

## Turkmans

**History is a science that studies the past of humankind and records real facts, events, and personalities. However, historical knowledge is often surrounded by myths: legendary plots, nonexistent characters, and fabricated events. As societies develop, interest in one's own past and national history grows. Against this background, another trend also emerges: the falsification of history, i.e., the deliberate distortion of facts, becomes a political and propagandistic tool in both domestic and foreign policy.**

The falsification of historical facts dates back to antiquity. While working on his book *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms* (published in 1725; republished in 1728 under the title *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*), the English physicist, mathematician, and astronomer Isaac Newton (1642–1727), drew attention to the widespread practice of ‘lengthening’ history: many peoples strive to prove their lineage by tracing their origins almost back to the Stone Age. Therefore, the fake phenomenon of the ‘ancientness’ of many nations is so widespread today, as they attempt to rival the Armenians, Basques, Ethiopians, or Jews in claims of antiquity.

The falsification of facts, events, and names has often served the purposes of politics. One illustrative historical example is the following: after conquering lands beyond the Volga River in the 16th century, Russia began advancing into Turkic territories. Later, under Peter I, decrees were issued (in 1720 and 1722) according to which ancient books and manuscripts were confiscated from dioceses and monasteries supposedly for copying. In public memory, the belief took hold that part of these documents was destroyed and replaced with forgeries.

In Tsarist Russia, such falsifications later became a tradition. Beginning with the reign of Catherine II (1762–1796), Russian historians were tasked with forming a ‘new’ version of the past for colonized peoples. Within such frameworks, Turks were assigned a new genealogy: their ‘ancestral homeland’ was shifted to southern Siberia, and the formation of modern Turkic peoples was linked to the period after the collapse of the Second Eastern Turkic Khaganate (682–744). Distortions continued both during the Russian Empire and under the USSR, particularly during the Stalin era. This indicates that the history of Turkic peoples has been distorted at all times. Many

Russian, Chinese, and Western historians avoided the term ‘Turks.’ In numerous works, it was claimed that the Scythians were Iranian-speaking people (although an alternative viewpoint exists), the Turkic Hunnic Empire was portrayed as ‘unclear’ and multiethnic, and the empire of Genghis Khan was commonly depicted as predominantly ‘Mongolian.’

The history of the Golden Horde and the Turkic khanates that emerged after its collapse is an important subject for pan-Turkic historiography. In the Russian tradition, the Horde was first presented as a Mongolian state, and later as a Turko-Mongolian one. However, historical facts could not be concealed, and over time, its Turkic essence was increasingly acknowledged.

In Russian historiography, the states of the Jalayirids, Qara Qoyunlu, Aq Qoyunlu, Safavids, Afsharids, and Qajars are often referred to as Persian or Iranian. Here, it is important to distinguish between geographical and ethno-political terms: ‘Iran’ and ‘Azerbaijan’ may be understood as toponyms; however, the ruling dynasties and military-political elites of these states were of Turkic origin and are related to the ancestors of present-day Azerbaijanis. Therefore, attributing them exclusively to ‘Persian’ ethnicity raises strong objections.

In quasi-academic circles, one often encounters the claim that there was allegedly no Azerbaijani state before 1918 and the ‘Azerbaijanis’ nation did not exist at all until 1936. However, it should be clarified that historically, in the territory of the South Caucasus, Russian administrative practice often used common identities such as ‘Basurmans,’ ‘Azerbaijan Muslims,’ later ‘Transcaucasian Tatars,’ ‘Azerbaijan Tatars,’ and ‘Azerbaijanis.’ Before 1918, in the Russian Empire, many Turkic-speaking Transcaucasian Muslims were called ‘Caucasian Tatars,’ and the ‘Tatars’ term was widely applied to various Turkic groups with a qualifying adjective indicating their place of residence. For example, during the Ottoman period, Persians were called *Ajemi* (new, newcomers), while Azerbaijanis were referred to as *Ajemi Turks*.

It should be emphasized, however, that ‘Azerbaijan’ is a toponym (in antiquity, Atropatene). As a self-designation, many Turkic-speaking groups, including the inhabitants of Southern (Iranian) Azerbaijan, used the term ‘Turk.’ From 1918 onward, the country became known as Azerbaijan, and the titular nation as ‘Turks.’ During the

Soviet period, from 1939 onward, the ethnonym ‘Azerbaijanis’ became firmly established.

For centuries, the Turkic Azerbaijanis have occupied a dominant position in the territories of Iraq, Iran, Western Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Eastern Georgia, and Southern Dagestan. Among the states created by Turkic dynasties, the following stand out:

**The Jalayirids** – a dynasty of sultans (1340–1410) originating from the Turkic tribe of Jalayir. The last ruler of the Jalayirid dynasty (1382–1410), Ahmad Jalayir, is deemed to be one of the first Azerbaijani poets. He wrote poetry in Azerbaijani, Arabic, and Persian.

The Jalayirs appeared in the territory of Azerbaijan during the period of the Hulaguids (1256–1335). They were also a Turkic tribe that formed part of the core of Genghis Khan’s empire. They were the last to adopt Islam, at the end of the 13th century. From that time, they also came to be known as Turkmen. They were settled in Southern (Iranian) Azerbaijan and Iraq. Under their rule, Turkic became the second language in Iraq after Arabic.

**Qara Qoyunlu** – a confederation of Turkic tribes led by a Turkman dynasty from the Oghuz clan of Iva (1375–1468). Jahan Shah (1436–1467), the first among the Qara Qoyunlu rulers to adopt the title of sultan, was also known as a poet who wrote in Azerbaijani Turkic under the pseudonym Haqiqi.

**Aq Qoyunlu** (1453–1501) – a confederation of Turkman tribes led by a Sunni Turkman dynasty from the Oghuz clan of Bayandur.

**The Safavids** – a shah dynasty formed from a union of Turkman tribes, rulers of the Safavid state (1501–1736). The first ruler of this dynasty was Ismail I (1487–1524), born in Ardabil (Southern Azerbaijan, Iran). They ruled in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Eastern Georgia, Southern Dagestan, Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

**The Afsharids** ruled in Azerbaijan and Iran (1729–1796), and later in Khorasan (1750–1796). The founder of the dynasty, Nader Shah, was a Qizilbash from the Oghuz clan of Bayandur.

In his letter to Fath Ali Shah Qajar, Napoleon Bonaparte considered himself a new Nader. Joseph Stalin called Nader his teacher, along with Ivan the Terrible.

**The Qajar Empire** (1789–1925) was established by the Turkman Qajar tribe. According to the Ethnohistorical Dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empires, the Qajars are a sub-ethnic group of Azerbaijanis. Heirs to the Qajar throne were appointed governors of Azerbaijan. They ruled in Azerbaijan, Iran, the western part of Afghanistan, Eastern Georgia, and Southern Dagestan.

In the 11th century, the Turkmen entered the historical arena, creating the **Seljuk State** (1037–1194). It was precisely that part of the Oghuz tribes that adopted Islam, received the name ‘Turkmans,’ and migrated from the Syr Darya region to Khorasan. This self-designation was used both by the Turkmen themselves and in European sources. Starting from the 13th century, this term completely replaced the ethnonym ‘Oghuz.’

Already during the Seljuk period, a system of governance by uch beys was formed. Border territories were entrusted to individual clans, and their rulers were called uch beys – governors of frontier regions. In the 1330s, a plague epidemic devastated the Ilkhanate (the Hulaguid state). In 1335, Ilkhan Abu Sa‘id and his heirs died, which led to the collapse of central power. As a result, in Anatolia, 16 virtually independent beyliks (principalities) emerged, including the Osmanogullari, Jandarogullari, Germiyanogullari, etc. All these beyliks were of Turkman origin.

It was the Turkmen who became the founders of the great Ottoman Empire (1299–1922). Suleiman Shah, the grandfather of Osman I, the founder of the dynasty, lived at the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century. It is known that with the onset of the expansion of the Chinggisids into Khorasan and Iran in 1214, he migrated to the Sivas region with his Turkman Kayi tribe. The Seljuk Sultan, Alaeddin Kayqubad I (1190–1237), appointed Suleiman Shah’s son, Ertugrul, uch bey of Sogut to guard the border with the Byzantine Empire. Ertugrul himself (date of birth unknown; died in 1281) and his mother, Hayme Hatun (date of birth unknown; died in 1268), are buried in Sogut.

In 1234, the Ayyubids attacked the territories of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum from the direction of Syria. The Seljuk sultan Ala al-Din Kayqubad I defeated the troops of al-Kamil (the nephew of Salah ad-Din, 1177–1238). After that, the Seljuks captured the city of Raqqa, located on the banks of the Euphrates River. Suleiman Shah also took part in these battles with his detachment. He died in Raqqa, drowning in the Euphrates River.

