

DISPERSION AREAS OF KYPCHAK SCULPTURE

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ÖZET

Göktürk Kağanlığı içinde bulunan Boyları sadece yazılı kaynakları dikkate alarak birbirinden ayırt etmek ve yaşam alanlarını belirlemek neredeyse imkânsızdır. Çünkü yaylak ve kışlak arasında devamlı hareket eden bu göçer Boylar, zaman zaman da farklı sebeplerden ötürü yaşadıkları coğrafyaları değiştirmek zorunda kalmışlardır. Boyların isimleri ile ilgili bize yardımcı olacak verilerden biri, arkeolojik malzemelerdir. Özellikle heykellerin üzerindeki ikonografik şekiller bize bu konuda yardım etmektedirler.

Kıpçak heykelleri ile Göktürk, Oğuz ya da On Ok boylarının yaptıkları heykeller arasında bir takım ikonografik farklılıklar bulunmaktadır. Makale bu farklılıklardan yola çıkarak Kıpçak Boylarının buldukları yerler hakkında birtakım tezler ileri sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göktürk, Kıpçak, balbal, bediz, Avrasya step kuşağı.

ABSTRACT

It is almost impossible to differentiate the tribes who lived within the Göktürk Kaganate by only considering the written sources. The lives of those highly nomadic people were divided between pasture and winter quarters and from time to time they had to change their entire geography due to different reasons. Archaeological materials are one of the guides that help to find about their ethnicity. Especially the iconographic forms of statues are useful on this issue.

There are some iconographic differences between Kypchak statues and Gök Türk, Oghuz or On Ok tribe's statues. The article provides some proposals about the location of the Kypchak tribes (both European side and Asian side of the Eurasian step belt) based on the differences of the statues.

Key Words: Göktürk, Kypchak, balbal, bediz, Eurasian step belt.

The death of the Bilge Kagan in 745 triggered the beginning of the fall of the Eastern Göktürks. First the Oghuzs' then the Kypchaks' abandonment of the Kaganate set the foundations for the dissolution not only in the Göktürk administration but also within the military order.

As it is known, the Oghuzs moved west after leaving Tola River banks, making their first stop at the waste Steppes between Lake Aral and the Caspian Sea. In fact,

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the Oghuz were expected to move to the west into the southern Russian Steppes like their predecessors the Cimmerians, Scythians, Huns and Avars. Conversely, they poured into the east of Persia, gaining advantage from the disorder in the Middle East.

The real blow to the Eastern Göktürks, however, came from the Kypchaks. Interestingly this did not happen by any military strike, but instead by their moving away from the center of Göktürk authority. Oghuzs and Kypchaks were important elements of the Göktürk military power. By the mid-ninth century AD. following the Oghuzs' abandonment, the Kypchaks did not recognize Göktürk sovereignty any longer; at first they joined the Tolis Confederation founded in the Southwest (Upper Yenisey) and later moved to a land eventually called Dest-i Kypchak (Lower Volga), which was left by the Oghuz earlier, in their move toward Iran. Soon after, these tribes moved across the Volga river and controlled the territory stretching up to the Danube river. More than being just a regional power, the Kypchaks disturbed the whole of Byzantium and even surrounded Constantinople. At times they would fight against Russian Princedoms, at other times became allies with them against the Mongolian threat (Federov-Davidov, 1968: 37, 72; Pletneva, 1974: 18, 19).

This essay will focus on the following question: Where were the Asian bases of the tribes who controlled the steppes to the north of the Black Sea (southern Russia) between the 9th and the 13th century AD. ?

One of the biggest problems in the studies about nomads is determining the locations of tribes which assembled a political union. It is often impossible to even determine the names of the tribes which traveled annually between mountain pastures in the summer and sheltering locations in the winter. Under these circumstances, historians have tried to overcome the problem by referring to the annals kept by the sedentary nations such as Chinese, Persian, Greek and Roman. But this ignores the issue that, although the nomads were traveling between certain summer pastures and winter shelters, conflicts very often arose between the tribes. Therefore, a chronicle originating from China or the Middle East would provide data only for a certain period or even for just a brief moment. Also, considering the huge difference in what we understand of history as a science then and today, we must also question how reliable these documents are. If we approach these chronicles with suspicion, then we must support them with archeological materials.

