

THE MASS PENETRATION OF KURDISH TRIBES INTO ARMENIA AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

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According to the medieval sources, after the Arabic conquests Kurds lived in a territory, which now corresponds to the locations of modern Iraqi Kurdistan and Iranian Kurdistan. It is known from trustworthy sources, that during the Arab invasions khalif's army conquered the cities of Takrit, Holvan and Mosul and the neighboring territories in northern Mesopotamia. There existed a large Kurdish population which was forced to pay a tax called kharaj to the conquerors¹.

Due to different political, economic reasons, during the Arab rule the geography of Kurdish settlements was not steady, neither was the number of the tribes. They constantly underwent changes. In general, the geographic, linguistic historical borders of Kurdish settlements were not united.

Approximately in VIII century large waves of Kurdish migration to different provinces of the enormous Arab caliphate occurred. The causes were diverse. Like all other nomadic tribes, Kurds were characterized by their constant mobility moving from one territory to another, there were mass migrations in search of pastures and water sources for their cattle. Moreover, the Arab sources state that in the caliphate Kurds served as mercenaries in the military units belonging to the semi-dependent and independent feudal authorities (in the emir houses like the Sajids, Sallarids, Daysams, etc), as well as in the regular army of the caliphate, thus participating directly in the conquest of such countries as Iran, Armenia, etc². We can presume that Kurds, who invaded Armenia and Iran with the Arab army, settled there.

In the sources concerning the era of the Abbasids Kurds are portrayed as insurgent, rebellious elements that were a constant threat to the caliphate. To subjugate them punishing operations were carried out. This was another cause for

¹ Minorsky V., "Kurden", *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, vol. II, Leiden-Leipzig, 1927, p. 1200.

² See Поладян А. Курды в VII–X веках по арабским источникам, Е., 1987, с. 41–51.

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the waves of Kurdish migrations. Finally, in the military clashes with powerful Arab tribes, defeated tribes were forced to search for a new place of settlement.

In X century among other directions a crucial wave of migration towards the north, i.e. Armenia was noticeable. As Arabist A.Ter-Ghevondian writes, “In the second half of X century the pure Arab element had almost completely disappeared in Greater Armenia, but instead, a new element, i.e. Kurds, who unlike Arabs, came under completely different circumstances, settled in the Armenian highlands. Arabs invaded Armenia as conquerors. The penetration of Kurds into Armenia was very peaceful, thus it was difficult to trace it back³”.

The easy and peaceful penetration of Kurds into Armenia was facilitated by the fact that Arab emir houses failed to preserve their supremacy. The breakthrough by Arab emirates in Armenia contributed to the easy and peaceful Kurdish penetration. The Arab emir houses failed to survive, but their territories were not re-conquered by the indigenous owners of the country and fell into the hands of the Kurdish elements that had already converted to Islam and had partly become Arabs. The indigenous feudal authorities made some attempts of re-conquering but with no great success as the Armenian kingdom lacked strong centralized power⁴.

Kurdish tribes and confederations moved to Armenia mainly from Northern Mesopotamia, from Mosul, the eastern bank of the Tigris and partly from Iranian Kurdistan and settled in Vaspurakan, Aghdznik and other places. Later, Kurds penetrated into Northern Armenia and settled in the vicinity of Dvin where in the rule of the Bagratunis Kurdish emir **Muhammad ibn Shaddad** (951–954) became temporary ruler. It is worth mentioning that he was the first Kurdish emir in Greater Armenia⁵. In about X century, a new military, political institution came into existence in the Kurdish rule, namely the institution of emirate (which in the Armenian sources was referred to as emirutyun). This institution survived up to the middle of XIX century. Emir was the military, political leader of tribes, inhabiting separate regions.

According to Arab authors, the tribe called ar-Ravadia, being one of the branches of the famous Kurdish tribal union **Hadbania**, settled in the region of

³ **Տեր-Ղևոնդյան Ա.**, Արաբական ամիրայությունները Բագրատունյաց Հայաստանում, Ե., 1965, էջ 191:

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See **Minorsky V.**, Studies in Caucasian History, London, 1953.

Dvin. Prominent Salah-ad-Din al-Ayyub descended from the ar-Ravadiya tribe, whose ancestors, according to Arab historians, were from Dvin⁶.

Kurds started spreading from Korchaik to Aghdznik, to the regions of Khizan and Sgherd, then they reached Arzn and Nrpert, later through Baghesh they entered the territory around Lake Van. According to Arab historians, Kurdish tribes al-Hamdiya, al-Bashnavia, al-Haqyaria, al-Bukhtia and others moved to the south-western areas of Greater Armenia⁷.

Taking the advantage of the weakened political power of the caliphate, as well as the rapidly growing anti-Arabic movements that were initiated by the Iranian peoples, Kurds could benefit from the favorable political situation. Thus, beginning from the second half of X century they managed to found a number of feudal authorities or gain local feudal wealth in different places and in Armenia as well.

