

LUIZA GASPARYAN*

Candidate of philological sciences

Scientific researcher at the

M. Abeghyan Institute of Literature, NAS RA

Lecturer at Foreign Languages and Literature, EIU

Luisa.gasparyan83@gmail.com

DOI: 10.54503/1829-4073-2022.3.186-196

ARTSAKH IN THE WESTERN TRAVELOGUES (UP UNTIL THE LATE 19TH C.)

Key words: Artsakh (Karabagh), travelogue, Armenians, testimony, Shushi, Russian Empire, prosperity.

Introduction

With its greenish landscapes, serene and proud monasteries, hospitable and positive atmosphere, Artsakh always remains consistent and unbreakable in the turmoil of cataclysmic events. Artsakh is organically intertwined with Armenia in all spheres; historical, religious, cultural-spiritual, sociopolitical and linguistic. The Armenian linguist Hr. Acharyan, in one of his scientific works, underlined that Artsakh dialect is one of the largest Armenian dialects¹. Historian Leo qualified Artsakh dialect as a rich ancestral heritage, strong, courageous and reinforced with mountainous flavor². In other words, diachronically and synchronically Artsakh has a profound and unique significance in preserving the roots and heritage of the Armenian ethnicity and its identity.

The research aims at revealing and illustrating Artsakh through the light of Western travelers' missionaries, diplomats' notes and travelogues up to the end of the 19th century, thus underlining the importance of Artsakh Studies from the viewpoint of literary and cognitive-linguistic perspectives. One cannot fail to notice that Artsakh Studies should be on the agenda of proficient experts, historians and

* Հոդվածը ներկայացվել է 10.10.22, գրախոսվել է 17.10.22, ընդունվել է տպագրության 01.12.22:

¹ Աճառյան 1911, 61:

² Լեո 1967:

literary critics, since there are many published works and hypotheses which create an incredible atmosphere and put forward pseudo-scientific information.

The study is carried out within the scope of spatial-temporal domain taking into focus the travelogues of different centuries and their textological features, as well as the dynamism and chronology of the authors' thoughts. On the other hand, the research of different travelogue texts helps us reveal the cognitive-linguistic utterance as unified objective materials and entities, which revolve around Artsakh.

The article is a first attempt to shed light on the studies dedicated to Artsakh. The mechanisms of travelogue analysis are based on the observations and interpretations of travelers, missionaries, diplomats, and are compared and illustrated within the scope of a single semantic-conceptual spiral. The data will more or less enrich the historical-culturological material about Artsakh especially by assembling the Western scientists' informative facts of different centuries.

Historical Evidence

An abundance of testimonies about Artsakh (Karabagh) in Armenian historiography, referring to religious, geographical, cultural-spiritual, sociopolitical peculiarities, has existed since ancient times. In the IV-V centuries the adoption of Christianity and the Golden Age period led to spiritual and cultural development, which fundamentally shaped the identity of Armenians³. Referring to the historical geography of Armenia, Robert H. Hewsen stated that Greater Armenia consisted of fifteen provinces, and one of them was Artsakh⁴.

Strabo in his famous work "Geography" informed us about Artsakh and its indispensable organic connection with Great Armenia. He indicated that Artsakh was a fertile and developed country with strong military forces, like, for example, cavalry⁵.

One cannot fail to observe that alongside with the toponym Artsakh, another toponym – Karabagh – is also widely spread. According to some linguists, Artsakh and Karabagh have similar associative significance; the toponym comes from the ancient times, and traditionally derives from the roots *Ar* (Armanian) (the Armenian ancestor Hayk Nahapet's son) and *tsakh* – tree (the indication of the natural environment of Artsakh, which is rich in forests). There is still another

³ Lang 1978/1980.

⁴ Hewsen 2004, 15.

