

Sultanate, which ended in the victory of the Ottoman Empire and the conquest of most of the Middle East, and also led to the destruction of the Mamluk Sultanate.

2. The Qays are considered descendants of the Prophet Ismail. Yemenites originate from Yemen and are considered descendants of Sam, the son of Prophet Nuh.
3. Here and hereafter these organizations are banned in the Russian Federation.
4. Al-Amir al-Sayyid Jamal al-Din Abdullah al-Tanuhi (1417-1479) was a Druze theologian. He is the author of works explaining the provisions of Risalat al-Hikma («Messages of Wisdom»), the holy book of the Druze.

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LARISA ALEKSANYAN. THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY IN SYRIA: HISTORY AND CURRENT STAGE

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the study of the history of the Armenian community in Syria. Particular attention is paid to the process of its formation and further development. The emphasis is made on the activities of cultural and public organizations of the community. The article also studies the impact of military actions in Syria on the state of the Armenian community. The author concludes that the Syrian crisis has dealt a great blow to the Armenian community in the country; however, the diaspora managed to maintain its traditions.

Introduction

The Armenian presence in Syria has a thousand-year history, originating from the first century BC¹. “The number of Armenians in Syria increased especially in the 9th-11th centuries due to the policy of

the Byzantine emperors to resettle Armenians in Northern Syria, as well as the fall of the Armenian kingdom of the Bagratids (1045) and the invasions of the Seljuk Turks²." Once in Syria, Armenians preferred to live compactly for security reasons, mainly in Damascus, Alexandretta and Aleppo. In the 10th century on the territory of this state there was founded the diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Syrian Armenians were actively engaged in trade and craft. Armenian merchants and craftsmen had a high reputation and, due to their hard work, were able, over time, to find their place in Syrian society. Since the 16th century, when Syria was under the control of the Ottoman Empire, the situation for the Armenians changed somewhat, difficulties appeared. These difficulties were mainly caused by the discriminatory policies of the Ottoman rulers towards the Christian population.

The next emigration of Armenians to Syria occurred at the beginning of the 20th century as a result of the genocidal policy of the Ottoman Empire. According to official data, in 1918 the number of Syrian Armenians was 142 thousand people, some of whom gradually began to emigrate to Lebanon, European countries, Canada, the US, and Armenia³. However, a significant part of the deported Armenians chose to stay in Syria, given the hospitality of the local people and state bodies. They were able to integrate into Syrian society, preserving their national traditions, religion, language. It was at this stage that the process of forming the modern Armenian community of Syria began.

Formation of Modern Armenian Communities in Syria: Major Institutions and Organizations

After being deported to Syria, Armenians received help of Armenian and American missionary and charitable groups, as well as the support of the local population. However, none of these parties had the authority to resolve issues of the legal status of Armenian refugees⁴. Food, housing and sanitation were certainly crucial for these individuals, but over time there was a growing feeling that these refugees would never return home, and accordingly, the issue of their legalization became acute. The League of Nations undertook to solve this problem, which played an important role in the formation of the Armenian community and ensuring its safety. As a result of the initiative and close work of this organization, Armenian refugees began to receive so-called "Nansen passports" (since 1924), which were recognized by 38 states. This document allowed the Armenians to regain