

**REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

of the dissertation of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**THE RELIGIOUS POLICY OF ROMAN POPES IN THE  
TERRITORY OF THE SAFAVID EMPIRE OF  
AZERBAIJAN (XVI-XVII CENTURIES)**

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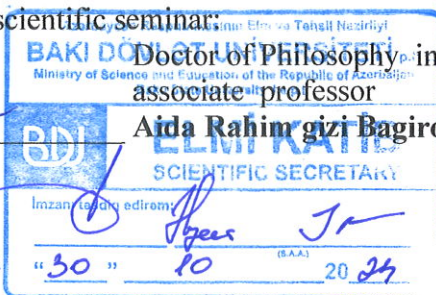
  
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## I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION

**Relevance and elaboration of the topic.** From 1453, with the conquest of Constantinople, the process of expansion of the Ottoman Empire into the interior of Europe began. The Ottoman Empire thereby ensured its internal stability and the security of its borders. From the time of Pope Urban II (1088-1099), the hope of the Western world to "drive the Turks out of the Mediterranean and Seas of Marmara" was dashed. The papacy characterized the fall of Byzantium as a "crime of Christians" and brought up not only the image of the "infidel Turk", but also crusades, holy alliances, indulgences, and the centuries-long Muslim-Christian conflict. If earlier, the crusades of the 11th-13th centuries were carried out with the slogan "to save the holy lands", the slogan of the 15th-17th centuries was "to drive the Turks out of Anatolia". On the other hand, Catholic Europe was already on the defensive. In the words of Pope Pius II: "Before, we were defeated in foreign countries. And now they are hitting us at home, in Europe."<sup>1</sup>

The popes saw any force fighting against the Ottoman Empire as an ally, and connections were made to be drawn into the alliance. During this period, the myth of Prester John was widespread in Christian countries. According to this myth, a man named Prester John, who lived in Islamic countries, came to the aid of Christians and helped capture Jerusalem. It should be noted that Lev Gumilyov, who studied this legend, emphasizes that Prester John was invented by the Templar order and aimed to justify the Crusades. Thus, the Roman popes who carried this myth in their hands began to see the Mongol khans who invaded Muslim countries in the 13th century, and Amir Teymur, who defeated the Ottoman sultan Yıldırım Beyazid in the 15th century, as Prester John. From the second half of the 15th century, Uzun Hasan of Aghgoyunlu, who fought against the Ottomans, attracted the attention of Western countries. In 1501, the news about Shah Ismail I, who created the powerful Safavid empire in the lands

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<sup>1</sup> Piccolomini S. Oration "Moyses vir Dei" of Enea Silvio Piccolomini/ S. Piccolomini, tart.ed., Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. – Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, - 2017. - 46p.

of Azerbaijan, reached the Papacy through Venice, which is called "Europe's window to the East". The war between the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan and the Ottoman Empire gave hope to the Popes of Rome, and the Safavid Shahs began to be seen as "saviors".

There are a number of reasons that make the research topic relevant. First of all, let's note that there are historically formed traditions of tolerance in our territory, and these traditions have become one of the main qualities of our people, incorporating new features over the past centuries. Members of different religious denominations settled in this geographical area in different historical periods operate without any restrictions. We can see the traces of this religious tolerance and the historical relations between the confessions in the strong relations established with the Vatican, the center of the world Catholics. In a period of ongoing inter-religious conflicts, the high level of bilateral relations established with the Vatican makes it important to study the history of these relations, and it is the duty of historians to clarify this history and form a historical perspective. The current dissertation is important for studying the history of the religious policy introduced by the popes in the geographical area where the Safavid empire existed in the XVI-XVII centuries. The reason for choosing the 16th-17th centuries as the research period is that the Papacy-Safavid relations were more intense in this period and the activities of Catholic missionaries in the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan coincided with this period.

As another reason that makes the topic relevant, we can point to the trend of Islamophobia currently prevailing in Western Europe. Islam is called "a threat to Western culture" and Islamic culture is interpreted as "a culture that lags behind the West". The "crusade" policy of the Middle Ages has changed its shape in the modern era, and researchers consider the created Islamophobia to be a "successful" fabrication of Europe in search of an "enemy" and an ideal reason to weaken Islamic countries politically and economically. The interreligious relationship studied in the topic, the tolerant policy of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan against the aggressive attitude of the missionaries against Islam, the rights they gave to their Christian subjects, as well as to the Catholic missionaries who came to the

country, and most importantly, the right to speak, are solid evidence for Western researchers who criticize Islamic culture. In a period of increasing violence between Protestants and Catholics, the tolerant behavior of the Safavid kings towards their Christian subjects and missionaries was described by some Catholic missionaries as the opposite of France's religious policy towards Protestants. Reverend Sanson expressed this tolerance in these words: "The king never demanded tribute from the missionaries and gave them the authority to build their residences wherever they wanted. He loves Christians and I am not worried about religion here. He doesn't like using violence to convert them to Islam." Sanson's remarks about Shah Suleiman I are also a clear example of tolerance: "They call him 'Alam Pena (penah)', which means 'protector and guardian of all nations.' Therefore, none of the monarchs of all Asia could receive foreigners better than him, love them more sincerely, and grant them greater privileges and advantages than he did. The ruler gave the missionaries the right to settle wherever they wanted. Moreover, the latter mission, recommended by a distinguished Christian king, was exempted from all taxes and rents, wherever they came from."<sup>2</sup>

We can also relate the importance of the topic to the fact that the Armenian Gregorian Church is the main supporter of the massacres committed against Azerbaijanis, encouraging Armenians to war. The root of this extremism and nationalism goes back to the beginning. When we look at the activities of Armenian Catholicos during the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan, we can see the aggressive behavior of Armenians towards the European envoys, the conflicts they created, and the impact of these behaviors on Safavid-European relations. The Gregorian church, which considers itself a religious fanatic, has sold its religion for money and profit. J. Taverniyer called it "money paints the eyes of Armenians", and Kempfer called it "a shameful custom of Armenians". The papacy promised the Armenians a silk trade of 6,000,000 in exchange for accepting Catholicism. We can also