In the southwestern area of Greater Armenia, the first emirate was founded which was known under the name of the Marwanids (Banu-Marwan/984–1083/).

Archesh, Khlat, Nprkert, Manazkert, Aghdznik, northern and western regions of Lake Van were under his rule. The founder of the emirate Bat (Bat Abu Abdullah ibn Dustak al-Kharbuti) raided even Taron, which was under the Byzantine rule. He plundered the city, massacred the residents of the whole province. Bat plundered the city of Mush as well⁸. The dynasty of the Shaddadids controlled all of the Southern Caucasus, particularly the region lying between the Aras and the Kur rivers, as well as the areas bordering Turkey, Iran, and Northern Iraq. Up to the end of XII century, another branch of the aforementioned dynasty ruled the vicinity of Ani city and borders of Armenia.

As A. Ter-Ghevondian states, the emir houses of the Kurdish origin, which existed under the rule of the last Bagratunis, were all in all Arab emirates. Their official language was also Arabic. He writes, “On the Armenian soil Kurds and Arabs along with other Islamic elements were acting as a monolithic entity, thus forming a united front against the indigenous Armenian population. In Armenian “tachik” meant not only “Arab” but also “Muslim” in general⁹.

⁶ See **Փղաղյան Ա.**, *Քրդերը Արբասյան խալիֆայության ժամանակաշրջանում* (X–XI դդ.), Ե., 1999, էջ 54–55:

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ **Տեր-Ղևոնդյան Ա.**, op. cit., p. 193–194:

⁹ Ibid, p. 192:

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Hence, before the mass migration of Central Asian Turkish tribes to Asia Minor and Western Armenia, the Kurdish tribes had already initiated this process. In XI–XII centuries the Seljuk-Turks' aggression was a stimulus for the large-scale migration of Kurdish tribes. In 1071 in the battle of Manazkert having defeated Byzantium as well as unleashing victorious wars the Seljuk invaders not only conquered Western Armenia but also the majority of the Kurdish-populated territories in the Middle East. It is worth mentioning that “Kurdistan’s” and “Kurds” denominations were mentioned for the first time in XII century during the rule of the Seljuk Sultan Sanjar (1117–1157)¹⁰.

At the outset of XIII century from the depth of Central Asia, a new major power like Mongols stepped on the stage of history.

Their aggressive conquests had started since 1209. From 1231 to 1239 Mongols conquered Atrpatakan, Arran, Shirvan, Georgia, Armenia, then raiding the whole Middle East they reached Baghdad, vanquishing it in 1258. After their raids, large populations were massacred and many territories were left in ravages¹¹.

Mongols treated Kurds with hostility, without tolerating their self-will. “From Atrapatakan to Haqqari, thereon in Syria Mongols killed the captured Kurds mercilessly”, writes Karo Sasnuni¹². The persecuted Kurds to save themselves had to migrate to distant countries like Syria, Egypt, even Algeria and Maghribi etc. According to some data, in order to save themselves Kurds searched for shelter not only in Western Armenia, but also in Eastern Armenia escaping even to Northern Karabakh¹³. Many of them found shelter in the unreachable mountains, waiting for the end of the Mongolian raids.

Afterwards in the era of Lank Timur, during the reign of two newly emerged houses of Oghuz Turkomans which were Aq Koyunlu (white sheep) and Kara Koyunlu (black sheep) the Kurdish migration waves from the Taurus mountain range to the north, i.e. to Armenia did not cease. The reasons were the same as the Kurds rebelled against the conquerors for their right of free existence. As the

¹⁰ **Le Strange Guy**, The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate Mesopotamia, Persia and Central Asia from the Modern Conquest to the Time of Timur, London, 1966, p. 192.

¹¹ See The Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 5: The Seljuk and Mongol Periods, Cambridge, 1968.

¹² **Սասունի Կ.**, Քիւրտ ազգային շարժումները եւ հայ-քրտական յարաբերութիւնները (ԺԵ դարէն մինչեւ մեր օրերը), Պէյրութ, 1969, էջ 26:

¹³ **Mc Dowell D.**, A Modern History of the Kurds, London, 2013, p. 491.

Kurdish Historian Sharaf Khan Bidlisi notes, the leader of Aq Koyunlu Uzun Hasan (1453–1477), being the self-proclaimed “Sultan of Diyarbakir”, was rigorously trying to uproot all those influential Kurdish tribes and houses which were reluctant to cooperate with him and had kinship relations with his rivals – the Kara Koyunlus¹⁴. Indeed Kurds were struggling in the vortex¹⁵ of the existing rivalry between these two Turkoman houses where religious, political clashes never seemed to end. As a way of salvation, Kurds had to emigrate. Armenia, being rich in pastures, water resources and other amenities for stock raising, was an appealing territory for the Kurdish tribes.