The most important archeological data of the Kypchaks who settled in the northern areas of the Black Sea are their cultic sites, where rituals performed for the dead. Because of the similarity of the artifacts between the nomads, the importance of those enclosures becomes even greater. The sculptures in southern Russia were removed from their origins so early on that unfortunately today it is difficult to find a cultic site in situ position; the sculptures, however, remain an important element in the studies (**Illustration 01**, see: p. 3700).

Primarily starting from the sculptures from the north of the Black Sea, we know definitely belong to the Kypchaks by moving to the east geographically we

also date those sculptures chronologically. This information will give us an idea about the migrating routes of Kypchaks, and the settlements of the tribes which assembled the Black Sea Kypchak Union.

It was not possible to make a chronological determination in the 18th century when the first sculptures were studied, because we neither had enough knowledge about the sculptures on the east side of Eurasia nor about the history of the empires in the region as detailed as today (Federov-Davidov, 1968: 26). These sculptures which were studied during Tsarist Russia were exhibited in the gardens of governmental offices (probably for protection reasons), therefore we could review these sculptures from the illustrations or the gravures of the researchers who studied in the region. Only the later, more detailed studies help us create a chronological order (Pletneva, 1976).

In order to determine this subject, we need to analyze the iconographic characteristics of Kypchak Sculpture. There are two main typologies on the sculptures made during Göktürk Kaganate. First, those sculptures holding a bowl with the right hand at the chest level (**Illustration 02**, see: p. 3701); and the second, those holding bowls with both hands (**Illustration 03**, see: p. 3702). It is possible to create sub-groups of these sculptures (Ser 1966: 25-26), but the main typological characteristics are accumulated around these two groups.

The typological characteristic of Kypchak sculptures who settled in the northern Black Sea region are the sculptures of women and men holding bowls with both hands (**Illustration 04**, see: p. 3703). The sculptures are mostly made of stone, but we sometimes come across those made of wood (Pletneva 1974: 59; Gurkin 1987: 103) (**Illustration 05**, see: p. 3345) The archeological data from sculptures which were minimally excavated and found in situ position show us that the shape of the cultic sites were circular, as were the examples in the east (**Illustration 06a-b**, see: p. 3346).



Illustration 05: Lower Don, (Gurkin 1987: res.3/1)

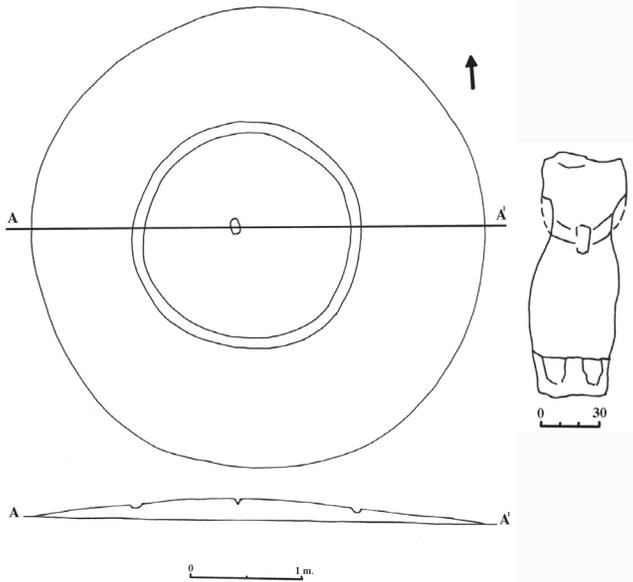


Illustration 06a: Lower Don, Tuzlukov village, (Gurkin 1987: res. 4/2)

