

ԵՐԵՎԱՆԻ ՊԵՏԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՄԱԼՍԱՐԱՆ
ԱՐԵՎԵԼԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՖԱԿՈՒԼՏԵՏ

ԱՐԵՎԵԼԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՀԱՐՑԵՐ

*Նվիրվում է ԵՊՀ արևելագիտության ֆակուլտետի
հիմնադրման 50-ամյակին*

№ 14

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2018

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**Հրատարակվում է Երևանի պետական համալսարանի
արևելագիտության ֆակուլտետի
գիտական խորհրդի որոշմամբ**

Խմբագրական խորհուրդ՝

Մելքոնյան Ռուբեն բ.գ.թ., պրոֆեսոր (խմբագիր)

Մելիքյան Գուրգեն բ.գ.թ., պրոֆեսոր

Խառատյան Ալբերտ պ.գ.դ., պրոֆեսոր, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ թղթակից-անդամ

Սաֆրաստյան Ռուբեն պ.գ.դ., պրոֆեսոր, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ ակադեմիկոս

Հովհաննիսյան Լավրենտի բ.գ.դ., պրոֆեսոր, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ թղթ.-անդամ

Հովհաննիսյան Դավիթ բ.գ.թ., պրոֆեսոր

Սաֆարյան Ալեքսանդր պ.գ.թ., պրոֆեսոր

Ոսկանյան Վարդան բ.գ.թ., դոցենտ

Քոչարյան Հայկ պ.գ.թ., դոցենտ

Սարգսյան Լևոն պ.գ.դ., պրոֆեսոր

Կարապետյան Ռուբեն պ.գ.դ.

Տեր-Մաթևոսյան Վահրամ պ.գ.դ.

Գրեկյան Երվանդ պ.գ.դ.

Բեյլենկովա Մարիա բ.գ.դ., պրոֆեսոր (Ռուսաստան)

Կուզնեցով Վասիլի պ.գ.թ., դոցենտ (Ռուսաստան)

Էքմեքչյան Լեոնա PhD (ԱՄՆ)

Իլյա Յակուբովիչ բ.գ.դ., պրոֆեսոր (Գերմանիա)

Ահմադջան Ղուրոնբեկով բ.գ.դ., պրոֆեսոր (Ուզբեկստան)

ԲՈՎԱՆԴԱԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

<i>ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՆԱԽԱԳԱՀ ԱՐՄԵՆ ՍԱՐԳՍՅԱՆԻ ՈՂՋՈՒՅՆԻ ԽՈՍՔԸ ԵՊՀ ԱՐԵՎԵԼԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՖԱԿՈՒԼՏԵՏԻ 50-ԱՍՅԱ ՀՈՐԵԼՅԱՆԻՆ</i>	11-12
---	-------

ԱՐԱԲԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

<i>Մկրտումյան Գայանե ՍՈՒՍՈՒԼՍԱՆՆԵՐԻ ԿՈՂՄԻՑ ՏՐՎԱԾ ՀՐՈՎԱՐՏԱԿ- ՊԱՅՄԱՆԱԳՐԵՐԻ ԴԵՐԸ ՔՐԻՍՏՈՆՅԱ ԲՆԱԿՉՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԿՅԱՆՔՈՒՄ</i>	14-27
--	-------

<i>Ռաֆայելովա Քրիստինե ՍԱՐԴՈՒ ՖԻԶԻԿԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՏԿԱՆԻՇՆԵՐԸ ԵՎ ՍՈՑԻԱԼԱԿԱՆ ԿԱՐԳԱՎԻՃԱԿԸ ԲՆՈՐՈՇՈՂ ՀԱՄԵՍԱՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ՀՈԳԵԼԵԶՎԱԲԱՆԱԿԱՆ ԱՌԱՆՁՆԱՀԱՏԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐՆ ԱՐԱԲ ԵՎ ՀԱՅ ԼԵԶՎԱՍՇԱԿՈՒՅԹՆԵՐՈՒՄ</i>	28-39
--	-------

<i>Ikilikyan Sona ARAB-IRANIAN RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PERSIAN GULF NAMING DISPUTE</i>	40-54
--	-------

ԹՅՈՒՐՔԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

Ռամագյան Սամվել

«ՔՅՈՌՕՂԼԻ» ԷՊՈՍԻ ՊԱՏՄԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ

ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՀԱՐՅԵՐԸ ԵՎ XVII ԴԱՐԻ

ՀԱՅ ՊԱՏՄԱԳՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ.....56-94

Հակոբյան Տաթևիկ

ԱԲԴՈՒԼ ՀԱՄԻԴ ԵՐԿՐՈՐԴԻ ԿԵՐՊԱՐԻ

ՎԵՐԱՐԺԵՎՈՐՄԱՆ ԱՐԴԻ ՄԻՏՈՒՄՆԵՐԸ

ԹՈՒՐՔԱԿԱՆ ՊԱՏՄԱԳՐՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄԵՋ (ՍԵԼԻՄ

ԴԵՐԻՆԳԻԼԻ ԱՇԽԱՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ՕՐԻՆԱԿՈՎ).....95-110

Սարգսյան Տաթևիկ

ՊՈԼՍՈ ՀԱՅՈՑ ՊԱՏՐԻԱՐՔԻ ԴԵՐԸ ԹՈՒՐՔԱԿԱՆ

ՊԵՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ-ՀԱՅ ՀԱՄԱՅՆՔ

ՀԱՐԱԲԵՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐՈՒՄ. ՕՍՄԱՆՅԱՆ ՎԵՐՋԻՆ

