



THE ORKHON INSCRIPTIONS AS A SOURCE THE STUDY OF TURKIC HISTORY

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Annotation

This article covers the importance of the study of national history in the rise of historical consciousness, with a special focus upon the Orkhon written monuments. The processes of formation of ethnic units at the socio-historical stages, the gradual development of the Turkic peoples and their role in ensuring human civilization have been researched in detail. The responsibility of the Orkhon written monuments in raising the consciousness of Turkic peoples, also their role of Khagans Bilga, Istami and Tonyukuk in uniting the scattered Turkic tribes and forming a large political-military unit and the importance of the individual in ensuring military-political integrity in socio-historical processes have been stated. In the study of the processes of ethnic formation, the rising and developing of the nation, from the clan to the tribe, has been analysed in stages, and the characteristic features of each ethno-social and historical stage have been discussed.

Keywords: history, nation, Orkhon monuments, Kosho-Tsaidam, Turkic Empire, spirituality, writing, artifact, stone scripts, stages of ethnic formation.

The science of history is known as a subject that studies the stages of formation and evolution of the world around man and it plays an important role in awakening historical consciousness and historical memory in the representatives of mankind. Civilizations that have been formed and developed in every historical period and context also require attention as an object of study of the science of history. "The science of history allows us to see the interrelationships between processes and events that took place in the past, their roots, the reasons that move history, its logic and meaning[1, 274]. Historical information is reflected on archeological monuments, artifacts, manuscripts depicting past events and happenings and inscriptions on stones. These sources are interpreted by experts, scholars and researchers. Stone inscriptions and manuscripts were written on the basis of the products of thought and ideas which put forward by the nobles of their time. The products of such thinking were created in the form of attitudes towards military, political, social, cultural and





spiritual processes in society, ensuring the rise of the worldview, spiritual and moral image of members of society.

‘An artifact (from Latin ‘Artefactum’: ‘arte’ – artificially + ‘factus’ – made) – in archeology, an object subjected in the past to directed mechanical impact, which is discovered as a result of targeted archaeological excavations or any single, sometimes random event. Examples of artifacts are stone tools, jewellery, weapons, ceramics, buildings and their details, coals of an ancient bonfire, bones with traces of human exposure, and so on’. [2, 82-83] Stone inscriptions are also important as they display the factors of socio-cultural impact on the process of formation and development of mankind in the stages of its gradual development. And also the artifact: ‘... stuff, made by man’ [3, 63], as a product of human creation, expresses the possibility and level of thinking inherent in a particular socio-historical period and testifies to the state of natural-evolutionary processes inherent in a particular tree through an artificial approach to the elements of nature. Therefore, stone inscriptions, as an expression of historical processes, increase the awareness of identity in each person, nation, and allow the development of historical consciousness. ‘Writing is the true beginning of the cultural development of human society, one of the main factors in the process of long and complex evolution of mankind.’ [4, 467] Stone inscriptions also serve to reveal the historical essence of spiritual processes as an artifact that represents the evolutionary stages of universal culture. Writing as a product of language is a reflection of certain signs of communication and processes. Writing as a socio-cultural phenomenon proves the historical significance and depth of language. Therefore, writing is important in the study of the processes of formation of humanity, first as a language, then as an expression of words based on certain characters. ‘Language is one of the most enigmatic, mysterious events in the life of a society. Human life takes place in the environment of language, in the world of words. Language surrounds each of us and society in general, and at the same time keeps them in its path through society and human consciousness. Therefore, man cannot imagine himself without language, outside of language.’ [5, 11-12] Therefore, writing is also important to reach the wisdom that is the product of thinking and language to reach all members of society and remain a spiritual heritage for future generations.