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<sup>2</sup> Sanson. M. N. The Present State of Persia: with a Faithful Account Of the Manners, Religion, and Government of that people/ M.N. Sanson.-London: Westminster-Hall, - 1695. - 52p.

note that the activities of the Dominican, Augustinian, Carmelite, Jesuit and Capuchin missionary priests who came to the territory of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan have not been widely investigated. The members of these missionary orders had great services in interreligious and intercultural relations. As a result, the telescope made by the missionaries, dictionaries of Azerbaijani Turkish, maps of the Safavid empire, the Bible translated into Azerbaijani Turkish, and tazkiras that emerged as a result of religious debates are proof of this. Jean Chardin compared the development of science in the Safavid Empire to France and criticized the French government that controlled science through the Royal Academy of Sciences founded by Louis XIV in 1666 at the suggestion of Jean Baptiste Colbert. He wrote: "There is no more respectable country than the Safavid Empire, which focuses on the development of science. Even science is part of the life of the peasants or the poor: Many peasants themselves read good books, educate their children with science as much as their circumstances allow, and engage in science for this purpose. To prevent poverty, they try to send children to public schools at the age of five with special teachers."<sup>3</sup>

The interest of the Safavid kings in scientific innovations, art and book translations was reflected in the gifts brought by the foreigners who came to the country. An example of this is the Arabic edition of Euclid's "Elements", which is believed to have been translated by the son of Nasreddin Tusi, presented by Carmelite missionaries to Shah Abbas I. From the point of view of S. Brentjes, there were other interesting reasons why the missionaries brought innovations to the East: 1) New tools were one of the methods to encourage young people belonging to the Eastern branch of Christianity to the Catholic faith. 2) The invention of magnifying glass tubes of various sizes tempted travelers to use them as spy tools to get a glimpse of scandalous events.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Floor, W. The Role of Azerbaijani Turkish in Safavid Iran / W. Floor, H. Javadi // Iranian Studies, - London: - 2013. №46 (4), - p.569-570.

<sup>4</sup> Tommasino, P. M. Travellers from Europe in the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, 16th-17th centuries: Seeking, Transforming, Discarding Knowledge/ P.M.Tommasino, S. Brentjes - Ashgate: Farnham and Burlington, - 2012. - 35p.

The fact that Armenian authors spread distorted information about the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan in their works is another reason that makes the topic relevant. The Armenians who presented Nakhchivan as a historical Armenian territory connected it with the existence of the Dominican Bishopric. Missionary records show us that more than half of the bishops and provincial priests were not of Armenian nationality. Also, the aggressive behavior of the Armenians towards the European envoys and the conflicts they created were a blow to the Safavid-European relations.

The chronological framework of the dissertation covers the diplomatic relations of the Roman popes with the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan in the 16th and 17th centuries and the religious policy implemented in the Safavid lands. At the same time, the coalitions created in Europe against the Ottoman threat in the 15th-16th centuries and facts related to the crusade policy of the popes have also become the research object of the dissertation.

It is impossible to study the research question without referring to the sources of the period. The source science base of the dissertation work is mainly based on diplomatic letters, travelogues and chronicles.

In order to get acquainted with the correspondence of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan with the Popes of Rome, we have applied to the electronic archive of the University of Marburg. The "Electronic Iranian Archive" fund of this archive preserves published and unpublished decrees and letters of the Safavid shahs. Documents such as "Letter of Shah Abbas I to the Duke of Venice", "Letter of Shah Abbas to Pope Clement VIII", "Letter of Shah Safi to King Charles I of France", "Petition of the Armenian Patriarch to Shah Abbas II" were used for the purpose of research.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the sources related to Papacy-Safavid relations are stored in the Vatican Apostolic Library, the British Library and the Vatican Archives of the Propagation of the Faith. The aforementioned library and archive were visited and papal reports that recorded the

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<sup>5</sup> Fakete, L. Einführung in die persische Paläographie. 101 Persische Dokumente / L.Fakete. - Budapest: Akademiae Kiado, -1977.- 543p.

period from the arrival of the Safavid envoys to Rome until their departure, a dictionary compiled by the missionaries in Azerbaijani Turkish, letters sent by the missionaries from Isfahan to Rome, and treatises attributed to Pietro della Valla and Sayyid Ahmed Alavi were investigated and involved in the research. In addition, the records of the Jesuit missionaries kept in the French Jesuit Archives located in Vanves, the reports and maps they sent about the church construction when they were in Isfahan were revealed. From these sources, the information recorded by the traveler Daulier Deslandes, the priest Sanson and Gauderau during their visits to Isfahan in the seventeenth century and the letters they sent were collected by Anna Croel and published in French under the title "News of Isfahan". The records of the travelers and missionaries we have mentioned are important because they allow us to trace the course of Safavid-European relations. For example, in one of the letters sent by Daulier Deslandes from Isfahan, it is said: "Here live seven Franks who serve the ruler, two of them are watchmakers, one is a jeweler, and three are married gunsmiths." There is also Monsieur L'estual, who is a great statesman, and lives here very comfortably as a prince. Of these seven Franks, only two were Catholic. All of them have good letters of recommendation from the king."<sup>6</sup>

During the investigation of the research work, the French-Azerbaijani dictionary, which is kept in the manuscript fund of Uppsala University and attributed to Raphael du Mans, was also involved in the research. In his travelogue, Raphael du Mans calls Azerbaijani Turkish "Turk Ajami" and notes that it sounds more delicate to the ear than Ottoman Turkish, that all nouns are simple, that there is no division into male or female genders, and that the syntax is similar to the syntax of the Latin language.<sup>7</sup>

Some of the documents we used in the study of the problem belong to the Modena archive. As we know, the Italian city-states,

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<sup>6</sup> Kroel, A. Daulier Deslandes André Sanson François Gaudereau M. & Société d'histoire de l'Orient (Paris). Nouvelles d'ispahan: 1665-1695 / A.Kroell. - Paris: Société d'histoire de l'Orient, - 1979. -13p.