ՊԱՏՐԻԱՐՔ ԶԱՎԵՆ ՏԵՐ-ԵՂԻԱՅԱՆ.....111-123

Աբրահամյան Մհեր

ԵՐԻՏԹՈՒՐՔԵՐԻ ԲՈՆԻ ԿՐՈՆԱՓՈԽՈՒԹՅԱՆ

ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ՀԱՅԵՐԻ ՆԿԱՏՄԱՄԲ.....124-137

Պողոսյան Նաիրա

ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՐՅԸ ՀԱԼԻԴԵ

ԷԴԻՓ ԱԴԸՎԱՐԻ ՀՈՒՇԵՐՈՒՄ.....138-151

Մելքոնյան Ռուբեն

ԵՐԻՏԹՈՒՐՔԵՐ-ՔԵՄԱԼԱԿԱՆՆԵՐ. ԳԱՂԱՓԱՐԱԿԱՆ

ԵՎ ԿԱԴՐԱՅԻՆ ՇԱՐՈՒՆԱԿԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ.....152-165

Գևորգյան Արշակ
ԿՈՍՏԱՆԴՆՈՒՊՈԼՍԻ ՀԱՅՈՑ ՊԱՏՐԻԱՐՔՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ-
ԹՈՒՐԲԱԿԱՆ ԻՇԽԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐ
ՓՈԽՀԱՐԱԲԵՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ
ՎԱՐՉԱՊԵՏ ԱԴՆԱՆ ՄԵՆԴԵՐԵՄԻ ԵՎ ԳԱՐԵԳԻՆ
ՏՐԱՊԻԶՈՆՑԻ ՊԱՏՐԻԱՐՔԻ ԱՆՁՆԱԿԱՆ ՇՓՈՒՄՆԵՐԻ
ՀԱՄԱՏԵՔՍՈՒՄ.....166-178

Հովսեփյան Լևոն
ԹՈՒՐԲԻԱՅԻ ԱՆՎՏԱՆԳԱՅԻՆ ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ
ԱՐԴԻ ՄԻՏՈՒՄՆԵՐԸ ԵՎ ԱՆՎՏԱՆԳԱՅԻՆ
ԻՆՔՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՓՈԽԱԿԵՐՊՈՒՄԸ.....179-205

Դարբինյան Հայկ
«ՓԱՓՈՒԿ ՈՒԺԺ» ԶՈՒԳԱԿՑՈՒՄԸ «ԿՈՇՏ ՈՒԺԻՆ».
ՀԱՆՐԱՅԻՆ ԴԻՎԱՆԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ
ԻՆՍՏԻՏՈՒՑԻՈՆԱԼԻԶԱՑՈՒՄԸ ԹՈՒՐԲԻԱՅՈՒՄ.....206-219

Գևորգյան Արշակ
«ԱՐԴԱՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ԵՎ ԶԱՐԳԱՑՈՒՄ» ԿՈՒՍԱԿՑՈՒԹՅԱՆ
ԿԱՅԱՑՄԱՆ ԳԱՂԱՓԱՐԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՄԱՏԵՔՍԸ.
ՊԱՀՊԱՆՈՂԱԿԱՆ ԺՈՂՈՎՐԴԱՎԱՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆ
ԻԲՐԵՎ ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆ ԻՆՔՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ.....220-230

Հովհաննիսյան Գոռ
ՌՈՒՄ-ԹՈՒՐԲԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՐԱԲԵՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ 1920-
ԱԿԱՆՆԵՐԻՆ. ԸՆԴՀԱՆՈՒՐ ԱԿՆԱՐԿ.....231-240

Հարությունյան Ավետիք
2015 թ. ԽՈՐՀՐԴԱՐԱՆԱԿԱՆ ԸՆՏՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ
ԹՈՒՐՔԻԱՅՈՒՄ.....241-250

Մարգարյան Հայկ
ՏԵՂԱԿԱՆ ԻՆՔՆԱԿԱՌԱՎԱՐՄԱՆ ՄԱՐՄԻՆՆԵՐԻ
ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆ ԱՐԺԵՔԻ ԹՈՒՐՔԱԿԱՆ
ԸՆԿԱԼՈՒՄՆԵՐԸ251-263

Պետունց Արեն
ԱԶԳԱՅՆԱՍՏՈՒԿԱՆ ՆՈՐ ՈՒԺԻ ԲԵՄԵԼԸ
ԹՈՒՐՔԻԱՅՈՒՄ 2018 թ. ԸՆՏՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐՈՒՄ.....264-278

Մելքոնյան Մարիամ
ԿՆՈՋ ԷՄԱՆՍԻՊԱՅԻԱՅԻ ԽՆԴԻՐԸ ՄԻՂԻ
ՀԱԹՈՒՆԻ «ԱՂԵՐՄԱԳՐՈՒՄ».....279-288

Պետրոսյան Ամալյա
XVIII ԴԱՐԻ ԹՈՒՐՔՄԵՆԱԿԱՆ ԳՐԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ
ՈՐՈՇ ԱՌԱՆՁՆԱՀԱՏԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ՇՈՒՐՋ.....289-298

Խաչատրյան Շուշան
ՄՈՒԽԹԱՐ ԱՌԻԵՁՈՎԻ ՍՏԵՂԾԱԳՈՐԾՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ
ՀԱՅԵՐԵՆ ԹԱՐԳՄԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ՇՈՒՐՋ.....299-314