⁵ Страбон 1964, кн. XI, § 4.

interpretation which consists of the roots *Sar* – mountain (because of the mountainous landscape) and *tsakh* – tree; in the course of time the sound [s] from *sar* disappeared, hence the toponym *Artsakh* occurred⁶. The geographical term *Karabagh* is comparatively new and attested in Persian and Georgian sources of the XIV–XV centuries. There are different hypotheses and versions of the etymology of the name Karabagh. According to the circulating assumption and interpretations, the geographical name originated from the Altaic word *K'ara* – black, a Persian word *bagh'* – garden⁷. Whereas K. Gunn tended to interpret *K'ara* with *dark green* and *dense*⁸ connotative overtones. The same assumption had Ghevond Alishan who emphasized that the world of Artsakh is called Karabagh by foreigners, because of its *dense green forests and gardens*⁹.

Due to their courageous spirit and patriotism, Artsakh Armenians preserved their independence throughout history and were never subjected to different yokes. Still in some historical periods it merely paid symbolic tributes to governors. At the end of the XVI century an autonomous administrative-political government system called “Melikutyun” (Melikdoms of Karabagh) was established in Artsakh.

In 1805 Artsakh voluntarily involved into the Russian Empire, and this was an important historical event for Artsakh Armenians (fixed later by the Treaty of Gulistan, 1813); on the one hand it gave the people a reliable guarantee towards devastating invasions, on the other hand it led the Melikutyun (Melikdoms of Karabagh) towards prosperity and enhancement of the cultural-spiritual potential. In 1868 Artsakh (Karabagh) which was part of Elisavetapol gubernia had the following essential counties; Shushinsky, Dzhebrailsky, Dzhevanshirskiy¹⁰. The unification of Artsakh with Russia had an important historical significance, which contributed to the development of commerce, craft and in general the economic environment. At the same time the creation of infrastructures in Artsakh raised the level of the social-economic life of the average people as well as improved the situation of cultural-spiritual education.

⁶ Բեկնազարեանց 1886, 148:

⁷ Мкртчян 1988; Հակոբյան, Մելիք-Բախշյան, Բարսեղյան 1991, 520–521:

⁸ Ган 1909, 70–71.

⁹ Ալիշան 1993, 13:

¹⁰ Мкртчян 1988; Ուլուբաբյան 1994:

Artsakh in Travelogues

The fundamental goal of travelogues is to illustrate the objective reality as far as possible of the unknown or less investigated geographical territory for different purposes: diplomatic, geopolitical, scientific, religious, cultural. As a rule, a travelogue is largely based on cognitive observations, travel testimonies, and can serve as a historical-literary toolkit. From the point of view of the spatial– temporal domain, the documentary evidence of various researchers comprehensively represents the route with thorough descriptive details of the surroundings, geographical places and names, peculiar traditions and legends, accurate depictions of the historical-cultural epoch. These studies comprise valuable facts and can serve as an effective historical-cultural source material.

The early European source about Artsakh or Karabagh was mentioned by German traveler Johannes Schiltberger (1381–1440). Let's discuss the extract.

I have also been a great deal in Armenia. After Tāmerlin died, I came to his son, who had two kingdoms in Armenia. He was named Scharoch; he liked to be in Armenia, because there was a very beautiful plain. He remained there in winter with his people, because there was good pasturage. A great river runs through the plain; it is called the Chur, and it is also called the Tygris; and near this river, in this same country, is the best silk. The Infidels call the plain, in the Infidel tongue, Karawag¹¹.

Passing to the further observations of Schiltberger's travelogue one can notice the positive evaluation of the traveler towards Artsakh Armenians' hospitality, lifestyle and kindness which caused him always live with them. Apart from characteristic sympathy, Schiltberger appreciated the spiritual devotion of the Armenians towards their faith, as he stated "they also taught me (Schiltberger) their Pater Noster and their language"¹².

Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo, a Castilian ambassador from King Henry III to Timur (1403–1406)¹³, illustrated important facts, concerning the geographical territory and their route, thus emphasizing that Timur and his grandson Omar Mirza used

¹¹ **Schiltberger** 1983, 209; see also the following website; <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/52569/52569-h/52569-h.htm>

¹² **Archbishop Mesrob Ashjan** 2003, 121-127.

