

THE NATIONALITY OF THE EPHTALITES

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After the Kushans the regions of Transoxania, Khurasan, and northern India came under the rule of the Ephtalites, or White Huns, who are called Hayṭal, or Hayâṭila in the plural, by Islamic writers. Syriac sources speak of them as Epthtalite or Hephthalite, and Abdel, and Armenian sources refer to them as Heptal. They are generally considered to have constituted a part of the Hiyugnu, or the Huns who invaded Europe, and they thus become, by this token, or by their very name White Hun, a nation probably closely associated or related with the Turks. Especially Arabic or Islamic sources are clear and unequivocal in asserting them to be Turkish and identifying them with Turkish peoples.

The Ephtalites overthrew the Kushans and in the fifth century founded an empire extending from Transoxania and the basin of the Oxus River to the interiors of northern India, corresponding in territory roughly to that of the extinct Kushan Empire. They carried out a series of campaigns against both India and Persia, defeated the Sasanians in a series of campaigns, forcing them to pay tribute, and held the all-important trade routes of Central Asia under their control and kept them in a thriving condition.

The Ephtalites were redoubtable enemies of the Sasanian Empire especially, and they reached the peak of their political power with the reign of their king Aqshunwar or Aqsunvar whose rule started in 484 and who vanquished the Sasanid king Piruz in a campaign in the course of which the latter lost his life.

The boundary between the Sasanids and the Ephtalites started in Jurjân at the southeast corner of the Caspian Sea and passed through Tâliqân roughly along the Murghâb River, around the turn of the century, i. e., about 500 A. D.. Their territory generally includ-

ed Tokhâristân, Chaghânyân, Zâbulistân, and Bâdghîs, i. e., the environs of Balkh, Kâbul, Ghazna, Bâmyân, and Herât. Bâmyân, the metropolis of Bâdghîs, was their capital, and Balkh war their secondary capital or city of royal residence.

The Ephtalite state collapsed under the joint assault of the Western Tukyus and the Sasanians. This was accomplished early in the second half of the sixth century during the reign of Khusraw I, Anûshîrawân who entered Balkh on this occasion. Some local kingdoms such as the Shâhîs of Kâbul and Sijistân whose title was Rutbîl continued to exercise sovereignty in the district as remnants of the Ephtalites until the conquest of the region by the Arab armies early in the mid seventh century.¹

There is mention of a group of people, judged to be Ephtalites, whom an Arab army contingent combatted in Kûhistân. They were inhabitants of the vicinity of Herat. Sources sometimes specifically use the expression "king of the Ephtalites" for rulers with whom the Arabs, or, more generally, the Muslims had to deal, and sometimes they use merely the term Turk or Turkish. Tarkhan Nizak who was put to death by Qutayba in 709-710 bore the title "the king of the Ephtalites".²

In the year 718 the younger brother of the yabghu of Tokhâristân, a prince who had been living for over fourteen years in the Chinese palace, registered a complaint with the Chinese Emperor, saying that he was not receiving a salary compatible with his rank. For, he said, his brother ruled over two hundred and twelve princes, governors, and prefects, and he enumerated the districts and peoples over which his jurisdiction extended. His brother, he said, was the suzerain of the kings of Zâbulistân, Kapicha, Khuttal, Jurjân, Bâmyân, and other rulers among whom is mentioned also "the king of the Ephtalites." Again, in 727, the yabghu of Tokhâristân sent to the Chinese Emperor a request for assistance against the Arabs, and the latter

¹ Edouard Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue Occidentaux*, Paris 1903, pp. 221-229, 234, 235; Denis Sinor, *Introduction à l'Etude de l'Eurasie Centrale*, Wiesbaden 1963, pp. 232-233; Grégorie Frumkin, *Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia*, Leiden 1970, pp. 52, 62, 91, 123; Enver Konukçu, *Kuşan ve Akhunlar Tarihi*, Ankara 1973, pp. 52-58, 75-95, 98-101.

² J. Marquart, *Eransahr*, Berlin 1901, pp. 67, 69, 77-78, 150.

conferred to him, on this occasion, the title the yabghu of Tokhâristân and the king of the Ephtalites.³

All this creates the impression that, as is perhaps to be expected, such people as the descendants or remnants of the Ephtalites and other elements of the population of these areas were quite distinguishable at the time of the Arab conquests. The Arab conquerors, on the other hand, and a bit later on, the Moslems in general, were in actual contact with these people and in a position to have first hand knowledge concerning their ethnic character or nature. The testimony of the Arabic sources therefore should carry considerable weight. And their testimony is to the effect that the Ephtalites were Turkish.