<sup>7</sup> Mans, R. Etat de la Perse en 1660 / R. Mans. - Paris: E. Leroux, -1890. -135-136p.



including Modena, which is considered one of the important cities of the Republic of Ferrara, had extensive relations with the Safavids and the Ottoman Empire. The documents stored in the Modena archive were published in the form of a book by Ankara University professor N. Ozkan in 2004, and this book contains both the original version of the documents in Italian and a translation in Turkish.<sup>8</sup>

One of the sources we use to examine the problem is a 1538 treatise by Theodore Spandugino, a papal adviser. This treatise consists of four parts: 1) About the origin of the Ottoman emperors 2) About the Ottoman court, army, and state 3) about Safavid kings Ismail I and Tahmasib I 4) a short epilogue. Teodor Spandugino noted for the first time that the Ottoman Turks, unlike their contemporaries, have roots in the Oghuz. The papal adviser does not call Islam a "satanic religion" and writes about the Christian kings asking the Turks for help in their internal struggles: "The sins of the Christians have blinded the eyes of their leaders. When there is a conflict between them, Christians take help from them. These poor wretches do not see that this is their destruction."<sup>9</sup>

As part of the religious policy of the Roman papacy, representatives of Catholic missionary orders were sent to the territories of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan. To follow the activities of these orders, it is necessary to look at the reports and letters of the missionary priests who came to our lands. Members of the Carmelite missionary order recorded and wrote reports on political, social, cultural and religious activities from 1608 to 1753, when they were officially settled in Safavid lands. These reports were first published in 1939 by Ch. Collected and translated by Herbert and published in two volumes.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Özkan, N. Modena Devlet Arşivi'ndeki Osmanlı Devleti'ne ilişkin belgeler (1485-1791) / N.Özkan. - Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, - 2004. - 123s.

<sup>9</sup> Spandounes, T. On the origins of the Ottoman Emperors/ T.Spandounes.- Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, - 2009. - 76p.

<sup>10</sup> Herbert, C. R. A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia: The Safavids and the Papal mission of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries / C.Herbert, R.Matthee - London: I.B.Taurus, - 2012. - 515p.

Starting from the time of Shah Abbas I, countless travelers, merchants, diplomats and missionaries who came to the territory of the Safavid Empire created a comprehensive picture of the period with their travelogues. But the missing feature of these travelogues is that "Safavids" and "Persia" are used side by side. We can relate this to a number of reasons. At the beginning of the 15th century, Ptolemy's book "Geography" was translated into Latin, and "Persia", a provincial name, began to be used as a geographical term for the entire region. At the beginning of the 16th century, in some maps compiled by the Portuguese, "Kingdom of Sophia" was mentioned instead of "Persia". This meant that the question of the state created by Shah Ismail I reached Europe. One such travelogue is that of Pietro della Valli, which sheds light on some issues about missionary activity and Safavid relations with Rome. However, this travelogue is full of distorted information about the cities of Azerbaijan. For example, the fact that the language of the people living in Nakhchivan is Armenian, or the border of Shirvan with the Armenian state, or the fact that the people of Darbend are called "barbaric Tatars" are proof of this idea. The importance of the travelogue for our topic is that it touches on Armenian-missionary relations, describes churches and clarifies the priorities of foreign relations during the reign of Shah Abbas I. While in Isfahan, Pietro della Valle wrote a treatise in Persian describing the tenets of Christianity and comparing it with Islam. This treatise kept in the Vatican archive was published by E. Rossi in 1948. The purpose of writing this treatise was to defend Christianity against Islam in the debates that were often organized between Shia clerics and Christian clerics. It should be noted that the treatise consists of three parts: the denial of the prophethood of Muhammad and the Koran in Christianity, the accusations of Muslims that they have changed the books of Christians, and the confirmation of the use of icons by Christians. This treatise is important for the study of the nature of debates between Muslim clerics and Catholic missionaries and the propagation of Catholicism in the Safavid lands, and was involved in our research.

During the research, the travelogue of the Jesuit priest Alexander of Rhodes was also used. The priest describes how they spread

Catholicism in the sections entitled "The First Fruit of our Mission" and "The Second Fruit of our Mission" in his notes. Let's draw attention to one issue that is known from the source Catholic-Shia disputes were often held in the palace of the Safavid emirs, mainly the prime minister, and the Jesuits even wrote some works related to Christianity in these debates and presented them to the Safavid prime minister.

One of the travelogues that best describes the relations between the Papacy and the Safavids is Oruj Beg Bayat's "Relations". It should be noted that Oruj Beg was included in the delegation sent by Shah I Abbas to European countries with Sir Antony Shirley and Husain Ali Beg. He and other ambassadors named Ali Gulu Bey and Bunyad Bey accepted Catholicism and stayed in Spain. There are disputes in historiography regarding the writing of "Relaciones" published in 1604 by Oruj Beg Bayat himself. Emilio Cotarelo de Mori notes that when Oruj Bey came to Spain, he did not know Spanish well enough to write the language of the book. At the end of Oruj Beg's book's original is a letter from a secretary named Licentiate Alfonso Remona. In this letter, he explains how Oruj Beg became a Catholic and how the work "Relaciones" appeared. It is believed that Licentiate Alfonso Remona wrote Relaciones. The work contains valuable information about the reception of the Safavid embassy in Rome, the meeting with the pope, and the conversion of the three ambassadors to Catholicism under the influence of the Jesuits.

