# ANOMALOUS RDISH IAMES

JOSEPH AMYOT PADJAN

JOSEPH AMYOT PADJAN

Anomalous and Kurdish Surnames in Croatia

Copyright © 2015, 2017 by Joseph Amyot Padjan

All rights reserved. No part of this book, or paper, may be used or reproduced in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the publisher. For all inquiries:

josephamyotpadjan.com

he anomalous surnames discussed in this paper are found in church records pertaining, in the main, to four villages that are very close to one another, namely, Kaniška Iva, Vukovje, Garešnica, and Tomašica, which were all located in Slavonia for about eight hundred years, but which are now located in Croatia. The records are from the mid to late 1700s and the early to mid 1800s.

Slavonia and Croatia, for all intents and purposes, were separate regions from the time of King Tomislav (c. 925-928) to the creation of the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia in 1868. In When ethnicity did not matter in the Balkans, John V. A. Fine, Jr. writes:

The word "Croat," as we have seen, had occasional usage in Croatia/Dalmatia in the Middle Ages, but never in Slavonia. Moreover, Dalmatia and Slavonia were rarely in a state together. Tomislav may have briefly conquered some of Slavonia in his warfare with the Hungarians, but for most of the period from the seventh century to the end of the eleventh century, the two areas were not in a single state; and after the arrival of the Hungarians these newcomers usually held most of Slavonia—even though the majority of the population seems to have been Slavic speaking.

After 1102, most of the area of Croatia proper or our Velebitia was in a state together with Slavonia. However, Dalmatia (including the Slav-founded towns there) more often than not was not part of that state. Venice held Dalmatia, for far longer periods of time than Hungary did. Even when Hungary held Slavonia, Croatia, and Dalmatia, the three areas were never integrated, but Slavonia had its own ban, legal system, and administration, separate from Croatia. Slavonia was far more integrated into Hungary than the areas of Croatia proper, which had much more autonomy. So, despite a common king, Slavonia and Croatia were administered separately and were never conceived of as belonging to any sort of unity.<sup>1</sup> [Brackets added.]

Yet even after 1868, once Slavonia and Croatia had formed into a single kingdom, inhabitants of Slavonia did not suddenly begin to think of themselves as Croats. In other words, the ethnicities of the inhabitants of Slavonia, whatever ethnicities the inhabitants happened to be, underwent no change in 1868 when Slavonia and Croatia became a kingdom.

In discussing the history of Slavonia in When ethnicity did not matter in the Balkans, Fine devotes a few pages to the observations of German traveller Friedrich Wilhelm von Taube, who traveled through Slavonia and Srem in the mid 1700s, and published a work on both regions in 1777, a year before his death. Fine writes:

Throughout his text he calls the South Slavs (both those in Slavonia as well as those in other parts of the future Yugoslavia, whether Catholic or Orthodox) "Illyrians." He also calls their language "Illyrian." At times he breaks the Illyrians down into

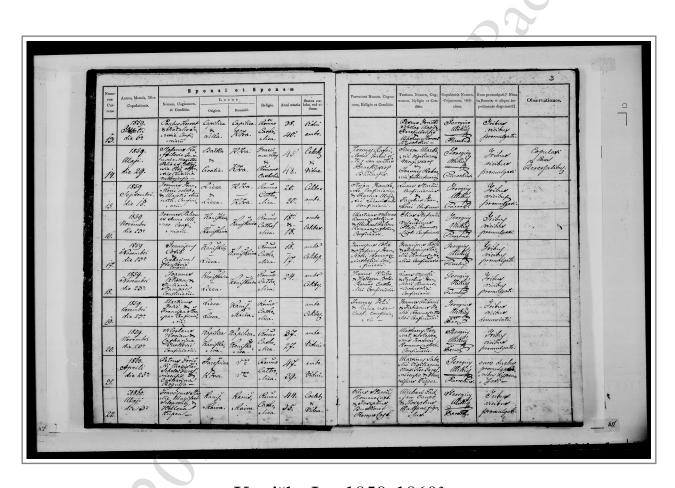
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> John V. A. Fine, Jr., When Ethnicity Did Not Matter in the Balkans (University of Michigan Press, 2006), p. 172.

Dalmatians, Slavonians, Bosnians, and so forth, but, as we shall, he does it on the basis of geography or political entity...

Then Taube goes on to speak of the rivers in Slavonia, noting that the Danube in Illyrian is called the "Danuv" (2, p. 160). Shortly thereafter he provides another summary explanation: The Slavonians are made up of the indigenous population and immigrants. Among these, then, are both the old inhabitants of the land and the Illyrians who have come and are daily still coming from Albania, Dalmatia, Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, and other places. They (have been coming because they) are one people and have the same language, character, customs, and habits. Taube notes the existence of large tracts of abandoned land in Slavonia (owing to the warfare and raids) that these "Illyrians" could settle on. He comments once again that many have settled in the Hungarian lands. He then says that in Slavonia have also settled many Vlachs, who are found mixed with the Illyrians and have adopted their language. Thus here, in speaking of "Vlachs," he is not thinking of Serbs, but real Vlachs, having (on arrival) a different (the Vlach) language.<sup>2</sup>

The inhabitants themselves of the villages named above—Kaniška Iva, Vukovje, Garešnica, and Tomašica, located in the extreme west of Slavonia—considered Croatia entirely separate from Slavonia, and their own records reflect this:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> John V. A. Fine, Jr., When Ethnicity Did Not Matter in the Balkans, pp. 546-547.

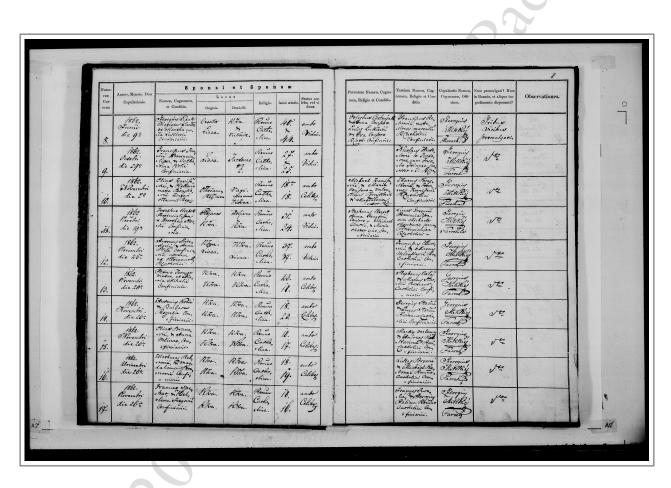


Kaniška Iva 1859-1860<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> "Croatia, Church Books, 1516–1994, Roman Catholic, Kaniška Iva," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G99C-LJPD?mode=g&i=360&wc=9RKB-T3T%3A391644801%2C391845301%2C391845302&cc=2040054">https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G99C-LJPD?mode=g&i=360&wc=9RKB-T3T%3A391644801%2C391845301%2C391845302&cc=2040054</a>.

The record above shows that two individuals marrying in Kaniška Iva were from Croatia and Bačka respectively. Croatia, like Bačka, would not have been named as the place of origin of the individual if the inhabitants of Kaniška Iva had considered Kaniška Iva a part of Croatia at that time.

The next record from Kaniška Iva, shown just below, is from 1862, and it shows the same evidence as the record above does, namely, that Kaniška Iva was not in Croatia, but in Slavonia, and that the inhabitants of Kaniška Iva regarded Croatia as entirely separate from Slavonia:



Kaniška Iva 1862<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> "Croatia, Church Books, 1516–1994, Roman Catholic, Kaniška Iva," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L99C-LJZD?mode=g&i=365&wc=9RKB-T3T%3A391644801%2C391845301%2C391845302&cc=2040054">https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L99C-LJZD?mode=g&i=365&wc=9RKB-T3T%3A391644801%2C391845301%2C391845302&cc=2040054</a>.

