

Armenian Clans

There was no state of 'Great Armenia' in history. There was a Satrapy of Armin, a Marzpanship of Armenia, and an Emirate of al-Arminiyya - provinces in the composition of various states.

There were historical territorial-geographical names: Egypt, Syria, Persia, Cappadocia, Lesser Armenia, Greater Armenia, Media, Persia, Bactria, Parthia, Atropatene, Caucasian Albania, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, etc. Some disappeared, and new ones emerged.

The most spread ending of Armenian surnames is YAN.

According to one version, this is the Indo-European suffix of belonging – IN.

There is a version that the ending 'yan' came from the Persian 'arian' (Aryan).

According to 'Armenian linguists', such surnames come from the 'ancient ending yants' (variants – onts, unts), i.e. belonging to any clan. Over time, the 'ts' in the endings of many Armenian surnames disappeared.

Officially, surnames started being recorded during the first censuses in the 19th century, when the need to register people emerged. Later, passports appeared, where surnames were specified along with the names. Armenian surnames are mainly derived from the name of an authoritative tribal ancestor by adding suffixes expressing belonging. This was mostly the suffix 'eants', then 'ents', 'yants', and 'yan.'

As known, not only Armenians have surnames ending in 'yan.' Yezidi Kurds and Moldavians also have such ones. There are similar Persian and (Iranian) Azerbaijani surnames; they are written not 'yan' but 'ian.'

There are also Jewish surnames. During World War II, many Jews have taken Armenian surnames to escape Nazi persecution.

The Church has formed Armenian people from the fragments of the Parthians. Therefore, many names and endings of surnames came also from the ancient Persian Parthians. Over the centuries, the endings 'i', 'ni', 'uni', 'ian', 'unts', 'yants', etc., have taken the form 'yan.'

Armenian mythology often refers to the Bible. According to Biblical mythology, Hayk was a descendant of Biblical Fogarma. According to tradition, giant Hayk came from Mesopotamia to the Lake Van shores with 300 men and

their families. He drew the borders of his state between the three lakes: Van, Sevan, and Urmia. However, soon the ruler of Babylon, tyrant Bel, invades Hayk's kingdom. A battle takes place in Hayots Dzor (now Guzelsu village, Van region, Turkey), where Hayk kills Bel with an arrow. This way, "Hayk becomes the founder of the Armenian Kingdom."

Haykazuni (Haikids, Haykids, Gaykids)

'The dynasty of the first Armenian kings' - 2492 -325 BC.

'Haykh'/'Hayq' is the self-name of Armenians' country, Armenia.

'Hay' (Armenian) is the self-name of Armenians.

In ancient times, along with the self-name of the country of Armenians, the second eponym was formed – Armenia, derived from the name of a descendant of the first 'Armenian King Hayk', i.e. Aram or Aramanyak.

All these names are not related to present-day Armenians, they are a myth.

Armenian historians also consider the ancient State of Urartu (860-590 BC) Armenian. Urartu was situated in the eastern part of Asia Minor (the present-day eastern part of Turkey, northwestern Iran, Armenia, and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan).

Given the scarcity of archaeological data of the 5th century BC - 5th century AD for the East Anatolian Highlands, studying them is based on linguistic and anthropological data. Russian scholar Diakonov (linguist, expert in ancient writings, the Sumerian language, and the history of the Ancient East, 1915-1999) proved for the first time that the State of Urartu was not Armenian. This theory destroys Armenian history-mythology in total.

Armenian historians also indicate the Yervandid family as their first kings.

The Yervandids (Orontids, Yervanduni, or Yervandakans, 570-200 BC) are a dynasty that ruled from 401 BC as Persian Achaemenid and temporarily, Macedonian satraps of Armenia.

According to Strabo (ancient historian and geographer, 64 BC - 24 AD), this Dynasty descended from the Persian nobleman Hydarnes the Elder.

Everyone has seen the film about 300 Spartans – a story of the brave feat of the 300 best soldiers of Sparta, led by King Leonidas, fighting against the many-thousand-strong Persian army under the command of Xerxes.