The mausoleum of Suleiman Shah was initially located near the Jaber Fortress, not far from the Syrian city of Raqqa; it was a Turkish enclave on Syrian territory guarded by Turkish military personnel. In 1975, due to the threat of flooding, the mausoleum and the military base were relocated to a new site with an area of about 10,000 square meters in the village of Qarakozak, located 123 km from Aleppo, under an agreement concluded between Turkey and Syria. During the Syrian civil war in 2015, the mausoleum again came under the threat of destruction, because of which Turkey temporarily moved it to the Eshme area on the Syrian-Turkish border.

In 1299, Osman I (1254–1324), the grandson of Suleiman Shah through his son Ertuğrul Ghazi, first established a Turkman beylik (principality), and later the Ottoman Empire, which existed until 1922. In 1923, the Republic of Turkey was established.

### **Oghuz and Kipchaks**

As is known, the Turkic world is traditionally divided into two main ethno-linguistic communities – the Oghuz and the Kipchaks. The Oghuz group includes Turks, Azerbaijanis, Turkmens, Gagauz, Khorezm Turks, part of the Crimean Tatars, Iranian Turks, as well as the Turkmans of Iraq and Syria. Tatars, Bashkirs, Nogais, Kumyks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Karakalpaks, and other peoples spoke the Kipchak branch languages. The Uzbek, Uyghur, and Chuvash languages belong to the Karluk branch of the Turkic languages.

After the collapse of the Eastern Turkic Khaganate (744), the Kipchaks became part of the ancient Turkic state, the Kimak Khaganate (750–1035), located on the territory of present-day northwestern Kazakhstan and Southern Siberia. The Kipchaks bordered the Kimaks to the east, the Khazars to the west, and the Oghuz to the south. During that period, Oghuz tribes occupied vast territories of Kazakhstan, the Aral Sea region, and the Syr Darya and Chu Valleys.

In the 9th–10th centuries, in the basin of the middle and lower reaches of the Syr Darya, as well as the adjoining steppes of western Kazakhstan, a political union of the Oghuz was formed with its capital in Yangikent (a small town in the territory of the present-day Kyzylorda Region of Kazakhstan). In the 10th century, the Oghuz were allies of the Kipchaks and lived together within the Kimak Khaganate.

In the 11th century, the Kimaks (who later became part of the Kipchaks) and the Kipchaks pushed the Oghuz southward, the Oghuz and Pechenegs (one of the Oghuz

branches) westward, the Karluks to the southeast, and the Ugrians northward, toward the Siberian taiga. Subsequently, the Kipchaks moved westward, occupying lands that had previously belonged to the Oghuz and Pechenegs.

The term ‘Turkmans’ (Turkomans, Turkumans, or Turkmens) is used to identify Oghuz Turkic peoples. According to the Persian Thinker and a scholar at the court of the Ghaznavid sultans, al-Biruni (973–1048), and the Persian physician Sharaf al-Zaman Tahir al-Marwazi (1056–1125), who served at the court of the Seljuk sultan, this term referred to Oghuz who had adopted Islam.

The Ottoman historian Mehmed Neshri (1450–1520) wrote that the ‘Turkman’ denomination consists of the ‘*Turk*’ and ‘*iman*’ words, meaning ‘believing Turk’ or ‘Muslim Turk.’ According to another version, the ‘Turkman’ denomination is derived from the ‘*Turk*’ and ‘*man*’ words, meaning ‘I am a Turk.’ In his work *The Natives of the Trans-Caspian Region and Their Life* (1900), the orientalist and ethnographer Mikhailov F. A. (1862–1920) proposed that this was how the Oghuz Turks referred to themselves when answering the question ‘Who are you?’ with the expression ‘turkem men,’ i.e., ‘I am a Turk.’

Historian Sergei Agadzhanov (1928–1997) believed that the Turkmens were formed as a result of the mixing of part of the Oghuz with the Indo-European population of Central Asia. American linguist and Turkologist Larry Clark (1943–2025) noted that the ‘Turkmen’ term appears in Muslim sources of the 10th century to denote part of the Oghuz who adopted Islam and migrated in the mid-11th century from the Syr Darya region to Khorasan. During that period, the terms ‘Oghuz’ and ‘Turkman’ were interchangeable and applied to all Islamized Oghuz.

In the historical context, the terms ‘Turkman’ or ‘Turkoman’ do not primarily refer to the Turkmens of Turkmenistan, but rather to Turks, Azerbaijanis, and the Turkic-speaking populations of Syria and Iraq. Modern Turkmens are descendants of those Oghuz tribes that remained in the steppes between the Syr Darya and the Ural River; originally, the term ‘Turkman’ was not applied to these tribes. From the 14th century in Anatolia, this term gave way to the ‘Ottomans’ denomination. In Azerbaijan, it fell out of use from the 17th century, giving way to the ethnonyms ‘Turk,’ ‘Qizilbash,’ and ‘Terekeme.’

Currently, the ethnonym ‘Turkmen’ refers to the titular nation of Turkmenistan, whereas the terms ‘Turkman’ or ‘Turkoman’ are used concerning the Turkic-speaking population of Syria and Iraq. Turkmens, Azerbaijanis, Turks, as well as the Turkmans of Syria and Iraq, are closely related peoples in ethno-cultural and historical terms.

### **Turkmens/Turkmans**

The toponym of the Turkmenistan state has officially existed since 1924. In 1869–1885, the territory of present-day Turkmenistan was annexed by the Russian Empire and named the Trans-Caspian Region, which was part of the Turkestan Military District (1867–1920). Along with the territory of present-day Turkmenistan, the Turkestan region also included lands of present-day Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

The Turkestan (‘land of the Turks’) term originates from the Turkic peoples who formed the basis of the local population and denotes a historical and geographical region of Central Asia. This term was widely used in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

In China, there is the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, which was previously known as the East Turkestan Islamic Republic (1933–1934) and the East Turkestan Revolutionary Republic (1944–1949). Earlier, this region was also called East Turkestan, an area of residence for Turkic peoples and the historical homeland of the Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Salars, as well as Dungans and Mongols.

Before their unification into a single nation, called the Turkmens, the main Turkic tribes were the Teke, Yomut, Ersari, Chowdur, Geklen, and Saryk. Teke was the most numerous group among them.

The Seljukid, Anushteginid (Khwarazmshahs), Ottoman, Qara Qoyunlu, Aq Qoyunlu, and Afsharid dynasties are considered to originate from ancient Oghuz tribes, respectively, Kinik, Begdili, Yiva, Bayandir, Kayi, and Afshar.

Syrian and Iraqi Turkmans regard classics of Azerbaijani literature, **Nasimi** and **Fuzuli**, as their poets. Until recently, Nasimi’s grave was in Aleppo and was destroyed during the war between Syrian government forces and formations of the ‘Islamic State.’ Fuzuli’s grave is in Karbala (Iraq).

### ***Reference.***

*Seyid Imadaddin (1369–1417) was a poet who wrote under the pseudonym Nasimi. He was born in Shamakhi (Azerbaijan) and died in Aleppo (Syria). He is considered one of the first Azerbaijani poets to write in Persian, Arabic, and Azerbaijani Turkic. Nasimi was a follower of Hurufism, a religious and philosophical doctrine. The clergy declared him a heretic. Nasimi was executed in Aleppo by order of the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, Abu Mu'ayyad.*

*Muhammad ibn Suleiman (1494–1556) was a poet and thinker who wrote under the pseudonym Fuzuli. He was born and died in Karbala (Iraq), which was then part of the Aq Qoyunlu state and later the Safavid state. According to the dominant views, Fuzuli's poetry is a constituent part of Azerbaijani literature. Fuzuli was a representative of pan-Turkic poetry, whose language was the Azerbaijani dialect.*

The Azerbaijani language has the 'ə' letter, similar to the English 'æ' in the word *man*. Today, this letter is used by Azerbaijanis, some peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as Turkmens and Gagauz. In Azerbaijani, it denotes an unrounded front low vowel, a sound intermediate between 'e,' 'a,' and 'ya' in Russian. In Turkish, the 'ə' letter is not an independent graphic symbol and is rendered by the letter 'e' or 'a,' although in some cases, it is pronounced as 'ə.'

When transliterated into Russian, at the beginning of a word, the 'ə' letter is usually rendered and pronounced as 'a,' and in other positions, predominantly as 'e,' more rarely as 'ya.'

Persian-speaking Tajiks call modern Turkmens **turkmani**.

In Azerbaijani, the word *Turkmen* is written and pronounced as **türkmən**, and in Turkish, it is written as *türkmən*, with the pronunciation also being **türkmən**.

In Russian, the people of the Republic of Turkey are referred to by the word 'Turok,' and the state as 'Turtsiya.' Thereat, the term '**tyurki**' is used as a collective denomination for a wide group of peoples united by related languages and common historical and cultural roots.

