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ARMENIAN NAKHIJEVAN OF THE XVII CENTURY EVIDENCED BY JEAN CHARDIN

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Introduction

Nakhijevan¹ is an area of 5,500 square kilometers within the north-east Armenia (also explained by Chardin as Upper or Eastern Armenia²), and in the north of the Araxes River, near the slopes of Masis (Ararat). It is the border area of Armenia in the north, which borders proper Iran in the south. On the other hand, it also has a small strip that borders Turkey.³ Now, in the 21st century, this district forms an autonomous unit within the Republic of Azerbaijan, though it has no common border with this country and lives separately. Nakhijevan has

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¹ The gist of the study and of the testimony by Chardin is the meaning “Armenian Nakhijevan,” which is not equivalent to merely the Armenians who lived in the unknown by its national affiliation region. Nakhijevan of the 17th century is an Armenian administrative unit, conquered, ruled and subordinated by the Persian Empire. Its de-ethnification was caused by the Persian-Turkish Wars with their huge scorched-earth policy of the Shah Abbas I. However, Jean Chardin recorded that at the moment of his trip to this region ruined 70 years before, the latter was reviving and being reconstructed as a national area. See: **Ağalarlı** 2016, 43–44; **Galichian** 2012, 89–92, 107–110, 147–148, 197; **Галчян** 2013, с. 79, 81, 83, 97.

² Travels of **Sr. John Chardin** 1686, 333, 345–346, 348. About Jean Chardin (1643–1713): Richards 1959, Abbasi 1959, 5. In Persian: سفرنامه سر جان شاردن به ایران، مترجم محمد عباسی، تهران، امیرکبیر، 1337، ص 5.

³ According to the Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin in 1639 the border between Safavid Iran and Ottoman Empire in East Anatolia (West Armenia) was Kars, and Nakhijevan had no border with the Ottomans.

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undergone ups and down in its history with many changes and conquests, and there is no complete consensus among historians about the origin of the city*.

The Armenian prime sources and historians mention that Nakhijevan was founded by the Armenian king Tigranes II the Great⁴. They base their reports on Josephus Flavius (1st century AD) and Ptolemy (2nd century).

As far as Chardin is concerned, he tells nothing about the builder of the city. So, the aim of this article is to show the importance of Chardin's account on Nakhijevan, relating to the Armenian essence and every-day life of the native people of the area except the Persian speakers, mainly represented by the Imperial Garrisons and Nobility. Therefore, his exposition clearly testifies that this land had native Armenians together with Persians, who served in the Garrisons and civil administration. The French traveller tells nothing about Persian craftsmen, traders or villages in the area. Finally, his report on Nakhijevan brings us to the conclusion that demographic changes in favor of the Turks and the intended policy of Turkification occurred and sped up after Chardin's time.

Jean-Baptiste Chardin was the son of a French jeweler (a wealthy Huguenot family⁵ who ran their customary business)⁶. He was born in Paris in 1643, the year of Louis the XIV's (1643–1715) accession to the French throne. His father Daniel was a wealthy Huguenot jewelry merchant with business interests in India. After enjoying an excellent education, Jean followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a gem merchant.⁷ Like his precursors J. Tavernier and J. de Thevenot, Chardin practised the same métier and Christian affiliation; he also travelled independently to Persia for commercial purposes.⁸ He first left for Asia in 1664,

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⁴ See: Հակոբյան, Մելիք-Բախչյան, Բարսեղյան 1991, 951–952:

⁵ Protestant.

⁶ Mokhberi 2019, 1.

⁷ شاردن، ژان . سیاحت نامه شاردن، ترجمه محمد عباسی، تهران، موسسه چاپ و انتشارات امیرکبیر، 1393، جلد اول، ص 5.

⁸ The Travels of Monsieur de Thevenot 1687, 70.

accompanied by Antoine Raison – a goldsmith from Lyon⁹ who was a business associate of his father¹⁰.

Jean Chardin has become the most famous expert in Iranian Studies who conveys important information about the region. Although his description is not complete or very accurate, his account gives us a good portrait of the Persian Empire with Erivan and Nakhijevan Khanates of the 17th century. Chardin started his journey to Iran in 1664 and returned to Paris in 1669. He published his first work in 1671. In the same 1671 he returned to Iran (Persia) and remained here until 1677¹¹. He lived in Iran for about ten years¹². After a while, Chardin entered the court of Shah Abbas II¹³ from the Safavid dynasty and learned Persian fluently. In his travelogue he presented his stay and voyages through the region in detail, as far as he had made interesting observations and collected information about Iran.

One of the most important aims of Chardin's voyage to Persia was to find out some new trade route other than the Silk Road from Europe to India and China. France as a rival of Britain in the 17th century was eager to reach China by some new and safe route. The ambassador of France in Constantinople had openly tensed relations with the Ottoman Court. That's why when Chardin stayed in Constantinople, he had to escape from the city and went to Georgia. Above all, he had a thought in his mind and was looking for a possibility to establish business ties in Russia as well.

Chardin Travel Route from Tbilisi to Tabriz

Chardin chose to travel to Iran via the Black Sea and Georgia, as far as the land voyage had been too dangerous for him. So, he did not travel through Asia Minor (which he never called Anatolia) and Upper Armenia to the Levant and Mosul like the others did before him. He arrived in Kakhids¹⁴ and Georgia¹⁵. In that period, Georgia and Armenia were countries, conquered by and incorporated

⁹ Emerson, 327–328; Richards, Ibid.

