

Schamachi/Şamaxı in 1683/1684 – Engelbert Kaempfer's intercultural contacts

Lothar Weiss

Lothar Weiss, Dr. rer. nat.
Detmold, Germany

Abstract

As secretary of a Swedish delegation to the court of Shah Sulaimān, Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716) travelled through what is today Azərbaycan for 77 days. He stayed in Schamachi/Şamaxı, the former capital of the Persian province of Şervān, for four weeks, including his visit to Bakı and the oil fields of Apsheron – this report (Lemgo 1712) is well known. Not so well known are details of his stay in Schamachi; his diary and his *liber amicorum* (autograph book with five entries from Schamachi, in five languages; not shown before) give the names of seven or eight of his local or foreign contacts – clerics of different nominations, military men and diplomats from different nations. Identifications of his contacts and details of their lives can be found in Kaempfer's "Amoenitates" and the books by European and Persian travellers (Olearius[!], Chardin, Tavernier and Ibn Muḥammad Ibrāhim). All this shows Şamaxı as an important place of intercultural contacts.

For ten years from 1683 to 1692 the German physician Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716)



travelled through parts of Russia, Persia, India, Siam, Japan and South Africa.

The first map (see ill. 1), shows his journey:¹

1. Engelbert Kaempfer from Sweden to Japan (1683 - 1692)

At first as secretary of a Swedish delegation he came to the court of the Persian Shah Sulaimān, later in the service of the Dutch trading company “*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*” to Japan. His “*History of Japan*”, published 1727 in London, became the reference book on Japan for more than a century.

On his way to Isfahan he travelled through what is today Azərbaycan for all of 77 days, (see ill. 2).² After crossing the Caspian Sea he stayed at Niyazabad and in its vicinity for three weeks and proceeded to Schamachi, the capital of the former Persian province of Šervān. During his four weeks at Shemakha he undertook a six day trip to Baku and the oil fields of Apsheron.

He published his report of this trip as a part of his “*Amoenitatum exoticarum*”, that is “*Exotic Pleasures*”, Lemgo 1712.³ This report is quite well known in Azerbaijan and in Russian literature. Within those books or papers the most extensive use can be found in the “*History of Baku.*”

2. In Azerbaijan 1683/1684

1998 by Sara Aşurbəyli,⁴ which contains more than 30 quotations from Kaempfer. His view of Baku of 1712 is quite often reproduced, mostly in a slightly simplified and coloured version from about 1730, as can be seen on the cover of Chingiz Gajar’s “*Old Baku*” 2009.⁵

Now we will have a closer look at Kaempfer’s stay in Schamachi.

Kaempfer in Schamachi

Unlike his report on Baku, he doesn’t give a printed report of his stay in this town in December 1683/January 1684. But while describing the geology of the mountain with the Gulistan fortress he depicts a less well known view of Schamachi (see ill. 3) in 1712.⁶ Always very much interested in historic monuments he visited Gulistan and the mountain to its right with the old burial places.

3. Kaempfer’s view of Schamachi 1683/1684 (75 %)

But details of his stay in Schamachi can be found in his travel diary, today kept in the British Library London.⁷ This diary is written in a mixture of Latin and

German, is in a slightly damaged condition and is in parts not decipherable. But it has a number of sketches of buildings and inscriptions. So it will be worthwhile to take a close look into these observations of his travels through Azerbaijan. The greatest part of this diary has been read and published in German by Karl Meier-Lemgo in 1968,⁸ but gone unnoticed in Azerbaijan, as far as I can see.

Kaempfer's report on Schamachi is not as detailed as the book by Adam Olearius,⁹ but has his personal observations on an Islamic day of mourning and a detailed description of the dinner given by the governor in his residence. He mentions four caravanserais and describes the slave trade taking place in one of them. His description of Gulistan and the old burial places is fairly detailed.

Maheb Aali Molla

When Kaempfer explored the town he also visited the mosques and schools. And here is the report of one such visit in his diary (see ill. 4), some lines in his typical mixture of Latin and German, translated into English:¹⁰

