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Kerlevüt in the Crimea and the historical ethnic name *Kürlevüt* ~ *Kürlü'üt***Abstract**

Kerlevüt ~ *Kirlevüt* is the name of six villages known from the pre-Russian Crimea. This oikonym is certainly of ethnic origin. So far a similar ethnonym has only been attested in two historical documents, Rašīd ad-Dīn's chronicle and Abulghazi Bahadur Khan's *Genealogy of Turks*, where the *Kürlevüt* are mentioned among Mongol tribes. In this paper, an attempt is made to identify the Crimean *Kerlevüt* ~ *Kirlevüt* with the historical *Kürlevüt* ~ *Kürlü'üt* from outside the Crimea. For this purpose all the extant documentary attestation is presented and an etymology of the name *Kürlü'üt* and *Kerlevüt* is proposed.

Kerlevüt in the Crimea

Evidence for this hypothetical ethnic name is only provided by the names of Crimean habitation places. Among the most frequent Turkic ethnic names in the corpus of Crimean oikonyms in Jankowski (forthcoming), *Kerlevüt*, with six occurrences, ranks thirteenth after *Qypčaq* (23 occurrences), *Qoŋrat* (19 occurrences), *Qyjat* (18 occurrences), *Najman* (14 occurrences), *Miŋ* (12 occurrences), *Qyrq* and *Tama* (11 occurrences each), *Keneges* and *Üjšün* (9 occurrences each), and *Qaŋŋyl* ~ *Qaŋly* and *Qytaj* (7 occurrences each).

Evidence for the oikonym *Kirlevüt* is furnished by the first Russian administrative documents relating to the Crimea. Muxin's map of 1816, published in 1817 (Muxin 1817), shows the following villages which bear the name *Kerlevüt* ~ *Kirlevüt*: *Керлеутъ* (g) *Керлеутъ* (p) *Кирлеутъ* (e), *Кирлеутъ* (g), *Кирлеутъ* (h) and *Кирлеутъ* (n).¹

¹ Round brackets enclose grid references to Muxin's map in Jankowski (forthcoming).

All these villages were successfully identified in two the most important Russian registers of the villages of the Crimea prepared by Russian administration in 1784–1784 and 1805–1806:

Кирлеутъ (e) – 1784 *Kirleut*” (Laškov” 1888: 56) and 1806 *Kerleut*” (in Yashbek district of Eupatoria province, Laškov” 1897: 295).

Керлеутъ (g) – 1784 *Kerleut*” *bočala* (Laškov” 1888: 51) and 1805 *Kerleut*” (in Bozköz district of Perekop province, Laškov” 1897: 261).

Керлеутъ (g) – 1784 *Kirleut*” (Laškov” 1888: 61) and 1805 *Kerleut*” (in Janai district of Perekop province, Laškov” 1897: 255).

Кирлеутъ (h) – 1784 *Kirleut*” (Laškov” 1888: 49) and 1805 *Kerleut*” (in Biyük-Tuzakchi district of Perekop province, Laškov” 1897: 263).

Кирлеутъ (n) – 1784 *Kirleut*” (Laškov” 1888: 52) and 1805 *Kerleut*” (in Urus Kōja district of Feodosia province, Laškov” 1897: 291).

Керлеутъ (p) – 1784 *Kerleut*” (Laškov” 1888: 59) and 1805 *Kirlevut*” (in Parpach district of Feodosia province, Laškov” 1897: 288).

Unfortunately the ethnic history of the Crimea, and the history of the Turkic peoples of the region are full of gaps and omissions. Although numerous sources and documents mention the most important tribes and clans, such as *Širin*, *Baryn*, *Mansur*, *Seğevüt*, *Aryyn*, *Qypčaq* and *Maŋgyt*, our knowledge of minor tribes and clans is very poor. Moreover, only the *Aryyns*’ genealogical tree has been published (Laškov” 1897: 43). No source and no document mentions the people of *Kerlevüt* ~ *Kirlevüt*. As a matter of fact, one may feel doubts about the ethnic character of the names of the villages listed above. However, their ethnic origin is certain for two reasons. Firstly, the linguistic structure of this oikonym, secondly the location of these villages. Namely, all these villages are located in steppe areas of the peninsula where once nomadic Turkic tribes migrated and where they later settled down. The names of villages that emerged as a result of this process are mostly ethnookonyms or anthropookonyms or reflect the features of landscape, being oikonyms composed from topographic terms, terms of orientation etc. It is absolutely clear that *Kerlevüt* ~ *Kirlevüt* is an ethnookonym.