During the reign of Xerxes I (Shahinshah of the Achaemenid Empire, 486-465 BC), Hydarnes the Younger (son of Hydarnes the Elder) was one of the commanders of the Second Persian Campaign against Greece in 480 BC. On the first day of the Battle of Thermopylae, Hydarnes led the 'immortals' against the phalanx of Leonidas' Spartans, but an attempt to break through their formation failed. On the second day, local inhabitant Ephialtes betrayed the Spartans and told the Persians about the secret goat path around Thermopylae, which allowed Hydarnes and his 'immortals' to bypass the Spartans and defeat them.

The Artashesid Dynasty (190 BC -12/14 AD) is considered to be his branch, a representative of which the King of Seleucids (312-64 AD) appointed satrap (189-160 BC) of the province of Armenia. The correct form of the Armenian Artashes is the Greek Artaxius or the ancient Persian Artakshara.

Armenians consider Tigranes II from the Artashesid Dynasty (governor of the province of Armenia in 95-55 BC) the 'Great King of Armenia.' At that time, the Romans, the Seleucids, and the Parthians wages continuous wars. The Romans and the Parthians took, respectively, the western and eastern parts of the Seleucid State. Governor Tigranes II rebelled against the King. The province's territory enlarged during that period. The Romans and Parthians punished him for insolence. He spent the last 10 years of his life in the province of Armenia and dealt with merely provincial issues.

The Yervandids and Artashesids had ancient Persian roots.

At the beginning of our era, in the Parthian Kingdom's province of Armenia (250 BC - 227 AD), nahararship became widespread.

In the 3rd-4th centuries, there were relatively few cities in the province of Armenia. Settlements belonged to various nomadic tribes and clans, many of which were of Indo-Parthian, Siro-Aramaic, and Jewish origin.

There were strong patriarchal tribal traditions, semi-independent tribes, economically strong temple estates and privately owned ones – dastakerts with predial slaves, and free landowners living according to the communal life pattern traditions. For a rather long time, the remnants of nomadic tribal traditions were preserved.

Artashat, Tigranakert, and Vagharshapat were the most significant cities. Large cities were directly subordinate to satraps, assigned by shahaps. In the same period, the city of Dvin arose, which later became the center of the Satrapy of Armenia. The governor of the province Khosrov III built a palace for himself on a hill (in Middle Persian, 'dvin' means hill) in the forest not far from Artashat, around which the nobility began to settle. Since the Araks River course

changed, and the outskirts of Artashat swamped, its residents began massively resettling to Dvin.

The distances from Yerevan to Artashat, Vagharshapat (better known as Echmiadzin), and Dvin are, respectively, 30, 21, and 37 km.

Artashat dropped out of history in the 7th century. In 1945, the Azerbaijani Kamarlu village was renamed Artashat, which in 1962 received the status of a city.

Vagharshapat dropped out of history at the end of the 4th century. At the end of 1441, as a result of the growing crisis within the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Catholicosate was transferred to Uchkilis (Echmiadzin) with the permission of Jahan Shah, the ruler of the Karakoyunlu State (1351-1468). Karakoyunlu was the state of the Oghuz Turks, the ancestors of the Azerbaijanis.

Tigranakert is the former center of the province of Armenia, a city whose exact location is still unknown to historians.

It is truer that Tigranakert was founded around 78/75 AD by the Parthian Tigranes II and became the new center of the province of Armenia, replacing Artashat.

Armenian historians claim that “Tigranes built at least 7 more cities named after him.”

Armenian historians made a ridiculous assumption that present-day Diyarbakir (Turkey) is the ancient Tigranakert. Armenians living in Diyarbakir even called this city Dikranagerd, and themselves - Dikranagerds.

Armenian historians made another ridiculous assumption that ancient Tigranakert was located near the city of Aghdam (Azerbaijan). This approach is typical of Armenian historians, who claim that they are the most “ancient inhabitants of Eastern Anatolia and Transcaucasia.”

In fact, the true location of the ancient Tigranakert is still being discussed. But it unlikely is referred to Diyarbakir, which in ancient times was known to the world as Amida. Most likely, Tigranakert was also not far from present-day Yerevan or did not exist at all, i.e., this is another Armenian invention.

In the names of cities, Armenians often use the ending ‘kert,’ which in Persian means ‘build’, ‘create.’ Tigranes was the Parthian governor of the satrapy of Armenia, and this ending was taken from the Parthian Persian language.