It should not be reasonable to conclude, as Kazuo Enoki, the author of one of the most valuable and substantial publications on the Ephtalites, has actually done, that because Moslem historians may have made a mistake concerning some incident in the past history of the Ephtalites, basing themselves presumably on the Sasanian *Khudâinâma*, they are not reliable in what they have to say concerning the Ephtalites with whom they came into direct contact. At any rate, as Kazuo Enoki has noted, among the scholars who have been interested with the Ephtalites a good many subscribed to the thesis that they were Turkish.⁴

Chavannes says that the Sasanians' plan to benefit from alliance with Western Turkey worked out to their advantage at first by leading to the elimination of their archenemy the Ephtalites but that it was not long before they came to realize the great danger of this policy. For the next step taken by the Western Turkey was to make an alliance with the Byzantines against Persia. This, says Chavannes, weakened Persia and constituted the major factor facilitating the collapse of the Sasanian Empire before the onslaught of the Arab armies toward the middle of the seventh century.⁵

³ Chavannes, *Documents* . . . , pp. 200, 291-292, 293-294. See, Ṭabarî, *Annales*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, series 2, vol. 1, Leiden 1881-1883, p. 156, concerning the Arab conquest of Balkh and Kûhistân in the year 51 H. and the first encounters with Tarkhân Nizak. See also pp. 109 and 493 (years 50 and 65 H.).

⁴ Kazuo Enoki, "On the Nationality of the Ephtalites", *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, No. 18, Tokyo 1959, pp. 20-22, 15-23.

⁵ Chavannes, *Documents* . . . , p. 302.

We learn from Chinese sources that upon their conquest of Ghandhâra the Ephtalites changed the name of that district and that the Ephtalite prince ruling that region bore the Turkish title *tigin* or *tekin*. Their use of this title is confirmed by Indian sources, or, at least, by one such source. Chronologically this refers to the second half of the fifth century, i. e., to an era prior to the spectacular appearance of the Tukyus upon the scene of history.⁶ Moreover, the manners and customs of the Ephtalites were very much like those of the Tukyus, as attested by Chinese sources in particular, at a time when the Tukyus were under the tutelage of the Juan Juan and of little political importance.

The language of the Ephtalites is not known through any clear documentary material. Only very few of their words have come down to us. One is their name, one is the word meaning country or something akin to it, and one is the title *tigin* or *tekin*. In addition to these the names of a few of their kings are known, and in connection with the above-mentioned Nizak the title Tarkhan is used. But Nizak of course belonged to a period posterior to the downfall of the Ephtalite empire. He did not represent an entirely independent and integral political power. Tarkhan Nizak was a vassal of a king who was tied up to the Tukyus Khanate. Hence, this may be the reason he had the title *tarkhan*, and the Ephtalites themselves may not have used this title. This being the case, the only Ephtalite word clearly known and understood boils down almost to the word *tigin*. But another fairly clear word the Ephtalites used is the Turkish title *yabghu* which is transmitted to us by Indian sources in a somewhat deformed variant, and this should constitute also an evidence supporting the thesis that they were Turkish.⁷ Moreover, the Shâhi kings of Kâbul and Sijistan were descendants of the Ephtalites, and they too are attested to be Turkish in our Islamic sources, and on the basis of recent research this point tends to be further clarified and corroborated.⁸

⁶ Chavannes, *Documents* . . . , pp. 325-326 and p. 325, note 3. See also, Kazuo Enoki, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

⁷ See, Kazuo Enoki, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-43; Enver Konukçu, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-58. See also, Denis Sinor, *Introduction à l'Etude de L'Eurasie Centrale*, Wiesbaden 1963, p. 232.

⁸ See the work referred to below in footnote 33.

Attempts have been made to derive the name of the illustrious Ephtalite king Aqshunvar from Soghdian and Iranian words, and its similarity with the Turkish name Aqsunghur has also been pointed out. Sunqur, sunghur, sinqur, sunqar, shunghar, etc., mean a bird of prey such as hawk or falcon in Turkish, so that this name could mean "white hawk" in Turkish, where one actually finds examples of names of kings and princes such as Aqsunghur, Alp Sunghur Tigin, and Alp Sunghur Tarkhan, *alp* meaning "valiant" and *tigin* and *tarkhan* being titles.⁹

It was pointed out by Barthold that according to Ṭabarī Arab armies had come into contact with Qarluqs in Badakhshân already in the seventh, or, perhaps, in the eighth century, and that even today a clan of Uzbeks in Badakhshân is called Qarluq.¹⁰ Zeki Velidi Togan showed these not to be exceptional and isolated cases, and he pointed out that 'Abdullâh ibn Muḥammed al-Kâtib al-Khwârazmî and Ismâ'il al-Jawharî al-Fârâbî mention Qarluqs living in the same mountainous regions, stating them to be a branch of the Ephtalites. The same author brought to light other source evidence indicating that there were Qarluqs in the Pamir plateau, in Wakhân, Ghûr, Gharjistân, in the Hilmend River basin, and in Tokhâristan, in the environs of Balkh.¹¹

