

## Terms Related To The Military Administration Of The Karakhanid State

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### ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the terms related to the military administration system and strategy of the Karakhanid state based on Mahmud al-Kashgari's work "Diwan Lughat al-Turk", as well as their semantic content and significance.

**Keywords:** - Karakhanids, Mahmud al-Kashgari, "Diwan Lughat al-Turk", ashuq, sunu, kesma, bogda, su, subashi, yatg'oq, tegin, chovush, haylboshi, yizak, qulovuz.

### INTRODUCTION

It is well known that the 9th–12th centuries in the history of our region are characterized as a great spiritual and intellectual era. The scholarly heritage of encyclopedic scholars who were active during this period later served as a fundamental foundation for world science. One of such scholars is Mahmud ibn Husayn ibn Muhammad al-Kashgari.

Mahmud al-Kashgari, a great linguist, historian, and ethnographer who lived and worked in the 11th century, authored the work "Diwan Lughat al-Turk", which is one of the most important sources for studying the history, culture, customs, and linguistic wealth of Turkic peoples. This work is not only the oldest dictionary of Turkic languages, but also provides valuable information about the socio-political life of that period, including military art.

The military terms found in the Diwan testify to the statehood traditions, military organization, weaponry, and combat skills of Turkic peoples. The scientific analysis of these terms is an important source for studying medieval Turkic military

culture. This work can be regarded as one of the most significant primary sources on the history of the Karakhanid state. Below, we mainly focus on military terms related to the Karakhanid period and their meanings.

Like all medieval states, the Karakhanid state undoubtedly relied continuously on military power in its activities. Therefore, the need for military forces was high, and the central authority paid great attention to their qualitative development and improvement. The military troops of this state were armed with various weapons such as swords, shields, and bows and arrows, as well as ashuq (iron helmet), sunu (spear), kesma (a narrow and long spear), and daggers known as bogda (1).

The deployment and movement of military troops were carried out according to strictly defined rules. For example, an ordinary soldier was called su, while the entire army formed in ranks was called cherik. The term su was also used in a collective sense, meaning the entire army. Just as in modern Uzbek usage the phrase "An Uzbek would not do that" refers not to an individual but to the whole

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nation, the term su could sometimes refer to a single soldier and sometimes to the entire military unit, depending on the context.

Each military unit performed specific assigned tasks. For instance, haylboshi commanded the cavalry units; yizak was the vanguard of the army, moving ahead and consisting of brave warriors who fought in the most intense areas of battle. Cavalry units have always been considered a very important component among Turkic peoples. Rapid military measures, tactical retreats, pursuit of enemy forces, and quick adaptation to battlefield conditions largely depended on cavalry units.

The official known as chovush maintained order in military ranks during battle. In times of peace, he prevented soldiers from acting arbitrarily and harming the civilian population. If soldiers were left uncontrolled, the risk of seizing or looting civilian property increased, which could lead to dissatisfaction with the ruler. Therefore, individuals holding the position of chovush were entrusted with great responsibility. During military campaigns, issues of lawlessness and violence against civilians were considered extremely serious. Although rulers did not personally desire such incidents, they were not always able to fully prevent them, especially during prolonged military operations and frequent troop movements.

Guiding the troops along the route was the responsibility of the qulovuz. They identified safe and convenient routes for the main army and warned of potential dangers. One of the greatest threats to military units was surprise ambushes organized by the enemy. Such ambushes were often set in narrow gorges, bridges, or river crossings that were difficult for large armies to pass. The qulovuz was responsible for protecting the army from such dangers. Usually, individuals in this position were experienced soldiers who were well acquainted with maps and travel routes.

In addition to the main army, there was also a specially selected military unit known as yortug', which stayed close to the ruler and protected him from threats. The warriors in this unit were selected based on various tests, military competitions, and combat experience. They were prepared for the most difficult situations and were considered the ruler's most loyal supporters.

The ruler's personal bodyguard was called yatg'oq (2). This official accompanied the ruler day and night and was responsible for protecting him from unexpected dangers.

The overall commander of the army was called subashi (3). Individuals with extensive military experience and proven loyalty were appointed to this position. Often, this important role was entrusted to members of the ruling dynasty. For example, during the reign of Ahmad ibn Ali Arslankhan (998–1017/1018), the Karakhanid campaigns into Mawarannahr intensified. These campaigns were led by the khagan's brother Nasr ibn Ali. Under his command, the Karakhanid army captured Fergana and Khujand in 994, Ilak and Shash in 995–996, and Ustrushana in 997, advancing into the central regions of Mawarannahr (4). Thus, logically, the subashi was the second most important figure after the khagan and was responsible for all military operations.

Military command was also tactically advanced. Military campaigns were carefully planned in advance, and each unit carried out specific tasks. During campaigns, ambushes were set against the enemy, and military fortifications known as qarg'u were built in elevated and strategic locations to defend against enemy attacks. There were also special military units called aqinchi, which carried out sudden night attacks on the enemy (5).

Soldiers who demonstrated bravery in battle were rewarded, and their ranks were promoted to motivate them in future engagements. Warriors who displayed exceptional military ability could even gain the favor of the khagan. In many cases, such recognition was achieved by Turkic soldiers of slave origin. Mahmud al-Kashgari mentions slave names such as Qutlug'tegin, Chag'ritegin, Kumushtegin, Kuchtegin, and Alptegin in his work, which serves as evidence of this (6). Undoubtedly, they earned the khagan's attention through loyal service. Thus, during this period, individuals were selected not based on social origin but on their abilities and talents.

At this point, it is worth paying attention to the term "tegin" found in the names of the historical figures mentioned above (7). The term tegin existed as early as the period of the Turkic Khaganate and was usually used as a title for princes who were heirs to the throne. At the same time, this term encompassed multiple military,

administrative, and social meanings. Initially, as an exalted title, it was applied only to members of the ruling dynasty during the Turkic Khaganate period. Over time, however, it began to be used for individuals outside the dynasty who faithfully served the rulers. Among them were many prominent historical figures. For example, Alptegin, associated with the Samanid period, initially rendered significant service to the Samanid state and was appointed governor of Ghazna. Later, as his influence and military power grew, he entered into conflict with the central authority. Although Ghazna formally remained a Samanid governorship during his time, it effectively began to be ruled independently. Under his successor Sabuktigin, Ghazna emerged as an independent state and dynasty and became one of the most powerful states in the region. Thus, the term tegin, as an exalted title, was widely used and carried varying military-administrative and socio-political meanings in different periods, making it an important term in the history of our statehood.

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