

NEW DATA ON THE DESCENDANTS OF GHURAK, THE LAST KING OF SOGHD

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Early medieval textual sources, especially those in Arabic and Persian, contain some data on Ghurak, one of the last representatives of the pre-Islamic rulers of Sogd, who had the high royal title *ikhshiid* (اخشيد) or *ikhshiidh* (اخشيد), and ruled in Samarqand during 710 – 738 AD [Le Strange 1905; Gibb 1923; Гоибов 1989]. But we know very little about his descendants. Arabic sources mention two sons of Ghurak. One of them, al-Mukhtar (المختار), mentioned in the historical work of al-Tabari in connection with events of 110/728-29 in Soghd [at-Tabari II: 1523]. The other, Yazid (يزيد), according to Narshakhi, was king of Soghd in 166/782-83 [Наршахи: 32].

Ghurak mentioned in Chinese textual sources as U-le-ga (or U-le-tzya). According to “Chefu”, the ruler of Kan (i.e. Samarqand) U-le-ga had two sons: the elder of them named Du-ge (Du-he), and the younger, Mo-tchjo [Chavannes 1903: 136]. According to “Tanshu”, in 731 Du-he appointed as ruler of Sezhiqian (Ishtikhan), and Mo-tchjo as ruler of Mi (Maymurgh). In 738 the Chinese Yard received the news on the death of U-le-ga, and his elder son Du-he was approved as king of Samarqand through special diplomat sent to Soghd by the Chinese Emperor [Бичурин II: 275, 287, 311]. Numerous ambassadors from Samarqand, i.e. from Ghurak (in 717, 724, 726, 727) and his son Du-he (in 740, 744, 750, 751, 754, 755 and 772) were recorded in Chinese sources [Chavannes 1903: 136]. We know little else, however.

Arabs preserved nominal power of pre-Islamic rulers in early period of their conquest, liquidated them later when their military and administrative powers consolidated in the newly conquered lands. When Qutayba ibn Muslim captured Samarqand in 712, he did not kill Ghurak, but imposed a humiliating treaty [Смирнова 1957: 119 – 134].

According to Sogdian numismatics, after Ghurak the coins of Samarqand were issued by Turghar or Turkhar, the same as Du-ge (or Du-

he) of the Chinese sources. Turghar was the last *ikhshiid* of Soghd, who minted his own silver coins [Смирнова 1981: 43 – 45]. There are two types of these coins: one conformed to the earlier style of Ghurak's coins, and the other contained an additional sign in the form of the half-moon, characteristic of Chinese coins of the 4th decade of the 8th century [Ахунбабаев 1986: 94].

Turghar may have minted the first lot after his father's death (exact year not known). After 738, when he received the endorsement of the Chinese emperor, he may have started the issuing the second type of coins. During Arab conquests, rulers of Soghd and other countries of Central Asia maintained close relations with China, and repeatedly asked the Chinese emperor for military support [Chavannes 1903: 136; Шеффер 1981: 581]. This may explain the appearance of the new sign on Turghar's coins.

In the medieval Arabic biographical sources we have found references to an ancestor named Turkhar (طورخار).¹ In the work “al-Qand fi dhikr ‘ulama’ Samarqand” (The Sweet in the Reference of the Scholars of Samarqand) by Abu Hafṣ ‘Umar ibn Muhammad al-Nasafi (died in 537/1142) is mentioned Abu Ahmad Talib ibn ‘Ali ibn al-Hasan ibn Turkhar al-Shirakathi al-Nasafi (died in 288/900-01), who transmitted the *hadith* from the lips of Muhammad ibn Isma‘il al-Bukhari. His son Abu-l-Husayn Muhammad ibn Talib ibn ‘Ali ibn al-Hasan ibn Turkhar al-Shirakathi transmitted the *hadith* from the lips of his father [al-Nasafi: 290]. The *nisba* “al-Shirakathi” (الشيركثي) testifies that they originated from the village named Sirakath (سيركث) or Shirakath (شيركث) situated in the region of Nasaf [al-Moqaddasi: 49; al-Sam‘ani VII: 461].