¹³ **Clavijo** 1928. <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/gsbahsgv/items?canvas=317>; Հակոբյան 1932:

to settle down in Karabagh (Qarabagh) during severe winters. According to the context, Clavijo with his representatives reached the village named Alanza, where he was reported that Timur wintered and departed from Karabagh to Persia (p. 121, English version). Proceeding with the narration, Clavijo stated that both Timur and his grandson Omar often spent the winters in Karabagh (pp. 132, 309–310, English version) and illustrated the map of the territory (pp. 110–112, English version). The experts and researchers qualified Clavijo's travelogue as an accurate and a valuable itinerary of Oriental Studies.

It is noteworthy that Karabagh was also mentioned by Venetian travelers Giovanni Maria Angiolello (near 1451/52–1525) and Caterino Zeno, who illustrated the toponym as *Carabas*¹⁴.

French aristocrat and traveler Fr. le Gouz (1623–1668/69) represented valuable sources about the Orient and gave important commercial and sociopolitical testimonies of the epoch. In his travelogue he stated that he arrived in Gandja, the capital of province Karabagh for passing the river Kur and reaching Georgia; "*Arrives a Gandja, capitale de la province de Karabagh*"¹⁵.

The famous Orientalist and Armenologist Heinrich Hübschmann (1848–1908) carried out comparative research and showed that Armenian is a separate Indo-European branch. In his work *Armenische Grammatik* published in Leipzig, 1895, Heinrich Hübschmann carried out an etymological survey of the Armenian vocabulary and by analyzing the toponym *Ganjak* (*pers-Ganja, lat. Gaza, Ganzaga*), he referred to it as the province of Artsakh (in German) "*....Ganjak in der Provinz Arcax*"¹⁶.

In the XVI–XVII centuries the process of the formation of five Armenian counties, which were called Hamsa (Five counties) was initiated. In this connection, the Russian historian of the late 19th century P.G. Butkov, proceeding from the St. Petersburg Gazettes of 1743, pointed out the following:

Карабаг есть страна, лежащая между левого берега Аракса и правого реки Куры, выше Муганского поля, в горах. Главнейшие обитатели её – Армяне, управляемые наследственно 5 своими меликами или природными

¹⁴ Հակոբյան 1932, 272–273:

¹⁵ Archbishop Mesrob Ashjan 2003, 602.

¹⁶ Hübschmann 1972, 34; Ղուկասյան 2003, 33–34:

Artsakh in Western Travelogues (till the end of the 19th century)

князьями, по числу сигнагов или кантонов: 1. Чаранерт, 2. Игермадар, 3. Дузах, 4. Варанд, 5. Хачен¹⁷.

According to the passage, Karabagh is a country lying between the left bank of the Araxes and the right bank of the Kura River. Its main inhabitants are the Armenians, ruled hereditarily by their 5 Meliks.

It is noteworthy to mention that often historians and travelers did not separate Armenia from Artsakh, they perceived them as one unified entity. However, the interest of Western travelers towards in Artsakh probably became evident with the influence and development of the Russian Empire, and the aim of the travelers was to pursue a thorough and rational recognition of the sociocultural and geopolitical situation, as well as territorial awareness for strategic purposes. Thus, interesting information was given by August Baron von Haxthausen¹⁸ (1844), who was invited to Russia to examine the agrarian condition of the soil. His travelogues entitled as "Russia" (1847/52), "Transkaukasia" (1856) gave the comprehensive description of not only economic-agrarian nature, but also spiritual-cultural and religious peculiarities. There was even an assumption that he was one of the advocates of the unification of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. And it is not by chance that in his travelogue Haxthausen referred to the Armenian spiritual center and the impeccable gem – the city of Shushi.

Here is the extract;

Many attempts have also been made to unite the Armenian with the Greek Church. Six Armenian villages on the west bank of the Euphrates have adopted the Greek faith, the largest of which is called Aga or Aguntsi. The Protestants, too have endeavoured to make converts. The Basile missionaries founded an Armenian school at Shusha¹⁹, which was however removed at the request of the patriarch, who regarded it as dangerous. In Calcutta the English have established an Armenian college and printing-press, probably to counteract the Russian influence over Armenians. Russia, however, has always kept aloof from proselytism.

Dwelling upon further observations of travelogues, one cannot fail to observe that the establishment of the Basile missionaries in the city of Shushi was touched

¹⁷ Бутков 1869. <https://web.archive.org/web/20131019084130/http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/Dokumenty/Kavkaz/Butkov1/pril2.htm>

¹⁸ Haxthausen in his works also described some touching paths of the famous Armenian writer Kh. Abovyan.