Մովսիսյան Լիլիթ
ԱՐԴԻ ՀԱՅ ԵՎ ԱՐԲԵՋԱՆԱԿԱՆ ՄԱՍՈՒԼԻ ԼԵԶՎԻ
ԲԱՌԱՊԱՇԱՐԻ ԶՈՒԳԱՐԿԱԿԱՆ ՔՆՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ.....315-328

*Хабидуллина Элмира **

ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ ПЕРЕВОДОВ

ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ С ТАТАРСКОГО

ЯЗЫКА НА ТУРЕЦКИЙ.....329-335

Քոչարյան Հայկ, Գևորգյան Աննա

ԻՍԼԱՄԱԿԱՆ ԳՈՐԾՈՆԸ ԱՂԲԵՋԱՆՈՒՄ ԵՎ ԱՅՌ

ԳՈՐԾՈՆԻ ԱԶԴԵՑՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ՀՀ ԱՆՎՏԱՆԳԱՅԻՆ

ՇԱՀԵՐԻ ՎՐԱ.....336-356

ԻՐԱՆԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

Vardanyan Aharon

SOME REMARKS ON THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC

SITUATION IN XALXĀL.....358-365

Տոնոյան Արտյոմ

ԿՈՎԿԱՍՅԱՆ ՊԱՐՍԿԵՐԵՆՈՒՄ ԲՈՒՆ ԱՊԱՌՆԻ

ԺԱՄԱՆԱԿԱԶԵՎԻ ԿԱԶՄՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՈՐՈՇ

ԱՌԱՆՁՆԱՀԱՏԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ՇՈՒՐՁ.....366-380

Բիանջյան Հասմիկ

ՍԵՅՅԵՂ ՍՈՀԱՍՄԱՂ ԱԼԻ ԶԱՄԱԼԶԱԴԵՒ ԴԵՐԸ 19-ԸՂ

ԴԱՐԻ ՎԵՐՁԻ և 20-ԸՂ ԴԱՐԻ ՄԿԶԲԻ ՊԱՐՄԻՑ

ԳՐԱԿԱՆ ԼԵԶՎԻ ՆՈՐԱՅՄԱՆ ԳՈՐԾԸՆԹԱՅՈՒՄ.....381-392

Խաչատրյան Զարուհի

ԹՅՈՒՐՔԱԿԱՆ ԾԱԳՄԱՆ ՁԻԱՆՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ

ՊԱՐՍԿԵՐԵՆՈՒՄ.....393-402

Դավթյան Սոնա

*ԲՈՒՅՍԵՐԻ ԱՆՎԱՆՄԱՆ ՀԻՄՆԱԿԱՆ ՄԿՁԲՈՒՆՔՆԵՐԸ
ՊԱՐՄԿԵՐԵՆԻ ԵՎ ՀԱՅԵՐԵՆԻ ԲՈՒՍԱՆՎԱՆԱԿԱՆ
ՀԱՄԱԿԱՐԳԵՐՈՒՄ.....* 403-419

Կոստանյան Վահան

*ԱՅՐՈՒՄՆԵՐԻ ԾԱԳՈՒՄՆԱԲԱՆԱԿԱՆ ԱՌԱՍՊԵԼՆԵՐԸ
ԵՎ ՑԵՂԱՆՎԱՆ ՍՏՈՒԳԱԲԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ.....* 420-430

Գեղամյան Աստղիկ

ՄԻՐԱՅԻՆ ՄՈՏԻՎՆԵՐԸ «ՇԱՀՆԱՍԵ»-ՈՒՄ..... 431-440

Պետրոսյան Լիանա

*ԻՐԱՆԱԿԱՆ ԱԶԳԱՅՆԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԽՈՍՈՒՅԹԸ
Մ. ԱՀՄԱԴԻՆԵԺԱԴԻ ԿԱՌԱՎԱՐՄԱՆ
ՏԱՐԻՆԵՐԻՆ (2005-2013 ԹԹ.).....* 441-449

Կոստանյան Վահան

ԱՅՐՈՒՄԱԿԱՆ ԿԱՑԱՐԱՆՆԵՐԻ ՆԿԱՐԱԳԻՐԸ..... 450-456

Брутян Ануш

*ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ РОССИЙСКО-ИРАНСКОГО
СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА ПОСЛЕ ПОДПИСАНИЯ СВПД.....* 457-471

Khorikyan Hovhannes

ON THE LOCATION OF THE NEPHTHALITES..... 472-486

ARAB-IRANIAN RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PERSIAN GULF NAMING DISPUTE

Keywords: *Arab-Iranian relations, geopolitical rivalry, Arab-Islamic expansion, Persian Gulf; Arabian Gulf, naming dispute, Gulf States, Gulf Cooperation Council*

The body of water between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula, which is historically known as the “Persian Gulf”, has an area of 240,000 square kilometers (92,500 square miles) and extends for 984 kilometers (615 miles) from the mouth of the Shatt al Arab River in the northwest to the Strait of Hormuz in the southeast. In classical geographies this projection of water is known as *Sinus Persicus*¹.

