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The Koumanians in the Bulgarian History (XI–XIV Centuries)

(Summary)

The genesis and pre-history of those ethnical groups that formed the core of the Koumanian (or Kipchak) people, played an important role in the destiny of Eastern Europe, are covered in darkness. As the “Eastern Huns” (Hsiung-nu) founded the first steppe state in the world under the leadership of their shan-yüi Mao-t’un (Mo-de, 209-174 BC), they conquered also the Küe-she (K’in-ch-a) who are accepted as possible ancestors of the Kipchaks. The name of those people is found in Old Turkic (Uighurian) inscriptions saying “When the Kipchaks [and] Turks ruled us for 50 years...”. However, in an earlier inscription instead of “Turks and Kipchaks” one can read “Turks and Sirs”, therefore it is supposed that “Sir” and “Kipchak” are both names of one society. After the victory of the Uighurs (744) this people immigrated with remnants of the Turks to North Altay and Upper Itrish region, where later appear the Kimeks. Their arrival is related to the expansion of the Proto-Mongol Kidans (Kitans, Kitays), who in 916 established a state, that Russians and Mongolians called China. In about 986 the Kidans occupied the lands Northeast of Peking and caused the immigration of the Koumanian ancestors. The later movements of people in the XXI century was again related to the expansion of this very Kidans under the Liao dynasty, whose downfall in 1125 gave an impulse for further migrations. It is assumed that in about 1020 the Kipchaks were already united with the Qun and the Sari people, forming a new tribe union, that was registered 10 years later in the surroundings of Khorezm. And approximately in 1040 another Proto-Mongol Kay tribe, former neighbour of the Kimeks in Manchuria, emerged in the steppe and caused a chain-

movement of tribes whereby Kimeks repelled Kipchaks, Kipchaks repelled Oghuzs, which repelled the Pechenegs from their homeland. The new rider people came to the Russian boundaries in the middle of the XXI century and in the next three decades they penetrated in Moldavia, partly in Hungary and on the Balkans. The Koumanians emerged at the south side of the Danube river in the late 1070s. They entered the Byzantine territory firstly as allies of the Pechenegs, then they assisted the emperor against those same Pechenegs and finally began to invade and to settle the region on their own. They spread widely on the Bulgarian lands, in Macedonia and the regions of Vidin, Vratza, Kotel, Sofia, Tarnovo, Silistra etc. In the course of time the newcomers integrated into the local community, preserving some of their cultural characteristics. Anyway in the XXII century there was already an ethnically mixed population on the Balkans, called "mixobarbarians" in the Byzantine sources. Moreover the founders of the Second Bulgarian Tsardom in 1185, the brothers Asen and Peter, belonged to them.