THE MANY NAMES OF ARMENIA

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Category: Did You Know?

The original Armenian name for Armenia was Hayq, later Hayastern, translated as the land of Haik, and consisting of the name Hail and the Persian suffix –stan (land). According to legend, Haik was a great-great-grandson of Noah (son of Togarmah, who was the son of Gomer, a son of Noah's son Yafet/Hapet), and the forefather of all Armenians. Hayastan was given the name Armenia by surrounding states, as it was the name of the strongest tribe living in the historic Armenian lands, who called themselves Armens. It is derived from Armenak/Aram (great-grandson of Haik's great-grandson. Some Christian and Jewish scholars believe the name "Armenia" derives from Har-Minni (Mountains of Minni or Mannai. Pre-Christian accounts suggest that Nairi, meaning land of rivers, was an ancient name for the country's mountainous region, first used by Greek historians around 800 BC; while the first recorded inscription bearing the name Armenia, namely the Behistun Inscription in Iran, dates from 521.

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