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Researches on Persian and Georgian-Persian Historical Documents of Nader Shah's Times from Georgian Depositories

Helen Giunashvili, Tamar Abuladze

► **To cite this version:**

Helen Giunashvili, Tamar Abuladze. Researches on Persian and Georgian-Persian Historical Documents of Nader Shah's Times from Georgian Depositories. *Analytica iranica*, 2013. hal-04252819

HAL Id: hal-04252819

<https://hal.science/hal-04252819>

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Institut Supérieur d'Études Historiques sur l'Iran
Institute for Iranian Historical Studies

Analytica Iranica

revue pluridisciplinaire d'histoire et de civilisation iraniennes



Sous la direction de

Mahmoud Delfani

Volume IV - V Été 2013

□ français / english

METHODOLOGICA
UNIVERSITAS PARIS
Editions

Analytica Iranica

Revue interdisciplinaire d'histoire et de civilisation
iraniennes

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Analytica Iranica

Volume IV - V

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www.mahmouddelfani.com

Avec le concours scientifique de

Institut Supérieur d'Etudes Historiques sur l'Iran

www.historiairanica.com

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Centre privé d'enseignement en méthodologie des sciences humaines

www.methodologica.fr

□ Analytica Iranica

Volumes IV – V, été 2013

Sous la direction de Mahmoud Delfani

ISBN : 9782918264088

Dépôt légal : Juillet 2013

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Couverture : Ayatollah Abolhassan Esfahani, un des grands ulémas chiites, qui a immigré en Iran après la Révolution d'Irak de 1920, pendant la prière de vendredi à Nadjaf.

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□ The opinions expressed in this publication are the views of the authors. These articles are published as they were received after confirmation of their research quality by the Academic Committee of the Institute for Iranian Historical Studies and the editor-in-chief of *Analytica Iranica*.

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Première partie / First part

Histoire de l'Iran



Researches on Persian and Georgian-Persian Historical Documents of Nāder Shāh's Times from Georgian Depositories

Helen Giunashvili / Georgia

Researcher, G. Tsereteli Institute of Oriental Studies, Georgia

Researcher, Institute of Old Oriental Studies, Leipzig

Academic board, Institute for Iranian Historical Studies / Institut Supérieur
d'Etudes Historiques sur l'Iran

Academic board, Encyclopaedia Historica Iranica

Tamar Abuladze / Georgia

Senior researcher, National Center of Manuscripts, Georgia

Collections of Georgian Depositories (the National Center of Manuscripts, the National Archive of the Ministry of Justice) preserve Persian (about 30 units) and Georgian-Persian historical documents of the Afshar period (1736-1796). They are issued by Nāder Shāh, the Commander of Kartli, Sefī-Khan, rulers of East Georgia. Addressees of these deeds were valis of Kartli and Erevan, hakims of Ganja (Azerbaijan), other local representatives of the Shāh's

administration, members of the Georgian princely houses, and heads of the Church.

Historical documents dealt in the present article generally reflect Iran's policy during Kizilbashs' rulership toward East Georgia, political and social-economic realities.

These deeds concern tax issues, granting and affirmation of ownership on lands for distinguished Georgian nobles and the Holy Church leaders, appointment to a high post, setting up a rental (natural and monetary) share for Georgian officials and so on. Some of these documents have not been published up to the present (Pd-53, Pd-98).

The historical documents, being characteristic models of functional texts clearly reflect realities conditioned by variety of deeds as well as their social functions, thematic components, issuer's rank, etc. Differences among them are mostly distinguished on linguistic-semantic and architectonic levels.

The article presents one of interesting illuminated documents of this period (F. 1452-235), made in a typical artistic tendency of the Afshar painting – adorned with colour flowery motives in naturalistic manner.

Key words: Persian and Georgian Persian historical documents, Nāder Shāh, Iranian-Georgian social-political interrelations

Reported Sources:

Diba S. Layla, Ekhtair Mariam, *Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch 1785-1892*, New-York, 1999, I. B. Tauris Publication, 288 p.

Dundua, Nugzar, *Persian deeds, issued by kings, princes and khans of East Georgia (in Georgian)*, Tbilisi, 2010, Nekeru Edition, 108 p.

Khubua, Makar, *Firmāns and Hokms of the Museum of Georgia*, Tbilisi, 1949, the Georgian Academy of Sciences' Publication, 186 p.

