Nodar Mossaki

Institute of Oriental Studies
Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia, Moscow
ORCID: 0000-0001-8268-006X

Dimitri Pirbari

G. Tsereteli Institute of Oriental Studies
Ilia State University, Georgia, Tbilisi
ORCID: 0000-0002-6629-8415

DOI: https://doi.org/10.32859/yezidistudies/1/5/113-159

The rulers of Sarhad Yezdikhan: The history of the Yezidi Lineage of Kok-agha

Abstract:
The article analyses and introduces previously unknown historical and scientific documentation from the National Archives of Georgia on which it provides new insights into affairs of Khalil-agha, one of the Yezidi leaders in the Russian Empire and a sous-lieutenant (*podporuchik*). Among them the Russian translations of two charters issued to the ancestors of Khalil-agha by the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire and the Shah of Iran, attesting to the existence of a semi-independent Yezidi principality, recognized by both the Persian and Ottoman powers, known as Ezdikhan (Yezdikhan) in eastern Anatolia from the 16th to the 18th century. Together with previous research, the discovery of these documents represents the missing link in the documented history of the Yezidis in Eastern Anatolia, which spans no less than five centuries.

Keywords:
Yezidis, Sarhad, Yezdikhan, Ezdikhan, Ottoman Empire, Kok-agha, Avdal-agha, Khalil-agha, Choban-agha, Abagha, Mahmudi, Khoshab.

Introduction

The political history of the Yezidis begins after the consolidation of the Yezidi community in the 12th–14th centuries. From the end of the 13th century, the Yezidis living in the former principality of Dasin in the northwestern part of present-day Iraqi Kurdistan founded or revived their own political unit and gave it the new name Sheikhan, derived from the name of the most important Yezidi saint, Sheikh Adi. Nevertheless, for centuries, in chronicles and historical sources, the title 'Emirs of Dasni' continued to be used to refer to the rulers of Sheikhan. The Kurdish chronicler Sharaf-Khan ibn Shamsaddin Bidlisi mentions the Yezidi rulers, including, for example, Mir Hussain-beg Dasni (16th

© International Journal of Yezidi Studies

century).[1] In addition to the principality of Sheikhan, there were other Yezidi principalities and territorial entities. However, Sheikhan was a religious center, and the Emir of Sheikhan presided both spiritually and politically over all Yezidis. Nevertheless, Yezidi territorial units which were geographically remote from Sheikhan, were in fact independent of it. This situation was due to the feudal fragmentation characteristic of the Ottoman Empire and Iran, where there were various large and small principalities, emirates, and principalities. After the victory over Safavid Iran in the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514, the geopolitical landscape of the Turkish-Iranian border region began to change. The Ottoman Empire consolidated its new frontiers, largely inhabited by Armenians, Kurds, Yezidis, and Assyrians. A major role in the defense of these new borders of the Ottoman Empire was assigned to the Kurdish tribes which were moved there from other regions (mainly from the south) to the new frontiers, including the border with Transcaucasia (South Caucasus). It seems that the Yezidi tribes were also included in what is historically known as the migration of Kurds to the border regions of Transcaucasia.

During the reign of the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman Kanuni,[2] who contributed to the large-scale settlement of belligerent Kurdish tribes in these areas, the presence of Kurds in Eastern Anatolia, in the so-called Sarhad,[3] was increased to prevent raids by the Georgians and Persians. In this sense, Suleiman I continued the work of his father Selim I (r. 1512–1520) and grandfather Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512), who based their strategy on the fact that the Kurds from Persia defected to the Ottoman side, because of Idris Bidlisi, a famous political figure of Kurdish origin. Thus, while expanding their empire to the east, the Ottoman sultans carried out significant ethno-political, ethno-confessional, and geopolitical changes in the new territories, forming a complex and multilayered system, by creating a somewhat unpredictable and turbulent balance of power by supporting some groups, only to abandon them shortly afterwards in favour of others. The policy of the Ottoman Empire towards the Kurdish tribes (as well as towards the Sunni Kurds) was more flexible compared to that of Iran. This engendered and strengthened pro-Ottoman sentiment among the Kurds. In turn, local princes and rulers also exhibited variability in their allegiance to the dominating powers in their regions, recognizing the power of one or the other sovereign at different times.[4] This

1 See: Бидлиси 1967: 325–327.

2 Suleiman I the Magnificent, r. 1520–1566.

3 The term 'Sarhad' ('Serhed') comes from two words from Kurmanji *sar* – 'on' and *had* – 'border', which means 'on border', or 'on the frontier': the Yezidis and Kurds called the northern borders of their compact settlement. *Sarhad* (this word has become a geographical concept among the Yezidis and Kurds) covers the lands of the Van Vilayet, Bayazid Sanjak, Arzrum (Erzrum), Igdir, and Kars.

4 See: Васильева 1967: 44.

was also characteristic of the local Yezidi rulers, whose territories extended over northern Mesopotamia, northern Syria, numerous areas of Asia Minor in eastern Anatolia, regions bordering Iran, and even some areas in the northwest of Iran. The Ottoman sultan was the caliph of all Muslims and the ruler of the Ottoman Empire, which was inherently Muslim, albeit with a sizable Christian component. "Unlike the West […] there was no separation of secular and religious power and [no] clear demarcation between administrative and religious functions."[5] Sharia was the basic law of the state.[6] Thus, the disposition of the Ottoman ruler towards the Yezidis was ambiguous at best, in particular from the 15th to the 16th century. However, there are some cases on record showing that Yezidi mirs and leaders were treated kindly by the sultans. This has been evidenced by recently discovered historical documents.[7]

For about two centuries after the territories inhabited by the Yezidis were incorporated into the Ottoman Empire (in the 16th and 17th centuries), the attitude of the Ottoman authorities towards the Yezidis was not based on their religious affiliation, but rather on their submission and recognition of the supremacy of Ottoman power.[8] However, from the 18th century onwards, the dynamic between Ottoman state and the Yezidi community was in addition characterized by religious pressure on the Yezidis[9] to convert to Islam. The *Sharafnama* provides information about the relationship between the Sultan and the head of the Yezidi community, Hussain-beg Dasni. After the Sultan conquered Baghdad in 1534/5, the ruler of the Erbil Sanjak, Izzadin Shir enraged the Sultan for which he was executed. Subsequently, the Sultan granted the Erbil district to the Yezidi Mir (En. Prince) – Hussain-beg Dasni. Soon after this, Izzadin Shir's brother, Suleiman Beg died and the Sultan "united the entire vilayet of Soran to the Erbil district and granted [it to] Hussain-beg Dasni."[10] However, Emir Sayfaddin, son of Suleiman-beg, after gaining power, managed to recapture Erbil and expel Hussain-beg, who, according to Bidlisi, was executed by the Sultan. During this struggle, Emir Sayfaddin fought under the banner of Islam against Hussain-beg and the Yezidis.[11]

It should be noted, however, that information about the greatest Yezidi figure in the Ottoman period – Hussain-beg, which was previously available only in *Sharafnama*, now is partially disproved and amended.[12] Thus, according to the identified archival

[5] Иванов 1993: 237.
[6] See: *Ibid*: 235.
[7] See below.
[8] See: Akman 2021: 122–123.
[9] See: Orpak 2021: 6–7.
[10] Бидлиси 1967: 325.
[11] See: *Ibid*: 325-326.
[12] Hassan 2022a; Idem 2022b; Dehqan and Genç 2019.

documents, Hussain-beg Dasni, before taking possession of the Erbil Sanjak, ruled the Mosul Sanjak; moreover, he was not executed by the Sultan and he and his sons ruled over various regions of the Ottoman Empire.[13]

As Vasilyeva rightly noted, Sultan Suleiman, an ardent supporter of the dogmas of Islam, handed over control of these territories to the head of the Yezidis, despite the maxim of "divide and rule" otherwise carefully observed by the Ottomans. In other words, favouring the Yezidi Dasni Hussain-beg, in order to break the resistance of the rulers of Soran seemed more important than religious zeal. Hussain-beg Dasni suffered heavy losses in the war with the rulers of Soran. Although the ruler of Amadia was also sent to Soran to support Hussain-beg, it ultimately proved impossible to reconquer Soran. However, "the Turkish rulers had another, more important result in mind namely that through these wars, the opponents would weaken each other",[14] not least since the Ottoman Empire represented itself as a "conglomerate of different nationalities and regions, united by the supreme power of the Sultan".[15]

Bidlisi also mentions in *Sharafnama* a number of other territories which were ruled by Yezidis, as well as the rulers who were Yezidis or descended from them, but subsequently converted to Islam. The rulers of Jezire[16] and Kilis[17] originated from the Yezidis. In the latter case, "the governance of the Kurds to one of the descendants of Yezidi sheikhs – a certain Sheikh 'Izzaddin", whose authority was recognized by "several apostates from the Yezidi Kurds", was handed over by the Circassian rulers.[18] The large Yezidi tribes in Syria, which became subsequently Kurdish (Kurdish-Muslim), were the Mahmudi and Dumbuli,[19] who later governed large areas in Eastern Anatolia and the adjacent northwestern Iran. "The hereditary principalities of Khoshab, Ashut and, somewhat later, Albak […] were, since the time of the rulers of the Kara-Koyunlu dynasty, fiefdoms of the emirs of the Kurdish tribe of Mahmudi, who came to these areas from Syria or Jezira."[20] To the northwest of Khoy was the hereditary principalities of Sokmanabad – *ocak* of the Dumbuli tribe, that also came from Syria or Jezire at the beginning of the 15th century during the time of Kara Yusuf Kara-Koyunlu and who later received Khoy region from Shah Tahmasb.[21]

[13] Hassan 2022a; *Idem* 2022b; Dehqan and Genç 2019.
[14] Васильева 1967: 57.
[15] Иванов 1993: 239.
[16] Бидлиси 1967: 175.
[17] *Ibid*: 275–276.
[18] *Ibid*.
[19] *Ibid*: 83.
[20] Васильева 1967: 43.
[21] *Ibid*: 44.

Ezdi Mirza (first half of the 17th century), who was recognized as the leader of the Yezidis by Sultan Murad IV (r. 1623–1640), and who was appointed by the Ottomans as a ruler of Mosul in 1649. It should be noted here, that in the Ottoman Empire "the implementation of the prerogatives of the Sultan has always been delegated through two lines of power independent from each other: through the line of 'political power' (*hukm al-siyasa*), directly from the imperial council (*divan*) headed by the Grand Vizier, and through the line of 'Sharia power' (*hukm al-Sharia*), coming from the Sheikh ul-Islam of the capital".[22] It is obvious that the political power was delegated to the Yezidi leaders by the *divan* and that the Sharia power was omitted.[23]

This article examines the history of one of the Yezidi leaders, Avdal-agha,[24] who was favoured by Sultan Murad III[25] and his family. They were known under the name of the Kok-agha lineage, apparently in honour of Avdal-agha's grandfather bearing the same name.

Review of the Archival Documents Concerning a Descendant of the Kok-agha Family.

In the National Archives of Georgia, we discovered a file of a descendant of this family – Khalil-agha,[26] which preserved, without doubt, unique and previously unknown documents dating back almost 300 years. This file sheds light on many previously unknown questions, both on the history of this family, and on the Yezidis in general, as well as interactions and relations between the Ottoman sultans and the Yezidi leaders in the late Middle Ages. This file contains certified translations of the charters issued to representatives of the Kok-agha lineage by Sultan Murad III (grandson of Suleiman I, and son of Selim II) at the end of the 16th century, and also by Mohammed Shah in 1836. Using these archival documents and other information known so far, both from documents and folk tales, we will try to reconstruct the history of this family and thus the history of the Yezidis of Sarhad in general.

---

22 Иванов 1993: 240.

23 Certainly, from this period (from the 15th to the 18th century) there should be more examples rewarding Yezidi leaders, rulers, heads of tribes and military squads and providing them with certificates, which, hopefully over time, will be proven thanks to archival documents. A significant part of the documents should be in the Ottoman archives of Turkey, as well as in Iran.

24 Agha – in the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Iran, the title and designation of a tribal nobility on par with the title *bek*, *bey*, *biy* or *beg*. In different eras, the meaning of the term changed and was sometimes used as title for a military leader.

25 Murad III was born in 1546 and died in 1595 (reign 1574–1595).

26 National Archives of Georgia – Central Historical Archive (NAG-CHA), f. 5, op. 1, d. 1, 6112, ll. 1–40. Sources from the Russian-language archives are described in following format: 'f.' stands for *fond* [*фонд*] – archival collection, 'op.' for *opis'* [опись] – register or series, 'd.' for *delo* [дело] – file, 'l.' for *list* [лист] – page number, 'l. ob.' for *oborot lista* [оборот листа] – back (verso) page number.

Khalil-agha: Historical Background

To properly analyse the historical documents in the archival file, it is important to introduce the person to whom the document relates.

Until now, there has been very little information in the literature about Khalil-agha, the son of Amar (Omar)-agha, and even what is available has so far been ignored by researchers on the history of the Yezidis. We found the first mention of him in a well-known piece of Kurdology literature, namely the *Rules for the Management of the Kurdish Tribes, Compiled by Order of the General Muravyov, by Colonel Loris-Melikov November 30, 1855*.[27] In this text, Loris-Melikov lists ten nomadic communities within the Russian borders, one of which are the 'Yezidis'.[28] At the end his account Loris-Melikov provided a list of the communities of Kurds living in the Yerevan province and the Pashalik of Kars, with an estimation on the number of households in each of the areas. He also explained who would control them and where they would migrate in the winter and summer. Loris-Melikov estimated the total number of Kurdish communities in Yerevan Province and the Pashalik of Kars at 3,220 households, including 740 Yezidi families. In this text, the Yezidis were in turn divided into two communities: *Yezidis 1* were under the leadership of Teymur-agha, who had winter and summer migrations in the Surmalu *uezd* (district), and comprised of 400 houses, and *Yezidis 2* were under the leadership of Khalil-agha Omar-agha-ogly, who settled and lived permanently in the Abaran part of Sardarabad area comprising of 340 houses.[29]

Khalil-agha was also mentioned in the work of Egiazarov,[30] moreover, Egiazarov mistakenly called him the head of the younger branch of the Hassani[31] tribe,[32] although Khalil-agha was the head of the tribal association *(êl)* Mahmudi, whose name was transformed over time into Mahamdi. This tribal union was also called *êla Kok-axa*.

Egiazarov noted that Khalil-agha enjoyed "the respect of his subjects."[33] Nevertheless, it is clear that Egiazarov considered the head of the senior branch of the Hasan tribe, Hasan-agha, to be more influential than Khalil-agha. Although the Khalil-agha lineage occupied a special place in the history of the Yezidis and the Khalil-agha line was significantly more famous and influential.

[27] *Акты* 1888: 427–428.
[28] The remaining nine were tribes or tribal unions of Muslim Kurds (*Ibid*: 427).
[29] *Ibid*: 428.
[30] See: Егиазаров 1891: 197.
[31] Hassani – a union of Yezidi tribes that inhabited the Surmalu *uezd* in the 19th century, which moved to the Russian Empire in 1829 from the Bayazet *pashalyk*.
[32] See: Егиазаров 1891: 197.
[33] *Ibid*: 203.

Khalil-agha is also mentioned in a book of a descendant of his family (his great-nephew, grandson of Khalil-agha's brother – Karaman-agha). Although lacking scientific character and based on oral transmissions (and therefore replete with unreliable and/or contradicting statements) the book is nevertheless of significant interest, as it provides insight into the narratives circulating among the Yezidis at the time it was written.[34] Despite its shortcomings, the book makes an important contribution to the study of this little-researched topic. For the purposes of this study, given the nature of S. Kagramanyan's book, we will refer only to the content that is historically verified.

In particular, the book states that Amar-agha, who had moved to the Russian Empire, sent his two sons to the Russian army and that the older one, Khalil-agha, who succeeded Amar-agha after his death, was appointed lieutenant colonel.[35] The author seems to have confused the epaulettes of a sous-lieutenant (second lieutenant, junior lieutenant) (Russian: *podporuchik*) with those of a lieutenant colonel (Russian: *podpolkovnik*). After Khalil-agha's death, his son Rizgan became tribal chief.