#### Anomalous and Kurdish Surnames in Croatia

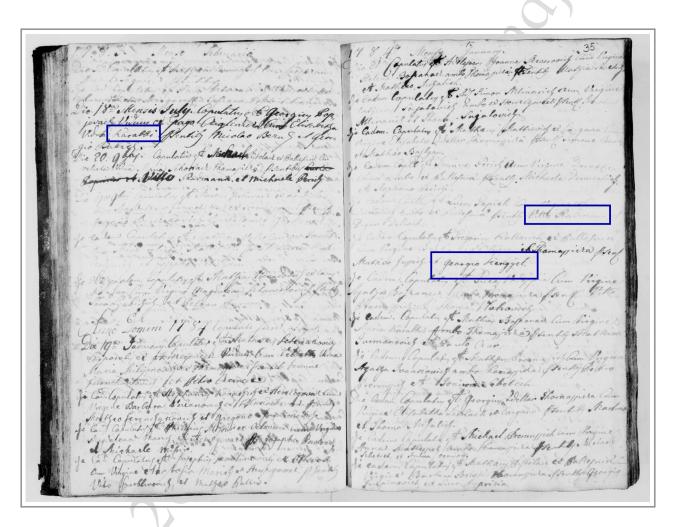
The first surname shown below is Karaba. Incidentally, one of the Padjanak clans was called Karabai (Charaboï, Qara-baj)<sup>5</sup>.

All American bearers of this name [Karaba] apparently originate from the village of Drahovce in Slovakia.<sup>6</sup> [Brackets added.]

This unusual surname, Karaba, which in all probability derives from Karabai, is also recorded in the Kaniška Iva area, as shown below. In all indexed LDS records, of which there are millions, the immediate area of Drahovce is, outside Croatia, the only other area in all of Europe where the surname Padjan is found to be spelled in exactly the same way as it has been in my own family, that is, as Padjan, and as Pagyan, with the sole exception of one occurrence of the form Pagyan found in rural Hungary on the border of Slovakia, in a village called Ludányhalászi, formerly known as Felsőludány. Outside Croatia, all other variants of the surname Padjan (Pogyon, Pogyan, etc.) are found in Hungary in the places where Padjanaks were settled, particularly in Fejér and Tolna Counties. The reason for the concentration of records of persons bearing variants of the surname Padjan near Drahovce, is that Padjanaks settled near that village and established a settlement, which became a Padjanak village known as Zsitvabesenyő. The concentration of Padjanaks so close to Drahovce, together with the fact that one of the Padjanak clans or tribes was named Karabai, lends weighty plausibility to the assertion that the surname Karaba comes from the Padjanak name Karabai.

 $^6$ 

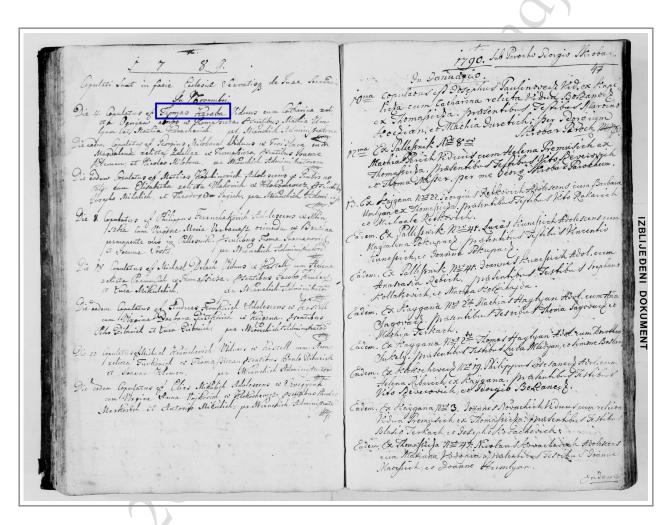
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, Volumen I, translated by R. J. H. Jenkins (Dumbarton Oaks, 1967), p. 167; Victor Spinei, *The Romanians and the Turkic Nomads North of the Danube Delta from the Tenth to the Mid-Thirteenth Century* (Brill, 2009), p. 257.



Karabbi (or Karabai), Radman (name of a Padjanak chief<sup>7</sup>), and Kengyel (Kangar)<sup>8</sup>

 $<sup>^7</sup>$ Fehér M. Jenő, Besenyőőstörténet (Kárpáti Ház, Budapest, 2004), p. 77.





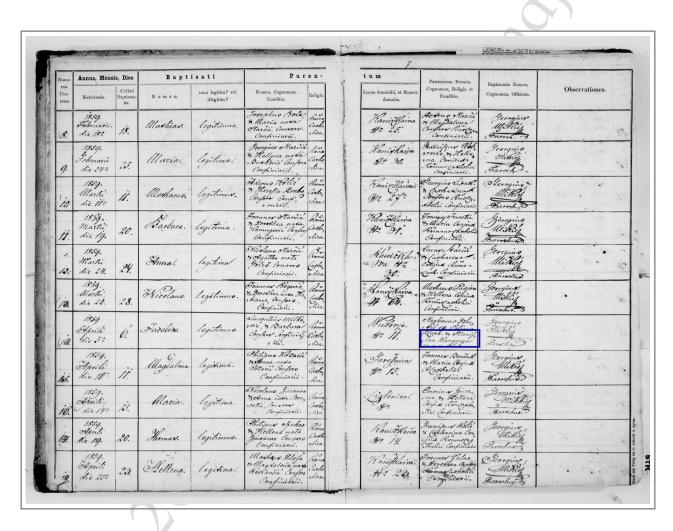
Karaba<sup>9</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> "Croatia, Church Books, 1516–1994, Roman Catholic, Tomašica," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-28322-15825-64?cc=2040054&wc=9R2Q-MNT:391644801,392123601,392124001">https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-28322-15825-64?cc=2040054&wc=9R2Q-MNT:391644801,392123601,392124001</a>.

Some persons of Padjanak descent living in Hungary, or having ancestors who lived there, and being speakers of Hungarian, or having ancestors who spoke it, bore and bear as a surname the Hungarian form of Padjanak, namely, Besenyő, or the form Batthyány. The common transliteration of Batthyány in Croatian is Baćan, pronounced virtually identically to Padjan, and meaning of course the same thing. Similarly, Badjanak is a variant of Padjanak, or vice versa; Badjanak and Padjanak are one and the same name; thus Baćan or Badjan and Padjan. Batthyány means Padjanak. Batthyány is derived from the name of the village in Hungary that is now called Szabadbattyán, but that was formerly called Bathyan (Battyán). Battyán was settled and inhabited by Padjanaks, 10 and from them the village got its name, which of course means Padjanak. Incidentally, in 1404, the ban of Slavonia, Croatia, and Dalmatia was Pál Besenyő (Padjan).11

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> "Településtörténet," *Szabadbattyán*, accessed June 2, 2025 <a href="https://www.szabadbattyan.hu/telepulesunk/telepulestortenet/">https://www.szabadbattyan.hu/telepulesunk/telepulestortenet/</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> János Jerney, *Keleti utazása a' magyarok' őshelyeinek kinyomozása végett*: 1844 és 1845, Volume 1 (Pesten, A Szerző Tulajdona, 1851), p. 265.

