

A SWALLOW OF TEA BUT ONLY IN AN ARMUDU...

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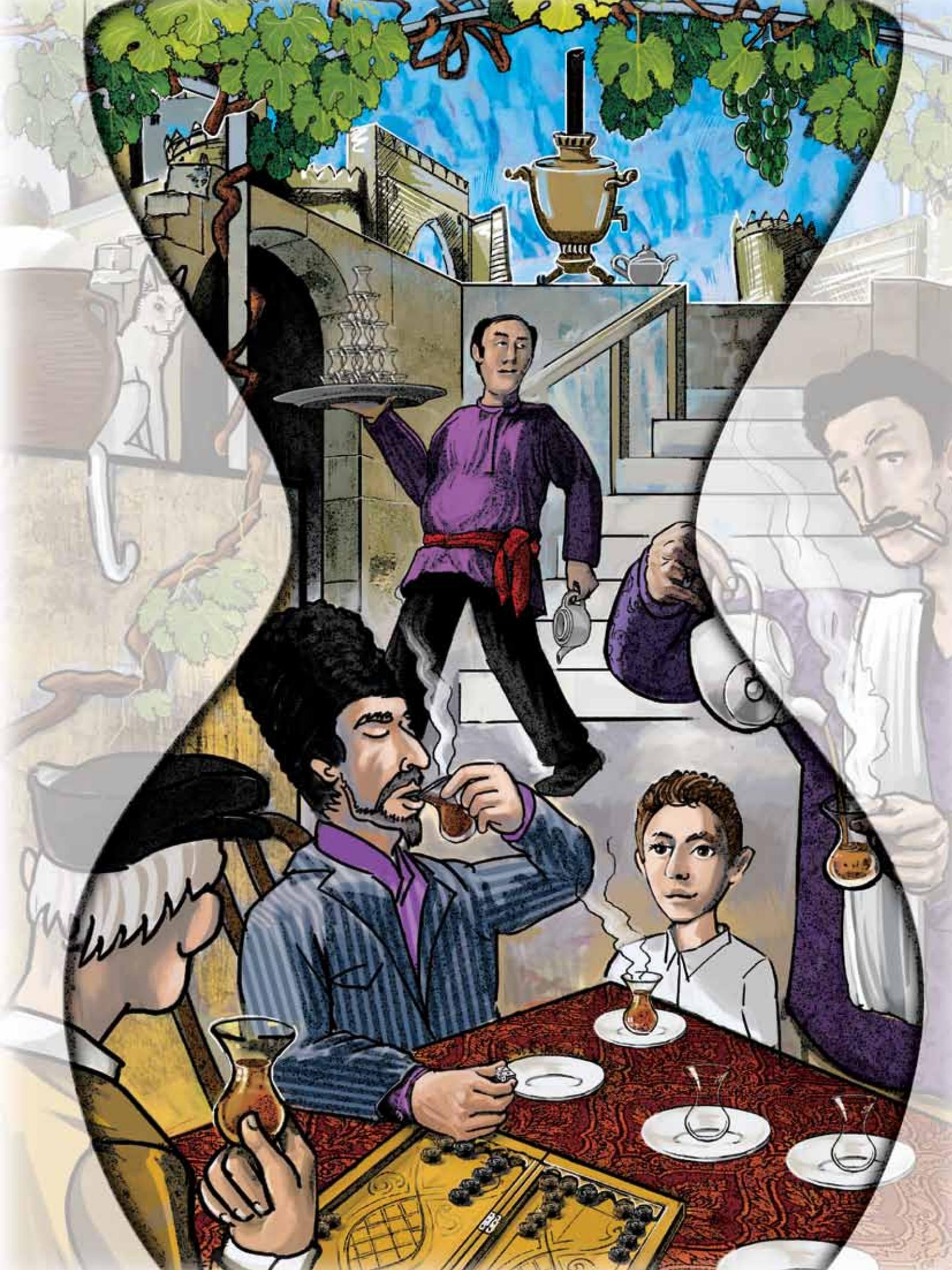
AESTHETICS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THE PERCEPTION OF THE WORLD. IT MANIFESTS ITSELF IN DIFFERENT SPHERES, INCLUDING IN FOOD CULTURE. MAN TRIES NOT SIMPLY TO SATISFY HIS NATURAL NEED WITH FOOD BUT ALSO TO ATTACH A CERTAIN ARTISTIC TASTE TO THE PROCESS – TO LAY THE TABLE, ON WHICH HE WILL EAT, PREPARING THE TABLEWARE WHICH BECOMES A REAL WORK OF ART ETC. THE BASIS OF ALL THIS IS A FUNCTIONAL ASPECT, I.E. THE FORM AND DESIGN OF TABLEWARE IS WITHOUT FAIL SUBORDINATE TO ITS PURPOSE. FOR EXAMPLE, VESSELS FOR DRINKS OF APPROPRIATE SHAPES HAVE BEEN CREATED – BOWLS, CUPS, MUGS, DIFFERENT TYPES OF GLASSES AND OTHERS.