¹⁹ It is noteworthy to mention that the pronunciation "Shusha" is non-Armenian.

upon by different travelers. Thus, Dr. Fr. Parrot underlined "the generous efforts of the missionary society of Basile, who had formed an establishment in Shusha, beyond the Caucasus, for printing a translation of the New Testament"²⁰. The question of the Basile missionary activity was discussed by John Ussher, who quoted Haxthausen description²¹.

Artsakh (Karabagh) was mentioned in Eli Smith and H. Dwight's travelogue (1834). Eli Smith was an American Protestant missionary and scholar, who together with H. Dwight traveled to Armenia, Georgia and Persia, probably for religious purposes and for establishing Christian sects. They have special sections devoted to the city of Shushi. Let's discuss some extracts;

*Shoosha is the capital of the province of Kara-bagh, which embraces the ancient Paidagaran*²².

The travelogue thoroughly illustrated the nature and architecture of houses and the fortress of Shushi by emphasizing that Armenians had two large and two small churches, whereas the Muslims had only two mosques²³. Moreover, the American missionaries stated that Armenian chiefs, who had gained independence in the territory were forced to receive a Muslim governor because of the insistence of Persian Nadir Shah. The travelers underlined that *Shooshi* is the Armenian name of the city (pp. 179–180). In the travelogue three letters (chapters) were devoted to the capital of the province of Karabagh – Shushi, the conduction of the Armenian church, the description of the local population and peasantry.

In the vicinity of Echmiadzin there seems to be little less than a formal sale of it. The vartabed who visited Shoosha while we were there, not only acted for the Catholicos, for the suppression of heresy, but was clothed with the more profitable of novirag, for the collection of contributions and the distribution of the meiron. Delegates of the different villages visited him, and while the contribution was fixed at so much per head, the conditions of their receiving the meiron were settled in a manner not unlike a formal bargain in trade. If the few data that came to our knowledge afford a correct general average, the province of Karabagh contributed

²⁰ **Archbishop Mesrob Ashjan** 2003, 212.

²¹ **Archbishop Mesrob Ashjan** 2003, 282.

²² **Archbishop Mesrob Ashjan** 2003, 179. See also the website: <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.31826/9781463232719-015/html> <https://books.google.ws/books?id=-cONAAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

²³ **Archbishop Mesrob Ashjan** 2003, 180.

Artsakh in Western Travelogues (till the end of the 19th century)

upon that occasion to the treasury of Echmiadzin not far from ten thousand dollars (p. 248).

Eli Smith and H. Dwight thoroughly interpreted Russian influence on different spheres, especially on religion and faith, probably for figuring out the strategy of the Russian Empire. In 1836 Tsar Nicholas I enacted a set of regulations, known as the Polozhenie and after some changes and editions in the abovementioned regulations, it declared the freedom of belief for the Armenian church, the right to preserve the Armenian language and national heritage, as well as to open and maintain Armenian schools under the supervision of the clergy. The vibrant Armenian communities in the Russian Empire became quintessential centers for cultural-spiritual viewpoint, among them were not only large cities, like Moscow, St Petersburg, Feodosiya (Crimea), and Tiflis, but also important Armenian cities like Vagharshapat (Ejmiadzin) and Shushi.

The following are the diocesans now subject to Russia, according to a statement given us by the secretary of the Catholicos, and agreeing with information from another intelligent gentlemen. The bishops of Bessarabia, Astrakhan, Tiflis, Akhaltsikhe, Erivan, Datev, Kantsasar, Shamakhy, Sheky (subject to the bishop of Tiflis), and Tateos Arakeal, now at Nakhcevan (Eli Smith and H. Dwight, pp. 249–250).

