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ON THE ETHNIC

HISTORY OF NAKHCHIVAN REGION OF AZERBAIJAN

SOBRE LA HISTORIA ÉTNICA DE LA REGIÓN DE NAKHCHIVAN DE AZERBAIYÁN

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ABSTRACT

The study of the ethnic history of a region is fundamental to understanding and appreciating cultural diversity, fostering peoples' identity and belonging, understanding historical interactions, contributing to general historical knowledge, and promoting social justice and inclusion. Given its importance, the article examines the ethnic history of the Nakhchivan region of Azerbaijan from early times to the present. Conducted studies show that Nakhchivan was historically an integral part of Azerbaijan. In the territory of Nakhchivan there are numerous settlements belonging to the Stone Age; among them the settlements of Gazma and Kultepa stand out. Starting from the 3rd and 2nd millennium BC, the territory of Nakhchivan was one of the regions inhabited by Turkic-speaking tribes. In ancient times, the Nakhch, Gerger, Cimmerian, Scythian, Sak tribes, and in the early Middle Ages the Huns, Sabirs, Pechenegs, Khazars and Oghuz Turks migrated to all territories of Azerbaijan, including Nakhchivan, and settled there. All of these have preserved their existence in the place names and hydronyms that currently exist in the Nakhchivan territories.

Keywords: Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan, Pechenegs, Khazars, Oghuz Turks

RESUMEN

El estudio de la historia étnica de una región es fundamental para comprender y apreciar la diversidad cultural, fomentar la identidad y la pertenencia de los pueblos, entender las interacciones históricas, contribuir al conocimiento histórico general y promover la justicia social y la inclusión. Dada su importancia, en el artículo se examina la historia étnica de la región de Nakhchivan en Azerbaiyán desde los primeros tiempos hasta la actualidad. Los estudios realizados muestran que Nakhchivan fue históricamente una parte integral de Azerbaiyán. En el territorio de Nakhchivan existen numerosos asentamientos pertenecientes a la Edad de Piedra; entre ellos destacan los asentamientos de Gazma y Kultepa. A partir del tercer y segundo milenio antes de Cristo, el territorio de Nakhchivan fue una de las regiones habitadas por tribus de habla turca. En la antigüedad, las tribus Nakhch, Gerger, Cimmerian, Scythian, Sak y, a principios de la Edad Media, Huns, Sabirs, Pechenegs, Khazars y Oghuz Turks emigraron a todos los territorios de Azerbaiyán, incluido Nakhchivan, y se establecieron allí. Todos estos han conservado su existencia en los topónimos e hidrónimos que existen actualmente en los territorios de Nakhchivan.

Palabras clave: Nakhchivan, Azerbaiyán, pechenegos, jázaros, turcos Oghuz

INTRODUCTION

An ethnic group is a social group that shares a common and distinctive culture, religion, language, or another characteristic. These shared attributes distinguish them from other groups and are often used to develop a sense of cultural identity. Ethnic groups can be found all over the world and can vary in size from small, closely related communities to large, diverse populations. They can also be formed through a range of processes such as migration, conquest, voluntary association, or cultural diffusion. Ethnic groups are an important aspect of human history, culture, and identity and have had a significant impact on the development of societies and nations (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023).

The history of ethnic studies can be traced back to the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1960s. Students of color and their white supporters occupied administrative offices in colleges and universities, demanding fundamental changes in higher education. They demanded better access to higher education, changes in the curriculum, the recruitment of more professors of color, and the creation of ethnic studies programs. These programs were the beginning of multicultural curriculum reform in higher education and despite some difficulties ethnic studies programs and departments have survived and proliferated since then (Hu-DeHart, 1993).

Within ethnic studies, an essential aspect to deal with is migratory processes, since they can affect the ethnic landscape of a region in various ways (Finney & Simpson, 2009). In some cases, migrations can lead to the emergence of new ethnic communities or the fusion of various cultural identities, while on the other hand, migrations can also lead to the loss of cultural identities or assimilation into new communities. In general, migration processes can have a significant impact on the ethnic composition of a society and on the relations between different ethnic groups, which can have both positive and negative consequences in terms of social cohesion, cultural diversity and ethnic tensions.