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Puturidze, Vladimer, *Georgian-Persian Historical Documents*, Tbilisi, 1955, Edition of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, 528 p.

The Cambridge History of Iran, volume 7, *From Nadir Shah to Islamic Republic* by Peter Avery, Bayne Fisher, Gavin Hambly, C.P. Melville, Cambridge University Press, 1991, 1096 p.

Collections of Georgian National Antiquities preserve more over than 30 units¹ of Persian and Georgian-Persian historical documents, belonging to the Afshar period (1736-1796). These documents are kept at the National Center of Manuscripts, the National Archive of the Ministry of Justice; some of them have not been published up to the present. They were issued by 1) the head of the Afshar dynasty, Nāder Shah (1736-1747); 2) the commander of Kartli (East Georgia) Sepi-Khan; 3) the ruler of Kakheti (a province of Eastern Georgia) during 1733-1744, later the king of the whole Kartli (1744-1762) Teimuraz II (1700-1762) ; and 4) the king Erekle II, the king of Kakheti in 1744-1762 and of the whole Kartli-Kakheti province during 1762-1798. Addressees of these deeds were valis of Kartli and Erevan, hakims of Ganja (Azerbaijan), representatives of the royal and local administration, members of the Georgian princely houses, and heads of the Church. These historical documents deal with granting/affirmation and reaffirmation/ of ownership on lands, peasants, releasing from duties, appointment to a high post, setting up a rental (natural and monetary) share for Georgian officials; the documents equally concern issues of paying taxes and rates such as, orders and accomplishment of various duties, including military obligation, petitions of Georgian nobles with the Shah's resolution.

¹ Among inventoried Persian historical documents attested in Georgian medieval records and lost during the course of time, there existed also deeds from Afshar period (94 units), dated by Nāder Sāah's reign (1736-1747 years). Their complete list is given in :Todua, Shams, 1989, 2, pp.1022-1029.

The above-mentioned documents clearly reflect Nāder-Shah's (that the second "Alexander the Great") policy toward Georgia, his aim of exploiting the Georgian nobles against the Ottomans, the Lezgians and other peoples, his resolve of winning over the Christian aristocracy, who was seeking protection from Orthodox Russia. After establishing Kizilbashs's power in Kartli (1735) the kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti, struggling for the independence drawn on its powerful neighbours – Iran against Ottomans, Russia – against Persia, sometimes Persia for preserving stability and certain safeguards of the own country.

On the other hand, Nāder Shah also applied for the Georgian support against the Ottomans and the Lezgians; however, as soon as the Ottomans left Georgia, he began to persecute grandees of Kartli-Kakheti. He was aware of Georgian-Russian coalition, notably of the king Vakhtang VI (the viceroy of Kartli in 1703-1712, and the King of Kartli in 1716-1722), who was dwelling in Russia and was intended to become the real King of Kartli. Nāder Shah perfectly knew that the Georgian "faithfulness" was only their tactical way and they would never stop their national struggle for independence. The Commander took again advantage of Shah Abbas I's (1587-1629) former plan, implying withdrawing population of Kartli-Kakheti and settling Kizilbash tribes there.¹⁸²

Together with this, Nāder-Shah's policy in Georgia varied correspondingly to his position on international scene; it also depended on how powerfully he was established among the Georgian nobility, or how

¹⁸² See about it N. Berdzenishvili, 1973, VI, pp. 319-335.

strong was rebellion among the populace against his administration.

In 1736 Nāder became the Shāh of Iran. He sent the governor of Kartli Alexandr – Ali Mirza (the vali of Kartli – 1735-1737) from Mughan together with the Commander Sefi-Khan followed by Kizilbashs' army. Sefi-Khan was performing his official duties during 1737-1738 years in Kartli.¹⁸³ Generally administrative functions of the commander of East Georgia were extremely wide such as, combat readiness of Kizilbash and local armies, ensuring the security of the borders, if necessary, bringing out and leading the armed forces³; fulfilling the Shah's services and collecting duties from population (in this case he was a helpmate of vali)⁴.

