



## **ONE MIGRATION, TWO DIFFERENT HISTORIOGRAPHIES: THE MIGRATION OF THE UZBEKS AND KAZAKHS IN THE 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY\***

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### **ABSTRACT**

History education has a crucial role in training the future generations. Each nation-state teaches history according to necessities of forming national identities for its citizens. After the dissolution of the USSR, following the fail demise of the common identity, *New Soviet Man*, newly independent Central Asian states moved to find distinct national identities for their citizens. During the Soviet period the historiography was based on territoriality within the driven borders. The common past, however, cannot be delimited to contemporary borders. Kazakh and Uzbek peoples consist of some similar tribes, because they had arrived as a result of massive migrations in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The comprehension of their past and the differences in evaluating this migration is related to their recent needs of constructing a nation, which is manifested in their history textbooks.

Textbooks present a rather secluded sphere, where the signs of political needs on education can be more clearly analyzed. Thus, this study aims to compare the evaluation of a certain migration process in the historiography of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan through text analysis in history textbooks. Uzbekistan underlines the deeds of settled civilizations in recent Uzbekistan. Here the Timurids are being glorified, although a century later with the migrating “Uzbek” tribes pushed them away. This controversial case is solved against the nomadic Uzbeks, in favor of pre-Uzbek settled civilizations of recent Uzbekistan. In Kazakhstan this migration is evaluated positively in glorifying the legacy of Eurasian nomadic khanates parallel to their modern, political vision for Eurasia.

**Key Words:** Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Migration, History Education.

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## BİR GÖÇ İKİ FARKLI TARİH YAZIMI: ÖZBEKLERİN VE KAZAKLARIN ON BEŞİNCİ YÜZYILDAKİ GÖÇÜ

### ÖZET

Tarih eğitiminin gelecek kuşakları eğitmene kritik bir rolü vardır. Her ulus-devlet vatandaşları için bir ulusal kimlik oluşturma gereğiyle tarih eğitimi verir. SSCB'nin dağılışının ardından *Yeni Sovyet İnsanı* ortak kimliğinin gözden düşmesiyle, yeni bağımsızlığını kazanan Orta Asya cumhuriyetleri vatandaşları için farklı kimlik arayışlarına yöneldiler. Sovyet döneminde tarihyazımı çizili sınırlar içindeki topraklarla sınırlıydı. Ancak ortak geçmiş günümüz sınırları tarafından sınırlandırılmaz. Kazak ve Özbek halkları içinde bazı kavimler ortaktır, çünkü on beşinci yüzyıldaki kitlesel göçlerle gelmişlerdir. Geçmişlerini nasıl kavradıkları ve bu göçü nasıl değerlendirdikleri bugün inşa etme ihtiyacı duydukları ulusla ilintilidir, ki bu da tarih ders kitaplarında kendini gösterir.

Ders kitapları, görece kapalı bir alanda yer aldıklarından, eğitime ilgili siyasi gereksinimlerin işaretlerini burada daha açıklıkla çözümlenebilir. Bu nedenle bu çalışma belli bir göç sürecinin Kazakistan ve Özbekistan tarihyazımında nasıl değerlendirildiğini karşılaştırmayı amaçlıyor. Özbekistan günümüz Özbekistan sınırları içindeki uygarlıkların yaptıklarını vurgulamaktadır. Bu çerçevede Timuriler yüceltilmektedir, oysa yüz yıl sonra göç eden "Özbek" kavimleri onları uzaklaştırdılar. Bu çapraşık durum göçer Özbeklere karşı, Özbeklerden önce günümüz Özbekistan'ında yaşayan yerleşik uygarlıkları lehine çözülmüştür. Kazakistan'da bu göç, günümüz siyasi vizyonlarına paralel olarak, göçer Avrasya hanlıklarını yüzeltmek için olumlu olarak değerlendirilmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Özbekistan, Kazakistan, Göç, Tarih Eğitimi.

