The Bulgars and the Steppe Empire in the Early Middle Ages

The Problem of the Others

Tsvetelin Stepanov
The Bulgars
and the Steppe Empire
in the Early Middle Ages
East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450

General Editor
Florin Curta

VOLUME 8
## CONTENTS

Illustrations .......................................................................................... vii
Maps ..................................................................................................... ix
Acknowledgements ............................................................................. xiii
Introduction ........................................................................................ 1

### Chapter I. The ‘Outside’ Other

I.1. The *Other* is ‘locked behind walls’, or about the role of the initial visual demarcation ................................................................. 13
I.2. About freedom and *otherness* and the signs and images of *usness* and *otherness* ................................................................. 40
I.3. World religions and *otherness* .......................................................... 64

### Chapter II. The ‘Inside’ Other

II.1. The female *otherness* (combining bow and ‘female work’, or between *order* and *chaos*) ................................................................. 86
II.2. Smiths and shamans/magicians/koloburs, or the inevitable but necessary *otherness* ................................................................. 110
II.3. The *Otherness* of those (aristocrats) professing non-state religion ......................................................................................... 119

Conclusion .......................................................................................... 127
Bibliography ........................................................................................ 131
Index .................................................................................................... 147

Illustrations Section
ILLUSTRATIONS*

Fig. 1. Bulgar dikes on the Balkan peninsula (after Fiedler 2008, fig. 2, with kind permission of Brill).

Fig. 2. Plan of Pliska’s center (palaces and temples) (after Beshevliev 1981).

Fig. 3. Pliska, palatial compound, first building phase (after Fiedler 2008, fig. 7, with kind permission of Brill).

Fig. 4. Pliska, palatial compound, second building phase (after Fiedler 2008, fig. 8, with kind permission of Brill).

Fig. 5. Pliska, substructions of the older (“Krum’s palace”) palace below those of the smaller “Throne palace” built by Omurtag after 814 (black with diamond checker) (after Fiedler 2008, fig. 4, with kind permission of Brill).

Fig. 6/6a. Fragment from the stone inscription of the 30-years peace treaty between Byzantium and Bulgaria, 815 A.D., together with the text (after Beshevliev 1981b, fig. 19 and 26).

Fig. 7. Memorial Inscription of Korsis (after Beshevliev 1981b, fig. 29).

Fig. 8. Madara, the relief with the inscriptions (after Fiedler 2008, fig. 14, with kind permission of Brill).

Fig. 9. Plans of the Bulgar heathen temples, 9th century (from Pliska, Preslav, Madara, and Drustur/Silistra) (after Aladzhov 1999, fig. 12, with kind permission of Zhivko Aladzhov).

Fig. 10. Bishapur, palatial complex (after Doncheva 2005, fig. 21, with kind permission of Stela Doncheva).

Fig. 11. Dura-Europos, palatial complex (after Doncheva 2005, fig. 16, with kind permission of Stela Doncheva).

Fig. 12. A Khazar vessel from Kotski with figures of men and animals (after Flerova 2001, fig. 21, with kind permission of Valentina Flerova).

Fig. 13. Figures from a bone vessel from the region of Saltovo-Mayatskoe, Khazar khaganate (after Flerova 2001, fig. 5, with kind permission of Valentina Flerova).

* The illustration section is located at the end of this volume.
Fig. 14. Podgornenskii IV burial ground, mound 14, Khazar khaganate (after Flerova 2001, fig. 24 c, with kind permission of Valentina Flerova).

Fig. 15. Amulets from Khazaria and Bulgaria, 8th–10th century (after Flerova 2001, fig. 16 a, with kind permission of Valentina Flerova).

Fig. 16. Plates from a saddle from Verkhnii Chir-Yurt, Khazaria, now in Daghestan; and plates from a saddle from Shilovo mound 1, Khazaria, Middle Volga, now in Russia (after Flerova 2007, figs. 2–3, with kind permission of Valentina Flerova).

Fig. 17. Podgorovskii burial ground, the basin of Severskii Donets river, Khazar khaganate (after Flerova 2007, fig. 4, with kind permission of Valentina Flerova).

Fig. 18. Keeper of relics from burial 1, mound 3, burial ground Talovyi II, Khazar khaganate (after Glebov 2007, fig. 1, with kind permission of ‘Problemi na izkustvoto’).

Fig. 19. Figures from the keeper of relics, burial ground Talovyi II (after Glebov 2007, fig. 2, with kind permission of ‘Problemi na izkustvoto’).

Fig. 20. Reconstruction of a part of the Kül-tegin’s temple (Nowgorodova 1980, p. 240).

Fig. 21. Plan of the Kül-tegin’s temple (after Nowgorodova 1980, p. 238).

Fig. 22. Bulgar warrior, first half of the 9th century, miniature (after Beshevliev 1981, fig. 22).

Fig. 23. Stele with the Bugut inscription (after History of Civilizations of Central Asia 1996, fig. 2-photo: Sergei G. Klyashtorny, with kind permission of Sergey Klyashtornyj).

Fig. 24/24a. Male costumes from the frescoes at Kucha, 5th–8th century (after Yatsenko 2000b, in Vostochnyi Turkestan 2000, tab. 59, 60, with kind permission of Sergey Yatsenko).

Fig. 25. Female costumes from the frescoes at Kucha (after Yatsenko 2000b, in Vostochnyi Turkestan 2000, tab. 62, with kind permission of Sergey Yatsenko).

Fig. 26. Costumes of ‘foreigners’ (after Yatsenko 2000b, in Vostochnyi Turkestan 2000, tab. 63, with kind permission of Sergey Yatsenko).

Fig. 27. Uighur hats, 9th–12th century (after Yatsenko 2000b, in Vostochnyi Turkestan 2000, tab. 65, with kind permission of Sergey Yatsenko).

Fig. 28. Old-Turkic balbal (after Nowgorodova 1980, fig. 180).
MAPS

Map 1. Bulgaria in mid-9th century (after Petkov 2008, map 1, with kind permission of Brill).


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The outlines of this study were drawn in 2000 when I was lecturing on the problems of power, identities, and religions in steppe Eurasia in the Early Mediaeval period at the Department History and Theory of Culture, “St. Kliment Ohridski University” (Sofia). The actual work began in 2001 thanks to a scholarship granted by “Maison des Sciences de l’Homme” (Paris) and “Maison des Sciences de l’Homme et de la Société” (Sofia) to whom I do express my deep gratitude. The work continued in the next few years despite interruptions caused by different factors.

Thanks are also due to my colleagues and friends whose questions stimulated me to search for answers to a number of complicated problems related to the perception of the *Others* in the Early Mediaeval period.

Special thanks are also owed to Vladimir Petrukhin, Florin Curta, Antoaneta Granberg, Jonathan Shepard, Valeriy Flerov, Peter B. Golden, Roman K. Kovalev, Timothy Ashplant and Adelina Angusheva-Tikhonov who have been very supportive providing me with books and articles concerning many issues subject of the present study, which were not available in Bulgaria. And last but not least, I should also thank Anton A. Marinov for his help in a crucial moment before publishing the text in 2005.

Tsvetelin Stepanov,
September 2005

P.S. Especially for this English edition, I must express appreciation to my colleague Zornitsa Angelova who took good care of the technical details preparing the electronic versions of both the illustrations and the maps. Also, I should express my deep gratitude to Tatiana Stefanova who did her best to translate from Bulgarian into English the ‘Introduction’ and the First chapter of this book. Finally, I am deeply grateful to Peter Golden who made some useful remarks and helpful comments on the English text and specific transliteration of one or another name of Persian or Arab origin. Needless to say, what errors remain are mine.

Note on copyright
The author and Brill Academic Publishers have made several attempts to contact copyright holders. If any have been overlooked, the appropriate arrangements will be made at the first opportunity.
INTRODUCTION

Over the last two-three decades the problem of alterity (and the closely related problem of identities\(^1\)) has turned into a much-debated issue. This study is another proof of its importance. The real image or the notion of the *Other* is created most of all in a dialogical interaction with *me* or *us*. In this very case it reflects the situation ‘we vs. them’ since it is a basic one for the pre-modern (or traditional) societies that used to create their (self)notions mostly on the mental horizons and markers for the identification of the *own* and *other/foreign* set by the community and the traditions. The dichotomy is of great assistance to traditional societies, who typically employ ideologies distinguishing them from *other* communities, in order to build a sense of self-identity. It is especially true for the ones I have designated as “significant neighbor(s)”, i.e. the societies which were stronger and more advanced as far as economy, politics, and culture are concerned. They are the ones who serve as a mirror—when one is looking at them, one finds out who one actually is. This way they also generate problems for they urge one to compare and/or compete with them, to develop together with them as well as to change and learn more about oneself by learning more about the *others*.

In the philosophy-driven anthropology, drawing a border between *self* and *other* (sometimes the *other* is considered as a threatening *foreigner*) is related to the problem of the position of the person in the environment. However, humans create their ‘own places’ not only in the natural environment; humans aspire to create their *own* micro-cosmos where the complex relations between ‘I’ and ‘you’ and ‘he/she/...
it' have a very dynamic nature and, in fact, form the ground for the self identification and for the development of one's self culture. Moreover, exactly that self culture discovers and defines its specific features and peculiarities only in the process of understanding the foreign/other culture and in communication with it. We can therefore accept as valid that one's own culture is created by uniting two possibilities: the first one consists of the ability to discern the Self from the Other and the other's culture; the second one—to open the Self for the Other and the other's culture; it is nothing more but a dynamic balance between 'openness'-'closeness' towards the Other.  

Such issue requires an interdisciplinary approach and, as a consequence, the use of various methodologies and research methods, because the notions of Other and its representations are often variable quantities just as the Other is a variable quantity too. However, the Other is not only the foreigner (a representative of another tribe/state) but also someone from ‘another’ social group, religion, culture, sex/gender, etc. 

The present study aims at bringing light, by means of comparison, on problems that have not been paid enough attention by historians. Until now, it has been the notions of the Other (the “barbarians” being implied) of the sedentary civilizations which usually have been a subject of analyses and interpretations, a fact that results from a number of objective reasons. One of the most important reasons is related to the existence of an ancient written tradition among sedentary societies such as ancient Greece, Persia, China, the Roman and the Byzantine Empires providing the opportunity of accumulation of enough amount of information to make the description of the notions and the images of the Other and the otherness far easier. However, here I

---

4 This is explicitly declared by, Seaman 1991, 3. One of the exceptions is, Litavrin 1986, 100–108, but here, too, the analysis is centered mainly around examples taken from the Slav-speaking countries; Litavrin also touches upon important questions that refer to methodological issues. The study of Golden 2003, has different purposes and the author is not indeed interested in questions such as ‘identity’ and ‘otherness’.
5 The literature on this question is considerable. For instance see, Hartog 1980 (the same in English—1988); Ahrweiler 1998, 1–15; Angelov 1994, 18–32; Angelov 1999. As regards the question about the notions of ‘Other’, on the level sedentarists-sedentarists, and that of the Westerners towards the Byzantines in particular, see, Wickham 1998, 245–256.
am not focusing my attention on the sedentary civilizations. Instead, the research interest focuses mainly on the steppe lands of Eurasia and on the world of the nomads and semi-nomads/semi-sedentary societies and their perception of the ‘outside Other’ (e.g. Arabs, Sassanian Persians, Chinese, Byzantines). At the same time, this study takes into consideration that the relations, the interactions, the contacts, and the encounters with the others are a source and sometimes a motivating power for the economic, military, cultural, religious and other changes occurring in a certain environment as a result of their impact.

To put it another way, it is Arnold Toynbee’s famous “challenge-and-response” theory that is especially appropriate to our case. In my view, here it should be applied with certain modification: the sedentary societies are not only and solely a subject of the “challenge” in the studied region and time span; often they were in the position to provide responses to the challenges of the steppe (e.g., the fashion of the “Hunnic” hairstyle was in fact introduced in sixth-century Constantinople, as clearly attested by Procopius of Caesarea). I hope to be able to prove that much through a number of historical examples. It is important to understand in what media and ways were various challenges met, whether or not there was any selective approach, and under what circumstances was selection applied to borrowings from the other culture, who had the power to control the selection, and in which regions was convergence of various cultures stronger.

So in reality there are two ways to look at the evidence available. My goal is to analyze and interpret the attitudes and the approaches taken by members of the so-called steppe empires towards sedentary societies, which may thus be used to reveal the notion the steppe empires had about themselves, that is the way in which they constructed their respective group identities. Such a notion could be teased out of a study of the cultural relation between the two worlds, which stood in sharp contrast to each other in many respects. Each one of them attempted to impose its own concept about ‘peace’ and ‘world order’ on territories that look vast even by present-day standards.

The Latin word ‘pax’, which is normally translated as “peace,” also connoted “order” and “empire” (specifically “imperial order”). As a consequence, when Omeljan Pritsak employed the phrase “Pax Nomadica” to refer to the steppe lands of Eurasia, he drew a fundamental distinction between nomadic polities and the ‘sedentary’ empires of the ancient and medieval world. Peter Golden subsequently introduced
the phrases “Pax Turcica” and “Pax Chazarica” for the Turkic and the Khazar khaganate, respectively. While the primary meaning of ‘pax’ is “peace,” the Turkic-Mongol word “el/il”, which was equally translated as “peace” by West European authors writing in Latin in the aftermath of the Mongol invasion, in fact refers to the political and military organization in the area onto which peace was imposed and in which law was established by force. In other words, the correlate of the Turkic-Mongol notion of “peace” was obedience (subordination). (In order for “el” to exist, someone had to accept the political domination of the respective khagan(ate), and not just the “peace” that polity presumably promoted. This terminological distinction is important not just for drawing contrasts between sedentary societies and the ‘Steppe Empires’, but also for gauging the degree to which misunderstanding and mistrust dominated the relations between them). In this book, I adopt a comparative approach, blending a global (Eurasia), regional (Pax Nomadica/Steppe Empire, or following David Christian—“Inner Eurasia”6 and local (ancient Turks, Uighurs, Bulgars, and Khazars) perspective.

The phrase “steppe empire(s)” has already been used here in the sense of what, ever since R. Grousset, was known as an “empire of the steppes”. A ‘Steppe Empire’ in the early Middle Ages was the polity of any one of the “imperial peoples” who, between the mid-sixth and the tenth century (the ‘golden age’ of the ‘Steppe Empires’) established large territorial polities: Turks, Uighurs, Khazars, and Bulgars. Conspicuously absent from my analysis are the Avars. The reasons are quite obvious: unlike the other “imperial peoples,” the Avars left no written sources, which could allow a glimpse into their ways of defining themselves. Moreover, the territories under Avar rule between ca. 570 and ca. 820 were mostly in Central Europe, beyond what ancient and medieval authors regarded as the traditional boundaries of “Scythia”, especially the Lower Danube (together with the river’s delta). In Antiquity, the Roman province between the Danube Delta and the Black Sea was called “Scythia Minor”, because that region was perceived to be very similar, in both landscape and living conditions, to the “Great Scythia” of the steppe lands north of the Black and Caspian Seas. It is not by accident that in his book “Nomads and the Outside World” A. Khazanov wrote of Pannonia (the lands in western

---

Hungary and the core of the Avar khaganate) as being marginal to the “Great steppe.” The notion that the civilized world ended at the Lower Danube (including the Danube Delta) was an extremely popular one throughout the Middle Ages. It can still be found in the thirteenth century in the work of William Rubruck, according to whom Scythia stretched from the Danube River all the way to the sunrise. Rubruck’s concept of Scythia mirrors a geographical stereotype, which originated in Greek mythography and ethnography, before being borrowed and much expanded by Roman authors and thus transmitted to the medieval West.

The roots of the traditional notion of otherness (especially during the early Middle Ages, when the Other was always the foreigner) lie within a rather general scheme, in which the Other was present as periphery and limit of the self, in other words, geographically placed on the fringes of the Self’s known world. The Other had to be conquered by means of disintegration and transformation, and later on, by incorporation into the Self. The Other was thus perceived only as a mirror of the Self. Because of that, images or notions of the Other were not required, or even expected to reflect reality. In fact, quite the contrary is true: in order to control the Other, (former) nomads often employed hyperbolic representations of alterity, in which eternal or absolute features were given pre-eminence, in order to obtain an idealized mirror-image of the Self. Such representations typically omitted or concealed defeats and mistakes, in order to project the image of a heroic Self. They also spoke with excitement about the Self’s victories, and belittled the Other’s. However, such strategies of self-representation are hardly typical to nomadic societies and can be found in any society preoccupied with establishing by means of collective memory a sense of group identity. The peoples of Eurasia are thus no ‘exotic’ exception.

There are, of course, worse problems to consider. Given that writing was introduced to the world of the nomads only in the mid-seventh century, information about how nomadic societies viewed themselves is scarce prior to the ninth century. To put it in other words, there are no written tracts from the world of the nomads, which could inform

---

7 Shukurov 1999, 15.
us about their notions of alterity. It is then almost impossible to find any firm points or hidden references, which are otherwise so typical for understanding alterity in sedentary civilizations, especially those of the “Big Tradition”.

This is not to say that nomads did not have stereotypical notions of the sedentary Other. On the contrary, they seem to have attributed to the Other a stereotypical identity or at least features, which would become apparent in the course of this study. Stereotypes make people feel secure and stable, since they exploit a sense of familiarity. It all appears as if stereotypes can guarantee the preservation of the well known order and provide especially important support for both the individual and the community. They seem to ‘promise’ commemoration of the Self as long as the ‘rules’ and the ‘order’, made sacred by tradition, are strictly observed.

All this, indeed, creates difficulties in the quest for an adequate methodology and the most appropriate methods to be used in the study of alterity. The difficulties multiply when considering the chronological span (sixth to ninth century), as the geographic area considered, including such contact zones as that between the Bulgars and the Byzantines; the Khazars and the Byzantines; the Khazars and the Arabs; the Turks and Uighurs, on one hand, and the Chinese, on the other hand; the Turks or Uighurs and the Sogdians. Moreover, given that stereotypes are historical constructions, it is important to understand the circumstances for the changes of the negative stereotypes about the sedentary Other.

In this study, however, the alterity is defined not just as a contrast between the nomadic Self and the sedentary Other, but also as internal contrasts (the ‘Inside Other’) isolating or marginalizing such groups as blacksmiths, shamans (magicians, koloburs, and the like), and women, whose status in the nomadic world was quite different from that in sedentary societies.

Equally revealing in this respect may be the attitudes towards groups inside nomadic communities, which were of a religion different from that officially accepted within those communities. Shamans, blacksmiths, and healers had powers within their own community and for that reason they often found themselves in an ambiguous position within that community. Therefore, the present study will also touch upon such things as outward appearance, clothes, manner of speaking.

---

or general behavior in public. Such aspects of alterity are very important, under the assumption that alterity in the Middle Ages was manifested in highly stable forms, especially those linked to cultural and religious practices.

Within the vast region of Eurasia considered in this book, the period between the sixth and the ninth century was one of dramatic changes. We therefore adopt Yurii Lotman’s idea that every semiotic system needs to be analyzed from two fundamental points of view: its relation to the out-system, that is to the world beyond its limits, and the way in which a system can develop while maintaining its internal characteristics.\(^{10}\) It is beyond any doubt that the world of “Pax Nomadica” was a specific system and that it played the role of the Other in relation to the world of the sedentary civilizations. As William Rubruck put it, “when we entered the world of those barbarians [nomads], as I mentioned above, I had the impression of entering another (sic!, Ts. St.) world”.\(^{11}\)

Yurii Lotman’s other idea, concerning the ratio between statics and dynamics is particularly important for this study, as it applies to the highly variable boundaries between the Self and the Other attested in the sources pertaining to the region and time span considered in this book. In certain areas, especially in areas of intense contact, such as parts of Central Asia, Crimea, or the ninth-century Balkans, the nomads abandoned their previous ways of life, albeit still regarding themselves as different in relation to the Other in the same way they had constructed that difference before sedentization.

Another point about dynamics deserves special emphasis. The steppe lands of Eurasia represent a vast territory of considerable ecological variability. The western parts are by far more fertile and rich than the eastern steppe lands, which is why most migrations of nomads took place from east to west, often under circumstances defined by warfare and short-term political strife.\(^{12}\)

Who or what the Other is can therefore never be a homogeneous category, which requires the use of a ‘synthetic’ methodology, combining different approaches such as the history of mentalities, traditional positivist history, anthropology, hermeneutics, and semiotics. Hermeneutics here implies not only a deeper understanding of particular

---

\(^{10}\) Lotman 1992, 7.
\(^{11}\) Puteshestviia 1957, 103.
‘texts’, but also the recognition of the fact that the sedentary world had encountered the nomads much earlier than the sixth century and had therefore long established stereotypes and clichés for the description of the Other. This, of course, means that the same is true about the nomads’ image of the sedentary world.

Such remarks imply that at stake is a pre-understanding and pre-knowledge of the Other, which often takes the form of prejudice. Such a form of pre-knowledge changed gradually as a result of the contact and interaction with the outside Other that happened earlier than the mid-sixth century; and it was even deepened after the beginning of the nomadic expansion to the south, in the direction of the sedentary world. The ‘interpretative clichés’, which had accumulated in the nomadic consciousness until that period began to give way to some other forms of knowing the Other. The changes in these preliminary knowledge-frames also occur as a result of the changes in the political boundaries existing until then between the sedentary and the nomadic worlds. It inevitably contributed to a better acquaintance with the world of the sedentary civilizations even more so as a considerable part of the nomads settled down in Sogdiana, on the Crimean peninsula, in the Eastern Caucasus region, as well as in the Balkans, which were some of the most important contact zones. In this way, after so many centuries, the nomads finally moved out of the ‘backyard’ of world history. By conquering parts of the ‘central’ world, they effectively moved into the center of world history. This, however, happened at a price, the abandonment of the nomadic way of life. One of the most interesting consequences of this process of sedentization was the rapid change of stereotypes referring to the Other. The old acquaintance between nomads and sedentary populations in Eurasia is a very important feature of the history of the region, as well as of the gradual change taking place after the sixth or seventh century in the nomadic perception of the Other.

14 Khazanov 1994b, 83–84, 198 ff., points out the different means of nomads’ adaptation to the external sedentary world claiming that in such situations the former nomads tended to break down with the old mental and behavioral stereotypes, i.e. with traditional system of values and lifestyle. This threat was intentionally used by some of the nomads’ elites in order, firstly, to integrate the nomads both ethnically and culturally and, secondly, to develop amongst the latter a negative attitude toward the sedentary world.
The majority of the sources concerning the problem under study originate from the sedentary world: Byzantine, Armenian, Arab, Persian, and Chinese. One needs therefore to recognize the numerous clichés and the long-lasting stereotypes, before even attempting to approach this *interpretatio sedentarica* in order to reach the reality of the “Pax Nomadica”. Menander the Guardsman, Patriarch Nicephoros, Theophanes Confessor, Theophylact Simokatta are some of the most important historians writing about the nomads, whose works are going to be analyzed in this book. Further valuable information may be found in the *Responsa* of Pope Nicholas I to the questions of the khan (or prince) of Bulgaria, Boris-Michael (852–889, d. 907), as well as in the work of the Armenian historian Movses Daskhuranci. I have included in my analysis the few Khazar sources, especially the mid-tenth-century correspondence between the Khazar King (khagan-beq) Joseph and Hasdai ibn Shaprut, the Jewish advisor of the Caliph of Cordoba. The Persian-Arabic tradition is represented by the writings of Ibn Khordadhbeh, Ibn Rusta, at-Ṭabarî, Ibn Fadlan, al-Mas‘ūdî, Tamîm ibn-Bahr, and others. Most Chinese sources pertaining to the problem are chronicles written under the Sui (‘Sui-shu’) and T’ang (‘Tang shu’) dynasties, between the sixth and the tenth century, to which one must add the seventh-century travelogue of the Buddhist monk Xuanzang.

Several inscriptions on stone stelae erected for Bulgar, Turk, and Uighur rulers are an especially valuable source for the current study. They are to be regarded and studied as a series of sources, a fact of great significance for the adequate reconstruction of medieval notions and ideas. This is certainly the case of the inscriptions on the Madara Cliff in Bulgaria, of the Chatalar and Philippi inscriptions (all of which concern the Bulgars), as well as of those from Bugut, Orkhon, for the Turks, and of the ones found in Tes, Terkhin, Karabalghasun, and Shine-usu, for the Uighurs.

Equally important is the archaeological evidence, particularly that of memorial or funerary monuments, especially the Turkic balbals (“kamennye baby”) and the commemorative temples of Turkic khagans dated to the first half of the eighth century. Much information about Self and Other can be extracted from images carved on the grave *stelae* of the Turkic commemorative temples or on the Madara Cliff (the Madara Horseman) in Bulgaria, as well as from the frescoes discovered in Panjikand and Afrasiab in the Turkic-Sogdian contact zone.
In sharp contrast to the sixteenth-century discovery of America by Europeans, a case of absolute alterity produced by the contact between radically different civilizations with no previous contact with each other, nomads from the Eurasian steppe lands had long been acquainted with the sedentary Other and had established an acceptable *modus vivendi* long before the sixth century. Responsible for this long tradition of contact was trade (such as that between the ancient Greeks and the Scythians or that between the Xiongnu and the Chinese), as well as the desire of the nomads, ever since Antiquity, to establish equivalent relations with sedentary societies. As Nicola di Cosmo has shown, the symbiosis between those different ecological, economic, political, and cultural systems was relatively often disturbed by nomadic raids aimed at booty or obtaining payments of tribute and favorable trade relations from rulers of sedentary societies (A. Khazanov’s famous “trade vs. raid” pattern of nomadic-sedentary relations). Such familiar *contact-mechanisms* and *strategies-of-contact* (which sometimes turned into *dialogue strategies* as well) between representatives of the nomadic and sedentary societies, required also the existence of comparatively sustainable notions of the *Outside Other*. These notions are clichés similar to those about nomads (mainly Turkic-speaking peoples) in existence among sedentary communities. Most typical for the attitude and established stereotypes about nomads is a quote from Al-Jahiz from Basra (*ca.* 778–869), which deals with the Turk steppe empire and its significance for the neighboring sedentary civilizations:

So the Turks are nomads living in the wilderness and they have [different] cattle…their interest is [directed] to raids and invasions and in hunting and horse riding…as well as in…conquering the states…. Accordingly, they have in the warcraft the place which the Greeks have

---

16 Khazanov 1994b, 172, correctly points out that the steppe Eurasian nomads had been confronted for almost 3 millennia with different sedentary societies that were well-organized in stable and mighty states.
17 di Cosmo 1994, 1092–1126. Also see, di Cosmo 2002, who stresses that China began the construction of walls in Central Asia for both offensive as well as defensive purposes.
18 Khazanov 1994b. The model ‘trading-and/or-raiding’ can be also found in: Origins of the State 1978; State and Society 1988.
in science and the Chinese—in art, the Arabs (in the language and in the genealogies.—author’s note), and the Sassanians...in politics and [administering of] an empire.\textsuperscript{19}

The most important aspect of this description of the early medieval Turks is that the author compared them to the main ‘great powers’ of the early Middle Ages, Byzantium, Sassanian Iran, China, and the Arabs. However, the evidence, particularly that relevant to the Uighurs, the Bulgars, and the Khazars, unambiguously reveals that such clichés were very old-fashioned. The ‘imperial’ people of the steppe had by then switched to a sedentary mode of life, and established complex societies, which contained a number of elements otherwise known only from prestigious sedentary civilizations.\textsuperscript{20}

Another aspect of the steppe empires deserves special attention. According to Arab sources, there were three special chairs in Khosro I Anushirvan’s (531–579) palace in Ctesiphon. On the right side of the shahinshah’s throne, one such chair was reserved for the Emperor of China, another for the great khagan of the steppe, and a third for the Byzantine Emperor, “in case that any of these rulers comes as a vassal in the court of the shahin-shah, the King of Kings”.\textsuperscript{21}

Such considerations required an especially attentive reading of the theoretical literature, as well as of specialized general works concerning the region in question. Among those authors who were particularly influential for the stance taken in this book, mention must be made of Tzvetan Todorov,\textsuperscript{22} Yurii Lotman (especially some of his studies on

\textsuperscript{19} Walker 1915, 684–685.
\textsuperscript{20} Meserve 1996, 49, passim.
\textsuperscript{21} See Braun [Brown] 1999, 173. This story is narrated in, Ibn al-Balkhi 1921, 97: “…a seat of gold and [two] other seats of gold on the left and behind [his throne]. Of these three seats, one was reserved for the King of China, the other for the King of Byzantium and the third for the King of the Khazars, so that should they come, they would sit on these seats. They were kept all year long and no one else could sit on them”.
\textsuperscript{22} Todorov 1992.
the relations between periphery or border, and the center)\textsuperscript{23} as well as L. Chvyr,\textsuperscript{24} A. Khazanov,\textsuperscript{25} R. Cribb,\textsuperscript{26} Th. Barfield,\textsuperscript{27} N. di Cosmo,\textsuperscript{28} P. Golden,\textsuperscript{29} O. Pritsak,\textsuperscript{30} O. Lattimore,\textsuperscript{31} D. Sinor,\textsuperscript{32} F. Hartog,\textsuperscript{33} S. Klyashtorny,\textsuperscript{34} A. Bartha,\textsuperscript{35} and others.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{23} Lotman 1992b.
\textsuperscript{25} Khazanov 1994b; Khazanov 1994.
\textsuperscript{26} Cribb 1991, esp. 12–14 (theories concerning the origin of the nomadic, extensive type of cattle breeding), 15–22 (different definitions of the nomadic type of pastoralism), 23–43 (essence of the nomadic economy). Still, for the origin of nomadism a classic study is, Khazanov 1994b, 85–118.
\textsuperscript{27} Barfield 1989; Barfield 1993; Barfield 1991 (Vol. 2), 21–62.
\textsuperscript{28} di Cosmo 1994, 1092–1126; di Cosmo 2002.
\textsuperscript{29} Golden 1992.
\textsuperscript{30} Pritsak 1981b.
\textsuperscript{31} Lattimore 1988 (1st ed., 1940), esp. chapters 2, 4, 6; Lattimore 1962.
\textsuperscript{32} See Sinor (ed.) 1990.
\textsuperscript{33} See Hartog 1980.
\textsuperscript{34} Kliashtorny and Sultanov 1992; Kliashtorny and Sultanov 2000.
\textsuperscript{35} Bartha 1988, 151–174.
\textsuperscript{36} Jagchid and Symons 1989. As regards the symptomatic Chinese name for ‘barrier’ see, Honey 1990, 174—in his view, it was wrongly translated into English as “pass”; it meant, he adds, a “pass in the hills that was barricaded to keep…foreigners out and…Chinese in”.
CHAPTER ONE

THE ‘OUTSIDE’ OTHER

I.1. The Other is ‘locked behind walls’, or about the role of the initial visual demarcation

One of the most intriguing problems of the history of the Eurasian steppe lands is the reason driving the nomads to large-scale migrations and military campaigns against sedentary agricultural civilizations living to the south. Various opinions were expressed on the matter¹ and they can be summarized in the following way: 1) various climatic changes of global nature (A. Toynbee, G. Grum-Grzhimaylo, L. Gumilev); 2) the military and predatory nature of nomadic societies; 3) the demographic growth in the steppes; 4) the development of productive forces and the ensuing class struggle or, alternatively, the weakening of the agricultural civilizations as a result of feudal fragmentation (various concepts following the Marxist model and its methodology); 5) the need to complement the extensive stock breeding economy by military campaigns against the more stable, sedentary, and agricultural societies; 6) the unwillingness of sedentary societies to trade with the nomads (the absence of any markets for the sale of surplus of livestock); 7) the personal, charismatic qualities of the leaders of the steppe communities; 8) irrational impulses towards ethnic integration (L. Gumilev’s “passionarism”).

Several explanations contain rational elements, but none of them, taken separately, could account for all known historical cases and allow a synthetic approach to the history of nomadic migrations. The only common denominator for all known historical cases is interest, to put it in the most neutral way, which nomads had in sedentary societies. The stability of the steppe societies was directly depending upon the abilities of the aristocratic elites to organize the transfer of

¹ For the summary of all these hypotheses see, Kradin 2001, 23; Khazanov 1994b, 37–39, passim.
silk, agricultural and craft products, as well as various precious objects (gold, silver, pieces of jewelry, etc.) from the sedentary world, given that none of those things could be produced in the steppe or those that could were in insufficient quantity. Such abilities were the key to the maintaining of any ‘Steppe Empire’ for any longer period of time. The alternative was, of course, the pastoralist economy, with its extensive stock breeding strategies, but its resources were not sufficient for establishing and maintaining a ‘Steppe Empire.’ For that reason, the elites of the nomadic societies in the Eurasian steppe lands had nowhere else to turn but southwards, to the sedentary societies. Meanwhile, such societies were making every possible effort to mark and maintain the boundaries—physical, as well as cultural—which separated them from the northern nomads.

Such efforts are best illustrated by special walls or lines of defense erected on the borders of sedentary societies. In this way, the opposition between Self and Other was mapped onto that between inside and outside in relation to the specific location of the walls and of the fortresses built to defend the frontier. The frontier never was the locus for any ‘nomadic identity’, but it distinctively marked the rejection of (or at least an attempt at reducing) contacts between nomadic and sedentary societies. Artificial barriers (walls, earthen ramparts, ditches, etc.) thus mark the borders separating the Self from the Other, one’s consecrated or sacred territory from the impure lands of the foreigners. Depriving the space of the Other of any sacred quality was in the pre-modern period a strategy of idealizing one’s own space by imposing onto it the values of the Self.

The Chinese built up such a limes against the Xiongnu tribes as early as the early Han dynasty (third century B.C.), while both Byzantines and Sassanians began building fortified frontiers against the fifth and sixth-century nomads: Anastasius’ Wall in Constantinople, the three defense lines built along the Danube limes during the reign of Justinian I, and the forts in Derbend, the Caucasus Mountains, and Merv. In the eighth century, the Arabs built long walls around the oases in Maverranahr, the region between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers in Central Asia. The Great Wall of China begins in Manchuria, which

---

4 Khazanov 1994b, 222 f.
is an indication that it was meant to be a barrier against the eastern ‘Hu’ (= barbarians), and then runs to the west as far as Tung-huan as a protection against the northern ‘Hu’ (the Xiongnu). The sedentary, urban civilization was to the south of the Great Wall, while everything chaotic, disordered, horribly cold, and unsuitable for agriculture was expected to be found north of that barrier. At least this is how the Chinese saw it or, rather, what they believed.\footnote{See more in, Barfield 1989; Waldron 1990.}

The Byzantines, as followers of the Roman traditions of separating civilization and the ‘Roman order’ from barbarians living to the north and with an eye to the frequent Hun, Bulgar, Slav and other invasions into Southeastern Europe during the fifth and sixth century, erected a special “Long Wall” in the early 500s. The barrier was built under Emperor Anastasius (491–518) and was meant to protect Constantinople and its vicinity from attacks from the north. A few years later, Emperor Justinian I (527–565) launched an impressive construction program aimed at defending the Balkan territories of the Byzantine Empire against the northern “barbarians” (which consisted primarily of Slavs and Bulgars). The three defensive lines included also a system of fortresses along the Danube \textit{limes} and were described by Procopius of Caesarea, in Book IV of his “Buildings”.\footnote{Prokopii [Procopius] 1958, 154–178.} Although Justinian’s fortresses were neither able to stop the invasions, nor prevented raiding, they effectively marked (together with the natural barrier of the Danube River) the boundary of civilization and of the Christian \textit{oikoumene}.

During the sixth century a number of fortresses were also built in the Caucasus region by the Sassanians. They were meant to keep the “northern barbarians” (Huns-Savirs, Bersils, Khazars, Alans, etc.) at bay. Kavad I (488–531) built up a mud-brick wall between Shirvan and the Daryal Gorge with a number of forts along it.\footnote{Ibn Hordadbeh [Ibn Khordâdhbeh] 1986, 109 (paragraph 62).} Later, his son Khosro I Anushirvan (531–579) erected the famous Derbend wall (this time made of large stone \textit{quadrae}) and several fortresses (Ibn al-Faqih mentions about 360 of them, but the number seem to be exaggerated). Again, the apparent threat against which the wall was built was the nomadic “Huns” living to the north: they had disturbed the economy and life in the Sassanian borderlands of Armenia and Caucasian Albania. The Sassanians populated those borderlands with immigrants from
other territories of their vast empire, and turned both regions into a reliable barrier and a bulwark against various enemies. This defensive system must have been an impressive one as the Arabic written sources pay a very serious attention to it. The name of one of those fortresses, Semender/Samandar, which would later become one of the early capitals of the Khazar khaganate, means “the last gate” in Persian and apparently implies the notion of a special semantic sequence of gate—key (and thus, locking-unlocking, opening-closing towards the Other)—Self (sedentary life, towns, etc.). In a similar way Derbend, i.e., the defensive stone wall erected in the eastern part of the Caucasus next to the Caspian coast in order to protect the approaches to Northern Iran, was named by the Arabs “Dar al-alam”, which means “the gate of/to the world.”

In folklore, ‘gates’ consistently appear as points of breaking through or penetration. Wedding rituals, especially those imitating royal marriages, equate the nuptial event to the conquest of a town, i.e., of a foreign space par excellence, and as such with the conquest and taming of the Other, in this case of the woman. The semantic chain gates (or door)—town—unlocking—conquest is also a Biblical motif (Revelation 21: 10–27).