4. *Maheb Aali Molla in Kaempfer's diary 1683/1684 and in Olearius' book 1663*

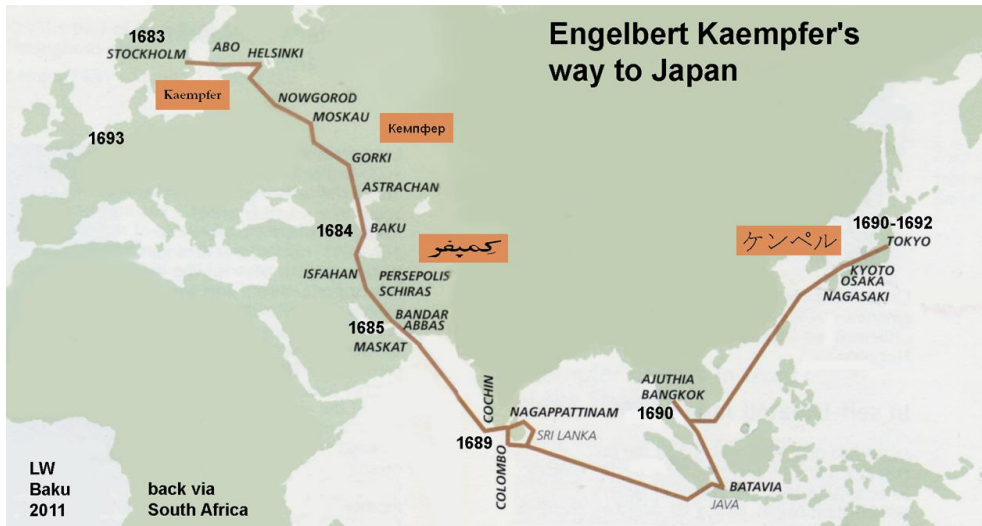
“In one of them I spoke to a quick and cheery man, perhaps of 70 to 80 years, who also wrote his name on my box. He had taught Olearius the fundamentals of the Arabian language and said that Oljars – as he called him – had been a brave head and man, but had not yet completely understood the fundamentals of the Arabian language. Olearius remembers him...”

Kaempfer had the travel book by Olearius to Isfahan with him, perhaps the edition of 1665.

When in February 1637 at Shemakha Olearius reports (and again in Feb. 21st, 1638) in translation:¹¹

“The Molla (teacher) of this school had the name Maheb Aali. He was a young, merry and religious man and showed good friendship and service to me with learning the language. ...”

Those two descriptions of this man fit perfectly with respect to place, characterization and age – we can surely assume that both men met the Mullah Maheb Ali, but Kaempfer nearly 47 years later.

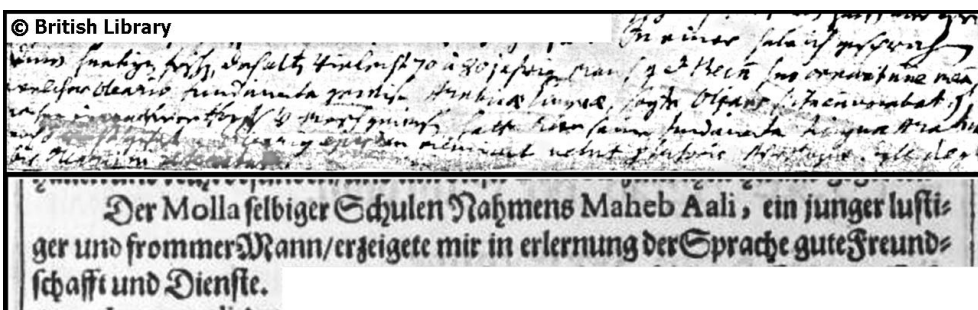


Olearius some lines later says that he was taught “*their language*”, Kaempfer was told “*the Arabian language*” – a misunderstanding? When Olearius and Kaempfer arrived in Shemakha both of them had no knowledge of Arabian-type script languages. Later Olearius differentiates between the Arabian, Turkish and Persian languages and Kaempfer spoke Persian, and had a Turkish grammar and a dictionary with German, French, Latin, Turkish and Persian, too.¹²

Because of Olearius’ “*their language*” there is a good chance that in reality he learned in 1637 the fundamentals of Azeri.

Priest Arakhel

For 20 years (1674 to 1694) Kaempfer carried a liber amicorum with him, today at Lippische Landesbibliothek Detmold.¹³ From the start of his studies until his return to Europe he presented this autograph book to people he met and asked for an entry – it has more than 130 of them, in 25 scripts and languages. With the help of many linguists Karl Meier-Lemgo succeeded in 1952 to edit a translation into



German.¹⁴ For this paper I have made use of this translation.

And this precious book contains five entries directly from Shemakha. I shall follow them according to their date of writing, and here I reproduce those pages, which have never been printed before.

The first is written by an Armenian priest who introduces himself as “Arakhel” (see ill. 5).¹⁵