Marino Sanudo's diaries are the source that gives us the best description of the European attitude towards Shah Ismail I (1501-1524) and the established diplomatic relations.<sup>11</sup> . Marino Sanudo started keeping a diary starting in 1496. His election to the Venetian senate in 1498 made him follow political events more closely, and he continued to write this diary until 1533. In 1502, Constantino Lascari was the first to inform Italy about the Safavid Empire. This is reported in Marino Sanudo's "Diarii" (Diary).

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<sup>11</sup> Sanudo, M. Sah İsmail I nei Diarii / M. Sanudo, ed., B. Scarcia Amoretti. -Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, -1979. -571p.

Also, in the study of our topic, we have used the travelogues of Bakhchasarayli Vecihi Hasan Efendi<sup>12</sup>, Ludovico Varthema<sup>13</sup>, J. B. Tavernier<sup>14</sup>, Adam Oleari<sup>15</sup>, Jesuit Kruzinski<sup>16</sup>, Sir Anthony Shirley<sup>17</sup>, Alfonso Albuquerque<sup>18</sup>.

In addition, the works of Hasan Beg Rumlu<sup>19</sup>, L. Zacchia<sup>20</sup>, and Babai Ibn Lutf<sup>21</sup> were used for the study of the problem.

**The object and subject of the research.** The object of the study is the religious policy implemented by the Roman popes in the territory of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan in the XVI-XVII centuries. The subject of the study is the anti-Turkish coalitions created in Europe through the mediation of the Roman popes, the attempts of the Papacy during the reign of Shah Ismail I and Shah Tahmasib to involve the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan in an alliance against the Ottoman Empire, the "Grand Embassy" policy to Europe during the reign of Shah Abbas I, the Papacy in the second half of the 17th century -The Safavid connections are the activities of the Dominican, Augustinian,

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<sup>12</sup> Atsız, B. Vecihi tarihi / B. Atsız. - İstanbul: Post Yayın, - 2016. - 141s.

<sup>13</sup> Jones, J. W. The travels of Ludovico de Varthema in Egypt, Syria, Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix, in Persia, India, and Ethiopia, A.D. 1503 to 1508/ J. W. Jones, G. P. Badger - London: Hakluyt Society, - 2017.- 480p.

<sup>14</sup> Tavernier, J. Tavernier seyahatnamesi/ J.Tavernier.- İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, - 2010. - 343s.

<sup>15</sup> Путешествие через Московию Корнилия де Бруина: пер. с фр. / [соч.] Корнилия де Бруина / Под ред. П. П. Барсова. - Москва: Московское общество истории и древностей Российских, - 1873. - 293с.

<sup>16</sup> Kruşinski, Y.T. Xristian səyahın tarixi. Səfəvilər dövlətinin süqutuna dair qiymətli ilkin mənbə / Y. T. Kruşinski, tərt. ed., Ş. Fazil. - Bakı: Azər nəşr, -1993.- 102 s.

<sup>17</sup> Sir Anthony Sherley and and his Persian Adventure/ ed. E. Ross - London: Routledge, - 2004. - 360p.

<sup>18</sup> Albuquerque, A. The Commentaries of the great Afonso Dalboquerque: [in 4 vol] / A. Albuquerque. - New York: Routledge, - vol. 2. -2016. - 244p.

<sup>19</sup> Rumlu, H. Əhsənüt-təvərix (Tarixlərin ən yaxşısı) / H. Rumlu, tərt. ed., O. Əfəndiyev, N. Musalı. - Kastamonu: Uzanlar, - 2017.- 661s.

<sup>20</sup> Zacchia, L. Epistolae Magni Turci / L. Zacchia. -Rome: Philippus de Legnamine,- 1473. -7p.

<sup>21</sup> Moreen, V. Iranian Jewry's Hour Of Peril And Heroism : A Study Of Babai Ibn Lutf's Chronicle, 1617-1662 / V. Moreen. - New York: American Academy For Jewish Research, - 1987. - 247p.

Carmelite, Jesuit and Capuchin missionary orders sent by the Papacy to the Safavid lands.

**The goals and objectives of the research.** The main goal of writing the dissertation is to investigate the religious policy of the Roman popes in the territory of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan and comprehensively analyze the problem based on primary sources. By the set goal, the following tasks are planned:

- To identify the anti-Ottoman coalitions emerging in Europe;
- To study the nature and organizational issues of the "crusade" policy, which has been on the agenda again since the 15th century;
- To examine the initiatives of the Papacy to involve the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan in the alliances against the Ottoman Empire
- To study the activities of the Dominican Missionary Order in the territory of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan;
- To clarify the political and religious activities of the Augustinian missionary order in the lands of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan;
- To determine the cultural, political, and religious relations of the Carmelite missionary order, who are considered as the ambassadors of the Roman popes, with the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan;
- To study the attempts of the Catholic missionaries to bind the Christian subjects of the Safavids to Rome and the relationship of the Catholic missionaries with the Armenians;
- To investigate the attempts of the Jesuit missionary order to spread Catholicism and French interests in the territory of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan;
- To study the activities of the Capuchin missionary order in the territory of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan;

**Research methods.** We can say about the methodological basis of the dissertation that the sources written about the period were studied, a critical attitude was shown to the sources, an objective analysis was made and a general conclusion was reached.

**Main issues defended:**

- By examining the sources of the 16th century, it is concluded that the personality of Shah Ismail I was adored in Christian Europe.

It is clear from the sources that Renaissance Europe did not explore the identity and ideology of Shah Ismail I.

- As a result of the ambassadors sent during the reign of Shah Abbas I and the active foreign policy, the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan became more widely known in Europe. In the frescoes of the Vatican Library and the Sala Rezia palace, as well as in the tomb of Paul V - Santa Maria Maggiore, there are images of meetings with the ambassadors of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan.