Such notions appear also in a number of episodes that have been often cited as examples of alterity. In one of them, the early ninth-century Bulgar khan Krum is said to have been bent on planting his spear into the Golden Gate of Constantinople while preparing for the siege of the city. In another, the tenth-century Rus’ prince Oleg nailed his shield on the same gate a century later, in a symbolic gesture of appropriation of Constantinople, despite the fact that, like Krum, Oleg did not in fact conquer the city. It is not difficult to interpret the intentions of Krum and Oleg in relation to the Golden Gate: both wanted to break through, to conquer and to appropriate the foreign space,

---

8 Ibn Hordadbeh 1986, 109 (paragraph 62) and n. 47; Pletneva 1976, 17–18, 29; Magomedov 1994, 112. For different etimologies of the name ‘Samandar’/’Semender’ see, Romashov 2004, 198, with the literature cited there. Especially for Derbend see, Kudriavtsev 1993. Magomedov 1994, 73, stresses the fact that “the walls of Semender were at the end with regard to the main walls of Derbend”; it is hardly a coincidence that they had a similarity both in the plans and in direction with the latter.

especially this which they may have regarded as the most civilized and which, as a consequence, was radically different from their own.\textsuperscript{10}

By the mid- and late sixth-century, Semender was the northernmost bastion of the power of the Sassanian shahin-shahs against the “wild and martial nomads.”\textsuperscript{11} The Sassanians built a fortified line in Bactria, specifically in the Merv oasis, which they regarded as a barrier against the Hephtalites and, after their annihilation in the mid-sixth century, of the Turks.\textsuperscript{12} Decades after the fall of Sassanian Persia to the Arabs in the mid-seventh century, Ibn Khordâdhbeh noted that Khosrois (\textit{sic}), i.e., the Sassanians after the sixth century, had “blocked their boundaries from five sides.” Ibn Khordâdhbeh described barriers blocking the access of those coming “from the land of the Turks,” as well as of those “unexpected visitors” from “the land of the Khazars and Alans.”\textsuperscript{13} To R. Frye, those barriers embodied a “wall psychology” most typical for the mentality of the sedentary elites in Central Asia and for the Sassanians.\textsuperscript{14}

Th. Barfield focuses the attention on an important regularity typical for the steppe Eurasia and mainly concerning the relations between China and the northern “barbarians”. According to him, each time the control over the border zone was taken by strong and centralized empires, a concern with limiting access to the borderland appeared which was directly linked with the idea of drawing a sharp distinction between the sedentary society and the nomads. The latter was accomplished by various means including most often erection of walls, setting up armed garrisons in special fortresses and establishment of an extremely strict regime regulating the free access and movement of the northern “barbarians”. Such differentiating measures provoked the ‘answer’ of the nomads who, in return, often reacted by organizing centralized polities in order to have a chance in the search of a beneficial agreement in the new situation, in which the conflict with a potentially hostile and powerful sedentary world was inevitable. The Middle Kingdom (= China) tried to reduce to the possible minimum the contacts with the northern nomads by using the Great Wall and

\textsuperscript{10} For interesting notes in that same direction see, Badalanova-Pokrovska 1995, 159–166.
\textsuperscript{11} Pletneva 1976, 29.
\textsuperscript{12} Christian 1998, 253; Frye 1977 (not available to me).
\textsuperscript{13} Ibn Hordadbeh 1986, 135 (paragraph 78).
\textsuperscript{14} Frye 1996, 227.
the trade regulations but the nomads responded with violence, because for them it was the only way to change the situation in a positive direction. Therefore, their violence was based on cold-blooded, political consideration, and an economic strategy having well-calculated final goals and was not just a series of random attacks on Chinese territories.\textsuperscript{15}

All those real fortifications were in a special synchrony with a sustainable \textit{topos} as early as the Classic period—the so-called Iron Wall in the Caucasus Mountains erected by Alexander the Great against the northern barbarians (known under the names of Gog and Magog, and mentioned in Arab sources as Yâjûj and Mâjûj); the Arabs were also familiar with this legend—according to them, the wall was erected by Iskandar Dhu’l-Qarnayn (i.e. the “Two-horned” = Alexander the Great) distinguishing thus ‘the world of order’ and civilization from ‘the world of chaos’, e.g. the steppe.\textsuperscript{16} This way, the Macedonian ruler was turned into a \textit{topos} referring to the notion of ideal ruler-\textit{demiourgos} establishing and governing the \textit{oikoumene} in accordance with defined order principles. That the story of Alexander was known among Jews, Christians, and Muslims, all three so-called Abrahamic religions, is an indication of a meta-anthropology, in which after the fourth century B.C. Alexander’s image retained some special and consistent features, on which various cultures at various times canvassed their own interpretations of the story.\textsuperscript{17}

Alexander’s space, which extended to the Indus River to the east, marked by numerous cities named after him, in itself a symbol of civilization, was always set against the other space, distinguishable by marks of non-culture and non-civilization. This notion lived through the centuries and it is not a surprise that Muslim scholars interpreted the foreign character of the Turks within the general framework of Alexander’s story, in that they associated the Turks with the Gog and Magog, who had been allowed by God to enter the inhabited

\textsuperscript{15} Barfield 1994, 165–166.

\textsuperscript{16} For instance see, Ibn Hordadbeh 1986, 44–46, 129–130; Anderson 1932. Also see, Stepanov 2002, 131–139 (the same in, Stepanov 2003, 14–27).

\textsuperscript{17} Shukurov 1999, 35. The literature on this problem is enormous. For instance see, Aleksandr Velikii 2000, especially the unpublished version of the novel about Alexander the Great (by A. Ya. Garkavi) and the stories about Alexander found in the “Talmud” (by I. Orshanskii). Also see, Bertel’s 1948. For the use of the image of that same ruler also see, Pfister 1956. Concerning the use of his paradigm among the Volga and Danube Bulgars during the Middle Ages see, Stepanov 2002, 131–139.
outside world, as a punishment for the sins of the (civilized) people.\textsuperscript{18}

The horror provoked in Christian Byzantium by the people from the North, who one day would conquer Constantinople in order to fulfill the prophecy about Gog and Magog joining Antichrist at the end of the world was at the origin of a special genre, the so-called historical apocalyptic texts of eschatological nature.\textsuperscript{19} The Byzantine legends about Alexander the Great were developed in a similar context, especially after the mid-ninth century (perhaps because of the interest shown by the Macedonian dynasty in Byzantium towards this image-notion which was full with great potential). A common theme during this period was that of the “impure/unclean” people from the North, whom Alexander had subdued and pushed out beyond the Caspian Gates with the help of God. Those “evil” people were regarded in Byzantium a total antithesis not just of Christianity, i.e., of Byzantium, but of humanity as well.\textsuperscript{20} According to the Byzantine doctrine and in relation to the idea that the Danube River constituted the border of the \textit{oikoumene}, the people living between the Dnieper and the Dniester Rivers and to the north of the Caucasus Mountains were regarded as inhabiting the \textit{oikoumene}'s border land. They would be the last barrier in front of the Byzantine civilization in relation to some people living further to the north and for that considered even more “evil” and frightening; at the same time, they were useful for the Byzantine identity as well, for they were both foreign and different. In other words, from a Byzantine point of view, both Qubrat’s “Great Bulgaria” and the Khazar polity were “neighboring” foreigners.\textsuperscript{21}

The nomads living to the north of those real walls naturally regarded their neighbors to the south as the Other. There was no notion in the world of the nomads of Alexander the Great and his deeds. This is especially true for the sixth century, when from Mongolia to Southeastern Europe the nomads were ‘locked behind the walls’, and stood in almost permanent conflict with the neighboring Byzantines, Iranians, and Chinese.

\textsuperscript{18} Shukurov 1999, 23.
\textsuperscript{19} For this see, Alexander 1978 (N XV). For the Bulgarian works of that same type see, Tapkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996.
\textsuperscript{21} Vachkova 2004, 137–138.
The walls were also able to arouse the curiosity of the “northern barbarians” and it did not take long. It was through this curiosity that a true awareness of the Others began to develop, as well as the gradual adoption of them and some of their typical cultural and social features. This process was most intensive on the territory of the Western Turkic khaganate, especially in the Semirechie region, where the otherness of the Sogdians (Eastern Iranians) was rather quickly adopted and dissolved into the own, i.e., in the Turkic. The process of actual forming a contact zone and as a result of it—of a syncretic culture, was supported to a considerable extent by the Sogdians themselves. According to S. Kliashtornyi, both in the Semirechie and Eastern Turkistan in general, the Sogdian aristocrats, e.g. the dihqâns, were ready to accept Turkic names and titles that defined their social status not only in relation to the local aristocracy but also in relation to the lowest strata of the local population. Also in relation to their general entry in the structure and the culture of the khaganate, the absolute boundaries of the otherness (understood as incomprehensible foreignness) quickly disappeared or were, at least, diluted since the dominating aspects of the otherness (the ethno-linguistic—our/other language; the religious—own/foreign religious systems, stereotypes in behavior and ethical norms; the everyday life in the cities/life in the steppe and, respectively, a higher technological level in the city/a primitive technological level in the steppe) began to lose their firmness.

Why cannot then these walls be automatically related to the creation of a ‘nomadic’ identity in this period? The Bulgars, some of whom were still nomads in the seventh century, made walls and earthen ramparts as early as the end of the same century when they settled down in Southeastern Europe; the walls were meant to serve as a protection both against Byzantium and the “barbarians” to the northeast and northwest. Similarly, in 750–751 A.D., the Uighurs built up a defensive (and delineating at the same time) line against the Qirghiz people, their northern neighbors. Seventeen rectangular and quadrangular fortresses with towers and ditches filled with water, which served as garrisons and centers of sedentarism, were situated along this defensive

---


line (the so-called Long Clay wall; it was more than 230 km long).\textsuperscript{25} This limitation of the borders had, most of all, practical, military, and political aims. It has the same functions in the world of the sedentary civilizations as well. However, it could have had another meaning for the Bulgars, especially with view to the fact that after 813 A.D. they built the ‘Erkesiya’, more than 120 km long earthen rampart with a ditch; the fortification facility was situated in Eastern Thrace, between the Black Sea and the Maritsa River estuary.

From a symbolic point of view it seems that ‘Erkesiya’ was meant to stop the penetration of Byzantine influence into Bulgarian lands in general.\textsuperscript{26} At the same time, for the Turks and Uighurs, there was no need to make such barriers against their main enemy—the Chinese, since the steppe to the north of Ordos provided a sufficient boundary. The nomads also knew that China was not interested in conquering their territories since they were not suitable for agriculture.\textsuperscript{27}

Another written source—the Turkic stone stelae—reveals the existence of the sustainable topos ‘boundary’ in the consciousness of the Turkic aristocracy and, most of all, its importance for the preservation of their own identity and independence. The inscription of Kül-tegin explicitly states that some people “did not cross the borders”; it also pays attention to the danger of settling down near the border with China and recommends establishing the center of the Turkic khaganate in the sacred territory of Ötüken.\textsuperscript{28}

The problems of the real boundaries and the real (or symbolic) intrusion of otherness across them were crucial issues for the Bulgars, Khazars and Western Turks in Sogdiana. The Other for the Bulgars and the Khazars was Byzantium, the Arabs—for the Khazars after the


\textsuperscript{26} More details in, Stepanov 2000, 144–166. For the system of the frontier fortifications in Early Medieval Bulgaria see, Rashev 1982.

\textsuperscript{27} Taskin 1975, 149–150: from the point of view of economy, the lands of the nomad herdsmen were useless to the Chinese-agriculturalists. Also see, Maliavkin 1980, 104. For the notions of the frontier, e.g. great sand steppe, towards the Middle Kingdom see, Bichurin 1950, 238. The Turks, as all the other nomadic or semi-sedentary societies, were interested in opening markets along the border with China (see Bichurin 1950, 240). The Chinese, on their part, were well aware of the possible dangers that could come with a nomadic settlement in China proper, e.g. south of the Great Wall, and this becomes clear from the ardent dispute in the emperor’s court discussing the possible settlement of Turks south of the Great Wall after the fall of the First (East) Turkic khaganate in 630s—details see in, Bichurin 1950, 258–260.

\textsuperscript{28} See the inscription in, Rybatzki 1997; Kliashtorny 1964.
mid-seventh century, and for the western Turks it was first the Sasanians and later—the Arabs, especially after 704 A.D. Yurii Lotman accepts that the periphery, i.e. the borderlands, is the place of the most intensive exchange and changes in the semiosis and in the dialogue, in particular, thus causing, as a consequence, serious transformations in the core/center.\(^{29}\) In our case, that concept is valid mainly for the Western Turks, but also sometimes for the Uighurs (see the acceptance of the Manichaeism by the Uighur khagan in 762/763 A.D., during his stay in the Chinese capital).\(^{30}\) Consider also that the Turks in the time when the Turkic state did not exist (from the 630s till the 680s) and a great number of the Turkic aristocracy were sinicized as a result of the fact\(^{31}\) that the Turks were settled down in Northern China and in Ordos and were given Chinese titles, positions, etc.

The destiny of the Turks who lost their independence in the mid-seventh century and submitted to China is indicative enough. Taking into consideration that the typical Turkic mentality and governing style was based on charismatic leadership and not on citizenship (as it is in China), the T’ang dynasty (618–907) admitted along its northern borders (and what is more important—to the south of the Wall) various Turkic tribal formations. They were supposed to be a buffer between China and the rest of the other “northern barbarians”; and this was not unlike the Byzantine concept of the *foedus/foederati*. The Turkic Orkhon inscriptions (the ones of Tonyuquq, Kül-tegin, and Bilge khagan) represent evidence that certain Chinese titles and rituals were adopted by the Turkic aristocracy as a result of these changes uniformly considered as disastrous for the Turkic nature.\(^{32}\) It is not likely that any essential changes occurred in these borderlands since the Turks continued to live there the way they always had and were governed by their own rulers (although they were now obedient to the Chinese); they avoided living in the towns, i.e. the most important—from a symbolic point of view—*places* of the Chinese civilization. Therefore, the question of the real sinicization of the Turks and their acceptance of the Chinese *otherness* in the 630s/680s is still open to

\(^{29}\) Lotman 1992, 21.  
a certain extent. However, it is beyond any doubt that living in the peripheral zone of the old sedentary civilization had an impact on the Turks’ better acquaintance with Chinese otherness. This conclusion is hard to support with solid proofs of material (i.e. visible) nature. It is rather implicitly embodied in certain passages of the above-mentioned Orkhon inscriptions and in ‘Tang shu’.

The situation with the periphery-dialogue-otherness-boundary of the Uighurs seems somewhat clearer. In 762/763 A.D. khagan I-ti-chien (usually transcribed in the literature as Mou-yü), after spending three months in the city of Lo-yang (one of the Chinese capital cities) and accepting Manichaeism, returned back and proclaimed Manichaeism a state religion. However, he was converted to the new religion not by the Chinese, but by Sogdians living in the capital of the Middle Kingdom, a fact to which special attention will be paid later on. At this point it is enough to mention that penetrating into Ordubaliq, the Uighur capital, the otherness of Manichaeism was going to bring many changes among the aristocratic elite of the khaganate.

The situation related to the Bulgars differs in this respect. They not only separated themselves by earthen ramparts from the Other, but did not admit them easily to their country either. The exceptions increased in number after the first decade of the ninth century when several outstanding Byzantine military commanders came to serve to khan Krum (803–814) and lived at his court in Pliska. Such military commanders were also employed by Omurtag (814–831) and Malamir (831–836). However, there they were also under the careful scrutiny and control of the aristocratic elite (Other here was regarded also as foreign and threatening due to his Christian nature). On the other hand, the Byzantines taken captive in the campaigns of 813–814 A.D. in Eastern Thrace settled down far from the state center, in “Bulgaria beyond the Danube River” (i.e. to the north of the Danube), probably along the borders with the Khazars and it does not seem likely that they were able to exercise essential influence on the Bulgars. The more important thing is that as early as the late 830s, during the reign of Emperor

---

33 For the difficulties with the Turkic lands reclaimed by the Chinese after 630 A.D. as well as different ideas among the Chinese court elite with regard to the subdued Turkic population which was not able to fit easily into the sedentary civilization of China see, Popova 1999, 190–202.
35 More see in, Barfield 1989, 157–159.
Theophilos (829–842) in Byzantium, they were returned to Byzantium after a successful campaign of the Byzantine fleet somewhere at the Danube estuary.\(^{36}\) So, according to the Bulgar version, at least until the 830s, the Other (the Byzantines in this particular case) was placed either in the center (i.e. under the control of the central authority), or along the borders, far from real and everyday contact with the Bulgar population.\(^{37}\)

It was as late as the 830s–850s when a gradual change began, which was related to the successful military campaigns of the Bulgars who conquered quickly and this time settled permanently on a greater part of the so-called Byzantine West. The control over the otherness/foreignness already had to find new directions and new forms since the boundaries were in fact disappearing. This was how a dialogue between the two cultures began and the formation of a special contact zone on the territories of Western Thrace and present-day Macedonia facilitated this process. Its additional intensity became possible after the acceptance of Christianity by the Bulgars (after 865 A.D.) when new reference points were established for the notion of the Other (for the Bulgars it was Byzantium). However, this period goes beyond the scope of the study.\(^{38}\)

Another important contact zone in Europe in the early mediaeval period, related to the boundaries and the possibilities of creating a syncretic culture which restrained the most negative notions of the Other, is beyond any doubt the Crimean Peninsula.\(^{39}\) After the 670s its entire territory, with the exception of the town of Chersonesus and a chain of settlements and monasteries along the southern coast of the peninsula, was in the hands of the Khazar khagan and it remained so until the eleventh century. The Crimean Peninsula is one of the places

\(^{36}\) Rashev 2001, 119.

\(^{37}\) Stepanov 2000, 144–166; cf. Browning 1988, 33–35. For the Byzantines in Bulgaria until 864 A.D. in general see, Rashev 2004, 151–162—according to Rashev (p. 155), the Byzantines who were settled in the central part of the state and in Pliska, in particular, could have had “some influence for the penetration as well as popularization of the Christian ideas and ethics” among the Bulgars.

\(^{38}\) For the changes in the notions of the ‘Other’ and in the self-knowledge of ‘Us’, e.g. the main characteristics of the Bulgarian culture after the mass penetration of Christianity in the country after 864 A.D., see details in, Polyviannyi 2000, 30–56.

of ‘export’ of Byzantine influence in the Black Sea steppe region and a sort of observation point of the Byzantines to scrutinize the *status quo* in the steppe. The Bulgar settlements there were divided into two groups: the first one is dated to the second half of the seventh century until the first half of the eighth century while the second one dates from the mid-eighth to tenth centuries. The settlements from the former were situated in the southern part of the Crimean steppe, but far from the sea coast. In this they were similar to the Bulgar settlements in the region between Varna and the Danube estuary in the eighth-ninth centuries, which were situated 1 to 6 km inland, away from the Black Sea coast. The settlements from the latter were situated (with the exception of Kerch) mainly along the coastal line. In most cases they were founded on uninhabited places or within the frames of fortresses destroyed by the Huns (e.g. Kalos limen, Kerkinitida), but there were settlements on top of Byzantine fortresses reinforced by additional walls (e.g. Aluston, Bospor, Sudak/Sugdaya) although they did not have their former marine importance.\(^{40}\) So, until the mid-eighth century, the ‘meetings’ here with the Byzantines were quite restricted. Later on, Christian churches were built there, a fact which is in total contrast to the situation in Danube Bulgaria, where it is difficult to find construction of churches in the period from the late seventh till the mid-ninth century,\(^{41}\) suggesting no Byzantine missionary activity existed.

Similar to the Chinese, the Byzantines after the fifth-sixth century had one primary goal towards the northern “barbarians”—they did not want to allow the establishment of a large “barbarian” empire to the north of the *oikoumene*. However, after the Arab invasion in the seventh century some concepts about the territory to the north of the Black Sea had changed—now the Byzantine Empire was in favor of the existence of a powerful nomadic confederation to act as a barrier against the barbarian attacks from the Volga River and to block the Avar khaganate within the territories of Central Europe as well.

\(^{40}\) Baranov 1990, 35–36 and the map on p. 8; Rashev 1997, 34–38.

\(^{41}\) Baranov 1990, 133–139; Nikolov 2000, 342. Noonan 2000, 17, also claims that there were no purposeful Byzantine attempts aiming at converting the heathen Bulgars in Crimea. As for the missionary politics of Byzantium in details, e.g. the Christianization of the ‘barbarian’ Crimea Peninsula launched in ninth century, see Ivanov 2003, 142–143.
The role of Crimea being an important contact center-boundary and a possibility for acquaintance with the *Other* is confirmed also by the fact that the dethroned basileus Justinian II (685–695; 705–711) was sent into exile there after 695 A.D. Apparently, at that time the so-called Chersonesus’ Taurica was considered a no man’s land by the Byzantines (*cf.* the Byzantine notion about the Danube River as the northern/western border of the *oikoumene*, the space arranged according to the regulations of the Byzantine Christian and imperial ‘order’). Consequently, the Crimean Peninsula was considered an appropriate place to send a punished Byzantine citizen (*cf.* the earlier banishment of Ovid in Tomi, present-day Constanţa in Romania, i.e. again on the border with the nomads-barbarians Scythians and Sarmatians). The ambivalence of this borderland was also confirmed later on, during the mission of St. Constantine-Cyril, the so-called Philosopher, to the Khazars (860–861). There, he had to lead a dispute with the representatives of the other monotheistic religions and to convince the Khazar khagan in the advantages of Christianity. Why did this dispute happen near the border and, at the same time, on no man’s land and not for example in the Khagan’s capital Itil at the Volga estuary? Were the authors assuming that the meeting actually happened in Samandar and did they have good reasons for this assumption? Did any utilitarian reason (the easier access of the Byzantine ships to the ports of the peninsula?) predetermine the choice, or was there a deeper meaning and symbolism, such as a search for a place defined (border, uncertainty, etc.?) as being neutral and, for that reason, considered appropriate for a contest with the *other* religions? These are questions that have to be asked regardless of the fact that the answers are not clear and simple.

During the flourishing of the nomadic confederations the borderlands were uninhabited as a rule and thus the places for an acquaintance with the *Other* were reduced mostly to the trade points along the

---

42 Tapkova-Zaimova 1976, 14; Vachkova 2004, 135–150.
43 The pope-martyr St Martin (the seventh century) was sent in exile to Crimea and died there. According to Ukhanova 2000, 124, in the period between seventh and ninth century in Byzantium, Chersonesus was “thought as a place for exile”.
44 Obolenski 2001, 101; also see, Zuckerman 1995, 237–270; Kovalev 2005, argues that Judaism in Khazaria was accepted between December 3rd, 837 A.D. and November 22nd, 838 A.D., so the dispute with St Cyril is an anachronism and was a later addition in the text. With this statement, indeed, he agrees with an idea presented earlier by O. Pritsak (see Pritsak 1988, 298), which follows that same direction.
Great Silk Road\textsuperscript{45} and the headquarters/capitals of the khagans. This was a valid situation in relation to Byzantines, Persians, and Chinese.

However, as far as the borders are concerned, there is a significant exception, which has already been mentioned. It is related to the symbiosis between the nomad Turks and Uighurs, on the one hand, and the sedentary Sogdians, on the other. In Eastern Turkistan and the Semirechje, between the sixth and the ninth century, there were no real barriers such as earthen ramparts, walls, etc., which is another proof for the long held conclusion that there was no sharp conflict between sedentarists and nomads in Middle Asia during the early medieval period. Apparently the otherness of the Sogdians (who, apart from everything else, spoke East Iranian dialects) was not regarded as a total otherness by the Turk and the Uighur, who spoke some Turkic dialects and had another lifestyle. For that reason after the mid-sixth century, as has already been mentioned, the Sogdians quite often accepted Turkic titles, names, clothes and habits, thus easily becoming part of the Turkic military and political system and at the same time, in their turn, established and inhabited the first towns in the khaganate.\textsuperscript{46} Both the Turkic and the Uighur towns used the Sogdian ones as a model and it is likely that the greater part of them were planned and constructed by Sogdian craftsmen. They were among the places where the sedentary East Iranian civilization ‘opened’ itself for the nomadic otherness and vice versa. According to A. von Gabain, the concept of ‘city’ among the Central Asian peoples is a specific Iranian one and is represented by “kent/kand” (Sogd. ’kndh’), although it matches the original Turkic ‘baliq’.\textsuperscript{47} This conclusion proves once again the existing Turkic-Sogdian symbiosis and the fact that the otherness of the


\textsuperscript{46} See Minorsky 1978, N 1 (pp. 283–285), who gives the translation of Tamîm ibn Bahr’s report. There, the author mentions that in the khagan’s capital Ordubaliq (later to be called Karabalghasun) the main part of the populace was Manichaean and its preoccupation was mainly the trade; this fact is one more proof about the existence of enough Sogdians living there. Also see, Golden 1992, 160; Mackerras 1990, 335; Mackerras 1972 (2nd ed.), 10, 88–89, 152. All these authors assume that the coup d’etat of Ton Bagha-tarkhan (who later became Alp Qutlug, 779–789) was directed against the Sogdians and the influence of the sedentary civilizations, in general; the latter had never been viewed by the local aristocrats as something absolutely positive.

\textsuperscript{47} von Gabain 1983, 623. The Uighur inscription from Shine-usu narrates that Moyen-ch’o khagan ordered Sogdians and Chinese to build up the town of Baybaliq, on the Selenga River—for this see, Mackerras 1990, 321.
Sogdians did not cause great concern among the nomads and was accepted by them.\footnote{48 For the mutual influences and benefit see, Raspopova 1970, 86–91; Khazanov 1999ab, 256–257; Kliashtornyi and Sultanov 2000, 92: “The early medieval city’s and agricultural culture of the Western Turkic khaganate was made through the participation of the Sogdians who, from a long time, started to establish their trade-and-agricultural colonies along the Great Silk route—in Semirechie, Dzhungaria, East Turkistan, North China”.

49 von Gabain 1983, 622–623. Lobacheva 1979, 24–25, admits that in the beginning of the eighth century there existed in Sogdiana a blurring of the ethnic traditions amongst the towns’ population and this was visible especially in the dress. There were apparently forms of synthesis that were made possible on the basis of the Sogdian and Turkic costumes’ bringing together and this brought to “leveling of the ethnic peculiarities in clothing”. Also see, Kyzlasov 2004, 4, n. 8, who stresses the fact that the Turkic coins in the period the late seventh-eighth century had Sogdian inscriptions.}

The Turks and Uighurs also accepted the foreign Sogdian titles, symbols, and habits\footnote{On the other side of the stelae there was also a brief inscription in Sanskrit given with ‘brahmi’ script but this inscription suffered by erosion and is now almost totally destroyed—see Kljashtornyi and Livshits 1971b, 121–146; Kljashtornyi and Livshic 1972, 69–102; Kljashtornyi and Sultanov 2000, 150–151.} and the more important thing—the Sogdian writing, which served as a base for the creation of the Turkic runes in the seventh century. The earliest inscriptions of the Turks (the one from Bugut for example, \textit{ca.} 582 A.D.) were written in Sogdian,\footnote{Frye and Litvinsky 1996, 467. Kyzlasov 2004, 6, concludes that the Turkic-speaking tribes in Central Asia and Southern Siberia had been using for more than 500 years (end of sixth—beginning of thirteenth century) both Sogdian and Turkic scripts. Also see, Rôna-Tas 1987, 7–14.} which in the early mediaeval period turned into a \textit{lingua franca}\footnote{von Gabain 1983, 621. For the enormous impact of the Sogdian traders and their urban culture see, De La Vaissière 2002, \textit{passim}.} of the peoples of Central Asia and removed another barrier to communication and acquaintance with the Other.\footnote{For the enormous influence of the Sogdian traders and their urban culture see, De La Vaissière 2002, \textit{passim}.}

The Sogdians learned Turkic and the Turks, in their turn, learnt Sogdian dialects. For that reason the Sogdians were not regarded as the hostile Other, but as teachers. By their writing they facilitated not only a better understanding between nomads and sedentarists, but also a decrease in the level of cultural heterogeneity in the khaganates of Turks and Uighurs. This was especially necessary during the first stage of the establishment of the Turkic state organization during the second half of the sixth century. It is worth noting here the comments of a notable Chinese military commander from this period who claimed that without the Sogdians, the Turks were doomed because they are known for their very simple nature and lack of experience in state...
affairs. “Regretfully”, he writes, “many Sogdians live among them [the Turks] . . . they train and instruct the Turks”.53 Another significant fact was that it was the Sogdians who, being very interested in settling the problem with the silk trade,54 headed the earliest missions of the Turks to Byzantium. Such missions were aimed at gaining (with the help of the powerful Turkic khagans) the role of agents and middlemen in this trade between Sogdiana and China, on the one hand, and the Byzantine Empire, on the other, i.e., between the greatest producers and the most serious consumer of silk in the early medieval period. However, it is important to recall that one of the most common ways and mechanisms in becoming acquainted with the Other, and the conflict with the otherness in general, is the Great Silk Road itself, which breaks all boundaries. Various goods as well as real and imaginary (conventional, taken from the old books) notions of the Other were distributed along this road.55

Returning to the writing system and its role in overcoming the barriers to acquaintance with the Other, the intensive development of the runic writing in the seventh–ninth century provided Turks and Uighurs with a powerful instrument for creating their own identity. This process was helped by written rhetoric and the notions of own and foreign left for the future generations. By making inscriptions on stone they also tried to propose a sort of innovation, a kind of ‘domestication’ of the foreignness of the Chinese—the words cut on the stone could be read and, at the same time, seen and not only heard; this way, remembering was easier and more effective (apart from the visual effect of the stone stelae sticking up from the soil). Regretfully, the surviving monuments are not numerous, but the available ones are extremely important since they are products of the domestic environment and reveal in a far more genuine way the image of the Other.56

53 Lieu 1992, 228. Also see, Golden 1992, 134.
55 There are many works dealing with questions regarding the Great Silk Road. For instance see, Lubo-Lesnichenko 1994; Baipakov 1998; Liu 1998. For the cliché-notions and archaizing in Byzantium—as both mental and artistic practice—see, Bartusis 1995, 271–278.
56 For the role of the state, as well as literacy and their mutual relation and dependency in certain moments, see, Kyzlasov 1994, 208–235. Kyzlasov pays attention to the fact that the Chinese, especially during the period of the Second Turkic khaganate, had a definite impact upon the concept’s development regarding khagans’ stelae and their inscriptions (Kyzlasov 1994, 227). For the role of memory as one of the most
It is the ‘domestic’ inscriptions that provide a good opportunity for interpretation of the concepts of the “steppe empire” regarding the naming of the Outside Other. Indeed, the naming, as is generally considered, contains a powerful (self-)identifying supply of energy and potential. The Turkic Orkhon inscriptions provide numerous examples in this respect. In them, the subjects of the Middle Kingdom were called “Tabgach”.

It is even more interesting to note the names the Bulgars called the Byzantines. On all stone inscriptions the latter are represented by the name “Greeks”; the Bulgars continued to use the same name even after they accepted Christianity in 860s. In fact the Byzantines were also named “Greeks” (Graeci) in the written sources from early mediaeval Western Europe. Until the thirteenth century at least, the Byzantines reacted in a very negative way to this name and it often caused diplomatic and political embroilments in relations between Byzantium and various western European rulers, especially the emperors and the Papacy. It seems that the “new people” from the so-called barbarian kingdoms and especially the Carolingians refused to recognize the Roman identity of the subjects of the former Eastern Roman Empire. It was the way they intentionally stressed the groundless claims of the Byzantine basileus to the ‘Roman Augustus/Emperor’ title. It seems quite logical after the late sixth century with view to the fact that the Greek language replaced Latin in the Byzantine Empire and the Greek lifestyle and habits began to dominate over the Latin ones. However, the refusal of those people who established their polities on the territories of the former Roman Empire to recognize the Roman identity of the Byzantines had a further aim and it was related to their own identity and its gradual establishment as a counterpoint to the Byzantine one. The Bulgar ‘kanasybigi’ Omurtag declared this in a very explicit way in one of his inscriptions (the so-called Chatalar inscription, which was found near the present-day village of Tsar Krum, Shumen region in Bulgaria): “Khanasybigi Omurtag is by God’s will an archon of the land where he was born” (ital. mine, Ts. St.). It was no longer the land of the others (i.e. the Byzantines) although present-day
Northern Bulgaria, where Omurtag had most probably seen the dawn for the first time, was the former Roman province of “Moesia”. Of course, the notion of the Bulgarians being a western ‘segment’ of the Christian (meaning the Byzantine) kingdom would develop as a well defined political concept much later, after the acceptance of Christianity by the Bulgarians and especially during the reigns of Simeon (893–927) and Peter (927–d. 970). However, some initial concepts in this direction were to be observed as early as the pagan period of the Bulgarian kingdom in the first half of the ninth century.

Since the Sogdians did not have a strong and centralized state and were merchants and craftsmen mainly,\(^59\) they were not a real threat to the Turks and Uighurs. They were instead the ones searching for the protection of the powerful steppe khagans in order to set regulations along the Great Silk Road.\(^60\) For that reason, the notion of the Sogdian could be expressed by the ‘friend-other’.\(^61\) That is why it was not surprising that the Sogdians were the ones to contribute the most to the Turkic identity and its development after the mid-sixth century. It was their towns that became a contact zone for the development of a syncretic culture although the population was a bilingual one. The process of acculturation there passed through several phases: 1) living together and mutual acquaintance—after the 560s; 2) the accepted otherness of the other social and cultural system—the eighth-ninth century;\(^62\) 3) the final synthesis—after 840 A.D., after the Uighurs’ settling down

---

\(^59\) For the Sogdians-craftsmen and traders as well as their colonies in Tarim basin, China, etc. see, Ikeda 1981, 77–79. Especially for the Sogdian influence over the Turks during the T’ang dynasty and with regard to the metals’ treatment see, Marshak 1971, 80–82. For the Sogdian traders in general and for the development of many of the Central Asian civilizations thanks to their role see, De La Vaissière 2002, 196–221 (for the connection Sogdians-Turks and Sogdians-Uighurs), 244–252 (for the connection Sogdians-Khazars).

\(^60\) Pritsak 1981b, 14–17.

\(^61\) Barfield 1989, 158, also claims that the Sogdians regarded the steppe tribes as allies and not enemies. Also see, Golden 1992, 172–173, for the Sogdian influence over the Uighur culture.

\(^62\) Lobacheva 1979, 28, on the basis of comparison of costumes, e.g. those in Afra- siab (the seventh century) and Panjikand (the eighth century), where there are frescoes depicting some Turkic aristocrats, claims that at the eighth century there was already a tendency towards a blending of traditional costumes of nobles from Turkic origin and those of Sogdian milieu.
in Eastern Turkistan (in Kocho and Turfan, in particular) and their final sedentarization.\textsuperscript{63}

China, being a border culture, played a certain role in the development of the Turkic identity, although it was not a direct role since the opposition ‘we, the nomads’—‘they, the sedentarists’ was embedded in its foundations. Following the same model, as a mirror reflection of the Byzantine otherness, although not focusing on the nomads–sedentarists opposition, the Bulgars also created and developed their identity until the beginning of the ninth century. After their successful military campaigns in the south and the conquest of the greater part of the Byzantine West, the Haemus Mountain was no longer a border between the Bulgars and the Byzantines. A considerable number of Greek-speaking people—former subjects of the Byzantine Empire—remained in the newly acquired Bulgarian territories and this required a softening of the notion that ‘the Byzantine is not ours but foreign’. This was the moment when the confessional difference came to the fore (‘the Byzantines are others, because they are Christians’).\textsuperscript{64}

The existence of real borders such as the Caucasus Mountains and the steppe to the north of China put obstacles in front of the real and permanent conquest of the Turkic territories by China and the Khazar territories by the Arabs, respectively. The same conclusion is also valid for the other side of this relation as the Turks and the Uighurs did not aim at permanent domination over the sedentary Chinese.\textsuperscript{65} The foreignness of the “Northern barbarians” and the Chinese hostility towards them also provides circumstantial evidence of the great difference that existed on both sides of the Great Wall of China. The Chinese historian Ban Gou (d. 92 A.D.) explicitly designates its parameters and names in his “History of the Former Han dynasty”: he writes that compared to the Middle Kingdom, the nomads wear different clothes, have different habits, eat and drink different things, speak incomprehensible languages, live isolated in the steppe, migrate from place to place in search for new pastures for their herds and are hunters. In his view, they are, too, cut off from the Chinese by the mountainous

\textsuperscript{63} von Gabain 1961; von Gabain 1973. Also see, Stepanov 2004, 288–305. The proverb narrated by Mahmud al-Kashgari (the eleventh century) represents quite well that Turkic-Sogdian symbiosis: “As the head can’t be without a hat, so the Turk can’t be without a Tat”, where ‘Tat’ means people who speak Eastern Iranian dialects and live in the region of the Central Asian towns.

\textsuperscript{64} See Beshelevlev 1992, N 14.

\textsuperscript{65} Pritsak 1981b, 19; Jagchid 1991, 69, 75, 77–78.
meadows and are hidden in the sands’ desert through which Heaven and Earth, e.g. the gods, separated the so-called inside lands from the outside lands and their land can not be cultivated. Additionally, says Ban Gou, it is impossible for anybody to rule them as subjects. Such ideas found in the Chinese written sources and in the Turkic and Uighur inscriptions, respectively, made L. Gumilev to claim some 40 years ago that the Chinese and the nomads living to the north of them were not able to find a common language “since their mentalities were alien to each other”.66

A certain number of things related to the description above had already changed in the seventh-ninth century, although the mutual notion-clichés existing both among Turks and Uighurs towards the Chinese and in the Middle Kingdom, towards the nomads, maintained the usual status quo and served as a ground for the existence of stable mental stereotypes.

The nomads were focused on “pumping out” the Chinese resources from a distance. According to S. Jagchid, they achieved it through exchange practices in which both the Chinese court and the nomadic

---

66 See Jagchid 1991, 64: “The barbarians are… human faced but animal hearted… As for clothing, costume, food, and language, the barbarians are entirely different from the Middle Kingdom”. Also see, Barfield 1989, who speaks about “inner and outer frontier strategies”. For that same ‘outer frontier strategy’ he speaks also in his “Inner Asia…” (1991, p. 35) where among its elements, he points to “the deliberate refusal to occupy Chinese land even after great victories”. The others are the devastating raiding and incursions aiming at terrorizing the court of China as well as temporally changing the periods of war and peace in order to force the China’s court to give more generous allowances to the khagans and advantageous trading privileges as well.

67 Gumilev 1967, 327. Here, there is a significant exception—the emperor T’ai-tsung (627–649). He took the title of “khagan” following the request of the Eastern Turks, whom he subdued, for he was well informed about the role of the personal charisma in the steppes and in the nomadic culture, in general. For this see, Barfield 1991, 37–38; Yihong 1997, 179–182. But one must add that this emperor was indeed a child of a mixed marriage.

68 Barfield 1989, 139, 148; Taskin 1975, 149. Barfield 1991, 24, 35, also highlights the main desire and aspiration of the steppe towards the Middle Kingdom; the steppe usually achieved its goals through manipulation, e.g. through peace treaties with China which gave chance for a ‘legal’ access to luxurious goods and other important for the nomads items. Once such a treaty had been concluded, the nomads started to behave themselves as loyal partners and sometimes even sent troops to one or another ‘originally’ Chinese dynasties which were facing internal or external threats. Here, we may also add some similar facts that come from the Bulgar milieu, e.g. Omurtag’s help rendered to the Byzantine basileus Michael II (820–829) against the usurper Thomas the Slav in 821/2 A.D. and some decades earlier, that of another Bulgar ruler, Tervel, who in 717–718 A.D. sent an army to the Byzantines in order to help them to rescue the besieged city of Constantinople; thanks to Tervel’s help the Arabs who were in
elites took part. Those practices included marriages between the courts (or, the so-called diplomatic marriages), tribute payments to the nomads, annual taxes and presents from the Chinese emperor for the nomadic chieftains. However, the most important thing, with view to the economy and the stability of the khagans, was the establishment of trade centers along the borders.\(^69\) Also, we should not ignore the fact that at the end of the reign of Sui dynasty (i.e. from 617 until 623 A.D.), as a result of the serious unrest in China, many subjects of the emperor fled north to the Turks or were taken captives by them. However, it is hard to believe that they had enough time to enter the Turkic environment and accept the Turkic lifestyle since their return to the original Chinese territories was proclaimed the highest priority of Chinese foreign policy as early as the first years of the T'ai-tsung reign (627–649). This way, as a result of the victories of China over the Turkic khaganate in 629–630 A.D., more than 1.2 million people returned back to China and among them there were 100 000 Turks who expressed their desire to become subjects of the Chinese Emperor. In 631 A.D. that same emperor “redeemed with the help of gold and silk 80 000 Chinese men and women who were taken captives by the Turks during the Sui unrest and gave them back their household property”.\(^70\)

Regardless of how afraid they were of the otherness of the sedentary civilization, the nomads had to trade with the people living there. Jordanes’s words (the sixth century) can be used as an appropriate illustration for this necessity:

> The wild Scythian tribes allowed the Greeks to establish these cities [along the Black Sea coast, e.g. Boristhenida, Olbia, Chersonesus, etc.—\textit{my note}, \textit{Ts. St.}], in order to trade with them.\(^71\)

---

\(^69\) Jagchid 1991, 66–69, with examples. I. Ecsedy points out that there was a different attitude toward trade (as basic positions as well as methods) among the Turks and Chinese during the second half of the sixth–beginning of the seventh century; sometimes this was followed by serious problems between the two powers and even by a change of one dynasty, (e.g. Sui, with another—T'ang), that was made thanks to the help rendered by the Turks—for this see, Ecsedy 1968, 131–180; Ecsedy 1990, 123–132. Also see, Seaman 1991, 3, 8.