Related to the above, the case of Azerbaijan is of special relevance since, due to its geographical location, it has had a significant influence on migratory processes in the region. Azerbaijan is located in the South Caucasus, a region that has historically been a meeting point between Eastern Europe, Western Asia, and the Middle East. This strategic location has influenced population movements over the centuries as Azerbaijan lies on the path of the ancient Silk Road, an important network of trade routes connecting Europe and Asia (Mammadov, 2013). This caused the ethnic diversity in the region to be abundant. More

recently, as a country rich in natural resources, Azerbaijan has experienced significant economic growth, especially due to the oil industry (Shafizada & Aslanova, 2022), which has influenced the migratory movements of workers internally and from neighboring countries in search of job opportunities (Rzayeva, 2022). In addition, in recent decades, the geographical location of Azerbaijan has been affected by conflicts in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. This conflict has led to significant internal displacement in Azerbaijan, with people leaving their homes in the affected areas and seeking refuge in other parts of the country (Baumann et al., 2015; Yamskov, 1991).

Within Azerbaijan, there are several regions, including the Absheron Peninsula, the Greater Caucasus Mountain range, the Lesser Caucasus Mountain range, the Caspian Sea coastal plain, the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the autonomous region and exclave of Azerbaijan, Nakhchivan. Particularly, Nakhchivan is a very interesting region with a rich and diverse ethnic history. It has been inhabited by various ethnic groups throughout history, including Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Turks, and Russians. Considering this, the objective of this work is to analyze the ethnic history of the Nakhchivan region of Azerbaijan, from remote times to more current times. For that, the historical method was used as research methods, which allowed from the analysis of various documents a more detailed understanding of the subject.

DEVELOPMENT

Stone age monuments of Nakhchivan

The favorable natural and geographical conditions of Nakhchivan, an integral part of Azerbaijan, have created conditions for the settlement of people from the ancient Stone Age. Joint research by US-Azerbaijan and French-Azerbaijani archaeologists confirms that ancient people settled in Nakhchivan 2 million years ago. Research in the Qazma cave show that life continued in Nakhchivan in the middle and last phase of the Paleolithic period. The tracing of signs characteristic of the Upper Paleolithic period confirms that the ancient inhabitants of Qazma were on the verge of the formation of tribal communities. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023).

The Neolithic period in Nakhchivan covers the 7th-6th millennium BC. The study of the monument to Kultepe I, located in the village of Kultepe in Babek region, shows that it was the oldest settlement in the South Caucasus in the Neolithic period. The Eneolithic period in Nakhchivan covers the 6th-4th millennium BC. The early stage of the Eneolithic period in the South Caucasus is still represented by Nakhchivan monuments.

Kura-Araxes culture was formed in Nakhchivan in 5th – 3rd millennium BC-Early Bronze Age. The most ancient monuments of the Early Bronze Age were discovered in the territory of Nakhchivan (To rul, 2020), which confirms that Nakhchivan is the main homeland of the Kura-Araxes culture. In the south of Azerbaijan, as well as in the territory of Nakhchivan, the carriers of the Kura-Araxes culture were the Turkic-speaking tribes -kuti, lullubi, subi and turukki.

At the end of the third millennium BC, socio-economic changes in the southern regions of Azerbaijan covered Nakhchivan, and a new culture was formed in this area, characterized by Painted Pottery. The study of settlements of the Middle Bronze Age confirms the formation of strong tribal unions and city-states in Nakhchivan during this period.

Early tribe unites and tribes in Nakhchivan

As stated before, from the 7th millennium BC to the first millennia BC, there was a considerable population in Nakhchivan. The region was geographically located in the center of Azerbaijan and was distinguished by its geopolitical position, was recognized as one of the most ancient people's settlements and World centers of civilization. Different tribes lived in the territory of Nakhchivan starting from the Stone Age. However, the names of these tribes and their ethnic history have not been the subject of special research and have not been properly investigated. Among the few researches in the topic we can highlight the one by Geibullayev (1999, pp. 37–44) who touched the ethnic history of Nakhchivan. In general, there is a great need to study the ethnic history and national composition of the population of Nakhchivan since some researchers put forward false and fabricated opinions on this problem, thereby trying to justify the fact that the territory is part of "Great Armenia" and to prove that the Azerbaijani Turks came to these territories first. In fact, this opinion is completely wrong, it is not based on any scientific basis since Azerbaijani Turks were the most ancient inhabitants of these territories. Geibullayev (1999, pp. 37–44)

The tribes living in the Nakhchivan region had a very close relationship with the tribes living around Lake Urmia. Kuti, lullubi, subi, turukki and other tribes were the most ancient inhabitants of these territories. Nakhchivan region was historically part of the states that existed in the southern territory of Azerbaijan. There is no doubt that those states are political bodies of Turkic ethnic groups.