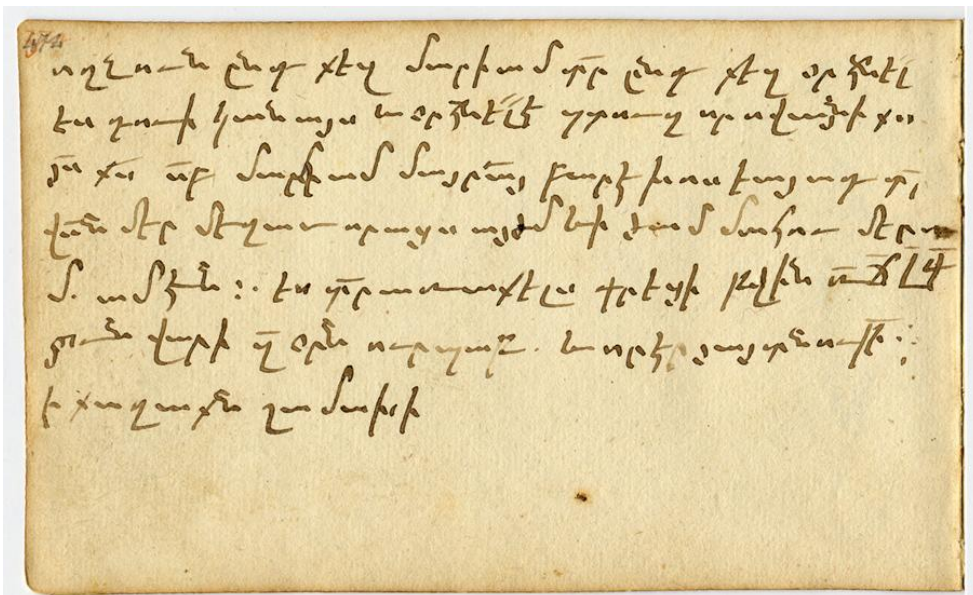
5. Entry into Kaempfer’s *liber amicorum* by the priest Arakhel, Christmas 1683. (75 %) % © LLB Detmold

The date he gives is Epiphanius (= Christmas), Jan. 6th, a Friday, Armenian year 1133.¹⁶ Due to the different calendars in use – Kaempfer here always uses the old style calendar, the Julian – I will follow this use in order to compare with the entries in his diary.

The given date transformed to the Julian calendar is Dec. 27th, 1683. It can’t be Jan. 6th 1684, Julian calendar, because on this day Kaempfer was in Baku. It seems plausible that Kaempfer witnessed an Armenian service, because Kaempfer, being a very religious man of Protestant denomination, would have attended a Christian service on Christmas.

The main text of Arakhel’s entry is a rendition of the “Ave Maria”, “Hail Mary”, one of the most important prayers of Christianity.

I could not find any details of the biography of this man Arakhel, but from him



reciting the “Hail Mary” one might conceivably conclude that he belonged to the Armenian monastery at Meysari nearby, because that was dedicated to Mary.

Martiros, son of Murad Chan

The next entry (see ill. 6) ¹⁷ has a number of peculiarities.

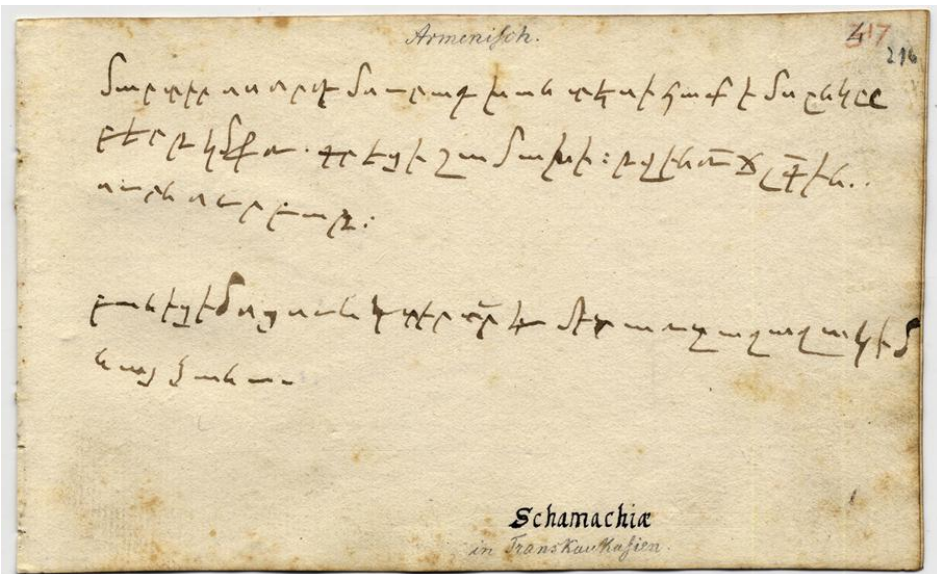
6. Entry of Martiros, son of Murad Chan 1683/1684 (75 %) © LLB Detmold

The name is Martiros, son of Murad Chan ¹⁶ – what ethnic origin; Armenian, Turkish or Persian? The date is not complete – only “Friday, year 1133 [Armenian calendar]”. That might have been on the same occasion as Arakhel’s entry. The handwriting becomes worse and worse after the first line. This entry has not been completely deciphered until now.

It seems to include a prayer: “God, relieve us of our pains”. Does this show a priest? On the other hand he mentions “I saw the physician Engelbert Kaempfer”. Pains, physician and the condition of the entry could mean that he was a sick man and Kaempfer saw him as his patient.

We will find other cases of Kaempfer pursuing his medical profession while on route.

