

**CHASING THE FOOD, CHASING THE NAMES:  
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH  
TO THE CULINARY CULTURE OF TURKIC PEOPLES OF EURASIA**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

This thesis takes a critical stance on the conventional approaches to the nomadic societies based on the historical sources written by the agents of the sedentary entities and interrogates the dominant discourse on the characteristics of the nomads. In order to reveal the essence of the controversial approach to the nomadic peoples and uncover the prevalent patterns in their presentation, this study first conducts a literature review of the historiographical tradition on the subject. It also asserts that assumed to be devoid of agricultural foods and dominated by carnivorous savagery, suppositions about their imagined diet have been substantially exploited to describe them; thus, they can only be challenged by exploring alternative means of accessing data reflecting their cultural realm. Thus, since they are one of the most prominent groups of peoples with a distinct nomadic heritage, this study examines the primary Turkic lexical sources in a historical sequence to investigate the food culture of Turkic nomads and to trace the linguistic and culinary connections among them. Therefore, this thesis attempts to challenge one of the most common arguments underpinning the traditional approach to the nomadic peoples, endeavours to test its validity by examining the essential lexical material available and tries to present the history of culinary and linguistic interaction among Turkic peoples. It mainly focuses on grain-based foods because their prevalent existence in their diet, if proven, may challenge the misrepresentations of the historical accounts, which tend to define and marginalize them with their alimentation. To this end, it adopts an interdisciplinary approach touching upon various fields and sub-fields such as Language, Food Studies, Cultural History, Nomadology, and Onomastics.

**DEDICATION:**

For the ones I lost too early,

For my mother and grandfather,

For Okşan and Mustafa Yeşil...

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

I am grateful to my family; to my grandmother Hatun Yeşil, to my wife Anna Yeşil, to my father Hüseyin Gazi Yeşil, to my brother Serhan Yeşil, and to my best friend, Umut Feyzioğlu. These words accumulated through these pages and all these sentences reflecting my humble ideas would have been impossible to come together had it not been for their endless support and patience.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **i. Background of the Problem:**

As with all actions encouraging people to learn and discover, personal curiosity is at the heart of this research. Nevertheless, it would be at least incomplete to say that behind this curiosity, there is only a natural suspicion since the curiosity here, is, in some sense, conditioned and learned. To put it in another way, my interest in history, languages, and words, my love of food, and what I have learned about all of these have led me to ask broader questions that go beyond these individual fields and my desire to try to answer one or more of these questions in my capacity has led me to do this research.

What I have read about the history of the people whose language I speak as a mother tongue, in general, has led me to think more about their ethnogenesis, ontological existence, historicity, and cultural identity. Especially in terms of the historical presentation of the peoples of nomadic origins such as Turks or Mongols, or even popular culture's understanding of them, I have encountered generalizations and misunderstandings similar to what Edward Said (Said, 1978) noticed in the context of Colonial historiography about the image of the "Orient." I noticed that just as the colonial powers imagined an East confined to fundamental and immutable characteristics, the sedentary agents as well, similarly, imagined Nomads confined to precise boundaries. I realized that they were fixing this form of the Absolute Other since they could not make fully sense of it in their ideological world of meaning. And that perhaps in this way, they wanted to stabilize the unstable and uncanny feelings arising from the unsettling presence of these highly mobile people within the comfort of clichés and generalizations.

Even if a different perspective on Nomadic peoples or their successors is to be offered, it should be kept in mind that a significant proportion of the literature to be examined was

primarily written by the sedentary élites. Nevertheless, there are several ways to overcome the difficulties stemming from this dilemma, which places the researcher in a complicated situation, and one of them is to draw on the subject and methods of other fields.

This master's thesis is based on the idea that an interdisciplinary approach can introduce new perspectives, critically rethink, and perhaps rebuild the structures that have been taken for granted. Thus, even if such written sources are not composed with a view to changing or challenging a particular theory, an analysis of linguistic texts on Turkic nomads' languages and their lexical repertoires on the subject of diet, which constitutes one of the most common generalizations about nomads, is likely to yield crucial data.

Therefore, the following subheadings of the Introduction section will present the topics and fields of interest of this master's thesis, as well as how they relate to each other within the research's universe of discourse. Subsequently, the methodology of the study will be outlined, and the lexical texts that are the subject of the study will be introduced.

## **ii. Argumentation and Hypothesis of the Research:**

This thesis argues that not only little scholarly attention has been paid to the Turkic nomadic peoples or their descendants living in Eurasia from Eastern China to Asia Minor, but also that various traditions of historiography and general assumptions about them may be scientifically problematic; thus, in order to present the implications of this questionable approaches and to grasp their contours, it first embarks on a literature review of the historiographic tradition on the subject.

This study asserts that the role of food, with all its connotations (from trade to distribution and consumption), and the context around the food is of great explanatory value in



reframing the traditional perspective regarding nomads, just as they were also materialized in the rote assumptions about them.

More crucially, it underlines that nomadic and sedentary lifestyles should not be considered absolute forms, particularly within the context of Inner Asia because of the fact that human groups of different sizes in this vast region switched between these two forms for climatic reasons and due to human factors, such as wars or economic crises.

It utilizes a methodology that focuses on lexical texts as they present the verbal inventory of a particular society in a specific place and time and expects to generate additional knowledge and interpretations based on the linguistic inventories preserved by these lexicographic sources.

It adopts an interdisciplinary approach focusing on the linguistic, cultural, and historical footprints of certain foods (Schafer, 1963, pp. 139-154) like “noodles” or “dumplings” (Anderson, 2014, pp. 163-165 and 293-295; Buell et al., 2020, pp.182-192) and their names within the context of nomadic Turkic peoples and their descendants who have been living from Siberia to Balkans.

It is predicated on the hypothesis that such a methodology focusing on the aforementioned textual material may reveal lexical clues showing that Turkic nomads and their descendants, contrary to the assumptions about them, had a rich culinary heritage of agricultural foods. It can also present the cultural and linguistic connections binding them a whole within the spatiotemporal depth of Eurasia.

Finally, it aims to generate new research questions about the validity of historical prejudices regarding the nomadic societies in relation to the Turkic pastoralists of Eurasia, to raise awareness about their under-presented culinary culture and contribute to the limited literature on Turkic Eurasia.

### iii. Eurasian Nomads:

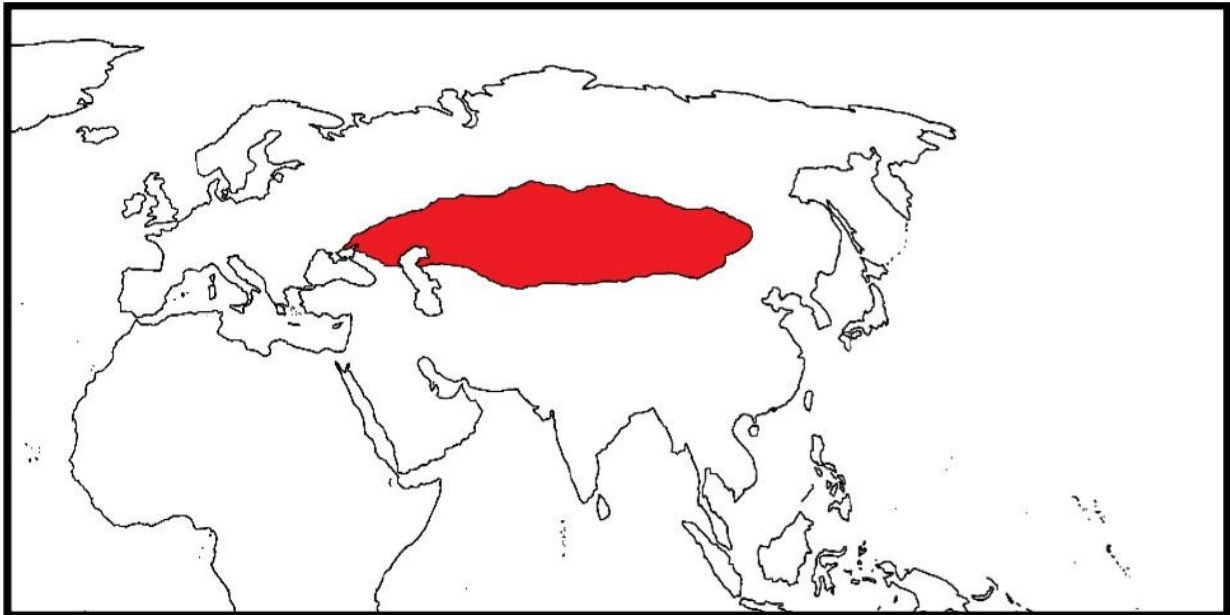
Throughout history, many different peoples –early Iranian nomadic groups such as Scythians<sup>1</sup> (Khazanov, 2014) and Eastern/Northeastern Iranian sedentary peoples of Sogdiana (Hansen, 2003)- have lived in Eurasia. However, in a broader and deeper context, both in space and time, one can realize that the cultural, ethnological, and linguistic diversity in and around Central Asia is even richer than what is generally assumed (Eker, 2012). For instance, Tocharian, “an Indo-European language related to Latin, Greek, Celtic, and, among many others, English” too, had been spoken in the Tarim Basin, which is located in the Northwest of present China, and this extinct language still survives within the paper manuscripts of 3000 years old that were founded in the region (Peyrot, 2017, p. 12). Following the foundation of the First Turkic Khanate (Göktürk Khaganate-Celestial Turks) in A.D. 552 (Stark, 2016), the gradual southward and westward “Turkification” of the region initiated the emergence of a mainly Turkic-speaking corridor occupying the Central Asian eastern half of “ the grid arid zone continuum of Asia and Africa,” stretching from modern Xinjiang/China to Asia Minor.

However, despite being home to diverse cultures, languages, and states, within the context of Central Asia, where natural resources are not evenly and widely distributed, perhaps the most meaningful and fundamental distinctions among different entities centered around the choice between nomadic or sedentary lifestyles. According to Khazanov (2014), it is highly probable that around the beginning of the first millennium BCE, sedentary life in the great belt of the Eurasian steppes was adversely affected by the climatic changes associated with the period of

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<sup>1</sup> “The Scythians were a nomadic people (*originally of Iranian stock*) whose culture flourished between the 7th and 3rd century BCE in a territory ranging from Thrace in the west, across the steppe of Central Asia, to the Altai Mountains of Mongolia in the east.” [www.worldhistory.org](http://www.worldhistory.org) - Scythians

drought in Central Asia, the transition to pastoral nomadism was probably triggered too, and this process, over time, resulted in “the reconfiguration of the ethnopolitical map” of the region (p. 32).



*Fig. 1. Map of Göktürk (Celestial Turks) Khaganate (A.D. 552 - 744).*

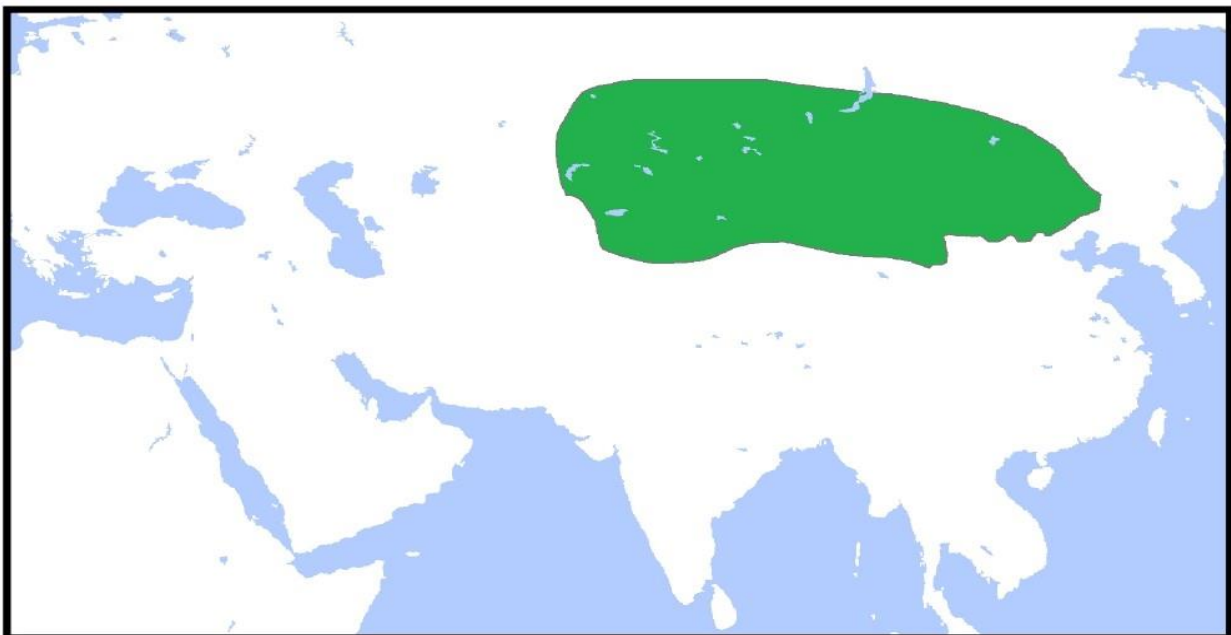
**Göktürk Khaganate is regarded as the first Pan-Eurasian Empire.**

*Wikimedia Commons. Retrieved 23:22, May 11, 2023.*

Although the struggle between the nomadic and sedentary polities has manifested itself in different regions throughout the history of the world, the entry of Altaic nomads like Turkic peoples into the deeper edges of the Old World through Central Asia constitutes a crucial stage in terms of the magnitude of the impact of nomadic polities on their environment and the exacerbation of their conflicts with sedentary societies.

Around the beginning of our era, more than two thousand years ago, the tribal confederation of Xiongnu not only came to the stage as “the first united nomadic empire of the Inner Asian steppe,” but also became a fierce opponent against Chinese civilization (Ming, 2021, p. 711). In the West, the Hun Empire that shook Europe in the fourth century and in the East, the

Turkic Khaganate that emerged on the stage of history in the sixth century to confront the sedentary Chinese culture were rooted in the nomadic tradition of the Xiongnu (Vaissière, 2012). but, the impact of the nomadic empires founded by Turkic and Mongolian peoples on the whole sedentary world was far more substantial. For Turkic nomads could create the the first Pan-Eurasian nomadic empire in history in the 7th century (Kradin, 2002, pp. 380-381) and this could happen only one more time in the 13th century in the case of Mongolians united under Chinggis Khan. However, as the focus of this study will suggest, the impact of the Turkic nomads on the world in which they lived would not only be considerable, but, at least in some specific respects, more profound and long-lasting.



*Fig. 2. Map of Xiongnu Empire (around the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. - the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.).*

*Wikimedia Commons. Retrieved 01:01, May 12, 2023.*

All in all, this brief introduction to the history and characteristics of ancient Central Asian nomads began with the pre-B.C. period, when nomadic peoples such as the Scythians of Western plains of Central Asia, supposedly a group of Iranic-speaking nomadic tribes, were included in

the historical record. Then, during the last centuries B.C., dominated by the tribes from Eastern North, more organized nomadic entities, such as the Xiongnu Confederation, started to form and move towards Eastern and Western parts of Eurasian steppes. Eventually, after the first half of the first millennium, following a demographic and linguistic change in their favor over the entire region, the Turkic tribes gradually reached a dominant position in Central Asia, established the first nomadic state with their names, and finally started to produce written works as well (Stark, 2016).

#### **iv. Food of the Other:**

About the aforementioned periods and places, when and where large sedentary and nomadic societies came closest to each other and engaged in a significant struggle over available resources, we can say that the attitudes and views of the parties towards each other began to crystallize. It should also be noted that the discourses generated in the sedentary societies, which put forward their own one-sided approach to the nomads, thanks to their monopolizing role as controlling agents of historiography (Miller, 2009), are surprisingly similar. Indeed, the ancient states of Eurasia similarly describe non-sedentary societies as a distant other. Astonishingly similar characterizations were used to reinforce their image as Barbarians, and one might even believe that all these historical texts were written by the same people, if not for the thousands of kilometers and hundreds of years separating them.

The strength of the dichotomic description of the relations between sedentary and nomadic societies has been consolidated regardless of the time and space in which they were formed. In fact, for those who hold the monopoly on historiography, the nomads have often been

the Absolute Other, or sometimes, even non-existent. Such a narrative has survived into modern times and dominated most disparate historiographical traditions. So much so that, for a long time, scientific texts' and popular culture's approach to the description of nomads converged in a way that it rarely did in other contexts. In this study, this dichotomic relationship, which is the domain of Nomadology in general and perhaps, Turkology in particular, will be discussed in order to provide theoretical depth to the research; in addition, this constitutive context, in which the ideological concern of the study lies too, will be discussed within the framework of the fields of our interest. At this point, it is necessary to specify where in this dichotomic relationship the study will focus and through which lenses this vast field will be monitored.

When describing this dichotomic relationship, an under-researched topic in the academic literature, one issue, has been given prominence in almost all accounts of nomads. The issue of what nomads eat seems to always find a special place in sedentary societies' pejorative descriptions of them, and their otherness is reinforced through demeaning references to the food they consume, as if they were another form of life (Di Cosmo, 1994), a different sort of human, at best. In the next chapter, this study examines the historical sources and historiographical traditions on nomads in order to strengthen its theoretical argument, while at the same time focussing more on one of its subjects of interest: food.

It should not be surprising that food and the act of eating, vital for human existence, is a central element in defining a different entity. After all, it is beyond dispute that food, which is at the base of the hierarchy of needs and provides the energy requirement that is the condition of existence, is also decisive for human societies that struggle to exist by controlling resources. In this context, when sedentary sources wrote about the Barbarian nomads, whom they often portrayed as the Absolute Other, they were pointing out how different their diet was from their

own, and they were, in fact, drawing attention to the fact that the mode of survival of the nomads was based on a completely different set of resources and a completely different strategy than their own. Thus, the settler's perception of the nomad is marked not only by a casual disdain for the foreign but also by awe and distance towards an alien way of life that is intimidatingly different. Hence, food constitutes one of the fields of interest of this study, not only because it plays an essential role in the perception of sedentary and nomadic societies in relation to each other but also because the strategic and organizational difference in access to the food itself, as the most basic resource of human life, gives rise to a fundamental contradiction between these entities.

Even leaving aside the question as to whether food was fundamental to settled and non-sedentary entities' convictions about each other or, more profoundly, whether it lay at the heart of the differences and contradictions in the organization of the life of these two communities, this study argues that these diametrically opposed assumptions and definitions around food are inherently problematic, and that even the sharpest differences in organization between human societies can be understood not within a binary and essentialist conceptual framework, but through a comprehensive and hybrid context.

After introducing Eurasian Nomads, mentioning the controversial assumptions about them and revealing the importance of their diet in their definition as the "Absolute Other," the next chapter will transcend into an entirely different realm, the domain of Linguistics, Etymology, Onomastics, and to an extent, Glottochronology, which not only further enriches the thematic diversity of the study but also provides it with its methodological method and inventory on which to work.

## **v. Lexical Inventory:**

Before we proceed one step further, one more question needs to be asked, and the answer to this question will also reveal the methodology of this study. Given that these nomads, highly mobile and irregularly displaced across the vast steppes of Eurasia, were not very generous in leaving written and archaeological traces, then where should be looked for clues that would allow us to challenge the unquestioned arguments of the traditional antagonistic approach? This research assumes that the most reliable information on the food of Turkic peoples and their cereal-based or pastry foods may be found in the lexical texts, grammar books, or encyclopedic dictionaries, which, though few in number, were written during the time of the different polities founded by these peoples (from the tribal confederations to the Post-nomadic gunpowder empires of Asia), or compiled by foreigners to understand them. Indeed, such rare artifacts, which take a snapshot of the language of their time and record the lexical richness of that period, register the concepts and objects hidden in the linguistic heritage. Thus, in search of grain-based foods and their names, this study is based on scanning some important examples of such lexical texts, which are highly valued in Turcology.

Although not a linguistic text, as one of the earliest surviving Turkic texts, the eighth-century Orkhon inscriptions carved on stone pillars and erected near the river of the same name in the Orkhon Valley of modern Mongolia (Findley, 2005, p. 39) will be the first sources to be mentioned. The first text to be scanned will be “*Dîvânu Lugâti’t-Turk*” (Compendium of the languages of Turks), considered the first dictionary about Turkic languages. As the first comprehensive Turkic grammar book and encyclopedic glossary written by Mahmud Kashgari (1008-1102) in the Karakhanid dialect for teaching Turkic to Arabic people in 1072, it will



function as the primary source of this study since there is no other text from a millennium ago that can provide that much lexical information about the language of the Turkic peoples. Then:

“Codex Cumanicus,” a Turkic linguistic manual/multilingual glossary designed to help Italian merchants and German missionaries of the Franciscan Order missionaries interact with Cuman-Kipchak Turkic speakers of Northwest Central Asia,

“Muhakemetü’l-Lugateyn” by Ali Shir-Navai (1441-1501), a linguistic study comparing the features of the Persian and Chagatai Turkic language of the Timurid Empire (around 1500),

“Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium Turcicae - Arabicae - Persicae = Lexicon Turcico – Arabico – Persicum,” i.e., the Thesaurus of the famous linguist Francizsek Meninski (1623-1698), a comprehensive 5 volume linguistic compilation presenting the Turkish lexicon in and around the Ottoman Empire of late 17th and early 18th century, will be traced in the light of the lexical material compiled from the Compendium of Mahmud Kashgari to reveal the linguistic, cultural and gastronomic ties that transcend time and place.

“Kamûs-i Türki,” one of the most famous Turkish etymological dictionaries of the late Ottoman period, will be the last stop on this lexical journey that spans 1200 years and 5000 kilometres from east to west. As a Turkish dictionary published in 1901 by the Ottoman intellectual Semsettin Sami, this text will function as a historical mirror reflecting the verbal heritage of Turkic into modern Turkish through the lenses of the Ottoman lingua-cultural sphere.

## **CHAPTER 2: EURASIAN NOMADS in LITERATURE**

### **i. Statement of the Problem:**

Throughout history, the perception of and approach to nomadic peoples and polities has been characterized by numerous misrepresentations and innuendos. For a long time, the literature about nomadic peoples reflected negative and subjective convictions and, in many cases, they were defined as “the other.” For the most part, their otherness was “absolute” and distinct from the “otherness” among competing sedentary entities, which may be called “relative otherness.”. Their difference was absolute because they represented a different system of production and form of social order vis-à-vis their sedentary and relatively stable political rivals; besides they represented something ontologically conflicting. Thus, it can be argued that the struggle among sedentary societies, since they were similar in their political and socio-economic organization, was less ontological and more nominal in comparison to their conflict with the nomadic polities.

The historical record reveals that, regardless of the origin of the relevant sources from the East or the West, the written material mentioning them contextualized them in similar terms. This tendency remained visible in different historiographies of Modern and Early Modern periods, and the roles that Nomads played in history, in many cases, were either neglected or underestimated. This chapter focuses on the pastoral nomadic peoples of Asia/Inner Asia and regards them as an underrepresented social category. It examines the narratives about the nomadic peoples in different contexts and times. Due to its scope, rather than giving a comprehensive and detailed account of the issue, it aims to chronologically refer to the primary sources mentioning the issue and present the scholarly conversation around it.

## ii. Definitions:

Studying Nomadic peoples or writing about them in a generic way is not the purpose of this dissertation. Besides, given that “The terminology for the regions inhabited by the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples of Inner Asia in pre-historical and historical times is inherently unstable, given that geographic areas such as Central Asia, Inner Asia, the Northern Zone, and Central Eurasia are usually defined ad hoc” (Di Cosmo, 2004, p. 13) here, the term “nomads” will refer to the “*Pastoral Nomadic peoples<sup>2</sup> of Eurasia*” who have been living, more or less, in a specific area called “*Central/Inner Asia*” or Central/Inner Asian corridor<sup>3</sup>.

*Nomadism* is defined by Scholz (2001) as “a way of life practiced in the dry belt of the Old World, a socio-ecological mode of culture, (sozioökologische Kulturweise) whose internal processes, governing factors, and external appearance essentially obey the elementary ‘law’ of safeguarding survival.” (p. 10650) *The great arid zone continuum* of the Old World is “a distinctive ecological macro-region.” It is “world’s largest continuous arid zone extending from the Atlantic and the Sahara across Suez to Arabia, the Levant, and Iran, and thence northward to Central Asia, Mongolia and parts of China and southeastward into the Indian subcontinent.” (Wink, 2016, p. 1)

However, this chapter mainly analyzes the literature focusing on the nomadic peoples of

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<sup>2</sup> The term Pastoral Nomadic People basically stands for a form of mobile livelihood, defined as the utilization of geographically scattered vegetable resources and water for feeding large numbers of herbivorous animals.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that the term Central Asia refers to the territories that are today occupied by Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union (Turkic republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Dari-speaking Tajikistan), and it has political implications pertinent to Soviet pasts of these countries; however, Inner Asia may be employed in a broader sense, to designate the vast area covered by the countries of Central Asia, as well as Mongolia, north-western and north-eastern China, Afghanistan, and Tibet.