Khalil-agha is also reflected in two genealogies of this lineage, compiled as part of the study of his genealogy by Karim Ankosi. In the first, Khalil-agha is mentioned as one of the six sons of Amar-agha, and in the second, his sons and their sons are mentioned alongside him.[36]

As can be seen from the archival documents, Khalil-agha was a *podporuchik* in the *militsiya* and was received by the Grand Duke (Kniaz) and Viceroy of the Caucasus in November 1880.[37] On this occasion he submitted a petition for a lifelong pension.[38] While considering the petition of Khalil-agha, the Chief Office of the Caucasian Viceroy,[39] sought evidence through official channels upon which to base its decision.

Thus, on the 20th of March 1881, the Chancellery of the head of the Chief Office of the Caucasian Viceroy sent Khalil-agha's petition to the governor of Yerevan, in whose territory Khalil-agha lived, with a request to provide information about the petitioner,

[34] Каграманян 2013.
[35] *Ibid*: 54, 85, 71.
[36] See: Анкоси 2004: 58, 31.
[37] Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich Romanov (1832–1909), son of Emperor Nicholas I and brother of Emperor Alexander II, who was Viceroy of the Caucasus in 1862–1881.
[38] See: NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, l. 3 (both sides) 3, 8, 10, 12, etc.
[39] Chief Office of the Caucasian Viceroy is an administrative institution under the Viceroy, created in 1858 to exercise his powers as the highest official in the region, determine the main directions for the assimilation and development of the Caucasian region, ensure the execution of orders of the emperor and the highest bodies of state power. See: Абазов 2019: 44–45. More about the Chief Office of the Caucasian Viceroy, see: *Ibid*.

his family, and his financial situation. Some of the information about Khalil-agha is contained in his petition, some in the letters of the governor, Major General Shalikov.[40]

In the response the governor of Yerevan governor replied on the 22nd of July 1881 and the 5th of March 1884, it was noted that the family of Khalil-agha, who lived in the village of Mirak[41] to where they had moved from the village of Abagha in the Van vilayet, numbered 14 members. He had a wife and three sons – Rizgan-agha[42], Haji-agha and Ali Amrat-agha[43]. The first son had a wife, two sons and four daughters; the second son had a wife but no children. In addition, the certificate of the governor stated that Khalil-agha lived in the new place like other resettled Kurds from the Vilayet of Van and did not own any property.[44] In other words, the property status of Khalil-agha was assessed as equal to other Yezidis[45], his financial hardship[46] was emphasized, and he himself, as a justification for his pension, noted the need to prevent his family from merging with the common people due to poverty.[47] In a letter dated the 3rd of July 1882, the governor presented the service records to the administration of Viceroy Khalil-agha.[48]

According to the petition of Khalil-agha, submitted to the Viceroy of the Caucasus on the 11th of November 1880, his father Amar (Omar)-agha, together with 275 Yezidi households, moved from the village of Novshor in the Abagha area of the Van vilayet to the Armenian region (*oblast*)[49] in 1839 and accepted the citizenship of the Russian Empire. These Yezidis were settled in nine villages in the Aparan region (in present-day western Armenia); in one of these villages, Mirak the head of this Yezidi community settled.[50]

[40] Mikhail Yakovlevich Shalikov (1831–1909) – Russian statesman and military leader. Since 1875 major general, in 1880–1890 (that is, during the researched period) – governor of the Yerevan Governorate (gubernia).

[41] Nowadays it is part of the Aragatsotn region of the Republic of Armenia, the administrative centre of which is the city of Ashtarak.

[42] In the archival documents in question, the name is spelled as 'Ruznali', which, obviously, is not correct and we consider the information of Karam Ankosi and Suto Kagramanyan to be more correct. See: Анкоси 2004: 62; Каграманян 2013: 88.

[43] It should be noted that the genealogy of Khalil-agha, compiled by Karam Ankosi, indicates four sons – in addition to the already mentioned Rizgan. Hajo is indicated in archival documents as Haji, Sheko, or Asho. See: Анкоси 2004: 62.

[44] See: NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, ll. 8–10 (both sides), 18 (both sides).

[45] See: *Ibid:* l. 12 (both sides).

[46] See: *Ibid:* l. 8–10 (both sides), 18 (both sides).

[47] See: *Ibid*.

[48] See: *Ibid:* l. 12 (both sides).

[49] The Armenian region (oblast) with its centre in the city of Yerevan was formed in 1828 after the end of the Russian-Persian War (1826–1828) and existed until 1840. As of 1839, it was divided into 6 districts, including Yerevan, which included the Aparan area with villages in which the Yezidis from Abagha settled. In 1840, the Georgian-Imeretian gubernia was formed, which, among others, included the Yerevan uezd, from which the Alexandropol uezd was separated in the same year. In 1846, after the abolition of the Georgian-Imereti gubernia, the Alexandropol uezd became part of the newly formed Tiflis gubernia, and in 1849 the Yerevan gubernia.

[50] See: NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, l. 29.

Khalil-agha "under the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasian Army, Count Vorontsov […] participated in cases against the highlanders."[51] This apparently refers to the Dargo campaign of 1845,[52] however, it is conceivable that some other operations "against the highlanders" are meant here. Another letter from the governor of Yerevan stated that Khalil-agha had "served in the militia since 1846."[53] He also served during the Turkish Campaign of 1854–1856.[54] During the Crimean War, Khalil-agha participated in repelling an attack of the Kurds of the *Zilan* tribe on the border villages of the Alexandropol *uezd* in 1854,[55] which made it possible for residents of the border villages to move to the Russian side. Consequently, "according to the testimony of the governor of Yerevan, General Kolyubakin," Khalil-agha was appointed to the rank of *praporshik* (warrant officer) of the police,[56] in 1859. This is indicated by the materials stored in the Russian State Historical Archive. The Viceroy of the Caucasus, Alexander Baryatinsky, awarded Khalil-agha based on a report from the military governor of Yerevan. In addition for commanding a hundred men during the Crimean War, the rank was given to him for his relationship with "the 246 families" resettled in the Russian Empire 18 years prior, engaged in agriculture, which had among them "not a single exile, suspect, or even any person involved in a criminal case"[57] – a very rare phenomenon in this region at that time.

For his military service in the Crimean War, Khalil-agha was awarded a medal "in memory of the war of 1853–1856" on the ribbon of St. Andrew.[58] It should be noted that in the Acts collected by the Caucasian Archaeography Commission, a letter from General Muravyov to Prince Dolgorukov, dated the 22nd of June 1855, refers to Khalil-agha deployment on the Saganlug ridge,[59] and notes, inter alia, the presence of two hundred Yezidi fighters.[60] Referring to this episode, the famous Russian military

[51] *Ibid*.
[52] See: *Ibid*.
[53] *Ibid:* l. 27 (both sides).
[54] See: *Ibid*: l. 29.
[55] On the actions of the Kurds, including the Kurds of the Zilan tribe against Russia during the Crimean War, see, for example, Мосаки 2018: 159–170.
[56] NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, l. 29. Here, obviously, Nikolai Petrovich Kolyubakin is meant, who in 1858 was appointed military governor of Yerevan, remaining there in the rank of major general until 1861. Moreover, in 1854, Colonel N. P. Kolyubakin headed the headquarters of the Yerevan detachment and, apparently, knew Khalil-agha.
[57] РГИА, f. 1268, op. 10, d. 180, ll. 1–3 (both sides). It should be noted that the archival case regarding the awarding of Khalil-agha was mentioned by A. Pobedonostseva Kaya (see: Победоносцева Кая 2016: 63).
[58] See: NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, l. 12, 18 (both sides). The medal "In Memory of the War of 1853–1856" was a mass award, it was awarded to a wide range of people, both those who fought in the Crimean War and those who were on home front. The medal on the St. Andrew's ribbon was second in importance – after the medal on the St. George's ribbon and before the medal on the Vladimir ribbon.
[59] See: *Акты 1888:* 357–359.
[60] *Ibid*: 358.

historian Lieutenant General M. I. Bogdanovich in his fundamental work about the Eastern War, mentions the presence of a hundred "Yezidi Kurds",[61] having previously also indicated the presence of another one hundred Yezidis in the 2nd Kurdish regiment;[62] which was part of the Alexandropol detachment.[63] These Yezidis, we can assume with a considerable degree of confidence, were commanded by Khalil-agha.

During the Russo-Turkish War (1877–1878) Khalil-agha "was in the Alexandropol Cavalry Irregular Regiment", in which he commanded a hundred men.[64] For his devotion and bravery he was awarded the rank of *podporuchik* (lieutenant) and the Order of Saint Stanislaus (III degree with swords and a bow).[65]

In conclusion, Khalil-agha began his service in the mid-40s and participated in the Crimean War (1854–1856) and the Russo-Turkish War (1877–1878). Although the case file does not indicate the year of his birth, it can be assumed that he was born in the first half or in the mid-1820s. At the time of Khalil-agha's application for a lifetime pension, his military service totalled approximately 35 years.

In addition to his merits in service, when considering Khalil-agha's request, the "special honour and respect" of his family was emphasized, as well as his position as a leader of "these Kurds," i.e. the Yezidi, and a possible "political" role in terms of his influence over those living in the province, as well as on fellow Yezidis living abroad. Considering his "honourable position" and "devotion" to the Russian government, the governor of Yerevan deemed the request worthy of respect.[66]

The deliberations pertaining to Khalil-agha's request for a pension took about four years in total. From the available archival materials and the legislation of the time, it emerged that Khalil-agha would not have been entitled to a pension. However, given his status as head of the Yezidis of the Alexandropol Uezd and the possibility of exerting

[61] Богданович 1876: 262.

[62] As is known, during the Crimean War two Kurdish regiments were formed: the 1st as part of the Yerevan detachment under the command of Major Jafar-agha (future major general) and the 2nd as part of the Alexandropol detachment under the command of Ahmed-agha Suleiman-agha ogly. See: РГВИА, f. 15099, op. 1, d. 14, ll. 9 (both sides), 15, 40; *Ibid*, d. 22, ll. 6, 10, 14; Богданович 1876: 238–239; Мосаки 2018: 168.

[63] See: Богданович 1876: 239.

[64] See: NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, ll. 27, 29. The Alexandropol detachment included, among others the two hundredth Alexandropol division (see: Колюбакин 1906: 121; *Материалы для описания русско-турецкой войны 1877–1878 гг. на Малоазиатском театре с планами 1904:* 233), one hundred of which, as stated in archival documents, were commanded by Khalil-agha. It is difficult to say whether this hundred consisted of Yezidis, as one might assume, or also included people of different ethnic origin. At least, we were unable to establish any documentary evidence on this. It should be added that the Kurdish regiment was part of the Yerevan detachment. See: *Ibid*: 121.

[65] The Order of St. Stanislaus, III degree, was the lowest in the order of seniority of orders of the Russian Empire and was awarded more often than others. The total number of the recipients of this medal was several hundred thousand people, although it is worth noting that the share of non-Christians was very small – up to 3–4%.

[66] NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, ll. 12 (both sides), 24.

his political influence also on the Yezidis living abroad,[67] the governor of Yerevan supported the granting of a pension to a Khalil-agha.

On the 26 of October 1884, as a result of a 4-year consideration period, Khalil-agha was granted a lifelong pension of four hundred and fifty Rubles per year.[68]

Lineage of Kok-agha

The archival materials related to the pension application are undoubtedly of considerable interest for the study of the history of the Yezidis in the Russian Empire: their settlement in the particular villages, the entry of the Yezidi leaders into the Russian military service, their participation in wars, as well as their awards and ranks. Although information about the resettlement of the Yezidis to the territory of the Russian Empire is known to some extent, new information about the activities of famous people and the clan leaders expands our knowledge of this important period in the history of the Yezidi community and its history before the Russian October Revolution. In this sense, even the mere discovery of the documents directly relating to Khalil-agha is of great historical interest. However, these archival materials are not limited to the biography of this Yezidi tribal chief. The archive file contains documents from the Ottoman Sultan and the Iranian Shah, as well as supplementary information on the history of his ancestors, which Khalil-agha provided to support his request. Additionally, there is information about these ancestors and, therefore, the Yezidi community of Eastern Anatolia is also reflected in his petitions. Considering the foregoing, it would not be an overstatement to say that the documents analysed in this article are one of a kind. These documents make it possible to connect various pieces of Yezidi history with each other, as well as to identify previously unknown aspects of Yezidi history in general. As already noted, prior to this article, only limited information about Khalil-agha existed – some of which was incorrect. His true identity and significance remain unknown to this day as Egiazarov mistakenly attributed him to the Hassani tribe.

Not only was Khalil-agha a representative of the Yezidis of the Yerevan province, but he was also an officer in the Russian military and a tribal leader who was considered politically significant both locally and beyond. Within the oral history of the Yezidis, and in particular that of the descendants of Khalil-agha and his brothers, it is well known that they were from the clan of Kok-agha and that they played an important role in the wars between the Ottoman Empire and Iran. This oral history also maintains that the clan of Kok-agha ruled a territory of 366 villages, and that they received

[67] See: *Ibid:* ll. 25–27.
[68] See: *Ibid:* l. 36 (both sides).

various awards from the Ottomans and the Iranians. However, the published literature, some of which is not without error, merely focusses on isolated aspects of this topic.

Brief reference was made to the clan of Kok-agha by Eskerê Boyîk in his article devoted to a different research question[69] in particular, to the 366 villages in Abagha, the fortress that the Kok-agha family possessed, their good relations with the Ottoman authorities, the battle with the "Muslims"[70] for Zarif-khatun (more on this below), their migration to Iran and subsequently to the Russian Empire, to the village of Mirak, and the name of their tribe – Mahamdi.[71]

Karam Ankosi's research connects Khalil-agha with the Kok-agha lineage. In a brief description of the "Aglar/Agalari" (*ax'lerî*) clan, he explains that this is the name of the descendants of the "Kok-agha lineage", representing a "noble, ancient princely family[…] by origin-agha (rulers)" and ruling "366 villages". As K. Ankosi wrote, this lineage belongs "to the union of the Mahamdi tribe", lived in "Abakha" (Abagha), and comes from the Avdal-agha family and traces its ancestry to Mir Choban-agha.[72] True, the author did not indicate which Choban-agha is being referred to, but based on the genealogy, apparently, the grandfather of Amar-agha is meant here (the father of Kok-agha which was the father of Amar-agha).[73]

The history of this family is described in more detail.[74] It was compiled, among other narratives, on the basis of stories of the Yezidi elders, Nadirê Dao (Nadir Usoev) and Fetla son of Jangir-agha which were recorded in 1999.

Suto Kagramanyan (Agalari) also correctly traces this family back to the family of Kok-agha and Mîro Choban, who settled in the "Abakha" (Abagha) plain "in Van *uezd*",[75] however, for some reason he incorrectly indicates the name as "Chupan", "Chupani" or "Chupa", apparently wanting to avoid associations with the word 'shepherd', as 'choban' means shepherd.

In general, Kagramanyan faithfully conveys the performance of the "Kok-agha family" in the second half of the 16th century: their struggle on the side of the Ottoman Empire in the confrontation with Iran under the leadership of Shah Abbas and the "Documents and Orders for Eternal Rule" granted to the Kok-agha family by the

[69] Boyîk 2004: 238–240. This article by Eskerê Boyîk was first published in the Armenian literary newspaper Գրական Թերթ (Grakvan Tert), February 23, 1990, No. 9 (2361).
[70] Obviously, Eskerê Boyîk deliberately used the word 'Muslims,' avoiding 'Kurds,' that is, Muslim Kurds.
[71] See: Boyîk 2004: 239.
[72] Анкоси 2004: 31.
[73] See: *Ibid:* 58
[74] See: Пирбари 2008: 118–127.
[75] Каграманян 2013: 75.

