

THE ISSUE OF TAYK'S IDENTITY IN THE GEORGIAN STUDIES

The history of XIV ashkharh (province) of Great Armenia – Tayk, is one of the most unstudied in Armenian historiography. From the ancient times, Tayk was part of the Armenian statehood and was inhabited by Armenians. This is certified in the Armenian and Greek sources. The first mention of Tayk refers to the 12th century BC, when the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I, attacked state form Nairi, part of which was the country *Dayaeni*. In the records of Van Kingdom, Tayk is mentioned as *Diauhi*. In 401 BC, Greek historian Xenophon, passing through Armenia, mentioned the *Taokhs*. In the 2nd century BC, King of Great Armenia Artashes I (189–160 BC) united to his kingdom the territory in the north and north-west, including the part of Tayk, which in the 3rd century was conquered by Georgia. In the 4th AD century Tayk was passed to Armenian princely family Mamikonians. The Mamikonians often became the leaders of the struggle against a foreign enemy, and Tayk became the stronghold of the Armenian armed forces. In 591 by the order of the Byzantine Emperor Maurice, a new administrative unit was formed – “Deepest Armenia” from the territories of Tayk and Gugark.

At the end of the 8th century, after the anti-Arab uprising, Mamikonians were searching for a political asylum and had to leave Tayk where Bagratids emerged. In the 7th -8th centuries under the yoke of many Arab residents, a considerable part of the population of Tayk, including the clergy estate, preferred to move to the neighboring Byzantium. Soon in Tayk appeared the Georgian clergies, which joined a small amount of the Georgian population. Armenian indigenous population was quite tolerant towards Orthodoxy, and soon the Armenians themselves preferred to receive Orthodoxy, which however did not suppose the georgianisation of Armenians.

In the 10th century the region became part of Tayk principality (kurapalacy), which dates back to the 9th century in the nearby Kgharchk. Tayk gets great importance for Byzantium and South Caucasian countries as for its position as well as due to its considerable local authority which was at its zenith under David Kuropalates (960 - 1001). After the death of David Kuropalates Tayk pass to Byzantium. In the 2nd half of the 11th century Tayk was destroyed by Seljuk troops, and at the beginning of the 12th century it came under the influence of the Georgian kingdom. After the Mongol invasions of the first half of 13th century, Tayk became a part of the principality of Samtskhe in 1266, and in the 16th century it was conquered by the Ottoman Turks.

Tayk, as a part of the Ottoman Empire, was divided between the following eyalets (province): Erzurum (Tortum and Mamrvan sanjaks), Akhaltsikhe (Kiskim, Parhar, Tavuskyar, Olti and Panak sanjaks) and Kars (Gyole sanjak). After the dissolution of the Akhaltsikhe and Kars eyalets, Tayk entirely joined the Erzurum eyalet (1834).

Ottoman yoke had a serious influence on the demographic picture of Tayk. More than 60% of 94000 population of Tayk were Armenians, for whom the wars

between Turkey and Persia became a real horror. In 1604 the population of Gyole, Panak, Panaskert, Olti and Mamrvan was migrated by the Persians. On the other hand, the Ottoman government began to inhabit Turkish-speaking and Iranian-speaking population, in order to strengthen dominion over the nations. As a result of this policy in Gyole and Panak sanjaks appeared Kurdish population, and Tortum and Kiskim were settled by the *Lazes*.

In 1643 the Ottoman government tightened fiscal policy in relation to non-Muslim population. The witness of those events – Armenian author Jacob from Karin reports, that the Apostolic Armenians kept their faith, but Georgians and Orthodox Armenians of Tayk preferred to adopt Islam¹. Another Islamizing was described by Gh. Injijean, according to him “former Armenian inhabitants of Tortum were tired of violence and turned up in religion of Muslims”, even though the villages were still “inhabited the part by Armenians and the part by Muslims”². Threatened by the Turkish Government a significant part of Muslim Armenians had secretly kept Christianity by attending churches, performing various Christian rituals. Such people are known as “Keskes”-es (half Armenian Christians, half-Turkish Muslims).