In the Ḥudûd al-'Âlam the Qarluqs are mentioned in the mountainous regions of Farghâna, in Tokhâristan, in the Hilmend River basin, and in the environs of Balkh, and this knowledge has proved useful and supplied a key for making intelligible certain Tibetan literatures in which the Qarluqs are referred to as Gar-log.¹²

Continuing his researches on the Qarluqs, Z. V. Togan gleans additional information of a similar nature and reaches the conclusion

⁹ K. Enoki, p. 42; Konukçu, p. 67; Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish*, Oxford 1972, p. 838; Richard N. Frye and Aydın Sayılı, "Turks in the Middle East before the Saljuqs", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 63, No. 3, 1943, p. 204, notes 132, 133.

¹⁰ W. Barthold, *Zwölf Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Türken Mittelasiens*, Darmstadt 1962, p. 100.

¹¹ Zeki Velidi Togan, "Die Schwerter der Germanen", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 1936, p. 33 and note 5, p. 34 and note 1. See also, *Ḥudûd al-'Âlam*, tr. V. Minorsky, *E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, New Series*, vol. 11, 1937, p. 348.

¹² Helmut Hoffmann, "Die Qarluq in der Tibetischen Literatur", *Oriens*, vol. 3, 1950, pp. 190-208.

that the Qarluqs were to be found in all the regions to which the Ephtalites had extended their domination. According to the above-mentioned Ismâ'il al-Jawharî and Al-Kâtib al-Khwârazmî, on the other hand, the Turkish peoples called Qarluq, Kanjîna (or Kangîna), and Qumidh, or Kumich, were the most important elements of the population of these regions who were responsible for the foundation and continuation of the Ephtalite Empire. Moreover, Himotalo, near Badakhshân, of which Huan Tsang speaks and which has in Sanskrit the meaning "the foot of snowy mountains" and according to Marquart¹³ is to be taken to refer to the Ephtalites, or, more strictly speaking, to the land of a state representing a survival or a remnant of the Ephtalites because of the parallelism between the characteristics of its people and those of the Ephtalites, should in Zeki Velidi Togan's opinion refer to the Ephtalites themselves and convey the idea of "the people living in a snowy place", just as qarluq or qarligh, meaning "snowy place" could.

Further, while the Ephtalites have been characterized as against Buddhism by Huan Tsang, Tibetan sources say the same thing about the Qarluqs. The exercise of polyandry has likewise been ascribed to both of them. It is of interest, moreover, that Daqîqî, who was a forerunner of Firdawsî in the genesis of the Iranian epic on the heroic exploits of the warriors of Iran in their struggle against Turan, spoke of the lands of the Ephtalites as "the lands of the Khallukh".

On the basis of all this evidence, Z. V. Togan concludes that although it remains unknown as to which was the tribe or the stock that gave the Ephtalites their name, it is certain that the above-mentioned three Turkish peoples, and especially the Qarluq, were the major and the most powerful representatives or constituent elements of the Ephtalites.¹⁴

The author of the *Ḥudûd al-‘Âlam* too asserts that the Qarluq and the Kanjîna Turks were the remnants of the Ephtalites.¹⁵ It may

¹³ Marquart, *Eransahr*, pp. 238-240.

¹⁴ Z. V. Togan, "Eftalitlerin Menşei Meselesi", Appendix to note 41 of: Nazmiye Togan, "Peygamber'in Zamanında Şarkî ve Garbî Türkistanı Ziyaret Eden Çinli Budist Rahibi Hüen-Çang'ın Bu Ülkelerin Siyasî ve Dinî Hayatına Ait Kayıtları", *İslâm Tetkikleri Enstitüsü Dergisi*, vol. 6, parts 1-2, Istanbul 1964, pp. 58-61.

¹⁵ *Ḥudûd al-‘Âlam*, tr. Minorsky, p. 362.

be of interest that according to Theophanes of Byzantium, who calls Aqshunvar by the name Ephthalantos, it was from this sovereign that the Ephtalites got their name.¹⁶

Quoting from Mas'ûdî, Minorsky writes as follows:

"... Mas'ûdî enumerates among the descendents of Japhet 'the Turks, the Khallukh, and the Toghuzghuz. ... Their (the Toghuzghuz) king is *Uyghurkhan (ايفرخان read ارحان) and their religion is Manichæan (*al-mand'îya*). There are no other Turks, besides them, who profess this religion. And the (other) Turks are the Kîmâk, the Barskhânians, ... Of these the strongest are the Ghuz, while the Kharlukh have the best shape, the tallest stature, and the finest faces; they live in the region of Farghâna and Shâsh (Tashkent) and in its neighborhood. And they (rather 'these Turks' than the Qarluq!) had a kingdom, and of them was the khaqan of the khaqans, who united (under him) the other Turkish kingdoms and the kings used to obey him. Of these khaqans was Afrâsiyâb the Turk who triumphed over the Persian kingdom; of them was *Shâba, but in our time there is no khaqan of the Turks whom the (other) kings obey. This has happened since the destruction of the town called عمارت ['Amât] (*سوياب Sûyâb?) which lay in the steppes of Samarqand. ..."

