

MIGRATION PROCESSES IN ASIA MINOR IN THE 1250's–1260's

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The author considers the migration processes in Asia Minor in the 1250's – 1260's which were caused by the Mongol conquest of the Sultanate of Rum at the end of the 1240's – the beginning of the 1250's. Seljuk tribes and results of their activity in Asia Minor are revealed in the article.

The second half of the 13th century was marked by the changing political situation in Asia Minor. After defeating the Seljuks in the Battle of Kose-Dag (June 26, 1243), capturing Sivas and Kayseri the Sultanate of Rum turned into a vassal state of the Mongols [1, p. 259]. Mongol conquest caused a new wave of migrants from the west into Asia Minor. It was mainly nomadic tribes not only of Turk, but also of Iranian origin [2, p. 15]. In the 1250's – 1260's nomadic tribes massed at the borders of Empire of Nicaea, the Empire of Trebizond and the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia: the Agacheri in the Marash – Malatya area; the Chepni in the Sinop – Samsun area; the Udj Turkmens in the area of Koycegiz – Denizli – Ushak; the Karamans in the Ermenek – Mut – Silifike – Anamur area; the Germiyans in Kutahya area [3, p. 231]. The Kayi tribe settled in the Eskishehir – Sogut – Domanich – Konya area [4, p. 73]. It must be mentioned, that the Karamans and the Germiyans descended from the Avshar tribe. It was Oguz tribe driven out by the Mongols from the Iranian provinces of Fars and Kirman [5, p. 275]. About 200 thousand nomadic Turkmens were located at the western borders of the Sultanate near the Turkmen mountain (Jabal Turkman) near Denizli (Tunguzlu, Laodicea) and the fortress of Chonas [6, p. 14]. Such a fast pace of the expansion of nomadic tribes to the west was caused by many factors, such as military and economic weakness of the Nicaea Empire and the Sultanate of Rum, and the presence of a significant number of Turks among the Byzantine population of Asia Minor [7, p. 127].

The aim of the research is to study the activity of the Seljuk nomadic tribes in Asia Minor in the 1250's – 1260's and its influence on the political situation in the region in the subsequent period. The scientific and theoretical basis of the work are the works of Armenian, Byzantine, Seljuk historians, as well as Italian and French travelers. The works of Soviet and foreign researchers specializing in the history of Byzantium and the Sultanate of Rum are also valuable. The study is based on historical-genetic and historical-systemic methods.

After the conquest of fertile land in the south-west of Asia Minor, nomadic tribes continued to be engaged in their usual occupation – nomadic herding. As a result, fertile lands in the valleys of Meander (Buyuk Menderes), Kaystros (Kucuk Menderes) and Germ (Gediz) rivers began to fall into a state of neglect [8, p. 160]. Nomads had aggressive attitude towards settled population, devastating both Seljuk and Byzantine soils. In 1254 Agacheri headed by Islam-bek, damaged a lot of settlements at the foot of Taurus and soon after took down and burned Krakk [9, p. 131]. They also robbed caravans and committed constant raids into the territory of the Sultanate of Rum, Syria and Armenia [10, p. 270–271]. In 1260 nomads turned to sultan Izz ad-Din Key-Kavus II's (1245 – 1256, 1257–1261) side. That's why ilhan (supreme ruler) Hulagu (1260–1265) was forced to assign army of 20 thousand soldiers headed by noyon (ilhan's governor) Baydju [5, p. 263]. The nomads were defeated. One part of them fled to Syria, another part to the west and south-west areas of Asia Minor [10, p. 270 – 271].