Based on the tribes mentioned at the beginning of the 1st millennium BC, ethnos named Manna and Maday in Assyrian sources appear on the stage of history. The states of Manna (9th-7th centuries BC) and Media (673-550 BC)

are important political bodies in the history of the Turkic peoples. Although the Manna people are considered to be of Turkic origin, some researchers do not accept the Medes (Dyakonov, 2008) but others do, like the turkologist A.Sanduch. The Nakhchivan region had been within the borders of the Media at different times. In the middle of the 6th century BC, a median family consisting of 10 thousand people was moved to the territory of Nakhchivan. In the decree of the Arab commander Habib ibn Maslama on the population of Nakhchivan, the population of Nakhchivan is called "maq" (mar). "Nakhchivan is the land of the mars" (Buzand, & Gevorgiana, 1953). Istoriya & Sarkisiana, (1990) in your History of Armenia says: "There are villages of mars in Gokhtan" and etc. These show that madais (mags, mars) lived in the Nakhchivan region, and it is accepted that they are of Turkic origin. In this regard, G. Geibullayev made interesting generalizations: "The territory of Nakhchivan has been an integral part of Azerbaijan since long before our era. The ancient population of this area had the same ethnic environment as the tribes that lived in the territory of South Azerbaijan".

The ethnic composition of the population of Nakhchivan attracts attention with the predominance and multiplicity of Turkic-speaking tribes historically. In the later stages of history, various Turkic-speaking tribes also migrated to this region and mixed with the same-language tribes living in this area. According to the researchers, Sak tribes who came to the South Caucasus from the north in the 7th century BC settled in the territory of Nakhchivan. It has been proven by researchers that these tribes are Turkic-speaking. Kol tribe (Koltan, Gokhtan), a branch of Saks, also lived in Ordubad area of Nakhchivan region. A mountain called "Sak Mountain" in the west of Nusnus village of Ordubad bears the name of the Saks. One of the biggest streets of the village is named "Sak" and this street is east of Sak Mountain. Mahmud Ismail wrote that these toponyms, as well as the place called Saqqarsu, located in the north-east of Nusnus village, in the west direction of Nakhchivan, and the river are connected with the saks. According to Herodotus, the ethnonym Saka (sak - I.H.) is the same as the concept of Scythian, the only difference is that the Greeks called this ethnos "cythian", while the Persians used the name "Saka" (Herodotus, 2006, p. 64).

The settlement of families belonging to the Bulgar tribe of ancient Turkic origin in the Nakhchivan region in the 2nd century BC is also known to science. It is known that Vanand settlement in Ordubad territory belongs to them (Hajiyev, 2001, pp. 133–135). Bulgars living north of the Caucasus Mountains came to the territory of the South Caucasus in 149-127 BC. The author of the 5th century wrote that the arrivals called their settlement Vanand after

the name of their leader. According to some researchers, the toponym was derived from the name of the famous Alvandi tribe of Azerbaijan. Oykonym is an ethnotoponym in both cases and is of Turkic origin.

Migration to Nakhchivan in the early Middle Ages

In the early Middle Ages, Gargar, Shirak, Basin, Albanian, Khazar, Gerus and other Turkic tribes came to Nakhchivan region. The battlefield of the Arab-Khazar wars of the 7th-8th centuries was mainly the territory of Azerbaijan (Artamonov, 1962, pp. 205–211). It is mentioned in the sources that Khazars consist of Abas, Kulac, Tarna, Avar, Oguz, Bulgar, Biral, Pachinak, Kabar and other tribes (Geybullaev, 1986, pp. 43–46). According to G. Budagova, among the Khazars, Pechenegs also came to Nakhchivan region. The Pechenegs settled in Albania, in the territory of present-day Armenia and in the region of Nakhchivan. Originally, they are the Basines mentioned in ancient sources. Pechenegs were one of the ancient Turkic-speaking tribes of Central Asia. In the Nakhchivan region, this ethnonym is reflected in the name of a settlement called Bichenak and a pass. The Pechenegs were located in a number of territories and consisted of different tribes. Based on the existing toponyms in the South Caucasus, it was determined that those tribes were actually called Kuerchi, Erdim, Chur, Kuloba, Garabay, Karabakh, Kapan and Choban (Geybullaev, 1986, pp. 106–107). Also, it was found that the names of those tribes were reflected in the toponyms of Yardimli, Choryurt, Goyerchin, Karabakh and Gapanli. Among them, the name of the Karabakh tribe attracts special attention. Due to the fact that in Azerbaijan, in the territory of eastern Turkey and in the Nakhchivan region, the toponyms Karabakh and Karabakhtar occupy a wide place.

