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On the History of the Population and Territorial Issues of the Gazakh Region of Azerbaijan

Although the Gazakh region, covering the lands along the Aghstafa and Kura rivers in north-western Azerbaijan, is one of the oldest areas inhabited by people, the Gazakh tribe that migrated to the South Caucasus as part of the Hunnic Tribal Union and gave its name to the region, played an important role in shaping its ethnic landscape. Based on the available sources and research. we can talk about at least two large flows of the Gazakh tribe to the northwestern region of Azerbaijan, which occurred in different periods. The first stream, which took place at the beginning of our era, was probably closely connected with the Barsils and Khazars, who were part of the Hunnic tribal union. It is not by chance that some authors, based on ancient sources, identify the Gazakh tribe, especially the Karapapaks, one of its oldest and largest branches, with the Barsils and Khazars². The Armenian author Horseradish Moses shows that the first campaigns of the Barsils to the South Caucasus took place in 1973. Turkish historian Fahrettin Kyrzioglu claims that the Barsils. known as 'garapapak', in the III-IV centuries made two large campaigns to the South Caucasus, settled on the lands between Ardagan, Ganja, Tiflis and Irevan and called these places 'Gazakh' by their name4. Referring to Georgian and Armenian authors, I. Chopin argues that the Gazakhs, who in ancient times were called Kosogs, come from the same tribe as the Khazars⁵. Based on all this,

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² K. Məmmədov, Qazax-Borçalı bölgəsinin tarixinə dair, "Qazax-Borçalı bölgəsinin xalçaçıları", Bakı 2014, p. 24

³ История Армении Моисея Хоренского, Перевод Н. Эмина, Москва 1858, с. 134-15.

⁴ F. Kırzıoğlu, Yukarı-Kür ve Çoruk boylarında Kıpçaklar, Ankara 1992, p. 43.

⁵ И. Шопен, Исторический памятник Армянской области в эпоху присоединения к Российской империи, Санкт Петербург 1852, р. 532.

it can be concluded that the Gazakh tribe became part of the Hunnic tribal Union at the beginning of the early Middle Ages and as its offshoot came to the north-western regions of Azerbaijan, which also confirms the information of many Arab authors who tell about the events. In these data, the name of the Gazakh tribe and the locality of its residence is already used in the form of Kasak⁶ or Kasal⁷. Balazuri, who uses the Gazakh ethnotoponym as Kasal, provides information about the foundation of the Arab governor Marwan ibn Muhammad (732–744) in the 30s of the VIII century of a settlement under this name (now the city of Gazakh) as a military camp. Academician N. Valikhanli explains the use of the name by different authors in the form of Kasak or Kasal by the similar spelling of the letters "k" and "I" in Arabic manuscripts⁸.

The analysis of the available materials shows that the next and stronger outflow of the Gazakh tribal community to the north-western region of Azerbaijan occurred in the XI–XII centuries. The currents during this period covered Central Asia and Gazakhstan, the northern shores of the Caspian Sea, the lands between the Volga and Don rivers, the North Caucasus and the Crimea in the IX–XI centuries, which was associated with migrations of different tribes in different directions. To be more precise, during this period, the Gazakh tribe was one of the largest branches of the Kipchak tribal union. As a result, some authors represent this tribe as Kipchak, and others as Gazakh. It should also be noted that at least three large flows of the Gazakh tribe to Georgia and the north-western lands of Azerbaijan in the XI–XII centuries were closely connected with the Georgian-Seljuk conflict.

Referring to Klaproth and other orientalists, Chopin gives valuable information about the resettlement of the Gazakh tribe from Central Asia in the X century. This information shows that the Gazakh tribe emerged from the Amu Darya basin simultaneously with the Seljuks in the X century and, having passed through the north of the Caspian Sea, settled in the North Caucasus. The author, who called the Gazakhs ancient kosogs, states that the kosogs who crossed the Volga, or the Gazakhs, as they called themselves, moved towards the Black Sea, settled in a part of the Kuban steppe located between the Volga and the Don, and called this land "Gazakhia" after their name. By the way, we note that during this period, the names of people who lived be-

⁶ Ахмед ибн Асам ал Куфи, Книга завоеваний, Перевод З.М.Буниятова, Баку 1982, р. 49.

