CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF TÜRK IDENTITY AMONG THE MEDIEVAL NOMADS OF CENTRAL EURASIA

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The Türk Khaganate and the ethnonym Türk have been used in modern nation-building processes among the Turkic-speaking peoples of Eurasia since the end of the nineteenth century. The historical importance of the name is exemplified by the country of Turkey today, the plan for a Turkic Republic in Central Asia in the 1920s, and the latest Kazak (Tatar) historiography after the fall of the Soviet Union. The study focuses on the meanings of Türk in the period of the Türk Khaganate (6th–8th centuries). Its first denotation is for an ethnic community or nationality, that is, a nomadic tribal confederation defined by use of the model of *gens*, including a common origin, language, and traditions with centuries of a stable political framework and the majority of society sharing common law. The second aspect of the usage of the term Türk, being political, referred to all peoples subject to the power of the Türk Khagan. After the fall of the Türk Khaganate, both meanings faded away due to the lack of political stability in the history of the Eurasian steppe, revealing an absence of ethnic continuity from the Middle Ages. However, fragments of Türk identity may have survived in the forms of language community, the Islamic legend of descent from an eponymos hero, and a nomadic way of life opposed to the territorial principles of settled civilisations.

The term "Türk" has several connotations, defining different identities that can be studied from various aspects. The whole question can be put into historical context by identifying the meaning of the word in different periods and examining which identities are connected with one another. I am aware of the fact that the term "Türk" denotes a modern nation, which is connected with the birth of Turkey as opposed to the Ottoman Empire (Azarian 2011: 72–82). There was another attempt to create a Türk Soviet Socialist Republic in Central Asia in the 1920s in accordance with Soviet national policy; this finally failed and several Turkic speaking nations were formed (Ubiria 2016). After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, there were five sovereign Turkic-speaking nation-states: Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenia, and Kyrgyzstan. The Russian Federation consists of 22 republics, including seven that are Turkic-speaking: Altai, Bashkortistan, Chuvashia, Khakasia, Sakha (Yakutia), Tatarstan, and Tuva. There is a pair of republics consisting of two ethnic components, of which one is Turkic-speaking (Balkar and Karachay): Kabardo-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia.

The new nation-building processes of these republics are closely connected with the idea of the Türk. According to leading Kazak historians (Baipakov et al. 1997: 312–348) the Kazak Khanate was established in the 1460s by Janibek and Kerei Khan. Decentralised into three hordes in the mid-sixteenth century, it was later conquered by Russian tsars. Thus, the ethnic and political base of the modern Kazak nation was regarded as the Kazak Khanate and its successors. However, there are tendencies to extend the Kazak past to earlier periods; for example, Bulat Kumekov emphasises the role of Kipchaks and the Kimek Khaganate as important factors in the formation of the modern Kazak nation (Kumekov 2013: 10–17). Finally, the territory of the Western Türk Khaganate included modern Kazakhstan, and the Kimek Khaganate was its successor state; thus, even the Türk Khaganate is part of the Kazak past. In 2013, an atlas of the Western Türk Khaganate was published in Astana (Dosymbaeva & Zholdasbekov 2013).

There is a parallel phenomenon in the recent historiography of Tatarstan. Three basic concepts can be reconstructed in the historiography of the ethnic formation of the modern Tatar nation: Bulgar-Tatar, Tatar-Mongol, and Türk-Tatar. The first emphasises the dominant role of the Volga Bulgars, while the second places stress on the Tatar-Mongol elements in the Mongol period (13th–15th centuries) in the Tatar ethnogenesis. The Türk-Tatar theory extends the ethnic and state traditions back to the Türk Khaganate and divides the history of medieval Tatar ethnic formation into two periods: 1) the formation of basic ethnic components (6th –13th centuries), and 2) the evolving unified Tatar ethnopolitical community (13th–15th centuries) (Ishakov & Izmaylov 2000). The official history of Tatarstan has been published recently in seven volumes; the first volume includes a long chapter on the Türk Khaganate written by the late Sergei Klyashtornyi (2002: 218–267).

