

KARABAGH (ARTSAKH) IN OLD MAPS

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1 – GENERAL

The author has tried to present a balanced and unbiased historic and cartographic view to the reader interested in obtaining some knowledge of how and when the historically Armenian-populated region of Karabagh (Artsakh – in Armenian) was described by various world-famous geographers and depicted by famous cartographers. For this reason the maps reproduced in the article, with the exception of two, are produced by non-Armenian geographers and cartographers, whose works form the basis of the world cartographic heritage. These documents have been sourced from various libraries all over the world.

The documents presented are in no way complete and represent only a small portion of the maps where Karabagh has been shown and named. Furthermore, the article excludes all descriptions and details mentioned in the travelogues of Islamic and western travellers, who have written about their passage through Karabagh, such as Clavijo,¹ who travelled during 1405–1407, and Schiltberger,² who travelled from 1396 to c.1422, and many others who travelled through South Caucasus during the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries. These sources confirm the Armenian presence in the area by providing much detail about the population and their way of life in the region concerned. However, as they do not contain any maps, they have been excluded from this study.

The maps come to prove that Karabagh or in Armenian, Artsakh, has appeared on the maps from around 1460. However, this does not imply that the name is absent from the ancient and old historic writings and documents, the discussion of which is beyond the scope of this article.

¹ **De Clavijo**, Ruy Gonzales. Narrative of the Embassy of the Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo to the Court of Teimour at Samarkand. Translated by Clemens Markham. London: Hakluyt Society, 1854.

² **Schiltberger**, Johann. Bondage and Travels, 1396 to 1427. Translated by Telfer Buchan. London: Hakluyt Society, 1879.

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2 – EARLY AGES

The oldest cartographic or geographic information has reached us from Greco-Roman sources, but these do not contain any documents, which could be called a map. There are only references about mapmaking and maps prepared by some of the ancient geographers such as Hecataeus of Miletus, etc.³ The maps referred to by the ancients could be seen today in reconstructions, prepared by well-known cartographic experts such as Karl Müller, Konrad Miller, E.H. Bunbury, John Murray and others based on the descriptions provided in the texts of ancient historians such as Hecataeus, Herodotus, Eratosthenes, Strabo and others. Today, when we refer to world maps of the Greco-Roman period, we mainly refer to the reconstructions prepared by those specialists.

It is interesting to note that although these texts and maps contain names of countries, no borders are delineated. Generally speaking, regions, or, as preferred, the so called “countries” are called by the names of the races, peoples and nations who inhabited the given area. Borders, being manmade, are very amorphous and keep changing constantly; hence, they did not merit mentioning, unless they were major natural borders, such as large rivers, lakes, seas and mountain ranges. Since the population of the region of Karabagh was mainly Armenian, the region was covered under the general name of Armenia, the same name appeared over the region of Karabagh-Artsakh, and this name did not appear on ancient and early medieval maps.

One of the founding fathers of geography was Claudius Ptolomaeus or simply Ptolemy (c. 90–168 C.E.) whose opus magnum, *Geographia*, is considered to be the most important early work on geography. The book contains instructions on how to observe the universe, measure distances and angles and generally how to prepare maps. His methods were used well in the sixteenth century. The book has a list of about 8,000 toponyms, divided by continents and subdivided into countries. Out of those toponyms, around 176 relate to Armenia Maior and Armenia Minor. No original map of the work has survived, and the oldest manuscript copy of the work containing maps mentioned in the book dates from the thirteenth century and contains the reworking of the drawings as mentioned by Ptolemy in his book.

³ Galichian R., *Historic Maps of Armenia*. London and New York: I.B.Tauris, 2004, p. 12.

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On his maps, Ptolemy divides countries mainly using then natural features of the land, which do not always correspond exactly with reality, while few other maps of the ancient and early medieval periods show country borders, a tradition, which in Europe extended well into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. On some medieval maps straight lines are drawn to artificially divide and specify countries, mainly as an aid for the reader to differentiate them.⁴ The map-maker often was unaware of the regions and the countries that he was drawing and had no knowledge of the strategic variations in their political geography and border changes; therefore it was safer not to draw borders at all. With the exception of the reconstructed and copied Ptolemaic maps, which date from around the fifteenth century, the practice of drawing borders on the maps came to general use during the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries.