During the Seljuk and Mongol invasions, certain representatives of the Kurdish leadership, being in the service of the conquerors, were rewarded with territories in the eastern vicinity of Lake Van on the eastern bank of the Euphrates. On those territories they attempted to establish semi-dependent unions. Namely in XIV century the tribes of Baghesh of Rozhak, Van Vostan, Shamoyan, Haqyar tribes and such minor tribes like those of Khizan, Hazo, Jermuk, Sparkert, Balu, Chmshkatsag gained power. According to “Sharaf Nama”, in the middle of XIV century Kurdish emirs of Baghesh ruled in hereditary terms¹⁶. Turkish scientist and traveler Evliya Chelbe, in the middle of XVII century, visiting Abdul khan who was the leader of the ruling tribe Rozhak in Bitlis described them as belonging to the “old Kurdish clan”¹⁷.

Based on the colophons of ancient Armenian manuscripts of XV century, LevonKhachikyan has revealed that the Kurdish rule, which spread over Van, Vostan, Julamerk, Haqyari, was established in XV century. Yezdin Sher (Yezdan-shir, Ized din-Sher) was the founder of this emirate whose name is frequently referred to in Armenian sources¹⁸.

¹⁴ **Шараф-хан ибн Шамсаддин Бидлиси**. Шараф-наме, т. I, М., 1967, с. 221.

¹⁵ See **Woods John E.**, The “Aqqoyunlu” Clan, Confederation, Empire, Minneapolis and Chicago, 1976.

¹⁶ **Փափազյան Հ.**, Օտար տիրապետությունը Արարատյան երկրում (ԺԵ դարում) (ՀՍՍՌ-ԳԱ «Տեղեկագիր հասարակական գիտությունների», 1960, No 7–8, էջ 35): See also **Խաչատրյան Ա.**, Հաքարի քրդական իշխանության կազմավորման հարցի շուրջ (ԺԵ դար), ՄՍԱԵԺ, հատ. 13, Ե., 1985, էջ 134–135:

¹⁷ Օտար աղբյուրները Հայաստանի և հայերի մասին: Թուրքական աղբյուրներ: Կազմեց Ա. Սաֆրաստյան, հ. Գ, Ե., 1972, էջ 202: See also **Dankoff R.**, Evliya Celebi in Bitlis, Leiden, 1990.

¹⁸ ԺԵ դարի հայերեն ձեռագրերի հիշատակարաններ, կազմեց Լ. Խաչիկյան, մասն Բ (1451–1480 թթ.), Ե., 1958, էջ I–VII:

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Nikoghayos Adonts adheres to the view that “except the (Kurdish) rulers of Van and Bitlis which come from Timur’s era, the rest of the Kurdish territories located on the banks of the Euphrates as well as in the river mouth of the Tigris emerged during the Turkish – Iranian wars within XV–XVI centuries¹⁹”.

Tovma Metsopetsi introduces noteworthy data concerning the Kurdish emirates in Armenia. He writes, “The Kurdish emirates of Armenia had freedom in their internal policies. Emirs not only were legally entitled to draft tax laws, but also had administrative and judicial autonomous rights. Each of them had their own court, which was the miniature copy of the central court. The officials of the central government did not have access to these autonomous regions. Emirs tried and sentenced criminals independently. They even executed death sentences, or the trial was held according to Sharia laws over which the high-rank Islamic clergy, in charge of ghad, presided. The leaders of nomadic tribes and governors of the regions played a vital role in the life of the emirates²⁰”.

Sources do not clarify the nature of relationships between the Armenian population and the Kurdish tribes in the emirates.

At the outset of XVI century a new power was seen in the political arena. The Iranian state was founded by the Safavids. The emergence of this newly-established state led to rivalry with the Ottoman Empire. The formation of this state in the political arena in the Middle East would totally change the course of the history. The founder of the state of Safavids Shah Ismail A (1502–1524) defeated the Aq Koyunlu Turkoman at Sharur and eradicated their state. Thereupon he would lead an expanding policy. His army seized all the territories from Baghdad to Marash.