In Tayk, along with the process of Islamizing of the population at the end of the 18th century, appeared Catholic missionaries who were able to spread Catholicism among the Armenian population of Kiskim and Tortum sanjaks..

During the Russian-Turkish war of 1828-1829, Russian troops seized Tayk, suppressing the resistance of local armed forces leading by Kuchuk Agha and Osman Bey. According to September 2, 1829 Adrianapol agreement, the territories of Tayk as well as the territories of Western Armenia, which had been taken by the Russian troops, were given back to the Ottoman Empire. In order to avoid the massacre of the Armenian population by the Turkish government and Muslim fanatics, there were organized resettlements of Armenians in Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki, which was passed to Russia according to the treaty of Adrianapol. The relocation, which began on 10th May 1830, had the same dire consequences for the Armenians of Tayk as an Islamizing of 17th – 18th centuries. As a result of the relocation, the region had lost a great part of the Armenian population, the consequence of which was acceleration of Turkization process of “keskes” population.

From the 19th century Georgian scientists have made great efforts to prove that “Tayk is originally Georgian territory”, considering that Georgian is not only history, but also the masterpieces of medieval Armenian architecture. Concerning this issue Georgia is receiving assistance by Turkey. Since 2003 Turkish researchers of Pamukale and Sivas universities studied about 300 religious, historical and cultural monuments (monasteries, chapels and churches) and registered them as Georgian ones. It is noteworthy that most of these monuments are in Tayk. The Georgian and Turkish governments reached an

¹ Յակովբ Կարնեցի, Տեղագիր Վերին Հայոց, Վաղարշապատ, 1903, էջ 18:

² Բնձիճեան Դ., Աշխարհագրութիւն չորից մասանց աշխարհի, Մաս Ա, հ. Ա, Ասիա, Վենետիկ, 1806, էջ 93-94:

agreement about the restoration of monuments in Ishkhan and Oshkvank involving the Georgian side. Also they agreed to receive the participation of Georgia in the restoration of other monuments of Tayk (the churches of Khakhu, Banak etc.). Instead, the Georgian government agreed to provide space for the construction of 4 mosques in Georgia.

The Turkish architect company "Anfora mimarlik restorasion" made the church restoration project, which was presented to the public on 5-8 September 2012 in Batumi, at the 2nd International Conference "Tao-Klarjeti" organized by the Georgian National Center of Manuscripts. The tender of the works on the Restoration project won one of the organizations of Erzurum ("Erzurum Rölöve ve Anıtlar Müdürlüğü"). In the spring of 2013 the restoration works of Ishkhan church began. The Deputy Minister of Culture of Georgia M. Mizandari went to Turkey and obtained the agreement with Turkish side that the Georgian specialists participate in the works. When the specialists cleaned the floor of Ishkhan church, there appeared mosaics and frescoes, which were brought out of the church with the leftovers of rocks and soil. It should be noted as well that restoration works have been carried out with the partial change of the building's architectural style and aesthetic deviations. In fact, if in the Medieval the church was built by using local natural resources, in restoration that principle was broken, because of it, the restored version become pretty rough. In 2015 the second phase of restoration works started. In 2014 the measurement works of Oshkvank church started and April 7 was declared as "Oshkvank Revival Day".

This scenario is a real threat for the Tayk monuments. The Armenian Apostolic Church's powers are limited in this problem, as it applies only to the Orthodox Churches, Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin is unable too. Therefore, this issue must be taken to political area and resolve the issue at the state level. On the other hand, Georgian and Turkish researchers reduce or completely eliminate all real numbers of the Armenian population Tayk, which becomes a huge problem and turns into the new form of denial. Moreover, they try to introduce pro-Armenian evidences in the Turkish "packing". Particularly, Georgian scientist Professor E. Takaishvili distorts old Armenian place names into Turkish version (e.g. Oshkvank in Turkish version Eoshvank (Ösvank). Takayshvili says that this place name has Turkish roots. However, it's very difficult to meet in whole Tayk Georgian or Turkish place names. In contrast, we find everywhere in the province irrefutable evidences of Armenian past. We come across about the remarkable testimonies of Armenian past of the region in Georgian Central State Archive of History (Fund No. 1438 (Esadze Brothers Private fund), 116th ratification. So, Kiamkhis village opens the scene of "Georgian" fortress Soghomon-Kala, 1 km away from Avdos village are Jermuk hot mineral water sources, and finally, 15 km away from Olor village we find the ruins of the "Georgian Vank monastery" (See: GCSAH, f. 1438 , l.1, r. 116, s. 5-7).