Most of the other cities were fortified areas with a nakharar castle in the center and a settlement at its foot. The indigenous urban population of the province was engaged in grain husbandry and horticulture, gardens and crops of the citizens were located around the walls. Along with agriculture, the citizens were also engaged in handicrafts. Craftsmen worked mainly for the domestic market; metal products and fabrics were exported outside the satrapy.

Large cities were the centers of trade. Caravans from the Roman Empire and Persia arrived in Artashat. The province of Armenia was related to Persia, Mesopotamia, other regions of Asia Minor, the Black Sea ports, Kartli and its capital Mtskheta, etc. Markets were arranged under the castle walls. Here the merchants were protected from violence and robbery. The bulk of the population has nothing to do with trade. The village hardly participated in it.

The urban population was ethnically and religiously diverse, foreigners played a significant role in the life of cities. Syrians (Aramaean) and Jews were predominantly merchants and usurers; the Persians were artisans. As elsewhere in the East, foreigners constituted ethnic-religious communities, lived in special quarters, and had the Elders subordinate to the city governor. From the second half of the 4th century, the decline of cities and trade began. Discords between clans for territories, the religious confrontation between Christians and Zoroastrians, and continuous wars between the Byzantines and Sassanids prevented trade relations, and the disunity of individual regions enhanced.

Armenian historians call the rulers of satrapies and marzpan kings. A satrapy or marzpanship is a province. A satrap or marzpan is a governor. In the province, the border region's rulers were called bdeskh, i.e. Governor-General who had an armed detachment. The city governor was called Shahap.

In the early medieval era, tenure was called nakhararship. Nakharar is a Parthian title of nobility.

Today, in the Republic of Armenia, the term 'nakharar' is related to ministers, i.e., in Armenia, a minister is called nakharar, just like a ministry is called nakhararship.

The term 'nakharar' comes from the Persian 'nakharar' - the head of the clan. Large feudal lords were called nakharars; later, large feudal lords were called ishkhans, and medium and small ones - nakharars.

The province of Armenia was divided into large estates, belonged to noble families and ruled by one of their members, whose title was nahapet (in Persian, 'patriarch'), i.e. 'head of the family,' later tanuter ('housemaster'). The entire

extended family worshiped the same ancestors and lived in small, fortified villages.

All the feudal class representatives were considered free people who did not pay taxes but were eligible for military service in favor of the governor as his vassals. The clergy was also related to the free class since the Christian Church was the largest landowner.

The exploited class consisted of the unfree. The rural, and later the urban population was considered unfree. The unfree had to pay taxes and perform various duties in favor of the feudal lord. Roman and Parthian coins were used in trade.

Parthian was the official language of both the Parthian Kingdom and the Satrapy of Armenia. Parthian writing was developed from Aramaic. It also contained many Aramaic words. In colloquial speech, along with Parthian, there were Siro-Aramaic, Greek, Hebrew, and many different dialects of these languages.

Feudal landowners supported the central power. Relations between the governor's power and nakharars were regulated by Gahnamak (during the time of Parthians and Sassanids).

In the Middle Persian language, Gahnamak means 'throne registrar,' which listed all feudal lords in the order of their political weight and influence. The first ten consisted of Nakharar clans, whose representatives hereditarily held all the high posts in the province. They were considered senior nakharars and enjoyed great authority and influence on political affairs.

The remaining nakhararships were considered junior since their representatives held secondary positions and, accordingly, had less weight. Nakharars sat at meetings and feasts according to the seniority recorded in Gahnamak.

In some cases (treason against the State, extinction of the dynasty, etc.), the King could make some changes to Gahnamak.

In the 4th century, several dozen nakharar houses owned a significant part of the province. As a hereditary privilege, nakharars received the right to hold the highest posts. Representatives of the Mamikonian clan - the position of sparapet (commander), Gnuni and Amatuni - azarapet (manager of finances, taxes, economy), Bagratuni - master of ceremonies, Khorkhoruni - malkhaz (head of security). The Spanduni managed the slaughterhouses. Havnuni were falconers. The Dziunakans were watchmen of summer residences.

Representatives of the Parthian royal Arsacid family were governors of the province of Armenia.

With the beginning of the rule of the Arabs (650), marzpanship was abolished, and the province of al-Arminiyya was created, ruled by the Emir. The city of Dvin became the center. Since 701, the province became known as the Emirate of al-Arminiyya. The Armenian clan heads began to be called Ishkhans.