Turkish Sultan.[76] However, he erroneously indicates that the Yezidi leader was awarded by Sultan Murad IV, although it was Murad III – as evidenced by archival documents. However, in the absence of any previous information on this aspect of Yezidi history and considering the manner in which it was compiled (based on oral traditions), it can be concluded that the Yezidi oral tradition has been generally confirmed over several centuries. In this regard, it should be noted that the Yezidi oral history contains a story about the presentation of a charter by the Turkish Sultan to the Yezidi leader, Choban-agha, whose real name was Mîro, and not his grandson Abdal-agha, as is in the documents on Khalil-agha. According to this oral history, either the Sultan, or some pasha traveling around his territories, stopped for the night in the mountains, where he met a shepherd named Mîro, who gave him a warm welcome and, at his request, prepared a dish of sheep kidneys for him, because the Sultan said that he would not eat meat, but only sheep kidneys. Amazed by the shepherd's generosity, he rewarded Mîro with gold and handed him a letter stipulating the right to visit him. Mîro, the shepherd, visited the Sultan, who awarded him the title of -agha and made him the head of the local Yezidis and named him Choban-agha (Mîr Çoban Axa) – from the word 'choban' (Tur. shepherd).[77] The Sultan's visit is confirmed by a letter that we found in the archive. However, it showed that Sultan Murad visited the house of Avdal-agha and that the charter was issued to him, not to Choban-agha. At the end of this document states:

> This charter was given to Avdal-agha Amar-agha-oghlu Amar-agha Mîr Choban-oghly Mir Choban Avdal-agha-oghly Avdal-agha Avdal-agha-oghly Avdal-agha Haji-agha-oghly Haji-agha Mirza-agha sons of Kiovkan-agha and all his hereditary successors.[78]

Moreover, the document says that it (the charter) was awarded to Avdal-agha for the valour and bravery shown by him and his people in the war against the Persians. It is difficult to determine which event the orally transmitted story is related to and whether it has anything to do with the archival documents examined in this article. To date, documentary confirmation remains incomplete. However, while some distortion of the original events appears to have occurred during the oral transmission process over several generations, it does not appear that the story is pure fiction.

Based on the ancestors of Avdal-agha listed in the Sultan's charter, it is clear that even before the Sultan bestowed the title of -agha on Avdal-agha for his service in the fight against the Persians, this family was of noble origin. Each of Avdal-agha's

[76] *Ibid:* 77–79.
[77] The story was recorded from the words of Nadirê Dao in 1996 in Tbilisi.
[78] NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, l. 32 (both sides).

ancestors had already borne the title 'agha'; the name 'Kiovkan-agha' is apparently a distorted form of the name of their ancestor, known in Yezidi history as Kok-agha. It should be added that Kok-agha is also known among the Iraqi Yezidis. However, he is referred to there as the Yezidi Ashiret Dinan and therefore it is difficult to determine whether this name is attributed to the same historical figure or whether they are different people.

Currently, numerous oral histories have been published on *YouTube* by descendants of this clan or by people interested in the history of the Kurds or Yezidis. In addition to commonly known facts and stories, there is also new information, some of which is of a fantastic nature.[79]

As indicated above, two Choban-aghas are known in the history of the Sarhad Yezidis: the first is the grandfather of the Avdal-agha who received a charter from the Sultan Murad III. He is the first Choban-agha and lived approximately in the first half or the middle of the 16th century. The second is the grandfather of Khalil-agha, who was in correspondence with the Georgian King Erekle II (Heraclius II) in the 1770s regarding the possible creation of an anti-Ottoman coalition.

In Khalil-agha's petition addressed to the Viceroy of the Caucasia, Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich, dated the 11th of November 1880, he briefly described the history of his family. The petition noted that his ancestors held a "high-ranking title" in Turkey, were at the leaders of a "large Yezidi tribe", "ruled in Abagha, that is, the eastern half of the Van vilayat and were known as invincible heroic knights".[80] As Khalil-agha wrote, in 1593, one of his ancestors, Avdal-Agha, son of Amar-agha son of Mîr-Chapan, fought in the famous battle of Sultan Murad with the *Ajems* (Persians) and performed courageous deeds. Thus, he contributed significantly to the victory over the enemy. In return, as an expression of his gratitude, the Sultan granted him and his descendants a number of towns and districts, as well as all state revenues and taxes and the subordination of all Yezidi tribes of the Ottoman Empire for ever. The Sultan, on his return from Persia with triumph, came to Abagha[81] and visited Avdal-Agha with all his retinue; in a letter to his

[79] See for example: Ayhan Erkmen channel, Mala Kok Axa, published on 25th February 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okrcOXdIJ_w&t=26s (accessed: 17/09/2023); Orhan Basî channel, Kelha Kok Axê,Xalti/Xaldi, published on 4th February 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUpaAAGl-lM&t=59s (accessed: 10/01/2024); Xiret Media channel, Belgek ji dîroka mala Kok Axa: Mamedê Îvo, published on 23rd Aygust 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZ1wrmvusWM (accessed: 03/03/2024); Ezidxan TV Official channel, MALA KOK AXA – Piştî gelek salan xizmên hevdu dîtin, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_m7OakqEXI (accessed: 3/032024).

[80] NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, l. 28.

[81] Abagha is a district in eastern Turkey, north of the city of Van, another and current name of the city of Abagha is Çaldiran.

mother[82] in Constantinople in which he wrote about his victories over the Persians, he also mentioned the house of Amar-agha.[83]

After listing the merits of Amar-agha in the war against the Persians, the Sultan's charter granted him eternal and hereditary possession of the Abagha region, which included 366 villages, as well as a number of towns with marketplaces, including Mahmudiya.[84]

In fact, we can say that this charter marks the establishment of the Yezidi principality under the leadership of the noble Amar-agha family and grants them the claim to the Abagha region, including tax and economic privileges. Moreover, in addition to the territorial possessions, Amar-agha was also granted extraterritorial power over all the Yezidis of the Ottoman Empire, although, as far as we are aware, this kind of power did not extend beyond the borders of Eastern Anatolia.

Comparing the charter granted by the Sultan to Avdal-agha at the end of the 16th century and the correspondence of Choban-agha with Georgian King Erekle II after almost two centuries, it can be understood that these were the representatives of the same ruling family that was leading the Yezidi tribes of Sarhad for at least three centuries, notwithstanding the shrinking of their territory and the waning influence of this family over time. These conclusions are confirmed by the following circumstances:

Choban-agha's appeals to Erekle were due to the growing influence of the kingdom of Kartl-Kakheti (East Georgia) after its unification in 1762 under the leadership of the outstanding statesman King Erekle II, and the aspirations of the non-Muslim peoples, namely the Armenians, Assyrians and Yezidis, in relation to this Georgian king.

Mahmudi Region

In his letter to King Erekle II dated the 13th of August 1770, the Assyrian bishop Isaiah[85] wrote that he "went to Mahmedian Kurdistan".[86] As Vasilyeva wrote in the preface to *Sharafnama*, even after the administrative reform that was aimed at strengthening

[82] It is known that the mother of Sultan Murad III, Nurbanu Sultan had great influence during the reign of her son.

[83] See: NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, ll. 28–28 (both sides). See also the sultan's charter itself, *ibid*: ll. 31–32 (both sides).

[84] It should be noted that Sharaf-khan Bidlisi wrote that the Abgay (Abagha) district in 1005 A.H. (1596–97) belonged to Vali-bek from the Dumbuli tribe (see: Бидлиси 1967: 313) which apparently is not true. Obviously, the discrepancies between some information from the Sharafnama and real historical events confirmed by Ottoman archival documents, especially regarding the Yezidis, requires additional study.

[85] It should be noted that Armenian historiography considers him to be an Armenian bishop. See: Иоаннисян 1989: 233.

[86] Мачарадзе 1989: 49. Macharadze, based on the peculiarities of the Georgian language, mistakenly translated the word 'Mahmed' as 'Mohammedan', that is, 'Muslim Kurdistan' (see: Мачарадзе 1989: 49), although it is clearly 'Mahmudi Kurdistan'.

control over Kurdistan, "Kurdish principalities and emirates remained, which the Turkish authorities failed to fragment"; in particular, in the Van vilayet – Hakkari, Mahmudi, and Penyaneshi[87] of Kurdistan that was known as the Mahmudi region, the region of the Mahmudi tribe.[88] Thus, in the Van vilayet the matter was about a separate principality. In his *Description of a Journey Along the Turkish-Persian Border*, Mehmed Khurshid Efendi mentions the "Mahmudi River, which flows near Van from Khoshab-Kale, in the Mahmudi district, into Lake Van".[89]

In Chirikov's *Travel Journal*, as well as in the maps attached to it, the region, area, sanjak, or fortress of Mahmudi are mentioned repeatedly.[90]

In the second half of the 17th century the once vast Mahmudi region of the Van vilayet, as we can assume, included territories occupied by both the Muslim part of this tribe and the Yezidi Mahmudi, concentrated around Abagha. This is confirmed by Choban-agha's letter to Erekle II, dated the 13th of August 1770, in which he calls himself Choban-agha of Abaghlu.[91] Valerian Macharadze, not knowing this geographical name, could not explain the word 'Abaghlu', therefore he put a question mark on it. In addition, in the same letter, Choban-agha speaks about his community, when he writes: "we are Mahmud Yezidis".[92] Macharadze again incorrectly assumes that the word 'Mahmud' supposedly means "Mohammedan,"[93] that is, Muslim – which makes the phrase a misnomer: 'we are Muslim Yezidis'.[94] Our argument that both Choban-aghas belonged to the same clan of Yezidis-Mahmudi are confirmed by the description of Khurshid Efendi, according to which "Mahal[95] Abgay, or Abagha," consists "of a vast steppe […] assigned to the Van sanjak and located in the vicinity of the Bargiri sanjak, on the south side of Ala-dag, and of numerous *yaylaks*[96] located in the surrounding mountains," which the local residents call Mahmudi and Mehemdi-*dyuzlyugyu*.[97] Khurshid Efendi also wrote that Yezidis earlier lived in the Abag territory "who filled this area with their villages, cultivated it, and even built a sufficient number of fortified castles

[87] Васильева 1967: 53.
[88] The word 'მაჰმედა (-mahmeda)', used in the bishop's letter, is similar to the Georgian word 'სამაჰმადიანო (-samahmadiano)' – 'Mohammedan'. It should be added that the Kurds called the Mahmudi district Mahamdan, and Chapter III of the Book on the New History of Kurdistan by Mela Mahmoud Bayezidi was called: Description of the events that occurred in the Mahmudi district, which the Kurds call Mahamadan and the main city of which is Khoshab [see: Васильева 1991: 35].
[89] Хуршид-эфенди 1877: 287.
[90] Чириков 1875: XLIV, LXXXII, 482, 484, 486, 584–587, 592.
[91] See: Мачарадзе 1989: 50.
[92] *Ibid*: 51.
[93] *Ibid*: 51.
[94] On this see also Пирбари 2008: 121–122.
[95] In this case, a community or district with a certain level of self-government.
[96] High mountain pastures for summer season.
[97] Хуршид-эфенди 1877: 290.

in it to protect themselves from the attacks of the Ashirets hostile to them,"[98] which obviously refers to the Kurdish Muslim tribes.

Similar information about Abagha was also available in the work of another Ottoman officer engaged in the process of defining the Turko-Iranian border in the mid-19th century.[99]

Kurdish and Yezidi elders said that the Choban-agha family ruled over 366 villages.[100] It is noteworthy that 360 Yezidi villages in Abagha were mentioned in the description of this area by the afore-mentioned Ottoman officer named Dervish Pasha.[101] One of the villages of Abagha, cited by Khurshid Efendi, bears the name of Choban-agha (*Kalê* Chopan-agha),[102] the fortress of Choban-agha, apparently, the village of the Choban-agha family.

Khurshid Efendi also pointed to the presence of graves of Yezidi *beys* (tribal chiefs) in the Abagha area, over which *qubbes* (tombs or shrines) were built, one of them had an inscription indicating the deceased's demise in 1114 AH (1734).[103]

Part of the Mahmudi region from Van vilayet was transferred to Hakkari. The seat of the administration of this area was the Khoshab fortress.[104] In his letter to Erekle II, Bishop Isaiah conveyed that Choban-agha would ask the Georgian king to assist him in the conquest of the Khoshab fortress.[105] Apparently, the Khoshab fortress once belonged to the Choban-agha family, who later lost it and moved north. Choban-agha, wanted to regain his native lands. Moreover, not long before this, in 1762, Choban-agha captured the son of the ruler of Khoshab. Subsequently, the ruler of Van launched a campaign against Abagha, took the fortress, and Choban-agha was forced to flee.[106]

Ezdikhan: Yezidi Principality

For a long time, the territory around Abagha, northeast of lake Van was the fiefdom of the Yezidi princely family Kok-agha, who led the Yezidi part of the Mahmudi tribal union. This fact is even noted as a place name – Ezdi-khan or Yesdi-khan on various maps listed below. Furthermore, the place name "Ezdikhan" was not previously known for any area, especially not in Eastern Anatolia, which is far away from

[98] *Ibid*.
[99] See: Fener 2015: 143–144.
[100] Perhaps they mention the number 366 (as well as 72) as the oral tradition due to the large number of villages.
[101] See: Fener 2015: 143–144.
[102] See: Хуршид-эфенди 1877: 422.
[103] See: *Ibid*: 291
[104] See: *Ibid*: 292.
[105] Мачарадзе 1989: 49.
[106] See: Մանր ժամանակագրություններ 1956: 490.

Sheikhan and Sinjar (Shangal). It should be noted that it was characteristic for Yezidi rulers in general to call their territories, which had a certain level of independence, Ezdikhan or Ezidkhan (Êzdîxan). This was also the name of the Yezidi principality in Sheikhan. Apparently, such a name was intended to assert the distinction from the Kurds (Muslims). Ezdikhan literally translates as 'House of the Yezidis', but in this case means 'Yezidi World'.

On another map this territory is designated as 'Yezdi Khan Principauté, that is, the Principality of Ezdikhan.[107]

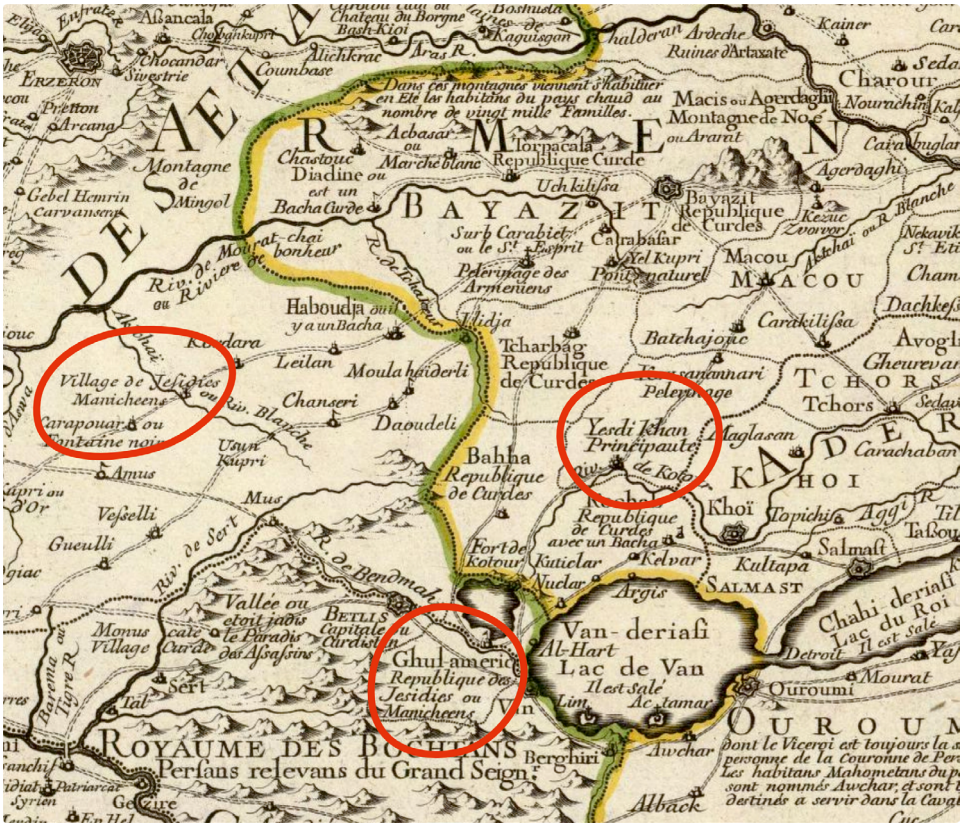


Figure 1. Part of a map by *Guillaume de L'Isle, Mer Caspiene, Pays voisins*, 1723.[108]
On another map, the area is simply labelled as Ïezdi-kan.

[107] The same map shows toponyms referring to Yezidis and Manichaeans.
[108] David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, https: //www.davidrumsey.com / luna/servlet / detail / RUMSEY~8~1~2906~300042:Carte-des-Pays-voisins-de-la-Mer-Ca (accessed: 11/10/2023).



Figure 2. Part of a map by Jean Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville, *Asie 1*, 1751.[109]



Source bibliotheque-numerique.diplomatie.gouv.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 3. Manuscript map of the surroundings of Lake Van and the sources of the Tigris, 18th century.[110]

[109] David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~4416~410005:Premiere-partie-de-la-carte-d-Asie (accessed: 22/09/2023).