The original Azerbaijani tableware intended for drinks is the *Armudu* or *Boghmali* glass. Both names are linked to the shape of the glass and associations which it provokes in the con-

sciousness of people. It is difficult to imagine the tea drinking of the Azerbaijanis without it.

In form the *Armudu* glass reminds one of the classic figure of an eastern woman. The middle is

like her waist – this is the narrowest part of the glass from which the name *Boghmali* also comes, which in translation means tightened. This feminine form is reflected in the shape of the national object





hamam tasi. This metal vessel was intended for women. Women took the *hamam tasi* with them to the baths and they kept all their valuables in it. The *hamam tasi* had a lock. Women also flaunted the size of their *hamam tasi* 'the larger it was the more wealthy a woman and her family was considered'.

The classic *Armudu* is, in principle, the truncated shape of a woman without legs and head. Depictions of women without heads are also characteristic of the petroglyphs of Gobustan. These projected the fundamental essence of femininity, her fertility. Moreover, according to cosmogony thinking Azerbaijani motherhood, femininity and fertility are higher than masculinity. Matriarchy is very durable in the

thought of Azerbaijani men. This idea is corroborated also in the holiday Novruz – the Azerbaijani New Year, which is permeated with symbols of femininity and fertility.

In accordance with this thought, woman has cosmic divine energy straight from the cosmos. She is a transmitter of life energy, including to man, and is in principle, life-giving, soft and tender but at the same time strong.

When man symbolically drinks woman and her life-giving substance from the *Armudu* glass she is again replenished from cosmos. This is still a hint that nobody loves shallow women. Only a wise, intelligent, strong, soft and tender woman can be a partner for life.

The other name of the glass – *Armudu*, as already noted, is

also related to its shape. *Armudu* means pear-shaped in translation, because in shape they resemble pears.

Armudu glasses, which can be made of glass, porcelain, fayence, silver and other materials, and a samovar are an excellent tea service and the property of every Azerbaijani family. It is worth mentioning that the home of the most ancient samovar, which is about 4 thousand years old, is Azerbaijan.

The lower and upper parts of the *Armudu* glass remind us of our national *kazan* – (cooking pot). Yes, the shape of the *Armudu* is also repeated in the *parch* (mug for water), *satil*, *sarnij* (for milking), *dopu* (clay vessel for the preparation of *piti*) and others. This similarity is not accidental, because both ex-



amples are the product of people with one social and cultural environment, people with one type of thought.

It is necessary to mention that in addition to aesthetics the *Armudu* glass has also thermal-physic advantage. This is because its narrow waist does not allow the warm part of the liquid which flows from the bottom of the glass to leave it. This flow is reflected and because of this it receives additional energy, as a result of which it is again returned to the bottom. Moreover, this small amount of cooling liquid rises from the bottom it passes through the narrow waist to the upper part of the glass. This is so very comfortable for the tea drinker because in the process of drinking, the tea in an

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Armudu glass does not cool down all at once. The small capacity of these glasses (100g) means that it does not take long to drink their whole content. Because of this the taste quality of the tea is not lost – it is drunk fresh. This characteristic of the *Armudu* is taken into consideration also in the shape of the *sarnij* – a metal vessel for milking. It is known that fresh milk has a series of health-giving properties which disintegrate when the temperature of the milk falls. Milk is most healthy when its temperature is close to the body temperature of the animal. This knowledge

is characteristic of our people.

A specificity is that *Armudu* glasses are not filled to the brim: leave a 1-2cm space at the top, which is often marked on the glass. People call this distance *dodagh yeri*, which literally translates as – place for the lips.

All this shows that for Azerbaijanis tea drinking is a cultural and aesthetic property which has its own rules and models intended to make it pleasant and interesting.