There is no doubt that the Karabakh toponyms are related to the name of the Karabay tribe of the Pecheneg, because there is an idea that the “y” sound at the end of the Karabay ethnonym in the Pecheneg language corresponds to the “f” sound in other Turkic languages. On the other hand, Karabakh toponyms have a very wide range and exist mainly in the regions where the Pechenegs live.

In the early Middle Ages, along with the Bulgarians and Pechenegs, Huns, Kangars and Khazar tribes also played a certain role in the ethnic history of Nakhchivan region. In the Nakhchivan region, the Khazaryurd oronym indicates that the Khazars also lived here. The Caspian coastal area of the North Caucasus is considered the homeland of the Khazars. Therefore, the relations of the Khazars with the South Caucasus have an ancient history. According to a source dating back to the fifth century, the military campaigns of the Khazars to the territory of present-day

Armenia began in the 2nd century AD. Albanian historian Musa Kalankatli dates the first attack of the Khazars on Albania to 350. According to the Arab historian Tabari, the Sassanid Shah Khosrow Anushiravan settled 10 thousand Khazar families between the Kura-Araz Rivers (Buniyatov, 1965, pp. 107–116).

During the raids of the Khazars on the South Caucasus in the 5th-6th centuries, a part of them settled here. Then, starting from 623 to 796, Arab-Khazar wars took place from time to time, and the battlefield of these wars was mainly the territory of Azerbaijan (Artamonov, 1962, pp. 181, 205).

The sources mentioned that the Khazars consisted of Abas, Kulas, Tarna, Avar, Oguz, Bulgar, Bizal, Pachinak, Kabar and other tribes. Although it is impossible to determine the exact time of settlement of the Khazar tribes in the Nakhchivan region, some facts can be considered. According to the mention of the Tarnavar toponym in the Nakhchivan region in the work “Armenian geography of the 7th century”, it can be concluded that this tribe of Khazars came and settled here before the 7th century.

It was known from historical sources that some of the Pechenegs were called Kangars. Speaking about the Bilgamish saga, F. Agasioglu wrote that “Since the name of the Sumerian part of the country is written in the form of KI.EN.GI., it is clear that the Sumerians called themselves kenger”. The Kenger-Kangar tribe is the name of the people living in the Kang state in Central Asia, and it means “Kang heroes and men”.

Historically, kangars played an important role in the Nakhchivan region since the settlement of the Kangars in the South Caucasus dates back to the beginning of our era. During this period, the Huns, moving from Central Asia to Eastern Europe, passed through the Kang state and annexed a part of the Kangars. At the beginning of our era, Turkic-speaking Kangars lived in the territory of Azerbaijan. In the South Caucasus, Kangars lived in two regions: both in the west of Albania - in its border zone with Georgia and Armenia, and in Nakhchivan. The name of the Kangars in the South Caucasus was mentioned in the events of 193-213, and the Greek author Claudius Ptolemy of the second century wrote that one of the cities in Albania was called Gangar. In Syrian sources, the name of the Kangars in the Nakhchivan region was first mentioned in the events of 542-552. Therefore, it is not true that some researchers attribute the settlement of the Kangars in the Nakhchivan region to the years of 826 and 836. The Kangar tribe lived in the Nakhchivan region for many centuries and took an active part in the activities of the region. Written sources from the time of the Safavid Empire about

the descendants of the Kangars, an Oghuz-Turkic tribe, have come down to our time. According to the historical documents in the Kangarli archive, 23 tribes belonging to the branches of the Kangarli people were mentioned.