¹⁰ Faithorne, ibid.

¹¹ Navai, Ghafari Fard 2007.

¹² Richards 1959, 327–328. شاردن، همان، صص

¹³ Shah Abbas II was the seventh Safavid king of Iran from 1642 to 1666 AD.

¹⁴ Kakhid or Kalshid in Persian (کلشید) was the ancient name of the Eastern part of the Black Sea, named Colchis in the Greco-Roman geography, and located today in western Georgia.

¹⁵ Sir John Chardin's 2012, 9.

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into the Safavid Empire. The Frenchman had chosen this route as the safest way for him to go to Iran.

He depicted borders of Iranian territories and repeatedly emphasized in his travelogue in Tbilisi that his intention was to reach the boundaries of Iran as soon as possible¹⁶. He said he had a letter with recommendations by the French Ambassador and the sovereign minister of the Republic of Geneva for his voyage to Iran. He also informed that Georgia or Colchis (Kakhid) had a Viceroy¹⁷.

At the beginning of Chardin's visit to Georgia, he doesn't indicate the date of his arrival, although he came to Tbilisi and came from there to Armenia and then Ardabil.¹⁸ It is from this route that he traveled to Nakhijevan to continue his way to Isfahan and the court of the Safavid Shah. He stayed in Yerevan from March 7 to April 8, 1673, that was quite sufficient to collect and record information about this city and its history.

So, J. Chardin writes: "On [April] eighth, an hour before day, I parted from Erivan and travelled four Leagues [i.e. 19.3 km] over the little hills and through valleys and Country which I crossed being full of Villages. In one of which that was a very fair and large one I lodged, called by the name Daivin¹⁹ [Dvin], (دئوین). On [April] ninth, we travelled five Leagues [24,1 km] through a country that was very level and fertile, and whatever is called the mountain of Noah²⁰, was to the right. We directed our course South-West, and stopped at village Kainer²¹.

¹⁶ Ibid., 382.

¹⁷ شاردين، همان، ص 64.

¹⁸ Chardin 2012, 382.

¹⁹ Travels 1686, 344. Dvin (Դւին, Դվին Dwin-Duin) that means "Hill" in Persian, as recorded by Movses Khorenatsi, is located 35 km south-east of Yerevan and was the capital of Armenia in 335–428. The Armenian sources mention that this city was built by the Armenian King Khosrov III Kotak in 335 on the spot of an old fortress. Movses Khorenatsi writes that Khosrov came to the throne in the third year of the Persian King Hormozd (هرمزد). In the "eighth year of the reign of Constantius he [Khosrov III] planted a forest near the Azad River, which is still called by his name. He also moved the Court to a hill at the top of the forest, and built a sun-protected palace....As the unclear and warm air smelt disgusting, the residents of Artashat (in Ararat Province) could not stand this [reality] and voluntarily undertook this relocation" – Մովսես Խորենացի 1997, 216. Then, the Sasanian Shahanshahs made it the residence of their Governors, called Marzpanes. Afterwards it was a Seat for Byzantine Kuropalates and Arab Ostikans, who established the center of the Province of Armenia here. Dvin had been important in trade and crafts till 1236, when it was completely destroyed by Mongols.

²⁰ According to a widespread medieval myth, Mount Noah is Mount Ararat (Masis); its slopes are perceived as a landing place for Noah's ark. The peak of Masis was linked to the

[On April] tenth, we travelled 8 Leagues [38,6 km] and passed half the way before we reached a great town called Sadarak²². It was the Capital of the Province of Armenia called Sharur²³, and the sultan of the Province resided in that town. That night we had but a very bad lodging in an old ruined Inn, near a village called Norashen²⁴.

According to Chardin, he went to the historical city of Dvin and passed from the plain of Ararat in the region of Little Sis²⁵ or Little Ararat to the plain of Nakhijevan. Mount Ararat was to the right, and from the southeastern slopes of Sis he passed to the village of Qainar (قاینار). Continuing the route, the French traveler reached the large village of Sadarak²⁶ (سه دره), which is located in the present-day Nakhijevan district. It is interesting to mention that the toponym Nakhijevan, which has been used since ancient times, derives from a Persian word meaning "three valleys". Thus, this route was the smoothest and closest road to Nakhijevan, which was under the jurisdiction of Yerevan province and its Sardar Biglarbeyg. Chardin also called Sadarak the regional center of Armenia, where the Sultan (monarch) of the region resided²⁷.

The merchant also writes: "On [April] eleventh, we traveled four Leagues [19,3 km] along the same road, and through a very fair Country; but not so level or smooth. It was stony, and full of little hills. We also ferried over a river called

toponyms Ararat and Nakhijevan, where according to the Bible Noah descended from the ark and had his rest. However, J. Chardin stipulates that the genuine mount Ararat with the Ark should be searched in the Corduenian region, to the south-west of Lake Van – Travels 1686, 252–253.

²¹ Not located on the map.

²² Sedarec (سدراک).

²³ Charour (شرور) was a small town. Today the whole district is called by the name Sharur, which comes from Persian but originally was extracted from the word "Shar" (شر).

²⁴ Nouratchin (نوراجین) See: Travels 1686, 344 and Sir John Chardin's 2012, 386–388. This village exists till now, though without its Armenian dwellers.

