



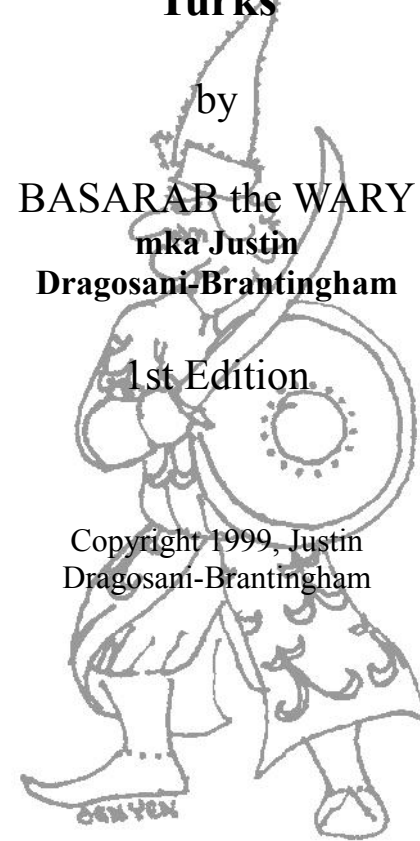
An Illustrated Introduction to the Kipchak Turks

by

**BASARAB the WARY
mka Justin
Dragosani-Brantingham**

1st Edition

Copyright 1999, Justin
Dragosani-Brantingham



Preface

Enclosed in this booklet is an introduction to the Kipchak Turks and their culture. Its purpose is to easily spread knowledge to any of its readers, and be useful. I consulted many sources to make this booklet, and to learn much that I have not presented here. For a speaker and reader of English, the search for the Kipchaks can be arduous. Scholars have written hundreds of articles, most in Russian, German, French, Latin, Turkish, even Norwegian and Scandinavian, the least abundant probably English.

I sincerely wish to acknowledge Professor Peter B. Golden, world renowned expert on the Turks, for his personal correspondence, aiding me in my quest for all things Kipchak. I also owe thanks to my wife, Theophano Keppoure, mka Shannon, for her unending support.

Any portion of the book may be duplicated or distributed without prior written consent of the author, excluding for any personal gain or profit.

Enjoy it!

SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO:
BASARAB the WARY
mka Justin Dragosani-Brantingham
~~P.O. Box 14322~~
~~Grand Falls, N.D. 58208-4322~~
~~(701) 656-2094~~
~~email: basarab@gfherald.infi.net~~



About BASARAB the WARY:

Basarab the Wary is a Kipchak warrior from the south Russian steppes who never indulged in conquests as his 1100s brothers have done, but has traveled throughout Eurasia, freeing slaves and opposing brutality, finding the forests nearly as likeable as the plains. The forests are fitting, anyhow, as his horsemanship requires work. Basarab

(21) later period first-hand cultural accounts of the Kipchaks can be had by reading Ibn-Batuta's (1307-1377 C.E.) travels.

(22) David Nicholle, *Attila* . . . , 52-3.

(23) Peter B. Golden, "Cumanica IV: . . . , 108.

(24) Andras Paloczi-Horvath, *Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians: Steppe People in Medieval Hungary*. Budapest: Corvina/Kultura, 1989, 97.

(25) Andras Paloczi-Horvath, *Pechenegs*, . . . , 53.

(26) Peter B. Golden, "Religion . . . , 188.

(27) Peter B. Golden, "Religion . . . , 191-193.

(28) Consult Vladimir Nabokov, *The Song* . . . ; Robert C. Howes, *The Tale of the Campaign of Igor*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1973; Geza Kuun, ed., *Codex Cumanicus*. Budapest: MTAK, 1981.

(29) Consult Greg S. Rogers, "An examination of historians' explanations for the Mongol withdrawal from East Central Europe," *East European Quarterly* 30 (Spring 1996): 3-27.

(30) Peter Golden, *An Introduction* . . . , 278.

bers, *The Devil's Horsemen*. New York: Atheneum, 1979, 15.

(3) Numerous sources cite the Kipchak-Mamluk connection, for easy reference one can refer to David Nicholle, *Saladin and the Saracens*. London: Osprey Publishing, 1986, 36-40.

(4) For an excellent historical essay on Kipchak religion, see Peter B. Golden, "Religion among the Qipchaqs," *Central Asiatic Journal* ([last issue of] 1998): 180-237.

(5) See Christopher Gravett, *German Medieval Armies: 1300-1500*. London: Osprey Publishing, 1985, 42.

(6) Peter B. Golden, "Cumanica IV: The Qipchaq Tribes," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, v. IX (1997), [pp 99-122] 108-121.

(7) David Nicholle, *Attila and the Nomad Hordes*. London: Osprey Publishing, 1990, 32.

(8) Karl Heinrich Menges, "The Oriental Elements in the Vocabulary of the Oldest Russian Epos, The Igor' Tale," *Word: The Journal of the Linguistic Circle of New York*, Vol. 7, December 1951, [pp 1-98] 3-4.

(9) Peter Golden, *An Introduction* . . . , 270.