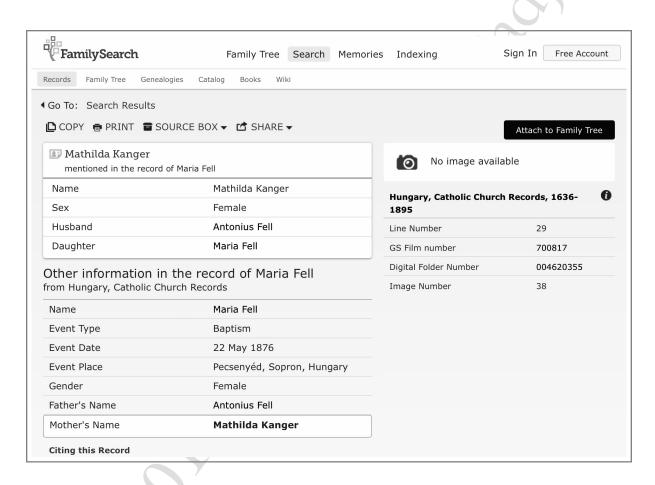


Kangerga (Kangar)<sup>12</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> "Croatia, Church Books, 1516–1994, Roman Catholic, Kaniška Iva," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-28340-2406-41?">https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-28340-2406-41?</a> <a href="https://cc=2040054&wc=9R2C-82W:391644801,391845301,391845401">https://cc=2040054&wc=9R2C-82W:391644801,391845301,391845401</a>.

The surname Kangerga is an evolution or a corruption of the name Kangar. The surname Kangar (as well as Kanger) is most common in Hungary, especially in Fejér and Tolna Counties, where, again, Padjanaks were heavily settled. As I demonstrate in *The Padjanaks*, the Kangar came to be called Padjanaks after they had merged with them.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Joseph Amyot Padjan, "The Padjanaks" (unpublished manuscript, 2014), accessed June 2, 2025 <a href="https://www.josephamyotpadjan.com/2025/04/the-padjanaks-2/">https://www.josephamyotpadjan.com/2025/04/the-padjanaks-2/</a>., pp. 58-62.



Kanger<sup>14</sup>

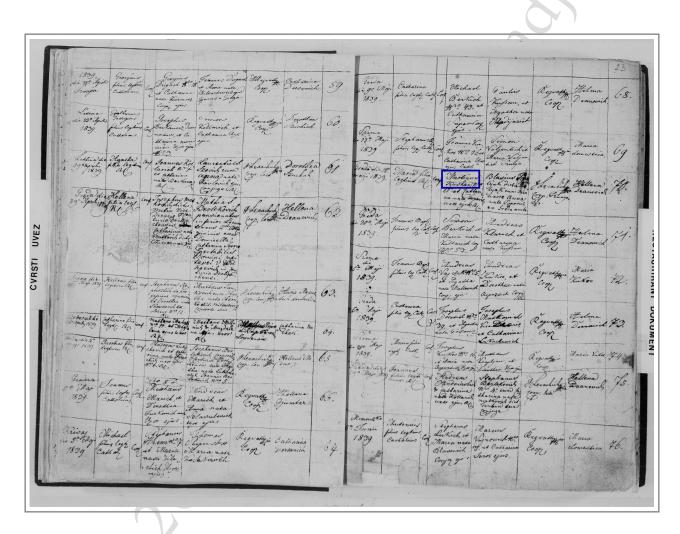
Pecsenyéd is a variant of Padjanak. It is a Padjanak toponym. Note that Pecsenyéd is located in Sopron, Hungary.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> "Hungary, Catholic Church Records, 1636–1895," FamilySearch, <a href="https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:23MQ-5Q1">https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:23MQ-5Q1</a>.

#### Florin Curta points out the following:

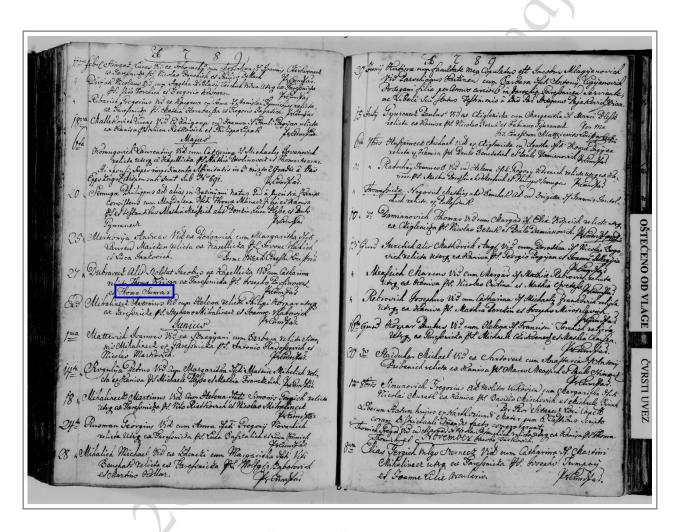
In 1071, the Pechenegs [Padjanaks] crossed the Sava from the south and raided southern Hungary. King Salomon pursued the marauders to the walls of Belgrade, and then besieged the city. Its inhabitants called the Pechenegs for help, but the city was eventually conquered and the Pechenegs defeated by Count Ian of Sopron, who took many prisoners, all of whom he then moved to the county of Sopron.<sup>15</sup> [Brackets added.]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Florin Curta, *The Image and Archeaology of the Pechenegs*, pp. 143-202 (Banatica 23, 2013), p. 177 n. 151.



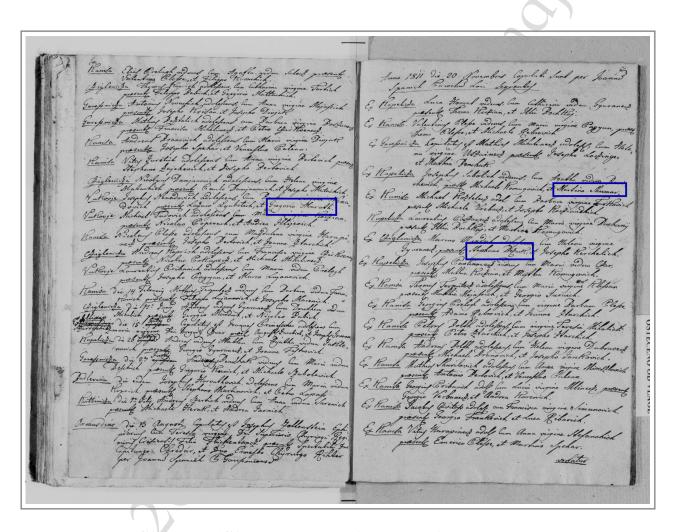
Kushan (Sunja, Croatia)<sup>16</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> "Croatia, Church Books, 1516–1994, Roman Catholic, Garešnica," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1971-28193-32448-41?cc=2040054">https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1971-28193-32448-41?cc=2040054</a>.



Sumar (Sumer)17

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> "Croatia, Church Books, 1516–1994, Roman Catholic, Garešnica," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-28353-1600-90?cc=2040054&wc=9R26-PTP:391644801,391823301,391823901">https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-28353-1600-90?cc=2040054&wc=9R26-PTP:391644801,391823301,391823901</a>.



Shumar (Shumer), Beruk, Murath (Murat)18

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> "Croatia, Church Books, 1516–1994, Roman Catholic, Garešnica," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1961-28356-10535-40?">https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1961-28356-10535-40?</a> <a href="https://cc=2040054&wc=9R2X-7MQ:391644801,391823301,391824101">https://cc=2040054&wc=9R2X-7MQ:391644801,391823301,391824101</a>.

