, in part, Central Asia. This type of sculptures was certainly brought from the Eurasian steppes, and it must have been the Turks who propagated it²⁵⁴.

A. A. Demakov and O. V. Orfinskaya also remark that in research literature such statues are called “the Old Turkic type”, and the statues found in the upper Kuban river – Old Turkic ones in terms of iconography, as the scholars argue – are made of sandstone in a very skillful way. Even some individual traits of the sculptures discovered in Asia resemble those of Old Turkic statues; e.g. the shapes of the unibrow and of the nose²⁵⁵. This view was also accepted by another major specialist in Caucasian studies, archaeologist E. P. Alekseyeva²⁵⁶, while T. M. Minayeva remarked that “the statues are illustrative of the presence of nomadic Turks in the submontane part of the Kuban river area”; the scholar believed the artefacts were created in the 8th – 9th centuries²⁵⁷. L. A. Evtukhova described the most striking

²⁵⁴ *Kuznetsov V. A.* The Alan Peoples in the North Caucasus (Materials and Studies on the Archaeology of the USSR (MSA) № 106). – Moscow: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1962. P. 75.

²⁵⁵ *Demakov A. A., Orfinskaya O. V.* About a Type of Stone Statues Found in the Vicinity of the Upper Kuban River // The Culture of Eurasian Steppes in the Second Half of the 1st Millennium CE: (Excerpts on the History of Costume). Vol. 1. – Samara: Samara Regional Museum of Local History Named after P. V. Alabin, 2001. P. 123.

²⁵⁶ *Alekseyeva E. P.* An Ancient and Medieval History of Karachay-Cherkessia (Issues of Ethnic and Socioeconomic Development). – Moscow: “Nauka”, 1971. P. 101.

²⁵⁷ *Minayeva T. M.* On the History of the Alans in the Upper Kuban Region According to Archaeological Findings. – Stavropol: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1971. 216 p.

parallels to the Alan statues discovered in the upper Kuban river, namely, the Old Turkic (the 6th – 8th centuries) sculptures excavated in the North Altai, e.g. the statue № 2 from the Kosh-Agach aimag in the Tadil terrain in the Kurai steppe (Appendix 4)²⁵⁸.

As regards Old Turkic heritage in the North Caucasus, a note should be made of numerous Old Turkic runiform inscriptions in the upper Kuban river, in particular, on the walls of the ancient Khumar town (the 8th – 10th centuries). The prominent archaeologist and expert on runiform monuments I. L. Kyzlasov studied the inscriptions and arrived at the conclusion about the common origin of the Kuban and Don runiform inscriptions, which are connected to the Saltovo-Majaki culture of the Khazar Khaganate²⁵⁹. This opinion was shared by another archaeologist, S. Y. Baychorov²⁶⁰.

Research literature on the Karachays' and Balkars' ethnogenesis also suggests the considerable role of Iranian peoples, such as the Alans; some scholars, though, suppose that the Alan people included Turkic ethnic groups²⁶¹. For example, this view has been advanced by the authors of the above-mentioned seminal work *The Karachays. The Balkars*²⁶². In her book *The Karachays' and Balkars' Folk Art*, the renowned Soviet expert in the field A. Y. Kuznetsova observed that “the Alans' material and spiritual culture was greatly influenced by the Turkic ethno-cultural

²⁵⁸ *Evt'yukhova L. A.* The Stone Sculptures Found in Northern Altai // The Proceedings of the SHM (Moscow). 1941, iss. XVI. P. 120, 122.

²⁵⁹ *Kyzlasov I. L.* The Runiform Scripts of Eurasian Steppes. – Moscow: “Vostochnaya literatura”, 1994. P. 33–34.

²⁶⁰ *Baychorov S. Y.* The Old Turkic Runiform Monuments in Europe: Relation of North Caucasian Area of Runiform Writing to Volga-Don and Danube Areas / Chief ed. E. R. Tenishev. – Stavropol: “Knizhnoye izdatelstvo”, 1989. P. 166, 254.

²⁶¹ *Hajilayev H.-M. I.* Studies in Karachay-Balkar Lexicology... P. 45; *Miziyev I. M.* Towards the Beginnings of the Central Caucasus Ethnic History / Ed. and introd. by V. B. Vinogradov. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 1986. P. 78.

²⁶² *The Karachays. The Balkars...* P. 35–36.

world of North Caucasian steppes”²⁶³. Scholars underline the substantial role the Alan peoples of the upper Kuban river played in the Karachay and Balkar ethnogenesis²⁶⁴. The specialist in Alanian history G. Kokiyeu held the unwavering belief that the Karachay and Balkar peoples were ethnically connected to one of the Alanian tribes²⁶⁵.

The view concerning the Alans’ presence in the territory of the present-day Karachay and Balkaria is corroborated by archaeological discoveries. For example, the Ust-Teberda burial mound, found by T. M. Minayeva in 1939 in a few kilometres northward of Karachayevsk city, dates back to the end of the 8th – the dawn of the 10th century; the archaeologist believed it was of Alanian origin²⁶⁶. Multiple discoveries of other Alanian monuments followed in the subsequent years²⁶⁷. V. P. Alekseyev observes that written evidence supports the idea of these monuments’ Alanian origin by communicating that the upper Kuban river, as well as upper Bolshoy and Maliy Zelenchuk rivers, were populated by Alan peoples²⁶⁸.

It should be noted that the ethnonym “Alan” is still used when Karachay-Balkar native speakers address each other: “Alan!” (“Friend!”, “Compatriot!”)²⁶⁹. M. A.

²⁶³ *Kuznetsova A. Y.* The Karachays’ and Balkars’ Folk Art... P. 2–11.

²⁶⁴ *A History of Kabardino-Balkarian SSR from the Earliest Times to the Present Day. Vol. 1.* – Moscow: “Nauka”, 1967. P. 73.

²⁶⁵ *Kokiyeu G.* Revisiting the Question of the Balkars’ and Karachays’ Origin and Time of Settlement in Current Territories // “Sotcialisticheskaya Kabardino-Balkaria” Gazette. 1941, № 28–30.

²⁶⁶ *Alekseyev V. P.* Some Issues of the Balkars’ and Karachays’ Origin in Light of Anthropology // PSS. – Nalchik: “KBKI”, 1960. P. 323; *Minayeva T. M.* A Burial Mound at the Teberda River Mouth // Materials on Stavropol Krai Studies. 1955, iss. 7. P. 261–289.

²⁶⁷ *Kuznetsov V. A.* The Alan Peoples in the North Caucasus... P. 43–75.

²⁶⁸ *Alekseyev V. P.* Some Issues of the Balkars’ and Karachays’ Origin in Light of Anthropology... P. 323.

²⁶⁹ *Kumykov T. H.* The Balkar and Karachay People Ethnogenesis as Reflected in Historical Literature // PSS. – Nalchik: “KBKI”, 1960. P. 31.

Habichev remarks that “*Alan* is the conventional word the Karachay and Balkar people use to address each other”²⁷⁰. The Balkar philologist and writer S. A. Otarov refers to some field data, containing such a sentence: “Эй, маржа, аланла, сабыр эмигуз – Hey, Alans, remain patient”²⁷¹. Ethnonyms “Alan” and “As” can also be frequently seen in the Karachay-Balkar heroic epic *The Nart Sagas*: the Nart heroes address each other with these words, and the giant cyclops address Narts in the same manner²⁷². The ethnonyms are still applied to the Karachay-Balkar people. For example, the Ossetian people call their Balkar neighbours “As” (while the Ossetians’ self-designation is “Irons” or “Digors”)²⁷³. The Mingrelians call the Karachay “Alani”²⁷⁴. In this context N. Y. Marr remarked (referring to I. Kipshidze): “Interestingly, the Mingrelians use the word ‘Alans’ to speak about the Karachay Tatars living on the Northern descent of the Main Caucasian Range, in the vicinity of the mount Elbrus, near the source of the Kuban river”²⁷⁵. In his book *The Ossetian*

²⁷⁰ Habichev M. A. *The Pronoun in the Karachay-Balkar Language*. – Cherkessk: “KChKI”, 1961. P. 128.

²⁷¹ Recorded in 1959 by S. A. Otarov in the Tyrnyauz town; the informant: Biya Baizullayev (b. 1881) (The KBRI Archive. Folklore Collection 13, on. 1, case record № 15) // *The Balkar and Karachay Peoples’ Folk Poetry (The Nart Sagas. Mythological and Ceremonial Poetry)* / Comp. by T. M. Hajiyeva; Forewords by H. Hutuyev and T. M. Hajiyeva. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 1988. P. 177.

²⁷² *The Nart Sagas. Balkar and Karachay Peoples’ Heroic Epic...* P. 107, 135, 196, 334, 349, 373, 385; *Малкъар-Къарачай нарт таурухла (Malqar-Karachay Nart Tales)* / Comp. from field data by A. Z. Kholayev. – Nalchik: “K’abarty-Malqar kitab basma”, 1966. P. 63.

²⁷³ *A History of Kabardino-Balkarian SSR from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. Vol. 1. – Moscow: “Nauka”, 1967. P. 73.

²⁷⁴ Aleman A. *The Alans in Ancient and Medieval Written Records*. – Moscow: “Menedzher”, 2003. P. 32.

²⁷⁵ Marr N. Y. *The Inscription of Sarduri II, Son of Argishti, in Dash-Kerpi near Lake Chaldir (Proceedings of the Caucasian Museum. Series B.–I)*. – Petrograd: “Tipografiya RAN”, 1919. P. 4; Kipshidze I. A. *A Grammar of the Mingrelian (Iverian) Language, Supplied with an Anthology and a Dictionary // Materials on Japhetic Linguistics. VII*. – St. Petersburg: “Tipografiya Imperatorskoy Akademii nauk”, 1914. 424 p.

Language and Folklore V. I. Abayev remarks that the word has not vanished from the local usage and the Mingrelian language, as the ethnonym “Alani” is still applied to the Karachay people²⁷⁶.

Thus, the Karachay and Balkars ethnogenesis was a lengthy, complicated process, which involved the indigenous Caucasian and Iranian as well as Turkic components. The synthesis has certainly influenced both the material culture and the language of the Karachays and Balkars, while geographical isolation in the Central Caucasian mountains helped them to preserve ancient linguistic and cultural legacy, including that left by the Old Turks.

2.3. Karachay-Balkar Mythology and Epic

Based on the indigenous Caucasian motifs, Karachay-Balkar epic and mythology are very informative. The direct cultural interaction between the peoples living in the Caucasus facilitated mutual exchange of mythic elements, which found expression in the development of epic and mythic stories. Experts believe that the Nart Sagas were beginning to evolve as early as in the 4th – 3rd centuries BCE among the local tribes who created the Koban culture.²⁷⁷ However, each version (i.e. Adyghe, Ossetian, Vainakh and Karachay-Balkar ones) is distinctive in terms of its elements. Therefore, the Nart Sagas are the common heritage of all Caucasian peoples.

²⁷⁶ *Abayev V. I.* The Ossetian Language and Folklore. – Moscow, Leningrad: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1949. Vol. 1. P. 45, 47.

²⁷⁷ The Nart Sagas. Proceedings of the Conference Held at October 19–20, 1956 / Ed. by V. I. Abayev et al. – Ordzhonikidze: “Severno-Osetinskoye knizhnoye izdatelstvo”, 1957. 232 p.; The Nart Sagas (Collected Papers) / Ed. by K. Dzokayev. – Dzaudzhikau: “Gos. Izdatelstvo Severno-Osetinskoy ASSR”, 1949. 80 p.

The specialist in Caucasian studies L. I. Lavrov supposed that Karachay and Balkar beliefs incorporate three strata, namely Caucasian, Old Turkic and Alanian²⁷⁸. The Caucasian stratum, according to the scholar, is displayed in several mythological figures, such as Aymush (Adyg. *Yemysh*), the deity of livestock, Absaty (Oss. *Afsati*), the deity of hunting and patron of forests, mountains and wild beasts, and Aghach-Kishi – the forest man, and others. The Teyri (Tengri) cult is unfamiliar to other Caucasian people and, as K. G. Azamatov and L. I. Lavrov suggest, it points specifically to the ancient Turkic religion²⁷⁹. As regards the Iranian influence, a manifestation of it is visible in the images of Daevas, designated by Karachay-Balkar sources as “*деу эмезен*” (the common notion for terrible giant cyclops, hostile to Narts and people); the word *dey* also conveys such meanings as ‘a giant,’ ‘colossus,’ ‘a strong creature’²⁸⁰ (cf. Pahl. *dēw*, Avest. *daēva* – ‘an evil spirit’ in Old Iranian mythology)²⁸¹.

S. G. Kljaštornyj undertook a comparative study which indicated that the ancient Turks living in Central Asia and the Hun-Bulgarian tribes of the North Caucasus shared the common pantheon, mythology, rituals, archaic beliefs and superstitions. The scholar considers it likely that characteristic features of the ancient Central Asian religion influenced the religious teachings of the Proto-Bulgarians with their cult of Tengri-Khan²⁸².

²⁷⁸ *Lavrov L. I.* From an Expedition to Balkaria... P. 175–181; *Lavrov L. I.* Karachay and Balkaria Prior to the 1830s // CEC. 1969, iss. 4. P. 106–107.

²⁷⁹ *Azamatov K. G.* The Vestiges of Heathendom in the Balkars’ Beliefs... P. 146, 161.

²⁸⁰ The Nart Sagas. Balkar and Karachay Peoples’ Heroic Epic... P. 103, 122, 142, 346, 370, 644; KBRD (A Karachay-Balkar-Russian Dictionary: About 30 000 Words / Ed. by E. R. Tenishev, H. I. Suyunchev. – Moscow: “Russkij yazyk”, 1989). P. 203.

²⁸¹ *Chunakova O. M.* A Pahlavi Dictionary of Zoroastrian Terms, Mythical Figures and Mythological Symbols. – Moscow: “Vostochnaya literatura”, 2004. P. 103–104.

²⁸² *Kljaštornyj S. G.* “The People of Asparuh”, the Caucasian Huns and the Old Turkic Olympus // The Oldest States in Eastern Europe. 1998. In Memoriam of A. P. Novoseltsev. – Moscow: “Vostochnaya literatura”, 2000. P. 125.

According to the American Turkologist P. Golden, ancient Turkic legacy also manifests in the lupine cult, which, as studies show, was rather typical for many non-Turkic Caucasian peoples as well²⁸³. Nevertheless, it is not only universal storylines, but specifically Old Turkic ones which can be found in Karachay-Balkar mythology. The wolf is known to be one of totemic animals for Turkic-Mongolian peoples, and their epic narratives depict him as a progenitor, guide, fosterer and nurturer²⁸⁴.

The animal was deeply revered in traditional (pagan) beliefs espoused by the Karachay and Balkars. Amulets with wolf hair and bones were made in order to heal various ailments. Whatever evil spirits inhabited the Earth, the wolf could see them and eat their children; he was their most powerful enemy²⁸⁵.

In his article *A Qaračay Nart Tale of Lupine Origins: an Echo of the Ašina Tradition?*, focused on comparative research into Karachay-Balkar and ancient Turkic mythology, P. Golden reaches the conclusion that Karachay-Balkar mythology reveals Old Turkic influence; in particular, it can be seen in the lupine and serpentine figures, in the Ašina ethnogonic tale, etc.²⁸⁶ The scholar pays special attention to that part of Karachay-Balkar heroic epic which has no parallels in other Caucasian epic traditions – i.e. the legend about the birth of the Nart hero Örüzmek, who came out of a “tailed star” which fell to the Earth surface; the infant child was suckled by a she-wolf²⁸⁷. P. Golden considers these motifs to be reminiscent of the ancient Turkic ethnogonic myth²⁸⁸.

²⁸³ *Azamatov K. G.* The Vestiges of Heathendom in the Balkars' Beliefs... P. 154.

²⁸⁴ *Lipets R. S.* “The Wolf’s Face is Blessed” (Progressive Development of the Wolf’s Image in the Turkic-Mongolian Epic and Genealogical Tales) // SE. 1981, № 1. P. 120–133.

²⁸⁵ *Golden P. B.* A Qaračay Nart Tale of Lupine Origins: An Echo of the Ašina Tradition // January 2010. URL: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351331817> (accessed: 17.09.2023). P. 22.

²⁸⁶ *Ibidem.*

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.* P. 20.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.* P. 22.

Some versions of the saga portray Örüzmek as wearing a wolf fur coat, which symbolizes his power and strength, distinguishes him as the Narts' leader, the tribal patriarch, and reflects the lupine cult²⁸⁹. Örüzmek never injure wolves, nor do they cause him any harm²⁹⁰.

The expert on Karachay-Balkar folklore and epic M. D. Karaketov remarks that the Karachay-Balkar mythology preserves relics of images of such ancient Turkic deities as Tengri and Umay²⁹¹, who are referred to in runiform Orkhon-Yenisey inscriptions. It is not only the mythology, but the Karachay-Balkar language as well which retains the image of Tengri, pronounced as Teyri. When a native speaker of the language wants to emphasize his trustworthiness, he is likely to say: “*Teÿpu керму аймama!*”, i.e. “By Teyri’s name, I’m telling the truth!”²⁹². According to K. G. Azamatov, “the Balkars inherited the Teyri deity from the ancient Turks, in particular from the Polovets people, who had served as a constituent part in the Balkars’ ethnic formation”²⁹³.

Balkar and Karachay epic literature includes texts focused exclusively on Umay-Biyče (Lady Umay)²⁹⁴. Scholars note that the Nart song “Umay-Biyče” is a fragment of what used to be a ritual song of praise, performed during hunting ceremonies²⁹⁵. Other Caucasian peoples’ epic texts do not include this song and the figure of Umay. In Karachay-Balkar beliefs, the image of Umay (Umay-Biyče,

²⁸⁹ The Nart Sagas. The Balkar and Karachay Peoples’ Heroic Epic... P. 36.

²⁹⁰ Ibid. P. 619.

²⁹¹ The Karachays. The Balkars... P. 415; See also: *Potapov L. P.* Umay, the Old Turkic Goddess, in the Light of Ethnographical Data // Turkology Collection 1972. – M.: “GRVL”, 1973. P. 265–286.

²⁹² *Shamanov I. M.* The Old Turkic Supreme Deity Tengri (Teyri) in Karachay and Balkaria // Issues of Archaeology and Ethnography in Karachaevo-Cherkessia. – Cherkessk, 1983. P. 155–170.

²⁹³ *Azamatov K. G.* The Vestiges of Heathendom in the Balkars’ Beliefs... P. 146.

²⁹⁴ The Nart Sagas. Balkar and Karachay Peoples’ Heroic Epic... P. 34, 283, 582, 640; *Jurtubayev M. Ch.* Mythology and Epic of the Karachay-Balkar People. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 2011. P. 92–94.

²⁹⁵ The Nart Sagas. Balkar and Karachay Peoples’ Heroic Epic... P. 34.

Ummakhan) is closely related to the supreme deity Teyri. Umay's role is not only that of the patroness of soil and human fertility; she is, first and foremost, the goddess of motherhood and childbearing – exactly as she is in ancient Turkic mythology.

Some scholars also note that the Karachay-Balkar religious connection with the ancient Turkic world is manifest in the ritual of “bathing a frog”, performed in order to invoke rain, as well as in *Čök*, the ritual performed to commemorate the dead relatives; the latter is mentioned already in Orkhon-Yenisey inscriptions²⁹⁶.