(10) David Nicholle, *Attila* . . . , 52; Vladimir Nabokov, *Song of Igor's Campaign*. New York: Vintage Books, 1960, 111.

(11) Peter Golden, *An Introduction* . . . , 279.

(12) Chingis Khan first established the Kipchak Khanate as a reward for Juji's military prowess. See Michael Prawdin, Eden and Cedar Paul, trans., *The Mongol Empire*. New York: MacMillan Co., 1940, 111.

(13) Peter B. Golden, "Cumanica IV: . . . , 107.

(14) Peter Golden, *An Introduction* . . . , 279.

(15) David Nicholle, *Attila* . . . , 52.

(16) David Nicholle, *Attila* . . . , 52.

(17) James Chambers, *The Devil's* . . . 14.

(18) David Nicholle, *Attila* . . . , 52.

(19) David Nicholle, *The Age of Tamarlane*. London: Osprey Publishing, 1990, 40.

(20) David Nicholle, *Attila* . . . , 14.

fell in love with a fine Pecheneg woman living within Byzantium, Theophano, and they roam the steppes freely with their dog, Haywynn Cossas, at their side.



Drawing by Angus McBride in Christopher Gravett, *German Medieval Armies: 1300-1500*. London: Osprey Publishing, 1985, 27.



Map of Cuman migration and settlement. The black solid line marks the eastern and southern borders of the Russian principalities. The shaded area denotes the territory of other Turkic tribes referred to in Russian as the "Chemye Klobuki," a melange of people including remnants of Pechenegs (pronounced Pawt-zi-nok), all of whom usually allied themselves with Kievan Russia against the Kipchaks. They were known for their black cowls/caps/headgear with gave them their name. It is also noted in the Song of Igor's Campaign that they would enter battle with nothing but a dagger. This reference may actually apply to the short sabre/enlarged dagger that some Turkic warriors wore horizontally across their belly, similar to the Anglo-Saxon "seax". The statues illuminate the central Kipchak settlement areas and locations of their statues. From Andras Palocz-Horvath, Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians: Steppe People in Medieval Hungary. Budapest: Corvina/

1290 (10 July) Three Cumans assassinate Laslislav IV.

1298 Battle of Gollheim; a Hungarian-Cuman force fights with the army of Albrecht I of Habsburg.

1300s (early) compilation of the "Codex Cumanicus".

1328 Pope John XXII instructs Hungarian bishops not to collect tithes from Cumans.

1330 King Charles Robert of Hungary has unsuccessful campaign against Basarab, Voivode (warrior prince) of Wallachia.

1347-1349 First campaign of Hungarian King Louis the Great against Naples.

1348 Pope Coloman VI charges Minorite friars to convert Cumans.

1350 Louis the Great's second campaign against Naples.

1397 King Sigismund introduces the "militia portalis".

1418 First record of Cuman "seats".

Notes

(1) Peter Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992, 277.

(2) When the Mongols sacked Samarkand in 1220, a portion of the Kangli garrison had surrendered and asked to join the Mongols because they too were nomads of the steppes. The Mongols found the "disloyalty" abhorrent, surrounded the Kangli camp, and slaughtered them. Chingis Khan once said, "A man who is once faithless can never be trusted." Ironically, here the Mongol double-standard exhibited itself. The Mongols often offered surrender as an option for mercy, or they would show none to offer an example of their ferocity! See James Cham-

ace and murdered Kotian and his family. The Cumans, disillusioned, desperate, and furious, exacted revenge upon the Hungarians by deserting them in their greatest time of need. They fled to the Balkans, ravaging as they went.

(12 April) The Mongols annihilate the Hungaria army near the village of Muhi.

John III settles 10,000 Cumans as military colonists in Thrace and Anatolia, later mustered for campaigns in Europe. Other Cumans living in lower Bulgarian plain in Bulgaria.

1246 Cumans re-enter Hungary and fight with Bela IV against Duke Frederick of Austria.

1247 Bela IV cements the Cuman alliance again by arranging the marriage of his eldest son, Stephen V, to the Cuman Khan's daughter, who received her name "Elizabeth" on her baptism.

1254 Baptism of Elisabeth's parents in Dominican church of Buda.

1264-1265 Stephen (as "Younger King") wars with father Bela IV, who has Cumans on his side.

1278 (26 August) Battle of Durnkrut (Marchfeld); Rudolf Habsburg of Austria and Ladislas IV of Hungary defeat Ottokar II.

1279 (23 June) Hungary's first Cumanian Law.

(10 August) Decrees of Hungarian Diet at Teteny issued (2nd Cumanian Law).

1280 (?1282) Battle of Lake Hod; Ladislas IV ("the Cuman") forcibly restrains Cumans from leaving Hungary.