3 – PRESENCE OF KARABAGH IN THE REGION

Rising from the above-mentioned methodology used in the Middle Ages, the name of the region of Karabagh (the Armenian Artsakh) did not feature on the early maps, as this was considered to be a part of the country of Armenia or the Armenian population of the region, covered by the general toponym of Armenia.⁵

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned, the name of Karabagh occasionally appears on maps prepared earlier than the sixteenth century. Whenever the name appears, it invariably refers to the region between the Arax and Kura rivers located to the west of the confluence of these two rivers, extending to the east of the Lake Sevan in Armenia. Up to the fourth century the country located east of Karabagh and north of the river Kura was named “Caucasian Albania” or in Arabic and Persian “Aran” – in Armenian “Aghvanq”. After the takeover of the region by the Iranian Sassanid dynasty during the late fourth century, the Sassanid administrators combined the regions north and south of the Kura into one province, that of the Iranian Satrapy of Aran. For this same reason in Islamic

⁴ **Galichian R.**, *Countries South of the Caucasus in Medieval Maps*. London: Gomidas Institute, 2007, pp. 45, 91, 194–196.

⁵ **Ptolemy**. *Geographia*, prepared by Lorenzo Fries, Manuscript Maps. C.1.d.11 and other copies in the British Library. For full texts of towns etc. see also Galichian, Rouben. *Historic Maps of Armenia*. London and New York: IB Tauris, 2004, pp. 96–99.

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cartography the region north of the Arax River, up to the Mount Ararat is sometimes referred to as part of Aran.⁶

It must be mentioned that on all the Islamic maps of the ninth to the twelfth centuries the Iranian-Sassanid province of Aran also included the whole of Georgia. Furthermore, north of the eastern end of the River Arax there was no country mentioned other than Aran. On all the Islamic maps Azerbaijan is shown south of the Arax, as the north-western province of Iran, whose name was changed from Lesser Media to Atropatene during the second century B.C.E., a name, which evolved to Atorpaten, Adherbigan, Adherbaygan and finally, during the Arab and Turkish rules to Azerbaijan. On all of the above maps there is a third country, Armenia, straddling the Arax River and extending south-westward to Bitlis, Amid and Miafarqin (old Armenian capital of Tigranakert, today near Diyarbakir, Turkey). Thus, it could easily be deduced that the region of Karabagh, north of the River Arax, has never been placed inside a country named Azerbaijan, as claimed by the present authorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan, since such a country never existed in the region north of the Arax River. Azerbaijan as a country toponym has always been a province of Iran, located south of the Arax River, a status, which changed its name only in 1918. Various Russian, British, American and European encyclopaedias bear evidence to this fact.

A further look into the maps of the region prepared by various renowned cartographers and published all over the world, would show that north of the Arax there has never been a country named Azerbaijan prior to 1918. The name of the region in medieval times was Aran, and after the Islamization of the region, Karabagh and Aran were divided into smaller regions, where Muslim khans and beglarbeys ruled under the names of the khanates of Ganja, Shaki, Talish, Derbend, Shamakhi, Shushi etc., which were collectively given the all-encompassing name of Shirvan.⁷ Historically, in this area the five Armenian

⁶ **Galichian R.**, *Countries South of the Caucasus*. Op.cit., pp. 94–130. Here the most important Islamic maps depicting the area are reproduced, which include the works of Istakhri, Ibn Hawqal, Idrissi, Qazwini, Mas'oudi, and Ibn Said.

⁷ For further historic and cartographic details related to the subject see Galichian Rouben. *The Invention of History*. London: Gomidas Institute, 2009/2010 and Galichian Rouben. *Clash of Histories in the South Caucasus*. London: Bennett & Bloom, 2013. Even Ottoman, Persian and Arab geographers and cartographers never show a country named

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“Meliks” (derived from the Persian word “malek”, large landowning families) lived and ruled. They led almost independent lives, but paid their tribute to the Persian rulers or the Ottomans, whoever happened to rule during the particular period.

4 – KARABAGH ON OLD MAPS

In medieval texts the name of Karabagh or Artsakh was mentioned in some manuscripts, particularly in the first Armenian-language geography book, the seventh century *Ashkharhatsuyts* (World Mirror) of Anania Shirakatsi, a paragraph of which could be seen in a manuscript of the work reproduced in Fig. 01, taken from MS N.1486-f102, 1597.