Evidence from outside the Crimea

As said above, there are only two historical sources known so far which mention the *Kerlevüt* ~ *Kirlevüt*. Rašid ad-Dīn calls them a Mongolian people *Kürlevüt* (RA 216) *qwm kwurl’awut*, i.e. *qawm-i Kürlevüt*, in other copies *kwrlw’wt*, i.e. *Kürlü’üt*. They are said to have been closely connected with the *Qoŋgyrat*, *Elčigin* and *Barqut* who used the same *tamya*. In Rašid ad-Dīn’s opinion originally they were not Mongols (RA 82). Abulghazi Bahadur Khan in his *Genealogy of Turks* makes a short mention of the Mongol people *Kürlevüt*, *kwrl’wt*, who beside the *Borqut* or *Burqut* were closely related to the *Qoŋgyrat* (Ölmez 2003: 59, 213).

In contrast to most ethnonyms reflected in Crimean habitation place names, which are shared with other Turkic peoples, basically Kypchaks, such as Noghais,

Kazakhs, Karakalpaks and the ethnically mixed Kirghiz and Uzbeks, but also others, e.g. Altai, the ethnonym *Kerlevüt* ~ *Kirlevüt* is not attested to, see the Noghai ethnonyms (Baskakov 1940; Baskakov ed. 1963; Kerejtov 1999; Trepavlov 2001) and oikonyms (Bulgarova 1999), Kazakh ethnonyms (Qudajberdiuly 1991; Amanžolov 1997; Šežire 1991; Tolybekov 1992), Kirghiz ethnonyms (Abramzon 1960; Attoqurov 1995; Qaratajev 2003), Uzbek ethnonyms (Vámbéry 1885), Bashkir ethnonyms (Kuzeev 1960) and oikonyms (Xisametdinova 1991, 1992), Altai ethnonyms (Baskakov and Toščakova 1947) and oikonyms (Molčanova 1979), and Khakas ethnonyms (Butanaev 1994, 1999) and oikonyms (Butanaev 1995).

The single genealogical study which lists this ethnonym is Qudajberdiuly's genealogy. He gives this ethnonym in the form *Körlevüt* (in a new edition of his book spelt көрлеут), but identifies it with the *Qarluq* (Qudajberdiuly 1991: 19), which is wrong (for the Mongol form of this ethnonym derived with the suffix *+t* see below).

Apart from the two sources indicated above, we could not find any evidence for the ethnonym *Kürlevüt* in other sources (e.g. *Secret History*, see SH and Kałużyński 1970) and studies relating to the Mongols (Shastina 1975; Kałużyński 1983; Njambuu 1992). It is also absent from Mongolian toponyms (Haltod 1966).

The etymology of *Kürlü'üt* and *Kerlevüt*

The spelling of this oikonym in Crimean Tatar historical documents is *krlwt* (e.g. in 1668, SSSM 10,13) which may be read *Kerlevüt* or *Kirlevüt*, the former being commoner. The modern Crimean Tatar pronunciation is also [kerlevüt] (e.g. I-EA). Therefore, the basic form should be established as *Kerlevüt*. Had we accepted the relationship between the oikonym *Kerlevüt* and the historical ethnic name *Kürlevüt* ~ *Kürlü'üt*, we should establish the original form of this oikonym as *Kürlevüt* ~ *Kürlü'üt*. The unrounding of a round vowel in the first syllable after the consonant *k-* is attested to in the Crimea in some other oikonyms, e.g. *Közlev* → *Kezlev* and *Kenček* → *Könček*. Therefore, the change *-ü-* → *-e-* is also possible. As for the change *ker-* → *kir-*, it may be attributed to the instability of this vowel or other reasons as in the case of *Kerejit* → *Kirejit*.

