

Transcaucasia, Nationalism, and Social Change

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Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia

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The Turkic nomads firmly controlled the marginal grazing lands in the north and central areas of Eastern Armenia extending all the way to the south; while the Kurds dominated the eastern and western sections.

The Turks, on the whole, were organized into eight larger tribal groups and confederations than the Kurds. The Karabash (Black Head) with close to 1,000, the Kangutis with 6,000, and the Ayrants with 2,000 nomads each were the largest. Following them were six other confederations with approximately 1,000 nomads each: the Büyük-chobankara, the Sarbis (Berlin), the Saryants-Ashkene (Sheld), the Mughants, and the two Oghur tribes of Shuldeni and Sardashki.

The Kangutis shared the control of the grazing lands of Van-Nor Malat with the Sheld Kurds of the Karabash and Nelli tribes. The Turks fully controlled the mahal of Zangi-basar and the orange northern areas of Tain, Aparan, Goshchuk, Saryants-Ashkene, and the central mahal of Black bulagh. The Oghur settled in Van-Nor near the Van-calle and Sardashk areas, and the Mughants stayed in Karabash. The Ayrants moved in Tain, the Sheld-Ashkene provided in the mahal named after them the Büyük-chobankara claimed rights to Kerk-bulagh and Aparan but shared Zangi-basar with the Karapapakh.

The Sardashki claimed the northern regions of Gökçer Malat (on the northern slopes of the Aghstaphen mountains), the plain of Abovja and Derzichuk. The Karabash Begli, the Oghurli, the Goshchuk, and the Karash were concentrated in the Gökçer Malat, west of the lake, while the Berlini were situated with their traditional home in the portions of the Nelli Malat. The Kangutis confederation controlled all of Nakhchivan and reached into Shvan Malat. The confederation was composed of Polomys, Tarki, Kursi, Sardashki, Shuldeni, Pshawani, Sardash, Aya Begli, Homa, Chaghatai, Karabash, Kar-Evan, Hapka, Arzash, Kursi, Kursi Qashqai, Kursi Karabash, Shuldeni, Karabash, Karash, Arzash, Chaghatai, Shuldeni, Arzash, Sardash, Arzash, and Gofte (see Map 2 for details on locations and migration patterns). In general the confederation had the consent of the Mongol tribes and some Kurdish groups moved with the Turkic peoples. In Gökçer the nomads of the Kursi tribe were the only pastoralists but their exact numbers unknown; with some claiming that they were Christians who were forcibly converted into Islam and had adopted a nomadic way of life. Overall all the coastal borders of Eastern Armenia were delegated to the sheiks of the above leading tribes who controlled the area.²²

The Kurds were themselves divided by origins affiliation into three groups: the Svan, the Sheld, and the Yezidi.²³ The most powerful confederations were Svan. These consisted of the three major groups of the

²² Stepanov et al., pp. 522-523, 532-537.

²³ Sheld is the general name for various groups of different Muslim sects, the