²⁵ Movses Khorenatsi in his book "History of Armenia" writes that toponyms Sis and Masis came from Hayk's great – grandson Amasia's name. Although they were characterized as descendants of Noah, Khorenatsi does not link those peaks with the Great Deluge. Amasia came from Armavir, settled his sons in the area and returned to his city. See: Մովսես Խորենացի 1997, ԺԲ, 88.

²⁶ 192. سمیعا، همان، ص In the book Tazkerat al-Muluk, Mirza Samea has written the name of Sadarak in Persian (صدراک) Sadrak, and it is located in the area of Sharur in the middle of the road from Yerevan to Nakhijevan.

²⁷ Travels 1686, 256, 344 and Chardin 2012, 387–388.

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Arpa²⁸ that waters all the neighboring lands. It separates the Government of that part of Armenia, of which Erivan is the Capital, from that other part of which Nakhijevan is the Metropolis"²⁹.

Chardin states that the Arpa River is a border between two Khanates which separated the Erivan Khanate from the Nakhijevan administrative unit. The center of the first part is Yerevan and the center of the second part is Nakhijevan. So, it means that the traveler includes the whole of the Arpa plain in Armenia. He has explicitly determined that the western part of this river is in the Khanate of Yerevan. Chardin calls the ruler of the state of Armenia (ارمنستان ولایت) Biglarbeyg (بیگلربیگ)³⁰ and the ruler of Yerevan Khan (خان) and has introduced him as Safi Gholi Khan³¹. Chardin says that when a State (ولایت) is big and important for the Empire, the king gives the title "Beglerbeg"³². Therefore, on March 7 - April 13, 1673, Chardin reported that Nakhijevan Khanate entered the bigger Armenian province which was part of Safavid or Iranian Empire.

Chardin's Description of Nakhijevan

Chardin describes the geographical location of Nakhijevan and writes that the Arax flows through and fertilizes the plain of Ararat – the site of major Armenian cities like Armavir, Yervandashat, Artashat, Yerevan, Dvin, Ani³³, Nakhijevan and Vagharshapat³⁴, all of them being Capitals of the country during different periods, except Nakhijevan.

²⁸ The toponym "Harpasouy" should undoubtedly imply "Harpasouy" or Arpa-souy River, which bears its correct name Arpa. Not to be confused with the Arpachay, as far as the river Arpa descends from Vardenis and flows into the Arax from its left bank. In its turn, the Arpachay or Western Arpachay, commonly called by its initial toponym the Akhuryan, flows south of contemporary Gyumri, is 186 km long and also joins the Arax from its left side. The toponym Akhuryan (Ախուրյան) has nothing to do with Turkish. It was recorded by Khorenatsi. There was a village in Nakhijevan, until 2003 it was called Shuraabad (Persian name) or then Sovetabad.

²⁹ In *Travels* 1686, 345 written as "Naccivan." See also: **Sameea** 1989, 192.

³⁰ Biglarbeyg (Beglerbegi–Beylerbeyi) was a Turkish word and high rank title in Seljuks, Safavi and also Ottoman time.

³¹ Safi Gholi Khan was the ruler of Yerevan Province in 1666–1674. See: **Travels** 1686, 256 and **Chardin** 2012, 377–386. Also: **Bournoutian** 2003, 75; **Floor** 2001, 87–88; **Nasiri** 2008, 172; **Matthee** 2012, 146, 206.

³² **Travels** 1686, 256; **Chardin** 2012, 313.

³³ Ancient Armenian city, its Capital in 961–1045, which was annexed to Turkey after the Treaties of Moscow and Kars (1921).

³⁴ **Bournoutian** 2002, 6.

Chardin continues his journey: on April 12, 1673, after five Leagues [24,1 km], we entered Nakhijevan in a very flat and fertile plain³⁵. According to the French author, Nakhijevan was a ruined big city, and most of it was an astonishing mass of ruined land, which was gradually being rebuilt and inhabited. There were large markets which were long, as well as long galleries or roofed alleys where rooms and shops were lined up on both sides, and all kinds of goods and foods were sold there. There were five caravanserais, and public baths, commercial centers, and coffee houses and large bars, and about two thousand houses in Nakhijevan³⁶. He adds that according to Iranian history there used to be 40,000 houses in this city. The authors of these books also stated that “before Arabs conquered this country, there had been five cities in it, built by Bahram Chobin³⁷ (چوبین بهرام), King of Persia”³⁸.

During the independent Kingdoms of Armenian Artashesids, Arsacids and Bagratids³⁹, trade flourished along the route from Ctesiphon⁴⁰ (تیسفون) to Armenia, Constantinople and the Black Sea, enabling merchants and artisans to sell their wares in Rome, Byzantine and Persia. The route went through the cities of Artashat, Dvin, Nakhijevan, and Karin-Theodosiopolis⁴¹, thus transforming them

³⁵ **Travels** 1686, 345 and **Chardin** 2012, 387.

³⁶ *Ibid.*; **Капарезян** 2019, 133, 135.