Peculiar information about Shushi was given by Waldemar Belch (1891), a German chemist, botanist and archaeologist, who conducted surveys of the ancient ruins and made copies of old inscriptions in different regions of Armenia and the Caucasus. The researcher was surprised by the geographical and strategic position of Shushi, thus indicating:

Erbaut auf einem über 5000 fuß hohen Plateau, welches gegen die unmittelbar angrenzende Ebene fast senkrecht etwa 3000 Fuß steil abfällt, kann sich Schuscha bei seinem Gründer außer für die eminente Erschwerung allen Verkehres auch noch für den abscheulichen, dicken Nebel, resp. feinen Regen, in den die Stadt fast die Hälfte des Jahres hindurch eingenhüllt ist, und die dadurch erzeugten Fieber und Erkältungen bedanken²⁴. (the example is in German)

²⁴ **Archbishop Mesrob Ashjan** 2003, 530. The Armenian landscape was also described by a British historian, politician and diplomat, as well as an amateur alpinist – James Bryce, who climbed Mt. Ararat in 1876. He described it as follows: "Except in the large convent garden just outside the walls, which borders the magnificent stone-faced fishpond, or reservoir, formed by a late patriarch, there are no trees anywhere near; the landscape is bare and open all the way

In the extract Waldemar Belch mentions that after visiting Elizavetapol gubernia the traveler set towards the city of Shushi, one of the most wonderful places of the era, with its inaccessible hard-to-reach position, which causes obvious difficulties for almost all types of vehicles, marvelous nature and its dense fog and light drops of rain, which wrapped the city and made it unreachable. The city has an air of nobility and dignity and obviously is a palette of majestic nature and the heart of Artsakh.

Conclusion

Hence, the study of travelogue excerpts devoted to Artsakh/Karabagh in different spatial-temporal domain has shown the contextual analogy and descriptive-informative input of diplomats, missionaries, scientists that leads to the unequivocal idea that Artsakh is always organically interwoven with Armenia. Travelogues, which illustrate Artsakh and its population are valuable documents and resources that reveal the ethnographic and cultural heritage and its indispensable place in the world stage as part of ancient civilization. Travelogues are distinguished with textual naturalness, completeness and the reliability of facts and data of the time and undoubtedly, they should be on the research agenda as valuable treasures.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ալիշան Ղ.** 1993, Արցախ, Երևան, Երևանի համալս. հրատ., 124 էջ:
- Աճառյան Հր.** 1911, Հայ բարբառագիտություն (Էմինեան ազգագրական ժողովածու, հատ. Ը), Մոսկվա-Նախիջևան, Հրատ. արեւելեան լեզուների, 307 էջ:
- Բեկնազարեանց Ա.** 1886, Գաղտնիք Ղարաբաղի, Սանկտ Պետերբուրգ, տպ. Ի.Ն. Սկորոխտով, 406 էջ:
- Լեո** 1967, Հայոց պատմություն, II հատոր, Երևան, «Հայաստան», 758 էջ:
- Հակոբյան Թ. Խ., Մելիք-Բախշյան Ստ, Տ., Բարսեղյան Հ. Խ.** 1991, Հայաստանի և հարակից շրջանների տեղանունների բառարան, հ. 3, Երևան, Երևանի պետական համալսարան, 992 էջ:
- Հակոբյան Հովհ.** 1932, Ուղեգրություններ, հատոր Ա, (1253–1582), Երևան, հրատ. Մեղրոնյան ֆոնդի, 504 էջ:
- Ուլուբաբյան Բ.** 1994, Արցախի պատմությունը սկզբից մինչև մեր օրերը, Երևան, Մ. Վարանդեան հրատ., 377 էջ:

from the glens of Ala Goz and the brown mountains of the Karabagh in the east to the hills of Kars, far on the western horizon". **Archbishop Mesrob Ashjan** 2003, 311.

Artsakh in Western Travelogues (till the end of the 19th century)

Бутков П. 1869, Текст воспроизведен по изданию: Материалы для новой истории Кавказа с 1722 по 1803, СПб. <https://web.archive.org/web/20131019084130/http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/Dokumenty/Kavkaz/Butkov1/pril2.htm>

Гань К. 1909, Опыт объяснения кавказских географических названий, Тифлис, Тип. канцелярии Его Императорского Величества на Кавказе, VI, 164, [5] с. <https://viewer.rsl.ru/ru/rsl01008032943?page=1&rotate=0&theme=white>

Мкртчян Ш. 1988, Историко-архитектурные памятники Нагорного Карабаха, Ереван, "Айастан", 359 с.

