

Sources of Seljuk History in Medieval Western Historiography

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Abstract — *This article is devoted to the study of works written by medieval Byzantine, Greek, Armenian and Assyrian historians about the great Seljuk state.*

Keywords—Great Seljuk state, Byzantine, Greek, Armenian and Assyrian sources, Matiane Kartlisa, Vardana Bardzbertsi and Kirakosa Gandzaketsi. Mkhitar Ayrivank's chronography.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Great Seljuk state, which ruled from 1037-1194, is the third largest empire in the history of Muslim statehood after the Umayyads and the Abbasids. After the establishment of this vast Turkish-Muslim empire, a new era began in which the influence of the Arab-Persian dynasties in various countries in the east of the Islamic world began to wane. For many centuries since then, political leadership in the East has been largely in the hands of Turkish dynasties.

2. MAIN PART

The Seljuk state, like other Turkish khanates, was formed at a crucial stage in Islamic history. In a difficult situation before the Crusaders began marching towards the Middle East, the Turks, who had recently converted to Islam, managed to seize the initiative. The only force that could withstand the invasion of European countries was in fact the Turks. Despite their victories in the first battles, the Crusaders were unable to resolve the conflict with the Muslim world in their favor, and the service of the Seljuks and their governors was largely due to this.

The Seljuks won a great victory in the battles with the Byzantine Empire. They not only crushed the Romans, who had been at war with Muslim states for centuries, but also completely shattered their power. As a result, due to the conquests of the Seljuks in the XI-XII centuries, reports about the Turkic peoples are also found in Armenian, Georgian and Syrian sources. Important reports on the history of the Seljuk state, which contain a number of details that have not reached us, have been compiled in the works of the Syrian scholars Michael (Michael) (1126-1199) and Gregory Abul-Faraj Bar Hebreus (1226-1286). Bar Hebreus leaves a short translation in Arabic in his Assyrian chronicle. The first information about the Oguzs in Byzantine historiography can be found in the works of Constantine Bagryanorod in the X century. Among the works created much later are the works of Nikifor Vrienny, Anna Komnina and Nikita Honiat, created in the XII-XIII centuries.

Among the historical works in the Armenian language, the chronicles of Aristakes Lastivertsi (XI), Matthew Edessky (XII), Mkhitar Ayrivank (XIII) describe the conquest of the Caucasus and Asia Minor by the Seljuks. At the same time, they provide information about the struggles of the Turkmens with the Ghaznavids and the origin of the Seljuks. Many Armenian historians' accounts of the Seljuk tribes are based on the work of the twelfth-century author Ioann Sarkavag. His book "The Beginning of History and the Origin of the Turks" is quoted in the works of the 13th century authors Vardana Bardzbertsi and Kirakosa Gandzaketsi. Mkhitar Ayrivank's chronography also contains a genealogical table of the Seljuk dynasty learned from the work of Sarkavag.

Interesting information about the Seljuk tribes can also be found in Georgian chronicles. Matiane Kartlisa (XI) tells the story of when the Seljuks first appeared in Georgia, the Alpine Lion and the King. Another Georgian source, written in the 12th century, mentions their invasion of the Caucasus.

The fact that Syrian historians living in Eastern Anatolia accepted the Turks as saviors against the Byzantines is also reflected in their works. Patriarch Michael of Malatya (1125-1199), who ranked first among Syrian authors, was very close to the events of this period in the shadow of the friendship and protection of Sword Lion II. He quoted a historically valuable letter to Sword Lion II in his *Vogueanoma*. It is unknown where he got the important messages he gave about ancient times, the source of the Turks, and even the Blue Turks. Chronological errors are sometimes found in the stories narrated about the Seljuks. The work is an important source on the history of the Turkic peoples of Central Asia in the Middle Ages. There is also a special chapter in the play about the countries of the Turks, their occupations, lifestyles and customs. Mikhail of Syria pays special attention to the history of their migration from Central Asia to Central Asia, Iran and the Middle East. The chronicle contains an interesting story about the actions of the Kipchaks and the Seljuks. The anonymity of Little Syria, which lasted until 1164 with its first crusades, is also important to the Seljuks and completes the messages of Michael. Among the Syrian sources, we should mention the historical work of Abul Faraj ibn al-Ibri (Bar Ebray) (1226-1286), a sect and compatriot of Mikhail.

G. Moravchik's work, which is a guide to the Turkic parts of Byzantine sources, is a leading work for those who study the history of the Seljuks. Translations of some of these sources into European languages facilitated the work of historians who did not

speak Greek. Georgian sources contain not only information about the actions of the Seljuks in the Caucasus, but also very vivid images and information for the Turkification of Anatolia and sometimes for the Seljuks of Turkey. Armenian and Syrian authors living in Anatolia were able to provide more accurate information because they lived in the environment of that period. The most important of the Armenian sources is the Vekai-name ("Vekainame") of the famous Urfali Mateo. The author, who gave valuable information about the events from Chagribek's first invasion of Anatolia in 1018 to 1136, has witnessed or heard many of the events of this period from those who witnessed them personally. The more bitterly Mateo describes the first invasion, the more he praises the Turkic-Oguzs for the next period, expressing their justice and compassion. Alternatively, he exposes his hatred of the Romans for their oppression, while his religious and national sentiments are positive. His work has the same significance as the appendix of Keshish Grigore, who lived in Gokson and collected the events of his time, and the events continue until 1162. Mateo's work, which uses the latest Armenian sources, is more abstract and incomprehensible than that of the Syrian authors. While other Armenian sources are general and concise, they provide important notes on Turkish Seljuks and complement other Christian and Muslim sources. Only on the occasion of the first Turkish invasions in Eastern Anatolia before the victory of Malazgird, the work of Aristakes, who witnessed the events in this country, is very important and full of vivid images.

3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study of foreign works and sources, not only Arabic-Persian sources, provides a wide range of information about the Seljuk period. Comparing their manuscript and lithographic variants, comparing research work on sources, compiling them and compiling catalogs on a particular language, analysis is important in comprehensively covering the topic and expressing an objective attitude. In addition, the research work of the scholars who have contributed to the survival of these works to date requires further independent research. In general, the history of the Seljuk period is an integral part of the "History of Uzbekistan".

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