In the “Kitab al-Ansab” (The Book of Genealogic Names) by Abu Sa‘d ‘Abd al-Karim ibn Muhammad al-Sam‘ani (died in 562/1167) we have the mention of the *nisba* “al-Turkhari” (الطورخاري), and the biography of Abu ‘Ali Muhammad ibn Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad ibn ‘Amr ibn Salih ibn al-Hasan ibn Turkhar al-Nasafi al-Turkhari, who lived in Nakhshab and transmitted the *hadith* between 10th and 11th centuries [al-Sam‘ani VIII: 261].

Both persons were inhabitants of Nakhshab. However, in their given ancestries only two upper generations, i.e., Turkhar and his son al-Hasan, are common. Further in the first ancestry we have the name ‘Ali, and in the second, Salih. Is there any genealogical connection between them? For the present we can only float a preliminarily hypothesis. Turghar/Turkhar, the last *ikhshiid* of Soghd, settled in Nakhshab, in Southern Soghd, towards the

¹ The writing of the name Turkhar by the Arabic scripts: *Tur.khar* (طورخار) allows us firmly to identify it with the writing of name *Turkhar* or *Turghar* (*tryr*) by the Sogdian scripts and with the name Du-he or Du-ge of the Chinese sources.

end of his life. He may have issued the second type of his coins from there. Turkhar may have had Islamic name Yazid [Смирнова 1951: 14], since, according to Narshakhi, in 166/782-83 the king of Sogd was *ikhshiid* named Yazid [Наршахи: 32]. The writing of the name Turkhar in the Arabic script, which fixed in the works of al-Nasafi and al-Sam‘ani, may have been compared with the Islamic *laqab* (i.e. nickname) al-Mukhtar (The Selected),² who according to al-Tabari was son of Ghurak, the king of Soghd [at-Tabari II: 1523]. We can suppose these references to be to the same son of Ghurak that is Turkhar. Following al-Nasafi and al-Sam‘ani we could presume that Turkhar settled in Nakhshab, his son and grandsons were Muslims and used Arabic and Islamic names. The name of Turghar or Turkhar is mentioned also in the historical work of Mirzo Ulughbek, the grandson of Amir Timur, according to which one of the descendants of Oghuz-Khan was named Turghar-Khan [Улугбек: 59]. It was supposed that this name of the Turkic origin [Frye 1951: 121]. Origin of this name connected with the Turkic title Tarkhan (Arab. *طرخان*, Sogd. *twry'n*) [Фрейман 1958: 130]. In my opinion, origin of this name connected with the Turkic *turyaql/turyar* – “guard”, “guardsman» [ДТС: 587].

Thus, after the death of Ghurak, in 738 or a little before, the center of social-political, cultural and spiritual-religious life of Soghd, including Samarqand and Bukhara occupied by the Arabs, transferred to Nasaf in Qashqa-Darya valley, more exactly to the Nakhshab city, the former capital of pre-Islamic Southern Soghd, situated nearby the Nasaf city. Today the ruins of early medieval Nakhshab called Qala-i Zakhok-i Maron [Массон 1973: 21]. In medieval sources “the village of Nakhshab” (قرية نخشب), which was situated in the region of Nasaf, is mentioned [Иванов 1954: 325]. In this village lived one of the descendants of Turkhar.

After Turkhar moved to Nakhshab, it became the focus of anti-Arab sentiments and attracted people from the neighbouring Khorasan and Tokharistan too. In the fortress Kasba (كسبة) in the Nasaf region in the 9th century lived descendants of Shishpir (ششپير), one of the pre-Islamic rulers of the neighbouring district of Kesh [al-Nasafi: 380]. In the Rukhthin (رخثين) village lived one of the descendants of Divashtich (ديواشتج), *dihqan* of Pandjikent, who was executed by the Arabs in 105/723-24 [al-Nasafi: 134]. In the Utshund (اتشند)³ village, in the 10th century, lived the descendant of Mahawayh, pre-Islamic ruler (*marzban*) of Marw, who

² The similar writing of the two words in the Arabic script allows to suppose, that the copyist might be mistaken in the reading of the Turkic name *Tur.khar* (طورخار), which was unknown for him, and changed it for the Arabic name *M.kh.tar* (المختار), which was more known [at-Tabari II: 1523].