The Kipchaks

The Medieval world knew them by different names. The Russians called them "Polovetsy", the Hungarians "Kunok", the Arabs and Persians "Qipchaq" and "Qangli", the Mongols "Kimchag", the Germans sometimes "Falven", and most of the rest of Europe knew them as the "Cumans". The varied spellings of their names continue seemingly endlessly to include "Kipchak", "Qifjaq", "Xifjaq", "Kimcha'ud", "Quman", "Comani", "Polovtsy", "Skythicon" (what the Byzantines called the Pechenegs or Cumans in their army), and tens more. The popular forms of the Anglicized spellings for this group of peoples are: "Kipchak/Qipchaq," "Cuman," and "Kangli."

Why three? The Kipchaks could be delineated into three main groupings: the main body/whole body can be referred to as the Kipchaks, while the western [European] branch is usually recorded as Cumans, and the eastern [Asiatic] branch are known as the Kangli.

The Kipchak legacy is the story of the hub of the world during a tumultuous and monumentally historic time. Nearly everyone has heard of the Mongols, and nearly half of many know of the exploits of the Mamluks of Middle Eastern notoriety, but how many can recite the deeds of the intrepid Kipchaks, even though the Kipchaks were an integral part of Mongol and Mamluk history? Actually, these tribes are well known in fables and history in languages other than English. Hundreds of these foreign works have the Kipchaks as their subjects.

The Kipchaks first appear in Russian chronicles in 1055 C.E. (1), causing additional alarm as they moved into the area in the wake of the Russian people's ever-increasing threat from Turkic tribes moving westward. Driven by the desire for space and autonomy, the Kipchaks spread out and in less than ten years had already waged many battles with Russian princes and continued to gain vast territories. Kipchaks would be masters of the door to or from Europe, Asia,

or the Middle East- the southern steppes- for the next 150 years, pillaging and taking captives to be sold to Arab, Greek, or Italian merchants. Eurasians feared and revered them. Later, when Mongol expeditions reached lands inhabited by Kipchaks, vendettas and alliances were renewed as a portion of the confederated Kipchak tribes were Mongolic in origin, as well as Turkic. Indeed, some of the Kipchaks sided with the Mongols and became members of their army, while others resisted the ancient enemy to the point that the Mongols repeatedly used fleeing Kipchaks as an excuse to invade territories! When Mongols took Kipchaks captive, if they did not slay them for their insolence, or their distrust of them as traitors if they surrendered (2), they were sold into slavery in the Middle East. Kipchaks comprised a substantial portion of the Mamluk populace (3)! Russian gains, Mongol defeats, Mamluk fates, all are facets of the historic Kipchaks.

Part of the appeal of the Kipchak persona is their abundance of eclectic conditions brought upon by their travels, settled regions, and captivities. One could historically place a Kipchak in any religion: their own tribal beliefs of Shamanism, aspects of Manichaeism, Nestorian Christianity, Eastern Orthodox, Judaism, Roman Catholicism, Islam, even Buddhist, as historical examples exist to verify all these choices (4). Moreover, a Kipchak could serve in a Byzantine, Georgian, Hungarian, Kwarizmian, or Russian garrison, or on the flip side could be fighting any of the above. They could be exchanging blows with the Varangian Guard that defended the Byzantine Empire. A Teutonic Knight, used in a small part to settle and fortify Hungary, could defend against Kipchak incursions. The Hungarians even loaned Kipchaks to German armies (5). An Egyptian or Syrian Sultan may incorporate Kipchak Mamluks into his army. A Kipchak merchant may reside in Italy, as the Italians who traded in the Black Sea and Mediterranean had much to do with Mongol expansion into Europe. In fact, the Kipchak Khanate Khan, Janibeg, backed by Venetians, seized Kaffa,

Cumans, Bulgars, Khazars and Alans attempt to ambush Mongols, accept a Mongol bribe to withdraw, and are consequently attacked and slaughtered.

Dominicans send missionaries to Cumans.

1223 (16 June) Kotian Khan and joint Russian army suffer Mongol defeat at the River Kalka, near the Sea of Azov.

1227 Bortz/Bortch (meaning "debt") khan of the Cumans west of the Dneiper, has his people baptised as Catholics and swears allegiance to Hungary in Moldavia.

1229 Bishopric of Cumania with seat at Milkov in Moldavia.

1236 Batu and Subedei commence Mongol campaign in West.

1238 Kotian Khan seeks once and for all sanctuary from the Mongols after many defeats at their hands, and at least one victory, and finds asylum in Hungary.

1239 The Bela IV and the Hungarians welcome the Kipchaks into Hungary through the Radna Pass with a great ceremony on Easter Day, 1239. Kotian has agreed to convert his people to Catholicism, and be loyal to Hungary.

1240 Alliance of Baldwin II, Latin Emperor of Constantinople, with Cumans on lower Danube.

1241 (March) The Mongols, having taken Galich, are poised to strike Hungary. Hungarian resentment had been building against the Cumans whose large herds destroyed farmland and nomadic ways conflicted with Hungarian communities. Bela IV found it necessary to shelter the great Kotian Khan and his family in a royal palace in Pest. A group of German and Hungarian soldiers, most likely instigated by Duke Frederick Babenberg of Austria, mounted an assault on the pal-

against the Cumans.

1122 Pechenegs (pronounced Pawt-zi-noks) are defeated at the Battle of Eski Zagra. The Cumans subsequently occupy their lands.