No written deed has remained since the era before the Pars Empire but in the oral history and culture the Iranians have called the southern waters: *Jam Sea, Iran Sea, Pars Sea*. Greek geographers Strabo and Ptolemy utilized the expression *Sinus Persicus* to specify the body of water between the Arabian Peninsula and the Iranian Plateaus. From among the writings of others in the same period, there is the inscription and engraving of Darioush the Great, installed at junction of waters of Arabian Gulf (*the Red Sea*), Nile river and Rome river (current Mediterranean) which belongs to the 5th century BC where, Darioush, the king of Pars Empire has named the Persian Gulf Water Channel *Pars Sea*. Also a map has remained from Herodotus, the great historian of Greece (425-484 B.C.) which introduces the Red Sea as the Arabian Gulf. However, in more than 30 geographical,

* Ph.D. Applicant, Southern Federal University, E-mail: sonaik82@mail.ru

¹ United Nations Working Paper Group of Experts On Geographical Names, “Historical, Geographical and Legal Validity of the Name: Persian Gulf”

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/gegn23wp61.pdf> (accessed November 29, 2018).

historical and literary books the Muslims and Arab scientists have described the Persian Gulf.²

The principal geopolitical characteristics that have distinguished the Persian Gulf as an especial region are: the particular geographical position of the Persian Gulf region; the huge fossil energy resources; and the geostrategic ambitions of the major powers of the world.

The Persian Gulf sometimes was wrongly considered as a subfield of so called Middle East. Nations in this region are very different in cultural, political, economical and religious aspects.³

The geopolitical significance of the Persian Gulf may be measured by the fact that it is situated at the cross-roads between the East and the West, to wit, in the area where Europe, Africa and Asia meet, which denotes that the region is directly affected by events in those continents.

From the geostrategic perspective the Persian Gulf is also significant, as it has been an important military pathway to access other regions. These are the most essential factors making the region important to major powers of the world.

The Persian Gulf region has its importance as well in its particular geo-economic situation. During the 18th century the region had become strategically more significant due to its crucial economical role in communication between Asia and Europe. Almost 65 percent of the proven oil reserves in the world and more than 40 percent of the global natural gas reserves are located in the Persian Gulf region. Moreover, 20 percent of the world's oil trade is done through this region. Besides these factors, the principal geopolitical feature of the region is its highest volume of fossil fuel exports to the world. Proven crude oil reserves of the Persian Gulf coastal states of Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Bahrain stand almost two thirds of the world's total oil

² Kamyar A., "The Name Game: The Persian Gulf, Archaeologists, and the Politics of Arab-Iranian Relations" in *Selective Remembrances: Archaeology in the Construction Commemoration and Consecration of National Pasts*, ed. Philip L. Kohl and others (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 221

³ Mohammad Z., Pour G., Shamani Y. and Ebrahimi E., "Hidden Perspectives of Convergence in Persian Gulf Region," *Journal of American Science* 9, no. 4 (2013): 145.

reserves and more than one third of the global oil supplies. Saudi Arabia has nearly 25 percent of the world's crude oil reserves, followed by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait and the UAE.⁴

By and large, the Persian Gulf represents a significant part of the world, because of its geopolitical and geostrategic situation and oil wealth. In this regard, the region has been the focus of regional and extra-regional powers throughout the course of history. The region witnessed the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988, The Gulf War of 1990-1991 and the Iraq War of 2003, resulting in regional and global instability. The fall of Iraq made Iran more powerful in the region, and as a domination strategy, Iran launched its nuclear program. Iran is considered to be a major power in the region; it can destabilize the regional balance as Iran's nuclear program is threatening the stability of the Gulf region.⁵

During the 1980s, the Gulf region experienced major developments and progress, moving the region toward a new era of challenges. For the sake of having a coordinated resistance against outside intervention, the Arab Gulf states realized that they had to react collectively to be able to achieve stability and security in the region. As they shared a common culture and had similar socioeconomic and political structures, the Arab states were ready to cooperate and establish an organization that would help them to coordinate and protect their common interests.⁶

On March 10, 1981 at Muscat, Oman, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was shaped as a regional economic and defense organization.⁷ The members of Gulf Cooperation Council are: the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar, which are known collectively as the Gulf States.⁸ The member nations of

⁴ Mirhosseini S. M., Rasoulisaniabadi E. "The Milestones of the Persian Gulf Security Developments," *Sociology and Anthropology* 3, no.2 (2015): 117-118.

⁵ Al Kaabi Y. H. and Al Kaabi Kh. M., *The Iranian Century: The Tension Between Iran and The Gulf States*, <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/10720> (accessed Apr. 15, 2018).

⁶ Al Hamad T. , "Will the Gulf Monarchies Work Together?," *The Middle East Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (1997): 47-48.

⁷ Jessup J. E. *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Conflict and Conflict Resolution, 1945-1996* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 262.

⁸ Europa Publications, *The Middle East and North Africa, Volume 50* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 1318.

the Gulf Cooperation Council reflect “the historic, geographic, economic, cultural, political and strategic realities of the Gulf.”⁹ Nowadays Gulf Cooperation Council countries require a comprehensive regional strategy to deal with Iranian ambition. The Gulf Cooperation Council countries should work to enhance the collective defense capability and share the burden of security in the region in order to achieve stability. More cooperation and coordination while working with the Gulf Cooperation Council system can help the Gulf States counter Iran’s ambitions and play a stronger role in the region. The Gulf States must develop a unified policy, which could ensure to prevent any possible attempts by Iran to destabilize the region and allow them to rely less on help from the external actors. The Gulf Cooperation Council countries’ highest priority is to free the Gulf region from weapons of mass destruction. The stability in the Gulf region depends on the dynamic relationship between the Gulf States and Iran in addition to external actors like the United States and other superpower countries.¹⁰

The socio-cultural significance of the Persian Gulf region is unique, because it has a very long history of civilized society and human conflict; it was also the center of a great empire of history. The Persian Gulf is often regarded as a part of the Middle East crossroads of three continents and an intricate part of the Arab and Muslim world. The Persian Gulf region links the three continents of Asia, Europe and Africa. It is as an arm of the Indian Ocean and a bridge of trade between three continents. The advent of Islam took place in the Arabian Peninsula that was located in the coastal borders of the Persian Gulf region, which now is known as the center of the Muslim world. Because of its strategic location, for a long time, the Persian Gulf region has been the center of attention for traders and the superpowers. Since the beginning of human history as evidences shows, the Persian Gulf

⁹ Najem T. and Hetherington M., *Good Governance in the Middle East Oil Monarchies* (New York: Cengage Learning, 2003), 30.