The role of Orkhon written monuments is important in the study of the first stages of the spiritual heritage of the Turkic peoples. Since these characters were not read by anyone for hundreds of years, they have acquired a mysterious nature and taken the term runic. ‘Runo – secret, mystery, magical.’ [6, 276] And it was only in the last decade of the 19th century that these magical characters began to reveal their secrets and magic to humanity. ‘Since beginning in the 2nd half of the 1st millennium AD





Turkic tribes, who settled in the upper reaches of the Yenisey and Orkhon, used their own writing system, which some researchers such as V.Tomsen, V.V.Radlov, L.R. Kyzlasov, I.L. Kyzlasov, A.S. Amanjolov , Q. Sartqojauly, N.G. Shaymerdinova,Q. Sartqojauly and others call the ancient Turkic runic script' [7, 14].

The Orkhon-Yenisey alphabet gradually spread over a considerable territory. The ancient Turks left a significant number of inscriptions on the steles erected in honour of the khans, leaders, tribal leaders, heroes and various officials, on the rocks, on metal and clay dishes and other small things, and, finally, later manuscripts written in this alphabet have been preserved. 'It is interesting to note that this alphabet also contains seals which are the characteristics of the great Turkic tribes.' [8, 94] Indeed, the stamp-shaped forms of the Turkic-runic inscriptions are more likely to be used in the creation of this inscription than the stamps (en) used to indicate which tribe the cattle belonged to. 'On the basis of such inscriptions and stamps a (en),- the ancient Kyrgyz script can be distinguished from other inscriptions of that period' [9, 3].

Early references to finds with mysterious inscriptions date back to the 18th century and mean those monuments that were discovered by travellers in the river basin Yenisey. At the beginning of the 19th century, quite detailed images and descriptions of them were already published in Russia, attracting the attention of a number of prominent scientists. Different and conflicting views were expressed on the origin and ethnicity of this writing system. 'In 1889, the East Siberian branch of the Russian Geographical Society organized an expedition led by N.M. Yadrintsev and examined a number of monuments in the river basin Orkhon (Mongolia). The discovery of the Orkhon monuments opens a new glorious page in the development of Turkology, when, at last, the monuments of the Orkhon-Yenisey writing were read, described and analyzed from both linguistic and historical points of view'[10, 14-15]. Since the beginning of the reading of the Orkhon-Yenisey written monuments and the interpretation of its content, that is, for one hundred and twenty-five years, a number of works on its textological analysis, language and lexicological significance have been carried out. The main reason for this is that any written finding that embodies the essence of the centuries is first studied, focusing on the structure of the alphabet, lithographic and the ratio of vowels and consonants in word formation. 'In Turkology, a number of scientific works have been done on the language of the Orkhon-Yenisey monuments, its phonological features, lexical parallels, word groups and other issues.' [11, 3] This is true, but issues such as its historical significance and its role in the development of thinking of the Turkic peoples have not been studied in the context of the Orkhon-Yenisey written monuments. The study of these issues has great importance today, when the processes of cultural cooperation between the Turkic





peoples are intensifying and the processes of self-awareness in Turkic thought are increasing. Thus, man tends to understand the essence of his existence. 'Man is a creature seeking the meaning of his existence. If nonsense fills life, this condition gives rise to depression and suffering.' [12, 380] That means the meaninglessness in human life causes mental exhaustion and suffering in it. Therefore, addressing the historical aspects and filling the historical consciousness with the invaluable teachings and sayings of our ancestors is an important factor in understanding ourselves. Based on historical sources, the study and application of the courage, heroism, generosity and nobility characters of ancestors in our socio-cultural life is the spiritual basis for understanding their identity.

There are some kind of meaningful sayings written in Orkhon monuments: 'The sky that exalted my father-khan and my mother-khatun saying: 'May the name and glory of the Turkic people not perish!' Heaven, the giver of the tribes (under the authority of the khan) said (and this time): 'May the name and glory of the Turkic people not perish!' Therefore, Heaven himself exalted me (and made) Khan.' [13, 23]