There is a paradoxical parallel with the Uyghur nation in Xinjiang. The Uyghurs were one of the nomadic tribal confederations at the time of the Second Türk Khaganate (680–742), which they defeated the Türk Khaganate to found the Uyghur Khaganate. When the Kirghiz nomads put an end to the Uyghur hegemony in 840, the Uyghurs dispersed: one branch moved to the south-west and was assimilated by the Chinese, the second migrated to Gansu to become the ancestors of the Yellow Uyghurs, and the third settled in the oases of the Tarim Basin, where they became merchants and peasants and founded the Kocho Uyghur city-state (850–1250). There they gradually lost their Manichaean religion and converted to Buddhism. Furthermore, as their civilisation was highly developed, their script was adopted by the Mongols. Islam gained ground on the western fringe of the Tarim Basin in the tenth century, but the Uyghurs were able to resist it until the fifteenth century, when the eventual conversion of the Turkic-speaking peoples resulted in the Uyghur name and identity fading away.

The term "Uyghur" for the settled Turkic-speaking Muslim peoples of the Tarim Basin was the idea of Soviet experts in the 1920s, which was accepted by Chinese officials. The modern nation of the Uyghurs was created in the following decades through mass media and education. However, the identity of the Turkic-speaking inhabitants of the Tarim Basin was connected with its towns before they formally became Uyghurs. In the 1920s, for example, they identified themselves as Kashgarlik, Turfanlik, and Khotanlik. The emergence of modern Uyghur identity has thus been connected with three important factors: Islam and Turkic language, being distinctive features from the Chinese, and agriculture from other neighbouring Turkic-speaking nomads (Gladney 1990: 1–28).

There are more curious pseudo-nations in Siberia among the Turkic-speaking peoples. The Polish Turkologist Marzanna Pomorska published a monograph on noun formation in the Turkic

Middle Chulym dialect in 2004, and in the introduction the term "Chulym" is discussed in relation to the problem of the existence of such a separate ethnic group or Turkic language. First of all, the author recorded that three Turkic dialects can be distinguished: middle Chulym, low Chulym, and Küärik. The term "Chulym Turkic" does not mean a literary language, since an independent literary language has not been created; there is no possibility to teach the language in schools and there is no vernacular media at all. There is no script for any of the three dialects. Thus, Chulym Turkic is traditionally a collective name for three dialects, which is based on their sharing of common, typical characteristics. It is misleading, however, as the middle and low Chulym Turkic dialects are genetically different. Consequently, the three dialects have their own characteristics. Pomorska adds that she used the term "Chulym" if she could not determine the dialect from the material collected by the two local linguists. Therefore, it is a technical term, a typical linguonym invented by linguists.

As for the national identity of the people, they were first mentioned as "Chulym Türks" or "Chulym Tartars" in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and determined to be a Turkic-speaking population living in the river valley of Chulym. Two types of identities prevailed in the area of the Chulym among the Turkic-speaking groups: territorial units paying tax (tax communes) formed by the Russian administration and the traditional extended family and clan. This population was converted to Christianity under the Metropolitan residing in Tobolsk around 1720. By the late 1990s, however, family and clan ties had lost their significance among the Turkic-speaking population. The Turkic population known as Chulym appears in ethnographic and linguistic descriptions as a nation and language, but the lack of an independent administrative political framework, autonomy, common language, and common literature, as well as accelerating Russification, proves that the term "Chulym Turk" means neither an ethnic group/nationality nor a Turkic language (Pomorska 2004).