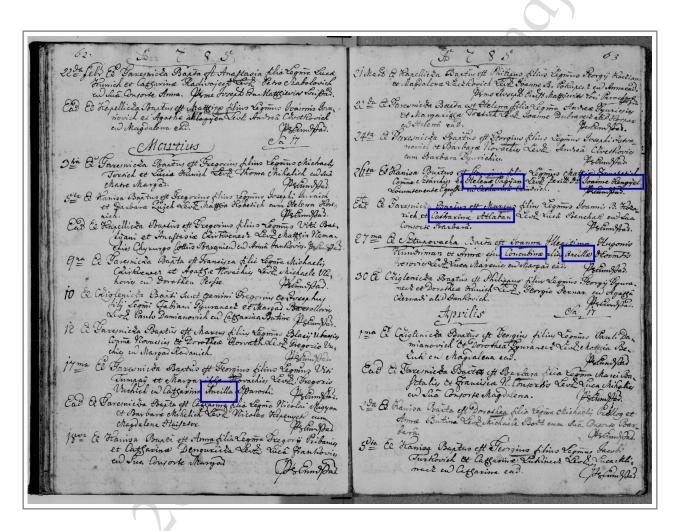
Sumer was the Babylonian name for southern Babylonia, and it was pronounced *Shumer*, not *Sumer*, as Stephen Langdon tells us:

Scholars universally speak of the *Shumerians* as the *Sumerians*, a slight inaccuracy due to the founders of the science.<sup>19</sup> –

Southern Babylonia was called Kangar by the people who actually lived there, namely, the Kangar.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Stephen Langdon, *A Sumerian Grammar and Chrestomathy* (G. E. Stechert & Co., 1911), p. 1 n. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Wolfram von Soden, Einführung in die Altorientalistik (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1985), translated by Donald Schey, The Ancient Orient: An Introduction to the Study of the Ancient Near East (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), p. 17.

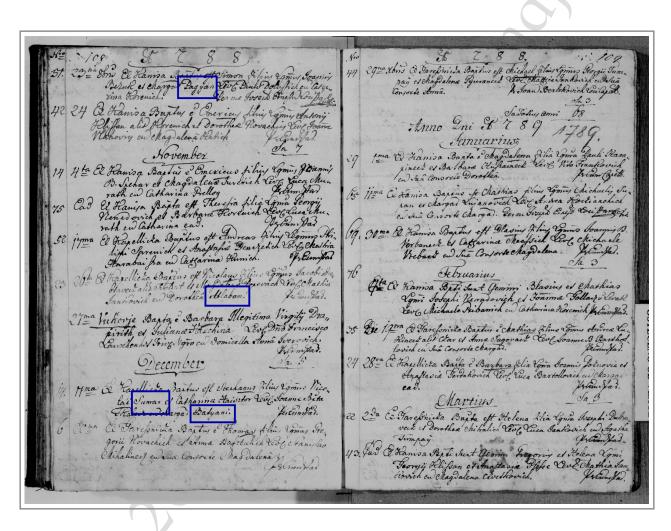


Pagyan, Atlaban, Kengyel<sup>21</sup>

Note the words *concubine* and *ancilla* in the above record.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> "Croatia, Church Books, 1516-1994, Roman Catholic, Garešnica," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-28353-4485-59?cc=2040054&wc=9R26-PTP:391644801,391823301,391823901">https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-28353-4485-59?cc=2040054&wc=9R26-PTP:391644801,391823301,391823901</a>.

An *ancilla* was a maid (also defined as slave-girl). While most people may not know what an *ancilla* is or was, everyone knows what a *concubine* is. I have found multiple occurrences in the records of the Kaniška Iva area of the word *concubine*.



Pagyan, Atlaban, Sumar, Batyani (Batthyány)<sup>22</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> "Croatia, Church Books, 1516–1994, Roman Catholic, Garešnica," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1961-28353-4601-69?cc=2040054&wc=9R26-PTP:391644801,391823301,391823901">https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1961-28353-4601-69?cc=2040054&wc=9R26-PTP:391644801,391823301,391823901</a>.

Atlaban is a very interesting and rare surname. It is of Kurdish origin. The surname Atlaban is derived from the word *atlab*, a Kurdish word meaning squadron;<sup>23</sup> and *atlaban*, meaning squadrons,<sup>24</sup> is the plural form of *atlab*, the suffix *-an* forming the plural of the noun in Kurdish. That *atlab* is not a word of Arabic origin is secured by the fact that the plural of it is formed by the addition of the suffix *-an*, which is not used in Arabic to form the plural of nouns, but is used in Kurdish to form the plural. In Europe, before the twentieth century, the surname Atlaban was documented only in Kaniška Iva and Garešnica.

Another surname of Kurdish origin documented in Kaniška Iva is Šemuga (also spelled Semuga and Shemuga in old records). I have ancestors from Kaniška Iva who were surnamed Šemuga. The Samuga (Semuga) are a Kurdish Yezidi tribe that live in Western Kurdistan,<sup>25</sup> near Sinjar, Iraq.<sup>26</sup>

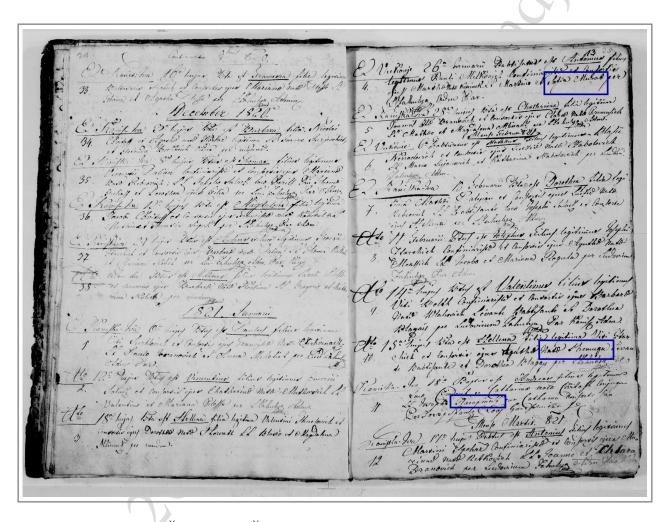
Shown below are more non-European surnames found in the Roman Catholic Church records of Kaniška Iva. They are followed by screenshots of maps of Turkey showing place names around Lake Van that are identical, or nearly identical, to the surnames. The bearers of the surnames inclosed in blue outlines below trace their ancestry to the Lake Van area where the place names are.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Alexander Mikaberidze, Conflict and Conquest in the Islamic World: A Historical Encyclopedia, Volume 1 (ABC-CLIO, 2011), p. 625.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260-1281* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 222.

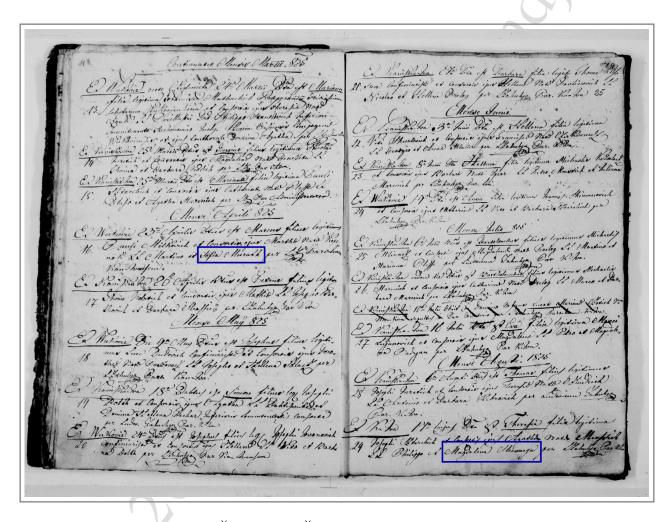
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Mehrdad Izady, *The Kurds: A Concise History And Fact Book* (Taylor & Francis, 2015), p. 84.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Mark Sykes. "The Kurdish Tribes of the Ottoman Empire." The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland 38 (1908): 451–86. https://doi.org/10.2307/2843309., p. 474.