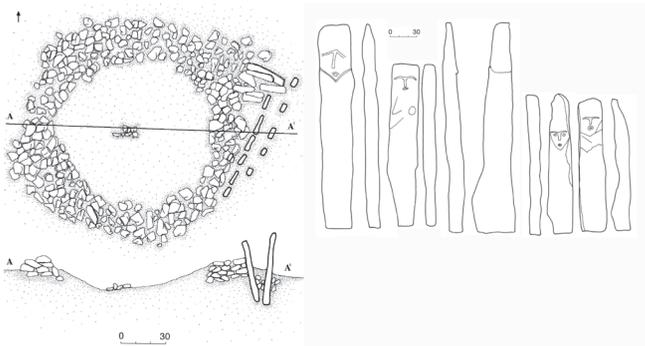


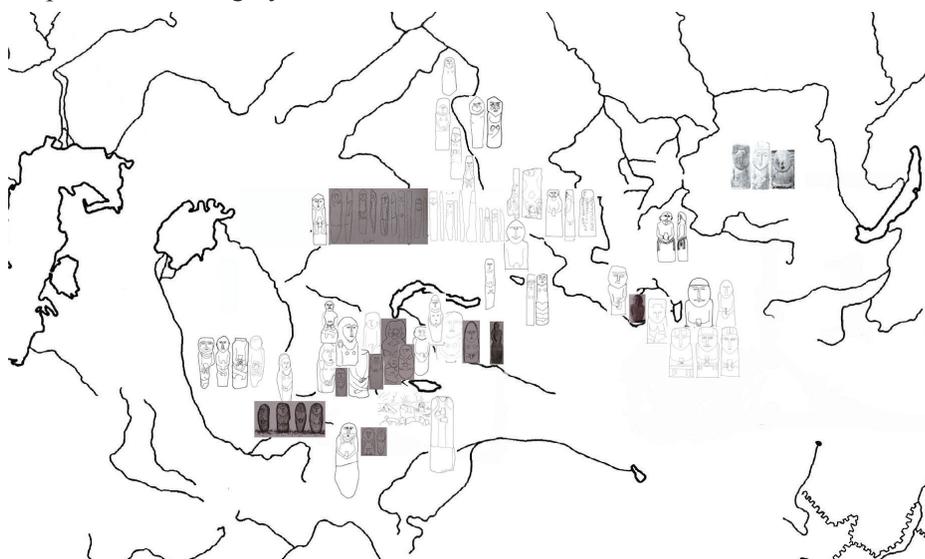
Illustration 06b: Upper Irtysh, Semipalatinsk, (Arslanova-Carikov 1974: res. 6/17-21: 9/1)

Both the iconographic characteristics of sculptures and the archeological data show that there are some ethnic connections between Kypchaks in southern Russia and the nations who lived during the Göktürk Kaganate. Since the daily materials used by the nomadic nations are very similar to each other, the archeological materials found in the enclosures do not tell us the difference between the tribes clearly. Rituals carried out after death, do not show any particular difference either. For example, all the nomads during Göktürk Kaganate used to build a cultic site for Yog-ash ceremony for the dead and erect a sculpture symbolizing the dead person. This tradition applies to all the Turkic tribes within the boundaries of the Göktürk Kaganate. Consequently, tribes like Turgish, Kyrgyz, Kypchak and

Oghuz used to leave their presents and sacrifices, under the guidance of a shaman, in front of the sculptures erected at their cultic sites.

Some of the sculptures made in the east of the Eurasia Steppe Belt show some iconographic resemblances to those in the southern Russian Steppes. My thesis resides over the possibility that the communities on the east side of the Eurasia Steppe Belt, which made such sculptures, and the tribes which established a political organization under the Kypchak name on the west side are the same. Naturally, the fall of a Kaganate brings many problems. A lot of tribes would claim the Göktürk legacy and bloody fights were inevitable. Therefore it was quite reasonable to expect migrations to the west, which were thought to be safer lands. Moreover, these migrations to the west were not the first. Just like their predecessors the Cimmerians, Schyrians, Huns and Avars, they must have believed that moving to western Eurasia was more secure.

The name of the tribe or the leader who started this migration, who captivated an entire nation, has unfortunately taken its place in the unknown pages of history. As understood from the map (**Map 1, see: 3347**), (**Map 2, see: 3704**) Kypchak tribes mostly dispersed over Semirechya (Yedisu), upper Irtish and Tien Shan mountains. However in the neighboring lands to these sculptures there are some other sculptures showing different type of iconography. These differences of the sculptures lead us to believe that different tribes used to live side by side. More specifically, the Kypchak and Turgish tribes even On-Ok people were living next to each other in the Yedisu region. When the Kaganate was strong, its authority prevented conflict, but when the power ceased, tribes began quarreling over who was to become a new authority; losers either migrated to new geographies or accepted the sovereignty of the winners.