-In the years of the reign of King Suleiman I, although active foreign policy was implemented with the Papacy, proposals to join anti-Ottoman alliances were rejected. Even though Shah Suleiman I was promised Baghdad by Habsburg Emperor Leopold I, Shah Suleiman I did not join the alliance against the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, missionaries were given privileges, and Jesuits were officially allowed to settle in Shamakhi. However, in the last years of the shah's rule, conflicts between Armenians and missionaries intensified in Yeni Julfa, and this is considered a blow to international relations.

-In the 17th century, a Dominican bishopric was established in Nakhchivan, and a Dominican monastery was established in Isfahan, and a part of Armenians adopted Catholicism to receive financial support under the influence of the Dominicans.

- The Augustinian friars who came to the Safavid territories in the 17th century acted as spies of the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal. On the one hand, they had roles in interreligious and intercultural dialogues. Among these friars there were even converts to Islam.

**Scientific novelty of the research:** The main aspects that determine the scientific novelty of the dissertation are as follows:

- The Roman popes' religious policy in Azerbaijan territory was comprehensively studied for the first time.

- Analysis and comparison of Robert Shirley's verbal note and the document named "Privilege" submitted by Antony Shirley on behalf of the Safavid Shah, sent to Europe during the reign of Shah Abbas I;

- The relations of the Christian subjects of the Safavid Empire, especially the Armenians with Rome, the Armenian-missionary ties, and the influence of these relations on the foreign policy of the Safavid

Empire of Azerbaijan were comprehensively reviewed for the first time;

- The activity of Catholic missionaries among the Georgian subjects of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan was studied for the first time.

- For the first time in our history, the activities of Dominican, Augustinian, Jesuit, Capuchin, Carmelite priests, their relations with the Shahs of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan, debates with the clergy, and their contributions to our culture are comprehensively studied;

**Theoretical and practical significance of the research.** The scientific results and generalizations obtained in the dissertation have a certain practical importance. It can be used in the preparation of general history and general works on the history of Azerbaijan, textbooks, teaching aids, and lecture courses intended for higher schools.

**Approval and application.** The research work was carried out at the Department of History of the Ancient World and Middle Ages of the Faculty of History of Baku State University. The main scientific provisions of the research were reflected in the author's articles published in various collections and speeches at conferences. Also, "Why did the plan of the Catholic missionaries of the Safavid empire to Catholicize the Armenian and Georgian communities in the 17th century fail?" The article was awarded a grant from the US Embassy and ADA project "Research Capacity Building and Foreign Cooperation". The paper "Religious polemics between Catholic missionaries and Safavid Shiite clerics" was awarded a Brepols scholarship and presented at the conference "Radical Thought in the Middle Ages" in Paris in August 2022. In 2022, the project "Catholic Missionaries as Mediators on the Silk Road: Interfaith and Cross-Cultural Exchange between the Safavid Empire and Europe" was awarded the UNESCO "Silk Road Youth Research Grant" as part of the research.

**The name of the institution where the dissertation work was performed.** The dissertation was completed at the Department of History of the Ancient World and Middle Ages of the Faculty of History of Baku State University.

The total volume of the dissertation with a sign indicating the volume of the structural sections of the dissertation separately. The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, eight subchapters, a conclusion, a used source, and a literature list. Cover and contents 2190 characters, chapter I 148 990 characters, chapter II 105 737 characters, chapter III 46 530 characters, conclusion 7184 characters, list of used literature 26 495 characters, the total volume of the dissertation consists of 275 326 characters.

## II. THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

In the "**Introduction**" part of the dissertation, the facts showing the relevance of the dissertation topic are included, sources and literature are analyzed, the goals and tasks, chronological framework, theoretical-methodological basis, and practical importance of the dissertation work are given, and a summary of the main scientific innovations is reflected here.

The first chapter of the dissertation is called "**Ottoman Conquests and the Papacy's search for allies against the Ottoman Empire in the East**" and consists of four subchapters. The first subchapter of the first chapter is called "**Anti-Ottoman coalitions emerging in Europe**".

At the beginning of the 16th century, the crusades organized by the Papacy against the Ottoman Empire were unsuccessful due to the differences between the European states, and the Ottoman Empire advanced towards the interior of Europe. However, towards the end of the 16th century, this situation changed. In 1570, the Ottoman Empire sent an ultimatum to Venice and demanded Cyprus. The main reason was that the island of Cyprus was used by pirates and it was an obstacle in the trade relations between Istanbul and Alexandria. The defeat of Lepanto in 1571 destroyed the idea of the invincibility of the Ottoman fleet. Not only were holidays celebrated in Catholic Europe in honor of this victory, but the Lepanto victory was immortalized in music, painting, and literature. The Ottomans valued Lepanto as a disaster sent by God to the Turks. According to Pechavi, "Since Prophet Noah invented the ark, such a disaster has not occurred in the seas of the



world."<sup>22</sup> If we look at the 17th century, we can see that the Ottoman Empire has already lost territory. The unsuccessful siege of Vienna by the Ottoman Empire in 1683 prompted Innocent XI to plan to re-establish a holy alliance with the slogan "Deus vult (God wills)". As a result, the Ottoman Empire lost territory in Hungary and the Morea for the first time. The Ottoman Empire saw the way out by declaring "nefiri-amm (holy call)". According to "Nefiri-amm", jihad against Christians was considered obligatory for the Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire, and in the issued fatwas, the population was required to "fight with their lives and property in the way of God".

The II sub-chapter of the dissertation entitled "**Policy of seeking allies in the East during the reigns of Shah Ismail I and Shah Tahmasp I**" deals with the Papacy-Safavid relations during the reigns of Shah Ismail I and Shah Tahmasp I.