Although, according to the conviction of Georgian scientists, Tayk with all the ancient state formations on its territory (Dayaeni, Diaukhi, land of Taokhs) since the ancient times, was inhabited by Kartvelian tribes. In the 3rd century BC Tayk was the part of the "Pan-Georgian" kingdom of king Parnavaz. In the 2nd century BC Armenian

king Artashes, taking advantage of the weakness of the Georgian state, connects Tayk to Armenia. On that period connected the emergence of Armenian toponyms in Tayk³. Unfortunately, the Georgian authors ignore the report of Strabo, that after the invasions of Artashes all spoke in same language in united Armenia⁴, naturally they did not speak the Georgian language, but Armenian.

The period of Tayk's history of 4th – 8th centuries also is presented in the context of Georgian history. Here it is noteworthy the approach that Tayk owners - Mamikonians, are presented as a princely family with Georgian origins, who had a dominant position in the royal court. On this occasion, a famous Georgian scientist Simon Janashia says: "The feudal dynasty of Mamikonians of Tao, which appeared in the first ranks of Armenian nobility, originally belonged to the Georgian tribe of "Chans", especially as it acknowledges and justifies the major representative of modern Armenian history professor N. Adontz"⁵. In reality Adontz has never claimed that "Chans" were the part of the Georgian ethnos. Janashia was trying to present reality as if Adontz considered Mamikonians the Georgian origins.

According to Georgian scientists, during and after the rule of Arshakids kingdom in Armenia, Tayk was populated by ethnic Georgians: "The truth is that the majority of the population of Tao-Klarjeti region initially by language and culture was Georgian, while the Armenians, if only they were somewhere they were resettlers. ...Those resettlers came to South Tao as migrants searching safe shelter. That's happened in hard times for Armenians, when they were under the rule of Persians and Arabs (5th – 7th centuries). The assimilation of those Armenians into the Georgians was aided by the fact that the migrants were few compared to indigenous people. It's impossible to find a more reasonable explanation to this indisputable fact"⁶.

The debates over the origin of Tayk are unacceptable in the Georgian studies. Prof. S. Janashia explains the identity of Tayk monuments in the following form, which is incorrect from scientific point of view: "Until now were *considered* that Tao-Klarjeti architecture is an organic part of the Georgian architecture". Every logical argument on the Armenian past of Tayk makes a protest by the Georgian scientists.

Why the Wonders of Tayk (the churches Oshvank, Khakhu, Chordvank, Ishkhan, Banak, etc) which were built by Armenians in their own settlements, were privatized by the Georgians, and today they are presented as masterpieces of medieval Georgian culture. The Georgian side has a number of arguments - Georgian inscriptions on the walls of churches, the coins of David Kuropalates, many Georgian manuscripts written in the Tayk monasteries, as well as Tayk dioceses of the Georgian Patriarchate. All these arguments are persuasive in itself, but when we carry out a comprehensive and

³ Silogava V., Shengelia K., *Tao-Klarjeti*. - Tbilisi: 2006, s. 19.

⁴ See: *Մտքորոն, Օտար արքունիները Հայաստանի և հայերի մասին*, Եր., 1940, էջ 54-57.

⁵ Джанашиа С., *Об одном примере искажения исторической правды*, Тбилиси, 1947, с. 19.

⁶ Джанашиа С., *указ. соч.*, с. 18-19.

objective analysis of available sources of historical facts, then all of us get the answers on our questions.