By the 4th century, in the province of Armenia, two Nakharar clans came forward and entered into a confrontation for dominance. These were the Artsruni and Mamikonian clans. The Artsruni sought to dethrone the Arshakuni and return to the pagan religion and supported the Sassanids. The Mamikonian also claimed power, they were related to the Catholicoses and supported Christianity and the Byzantines.

Vramshapuh (marzpan of the province of Armenia in 404-414) understood the difficulty in establishing relations with the aristocracy, therefore, he abandoned absolutist aspirations and sought to establish a government that would consider the nakharars' interests and herewith, should be strong enough. He tried to mend relations between the struggling Nakharar clans.

He also acted as a mediator between them and the Sassanids and established good relations with the Byzantines. But his best decision was to send Mashtots to create an alphabet. This was an important step towards the formation of a new nation. While Vramshapuh could maintain balance, his son Artashes IV was unskilled. The Nakharars disliked him and arranged a rigged trial, humiliating him. Everything came to the point when nakharars stated to the Persian court that they did not need a governor. Isaac Partev supported the governor, although the Church did not like the governor's ruling role. But it was too late: nakharars won, and Artashes was overthrown. In the province of Armenia, the Arsacid dynasty ceased to exist - the last Parthian trace. Since 428, in the province of Armenia, the Sassanid clan representatives were appointed marzpan. The first and second ones were appointed by the Sasanian rulers.

Estimates of this event are different - both among scientists and simply in an educated community. Some consider the baptism of Armenia and Tiridates to be outstanding and the only true, perhaps the best event in the entire history of the country and Armenian civilization. Others see that as a conspiracy of nakharars and the Catholicos, who deceived the brave and intelligent but gullible and simple-hearted governor, which ultimately led to the strategic loss of Armenia's 'independence' and the division of its territory between Persia and Rome.

The first assessment is correct since the formation of a new nation called Armenia (toponym of the area), which did not exist before, began.

The second assessment of this event is absolutely incorrect since Armenia had never been independent before 1918.

The Armenian nation was formed by the Arsacid dynasty and the Mamikonian clan. The loss of control over the province of Armenia meant the loss of the last Parthian support. The Arsacids were governors. Representatives of this dynasty became Catholicoi, who were related to the Mamikonian clan representatives. The Arsacids in the person of the governor and the Catholicos always hated the Sassanids, spread Christianity, and subjugated other nakharars close in language. Then they created a new language and formed a new nation from the fragments of the Parthians.

Seven great Parthian clans:

The House of Aspakhapet from Apartvatitsena (Yazd, Iran).

The House of Dahae from Astabena (Kuchan, Iran).

The House of Karen from Hyrcania (Gorgan, Iran).

The House of Mihran from Komizena (Semnan, Iran).

The House of Parni from Parthena (Partaunis, the ancient city of Nisa, the ruins of which are 18 km from Ashgabat, Turkmenistan).

The House of Sokhay from Margiana (Merv, near the city of Mary, Turkmenistan).

The House of Suren from Sakastan (Sistan, Iran).

The house of Suren

Gregory the Illuminator, the Baptist of the province of Armenia, belonged to the Suren clan. This was his family name. The Suren clan was one of the seven great Parthian houses (Haft Khandan Pahlav) - the noblest and most powerful feudal clans of Parthia.

Suren (Surena) was the name of an ancient commander - spahbed (commander-in-chief) of the Parthian army, who inflicted one of the most terrible in history defeats on the Roman legions at the battle of Carrhae (now the city of Harran, Turkey) in 53 BC. The sworn enemy of the Parthians - commander and consul Markus Licinius Crassus (known for the massacre of Spartacus) was then captured and killed. According to tradition, Surena was

executed by order of King Orodes II, who was uptight about his popularity and saw him as a contender for the throne.

German Ashkenazi (Jews of Central and Eastern Europe) archaeologist and Iranist Ernst Emil Herzfeld (1879-1948) argued that the Indo-Parthian kings from the Gondophares Dynasty were representatives of the House of Suren.

Gondophares I or Gondophernes I was the founder and first King of Indo-Parthians (20-48 AD) in the territory of present-day Afghanistan and Pakistan.

This dynasty, like the name Suren, is not Armenian but Parthian.

Under the Sassanids, representatives of the House of Suren went over to Persians and began to serve them.

