

Kумыкs - Muhajiran in Turkey

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A muhajirun, which is a resettlement of a major part of the Caucasians to the Ottoman Empire, had begun in Dagestan and in the whole Caucasian region after the Caucasian War in the sixties of the XIX century. There are diverse viewpoints on the muhajirun of highlanders of the Northern Caucasus in historical science. Some scientists believe that the main reason of the resettlement was the policy of the Russian authorities, and the others conversely denote the influence of the Ottoman Ports on the Caucasian deals and religious fanaticism of Dagestanis.¹

After the Adygs, Nogais and Chechens, several tens of thousands of Dagestanis resettled to the Sultan's Turkey, which traditionally represented the top of the Islamic world to highlanders.² It can be said that muhajirism was caused by a number of political, socio-economic and religious factors.

Historical literature includes a variety of numerical data, which is related to resettlement. The resettlement of Muslim Caucasian highlanders to Turkey began in 1858 and continued until the early 1920s. The most extensive resettlement adopted in 1864-1865.³ In general, resettlement in Turkey hadn't any organized pattern in Dagestan, which complicates statistical records of settlers. One Turkish historian of Circassian origin used the analysis of the Ottoman archives to identify that for the period from 1858 to 1907 about 20 thousand people of Dagestanis came in the Ottoman Empire, in addition to other Caucasians.⁴

The migrants included diverse ethnic groups. From all the people of Dagestan many of settlers were Kумыкs, Avars and Dargins. The first immigrants were

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1 Kidirniyazov, D.S., *The Interaction Between the Nations of the North Caucasus and Dagestan in XVIII – XIX Centaury: Political, Trade-economical ans Etho-cultural Aspects*, Makhachkala, 2016.

2 Abdullaeva, M.I., *The Dagestan Immigration to Ottoman Empire in the XIX- XX Centuary: Reasons and Consequences*, The thesis abstract. Makhachkala, 2000, p. 193

3 Aboltin, W.A., "The Ethnic Composition of Turkey", *New East. M.*, № 1 (7), (1925), p. 21.

4 Habichoglu, B., *Kafrafiyadan Anadoluya Goeler*. Nart Yayincilik, Istanbul 1993, p. 192.

Kumyks, who arrived from Boragan-yurt (a modern Kumyk village Braguny in the Gudermes district of the Chechen Republic) to the province of Tokat in 1861. Over the next three years the following groups arrived. They settled in different areas of Turkey, generally in separate villages.

Like all the nationals of Dagestan and the Northern Caucasus, Kumyks mainly replenished the rural population of Turkey. Those Kumyks, who were able to buy a property or had any kind of education and profession that would allow to get any work at state centre or religious schools, could settle in towns. Many Kumyk families lived in the cities of Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Yalova. So in 1862 those Kumyks, who lived in the village Yavukoy, came to Istanbul and settled there. The circumstance that captured our attention is a record on the gates of a mosque in Istanbul. Among the myriad of names there is a record that runs “Endyrey va Yahsay ustalar” (Masters from Endyrey and Yahsay). It is possible that the Yavukoves are natives of these villages. This is evidenced by preserved in the Turkish tradition of Endyreys and Yahsays to build huge two-storey houses with wide verandas.⁵

In rural areas they mainly lived in 11 villages in 4 provinces: Bursa, Sivas, Tokat, Channakale, up to a total of 700 farms.⁶ Many settlements were ethnically mixed. There are only two fully Kumyk villages now, one in the Bursa province, Koshu-bagaz village and in province of Sivas Yavukoy village. In the province of Canakkale, in the area of Biga in 6 villages live up to 200 Kumyk families together with the Turks. In the regional center located about 100 Kumyk farms. Residents of Kushoturagy, who moved here in 1870, came from the ancient Dagestani village Endyrey. When they arrived in Turkey, they were welcomed in Akkoy, the others in Yavukoy, and the rest formed a new village Kushoturagy.⁷

Kumyks that reside in the village Uchgesen come from the village of Borchart in one part, and in another of Endyrey and Yahsay. All of these towns at one time belonged to the Temir-Khan-Shura. After 100 years uchgozenes merged with the villages of Ortakoy, Asarjik, Karaevly and resettled in area of the Tokata, and a new settlement was called Shenyurt. Kumyks of Yavukoy also came from villages that once were related to the Temir-Khan-Shura. The exact names of these villages are not established. Yavukoy is an amazing village, both in geographical location