These were noted with pride that the glorious Turkic people belong to eternity, that celestial bodies always support the Turkic peoples, and that these lines have an educational value among youth today, raising their sense of pride, responsibility for the fate of the homeland and the people. These aspects are important in today's context of spiritual renewal, in the socio-cultural development of society. Indeed, the success of a particular nation depends on a personal factor, that is, the skill of the leader: 'My, Bilga Khagan's, word, who was created by the God of Heaven, to the Turkic people: when my wise father occupied the Turkic throne, nine Oghuz heroes, famous beks – governors, his nation regarded him... At the age of seventeen, I led my troops towards Tangut... At the age of eighteen, I marched towards the Olti Chub Sughdak, I crushed the people... At the age of twenty-two, I led my troops towards Tabgach ... Tengry says, I succeeded, the Turkic people won. If the state had not governed by me, the Turkic people would have died and perished.' [14, 136-137] Of course, the role of the political-military leader in the victory and triumph of a particular nation is invaluable. These aspects:

1. Which are closely related to the leadership skills and abilities of a political-military leader to ensure the success of a particular people, nation, ethnicity and ethnic group in socio-political processes.
2. For a nation to be great, its leader must be a brave, courageous, fully incorporating the military-political will. The success of a particular nation and people is closely related to the organizational ability of the political leader, and his most of the qualities and characteristics are embodied in the daily activities of the people.





It is important that the monuments of Orkhon - Bilga, Istami and Tonyukuk play an important role in the promotion of our national history and comprehending of our identity. Bilga Khagan says: 'I did not become a khan over wealthy people and cattle over the people, I became a khan over a miserable, low people, who had no food inside, but clothes outside. With my younger brother Kul-Tegin, we agreed that the name and glory of the people acquired (conquered) by our ancestors should not perish (and therefore) because of the Turkic people I did not sleep at night and did not sit (idle) during the day.' [15, 23] That testifies he worked tirelessly day and night to unite the scattered population and strengthen the ethno-political foundations of the Turkic state. As the thinker T. Carlyle rightly points out: 'At every stage of world history we meet the Great Man who was his savior and who burned it in the hearts of men. World history is a biography of great people'[16, 42]. Indeed, world history is a mirror that embodies the activities of great personalities. It is noteworthy that Bilga, Istami and Tonyukuk Khagans, as great figures who united the scattered Turkic people, still have a strong place in the historical memory of the Turkic peoples.

Bilga Khagan says: 'In my thirty two years old, I went against the Chinese and fought with the eighty thousand army of Chach Sengun. I completely defeated his army there.' [17, 25] These aspects confirm the bravery of our ancestor Bilga Khagan and the high level of organizational skills, such as uniting my heroes in the interests of the people.

The study of formation stages of Turkic ethnic units is important in restoring our historical memory, the study of the formation of ethnic units is important in studying the essence of striving for Turkishness and understanding ourselves. In order to deeply understand and comprehend the essence of the processes of formation of Turkic units as a hand, we must first analyse the processes of formation and development of ethnic units and its sub-levels in the Eurasian lands. It is natural that the Turkic super ethnos that is an integral part of today's social and ethnocultural civilization, consists of a set of ethnic units based on a common language, identity and worldview. When we say humanity, we mean first of all the large, numerous, advanced, super ethnos that are leading in science, technology, manufacturing and other spheres of life, and then the nations. Super ethnos and nations play a decisive role in the further progress of mankind, in raising production to new heights, in the struggle for peace, stability and justice in the world and in the creation of material and spiritual wealth.

Any conscious unit consists of a set of people. In the primitive community system, the first people lived as a mutual community, that is, as a group of people. The first people to be separated from the animal world felt helpless in the face of the spontaneous





forces of external nature, and there was a need to unite between them. As a result, the first primitive unity of people was formed, which not only played an important role in protecting against the forces of nature, external threats, but also in ensuring their material well-being, as well as opened up favourable opportunities for this first community. Thus, the primitive clans first appeared in human society.

On the whole, the study of national history plays a leading role in the understanding of identity, in which it is important to pay attention to the stages of ethnic formation and development. It is important to raise the historical consciousness of the individual, ethnic group, people and nation, to create future development using the positive aspects of historical experience, that is, to inculcate the noble qualities of ancestors in the mental essence of the nation and contribute to universal civilization. Mankind originated from a single root, it is necessary to study the stages of specific formation and development and pay attention to the features that provide mutual commonality. Thus, universal development is emphasizing mutual commonality.

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