In Turkey itself, the word 'Türk' has a dual meaning: on the one hand, it denotes a Turk as a representative of the Turkish nation; on the other hand, it is used in a broader sense to refer to Turkic peoples as a whole. The country's toponym is pronounced '**Turkiye**' (Türkiye). During the Ottoman Empire, the subjects of the state were called **Ottomans**. After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, Mustafa Kemal

Atatürk proposed adopting the ‘Türk’ ethnonym as the common national self-designation. From that time on, the people and the country began to be called, respectively, Türks and Türkiye. In Turkish and other Turkic languages, the distinction between the concepts ‘Turk’ and ‘Türk,’ which is characteristic of the Russian language, does not exist.

Since 1991, work has been underway to create a unified Latin alphabet for all Turkic languages to simplify mutual understanding and expand cultural exchange among Turkic peoples. This project supposes the use of the ‘ə’ letter. The latest version of the common Turkic alphabet was agreed upon in 2024; however, it has not yet been finally approved.

### **Turks and the Arab Caliphate**

Turkic peoples lived across vast territories of the Arab Caliphate (632–1258) from the very first centuries of the Common Era. Already in the early period of Islamic history, the Turks began to play a prominent role in the military and administrative system of the Caliphate. The first Turkic military formations emerged under the Umayyad dynasty (661–750).

In 674, the governor of Basra, Kufa, and Khorasan, Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad (628–686), formed a detachment numbering several thousand Turkic archers. In 680, by order of Caliph Yazid I ibn Mu‘awiya, the troops of Ubayd Allah took part in the tragic events related to the killing of Ali ibn Abi Talib’s family.

The son of Imam Ali and grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, Husayn ibn Ali, was traveling with a small caravan consisting of relatives and supporters toward the city of Kufa. In the area of Karbala, about four thousand warriors attacked this group: 72 people were killed, and 25 were taken captive. Those who survived were women and Husayn’s severely ill son, Ali Zayn al-Abidin, who was staying in a tent and did not take part in the battle; he later became the fourth imam of the Shiites.

These events became a turning point in the history of Islam, marking the beginning of the final division of the Muslim community into Sunni and Shiite branches.

### ***Reference***

*Ali ibn Abi Talib (599–661) was the fourth of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, ruling from 656 to 661. He was a cousin, son-in-law, and companion of the Prophet Muhammad.*

*Shiites venerate Ali as the first imam and a saint. Sunnis regard him as the last of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs.*

*Yazid I ibn Mu'awiya (646–683) was the second Arab caliph of the Umayyad dynasty, ruling from 680 to 683. His reign became the first hereditary rule in the history of Islam. He was a rival of Imam Husayn. Shiites consider Yazid an illegitimate ruler and hold him responsible for the killing of Prophet Muhammad's family, including Imam Husayn.*

The Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258) relied mostly on Turkic warriors. Various Turkic groups, such as Turgesh, Karluks, Oghuz, Kipchaks, Kyrgyz, and Khazars, moved northwestward and further into Europe, as well as Dagestan and Azerbaijan; southwestward into Iran, Anatolia, and Syria. The scale of Turkic migration increased sharply in the 8th century and intensified significantly in the 9th century.

In 751, the Battle of Talas took place on the Talas River, in the border regions of present-day Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, near the city of Taraz. The battle sprang up between the forces of the Abbasid Caliphate and their Turkic Karluk allies on one side, and the army of the Chinese Tang Empire on the other, for control over Central Asia. The victory of the Abbasids and their Turkic allies had become a turning point: it marked the beginning of the active spread of Islam in Transoxiana (Mawarannahr) and Central Asia. From that time on, the Abbasid Caliphate directly bordered the vast Turkic world.

Starting from the second half of the 8th century, Turks began to occupy important positions in the state administration system. Zubayr ibn al-Turki was the governor (wali) of Hamadan (present-day Iran) and Mosul (present-day Iraq); Mubarak al-Turki was a military commander and governor of the city of Qazvin (present-day Iran); and Hamad al-Turki was a military commander who played a notable role in the construction of Baghdad. Under Caliph al-Mansur (754–775), and especially under al-Mu'tasim (796–842), the number of Turks in the army and administration increased significantly.

Turkic military commanders Abu Ja'far Ashinas, al-Afshin, Wasif al-Turki, Itakh al-Khazari, Bugha al-Kabir, Abu Musa Utamish, and Bayg-Bek served in the Turkic guard of the caliph. The Turks became one of the most active and combat-ready forces

of the Caliphate. They participated in almost all military campaigns, including expeditions against Byzantium, as well as in suppressing internal rebellions.

After the death of Caliph al-Mutawakkil (847–861), killed by Turkic soldiers, Turkic military commanders virtually became arbiters of the fate of the state and the caliphs themselves. They enthroned caliphs and removed them from power.

One such military commander was the Oghuz Turk, Ahmad ibn Tulun, who founded the Tulunid state (Tulunogullari) (868–905) with its capital in the city of Fustat (present-day Cairo). This state controlled the territories of present-day Egypt, Libya, Palestine, Syria, as well as the island of Crete. Subsequently, these lands passed under the rule of the Fatimids.

Another Oghuz Turk, Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Tughj al-Ikhshid (the son of a military commander of the Tulunid sultanate), established the Ikhshidid state (Ikhshidogullari) (935–969) with its center in Fustat. It encompassed a significant part of Egypt and the Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine). Later, these territories were also conquered by the Fatimids.

In his work *'The Epistle of al-Fath ibn Khaqan on the Merits of the Turks and the Rest of the Caliphal Army,'* the Arab writer and theologian Abu Uthman Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz (775–868) describes in detail the martial qualities of the Turks and their role in the army of the Caliphate.

In his book *Akhbar al-Buldan* ('Accounts of the Countries'), the Persian geographer of the late 9th–early 10th century, Ahmad ibn al-Faqih al-Hamadani, devoted special chapters – 'On the Turks' and 'On Certain Cities of the Turks and Their Curious Features' – to the Turks. This work was written around 903.

In the first half of the 11th century, the Arab chronicler Abu al-Ala ibn Ali ibn Hassul wrote the work *'The Book on the Superiority of the Turks over Other Warriors and the Merits of the Exalted Sultan's Presence.'* He originated from Hamadan, and his family lived in Rayy (present-day Iran). At the end of the 9th century, he moved to Ghazna and held high positions at the court of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. Later, Ibn Hassul served in Rayy, at the court of the Seljuk Sultan Tughril Beg, and died in 1058. It is known that Mahmud Ghaznevi captured Rayy in 1029, and Tughril Beg in 1042.

By the end of the 9th century, the Abbasid Caliphate had entered a period of decline. In various regions of the state, governors and military commanders began to establish their own semi-autonomous entities, resembling principalities or counties in nature.

**The Sajids** ruled from 889 to 929 in Azerbaijan and northwestern Iran. They were of Turkic origin, originating from Central Asia. Their capitals were Maragha and Ardabil (currently cities in Iran, South Azerbaijan).

**The Salarids** ruled from 941 to 981, first in Azerbaijan and northwestern Iran, then territories up to Derbent. They were of Daylamite origin (a now-extinct Persian-speaking people). Their capital was Ardabil, currently a city in Iran (South Azerbaijan).

**The Samanids** were of Arab origin. The dynasty ruled from 875 to 999 over the territories of Khorasan and Transoxiana (Mawarannahr) (currently parts of Iran, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Pakistan).

**The Shaddadids.** Muhammad ibn Shaddad, being within the sphere of influence of the Salarids, managed to gain a foothold in Dvin (Dabil) in 951, thereby laying the foundation of the Shaddadid dynasty (951–1199). Some members of the ruling house bore names associated with the Iranian (Sasanian) tradition (Manuchehr, Anushirvan, Gudarz, Ardashir, etc.). In historiography, this is often interpreted as a policy of symbolic legitimation: ruling dynasties frequently resorted to prestigious onomastics and titlature regardless of their actual origin.

The Russian orientalist Vladimir Minorsky (1877–1966) suggested that Shaddad, the father of Muhammad, originated from the Jazira region near Hasaniya. Muhammad ibn Shaddad was the leader of the Hadbani sub-tribe.

By the late 10th and early 11th centuries, Turkman tribes already dominated the territory of Azerbaijan and northern Iran. The Byzantine Empire, together with its vassals (Armenian and Georgian feudal lords), repeatedly launched attacks on Shaddadid possessions. The Seljuks, who came to their aid, together with the Shaddadids, defeated them near Dvin in 1037. In 1054, the Shaddadids voluntarily became part of the Seljuk state.

The Shaddadids ruled in Azerbaijan and Armenia from 951 to 1199. They were of Arab origin. Their capitals were Dvin, Ganja (970–1075), and Ani. The city of Ganja is

in Azerbaijan. With the arrival of the Seljuks, the Shaddadids became their vassals and governors of territories, part of which corresponds to present-day Armenia.

### **The Rawwadids**

In 981, the ruler of Tabriz, Maragha, and Ahar, Abulhijja, overthrew the last ruler of the Salarid dynasty and founded the Rawwadid state (981–1054) in the northwestern part of Iran.