5 Halipaeva, I.A. *Mythological Kymyk Prose*. Makhachkala, 1994, p. 191.

6 Musaeva, M.K., Magomeddadaev A.M., Kurbanov, M.Y., *The Dagestan Diaspora in Turkey*. Makhachkala 1999, p. 65.

7 Musaeva, Magomeddadaev, Kurbanov, *ibid.* p. 65, 197.

and in preservation of the national color Kumyk by its inhabitants. There are two rivers on both sides of Yavukoy, river Alchay and Artsuv. Yavukoyers chose this place due to the fact that it was very reminiscent of their native village surrounding in Dagestan nature. As well as there, it is possible to plant corn and to go fishing. They remained faithful to their former occupations, traditions, and customs for quite a long time.⁸ But the modern processes of urbanization influences. As a result of urbanization and displacement of the majority of the local population from their places of compact residence to large cities, the processes of assimilation of the Kumyk population has become tangible. Kumyk language dissolved in the environment of the Turkish language, which is close to it. Some of non-Turkic people of Dagestan more complete preservation got the Avar, Lezghin languages, and Dargwa, Lak are less preserved, and even less preserved the language of the non-literate people of Dagestan.⁹

Despite the fact that the Kumyk language was being influenced by the Turkish language for a very long period and had changed, yet it retained more words, phrases, expressions. Modern speaking Kumyk Diaspora reminds the literary language of the Kumyks of the XIX century. In addition, Kumyk population kept everything historically valuable things for centuries, all the epics, folk songs, dances, idioms and Proverbs.

Although the self-consciousness of the Kumyk Diaspora is no less expressed than the rest of the Dagestan people,¹⁰ they were less fortunate in preserving their native language. It should be noted that in areas of dispersed accommodation of Kumyks, in particular localities of Tenderly and Baglarbashi (Tokat vilayat), Esadiye (Vilayat Yalova), Jaggerr (Vilayat Mush) native language was not preserved, so Kumyk Diaspora in Turkey does not feel particular differences between native and Turkish languages. The problems of dispersed settlement, limited opportunities for reproduction in the generations of ethno-cultural appearance, the official policy, according to which was said “Turks live in Turkey”, all this has led to the fact that the processes of naturalization and assimilation of North Caucasians in general, and Dagestanis in particular, have become irreversible.¹¹

8 Halipaeva, *ibid*, p. 193.

9 Halipaeva, I.A., Magomedadaev, A.M. “Muhajirism of the Turkic Nations of the North Caucasus and the Modern Interpretation of National and Religious Traditions”, <https://turkology.tk/library/393>

10 Magomedhanov, M.M. “The Dagestan Diaspora in Turkey”, *Bulletin of the LAE*, Makhachkala. 2013. №2. p. 135.

11 *ibid*, p. 134

Women in many villages began to wear dressing gowns with long sleeves “Uch tech entari” over of the shirt, like all Turkish women. Nowadays, women in rural areas everywhere wear headscarves or kerchiefs, low down on the forehead and pin (tie) it at the chin. In daily life, a kerchief is worn by folding the corners crosswise and tucking one of the corners on the opposite side. It should be noted that the new clothes were first vaccinated in wealthy families. The assimilation processes were most actively carried out in this environment. Nowadays, women’s clothing in rural areas, despite various innovations which are popular in the circles of youth and middle-aged people, in general mass is a kind of character that can be called Turkish women’s suit.¹²

The food system of Dagestanis, including Kumyks living in Turkey, as well as other elements of material culture, has many features. From milk soups known in Dagestan, Kumyks prepare soup with the addition of finely chopped pumpkin, soup with lentils. As at home, for the local Dagestanis is typical to prefer consumption of lamb meat, and in Sivas (in the village of Fyndyzhak) and goat.¹³

The custom of hospitality is also observed by Kumyks in Turkey. One can feel here this influence even in the organization of space in the house. The house is divided into female and male parts. As in Dagestan, the Kunaks maintained friendly relationships that resulted from constant contacts initially on a business or other basis, and then became a habit and a need to communicate. Kunaks helped each other and mutually participated in all family events. The arrival of the guest in the house was quite a remarkable event, and in honor of the arrival of Kunak the host arranged a celebration with music, dance and rich food. Kumyks in Turkey tried to adhere to those rules and norms of life in public life which were acquired at tens generations of ancestors.¹⁴