⁷ Н.Б. Велиханлы, Ибн Хордадбех, Баку 1986, р. 303.

⁸ Tiflis əyalətinin müfəssəl dəftəri. Borçalı və Qazax. 1728-ci il, Ön söz, tərcümə və şərhlərin müəllifi akademik Şahin Mustafayev, Bakı 2022, p. 303.

⁹ И. Шопен, Исторический памятник Армянской области в эпоху присоединения к Российской империи, Санкт Петербург 1852, р. 533.

tween the territory called "Gazakhia" and Transcaucasia, or rather Georgia, where they later migrated, are mentioned.

Georgian Tsar George II was the first to use the help of the Gazakh tribe in the fight against his enemies. Again, the same I. Chopin shows that "the Gazakhs who helped the Georgian tsar George II (1072–1089) in the wars with his enemies moved to Georgia, the current Gazakh district, and settled here, and from there to Turkey and the Armenian province (the "Armenian Province" of tsarist Russia in 1828 was created on the territory of The Irevan and Nakhchivan khanates of Azerbaijan – J.M.) spread to his immediate environment" 10.

A large outflow of the Gazakh tribe, which Georgian sources call Kipchaks. to the South Caucasus occurred at the beginning of the XII century due to the invitation of the Georgian king David IV. The Georgian king, who was not strong enough to free himself from Seljuk dependence, married the daughter of Atrak, the ruler of this tribe, and in 1118-1119 transferred 45,000 soldiers and their families to his lands. Shortly after this event, many of those soldiers returned to the banks of the Don in 1125 under the leadership of Atrak¹¹, or rather to Gazakhstan, and some settled permanently in Georgia and converted to Christianity¹². It is safe to say that Gazakhs made up at least the bulk of this population, which the Georgian source calls Kipchaks, and they retained their national identity by settling in Gazakh and Borchaly, who were at that time under the influence of the Georgian tsars. This opinion can be justified because the Gazakh branch of the Kipchaks lived in the area closest to Georgia in the X century. In "Kartlis shovrebe", David IV's appeal to the Kipchaks for help is justified because they are very belligerent and live nearby¹³. In the mentioned source, one can find interesting information confirming that the Kipchaks, whom David IV called for help, were Gazakhs, albeit indirectly. It was shown that the Alans lived between Gazakhiva and Georgia, where the Gazakhs. a branch of the Kipchak tribe, lived. From the information in "Kartlis shovreba". it is clear that enmity reigned between the Alans and the Kipchaks, or rather, the Gazakhs living in their northern neighbours, that is, in Gazakhiya, In response to David IV's offer to move to Georgia, the population, represented in the source as Kipchaks, asked him to create conditions for the safe passage

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 535.

¹¹ Вадим Дамье, Кипчаки, https://www.krugosvet.ru/enc/istoriya/KIPCHAKI.html [доступ: 13.09.2022].

¹² Картлис цховреба, Тбилиси 2008, р. 189.

¹³ Ibidem, p. 189.

of hostile Ovians (Alans, who are called Ossetians in the source – J.M.), who were in a state of hostility. David IV was in great need of military assistance from the people called Kipchaks in the source, but Gazakhs, a branch of the Kipchaks, went to the recipient lands and "took money from both sides – from Oats and Kipchaks and easily reconciled both peoples"¹⁴.

The etymological meaning of the name of the Gazakh tribe is also of great interest. Researcher K. Mammadov claims that this name came from the phrase "Gordman" in Pahlavi, which means "house of wolves" 15. But this name is also based on opinions indicating that the Kipchak-Gazakh tribe used a special order of battle during the wars. It is known that the basis of the armed forces of this tribe was cavalry, armed with bows, swords, spears and other light weapons. In their wars against their enemies, they avoided open battles and preferred the tactics of surrounding them with a quick and sudden attack and cutting off communication with reserve forces 16. Such a battle order was called kossak/kəsmək. In our opinion, it is more reasonable to think that the Gazakh tribe, which gained a reputation for wariness, took its name from the kossak/kəsmək tactics used during the battle. By the way, let us note that Uzun Hasan, who headed the Aghgoyunlu state of Azerbaijan in the XV century, also widely used this battle tactic in the wars against his enemies 17.