The Kurds of Iran at first sight seemed to be pleased to see the state Aq Koyunlu collapse due to the Iranian attacks as they never ceased fighting with the latter and hated them²¹. Nevertheless, in a short while they came to understand that the Iranian new ruler led an extremely intolerable political, religious policy against Kurds. There were crucial reasons. Shah Ismail’s dream was to create a centralized strong state. Hence, he could not tolerate the irrepressible self-will of

¹⁹ Ադոնց Լ., Երկեր, հ. 1, Պատմագիտական ուսումնասիրություններ, Ե., 2006, էջ 193:

²⁰ Թովմա Մետսոփեցի, Պատմագրություն: Աշխատասիր. Լ. Խաչիկյանի, Ե., 1999, էջ XXVI:

²¹ See Chèrèf nameh ou histoire des Kourdes par Chèrèf, prince de Bidlis, vol. 2, lème, S. Petersburg, 1868, p. 121; see also **Bajalan Djene Rhys**. Sheref Khan’s Sharafnama: Kurdish Ethno-Politics in the Early Modern World, it’s Meaning, and its Legacy. “Iran Studies”, vol. 45 (2012), pp. 795–818.

the Kurdish tribes and their inclination of disobeying the state. He wished to eradicate the complete freedom of those tribes, which was in fact almost unlawful. His aim was to make them respect the state laws and pay taxes. Moreover, the Shah decided to launch a policy which would overthrow the Kurdish ruling clique and replace them by the aldermen belonging to Qizilbash tribe. This policy consisted in creating a reliable social support for the state. Namely, “the Shah wanted to hand in all the Kurdish populated territories to his henchmen, eradicate the tribal leadership and independent Kurdish authorities, merge the tribes and make them obedient Qizilbash²²”.

The Shah adopted the Shia branch of Islam as state religion and he was preoccupied with the fact that Kurds were religiously interconnected with his rivals, Ottoman Turks. Thus, the Shah led a policy of religious intolerance towards Sunni Kurds in Iran, forcing them to convert to Shiism. Moreover, Ismail's persecutions of Kurds were not confined to Iranian borders. He would banish all the Kurdish emirs from the territories under his rule in Western Armenia and Mesopotamia, and appoint his own henchmen.

These events led to unprecedented aggravation in the relationships of the two parties as Sunni Kurds, being the followers of *Shafi'i madhhab religious school*, already loathed the Shiia Persians. Yet, the Shah, who was distinguished with his religious fanaticism, led a policy of violent conversion of the Kurds to Shiism. This would bring about extreme escalation of the mutual relationships. The Shah seized from the Kurdish tribal chiefs the following territories: Jazire, Hasanqef, Chmshkatsag, Agil, Balu, Ochermiq, Ataq, Terjil, Chapaghajur, etc. He handed these territories to his supporters. The majority of Kurdish emirs, who willingly came to the Shah to make a pledge of obedience, were sent to the dungeons²³.

This policy led to a rise of irrepressible hatred for the new ruler of Iran on the Kurdish part and adamant resolution to fight. It was then that the Iranian Kurds leaned towards the Ottoman Empire, seeking for protection from Ismail's policy of Kurdish persecutions. Hence, a large-scale Kurdish emigration to the Ottoman Empire arose. Kurds settled in different parts of Western Armenia. Sultan Selim A

²² Ռաշիդ Յասենի, Քորդ վե փեյվասթեզի-ե նեժագի վե թարիխի-ե ու, ազ Նեշարի-աթ-ե մոջամե նաշերե-ե քեթաթ, շումարե-ե 9, էջ 38 (Ռաշիդ Յասենի, Քորդերը, նրանց ցեղային հարաբերությունները և պատմությունը), պարսկ.:

²³ See Brown E.G.A., A History of Persian Literary in Modern Times, A. D. 1502-1924, Cambridge, 1924, pp. 58-59.

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Yavuz (1512–1520) whose war campaign against “heretic” Shiites consisted in protecting the orthodox Islam, willingly encouraged the Kurdish settlement in his territories. He lavishly awarded them territories, promising to preserve their long-standing rights and traditions. The Sultan decided to use the Kurdish element and create an influential, hostile power to fight against the Persians – his old adversaries²⁴.

This was the outset of the new frontier of the bloody wars between Iran and Turan which would last more than two and a half centuries.

In 1514, using the false motto of “protecting faith”, Sultan Selim A Yavuz waged a war against “the heretic” Shah Ismail who was thought “to have corrupted Islam”. The decisive battle took place in Chaldiran valley north-east from Lake Van. It was there that the Sultan defeated the Qizilbash army, using the artillery for the first time²⁵. During the battle, a number of Kurdish rulers, supporting the Ottoman army, contributed to the Turkish victory. After the battle of Chaldiran 25 Kurdish leaders, being initially neutral joined the Turkish side²⁶.

The victory of Chaldiran battle was of great political significance for the Ottoman Empire. First of all this victory led to the overall conquest of the Armenian plateau. This conquest secured a natural strategic fortress against Iranian and generally all kinds of invasions, radically changing the balance of power in Central Asia in favor of the Empire. After this defeat, Shah Ismail lost his influence over the Kurdish regions beyond the Zagros mountain range. The victory in Chaldiran predicted the political allegiance of Kurds concerning the rivaling states. The majority of the Kurdish tribes formed a leaning towards Turks.