There are famous diplomats, scientists, generals and doctors among Kumyks-Muhajirs and their descendants, who moved forward in the country. For example, Yashar Aydemir from Yavukoy was a famous scholar, Professor at University of California, USA; Javir Aydemir – scientist-oilman, Professor, who lived and worked in Canada for a long time; Shinasi Aydemir was a Professor at Transantiago University; Vahid Aydemir, was a Professor at Izmir University; Jamaledin Ak-Jurek from Konya, was a Professor at Seljuk University and many others.¹⁵

12 Musaeva, Magomeddadaev, Kurbanov, *ibid*, p. 98-101.

13 *ibid*, p. 107, 119-120.

14 *ibid*, p. 183.

15 Halipaeva, *ibid*, p. 190-191.

As a result of migration processes abroad were many famous religious figures, such as Jamaluddin Haji, a prominent scientist Arabist, scholar, mathematician and astronomer, scholar of the Arabic language and theology, who was born in Dagestan, in Kумыk village of Karabudakhkent.¹⁶

An independent study in 1994-1996 there were more than 20 villages in Turkey, which were compactly inhabited by the Kумыk (with other people, namely) Koşuboğazi in Bursa province, Mustafakemalpaşa (assimilated, but keep it in the family history); Yeniköy Orhangazi in the province; in the province Sivas - Yıldızeli (Yavuzköy), Yağhdere, Yıldızeli (Yağköy), the Süleymaniye, Hafik; in the province of Tokat - Doğançaylı, Yavu, Çermik, Artova, Çirdağ, Gültepe, Erbaa, Yeniderbent, Zile, Turhal (a cultural center); Çanakkale province - Akköprü, Biga (there is a cultural center), Aziziye, Doğanlı, Geyikkırı, Kalafat, Biga (Bozna). Many Kумыk districts and villages, such as the town of Samsun, have disappeared as a result of the resettlement and assimilation of the inhabitants.¹⁷

Dagestanis in the Diaspora, including Kумыk, have undergone a significant ethnic and cultural transformation. The life of Dagestanis in the “new Homeland”, which in fact is an alien environment, forced them to integrate into the local society, and it was unthinkable without integration into the socio-economic system of Turkish society, without the perception and development of the Turkish way of life, Turkish language and culture.

Thus, more than 150 years of alienation of the Northern Caucasus, including the Dagestan Diaspora from its historical Homeland, the lack of sufficient conditions for cultural self-organization, determined the prospects of ethno-cultural self-preservation of Kумыk in their new Homeland - Turkey, deprived them of any alternative, except for integration in Turkish society.¹⁸

The desire not to lose their customs and traditions, their languages and ethnic identity contributed to the strengthening of ties within the Dagestan Diaspora.

Today representatives of the North Caucasian Diaspora in the Republic of Turkey have societies “Dagestan”, “Caucasian cultural society” and others. The main purpose of these society organizations is to preserve the language, literature and

16 Musaeva, Magomeddadaev, Kurbanov, *ibid*, p. 197.

17 Nartajans Dağstan Kökenlilerin Türkiye'de Yaşadıkları Şehirler ve Yerleşim Yerleri (1994-1996) 03-01-2007/ <http://www.nartajans.net/site/haberler>

18 Magomedhanov, *ibid*, p. 135.

national traditions.¹⁹ There are people in the Kumyk Diaspora in Turkey who still remember folk songs, idioms and proverbs. Even 20-30 years ago during Kumyk tois (weddings) in Turkey was normal to arrange a singing competition between the girls and the guys for the performance of “sarins” of “Suydam tayak” type. Among the Kumyks was widely popular Devet, the folk singer of Kumyk sarins and ancient yysr, whose ancestors came from the village of Kostek in Dagestan. He performed his songs to the accompaniment of Kumyk harmonica.²⁰

Kumyks of Dagestan and the Northern Caucasus still try to maintain regular contacts with their relatives and friends, who have been outside the historical homeland for diverse reasons.

19 Kidirniyazov, “The Nogais Immigration of the North Caucasus to Turkey in XIX Century”, *Immigration of the North Caucasus Nations to Ottoman Empire Makhachkala*, Makhachkala 2000. p. 112.

20 Ирек, “Кумуклар-Кардаш едебиятлары”. №15. Erzurum 1987, p.6

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