³ In the text: ايشند .

surrendered Marw city to the Arabs without battle in 30/650-51 [al-Nasafi: 81; al-Nasafi 6284: 74R]. In Nasaf and surrounding villages lived also numerous descendants of the priests of pre-Islamic cults, who received Islam after Arabs invasion. In the 9th century there were the descendants of Khushtiyar (خشتیاری), the main Zoroastrian priest of pre-Islamic Bukhara [al-Nasafi: 280, 325]. According to the genealogies, there were also the descendants of Nushpir (نوشبیر), Farinkadik (فرنکدیک), Karin Raj (کارین رج), Mika'il (میکائیل), Nimrun (نیمرون), Dabbusa (دبوسه), Kharjik (خرجیک), Matt (مت), Rawakhsh (راوخش), Sasan (ساسان), Turkash (ترکش), Tarkhan (طرخان), Yazdad (یزداد) and others, the representatives of the local cultural circles of pre-Islamic Soghd [al-Nasafi: 85, 202, 284, 327, 359, 413, 414, 566, 585, 606, 617, 673, 674; al-Nasafi 6284: 73R].

I suppose that removal and concentration of the Soghdian rulers in Nakhshab was connected with suppression of the great anti-Arab uprising of Soghd and Tokharistan, in 119/737. According to al-Tabari, this year the Turkic *khaqan* with an army of 50 thousands of the Turks and Sogdians fought Asad ibn 'Abd Allah and after numerous battles sustained a defeat [at-Tabari II: 1593 – 1635, 1717 – 1718].⁴ This marked the end of struggle against the Arab conquerors in the region. There were, however, a few sporadic battles under the leadership of rebellious Arabs or Persians, in revolt against the Caliphate (Muqanna', Pafi' ibn al-Layth and others).

The Khorasanian rebel al-Muqanna', who headed the first anti-Arab and anti-Islamic uprising, after his escape from the prison in Baghdad in 152/769 went directly to Nakhshab and Kesh, where local inhabitants killed the Arab governors, rejected Islam and received his religion [Наршахи: 62]. In 191/806-07, when the rebellious Arab commander Rafi' ibn al-Layth headed anti-Caliphate (also anti-Islamic) uprising and occupied Samarqand, the population of Nasaf supported him. They asked him to help them kill the Arab governor, and he sent to them the ruler of Shash with his Turks and one of his commanders [at-Tabari II: 1693 – 1696].

Thus, in the 8th and 9th centuries, Nakhshab and neighbouring villages housed the anti-Arab Sogdian and local Turkic aristocracy, the representatives of supreme clergy of the local Zoroastrians, Buddhists and other pre-Islamic cults of the larger region, including Khorasan and Tokharistan.

As to the second son of Ghurak, the younger brother of Turkhar, who is mentioned in the Chinese sources as Mo-tchjo, about him is known only that in 731 Ghurak gave him the administrative district (*rustaq*) of Maymurgh, situated in the region of Samarqand [Бичурин II: 275, 287, 311]. Numerous embassies during 713 – 774 from the ruler of Mi (i.e.

⁴ Ghurak probably died in the war of 737.

Maymurgh) with the gifts to the Chinese Yard are mentioned in Chinese sources [Chavannes 1903: 144]. On his last embassy, in 744 [Шеффер 1981: 582], he and his wife *qatun*, were awarded by honorary titles [Chavannes 1903: 145]. There is no other information about this son in textual sources. O.I.Smironova identified him with al-Mukhtar [Смирнова 1963: 30], which, I have suggested, was the nickname of Turghar (Turkhar).

According to Chinese sources, Mo-tchjo was also one of the supreme Turkic *qaghans*, who ruled during 691 – 716 in the Eastern Turkic Qaghanate [Бичурин I: 268 – 269], and, according to runic inscriptions, used the title Qaraghan-Khan (i.e. The Predatory Khan) [Гумилев 1967: 468]. The name in Chinese characters is written absolutely identical with the name of the son of Ghurak [Chavannes 1903: 136]. The name of Mo-tchjo may be reconstructed as Mochur, and originated from the ancient Turkic name Bagh-Chur, which is fixed in the runic inscriptions and the Tibetan documents [Кляшторный 1964: 35]. The younger son of Ghurak, may have been named in honor of above mentioned *qaghan*.⁵ Some argue the view that the name Mo-tchjo may reconstructed as Bek-Chur [Бобоёров 2002: 123].