³⁷ This report is to be corrected, as far as Bahram Chobin known as Bahram VI ruled in 590–591, and the Sasanian King Shapur II had devastated the city of Nakhijevan two hundred years before, in 368 AD. See: **Travels** 1686, 388.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ The Armenia sovereign dynasties Artashesids, Arsacids and Bagratids ruled in 189 BC – 12 AD, 52–428 and in 885–1045, correspondingly. The first two dynasties had strong political and cultural ties with Parthia and the Sasanian Empire, but were completely self-governing. It was Parthian Arsacid, King of the Kings Valarsh I, who enthroned his brother Trdat I as the first Arsacid King of independent Great Armenia; however relations between the two States were aggravated with Iranian conquests, hard oppression and bloody wars. The city of Nakhijevan itself was totally ruined, when the Sasanian Shakh Shapur II relocated its whole population of 18,000 families in 368 AD.

⁴⁰ Ctesiphon was an ancient city on the eastern bank of the Tigris, about 35 kilometers southeast of present-day Baghdad.

⁴¹ The Greek and Roman sources of the 1st century AD tell about Karin, a center of the same district from the VI century BC. In 421 AD this village was strongly fortified by the order of the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius I and got a toponym after him. Since 1049 the Arabs called it Arzan ar-Rum and its province had become an Erzerum Emirate. It had always served as a junction of the seven wide trade routes. See: *Armenian Karin* 2003.

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into the major trade centers between India, Iberia, Persia, and Europe. Dvin in particular became an entry point where merchants met to transact business⁴².

We have also mentioned, that having recalled the Persian Histories, Chardin noted the name of Bahram Chobin as a probable builder of Nakhijevan. This person had stayed some time in Azerbaijan and had fought with Khosrow Parviz.⁴³ In 588–589 AD at the end of the government of king Hormozd IV,⁴⁴ when Khazars⁴⁵ attacked Arran and Armenia, Bahram Chobin was the Commander at Atropatena⁴⁶ and waged war on the Armenian borders due to the fact that he had been sent by Hormozd IV to confront the Turks.⁴⁷ However interesting Chardin's possession of this historical data might be, reliable fact remains, that Nakhijevan was devastated by his predecessor Shapuh II two centuries before Bahram VI.

Chardin continues his journey and writes: "Without the City are to be seen the ruins of a great Castle, and several Forts which Abbas caused to be destroyed, toward the end of the last Age, not finding himself strong enough to keep them: all which he caused to be ruined, after he had taken Nakhijevan from the Turks; and after he had ruined and dispeopled the City. Which he did to prevent the Turks from fortifying themselves in that Place, and furnishing themselves with Provisions. Most certainly the City is an object of pity, considering in what a condition it now lies. The Histories of Persia would have us believe, that it was one of the greatest and fairest cities of all Armenia"⁴⁸.

The French merchant and traveler is one of those who has carefully mentioned the number of houses in Nakhijevan: in 1673 they counted two thousand. He showed both administrative and economic connection of this region with the Persian Empire and its Shahanshahs. Chardin introduced Nakhijevan as an Armenian province of Iran, which the Safavid Kingdom was obliged to defend against a foreign invader (the Ottomans). Then, he gave his explanation, why the population of these areas was forcibly resettled by Abbas I, who destroyed this

⁴² Bournoutian 2002, 56.

⁴³ میرخواند، همان، صص 812–825.

⁴⁴ Hormozd IV or Hormizd IV was a Sassanian king of Iran from 579 to 590 AD.

⁴⁵ Khazars were originally located in the northern Caucasus region about 6th Century AD and were part of Turkic empire in Turkistan.

⁴⁶ Atropatena or Adurbadagan which is a Persian word also known as Media Atropatena was in Iran in Medes time. Today it is called Iranain Azerbaijan.

⁴⁷ رضا، عنایت الله. ترکان در روزگار ساسانیان. تهران، شرکت انتشارات علمی، 1390، صص 110–112.

⁴⁸ Travels 1686, 345; Chardin 2012, 387–388.

region and the greater part of Armenia to begin with Erzerum, striving to prevent the entry of the Ottoman army. The author of the "Travels" considers this to be prudent tactic, which "had an effect answerable to the wishes"⁴⁹ of the Shah.

Later on, Chardin explained that all the correspondence of the priests and the requests of the people of this region was to the Safavid king of Iran. By the word "People" he means the Armenians who were living in the province of Armenia including the Khanate of Nakhijevan, subordinated to the Biglarbeyg at Erivan. According to him, Armenians were closely tied to the Iranian government⁵⁰.

Chardin also testified that "The Araxes, which the Orientals call Aras and Ares, ... is that famous River that separates Armenia from Media"⁵¹. He described totally demolished city of Old Julfa (Jugha) on the other bank of the Arax. "The Avenues to it, which are naturally very difficult of access, were defended by several Forts". In 1673 there were "nothing but holes and caverns, made in the mountains, fitter for beasts than men". The French voyager "did not believe there was in the world a more barren or hideous place, than that of Old Julfa, where there was neither tree nor grass to be seen. ...Not above 30 families [lived] in it, which were all Armenians," though before the exile of 1604-1605 "it contained 4,000 houses as the Armenians report"⁵².

The Root of the Name of Nakhijevan City from Chardin's View

Chardin also gave us some information from other sources about the toponyms of Armenia and Nakhijevan. He mentions that he had referred Herodotus, Pliny, Strabo, Ptolemy and other authors. The traveler writes: others "derive the name of Armenia ...with far more reason from Aram, which might have some relation to the Hebrew word Ram, which signifies High or Elevated, either because the Country lies high, and several of the Eastern Mountains make part of it, or else because it fell as his share to Aram the grand-child of Noah; who therefore called it by its own name. And therefore Hayton who was King of the Country derives this name of Armenia from Aram-Noah. But how uncertain so ever this Etymology may be, I would rather give credit to it, then to another Story

⁴⁹ **Travels** 1686, 348.