It might be possible that this Martiros is identical with Martiros, bishop and father superior of the Meysari Armenian monastery, who 40 years later in



February/March 1724 wrote letters to the Russian commandant of Derbend, asking for help against the Osman-Turkish troops.¹⁸

Mohammed Hossein Beg

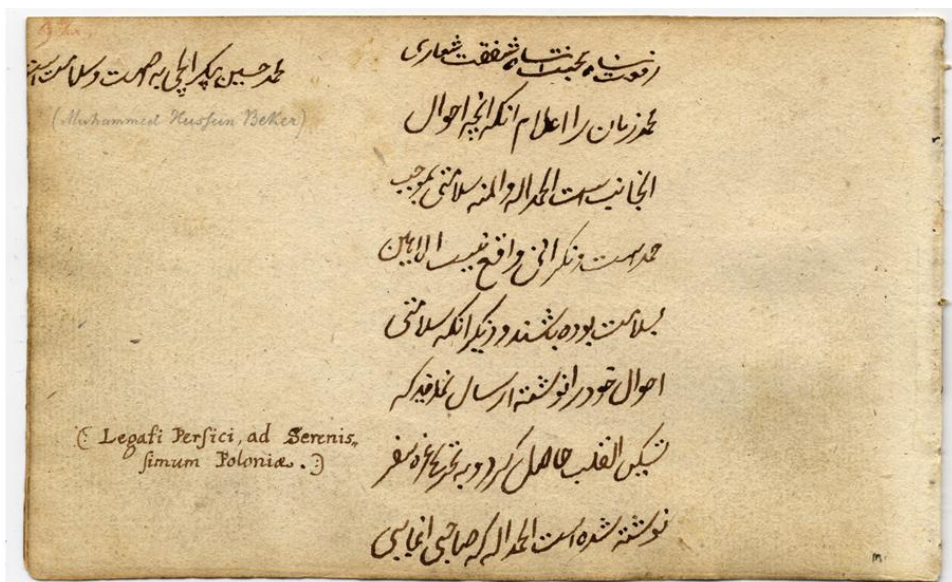
The day when Kaempfer returned from his trip to Baku, he got a third entry in his *liber amicorum* (see ill. 7).¹⁹

The writer gives his name as Mohammed Hossein Beg, envoy;²⁰ and Kaempfer adds: “*Persian envoy to the Polish king*”. The date is Safar 1st, that is Jan. 9th 1684, Julian calendar. After some compliments to Kaempfer Mohammed Hossein informs Kaempfer about the good state of his own health and wants to reassure him in this respect.

7. *Entry of Mohammed Hossein Beg, Jan. 9th 1684 j. (75 %) © LLB Detmold*

That is a clear indication that he had been Kaempfer’s patient – one of many in Schamachi, as Kaempfer states at the beginning of his report of his visit to Baku.²¹

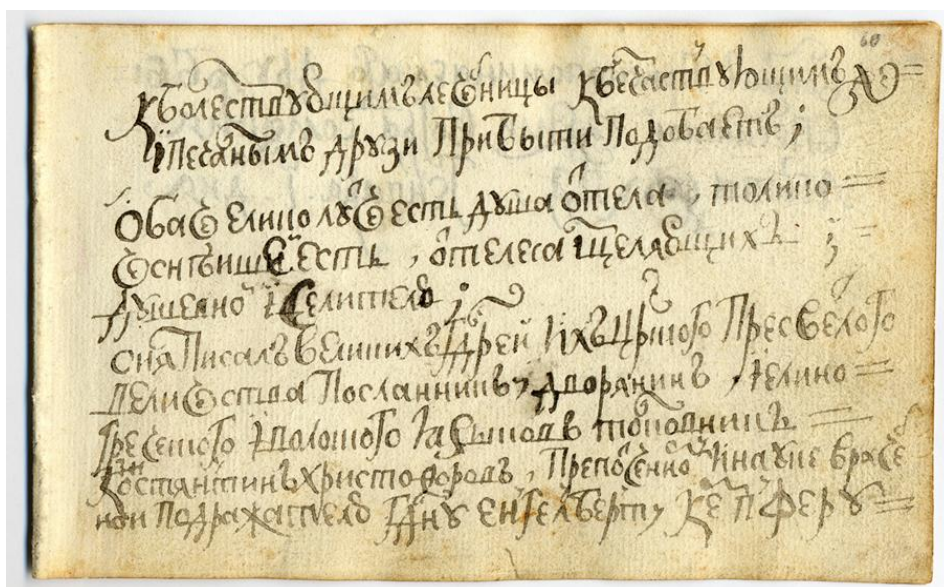
This Mohammed Hossein Beg can be found in contemporary literature. Jean Chardin, the well known traveller and trader in jewels, went from Isfahan to Qazvīn in May 1675,²² where the Shah was in residence. On this way he was accompanied by “*Mahammed Heussein bec*”. This young man had come from Bahrein, where his father Mahammed Poquerbec Sultan was governor. Chardin describes him as a high spirited and very courteous man.



