

An Epic Geography of the Oyuz-nāmā in Uyghur Script

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The present paper examines the proper names occurring in the pagan Oyuz-nāmā (PON) in the Uyghur script and attempts to match historical political formations to them. It is clear that these names belong to several temporal layers and their order of occurrence within the text does not follow a chronological order. The analysis highlights the dynamic evolution of PON's plot. Four temporal layers were detected within the text (7–9th centuries, 10–12th centuries, 13th century, and 14–15th centuries) and the related events in PON were put on a map. It can be concluded that the text must have been written in the 15th century in the lower Volga region, in the territory of the Great Horde, and the latest temporal layer of PON's plot was influenced by Kipchak historical tradition built upon a Mongolian substratum.

The Oyuz-nāmā in the Uyghur script (in the following, PON²) is a unique piece of the Oghuz-tradition. The exact date and place of its emergence is disputed. Its only manuscript is held in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.³ The manuscript consists of 21 folios (42 pages). Some folios are damaged; originally there were nine lines of text written on each pages. The text was written in the Uyghur(-Mongolian) script; its total length is 376 lines. Its language is the Middle-Turkic dialect, which shows Kipchak features.⁴

PON has several editions. The earliest one was made by Wilhelm Radloff, which contains the first eight pages of the manuscript's facsimile,⁵ and the

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² The abbreviation PON is based on the terms 'Pagan Oyuz-nāmā' or 'pre-Islamic Oyuz-nāmā'.

³ *Supplément Turc.* No. 1001. The digital photos of the manuscript are accessible on the webpage of the library: <http://expositions.bnf.fr/islam/gallica/turc2.htm>

⁴ B. Danka, "A zárt illabiális vokálisok jelölésének problémája a „pogány” Oyuz-nāmāban,” [The problem of marking closed illabial vowels in the 'pagan' Oyuz-nāmā] In: *Lingdok 13. Nyelvészdoktoranduszok dolgozatai*, ed. Zs. Gécseg, Szeged 2014, 9–27.

⁵ W. Radloff, *Kudatku Bilik – Facsimile der uigurischen Handschrift*. St. Petersburg 1890, 291–292.

German translation of the text.⁶ Riza Nour published the source in 1928. He adapted the text to the Arabic script, made a transcription of it, and commented on the text in French. This edition also contains a part of the facsimile.⁷ Paul Pelliot made critical comments on Nour's edition.⁸ The most well-known edition of PON was published by Willy Bang and Reşid Rahmeti Arat in 1932,⁹ which was translated into Turkish four years later.¹⁰ The latest edition of PON was published by Aleksandr Mihailovich Scherbak in 1959.¹¹ The topic of the doctoral dissertation of the author of this paper, which was defended in November 2016, is the philological and linguistic analysis of PON.¹² The cited translations of the textual parts from PON are the author's translations.

The Oghuz-tradition has several Muslim versions, which have overlapping plots with PON. These are: 1) The *Oyuz-nāmā* in the Persian historiographer Rašid al-Dīn's work *Jāmī al-Tawāriḥ* compiled in 1310-1311, in Persian,¹³ 2) The *Oyuz-nāmā* in the Ottoman historiographer Ali Yazīzādā's work *Tevāriḥ-i Āl-i Selçuk*¹⁴ written in 1423 in Ottoman Turkic, 3) The so-called *Oyuz-nāmā* of Uzunköprü whose dating and the location of recording is unknown; probably it was written in the 15th century in Ottoman-Turkic,¹⁵ 4) The *Oyuz-nāmās* in the Khivan Khan Abu'l-Ġāzī Bahadur's historical works *Šājārā-i Tārākīmā*,¹⁶ compiled in 1661 and *Šājārā-i Türk*¹⁷ in 1665. Both works were written in Turkī (Chagatay) literary language. The latter was finished by order of the khan's son because of the khan's death. The text of these two *Oyuz-nāmās* differs in several details, but their plot is practically identical.

The Oghuz-tradition narrates the life, deeds, and conquests of the Turks' mythical hero, Oghuz Kaghan, and his sons. While the mythic background of the version in Uyghur script shows totemistic features, the Muslim group of *Oyuz-nāmās* can trace back the protagonist's genealogy to Yafeth.

Concisely, the mythic background of PON is that Oghuz grew up quickly after his birth. In those times, there was a creature in a great forest who op-

⁶ W. Radloff, *Das Kudatku Bilik von Jusuf Chass-Hadschib aus Balasagun*. St. Petersburg 1891, x-xiii.

⁷ R. Nour, *Oughuz-namè, èpopée turque*. Alexandrie 1928.

⁸ P. Pelliot, "Sur la légende d'Uğuz-Khan en écriture ouïgoure," *T'oung Pao* 27 (1930), 247-358; its Turkish translation: P. Pelliot, *Uygur yazısıyla yazılmış Uğuz Han Destanı üzerine*, Çev. V. Köken. Ankara 1995.

⁹ W. Bang – R. R. Arat, *Die Legende von Oghuz Qaghan*. Berlin 1932.

¹⁰ W. Bang – R. R. Arat, *Oğuz Kağan Destanı*. İstanbul 1936.

¹¹ A. M. Ščerbak, *Oguz-nāme; Muḡabbat-nāme*. Moskva 1959.

¹² B. Danka, *The 'Pre-Islamic' Oğuz-nāmā. A philological and linguistic analysis*. Szeged 2016 (manuscript).

¹³ K. Jahn, *Die Geschichte der Oğuzen des Rašīd ad-Dīn*. Wien 1969.

¹⁴ A. Bakır, "Tevāriḥ-i Āl-i Selçuk Oğuz-nāme'si," *Turkish Studies* 3/7 (2008), 163-199.

¹⁵ K. Eraslan, "Manzūm Oğuznāme," *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 18 (1976), 169-244.

¹⁶ Z. Kargı Ölmez, *Ebulgazi Bahadur Han: Şeçere-i Terākime (Türkmenlerin Soykütüğü)*. Ankara 1996.

¹⁷ *Historie des Mongols et des Tatares par Aboul Ghâzi Bêhâdour Khân*. Ed. par Ivanovič, Petr Desmaisons. Amsterdam 1970².

pressed the people. Oghuz hunted it down. He acquired two wives. The first descended in a beam of light from the sky; the second was found by him in a hollow tree. His first wife gave birth to his elder sons Sun, Moon, and Star (*kün, ay, yultuz*); his second wife gave birth to his younger sons Sky, Mountain, and Sea (*kök, tay, täñiz*). The names of the elder sons reflect the macrocosmos, while the names of the younger sons mirror the microcosmos. Thus, PON connects the cosmic order to Oghuz Kaghan.¹⁸ Oghuz Kaghan, after the birth of his sons, organised a great celebration, where he appointed the distinctive features of his clan, that is, their *tamya* (property tag) and *uran* (parole, warcry).¹⁹ Finally, he announced himself as the ruler of the world. From this point on, the text narrates events that correspond to real historical events in a certain way.

