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# The Life and Political Role of Kurdish Women in the Ottoman Empire

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**Abstract:** Kurdish women have always played a major role in communal and political activities, notably during the Ayyubid dynasty. In the Ottoman era, many Kurdish women played a great role in politics and even ruled in some places. However, populist feminist narratives have been ignorant of the strident role played by Kurdish women during the Golden age of Islam in Kurdistan, including believing Orientalist stereotypes that they had no rights and could not go outside freely. This article shows the dynamic role of Kurdish women in the Ottoman era, particularly their contributions in politics, using qualitative historical and textual analysis, with an exploratory qualitative research design, depending on both the primary and secondary sources. This article also presents a more authentic understanding of Kurdish women's lives in their communities, particularly their highly influential role in dynastic politics and their symbiotic careerism with their husbands and sons.

**Keywords:** Kurdish women, Kurds, Kurdistan, political role, Ottoman era.

## Introduction

Many Kurdish women have played a major role in Kurdish life and culture as well as in Islamic civilisation throughout history. Under the Ayyubid dynasty, they were great patrons and scholars of *hadith* as well as strong political figures. Kurdish women played a crucial role in the

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political sphere of Kurdistan, especially in ruling the principalities and fighting against their enemies, often supporting their husbands and sons as the power behind the throne, as well as exercising power themselves (Joseph, 2005). In the early history of Islam in Kurdistan, the Kurds were engaged in political affairs in Kurdish principalities, for example, in the Dustaki State (983-1093), with its capital in Mayyafariqin, which was located in the current Kurdistan of Turkey, around the land of Jazira. Some sources state that Jazira was named after Jazirat Ibn ʿUmar. Meer Badh ibn Dustak, the son of Dustak (983-990), established the kingdom after protracted wars. The Marwani family was descended from Marwan ibn Kak, who ruled after Meer Badh was killed (Mohammed, 2018). In this state, many Kurdish women were enrolled in the political field, including Fāṭima bint Aḥmad al-Kurdi (also known as Fāṭima Khatun), a great politician in the Abbasid caliphate who secured the rule of her son, Abū Taghlib. She arrested Nāṣir al-Dawla in the Dustaki State in the 4th century H (Zeki Beg, 2000). In addition, al-Amira al-Daylamiya, Amir Badh bin Dustak's wife, ruled from the Hisn Kayfa fortress after her husband was killed in Mosul in 990 CE. Al-Amir Abi Ali Hassan bin Marwan came to his aunt's castle with his army and informed her that his uncle was dead. He then proposed a matrimonial alliance with al-Amira al-Daylamiya whereby he would be rendered every castle and city and she would be consulted in the ruling and administration of his state. She accepted this offer and became a major figure in the Marwani State without any conflict. Sitt ʿAzīza bint Zanki bin Awan held Diyarbakir after losing her husband, Amir Saʿīd bin Nāṣir al-Dawla, in 464 H/1072 CE. She then agreed to marry Amir Niẓām al-Dīn and gave him the city. Similarly, Sitt al-Malik bint Nāṣir al-Dawla built the Marwan dome in the suburb of Farqin, which included her father's grave, while Sitt al-Nas bint Amir Saʿīd (Raḥima) created a tomb for her husband, Nāṣir al-Dawla Manṣūr, and also bought and converted a church into a mosque. In the negotiation with Seljuks, Sitt al-Malik bint Nāṣir al-Dawla met Niẓām al-Mulk al-Ṭūsī, who was a vizier of Sultan Alp Arsalan in the Seljuk State, and gave Farqin to them in 463 H/1071 CE (Yusuf, 2001). The Rawaddi State (954-1071) was one of the most important Kurdish dynasties during the Abbasid era, ruling in Tabriz, Azerbaijan, Ardabil, Urmia, Maragha and Miyana. The name of this territory goes back to the Kurdish Rawaddi tribe. Ibn Khallikan al-Irbili mentions that the Rawaddis were a great Kurdish tribe whose founder, Muhammad ibn Husain Rawaddi, drew on the great loyalty of his tribal

followers. Princess Hwadad Khatun was the last ruler of the Rawaddi State. Ruling in the city of Maragha, she was the granddaughter of ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Beg, who passed away in 604 H. After she married Jalāl al-Dīn Khwarizmshah, the Rawaddi lands were absorbed into the Khwarizm State (al-Swirky, 2000).