¹⁰ Al Kaabi Y. H. , Al Kaabi Kh. M., “The Iranian Century: The Tension Between Iran and The Gulf States,” <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/10720> (accessed April 15, 2018).

has been a valuable waterway as well as the center of the great civilizations of the ancient east; it has a background of several millennia.¹¹

Islam, promoted by Muhammad in Arabia in 610 A.D., played a crucial role in social, political and cultural life of the region, changing its religious and socio-linguistic picture. Arabia was in the middle of the major ancient world civilizations and routes. It participated, transferred, and contributed to it prior to and after the advent of Islam in Makkah in 610 CE.¹² The Arabian Peninsula is the cradle of Islam. Islam was "born" in it, and "grew up" in it, and was already "full-grown" when it came out of it. It was in the Arabian cities of Makkah and Medina that the classic Islamic identity was evolved, and Islam actually "jelled".¹³

The area that constitutes the present-day Persian Gulf states was on the immediate periphery of the rise of Islam. The early Islamic polity was intensely expansionist, fueled both by fervor for the faith and by economic and social factors. After gaining control of Arabia and the Persian Gulf region, conquering armies swept out of the peninsula, spreading Islam. By the end of the eighth century, Islamic armies had reached far into North Africa and eastward and northward into Asia.¹⁴

Hence, Islam played an important role in shaping the socio-cultural picture of the Gulf region. Saudi Arabia is the centre of the Islamic world, where the two holiest places in Islam, Makah and Medina are situated. Some scholars emphasize the geopolitical and economic importance of the Gulf to both global and Islamic history.¹⁵ Thus, history of Islamic civilization traces its development from its beginnings in seventh century Arabia to its wide and varied presence in the globalised world of today.¹⁶

¹¹ Mirhosseini R. , "The Milestones of the Persian Gulf Security Developments," 117.

¹² Natana J. Delong-Bas, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Women*, Vol 2 (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 2013), 711.

¹³ Sayed A., Razwy A. ,*A Restatement of the History of Islam and Muslims CE 570 to 661* (United Kingdom: World Federation of KSI Muslim Communities United Kingdom, 1996), 451.

¹⁴ Metz H. Ch., *Persian Gulf States : country studies* (Washington: Library of Congress. Federal Research Division.,1994), 9.

¹⁵ Kennet D., "Islamic archeology in the Gulf," *Hadith Ad-Dar* 33 (2010): 28.

¹⁶ Chase F.Robinson, *The New Cambridge History of Islam: the Formation of the Islamic World Sixth to Eleventh Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 171.

Arab-Iranian geopolitical rivalry has deep roots. It began from the early Islamic period and was closely associated with Arab-Islamic large-scale expansion.

The Prophet Muhammad argued that the Arabs and all other people needed to look beyond their tribal, ethnic, or city loyalties to understand that they were all one community under Allah, and that this recognition would bring peace and equality to all. He had achieved great things, with the western areas of the Arabian Peninsula united under Islam and the leadership of the messenger of Allah.¹⁷

The first Islamic century began in 622 of the Common Era with the *hijra*, Muhammad's "emigration" from Mecca to the town of Yathrib, which later was called "the Prophet's city" or "the city" (Medina). The *hijra* thus marked a new beginning for Muhammad and his followers. It also illustrates a striking feature of Islamic history. In the long term the campaigns grew into the conquest armies of the 640s and 650s (and beyond), which would overrun much of the Byzantine and all of the Sasanian Near East.¹⁸

During the first two centuries after the appearance of Islam, the Arab Muslims created a vast empire that stretched from Spain and North Africa all the way to the borders of China and India. Iraq and the Iranian plateau were among the first to be conquered. In 636 CE, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās crushed the Persians in the Battle of Qādesīya and took over their capital, Ctesiphon. The reasons for the success of the Arab Muslims included organization and determination, effect of their religion on their moral and spiritual mobility, their ability to recruit forces as they expanded, gain of resources as they took over more lands to better equip themselves.¹⁹

In the wake of the Arabs' conquest of most of the Near East, the new religion became identified more sharply as a monotheism for the Arab

¹⁷ Bowen H. W., *The History of Saudi Arabia* (London: Greenwood press, 2008), 157.

¹⁸ Robinson, *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, 172-173.

¹⁹ Zarrīnkūb Abd Al-Husain, "The Arab Conquest of Iran and its Aftermath," in *The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs in The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Richard N. Frye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 1.

people. During the second half of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth centuries the Muslims' religious identity was being established in the region, which became the most powerful unifying force for all the nations of Arab Caliphate. The formation of this distinct religious identity and the consolidation of the empire dominated by Arabs, were really the culmination of the longer-term process by which the Arabs of the peninsula were incorporated into the dominant social and cultural patterns of the Near East.²⁰

The spread of Islam was one of the cultural contact experiences in the world history from its initial base in the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East to a host of areas in Africa, Asia and Europe. Islam unified people of various societies and cultures and brought important changes as a result of contact.