The Muslim Oğuz-nāmās have overlapping plots with PON, but instead of the mythic background, they include the Muslim legitimisation which is concisely the following: 1) The progeny of Oghuz is traced back to Noah's third son, Yafeth, 2) Oghuz was born as a Muslim, and he visited his mother in her dreams, asking her to convert to Islam, otherwise he would not accept his mother's milk, 3) Oghuz asked his three wives to convert to Islam. Only the third, the youngest one, did it and Oghuz loved only her, 4) Oghuz waged war against his father, because he himself did not follow his father's old faith.

Based on the further comparison of the plot of PON and that of the Muslim Oğuz-nāmās, the plot of PON can be divided to five parts: 1) The mythic background detailed above (1/1–10/7, ~10 pages),²⁰ 2) Those unique features (10/8–23/4, ~12,5 pages), which are not present in any of the Muslim versions as detailed in PON, 3) The stories of the allied Turkic tribes and clans (23/4–32/9, ~9,5 pages), which are present in all the Oğuz-nāmā versions, but differ in details from PON, 4) The stories of conquests that are not narrated in detail in PON, contrary to the Muslim versions (32/9–35/4, ~2 pages), 5) The dividing of Oghuz's empire (35/4–42/7, ~8 pages), which is present in all versions except the Uzunköprü one, but they differ in detail in all the versions.

The comparison of the plot of the Oğuz-nāmās' different versions allows the conclusion to be drawn that the Oghuz-tradition is based on an oral tradition, and the written versions are projections of a dynamically developing system.

¹⁸ For a more detailed religious background of PON, see B. Danka, "Az ősi hitvilág nyomai. Szemelvények a „pogány” Oğuz-náméból." [Traces of the ancient belief. Selections from the 'Pagan' Oğuz-nāmā] In: *A török népek vallásai. Filológiai tanulmányok a török vallásos szövegek köréből*, (Altajisztikai tankönyvtár, 4.) ed. M. Biacsi, M. Ivanics, Szeged 2014, 49–68; B. Danka, "About the Historical and Religious Context of the 'Pre-Islamic' Oğuz-nāmā," In: *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on the Role of Religions in the Turkic Culture Held on September 9–11, 2015 in Budapest*, ed. M. Ivanics, É. Csáki, Zs. Olach, Budapest 2016, 257–267.

¹⁹ Danka, *Az ősi hitvilág*, note 61/21.

²⁰ The numbers in the paranthesis are 'from until' data, the number before the "/" refers to the page number of the manuscript, the number after the "/" refers to the number of the line on the given page.

The aim of the present examination is to outline an “epic geography” based on the proper names found in PON. These proper names can be divided into two groups: 1) The names of people who occur in the narration; these names are the personalisations of historical ethnic or political groups or states that have played a role in the history of the Turks, 2) Geographical names. I will show when and where these historical entities occurred in the history of the Turks, so that we may draw a picture of how they have been built into the epic tradition represented by PON, and in a broader sense, into the collective memory of the Turks. The locus of these events will be put on a map, and an attempt will be made to divide the plot of PON into historical layers. Therefore, the picture that depicts the dynamics of the plot development and of the overlaying of the motifs found in PON will be drawn.

We can evaluate the following data in the mythic background of PON:

(1) 1/8 That child drank the colostrum (*oyuz*) from his mother’s milk and after this he did not drink any more.

Although the narration does not express it explicitly, this seems to be the interpretation of the name Oghuz, which is connected to the Old Turkic word *ayuz/ayuž* ‘colostrum’²¹ by a folk etymology. The word is spelled with a first-syllable <w> in the text. For interpretations of personal (=ethnic) names with folk etymology, we can find many examples not only in PON, but also in the Muslim versions of the Oghuz-tradition.

The ethnic name Oghuz is well-known in the earliest Turkic sources, namely the Orkhon inscriptions. Their name occurs in the name of the tribal confederation called Tokuz Oghuz ‘nine Oghuz’. Their centre was the northern territory of the II. Türk Kaghanate (682–744),²² which was located more or less in the territory of present day Mongolia. After moving to the Aral Sea and the river Sir Darya,²³ they were called Oghuz. Their western migration can be traced very well in PON.

In the following citation, there are two more interesting details about the persona of Oghuz in the mythic background:

(2) 2/3 His feet were like the feet of an ox (*aḍaqi uḍ aḍaqi teg*), his waists were like a waist of a wolf, his shoulders were like the shoulders of a sable, his chest was like a chest of a bear. The whole of his body was full of hair (*tük tülüklüg erdi*).

According to the Chinese sources about the early history of the Turks, the Turks were divided into several ethnically identical or similar groups. One of

²¹ G. Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*. Oxford 1972, 98.

²² I. Vásáry, *Geschichte des frühen Innerasiens*. Herne 1999, 81–82.

²³ P. B. Golden, “The Peoples of the South Russian Steppes.” In: *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*. ed. D. Sinor, Cambridge 1994², 256–284.

these was the forest-dweller 'ox-footed' (*uδ haδaqlīy*) Turks.²⁴ These people might have lived at the rivers Ural and Tobol.²⁵

Another characteristic of the young Oghuz is that his whole body is fully covered by hair. There is an interesting parallel with the persona of the Muslim Sūfī Saint, Baba Tükles who, according to the legend, converted Özbeg Khan (1312-1342), ruler of the Golden Horde, to Islam. One of the main characteristics of Baba Tükles was that his body was covered by hair.²⁶

Scherbak connected the name of the mythic monster defeated by Oghuz Kaghan with the ethnic name Kiyad²⁷. Chinggis Khan descended from the Borjigin branch of the Kiyad clan. As another interpretation, one must consider also Khitan, an Old Mongolic-speaking group, who conquered North China and ruled it under the dynastic name Liao between 907 and 1125.²⁸ The identification is problematic, as the spelling of the words denoting this creature refers to at least two different words. Their instances and their approximate spellings can be divided into the following groups:

(3) Group 1: 3/4 <čyd>; 3/8 <čynd> or <čy'd>; 4/5 <kyynd>; 6/3 <kyynd> or <kyñnd>

Group 2: 4/9 <d'n'w> or <d'nnw>; 5/1 <d'nñk>; 5/3 <d'nñw>, 5/5 <[č]dýnk> or <[č]dñnk>; 6/1 <[n]dyñk> or <ñdyñnk>.