1159 The Ipat'yevskaya Chronicle reports Russians deserting lands along the middle Dneiper River region due to Polovetsian ravages.

1180 The Polovetsi aid Prince Igor Svyatoslavich and the Olgovichs against Prince David Rostislavich in Smolensk.

1183 Kievan Grand Prince Svyatoslav (not Igor) captures Khan Kobryak

1185 (March) Russian Princes Ryurik and Svyatoslav defeat the Polovetsi on the Khorol River. Igor Svyatoslavich, seeking his own fame a month later, launches his famous, though disastrous, campaign against the Polovetsi. Koncheg Khan retaliates successfully in Pereiaslavl region.

1185-1187 Revolt against Byzantine rule by Cuman-descended Bulgarian "boyars" Peter and Asen, with Bulgar, Wallachian and Cuman troops; foundation of second Bulgar state.

1203 Cumans capture Kiev.

1219 Prince Mstislav of Novgorod, with Cuman help from Kotian Khan, recaptures Galich from Magyars. Start of Chingis Khan's Kwarizmian campaign.

1220 Mongols take Bukhara Samarkand. Kangli garrisons slaughtered.

1221 King George IV's Cuman cavalry of Georgian Royal Guards defeated by Mongols; Kotian Khan's force of

an important Genoese port on the Crimean Peninsula. He catapulted Plague infested bodies within its walls. Four ships laden with Kaffa survivors escaped to Italy, only to bring the Black Plague with them and spread it to the rest of Europe!

How does one explain exactly what and who the Kipchaks were? Their ethnogenesis remains an intense subject of discussion. We know of approximately 40 groupings or tribes that existed at one time or another, of Turkic, Iranian, or Mongolic ethnicity (6). But the heterogeneity does not stop there. Other Eurasian tribes and possibly caucasian tribes like the Kasogs, Circassians, Teutonic Crimean East Goths, and Avars could have had participating members as the Kipchaks migrated west. The ancestors of the Kipchaks



James Chambers, *The Devil's Horsemen*. New York: Atheneum, 1979, xiv.

had their origins in Central Asia, northern fringes of the steppes east of the Ural Mountains. The Kipchaks originally grew out of the Kimak tribes, an obscure people that lived in underground houses and never converted to Islam (7).

The semantics of the of the word root of Kipchak, or Cuman, or Kangli appears, in the analysis of scholars, to be "yellow". The "yellow" may be metaphorical, or literal. Yellow may originally have implied tribal designation, a

name, or it may give a clue to their outward appearance: whitish, yellow, beige, tan, light-brownish, sandy, blonde. The light color reference (referring most likely to fair skin and hair) has been noted again and again, with the earliest German account by Adam of Bremen; and Matthaïos of Edessa referred to them as the "Blonde Ones"(8). The pallid nomenclature could also refer to the color horses they favored, or the symbolic description of the steppe environment they came from (9). Either interpretation is equally valid, and they both may be right depending on the distinct group. Moreover, the Kipchaks were regarded as handsome people, their women much desired and married to anxious others (10).

The Kipchaks never established a state, and their formlessness may have served to prolong their existence, or hasten its demise, depending on one's interpretation. The twelfth century Jewish traveler, Petahia of Ratisbon commented that "they have no king, only princes and royal families" (11). The Kipchaks faced no grand, prolonged threat that would force a cooperative statehood.



Statue of Cuman woman, accessories hanging from her belt. Their dress, and hair, is clearly detailed. From Andras Palocz-Horvath, *Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians: Steppe People in Medieval Hungary*. Budapest: Corvina/Kultura, 1989, 99.

Byzantium often hesitated to war with the Kipchaks beyond the Danube, and instead opted to bribe them, as did the Hungarians to the west. The shahs of Kwarizm had more important targets in the islamic lands of Iran and Iraq, but hired

possibly to add insult to injury, had his brother Budjek dispatch him with a sword. (p.71) His death helped to devastate the Kipchaks' already worsening fate.

Found in Peter B. Golden, "Religion among the Qipchaqs," ([last issue of] 1998): 180-237:

Itlar/It-ogli/Ituk: all derivatives of a descriptive name meaning "dog", "dog-like", or "dog head"- all complimentary terms.

Timeline

1055 Cuman advance guard at the Dnieper in pursuit of Ghuzz tribe.

1061 Cumans at southern fringe of Russian principalities.

1068 Russian Princes Izyaslav, Svyatoslav, and Vsevolod beaten by Polovetsians on Al'ta/L'to River.

1071 Cumans at border of Kievan principality.

1078 First Cuman intrusion into the Balkans.

1079 Russian Prince Oleg "Gorislavich"'s brother, Prince Roman of Tmutarakan, is killed by Polovetsi.

1091 Battle of Mount Levunion; Byzantines and Cuman allies devastate the Pechenegs. Cuman army invades Hungary and is vanquished by King (St.) Ladislav.