Ethnic composition of Nakhchivan after Russian-Gajars war

According to the information obtained from The Chronicles of the Russian-Gajars Wars, Nakhchivan sent mounted troops from Kangarli province under the name of "Nakhchivan cavalry" to the service of the Safavid state for a long time. It was the kangarlis who created the Nakhchivan Khanate and ruled it for several centuries. After the annexation of Nakhchivan Khanate to the Russian Empire in 1828, for the first time in 1831-1832, Kangarli tribe was listed in Nakhchivan province and Nakhchivan city. According to data from the beginning of the 19th century, 920 out of 2791 Azerbaijani families in Nakhchivan province belonged to the Kangarli descendants (Geibullaev, 1991, pp. 101–102). According to I. Shopen, the kangarlis in Nakhchivan consisted of the following tribes: Yurdchu, Kizilli, Sarvanlar, Khalkhalli, Pirhasanli, Salash, Agabayli, Karabakhtar, Kaman, Jagatai, Karakhan, Hajilar, Jamshidli, Bilici, Gizil Ilan, Kurdlar, Karadolaghi, Shabanli, Kalfir, Arafali, Karajali, Garakovsarli, Bulgarian, Kurdish Mahmudli, Aliyanli, Ziyadli, Barghusadli (Shopen, 1852, pp. 537–538) encompassing 6437 people. In general, 24385 people lived in Nakhchivan province at that time (Shopen, 1852, p. 525). I. Shopen indicated that the descendants of the Kangarli consisted of 1,433 families, but perhaps, the Kangar people who wintered in Karabakh were not taken into account in some censuses conducted in Nakhchivan.

In the cameral list of 1832, the Kangarli tribe was given a wide place. Here, the Kangarli tribe of Kangarlis and its descendants were mentioned separately: 411 families, 879 men, 815 women, a total of 1694 people. Azerbaijanis belonging to other tribes were: 494 families, 1004 men, 926 women, for a total of 1930 people. The resettled Armenians were: 265 houses, 600 men, 510 women, for a total of 1110 people. In general, the number of houses in the city was 1330, 2871 men, 2599 women, for a total population of 5470. 2 families of khans, 45 families of beys and sultans, and 11 military personnel were mentioned in the cameral list (Pashayev, 2022, pp. 2–26).

In the archive work of 1832, the following descendants of the kangarli tribe were mentioned: Bilici, Garadolaghi, Sarvanlar, Khalkhalli, Salahi, Gomayil, Karabakhtars, Agabayli, Jagatayli, Karakhanbeyli, Gajlar (Keclar), Jamshidli, Shabanli (Shahbanli), Kalfir, Pirhasanli, Arafali,

Kizilli, Kara nomad, Karajali, Yurdchu, Alikhanli, Alialakbarli, Gyzylgishlagli, Gurdlar etc.

The cameral description also noted the neighborhoods where the descendants belonging to the Kangarli tribe lived. In the same year, the following neighborhoods were recorded in the city of Nakhchivan: Sarvanlar, Armenian neighborhood (Armenians who were resettled from Iran in 1828), Oruj neighborhood, Kohne Gala, Khoshulu, Alikhan, Chaparkhana, Ziyilarkhi, Bilici, Shahab, Khoylu, Tazakend, or Uzun Divar. The names of the tribes to which the Kangar people living in each of them belong are also mentioned. For example, in the Sarvanlar neighborhood of Nakhchivan city, the names of the following descendants belonging to the Kangarli tribe are found: Yurdchu, Kizilli, Garadolaghi, Pirhasanli, Sarvans, Salahis, Khalkhals, Gomayils, Karabakhs, Agabaylis, Jigataylis, Karakhanbeylis. Kangarli descendants living in Alikhanli neighborhood: Agabayli, Arafali, Kizilli, Alikhanli, Salahlil, Gacler (Keclar). In the Shahab part, mostly the Bilijiler lived (Pashayev, 2022, p. 265).

In general, the cameral list of 1832 is the original first Russian-language source providing detailed information about the Kangarlis of Nakhchivan. It is no coincidence that V. Grigoryev and I. Chopin benefited from this cameral list when writing their works. I. I. Shopen in his work dedicated to "Armenian Province" (Shopen, 1852) also provided information about the Kangarli generation, the areas where they lived, and the composition of the population. According to him, when Russia occupied Nakhchivan, there were 67 khans, 373 beys and sultans there (Shopen, 1852, pp. 468–469). Another Russian author, K. Smirnov, noted the presence of the following descendants of bey in Nakhchivan, in addition to the Kangarli descendant: Talyshovs, Agashibeyovs, Muradasilbeyovs, Shahtakhtinskys, Vazirovs, Jamalbeyovs, Sultanovs, Elchiyevs, etc. (Smirnov, 1999, p. 51).

