



## ĠOZZ

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**ĠOZZ**, a significant Turkic tribe in western Eurasia in the 5th century.

i. *Origins.*

ii. *Tribe.*

i. ORIGINS

Ġozz is the rendering by Muslim geographers of the Turkic Oġuz. Oġur, the Bulġaro-Ĉuvašic form of this term, is noted as the name of a Turkic people in Western Eurasia in the 5th century. *Oġur/Oġuz* is probably a term denoting some kind of tribal confederation, perhaps signifying a union of related tribes or clans. Chinese sources sometimes translate this word as “clan, people” (*hsing/xing*). The Oġurs and Oġuz were part of a far-flung tribal confederation called, in the Chinese sources, *T'ieh-lē* (*\*Tegreg* “[People of the] Carts”), which spanned Eurasia. A number of tribal groupings bearing this name, often with a numeral representing the number of constituent tribes in the union, are noted in the Old Türk and Uighur runiform inscriptions of Southern Siberia (Yenisey zone) and Mongolia (Orkhon and Selenge regions): Oġuz, Üĉ Oġuz (“Three Oġuz,” identified, perhaps, with the Qarluqs; cf. the Üĉ Qarluq; see Aydarov, p. 349), Sekiz Oġuz (“Eight Oġuz,” linked by some scholars with the later Naiman [Mong. eight] tribal union), and Toquz Oġuz (“The Nine Oġuz,” the *Ṭ/Toġozġozz* of the Islamic sources: Masʻudi, *Moruj*, ed. Pellat, sec. 312; Ešġakri, p. 10; Ebn Ḥawqal, pp. 9, 11; *Ḥodud al-ʻālam*, ed. Sotuda, pp. 77, 78). The latter were ruled by a vassal khagan (“*baz qaġan*” [*kāqān*]). The relationship of these Oġuz



groupings to one another has not been resolved. The Oğuz are depicted in the Türk Orkhon inscriptions as an occasionally unruly subject *bodun* (people, tribal union). The various tribal groupings bearing the Oğuz name in one form or another were all part of the Eastern Türk khaganate (552-630, 687-741) centered in Mongolia. The Toquz Oğuz confederation, however, which came to be led by the Uighur union had a longstanding tradition of enmity with the ruling Türk A-shih-na clan and frequently were in revolt against it. The Uighurs and the Qarluqs assisted the Basmil in their overthrow of the Turks in 742. Two years later, the Uighurs, allied now with the Qarluqs and Oğuz, toppled the Basmil and founded their own khaganate in Inner Asia. This alliance was short-lived as the Qarluqs migrated to the land of the On Oq/Western Türk union in 745 and took possession of the Western Türk capital (Suyāb) in 766. The Oğuz seem to have been uneasy with the Uighur rule as well. Ebn al-Aṭir (Beirut, XI p. 178), using Khorasani historians, remarked that the Oğuz had migrated to Transoxiana from the “most distant parts of the Turks” (presumably Mongolia) during the caliphate of al-Mahdi (r. 775-85). By the early 9th century, the Oğuz were already an important presence in the region. The Taherids waged war on them, deep in the steppe, bringing back large numbers of prisoners (Ebn Kōr-dāḍbeh, pp. 37, 39), the embryo of the *ḡolām* institution of the ‘Abbasid caliphs. Oğuz legend portrays this as a period of struggle with the Pečenegs, whom they ousted and drove westward into the Pontic steppes. The Oğuz were centered around the Syr Darya, Chorasmia serving as their principle urban point of contact. Their nominal leader, the *yabḡu*, made his winter quarters in Yangi Kent (Pers. Deh-e Now; Ar. al-Madina al-Jadida, al-Qarya al-Ḥadiṭa). It was also here that their 22-24 clans/tribes, organized into two sub-confederations, the Boz Oq and Üç Oq, came fully into the view of the Islamic sources. The Oğuz language, by the time of Maḥmud Kāšḡari (ca. 469/1077), was already showing some differences from the other common Turkic dialects, in part due to borrowings from Iranian languages resulting from close contact with Chorasmia (q.v.) and other districts of Iranian Central Asia.



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## ii. TRIBE

Name of a Turkish (Oğuz) tribe that came to play a considerable role in medieval Islamic Persian history.

The Oğuz appear in history as a group of nine tribes, the Toğuz Oğuz, who formed part of the Eastern Turkish or Tiu-kiu confederation and as such are mentioned in the Orkhon inscriptions of the early 8th century C.E. In the later 8th century they moved from Mongolia westward to the regions of the upper Irtysh (Erteš) river, the Aral Sea, and the fringes of the Syr Darya valley (now the southern part of the Kazakhstan Republic), where they entered Islamic history. By 205/820-21, the Toğuz Oğuz were harrying the middle Syr Darya province of Ošrusana (Ṭabari, III, p. 1044), and the governor of Khorasan, 'Abd-Allāh b. Ṭāher (213-30/828-45, q.v.), raided the land of the Ġozz (*belād al-Ġuzziya*; *Balāḍori*, *Fotuḥ*, p. 431).

The caliph's envoy Aḥmad b. Faẓlān (q.v.), who traveled in the spring of 309-10/922 from Chorasmia to the Ural and Emba rivers en route for the kingdom of Bulgar on the middle Volga, commented on the Oğuz while passing through their lands on the Üst Urt plateau between the Aral and Caspian Seas.