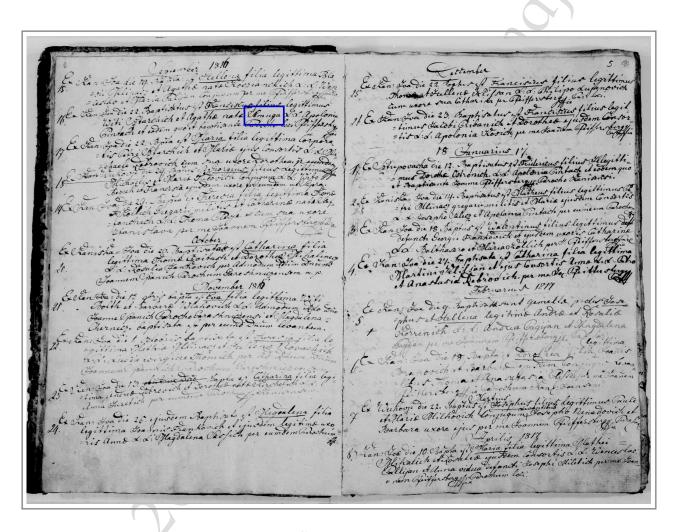
Shemuga (Šemuga/Šemuka), Harapinacz (Harap), Murat<sup>27</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> "Croatia, Church Books, 1516-1994, Roman Catholic, Kaniška Iva," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1971-28191-15225-54?cc=2040054&wc=9RKB-T3T:391644801,391845301,391845302">https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1971-28191-15225-54?cc=2040054&wc=9RKB-T3T:391644801,391845301,391845302</a>.



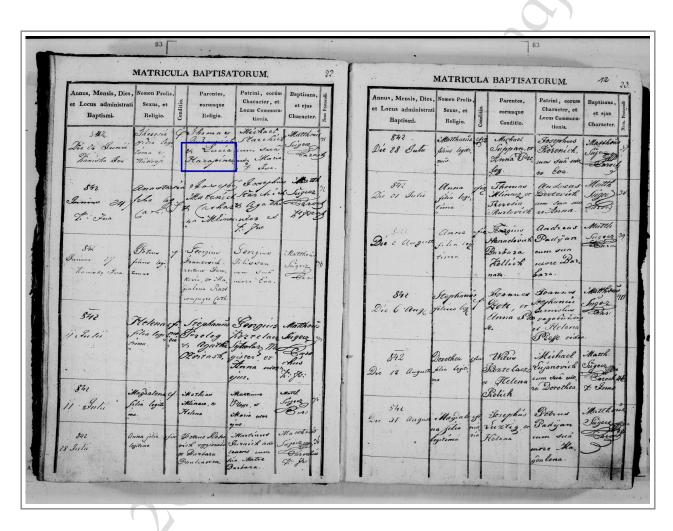
Shemuga (Šemuga/Šemuka), Murath (Murat)<sup>28</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> "Croatia, Church Books, 1516-1994, Roman Catholic, Kaniška Iva," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-28191-15797-40?cc=2040054&wc=9RKB-T3T:391644801,391845301,391845302">https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-28191-15797-40?cc=2040054&wc=9RKB-T3T:391644801,391845301,391845302</a>.



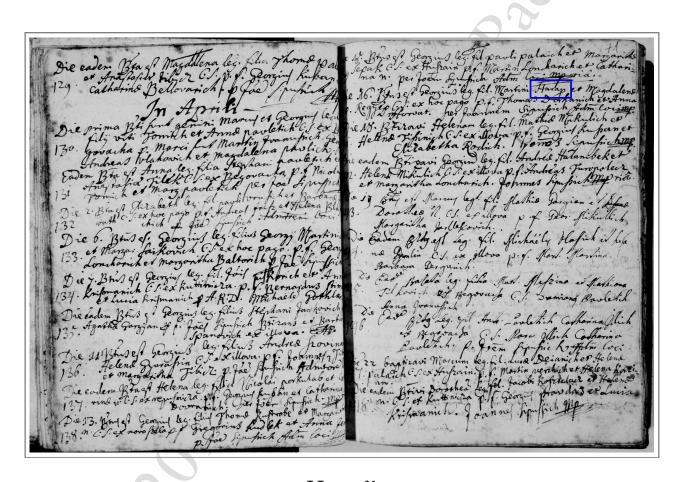
Semuga<sup>29</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> "Croatia, Church Books, 1516-1994, Roman Catholic, Kaniška Iva," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G99C-LJKV?mode=g&cc=2040054">https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G99C-LJKV?mode=g&cc=2040054</a>.



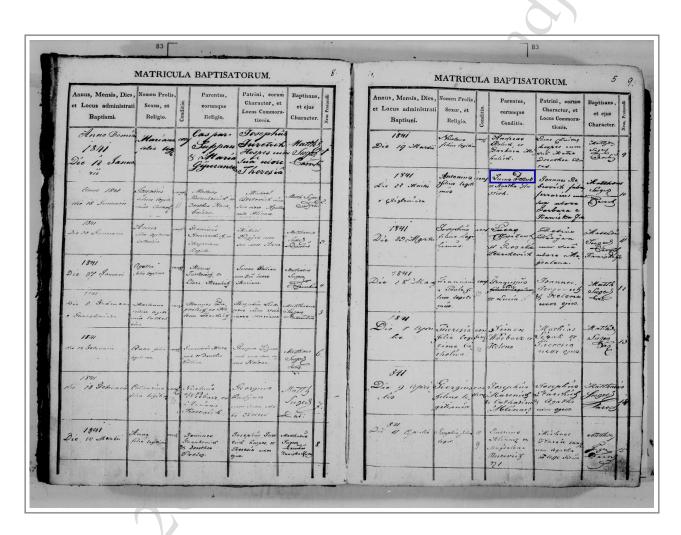
Harap-inacz (Harap, from Berük Harap)<sup>30</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> "Croatia, Church Books, 1516-1994, Roman Catholic, Kaniška Iva," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-28191-17631-31?cc=2040054&wc=9RKB-T3T:391644801,391845301,391845302">https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-28191-17631-31?cc=2040054&wc=9RKB-T3T:391644801,391845301,391845302</a>.



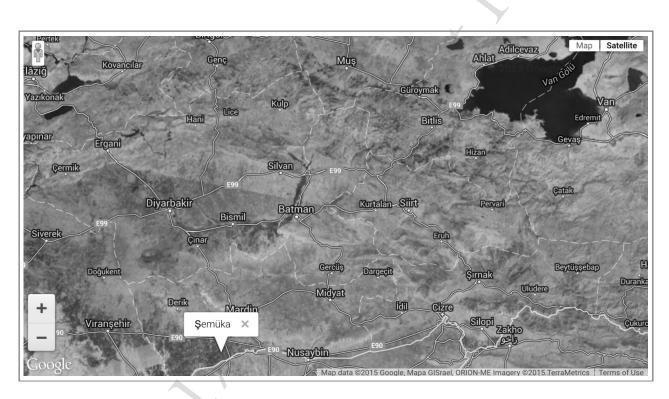
Harap<sup>31</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> "Croatia, Church Books, 1516-1994, Roman Catholic, Kutina," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L99C-5QBM">https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L99C-5QBM</a>.