### Introduction

History education has a crucial role in training the future generations. Each nation-state teaches history according to necessities of forming national identities for its citizens. The years, persons and their accomplishments in history are forgotten by most graduates, but the main idea remains. It teaches the students "who they are" through "where they stand in history". The family backgrounds or local history of students might be different than what is being thought in the textbooks, but history education gives some of the main features about the shared identity. The shared history represented in history textbooks is more authoritative than singular histories. Citizens with different backgrounds base their interpretations and figure their position in daily political events upon the knowledge learned during the school education. Media and daily national and international events strengthen and reproduce the basic ideas about the national identity learned at school.

This was also the case during the Soviet period. The related concern of the Soviet period was creating the *New Soviet Man* (новый советский человек), who was expected to be a person stripped from her/his tribal roots (Ustryalov 1934: 6). During the Soviet period the identity of the Soviet citizen and its relation with the national identity was not static. In the first years the main

### Turkish Studies

*International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*  
Volume 8/5 Spring 2013



idea was *korenizatsiya* (taking roots through nativization), in which titular nations were supported in each republic and significant rights for minorities were acknowledged. Accordingly education and production of literary works in national languages, the study of history and ethnography of various nationalities were supported. The policy was indeed established to obtain the support of various nationalities in the USSR. The nationalities were not considered as threat to the internationalist Soviet ideal, but they were understood as roots of the gigantic Soviet tree. Strong roots would only create a stronger tree. The nationalities were not only supported culturally but national territorial delimitations were also created, where different nationalities would enjoy some level of autonomy in self-governing bodies.

During the liquidation of 1936-38, many intellectuals and politicians were condemned for their supposed bourgeois-nationalist tendencies. That was a new epoch with stress on an undeclared Russification, when Russian education was made compulsory for non-Russian schools, Latin alphabet of Central Asian republics was replaced by Cyrillic, and Russian culture was turned to be the focus for every nationality as the shared cultural legacy. Thus Russians in history education turned to “big brothers” helping the backward peoples. The Russian invasion of Central Asia was taught as a progressive movement within a discourse similar to “white man’s burden”. For the Kazakhs it was also taught that Russians were invited by Kazakh tribes and thus the Kazakh subordination was voluntary. This was in sharp contrast with the previous evaluation of Russian advance, which explained it through economic factors align with Marxism and criticized it as being capitalistic and exploitative.

### **New Historiographies After the Independence**

After the dissolution of the USSR newly independent Central Asian states moved to found distinct national identities for their citizens. During the Soviet period the historiography was based on territoriality within the drawn borders. While the historiography was being reformulated, some main issues remained. After the delimitation of Soviet republics between 1924 and 1936, the acceptance of the new territory became one of the main concerns for creating a belonging to the created Soviet Socialist Republic. This was a challenge for nomadic societies, because even the drawing of static borders was a problem for nomadic societies, which were constantly changing their locations from summer to winter pastures crossing imposed borders.

The historiography played a role in the acceptance of national borders. History textbooks taught the past of all peoples lived within the recently drawn borders, but related peoples immediately beyond the borders were subject matter of neighboring republics. It was inclusive in terms of including historically every people and civilization within the territory until ethonogenesis, but exclusive for shared achievements or ancestors beyond the borders.

After the independence the concern for territoriality continued also in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. For Uzbekistan regionalization was considered a threat, where in the 19th century the republican territory was not unified but divided between Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand khanates, and in Kazakhstan the majority of the population in 1989 was non-Kazakh ([http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng\\_nac\\_89.php?reg=5](http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_89.php?reg=5)). Additionally the majority of the Kazakhstani citizens living in the northern half of Kazakhstan - with shared borders with Russian Federation - were Russians.