In instances 5/5 and 6/1, the letters given between the brackets "[]" could be secondary additions to the manuscript. Figure 1 presents the words in order of their occurrence.

²⁴ D. Sinor, "The Establishment and Dissolution of the Türk Empire." In: *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, ed. D. Sinor, Cambridge 1994² 285–313.

²⁵ T. Senga, "A T'ung-tien híradásai a közép-eurázsiai népekről," [The reports of the T'ung-tien about the peoples of Middle-Eurasia] In: *A honfoglaláskor írott forrásai*. (A honfoglalásról sok szemmel, 2.) [Written sources about the age of conquest of the Carpathian Basin. (Multiply views about the age of conquest 2.)] ed. L. Kovács, L. Veszprémy, Budapest 1996, 35–48.

²⁶ D. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde – Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition*. Pennsylvania 1994, 330–331; Cs. Göncöl, "'Abdu'l Ğaffār a kalmükek vallásáról," ['Abdu'l Ğaffār on the religion of the Kalmucks] *Keletkutatás* 2016 ősz, 75–92.

²⁷ Ščerbak, *Oguz-nāme*, 68.

²⁸ Vásáry, *A régi Belső-Ázsia*, 112; *Innerasiens*, 105.

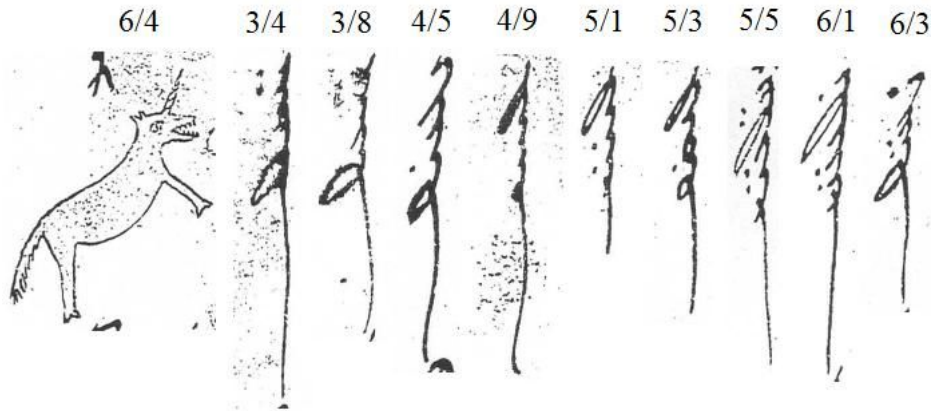


Figure 1. The picture depicting the mythic monster and its denominations

The reconstruction of Kitan or Kiyad may be considered only in the case of Group 1; however, even these written forms are deteriorating, as if the scribe had not known the word that he wrote down. In the earlier editions of PON mentioned above, these words were translated as ‘unicorn’ or ‘rhinoceros’ based on the picture.

The second part contains unique features of PON. After the birth of his sons, Oghuz Kaghan organises a celebration and he sends a message with his envoys to the four cardinal points of the world:

(4) 12/6 In that message it was written that ‘I am the kaghan of the Uyghur (*uygur*), who (thus) should be the kaghan of the four corners of the world. (From now on,) I expect obeisance (lit. bowing of head) from you.’

The name Uyghur occurring in the message refers to the era of the Uyghur Kaghanate, which existed in 744–840, in the territory of present-day Mongolia. The leading tribe of the Tokuz Oghuz tribal confederation was the Uyghur. Their kaghans considered themselves as all-powerful rulers of the world. They expected a ritual of respect from their subjects as well as from foreigners.²⁹ This attitude is mirrored in the above citation. The narration moves forward smoothly but there is a leap in real historical space and time:

(5) 13/8 Then at this time on the right side, there was a kaghan named Golden Kaghan (*altun qayan*). [...] 14/7 On the left, there was a kaghan named Urum (*urum*).

This establishment of position locates the starting point of the plot in Central Asia. We find northern orientation here, as opposed to the eastern orientation of the Orkhon Inscriptions, so ‘right side’ means eastern, while ‘left side’

²⁹ C. Mackerras, “The Uighurs,” In: *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, ed. D. Sinor, Cambridge 1994² 317–342.

means western direction. Golden Kaghan submits to Oghuz Kaghan and pays tribute to him:

(6) 13/9 This Golden Kaghan (*altun qayan*) sent an envoy to Oghuz Kaghan [...] 14/5 He heeded his words, and with his good tax he made friendship, and became peaceful with him.

The meaning of the Turkic word *altun* is 'gold', which is the Turkic translation of the dynastic name (Chinese *kin*, Mongolic *altan*) of the Jurchen, who overthrew the Liao dynasty and ruled North China in 1115–1234. The Secret History of the Mongols (§ 248.) narrates the submission of Altan Khan to Chinggis Khan (1214) in a very similar way as it is narrated in PON.³⁰ Thus, PON places Oghuz Kaghan in the role of Chinggis Khan. Urum Kaghan, who rules in the West, resists Oghuz's order, so Oghuz launches a war against him:

(7) 15/1 This Urum Kaghan did not heed Oghuz Kaghan's order. [...] 15/5 Oghuz Kaghan got angry, and wanted to ride against him.

Urum Kaghan's name is the Turkic correspondent of the name *Rūm* occurring in the Muslim sources, which is the Arabic name of the Byzantine Empire (5th century–1453)³¹. The following citation shows the route of Oghuz's campaign:

(8) 15/7 After forty days, he arrived at the feet of a mountain named Ice Mountain (*muz tay*). [...] 17/9 After a few days [...] 18/3 Oghuz also stopped with the army. There was a mass of water here, named Etil (*etil*) river.

There are two geographical names in the citation. The first one is *muz tay*, 'Ice Mountain'. This name is frequently used to name high mountains in Turkic. In the range of the Kunlun, there are at least two mountain chains with this name. As we will see later in connection with the Karluk, the Ice Mountain mentioned here is located in the western range of the Kunlun, near the eastern border of present-day Tajikistan. According to the narration, Oghuz arrives in a few days from these mountains to the river Etil. The name Etil is used in the Turkic languages to mean the Volga and its side-rivers, the Belaya and Kama (*aq etil* 'White Etil, White River'), as well as the river Don. Among the modern Turkic languages, it is mostly found in the Kipchak languages. In Volga-Kipchak (Tatar and Bashkir), the word *etil* has the generic meaning of river, which is secondary to the meaning of the proper name.³² The battle between Oghuz and Urum is fought on the bank of the Etil:

³⁰ *The Secret History of the Mongols. A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century* I-II. (Inner Asian Library 7.), ed. I. de Rachewiltz, Leiden–Boston 2006², 176.

