

## **"Khat'irilit'ber" in Lewond's History An 8th Century Armenian Historiography**

The present article is an additional note on the Khazar regiment called Khat'irilit'ber, found in the History of Lewond the Priest, which was translated into English for the first time with an introduction and commentary (1). The name occurs in chapter 31 and on page 125 of the 1982 English edition, where the historian Lewond refers to the invasion of the Khazar troops to Armenia, under general Razht'arkhan, during the reign of the Arab governor Yazid Ibn Usaid in the year 754. The historian says:

*«Գումարեաց զօր բազում տայր ի ձեռս զօրավարի միոջ. որ  
անուանեալ կոչիւր Ռաժթարխան, ի գնդէն իւր իր բերայ»:*

"[The king of the Khazars] assembled a large troop under the command  
of a certain general whose name was Razht'arkhan, from the regiment  
of Khat'irilit'ber, and sent it to our country which was under the rule  
of Yazid." (2)

The last phrase in the original says: "I gnden Khat'irilit'beray", which is "from the regiment of Khat'irilit'ber". The "ay" ending shows simply the genitive case of this proper name. Therefore, the name as written by the historian Lewond is to be "Khat'irilit'ber", which is of Turkic origin. In my opinion the name is the combination of two words and could be deciphered as such. It is much simpler to read this Turkish name as the combination of "khat'irli" and "tber".

The first word is perfectly understandable as an adverbial adjective, meaning "esteemed" or "influential", again with the combination of "khat'ir" ("honor") and "li" ending which is the equivalent of "possessing". Examples: "bereket+li", which means "possessing blessing", from "bereket", meaning blessing. Also Kuvvet+li, which means "power+ful".

Therefore, the first part of the name in Lewond is not distorted, but it stands correctly for the "influential" or "esteemed" [regiment]. The second part however is distorted in the Armenian text. Most probably it was "tabour", which is "battalion", "regiment", or "a military sub-division". Thus, the entire name should stand not for a person, but for the prestigious, influential and esteemed horde of the Khazars.

The problem is that the plain Armenian reading of the passage implies either a person or a regiment. Note however that the word "i gnden" ("from the regiment") precedes the name and directly qualifies the latter as being a regiment. Still, the name deciphered this way, can only imply a horde rather than a general, since the name of the general Razht'arkhan is already given immediately before the name of the troop.

(1) History of Lewond, The Eminent Vardapet of the Armenians, by Zaven Arzumanyan, Philadelphia, 1982  
(2) *Ibid.* p. 125

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