A number of Persian and Georgian-Persian deeds released by Sefi-Khan have been preserved in collections of Georgian depositories. They are dealing with distraining of several villages in Kartli, returning to their previous dwelling-places distracted peasants from the *katholikos's* land and confirmation the exemption of

¹⁸³ Apart of documentary material, references about Sefi-Khan are also to be found in contemporary Georgian narrative sources, such as, "The Life of Kings" by Sekhnia Chkheidze, see Z. Chichinadze, 1913, p.49, 50, 51, as well as "Stories of Kartli" by Papuna Orbeliani, see Tsagareishvili, 1981, p. 36, 43, 44, 75.

³ Deeds dealing with military duties have been issued by Nāder before becoming the Shah, namely in 1734-1735 years. Their addressees were general headquarters and ordinary people, also nobility of Kartli-Kakheti. See the National Center of Manuscripts' collection documents, **Pd-108** and **Pd-109**, also Todua, Shams 1989, 2, pp. 48-49, Khubua, 1949, pp. 58-60.

⁴ Lomidze 2007, 66, 86-87

the Holy Church, affirmation of ownership on lands to princely houses' members.

The Kartli-Kakheti principality was exactly included that time in Iranian taxation system.⁵ It is known that from the beginning of his rulership Nāder particularly has been taking care of improvement the country's economic and military situation, such as restoration of cities and irrigational buildings, survival of state trade, settling deserted areas. These insufficient reformal steps having chiefly military and political aims, were implemented by complete destroying of several regions, sacking non-Iranian conquered territories, laying them under severe tribute duties.

Herewith, the Shāh fixed definite wages for soldiers and for those having administrative functions, instead of a previous salary gained from lands' profits and this also was constantly increasing population's taxes.⁶

For registering subjected lands of the Empire, Nāder Shāh's representatives made an inventory control of arable grounds, plantations, gardens, vineyards, all trees, (wind- and water-) mills, goods, cattle, herds, etc. on the conquered territories, for bringing all the data in a special register list – famous *raqābat e nāderi* (رقابت نادری).⁷

The Georgian people paid taxes unmercifully. Though amount of these taxes in most cases did not exceed duties established in Iranian provinces, but apart from them Georgian peasantry, merchants, and

⁵ Kutsia 2002, 127-128

⁶ Perry 1975: 199-215

⁷ Lamton 1953: 129-33, 164

handicraftsmen were also to give levies set up by traditional Georgian feudal legislative power. Therefore, they were obliged to give twofold tribute. The Georgians also paid duties for Khizilbashes' army charges.

Thus, correspondingly to taxes imposed by Ali-Mirza the ruler of Kartli and Nāder-Shāh's own order issued in 1736 for Tbilisi residents, Kartli realm had to pay 3300 tumans and the town Tbilisi was to be ready for leading out totally armed forces.⁸ The most heavy burden have become for population bread taxes.

As a distinguished example of people's grave conditions and forced intolerable duties could be considered the firman Pd-25 (collections of the National Center of Manuscripts of Georgia) issued by Nāder-Shāh in 1742. In this document he orders : "Despite of the country learders' assertion that Georgia became empty and *ra'iyat* (peasants) are dispersed, officials are in charge to gather taxes in the same quantity".⁹

In this respect one Georgian-Persian document issued in 1737 by Sepi-Khan is mostly intersting. It is kept at the National Center of Manuscripts collections (being previously at the Georgian Historical and Ethnographic Studies Society) - Hd-2608. The deed deals with the description of villages due to Sekhnia Chkheidze, the official of Kartli, the author of writings

⁸ Persian, Georgian and Armeanian sources of that period duly relate Nadēr's tributary policy, see K. Kutsia, 2002:127-128; Dumbadze, 1974: 451-452; Avery, Fisher, Hambly, Melville, 1991, 33-34; Encyclopedia Iranica, online version, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/nader-shah> by Ernest Tucker.

⁹ See Todua, Shams 1989, 2, 56-58.

on Kartli-Kakheti historical realities during Saffavids and Afshars. The document reads that all harvest from these lands "are belonging now to malujat", the deed also mentions that Sekhnia Chkheidze "run himself to West Georgia and we did not know about his lands or who profited and took care of them"; these villages were transferred by order to the possession of Zaza-Beg Tsitsishvili; Local officials (*māmāsakhlī-s*, *ketkhodā-s*) were responsible for ensuring taxgathering.¹⁰

The rise of dues often resulted in insurgences in East Georgia. A great and prolonged rebellion took place in Kartli, at the first half of 18th century. The commander Sepi-Khan actively participated himself in the suppression.

