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Georgian Muhajirs Villages in Turkey: Kabakdaghi

This paper is a historical-ethnographic analysis of the Georgian Muhajir settlements on the example of the village of Kabakdaghi in the Fatsa district of the Ordu province of Turkey. The article discusses the process of migration that began as a result of the Russo-Ottoman wars of the 19th century and the attempts of the population exiled from Kobuleti to preserve their identity, language and traditions in the new environment. The presented ethnographic material demonstrates the importance of collective memory, place selection, religious practices, and spatial arrangements in maintaining group belonging. The study highlights Kabakdagh as a cultural memory and one of the main symbols of the Muhajir's descendants in the present.

Keywords: Muhajiroba, Chveneburi, Ordu, Fatsa, Ethnography, Cultural Memory, Belonging, Traditions.

The Russo-Ottoman Wars of the 19th century fundamentally changed the political and social structure of the South Caucasus. One of the most significant outcomes of these wars was the process of migration, which left the region with a profound demographic and cultural footprint. The term "muhajir" (Arabic: muhajir, exile) refers to a group of people who, for various political, military, and religious reasons, were forced to leave their land and settle in exile in the Ottoman Empire.

The first wave of migration from the Caucasus began after the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828–1829, followed by the mass exodus of Abkhazians in 1867, and the largest migration was carried out after the war of 1877–1878. After the end of this war, by the decision of the Armistice of San Stefano and the Congress of Berlin, the regions of Artaan, Kars and Batumi were transferred to the Russian Empire, which gave the territories in the south-west of Georgia - including Kobuleti, Adjara and Shavsheti It became the basis for administrative arrangement (Megrelidze 1974, 92).

According to the resolution of the Congress, the local population was given a three-year deadline to leave the region and be exiled to Ottoman territory, or to remain under Russian control. It was during this period that the mass migration of Georgians to Western Turkey began, most of whom were Muslim Georgians from the regions of Adjara and Kobuleti.

The process of migration was facilitated by both local clergy, which called on the population to exile for religious reasons, and the administrative authorities of Russia, which tried to change the local demographic composition by withdrawing Muslims from the region and replacing them with a "trustworthy" population. As a result, by the 1870s and 1880s, a significant part of southwestern Georgia was almost empty of population.

Georgians exiled to different regions of Turkey, especially on the east coast of the Sea of Marmara and the southern Black Sea, tried to preserve the living and cultural models established in their homeland in a new environment. They founded new villages, where the Georgian language, traditions, and socio-religious practices were preserved for some time. A notable example of this dynamic is the Fatsa district of Ordu province, where the descendants of the exiled from Kobuleti still live and continue to transmit the Georgian cultural heritage alive.



Appendix 1. The beach of the city of Fatsa.

There are 73 villages and Mahaley (districts) in the Fatsa district of Ordu province. According to ethnographic materials, there are 20 villages where Georgians live, in some places with an absolute majority, and in others with a minority. Georgians live in the villages of Kabakdagh, Karatashi, Dwayer, Cherkezdagh, Mazanaki, Dududuk,

Takhtabash, Hoilu, Sudere, Salihli, Esquird, Jabran, Konakbashi, in Hamluk, Bozdagh, Hatibdagh, Yusufli, Sajilar, Ilever, and Dod.

As is known, the Muhajirs themselves settled on the plateau in the area of present-day Kabakdağ and later spread to various villages. It was a vast pristine forested area. The environmental conditions here were much better than that of the seaside, where swamps and insects abounded. In addition, there were no Greek and Armenian settlements in the area. As the narrators say, the ancestors, after choosing a place, first of all, took into account the place of the mosque and the cemetery and established the rule that no one would approach this place chosen for living. This rule has been in force for 143 years. The first group to reach the plateau consisted of 80 families. Later, some went up to the place where the village of present-day Hasanjik is located.

From the ethnographic materials, it is clear that they chose an area that resembled "homeland". It was an open, free, pristine territory, close to the sea. Ahmet Bezhanidze, who has been in Kobuleti since the opening of the border and has seen the environment there, tells us: "If we compare Patsa with Kobuleti, then let's say so, if you pass through Konakbashi you can see the river and the sea of Deinkhin Iliji. If you go up to the village of Gvara in Kobuleti and look below, you will see the river and the sea of Kintri. The village of Kvirike is located below, on the bank of the river, it looks like the settlement of Zavo. This is the similarity of Fatsa and Kobuleti." 78-year-old Erdogan Meskhidze, who has never been to Georgia and remembers only his father's story, told us: "Those who came from there are places where they stay. It's my home, it's my home, it's not close to my house. They're far away. Now that we've been so close, we've been so far away. I want to go out, chase my village, I think it will be like this."