\(^70\) Popova 1999, 51–52.

\(^71\) Iordanes 1958, 335.
This old “Scythian pattern” was used by all “barbarians” in steppe Eurasia. It was not by accident that the treaty between the Bulgar ruler Tervel (700–721) and the Byzantines signed in 716 A.D. contained trade clauses which were extremely important for the Bulgars.\textsuperscript{72}

Sergey Kliashtornyi also insists upon the frequent attempts of the Turkic khagans to obtain trade permits from the Chinese emperors. Since the Middle Kingdom always considered the border trade as a means of political control and pressure on the “barbarians”, practically this trade represented the emperor’s court monopoly. For that reason, the almost 200-years-long history of the Turkic khaganates provides little information about the opening of trade points along the northern Chinese border.\textsuperscript{73}

There was one more form of “exchange trade” that resulted from the Chinese emperors seeking help from “northern barbarians” to deal with internal unrest.\textsuperscript{74} It increased the number of the ‘meeting points’ with Chinese civilization although in general it did not significantly change the nomad’s notions or prejudices toward China. However, there were Turks and Uighurs, especially after the suppression of the An Lu-shan rebellion in 763 A.D. that resulted in increasing the Uighur role in China,\textsuperscript{75} who adopted many elements of this sedentary civilization’s lifestyle. These elements mostly represented a good appearance although they contributed to diluting the boundaries between own and foreign, especially in the khagan’s capital centers. According to the Chinese, it only led to the undermining of the morality of the Uighurs: prior to 780 A.D. as the Uighurs had common, simple habits and traditions and for that reason they were unanimous and had no rivals; from the moment they started receiving rich presents from T’ang China, the khagan became very proud and built up a palace for himself and the women in the court began to use make-up and expensive clothes; China suffered great financial losses trying to pay for these luxuries of the nomads; however, the morality of the nomads suffered


\textsuperscript{73} Kliashtornyi and Sultanov 2000, 84.

\textsuperscript{74} See here n. 69.

\textsuperscript{75} For this rebellion see, Pulleyblank 1955; Mackerras 1990, 317, 330; The Cambridge History of China 1979, 455, 472–484. For some interesting parallels in Bulgaria during the reign of Omurtag see, Stepanov 2003d, 81–93; Stepanov 2005b, 152–161.
equally.\textsuperscript{76} An element of rhetoric and didactics is certainly present in this statement, but it is also apparent that the Chinese felt real fear of the consequences of the broken \textit{status quo} along the borders after the help they got from the Uighurs in suppressing the rebellion of An Lu-shan. However, the invasion of the Chinese \textit{otherness} into the khanate and the Uighur one—into the Middle Kingdom (mostly with the protection of the Manichaean communities there), were not equal. Indeed, it soon turned out to be disastrous both for the Uighurs and their state, even though their center was traditionally situated on the sacred territory of Otüken, i.e. far away from the northern Chinese border. For both the Turks and Uighurs ‘unlocking the door’ of the sedentary Chinese civilization turned out to be disastrous as they had at their disposal neither symbolic, nor economic resources to long resist its civilization’s \textit{otherness} and economic power.

The Khazars acted in a similar manner after the late eighth century when they were only able to effectively control the territories to the north of the Caucasus. They ceased their attacks to the south of Derbend and shifted the center of their state from the region of the Sulak and Terek Rivers (present-day Dagestan) and the old centers of Samandar and Balandzharr to the far north, at the Volga River estuary, where they established the large capital city of Itil.\textsuperscript{77} After the Arabs ‘blocked’ them, Derbend turned into a border again. However, it did not prevent the intrusion of Islamic influences and the accompanying \textit{otherness} into the khaganate during the ninth-tenth century. The merchants also played an important part in the process as in the early mediaeval period Muslim and Jewish merchants enjoyed considerable fame and prestige in Europe, the Near East and Asia. Due mostly to their activity, the Khazar khaganate not only flourished during this period but also ‘broke up’ the boundaries with the sedentary civiliza-

\textsuperscript{76} Bichurin 1950, 323–324. For the scale of the wealth that arrived at the Uighur court one could take into account the information about the annual incomes in the khanate of silk products—in the course of the ninth century, the Uighurs received from China almost half a million rolls of silk. This can be compared with that same situation but referring to the Turks—the latter received for one of their horses 4 or 5 rolls only. For this with more details see, Mackerras 1972 (2nd ed.), 47–50; Barfield 1991, 39.

tions situated to the south, accepting certain elements typical for their otherness, which were not regarded as a ‘foreign’ threat.

The Bulgar–Byzantine border case is a different one. Byzantine doctrine regarded the Balkan territories temporarily ceded to the Bulgars (cf. the nine campaigns of Constantine V in the period between 756 and 775 A.D.) and the Bulgars felt strong enough after the early ninth century to abandon the real barrier, the Haemus Mountains, and to begin organizing the already conquered Byzantine territories to the south of the mountains seeking a balance between Byzantine and Bulgar. Their activities related to the organization of these territories after the beginning of the ninth century were quite indicative. The Bulgar ruler Krum (803–814) divided the conquered territories in Eastern Thrace according to the typical steppe three-partite pattern—a couple of flanks and a center, led by his brother (the center), by the “kaukhan” (the eastern flank, e.g. toward the Black Sea) and by the “ichirgü-boila” (the western flank). However, the khan had chosen Byzantine strategoi who moved to Bulgar service after 809 A.D. for their substitutes (e.g. Vardanes, Yanis, Grigoras, and Kordiles). Together, with this division, the traditional one continued to exist—the country was divided into an ‘internal’ area (where the ‘tsar’’s people/tribes lived) and an ‘external’ one.

Another system of administrative division was probably introduced in Bulgaria as early as the time of Omurtag’s reign (maybe after 824 A.D.?)—the so-called comitates, i.e. territories bearing the name of the comes/comitates, well known from the Roman period and the West European “barbarian” kingdoms. This fact again points to the establishment, in the ninth century, of a contact zone on the Balkan Peninsula, initially in the territories to the south of the Haemus Mountains.

---

80 This evidence, beyond any doubt, is mentioned for the time of knyaz Boris-Michael (852–889) but it is almost taken at face value that this change had already begun in the time of Omurtag, when in Bulgaria there were many signs for the beginning of ‘modernization’ and centralization processes. See Annales Bertiniani 1960, 287 (s.a. 866); Venedikov 1979; Stepanov 1999, 65–72.
81 Nikolova 1997, 33, speaks about the existence of a second contact zone in the places where the Bulgar khans settled captives-Christians from the territories of Byzantium, or, in the places that were very close to the Bulgar lands where the Byzantine emperors used to settle Christians. In my opinion, as regards “Bulgaria beyond the Danube River”, we can speak about zones of contacts only, and not about contact zones, because that period, during which the Krum’s Byzantine captives from Eastern
(in the region of the present-day Debelt, Sozopol, Nessebar, Pomorie, etc. in Bulgaria, in particular) and inhabited by a Christian population. One should keep in mind that in the second half of the eighth century Constantine V sent to Thrace Christian populations from the eastern parts of the empire, Syrians mainly, and also people professing the Paulician heresy consisting mostly of Armenians.\footnote{See evidence in, Theophanes 1960, 269–270, and Nicephoros Patriarch 1960, 301.}

This way, in contrast to Turks, Uighurs and to certain extent Khazars, the Bulgars conquered and organized in their own way the territories of the sedentary foreign civilization in the greater part of Southeastern Europe. Maybe this was one of the main reasons that they (the only ones among the four above-mentioned ethnic groups) accepted the religion of their primary enemy. It was the Bulgars who most courageously and successfully broke up the barriers set by the sedentary civilizations in front of the “northern barbarians” and thus shortened the cultural distance between them. It was at that moment when true acquaintance with and acceptance of elements of the Byzantine otherness began, related already to the somewhat compulsory and permanent settlement of the Bulgars.

This general review reveals that while in the sixth-seventh century the above-mentioned ‘early’ states were nomadic (regarding the value system, traditions, lifestyle, etc.), in the eighth-ninth century the boundaries began to blur. Urban lifestyle, combining the acceptance of the otherness of the sedentarists with the own traditions, began to form among the former nomads and especially among the Bulgars and the Khazars as well as some Turks in the Western khaganate and part of the Uighurs. The ‘propaganda’ of the world religions in the ‘Steppe Empire’ also grew more intense.\footnote{Details see in, Khazanov 1994, 11–33.} All this leads to a better acquaintance with the Outside Other. The contradictions did not disappear, but there

\footnote{\textit{Thrace were ‘beyond the Danube’, was indeed too a brief (not more than quarter of a century) to allow for a real contact zone. We need evidence and artifacts at our disposal if we want to make such a claim. And until now such evidence is quite scarce.} Before the ninth century it is difficult to talk about a contact zone in the region to the north of Odessos (today Varna in Bulgaria) and spanning to the estuary of the Danube River, because the four other—except Odessos—towns in this area, e.g. Dionysopolis, Kalatis, Tomi, and Istrso, together with several smaller forts and villages along the Black Sea coastal line, were already in ruins after the devastating raids in the region in the first half of the seventh century. That is why the new villages were in fact built away from the coastal line—details see in, Rashev 1997, 33–37.}
was an opportunity for softening the extreme features of the image of the sedentary Other. This way, the focus on the otherness and its rejection aimed at creating the own identity observed among the above-mentioned communities can be examined not only through the prism of the sedentarism-nomadism, or steppe (suitable for transhumance)-plain (suitable for agriculture). The initial ecological (natural) reason for a differentiation between these two ‘worlds’ had lowered its intensity after the eighth century since in a number of regions (especially in Southeastern Europe, to the north of Caucasus and in the old Sogdiana), no sharp ecological boundaries existed in fact. Of course, “the steppe (ecological) perspective” towards the Other had the longest life among the Uighurs since they were the only ones in the ninth century who inhabited the classic steppe region to the north of China.

From a geographic point of view, the concept of the Outside Other in the ‘Steppe Empire’, in the sixth-ninth century, is based mainly on the opposition between north-south and not on that between east-west. The steppe rulers thought of the South as a direction of expansion, both as an abstraction and as reality; it embodied the otherness in the best possible way since it also played an essential role in the formation of Bulgar, Khazar, Turkic, and Uighur identity. The North was at the opposite pole; it was regarded as a direction of refrain, especially by the Bulgars, Khazars, and Uighurs.

For the sedentary civilizations and especially for Byzantium, the Sassanians, and China, the important Others—from a geographic point of view—were situated along the east-west axis; it was the direction of the greatest tensions (wars, expansion) while the North, i.e. the ‘Steppe Empire’, was regarded mainly as the direction of refrain and defense. For that reason, the aristocrats from “Pax Nomadica” regarded the South as weak, feminine, and perfidious while they looked at themselves through the prism of manliness since, compared to the South, they seemed active, dynamic, and aggressive, all masculine characteristics. These arguments taken from the sphere of morality by the representatives of the ‘Steppe Empire’ and used in relation to the sedentary civilizations are more fully explored in another chapter.

However, the otherness, as it is well known, finds its support and manifestation not only in the natural but also in the human and the religious factor.
I.2. About freedom and otherness and the signs and images of usness and otherness

The human factor studied through the prism of “Pax Nomadica”—‘sedentary world’ could be also related to the problem of freedom and the nomads’ attitude towards it. It is key to the process of developing images of the Other.

In contrast to Byzantium, for example, where freedom was interpreted through the prism of Christian doctrine and true freedom meant that the individual was free from sins, freedom in the above-mentioned nomadic/semi-sedentary type of societies was not so much related to the Self but rather to the community, to we and our lifestyle, notions, and values. This was the life of the free rider who was a member of a particular clan/tribe and was loyal to his leader until death. In the tribal system we can be completed only in the presence of its antithesis—they, the sedentary societies. The marks of our freedom and our values among the nomads were numerous: steppe, fresh air, herds, yurts, lack of artificial borders, dynamics and bellicosity, tribal solidarity and, perhaps, meat and milk. According to their ideas, the only way of life for the dignified free man was that typical for the warrior and the herdsman; and the basic social structure (at least according to the traditional concept)—the tribal organization with its highly developed military hierarchy and subordination. There the tribes were united by the power of the Heaven’s representative on earth—the khagan.

For the nomad, the sedentary world was marked by signs and qualities (semi-dug in dwellings and overcrowded houses, stuffy air, backs bent over the rice or corn fields, strenuous taxes, perfidy/treachery, lust, and indolence), part of which he read as non-freedom and others, such as perfidy/treachery, lust, and frailness,—he defined as femaleness, marked a priori by obedience, i.e. non-freedom again.

However, in the nomad’s mind there were some more name-and-images of the sedentary otherness such as ‘richness’, ‘luxury’, ‘gold’, ‘literacy’, ‘silk’, ‘baths’, i.e. things and qualities that the nomads (especially in the sixth century) still did not often possess. The written

---

84 Sagalaev and Oktiabr’skaia 1990, 14.
85 Sagalaev and Oktiabr’skaia 1990, 22.
sources provide examples eloquent enough. One of them comes from the works of Procopius of Caesarea (the sixth century) who narrates that,

> even until present days the Huns [Kutrigurs and Utigurs living at the Northern Black Sea region—my note, Ts. St.] have no idea of writing and are totally illiterate, they have no one to keep a record for them either… They tell in a very barbarian way, from memory, all the things that [Sandilkh, the ruler of the Utigurs—my note, Ts. St.] have commissioned to them to do. ⁸⁸

Procopius also describes the attitude of the nomads-Utigurs towards certain signs of the sedentary otherness and civilization:

> While we live in a deserted and infertile land, the Kutigurs are able to buy wheat, to drink wine and to eat the most exquisite meals. Besides, at some places they also use baths and these tramps even wear golden adornments and have fine, colorful and gold-embroidered garments. ⁸⁹

Knowing this one should not be surprised by the baths in the Pliska palaces of pagan Bulgaria, which were considered a mark of luxury and prestige in the societies demonstrating a certain level of hierarchy. The baths are not found in any other buildings, of course, as they were the sole ‘privilege’ of the ruler. The dangerous otherness coming from the sedentary world was not supposed to be offered to the ordinary people and the warriors since it was seen to be bringing frailness and decay.

The societies inhabiting the ‘Steppe Empire’ understood that it was more favorable and easier for them to maintain the peace in the steppe by directing their aggression outwards, against their sedentary neighbors. This fact is related to the problem of freedom although the relation is not a direct one. The above-mentioned strategy is far more successful compared to stealing the neighbor’s herds and allowed for a greater variety of resources. These resources provided the nomads with the opportunity to maintain efficient armies and an ‘imperial’ type of administration without putting heavy taxes on their population, ⁹⁰ a practice that was typical for the sedentary states. This fact gave more self-confidence to the inhabitants of steppe Eurasia and made

---

⁸⁸ Procopius 1958, 144.
⁸⁹ Procopius 1958, 145.
⁹⁰ Barfield 1994, 164.
them think of themselves as far freer people, in comparison to their neighbors to the south.

Part of these names—signs of the otherness were highly appreciated and accepted by the nomadic aristocracy. The Orkhon Turkic inscription of Kül-tegin (ca. 732 A.D.), for example, explicitly states that the Turks received from the Chinese gold, silver, silk and all this was ‘lavishly garnished’ with the sweet and seductive words of the Chinese. The elite was very well acquainted with the economic benefits and the symbolic value of possessing such luxurious goods, especially purple garments, silk and exquisite golden adornments and vessels produced in the workshops of China, Iran, or Byzantium. This otherness did not scare the nomads and they willingly accepted it in their own community. The accumulation of wealth of any kind for the nomads was in fact a function of their notions about the high prestige and the strong power-source of life, good luck and good fortune that was ‘locked’ (especially) in the gold. The old Iranians called it hvarena/farn, and the Turkic speaking tribes—qut. Due to their striving for all these goods—symbols of prestige, luxury, wealth, and glory, and due to the easy way they spent them (at least that was how it seemed to the representatives of the sedentary civilizations), the nomads earned a reputation as greedy and ungrateful neighbors in the eyes of the sedentary world that regularly paid tributes to them.

Therefore, in the steppe there was a mixed attitude towards sedentary civilizations—the wealth attracted and at the same time repelled the leery nomads, because they related it to seduction and moral decay. The refined civilization hidden behind the walls it had erected both lured the nomads and made them despise it.

Freedom for steppe Eurasia had a mainly spatial dimension; it was freedom-in-the-nature and was a result of a traditionally high level of mobility. However, the unaware nomads were not free from another

point of view as they were totally dependent on unwritten oral law and tradition as passed on by the clan and the fathers of the tribe. Indeed, it was the clan rather than the nuclear family that was the heart of their social system. Everything was subordinate to the clan and everything was learned from and regulated by traditional law which influenced behavioristic models and patterns rather than moral norms justified in written laws, as was common for the sedentary civilizations. This, beyond any doubt, was another otherness recorded by the nomads when they compared themselves with the other cultures (Persian, Byzantine, Chinese, and Arabic). As a matter of fact, that was why among the nomads charisma, especially demonstrated on the battle field, had a modeling significance—it was the only dignified behavior-model that had to be followed by everybody. For that reason, quite often nomadic rulers of the highest rank stood at the head of their armies, something that was relatively rare in the medieval period amongst Byzantines, Arabs, or Chinese. This striking difference both in military strategies and rules of lifestyle and activity was usually interpreted by the nomads as cowardice and a lack of dignity in the rulers of the sedentary world (i.e., it was again non-freedom, because the cowardly person was not regarded as free).

Therefore, the nomads also had their clichés about what the freedom meant and how to practice it and these clichés were the ones to define the image of the Other. Their own freedom was considered a movement of the community in-the-space or, in other words, an emanation of the moving body of the collective/community,95 and not an individual and rationalized freedom-from-the-collective body. That is why it comes as no surprise that no great philosopher was born among the steppe nomads. Their “love/friendship of wisdom” and freedom did not bear the characteristics of the abstract quest and reflection, but had the marks of the natural and the utilitarian. For that reason, apart from being freedom-in-the-nature, it was also freedom-of-the-collective and was marked by incompletion, but this was exactly how it was accepted by them as real freedom.

Within the nomadic communities the otherness was also part of the moral virtues. The nomads thought of themselves as men of honor and men of “the given word”, as men that respect the treaties concluded

---

95 The phrase is taken from, Gachev 1995, 127. In my opinion, as regards the nomads’ notion of ‘Motherland’, Gachev’s phrase is not convincing enough.
with the sedentary people. In this case again, following the principle of the antithesis, they created the image of the *Outside Other*: he was dishonest, arrogant, manipulating and did not respect the contracts. Turksanth (Turk-shad?), one of the eight most eminent aristocrats of the West Turkic khaganate in the 570s, is quite eloquent on the matter as presented by Menander. Turk-shad welcomed with bitter words the Byzantine aristocrat Valentinos who came to ask the Turks to renew the contract for joint actions against Iran as well as to inform them about the enthronement of the new Byzantine emperor Tiberius: “Aren’t you the same Byzantines who use ten languages but one fraud?” After saying this, Menander narrates, the Turk pressed his lips with his ten fingers and uttered:

As I have ten fingers on my lips, the same way you, the Byzantines, use many languages: one of them is used by you to deceive me and the other one—to deceive my slaves, the Varkhonites [the Avars]. And in general, the way you mock all people and flatter them with various words and perfidy, you betray them when they fall on evil days, and you benefit from this. And now you, the envoys [are] dressed in lies and the one who has sent you is the same deceiver. And I am going to kill you right now without any delay because the lie is alien and unusual for the Turks.96

The accusations in perfidy and lie were *topoi* in the description of the sedentary people made by the nomads.97 The Bulgars also commonly held that the Byzantines possessed these ‘qualities’. The first inscription on the Madara rocks, dated to the 705 A.D., gives information about the help provided by khan Tervel to emperor Justinian II for his re-enthronement in Constantinople in 705 A.D.; it reads: “...the emperor with the cut nose did not believe my uncles in Salonika (Salonika region?) and went away...”.98 The Philippi inscription was

96 Menander 1958, 228–229.
97 Litavrin 1986, 103–105, shows with many examples the verbal depiction of the Byzantines that was typical for other peoples. It demonstrates two main characteristics that were assigned to the emperor’s subjects; their roots were indeed visible in the works of the older Roman authors. According to them, and later already following the established tradition, the Greeks are perfidious and insincere and, also, cowardly and incapable of fighting as brave soldiers. The latter stereotype is later confirmed even by a Byzantine basileus, namely Manuel I Comnenus (twelfth century) who named his warriors-compatriots “clay pots” while calling “metal cauldrons” the Western knights that were fighting for money for the Byzantine’s cause. The Byzantines are almost ubiquitously blamed for perfidy in the medieval Arab literature—for this see, El-Cheik 1996, 122–135.
made many years later, in 837 A.D., and contains the evaluation of the Bulgar khan Persian (836–852) on the Byzantines:

The one who is seeking the truth, Lord sees, and the one who is lying, Lord sees. To the Christians [= the Byzantines] the Bulgars did good services and the Christians forgot about them; but Lord sees.99

Probably as a double insurance and to make the Byzantines respect the treaties, the Bulgars, and khan Omurtag especially, performed the Christian rituals when the 30-years-long peace treaty between Bulgaria and Byzantium was signed in 815 A.D., and, at the same time, he wanted the Byzantine emperor Leo V (The Armenian) to perform, in return, the Bulgar pagan rituals related to taking an oath over a dog cut in pieces and the emperor did it “bringing shame on all Byzantines”, as stated by a Byzantine annalist.100

Another Bulgar khan, Krum (803–814), wanted the treachery of the Byzantines to be stated explicitly in the so-called Hambarlii stone inscription (the present-day village of Malamirovo, Elkhovo region, Bulgaria) by the following words:

…the old man, the Emperor himself, the bold headed man, and he has conquered everything and has forgotten about the oaths he has given, and Krum the archont, stepped against him…101

The reproaches are again within the sphere of morality and are considered as casus belli sufficiently serious. Due to the same reason, the breaking of the treaties, in 830s khan Malamir’s army headed by kaukhan Isboul marched southwards and conquered the fortresses of Provatos (near the present-day Edirne in Turkey) and Burdizos; after that they probably conquered Philippopolis (present-day Plovdiv, Bulgaria) as well, where Malamir and the kaukhan had a meeting with the citizens. In this case again, the military activity of the Bulgars was presented as a consequence of Byzantine aggression.102

The Orkhon Turkic inscriptions dated between 716 and 734/735 A.D. are also very indicative in this respect. These inscriptions describe the Chinese (under the name of “Tabgach”) as flatterers, sly and perfidious,

---

100 Rashev 2001, 111. Also see, Sinor 1997 (N XVII: “Taking an oath over a dog cut in two”). Especially for the ritual practices performed by the Byzantine basileus while concluding the treaty see, Theophanes Continuatus 1961, 113, and also, Ignatius 1961, 36–37.
creating intrigues and stirring up intentional troubles among the Turks; for that reason Tonyuquq appealed to the Turks not to accept the Chinese habits and manners and not to live in towns, but “to follow the water and the grass”. In fact, this way he dissuaded Bilgä kha-gan (716–734) from building up a city in the steppe after receiving 100,000 rolls of silk in 727 A.D. from China and feeling rich enough to plan this event. Tonyuquq pointed out the very important fact that the Turks, for their survival, have always relied on their flexibility and mobility; however, if they had a city to settle down in, they could be defeated and lose everything in one single battle; the free nomadic life provided them with the advantage to attack or retreat according to the enemy’s power.

The courage and bravery showed on the battlefield were among the qualities that always made an impression on the nomads. They value the strength and recognize it in the Other if demonstrated appropriately (i.e., in accordance with their warrior ethos). In such cases, all other considerations were not valid. That is why we could lay our trust on at-Ṭabarî who puts the following words in the khagan’s mouth:

Indeed, when the Arabs are in a difficult situation, they seek death; leave them, let them retreat [from the battlefield—my note, Ts. St.], do not stand on their way since you will not be able to resist them.

Such recognition is even more valuable with view to the fact that it was made after many decades during which the Arabs undertook numerous efforts to conquer Central Asia and to introduce Islam there; they were opposed by the joint (most often) armies of Sogdians and Turks and—until the battle of Talas in 751 A.D.—the army of the Chinese T’ang dynasty. Although they were all opposed not only to the Arabs but to Islam as well, in this case even the confessional opposition, known for its extremes, could not hide its admiration for the Other whose bravery was highly valued according to the Turkic warrior’s ethos. Again, the reference point for evaluating Arab bravery is the

104 Liu Mau-tsai 1958, 172–173; Barfield 1989, 149. Tamîm ibn Bah (see Minorsky 1978, N 1, p. 284) points to that same practice as regards the Uighur khagan who was moving from place to place following the grass.
107 Cf. the unexpected behavior of Li Shi-min, who, though Chinese, led his armies for he knew how important it was for the nomads to be led by their chiefs or rulers, a concept that was quite untypical for the sedentary China; following the prescriptions
Turkic own ethos, which was familiar and accepted as valuable and respectful.

Tonyuquq’s warnings mentioned above are indirect evidence for the intensified Chinese influence in the Turkic khaganate after the beginning of the eighth century. It was not a coincidence that signs of the Chinese otherness, such as the tortoise and the dragon, were allowed in the Turkic sacred circle, i.e. in the memorial temple assemblages of Kül-tegin (ca. 732 A.D.) and Bilgä khagan (ca. 735 A.D.). The Turks, of course, accepted and interpreted these signs through a different point of view: the dragon—as a symbol of the khagan’s heavenly power (i.e., it marks ‘up’ in the cosmogram), and the tortoise—as a symbol of stability, eternity, and invariability of the world as well as long life (it marks ‘down’ in the cosmogram). If V. Voitov is right, we can ‘read’ in them not only Chinese influence, but the zoo-code of the Turkic cosmographic scheme as well (upper, middle, underground world—dragon, rams, lions and tortoise, respectively). These were the animals depicted on the sculptures in a number of memorial assemblages of Turkic and Uighur khagans.

The dragon was known for a long time in the steppes as the zoo-code of Heaven and the power of the supreme master. It also gave the names of several Xiongnu towns: “City of Dragon”, “Temple of Dragon”, “Stopping place of Dragon”, etc. The summer residence of the northern Xiongnu was named Lun-chen—“City of Emperor=City of Dragon”. There is a certain doubt, of course, whether these names were given following the Chinese pattern, meaning names that did not correspond to the real names used by the Xiongnu. The dragon images were typical for the Xiongnu banners as well.

Although the spiritual tendencies of Chinese civilization were alien in many respects for the Turkic people, Bilgä khagan willingly welcomed of traditional behavior there, its emperors preferred to stay isolated behind the heavy walls of the palaces. Li Shi-min even dared to propose to the Turkic khagan He-li a personal combat, one on one, a quality which the Turks could not leave unnoticed since such a thing was quite a rare decision amongst the Chinese sovereigns—for this see, Barfield 1989, 143–144.

For these complexes there exist a number of works. Details see in, Voitov 1996.

108 For these complexes there exist a number of works. Details see in, Voitov 1996, 75, 97–99 and ill. 60. Especially for the tortoise see, Voitov 1996, 101–103. Also see, Kliashtorny 1980, 487; Melan’iin 2001, 12–16; Reshetov 1996, 142–163.
110 Yatsenko 2000, 90.
111 Voitov 1996, 78.
the craftsmen and painters sent by the Chinese emperor and they 
worked at the construction and decoration of Kül-tegin’s (i.e. Bilgä 
Stebleva 1965, 110, 123; Kubarev 1984, 60.} One of the reasons was 
that the Turkic craftsmen were not that skillful. The temple provides 
evidence for the synthesis of Chinese and Turkic elements, especially 
the ones that are common for the Central Asian cultures and do not 
contradict each other. V. Voitov mentions some of them including the 
alleys in Kül-tegin’s temple flanked by rows of statues. They are typi-
cal for the burial and memorial monuments of the emperors and the 
highest rank officials of the Jurchen, Koreans, and Chinese; the Chi-
nese called the “alley with sculptures leading to the grave” the “road 
of the spirits”, thus semantically related to the macrocosmic vertical 
axis.\footnote{Voitov 1996, 108. Also see, Kubarev 1984, 60–63.}

Emperor Xuanzong continued to send craftsmen after the death of 
Bilgä khagan and in 735 A.D. they built another magnificent temple 
situated near that of his brother.\footnote{Voitov 1996, 101.} It seems that the adaptation of all 
these signs in the Turkic milieu (especially the sacred milieu) faced 
no troubles; probably it was interpreted by the Turks through another 
possible prism, namely as a respectful attitude of a foreign ruler, which 
can also be found in the inscriptions on the stelae in both temples.

The appearance of crosses on some of the stone inscriptions in 
Bulgaria during the reign of “khanasybigi” Omurtag (814–831)\footnote{For this see, Beshevliev 1992, 83–84; Stepanov 1998, 253.} as 
well as the image of the same khan on golden medallions, depicted in 
Byzantine emperor’s garment and holding Byzantine regalia,\footnote{Yurukova and Penchev 1990, 22, ph. I.3; Beshevliev 1992, 83–84; Stepanov 2001, 6–7.} should 
be interpreted in a similar way (provisionally called \textit{imitatio imperii}). These foreign signs were adopted in own milieu with a certain aim 
and were loaded with a different significance. They were accompa-
nied by own signs as well, including the title of Omurtag (‘kanasybigi’) 
on the golden medallions (i.e. the Bulgar original title meaning “ruler 
from God”) and the tortoises and dragons in the Turkic temples lived 
peacefully together with the Turkic balbals and sacrificing pits.

The fear that certain elements of the sedentary Chinese civilization’s 
\textit{otherness} would influence the non-understanding of the \textit{Turkness} (the
different languages in the first place) was explicitly stated by Yollig-tegin who was asked by Bilgä khagan to organize the building up of the Kül-tegin’s memorial temple. Yollig-tegin found it necessary—and it was quite revealing—to point out on the stone stelae that the stone-cutters who came from China “did not twist my words”.118

It is hard to estimate what the attitude of the Bulgars was to signs of the Christian otherness such as churches and monasteries that were left on Bulgarian territory after the beginning of the ninth century. Some examples from Durostorum/Drastar (present-day town of Silistra, Bulgaria) can be used as a model of the attitude shown towards the Christian ‘sacred places’.119 However, it could be assumed that a certain level of control was exercised on the foreign signs, especially the ones present in important centers of the khaganates. The Khazar khaganate in the ninth century was an exception since there were mosques, churches and synagogues in its cities.120

Although accepting the foreigner, the nomad held firmly to his/her own. Nomadic specific hairstyles as well as the special eyebrow style (depicted on the balbals) were also signs of the own. According to their tradition, the Turks used to tie their hair in plaits at the back and this hairstyle was a significant and distinctive feature of a Turk of a noble origin (and of the Avars as well). We find information about it in the writings of a number of authors; besides, it is evidenced as an own sign both on the balbals always presenting this detail121 and on the Panjikand murals. The hairstyle in plaits at the back is mentioned also by the Armenian chronicler Movses Daskhuranci, who describes it as a typical feature of the Khazars in general. Sometimes Movses writes about the leader (Jebu khagan) of the “animal-like people consisting of plaits bearers” and sometimes about men with shaved heads and men with hair who were subjects of the “king of the North”; writing about the attack of the Khazar army at Derbend, Movses points out the following: “...they rushed at the battle looking like women with their hair loose”.122

118 Stebleva 1965, 110.
120 Zakhoder 1962, 150–167; Magomedov 1994, 122–139.
In his work about the reign of Justinian the Great (527–565) Agathias of Myrina (sixth century) explicitly mentions “the uncombed, dirty and clumsily done hair of the Turks and Avars”.\(^\text{123}\) Several decades later (in 630 A.D.) the same remark was made by Xuanzang, the Buddhist monk-pilgrim who had left a description of Ton Yabgu khan and his court: the khan was surrounded by his suite consisting of 200 horsemen whose hair was tied in plaits.\(^\text{124}\) Ton Yabgu khan, at the same time, had his long hair loose and tied with a narrow silk ribbon on the forehead.\(^\text{125}\) Of course, the notion of the magic power of the hair is quite obvious, a notion typical for many pre-modern societies where hair is regarded a symbol of power, vitality, etc.\(^\text{126}\) Indeed, the Turks had always related hair to *qut*.\(^\text{127}\)

Turks also regarded as *own* signs the specific eyebrow style; they used to put a special substance on the eyebrows in order to make them lustrous as it was mentioned in ‘Bei-shi’.\(^\text{128}\) Most probably the special way of depicting the eyebrows on some of the Turkic balbals is related to this tradition.\(^\text{129}\) In this type of society distinction was a leading principle and each typical feature, which was used and earlier considered a sign of the *own*, was apparently exploited accordingly. Probably there was a certain reason to use the expression “crew-cut heads” in the so-called “Name List” of the Bulgar khans that has been commented on many times by scholars and was used when necessary to differentiate the period of Qubrat’s “Great Bulgaria” and its ‘foreword’ from the one of Asparukh’s Bulgaria on the Danube; the anonymous author of the extremely laconic (!) “Name List” must have had a reason to stress on a small detail like this. “Crew-cut heads” lived together with a “man with hair” in the ‘Steppe Empire’ and this mark was a sign of affiliation to the latter (i.e., a sign of *own*).\(^\text{130}\)

The difference between the way of belting the garment of the Chinese and the steppe nomads (from left to right and from right to left,

---


\(^\text{124}\) Quoted after Gumilev 1967, 164.

\(^\text{125}\) Gumilev 1967, 164.


\(^\text{127}\) Traditsionnoe mirovozzrenie 1989, 59, 79.

\(^\text{128}\) For ‘Bei-shi’ see details in, Bichurin 1950, 241 f.

\(^\text{129}\) Sher 1966, 67.

respectively) is a special problem with regard to signs and it reveals the gradual increase of Chinese influence in this area. Apart from the rituals of choosing a ruler, managing the economy, as well as food, clothing and habits, the Chinese paid the same attention to the Turkic hair styles as well as to the different way they belted their garments, which were all elements attributed to a group of people that make it own or foreign.131

The old Indoiranians-nomads as well as the early Turks belted their kaftans from right to left and it was a common habit in the nomadic world by the fourth-fifth century A.D. The Tabgach people (Wei dynasty in China), ex-nomads who conquered the territory of Northern China in the fourth century, began to accept the Chinese manner of belting from left to right. This version became popular ca. ninth century in the steppes to the north and then was expanded by the Turks both in the Near East and Eastern Europe. Let us point to the interesting fact that in the earlier period the belting from left to right marked persons in folklore that belonged to the other world as well as dead people and some deities,132 which in these cases was regarded as a sign of foreignness/otherness.

On the other hand, the imposing of the own and the assimilation of the foreign, seen through the prism of the costume as a whole, can be considered one more thing that confirms the conclusion about the Turkic-Sogdian symbiosis. The costume of Sogd as well as the one in Kucha was turkified after the mid-sixth century.133 In the Turfan oasis (Gao-chang) the Turks even tried to impose, through administrative channels, the Turkic costume and habits to the local population in the late sixth—early seventh century as evidenced in ‘Tang shu’.134 According to S. Yatsenko, it was the only place where the Turks had such politics and exercised pressure upon the local population to replace their native costume with a Turkic one. So Yatsenko had to look for another scheme that could explain this exception.135 In his view, the explanation can be found in one of the Turkic ethnogonic myths stating that Turfan was the original land of the Turks who left it in the fifth

131 See the classical description in, Bichurin 1950, 229–231.
132 Yatsenko 2000, 89–90.
134 Chavannes 1903, 102–103.
135 Yatsenko 2000b, 363.
In the fourth–sixth century, a troubled period in China, a considerable number of Chinese, aristocrats included, settled in Gao-chang. After the conquest of the region the Turks tried to reduce the Chinese cultural influence there by imposing their own signs. Such measures were also taken because of the strategic importance of the region. Later I shall return to this ‘war of the symbols’ between the Turks and the local ruler.

Most probably the administrative reforms of the Western Turkic Ton Yabgu khan (618–630) played a considerable role in the distribution of the Turkic costume and the special types of waistbands. These reforms helped the Turks to incorporate the aristocrats of the conquered Middle Asian tribes under the khaganate’s management by giving them Turkic titles, names, etc. However, the local Sogdian (most of all) fashion styles also exercised some influence on the Turkic costume as evidenced by a number of wall paintings in Afrasiab and Panjikand. According to S. Yatsenko, nowadays it is not possible to find any traces of influence of the costume of the southern sedentary agricultural empires on the clothes of the aristocrats-nomads from either the artifacts from the graves or the grave sculptures. It is possible that this is partially due to the ritual character of these assemblages in which the foreign was hardly allowed. However, there are some exceptions—attractive small accessories such as fibulae, etc.

The Bulgars also paid great attention to the distinctive features of their costume both during the pagan period and after. The information about this provided by Constantine VII Porphyrogenetus and Bishop Liutprandus of Cremona, both living in the tenth century, was alluded to several times and leaves no room for doubt that the Bulgars wore their “skaramangii” as late as the tenth century in order to be distinguished from the Byzantines or other peoples from the East and West. The Madrid copy of the Chronicle of John Skylitzes provides a certain number of miniatures depicting Bulgars of noble origin which present characteristic features of aristocratic costumes that were typi-

---

136 For this legend see, Kliashtornyi 1964, 103–104.
137 Yatsenko 2000b, 363.
139 Lobacheva 1979, 25, ill. 1; Al’baum 1975, ill. 5, fig. 5; Belenitskii and Raspopova 1980, 213–218; Yatsenko 2001, 12.
ally Bulgarian\textsuperscript{142} and apparently worth the attention of the Byzantine miniaturists. Therefore, we are able to highlight once again the effort to maintain traditions and the intentional loading of the costume with significative and differentiating functions, which applied to the early medieval Bulgar elite as well.