Sefi-Khan called the heads of this rebellion – the ruler of Kakheti Teimuraz II and the nobleman Givi Amilakhvari, held them captive and sent to Isfahan. However, Nāder Shāh released later Teimuraz for his devoted service. Wave of the rebellion was not going to decrease, but throughout the time lost its severity, which was determined by the following factors: Iran and Ottoman Empire concluded truce and East Transcaucasia returned to Iran; Georgians were not helped by Russians, who did not want to destroy the relationship with Nāder Shāh; at the same time, the opposition was growing among the Georgian nobles and the Kizilbashs's leader used it skilfully.

The above-mentioned facts are clearly reflected in one of Persian deeds (F. 1452, N 94) dated by 1742 year and kept at the National Archive of the Ministry of

¹⁰ Puturidze, 1955, pp. 442-445.

Justice. According to this document, Nāder-Shāh comforts and encourages Georgian princes, proprietors of Kvemo and Zemo Satsitsiano domains, who have condemned dignified Givi Amilakhvari, to fulfil their duties together with local officials, nobles and ordinary population.¹¹ In hard tributary conditions the Shāh renewed salary and granted lands to some of secular and religious leaders by which won over them to some extent.

The document issued by Sefi-Khan in 1736-1737 from the collection of the National Center of Manuscripts –Pd-52 precisely reproduces this policy. It is the hoqm/order issued by Sefi-Khan to Zaza Tsitsishvili, in which on the basis of the conclusion made by the vekil-s/vakil-s¹² of Georgia- Ali-Quli Beg and Kaikhosro Baratashvili five villages are to be reconfirmed to the above-mentioned noble. He should treat dwellers of these villages fairly and they, in turn, must pay duties regularly.¹³

In another Persian deed of the same collection (Pd-53) also issued by Sefi-Khan, according to which the Commander points the mdivanbeg (*divānbeg*) of Kartli,

¹¹ Todua, Shams 1989, pp. 59-60.

¹² In 1735-1749 years in East Georgia vakil was one of the most important officials of the Kizilbashs' administration. He managed the assessment and collecting state duties, giving salary for army and transferring the rest of the sum to the Treasury. His assistants were the vezir and mustopi. In XVI-XVII cc. and later Persian administrative term vazir denoted a high-rank official, who managed financial services in East Georgia, see Puturidze 1955,460; Dundua 2010, 63; cf. also Anvari 2002, VIII, 8222.

¹³ About this document see Khubua 1949, 62-64; Dundua 2010, 35-37.

distinguished Kaikhosro Baratashvili¹⁴ out to remain villages owned by famous grandee, Zaza Tsitsishvili, in possession of his own son; these villages could not be distraining as the last person agreed increasing duties.

The mentioned document was not published or specially investigated.¹⁵

According to several Persian historical documents, come to light the facts of satisfying the Georgian princely houses members's demands on returning their own lands and distracted peasants, with the Shāh's or a local governer's resolution.

Such a document is presented by the deed Pd-98 at collections of the National Center of Manuscripts, according to which Mzechabuk Javakhishvili asks Sefi-Khan to return his own peasants being sparsed in Karthi and Kakheti. Sepi-Khan with a special decree orders Quli-Beg to accomplish this demand. The list of escaped peasants is also enclosed to the deed in Persian.¹⁶

Exactly to the same period belong documents given by Sefi-Khan and reflecting Nāder-Shāh's policy toward the Georgian Church: bringing back the own peasants as

¹⁴ At the national Centre of Manuscripts is kept one document Pd-26, issued by Nāder Shāh in which he bestows the position of mdivanbeg to "the distinguished among similar persons and peers" – Kaikhosro Baratashvili", the Shah determines then his duties and attributes his salary, see this document in Khubua 1949, 66-70.

¹⁵ The document was prepared by us for publication with a critical reading, translation and comments, see Giunashvili, Abuladze , Concerning One Unedited Historical Document of Afshar Period, in: Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of the Societa iranologica Europaea, Krakov 2011 (in consideration).

¹⁶ The document remains unpublished.

well as affirmation of possession on lands and authorization the indemnity of the Holy Church.

By the order given in 1737 (Pd-54)¹⁷ Sefi-Khan entrusts chief official of Mtskheta, Gurgen and Solomon the scribe to support "gathering and settling" peasants from *katholikos's* villages and other lands for doing rural activities.