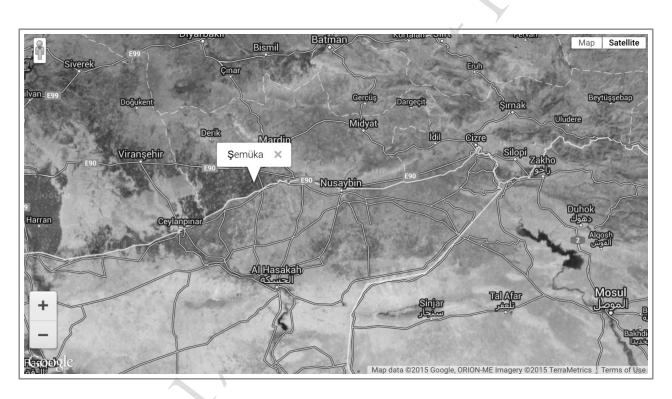


Beruk (from Berük Harap)<sup>32</sup>

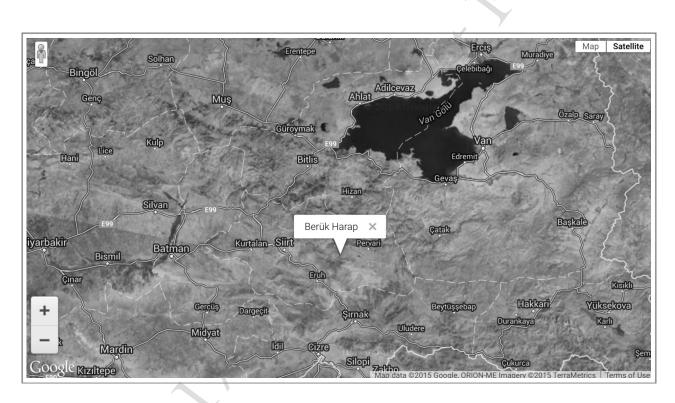
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> "Croatia, Church Books, 1516-1994, Roman Catholic, Kaniška Iva," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-28191-17741-52?cc=2040054&wc=9RKB-T3T:391644801,391845301,391845302">https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-28191-17741-52?cc=2040054&wc=9RKB-T3T:391644801,391845301,391845302</a>.



Şemüka (Šemuga), Turkey



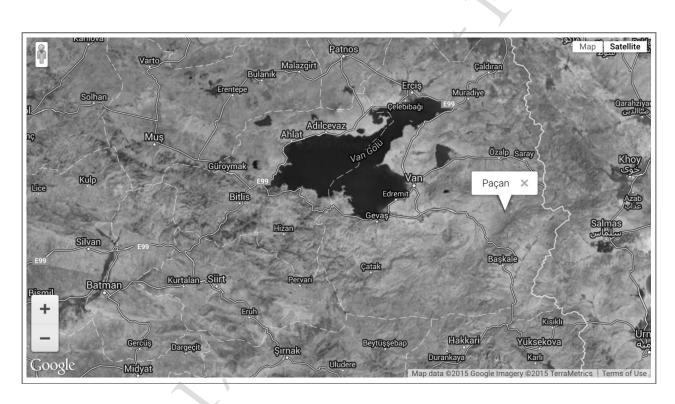
Note where Sinjar (Iraq) is in relation to Şemüka.



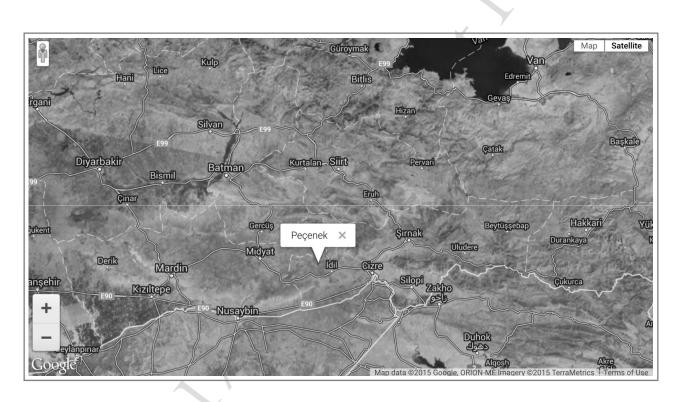
Berük Harap, Turkey



Murat, Turkey



Paçan (Padjan), Turkey



Peçenek (Pecheneg, Padjanak), Turkey



Malâzkirt (Manzikert), Turkey

Padjanaks fought in the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, which took place around Lake Van. There are many places named Peçenek (Padjanak) in Turkey, and others there named Paçan (Padjan), or a variant of it. These toponyms came into existence after the Battle of Manzikert, obviously indicating that Padjanaks settled in those places, two of which are relatively close to Lake Van, as shown above. The fact that the surnames Beruk, Harap, Murat, and Šemuga are also names of places near Lake Van, and the fact that they, along with the surname Atlaban, are found in many records in Kaniška Iva, where my branch of Padjanaks settled, as well as in many records in the villages around it, and in records in other parts of Slavonia and Croatia near to places where Padjanaks settled, may seem at first to suggest that Padjanaks returned to Slavonia and Croatia from Manzikert, and specifically to Kaniška Iva, with persons from, or identified with, these ancient places (Beruk Harap, Murat, Semüka) in present-day Turkey. And it is, in fact, possible that some Padjanaks settled in those places with persons identified by those names, and with those places in Turkey, or with that tribe. It is an intriguing possibility. But the probability is that the forebears of those in Slavonia and Croatia who would come to bear such surnames as Beruk, Harap, Murat, Semuga, and Atlaban, arrived in the Balkans with the Ottomans.

The surname, or name Murat, or Murad, though generally assumed to have originated among the Turkish, may have an overlooked origin. Another name for the Eastern Euphrates, which flows through eastern Asia Minor, is Murat. In his paper Armenian Mawr 'Mud, Marsh' and its Hydronymical Value, Hrach Martirosyan writes:

The Aracani River, the Eastern Euphrates, is mainly known by Turkish names: *Murat urmağı*, *Murat nehri*, *Murat suyu*, *Murat çayı*, thus Murat River. This name is usually associated with the Turkish name *Murad* or its appellative *murat*, -dı 'purpose, intention, desire'. Such a synchronic association of the river name is observable also among Armenians.

As Belck (1901: 45) points out, however, this interpretation has the flavor of folk etymology. He (ibid.) assumes that the name *Murat* has most probably resulted from folk-etymological reshaping of the name for Euphrates – *Frat* or *Purat*. Hartmann (1945: 945b) mentions this view but points out that the origin of the river-name is not clear. In what follows I offer an alternative solution.

As we have seen in section 1.1, Patmut'iwn Tarōnoy reliably testifies the existence of marshlands on the riverbanks or in the vicinity of the Aracani River, in the districts of Taron and Hašteank'. Note also that, according to Melik'ean (1964: 91) one of the tributaries of the Aracani, the river Daniel, forms vast morasses that are extremely dangerous for people and animals alike before flowing into the Aracani. The author/compiler of Patmut'iwn Tarōnoy refers to the marshlands of the Aracani as mawr, which, in some cases, has been replaced in a number of manuscripts by forms that contain a dental suffixal, viz. murt and murat. These forms should be connected with mawrat, murat, etc. which are attested in a number of Postclassical and Middle Armenian literary sources. Bearing in mind that these forms are present only in a few ko-dialects of southwestern peripheries, we can assume that at the time of (Peusdo-) Yovhan Mamikonean, i.e. not later than the tenth century, mo/urat was an extant form in southwestern parts of Armenian-speaking territories, including the districts of Taron and Hašteank', where the marshes around the Aracani River are designated by mawr, murt, and murat...

