

Definition of Kurdistan

Fred Aprim

January 20, 2025

When it comes to the Kurdish history, there is too much misinformation that is spread on the Internet or by certain writers.

We know that, "... not every occurrence of the term Kurd in the historical sources especially those of the early period are an explicit indicator of the Kurdish ethnic element.¹ See also D'yakonov 1981: 90.

Asatrian writes: "Hardly any other field of Near Eastern Studies has even been so politicized as the study of the history and culture of the Kurds, having produced an industry of amateurs, with few rivals in other domains of Oriental studies. ... Due to the politicized nature of Kurdological disciplines, many ideological elements of non-Academic provenance, that have become a constant set of stereotypes and clichés."² Many scholars and linguist agree that the term Kurd did not reflect ethnic belonging in earlier periods. The Kurds themselves agree when they originate their Kurdish origin from a myth.³ Of course the myth originated from the most known 1597 publication of Kurdish history titled "Sharaf Namah" or The Book of Honor" by Sharaf al-Din Bitlisi, published in Persian language.

We know that the term [Kurd originated from Kwr̄t](#) of the Middle Persian, which is around the Sassanid period. Kwr̄t meant "tent-dweller nomad". For the Persians, ALL the nomads of the Zagros Mountains were seen as Kwr̄t. Again, the term did not reflect an ethnic belonging. Kwr̄t in time evolved to Kurt (plural Kurtan) and then Kurd.

Now, Kurdistan is a compound name consisting of [Kurd and istan](#), or the "land of Kurds". This compound term is similar to Afghanistan (land of Afghans), Turkomanistan (land of Turkomans), Uzbekistan (land of Uzbeks), Baluchistan (land of Baloch), Tajikistan (land of Tajiks), etc. However, a politically recognized country under the name of Kurdistan never existed at any time in history. It was always a virtual region, superimposed on the Middle East maps. The shape of this region varied depending who was doing the superimposition.

Knowing these historical and linguistic facts, we ask, what does Kurdistan really mean?

Since Kurd originated from Kwr̄t and Kwr̄t meant tent-dweller nomad and since stan meant land of; therefore, Kurdistan in reality meant originally "the land of the nomads".

¹ Vladimir Minorsky, "The Guran". In *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 9/1. pp.75-103

² Garnik Asatrian. "Prolegomena to the Study of the Kurds", Iran and the Caucasus Vol 13, No. 1. Yerevan State University. Brill, 2009, page 1-2

³ Basil Nikitin. Les Kurdes. 1956.