"With some misunderstandings, inevitable in such obscure matters, Mas'ûdî refers to the former Turkish kingdom (the Western On-oq). In his own time he enumerates the Toghuzghuz (= Uyghurs of the T'ien-shan), the Qarluq, and the "Turks". Among the latter the strongest tribe were the Ghuz and, in any case, the Toghuzghuz stand apart from the Ghuz".¹⁷

Minorsky believes that Mas'ûdî is making a mistake, and he corrects this by writing within brackets "rather 'these Turks' than the Qarluq!", referring apparently to the Tukyus. When it is taken into consideration that the Qarluqs were the most significant remnants and representatives of the Ephtalites, however, it becomes clear that Mas'ûdî is referring to the Ephtalites and not to the Tukyus, that his statement is correct, and that Minorsky's correction is not quite to the point.

¹⁶ Chavannes, *Documents* ..., p. 223.

¹⁷ V. Minorsky, "Tamîm ibn Bahrs Journey to the Uyghurs", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 12, 1948, p. 288.

Kazuo Enoki says, "The physical characteristics of the Ephtalites may be known from the writing of Procopius, which runs as follows: 'The Ephtalites are of the stock of the Huns in fact as well as in name. However, they do not mingle with any of the Huns known to us. They are the only ones among the Huns who have white bodies and countenances which are not ugly.' As to the countenance, costumes, manners of living of the Huns, Ammianus Marcellinus XXXI, 2, is careful and in full detail. 'Since there the cheeks of the children are deeply furrowed with steel from their very birth, in order that the growth of hair, when it appears at the proper time, may be checked by the wrinkled scars, they grow old without beards and without any beauty, like eunuchs. They all have compact, strong limbs and thick necks, and are so monstrously ugly and misshapen, that one might take them for two-legged beasts or for the stumps, rough-hewn into images, that are used in putting sides to bridges. But although they have the form of men, however ugly, they are so hardly in their mode of life that they have no need of fire nor of savory food, but eat the roots of wild plants and the half-raw flesh of any kind of animal whatever, which they put between their things and the backs of their horses, and thus warm it a little.' In this way, the description of their physical character left us by Procopius, who wrote when the Ephtalites were at the height of their power, is decidedly adverse to the view that they were really Huns. They were a light-complexioned race, whereas the Huns were decidedly swart: they were not ill-looking, whereas the Huns were hideous. That the Ephtalites had white bodies is also known from the fact that they were often called White Huns in the Indian and Byzantine literature. That their countenances were not ugly is also guessed from portraits of their kings engraved on the so-called Ephtalite coins; if they have copied the Ephtalite chief to any extent. Most of these coins are after the fashion of Kushana, Gupta and Sasanid Persia, and portraits engraved on them resemble to those of their kings. So we should not claim from these portraits the Iranian characteristic of features of Ephtalite kings, but that there is none which makes us imagine of their Mongolian and Turkish physiognomy will not be objectionable to the theory that they might be classified as one of the so-called white race".¹⁸

¹⁸ K. Enoki, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.

It may be that the Ephtalites, if they represented a part of the Huns, may have been, or belonged to, that wedge of blondes within the Huns of which also we are informed,¹⁹ if this could possibly be brought to agree with other data gleaned from the sources.

As to the racial characteristics of various Turkish peoples and the Qarluq in particular, it is of interest that, as we have seen,²⁰ the Qarluq were noted, just like the Ephtalites, for being good looking and handsome. Ibn Bîbî, thirteenth century historian, speaks of the women of the Qarluq, or perhaps the Khalaj, with "narcissus-like eyes and rosy cheeks".²¹

Muḥammad Najîb Bakrân (ca. 1200-1220) writes, in Minorsky's translation :

"The Khalaj are a tribe (the text has *qawm* = people) of Turks who from the Khallukh limits²² emigrated to Zâbulistân. Among the districts of Ghaznî there is a steppe where they reside. Then on account of the heat of the air their complexion has changed and tended towards blackness; the language, too, has undergone alterations and become a different dialect (or tongue) . . ." ²³

Ibn al-Nadîm, illustrious tenth century writer, says that Turks, Bulgars, Khazars, and Alans were blonde,²⁴ while Mas'ûdî writes as follows :

" . . . and some of them such as the Turks, the Khallukhs (Qarluqs), and the Toqhzughuz . . . occupied the countries . . . between Khurasan and China. . . . Among the Turks are the Kîmâks, the Varsakhs (or Barskhâniyya), the Baddiyya (?), the Majghariyya, and also the Ghuz who are the most valiant of all, while the Khallukhs are the best looking among them, and they are distinguished by the excellence of their bearing and conduct (*aşbahahum wujûhan*, ("perfection de leurs traits"; "perfection de leurs environs");

¹⁹ See, W. W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, Cambridge 1966, p. 110.