After the independence the maps on history textbooks and school atlases continued to show historical ages within recent national borders. It is the same for Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. In the last decade, however, although the territorial concern for ancient ages and maps for all ages remained the same, some changes about the enlargement of the sphere of historical interest are also apparent. The history of Kazakhstan recently includes information about some nomadic formations on the Eurasian Steppes. For example, The Huns (Hsiung-Nu) were also taught in Soviet period, as

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### **Turkish Studies**

*International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*  
Volume 8/5 Spring 2013



they had ruled over the Kazakh Steppes, but recently the information given about the Huns crosses the borders of Kazakhstan, and the chapter closes with Atilla, whose powerbase was in today's Hungary (Turlugyl 2002 :71).

Also in Uzbekistan the sphere of interest of history textbooks is not only defined by territoriality any more. After the first years of independence and some debates Amir Temur obtained a central position in the Uzbekistani historiography. During the Soviet period sultans and khans were considered as feudal despots, and no pages were devoted to their glories. Today the most glorious age of Uzbekistan is accepted to be the age of Amir Temur and Temurids. The conquests of Amir Temur, which covered most of Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, and part of Anatolia, Iraq, India, Pakistan are used to demonstrate the grandeur of Amir Temur (Muhammadjonov 2009: 118). On the main square of the capital stands the statue of Amir Temur and next to it the Amir Temur Museum (established in 2006). All significant members of the Temurid dynasty are remembered at the museum, including Babur, who had fought against the nomadic "Uzbeks" before leaving today's Uzbekistan.

Babur's resistance against the Uzbeks (Usmonov 2006: 15-16) and the resistance against Chinggis Khan are told in history textbooks as a heroic fight against the intruders. Nejmeddin Kubro is told to have fought against the armies of Chinggis Khan by saying "Land or honorable death", which is also the subtitle of the related chapter. Another heroic fighter is Khwarzemshahid Jaloliddin Manguberdi, who is honored by patriotic sentences (Muhammadjonov 2009: 97-100). As the nomadic "Uzbek" khans were from Chinggis Khan's lineage, the confrontation of Chinggis Khan and the peoples of Uzbekistan built the first confrontation between the locals and – the forefathers of - the Uzbeks. This struggle is also evaluated for the benefit of territoriality against Chinggisid (Uzbek) lineage.

It is a fact that the past cannot be delimited to contemporary borders. It is also true that the Kazakh and Uzbek peoples arose from intermingled tribes, which is manifested in the shared names of some tribes. This can be considered as an outcome of the dynamic nomadic way of life, but also because many tribes had arrived as a result of massive migrations in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The recent national designations of "Uzbek" and "Kazakh" was attested to modern Uzbek and Kazakh peoples – which were not nations yet - after that very migration. Some tribes known as "Uzbeks" moved to agricultural centers in recent Uzbekistan and some remained in the steppes, and because of their separation they took the name "Kazakh".

The significance of this migration is evaluated differently in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, which is not only based upon scientific data but also on the selection of historical data influenced by their recent needs of constructing a nation.

### **The Migration and Kazakh Historiography**

The migration of the Kazakh tribes to today's Kazakhstan has a special role in the formation of the Kazakh ethnogenesis. The emergence of the Kazakh tribes is a well-known fact documented in historical sources. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century some tribes of the Golden Horde, who were called Uzbek (Özbek), were united under Abulkhayr Khan. The aim of Abulkhayr Khan was migrating from the north of the Caspian Sea to the south, Transoxiana, where there were more fertile regions and various cities, and where he could centralize his loose tribal union. Two of the khans in his tribal confederation, Karai Khan and Jani Beg Khan were not comfortable with Abulkhayr Khan's plans about the restoration of power and establishment of a dynasty. In 1459-1460, Karai Khan and Jani Beg Khan united nomadic and semi-nomadic groups, who were against the migration to Transoxiana and centralization, and moved to Western Jedisu. (Kumekov 1998: 67)

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### **Turkish Studies**

*International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*  
Volume 8/5 Spring 2013



Mirza Muhammed Haidar Dughlat (1500-1551) transmitted Abulkhayr Khan's push for centralization and the reaction, which resulted in the separation of "Kazakh" tribes from the Uzbeks, in his work, *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, as follows:

When Abulkhayr had made himself master of the whole of the Dasht-i Kipchak, he desired to remove several of the Sultans of the race Juji, in whom he detected symptoms of seditious designs. Karai Khan and Jani Beg Khan, perceiving the intentions of Abulkhayr Khan, fled together with a few other Juji Sultans, to Moghulistan. This country was at the time under the khanship of Isan Bugha Khan, who received them favourably and assigned a corner of Moghulistan for them to live in. Here they dwelt in peace.