Map 1: Sculptures in Kypchak iconography in the eastern part of Eurasian steppe belt.

There is another question we must find an answer to: Why were the Kypchak tribes dispersed all over the Kaganate? Was the population of the Kypchaks in the Kaganate too dense? This was most probably the policy of the Kaganate. High rank officers in the Kaganate, like in all the big empires, must have moved the tribes from a dense location to different locations in order to prevent the idea of causing possible military problems. This tradition is seen with the Seljuks, the Ottomans and even the Romans and Persians etc. Such population policy was not only applied to the tribes which had a potential threat of military disorder, but also to those loyal tribes which were strengthening the power of central authority.

Throughout Eurasia although the sculptures holding bowl with both hands are accepted as the same iconographically, they show dissimilarities artistically. Considered time period consist of almost 6 hundred years from the second half of 6th century AD. when the Göktürks founded till the 13th century when the Kypchaks lost power. By passage of time, the change of taste of whom they got these sculptures made, the differentiation of the sculptors' skills, the distance to the cultures that developed and specialized in making sculptures were varying the artistic image of the sculptures. My thesis at this point is; when we look at the sculptures throughtout River Irtish, we see a very cheap technique (**Illustration 06b**, see: p. 3407). However Göktürk sculptures in 8th century creates an amazing 3 dimensional effect (Yilmaz 2005: 90). Also we know the influence of the Chinese artists over Göktürks at this period (Kul Tigin south face: line 11-12) and Budist effects over western Göktürk sculptures (Yilmaz, 2007: 158). Consequently the Kypchak sculptures throughout the River Irtish should be put on a date after the fall of the Kaganate, 9th century AD. or later. After the fall, the tribes must have preferred a political organization to artistic manners. The Kypchak sculptures around Yedisu, must be pointing out the tribes living under the sovereign of western Göktürks. I did not come across to a dense Kypchak sculpture iconography in Mongolia. This makes us think that the Kypchaks were not allowed to settle down close to centrum of the Kaganate (but this issue should be examined in detail).

After 9th century the Kypchaks, where we showed their locations on the map, moved to southern Russian steps and after mixing with their successors (remaining of the other steppe tribes had previously come to the region) established dominance over the region. As a consequence of the closeness of this location to the centers which the sculpture art was on top level such as Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Greece and even Italy, the Kypchak sculpture reached a higher level of technique and art compared to earlier examples (**Illustrations 07a-b**).