1099 Bonyak Khan's Cumans defeat Hungarian army of King Coloman Beauclerc at Przemysl.

1103 Unified Russian forces crush Cumans.

1116 Cumans occupy Sarkel; Prince Yaropolk's campaign

Kotony/Kotian/Kuthan/Kutan: leader of the Kipchaks that sought refuge in Hungary under Bela IV and fell victim to jealous Hungarian nobles.

Found in Andras Paloczi-Horvath, *Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians: Steppe People in Medieval Hungary*. Budapest: Corvina/Kultura, 1989:

Alpra/Al-bura: meaning "tawny-colored camel", supreme Cuman commander 1260s and 70s, Cuman leader who in 1273 King Charles of Sicily admonishes to stay loyal to the Hungarian crown after the death of King Stephen. (p. 91)
Zeyhan/Zehan: possible murderer of Ladislas IV. (pg. 54)
Arbuz: meaning "watermelon", possible murderer of Ladislas IV. (p. 55)

Turtel/Tort-oyul: meaning "five sons" possible murderer of Ladislas IV. (p. 55)

Kemenche/Kamanche: meaning "little bow" possible murderer of Ladislas IV. (p. 55)

Menk/Manj: meaning "birthmark", led Bela IV's troops in 1264 against Bela's own son, Duke Stephen. (p. 55)

Uzur: a member of the Great Council at Teteny which settled the provisions of the law of 1279 regarding Cuman settlement. (p. 55)

Tolon/Tolun: meaning "full moon", a member of the Great Council at Teteny which settled the provisions of the law of 1279 regarding Cuman settlement. (p. 55)

Found in James Chambers, *The Devil's Horsemen*. New York: Atheneum, 1979:

Bachman: After Mongol surprise attacks in 1237 that claimed outlying Kipchak clans, the Kipchaks rallied behind Bachman Khan, and hid in the forests along the Volga. Mankgu and Budjek eventually surrounded him on an island river, and captured him. He refused to kneel before Mankgu and exclaimed, "Do you think I am a camel?" Rather than plead for mercy, he requested to die by Mankgu's own hand. Mankgu,

Kipchaks for garrison duty. The Russians posed one of the larger threats, but by the mid 1100s the lack of princely unity fragmented with constant internecine wars. It wasn't until the Mongols that Kipchaks faced a lethal concerted enemy, and the Mongols consequently ended all likelihood of a sovereign Kipchak state. They did, however, adopt the tribal name to designate Juji's and Batu's territory centered at Saray/Sarai on the lower Volga River, the Kipchak Khanate--the Golden Horde (12)!

Through marital and martial alliances, the Kipchaks maintained in an ambiguous existence with the Russians, Byzantines, Georgians, Kwarizmians -- one of war at one moment and peace at another. The assorted tribes, each under a ruling clan, formed subconfederations under charismatic ruling houses and acted independently of each other, including implementing opposing policies (13). It is important to note that the Kievan Rus grouped the Kipchaks that they had direct contact with in two classifications. The so-called "Wild Cuman" tribes had an ongoing tradition of hostility, while the "Non-Wild Polovcian" tribes were more friendly (14).

The Kipchaks drove many tribes before them, assimilating or dominating tribes such as the Oghuz, Pecheneg (pronounced Pawt-zi-nok) and various Iranian, Finno-Ugrian, and Slav nomadic groups. They controlled the South Russian steppes and parts of the northern coast of the Black Sea, and from Wallachia and Moldavia (present day Rumania) raided deep into the Byzantine Empire. To this end, they occasionally joined forces with the Normans of southern Italy or the Hungarians who attacked Byzantium from the west (15). After 1159 C.E., the Kipchaks shifted their center of influence north to the Dnepr River and raided Russia, though a portion stayed and settled into a life as Rumanians with the Vlachs. Kipchaks in Byzantium south of the Danube eventually served as garrisons and then as a fief or "pronoia" holding military aristocracy (16).

A Kipchak could make a living as a warrior in many ways. One could quest and conquer with the tribe and keep

the spoils. Another option could be to hire himself or herself out as a mercenary in exchange for the promise of loot. Or, as many Kipchaks did, one could serve as a member of a garrison. Unfortunately, too many Kipchak warriors that settled into a garrison forgot their light cavalry skills and became poor infantry. The Mongols took full advantage of this when it slaughtered the Kipchak garrison at Samarkand in 1220 (17). Kipchak women could fight alongside their male counterparts (18).

Kipchaks fought largely as light cavalry, although in the late 11-early 12th century they fielded heavy cavalry. The Kipchak weapons of choice were a recurve and later composite bow (worn at their hip with the quiver), javelin, and curved sabre (not having as pronounced a curve as a scimitar). The heavy cavalry may have been equipped with the above items, and/or additionally a mace, a round or almond shaped shield, and a heavy spear for lancing. European contact had its influence as well: later period Kipchaks have been known to wield battle-axes and war hammers.