Страбон, (1964/1994), География, в 17 книгах, кн. XI, § 4, репринтное воспроизведение текста издания, «Ладомир», Москва. <http://ancientrome.ru/antlittr/t.htm?a=1260110000>

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjan 2003, The Etchmiadzin Chronicles, Recorded by Missionaries and Merchants, Diplomats and Scholars/ Armenia, Moughni Publishers.

Clavijo. 1928, Embassy to Tamerlane, 1403–1406. Translated from the Spanish by Guy Le Strange. The Broadway Travelers, Edited by Sir E. Denison Ross and Eileen Power, London, Published by George Routledge & Sons. <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/gsbahsgv/items?canvas=317>;

Hewsen Robert H. 2004, The Geography of Armenia/ The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times, Volume I/ Edited by R. Hovannisian, New York, St. Martin's Press.

Hübschmann Heinrich 1972/2003, Armenische Grammatik, Armenische Etymologie, Hildesheim-New York, 1972, հայերեն թարգմանություն Հ. Դուկասյան, Հայերենի քերականություն, Հայերենի ստուգաբանություն, մաս առաջին, Երևան, Երևանի համալսարանի հրատ.:

Schiltberger Johannes. 1983, Als Sklave im Osmanischen Reich und bei den Tataren: 1394–1427, Stuttgart: Thienemann Press; see also the following website; <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/52569/52569-h/52569-h.htm>

ԱՐՑԱԽԸ ԱՐԵՎՄՏՅԱՆ ՈՒՂԵԳՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐՈՒՄ (ՄԻՆՉԵՎ XIX ԴԱՐԻ ՎԵՐՋ)

ԳԱՍՊԱՐՅԱՆ Լ.

Ամփոփում

Բանալի բառեր` Արցախ/Ղարաբաղ, ուղեգրություն, հայեր, վկայություն, Շուշի, Ռուսական կայսրություն, բարգավաճում:

Հոդվածի առանցքում` արևմտյան ուղեգիրների Արցախին նվիրված դրվագների համակողմանի մեկնաբանությունն է` տարբեր տարածաժամանակային տիրույթներում: Դիվանագետների, միսիոներների, գիտնականների ուղեգրությունների ուսումնասիրությունը բացահայտում է նկարագրական-տե-

դեկատվական և համատեքստային զուգահեռներ, ինչը հանգեցնում է այն պնդմանը, որ Արցախը օրգանապես միահյուսված է եղել Հայաստանին և նրա անբաժանելի մասն է կազմում: Մեծ է նաև Ռուսական կայսրության դերը Արցախի բարգավաճման հարցում:

Աներկբայորեն, տվյալ ուղեգրությունները, որտեղ լուսաբանվում է Արցախը, արժեքավոր աղբյուրագիտական տեղեկատվություն են հաղորդում ազգագրական և մշակութային ժառանգության, պատմական և աշխարհաքաղաքական անցուդարձի մասին: Ճամփորդական գրառումներն աչքի են ընկնում իրենց տեքստային բնականությամբ, ժամանակի հավաստի փաստական տեղեկատվությամբ և, անկասկած, պետք է լինեն հետազոտությունների օրակարգում:

АРЦАХ В ЗАПАДНЫХ ТРАВЕЛОГАХ (до конца XIX века)

ГАСПАРЯН Л.

Резюме

Ключевые слова: Арцах (Карабах), путевые заметки, армяне, свидетельство, Шуши, Российская империя, процветание.

Статья посвящена истолкованию отрывков и эпизодов из западных травелогов (до конца XIX века), посвящённых Арцаху/Карабаху в разные исторические периоды. Изучение путевых заметок дипломатов, миссионеров, ученых выявило описательно-информативную и контекстуальную аналогию, приводимую к однозначному утверждению, что Арцах был органично связан с Арменией и является ее неотъемлемой частью. Велика также роль Российской империи в развитии и процветании Арцаха.

Путевые заметки являются ценными документами, иллюстрирующими этнографическое и культурное наследие Арцаха. Они служат фактологическим материалом в историческом разрезе, к которому следует обращаться исследователям.