On the basis of these considerations I tentatively propose to treat the river name Murat as reflecting the Armenian word mō/urat 'mud, marsh'.<sup>33</sup>

In other words, besides Turks, the name Murat may have been used by others living in eastern Asia Minor in early times, Armenians as well as Kurds, both of whom, by the way, had lived in Asia Minor for a very long time before the arrival of the Turks (who came, of course, to Asia Minor from Central Asia). Since the name Murat is most commonly used by the Turkish people, it would be natural to assume that the name was introduced into Slavonia by Turks, and natural to conclude that it was first borne as a surname there by them, that those in Croatia today who bear it are of Turkish descent, at least in part. But Kurds in time bore, and do bear the surname Murat, or Murad, as well, and, for some reasons, to be discussed below, it is, I think, actually more likely that the surname Murat was introduced into Slavonia by Kurds, by Yezidis in particular, and that those who first bore it as a surname in Slavonia were Yezidis, that those who bear it today in Croatia are of Yezidi descent.

When I had made the discovery of the Kurdish origin of the surnames Atlaban and Šemuga, I suspected I would find other surnames of Kurdish origin in the Balkans, especially in Slavonia and Croatia, as well as in Hungary and Slovakia, where other Padjanaks had settled. But how does one recognize in records pertaining to Hungary, or to Slovakia, or, for that matter, to Croatia, or to Slavonia, a surname of Kurdish origin? To be able to identify surnames of Kurdish origin, one needs to

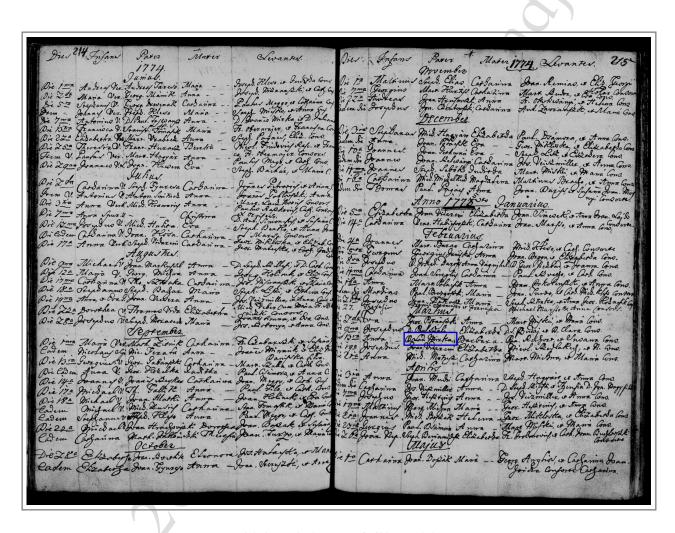
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Hrach Martirosyan, *Armenian Mawr 'Mud, Marsh' and its Hydronymical Value* (Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies, IV/I, pp. 73-85, 2009), pp. 80-81.

know a Kurdish name when he sees it. Fortunately, in *The Kurdish Tribes of the Ottoman Empire*, we have a catalog of Kurdish names, and tribal names in particular, thanks to Mark Sykes, author of that paper. It was, in fact, in that paper that I found, in 2015, the name Samuga. Along with the Samuga, Sykes names eight other Yezidi tribes,<sup>34</sup> namely:

Bumteywit Mirkan Beit-el-Khulta Hababa Kiran Beled Bekiran Mendikun

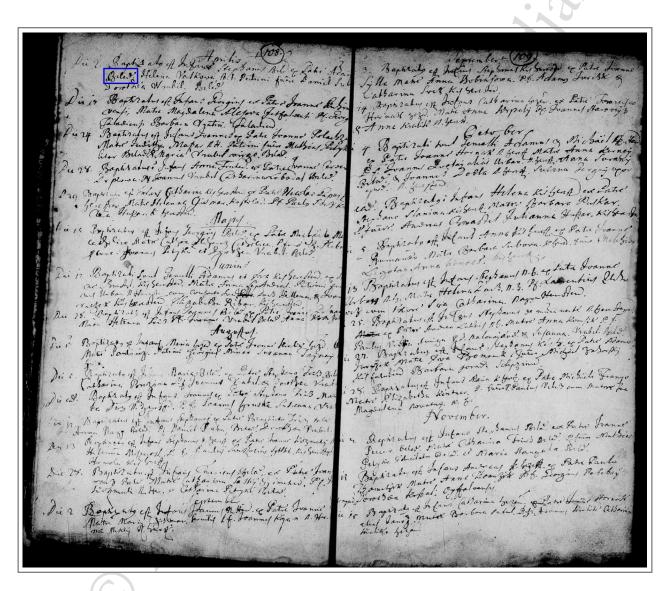
I have found that the Yezidi tribal names Mirkan, Hababa, Kiran, and Beled are documented as surnames in Hungary or Slovakia, or in both. The surname Mirkan, for example, was documented in Vrbové, Piešťany, Slovakia, in 1774. What is rather remarkable about the record, is that the given name of the person surnamed Mirkan is Balád, which is synonymous with Beled, the name of the Yezidi tribe. This is the only record of a person surnamed Mirkan in the millions of indexed LDS records. But there is one record from the year 1694 pertaining to a family in Spišské Bystré, Poprad, Slovakia, with the surname spelled Mirkon rather than Mirkan. Mirkon is, of course, just a variant of Mirkan, or a misspelling of it.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Mark Sykes, "The Kurdish Tribes of the Ottoman Empire," p. 474.



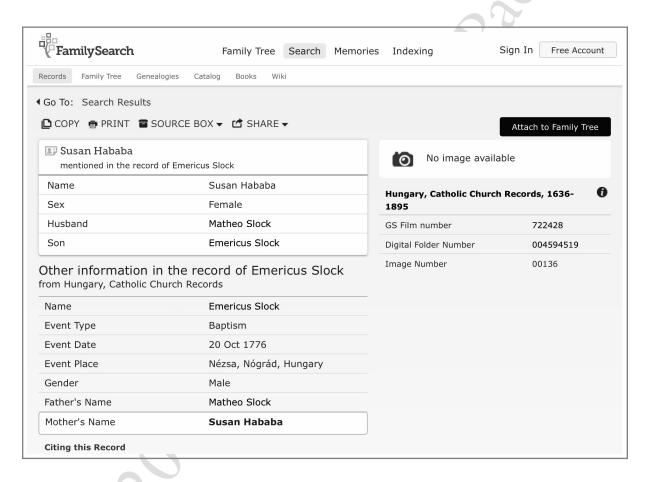
Balád Mirkan of Slovakia<sup>35</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> "Slovakia, Church and Synagogue Books, 1592-1935, Roman Catholic (Rímsko-katolícká cirkev), Piešťany, Vrbové," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939F-B3SW-WQ?mode=g&cc=1554443">https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939F-B3SW-WQ?mode=g&cc=1554443</a>.



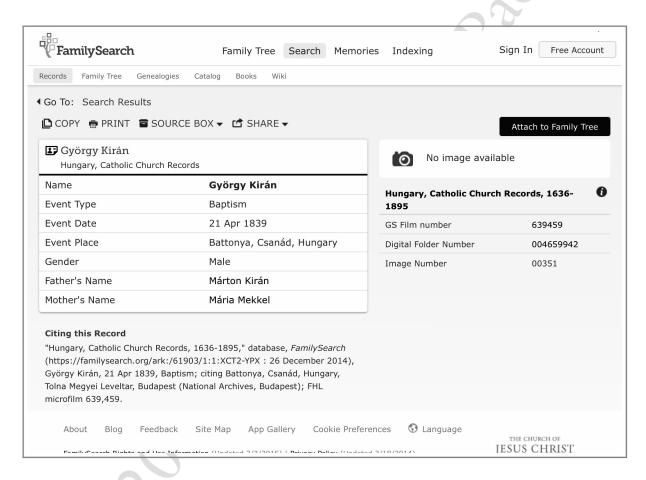
Adam Beled of Slovakia<sup>36</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> "Slovakia, Church and Synagogue Books, Roman Catholic (Rímsko-katolícká cirkev), Zlaté Moravce, Veľké Chrašťany," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9BRB-6J8?mode=g&i=59&cc=1554443">https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9BRB-6J8?mode=g&i=59&cc=1554443</a>.