His later fate is known from a report of the Persian embassy to the court of the king Narai of Siam/Thailand at Ayutthaya in 1685, written by its secretary Ibn Muḥammad Ibrāhīm.²³ “*Muḥammad Husain Beg*” at this time held a position at the *khāṣṣa*, the administration of the Shah’s immediate properties. He was appointed ambassador of this delegation and then fell ill already at the Persian Gulf departure port Bandar-e ‘Abbās in June 1685. (Kaempfer at Bandar-e ‘Abbās fell ill in 1686, too). He suffered much during the voyage across the sea and after landing at the coast of today’s Myanmar/Burma was afflicted with dropsy. The two doctors sent by the Siamese king could not help. Mohammed Hossein Beg died in Tenasserim, today’s Myanmar, on Dec. 19th 1685.

Konstantin Christophorov

It was already on the following day when Kaempfer received the next entry – a long one of four pages, the first in Greek and three in Russian. Here the second Russian page is reproduced (see ill. 8).²⁴



8. *Entry of Konstantin Christophorov, Jan. 10th 1684 j.; 3rd page of 4 (75 %) © LLB Detmold*

The author gives his name as Konstantin Christophorov, being a nobleman and envoy and interpreter of the Greek and Italian language, in the service of the Imperial Majesties [of Russia]. He writes these lines as a sign of friendship to the

honourable physician Engelbert Kaempfer; the date is Somakia [Shemakha], Jan. 10th 1684, Julian calendar. ²⁵

The Greek text and the main part of the Russian text contain a Bible quotation “*The skill of the physician shall lift up his head, and in the sight of great men he shall be in admiration*”. Another sentence says “*when we call for a physician we shall not give up our hope in God*”. These repeated references to Kaempfer’s profession might indicate that the Russian envoy Christophorov had been his patient, too.

Kaempfer will have met Christophorov for the first time when the Russian delegation landed in Niyazabad at the same day as Kaempfer’s Swedish delegation. Both delegations had to wait for three weeks and together they proceeded to Schamachi. In Schamachi both delegations seem to have lived in the houses of Armenians for four weeks; Kaempfer and Christophorov both attended a diner given by the governor on Dec. 29th 1683 j. ²⁶ In this time a friendship between these two men grew – they spoke the same language, Christophorov being a born Greek and Kaempfer having learned Greek at school. The last evening before leaving Schamachi they had a going-away party, and Kaempfer got rather drunk. ²⁷

The two men later met in Isfahan in 1684 and 1685 and took part in audiences granted by Shah Suleiman. In the Persia part of his book Kaempfer gives a detailed report of a magnificent general “New year audience” – probably in December 1684 (see ill. 9). ²⁸

The first lines describe Christophorov’s introduction to this audience and he continues:

“His diplomatic missions suffered from bad fates. Three years ago he was sent to the Turkish emperor, and lost 150 of his companions to a fatal illness when crossing the Black Sea.

Later he was brought to death, being poisoned by his secretary. It was a slowly working

Idem congruit de officio dicere *Legationibus Ruthenorum*, quibus subinde hæc aula molestat. Novissimè dimissus urbe nondum excesserat, dum appelleret cum comitatu triginta fervorum *Constantin Christophorowitz*, natione Græcus, ejusdemque linguæ in aulâ Magni Ducis interpres. Hic post Tartaros introductus, salutatâ Majestate, ad convivandū permanfit. Sinistra illi in *Legationibus* fata erant; nam ante triennium cum magno comitatu ad Imperatorem Turcicum missus, in Ponto Euxino quinquaginta supra centum ex suis amiserat, malignitate morbi extinctos. Hic verò ipse per suum à secretis sublatus veneno fuit; quod cum lentius in intestina ageret, detecto crimine, vivum parricidam intra horti sui pomeria rogo impostum, cum ephebo, sceleris conscio, combussit pridie, quàm ipse anno ætatis quadragesimo exspiraret; Vir Græcè doctissimus, & longioris ævi dignus mihi Amicus.

9. *Kaempfer's printed report of Christophorov's life (1712) (75 %)*

poison and the crime was detected. He had the murderer and a boy who knew about it laid upon a pyre in the walled part of his garden to be burned alive. That was one day before he himself died, forty years of age. He was a highly learned man in Greek and worthy of a longer life, a friend to me."

