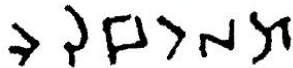


THE KHAZARS – SCRIPT

OVERVIEW

Before the Russians became the dominant power in southern Russia, there were other nations like the Khazars who had their own language and script. The Khazars wrote their original language in Turkic runic letters.

When the Khazars converted to Judaism, they adopted the Hebrew language and its script. It is possible that the Khazars might have learned Hebrew language from Jewish merchants to Khazaria or from the old Jewish settlers in the Crimea.



Written with Stepean Rovas font	⋈⋈ ρ>Nϣ
Written without ligatures	⋈⋈1 ρ1>Nϣ
IPA phonetic transcription	/oɣˈðiq ilʁ/
Translation from Khazar	'We have read. Ilik.'

SCRIPT : The Khazars wrote their original language with Turkic runic letters.

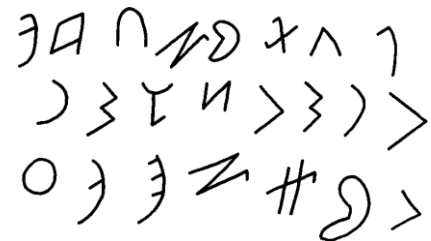
A single word written in Turkic runic script translated as “I read (it)” was found in the *Kievan Letter* (930), a piece of thin parchment from the Cairo Genizah, a storehouse of Jewish documents, manuscripts and manuscript fragments.

The Khazar runic inscription in the Kievan Letter

Besides the *Kievan Letter*, Turkic runes were also found in a cave in Kerch in the east of Crimea, on two small bottles from Novochoerkassk in Rostov Oblast, and on stones from the fort at the Mayaki hill in Voronezh Oblast which is one of the most studied Khazar sites.

Other Turkic runes were found in the medieval Khumar fortress in Karachay-Cherkessia:

The ruler Aaron pierced (the enemies), then (he) just married the youngest daughter (who belonged to) the kagan (king) of the Alans.



When the Khazars adopted Judaism, they also adopted the Hebrew language. The anonymous Khazar *Schechter Letter* and *King Joseph's Reply* were written in Hebrew.

The Arab writer Muhammad ibn Ishaq an-Nadim of Baghdad, in his *Kitab al-Fihrist* (Book of the List) written in the last decade of the 10th century, in the section “Remarks about the Turks and Those Related to Them”, mentioned that the “Khazar write Hebrew”.

Ta'rikh-i Fakhr ad-Din Mubarak Shah written in Persian in 1206 provided information about the Khazars. It pointed out that the Khazars, besides the Hebrew script, they also used a form of writing derived from Cyrillic alphabet with twenty-two letters written from left to right and the letters are not joined. The majority of the Khazars who used this script were the Jews. According to Mubarak Shah, the Khazars adopted this script from the Rūs, and the same script was used by Rūm-Rūs lived nearby.

Discussion/Questions

1- Why would the Khazars use a form of the Turkic runic script?

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