Arshakuni

The Arsacids or Arshakids is an ancient dynasty founded by the leader of the Parni Arshak I. They ruled in the Parthian Kingdom, Armenia, Atropatene, Iberia, and Caucasian Albania.

In historiography, the Parthian-Persian Arsacid Dynasty is often referred to as the Pahlavids, from the Parthian 'pahlav' - Parthian. In Armenian historiography, it is called Arshakuni. It ceased to exist in 428.

Arshak I is considered the founder of the ruling dynasty, but he was its ancestor. The first crowned king from this dynasty was his younger brother Tiridates, who took the throne name Arshak II and ruled Parthia. Representatives of this dynasty were in power in Eastern Anatolia, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, partly Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia.

The Parni or Aparni was an ancient East Iranian ethnos probably belonging to the Massagetian (Scythian) group, who were part of the Dahae confederacy. In the period of antiquity, they inhabited the steppes of the Aral Sea and Mangyshlak and the northern slopes of the Kopet-Dag.

Dahae is the common name of the Iranian-speaking confederation of three nomadic tribes of the Sakas (Massagets), who inhabited Central Asia in ancient times.

Massagets is the name used by ancient authors to refer to the Iranian-speaking nomadic people, who inhabited the territory of Scythia. Referring to his contemporaries, Herodotus wrote that according to some of them, the

Massagets were a Scythian tribe. The Scythians are a group of Iranian-speaking nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes.

Arshak I, the founder of the Parthian Dynasty of Arsacids, also originated from Bactria (a historical region in the adjacent territories of present-day Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan, between the Hindu Kush mountain range in the south and the Ferghana Valley in the north). The Persians did not like the Parthians, who were considered nomads of Central Asia.

Mamikonian (4th-8th centuries)

According to Armenian historians Movses Khorenatsi and Sebeos, the Mamikonian clan is of Chinese origin.

According to Movses Khorenatsi, two brothers, Chinese princes Mamik or Mamkon and Konak, rebelled against the Emperor of China and after the defeat, found shelter with the Persian King Ardashir Papakan (180-241), who was the first Shahinshah of Iran (224-241) from the Sassanid Dynasty.

The Mamikonian claimed to be descended from an ancient royal family of the Chen region in Central China. Historical tradition links the Mamikonian clan with China.

Some scholars have expressed an opinion on the Iranian origin of the Mamikonian. In 'The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, the 18th-century British historian Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) suggests that the Mamikonian may have been of Scythian origin. Encyclopedia 'Iranica' notes that the origin of the Mamikonian has not still been discovered.

The 8th-century work 'History of Taron,' also reports the non-Armenian origin of the Mamikonian clan. Armenian historiography recognizes Zenob Glak and Hovhan Mamikonian as the authors of this work. Apparently, these names belong to the same person while Armenians attributed the first part of their 'History' to Zenob Glak (4th century), and the second one - Bishop Hovhan Mamikonian (8th century). This work is a collection of folk tales, compiled based on various sources. The work's key objective is to praise the nakharar Mamikonian clan. The Legend of Gisane and Demeter, immigrants from India, who settled in the province of Armenia but did not forget the 'faith of the fathers,' and, according to the legend, gave rise to the Mamikonian clan, is of particular interest.

In the 3rd century, Chinese historians called Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India the 'Western Land.' In 105-250, there was the Kushan Kingdom. The Kushans (one of the Yuezhi tribes) belonged to the eastern

Iranian Yuezhi people who migrated from northwestern China and settled north of Bactria. Later, the Kushan Kingdom occupied the territories of present-day Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Northern India.

The Iranian-speaking Yuezhi and the Turkic-speaking Huns were at enmity for a long time, but eventually, the latter gained an upper hand.

During the Sassanid invasion of northwestern India in 240, the brothers Mamkon and Konak, most likely, betrayed the Kushan King and went over to the Sassanids.

Many scholars consider them to be Iranian-speaking. A version was suggested on the clan's origin from the Hun tribes. The versions that the clan was Iranian-speaking immigrants from China or India partially coincide. More likely, the Mamikonian clan belonged to the Iranian-speaking Yuezhi (Kushan) from Central Asia.

Mamikonian is a feudal clan that played a very important and even dominant role in the history of Armenia in the early Middle Ages.