On the death of Abulkhayr, differences arose between the Uzbek Ulus. As many as were able, repaired to Karai Khan and Jani Beg Khan, for the sake of peace and security: and in this way [the two khans] became very powerful. Since they have first of all separated from the mass of their people, and for some time had been in an indigent and wandering state, they got the name of Kazakh, which has clung to them [ever since] (Elias 1972 (1895): 272-73).

This separation laid the foundations of the Kazakh people. Before it became the name of a people, the term "kazakh" was used for "free and independent man, vagabond, adventurer". According to Barthold and Hazai "Kazakh" comes from the Turkic word "kaz" which means "to flee, to escape", and the suffix "akh" is used for the person, who had escaped (in modern Turkish "kaçak") (W. Barthold G. Hazai, *Encyclopedia of Islam*). Mirza Muhammed Haidar Dughlat's explanation about their process of becoming "Kazakh" also confirms this claim: "Since they have first of all separated from the mass of their people, and for some time had been in an indigent and wandering state, they got the name of Kazakh." (Elias 1972 (1895): 73)

The Uzbek tribes, who had left Abulhayr Khan, were first called "Uzbek-Kazakh" meaning "the Uzbeks, who had become kazakhs" or "the Uzbeks, who had become followers of kazakh khans". In the beginning of the 16th century, when the Uzbeks had finally moved to Transoxiana and consolidated the Kazakh Khanate around Jedisu region, the term "Uzbek" was dropped for the Kazakhs, and they came to be known as the Kazakhs (Togan 1981: 37).

Again in the beginning of the 16th century the Uzbeks migrated to Transoxiana, where they established their khanate. The separation of the Kazakhs and formation of different khanates on different territories can be considered as a very crucial step in the historical formation of the Uzbek and Kazakh peoples. In the Kazakh historiography this is the turning point in the formation of the Kazakh people. The history textbooks about the Kazakh history cover all peoples lived in Kazakhstan, starting with tribes of the Andronov culture, Saks, Sarmats and Usun (Zholdasbaev 2003: 124-125). They had all lived before the coming of the Kazakhs. It is, however, emphasized that the ethogenesis of the Kazakh people could only be achieved after the establishment of the ethno-political stability, which was at the time of the Kazakh Khanate (Zholdasbaev 2003:126).

The migration, separation and formation of the Kazakh and Uzbek tribes are taught in Kazakhstani history schoolbooks as follows:

As a result of the dispersion of clans and tribes under the Abulhayrid Khanate, this khanate was abolished and remaining clans and tribes migrated till Central Asia causing the emergence of the Uzbek people there. On the contrary, ethno-political groups in Kazakhstan united around Janibek and Kerei sultans, which firstly resulted in the formation of the Kazakh Khanate and secondly in the consolidation of the ethnic components of the Kazakh people (Zholdasbaev 2003:128).

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### **Turkish Studies**

*International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*  
Volume 8/5 Spring 2013



The clans and tribes migrating with Janibek and Kerei khans were first called Uzbek-Kazakh. Later the expression “Uzbek” had somehow become obsolete, the expression “Kazakh” was fixed and turned to the ethnic name of the Kazakh people. The clans and tribes, who were called “Uzbek” and migrated to Central Asia, became components of the Uzbek people. Thus two brotherly peoples had emerged from the ethno-political community, who were called “Uzbek-Kazakh” at the time of the Uzbek Khanate. The expression of the Kazakhs corresponding to this brotherhood “Uzbek, my blood brother” is the proof that the origins of these two peoples are the same (Zholdasbaev 2003:128).