³¹ I. Zimonyi, *The Origins of the Volga Bulgars*. Szeged 1990, 167–168.

³² L. Ligeti, *A magyar nyelv török kapcsolatai a honfoglalás előtt és az Árpád-korban*. [Turkic contacts of the Hungarian language before the conquest of the Carpathian Basin and the Árpád-era] Budapest 1986, 478–480; A. Róna-Tas-†Á. Berta, *West Old Turkic – Turkic Loanwords in Hungarian I-II*. Wiesbaden 2011, 345–347.

(9) 18/5 At the bank of the river Etil, in the vicinity of a black mountain, a battle was fought (lit. a fight was held). [...] 19/5 Oghuz Kaghan attacked, Urum Kaghan fled. Oghuz Kaghan took the kaghanate of Urum Kaghan [as well as] he took his people.

There is a historical contradiction in the cited part. The battle near the Volga locates the events in the South Russian steppe, to where the Oghuz tribes moved under the pressure of the Kipchak in the end of the 10th century. This group of the Oghuz entered the Byzantine Empire accross the Danube on its northern border in the 1060s, fleeing from the Cumans.³³ The text indicates, however, that Oghuz takes Urum's empire and people. In this form, we can hardly talk about fleeing; it is clearly a conquest. This might refer to the conquest of East Anatolia by the Seljuks after the battle at Manzikert (Malazgirt) in 1071.³⁴ Therefore, it seems that in the part cited in (9), we see a fusion of memories that are nearly contemporary but happened in different places. After this, PON goes on with the history of the conquest of the South Russian steppe:

(10) 20/1 Urum Kaghan had a brother. He was called Urus Beg (*urus beg*). That Urus Beg sent his son to a good, well-fortified town (being located) on the top of a mountain in the middle of deep river. [...] 20/8 Oghuz Kaghan rode against that town. Urus Beg's son sent him a lot of gold and silver. [...] 22/6 (Urus Beg's son:) 'I (hereby) give my head and my regal charisma for you. Paying tribute, (I) will (never) quit from friendship!' [...] 23/1 (Oghuz:) 'You have sent me a lot of gold, you have defended the town well (*baluqni yaqši saqlap sän*).' Because of that, (Oghuz) named him Saqlap (*saqlap*) and made friendship (with him).

The name Urus is the Turkic correspondent of the Rus, which was a loose confederation of Eastern Slavic principalities that existed between 882 and 1240. It was conquered by the Mongols. In the second half of the 11th century, the Oghuz and the Rus fought several wars against each other.³⁵ We must also take into account the fact that there was another Urus Khan, who ruled the Golden Horde's territories East of the Volga. He ruled the Blue Horde (*kök orda*, the eastern wing of the Golden Horde) from 1361, and between 1374 and 1377, he held Saray, the centre of the Golden Horde.³⁶

The name Saqlap corresponds to the Arabic word *ṣaḳālība* (singular *ṣaḳlabī/ṣiklabī*), which derives from the Middle-Greek word *Σάλαβος*. The Greek word is connected to the self-designaton of the Slavs (*Slověne*, *Slovvyane*). The ethnic

³³ Golden, *The Peoples*, 275–277.

³⁴ Y. Bregel, *An Historical Atlas of Central Asia*. Leiden–Boston 2003, 28.

³⁵ *The Russian Primary Chronicle – Laurentian Text* ed., transl. S. H. Cross, O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor. Cambridge–Massachusetts 2012, 143, 168, 202, 213.

³⁶ Bregel, *An Historical*, 41.

name had developed a meaning: 'slave'.³⁷ The name is present in the Muslim geographical sources from the 9th century onwards, but its denotation is not always clear. The name could mean the Slavs, the (presumably Finno-Ugric speaking) forest-dwelling peoples of Eastern Europe, or the Volga Bulgars. Later on, it became the generic geographical name of the huge territory between the Elba and Sir-Darya, from where the slaves were brought.³⁸ The name Saqlap is interpreted in PON through folk etymology, derived from the verb *saqla-* 'to watch over, guard, protect'³⁹ with the converb-suffix *-p*.

We arrive at the third main part of the narration. Oghuz arrives to the river Etil (again) but is not able to cross it with his army. There is a beg named Great Horde (*uluy ordu*) among the soldiers, who makes rafts with which they can cross the river. For his performance, he is granted the name Kipchak (*qipčaq*):

(11) 23/4 Then with the army [Oghuz Kaghan] passed to the river named Etil. [...] 23/6 Oghuz Kaghan saw that. Then he asked: 'Through the water of the Etil, how are we going to pass?' In the army, there was a good *beg*. His name was Great Horde Beg (*uluy ordu beg*) [...] 24/4 He lied on the trees and crossed. Oghuz Kaghan was glad and laughed. Then he told: 'Oh, oh, you shall become a *beg* here, you shall become a *beg* named Kipchak (*qipčaq*)!'

The Kipchak tribal confederation occurred in the 8th century in the Altay region as the subjects of the II. Türk Kaghanate, from where they migrated to the West. In the 9-10th centuries, they fought several wars with the Oghuz, whom they squeezed out of the South Russian steppe, including the Volga region, by the 1070s. After the battle near the river Khalkha in 1223, the Mongols integrated a part of the Kipchak into the Golden Horde, while other Kipchak groups fled.⁴⁰ The name Kipchak is originally a self-designated term, but its etymology is unclear.⁴¹ The manuscript of PON is also damaged at the relevant part, but it can be assumed that it has again been interpreted by folk etymology. The name *qipčaq* is probably understood as the nominal derivation of the verb *qap-* 'to grasp or seize with the hands'⁴² or **qaβ-* with the approximate meaning 'to hold together, to collect, to assemble';⁴³ thus, *qipčaq* might mean 'one who puts (the branches) together', namely, makes rafts.

³⁷ P. B. Golden, "Al-Sakāliba," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. VIII, ed. C. E. Bosworth *et al.* Leiden 1995², 872–878.

³⁸ I. Zimonyi, *The Origins of the Volga Bulgars*. 1990, 70–75, 91–92, 107, 125, 134, 150, 167.

³⁹ Clauson, *An Etymological*, 810.

⁴⁰ Golden, *The Peoples*, 277–284.

⁴¹ Sz. Kovács, *A kunok története a mongol hódításig*. [The history of the Cumans until the Mongol conquest] (Magyar Őstörténeti Könyvtár 29.) Budapest 2014, 13–17.