⁵⁰ **Travels** 1686, 346; **Chardin** 2012, 387-388.

⁵¹ **Travels** 1686, 347-348; **Chardin** 2012, 395.

⁵² **Travels** 1686, 348; **Chardin** 2012, 393.

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which he reports of Armenia, that is to say, that it was the Province where Salmanassar planted the greatest number of the Jews which he took prisoner in the conquest of Palestine. The Holy Scripture, wherever it has occasion to mention it, calls Armenia Ararat. ...However, Armenia is renowned for several other famous Accidents and Events. There is not any other country wherein so many Bloody Battles have been fought nor with greater Numbers on both sides. It has had particular Kings of its own during several periods; though they could not preserve their Dominion, while as Histories assure us, all the most eminent Captains that ever invaded Asia, subdued it under their Subjection in their several turns. It was the Theatre of the last Wars between Turks and Persians; while the Turks fought to have had it entire; though at length they were content to share it with Persians, yet not so but they have had the greater part⁵³".

Let's notice that the French did not make any attempt to understand Armenian toponyms with the help of the Armenian language, its own legends or political events. So, Tigran the Great is deprived of the relocation of his Jewish prisoners from Palestine to Nakhijevan, or to his capital Tigranakert. These episodes are attributed to Salmanasar; and not Nakhijevan in particular, but all Greater Armenia is attributed now to the conception of Noah's Ark.

Continuing his journey, Chardin retails the history of the famous Echmiadzin in the city of Vagharshapat, and discusses if Erivan was an old Capital of Armenia. He reasonably notes that earlier this service delivered "Royal Artaxate" or Echmiadzin, the latter "was formerly called Vagar-Shapat, which signifies (word for word) Vagar's City". All enumerated places exist up today. Artashat is located 35 km south-east of Vagharshapat and 31 km south of Yerevan. Then the French reasonably attributed Artashat to the vicinity of the Khor-Virap Monastery, but mistakenly associated it with "Artaxerxes, whom the Eastern call Ardeshir⁵⁴".

Chardin is correct when he delineates Vagharshapat and Artashat as former Capitals of Armenia; though he makes a mistake, when he links the Armenian

⁵³ **Travels** 1686, 243–244, quotation on 243; **Chardin** 2012, 280.

⁵⁴ **Travels** 1686, 248 shows the difference between the three cities, p. 252 mentions the name of Artaxerxes. As a matter of fact, ancient Artashat is named after the Armenian King Artashes I (189–160 BC) the founder of Artaxiad Dynasty. It is well-proved that the City was founded in 176 BC and had been the national Capital, with intervals, till 355 AD. In its turn, Artaxerxes I Achaemenid or Ardeshir (اردشیر) ruled much earlier and was the King of Persia in 464–425 BC.

toponym Artashat to the Achaemenid ruler Artaxerxes I. Then he describes Erivan as a place where, allegedly, "Noah and all his family dwelt... before the Deluge", and associates this Persian administrative center with Nakhijevan, linking the second toponym with Noah, too. Now he explains that a toponym Nakhijevan means "first habitation" in Old Armenian, and also reminds the Ptolemy's toponym of this city as "Naxuane"⁵⁵. Chardin had misguidedly supposed that the town of Nakhijevan, could have been very close to the Artaxata, though there are 115 km between them. He refers to the Anthic sources, "for Tacitus observes that the Araxes ran very close to that City; and we find it not to be above seven Leagues [33,8 km] from Nakhijevan". The Frenchman also adds that on Iranian astrolabes, the angle between the polar line and the horizon of this city (width) is 38 degrees and 40 minutes, its length is 81 degrees and 34 minutes. "It is governed by a Khan, and is the Capital of one part of Armenia"⁵⁶.

After giving us some information about the toponym Nakhijevan, Chardin writes that twelve Leagues [58 km] from Yerevan, on the east side, there is a famous mountain which "the Armenian and Persian call it both by the same name Masis" (Ararat) and where almost everyone says that Noah's ark stopped, though no one "can bring solid proof to make out what they affirm". The Bible (Torah), gives no particular name and only locates the peak in Armenia; though Chardin reminds of "those mountains [called Ararat or Ararada] so famous in the Greek and Latin authors, which they assert to be part of the Taurus Mountains, and called by the names of Gordian, Cordean, Corduenian, Cardian, Curdi, and Carduchi". It is stated in Armenian mythology that the ark of Prophet Noah (PBUH) "is still upon the point, or highest top of mount Masis"⁵⁷. So the French clearly distinguishes Mount Ararat (Ararada) in Corduk, and the peaks of Sis and Masis near Nakhijevan. At the same time, Chardin did not elaborate on the toponym Nakhijevan, but says that the authors attribute this term to the name of Noah⁵⁸.

⁵⁵ **Travels** 1686, 248, 345–346. In the map of "Ancient Persia Elam with Adjacent Countries," taken from the Atlas published by John Dower (1825–1863) in the 1850s, Nakhijevan is written as Nachuana. See: **Galichian** 2004, 206.

⁵⁶ **Travels** 1686, 346; **Chardin** 2012, 388–389. Artaxata is the Hellenized name of Artashat, see the footnote above. Publius Cornelius Tacitus was a Roman historian and politician (56–120 AD).