The subsequent history of the territory inhabited by the Gazakh tribe was closely connected with Azerbaijan statehood. At different times, this territory was part of the Atabays, Hulakus, Garagoyunlu, Aggoyunlu, Safavid and Afshar states of Azerbaijan. The name of the Gazakh tribe and its leaders is mentioned more often in connection with Azerbaijan's military and political events starting from the Safavid era. This tribe played an important role in the social and political life of the Safavid state, like the Shamli, Rumlu, Ustajli, Zulgadar, Gajar, Baharli and other Gizilbash tribes. It is clear from the information in the source "Tazkirat al-muluk" compiled at the beginning of the XVIII century that the territory ruled by the Gazakh or Gazakhli tribe had the status of a district under the name of Akhistabad within the Karabakh Beylerbey of the Safavid state¹⁸.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 190.

K. Məmmədov, Qazax-Borçalı bölgəsinin tarixinə dair, "Qazax-Borçalı bölgəsinin xalçaçıları", Bakı 2014, pp. 20–25.

¹⁶ Обозрение российских владений за Кавказом, ч. II, Санкт-Петербург 1836.

¹⁷ И. Шопен, Исторический памятник Армянской области в эпоху присоединения к Российской империи, Санкт Петербург 1852, p. 535.

¹⁸ Tadhkirat al-muluk. A manual of Safavid Administration, London 1943, pp. 107–113.

Information about the administrative structure and some aspects of the political life of Akhistabad district can be found in detailed notebooks compiled by Turkish officials during the Ottoman occupations of the late XVI and early XVIII centuries. From this information, it is clear that at the end of the XVI century, the Akhistabad district, called Sanjag by the Ottomans, was divided into 5 districts named Kuzey, Güney, Akhistabad, Nagorno Ince and Ince¹⁹. Interestingly, in the "Detailed Book of Tbilisi Province" compiled in 1728, that territorial unit is not called Akhistabad, but Gazakh Sanjak. Sanjak included 4 districts – Inja, Juvar, Akhistabad and Türk districts. A total of 230 settlements and 1484 taxpayers were registered in Sanjak²⁰. If we consider that every taxpayer is the head of a family and that an average of 5 people live in each family, it can be determined that in 1728, more than 6,000 people lived in the Gazakh sanjak.

The analysis of the available materials shows that the Gazakh saniak, created during the Ottoman occupation, did not cover the entire area of Akhistabad district during the Safavid period. It is known that after the Ottoman army captured Tiflis in 1723, it entered Akhistabad district ruled by Mirali Bey. the head of the Gazakh tribe. Not only did Mirali bey not resist the Ottoman army, but on the contrary, he managed to maintain his power by supplying it with food. After that, the Ottoman army tried to capture Gania by passing through Gazakh territory in the autumn of that year, but failed and was forced to retreat to Tiflis²¹. It seems that during the military operations of 1723, the Ottomans took control of the part of Akhistabad district starting from the border of Georgia along the Kura River to the place where the Agstafa River flows into it. After the defeat of Ganja, they created the Gazakh sanjak, which covered that area, and added it to the Tbilisi province. It can be assumed that the Ottomans captured the remaining part of Akhistabad district, especially the settlements located along the upper reaches of the Aghstafa river, during the military operations of 1725 and included them in the Esrik and Garagaya districts. This opinion is also confirmed by including the names of many settlements (Goyerchin, Polad, Chaikend, Uzuntala) located along the upper course of the Agstafa River in the "Detailed notebook of the Ganja-Karabagh Province" compiled in 1727²².

¹⁹ V. Piriyev, Azərbaycanın tarixi coğrafiyası, Bakı 2002, p. 76.

Tiflis əyalətinin müfəssəl dəftəri. Borçalı və Qazax. 1728-ci il. Ön söz, tərcümə və şərhlərin müəllifi akademik Şahin Mustafayev, Bakı 2022, pp. 7–9.

²¹ Т.Т. Мустафазаде, Азербайджан и русско-турецкие отношения в первой трети XVIII в., Баку 1993, р. 73.

²² Gəncə-Qarabağ əyalətinin müfəssəl dəftəri, Ön söz, tərcümə, qeyd və şərhlərin müəllifi Hüsaməddin Məmmədov, Bakı 2000, pp. 260–266.