It seems evident that the modern nations and the nationalities or ethnic communities that existed before modernisation are different categories; the latter are used in nation-building processes.[1] Reviewing the different concepts of nation, Anthony Smith attempted to clarify the difference between the nation as a modern phenomenon and the ethnic community that was dominant before modernisation. His definition of a nation is: "a group of human beings, possessing common and distinctive elements of culture, a unified economic system, citizenship rights for all members, a sentiment of solidarity arising out of common experiences, and occupying a common territory" (Smith 1998: 188). However, ethnic communities are "named human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity" (Smith 1998: 191). The differences between the two definitions involve economic and citizenship rights. Smith proposed a research programme to compare the various forms of the institutional and cultural dimensions of nations with earlier premodern ethnicities, thereby studying six main institutions: state, territory/homeland, language, religion, history, and rites and ceremonies (Smith 1998: 226–227).

A more elaborate concept involves the theory of Jenö Szűcs (1981: 190), who offered the following definition of a nation: "'Nationality' is an old formation of history, as are 'society' as a concept of sovereign political community and the notion of 'political loyalty', with no inherent connections between these three categories in earlier periods and structures. What is new and has

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1 Hobsbawm (1983: 1–14) called attention to the reconstruction of the past by the modern nation-building elite, using the special term "invented tradition".

existed only since the end of the 18th century is the historical fusion and functional connection of the three categories, that is nation as we now understand it." The term "nationality" denotes a large group of people, not a face-to-face group whose internal cohesive factor ("we-consciousness") is embodied in the belief of a common origin fostered by a common historical past. Belief in a common origin is the most important subjective element in the formation of a group that is not based on a real blood-relative community, but rather by means of comprehending a secondary in-group as an imagined or fictitious community. The other basic cementing factors of a community are a common language and culture. Such a group can be formed through a lengthy process of artificial historical integration within a lasting political framework (Szűcs 1981: 180–181, 233–235, n. 22–24). According to Szűcs, premodern nationality has different forms, such as gentilism, provincial or territorial nationalities,[2] and medieval nationality.[3] As the very notion of nationality is an integral part of nations, and premodern identities such as political units, groups speaking the same language, or having similar or the same cultures are designated with an ethnonym, our contemporary way of thinking models these units or groups, according to our perception of the concept of nation. We discover nationality in these units or groups, which makes them an integral part of the history of the term "nation". Calling attention to such a paradox, Susan Reynolds (1984: 250–253) used a retrospective model, while Szűcs (1981: 11–160) described it as history written from a national point of view.

Regarding medieval nomadic societies, the model behind the formation of Germanic- and Slavic-speaking nationalities in the early Middle Ages is known in the Latin sources as *gens*, hence the term "gentilism" is applied. These communities are described as possessing ethnic and political unity, and they include more than one hundred thousand people. The conditions for the formation of such a community are as follows:

1) A relatively large, homogeneous, blood-related community originating from a common ancestor having a common language and culture. The blood relationship is not real but imagined, the belief in a common origin being spread amongst the different ethnic groups and manifested by legends of origin recorded in written sources.

2) The group is politically organised under strong monarchic rule. Only a stable political framework that has existed for two or three centuries can provide a basis for the formation of linguistic and cultural unity. Only such a framework can spread the belief in a common origin amongst the different subgroups.

3) In social respects, the community is stratified, but most of the individuals share the same customs and laws. The decisive factors in their minds, apart from the belief in a common origin, are common law, tradition, religion and, the vehicle for all these, a common language. This model applies when the ethnic consciousness based on a common origin, tradition, and language coincides with loyalty to the political power and with the consciousness of common law for the free.[4]

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2 Szűcs (1981: 100–106) defined it as a transformation from common descent to the idea that the members of the community are born in the same province, speaking the dialect of the province and following the formation of the local laws of the province. This new identity could also come into being under a stabile political framework.
3 Medieval nationality is connected in Europe with the formation of estates in the 13th century. Using the method of *pars pro toto*, the nobility identified themselves with the nationality, excluding the majority of the society (i.e. the peasantry) (Szűcs 1981: 161–243).
4 In this respect, Szűcs (1992) used the synthesis by Wenskus 1961.