Sultan Selim Yavuz appointed Idris Bitlisi, who was then the ruling representative in Baghesh (Bitlis), the general ruler (haqim) of all Kurds, ordering him to manage the government in the newly conquered territories. As G. Ayvasovsky writes, “Thereupon the king ordered Idris to reform the territory with

²⁴ **Safrastian A.**, Kurds and Kurdistan, London, 1948, p. 40.

²⁵ See in A Chronicle of the Early Safavids being the Ahsanut-tawarikh of Hasan-i Rumlu, Baroda, 1934; **Moukbil Bay M.**, La Campagne de Perse 1514, Paris, 1928.

²⁶ **Arfa Hassan**, The Kurds: A Historical and Political Study, London-New York-Toronto, 1966, p. 95.

his support. His task was to tempt the Kurds to come to the Ottoman territories as well as include them in the administrative system of the Ottoman state.²⁷

Idris Haqim undertook the completion of his mission vigorously. He even succeeded in persuading about twenty Kurdish tribes, who were allies of the Safavids to join the Turkish side. They immigrated to the region of Diyarbakir and settled there²⁸. In settling the Kurdish tribes there, he created new military feudal elements which were called Sanjaks, Yurtluks, Ojakluks, Hukumets, Ekrad Belliks etc²⁹. They were absolutely independent administrative units having semi-dependence on the central government. But, in fact, they were completely independent. Sharaf Khan Bitlisi notes, "Although they never aspired to the title of Sultan, they were entitled to order Khutbah readings in mosques. Moreover, they had the right to coin money³⁰". In the Armenian sources, these tribe leaders were referred to as "masters having families, houses, villages, and fields³¹".

Idris handed these newly formed administrative units to Kurdish beys as hereditary territories, thus creating feudal houses for them. N. Adonts notes, "Listing these houses, the Kurdish historians never say anything about the nature of the population of sanjaks which were ruled by Kurdish houses. It would be wrong to presume that if the rulers were of Kurdish origin, then the ethnic population was made up by Kurds only, this would seem so if the Kurdish historian's (Sharaf-khan Bitlisi) view were taken for granted without criticism³²".

The semi-dependent Kurdish rulers of Baghesh, Julamerik, Sparkert, Moks, Shirvan, Hzu, having settled in Western Armenia were part of the Ottoman feudal system. So they were able to make up the shortage of state taxation that pashas, janissaries, sipahis left uncollected³³.

²⁷ Այվազովսկի Գ., Պատմություն Օսմանեան պետության, հ. 1-2, Վենետիկ, 1841, էջ 320:

²⁸ Մ. Մաշտոցի անվան Մատենադարան, Գալուստ Տեր-Մկրտչյանի արխիվ, թղթ. 16, վավ. 7:

²⁹ Шараф-хан ибн Шамсаддин Бидлиси. Шараф-наме, т. I, с. 226; Տե՛ս նաև Ինճիճեան Ղ., Աշխարհագրություն չորից մասանց աշխարհի, մասն Ա, հ. Ա., Վենետիկ, 1806, էջ 97:

³⁰ Шараф-хан ибн Шамсаддин Бидлиси. Шараф-наме, т. I, с. 85-86.

³¹ Մանր ժամանակագրություններ (XIII-XVIII դդ.), կազմեց Վ. Հակոբյան, հատ. 2, Ե., 1956, էջ 297:

³² See Ադոնց Ն., Հայկական հարց, Ե., 1996, էջ 108:

³³ Անասյան Հ., Թուրքական տիրապետությունը Հայաստանում XVII դարում (ՀՍՍՌ-ԳԱ «Տեղեկագիր», 1951, No 5, էջ 67):

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As for minor unimportant tribe leaders *asharat-reis* and *asharat-begs*, they became military men under the service of the Ottoman army. They had landowning privileges for their service based on the military, feudal laws of the Ottoman Empire³⁴.

The Kurdish system established by Idris Bitlisi in the Ottoman Empire existed up to XIX century³⁵.

Owing to the encouragement of the Ottoman Empire as well as the vigorous activities of Idris Bitlisi, a mass Kurdish migration to Western Armenia emerged, the dimensions of which equaled with ethnic invasion and aggression. "The tribe leaders were followed by nomads with their herds³⁶". They moved to Armenia mainly from the northern regions of Mesopotamia, the foot of the Taurus Mountains, from the eastern banks of the Tigris, from Iranian Kurdistan³⁷. According to Sharaf Khan Bitlisi only in the Eyalet of Van, having occupied vast territories, the following newly arrived Kurdish tribes settled in Southern Armenia: Semira, Mahmud, Dumbul, Pazuk. He mentioned the tribes of Haqqari, Belilan, Bilbas, Kavalis, Qisyan, Sheqaq, etc³⁸. With the resettlement of a number of Kurdish tribes in Erzurum, Idris Bitlisi established their roots in the "heart" of Western Armenia. Due to his efforts, a great number of tribes settled in the regions of Vaspurakan, Kars, and in many other regions which abounded in pastures³⁹. At the end of XVI century many Kurdish tribes settled in the Southern Caucasus. The main goal of their settlement was to form a wedge between the Ararat valley, Sharur, Syunik and Artsakh and to impair the local Armenian population politically⁴⁰.

