

## TOPONIMYS WITH ANCIENT TURK ORIGINS IN THE BALKANS

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### **Abstract**

One of the sources dealing with the ancient Turkic history are toponyms. Toponymic investigations show that most of the ancient geographical names which have spread in Euroasia, in Central Asia, from North Africa, to Eastern Turkistan even in Siberia and these names were formed before Roman and Byzantine periods. So development of toponymic investigations, study of the history of Turkic peoples and scientific investigation of existing geographical names which keep the history of Turkic peoples have great significance.

One of the uninvestigated fields of the Turkic history are geographical names keeping historical facts within are the holy Balkan areas. The toponymic investigations carried on the Balkans show that these territories are the places were the ancient Turkic tribes were firstly settled and possessed. This fact is proved by the Turkic tribe names and by the words of different semantic meaning of the languages of Turkic tribes. The great deal of Balkan geographical names are the names derived out of ethnoniymms thus the names reflecting ancient Turkic tribe names (**Astipos//Astepe//Ishtip, Izletdere, Vardar, Sofular, Gilan, Sahsuvar kariyesi, Kosalar village, Tatarli kariyesi, in the Kosova, Uskup, Usturumca, Kumanova, Propishtip, Kochana, Makedonska Kamenika in Makedony, Araz district, Arazli, Azman, Cepine, Coban, Chorlu, Culfalar, Horozlar, Kangirlar, Sakarli, Sungurlar, Karuk, Kaspi, Kaz//Kas, Kazancilar, Kecililer, Kuman, Padarlar, Sofular, Tatar, Uzlar in Bulgaria**) show that Balkans historically were Turkic areas.

Geographical names are the real witnesses of history. We must pay great attention to the scientific investigations of the geographical names in Balkan states. The names of ancient Turkic tribes and their ethimology attract attention. I think that we must pay great attention to the toponymycal investigation of the geographical names existing in the Balkan states. Investigations show that the history of etnotoponimys dates back to B.C. This fact is very important on investigation of Turkic history in Balkans. These problems have been widely explained in the article. Because of the time I want to express my thoughts briefly. The names of ancient Turkic tribes and their historical etimology existing in this region attract attention. Some historians connect the visit of Turkic tribes to Balkans with the history of Ottoman Empire. But some historical – toponymycal investigations in Balkan states refuse this information. The Turkic tribe names which date back B.C. and keep the Balkan toponymys show that the Turkic tribes had settled in those places long before the Ottoman Empire. I want to attract your attention to the fact that we can meet the

variants of existing historical ethnotoponymys and their phonovariants in some states of the world, especially the places where the Turkic tribes lived. Thus, we must pay special attention to the comparative and parallel investigation of geographical names existing in regions of the world. The comparative – parallel investigation of these toponyms discover their phonovariants in different countries and creates opportunity to define their extralingvistic factor that underwent during the history.

At present, investigation of the toponyms attracts attention as an actual, historical and political issue. From this point of view it is very important to investigate the existing geographical Turkic names of Balkan states which keep their historical origin. We have investigate the historical Turkic toponyms existing in the Balkan states and pay attention to the comparative investigation of toponyms of other countries. This investigation finds out the fact about the places where the peoples settled down firstly, their historical migration as well as integration among different peoples. We may show following geographical Turkic names as the examples of phonovariants Turkic existing in different Turkic countries. According to the features and grammatical structure there appears the fact that phonovariants of toponyms have derived from the same origin.

**EX:** In Orhon monuments AZ bodunġ (Az peoples) as noted As//Az tribes toponymic parallels in versions countries: **North Azerbaijan;** *Azıx cave, Aza village, Araz river* ; **South Azerbaijan; (in Iran)** *As vllage , Aras (in Miyana ) , Azcan (in Eher);* **Turkey;** *Elazıx, Aş (Gumshane), Asi river (Hatay), Astarqan// Ashqala ( Erzurum ) , Ashut qalası (Hakkari);* **Bulgaria;** *Apaz district –Slavçitsa Hezargrad (Razgrad) Apazlar Martino Kırca AliAs district –Arsovo Şumnu(Şumen)Ası Koru RavnogorTatar Pazarcık (Pazarcık)Ası Köy (village) – Has Köy Dobri Vaynikov Şumnu(Şumen)AsılKöy Telerig H.Oġlu Pazarcık Asıllar(Asıller) Krasen Dol ŞumnuAsırlık Rogozovo Kırca Ali Aslar Naum Şumnu. Aslı Beyli Bliskovo Varna/Piri Vadi (Provadı) Azmanlar Azmanite Gabrova(Gabrovo Bek Aşlı - İvaylov Gradortaköy;* **Kosova (Yuqoslaviya);** *Astipos, Astepe;* **Russia;** *Azak Sea, Azak country, Azak castle, Azġur castle, Azak river (Ancient name of the Don in Ottoman sources), Azov Sea, Asaul, Azay .*