The Uighur costume kept its uniqueness for a very long period, but \textit{ca.} eighth century the Uighurs began to accept a number of elements from the Chinese costume. It is likely that it happened far earlier before the Uighurs’ settling down in Turfan in the ninth century; maybe even during the reign of Tengri khagan (759–779).\textsuperscript{143} At the time they settled down permanently in Turfan, they already belted their kaftans to the right and this manner was typical, especially for the aristocrats. Probably S. Yatsenko is correct in arguing that this novelty (or, should I put it metaphorically, ‘uncomplainingly accepted \textit{otherness}’) was also a result of the relations between the Uighurs and the Chinese after 762 A.D., as during this period numerous missions sent by the khagan visited the capital cities of T’ang China every year and received Chinese robes as gifts.\textsuperscript{144} Probably the Uighurs did not consider it dangerous to accept some other elements of the Chinese culture (some women’s hair styles, hats, waist belts, the coloring of the women’s foreheads and cheeks with red paint),\textsuperscript{145} but as a whole, these elements did not substantially influence Uighur culture.\textsuperscript{146} The flexibility in the behavior of some Uighur merchants in the Chinese capital Chang’an was perhaps a small exception. The tea merchants at the big market, situated in the western part of the capital city, gained great prestige and became especially popular from the mid-eighth century onwards. The new fashion of tea drinking spread out among the Uighurs as well. Indeed, when the Uighurs visited the market in Chang’an the first thing they did was to stop at the shop of the tea merchants.\textsuperscript{147} Such flexibility and freedom could be manifested ‘outside’. At home, however, the traditions required \textit{kumis} drinking; apart from that, the climatic conditions

\textsuperscript{142} For a detailed analysis of this source, and exactly in that same direction see in, Atanasov 1999, 17, 47–49, and Tabl. II.2 and IX.4.
\textsuperscript{143} Maliavkin 1974, 92.
\textsuperscript{144} Yatsenko 2000b, 367.
\textsuperscript{145} Le Coq 1913, Tabl. 11, 32; Yatsenko 2000b, 367 and Tabl. 64.
\textsuperscript{146} Yatsenko 2000b, 369, points out that there were some Uighur objects that were highly valued by the Chinese too; they were indeed linked to the nomads’ clothing, for instance belt buckles made of jade and the winter kaftans lined with sable.
\textsuperscript{147} Schafer 1963, 20. The same book has also a Russian translation—Shefer 1981.
to the north of the Great Wall of China were not favorable for growing tea. So drinking the foreign drink was just an exotic experience for the Uighur merchants. Apparently such things were not able to threaten the roots of the Uighur identity. Moreover, after 763 A.D. the Uighur aristocrats were converted to Manichaeism, and this put one more ‘barrier’ in front of the Chinese otherness; we know that due to Uighur pressure the Chinese supported the Manichaean communities in China rather reluctantly and immediately after the dissolution of the khaganate in 840 A.D. Manichaeism was officially forbidden in the Middle Kingdom.\footnote{Bichurin 1950, 337. The books and the other religious attributes were burnt down and the Manichaens’ possessions went to the emperor’s treasury; also see, Schafer 1963, 10.}

Despite the neglectful attitude towards the nomads, in general, and the Turks and Uighurs, in particular, who were considered totally foreign by the Chinese, there was a tradition of following the Turkic and the East Iranian fashion of the costume in China and in the capital cities of Lo-yang and Chang’an.\footnote{Shefer 1981, 48; Maitdinova 1990, 131.} During the time of the T’ang dynasty men and women wore “barbarian” hats when riding a horse. Some hairstyles and cosmetic product were non-Chinese and the ladies-in-waiting in the eighth century wore “Uighur chignonne”.\footnote{Shefer 1981, 49; Schafer 1963, 29.} It was made of soft wood, leather or fabric and was worn under the hat.\footnote{Kriukov, Maliavin, and Sofronov 1979, 159.}

However, between the sixth and the tenth centuries, a special hat known under the Chinese name “putou” became extremely popular in China, Tokharistan and Sogdiana, among both the Turks and the Uighurs. The wide-spread fashion of wearing “putou” in a vast geographic region was probably a result of the intensive contacts along the Great Silk Road at that period and mainly due to the fact that the people speaking Turkic languages, East Iranians and Chinese had a very intensive communication at various levels.\footnote{Maitdinova 1990, 133. Also see, Yatsenko 2000b, 351, 367.} As far as the origin of this hat is concerned, the literature provides varying opinions on the matter. For example, S. Yatsenko thinks that “putou” was part of the Chinese male costume,\footnote{Yatsenko 2000b, 367, with the literature cited there.} while G. Maitdinova, using the information provided by Hsen Kuo, a Chinese annalist who lived in the eleventh century (”the Chinese clothes and hats, starting from the time of
the Northern Qi dynasty (550–577) represent a barbarian costume"), proposes the idea that “putou” is a result of the further development of the old Central Asian hats and assumes that the Turks were the ones that contributed a lot to the distribution of this special hat on the territory from Sogdiana and Tokharistan to China. The fact that the Turks were masters of a huge part of the Central Asian region in the sixth–ninth century was reflected by the fashion style as well, as revealed by the decoration and manner of wearing certain clothes and other elements of the costume.

There are “putou” hats on the wall paintings in Afrasiab and Panjikand in Middle Asia dominated by the Turks in the seventh and the eighth century although the bulk of the local population there spoke various East Iranian dialects. People wearing small black hats with a couple of strings (like ribbons) at the back are depicted on the eastern and the northern walls of the Afrasiab hall and these hats are similar to those known from Sogd and Panjikand, East Turkestan, and China. Since this book is not aimed at studying the genesis of certain elements of the costume in Central Asia, we have to conclude that the “putou” hats cannot be studied through the own–foreign prism, or as an ethnic marker, since they are used in a different ethnic environment. It would be more appropriate to seek the distinction in a social aspect as it is typical for the pre-modern world in general, but it is not a subject for discussion here.

There are own signs among the nomads, which are imposed by the aristocratic culture that consolidated the elite. We find one of them on the Bugut stele which was also placed on a tortoise but bears an inscription in Sogdian and—what is probably the most important thing—has a very unusual upper end: there are neither khagan’s signs (cf. the wild he-goat schematically depicted on the stelae from the time of the Second Turkic khaganate), nor the imperial dragons, but instead a picture of a she-wolf (wolf?) and a standing human figure below it. There is no room for doubt that it is an illustration of the most popular ethnogonic Turkic myth—about their origin from a she-wolf. This legend is embedded in the symbolism of the ruler’s attributes of

---

154 Maitdinova 1990, 128–133.
157 Belenitskii 1973, 26; Sychev and Sychev 1975, 55–60; Maitdinova 1990, 128.
158 For this stele and its inscription see, Kliashtornyi and Livshtits 1971b, 121–146.
the Turkic Khazars—their military flags were decorated on the top with wolf’s heads made of gold (compare the yellow/golden color which was reserved for the Chinese emperor!) and the khagan’s personal guards were called “wolves” (‘böри’ in Turkic; ‘fuli’ in Chinese). Therefore, the wolf and the wolf’s behavior are signs of the Turkness, although from a typological point of view they are typical not only for the Turks, but for a number of Indo-European people as well (cf. the myth about the she-wolf, Romulus and Remus). The important thing here is that the Turks considered them as theirs (i.e., as their own sign and own behavior).

The Madara horseman in Bulgaria also has a high symbolic value, once again signifying the own. The relief is located at a place of the highest level of sacredness—on the Madara rocks, the main place of cult in pagan Bulgaria. The cult assemblage consists of a cave, a huge piece of stone, a pagan temple and a relief (the latter is unique for all of Europe) and is our/own place par excellence. The relief representing a triumphant horseman trampling down a lion and followed by a hound contains at least three semantic levels: the god of Heaven and Sun, the cultural hero, and the Bulgar ruler (in general). Here the signs of the Other are absent, but his mental image and his name are rather obvious: three inscriptions in Greek surround the image and all three point to one and the same ‘partner’ of the Bulgars—the Byzantine Empire. All these inscriptions describe the help provided by the Bulgars to the Byzantines in crucial moments for the Byzantine state, or the Bulgar reactions to the Byzantine breaking of peace treaties with the Bulgars. Indeed, it was the Byzantine Empire and its heart, Constantinople, that was the important Other for the Bulgars. It seems that neither the relations with the Khazars, nor the ones with the Avars and the Franks were vital or symbolically meaningful for the Bulgars; it was only relations with the Byzantine Empire that mattered, especially when

159 Kliashtornyi and Livshits 1971b, 126; also see, Clauson 1964, 3–22.
160 For the comparative perspective in this aspect see, Kardini [Cardini] 1987 (Pt. 1). Also see, Clauson 1964, 3–22.
161 There are many studies dealing with different problems referring to Madara and the rock relief. For instance see, Madarskiat konnik 1956; Aladzhov 1983, 76–86; Minaeva 1990; Stanilov 1996, 270–279; Rashev 1998, 192–204; Stepanov 1999, 150–155; Grigoriou-Ioannidou 1997.
162 It should be noted that, if we are to leave aside some examples (see Beshevliev 1992, N N 59, 60), all of the inscriptions left on stone and made by the chancellery of the Bulgar khans referred to the Byzantines (!) and very rarely—some of the Slavs who were living in the frontier regions of Bulgaria.
it came to identification, equality of rights, power and the search for ways to create a ‘Bulgar image’. The Bulgars are strangely consistent in this respect, much more than the Turks and the Uighurs for example; for the former the Byzantine Empire is not just an image of the Other among all, but the Image, with capital ‘I’! In fact this Image helps the Bulgars to define themselves as an opposite image, idea, and experience, especially in the first half of the ninth century. And it is so because the Byzantines were the only ones claiming to be masters of the present-day Balkan Peninsula, or the western part of the Empire (known also, as mentioned above, as “Dysis”, i.e. ‘West’), while there were lots of potential claimants of the imperial legacy in the steppes of Central Asia including the Karluks, the Basmils, and the Qïrghïz tribes. The victories over them were strictly marked on the stelae from the time of the two Turkic khaganates and the Uighur one. Of course, the main antagonist for them was again the sedentary world, in general, and China, in particular.

Therefore, at Madara, the most sacred topos of pagan Bulgaria, the Byzantine otherness was permitted only with a view to the cultural memory of the Bulgars who visualized themselves through the opposition “we, the Bulgars—they, the Byzantines”. However, this concerns only the language of the Other and not its signs. The function of all these signs is again significative and differentiating at the same time. They really helped consolidate the (Bulgars’) cultural memory, which is particularly important for the intensification of the processes of self-identification.

The creation of the notion of the sly and perfidious Byzantine or Chinese was supported by the fact that both sedentary civilizations used the reliable system of sowing the seeds of discord among the “barbarians” (“divide et impera”—in Rome and the Byzantine Empire, in particular; “to subdue the barbarians using their own hands”—in China). For China especially, it was, according to A. Johnston, one of

---

163 Cf. Said 1999, 6—the image of the Orient used by Western Europe to determine itself through viewing the ‘oriental’ as a counter-image.

164 For the Chinese system see, Maliaïkine 1980, 103–126. Also see, Popova 1999, 183: "T’ai-tsung said laughing ‘[…] The old [people used to say]: With the help of the barbarians win [against] the barbarians’”. So these were indeed the roots of the Middle Kingdom’s power, in emperor’s opinion. For Byzantium see, Prokopios [Procopius] 1983, 49: Justinian I (527–565) “instigated all the barbarians one against the other”; Agafi Mirineïskii [Agathias] 1996, 188: at the end of his life the emperor [Justinian I] “preferred rather to confront the enemies” one with another; and at 204–206: for
the typical features of its “strategic culture” manifested by a “strategic behavior”. Johnston says that the essence lies in the following: to rely, both in theory and in practice, on strategic defense (fortresses, defensive walls, garrisons, etc.) always supplemented by diplomatic intrigues and forming alliances instead of expensive military campaigns carried out on the territories of the nomads, or their total annihilation. The only aim of the dynasties of real Chinese origin was to prevent the establishment of a great nomadic confederation to the north. Probably this strategy was closely related to one of the main Chinese principles—“the soft defeats the hard”. Of course, the Chinese who were known for their flexibility did not follow this principle dogmatically.

The Byzantines also used diplomatic intrigues all the time and there are too many examples to be cited here in detail. The relations between the Khazars and the Byzantines as well as between the Uighurs and the Chinese were a bit different since they had been allies for many decades: the former against the Arabs and the latter—against the rebel An Lu-shan and the dangerous enemy Tibet. This fact probably softened the extremes in the notions of the Other as it was the necessary factor in political, military as well as economic spheres. There were even marriages at the highest level between these royal courts and they were used to consolidate their strategic relations in the period between the 760’s and the 840’s.

Despite all these epithet-images (“sly”, “perfidious”, “dishonest”, etc.) neither the Bulgars, nor the Khazars or the Turks and the Uighurs aimed for the total annihilation of the sedentary Other living to their south. Of course they did not have the resources to maintain domination over these territories, but it was also true that they needed the sedentarists as Others, in order to confirm their own political positions and (especially) their own identity. This is proved by the recorded situ-

---

165 Jonston 1995, 25. According to Jonston, as regards the other characteristics, the Chinese preferred two strategies: 1) limited war, or 2) exercising limited power, but only if there was a clear and definite goal. Also see, Maliavkin 1980, 103–126.

166 For some of the essential aspects of Byzantine diplomacy see, Shepard and Franklin (eds) 1992.


ations when they tried to humiliate the other. The rulers from “Pax Nomadica” acted very inventively in such cases, because such activity and behavior helped them rise in the esteem of their own subjects as well as in their own eyes.

The humiliation of the Other was often regarded a necessary condition for a self-recognition in certain situations. The Bulgar Ditsevg/Ditseng (Krum’s brother?) forced some of the Byzantines captured in Eastern Thrace in 813–814 A.D., including Manuel, the Bishop of Hadrianopolis (present-day Edirne in Turkey), to eat meat during the Orthodox Long Lent and when they refused to obey, he executed them.

Omurtag, in his turn, ordered the old formula presenting a victor trampling down an enemy lying on the ground (cf. “...by trampling down with his foot the emperor...”), from a Bulgar stone inscription) to be incised next to the inscription on the column found at Chatalar and dated 822 A.D. (the enemy mentioned here was most probably the Byzantine usurper Thomas the Slav); this formula established in the pre-Christian period was used later on by the Arsakid and the Sassanid dynasties in Iran, as well as the Romans and the Byzantines. That same Bulgar khan forced the captured Byzantine aristocrat Kinamos to eat the meat of a sacrificial animal, which was against his Christian religion.

Krum, Omurtag’s father, also showed disrespect towards the Byzantine emperor in a stone inscription (the so-called Hambarlî inscription) dated to the 813 A.D. There, Krum mocks the emperor

---

169 See Simeonova 1996, 29–43. According to her, in Byzantium there was even a special system, apparently with semiotic characteristics and it was aimed at humiliating the Other thus overestimating the prestige of the Byzantine basileus. Amongst the nomads, in the period of the Early Middle Ages, it is hard to believe that there existed a sophisticated system of this kind though there are some data, namely situations and signs mentioned by some authors. These facts allow one to suppose that the nomads were not strangers to this practice; of course, as regards the nomads, we can not expect that there were amongst them finesse or refined, hidden ‘quotations’ from the remote past.

170 Theophanes Continuatus, 216.12–217.9; for these events also see, Kodov 1969, 141, and Browning 1988, 33.

171 Beshevliev 1992, 216, N 57. For the rebellion of Thomas the Slav see, Lemerle 1965, 255–297 (the same also in, Lemerle 1980, N III). Something similar happened with the captured in 813 A.D., in Hadrianopolis, archbishop Manuel—see details in, Theophanes Confessor 1960, 289. For this rite, indeed a replica of the Roman and later Byzantine ‘calcatio’, see, McCormick 1986, 144.

172 Mitropolit Simeon 1931, 256.
and calls him “the old man emperor, the bold headed”.\footnote{Beshevliev 1992, N 2 and pp. 121–122, where the author properly claims that there existed nicknames among the other emperors as well, for instance Justinian II, Constantine V, Leo IV and Leo V, etc.} So beside the collective portraits, illustrated as a rule by stereotypic epithets such as “sly”, “perfidious”, etc., the nomads quite often made individual characteristics (similar to the above-mentioned) about representatives of the sedentary civilizations, mostly of high ranking aristocrats and rulers.

After 757 A.D. the Uighurs often sent weak and feeble horses to China in exchange for silk.\footnote{This forceful, imposed trade was called by Mackerras 1972 (2nd ed.), 57, “a military visit to the Chinese market”. Details see in, Bichurin 1950, 323: the Uighurs brought to China “weak, useless horses”; the annalist pointed to the fact that at 758 A.D., the Uighurs “became quite insolent”. Also see, Sinor 1998, 195.} The sign value as well as the social prestige attributed to the horse in the medieval period is well established, but it is important to explore the possible interpretation of such an act apart from its (expected) economic benefit. According to the notions of a noble Uighur, forcing someone to buy a weak horse meant that you made him declare his weakness and lack of dignity. Such signs of humiliation were also recorded in 762 A.D. when the Uighur khagan, not receiving the required gesture of respect from the Chinese crown prince, ordered a couple of men of the prince’s suite to be caned to death.\footnote{Bichurin 1950, 318. Also see, Gumilev 2004, 442. Such behavior of the khagan had been perceived by the Chinese army as violation of the heir apparent as well as the Empire itself.}

The Uighurs demonstrated the same provocative behavior, and much more openly manifested, after the suppression of An Lu-shan’s rebellion when they became aware of the weakness of China and the total dependence of the latter on the Uighur cavalry against powerful Tibet. Visiting the capital city of Chang’an, the Uighurs very often kidnapped young girls from the market places, took horses belonging to the state and demonstrated arrogant behavior towards the Chinese as if they were their masters. However, in 775 A.D. the Uighur merchants went beyond any limit and brought 10 000 jades instead of the 6 000 selected horses they were supposed to bring; this arrogance was too much for the Chinese and they refused to pay. The state official at the market was killed by the angry Uighurs, but the murderers were captured and sentenced to life imprisonment. Then the Uighur soldiers
broke into the prison, set their tribesmen free and slaughtered most of the guards; with some only beaten and released after that.

In 778 A.D., the throne of the Middle Kingdom was taken by the same Chinese crown prince whose courtiers and counselors were humiliated and caned by the Uighurs in 762 A.D. He was the one who successfully expelled quite a large number of the Uighur “guests” from the capital city who were indeed parasites on the Chinese treasury. Some of them were killed by the Chinese after Tun Bagha-tarkhan’s coup d’etat in 779 A.D. The latter wanted peace with China and for that reason in 781 A.D. accepted ransom for the death of the “guests”. A couple of years later the Uighurs and the Chinese signed a peace treaty that put an end to the Uighurs’ hegemony in the Chinese capitals and their humiliating attitude towards the Middle Kingdom. According to the clauses of the treaty, the khagan accepted to be called a Chinese vassal and promised not to send more than 200 Uighurs in an embassy; the Uighurs also accepted to limit to a 1,000 the number of the horses they had to bring to the compulsory auctions and not to kidnap Chinese beyond the state boundaries.176

The Turk khagans took the same measures, especially in the 620s, when the T’ang dynasty had to pacify China and to restore order in the Middle Kingdom. ‘Tang shu’ provides information about the yearly attacks of the khagan and his contempt towards China. He noted in detail, for example, the humiliation of the Chinese emperor when he was compelled to answer the constantly increasing demands of the Turkic ruler and to send higher tributes to the khaganate.177 Even the Emperor himself admitted that his father, the founder of the T’ang dynasty, had to humiliate himself in front of the Turks during the hard times immediately after 618 A.D. and to call himself a vassal of the Turks.178

The words of Tobo/Taspar/Tatpar khagan (572–581) also confirm the contemptuous attitude towards China and especially towards the two northern Chou and Qi dynasties that experienced serious difficulties in the 570s resulting in each of them asking for an alliance with the powerful Turks of the period. He was so happy that he used the following strong words in front of the people from his entourage:

---
177 Bichurin 1950, 247.
178 Bichurin 1950, 255.
...it is enough if the two little boys from the South [the Northern Chou and the Northern Qi dynasties—*my note, Ts. St.*] are obedient to us; in such case we should not be afraid of poverty.\textsuperscript{179}

Other passages of the Chinese dynastic chronicles also provide eloquent proofs of the enormous significance that the Turks attributed to their dignity and honor in the relations of subordination which the Middle Kingdom always tried to impose on the so-called barbarians.\textsuperscript{180} These relations resemble a game of mutual outwitting in which the “elder brother” (China) required to be respected as such notwithstanding the passing economic and political failures, while the Turkic and especially the Uighur rulers used each opportunity for ‘breaking into’ the system.\textsuperscript{181} In this case, we can accept L. Gumilev’s conclusion that the serious conflict between the Turks and the Chinese existed not only at a state level but at the level of different ideologies and cultures. It was the way the Great Steppe “declared its right not to be China, but itself” putting the stress on the denial of Chinese culture and the glorification of the own superiority over the neighbors, China inclusively.\textsuperscript{182}

Such behavior (for the Uighurs—after 757 A.D., and for the Bulgars—after 811 A.D.) towards T’ang China and Byzantium, respectively, is evidence for the existence among the nomads of an ideology about equality with the sedentary Other. It states that the rulers of these state formations have to be treated not like barbarians of a lower rank but like equals of the Byzantine basileus and the Chinese emperor.\textsuperscript{183}

---

\textsuperscript{179} Bichurin 1950, 233. For the need of Turkic help there exists some eloquent facts: the Chinese signed a peace treaty with the khagan, through a diplomatic marriage, and every year they had to submit to the Turks 100 000 rolls of silk; also, the Turks received warm welcome in the capital city of the Middle Kingdom and there they stayed at the expense of the China’s court. And sometimes they numbered even 1 000 people, a fact that gives an idea about the heavy burden which fell upon the China’s treasury.

\textsuperscript{180} Bichurin 1950, 237 f., 280–281.

\textsuperscript{181} Bichurin 1950, 313–314.

\textsuperscript{182} Gumilev 1967, 338–339.

\textsuperscript{183} For the ideologem ‘equality with Byzantium’ in Bulgaria see, Panova 1995, 51, 57. Also see the Bulgars rulers’ titles after 822 A.D.: they are literal translation of the Byzantine title “from Lord ruler”—see for this, Bakalov 1985, 89–94; Stepanov 1999, 77–83; Stepanov 2001, passim. Also see the marriages in 758, 778, and 821 A.D. between Uighur khagans and daughters of different Chinese emperors, which is indeed a precedent in the relationships between the world of the steppe and the Middle Kingdom. Also see, Bichurin 1950, 316–318; Sinor 1998, 196–197.
The Uighur khagan’s reputation grew significantly especially after 760s. On the occasion of his marriage to a Chinese princess (788 A.D.), he sent a special charter to the Chinese emperor that read the following:

Earlier we regarded us brothers *sic*!; and now the son-in-low [on your] daughter’s [side] is your half-son. If the Western Huns [Tibetans] trouble you, master, then your son asks for permission to stand against them with an army.

Bulgaria also aims at such filial-and-fraternal links with the Byzantine Empire, but it happens as late as the time when the Bulgars were converted to Christianity in mid-860s. Until then, the formal barrier of different religions was in place and it prevented such recognition from the Byzantine side. There is, of course, an exception dated to 705 A.D. and related to the names of the Bulgar khan Tervel and the Byzantine emperor Justinian II (685–695; 705–711). However, it was not worth very much from the self-identifying point of view and the comparison between the Bulgars and the Byzantines, at least by the ninth century. This becomes obvious from the available evidence and the Bulgar stone inscriptions especially. Of course, they often put the stress on the differences and the distinctions rather than on similarities as it is typical of the pre-modern man. There was ground for similarities although within a limited framework since after the early decades of the ninth century the Bulgars conquered territories until then populated with subjects of the Byzantine emperor. Therefore, the old boundaries became ‘history’, but the imaginary ones, such as *own/our* land—*foreign/their* land probably survived for a long period. To a great extent it was due to the fact that the geographic boundaries in this very case existed in a special ‘synchrony’ with the ethno-cultural de-limit-ations, the psycho-emotional settings, prejudices and clichés that were deeply embedded in the early medieval Bulgar society regarding Byzantium as the total *Other*.

Summing up, the notions about the *Other* and the attitude towards him were focused not only on the morality, but on the symbolic and hierarchic level as well.

---

184 Bichurin 1950, 327.
I.3. *World religions and* otherness

Except for Islam, the great world (as well as monotheistic) religions penetrated the territories situated between the Black Sea and Mongolia far earlier than the sixth century and, in principle, none of them took over the ‘Steppe Empire’. They were products of the great sedentary civilizations, i.e. they were initially marked as *foreign* and for that reason the nomadic rulers were cautious and suspicious towards their penetration in the steppes. The choice of a world religion or its replacement with another one by the nomads resulted in changes in their culture, a special cultural orientation and a selectivity of the cultural influences inclusively. Given that situation, we should keep in mind at least a couple of things: 1) when the nomads were making their choice to be converted to various world religions, it was a result of practical (political mainly) rather than spiritual reasons; 2) as a rule, the first ones to be converted to the new religion\(^{185}\) were the rulers and the aristocratic elite with the common people following soon after that. The aristocrats were well aware of the fact that the monotheistic religions could support the promotion of a new (or the modifying of the old) political ideology and were an essential element of the establishment of cultural identity.

Buddhism and Taoism were considered improper in steppe Eurasia between the sixth and the ninth centuries since they were regarded as religions of humility and commonly associated with China as well\(^ {186}\) (*cf.* the unsuccessful attempt to introduce Buddhism as a state religion of the Turks during the reigns of Taspar/Tobo khagan and Nivar recorded also on the Bugut stela, 570s/580s A.D.). The acceptance of Confucianism, which experienced a period of revival during the reign of the T’ang dynasty, was totally impossible. The focus of such denial was aimed not only against the Chinese concept of superiority accomplished through the Confucian religion but, as A. Khazanov\(^ {187}\) has written, against the specific role performed by the religion in the

---

\(^{185}\) Khazanov 1994, 14–15.

\(^{186}\) Sinor 1990, 312. It was V. Bartol’d who, some decades earlier, wrote that sometimes the nomads consciously—because of preservation of their military style of living—declared that they were not ready to change the religion of their predecessors for this could have made them peaceful and thus would undermine the core of their societies—for this statement see, Bartol’d 1964 (Vol. 4), 431. Especially for Buddhism in Central Asia see, Haussig 1992, 185 ff.

\(^{187}\) Khazanov 1994, 22.
Chinese society and the Chinese state, in general. There, the religion did not have any meaningful independent existence since in contrast to Europe and the Middle East, socialization through the channels of the state organization in China was considered better and more trustworthy than when done through religion. In other words, there was no institutionalized denomination in China and for that reason the acceptance of any of the “Chinese” traditional religions went together with the process of sinicization. This ‘double threat’ was leading the nomads to a de-nomadization and, hence—to a loss of their social and military background. Therefore, we face the interweaving of several factors resulting in the rejection of the “Chinese” religions: not only were they perceived through the prism of the foreignness and in opposition to the nomadic lifestyle but, at the same time, they were considered dangerous from a political point of view.\textsuperscript{188}

In the best case, the nomads living to the north of China, or nomadizing next to the Great Wall, were choosing Buddhism as their religion. It had a considerable number of followers in the Middle Kingdom, but there it had never been considered a local religion.\textsuperscript{189} Maybe it was one of the reasons that some of the early Turkic khagans, specifically the above-mentioned Taspar/Tobo (572–581) and Nivar (581–587), tried to introduce Buddhism as a state religion in the khaganate; as it could act as an ethno-generating factor from the point of view of the opposition with China.\textsuperscript{190} However, this attempt failed.\textsuperscript{191} This was despite the fact that Taspar khagan was converted to Buddhism by the Qi monk Huilin and established contacts with the emperor of one of the two North Chinese dynasties (Northern Qi), whom he asked for cannonical Buddhist books. The greatest merit for the introduction of this religion belongs to the Gandhara monk Jinagupta/Chinagupta,

\textsuperscript{188} Khazanov 1994, 23 f.
\textsuperscript{189} Khazanov 1994, 24.
\textsuperscript{190} A similar hypothesis is in accordance with one of the regularities mentioned by A. Khazanov (1994, 30), namely in accepting some of the world’s religions among the nomads. According to him, this was “either opposition or adjustment”. Golden 1992, 131, 150, also speaks about the different religions that existed in the First and Second Turkic khaganates.
\textsuperscript{191} See details in the Bugut stela. Also see, Sinor and Klyashtorny 1996, 333—Taspar/Tatpar khagan had an ambitious program and launched a campaign for the building of Buddhist temples and monasteries; the khagan also gave money for the translation of Buddhist books while his brother Nivar made the khagan’s court the main center of Buddhism in the First Turkic khaganate. Also see, Liu Mau-tsaï, 1958, 461–462; Christian 1998, 251; Bichurin 1950, 233 f.—esp. for Taspar/Tatpar khagan.
who spent the period between 575 and 585 A.D. at the court of these khagans. Compared to Buddhism, the other great world religions, e.g. Zoroastrism, Nestorian Christianity, and Manichaeism, also had some significance for the Turks in the sixth–eighth century, but it was not that great.\footnote{Sinor 1990, 314 f. For these religions also see, Klimkeit 2000, 69–81.}

In principle, the nomadic confederations’ choice of own religion was determined by the degree to which that religion guaranteed, among other things, a confessional opposition towards the main rival. Such choice provided an opportunity for a higher level of stability of the own identity. Of course, the most important role was played by the Old Turkic religion—the Tengrism, and the ancestors’ cult as well, which were thought to be the main ‘pillar’ of the Turkic identity as they were regarded as originally own.\footnote{For the special cult see, Sinor 1990, 314; Roux 1987 (Vol. 14), 401–403; Roux 1987 (Vol. 15), 91–92.}

The Khazars made a different choice as, in the ninth century, the aristocracy preferred to be converted to Judaism as opposed to the Christianity of the Byzantine Empire and the Islamic faith of the Arabs, who were their most powerful neighbors (of course, the choice was highly influenced by the commercial interests as well).\footnote{Golden 1980, 15, 39 ff.; Khazanov 1994, 16. For Judaism in Khazaria also see, Pritsak 1981, 261–281; Zuckerman 1995, 237–270; Shepard 1998, 11–34; Kovalev 2005, 220–253; most recently see, Golden 2007, 123–162. Pritsak 1981, 280–281, pays special attention to the Jewish traders ar-Radhaniia/ar-Razaniia in Khazaria; in his opinion, they had a tremendous influence on the choice of Judaism as an official state religion of the Khazar elite.}

However, the Syrian author Zacharias Rhetor writes that Christian preachers appeared on the Hun territories in the Caspian steppes as early as the mid-sixth century, before the establishment of the Khazar khaganate and Qubrat’s “Great Bulgaria”. The Bulgars and the Khazars are explicitly mentioned among the local people living there. Zacharias Rhetor notes:

After the Byzantine captives were taken to the Huns they stayed with them for thirty four years. Then a man named Kardost, a bishop in Arran [Caucasian Albania, i.e. present-day Azerbeidzhan—my note, Ts. St.], had a vision of an angel as this bishop himself told us…\footnote{Pigulevskaia 1976, 228–229.}

By order of the angel Kardost and seven more people went to the Huns and not only converted many people on their territories to the

\[\text{\footnote{Sinor 1990, 314 f. For these religions also see, Klimkeit 2000, 69–81.}}\]
\[\text{\footnote{For the special cult see, Sinor 1990, 314; Roux 1987 (Vol. 14), 401–403; Roux 1987 (Vol. 15), 91–92.}}\]
\[\text{\footnote{Pigulevskaia 1976, 228–229.}}\]
Christian religion, but also translated the Gospels into their language. He stayed there for fourteen years and after that Christianity was preached by “another Armenian bishop named Macarius”, who lived with the Huns, built “a church made of mud-bricks” for them and taught them “to plant grains”, fruit trees, and vegetables. Zacharias Rhetor adds that the rulers of these Hun people were content with the novelties and respected the Christian preachers very much. They considered them their teachers and were anxious to invite them to their domains. By the mid-sixth century these preachers still lived with the Huns. Everything done by the missionaries was aimed at proving how necessary they were to the “barbarians” as their civilizers.196

Later on, ca. 682 (or 684?) A.D., the mission led by bishop Israel from Caucasian Albania came to the Khazar khaganate and after long discussions and advice managed to persuade the local ruler Alp-Ilituer (elteber?), a deputy of the Khazar khagan, to be converted to Christianity.197 It, of course, happened after the “competition of the religions”,198 which was traditional for the nomads and was most often performed in the form of a dispute. The Arabic and Jewish written sources provide information about these disputes when the Khazars were converted to the Jewish religion.199 There was such a dispute between St. Constantine-Cyril, the so-called Philosopher, and the khagan when the future “apostle of the Slavs” was head of the mission at the khagan’s court in 861 A.D.200 It is certain that the Jewish influence in the khaganate dates back earlier than the ninth century, and the Jewish presence in

---

197 Novosel’tsev 1990, 145–147; Movses Kalankatuatsi [Daskhuranci] 1984, 124–131. Ivanov 2001, 22, notes those Christian dogma and teachings that mostly impressed Alp-Ilituer: it was not the concept that one should not use violence but the promise for military successes (cf. the victory of Constantine the Great after his dream and the sign “in haec signo vinces”) which was declared explicitly by the master of the Huns in front of his entourage and, thus, became one of the main motifs for Huns to accept Christianity.
the region to the north of the Caucasus and the Crimea was registered in the early decades of the 1st millennium A.D. Probably the attempts to convert Jews to Christianity by force during the reigns of Heraclius (610–641) and Leo III (717–741) in the Byzantine Empire made some of them seek refuge in Khazaria.\textsuperscript{201}

The successes of the Byzantines in spreading Christianity through the work of missionaries favored by the state continued until the mid-sixth century. Later on, as a result of the numerous defeats by the Arabs, as well as by the Bulgars, and the general crisis in the Byzantine Empire, the imperial court in Constantinople was not able to send and support missions. At that time a new type of missionary appeared—the “solitary” missionary. According to Sergei A. Ivanov, the bishop of Sugdaya in the Crimea, Stephan of Surozh, was the first representative of the new trend in the eighth century. The missionary activity, however, did not flourish before the next century.\textsuperscript{202}

We should not omit another important detail concerning the acceptance of Judaism as a state religion in Khazaria. Both the Short and the Long version of the “Answer” of the khagan-beg (king) Joseph to Hasdai ibn Shafrut of Cordoba (mid-tenth century) were certain that the ‘beg’ Bulan (Sabriel, according to the letter from the Cairo Genizah) was already converted to Judaism prior to this act. However, he needed the consent and the permission of the supreme master of Khazaria, the khagan, in order to initiate the official establishment of Judaism in Khazaria. This official establishment was possible with the help of traditional religious disputations in such cases (in the case with the Khazar khanate—a disputation among Islamic, Jewish, and Christian clergymen).\textsuperscript{203} This case reveals that the final decision for the establishment of some of the world religions in the steppe depended on the will of the supreme masters of the ‘Steppe Empires’.

Historical sources contain records of the short period of the conversion to Islam by the khagan after the disastrous—for the Khazars—military campaign of Marwan in 737 A.D. Three years later, however, this act was declared invalid and apparently had no serious effect on

\textsuperscript{201} Dunlop 1954, 89–90, 170; Khazanov 1994, 16–17; Artamonov 1962, 276.
\textsuperscript{202} Ivanov 2003, 142–143, 333; esp. for Stephen of Surozh—pp. 120–127.
the common people in Khazaria. In relation to this, we have to pay
attention to the following fact: traces of Islam are recorded by the
archaeological monuments of the so-called Bulgarian version of the
Saltovo-Mayatski archeological culture in the region of the Northern
(originally Severski) Donec River. ‘Zlivki’-type of graves were excavated
in this region; and the dead were buried according to Islamic burial
practices. They are dated to the mid-ninth-tenth century, a period
when these territories were part of the Khazar khaganate. A number of
graves from the Chervonaya Gusarovka necropolis dated to the second
half of the eighth-ninth century belong to the same ‘Zlivki’-type. They
yielded a relatively high number of cross-shaped pendants, some of
which were not worn as necklaces but were attached to the clothes of
the buried person. According to V. Aksenov, such artifacts suggest a
certain dualist philosophy, but the other typical features of the graves
as well as some ethnographic data about the Ossetians (descendants
of the Alans) from the nineteenth century, convinced him that the
Christian attribution of the above-mentioned cross-shaped pendants
is more probable.

Returning to Christianity in Khazaria, we should also ask the ques-
tion, whose subordinates were the missionaries when performing this
activity among the “barbarians”, especially the ones coming from the
Byzantine Empire? S.A. Ivanov thinks it was most likely the hierarchs
of the bordering bishoprics, for example that in Chersonesus, that
were responsible for the missionaries. In one of his letters, written in
the second half of 920 A.D., the Byzantine patriarch Nicolas Mysticus
praised the bishop of Chersonesus for enlightening people. In another
letter written between 919 and the first half of 920 A.D., he wrote:

As for the bishop of Chersonesus, your great wisdom remembers that
we, with our own mouth have spoken and now we state in a written
form: when [people] from Khazaria came to ask for a bishop, so that he
can ordain the local presbyters…, we ordered the bishop of Chersonesus
to go to Khazaria with Lord’s help and to do all that is necessary, and
after that to get back…to Chersonesus.

---

207 Nicolai I 1973, 314. 10–22, 390, 553; Ivanov 2001, 29; Ivanov 2003, 182–183,
follows the opinion of Yu. Kulakovskii (from 1898) that in the letters of the patriarch
the people under scope were indeed the Alans.
This source, dated after the establishment of Judaism as a state religion in the Khazar khaganate, leaves no doubt about the religious tolerance typical for the ‘Steppe Empire’. It was this tolerance that made the Byzantines rethink the establishment of a broad network of missionary bishoprics among the remote “barbaric” people as is apparent from a slightly mysterious source—the list of the eparchies of the Byzantine church, which is preserved in a single manuscript (Par. 1555A) from the fourteenth century. Some specialists date it to the late eighth century (the earliest possible date is 787 A.D.) and others—to the late ninth century. Number 37 in this list is “the eparchy of Gothia” and it includes “Doros metropolitan [present-day Mangup in Crimea] (bishops of) the Hotsirs, Astel, Khvalis, the Onogurs, Reteg, the Huns, Tamatarkha”. All these ethnonyms and toponyms (Khvalis—the present-day Caspian Sea, Reteg—the Terek River, Tamatarkha—Taman, Astel—probably Itil, on the Volga estuary, or Samosdelka site?) give reason for S.A. Ivanov to accept that the Doros metropolitan included huge territories from the Caucasus and territories surrounding the Caspian Sea and that this Constantinople project—for an intensive missionary activity in Khazaria—was developed as a concept during the reign of emperor Basil I (867–886) when the missionary activity of Constantinople was at its zenith. Notwithstanding all this, S.A. Ivanov is inclined to accept that the plan about the establishment of Christianity in Khazaria through Byzantine missionary activity “was never put into practice”.

Something similar happened far to the east. Before being converted to Manichaeism, the Uighur khagan asked for a preliminary explanation of the main principles of the religion through a religious debate. As it was already mentioned, the Uighurs chose Manichaeism after 762/763 A.D., which was not welcome by the Chinese. Maybe the opposition to China and the desire of Bögü khagan (759–779) to demonstrate his independence from the Middle Kingdom and the T’ang dynasty were the ‘engines’ of this decision. However, we should not neglect the possibility that it was a clever move for manipulating the

210 Ivanov 2001, 30; Ivanov 2003, 147–149.
211 Ivanov 2003, 334.
rulers of the weakened Chinese state aimed at imposing some ideas of
the Uighur court concerning religious politics. A. Khazanov stresses
the fact that Manichaeism was established in the Uighur khaganate
immediately after the end of the An Lu-shan’s rebellion (755–763),
which was disastrous for the Chinese Empire. Khazanov describes how
the political confrontation with the Middle Kingdom was “translated
into the language of religious opposition”.