The coming to power of Shah Ismail I was welcomed by the Papacy with great hope. The Catholic Church, treating him as a "savior", tried to attract the Safavid shah to alliances against the Ottomans. He was called "King of Albania, Hyrcania, Mesopotamia, Parthia, Bactria, Scythia". Interestingly, the printed pamphlets supported not only the Safavid Shah's struggle against the Ottomans but also his struggle against Portugal. We can connect this with the fact that the interests of the Italian city-states and the Portuguese clashed in Hormuz. On the other hand, the enmity between Spain and Portugal was the cause. These two kingdoms fought each other until Portugal was annexed by Spain in 1580. For example, Pena, who was originally from Spain, noted in his pamphlet: We have received news from Sophie that the Portuguese have captured her forts in the Indian Ocean. We hope that he will not allow this insult to go unpunished."<sup>23</sup>

Our analysis showed that Shah Ismail I himself was interested in establishing relations with the Catholic Church. Examining the sources of the period, it is clear that Shah Ismail I sent letters soon after

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<sup>22</sup> Peçevi, İ. Peçevi tarihi / İ. Peçevi.- Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, -1981.-78s.

<sup>23</sup> Herbert, C. R. A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia: The Safavids and the Papal mission of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries / C.Herbert, R.Matthee - London: I.B.Taurus, - 2012. - 515p.

coming to power. In 1505, the Damascus consul Bartolo Contarini informed the Venetian senate that he had received a letter addressed to the doge from Safavid Shah Ismail I and sent it with the original letter attached. These letters continued to be sent in subsequent years.

In 1524, Shah Tahmasib I (1524-1576) ascended the Safavid throne. Western attempts to attract the Safavids to an alliance against the Turks continued during the reign of Shah Tahmasib I (1524-1576). In 1538, Michel Membre was sent to the Safavid capital of Venice as a representative of the Holy Union. He wrote about his trip in his book *Relazione di Persia*.<sup>24</sup>

Encouraged by the victory in the naval battle of Lepanto in 1571, Pope Pius V decided to form an anti-Ottoman coalition to drive the Ottomans out of Europe once and for all. He sent a letter to Shah Tahmasp I for this purpose. However, attempts to attract Shah I Tahmasib to the alliance were unsuccessful.

Sub-chapter III of the thesis is entitled **"Papal-Safavid relations during the reign of Shah Abbas I"**. The Papacy-Safavid relations established during the reign of Shah Abbas I are the subject of this subchapter.

During the reign of Shah Abbas I, Safavid envoys were regularly sent to European palaces. The first delegation was sent in 1599 under the leadership of Anthony Shirley, De Melo and Husain Ali Beg. Envoys were instructed to deliver the king's letter of friendship to at least nine countries, including Queen Elizabeth I, King Philip III of Spain. Oruj Beg Bayat wrote in his work "The Connections of Don Juan of Iran" that, in addition to giving the components of the embassy, a gift weighing 30 camel loads was prepared to be presented to the kings and the pope. Antony Shirley's sale of gifts intended for European kings also intensified the conflict between the Safavid representatives. As a result, it was known to us from his records that he left Husain Ali Beg and left for Rome.<sup>25</sup> Namely, in 1601, Antony Shirley met with Pope Clement VIII and

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<sup>24</sup> Membre, M. *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia (1539-1542)* / M.Membre. - Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, -1993. -43p.

<sup>25</sup> Steensgaard, N. *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade* / N. Steensgaard. - Chicago: University of Chicago Press, - 1973. - 145p.

presented the document called "Instructions" on behalf of the king. The document is in the style of a verbal note. After Sir Antony Shirley, another group of Safavid envoys headed by Husayn Ali Bey came to Rome and this delegation was received with great ceremony in Rome. Oruj Bey Bayat writes about this: "When we entered the city, 20 cannons were fired in our honor from the towers around the St. Angelo Castle. Also, on the order of the pope, the soldiers opened fire."<sup>26</sup> Oruc bəyin əsərində həm də Hüseyn Əli bəyin şahın məktubunu papaya çatdırdığı faktı diqqəti çəkir.<sup>27</sup> This fact casts doubt on the authenticity of the document "Instructions" presented to the pope by Sir Antony Shirley, given to the ambassador by Shah Abbas I. The adoption of Catholicism by six members of the Safavid delegation and the baptism of three by the Pope increased the tension between Husain Ali Beg and Antony Shirley.

In response to the embassy, Pope Clement VIII announced on May 2, 1601, that an alliance would be formed against the Ottoman Empire. On May 17, the Papacy gave Anthony Shirley a letter to deliver to Shah Abbas I. But Antony Shirley did not return because he sold the gifts intended for European kings and the pope, and this letter did not reach the Safavids. Pope Clement VIII probably doubted that the letter sent after Husayn Ali Bey's arrival and his complaints about Antony Shirley would reach Shah Abbas I, and wrote a second letter to Husain Ali Beg, reminding him of the letter that Antony Shirley had.

In 1608, Shah Abbas I decided to send another envoy to the European palaces under the head of Anthony Shirley's brother Robert Shirley. In June 1608, Robert Shirley, who came to Germany from Poland, met with the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II. Robert Shirley came from here to Rome to meet Pope Paul V (1605-1621) and the Safavid delegation was received with pomp in Rome. <sup>28</sup> Robert Shirley's meeting with Pope Paul V in 1609 is depicted in the frescoes of the Vatican library and the Sala Recia palace, as well as in the tomb

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<sup>26</sup> Don Juan of Persia: A Shiah Catholic, 1560-1604 / ed. Le Strange - London: Routledge, - 2005. - 77p.

<sup>27</sup> Don Juan of Persia: A Shiah Catholic, 1560-1604 / ed. Le Strange - London: Routledge, - 2005. - 130p.