⁵⁷ **Travels** 1686, 252–253; **Chardin** 2012, 306.

⁵⁸ **Travels** 1686, 345; **Chardin** 2012, 389.

The Language of the People of Nakhijevan from Chardin's Point of View

Chardin writes that five Leagues [24,1 km] in the north from Nakhijevan, there was a village called Abrenor which means the fertile field.⁵⁹ The residents of this village with seven other in the neighborhood were Roman Catholics. Their Bishop with Curate belonged to the Dominican order and performed service in Armenian⁶⁰.

The Frenchman does not precise the language, implemented in these areas of Armenia. He defines no language, he spoke with Azaria, his Armenian Catholic Assistant. Was it Persian, Turkish, French or Latin? The traveler himself didn't speak Armenian and perhaps he based on the fact that the region was Armenian, the prevalent language was Armenian and there was no need to emphasize it. Though he didn't mention colloquial Persian, but he represented clearly the Persians who were State officials or served in Garrisons of Erivan and Nakhijevan. He tells in detail about Biglarbeyg of Dagestan origin; that's why he spoke to him in Sardar's Erivan's residence in Turkish with the help of an interpreter. However, there is not a word about any Turkish-speaking village or craftsmen in the cities. At the same time Chardin plainly noted that all the tiny population of Old Julfa (Jugha) was pure Armenian.

There is little direct reference to the fact that Persian was also spoken there; though all dwellers of the Erivan and Nakhijevan Garrisons, were servicemen or

⁵⁹ **Travels** 1686, 346; **Chardin** 2012, 389. Chardin recorded the toponym Abrener which could be interpreted in Persian, if divided into two words: "Ab" plus "Nor" (آبرنور) instead of "Ner" in the primary source. "Ab" in Persian means water and "Nor" means light, it also can be apprehended as "Cloud" (ابر) in Persian, and its component "Nor" could have been a changed form of the word Nahr (نهر), that means river. Though it is a well-established fact, that the Armenian word Abrener comes from a term Aparan(ner) Ապարան(ներ) and means "the Palace" with plural ending "ner". This township had been a center of the Uniats and Catholic Diocese; it was situated next to the Ernjak fortress and had a monastery, called Aparnero (Ապարներո) with a See at the Church of Amenayn Srbots (All the Saints). This complex had been severely destroyed by the earthquake in 1848. The township itself was inhabited by 500 Armenians in the 17th Century and was mentioned as Aberner by the French traveller J.-B. Tavernier (1605–1689) during his voyages in 1632, 1655. Now it is called Beneniar and is situated 25 km north of the city Julfa. See: Հակոբյան, Մելիք-Բախչյան, Բարսեղյան 1986, 307:

⁶⁰ **Travels** 1686, 346; **Chardin** 2012, 389. After his death in 1246 the followers of the Saint Dominic Order came to the north-western Iran. In 1328 a number of Armenians went to Maragheh in Iran, then they traveled to Nakhijevan monastery on the northern borders of Iran.

members of their families, should. But wherever he referred to Catholic villages, he immediately emphasized that religious rites were performed in the Armenian language to accentuate that Catechism was not performed in Latin. Here, linguistic characteristic in performing ceremonies had been his goal. The reason why he did not speak explicitly from the people of Nakhijevan was that he repeatedly emphasized that these areas belonged to the province of Armenia. He probably did not see there was a necessity to point out this issue because he logically described these areas as Armenian.

Then, Chardin gives some explanations that can lead us to find out information about the inhabitants and the religion or beliefs of the people in the district (Khanate) of Nakhijevan. He writes: "He was an Italian Dominican of Bologna [Bartolomeo de Podio], that brought all this Country under subjection to the Pope [John XXII],⁶¹ about 350 years ago. And about 20 Villages more that lay around acknowledged the same Ecclesiastical jurisdiction. But at length they returned to their obedience under the Armenian Patriarch, and to their first religion: and as for those that persist in the Romish ceremonies, their number daily decreases, by reason of the persecution of the Patriarch, and the Governors of Nakhijevan. Those poor people, having drawn upon their own heads, the indignation and violent usage of those Governors, for having endeavored to withdraw themselves from their jurisdiction and dependence. To which purpose there arrived in Persia in the year 1664 an Italian Dominican, in the quality of an Ambassador, from the Pope⁶²".

Here, it is clear from Chardin's descriptions that people in the whole district of Nakhijevan spoke Armenian and were Christians. They appealed to the High Court of the Safavid king of Iran and followed the central government of Iran, and sometimes the king himself. They wanted their affairs to be taken care of and the king to decide for their demand. Chardin emphasizes that following this request, the King of Iran ordered that the Armenian Catholics would pay their annual tribute to the Royal Treasury "and whatever they were obliged to pay yearly according to the rates set down in writing in the Register of the Superintendent

⁶¹ The first Armenian Catholic Diocese was established in 1318 in Maragha, Persia, during the rule of the Pope John XXII. It was entrusted to the Italian Dominican friar Bartolomeo de Podio (-1333). The first Catholic Diocese in Nakhijevan was established in 1337-1344 and approved by the Pope Innocent VI in 1356: **Lucca** 2021, 40.

⁶² **Travels** 1686, 346; **Chardin** 2012, 390.

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and and Receiver-General of Media" (Azerbaijan). Then the orders were sent to the Super-Intendant and Governor of Nakhijevan and all other King officers that Roman Catholics had become "absolutely independent from their jurisdiction, and that they should not presume to make any Levies within their territories⁶³".