C. Mackerras also points out that in 768 A.D. the khagan managed
to persuade the emperor to give permission for building Manichaean
temples in China; perhaps, says Mackerras, by doing so the Uighur
ruler intended to keep an eye on the Uighur residents in China and
to provide them with a powerful weapon against presupposed Chi-
nese influence. Three years later the Uighurs asked for a permission to
establish such temples in four other cities, including in Southern China,
and this way the number of the temples of the “Doctrine of Light” (the
Chinese name of the Manichaeism—my note, Ts. St.) increased with
four. In fact this act deserves careful scrutiny. In 732 A.D. the fol-
lowers of Manichaeism in China were subjected, for the first time,
to an official pursuit and their religion was forbidden for everybody
except foreigners. The Uighur khagan demanded the cancellation of
this prohibition and China, exhausted by the long military campaigns
against An Lu-shan and Tibet, had no choice but to accept this humili-
ating demand if China intended to keep the important friendship with
the Uighurs. So the khagan’s demand can be hardly interpreted as a
simple act demonstrating his ideological independence. Later on, ca.
806 A.D., the Uighurs sent a special mission to the Chinese capital
to preach the Manichaean religion. A monastery was built for the

213 For this as well as other possible motifs see, Mackerras 1990, 331 f.; Foltz 1999,
80–81.
Manichaeism is brought no later than 672 A.D., and missionaries came to the court
in 694 A.D.; with the edict of 732 A.D. they were allowed to preach to their adherents,
but later the missionaries were again repressed. According to Lieu 1998, 194–195,
there were also Manichaeans who came to the court of China during the reigns of
Kao-tsun (650–683) and Wu Tse-tien (684–704).
216 Foltz 1999, 79: “However, since it [Manichaeism—my note, Ts. St.] is the indig-
enous religion of the Western Barbarians and other [foreigners], its followers will not
be punished if they practice it among themselves”, to quote the emperor’s edict.
218 Bichurin 1950, 331 and n. 2. For some Gnostic texts written in Turkic dialects
and giving aspects of Manichaean doctrine see, Gnosis on the Silk Road 1993, 277–376.
mission and its members began to establish their rules: to eat fruit and drink water and kumis. However, due to abuses and mainly those related to trade, the preachers were expelled from the capital in 817 A.D.

In order to gain the heart of the Uighurs and to overcome the negative attitude towards the foreign, the Manichaean preachers developed a very clever approach. They intentionally bound their religious concepts, symbols and even terminology with the Turkic ones. Some of the ideas of the Manichaeism, for example, having a direct relation to the light, were assimilated to the ancient Moon and Sun worship of the Turks. Besides, the Manichaean’s ‘attached’ the Turkic word ‘bilig’ (“knowledge”, meaning also “wisdom”, a term associated by the nomads with the person of the ruler in general) to the five main virtues (e.g. love-wisdom, faith-wisdom, patience-wisdom, etc.). Yet they used, as already noted, the Turkic word ‘qut’ for “soul”.

Such flexibility in promoting some of the so-called world religions in steppe Eurasia was typical for the Nestorians too. Both Manichaean and Nestorian preachers avoided the extremes in the sphere of faith and for that reason both religions won many followers in Central Asia in the early medieval period. The religious systems are much more successful and effective when adjusted to the philosophy of the ‘target group’ thus creating the feeling that the ‘new’ message is just an “improvement” of the old beliefs and that it can fit perfectly the traditional concepts of the people. 219

However, it was not only the opposition to China that mattered in Central Asia but also the rivalries with other steppe rulers, the Karluks in particular. They inherited the leading position in the Western khaganate after the Turks’ collapse. There was also another rivalry—with the Qirghiz people who supported Christianity as did the Karluks.

The opposite ‘pole’ in these complicated schemes of opposition in Central Asia, during the eighth and the ninth centuries, was held by the Tibetans who followed Buddhism. The commercial factor also played an important role in the choice of religion as was the case with the Khazars. It was in fact the Uighur appeal to the Sogdian Manichaean diaspora and the Khazar one—to the Jewish. 220 The actual significance of Manichaeism for the common people in the Uighur khaganate is

219 Foltz 1999, 75, 81, 83.
220 Khazanov 1994, 20. Foltz 1999, 78, argues that it was again the Sogdian people who started disseminating Manichaeanism. The Sogdians first translated into the Sog-
still a topic of discussion. D. Tikhonov claims that Manichaeism “did not touch the nomadic periphery” remaining “a religion of the capital city and the aristocracy ruling the state”. Tikhonov 1983, 186. At least as the capital Ordubaliq is regarded, no one can deny the existence of many Manichaeans there. According to the Arab written tradition (Ibn Khordadhbeh, al-Mas’udi, Gardizi, or Tamim ibn Bahr), in Ordubaliq there were also Christians, Buddhists, and magi, e.g. men that followed the rites and prescriptions of the Ancient Turkic religion; in front of the khagan’s palace, and it happened every day, there gathered 300–400 men and read the Mani’s books—details see in, Ibn Khordadhbeh 1986, 65 and nn. 16–18; Minorsky 1978, 275–305, esp. p. 283. Tikhonov’s opinion is in tune with Gumilev 2004, 473. Cf. Mackerras 1990, 328; Foltz 1999, 83.

Yet another important detail should be pointed out. The sermons of the founding prophet Mani and his followers against material things, which were a product of the “dark power” in the Universe, did not stop the Uighur elite from increasing its wealth considerably and none of the khagans living after 763 A.D. seemed to have been seriously bothered by such developments.

However, these confederations tolerated the free confession of other religions as well, especially the ones of “the Book” or “Scriptures”. This fact made many specialists accept that the nomads were tolerant towards the other religion. In this aspect, there is a lot of information about the Khazars and it is provided by various sources (differing both in origin and in genre) confirming such a conclusion. We find such information in the “Vita” of St. Abo of Tiflis (present-day Tbilisi in Georgia) who converted to Christianity in Khazaria since “there are many towns and villages in the northern country [Khazaria], whose citizens lead a care-free life, because they believe in Christ”. The Arabic sources made a topos the information about the seven supreme judges in the Khazar khaganate—two each for the Muslims, Christians, and Jews, and one for the pagans. We have to stress the interesting description of Ibn Rusta and Gardizi mentioning the exceptional religious tolerance of the citizens of as-Sarir: on Fridays people living...
there attended the mosques, on Sundays—the synagogues, and on Saturdays—the churches.\footnote{Zakhoder 1962, 150. For religious tolerance among the Bulgars see, Giuzelev 1999, 107.}

However, there were cases of intolerant threats towards persons of different faiths in the own country. Such information dates back to the first half of the ninth century, just before the disintegration of the Uighur khaganate, when its supreme ruler threatened to kill all Muslims living within his territory in response to the persecution and murders of Manichaeans in Samarkand.\footnote{Mackerras 1972 (2nd ed.), 42–43; Christian 1998, 270; Gumilev 2004, 471.} This situation (as well as a similar one in Khazaria which will be examined later in this volume) required the application of the reciprocity principle and not persecution for persecution’s sake, or persecution for emotional reasons. It was the way that the khagan-beg Joseph acted in the Khazar khaganate (the mid-tenth century) in response to the persecutions against the Jews in the Byzantine Empire during the reign of Romanos I Lekapenos (920–945). According to the correspondence between Joseph and the Jew Hasdai ibn Shafrut of Cordoba, the khagan-beg “got rid of many Christians”.\footnote{See Golb and Pritsak 1982; also see the Russian translation of the same book: Golb, N. and O. Pritsak 1997. “Khazarsko-evreiskie dokumenty X veka”. Moskva/ Ierusalim, 141, 163, and the commentary of Vladimir Petruchkin there, on p. 219, who says that Pavel Kokovtsov (in his “Evreisko-khazarskaia perepiska v X v.”. Leningrad. 1932, 118) translated “uncircumcized” instead of “Christians”.}

Perhaps the most numerous and typical cases of change and adaptation of the people living in the ‘Steppe Empire’, in general, and in Central Asia, in particular, with view to a new world religion, are related to Islam. It was the religion with the lowest number of extreme requirements towards the nomads and it did not threaten their political order which they believed was sanctified by Heaven. Settling down as a consequence of the conversion to Islam, as well as a development of a new ethnical affiliation and identity, was not obligatory either. Moreover, at least at the beginning (i.e. after the eighth century) the Muslim clergy required only official conversion to Islam from the nomads and a declaration that they believe in Allah. This flexible approach allowed the preservation of a number of traditional features in the culture of the local population as well as the preservation (even to this day) of a number of pre-Muslim practices in the Central Asian region.\footnote{Khazanov 1994, 21–22; Drevnie obriadyi 1986.} How-
ever, in the early medieval period, at least by the tenth century, Islam still had not achieved considerable success among the ordinary people of the ‘Steppe Empire’. Until then it was a religion of the urban population mainly, and of the merchants of Sogdian origin especially. However, in contrast to Khazaria, Islam entered Central Asia through the filter of Persian civilization.

The Nestorians experienced considerable missionary success, especially within the borders of the Western Turkic khaganate and among the Karluks, in the seventh-eighth century. For example, the communities in the central and eastern part of Middle Asia flourished in the seventh century. However, an increased influx of Christians is attested in this region as early as the mid-fifth century when the “Syrian church” separated from the Church in Constantinople after the councils in Ephesus and Chalcedon.

The so-called Merv bishopric in Northern Iran had the leading role there. It was of ancient origin, from the mid-fourth century according to some sources, and even earlier according to others, namely as early as the reign of shahin-shah Shapur I (242–272). One of its bishops, Iliya, was even named “apostle of the Turks” due to his missionary efforts, since in 644 A.D. he baptized the Turkic ruler together with his army “beyond Oxus” (i.e. in Tokharistan). In 719 A.D. many missions went to China and from the information they provided it becomes clear that there were lots of Nestorians in Tokharistan, a fact

---

229 For the penetration of Islam there see, Haussig 1992, 242 ff. For the resistance against the Arabs and Islam, in general, in the region of Sogdiana as well as the similar efforts of Turks, Sogdians, and Chinese till 750 A.D. see details in, Bichurin 1950 (Vol. 2), and Bartol’d 1968 (Vol. 5), 295–301; Karimov 2000, 81 ff.; De La Vaissière 2002, 258–288.

230 Foltz 1999, 15.


233 For his life and activities see, Guidi 1903; Bader, Gaibov, and Koshelekenko 1996, 92. According to one of the existing versions referring to the death and funeral of the last Sassanian shahin-shah, Yazdgerd II (d. 651 A.D.), the latter’s body was transmitted by the Nestorians led by metropolitan Iliya to “the garden of metropolitan in Merv”, which was situated in the local Christian monastery—see Bartol’d 1966 (Vol. 4), 186; Istoriia at-Tabari [aṭ-Ṭabari] 1987, 30; Beliaev 2000 (2nd ed.), 226 and n. 137.
that gives reason to believe that there were serious relations between the Nestorian church and the local aristocracy.\footnote{Enoki 1964, 72 and n. 114—quoted after Litvinsky 1996, 424; also see, Haussig 1992, 218 ff.; Foltz 1999, 69 f.}

There was a Christian mission in Semirechie that was sent by Sogdiana and is attested to in the preserved necropolises, dated to the sixth or the seventh century, the church at Aq-Beshim, dated to the eighth century and the Christian inscriptions in Syrian and Sogdian languages. So when the Turkic tribes came to this region, they found a Christian population. As has been pointed out, Christianity became especially popular among the Karluks, as well as among the Qirghiz living further east who left stelae with crosses and runic inscriptions.\footnote{Litvinsky 1996, 425. For the bishoprics of the Karluks that appeared between ninth and tenth century see, Beliaev 2000 (2nd ed.), 228.}

V. Bartol’d writes that according to Syrian authors, patriarch Timotheus (780–819) was receiving letters from the Turkic ruler as well as from other kings who were presented as having converted to Christianity through his efforts.\footnote{Bartol’d 1964 (Vol. 2, Pt. 2), 275. For the deeds of the patriarch and for the Nestorians in general, also see, Mackerras 1990, 333; but cf. von Gabain 1949, 47–48.} According to A. Mingana, there was a second large-scale Turkic conversion to Christianity in 781–782 A.D. and patriarch Timotheus established a Central Asian bishopric in order to admonish the Turks-Christians especially.\footnote{Mingana 1925, 12–13—quoted after Foltz 1999, 70.}

The Sogdian trade center Panjikand also saved traces of Christian presence. The famous sixth–eighth century wall paintings from Panjikand, depicting rituals of various religions, present a very interesting subject—“Joseph sells grain in Egypt”. The details of the iconography give ground to suggest that it could have had a Christian prototype.\footnote{Beliaev 1925, 12–13—quoted after Foltz 1999, 70.}

However, another monument that also provides evidence for the penetration of Christianity into Central Asia deserves special interest—the temple in the Turkic capital Ordukent (Suyab) dated to the mid-seventh–early eighth century.\footnote{Beliaev 2000 (2nd ed.), 228; Vysotskii 1989.} It was erected outside the shahristan but it was still situated close to the latter.

The long life of Christianity in Central Asia and the penetration of some typical features of the Nestorian church into the region are also traced through the so-called kayraks in present-day Kirghizstan. These are flat, relatively large funeral stones with equilateral crosses
and Syrian-Turkic epitaphs. They were found on the territories of the Nestorians in the northern parts of the T’ien-shan region and date from the second half of the eighth until the mid-fourteenth century. Analogies are also registered in Syria (the fifth-sixth century) and in the neighboring regions. Therefore, this ritual was strictly kept in the areas where Syrian people were settled as well as in the regions of Middle Asia, where the Turkic population was Christian. The earliest epitaphs from the Semirechie are dated to the late eighth century and continued the tradition of putting such monuments in Merv, Samarkand, and Urgut where analogous funeral stones are dated to the sixth-seventh century. The inscriptions usually consist of a date according to the Turkic cyclic (so-called ‘animal’) calendar, the names of the deceased as well as the names of the parents. The epitaphs are clear evidence of the combination of elements from both languages.

Syrian writing was used in the territories of present-day Northern Kirghizstan from the conversion to Christianity (the late eighth-ninth century) until the downfall of the Nestorian municipalities in Semirechie in the mid-fourteenth century.

There were pagans as well as Manichaean and Nestorians among the Uighurs as was typical for Asia, where all world religions (Christianity, Zoroastrism, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, and Manichaeism) co-existed among various tribal cults.

The Bulgars were an exception to a certain extent because in 864 A.D. they were converted to Christianity and adopted the religion of their main rival, the Byzantine Empire. Until that time they persistently imposed their pantheon, their religion and built up several temples of their God of Heaven and Sun. The Philippi inscription from 837 A.D. is very indicative in this respect:

Persian, by Lord appointed archon of the many Bulgars, sent Isboul the kaukhan, and gave him an army, and the ichirgü-boila, and the kanakolobur. And the kaukhan to the Smolyans... The one who seeks the truth, the Lord sees, and the one who lies—the Lord sees. The Bulgars

242 Beliaev 2000 (2nd ed.), 253 and n. 147.
243 Minorsky 1978, 283; Mackerras 1990, 333.
244 Details see in, Litvinsky 1996, 421–431; Synkretismus 1987; Roux 1984.
245 See Stepanov 1999, 156–160, with literature cited there.
did many good services to the Christians and the Christians have forgotten about them; but the Lord sees.246

The events mentioned by the inscription happened in 837 A.D. when emperor Theophilos (829–842) took back from “Bulgaria beyond the Danube River” the Byzantines captured by Krum in 813 A.D. Theophilos did this by tricking Persian to send a great army against the rebellious Smolyans and this way reduced the number of Bulgar soldiers in the Northeastern parts of the Bulgar state. Apparently kaukhan Isboul stayed long enough in Philippi situated close to the Aegean coast and had time to make the above-mentioned inscription on behalf of the Bulgar khan Persian. Remarkably, it was situated on the stylobate of the local basilica, the so-called Basilica ‘B’. In light of the serious accusations of the Byzantines being deceptive in dealing with the Bulgars it is hard to believe that the kaukhan had accidently chosen a Christian church as the site for the inscription. One could not think of a better place for this type of propaganda.247

One more inscription is explicitly related to Christians as well, i.e. Byzantines—the so-called Syuleimanköy inscription (named after the village of Syuleimanköy, now the Novi Pazar region in Bulgaria where it was found). It presents separate articles of the 30-years-long peace treaty signed between the Bulgar khan Omurtag and the Byzantine Empire and is dated to 815 A.D.248 Unfortunately this part of the inscription is very badly preserved and it is difficult to be used as a source in this aspect. Consequently, we should also consider the Byzantine sources249 because they provide more details than the inscription. Article Four is related to “the captured Christians and the imprisoned..., and for the turmarchs, spatharii and comites: will give..., and for the poor soldiers a soul for a soul”. Did Omurtag abide the clauses of the treaty for returning the captured Christians? The Byzantine information, other than the hagiographic tradition, provided for example by Zonaras (“After the death of Krum another one took the power, signed a treaty with the Byzantines and returned back

246 Beshevliev 1992, N 14. Regarding which God is mentioned, e.g. that of the Christians or that of the Bulgars, there are different opinions. For instance see, Rashev 1996, 39–44, with literature cited there, and also: Bozhilov 1995, 47; Beshevliev 1992, 85–86 and esp. N 14, 140–148; Nikolov 2000, 347.
247 Beshevliev 1992, 147 f.
249 Details see in, Nikolova 1995, 190, with the sources mentioned there.
the captives"), by the so-called Successor of Theophanes/Theophanes Continuatus (he ascribed the return of the captives to God’s intervention), as well as by John Skylitzes, confirm that Omurtag kept his promise and fulfilled the clause provision pointed out above. However, the mentioned authors reveal only part of the truth as they omit mentioning that not all captives returned to the Byzantine Empire as, for various reasons, some of them stayed and lived in Bulgaria.250

Therefore, from a confessional point of view, the Other (with the exception of the Bulgars, because the otherness in their society was highly radicalized for a certain period, namely in confessional aspect) was not totally rejected since he/it was necessary for the own identification in the search of a higher homogeneity in these confederations. For that reason the introduction of the world religions in their societies related to the foreign in general, had economic and religious reasons as well as identification and political reasons. Even among the Bulgars, however, a more tolerant attitude towards the confessional otherness was observed ca. mid-ninth century as well as a decrease of the radicalization of the attitude towards the Other confessing some of the monotheistic religions, which became apparent through the deeds of the Bulgar aristocracy rather than its words. The sources are silent about the persecutions of Christians in Bulgaria after the 830s but mention the propaganda of Islam and probably Judaism in this part of Europe. Such propaganda is referred to in such sources as “The Answers of Pope Nicholas I to the Questions of Knyaz Boris-Michael”.251 The missions to the Khazars and the Bulgars in the early 860s, which were sent by various representatives of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, confirm the existence of a struggle for superiority in this part of Europe that resulted in a struggle to win the hearts and minds of the local population. The Byzantine patriarch Photius was beyond any doubt one of the architects of this strategy.252

Why did the Bulgars still break the general rule and accept the religion of their main opponent, the Byzantine Empire? The answer (or

250 Nikolova 1995, 190.
251 Latinski izvori 1960, Ch. 103: “You are asking what should be done with the impious books which, as have been reporting, have been introduced to you by the Saracens and are now in your [country]…”; Ch. 104: “You are claiming that by a certain Jew, you do not know whether he is a Christian or a pagan, many have been baptized in your fatherland…”.
the probable answers, at least) can be found only if we study in general the problem of Christianity in Bulgaria prior to 864 A.D. Since various aspects of this problem have already been examined by a number of scholars,253 I will try to synthesize their general points and to give my answer to the above-mentioned question.

Until the beginning of the ninth century Asparukh’s successors had permanent control over the territories to the north of Haemus Mountain and no significant Christian (Byzantine) population was attested (or it is not possible to be proved) within the boundaries of the Bulgar state. It is also hard to prove the real existence of a network of bishoprics at the sites located along the Danube (Novae, Ratiaria, Durostorum, etc.),254 which would have been a base for an intensified preaching and promotion of Christianity among the Bulgars. However, the territorial expansion to the south in the early ninth century changed the situation and, as it is well known, quite a high number of Byzantine Christians were included within the borders of the state, a fact that gives reason for P. Schreiner to assume “an existence of constant Christian communities” among the former Krum’s captives.255 Did they expand the Christian faith? It is hard to give a simple answer to this question but the answer is “no”, if we speak about purposeful actions for this goal.

The overall politics of Krum and his successors until 864 A.D. made it clear that the Bulgar elite used the resources (knowledge, specific skills, etc.) of the captives and the voluntary Byzantine settlers in Bulgaria to strengthen their own (e.g. Bulgar) identity through imitating and adapting some Byzantine elements to the Bulgar reality, ideology, etc., i.e. after a process of necessary interpretation through the prism

---

253 For instance see, Schreiner 2004, 215–224; Venedikov 1996; Nikolov 2000, 325–364; Browning 1988, passim; Rashev 2004, passim. Especially for the church architecture (in the lands of Bulgaria) during Late Antiquity, as proving the serious place of Christianity there see, Chaneva-Dechevska 1999; another related proof are the reliquaries found in Bulgarian lands and dated to the fourth-sixth centuries. For them see, Minchev 2003. For early Christianity in the Rhodope Mountains, now in Bulgaria and in Greece see, Vaklinova 1999, 51–72; Vaklinova 2002, 159–179, who claims that church building was stopped in the region after the sixth century and began again only in the tenth century.

254 Following Darrouzès’ “Notitiae episcopatum ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae” Peter Schreiner is not inclined to claim such a thing, too. Details see in, Shrainer [Schreiner] 2004, 219.

of the Bulgar goals and ambitions. So, in this case, the foreign (construction techniques, writing, invocations, etc.) is put to work to support the Bulgar ‘modernization’ and was not just an influence coming from the Byzantine Empire. In other words, it was intentionally controlled by Pliska, by the central power, which until the 830s neglected to a certain extent or had a policy of no compromises towards the Christians living within the borders of Bulgaria and those with high ranks some of whom even died as martyrs.

Therefore we can accept S. Nikolov’s thesis that until the conversion to Christianity in 864 A.D., communication between the Bulgars and Byzantine Christianity “never reached the level of a full fusion of ideas and representations”. The use of the Greek language at the court of the khan for writing inscriptions in Bulgar language using Greek letters inclusively, was paving the way for expanding Christianity in the region rather than a pre-planned missionary act of the Byzantine imperial court. However, accumulating so much and for such a short period—less than 50 years—created a ‘critical mass’ in Bulgaria because the Bulgars borrowed from Byzantine civilization symbolic as well as organizational (the comitatus) and demographic resources, which in the end turned out to be crucial for the conversion of the Bulgars to Orthodox Christianity. It is important to note here that nobody forced the local elite to ‘modernize’ itself after the first decade of the ninth century by so quickly accepting some Byzantine cultural and political realia. It became a ‘hostage’ of its expansion in

256 For a detailed analysis of this thesis see, Stepanov 1999, passim, and Nikolov 2000, passim. Also see the important conclusion made by L. Fridman (in his “Horizontalnoto obshtestvo”. Sofi a, 2002, 96) though it does not in fact concern the Middle Ages: “…the resistance should take on assume and symbols of the culture which it hates so much”.

257 For the sources and commentaries see, Follieri and Dujchev 1963, 71–106; also see, Nikolova 1995, 182–194.

258 Nikolov 2000, 343.

259 Nikolov 2000, 343. For these inscriptions see, Beshevliev 1992, N N 53, 54—however, both of them are in the segment of the so-called military inventory inscriptions, meaning they are not aimed at propaganda; which is why they are not written in Greek!

260 Ivanov 2001, 16, notes correctly that in the first centuries of the Middle Ages evidence about Christianity had been disseminated mostly by traders, soldiers of fortune as well as captives and hostages amongst the “barbarians”; so the missionary activity of the Constantinopolitan church indeed dates back to a much later time. Moreover, the Byzantine church, contrary to that in Western Europe, had never formulated missionary tasks.
southern, western and northwestern direction that turned the Bulgars into masters of almost the entire Byzantine West, as mentioned earlier. Dominating over quite a high number of Christian subjects and large territories overloaded with Roman imperial and Christian memory, after the mid-ninth century the Bulgar aristocrats had, in my opinion, a single choice: either to persist opposing the old Bulgar deities to Christianity, or to embrace the Christian faith. And patriarch Photius, together with the intellectual circle around him, developed ideas about massive Christian missionary activity initiated by Constantinople in the east, north, and northwest thus responding to Roman missionary and political ambitions. The following fact, however—on this matter knyaz Boris-Michael addresses not only the Byzantines but also the Eastern Franks (the Germans) and later on the Papacy,—suggests that his choice was determined to a certain extent by the political benefits that were in fact completely in accordance with early medieval practice and tradition that was especially typical for the Great Steppe. Knayaz Boris’s trimming, however, was facilitated by the geographic location of Bulgaria whose territories in the second half of the ninth century were situated both in the diocese of the Constantinople patriarch and under the jurisdiction of the Roman pope (a considerable part of Illyricum was part of the Bulgar khan’s domain). Probably it was the fact that tipped the balance towards the choice of Christianity—a religion which, beyond any doubt, was familiar but still a foreign one—for an official religion of the Bulgarian polity.

The attempt of combining writings and dates at one place, on one and the same material, was one of the ‘side effects’ of contact with the sedentary civilizations and their religious doctrines. This phenomenon is evidenced in a number of stone inscriptions from Bulgaria as well as among the Turks and the Uighurs in the East. Undoubtedly, in these cases, the nomadic elites were trying to establish a dialogue with the Others by writing inscriptions in Greek (in Bulgaria), or in Sogdian and Chinese (in the cases with Turks and Uighurs). It is quite apparent as far as the latter are concerned, because after the mid-seventh century they had their own runic writing developed on the basis of Sogdian writing; nevertheless their most important inscriptions, apparently aimed at propaganda, very often bore the marks of the Other as well.

The dates are very significant indeed. The Chinese text of Kül-tegin’s stela provides information about the exact dynastic date, e.g. the “K’ai-yuan period (713–742), year 20th” (i.e. 732 A.D.). There are three
dates in the Turkic text of the same monument (Kül-tegin’s death, the funerary ritual, and the inauguration of the inscription and the funerary temple), which, if calculated according to the so-called ‘animal’ cyclic calendar, give “the year of the monkey”.261 The Uighurs also used the 12-years-long cyclic calendar262 and some of the inscriptions on their stelae (the Sevrey and Karabalghasun ones) contain Sogdian and Chinese type of dates. Therefore, the message was aimed both ‘inwards’, e.g. towards their own subjects who were able to read Turkic and Uighur runes, and ‘outwards’, e.g. towards the Chinese mainly.

The Bulgars differ a lot in this respect. The “propaganda” inscriptions were always written in Greek, using Greek letters although there is a couple of inscriptions, N N 43 and 57, whose date requires special attention. Both of them are dated to Omurtag’s reign; N 43 contains a date in Byzantine style, while N 57 contains a date in accordance both with the indication and with the Bulgar cyclic calendar.263 So after the beginning of the ninth century, at the khan’s court at least, the Bulgars got used to Greek (and Christian) dates but the distinction was still present—the own, traditional date was emphasized by some very well educated people even half a century after the conversion to Christianity.

In fact we can make the conclusion that there is a special fluidity within the religious sphere, manifested by frequent changes of the state religion in this type of societies (especially typical for the Turks and the Uighurs).264 It explains to a certain extent, why the nomadic cultures in steppe Eurasia, during the Middle Ages, especially the ones to the north of the Black and the Caspian Seas, became less homogenous than they were in the Roman period and in the early medieval period (to a certain extent). The religious diversity in the steppe resulted in a diversity of writing systems (alphabets and characters) and literacy in

262 For instance see the inscriptions from Terkhin (Tariat) and Tes in, Klyashtorny 1982, 341–343 (old-Turkic), 343–346 (translated into English); Tekin 1982, 46–48 (old-Turkic), 48–52 (translated into English), Klyashtorny 1985, 152–153 (old-Turkic), 153–154 (translated into English).
263 Beshevliev 1992, 177 f. (N 43), 215 f. (N 57): “[It] was built, according to the Bulgar [calendar], in sigor elem, and according to the Greeks—in 15th indication” (pp. 84–85). Similar dating in Bulgaria following the model seen in inscription N 57, but this time from the period after 865 A.D., one can find in Chernorizets Tudor Doksov’s marginal text where, s.a. 907 A.D., it is written the Bulgar “eth bekhti” along with the date typical for the Christian’s calendar.
general, art styles, fashion, etc.\textsuperscript{265} (i.e. all things that are also signs of otherness and go together with the acceptance of some of the so-called world religions). It became possible in this period due to the intensified “meetings” and the dialogue between the nomads and the various cultures (and, apparently, various Others), something that was both a strong and the weak feature of the nomadic societies.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{265} Khazanov 1994, 15.}
CHAPTER TWO

THE ‘INSIDE’ OTHER

In every society there are groups which could be viewed as united by different characteristics, for instance biological, economic, social, etc. The attitude towards them usually varies and sometimes changes due to different reasons and events. However, such attitudes can be observed in the way they are represented. For the purposes of this research, in the group that is under scope here, I selected, firstly, the figure of the woman, secondly, that of the shaman/magician (indeed called “koloburs” in Bulgaria, or “qams” among the Turks), and smiths, and thirdly, of all those who did not confess the formal ‘state’ religion. I called them ‘Inside Others’, because all these figures do exist in reality and are common among the societies of the ‘steppe’ empire, but in ways quite different from those typical for the main groups of the given society. It could not be denied that in their status and, also, in the images and notions that followed them there is a certain ambivalence, which one can distinguish quite easily. When putting them under analysis we are indeed facing with clichés and different traditional notions typical of the pre-modern societies. It seems that in many aspects, all these notions and clichés look as determining in advance many of the criteria used to accept or to reject these “marginal” groups.

Still, the very existence of such groups can be put under scrutiny, especially after the beginning of the seventh century, when some contact zones were formed in the ‘Steppe Empire’. Starting from that period on, the former nomads used to learn how to live together, side-by-side and, sometimes, even in common, with the sedentary world. Is there any change, then, in the attitude toward the ‘Inside’ Others that was made possible because of this move? Such kind of changes could be noticed in the attitude towards people who, till this moment, e.g. in the sixth century, were forced to maintain the spiritual, transcendental stability in the given khaganate. The ‘meeting’ with the sedentary civilizations urged the khagans to centralize their polities as well as their positions in the sphere of sacral authority. They acquired most of the supreme priest’s responsibilities thus diminishing the shamans’
It was because of the same centralization that the khagans undertook such serious changes in their polities thus introducing not only the *imperial pax* in the steppe but also the *imperial law* ("törü" in Turkic) which, one may suppose, required also innovations at home.

II.1. The female otherness (combining bow and ‘female work’, or between order and chaos)

In principle, in the steppe region of Eurasia the women are ‘situated’ in four main categories, namely that of the mother, spouse, warriorwoman, and shamaness. In what follows, I shall try to show their role and functions as well as notions of them in the society.

In the Middle Ages, against the tradition of the sedentary civilizations, the nomads did not look upon the maidens with neglect. Therefore, in the steppe the unmarried woman had much more freedom. She also knew how to shoot with a bow and how to ride a horse, i.e. she was well acquainted with the primary males’ ‘steppe’ activities. Since nomadism was quite a risky occupation, it presupposed strong spirit and fast mind-making, especially during bad climatic conditions. That is why everybody in the steppe highly appreciated all those individuals who were able to show courage and initiative, regardless of their sex.

Still, the woman *a priori* is in the sphere of otherness, because, according to the laws and behavior in such kind of societies, and in the Middle Ages in particular, the above-mentioned activities are mainly the prerogative of men. Needless to say, female otherness is first of all due to biology, but this brings out some social dimensions and repercussions as well. Al-Mas’ûdî (the tenth century), for instance, noticed one of the differences characteristic to the Volga Bulgars. Among them, and particularly in the tenth century, there existed a differentiation

---

1 Especially for the place of the women in Byzantium see, Laiou 1981, 233–260; Carr 1985, 1–15; Beaucamp 1990; Emmanuel 1995, 769–778; Shreiner [Schreiner] 2004, 100–105. For the Byzantine empresses see, Garland 1999; McClanan 2002; Heronin 2001. The Byzantine woman was first of all a house-keeper. Before the eleventh century, women that were engaged in any kind of intellectual work were a rarity. For a general view about women’s role and positions in Western Europe until the end of the Early Middle Ages see, Jesch 1991; Bitel 2002.

between boys and girls who had to inherit their parents. According to him, the girls received more, but a closer analysis of the patrimony clearly shows the specific notion of a woman’s position in the clan, or in the family: in fact she received a significant amount of possessions but in movables only; and the estates were given to the sons, i.e. they were viewed as the clan’s and the family’s property. It was the estate that people perceived as more important than gold, silver, or precious stones since it provided any society with food supplies. The more land one had, the more power and weight in the society he had; it was the same with the clans and families. That is why it was considered that land should not to be divided or ‘moved’ to another clan, something that could have possibly happened if a girl married to a boy and then left her father’s house.

Of course, the passage referred to the already sedentarised Volga Bulgars, but it is beyond any doubt that such kind of notion was typical for the remote past and was spread not only among sedentary societies but amongst nomads too. Arable land was also valuable for the steppe people and most of the nomads in the Middle Ages always maintained an agricultural sector appropriate enough for the steppe conditions. Such a claim is absolutely valid for the ‘steppe empires’ of Turks and Uighurs, especially in the oasis towns, not to mention Khazaria and Bulgaria where the conditions for agriculture were much better than those in the steppes of Central Asia.

If one wants to make a comparison between the status of women in steppe Eurasia and Western Europe in the Early Middle Ages, he/she will notice that there is no serious evidence from the steppe area. The same is true about her role as a wife, widow, or divorced woman. In Western Europe, in the so-called Barbaricum, the law was in fact a product of a ‘written’ culture as well as of the adaptation of the Roman law to new, post-Roman conditions. In the steppes, the law was a product of an ‘oral’ culture and different traditions, without any Roman legacy at all.

Not surprisingly, Herodotus links the warrior-like Amazons (who are with another status and with another style of living than that of

---

3 Something similar is seen in Chapter 49 of the “Responsa papae Nicolai I ad consulta Bulgarorum”: “Besides, you want to know if you are allowed to give, as it was before, a dowry to your spouses in gold, silver, oxes, horses, etc.”. For the dowry and marital gift in (Early) Medieval Bulgaria see, Georgieva 2001, 9–16.

4 See Hristova 2002, 13–28, with literature cited there.
the Greeks) with Scythia, i.e. with the nomads’ area! Besides that story of Herodotus, there are other legends about the Amazons’ appearance in Scythia as well, but the steady image and notion about the powerful women in the Eurasian steppes is linked also to the heirs of the Scythians in that same area, namely the Sarmatians. Their society was often labeled by ancient writers as a “gynekokratia”, e.g. a society with/under “women’s power”. It is hardly believable that such *topoi* and images appeared by chance, because the Sarmatians came to the area north of the Caucasus Mountains exactly from Central Asia, and after the second century B.C. managed to subdue totally the Scythians in the region west of the Caspian Sea.

This “women’s power” sometimes was transformed into real power and it seems that such kind of moments in history gave reason to the existence of the *topos*. The sixth century for instance knows such cases: it was Boarix, the widow of Balakh and ruler of the Savirs, who, according to Theophanes the Confessor, “started to rule over in the Huns’ lands after the death of her husband”; she was capable enough to achieve success on both diplomatic and battle grounds. Some years later, in 576 A.D., it was the Turk Anagai who raised to power Akaga over the Utigurs and she, probably together with him as a Turks’ deputy, ran the region north of the Caucasus. Svetlana Pletneva is inclined to accept that something similar happened in the eighth century in Khazaria—there, the mother of the late khagan Parsbit was in fact the person who ruled over the Khazars although her grandson, Parsbit’s son indeed, had already been invested with the supreme power and even launched a raid against the Caucasian Albanians. Such behavior in “Pax Nomadica” follows the pattern of the women rulers of Sauromatians, Saka tribes, and Massagetae during Antiquity; because of this reason, for us it is not a surprise. As far as Bulgaria is concerned, we should bear in mind Al. Fol’s claim that a big part of

---

5 Gerodot [Herodotus] 1972, 214 (Bk. IV).
6 See Pletneva 1998, 529, with literature cited in notes 2 and 3. For the appearance of the *topos* ‘amazons’ and its ancient roots and nuances in meaning see, Fol 1991, 14–18. For some notions in Thracian milieu referring to the young woman as well as color markers of her status in Bulgarian folklore see, Marazov 1985, 90–117; Marazov 2003, 13–51, esp. pp. 16–17, 24, 27, 34.
7 Chichurov 1980, 50.
8 Menander 1958, 228.
10 There exist innumerable works in this field. For instance see, Tolstov 1948, 325–331; Smirnov 1964.
these notions, especially in the Bulgarian folklore today, came thanks to the “illiteral relations among Slavs, Bulgars, and (Thracians) pagans at least until the 9th century”\textsuperscript{11} and, therefore, they do not have in fact nomadic roots only.

Reminiscences are also visible amongst Magyars, whose early historic destiny, especially in the course of the ninth century, is closely connected to the Khazar khaganate. In the second half of the tenth century, the wife of Geza, Sarolta, though already a Christian at that time continued to drink from time to time and loved riding.\textsuperscript{12} In the ‘maiden-warrior’ plot, the Bulgarian folklore bears signs, too, for the existence of the same old notions.\textsuperscript{13}

During the Middle Ages, similar legends and similar status were typical for the women in Volga Bulgaria. Some authors, Arabs or Persians, namely Ibn Fadlan (tenth century), Ibn Rusta (tenth century), or al-Garnati (twelfth century) mentioned such motifs. Legends about women giants, called “alypi”, existed in Volga Bulgaria during the Early Middle Ages and could be explained with the conditions in the Bulgar society, where the women had more freedom; the same was typical also for the Huns, Turks, and Oghuz tribes and, as a whole, for the so-called nomadic/‘steppe’ empire.\textsuperscript{14} Ibn Fadlan narrates about the rite and law in Volga Bulgaria according to which the ruler’s wife attended the ritual feast and adds that during funerals men are those who are obliged to mourn and not the women.\textsuperscript{15}

Among the Burtas tribes who were once subjects to Khazaria and later Volga Bulgaria, the maidens that had already achieved the age of full maturity stopped obeying their fathers and could freely choose husbands.\textsuperscript{16} In the lands that once were under Volga Bulgars’ rule and now are part of Tatarstan there is clear evidence from toponimy, which shows such notions, namely “kiz kala” (“maiden’s town”), or “kiz tau”

\textsuperscript{11} Fol 1991, 18.
\textsuperscript{12} Thietmari Merseburgensis \textit{Chronicon} 1957, 444 (L. VIII, Cap. 4). Cf. Petrukhin 1996, 31–43, esp. p. 40, who points out that all these stereotypes could be a product of the clichés in depicting the “barbarians”, a practice which was so dear to the mediaeval authors. Also see, Sarangerel (Julie Ann Stewart) 2002, 317–318.
\textsuperscript{13} See details in, Kamenov 1991, 132–138. For women’s status and living conditions in the Varangian society see, Petrukhin 1996, passim.
\textsuperscript{14} Davletshin 1990, 93–94.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibn Fadlan 1992, 39, 61.
\textsuperscript{16} Hvol’son 1869, 21.
(“maiden’s mountain”).\(^{17}\) It was al-Masʿūdī who, in the tenth century, mentions that among the Volga Bulgars women, together with their children, had an important role in the military organization.\(^{18}\)

All these examples, from different authors and for different peoples, but referring to societies on a similar phase of development are indeed enough so as to claim that such a ‘woman behavior’ had been quite a typical phenomenon during the age of the so-called early state as well as in earlier time, in the chiefdoms’ era. This can be seen in 811 A.D., in Danube Bulgaria, when Bulgarian women took part in the repelling of the army led by the Byzantine basileus Nicephorus I (802–811).