The political role of women in the Ayyubid dynasty was expanded. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī's grandfather belonged to a Kurdish tribe, whose forefathers had settled in northern Armenia. Along with most Kurdish tribes, they became progressively integrated with the Turkic world during the course of long service in the Abbasid Caliphate and later Turkic Sultanates. Ayyūb, the father of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, was born in Dwin, which is near Karkh in eastern Azerbaijan. His father, Shādhī, served a Shaddadi family of Kurdish descent, whom the Seljuk Sultan Alp Arsalan had made the governor of that territory. After a while, he left Dwin for Iraq as circumstances became unfavorable for him there. In Iraq, he was welcomed by his friend, Bahruz, the military governor of Iraq under the Seljuk Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Masʿūd. Bahruz appointed Shādhī as his governor of the town of Tikrit, situated on the bank of Tigris, which was granted to him as a fief. After the death of Shādhī, his elder son, Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, became the governor of Tikrit. His younger brother, Asad al-Dīn Shīrkūh, also assisted him in the administration of the town. They managed the affairs of the city with such dedication, love and wisdom that they soon became highly popular among the local people. In the meantime, ʿImād al-Dīn Zanki, the ruler of Mosul, was defeated by the army of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mustarshid in battle, in which Bahruz also fought on the side of the Caliphate. Caught between the enemy behind and the river ahead, Zanki almost despaired for his life. His only option was to escape to Mosul via Tikrit. Hence, he took shelter with Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb and sought his assistance in this task. Ayyūb provided him with some boats, by which he and his army crossed the Tigris and safely reached Mosul. Ayyūb was put to task by the authorities of Baghdad for having assisted the enemy. Simultaneously, another serious incident involved Shīrkūh killing a close confidant of Bahruz with regard to the charge of sexually assaulting a helpless woman. The matter was reported to the court of Baghdad in an exaggerated manner, the consequences of which were warrants issued to arrest both Ayyūb and Shīrkūh. However, before they could be arrested, both of them left Tikrit for Mosul in 1138. Ṣalāḥ al-

Dīn was born on the same night they fled, along with their families. After that, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn lived in Mosul and then moved with his uncle, Asad al-Dīn Shīrkūh, and their army. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn later established the Ayyubid State after destroying the Fatimid Caliphate in 1171 (Anjum, 2002; Mohammed, 2018; Ibn Khallikan, 1961; Ibn Shaddād, 1934). After the death of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in 1193, many of his relatives ruled in the Ayyubid State, with a prominent role for the women of the family, one of them being Ḍayfa Khatun (also known as Safiya Khatun). She was the daughter of al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Sayf al-Dīn Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ayyūb, who was the brother of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. Al-Malik alʿĀdil was born in 1143 and once ruled Aleppo before passing away in 1218 (al-Zaʿbi, 2003). Ḍayfa Khatun was the following: the wife of her cousin, al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Ghāzī ibn Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī, who was the ruler of Aleppo; the mother of al-ʿAzīz, who became the ruler of Aleppo; and the grandmother of the ruler of Damascus, al-Nāṣir. She was born in the Citadel of Aleppo in 1185 and was raised there (al-Zarkaly, 2002). She was renowned for her knowledge, faith and strong power. She established Al-Firdaus Madrasah in Aleppo in 1235, lavishly endowing it and paying the teachers' salaries (Ali, 2005). Her husband passed away and his rule ended in 1236, after which it passed to her son, al-Malik al-ʿAzīz. Since he was young, Ḍayfa Khatun, then aged 52, ruled as regent for six years (Othman, 2010; al-Zarkaly, 2002) and assisted by Shams al-Dīn Luʾluʾ. She passed away in 1242 at the age of 58, after which her grandson assumed control at the age of 13 (Yusuf, 1992).