[110] Author: Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d' Anville, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8592844b (accessed: 18/08/2023).

In the Russian *Map of Asian Turkey*,[111] compiled in 1793, the area between Van in the south and Maku in the north is designated as 'Yezdikan' (Ездикан).

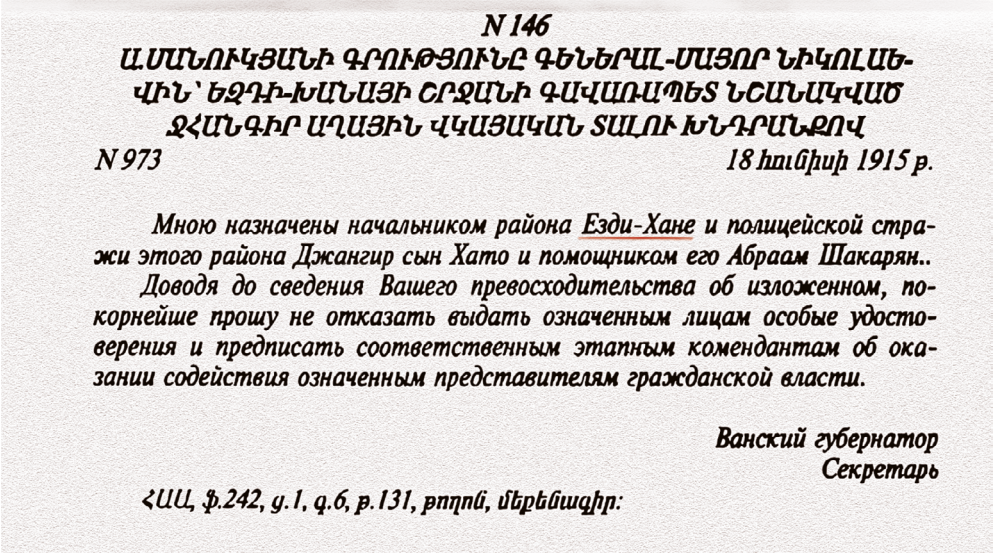


Figure 4. Part of *Map of Asian Turkey*.[112]

Moreover, on the 26th of December 1843, at the 10th conference between the plenipotentiaries of the Ottoman Empire and Iran on border disputes, the Iranian side, listing, among other things, the borderlands, added that "Mahmoudi et Abakaï, dits aussi [also called] Yézidi Khana".[113]

Thus, thanks to the Kok-agha family, which ruled vast territories to the north and east of Van, this region was called Ezdikhan on various maps in the 17th and 18th centuries. Apparently, this toponym appeared in this territory already in the 16th century, during the period when the Kok-agha family held the most power. Moreover, the term 'Ezdikhan' denoting densely populated areas in the Van vilayet continued to be used even at the beginning of the 20th century. Thus, in 1915, the so-called "Armenian governor of Van" issued an order, appointing Jangir-agha as "chief of the Ezdi-Khan region".[114]

[111] Figure 4.
[112] Map of Asian Turkey (Карта Азиатской Турции), Anatolia, including Armenia, Kurdistan, Aljazira, Iraq-Ajami, from the New Atlas, or collection of maps of all parts of the world, Saint-Petersburg 1793, https://geoportal.rgo.ru/record/9976 (accessed: 12/10/2023). This atlas is a Russian translation of a French one of the same name, printed in Paris in 1762 (British Library, London – Maps C. 27. f.3).
[113] Extracts From Correspondence Relative to the Turco-Persian Boundary Negotiations (Extracts) 1912: 105.
[114] Մանուկյան 2009: 162.



N 146
Ա.ՄԱՆՈՒԿՅԱՆԻ ԳՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ԳԵՆԵՐԱԼ-ՄԱՅՈՐ ՆԻԿՈԼԱԵՎԻՆ՝ ԵԶԴԻ-ԽԱՆԱՅԻ ՇՐՋԱՆԻ ԳԱՎԱՌԱՊԵՏ ՆՇԱՆԱԿՎԱԾ ՋՀԱՆԳԻՐ ԱՂԱՅԻՆ ՎԿԱՅԱԿԱՆ ՏԱԼՈՒ ԽՆԴՐԱՆՔՈՎ

N 973 18 հուլիսի 1915 թ.

Мною назначены начальником района Езди-Хане и полицейской стражи этого района Джангир сын Хато и помощником его Абраам Шакарян..

Доводя до сведения Вашего превосходительства об изложенном, покорнейше прошу не отказать выдать означенным лицам особые удостоверения и предписать соответственным этапным комендантам об оказании содействия означенным представителям гражданской власти.

Ванский губернатор
Секретарь

ՀԱԱ, ֆ.242, ց.1, գ.6, թ.131, բողոն, մերենագիր:

Figure 5. Translation of the Russian text: I have appointed the head of the Ezdi-Khan district and the police guards of this region, Jangir son of Khato and his assistant Abraham Shakaryan. Bringing the above mentioned to the attention of Your Excellency, I cordially ask you not to refuse to issue special certificates to the said people and to instruct the relevant staging commanders to provide support to the above-mentioned representatives of the civil authorities.[115]

History of the Mahmudi Tribe and the Kok-agha Lineage

The period of strengthening of the Mahmudi tribe - Conversion to Islam – The future fate of the Kok-agha family

It should be noted that in his chronicle, Sharaf-khan Bidlisi devotes one of the chapters to the emirs of the Mahmudi tribe.[116] Therein, he indicates their genealogy and points out their Yezidi religion. According to the *Sharafnama*, during the time of the Turkmen dynasty (Kara-Koyunlu which ruled in the territory of Kurdistan) a certain Shaikh Mahmud received from Kara Yusuf (1389–1420) the Ashut and Khoshab districts as an emirate. Furthermore, his son Hussain-beg received the Albak district, which had been taken from the Hakkari rulers.[117]

The Iranian shahs, despite their best efforts, failed to establish real authority over the Mahmudi tribe and eventually settled for mere formal subordination.

[115] Մանուկյան 2009.
[116] See: Бидлиси 1967: 349–358.
[117] See: *Ibid*: 349.

When presenting the history of Shaykh Mahmud's descendants, Sharaf-khan Bidlisi, states that Hasan bin Iwaz-bek bin Mir Hamid, "eliminated the Yezidi heresy in the tribe [of] Mahmudi."[118] Thus, the Mahmudi tribe was entirely Yezidi before the rule of Hassan Beg around the middle of the 16th century. Sharaf-khan. Bidlisi also mentions the escape of Hasan-bey to the court of Shah Tahmasp (1524–1574), who granted him the administration of Mahmudi and the Khoshab fortress,[119] an event that, according to Açikyildiz-Şengül, took place around the year 1550.[120]

This period during the reign of Suleiman I can be described as the time when the Mahmudi tribe became stronger on the border between Turkey and Iran. Evliya Çelebi, mentioning this tribe several times in his work, writes about the transfer of the fortress of Maku to a *bey* from this tribe after his submission to Suleiman I. These Makhmudi *beys* also owned Malazgirt.[121] It is also worth to recall that after the first mention of the Mahmudi tribe by Evliya Çelebi, Soviet authors noted that it was "one of the largest and most powerful Kurdish tribes in the 16th and 17th centuries, leading a nomadic life east of Lake Van. Because the tribe was Sunni, in the wars between the Persians and the Turks, they often supported the latter."[122]

The Ottoman archives contain extensive documentation on various emirs of the Mahmudi tribe in the 16th century who played an important role in the Ottoman-Iranian border region. Among these documents are some who were previously unknown in historical literature.[123] The works in Ottoman archives devoted to the subject of the Principality of Mahmudi (Khoshab) contain certain aspects related to our topic.[124] In the middle of the 16th century, after having supported the Ottoman Empire against Iran, the Mahmudi tribe was granted the opportunity to build the Khoshab fortress. Part of the tribe, along with the rulers, soon converted to Islam and the proportion of the Yezidi population in the Mahmudi region decreased over time. However, it had still a presence there until the early twentieth century.[125] Very important is a work on the religious architecture of the "Yezidi Mahmudi dynasty" in Khoshab, which contains pre-Islamic Yezidi elements.[126] There is also an article that analyses the Khoshab fortress and the

[118] *Ibid*: 354.
[119] *Ibid*.
[120] See: Açikyildiz-Şengül 2016: 370.
[121] See: Челеби 1983: 107.
[122] *Ibid*: 110.
[123] See: Dehqan and Genç 2019: 90–91.
[124] Şen 2018; Şen and Tekin 2020: 141–162.
[125] See: Şen 2018: 37–39; Şen and Tekin 2020: 156–158.
[126] Açikyildiz-Şengül 2016.

findings (fragments of ornamented stucco) of the excavations in 2017 which also includes a history of the Mahmudi principality.[127]

Thanks to its diplomatic manoeuvring between the Ottomans, Iranians, and local Kurdish rulers, the "Kurdish Yezidi Mahmud dynasty" managed to maintain its control over the Van region for quite some time.[128]

The Mahmudi tribe, or more precisely its growing Muslim branch, was a powerful unit in Eastern Anatolia and the border regions of Iran. Evliya Çelebi also mentions several thousand "armed and excellent [Kurdish] warriors from the Mahmudi tribe" in Khynys in the Erzurum vilayet.[129] He writes about their residence in the Araks region[130] and, recounting a legend, mentioned the enormous size of the horses of the Mahmudi tribe.[131] Considering the role of the horse at that time and in that region, this can be seen as a sign of the Mahmudis' glory and power.[132]

In the second half of the 16th century, a split occurred in this large and powerful tribe, when a part of the Mahmudi tribe moved away from the Mahmudis of Khoshab who had converted to Islam. The Mahmudis, who remained faithful to the Yezidi faith, moved to Abagha in the north of Khoshab under the leadership of the Kok-agha family. Very interesting information about Mahmudi-Van Yezidis can be found in a famous 18th century chronicle, namely the "Van Tarihi" (The History of Van) by İbn-i Nuh.[133] The chronicle reports on the conflicts between the Ottoman forces under the governors of Van and Diyarbakir and the Yezidis, in particular the attack of the Yezidis of Khoshab on the fortress of Van in 1042 AH (1632/3), the battles between the Ottoman troops of Van and the Yezidis of Khoshab in 1127 AH (1715), the defeat of the governor of Van by Yezidi fighters in 1128 AH (1716); the defeat of the Yezidis by Ottoman troops, and the upraising of the Yezidis of Khoshab against the Van administration shortly thereafter.[134] As mentioned above, from about the middle of the 16th century, Khoshab belonged to the Muslim Kurds, while the surrounding area was inhabited by the Mahmudi Yezidis. According to a number of sources, these Yezidis collaborated at times with the Kurds against the Ottoman authorities.[135] The presence of Yezidis in the vicinity

[127] Top and Telli 2020: 275–299.
[128] Orpak 2021: 9.
[129] Челеби 1983: 224–225.
[130] See: *Ibid*: 109.
[131] See: *Ibid*: 249.
[132] Information about the various rulers of the Mahmudi tribes and Khoshab is widely present in the famous work on the history of Iran. See: Monshi 1978: 856, 863, 878–879, 897, 911–912, 118. Also, an article on the Mahmudi sanjak and its rulers has recently been published. See: Kaya 2023: 764 – 777.
[133] İbn-i Nuh 2003.
[134] *Ibid*: xv–xvii.
[135] See: *Ibid*: 86–88; Aykan 2022: 692.

of Khoshab is also confirmed by Russian pre-revolutionary literature. In one of the sources on the history of military operations in Asian Turkey in 1828–1829, there is a "Table of Kurdish *taifas*", according to which "at the Koshab [Khoshab] fortress behind Koshab on the border of Albag lives a Yezdi *taifa* numbering 200 families and the chief of them is Khidir-agha."[136] Apparently, this was the part of the Mahmudi Yezidis that remained and continued residing not far from Khoshab.

Ottoman archival materials also contain documents about various actions of the Yezidis in Eastern Anatolia against the Ottomans, indicating their quite significant military strength and influence in the region. In particular, there is information about one of the most famous personalities of this region named Abdi Oğlu Mahmud who lived in the early 18th century[137] and who can be assumed to have been a representative of the Kok-agha clan.

Some information is also available on personalities of the Kok-agha clan in the Ottoman documents published by Amed Gökçen.[138] One of the documents refers to a Choban-agha from Abagha of Van, who went to Khoy in Iran but soon after returned to his lands[139] – an information which generally corresponds to the one provided below. The second document seems to refer to Choban-agha's sons, in particular to Avdal-agha (Abda-agha) and his passage to Iran[140] and his and his brother's return to the Ottoman Empire – very much to Abbas-Mirza's discontent.[141] Although, it would appear that Avdal-agha and his brother returned because they were unhappy with Abbas Mirza.[142]

Relations Between Choban-agha and Erekle II, the King of Kartli-Kakheti

In the 17th and early 18th centuries the Yezidis represented a significant ethnic element and an important military force in four regions of the Ottoman Empire: in Van, in the mountainous area stretching from Amadiye (Imadiye) to Hakkari, in the area located between the districts of Kilis and Ruha (Urfa), and the area between Mosul and Sinjar.[143] However, in the 18th century, the situation of the Yezidis began to seriously deteriorate due to the increase of the Kurdish-Muslim demographic element.

The history of the Yezidis of Sarhad in the second half of the 18th century was preserved within the archival materials, thanks to the correspondence of Choban-agha

[136] *История военных действий в Азиатской Турции в 1828 и 1829 годах 1836*: 129.
[137] Kaya 2021: 982.
[138] See: Gökçen 2012: 241, 244.
[139] See: *Ibid*: 241.
[140] See: *Ibid*: 244.
[141] See: Azap 2021: 38, 144.
[142] See: Azap 2021: 38, 144.
[143] See: İbn-i Nuh 2003: 86–88; Aykan 2022: 693.

with Erekle II, the King of Kartli-Kakheti,[144] and the work of the Armenian Catholicos Simeon Yerevantsi (Simeon of Yerevan, 1710–1780),[145] who mentioned the correspondence between "Abagha's" ruler "Choban-agha" and the Georgian king.[146]

It is noteworthy that the famous Armenian historian Abgar Ioannisyan wrote about Joseph Emin based on Simeon Yerevantsi Etchmiadzin's *Memorial Book*.[147] Therein, he recounts a story about Choban-agha, "the ruler of Abagha" ("պարոն Ապաղու")[148] and the subsequent resettlement of Choban-agha, due to the oppression of the pashas and khans in Khoy. In contrast to Macharadze's work, Ioannisyan has not yet been taken into account by researchers on Yezidi and Kurdish history. Thus, his chronicles have gone unexamined. Besides, in the same work, Ioannisyan wrote that several years before Choban-agha's correspondence with King Erekle II, the famous Armenian clergyman Hovnan[149] "assigned to the Yezidis, as well as to the Assyrians, a very important role in the joint uprising against the Turks that they were preparing for" and "conducted some negotiations with the Yezidis (obviously, with Choban-agha). In 1764 he wrote with confidence to Emin that the Yezidis also agreed to join them together with the Armenians and take up arms."[150]

There is also information about a letter from Choban-agha to Erekle II, dated the 23rd of September 1770, in which he agrees "to the proposal of a joint fight against Turkey" and expresses hope "for the patronage of Erekle II".[151]

Yerevantsi also wrote about Choban-agha's correspondence[152] with an Armenian clergyman and about monetary aid provided to Choban-agha,[153] as well as on Choban-Agha's appeal to the Georgian King Erekle II through the Armenian abbot who interceded on his behalf. The abbot noted that "the ruler of the country Abagha Yezidi Choban-agha suffered great damage multiple times from the rulers of all the surrounding

[144] Мачарадзе 1989.

[145] He was the Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church in 1763–1780.

[146] Սիմէօն Կաթուղիկոս Երեւանցի 1913: 133, 376–377. Yerevantsi is also the author of a work on the history of the Armenian church [Ереванци 1958].

[147] See: Иоаннисян 1989: 234.

[148] The mountainous Aladag region, south of Diadin and southwest of Bayazid.

[149] Abbot of the monastery of St. Karapet in Mush, which was one of the centres of the Armenian liberation movement.

[150] *Ibid*.