Appendix 2. Kabakdaghi village.

The life of Georgian migrants was the hardest, especially in the first years, when they had to create a new place of residence - a "house" out of nothing. The territories allocated by the relevant commission to the local population were mostly completely undeveloped and covered with timber.

Naturally, upon arrival in a new environment, in complete poverty, no one has built magnificent houses. According to the legend, for the first four years, the inhabitants lived in small wooden huts (huts) in the plateau, on the site of today's mosque. According to informants, there were many artisans in the queue of migrants who began to use these properties to create a new environment. This process was led by Recep Agha Makaroglu, who built the first houses in the village with a group of craftsmen of several people. This was followed by the construction of new homes by Nadi (the method of collective assistance). They began to produce tiles and attract other necessary materials as well. In this way, the immigrants who arrived there jointly built the first cemetery of the village, a mosque and a madrasah.



Appendix 3. The village of Kabakdaghi, a 140-year-old house belonging to the Bezhnidzes.



Appendix 4. Nalia - the village of Kabakdaghi.

The development of the village initially began with the arrangement of the village. It seems that the Muhajirs left a fairly large area for the cemetery. Most of the narrators in private conversations clearly emphasize the existence of such a Georgian rule as the arrangement of a large cemetery and collective burial. One of the narrators noted that, along with many other features, it is the Georgian practice that distinguishes them from the Turks. This practice was of great importance. On the way to adapt to the new environment, the migrants have developed a mechanism of need for commonality and density, which expresses an attempt to preserve their identity. Apparently, they were reluctant to build two cemeteries, or two mosques, so as not to cause division of the population.

Although most of the graves behind the mosque are no longer visible today, locals believe that the area is entirely the graves of their ancestors, whose tombstones have sadly been lost. Therefore, no new graves are being built in the area today. In general, the cemetery was a sacred place for the Muhajirs. According to ethnographic materials, divine light descended into the cemetery. This belief was conditioned by the high spirituality of the Muhajirs and their devotion to Islam, the manifestation of which is the process of Muhajir itself. They believed that leaving one's homeland on religious grounds amounted to martyrdom. Such a notion is still deeply embedded in the memory of the descendants of the Muhajirs.



Appendix 5. Cemetery of the village of Kabakdagi.

The decision to build the first mosque in Kabakdagh was made on October 13, 1883. Initially, the Board of Trustees was established. The council collected 1,850 kurus for the construction of the building. According to the foundations of the building, construction began in 1887 and its expenses were collected entirely from the Georgian population. Later, as the population grew, a new stone mosque was needed, which was built in the 1960s and operated until 2010. Today, Kabakdagh is decorated with a new, large mosque built in 2010.

The First Greeks also built a small madrasah near the cemetery and mosque for religious lessons. The mullahs from Kobuleti, who were well acquainted with Islam, had been teaching the religion to the next generation for years. Later, in 1932, a small school was also built in which the Turkish language was taught.

The etymology of the village of Kabakdaghi is Turkish, and it must be related to the pumpkin (in the dialect of the Muhajir - Khapi). According to the legend, the migrants took pumpkin seeds from their homeland, which then spread throughout the village - "They brought me khapi seeds from there and sowed them. Khapi was leaning on a tree, and if people had come out of there, it would have been Khapi's village." If we believe Hussein arranged, the origin of the name Kabakdagh must be related to this.

In unofficial records, the name of this place is the village of Sambadiri in the Chamash district. "Sama - Trinity" means dancing and playing in the Adjarian and Tao-Klarju dialects. It can also be associated with the Christian meaning of the Trinity, "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." It is also worth noting that a large number of Muhajirs came from the village of Samebi in Kobuleti at that time, although these opinions are unlikely, since the population who came here were from villages other than Tripbi.