The Karachay-Balkar pantheon also includes a deity called Ölgemay (seldom referred to as Ölgentay), who may be related to the ancient Turkic Ulgenem, as M. D. Karaketov suggests²⁹⁷. Erklileyli Erk-Jilan is another deity of Turkic descent; he is simultaneously malign and benevolent. He presides over the underworld, called Erk-Asselik or Esselik²⁹⁸. The Karachays and Balkars are also familiar with the ancient Turkic deity Yer-Sub, known by the Karachay-Balkar name Jer-Suumay; meanwhile, Jer-Suu denotes the middle world²⁹⁹.

An important figure of the Karachay-Balkar epic is Gemuda, a mighty horse, whose master is Qarašaway, a leading epic hero. This “three-legged, brass-eared, steel-hooved” stallion who can speak like a human (*Qarašaway and Gemuda, Gemuda, A Song to Gemuda*) is given such a significant role in the epic texts, that sometimes it may create the impression that the animal subordinates Qarašaway himself; the hero seems to be highly dependent upon the horse and seeks its advice to undertake endeavour of any kind. R. S. Lipets argues that such plotlines can be traced back to the genre of “praise to the horse” which is widespread in Turkic and

²⁹⁶ *Miziyeu I. M.* Ethnographical Data About the Balkar and Karachay Ethnogenesis... P. 139.

²⁹⁷ *The Karachays. The Balkars...* P. 415.

²⁹⁸ *Ibidem.*

²⁹⁹ *Ibidem.*

Mongolian peoples' epic narratives³⁰⁰. The Altay epic called "Maadai-Kara" has a particularly large number of parallels to the Qarašaway cycle.

The facts presented in this section indicate that, in addition to elements common to all Caucasian epic narratives, Karachay-Balkar epic and mythology incorporate a number of important Old Turkic storylines, heroes and material objects, all of which point to the continuity between these cultures.

³⁰⁰ *Lipets R. S.* The Images of Batyr and his Horse in the Turkic-Mongolian Epic. – Moscow: "Nauka", 1984. P. 124–146.

CHAPTER 3. FRAGMENTS OF THE OLD TURKIC MONUMENTS: TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION

3.1. The *İrq Bitig*: chapter III, the meaning of the word *qarakuš*

Interpretation of Chapter III of the *İrq Bitig* is highly debatable, and some of its translations are fundamentally different. Here is the transcription of the text:



Ill. 4. The *İrq Bitig*, Chapter III (source: The British Library)³⁰¹.

Altun qanatlıy

talim qara quš män.

Tanim tüsi taqı tükämäzkän

talujda jatipan

tapladuqimın tutar män

säbdükimin jijür män.

Anday küçlüg män.

Ança bilinlär ädgü ol

³⁰¹ The Book of Omens. The British Library. Manuscript Or.8212/161 // URL: <https://idp.bl.uk/collection/0EB6E2F74517416E9C8C2A63B67BD21D/> (accessed: 01.04.2024).

This fragment has been translated into different languages at least six times. The first Russian translation was made in 1951 by S. E. Malov:

Я – чёрная хищная птица с золотыми крыльями.
 Добыча для моего тела совсем не истощится.
 Находясь на море,
 я ловлю нравящееся мне и ем моё любимое.
 Так я силен. Знайте так: это – хорошо!³⁰²

I am a black, gold-winged bird of prey.
 Food for my body will not run out at all.
 Being at sea,
 I catch what I like and eat what I favour.
 I am that strong. Know thus: this is good!
 (our translation from Russian – A. G.)

According to S. E. Malov's translation, the chapter is about a black predatory bird having golden wings; it lives or hunts at sea; seeing it is a good omen.

The word combination *qara-kuš* can be found in many Turkic languages. The word *күш* (*kuš*) means 'bird' in all Turkic languages, and in Karachay-Balkar it also denotes an "eagle", "griffon vulture". According to A. N. Kononov, the word *кара* (*qara*) carries the following meanings: Kyrg., Uyg., Nog., Turkm., KKalp. 'big', 'large' and common to all Turkic languages *кара күш* (*qara kuš*) 'eagle' < 'big bird'; and also 'main', 'great', 'mighty', 'strong'³⁰³. All these meanings are relevant for the Karachay-Balkar language. L. Z. Budagov also notes that in Turkish, when combined

³⁰² Malov S. E. Old Turkic Written Monuments. Texts and Studies... P. 80–92.

³⁰³ Kononov A. N. Semantics of Colour Naming in Turkic Languages // Turkology Collection 1975. – Moscow: "Nauka, GRVL", 1978. P. 162.

with personal names, the word conveys such meanings as ‘fearsome’, ‘intimidating’ (Kara-Mustafa etc.)³⁰⁴. In the language of the Karategin Kyrghyz the meaning of *kapa* is ‘big’, ‘large’ (*kapa-мол* ‘big cattle’)³⁰⁵; the same applies to other Turkic languages: Kyrg., Uyg., KKalp., Nog. *kapa мал*, Turkm. *zapa мал*, Uzb. *кора мал* ‘big cattle’³⁰⁶. The Turkic epic called *The Book of Dede Korkut* describes the hero’s horse and weapon using such attributes as *kara aygır* ‘mighty steed’, *kara polat* ‘damask sword’³⁰⁷.

The Dictionary of Mahmud Kashgari provides the following definitions of the word combination *qara quš*: 1) ‘the Libra constellation’; 2) ‘the planet Jupiter (a morning star)’; 3) ‘an eagle’³⁰⁸. *Aquila*, i.e. ‘an eagle’, is the meaning of *kara kus* in the *Codex Cumanicus*³⁰⁹. In modern Turkic languages, the word *каракуш* / *qarakuš* is applied to various kinds of predatory birds³¹⁰: Alt. *кара гыш* ‘a golden eagle’³¹¹, Tat. *каракуш* ‘a golden eagle’, ‘an eagle’, MU *qara quš* ‘a golden eagle’, MK *qara*

³⁰⁴ *Budagov L. Z.* A Comparative Dictionary of Turkic-Tatar Parlanges Including Most Widely Used Arabic and Persian Words Translated into Russian: In 2 Vol. – St. Petersburg: “Tipografiya Imperatorskoy Akademii Nauk”, 1869–1871. P. 53.

³⁰⁵ *Karmysheva B. H.* The Karategin Kyrghyz / Introd. article and Glossary of local terms by S. S. Gubayeva. – Moscow: “Nauka”, 2009. P. 274.

³⁰⁶ *Kononov A. N.* Semantics of Colour Naming in Turkic Languages... P. 162–163.

³⁰⁷ *Ibidem.*

³⁰⁸ *Mahmud al-Kashgari.* A Compendium of the Turkic Dialects / Transl., introd. and comm. by Z.-A. M. Auezova. Indices by R. Ermers. – Almaty: “Daik-Press”, 2005. P. 322.

³⁰⁹ *Kuun G.* Codex Cumanicus, Bibliothecae ad templum divi Marci Venetiarum... P. 180.

³¹⁰ The Proto-Turkic Ancestor Language. The Worldview of the Proto-Turks According to Linguistic Data // Comparative Historical Grammar of Turkic Languages. Vol. 6 / Ed. by E. R. Tenishev and A. V. Dybo. – Moscow: “Nauka”, 2006. P. 702.

³¹¹ A Dictionary of Altaian and Aladag Parlanges of the Turkic Language / Comp. by protopresbyter V. Verbitskiy. – Gorno-Altaysk: “Ak Chechek”, 2005. P. 130.

*qus*³¹², Turk., Ott. *qara qus*, Nog. *qara qus*, Kyrg. *кара куш* ‘a steppe eagle’³¹³ > Rus. *карагуш* (‘an eastern imperial eagle, long-legged buzzard or golden eagle’).

It should be noted that each translator understood the meaning of the word *qarakuš* in his or her own manner, and therefore diverse interpretations of the fragment were offered – apparently, the scholars did not pay due attention to archaeological data (the Kopyony chaatas of the 8th – 9th centuries and the like) and to the Old Turkic texts which reflect the 6th – 10th centuries Turks’ religious beliefs and mythology bequeathed to modern Turkic peoples. Yet, it is the interdisciplinary approach which was strongly recommended by I. V. Steblyova to interpreters of Old Turkic monuments³¹⁴.

The scholar gave her own interpretation of the fragment, translating *talim qarakuš* as ‘хищный беркут’³¹⁵ – ‘a predatory golden eagle’. In 1993, T. Tekin translated *talim qarakuš* into English as a ‘predatory eagle’³¹⁶. R. Dor rendered the word *qarakuš* into French as an ‘*aigle ravisseur*’³¹⁷, i.e. a ‘predatory eagle’, and his interpretation of the text is similar to that of T. Tekin, but the French version is rather questionable: for some unexplained reason, R. Dor translated one of the key words, *taluj* ‘sea’, as ‘river’, and the word combination *talujda jatipan* as ‘I live by the river’, which contradicts the original text. Presumably the scholar was puzzled by the idea of a bird living in the ocean; if this is the case, then it is a glaring example of an error

³¹² Houtsma M. T. Ein Türkisch-Arabisches Glossar... S. 32, 88.

³¹³ A Kyrghyz-Russian Dictionary in two volumes: 40 000 words / Comp. by K. K. Yudakhin. Vol. 1, A–K. – Frunze: “Glavnaya redaktsiya Kirgizskoy Sovetskoy Entsiklopedii”, 1985. P. 456.

³¹⁴ Steblyova I. V. Towards Reconstruction of the Old Turkic Religious and Mythological System // Turkology Collection 1971. – Moscow: “GRVL”, 1972. P. 222.

³¹⁵ Steblyova I. V. The Old Turkic Book of Divination as a Work of Poetry // History, Culture, and Languages of Eastern Peoples. – Moscow: “GRVL”, 1970. P. 150–177.

³¹⁶ Tekin T. Irk Bitig. The Book of Omens... P. 9.

³¹⁷ İrq Bitig, jeu divinatoire turk-ancien / Traduit et présenté par Rémy Dor... P. 81.

which may occur when a written monument is being interpreted outside of its mythological context.

A. N. Garkávets in 2022 published his translation of the *İrq Bitig*, which is markedly influenced by T. Tekin's and R. Dor's versions; *talim qaraqus* is rendered as 'хищный орёл'³¹⁸, i.e. a 'predatory eagle'. In V. M. Yakovlev's rather loose translation (2004) the *qarakuş* is strangely rendered as 'дракон'³¹⁹ – 'a dragon'. It is important to mention that V. M. Yakovlev virtually neglects Old Turkic culture and mythology, focusing exclusively on the influence of the Chinese *I Ching* (*Book of Change*). Nevertheless, in a commentary to his translation the scholar remarks: "Literally: I am a golden-winged bird of prey" (with reference to S. E. Malov's version)³²⁰. To explain the reason behind substitution of a 'predatory bird' for 'dragon', V. M. Yakovlev points to the bird's marine habitat: "Cf., however, the 1st hexagram of the *Book of Change*, where 'hidden' dragon, i.e. not visible, not coming to the water surface; water being the dragon's element"³²¹. This line of argument does not seem quite acceptable because, as mentioned earlier, the *İrq Bitig* was created in an ancient Uyghur Manichaen community and incorporates noticeable features of Old Turkic myths and belief system, as well as traces of ancient Iranian mythology and culture.

I. V. Steblyova observed that, however lifelike the descriptions of animals and animalistic passages might be, their appearance in the *İrq Bitig* is to be seen first and foremost in a mythological context, as alluding to Siberian and Central Asian pre-shamanic and shamanic cults: in various ways, they all have association with Turkic, Mongolian, Ugrian and Tungusic beliefs. Thus, according to the scholar, the *İrq Bitig* contains an amalgam of diverse religious and mythological ideas; apparently, superstitions and popular beliefs recorded in the book reflect a primordial level of the

³¹⁸ Garkávets A. N. The *İrq Bitig*... P. 13.

³¹⁹ Yakovlev V. M. *İrq Bitik: The Old Turkic Book of Divination*... P. 123.

³²⁰ Ibidem: Commentary № 3.

³²¹ Ibidem.

religious and mythological mindset³²². However, in the introduction to his edition V. M. Yakovlev argues that the *Book of Change* obviously influenced the *İrq Bitig*; but the scholar provides no convincing reasons for that³²³.

Besides, in the 3rd commentary to his translation the scholar makes a reference to M. Erdal: “An assumption has been made that this is Garuda, a Hindu mythological creature, fairly exotic as well”³²⁴. Disagreeing with T. Tekin³²⁵, M. Erdal did propose the idea that *qarakuš* could be equated with Garuda, the winged figure from ancient Indian myths, serving as the celestial vehicle ridden by the god Vishnu³²⁶. To support this line of argument, M. Erdal quoted some words used in the Uyghur translation of the Buddhist sutra *Sekiz jükmäk: täñrilär* ‘gods’, *yäklär* ‘demons’, *ulug küçlüg luular* ‘large mighty dragons’, *gantarvilar* ‘gandharvas’ (Hindu celestial demigods), *asurlar* ‘asuras’ (a lower class of Hindu deities), *talim qara kuš kanlari* ‘the Garuda bird’, *kinarilar* ‘kinnaras’ (a special class of demigods in Hindu mythology), *maxoragilär* ‘Mahoragas’ (a race of divine beings with reptilian bodies from the waist down)³²⁷. Thus, the translator of this Buddhist sutra into the Old Uyghur language used the phrase *talim qara kuš kanlari* – ‘the master of predatory griffon vultures’ – in order to produce a more accurate Uyghur translation of the Sanskrit word *Garudas*. M. Erdal also draws attention to the fact that Garuda has golden wings, as well as *qarakuš*. Wide and golden wings of the bird are often mentioned in Hindu Sanskrit-language epic narratives as its distinguishing feature. However, after making this observation, M. Erdal did not further elaborate on interpretation of *qarakuš* image and

³²² *Steblyova I. V.* The Images in the Old Turkic “Book of Divination” (“İrq Bitig”): A Conceptual Foundation // *Semantics of Images in Oriental Literatures (Collection of Papers)* / Comp. by I. V. Steblyova. – Moscow: “Vostochnaya literatura RAN”, 1998. P. 74.

³²³ *Yakovlev V. M.* *İrq Bitig*... P. 10–12.

³²⁴ *Ibid.* P. 123. Commentary № 3.

³²⁵ *Erdal M.* Further Notes on the Irk Bitig... P. 74.

³²⁶ *Ibidem.*

³²⁷ *Ibidem.*

the idea of this creature equivalence to mythical birds. In the meantime, “golden wings” as Garuda’s distinguishing feature may signify that the fragment also suggests a mythical, not earthly, bird.

As we can see, in the translations discussed above the word combination *talim qarakuš* is rendered as a ‘predatory eagle’, ‘predatory golden eagle’, ‘dragon’, ‘Garuda’; so there is no scholarly consensus on what the word *qarakuš* denotes, and how to interpret Chapter III in general. L. Y. Tugusheva correctly observes that V. M. Yakovlev’s version, as well as other translations, contain imperfections resulting from the manuscript’s being very difficult to interpret³²⁸.

In order to accurately understand the bird’s designation, one should take into consideration that the text abounds with images of mythical animals: e.g. a snake with a golden head and a golden belly (Chapter VIII), a kuzgun raven (Chapter XIV), a white horse, reborn in three incarnations (Chapter XIX), a swan bird transporting the hero across the sky (Chapter XXXV), a cow (Chapter XLI) and a falcon (Chapter XLIV) talking like humans. The presence of such figures is consistent with the intention of the *İrq Bitig*.

Mythical birds are common to many world cultures, featuring in numerous stories which circulated in Ancient Egypt, in Sumer, among Scythians. Ancient Greek lore included the image of the Phoenix bird, regenerating from its own ashes. In medieval German and Scandinavian epic, one can find the figure of Hraesvelgr (the Old Norse *Hræsvelgr* literally meaning ‘corpse-swallower’), i.e. a giant eagle who sits at the northern edge of the heavens and originates winds and tempests by flapping his wings. Old Iranian mythology developed the memorable image of the Simurg bird. Its Arabic counterpart is called Anka, the king of birds, living in the ocean or sea. A number of Turkic mythologies (created by the Khakas, Altaians, Bashkirs) include

³²⁸ Tugusheva L. Y. [Review:] *İrq Bitik: The Old Turkic Book of Divination...* C. 310.

the image of a bird called Humai³²⁹; the Karachays and Balkars know it as Hummai, Qaraquš or Ankar. Khakas myths feature such birds as Huskhun (a legendary raven) and Hus-tes (an eagle leader of the birds)³³⁰. In the Kyrghyz *Epic of Manas* Alp Karakuš is a giant fantastic bird who helps the eponymous hero and other positive characters³³¹. When Manas fights against his enemies, the mythical bird Alp Karakuš protects him from demonic forces by extending its wings above him³³².

Containing a highly elaborate system of mythological vocabulary, the Karachay-Balkar version of the Nart sagas provides valuable information necessary for accurate understanding of the word *qarakuš* and, therefore, correct interpretation of the chapter. The titular character of the Karachay-Balkar myth *Qaraquš (The Giant Eagle)* is presented as a demiurge and patron of the good, who helps righteous people. According to the myth, Qaraquš (in some Karachay-Balkar epic narratives the bird is called by its Arabic name Ankar) is a titanesque eagle or griffin speaking in human language. A hunter saves Qaraquš, and in return it offers him three feathers, which

³²⁹ Heroic Epics of Soviet Peoples / Comp., introd. and scholarly apparatus by A. A. Petrosyan. In 2 Vol. – Moscow: “Khudozhestvennaya literatura”, 1975. P. 537; Cheremisin D. V. On the Study of Iranian-Turkic Connections in the Area of Mythology // The Siberian Indigenous People: The Issues of Studies in Endangered Languages and Cultures. Abstracts of the Scientific Conference Held in Novosibirsk at June 26–30, 1995. – Novosibirsk, 1995. P. 344.

³³⁰ The Folklore of the Sayan Turks in the 19th Century: Collected by N. F. Katanov: In 2 Vol. / Comp., transl. and ed. by A. Prelovskiy. – Moscow: “Novyj Klyuch”, 2003. P. 599.

³³¹ The Proto-Turkic Ancestor Language. The Worldview of the Proto-Turks According to Linguistic Data... P. 702; A Kyrghyz-Russian Dictionary... P. 457.

³³² Ilimbetova A. F. The Bashkir Cult of Birds in the Light of World Spiritual Heritage. – Ufa: “The Institute for the History of Language and Literature”, 2015. P. 107; See also: Nagayeva L. I. The Cult of Birds in Bashkir Folk Choreography // The All-Soviet Session Following Field Research in Ethnography and Anthropology, 1978–1979: Scientific Conference Abstracts. – Ufa, 1980. P. 190–191.

the former can burn should he ever need the bird's assistance³³³. Given how similar this plot is to the Persian epic tale of the Simurg bird and a hunter called Zal – a story not found in the epic narratives of other Turkic peoples – it was most likely borrowed from Old Iranian mythology. *Shahnameh (The Book of Kings)* describes Simurg as bestowing three feathers and providing Zal with protection. In case he needs Simurg's help, Zal should burn its feather.

In the Karachay-Balkar version, the three feathers given by Qaraquš help the hunter to gain happiness and fortune. Several times, Qaraquš tests the hunter's moral integrity before granting him enormous favours. The Karachay-Balkar myth is largely identical to its Kurdish version, except that Kurdish name of Qaraquš is Simyr; yet, the story about three magical feathers is lacking in the Kurdish version. Apparently, the materials of Karachay and Balkar epic make it reasonable to assume that 'Qaraquš' is Simurg's Turkic name.