The greatest discoveries on the past of Tayk have been made by academician Nicholas Marr. Marr said that the term "Georgian" in the period of our interest had religious significance, which was characterizing the Orthodox population of Tayk⁷. According to him, the process of Denationalization of Orthodox Armenians is the reason that Georgia gained Tayk and Kgharjk⁸. According to Marr, in the 10th century the Georgian clergy of Taik was surrounded by fellow but although the alien Armenian population. They called country Georgian substantiating the fact that the church liturgies were held in Georgian⁹. Renowned academician claimed that Georgian was the only ecclesiastical language, and did not have wide distribution among the population¹⁰. The rest all cases, they use the Armenian language. For example, one of the Orthodox Armenian from Taik Gregory Bakurean that in 1083 founded Bulgarian monastery of Petritsioni, authored the Code of the monastery signed his name in Armenian and noticed in Greek language that his signature made in Armenian¹¹. According to Article 182 of the Code of Petritsion, the Armenians in Orthodox churches must make a liturgy in Georgian¹², and proceeding from it the inscriptions on the walls of Armenian Orthodox churches were made in Georgian.

Thus, it becomes clear that the language of the inscriptions in Tayk monuments does not suppose the monuments stylistic and national identity. Moreover, that in some cases these records were made with serious errors in spelling. It should be noted that the inscriptions in the main churches of Orthodox Armenians are impeccable, because in those monasteries were writing centers, where were written a lot of Georgian manuscripts. It refers to the churches of rural areas whose inscriptions are introduced in the works of Georgian scientists. Thus, Ekek (Aygek) village's church's Georgian and Greek inscriptions Prof. E. Takaishvili described as illiterate. Professor adds that the author of inscriptions did not know well neither the Georgian language nor the Greek. The inscription of Ekek church, according to Taghaishvili, should made in 1006-1007 period, ie the period when the "the Kartvelian kingdom of Tao-Klarjeti" was in a period of cultural prosperity. Naturally it is difficult to believe that the "Georgian national majority of Tao with Georgian clergy" such ignorance of illiteracy would show on temple walls. This statement, of course, would be opposed, arguing that the mistakes were not

⁷ Marr Н., *Ани. Книжная история города и раскопки на месте городища. Л.; М., 1934, с. 131, Степаненко В., Чортванели, Торники и Тарониты в Византии (к вопросу о существовании т.н. Тайкской ветви Торникянов)// Античная Древность и Средние века, 1999, N 30, с. 35.*

⁸ See: Marr Н., *Аркаун, монгольское название христиан связи с вопросом об армянах халкедонитов, ВВ, XII, СПб., 1906, с. 6.*

⁹ See: Marr Н., *Георгий Мерчуле, Житие Григория Хандзтийского, СПб., 1911, с. 123.*

¹⁰ See: Marr Н., *Георгий Мерчуле, Житие Григория Хандзтийского, с. XVI.*

¹¹ See: Marr Н., *Аркаун ...*, с. 20.

¹² See: *Մարտիրոսի Տ., Հայ դասիական ճարտարապետության ակունքներով, Եր., 2003, էջ 244-245.*

made by a Georgian performer. But let's not forget that according to dominant viewpoint of the Georgian Studies, the population and Clergy in Taik were Georgians, so it's hard to imagine how they could tolerate incorrectly Georgian records. All mentioned things have only one explanation that neither the clergy nor the population of Ekek knew the Georgian, because they were not Georgians, but they were Orthodox Armenians.

We have a lot of information about the Armenian- speaking Orthodox population of Taik. The first of them dates back to 10th century. Outstanding scientist Father Nerses Akinian discovered a document about the history of "Copper City" by which proved that David Kuropalates, his courtiers and population were Armenian- speaking ethnic Armenians, and thus, Taik's principality was Armenian¹³. We also have many manuscripts from Tayk, which are kept in the National Center of Manuscripts of Armenia - Matenadaran¹⁴. The most interesting information about Taik's Orthodox Armenians reported the author of the 17th century - Hakob of Karin, who said: " And there are great Georgian monasteries in the villages Khakhu, Oshk and Ishkhan, and not like them, except the only Saint Sophia in Constantinople... And half the inhabitants of the land were Armenians, and half of them were Georgians by religion, but they spoke Armenian ..."¹⁵.