The family first emerged in the province of Armenia at the beginning of the 4th century and held an important position: they were hereditary military leaders (sparapet) and controlled large domains, including most of Taron (now the province of Mush, Turkey) and Tayk (part of the territory of the Artvin and Erzurum provinces, Turkey).

Khosrov III, who came to be known as 'Kotak' (from the Persian 'kutakh' - short) for his small height, became the governor of the province of Armenia in 330, after the death of his father Tiridates III. Khosrow sent an armed detachment to subdue the nakharars of the province. On his initiative, sparapet Vache Mamikonian destroyed two Nakharar clans and handed their property over to the Church.

Vardan Mamikonian was born in 388. His father was sparapet Hamazasp Mamikonian and his mother, Saakanush, - the daughter of Catholicos Isaac Partev, a descendant of Gregory the Illuminator.

After Isaac's death, the Mamikonian inherited many church lands since Hamazasp Mamikonian married Isaac's only daughter.

Vardan Mamikonian was a disciple of Mesrop Mashtots, the creator of the Armenian alphabet.

The Mamikonian ranked second among other noble families after the Parthian Arsacids, who continued to be governors of the province of Armenia. After the last Arsacid Parthians left the historical arena, the Mamikonian governed the province within the limits imposed by their Persian overlords.

By the order of marzpan Vahan Mamikonian (440-505), his childhood friend Lazar Parpetsi (related to the Mamikonian clan since he was raised by Vahan's mother) wrote the 'History of Armenia,' a continuation of the 'History of Armenia' by Pavstos Buzand. For sources, Lazar used the mythical writings of Agathangelos, Pavstos Buzand, and Koryun. He borrowed a lot from writings by Khorenatsi and Yeghishe. These writings were copied from Christian sources, names were changed or armenized in them. There are too many myths in them. This is natural falsification. Vahan Mamikonian was the marzpan of Armenia from 485 to 505.

Starting from 650, when the era of the Arab Caliphate began, the Mamikonian family lost all their possessions and political weight and ceased to exist.

Bagratuni (4th-11th centuries)

Bagratuni, Bagratids is a feudal clan, one of the most significant knyaz dynasties. From the beginning of the 4th century to 1045, it was a major dynasty in the Kars region (Turkey) and Lake Sevan (Armenia).

According to Armenian historian Movses Khorenatsi, the Bagratuni have a Jewish origin from a certain prince Shambot (Shmbat, in Armenian Smbat), one of the Jewish captives brought to Armenia by King Hayk II, an ally of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II.

Some contemporary historians call this version a genealogical legend, i.e., a genealogical fairy tale and myth.

The Bagratuni initially asserted their origin from the God of the Sun and then, after the adoption of Christianity, the mythical Hayk. Later, a version of Jewish origin emerged.

There are versions of Urartian and Median origin. Still, the Iranian version prevails. But the controversy continues.

The earliest Georgian forms of this dynastic name are Bagratoniana, Bagratuniani, and Bagratovani, later changed to Bagrationi. These names, as well as the Armenian Bagratuni and the modern Bagratid, mean 'Bagrat's children' or 'the house founded by Bagrat.' The surname's root is of Iranian

origin. The origin of the Bagratid Dynasty is still a subject of controversy between Georgian and Armenian scholars. Georgian scholars claim that the Bagrationi were of Georgian origin, while Armenian and Western ones consider them to be a branch of the Armenian Bagratuni.

In 481, Sahak II Bagratuni was appointed marzpan of Armenia by the Persian court. He participated in the uprising of Christians against the Zoroastrians together with Vahan Mamikonian. In 482, he died in a battle with the Persian troops.

Upon assuming office, the Bagratuni personally placed a tag (crown) on the heads of the governors from the Arshakuni Dynasty.

Sahak Bagratuni was a patron of Movses Khorenatsi, who charged him with writing the 'History of Armenia.' There is also no reliable information on the life of the 'father of Armenian historiography' Movses Khorenatsi, however, some scientists attribute the years of his life to not the 5th century but the period between the 7th-9th centuries. So there is no reliable data on Bagratuni.

In 1045, the Byzantines captured the city of Ani, the Bagratuni's main city, and the clan ceased to exist. The clan's last representative Gagik II was given the Kharsian theme, a military-administrative unit in Central Anatolia (Turkey). He was killed in 1079/1080.

The House of Artsruni (4th-11th centuries)

The Artsruni or Artsrunids were among the most significant Armenian feudal clans.