According to Ahmed Bezhanidze's version, the name may be related to the old Georgian tradition "Kabakoba". Kabakhi was a playground for military exercises and public entertainment in feudal Georgia. In the middle of the square, a pole was erected, on which a gold or silver bowl was placed instead of a pumpkin. Archers on horseback would take turns scrambling and shooting arrows to drop the trophy. Whoever achieved the goal was considered the winner, and this trophy was awarded. According to Sulkhan-Saba, the kabakhi was not called the entire square, but the central part of it, where the pole was erected. In the same arena, they played ball, and Marula was held. Zucchini was performed during weddings, secular or religious celebrations. The author supports this opinion with a map in the Ataturk Palace in Trabzon, where "Khabakh - Kabakh" is indicated where there is a modern Kabakdaghi today (Becioğlu 2022, 69). This opinion is also less likely, since "Kabakoba" does not occur in the ethnographic reality of Adjara-Guria nor in the Muhajirs. Therefore, it should be the most convincing first version.

Kabakdaghi from sea level 400 per meter, From the city 8 It is located about a mile away and is completely inhabited by Georgians. „Venue (Appearance) Rule“, And then there was the fact that the Democrats were going to have to go through the motions.¹ 140 Operating during the year, Therefore, Today, there are only a handful of

¹ No one could settle here except for the Georgians.

Turkish families mixed in the village. Accordingly, Kabakdaghi is the oldest and most traditional Georgian village in Patsa.

Georgian Rural Settlement, The history of development and toponymics of belonging to a group-One marker. A good example of this is the still existing narrative of the endogamy of the Georgian village and the use of indigenous toponyms.

Ahmed Bezhanidze in his author's book „Kabakdaghi village“ Clearly mentions, A few years ago, the Cubs were in the midst of a three-game losing streak. „It's called "Plateau". The same was confirmed by Hussein Arrangement during an informal conversation, His ancestor was in the ranks of the first Muhajirs and settled in the plateau from the very beginning. „One of them says something like this:, We call Kabakdagh Plateau, And then, after proving himself completely unable to adjust to the calm? The top is. The lower part is called Zavo (A place that has been disabled from Aga). People will tell us, Triple Crown? - Plateau, We will answer, And then, after proving himself completely unable to adjust to the calm, collected lifestyle of the Sensei... he dares to ask for the key, Our village is Zegani“. For others, the village is a highland., Kabakdağ is a name that was later used and influenced by the Turkish language. „None of the villages in Turkey and our region are called Plateau. Those words, which are starting to „São“-São, always describe high places. For example: Plateau (High Vake), Top, Heaven (Sky), Zei (Sun - The sun), Zenit (Dome of the Sky) And then there's the other side of the coin."Becioğlu 2022, 69).

The Kabakdagh is a settlement that was annexed later, „Zavo“. According to the narrators, the population does not have plots of land. A few of the smaller areas have been renovated, and these areas have been renovated.- Bags 11. The family bought it, and the settlement grew.

In total, 39 Georgian surnames live in Kabakdagh: Diasamidze, Makharoglu (Makharadze), Kamatamadze, Inaishvili, Mikeladze, Eliadze, Bajelidze, Meskhidze, Bezhanidze, Khakhutaishvili, Okropiridze, Kakaladze, Menafire, Makharashvili, Gogitidze, Khinikadze, Golomanidze, Arrangement, Machakheli, Chakveli, Tiladze, Bauzhadze, Kenchishvili (Kenchadze), Romanadze, Gorgadze, Tsenteradze. As for the surnames that end in Turkish Oghlut, or with a child, they are originally from Batumi, they are as follows: Hiralioglu, Sosioglu, Lazoglu, Hocioglu, Halvashoglu, Tamazoglu, Koroglu, Kadioglu, Kakuloglu, Afazoğlu, Kahvetsioglu.



Appendix 6. The Georgian restaurant "Saffrana", owned by the Bezhanidzes, is located in Kabakdari and is very popular, which is visited by many tourists and not only.

Today, Kabakdaghi, like other villages, is mostly empty in winter. The village is active in summer, July, August, and September, while it is the period of harvesting hazelnuts. In other cases, the houses are mostly closed and closed on weekends. According to Hussein Mozar, the school in the village is no longer functioning because the villages are slowly empty and there is little children's education. There is a particular shortage of young people who move to big cities.

Despite such a sad trend, Kabakdaghi still remains the main hub for the descendants of Georgian Muhajirs, which is one of the main symbols of common origin and belonging to the group. The study of the villages of the descendants of Georgian immigrants living in Turkey continues and aims to capture and study the elements of traditional and modern life and culture of Georgian villages, which are very important for migration, identity and diaspora studies.

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