The religion in Iran before Islam was Zoroastrianism. Formation of the Arab Caliphate and the process of Arabization completely changed the cultural, religious and lingual picture of conquered nations, starting from the 7th century. With Islam Arabic culture, language and customs were spread.

As the Qur'an is written in Arabic and may not be translated for religious practice, so that knowledge of Arabic is important for all Muslims. Hence, the Arabic language became the most essential language and medium of local pre-existing cultures in the whole empire. The term "Arab" became associated with speakers of Arabic rather than being confined only to the original inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula.²¹

Two of the most prominent ethnic elements in the Middle East, Arabs and Iranians have been in contact with each other, and at times have had their fortunes intertwined, for some three millennia. It is improbable that centuries of contacts between the Arabs and Persians, above all in eastern Arabia, should not have left behind some legacy in the fields of thought and culture, but such a legacy is not easy to quantify or to evaluate.

²⁰ Berkey J. P., *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 71.

²¹ *The Spread of Islam*, Yale University Press, <http://www.usislam.org/pdf/Spread-of-Islam.pdf> (accessed April 22, 2018).

In centers like Ctesiphon the Arabs acquired some familiarity with the externals of Persian life – the impressive buildings, the court ceremonial, the ceremonies and practices of Zoroastrianism, – yet these had no penetrating effect on society within the Arabian peninsula. The most lasting result of Arab-Persian contacts in these centuries was an influx of Persian words into the classical *‘arabīya*, especially those with religious and cultural references. Subsequent borrowings are also discernible in the Jāheli (pre-islamic) poets and in the Qur’an itself, where they were evaluated by later Muslim philologists.²²

Adopting Islam, however, the Persians didn’t tolerate Arab domination, truly realizing the privilege they had, as they were inheritors of Ancient Persian civilization and rich cultural traditions.

The Arab-Islamic conquests in the seventh century and series of epoch-making events following the advent of Islam have been variously seen in Iran: by some as a blessing, the advent of the true faith, the end of the age of ignorance and heathenism; by others as a humiliating national defeat, the conquest and subjugation of the country by foreign invaders. Both perceptions are of course valid, depending on one’s angle of vision. Iran was indeed Islamized, but it was not Arabized. Persians remained Persians. And after an interval of silence, Iran reemerged as a separate, different and distinctive element within Islam, eventually adding a new element even to Islam itself. Culturally, politically, and most remarkable of all even religiously, the Iranian contribution to this new Islamic civilization is of immense importance. The work of Iranians can be seen in every field of cultural endeavor, including Arabic poetry. Some scholars assert that in a sense, Iranian Islam is a second advent of Islam itself.

Thus, Arab-Iranian Geopolitical Rivalry started with the Arab-Islamic conquests in the seventh century, which completely changed the cultural, religious and lingual picture of conquered nations, widely spreading Islam, Arabic culture, language and customs. Persians, however,

²² Arabs and Iran in the Pre-Islamic Period, Encyclopedia Iranica, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/arab-i> (accessed April 25, 2018).

didn't tolerate Arab domination, truly realizing the privilege they had, as they were inheritors of Ancient Persian civilization and rich cultural traditions.

Since the early 1960s, there has been a naming dispute in regards to the Persian Gulf which gained more significance during the rise of Arab nationalism and growing political tensions between Iran (formerly known as Persia) and its surrounding Arab neighbours. Roderic Owen, an employee of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and British government officer, in 1958 published a book titled "The Golden Bubble: Arabian Gulf Documentary". This book constituted the first literary work of any significance to popularize the term "Arabian Gulf". Sir Charles Belgrave, the British advisor to the emir of Bahrain, was the first westerner to use and advocate the name "Arabian Gulf" in the journal "Soat al-Bahrain" (Voice of Bahrain) in 1955. He wrote a book in 1966 about the southern coasts of the Persian Gulf and declared that Arabs prefer to name the gulf "Arabian Gulf".²³

By the 1960s, all Arab states passed laws and issued decrees making the use of the name Arabian Gulf mandatory in their publications and communications with the rest of the world. Despite signing the 2 United Nations documents (UNAD 311/ Gen on March 5, 1971 and UNLA 45.8.2 (C) on August 10, 1984), Arab states, especially those bordering the Persian Gulf, continued to use and promote the name Arabian Gulf or a simple reference to "The Gulf." The common use of the name of Persian Gulf owes much to the fact that for most of the past twenty-five hundred years Iran (ancient Persia) has been the major regional power in the Persian Gulf littoral.²⁴

Iran uses the term "Persian Gulf" exclusively and does not recognize alternate forms such as the "Arabian Gulf" or "The Gulf", arguing that it's a historical name and on almost all maps printed before 1960, in most

²³ Levinson M. H. "Mapping the Persian Gulf Naming Dispute," ETC.: A Review of General Semantics 68, no 3 (2011): 279.