After the successful wars led by Nadir Khan Afshar, the Gazakh region, like all Azerbaijani lands under Ottoman occupation, was liberated and again joined the composition of the Karabakh Beylerbey, ruled by the Ziyadoglus. However, this situation did not last long. At the Mugan congress held in 1736, Ziyadoğlu's protest against the election of Nadir as king resulted in the exclusion of Gazakh, Shamshaddil and Borchali from the Karabakh principality. Mirza Adigozal Bey wrote that to weaken the Ziyadoglus, who refused to recognise him as a ruler, Nadir Shah "subjected the Gazakh and Borchali provinces to the Georgian emirs and the ruling of the high-rise governor together with their khans"²³.

Starting from the second half of the XVIII century, Gazakh district became a sultanate, and its judges began to bear the title of sultan. At the end of the century, the Kartli-Kakheti tsar Irakli II united Gazakh and Shamshaddil into a single sutan to facilitate the administration of the newly conquered territories. However, the people of the sultanate did not want to live under the rule of the Georgian tsars, and they left their places of residence en masse and moved to the territory of the Ganja and Karabakh khanates. According to the information provided by the Russian historian N.F. Dubrovin, at the end of the XVIII century, 1,500 families left the Gazakh Sultanate, and 3,200 families left the Shamshaddil Sultanate²⁴. These families, who moved to a new place, created new settlements with the names of their previous villages in their settled areas. It can be assumed that Yegerchi Gazakhs, Red Gazakhs, Gazakh Elchilar, Gazakhli, Javanshir and Garayagin settlements registered in Yelizavetpol (Ganja) district at the beginning of the XX century, it was built by the population who migrated from the Gazakh sultanate at the end of the XVIII century²⁵. In some cases, the displaced population of villages located near each other in the Gazakh sultanate settled in the neighbourhood of each other in the new place. An example is the villages Gazakhli, Kasaman, Poylu, and Salahli, which are part of the Eldar village community of Yelizavetpol district²⁶.

At the end of the XVIII century, under the influence of military and politi-

²³ Mirzə Adıgözəl bəy, *Qarabağnamə*, "*Qarabağnamələ*r", I kitab, Bakı 1989, p. 30.

²⁴ Н.Ф. Дубровин, История войны и владычества русских на Кавказе, т. II, Санкт-Петербург 1871, p. 222.

²⁵ Экономическое состояние крестьянского населения Елисаветпольской губернии по сведениям Мировых Посредников за 1908 год, "Памятная книга Елисаветпольской губернии на 1910 год", Под ред, И.П. Бабенко, отд. IV, Тифлис 1910, р. 186.

²⁶ Приложение к памятной книге Елисаветпольской губернии на 1914 год, "Таблица об экономическом состоянии городского и крестьянского населения, по сведениям, относящимся к 1912 году, собранным Начальниками полиций и Мировыми Посредниками Елисаветпольской губернии" / Под ред, И.П. Бабенко, Тифлис 1910–1914, р. 46.

cal events in the region, separate communities of the Gazakh tribe migrated to the Iravan Khanate and the Ottoman lands. It is clear from the information given in the source compiled in the 30s of the XIX century that two villages of Karapapags, one of the largest communities of the Gazakh tribe, moved from Borchali and Shamshaddil to the Akhalsikh Pasha at the end of the XVIII century at the invitation of the Turkish government. In the source, one of these villages is called "Tarakama", and the other "Amir-aslan". Hər iki oba hərbi xidmət müqabilində bütün vergilərdən azad edilmişdilər²⁷. This information also shows that the villages of the Gazakh tribe lived not only in the Gazakh sultanate, but also in the neighbouring sultanates of Borchali and Shamshaddil. There is also information about the existence of separate communities of the tribe, including Karapags, in the Iravan province at the beginning of the XIX century²⁸.

In 1801, the Gazakh sultanate joined the Russian Empire with Eastern Georgia. After that, the administrative status and subordination of the region was changed several times. In 1812, the sultanate became distant, and the region's sultanate status was abolished in 1819. It is clear from the camera map drawn up by Russian officials in 1831 that the Gazakh district, consisting of 69 villages, covered an area of 3200 square versts. 17,632 male persons were registered in the distance²⁹.