Cuman chain mail found at Csolyos. Notice the alternating rows of butted and riveted mail. From Andras Paloczi-Horvath, Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians: Steppe People in Medieval Hungary. Budapest: Corvina/Kultura, 1989,

The Kipchak horseman used stirrups, commonly oval shaped, and utilized a large bridle and a bit for the horse. A small whip, often attached to the wrist, was



The Cuman mounted archer shown shooting to the rear, a revered skill. It is depicted in a wall painting in Szepes-mindszent (Bijacovce, Czechoslovakia) telling the Legend of St. Ladislav. He is wearing a pointed felt cap over a chain mail coif and a long caftan with embroidered hems that fasten at the side; at his belt is strapped a lidded quiver. From Andras Paloczi-Horvath, Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians: Steppe People in Medieval Hungary. Budapest: Corvina/Kultura,

see page 102).

Kopti: chieftain, took Vladimir

Eldechyuk: chieftain, took Svyatoslav of Rilsk

Kobyaka: chieftain, Igor once held an alliance with him

Toksobich & Kolobich & Etebich & Tetrobich: Russian versions of Kipchak chieftains captured in battle, may be any of the above forementioned or other individuals entirely (see page 105). The Kipchak base name would most likely be the equivalent of: *Toks(o), Kolo, Ete, Tetr(o)*.

Lavor/Ovlur/Vlur: possibly a kinsman, aided Igor in his escape

Sharokan/Sharohan/Sharukan: (Kipchak base name Sharu/Sharo) chieftain, Konchak's grandfather who had been defeated by the Russians in a great battle on the Sula River in 1107. Called "the Old" by Russians.

Asalup: his daughter married Igor's grandfather, Oleg

Girgen: his granddaughter was Igor's stepmother.

The following name can be found in: Robert C. Howes, The Tale of the Campaign of Igor. New York: WW Norton and Co, Inc., 1973:

Bonyak/Bonyek/Bongek: chieftain, time of Sharukan.

Called "the Mangy" by Russians. (see page 2)

Toglyy: cheiftain, time of Igor's imprisonment. (see page 8)

The following names can be found in: Peter Golden, An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992, 279.

Etrek/Otrok: son of Sharokan/Sharohan/Sharukan

Sirchan: son of Sharokan/Sharohan/Sharukan

Eltut: brother to Konchak/Konchek

Yurgi: occidental name of Konchak/Konchek's son, died against the Mongols at the Battle of Kalka

Sevench: son of Bonyak/Bonyek/Bongek

The following name can be found just about anywhere:

guages and alphabets, a plethora of Kipchak name spellings exist. All of the following name versions are documentable and correct, depending on preference- some being more common than others. Kipchak names are descriptive. They can represent a personal trait, an idea, a social station.

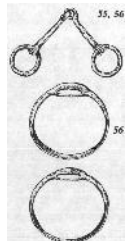
The following names can be found in: Vladimir Nabokov, *Song of Igor's Campaign*. New York: Vintage Books, 1960:

Konchak/Konchek/Kumcheg: meaning "trousers", a chieftain, daughter married Igor's son Prince Vladimir of Putivl

Chilbuk: chieftain, took Igor of Novgorod-Seversk
Roman (most likely not a Kipchak name/occidental): son of Kza, chieftain, took Vsevolod of Kursk

Gzak/Gza/Kza/Koza: chieftain, father of Roman

another essential part of a horseman's accessories. Turkic chiefs were known to wield the symbolic mace with a head shaped like that of a bull, it is quite possible Kipchaks shared this tradition (19). An established Turkic warrior could wear a sword belt complete with pendant straps, a mark of military aristocracy (20). Banners could be cloth with tribal emblems, and could be made of dyed horse hair- the more tails, the more established the warrior or group. Western heraldry did have an influence as Kipchaks moved west, and eventually warriors displayed hybridized European-Kipchak heraldry.



A Cuman snaffle bit and a pair of oval stirrups from Kunszentmarton. From Andras Palocz-Horvath, *Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians: Steppe People in Medieval Hungary*. Budapest: Corvina/Kultura, 1989,

Kipchak armor consisted of either a short sleeved, chain mail hauberk of commonly alternating butted and riveted rows, iron or leather lamellar, or leather cuirass complete,

Examples of Kipchak arms and armor in S.A. Pletneva, *Polovtsy*. Moscow: Nauka, 1990,

or a combination of these, complete with shoulder spaulders; a conical iron helm with detachable bronze anthropomorphic face plate, and sometimes a chain or leather camail suspended from the helm.



The favored Kipchak battle tactic was repeated charges by cavalry archers, a feigned retreat, and lastly a skillful ambush. In support of this end, they maintained large numbers of horses to refresh fatigued ones. The Kipchaks traveled largely with wagons as well, not only to carry

their supplies and lodgings, but to transport their sophisticated mangonels, ballistas, and incendiary weapons used to wreak havoc on fortifications. The wagon had four large wheels. Wooden laths made up the frame of their light felt tent that could sat atop the wagon and could easily be placed on the ground. The Kipchaks "grilled" the windows of their tents, making it easy to see out, but hard to see in (21). The Kipchaks constructed forts of their own for defense and settlement as they became more sedentary. Occasionally accompanying Balkan Kipchaks were Vlach tribesman mostly used as infantry.