Historically Artsakh has been one of the fifteen provinces of medieval Armenia. The book has much information about the provinces, including their location and important towns and villages.

On a map, published in 1751 in Venice, prepared as per the descriptions of Anania Shirakatsi’s *Ashkharhatsuyts*, the region of Artsakh is shown lying near the confluence of the Arax and Kura Rivers. The image in Fig. 02 is a section of this map showing the region of Artsakh which is entitled *Armenia according to old and new Geographers*. The name of Karabagh/Artsakh is underlined red in both images.

* * *

In western cartography the name of Karabagh does not appear until the middle of the fifteenth century. In 1459 a World Map was prepared ordered by Portugal’s King Alfonso V. This huge map (two metres in diameter) was prepared by the Venetian cartographer Fra Mauro (c. 1400–1464). The original of the map was lost in transit from Venice to Portugal and a second copy was made by the master’s assistants, which was eventually sent to the king in 1460.⁸

This map is oriented with the north at the bottom and peculiarly shows the approximately correct shape of the Caspian Sea, which on other maps prepared

Azerbaijan, north of the Arax River. The country by this name appeared only in 1918 and now is claiming to have three thousand years of history.

⁸ Fra Mauro’s map is kept in the Biblioteca Marciana, Venice.

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well in the 1700s, is shown by a flat oval shape.⁹ In the detail map of Fig. 03, the region of Armenia can be seen on Fra Mauro's World Map of 1460. On the lower left part of the map Armenia is mentioned near the confluence of the two rivers, Arax and Kura. Another *Armenia* in black letters and *ARMENIA* in gold letters appear at the top of the map with the Iranian Azerbaijani city of *Thauris* (Tabriz) to their south (above). Near these toponyms other cities such as *Choi* (Khoy), *Carpi* and *Arachaze*¹⁰ are also indicated, which are cities in or near the region of Armenia. To the right of *ARMENIA* the pile of stones depicts Mount *Ararat* with *Archa Noe* (Noah's Ark) sitting on the summit. Between these two the name of the Armenian city of *Salmas[t]* and the Artsakh town of *Barda* are shown, with *Monte Charabach* (Mountains of Karabagh) in between. Here, for the first time in the Western cartography the name of Karabagh is mentioned. Below the confluence of Arax and Kura the toponym *Siroan* (Shirvan) can be seen, which was given to the region corresponding to the location of the present day Republic of Azerbaijan.

* * *

Gerardus Mercator (1512–1594) was one of the most important Flemish cartographers of the time, and his projections for showing the spherical earth on a flat sheet of paper are widely used even today. His atlas of the world was published posthumously by his son Rumold and contains many detailed maps of Europe as well as other continents and countries.

The detail image shown in Fig. 04 is taken from Mercator's *Map of Asia*. The western part of Armenia is shown, and it has been entitled *Turcomania* (Turkish-Armenia), under the Ottoman rule, while eastern Armenia is shown under Persian domination.¹¹ The region north of Armenia, neighbouring the *Mare*

⁹ The shape of the Caspian Sea was not known until 1720s, when Peter the Great of Russia had it surveyed. Until then the generally agreed shape was a flat oval, which in the ancient times was considered to be connected to the Northern Ocean. It is a mystery how a fifteenth century cartographer would show the correct shape of the Caspian, which was surveyed only after 250 years of the making of this map.

¹⁰ This could refer to Mount Aragats or the region of Aragats in Armenia.

¹¹ For a period of a century or so, West Armenia, which was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, on some Western maps was given the name of Turcomania. At the same time in some of these atlases it is described that "Turcomania and Turkish [West] Armenia

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di Sala olim Caspium (Caspian Sea) is named *Seruan* (Shirvan), while the Persian cities of *Merent* (Marand) and *Coy* (Khoy) are shown south of the River Arax flowing into the Caspian. North of the Arax River the name *Carabach*, underlined green, can be seen. The Armenian populated cities of *Van*, *Mus[h]* and *Vastan* are placed inside the Armenian territory occupied by the Ottoman Empire.