The leaders of these new tribes by force of the arms, using their feudal rights conquered Armenian lands, proclaiming themselves as legal owners. On their part, the government of the Ottoman Empire displaced the Armenians and handed their lands to the Kurdish tribal leaders and their clans (*aşirets*). Therefore a large number of Armenians were displaced from the regions which bordered Iran and

³⁴ Ментешашвили А.М. Курды, М., 1984, с. 108.

³⁵ Гордлевский В.А. Из истории курдов. Избранные сочинения, т. III, М., 1962, с. 114.

³⁶ Աղոնց Ն., *op. cit.*, p. 86–87:

³⁷ Հակոբյան Թ., Հայաստանի պատմական աշխարհագրություն, Ե., 1968, էջ 414:

³⁸ Chèrèf nameh, vol. 2, lème, pp. 169–172.

³⁹ Bozarslan Hamit, Remarques sur l'histoire des relations kurdo-arméniennes. « Journal of Kurdish Studies », vol. I, 1995, pp. 55–60.

⁴⁰ Հայ ժողովրդի պատմություն, հ. 4, Ե., 1972, էջ 88:

Turkey. The displacements of Armenians also took place in the eastern slopes of Masis, Bayazed, Diadin, Alashkert, as well as from the provinces lying north of Lake Van⁴¹.

Beginning from XVI century for two hundred years the influx of the Kurdish tribes into Armenia never ceased. By the beginning of XVIII century these tribes had already spread all over the regions of the Armenian Highlands, mainly in Western Armenia⁴². Considerable part of the lands and pastures in the region were already in the hands of the Kurdish leaders, despite the fact that the Armenian peasantry still cultivated the lands.

Characterizing the situation Nikoghayos Adonts writes, “Kurds” existence has not been there from immemorial times, they are not the indigenous population either, though some individuals who are not well aware of the real facts, may claim the opposite. They are accidental visitors of the region, mainly the political agents of foreign states”⁴³. The Russian eminent diplomat and orientologist Vladimir Minorsky adhering to the same view, states, “It is beyond doubt that Kurds were gradually conquering some parts of the Armenian kingdom, which was completely destroyed in XI century. In many places the Kurds settled not in their indigenous and ancestral territories”⁴⁴.

Promoting the Kurdish element in Armenia and leading a pro-Kurdish policy the Ottoman government “consciously pursued the objective of establishing an Islamic supremacy over the Christian rayas⁴⁵”. Istanbul had another strategic goal: to provide with the help of the Kurdish settlements all over the Empire a reliable support in Western Armenia in terms of religiously affiliated new group, i.e. Kurds who were seen as an efficient tool not only for defending the borders with Iran but also for subjugating the Christian Armenians – the largest population in the region.

Since then the number one priority of the Ottoman Empire’s “eastern policy” was the escalation of the Kurdish-Armenian conflict and with the help of their armed Kurdish allies “to suppress the Christian Armenians⁴⁶”. It is obvious that since XVI century in terms of Kurdish-Armenian relations the Turkish policy had

⁴¹ **Հակոբյան Թ.**, Հայաստանի պատմական աշխարհագրություն, էջ 414:

⁴² **Ինճիճեան Ղ.**, Աշխարհագրութիւն չորից մասանց աշխարհի, Ի. Ե., Վենետիկ, 1804, էջ 51:

⁴³ **Ադոնց Ն.**, *op. cit.*, p. 87:

⁴⁴ **Минорский В.Ф.** Курды. Заметки и впечатления, Петроград, 1915, с. 8.

⁴⁵ **Ադոնց Ն.**, *op. cit.*, p. 87:

⁴⁶ See **Շահապազեան Յ.**, Քիւրդօ-հայ պատմութիւն, Կ. Պոլիս, 1911:

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been based on the famous Ottoman principle which discriminated the Christians, supporting the Muslims. This policy continued in further centuries as well. The Kurdish historian Nuri Dersimi adheres to the same view as he writes, "Sultan Selim Yavuz tried to provoke antagonism between Kurds and Armenians"⁴⁷.

Referring to the same question, Nikoghayos Adonts writes, "Turkish rulers presumably wanted to secure their well-being, using the discord of the two segments of the population. The persecution of its own Christian subjects, their underprivileged conditions could be observed as the state's secret or apparent strategy throughout the Turkish history. The Christian countries were under the direct threat of the neighboring Muslim nations. Against Syrian Christians there was Muslim Iraq, and against Christian Armenia – Muslim Kurdistan"⁴⁸.