Male garb and female garb were similar in Kipchak culture, but not the same. According to the crusader Robert de Clari, the ordinary tribesmen dressed in sheepskins (22). Many did. In fact, the shirt of choice was actually a long, sleeveless vest of sheepskin, hair side out, worn in conjunction usually with bracers. An under tunic, or tabard, with short or long sleeves,



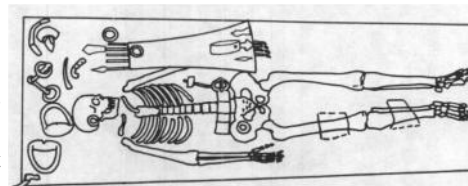
Русские князья с войском в половецкие степи. Миниатюра Радзивилловской летописи

extending to the mid calf, and split only in front and back between the legs- horse-man style, could be worn in conjunction with the vest, or either article alone. Although easily the most common, Kipchak men did not wear this style of tabard exclusively. Men wore conical felt or leather hats, pointy or rounded at the top with fur trim around the base if leather, or a broad brim if felt. This broad brim helped to distinguish Kipchaks because it was upturned on the sides and rear, and pointy in the front. Men sported long hair and pronounced moustaches, and could wear their hair loose or braided, down

Examples of Kipchak wagons, with detachable tent tops that could additionally be set up on the ground. From S.A. Pletneva, Polovtsy. Moscow: Nauka, 1990, 66.

- ◆ The Turkish system of geographic referents is colored: black=north, white=west, blue=east, red=south (30).
- ◆ When firewood could not be had, Kipchaks used dung for fires.
- ◆ When stationary and not traveling, the Kipchaks would loose their horses, oxen, and camels without sheppards or guards, as strict laws/taboo against thievery existed in their culture.
- ◆ Their diet could consist of a type of soup with millet, any meat they had cut up in pieces and added. They eat this alongside curdled milk (cottage cheese). Bread and other solid foods could be rare depending on locale. For drink, one could imbibe "qumizz" (curdled mare's milk) or "buza" (beer).
- ◆ Horses were their livelihood, and they maintained them by the thousands.
- ◆ They showed a remarkable respect for their women, serving them and letting them have the leisure of riding on horse or wagon while the men may walk.
- ◆ Purple, actually a deep crimson very similar to purple, is period for Kipchak decoration.

Names



Cuman burial in the Donets region complete with quiver and horse trappings. From Andras Palocz-Horvath, Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians: Steppe People in Medieval Hungary. Budapest: Corvina/Kultura, 1989, 102.

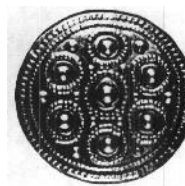
Due to the berscult that men of the chaks vary in a

to number of features made in a Kipchak city of

is entirely possible that the Kipchaks' fighting style and near common origins posed a threat to the Mongols. Ancient animosity had a part to play as well. The Kipchaks had provided sanctuary for Merkit and other refugees, victims of Chingis Khan's wars in his rise to Mongolian power. Harboring "slaves" as steppe cultures referred to their vanquished who fled them, was an affront to the Mongols. The Kipchaks themselves had used the same language earlier when addressing the Byzantines regarding their harboring of beaten Avars.

After the Mongol conquest, Kipchak culture began to adopt (forcibly or willingly) more Mongol and other customs from exterior influences wherever they happened to settle. Mongol words, foods, even clothing dominated portions of the Kipchak populace in the Golden Horde. Thankfully, manuscripts would survive that would preserve for future generations the history and language of the Kipchaks. Two of the more notable being the Russian Epic of "The Song/Lay of Igor's Campaign", the tale of Prince Igor Svyatoslavich's disastrous campaign against the Cumans in 1185; and the "Codex Cumanicus", a Cuman dictionary comprised by different authors in the early 1300s with Italian, German, and Persian translations including riddles (28). Treatment will not be given these two works due to the extensive commentary possible, save to say they serve as excellent sources. Kipchaks would change, and time would go on, but the fact that Kipchaks made a dramatic impact on world events would never change. It is even contemplated by scholars that the Mongol retreat from Europe was not to elect a new Khan, but to chase the fleeing Kipchaks to the Balkans (29). One can still find remnants of these proud people in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, where people continue to have Kipchak tribal names and speak modern versions of the Kipchak tongue, but this too is in jeopardy. Alas, that is a modern story . . .

Kip“facts”



Cuman decorative button from Bodoglarpuszta in Andras Palocz-Horvath, Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians: Steppe People in Medieval Hungary. Budapest: Corvina/Kultura, 1989,

among men and women, decorative arm bands, either

cloth (sewn on) or metal, were popular.

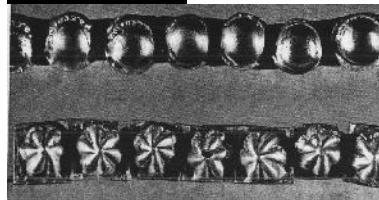
Cuman armlets from Balotapuszta. From Andras Palocz-Horvath, Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians: Steppe People in Medieval Hungary. Budapest: Corvina/Kultura, 1989, pl. 41.