* * *

The Royal Geographer Philip du Val (1619–1683) was an important French cartographer. Fig. 05 shows a detail from his map of *Turkey in Asia* published in 1676, where the green line delineates the border of the Ottoman and Persian Empires. Western Armenia is under the Ottoman rule and is entitled *Turcomanie al. Armenie* (Turcomania or Armenia, see endnote xi), which includes the region of *Nachijevan* and *Ararat*, the cities of *Kars*, *Erivan*, *Van*, etc. The adjoining territory to the east, inside Persia includes the provinces of *Adherbetzhan* (Azerbaijan) and *Kilan* (Gilan), where the cities of *Tauris*, *Chui*, *Ardebil*, *Maraga* and others are placed. The Persian-occupied territory in South Caucasus extends northward up to Shirvan and Derbend.

On this map the region north of the rivers *Arais* (Arax) and *Kur* are named *Shamachie* and *Shirwan*, but the triangle inside the confluence of the rivers Kura and Arax, underlined red is entitled *Karabag* (Karabagh).

* * *

The British cartographer Robert Morden's (1668–1703) atlas *Geography Rectified* contains a map of *Armenia, Georgia and Comania*. On the map the borders between the Ottoman and Persian empires are shown similar to du Val's map. On this map, shown in Fig. 06, *Scirvan* (Shirvan) and *Shamachie* are north of the *Aras* and *Kur* Rivers inside the Persian Empire and *Karabag* with *Nassivan* (Nakhijevan) are placed west of the confluence of these rivers, inside the Persian-occupied territory north of the Arax.

* * *

The Dutch cartographer Pieter Van der Aa (1659–1733) published his *Atlas Nouveau et Curieux* around 1710, which contained a map of the Tartar territories.

are the same". The name has possibly arisen from the more generally used terminology of "Turkish-Armenia", hence "Turco-[Ar]mania".

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A detail of this map in Fig. 07 shows the regions of the Caucasus extending to northern Persia. The map covers the regions of Circassia, Georgia, Armenia and Persia. Here *Karabagh*, underlined red, is shown on the southern shore of the river *Corasse* (Arax) and *Cirus* (Kura), north-east of *Nachsua* (Nachijevan) and north of *Ardavil* (Ardabil) placed inside Persia. The map does not include political boundaries.

* * *

Pierre Amédée Jaubert (1779–1847) began his travels through Turkey and Armenia towards Persia in 1805. After spending four months in the Turkish town of Bayazed, where he was imprisoned by the Pasha, Jaubert was only allowed to continue his journey only after the Pasha's death. In his book *Voyage en Arménie et en Perse* (Paris, 1821) he writes about his experiences and includes a map of his travelled route, drawn by the well-known French cartographer Pierre Lapie (1777–1850).

The detail reproduced in Fig. 08 from Lapie's map shows the region of southern Caucasus. North of the Kura we can see the regions of *Chyrwan* (Shirvan) and *Talidj* (Talish), which are mainly in the territory today occupied by the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Here *Cara-Bagh*, undelined red, is placed between the rivers *Araxes* and *Kour*, east of the Lake *Sivan* (Sevan) and south of *Elizabethpol* or *Ghandjeh*. On the map the sister territory of Karabagh, *Cara-Dagh* is shown south of the Arax, inside the territory or Persian Azerbaijan.

To be continued in the next issue.

ՂԱՐԱԲԱԴԸ (ԱՐՅԱԽԸ) ՀԻՆ ՔԱՐՏԵԶՆԵՐՈՒՄ

ԳԱԼԻՉՅԱՆ (ԳԱԼՉՅԱՆ) Ռ.

Ամփոփում

Հին քարտեզներում ընդհանրապես երկրների սահմանները չէին նշվում և տարածքի երկրամասերը կոչվում էին այնտեղ բնակվող ժողովուրդների անուններով: Քանի որ Ղարաբաղ/Արցախում հիմնականում բնակվում էին հայեր, ապա այս տարածաշրջանն էլ ներառվում էր Հայաստանի անվան մեջ:

տեղի: Արցախ յերկայ
 սիանեայ. փառաւոր է եւ ինձու
 ժբ. չոր աղուանէ + ունիք. Սիւս
 հարթանք. Վահանի +. Բերնա
 նոր. Տե՛ջ կուանէ Տե՛ջիւանէ
 հարձլանէ. Տուխանէ + սիանէ
 պանճկանէ + սիւսկանդուպանէ
 + ուստի փառանէ կողմ-յոր
 ում վեր + արարտուանի:

Fig. 01- A paragraph
 related to Artsakh (red)
 from a manuscript copy of
 the Ashkharhatsuyts".