This theoretical model provides us with a new project: to study the term "Türk" in premodern times. The starting point could be an analysis of the Orkhon inscriptions. However, it is also worth studying Old and Middle Turkic texts and Chinese, Muslim, and Western (Greek and Latin) sources in connection with the term,[5] which can be done in separate detailed studies through teamwork.

In terms of the first aspect of gentilism, this study focuses on the ethnonym *türk* in the runic inscriptions of the Türk and Uyghur Khaganate.[6] The most frequently used compound in the runic inscriptions is *türk bodun* (Tekin 1968: 387–388), the word *bodun* being the gentile form of premodern nationality or ethnic community (Zimonyi 2003: 57–79). The so-called "Türk bodun" must have regarded themselves as a blood-related community with common customary laws and a common language, and they had their own origin legends, preserved in the Chinese sources (Sinor 1982: 223–257). The two basic versions have common characteristics: an eponymous hero named Türk who descended from a she-wolf. It is worth mentioning that the idea of common descent via an eponymous hero survived in another form amongst most of the Turkic-speaking folks belonging to the Türk Khaganate, who had embraced Islam by the tenth to eleventh centuries. As Muslims, they followed the Islamic tradition, categorising people according to the Biblical-Quranic system of genealogy, and the idea of the forefather of the people being an eponymous hero was linked to the sons of Noah. For example, writing a chapter in Persian on the Türks, Gardīzī (1050–1052) reported that Japheth was the ancestor of Türk and his descendants are Oguz, Qarluq, and Khazar. The physical character and bad temper of the Türks were also connected to a condition suffered by Japheth, who had to eat an ant's egg and drink wolf's milk to recover (Martinez 1982: 116–118). In 1077, Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī wrote in his *Compendium of the Turkic Languages* that the Türks number, in their origin, twenty tribes, all descended from Türk, son of Japheth, son of Noah. The idea of a family tree was transformed for the genealogy of these peoples. Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī regarded the fundamental criterion for the Türks to be the Turkic language, which has dialects and several regional differences (al-Kāshgharī 1982).

The other characteristics of a blood-related community are reflected in such expressions as: *türk bodunuġ ölüräyin uruġsïratayïn* (KT 010 = BQ 09) 'I will kill the Türkü people and deprive them of progeny' (Clauson 1972: 220) and *iniyägünüm oġlanïm biriki uġušum bodunum* (KT S1 = BQ N1) 'my younger brothers, my sons, my family and my people' (Clauson 1972: 96). The fame and good reputation of an ethnic name are also important elements in "we-consciousness": *türk bodun atï küsü* (KT 025–26 = BQ 020–22) 'the good name and reputation of the Türk people' (Clauson 1972: 32).

The second basic characteristic of gentilism is a common culture including a customary law, religious cults, way of life, clothing, et cetera. The *türk törüsü* 'traditional, customary, unwritten law' (Clauson 1972: 531), which regulates the social life of the Türk people, is extended to the whole realm.

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5 For a relevant list of publications on the term "Türk", see Golden 2008/2009: 73–112; Golden 2015: 503–555; Vásáry 2016: 537–543; Frye & Sayili 1943: 194–207; Haarmann 1988: 175–196; Frenkel 2005: 201–241; Shukurov 2012: 273–296; Zimonyi 2001: 201–212; and Lee 2016: 101–132.

6 Inscriptions of the Türk Khaganate: Küli–Čor (720–725), Ongi (732), Toñuquq (726), Kül-Tegin (732), Bilgä Kagan (735); Uyghur Khaganate: Tez (750), Tariat (752/753), Šine-usu (759). The latest edition is found in Berta 2004; see also Tekin 1968: 257–290.

The traditional law of the Türk people (*bodun*) may have prevailed for both the elite and the common people, as the expression *Türk begler bodun* 'Türk *begs* [upper class] and people' (Clauson 1972: 322) was identical with *Türk bodun*, showing that the people were socially stratified but even the commoners belonged to the *Türk bodun*, as they had the same laws and customs.