⁴² Clauson, *An Etymological*, 580.

⁴³ The verbal stem **qaβ-* could not be dated even in the earliest Old Turkic monuments; however, its causative (*qaβir-*) and cooperative (*qaβiš-*) derivations are present. See: Clauson, *An Etymological*, 580, 585 and 588 respectively.

The original name of the *beg* who was named Kipchak by Oghuz Kaghan was Great Horde (*uluy ordu*), which is very interesting. The term Great Horde was used for the central territories of the dissolving Golden Horde, and was located in the lower Volga region. The centre of it was on the western bank of the Volga; it reached until the river Dnyeper in the West and the river Kuban in the East.⁴⁴ The name Great Horde, in accordance with PON's text, points to the lower Volga region, but at a much later point than the golden age of the Kipchak. The Great Horde was founded by the Chinggisid Kiči-Muḥammad in 1433. Under the rule of his successor Aḥmad (1466-1482), it formally subjugated the Rus for a short time (cf. example (10)), but after his death, the Great Horde dissolved and was destroyed by the Crimean and Russian armies in 1502.⁴⁵

Moving forward in the narration, we learn that the favourite horse of Oghuz goes astray and goes to the Ice Mountain mentioned in example (8). There is a *beg* in Oghuz Kaghan's army who brings the horse back and he obtains the name Karluk, here interpreted as 'snowy' (*qārliḡ*), which is the derivation of *qār* 'snow'. Thus, the story gives an explanation of the establishment of the Karluk tribal confederation.

(12) 27/1 In the army, there was a great tempered man [...] 27/7 After nine days, he brought the stallion to Oghuz Kaghan. Because it was very cold in the Ice Mountains, that *beg* was covered by snow, he was pure white. Oghuz Kaghan laughed with joy. He told: 'Oh, you shall become the leader for the *begs* here! (For) I am happy, thy name shall be Snowy/Karluk (*qārliḡ*)!'

The Karluk were present in western Turkestan from the 8th century as part as the Western Türk state.⁴⁶ They founded the Karakhanid dynasty, the first Muslim dynasty of the Turks, in the 9th century. The Karakhanids lived under the authority of the Karakitays from 1130.⁴⁷ The Ice Mountain (*muz tay*) mentioned in example (8) is located south of the southern border of the Karakhanid state.⁴⁸ The narration continues as follows:

(13) 28/5 Then on the road he saw a big house. The walls of this house were made of gold. Its windows were of silver, its shutters were of iron. It was closed, and there was no key. In the army there was a good, clever man. He was named as Tömürtü Kaghul (*tömürtü qayul*). To him, he ordered: 'You, stay (here) and open (*qal aç*) the shutters! After you opened it, come to the warcamp!' Thus, he gave him the name Khalaj (*qalač*).

⁴⁴ A. J. Frank, "The Western Steppe: Volga-Ural Region, Siberia and Crimea." In: *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia. The Chinggisid Age*, ed. N. di Cosmo, A. J. Frank, P. B. Golden Cambridge 2009, 237–259.

⁴⁵ P.B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*. Wiesbaden 1992, 323.

⁴⁶ Sinor, *The Establishment*, 309.

⁴⁷ Vásáry, *A régi Belső-Ázsia*, 111.

⁴⁸ Bregel, *An Historical*, 29.

The original name of the soldier, Tömürtü Kaghul, does not tell us much from the view of our present examination. It looks like an evocative name, which is an adjectival phrase: in Mongolian *tömürtü* (cf. Written Mongolian *temürliḡ* 'ferrous, metallic'⁴⁹) and in Turkic *qayul* 'stick, rod' (cf. Old Turkic *qayıl* 'willow shoot'⁵⁰). The meaning of the phrase might be 'metal rod', hence 'crowbar', which might refer to the skill of the soldier. Thus, the name could be connected to the memory of the traditional profession of the Türks, namely smithcraft, which they practiced within the Juan-Juan Empire (end of 4th century–552).⁵¹

The given name of the soldier Khalaj tells us more. The original name of the ethnic group, which is now called Khalaj in South Iran, was Arghu, and they were named after that Oghuz tribe Xalač ~ Khalaj, who is presumably mentioned by PON here.⁵² The Khalaj moved to the territory of Tokharistan (present day Northeast Afghanistan and partly Tajikistan) in the 7th century,⁵³ and there were Khalaj elements showing in the Oghuz tribal confederation even in the 9th century.⁵⁴

The name Khalaj is interpreted in PON by the imperative forms of the verbs *qal-* 'to remain' and *ač-* 'to open'⁵⁵: *qal! ač!* 'Stay (here and) open (it)!'

The house (or tent) with the golden wall and silver windows (or smoke-hole) might refer to the centre of the kaghan's power. In Karabalgasun, the centre of the Uyghur Kaghannate, the kaghan's tent was made of gold; it was so famous that it was considered to be the centre of Uyghur power. The leader of the Kirghiz threatened the Uyghur kaghan as follows: 'Your fate is sealed, for I shall certainly seize your golden tent'.⁵⁶ On the other hand, it is not clear why Oghuz, already kaghan, would have a house opened, which symbolizes the power of the kaghan.

In the next part, we meet the Jurchen again (cf. examples (5) and (6)), but this time their ethnic and not dynastic name is mentioned. According to the narration, they live on a flat land, which is rich in game. Oghuz fights against them and wins but he cannot carry the booty away. There is a man in his army who makes carts upon which they can load the booty. The soldier is given the name Kangli (*qanq²luy*) for his invention.

(14) 29/8 It was an uncultivated, flat land. They have ever called this Jurched (*ǰürčäd*) [...] 30/3 Here, the Jurched Kaghān and people came against Oghuz Kaghān. A fight started. [...] 30/6 Oghuz Kaghān attacked,

⁴⁹ F. D. Lessing, *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1960, 800.

⁵⁰ Clauson, *An Etymological*, 610.

⁵¹ Sinor, *The Establishment*, 295–297, 313.

⁵² G. Doerfer, "Turkic Languages of Iran," In: *The Turkic Languages*, ed. L. Johanson, É. Á. Csató London-New York 1998, 277.

⁵³ Bregel, *An Historical*, 16.

⁵⁴ Golden, *An Introduction*, 207.

⁵⁵ Clauson, *An Etymological*, 18, 615.