There are some periods of the Turkish history that have not been investigated yet at the result of material deficiency. Most of these problems deal with formation and development of the Turkish language. One of the most significant topics is formation of geographical names of several places where lived the Turkic tribes, their language and ethnic relations during the development of the world history the Turks possessed such a great area and geography that we can meet Turkish names on each point of history and on each point of the world from East to West and from North and South. As Prof. Dr. Tunjer Gulensoy said: “There appear Turkish names in Central Asia, Europe, Africa, even on a Small Island within a great ocean” (1, p. 20).

One of the sources dealing with the ancient Turkic history are toponyms. Toponymic investigations show that most of the ancient geographical names which have spread in Euroasia, in Central Asia, from North Africa, to Eastern Turkistan even in Siberia and these names were formed before Roman and Byzantine periods. So development of toponymic investigations, study of the history of Turkic peoples and scientific investigation of existing geographical names which keep the history of Turkic peoples have great significance.

One of the uninvestigated fields of the Turkic history are geographical names keeping historical facts within, are the holy Balkan areas. The toponymic investigations carried on the Balkans show that these territories are the places where the ancient Turkic tribes were firstly settled and possessed. This fact is proved by the Turkic tribe names and by the words of different semantic meaning of the languages of Turkic tribes. The great deal of Balkan geographical names are the names derived out of ethnonyms, thus the names reflecting ancient Turkic tribe names (*Astipos (Astepe)/İştîp, Kosova, İzletdere, Uskup, Kumanova, Koçana, Selanik, Usturumca, Vardar, Sofular, Gilan, Arasta, Şahsuvar karyesi, Kösalar köyü, Tatarlı kariyesi*) show that Balkans historically were Turkic areas.

The latest toponymic investigations show that the etymology of the tribe names which had great role in history and have their sings on geographical names which have not been investigated. So, at present the toponymic meaning of these forgotten names are existing as a secret. As the toponyms are unchangeable sources for historical investigations, on investigating the geographical names one must look through the whole historical places where the Turkic peoples lived. If we look through the historical stages of the ancient Turkic toponymy till present day we can meet misrepresented geographical names of Turkic origin in Russia, Oriental countries (Iraq, Iran, Afganistan and so on) also we can meet misrepresented and changed geographical names of ancient Turkic origin in some regions of Europe. Balkan countries take special place among these countries at the result of investigations carried on some historical sources. According to the language factors the ancient historical names prove our thoughts as official documents.

It is clear that, at the result of exchange of words between different languages, each word assimilates to the language rules, phonetic structure harmony and other peculiarities of the language. It is pity that, most of the words assimilate to the phonetic structure, lose their original semantic meaning and have absolutely opposite meaning. Geographical names take special place in the vocabulary of our language. From this point of view we must pay great attention to the geographical names of different places where the Turks lived lately, have seriously changed. The toponymic investigations prove that the onomastic unity are the Turkic origin toponyms concerning to B.C. One of the phonetically assimilated toponyms of Balkans is the settlement Ishtip which had the ancient name Astepe (Astipos).

In some ancient sources the name of Ishtip settlement was noted as Astipos (Astepe). According to Burhanettin Zaim's information which was taken from Ottoman sources there were eight Islamic, three Christian, one Jewish and one Kipti

altogether thirteen streets in this settlement. We see the fact that there were much more Turks there (2, p. 7).

Etymological investigations prove that the world Astipos (Astepe) was fully of Turkic origin and Turks settled there in ancient times. Historical documents show that the As tribe was one of the ancient Turkic tribes and they played a great role in the history. Toponymic investigations indicate that the name of this ethnos appeared during the stage of history during the historical process and it played a great role on ethnogenesis of all Turkic peoples, as well as Azeri Turkis. At present the fact of historical geographical names where the Turkic peoples lived in broad territories and reflect their tribe names, prove our thoughts.