The Salarids, or Musafirids (a dynasty of Iranian origin), ruled in northwestern Iran from 941 to 981. The founder of the dynasty was al-Rawwad ibn al-Muthanna al-Azdi. In 754, the Abbasid caliph Abu Jafar al-Mansur appointed Yazid ibn Hatim al-Muhallabi as governor of Azerbaijan, who resettled Yemeni Arabs there. The first among them was al-Rawwad ibn al-Muthanna al-Azdi, who settled with his clan in Tabriz. In 1054, the Rawwadids voluntarily joined the Seljuk state. In 1071, Sultan Alp Arslan abolished the Rawwadid state. Notably, the family of Salah ad-Din originated from the Rawwadid tribe (originally a Yemeni Arab clan). Members of his family bore Arab and Persian (as was customary among all Muslim peoples, including Turkic ones), and later Turkic names as well. His grandfather, father, and uncle, and later Salah ad-Din himself, served the Seljuks throughout their lives.

The Rawwadids ruled in Azerbaijan and northwestern Iran from 981 to 1071. They were of Arab origin (Yemenis from Basra) and were resettled in northwestern Iran under Caliph al-Mansur (caliph from 754 to 775). Their capitals were Maragha and Ardabil, which are currently cities in Iran (South Azerbaijan).

### **The Karakhanids**

One of the Turkic tribal leaders, Bilge Kul Kara-Khagan, who originated from the Karluk tribe of the Chigil and served the Uyghur Khaganate, founded the Karakhanid state (840–1212) in Central Asia in 840, with its capital in Balasaghun (today the city of Tokmak in Kyrgyzstan). Between 920 and 960, the Karakhanids fully embraced Islam, established the first Turkic Muslim dynasty, and created the first Turkic Muslim state.

### **The Ghaznavids**

Another Turkic tribal leader, Alp-Tegin (a member of the Oghuz Kayi tribe), who served the Samanids, became ruler of a state with its capital in Ghazni (present-day

Afghanistan) in 977 and founded the Ghaznavid dynasty, which ruled for over a century. The Ghaznavid state (977-1186) encompassed the territories of Khorasan, Afghanistan, Khwarazm, Bukhara, Gurgan, as well as the northern regions of India.

In 1001, the Ghaznavids and the Karakhanids divided the Samanid possessions between themselves. In 1008, Mahmud Ghaznevi (971–1030) recruited Oghuz tribes for military service, held their leader, Arslan ibn Seljuk (who led the Seljuks from 1009 to 1025) as a hostage, and settled the Oghuz across vast territories.

Earlier, the military commander Seljuk Beg, together with his father, Dukak ibn Luqman from the Oghuz Kinik tribe, served the Khazar khagan and later entered the service of Ali Khan, the yabghu (ruler) of the Oghuz state. Dukak and his fellow tribesmen were among the first to convert to Islam. This provoked resistance from pagan Oghuz and Kipchaks. The Islamized Oghuz began to be called Turkmans. Some Oghuz from the North Caucasus migrated south to join them, while others moved toward Europe, and some mixed with the local populations of Dagestan and Azerbaijan.

In 1035, the Seljuks received lands in Khorasan from the Ghaznavids under vassal conditions and resettled there. After the death of Mahmud Ghaznevi, a struggle for the throne broke out between his sons. Masud Ghaznevi attempted to retake Khorasan from the Seljuks and arranged a military campaign against them. However, in 1040, the Seljuks won a decisive victory at the Battle of Dandanaqan (near Merv, on the territory of present-day Turkmenistan). As a result, the Ghaznavid state was reduced to a small principality, while the process of forming the great Seljuk empire entered its decisive phase.

Between 1038 and 1055, part of the Oghuz from the Kinik tribe, led by Tughril Beg (the grandson of Seljuk), began an active westward expansion, conquering Khorasan, Khwarazm, Iran, and Iraq. The Abbasid caliph al-Qa'im recognized Tughril Beg as sultan and his governor. The caliph himself retained the status of spiritual leader, possessing only nominal sovereignty. Thus, the Seljuk state (1037–1194) arose, with its capital in the city of Ray - now a suburb of Tehran in Iran.

In 1072, the Seljuk sultan, Malik-Shah I, conquered northern Syria and part of Palestine. The Yiva, Bayat, Afshar, Begdili, and Doger Oghuz-Turkman tribes, as well

as the Uchok tribal confederation, were settled in the cities of Damascus and Halab (Aleppo).

### **Reference**

***The Oghuz State (750–1042)*** – a medieval Central Asian state occupying parts of present-day Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. The population mainly lived compactly in the Aral Sea region, the northern Caspian area, the lower reaches of the Syr Darya, and the adjacent steppes of western Kazakhstan. The capital was the city of Yangi-Kent in the Kyzylorda Region of Kazakhstan.

***Khorasan*** – a historical region of eastern Iran and parts of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. Its main cities were Nishapur (Iran), Merv and Sanjan (Turkmenistan), and Herat (Afghanistan). Today, three provinces within Iran bear this name: North Khorasan, South Khorasan, and Razavi Khorasan.

**The Fatimids (909–1171)** – an Arab Shiite dynasty descending from Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad. The Fatimids brought the territories of North Africa, Sicily, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and the Red Sea coast under their control. Their army consisted of Arab mercenaries and mamluks, including Turks.

### **Zengids**

The mid-11th century was marked by a period of political fragmentation in the Islamic world. In the Baghdad Caliphate, which encompassed the Arab lands of Asia, Iran, Transcaucasia, Central Asia, and part of Hindustan, power was held by the Abbasids (750–1258), as well as Arab and Persian-speaking dynasties closely associated with them. In the Fatimid Caliphate, which encompassed North Africa, the eastern Mediterranean, and Sicily, the Fatimids (909–1171) and related Arab dynasties ruled. By the end of the 11th century, Turkic dynasties closely related to the Seljuks, as well as representatives of other Oghuz-Turkman lineages, began to dominate the Islamic world. At that time, the Fatimid Caliphate remained the only major independent state, Shiite by confession, even though Sunnis constituted most of its population.

In 1163, the Fatimids, having drawn closer to the Crusaders, found themselves in a difficult position. The vizier of Egypt appealed to Nur ad-Din Zengi for help in

defending the Muslims. In response, Nur ad-Din sent troops; his emir, Asad ad-Din Shirkuh, and after his death, his nephew, Emir Salah ad-Din, became vizier of Egypt.

From the late 10th to the early 11th century, the term 'emir' came to denote feudal rulers and military commanders of various ranks. This practice existed under the Seljuks, Zengids, Ayyubids, and Mamluks.

The Zengid dynasty was of Turkman origin. Its founder, Aq-Sunqur, was appointed wali of Halab (present-day Aleppo, Syria) by the Seljuk sultan in 1087. In 1127, the Seljuk sultan appointed Aq-Sunqur's son, Imad ad-Din Zengi (1086–1146), atabeg of Mosul (Iraq) and Halab. Before him, the atabegs of Mosul were Kerbogha (1096–1102), Jekermish (1102–1107), Sherafeddin Mavdud ibn Altuntekin (1108–1113), Aq-Sunqur al-Bursuqi (1113–1126), and Izz ad-Din Masud al-Bursuqi (1126–1127).

After Kerbogha's death, Imad ad-Din Zengi did not leave Mosul and, from 1101, took part in the military campaigns of local atabegs. In 1122, he was appointed wali (city governor) of Wasit (a now-vanished city between Kufa and Basra, Iraq), and in 1124, wali of Basra. During this period, tensions escalated between the Abbasid caliph and the Seljuk sultan. Zengi maneuvered between them, supporting first one side, then the other. In 1126, he was appointed shihna (chief of security) of Baghdad, and in 1127, atabeg of Mosul and Aleppo.

In 1118, al-Mustarshid Billah (1092–1135) became Abbasid caliph. In 1125, he launched a revolt and sent troops to seize Wasit, but was defeated by Imad ad-Din Zengi. In 1126, when Zengi held the post of shihna of Baghdad, the caliph was virtually placed under house arrest. After the death of Sultan Mahmud II in 1131, a struggle for the throne began, which the caliph again attempted to exploit. In 1133, Zengi marched on Baghdad with an army but was defeated near Tikrit and forced to return to Mosul. The caliph besieged Mosul for three months, but unsuccessfully.

In 1135, al-Mustarshid launched a military campaign against Sultan Masud, whom he himself had previously crowned. The decisive battle took place near Hamadan (Iran). During the battle, many emirs abandoned the caliph, and he was captured. His life was spared on condition that he would not leave the palace in Baghdad; however, he was soon murdered in his tent by unknown persons. His reign is assessed as unsuccessful: under him, the Muslim world failed to offer sufficient resistance to the Crusaders.

After al-Mustarshid's death, with the support of Sultan Masud, Imad ad-Din Zengi launched an active struggle against the Crusaders and Muslim emirs to unite the Islamic world. In 1144, he captured the County of Edessa (present-day Şanlıurfa), thereby gaining widespread fame as a defender of Islam. However, in 1146, he was killed during the siege of the fortress of Ja'bar in Syria.