The assumption is supported by Şeyh Süleyman Efendi's *Chagatai-Ottoman Dictionary* (the 19th century), where *qarakuş* is defined as a 'mythical eagle Ankar', 'Simurg bird', 'Humay', 'sacred bird', 'a bird of paradise'³³⁴. As noted above, the name Ankar is used in Karachay-Balkar epic, too³³⁵. A mention of mythical bird Anka can also be found in Nizami Ganjavi's poem *The Seven Beauties*, the name 'Anka' being regarded as synonymous with Simurg³³⁶. According to the Arabic version of the *Kalila and Dimna* fables, the bird Titawa Anka is the ruler and queen of all birds;

³³³ Къара къуш [Qara Quş] // Къарачай халкъ таурухла (Karachay Folk Tales) / Comp. by S. A. Gochiyayeva, R. A. Ortabayeva, H. Suyunchev. – Cherkessk: "KChKI", 1963. P. 19–25.

³³⁴ *Kúnos I.* Şeyh Suleyman Efendi's Çagatay–Osmanisches Wörterbuch. – Budapest: "Publications de la Section Orientale de la Société Ethnographique Tongroise", 1902. S. 119.

³³⁵ The Nart Sagas. The Balkar and Karachay Peoples' Heroic Epic... P. 643.

³³⁶ *Nizami Ganjavi.* The Seven Beauties / Transl. by R. Ivnev. – Baku: "Izdatelstvo AN AzSSR", 1959. P. 157, 387.

she lives in the sea (ocean) and defeats a marine spirit who kidnapped her nestlings³³⁷. Besides, Ankar and sea feature prominently in one of the key parts of the Karachay-Balkar Nart epic, namely in the *Gemuda* tale about birth of a demiurgic creature, miraculous marine horse³³⁸. Sea plays a significant role in Turkic mythology of South Siberia and Altai: e.g., a Khakas tale centres around a mythical giant fish called Kir-Palyh³³⁹, while an Altaian story involves a “swirling Big (Black) Sea”, “Yellow Sea” etc.³⁴⁰ Despite the fact that there is no sea in the Altai region, the images of *малай* ‘sea’ and *мечус* ‘ocean’ are an intrinsic part of the Altaian mythological universe³⁴¹.

As noted by A. F. Ilimbetova, according to oral narratives presented by Bashkir, Chuvash, Tatar, Kazakh, Kirghiz and Uyghur people, Qaraqūš (or Qara-Quš) is a mythical bird who brings people from the underworld to the earth³⁴². There is also a Khakas story about a mythic oracular bird called Hara hus, whose image was often depicted on shamanic tambourines³⁴³. Altaian people describe Qarakus as a “brass-clawed kara-kuš”; the bird is believed to be one of the spirits who assist the shaman in his ritual performances; during his imaginary travel to the spirit realm, she

³³⁷ The Book of Kalila and Dimna (A Collection of Fables Known as Bidpay’s Fables) / Transl. from Arabic by M. O. Attay, M. V. Ryabinin. – Moscow: “Tipografiya O. O. Gerbeka”, 1889. P. 89–91.

³³⁸ The Nart Sagas. Balkar and Karachay Peoples’ Heroic Epic... P. 14, 437, 643.

³³⁹ Heroic Epics of Soviet Peoples... P. 556; *Zhirmunsky V. M.* Turkic Heroic Epic: Selected Works. – Leningrad: “Nauka, Leningradskoye otdeleniye”, 1974. P. 297.

³⁴⁰ *Anokhin A. V.* Materials on Altaic Shamanism, collected in the Course of an Altai Expedition Undertaken in 1910–1912 to Complete the Assignment of the Russian Committee for Central and Eastern Asia Studies // Introduction by S. E. Malov. Collected Papers of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (RAS). Vol. IV, 2. – Leningrad: “Izdatelstvo RAN”, 1924. P. 87.

³⁴¹ *Tekenova U. N.* The Mythologeme of Water (River, Sea, Ocean) in Altaian Literature (as Reflected in D. Kainchin’s and K. Telesov’s Works) // Bulletin of North-Eastern Federal University. 2020, № 2 (76). P. 111.

³⁴² *Ilimbetova A. F.* The Bashkir Cult of Birds... P. 107.

³⁴³ *Kyzlasov L. R., Leontyev N. V.* Khakas Folk Paintings. – Moscow: “Nauka”, 1980. P. 56.

accompanies him as a servant and provides spirits with home brew; on the way back it is her duty to retrieve the empty birch-bark vessel and the shamanic tambourine³⁴⁴.

The aforementioned Humay, often equated with Simurg and Anka, was portrayed on Sasanian plates as a bird holding in her paws a figurine of a woman who feeds Humay with a bunch of grapes (Appendix 5). According to experts on Indian and Iranian history G. M. Bongard-Levin and E. A. Grantovskiy, the woman is a fertility deity³⁴⁵. This opinion is particularly noteworthy, because Humay is associated by scholars with the Old Turkic goddess Umay, who guarded mothers and children, protected childbearing and helped women in labour³⁴⁶. It seems plausible to assume that the ancient Indian fertility goddess was connected with the mythical Humay bird, and their representations subsequently combined to become the Old Turkic figure of Umay.

The idea that the word *qarakuš* in Chapter III refers to Humay or Simurg is corroborated by L. N. Dmitriyev's Persian Dictionary, which interprets سيمرغ^۳ [s-i-m-r-g] as carrying two meanings: 'a large fabulous bird, whose shadow looms over the entire Earth' and 'an eagle'³⁴⁷. In the 11th century manuscript written by the Syrian physician Abu Said Ubaid Allah ibn Baktishu "Manafī al'haiawan" (*On the Usefulness of Animals*, 699 AH / 1299 AD) the bird called سيمرغ^۳ is depicted as a

³⁴⁴ Dyrenkova N. P. Materials on Teleutian Shamanism // Collected Papers of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. 1949, vol. 10. P. 119–120.

³⁴⁵ Bongard-Levin G. M., Grantovskiy E. A. From Scythia to India; The Ancient Aryans: Myths and History. – Moscow: "Mysl'", 1983. P. 63.

³⁴⁶ Potapov L. P. Umay, the Old Turkic Goddess, in the Light of Ethnographical Data... P. 265–286; Potapov L. P. Altaian Shamanism. – Leningrad: "Nauka, Leningradskoye otdeleniye", 1991. P. 284–298.

³⁴⁷ A Persian-Russian Dictionary, compiled by L. N. Dmitriyev. – Mashhad: "Tipografiya Mir-Murtuza Musavi", 1906. P. 160.

fantastic griffon-headed bird (Appendix 6)³⁴⁸. Apparently, it was under the impact of Iranian mythology that the word *sumurek* (denoting ‘griffon vulture’, ‘griffin’) – obviously an altered version of “Simurg” – remained in the Ottoman Turkish language³⁴⁹.

Mention should be made that in Karachay-Balkar epic the word *къаракъуш* (*qaraquš*) also refers to the griffin, a mythological guardian of the epic Nart hero Qubu³⁵⁰. Therefore, in this case we have a clear indication that *къаракъуш* (*qaraquš*) is the Karachay-Balkar epic name of Simurg, the bird equated with the griffin (griffon vulture). Furthermore, in Karachay-Balkar epic *къаракъуш* is also known as Ankar (*Анкъар*). Interestingly, the Russian translation of *Kalila and Dimna*, made from the Arabic original by I. Y. Krachkovskiy and I. P. Kuzmin, contains a footnote with the following commentary on the word Anka: “In Arabic fairy tales, *Anka* is a favourite name of a fabulous bird resembling a griffon vulture”³⁵¹. In the meantime, the *Kalila and Dimna* translation from Arabic into Ottoman Turkish renders Anka as *Sīmurġ*³⁵². These parallels indicate that the images of *Qaraquš*, *Ankar* (*Anka*) and *Simurg* are virtually equivalent.

To interpret Chapter III, one should also take into consideration *Qaraquš*’s association with sea and her predatory nature. N. P. Ostroumov observed that, according to the tales recounted by Sart informants, in ancient times Simurg lived among people, but she took away human children and ate them. For this reason, the prophet Hanzalya ben Sayfvan prayed to the Most High, and He settled the bird out

³⁴⁸ Bayazitov R. Zh. *The Art of Muslim Countries*. – Nizhny Novgorod: “Arnika”, 1996. P. 41.

³⁴⁹ Megiser H. *Institutionum linguae Turcicae libri quatuor*. – Lipsiae, 1612. 332 p.

³⁵⁰ *Heroic Epics of Soviet Peoples...* P. 550.

³⁵¹ *Kalila and Dimna* / Transl. from Arabic by I. Y. Krachkovskiy and I. P. Kuzmin. Ed. by I. Y. Krachkovskiy. – Moscow: “Izdatelstvo Vostochnoy literatury”, 1957. P. 109.

³⁵² Zajaczkowski A. *Studja nad językiem staroosmańskim*. I. Wybrane ustępy z anatolijskotureckiego przeładu Kalili i Dimny. – Krakow: “Polska akademja umiejetności”, 1934. S. 41.

to a desert island in the sea. There she caught various animals; she could even hunt elephants and buffalos, but was pleased with other kinds of prey, such as, for example, dragons³⁵³. This narrative explains the facts that in Chapter III *qaraquš* is called *talim* ‘predatory’ and that, living in the sea, she catches and eats anything she likes (*talujda jatipan tapladuqimın tutar män*). Then S. E. Malov’s translation of the previous line ‘*tanım tüsi taqı tükämäzkän*’ as ‘food for my body will not run out at all’ is perfectly understandable, because it hints at the abundance of food in the sea (ocean) where Anka (Qaraquš, Humay) lives.

In this context, mention should be made concerning rendition of the fantastic griffin in Scythian art: it is generally depicted in moving fashion, as a predator tormenting a goat, deer, colt or moose, or holding a deer head in its beak (Appendix 7)³⁵⁴. Even more ancient monuments (Noin-Ula burial mounds, the 1st century BCE – the 2nd century CE), created by the Hsiun-nu, include such artefacts as a felt carpet (kurgan № 6) with an image of a griffin tormenting a deer³⁵⁵. S. I. Rudenko believed that this burial mound served as a grave of a significant nobleman, perhaps even related to the reigning dynasty of the Hsiun-nu. As noted by scholars, the carpet ornament reflects, preserves and conveys the distinguishing features of the ethnic culture³⁵⁶.

³⁵³ *Ostroumov N. P.* Sart Tales in Russian Rendering. – Tashkent: “Tipografiya Okruzhnogo shtaba”, 1906. P. 167.

³⁵⁴ *Gryaznov M.* Altaic Ancient Art; L'Art Ancien de l'Altai / Ed. by Prof. M. I. Artamonov. (Photo by A. Bulgakov) – Leningrad: “SHM (SPb.)”, 1958. Photo 37.

³⁵⁵ *Rudenko S. I.* The Culture of the Huins-nu and Noin-Ula Burial Mounds. – Moscow, Leningrad: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1962. P. 79; *Rudenko S. I.* Reconstruction of the Noin-Ula Carpet Original Colours / Ed. by I. A. Orbeli. – Moscow, Leningrad: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1937. 15 p.

³⁵⁶ *Larina E. I.* Tufted Carpets as an Ethnographic Source (as Exemplified in the Peoples of the Russian Empire in the 19th Century and the Beginning of the 20th Centuries). The Author’s Abstract of Diss. for the Degree of Cand. in History (Lomonosov MSU). – Moscow, 2000. P. 22.

The Soviet expert in Oriental history L. A. Lelekov observes that the predatory griffon vulture and griffin depicted in Scythian art objects is the selfsame bird, i.e. Simurg, and its image can also be seen on the golden plate and the golden jewellery found in the famous Old Turkic burial ground called the Copyony Chaatas in Khakassia (the 8th–9th centuries), which is traced back to the Khakas people's ancestors, the Yenisey Kyrghyz³⁵⁷ (Appendix 8). Moreover, archaeological studies suggest that all the artefacts which contain images of Simurg were of local, and not Iranian, manufacture³⁵⁸. This indicates that by the 8th – 9th centuries the figure of Simurg became deeply embedded in the culture of Old Turks, in particular the Kyrghyz. This being the case, the presence of Qaraquš-Simurg in the *İrq Bitig* is perfectly explicable. Therefore, it is fairly interesting that a depiction of the mythical bird can be found on the crown placed on the head of the statue representing the khagan of the Second Turkic Khaganate, Kul-Tegin (Appendix 9). Noteworthy in this connection, a leading expert on South Siberian archaeology and history L. R. Kyzlasov discovered that Manichaeism was widespread among the South Siberian Turks, especially the Kyrghyz (ancient Khakas people). Besides, according to the scholar, the ancient Khakas (Kyrghyz) actively participated in preaching the Manichaean religion to the ancient Uyghur and Khitan peoples³⁵⁹, which deserves attention in the light of the proven fact that the *İrq Bitig* was written in a Manichaean community.

The prominent role which Simurg performed in Old Turkic mythology is confirmed by a note made by the chronicler Michael the Syrian (the 13th century), in which he describes Turks as worshipping the all-encompassing god Tengri and also

³⁵⁷ *Lelekov L. A. Simurg // Myths of World Peoples: In 2 Vol. / Ed. by S. A. Tokarev. Vol. 2. – Moscow: “Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya”, 1988. P. 437; Evtukhova L. A., Kiselyov S. V. The Chaatas Near Kopyony Village // Proceedings of the SHM (Moscow). 1940, iss. XI. P. 21–54.*

³⁵⁸ *Evtukhova L. A., Kiselyov S. V. The Chaatas Near Kopyony Village... C. 51.*

³⁵⁹ *Kyzlasov L. R. Siberian Manichaeism // ER. 2001, № 5. P. 83–90.*

some being resembling a dog³⁶⁰. Simurg (Humay) is often represented as a winged dog (Iranian *Paskunj*) or the musky animal (a dog-bird, sometimes having a maw similar to the griffin's beak, who is called Samyr by the Karachays and Balkars, Hubay-Hus by the Khakas, and Qumay ('mythical winged dog', lit. Humay-bird) by the Kyrghyz))³⁶¹. It is also depicted as a nestling of the mythical griffin, emerging from a duck egg³⁶²; the Kazakh describe it as It-ala-kaz (lit. the Dog – Many coloured Goose)³⁶³. It seems reasonable to assume that it was Simurg who was referred to in the text written by Michael the Syrian.

Despite her intimidating, predatory outward form and uncontrollable temper, the mythical Simurg is a benevolent creature, who helps righteous and honest people. The shadow cast by the wings of Humay (Simurg) was believed to be a good omen, and the very appearance of this bird boded well; the ancient Turks and Iranians considered it lucky to see her, and the name Humay (*'murg-i-humay'un-bal'*) is translated from the Middle Persian (Pahlavi) as 'a bird promising happiness'. This explains why Chapter III concludes with the idea that *qarakuš* is a good omen for anyone who sees her: “*Anča bilinlär ädgü ol* ‘Know thus, this is a good omen (a favourable augury)’”.

In summary, the bird Qarakuš as presented in the manuscript and in Karachay-Balkar mythology has exactly identical features: i.e. the golden wings, predatory nature, the place of living (hunting) and a positive connotation. It seems perfectly reasonable to assume that Qarakuš, Simurg and Humay are just different names of one and the same legendary bird. The fact that this image is present in the Karachay-

³⁶⁰ *Guseynov R. A.* About the Turks within the Territory of Caucasian Albania in the 4th – 7th Centuries / Ed. by I. Aliyev. – Baku: “Izdatelstvo AN AzSSR”, 1962. P. 184; *Chronique de Michel le Syrien. T. IV* / Ed. par. J.-B. Chabot. – Paris, 1910. P. 568–570.

³⁶¹ *The Folklore of the Sayan Turks in the 19th Century...* Vol. 2. P. 599.

³⁶² *Jurtubayev M. Ch.* Karachay-Balkar Heroic Epic. – Moscow: Pomatur, 2003. P. 196.

³⁶³ *Divayev A. A.* It-ala-kaz // ER. 1908, № 1–2. P. 149–150.

Balkar language, as well as in the *Īrq Bitig* manuscript, can be obviously traced back to Iranian cultural influence.

Our translation of the word *qarakuš* allows to noticeably improve understanding of Chapter III: to clarify why the colour of the bird's wings is golden, to explain the reasons behind the mention of sea (the latter confirming the accuracy of S. E. Malov's translation of the 5th and 6th lines), and to elaborate on the positive meaning of this image in divination. We offer the following translation of this chapter:

I am the golden-winged Simurg bird.
 Food for my body will never run out.
 Living on the sea,
 I catch what I want (find) and eat what I like.
 So strong am I. Know thus: this is good!

3.2. The *Īrq Bitig*: chapter XIII, the meaning of the word *qurṭya*

Although Chapter XIII of the *Īrq Bitig* does not seem to be as controversial as Chapter III, its interpretation remains somewhat inaccurate due to misconstruing of a key lexeme in this fragment: the word *qurṭya*. S. E. Malov rendered this word into Russian as *старуха* ('old woman'), and the combination *täṅrilig qurṭya* as a *небесная (т. е. полуживая, близкая к смерти) старуха* ("a celestial (i.e. barely alive, approaching death) old woman")³⁶⁴.

³⁶⁴ Malov S. E. Old Turkic Written Monuments... P. 86.



Ill. 5. The *İrq Bitig*, Chapter XIII (source: The British Library)³⁶⁵.

Täñrilig qurtıya jurtda qalmış.
 jaylıy qamič buluñin,
 jalyaju tirilmiš,
 ölümdä özmiš tir.
 Anča biliñler [...]

Here is S. E. Malov's translation:

Говорят: небесная (т. е. полуживая,
 близкая к смерти) старуха
 Осталась дома, (когда
 другие уже откочевали).
 Она лизала край
 масляного ковша и ожила,
 избавилась от смерти.

³⁶⁵ The Book of Omens. The British Library. Manuscript Or.8212/161 // URL: <https://idp.bl.uk/collection/0EB6E2F74517416E9C8C2A63B67BD21D/> (accessed: 01.04.2024).

Так знайте [...]

(They say: a celestial (i.e. barely alive,
 approaching death) old woman
 Stayed at home (when
 others had already moved off).
 She was licking the edge
 of a greasy ladle and she came back to life,
 she avoided death.
 Know thus [...])
 (Our translation from Russian – A. G.)

I. V. Steblyova virtually replicates S. E. Malov's transcription; the only change she introduces is replacement of the letter *-i* with *-y*, which does not seem justifiable as it violates the practice of transcription and transliteration established in Turkology³⁶⁶. Nevertheless, I. V. Steblyova's rendering slightly differs from the version offered by S. E. Malov: she translates *tāḡrilig qurṭya* as *небесная (благочестивая?) старуха* ("a celestial (pious?) old woman")³⁶⁷. The question mark after the word "pious" suggests that the scholar doubted the accuracy of her translation; she renders the word *qurṭya* as *старуха* "old woman"³⁶⁸, though, as does S. E. Malov.

A. N. Garkávets's translation is somewhat different from these made by S. E. Malov and I. V. Steblyova, but he also interprets *qurṭya* as *старуха* "old woman"; as regards the phrase *tāḡrilig qurṭya*, the scholar translates it as *боговерная*³⁶⁹ "a godly old woman".

³⁶⁶ Steblyova I. V. The Old Turkic Book of Divination as a Work of Poetry... P. 158.

³⁶⁷ Ibid. P. 168.

³⁶⁸ Ibidem.

³⁶⁹ Garkávets A. N. The Īrq Bitig... P. 24.

V. M. Yakovlev' version misinterprets the meaning of Chapter XIII, including the key phrase *täñrilig qurṭya jurtda qalmiš*; as for the word *qurṭya*, it is left without translation and explanation³⁷⁰. Nevertheless, the scholar senses that the chapter is about some priestess. This is illustrated by his translation of the first sentence *täñrilig qurṭya jurtda qalmiš*: “[Некто – A. G.] был во дворце Сиванму” (“[Someone – A.G.] was in the temple of Xiwangmu”) (*Xi-wang-mu*, Chinese 西王母 “The Queen Mother of the West” is a Chinese goddess, one of the most important in the Taoist pantheon, who guards the source and fruits of immortality)³⁷¹.