⁵⁶ Mackerras, *The Uighurs*, 339.

he crushed Jurchen Kaghan and killed him. He cut off his head. [...] 30/9 Oghuz Kaghan's army, bodyguards and people gained so much inanimate goods that an insufficiency of beasts of burden (lit. horse, mule, ox) turned out to load (the goods) on and carry it away. There in Oghuz Kaghan's army, there was an intelligent, good, clever man, his name was Barmaklig Josun Bellig (*barmaqliy josun bellig*). This clever (man) built a cart (*qanq⁹*). [...] 31/9 They dragged it and went away. [...] 32/5 Oghuz Kaghan saw the carts and laughed. Then he told: 'Let the living make the lifeless walk with the carts! You with the cart (*qanq⁹luy*), a name is to be for you, let the cart manifest it!'

The name Jurchen seems to designate a different entity than Golden Khagan. According to the text, Jurchen is simultaneously a geographical, ethnic, and personal name. It is strange that, while Golden Khagan appears as a diplomat who pays tribute, the Jurchen are warlike steppe people. Before the founding of the Jin dynasty, the Jurchen were the subjects of the Liao, who were differentiated between two groups. While the so-called civilized Jurchen were occupied with agriculture and cattle-breeding, the savage Jurchen led a different life-style, living on flat lands and in forests. The forest Jurchen paid tax to the Kitan court, while those living on the seashore paid tax to the Sung dynasty.⁵⁷ The context (uncultivated flat land) could refer to the savage Jurchen.

The Secret History of the Mongols (§. 253) mentions the conquest of the Jurchen again after Altan Khan's submission. The campaign is led by Qasar on Chinggis' order: 'Qasar brought the city of Beiging into subjection, forced Vujanu of the Jürčēt to submit and subjugated the towns which were on the way there.'⁵⁸ This parallelism, however, is not so direct as Golden Khagan's submission, and differs in the important detail that Oghuz kills the Jurchen Kaghan, while Qasar only subjugates them.

The name of the cart maker, *barmaqliy josun bellig*, is hard to interpret as the phrase is not completely transparent grammatically. Its approximate meaning is '[the man] who knows the method of wheelarm' or '[the man] who knows crafty methods': *barmaq* 'Finger, Speiche eines Rades'⁵⁹ *josun* ~ Written Mongolian *yosun* 'principle, method'⁶⁰ *bellig* 'bekannt, sicher, offenbar'⁶¹. Similar to the above-mentioned name *tömiürtü qayul*, it might refer to the skill of the man wielding it.

The given name *qanq⁹luy* corresponds to the historical tribal name, Kangli. We also find another folk etymological interpretation in this name giving.

⁵⁷ H. Franke, "The Forest Peoples of Manchuria: Kitans and Jurchens," In: *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, ed. D. Sinor, Cambridge 1994², 237–259.

⁵⁸ de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History*, 181.

⁵⁹ J. Th. Zenker, *Dictionnaire Turc-Arabe-Persan*. Leipzig 1866, 192a.

⁶⁰ Lessing, *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, 435.

⁶¹ Zenker, *Dictionnaire Turc-Arabe-Persan*, 208b

qanq^o is the name of the cart upon which they carry the booty away. The name, according to the text (not cited here), originates from the rattling sound that is made by the cart while moving; this is described by the onomatopoeic word, *qanq^o*. The name *qanq^oluy* is derived from the name of the cart: 'one who has a cart (*qanq^o*)'. The Kangli belonged to the Kipchak tribal confederation⁶²; their dwelling place was east of the Aral Sea and the region to the east of it, from the 11-12th centuries until the Mongolian invasion.⁶³

In the fourth main part of PON, the conquests of India, Syria, and the Tangut Empire are mentioned:

(15) 32/9 After that with this grey furred, grey maned male wolf, he rode out and went until the borders of India (*sindu*), Tangut (*tanqut*), and Syria (*šām*). After a lot of fights and battles, he took them and united them into his own country.

PON describes very few details about the conquests of these territories. The historical correspondents of these might be found in the following. From 977, the Ghaznevids led raiding campaigns to India with the lead of Sebük Tegin, who was of Karluk origin.⁶⁴ His son Mahmūd also led 17 such raids and annexed the provinces of Panjab and Sindh.⁶⁵ Similar raids also happened in the 12th century⁶⁶. The Chagadaid khan Du'a launched several invasions against India, and besieged Delhi in 1303 and 1305, and smaller-scale raids continued in the following years.⁶⁷ Timur also led armies against North India in 1398–1399.⁶⁸

The Tanguts lived in the region of Ordos and Ala-shan from the 8th century; they had had a state since 990. They played an important role in the lives of the surrounding states (China, Tibet, and Turkestan) in the first half of the 11th century. The Tangut state was overthrown by the Mongols in 1227.⁶⁹ The text of PON certainly registers this event. The Oghuz Seljuks conquered Syria after the battle of Manzikert (1071) together with East Anatolia.⁷⁰

We can read the following about the conquest of Egypt in PON:

(16) 33/6 It should not be left out, it should be known, that in the southern corner (of the world) there is a place named Barak (*baraq^o*). [...] 34/4 The kaghan of that place was a kaghan named Egypt (*mīšīr*). Oghuz Kaghan rode against him. It became a chaotic and terrible fight. Oghuz Kaghan at-

⁶² Ligeti, *A magyar nyelv*, 405.

⁶³ Bregel, *An Historical*, 27, 31.

⁶⁴ Bregel, *An Historical*, 22.

⁶⁵ Bregel, *An Historical*, 26.

⁶⁶ Bregel, *An Historical*, 32.

⁶⁷ M. Biran, "The Ögödeid and Chagadaid realms." In: *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia. The Chinggisid Age*, ed. N. di Cosmo, A. J. Frank, P. B. Golden, Cambridge 2009, 46-66: 54.

⁶⁸ Bregel, *An Historical*, 43.

⁶⁹ Vásáry, *Innerasiens*, 114-115.

⁷⁰ Bregel, *An Historical*, 28.

tacked, Egypt Kaghan fled. Oghuz crushed him, he took his country, and went away.

The mention of Barak as a geographical name here is very interesting. In the Muslim *Oyuz-nāmās* the story of Barak, land of darkness, constitutes an independent episode,⁷¹ while here they are obviously mixed up. This study will rather not attempt the historical interpretation of the name Barak, as the mention of Egypt provides the necessary amount of information.

The endeavour of the Seljuks to conquer Egypt was obstructed by the Byzantine emperor, Romanos Diogenes IV (1068–1071). The conflict became consummated in the battle of Manzikert but, in the end, the Seljuks did not conquer Egypt.⁷² The mention of Egypt, thus, can refer to the later Mamlūk state, which lasted from the second half of the 13th century until the first quarter of the 16th century. Its leading elite was a group of Kipchak Turks who were originally military slaves.