His son, Nur ad-Din Mahmud Zengi (1118–1174), continued the struggle against the Crusaders and in 1149, captured the fortress of Ja'bar. In Western historiography, Imad ad-Din Zengi is often mentioned under the name *Sanguin* ('the bloodthirsty'), but Eastern sources emphasize his sharp intellect, bravery, justice, generosity, and high moral qualities.

Nur ad-Din Mahmud Zengi succeeded in transforming the Muslim East into a force capable of resisting the Crusaders. In 1154 he captured Damascus, and in 1169 Egypt, as a result of which the Crusader states found themselves in a strategic encirclement. Until he died in 1174, he remained atabeg of Aleppo and Damascus. Contemporaries noted his strictness, courage, statesmanship, piety, justice, and complete devotion to jihad against the enemies of Islam.

In his work 'History of Damascus (1056–1160),' the 12th-century Arab chronicler Hamza ibn Asad Abu Ya'la al-Qalanisi, who lived in Damascus and witnessed its conquest by Nur ad-Din Zengi, described in detail and chronologically the military actions between the Crusaders and Muslims, emphasizing the role of Imad ad-Din and Nur ad-Din Zengi in uniting the Muslims.

In his book 'The Crusades: Myth and Reality of the Holy War,' the Belgian and French historian and archaeologist, Pierre Villemar (1935–2003), noted that the authority of Nur ad-Din Zengi reached unprecedented heights, "His name was glorified throughout the Islamic world, and the caliph granted him lofty titles equating his status with that of a sultan's son — Zayn al-Islam ('Adornment of Islam'), al-Malik al-Mansur ('Victorious King'), and Nazir amir al-mu'minin ('Support of the Commander of the Faithful')." All researchers agree that just the Turkmans and the Turkman rulers of Syria and Iraq played the decisive role in the struggle against the Crusaders.

At the court of the Zengid dynasty, two primary languages were used: Turkic, the language of the rulers, military elite, and nomads; and Arabic, the language of administration, theology, and literature.

## **Bozok and Uchok**

According to Turkic-Oghuz traditions, the administrative and social organization of the Oghuz had a dual structure. According to this tradition, the Oghuz were divided into two main branches, each consisting of twelve tribes: the Bozoks and the Uchoks. According to Oghuz legends, the Bozoks were considered the dominant branch, while the Uchoks were subordinate.

The 24 Oghuz tribes were first divided into two branches, Bozoks and Uchoks, then correlated with the six sons of Oghuz Khan, and finally, his twenty-four grandsons. The main sources of information on the tribal structure of the Oghuz are the works of Mahmud al-Kashgari and Rashid ad-Din. Rashid ad-Din counted 24 Oghuz tribes, whereas Mahmud al-Kashgari mentioned 22.

### ***Reference***

*Mahmud ibn al-Husayn ibn Muhammad al-Kashgari (1028–1126) was a Turkic scholar in the Karakhanid State. He is known for compiling ‘Divan lughat at-Turk’ (‘Compendium of the Turkic Languages’), equivalent to an encyclopedic work on Turkology. The present-day Uyghurs, Kyrgyz, and Uzbeks claim his legacy.*

*Rashid ad-Din Fazlullah ibn Abulkhayr Ali Hamadani, also known as Rashid ad-Dawla (1247–1318), was a Persian statesman, physician, and scholar in the Ilkhanate. He is known for his work ‘Jami‘al-Tawarikh’ (‘Compendium of Chronicles’), in which he described the Oghuz tribes, drawing upon Kashgari’s ‘Divan lughat at-Turk.’*

The Bozok Oghuz-Turkman intertribal union included 12 tribes: Kayi, Bayat, Karaevli, Alkaevli, Yazir, Doger, Dodurga, Yaparli, Afshar, Kizik, Begdili, and Karkin. The Kayi tribe became the foundation of the Ottoman Empire; Bayat — of the Qajar state; Afshar — of the Afsharid Empire; Begdili — of the Khwarazmshahs’ state.

The intertribal union Uchok also consisted of 12 tribes: Bayindir, Bechene, Chovdur, Chepni, Yomut, Salur, Eymur, Ala-Yuntlu, Uregir, Igdir, Bugduz, Yiva, and Kinik. The Bayindir tribe founded the Aq Qoyunlu state, Yiva – the Qara Qoyunlu state, and Kinik – the Seljuk state.

## **Qizilbash**

The Qizilbash tribal union in the Safavid state included the Bayat, Afshar, Ustajlu (a branch of Begdili), Shamlu (a branch of Afshars and Begdilis), Khyrmandali (a branch of Bayat), Tekeli (from the Teke group, which formed the core of the present-day Turkmen people of Turkmenistan), as well as Turkmans and other tribes originating from the common circle of the 24 Oghuz tribes.

Historically, the Afshars have been classified as Turkmans; however, some researchers consider them a sub-ethnos of Azerbaijanis. The Afshars of Northwestern Iran are close to Azerbaijanis in terms of language and culture, whereas Afshars from other regions of Iran and Afghanistan are closer to Turkmens.

### **Shamlu**

The origin of the Shamlu tribe is related to the Oghuz Afshar and Begdili tribes. During the Seljuk conquests, they settled in Azerbaijan, Iran, and eastern Anatolia, and later in Syria, primarily in the Damascus region. The Turkic toponym for Damascus is Sham, from which the ethnonym *Shamlu* originates, meaning ‘those from Damascus.’ During Timur’s campaign against the Ottoman Empire, this tribe was resettled to the vicinity of Ardabil and placed under the power of the sheikh of the Safavid Sufi order.

### **The Turkmen/Turkman Distribution Geography**

The Turkman also included the Yiva and Bayindir tribes, which founded the states of Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu, respectively. After the fall of Aq Qoyunlu, part of the Turkman tribes, having united into a Turkman tribal confederation, became part of the Qizilbash.

The origin of the Ustajlu tribe is related to the Oghuz Begdili tribe, whose representatives during the Seljuk period settled in Iran, Turkey (where they constituted the majority), and Syria.

Turkmans also settled along the main trade routes of Iraq, primarily in the areas of the cities of Tal Afar, Erbil, and Kirkuk, forming a region, now unofficially called Turkmaneli. On a map of the region published by William Guthrie in 1785, this territory was designated under the English toponym Turkomania.

Turkmans also live in Afghanistan. The total Turkic population there exceeds 8 million people, about half of whom are Uzbeks. Alongside Uzbeks and Turkmens, the Kyrgyz, as well as several small Turkic groups that are part of the Hazara population,

also live there. In Kabul and Kandahar, Qizilbash and Afshars live, who are close to Azerbaijanis in terms of language and culture; their population is approximately 300,000.

Turkmans also constitute a significant portion of the Iraqi population. In 1055, the Seljuks captured Iraq and created the Iraqi Sultanate (1118–1194) with its capital in Hamadan (present-day Iran). This state encompassed Iraq, Iran, and Transcaucasia. In the 12th century, the Seljuk state was a union of semi-independent emirates governed by atabegs. The largest of these were the Ildegizids in Azerbaijan, the Salghurids in Fars, the Hazaraspids in Luristan, and the Zengids in Iraq and Syria.

Later, Iraq became part of the states of the Ilkhanids, Jalayirids, Qara Qoyunlu, and Aq Qoyunlu. In 1534, it became a possession of the Ottoman Empire. In 1918, Iraq was occupied by the United Kingdom, and since 1958, it has been an independent state.

Currently, about three million Turkmans live in Iraq, making them the third-largest ethnic group in the country after Arabs and Kurds. According to some ethnographers and linguists, the Turkman language is a dialect of Azerbaijani Turkic. Turkish scholar of Iraqi Turkman origin, Kemal Bayat, notes, “The language spoken by Iraqi Turkmans belongs to the Azeri-Turkic dialect group. From a geographical standpoint, the Azeri dialect covers Eastern Anatolia, the South Caucasus and Caucasian Azerbaijan, Iranian Azerbaijan, Kirkuk (Iraq), as well as the regions inhabited by Turks in Syria.”

The territories of compact Turkman settlement in Iraq are the provinces of Salah ad-Din, Nineveh, Erbil, and Kirkuk, united under the common unofficial toponym **Turkmaneli**, whose administrative center is considered to be the city of Kirkuk.

Iraqi Turkmans are most closely related to the Syrian ones, who live in the provinces of Latakia and Aleppo, as well as in the cities of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Quneitra. It was precisely the Turkman tribes united by Salah ad-Din who played a major role in the victory over the Crusaders in 1187. The total population of Syrian Turkmans is about 1.5 million. Their language also belongs to the dialects of Azerbaijani Turkic.

In neighboring Syria, the first Turkmans were representatives of the Oghuz Kinik tribe, Qurlu Bey and Atsiz ibn Uvak. Initially, they served the Seljuks, but in 1069, due to a conflict, they left Seljuk service and found refuge in Byzantium. In 1070, they

entered the service of the Fatimids. In 1071, Atsiz founded an independent beylik in Palestine, which encompassed Jerusalem, Tiberias, Homs, and Damascus.