Sultan Suleiman Kanuni continued Sultan Selim Yavuz's policy⁴⁹. He carried on the same policy which consisted in bringing Kurdish immigrants from different regions and settling them down in Armenia.

Thus, Kurds became Turks' allies in conquering Western Armenia and keeping it under the Ottoman rule. The new Kurdish settlements in the regions populated by Armenians brought about a certain change in the ethnic structure of the Armenian Highlands. Armenia partly lost its homogeneity. Then in certain regions of Western Armenia, the dominance of Kurds, Turkomans, and other Turkish speaking nomadic tribes was growing gradually. These regions were subjected to nomadization. This brought about a downfall in the economic sphere. N. Adonts notes, "At Sultans' will the agricultural country was faced with regression. A return to prehistoric times was noticeable as the nomadic life of herdsmen came into existence again. This would inevitably lead to cultural and economic decay in the country"⁵⁰.

The Armenians' life on the Kurdish feudal territories was becoming unspeakably unbearable. Up to the end of XVI century in the vilayet of Bitlis, for example, the tax collection was based "on the Kurdish customs", namely on

⁴⁷ **Dersimi Nuri**, Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim, Halep, 1952, S. 22–23.

⁴⁸ **Աղոնց Ն.**, op. cit., p. 82–83.

⁴⁹ **Ozoglu Hakan**, Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004, p. 59.

⁵⁰ **Աղոնց Ն.**, op. cit., p. 87.

arbitrary terms⁵¹. Armenians, in fact had become the subjects of the Kurdish tribe leaders and feudal, although they were legally under the Ottoman rule. “Even though from military and state perspectives the Armenian provinces were under the flag of the Ottoman Empire, they were in fact the subjects of the Kurdish state government⁵²”.

In Western Armenia, small Armenian feudal authorities could survive in the western mountainous unapproachable provinces, namely in Zeytun, Sasun, Isyan, Chapaghjur, Khnus, Moks, Shatakh, Diyarbakir and in northern regions⁵³. The Armenian authorities managed to survive and last because, contrary to the rural population, they were armed.

As for the rest of the Armenian population, it was condemned to bear the Turkish-Kurdish bloody yoke. Any attempt of resistance was subdued with unspeakable ruthlessness⁵⁴. The state of Armenians was deadly because of intertribal clashes between feudal lords which converted certain places of the regions into hell. “The tribes fought each other whereas it was the Armenians who bore all the burden and misfortunes of the wars⁵⁵”.

There is no doubt that as a result a gradual displacement of Armenians from their native land would follow. Migrating, the Armenians step by step abandoned their homeland, searching for foreign shelters where they would have a comparatively safer life conditions. The French scientist and traveler Eliséé Reclus mentions that “due to the escape from these neighbors many Armenian provinces became uninhabited as Armenians moved to Transcaucasia”⁵⁶.

Now considering all this we wonder to what extent the ethnic invasion of Kurdish tribes into Western Armenia, as well as the in-depth changes this territory underwent affected its ethnic mosaic. Answering the questions whether the surface changes of feudalism in Armenia also transformed its ethnic background or whether the changes in upper layers of society were also reflected in the structure of lower classes, Nikoghaos Adonts notes that the country did not become

⁵¹ Օսմանյան օրենքները Արևմտյան Հայաստանում, թարգմանությունը, առաջաբանը և ծանոթագրությունները Ա. Սաֆրաստյանի և Մ. Զուլպյանի, Ե., 1964, էջ 45–47:

⁵² Սասունի Կ., Պատմություն Տարօնի աշխարհի, Պէրոպ, 1956, էջ 107:

⁵³ Ինճիճեան Ղ., Աշխարհագրութիւն չորից մասանց աշխարհի, Ի. Ե., էջ 158, 161, 200:

⁵⁴ See Babinger Fr., Sheikh Bedr-ed-din, der Sohn des Richters von Simaw. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sektenwesens im aliosmanischen Reich, Berlin-Leipzig, 1921, S. 43.

⁵⁵ Լեո, Երկերի ժողովածու, Ի. 3, Ե., 1969, էջ 189:

⁵⁶ Ռեկլյու Է., Լազիստան, Հայաստան և Քուրդիստան, Վաղարշապատ, 1893, էջ 36:

Mongolian under the Mongol rule, neither did the ethnos change under the Turkoman rule, nor did the Armenian land become Kurdish when the Kurdish tribes seized the power in the country. The core of the population with its non-nomadic, permanent and labored way of life remained Armenian as before⁵⁷.