Eurasia<sup>4</sup>, referring to the other nomadic polities living in the western parts of “*the great arid zone continuum*” (the territories stretching from the Atlantic coastal line of Africa to Suez across Sahara) only when the sources examined touch upon them directly<sup>5</sup>.

*Total Pastoral Nomads* with no permanent homes, which is the main socio-economic organization of the peoples of interest for this study, “do not practice any cultivation,” and move “with their herds of livestock” (Spedding, 1988, p. 120). *Pastoral Nomadism*; this mode of culture “encompasses an array of specialized knowledge concerned with the daily rhythms and long-term tempos of caring for herd animals in order to extract subsistence livelihoods” (Honeychurch & Makarewicz, 2016, p. 341); thus, the term “nomads,” in this chapter, refers to the pastoral nomads of Eurasia, and, as a matter of course, the temporal range focused here at most covers the periods after the domestication of ungulates<sup>6</sup>, and the mobility of *forager/hunter-gatherer* cultures should not be confused with the lifestyle of pastoral nomads.

However, it should also be underlined that different modes of life among the nomadic peoples of Eurasia have co-existed. While some nomadic groups were independently moving in search of water and pasture, other nomadic groups established nomadic polities called “super-complex chiefdoms” (Kradin, 2002, p. 372) that, in size, were far more extensive than the independent groups but still without some essential “state features” too. In the meantime, some of the nomadic/semi-nomadic or former nomadic groups of people were able to create “post-

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<sup>4</sup> For a roughly comprehensible boundary, it could be suggested that the vast area in which non-sedentary populations moved, encompassing “the eastern part of the Eurasian continental mass” (Di Cosmo, 2004, p. 13) and its environs, is roughly of interest to this study.

<sup>5</sup> For instance, the theory of Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406 A.D.), one of the first thinkers to realize the role of Nomadic polities in history, refers to the Bedouin tribes living around the Maghreb and Arabian Peninsula; however, his thesis about them is significant in terms of any scholarly argumentation regarding Nomadic peoples.

<sup>6</sup> Although the boundaries between different modes of living are not strict and subject to change based on preferred definitions, domestication is a determinative aspect of Pastoral Nomadism, and this way of living is entirely different than the “hunter-gatherer lifestyle” which depends on hunting and foraging.

nomadic Empires<sup>7</sup>” such as Ottoman, Mughal, and Ching<sup>8</sup>, “which were the most successful, powerful, well-populated, and longest-lived empires in the world at large” prior to the Western imperialist era of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. (Wink, 2016, pp. 2-3) Thus, when we speak of the political entities founded by the pastoral nomads of Eurasia or their successors, we are, in fact, referring to the whole range of forms of political organization that have evolved from independent and primitive groups of pastoral clans into the states over vast territories that had themselves evolved into a form of sedentary empires.

In conclusion, this chapter does not attempt to cover all the historical data on pastoral nomadic peoples, but instead tries to touch upon some of the important points presented in some key texts about certain nomadic peoples of Eurasia, their cultures, and lifestyles. Indeed, a literature review on the pastoral nomads of Eurasia, of which the Turkic peoples are a significant part, and the prevailing perception of them will not only lay the theoretical foundations of the study but also clarify the conceptual framework in terms of defining the field of the project, setting out the research focus and understanding the terminology used.

Finally, this chapter also attempts to call attention to the fact that pastoral nomads of Eurasia might have been neglected or underestimated in the academic world. Moreover, it should not be wrong to state that even the new scholarly fields/écoles well-known for their emphasis on subaltern or oppressed social categories seem not to pay enough attention to them<sup>9</sup>. This statement is not a moral admonition but rather the accentuation of a point that matters in the context of the significance of this work.

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<sup>7</sup> Empires founded by rulers of nomadic origin, such as the Ottomans, Qing, Mughals, and Timurids, who dominated large areas of settled populations and had global or regional influence beyond that of the previous nomadic Confederations or Khanates.

<sup>8</sup> It refers to the Qing state founded by the Manchu dynasty that ruled China between 1644 and 1912.

<sup>9</sup> The target of this statement is not to encumber any academic field with an additional or even inappropriate responsibility beyond or out of its epistemological/methodological realm but to draw attention to the fact that a similar indifference to Nomadic peoples and polities might still have been relevant.

### **iii. Classic Literature on Eurasian Nomads:**

As an essential part of this Thesis, this chapter argues that the traditional literature is biased against nomadic polities, as its depiction of nomadic peoples is subjective. Moreover, regardless of the origin of the creation of these texts, from the East or the West, the pejorative contexts about nomads are pretty similar. Also, because the history was recorded by the institutions of the settled entities and the state chroniclers/historians working for such empires or dynasties; hence, in such a literature survey, especially from the classical period, we naturally find only what the sedentary peoples recorded about them since nomadic polities had yet to begin to produce written works.

However, one point stands out in particular, beyond the similarity in the approaches by different settled entities towards the non-sedentary polities, i.e., the emphasis on a common thematic aspect often touched upon when presenting a negative view of them. The literature in this stream seems to deal a lot with socio-cultural issues, such as what nomads eat and consume, and focusing on this point would not only help to reveal signs of the aforementioned tendency but also facilitate the transition to another significant field in the topical range of the research. It should also be re-emphasized that this interest in what the nomads consume, and the persistent emphasis on differences in this respect, is more than just an identification of the disparate habits of the parties involved but points to a vital difference in the socio-economic organization and the production-consumption cycle.

Even in the well-known written accounts of sedentary civilizations, repeated references to the comestibles are made; thus, what nomadic peoples ate, becomes a distinctive defining element for the non-nomadic cultures, and a similar approach to the topic is common in different sedentary societies.

The role of food in describing the Nomads as the Absolute Other is so central that even the “father of history,” Herodotus (484 – 425 B.C.), provides detailed information for his reader when he mentions the Nomadic peoples, their trade relations with the sedentary societies, and compares their diet with that of the Greeks. According to him, for example, the Scythians were nomads, and as a people knowing nothing about agriculture, what they ate “for the Greeks was, to say the least, unusual” (Longo, 1999, p. 157). Similarly, the renowned Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus (around 330 – 400 A.D.) hesitates to accept the Huns as humans as well and describes them as “the barbarians like savage beasts that have broken free from their cages” who spread “the foul chaos of robbery and murder, slaughter and fire” (as cited in Kelly, 2010, p. 46). As for what they ate, he states that “they have no use for fire or seasoned food, but live on the roots of wild plants and the half-raw flesh of any sort of animal” (Marcellinus, 1986, p. 411).

When moving to the eastern side of the Eurasian continent, it can be argued that an awareness of the distinction between the barbarian and civilized, and of the relevant terminology, crystallized even earlier in the context of the most dominant cultural entity in the East, that is, the Chinese civilization, even though the definition and content of this distinction have been the subject of somewhat contentious academic debates (Pines, 2004, p. 60). Although some Confucian interpretations emphasize that the barbarians could also evolve and assimilate into the Chinese culture, it is nevertheless possible that “the hermetic distinction between Chinese versus Barbarian lifeways” goes back a long way in the context of this major cultural tradition of the East (Von Falkenhausen, 2008, p. 451). It is clear that, in such an interpretation, Chinese values represent the ultimate and universal direction toward which barbarians and others could evolve, but not vice versa (Dikötter, 1992). This

distinction, also referred to in Chinese as the Hua-Yi dichotomy<sup>10</sup>, which broadly excluded anyone who did not share the values of the inhabitants of ancient China, was later interpreted to refer specifically to nomadic “Barbarians,” following the famous chronicler Sima Qian’s later writings on Xiongnu. According to Di Cosmo (2004), “in early Chinese written sources’ descriptions of the north are embedded in a web of metaphysical theories and mythological beliefs that bear no relation to their ethnographic or geographic reality” (p. 290). However, Sima Qian (145 - 87 BC), the author of one of the most significant sources of Chinese history (Shiji - “Historical Records”), felt the need to rationalize the existence of these nomadic Barbarians by “linking a number of peoples living in more or less the same region and whose basic characteristics remain unchanged in a genealogical sequence and historical chain” (Di Cosmo, 2004, p. 298). Unfortunately, Sima Qian’s essentialist and reductionist approach to the nomadic peoples of the West and North confined a large number of peoples who had developed very different polities over a vast area into a single category. Furthermore, it also influenced subsequent generations and historiographical traditions by creating a definition of Barbarians that was of practical use in the context of China’s holistic and sinocentric worldview.

Sima Qian’s description of the Barbaric nomads of the north was to be truly enduring; even more than a millennium later, the famous philosopher from the Southern Song Dynasty of China, Chen Liang (1143 – 1194 A.D.), was complaining that “still are the northern steeds around” and asks, “Is there none who thinks it is wrong to submit to the foe, whose stink of mutton spreads for miles and miles?” (Kuhn, 2011, p. 167). And even five

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<sup>10</sup> The Huayi system is a Sinocentric idea that goes back historically as far as the Spring and Autumn period (770-476 BCE), based on the Chinese culture in the Yellow River basin and arguing that the Chinese people (Hua; 華/华) constituted the cultural, political and economic center vis-à-vis the barbarian (Yi; 夷) tribes living in the four corners beyond this area.



hundred years later, the definition of the Barbarian had not changed much, as Xie Zhaozhe (1567-1624 AD), a Chinese scholar of the late Ming period, could still state that “Followers of the sages eat cooked food; in this way the Chinese are distinguished from the northern and eastern barbarians, and people are separated from beasts.” (as cited in Han, 2019, p. 201) As Jaffe (2018) indicates as well, food played a significant role in characterizing these Barbarians of the different regions of Inner Asia. Furthermore, the written materials from ancient Chinese dynasties kept portraying them via their alimentation as the ones “who consume more meat than grain and know little of ritual propriety” (Jaffe, 2018, para. 2).

Apparently, in many cases, the struggle between nomadic and settled societies was related to the different modes in which food could be obtained (by cultivating, trading, or plundering) too, and this was perhaps one of the most fundamental socio-economic reasons for the conflict among them. On top of that, feasting -that is, possessing a wealth exceeding the need for sustenance- per se, was also political (Dietler, 2001, p. 66; Khazanov, 2019, p. 87; Kradin, 2002, p. 375) since holding such festive meetings functioned as the manifestation of power, rather than meeting a primal need. Thus, food sometimes became a reason for conflict, sometimes a vehicle for communication, but always an essential component for creating a political identity. For these reasons, throughout history, “food has played a role in societal construction and group identity formation” (Hastorf, 2016, p. 272), but in the early ages, the magnitude of its role was understandably more significant in creating an independent and distinctive socio-political identity. Therefore, this explains the countless references to food and nutrition in the descriptions of the nomadic peoples by the sedentary societies; besides, food/foodways are illustrative to understand the relationships between these entities, which are totally different in terms of their socio-economic

organization.

However, negative references to the nomadic groups were not limited to their diet but continued to be more general and pervasive. Their role in history has often been reduced to their “destructive” fighting power, and military conflicts, which can also be interpreted as a constant and massive struggle over the allocation of resources, are in many cases socio-economically based. Nearly 15 centuries after Sima Qian, a philosopher living on the other side of “the great arid zone continuum of the Old World,” thought that the role of the nomads in history could be explained within a theory of causality or a causal circle. To some extent, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406 A.D.) also falls into the trap of essentialism, when he generalizes about nomads; however, unlike Sima Qian, he could look at their historical role from a more objective and autonomous perspective and not through the lens of a particular state ideology.

As one of the earliest thinkers trying to explain the main dynamics responsible for the transformation of societies throughout history, Ibn Khaldun emphasized the historical role of nomadic peoples in transforming the given social structures within the context of a scientific conception and depiction of causation (Çaksu, 2017, p. 29). To the Maghrebi philosopher, for example, “asabiyah” was the definitive feature of the Bedouins (nomadic pastoralist groups of Arabia), and it was the source of a collective consciousness shared by the group members. For him, such a consciousness creates strong solidarity and unity in such entities. Asabiyah also implies “a willingness to cooperate,” and it is “particularly strong in small political units, such as tribal groups of nomads” (Gierer, 2001, p. 94). Based on that, Ibn Khaldun put forward the hypothesis that the characteristics of nomads that were explained by the term “asabiyah” allowed them to conquer the decaying settled societies and

open a new page in the book of history. However, he also speculated that, just in a couple of generations, they were also destined to lose their “asabiyah” and start decaying against another newer and more dynamic nomadic group endowed with “asabiyah.” Thus, he tried to formulate a scientific theory explaining the historical transformation based on causality in which the roles of nomadic peoples were defined as the fuel of change.

While it is true that his ideas on the role of Nomads “as the driving force of history” are exaggerated (Khazanov, 2001, p. 17), environmentally determinist (“untamed environments are equated with Barbarian people” as it can also be argued about Herodotus; Wink, 2016, pp. 3-5) and might only be valid for the region and the time he lived (Nomad Bedouins of North Africa in the 14th century), he was still one of the first thinkers elaborating on the multi-dimensional relations between mobile pastoral polities and sedentary urban centers (Khazanov, 2001, p. 7).

Nevertheless, the environmental determinism about the living mode of Nomads and the binary way of thinking regarding their relations with non-nomadic societies proved to be long-lasting. Similar stereotypes generated within non-sedentary societies have persisted in the memory of ancient states on both sides of Eurasia, and it would be possible to trace the implications of this approach in the numerous dynasties and states that had risen from this ancient tradition. As modern times approached, arguments about nomads’ place in history and their possible roles became more realistic and in-depth. As noted above, while issues such as the way the nomads look or what they eat might in essence point to more profound and fundamental vital conflicts, over time, more sophisticated and holistic approaches have begun to emerge and become the concern of different traditions of analysis and historiography.

#### **iv. Modern Literature on Eurasian Nomads:**

The interval between the birth of Ibn Khaldun and the emergence of the early modern historians was considerably long; however, what happened in terms of the Nomadic peoples of Asia during this half-millennium-long period was far more significant than what was written or told about them. Understandably, the history of the post-nomadic empires founded by them in this period, stretching from Istanbul to Khanbaliq (the city of Khan; modern Beijing), is beyond the scope of this research. Therefore, while their role in history through such empires is notable, to keep the research scope manageable, this chapter will focus on the historiography of more traditional nomadic polities.

To begin with, although negatively, Edward Gibbon (1737-1794 A.D.), the leading British historian of his era, paid particular attention to the role of nomads/barbaric peoples in shaping history, for, according to him, the pressure stemming from the Nomadic advance into European plains, for instance, was one of the primary reasons for the fall of the Roman Empire (Scuralli, 2018; Woudhuysen, 2018). However, another prominent historian, Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975 A.D.), approached the issue from a different perspective, seeing the invasions of nomads as the primary symptom, not the cause, of the decay of empires (Irwin, 1997, p. 468). However, fundamentally, his approach, too, dealt with the nomadic communities in a linear historical framework, and in his well-known chart of civilizations, the Nomadic civilization was defined as one of the “arrested civilizations,”; a civilization that could not reach a certain point that can be labeled as completely “civilized” (Toynbee, 1948, pp.: 7-22). Therefore, the tone about their existence remained generally negative, their relevance to *longue durée* dynamics was found to be ephemeral, and they were ontologically placed at the opposite side of the spectrum of the settled societies and the ancient civilizations. Scholz (2001) also confirms that

Nomadism has been generally seen “as a by-product of the cultural evolution of sedentary farmers, and as a permanent threat” to the cultured entities; they were considered “primitive, backward, and incapable of improving their living situation” (p. 10650).

However, the contributions of the leading historians of the 20th century paved the way for alternative and broader approaches to history. Prominent Asian specialists such as Owen Lattimore (1900-1989 A.D.) “began to pull away from ecological determinism” (Rowe, 2007, p. 764) that had been dominant in traditional historiography. Also, Thomas Barfield claimed that “all the nomadic empires in the Mongolian steppes and Chinese dynasties rose and fell together” (Khazanov, 2001, p.14)<sup>11</sup>, and this perspective openly challenged the classic antagonistic approach to the relationship between them. On top of that, Barfield “noted also that the conquest of China was, as a rule, a business of the Manchurian people” and “the breakdown of centralized power in China and on the steppes released the forest-dwelling tribes in Manchuria from pressure from both of these adjacent powers” (Kradin, 2002, p. 381). Thus, Barfield developed the ideas of Lattimore about the interdependence between the western nomadic and eastern settled polities around Chinese frontiers by emphasizing the roles of the peoples living up from the Siberian Taiga to Manchuria. Thus, Barfield called the tribal federations established by nomads “shadow empires” because rather than pure competition, he observed a complex and integral concordance between them. Based on such analyses, the relations among the sedentary, nomadic, and semi-nomadic peoples of frontier lines around China seemed to be tangled, and according to Scholz (2001), their various needs “to safeguard their existence led to a symbiotic relationship of conflict and coexistence” (p. 10652). Thus,

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<sup>11</sup> The writer, with this argument, points to the complementary relations between nomadic and settled polities during the eras of the “Han Dynasty-Xiongnu Confederation” and “Sui/Tang Dynasties-Gokturk Khanate.”

since the early 20th century, historical assessments have taken more factors into account and have been supported by new archaeological evidence. Although some of the old prejudices persist, nomadic societies have, in some research in certain fields, been treated as a more independent variable in historical equations, and the history they contributed to has been viewed from a broader perspective.

Therefore, the historical understanding of nomadic polities' effects on sedentary societies as "with no lasting impact in any aspect" was challenged in the newer paradigms. It was even argued that the traditional deterministic and binary approaches to the issue can only and partly reflect the ancient and medieval conditions but cannot explain the development of a different type of post-nomadic empires in early modern times whatsoever (Wink, 2016). Moreover, for a long time, the nomadic pastoral mode of life had been regarded as a preliminary stage before the agriculturalist one; however, the complex theories of the mid-20th century, based on new archeological/historical pieces of evidence, paved the way for different interpretations. First, the chronological presumption marked pastoral Nomadism as a primordial phase before the agriculturalist way of life became obsolete. Subsequently, "a repeated alteration between nomadic and farming life" was introduced by newer studies (Scholz, 2001, p. 10651). For example, various economic problems, political conflicts, and natural disasters too, over time, were shown to lead to such alterations among nomadic and non-nomadic societies.

Nevertheless, the effect of "stage theories" or "unilinear theories of development" on the interpretation of the history of nomads is still relevant since the repertoire of grand narratives, such as modernization, lacks the theoretical set of tools for thoroughly examining the nomadic societies. Thus, the traditional presentation of a linear and generic development

process “from local groups of primitive hunters to the modern post-industrial society” (Kradin, 2002, p. 368) for humanity is still prevalent. Despite this deep-rooted general belief, at the moment, numerous nomadologists tend to propose a more flexible and “multi-evolutionist” account of social progress to make room for the inclusion of Nomadism.

Traditional civilization theories are based on unilinear and determinist accounts of history, and some versions of them enable some different and independent cultural clouds to exist both at different times or simultaneously; nonetheless, the agricultural activities and a relatively sophisticated urban settlement are still regarded as the main attributes that distinguish a civilization from other societies, such as nomadic ones. Although such subjective and essentialist assumptions, over time, have been partly disregarded, the essence of the civilizational theories seems to frame a conceptual realm into which Nomadism cannot fit autonomously. For instance, one of the leading proponents of civilizational theories, Arnold Toynbee described the nomadic mode of life as one of the “arrested civilizations” (Toynbee, 1948, pp. 1-111). This epithet labeling them as one of the first links in the socio-economic development chain also reveals the linear temporal projection of these theories. In this regard, Fernand Braudel (1990) too, a leading historian primarily focusing on the broad socio-economic dynamics in history within the context of the “Mediterranean civilization,” also argues that the complex structure and inner contradictions of the history of Nomadism have never been critically analyzed (as cited in Scholz, 2002).

At this point, it should be pointed out that Marxism, too, does not have much to say about nomadic societies. Obviously, one should avoid falling into the trap of an oversimplifying explanation that considers Marxism to be nothing more than a formulation that can be adapted to every possible situation and condition. Also, it should be pointed out that it

maintains a linear and deterministic historical model too; however, the fact that it presents an articulated model devoted to the analysis of the fundamental mechanism at the core of the historical change and progress within the context of relations and modes of production requires a brief examination of whether it has anything to say directly about pastoral nomads.

As we noted at the beginning of our study, one of the fundamental contradictions between the sedentary and nomadic societies stems from the fact that they are based on entirely different systems of production in terms of access to and allocation of resources, and this statement might be considered an essentially Marxist determination based on the priorities of the historical materialism method as well. However, the most definitive work in which Marx (1965) directly puts forward some views on pastoral nomads is his treatise “Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations,” where Marx rather briefly considers them in the context of property relations and mode of production and moves on to discuss other issues such as slavery and serfdom and how they were produced in primitive societies (pp. 88-92).

Although some have dealt with the subject of pastoral nomadism in Marxist literature (Bradburd, 1984; Bonte, 1981), it is clear from such publications that Marxism’s direct interest in the subject is limited but that the Marxist method is thought to be able to constitute a valuable means of analysis for understanding these societies. In the end, however, it can be argued that the conception of historicity put forward by Marxism, and the historiography based on it, is also based on linear and deterministic logic and that the interest in nomadic societies stems more from a secondary interest in the development of primitive societies (doomed to eventually enter into the vacuum of deterministic linear development), perhaps also from an exotic curiosity.

To conclude, we can speak of various verbal contexts, similar to each other in certain



respects, that began to emerge in both the East and the West around 1000 BC, when pastoral nomadic peoples began to increase their presence on the stage of history. Although these narratives about them were formed within their specific conditions, it is clear that they are similar to each other, and therefore it would not be wrong to speak of a Master Context about pastoral nomadic peoples that takes the intersection of all these definitions and approaches. The Master Context about them has often been pejorative, essentialist, binary, and deterministic. At best, there are “optimists” variants foreseeing that they, the nomads, will evolve to become like them, but there are also skeptical ones doubting the human characteristics of these groups, often describing them as savages. Of course, with the development of the social sciences, the contributions of the natural sciences to understanding the world, archaeological findings, and increasingly complex new theories, different perspectives on pastoral nomadic peoples have also emerged over time. However, the field remains poorly touched and under-researched, and the impact of previous clichés, stereotypes, and generalizations is still felt. In the following chapters, with the contributions from other fields and methods, one of the significant generalizations about pastoral nomads will be examined more closely. Finally, some of the assumptions of the Master Context about pastoral nomads will be critically analyzed in light of new studies, many of which are unsurprisingly interdisciplinary.

**v. Final Notes:**

This chapter has attempted to present a literature review of how the settled entities defined the nomadic polities and how they were reflected in the sources written by the sedentary agents. It is evident that, although the historical sources under scrutiny were created by different sedentary elements in an extensive range of time and space, there is a more or less unified discourse among them, creating an almost standard narrative, which is referred to in this study as the Master Context pertaining to the nomads, namely the Absolute Other.

In particular, theories and historiographies that present the relationship between the parties in an essentialist, binary or evolutionary framework seem to miss the relationalities of total human experience, either describing the parties in an absolute antagonistic relationship against each other or, at best, confining them to a linear and mono-directional chronological determinism from nomadism to sedentarism.

However, recent studies, especially in the fields of Nomadology, Archaeology, and Biology, pay special attention to the topics that have historically received little attention. Besides, the way of conducting research is increasingly taking an interdisciplinary form, and this approach has begun to produce results that cast doubt on the generalizations discussed in this chapter. These studies contributing to the literature by combining the advantages presented by different fields, from linguistics to genetics, will be referred to in the final section, where the results of the textual analysis will be evaluated. Following this last statement, the third section of the study will soon proceed to the analysis of the lexical texts in the inventory.

### **CHAPTER 3: NOMADIC FOODWAYS and TURKIC LEXICON**

#### **i. Food as an Essential Component for the Social Sciences:**

Behind the gradual shift in the historical approach to nomads was the thematic and methodological expansion that came with a more comprehensive understanding of social analysis about development and change. The process by which nomadic societies came to be treated as more or less independent agents in the socioeconomic and historical analysis was fraught with complications, and the subject of what they ate was still one of the most frequently mentioned aspects of almost any discussion of them. As recently as the mid-19th century, the eminent historian Edward Gibbon thought that “a social history of the nomads must be very different from one of a polite and commercial people; it must think hard about the effect of diet, about the nature of the climate and about the consequences of this pastoral life for social organization and behaviour.” (Woudhuysen, 2018, p. 100) Nevertheless, it was Owen Lattimore (A.D. 1900-1989) who was one of the first historians to argue in his analysis that nomads could not only be meat-eating and blood-drinking groups of people but that they had to interact with sedentary peoples for their other needs; however, such a theoretical approach had to wait until the middle of the 20th century. Within the context of China and Inner Asia (he was mostly thinking about the relationships between the Nomadic Xiongnu Empire and the Han Dynasty of China), he depicted a mutually dependent relationship, suggesting that it was only in such a context that the nomads could meet their demand for their primary needs such as grains.

Not surprisingly, similar to the traditional approach that placed nomadic societies in ontological opposition to the sedentary ones, the views evaluating them in different ways, i.e., in terms of mutual relationship, also emphasized food. The importance of food in the relationality

of these two categories was not coincidental, as mentioned earlier, and was related to the parties' survival strategy and social organization. However, it took more time for food to become an important component of history and other social sciences.