²⁰ See above, p. 23, note 17.

²¹ Emel Esin, "Butân Halaç' M. VII-X. Yüzyıllarda Halaç Kültürünün Sanat Eserlerinde Akisleri", *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, vol. 17, pp. 25, 42.

²² Here "Khallukh" may possibly stand for Hayṭal and hence mean Khuttal. See, Guy Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, Cambridge 1930, p. 433.

²³ See, *Hudûd al-'Âlam*, tr. Minorsky, p. 348.

²⁴ Ibn al-Nadîm, *Kitâb al-Fihrist*, tr. Bayard Dodge, 1970, vol. 1, p. 36.

they live in the cities and surroundings of Farghâna and Shâsh (Tashkent)".²⁵

Emel Esin writes, "Another bearer of the high title of yabghu was the yabghu of the Qarluq. According to Ṭabari, the ruler of this important group of Turks, disseminated all over Turkistan, had his residence in 'Upper Tokhâristân' which was east of Balkh. The valleys of the Vakhs and the Surkhândaryâ were also populated by the Tardush, Qarluq, and the Kuminji Turks".²⁶

The author of the Ḥudûd al-Âlam, written in the last quarter of the tenth century and, according to Minorsky,²⁷ based partly on earlier sources, writes as follows, concerning the Qarluqs:

"Discourse on the Khallukh Country and Its Towns.

"East of it are some parts of Tibet and the borders of the Yaghmâ and the Toghuzghuz; south of it, some parts of the Yaghmâ and the country (*nâhiyat*) of Transoxania; west of it the borders of Ghuz; north of it, the borders of the Turks, Chigil, and Toghuzghuz. This is a prosperous (*âbâdhân*) country, the most pleasant of the Turkish lands. It possesses running waters and a moderate climate. From it comes different furs (*mûy-hâ*). The Khallukh are nearer to (civilized) people (*mardumânî-and bâ mardum nazdik*) [Minorsky's addition of the word "civilized" and his changing "near" to "nearer" do not seem appropriate. Just "near to people", or "affable", or "friendly" is undoubtedly what is meant.], pleasant tempered (*khush-khû*) and sociable (*âmîzanda*). In the days of old the kings of the Khallukh were called Jabghûy, and also Yabghû. The country possesses towns and villages. Some of the Khallukh are hunters, some agriculturists (*ka-shâvarz*) [sic.] *kunand*), and some herdsmen. Their wealth is in sheep, horses, and various furs. They are a warlike people, prone to forays (*tâkhtan baranda*).

"I. KÛLÂN, a small district adjacent to the Muslim world (*bâ musalmânî payvasta*). In it agriculture (*kisht-u-barz*) is practiced.

²⁵ Mas'ûdî, *Murîj adh-Dhahab*, ed. and tr. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, vol. 1, 1860, p. 288; tr. Barbier de Meynard, Pavet de Courteille, and Charles Pellat, vol. 1, Paris 1962, p. 120.

²⁶ Emel Esin, "Tabari's Report on the Warfare with the Türgish and the Testimony of the Eighth Century Asian Art", *Central Asiatic Journal*, vol. 17, Wiesbaden 1973, p. 133.

²⁷ *Ḥudûd al-Âlam*, pp. VII, XIV.

"2. MIKRÎ, a village inhabited by the Khallukh and also visited by merchants. Between these two villages (*scil.*, Kûlân and Mikrî) there are three Khallukh tribes called: Bistân, Khaym, and B.rîsh.

"3. NÛN-KAT (**Navt-kat?*) was a town near the mountain Ûrûn-'Arj (*Ghârch?*), but now it is desolate and a thieves' haunt. It is a stage (on the road) and a few felt-huts of the Khallukh are found there.

"4. GH.NKSÎR, a large village with numerous Khallukh tribes. It is a prosperous place.

"5. TÛZÛN - BULAGH, a village with fields (*kisht-u-barz*), running waters, and amenities. It lies on the frontier between the Khallukh and the Yaghmâ.

"6. By Tûzûn-'Âr.j (*Gharch?*) is the lake TÛZ-KUL (spelt: *Tuzkûk*), wherefrom seven tribes of the Khallukh procure for themselves salt.

"7. KÛKYÂL (**Kök-yal?*), ATLÂLIGH (*Otlâligh?*), LUL.GH (*Ul.gh?*) are three prosperous and pleasant villages, situated on the slope of a mountain (*babarâkûh*); their princes (*dihqân*) were Yabghû's brothers.