<sup>28</sup> Opher, M. . Picturing Global Conversion: Art and Diplomacy at the Court of Paul V (1605-1621) //- Leiden: Journal of Early Modern History, - 2013. № 5-6, - p. 532.

of Paul V - Santa Maria Maggiore. Robert Shirley's Safavid headdress with a crucifix drew a lot of attention. At the same time, the Safavid envoy in Europe sent a letter to Zaynalabidin Bey Shah that the friendship of the Christian kings was fake. They want the two Muslim states to destroy the Turks and the Safavids.

Sub-chapter IV of the dissertation is called "**Initiative of the Papacy to attract Shah Abbas II and Shah Suleiman I to the alliance**". This subchapter deals with the Papacy's initiative to bring Shah Abbas II and Shah Suleiman I into an alliance.

The initiatives of the Papacy to involve the Safavids in the alliance were observed again during the reign of Shah Abbas II. The deployment of the Ottoman army in Carinthia and the capture of Canea caused Pope Innocent X to send two consecutive letters to Shah Abbas II in 1646-1647. However, the answer was not received because Shah Abbas II was a minor.

In 1684, Pope Innocent XI's letter to Shah Suleiman I about joining the Holy Alliance remained unanswered. Shah Suleiman I preserved the peace treaty concluded with the Ottoman Empire. These attempts continued in the following years. It should be noted that during the siege of Vienna, Leopold I sent a letter to Shah Suleiman I and asked for help. The main goal was to persuade Shah Suleiman I to attack Egypt. But Shah Suleiman I did not break the peace and rejected the alliance calls.

Chapter II of the dissertation is called "**The Role of Catholic Missionaries in the Religious Policy of the Papacy: Dominican, Augustinian and Carmelite Missionaries**" and consists of two subchapters. The first sub-chapter "**Religious activity of the Dominican and Augustinian missionary orders in the territory of the Safavid empire of Azerbaijan**" is devoted to the activity of the Dominican and Augustinian orders in the territory of the Safavid empire of Azerbaijan.

Members of the Dominican Order first came to Azerbaijan in the 13th century. The Dominicans, who established Catholicism in Nakhchivan, separated from the Dominican order and acted as an independent branch, calling themselves "Unitarian brothers" since 1344.

<sup>29</sup> But in 1583, it was united by the decision of the Dominican Consul General. The Dominicans, who attracted Armenians to Catholicism, tried to create a "fifth column" under the Papacy. Armenians tried to separate themselves from the Safavids with the help of the Dominicans. During the reign of Shah I Safi, some Armenians were arrested for the help they received from abroad. To prevent this, a priest named Paolo Piromalli was sent. This priest was expelled from Uchmuazdin due to his aggressive behavior. During the reign of Shah Abbas II, Armenians again used the Dominicans as mediators to get help. Paolo Piromalli, who was appointed the Catholicos of Nakhchivan, asked the Pope to request the Doge of Venice and the King of Tuscany to limit the privileges of Armenian merchants. As a result, there was a conflict between Armenians and Dominicans.

Augustinians also played a major role in interreligious relations. Tracts defending Islam and Christianity were published, the Bible was translated, and dictionaries were compiled.

The second sub-chapter "**Religious activity of the Carmelite missionary order in the territory of the Safavid empire of Azerbaijan**" is devoted to the religious activity of the Carmelite order in the territory of the Safavid empire of Azerbaijan.

Our conclusion from the analysis of the sources is that the Carmelites managed to establish a bishopric in the Safavid lands. In papal bulls, in 1632, John Tadeusz is mentioned as the first bishop of Isfahan, and in 1640, priest Bernard is mentioned as a bishop.

The Carmelites had a great role in interreligious relations. They participated in the translation of the Bible and the Psalms and helped the talented youth of the Safavids to study in Italy. For example, Muhammad Zaman, also known as Paolo Zaman, was sent to Italy by the Carmelites, and today his works are exhibited in major museums such as the British, Brooklyn, and Metropolitan Museums.

Chapter III of the dissertation is entitled "**Missionary activity of Jesuit and Capuchin Missionaries in the territory of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan**" and consists of two sub-chapters. The first

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<sup>29</sup> Frazee, C. *Katolikler ve Sultanlar* / C. Frazee- Istanbul: Küre yayınları, -2009. – 110s.

sub-chapter "**Missionary Activities of the Jesuit Order in the Territory of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan**" is dedicated to the activities of the Jesuits in the territory of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan.

The Jesuits came to the Safavid lands to establish the fifth kalon. In 1647, the Jesuits received permission to build a residence in the Safavid territories. In 1652, the Jesuits, who brought Louis XIV's letter to Shah Abbas II, asked for residence in Julfa, Shiraz, and Tabriz in return for the promise of help in taking Kandahar from the Mongols.

Our conclusion regarding religious activities is that the Jesuits, like other missionaries, were prohibited from spreading religion among Muslims and converting Muslims to their religious sects. On the other hand, the Armenian Church opposed the activities of the Jesuits. The spread of Catholicism by the missionaries could lead to the attachment of the community to the Papacy, which worried the Armenian Church. A report sent by Reverend Felix Antonin to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide) in 1673 is proof of this: "I think Your Majesty would rather hear the truth than be deceived by false and exaggerated information. As far as Muslims are concerned, there is no conversion. This is not a failure of the missionaries. They do their best for it. But the appropriate image of God has not yet lifted the veil from the eyes of this poor population. I have been in the East for 26 years, and I have seen very few people who believe in the Mohammedan religion change their religion. Among the Armenians, several people changed their religion. They are stubborn and liars. The letters sent to you about the success achieved and the conversion of great effect are fictitious."<sup>30</sup>

The second sub-chapter is called "**The Initiative of the Capuchin order to spread Catholicism in the territory of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan**". The activity of Capuchin missionaries in the territory of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan is the subject of this sub-chapter.

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<sup>30</sup> Herbert, C. R. A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia: The Safavids and the Papal mission of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries / C.Herbert, R.Matthee - London: I.B.Taurus, - 2012. - 345p.