In 1079, Atsiz was killed by the Seljuk military commander Tutush, the brother of Sultan Malik-Shah I and son of Alp Arslan. Tutush had been sent by the sultan to assist Atsiz in his confrontation with the Fatimids, but instead accused him of conspiracy and put him out of the way. Then Tutush became the Seljuk ruler of Syria.

In 1087, Sultan Malik-Shah I appointed Aq-Sunqur (the grandfather of Nur ad-Din Zengi) wali of Aleppo. After the sultan died in 1092, a struggle for the throne broke out between his sons. Barkiyaruq became the new sultan, but Tutush refused to recognize his power. In 1093, Tutush demanded that the emir of Aleppo, Aq-Sunqur, and the emir of Edessa, Buzan, side with him, but both refused.

In 1094, Tutush attacked Aleppo, killing Aq-Sunqur and Buzan, and captured Emir Kerbogha, who supported Sultan Barkiyaruq. Later, Tutush managed to seize the western part of the Seljuk state, but in a battle near the city of Ray, he was defeated by the forces of Sultan Barkiyaruq and was killed.

After Tutush died in 1095, Emir Kerbogha was released by Tutush's son at the request of Sultan Barkiyaruq. Kerbogha took the nine-year-old son of Aq-Sunqur, Imad ad-Din Zengi, the future founder of the Zengid dynasty, under his protection and personally raised him.

### **Reference**

*Alp Arslan (1030–1072) was the second sultan of the Seljuk state. Under his rule, the state significantly expanded westward into Anatolia and the Caucasus. He defeated the Byzantines at the Battle of Manzikert. Byzantine Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes (1030–1071) was then captured and later released by Alp Arslan for a ransom of 1.5 million nomismas and an annual tribute of 360,000 nomismas. After returning from captivity, Romanos IV Diogenes was overthrown by his stepson, Michael VII Doukas. Alp Arslan was a brave, physically strong man and an excellent archer.*

*The Battle of Manzikert (Malazgirt, Turkey) took place in 1071 between the Turkmens and the army of the Byzantine Empire (395–1453). The Byzantine defeat marked the beginning of the mass Turkman migration deep into Asia Minor, the Caucasus, Mesopotamia, and virtually the entire Middle East, including Egypt.*

*Nomisma* (a Byzantine gold coin) served as an international reserve currency. It was used to pay for nearly everything and functioned as a standard for other coins. Islamic dinars were modeled on it. The gold content was 24 carats (almost pure gold), and its weight was 4.5 grams. Under Romanos IV Diogenes, the gold content was reduced to 18 carats.

Turks played an important role in the political and economic life of Georgia. In 1099, Georgian King David IV the Builder (1089–1125) stopped paying tribute to the Seljuk sultan, which became the formal pretext for the outbreak of military actions. In the same year, the Crusaders recaptured Palestine and Jerusalem from the Seljuks. The Byzantine Empire was also engaged in active military operations against the Seljuks. Under these conditions, David IV, striving to strengthen his military position, decided to settle Turkic Kipchak tribes in Georgia. In 1118, he allied with the Kipchaks, having previously married a Kipchak princess, the daughter of Khan Atrak. According to some sources, up to 40,000 Kipchak warriors, along with their families, were resettled in Georgia. The Kipchaks were incorporated into the Georgian army and played a significant role in the military campaigns of the early 12th century.

From 1121 onward, wars unfolded between the Shaddadid dynasty and the Georgian kings, who again enlisted Kipchak forces as allies. This confrontation forced the Seljuks to intervene in Caucasian affairs. The Seljuk military commander, Najm ad-Din Ilghazi, launched a campaign into Georgia in 1121–1122.

Later, in 1130, the ruler of the Dilmachogullari beylik, Togan Arslan (Bitlis region, present-day Turkey), and the emir of Ahlat (a city near Lake Van), Sukman II, conducted military operations against Georgia. In the same year, Husam ad-Din Kurti, son of Togan Arslan, captured the city of Dvin, playing an important strategic role in the Caucasus.

*There are many discrepancies, falsifications, and interpretations concerning the word 'kurt.' Translated from Turkish into Russian, it means 'wolf.' For example, Kurt Ali in Turkish or Gurd Ali in Azerbaijani carries the semantic meaning 'Ali the Brave.' When translated into Russian, however, the name sounds as Kurd Ali, where the zoonym 'wolf' is transformed into the ethnonym 'Kurd.' As a result, instead of 'Ali the Brave like a wolf,' it means 'Ali, a Kurd by ethnicity.' Thus, a substitution of concepts takes place.*

## Salah ad-Din

In the struggle against the Crusaders, especially during the Third Crusade (1189–1192), the outstanding military commander and statesman, a former associate of Nur ad-Din Zengi, the Sultan of Egypt and Syria, Salah ad-Din (1138–1193), played a particularly distinguished role. The Crusades (1096–1272) were initially directed primarily at Palestine to capture Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulcher, and later also against pagans and heretics.

The ancestors of Salah ad-Din originated from the city of Dvin. His grandfather's name was Shadi, his father's – Ayyub, and his uncle's – Shirkuh. At that time, the region was under the rule of the Arab Shaddadid dynasty.

Some sources report that Shadi belonged to the Kurdish Rawwadid tribe. Herewith, Russian orientalist Vladimir Minorsky (1877–1966) admitted the possibility of Salah ad-Din's Arab origin. According to some authors, his uncle Shirkuh was closely associated with the Turkic Zengid dynasty, the rulers of Syria and Mesopotamia within the Seljuk state.

Some studies assert that Salah ad-Din's father, Najm ad-Din Ayyub ibn Shadi (1093–1173), was a Kurd from the Hajabani (or Hazbani) tribe and originated from the settlement of Ajdanakan in the Dvin district (now the territory of Armenia). However, no settlement with such a toponym has been documented in the immediate vicinity of Dvin. Approximately 50 km from the city lies Mount Jahak, whose name in Armenian mythology is associated with the image of a man-dragon; in Turkic mythology, a similar image is known as *ajdaha*. In his work 'History of Armenia,' Movses Khorenatsi mentions the existence of a Median city called Ajdanakan in the 6th century BCE, during the reign of Tigranes. The Medes, as is known, were an ancient people of Iranian origin.

Shadi ibn Marwan and his sons, Najm ad-Din and Asad ad-Din Shirkuh, lived in Dvin until 1130 and served the Shaddadids. In 1130–1132, Shadi ibn Marwan (died in 1132) governed the fortress of Tikrit in Iraq on behalf of the Seljuks; after his death, Najm ad-Din Ayyub assumed this position. Between 1130 and 1138, the brothers served initially the Seljuks and then the Seljuk atabegs, the Zengids, who in 1139 granted them possession of the ancient city of Baalbek (Heliopolis), located 65 km northeast of Beirut at an altitude of approximately 1,130 meters above sea level.

Subsequently, Najm ad-Din Ayyub, by order of Nur ad-Din Zengi, served the Damascus atabegs from the Burid dynasty. In 1154, he facilitated the capture of Damascus by the forces of Nur ad-Din Zengi, after which he was appointed wali (governor) of the city.

There are various versions regarding the origin of the Rawwadids. Some sources consider them Arabs who ruled northwestern and western Iran and, by the early 10th century, became Kurdicized and concentrated in the regions of Tabriz and Maragha. However, the mechanisms of such an ethnic transformation raise questions. According to another version, the Rawwadids originated from Arabs of Basra, but due to mixed marriages came to identify themselves as Kurds. There is also an opinion that Salah ad-Din was a descendant of one of the branches of the Kurdish Hajabani (Hadhabani) tribe, which lived in the area between Erbil and Urmia. In the 10th century, representatives of this tribe migrated north of Lake Urmia and later spread across Azerbaijan and the Caucasus, splitting into several branches.

Some researchers believe that the Kurdish Hezban (Hadhkaban) tribe was later Turkicized. Others argue that Salah ad-Din belonged to the Rawwadids, who were Kurdicized Arabs. There is also the view that Shirkuh and Salah ad-Din, who served the Seljuks for a long time, significantly Turkicized.

Thereat, some historical facts coincide. Salah ad-Din's grandfather, Shadi, originated from a branch of the Rawwadids living near Dvin, where his sons Ayyub and Shirkuh were born. In 1130, Shadi and his family were sent to Baghdad on behalf of the Seljuk sultan to serve at the caliphal court. Subsequently, Shadi was appointed governor of Tikrit. In 1138, Shirkuh and Ayyub entered the service of the atabeg Imad ad-Din Zengi in Mosul. Shadi ibn Marwan himself was a minor vassal of the Shaddadids.

Salah ad-Din was born in 1138 in Tikrit (Iraq), where Arabs, Turks, and Assyrians then lived, which reflects the multiethnicity of the region of his birth.

The renowned Islamic scholar and jurist, Baha ad-Din ibn Shaddad (1145–1234), authored a detailed biography of Salah ad-Din. In his work, he described in detail both the military campaigns and the personal qualities of the sultan. After reading his writings, Salah ad-Din invited Baha ad-Din to his court and appointed him qadi of Jerusalem.

