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**Cross-validation of documents and oral evidence in the  
representation of family history (Case study: The Jurseri clan of  
Neshel village)**

Ali Rostamnezhad Nesheli<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup>- Assistant Professor, Farhangian University, Shahid Bahonar Birjand Campus, Birjand,  
Iran. [ar.arghavan@gmail.com](mailto:ar.arghavan@gmail.com)

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**ABSTRACT**

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One of the key methods for representing the familial and tribal history of villages is conducting oral history interviews. Oral narratives are valuable resources for depicting the multidimensional social history of villages, particularly the history and genealogies of tribes. However, these narratives are sometimes influenced by tribal rivalries or local discourses, leading to myth-making, exaggeration, or trivialization of certain figures and events. To assess the accuracy of such narratives, cross-validation with documented sources, such as familial and household records, is essential. The village of Neshel consists of eight tribes and nine independent households. This article, using a descriptive-analytical approach and through the examination of documents and oral narratives, seeks to answer two key questions: What is the role of documents and oral evidence in representing the historical background and genealogy of the Jurseri tribe of Neshel? And how can cross-verification of these sources contribute to a more accurate depiction of the Jurseri tribe's genealogy? The Jurseri tribe—the largest of the eight tribes in Neshel—comprises twenty family lineages. The oral narratives related to this tribe mostly provide limited information, only tracing back three generations and mainly extending to the late Qajar era. In contrast, documents such as endowment deeds, purchase deeds, marriage contracts, and settlement agreements confirm the presence of the Jurseri tribe's ancestors in Neshel as far back as the Afsharid era. These records have also rectified inconsistencies and errors in oral narratives. Furthermore, data within these documents clarify the genealogical relationships among the Jurseri family branches at the upper levels of the tribal tree.

**Keywords:** Village history, Familial documents, Oral evidence, Neshel, Jurseri tribe

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## **Introduction**

Today, the village of Neshel, in terms of administrative divisions, is part of the Emamzadeh Abdullah District in Amol County. Geographically and climatically, it is a mountainous area, and in terms of natural characteristics, it belongs to the Larijan region of Amol County.

Neshel consists of eight clans—Aghajanpour, Jarsari, Joursari, Ridani, Soleymantabar, Abbastabar, Ghasemi, and Karaji—as well as nine independent families: Fazeli, Nouritabar and Issazadeh (one family with two surnames), Sadat Razavi, Alipour, Yavarezadeh, Sadat Aghajanpour and Mousavi (another family with two surnames), Khalilzadeh, Ghasempour, and Ghorbannejad.

The aim of this article is to answer the following questions:

- What role do oral narratives and historical documents play in reconstructing the historical background and genealogy of the Joursari clan in Neshel?
- How does the cross-validation of documents and oral accounts lead to a more accurate genealogical reconstruction?
- What are the genealogies of the different families and sub-clans of this group?
- Did these families and sub-clans share common ancestors several generations ago?

The significance and value of this research lie in the following points:

1. Recording the memories and oral knowledge of elderly informants—whose advanced age makes them vulnerable to illness or death—preserves valuable elements of collective memory.
2. It provides answers to questions future generations may pose. Many current residents of Neshel, especially the younger generations, have limited awareness of their clan and family history. Awareness of a shared past strengthens a sense of intergenerational unity.
3. - Gaining knowledge about family and clan identity increases the perceived value of historical family documents and heritage, encouraging locals to preserve and restore such materials.

## **Materials & Method**

This article has been compiled using a descriptive-analytical method, relying on family documents and oral narratives. The data collection method in this research is based on interviews and oral evidence, and the references are grounded in family and private documents.

## **Discussion**

One of the key methods for representing the familial and clan history of villages is conducting oral history interviews. Oral narratives are valuable

resources for depicting the multi-dimensional social history of villages, particularly the history and genealogies of clans. However, these narratives are sometimes influenced by tribal rivalries or local discourses, leading to myth-making, exaggeration, or trivialization of certain figures and events. To assess the accuracy of such narratives, cross-validation with documented sources, such as familial and household records, is essential.

The Jürseri clan—the largest of the eight clans in Neshel—comprises twenty family lineages. The oral narratives related to this clan mostly provide limited information, only tracing back three generations and mainly extending to the late Qajar era. In contrast, documents such as endowment deeds, purchase deeds, marriage contracts, and settlement agreements confirm the presence of the Jürseri clan's ancestors in Neshel as far back as the Afsharid era. These records have also rectified inconsistencies and errors in oral narratives. Furthermore, data within these documents clarify the genealogical relationships among the Jürseri family branches at the upper levels of the tribal tree.

## **Results and Conclusion**

Among the twenty Joursari families living in Neshel, there are multiple elderly oral informants who enabled the reconstruction of their histories up to the late Qajar era. Some families possessed various legal and informal documents that made it possible to trace family interactions, activities, and genealogies even back to the Afsharid period.

Documents provided by the families of Mohammadnejad, Rostamnezad, Jafarpour, and Babajani allowed the author to both verify oral accounts and confirm the presence of their ancestors in Neshel during the Afsharid dynasty.

The genealogy of the Mohammadi and Mohammadtabar families was accurately reconstructed through mutual verification of documents and oral narratives.

However, for families such as Abolghasemzad, Gholamzadeh, Baghernejad, Najafi, Golmohammadzadeh, Mahdinejad and Sagha, Younessnia, Darvishzadeh, Nournejad, Esmaeiltabar, Gholami, Aliakbarzadeh, Mostafanejad, Rajaei, and Neshli, no documents were found. As a result, the genealogies of these families were reconstructed solely based on oral accounts.

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