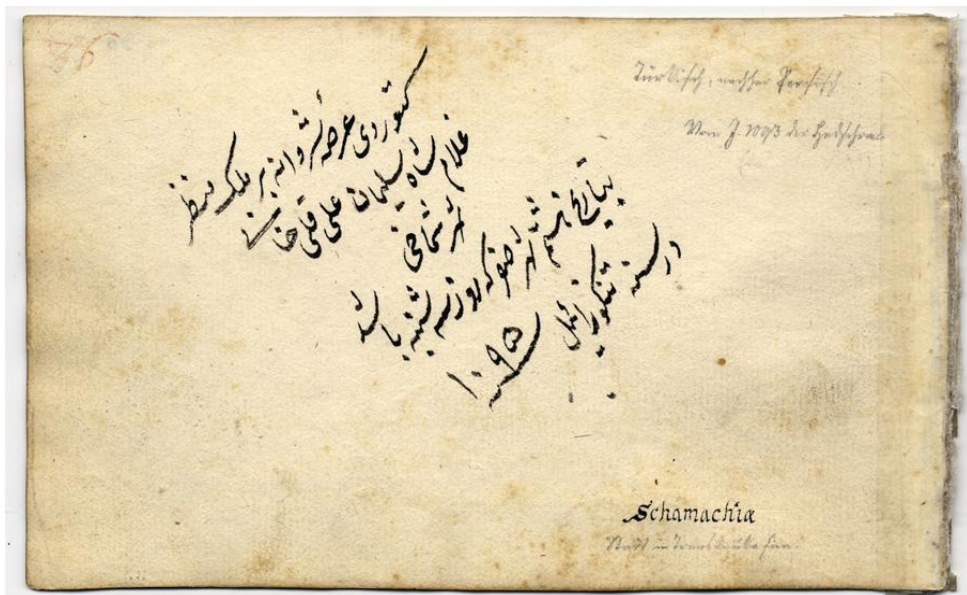
I could not find any more about him in literature independent from Kaempfer. Russian diplomatic archives might offer more, especially the place and year of Christophorov's death.

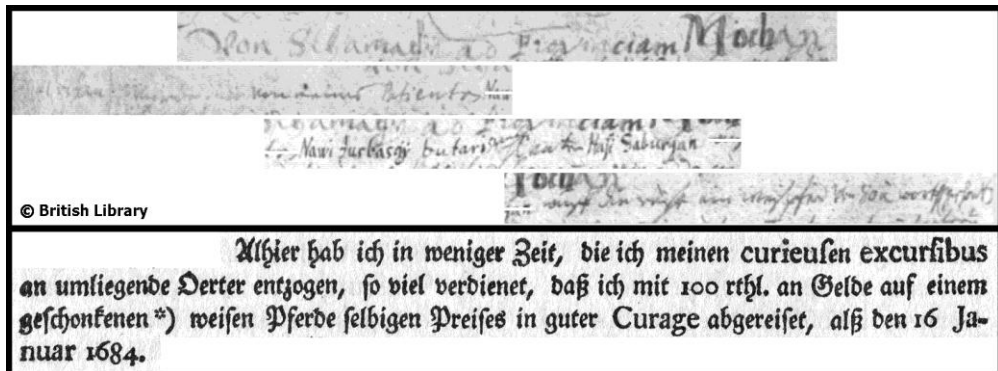
Nawi Jusbascy butari ... Hafi Saburjan

Kaempfer's diary has another passage which is of special interest to us (see ill. 10).
27

10. *Kaempfer's diary of Jan. 13th 1684 j. and his letter of Nov. 25th 1687 g.*

Below the heading "From Schamachy to the province Mochan", it deals with his last three days at Schamachi in January 1684. The first part of the first line is to be translated as "on Jan. 13th was by my patient Nawi Jusbascy butari". But because of Kaempfer's using abbreviations at the end of words it can't be decided if it concerns one or more patients. "Nawi" seems to be a personal name, "Jusbascy" is the military rank of captain, and "butari" might be a geographic term;





later on Jan. 23rd Kaempfer crosses a small river named “*Butaru*” in Talysh. ²⁹ So this would mean: one captain *Nawi*, born near the *Butaru*.

The next words might be read “*shengfi flauten*” which haven’t been interpreted so far.

The last part of this line is to be translated as “*Hafi Saburjan on the journey a white horse worth 80 to 100 Reichstaler presented*”. The main part is clear: Kaempfer was given a white horse of high value. But “*Hafi Saburjan*” remains vague: Is “*Hafi*” perhaps the Persian personal name *Hafis*, is “*Saburjan*” an Armenian family name? Is “*Hafi Saburjan*” an addition to “*Nawi Jusbascy butari*” or does it give the name of a second person?

May that remain unresolved. Kaempfer himself mentioned this event nearly three years later in a letter to his brother *Joachim*, written in *Bandar-e ‘Abbās* on Nov. 25th 1687 (Gregorian calendar) (see ill. 10). ³⁰

It says “... departed [from *Schamachi*] with earnings of 100 Taler in cash and the present of a white horse of same value ...”.

Ali Kuli Chan

There is a fifth and last entry in Kaempfer’s *liber amicorum* written in *Schamachi* (see ill. 11). ³¹

11. Entry of *Ali Kuli Chan*, Jan. 16th 1684 j. (75 %) © LLB Detmold

The first two lines are written in Turkish, then the entry is continued in Persian.