The new edition of the work of Abu Hafs al-Nasafi and its abridged version, composed by Abu-l-Fadl al-Samarqandi, provide some clues to the history of the younger son of Ghurak, who used the ancient Turkic name Banichur (or Bagh-Chur).⁶ According to al-Nasafi, in early 10th century in Samarqand lived Abu Ahmad ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Muhammad ibn al-Marzuban ibn Turkash Baqi ibn Kashir ibn Tarkhun ibn Banichur (Bagh-Chur)⁷ ibn Ghurak al-Babdastani al-Samarqandi, who was “descendant of the king Ghurak, who ruled in Samarqand in pre-Islamic and Islamic times” [al-Nasafi: 423]. His son named Abu Salih Ahmad ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Muhammad ibn al-Marzuban ibn Turkash Baqi was the *amir*, i.e. the ruler of some city [al-Nasafi: 79; al-Nasafi 6284: 70R]. His uncle from the side of his father was Abu-l-Husayn ‘Ubayd Allah ibn al-Marzuban ibn Turkash Baqi ibn Kashir ibn Tarkhun ibn Banichur (Bagh-Chur)⁸ ibn Ghurak al-Samarqandi (died in 278/891-92) [al-Nasafi: 456].

⁵ The name Mo-tchjo in the Chinese transmission might be compared also with the name of the Uyghur *khan* Moyan-Chur Gele-Khan (mentioned in the inscription of the “Selenga stone”), which came to the power in 747 [Гумилев 1967: 364, 373].

⁶ The writing of this name in the Arabic scripts in different places of al-Nasafi’s work transliterated differently: *Banijur* (بانيجور), *B. nay. jur* (بنایجور), *Abu Jur* (ابو جور) or *Abi Jur* (ابي جور), and also *K. nar. n. k.* (کنارنک) I suggest that all variants of the name may have read as *Bagh-Jur*, and identified with the Turkic name *Bagh-Chur*.

⁷ In the text: *K. nad. r. n. k.* (کنارنک).

⁸ In the text: *B. nay. jur* (بنایجور).

If the son of Ghurak named Banichur (or Bagh-Chur), probably his grandson was Tarkhun, and his great-grandson was Kashir, and two following descendants were Turkash Baqi and al-Marzuban. The last of them, al-Marzuban ibn Turkash Baqi, is mentioned in al-Tabari, as a chief witness in a court case in 225/840 in the yard of the Caliph al-Mu'tasim in Baghdad on the *afshin* al-Haydar, the prince next in the line in the throne of Ustrushsna, who was accused of treason and renunciation of Islam [at-Tabari III: 1311]. He was the descendant of Ghurak in the 5th generation, and one of the *dihqans*, i.e. the local rulers of Soghd [Смирнова 1969: 70 – 72].

From al-Nasafi, thus, we have information about 9 generations of the descendants of Ghurak, they were probably Turkic of origin. During the Turkic Qaghanate, the Sogdian nobility was included in the supreme Turkic hierarchy [Смирнова 1963: 10 – 19; Маршак, Распопова 1989: 423]. There was close ethno-cultural interaction between the Sogdians and the Turks, a Turk-Sogdian symbiosis of cultures, and it was expressed in great numbers of marriages not only among the nobility, who aspired to establish contacts with representatives of the Turkic aristocracy [Chavannes 1903: 135; Бичурин II: 271; Майтдинова 1984: 20 – 27], but also among common people [СДГМ II: 23 – 25; Чугуевский 1968: 153].