Armenian historian Movses Khorenatsi reports on the Artsruni clan's origin that their ancestor was the Assyrian King Sennacherib (whose mother was the Jewess Ataliya and grandmother - the Jewess Yaba). Thus, Jewish blood was in the veins of the descendants of Bagratuni and Artsruni. Representatives of these clans had marriage unions.

This clan has also been known since the 4th century. Initially, the Artsruni owned Adamakert (now Bashkale, Van region, Turkey) and Albak district (the historical region around Bashkale). At the end of the 7th century, the Artsruni subjugated the territories to the south and east of Lake Van, which previously belonged to the Rshtuni clan. The center of the Artsruni's possession was the city of Van. During the 8th century, this Dynasty extended its possessions to Vaspurakan (the historical region between southeastern Turkey and northwestern Iran).

At the beginning of the 9th century, under the Arab Caliphate, the Artsruni contended with the Bagratuni clan and were the knyazes of Vaspurakan until 1021. In the same year, the Byzantines captured Vaspurakan, moved them to Central Anatolia, and granted Sevestia (now the Sivas region, Turkey) to their possession. Part of the representatives of this clan remained to live in the vicinity of Van and held the position of the Akhtamar Catholicos. In 1071, the Artsruni clan ceased to exist.

The Syuni Clan (3rd - 11th centuries)

“According to ancient tradition, the Syuni clan, which had ruled Syunik for many centuries, descended from the legendary ancestor of the Armenians Hayk.”

Data on the early period of Syuni history is scarce. It is known that at the beginning of the 4th century, they actively participated in the adoption of Christianity in the province of Armenia and accompanied Gregory the Illuminator to Caesarea (now the city of Kayseri, Turkey) for ordination. They supported Mesrop Mashtots in founding schools and fighting sectarianism.

Armenian historian of the late 13th century Stepanos Orbelyan points out that throughout history, the Syuni clan had blood and marriage ties with other feudal dynasties - the Parthian Arsacid and Karen clans and the Bagratuni clan. In a later period, the dynasty was closely related to the Arabs and the Turks. Later, the Syuni family's lands were appropriated by the Bagratuni clan.

Gnuni (4th-9th centuries)

Gnuni was a noble clan owning the Aliovit region, including the city of Archesh, Arberani, and Berkerm on the northern shore of Lake Van.

Armenian historian Movses Khorenatsi reports on the origin of the Gnuni clan that their ancestor was the Assyrian King Sennacherib (whose mother was the Jewess Ataliya and grandmother - the Jewess Yaba). Thus, Jewish blood was in the veins of the Bagratuni, Artsruni, and Gnuni family members.

Gnuni were cupbearers of the governor, who were responsible for drinks and their serving to the table during the feast.

After the uprising of the Armenians against the Arab Ostikan (Emir or governor) in 850, some Armenian knyazes were killed and some were captured. The Gnuni family lost their possessions.

Armenians called the Arab Emirs Ostikans. In the Middle Persian language, Ostikan means 'faithful', 'trusted', or 'close to the ruler.' In this sense, the term was applied to both Armenian officials and representatives of Persian Kings and Byzantine Emperors.

In the province of al-Arminiyya, the Emirs were Arabs. Armenian knyaz clans such as Bagratuni, Mamikonian, Artsruni, Gnuni, Antsevatsi (after the uprising, the Artsruni family took over their lands), and others had their possessions.

Amatuni (4th-8th centuries)

Amatuni is an Armenian feudal clan. Movses Khorenatsi claimed that the Amatuni were of Jewish origin. According to another version, they had a Caspian-Median or Mannean, i.e., Iranian origin. The Amatuni knyazes were responsible for collecting taxes in the province of Armenia.

First, their possessions were located in the Artaz region, between Lake Van and Urmia; then they owned the Aragatsotn region to the west of Lake Sevan. In 791, Shapuh Amatuni migrated to the Byzantine Empire together with his son Amam and about 12,000 companions.

Rshtuni (1st century BC - 705)

According to the writings by Movses Khorenatsi, in the 1st century BC, Barzapran Rshtuni settled with his people on the island of Akdamar on Lake Van. He descended from the Syuni clan.

According to some Armenian historians, the clan's name is of Urartu origin, and the Rshtuni clan is considered a descendant of Rus I, who was the King of Urartu in 735-713 BC.