The passages from the Kazakh history textbook clearly demonstrates that the separation of two “kazakh” khans, the subjugation of some nomadic tribes to them and the establishment of the Kazakh Khanate are accepted as cornerstones in the formation of the Kazakh people. Therefore they also enjoy a significant status in the recent Kazakh historiography.

### **The Migration and Uzbek Historiography**

In Uzbekistan, on the other hand, the significance of this migration is very low. In Uzbekistan the most glorious age of the Uzbekistani history is accepted as the age of Amir Temur and the Temurids, but the coming of the nomadic Uzbeks brought the end of the Temurid period. The modern Uzbeks are proud with the achievements of the settled civilizations in today’s Uzbekistan, and they see themselves as the heirs of this rich legacy but not as the offspring of nomadic “Uzbeks” migrated to Uzbekistan.

The stress on the influence of the Uzbek migration is clearly rejected in official historiography. A book about the ethnic structure of Uzbekistan, *Etnicheskii Atlas Uzbekistana* (The Ethnic Atlas of Uzbekistan), about the past and present situation of the peoples of Uzbekistan (Ilkhamov 2002) triggered a strong rejection by some scholars from the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, including the head of the institute. They published an analysis criticizing the book. Later the Head of the Institute Sh. Kamoliddin published an article in English for the wider scientific community. He chose a single counterargument for the English article, which was about the migration and ethnogenesis of the Uzbeks.

His argument, which also reflects the standpoint of the institute, is as follows:

[T]he ethnogenesis of the Uzbek nation begins in the sixteenth century, when nomadic Uzbeks migrated from the Dashti-Kipchak steppes to Central Asia, constituting the core of the future Uzbek people (...) One has to admit that this point of view indeed exists among some researchers who, guided by their preconceived and unscientific opinions, try to depict Uzbeks and other Turkic-speaking peoples of Central Asia as “uncultured nomads, herders, migrants, and conquerors, who did not have their own cultural traditions in the region and did not contribute to the development of civilization.” (Kamoliddin 2006:42-43)

We have always considered erroneous the notion that the Uzbek nation’s ethnogenesis is primarily related to the history of Dasht-i Kipchak Uzbeks and local Turkic clans and tribes who joined them. Modern Uzbeks’ ethnic and historical ancestors were the ancient settled agriculturalist and urban Turks of the Central Asian interfluvial plain who were part of the autochthonous pre-Indo-European population of the region. In subsequent historical periods, this primary Turkic-speaking substrate included many other ethnic components, both Turkic- and Iranian-speaking tribes and peoples (Kamoliddin 2006:44).

The Dasht-i Kipchak component is the latest external element in the Uzbek peoples’ history, which did not contribute anything new to the process of nation formation. Nomadic Uzbeks blended into the settled agriculturalist Central Asian population and, having adopted their language,

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### **Turkish Studies**

*International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*  
Volume 8/5 Spring 2013



partook of its high culture. Dashti-Kipchak inhabitants' erstwhile political dominion is preserved only in the ethnonym, which, after the national demarcation of 1924, started being used to refer to all Central Asian Turkic-speaking settled agriculturalists. (Kamoliddin 2006:44)

Any impact of the migration of the "Uzbeks" to "Uzbekistan" is clearly rejected in Kamoliddin's words. He strongly denies any contribution of the nomadic Uzbeks to the nation formation process. He even criticizes this point of argument as a design to belittle their civilization.

This article in English can also be considered as an academic manifesto against the constructivist evaluation of the migration in the formation of the Uzbek people. Similar sentences about the migration and ethnogenesis of the Uzbek people are also used in the history textbooks of Uzbekistan:

Turkic clans and tribes living in Dashti-Kipchak, and who accepted for themselves the name "Uzbek" came to our land. This event did not have any impact on the ethnicity [living] within our fatherland's boundaries. (...) The recent Uzbeks and Karakalpaks were living on the territories they live today since ancient ages. But they were not called "Uzbeks" or "Karakalpaks" at that period.