Another important woman is Ghāziya Khatun, who was the daughter in law of al-Malik al-Kāmil and the widow of al-Malik al-Muẓaffar. Prior to her passing in 655 H/1257, she ruled the city of Hama on behalf of her son, al-Malik al-Manṣūr Muḥammad, until he grew up. He became the ruler of Hama in 1242 until he passed away in 1284 (al-Zaʿbi, 2003). During the siege of Damascus in 1229, al-Kāmil decided to dispatch a force against the fortress of al-Karak, where Ghāziya Khatun was then residing. When al-Kāmil's force appeared beneath the walls, commanded by two former Amirs of al-Muʿazzam, she ordered a sortie against them by the people of Karak castle. Al-Kāmil's forces, perhaps surprised by this show of resistance, were driven off in confusion, while the two commanders were captured. She threw them into a dungeon in the fortress, where they remained until they died (Humphreys, 1977).

It can be seen from this brief overview that women played a pervasive role in the political and dynastic affairs in pre-Ottoman Kurdish history.

## Kurds and the Ottomans

As mentioned previously, the Kurds lived alongside Turkic peoples from the early Abbasid era and had formal relations with the Ottomans since the Battle of Chaldiran, which happened in 1514 between the Ottomans and Safavids (Kalman, 1994). Others trace relations much earlier to the Kurdish tutor of Sultan Muḥammad II the Conqueror (al-Fātiḥ), Molla-i Gorrani, whose full name was Aḥmad bin Ismāʿīl. Born in 1410 in Shahrizor, he visited and lived in Damascus, Egypt, Cairo, Hijaz, Bursa and Istanbul. He became Ibn al-Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's student, then travelled to Bursa in 1441, where he was appointed as a lecturer. He subsequently became a special teacher to Sultan Muhammad II in 1442 (Othman & Rostam, 2013).

He taught Sultan Muhammad II and encouraged him to conquer Constantinople in 1453 (Othman & Rostam, 2013). Other sources believe that the first relationship between the Kurds and Ottomans goes back to Sultan Orhan's time, during which a Kurdish Imam named Mawlana Tāj al-Dīn al-Kurdi, known as Khayr al-Dīn Pasha, became the Grand Vizier of Sultan Orhan (Galip, 2015). Undoubtedly, the Ottomans and Kurds certainly had familiarity with each other prior to the onset of formal relations from 1514 onwards. Evliya Çelebi (1611-1684) traced their interactions to Yildirim Khan in the Malatya Citadel in Kurdistan:

> When the Diyarbakir's leader and Marʿash's leader were struggling to divide their realms, the Kurds of Malatya revolted against them and asked the Ottomans to help them. The revolutionaries asked Yildirim Khan in Bursa to come to Kurdistan and help them against their rulers, and the Ottoman's army also got Amasya and Sivas. After a while, the population of Malatya revolted against Yildirim Khan, therefore Yildirim with a hundred thousand soldiers attacked this Citadel in 800 and opened it. (Çelebi, 2000, p. 12)

Çelebi also alluded to the revered Ottoman progenitor, Sulaymān Shah, the grandfather of the founder of the Ottoman Empire, Osman

Bey, and his son named Ertuğrul staying in Malatya when they first came from the Steppes, after which they went to the Roman frontiers. In other section, Çelebi mentions about Kaya Alp Bay, the grandfather of Ertuğrul, living in the Citadels of Ahlad and Urfa (Çelebi, 2000). These two towns were mostly Kurdish inhabited areas. For these reasons, Çelebi is credited with mentioning the earliest ties between the Kurds and Ottomans.

## Women's Lives and Status in Kurdistan in the Ottoman Era

Kurdish women naturally comprised numerous socio-economic and geographical groups during the Ottoman era, and the only commonality universal to all of them was the general observance of a Kurdish Islamic lifestyle (Homar, 2016). More extensive documentation is available concerning elite women - such as the mothers, daughters and sisters of powerful men - including their roles in settling conflicts and social problems, not least in auspicious marriages. Individual women continued to play a major role as stewards governing their husbands' lands while the latter were travelling or on campaign, and even ruling directly as regents (Joseph, 2005). *The Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Culture* shows some information about Kurdish life under the Ottoman rule with regard to Çelebi's travelogue:

> In the Bitlis principality the female members of the prince's family, together with maids and slave girls, were confined to the harem. Apparently in exaggeration, he noted that women were not allowed into the marketplace, and would be killed if they went there. (Çelebi, 2000, p. 358)