The French Annales School<sup>12</sup> added food to its broader geographical and interdisciplinary analysis of history, and one of the most prominent members of this École, Fernand Braudel, (1902-1985) paid more attention to the food, food consumption and food prices in his studies on the demography and nutrition in the Mediterranean basin (Pilcher, 2012). For Braudel, food and related issues were more of a useful measure for calculating the patterns of growth, consumption or inflation over large periods of time/*longue durée*<sup>13</sup> (Burke, 2014). He was not only interested in the social and cultural contexts of eating but also in the volume of production of wheat or its rising price in times of scarcity. Still, Braudel's stance, over time, generated a sense of legitimacy in the academic world about food as a scholarly topic, particularly in the fields such as economic history and consumer society (Pilcher, 2012).

As food studies began to emerge as a discipline with more autonomy, a new understanding of history had already opened the doors to a broader thematic inventory and a more comprehensive universe of research, and what the Nomads consumed was also included in the subject of detailed socio-economic analyses. The Annales School's extensive quantitative analyses of food and its different facets to understand long-term diachronic dynamics paved the way for a broader perspective taking a more direct approach to the subject. The newer generation from the Annales School, such as "Jean-Louis Flandrin, along with Françoise Sabban and

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<sup>12</sup> "A French school of historical thought, established by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre in the late 1920s and developed by Fernand Braudel in the 1950s and 1960s." [www.oxfordreference.com](http://www.oxfordreference.com) - Annales School

<sup>13</sup> "It is a standard term of reference in the work of the *Annales School*, which Braudel helped to establish. It is used to indicate a perspective on history that extends further into the past than both human memory and the archaeological record." [www.oxfordreference.com](http://www.oxfordreference.com) - *Longue durée*

Maurice Aymard, perceived the intellectual value of symbolic and social analyses of food as a system of culture...sought to explain the history of culinary practices, eating habits, and food regimes of various eras and civilizations through the close reading of cookbooks, literary sources, and medical texts” (Watts, 2012, pp. 3 - 4). Scholars from different parts of the world broadened their perspectives on “food” as a significant part of the human experience. Flandrin and Aymard and another scholar from the other side of the Atlantic, Steven Kaplan from Cornell University, became the founding editors of the journal *Food and Foodways* in 1985 (Watts, 2012).

Although the social sciences’ interest in “Food” was initially stimulated by anthropologists and historians, by the mid-20th century, another prominent figure from continental Europe in the field of sociology, Norbert Elias, almost around the same time as the pioneering historian Braudel, included the issue in his famous work *On the Process of Civilization* (1939), discussing it in different contexts such as table etiquette and the standardization of repressive behaviour in individuals (Van Krieken, 2017). Over time, food and related themes have begun to be explored more and more in this compartment of social sciences, too; for example, Pierre Bourdieu, the famous sociologist, attempted to theorize his key concepts such as Social Reproduction, Social Hierarchy and Cultural Capital, within the context of issues such as food preferences and consumption habits (Kamphuis et al., 2015).

As Norbert Elias attempted in his sociological study on civilization progress in 1939 and Fernand Braudel in his comprehensive socio-economic, historical analysis in his magnum opus of 1949, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Lattimore, too, in his comparative analysis of the nomads’ relations with their sedentary neighbours (Inner Asian Frontiers of China, 1940), broadened his thematic horizon and gave food, in particular, greater

importance than ever before in this field. Thus, Lattimore's analysis of the nature of the relations among the nomadic and settled entities reflected the transformation in social sciences and started to change the dominant narrative about the history of Eurasian steppes. It was an important step because once the scholarship started to focus on themes outside of political and military domains, the image of savage and gluttonous nomads started to look dubious and inadequate. According to Di Cosmo (1994), in this process, the 'greedy' theory started to be developed into the 'needy' theory, and "the nomads' modes of contact and commercial exchange with -and dependency upon- settled people" led to the rise of a new endeavor to capture the true nature of the interrelationship between them (p. 1092).

This understanding, Owen Lattimore was one of the first historians to embrace it, gradually resulted in the discarding of the usual assumptions about nomads. Parallel to the growing interest in food/foodways in other social sciences such as history and sociology, the field of what we might call Nomadology began to address the related themes more and more directly. Anatoly Khazanov realized that in order for nomads to be categorically defined against sedentary ones, they had to be a completely self-sufficient organization because only such a definition could set up these two categories in an opposition in which they can both exist independently and singularly (Khazanov, 2001 and 2004). However, he argued that depending on the material conditions in which nomads lived, their engagement with the outside world was inevitable and could not be described as autarkic by stating that "The non-autarky, in many cases, I would even say the anti-autarky of their economy, means that their social and political organization cannot be fully autonomous and that culturally to a certain degree they are not self-sufficient" (Khazanov, 2004, p. 122). Khazanov's interdisciplinary approach to the materials from archaeology, anthropology, and history allowed him to grasp the importance of the

nomads' relationship with the sedentary societies on their periphery and demonstrate this with richer material. In his view, the diversity of nomads' diets was closely related to the climate-appropriate agricultural products cultivated by the non-nomadic societies they were close to. Thus, he demonstrated that Eurasian nomads did not eat as much meat as the more northerly reindeer-herders but could not consume as much vegetable as the nomads of the Near and Middle East regions further south too (Khazanov, 2004). Nevertheless, precise information on what nomads and their descendants consumed was not easy to come by, especially in the periods before the 8th century, when there were no written sources of their own. But Khazanov (2004), referring to a study recorded by Maisky in 1921 on the caloric intake of the nomadic Mongolian tribes at the beginning of the 20th century, was able to state that they derived about half of their energy from dairy products (p. 52), and only the rest was derived from meat and farm products.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Thomas Barfield even argued in his seminal book (*The Perilous Frontier*, 1989) that there is a model of cycles in the rise and fall of dynasties on the Chinese mainland and empires in the steppe and that the relationship between the parties reveals a demonstrable pattern in the eastern side of Eurasia (Khazanov, 2001). He argued that “No nomadic state ever emerged from Mongolia during periods when north China was torn apart by warlord struggles following the collapse of a long-lived dynasty. The re-establishment of order by foreign dynasties from Manchuria solidified the frontier and presented a single target which favored the creation of centralized states on the steppe” (Barfield, 1989, pp. 14-15). He described the interdependence in the eastern part of Eurasia in the context of a triangle consisting of the pastoral nomads of steppes, the Tungusic-speaking peoples of Manchuria (such peoples as Manchus and Jurchens living in different parts of Manchuria in sedentary, semi-nomad and sometimes even pastoral nomadic groups) and mainland China. In order to theorize this pattern,

he sought to integrate the histories of nomadic and sedentary peoples, focusing on the trade, economic and political relations between these regions.

Commercial agreements, the goods that were the subject of exchanges between the parties, and the consumption patterns now had to be dealt with in detail, not only because the modern analyses required this, but also since now it was possible to focus on the topics that a few decades ago would have been considered out of the field or even odd.

Therefore, social categories initially presumed to be in an antagonistic relationship, or mutual relations assumed never to be reconciled, or at most subject to the “optimistic” approaches, such as the idea that even barbarians can recover in a teleological process, finally started to be understood in an almost symbiotic orchestration. Interestingly, despite the fundamental change in historical and socio-economic interpretations, food, which was often referred to in the first place to draw attention to the ontological differences between the parties, now started to come to the fore to explain their interdependence. As this theme has emerged as an increasingly autonomous field in the social sciences, it has gradually become the subject of Nomadology, with the new wave of studies devoted mainly to this topic.



*Imperial state formation along the Chinese–Nomad frontier*

*Cycles of rule: major dynasties in China and steppe empires in Mongolia*

Native Chinese dynasties	Dynasties of foreign origins <sup>a</sup>	Steppe empires <sup>b</sup>
Qin and Han (221 BCE–220 CE)		XIONGNU (209 BCE–155 CE) Xianbei (130–180 CE)
Three Kingdoms and Period of Disunion (221–581 CE)	Toba Wei (386–556 CE) and other foreign dynasties directly before and after	Rouran
Sui and Tang (581–907 CE)		FIRST TURKISH (552–630 CE) SECOND TURKISH (683–734 CE) UIGHUR (745–840 CE)
Sung (960–1279 CE)	Liao (Khitan) (907–1125 CE) Jin (Juchen) (1115–1234 CE) Yuan (Mongol) (1206–1368 CE)	MONGOL (Yuan)
Ming (1368–1644 CE)		Oirats Eastern Mongols
	Qing (Manchu) (1644–1912 CE)	

*Notes:*

<sup>a</sup> All but Yuan are of Manchurian origin.

<sup>b</sup> Unified steppe empires that ruled all of Mongolia are given in capitals.

***Fig. 3. Imperial state formation along the Chinese–Nomad frontier***

According to Barfield, in many cases, “*Native Chinese Dynasties*” and “*Steppe Empires*” rose and fell together. In contrast, the “*Dynasties of Foreign Origins*”, mostly the peoples of Manchurian origin, dominated and managed to rule China when these interdependent nomadic and sedentary entities were vulnerable (Barfield, 2001, p. 23).

Barfield, T.J. (2001). *The Shadow Empires: Imperial State Formation along the Chinese Nomad Frontier*. In “*Empires: Perspectives from Archeology and History*,” (pp. 10–41). Cambridge University Press.

## **ii. Nomadic Cultural Heritage:**

Having established that pastoral nomadism emerged around three thousand years ago (Khazanov, 2019) in and around the dry belt of the Old World (Scholz, 2001), modern studies began to analyze the socio-economic organization of pastoral nomads and social complexity around Inner Asia with more focus on their relations with the sedentary world around them (Barfield, 2001; Khazanov, 2019). Initial studies in this framework showed that they could not be categorized as autarchic (Khazanov, 2001; Biran, 2015) but had to live in a certain balance with the sedentary elements around them. Even though theories suggesting a more precise symbiosis between Nomadic and Sedentary societies (Barfield, 2001) were subject to notable criticism in the literature (Di Cosmo, 1999), the archaeological and cultural evidence has shown that such a model was better suited to explain the socio-economic and cultural networks of relations in Inner Asia (Watt, 2002).

Archaeological findings also do not support the argument that pastoral nomadism represented a self-sufficient archaic state of development or an ontological form that was the antithesis of the sedentary way of life. On the contrary, they show that nomads not only interacted with the outside world but also conflicted with it, sometimes harmonized with it, or even influenced it (Schaffer, 1963). Moreover, such evidence increased over time with the succession of different nomadic polities dominating the steppes, such as the Mongols (Rossabi, 2015), creating a long-term trend around the region that outlived the lifespan of many individual dynasties and states. Thus, the networks of relationships that archaeological research had been pointing to in relation to the cultural sphere for some time could also be identified at

the infrastructural scale, thanks to the socio-economic linkages that have recently become better understood.

In this respect, archaeological evidence not only points to a rich cultural heritage of nomadic societies throughout Inner Asia (Bunker, 2002) but also indicates that many innovations from other regions were transmitted through them, and that their cultural elements sometimes even shaped the tastes of the sedentary societies. Khazanov (2001) states that:

For example, the archeological data indicate that, in the sixth century AD the Turks had invented a new type of saddle with iron stirrups that soon afterward spread across Eurasia. But the earliest iron stirrups, dating to the end of the third century AD or the beginning of the fourth century AD, were discovered not in the Altai Mountains (*where the Turkic tribes lived*) but in the tombs of North Korea and adjacent regions of Manchuria. It now seems, therefore, that the Turkic nomads did not invent iron stirrups; they just borrowed them and contributed to their contacts with the sedentaries.... Nomadic arms, ornaments, and modes of fashion were often imitated in sedentary countries. Thus, in the seventh and eighth centuries Turkic decorated belts spread from Iraq to China. In the Tang period (A.D. 618 – 907), Chinese dress styles were strongly influenced by those of the nomads (p. 2).

In light of the growing body of material evidence, Biran (2015) states that the nomadic polities possessed a “distinctive material culture” and exceptionally light but precious artifacts that could easily be carried, such as “daggers, knives, and horse equipment” generally decorated with “zoomorphic designs” were uniquely representing their own cultural complexity (p. 4).

According to Biran (2015):

“Nomadic culture included also a set of social norms and usages, such as the important role of warfare in everyday life, the high position of women, and the practise of hunting as a royal sport....Nomadic culture also had its own set of organizational tools, the most typical and long-lived among them being decimal military organization, first attested under the Xiongnu....The impact of nomadic culture on the other cultures was proportional to the nomads’ political power and was especially apparent when nomads ruled considerable sedentary territories. Their influence on global history, however, went far beyond these periods of nomadic rule, because elements of nomadic culture were preserved not only in nomadic states but also in postnomadic states. First, states established by nomads or seminomads who gave up nomadism as part of their empire-building project and yet retained many aspects of nomadic political culture (e.g., the Seljuks, Qing China, the Ottomans, Mughal India, Uzbek Central Asia and -in a way- Mamluk Egypt and Syria) (pp. 4-6).

Thus, the notion of a peculiar nomadic culture that was characterized not only by its military and administrative aspects but also by its cultural and creative aspects is now being emphasized by many publications of academic credibility, and new archaeological and anthropological studies have been reaching the evidence to strengthen this conclusion (Khazanov, 2015). In particular, the volume of cultural capital transferred through post-nomadic empires to their successor states and societies appears to be larger than expected (Canfield, 2006; Vasary, 2015; Wink, 2016).

However, the assumption that the cultural heritage of the nomadic societies as a whole is unique would be at least as misleading as the argument that, because they did not settle down, they could not have achieved a cultural sophistication of a certain peculiarity. While preserving their signature characteristics, the cultural presence of nomadic entities evolved as they moved and interacted with different communities, contributing to the emergence of cultural basins that could be described as symbiotic in different regions and times (Çağatay & Kuban, 2006, pp. 68-301). Thus, the socio-economic relations that nomadic societies were expected to maintain with the world beyond themselves have been supported by material evidence indicating that they interacted culturally with the world around them (Khazanov, 2001). On the other hand, this relationship did not appear to be unilateral and did not develop only in the context of the needs of nomadic polities; on the contrary, due to the nature of the interaction, this exchange was reciprocal and, moreover, nomads played additional roles such as the agents of cross-cultural transmission throughout Eurasia due to their mobility (Biran, 2015).

Rogers (2012) draws attention to these points when listing the particularities of Inner Asia:

Such hallmarks as sedentary populations, cities, complex bureaucracies, defined territorial boundaries, and agriculture, so typically associated with early states, play less conspicuous roles in Inner Asia. Instead, mobility, scale, extralocal interactions, nonfixed property, dispersed aristocratic control hierarchies, and the economics of multiresource pastoralism serve as alternative foundations for these complex social systems (p. 206).

In the socio-cultural and economic spheres, such a wide-ranging interaction, shaped by the unique dynamics of Inner Asia, could not fail to have an impact on the consumption patterns and foodways in the region. In this regard, Rogers' (2012) emphasis on multi-resource pastoralism is particularly relevant for understanding the material and cultural world of the Turkic nomads and their descendants and serves as a convenient conceptual connector for a direct engagement with the nomadic foodways.

### iii. Nomadic Foodways:

#### a. Prologue:

In 1055, when the Seljuk Sultan Tughrul<sup>14</sup> Beg<sup>15</sup> (990 – 1063 A.D.) took control of Iraq and began his military campaign into Arabia, representatives of the defeated powers tried to impress this mounted warrior by offering him *Lauzinaj*, a famous Perso-Arabian pastry of sweetened, perfumed marzipan wrapped in a paper-thin crepe of egg and cornstarch. Asked for his opinion about the dish, Tughrul Beg replied, “These are good noodles, but they need garlic.” (Charles, 2006, p. 120) When Tughrul Beg thought of a noodle dish, he probably thought of the heartier versions and more filling portions that Turks would call *Tutmach*<sup>16</sup> or *Salma*<sup>17</sup>. However, what should have surprised his hosts was not so much his answer, which

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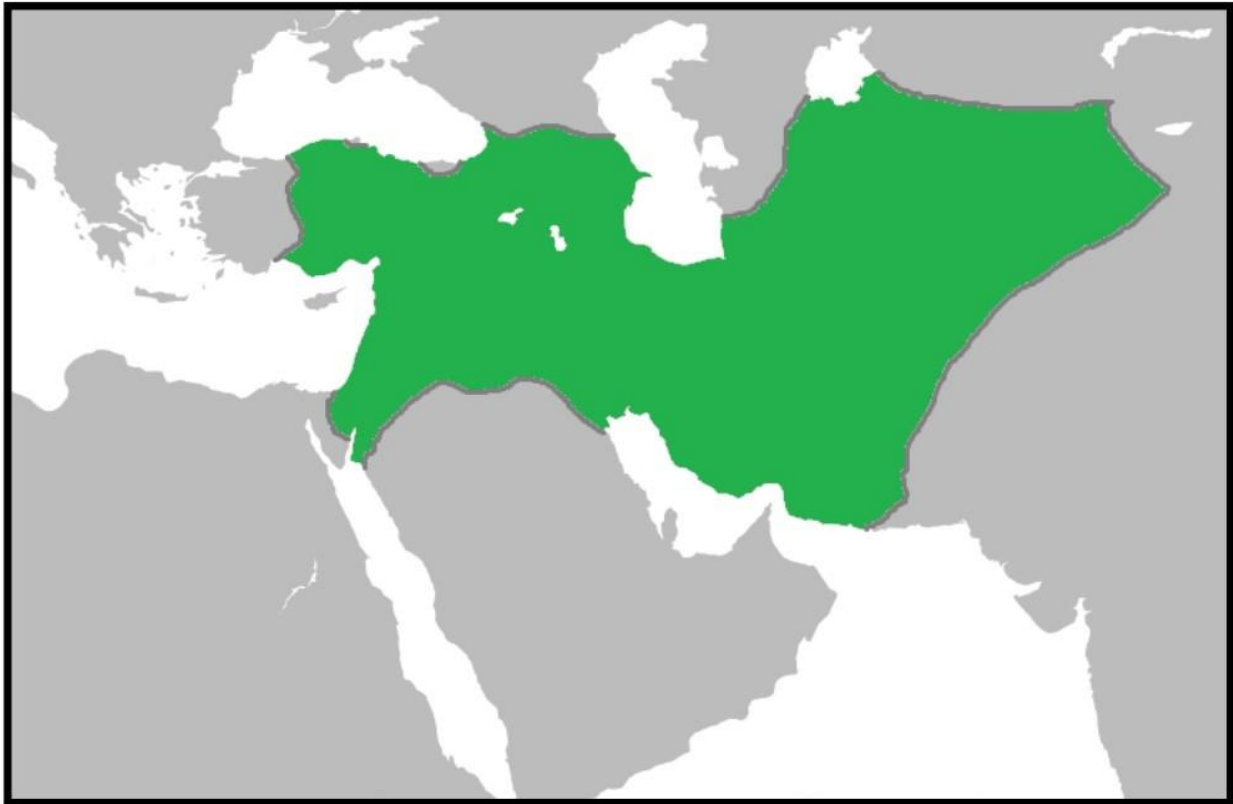
<sup>14</sup> Tuğrul Bey (Turkish), Tughrul/Toghriil/Tughril Beg/Begh is the founder of the Turkic Seljuk Dynasty that dominated modern Iran, Anatolia, Iraq and Syria between the 11th-14th centuries.

<sup>15</sup> A Turco-Iranian honorific title.

<sup>16</sup> Tutmach, which has now become a sort of vermicelli soup consumed in Anatolia, was a noodle stew and has been known for at least a thousand years by the same name (Mahmud Kāšgarî, 1982-85: I, p. 340).

<sup>17</sup> Perry (2010) states that “Salma” noodle pieces are described as “shaped with the fingers like coins” in the Arabic cookbook of Kitab al-Tibakha of the 15th century (p. 580).

may have sounded a little awkward to their ears, but the fact that their steppe-descended guests were perhaps even more fond of pastries than they had thought.



*Fig. 4. Map of Seljuk Empire at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.*

*Wikimedia Commons. Retrieved 23:12, May 11, 2023.*

Even a millennium ago, grain-based products and pastry foods were an essential part of life for the Turkic peoples. Regarding their culinary culture, such foods were more important than their sedentary neighbours could have imagined. Just as today, grain-based foods were crucial for all the communities in Central Asia, and this was true for almost all of the Turkic peoples, whether nomadic or sedentary (Anderson, 2014). As well as the Iranian nomads like Scythians, who lived on the plains of Central Asia for almost a millennium before the Turks, it is now accepted and supported by the archaeological evidence that even the Xiongnu (Asian Huns who established the first great nomadic empire in East Asia between B.C 200 and 200

A.D.) had access to grain products in various forms, and even practiced agriculture, albeit not continuously and extensively (Di Cosmo, 1994). Thus, as will be examined more closely in the following chapters, the Turkic Nomads' knowledge of cereals and the foods made from them was rooted in their cultural heritage in Central Asia and reflected their rich culinary tradition, which would be adopted in the places they reached as well (Işın, 2020).

As expected, meat was undoubtedly an essential part of the Turkish nomads' diet, but dairy products were even more essential and consumed in a stunning variety. However, rather than fresh milk, cheese, yogurt, kefir, and a slightly alcoholic drink called *kumis/qımız*<sup>18</sup> were consumed in large quantities (Anderson, 2014, p. 290). Yogurt was added to many dishes, and it was also processed "into a cheeselike solid by straining (*süzme/suzme*), drying (*qurut/kurut*) or boiling until it curdled and then draining the curds." (Perry, 2006, p. 117) A study of the diet of the Mongolian nomads about a century ago (Maisky, 1921) also showed that they derived more than half of their energy from dairy products (as cited in Khazanov, 2004). However, it should also be noted that the dependency on dairy products tended to be higher in the nomadic societies living in more northern regions. For example, Mongolians generally settled in the northern steppes just like Turkic Cuvash people, while many groups of Turkic nomads moved further west and south over time (Findley, 2005). But, it should also be mentioned that a significant part of the Turkic peoples moved along a specific line and tried to stay within a particular climatic zone. Anatolia, for example, is at the end of one of the western ends of the Silk Road, and as the region where the largest Turkic country is now located, in terms of both landscape and climate, it "resembles the western extension of the steppes and grasslands of the

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<sup>18</sup> A fermented dairy product made from mare milk and contains a small amount of alcohol.



northern arid zone, with the valuable addition of well-watered, highly productive, coastal agricultural regions” (Findley, 2005, p. 14).

Contrary to popular belief and the traditional description of the dietary habits of nomadic peoples, meat consumption was not excessive, and animal slaughter was not widespread, as it reduced the size of the herd and ended the reproductive process (Buell, 2006; Perry, 2016). Part of their meat consumption came from game animals, and they avoided excessive hunting in favour of the balance of nature on which their lives depended. However, when Turkish nomads converted to Islam, hunting regressed under the prohibitions of their new religion (Anderson, 2014). In addition to hunting-related meat consumption, the intake of traditional alcoholic beverages was also reduced with the spread of Islam among Turkic nomads, and dishes from animal blood almost disappeared as well (Buell et al., 2020). However, according to famous Maghrebi explorer Ibn Battuta (A.D. 1304 - 1368), Turkic Muslims of the Hanafi Sect were still consuming a slightly alcoholic beverage called buza/boza<sup>19</sup> (Ibn Battuta, 2004). Because, according to their belief, such a beverage with almost no alcohol content could be consumed in moderation as it was nabidh/nebiz, meaning not a wine or a strong liquor in their understanding of Islam (Buell et al., 2020, p. 191). Thus, the process of Islamization, which also meant sedentarization over a long time, affected the material culture of Turkic peoples in many ways.

However, it can be said that their tolerant approach to alcohol consumption coming from the pre-

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<sup>19</sup> Boza is a lightly alcoholic beverage usually made by fermenting millet, but it can also be made from other grain products. Although there are different explanations for its origin, either Turkic or Persian; according to Nişanyan (2018), this grain liquor has cognates in both languages, such as Turkic “buxsum” in the Compendium of Kashgari (p. 110), and has been found in many other Turkic sources for about a thousand years.

While the explanations regarding the origin of words should always be treated with caution, it is also reported to be the progenitor of the English word “booze” (Buell et al., 2020, p. 191). However, “booze”, according to *The Barnhart Concise Dictionary of Etymology* (1995): “v. 1768, probably a variant of earlier bouse (pronounced buz), with the same meaning (probably before 1325); borrowed from Middle Dutch *busen* drink heavily, related to Middle Low German *busen* to revel, carouse, drink heavily, both of uncertain origin.”

Islamic days has partly continued because alcohol consumption in Turkic countries such as Turkiye and Azerbaijan is still markedly higher than the average in overall Muslim countries (Michalak and Trocki, 2006).



*Fig. 5. Boza*

It is still widely consumed in Turkiye and some neighbouring countries.

The photo was retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 02:55.