Turghar remained nominal king, but his younger brother suffered worse fate. Bagh-Chur, apparently, at first refused to accept Islam and ran away to China, probably in 744, when the last embassy from the ruler of Mi, i.e. Maymurgh, is recorded in Chinese sources [Шефер 1981: 582]. He may have headed this last embassy himself, and arrived with his wife *qatun* (*khatun*). He did not return to Soghd, but on his way back stayed with the king of Farghana. He was there about 10 years. In the historical work of al-Ya'qubi is mentioned, that during the reign of the Caliph al-Mansur (136 – 158/754 – 775) Banichur⁹ arrived to Ma wara' al-nahr for talks with the Arabs as an envoy of the king of Farghana (who lived in Kashgar). The Arabs invited him to accept Islam, he refused and imprisoned until the rule of the Caliph al-Mahdi (158 – 169/775 – 785) [al-Ja'kubi II: 465, 576]. Then he, apparently, did accept Islam.

From early Islamic numismatic and textual sources it is well known, that dynasty of Turkic rulers, named imaginarily Banichurids or Abu Dawudids, ruled during the 9th century in Northern and Southern Tokharistan. The high ancestor of that dynasty, Banichur¹⁰, was a

⁹ In the text: *Batijur* (باتيجور).

¹⁰ His name is given in the different textual sources and monetary inscriptions in various forms: *Banijur* (بانيجور), *Batijur* (باتيجور), *B. nayjur* (بنایجور), *Mab. n. jur* (مابنجور), *B.*

contemporary of the Caliphs al-Mansur and al-Mahdi.¹¹ Who was Banichur?

Is Banichur the same as Bagh-Chur¹², the younger son of Ghurak? After accepting Islam and being released from prison, he was appointed as a ruler in Tokharistan. After the final conquest of Central Asia in the beginning of the second half of the 8th century, Arabs liquidated almost all local dynasties. The dynasty of the Qarluq *yabghu* ruled in Tokharistan from 618, when the supreme Turkic *qaghan* Ton Yabghu (618 – 625) had handed the country to his elder son, Tardu-Shad [Бичурин II: 281]. The *yabghu* took active part in the struggles against the Arabs, and headed some of the anti-Arab uprisings [at-Tabari II: 1221 – 1226, 1546 – 1549]. Therefore, the Arabs liquidated their power during the rule of the Caliph al-Mahdi, and appointed as ruler their protégé Banichur (Bagh-Chur), the Sogdian prince of Turkic origin. In the historical work of al-Ya‘qubi mentioned that the Qarluq *yabghu* of Tokharistan accepted Islam from the Caliph al-Mahdi [al-Ja‘kubi II: 528].

These events might have occurred at the end of the 7th decade of the 8th century, when al-Mahdi suppressed the great anti-Arab uprising headed by al-Muqanna‘, which continued more than 10 years, and covered almost whole Central Asia. The supreme Turkic *qaghan* was the proximate ally of al-Muqanna‘ [Кадырова 1965: 110 – 125]. The uprising covered a part of the territory of Tokharistan. After the suppression of the uprising in 163/779-80 al-Mahdi liquidated the Qarluq *yabghu*, forced him to accept Islam, and appointed Banichur (Bagh-Chur) on his place. As to the *yabghu*, although he accepted Islam for appearance, in fact he still continued to be in opposition to the Arabs, and in 194/809-10 he took a part in the uprising headed by Rafi‘ ibn al-Layth [al-Ja‘kubi II: 528].

Thus, there were family connections between the descendants of Banichur of Tokharistan (i.e. Abu Dawudids) with the rulers of Samarqand. In 197/812-13 the son of the Tokharistanian Banichur, Dawud ibn Banichur,¹³ was appointed by the Arabs as the ruler of Samarqand and the whole Ma wara’ al-nahr [al-Nasafi: 148]. This appointment may have been

yan. jur (بیانجور), *Nah. jur* (ناهجور), *Bigh. jur* (بیغجور) and others. The reading of this name in the historical literature accepted in the form *Banichur* [de Zambaur 1927: 202].

¹¹ The Caliphs al-Mansur and al-Mahdi ruled after one another from 136/754 to 169/785.

¹² We can compare the variant of the writing of the name: *Nah. jur* (ناهجور), fixed in one of the sources [Hamzae Ispahanensis: 49] with the writing of the Turkic name Bagh-Chur in the Arabic script: *Bagh. jur* (باغجور). Another variant of the writing of this name: *Mab. n. jur* we can compare with the name of the above mentioned Uyghur *khan* Moyan-Chur.