A source from the 30s of the 19th century showed that two large tribal groups lived in Nakhchivan province: Kangars and Karajas. It is noted here that the Kangar tribes live in the following villages: Yurdchu – in Jahri village; Jumshudlu – in the villages of Govurarkh, Khok, Shahtakht and Gildasar; Khalkhalli – in the village of Vaikhir; Karakhanbeyli - in the village of Karakhanbeyli; Agabayli, Jagatayli, Karajalli, Bilici, Karagulagi, Kechilar, Sarvanlar, Shahbanli, Alikhanli - in the city of Nakhchivan; Arafali – in the village of Karimbey Diza; Seleyka - in the villages of Nahajir, Kulus and Mahmudoba; Kyzylly – in the village of Kultepe; Pir Hasanli – in Kagan village; Gizilgishlaq – in the village of Bulgan; Kalfir – in the villages of Tirkesh and Selasuz; Karabaglar - in the village of Karabaglar

(Grigoriev, 1833, p. 32). The Karajalar tribe lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle in Dereleyez district.

It is clear from the geographical names in the territory of Nakhchivan that Abdal, Hun, Guhchu, Bayan and other ancient Turkic tribes also settled here. Seljuk-Oghuz Turks also came to Nakhchivan in the 11th-12th centuries. These include toponyms related to Yayci, Bekdili, Khalaj and other Oghuz tribes. Later, Ustajli, Rumlu and other Turkic tribes became more active in the land. Among the Turkic tribes, Didivarli, Gizilli, Amir Khanli, Araf sali, Hajili, Kechili, Kalfirli, Garahanbeyli, Garkhunli, Alikhanli, Mughanli and dozens of others were the aboriginal peoples of the region, traces of those tribes remain in the territory of the autonomous republic today, and a number of settlements are named after them. (Grigoriev, 1833, p. 32).

As it can be seen, historically the population of Nakhchivan consisted of Turks – Azerbaijanis. There are enough facts about this in the sources of the time. For example, Arab caliph Muawiya I (661-696) before sending troops to Azerbaijan called his court scholar and asked: - What do you know about Azerbaijan? A scholar who is well acquainted with Azerbaijan answered as follows: - Azerbaijan has been a country of Turks since ancient times and is inhabited by them. In the work “Ajaib ad-Dunya” (13rd century), the author of which is unknown, interesting information is given about the density of the population in Nakhchivan, their white-faced, their skill in artistic carving and wood-working, their fearless, hospitable, and good-natured character, their good language, especially their obedience to the safei sect of Islam. Khorenatsi & Sarkisiana (1990)

The “Detailed book of the Nakhchivan sanjak” also attracts attention from the point of view of the study of ethnic issues. Thus, in the 20-30s of the 18th century, the population of Nakhchivan Sanjak was listed, the national composition, occupation, tax system, demographic situation of the population were recorded. In “Detailed book” objective analyzes are given against those who put forward groundless territorial claims against Nakhchivan. The evidence show that Nakhchivan sanjak from ancient times, along with today’s territory, covered the territories of the regions bordering Armenia (South-eastern part of Vedi district, entire territory of Daralayaz District, half of Jermukh district, main part of Sisyan (Garakilsa) district and several settlements of the district including Mehri (Megri) settlement). These lands were the ancient land of Oguz. The “Nakhchivan book” contains the names of the administrative-territorial division of Nakhchivan, districts, cities and villages included in the regions, the tax system of the state, the names and patronymics of taxable persons, various mosques, caravanserais, shops, bazaars, baths and other names, all of which are in Azerbaijani.

This way, at the beginning of the 18th century the proportion of Muslims in Nakhchivan sanjak was about 70-76%. (Pashayev, 2022).

From the administrative-territorial division given in the “Nakhchivan book”, it can be seen that the Nakhchivan sanjak included 14 districts - Nakhchivan, Alinca, Sair Mavazi, Dareshahbuz, Mulki-Aslan, Mavaziyi-Khatun, Karabakh, Kishlagat, Deresham, Azadjiran, Shorlut, Daranurgut, Sisyan, and Dereleyez whose names are of Azerbaijani-Turkic origin. The information of the first sources about the medieval history of Nakhchivan and the opinions of researchers confirm that the area was part of Azerbaijan throughout the Middle Ages, as in previous periods, and its population consisted of Azerbaijanis. (Pashayev, 2022, p. 265).