<https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/istanbul/neyenir/boza460281>

According to Perry (2010) too, five hundred years after they established their first state called by their name (Göktürk Khaganate-Celestial Turks, A.D. 552 - 744), “Turks who invaded the Near East in the tenth century were herdsmen, not farmers, and they have often been pictured living entirely off their flocks, possibly supplementing a diet of yogurt and shishkebab with wild fruits and herbs. Grain foods were already their staple diet” (p. 571), and that is why Seljuk Sultan Tugrul Beg told those who wanted to serve him a sophisticated dessert that it needed a bit of garlic, inspired by the noodle dishes he was familiar with through his own culinary culture. Thus, to better understand the statement of Tughrul Beg, and to comprehend the almost constant prevalence of grains in the gastronomic culture of Turkic nomads and their descendants, it would be beneficial to go back further and take a closer look at the cosmopolitan environment in which they emerged on the stage of history.

Not long after the establishment of the Turkic Khaganate, the Sui (A.D. 581-618) and Tang (A.D. 618-907) dynasties had also begun to reunite China as a central power, and the influence of the Turkic nomads, who at a certain period controlled a vast territory stretching as far as the Crimea, had an impact not only on the other nomadic polities but also on the ancient merchant communities living in the Central Asian oases near to the rivers and in the ancient settlements along the Amu Darya river (Khazanov, 2019, p. 90; Rogers, 2012, p. 226). During the Tang period, when ancient Chinese civilization and the nomadic steppe culture of Inner Asia were intertwined, countless products and ideas started to move back and forth between the West and the East, and “China was rapidly becoming Westernized - faster than it would do again until the twentieth century” (Anderson, 2014, p. 159). Such a fertile process of interaction was taking place, as Barfield emphasized, at roughly the same time that the Turks were establishing “the first Pan-Eurasian nomadic empire” in history (Khazanov, 2019, p. 90; Kradin, 2002, pp. 380-381). History shows us that the trade routes in the Eurasian steppes could only run well when a nomadic polity was in control of everything, and this had only happened twice<sup>20</sup> (while Turkic and Mongolian nomads established their pan-Eurasian Empires, respectively, in the 7th and 13th empires, the presence of Xiongnu was mostly felt over eastern regions of Inner Asia) in the past (Khazanov, 2019, p. 91).

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<sup>20</sup> These periods are also referred to as Pax Turcica and Pax Mongolica.



*Fig. 6. Tang Dynasty (circa A.D. 700).*

Licensed under Wikimedia Creative Commons (derived from "The Tang Dynasty, 618-906 A.D.-Boundaries of 700 A.D." Albert Herrmann (1935). History and Commercial Atlas of China. Harvard University) Press.

*Wikimedia Commons.* Retrieved 01:57, May 12, 2023.

Therefore, the dynamism of Tang China in the East as an open sedentary civilization that produced and consumed immensely, the Turkic nomads in the steppes who were able to connect cultures from different regions across Eurasia along a secure network, and the city dwellers living in the oases of Inner Asia who were mostly Iranian-speaking traders, all together, paved the way for the free movement of objects, people, animals, plants, ideas, religions, and, most importantly, food across much of the then known world (Schafer, 1963).

b. Economic, Cultural, and Political Exchange in Central Asia:

Tang China, having long battled against the nomadic hordes from the northeast and establishing permanent garrisons and settlements in that region to confront the enemy, over time, became highly Central Asianized due to this intensive contact (Anderson, 2012, p. 159). So much so that when mentioning the growing consumption of tea in the southern regions below the Yangtze River after the end of the Han dynasty in the third century, Lewis (2019) notes that those in the north mainly were consuming yogurt (pp. 127-128). A yogurt-consuming China may sound odd now; however, although the intake of dairy products has later been considered a consumption characteristic of “less civilized societies,” more precisely, of nomadic peoples<sup>21</sup> (Schatz, 2017), encountering such foreign and non-sedentary effects on Chinese culture was prevalent during the Tang period (Schafer, 1963).

While dairy products, game meat, wild berries and seeds were important for medieval nomads, their more refined foods were cereal-based, and the transfer of commercial goods such as grains and dried fruits from the sedentary states or the oasis dwellers was convenient enough (Perry, 2006, p. 118), especially for the Turkic tribes who could gradually reach the south of the Mongolian steppe too. For them, trade was possible in various ways. Although long-distance trade was less widespread than it is generally assumed and was historically carried out by specialized groups such as Sogdian traders (Skaff, 2003), Turkic nomads charged a brokerage fee or demanded a commission for keeping the trade routes safe and

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<sup>21</sup> For instance, Schatz (2017) states about the results of the ethnographic research conducted in Inner Mongolia of China that “In my interviews with Chinese informants, I noticed that the consumption of milk products was associated with Mongols who are in turn considered to be backward and simple due to their nomadic lifestyle and low cultural development...Milk products are related to Mongolian eating habits and therefore have a bad image for Chinese...and [they] consider milk products typical Mongolian food that they cannot eat and from which they want to distance themselves” (pp. 15-18). This finding is meaningful and worth reflecting upon in terms of diagnosing the prejudices against the dietary practices of nomadic peoples or their descendants, which are even entrenched in popular culture.

intact. Even when they could not control the steppes as a whole under a united organization, they could still remain active in different parts of the region under various polities or states they established. For example, it is recorded by the Muslim traveller Ibn Fadlan in A.D. 922 that the merchants passing through the Central Asian steppes into the vicinities of Volga Bulgaria<sup>22</sup> were making payments to the Turkic Oghuz nomads in the forms of foods, clothes, and coins only for a safe passage; however, the long-distance terrestrial travelling itself, according to Khazanov (2019), was as severe a problem for them as these payments to their nomadic suzerain (p. 91).

Another form of trade was the short-distance or interregional trade with the oases, which was even more important than the long-distance trade, especially for the nomadic pastoral groups that were gradually moving from the Mongolian steppes towards the south. As Kradin (2015) states, as opposed to the inhabitants of the Mongolian steppes up north, the Turkic nomads and farmers in this region needed to coexist in close proximity (p. 42).

Thanks to the notes of Xuanzang (a Chinese traveller and Buddhist pilgrim; A.D. 662-664) about his travels along the Silk Road, it is understood that the food culture of the inhabitants of the oases of Central Asia, with whom the Turkic nomads had close relations, was based on grains and fruits, just like the sedentary Turkic peoples living in the same regions today (Buell et al., 2020, p. 104). As man-made oases that bear no resemblance to their landscape, these fertile areas have been the focal points of interaction between nomadic and sedentary societies (Khazanov, 1992, pp. 69-70). The Sogdian merchants, well-known by the

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<sup>22</sup> Volga Bulgaria is a Turkic state that existed around the 9th to 13th centuries between Kama and Volga rivers (around today's Tatarstan Republic in Russian Federation), and semi-nomadic Turkic Bulgars, Finnic-Ugric peoples, and Eastern Slavs together lived in this multi-ethnic state. The name of modern Bulgaria derived from the name of these Turkic tribes who reached the territories of Bulgaria, and even though they were completely assimilated into the Slavicized Bulgarians of today, their name survived (Golden, 2017, p. 353).

nomadic peoples of the first Turkic Khaganate, lived in a vast region of these oases cities and the fertile lands around them (roughly in an area known as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Uyghur Autonomous Region of China today). The relationship between the Turkic nomads and traders of oases was crucial in terms of the often short-distance trade within particular regions along the Silk Road (Khazanov, 2019, p. 85). Thus, the different needs of the nomads and oasis dwellers for survival led to a complementary relationship of conflict and coexistence between them (Scholz, 2001, p. 10652). Just like the Sogdian merchants of the first Turkic Khaganate, later, the native traders of Bukhara (a region within the borders of present-day Uzbekistan) and Nestorian monks also played similar roles in not only regional but also longer-distance trade; however, regardless of the form of the trade, “no caravan could cross territories controlled by the nomads without their consent and protection” (Khazanov, 2019, p. 88).

As for the well-known Silk Road, just like there was not a monolithic Great Wall (Huang, 2005), “one particular road regularly connecting the continents” was far from the truth, and according to Hansen (2012), there was hardly any evidence indicating such a fact (p. 238). Considering that the journey of Marco Polo and his brothers from Mongolia to the Mediterranean lasted more than three years, and taking into account the travel notes of the Arabian traders saying that the caravans in Central Asia could travel no more than a few “farsang<sup>23</sup>” in a day (Polo, 2001; as cited in Khazanov, 2019, p.89), it seems that the trade in silk and other goods was compartmentalized and driven by many middlemen and intermediaries (Khazanov, 2021, p.151). It should be noted, therefore, that such a distance, which was difficult to cover even in the 13th century, renders the idea of a Silk Road, which would have allowed for regular and inter-continental trade, inapplicable. Therefore, over an

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<sup>23</sup> Farsang is an ancient measure of length used in the Middle and Near East, equal to about 5 to 5.5 kilometres.

area of millions of square kilometers, mainly interconnected by shorter trade routes, there appears to have been a thriving trade traffic with many players, often controlled by nomads.

The reason for referring to the Silk Road, which is now considered a myth in the relevant literature, and pointing out a network that generated more interactivity via many shorter Silk Roads of different distances is to show that nomads had first-hand access to a wide range of goods along this network of routes. However, apart from these forms of trade, which were more beneficial to individual nomadic tribes and clans, it is also necessary to briefly look at the ways of direct interaction between the organized nomadic polities and the sedentary states. There is no doubt that the military and political pressure exerted by the organized nomadic groups amounted to tribute payments on the part of the sedentary states (Anderson, 2014, p. 175), and with the words of Chinese historian Ban Gu (A.D. 32-92), who realized that the nomads had a taste for foods other than meat [perhaps thanks to his twin brother Ban Chao (A.D. 32-102), an experienced soldier who led in military expeditions to Central Asia, and faced the nomads in the first hand], “human faced but animal hearted Barbarians were covetous of grain” (1997, as cited in Rogers, 2020, p. 220); thus, they always found ways to reach whatever they need when they were strong enough.

However, this harmonious equilibrium that could be established when the two sides were more or less equal in terms of their power was disrupted when one side had the capacity to coerce the other against its will. For example, Xiongnu leaders were, for a certain period, so strong that they could force the Chinese to make “large payments of silk, handicraft articles and products of settled agriculture under the pretense of gifts” (Barfield, 1981; Di Cosmo, 2002; Kradin 2002, as cited in Kradin, 2019, p.150) and even made their Chinese counterparts to recognize themselves as officially political equals. In the opposite way to the previous case,



after enduring the attacks of the nomads for a long time, the dynasties in China as well were eventually able to penetrate Central Asia by taking control of the strategic Hexi Corridor<sup>24</sup> and forcing some of the nomadic groups to co-operate with, and even to fight for Chinese imperial targets (Ma, 2017, p. 68).

Even if it was based on complicated power relations and did not always represent an equal exchange of goods and services, reciprocal trade in different forms remained a vital exchange component between the nomadic and sedentary polities. For instance, about 2000 years ago, the Xiongnu were annually receiving 10.000 rolls of silk cloth, each about 10 meters long; 500 years later, Turkish rulers were acquiring about 100.000 rolls of silk from the rival dynasties struggling for political domination over northern China, and about a thousand years after that, in the 16th century, the Nomadic Nogai Turks were selling tens of thousands of horses per year for the Russian state up north (Zimin, 1972, p. 221, Kradin, 2002, p.189, as cited in Khazanov 210, pp. 86-89).

In addition to all of these forms of transaction, there were “diplomatic” alternatives, such as Heqin<sup>25</sup>, where Han princesses were married off to nomadic rulers, bringing with them large dowries and binding agreements on regular payments and transfers of goods from China throughout the marriage (Miller, 2009, p. 93). However, when the sedentary state is more powerful, Nomadic princes could be forced to stay as forced guests in the palaces of the settlers as political hostages too, and the education these princes received in the courts of the East or the cultural assimilation they were subjected to sometimes paved the way for the

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<sup>24</sup> The Hexi [河西-West of the (Yellow) River] Corridor is a natural bridge of around one thousand kilometres connecting the Chinese heartland to both Central Asia and the eastern Eurasian steppe (Clydesdale, 2018, p.2). This corridor can be seen in **Map 4** as a narrow and long region connecting the western and eastern parts of Yuan China.

<sup>25</sup> Heqin (和親 - Marriage for Peace) was regarded as a conventional mode of diplomatic relations between the Chinese dynasties and the powerful steppe polities on the northwestern border, which encouraged the parties to establish stable relations through an imperial marriage contract.

Sinicization of the nomadic ruling classes, or in some rarer cases, even of a wider population (Psarras, 2003, p.71).

Therefore, Turkic-speaking nomadic peoples, who emerged on the stage of history with an empire named after themselves in a region connecting the Chinese cultural basin with the Near Eastern civilizations and Central Asian oases have been one of the most populous and influential communities in such vast geography for centuries. (Findley, 2005; Golden, 2011; Golden, 2018). From the point of their emergence on the stage of history and their gradual migration from there to the different regions of Eurasia, they had the opportunity to observe, participate, influence and even control the flows of goods, services, ideas and religions in this boundless landscape through the different commercial methods and diplomatic means briefly described above.

All in all, living in a region open to cultural exchange, in a mode of life that allowed them to establish dynamic relationships with different communities, nomads could also access cereal commodities through the abovementioned means. Alternative methods and the opportunities offered by other disciplines may also be useful for studying nomadic foodways, which are inherently not well-suited to manifest themselves in archaeological findings and are often subject to the subjective approach of historiography, which has remained under the hegemony of sedentary societies. In the next chapter, some primary Turkic lexical texts that might potentially reflect the linguistic heritage of Turkic nomads and their successors will be scanned, and clues stored in them will be looked for in the context of the grain-based foods and food culture, assumed to be monopolized by sedentary societies.

#### iv. Grain-based Foods and Dishes in Turkish Lexical Heritage:

##### a. From the First Written Records to a Gradual Islamization:

The First Turkic Khaganate, Göktürk Khaganate-Celestial Turks, started to dominate the northeastern pathways leading to China around the mid-6th century, and the first written examples of Turkic were carved into stones by them (Findley, 2005, p. 39). Of these inscriptions from the era of the Second Turkic Khaganate of the Celestial Turks, those carved in the names of Kul-Tegin (A.D. 684–731) and Bilge Khagan (A.D. 684–731) were erected on the edge of a lake near the Orkhun River in modern Mongolia in 732 and 735, respectively. Later, other inscriptions from this era, the ones known as Tonyukuk Inscriptions, was found 50 kilometres from Ulan-Bataar, the capital of Mongolia, and is believed to have been carved in 725.



*Fig. 7. Tonyukuk Inscriptions (circa A.D. 725).*

Two steles with inscriptions were erected in the early 8th century in honour of “Tonyukuk the Wise,” who was an Advisor to the Khans of the Göktürk (Celestial Turks) Empire.

*Wikimedia Commons. Retrieved 00:14, May 16, 2023.*

A part of the carved text on the Bilge Khaghan monument roughly says the following: “Turk people, you do not remember that if you are hungry, you will be full, and when you are full, you will be hungry again<sup>26</sup>, so some of you fools did not listen to your ruler who fed you, but went to the foreign lands and lost your lives. Turk folks were also warned that they would be ruined if they settled in the plains or were too close to them (*China*); such Turks perished, even though they had been instructed to stay in their homeland, Otuken<sup>27</sup>”. These inscriptions also warn Turkic peoples “not to be deceived by the sweet words and the mesmerizer wealth of their (*Chinese*) states<sup>28</sup>”, contain not only significant information about the early Turkic language spoken in the steppes of Mongolia about 1300 years ago but also provides crucial information about them.

These monuments where Turkic Khagans addressed their subjects are far from the traditional portrayal of nomadic “Barbarians” blindly attacking the outside world, but rather introduce us to a political entity who knew their own strengths, weaknesses, and socio-economic realities. It is evident that they created a society aware of the outside world and knew that they would be assimilated if they strayed away from the necessities of their way of life.

Even a few sections quoted from the monument demonstrate how vigilant they were in dealing with the sedentary polities and how they wanted to maintain an ideal balance in their

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<sup>26</sup> “When thou art hungry, thou dost not remember what fullness is; but once thou art full-fed, thou hast no thought of what hunger is.” (Ross and Thomsen, 1930, p. 862)

<sup>27</sup> When some among you, Turkish folk, said: ‘I will settle in the South, but not in the forest of Mount Chugay (*Yinshan Mountains in modern Northern China*), but in the plain,’ then the wicked men encouraged this party among you, Turkish folk, in this wise: ‘When they are far away they give bad gifts; when they are near they give good gifts.’ Thus, did they urge them on. The foolish persons were taken by these words, and went down to their neighbourhood, whereby many among you have come to destruction. ‘If thou then go forth to that land, O Turkish nation, thou wilt come to destruction; but if thou stay in the land of Ötükan (*the capital of the First Turkic Khanagata and is located in the Karkhorin District of Mongolia*), and send out caravans, thou wilt never suffer any need. If thou stay on in the mountain forest of Ötükan, thou shalt ever hold an everlasting kingdom, O Turkish nation, and thou shalt be full-fed’ (Ross and Thomsen, 1930, pp. 862-863)

<sup>28</sup> “But by letting yourselves be snared by their ingratiating talk and enervating riches, many of you, Turkish folk, have gone to destruction.” (Ross and Thomsen, 1930, p. 863)

relations with them, keeping a reasonable distance where trade caravans could travel back and forth. It is well known that they were as cautious and strategic in their relations with the other actors, such as the farmers and traders of oases (Golden, 2011; Kradin, 2015), as they were with the larger sedentary states. For it was only within the framework of such a complex but delicate economic network that nomadic societies could access everything they needed in their ever-expanding sphere of influence.

However, just a couple of decades after the first written examples of Turkic were carved into the stones, a war between the Tang armies and the Abbasid forces, which had begun to press against the Chinese gates, triggered major events not only on a regional but also on a global scale. Due to the rise of the Abbasid Caliphate to the west and the decline of the West Turkic Khaganate, which dominated entire Central Asia until the early eighth century, Tang China's stable control and protection of the Steppe Road did not last very long, and after the victory of Muslims in Talas Battle in 751, Tang China's influence on Central Asia gradually began to decline (Meicun & Zhang, 2018, pp. 263-264). Indeed, as Barfield (2001) noticed, in the western half of Eurasia, there was again visible synchronicity in decline, as well as the rise, of the powers that ruled the steppes and the sedentary China. The second half of the first millennium, which marked the rise of the Tang and the first Turkic Nomadic Empire, witnessed a period of cultural integration in Asia, and during this period, countless types of goods, raw materials, fabrics, and food, as well as an enormous variety of languages, religions, writings, philosophies, technologies and ideas in general, travelled along the Silk Road and across the steppes, deserts and mountains of Central Asia (Anderson, 2014; Schafer, 1963). According to Anderson (2014):

People speaking Chinese, Tocharian, Indian languages, and countless Iranian and Turkic dialects met and practiced Buddhism, Islam, Confucianism, Daoism, Manichaeism, Church of the East (Nestorian) Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and various shamanistic religions without usually getting in each other's way. Islam eventually prevailed in most of the area....but even Islam took notably tolerant forms, far from the current extremist forms of that faith. (p. 168)

This open and integrated cultural context paved the way for a *modus vivendi* in which the Turkic peoples' nomadic identity and mobile way of life functioned as convenient tools to connect them to these networks better. Within this cultural triangle formed by the sedentary empires, Turkic Nomads, and the mostly Iranian peoples living in the oases in Central Asia, a more or less similar gastronomical world emerged, and the grain-based foods generally appeared in one of three forms (Anderson, 2014, p. 289). As essential components of this transregional culinary culture, Turkic versions of these three main forms of pastry food too would soon begin to spread across Eurasia as Turkic peoples established new states towards the west and south (Buell, 2000, p. 215).

The first form of these grain-based foods was "bread," which was even considered sacred in many cultures in Eurasia (Buell et al., 2020, p. 183). Persian-style bread called "Nan" was the most important cereal product in Central Asia, Persian refugees were selling these breads at the capital of Tang Empire. Tang Dynasty records show that Turkic peoples knew how to sow millet, barley, and wheat and make flour in hand mills (Perry, 2006, p. 118) even when they were still dominantly pastoral nomadic. Although the documents from the Turkic Uyghur Khaganate

(A.D. 744-840), too, show that they knew about the “hand mill” and “laksa<sup>29</sup>”, Turkish nomads did not use Central Asian-style tandoors or Roman-style brick ovens, instead, used a portable cooking appliance called a saj/sac<sup>30</sup> to make their flatbreads (Perry, 2006, p. 119).

The second form was “dumplings,” and Perso-Arabian “samosa<sup>31</sup>” represents one of the earliest forms of this category. According to Anderson (2014), dumplings are “quintessentially Turkic food, and their most widespread name in the region - manty or some variants of it - is clearly Turkic” (p. 289) too. Buell et al. (2020) also suggest that dumplings may have originated in the Near East, if not Central Asia, and underlines that although “they came early to China, but do not seem truly ancient there.” (p. 97) However, just as different kinds of bread, versions of dumplings are now universal and can be found almost everywhere including the other famous forms of Italian “ravioli” and Russian “pelmeni.” (Gallani, 2015)

The last form was “noodle,” and even though the great diversity and richness of noodle and pasta dishes reflected in modern global culinary culture seems to be exclusively related to the Chinese and Italian gastronomical sphere (Shelke, 2016, p. 8); however, the homeland of wheat is known to be the Fertile Crescent (Stevens et al, 2016, p. 1542), and the noodle-like dishes have always been an essential part of Central Asian (Anderson, 2014, p. 289; Buell et al., 2020, p. 96) and Turkic (Perry, 2006, p. 120) foodways as well<sup>32</sup>. As evidenced by the sarcastic response of Tughrul Beg, who took control of the Islamic caliphate, to the settler hosts who

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<sup>29</sup> An ancient Persian word for noodles; “lakhsa” (Perry, 2006, p. 119), and the word “laksa” still means “noodle” in many Southeast Asian countries.

<sup>30</sup> A mildly domed grill that has still been used in Turkic and some Balkan countries.

<sup>31</sup> The Central Asian version of “samosa”, “Samsa”, is a baked bun stuffed with meat or sometimes vegetables and later entered the cuisines of the Indian subcontinent as “Samosa”, a fried dish. However, while similar in origin, dumplings and their variants such as Turkic “manty”, Korean “mandu” or Chinese “Jiaozi” are boiled dumplings, and considerably different than versions of Samsa/Samosa.

<sup>32</sup> However, it should also be noted that the archaeological findings of the first examples of noodle-like dishes dating back 4000 years point to this region as the origin (Fu, 2008, p. 889; Ma, 2016, p. 209), and “Noodles did not appear in the Western world until they were invented, apparently independently, by the Greeks. This occurred in the later ancient period, probably around 400 CE.” (Buell et al., 2020, p. 185)

welcomed him in the conquered territories, noodles had long been established in the Turkic diet, and these noodle dishes soon would become a part of the culinary culture throughout East Asia and the Middle East with their Turkic names. For instance, historical texts such as *Jujia Biyong Shilei* (JBS)<sup>33</sup> and *Yinshan Zhengyao* (YSZY)<sup>34</sup> from China and the Arabic cookbook of *Kitab al-Tibakha* of the 15<sup>th</sup> century refer to different noodle dishes of Turkic origin, indicating that some of the grain-based Turkic foods, over time, started to become popular in the west as they were in the east (Buell et al., 2020, p. 215) too, and Turkic versions of these forms began to spread across the entire Eurasian continent as Turkic peoples founded new states to the west and south, only this time by combining the characteristics of their ancient nomadic culture with those of the new sedentary way of life, which they were adapting to at a timid pace.

Along with the gradual sedentarization of the Turkic Uyghur people, some of whom had started to live in the ancient oases after the collapse of the First Turkic Khaganate, the knowledge of advanced agriculture started to spread among the Turkic peoples since they acted as cultural intermediaries among the settled and nomadic entities (Perry, 2006, p. 119).

Islamization was another important element, and after the Battle of Talas, the pace of Islamization and the ability of Muslim soldiers, merchants and clerics to infiltrate Central Asia increased as well. The conversion of Turkic peoples to Islam in crowded groups began in the 10th century, but Islam did not mean mass and definitive settlement for them, and nomadism in its various forms has continued to exist so far (Kavas et al., 2015). However, the Karakhanids

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<sup>33</sup> *Jujia biyong shilei quanji* 居家必用事類全集 is domestic-use encyclopedia focusing on different aspects of daily life. It was compiled by an unknown person during the Yuan period (A.D. 1279-1368) in Chinese History. <http://www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Science/jujiabiyongshileiquanji.html>

<sup>34</sup> *Yinshan Zhengyao* 飲膳正要 “Correct preparation and application of delicious broth,” is a book on medical diet written in the Yuan period (A.D. 1279-1368) by “the Palace Physician for Diet,” an office created in the Yuan Era in Chinese History. <http://www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Science/yinshanzhengyao.html>



(840-1012 AD) established one of the first Turco-Muslim steppe polities in history, and according to the notes of the Arab historian Ibn al-Athir, 200,000 tents of the Turks converted to Islam during their reign in A.D. 960 (Golden, 2001, p. 70).