Hababa<sup>37</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> "Hungary, Catholic Church Records, 1636-1895, Nézsa, Nógrád, Hungary," *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XK5P-9ZV">https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XK5P-9ZV</a>. In Europe, prior to the twentieth century, the surname Hababa was recorded only two times; both records of it are in Hungary, and they pertain to the same family.



Kiran<sup>38</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> "Hungary, Catholic Church Records, 1636-1895", *FamilySearch*, <a href="https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XCT2-YPX">https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XCT2-YPX</a>.

I said above that I would give some reasons for my thinking that the name Murat may have been introduced into Slavonia by Kurds, rather than by Turks. One reason is, that the surnames Beruk, Harap, Murat, and Šemuga, that are found in Slavonia and Croatia, or in Hungary, or in Slovakia, all correspond to place names found in Kurdistan, namely, Beruk Harap, Murat, and Semüka. The other reason is that all the persons documented to have borne these surnames were Christians. Most of the surnames shown in this paper to be of Kurdish origin are names of Yezidi tribes; thus, the names themselves must have been borne originally by Yezidis stationed in those areas that I mentioned. The Yezidis are neither Muslims nor Christians. It is much easier to imagine a Yezidi soldier becoming a Christian, than to imagine a Muslim Turk forsaking Islam in order to embrace Christianity. For this reason, I think that the surname Murat was introduced into Slavonia by Yezidis, and that those who bear the surname Murat (or Murad) today, who trace their ancestry to Slavonia, or Croatia, or Hungary, or Slovakia, are of Yezidi descent. Incidentally, perhaps the most famous young Kurdish woman today is Nadia Murad. She is a Yezidi.

I first published this paper in 2015, and stated in it that the surnames Atlaban and Šemuga were of Kurdish origin. When I found them, and determined that they were of Kurdish origin, I knew I had made an important discovery. I did not expect later to find the names of more than half of the Yezidi tribes as surnames in Slavonia, Croatia, Hungary, and Slovakia, but I have found such to be precisely the case.

Zurab Aloian, in *The Kurds in the Ottoman Hungary*, writes:

Yet, the most direct hint on the Kurdish factor in Hungary is the village of Kurd in Tolna county...<sup>39</sup> The coat of arms of the village depicts the wolf, referring to the Turkish word kurt for wolf. However, the name of village is Kurd, not Kurt. Then we can turn to the popular tradition which mentions an Ottoman military chief of Kurdish stock – Kurd Pasha – who is supposedly buried in the nearby forest. The idea of Kurdish settlement, in my view, could be highlighted due to the fact that previously there have been another village, only two kilometres away, named Láz. It is not excluded that the two villages bear the ethnic allusion of their settlers, who might have come here as Ottoman soldiers. The possibility becomes even more solid if we take into consideration that for some time during the Ottoman rule the village has been deserted and that until 1729 there is no data on the village population and their taxation.

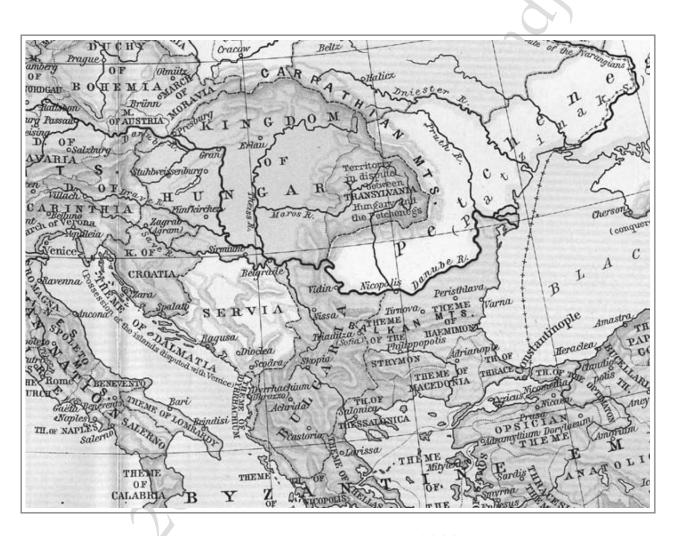
The name appears as Kurtu in the taxation letter of Dömösi and is to be found in similar forms later on. In 1542, the village belonged to Kaposment, but in 1543 a big portion of the population left it. In 1559-1560 a part of the residents came back. The rest, who moved to other places, kept their family names as Kurdi, and now one of the well-known Hungarian writers bears the name Imre Kurdi.

In 1730, decades after the Ottoman withdrawal from Hungary, the name Kurd were to be found in a source indicating on neopopulata possessio Kurd. But starting from 1729, new migrants came from central Hungary and were mostly of Slavic, Serbian and Slovak, as well as Magyar ethnic background. Since the midst of the eighteenth century and until the end of the World War II, the majority of the population were the Rheinland Germans, At present it is mixed: German, Hungarian and Gypsy. Yet, all of the 2000 residents proudly refer to themselves as Kurdi, a local patriotic definition which has lost any connotation with the legendary Kurd Pasha.

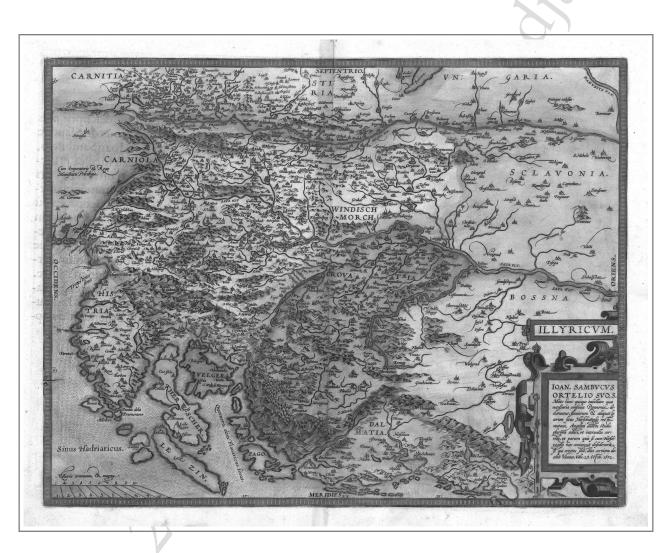
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Zurab Aloian. "The Kurds in the Ottoman Hungary." *Transoxiana*, 9 - Diciembre 2004, accessed June 6, 2025 <a href="http://www.transoxiana.org/0109/aloian-kurds">http://www.transoxiana.org/0109/aloian-kurds</a> ottoman hungary.html.

As in the case with the already mentioned Germiyan military unit, there are some general facts about the Kurds participating in the Ottoman campaigns on the territory of Hungary. Thus, the Ottoman infantry troops called sipahi, who were active in Hungary, were partly recruited from the Kurds.<sup>40</sup>

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 40}$  Zurab Aloian. "The Kurds in the Ottoman Hungary."



Eastern Europe about 1000



Illyricum 1598



Slavonia, Croatia, Bosnia, Dalmatia 1643 - 1650



Slavonia 1816 - 1822



Croatia and surrounding countries in 2017. Note the location of Kaniška Iva.