Chardin mentions that there are pubs (public places to drink wine) in the city, which indirectly refers to the existence of the Christian inhabitants. During the Safavid period they had the right to have public places to drink wine in their areas. So it proves that the language of Nakhijevan was Armenian. Let's note that drinking wine was illegal in the Safavid kingdom, except for non-Muslims. His emphasis on the fact that about 20 villages in the district of Nakhijevan performed religious services in Armenian is a sign that the Armenian language had been commonly used in Nakhijevan. Although there is no explicit reference by Chardin regarding the extent of using Persian and Armenian in every-day life.⁶⁴

The Relations of the Biglarbeyg and Armenians in Nakhijevan

Tazkerat al-Muluk mentions that during the reign of Shah Abbas I, there were special lands in some Christian areas in the west of the country, and in Nakhijevan region in particular. There is no exact information about their boundaries. These were properties or lands that were under the direct supervision of the caliph or the sultan or king in the Safavid period, and the proceeds were deposited in his private treasury. The areas inhabited by the

⁶³ **Travels** 1686, 346; **Chardin** 2012, 390.

⁶⁴ We assume that the Armenian language was common for the Christians of the city, as there were not other nationals of this faith. They could happen to be only Georgians and some Italian monks, though we do not trace any presence of Georgians. As distinct from Tiflis, where Chardin clearly depicts and enumerates several languages spoken, he did not bring such a testimony in regard to Nakhijevan. This is understandable: in the difficult conditions after the relocation of 1604-1605, you could hardly get any migrants but repatriates. The Safavid kingdom needed population and thus didn't urge any flows of emigration. Besides, it is very natural that we do not get any evidence of ethnic Persians to convert into Christianity. Let's address to the Ottoman traveler Evliya Chelebi (1611–1682) who had composed 10 volumes of his "Book of Travels," and published his vol. 3 on Armenia in 1648 – **Էվլիյա Չելեբի** 1967. Celebi introduced the language of people in the city of Nakhijevan as the language of the peasantry and the language of those who knew poetry in Pahlavi. These connoisseurs should be not only servicemen of the local Garrison, but also the members of their families, State officials and quite possibly – some merchants. The results of several studies also show that most of the dwellers in Azerbaijan and Nakhijevan in the 16th century were Christians. See: **Floor, Javadi** 2013, 4.

Armenians and called Ahl al-Dhimma⁶⁵ (اهل ذمه) were special lands, though in some cases, for example, during the reign of Shah Tahmasb I in 1576, he exempted them in the provinces from taxation for eight years.

Chardin says the rulers of great areas of Iran are called Biglarbeyg. They were superior to other officials who were called khans and served as second-rate rulers. His Holiness also had the title of Sardar, which meant commander of the corps. The ruler of this state, Safi Qoli Khan, was one of the highest nobles of Iran. Safi Qoli Khan had been just and impartial; he took less bribes than the other rulers⁶⁶.

Nevertheless, Chardin reports that the people of Nakhijevan had complained to the King about Khan's unfair behavior when he was about to travel. The Frenchman adds: about 20 Catholic villages around "returned to their obedience under the Armenian Patriarch, and to their first religion" and the number of Catholics "daily decreased, by reason of the persecution of the Patriarch, and the Governors of Nakhijevan." As the matter stood, in 1664 an Italian Ambassador from the Pope negotiated successfully with the Shah and was granted a privilege: the Armenian Catholic villages would send their annual tribute to the Royal Treasure and their local taxes could not surpass the previously written dimensions. Apart from these fixed duty, since 1664 they had been made "absolutely independent from the jurisdiction" of all local King Officers. As far as Catholics were exempted from any extra Levies within their territories, that provoked the anger of the Governor and, thus, their benevolent treat "did very little good" to them. On the contrary, this privilege would become "an occasion of many Mischiefs that afterwards befell them; and will one day be the cause of their ruin,"⁶⁷ – had justifiably predicted J. Chardin.

So, we can conclude from Chardin's descriptions that the areas around Nakhijevan were under control of Khan who was subordinated to the rule of the Biglarbeyg in Erevan. The latter consisted of two: the Erevan and Nakhijevan administrative units. The people of Nakhijevan appealed to the Supreme Court of Safavid Iran and were subjects of the central government of Iran. Sometimes they asked the King to take care of their affairs and he made his decisions. Chardin

⁶⁵ It is a kind of religious tax taken from the non-Muslims in the Muslim's territory.

⁶⁶ See: میرزا سمیعا، محمد سمیع، تذکره الملوك، ترجمه مسعود رجب نیا، به کوشش دبیرسیاقی، تهران، انتشارات امیرکبیر، 1368، ص 196

⁶⁷ *Travels* 1686, 346.

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emphasizes that following their request, the King of Iran granted the Armenian Catholics a privilege to be exempt from arbitrary taxation, the latter had been fixed by the Median agent of Azerbaijan in writing. Hence, the Biglarbeyg, who was Lezgin⁶⁸ from Dagestan, would not interfere in their matters and could not get more payments it was prescribed by his superiors beforehand. However, after the death of Shah Abbas II in 1666, these poor people had to "pay three or four times the money which they sent to the Treasure Royal." And when they brought their tribute, the local Officers filled the receipts in a manner, which kept "a Door open for arbitrary impositions, and brangling to ruin them when they [local rulers] please themselves⁶⁹". This story shows the existence of the Armenian Catholics in the region who were stimulated by the central Government and thus had noticeable trouble with their local non-Christian ruler.