There are references to religious cults amongst the Türks, such as *türk täŋrisi*, *türk ıduq yeri subı* 'Türk god, sacred territory of the Türks' (Clauson 1972: 783). The term *täŋri* means 'sky' but it acquired the religious meaning of God among the nomads. Later, it was used for the term "God" in Buddhist, Manichean, and Muslim texts (Clauson 1972: 523). When a nomadic tribal confederation or people founded an empire, its ruler became a *khagan*, whose power was legitimised by the sky-god.

Regarding the way of life, in Muslim and Greek sources the term "Türk" had the connotation of the nomadic peoples of the Eurasian steppe (Vásáry 2016: 540; Shukurov 2012: 283–286). The steppe belt of Eurasia represented the same way of life and culture in the Middle Ages, when the nomads created empires that determined the fate of Eurasia. After the first nomadic empire founded by the Xiongnu in the second century BCE, the Türks created a vast nomadic empire from Mongolia to the Crimea. The Türk Empire was followed by the successor states of the Uyghurs, Khazars, Karluks, Kirgiz, and Kimeks. Finally, the Mongols united the Eurasian steppe under their rule in the thirteenth century, including the neighbouring sedentary civilisations. However, the basic population of the steppe region ruled by the Mongols was Turkic-speaking, and the nomadic lifestyle of the Eurasian steppe spread, representing an autonomous economic, social, and political system. The Türks were regarded as the traditional steppe nomads in Islamic and Western sources, and it is probable that this connotation was formed within the Türk Khaganate, despite the fact that there is no indication of this in the Türk runic inscriptions. After the fall of the Türk Khaganate, the concept was employed in Muslim historiography, and by the eleventh century the eastern European steppe nomads were regarded as Türks. Thus, "Türk" lost its original ethnic meaning after the dissolution of the Türk Khaganate, meaning simply a nomad of the steppe belt. Its later usage can be viewed analogously with the term "Russian" in the Soviet era: it would be absurd if the Estonian or Hungarian peoples were presented as Russians between 1948 and 1989, in spite of the fact that the economic, social, and political systems of Estonia and Hungary followed the Soviet pattern and the Soviet system was dominated by the Russians.

Language is the third basic element in the construction of gentilism, but it is not a precondition; it is rather a consequence of a longer process of creating a stable political frame for a tribal confederation (*bodun*), which required the homogenisation of the means of communication (i.e. the common language). It is no coincidence that the first Turkic literary language reflected in the monuments of the Orkhon Turkic runic inscriptions of the Türk Khaganate is from the first decades of the eighth century.

As for the history of Turkic languages, the Old Turkic period is dated to the eighth–thirteenth centuries, when the Turkic texts were primarily recorded with runic, Uyghur, and Arabic scripts. Connected to the conversion to Buddhism and Islam, the latter two are regarded as representatives of East Old Turkic. However, West Old Turkic has no extant written sources; its reconstruction is based on early Turkic loanwords in Hungarian, which number approximately 400 words (Róna-Tas & Berta 2011: vii, 20–22).

The Turkic languages are divided basically into Chuvash-type Turkic and Common Turkic languages. West Old Turkic, Volga Bulgaric, and modern Chuvash represent so-called Chuvash-

type Turkic; however, Chuvash cannot be a direct continuation of Volga Bulgaric. The Common Turkic languages are divided into major groups: Inner Asian or Turki (Uyghur, Özbeg); South-Western or Oguz (Turkish, Azerbayjan, Türkmen); North-Western or Kipchak (Tatar, Bashkir, Kazak, Nogay, Kirgiz); and Siberian (Altay, Hakas, Tuva, Yakut) (Johanson 1998: 81–125).