T. Tekin's translation of *qurṭya* into English is *old woman*³⁷².

R. Dor's version differs considerably from those of T. Tekin and S. E. Malov, but he also translated the word *qurṭya* as “*une vieille femme* – an old woman”; the second key word, *täñrilig*, is rendered as “*dévouée a Tengri* – devoted to Tengri”, which is close to the true meaning of the word; however, the scholar mistranslates the word *qamič* as a ‘belt (scourge)’³⁷³. Although his rendering is not quite accurate, it creates the impression that, unlike other translators, R. Dor was on the right path and considered the woman to be a servant of Tengri.

As we can see, all the scholars practically followed in the steps of S. E. Malov and A. von Gabain who equated the word *qurṭya* with the Turkish *ihtiyar kadın* ‘old woman’ (*alte Frau*)³⁷⁴; this is not entirely correct in regard to the word's denotation as reflected in Old Uyghur texts, especially hermetic texts of Manichaean origin, such as the *İrq Bitig*.

Some experts have attempted to explore the etymology of the word; e.g. such an endeavour was made by E. V. Sevortyan in the *Etymological Dictionary of Turkic*

³⁷⁰ Yakovlev V. M. The *İrq Bitik*... P. 126.

³⁷¹ *Ezhov V. V. Ancient Chinese Myths / Introd. and comm. by I. O. Rodin. – Moscow: “AST, Astrel”, 2004. P. 138–139, 180.*

³⁷² Tekin T. *Irk Bitig. The Book of Omens*... P. 11.

³⁷³ *İrq Bitig, jeu divinatoire turk-ancien / Traduit et présenté par Rémy Dor*... P. 69.

³⁷⁴ Gabain A. von. *Altürkische Grammatik. – Leipzig, 1950. S. 331.*

Languages. The scholar suggests there is a connection between *қуртқа* < **курутқа* and *урутқа*, which is recorded in *Kitab At-Tuhfa az-Zakiya Fi-l-Lugat at-Turkiya (An Exquisite Gift to the Turkic Language)*, but he makes a caveat regarding the fact that this connection is not proven yet, and the initial *қ*- in the lexemes *қу:ртқа*, *курутқа* could emerge or disappear due to the influence of *қуғ** ‘wily’; for comparison, the scholar points to the word *қу:кам* (‘a witch’ in Khakas) with theoretically possible **қу:урутқа қу:рутқ* > *қуртқа*³⁷⁵. This word can also be found in some Chagatai texts, e.g. in the language of the translation and exegesis (Tafsir) of the Quran, which was described in detail by A. K. Borovkov. The scholar provides the sole meaning of the lexeme *қуртқа* – ‘old woman’: *мәнім кишим қуртқа туруп* ‘*үдтри кәсилмиш* – “my wife is an old woman, past her femininity (she cannot deliver a child)”³⁷⁶. The same rendering (*старуха*, ‘old woman’) is offered by E. N. Nadzhip³⁷⁷.

The Dictionary compiled by Pavet de Courteille also contains the Chag. *قورتغا* ‘old woman’³⁷⁸.

When interpreting the fragment in question, one should take into consideration that many languages, Turkic languages included, tend to combine such denotations as an ‘old woman, grandame’ and a ‘witch, sorceress’ in a single word. For example, in the German translation of the *Codex Cumanicus* the lexeme *kurtka* is rendered as *en*

³⁷⁵ An Etymological Dictionary of Turkic Languages: Common Turkic and Interturkic Lexical Bases. Vol. VI. [Iss. 2]: Common Turkic and Interturkic Lexical Bases with the Initial Letter K / Ed. by D. F. Blagova. – Moscow: “Nauka”, 2000. P. 169.

³⁷⁶ Borovkov A. K. The Vocabulary of Central Asian Tafsir in the 12th – 13th Centuries. – Moscow: “Izdatelstvo Vostochnoy literatury”, 1963. P. 218.

³⁷⁷ Nadzhip E. N. Studies in the History of Turkic Languages of the 11th – 14th Centuries. – Moscow: “Nauka”, 1989. P. 208.

³⁷⁸ Kuun G. Codex Cumanicus, Bibliothecae ad templum divi Marci Venetiarum... P. 232.

babe ‘old woman’³⁷⁹, but G. Kuun also points to its Latin equivalent *vetula*³⁸⁰ with its two meanings: ‘old lady’ and ‘old witch’³⁸¹.

In the Karachay-Balkar language, the word *къуртха* denotes a ‘wizardess’, ‘divineress’, ‘temple priestess’, ‘progenitrix’³⁸². In the scholarly edition of the Nart sagas the lexeme *къуртха* is rendered into Russian mostly as *ведунья*³⁸³ (‘wizardess’), but sometimes as *веиунья*³⁸⁴ (‘divineress’). These meanings are not recorded in the Etymological Dictionary of Turkic Languages. When Islam was introduced to the land, the Karachay-Balkar word *къуртха* assumed some negative meanings, such as ‘beldam’, ‘old witch’: *обурдан ычхында къурхагъа* – “to evade a werewolf and to meet a witch” (“out of the frying-pan into the fire”)³⁸⁵. “Who is *къуртха*?”, was the question we addressed to a native resident of the Upper Balkaria village, and her reply was as follows: “*Къуртхауа аман затты. Хыйны этеди ол*” – “*Къуртха* is a wicked vixen, she practices witchcraft”³⁸⁶. Such a comment seems quite natural because the Muslim religion strictly forbids witchcraft and sorcery. Therefore, assumedly it was the introduction of Islam which caused the word *къуртха* to acquire negative meanings in the everyday language, whereas its positive connotations only remained in old epic texts.

³⁷⁹ Ibid. P. 232.

³⁸⁰ Ibid. P. 266.

³⁸¹ An Abridged Latin Dictionary of Ananyev, Yasnetskiy and Lebedinskiy, published by P. M. Leontyev. – Moscow: “Universitetskaya tipografiya (M. Katkov)”, 1883. P. 1116.

³⁸² The Nart Sagas. Balkar and Karachay Peoples’ Heroic Epic... P. 645; Ёрюзмек бла къурхала // Нарт жырла бла таурухла (Nart Tales and Songs) / Comp. by M. Ch. Jurtubayev. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 1992. P. 52–54.

³⁸³ The Nart Sagas. Balkar and Karachay Peoples’ Heroic Epic... P. 24, 55, 324, 307, 396, 419, 420, 434.

³⁸⁴ Ibid. P. 347.

³⁸⁵ A Karachay-Balkar-Russian Dictionary... P. 425.

³⁸⁶ Field data gathered by A. A. Glashev in the village of Upper Balkaria in 1985 (the informant: Karabasheva Mariam Sarbiyevna).

Ancient records of the Karachay-Balkar version of the Nart Sagas contain the lexeme *кѳуртха* as applied to the main female character, the honourable mother of the Nart heroes, wise Satanay (*Сатанай* < Kar.-Balk. *сынты* ‘saint’ + *ана* ‘mother’)³⁸⁷. Her name is often paired with positive attributes and euphemisms: *бийче* ‘lady’; *ариу* ‘beautiful’; *билгич* ‘prophetic’; *хар затны билиучю Сатанай* ‘all-knowing Satanay’; *кѳнню кѳрген* ‘the one who saw a lot’ and the like. To describe her beauty, the following words are used: *даммырлыкѳ* ‘wonderful, extraordinary’; *кѳз кѳаматхан, чыммакѳ кѳоллу* ‘she who has dazzlingly beautiful white hands’ etc.³⁸⁸ The following story illustrates the meaning of Satanay’s image. Once Nart heroes saved the Earth from evil and enemies of mankind – i.e. cannibal cyclopic emegens – they left the human planet and flew to the sky. Satanay is the only one who stays in order to teach her wisdom to the Earthmen and not leave them completely alone. It is only some time later, when she can no longer live without her Narts, that she pleads Teyri (Tengri) to let her go, and with the divine blessing she leaves the planet. Teyri hauls down something like a dipper, with a handle extending up to the sky; Satanay enters the vehicle and disappears in the sky. This plotline featuring the *кѳуртха* Satanay has a direct parallel in the *İrq Bitig*, where *qurtѳa*, like Satanay, stays alone in a village (*jurtda qalmiř*); besides, both texts mention the same object – namely, a dipper.

In the meantime, one of the epic designations of Satanay is, as we have already mentioned, the word *куртха* denoting a ‘foremother’, ‘clairvoyant’, ‘divineress’, ‘the all-knowing’, ‘prophetess’³⁸⁹. Satanay’s clairvoyance and wisdom are her essential characteristics³⁹⁰. Interestingly, Satanay was educated by female wizards, *qurtkhas*, from her very young age. According to the epic, the father of Ariu Satanay (Beautiful

³⁸⁷ The Nart Sagas. Balkar and Karachay Peoples’ Heroic Epic... P. 314, 356, 357.

³⁸⁸ Ibid. P. 55.

³⁸⁹ Field data gathered by A. A. Glashev in the village of Hasanya in 1999 (the informant: Asanova Elizaveta Askhatovna).

³⁹⁰ The Nart Sagas. Balkar and Karachay Peoples’ Heroic Epic... P. 24, 314, 388.

Satanay) was the Sun, and the Moon was her mother. The newly-born girl was kidnapped by a marine dragon, but later adopted by an old *къуртха*; the woman brought the child up, taught her wisdom, and later married to the great Nart hero, Örüzmek³⁹¹. Furthermore, in the tale titled *Сатанай Темир-къапуну аскерин хорлайды* (“Satanay defeats the army of Temir-капу”) one can find the name of the chief qurtkha of the Nart land (“*нарт элени баи къуртхасы*”) – it is Tohana, and it was her who brought Satanay up³⁹². In a Russian translation of the epic *къуртха* is rendered as ‘*вещунья*’ – ‘divineress’, and the phrase ‘*нарт элени баи къуртхасы*’ as ‘*главная вещунья страны нартов*’³⁹³ – ‘the chief divineress of the Nart land’.

In Karachay-Balkar epic, the word *къуртха* also applies to other characters, i.e. prophetic wizardesses, whose advice frequently helps the epic heroes. The tale titled *Ёрюзмек бла къуртхала* (“Örüzmek and Qurtkhas”) present the mythical women as playing a particularly important role. When preparing to fight against *Къызыл Фук* (lit. “Red evil spirit”), Nart heroes ask qurtkhas for advice, and following it the main hero, Örüzmek, defeats the evil spirit, and then kills him by the direction of the oldest, the most respected qurtkha; after this all life on Earth resumes its normal course³⁹⁴.

The birth and survival of Qaraşaway – another leading character of the Karachay-Balkar epic – are also connected with a qurtkha’s help. According to the tale of *The Birth of Qaraşaway*, the hero’s mother was a daughter of giant emegen Bayrim-kiz (who was a qurtkha, too), taken as wife by the Nart hero Alaugan. Alaugan’s wife ate all their children. In apprehensive expectation of a new childbirth, Alaugan asks a qurtkha to help him, and she suggests that the baby be hidden on the

³⁹¹ The Nart Sagas. Balkar and Karachay Peoples’ Heroic Epic... P. 71–73.

³⁹² Ibid. P. 104.

³⁹³ Ibid. P. 347.

³⁹⁴ Ёрюзмек бла къуртхала // Нарт жырла бла таурухла (Nart Tales and Songs) ... P. 52–54.

very top of the mount Elbrus (*Mingi-Taw* – “The Eternal Mountain”); there the future hero grows up, eating icicles and drinking healthful water³⁹⁵.

Another famous and important qurtkha, Mičiliu, could discern which one of the Nart heroes was riding, by merely getting her ears down to the ground³⁹⁶.

The examples from the Karachay-Balkar epic texts make it reasonable to assume that it is not just an “old woman” who is featured in Chapter XIII of the *İrq Bitig*, but a divineress.

In order to correctly interpret the lexeme *qurtqa*, the meaning of *täñrilig* should also be clarified; R. Dor translated it as “devoted to Tengri”, and V. M. Yakovlev omitted it from his translation. As noted above, S. E. Malov rendered it into Russian as *небесная* (*т. е. полуживая, близкая к смерти*) – “celestial (i.e. barely alive, approaching death)”, and I. V. Steblyova as *небесная* (*благочестивая?*) – “celestial (pious?)”, adding in a commentary: “S. E. Malov translates the word *täñrilig* as “celestial” and interprets it as ‘barely alive, approaching death’. For the purpose of comparison, it is useful to examine the record of Chokan Valihanov. According to Khazakh beliefs, the sky is inhabited by celestial humans; one of them is a fabulously rich old woman. <...> And the rainbow is called *Kempirden kosagy*, lit. ‘the old woman’s *kosag*’, i.e. a rope with loops, which serves for two-side sheep tethering. Cf. a Turkmen tale about a ‘thundering grandmother’: when the old lady tears her *sanač* (leather sack, water bag), thunder roars”³⁹⁷. A. von Gabain interprets the word *täñrilig* by providing such a meaning as *Götzentempel* ‘heathen temple’, and translates the word into Turkish as *müşrik mabedi* ‘an idolatrous temple’³⁹⁸. In Manichaean texts written in Old Uyghur *täñrilig* denotes a ‘sanctuary, monastery’ or a ‘divine house’³⁹⁹.

³⁹⁵ The Nart Sagas. Balkar and Karachay Peoples’ Heroic Epic... P. 164–166.

³⁹⁶ Ibid. P. 434.

³⁹⁷ Steblyova I. V. The Old Turkic Book of Divination as a Work of Poetry... P. 168.

³⁹⁸ Gabain A. von. Alttürkische Grammatik... S. 340.

³⁹⁹ Gabain A. von. Old Turkic Literature / Transl. from German by D. D. and E. A. Vasilev // Global Turkology / Comp. and introd. by S. G. Kljaštornyj. – M.: “Nauka”, 1986. P. 324.

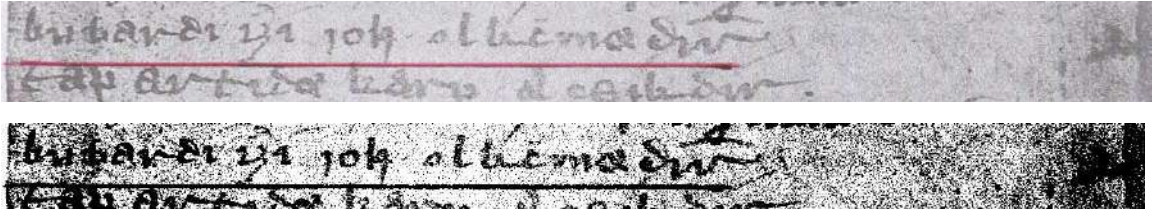
Taking into consideration the materials of Karachay-Balkar epic and the semantics of the lexeme *täñrilig*, we assume that the word combination *täñrilig qurtya* in the *İrq Bitig* denotes more than just an “old woman”; it means “a temple priestess (oracle)”, ‘a Manichaean temple (cult) acolyte’, ‘divineress’. Therefore, we can offer the following translation of Chapter XIII:

The temple priestess (oracle) stayed at the village,
 By licking a greasy ladle,
 She came back to life and escaped death.
 Know thus: [this is good!].

3.3. The Codex Cumanicus: riddle 38, the meaning of the word bu

As noted above, some fragments of the *Codex Cumanicus* and meanings of individual words prove exceedingly difficult to interpret. Translators may find the most precious part of this manuscript, i.e. riddles, particularly challenging. This is vividly illustrated by riddle 38 (G. Kuun’s edition), which has been translated by a number of scholars and aroused considerable controversy. Special mention should be made of A. N. Samoylovich’s article, in which he meticulously analyzed all the transcriptions and translations published by that time. Here is the riddle: “bu bardi izi joh. ol kema dir” (folio 60v)⁴⁰⁰.

⁴⁰⁰ *Kuun G. Codex Cumanicus, Bibliothecae ad templum divi Marci Venetiarum...* P. 146.



*Ill. 6. The Codex Cumanicus, Riddle 38*⁴⁰¹.

G. Kuun offered the following translation: “Abiit, vestigium non est. – i. e. navis”⁴⁰² – “It passed by, but left no trace – this is a ship” (my translation from Latin – A. G.). V. V. Radlov only rendered G. Kuun’s Latin translation into German: “Er fuhr und liess keine Spur. – Das Boot”⁴⁰³ – “It went by and left no trace. A boat” (my translation from German. – A. G.). The version of W. Bang is essentially similar to the previous ones: “Dies geht und hat doch keine Spur. – Das Schiff”⁴⁰⁴ – “This is going by, leaving no traces. A ship” (my translation from German – A. G.). J. Németh reproduced W. Bang’s translation⁴⁰⁵. As we can see, neither J. Németh, nor W. Bang and V. V. Radlov found the correct solution to the riddle; they all relied on G. Kuun’s translation.

A. Tietze’s English version is very similar to others: “There it went! It leaves no trail! That is the ship”⁴⁰⁶.

⁴⁰¹ Codex Cumanicus Manuscript. Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Lat. Z. 549 (=1597) <https://www.internetculturale.it/jmms/iccuviewer/iccu.jsp?id=oai%3A193.206.197.121%3A18%3AVE0049%3ACSTOR.243.15099&mode=all&teca=marciana> (дата обращения: 07.05.2024 г.).

⁴⁰² Kuun G. Codex Cumanicus, Bibliothecae ad templum divi Marci Venetiarum...

⁴⁰³ Radloff W. Das türkische Sprachmaterial des Codex Comanicus... S. 5.

⁴⁰⁴ Bang W. Über die Rätsel des Codex Cumanicus // SPAW. 1912. S. 334–353.

⁴⁰⁵ Németh J. Zu den Rätseln des Codex Cumanicus // KCsA. Bd. 2. – Budapest, 1930. S. 366–368; Németh J. Die Rätsel des Codex Cumanicus // ZDMG. 1913, 67. S. 577–608.

⁴⁰⁶ Tietze A. The Koman Riddles and Turkic Folklore. – Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966. P. 113.

The translation made by A. N. Garkávets only slightly differs from the other ones: “Bu bardī – izi yoχ. Ol, kemä-dir. Пошёл он – следа нет. Это корабль”⁴⁰⁷ (It went by – there is no trace. It is a ship) (my translation from Russian – A. G.). This translation is reproduced in the new enlarged edition of the *Codex Cumanicus*⁴⁰⁸.

As regards M. Argunşah and G. Güner’s version, it also resembles the above-cited ones: “bu bardī izi yoh. ol kemedir – o gitti, hiç bir izi yok. ol gemidir”⁴⁰⁹ – “It went away, and there is no trace. It is a ship” (our translation from Turkish – A. G.).

As a starting point, it is important to underline the fact that, in Turkic languages, the word *bu* is not the personal pronoun “it” (or “he”), but the demonstrative pronoun “this”. Therefore, the question inevitably arises: who is “this”, for that matter? Who “went by”? Remarkably, A. N. Samoylovich sensed this semantical incoherence and guessed there must have been some other word instead of the demonstrative pronoun *bu* “this”; the scholar almost reached the solution to the “conundrum”, when he noted: “For quite some time, I have been baffled by this isolated pronoun *bu* in the beginning of the sentence, which makes the riddle sound unnatural, artificial and somewhat strange for Turkish folk riddles. ‘This (sic!) went by, and there is no trace’. The answer: a boat. ‘Dies geht und hat doch keine Spur’”⁴¹⁰. A. N. Samoylovich continues by commenting that this Polovets riddle, with the small inconsistency undetected by experts, was included in the *History of Tatar Literature*, along with misspelled Polovets names of months. The scholar rightly observes that W. Bang’s facsimile of

⁴⁰⁷ Garkávets A. N. *The Codex Cumanicus: Polovets Prayers, Hymns and Riddles of the 13th – 14th Centuries...* P. 17.