[151] Чатоев 1985: 70. Thus, besides in the work of Yerevantsi, this is the first mention in scientific literature of the correspondence of the Yezidi ruler Choban-agha with the Georgian king Erekle II. Moreover, Choban-Agha's letter with the indicated date is not contained in Macharadze's work. It is noteworthy that Khalit Chatoev provides only a reference and not to an archival document referring to Choban-agha's letter, but in the History of the Armenian People, published in 1951 (though without indicating the author of the chapter) it is said that the abbot of the monastery Surb Karapet Hovnan, along with the Kurds, hoped to persuade the Yezidis and Assyrians to act together with them against the Turks. See: Иоаннисян 1951: 261. The context of Hovnan's negotiations with Emin and Erekle is analysed there, as well as the attitude of Catholicos Simeon to it. See: *Ibid*: 261–262.

[152] Yerevantsi lists him as "Chopan-Agha", but we use the generally accepted name.

[153] See: Սիմէօն Կաթուղիկոս Երեւանցի 1913: 133.

states, be it from pashas or khans", in connection with which he remained completely helpless. Choban-agha had previously appealed to King Erekle II with requests to proceed with his people to the king's domain. Having received no help, the Yezidi-agha became disillusioned with the king. Oppressed in his own land, Choban-agha abandoned his homeland and headed for Khoy, destroying the surrounding terrain before his departure.[154] Having reached Khoy, he again sent a messenger to Erekle II, asking him to receive him and his people. In November 1778, the Georgian king sent a small detachment to Khoy to fetch Choban-agha, but the Khan of Khoy, Ahmat-khan, opposed Choban-agha's departure and Erekle's detachment returned without Choban-agh. The Georgian king informed Choban-agha that the Khan of Khoy intended to kill him and disperse his people, upon which Choban-agha fled to King Erekle and stayed with him for about six months, until May 1779.[155] Then, Erekle sent his men accompanied by Choban-agha to the Khan of Khoy with a request to allow Choban-agha to take his people with him. Initially, the khan reluctantly agreed and granted permission for 200 families to leave, but soon changed his mind. Thus, Choban-agha and the representatives of the King returned empty handed. Sometime later, Choban-agha returned to Khoi. However, before this, the Pasha of Van requested the Armenian abbot in a letter to intercede with King Erekle II to allow Choban-agha to leave so that he could return "to his country" and rebuild it under the patronage of the pasha. The Armenian priest did so and on the 5th of June 1779 Choban-agha and the representative of Erekle II began their return. By then, Choban-agha did not even have a horse of his own and the Armenian Catholicos had to provide him with a steed.[156]

King Erekle II perceived Choban-agha as a passible natural ally. This is evidenced in a significant postscript by the Georgian king in a letter dated August the 13th of 1770, which truly reflects the aspirations of the Yezidis of Eastern Anatolia towards their Christian neighbors, Georgians, Armenians, Assyrians and subsequently the Russian Empire: "This Choban-ogly, whose last name is Yezid, is neither a Christian nor a Muslim. More a supporter of Christians and an enemy of Muslims. He also wants to join us, since they are oppressed by Muslims".[157]

[154] It is precisely this part of S. Yerevantsi's book that Ioannisyan refers to.

[155] Yerevantsi does not indicate the precise year, but since the events of this chapter refer to 1778, Choban-Agha's stay from November [1778] to May implies 1779.

[156] See: Սիմէօն Կաթուղիկոս Երևանցի 1913: 376–377. Choban-agha is also briefly mentioned in another part of the chronicle of Catholicos Simeon Yerevantsi. About his correspondence with the Armenian Catholicos and the exchange of gifts in 1767 see: Idem: 1908: 53–54.

[157] Мачарадзе 1989: 51–52. It should be noted that the author of one of the most informative books about the Yezidis, John Guest, mentions Choban-agha only once, and – although with reference to Marietta Shaginyan – mistakenly classifies Mîr Choban-agha Beg as a member of the Hassanli tribe (see: Guest 1993: 198). Also incorrect is his statement that the Choban-agha's tribe migrated from Van to Georgia (apparently, he meant

Despite the weakening of the tribe led by Choban-agha, two hundred years later, in the middle of the second half of the 19th century, it still played a role in the region and in the potential formation of an anti-Ottoman Armenian-Georgian-Yezidi coalition. However, due to pressure from the Kurds starting during the Choban-agha period, the Yezidis continued to seek resettlement opportunities in the interest of self-preservation. In other words, they prepared for the possibility of having to leave their territories.[158]

The seizure of pastures belonging to Yezidis in Abagha by the increasing number of nomadic Kurds and the migration of local Yezidi residents, to Bitlis, Mush, Van, Khoy, and Ovadzhik (Avachikh). The movement of about four hundred families to the latter already envisaged by Khalil-agha in his petition to the viceroy) and the migration to Russia is also attested in Turkish sources.[159] In the beginning of the 19th century, about fifty or sixty years before Khurshid Efendi wrote his book, Kurdish *aşirets* (tribes) came with their herds in the summer to the Abagha region, which was famous for its air and abundance of pastureland. Since seasonal grazing was no longer enough for them, they coveted the Yezidis' land and began to take away their property. This led to conflicts between Yezidis and Kurdish *aşirets*, whose numbers increased every year. "Hindered and ravaged by the atrocities of outsiders," the Yezidis eventually left and the Abagha area became permanently settled by Kurdish *aşirets*.[160]

The Narrative of the Kidnapping of Zarif-khatun

It should be added that, apart from the above-mentioned reason for the struggle for territory, orally transmitted Yezidi accounts reflect a story that can be taken as the reason that started the war between the Kurdish bey and the Choban-agha family, known among the Kurds and Yezidis of Sarhad as 'şerê ser Zerîf-xatûnê' (war for Zarif-khatun).[161]

Abagha at the foot of Mount Ararat, which was under Iranian rule) and that he had to return to the place of his former residence near Mount Ararat, due to the oppression of the Georgian King Erekle II (see: *Ibid*: 198). We can also add that the information about the Mahmudi tribe (as well as the Dumbulis) given by Guest is only based on information provided by the Sharafnama (see: *Ibid*: 45–48).

[158] Probably, Choban-agha, manoeuvring between different forces, was also for some time in the vicinity of Sheikhan. There are oral stories about this. Moreover, representatives of the Yezidi tribes of Iraq, the Jasanis and Haskis, claim that they are relatives of Choban-agha. In Sarhad, and later in Armenia and Georgia, the Choban-agha family had close kinship relations with the aşirets (tribes) of Kandali and Mamrashi. Representatives of these tribes believed that they had a common origin. It is interesting that the ethnonyms of all these tribes might originate from the names of three neighbouring villages in the Sheikhan region – Mamrasha, Mahmuda, and Kandala, since Yezidi tribal names are often derived from toponyms.

[159] See: Fener 2015: 143–144.

[160] Хуршид-эфенди 1877: 290.

[161] This story was told to us by Nadirê Dao Mandikî (1929–2023) and Fetla-beg (1924–2002), the son of Jangir-agha (Tbilisi, 1996; Yerevan, 1997).

Thus, in the early 19th century, the Kurdish *bey* Ali-agha, son of Badr-khan-beg,[162] planned to kidnap a girl named Zarif-khatun from the Yezidi family of Kok-agha, son of Choban-agha. The Ali-agha invited the Yezidi agha to his son's wedding. At the wedding, the host paid due respect to the Yezidi agha but had treacherously ordered his servant to steal the Yezidi leader's rosary during the feast and go to the latter's house where Zarif-khatun lived. In case she would refuse to leave the house, the servant was ordered to show the girl her father's rosary in order to gain her trust. The plan was successful, and the girl went with the servant. When the Yezidi agha saw his daughter dancing in a circle and realized the Kurdish *bey's* intentions, he sent a messenger to Khatib-agha, the head of the Yezidis of Karasu district, who lived in the village of Chibukhli. Khatib- agha and his men immediately rushed to the aid of their co-religionist. Although the Yezidis defeated the Kurds, the losses suffered during the battle meant the end of their military power. Thus, they were forced to leave their territories and move to the Russian Empire (the present-day territory of Armenia), finally settling in abandoned Turkic and Kurdish villages in Aparan at the beginning of the 19th century. The first description of this event was given in the work of the French author M. Ernest Chantre in the 19th century, based on stories from local residents. According to this account, the Kurds of the Haideranli tribe kidnapped Zarif-khatun, the daughter of Kok-agha, the head of the Yezidi settlement in Abagha. This resulted in a conflict which ended in the defeat of the Yezidis, who were forced to leave their fertile plain and migrate to Russia and Iran.[163] In 1902, this story about the war for Zarif-khatun was published in Armenian by the Russian Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages in the *Eminyan Ethnographic Collection*, which contained Armenian folk tales collected by the ethnographer and collector Sarkis Haykuni.[164]

Furthermore, the story of the war for a girl from the Choban-agha family is also recorded in Kurdish folklore. Two stanzas of one of the songs preserved in Alexandre Jaba's collection of Kurdish manuscripts relates it from a Kurdish perspective:

[162] Not to be confused with the infamous Badr-khan.
[163] See: Chantre 1881: 293–294.
[164] Հայկունի 1902: appendixes 123–126.

Şer'ek bûye li zozanan	There was a battle in the pastures
Ça'v nabir'e ji mij û dûmanan	Fog made it hard to see,
Ewqas meriv hatine kuştin,	How many people were killed,
Teyr naxwin goştê însanan	Birds don't eat human flesh
Kela Wanê çardeh derî	Van fortress with fourteen gates,
Lê digerê Nasirê xemî cotek zerî	Nasirê Hêmî and a couple of maidens walk there
Qîza Mîr Çoban xwişka Gok Axa,[165]	Daughter of Mîr Choban, sister of Gok-agha,
Bûye hêviya E'lî Axa Heyderî[166]	Became the second wife of Ali-agha Haydari[167]

Another Kurdish folk song is entirely devoted to the story of Zarif-khatun, in which the Kok-agha clan is represented as the oppressor – this can be explained by the Kurdish-Yezidi rivalry, and the religious overtones.[168]

Stories similar to those told by the Yezidi elders have been preserved among the Kurds of this region, leading to the conclusion that with the capture of Zarif-Khatun and the subsequent battle, the backbone of the Kok-Agha clan was broken and the clan never recovered.[169]

In addition, there are also derogatory remarks against Yezidis[170] that are understandably absent from the Yazidi narrative but are included in the Kurdish one, underscoring their religious prejudices against Yezidis.[171]

[165] This song says that Zarif-khatun is the daughter of Choban-agha. However, as we know, she is the daughter of Kok-agha and the granddaughter of Choban-agha.

[166] Öztürk 2018: 191.

[167] *Ibid*.

[168] TRT Kurdî YouTube channel, Dengbêj Cemalê Wanê-Zerîfa Kok Axa, published on 22nd November, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrxTnr7Mahg (accessed: 5/01/2024). It should be added that this song was composed by the artist himself.

[169] See: *Ibid*: 126.

[170] See: *Ibid*: 89.

[171] Information about the fight for Zarif-khatun, which is associated with the defeat of the Kok-agha family (father of Amar-agha, grandfather of Khalil-ogly and son of Choban-agha) the only time in the Soviet period, has been recorded by us only. See: Boyîk 2004: 239. This is discussed in more detail in: Каграманян 2013: 83–84; Abasyan 2005. There is also a story about this war in Taar Abasyan's book (see: Abasyan 2005). Although Taar Abasyan incorrectly reflects the opponent of the Kok-agha family, he is named Badrkhan-beg (similar confusion in names was observed in the stories of Yezidi elders. Nadirê Dao also called him Badrkhan-beg Haydar-khan). In fact, Badr-khan was the father of Ali-agha, and Haidari was the name of their tribe while Ali-agha, is the son of Badr-khan from the noble clan of "Torna mala Sharo" (T'or'ina Mala Şero) (torn means a high-born aristocrat). The context of the confrontation, narrated in Taar Abasyan's book, is conveyed close to reality. More precisely, this story says that the Kok-agha family owned Abagha, which was the center of 366 villages. However, Zarif-khatun, because of whom the confrontation started, is not mentioned as Kok-agha's daughter, but as his sister and the daughter of Choban-agha (see: *Ibid*: 44).

Yezidis of Kok-agha in Russian Empire

In any event, it is the war for Zarif-khatun that is unanimously named as the incident that put an end to the Yezidis in Abagha and forced them to move to the east.

From the 1820s and 1830s onwards, Yezidi tribes from the Vilayet of Van and later from the province of Kars as well as from the Surmaly district of the province of Yerevan gradually moved to Aparan at the foothills of the Alaghez (called Aragats in Armenian), since the meadows there were an excellent pasture for cattle. Aparan belonged to the Alexandropol district of the Yerevan province and with time, a new union of tribes emerged there, called Ela Akhbarane or *Êla Axbaranê* (lit. union of the tribes of Aparan).

Based on the information provided above, it can be argued that one of the first Yezidi settlers in Armenia were the Yezidi tribes led by the Kok-agha clan. Although, as the elders said, a small number of Yezidis already lived in Aparan at that time.

Amar-agha, son of Kok-agha, after moving to Armenia, built a fortress near Stepanavan, called Amar-agha's fortress (*Kela* Amar-agha). Currently, only ruins of this fortress remain.

In Aparan, the Yezidis settled in the former villages of the Caucasian Turks or Tatars (now Azerbaijanis), who left these places due to the harsh climate. The names of the villages, now belonging to Yezidi, testify to the fact that they formerly belonged to Turks: Chobangyalmyaz ('the shepherd left and did not return'), Korbulach ('blind spring'), Sangyal ('you have come'), etc. Over time and already inhabited by Yezidis these names further changed: Sangyal to Sangyar, Chobangyalmaz to Chobanmaz, Jamushlu to Jamushvan, etc.

The descendants of Choban-agha settled in the village of Mirak, where, along with them lived various tribes (Dasni, Kandali, Masaki, Khani, Suhani, Mamrashi, etc.), as well as families of Yezidi sheikhs and pirs.[172]

The settlement of the Kok-agha clan people in the new places was reflected in various pre-revolutionary Russian publications. In the *Caucasian Calendar for 1855* in the Sardarabat section among the nomadic Kurds the tribe "Yezidi or Megemdanli" (Mehemdanli) is indicated, of "a little known Yezidi faith", and Kurdish-speaking.[173] Apparently, this refers to the Mahamdi/Mahmudi tribe and the Kok-agha clan. According to the list of populated places in the Yerevan province, compiled in 1869 the Yezidi villages in the Alexandropol district were Mirak, Kurubogaz, Dzharzharis (Dzhadzhiris), Chobankyarakmaz (Cheboran-Keryakmaz), Kurdish Pamb (Kurdi-Pamb), Jamushli,

[172] The sheikhs of the Kok-agha clan are sheikhs from the Shekh Ale Shamsa family, and the pirs from the Pir Hasanta'lki family.

[173] Кавказский календарь на 1855 год 1855: 316.