As the *Encyclopedia* acknowledges that this is a hyperbole signifying the jealousy of a particular ruling house in Bitlis, in other entries, Çelebi alluded to the freedom of Kurdish women and the great love their husbands held for them. The Kurds were noted for their love of bathing; hence, expensive household baths were installed for women to bathe and thus avoid the negative impacts of cold weather. Most houses in Imadiyye had their own bathrooms (Alpaslan, 2014):

> The building of cleaner baths, this city has… baths, but they are not developed and repaired like other baths in Kurdistan. They were created in the past, and are great buildings. In

> addition, the people of this city created household baths for their women, because they do not like their women go outside to bathe and come back and the cold weather could make them ill. (Çelebi, 2000, p. 307)

Kurdish women wore modest Islamic dress, typically a *sirwāl* (trousers) and a tunic blouse, with a coloured headscarf, as noted of the women of Van (Çelebi, 2000). Çelebi discussed women's clothes in Diyarbakir, where "all of the women wear a white headscarf and cloth to cover their face, and put a small gold on their heads, and boots for their feet; they are faithful to their husbands and look very beautiful" (Çelebi, 2000, p. 50).

Women in Bitlis were famous for their dedication to preserving their modesty and chastity as well as avoiding markets or public bathrooms. They had clothes sewn from silk fabrics, and silver or gold embroidered caps on their heads. When they went out, they wore a thin white veil on their heads, thereby covering their faces (Çelebi, 2000). Çelebi stayed in Kurdistan for a long time, which is why his descriptions are particularly important as he regularly saw Kurdish women from various regions in the streets. All of his descriptions of Kurdish women's clothes are in accordance with those recorded by İzzat (2009).

Women had a significant role in their family and social activities with their husbands, and were noted for their frugality and conscientiousness (al-Damluji, 1999). Due to the difficult terrain of Kurdistan, they were skilled horsewomen and helped their husbands in the fields (Nabaz, 2003). Some Western travellers who visited Kurdistan noted the strength of Kurdish women. One of such traveller was a German voyager named Lerkh Petr who noted that, in the villages, women carried their children and toiled the fields, wove carpets, fabrics and sheets and also sewed clothes (Lerkh, 2008). Molla Mahmood Bayazidi, who was born in 1797, wrote *ʿAdat wa Aʿaraf al-Ṭawaʾ al-Kurdiya* (Habits and Customs of Kurdish Tribes) in which he discussed about Kurdish culture at that time, with much information on women (Nabaz, 2003). He lived in the Soran Emirate and noted that "Kurdish women are respected by their husbands and they are freer than women from other nations, even during the battle, they fight beside her husband against their enemies" (Nabaz, 2003, p. 123).

In general, Kurdish women were notably freer than their counterparts in other nations in the Middle East, and Kurdish husbands had a great deal of trust in their wives (Lerkh, 2008). If the husbands were not in the house, the wives would still welcome guests and serve them (Son, 2007). Claudius James Rich believed that "the Kurdish women's positions are greater than Turk, Arab, and Persian women" (Son, 2007, p. 35). Major Frederick Millingen also believed that "the Kurdish women are very free and intelligent, they are loyalty do not do any treason against their husbands, they are grateful in order to do anything" (Millingen, 1870, p. 250). Moreover, as described by James Bryce (1910), who was born in 1838 and passed away in 1922, "Kurdish women wear headscarf but do not put any fabric on their face, and they are not afraid of us and people of the Caucasus" (Bryce, 2010, pp. 254-255). Pietro Della Valle notes that "Kurdish women do not wear hijab, and they are talking with their men and us freely" (Della Valle, 2006, p. 94). Clearly, these conflicting accounts represent different times and geographically diverse communities and, in general, refer to peasants that travellers were more likely to encounter (Homar, 2016).

## The Role of Kurdish Women in Kurdistan under the Ottomans

The situation of Kurdish women under the Ottomans was generally a continuation from the preceding eras. In the Luristan Emirate, there was a female ruler named Dawla Khatun, who assumed governance after the death of her husband, ʿIzz al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 716H). However, she was unable to maintain power amidst intrigues among the emirate family and consequently ceded control to her brother, ʿIzz al-Dīn Husayn (Al-Swirky, 2000; Zeki Beg, 2000).