ՄԻՋԻՆ ԴԱՐԵՐՈՒՄ ՔՐԴԱԿԱՆ ՑԵՂԵՐԻ ԶԱՆԳՎԱԾԱՅԻՆ ՆԵՐԹԱՓԱՆՑՈՒՄԸ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆ ԵՎ ԴՐԱ ՀԵՏԵՎԱՆՔՆԵՐԸ

ԲԱՅԲՈՒՐԴՅԱՆ Վ.

Ամփոփում

VIII դարից սկսած ծայր են առել քրդական ցեղերի խոշոր չափերի հասնող միգրացիոն շարժումներ դեպի Արարական խալիֆայության տարբեր նահանգներ: X դարում ի թիվս այլ ուղղությունների, նկատվում էր նաև քրդերի գաղթային նշանակալից շարժում դեպի հյուսիս՝ Հայաստանի կողմը:

Քրդական ցեղերը և ցեղային համադաշնությունները Հայաստան էին անցնում գլխավորապես Հյուսիսային Միջագետքից՝ ներկայիս Մոսուլի շրջանից, Տիգրիսի արևելյան ափերից, մասամբ նաև Իրանական Քրդստանից և հաստատվում Վասպուրականում, Աղձնիքում և այլ վայրերում: X դարից սկսած քրդական իրականության մեջ ձևավորվում է ռազմաքաղաքական մի ինստիտուտ՝ ամիրաների և ամիրայության ինստիտուտը, որն իր գոյությունը պահպանեց ընդհուպ մինչև XIX դ. կեսերը:

XVI դարի հենց արշալույսին քաղաքական ասպարեզ իջավ մի նոր հզոր ուժ՝ Սեֆյանների (Սեֆեվիների) իրանական պետությունը, որը ծնունդ առնելուց անմիջապես հետո դարձավ Օսմանյան կայսրության ախոյանը: Այդ նոր պետության հրապարակ իջնելը Մերձավոր ու Միջին Արևելքում հիմնավորապես փոխելու էր պատմության ընթացքը:

Շահ Իսմայիլը ձգտում էր ստեղծել կենտրոնացված ուժեղ պետություն՝ վերջ տալով այդ ցեղերի բացարձակ անիշխանությանը: Շահը ցանկանում էր նրանց ենթարկել իր պետության սահմանած օրենքներին և դարձնել հարկատու: Միաժամանակ Իրանի քրդերը սկսեցին հակվել դեպի Օսմանյան կայս-

⁵⁷ Ադոնց Ն., op. cit., p. 109.

րոյթունը՝ պաշտպանություն փնտրելով շահ Իսմայիլի քրդահալած քաղաքականությունից: Ըստ այնմ, ծայր առավ քրդական հոծ զանգվածների տեղափոխություն Օսմանյան կայսրություն, և այդպիսով քրդերը տեղակայվում էին Արևմտյան Հայաստանի տարբեր մասերում: Օսմանյան կայսրությունը որոշել էր հանձնիս քրդերի իր ախոյան պարսիկների դեմ ստեղծել մի հսկայական թշնամական ուժ: Այս ամենը հանգեցրեց թուրք-քրդական դաշինքի ձևավորմանը, որի հիմնական նպատակը հայ քրիստոնյա բնակչության տարհանումն էր հայրենի հողերից՝ Արևմտյան Հայաստանից:

МАССОВОЕ ПРОНИКНОВЕНИЕ КУРДСКИХ ПЛЕМЕН В АРМЕНИЮ В СРЕДНИЕ ВЕКА И ЕГО ПОСЛЕДСТВИЯ

БАЙБУРДЯН В.

Резюме

Приблизительно к VIII в. восходит начало миграции курдских племен в разные районы обширного Арабского халифата. Процесс миграции активизировался в X веке, когда курдские племена и племенные объединения стали проникать также в Армению и поселяться на территории как Западной, так и Восточной Армении. При этом племена мигрировали на север, в сторону Армянского нагорья, преимущественно из районов Междуречья (Северного Ирака), частично также из Иранского Курдистана. На территории Армении феодальной верхушкой курдских племен были созданы полунезависимые феодальные княжества, известные под названием «курдских эмиратов».

В начале XVI в., в связи с образованием в Иране мощного Сефевидского государства, во всем обширном регионе Ближнего и Среднего Востока сложилась принципиально иная ситуация. Обострились ирано-турецкие отношения. Проводимая сефевидскими шахами политика была направлена на централизацию государства. Сефевиды пытались заставить курдов соблюдать законы государства и платить налоги.

В то же время иранские курды стали придерживаться проосманской ориентации, пытаясь в лице османов найти защиту от шаха Исмоила.

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Началось массовое переселение курдов в Османскую империю, где они поселялись в разных частях Западной Армении. Османская империя решила с помощью курдов бороться со своими врагами – персами. В итоге был сформирован турецко-курдский союз, основной целью которого было изгнание армянского христианского населения с родных земель, т.е. из Западной Армении.