The first reliable representative of the house is Manucher Rshtuni (about 330). Manuchehr, Manuchar, or Manuchihr is a Persian male name meaning 'the face of the sky.' Like many nakharar families, the Rshtuni clan was of Iranian origin.

This dynasty always opposed Byzantium. First, they supported the Sassanids and then, the Arab Caliphate.

At the beginning of the 7th century, the noblest member of this family Theodoros was the marzpan of the marzpanship of Armenia and later, Ishkhan (Knyaz) in the province of Armenia (638-655). They owned the city of Van and

its outskirts, as well as the islands on Lake Van. Then the Rshtuni family's lands were appropriated by the Artsruni and Mamikonian clans.

Khorhoruni (about 400-800)

Representatives of the Khorhoruni feudal family were malkhaz (security service) under the governor of the province; they controlled Khorhorunik, the territory to the west of Lake Van.

According to Movses Khorenatsi, the Khorhoruni clan originated from Khor, the son of Hayk. According to some researchers, the clan formation way testifies to its Hurrian origin.

The Hurrians are an ancient people that appeared in northern Mesopotamia in the second half of the 3rd millennium BC and belonged to an unknown language group.

Many Armenian noble families were either associated with the aristocratic Iranian families or even had an Iranian (Persian, Parthian, Median, etc.) origin.

Armenian knyaz families were divided into large and strong and small and weak. During the war, knyazes had to supply warriors. Some sent three and some 7, 10, or even 20 warriors. Large clans like Mamikonian and Bagratuni fielded 100-150 warriors each, and the Artsruni family - 30-40 ones.

The enmity between Armenian knyazes (first nakharar, later ishkan) and their clans lasted for a long time, sometimes for centuries (the traditional struggle was between Mamikonian and Bagratuni). Often this was aimed at the seizure of lands. There were battles for the faith since some clans remained Zoroastrians for a rather long time and did not convert to Christianity. Domestic cases often took place when a representative of one clan killed a member of another, i.e., blood feud. There were cases when they killed their father and mother or other close relatives who remained Zoroastrians. Sometimes nakharars rebelled against the governor.

Armenian historians often tied the family tree of dynasties to the biblical 'ancestor of the Armenians Hayk' or the Jews. According to Movses Khorenatsi, Jewish blood was in the veins of the Bagratuni, Artsruni, Gnuni, and Amatuni family members.

During the period of the Arabs, from 650 to almost 1000, the Christianization of Armenian clans was virtually completed.

The Arshakuni clan was the younger branch of the Parthian Arsacids, hereditary governors of the province of Armenia since 216. In 224, Sasan from the historical region of Pars seized power from the Parthians. The Parthian Kingdom became the Iranian Kingdom. Actually, only the name has changed. An Iranian dynasty from Pars came to power instead of an Iranian dynasty from Central Asia. The Parthian clans who recognized the new power remained in their possessions and positions. Thus, the Arshakuni clan continued to govern the province of Armenia. Starting from the end of the 4th century, the Arshakuni adopted Christianity and often and openly supported the Byzantines, which filled up the cup of the Sassanids. In 428, the Arshakuni Dynasty fell.

Earlier, the Arshakuni clan, represented by the governor and the Catholicos, and the Mamikonian clan charged Mesrop Mashtots with creating the Armenian alphabet. Based on this alphabet, the Armenian language was created, the Bible was translated into a new language, schools were opened, and the formation of the Armenian people began.

The Arshakuni and the Mamikonian clans (who were related) charged Pavstos Buzand with writing the 'history of Armenia' (describing events up to 387 AD). Firstly, Buzand is the alleged author of this historical-epic work, full of mythical ideas.

Secondly, American historian Nina Garsoyan affirms that the 'History of Armenia' was written in 470 by an Armenian who was often poorly informed of the events of world history. She suggested that the author was a priest.

In general, the Church is the main author of the Armenian alphabet, language, culture, history, and the formation of people. And today, for Armenians, the Church is a religion that supersedes the State.

At the beginning of the 4th century, mainly Persian-Parthian tribes and clans, as well as Siro-Aramaeans, Greeks, Jews, etc., lived in the province of Armenia. The probability of the Parthian origin of the Armenian noble clans is very high. After the adoption of Christianity, they started asserting their biblical and Jewish origin.