But according to bilingual Georgian-Persian document Ad-1779¹⁸ (kept at the National Center of Manuscripts received from a fund of the ancient Church-Museum), issued one-month earlier of the above-mentioned deed, Sefi-Khan entrusted the chief officer Giorgi and the scribe Solomon villages of Mtskheta vicinity in Upper and lower Kartli, Somkhiti, Sabarationo and Trialeti. They have to "gather in" provisions from peasants and employ them on state service.

Presented documentary material – the deeds issued by Nāder Shāh and Sefi-Khan contain many-sided important information and clearly reflect policy of Iran toward Georgian nobles, ordinary population and the Church, also Georgians' military and tax duties, and generally, social and political realities of the Kizilbashs' power.

Nāder Shāh's two documents, remarkable by their illumination are to be distinguished particularly. They are preserved at the National Archive of the Ministry of Justice – F.1452-234 (issued in 1738), F.1452-235 (issued in 1747).¹⁹ There are only a few works of art

¹⁷ Khubua 1949, p.66

¹⁸ Puturidze 1955, pp. 445-447.

¹⁹ See Abuladze, Koshoridze, 2011, pp. 203-205.

reached to the present from the Afshar epoch. Among them are Nāder Shāh's two oil-painted drawings and some other specimen of fine art. In that period patterns of vitreous enamel were mostly widespread. Together with figurative images there were also used typical flowery motives, done in a somehow naturalistic manner.²⁰

Nāder Shāh's *firmāns*' decorative design clearly expresses this artistic tendency: plant garlands with sky-blue, orange and wine coloured blossoming flowers on the right upper part of a text and round of a dome-shaped seal in the centre of a document as well as ornamental endings edged on one or both sides being also adorned with colour plant motives.²¹

The considered historical documents are typical models of functional texts and represent realities conditioned by variety of deeds as well as their social functions, thematic components, issuer's rank, etc. Correspondingly, the *homāyun firmān* (همایون فرمان) given by the Shāh, the beginning of which is followed by titles of the supreme sovereign, "God-strengthened Nāder", is distinct from the style of the "high order" issued by the administrative official. Differences are clearly revealed on linguistic-semantic and architectonic levels. The hierarchic structure of these documents is represented by lexical means with a complete guard of Persian diplomatic language peculiarities, by epithets used for adorning the Shāh, the Commander, Georgian nobles and officials. Distinction is evidently less in the

²⁰ Diba, 1998, pp. 137-145.

²¹ Kldiashvili 2011, pp.203-205; Todua, Shams 1989, pp. 50-51, 73-74.

middle and final parts of the deeds, within textual components written in a simple, official style, where the main theme of the document is transmitted.

Generally, Persian and Georgian-Persian juridical acts present the most interesting material on Persian and Georgian diplomatic language, social terminology, lexical interference and linguistic interrelations.

Though these issues are considered in the above mentioned and some other publications, also in special dictionaries enclosed to deeds' editions and in works concerned general historical subjects, Persian historical documents as definite structural, codificated linguistic models have not been studied up to the present. This type of investigation was recently begun.²²

²² Abuladze, Giunashvili 2011, 4, pp.5-10; Abuladze, Giunashvili 2012, pp.9-15; Giunashvili, Abuladze 2012 (b), pp. 35-42; Giunashvili, Abuladze 2012 (c) (forthcoming).

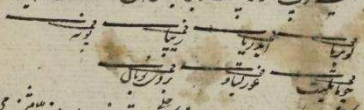
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حکم شاهنشاهی

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در اول سال ۱۱۰۰

بسم الله

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اینچه خود را در راه و در اینچه خود را در راه
 و غلبه ای نیست که در این راه و در اینچه خود را در راه
 شد از وقتش تا زمانه روزگار و در اینچه خود را در راه
 شایسته بود و این کار است که در اینچه خود را در راه
 شرف و عزت است بر دیگران و در اینچه خود را در راه
 سپرد و خود را در اینچه خود را در راه
 عفا نیز در وقت این مناسبت و در اینچه خود را در راه
 و در روزگار و در اینچه خود را در راه
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 عفو هم که در اینچه خود را در راه

محمد باقر



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Achevé d'imprimer en France en juillet 2013
Dépôt légal : juillet 2013
Imprimé par Image Tec (SPRINT)
64 rue Lambrechts 92400 Courbevoie



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