In his work ‘Salah ad-Din – the Conqueror of the Crusaders’, in the second chapter titled ‘The Second Expedition to Egypt, Known as the Events at al-Babayn’, the author writes, “Asad ad-Din very often publicly spoke of his intentions regarding Egypt. Shawar heard of them and, fearing that the country might fall into the hands of the Turks, and almost certainly knowing that Asad ad-Din would invade the country to establish his power there, wrote to the Franks and entered a convention with them.”

According to most Arab primary sources, the army of Asad ad-Din Shirkuh in that campaign consisted of 6,000 elite Seljuk Turkman and 2,000 mounted lancers from the personal guard of Nur ad-Din Zengi.

The only complete chronicle, setting out in detail the history of the Crusades, is considered to be the work ‘History of the Conquest of the Overseas Land’, authored by Bernard, treasurer of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen (1194–1250). Bernard lived in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, and in his chronicle, particularly in Chapter 44 (‘The Battle of Tiberias and the Capture of Jerusalem by Salah ad-Din’), repeatedly mentions Salah ad-Din, Turks, and Saracens. Notably, the term ‘Kurds’ is not used in the text.

Bernard the Treasurer wrote, “When the countess saw that the Turks had besieged her and she could not withstand so many Saracens, she sent ambassadors to King Guy and to the count, her lord, notifying them that, unless they immediately assisted, she would lose the city, having too few men to resist the vast army of the Saracens.”

### **Reference**

*The city of Tiberias (Tveria, Tiberiade) is in Galilee on the western shore of the Sea of Tiberias, in the northeast of modern Israel. The Crusaders captured Tiberias in 1099, which then became part of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. In 1187, Salah ad-Din won a decisive victory over the Crusaders at the Battle of the Horns of Hattin, near Tiberias.*

*Kvido (Guy de Lusignan) was King of Jerusalem from 1184 to 1196.*

*Raymond III (1139–1187) was Count of Tiberias and regent of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.*

*Eschiva II de Bures (1136–1187) was Countess of Tiberias, the wife of Raymond III.*

*In Arabia, all nomadic tribes, regardless of their ethnic origin, were called Bedouins. In the Middle Ages, the term ‘Saracens’ referred to Muslims participating in wars*

*against the Crusaders and generally the inhabitants of the Middle East and Asia Minor, including Oghuz-Turkman tribes.*

In 1099, the Crusaders under the leadership of Godfrey of Bouillon captured Jerusalem and exterminated its Muslim population. The city became the capital of the Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099–1291). In 1187, Jerusalem was retaken by Salah ad-Din.

Describing the siege of Jerusalem, Bernard the Treasurer noted, “The Turks advanced to the assault, holding small shovels in their hands, with which they threw sand and dust into the air, flying into the eyes and faces of the Christians.”

He further wrote, “The Turks reached the moats and, lowering the diggers into them, set ladders against the walls. In two days, they undermined the walls to a depth of fifteen cubits, propped them up with beams, then set fire to them, and the undermined section of the wall collapsed into the moat.”

Greek, Latin, Armenian, and Syriac sources tell nothing about the Kurds in the pre-Seljuk period, up to the mid-11th century. From the 11th century, the term ‘Kurmanji’ appears, later becoming the self-designation of part of the Kurdish population. In his work ‘Nuzhat al-Qulub’ (‘The Delight of Hearts’), one of the key sources of the Ilkhanate era, the Persian scholar Hamdallah Mustawfi Qazvini (1281–1350) was the first to systematically mention a province called Kurdistan.

In Persian sources, the term ‘kurd’ was used to denote nomadic Iranian tribes of northwestern Iran. In the 17th–18th centuries, many scholars attempted to determine the origin of the Kurdish people and language. Some considered Kurdish to be a dialect of Persian, which is explained by their significant similarity. According to the Armenian version, Kurds emerged from Turkic tribes, who migrated to Iran and Anatolia and mixed with Persians. Some researchers derive the ethnonym ‘Kurd’ from Arabic ‘akrad,’ meaning ‘nomad,’ since Arabs used this term for all nomads of Iran and Mesopotamia.

In the Parthian language, the word *gurd* (gwrt) meant ‘hero,’ and in Persian, there existed the word *kord*. Until the 19th century, Armenians referred to Kurds as mards, after the name of an ancient Persian-speaking tribe.

Some authors believe that the Hadhabani were a medieval Kurdish Muslim tribe, while others associate this ethnonym with the geographical region of Erbil. The tribe’s territories covered Maragha and Urmia in the east, Erbil and Sinjar in the south, Jazira

in the west, and Barkari, Hakkari, and Salmas in the north. The tribe was divided into several groups: Mehranis (or Mihraniyya), Rawwandi (or Rawwadiyya), Hakimi (Hakimiyya), and Maran (Banu Maran).

The Mehranis are associated with the Mihran clan, one of the seven great houses of Parthia and the Sasanian Empire. The progenitor of the Rawwadiyya is considered to be al-Rawwad ibn al-Muthanna al-Azdi; this dynasty ruled in Southern Azerbaijan in the 8th–11th centuries and had Arab Yemeni origins. The Hakimiyya represented an Ismaili Shiite sect founded by followers of the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah. The origin of the Maran group remains unclear, as it is associated with both Jewish and Persian traditions.

Thus, researchers put forward various hypotheses regarding the ethnogenesis of the Kurds, linking them to ancient Iranian, local, Arab, and Turkic elements. However, it is generally recognized that Persian-speaking tribes inhabiting the border regions of Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and partly Syria played a leading role in the formation of the Kurdish ethnos.

### **The Mamluks**

In 1250, the Mamluk Aybek at-Turkumani, who had previously held the position of emir under the Ayyubids, became Sultan of Egypt. The Mamluk sultan Izz ad-Din Aybek at-Turkumani (date of birth unknown – died in 1257) came from a Turkman background. At the court of Sultan as-Salih Ayyub (1205–1249), the grandson of al-Adil, the brother of Salah ad-Din, he pursued a military career and rose to the rank of emir.

The Mamluks constituted a special military estate in Egypt. Initially and predominantly, they were formed from young men of Turkic origin who were acquired for military service. Later, natives of the Caucasus, residents of Egypt, and, in some cases, individuals from other regions were also incorporated into the ranks of the Mamluks.

According to most scholars, the institution of the Mamluks as a military class began to take shape in the Islamic world as early as the 9th century. The early Mamluks were known as *ghulams*, a term denoting warrior slaves. The first such units were created under Caliph al-Mu‘tasim (833–842). In Arabic, the word *ghulam* literally means ‘boy’ or ‘young man.’ It should be emphasized that Islamic law lacks the classical notion of

slavery: the acquired warriors converted to Islam and were considered personally free. Moreover, the term *ghulam* did not always denote an unfree person: many ghulams were free mercenaries. Ghulams in military service were directly subordinate to the caliph.

The first Turkic warriors appeared as guards performing bodyguard functions under Caliph al-Ma'mun (813–833). During the reign of al-Mu'tasim, the ghulam guard was finally formed, recruited primarily from Turks.

The Mamluks established the Mamluk Sultanate (1250–1517) over the territories of Egypt and Syria, which played a key role in the history of the Middle East. In 1260, the Mamluks defeated the Hulaguid army; in 1302, they finally eliminated the Crusader state; and in 1375, they brought an end to the Cilician Armenian Kingdom. In 1517, the Mamluk Sultanate was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire; however, the Mamluks retained significant political and social influence for a long time thereafter.

Two dynasties ruled the Mamluk Sultanate: the Bahri dynasty (1250–1382) and the Burji dynasty (1382–1517). The first one was Turkman by origin. The second is traditionally considered Circassian; its founder was Barquq. According to sources, Barquq originated from Circassia and was sold into Mamluk service in his youth. Some studies assert that the Burji rulers originated not only from Circassia but also from Georgia, Armenia, and other regions of the Caucasus.

It should be borne in mind that the term 'Circassia' denoted a vast historical region of the North Caucasus, which today encompasses the territories of Krasnodar Krai and Stavropol Krai, the republics of Adygea, Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, as well as parts of North Ossetia, Ingushetia, and Chechnya. The self-designation of the Circassians is 'Adyghe.' Significant Circassian diasporas were formed in Turkey, as well as in Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Israel.

Some written sources testify that Turkic ethnic groups were among the most numerous in the Caucasus during the medieval period. There is a viewpoint that the very term 'Circassian' is of Turkic origin. Research into the origins of the princely families of Kabarda (part of Circassia) shows that many of them had roots in Karachay, Balkaria, the Kumyk Plain, and Crimea, and were of Turkic origin. In Russia, the term 'Circassians' was traditionally applied to the Adyghe, whereas in Turkey, it often

refers more broadly to natives of the North Caucasus in general, including Turks, Abazins, Kabardians, Karachays, Balkars, and other groups.