²⁴ Abdi K., "The Name Game: The Persian Gulf, Archaeologists, and the Politics of Arab-Iranian Relations" in *Selective Remembrances: Archaeology in the Construction Commemoration and Consecration of National Pasts*, ed. Philip L. Kohl and others (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 225

modern international documents this body of water is known as the "Persian Gulf". Arabian Gulf for Iran means the Red Sea and the "Arabian Gulf" name may create confusion with the Red Sea, so it's better to use the name "Persian Gulf". Iran argues that if the Arabian Gulf gets its name from the fact that more Arab countries are surrounding it, then Indian Ocean should also change its name because India has a smaller border with it than other countries.²⁵

On the international level the Iranian government endeavored to apply pressure on Arab states to deny the name "Arabian Gulf". There are some vivid examples of Iran's pressure: in 2006 the *Economist* magazine was banned in Iran for the simple fact that a published map referred to the Persian Gulf region as merely "The Gulf;" *National Geographic* magazine, in 2004, was forced to republish a map that referred to the region as the "Arabian Gulf" after a vigorous campaign by Iranian academics worldwide. *National Geographic* was eventually forced to include a parenthesis next to the region noting that only "some" individuals refer to the Persian Gulf region as the "Arabian Gulf" rather than the "Persian Gulf."²⁶

In 2012 Iran threatened legal action against Google for not labeling the Persian Gulf on its maps.²⁷ Now Google Maps shows both terms, with Arabian Gulf in parentheses. But Google will show either Arabian or Persian Gulf to local users, depending on geolocation and language settings²⁸.

In 2005, Iran proclaimed April 30th as "National Persian Gulf Day" (April 30th corresponds with the anniversary of Shah Abbas' successful seventeenth-century military campaign, which drove Portugal's navy from

²⁵ Levinson, Mapping the Persian Gulf Naming Dispute, 279.

²⁶ Naimi A., "Naming Dispute: The Persian Gulf" https://www.academia.edu/744772/Naming_Dispute_Persian_Gulf (accessed April 29, 2018).

²⁷ Levs J., "Iran threatens to sue Google for not labeling Persian Gulf," CNN, May 18, 2012, <https://edition.cnn.com/2012/05/17/world/meast/iran-google-gulf/index.htm> (accessed May 02, 2018).

²⁸ Zraick K., "Persian (or Arabian) Gulf Is Caught in the Middle of Regional Rivalries," New York Times 2 June ,2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/13/world/middleeast/persian-gulf-arabian-gulf-iran-saudi-arabia.html> (accessed August 17, 2018).

the Strait of Hormuz, the narrowest point in the Persian Gulf). In 2006, the top rank of the Iranian soccer league was named the Persian Gulf Cup to advance the Persian label.²⁹ By calling this body of water “Arabian Gulf”, Arabs seem to be trying to signal the end of Iran's regional supremacy and to emphasize their own rising star.

The following are some arguments that have been made by Arab supporters for the use of the term "Arabian Gulf":

- The name "Persian Gulf is linked to the Persian Empire that does not exist any more. The Mediterranean Sea used to be called the Roman Sea and had the Roman Empire lasted that's what we would call it today.

- The people who live around the gulf are mostly Arabs, hence by virtue of demography it should be called the Arabian Gulf.

- Likewise by virtue of geography: six Arabian countries surround the gulf (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates) compared to one Iran and they encompass 70% of the coastline.³⁰

Nay, using the term "Persian Gulf" is impolite at least for Gulf Cooperation Council countries and nationals, whereas, Iran and many Iranians find the term "Arabian Gulf" offensive.³¹

According to analysts, the name can be a source of friction even in diplomatic encounters.³²

Before Iran's revolution of 1979, which led to the establishment of an Islamic Republic, the name "Persian Gulf" still maintained its official credibility. However, after the political isolation of Iran in the post-revolution period and with the decreasing influence of Tehran on the political and economic priorities of the English-speaking Western World, including petroleum-related businesses, there has been an increasing

²⁹ Levinson M. H., Mapping the Persian Gulf Naming Dispute, 280.

³⁰ Levinson, Mapping the Persian Gulf Naming Dispute, 279.

³¹ Persian Gulf Naming Dispute, Howling Pixel https://howlingpixel.com/wiki/Persian_Gulf_naming_dispute#cite_note-21 (accessed May 02, 2018).

³² Zraick K., "Persian (or Arabian) Gulf Is Caught in the Middle of Regional Rivalries," New York Times 2 June ,2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/13/world/middleeast/persian-gulf-arabian-gulf-iran-saudi-arabia.html> (accessed August 17, 2018).

acceptance of omitting "Persian" from the name on maps or even renaming it "Arabian Gulf".³³

Some atlases and media outlets have taken to referring to "The Gulf" without any adjectival qualification. In the mid-1970s the BBC decided to adopt the neutral term "the Gulf" for the waterway. The British press followed the BBC in adopting "the Gulf" as the primary point of reference. In due course some media on the European continent and a small minority of media and publications in North America adopted the BBC approach in stripping the Persian Gulf of its identity.³⁴

During the naming issue discussion of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names held in Vienna in 2006 (the 23rd session), the Convenor noted "that countries could not be prohibited from using or creating exonyms."³⁵

The United Nations website only uses the term "Arabian Gulf" when presenting transcripts of speeches by Arab delegates, arguing that the use of "Arabian Gulf" is faulty.³⁶

The United Kingdom government's Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for Official British Use (PCGN) has endorsed the term 'The Persian Gulf' as the correct term for the body of water. PCGN recommends using the name Persian Gulf on UK products, as this has long been considered the English language conventional name for this body of water, which is a high seas feature, extending beyond the territorial limits of any recognized sovereignty. According to PCGN, the Arabian Gulf is an

³³ Boghrati N., "Omission of " Persian Gulf" Name Angers Iran," Wordpress, Dec. 28, 2006, <http://www.worldpress.org/Mideast/2616.cfm> (accessed August 07, 2018).

³⁴ Mahan A., "All at Sea over "the Gulf," Asia Times, Dec 9, 2004, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/FL09Ak03.html (accessed August 15, 2018).