According to prof. F.Jelilov's information we can meet the tribe name As (Az) ethnonym (in ancient Turkic written materials *Az – bodunğ or As people* ) in Uzbek, Altay, Karakalpak and other Turkic peoples like the tribe generation or family names. In the middle age information the name of Turkic origin Az tribe was spread from North Caucasus to central Asia and Altay. The more ancient materials (Heet, Urartu, Latin etc) indicate that the ethnonym Az was spread on a broad area from Small Asia to Azerbaijan. In those materials Az was shown like ethnonym and ethnotonym (3, p. 116).

Prof. R. Eyvazova also indicates that the ancient ancestors of Turkic peoples As tribe played a great role on Azerbaijan history. This territory was named As the country *of As people, the settlement of As people, the settlement of As knights, the settlement of Azer*. We can also meet the Az (As) ethnonym on Orkhon inscriptions “ *Az bodunğ üküş kiltım, Iğar elliğde [ı] ğar kağanlığda yeğ kiltım* ” (4, p.70). (I increased the small tribe and made great people Az. I made the Az people more powerful than the small tribe.)

XV – XVI century Ottoman sources indicate several place names in Turkey and Russia connected with the name of *Az tribe Ash – in Gumushane, the River Asi – in Hatay, Ashkale – in Erzurum, Ashut castle – in Hakkari, Elazix – in Turkey, the Azak Sea, Azak region, the Azak bridge, the Azak castle, the Azgur castle, and Astergan // Ejderhan – in Russia, the Azik cave in Azerbaijan*. In some Ottoman sources the name of the Don river was shown as Azak (5, p.50; 68). Most of investigators say that the largest part of the continent Asia is connected with the name of As tribe.

As R.G.Guzayev wrote during several centuries the ethnonymy As//Az was known not only in the Caucasus but also was known in some other parts of the world and even it was known in a great region from Altay to Ural. The most valuable information was the fact found by J.Jafarov. There it is said that, there is a hieroglyph which shows the name of the As//Az tribe on Gobustan rocks, the historical region where the first people were settled down in Azerbaijan.

At present, we may come across geographical names in several parts of the world, which are connected with the name of As tribe. There are much more ethnonyms of

As//Az origin in the Altay, Ural, Caucasus regions, in the Crimea, Central Asia and Kazakhstan. (6, 151-152).

At present most of the Ases live in Uzbekistan, Belkh, Kharezm, Gashgadere, Zerefshan and some other places. There are lots of toponyms keeping the name of As tribes in South Azerbaijan (Iranian Azerbaijan). *Such as: Esbha, Esbegelyan, Estergan Ezjan (Eher region), Eres // Aras (Miyana), Bekas (bey – as – the bey-ancient Turkic highest title of men, ) – in Mangur the Espir island) (in the Urmiya lake).*

So thus these toponyms borrowed some phonetic changes. They prove that the As tribes lived in these places in the ancient times. Today the name of the As//Az tribe without borrowing any additional language elements is keeping its origin in the Horand district, Eher region, South Azerbaijan. Also the name of Aza village in Ordubad region, Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, geographically neighbouring South Azerbaijan. It is one of the historical facts keeping the name of ancient Az tribes which lived in these places.

N.A.Bulgarova notes that the As ethnonym has mostly diffused in the Nogay toponymy on formation of *As Avıl (As Aul)* and *Azay* toponyms. As you know the name of As//Az ethnonym with light phonetic difference, we may come across in different regions where, the Turks live. At present both components of ancient geographical Balkan name *Astipos//Astepe (As – tepe, hill ) bared the phonetic influence of the Greece language and kept up today* (7, p.125).

At present both components of the ancient geographical Balkan name Astipos//Astepe have formed out of Turkic components (*As – tepe*). It has been kept up today though the word borrowed some phonetic changing.

The Suwar's are one of the Turkic tribes which followed geographical names at the ethnogenesis of the Turkic peoples. The Shahsuwar district in Ishtip region is one of the geographical names keeping the name of those tribes. In some historical sources the Suwars are known as Saspers and the country beginning from Besre the to North is shown like this: "Ilanlilar country, the Saspeir (Subar//Sabir) and their Kolkhisliler country" (8, p.37 - 40).

Ancient Sasper's country includes modern regions: Azerbaijan, the western Azerbaijan (present Armenia) and the Eastern part of Eastern Anatolia and South Azerbaijan regions. Ksenopon's historical work "Anabasis" deals with the Makron's and Skythen's living in the south of Choruh.

The Sabir's (*Sabirler//Savir//Subar//Suvar//Sabarlar*) who came and ruled for some period the places left by Ongur's, later were seen at the Caucasus – Don – Volga regions. In the years 515-516 they passed the Caucasus entered inside of Anatolia and spread through Khayseri, Konya and Ankara. The historians take this movement as the second visit of Turks to Anatolia (10, p.59).