"8. ÛZKATH and M.LJ.KATH(?), two villages situated on the slope of a mountain (*barâkûh*), prosperous and pleasant, which belong to Jabghû's kingdom (*va pâdshây* [**pâdshâ'î-yi*] *Jabghûy*).

"9. KIRMÎNKATH, in which live a few Khallukh, called L.BÂN. It is a large village where merchants from everywhere reside.

"10. TÛN.L (**Tong?*) and TÂLKH.ZA, two villages amidst the mountains, on the frontier between Chigil and Khalluk, near the lake Issi-kûl (spelt: *Iskûl*). The inhabitants are warlike, courageous, and valiant.

"11. BARSKHÂN, a town on the bank of the lake (*daryâ*) (Evidently referring to Issi-kûl . . .), prosperous and pleasant. Its prince (*dihqân*) is a Khallukh, but the (inhabitants) are devoted to the Toghuzghuz (*havâ-yi T. khwâhand*).

"12. JÂMGH.R, a small borough in the Khallukh country, on the edge of the desert. In the days of old it belonged to the Khallukh, but now its government (*pâdshâht*) is on behalf of the king of the Toghuzghuz. In it live some 200 tribes of men (*divtst qabîla mardum*), and to it belongs a separate district.

“13. B.NJÛL (**Banjúk*?) lies in the country of the Khallukh, but formerly its king was (ruler) on behalf of the Toghuzghuz, and now it is occupied by the Khirkhîz.

“14. AQ.RÂQ.R?, a town (with) a numerous population, situated between a mountain and a river.

“15. ÛJ lies on a mountain (*bar sar-i kûh*). There are some 200 men (*mard*) in it.

These two (last-named places) are held by the Khallukh”.²⁸

I have quoted this passage at some length because it is clearly seen from its details that it is meant to deal solely with Qarluq people who are living outside of Islamic lands. And, again, because these details serve to give a clear impression of a relatively large population. In items 2, 4, 6, and 12, e.g., there is mention of several tribes in one town or village. This shows how wrong it could be to translate a word like *qawm*, meaning “nation” or “people”, used in connection with people like the Qarluq or the Khalaj in our sources, as “tribe”, as is done by Minorsky in his translation of a passage of the *Ḥudûd al-‘Âlam* dealing with the Khalaj and quoted above.²⁹ And, likewise, it serves to bring home to us the idea or impression that when such words as “tribe” are used in connection with such peoples it may be quite unreasonable to imagine this to refer to a small and compact population occupying a limited area. The result, in this case, of Minorsky’s translating *qawm* as “tribe”, has been referred to on a previous occasion in the last paragraph of the following passage:

“Al-Khwârazmî designates the Khalaj Turks as the descendants of the Ephtalites. This view may be said to be shared by others but only implicitly. The assertion of Al-Khwârazmî has been accepted in a very limited sense by Marquart and Minorsky, although they claim no other people as the descendants of the Ephtalites. [‘Abdal’, considered a derivation of the name ‘Ephtalite’, is used to designate a tribe of Turkmans in northern Afghanistan at the present time. (Jarring, G., “On the Distribution of Turk tribes in Afghanistan”, *Lunds Universitets Arsskrift*, Humanities Series, 1939, pp. 38, 56). On the other hand, Abdel, as a name given to a Turkish people, existed in the sixth century; cf. *Eransahr*, p. 253.]

²⁸ *Ḥudûd al-‘Âlam*, pp. 97-98.

²⁹ See, above, p. 25 and notes 22, 23.

“There is no doubt that the Khalaj were Turks. They are mentioned in connection with the campaigns of Ya‘qûb ibn al-Layth al-Şafâr against Zâbul, in the present Afghanistan area, in the second half of the ninth century. Istakhrî, as well as Ibn Hawqal, mention the Khalaj in the Kâbul area. Yâqût, quoting Istakhrî, says, ‘The Khalaj are a kind of Turks. They came to the land of Kâbul in ancient times. They are owners of land and are of Turkish appearance, dress, and language.’ Idrîsî says much the same. Mas‘ûdî speaks of Khalaj (Khallukh?) in the region of Seistân, extending as far as Bust. Maĥmûd of Ghazna used them in his army in 1008 and earlier, recruiting them from the regions of Ghazna and Balkh. Ibn Khurdâdbih states that the Khalaj are on the Khurasan side of the river (apparently the Oxus) and in another passage, speaking of the vicinity of Talas, says that the Khalaj (Khallukh?) have their winter quarters there. From these reports of the Moslem writers it results that during the tenth century the Khalaj lived over an area corresponding to that previously occupied by the Ephtalites.