⁴⁰⁸ Garkávets A. N. *The Codex Cumanicus. The Second Edition...* P. 85.

⁴⁰⁹ Argunşah M., Güner G. *Codex Cumanicus...* S. 347.

⁴¹⁰ Samoylovich A. N. *On the History and Critical Discussion of the Codex Cumanicus // RRAS. “B” Series.* – Leningrad, 1924. P. 86–89; See also: Samoylovich A. N. *On the History and Critical Discussion of the Codex Cumanicus // Samoylovich A. N. Studies in Turkic Languages. Philology. Runic Writing / Comp. and ed. by G. F. Blagova and D. M. Nasilov.* – Moscow: “Vostochnaya literatura”, 2005. P. 193–194.

the 60th folio, which contains the riddle, shows that G. Kuun's reading was correct. However, the surviving copy of the manuscript was inaccurate in recording this piece of Polovets folklore (the more so because, as W. Bang assumes, this copy is a rather crude one, taken from an older version).

In this connection, A. N. Samoylovich remarks that he was later provided with a clue to correction of the text by a Yakut riddle translated into the Russian language in N. I. Tolokonskiy's edition of *Yakut Proverbs, Riddles, Christmastide Divinations, Ceremonies, Popular Beliefs etc.*⁴¹¹: "A mare ran by and left no trace. The answer: a boat". Therefore, in A. N. Samoylovich's view, it was not the pronoun *bu* which the Polovets riddle originally contained, but a designation of some living creature, e.g. the mare, an animal the Polovets were perfectly familiar with⁴¹². This line of argument sounds fairly convincing; yet the next assumption the scholar makes is rather questionable. He argues that the manuscript contains the only mention of the mare: it is *bey*, i.e. the answer to the riddle № 33. The idea that *bey* could have been misspelled as *bu*, seems improbable to A. N. Samoylovich, yet he presumes that there may be another, more plausible explanation: the word *bugu* 'moose, deer' is familiar to such ethnic groups as the Kazakh living in steppes, the sedentary Uzbek people, the Turkic communities of the Caucasus. The scholar considers it very likely that the copyist might have misidentified the word as the pronoun *bu*, especially in case if the intervocalic *g* was omitted: *buu*. According to A. N. Samoylovich, *buu* closely resembles *bu*, yet the former is more feasible in terms of cadence, because it creates the seven-syllable line, conventional for riddles, proverbs and folk-songs: *Буу барды узу ўок* – 'A deer (moose) went by, leaving no trace'.

⁴¹¹ *Tolokonskiy N. I. Yakut Proverbs, Riddles, Christmastide Divinations, Ceremonies, Popular Beliefs etc. (Providing Explanations of Autologies and Figurative Meanings of Puzzling Proverbs) / Gathered with the immediate help of a Yakut teacher A. Kulakovskiy. – Irkutsk: "Типография Okuneva", 1914. 122 p.*

⁴¹² *Samoylovich A. N. On the History and Critical Discussion of the Codex Cumanicus // Samoylovich A. N. Studies in Turkic Languages... P. 193–194.*

In the introduction to his book on translating Polovets riddles, A. N. Samoylovich quotes W. Bang: “When it comes to such kind of riddles as, for example, those about ‘an egg’ or ‘a boat’, which seem to be universal and can be found in all literatures, I did not provide any non-Turkic counterparts: in my view, that would be unnecessary. On the contrary, what proves useful for clarification, as well as correction of inaccurate fragments, are the following: cadence, frequently used alliteration, symmetrical composition of verses (parallelism) and, finally, the fact that in many of our riddles material objects are personified”⁴¹³. A. N. Samoylovich comments the observation of the German orientalist, noting that “yet, W. Bang does not provide the riddle about ‘an egg’ <...> as well as the one about ‘a boat’, with either non-Turkic, or Turkic counterparts; the latter, in my view, would have been of particular interest regarding the riddle about ‘a boat’”⁴¹⁴.

The article by A. N. Samoylovich, very informative and insightful one, concludes that “It is not only the above-discussed riddle, but a considerable number of other Polovets riddles from the *Codex Cumanicus*, which should be critically examined”⁴¹⁵. Apparently, later on the scholar did consult Karachay-Balkar linguistic materials, yet the article was not updated. This is suggested by S. E. Malov’s remark in his work *On the History and Critical Discussion of the Codex Cumanicus*: “I am puzzled by the fact that in the Balkar language this word (*bū* ‘deer’) contains a long vowel; it was A. N. Samoylovich who first drew my attention to this”⁴¹⁶. So, A. N. Samoylovich was on the right path again, but neither him nor S. E. Malov were ready to assume that the Balkar *buu* can satisfactorily solve the problem of the riddle’s

⁴¹³ *Samoylovich A. N. On the History and Critical Discussion of the Codex Cumanicus // Samoylovich A. N. Studies in Turkic Languages... P. 193–194...*

⁴¹⁴ *Ibidem.*

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.* P. 195.

⁴¹⁶ *Malov S. E. On the History and Critical Discussion of the Codex Cumanicus... P. 367 (footnote No. 1).*

translation; S. E. Malov only acknowledged that “the fact that in the Balkar language this word (*bū* ‘deer’) contains a long vowel” was puzzling.

In our view, it is the word *buu* ‘deer’ and not *bu* ‘this’ which is used in the Polovets riddle. Most probably, the copyist inadvertently omitted the second vowel *u*, or forgot to provide it with a macron, which seems very likely since the text contains even more glaring errors. Given that the manuscript is a later copy of a yet undiscovered original, one can assume that the copyist mistook the original *buu* for a distorted version of the word *bu* ‘this’, basic in all Turkic vocabularies. Therefore, A. N. Samoylovich’s hypothesis that the later copy contains an error seems quite plausible. Unlike A. N. Samoylovich, A. N. Garkávets, W. Bang and V. V. Radlov, although they make some impermissible conjectural emendations in the *Codex Cumanicus*, do not make any emendations here, in the fragment where it is conspicuously lacking.

From our perspective, this fragment does need to be emendated, and we have a legitimate reason to place the diacritic mark $\hat{\ } over the letter *u*: *bû* ‘deer’, or to add one more *u*, which corresponds to the Karachay-Balkar *buu* ‘deer’⁴¹⁷. The word *buu* ‘deer’ is often mentioned in Karachay-Balkar folk tales and modern literature: “Тамбла буудан бюгюн къоян ахшы (proverb) – Today’s hare is better than tomorrow’s deer” (cf. “A bird in the hand is worth two in the wood”); “Тай тарладан биринде баиланады Юрко суу, андан, садакъ огъуча, секирип ётеди буу – A mountain gorge originates the Yurko river, and a deer leaps over it like an arrow from a bow”; “Адам аягъы кирмеген таулада, шындык чегетледе къулакъ юзюлген, къая оюлгъан, буу ёкюрген тауушла уллу ёзенни зынгырдатадыла – In the mountains, where no man has ever trodden, in most remote and elevated places, where sharp rocks reign, the deer’s roar fills the alpine meadows”⁴¹⁸. This word is also$

⁴¹⁷ A Karachay-Balkar-Russian Dictionary... P. 171.

⁴¹⁸ Къарачай-малкъар тилни ангылатма сёзлюгю (An Explanatory Dictionary of the Karachay-Balkar Language): In 3 Vol. / Ed. by M. Zh. Guzeyev. – Nalchik: “El-Fa”, 1996–2005. Vol. I. P. 531.

popular in Karachay and Balkar country lore: “Буу силегей (lit. deer web) – The web which flies in Indian summer”; “Буу силегей учхан заман – [The period of] Indian summer”⁴¹⁹. Taking into account all the facts presented in this section, we offer the following transcription and translation of the riddle: “Buu bardī – izi yoḡ. Ol, kemādir. – A deer went by – with no trace left. It is a ship”.

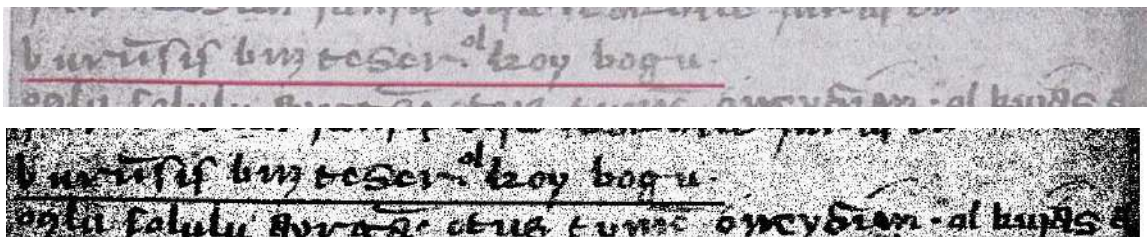
3.4. The Codex Cumanicus: riddle 31, the meaning of the word burûsis

All the readings of the 31st riddle of the *Codex Cumanicus* (folio 60v), except V. V. Radloff’s version, are fundamentally similar; however, these interpretations are questionable because, in our view, they have been based on unreasonable conjectural emendations⁴²⁰. The riddle is intrinsically interesting from both linguistic and cultural perspectives. Here is the text according to the manuscript:

burûsis buz tesor. ol koy bogu.

Transcription:

burûsis buz tesor – ol qoi boyu.



Ill. 7. The *Codex Cumanicus*, Riddle № 31⁴²¹.

⁴¹⁹ Къарачай-малкъар тилни ангылатма сѣзлюгю (An Explanatory Dictionary of the Karachay-Balkar Language) ... Vol. I. P. 531.

⁴²⁰ *Glashev A. A. The Karachay-Balkar Language and Translation of the Codex Cumanicus...* P. 126.

⁴²¹ Codex Cumanicus manuscript. Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Lat. Z. 549 (=1597) <https://www.internetculturale.it/jmms/iccuviewer/iccu.jsp?id=oai%3A193.206.197.121%3A18%3AVE0049%3ACSTOR.243.15099&mode=all&teca=marciana> (accessed: 05.04.2024).

In 1887, V. V. Radlov was the first to suggest the following reading: “Бур̄ыцыз буз тәшәп. Ол кой бо̄бу. Ohne Bohrer macht es Löher in’s Eis. Der Schafmist” (*It makes a hole in the ice using no drill. Sheep droppings*)⁴²². The German word *Bohrer* denotes ‘drill’, ‘borer’, ‘perforator’, ‘piercer’, ‘drilling device’⁴²³. The diacritic mark placed over the vowel apparently means its duplication: *-y* → *-yy*, i.e. *buruu* (*burū*). Substitution of *teser* for *mäuäp* does not seem to be reasonable, because, for example, in the Lutsk-Galich dialect of the Karaim language this word is registered in the form *mecep* (*teser*).

V. V. Radlov interpreted this riddle by referring to the life of nomadic herders; the scholar drew attention to the following fact: “In the springtime, when the sun shines on ice, the ice slightly melts, especially in the places where dark objects lie. Small sheep droppings, scattered around nomads’ *jurtas*, make deep circular holes in the ice, which look as if they were drilled in the smooth surface with an ice borer (drilling device)” (my translation from German – A. G.)⁴²⁴.

S. E. Malov disagrees with V. V. Radlov and mistakenly supposes that V. V. Radlov’s version was *burūmsyz*, i.e. a verbal noun ending with *-m*: *bur+u+m* ‘rotating’; S. E. Malov reads the word as *burunsiz* “noseless, without nose”⁴²⁵. Besides, S. E. Malov makes an attempt to link this riddle to another one, widely popular among Turkic peoples – “Beakless, it hollows the ice out. This is dribbles” – although the answers are quite different. A. Tietze researched into Coman riddles and carefully analysed them against the background of Turkic peoples’ folklore; the analysis being made, the scholar criticised S. E. Malov’s idea about the abovementioned riddle and the riddle № 31 from the *Codex Cumanicus*. In our view,

⁴²² Radloff W. Das türkische Sprachmaterial des Codex Comanicus... S. 4.

⁴²³ Rymashevskaya E. L. A Modern German-Russian and Russian-German Dictionary; Modernes Deutsch-Russisches Russisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch. – Moscow: “NIK P”, 1999. P. 81.

⁴²⁴ Radloff W. Das türkische Sprachmaterial des Codex Comanicus... S. 4.

⁴²⁵ Malov S. E. On the History and Critical Discussion of the Codex Cumanicus... P. 363.

it is fairly reasonable on the part of A. Tietze to seriously question the possible link between the *Codex Cumanicus* riddle and the riddle about dribbles (*tamči*)⁴²⁶.

Since then, interpreters have never elaborated on V. V. Radlov's reflections and commentaries on the 31st riddle. G. Kuun in his note on the word *burûsis* remarks that its Latin equivalent is *sine tubere*⁴²⁷, which translates as 'without bump', 'without lump', "without nodule", "without pointed hard nodule"; the scholar does not explain why he makes such a translation, though.

W. Bang's translation is *burunsiz* 'noseless, without a nose': "burunsiz buz teşer. ol koy bogu. Ohne Schnabel hackt es (durchlöchert es) das Eis auf. Schafmist"⁴²⁸ – "Beakless, it breaks (hollows out) ice. Sheep droppings" (my translation from German – A. G.). A. N. Garkávets makes only subtle alterations: "Burunsiz buz teşer. Ol, qoy boyu. – Без носа – лёд сверлит (точит, протачивает). Это помёт овцы"⁴²⁹ – Without a nose, it drills (gnaws through) the ice. This is sheep droppings (my translation from Russian – A. G.). C. Salemann did not comment on this riddle in his article about the *Codex Cumanicus* scholarship⁴³⁰. The American Turkologist P. Golden also accepted the conjectural emendation *burunsuz* and the translation "without a nose"⁴³¹.

M. Argunşah and G. Güner offer the following transcription and translation: "Burunsis buz teşer. Ol koy bogu – Burunsuz buz deşer. O koyun boku"⁴³² – "It breaks the ice without a nose. It is sheep droppings" (my translation from Turkish – A. G.). Their version is virtually similar to that of A. N. Garkávets.

⁴²⁶ Tietze A. The Koman Riddles... P. 91–92.

⁴²⁷ Radloff W. Das türkische Sprachmaterial des Codex Comanicus... S. 4.

⁴²⁸ Bang W. Über die Rätsel des Codex Cumanicus... S. 346.

⁴²⁹ Garkávets A. N. The Codex Cumanicus: Polovets Prayers, Hymns and Riddles of the 13th – 14th Centuries... P. 17.

⁴³⁰ Salemann C. Zur kritik des Codex Comanicus... P. 943–957.

⁴³¹ Golden P. B. The Codex Cumanicus...

⁴³² Argunşah M., Güner G. Codex Cumanicus... S. 345.

In the meanwhile, the 31st riddle of the *Codex Cumanicus* presents a very realistic sketch of nomadic life, which was first noticed by V. V. Radlov and remains part of Karachay-Balkar folklore: “*Бурӯусуз буз тешер. Кой кур.* – It can drill the ice through using no borer. This is sheep droppings”⁴³³.

Anyone who has ever lived in the mountains knows very well how, early in the spring morning, sheep usually wake up, become animated and relieve themselves. Warm sheep droppings fall down to the thin ice which formed overnight; the slight melting is sufficient for them to break through the thin icy crust. The author of this dissertation has observed this phenomenon himself in the North Caucasian mountains and compared it in his field notes with V. V. Radlov’s text⁴³⁴. Not only does this riddle provide a vivid image of the Cuman (Polovets) everyday life lived in close connection with nature, but it also reflects the unique, vividly expressive Polovets folklore and attests to the fact that the author of this part of the *Codex Cumanicus* was very well acquainted with the culture and daily experiences of Polovets people.

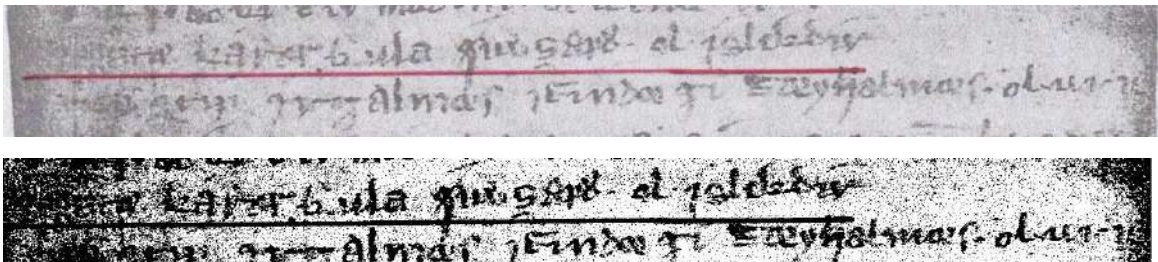
With its evocation of the pastoral stock-breeding life of Turks in submountain regions, the riddle is a valuable source for linguistic and cultural studies alike. The above-presented facts and the materials of the Karachay-Balkar language and folklore being considered, we offer the following transcription and translation of this fragment: “*Burūsuz (buruusuz) buz tesor. Ol koi boyu* – It can drill the ice through using no borer. Sheep droppings”. We leave the word *teser* without the conjectural emendation proposed by V. V. Radlov, because this correction does not seem to be reasonable enough.

⁴³³ *Glashev A. A. The Karachay-Balkar Language and Turkic Written Monuments of the 10th – 14th Centuries...* P. 126; *Karachay-Balkar Parables and Riddles = Къарачай-малкъар ойберле бла элберле / Comp. by M. M. Olmezov; transl. by H. Ch. Jurtubayev. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 2010. P. 199.*

⁴³⁴ Field data collected by A. A. Glashev at Cherek (Balkar) Gorge on 25 May 2020.

3.5. The Codex Cumanicus: riddle 3 and its interpretation

The 3rd riddle from the *Codex Cumanicus* (folio 60r) has proved very difficult to transcribe and translate. Scholars have not reached consensus about this fragment as yet; their readings also differ fundamentally. Currently, there are at least eleven translations and interpretations of this riddle; all of them, in our view, are debatable. The text in the manuscript reads as follows: “...ra(ta) kara kula juvšapd. ol, jslik-dir”.



Ill. 8. The *Codex Cumanicus*, Riddle 3⁴³⁵.

The fact that the riddle is hard to construe was highlighted by N. A. Baskakov: “Among all the riddles presented in the *Codex Cumanicus* it is the riddle № 3 – in the established order – which is the most difficult when it comes to transcription, translation and unravelling”⁴³⁶. However, W. Bang spotted the problem even earlier, when conducting a detailed research into Polovets riddles⁴³⁷.

In his endeavour to transcribe and translate the riddle, W. Bang noted that the meaning of the word *jšlik* (*išlik*) is obscure and suggested that it be read as *jiglik*, providing it with the following transcription: “...ta qara-qula juvšap dir. Ol, iglik-dir” – “Auf ... ist der Schwarzfalbe zahm geworden. Auflösung: rote Schminke”⁴³⁸ – “On

⁴³⁵ Codex Cumanicus Manuscript. Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Lat. Z. 549 (=1597) <https://www.internetculturale.it/jmms/iccuviewer/iccu.jsp?id=oai%3A193.206.197.121%3A18%3AVE0049%3ACSTOR.243.15099&mode=all&teca=marciana> (accessed: 05.04.2024).

⁴³⁶ Baskakov N. A. Revisiting the Codex Cumanicus (On a Riddle Yet Unsolved) ... P. 79–86.

⁴³⁷ Bang W. Über die Rätsel des Codex Cumanicus... 337.

⁴³⁸ Ibidem.