Fig. 02 – Detail of Artsakh from the “Map of Armenia”, Venice, 1751.



Fig. 05 – Detail from the map of “Turkey in Asia” by du Val, dated 1676, showing the border of the Ottoman and Persian empires.



Fig. 06 – Part of the map of “Armenia, Georgia and Comania” by Morden, 1700, possibly a later revision.



Fig. 07 – Detail from the “Tartarie” map of van der Aa, printed around 1710, showing South Caucasus.

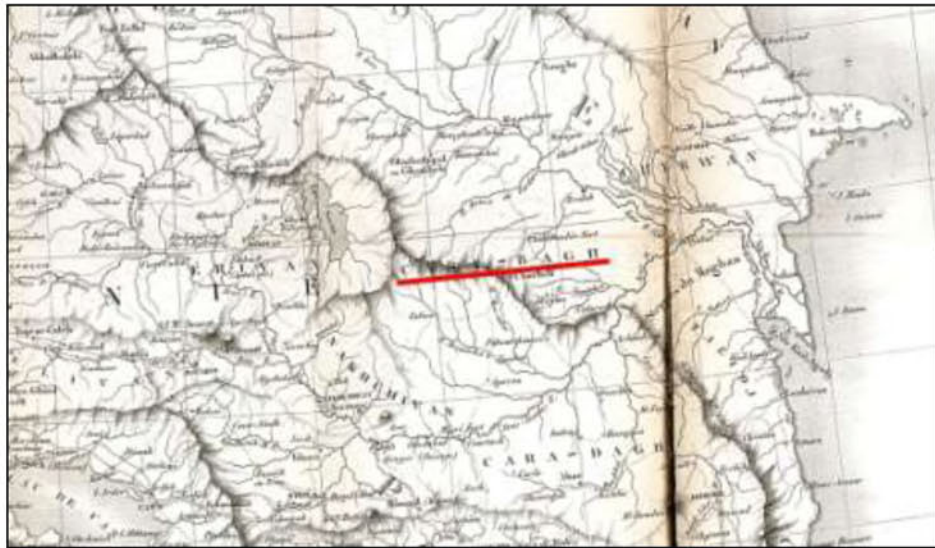


Fig. 08- Detail from Lapie's map showing the route taken by Jaubert, when travelling from Constantinople to Persia in 1805.

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Եվրոպական քարտեզներում առաջին անգամ Ղարաբաղը նշված է 1460 թ.՝ իտալական մի աշխարհագրույց քարտեզում: 17-րդ դարի և դրանց հաջորդող քարտեզներում Ղարաբաղ անվանումը կարելի է տեսնել բազմաթիվ եվրոպական և մահմեդական քարտեզներում: Քարտեզներում այսպես անվանված երկրամասը գտնվում է Արաքսի հյուսիսային ափերին և տարածվում է Սևանա լճի հարավ-արևելքից մինչև Արաքսի և Կուրի միախառնումը:

Հոդվածում նշված և պատկերված քարտեզները կարևոր աշխատություններ են, որոնք համաշխարհային քարտեզագրական ժառանգության մասն են կազմում: Սրանց մեջ հստակ երևում է, թե օտար քարտեզագետները որտեղ են տեղադրել Ղարաբաղ/ Արցախն իրենց աշխատություններում:

КАРАБАХ (АРЦАХ) НА СТАРЫХ КАРТАХ

ГАЛИЧЯН (ГАЛЧЯН) Р.

Резюме

На старых картах границы стран вообще не отмечались, и регионы обозначались в соответствии с названиями живущих там народов. Так как Карабах /Арцах/ преимущественно был населен армянами, то на старых картах этот регион также представлен под названием Армения. На европейских картах Карабах впервые был отмечен в 1460 году в итальянском географическом атласе. В XVII и последующих веках название Карабах встречается во многих европейских и исламских картах. Данный регион на картах локализован на северных берегах Аракса и простирается с юго-востока озера Севан до места слияния Аракса и Куры.

Представленные в статье карты составляют часть всемирного картографического наследия. Эти карты явствуют о том, где локализовывали Карабах иностранные картографы.