“Minorsky finds the two statements of Ibn Khurdâdbih contradictory. He says, “we can hardly suppose that a tribe, living on the west of the Oxus, travelled a tremendous distance to its winter quarters across two such mighty streams as Amu-daryâ and Sir-daryâ.” It is also unlikely that a single tribe could spread over vast areas extending from Talas to Bust. There is no reason, however, to assume that the Khalaj were a single tribe. We know that the Ephtalites were city dwellers and, as we have seen, it is stated explicitly that the Khalaj were owners of land.”³⁰

In view of the extra-Islamic cities, towns, and villages of the Qarluq enumerated in the Ĥudûd al-‘Âlam, it is of great interest, indeed, that Byzantine writers such as Prokopius of Caesarea and Menander always refer to the Ephtalites as city dwellers. For thus is established apparently another parallel feature not only between the Ephtalites and the Khalaj but also between the Ephtalites and the Qarluqs. As a matter of fact, Soviet excavations in Khwârazm and its environs have served to reveal the remains of some of these Ephtalite towns.³¹

³⁰ Frye and Sayılı *op. cit.*, pp. 205-206 and note 156.

³¹ Frye and Sayılı, *op. cit.*, p. 205; S. P. Tolstow, *Auf den Spuren der Altchoresmischen Kultur*, Berlin 1953, pp. 230-231.

Marquart had noted that the Khalaj, or "rather, the Kholaj" must have been one of the remnants of the Ephtalites.³²

It may be noted that there are other details also in the passage concerning the Qarluqs quoted last from the *Ḥudūd al-Ālam* which are reminiscent of the Ephtalites. These too therefore are of a nature to confirm or reinforce the assertions in our sources that the Qarluqs constituted parts and remnants of the Ephtalites, or that, conversely, they were one of the major elements making up the Ephtalites.

Abdur Rahman says, "If Istakhrī was the *locus classicus* on the Khalaj and he was fully acquainted with the fact that they were not fresh settlers in Zamīn Dāwar and that they came there in the days of old, Khwārazmī's statement shows that he knew the particular ethnic group from which the Khalaj had descended. 'The Hayâṭila are a tribe of men', he says, 'who had enjoyed grandeur and possessed the country of Tokhâristân; the Turks called Khalaj and Kanjīna are their remnants.'

"The evidence of Istakhrī and Khwārazmī put together would take the history of the Khalaj several centuries back, perhaps to the time of the White Huns. The continued existence of the Ephtalite principalities to the north of the Hindu Kush mountains till the arrival of the Muslims in that area is fairly well known. There is no reason why the Ephtalites to the south of the Hindu Kush should have passed out of history without any particular threat. Frye and Sayılı rightly maintain that the Ephtalites were Turks and that the Khalaj and presumably some other Turks who were incorporated into the Muslim domain, were descendants of the Ephtalites. It may well be argued, therefore, that the word Turk (plural, *Atrāk*), as used by Arab chroniclers in the early Islamic period, meant Turkish-speaking Ephtalites, or a mixed population. The expression 'Turk Shâhīs' may also be understood in the light of this information".³³

Gibb says that the Arabic sources dealing with Islamic conquests of Central Asia are misleading because they use the word "Turk" for all non-Persian peoples of the region.³⁴

³² Marquart, *Eransahr*, p. 253.

³³ Abdur Rahman, *The Last Two Dynasties of the Shâhīs*, Islamabad 1979, pp. 41-42.

³⁴ H. A. R. Gibb, *The Arab Conquests of Central Asia*, London 1923, p. 10.

Gibb's criticism of the "generalization" of the word Turk by the Islamic sources so as to encompass all the non-Persian people of the East is shared by certain other scholars too. Minorsky, e. g., writes:

"The use of the term 'Turk' in early Muslim literature is loose and even the Tibetans are considered as Turks. . . .; therefore the racial appurtenance of the Ephtalites is still obscure".³⁵ Minorsky makes this particular statement partly as a reaction to the impression gained by Marquart, referred to above,³⁶ to the effect that the Khalaj were remnants of the Ephtalites.

But the same thing may be said about Persian sources. According to the *Shâhnâme* of Firdawsî all of Iran's neighbors to the north, east, and northeast of Persia were Turks; for the term Turan is used there as a synonym of Turk, or, if the word Turan there is used as a synonym of the word Turk. Byzantine sources too may be said to generally agree with the Arabic sources in this respect.

Kazuo Enoki writes: "According to Ṭabarî, the Khâqân, king of the Turks, invaded the territory of Persia at the time of Bahrâm Gûr (420-438) with 250,000 Turks, but he was finally destroyed by Bahrâm Gûr . . . It is generally known that Ṭabarî is based on Arabic translations of the *Khodâinâme*, a semi-official history of Sasanid Persia compiled under the reign of Khosrô I (531-578) and his successors up to Yazdegerd III (632-651/652) and the *Khodâinâme* itself and its Arabic translations have long been lost. . . . The name T'u-chüeh was first known to China about 542, a hundred years later than the time of Bahrâm Ghûr, and it was not until 546 that the T'u-chüeh became independent from the Juan Juan, to which they had been subjugated. From chronological point of view, it is quite impossible for the Khâqân of Turks to invade Persia at the time of Bahrâm Ghûr. If the Khâqân of Turks had been mentioned in the *Khodâinâme*, it may have been because of rationalization or anachronism of the compilers who wrote the book more than one hundred years later than the time when the event took place. . . . I, therefore, am of the opinion that the Turks who invaded Persia at the time of Bahrâm Ghûr meant a non-Persian tribe who lived to the northwest of Persian territory. In this connection, I would like to call readers' attention to

³⁵ See, *Hudûd al-'Âlam*, tr. Minorsky, 1937, p. 362.