The 10th century was to be a period of momentous events not only for those in the steppes but also for those in the East. The year 960, when Ibn al-Athir says that the Karakhanid Turks converted to Islam in hundreds of thousands of tents, also corresponds to a significant event in Chinese history, the beginning of the Song period. After the fall of the Tang Empire at the beginning of the 10th century, a substantial reunification of China was possible in the second half of the 10th century, during the Song dynasty. Song China began as a period favourable to personal freedoms and an open society, but changing circumstances gradually affected the entire system. “Women reached what was apparently the highest status they held in imperial China’s history.” However, the “Barbarian” incursions, which gradually weakened the empire, and neo-Confucianism, with its conservative interpretations that had risen in response to the political decline, would eventually close China even further (Anderson, 2014, p.175). Such a culturally, economically, and politically open China to Central Asia in particular, and to the outside world in general, would be out of the question, with some periodic exceptions until the reforms of Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping in 1978 (Brodsgaard, 1987; Dillon, 2015).

Therefore, the end of the first millennium is a critical historical juncture for both Turkic and Chinese peoples. As a new Chinese world, with more limited ties to Central Asian culture, takes shape, Turkic peoples would increasingly populate the Near East, entering a period of conquests that blends the qualities they had acquired over the last five centuries with the Muslim identity they had been adopting through Iranian cultural sphere (Frye, 2006; Golden, 2016).

The next parts of this chapter will directly look at the gastronomic culture of the Turkic peoples, who had emerged in a time and region of cultural fluidity, reciprocal trade and endless struggle for survival before they themselves gradually started to settle down. However, it will exclusively look at their cereal comestibles and will try to process the data within their limited recorded lexical heritage to detect whether these types of food have had a substantial place in their gastronomical culture and whether the imprints of such a culinary culture can be traced back in time and over space parallel to their historical journey from East to West and past to present.

b. Turkic Lexical Heritage I – The Compendium of Mahmud Kashgari:

Barely a century after the Karakhanid Turks, who established their Khaganate in a region around the borders of modern Northwest China, had converted to Islam in 960, the leader of Seljuk Turks, Tughrul Beg, in 1055, would imply that the defeated hosts in Baghdad who offered him a sweet pastry dish should make the noodles more garlicky. Tughrul Beg was a progeny of the above-mentioned gastronomically diverse world, and to understand how rich the pastry foods were in the culture he grew up in, one would have to go back to the land of the Karakhanids. Because the scholar who authored the most comprehensive and arguably the most influential work on the Turkic languages was born in Kashgar, the capital of the Karakhanids, spent his life researching the Turkic tribes scattered all over Eurasia, started to write his famous Compendium in 1072 in Baghdad to demonstrate the richness of Turkic languages for the Arab Muslim Caliphate that had become a Turkic Seljuk vassal.



**Fig. 8. Map - Karakhanid Empire (A.D. 840 – 1212).**

*Turkosfer.com/O.Gurman Collection. Retrieved and cropped 02:35, May 12, 2023*

Compendium of the Languages of Turks (Dîvânu Lugâti't-Turk) is the first lexical compilation of the Turkic languages, and it was written by Mahmud al-Kashgari [Mahmud from Kashgar (one of the major cities of Uyghur people located in Xinjiang-Uyghur Autonomous Region of modern China)] around 1072-1074 (Korkmaz, 1995) for the Caliphate in Baghdad that was under the control of Turkic Seljuk Empire. The book was written in Arabic (*The book explains the Arabic meanings of Turkish words and various sentences in a systematic way, presents the main suffixes and introduces the Turkish morphology and syntax to the target readers*) except for the Turkish examples and designed for teaching Turkish language to Arabic people. Mahmud al-Kashgari is regarded as the founder of Turcology, and even though a copy of his magnum opus, Compendium of the Languages of Turks, could be

found almost 800 hundred years after it was written, the Turkic intelligentsia had been aware of its existence and searching for it (2009, Kraubayeva, p. 6).

Compendium of the Languages of Turks may be the most significant Turkic philological text; furthermore, it is one of the first Turkic books ever written and contains precious information regarding the history of Turkic people. Besides, the Compendium includes a rough map indicating the geographical positions of the Turkic tribes of the era. Although it cannot be regarded as precise as a modern map, it provides geographical information on the Turkic peoples and includes rough drawings of China and Japan. A Compendium with an ethnographic map prepared by a man from Central Asia about a thousand years ago for being presented to the Caliphate in Baghdad with an additional map including the rough maps of China and Japan is intriguing enough; however, the Compendium provides unrivalled information about the culture of the Turkic peoples of a thousand years ago. As a time-honoured text, it provides us with substantial knowledge about the culinary culture of the Turkic peoples. As a lexical encyclopedia compiled in a dominantly non-sedentary culture except for the major cities, the pastry food examples mentioned by Mahmud Kashgari are unexpectedly rich. Thus, the examples of grain-based dishes documented by Kashgari should be identified first and then scanned across time and space, from the ancient city of Kashgar/China to modern central Anatolia, with the help of other relevant sources.



**Fig. 9. Kashgari's Map:**

The map prepared by Kashgari for his Compendium displays the regions where the Turkic peoples of his time lived. Although primitive according to contemporary mapping techniques, it is one of the earliest cartographic documents even marking the location of modern Japan (Kashgari writes the name of this island as Cabarka/Djabarqa in Arabic script - the word magnified at the top) and considering the geographical knowledge and techniques of the eleventh century, it is regarded as an advanced work providing valuable information.

*Wikimedia Commons. Retrieved 23:45, May 15, 2023.*

Although not a cookbook or a travelogue, cereals and grain-based foods occupy a considerable place in Mahmud's work, and based on Çetin's (2005) and Golden's (2015) analyses of them: Arba/Arpa<sup>35</sup>, Bugday<sup>36</sup>, Qonaq<sup>37</sup>, Suma<sup>38</sup>, Tarig<sup>39</sup>, Tutturqan<sup>40</sup>, Tügi<sup>41</sup>, Un<sup>42</sup> and Yarmash<sup>43</sup> are some of the most remarkable raw and processed types of crops. Awruzi<sup>44</sup>, Buhsı/Buxsı<sup>45</sup>, Bulgama<sup>46</sup>, Qawurmach<sup>47</sup>, Qavut<sup>48</sup>, and Talqan<sup>49</sup> are some of the important

<sup>35</sup> Barley (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 148), *Hordeum vulgare* (Kaşgarlı Mahmud, 2020, p. 62).

<sup>36</sup> Wheat or similar seeds and grains. [Urugluk Bugday, Wheat that is stored for use as seed grain. The same for any other seed or grain. (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 167).

[Bugday qavruıldı. The wheat (or other) was fried. (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: II, p. 79).

Although this word seems to be used for other seeds and grains as a generic term, in modern Turkish, just like many of the other modern Turkic variants, it specifically refers to Wheat (*Triticum*).

<sup>37</sup> *Panicum miliaceum*, white millet (Kaşgarlı Mahmut, 2020, p. 165).

<sup>38</sup> The name for "sprouted wheat" which is dried and ground, then made into gruel or bread. (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: II, p. 271).

<sup>39</sup> Wheat (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 201).

Although *Triticum* (*Triticum*) is used to mean wheat among most Turkic tribes, among the Oghuz Turks it also has similar meanings such as millet (*Panicum*), grain, seed, crop. (Kaşgarlı Mahmut, 2020, p. 856)

<sup>40</sup> Rice (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 382).

<sup>41</sup> Seeds of millet after the bran has been peeled away (in the Oghuz Turkic dialect) (Mahmud al-Kāşğarî, 1982-85: II, p. 269).

<sup>42</sup> Flour (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 97).

<sup>43</sup> Coarsely grounded flour (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: II, p. 169).

Although there are two meanings in the Compendium attributed to this word, "Yarma" [sharing the same root of "yar" (**yar**+mak = to+split) with Yarmash] means "coarsely-split" and Yarma Buğday (wheat) is still widely used for preparing many kind of grain-based dishes in modern Türkiye.

<sup>44</sup> Mixed food, such as wheat and barley flour mixed together and baked (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 320).

<sup>45</sup> Name of a food. It is made by cooking wheat, putting it into a jar with almond kernels, and pouring over it talbina (a mixture of bran, milk and honey), then leaving it to ferment. One eats the solid part and drinks the liquid (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 97).

<sup>46</sup> Gruel that is unsweetened and unbuttered (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 365).

<sup>47</sup> Fried Wheat (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 366).

<sup>48</sup> For the dish given to confined women. It is made by mixing millet gruel with butter and sugar, then it is eaten (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: II, p. 233).

<sup>49</sup> Barley gruel (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 331).

Here the author of the Compendium records a jingle of thousand years about the food Talqan, and Old Turkic (OT), modern Turkish (MT) and English (ENG) versions of this can be written as follows:

(OT) Oglum ögüt algıl, bilgisizlik kiter,

Talqan kimning bolsa, anar bekmez katar.

(Turkish transcription of OT form: (Kaşgarlı Mahmut, 2020, p. 191)

(MT) (Oğlum öğüt alır, bilgisizlik gider)

(Talkan kimin olsa, ona pekmez katar)

(MT Translation: Emrah Yesil)

(ENG) My son, take my counsel and drive off the ignorance,

For he who has barley gruel mix it with syrup – similarly, he who has intelligence will accept advice.

(English Translation: Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 332)



grain-based food names in Compendium. Besides, as well as different kinds of bread, such as “Atmak~Etmek<sup>50</sup>, Bösgech<sup>51</sup>, Chörak<sup>52</sup>, Közman/Közmen<sup>53</sup>, Quyma<sup>54</sup>, Toqach<sup>55</sup>, Üsbäri/Üsbüri<sup>56</sup> and Yuga/Yuwqa/Yupka<sup>57</sup>”, and numerous other dish names for a noodle culture symbolized by well-known Tutmach<sup>58</sup>” (*by far the most famous noodle dish in soup representing the noodle culture in Turkic culinary heritage*) with its some variations such as Litu<sup>59</sup>, Sarmachuq<sup>60</sup>, Ügre<sup>61</sup> and Kıyma Ügre<sup>62</sup> are also included in the Compendium (Golden, 2015, pp. 118-125).

Finally, it is worth mentioning the two types of beverages made from wheat and millet and mentioned in the Compendium, as it is understood that Turkic peoples, who had a broad dairy-based beverage culture, produced and consumed grain-based beverages, too, although a

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<sup>50</sup> Bread (English Translation: Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 133)

<sup>51</sup> A flat loaf bread (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 340).

<sup>52</sup> Round Bread (Kaşgarlı Mahmut, 2020, p. 167) / Flat Bread (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 297).

<sup>53</sup> Bread baked in hot ashes (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 334).

<sup>54</sup> Name of a type of buttered bread. The dough is thinned like qata’if (a desert name in Arabic that is derived from the Arabic root *q-t-f*, meaning to pick up or to pluck), and Kashgari uses this to make an analogy) dough, then poured into a kettle of boiling butter so that it forms onto thin loaves. Afterward it is removed and sprinkled with sugar, eaten (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: II, p. 239).

<sup>55</sup> Flat-bread (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 278).

<sup>56</sup> A dish made by crumbling bread baked in ashes into butter and adding sugar (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 161).

<sup>57</sup> Folded Bread (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: II, p. 160) / Yufka (thin) Bread (Kaşgarlı Mahmut, 2020, p. 359).

<sup>58</sup> A well-known food of the Turks. (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 340)

<sup>59</sup> Noodles chilled with water, snow, or ice. Condiments are thrown in, then it is eaten as a cooling dish (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: II, p. 273).

According to Clauson (1972), it should be read as lētu and the word is suggested a derivation from Chinese; leng tao (as cited in Golden, 2015, p. 125).

<sup>60</sup> A type of Noodles. The dough is cut up into small pieces the size of chickpeas; it is fed to sick persons, in a broth (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 386).

According to Clauson (1972), the root of the name of the food, sarmachuq, is sar (**sar**+mak = to+**wrap**), and means “to wind or wrap (something) round (something,” sarma “intertwined”). (as cited in Golden, 2015, p. 125).

The verb “sar” + “ma” [*the derivational suffix creating a noun (we often see this linguistic mechanism for creating food names in Turkish) from a verb root*] = *Sarma* is now the name of another well-known food (rice mixture wrapped in grape leaves) whose method of preparation emphasizes the same action indicated by the verb “sar”.

<sup>61</sup> Noodles. It is similar to Tutmach except that it is finer (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: I, p. 150).

<sup>62</sup> Name of a type of noodles in which the dough is cut obliquely like sparrows’ tongue (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: II, p. 239).

Here the root of the word Kıyma is (**kıy** = to **mince**) added with the suffix “-ma” (Kıy+ma = *Kıyma*), and another food name is created. Kıyma generically refers to “minced meat”, but can also be used for other minced foods. Kashgari uses this word for Ügre, and it means pieces of dough that are minced as thinly as sparrows’ tongue.

limited extent. Agartgu<sup>63</sup> and Buhsum/Buxsum<sup>64</sup> are mentioned in the Compendium, and Kashgari calls them “mizr (مزر),” an Arabic name used for fermented drinks from cereals.

The Compendium, which seeks to convey to the ancient peoples of the newly conquered lands that Turkish is as beautiful a language as their languages, also presents a wealth of knowledge that Kashgari gained from his travels and research in the Turkic world. The lexical inventory recorded in Kashgari’s Compendium provides a comprehensive account of Turkic peoples’ food and drink culture from a millennium ago. It would be beyond the scope of this study to analyze all the data relating to the food cluster of interest, let alone go through the entire culinary inventory of the Compendium one by one. However, in order to better illustrate the contemporary repercussions of this heritage, it is necessary to follow the above presentation of specific foodstuffs with a closer look at the critical culinary links that will enable us to understand the food culture of the Turkic peoples more or less as a whole over a wide range of time and space.

c. Turkic Lexical Heritage II – Foods in the Compendium as Cultural Connectors:

This section focusses on the importance and continuity of the information provided a very long time ago by a Turkic philologist from Kashgar about the language and culture of a largely nomadic people group in the context of the food culture of the Anatolian Turks, who are currently the most populous Turkic-speaking people group in the world. Therefore, only those words and food names from the Compendium that demonstrate a distinct continuity in

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<sup>63</sup> A drink made from wheat flour, like beer (Mahmud Kāšgarî, 1982-85: II, p. 376).

<sup>64</sup> Millet beer (Mahmud Kāšgarî, 1982-85: I, p. 360). The ingredients of the drink are very similar to “Buxsı,” a grain-based food explained in footnote number 45, and this similiarity is emphasized in Golden (2015, p. 119) as well.



terms of their linguistic and culinary characteristics will be discussed, and their equivalents in today's Anatolia will be presented with etymological explanations and visual support.

### Arpa, Buğday and Un:

First of all, we realize that some grain-related nouns mentioned in the Compendium have entered and are widely used in Turkish, the most widely spoken Turkic language today<sup>65</sup>.

Arpa [arpa] still and exclusively means Barley in modern Turkish, which is an important ingredient for different kinds of soup and breads. Although Buğday is used in the Compendium both for wheat and for other grains and their seeds, in modern Turkish the word Buğday [buuɟdaj] is understood as wheat. The most commonly used flour in Turkey is made from wheat, and like in the Compendium, flour is still called Un [u n] in modern Turkish as well.



Fig. 10. – Buğday Unu (Wheat Flour) and Arpa Şehriye (Barley Vermicelli)

The words “Buğday,” “Un,” and “Arpa” remain as they were in the Compendium, and they mean “Wheat,” “Flour,” and “Barley” in modern Turkish. “Buğday Unu” in the first photo means “Wheat Flour,” and “Arpa Şehriye” means “Barley Vermicelli,” although these vermicelli pieces are generally made from wheat rather than barley.

*The photos were retrieved from the database of Agricultural Credit Cooperatives of Türkiye on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 21.14.  
<https://www.tarimkreditbirlik.com.tr/un-ve-makarnalar>*

<sup>65</sup> Türkiye's population in 2023 is estimated at around 85 million, and the official language is Turkish (The World Factbook).

<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/turkey-turkiye/#people-and-society>

## Qavut and Qavurmach:

Mahmud Kashgari mentions some food names a couple of times, and one of them is named “Qavut/Qagut.” It is a food made of millet, butter and sugar, and we learn that it was traditionally prepared for the woman who had just given birth to a child. Interestingly, although without any cultural reference to the postpartum period, this food, written as Kavut [kavut] in modern Turkish, is still cooked by using wheat rather than millet, and the name of it did not change in some other Turkic languages as well. Perry (2010) states that this food was included and described in various Arabic cookbooks of 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, such as *Kitab al-Wuslah ila al-Habib* (Syrian Cookbook of the 13<sup>th</sup> century) and *Al-Tuhfah al-Zakiyyah fi Lughat al-Turkiyyah* (an anonymous Arabic manuscript of the 14<sup>th</sup> century), and used in Arabic and Persian as borrowings for some similar foods.



*Fig. 11. - A bowl of Kavut/Gavut made from wheat, butter and honey.*

The photo was retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 21:38. (Source: *Van Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism*)

<https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/van/neyenir/gavut>

Nişanyan (2018) states that the word “Kavut” in modern Turkish, just like Qavut and Qavurmach in the Compendium, comes from the verb “**kavur**+mak (to+**roast/fry** in English),” but the “r” sound before the Old Turkic suffix of “+ut” is generally omitted through *crasis* (kavur+ut → kavu(r)+ut → kavuut → kavut)<sup>66</sup> (p. 427).

When the verb “**kavur**” (to **roast/fry**) takes the suffix of “-me/-ma” [a suffix that makes the verbs noun (*or sometimes adjectives*; footnote 82) and is often used in Turkic languages for generating food/dish names)] and becomes kavur+ma = *kavurma* = roasted/fried = roasting-roasted/frying-fried. Although Qavurmach in the Compendium specifically means “fried wheat,” it turns into Qavurma/Kavur+ma [kavurma] in modern Turkish, and now is used for a way of frying meat and refers to a particular form of making meat. The best way of Kavurma is thought the one fried on a pan called “Saj/Sac<sup>67</sup>”, and just as the Turkic nomads of medieval times (Perry, 2006, p. 119), this traditional portable utensil, which was noted by Kashgari in the Compendium too<sup>68</sup>, is still used and goes with the name of saç {sach/saj - [s a tʃ]}. Besides, although the cooking method implied in the Turkic verb root changes and becomes braising, but not frying, the well-known dishes Korma (Perry, 2010), p. 576) and Ghormeh (قورمه) (Perry, 2006, p. 130) are culturally modified Urdu and Persian variants of this Turkic food/food name.

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<sup>66</sup> Nişanyan also underlines that even though there are many such examples in old and new Turkic languages, in some cases, the “r” sound remains as it is.

The best example for this exemption is the word yoğurt (yoghurt). **Yoğur**+mak = to+**knead**, and in this case “r” sound stays in the derived noun Yoğurt (Yoğur+ut → Yoğurut → Yoğurt).

<sup>67</sup> See the footnote 30.

<sup>68</sup> Frying Pan (Mahmud Kāšgarî, 1982-85: II, p. 223).



Fig. 12. – Sac/Saj

Once mainly used for preparing flatbreads, Sac, a word recorded in the Compendium of Kashgari, still refers to the similar kinds of utensil used for cooking different kinds of kebabs and bready treats such as Sac Tava (1) and Sac Böreği (2).

The photos were retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May, 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 22:24.

(Sac Tava – Source: *Diyarbakır Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism*)

(Sac Böreği – Source: *Isparta Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism*)

1- <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/medya/fotograf/fotodokuman/4557>

2- <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/isparta/neyenir/etli-senget-sac-boregi>

Yuga/Yuwqa/Yupka, Atmak/Etmek, Chörak and Közman/Közmen:

It has been noted above that the word “Yuga/Yuwqa/Yupka,” defined by Kashgari as “folded bread,” elsewhere in the Compendium qualifies the word “bread” with the meaning of *thin*. This word, which is written as “Yufka” [j u f k a] in modern Turkic, now means “phyllo” or “thin sheet of dough.” According to Nişanyan (2018) too, this word meant “thin” in the ancient Turkic world and also referred to the very thinly layered bread (p. 943). The history of this word can even be traced back to earlier times, and we first encounter this word in the Turkic Inscriptions of the 8<sup>th</sup> century (the one called Tonyukuk Inscriptions). Today, Yufka is used in the preparation of many pastry foods and in Turkey, shops that sell only daily-made Yufka are called Yufkacı.



Fig. 13. – Yufka (Phyllo Dough) and Yufkacı (Phyllo Dough Store)

1. Kuru Yufka (Dry Phyllo Dough) can be stored for a long time and consumed after soaking.

The photo was retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 23.24.

(Source: Ordu Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism)

<https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/ordu/neyenir/kuru-yufka>

2. Yufka (dough), used in preparing many pastry foods prepared at home, is still prepared and sold daily in special Phyllo Dough Stores (Yufkacı) in Turkey.

(Photos 2 and 3 are from the author's personal collection)

Two of the most famous pastry dishes made with Yufka sheets are Börek [b ø r e k] (Borek, Burek, Burak, Brik, Braka, Piirakka or Pirog in other languages, and not recorded in the Compendium) and Chörak of the Compendium {only this word is written as Çörek in modern Turkish [tʃ ø r e k]}. “Börek<sup>69</sup>” is the name of a kind of pastry that can be made with different ingredients, and even in the first recipes, the different variations of it were mentioned. In fact, we do not find the word “Börek” in the Compendium; however, Nişanyan (2018) notes that the word first appeared in 1312 (p. 111) in a book written by an Arabic linguist about the language of the Turkic dynasty that established a state around the territories of modern Egypt and Syria<sup>70</sup>.

<sup>69</sup> According to Tietze (2002); this word may have been formed by the combination of the root of the verb **bur**+mak and **bür**+mek (to **twist**, to **roll**) and the suffix -(ı)k, which generates a nomen concretum in Turkish (p. 381).

<sup>70</sup> This word is not presented in the Compendium but later enters into the Turkic culinary vocabulary, and very similar words, both phonetically and semantically, can be detected in numerous languages.

Nişanyan (2018, p. 111) states that this word was recorded for the first time in an Arabic book (Kitab al-‘Idrak li’Lisan al-‘Atrak – Book on Understanding the Language of Turks) written in A.D. 1312 by Abu Hayyan al’Andalusi (A.D. 1286 – 1344). The book of Abu Hayyan was written based on the Turkic Kipchak language used in The Mamluk Sultanate (A.D. 1250-1517), a state dominated over modern territories of Syria and Egypt, and founded by the Kipchak Turks, some of whom had initially served as captured soldiers or legionnaires in the Arabic countries of the region (Petry, 2022), but who eventually had seized power. The ruling class of this state, which the Ottoman Turks overthrew, spoke, especially in the early period, an older form of the Kipchak languages, also referred to as Northwest Turkic



According to Buell (2000) too, there are recipes for several kinds of “Börek” in the “Yinshan Zhengyao<sup>71</sup>”, a book on medical diet written in Yuan China (1279-1368) in 1330, and one of them is called “Pirak<sup>72</sup>”. As a result, this food name, which has different explanations for its etymological origin and phonetic and gastronomic affinities with the “Çörek” in the Compendium, appears at roughly the same time, around the 14th century, in the texts referring to the Turkic cuisine, both in the East (Turkic Mamluk Sultanate - around the modern Egypt/Syria) and in the West (Mongolian Yuan Dynasty - around modern China). It should also be noted that “Börek,” with its many variations, is the generic name for one of the most widespread categories of pastry food in modern Turkey.

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languages. Thus, their language was related to the language of Codex Cumanicus, the lexical compilation collected by the Italian and German missionaries of the Franciscan Order to understand the Cuman-Kipchak speakers of Northwest Central Asia (Salan, 2013).

<sup>71</sup> Yinshan Zhengyao 飲膳正要 (see, footnote 34). According to Buell (2000, p.215), during the Yuan Era (A.D. 1279-1368), when a Mongolian Dynasty was in power, “a Turkic-influenced Mongol-era cuisine of China is well described” both in the Yinshan Zhengyao 飲膳正要, and Jujia biyong shilei quanji 居家必用事類全集 (see, footnote 33).

<sup>72</sup> Buell (2000) states that “The word (*pirak*) may ultimately be from Chuvash (*one of the most distinctive Turkic languages and it is spoken in the Chuvash Republic in the west of the Russian Federation*), or their ancestors who gave the same word to the early Slavs, among whom it appeared as *pirog*.”

Buell (2000) also states that “Other examples of Turkic foods in the YSCY (*Yinshan ZhengYao*) include several kinds of börek” [b ø r e k], and one of them is called “Pirak” (p. 211).

Finally, Şemsettin Sami, in his dictionary of 1901, defines a dish called “pirog” as “a food made of dough with a little cheese in it” and likens it to “börek of Tatars without minced meat and yogurt.” Considering that the Tatars, just like the Cuvash people mentioned above, is one of the Turkic peoples who have had the most contact with the Russians throughout history, the statement that “pirog” resembles “börek” of the Tatars suggests that the connection between these words and the type of food they refer to might be more than a coincidence.