... a black hawk was tamed. The answer: rouge” (my translation from German – A. G.). The first word [...]ra(ta) was not deciphered. W. Bang rendered the word combination *kara kula* as ‘black and creamy, grayish-brown’, the word *juvšapd* as ‘tamed, curbed’; as for the answer, he transcribed it as *iglik-dir*, i.e. “rouge”.

The next research into Polovets riddles was conducted by J. Németh, who offered the following transcription and translation: “...ta qara qulaa juwšapdir. Ol, išlikdir – Für ungebildete Ohren ist es angenehm [Auflösung: der Pfiff]” – “It is pleasant for a commoner’s ears (The answer: a whistle)” (my translation from German – A. G.)⁴³⁹. Like W. Bang, J. Németh did not decipher the first word, [...]ra(ta). He considers *kara kula* to be a combination of the adjective *kara* ‘black, common (low-ranked)’ and the noun *kulaa* < *qulaq* ‘ear’ + affix of the allative case *-a*. The translation and interpretation of the word *juvšapd*’ is of particular interest; J. Németh renders it as “soft, pleasant”: *juvšapd*’ > *juwšapdir* and traces it back to *jumšaq*; as for *išlikdir*, the scholar translates it as “a whistle”.

Here is V. V. Radlov’s transcription of the riddle: “...ta qara-qula juvsap dir. Ol, išlik (ol ešlik)”; he renders it as “On the ... bay-coloured sheep (bulls) are chewing the cud. (The answer: 1. Work (business), someone busy; 2. Friendship, someone maintaining friendship)”⁴⁴⁰. As well as other scholars, V. V. Radlov does not decipher the first word of the fragment, [...]ra(ta). He translates the phrase *kara kula* as a horse coat colour: ‘bay-coloured’, and the word *juvšapd*’ > *juvsapdyr* as a verb form based on the lexical base *juwsa* ~ *juwša* ‘to chew the cud, to stand pacified after feeding’. The scholar offers two interpretations of the word *jislikd*’: 1) *iš* ‘work’ + affix *-lyq/-lik* in a possessive meaning > *išlik* ‘having work, busy’; 2) *eš* ‘friend’+ affix *-lyq/-lik* > *ešlik* ‘friendship, maintaining friendship, having a friend’⁴⁴¹.

⁴³⁹ *Baskakov N. A. Revisiting the Codex Cumanicus...* P. 80; *Németh J. Die Rätsel des Codex Cumanicus // ZDMG. Bd. 67. – Leipzig, 1913. S. 577–608.*

⁴⁴⁰ *Baskakov N. A. Revisiting the Codex Cumanicus...* C. 80.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibidem.*

S. E. Malov expresses legitimate criticisms of all the transcriptions and translations of the riddle. However, his version, in our view, is hardly more accurate. The scholar offers the following transcription and translation: “[köl]te kara kula juwsap dyr [ol, jašlyq dyr] – В озере желают мыться гнедые лошади (или овцы, коровы). Отгадка: ‘Это – плач / влажность глаз’”⁴⁴² (Bay-coloured horses (or sheep, cows) are willing to bathe in the lake. The answer: ‘It is weeping / watery, tearful eyes’) (our translation from Russian – A. G.). Thus, S. E. Malov deciphers the first word as [köl]te ‘in the lake,’ which does not seem to be reasonable, because the entire translation appears rather questionable. The word *juwsapd’* > *juwsap dyr* is rendered as ‘willing to bathe’, and *jšlik* is transcribed as *jašlyq* from *jaš* ‘tears’ + affix *-lyq/-lik*.

The Romanian linguist, expert on Turkic loanwords in the Romanian language, H. F. Wendt offers the following transcription and two translations: “...ta qara qula juwšap dir [ol, išlik dir] – 1) Auf ... ist ein schwarzer Turm weich (geworden?) – “On the ... a black tower became soft”; 2) Auf ... ist Schwarz und ganz weich [Auflösung: die Pelzmütze] – “On the ... [something] black [lies something] very soft” (The answer: fur cap)⁴⁴³. H. F. Wendt reads the phrase *kara kula* as a ‘black tower’, while the lexeme *juwsapd’* is interpreted as a verb form derived from the base *jumšaq* ‘soft’⁴⁴⁴. The scholar’s inference about translation of *juwsapd’* is noteworthy, and we will revisit it later.

The famous Romanian Turkologist V. Drimba published his translation of the riddle in the monograph focused on the *Codex Cumanicus*’s syntax: “...čte qara qula uwšap dir [ol yjšliq dir] – ... le noir a caressé le fauve [C’est la montagne boisée]”⁴⁴⁵ – “...the black one was caressing a beast. It is a forested mountain” (our translation from French – A. G.).

⁴⁴² Malov S. E. On the History and Critical Discussion of the Codex Cumanicus... P. 352.

⁴⁴³ Baskakov N. A. Revisiting the Codex Cumanicus... P. 81.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid. P. 82.

All the translations presented above were justifiably criticised by A. Tietze who noted that “none of the attempts to translate this riddle yielded a satisfactory result”⁴⁴⁶. One should give proper credit to A. Tietze’s intuition. He suggests a thought-provoking hypothesis that the lexeme *išlik* can be rendered as ‘a fireplace’ or ‘a smoke house’ and has a connection with the word *iš* (‘to dry in the smoke’), which is used in modern Turkic dialects of Altai and Tuva regions; the scholar also points to the Kyrghyz word *ištiq* ‘the room for hanging pelages in the smoke’. The scholar offers a possible transcription and translation of the riddle: “...ta qara qula uvšap d’ [ol jšlik dir] – On the ... the black one has caressed the bay-colored one [That is the woody mountain]”⁴⁴⁷.

Having analysed all the translations and interpretations of the fragment, N. A. Baskakov reached the following conclusion: “The discrepant transcriptions and interpretations of the riddle, as well as the variety of solutions to it, attest to the fact that there is still no unanimous consensus about the proper way of reading it, the correct transcription and commonly-accepted solution; the riddle is baffling indeed, which generates such a multitude of conflicting versions”⁴⁴⁸. However, in our view, N. A. Baskakov’s own transcription and translation are also debatable: “(qa)ra qarakula juwsap (~juwšap) dy(r) [ol yslyq (yšlyq) dyr] – Чёрный Каракула, наевшись, сонно стоит (~ пребывает в полном покое). Отгадка: Это – копоть; место, изобилующее копотью»⁴⁴⁹ (Black Karakula has just eaten his fill and is standing, sleepy (~ slumbers away in total inactivity). The answer: It is soot; a very sooty place” (our translation from Russian – A. G.).

N. A. Baskakov’s observation, quoted above, is still relevant, because the most recent publications on the topic do not provide acceptable transcriptions and translations. A. N. Garkávets published two books about the *Codex Cumanicus* in

⁴⁴⁶ Tietze A. The Koman Riddles... P. 19.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid. P. 16–17.

⁴⁴⁸ Baskakov N. A. Revisiting the Codex Cumanicus... P. 82.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibidem.

2006 and 2021, in which he offered the following version: “Qaşta qara-qula uvşapdır. Ol, işliq-dir. – На перекладине чёрный и саврасый уподобились друг другу (стали похожими). Это коптильня для кож”⁴⁵⁰ (On a girder, the black one and the sorrel one blended in (became similar). It is a smoke house for pelages) (our translation from Russian – A. G.).

M. Argunşah and G. Güner’s version reads as follows: “Kıştta qara qula uvşapdır. Ol işlikdir – Kış mevsiminde kara kula (köleye) benziyor. O bacadır”⁴⁵¹ – “In winter he resembles a black slave. It is a chimney” (our translation from Turkish – A. G.). As we can see, the Turkish scholars decipher the first word as *kıştta* ‘in winter’, and the phrase *kara kula* as ‘a black slave’. The word *işlikdir* is rendered as ‘a chimney’. In our view, this version is also debatable and semantically more different from the original text than the other versions.

To translate this riddle, we have used materials of the Karachay-Balkar language, which enables us to avoid making any conjectural emendations of the manuscript’s text and to only decipher the first word [...]ra(ta) in a new way.

In Karachay-Balkar, the lexeme *кбула* denotes ‘red,’ ‘sorrel,’ ‘reddish-yellow’⁴⁵². Therefore, the Karachay-Balkar *къара кбула* means ‘black and red’ or ‘black, red and yellow’ (cf. Kar.-Balk. *къара-къолан* ‘black and brindled (black and multi-coloured)’, ‘black and striped’⁴⁵³, *къара-къура* ‘blackish, swarthy’⁴⁵⁴). One cannot but compare the word *işlikdir* with Kar.-Balk. (UBD) *ишлик* ‘a kebab (shashlyk)’ > *ишликди* – ‘this is a kebab’ (Karachay *ишлик*, Balkar *ишлик*)⁴⁵⁵.

⁴⁵⁰ Garkávets A. N. The Codex Cumanicus: Polovets Prayers, Hymns and Riddles of the 13th – 14th Centuries... P. 14.

⁴⁵¹ Argunşah M., Güner G. Codex Cumanicus... S. 339.

⁴⁵² Къарачай-малкъар тилни анғылатма сёзлюгю (An Explanatory Dictionary of the Karachay-Balkar Language) ... Vol. II. P. 689.

⁴⁵³ Ibid. P. 572.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid. P. 149.

Therefore, the first word in the Polovets riddle is likely to be deciphered as *otta* ‘over a fire’. The word *juvšapd* from the riddle can be linked to Kar.-Balk. *жууууу* ‘to adhere, to cling to something’⁴⁵⁶, or *жумуушам* ‘to soften, to unstiffen’⁴⁵⁷.

Thus, making no conjectural emendations in the Polovets text: “*Otta qara qula juvšapd(i). Ol, išlikdir*”, – we offer two variants of translation: 1. “On the fire the black-and-red-and-yellow clung to something. This is a kebab” (in Karachay-Balkar: “*Отта къара къула жуууушанды. Ол ишликди*”); 2. “On the fire the black-and-red-and-yellow became soft (tenderized). This is kebab” (in Karachay-Balkar: “*Отта къара къула жумуушанды. Ол ишликди*”). The second variant corresponds to H. F. Wendt’s idea that *juvšapd*’ is a verb form derived from *jumšaq* ‘soft’⁴⁵⁸. This riddle provides an exact description of kebab pieces: from carbonized black to yellow and reddish-brown.

Most probably, it was everyday life of nomadic herders which was as a source of inspiration for the Cuman (Polovets) people, and this should be taken into consideration when the *Codex Cumanicus* texts are analysed. The roasted pieces of meat on a skewer (Kar.-Balk. *ишлик*) is a dish popular among many Turkic peoples from ancient times, in the area stretching from the Caucasus to Tuva⁴⁵⁹. Occasionally, skewers may be substituted with shaved sticks or twigs: the Karachays and Balkars often use them when cooking in the wild.

⁴⁵⁶ Къарачай-малкъар тилни ангылатма сѣзлюгю (An Explanatory Dictionary of the Karachay-Balkar Language) ... Vol. II. P. 965.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid. P. 946.

⁴⁵⁸ *Baskakov N. A.* Revisiting the Codex Cumanicus... P. 81.

⁴⁵⁹ *Shipova E. N.* A Dictionary of Turkic Loanwords in Russian. – Alma-Ata: “Nauka”, 1976. 444 p.; *Pokhlyobkin V. V.* Our Peoples’ Ethnic Cuisines...; The Karachays: A Historical and Ethnographical Study / Chief ed. L. I. Lavrov. – Cherkessk: “Karachaevo-Cherkesskoye otdeleniye Stavropolskogo knizhnogo izdatelstva”, 1978. P. 186; *Mahmudov K. M.* The Uzbek Cuisine. – Tashkent: “Izdatelstvo Uzbekistan”, 1974. P. 119–122; *Potapov L. P.* Essays on Tuvinian Everyday Life. – Moscow: “Nauka”, 1969. P. 187.

3.6. The Codex Cumanicus: the meaning of the word *kesene*

The German part of the *Codex Cumanicus* contains the word *kesene* (*kesenä*), but the place where its German equivalent is written is partly corrupted, and G. Kuun offers the word combination *des toden hws* – “a house of the dead”⁴⁶⁰. Scholars have encountered considerable difficulties in their attempts to translate the word itself and interpret its German counterpart. K. Grønbech offered the following reconstruction of the German text: ‘*der t[oden] hu[w]*’; he transcribed the word *kesene* as *kešene* (which is identical to the Karachay-Balkar word) and rendered it as *Grabhügel*, but with a question mark in round brackets: (?)⁴⁶¹. German-Russian dictionaries translate the word *Grabhügel* as ‘a small burial hill, grave, burial mound’⁴⁶².

G. Kuun did not succeed in finding a plausible explanation for the word; he only remarked in a footnote: “Quod ad kesena, cf. altaicum kasinti fossa” – “as for *kesenä*, cf. Altaic *käsinti* ‘moat, foss’” (our translation from Latin – A. G.)⁴⁶³. G. Kuun’s glossary of Polovets words contain two Latin translations of *kesenä*: *fossa* ‘a moat, foss’ and *bistum* ‘a statue, sculpture’⁴⁶⁴.

Presumably, all interpreters have been puzzled by the German word *Haus* ‘a house’. However, as we will show further, the German author of the *Codex Cumanicus* was right, since this word is perfectly appropriate for translation of the word *kesene*. Yet, because of G. Kuun’s doubts and his miscomprehension of the word, subsequent interpreters were even more hesitant and uncertain.

⁴⁶⁰ Kuun G. *Codex Cumanicus, Bibliothecae ad templum divi Marci Venetiarum...* P. 222, 262.

⁴⁶¹ Grønbech K. *Komanische Wörterbuch...* S. 141

⁴⁶² Polak G. F., Lindner E. B. *A German-Russian Dictionary*. – Moscow: “Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya”, 1937. P. 239.

⁴⁶³ Kuun G. *Codex Cumanicus, Bibliothecae ad templum divi Marci Venetiarum...* P. 222.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.* P. 262.

V. V. Radlov translated the word *kesene* as *Grabhügel* ‘a burial mound’, ‘burial hill’, ‘grave’⁴⁶⁵. P. Golden believes it to be a word of undetermined origin: “...*kesene* ‘grave mound,’ which is preserved in Qaraçay and Balqar *k’esene, kešene* ‘Friedhoff, grobnica’...”⁴⁶⁶. P. Golden refers to the Hungarian scholar L. Ligeti who suggested a Caucasian provenance of the word, but adduced no evidence, and also to A. Zajączkowski who pointed to P. Pelliot’s earlier, Persian etymology of the word: *kasana* ‘a small house’. However, P. Golden continues with the remark: “...it is not quite clear how the Cuman form could have emerged from the Persian...”⁴⁶⁷. A. N. Garkávets did not translate this word in his publications. The Turkish edition of the *Codex Cumanicus* (2015) provides the transcription of the word *kesene* in the Karachay-Balkar form *kēšene* and its translation as *mezar höyüğü* ‘burial mound’⁴⁶⁸ (our translation from Turkish – A. G.), which corresponds to V. V. Radlov’s version.

Mention should be made of an interesting idea suggested by V. V. Bartold, that the word refers to Polovets brick mausoleums⁴⁶⁹.

In modern Karachay-Balkar, the word *кешенэ* is preserved in the meanings ‘a mausoleum’, ‘a round or multangular jurta-shaped mausoleum with a dome’⁴⁷⁰; such kind of monuments vividly represent the Karachay and Balkar material culture, being one of its most remarkable features⁴⁷¹. According to the expert in Caucasian studies V. M. Batchayev, the Karachay-Balkar lexeme was borrowed by Abkhaz-Adyghe and

⁴⁶⁵ Radloff W. Die alttürkischen Inschriften der Mongolei von Dr. Radloff... S. 31.

⁴⁶⁶ Golden P. B. *Codex Cumanicus*...

⁴⁶⁷ Golden P. B. *Codex Cumanicus*...

⁴⁶⁸ Argunşah M., Güner G. *Codex Cumanicus*... S. 737.

⁴⁶⁹ Bartold V. V. Revisiting the Topic of Turkic and Mongolian Mortuary Rituals // NEDRAS. Iss. 1-4. – Petrograd, 1921. P. 59.

⁴⁷⁰ Къарачай-малкъар тилни ангылатма сёзлюгю (A Dictionary of the Karachay-Balkar Language). Vol. II. P. 244; A Karachay-Balkar-Russian Dictionary... P. 334.

⁴⁷¹ Miziyeв I. M. Medieval Towers and Burial Vaults in Balkaria and Karachay (the 13th – 18th Centuries) / Ed. by Prof. E. I. Krupnov. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 1970. 91 p.

other Caucasian languages⁴⁷²: Kab.-Cherkes. *чещанэ* ‘a tower, a graveside tower-shaped structure’⁴⁷³, Abkh. *а-қашана* ‘a stone graveside structure’, Sv. *kešēni* ‘a supraterranean burial vault’, Chech. *каш* (*кошан, кошана, кошō, кошē*) ‘grave’; *кешнаш* ‘graves’, ‘cemetery’⁴⁷⁴. The detailed research into mausoleums conducted by the archaeologist I. A. Druzhinina showed that *kešene* mausoleums in Kabardino-Balkaria were built by the ancestors of the Balkar people⁴⁷⁵. V. I. Abayev registered this word in Ossetian, but he was not certain about its precise meaning; the scholar even made an attempt to determine its etymological origin: “Ossetian referential texts ... do not confirm the denotation ‘a graveside structure’; they suggest a building which is used – or can be used – as a housing. This implies association with Pers. *kasana* ‘a lacquered house’, ‘a small cottage’, ‘a winter dwelling’ and the like (*vullers*). Maybe it is the Persian word used in this meaning which was the primary source, and the subsequent semantical shifts towards ‘mausoleum’ and ‘burial vault’ occurred in Turkic (Polovets) usage...”⁴⁷⁶. In Persian, the word *کاشانه* denotes a ‘large parlour’, ‘room’, ‘kiosque’, ‘hall’⁴⁷⁷.

Apparently, scholars did not take into consideration a most valuable note made by the Franciscan missionary G. de Rubrouck, who travelled to the Polovets lands in 1253 and recorded the following fact: “When burying someone, the Comans make a large mound over the departed and put up a statue for him; the statue faces East and

⁴⁷² *Batchayev V. M.* The North Caucasian Polovets and the Question of Medieval Balkaria Turkification... P. 79–95.

⁴⁷³ *Apazhev M. L., Kokov J. N.* A Kabardian-Circassian-Russian Dictionary / Ed. by B. Ch. Bizhoev. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 2008. P. 560.

⁴⁷⁴ A Chechen-Russian Dictionary / Comp. by A. G. Matsiev. – Moscow: “GIS”, 1961. P. 213.

⁴⁷⁵ *Druzhinina I. A.* The Burial Site in the Vicinity of Kashkhatau Aul (According to the Materials of I. A. Vladimirov’s Research Undertaken in 1896) // Issues of History, Philology, and Culture. 2018, iss. 4 (62). P. 177–186.

⁴⁷⁶ *Abayev V. I.* A Historical Etymological Dictionary of the Ossetian Language. – Moscow, Leningrad: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1958. Vol. 1. P. 594.

⁴⁷⁷ A Persian-Russian Dictionary, compiled by L. N. Dmitriyev... P. 238.

holds a bowl near its navel. **For wealthy people, they also build pyramids, i.e. small gable-roofed houses, and I also saw massive brick towers in some places** (highlighted by us – A. G.), and stone houses here and there, although there are barely any stone materials there”⁴⁷⁸.