Kondokhsaz (Kondaksaz), and Korbulag (Kor-Bulag). They comprised of 260 houses in total,[174] although it should be noted that the preface to this list noted that for technical reasons about a third of the population was not included in the desk research,[175] meaning that the number of houses in these villages was actually closer to 350. The following villages along the Abaran (Aparan) river with a Yezidi population can be found in the list of settlements of Yerevan province as of 1873: Greater Jamushli (19 households/196 inhabitants), Small Jamushli (19/157), Kondaksaz (30/323), Kor-bulag (21/193), Mirak (66/572), Chobankermakmaz (33/316), Kurdish Pamb (33/292), Kuribogaz (57/471), Jarjaris (65/441). Another Yezidi family (6 people) lived in the Armenian village of Aparan (Dzhangi-tepe).[176] Obviously, the Yezidis who lived in the indicated villages (344 households, 2961 inhabitants) formed the community headed by Khalil-agha. Bakhtadze, describing the settlements of the Kurds, noted that it was mainly "Yezidi Kurds" that lived in the Alexandropol district, and they were divided into six communities: Mahmudli, Pivazli, Sipikli, Balanli, Hassanli, and Kushkinli, almost all of which moved from Turkey, mainly in 1830 and some a little later. They lived in nine villages, Mirak, Kurabogach, Jarjaris, Choban-Gyakarmaz, Pamba, Kondaksaz, Greater and Small Jamushli and Korbulag.[177] The publication of the Caucasian Artisanal Committee, devoted to the carpet trade of the Kurds of Surmali, Echmiadzin, and Alexandropol districts of the Yerevan province, contains a table on population, land use, cattle breeding and payments, in which three Yezidi villages are indicated in Alexandropol district, namely Kuchuk-Jangi, Mirak and Pamb. At the same time, the union of the village of Kuchuk-Djangi is indicated as Haji-Khalil.[178] Such a name was previously unknown to us, however, a village with the same name, but with a slightly different pronunciation is also present in another pre-revolutionary source: Hojakhalil.[179]

However, in the list of populated places in the Yerevan province, the population of the village of Haji-Khalil is noted as completely Armenian.[180] Mirak and Pamb are assigned to the Mirak union of villages.[181] In these three villages there were 138 households in which 1,381 people lived.[182] For various reasons, discontent grew towards the *agha* clan among the Yezidis of Aparan and finally, in 1912,

[174] See: Эриванская губерния. Список населенных мест губернии1869: 11.
[175] *Ibid*.
[176] See: Сборник сведений о Кавказе 1879: 98.
[177] Бахтадзе 1888: 77.
[178] See: Кустарная промышленность на Кавказе 1903: 36.
[179] See: Заваров 1899: 424.
[180] See: Сборник сведений о Кавказе 1879.
[181] See: Кустарная промышленность на Кавказе 1903: 36.
[182] See: *Ibid*.

the inhabitants of Mirak revolted against them. Because of this, the clan resettled to a nearby territory. Later, their village would be called *gundê axa* (village of *agha*).[183] The Soviet Kurdologist Aristova compiled a list of tribes that inhabited certain villages, based on the results of her field research. Mirak was inhabited by the Mahamdi (Mahmudi) tribe.[184]

In his petition, Khalil-agha also wrote that due to the hostile actions of the "Kurds" – by which he meant Muslim Kurds – "and Persians", the power of his family, which occupied the border area between Turkey and Persia, had been weakened. He continued that in 1813 the Iranian crown prince Abbas Mirza led Persian troops and attacked the Van, Bayazid, and Mush pashaliks; he did not come across Turkish troops anywhere and finally devastated the Amar-agha domain, taking many of its inhabitants captive. Khalil-agha concluded that because of this his Yezidis subjects began to move from the Abagha region to other places, namely to the Mush and Bayazid pashaliks and the Yerevan Khanate.[185]

We could not establish the mentioned campaign of Abbas Mirza in 1813, especially since in late 1812 and early 1813 he was commander-in-chief of the Persian army and busy with the war against Russia. The latter defeated the Persians and in October 1813 the Treaty of Gulistan was signed as a result of months of negotiations.[186] Most likely, the date given by Khalil-agha for the end of the rule of his family (1813) is an approximation.

The End of the Yezidi Principality

On this basis, we can assume that Khalil-agha somewhat inaccurately indicated the year of the Persian troops' campaign in Eastern Anatolia. Apparently, the end of the Yazidi principality is closely connected with the events that took place in the second half of the 19th century in connection with the Dervish Pasha revolt and later in the Vilayet of Van and the surrounding areas. In 1816, the commander (muhafiz) of the Van garrison, Dervish Pasha, started a revolt and drew the tribe of Iranian Kurds called Sipki to his side. As a result of the uprising, his troops, as well as the opposing forces of the Mush government, devastated several regions of Mush and Van. In addition, Dervish Pasha's troops crossed the Iranian border, which led to a Persian invasion of the territory of the Ottoman Empire in retaliation. The result was the capture and destruction of the

[183] See: Чачани 1977: 85.
[184] See: Аристова 1963: 47.
[185] NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, ll. 28–28 (both sides).
[186] In this sense, the absence of Yezidi historiography poses great difficulties and highlights the need to select information about the Yezidis bit by bit from various sources, including those where the Yezidis are not clearly identified. In the Kurdish historiography, information about Yezidis seems to be hidden or silenced. In this sense, one can also mention Sharafname which contains gaps in chapters devoted to the Yezidi tribes of Mahmudi and Dumbuli.

fortress of Sedmatesh by the Persians and the forced resettlement of several thousand families,[187] which probably considerably weakened the position of Choban-agha's descendants. We could not identify the fortress of Sedmatesh, but it may have belonged to the property of the descendants of Choban-agha.

The Ottoman authorities eventually crushed Dervish Pasha's revolt and, as the Soviet-Armenian historian Bodzholian outlined,[188] subsequently executed or subordinated to the central government such famous derebeys as Tekeli oglu, Dagdeviren oglu, Ismail-bey Serezli and Çapan oglu.[189] It is conceivable that Chapan-oglu refers to one of the descendants of Choban-agha.

Substantial information on this topic can be found in a very informative monograph by Sabri Ateş,[190] in particular about the fortress of Khoshab, which is one of the important possessions of the Mahmudi tribe. The Yezidi part of the tribe was represented by the Kok-agha lineage, which used to own Khoshab. He notes that Dervish Pasha, who devastated the Hakkari, Van, and Urmia regions in 1816–1819, invited the Kurdish Sipki tribe to move from the Iranian-owned neighbouring areas of Yerevan to Erjish in the Van vilayet – an invitation they followed. When Dervish Pasha refused to return them to their former places of residence, Abbas Mirza sent his army of several thousand men to besiege the fortress of Erjish and later an army under the command of Hussayn Khan, the Sardar (tribal leader) of Yerevan, to the "fortress of Khoshab, the center of the Mahmudi dynasty".[191] Dervish Pasha and the Mahmudi Kurds were able to repel the Iranian attack, but Constantinople soon crushed Dervish Pasha's revolt. The Sipki tribe remained in the new territories and another Kurdish tribe, the Haydaranlu, joined them. According to another source, in 1820 the Kurdish Zilanli tribe was sent by the Yerevan sardar at the behest of Abbas-Mirza to ravage Kars and Shuragel. The Yezidis of Abagha suffered seriously as a result of this.[192]

Pursuant to Khalil-agha petition and after the above-mentioned destruction of his father Amar-agha's property, the latter went to Tehran and presented himself to Feth Ali Shah (1797–1834). He succeeded in freeing some of the captive Armenians and Yazidis and, with the Shah's permission, subsequently settled in the Khoy Khanate in Avachikh (Ovadzhik). There, privileged by his lineage, he ruled over the Yazidis in Persia and had the hereditary right to appropriate all the taxes available to the treasury.[193] Although the

[187] See: Боджолян 1984: 61–63.
[188] Referring to the work of Abdurrahman Şeref *Tarih-i devlet-i Osmaniye* (published in 1897 in the Ottoman language) as part of the fight against the "feudal separatists" during that time.
[189] *Ibid*: 64.
[190] Ateş 2013.
[191] *Ibid*: 50.
[192] See: Azap 2021: 144.
[193] See the attached Russian translation of Mohammed Shah's (1834–1848) charter provided to Amar-agha in 1836. See also: NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, l. 28 (both sides).

charter issued by the Shah has no connection with the charter of the Sultan, it is clear that when Iran issued privileges to Amar-agha, his previous position in the Ottoman Empire was obviously taken into account.

Since the phrase "managed in time to" in the Khalil-agha petition is used, one can conclude that Amar-agha went to Feth Ali Shah shortly before the Shah's death in the early 1830s. As already mentioned, it is unlikely that the Kok-agha clan's rule over Abagha ended in 1813 - it probably happened a little later. It is also unlikely that Amar-agha was vying for the Shah's favor 20 years after the devastation of his region and the captivity of his people. Moreover, the population under his control, as we can see, consisted not only of Yazidis, but also of Armenians. Most likely, the Kok-agha clan ultimately lost its possessions in the late 1920s, when Iran's influence in these territories was weakened as a result of its defeat by Russia. The Ottoman administration took advantage of this fact and strengthened its control over them.

As for the shah's granting of the right to Amar-agha to settle in the Khoy Khanate, it should be noted that this decision of the shah was made due to historical and geographical conditions. The Khoy Khanate, founded in the mid-18th century, was, as already mentioned, the hereditary possession of the Kurdish Dumbuli tribe, previously a large Yezidi tribe (notably mentioned in the Sharafnama), which moved from Syria and Jezire to the north-western part of Khoy in the 15th century and was connected by many threads with the Mahmudi tribe. In addition, the territory in the Khoi region allocated to the Amar-agha by the Shah formed, in a sense, a unified region with the former Van possessions of this clan. This was reflected in particular in the demarcation of the Turkish-Iranian border.[194] In addition, in the 16th century, the rulers of these and neighbouring areas, for instance in Maku, were also "Kurdish emirs of the Mahmudi tribe"[195] which was documented by Chirikov.[196]

However, the historical hatred of the Shiites towards the Yezidis, whom they perceived as descendants of the Umayyad Caliph Yezid, who killed the grandsons of the Prophet Muhammad and the sons of the fourth Caliph Ali, Hassan and Hussein, forced Amar-agha to return to the "ruined Abagha village of Nowshor". In 1839,[197] Amar-agha moved from there "with 275 houses of his subjects to the Armenian province and became a subject of the Russian Empire". His Yezidi subjects "were settled in nine villages

[194] See: Ateş 2013: 58–59.
[195] Monshi 1978: 878.
[196] See: Чириков 1875: 584, 587.
[197] Within a margin of one or two years, based on the date of receiving the official letter from the Shah, which we assume he received in 1836.

in the Aparan section," and Amar-agha himself and his six sons settled in one of them, in Mirak.[198]

With regard the Yezidi–Kurdish relations, it should be noted that Khalil-agha is referred to in the archival documents[199] as "the head of the Yezidi Kurdish community of the Alexandropol district".[200] Apparently, he was given this title by the authors of his petitions for two reasons: first, because of his illiteracy, he was perceived as such by those who drafted these documents for him, and second, because the Russian Empire considered the Yezidis to be Kurds. Khalil-agha himself, as his petition shows, clearly distinguished the Yezidis from the Kurds, not least because they were the cause of his clan's problems. He states that it was the "hostile actions of the Kurds […] that contributed to the weakening of the power" of his clan.[201]

Conclusion

By using newly discovered and analyzed archival documents and comparing them with existing literature and oral traditions, we can now trace the history of the Yezidis in Eastern Anatolia over five centuries, beginning in the 16th century. In 1593, during a tour of the areas bordering Iran, the Ottoman Sultan granted Avdal-agha (from the Kok-agha family) a region of 366 villages centered in Abagha, as well as a number of other adjacent areas, for his services in the war against the Persians (which are reflected in the Yezidi folklore). In addition, as Mahmudiya-agha, he was given power over all Yezidis in the empire. This is the first documented case in history where the Yezidis were granted legitimate power. The Kok-agha line belonged to the Mahmudi tribe, which settled in Eastern Anatolia at the beginning of the 15th century. When Avdal-agha received the sultan's charter, his clan obviously already had a certain influence and power and bore the title of agha. A few decades earlier, in the middle of the 16th century, the Kok-agha split from another part of the tribe, which had converted to Islam and continued to rule in Khoshab. Soon after, he and his subjects migrated from Khoshab to the north of Abagha. However, some Yezidis of his clan and lineage remained in the vicinity of Khoshab for a long time. In fact, the sultan's charter created a Yezidi principality in the Van region, as can be seen on various maps from a subsequent period. Based on the analysis of documents, it has been established that Choban-agha, who corresponded

[198] NAG–CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, l. 28 (both pages).
[199] See: NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, ll. 8, 10, 12, 18, 24, 27, 28 (both sides), 3, 23, 36.
[200] Alexandropol district was at that time an administrative unit within the Yerevan province with its centre in the city of Alexandropol (now Gyumri). The district included 12 villages populated by Yezidis. In addition, the Yezidis also inhabited the Surmaly district of the Yerevan province, headed by a representative of another lineage, Hassan-agha.
[201] NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, l. ob. 28.

with Erekle II, King of Kartli-Kakheti, is a representative of this lineage. Weakened by the clashes with the Kurds and the armed forces of the states, the tribe was forced to move to the neighbouring territory on the Iranian side. Three years later, in 1839, they moved again, this time to the territory of the Russian Empire. This continued the settlement of Yezidis in Russia that had begun ten years earlier, in 1829, under the leadership of the head of the Hassani-Hassan tribal union.

Acknowledgements:

The authors would like to express their gratitude to Diar Al-Omar for sharing valuable material and to Joan Croker for English proofreading and valuable advice that improved the article. The authors also thank the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggested revisions, which have contributed to the improvement of the paper.

Appendixes:

The above-mentioned archival file of Khalil-agha was compiled in connection with his application for a pension for life. The file contains correspondence from the authorities of the of the Caucasian viceroyalty of the Russian Empire, petitions from Khalil-agha to the governors, as well as translations of charters issued by Sultan Murad III and Mohammed Shah to the ancestors of Khalil-agha. The uniqueness of these documents lies not only in Khalil-agha's story about himself and his lineage mentioned in the petitions, but also and above all, in the certified translations of Ottoman and Iranian charters. Moreover, an Ottoman charter dating back to the end of the 16th century allows us to trace the history of this lineage up to the period of its greatest power. Thus, due to the lack of information about the originals of the charters of the Ottoman sultan issued to this Yezidi family (due to various vicissitudes, representatives of this family were lost), we have the opportunity to familiarize ourselves with them through certified translations made by members of the Russian administration and enclosed to the Russian viceroys in the Caucasus.

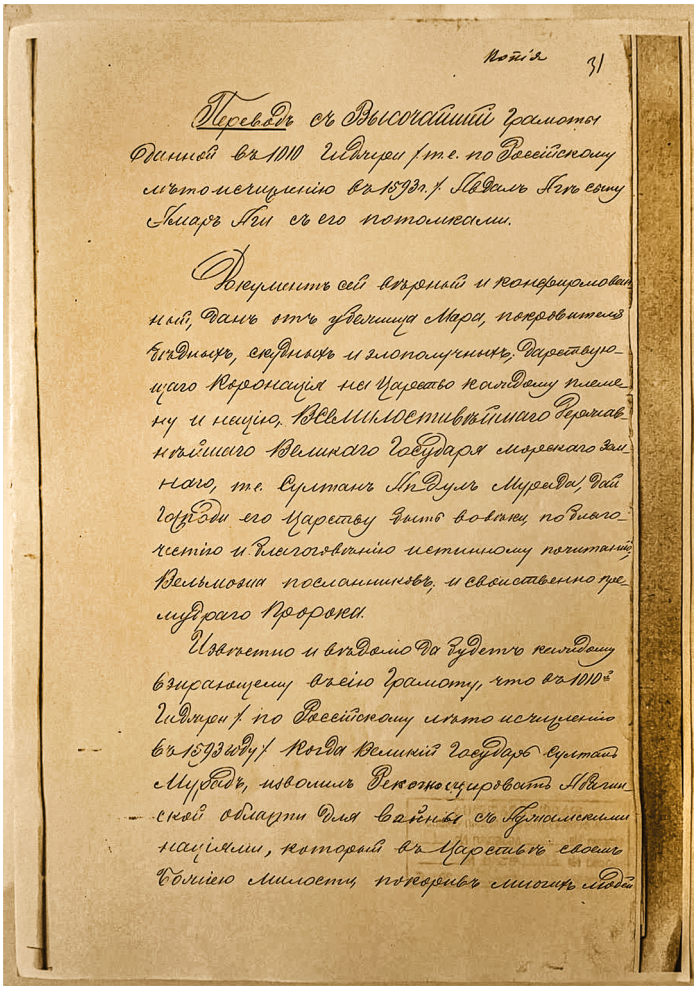


Figure 6: NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, ll. 31–32 (both sides).

Translation:

Translation from the Highest Charter given in 1010 Hijra (i.e. according to the Russian chronology in 1593) to Avdal-agha son of Amar-agha and his descendants:

This document is true and confirmed, given from the haven of the World, the patron of the poor, the meagre, and the unfortunate, who grants the Coronation of the Kingdom to every tribe and nation, the Most Merciful, the Most Sovereign, the Great Sovereign of the sea, the earth, i.e. Sultan Abdul Murad, may God grant his Kingdom to be forever, according to piety and reverence, true veneration, the Noble of the messengers, and character of the wise Prophet.