The Bitlis Emirate, which was a *vilayet* (province) in the Ottoman Empire, was ruled by Shah Khatun after the death of her husband, Amir Shams al-Din. She ruled ably until her son, Amir Ibrāhīm, ascended to rule in 835 H (al-Swirky, 2000; Zeki Beg, 2000). This emirate was called Rozhakiyans and encompassed a wide area with a huge army. Çelebi narrated about Shah Khatun's grandson named Abdal Khan:

> The head of this government named Abdal Khan and his people were the Kurds. During the war, the Bitlis government had 5,000 soldiers. The government's administration was

> created by the tribes, and they did not become Melek Ahmed Pasha's guests just for ten days. (Çelebi, 2000, p. 128)

However, Çelebi narrates about the Bey (Governor) of Bitlis' help to Sultan Murad IV during the Baghdad campaign. The Bey of Bitlis welcomed the Sultan and serviced him when he returned from the Baghdad campaign. Sultan Murad IV stayed in Bitlis for a while and appointed the Bey to collect Mush City's incomes for himself. The Bey of Bitlis spent these incomes on the guards of the Citadel and repaired the bazaar at Bitlis. However, the key of the Bitlis Citadel was with the Bey of Bitlis because it was an independent government (Çelebi, 2000).

The Soran Emirate was ruled by Khanzad (1555-1615 CE), the daughter of Amir Hassan, after her spouse, Meer Suleiman bin Shakaly, was arrested by the Ottomans in Baghdad. She served the emirate very well and spent much time listening to the problems of her community and building many mosques. In addition, she moved the capital of the emirate from Dwin Qala to Harir and built the Kalasw fortress to protect her capital from enemies. She even prepared a large army and attacked many surrounding cities (Zeki Beg, 2000; Nabaz, 2003). Çelebi was amazed at a situation during the reign of Sultan Murad IV, when a Kurdish woman named Khanzad-i Meer-i Soran commanded Harir and Soran in Shahrizor Province. Despite the Soran Emirate not being a *vilayet* per se, she had a huge army of between 40,000 and 50,000 soldiers, including 12,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry archers. This example was unique, and she fascinated Çelebi as a Kurdish warrior queen who successfully attacked the Safavid strongholds of Hamadan and Dergazin (Çelebi, 2000). Her name remains legendary and is commemorated in many Kurdish songs and poems, especially in the Laskiri poem (al-Swirky, 2000).

Qarafatim (Black Fatim) was a female warrior born in 1854. During the Crimean War, she fought for the Ottomans against the Russians in Qaris and Erzurum in 1887, leading a battalion of 500 men. Her fierce leadership captured the imagination of the West (Zeki Beg, 2000). In 1887, the *New York Times* featured a profile on her, describing her as "the redoubtable female warrior of Kurdistan." *Al-Waqyʿ Newspaper*, No.730, which was published on November 4, 1877, described her as follows:

> We have already talked about the Kurdish princess, who led the military by herself, and now it is learned from the news of Astana (Istanbul) that this princess was called Qara Fatima. When the Ottomans attacked the village of Qawzim Tepe (Qawzim Hill), she was a leader of the group of soldiers, and she is one of the people of Bruce, who is a young and wealthy beauty with vigor, patriotic jealousy, and Islamic diet, with which she formed a group of 500 volunteers from her countrymen. (Zeki Beg, 2000, p. 247)

Given the nurturing, placid feminine archetype of the West during the Crimean War that was embodied in Florence Nightingale, it is truly remarkable that there were women leading crack units in the Ottoman ranks. At the end of the Ottoman rule in Kurdistan, ʿAdila Khan (1859-1924) lived in the city of Sine, in the Kurdistan region of Iran. She married Osman Pasha ibn Muhammad Pasha, the head of the Jaf tribe, in 1895 (Zeki Beg, 2000). She moved from Sine to Halabja in the same year and after the death of her husband in 1909, she came to rule Halabja and became famous for her governing capabilities. She built a bazaar and garden in the Persian style as well as the institution of the Court of Justice, over which she presided (al-Swirky, 2000). A British writer and diplomat named Major E. B. Soane travelled to the Kurdish borderlands in the early 1900s and wrote the first English-language manual of Kurdish grammar. He met her in Halabja and described her as a woman unique in Islam, both in the power she possessed and the efficacy with which she used the weapons in her hands. In addition, during the First World War, she helped save the lives of several British soldiers stationed in Halabja, which earned her the title of *Khan Bahadur* (Princess of the Brave) from the British (al-Swirky, 2000).