Since we do not have another evidence from Bulgaria till the country’s Christian conversion in 864 A.D. that mentions women’s activity during wars or in the political sphere, one should agree with S. Georgieva’s claim that in Danube Bulgaria this “women’s role” had been sporadic and incidental.\(^{19}\)

In the nomadic and semi-nomadic societies women were really capable in holding the sabre, or sword, or bow, or horse’s bridles.\(^{20}\) Women warriors in the steppe were not a forgery but a reality and this reality can be noticed not only in folklore (in the typical plot of before-wedding or during-the-wedding combat between the bride and the groom)\(^{21}\) but also in artifacts found during archeological excavations. The Bulgaro-Alan necropolis in Dmitrievskii, which belongs

\(^{17}\) Davletshin 1990, 95. Cf. Badalanova-Pokrovska 1995, 156–161, for the mythologem ‘town–woman’, which in the folklore of Danubian Bulgaria can be found in two nuances: 1) marked by the meaning “Bulgarian maiden” / “maiden’s town”, from the original ‘devingrad’; 2) marked by the scandalous “whore-town” mentioned by the Hungarian writer Felix Kanicz in 1870s. Of course, we may also suppose that in ‘devingrad’ one can see an old mythologem linked to the common Indoeuropean heritage, namely ‘daeva’, that is “deity”. As regards the cultural heritage in Volga Bulgaria, now Tatarstan in Russia, such naming could have in its roots that same mythologic origin.

\(^{18}\) Garkavi 1870, 126; Georgieva 1996, 109.

\(^{19}\) Georgieva 1996, 110. Probably the same was also true for early Byzantium if one takes into consideration data from the Arabic sources where there is information that sometimes even the Byzantine women took in their hands weapons—see El-Cheik 1996, 132.

\(^{20}\) Golden 1992, 161 f., does not miss to point out that around 835 A.D. the Uighur mission to the T’ang court in China presented to the emperor “seven women archers who were able to shoot well even while riding”. Barfield 1989, 25, also claims that women in steppe Eurasia had been more autonomous and had more prestige compared to that in the sedentary societies. For evidence from archaeological excavations in that same direction, in general, see in, Davis-Kimball 2002.

\(^{21}\) See Pletneva 1998, 530–532. It was believed that after the wedding, woman usually lost her warrior power because she moved to totally ‘female’ status, i.e. to abso-
to the Saltovo-Maiatski archeological culture (end of seventh–ninth century), is quite appropriate for such a statement. Almost 30 percent of female burials contained weapons, mostly small axes. It is obvious that, on the one hand, there existed different notions regarding the burial ceremonies for young women (aged between 18 and 25) and for old ones (aged over 50), and on the other, for all those women who were aged between 25 and 50 years—in almost 70 percent of the cases weapons were left in the graves that form the first group. Sometimes young women, most probably warriors, were buried with a total number of weapons, e.g. axe, bow with arrows, daggers or even sabres. Such a post mortem armament characteristic for some women who were buried alone, in graves especially dug for them, and located away from males’ graves, can not be viewed as a coincidence. A similar situation can be found in other funeral sites, closely related to the Dmitrievskii necropolis.22

During the Early Middle Ages, in some of the Eurasian courts, there were not only male organizations of the comitatus/Männerbunde-type, who were personally devoted to the king, but also women who were especially selected for the ceremonies of communal eating-and-feasting. Such women attended these rituals and sometimes, as it was characteristic for the Toquz-Oghuz tribes, they numbered four hundred.23

Women’s otherness was in fact activated mostly in extreme situations.24 I have already mentioned that the Bulgars and their ruler Krum, in 811 A.D., “armed also women as if men”25 in order to repel Nicephorus’ armies who invaded Bulgaria. The fame of women warriors is also confirmed by the women’s statues scattered in the steppe, a fact which is not attested during the Early Middle Ages among the sedentary civilizations. Such statues are quite typical for a later period, too, namely for the eleventh-thirteenth century, in the area where the Cumans lived, i.e. the western part of steppe Eurasia and north of the Black Sea and Azov Sea. But the Cumans were indeed the same, but late, nomads who came exactly from Inner Asia thus giving a chance

22 Pletneva 1983, 14–15; Pletneva 1989; Pletneva 1998, 533. Also see, Flerov 1993, 131, who points out that in almost half of the cases with female single burials in catacombs there appeared knives.
24 Pletneva 1998, 537.
for a re-birth of the classical Turkic sculpture from the sixth–eighth century.\footnote{See Pletneva 1974, 107, Tab. 70, N 1205—this statue is quite interesting since it is more than 2.8 m in height and the warrior woman is presented holding a sabre, quiver, and dagger.}

The boundary role of the women who were between two social worlds-and-behaviors, and their status, in particular, had been typical only for a well-established and acceptable for all the society’s members period of time, namely till the end of the wedding ceremony. After that, it was not allowed for women to cross the boundaries of the ‘male world’. Women had to follow and obey the socially accepted codes of behavior, which were ‘sacralized’ by the tradition and in fact marked their new status. But there were also some exceptions linked mostly with the aged and not so much with the social status of women. They signify the women shamaness who, just as it was typical for the warrior women, lived on ‘the edge’, on the ‘frontier’; and because of this fact they had an ambivalent nature. But the shamaness is not totally ‘outside’ the boundary and, therefore, their own group or community does not mark them as “unclean”, or evil and alike. At the same time, such women are not included in the main social categories, either, since they were living—literally and metaphorically speaking—‘on the edge’. Later in the text, I shall return to this question.

Contrary to the Scythian era, when, in the steppes there were stone statues of men only, during the Turkic era and mostly in the area of today Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, and Semirechie there are several stone statues of women. All of them are indeed female figures holding a vessel in the right hand at the level of the breast. They wear hats and their hair is not visible at all, which is in a total opposition to the male figures. On the latter, hair is always visible, and they wear no hats. It is believed that these statues were originally colored.\footnote{For a positive opinion see, Rossiiskaia arkheologiia 2004, N 2, p. 187.} It seems very probable that from the very beginning both sexes existed in the old-Turkic notion that stayed behind the practice of erecting stone statues in the steppes. According to Yurii Motov, behind this notion there stood the specific idea of representing a human being, who is positioned ‘hieratically’, in front of another person. This concept has its roots in the remote past, e.g. the idea of the ‘arbor mundi’, or that about the king and queen, or the connection between Earth and Heaven, and alike, and it is marked, beyond any doubt, by sacrality.
And because of exactly this reason the Turkic visual canon as well as that of representation had been obviously influenced by religion, a fact which makes easier to explain the existence not only of the females’ statues but also their representation always wearing a hat. These hats were modeled as tiaras (with elements similar to denticuli) or fur caps, but without displaying any kind of hair.\textsuperscript{28}

After the dissolution of the First Turkic khaganate the memorial cult among the western Turks definitely saw some development and because of this reason people started paying devotion to both male and female ancestors. Then, along with the male statues, there also appeared female ones, a tradition, which is later to become typical for the Cumans. It has been already mentioned that this tradition, after the eleventh century, will be displayed by those same Cumans in the western part of the Eurasian steppes including the area north of the Black Sea and Azov Sea.\textsuperscript{29}

The woman’s foreignness is visible most probably in the notions of the married woman who has two main functions and roles—to be wife and mother.\textsuperscript{30} After the wedding ceremony she leaves her clan and thus becomes foreign. But she is not ‘at home’ in her new clan as well since she is an alien coming from the outside, i.e. she is potentially linked to ‘chaos’ and thus she was thought she was dangerous. It is hardly a coincidence that in the Turkic-speaking people’s folklore the foreign country/foreign space is usually presented as alien, as a space not suitable for life and the people there—as ones that are definitely inferior beings. Such a woman, therefore, is already lost for her own clan and for her own space.\textsuperscript{31} That is why, according to the tradition and old models of behavior, the woman had to be neglected as if she

\textsuperscript{28} Motov 2001, 145–151, esp. pp. 145, 147–149.
\textsuperscript{29} Borisenko and Khudiakov 2000, 223.
\textsuperscript{30} D’iakonov 1990, 89–91, passim, makes a differentiation of the mythologic characters in two categories—‘warriors maidens’ and ‘matrons’ (i.e. mothers and wives).
\textsuperscript{31} Sagalaev and Oktiabr’skaia 1990, 18, 55. It is interesting to make a comparison to the Chinese civilization too. In China, people looked at the young girls as “flying away” from their clans and because of this fact the girls were not let to know the secrets of the families’/clans’ handicrafts—for this see, Maliavin 2000, 543. Among the Turks it was thought that woman’s maturity came only when the woman moved to her husband’s house, i.e. outside her native home (= own world); because of this reason, moving to the alien space (of the husband’s family) was possible only after definite rituals had been performed accordingly—as if a border had been crossed by a shaman or a hero; in such situations, the woman was thought as being dead or sleeping and she was covered, etc. (details see in, Traditsionnoe mirovozzrenie 1988, 76).
is from another world. And because of that kind of notions the contacts with such kind of women had to be 'sanctified' by special rituals.\footnote{Sagalaev and Oktiabr’skaia 1990, 155. Barfield 1989, 26, however, claims that, after the death of her husband, the widow retained significant influence over her sons, and, if the latter were quite young boys, she had the right to be the head of the household.}

Notions of this kind have at the base most probably both cosmological and mythological projections since, generally speaking, projections of this type were indeed modeling the social relations of the so-called pre-modern societies and had their repercussions upon social ‘bodies’ of this type. There are enough such examples characteristic to the Turks, namely some of those which have their origins from the world’s directions North and West and their marking by different values. For instance, since East has always been regarded as the most sacred direction of the world, it was believed that a person looking to East had South on his/her right side and North—on his/her left side, and ‘up’ and ‘down’ respectively. This was the “picture” if the space was looked at according to the vertical projection. Among the Altaic people both the yurt and the Sky were split into male (to the South) and female (to the North) sides (or halves). Not coincidentally, in some South-Siberian dialects ‘right’ marked a spectrum of positive qualities such as ‘rightful’, ‘good luck/success’, ‘frontal/facial’, ‘favourable’ and alike, and ‘North’ had usually meanings such as ‘irregular’ or ‘anomalous’, i.e. there everything was viewed in total, absolute opposition to the ‘nice’ South. Moreover, North is also ‘left’ and it is hardly a coincidence that the shamans used to hold their drums (“buben”) with the left hand.\footnote{Traditsionnoe mirovozzrenie 1988, 43.}

However, as regards the Bulgar pre-Christian society, it can be taken for granted that the notion of the woman seen from the point of view of the lower levels of mythology is not totally negative, that is in accordance with the well-known scheme of oppositions where ‘female’, as a rule, is marked by ‘left’ and ‘bad’/‘wrong’; rather, the woman here was marked indeed by ambivalence and was linked as much to ‘positive’ as it was to ‘negative’ as well.\footnote{Georgieva 2001b, 122–123.}

Difficulties again arise when someone tries to present in details the female Otherness and its perception in the ‘Steppe Empire’ during the sixth–ninth centuries from the point of view of the afore-mentioned term “qut”. Having in mind these difficulties, we should at least try to
mention the most significant features which could be viewed as reflect-
ing the original connection between “qut” and all those marked by the
sign of ‘femaleness’. According to S. Skobelev, among the Turks the
female deity Umay which is mentioned in the Orkhon inscriptions,
had been perceived as directly linked to the initial understanding of
the term “qut”, e.g. in a period when “qut” was viewed as an integral
part of the rite of sewing the child’s umbilicus in small, specific bags.
Apparently, in ancient times, “qut” had been placed in the background
of terms such as ‘embryo’, ‘foetus’, ‘vital potential/power/spirit’, along
with the well-known ‘fortune’, ‘luck’, wealth’, and ‘thrive’. With the
development of the Turkic mythological notions, in the later stages,
this close connection between ‘umay’ and ‘qut’ diminished in inten-
sity.\footnote{Skobelev 1997, 84, 87, 89. For the connection of Heaven (Tengri) with Umay and
their analogies on Earth, e.g. the khagan and his wife the qatun/khatun, see details
in, Kyzlasov 1998, 39–53, and Stebleva 1965, 113, where there is an eloquent passage
from the so-called Big inscription of Kül-tegin: “My father Ilterish khagan, my mother
Ilbilge khatun, Heaven, supporting [them] by His height…raised [to the throne]”.


Another question that should not be bypassed concerns the exis-
tence of mixed marriages along the Great Silk route. What was the
attitude toward such women? To what extent did they have serious
influence for the formation of their children’s world outlook? Or for
their children’s decision to follow one or another religion? Questions
of this kind are still waiting for profound and detailed answers and
analysis. Still, we may say that, at least in principle, children from such
type of marriages had been perceived first of all as belonging to the
community (clan, or tribe) of the father. However, it was the mother
who, through the religious education of her children, had a stronger
influence than that exercised by her husband. The traditions in the
so-called oral cultures, in principle, usually prevailed over those con-
ected to the canonical texts.\footnote{Skobelev 1997, 84, 87, 89. For the connection of Heaven (Tengri) with Umay and
their analogies on Earth, e.g. the khagan and his wife the qatun/khatun, see details
in, Kyzlasov 1998, 39–53, and Stebleva 1965, 113, where there is an eloquent passage
from the so-called Big inscription of Kül-tegin: “My father Ilterish khagan, my mother
Ilbilge khatun, Heaven, supporting [them] by His height…raised [to the throne]”.


Evidence about women’s role in Khazaria is scarce. This gap could
be filled up, in my opinion, if we follow Th. Noonan’s way of study.
In one of his articles,\footnote{Noonan 1995–1997, 288–289.} Noonan uses data from two writers living in
the thirteenth century, namely William Rubruck and Pian de Carpine, about the Mongols and their typical way of making a differentiation between ‘male’ and ‘female’ work as well between gender and age. He was ready to accept all this as valid for Khazaria, too. In Rubruck’s words, Mongol women had to load and unload the yurts from the carts; they made dresses too, prepared the food, took care of the cows and produced different things from milk, while the men in the Mongol society were responsible for the yurts’ manufacturing, for the camels and mares (along with the *koumis*) as well as weapons (arrows and bows) and equipment (saddles, horseshoes, etc.).

Pian de Carpine is a bit extreme. For him, men do nothing except making arrows and, from time to time, taking care of the flock. They were mostly preoccupied with bow shooting and other military activities. According to him, women did everything: they made clothes of leather, shoes, etc.; they loaded the carts and the camels, etc.38 Still, we should bear in mind that in Khazaria’s and Bulgaria’s lands the process of sedentarization started in earlier times and because of this fact, some of the details mentioned above (by Rubruck and Pian de Carpine) may not fit the social roles of women as well as men in Danube Bulgaria and Khazaria.

But why did women have such a serious impact in the economic life of steppe Eurasia? Why, in this area again, did polygamy and levi-rate continue exercising such a tremendous influence? Also, why were nomads interested not so much in plundering distant lands but in taking away the others’ women? Was it always because of the exogamy? Answers to questions like these could be found out not only in the traditional notions in the steppes but in the essence of this type of economy as well as in the specific style of living in such areas. There, due to security reasons of different kind, labor of un-free women (in Old-Turkic “küng”) was much more preferable than that of male slaves (in Old-Turkic “qul”, meaning “un-free man”). To have such women concentrated in a single place/area was good since they were easily controlled in the frameworks of the family-and-clan life. These women usually worked in different places and this gave an opportunity for lots of men to free themselves from boring and tiresome work.

---
38 The Mongol Mission 1955, 18 (Pian de Carpine), 103 (William Rubruck).
at home thus affording them to concentrate their power and attention to military training and mobile warfare.\textsuperscript{39}

But such an ambivalent attitude toward both “female” and sedentary \textit{otherness} did not hinder nomads or semi-nomads to search for higher prestige through dynastic marriages with Chinese, Persians, or Romans. Ever since 557 A.D. Ishtemi khagan made an alliance with the Sassanian shahin-shah Khosro I Anushirvan who took Ishtemi’s daughter for his wife. Soon after that the Turkic-Persian coalition launched a campaign against the Ephtalites in Bactria/Tokharistan and within a period of seven to eight months managed to crush them totally thus establishing a common, Turko-Persian border along Amu-Darya River.\textsuperscript{40} The nephew of Ishtemi khagan, Muqan, who was running the eastern part of the First Turkic khaganate between 553 and 572 A.D., married his daughter to the Chinese emperor Wu-ti in 568 A.D. Lots of Turks from the entourage of the new Chinese empress moved to the Chinese capital city of Chang’an and settled there; soon they became well informed about many of the Chinese manners and habits and thus adopted them, and China’s culture in general,\textsuperscript{41} that is China’s \textit{otherness}. It was Tobo/Taspar/Tatpar khagan (572–581) who, in 579/580 A.D., launched negotiations for peace and a matrimonial alliance with China. Again, there were not just tricks, which both sides played on each other, but also (and again characteristic for the early Turks) nomadic raids across the borders of China. Only the khagan’s death in 581 A.D. stopped the contacts between Chinese and Turks.\textsuperscript{42} But the next khagan, Ishbara (581–587), had a Chinese bride for his wife (Turk. “qatun”/“khatun”), who was, not surprisingly again, a princess.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{39} See more in, Kliashtornyi and Sultanov 2000, 147–150. According to some Arab sources, in Khazaria slaves might be only heathen people for it was strictly forbidden for Jews, Christians, or Muslims to make their slaves people from “the religions of the Scriptures”. For this see, Ludwig 1982, 206–207; Golden 2004, 307. For slaves and free people there is information in the “Respnsa” of Pope Nicolas I to the questions of the Bulgar ruler Boris-Michael in mid-860s (N N 20 and 21), where it is explicitly recommended, exactly in harmony with the Christian morale, that a master should forgive his runaway slave, had the latter been caught.

\textsuperscript{40} Christian 1998, 252.

\textsuperscript{41} Christian 1998, 251. For the relations between China and the Turks and the impact of the marriages between the two courts for the future developments, e.g. as a result of these relations, see Jagchid 1977, 183, 191, 201–202. Especially for the marriage under study here see more in, Jagchid and Symons 1989, 146.

\textsuperscript{42} Bichurin 1950, 234; Jagchid and Symons 1989, 147.

\textsuperscript{43} Bichurin 1950, 235, 238; Jagchid and Symons 1989, 147–150.
In 625 (or 627?) A.D., the West Turkic khagan Ton yabghu declared his desire for a matrimonial alliance with the Chinese court and sent to the emperor a crown, 5,000 horses and a special golden belt decorated with jewels.\(^{44}\) In 612 A.D., together with the princess, the Chinese sent the Turkic khagan 1,000 kaftans and 1,000 pieces of silk.\(^{45}\) In 703 A.D., Kapaghan kaghan (692–716) ordered Bagha tarkhan to negotiate for a marital alliance with China. On a later date that same khagan, as a special sign of gratitude, sent to the Middle Kingdom 1,000 horses. Usually, all these measures and initiatives were most often accompanied by blackmailing from the Turkic side, as well as by raids of the Turkic cavalry across the northern border of China. In 698 A.D., Kapaghan khagan avoided such an alliance, but soon after 703 A.D., i.e. in 710 A.D., he again had to seek for a marital alliance with his southern neighbor. This time Kapaghan khagan received from the Chinese a princess with a title of Gin-xan.\(^{46}\) Though the Turks received Chinese princesses as wives for their supreme rulers, in reality the khagans usually were not satisfied with these matrimonial alliances based on inter-marriage since they were well aware that the Middle Kingdom would never admit having such an alliance on an equal level. And the khagan’s disappointment is well illustrated by the following phrase: “Besides the princesses given to us are not daughters of the emperor; so we do not dare to make a choice”\(^{47}\).

In this type of relations the sedentary civilizations and the Chinese, in particular, used such alliances to establish the security and peace along the Great Wall. The nomadic leaders, in their turn, viewed the inter-marriage alliances as another pretext to receive rich donations and gifts as well as possibilities for closer connections to different courts in the South. This means, beyond any doubt, an easier access to the precious and luxurious objects made by craftsmen in Byzantium, Sassanian Persia, or China that were so dear to the hearts and eyes

\(^{44}\) Schafer 1963, 222 [= Shefer 1981, 293]; also see, Jagchid and Symons 1989, 152.
\(^{45}\) Bichurin 1950, 56, 90, 93, 101, 284. Gumilev 2004, 190, adds that Chu-lo was offered by the Chinese (at that time he was still “shad” only) a princess and the title “southern khan”.
\(^{47}\) Bichurin 1950, 276. Especially for the Turgesh people in Central Asia and its marriage ‘tactics’ see, Bichurin 1950, 298–299. For the attitude of the eastern Turks from the Second khanate (while on the Turkic throne was Bilge khagan) towards these marriages as well as Bilge khagan’s lash towards China’s tactics to search for a balance against the Turks through marriages with Tibet or the Qitans, see more in, Jagchid and Symons 1989, 153–156.
of the steppe nobles. Given that situation, it is clear that both sides were in fact satisfied with the situation established long time ago. It is clear, too, that for the sedentarists it was the political reasons that had more significance, while the nomads were first of all preoccupied with economic issues.48

In the years until the T’ang dynasty’s establishment in the beginning of the seventh century it was the people of the Rou-Rans/Jou-Jans and that of the Turks who, usually, acted first in seeking for a stronger commitment from the Middle Kingdom by means of matrimonial alliances. But the suggestions coming from the North were taken seriously by the Chinese only if they felt threatened, firstly, from the nomads in the North and, secondly, if that same northern nomadic tribes could be used as potential allies against other, rival Chinese dynasties. For the Chinese courts, money, gifts, and last but not least, princesses that moved to the North, had never been anything more but the price which the Empire was ready to pay in order to fulfill its political purposes. And this truth was well known to both the Rou-Rans/Jou-Jans and the Turks. That is why the nomadic powers also took into consideration all advantages and weak sides of one or another (marital) alliance.49

The strategic relations between the Byzantines and Khazaria after 720s–730s were also reconfirmed by a marriage, this time between the future basileus Constantine V (741–775) and the daughter of the Khazar khagan. From this marriage a child was later born, that is the future emperor of Byzantium Leo IV (775–780) called “Khazarian”. It is hardly to believe that this marriage was just a matter of pure friendship—in fact the alliance had a clear, anti-Arab direction. The ceremony took place probably in 733 A.D. and the Khazar princess received the Christian name “Eirene”, i.e. Irina, which in Greek means “peace”.50 It is interesting to note that there is another fact that many scholars are inclined to link with this marriage. After it, it is believed that a special new garment called “tzitzakion” appeared in the court ceremony in Byzantium which originates from the Turkic “chichek”, i.e. “flower”.51 This detail proves once again the mutual influences between the world of the (semi-)nomads and that of the sedentary

48 Jagchid and Symons 1989, 141.
49 Jagchid and Symons 1989, 151.
civilizations. Though not quite frequently, nomads were also an active side in these relationships.

The ‘female participation’ in the Byzantino-Khazar history indeed dates back to the seventh century. In the time of the Byzantine basileus Heraclios (610–641) it had an anti-Sassanian character. Heraclios was ready to marry his daughter to the khagan of the Western Turks but in the early 630s there started turmoil in the Khaganate and it had serious repercussions upon the future developments. Not only the marriage failed, but Heraclios turned his attention north and made an alliance with Qubrat, the ruler of “Magna Bulgaria”. The Bulgars were again involved in a marriage alliance between both the Byzantines and Khazars in the end of seventh–beginning of eighth century. While in exile in Crimea after 695 A.D., the ex-basileus Justinian II (685–695; 705–711) married the daughter (or sister) of the Khazar khagan. At that time the Khazars had already been almost absolute masters of the peninsula. Only Chersonesus was left in Byzantine hands. Given that situation, Justinian II looked for the help of the khagan in order to restore his power in Constantinople. But in reality it was not the Khazar khagan but the Bulgar ruler Tervel (700–721) who helped Justinian II to enter Constantinople in 705 A.D. and to take back the throne. After that Justinian’s wife, together with their son, moved to the capital city of Byzantium, accepted the name “Theodora” and later both she and her son Tiberius were nominated co-rulers of Justinian II.

In the ninth century the Magyars (Hungarians) became the main ally of the Khazars on their western borders. The Magyars fought bravely on the Khazar side and this was noticed, of course, by the Khazar khagan. He gave to the Magyar chieftain Levedias “a noble Khazar woman because of glory [and] his virtue and because of his clan’s fame”. This decision was taken by the khagan not only because of his immediate interest but also because he wished to do a favor to Levedias for his loyal service. Here the Khazar noble princess was treated as a pawn thus following the well-known practice of “do ut des”.

It is obvious that the Khazar rulers, after the beginning of the tenth century, entered a series of matrimonial alliances and they were marked by a clear political tendency. This way, through an active

---

53 Ostrogorsky 1984, 141–142.
54 Konstantin Bagrianorodnyi 1989, 158 (text in Greek), 159 (Russian translation) [= Ch. 38. 14–18].
‘marriage diplomacy’ indeed, the khagans aimed at establishing obedience or, at least, their interests in Georgia, Alania, and among the Volga Bulgars. The Arab diplomat Ibn Fadlan who made a journey to Volga Bulgaria in 922 A.D. wrote that the Khazar khagan had 25 wives and each of them was a daughter of some ruler who was a neighbor of the khagan or his rival; and, volens nolens, such women were taken by the khagan. Such marriages which in fact were a type of hostage-taking had been a common practice in the Early Middle Ages; so the Khazars behaved themselves ‘appropriately’. Alexander Tortika has recently put forward the hypothesis that this Khazar practice had its roots in the Turkic–T’ang relations. In my opinion, such an idea needs further and thorough study because there is no sufficient evidence to support it. It is absolutely clear that the Khazars were not allowed to behave that same way in their relation with the Byzantines or Arabs. Toward them the khagans had different, not oppressive methods in such a specific sphere as the ‘marriage diplomacy’ was.

Through this kind of marriage, too, the sedentary civilizations again aimed at emphasizing the inequality that existed between them and the (semi-)nomads. Thus they confirmed and reinforced the ‘senior–junior’ subordination for they usually gave the nomads’ rulers princesses of a lower aristocratic rank. At the same time they received from khagans of the steppe their sisters or daughters of the highest possible rank.

However, a special attention should be paid to three marriages of Uighur khagans to princesses who were daughters of Chinese emperors. All these marriages took place in the period between 758 and 821 A.D. They obviously do not fit the above-mentioned framework and status quo and, therefore, deserve to be studied separately. All three marriages break up the old scheme of ‘seniors–juniors’ and apparently are a clear sign of the T’ang dynasty’s weakness at that time. T’ang emperors had to abandon the old practice and traditions. Therefore they sent three times to the Uighur capital Ordubaliq (Karabalghasun)

---

57 Tortika 2004, 3 f.
58 Around 760 (or 762?) A.D. the Arab governor of Armenia took as his spouse a Khazar noble woman. On the opposite ‘pole’ is the sister of the Georgian prince Juansher, who, in the end of the eighth century, preferred poison instead of marriage with the Khazar khagan—for this see, Noonan 1992, 126; Golden 1992, 238 f.
daughters of China’s sovereigns. All those three women became indeed hostages of the Uighur–Chinese military alliance.

The three marriages of Uighur khagans with daughters of different T’ang emperors put an end to the ‘senior–junior’ relationship and are therefore a sign of T’ang political weakness in the years after 758 A.D. and before 830s. So the T’ang emperors of that time, seeing themselves quite threatened by different enemies, both internal and external, had to change the usual tactics and to adapt themselves to the new conditions, i.e. to send three times (!) to Ordubaliq imperial daughters. Till this moment, i.e. the mid-eighth century, no Turkic ruler could boast such a successful dynastic alliance with China.59 The Uighur khagans interpreted the situation as a sign of equality between the khaganate and China, an interpretation confirmed by the latter.60 That such an understanding existed among the Uighur elite is also clear from the wedding ceremonies held in the Uighur khagan’s court in 758, 788, and 821 A.D., respectively.61 In the year 758 A.D., during the insurrection of An Lu-shan and especially after the decisive support by the Uighurs, thanks to whom the rebels were victorious and the authority of the T’ang dynasty over the Eastern Chinese capital was restored, the khagan demanded a marriage being held and was given the princess of Ning-kuo,62 the second daughter of emperor Su-tsung, as a wife. The khagan died a year later and according to the Chinese chronicles, the Uighur dignitaries requested his wife to accompany him in his last “travel”. She declined with the explanation that the rites in the Chinese empire, in such particular cases, are rather different than the Uighur ones. The aristocrats, however, managed at least to force her to bruise her face in order to show her grief. Afterwards she was sent back to China as she has not given birth to male inheritants,63 a fact expressing the male domination in societies of this kind.

59 The Cambridge History of China 1979, 678. Details for these marriages see in, Jagchid and Symons 1989, 157–162.
61 One of these princesses lived in the Uighur capital approximately 21 years, from 787/8 A.D. until 808 A.D., when she died in the court thus being wife of four different khagans; so she was not only wife of Tun Bagha-tarkhan but also of Tun’s successors—for this see, Bichurin 1950, 331; Sinor 1998, 196.
There is another interesting detail concerning this marriage. Being overzealous to ensure Uighur support, emperor Su-tsung sent one more Chinese princess, namely the daughter of the prince Yu, to Bögü khagan. She had to become a concubine to the Uighur ruler and her title was clearly expressive—“little (or younger) princess Ning-kuo”. However, she was not allowed to return to China after the khagan’s death. Instead, following the rites in the khaganate, she was married to the heir of the dead khagan and got the status of junior “khatun”. She gave birth to two boys who were killed during the disturbances in the Uighur court. This noble Chinese princess passed away in the year 791 A.D. surrounded by the nomads and far away from her native land.64

The next marriage dates back to 788 A.D. but emperor Te-tsung agreed to it only after the Uighurs accepted the following preliminary conditions: 1) the Uighur khagan, like the Turk ruler had done earlier, had to accept subordination as a Chinese vassal; 2) no more than 200 men to be sent as escort for special missions of the Empire; 3) no more than 1,000 horses to be offered for trade by the Uighurs, and 4) no subjects of the emperor to be brought to the Uighur territory. Princess Xian-an was sent to the Uighurs only after special ceremonies and feasts were held in the emperor’s palace.65

The Uighur female coronation rite described in ‘Tang shu’ needs special attention, namely with the episode of the last marriage of a khagan to a Chinese emperor’s daughter—princess T’ai-ho. Before that, however, the ‘New Tang shu’ has to be cited in order to gain a better understanding of the pomp surrounding that marriage: the preparation, the delegation, and gifts sent to the Middle Kingdom were so enormous and extravagant that the author of the chronicle did not forget to mention that never before had such a numerous delegation from any “barbarian” country arrived in China. Let us point out vaguely just a telling detail—the Uighurs had taken 20,000 horses and 1,000 camels with them! And the khagan himself sent a special escort of 2,000 soldiers just to escort the princess and even went out to see her going to Karabalghasun. Just for comparison, for the

---

64 Jagchid and Symons 1989, 159.
65 Bichurin 1950, 327–328 (also, see here n. 61). For the next marriage see, Bichurin 1950, 331–333 and esp. p. 333, where is stated that the princess decided to put on Uighur dress first (!) and just after that—the official khatun clothes, e.g. a red kaftan and a special garment over it, and to put on her head the hat adorned with gold. Details also see in, Sinor 1998, 196; Mackerras 1990, 325.
previous marriage in 788 A.D., the ruler sent only 2000 horses.  

Probably the gifts sent in return by the Chinese were even more abundant, as the tradition prescribed the value of the presents donated to the nomad chiefs by the Empire to be higher than the ones received in the emperor’s court.

Let us return to the coronation rite. The princess went out together with her mother and bowed to the west. After that she put on the official clothes of the khagan’s wife and went out again to bow once more. After sitting on a special stretcher she was taken by the so-called nine ministers of the state and they made nine circles following the Sun’s path. Only after that she sat by the khagan and glanced at the East waiting for the dignitaries to present themselves. She also installed two ministers in her yurt and organized an official feast before the Chinese ambassador’s departure, where she wept a lot for her relatives and close persons. The sacralization of the rite is just as obvious as are the concrete elements constructing it: the bows to the East and to the West, special ninefold (!) circulation of the stretcher following the Sun’s path on the sky, putting on first the clothes typical for Uighur women and only after that—the official khatun’s ones (this act obviously symbolizing the ‘death’ of the Chinese and the ‘birth’ of the Uighur in the princess in order for her to be accepted as our in the Uighur society), etc.

However, it had happened for the Uighur khagan’s wives to use other means, beside peaceful ones, in order to achieve their interests and to impose their influence and in such cases a well-tested weapon like poison had proven very helpful. For example, one of the khagans managed to stay in power only a year before been poisoned by his wife.

Due to such marriages foreign penetrated the core of Uighur culture but, at the same time, it asserted the strategic relations between China

---

68 Bichurin 1950, 333; Jagchid and Symons 1989, 161 f. This princess, namely T’ai-ho, lived among the Uighurs for 22 years! She was wife of three khagans who ruled one after the other and came back to China only after the collapse of the khaganate in 840 A.D.—for this see, Sinor 1998, 197.
and the Uighurs after 756 A.D. until the destruction of the khaganate in 840 A.D.\textsuperscript{70}

No dynastic alliance is known between the Bulgars and the Byzantines or other imperial sedentary civilization before the conversion to Christianity in the 860s, so that attitudes towards women that came from the outer world\textsuperscript{71} are difficult to trace. As far as the Byzantine Empire is concerned, there is quite an easy explanation. According to the Byzantine doctrine clearly stated by the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos,\textsuperscript{72} from the times of Constantine the Great it was forbidden for the Byzantines to get into marriage with people having rites specific and foreign, and different from the Byzantine ones, and especially with infidels and non-baptized; the only exception were the Franks. This is a principled position of the Byzantine Empire at least until the end of the tenth century and consequently Byzantine princesses from the ‘royal kin’ were never given as wives to ‘barbarians’. Namely on this account Constantine Porphyrogenetos attacks with such a spite the Lecapenes, who violated the usual order and allowed the grand-daughter of Romanos Lekapenos (920–944), Maria-Eirene, to be given as a wife to the Bulgarian tsar Peter (927–d.970) in 927 A.D. Later on such a ‘break-through’ was repeated with the Rus’ians—in the year 988 A.D. Vladimir (?–d.1015), who converted the Kievan Rus’, married the emperor Basil II’s (976–1025) sister and thus Rus’ entered Orthodox Christianity.

Bearing in mind the lack of evidence from the period, some typical features of the Bulgarian supreme ruler’s wife position can only be broadly stated. The frequently cited “Answers” of Pope Nicholas to the Bulgarian knyaz Boris-Michael (mid-860s) and especially answer № 42 present some useful information. It is explicitly pointed that

\textsuperscript{70} The Cambridge History of China 1979, 609, 677–678.

\textsuperscript{71} Giuzelev 1999 (Vol. 1), 105–106, has paid due attention to the promise received by Tervel in 705 A.D., namely that Justinian II will give him as wife his daughter; but later the emperor declined. Instead, Justinian II made another concession so as to compensate the Bulgar side. It was G. Atanasov who lately has written the following: “On the other side, however, the ‘kaisar’ title and regalia of Tervel would not be legitimate unless he was a member of the emperor’s family, i.e. if he failed to marry…Justinian’s II daughter. Since his contemporaries in the Empire did not question his ‘kaisar’ dignity, it seems that the marriage with the Byzantine princess was real” (see, Atanasov 2004, 37). At the moment, this suggestion is still hypothetical since it needs further and clear information in order to be fully substantiated.

\textsuperscript{72} Konstantin Bagrianorodnyi 1989, 59 (Ch. XIII).
nobody has the right to eat together with the ruler, not even his wife.\textsuperscript{73} Probably the role of the wife was only to give birth to heirs for the ruler’s throne and to fulfill the ordinary marital obligations; and nothing more.\textsuperscript{74} However, it is difficult to agree with the statement made by M. Hristodoulova\textsuperscript{75} that the Bulgarian queen did not possess a specific title because this would come into contradiction with the usual practice of the time. Whether she was called “khatun”/“qatun” like the Turk and Uighur queens, however, is difficult to assert. Having in mind the above-mentioned title, it is also important to emphasize the lack of any reference to the Bulgar ruler’s wife in the stone inscriptions. It is just the opposite with the Uighurs. In the inscription from Terkhin (Tariat), found near the lake Terkhin (Northwest Khangaj, i.e. ancient Otüken) and dated to the times of Mo-yen-cho (747–759), side by side with the “Heavenly born” khagan stands his “wise wife” (El-bilgä qatun).\textsuperscript{76} It was that same Mo-yen-cho who laid the foundations of the Uighur capital Ordubaliq and the “sacred town” of Bajbaliq and the following khagans built the temple town of Marubaliq, the merchant “Uighur town” in Dunbei and, more importantly for the problem of the female ruler, the residence of the khaganal wives in Khatunbaliq.\textsuperscript{77}

In human society clothes and their accessories are one of the most important marker-classifiers for social status, sex, property status, etc. It is not possible to consider here all aspects of this problem, so the discussion will be restricted to some important features of the female garments in Central Asia (e.g. Turkic and Uighur khaganates) as they are more numerous and more reliable sources for this region. The situation with the Bulgar and Khazar material is rather different and its scarcity hampers the analysis from a scholarly perspective.

The sources from Central Asia are of different origin (artifacts and clothes discovered in archeological excavations, written sources, mainly of Chinese origin that mention details exotic for the Empire, mural paintings as well as paintings on cloth, sculpture, etc.)\textsuperscript{78} and they come from different regions ruled by nomads and semi-nomads.

\textsuperscript{73} Responsa 1960, 93. In the same source there is another question, namely N 51, dealing with the possibility for living “simultaneously [with] two wives”, a practice quite typical for the newly baptized “barbarian” peoples and their rulers, in particular.
\textsuperscript{74} Georgieva 1996, 110.
\textsuperscript{75} Hristodulova 1978, 142.
\textsuperscript{76} Klyashtorny 1982, 343, 345; Tekin 1982, 50.
\textsuperscript{77} Malov 1959, 40–43; Maliavkin 1974, 65, 145–146; Kyzlasov 1998, 10–11.
\textsuperscript{78} Details see in, Yatsenko 2000b, 300, 303.
The inhabitants of these regions were multiethnic and multilingual (Sogdians, Iranians, descendents of the Tokharians, Turks, Uighurs, etc.). For example, the female kaftans in Kucha and Khotan, unlike the male ones, were never tightened with a girdle. In the above mentioned oasis centers the women were famous for their extraordinarily slender waists, probably the result of a continuous usage of a special tightening device of a corset-type. According to S. Yatsenko, there are no reasons to suppose any foreign influence for such a rite as there was nothing similar to it in the neighboring Kucha and Khotan regions.