And finally, the important information about thousands of Armenians in Tayk shows us Turkish tax lists of the XVI century. In this tax lists are Tortum, Mamrvan, Banak, Kiskim provinces, as well as other regions of Tayk, taxable settlements by families, which also include the names of the heads of the families, represented by the amount of tax levied. The tax lists are written at the end of the XVI century and, therefore, according to the Georgian researchers, they must show the prevalence of Georgian ethnos in the population of Tayk. Georgian scientists Sergi Jikia and Nodar Shengelia, who are the translators of tax lists, tried to make all Armenian "Hovhanneses" as Georgian "Ivane" and "Grigors" as "Grigol", but however, it is not the matter, because we see that the majority of Tayk settlements (about 2/3) were Armenians and the people who had popular names among Armenians, and very few people were with Georgian names. The most obvious evidence of Orthodox Armenians is the man from village Zatgerak – "Father Hakob (Jacob) the Georgian"¹⁶.

Thus, Tayk from the ancient times was the part of Armenian world. In the Middle Ages, mostly receiving Orthodoxy, the Armenians of Tayk do not merge into the Georgian ethnos. On the contrary, the Georgian minority of Tayk has taken Armenian in the everyday life and gave Georgian as the only language in church liturgies. The monuments which were built by Orthodox Armenians for themselves couldn't be stated

¹³ *სკიხუას ს., ოქნის ქადაგის ყაითმოქონი, ჯანსუ სამოხეა, წიგნები, 1958, N 1-4, էვ 30-48:*

¹⁴ *See: Matenadaran, Manuscripts N 3223, s 326b, N 8624, s 96b, N 8064, s20b, 22a.*

¹⁵ *ზაკიძე წარსეგი, სედაგირი წერილი ჯაიგი, წაყარჯაყაი, 1903, էვ 18:*

¹⁶ *გორჯისტანის ვილაიეთის დიდი დავთარი, წ. 2, თურქული ტექსტი გამოსცა, თარგმანი, გამოკლევა და კომენტარიები დაურთო სერგი ჯიქიამ, თბილისი, საქართველოს აკადემიის გამომცემლობა, 1941, გვ. 345.*

as a heritage of the Georgian nation, and the study of the history of Tayk in the context of the history of Georgia is scientifically wrong and unacceptable.

ՏԱՅՔԻ ՊԱՏԿԱՆԵԼՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՀԱՐՅՈՒ ՎՐԱՑԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄԵԶ

— *Ամփոփում* —

— *Ս. Ակոպով* —

Հայ-վրացական սահմանամերձ շրջանների ազգային պատկանելության հարցը արդի պատմագիտության լիարժեքորեն չուսաբանված խնդիրներից է: Մակայն այդ հիմնախնդիրն ուսումնասիրելը և գիտական գնահատական տալն անհրաժեշտություն է դառնում, երբ մեծանուն գիտնականների կողմից հերքվում կամ կասկածի տակ է դրվում մի էթնոսի անհերքելի ներկայությունն իր հայրենիքում սկսած անհիշելի ժամանակներից: Այդպիսի խնդրահարույց հիմնահարցերի թվին է դասվում պատմական Մեծ Հայքի մաս կազմող Տայք աշխարհի պատկանելության հարցը: Հոդվածում ներկայացված է Տայքի համառոտ պատմությունը, ինչպես նաև վրացագիտության ականավոր ներկայացուցիչներ Է. Թադախիշվիլու, Ս. Ջանաշիայի և այլոց մոտեցումներն առնվազն վիճահարույց այս թեմայի շուրջ, քննության է առնված նրանց կողմնակալ եզրահանգումները և պատմությունը կեղծելու փորձերը: Հայկական, թուրքական և վրացական սկզբնաղբյուրների համադրմամբ և առանձին ուսումնասիրողների եզրակացությունների հիման վրա փորձ է արված լույս սփռելու առաջին հայացքից բարդ ու խճճված թվացող այս հիմնահարցի վրա:

Տեղեկություններ հեղինակի մասին

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