³⁵ Economic and Social Council, United Nations, Report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on the work of its twenty-third session, Document E/2006/57, New York, 2006.

³⁶ Mostashari A., Factsheet on the Legal and Historical Usage of the "Persian Gulf", Iranian Studies Group at MIT, 2004, <http://web.mit.edu/isg/persiangulf Factsheet.pdf> (accessed August 08, 2018).

English language version of the name applied by Arabs to this body of water and should not be used.³⁷

Due to increased cooperation with Arab states of the Persian Gulf the USA prefers to use the term "Arabian Gulf". According to the Persian Gulf affairs director at the National Security Council, "the terminology shifted along with geopolitics". So the terms used by American officials had become more nuanced, and that more officials now say "Arabian Gulf" or simply "the Gulf".³⁸

In conclusion we can emphasize that the impact of this naming dispute is of immense importance, because it has definitely had a considerable influence on many political, socio-cultural processes and identity construction of the region. The relations between Iran and the Gulf states impact the situation in the Gulf region, evidently. The Gulf Cooperation members have different attitudes towards Iran. At the same time most of them are confident that Iran is a big threat for the region due to its hegemonic ambitions. This is considered to be one of the major obstacles to normalization of relations with Iran, building a balance of power and effective relationship.

The possible future resolving of this dispute depends on many different factors, such as the geopolitical situation in the region, historical basis of the dispute, the position of external actors and their own interests, hegemonic goals of the regional powers, the religious factor, etc.

There have been suggestions of using other name variants for this region, such as "Islamic Gulf" or "Muslim Gulf"³⁹, "Gulf of Iran", "Gulf of Ajam", "Gulf of Basra", "Persian-Arabian Gulf".⁴⁰

³⁷PCGN geographical names guidance https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/318465/Iran_Toponymic_Factfile_2012.pdf (accessed August 08, 2018).

³⁸Zraick K., "Persian (or Arabian) Gulf Is Caught in the Middle of Regional Rivalries," New York Times 2 June ,2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/13/world/middleeast/persian-gulf-arabian-gulf-iran-saudi-arabia.html> (accessed August 17, 2018).

³⁹ Goodarzi J., *Syria and Iran: Diplomatic Alliance and Power Politics in the Middle East*(London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006), 297.

⁴⁰ National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency <https://www.nga.mil/Pages/Default.aspx> (accessed August 05, 2018).

Obviously, the both sides need to reach a mutually agreed compromise for further cooperation and normalization of relations. However, this issue is under the dispute, which makes Arab-Iranian relations more complicated in contemporary times.

**ԱՐԱՔԱ-ԻՐԱՆԱԿԱՆ ՓՈԽՀԱՐԱՔԵՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ
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ՀԱՄԱՏԵՔՍՏՈՒՄ**

**Իկիլիկյան Սոնա
(Ամփոփում)**

Արաքա-իրանական աշխարհաքաղաքական մրցակցությունը խոր արմատներ ունի: Այն սկիզբ է առնում դեռևս վաղ իսլամական դարաշրջանից և պայմանավորված է արաքամուսուլմանական լայնածավալ էքսպանսիայով: VII դարից սկսած՝ Արաքական խալիֆայության կազմավորումը և արաքականացման գործընթացը մեծապես փոխեցին նրա կազմի մեջ ընդգրկված նվաճված ժողովուրդների մշակութային ու կրոնական բնութագիրը: Մասնավորապես Իրանում գրադաշտականությանը եկավ փոխարինելու իսլամը: Պարսիկները, իսլամ ընդունելով, այնուամենայնիվ չէին հանդուրժում արաքական գերիշխանությունը, քանզի քաջ գիտակցում էին իրենց առավելությունն արաքների նկատմամբ՝ հանդիսանալով հազարամյակներ շարունակ գոյություն ունեցող քաղաքակրթության ու հարուստ պատմամշակութային ավանդույթի կրողներ:

Արաքա-իրանական փոխհարաբերությունները շարունակում են մնալ բարդ ու հակասական նաև արդի ժամանակաշրջանում: Այստեղ զգալի դեր է խաղում Պարսից ծոցի տեղանվան գործոնը՝ որպես արաքա-իրանական աշխարհաքաղաքական մրցակցության խորհրդանիշ: Արաքա-իրանական աշխարհաքաղաքական մրցակցությունն ու ծավալվող հակասություններն անշուշտ մեծ

ազդեցութիւնն են թողնում տարածաշրջանի քաղաքական ու մշակութային մի շարք կարևոր գործընթացների վրա:

АРАБО-ИРАНСКИЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ В КОНТЕКСТЕ СПОРА О НАЗВАНИИ ПЕРСИДСКОГО ЗАЛИВА

Икиликян Сона
(Резюме)

Персидский залив имеет важное геополитическое и социокультурное значение, благодаря своему расположению между Востоком и Западом и богатым энергоресурсам. Важное стратегическое расположение и фактор энергоресурсов превращают регион в арену столкновения интересов и соперничества мировых держав.

Арабо-иранская конкуренция имеет глубокие корни и сложилась на региональном пространстве Ближнего Востока еще в первые века ислама в результате арабо-мусульманской экспансии. Отношения Ирана с арабскими государствами остаются сложными и в новейший период истории. На современном этапе в арабо-иранских отношений особое значение приобретает топоним Персидского залива, отражая символику этого противостояния. Это оказывает огромное влияние на многие современные политические и социокультурные процессы Персидского залива, превращая его в арену столкновения интересов и соперничества.