Women wore pants as well, and sometimes dresses. The female tunic was shorter than the mens, and sometimes split in four along the leg-front and back, and the two sides. Females commonly donned stout, conical felt hats, flat on top, with a cloth veil extending down their back. This veil did not cover their hair, face, or neck (excluding the back). Hair could be worn in braids twisted into buns at the side of the head or descending down the back.

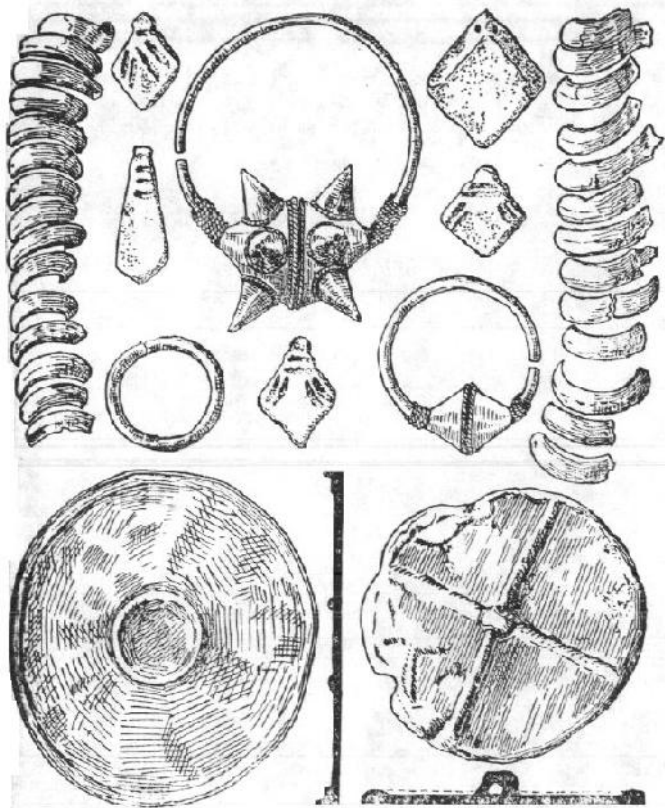
Rosette and hemispherical Cuman dress mounts from Balotapuszta. From Andras Palocz-Horvath, Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians: Steppe People in Medieval Hungary. Budapest: Corvina/Kultura, 1989, pl. 47.

Tribes or clans could be designated by a name of an animal or object, by the person who led them, or even by the person leading them adopting the name of the tribe. For example, the "Altunopa" clan or tribe (unknown distinction), has the word roots "Altun (< Turk. gold)" and "-opa/-oba (< Turk. extended family, camping unit, tribe)." The name of the "gold" clan,



and many times its leader, would be called "Altunopa." The rule can be applied to any household or group. Simply add -opa/-oba to any Turkic noun. Additionally, the leader could have -apa/-aba instead of -opa/-oba which would denote him as the senior ancestor or military chief (23).

The family structure of the Kipchaks is as follows: a "beg" or "bey" was the head of the family, or nobility, a



Examples of jewelry in S.A. Pletneva, Polovtsy. Moscow: Nauka, 1990, 125.

man in charge, etc.; fami-

lies formed a "horde" or "clan" led by a "sultan"; and many hordes formed to create a tribe, or a number of tribes, ruled by a "Khan". Feudalism would eventually usurp the traditional social structure, changing tribal identity from kinship to territory-based, and some Kipchaks did settle into sedentary lives, attracted by agriculture, and making money at crafts such as iron and leather working, archery items, and saddle making. A few Kipchaks as merchants followed the ancient trade routes from their towns to the Middle East, the Orient, even to Italy.

Religion among the Kipchaks is no easy analysis. Their traditional religion seems to be shamanistic and totemic, recognizing animal spirits and ancestors. The Cumans called their shamans "Kam" (24). Kipchaks, being tribal, continued to recognize the importance of family, of ancestors, of the first people, the original "Great King" that all died and had lived well would see. Funerals for great persons involved building a mound, placing the deceased inside, often with a horse, sometimes a servant or slave, and other useful items for the afterlife. The Kipchaks held the dog "It/Kopec (<Turkic dog)" as sacred. So sacred in fact, that a person, a clan, or a tribe would take on the name of the dog, or type of dog. Oaths were sworn with swords in hand that touched the carcass of a dog cleaved in two (25). They respected the wolf, "bori (<Turkic wolf)", immensely, the resourceful, ferocious, steppe predator, and at times would howl along with them to commune (26). The Khans' personal bodyguard were referred to as "bori". Allies, brothers, family, could implement blood bonds (the mixing or drinking of each others blood to symbolically cement a bond) (27).

The Kipchaks inevitably fell prey to other conquerers, some of most skillfull warriors that the world had ever known- the Mongols. The Kipchaks tried in vain to resist them, fighting them steppe by steppe (pun intended) as the Mongols advanced westward from Samarkand. The Mongols slaughtered them in their wake most treacherously as they seemingly targeted the Kipchaks on every occasion. It