We arrive at the last part of PON, which narrates how Oghuz divided his empire among his sons. We learn that Oghuz's counsellor was a man named Great Türk (*uluy türük*).

(17) 35/4 It should not be left out, it should be known that next to Oghuz Kaghan there was a white bearded, grey haired, sharp minded (lit. long minded) old man. He was a wise and well-behaved man, a seer (*tüšimāl*). His name was Great Türk (*uluy türük*).

The meaning of the name of the man is 'Great Türk'. Türk was used as an ethnic name for the leading elite of the I. and II. Türk Kaghanates (552–659 and 687–744, respectively). The description of the persona of Great Türk reminds the reader of Bilge Tonyukuk⁷³, who helped Elterish Kaghan during the foundation of the II. Türk Kaghanate.

According to the narration, Great Türk saw a dream, which he explained Oghuz, who sent his sons out for hunting. The elder sons found a golden bow; the younger ones found a silver arrow. This determined the later hierarchy between them.

(18) 38/6 Sun, Moon, and Star, after they hunted down many games and birds, found a golden bow on the way, they took it, and gave it to their father. Oghuz Kaghan [was glad, laughed, and] he broke the bow into three pieces. [Then he said: 'Oh, elder sons,] The bow shall be yours! Like the bow, you shall shoot the arrows up to the sky!' – he said. [...] 40/9 On the right side, he erected a pole of forty fathoms. Onto its top, he put a golden hen. To its neath, he tied a white sheep [...] 41/7 The Broken (*buzuqlar*) sat on the right side.

⁷¹ Cf. Jahn, *Die Geschichte*, 24–26, 43; Bakır, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Selçuk*, 183; Kargı Ölmez, *Ebulgazi Bahadır Han* 133, 137.

⁷² Golden, *An Introduction*, 221.

⁷³ Cf. Sinor, *The Establishment*, 312–313.

(19) 39/5 Then after that Sky, Mountain and Sea, after they hunted down many games and many birds, found three silver arrows on the way. They took it, and they gave it to their father. Oghuz Kaghan was glad, laughed, and he distributed the arrows among the three of them. So he said: 'Oh younger sons, the arrows shall be yours! The bow shot the arrows, you shall become (like) the arrows!' – he said. [...] 41/3 On the left side, he erected a(nother) pole of forty fathoms. Onto its top, he put a silver hen. To its base, he tied a black sheep. [...] 41/8 the Three Arrows (*üč oqlar*) sat on the left side.

In these two parallel sections, the occurrence of the white and the black sheep is very important. The names Broken (*buzuqlar*) and Three arrows (*üč oqlar*) do not show up in the sources earlier than the Oghuz-tradition. The name *buzuq* has a later parallel in the Ottoman Empire: there was a *sanjak*, later a *vilayet*, which was named Bozok. The white and the black sheep (*aq qoyun*, *qara qoyun*), on the other hand, are known to be the names of political formations. Two East Anatolian tribal confederation of the Turkmens, the Akkoyunlu and the Karakoyunlu were named after them; they migrated into East Anatolia in the Mongol era.⁷⁴ The centre of the Karakoyunlu was Arjish, which was northeast of Lake Van. Their residence became Tebriz in the 14th century.⁷⁵ The residence of the Akkoyunlu, who were in a constant feud with the Karakoyunlu, was originally Amid, until they took Tebriz from their foes in 1469.⁷⁶

If we review what has been told so far, we can see that PON narrates historical events in a kaleidoscopic mixture, leaping back and forth in time and space, by no means in a chronological order. As we saw in the case of the river Etil and the Ice Mountain, even the narration itself is not linear, but is rather a loose string of episodes. The direct evidence for this is the phrase 'It should not be left out, it should be known...' in examples (16) and (17), which introduces a new unit of the plot. If we survey the structure of the plot thoroughly, it can be seen that the events narrated in the third and fourth main parts can be attached to the second main part; they each elaborate a detail. The Jurchen and Kangli are in connection with them (14) as well as the Tangut (15), who can be connected to Altun Khan (6). The name of the Ice Mountain (8) shows up during the campaign against Urum (7), where the story of the Karluk takes place (12). The river Etil occurs in this part (8), which will later provide the scene for the story of Great Horde/Kipchak. The mention of Syria (15) and perhaps that of Egypt (16) refers to the campaign against Urum. The house or tent occurring in the story of the Kalach (13) might symbolise the residence of the Uyghurs (4).

The following table sums up the historical occurrence of the events and entities in the order that they occur in PON. The serial numbers given do not

⁷⁴ Golden, *An Introduction*, 367.

⁷⁵ Golden, *An Introduction*, 369.

⁷⁶ Golden, *An Introduction*, 371.

correspond to the numbers of the above examples, but they instead refer to the sequence of their occurrence in PON.

The historical correspondences of the proper names occurring in PON

Main part of the plot	From until (length)	Proper name	Era
I. Mythic background	1/1–10/7 (~10 pages)	1. <i>oyuz</i> (= <i>uδ haδaqlıy</i> ~ <i>tük tülüküg</i>)	8. century ?14. century
		2. <i>?qıyat,</i> <i>?qıtan</i>	?1200 / ?907–1125
		(<i>kün, ay, yultuz</i>) (<i>kök, tay, täñiz</i>)	see part V.
II. Unique features of PON	10/8–23/4 (~12,5 pages)	3. <i>uyyur</i>	744–840
		4. <i>altun qayan</i>	1214
		5. <i>urum qayan</i>	11. century
		6. <i>muz tay</i>	
		7. <i>etil</i>	
		8. <i>urus beg</i>	11. century / ?14. century
		9. <i>saqlap</i>	9. century on
III. Allied Turkic tribes	23/4–32/9 (~9,5 pages)	7. <i>etil</i>	11. century / 15. century
		10. <i>uluy ordu beg =</i> <i>qıpçaq beg</i>	
		6. <i>muz tay</i>	11–12. centuries
		11. <i>qārliy beg</i>	
		12. <i>tömürtü qayul =</i> <i>qalač</i>	?4–6. centuries / 7. century
		13. <i>jürčäd qayan</i>	1115–1234
		14. <i>barmaqlıy josun bellig =</i> <i>qanqoluy</i>	11. century
IV. Secondary conquests	32/9–35/3 (~2 pages)	15. <i>sindu</i>	10–12. centuries / ?1303–1305 / ?1398–1399
		16. <i>tañqut</i>	1227
		17. <i>šām</i>	1071
		18. <i>baraq^g ~ misir qayan</i>	1071 / 13–16. centuries
V. Dividing the empire	35/4–42/7 (~8 pages)	19. <i>uluy türük</i>	?7. century
		20. <i>kün, ay, yultuz = buzuq = (aq</i> <i>qoyunlu)</i>	14–15. centuries
		21. <i>köl, tay, täñiz = üç oqlar =</i> <i>(qara qoyunlu)</i>	

In order to make the results more expressive, the above table is depicted in a graph below. The horizontal axis shows the proper names in their order of occurrence, to which I ordered on the vertical axis those centuries in which the name occurred, the given political entity playing an historical role, etc. The points marked with '?' are the possible correspondences to which I referred in the discussion of the individual examples. Thus, the graph shows the historical layering of those political formations and events that became the building stones of PON.