Yavuz Edib shows that the Siberian fields of Russia are the settlement of the ancient Turkic tribe Sabars and the author proves it by the historical facts (12, p. 45).

N. Chetinkaya writes that the Subars settled down at the northern banks of the Firat and Dejele rivers in the southern regions of Urfa, Diyarbakir, Mardin and around Mosul (Iraq). The author shows that the geographical name Sasper (Sa Sper) in Choruh region Turkey is connected with the Turkic ethnos.

Historians G.Geybullayev and R.Eyvazova wrote in their historical investigations that the Suvars settled down in the Caucassian Albania B.C.

Prof. Tofiq Ahmedov in his investigations writes by historical facts that the name of Bilesuvar region in Azerbaijan is connected with the ancient Turkic ethnos Suwar//Sawir (13, p.32).

N.Mammadov approves T.Ahmedov's thought. He notes that the first component of the word bile//pile means field and the whole word means the field of Suvars, the place where the Suvars lived (14, p.132).

All these scientific historical facts prove that in the toponymy of the Turkic peoples settled in different places the word Suwar// Sawar// Sabir was one of the ancient Turkic tribes and at present is being kept in some geographical names.

In the Balkan toponymy one of the geographical names is Kumanova which attracts attention. According to M.Oner's information beginning with the VIII century besides Kipchak name the Turkic tribes were called by three names. These names were given by Turkic tribes. Besides those names they were given four names by foreigners;

1. The word "Kipchak" which used by other Turkic tribes was met in Islamic historical geographical literature and later it was used in Mogol and Chinese sources.
2. The word "Kuman" was used by Byzantine writers and rarely met in Russian, Oriental and Latin sources.
3. The names "hun//kun" which is much used by Hungarians and was used in the geography books by some Arabians authors.
4. The word "polovets" which have been used in Russian sources since XI century.
5. The word "pallady" which was used in Adam Brement's work in Latin XI century.
6. The word "walwen" which was included into central German and Latin texts of the XIII century.

7. The word “Kharteshkin” ” which was taken by Mathaios from Urfa. It was taken from an Armenian author ” which was written in the XII century. It was borrowed by Armenians after neighborhood relations. In another investigation the name “Kipchak”, “Kuman” and present day word “Kumuk” (the name one of Kipchak peoples) have been combined.

According to the new information given in the Hungarian historians works there is a great Kimek – Kipchak tribe consisting of 1020 people in Western Siberia.

Later the well – known Kuman tribe name also appeared at that time. Before Kuman – Kipchak tribe unity while Kuman people living in the far East, they occupied Sari Uygurs country, made half of them obey. In the second half of the X century the Kuman – Sari Uygur unity were driven away to the Oghuz and Garlugh lands by their neighbors Kitays (17, p.15-20).

It is not an occasion that the Balkan toponyms were used in Turkic peoples ethnogenesis such as; Kas, Sul, Uz, Sofular, Kosalar as well as makro and mikrotoponyms Arasta mosque, Gara Gazi mosque, Gurshunlu mosque, Seid Abdulkerim effendi mosque, Toplunja district, Garaca Ali district, Guru Chapichi bathhouse Bashaus, Guru bath – house and so on.

If we pay attention to the toponyms that have small phonetic difference and influence of some language elements we can scientifically analyse the origin of these toponyms according to historical facts. Investigations show that the Balkan toponymy is compound and mixed according to the meaning and origin. So there are several toponyms concerning to different language groups. Most of these toponyms originally concern to the Turkish language (Ish obasi, Uskup, Kozyak district, Haji Yusifli district, Ulanja district). Investigation of Balkan names of rivers, villages, cities and mountains and also investigation of ancient Turkic tribe and etnos names have great importance on studying of the history, origin and development of the Turkic peoples.

If we pay attention to the developmental steps of the ancient Turkic toponymy till present day, in Balkans and in some other places we can meet Turkic origin words which were distorted changed and influenced by some other languages. During the history some of those geographical names were taken away or forgotten some of them fall under the influence of historical process and changed some phonetic elements and at the result changed their semantic meaning and they became toponyms that are not understandable from the language viewpoint.

According to the investigations the history of toponyms in Balkans concern to the ancient times BC much more ancient Ottoman Empire. Investigation of these toponyms analyses the historical state, as well as has great importance, on studying the ethnogenesis of the Turkic peoples, their ancient settlement, mythology, religion and social-philosophic view.

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