I. Chopin gives interesting information about the names of 14 communities of the Gazakh tribe living in remote areas and the number of people living in each community. These communities were as follows: 1. Karapapag, 2. Beyuk Chobangara, 3. Sarashli, 4. Demirchili, 5. Karimbeyli, 6. Gafarli, 7. Sheikhs, 8. Karabagli, 9. Jafarli, 10. Alisharurlu, 11. Gödekli, 12. Jamilli, 13. Chakhirli, 14. Kerkibaşli³⁰. In total, 8445 people lived in 1451 registered families in the 14 communities of the Gazakh tribe. In fact, in the 30s of the XIX century, about 1/4 of the population lived in the Gazakh district.

Among the communities belonging to the Gazakh tribe, the Karapapags were the largest. More than half of the population living in all the mentioned communities (4619 people) belonged to this community. Garapapags were also distinguished by their ancient existence in the Gazakh territory. The Turkish historian F.Kırzıoğlu states that the Barsils and Khazars who settled in the Gazakh-Borchali region in the III-IV centuries were known by the name

²⁷ Обозрение российских владений за Кавказом, ч. IV, Санкт-Петербург 1836, pp. 213–214.

²⁸ Ibidem, pp. 270-271.

²⁹ Обозрение российских владений за Кавказом, ч. II, Санкт-Петербург 1836, р. 223.

³⁰ И. Шопен, Исторический памятник Армянской области в эпоху присоединения к Российской империи, Санкт Петербург 1852, р. 535.

"Garapapaq"³¹. Based on this information of the Turkish historian, the Garapapags can be considered one of the first branches of the Gazakh tribe to settle in the territory of Azerbaijan. Some researchers identify the Karapapags with the Karakalpags who live on the shores of the Aral Sea, speak the same language and lead a similar lifestyle³².

The next change in the status and administrative subordination of the Gazakh province occurred during the administrative reform carried out by the tsarist government in 1840. According to this reform, Gazakh and Shamshaddil districts were turned into precincts and joined Yelizavetpol district, which was created on the site of Yelizavetpol district. A separate Gazakh district was established during the next reform of the tsar's government in 1868. According to the data of 1897, 112074 people lived in the district with an area of 5908 km² ³³.

It is possible to find more accurate and detailed information about the population living in the Gazakh region, the national composition, and the number and administrative division of the existing settlements in the region, in the sources compiled by Russian officials in 1908 and 1912. In 1908, according to our calculations based on statistical data, 135 villages registered in the district were divided into 3 village departments and 42 village societies, and the total population was 122,961 people³⁴. 69,711 people (56.69%) of this population were Azerbaijani Turks, 52,241 people (42.49%) were Armenians, 861 people (0.7%) were Russians, and 148 people (0.12%) were Greeks. Comparison of these data with the data of another source compiled in 1912 allows creating a more complete picture of the national and numerical composition of the population living in the city. So, during the last 4 years, the district's population increased by 7443 people and reached 130 404 people from 122,961 people. 63,895 of them (49%) were Azerbaijani Turks, 61,026 were Armenians (46.8%), 5,052 (3.8%) were Russians, and 531 (0.4%) were Germans³⁵. When compar-

³¹ F. Kırzıoğlu, Yukarı-Kür ve Çoruk boylarında Kıpçaklar, Ankara 1992, p. 43.

³² И. Шопен, Исторический памятник Армянской области в эпоху присоединения к Российской империи, Санкт Петербург 1852, р. 536.

³³ V. Piriyev, Azərbaycanın tarixi coğrafiyası, Bakı 2002, pp. 118-119; Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской империи 1897 г., т. LXIII, Елисаветпольская губерния. Издание центрального статистического комитета МВД России, 1904, р. III.

³⁴ Экономическое состояние крестьянского населения Елисаветпольской губернии по сведениям Мировых Посредников за 1908 год, "Памятная книга Елисаветпольской губернии на 1910 год," Под ред, И.П. Бабенко, отд. IV, Тифлис 1910, pp. 142–168.