Linguists emphasise that the language reflected in the Orkhon Turkic inscriptions cannot be directly connected to any Middle Turkic or modern Turkic languages (Johanson 1998: 85). This means that the family tree of the Turkic languages comprises a scientific theoretical model, one of three basic methods used to compare languages in modern linguistics. The others are contact linguistics, which deals with linguistic interactions, and language typology, which addresses general characteristics and linguistic universals. These three methodological approaches are equivalent and are all accepted in comparative linguistics (Bakró-Nagy 2014: 193–198). It is well known that there were intensive contacts between different Turkic languages (e.g. Chuvash-Tatar contacts are reflected in loanwords going both directions and present in both languages) (Agyagási 2012: 21–37). It is worth mentioning that while the term "Turkish" in English usage means the language spoken in Turkey, "Turkic" denotes all the members of the language family.

According to the most widespread view today, the formation of the Turkic languages is conceivable only if there were also Turkic peoples already in existence. Consequently, most historians assume that the Turkic language and the Turkic people are coeval. At the same time, most linguists highlight the fact that the history of a language and the history of a people are two different conceptual categories; that is, their identification is methodologically questionable (Róna-Tas 1999: 5–15). A further serious problem is posed by the mixing of the terminologies of various scientific fields. Probably the most frequent is when a linguistic category takes the place of an ethnic one. According to the German ethnologist Wilhelm Mühlmann, it is the linguists' fault that they talk about Indo-European peoples, not Indo-European languages. To put it another way, what we call a linguistic community is by no means a community in a sociological sense; it is only a group of speakers of the same language, a statistical set. This is valid not only for general concepts like Indo-Europeans, but also for subcategories like Germans, Celts, Slavs, et cetera. As Mühlmann (1985: 15–16) stated, "We have to expel the concept of people from the research on origins. Terminology is not indifferent, since incorrect terminology leads unawares to incorrect thoughts. The mix-up and blending of linguistic and ethnic categories is as a scientific impossibility, just like the thimblerigging with linguistic and physical anthropological terminology used to be."

Furthermore, we may add that whilst linguistic affinity is a conceptually well-defined and well-founded term, the affinity of peoples is a concept that is difficult to interpret historically, as under people we mean a larger group whose cohesion is ensured by a commonly accepted fiction. This means that, whilst in the case of smaller, consanguineous communities kinship can be verified, for larger groups and tribal alliances kinship is an obvious fiction within the community. It is an imagined community. Thus, in the case of affinity of peoples, we create a kinship between two fictions, which is obviously a conceptual impossibility. In this sense, we cannot talk about an affinity of peoples, only about peoples speaking related languages. With regard to Bashkir, this means that Bashkir is not a Turkic people, but rather the name of a people speaking a Turkic language, as the term "Turkic peoples" is an erroneous derivative of the expression "peoples speaking Turkic languages". Turkic peoples did not exist at all; the correct term is "Turkic-speaking peoples". This is the same for other terms, such as "Indo-Europeans" and "Finno-Ugrians".

The "Türk bodun" has basic gentile characteristics based on common descent (*origo*), culture (*mores*, or customary laws and way of life), and language (*lingua*). It is socially divided, but even commoners belong to it. However, at the same time the "Türk bodun" is a political community, a tribal confederacy. The stability and lasting survival of the political frame is a fundamental condition for ethnic homogenisation, including acceptance of the legends of the origin of the leading tribe, the formation of a special culture, and the dominance of a common language. There is no reference to the number of Türk tribal confederations (*bodun*) in the runic inscriptions, but there are several examples of ethnonyms that include numbers: *toquz oγuz* 'Nine Oguz', *üč qarluq* 'Three Qarluqs', *otuz tatar* 'Thirty Tatars'. According to Chinese sources, eleven tribes of the eastern Türks can be reconstructed from the *tamga* 'tribal sign' found on imported horses (Czeglédy 1972: 275–281; Dobrovics 2004: 53–66).