It is known and will be known to everyone looking at this Diploma that in 1010 Hijri year (according to the Russian chronology in 1593) when Sultan Murad, the Great Emperor, disposed to the exploration of Abagha region for war with Adjam nations, who in his kingdom, by God's grace, subdued many people and conquered cities and towns up to the Kaplat region. In all the movements of His Majesty, and in all the battles that happened with the Ajam nations, Avdal-agha, the son of Amar-agha, the son of Mîr Chaban, participated, showing exemplary courage and courage against the enemies of the Sultan and acted with the tribe entrusted to him with fearlessness. Thus, having achieved victory over the enemies of Sultan Murad and cutting off 5,000 enemy heads from the Ajams, they gained enormous property and numerous wealth, with the capture of many people, and after the pacification of the Ajams and their subjugation, the Great Sovereign Sultan Murad returned to Abagha, stayed with his entire retinue in the Dar-Kazan [Dergezîn] fortress and in the house of the Highly Honoured and victorious Avdal-Agha, where the court ministers and honourable principal officers of the State Court, in examination and praise of all successful and brave actions of Avdal-agha, who distinguished himself against the enemies evenly, and of the cutting off of 5,000 enemy heads. When His Majesty Sultan Murad was informed of this, an extraordinary love for Avdal-agha awoke in His Majesty, who, in addition to various honours and huge gifts, as a reward for the differences he made in battle, and what happened through him to the Ajam nations, most gratiously deigned to grant to Avdal-agha a permanent and hereditary possession, namely: A) the province of Abagha with 366 villages, B) the towns of Turdchin with all their properties, lands and markets, called Kurkit, Sakimanis and Mahmudiya, with the exemption of their inhabitants from the entire financial system and from all state taxes and duties, which henceforth shall not flow into the state treasury, but directly into the hereditary position of Avdal-agha as an honorable and worthy person in the state; which is why he bestowed upon Avdal-agha this most merciful right of inheritance. Moreover, he showed his most generous (p. 32) and most gracious mercy especially upon all the high ranks and commanders who were subordinate to Avdal-agha and rewarded their work with huge and numerous gifts. Then His Majesty Sultan Murad, returning to the city of Constantinople, and of all the exploration that had taken place, notified his mother, and thus, aroused in her a pleasant feeling and extreme joy. And therefore, we have deigned to grant Avdal-Agha and his direct heirs, in addition to all the honors with respect to all the Yezidi tribes, the same rights that were granted to him with respect to the aforementioned areas, the city and the region, which we grant and establish with this charter; we command all our rulers and the noble classes to honour this charter as inviolable and valid, and no one should dare from now on to

demand anything from the lands granted by this charter to Avdal-Agha and his descendants, as well as from the inhabitants We command all our rulers and the noble classes to honor this charter as inviolable and valid, and no one should dare from now on to demand anything from the lands granted by this charter to Avdal-Agha and his descendants, as well as from the inhabitants in his area and his financial system in general. This Charter was given to Avdal-agha Amar-agha-oglu Amar-agha Mir Choban-ogly Mir Choban Avdal-agha-ogly Avdal-agha Avdal-agha-ogly Avdal-agha Haji-agha-ogly Haji-agha Mirza-agha sons of Kiovkan-Agha and all his heirs.

This certificate is translated correctly. Translator of the Caucasian military people's administration Major Sharif-agha Gaishbashi.

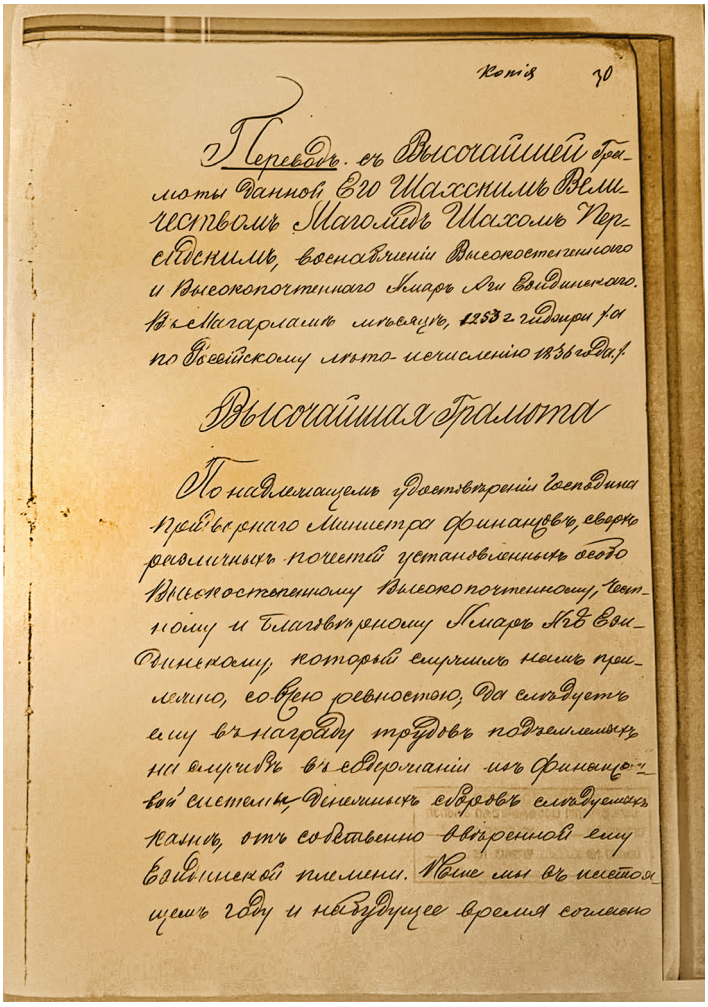


Figure 7: NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, ll. 30 (both sides).

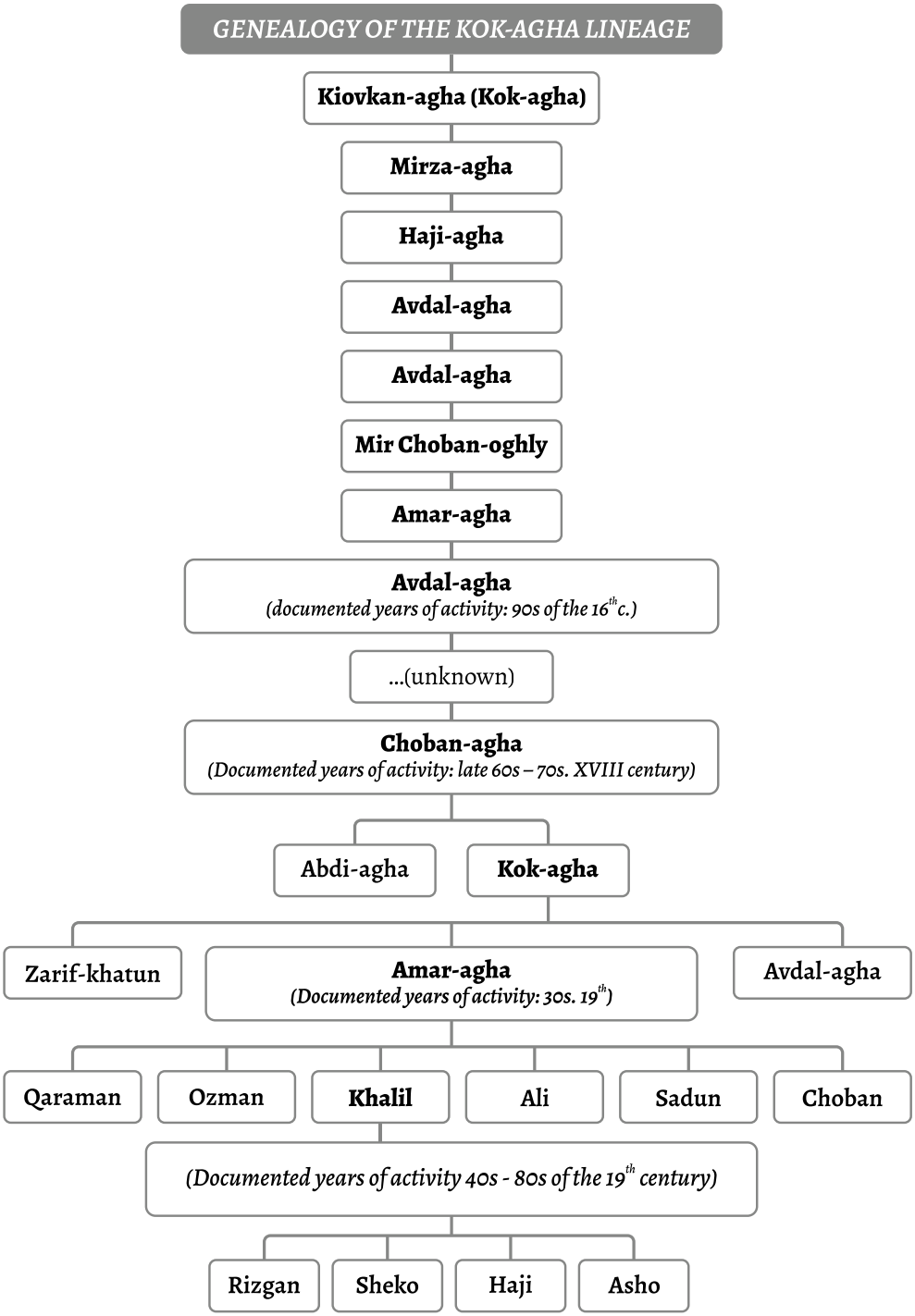
Translation:

Translation[202] from the Highest Charter given by His Shah's Majesty Mohammed Shah of Persia, supplied by the Honorable Amar-agha of Yezidi. In the month of Maharram, 1253 of *Hijrah* (according to the Russian chronology of 1836)

Highest Charter [203]

Upon proper certification of the Court Minister of Finance, in addition to the various honours established especially for the Noble and Highly Honourable, Honest and Honoured Amar-agha Yezidi; Who has served us diligently, with all zeal, may he be rewarded for his labours in the maintenance of their financial system, the money collected for the treasury from the Yezidi tribe proper entrusted to him. Now, in the current year and for the future, in accordance with the conclusion and decision of the Minister of Finance of the Court, we have kindly welcomed and established the following: we exercise our public service by allowing him to keep the monetary dues [collected] from the said tribe, which are due to the treasury, so that he may use this allowance annually for his subsistence. We hereby grant and establish this Charter, commanding all our governors and clerks of the State Chancellery, upon recording this Charter in a proper book, to recognize and honour it in a proper manner, as a loyal subject should.
This charter is approved
By the Seal of Mahomed Shah.
This charter has been translated correctly.
Translator of the Caucasian Military People's Administration Major Sharif-agha Gaishabashi.

[202] The archive file contains a Russian translation of charters to employees of the Caucasus administration. There is no information about the language from which these charters were translated. This article translates these charters from Russian into English.
[203] NAG-CHA, f. 5, op. 1, d. 6112, l. 30 (both sides).


GENEALOGY OF THE KOK-AGHA LINEAGE
Kiovkan-agha (Kok-agha)
Mirza-agha
Haji-agha
Avdal-agha
Avdal-agha
Mir Choban-oghly
Amar-agha
Avdal-agha
(documented years of activity: 90s of the 16th c.)
...(unknown)
Choban-agha
(Documented years of activity: late 60s – 70s. XVIII century)
Abdi-agha
Kok-agha
Zarif-khatun
Amar-agha
(Documented years of activity: 30s. 19th)
Avdal-agha
Qaraman
Ozman
Khalil
Ali
Sadun
Choban
(Documented years of activity 40s - 80s of the 19th century)
Rizgan
Sheko
Haji
Asho

Bibliography

Abasyan, Tharê Emer (2005), *Cangîr Axa* [*Jangir-agha*], Yêrêvan: Neşirxana "Van Aryan".

Açikyildiz-Şengül, Birgül (2016), "From Yezidism to Islam: Religious Architecture of the Mahmudî Dynasty in Khoshâb", *Iran and the Caucasus*, 20, 369–383, DOI: 10.1163/1573384X-20160307.

Akman, Ekrem (2021), "İtaat, İtikat Ve Askerlik Üçgeninde Osmanlı'da Devlet-Yezidi İlişkileri [Relations Between the State and the Yezidis in the Ottoman Empire: Exploring the Interplay of Obedience, Faith, and Military Service]", *Hitit İlahiyat Dergisi*, 20/1, 109–138, DOI: 10.14395/hid.875155.

Ateş, Sabri (2013), *Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843–1914*, Cambridge.

Aykan, Yavuz (2022) "On the Legal Status of Yezidis: Law, Geography and Confession-Building in Early Modern Kurdistan (Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries)", Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu (eds.), *Entangled Confessionalizations?* 673–700, DOI: 10.31826/9781463243586-023.

Azap, Eralp Yaşar (2021), *1820–1823 Osmanli-Iran Savaşi* [*The Ottoman-Iranian War 1820–1823*], Doktora Tezi, Istanbul Üniversitesi, Istanbul.

Boyîk, Eskerê (2004), "Serhata Cangîr-axa [The history of Jangir-agha]", *Laliş*, 2004, No. 21, 238–240.

Chantre, Ernest M. (1889), "De Beyrouth à Tiflis (A Travers La Syrie, La Haute-Mésopotamie et le Kurdistan", *Le Tour du Monde. Nouveatu Journal des Voyages: Deuxième Semestre*, London and Paris, 289–304.

Dehqan, Mustafa and Genç, Vural (2019), "Kurdish Emirs in the 16th-Century Ruus Registers", *Der Islam*, 96 (1), 78–111, DOI: 10.1515/islam-2019-0003.

Extracts From Correspondence Relative to the Turco-Persian Boundary Negotiations (1912, April), Part I, Dispatches From the British Commissioners with Protocols and Various Documents, Relating to the Conferences of Erzeroum 1843–1844, Printed for the use of the Foreign Office [Without place of publication].

Fener, Alpaslan (2015), *Hadd-i hudud-i saltanat-i seniyye: Derviş Paşa'nin tahdid-i hudud-i Iraniye adli eseri işiğinda Osmanli-Iran siniri* [*The border of the Sunni Sultanate: The Ottoman-Iranian Border: A Study of Darvish Pasha's Work "Challenging the Iranian Frontier"*], Yüksek lisans tezi, Istanbul Medeniyet Üniversitesi, Sosyal bilimler enstitüsü tarih anabilim dali tarih bilim dali.

Gökçen, Amed (2012), *Osmanlı ve İngiliz Arşiv Belgelerinde Yezidiler* [*Yezidis in Ottoman and British Archive Documents*], Istanbul.

Guest, John (1993), *Survival Among the Kurds: A History of the Yezidis*, London and New York.

Hassan, Nizar (2022a), "The Political Situation in the Land of Dasin in the 16th Century", *Koya University of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. V, No. 2, 129–137, DOI: 10.14500/kujhss.v5n2y2022.

Hassan, Nizar (2022b), "Prince Hussein Al Dasni and his Sons: A Study of Their Biography and Their Administrative Role", *Humanities Journal of University of Zakho (HJUOZ)*, Vol. X, No. 1, 117–125, DOI: 10.26436/hjuoz.2021.10.1.820.

İbn-i Nuh (2003), *Van Tarihi. Inceleme-Metin* [*History of Van: A Review-Text*], Van.

Kaya, Hakan (2021), "18. Yüzyılda Erzurum Eyaleti'nde Yerel Siyaset ve Yezidi Aşiretlerin Rolleri [Local Politics and the Roles of Yezidi Tribes in Erzurum Province in the 18th Century]", *Şarkiyat*, 13/3, 971–987, DOI: 10.26791/sarkiat.1000137.

Kaya, Hakan (2023), "18. Yüzyilda Mahmudî Hükûmetinin Idari Yapisi ve Çevresiyle Etkileşimine Dair Bazi Tespitler [Determinations of the Administrative Structure of Mahmudî's Government in the 18th Century and its Interaction With the Environment]", *Şarkiyat*, 15/2, 764–777, DOI: 10.26791/sarkiat.1361406.

Monshi, Eskandar Beg (1978), *History of Shah 'Abbas the Great*, M. Savory (tr.), Vol. II, Boulder, Colorado.

Orpak, Oral (2021), "A Descriptive Effort On The Ottomans-Yezidis' Unjust Relations: A Relationship In The Shade Of Violence", *Kurdiname*, No. 5, 1–20.

Öztürk, Mustafa (2018), "Destnivîsên Helbesta Kurdî ya Gelêrî Yên di Koleksiyona Aleksandre Jaba de û Nusxeya "Kilamê Kîçan" ya bi Hejmara Kurd 49ên [Aleksandre Jaba's Collection of Kurdish Folk Poetry Manuscripts and "Kilamê Kîçan" of the Kurd 49]", *International Journal of Kurdish Studies*, 4 (1), 176–199.

Şen, Yağmur (2018), *Osmanlı Arşiv Kayıtlarında Mahmudî (Hoşab) Beyliği* [*The Mahmudi (Hoşab) Principality in Ottoman Archive Records*], Van.