Representatives of the French Capuchin Order officially established a residence in Isfahan in 1628. One such residence was opened in Tabriz in 1658. Through their activities, the Capuchins helped many French travelers and scholars to communicate with Safavid scholars and scholars, collect books about the Safavids, and learn Azerbaijani Turkish. The frequent participation of the Capuchins in disputes with the Shiite clerics led to the creation of new scientific works. One of these works was Tafri's "Nusrat-al-haqq" written against Christianity in 1660. This book was written based on disputes with the Capuchin priest Gabriel de Chinon in Tiflis. Raphael du Mans, one of the Capuchin priests, was a translator (oratorian) in the palace and compiled the first Azerbaijani Turkish grammar..

In the "**Result**" part of the dissertation, the research was concluded, recommendations were noted and relevant scientific generalizations were made:

1. The analysis of the sources showed that not only the attacks of the Ottoman Empire, but also the material and moral benefits pursued by these states were at the root of the alliances between the Catholic states and the Papacy.

2. As a result of the study, it is clear that the Catholic Church, horrified by the conquest of Constantinople, revived the crusade plans. At the beginning of the 16th century, the war waged by Shah Ismayil I (1501-1524), the founder of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan, against the Ottoman Empire reached Europe, and this news gave hope to the West. From the analysis of the sources, it becomes clear to us that Christian Europe, which had a very superficial knowledge of Islam, connected Shiism with Christianity

3. Our research on the reign of Shah I Abbas showed that the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan entered a new stage in relations with Europe during the reign of Shah I Abbas. The increasing influence of the Safavid Shah and his victorious wars focused the attention of European countries on the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan.

4. A bishopric was established in Nakhchivan by Dominican monks in the 14th century. The analysis of the sources shows that for two centuries it operated as an independent branch of the Dominican missionary order under the name "United Brothers". By a decree

issued in 1583, independence was abolished and it was united to the Dominicans. The fact that the bishopric of Nakhchivan was made up of Catholic Armenians was not confirmed.

5. We can say about the results of the study about the Augustinians that the plans of the Augustinians to subjugate the Armenians to the Papacy did not come true. Taking advantage of the tolerant attitude of Shah I Abbas, Shah I Abbas reminded the Augustinians that Armenians were rich merchants, not slaves. From the records of Pietro della Valle, it is known that the king sent a letter to the Armenian patriarch and demanded that Armenians do not have Latin roots and remain in their religion.

6. Although Carmelites' attempts to spread Catholicism among the Muslim population were unsuccessful, they played an important role and contributed to interreligious relations. An analysis of the sources shows that the Carmelites engaged in debates with the Safavid clergy and contributed to the publication of a number of tazkiras.

7. As a result of the research about the Jesuits, it became clear to us that the Jesuits came to the Safavid lands to establish the fifth kalon. In order to realize this intention, they wrote works against Islam. Jesuit priest Ayime Chezard's treatise "Mash-i misqal-i safa-yi Ainih-i haqnuma (Clearing the Clarity of the Mirror Reflecting the Truth) is proof of this.

8. One of the most important services of the missionaries is the compiled dictionaries of the Azerbaijani language. These dictionaries are one of the facts that prove that the Safavid Empire was a Turkish state. An example of this is "Dictionnaire franais et turce, mesle de Persan et d'Arabe and a Dictionarium latinum turcicum" written by the bishop of Isfahan and Baghdad in 1641 and currently stored in the Paris library. and a dictionary from Latin to Turkish).



**The main content of the dissertation is reflected in the following published scientific works of the author:**

1. Erməni məsələsində katolik missionerlərin rolu // Bakı: Tarix və onun problemləri, - 2016. №1, - səh. 72-75.
2. The notion of the Turk in the eyes of Europe (XV-XVI centuries) // Estratto da Filosofia e Politica, - 2016. №1, - p.1-6.
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11. Georgian christianity and Roman Catholic presence // Georgia-Byzantium-Christian East. Tbilisi, -2017, - p. 30-31.

12. XVI əsr Avropa mənbələrində Sufi şah obrazı // Dedicated to the 94th Anniversary of the National leader of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev I international scientific conference of young researchers, - Bakı: - 2017, - s. 1109-1110.
13. İstanbulun fəthi və katolik kilsəsinin bu hadisəyə münasibəti // Bakı: Tarix və onun problemləri, - 2018. №1, - s. 35-41.
14. The ambassadors of Shah I Abbas at the courts of Christian Europe // Сборник научных работ “Тилея: научный вестник”, - 2018, 132 (5), - с. 116-119.
15. Şah I Abbasın hakimiyyəti illərində Papalıq-Səfəvi əlaqələri // “Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti 100: Müsəlman Şərqində ilk parlamenti respublika” beynəlxalq konfransı, - Bakı: -2018, - s. 724-728.
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17. Activities of Dominican and Augustinian missionaries in the territory of the Safavid Empire: interreligious exchanges and challenges // Revista Romana De Studii Eurasiatice, - 2020, №1-2 (Anul XVI) – p.217-229.
18. Activities of Catholic missionaries in the Georgian lands: diplomatic relations or the policy of catholicization by European kings // Saint Grigol Peradze 2nd International Scientific Conference *Dedicated to the 900th Anniversary of the Battle of Didgori*. Tbilisi, - 2021, - p.148-150.
19. Katolik Avropanın siyasi oyununun hədəfinə çevrilən şahzadə Cem Sultan // Tarix və onun problemləri, -2022. №1, - s. 73-77.
20. The Tolfa alum mines as a gift of God to Christendom: the Papal cause for a new crusade and a monopoly // Mercenaries and crusades. Abstracts. (1202-1480). Debrecen, -2022, -p. 17.
21. Religious Debates and Exchanges in the Safavid Empire: Polemical Treatises in Defense of Christianity and Islam // The XVth International Congress of Medieval Philosophy. Paris, - 2022 - p. 72-73.

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