At the beginning of the 20th century, there were many Kurdish women who led their tribes. One such woman was Qadem Kher, who revolted against Reza Shah Pahlavi of Iran after her brother, Shah Murad, was killed by the Shah in 1925. She arose and gathered her tribe's warriors and fought a five-year rebellion against the Persians. She even inspired the Kurdish leader, Sheikh Maḥmūd, to combine their forces and fight for the independence of the whole of Kurdistan. This was because Sheikh Maḥmūd came from a great family that was a part of the Qādiriyya Sufi order in Kurdistan of the well-known Barzinji tribe. His full name was Muḥammad al-Hafid, son of Sheikh Saʿīd, son

of Muḥammad, son of Hajj Aḥmad. He was born in 1881 in a small place called Kani Askan. He studied Islamic sciences and was fluent in Kurdish, Arabic, Turkish and Persian. He led the Kurdish national struggle for decades to the point where he could establish a country in Sulaymaniyya and the surrounding areas. Unfortunately, though, it was destroyed by British colonial warfare. He died in 1956 (al-Bayati, 2005). Eventually, Reza Shah mediated an agreement and controlled some Kurdish leaders around Qadem Kher. Moreover, he sent a golden Holy Quran with his signature to her to show his honest intentions. Eventually, Qadem Kher surrendered, but Reza Shah treacherously imprisoned her until she died (Jabbary, 1969).

Women in the Kurdish tribes also resisted Ottoman attempts to combine Kurdish tribes and govern them more directly. These women included Mama Pwra Halima in Pishdar, Mam Pwra Nergiz of the Shwan tribe (Izedi, 2002), Mam Prshang of the Milan tribe and other women, namely Pery Khan, Shemse Khatun, Meryem Khanum and Fasla Khatun. In addition, Major E. B. Soane mentioned many brave horsewomen from Hamawand tribe who fought against the Ottomans (Son, 2007).

At the end of the Ottoman era, in 1919, a Kurdish women's organisation named Kürt Kadınları Teʿalî Cemʿiyeti was established in Kadıköy, Istanbul. This group sought to show Kurdish women's abilities in political and other social activities, and to find employment and provide education for Kurdish women and children, for which they opened many schools in Kurdistan. Many women from the Badirkhan family were involved in this organisation, such as Adwiye Khatun, Nazli Khatun, Zarife Khatun, Nazira Khatun, Saedet Khatun and Princess Layla Khan. Princess Amine Khan was the head of the organisation (Altan & Akbaş, 2019).

It can be seen that Kurdish women were prepared to fight against great powers to protect their tribes and homeland, including the Persian and Ottoman Empires, as well as to strive to improve conditions for women, children and society in general in Kurdistan.

## Conclusion

This article concludes that Kurdish women played a great role in the political sphere in Kurdistan under the Ottomans. According to European travellers who came to the Near East to visit Kurdistan, Kurdish women were freer than those from other nations and were fiercely loyal to their husbands. In addition, ordinary women helped their husbands by working both in the fields and in their homes, just as noble women helped their menfolk in the political sphere. Many Kurdish women became rulers in their own right in Kurdish principalities before the Ottoman era and often served as regents after the death of their husbands or until their sons attained their maturity. They were not mere figureheads, but rather actively engaged in all aspects of the political sphere, even in leading armies on the battlefield. Indeed, even during the late Ottoman era, Kurdish women led battalions during the Crimean War between the Ottomans and Russians, including at the battles of Qaris and Erzurum in 1887, and many newspapers at the time wrote about their bravery.

Kurdish women fought against Iran, as evidenced during the early 20th century when Qadem Kher revolted against Reza Shah Pahlavi of Iran after her brother, Shah Murad, was killed by the latter in 1925; she even tried to coordinate an alliance among the Kurds. Most modern Kurdish women are still engaged in civil society activities, such as women's organisations and education, in preparing women to become leaders. Indeed, the first of such an organisation, Kürt Kadınları Teʿalî Cemʿiyeti, was established in 1919. However, they retain the passion and bravery of their foremothers, which was evident most recently when Kurdish women were at the forefront of the war against Daesh after the Iraqi army fled Mosul in 2014.

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