³⁶ See above, p. 30 and note 32.

that the people to the northwest of Persia was generally called Turks; that in the *Shâhnâme* the name Turk means something like Turân which is a contrast to Iran; and that Islamic authors usually applied the name Turk to any people bad or obstinate".³⁷

Byzantine sources on the Ephtalites are of great importance, although they are somewhat meager. For they are contemporaneous with the Ephtalite state itself and not only with its remnants. Procopius, Zacharias of Mytilene, John Malalas, Syrian writer of the sixth century, and the Armenian historian Moses of Chosrene speak of the Ephtalites as Huns. The Byzantines generally used the name 'Hun' for Turkish peoples. They applied this name to the Tukyus, Avars, Bulgars, and the Khazars, and the Armenian writer Vardan designated the Khazars as Huns.³⁸

Syriac sources, e. g., the Chronicle of Seert, designate the Ephtalites as 'Turks'. Thus, the Ephtalites, besides being called Huns, a name generally given to Turkish peoples, were also called Turks not only by the Moslem, or the Islamic sources, but also by some Syriac authors.³⁹ At any rate, as the Arab armies and the Moslems came into intimate and continuous contact with the descendants of the Ephtalites, as far as their ethnic composition or constitution was concerned, or at least that of their descendants or remnants, the importance of the Islamic sources should not be minimized. Moreover, as pointed out by Abdur Rahman, there were remnant states of the Ephtalites to the north and south of the Hindu Kush who enjoyed more or less physical and concrete continuity with the Ephtalites, and these were among the earliest Turks with whom the Arab armies had come into actual contact in their conquests beyond Persia.

There is the question of the difficulty of clearly distinguishing between Qarluq and Khalaj in the Arabic script. It seems, however, that the Khalaj too, as well as the Qarluq, had been among the constituent elements of the Ephtalites, and not the Qarluq to the exclusion of the Khalaj. I shall not make an attempt to resolve this problem with certainty and precision, and since both the Qarluqs and the Khalaj were Turks, the question does not make a great

³⁷ K. Enoki, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-22.

³⁸ Frye and Sayılı, p. 205.

³⁹ Frye and Sayılı, p. 205.

difference as far as the ethnic character or the nationality of the Ephtalites is concerned in a broad sense. Thus through the Qarluqs and other constituent Turkish elements of the Ephtalites, the chronology of the name Turk as a generic name seems in effect to be extended back in Central Asia to pre-Tukyu times, without any sharp break of continuity.

Speaking of the Chionites and the Kushans, as referred to in Byzantine sources, C. A. Macartney writes as follows:

“The statement that they were known as ‘Turks’ is very interesting, and is not, I am convinced, confined to Theophanes. I believe Menander to be referring twice to the Kermichiones under the name of Turk, where it has usually been supposed that he is speaking of the Tou-kious. . . .

“The ambiguity, moreover, is probably less than we suppose. It will be noted that Theophanes describes the Kermichiones as the ‘Turks formerly called Massagetae’, while Menander calls the Tou-kious ‘Turks, formerly called Sakae’. The distinction is probably deliberate and affords at the same time a valuable clue to the position of the two nations. The Kermichiones lived in the homes of the old Massagetae, viz., on the Jaxartes and the Aral; the Tou-kious further east, in the homes of the old Sacae.

“There is another passage in Theophylactus where the name appears to be used in the same way. A pseudo-Avar dignitary, having got one of the wives of his Khagan into trouble, decided ‘to flee to his ancestral tribe. These are Huns living in the East, neighbors of the Persians, and to many more familiar under the name of Turks.’ . . .

“The name ‘Turk’ appears to have been used at an earlier date still for the people living northwest of Persia. Ṭabarī uses it of the Kushan Huns in the fourth century, and both he and Dīnawarī tell of an inroad by ‘Turks’ in the reign of King Bahram V (420-438). In view of the Byzantine usage which we now see to have been frequent, it is difficult to dismiss these references as purely anachronistic but it may be necessary to revise our estimate of the first appearance of the name.”⁴⁰

⁴⁰ C. A. Macartney, “On the Greek Sources for the History of the Turks”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 11, 1943-1946, pp. 272-273.