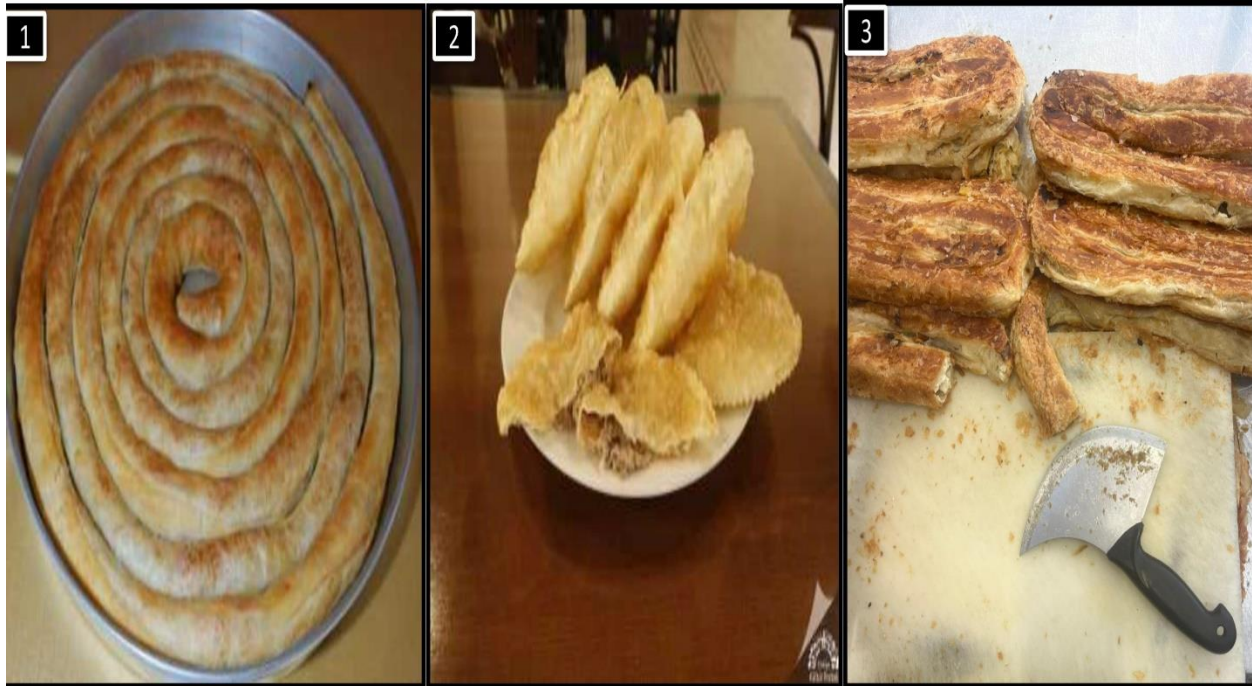


Fig. 14. - Different types of Börek from Türkiye

1. “Dolamber Böreği” - The photo was retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 21:13.

(Source: *Kütahya Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism*)

<https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/kutahya/neyenir/dolamber-boreg>

2. “Çibörek” - The photo was retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 21:17.

(Source: *Eskişehir Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism*)

<https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/eskisehir/neyenir/ciborek>

3. “Kol Böreği”

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(Photos 3 is from the author's personal collection)

In Turkish, “bread” is called “Ekmek” [e k m e k], and the earliest form of this word is “Atmak~Etmek” in the Compendium. “Ekmek” is by far the most-consumed food in Türkiye, and although there are hundreds of different kinds of it, it generically refers to a particular one consumed almost in every home in Türkiye. Traditionally, most dishes in Turkish kitchens are consumed with it; thus, the per capita bread consumption in Türkiye is also very high. According to Eglite and Kunkulberga (2017), Türkiye was reported to have the highest bread consumption per capita per year among European countries (p. 178).

According to the Compendium, “Közman/Közmen” is a type of bread baked in hot ashes, and the name of a very famous type of flatbread in Türkiye is also constructed with the same root of the verb indicating a specific method of baking, grilling on the embers. “Gözleme” [g ø z l e m e] is a Turkish flatbread filled with cheese, minced meat, spinach, or processed meats such as “pastırma”<sup>73</sup> [p a s t ı r m a], and the traditional Turkic cooking utensil we first encountered in the Compendium, “saç” [s a t ʃ], is still used for cooking “Gözleme.”

Just like “Közman/Közmen” bread in the Compendium, modern “Gözleme” too includes the noun, köz<sup>74</sup> (ember), and with the inclusion of the derivational suffix of “-la/-le” that can generate a verb from a noun [köz (= **ember**)+le = *közle* ≡ *grill on embers*], a new verb is constructed. The new verb közle (≡ grill on embers) takes the derivational suffix of “-ma/-me” and once again turns into a name, the name of a specific food, by the already-familiarized

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<sup>73</sup> In the word *Pastırma* too, a verb and the suffix of “-ma” creates another food name by referring to the primary method of preparation of it. {the verb “Bastır” [bastır+mak = to (physically) **compress**/to **press**] + “-ma” [the derivational suffix creating a noun that is often used for generating food names in many Turkic languages] = Bastırma, and this eventually becomes **Pastırma** = press-dried meat.

According to Nişanyan (2018), one of the plausible etymological origins for the word Pastrami is the Turkish word *Pastırma*, which first appeared in a written text called *Danismendname* in 1360 (p. 660).

Işın (2020) also mentions *Pastırma* when enumerating the types of foods that have crossed the borders of the Ottoman Empire and left their mark in other languages, and then refers to an etymological work relating it explicitly to the word Pastrami in American English (p. 50).

Considering that the Yiddish word *Pastrami* is thought to have been borrowed from Romanian *Pastrama* (a region that had been a part of the Ottoman Empire around 400 years (Nişanyan, 2018), it seems probable that the word was brought to the new world by the migration from Eastern Europe to the United States of America.

According to *The Barnhart Concise Dictionary of Etymology* (1995) “**pastrami** n. 1940, borrowed from Yiddish *pastrame*, from Rumanian *pastrama*, possibly from modern Greek *pastono* I salt, from Classical Greek *pastos* sprinkled with salt, salted, from *passein* to sprinkle; or the Rumanian word came from dialectal Turkish *pastırma*, variant of *basdırma* dried meat. The English spelling in -mi was probably influenced by *salami*.” (p. 545)

According to the renowned Turkologist Andreas Tietze (2002): Given its formation from the Turkish verb “-bastır” and its various usages, the Greek version should be borrowed from Turkish, too (p. 285).

Although it is not known for sure whether it was true or not, in quite a few of the sources written about them (Işın, 2021, pp. 98-99), the nomadic warriors have been said to have fed on dried meat pressed under the saddles of their horses (Marcellinus, 1986, pp. 25-26), and this is a well-known story about *Pastırma* in contemporary Türkiye as well.

<sup>74</sup> Burning wood charcoal (Mahmud Kâşgarî, 1982-85: I, p. 267).



linguistic mechanism that was mentioned in numerous examples [**közle**+**me** (**grill** on embers) + **me**) = Közleme → **Gözleme**<sup>75</sup> (the one grilling/grilled on embers).

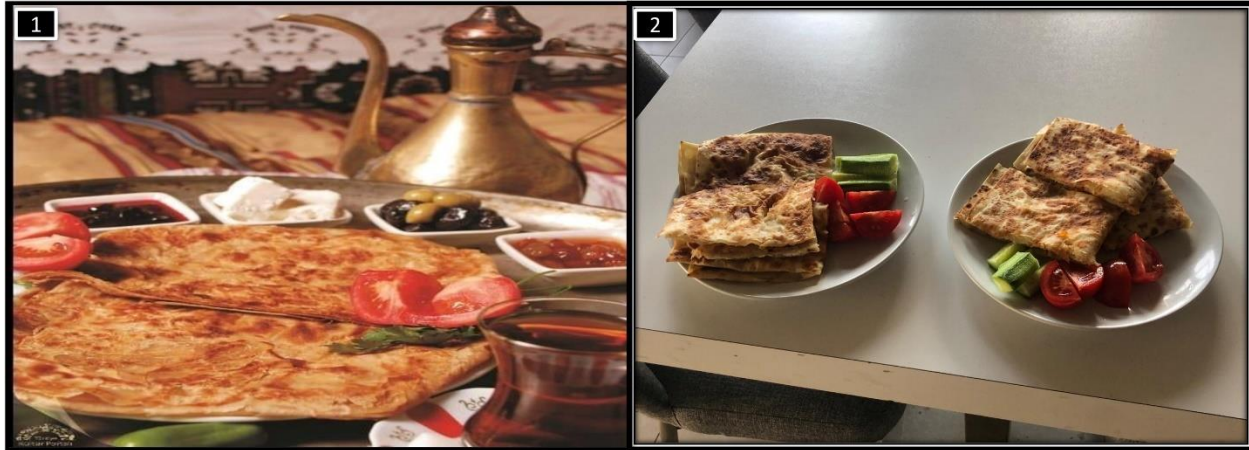


Fig. 15. - Gözleme plates from Türkiye

- |                                     |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. "Gözleme prepared for breakfast" | - | The photo was directly retrieved from the archive of the <i>Culture Portal</i> of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2023, at 13:09.<br><br><a href="https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/medya/fotograf/fotodokuman/6300">https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/medya/fotograf/fotodokuman/6300</a> |
| 2. "Gözleme serviced as a snack"    | - | (Photo 2 is from the author's personal collection)   |

### Tutmach and the Noodle Culture:

Tutmach may have been considered the most important dish for all the Turkic peoples when Kashgari lived and wrote his Compendium. The dish was so famous that although Kashgari mentioned it in numerous places in his book, he still did not consider it necessary to define it further (Tryjarski, 1993, as cited in Golden, 2015, p.124). However, when they are put together, all the information in different parts of the Compendium provides a great deal of knowledge about the importance of the Tutmach culture for the Turkic peoples of a millennium ago.

<sup>75</sup> Nişanyan (2018) notes that it is difficult to determine when this initial consonant change from “k” to “g” occurred since the distinction between “köz/göz” is not always specified in the Ottoman scripts (p. 296), and states that the history of Gözleme can be traced back to A.D. 1477 (p. 296).

Mahmud Kashgari provided detailed information about this food and tried to explain its etymology with a religious story mentioning the surah and verses from Quran. It is apparent that Mahmud Kashgari gave particular attention to the food called Tutmach, and he did not only mention it on different occasions, but he also explained the origin of its name with a religious story. Although his explanation of the name of Tutmach can be regarded as a hagiographic account, rather than being a thorough grammatical or etymological explanation, it is still a very thought-provoking historical statement.

Tutmach is still cooked in modern Türkiye, and it seems to have been able to keep its original name for such a long span of time. It is written as Tutmaç in modern Turkish [t u t m a t̃]. According to Mahmud Kashgari (1982-1985):

A well-known food of the Turks. It is one of the provisions of Du-l-Qarnayn<sup>76</sup> [remaining] among them. Thus: When Du-l-Qarnayn emerged from the lands of darkness the people's food supply was short and they complained to him of hunger, saying: BIZ-NIY TUT'M' AJ bizni tutma ac meaning "Don't keep us (here) hungry"....He consulted with the wise men about this, and they came up with this food. It strengthens the body and reddens the cheeks, and is not quickly digested. When the Turks saw this, they called

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<sup>76</sup> "Dhu al-Qarnayn, (Arabic: ذُو الْقَرْنَيْنِ - Zülkarneyn: Turkish): 'He of the Two Horns'), also spelled Zu al-Qarnayn, appears in the Quran, Surah Al-Kahf (18), Ayahs 83-101 as one who travels to east and west and erects a wall between mankind and Gog and Magog (called Ya'juj and Ma'juj)". [Dhul Qarnayn | Al-Islam.org](http://DhulQarnayn.org)  
Although there is no consensus among Muslim scholars about the identity of Dhu al-Qarnayn, many believe that this name in Quran might refer to Alexander the Great due to his military campaigns between east and west, the famous two-horned helmet he had and the wall built by him [the legendary wall (Gates of Alexander or Caspian Gates) built by him in the Caucasus (it is thought to have built in the front line between Derbend/Russia and Georgia) to keep the uncivilized barbarians of the north (probably nomadic peoples of North Eurasia, but typically associated with Gog and Magog in the literature) from invading the southern territories].

it: TUT'M'J, tutma ac meaning “Don’t leave hungry.” The two alifs were dropped for lightness. The sense is, “Don’t leave yourself hungry, but take this food and eat it.”<sup>77</sup>

All in all, his explanation of Kashgari about Tutmaç is based on wordplay, and he states that “tutma aç” [tut-mak (to keep) is the infinitive form of the verb “tut” (keep, hold, grip) and in Turkish, only verbs bear imperative meaning, and they become negative when the negation suffix “-ma/-me”<sup>78</sup> is added to them. Thus, “tut” means (keep, hold, grip) and “tutma” means (do not keep, do not hold, do not grip) and “[{bizi (us)] tutma (do not keep) aç (hungry)] / (bizi) tutma aç simply means “do not keep (us) hungry.” Then, with some extra simplification (omitting the extra vowel, Roman A, Arabic Elif), Mahmud Kasghari reaches the last form of the word, which is Tutma + aç → Tutmaç.



Fig. 16. – Modern versions of Tutmaç prepared by using different ingredients such as “green lentils (1)” or “strained yogurt (2)”: Tutmaç and Tutmaç Çorbasi (Tutmaç Soup)

- |                                   |   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. “Tutmaç”                       | - | The photo was retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2023, at 13:43.<br>(Tutmaç – Source: Ankara Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism)          |
| 2. “Tutmaç Çorbasi (Tutmaç Soup)” | - | The photo was retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2023, at 13:44.<br>(Tutmaç Çorbasi – Source: Kütahya Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism) |

1- <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/ankara/neyenir/tutmac950711>

2- <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/kutahya/neyenir/tutmac-corbasi887692>

<sup>77</sup> The English translation of Tutmaç is excerpted from: “Mahmud Kāšgarî, 1982-85: I, p. 340.”

<sup>78</sup> These negation suffixes of “-me/-ma” in Turkish, only in appearance, are similar to the derivational “-ma/-me” suffixes that generate nouns (especially nouns for food names and even adjectives on different occasions) and it is shown how often they are used to generate food names; see the footnotes 43, 46, 47, 60, 82.

Considering the fact that Mahmud Kashgari lived in the first Turkic Khanate that officially proclaimed itself as a Muslim state<sup>79</sup> (Biran, 2001), it is not unexpected for such an intellectual from a noble family to be a religious person. Thus, Kashgari tries to refer to Quran or to other religious stories in the Compendium as much as possible, and his story about Tutmaç is one of them. However, I believe that such a hagiographic story, although it seems to be liked very much by the readers and the scholars who studied Kashgari and his works, is not telling much about the etymological qualities of the name of this dish.

In fact, the word “Tutmaç” seems to be one of the earlier examples of the Turkic dish names generated with the Turco/Persian suffix “+aç” (Turco-Persian suffix of ‘+aç’ that generates food names was derived from the word ‘aş’ meaning ‘boiled dish’ in both languages). For instance; according to Ercilasun (2012) and Nişanyan (2018), too, many Turkish food names contain the suffix “+aç,” and it seems that “Tutmaç,” presented in the Compendium, is one of the earliest examples<sup>80</sup>. We also understand from the explanations in different sections of his Compendium, as a dish made with thick pasta pieces, “Tutmaç” was not eaten with a spoon, but rather with a type of fork called “Shish<sup>81</sup> {which is written as Şiş [ʃɪʃ] in modern Turkish}” (Genç, 1982). And as the verb “tut-mak” means “to-keep, to-hold, to-grip” in Turkish: thus, rather than the religious story used by Kashgari for introducing this ancient Turkish food, the

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<sup>79</sup> Karakhanid Khanate (840-1212).

<sup>80</sup> According to Ercilasun (2012); the fact that the suffix “-maç/meç,” which has generally been regarded as a single suffix to generate nouns from verbs in Turkic, should also be considered together within the composition of “-me/-ma” + “aş,” particularly in food names. Thus, Ercilasun (2012) too, explains the word Tutmaç with this mechanism and elaborates on the subject with even a richer set of examples by analyzing the names of the foods/dishes still consumed.

Although “-meç/-maç” functions as an independent suffix in some other contexts {such as the noun “yirtmaç” [slit(n)] from the verb “yirt” = **yirt** (to **slit**/to slide/to tear) + *maç* = “**Yirtmaç**” = “**Slit** (noun)” (of a skirt)}, the statement above suggests that the linguistic mechanism that manifests itself in the creation of food names seems to be different and the addition of the suffix “aş” in such examples might be more explanatory.

<sup>81</sup> “The skewer with which Tutmach is eaten” (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: II, p. 10)” and “The meat was arranged on the skewer (or other)” (Mahmud Kāşğarî, 1982-85: II, p. 103).

etymological clues and historical information in the Compendium indicates that “Tutmaç” may mean “the food for gripping/holding or the food gripped/held [with a fork (şış)]<sup>82</sup>”.

Besides the Şış, which is still widely used in modern Turkish for naming the long and thin rods made of iron or wood as a skewer or even as a weapon or a tool for knitting<sup>83</sup>, Kashgari also mentions another word that seems to have also been essential for the Tutmaç culture, and it is called Chop<sup>84</sup> [tʃœp] in the Compendium. This word is used for the pieces of dough in the Tutmaç, and one is expected to eat all the pieces in Tutmaç by using Şış just as Kasghari described in the Compendium. Taking this into account, in line with the alternative approach to the etymological origin of Tutmaç presented above, it could be argued that the word Tutma aş → Tutmaaş → Tutmaş → Tutmaç may mean “**the dish** (aş; boiled dish) to be **held/gripped** (The Turkic/Turkish equivalent is ‘Tut’) by hand, but probaly with a **skewer** just like the Şış.”

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<sup>82</sup> “**Tut** (grip/hold)” + “-*me/-ma* [as a derivational suffix that can generate nouns (food/dish names in many cases; see the footnotes 43, 46, 47, 60, 78), when added to a verb, it can also generate a type of adjective referring to the characteristic of the verb it is derived from (not as a suffix negating the imperative form).

For example ‘Yap’ means “make/do,” and “Yap+ma = Yapma” means “do not make/do not do” in Turkish (here “-me/-ma” is a suffix negating the imperative form of the verb; thus, only verb root indicates the positive imperative mode for the second-person singular in Turkish).

However, if a noun is added after this structure, “Yap+ma çiçek [flower (n)]” means “Made (handmade) flower (not a natural one), so we understand that “yapma” is not a negative imperative, but a word functioning like an adjective”. In this meaning, the suffix of “-me/-ma” in the example of “*Made* (handmade) *flower* (not a natural one)/ “*Yapma çiçek*” is very similar to the derivational suffix of “-me/-ma” creating a noun that is often used for generating food names.

Similarly, in the case of the verb “tut”, meaning “grip/hold’ in the example of **TUTMAÇ**:

**Tutma** + **aç** (as a Turko-Persian suffix derived from the word aş (boiled dish) and generating food names when is added to certain words; not as a word which also means “**hungry**” in Turkish) = **Tutma aş** → **Tutmaaş** → **Tutmaş**, and finally the last “ş (sh)” turns to “ç (ch),” [this phonetic change often happens in Turkish for the food names generated by the suffix of “**aç**” such as “Gülleş (the desert/dish with rose) becomes Gülleç” and “Sütlaş (the desert/dish with milk/milky dessert-dish) becomes Sütlaç”] and finally becomes Tutmaç {The dish for holding/gripping [with a fork (şış)]} or {The dish held/gripped [with a fork (şış)]} = **Tutma aş** → **Tutmaaş** → **Tutmaş** → **Tutmaç** → **TUTMAÇ**.

Thus, Tutmaç might be one of the early examples of the food names generated via this linguistic mechanism.

<sup>83</sup> “A long, thin rod made of iron or wood, pointed at one end, sometimes used as a weapon,” “Meat cooked on this stick or skewer,” and “Long rod made of metal, wood, bone, etc. used for knitting.” (<https://sozluk.gov.tr/> - Online Turkish Dictionary of The Turkish Language Association)

<sup>84</sup> The “dregs” of anything, or what is squeezed out.”

Tutmach chopi (here “i” is only a suffix used in different Genitive Construction types in Turkic languages, thus is not affecting the meaning of the word itself): The word for any “piece of noodle or macaroni dough.” (Mahmud Kāşgarî, 1982-85: II, p. 208)

Although this alternative approach to the famous noodle dish of Tutmaç is not as intriguing and exciting as the story told by Mahmud Kashgari, it may still be useful for further interpretations of the Tutmaç culture.

Considering the fact that other food names would be formed over time by combining different words with the suffix “aş,” the idea that Tutmaç may have been one of the first examples of these may provide new insight into the etymological origin of its name. Besides, contrary to its modern look (a very thick soup with little pieces of dough and different spices), the old Tutmaç consumed during the time of Kashgari might have looked more like a noodle dish eaten with special sticks called Şiş, which may have been used like chopsticks as well<sup>85</sup>. Considering that even the Xiongnu, who ruled the first nomadic steppe empire more than a millennium before the Kashgari, used chopsticks (Bentley, 1993, p. 38) as well, with such an alternative approach to Tutmaç culture, it becomes probable that the Tutmaç tradition, a Turkic reflection of noodle culture<sup>86</sup>, might also have similar features like using chopsticks.

As noted above, this rich pastry culture, as presented in Mahmud Kashgari’s unique work, became even more colourful as Turkic peoples spread out and interacted with new cultures, and the gradual sedentarization process made it easier for their culinary culture to influence the other alimentary traditions. Thus, from the 13th century onwards, new Turkic variations of bread and noodles appeared in many regions of Inner Asia, from Syria to China

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<sup>85</sup> There is evidence of the use of chopsticks among some Uighurs, and it is thought that they kept them in a case attached to their belt (Gabain, 1973; as cited in Golden, 1994, p. 74).

<sup>86</sup> Tutmaç tradition can be regarded as a Turkic noodle culture presented in the Compendium (Golden, 2015, pp. 123-126), and not only the related foods/dishes such as *Litu* [(see the footnote 59) noodles: the cold noodle soup in Tutmaç tradition], *Sarmachuk* [(see the footnote 60) noodles: little pieces of dough in a broth and sick people are served this dish], and *Ügre* [(see the footnotes 61 and 62) noodles: thinner version of Tutmaç noodles], but also the tools and terms such as Şiş, *Çöp* (a single piece of noodle) or *Qatıq* [related to the Turkic verb **kat**+mak = to **add**, and *Qatıq* (*Katık* [k a t ı k] in modern Turkish) means a flavoring added to Tutmaç such as yoghurt] seem to be connected under the umbrella of this tradition.



(Perry, 2010). Particularly during the Ottoman era, the Turkic culinary culture, which had been continuously enriched by the gradual migratory movements of almost 800 years, was articulated with the cultures of almost all the Middle Eastern, Balkan, and Caucasian countries; thus, this process led to the birth of an imperial cuisine so rich that it shaped the culinary culture of the Middle East, Balkans and Caucasia as it is now understood (Işın, 2020).

#### d. Turkic Lexical Heritage After Kashgari:

There is no doubt that at the center of this work is the Compendium of Kashgari. His magnum opus, which focused on the Turkic peoples' language, culture, and history, had remained unrivalled for hundreds of years. In this final section of this chapter, although they are not as comprehensive and rich as the Compendium in terms of our fields of interest, the other lexical inventory will be scanned in search of the food and food names provided by Mahmud Kashgari. Reflections and counterparts of many of these were found and shown in terms of modern Turkish foodways. However, it is still important to scan the limited material presented in the later lexical texts to be able to mark the continuities and interruptions in the time and detect the extent to which the lexical heritage regarding the Turkic peoples' food culture in the time of Kashgari was reflected in these works.