The hats and head decorations were also rather different and therefore not a single common type can be identified. In Kucha, they were rare and probably were a privilege for women from the royal family or for some male aristocrats. In Khotan, for centuries the male and female head decorations have had the same shape. According to ‘Bei-shi’ and ‘Sui-shu’ chronicles, in the second half of the sixth century, the Khotan princess used to wear a “golden wreath” on her head. The prince himself wore a strange hat with a figure of a golden beast on top; golden lion decorated also the hat of the Kashgar prince. Shoes were another important detail. With only one exception (from Khotan), with the female dress shoes were always covered by clothes.

In another oasis, Turfan (Gaochang), women, according to ‘Bei-shi’, “used to tighten their hair in tufts”. Between the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century, the inhabitants of the region were put under serious ‘costume experiments’ by the Turk and Chinese rulers. The following episode, for example, shows the attempt to impose foreign costume and the reasons behind such experiments. In 590 A.D., a vassal to the Turks, namely the local Turfan prince, passed away and the throne was taken by his son K’iu Peya. His mother was the daughter of the Turk khagan and the first wife of the deceased prince. All this was enough for the Turks to recommend the new prince to accept the Turkic rites; he agreed but protracting and not without irritation. Twenty one years later, when the prince tried to strengthen his position and free himself from the Turkic authority in

---

79 Dyakonova 1980, 188; Yatsenko 2000b, 330, 342.
83 Yatsenko 2000b, 348.
84 Bichurin 1950 (Vol. 2), 253.
85 Chavannes 1903, 102.
Turfan, he established relations with the Chinese, i.e. the Sui dynasty. After gaining the Empire’s consent in 612 A.D., K’iu Peya introduced a new hairdo code:

By now we used to wear our hair lax and to girdle left since our principedom was situated in wild border territory. From now on, the Great Sui dynasty governs, the universe is peaceful and united… and the time for great changes has come. Ordinary people and dignitaries have to unbraided their hair in order to comb after Chinese [manner] and to cut the left part [of their kaftan?].

S. Yatsenko presumes that this experiment was not successful, because on the one hand, K’iu Peya did not want to worsen the relations with the Turks and, on the other hand, there were more important reasons to be careful with ‘making experiments’. Moreover, the Turks did not request such changes in any of the conquered regions! Thus the explanation can be searched in ethnogenic Turkic legends and in one of them, in particular, where Turfan was pointed as the Turkic homeland; the 10 Turkic clans migrated exactly from there northwards and later on became vassals of the Rou-Rans/Jou-Jans.

In the fourth- to sixth-century China fell into disturbances and instability and many inhabitants of the Northern border territories settled in Turfan. In the mid-fifth century there were many Chinese, including aristocrats, living in all the eight towns of the principedom. The Turkic pressure on K’iu Peya for restoring the ancient rites may be linked with the fears of growing Chinese influence in this important region on the border of the khaganate, but also with self-identification reasons. It is important to stress that, according to ‘Sui-shu’, the Turkicization of the costume in Turfan involved only the male costume and haircut, a fact that is very telling for the attitude towards ‘female’ and its symbolic and prestige value.

Let us return to the female dress. An important element of the Turkic tradition that can be found with both sexes is especially interesting and can be traced later on in the female Kipchak dress of the eleventh and twelfth century—the big diamond-shaped medallions worn on

---

86 Chavannes 1903, 103.
87 Kliashtornyi 1964, 103–104.
89 Yatsenko 2000b, 379.
90 Pletneva 1974, tabl. 1, 15, 57, 72, 77, 81, 82.
the chest.\textsuperscript{91} They can be seen in a fresco from Kizil (Kucha) named “Peoples lamenting Buda”. The same positioning scheme for these decorations can be found in a female Turk statue from the Semirechie region.\textsuperscript{92}

During the last century, a hypothesis was put forward regarding a stronger (in this particular case, Sogdian) and a weaker (Byzantine) influence over the ceremonial costume of the peoples in Eastern Turkestan. The first hypothesis is difficult to prove as the sources do not provide sufficient information and the second one, as Yatsenko states, “does not withstand the test of time”.\textsuperscript{93}

Finally, let us pay attention to the influence of the steppe traditions particularly in the attitude towards women in the Northern Chinese regions in the times of T’oba-wei dynasty, which was considered in China to be “foreign”, non-Chinese, as it was of Manchurian origin. Although being inevitably influenced by the Chinese, for the inhabitants of the South, e.g. the region along Yangtze River, which in the fourth–sixth century was still ruled by a true Chinese dynasty, those people in the North did not bear the traditions from the time of the great Han dynasty. The differences provoked some debate during the period mentioned for the Southerners used to consider their neighbors from the North capable and brave soldiers who, however, lacked the exquisite taste of literary expression and style of behavior so dear to the Han dynasty, especially in ceremonial practices. The South never missed an opportunity to point also to the different status of the women in the North—they had more freedom and were admitted into public life, in courts and were involved in economic transactions as well; they even used to lobby at the royal court. It was a rule there that instead of tea, e.g. the favorite beverage of the South, yoghurt with water was preferred, while local aristocrats used to ridicule the elitist habit of tea drinking in the South. Thomas Barfield points out that the list could be continued but even this is enough to conclude that a big number of steppe rites were integrated into the daily life of the North, especially among the Chinese elite in the royal court.\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{91} Grunwedel 1912, ill. 415.
\textsuperscript{92} Sher 1966, tabl. XIX, N 83; Yatsenko 2000b, 352.
\textsuperscript{93} Yatsenko 2000b, 364–366, with literature cited there. Yatsenko 2001, 14, claims that one can see Han’s and T’ang’s China and Sassanian Iran’s influence in that same direction.
\textsuperscript{94} Barfield 1989, 124–145 and esp. p. 140. Also see, Wright 1978, 21–53.
II.2. Smiths and shamans/magicians/koloburs, or the inevitable but necessary otherness

All of the persons mentioned in this group deal with natural elements, with fire and metals (and particularly shamans—with other-words plus other-dance)\(^95\) and that makes them liminal persons in this kind of societies. In the so-called traditional societies the principle of other-language/speaking most probably was understood as a universal method of drawing the distinction between ‘us’ (all those who used to talk understandably) and ‘them’ (those who did not talk, who talk another way, i.e. unintelligibly). And probably the shamans were those who used to incarnate best the image of a man with speech problems\(^96\) and the way they used to talk was actually a typical form of their verbal behavior. However, they had also ‘problems’ with dance as getting into a trance was accompanied by special dances, which were rather different from those typical for the everyday life, holidays, and community. In that sense they were beyond the known, own, and beyond the threshold of the daily routine.

Mystic dances,\(^97\) mastering the secrets of fire, spirits, and metals, for the ability to “travel” across the three levels of the Universe and the mythological commitment of the rulers to the shaman institution and the smiths are all typical features of “Pax Nomadica” cultures.\(^98\) It is no surprise, then, that khagans were simultaneously superior military commanders and superior shamans (for example, there is a sentence-

---

\(^{95}\) Sagalaev and Oktiabr’skaia 1990, 147, point out to the fact how important was the voice in cultures, which are thought and realized and defined as well as ‘oral’. In such societies people whose speech-status was not “in the standard” (namely those who were foreigners, or were stammering or dumbed) were looked upon as being others, as being aliens, which means they were in principle estimated through the prism of Otherness. For the shaman technique in general see the classical work of Eliade 1996.

\(^{96}\) Sagalaev and Oktiabr’skaia 1990, 148, 150.

\(^{97}\) For the games/dances, songs, and playing the music see, Kaloianov 2003, 127 f., as well as the answer N 35 in “Responsa” of Pope Nicholas to the questions of the Bulgarian khan/knyaz Boris-Michael where “dances, songs and certain predictions” are mentioned.

\(^{98}\) See Kardini [Cardini] 1987, 85–91, 97. Cardini claims (p. 39) that in this world those who ruled are “the horse and the shaman”. For the deity-smith connected to the Hell see, Golan 1993, 197 (it is in the under-earth space where the ore can be found; its characteristics as well as technology of getting and transforming it were known only to the miners and the smiths, respectively). For shamanic attributes see, Kaloianov 2003, 59–70.
belief among Bulgarians that the man who “slaughters the dog/cut the dog into pieces”, indeed is the one who is in power). Mostly because of that the so-called institution of sacred killing of the ruler (“the killing of the divine king”) was preserved till very late in those societies.99

Not surprisingly the metal lamellae on the shaman costume were linked with military armor and cuirass; the latter, however, were a product of the smiths100 who, better than any others, had control over fire and metals. Both the shaman and the smith had knowledge of secrets acquired during the rites of initiation (rites of passage). Both were ‘rulers/masters of fire’ and therefore were considered as people able to command this element, indeed one of the most important in the Universe. Typologically, the metal-laden jackets of the heavy cavalry that protected them from the enemy’s arrows and saber hits were also close to the garments of the shaman, which were also covered with metal lamellae so as to repel the evil forces and spirits.101

It is no surprise, therefore, that in Bulgaria such persons used to accompany the army during the war campaigns being at the same time “boilades”, i.e. representatives of the high aristocracy, and “koloburs”, i.e. magicians or “army priests” begging Heaven for success in the battles or provoking obstacles for the enemy by manipulating the forces of Nature.102 However, it is important to stress here the difference between the old Bulgar “koloburs” who were also astrologists/astronomers and the classic Turkic “qams” who were mainly healers and ghost-invokers. The first used to deal with the practice of pre-battle fortune-telling and incantation, extremely important for the pre-modern man and also used to choose the most proper days and hours for

99 For the sacred king’s power and the linked to it phenomenon known as “the killing of the divine king” the classical work is, Freizur [Frazer] 1984. Also see, Beshevliev 1981, 68–69 (with data referring to the nomadic world).
100 For the smiths and for the beliefs in the remote past that are linked to the metalurgy details see in, Eliade 2000. Also see, Kardini [Cardini] 1987, 97, who named the smiths as “magi-craftsmen”.
102 For the shamans/koloburs in Bulgaria in general see, Ovcharov 1981, 73–83; Ovcharov 1996, 51–67. For the Khazars see, Zakhoder 1962 (Vol. 1), 148–149. Similar data can be found in the sources for the sixth-century Bulgars who managed to overcome Byzantine armies thanks to magical practices—for this see, Beshevliev 1981, 84. Especially for the koloburs see the multitude of stone inscriptions scattered in the core territory of heathen Bulgaria and dated mainly to the first two-three decades of the ninth century in, Beshevliev 1981, 52, 83–84; Beshevliev 1992, 71–72, and N N 14, 65, 69; also see, Kaloianov 2003, 139 f., 174 f.
skirmishes as clearly pointed out in answer N 35 by Pope Nicholas I to the questions of the Bulgarian knyaz Boris-Michael.

The attitude towards these personages, as it was already mentioned, was ambivalent, especially in the time of peace for they used to stay in the periphery of their own space and at the border between the sacred and the profane. In doing so, they were able to help but also to harm the community. Precisely because of that reason their position in society was modeled by the relation own—foreign. The word “vrach” (“healer”, but also “one who tells the fortune”), in old-Bulgarian language actually alludes to the healing practices of the ‘magi’. This is easily proven by the later developments of the Bulgarian language where “healer” is “a person who heals with sorcery and herbs; fortune teller” while the initial meaning was “sorcerer”, or “conjurator”.

Along with the processes of centralization and adopting certain world religions in these confederations, to a certain extent, the shamans and magicians felt themselves marginalized for they were the product of the old tribal (i.e. decentralized) society (and thus supporters of the status quo). The new conditions required coming to the fore of the khagan, who was already the supreme priest of the cult of Heaven and that of the predecessors, and especially for the Bulgars—the figure of the supreme boila-kolobur, as it is stated in the Philippi inscription of khan Persian dated 837 A.D. Ruth Meserve considers this as a transition to “imperial” religion that showed inclination of contradicting shamanism and totemism, being more focused on the myths of origin and the ancestral cult. The latter got its final form much later, during the time of Chengis khan. Ceremonies in definite time of the year and keeping the common memory about the divine predecessors of the ruling clan or tribe became part of the tribal identity and often even an indicator of political legitimacy. Based on the worship of the almighty Heaven (Tengri), this religion also emphasized the vertical

---

103 Kaloianov 2003, 55.
104 Gumilev 1967, 80–81, 83. For some sacral aspects in the figure of the Khazar khagan after tenth century that bear signs of the priest’s power see, Stepanov 2003c, 219–232, and Golden 2007b, 161–194. For the Bulgar ruler as supreme priest who was cutting the dog and was making offerings to the gods see, Beshevliev 1992, N N 3 and 6. For the Central Asiatic shamanism in general see, Baialieva 1972; Basilov 1984; Sagalaev 1984; Alekseev 1980; Alekseev 1984; Novik 1984; Potapov 1991, and several works of M. Eliade. For the magical acts of the Bulgar ruler Krum during the siege of Constantinople in 813 A.D. see the commentary of Beshevliev 1981, 85–86; for that same position of supreme priest but this time in relation to the deeds of Omurtag see, Beshevliev 1992, N 6.
division of the world in three layers (Heaven, Earth, and Underworld) and this strict cosmological scheme often put the khagan into direct competition with the shamans and their ability to penetrate the worlds of spirits and dead.105

Unfortunately we do not possess enough sources for the period between the sixth and the ninth century in order to draw a detailed and concrete picture of this distinct group—among the nomad and semi-sedentary communities in the Eurasian steppe. Most importantly, we can not say for sure how it was perceived by own society and by foreign. We may suppose that the latter were afraid and sometimes even disgusted by such not-own personages. Shamans possessed different sacralized objects, in fact tabooed for the other members of the community; and at some of them ordinary people could not even stare. The latter believed that if some of these artifacts (clothes, amulets, etc.) were destroyed, the shaman power will disappear. Here the mutual interrelation between symbolic and psychological could be seen and it has to be remembered that precisely this close relation was used by such liminal personages in order to spread fear and obedience among people and to rule over and manipulate them.

The places (topoi) of shamans and magicians also provoked different feelings and thoughts in ordinary people. They were a principio marked by the otherness of the sacred and unusual, by some great secrets and especially the sacred trees (most often woods) and how they were cut down and burnt by Christian missionaries is common place (topos) in many saints’ Lives. Such acts not only cleared the space for the churches of the new faith but also destroyed the fear of old religion and its attributes.

The shamanesses provoked mixed feelings among their own people. The latter felt the shamanesses were not “just like us”, because they had abilities to mediate, they used to talk with spirits; also, they were masters of the diseases. Both the epic tales and the folklore constantly impose the perception that their garments106 had heavenly, divine origin and the shamanesses themselves were able to travel between the worlds under the shape of different birds. There is a widespread notion among the Altaic tribes in nowadays Siberia that the shamanesses are

105 Meserve 2000, 66. Also see, Gumilev 2004, 422.
more numerous than the shamans; moreover, people think they have more power than the latter.\textsuperscript{107}

Menander’s information about the Zemarchos’ mission to the Turks in the time of the Byzantine emperor Justin II (probably in 569 A.D.) is very often cited in the literature. It can not be omitted here, especially the part where Menander pointedly mentions that, after reaching Sogdiana, Zemarchos and his men were met by shamans (?) who incensed their luggage while singing something and compelled Zemarchos to cross a burning fire. Only after these purgatory acts the mission could continue its way to Ektag Mountain, where the residence of the Turk khagan was situated.\textsuperscript{108}

Two magicians (qams, shamans) were also mentioned in ‘Tang shu’ around 765 A.D., in connection to the joint actions of Uighurs and Chinese against Tibet,\textsuperscript{109} but, unfortunately, except the slight mockery to their prophecies shown by the Uighur and Chinese officials, nothing else was noted.

In the year 682 (684?) A.D., bishop Israel ran across magicians, priests, and prophecy-tellers in the “Hun regions” of Khazaria, i.e. nowadays Azerbaijan (Caucasus Albania in the past). The local ruler Alp Ilituer (Elteber?) who was vassal to the Khazar khagan listened attentively to the sermon of Israel that was pointed against the pagan beliefs and rites of the Alp Ilituer’s subordinates and promised to destroy local sanctuaries of “Aspandiat” (also called there “Tengrikhan”), to chop down sacred trees and to build churches in his lands. Following all the “rules” in such a situation, the magicians and priests were given an opportunity by the ruler to show that their faith and rites were stronger than those of bishop Israel; otherwise they would be punished. After the failure of the pagan priests to do that Alp Ilituer hand them over, together with the magicians, to Israel who ordered some of them to be burned at stake, thus ‘teaching’ a lesson to the locals, and others to be put into prison.\textsuperscript{110} Whether they were defended by the residents as own or not, we can only guess.

\textsuperscript{107} Sarangerel 2002, 316–317.
\textsuperscript{108} Menander 1958, 221–222.
\textsuperscript{109} Mackerras 1972 (2nd ed.), 83—it is “magicians” in the translation. Mackerras 1990, 333, thinks that the Uighur generals paid a serious attention to all that was said by them.
According to Ṭabarî (his information was repeated by Yâqût), some strange shaman beliefs could be seen among the Khazars, in connection with a specific case in 652 A.D. when the Khazars, near Balanjar, put the body of the killed Arab commander al-Bâhilî in a specific jar and used it as means to invoke rain. It is possible, however, for all this to be imagined by the Arab writers who are not famous for their inclination to tell the truth and even were prone to search for and relate tall stories.

It was the shamans who ‘cosmologized’ the model of their own world, putting their own people/tribe/community in the center of the world. This was the way they arranged their own space and put markers for the distinction of the Other who was put in the periphery. This model has extremely deep roots and can be traced in many places in the world among the so-called traditional/pre-modern societies. It is typical for the nomadic world but also for the great sedentary civilizations, including Byzantium and China. Following these notions every member of the clan (and in a broader scope—of the confederation) could feel him-/herself as part of the Earth-Water (“Yer-su” in Turkic), i.e. part of the homeland; namely this homeland was considered center of the Earth, as analog of the mythical cosmic center. The whole space beyond this center was assumed in negative terms, as foreign, and was given negative markers: “people” are only the “own”, and those in the periphery are “enemies”.

The shamans of the Central Asian tribes (Xiongnu/Huns, Turks, etc.) may have well spread the notion that the Earth is square, with four seas on the sides, and hostile tribes on the periphery. This

---

112 In China there was a special term denoting “the barbarians from the four sides/barbarians in the world’s four directions”—see details in, Maliavkin 1989, 110. Also see, Golygina 1995, 108, 142, 209, who points out the idea of the great empire situated “among the four seas” and uniting “the ten thousand kingdoms”; at the same time, it was encircled by “eight earths”, a complex notion indeed presenting the idea of the Great Square of the cosmic Earth, which was thought to be the Middle Kingdom. There, according to the idea, was eternal peace, order, and calmness. Cf. almost the same idea in Rome—the Roman Empire and later Byzantium were thought as being in the center of the world; in it, there was “pax Romana” and later “pax Romana Christiana”.
113 Sagalaev and Oktiabr’skaia 1990, 13, 18. Also see, Traditsionnoe mirovozzrenie 1988 (the chapter “Homeland”).
114 Kliashtornyi 1981, 122 f. Cf. The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia 1990, 298, where Menander Protector’s data are mentioned, namely that the Turkic state was run by four kings and that it was indeed “quadripartite”, i.e. of four parts. Voitov
notion can be found as such in the Orkhon inscriptions. This is made clear in the monument placed in honor of Tonyuqu: “Our enemies have surrounded us as predatory birds…”\(^\text{115}\) They are even more clear in the inscription cut in honor of Bilge khagan: “When I sat on the throne I used to express extremely strong power over the peoples from the four sides” (“in the four angles”),\(^\text{116}\) and also in the so-called Ongin stone: “Our ancestor Bumin khagan put in order, subordinated, overwhelmed, defeated the four corners”\(^\text{117}\)

Similar formulae can be found also in the Big inscription of Kültegin: “There were many enemies on the four sides. Going to war, all the people from the four sides were subdued, all were forced to make peace”\(^\text{118}\).

The Uighur version of the world in the elite’s eyes was the same, as the Uighur khaganate copied the Turkic khaganates in many respects. The Terkhin inscription ascertains such a statement with the words cut on its western side:

The peoples who live eastwards towards the sunrise and the peoples who live westwards towards the moonrise, all the people living in the four parts [of the world] serve me.\(^\text{119}\)

Such notions ascertain the idea that in the Middle Ages there were mythological and ideological aspects of understanding the space and often it was considered rather as concentric but not linear; moreover, it was value-burdened.\(^\text{120}\) It is of basic importance in naming all the elements of the space and it also relates to the fact that among the Turkic-speaking tribes the movement traditionally starts from the

\(^{115}\) Stebleva 1965, 125. Among enemies are mentioned Tabgach (from the right, i.e. South), Qitans (straight, i.e. East), Oghuz (to the left, i.e. North), and Qiırghız (North); Stebleva 1976, 40–42.

\(^{116}\) Stebleva 1965, 133.

\(^{117}\) Stebleva 1965, 134.

\(^{118}\) Stebleva 1965, 111; also see p. 117: “Peoples to the four directions—all of them I did compel to peace [full treaties], and made [them] not alien”. Stebleva 1976, 16.

\(^{119}\) Tekin 1982, 47, 50.

\(^{120}\) About this see the interesting volume of collected articles titled “Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices”. Ed. by D. Abulafia and N. Berend, ‘Ashgate’ [Variorum], 2002, and especially the essay written by R. Ellenblum.
center to the periphery. Thus the space in a way ‘closes’ (and, therefore, becoming ‘owned’) the community.\textsuperscript{121} This does not imply only making it own in a physical sense (in terms of certain localities and landschaft zones), but also for understanding and giving certain values to that space.\textsuperscript{122}

It is obvious therefore that in Uighur inscriptions the Other was understood mainly as enemy who had to be subdued.\textsuperscript{123} Indirectly the inscriptions set out the idea that the khagan was master of the four world directions and he had to impose peace and calm over them so everyone who stood against him was considered an enemy. With the exception of the Chinese, at least as far as the information in the Turkic Orkhon inscriptions was concerned, none of all the other enemies was described in a pejorative manner (cf. the explicit depiction of Chinese as cunning, sly, manipulative) and this fact is extremely important having in mind the fact that other enemies were also tribes from the ‘Steppe Empire’, as the Turks themselves.

The Turks (especially in the time of the Second Khaganate) and the Uighurs considered the Otüken (Khangai) Mountain as their sacred center, the core of their lands.\textsuperscript{124} It was the incarnation of the ancient Turk idea of Fatherland as sacred place where the residences of the khagans were situated and where the Turks from the Eastern khaganate could get powers in time of hardship.\textsuperscript{125} The sacred Otüken Mountain was considered a spirit protector of the khagan clan; the cave of the predecessor was also situated there and namely there the khagan used to make special sacrifices once a year.\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{121} Traditionnoe mirovozzrenie 1988, 25.
\textsuperscript{122} Traditionnoe mirovozzrenie 1988, 29.
\textsuperscript{124} The words of Kül-tegin are quite characteristic—establishing a polity in the Chugay region is dangerous since it is a border territory and is quite close to China. That is why Kül-tegin said to the Turks they should build their independent and eternal ‘el/il’, e.g. their state, in Otüken. For this see, Stebleva 1965, 108–109. Here, what we see is one example of that policy and those doctrines among the Turks, which Th. Barfield inventively termed China’s “inner and outer frontier strategy”, connecting them to the balance keeping between approaching to and/or living at a distance from the China’s frontiers, i.e. to the frightening Otherness of China; in his view, only the strict balance towards the Middle Kingdom could guarantee long lasting existence and successes of the Turkic khaganates.
\textsuperscript{125} Borgoiakov 1974, 208–211.
\textsuperscript{126} Details see in, Kliashtorny 2001, 81–89.
Besides the sacred mountain which was considered a sacred center of the territory, the Turks had other markers for their own land, namely a tree, a river, the hearth that used to mark the center and delineate vertical and horizontal dimensions of the own space. This sacred space was perceived as closed since it was guarded from different evil powers, winds, bad weather and, as a rule, from bad, i.e. foreign people (we are reminded here of the ritual purification of Zemarchos and his men when they were at the ‘threshold’ of the Turkic lands!).

In these societies very often the other was considered foreign and, following the religious-mythological notions, he/she was color-marked, namely in black. For the Turks black marks the North and chaos! Echos of this practice are still preserved in the modern Tuvin language, in which the phrase “khara kizhi” means “foreign person”, literally “black person”, while “khara cher” means “foreign land”, literally “black land”. In this context, we can not omit the important and insightful conclusion reached by R. Meserve that the main levels of classification (and from this statement—of recognition and decoding so that all phenomena be be-own-ed) for the Central Eurasia region can be found in folklore. They are grouped mostly according to color, season, direction, and shape. It is important to stress the fact that the colors were used not only in their literal meaning but also in the whole spectrum of their imaginative meanings as well as nuances for in this way, they perform their main functions—to unite-oppose and to classify, stratify, and build hierarchies.

In a sharp contradiction with the black color and its negative connotations was the white one, the most sacred for the peoples in the steppe region of Eurasia and particularly for Turkic and Mongol-speaking tribes. White was considered as “mother-color” and it embodied happiness, prosperity, purity and nobility, honesty and good, and the upper position in society as well. That is why the white-skinned animals and the milk were adored. According to Al. Fedotov,

---

127 Traditsionnoe mirovozzrenie 1988, 32–33.
128 Traditsionnoe mirovozzrenie, 38–39.
129 In contrast to other color markers for the world directions: white (‘aq’)—for West; sky blue (‘kök’)—for East; yellow (‘sari’)—for the middle, or red (‘qizil’)—for South. On color-coding system in Turkic, see Pritsak 1955b, 239–263.
130 Sagalaev and Oktiabr’skaia 1990, 18.
this adoration goes back to the oldest cults of Sun and Moon and later on—of Heaven. Thus white marked the own while black—the foreign, a contradiction typical for the ancient man that has the task to make hierarchies (i.e. the own is better). Here it is worth mentioning that the main sacred (imperial and aristocratic) colors in China of the T’ang dynasty were purple and yellow, while in the Byzantine Empire purple, white and golden yellow has had the highest sacred value. In comparison, among the Turks and Uighurs the dove-gray/dove-blue was the most adored as color of Heaven, i.e. Tengri; until now this can only be guessed for the Bulgars and the Khazars.

II.3. The Otherness of those (aristocrats) professing non-state religion

Unlike the Byzantines, for example, the nomads were not afraid of the otherness based on religious reasons as they did not assume any exclusive religion. It is interesting to present a few examples of attitude towards representatives of the elite whose faith was different from the official one in the khaganate. Some of them are typologically united in the group of the “barbarian” rulers and chiefs visiting Constantinople, among them the Rus’ princess Olga (tenth century), and more important, particularly for this research, nomadic chiefs such as Grod, Gyula, Bulchu, Kegen, Tirah etc. Here attention will be paid to Grod (sixth century) and Qubrat (seventh century), the first one viewed by many scholars as a Bulgar chief in the lands to the north of the Black and Azov Seas, although he is called a “Hun” in the sources. Qubrat, on the other hand, was the founder of “Old Great Bulgaria”. In John Malalas’ (491–578) words, Grod, “the ruler of the Huns who lived close to the Bosporus arrived” in Constantinople in 527 (or 528) and

---

132 Fedotov 2004, 261. For the white color see also, Zhukovskaia 1988, 158. ‘Black’ is the marker of the North and in this aspect color-codifying follows that of the space and vice versa, which in fact follows archaic logic. For the meaning of the color-codifying and the semantics of ‘white’ and ‘black’ in Antiquity, in general, see Kupur [Cooper] 1993, 232 f., 235 f.

133 For the color code in clothing and for the monopoly over ‘red’ and ‘yellow’, respectively, in T’ang China as well as over ‘purple’ in Byzantium of Justinian I see, Liu 1998, 16–17, with the literature cited there.

134 For instance, ‘(sky)blue’ in Western Europe became important color from the point of view of symbolism not until twelfth century—for this see, Pastoureau 2000; also see his book “Couleurs, images, symboles” (Paris, 1989).

135 Details see in, Ivanov 2001, 16–39, with the literature cited there.
“was baptized”, as emperor Justinian I took him from the font, and after that showered him with gifts and sent him back to his lands in order to “protect the Byzantine territories and the Bosporus”. Afterwards, Grod stepped down from the throne in favor of his brother. The local priests, angered by his infringement upon their silver and electron idols that were melted down and exchanged for Byzantine coins, killed Grod and being afraid of the Byzantines, exterminated the town’s garrison.136

The fate of Qubrat was rather different. He was baptized in Constantinople still being a child137 and the two rings of him bearing monograms, found in Malo Pereshchepyne, beyond any doubt confirm he was a Christian. Was he accompanied to “Old Bulgaria” by Christian priests? It is very probable as it was a common practice during those times, but no source mentions any missionary activity in the Bulgar lands at that time. Maybe there was not any such activity at all and Qubrat’s Christianity remained of ‘personal’ character. With the sources being dumb it is difficult to assess the attitude of his subordinates and of the Bulgar priests. Still serious opposition was highly improbable having in mind the above-mentioned tolerance toward world religions during the period and the fact that Bulgars were then seriously engaged with the Avar and, later on, with the Khazar threat to say nothing about building up their own state.

It is equally difficult to state whether Qubrat’s grandson—Tervel, also believed in Christ. He was proclaimed “kaisar” of the Byzantine empire in 705 A.D. Based on this fact, G. Atanassov claims Tervel was baptized in Constantinople since only a Christian could become “kaisar” of the Byzantine Empire.139 Whatever his faith, that provoked no disturbances or riots among his subjects, as Tervel did not press them to change their faith and to abandon old gods. Moreover, during that

136 Joannis Malalae 1829, 427 [= Grutski izvori 1958, 212 f.].
137 For this passage from the “Chronicle” of John of Nikiou see, Zlatarski 1894, 148–149; Venedikov 1995, 17–25. For the dissemination of Christianity amongst the Bulgars up to 681 A.D. see, Stepanov 2003, 92–94.
139 Atanasov 1999, 39–41; Atanasov 2004, 34–36. For his older opinion on this topic see, Atanasov 1993, 132. As regards exactly this direction of search, Giuzelev 1999, 107, was very cautious. Against the idea of Tervel’s baptism is, Bakalov 1995 (2nd ed.), 118 f. and n. 75. Also see, Whittow 1996, 273.
period Byzantium for many reasons, including religious, lacked any missionary enthusiasm.\textsuperscript{140}

It is highly dubious whether Kuber was eventually baptized while still in “Old Bulgaria”, i.e. before getting the trust of the Avar khagan who gave him the right to rule as his own people a part of the khaganate’s inhabitants, mainly former Byzantine captives (taken during the Avar campaigns in the Balkans in the first decades of the seventh century), i.e. Christians and their kin. Perhaps Kuber has won the sympathies of his subordinates with his knowledge (if not with his personal belief?) of the Christian faith so that he was able to persuade them to split with the Avars, to fight several times with them and, finally, to settle down within the borders of the Byzantine Empire, in the lands of nowadays Macedonia. The fact that he was allowed to rule those lands can support the idea that Kuber was baptized before leaving Qubrat’s Bulgaria.\textsuperscript{141}

More serious opposition in this respect existed among the Bulgars against the Christians of Bulgar noble origin, and especially after 813 A.D. ‘Kanasybigi’ Omurtag (814–831) and his youngest son Malamir (831–836) became most notorious with their attitude to Enravota, the eldest son of Omurtag and heir to the throne. Omurtag denied him the right to inherit the throne as Enravota refused to renounce his Christian faith, and after getting the throne in 831 A.D. his brother Malamir had him beheaded because of his stubbornness.\textsuperscript{142} Probably Enravota was the first martyr of the Christian faith among the noble elite of the Danube Bulgaria.\textsuperscript{143} The intrusion of Christianity at the court threatened to alter the Bulgar ‘nature’, as a consequence of the penetration of the Christian (= Byzantine) otherness; that is why there were persecutions and martyrs though most of them were among former subjects

\textsuperscript{140} More details see in, Vachkova 2004, 147 and n. 160.

\textsuperscript{141} Atanasov 1999, 33–34, who in fact follows Venedikov 1995, 90. Also see, Stepanov 2003, 92–93.

\textsuperscript{142} Mitropolit Simeon 1931, 256–259. For the persecutions of Christians in Bulgaria, especially in the reigning years of Omurtag and Malamir, details see in, Zlatarski 1970, 376–426.

\textsuperscript{143} See Follieri and Dujchev 1963, 104. Browning 1988, 33, stresses on the fact that among the martyrs, killed after the Krum’s death, there were two men with Slavonic names, namely Khotomirovs and Loubomirovs, and two more men one of them bearing most probably a Bulgar name and the other—a name with possible Bulgar origin, namely Koupergos and Aspher. But whether or not they were Bulgar aristocrats, it is still an open question. Nikolova 1995, 191, quite reasonably asks, why this evidence of archbishop Theophylaktos “does not find support in other sources”.
of the Byzantine Empire and not among Bulgars themselves. These persecutions obviously were stopped in the late 830s; after 864 A.D. the Bulgars were baptized. In this respect I. Venedikov correctly states that the koloburs in Bulgaria “were not mentioned in any inscription from the times of Krum”. Their appearance in Omurtag’s, Malamir’s and Persian’s reigning years make him guess that “there was heated religious tension in Bulgaria in the time of Enravota’s dethronement and decapitation from the last years of Omurtag reign to the early years of Persian”. Thus a question appears whether the role of the “koloburs” was not strengthened as a consequence of the increase of Christian inhabitants of Bulgaria in the beginning of the ninth century and whether because of this they changed into a strong and centralized institution closely linked to the court. Having in mind the whole process of centralization and ‘modernization’ of Bulgaria in this period such a hypothesis has a certain logic.

The Khazars, however, were not afraid of their inside-religious- ‘Others’ and even, according to al-Masûdi, allowed their professional army of 7 000 (or 10 000?) men, the so-called “al-arsiya/*Orsiya”, to be formed by Muslims coming from Khwarezm, who only refused to fight against fellows Muslims. This paid army of 7 000 men had its own vizier, of course a Muslim, and the right to follow their own faith. Numerous Muslim merchants living within the borders of the khaganate possessed the same right. But when Judaism was adopted as state religion by the Khazars, all the khagans had to be Judaists by faith. Al-Iṣṭakhrī notes that members of the ruling clan were denied the right to inherit the throne for having converted to Islam.

---

144 For this see the “Synaxar” of the Church of Constantinople in, Kodov 1969, 141. Cf. the opinion of Nikolova 1995, 188–192, that in this period there was no “negative attitude and ideological opposition towards Christianity” from the Bulgar elite and also, that the killed Christians were indeed rebels against the Bulgar central authority, i.e. the persecutions were not a result of “fanaticism of faith, of a conscious search for challenge, of a policy of hostility towards Christianity”.


146 Venedikov 1995, 221–222.


149 al-Iṣṭakhrī 1870, 224—quoted after Golden 1992, 242. Also see, Novosel’tsev 1990, 153, who is quoting al-Iṣṭakhrī and Ibn Ḥawqal and underlines that the main part of the khaganate’s population in ninth–tenth century followed Islam and Christianity. It
Obviously opposing this rule—by accepting a follower of other religion in the most sacred place—was unthinkable and for the Khazar elite, at least after the ninth century, was valid the rule of exclusiveness of the religion of the ruling clan.

A. N. Poliak even claims that the Khazar khagans “have attempted to organize and head a holy center of the keepers of different religions”.\textsuperscript{150} According to him, these ideas were realized after the mid-ninth century and they concerned monotheism in its different variations (Judaism, Christianity) while there was also Manichaean influence over “the origin of the religious reforms in the Khazar center”. According to A. N. Poliak, this happened “with the mediation of Khazar-Armenians (sic—Ts. S.), and the strengthened Armenian Paulician heresy, and maybe also by Khorasan”. The Ethiopian notion about the Khazars as rebels “in Armenia” against the Byzantines and their Christianity resembles that in Dimashky who considers Khazars being Armenians and adds they were Christians. He also wrote contradicting himself that Khazars were Muslims and Judaists; obviously such a statement showed the retreat of the Khazar–Armenians from Christianity. According to A. N. Poliak, Khazaria became an instrument of the Manichaeism in the West, and especially in Italy, where such heretics were called “Gazari”; in German the term used was “Ketzer”. Such a hypothesis needs to be more seriously supported by the sources, but as a whole, it can be stated that changes, like this one, were a normal practice for the ‘Steppe Empire’ in the Early Middle Ages. And for Khazaria they can be more seriously presumed as it was situated between Islam and Christianity. Nothing certain is known about the Manichaeism (or Paulicians) in the khaganate and especially among the aristocracy there but it can not be a priori excluded having in mind numerous heretical aristocrats in Southern France in twelfth–thirteenth centuries. At the moment, however, the situation with the sources available, e.g. Arab and the Khazar correspondence in Hebrew mentioned above, do not allow any conclusions regarding the Manichaeans in Khazaria.

In principle, we could say, however, that the above-mentioned tolerance towards the Other had a forced character (especially from the point of view of the supreme power and its representatives), and was

---

\textsuperscript{150} Poliak 2001, 99–100.
caused by military and trade benefits above all.\footnote{Cf. data in Yâqût (dating from ca. 922/923 A.D.): the Khazar ruler ordered the minaret of a mosque in the capital Itil to be destroyed and the muezzins there to be killed most probably in response of the destruction of the synagogue in Dâr al-Babûnaj made by the Muslims. For this see, Zakhoder 1962, 161; Pletneva 1976, 68. It is hard to accept the opinion of Gumilev 1993, 373, that the Khazars were “tolerant up to complete unfastidiousness”.} This became clear through the episodic persecution of Muslims in the tenth century.

In those times religious differences had strong political connotations and the Khazars’ attempt in the tenth century to present themselves as defenders of Judaism in the Muslim and Christian states confirms the above mentioned idea.\footnote{Khazanov 1994, 18.}

The situation with the Manichaeans in the Uighur khaganate can be interpreted in a similar way. There, as stated by Tamîm ibn Bahr, the population was mainly urban, chiefly of Sogdian origin. Their interests sometimes differed from the Uighur ones and on one occasion they even paid a big price for this. Bögü khagan and 2 000 of his relatives and Sogdians as well, all of them Manichaeans, were exterminated by his uncle Tun baga tarkhan who deposed Bögü in 779 A.D. and forbade Manichaeism in the khaganate. This usurpation of power had a clear addressee—it was pointed somehow at foreign Sogdians who managed to ‘seduce’ the Uighurs with a foreign religion\footnote{Mackerras 1972 (2nd ed.), 88–89, 151–152—this action had probably an anti-Manichaean direction. Also see, Bichurin 1950, 323–324; Sinor 1998, 194. Golden 1992, 160, points out that this happened in 779 A.D., one year after the marriage of the khan and the Chinese princess and almost immediately after the treaty between the Uighurs and China, which was absolutely beneficial to the Uighurs. Apparently the Sogdians in the capital had economic interests, namely the Uighur cavalry to press more strongly T’ang China and thus to coerce the Middle Kingdom to make more serious concessions to them; so the Sogdians were indeed those persons who gave this advice to the khan, who left aside his uncle’s (e.g. of Tun Bagha-tarkhan) warnings that such ideas presented by the Sogdians were not beneficial to the Uighurs. Soon after that Tun Bagha-tarkhan deposed his nephew and killed him, his family, and his entourage (as mentioned above, it numbered approximately 2 000 people), among them many Sogdian traders.} and at the own who, however, used to follow politics unfavorable, i.e. ‘foreign’, to the khaganate’s interests.

