EVANS, H. C., ED.: ARMENIA. ART, RELIGION, AND TRADE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

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Message from His Holiness Karekin II

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In the Middle Ages. In 885 CE the Armenians reestablished themselves as a sovereign kingdom under the leadership of Ashot I of the Bagratid Dynasty. A considerable portion of the Armenian nobility and peasantry fled the Byzantine occupation of Bagratid Armenia in 1045, and the subsequent invasion of the region by Seljuk Turks in 1064. Armenians kept to their traditions and certain diasporans rose to fame with their music. In the post-Genocide Armenian community of the United States, the so-called "kef" style Armenian dance music, using Armenian and Middle Eastern folk instruments (often electrified/amplified) and some western instruments, was popular. Middle Ages. Initially Armenia remained divided between Byzantium and Iran. Later, Armenia came under the rule of the Arab Empire. After numerous rebellions against Arab rule the Armenian Bagratid family succeeded in obtaining a degree of autonomy during the VIII century and in 885 Ashot Bagraturi was granted the title of King of Armenia, acknowledged as such by both the Arab Khalifat and Byzantium. Armenia also had its national divisions, which were recognized for their courage. The 89th Armenian division progressed all the way to Berlin, took part in Berlin battles and the Armenian soldiers danced their victory dance under the walls of Reichstag. The Soviet Army had about 60 Armenian generals. Armenians refer to their country as Hayastan, a name that comes from the name Hayk. Hayk was a descendent of the Biblical Noah, and founded a powerful kingdom in the region. The suffix -stan is from Persian, and it was added in the Middle Ages. The word Armenia has been used for around 2,500 years, and probably comes from the name of Aram, who himself was a descendent of Hayk. The land that has historically been populated by Armenians, in eastern Anatolia and the southern Caucasus Mountains, has been the site of different kingdoms and invasions for millennia. This means that there have bee During the Middle Ages, Armenians established a new kingdom in Cilicia, which despite its strong European influence, not unlike Cyprus, was often considered as being part of the Levant, thus in the Middle East. There were Armenian communities (in the form of well-established quarters in major cities) in the Edessa region, Northern Syria, Jerusalem, Egypt, and have played a direct role in many key events, such as the Crusades. The Armenians presence in northern Persia/Iran continued to increase. Armenians in Egypt are a community with a long history. They are a minority with their own language, schools, churches, and social institutions. The number of Armenians in Egypt is decreasing due to migrations to other countries and a return migration to Armenia.