



GUKLĀN

GUKLĀN (Turk. Göklen), a Turkmen tribal confederacy of the Gorgān region in northeastern Persia, the district of Qara Qal'a in Turkmenistan, and the Kīva region in Uzbekistan. In the Gorgān region, the Guklān occupy a small tract of land extending from Yās Tapa on the south bank of the Gorgān river to Yel Čašma and Tang-e Rāh, on the Āb-e Dahana, in the rural district (*dehestān*) of Guklān. In Turkmenistan, they occupy a small area between Qezel Arvāt and the Atrak river. In Uzbekistan, they reside between Ilyalyi and Türtkül, a few miles east of Kīva (Yate, p. 235; Wheeler).

Until the 1850s, the Guklān tribal confederacy was divided into two branches, namely Dudorġa and Dāġli. The Dudorġa branch included the tribes (*ṭawāyef*) Kerek, Bāyandor, Yangak, Sengrik and Karkaz; and the Dāġli branch included the tribes Čaqer, Bigdeli, 'Arab, Āy Dar-viš, Qara Balkan, Erkekli, and Qāy (Häntzsche, p. 741). The names Dudorġa, Bāyandor, Bigdeli, and Qāy are also mentioned among the original twenty-four Ġoz tribes (Houtsma, pp. 222-24; for other lists of Guklān tribes see Vámbéry, 1865, pp. 352-53; Melgunof, p. 88; Afšār Sistāni, pp. 1046-47).

The Guklān probably moved to southwestern K̄vārazm in the early 16th century when water shortages drove many of the Turkmen tribes to seek greener pastures in that region (Akiner, p. 315). Most of these subsequently moved from the northern shores of the Atrak river to the banks of the Gorgān river in Persian territory during the reign of Shah Ṭahmāsb I (930-84/1524-76; Eskandar Beg, p. 579, tr. Savory, p. 766). Allāhqoli Khan, the khan of Kīva (r. 1825-42), moved some 9,000 Guklān families into his dominions. Other Guklān



voluntarily migrated in the same direction when a Persian army approached in 1836 (Petrusevich, p. 57; de Bode, p. 66). “Afterwards, the emigrants in Khiva, not finding the khanate to their liking, returned by degrees to the Goorgan” (Petrusevich, pp. 57-58). But some of these Guklān must have remained behind, for today there is a sizable group of them residing in the Kiva region (Wheeler).

Several European visitors to Gorgān in the 19th century made estimates of the Guklān population, ranging from 1,275 (Melgunof, p. 89) to 12,000 families (Vámbéry, 1865, p. 355; for other estimates of the Guklān population, both from the 19th century and from more recent times, see Häntzsche, in *Spiegel*, I, p. 741; Petrussevich, in *Marvin*, p. 57; Yate, pp. 217-18; Sykes, p. 18; and Afšār Sistani, p. 1046. The most recently published estimate, that of Razmārā, p. 26, is 25,000 families). As for the Guklān of the former USSR, the Soviet census of 1926 indicates that there were then 17,000 individuals in Turkmenistan and 38,000 individuals in Uzbekistan (Wheeler).

The Guklān are Sunnite Muslims (Yate, p. 235). The lands of the Guklān in the Gorgān region contain an abundance of water and vegetation (Petrusevich, pp. 58-59). This probably explains why the Guklān adopted an agricultural economy already in the 19th century. But by settling down upon the land, they lost the cohesion that had once made them strong, and they became vulnerable to attacks by better organized and more aggressive neighbors, in particular the Yomut (Yate, p. 218).

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