Despite the great danger, the first contacts between the European states and nomadic tribes of the eastern part of Asia Minor were established in that period. The pioneers in trading with the nomads was the Republic of Venice [6, p. 77]. In the 1260's the trade activity was concentrated in Makri (the Gulf of Fethiye). From there timber, wheat and carpets were exported to Alexandria [61, p. 83]. Numerous Venetian merchants visited Makri in period from 1271 to 1278, but there is information only about 4 of them, who were robbed by the pirates [1, p. 4]. However, the trade was so profitable, that the Venetians did not care about the threat of pirates of the Aegean Sea, the most dangerous of which were Ioanno Delvacchio and Criviciotus (the governor of Rhodes) [12, p. 443].

More intense were the relations between nomads and the Byzantine Empire. Nomadic tribes started to commit raids into Byzantine border areas from the 1260's [13, p. 111]. Soon these raids became more organized and had ideological principles of holy war of Muslims against infidels – gazavat-jihad. Udj-beys (the head of udj, exempt from paying taxes in exchange for serving as border guards of the Seljuk Sultanate) often identified themselves as ghazi (warriors of faith) and it was the reason for the increase of their status in the Muslim community [14, p. 495]. However, we should not overrate the religious component of those campaigns. First of

all, their main objectives were robbery and the seizure of new territories. So, every ordinary soldier or participant of the raid could be considered as a ghazi [15, p. 36].

At the beginning of the reign of the emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259 – 1282) eastern Byzantine boundary line was from the river Ind (Dalaman Cayi) through Milas to Antioch and Suvley (Keciborlu). Then the boundary went west of Kottiteya (Kutahya) through Klavdicopol (Bolu) to the Amastris (Kizilirmak) river [6, p. 19]. During the period of the reign of Laskaris (1204 – 1261) Byzantine created effective security belt, consisted of several fortresses of Germ (Gediz) and Kaystros (Kucuk Menderes). The most important role was assigned to the fortress of Tralles (Aydin) [16, p. 200]. Besides, the significant fortress of Tripoli (Tirebolu) on Meander (Buyuk Menderes) river was strengthened [17, p. 91]. Crucial role in the defense of the eastern borders was played by akritai – a special estate in the Byzantine Empire, military border settlers (usually from a peasant environment), exempted from paying taxes for the period of duty [18, p. 12].

Before the restoration of the Byzantine Empire (1261), the Byzantines successfully coped with the onslaught of nomads. Michael VIII made a campaign against the bey of Denizli Mehmed al-Udji in the autumn of 1260. Nomads were expelled from the Byzantine territory in the upstream of Meander (Buyuk Menderes). Soon after byzantine troops crossed the river and seized part of their land [19, p. 830]. However, after that campaign the policy of Michael VIII towards nomads changed: he gave them an opportunity to become the citizens to prevent the Mongol conquest [16, p. 123].

After relocation of the capital from Nicaea to Constantinople in 1261, Byzantine was involved into the Balkan conflict, which required the movement of military contingents to the west and fiscal tightening (the abolition of tax privileges of the akritai) [16, p. 9]. Thus, the eastern border of the empire was threatened [20, p. 594]. Subsequently, the navy was dismantled by the emperor's order in 1284, which led not only to the military weakening of Byzantine, but also to increasing of piracy in the region [21, p. 58]. Nomads were repelled from the valleys of the Meander (Buyuk Menderes) and Kaystros (Kucuk Menderes) rivers and from the fortresses of Tralles (Aydin) and Magedon (Magidiy), but it made only short-term military gains [16, p. 201]. Soon nomads were able to move freely across borders and captured those regions again [16, p. 432].

Thus, migration processes that took place in Asia Minor in the 1250's – 1260's severely influenced the political situation on the peninsula. The Seljuck and the Iranian nomadic tribes gradually conquered eastern part of Asia Minor and became a serious threat for the Byzantine Empire. The most powerful beyliks of the 2nd half of the 13th century were the beyliks of Karaman and Germiyan, which were established at the end of the 1250's – the beginning of the 1260's. They became the centers of anti-mongol struggle. Also their warlords committed military campaigns to the west, seizing the Byzantine lands in the subsequent period.

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