The translation reads: “*An angle-shaped brought Ali Kuli/Gholi Chan, the servant/slave of the Shah Sulaiman, into the province of Shirvan. In the town Schamachi on Safar 8th 1095, a Tuesday, in the year of the pig.*”¹⁶

The hejira date given is in the Julian calendar Jan. 16th 1684 which is in agreement with Kaempfer’s information about the day of his departure from Schamachi, although Kaempfer says that it was a Wednesday.²⁷ Kaempfer added to the page “*Schamachiae*“ in ink, and 19th century readers added some German information in pencil.

Any entry into a *liber amicorum* is expected to be written in one’s own hand (this one needs to be compared with his other writings).³² So this entry has to be regarded to be by the author’s own hand. It shows particular features: It is written in two languages, Turkish and Persian. The writer gives only his name, not his position or function – evidently he doesn’t deem it necessary. So we can identify the writer as the Chan or governor of the province of Shirvan himself.

Kaempfer reports in detail on a dinner given by the governor, see Christophorov. He describes his residence, the people who attended and the food served. He mentions the governor only in short terms, naming him the “*Chan*“ or “*Viceroy*“. He doesn’t give his name or age or details of his appearance. He only finds it remarkable that the Chan sat on a European chair with his feet stuck under him. Who was this Ali Kuli Chan? He calls himself the “*ghulam of the Shah Suleiman*” – the translation of *ghulam* as servant or slave alone doesn’t cover the complete meaning of this word. By himself using the term *ghulam* he documents that he belongs to the great number of men who are bound to the Shah by strong and lasting loyalty. Many of them were members of the military; quite a few held high offices in Persia.

Among the number of men of this name you can find one with the added *ghulam*: in a list ending in 1666 with the reign of Shah Abbas II., an “*‘Alī-qulī Ḥān*” as governor of Marv in north-eastern Persia in about 1645 and a second time as governor of the province Āzərbaygān around Tabrīz, here without year, but with the additional “*sipahsālār*”, that is commander-in-chief of the Persian army.³³ The large time difference of nearly 40 years between Marv 1645 and Schamachi 1684 doesn’t contradict this attempt at identification, but it means that here in Schamachi we will have to envision a man of around 70 years of age.

The importance of being a *sipahsālār* has led Western travellers at that time to take notice of these men. Jean Chardin gives a detailed description of the events when “*Haly-Kouli-Kaan*”, who had been banned by Shah Abbas II, came again into power under his successor Shah Sulaimān. On top of becoming commander-in-

chief again he was appointed governor of “*Medien*”, that is *Āzerbāīgān*.³⁴ Jean Baptiste Tavernier, who also was in Isfahan during this year 1667, gives a slightly different description of the events around “*Ali-Couli-Kan*”, saying that he was of Georgian descent.³⁵

Some caution is called for when dealing with these reports, but it can still be assumed that the two travellers talk about the same man as does the above quoted list. To finally prove the Schamachi governor’s identity in 1684 one needs further sources to which I had no access.

REFERENCE AND NOTES

- ¹ Original of the map from: Lothar Weiss: On the trail of Engelbert Kaempfer ..., Lemgo 2000.
- ² Original of the map at: www.history.az, Feb. 2011.
- ³ Engelbert Kaempfer: *Amoenitatum exoticarum* ..., Lemgo 1712; pp. 262-286.
- ⁴ Sara Aşurbəyli: *Bakı şəhərinin tarixi*. Bakı : Azərnaşr, 1998.
- ⁵ Чингиз Каджар: *Старый Баку*. Вакu : Ока Ofset, 2009.
- ⁶ Kaempfer: *Amoenitatum* ...³; p. 432.
- ⁷ British Library London, Department of Manuscripts, Sloane 2923, fol. 55r-59r.
- ⁸ Karl Meier-Lemgo: *Die Reisetagebücher Engelbert Kaempfers*. Wiesbaden : Steiner, 1968; pp. 44-46.
- ⁹ Adam Olearius: *Auszfuehrliche Beschreibung der kundbaren Reyse nach Muscov und Persien*. 3rd ed. Schleswig 1663; pp. 423-447, 713-716.
- ¹⁰ Kaempfer’s diary⁷; fol. 58v. © British Library Board, Sloane 2923.
- ¹¹ Olearius: ... *Beschreibung*⁹; pp. 434, 713.
- ¹² British Library London⁷, Sloane 2908, Sloane 2924.
- ¹³ Engelbert Kaempfers *Stammbuch*. Lippische Landesbibliothek Detmold, Mscr. 124.
- ¹⁴ Karl Meier-Lemgo: *Das Stammbuch Engelbert Kämpfers*. In: *Mitteilungen aus der lippischen Geschichte und Landeskunde*. Vol. 21, Detmold 1952; pp. 142-200.
- ¹⁵ Kaempfer’s *liber amicorum*¹³; fol. 244v.
- ¹⁶ Meier-Lemgo: *Stammbuch*¹⁴; p. 174.
- ¹⁷ Kaempfer’s *liber amicorum*¹³; fol. 216r.
- ¹⁸ Armen M. Aivazian: *The Armenian Rebellion of the 1720s ...* Yerevan : American University of Armenia, 1997; pp. 27f.
- ¹⁹ Kaempfer’s *liber amicorum*¹³; fol. 58v.
- ²⁰ Meier-Lemgo: *Stammbuch*¹⁴; p. 174f.
- ²¹ Kaempfer: *Amoenitatum* ...³; p. 263.
- ²² Jean Chardin: *Voyages ... en Perse et autres lieux de l'Orient* (Nouv. ed. p. L. Langlès). Paris 1811; vol. 9; pp. 231-234.
- ²³ Ibn Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, John O’Kane tr.: *The Ship of Sulaimān*. London : Routledge, 2008; pp. 47f., 52f.
- ²⁴ Kaempfer’s *liber amicorum*¹³; fol. 60r.
- ²⁵ Meier-Lemgo: *Stammbuch*¹⁴; pp. 172f.
- ²⁶ Kaempfer’s diary⁷; fol. 51r, 52v, 55vf.
- ²⁷ Kaempfer’s diary⁷; fol. 60v. © British Library Board, Sloane 2923.
- ²⁸ Kaempfer: *Amoenitatum* ...³; p. 239.
- ²⁹ Kaempfer’s diary⁷; fol. 62r.