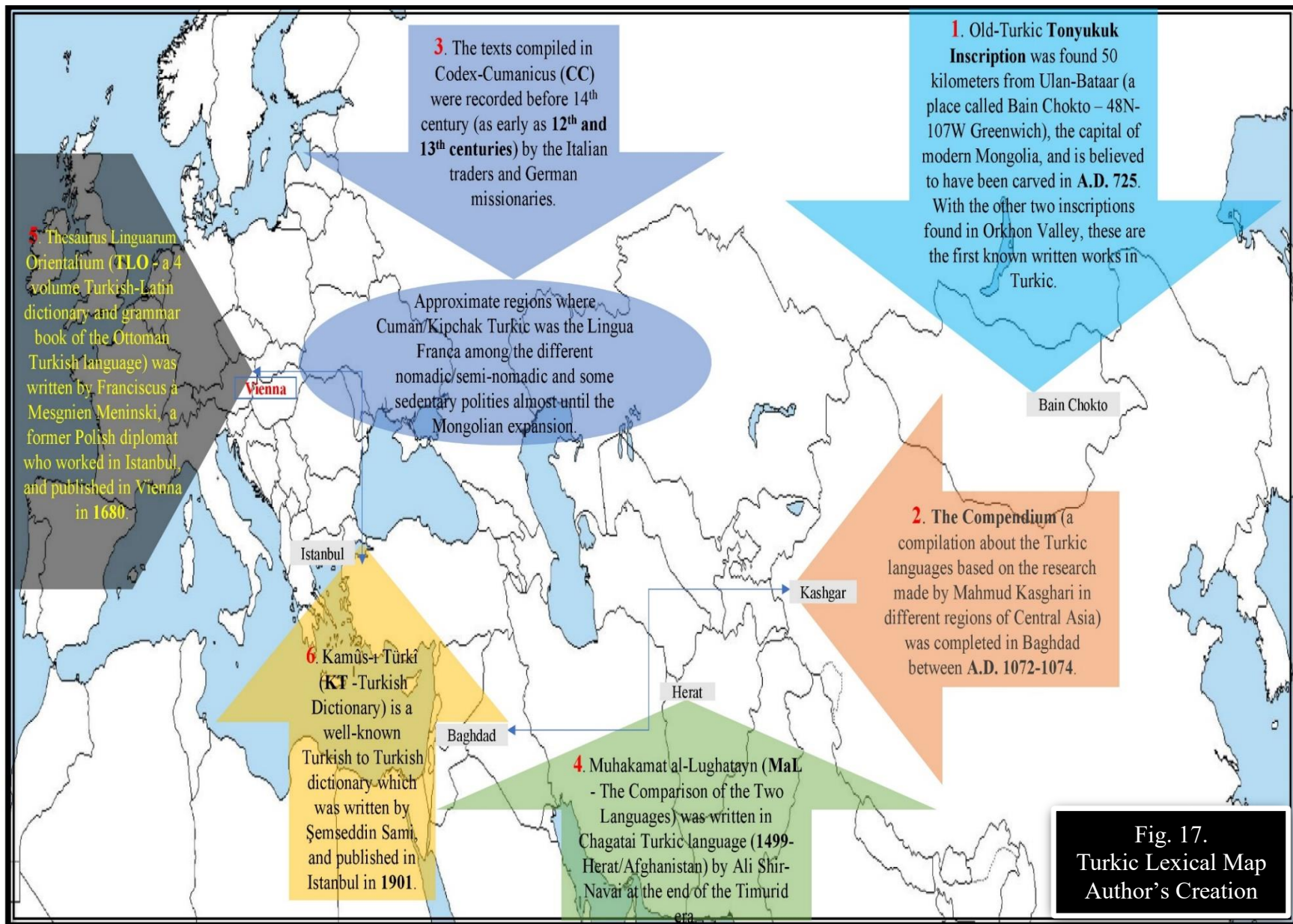


Fig. 17.  
Turkic Lexical Map  
Author's Creation



The Codex Cumanicus (CC) is one of the first linguistic works that can be examined based on the culinary culture presented in the Compendium. CC is a linguistic manual/multilingual glossary designed to help merchants and missionaries interact with Kipchak speakers (Salan, 2013) of Northwest Central Asia (a vast territory that can be described as roughly stretching from the Crimean Peninsula to the Balkash Lake in modern Kazakhstan). As a lexical corpus collected by the Italian traders and German Missionaries of the Franciscan Order, it has been written as a compilation of these step peoples' common language for numerous practical reasons such as improving the trade. This textual feature makes it even more relevant in this research since it is instrumental in transmitting the everyday repertoire of this language, although native speakers did not compile it. According to Golden (1992):

The Codex may be divided into two distinct and independent parts: I) a practical handbook of the Cuman language with glossaries in Italo-Latin, Persian and Cuman II) a mixed collection of religious texts, linguistic data and folkloric materials (the Cuman Riddles), stemming from a number of hands, with translations into Latin and a dialect of Eastern Middle High German (p. 34).

This compilation, which has a special status as the first book printed in Latin script among the Turkic languages and presents the relevant Turkic language from the perspective of different compilers, represents Kipchak Turkic as a Western Turkic language that had the opportunity to develop independently from the influences of Eastern Turkic (Salan, 2013, p. 229).

Although CC provides essential information about the Kipchak-Cuman Turkic language spoken around the Pontic-Caspian steppe, it does not sufficiently reflect the food culture of the speakers of this language due to its particular focus on the terms related to trade and religion.

Still, an examination of the texts that comprise the CC reveals that grain types such as Arpa (Barley), Bugday (Wheat), Tutturqan (Rice), Tüvi<sup>87</sup> (Millet) and Un (Flour), first described in detail in Kashgari, were also found in this Turkic dialect spoken about two centuries later<sup>88</sup>. Thus, the geographical map marking the lexical corpus on which this study is focused reveals that the perimeter of the triangle from where the writer of the Compendium was born, Kasghar, to Baghdad (where the Compendium was presented to Arabic Caliphate that had become a vassal of the Empire of Tugrul Beg) and through the Pontic steppes where these words were still used is about 10,000 kilometres long.

“Muhakemetü al-Lugateyn (MaL)” is a linguistic study comparing the features of the Persian and Chagatai Turkic<sup>89</sup> languages of the Timurid Empire (around 1500). This book was written in Herat (a city located in modern Afghanistan) by Ali Shir-Navai (A.D. 1441-1501), who is considered one of the most distinguished figures in terms of the history of Turkic literature, and he discusses his ideas about the superiority of Turkish over Persian in this book (Bulut, 2017). Although his argumentation and his examples are open to discussion, in MaL, there is a section where some of the important dishes are briefly mentioned.

Of the grain-based foods that were recorded by Kashgari and mentioned in this study, a similar dish to “Bulgama” (a type of gruel that is unsweetened and unbuttered) in the Compendium is recorded as “Bulamag<sup>90</sup>” in MaL. According to the “Sanglah,” a dictionary of Chagatai Turkic written by Mirza Muhammed Mehdi around A.D. 1758 – 1760 for

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<sup>87</sup> Millet seeds (see footnote 41): Tügi [ t ø ʝ I ] in the Compendium, and Millet: Tüvi [ t y v I ] in CC.

<sup>88</sup> Argunşah & Üner, 2015, pp. 423 [Arpa (Barley)], 449 [Bugday (Wheat)], 585 [Tutturqan (Rice)], 587 [Tüvi (Millet)] and 589 [Un (Flour)].

<sup>89</sup> Chagatai Turkic is a written language used from the early 13th century to the early 20th century in Central Asia, and the author of MaL, Ali Shir-Navai, is regarded as one of the greatest representatives of this version of Turkic.

<sup>90</sup> (Özönder, 1996, pp. 98-99).

understanding the works of art and literature of Chagatai tradition (Kuyma, 2018, p. 306) and based on “Lugat-i Chagatai and Turkî-i Osmânî,” [a dictionary compiled by Sheikh Suleiman Efendi Uzbek al-Bukhari (A.D. 1821-1890) to present the cultural and linguistic connections of the Turkic languages of Chagatai and Ottoman (Kaman, 2019, p. 69)], “Bulamag” and similar words such as “Bulamac” were being used for describing a gruel dish just as in the Compendium four centuries ago (as cited in Özönder, 1996, p. 98). Also, “Quyma” (described as the “name of a type of buttered bread by Kashgari) is mentioned in MaL as a type of bread and written as “Kuymag” (Özönder, 1996, p. 101). Similarly, “Buhsun/Buxsum” (millet beer) in the Compendium can also be seen as “bahsum,” in MaL, a type of drink “made from millet” (Özönder, 1996, p. 101). Although related to Buxsum, Boza first attested in an Arabic book (Kitab al-‘Idrak li’Lisan al-‘Atrak – Book on Understanding the Language of Turks) in A.D. 1312 by Abu Hayyan al’Andalusi (A.D. 1286 – 1344) and is still consumed in modern Turkey and the Balkan countries. Navai also records this drink made by millet in MaL (Özönder, 1996, p. 101).

Finally, according to the online etymological dictionary of Turkish, Nisanyansozluk, Meninski’s Thesaurus of 1680 (the work to be reviewed after the Navai’s book) seems to be the first to include the dish “mantı” [m a n t u] Turkish dumplings<sup>91</sup>. However, it is understood that Navai noted the word “mantu” [m a n t u] in the same meaning almost two hundred years before Meninski (Özönder, 1996, p. 102).

Known in almost every country in Asia and called by phonetically similar names in many languages, the debate over the origin of this dish and its name is controversial. According to

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<sup>91</sup> “mantı” - Nişanyan Sözlük (nisanyansozluk.com) / It should also be noted that compared to the larger versions in other Turkic countries, Turkish dumplings are prepared smaller and served with melted butter, garlic-yogurt sauce and various spices..

Anderson (2014), an expert on the history of Chinese and Central Asian food/foodways, the word is “almost certainly Turkic....The wheat-dough-wrapped filled dumpling came to China from Central Asia; it may have been invented there of in the Near East” (p. 164). Buell and Anderson (2010) state that the word “Mamata<sup>92</sup>” was defined by Kashgari as “dough smeared on fat chicken or meat so that the fat will not run out when the meat is roasted<sup>93</sup>” and add that “If Uighur manta (mantu/manti) does derive from Mahmud’s mamata (mamata>mamta>manta) then what was originally a dough–wrapped fat piece of meat has become a dough–skin–wrapped steamed bun with meat filling” (p. 111).

A phonetically similar word in Chinese was first recorded in the writings by the poet Shu Xi (ca. A.D. 264 - 304), and the etymology attributed to the origin of this word (barbarian heads)<sup>94</sup>, for Anderson (2014) is one of the typical examples of “Chinese fantastical folk-etymology” (p. 164). The Chinese word Mantou is now used for buns with no fillings<sup>95</sup>; however, differently named steamed buns with fillings are very popular in China and constitute an essential part of the immense culinary culture of China.

Rather than pinpointing this word’s origin and meaning, an appropriate thing to do may be to emphasize that dumplings have long been an essential part of Eurasian cuisines and are still

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<sup>92</sup> According to the theory based on a difficult-to-read word found in Kashgari’s work, the word “mamata” (if this is the correct spelling; other possibilities are yamata, tamata) could be the source of the Chinese Mantou (Chinese buns without filling now, but were filled previously) and other similar variations (Manta, Mandu, Manty) spread across Eurasia from Korea to the Balkans (Buell, 2010, pp. 110-111).

<sup>93</sup> It is understood that the word is difficult to redact (Mahmud Kāšgarī, 1982-85: I, p. 334).

<sup>94</sup> According to a popular Chinese story, the gods’ support was needed to win a war; however, this required a man to be killed and his head presented to the gods as a gift for such divine assistance. To not kill anyone, people started to wrap the mutton in large dough pieces shaped like a human head and offer the Gods these instead of human heads. Thus, this food (Mantou) is said to have originated from the homophonous Chinese characters 蠻頭, meaning “Barbarian heads” (Knechtges, 1986, p. 69).

<sup>95</sup> Over time, Mantou became a term for steamed buns with no filling, and were called “Baozi (包子)” if the dumplings were thick-skinned and “Jiaozi (餃子)” if they were thin-skinned. However, even records from the late sixteenth century show that the word Mantou was still used for dumplings with filling (Anderson, 2015, p. 164).

called phonetically similar names. Perhaps, during the periods of fusion between Central Asia and East Asia, these filled dumplings started to be popular and as still one of their most devoted consumers, nomadic peoples may have brought them almost anywhere they moved. Considering the effect of the politically and culturally Turkified Mongolian Empire as another nomadic polity connecting the far ends of Asia (Buell, 2000; Buell and Anderson, 2010), the fact that various recipes of such as dumplings and noodles started to be seen in cookbooks both in Yuan China and in the Middle East region implies such a pattern of spread too<sup>96</sup>.



Fig. 18. – Turkish Manti from the city of Kayseri (1) and Manti Packages (2) daily sold in Yufka Stores (Yufkacı = Phyllo Dough Stores)

1. “Kayseri Style Manti” – The photo was directly retrieved from the archive of the *Culture Portal* of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 14:39.  
(Source: Kayseri Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism) <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/medya/fotograf/fotodokuman/5938/manti>

2. “Daily prepared Manti Packages sold in special stores” – (Photo 2 is from the author’s personal collection)

The name of the next lexical text to be scanned in terms of the foods/food names this study is interested in is “Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium Turcicae - Arabicae - Persicae = Lexicon Turcico – Arabico – Persicum” or Thesaurus (TLO) by the famous linguist Franciscus à Mesnien Meninski (1620-1698). It is a 5-volume comprehensive dictionary presenting the

<sup>96</sup> Yinshan Zhengyao and Jujia Biyong Shilei Quanyi from China and Arabic books *Kitab al- 'Idrak li' Lisan al- 'Atrak* and *Kitab al-Tibakha* (see footnotes 34, 33, 17, 70).

Turkish lexicon in and around the Ottoman Empire of the late 17th and early 18th century.

Franciscus Meninski, a Polish orientalist and philologist of French origin who also worked as a diplomat in Istanbul, is considered one of the most prominent pioneers of the Oriental studies that began to appear in the West, and his *Thesaurus* is a rare linguistic study that also provides information on different aspects of a relatively understudied period of the Ottoman Empire (Umunc, 2015).

In this comprehensive dictionary<sup>97</sup> as well, Arpa (Barley)<sup>98</sup>, and Bugday (Wheat)<sup>99</sup>, Un (Flour)<sup>100</sup> were recorded with the same meaning given by Kashgari. “Bulgama” (a type of gruel that is unsweetened and unbuttered in the *Compendium*, and a similar dish named “Bulamag” was recorded in *MaL* too) becomes a dish Bulamach [b u t̪ a m a t̪] in *TLO*<sup>101</sup>, and this gruel is still cooked in Türkiye. Kavut {Qavut [k a v u t̪], a dish prepared by mixing millet gruel with butter and sugar in Kashgari} is explained as Keshkab<sup>102</sup> in *TLO*, and this word is used for a sort of grain gruel in Ottoman Turkish as well. In *TLO*, “Atmak/Etmek” (a specific type of bread in the *Compendium*) becomes Ekmek<sup>103</sup> [e k m e k] and starts to refer to the word “bread” in a more generic way, similar to the contemporary meaning of the word. Besides, Meninski presents the

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<sup>97</sup> *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium Turcicae - Arabicae - Persicae = Lexicon Turcico – Arabico – Persicum* (1680) consists of five volumes [Turkish-Latin dictionary (the first three volumes), the fourth volume is a Turkish Grammar book written in Latin and the fifth volume is a Latin-Turkish dictionary], was made ready for publication by M.Olmez, and in 2000, published in Istanbul with the addition of a sixth volume, a Turkish index prepared by Stanislaw Stachowski.

<sup>98</sup> (Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, 2000 : I, p. 130)

<sup>99</sup> (Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, 2000 : I, p. 851)

<sup>100</sup> (Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, 2000 : I, p. 137)

<sup>101</sup> (Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, 2000: I, p. 939)

<sup>102</sup> (Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, 2000: II, p. 3602; keshkab = كشكاب)

This Persian word is related to Keshk = كشك; which, in this context, is semantically related to “barley,” “barley soup” and will be seen in slightly different forms (Keshkes in Şemsettin Sami, 2018, p. 903 and Keshkek in the modern Türkiye) for naming the generally wheat-based gruels/dishes.

<sup>103</sup> (Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, 2000: I, p. 360)

word in its original form, as Etmek, too. Thus, two forms of the word are put together by Meninski confirms the six-decade continuity between them.

“Börek<sup>104</sup> {[b ø r e k]}”; Borek, Burek, Burak, Brik, Braka, Piirakka or Pirog in other languages } and “Çörek<sup>105</sup> [tʃ ø r e k]” is recorded in TLO with the meanings mentioned in the previous chapters, and they generically refer to the same kind of pastry. However, “Pide<sup>106</sup> [p i d e]”, at first, apparently meant a special type of bread, just as it is in modern Türkiye now. In fact, this word is also defined as “a well-known flat bread” by Şemsettin Sami (2018) at the beginning of the twentieth century as well (p. 288). However, this word now also refers to one of the most famous pastry treats in Türkiye, and this dish can be best described by comparing it to the world-famous Italian dish pizza. In addition to Börek, Çörek and Pide, which are currently some of the most popular types of pastry in Türkiye, the phyllo dough, which has been known as “Yufka” (Yuga/Yuwqa/Yupka in the Compendium) since the time of Kashgari is used in the preparation of these pastries, and also included in the TLO<sup>107</sup> with the same meaning. Also, the word used for Turkic version dumplings, “Mantı” [m a n t u] {or Mantu [m a n t u] as recorded by Navai in MaL}, is appeared in TLO<sup>108</sup> too, and described as a kind of meat pie.

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<sup>104</sup> The author exemplifies this food name by writing another pastry called “senbuse,” also known as “samsa” in Central Asia, samosa in the Indian subcontinent and “sanbusak” in the Near East (Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, 2000: I, p. 915).

<sup>105</sup> The explanation for the word suggests that it belongs to a bread category, too, similar to the descriptions found in the previous lexical materials (Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, 2000: I, p. 1675).

<sup>106</sup> The explanation for the word suggests that it is a bread food, and the writer uses words from other languages, such as pizza and focaccia, to present a better illustration (Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, 2000: I, 980).

<sup>107</sup> (Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, 2000 : III, p. 5625)

<sup>108</sup> (Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, 2000 : III, p. 4254; mantı [m a n t u] = مانطی)





Fig. 19. – Pide varieties from the cities of Türkiye: (1) Trabzon Style Pide and (2) Samsun Style Pide

1. “Trabzon Pidesi”	-	The photo was directly retrieved from the archive of the <i>Culture Portal</i> of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2023, at 15:43. <a href="https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/trabzon/neyenir/pide672555">https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/trabzon/neyenir/pide672555</a>
2. “Samsun Pidesi”	-	The photo was directly retrieved from the archive of the <i>Culture Portal</i> of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2023, at 15:47. (Source: <i>Samsun Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism</i> ) <a href="https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/samsun/neyenir/samsun-pidesi">https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/samsun/neyenir/samsun-pidesi</a>

The lexical evidence derived from different parts of TLO not only provides valuable information showing that the Tutmaç [t u t m a t̪] culture is present in the 17th century too but also paves the way for new connections related to this ancient noodle culture in Turkic culinary heritage. Meninski describes Tutmaç as a type of soup {menkyr soup/menkyr çorba [t̪ o r b a<sup>109</sup>]}, and this word<sup>110</sup> “menkyr” as recorded by Meninski seems to be the word known as “mangır”<sup>111</sup> [m a n g ə r] in modern Turkish too. Although it is written in the Ottoman Arabic alphabet without any consonant for the description of Tutmaç, it is also given with an alternative written form<sup>112</sup> in another place in TLO. This word, meaning “an Ottoman coin made of copper,”

<sup>109</sup> (Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, 2000 : I, p. 1452)

<sup>110</sup> (menkyr = منقر)

<sup>111</sup> “a vulgar word used for money in modern Turkish.”

<sup>112</sup> (Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, 2000 : III, p. 4979; mankur [m a n k u r] = منقور)



will also be noted by Şemsettin Sami around two hundred years later in his dictionary named “Kamûs-i Türkî.” Thus, the description of Meninski about Tutmaç makes one think of a soup with coin-shaped noodles inside. Surprisingly, even after about 350 years, a local noodle soup called by the same name (Mangır Soup; a noodle soup containing coin-shaped noodle pieces) used by Meninsky for the description of Tutmaç, is detected in one of the regional cuisines in Anatolia, although a soup by this name is not common in Türkiye.

The last work to be scanned in the context of the linguistic and cultural legacy following The Compendium of Kashgari is “Kamûs-i Türkî,” which will be referred to as KT afterwards. It was published in A.D. 1901 by the Ottoman intellectual Şemsettin Sami, who was also the author of the first Turkish novel and encyclopedia. Since the author tried to include all the words used in spoken language, this dictionary is essential in scanning the Ottoman Turkic lexicon of the early 20th century (Sami, 2017). In his work, which is also the first Turkish-to-Turkish dictionary with the word Turk/Türkî (Turkish) in its title, the writer preferred to give the most weight to the words in Anatolian Turkic that he thought to be more directly connected with Eastern Turkic dialects as well.

Arpa (Barley), Bugday (Wheat), and Un (Flour), in KT too, were recorded with the same meaning in the Compendium too. Yarmash (“Coarsely grounded flour” in the Compendium) has a morphologically and semantically similar variant in the KT, and just as in modern Türkiye too, the word Yarma (**Yar**+*ma* = *coarsely-split*) refers to grains such as barley that have been ground so that each piece is divided into one part in mill<sup>113</sup>.

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<sup>113</sup> (Şemsettin Sami, 2018, p. 1181)

Qawurmach, which was a word for “fried wheat” in Kashgari, was recorded in KT<sup>114</sup> with the same meaning and phonetic [k a v u r m a tʃ̌] as well. Similarly, Qavut [k a v u t], a dish prepared by mixing millet gruel with butter and sugar in Kashgari, was also recorded in KT, and Sami states that as a food made with fried flour, it is the staple food of nomadic peoples<sup>115</sup>.

Although in many Turkic countries, the word “Atmak/Etmek” was later replaced by the Persian word “Nan” to refer to the most consumed daily bread, the word “Ekmek,” as in the modern Turkiye, was used with the meaning of standard bread in KT<sup>116</sup>. Besides, similar to their presentation in TLO of Meninski, in the KT too, this word is given in both the new (Ekmek) and the old (Etmek in the Compendium) spellings.

“Yuga/Yuwqa/Yupka” in the Compendium, as mentioned above, by undergoing a slight phonetic change, becomes “Yufka [j u f k a]” in modern Turkish. As a word referring to “folded or thin bread” in Kasghari, this slightly changed variant in modern Turkish means “thinly rolled dough sheet” in KT<sup>117</sup>.

“Boza” [first seen in the Arabic book (Kitab al-‘Idrak li’Lisan al-‘Atrak - The Book for Understanding the Language of the Turks) written in A.D. 1312 by Abu Hayyan al’Andalusi (A.D. 1286 - 1344) and also mentioned by the Maghrebi explorer Ibn Battuta (A.D. 1304 - 1368) in his travelogue], as a grain beverage related to “Buxsum” (a type of grain liquor) in the Compendium, appears as a sour syrup made from fermented millet dough in KT<sup>118</sup>.

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<sup>114</sup> (Şemsettin Sami, 2018, p. 808)

<sup>115</sup> (Şemsettin Sami, 2018, p. 808)

<sup>116</sup> (Şemsettin Sami, 2018, p. 123)

<sup>117</sup> (Şemsettin Sami, 2018, p. 1209)

<sup>118</sup> (Şemsettin Sami, 2018, p. 246)

Besides, bread types such as “Chörak (Flat Bread)” and “Közman/Közmen (Bread baked in hot ashes)” in the Compendium become “Çörek [tʃø r e k]<sup>119</sup>”, and “Gözleme<sup>120</sup>” [ɟø z l e m e]” with similar semantic features. Other types of staple Turkic pastry foods that started to appear in written sources between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, such as “Börek [b ø r e k]<sup>121</sup>”, “mantı [m a n t ɯ]<sup>122</sup>”, and “pide [p i d e]<sup>123</sup>” are all recorded in the KT as well.

e. Tutmaç, Salma, Pilaf:

Under the rule of Mongolians, who were primarily Turkicized over time by their sedentarization and statification processes mainly mediated by the more crowded but culturally close Turkic peoples, a similar Turkicization process occurred in terms of the food and foodways too (Buell, 2000). Therefore, it was no coincidence that perhaps the most widespread period for the Tutmaç culture with its peculiarities (supplemented with dairy-based yogurt-like condiments, tail fat and mutton meat), which had constantly been prospering in a vast region, further consolidated during the Pax-Mongolica under the Mongolian rule. For example, not only Tutmaç but also Salma [s a t m a], one of the many Turkic noodle dishes that emerged in both the West and the East, appeared with its Turkic name and recipe in the Chinese and Arabic cookbooks (Buell and Anderson, 2010). Therefore, we can conclude this final section by demonstrating how the most prominent examples of Turkic noodle culture, Tutmaç and Salma, were presented in Chinese and Arabic books hundreds of years ago, retaining their names and culinary characteristics.

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<sup>119</sup> Coil-shaped soft bread (Şemsettin Sami, 2018, p. 409).

<sup>120</sup> Two types of dough, one for dessert and one for börek (Şemsettin Sami, 2018, p. 927).

<sup>121</sup> A type of food made from dough or phyllo sheets and filled with minced meat, cheese, or vegetables. (Şemsettin Sami, 2018, p. 243).

<sup>122</sup> Phyllo bread {“Yufka [j u f k a]” bread} with minced meat (Şemsettin Sami, 2018, p. 973).

<sup>123</sup> A well-known flat bread (Şemsettin Sami, 2018, p. 288).

羊皮麵  
補中益氣  
羊皮二箇持洗淨煮軟 羊舌二箇熟  
羊腰子四箇熟各切如甲葉 磨菰一片洗淨 糟薑四兩各切如甲葉  
右件用好肉醃湯或清汁下胡椒一兩鹽醋調和  
充禿麻食係手撒麵  
補中益氣  
白麵六斤作 充禿麻食 羊肉一肘子炒焦肉乞馬  
右件用好肉湯下炒葱調和勻下蒜酪香菜末  
細水滑細水滑 邊水滑一同

Fig. 20.  
The Chinese  
Recipe of  
Tutmaç

*The recipe of Tutum-Ash<sup>i</sup>* was given in “the Yinshan Zhengyao (YSZY), or “Proper and Essential Things for the Emperor’s Food and Drink,” a book written by the imperial dietary physician Hu Sihui in A.D. 1330 for the Yuan Imperial court (Buell & Anderson, 2010, pp. 3-4). According to the recipe<sup>ii</sup> contained in the area outlined by the red lines; mutton and white flour are some of the main ingredients of this dish.