The word can be found in Chagatai and Kipchak monuments of the 14th century. For example, one of the fundamental classic dictionaries of the Kipchak language, *Kitab At-Tuhfa az-Zakiya Fi-l-Lugat at-Turkiya* (“An Exquisite Gift to the Turkic Language”), contains this word in the form *кѳмәнә* denoting ‘a building with an arch or dome, a vaulted structure’⁴⁷⁹, which most probably suggests a mausoleum. The lexeme is also recorded in Russian charters of the 16th century: “...kešen’ means a stone or wooden graveside monument, especially a building...”⁴⁸⁰.

Balkarian mountains still abound with perfectly intact *кеменә* mausoleums, be it round jurta-shaped, pyramid-shaped and four-angled ones; most spectacular octangular mausoleums are plentiful in the Chegem gorge. Particular note should be made of such mausoleums of the 13th – 14th centuries as the big kešene in the village of Muhol, the multangular mausoleum in the village of Kosbarty, remarkably intact multangular mausoleums in El-Tyubyu (Verkhniy Cheghem)⁴⁸¹ (Appendix 10). Seen from a distance, such buildings do resemble inhabited houses, private dwellings; accordingly, it was quite natural on the part of the German author of the *Codex Cumanicus* to describe them as “houses for the dead”.

⁴⁷⁸ *Carpine I. de P., Rubrouck W.* A History of the Mongols. Travels to Eastern Countries / Transl. by A. I. Malein. – St. Petersburg, 1911. P. 80.

⁴⁷⁹ An Exquisite Gift to the Turkic Language. *Kitab At-Tuhfa az-Zakiya Fi-l-Lugat at-Turkiya* / Transl. by E. I. Fazylov and M. T. Ziyaeva. – Tashkent: “Fan”, 1978. P. 329.

⁴⁸⁰ *Kobenko D.* On the Location of Sarai City, the Golden Horde Capital // NEDRAS. 1890, iss. IV. P. 269–270.

⁴⁸¹ *Miziyeu I. M.* Medieval Towers and Burial Vaults in Balkaria and Karachay (the 13th – 18th Centuries) ... P. 53–71 (Photos 13, 15, 23, 24).

This kind of parallels in Polovets and Karachay-Balkar mortuary rites was noticed by H. O. Laipanov, who remarked in one of his articles: “The thesis about the Karachays’ and Balkars’ Kipchak origins is supported by material artefacts. The territory they inhabit retains burial vaults, known as *kešene* (кезене) in Polovets, *kešene* (кешене) in Karachay-Balkar. In terms of style and architecture, Karachay and Balkar supraterraneous burial vaults – *kešene* – are very similar to their Polovets counterparts, *kezene*. Supraterraneous burial vaults built by the Karachays and Balkars can be found in the vicinity of Kart-Jurt aul (in the vicinity of the Teberda resort), near Eljurt aul (Baksan) etc”⁴⁸². S. I. Vainshtein supports this view by stating that Balkarian multangular mausoleums were originally shaped as Polovets gable-roofed sepulchres⁴⁸³.

The facts presented in this section lead to the conclusion that the Polovets word *kesenä*, used in the *Codex Cumanicus*, should be translated as “a mausoleum”.

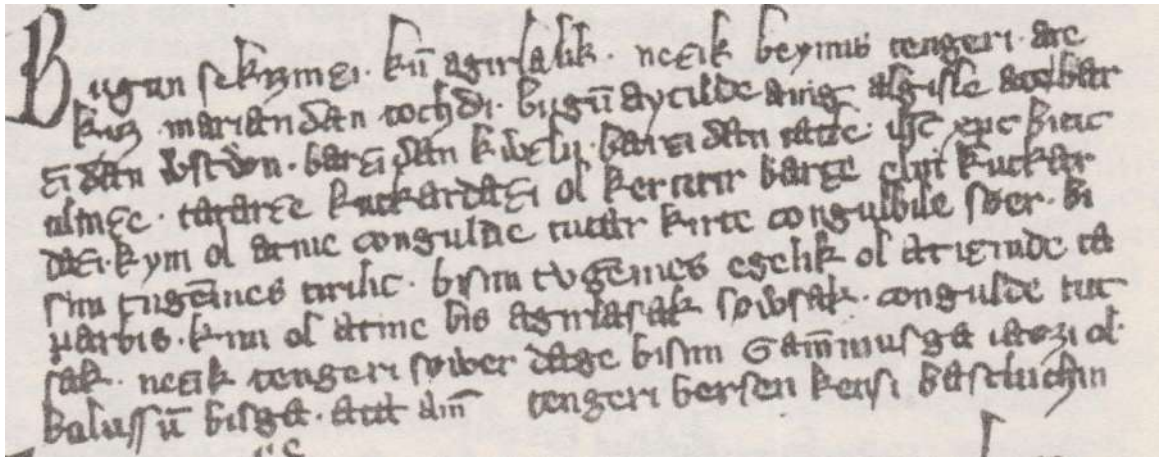
3.7. The Codex Cumanicus: interpretation of the phrase *kû agirlalik*

The “German” part of the *Codex Cumanicus* (folio 61v) contains a story of Jesus Christ’s birth – *A Sermon on the Day of God’s Circumcision – about His Nomination as the Saviour* – with the subtitle “De Sto Stephano”, containing the following text: “Bu kun sekizinci. kû agirlalik, neczik beymis tengeri are kyz mariandan tochdi”⁴⁸⁴.

⁴⁸² *Laipanov H. O.* Revisiting the Question of the Karachays’ and Balkars’ Formation // PSS. – Nalchik: “KBKI”, 1960. P. 70–80.

⁴⁸³ *Batchayev V. M., Vainshtein S. I.* On the Problem of Nomadic Influence in the Traditional Culture of Highlanders (Balkaria and Karachay) ... P. 160.

⁴⁸⁴ *Kuun G.* *Codex Cumanicus, Bibliothecae ad templum divi Marci Venetiarum...* P. 160.



Ill. 9. The Codex Cumanicus, Folio 61v⁴⁸⁵.

As the facsimile shows, the original text has a dot character between the phrases *bugun sekizinci* and *kü agirlalik*, and the fourth word, *kü*, is provided with the diacritic mark [^].

V. V. Radlov was the first to read and translate this fragment (1887): “Бу кун сакизинци кун, абырлалык! начик биймиз танри ары кыз Марямдан токты”; here is his German translation: “Heute ist der achte Tag, lasset [ihn] uns ehren! Wie Gott von der heiligen Jungfrau Maria geboren wurde, ist uns heute mitgetheilt worden”⁴⁸⁶ – “This is the eighth day, let us venerate it! Today we have been told that the Blessed Virgin Mary gave birth to God” (our translation from German – A. G.). Thus, V. V. Radlov assembled the first two sentences of the fragment, originally divided by a dot character, into one sentence.

A. N. Garkávets followed in V. V. Radlov’s steps, offering the following reading and translation: “Bügün sekizinci kün ayırlalıq, neçik Beyimiz Teñri ari qız Mariamdan [Mariandan] toçdı – Сегодня мы отмечаем восьмой день, как Господь

⁴⁸⁵ Codex Cumanicus Manuscript. Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Lat. Z. 549 (=1597) <https://www.internetculturale.it/jmms/iccuviewer/iccu.jsp?id=oai%3A193.206.197.121%3A18%3AVE0049%3ACSTOR.243.15099&mode=all&teca=marciana> (accessed: 01.04.2024).

⁴⁸⁶ Radloff W. Das türkische Sprachmaterial des Codex Comanicus... S. 83.

Бог наш родился от Святой Девы Марии”⁴⁸⁷ – “Today we celebrate the eighth day from when the Lord our God was born to the Holy Virgin Mary”. V. V. Radlov and A. N. Garkávets misspell Polovets pronunciation of Maria’s name as *Mariamdan*, instead of the manuscript’s version *Mariandan*; they also replace the original *teŋeri* (*tengeri*) (God) with *teŋri*. Such numerous conjectural emendations do not seem reasonable. In the Karachay-Balkar Upper Balkar dialect, which is the most similar to the language of the *Codex Cumanicus*, Maria’s name is pronounced as Marian, not Mariam. The word ‘God’ in the *Codex Cumanicus* is frequently spelled in two ways: as *tengri* (*tengry*) and *tengeri* – the same is the case with modern Turkic languages (Tatar, Azerbaijani, Kumyk, Tuvinian etc.). Accordingly, this conjectural emendation is not quite correct as well. A. N. Garkávets and V. V. Radlov also do not take into account the dot character between the words *sekizinczi* and *kû* and the diacritic mark ^ above the letter *u* in the word *kû*, and therefore they read the letter as a front vowel: *kûin* ‘day’. Besides, V. V. Radlov reads the word *agirlalik* as a verb meaning ‘to venerate’.

Accordingly, it is not just one, but several conjectural emendations which V. V. Radlov and A. N. Garkávets offer. In this connection, the question arises: can this fragment be read without any emendations?

The *Etymological Dictionary of Turkic Languages* indicates numerous phonetic variants of the word *kû* ‘a swan’: *күгү* in Cr.Kar., Az., OU, Chag., Turk., Kip.; *күв* in Kum. dial., Balk., Kaz., Nog., Turkm., Cr.Kar.; *кү* in Kum., Kyr., Alt., Tuv., Tof., Tel., Leb., Sh., Sag., Koyb., Kach., Küer., Tat., Uzb.; *хү*: Khak., Khak dial.; *кү* Chag., Tat., denoting: ‘swan’ everywhere, ‘wild goose’ in Uyg.; ‘fluff’ In Kum., Balk⁴⁸⁸.

⁴⁸⁷ Garkávets A. N. The Codex Cumanicus: Polovets Prayers, Hymns and Riddles of the 13th – 14th Centuries... P. 21.

⁴⁸⁸ An Etymological Dictionary of Turkic Languages: Common Turkic and Interturkic Lexical Bases. Vol. VI. [Iss. 2]: Common Turkic and Interturkic Lexical Bases with the Initial Letter K... 100.

The Karachay-Balkar word *кӳгӱ* (a variant: *зг*), along with the primary meaning ‘swan’, is also used as an attribute of the goddess of motherhood Umay⁴⁸⁹. M. Ch. Jurtubayev draws attention to the fact that there is a tradition to hold a chicken (originally swan) feather during a prayer to Umay, as an allusion to her ornithic nature. The scholar believes that the goddess’s image was developing in this manner: 1. a waterfowl bird (swan – *зг*) who lifted the earth up from the bottom of the global ocean (or generated the world in the form of an egg), Gumay, Gubay (a swan goddess), later an eagless; 2. a combination of ornithic features with features of a white female deer (another totem) – a winged she-deer, or the celestial she-deer Umay⁴⁹⁰. M. Ch. Jurtubayev also believes that in the Karachays’ and Balkars’ beliefs the power of Umay as the patroness of motherhood was delegated to a reinterpreted figure of the Virgin Mary – Bairym-biyče⁴⁹¹.

Such a reinterpretation is considered probable by other scholars as well: “They had a myth, according to which in the first days of creation there was nothing but water, and a pen (female swan) was gliding on it. Then, she dived to the bottom of the ocean and lifted up the earth, which began to enlarge, with mountains, rivers, plants and animals proliferating. That is the reason why the Turks venerated Umay as the world’s progenitrix (according to another version of the myth, initially the world was contained in the egg laid by Umay-pen). Eventually Umay-biyče acquired features of a beautiful lady living in the sky, who sometimes goes down to people; she was venerated as a goddess protecting mothers. In the 10th century CE, when the Karachays and Balkars – the Alans – converted to Christianity, the image of Umay-biyče began to blend in with that of the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, but the identification was never complete. For this reason, Karachay-Balkar mythology

⁴⁸⁹ *Jurtubayev M. Ch.* The Balkars’ and Karachays’ Ancient Beliefs. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 1991. P. 99.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibidem.*

⁴⁹¹ *Ibidem.*

retained two goddesses of motherhood – Umay and the Virgin Mary, the latter called Bairym-biyče”⁴⁹².

This leads to the conclusion that the word *kû* in the fragment is an attribute of Umay-biyče, applied to the Virgin Mary. Given a missionary message behind this part of the text, it seems reasonable to assume that, in order to clarify the Biblical text and the image of the Virgin Mary, the translator could use the word *kû* (кyy), which was supposed to evoke associations with the image of Umay. This paved the way for conversion of the Polovets (Cuman) people to Christianity, which was intended by the missionary authors of the German part of the *Codex Cumanicus*.

As regards the verb *ayïrla*, the *Etymological Dictionary of Turkic Languages* provides the following denotations: ‘to revere’, ‘to respect’, ‘to appreciate’, ‘to render honours’, ‘to pay tribute’ (Khak., Turk., Cuman)⁴⁹³, and the *Old Turkic Dictionary* defines it as ‘to show courtesy’, ‘to exalt’, ‘to attract attention to smth.’, ‘to enhance smb.’s standing, reputation’, ‘to ennoble’⁴⁹⁴.

Taking into consideration the above-presented facts, we offer the following translation of the fragment: “This is the day eight. Veneration of the Swan Lady⁴⁹⁵. What a great God was born to the beautiful Virgin Mary!”.

⁴⁹² The Proto-Turkic Ancestor Language. The Worldview of the Proto-Turks According to Linguistic Data... P. 570.

⁴⁹³ An Etymological Dictionary of Turkic Languages: Common Turkic and Interturkic Lexical Bases. Vol. 1 / Ed. by E. V. Sevortyan. – Moscow: “Nauka”, 1974. P. 87.

⁴⁹⁴ An Old Turkic Dictionary: 20 000 Words and Word Combinations... P. 19–20.

⁴⁹⁵ I.e. Mary, mother of Jesus.

CONCLUSION

1. The dissertation has summarized findings about two most famous Old Turkic monuments, the *Codex Cumanicus* and the *İrq Bitig*, which demonstrates their importance for the history and culture of Turkic peoples and explains the strong interest they continually generate among scholars and general public. This interest is promoted by state policies, in order to preserve the historical legacy and foster the sense of national and cultural identity among Turkic peoples. Notwithstanding rich historiography, the monuments still cannot be considered thoroughly studied and accurately interpreted. They have been deciphered and translated by a number of eminent Turkologists in Russia and other countries, and yet some fragments are still highly debatable; this is the case, first of all, due to prevalence of the linguistic approach which disregards interconnections between the texts of the manuscripts and Turkic cultural realia. Meanwhile, in order to properly understand the worldview and world perception of ancient peoples and their contemporary descendants, one should recreate the cultural context of the historical period in question.

2. The dissertation refers to opinions of respected authorities on linguistics, history, literature, archaeology, ethnology, who underline the specific character of historical development of the Karachay-Balkar people, their language, spiritual and material culture and emphasize the importance of Karachay-Balkar studies for deeper understanding of the evolution of Turkic languages and cultures in general. These ideas being the foundation, the dissertation has summarized data about the Karachays' and Balkars' ethnogenesis, folklore, religious beliefs, traditional way of life, funerary architecture, and compared them with linguistic and cultural data concerning other Turkic peoples. The materials provided demonstrate that there is an interconnection between the lexical semantics of some words and phrases – and the textual fragments containing them – with the linguacultural environments in which the monuments were created.

3. The interdisciplinary approach, by using the data obtained from related branches of humanities, makes it possible to comprehend the nuances of meanings of individual words and expressions, which were not taken into consideration in earlier interpretations of the Old Turkic monuments, and to clarify a number of debatable points in their translation. This has proven the interdisciplinary approach using various materials of folklore, archaeology, ethnography, history, literary studies, and written sources of the history of Turkic peoples – especially the Karachays and Balkars – to be very advantageous for studies in the Turkic monuments of the 10th – 14th centuries.

It seems right to suggest that the interdisciplinary approach be implemented more frequently, because it can considerably advance research into the written monuments, and help scholars to interpret them more accurately, to partially resolve debatable questions, to better understand the worldview of ancient peoples, to retrace the evolution of their spiritual heritage.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BARB – Bulletins de l'Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-arts de Belgique

BRIHMC – Brief Reports of the Institute for the History of Material Culture

BSAS – Bulletin of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR

CEC – Caucasian Ethnography Collection

EDTL – “Etymological Dictionary of Turkic Languages: Common Turkic and Interturkic Lexical Bases” (multivolume edition: 1974–2000)

ER – Ethnography Review

GRVL – “Glavnaya Redaktsiya Vostoshnoy Literatury” (The Main Office of Eastern Literature Publishing)

IOSRAS – The Institute for Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences

JA – Journal Asiatique

JMNE – The Journal of the Ministry for National Education

JRAS – Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland

KBKI – “Kabardino-Balkarskoye knizhnoye izdatelstvo” (Kabardino-Balkarian Book Publishing)

KBRD – A Karachay-Balkar-Russian Dictionary: containing nearly 30 000 words / Ed. by E. R. Tenishev, H. I. Suyunchev. – Moscow: Russkij yazyk, 1989. 830 p.

KChKI – “Karachayevo-Cherkesskoye Knizhnoye Izdatelstvo” (Karachay-Cherkessian Book Publishing)

KChRI – Karachay-Cherkessian Research Institute

KCsA – Körösi Csoma Archivum

KMTAS – Karachay-Malkar tilny angilatma sözlüğü (An Explanatory dictionary of the Karachay-Balkar language): In 3 Vol. / Ed. by Zh. M. Guzeyev. – Nalchik: El-Fa, 1996–2005.