As a tribal confederacy, the "Türk bodun" was formed in the fourth to fifth centuries (Stark 2016: 2127–2128), and from the middle of the sixth century it became the ruling confederation of the empire (i.e. the Türk Khaganate). The ruler took the sovereign title of *khagan*, and the new political community became an autonomous power, an empire. Accordingly, the Orkhon inscriptions reflect two concepts: a *bodun* becomes a true people only if it has its own ruler, whose power comes directly from the *Türk Tengri* 'Sky God', and the other tribal confederacies are subjected to the Türk *khagan* (*türk qaγan* KT S3), who administers the realm according to Türk laws (*türk törüsü* KT E13). Such a *bodun* 'people' is *ellig qaγanliğ bodun* 'having *khagan* and *el*', in contrast to *elsirätmiš qaγansiratmiš bodun* 'people without *khagan* and *el*', namely, the other tribal confederations (*bodun*) of the Türk Khaganate. During the period of Chinese rule (630–680), the Türk people were in a subjected position, which lasted until the foundation of the second Khaganate. The Orkhon inscriptions prefer and idealise the position of a people when they become a Reichsvolk. Thus, losing its gentile meaning, the term "Türk" is used in an expanded political sense to encompass the whole empire, which is reflected in the Türk *khagan*, Türk God, and Türk law. The expression Türk Empire curiously appears only after the fall of the Türk Khaganate in the runic inscriptions of the Uyghur Khaganate: Tariat E5: *türk elin anda bulgadım anda artatdım* 'I disturbed and destroyed the realm of the Türks' (Berta 2004: 249, 258); Šine-usu E4 *türk qaγan čaq ällig yıl olurmuš türk eliŋä altı otuz yašıma…* 'The Türk Qagan reigned exactly for fifty years, at my age of twenty-six (739) to the Türk realm…' (Berta 2004: 282, 301).

The term "Türk" also turned into a political term denoting the subjects of the Türk *khagan*. This means that the subjects of the *khagan*, the supreme ruler of the political community, were Türks in a political sense. This is reflected in the Orkhon inscriptions: *türgiš qaγan türkümüz bodunumuz ärti* (KT 018 = BQ 016) 'The Türgiš *khagan* (and his people) were our Türks and our people' (Tekin 1968: 266); *toquz oγuz käntü bodunum ärti* (KT N4 = BQ029) 'The Toquz-oguz were my own people' (Tekin 1968: 270). A similar phenomenon was well known even in medieval Europe: the *gens monarchiae* included all the people who lived in the country of a king.

In conclusion, in the second Türk Khaganate, the term "Türk" had two basic connotations: 1) "Türk bodun", a gentile nationality or ethnic community (based on common descent, culture, and language; a stable political frame, such as a tribal confederacy; customs and laws applying to both the elite and commoners); and 2) Türk Khaganate (*Türk el*, *kagan*), a political community. If an individual belonged to the former, it meant that he or she had an ethnic identity (being a nomad, speaking Turkic, etc.) that was supported by a political identity, namely, as the subject of the Türk *khagan*. Therefore, if someone was a member of the *Qitan bodun*, he or she

belonged to the Qitan ethnic community and spoke a Mongolian language, but being the subject of the Türk *khagan*, he or she was a Türk in the political sense.

After the fall of the Türk Khaganate, the political community as such ceased to exist. The "Türk bodun" must have survived for a certain period, but the tribal confederacy also eventually disintegrated, and the term "Türk" had no ethnic or political connotations from the ninth century on. The term did survive, however, in several special fragmentary forms of the gentile nationality. The idea of common descent survived, becoming a part of Quranic genealogy in Islamic literature, and the nomadic way of life was also connected with the ethnonym "Türk". Finally, the term "Türk" meant speakers of languages who would have been able to understand each other, until a complete Turkic language family was formed.

The intellectual elites of the new nations in the twentieth century, such as Turkey and the Soviet republics of Turkic-speaking peoples, tried to connect the Türk gentile nationality and the Türk empire through the fragmentary survival of Türk identities in their own modern countries. However, while it is evident that nomadic tribes and tribal confederacies can be described by means of the model of gens, including the idea of common origin, traditions, and language, the lack of political stability, a key factor in the history of the Eurasian steppe, resulted in a lack of ethnic continuity from the period of the Middle Ages.

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