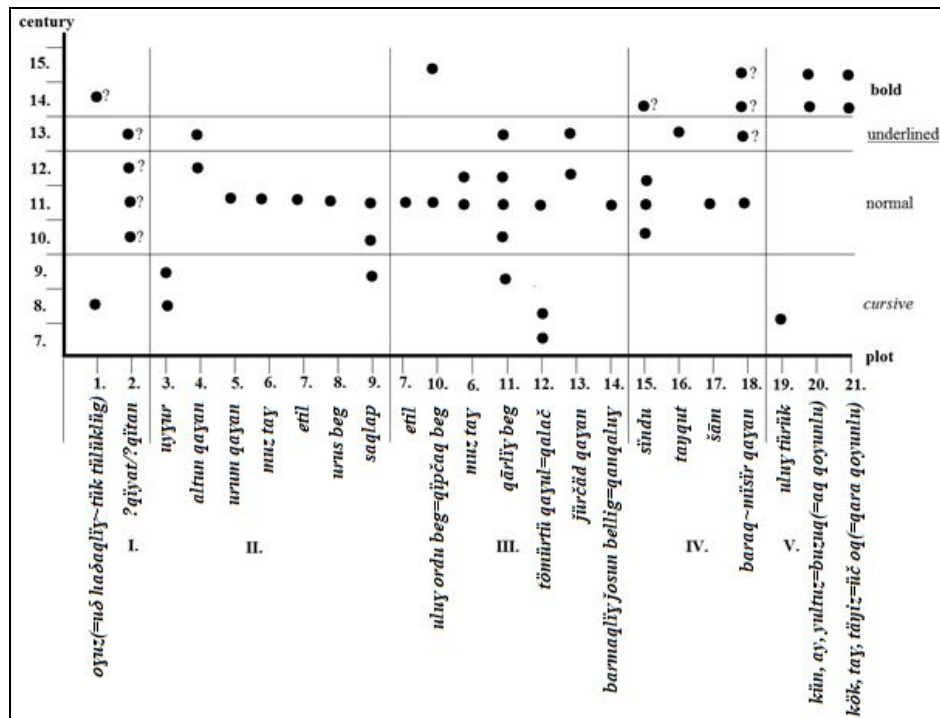


Figure 2. The historical layering of the proper names occurring in PON

I divided the vertical axis of the graph into four temporal layers. The oldest one refers to the 7-9th centuries, the era of the I. and II. Türk Kaghhanates, the Tokuz Oghuz tribal confederation, and the Uyghur Kaghhanate. The second and richest one records the events of the 10-12th centuries, the era of Central Asia before the Mongolian invasion: events connected to the Karakhanid, Ghaznevid, Seljuk Empires occur. Most of the names appearing in PON belong to this layer. This was probably the era when the Oghuz-tradition was formed. There are a few easily recognisable references to the Secret History of the Mongols or to the oral tradition on which the Secret History might be based. Thus, PON shows Mongolian influence. The addition of the youngest layer can be dated to the 14-15th centuries, to the westernmost end of the Turkic world of the era: Eastern Europe and East Anatolia. It is also clear that the order of the narration does not follow the chronology of real historical events.

in order to date the text. As stated above, the backbone of the plot is provided by the second main part, which is ordained to legitimise the authority above the Eastern European steppe by the defeat of Urum in the battle along the river Etil and with the subjugation of Saqlap. The story of the Kipchak is also connected to the river Volga (*etil*). The original name of Kipchak Beg, Great Horde (*uluy ordu*), could be the result of such an overlaying of the plot. Thus, the terminus post quem time of the emergence of the text can be given with the precision of decades, as the Great Horde existed between 1433 and 1502. PON was written down at that time at the earliest. The population of the Great Horde consisted mainly of Kipchak Turks, which supposes that the youngest temporal layer of PON could have been influenced by the tradition of the Kipchaks (cf. the possible parallel between the personas of Oghuz and Baba Tükles in example (2)). This might explain why there are conquests that are connected to the Mongols in this piece of the Oghuz-tradition. It is known that the Mongol leading elite of the Jochi-ulus became assimilated by their conquered Kipchak-Turkic population by the end of the 13th century,⁷⁷ so their Mongol tradition was built into the plot of PON together with the Kipchak layer.⁷⁸

The dynamics of the overlaying of PON's plot (as a text based on an oral tradition) are very similar to the development of the language. The tradition is developing throughout time. During the mutual interaction of different traditions, they affect and converge towards each other in a similar way to languages do.⁷⁹ The receiver might copy elements from the model, which are then adopted to the receiver's system (Chinggis Khan's conquests in PON belong to this category). Alternatively, certain features of the elements might be copied as selective copies (the addition of the feature of Baba Tükles' persona to that of Oghuz). The pre-requisite of such cultural interaction is the same as that of linguistic interaction: the coexistence of groups with different cultural backgrounds. The interaction can also be traced within the language of PON: Mongolian copies are present in the language of the text as are Kipchak linguistic features.

⁷⁷ I. Vásáry, "The Jochid Realm: the Western Steppe and Eastern Europe." In: *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia. The Chinggisid Age*, ed. N. di Cosmo, A. J. Frank, P. B. Golden, Cambridge 2009, 67–85.

⁷⁸ A similar but not so obvious process is described by K. Uray-Kőhalmi, "Egy eredetmítosz építőkövei (*A mongolok titkos története alapján*)," [The Constituents of an Origin Myth (as seen in the *Secret History of the Mongols*)] *Keletkutatás*, 2009. ősz, 5–22.

⁷⁹ For the code-copying framework widely applied in Turkic and non-Turkic linguistics to model interaction between different languages with the summary of the earlier literature, see L. Johanson, "Contact-induced linguistic change in a code-copying framework." In: *Language change: The interplay of internal, external and extra-linguistic factors*. (Contributions to the Sociology of Language, 86.), ed. M. C. Jones, E. Esch, Berlin 2002, 285–313, as well as further works by him.