Territorial claims against Nakhchivan are rejected by the ethnic history of this region, the ethnic composition of the population, and the fact that 97.4 percent of geographical names are in the Azerbaijani language. As mentioned above, mainly Turkic-speaking tribes lived in the Nakhchivan region. Azerbaijanis have been the main ethnic group of Nakhchivan since ancient times. Political power, naturally, has always been in the hands of Azerbaijanis since Azerbaijanis lived not only in the Nakhchivan region, but also a considerable part in the present-day territory called Armenia. These facts were substantiated in the works “Iravan became a province with Muslim inhabitants”, “Ancient Turkic-Oghuz land -Armenia”. Regarding this, A. V. Parvitski, who studied the Sharur-Daralayaz district of Iravan province in the middle of the 19th century, wrote that there were 55 Azerbaijani villages and 7 Armenian villages in the district (Parvitsky, 1886, p. 99).

Russian sources of 19th century also contain interesting information about the number and ethnic composition of the population of Nakhchivan. You will not find a Russian researcher of the 19th century who would have attributed Nakhchivan, which Griboyedov called a “Muslim country”, to other nations. In a letter to Commander Paskevich in 1828 on September 23rd, Griboyedov stated that there were 2,428 families in the Nakhchivan province, including 2,024 Muslim families and 404 local Armenian families. Grigoriev’s work “Statistical Description of Nakhchivan Province” showed that there were 4,959 families in the province: 4149 Muslim families and 810 Armenian families (Grigoriev, 1833, p. 72). Considering this, apparently, according to the cameral census, at sometimes Armenians made up only one-sixth of the population of Nakhchivan.

However, a fundamental change in the composition of the population of Nakhchivan, both numerically and ethnically, occurred after the Russian occupation. This was the

result of Tsarism's policy of armenianizing the population of Azerbaijan, including Nakhchivan. However, despite all the efforts of Tsarism, not only the Armenians could not make up the majority of the population, but they could not make a stand in this territory. Of those living in Nakhchivan province in 1832, 17,138 were Azerbaijanis, 2,690 were local, and 1,340 were Armenians resettled from Iran and Turkey after the Turkmenchay treaty (Shopen, 1852, pp. 38–39). In 1919s year the Azerbaijanians were 62,5 percent, Armenians were 36,7 percent among the population of the province of Nakhchivan and in Sharur-Daralayaz they were as 72,3 percent and 27,1 percent (Pashayev, 2022, p. 61). Then, socio-political events and conflicts that occurred in the 20s of the 20th century, resulted in the Armenians leaving the Nakhchivan region.

CONCLUSIONS

Knowing the ethnic history of a region is important because it gives us a deeper and more complete understanding of its cultural and social identity. Ethnic history reveals the different human groups that have inhabited the region over time, their interactions, migrations, and cultural legacies. By understanding the ethnic diversity of a region, we can appreciate and value the contributions of each group to its cultural heritage and promote respect and tolerance towards all communities present in it. Additionally, ethnic history also helps us understand current conflicts and challenges, as many issues and tensions may be rooted in historical events and relationships. In this way, knowing the ethnic history of a region allows us to build bridges between different groups, foster intercultural dialogue and work towards a more inclusive and equitable society.

Examining the territory of Nakhchivan, it is clear that historically was one of the regions inhabited by Turkic-speaking tribes which is unequivocally confirmed not only by archaeological data, but also by written sources, ancient sources, early medieval Arabic and Persian-language sources, as well as records of European travelers and Russian-language sources. The most ancient indigenous people of this region were Turkic-speaking tribes, so the ethnic composition of the population of Nakhchivan is predominantly Turkic-speaking, although historically there have been multiplicity. In the later stages of history, various Turkic-speaking tribes also migrated to this region and mixed with the same-language tribes living in this area. As examples, the Sak tribes who came to the South Caucasus from the north in the 7th century BC settled in the territory of Nakhchivan, or the Kol tribe (Koltan, Gokhtan), a branch of Saks, also lived in Ordubad area of Nakhchivan region. This influence has naturally reached our days, which is reflected in the fact that a mountain

called "Sak Mountain" in the west of Nusnus village of Ordubad bears the name of the tribe, or the case of one of the biggest streets of the village which is named "Sak".

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