He described them as nomads of a low cultural level, wandering “like wild asses” (text pp. 10-14, tr. pp. 19-27). Some of the Oğuz were, however, beginning to settle, and one of their towns was Yengi Kent “new town” (Ar. al-Qarya al-Ḥadiṭa, Pers. Deh-e Now) on the lower Syr Darya, which was the winter capital of the pagan Oğuz ruler (*Ḥodud al-‘ālam*, ed. Sotuda, p. 123, tr. Minorsky, p. 122). These Oğuz, made up of twenty-two component tribes (Kāšğari I, pp. 55-59), now found themselves on the northern fringes of the Samanids; it was out of one of these tribes, the Qiniq, that the Saljuq family was to arise. Proximity to the more civilized Muslim lands brought about the gradual conversion of the Oğuz to Islam. Details of the process are lacking, but the Saljuq family was Muslim by 382/992, when Arslān b. Esrā’il b. Saljuq was aiding the Samanids against the Qarakhanid invaders of Transoxania. The conversion of the other significant leading family of the Oğuz, that of the Yabğus of Yengi Kent, came around the same time, for the Yabğū allied with the last Samanid Esmā’il Montaṣer in 393/1003 (Bosworth, *Ghaznavids*, pp. 221-22).

From the region of Bokhara, the Oğuz, now often designated in the sources as Turkmans, a name whose exact meaning has not yet been elucidated (see Kafesoğlu, pp. 121-330), moved in the 1020s through the Qara Qum desert to the fringes of Khorasan, where they harried such towns under Ghaznavid control as Nasā, Farāva and Abivard (q.v.). Despite punitive expeditions launched against them by the Ghaznavid sultans, uncoordinated bands of Turkmans moved with their flocks of sheep and herds of horses into the pasture lands of northern Khorasan and westward to Ray and Jebāl, with raids extending by 420/1030 as far west as Azarbaijan. Counter-attacks by the exasperated sultans pushed some of the Oğuz back to the Üst Urt region, but other bands were by now raiding across the whole of northern Persia, disrupting caravan traffic and commercial life, and ruining the agriculture of the oases by the pasturing of their herds. The victory of the Saljuqs and their followers over the Ghaznavid army at Dandānqān (q.v.) in 431/1040 enabled the Saljuq family eventually to establish a genuine state in Persia and beyond (Bayhaqi, ed. Fayyaz, pp. 829 ff.; Ebn al-Aṭir, IX, pp. 462-64, 482-84).

The Great Saljuq empire, thus constituted, contained within it considerable groups of Oğuz or Turkmans, who continued to be tribally organized, with a way of life, and with economic and political interests very different from those of the Saljuq sultans, now rulers of an extensive territorial empire and with their exercise of power increasingly permeated by the Perso-Islamic ruling



ethic. In the early decades of Saljuq rule, the Turkmans often gave their support to rebellious members of the Saljuq family or to claimants in contested successions, as to Qāvord b. Čağri Beg Dāwud in 466/1074 after Alp Arslān's death. (Rāvandi, pp. 126-27; Ebn al-Aṭir, IX, pp. 78-79)

The policy of the Great Saljuq sultans came to be to direct as many as possible of these anarchic and undisciplined Turkman bands beyond the empire's boundaries, to Transcaucasia, to Syria, and to Armenia and Anatolia; in this latter region, the sons of the Saljuq Solaymān b. Qotalmeš b. Arslān Esrā'il succeeded, essentially with Turkman support, in founding the Saljuq sultanate of Rum based on Konya. Other Turkman elements settled within those regions of the empire suitable for pastoral nomadism, such as Khorasan, Azarbaijan, the uplands of Fārs, and the steppes of Kermān. In Azarbaijan they established an ethnic and linguistic core that eventually made Azarbaijan a Turkish-speaking province (see Azarbaijan iv. and viii.). In Fārs, after the extinguishing there of the Buyids in 454/1062, Turkmans had to compete with the indigenous Šabānkāra'i Kurds; the Turkish elements of the Qašqā'i tribe of Fārs are of comparatively recent formation. In neighboring Kermān, however, a Saljuq principality enduring for nearly a century and a half (440-ca. 584/1048-ca.1188), was formed under Qāvord and his descendants, which was strongly tribal in its ethos, and after its demise, Ĝozz elements under local chieftains such as Malek Dinār became the dominant element in Kermān until the Khwarazmians appeared there. A similar process took place in Khorasan during the 12th century. There, friction between on one hand the Saljuq administration, concerned to extend the authority of the central government over nomadic Ĝozz elements and, above all, to subject them to taxation, and on the other hand the still tribally organized Ĝozz, was at its most acute. In the last years of Sultan Sanjar's reign, in 548/1153, the Ĝozz burst out into rebellion, captured Sanjar and took him around with them for three years as their prisoner (Rāvandi, pp. 177-85; Ebn al-Aṭir, XI, pp. 176-83); this revolt marked the end of Saljuq rule in Khorasan, and after the sultan's death in 552/1157, Khorasan fell into the hands of various former slave military commanders of the Saljuqs, with the Ĝozz, lacking any purposeful leadership or political sophistication, remaining an intractable and unpredictable element there up until the coming of the Mongols (Köymen, 1947-48).

The appearance of the Oğuz in Persia had long-term effects in the spheres of social and economic organization and land utilization. It began a process of pastoralization across many parts of northern Persia which was to be



accentuated under the Mongols by the injection of fresh waves of Turko-Mongol nomads (see Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant* pp. 55 ff.; idem, *Continuity*, pp. 3 ff. and passim).

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