<sup>i</sup> The name of the food (within the areas shaded in blue) is shown with the Chinese characters that can be said to be closer to the Turkic phonetic features of the original word - 禿禿麻食 (Tū Tū Má Shí, when it is read according to the Modern Pinyin romanization system for Standard Mandarin Chinese, for example).

<sup>ii</sup> According to Buell and Anderson (2010): “This is the Tutmajh (*Tutmaç*) of the later Middle Eastern cookbooks, still a standard dish...Tutmajh is one of the earliest (pre-Ottoman) Turkic borrowings by a broader Middle Eastern food culture.” (p.289)

Buell and Anderson (2010) present this original text (YSZY, Vol. 1, 38b) in their novel work about YSZY (p. 229).

“Salma” is another important example from the Turkic noodle culture in which specially prepared pieces of dough are thrown/released into a pot of hot water, usually containing meat and spices. Buell (2000) states that the recipe of Salma given in the Chinese encyclopedia Jujia Biyong Shilei (JBS)<sup>124</sup> is so authentic that it could easily be a part of any Ottoman or modern Turkish cookbook (p. 215). In JBS, Salma is written in Chinese as Shuihua<sup>125</sup>, and JBS gives the following recipe for it:

Use the best quality flour. During the spring, the summer and the autumn use freshly drawn water. Add oil and salt. First mix together uniformly. When the flour becomes dough-like, gradually add water. Press together into balls. Use the hands to [press] open. Make into [flat] lumps. Then sprinkle with oil and water. Combine by kneading one or two hundred times. After doing this three or four times, the dough will be very soft, like a cake. With the dough placed on a table, use an aopeng 拗棒 [*might be a Chinese variant of Turkic roller pin for dough; Buell and Anderson., 2010, p. 112*] and roll out more than a hundred times. If one does not have an aopeng knead a hundred times with the hands. When the dough is ready, it can then be divided to make noodle fingernails. Put into recently cooled water. Soak for a couple of hours or so, waiting until the noodles are ready. Then put into the pot. [The noodles] will be ample and fine. Make them as one pleases. During the winter months soak the noodles in warm water<sup>126</sup>.

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<sup>124</sup>A domestic-use encyclopedia focusing on different aspects of daily life (See footnote 33).

<sup>125</sup> 水滑 (Shuihua), the first character in this word, means “water,” and the second one means “slip/slide.” Considering the relatively close phonetic features of these words too (*Salma – Shuihua*), the pictogrammic features in Chinese reflectional words used for *Salma*, are able both to inform the reader about the characteristics of *Salma* (about how it is made; water-polished noodles) and to sound similar to it within the Chinese phonetical boundaries (Buell and Anderson, 2010, p.92).

<sup>126</sup> For detailed information about Salma and its Chinese recipe, see Buell and Anderson, 2010, p. 112.

Although Turkic Kazakhs cut dough pieces as square parts, the Arabic cookbook of Kitab al-Tibakha of the 15th century describes it as “shaped with the fingers like coins.<sup>127</sup>” (Perry, 2010, p. 580). When we look at the recipe for this stuffed version of Salma in this Arabic cookbook:

Salma: Dough is taken and twisted and cut in small pieces and struck like a coin with a finger, and it is cooked in water until done. Then yogurt is put with it and meat is fried with onion for it and mint and garlic are put with it<sup>128</sup>.

In contemporary Türkiye, this dish is called Salma Aşı<sup>129</sup> [s a † m a - a ʃ u ], and still cooked in different variations. However, it is still a sort of broth with little pieces of dough, but of course, it may have a richer combination of ingredients, such as chickpeas and mint leaves, according to the preference of the cook. The following is a modern recipe for a decent Salma:

*Ingredients for 4:* Half kg of mutton sliced in cubic shapes, 6 tablespoons of flour, a little cup of water, 1 cup chickpeas, 2 tablespoons of butter, 2 cloves of garlic, 1 tablespoon of dried mint and chilli flakes, 2 tablespoons of vinegar, 1 spoon of honey, a pinch of salt. 6 tablespoons of flour + a little cup of water.

*Preparation:* Soak the chickpeas the night before. Boil and drain the water the next day. Wash the meat, add enough water to cover it and cook for 1 hour. When the meat starts to soften, add the chickpeas. If the water decreases, add hot water. Add the salt and remove the pot from the stove when the chickpeas and meat are cooked. Crush 2 garlic cloves with dried mint and salt in a mortar and pestle. Mix honey and vinegar in a bowl. For the dough, add salt to the flour and knead it by adding water. Pick chickpea-sized pieces

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<sup>127</sup> Such a statement is reminiscent of the Mangır soup mentioned in the entry of Tutmaç in TLO, the noodle soup with dough pieces that look like small coins and, thus, named after the ancient Ottoman coin.

<sup>128</sup> (Perry, 1985; as cited in Buell et al., 2020, p. 112)

<sup>129</sup> Aş is the word from which the Turko/Persian suffix “+aş” (the suffix generating food names in Turkic languages) is constructed and means “boiled dish.” Salma Aşı roughly means Salma Dish, and here the last sound “ı” (Aşı ) is only a suffix used in different Genitive Construction types in Turkic languages, thus is not affecting the meaning of the word itself (see footnote 84 too).

from the dough and form flat pieces with hands. Cook them in boiling salted water for 6 minutes. Add the dough, mint, 2 sliced garlic cloves and honey with vinegar to the dish and cook for 12-15 minutes. Finally, add the chilli flakes. *(Author's recipe)*

The Verb “**sal**” means “to **release**/to let it go” in Turkish. The suffix “-*me/-ma*,” when following a verb, turns the verb into a noun (sometimes an adjective, too), and as it was shown in many examples in this work, this structural change is widespread in the production of food names in Turkish. Such a food name constructed in this way underlines the method to be used to prepare a specific food<sup>130</sup>.

Although not among the noodle dishes mentioned in the Compendium, Salma reflects one of the essential examples of Tutmaç culture, and similar variations are still consumed in Turkiye and other Turkic states too. Işın (2020) states that variations in this noodle culture were so popular that it was included in the famous story collection of One Thousand and One Night as a dish called Tutmaciyye in Arabic (p. 23). However, about seven centuries ago, when dishes like Salma and Tutmaç were known by the same name and very similar recipes from the palaces of Mesopotamia to the courts of China, with the new cooking ways and techniques developed in

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<sup>130</sup> Finally, although they are not grain-based foods, “*Dolma*” and “*Sarma*” might be presented as two of the most well-known examples for this grammatical principle, and while the verb “**dol**” means “to **fill**,” the verb “**sar**” means “to **wrap**.” The suffix “-*ma*” turns these verbs into specific dish names; while “**dolma**” is generally used for the filled vegetables, “**sarma**” is used for the dishes when, for example, something like a piece of rice is wrapped in a leaf. Also, “Shawarma” might present an excellent model for this way of naming dishes. The Turkish verb “**çevir**/chevir” (meaning “to **turn**” in English) takes the suffix “-*me*” and becomes “çevir+me = **çevirme**” (the thing which is turning/turned); however, the Arabic peoples’ way of pronunciation made the word spelled as “Shawarma.” Although Arabs of the Ottoman Empire borrowed this Turkish word for naming this famous dish, the Turks prefer to name their dish “*Döner*.” In fact, the meaning of the verb “**dön**” is so close to the meaning of “**çevir**,” and the suffix “-*ar/-er*” also makes the verb (dön+er) a noun, **döner**, although this noun sounds more dynamic to native ears and makes the listener imagine a meat roll that “rotates without stopping.”

the Near East (Anderson, 2014, p. 195), another grain was about to declare its dominance in an even more expansive geography.

Rice had been known, especially in China, for a long time (Anderson, 2014, p. 292), and came to the Eurasian heartland via India, and then Iran (Buell et al., 2020, p. 97), with the new cooking techniques generally developed within the rich culinary culture of Iranic peoples (Anderson, 2014, p. 195). Of course, the noodle culture has continued to develop and prosper in China as it always did. Later, in Italian pasta culture, accompanied by excellent sauces enriched by the vegetables from the new world, such as tomatoes (Shelke, 2016, p.74), it became an essential component of the global food culture that we know today.

While many foods that can be considered a continuation of the ancient Tutmaç culture remain essential to Turkic cuisines and other food cultures around the region, pilaf and its variants came to play the leading role in important social events such as weddings and special gatherings (Anderson, 2014, p. 290). This is especially the case for Turkic peoples living in Central Asia (Işın, 2020, p. 23), and while Anatolian Turks were familiar with and fond of pilaf in its various varieties, a simpler form of pilaf was consumed in Ottoman cuisine in a more casual form as an accompaniment to the main courses that followed the soup just as it is now in Türkiye. The importance of pastry foods in everyday life has not changed much, and various types of bread, dumplings and noodles have remained among the national dishes of Turkic peoples, although different types of pilaf would eventually take center stage during feasts (Perry, 2006, p. 124) and Uzbek masters would become known as skilled pilaf masters.



#### **4. CONCLUSION:**

##### **i. Facts vs Myths:**

###### **a. Lexical Findings:**

In this study, some primary lexical texts that were thought to potentially provide more objective information about the food culture of Turkic nomads were investigated. Thus, written by them or to understand them, these texts presenting an inventory of Turkic-derived lexical items were analyzed in the context of grain-based foods that nomads allegedly did not or could not consume much.

Numerous words about different grains and grain-based dishes, almost all of them of Turkic origin (not linguistic “borrowings”), were detected in the lexical heritage of Turkic peoples. These findings also indicated that this lexical richness reflecting their grain-based culinary culture was not only specific to a region, a particular Turkic society or a period in their history. Instead, this linguistic heritage reflecting their culinary culture has been strongly preserved and transmitted within a surprising temporal depth and spatial breadth. The sources utilized in this study, written/compiled in different periods and locations, reveal that this lexical treasure naming the different kinds and forms of foods and dishes in Turkic culinary heritage, has been preserved in a remarkable way.

In addition, in the corpus scanned for this study, it was detected that they had portable devices such as hand grinders and “Sac” furnaces, which were used to prepare grain-based comestibles. Moreover, the findings of this study demonstrate that even in a work written nearly

a thousand years ago, elements of an even older cultural heritage are evident within the explanation of certain food-related words. Some grain-based foods were described to whom, when and how they were traditionally served, such as Qavut (a dish customarily prepared for confined women even a thousand years ago; see the footnote 48), and some were even accompanied by sayings about them like Talqan (see the footnote 49). All these references point to a heritage that goes back even further, but the written legacy from this period is limited.

What these findings also reveal is that there has been a culinary continuity reflected in food names (these words are mostly not borrowings from other languages but are of Turkic origin, and it is presented that they have remained almost the same not only morphologically but semantically too) and cooking techniques in terms of the food cultures of Turkic peoples, despite the thousands of kilometres of spatial and hundreds of years of temporal difference. Moreover, it was demonstrated through various examples that the imprints of this Turkic heritage can be detected in the culinary cultures of societies, many of which are considered sedentary. While these examples highlight the influence of Turkic peoples on the other culinary cultures, they, in fact, only demonstrate the contribution of a group of nomadic peoples and their descendants to a much broader and common culinary culture that has evolved over time across Eurasia with the participation of many different entities.

#### b. Recent Studies:

This study also mentioned how nomads could access cereals through pillage, trade, and “diplomatic” means such as “Heqin.” It was also noted that some previous studies showed that

they practiced seasonal agriculture in the areas suitable for agriculture and sometimes used forced labour, such as captives and enslaved people in agricultural fields.

It is crucial to understand that the lifestyles of nomadic and sedentary societies in Inner Asia were not rigidly fixed. In this expansive region, groups of different sizes have shown remarkable adaptability, switching between these two ways of life for various reasons, such as climatic conditions, political conflicts, and economic pressures. For, only the ability to adapt to such situations allowed these groups to survive and thrive in Inner Asia's challenging environment.

However, the most significant blow to the prevailing conventional narrative about nomads and, therefore, their way of life and diet is the new research from different fields, some of which were published even after the genesis of the idea for this study. For example, using the method of measuring the isotopes of carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, and strontium in human teeth and bones, recent research (Miller et al., 2021) on the burial sites of Scythian nomads demonstrated a diet with domesticated products such as millet.

Another related study (Spengler et al., 2021) about the Scythian nomads, using archaeological scientific methods such as botanical data analyses and linking this scientific data with the archeological findings, suggests the existence of farming and grain processing practices and a widespread presence of sedentary architectural structures. Their findings compiling the evidence provided by the other disciplines, directly challenge what they called "more than two millennia of compounding propaganda-based narratives surrounding the nomads of Central Asian prehistory." (p. 263)

c. Myths:

The relationship of nomads to agricultural products has been ignored under the assumption of no agricultural production in their polities; however, as mentioned above, the volume of evidence indicating agricultural activities has recently increased, and this study also underlined that even in the absence of agricultural production, such needs were met through different means.

However, in the traditional perception of Central Asia, which remained more or less fictional for a long time, there were elements that could be labelled as mythic, and they also helped to shape the established discourse about the nomads too. For instance, for a long time, there was neither a continuous Silk Road to allow intercontinental travel nor a monolithic Great Wall<sup>131</sup> to impede the movement of the masses across vast landscapes. These myths have often been romanticized and full of surreal elements. As emphasized in this study, the Silk Road was not a couple of long-distance intercontinental trade routes stretching between the east and west as it was shown on the maps, but a much more widespread network of short-distance and regional trade routes over a vast region. Bearing traces of Orientalist romanticism as well, such a scene cannot thoroughly reflect reality.

In the light of the recent data obtained by the collaboration of different disciplines, it is now better understood that the different societies living in this multilingual and multicultural region, at least in some periods, lived in close interaction with each other and that, contrary to inertia, in such periods, a rapid change prevailed and affected almost every entity.

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<sup>131</sup> Rather than being a monolithic and complete barrier, the Great Wall of China may be regarded as a humongous construction process undertaken partly by numerous emperors in a long span of time. “It consists of numerous walls—many of them parallel to each other—built over some two millennia across northern China and southern Mongolia.” [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com) – Great Wall of China

Since the traditional essentialist approach to nomads defines nomadism as a fixed category which is omnipresent in every aspect of their entity, the interpretation of the history of Turkic nomads also tends to present almost everything about them within the limitations of pastoral characteristics. In this regard, another recent interdisciplinary study (Robbeets et al., 2021) analyzes the data from the fields of “genetics,” “archaeology,” and “linguistics” in a method named “triangulation” and tries to explain the spread of the Transeurasian languages<sup>132</sup> from the combined perspective of these fields. A group of writers from different disciplines, using “a comprehensive Transeurasian agropastoral and basic vocabulary,” examining 255 Neolithic-Bronze Age sites in Northeast Asia and analyzing the results of previously published genome studies, try to reveal the patterns of the spread of the Transeurasian languages. Their findings show that the spread of the Transeurasian languages seems to have followed the agricultural spread in Northeast Asia due to the movements of early farmers. The results of this study have the potential to challenge “the traditional pastoralist hypothesis” connecting the spread of languages with the movements of Nomads.

Such evidence not only legitimizes the doubts about the validity of the nomadic bias but also reinforces the argument of central significance in terms of this study that “it is not convincing to explain the richness of the Turkic nomads’ linguistic heritage in a rigidly pastoral and autarkic model.” Although referring to an earlier period in the history of Turkic (and the other Transeurasian languages) languages, this interdisciplinary study, published about a year after the proposal of this thesis, adopts a similar critical approach by utilizing the agropastoral

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<sup>132</sup> Transeurasian languages are also known as Altaic languages (it includes Turkic, Japanese, Korean, Tungusic, and Mongolic languages), although the degree of their relatedness is a controversial issue in linguistics (Robbeets et al., 2021, p. 616).

vocabulary, challenges the dominant discourse through the findings offered by Genetics and Archaeology, and finally establishes a clear nexus among language, culture and farming.

## **ii. Last Remarks:**

By surveying the lexical heritage of Turkic peoples, this thesis points to an important tradition of their culinary culture and argues that the abundance of grain-based dishes in their food culture, which has been passed down through time and space, cannot be explained in terms of the assumptions attributed to the nomadic peoples.

This thesis firstly exposes the pejorative context established by sedentary societies towards nomads, with particular reference to one of its fields of interest: food. It emphasizes the cultural richness at the time of their emergence on the stage of written history, draws attention to the close networks of relations they established with other entities around them, and underlines that they were not in a state of isolation from the outside world, but in a symbiotic bond with it based on calculated relations with their environment. In this regard, their role as cultural agents is emphasized, as well as their ability to develop practical and flexible ways of responding to their needs. In the end, traces of a cultural heritage that casts doubt on the validity of the traditional perspective are presented over a period of at least a thousand years of time and an area of tens of thousands of kilometres by linking this past to the present with foods and their names.

A critical approach embracing the opportunities provided by different disciplines may pave the way for a better understanding of the issue of nomadic entities and enable one to have a non-territorial way of imagining communities without being trapped by the tricks of

essentialism. From such a vantage point, the antithetical and linear presentation of total human experience (as “nomadic ambiguity to sedentary civilization”), teleological reductionism about it, and the binary way of thinking around the issue became invalid.

Even in astounding ways, the symbiotic relations and regular interaction between the sedentary and non-sedentary polities/societies (not only in terms of nomadic but also in terms of quasi-nomadic, transhumance, or post-nomadic entities) seem to be able to manifest a broader picture about the totality of human experience and such an approach, preventing both the isolation of nomadic peoples in history and dissolution of their history in the pro-modernist/culturalist grand narratives, might better illuminate on their neglected story.

Given the recent evidence on the historical tendency to *trade-off between the nomadic and sedentary lifestyles*, as well as the flexible modes of life such as *multi-resource pastoralism* and *individual or collective migrations* that are still an ongoing part of the total human experience in our time, grasping the conflicts, negotiations, exchanges, mimics, and fields of merging among different cultural entities; may necessitate the refusal of binarism and call for the adoption of other ways of thinking such as “hybridity.”

Bhaba (2004), one of the leading scholars focusing on the “hybridization theory,” states that “threat from the hybrid is finally uncontainable because it breaks down the symmetry and duality of self/other, inside/outside” (p. 165). Perhaps, traditional ways of thinking that offer ease of thought and theoretical shortcuts may be replaced or supported by complex models offering a more prosperous journey, even if they do not always lead to definitive conclusions. Scott (2017), too, touches on similar points when stating that “State and nonstate peoples, agriculturalists and foragers, ‘barbarians’ and ‘civilized’ are twins, both in reality and

semiotically...The most tendentious of these pairs, the civilized-barbarian pair, are born together as twins.” (p. 186)

Finally, this thesis can be concluded by stating that this study attempted to make a critical and interdisciplinary contribution within the framework of the approaches that emphasize the need to examine the subject from a broader perspective.



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### **Figure 2:** Map of Xiongnu Empire (around 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. – the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.)

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### **Figure 3:** Imperial State Formation along the Chinese Nomad Frontier.

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### **Figure 4:** Map of Seljuk Empire at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

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### **Figure 5:** Boza

The photo was retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 02:55. <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/istanbul/neyenir/boza460281>

### **Figure 6:** Tang Dynasty (circa A.D. 700).

Ian Kiu, 12.10.2007, Tang Dynasty 700 AD from “The T’ang Dynasty, 618-906 A.D.-Boundaries of 700 A.D.” Albert Herrmann (1935). History and Commercial Atlas of China. Harvard University Press. File: Tang Dynasty circa 700 CE.png. (2021, June 14). *Wikimedia Commons*. Retrieved 01:57, May 12, 2023 from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Tang\\_Dynasty\\_circa\\_700\\_CE.png&oldid=569079931](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Tang_Dynasty_circa_700_CE.png&oldid=569079931).

**Figure 7:** Tonyukuk Inscriptions (circa A.D. 725).

Vezirtonyukuk, 03.11.2015, Bilge Tonyukuk monuments as part of Orkhon Inscriptions in Mongolia. File: Bilge Tonyukuk - Orkhon Inscriptions.jpeg. (2022, March 13). *Wikimedia Commons*. Retrieved 00:14, May 16, 2023 from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Bilge\\_Tonyukuk\\_-\\_Orkhon\\_Inscriptions.jpeg&oldid=638061415](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Bilge_Tonyukuk_-_Orkhon_Inscriptions.jpeg&oldid=638061415).

**Figure 8:** Map – Karakhanid Empire (A.D. 840 - 1212).

Onur GÜRMAN, Karahanlılar Devleti Haritası. File: Karahanlılar-Devleti-Harita.jpg. turkosfer.com. Retrieved 02:35, May 12, 2023 from <http://www.turkosfer.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Karahanlılar-Devleti-Harita.jpg>

**Figure 9:** Kashgari's Map.

Mahmud al-Kashgari, Map from Mahmud al-Kashgari's Diwan (11th century), File: Kashgari map.jpg. (2022, May 30). *Wikimedia Commons*. Retrieved 23:45, May 15, 2023 from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Kashgari\\_map.jpg&oldid=660103038](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Kashgari_map.jpg&oldid=660103038). Source given in the related wikimedia.commons page is: <https://web.archive.org/web/20080125072719/http://www.lindenmuseum.de/inhalt/tuerkei/diwan.html>.

**Figure 10:** Buğday Unu (Wheat Flour) and Arpa Şehriye (Barley Vermicelli).

The photos were retrieved from the database of Agricultural Credit Cooperatives of Türkiye on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 21.14. <https://www.tarimkredibirlik.com.tr/un-ve-makarnalar>

**Figure 11:** A bowl of Kavut/Gavut made from wheat, butter and honey.

The photo was retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 21:38. (Source: *Van Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism*) <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/van/neyenir/gavut>

**Figure 12:** Sac/Saj.

The photos were retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May, 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 22:24.

(1. Sac Tava – Source: *Diyarbakır Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism*)

(2. Sac Böreği – Source: *Isparta Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism*)

1- <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/medya/fotograf/fotodokuman/4557>

2- <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/isparta/neyenir/etli-senget-sac-boregi>

**Figure 13:** Yufka (Phyllo Dough) and Yufkacı (Phyllo Dough Store).

1. Kuru Yufka (Dry Phyllo Dough) can be stored for a long time and consumed after soaking.

The photo was retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 23:24. (Source: *Ordu Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism*)

<https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/ordu/neyenir/kuru-yufka>

2. Yufka (dough), used in preparing many pastry foods prepared at home, is still prepared and sold daily in special Phyllo Dough Stores (3. Yufkacı) in Turkey. (Photos 2 and 3 are from the author's personal collection)

**Figure 14:** Different types of Börek from Turkey.

1. Dolamber Böreği - The photo was retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 21:13. (Source: *Kütahya Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism*) <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/kutahya/neyenir/dolamber-boreg>

2. Çibörek - The photo was retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 21:17. (Source: *Eskişehir Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism*) <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/eskisehir/neyenir/ciborek>

3. Kol Böreği - (Photos 3 is from the author's personal collection)

**Figure 15:** Gözleme plates from Türkiye.

1. Gözleme prepared for breakfast - The photo was directly retrieved from the archive of the *Culture Portal* of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 13:09.

<https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/medya/fotograf/fotodokuman/6300>

2. Gözleme serviced as a snack - (Photo 2 is from the author's personal collection)

**Figure 16:** Modern versions of Tutmaç prepared by using different ingredients such as green lentils (1) or strained yogurt (2): Tutmaç and Tutmaç Çorbası (Tutmaç Soup).

1. Tutmaç - The photo was retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 13:43. (Tutmaç – Source: *Ankara Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism*) <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/ankara/neyenir/tutmac950711>

2. Tutmaç Çorbası (Tutmaç Soup) - The photo was retrieved from the archive of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 13:44. (Tutmaç Çorbası – Source: *Kütahya Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism*)  
<https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/kutahya/neyenir/tutmac-corbasi887692>

**Figure 17:** Turkic Lexical Map (Author’s Creation).

**Figure 18:** Turkish Manti from the city of Kayseri (1) and Manti Packages (2) daily sold in Yufka Stores (Yufkacı = Phyllo Dough Stores).

1. Kayseri Style Manti - The photo was directly retrieved from the archive of the *Culture Portal* of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 14:39. (Source: *Kayseri Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism*)  
<https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/medya/fotograf/fotodokuman/5938/manti>
2. “Daily prepared Manti Packages sold in special stores” (*Photo 2 is from the author’s personal collection*)

**Figure 19:** Pide varieties from the cities of Türkiye: (1) Trabzon Style Pide and (2) Samsun Style Pide.

1. Trabzon Pidesi - The photo was directly retrieved from the archive of the *Culture Portal* of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 15:43.  
<https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/trabzon/neyenir/pide672555>
2. Samsun Pidesi - The photo was directly retrieved from the archive of the *Culture Portal* of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 15:47. (Source: *Samsun Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism*)  
<https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/samsun/neyenir/samsun-pidesi>

**Figure 20:** The Chinese Recipe of Tutmaç.

Buell, P.D. & Anderson, E.N. (2010). *A soup for the qan: Chinese dietary medicine of the Mongol era as seen in Hu Sihui’s yinshan zhengyao*. Brill.  
<https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004180208.i-662>