The form *Kürlü'üt* may easily be explained as derived from **Kürlüg* ~ **Kürlük* with the plural suffix *+t*, which according to Menges (1995: 111) is evidenced in such Mongol ethnonyms as *Miyyat*, *Mañyyt*, *Qyjat*, *Käräjüt* and *Quryrat*, all being common among Turkic peoples. To these names we can probably add *Qarañyyt*, *Merküt*, *Ojrat* and *Oñyyut*. The problem with this explanation is that the plural suffix *+t* (*+d*) in Mongol languages is attached to the stems with the final *-ŋ* (← **-n*), *-l* and *-r* which are dropped when this suffix is attached (Sechenbaatar 2003: 26-27). However, there is evidence for the formations derived from stems ending in *-G* in ethnonyms, i.e. the Mongol form *Qarlu'ut* ~ *Qarlu'ut* of the well-known Turkic ethnonym *Qarluq* (SH 198; Poppe 1977: 166). In Old Turkic, the suffix *+t* was normally attached to the stems ending in *-n*, sometimes also in *-l*

(Erdal 1991: 78-79). The hypothetical name **Kürlüg ~ Kürlük* should be explained from the word *kür* which occurs in both Turkic and Mongol languages with various meanings, derived with the well-known suffix *+llg (+llQ)*. For Written Mongol, *kür* is glossed in the phrase *kür jeke ulus* as 'the whole great people' (Lessing 1960: 503), for Kalmuk as 'thick, fat' (Ramstedt 1976: 246). *Kür* first appears in Karakhanid Turkic. It is translated as 'brave; bold' (DTS 328) or 'strong, proud' (Dankoff and Kelly 1985: 115). Naturally, a word with such a meaning would perfectly be suitable for a name. It may also be sought in the well-known Qara Qytaj title *gürxan ~ kürxan* (for more on the meanings, distribution and etymology see ÈSTJa III 106-105).²

The form *Kürlevüt* should be explained in a different way. It resembles a well-known Turco-Mongol ethnonym *Baja'ud ~ Bajayut → Bajavut* (Shastina 1975: 242), also evidenced in the Crimea, which most probably reflects the common Old Turkic noun *bajayut*, derived from *baj* 'rich; wealthy; a rich man' with the suffix *+AGUt*. Erdal (1991: 76-83) has found five formations derived with the suffix *+AGUt* in Old Turkic which he calls a "class marker": *alpagut*, *bayagut*, (*baş*) *başagut*, (*uz*) *uzagut* and (*kadan*) *kadnagut* (the last also evidenced in the Crimea as *Qajnavut*).

If this is the case, it should be supposed that *Kürlevüt* has emerged from the former **Kürlegüt* as a result of a regular Kipchak change *g ~ γ → v*. Unfortunately, this form cannot be etymologised from any genuine Turkic word. As for Mongol languages, we have evidence for a word from which **Kürlegüt* could have been derived. It is *kürel* 'bronze' (Lessing 1960: 504), a word of unclear etymology, discussed in detail by Rybatzky (1994: 228-229), borrowed into south Siberian Turkic languages in the forms *küler ~ xüler* etc. Although there are many anthroponyms derived from metal terms, some of which have become ethnonyms, a derivation from the Mongol *kürel* with the Turkic suffix *+AGUt* is highly unlikely.³

Therefore, a more reasonable source for *Kürlü'üt* is **Kürlüg + (ü)t*, and the form *Kürlegüt → Kürlevüt* should be regarded as secondary, emerged from the phonetic association with such ethnonyms as *Bajayut → Bajavut* and *Qajnayut → Qajnavut*.

Conclusion

Crimean oikonyms contain more than sixty ethnic names, most of them are the names of Turkic or Turkicised tribes. These ethnooikonyms once occurred in the steppe areas of the Crimea, but some (e.g. *Aryyn*, *Najman* and *Tama*) penetrated as far southwards as the central mountainous part of the peninsula, to the south of the town Qarasuv Bazar. Many of these ethnonyms are shared by other Turkic peoples, such as the present-day Noghais and the Turkic peoples of Central Asia, the Kazakhs, Karakalpaks and Uzbeks.

² Note the homonymous OT *kür* in the doublet *tev kür* 'deception; trick' (DTS 328), which is rather unrelated to this name.

³ *Kürel* is attested to in one toponym, it is the Mongol name *Kürel ongyoča* of a mountain (Haltod 1966: 104).

The villages that have preserved the name of the *Kürlevüt* tribe through centuries shared the fate of many other Crimean Tatar villages in the Crimea in the aftermath of the Russian annexation, wars, deportations and ethnic cleansing. Only two of them have survived to date, one renamed to Russian as *Водопо́йное* the other as *Чернозёмное*.

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