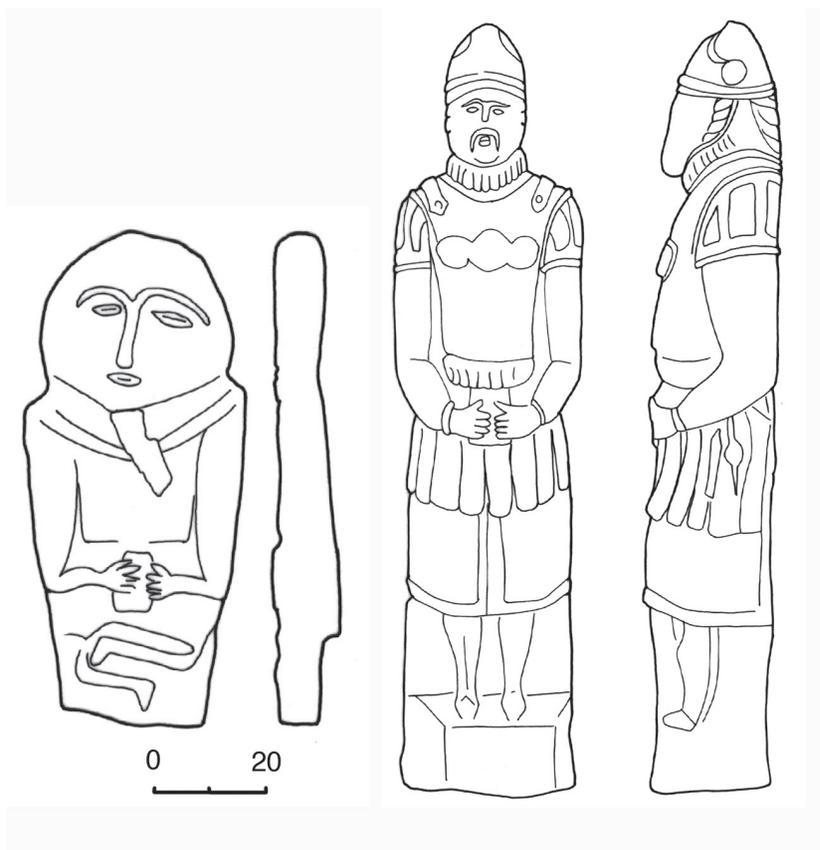


Illustration 07a: Cambul, Taraz, (Carikov 1980: res. 1/5); **Illustration 07b:** (Paloczi-Horvath 1980: 4)

Finally I can conclude that, the Göktürk Kaganate was shared between two brothers: Mongolia, centered east, was taken by Kutluk Kagan (since this region is sacred, the head of the state is named as Kagan) while the Tengri Mountains, centered west, was left for Istemi Yagbu. After collapsed of the Göktürks, many Kypchak and non-Kypchak tribes moved to west and settled between Volga and Don rivers. They kept their authority until the Altinordu State was founded in the 13th century. Accepting the authority of Mongols and later the Princedoms of Russians, they disappeared from history, melting into the gene pools of Eurasia.

Dispersion Areas of Kypchak Sculptures over Eurasia.

Kazakhstan

Cambul, Chuy county, Üngürlü area.

Cambul, Kurdaysky county.

Cambul, Caysan county.

Djezkazgan (Karaganda), Ulutau, river Cangabil.

Djezkazgan (Karaganda), Aktagoy, river Zhinishke.

Karaganda, Canarsky county.

Karaganda, Karkaralinsky county.

Karaganda, Şetsky county.

Karaganda, Agadır county.

Karaganda, Tengiz, river Caksıgan.

Akmolinsk, Turgay, Angar county.

Cambul, Merke, Caysan plattoo.

Chimkent, Turkubaz.

Chimkent, Ulan, Dirijambıl (Zeplin) village

Chimkent, Ulan, Toçka village

Chimkent, Kurçum, Pugaçevo village

Semipalatinsk, Jarminskiy.

Alma Atı, Sevreyenka village.

Kyrgyzstan

Eastern Kırğızıstan, Kulca, Verna village

Issik gol, Vernensk county

Issik gol, river Ton

Issik gol, Chon kemin, Djaye.

Issik gol, Karakol city.

Issik gol, Prejevalsk (Karakol), Novo Konstantinovka village

Issik gol, Sarı bulak area.

Issik gol, Tup county.

Issik gol, Tuura su area.

Chuy region, Merke, Karasay pass.

Chuy region, Merke, Bakteken valley.

Chuy region, Kegeti pass.

Narin region, Son gol, river Kok bulak.

Talas region, Eshmen Say.

Talas region, Bekbo Say.

Semirechye region.

Mongolia

Lake Hovd area

Bayan Olgii region

Southern Siberia

Hakasya, Minusinsk.

Altay region

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Illustration 02: History Museum of Bishkek, Kyrgyzistan.

Illustration 03: History Museum of Bishkek, Kyrgyzistan.

Illustration 04: History Museum of Krasnodar, Ukrain (The Treasures of Nomadic Tribes South Russia 1991: res. 218, 219)

Illustration 05: Lower Don, (Gurkin 1987: res.3/1)

Illustration 06a: Lower Don, Tuzlukov village, (Gurkin 1987: res. 4/2)

Illustration 06b: Upper Irtish, Semipalatinsk, (Arslanova-Carikov 1974: res. 6/17-21;9/1)

Illustration 07a: Cambul, Taraz, (Carikov 1980: res. 1/5)

Illustration 07b: (Paloczi-Horvath 1980: 4)

Map 1: Sculptures in Kypchak iconography in the eastern part of Eurasian steppe belt.

Map 2: Centres of Kypchak iconographic sculptures in both side of the Eurasia.

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