Conclusion

From the information that Chardin left for us it can be understood the culture, religion, history, geography, and also the general image of the Erivan Beylerbeylik (Province) which back in the time included the Khanate of Nakhijevan. Chardin clearly distinguishes two subdivisions – Erivan and Nakhijevan Khanates in the whole Governorship. He communicates that the ancient city of Nakhijevan was a Metropolis of the second unit with the Arpa River as its North-eastern edge and with the River Araxes as its southern frontier with Media or genuine Persia. The traveler does not mention explicitly Nakhijevan's subordination to Erivan, but he includes both sides of Arpa plain with Sharur and Nakhijevan in Armenia. Chardin calls the ruler seated in Erivan to be one of the principal Governors or Biglarbeyg and Serdar, introducing him as Safi Gholi Khan. The lesser rulers, obedient to Biglarbeygs, were called Khans, as it was with officials in Nakhijevan or Georgia.

From the travelog by J. Chardin we can find out that the people of the whole area were mostly Armenians who lived in the ancient Armenian land. The only other ethnic element recorded by the traveller was Persian. Though his description of the entire Nakhijevan is brief, when we compare it with the testimonies of other travelers to Safavid Persia, the volume that we researched is a valuable prime source for the Armenian Studies. Chardin is the only one who

⁶⁸ Lezgins are Sunni Moslems who speak one of the Caucasian languages.

⁶⁹ **Travels** 1686, 347; **Chardin** 2012, 390.

gives us numerous details about the Armenian life in the cities of Julfa, Nakhijevan and its Khanate, he shows the inside of the second city and its Bazar together with the situation in the first city in 1673. His stay here was not long, it lasted three days in the district and two days in the city itself: from April 11 till 13, 1673. However, his account is valuable as other travelers did not give us more about the city in the Safavid time.

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ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՆԱԽԻՋԵՎԱՆԸ XVII ԴԱՐՈՒՄ՝ ԸՍՏ ԺԱՆ ՇԱՐԴԵՆԻ ՎԿԱՅՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ

ԿԱՐԻՄԻ Մ.

Ամփոփում

Բանալի բառեր՝ Նախիջևան, Հայաստան, Սեֆյան Պարսկաստան, Ժան Շարդեն, Հին Զուղա, Արաքս, Նոյ:

Արաքսից հյուսիս սփռված հայկական հինավուրց երկիր Նախիջևանը պարսկական ներկայության հին ու ծանր պատմություն ունի: XVII դ. ֆրանսիացի ճանապարհորդ Ժան Շարդենը անմիջականորեն նկարագրել է այդ ու

ներկայության փաստերը: Պարսկական Սեֆյան հարստության օրոք բազմաթիվ ճանապարհորդներ ուղագրավ տեղեկություններ են թողել կայսրության քաղաքների մասին: Հատկապես Ժան Շարդենը իր աշխատության մեջ քանիցս հիշատակում է հայ ժողովրդի մշակութային ու քաղաքական կյանքը, ճարտարապետական հուշարձաններն ու ավանդույթները, Հայաստանի և հատկապես Նախիջևանի իրողությունները: 1673 թ. մարտ-ապրիլ ամիսներին մնալով Երևանում և Նախիջևանում, Շարդենը վերհանել է տարածքի վարչական սահմանները, անդրադարձել նրանում մեծապես գերակշռող հայ բնակչության պատմությունը: Նա հայտնում է, որ Նախիջևանի խանությունը եղել է Երևանյան բեկլարբեկության բաղադրիչը, իսկ վերջինս Սեֆյան պետության մի մասն էր: Նա նշում է նաև, որ Իրանի կայազորները, նրանց ընտանիքներն ու որոշակի թվով առևտրականներ պարսկախոս էին, և որ այստեղ գոյություն չի ունեցել թրքախոս բնակչություն:

АРМЯНСКИЙ НАХИДЖЕВАН XVII ВЕКА ПО СВИДЕТЕЛЬСТВАМ ЖАНА ШАРДЕНА

КАРИМИ М.

Резюме

Ключевые слова: Нахиджеван, Армения, Сефевидский Иран, Жан Шарден, Старая Джуга, Аракс, Ной.

Французский путешественник XVII века Жан Шарден совершил путешествие в древний армянский край Нахиджеван, расположенный к северу от Аракса. Многие путешественники оставили исторические свидетельства о городах империи в период господства персидской сефевидской династии, однако именно Жан Шарден подробно рассказывает об армянских населенных пунктах и народных обычаях. Будучи французом, он приводит ценные сведения о культурной и политической жизни армянского народа, об исторических и архитектурных памятниках и традициях страны в целом и Нахиджевана, в частности. Находясь в Ереване с 7 марта по 8 апреля 1673 г. и в Нахиджеване – с 11 по 13 апреля, Шарден описывает административные границы второго района и древние корни зна-

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чительно преобладавшего в нем армянского населения. По свидетельствам Ж. Шардена, Нахичеванское ханство входило в Ереванское бекларбекство, являвшееся частью Сефевидской Персидской империи. Особую важность представляет тот факт, что согласно Шардену, солдаты иранских гарнизонов, их домочадцы и определенное число торговцев говорили по-персидски, и здесь не было тюркоязычного населения.