

Turkestan **In time and space**

(Turkestan in 6th-17th centuries according to Muslim written monuments)

Formation of the term “Turkestan” has an indirect connection to the name of “Tura” tribe and “Turan” area. The term “Turan”, formed upon the name of the ancient nomadic ethnos Tur, it has meaning “state of the Tur”. According to “Avesta”, the first written sources known to us, Turanians were ancient inhabitants of Kazakhstan territory in the second half of the 2nd - beginning of the 1st century B.C. In Sassanian literature of Iran, there is a mention about “Turkestan” (twrst’n) area to the north of Iran. Since Turks’ emergence in the 6th century, who created the first Eurasian empire in Great steppe, the “Tur” notion and “Turk” name merged, while “Turan” area became identified with Turks’ state Turkestan; later this term was spread to unified Turkic community.

By the end of the 60-es of the 6th century, Turkic khanate entered political and economic system of the biggest states of the time: Iran, Byzantine Empire and China.

In a period of 6th-7th centuries, historical area of Turkestan had been represented as a unified historical and ethnographic community, and as a name of the single Turkic nationality with unified political system.

Further establishment of political hegemony of the Arabic caliphate in Middle Asia, spread of Muslim culture and religion in the Amudarya and Syrdarya interfluve, led to transformation of data about Turkestan region. The Turks state became opposed to Muslim regions of Central Asia.

In the middle of the 8th century, there was built a wall through Keles steppes, which stretched from Syrdarya shores up to mountains, it served as a border between Muslim domains and Turkestan.

Fall of Turkic khanate led to formation of seven Turkic states within the borders of Middle Eurasia in 8th-9th centuries: Khazar khanate, Bolghar state, Oghuz state, Kimek khanate, Kyrghyz state, Uyghur Khanate and Karluks state.

In Arabic historical and geographical literature of the 9th-10th centuries, the term “Turk” was perceived as a title of a group of nations rather than name of a single nation or state. Muslim historiography of the 9th-10th centuries offers general notions about genetic similarity of the languages which Turkic tribes spoke at the time and about genetic kinship of Turkic ethnoses.

After Karakhanid state turned Mohammedan in 960, character of data concerning Turkestan considerably changed. Since that time, Turkestan region was not

necessarily identified with unfaithful Turks; Turkic Muslim territories and towns started to be ascribed to that region. According to the information of Arabic historian Ibn al-Assir (13th century), Turkestan state included Kashgar, Balassaguni, Khotan and Taraz cities. After expansion of Muslim Karakhanids' political influence over Middle Asia, Mawerannakhr, (i.e. the Amudarya and Syrdarya interfluvium), was acknowledged as Turkestan. From the second half of the 10th century, territories of the South of Kazakhstan and Middle Asia were considered a part of Turkestan region.

Starting from the 11th century, Desht-i-Kipchak became an important constituent of Turkestan, which was closely related to establishment of Kipchak epoch as a prominent ethnic and historical factor in Eurasian steppes. In Muslim narrative sources, Turkestan region of the 11th-12th centuries was described as a super region, with its scopes connected with vast Eurasian territories. Makhmud al-Kashgari (11th century), who traveled across the lands of Turkic nations, described Turkestan as a spacious region, spreading from Rum (Turkey) in the West to China in the East.

Mongolian invasion in the beginning of the 13th century brought serious changes into substantial part of the term Turkestan. In a period of Altyn Horde (Golden Horde) formation, all territories of Turkestan tribes, starting from Khwarezm, Bolghars up to the sultanate of Rum, fell under Batu-khan. All tribes: Kipchak, Kangly, Kimek, Elbori, Rus, Cherkes and as were conquered.

As a result of political, administrative, ethnic and cultural changes in a period of 14th -15th centuries, Turkestan started to represent a localized region, which mostly included towns of the Syrdarya basin. Turkestan became a subregion, it transformed into a separate area, not connected to Desht-i-Kipchak and Mawarannahr.

First Kazakh khans Kerey and Zhanibek waged persistent battle for power over Turkestan region. Economic and strategic importance of this region became main reason of that struggle. During rule of Tauyekkel khan (1586-1598), a continuous war with Shibanids of Middle Asia for Syrdarya towns and Turkestan region came to a successful end. Since that time, history of Turkestan region and city became inseparable from the history of Kazakh nation. 16th-17th centuries became a period of Kazakh people and statehood consolidation.

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