¹³ In the text: *Banichur* (بانيجور).

connected with the final liquidation of the nominal power of the *ikhshiids* in Soghd. After that, the real power in the country handed over the protégé of the Arabs, who was the representative of the same royal family of the *ikhshiids* of Samarqand and was the grandson of Ghurak, the king of Soghd. One of the descendants of Banichur, Dawud ibn al-‘Abbas ibn Hashim ibn Banichur,¹⁴ was ruler of Balkh, and in 258/872 he ran from the city, when the troops of Ya‘qub ibn al-Layth entered Balkh. He came to Samarqand, where he stayed more than one year, and then returned to Balkh [al-Nasafi: 148].

According to al-Nasafi, Banichur (Bagh-Chur) of Samarqand had a son, named Tarkhun [al-Nasafi: 423, 456]. Banichur (Bagh-Chur) of Tokharistan, however, had four sons: Dawud, Hashim, Ahmad and al-‘Abbas [de Zambaur 1927: 202]. It is very probable, that Banichur (Bagh-Chur) had two families, in Samarqand, where he was married before the Arabs invasion and a second one in Tokharistan, where he married after accepting Islam. His first wife, according to Chinese sources, called *qatun* (*khatun*). It is possible that Banichur (Bagh-Chur) subsequently married into family of the *yabghu* rulers of Tokharistan. Numismatic sources testify to family ties between the dynasties during 6th and 7th centuries [Смирнова 1958: 259 – 260; Вайнберг 1972: 148]. A special festive reception of foreign embassies to Varkhuman, the king of Soghd (reigned about 650 – 696) depicted in the wall paintings of the main throne hall in the king’s palace of in the Afrasiab ruins. Among the guests the central place was occupied the embassy of Turan-Tash, “the king of Chaghan”, from what we can read of the Bactrian and the Sogdian inscriptions, written on the hem of the robe of the ambassador. It is supposed, that the scene is a depiction of a wedding between the Sogdian king and the princess of Chaghanian, which was a part of Tokharistan [Альбаум 1975: 55 – 56].

Thus, the Banichurids of Tokharistan did have family relations with the Sogdian *ikhshiids*. Arabs may have replaced the Qarluq *yabghu* with his relative from Soghd. Then, again the Sogdian *ikhshiid* (Turkhar?) may have been replaced in 197/812-13 by his relative (nephew) from Tokharistan, Dawud ibn Banichur (Bagh-Chur).

Thus, the Sogdian *ikhshiids* were of the Turkic origin [Тоған 2001: 20], or in significant degree assimilated with the Turks [Смирнова 1970: 32 – 35]. The process might have begun in the second half of the 6th century, when Soghd was within the Turkic Qaghanate and influence of the Turks there was strong. Turks may have established their protégé in Soghd and the *ikhshiids* of Samarqand may have been their descendants. The title *ikhshiid*, which originated from an ancient Iranian root [EI 1971: 1060;

¹⁴ In the text: *Abu Jur* (ابو جور).

Смирнова 1970: 50], is similar to a Turkic title *shadh* (شاذ) or *shidh* (شيد).¹⁵ The name of Ghurak, as the names Turghar and Banichur (Bagh-Chur) also may have be of Turkic origin.¹⁶

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¹⁵ This title in some sources mentioned in forms *akhshidh* (اخشيد) and *ikhshadh* (اخشاذ) [Ibn Haukal: 468].

¹⁶ Origin of the name Ghurak (غورك) connected with the Sogdian *γwr'kh* – “pride”, “arrogance” [Frye 1954: 128, n. 148] or the Old Iranian **uyraka* – “mighty” [Фрейман 1938: 148]. We can also suppose that it is originated from the Turkic ethnonym *uyraq* [ДТС: 363] or the Old Turkic *oyray* – “purpose”, “aspiration”, “urge” [ДТС: 363]. In the Old Turkic runic inscriptions is mentioned the name *inaη uyrač* [ДТС: 607].

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