Şen, Yağmur and Tekin, Rahmi (2020), "Osmanlı Devrinde Mahmudî (Hoşab) Beyliği [Mahmudî (Hosab) Principality in the Ottoman Period]", *Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, Vol. L: 141–162.

Taş, Melik (2018), *Lêkolînek li ser çanda devkî ya Çaldiranê [Research on the oral culture of Chaldyran]*, master's dissertation, Zanîngeha Mûş Alparslan, Enstîtuya Zanistên Civakî, Şaxa makezanista ziman û çanda Kurdî, Muş.

Top, Mehmet and Telli, Hale (2020) "Ornamented Stucco Fragments from Hosap Castle in 2017 Excavation Season", *Sanat Tarihi Dergisi*, Vol. XXIX, No. 1, 275–299, DOI: 10.29135/std.624561.

Абазов, Алексей Х. (2019), *Главное Управление и Совет Наместника Кавказского (1858): предпосылки образования, структура и объем полномочий* [*Chief Office and Council of the Caucasian Viceroy (1858): Background of Formation, Structure and Scope of Their Powers*], *Кавказология*, No. 4, 37–48, DOI: 10.31143/2542-212X-2019-4-37-48.

Акты (1888), *Акты, обранные Кавказской археографической комиссией* [*Acts Collected by the Caucasian Archaeographic Commission*], Дм. Кобяков (ed.), Vol. XI, Тифлис, 65–135.

Анкоси, Карам (2004), *Племена курдов-езидов на Южном Кавказе и в Германии (на русском и курдском языке) с приложением карты* [*Tribes of Yezidi Kurds in the South Caucasus and Germany (in Russian and Kurdish) with a map attached*], Тбилиси.

Аристова, Татьяна (1966), *Курды Закавказья (историко-этнографический очерк)* [*Kurds of Transcaucasia (A Historical and Ethnographic Essay)*], Москва.

Бахтадзе, Илья Л. (1888), *Кочевники Закавказского края* [*Nomads of the Transcaucasian Region*], *Свод материалов по изучению экономического быта государственных крестьян Закавказского края*, Vol. III, part 2, Тифлис.

Бидлиси, Шараф-хан ибн Шамсаддин (1967), *Шараф-наме* [*Sharafnama*], Пер., предисл., примеч. и прил. Е. И. Васильевой [ed. and. tr. by Е. Васильева], Vol. I, Москва.

Богданович, Модест И. (1876), *Восточная война 1853–1856 годов* [*Eastern War of 1853–856*], Vol. IV, Санкт-Петербург.

Боджолян, Мурад Т. (1984), *Реформы 20–30-х гг. XIX века в Османской империи* [*Reforms of the 20s and 30s. of the 19th Century in the Ottoman Empire*], Ереван.

Васильева, Евгения И. (1967), "Предисловие [Preface]", *Шараф-наме* [*Sharafnama*], Бидлиси, Шараф-хан ибн Шамсаддин, пер., предисл., примеч. и прил. Е. И. Васильевой [ed. and. tr. by Е. Васильева], Vol. I, Москва, 13–68.

Васильева, Евгения И. (1991), "Книга по истории Курдистана, которая остается ненайденной [A Book on the History of Kurdistan that Remains Undiscovered]", *Письменные памятники и проблемы истории культуры народов Востока. XXIV годичная научная сессия ЛО ИВ АН СССР (доклады и сообщения по проблеме курдоведения), 1989*, part 3, Москва, 33–59.

Егиазаров, Соломон А. (1891), *Краткий этнографический очерк курдов Эриванской губернии* [*A Brief Ethnographic Sketch of the Kurds of the Erivan Province*], Записки Кавказского отдела Императорского Русского географического общества, Vol. XIII, Тифлис.

Ереванци, Симеон (1958), *Джамбр: Памятная книга: Зерцало и сборник всех обстоятельств святого престола Эчмиадзина и окрестных монастырей* [*Jambr: Memorable book: Mirror and Collection of all the Circumstances of the Holy Throne of Etchmiadzin and Surrounding Monasteries*], С. С. Малхасянца (tr.), Москва.

Заваров, С. (1889), *Опыт исследования сельского хозяйства хлебородного района Эриванской губернии и Карсской области* [*Experience in Researching Agriculture in the Grain-producing Region of the Yerevan Province and Kars Region*], Тифлис.

Иванов Н. А. (1993), "Организация шариатской власти и административно-хозяйственного аппарата в Османской империи XVI–XVII вв. (на примере арабских стран) [Organization of Sharia Power and the Administrative and Economic Apparatus in the Ottoman Empire in the 16th–17th centuries (using the example of Arab countries)]", Н. А. Иванов (ed.), *Феномен восточного деспотизма: структура управления и власти*, 234–261.

Иоаннисян, Абгар Р. (1989), *Иосиф Эмин* [*Joseph Emin*], Ереван.

Иоаннисян, Абгар Р. (1951), "Армянское освободительное движение во второй половины XVIII века [Armenian Liberation Movement in the Second Half of the 18th Century]", Б. Н. Аракелян and А. Р. Иоаанисян (eds.), *История армянского народа,* [*History of Armenian People*], Vol. I, Ереван, 257–264.

История военных действий в Азиатской Турции в 1828 и 1829 годах (1836) [*History of Military Operations in Asian Turkey in 1828 and 1829*], Vol. I, Санкт-Петербург.

Кавказский календарь на 1855 год [*Caucasian Calendar for 1855*] (1854), Тифлис.

Каграманян [Агалари], Суто (2013), *История о Мираке* [*The story of Mirak*], Санкт-Петербург.

Колюбакин, Борис (1906), *Русско-турецкая война 1877–1878 гг. на Кавказе и в Малой Азии, Часть 1-ая* [*Russian-Turkish War of 1877–1878 in the Caucasus and Asia Minor, Part 1*], Санкт-Петербург.

Кустарная промышленность на Кавказе. Выпуск II. Ковровый промысел курдов Сурмалинского, Эчмиадзинского и Александропольского уездов Эриванской губернии (1903), [*Handicraft Industry in the Caucasus. Issue II. Carpet Craft of the Kurds of the Surmali, Echmiadzin and Alexandropol Districts of the Yerevan Province*], Тифлис.

Материалы для описания русско-турецкой войны 1877–1878 гг. на Малоазиатском театре с планами (1904) [*Materials for describing the Russian-Turkish war of 1877–1878 at the Asia Minor Theater with plans]*, Vol. I, Санкт-Петербург.

Мачарадзе, Валериан (1989), *Грузинские документы по истории грузино-курдско-ассирийско-русских взаимоотношений (60-70-е гг. XVIII в.)* [*Georgian Documents on the History of Georgian-Kurdish-Assyrian-Russian Relations (60–70s of the 18th Century)*], Тбилиси.

Мосаки, Нодар (2018), "Политика России в отношении курдских племён на границе с Османской империей во время Крымской войны [Policy of Russia Towards the Kurdish Tribes in the Turkish-Russian Border During the Crimean War]", *Российская история*, No. 3, 159–170, DOI: 10.7868/S0869568718030135.

Пирбари, Дмитрий (2008), *Езиды Сархада* [*Yezidis of Sarhad*], Тбилиси and Москва.

Победоносцева Кая, Анжелика (2016), *Курды в истории и политике России на Ближнем Востоке в XIX – начале XX вв.* [*Kurds in the history and politics of Russia in the Middle East in the 19th – early 20th centuries*], doctoral dissertation, Санкт-Петербург.

Сборник сведений о Кавказе (1879), *Collection of Information about the Caucasus,* Vol. V, Н. Зейдлица (ed.), *Списки населённых мест Кавказского края. Часть I. Губернии: Эриванская, Кутаисская, Бакинская, Ставропольская и Терская область* [*Lists of Populated Places in the Caucasus Region. Part I. Provinces: Erivan, Kutaisi, Baku, Stavropol and Terek Regions]*, Тифлис.

Хуршид-эфенди, Мехмед (1877), *Сияхэт-намэ-и-худуд: Описание путешествия по турецко-персидской границе: С приложением Отчета персидского комиссара о том же путешествии* [*Siyahet-name-i-hudud: Description of a Journey Along the Turkish-Persian Border: With the Appendix of the Persian Commissioner's Report on the Same Trip*], М. А. Гамазов (tr.), Санкт-Петербург.

Чачани, Карлене (1977), *Пьзмамтийа щьмэ'та эрмэнийа у к'ёрда* [*Friendship Between the Armenian and Kurdish Peoples*], Ереван.

Чатоев, Халит (1985), "Из истории русско-курдских связей [From the History of Russian-Kurdish Relations]", *Курдоведение: Страны и народы Ближнего и Среднего Востока XIII*, Ереван, 68–92.

Чириков, Егор (1875), *Путевой журнал Е. И. Чирикова, русского комиссара-посредника по турецко-персидскому разграничению, 1849-1852 гг.* [*Travel Journal of E. I. Chirikov, Russian Commissioner-mediator for the Turkish-Persian Delimitation, (1849–1852)*], Записки Кавказского отдела Императорского Русского географического Общества, Vol. 9. Санкт-Петербург.

Челеби, Эвлия (1983), *Книга путешествия: Извлечения из сочинения турецкого путешественника XVII века* [*Travel Book: Extracts From the Writings of a 17th-Century Turkish Traveler*], Vol. III *Земли Закавказья и сопредельных областей Малой Азии и Ирана* [*Lands of Transcaucasia and Adjacent Regions of Asia Minor and Iran*], Москва.

Эриванская губерния. Список населенных мест губернии (по данным 1869 г. [*Yerevan Province. List of Populated Places in the Province (according to 1869)*].

Հայկունի, Սարգիս (1902), *Էմինեան Ազգագրական Ժողովածու: Լազարեան Ճեմարանի*

Էրեվանեան Լեզուաց Հաւոոր [*Eminyan Ethnographic Collection, published at the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages*], Is. IV, Մոսկվա.

Մանր ժամանակագրուն'յուններ XIII–XVIII դդ. [Minor Chronicles of the 13–17th Centuries], (1956), V. A. Hakobyan (ed.), Vol. II, (Materials of the history of the Armenian people, book 7), Yerevan.

Մանուկյան, Արամ (2009), *Հայաստանի Ազգային Արխիվ. Փաստաթղթերի և նյութերի ժողովածու. Երևան* [*Collection of Documents and Materials. National Archives of Armenia*], Yerevan.

Սիմէօն Կաթուղիկոս Երեւանցի (1913), *Յիշատակարան: Մասն III (C)* [*Diary of Catholicos Simeon: Part III (1777–1779)*], Архив Армянской истории [Archives of Armenian History], Vol. XI, Тифлис.

Սիմէօն Կաթուղիկոս Երեւանցի (1908), *Յիշատակարան: Մասն II (1767–1776), Дневник Каталикоса Симеона* [*Diary of Catholicos Simeon Part II (1767–1776)*], Архив Армянской истории [Archives of Armenian History], Vol. VIII, Тифлис.

Archives

NAG-CHA – National Archives of Georgia – Central Historical Archive [საქართველოს ეროვნული არქივი – ცენტრალური ისტორიული არქივი]. *Fond* 5. *Opis'* 1. *Delo* 6112. *Listy* 1–40.

РГИА – Российский государственный исторический архив. Фонд 1268. Опись 10. Дело 180 – *Дело о награждении родоначальника Курдского общества в Александропольском уезде, Халил-Аги, за особые заслуги по управлению сим обществом чином прапорщика милиции. Начало 3 августа 1859г.-Конец 210ктября 1859 г*. Листы 1–4. [RGIA – Russian State Historical Archive. *Fond* 1268. *Opis'* 10. *Delo* 180 – *The case regarding the awarding of the founder of the Kurdish society in Alexandropol* uezd, *Khalil-agha, for exceptional merits in managing this society with the rank of* podporuchik. *Beginning August 3, 1859 - End October 21, 1859*. *Listy* 1–4]

РГВИА – Российский государственный военно-исторический архив. Фонд 15099 Управление начальника Карсской области (за 1828 – 1856 гг.). Опись 1. Дело 14 – Строевые рапорты о состоянии Куртинского полка. 11 июля 1854 – 1 апр. 1856. Лист 72.; Дело 22 – Рапорты о набегах курдов из Турции на селения Карсской области. 11 авг. 1855 – 11 сент. 1855 г. Лист 14. [RGVIA – Russian State Military Historical Archive. *Fond* 15099 – *Office of the Head of the Kars Region (for 1828 – 1856)*. *Opis'* 1. *Delo* 14 – *Combat reports on the condition of the Kurdish regiment. July 11, 1854 – April 1, 1856*. *List* 72; *Delo* 22 – *Reports on Kurdish raids from Turkey on villages in the Kars region*. *11 Aug 1855 – 11 Sep 1855*. *List* 14]

ნოდარ მოსაკი და დიმიტრი ფირბარი (Nodar Mossaki and Dimitri Pirbari)

სარჰადის ეზდიხანის მმართველები: ქოქ-აღას დინასტიის ეზიდ თავადთა ისტორია.

აბსტრაქტი: სტატიაში წარმოდგენილი და გაანალიზებულია საქართველოს ეროვნული არქივში მოპოვებული და აკადემიურ წრეებში აქამდე უცნობი ისტორიული დოკუმენტები, რომლებიც ახალ ინფორმაციას გვაწვდის რუსეთის იმპერიის ერთ-ერთი ეზიდი ლიდერისა და პოდპორუჩიკის, ხალილ-აღას მოღვაწეობის შესახებ. ორი ოფიციალური წერილის რუსული თარგმანი, რომელიც ხალილ-აღას წინაპრებს გადაეცათ ოსმალეთის იმპერიის სულთანისა და ირანის შაჰისგან, ადასტურებს ნახევრად დამოუკიდებელი ეზიდური სამთავროს არსებობას, რომელიც აღიარებული იყო როგორც სპარსეთის, ისე ოსმალეთის იმპერიების მიერ. აღმოსავლეთ ანატოლიაში XVI-XVIII საუკუნეებში განთავსებულ სამთავროს ეზდიხანი (იეზდიხანი) ერქვა. აქამდე არსებულ კლევებზე დაყრდნობით, ეს აღმოჩენა საშუალებას გვაძლევს, შევავსოთ აღმოსავლეთ ანატოლიის ეზიდების თითქმის ხუთსაუკუნოვანი, წყაროებით დადასტურებული, ისტორია.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: ეზიდები, იეზიდები, სარჰადი, იეზდიხანი, ეზდიხანი, ოსმალეთის იმპერია, ქოქ-აღა, ავდალ-აღა, ხალილ-აღა, ჩობან-აღა, ერეკლე მეორე, აბაღა, მაჰმუდი, ხოშაბი.

Nodar Mossaki û Dimitri Pirbari

Desthilatdarên Êzdîxana Serhedê: dîroka dînastîyeke arîstokratên êzdî – malbata Kok-axa

Abstrakt: Ev lêkolîn analîz, şirove û nasîna dokûmêntên dîrokî û zanistî yên kevn û heta niha nenas dike, yên ku Arşîva Gurcistanê ya dewletê da têne parastin û agahîyên nû derheqê kar û barên Xelîl-axa dide. Xelîl-axa yek ji serok û rêberên êzdiyên Împêratoriya Rûsyayê bû û rutba wî ya eskerî pod-porûçîk hebû. Di nav wan dokûmêntan da du belgeyên wergerayî bi zimanê rûsî îsbat dikin, ku ew bona bav û kalên Xelîl-axa ra ji alîyê Siltanê Împêratoriya Osmanî û Şahê Îranê va hatine derxisitn. Di wan belgeyan da tê xuya kirin, ku mîrgeheke êzdiyan ya nîv-serbixwe hebû, kîjan jî him ji aliyê şahên faris û hem jî ji aliyê siltanê osmanîyan va dihate naskirin û qebûl kirin. Ew mîrgeh ji sedsala 16 heta sedsala 18 li Anatoliya Rojhilat bi navê Êzdîxan (Yezdîkhan) dihate naskirin. Peyda kirin û derxistina van belgeyan dîroka êzdiyaye nêzîkî pêncsed salî li Anatoliya Rojhilat eşkere û dokûmênt dike.

Peyvên sereke: êzdî, Serhed, Êzdîxan, Yezdikhan, Împêratorya Osmanî, Kok-axa, Avdel-axa, Xelîl-axa, Çoban-axa, Êrêklê II (Îraklî II), Ebexe, Mehmûdî, Xoşab.