(...) the tribes coming from Dashti-Kipchak came naturally closer with their local brothers [in time]. (...) Eventually they improved spiritually by mixing with their local brothers. (Usmonov 2006:24-25)

The coming of the nomadic Uzbeks with a nomadic culture is not considered as something to effect the composition of the peoples living in Uzbekistan and the perenniality of the culture. On the contrary the local, settled culture had influenced the newcomers, and through a natural process they were assimilated by the local people and their culture. The territoriality again supersedes over the ethnic affiliation, despite the fact that at least the designation "Uzbek" has an undeniable affiliation with the modern Uzbeks.

While the impact of the historical Uzbeks is denied, no other term is presented instead. The term "Turk" is freely used for historical periods, but for modern periods "Uzbek" is accepted. President Karimov presents the political, social and economic restructuring of post-independence Uzbekistan as the "Uzbek Model". Considering the past, he declared that they had "common cultural, historical and anthropological ties with the Tajik people. It shows that [their] culture is a unique synthesis of Turkic and Persian components." It can be argued that what is officially understood by "Uzbek" today in Uzbekistan is the culmination of ages old traditions and intermingling of cultures and peoples, which creates the uniqueness of Uzbekistan.

### **As a Conclusion**

Uzbekistan with a vision of becoming the heir of Central Asian civilizations neglects the migration Uzbeks and underlines the achievements of settled civilization within the borders of Uzbekistan. Here the Temurids are being glorified, although a century later with the migration mentioned above the nomadic "Uzbek" tribes pushed them away. This controversial case is solved against the nomadic Uzbeks, in favor of pre-Uzbek settled civilizations of recent Uzbekistan. After the period as part of the Russian Tsardom and the Soviet years Uzbekistan aims to prove that "they" have a deeply rooted tradition of founding states and civilizations. Thus they were not in need of the civilizing role of the Russian "big brothers". They alone are the heirs of settled cultures, and they are able to revive this legacy. This legacy of settled civilizations is in fact not contradicting the facts. Yet the migration of the Uzbeks had also impact on the formation of the Uzbek society. The sheer difference in constructing the past in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan is not only determined by differences in their historical facts, as the different evaluation of the same fact

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### **Turkish Studies**

*International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*  
Volume 8/5 Spring 2013



(migration) represents. It is also determined by the past is being perceived, which is not independent than recent dilemmas.

On the contrary, in Kazakhstan the same migration is positively evaluated. The controversial significance in the evaluation of the migration in Kazakhstan, however, is not only an outcome of absence of settled civilizations or historical cities in Kazakhstan. the historiography of Kazakhstan includes the territory crossed by their nomadic ancestors as well. The glorification of the legacy of Eurasian nomadic empires is parallel to their modern, political vision for achieving a place at the heart of Eurasia. A recent book published in English and French with the official support of Kazakhstan is called “Kazakhstan: Linchpin of Eurasia”, which openly reflects the vision Kazakhstan aspires to stage for the world (Seguillon 2010). Also during the celebration of the 20th anniversary of independence (2011) Nazarbayev underlined the need for “new Eurasianism”, which he said was his political vision since 1994. This is now to be realized in the Eurasian Union with partner states of Russia and Byelorussia (Solozobov 2011; Islambek 2011).

Kazakhstani historiography is not restricted by territoriality any more, it exceeds the borders, and the direction of the expansion is to wider steppes in the north. In Uzbekistan an expansion of historical interest is also the case, but here the main direction is towards covering the settled heartland of Central Asia. It seems that this is also reflected in the history education of those two nation-states and the very evaluation of the historical migration of the nomadic “Uzbeks” and “Kazakhs”.

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## Turkish Studies

International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic  
Volume 8/5 Spring 2013





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**Turkish Studies**

*International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*  
Volume 8/ 5 Spring 2013