Manichaeism and the Sogdians soon returned to their positions and this can be seen in the three-lingual Karabalghasun inscription, which, according to D. Sinor, is evidence for a real ‘renaissance’ of the Sogdian, i.e. Manichaean influence in the khaganate in the 820s.\footnote{Sinor 1998, 196.} As far as relations between China and Uighurs are concerned, C. Mackerras
presents an interesting hypothesis that besides Turks and extremely influential Sogdians probably the Chinese were also an important minority in the Uighur khaganate. He emphasizes the well known fact that many of the khagans used to marry Chinese princesses and with them Chinese imperial retinues entered the Uighur court. But sources also mentioned that some eminent Chinese voluntarily settled among the Uighurs. For example, a representative of the Liu family was honored by the emperor with a high title in 792 A.D., but after that left for Karabalghasun where he was adopted by the khagan and took the name of the ruling Uighur clan—Yaghlaqar. It is difficult to state with details what was the attitude towards him and other subjects of the Chinese empire settled within the borders of the khaganate, but it can be guessed that, as the Christians and the Muslims, they were treated according to the laws of the ‘Steppe Empire’ that ordered tolerance towards those who used to follow a religion different from that favored by the court.

In the second half of the sixth century, as it was mentioned above, there were incidents with preaching other religions, Buddhism in particular, within the Turkic khaganate. After the death of Muqan (Makhan) khagan in 572 A.D. his brother Tuobo khagan accepted Buddhism and this fact is seen by some scholars as an attempt to get mainly political advantages while maneuvering between the two Chinese dynasties in the Northern China—Zhou and Qi. But soon after 581 A.D., when the Sui dynasty replaced Qi, the Buddhist monks were sent back to China.

Therefore, the above-mentioned tolerance depended mostly on the momentary political equilibrium and did not have a constant character. This is confirmed by the attitude towards some aristocrats following non traditional religions of the khaganate, who suffered because of that. But in general, and especially among the Turkic and Khazar high strata, there was favorable attitude toward the so-called world religions, towards Buddhism, the Nestorian version of Christianity, and Manichaeism, in particular.

---

155 Mackerras 1990, 321.
156 Gumilev 1967, 32.
157 For the notions of tolerance and their development from Antiquity to the early Christians and in mediaeval Western Europe until the sixteenth century (mainly based on sources from Catholic Europe!) see, Bejczy 1997, 365–384.
158 Ecsedy and Sunderman 1996, 478.
CONCLUSION

The strategies aimed at throwing aside the Otherness, if one wants to follow the words of Boyan Manchev, “always have as their preliminary premise the homogenizing and making of the Otherness visible”.¹ In fact, it was already during the Early Middle Ages, when the nomads as well as the sedentary societies of Eurasia had made efforts not to throw the Other totally aside, because one and the same idea came to both their minds, namely that they had always been mutually dependent on each other in spheres such as politics, economy, and identity. One of the most revealing examples can be taken from the Bulgar–Byzantine (822 A.D.), as well as Uighur–Chinese (756–762 A.D.) relations. In the first case, the Bulgars helped the Byzantine basileus Michael II, and in the second one—it was the Uighurs who supported the legitimate Chinese dynasty T’ang against the rebellion launched by An Lu-shan. Along with the purely pragmatic reasons, there were probably some other considerations involved, which had more serious weight, namely that the Romaioi and the Chinese had been viewed by their northern neighbors as the ‘eternal’ Other. Ideologically, the Other should exist forever for thus it could be incessantly rejected and, therefore, used as the counter-image needed for the maintaining of own, i.e. Bulgar and Uighur, identity.

The Other and its culture and essence had been evaluated in the steppe empire through the prism of own—alien. The analysis of the main configurations, e.g. core structures, in which Otherness was thought of and realized and the notions of it—represented (nature/ecology, religion, human person) shows that in some regions, and especially after the seventh century, the dynamics in the process of the nomads’ sedentarization caused a gradual opening towards the ‘Outside Other’. In some cases, it brought changes in the nomads’ culture and identity, thus leading to a certain ‘softening’ in the extreme views toward the Other. Therefore, the Outside Other was more and more accepted by the nomads not so much from the old stereotypical ‘natural-ecological’ angle but, on the one hand, through criteria of morality

¹ See his opinion in the newspaper ‘Kultura’, Nr. 10, from 8.03.2002.
(indeed through searching for possibilities for moral discreditation of the sedentary Other) and, on the other hand, of symbolism as well as hierarchy, i.e. from the anthropological and religious prism. Here it was the Bulgars who were quite ‘precise’ in their notions toward Byzantium after the eighth century, and the Turks from the Second Khaganate—towards China.

While getting to know the foreign culture of the sedentary Other the nomads and semi-nomads used to underline all those features, which were different from their own culture and style of living, a process whereby they in fact managed to build their own identity. Thus, through distancing from the Others, they indeed tried to strengthen their own distinctions from the sedentary civilizations for constructing of one’s identity should be understood as a process of interdependence; it was/is carried out ‘between us and the others, outsiders and insiders’. At that time, among the nomads there appeared an interest for proximity and better understanding of the sedentary civilizations’ Otherness and because of this reason, the sedentarists’ images had not always been constructed following the principles of total antithesis and total denial.

Still, the sedentary Other had been a priori represented as a threatening stranger, based upon a negative discrepancy, because the own identity was focused upon the opposition against the Other who was living to the South.

The notions of the Inside Other were more conservative. It was more probably due to the fact that they were definitely dependent on the pillar of this kind of societies, namely the clan, and this dependence was indeed quite strong. It is clearly seen in the role of the women, who preserved their almost constant character. Also, they can be noticed in

---

2 Minow 1990, 355. According to Barfield 1989, 131, the steppe and China are “mirror images of each other”, which is another corroboration of the above-mentioned thesis. For a similar ‘mirror’ argues D. Polyviannyi when discussing Bulgaria and Byzantium. It seems that the nomads made a comparison between their own culture (as values, special signs, etc.) and that of the foreign sedentary civilization and, at the same time, they usually confronted them. This was indeed a stereotypical manner in reacting to the Other/Otherness in the pre-modern time—Other and its Otherness became a mirror image of Mine and Own. In such a paradoxical—to some degree—prism one can see not only that knowledge that was ‘taken’ from the old written sources (with their clichés and stereotypes), but also the real knowledge of the Other that came to the nomads thanks to the hastening of the processes of mutual understanding and trade contacts between steppe Eurasia and the sedentary civilizations during the Early Middles Ages.
the opinions regarding the shamans/koloburs. Those notions that refer to the other kind of *inside Otherness*, namely men/women who had different religions, depended on the concrete political situation, that is on the context. But they were all viewed as *Others* and, therefore, the discrepancy had a positive character. Given that situation, here *We* has been defined ‘as a reference in the frameworks of the shared experience, common aims and collective horizon’,\(^3\) and not as denial of the *Others*. Moreover, here the “challenge” was not so strong and visible (with, to a certain degree, the exception of the world religions) and thus the ‘answer’ remained traditional and, in many ways, predictable; it rarely ended with radical changes in the notions of the *Other*.

\(^3\) Delanti 2004, 18.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Angelov, P. 1994, “The Bulgarians through the eyes of the Byzantines”, Bulgarian Historical Review 4, 18–32.

Baiileva, T. 1972, Doislamskie verovaniia i ikh perezhiti i u kigrizov. Frunze.
Bartol’d, V. 1964, “O hristianstve v Turkestane v domongol’skii period”. In Bartol’d, V. Sochinenia [in 9 volumes], II, pt. 2, Moskva.
— —. 1968, “Obzor istorii tiurkskih narodov”. In Bartol’d, V. Sochinenia [in 9 volumes], IV, Moskva.
Bertel’s, E. 1948, Roman ob Aleksandre i ego glavnye versii na Vostoke. Moskva/Leningrad.
— —. 1992, Purvobulgarski nadpisi (Vtoro preraboteno i dopulneno izdanie), Sofia.
Borgoiaakov, M. 1974, "Yish v drevnetiurkskih pamiatnikah runicheskoi pis’mennosti". In *Arkehologia Severnoi i Tsental’noi Azii*, Novosibirsk, 208–211.
Chavannes, E. 1903, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux*. Sankt-Peterburg (Sbornik trudov Orkhonskoi ekspeditsii, 6).


Enoki, K. 1964, "The Nestorian Christianity in China in medieval time according to recent historical and archaeological researches", *Accademia Nationale dei Lincei* 62, Roma.


Flerov, V. 1993, "O sotsial'nom stroe v Khazarskom khaganate (na materialah Maiatskogo mogil'nika)". In *Sotsial'naia differentsiatsiia obshchestva (poiski arheologicheskikh kriteriev)*. Moskva, 119–133.


Garkavi, M. 1870, Skazaniai musul’manskii pisatelei o slavianah i russkih. Sankt-Peterburg.


Georgieva, S. 1996, ”The political activity of women during the period of the First Bulgarian Kingdom”, Bulgarian Historical Review 3–4, 109–114.


Grutski izvori za bulgarskata istoriia 1958 (II), 1960 (III), 1961 (IV), Sofia.


*Istoria at-Tabari* [at-Tabari] 1987, Tashkent.

*Istoria na Bulgaria* 1999 [in three volumes], I, Sofia: “Anubis”.


BIBLIOGRAPHY

——. 1992, “Pamiatniki drevnetiurskoi pis’mennosti”. In Vostochnyi Turkestan v drevnosti i rannem srednevekov’e, ed. B. Litvinskii, Moskva, 326–369.
——. 2001, “Predstavleniiia o vremenii i prostranstve v drevnetiurskikh pamiatsnikah”, Altaica 5, Moskva, 81–89.
Kondakov, N. 1929, Ocherki i zametki po istorii srednevekovogo iskusstva i kul’tury. Praga.


Latinski izvori za bulgarskata istoria 1960, II, Sofia.


— —. 1980, "Taktika Tanskogo gosudarstva v bor’be za hegemoniiu v vostochnoi chasti Tsentral’noi Azii". In *Dal’ni Vostok i sosednie territorii v srednie veka*, ed. V. Larichev, Novosibirsk, 103–126.


Manchev, B. 2002, in ’*Kultura*’ (newspaper), Sofia, Nr.10/March 8th.


Minorsky, V. 1978, "Tamîm ibn Bahr’s journey to the Uyghurs". In *Minorsky, V.* The Turks, Iran and the Caucasus in the Middle Ages. London (Variorum reprints, Nr. 1).


Mitropolit Simeon 1931, "Pismata na Theofilakta Ohridski, arhiepiskop bulgarski". In *Sbornik na BAN* 27, Sofia, 1–279.


—. 1983, “Srednevekovye amazonki v evropeiskih stepiah”. In Arheologicheskie pamiatiitiki lesostepnego Podon’ia i Podneprov’a I tysiacheletia n. e., Voronezh.


—. 1996, Sarkel i “shellkovyi put’”. Voronezh.


Popov, A. 1866, Obzor khronografov russkoi redaktsii, I, Moskva.


—. 1955b, “Qara. Studie zur türkischen Rechtssymbolik”. In Zeki Veledi Togan’a Armağan, Istanbul, 239–263.


Puteshestviia v vostochnye strany Plano Karpini i Rubruka 1957, Moskva.


—. 2003, “Bulgarite i hristiianskata propoved”. In Istoriia na bulgarite. Ot drevnostta do kraia na XVI vek, ed. in chief G. Bakalov, Sofia, 92–94.


—. 2003c, “Razvitie na kontseptsiiata za sakralniia tsar u khazariite i bulgarite prez rannoto srednovekovnie”. In Bulgari i khazari prez rannoto srednovekovnie, ed. Ts. Stepanov, Sofia, 219–232.


—. 2005b, “Ruler and political ideology in Pax Nomadica: Early medieval Bulgaria and the Uighur Qaganate”. In East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages, ed. F. Curta, Ann Arbor, 152–161.


—. 1984, “Greco’s et "Romains" dans la litterature bulgare (Conscience d’une realite medievale)”, Etudes balkaniques 1, 51–58.


BIBLIOGRAPHY


Vostochnaia Evropa v drevnosti i srednevekov'e 1999, Vostochnaia Evropa v drevnosti i srednevekov'e. Kontakty, zony kontaktov i kontaktnye zony, ed. in chief E. Mel'nikova, Moskva.


Vysotskii, A. 1989, “Hristianskii pamiatnik na gorodishche Ak-Beshim”. In Baktiia i Tokharistan na drevnem i srednevekovom Vostoke. Moskva.


Zakholder, B. 1962, Kaspiskii svod svedenii o Vostochnoi Evrope, I, Moskva.


INDEX

Abulafia, D. 116, n. 120
Aegean coast 78
Afrasiab 9, 31 n. 62, 52, 55
Agathias of Myrina 50
Aibabin, A. 38
Akaga, Utigur ruler 88
Aksenov, V. 69 and n. 205
Alania 101
Alans 15, 17, 69 and n. 207
al-arsiya 122 and n. 147
al-Bāhilî 115
Alexander the Great 18 and n. 17, 19
al-Garnati 89
Al-İştaxrî 122
Al-Jahiz 10
al-Masūdî 90
Alp Ilituer, Caucasian Huns’ ruler 67
and n. 197, 114
Alp Qutlug (see Ton Bagha-tarkhan) 27, n. 46
Aluston 25
Amazons 87, 88 and n. 6
America 10
Amu Darya River 14, 97
An Lu-shan 35, 36, 58, 71, 102, 127
Anagai, Turkic chieftain 88
Anastasius, Byzantine emperor 14, 15
ancient Greece 2
Anderson, B. 1
Antichrist 19
Aq-Beshim 76
Arabs 3, 6, 11, 14, 16–18, 21–22,
32–33, 36, 43, 46, 66, 68, 75, 89, 101
Armenians 38, 123
ar-Radhaniia 66, n. 194
ar-Razaniai (see ar-Radhaniia) 66, n. 194
arr 66
Arsakid, dynasty 59
Aspandiat 114
Asparukh, Bulgar ruler 50, 80
Asper 121, n. 143
as-Sarir 73
Astel 70
Atanasov, G. 105, n. 71
at-Tabari 115
Avar khaganate 5, 25
Avars 4, 44, 49–50, 56, 121
Azerbaijan 66, 114
Azerbeijdzhan (see Azerbaijan) 91, 93
Azov Sea 91, 93
Bactria 17, 97
Bagha tarkhan 98
Balakh, Savirs’ ruler 88
Balandzhar 36, 115
Balkans (see Balandzhar) 7–8, 121
Ban Gou 32–33
Barbaricum 87
Barfield, Th. 109, 117, n. 124
Bartha, A. 12
Bartol’d, V. 64, n. 186, 76
Basil I, Byzantine emperor 70
Basil II, Byzantine emperor 105
Basmils 57
Baybaliq 27, n. 47
Berend, N. 116, n. 120
Bersils 15
Bilgä khagan, Turkic ruler 22, 46–49,
98, n. 47, 116
Bilge khagan (see Bilgä khagan) 23, 70, 103,
124
Boarix, Savir ruler 88
Bögü khagan, Uighur ruler
Boris-Michael, Bulgar ruler 9, 37,
n. 80, 79, 82, 97, n. 39, 105, 110,
n. 97, 112
Boristhenida 34
Bosphor 25, 119–120
Bosphorus (see Bosphor) 109
Buda
Buddhism 64 and n. 186, 65 and
n. 191, 66, 72, 77, 125
Bugut 9, 28, 55, 64, 65, n. 191
Bulan, Khazar ruler 68
Bulchu, Magyar chieftain 119
Bulgaria 9, 19, 21 and n. 26, 24, n. 37,
25, 30–31, 35, n. 75, 37 and n. 80, 38
and n. 82, 41, 45, 48–50, 56 and
n. 162, 57, 62, n. 183, 63, 78–80, 80,
n. 253, 81–82, 83, n. 263, 85, 87
and n. 3, 88, 90 and n. 17, 91, 96, 111
and n. 102, 120, 121 and n. 142, 122,
128, n. 2
INDEX

Bulgaria ‘beyond the Danube River’ 23, 37, n. 81, 78
Bulgars 89–91, 100–101, 105, 111, n. 102, 112, 119, 120 and n. 137, 121, 122 and n. 145, 127–128
Bumin khagan, Turkic ruler 116
Burdizos 45
Burtas 89
Byzantium 11 and n. 21, 19–21, 24, 25, n. 41, 26, n. 43, 29 and n. 55, 30, 34, n. 68, 37, n. 81, 39–40, 42, 45, 57, n. 164, 59, n. 169, 62 and n. 183, 63, 86, n. 1, 90, n. 19, 98–100, 115 and n. 112, 119, n. 133, 121, 128 and n. 2

Cairo 68
Carolingians 30
Caspian coast 16
Caspian Gates 19
Caspian Sea 70, 88
Caucasian Albania (see Arran)
Caucasian Albanians 88
Caucasus 8, 14–16, 18–19, 27, n. 45, 32, 36, 39, 68, 70, 88, 114
Central Asia 7, 10, n. 17, 14, 17, 28 and n. 51, 46, 55, 57, 64 and n. 186, 70, n. 112, 72, 74, 75 and n. 232, 76, 87–88, 98, n. 47, 106, 118, n. 131
Central Europe 4, 25
Chalcedon 75
Chang’an 53, 97
Chatalar 9, 30, 59
Chengis khan, Mongol ruler 112
Chernorizets Tudor Doksov 83, n. 263
Chersonesus 24, 26 and n. 43, 34, 69, 100
Chervonaya Gusarovka 69
Chinagupta (see Jinagupta)
Christian, D. 4
Christianity 19, 24 and n. 38, 26, 30–31, 63, 66, 67 and n. 197, 68–70, 72–73, 75, n. 232, 76–77, 79 and n. 252, 80 and n. 253, 81 and n. 260, 82–83, 105, 120 and n. 137, 121, 122 and nn. 144 and 149, 123, 125
Christians 18, 32, 37 and n. 81, 45, 73 and n. 221, 74 and n. 227, 75–76, 78 and n. 246, 79–81, 97, n. 39, 121 and n. 142, 122, n. 144, 123, 125 and n. 157
Chugay 117, n. 124
Chu-lo, Turkic ruler 98, n. 45
Chvyr, L. 12
Confucianism 64
Constanța 26
Constantine the Great, Roman emperor 67, n. 197, 105
Constantine V, Byzantine emperor 37–38, 60, n. 173, 99
Constantine VII Porphyrogenetus, Byzantine emperor 52, 105
Constantinople 3, 14–16, 19, 33, n. 68, 34, n. 68, 44, 56, 68, 70, 75, 82, 100, 112, n. 104, 119–120, 122, n. 144
Cordoba 9, 68 and n. 203, 74
Cribb, R. 12
Crimea 7, 25, n. 41, 26 and n. 43, 68, 70, 100
Crimea Peninsula (see Crimea)
Crimean peninsula 8, 24, 26
Ctesiphon 11
Cumans 91, 93
Dagestan 36
Danube River 5, 15, 19, 23, 26, 37, n. 81, 38, n. 82, 78
Dar al-alam 16
Dâr al-Bâbûnaj 124, n. 151
Darrouzès, J. 80, n. 254
Daryl Gorge 15
Debelt 38
Derbend 14–15, 16 and n. 8, 36, 49
di Cosmo, N. 10, 12
Dimashky 123
Dionysopolis 38
Ditseng 59
Ditsevg (see Ditseng)
Dmitrievskii 90–91
Dnieper River 19
INDEX

Dniester River 19
Don River 49, n. 121
Doros 70
Drastar 49, 80
Dunbei 106
Durostorum (see Drastar)
Dzhungaria 28, n. 48

East(ern) Turkistan 20, 27, 28, n. 48, 32
Ecsedy, I. 34, n. 69
Edirne 45, 59
Egypt 76
Eirene, Byzantine empress 99
Ektag Mountain 114
Ellenblum, R. 116, n. 120
Enravota, Bulgar prince 121
Ephesus 75
Ephtalites 97
Erkesiya 21
Eurasia 3–5, 7–8, 17, 20, n. 22, 35, 41–42, 64, 72, 83, 86–87, 90, n. 20, 91, 95–96, 118, 127, 128, n. 2
Europe (Southeastern) 15, 19–20, 38–39
Europe (Western) 30, 57, n. 163, 81, n. 260, 86, n. 1, 87, 119, n. 134, 125, n. 157
Europeans 10

Fedotov, Al. 118
France 123
Franks 56, 82, 105
Fridman, L. 81, n. 256
Frye, R. 17

Gandhara 65
Gaochang 51–52, 107
Gardizi 73 and n. 221
Garkavi, A.Ya. 18, n. 17
Gazari 123
Gelner, E. 1
Georgia 73, 101
Germans 82
Geza, Magyar ruler 89
Gog 18–19
Golden Gate 16
Golden, P. 2, n. 4, 3, 12
Gothia 70
Great Bulgaria 50, 66, 119
Great Scythia 4
Great Silk Road 29 and n. 55, 31, 54
Great Wall 14–15, 17, 21, n. 27, 32, 54, 65, 98

Greeks 10, 30 and n. 58, 34, 44, n. 97, 83, n. 263, 88
Grigoras 37
Grod, Hun or Bulgar ruler 119–120
Grousset, R. 4
Grum-Grzhimaylo, G. 13
Gumilev, L. 13, 33
Gyula, Magyar ruler 119

Hambarlii 45, 59
Han, dynasty 14, 32, 109
Hartog, F. 12
Hasdai ibn Shafrut 9, 68 and n. 203, 74
Hasdai ibn Shaprut (see Hasdai ibn Shafrut)
He-li khagan, Turkic ruler 47, n. 107
Hephtalites 17
Heraclius, Byzantine emperor 68
Herodotus 87–88
Hotsirs 70
Hristodoulova, M. 106
Hsen Kuo 54
Hu (eastern) 15
Hu (northern) 15
Hungarians 100
Hungary 5
Huns 15, 25, 41, 42, n. 93, 63, 66, 67 and n. 197, 70, 88–89, 115, 119

Ibn al-Faqih 15
Ibn Fadlan 9, 89, 101
Ibn Hawqal 122, n. 149
Ibn Khordadbeh 9, 17, 73, n. 221
Ibn Rusta 9, 73, 89
Ilbilge khatun 95, n. 35
Iliya, Nestorian metropolitan 75 and n. 233
Ilterish khan, Turkic ruler 95, n. 35
Indus River 18
Inner Asia 33, n. 66, 91
Inner Eurasia 4
Iran 11, 16, 42, 44, 59, 75
Iron Wall 18
Ispou 45, 77–78
Ishbara khan, Turkic ruler 97
Ishtemi khan, Turkic ruler 97
Iskandar Dhul-Qarnayn 18
Islam 46, 64, 68–69, 74, 75 and n. 229, 77, 79, 122 and n. 149, 123
Israel, bishop 67, 114
Istros (see Danube River)
Italy 123
INDEX

Maitdinova, G. 54
Mâjûj (see Magog)
Malamir, Bulgar ruler 23, 45, 121 and n. 142
Malamirovo 45
Malo Pereshchepyne 120
Manchev, B. 127
Manchuria 14
Mangup (see Doros)
Mani 73
Manichaeanism 71, n. 216, 72 and n. 220, 73, 77, 123–125
Manuel I Comnenus, Byzantine emperor 44, n. 97
Manuel, Bishop of Hadrianopolis 59 and n. 171
Maria-Eirene, Bulgarian tsaritsa 105
Maritsa River 21
Marubaliq 106
Marwan 68
Massagetae 88
Maverranahr 14
Menander the Guardsman 9, 44, 114, 115, n. 114
Merv 14, 17, 75 and n. 233, 77
Meserve, R. 112, 118
Michael II, Byzantine emperor 33, n. 68, 127
Middle Asia 27, 55, 75, 77
Mingana, A. 76
Moesia 31
Mongolia 19, 64
Mongols 96
Motov, Yu. 92
Mou-yû khan (see I-ti-chien khanan)
Movses Daskhuranci 9, 49
Mo-yen-cho khanan, Uighur ruler 106
Muqan khanan, Turkic ruler 97, 125
Muslims 18, 73–74, 97, n. 39, 122–123, 124 and n. 151, 125
Nessebar 38
Nestorian Christianity 66
Nicephorus I, Byzantine emperor 90
Nicolas Mysticophanes, patriarch of Constantinople 69
Nikolov, S. 81
Ning-kuo, Chinese princess 102–103
Nivar khanan, Turkic ruler 64, 65 and n. 191
Noonan, Th. 95
Northern Chou, dynasty 61–62
Northern Qi, dynasty 55, 62, 65
Northwest Khangaj 106
Novae 80
Novi Pazar 78
Odessos 25, 38, n. 82
Oghuz 89, 91, 116, n. 115
Olbia 34
Old Bulgaria (see ‘Old Great Bulgaria’ and ‘Magna Bulgaria’)
Oleg, Rus’ ruler 16
Olga, Rus’ princess 119
Omurtag, Bulgar ruler 23, 30–31, 35, n. 75, 37, n. 80, 45, 48, 59, 78–79, 112, n. 104, 121 and n. 142, 122
Ongin 116
Onogurs 70
Ordos 21–22
Ordubaliq (see Karabalghasun)
Ordukent 76
Orient 57
Orkhon 9, 22–23, 30, 42, 45, 95, 116–117
*Orsiya (see ar-arsiya)
Ossetians 69
Otukhen 36, 106, 116, n. 114, 117 and n. 124
Ovid 26
Oxus River 75
Panjikand 9, 31, n. 62, 49, 52, 55, 76
Pannonia 4
Paris 119, n. 134
Parsbit, Khazar khagan 88
Patriarch Nicephoros 9
Paulician heresy 38, 123
Pax Chazarica 4
Pax Nomadica 3–4, 7, 9, 39–40, 59, 88, 110
pax Romana 115, n. 112
pax Romana Christiana 115, n. 112
Pax Turcica 4
Persia 2, 17, 98
Persian, Bulgar ruler 45, 77–78, 112, 122
Peter, Bulgarian tsar 31, 105
Petrukhin, V. 74, n. 227
Philippi 9, 44, 77–78, 112
Philippopolis (see Plovdiv)
Photius, patriarch of Constantinople 79 and n. 252, 82
Pian de Carpine 96
Pletneva, S. 88
Pliska 23, 24, n. 37, 41, 81
Plovdiv 45
Poliak, A.N. 123
Polyviannyi, D. 128, n. 2
Pomorie 38
Pope Nicholas I 9, 79, 112
Procopius of Caesarea 3, 15, 41
Provatos 45
Qi, monk 65
Qirghiz 20, 57, 72, 76, 116, n. 115
Qitans 98, n. 47, 116, n. 115
Qubrat, Bulgar ruler 100, 119–120
Ratiaria 80
Remus 56
Reteg 70
Rhodope Mountains 80, n. 253
Roman Empire 30, 115, n. 112
Romania 26
Romanos I Lekapenos, Byzantine emperor 74, 105
Romans 59, 97
Rome 57, 115, n. 112
Romulus 56
Rou-Rans 99, 108
Jou-Jans (see Rou-Rans)
Rus’ (see Kievan Rus’)
Russia 90, n. 17
Sabriel (see Bulan)
Saka 88
Salonika 44
Saltovo-Maiatski 91
Samarkand 74, 77
Samosdelka 70
Sandilkh, Utigur ruler 41
Saracens 79, n. 251
Sarkel 49, n. 121
Sarmatians 26, 88
Sarolta, Hungarian queen 89
Sassanian Iran 11
Sassanian Persians 3
Sassanians, dynasty 11, 14–15, 17, 22, 39
Sauromatians 88
Savirs 15, 42, n. 93, 88
Schreiner, P. 80 and n. 254
Scythia 4–5, 88
Scythia Minor 4
Scythians 10, 26, 88
Selenga River 27, n. 47
Samandar 16 and n. 8, 17, 26, 36
Semender (see Samandar)
Semirechë 20, 27, 28, n. 48, 76–77, 92, 109
Severski Donec River 69
Sevrey 83
Shapur I, shahin-shah 75
Shine-usu 9, 27, n. 47
Shirvan 15
Shrainer, P. (see Schreiner, P.)
Shumen 30
Siberia 28, n. 51, 113
Silistra 49
Simeon, Bulgarian tsar 31
Sinor, D. 12, 124
Skobelev, S. 95
Slavs 15, 56, n. 162, 67, 89
Smith, A.D. 1, n. 1
Smolyans 77–78
Sogd 27, 51, 55
Sogdiana 8, 21, 28, n. 49, 29, 39, 54–55, 75, n. 229, 76, 114
Sogdians 6, 20, 23, 27 and nn. 46 and 47, 28 and n. 48, 29, 31 and nn. 59 and 61, 46, 72, n. 220, 75, n. 229, 107, 124 and n. 153, 125
Sozopol 38
St. Martin, pope 26, n. 43
St. Abo of Tiflis 73
St. Constantine-Cyril 26, 67
Stela 82
Stephan of Surozh, bishop 68
Steppe Empires 3–4, 11, 68, 87
Successor of Theophanes 79
Sudak 25
Sugdaya (see Sudak)
Sui, dynasty 9, 34 and n. 69, 108, 125
Sulak River 36
Su-tsung, Chinese emperor 102–103
Suyab (see Ordukent)
Syr Darya River 14
Syria 77
Syrians 38
Syuleimanköy 78
T’ai-ho, Chinese princess 103, 104, n. 68
T’ai-tsung, Chinese emperor 57, n. 164
T’ien-shan 77
T'oba-wei, dynasty 30, 45, 51, 109, 116, n. 115
Tabgach (see T'oba-wei)
Talas 46
Talmud 18, n. 17
Taman 70
Tamatartha (see Taman)
Tamim ibn-Bahr 9
Taoism 64
Tariat 83, n. 262, 106
Taspar khan, Turkic ruler 61, 64, 65
and n. 191, 97, 125
Tat 32, n. 63
Tatarstan 89, 90, n. 17
Tatpar khan (see Taspar or Tobo khan)
Tbilisi 73
Tengri 95, n. 35, 112, 119
Tengri-khan (see Aspandiat)
Tengri khan, Uighur ruler 53
Tengism 66
Terek River 36, 70
Terkhin (see Tariat)
Tervel, Bulgar ruler 33, n. 68, 35, 44, 63, 100, 105, n. 71, 120
Tes 9, 83, n. 262
Te-tsung, Chinese emperor 103
Theodora, Byzantine empress 100
Theophanes Confessor 9
Theophanes Continuatus (see Successor of Theophanes)
Theophylact Simokatta 9
Theophylaktos, archbishop 121, n. 143
Thracians 89
Tiberius, Byzantine emperor 44, 100
Tibet 58, 60, 71, 98, n. 47, 114
Tibetans 63, 72
Tikhonov, D. 73
Timoteus, patriarch 76
Tirah, Pecheneg chieftain 119
Tobo khan (see Taspar or Tatpar khan)
Todorov, Tz. 11
Tokharians 107
Tokharistan 54–55, 75, 97
Tomi 26, 38, n. 82
Ton Yabgu khan, Turkic ruler 50, 52
Tonyuquq 22, 46, 116
Toquz-Oghuz 91
Tortika, Á. 101
Toynbee, A. 13
Tsar Krum 30
Tun Bagha-tarkhan, Uighur ruler 102, n. 61, 124, n. 153
Tung-huan 15
Tuobo khan (see Tobo khan)
Turfan 32, 51, 53, 107–108
Turgesh 98, n. 47
Turkic khaganate 20, 21 and n. 27, 28, 48, 29, n. 56, 34, 44, 47, 55, 65, n. 191, 75, 93, 97, 125
Turks 4, 6, 9, 10–11, 17–18, 21 and n. 27, 22–23, 27–29, 30, n. 56, 31
and n. 59, 32, 33 and n. 67, 34 and n. 69, 35, 36 and n. 76, 38, 42, 44, 46, 47 and n. 107, 48–52, 54–58, 61, 62
and n. 179, 64, 66, 72, 75 and n. 229, 76, 82–83, 85, 87–89, 93 and n. 31, 94–95, 97 and n. 41, 98 and n. 47, 99, 100, 107–108, 114–115, 116, n. 114, 117 and n. 124, 118, 119, 125, 128
Turksanth 44
Uighurs 4, 6, 9, 11, 20–23, 27–29, 30, n. 56, 31 and n. 59, 32–33, 35, 36, n. 76, 38, 39, 53, 54, 57, 58, 60
Umay 95
Urgut 77
Utigurs 41, 58, n. 164, 88
Valentinos 44
Vardanes 37
Varkhonites 44
Varna (see Odessos)
Vladimir, Rus’ ruler 105
Venedikov, I. 122
Voitov, V. 47–48
Volga Bulgaria 89, 90, n. 17, 101
Volga Bulgars 86–87, 89–90, 101
Volga River 18, n. 17, 25–26, 36, 70, 86–87, 89, 90 and n. 17, 101
von Gabain, A. 27
Wei, dynasty 51, 109
Western Turks 21–22, 93, 100
William Rubruck 5, 7, 96 and n. 38
Wu Tse-tien, Chinese emperor 71, n. 215
Wu-ti, Chinese emperor 97
Xian-an, Chinese princess 103
Xiongnu 10, 14–15, 47, 115
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Page(s) or Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xuanzang</td>
<td>9, 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xuanzong, Chinese emperor</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaghlaqar</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yâjûj (see Gog)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yangtze River</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yanis</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yâqût</td>
<td>115, 124, n. 151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yatsenko, S.</td>
<td>51–54, 107–109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yazdgerd II, shahin-shah</td>
<td>75, n. 233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yer-su</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yollig-tegin</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zacharias Rhetor</td>
<td>66–67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zemarchos</td>
<td>114, 118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhou, dynasty</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zonaras</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoroastrism</td>
<td>66, 77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ILLUSTRATIONS SECTION
1—Large Roman Entrenchment in the Bačka; 2—*Brazda lui Novac de Nord*; 3—*Brazda lui Novac de Sud*; 4—embankment near Galați; 5—Upper Bessarabian embankment; 6—Lower Bessarabian embankment; 7—Little Earthen Dike; 8—embankments in northwestern Bulgaria (Lom, Khairedin, and Ostrov dikes); 9—dikes on the Black Sea coast; 10—embankments in the Stara Planina; 11—Erkesiiia.

*Fig. 1.* Bulgar dikes on the Balkan peninsula (after Fiedler 2008, fig. 2, with kind permission of Brill).
Fig. 2. Plan of Pliska’s center (palaces and temples) (after Beshevliev 1981).
Fig. 3. Pliska, palatial compound, first building phase (after Fiedler 2008, fig. 7, with kind permission of Brill).
Fig. 4. Pliska, palatial compound, second building phase (after Fiedler 2008, fig. 8, with kind permission of Brill).
Fig. 5. Pliska, substructions of the older (“Krum’s palace”) palace below those of the smaller “Throne palace” built by Omurtag after 814 (black with diamond checker) (after Fiedler 2008, fig. 4, with kind permission of Brill).
Fig. 6/6a. Fragment from the stone inscription of the 30-years peace treaty between Byzantium and Bulgaria, 815 A.D., together with the text (after Beshevliev 1981b, figs. 19 and 26).
Fig. 7. Memorial Inscription of Korsis (after Beshevliev 1981b, fig. 29).
Fig. 8. Madara, the relief with the inscriptions (after Fiedler 2008, fig. 14, with kind permission of Brill).
Fig. 9. Plans of the Bulgar heathen temples, 9th century (from Pliska, Preslav, Madara, and Drustur/Silistra) (after Aladzhov 1999, fig. 12, with kind permission of Zhivko Aladzhov).

Fig. 10. Bishapur, palatial complex (after Doncheva 2005, fig. 21, with kind permission of Stela Doncheva).
Fig. 11. Dura-Europos, palatial complex (after Doncheva 2005, fig. 16, with kind permission of Stela Doncheva).
Fig. 12. A Khazar vessel from Kotski with figures of men and animals (after Flerova 2001, fig. 21, with kind permission of Valentina Flerova).
Fig. 13. Figures from a bone vessel from the region of Saltovo-Mayatskoe, Khazar khaganate (after Flerova 2001, fig. 5, with kind permission of Valentina Flerova).
Fig. 14. Podgornenskii IV burial ground, mound 14, Khazar khaganate (after Flerova 2001, fig. 24c, with kind permission of Valentina Flerova).
Fig. 15. Amulets from Khazaria and Bulgaria, 8th–10th century (after Flerova 2001, fig. 16a, with kind permission of Valentina Flerova).
Fig. 16. Plates from a saddle from Verkhnii Chir-Yurt, Khazaria, now in Daghestan; and plates from a saddle from Shilovo mound 1, Khazaria, Middle Volga, now in Russia (after Flerova 2007, figs. 2–3, with kind permission of Valentina Flerova).
Fig. 17. Podgorovskii burial ground, the basin of Severskii Donets river, Khazar khaganate (after Flerova 2007, fig. 4, with kind permission of Valentina Flerova).
Fig. 18. Keeper of relics from burial 1, mound 3, burial ground Talovyi II, Khazar khaganate (after Glebov 2007, fig. 1, with kind permission of 'Problemi na izkustvoto').
Fig. 19. Figures from the keeper of relics, burial ground Talovyi II (after Glebov 2007, fig. 2, with kind permission of ‘Problemi na izkustvoto’).
Fig. 20. Reconstruction of a part of the Kül-tegin’s temple (Nowgorodova 1980, p. 240).
Fig. 21. Plan of the Kül-tegin’s temple (after Nowgorodova 1980, p. 238).
Fig. 22. Bulgar warrior, first half of the 9th century, miniature (after Beshevliev 1981, fig. 22).
Fig. 23. Stele with the Bugut inscription (after History of Civilizations of Central Asia 1996, fig. 2—photo: Sergei G. Klyashtorny, with kind permission of Sergey Klyashtornyj).
Fig. 24/24a. Male costumes from the frescoes at Kucha, 5th–8th century (after Yatsenko 2000b, in Vostochnyi Turkestan 2000, tab. 59, 60, with kind permission of Sergey Yatsenko).
Fig. 25. Female costumes from the frescoes at Kucha (after Yatsenko 2000b, in Vostochnyi Turkestan 2000, tab. 62, with kind permission of Sergey Yatsenko).
Fig. 26. Costumes of ‘foreigners’ (after Yatsenko 2000b, in Vostochnyi Turkestan 2000, tab. 63, with kind permission of Sergey Yatsenko).
Fig. 27. Uighur hats, 9th–12th century (after Yatsenko 2000b, in Vostochnyi Turkestan 2000, tab. 65, with kind permission of Sergey Yatsenko).
Fig. 28. Old-Turkic balbal (after Nowgorodova 1980, fig. 180).