Of the 26 sultans of the Burji dynasty, 10 bore Arabic-Persian names, and 16 bore Turkic names. Turkman onomastic tradition included both Turkic and Arabic-Persian names. Turkic mercenaries, as a rule, did not change their names when entering service. The names of such Burji sultans as Barquq, Baybars, Khushqadam, Bilbay, Timurbugha, Jaqmaq, Inal, Barsbay, Tatar, Qaytbay, Janbalat, Qansuh, and Tumanbay are of Turkic origin.

In subsequent centuries, the Mamluks continued to own feudal lands in Egypt and retained substantial political influence. In 1806–1807, the Mamluk leaders al-Alfi and al-Badrissi died under suspicious circumstances. The Ottoman ruler of Egypt, Muhammad Ali Pasha (1769–1849), seeking to eliminate Mamluk influence, invited their leadership to Cairo in 1811. About 700 Mamluks who arrived at the palace were killed; more than 3,000 people perished across the country. After these events, the Mamluks ceased to exist as a political force, remaining part of Egypt's history.

Two languages were used at the court of the Mamluk Sultanate: Turkic as the language of the ruling military elite, and Arabic as the language of administration and literature.

## **Conclusion**

The historical work 'Kitab al-Kamil fi al-Ta'rikh' ('The Complete History') by the outstanding Arab historian of the 12th–13th centuries, Izz ad-Din Ibn al-Athir, is a fundamental writing devoted to the history of the Muslim world from the pre-Islamic period to the era of the Mongol conquests. From a scholarly standpoint, the most valuable part of the chronicle is the section covering events from the 9th to the mid-13th century, since it contains crucial information on the history of the Samanids, Karakhanids, Seljuks, Ghaznavids, Ghurids, Khwarazmshahs, and Hulaguids. This is the milestone period for understanding ethno-political and military-administrative processes in the Islamic world.

The expansion of the Seljuk state largely contributed to the spread of Turkman tribes from Egypt to Afghanistan. In 1064, the Seljuks captured Armenia, including the city of Dvin. Both before and during the Seljuk period, the city was governed by the Shaddadid dynasty, which originated from the Arab Rawwadid tribe. In this regard, the

Kurdish origin of Salah ad-Din and his ancestors is not supported by sources; this version does not meet scholarly criteria and belongs to the realm of later historiographical distortions. During the period under consideration, the Kurdish people as a fully formed ethnos did not yet exist.

The city of Dvin and surrounding territories constituted a polyethnic environment in which, alongside Arabs, Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, Persian-speaking tribes, and Turkmans lived. Under such conditions, interethnic marriages were a natural phenomenon, leading to the formation of families of mixed origin. It is quite possible that Salah ad-Din's family was Persian-speaking and originated from local tribal groups integrated into the Seljuk administrative and military system.

### ***Reference.***

*Dvin was built during the Sassanid Empire and served as the residence of governors: marzpanes under the Sassanids, kouropalates under the Byzantines, and ostikans under the Arab Caliphate.*

*The Shaddadids, with the support of the Seljuks, defended the city from the Byzantines and Armenian princes in 1037 and from three Byzantine attacks in the mid-1040s. In the mid-1040s, Armenian feudal lords handed over their holdings in exchange for titles, lands, and administrative positions in the Byzantine Empire. The Shaddadids began to settle Turkmans in the territories under their control.*

Under the Shaddadids, Turkmans appeared in the territory of modern-day Armenia, including the city of Dvin. Even earlier, in 1029, under the Rawwadids, 2,000 Turkman families were settled in southern Azerbaijan (northwest of modern-day Iran). Tens of thousands of families later joined them.

Most of Armenia was populated by Christians: Armenians, Greeks, and Syrians. They were under the protection of Muslim rulers, and none of them were sold into slavery. Christians retained their faith, property, and possessions. Assyrians, Jews, Arabs, Persian-speaking, and Turkic-speaking tribes lived alongside Christians.

Before 1130, reliable information on the life and origin of Shadi ibn Marwan, the grandfather of Salah ad-Din, is lacking. An early assertion of the family's Kurdish origin, once recorded by one author, was uncritically accepted and reproduced by subsequent historiography. Only a few scholars, particularly the Russian orientalist

Vladimir Minorsky, pointed out the family's affiliation with the Rawwadid tribe and assumed its Arab origin.

After the conquests of Sultan Alp Arslan in 1064, the Arab dynasties of the Shaddadids and Rawwadids, which ruled in Iran, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, became vassals of the Seljuks. The family of Shadi ibn Marwan may have arrived in the region alongside the Seljuks and received offices and land grants, which corresponded to Seljuk administrative practice. In 1130, the family moved to Tikrit, where Shadi ibn Marwan was appointed shihna (chief of security) of the city. The position of shihna was usually entrusted only to representatives of the Turkman military elite. After Shadi died in 1132, his son Najm ad-Din Ayyub (Najm ad-Din ibn Shadi) became wali (governor) of Tikrit.

The 1130s were characterized by a sharp confrontation between the Abbasid caliph al-Mustarshid and Turkman forces led by Imad ad-Din Zengi. Najm ad-Din Ayyub supported Zengi, which determined his subsequent career: in 1139, he was appointed governor of Baalbek. His brother Shirkuh became one of Zengi's closest military commanders. After Zengi died in 1146, the brothers entered the service of Nur ad-Din Zengi, who later educated and politically shaped Salah ad-Din, virtually acting as his mentor.

Salah ad-Din was fluent in Arabic, Persian, and Turkic. Arabic fulfilled religious and administrative functions, while Persian was the language of literature and high culture, and Turkic was used at court, in the military environment, and among the Mamluks. Regardless of his precise ethnic origin, contemporaries, including Christian authors, perceived Salah ad-Din as a Turk or Turkman, reflecting his cultural and political identity.

Nureddin Zengi died in 1174. Salahaddin married his widow, Isma'addin Khatun, in 1176, who died in 1186. Salahaddin died in 1193. Salahaddin's mother was of Turkman descent, and his wife, Isma'addin Khatun, was of Turkman descent. Salahaddin's sons, Al-Afdal (1170-1125), Al-Aziz Uthman (1171-1198), Az-Zahir Ghazi (1173-1216), and Al-Mu'azzam Turanshah (1181-1260), had short reigns. Salahaddin's brother, Al-Adil, became Emir of Damascus in 1196, ousting Al-Afdal, and then in 1200 became Sultan of Egypt, ousting Al-Aziz Uthman. Egypt and Syria were then ruled by Salahaddin's brother's descendants until the Mamluks came to power in 1250.

From 1219 onward, the expansion of the Chinggisids into the Muslim world began, affecting the states of the Khwarazmshahs and the Seljuks. In the 1230s, Iran, Transcaucasia, and the North Caucasus were conquered. During that period, thousands of Turkic mercenaries migrated to the Mamluk Sultanate. Sources do not support the widespread claim of mass enslavement of Turks by the «Mongols»; it is more accurate to speak of voluntary enlistment and military migration. Herewith, the process of Islamization of the Turco-Mongol elites was gradual and was completed only by the end of the 13th - beginning of the 14th century.

The Mamluks played a particularly important role in that period. Under Sultan as-Salih (1240–1249), the grandson of Salah ad-Din's brother, their political influence increased significantly. It was then that the phased resettlement of Turkmans into Ayyubid territories occurred, connected with the advance of the Chinggisids.

Among the outstanding Mamluk rulers, special mention should be made of Sultan al-Malik al-Muzaffar Sayf ad-Din Qutuz (1259–1260), who came from the Oghuz Turkman Begtili tribe and halted the advance of the Chinggisids. The most famous sultan of the Mamluk state was Baybars (1260–1277). Despite the widespread view of his Kipchak origin, the sources allow him to be regarded as a Turkic military professional who consciously and voluntarily joined the ranks of the Mamluks. His activities included both a successful struggle against the Crusaders and the Hulaguids and active patronage of science, architecture, and culture.

The bulk of the Mamluks consisted of Turkmans, followed by Turks of the North Caucasus and Turkic-Chinggisid groups. From the late 11th century, Turkmans dominated vast territories from Egypt to Iran. The present-day descendants of these groups are Syrian and Iraqi Turkmans, Turks, Azerbaijanis, and Turkmens.

In modern times, the historical and cultural unity of the Turkmans remains a factor in international relations. Turkey traditionally provides political, economic, and humanitarian support to the Turkmans of Syria and Iraq, which is conditioned by the historical legacy of the Ottoman Empire and geographical proximity. Azerbaijan, in turn, maintains ties with Turkman communities, which have been reflected in official visits and scholarly initiatives, including the establishment of a Coordination Council for research devoted to the history and culture of Iraqi Turkmans in 2023, under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.

Under the conditions of post-conflict reconstruction in Syria and the transformation of regional processes, the Turkman factor can and should become one of the key elements of Turkey and Azerbaijan's cooperation with Syria and Iraq. The commonality of ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural values constitutes a stable historical reality and an objective framework for further interaction.