³⁵ Приложение к памятной книге Елисаветпольской губернии на 1914 год. "Таблица об экономическом состоянии городского и крестьянского населения, по сведениям, относящимся к 1912 году, собранным Начальниками полиций и Мировыми Посредниками Елисаветпольской губернии" / Под ред. И.П.Бабенко, Тифлис 1910–1914, pp. 98–116.

ing these data with the data of 1908, it is clear that the number of Azerbaijani Turks, the region's main population, decreased by 5,816 people, while the number of Armenians increased by 8,785 people, and the number of Russians by 1,660 people. There is no doubt that this change in the ethnic composition of the population living in the district was the result of the colonisation and resettlement policy implemented by the tsarist government.

Although the territory of the Gazakh district, which existed until 1929, remained relatively stable during the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, it underwent severe fragmentation during the Soviet regime, which was distinguished by its pro-Armenian policy. 45.5% of the lands belonging to the Ghazali were given to Armenia, and 5 districts (Carvansaray, Barana, Chambarak, Shamsheddin, Dilijan) were organised in these lands. Gazakh, Agstafa, Tovuz and Gadabey regions were created in the remaining part of the district, which is part of Azerbaijan.

In 1868, the Gazakh region, occupied by Russia at the beginning of the XIX century, was given the status of emergency. Although Azerbaijani Turks make up most of the population living in the district, due to the resettlement policy implemented by the tsarist government, the specific weight of Armenians began to increase rapidly. As a result, in 1912, 49% of the population living in the region were Azerbaijanis, and 46.8% were Armenians. After establishing Soviet power in Armenia in 1920, 45.5% of the Gazakh land was taken from Azerbaijan and given to this country.

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On the History of the Population and Territorial Issues of the Gazakh Region of Azerbaijan

Summary

The Gazakh region, located in the basin of Agstafa and Kura rivers in the northwest of Azerbaijan, was inhabited by the Gazakh tribe, which was part of the Hun tribal union from the first centuries of our era. The greater influx of the Gazakh tribe, which gave its name to the north-western region of Azerbaijan, took place in the XI–XII centuries at the invitation of the Georgian tsars who tried to free themselves from Seljuk dependence. During this period, the Gazakh tribe, which was part of the large Kipchak tribal union, lived in a part of the Kuban steppes. That area was called 'Gazakhia' after the name of the Gazakh tribe. Tens of thousands of Gazakhs who came to the South Caucasus at the invitation of the Georgian tsars settled in Georgia and converted to Christianity, while the other part began to live in the present-

day Gazakh and Borchali regions. The Gazakhs living in the latter areas have preserved their national identity by mixing with their compatriots since the early Middle Ages. The Gazakh region, a part of the Safavid province with the status of a county, came under the influence of the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom in the second half of the XVIII century. During this period, a large part of the Gazakh tribe, who did not want to live under the rule of the Georgian tsars, moved to Ganja, Karabakh, Iravan khanates and the eastern provinces of Turkey.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, Gazakh, region, tribe, population, Hun, Kipchak, san-jak, county

К вопросу об истории населения и территории газахского региона Азербайджана

Резюме

Газахский регион, расположенный на северо-западе Азербайджана в бассейне рек Агстафа и Кура, был заселен с первых веков нашей эры казахским племенем, входившим в гуннское племенное объединение. Более крупный приток в регион казахского племени, давшего свое название Северо-Западному региону Азербайджана, произошел в XI-XII веках по приглашению грузинских царей, стремившихся освободиться от сельджукской зависимости. В этот период казахское племя, входившее в состав большого Кыпчакского племенного союза, жило в части кубанских степей. Эта территория называлась "Казахия" по имени казахского племени. Из десятков тысяч казахов, прибывших на Южный Кавказ по приглашению грузинских царей, часть поселилась в Грузии и приняла христианство, а другая часть стала жить в нынешних Газахском и Борчалинском регионах. Казахи, поселившиеся на последних территориях, еще со времен раннего средневековья сохраняли свою национальную самобытность, смешиваясь со своими соотечественниками, проживавшими здесь. Газахский регион, с XVI века находившийся в составе государства Сефевидов в статусе уезда, во второй половине XVIII века попал под влияние Картли-Кахетинского царства. В этот период значительная часть казахского племени, не желавшего жить под властью грузинских царей, переселилась в Гянджинское, Карабахское, Иреванское ханства и восточные провинции Турции.

Ключевые слова: Азербайджан, Газах, регион, племя, население, кыпчаки, гунны, санджаки, уезд