KSz – Keleti Szemle

(M. V. Lomonosov) MSU – (M. V. Lomonosov) Moscow State University

- MTAHE** – Materials on the Archaeology, History, and Ethnography of Tauria
NEDRAS – Notes of the Eastern Department of the Russian Archaeological Society
NIAS – Notes of the Imperial Academy of Sciences
OTD – An Old Turkic Dictionary: 20 000 Words and Word Combinations / Comp. by T. A. Borovkova, L. V. Dmitriyeva, A. A. Zyrin. – Leningrad: “Nauka, Leningradskoye otdeleniye”, 1969. 676 p.
PSS – Proceedings of the Scientific Session on the Problem of the ethnogenesis of the Balkar and Karachay Peoples (June 22–26, 1959). – Nalchik: “Kabardino-Balkarskoye knizhnoye izdatelstvo”, 1960. 336 p.
RRAS – Reports of the Russian Academy of Sciences
SA – Soviet Archaeology
SE – Soviet Ethnography
SHM (Moscow) – The State Historical Museum
SHM (SPb.) – The State Hermitage Museum
SKI – “Stavropolskoye knizhnoye izdatelstvo” (Stavropol Book Publishing)
SPAW – Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
SPbSU – Saint Petersburg State University
TKBRI – Transactions of Kabardino-Balkarian Research Institute
TSL – Topics in the Study of Language
UAJb – Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher
ZDMG – Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft

Abkh. – Abkhazian

Chech. – Chechen

Adyg. – Adyghe

Cr.Kar. – Crimean dialect of Karaites

Alt. – Altaian

Ir. – Iranian

Avest. – Avestan

Kab.-Cherk. – Kabardino-Cherkessian

Az. – Azerbaijani

Kaz. – Kazakh

Balk. – Balkar

Kar.-Balk. – Karachay-Balkar

Chag. – Chagatai

Kab. – Kabardian

Kach. – Kachin	OU – Old Uyghur
Khak. – Khakas	Pahl. – Pahlavi
Kip. – Kipchak	Pers. – Persian
KKalp. – Karakalpak	Sag. – Sagay (Saghay)
Koyb. – Koybal	Sh. – Shor
Kum. – Kumyk	Sogd. – Sogdian
Küer. – Küerik (Lower Chulym)	Sv. – Svan (Svanetian)
Kyr. – Kyrghyz	Tat. – Tatar
Leb. – Lebedin (Chelkan)	Tel. – Teleut
MK – Middle Kipchak	Tof. – Tofalar
MU – Middle Uyghur	Tuv. – Tuvinian
Nog. – Nogai	Turk. – Turkish
Oss. – Ossetian	Turkm. – Turkmen
OT – Old Turkic	Uyg. – Uyghur
Ott. – Ottoman	Uzb. – Uzbek

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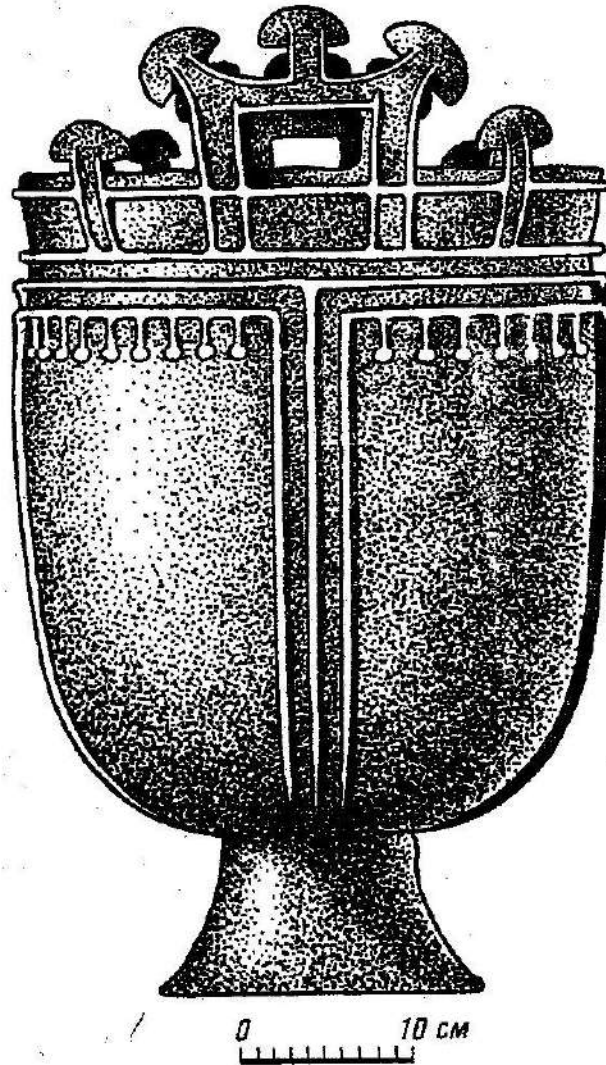
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APPENDICES

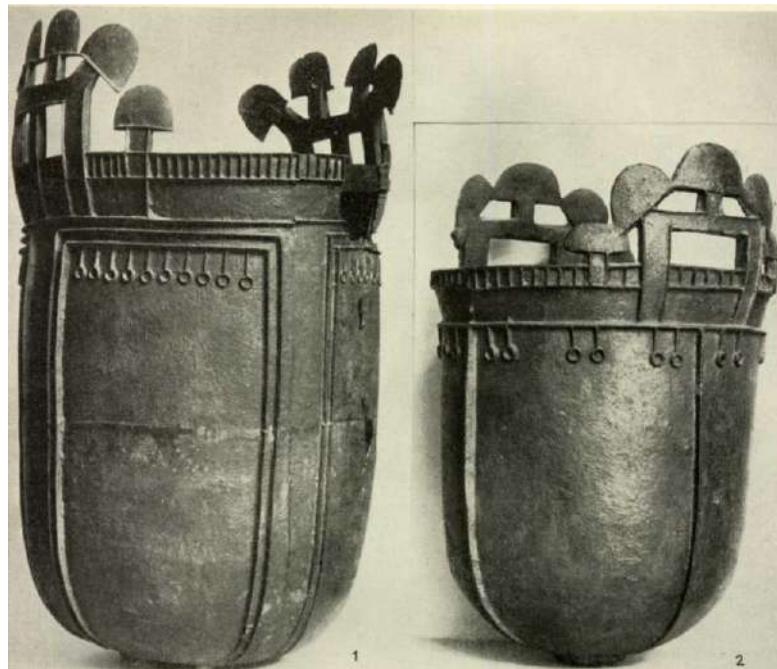
Appendix 1



Ill. 10. A Hunnic cauldron found in the mountain Balkarian village of Habaz (Kabardino-Balkaria), attaching a map of the place of discovery and samples of Hunnic cauldrons found in Hungary. The permanent exhibition of the National Museum of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic. Photo from: *Batchayev V. M.* The Hunnic Cauldron from the Village of Habaz // SA. 1984, № 1. P. 256–258. (In Russian)



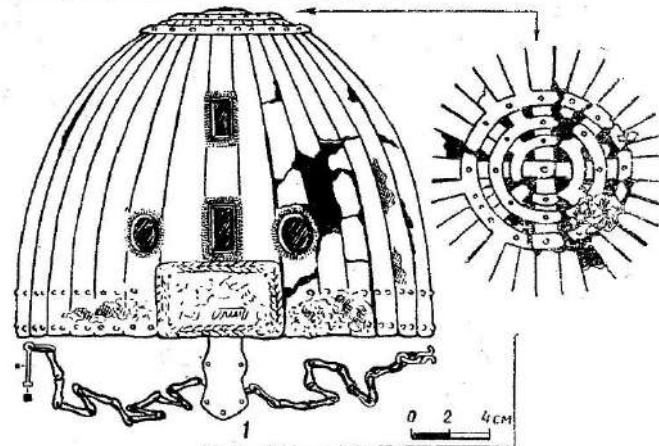
Ill. 11. The place of discovery of the Hunnic cauldron in the vicinity of the village of Habaz.



Ill. 12. Hunnic cauldrons of the 5th – 6th centuries. Hungary. Photos from: *Werner J. Beiträge zur Archäologie des Attila-Reiches. T. II. – München, 1956. Tafel 28. 44 s.*

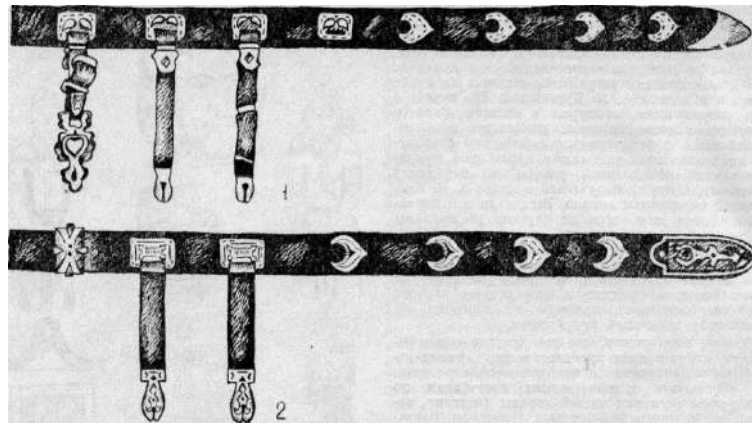
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Appendix 2



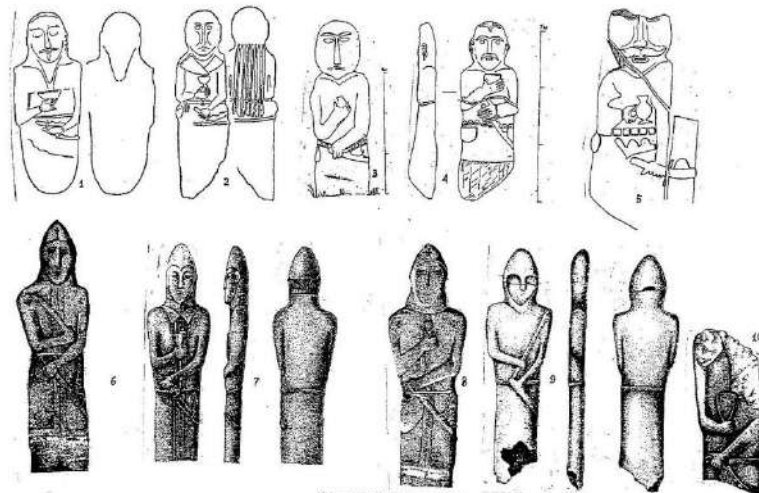
Ill. 13. A Hunnic helmet found in the burial mound № 13 in the vicinity of the village of Kishpek in Kabardino-Balkaria. Photo from: *Betrozov R. J. A Hunnic Chief's Grave Near the Village of Kishpek in Kabardino-Balkaria // The North Caucasus in Ancient and Medieval Time.* – Moscow: “Nauka”, 1980. P. 113–122. (In Russian)

Appendix 3



Ill. 14. Fragments of decorated belts made by Old Turks and Balkars: 1 – from the Kara-Choga gravesite in Tuva (8th—9th centuries CE), 2 – from the village of Upper Balkaria (the end of the 19th century). Photo from: *Kuznetsova A. Y. The Karachays' and Balkars' Folk Art* / Introd. by S. I. Vainshtein. – Nalchik: “Elbrus”, 1982. 176 p. (In Russian)

Appendix 4



Изваяния аланов и древних торков
 Древнетюркские (VI—VIII вв.): 1, 2. Саянские; 3. Дарь-Теге (Южная Сибирь); 4. Малая (Южная Сибирь); 5. Ал-Кобан (Южная Сибирь).
 Аланские (VIII—X вв.): 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Верхняя Кубань, Архан (Карачай).

Ill. 15. Anthropomorphic statues made by the Old Turks in the 6th—8th centuries (South Siberia) and by the Alans in the 8th—10th centuries (upper Kuban river).



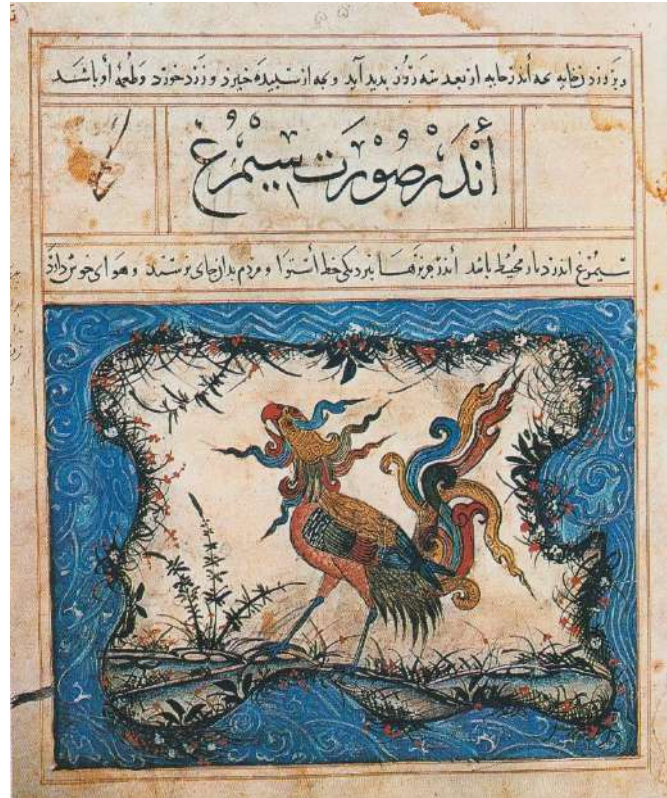
Ill. 16. An Old Turkic statue of the 6th – 7th centuries. Kosh-Agach aimag in the Tadil terrain in the Kurai steppe, Northern Altai. Photo from: *Evyukhova L. A. The Stone Sculptures Found in Northern Altai // The Proceedings of the SHM (Moscow). 1941, iss. XVI. P. 119–134. (In Russian)*

Appendix 5



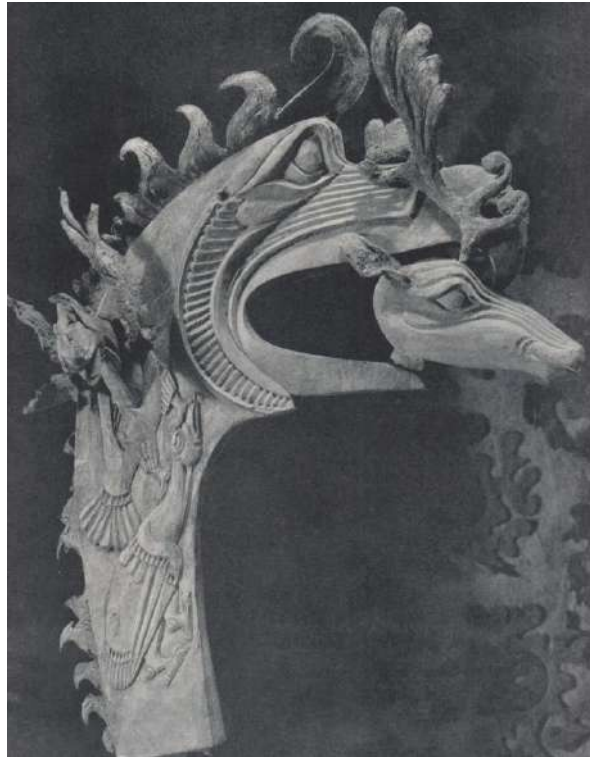
Ill. 17. The image of Humay bird on a Sasanian plate. Photos from: *Bongard-Levin G. M., Grantovskiy E. A. From Scythia to India; The Ancient Aryans: Myths and History. – Moscow: “Mysl”, 1983. 206 p. (In Russian)*

Appendix 6



Ill. 18. A folio with an image of Simurg and the lettering ^سسیمرغ *simrug*, in the form of a fantastic bird with a griffin head; from the manuscript of the Syrian physician Abu Said Ubaid Allah ibn Baktishu “*Manafi al’haiawan’* (*On the Usefulness of Animals*, 699 AH / 1299 CE). Photo from: *Bayazitov R. Zh. The Art of Muslim Countries*. – Nizhny Novgorod: “*Arnika*”, 1996. 165 p. (In Russian)

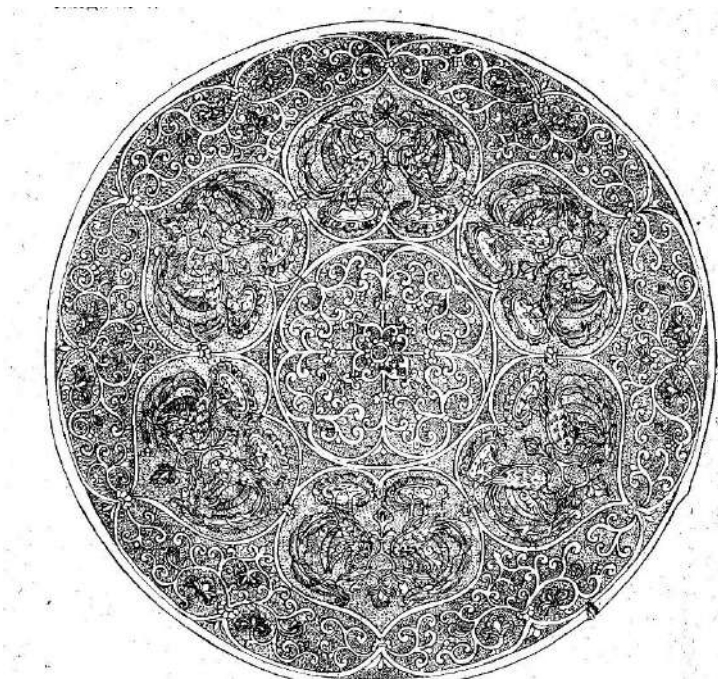
Appendix 7



Ill. 19. A deer's head in a griffin's beak. The second Pazyryk burial mound. The Scythians, 6th–3rd centuries BCE. Wood and leather. Photo from: *Gryaznov M.* *Altaic Ancient Art; L'Art Ancien de l'Altai* / Ed. by Prof. M. I. Artamonov. (Photo by A. Bulgakov.) – Leningrad: “SHM (SPb.)”, 1958. 95 s. (In Russian and French)



Ill. 20. A griffin tormenting a deer. The Hsiun-nu, Noin-Ula burial mounds. The 1st century BCE – the 2nd century CE. The picture and the counter drawing from: *Rudenko S. I. Reconstruction of the Noin-Ula Carpet Original Colours* / Ed. by I. A. Orbeli. – Moscow, Leningrad: “Izdatelstvo AN SSSR”, 1937. 15 p. (In Russian)

Appendix 8

Ill. 21. A golden plate ornamental pattern (concealment № 2 of the kurgan № 6, the Kopyony Chaatas), the Old Turks (the Kyrghyz), the 8th – 9th centuries. Source: *Evtukhova L. A., Kiselyov S. V. The Chaatas Near Kopyony Village // Proceedings of the SHM (Moscow). 1940, iss. XI. P. 21–54. (In Russian)*

Appendix 9

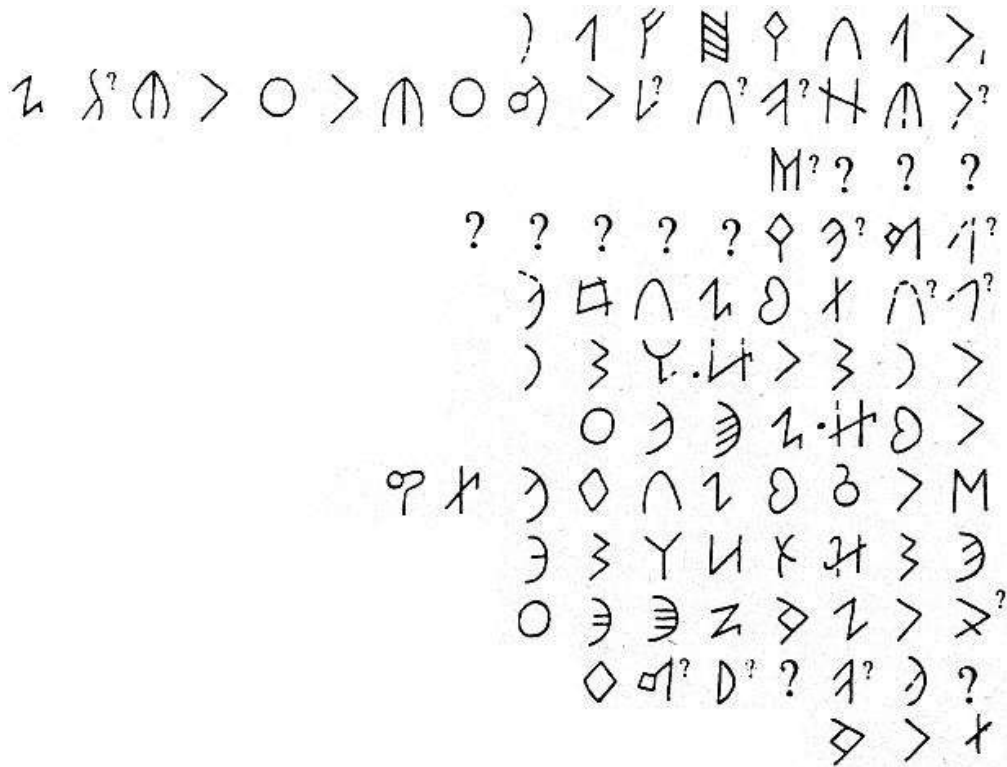
Ill. 22. A copy of part (the head) of the statue of Kul-Tegin, with Simurg depicted on the crown. The 8th century. Khosho-Tsaidam (Mongolia). The Museum of History of Statehood of the Tatar People and the Republic of Tatarstan.

Appendix 10



Ill. 23. Kešene mausoleums of the 13th – 14th centuries in the Balkar village of El-Tyubyu (the Kabardino-Balkar Republic). Photo from a website dedicated to Russian antiquities: <https://russianold.ru/2023/03/24/el-tubu/?ysclid=lwrsvvz8o4486818364> (accessed: 28.05.2024)

Appendix 11



Ill. 24. Khumarin runiform inscriptions from the Karachay-Cherkess Republic.
 Source: *Kyzlasov I. L. The Runiform Scripts of Eurasian Steppes.* – Moscow:
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