- ³⁰ Engelbert Kaempfer: *Geschichte und Beschreibung Japans*. Vol. I. Lemgo 1777; p. xx.
- ³¹ Kaempfer's *liber amicorum*¹³; fol. 30v.
- ³² K. Kekelidze Institute of Manuscripts of the Academy of Science of Georgia shows in its "Catalogue of Persian and Persian-Georgian Documents" a "Ali-Kuli Khan's private letter to Mohammad Hossein-beg, XVIIth century", <<http://www.persian-doc.org.ge/catalogue.html>>; Pd 202; May 2010 to March 2011. Because of both the two names and for comparison it would have been of interest for this paper.
- ³³ Klaus-Michael Röhrborn: *Provinzen und Zentralgewalt Persiens im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*. Berlin : de Gruyter, 1966; pp. 34f.
- ³⁴ Jean Chardin: *Beschreibung der Krönung Solimanni des dritten ...* Genff : Widerhold, 1681; pp. 42-44.
- ³⁵ Jean Baptiste Tavernier: *Beschreibung der sechs Reisen ... in Türckey, Persien und Indien ... Erster Teil*. Genff : Widerhold, 1681; pp. 250-252.
The title illustration shows Engelbert Kaempfer, drawing the ruins of Persepolis in December 1685 (detail of plate to p. 334, Kaempfer Lemgo 1712).

Summary

Schamachi/Şamaxı in 1683/1684 – Engelbert Kaempfer's intercultural contacts

Lothar Weiss

Lothar Weiss, Dr. rer. nat.
Detmold, Germany

Ali Kuli Chan	Nawi Jusbaschy butari Hafi Saburjan	
Mohammed Hossein Beg	Engelbert Kaempfer	Konstantin Christophorov
Martiros, son of Murad Chan	Priest Arakhel	Maheb Aali Molla

What can be gleaned from these rather incidental names?

The traveller Engelbert Kaempfer, a Christian German in Swedish diplomatic service, here in Schamachi, comes into real contact with a Muslim culture for the first time.

As an academically educated physician he makes profitable use of his profession, as with Nawi Jusbaschy, probably a born Azerbaijani, Mohammed Hossein and probably Martiros, perhaps Hafi Saburjan, too.

As a Christian living in Schamachi within the Armenian quarter he meets other Christians, the Priest Arakhel, the already mentioned Martiros and maybe Hafi Saburjan.

Besides the Armenian priest Arakhel he meets a cleric of another religion, Maheb Aali, the Muslim Molla, probably a born Azerbaijani and having lived there in Schamachi.

As a diplomat he makes good contacts with diplomats of other nations, like Mohammed Hossein, a Persian and envoy to Poland, and especially with his friend Christophorov, the Greek in Russian service.

And there are contacts with a military background, too, with the already-mentioned captain Nawi, and with – if correctly identified – the ghulam Ali Kuli Chan, possibly a born Georgian and all his life in Persian service, as commander-in-chief under two Shahs, one of the most powerful men in Persia and now, 1684, governor of the province of Shirvan.

On the one hand all these Schamachi contacts were surely a good start for Kaempfer's later cultural experiences and his attempts to understand foreign cultures, such as India, Siam and Japan. On the other hand this shows above else that, during those days, Schamachi was a meeting point between great empires and an important place of intercultural contacts at the European-Asian border.