

# WHEN EXHIBITS SPEAK, HISTORY SPEAKS

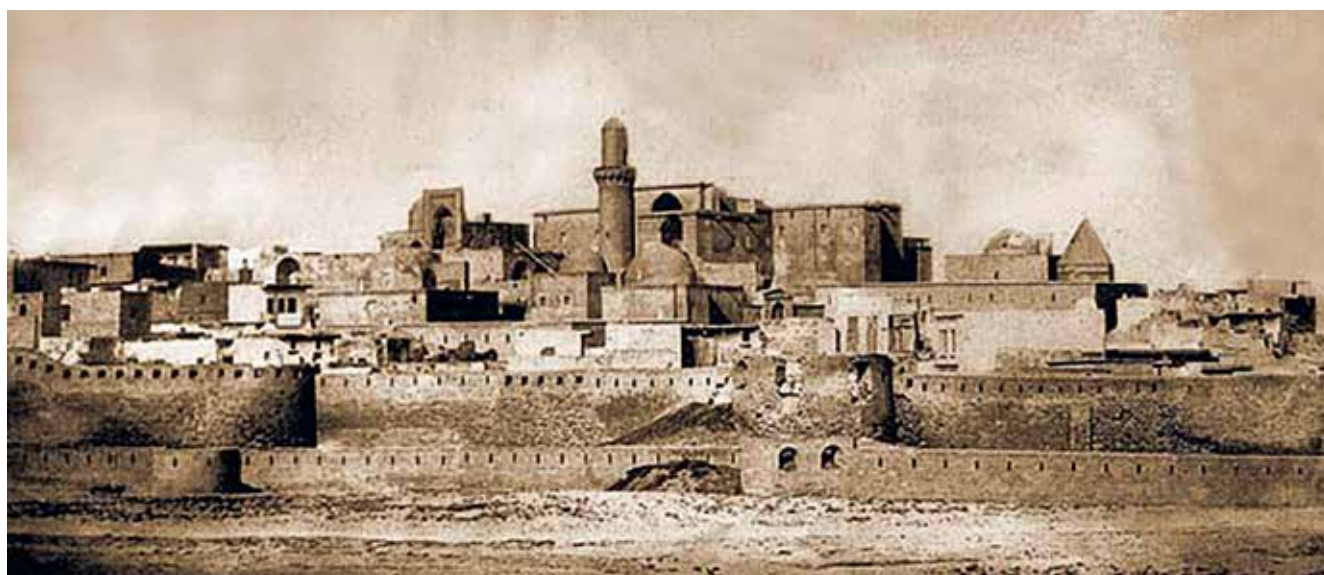
**H**istorical truths are confirmed through material-cultural artifacts kept in museums today. These artifacts that reached our present from time immemorial contain the truth of their time. From this point of view, museums have a responsible and great mission. Their work forms in two directions: creation of exhibitions based on scientific studies and promotion of cultural heritage.

There are many such museums in our country. One of them is the Icharishahar history museum. It is a museum that collects valuable material-cultural artifacts that reflect the past of ancient Baku, and taking this principle as a basis in its daily activities, involves them in scientific research in order to study historical events. Of course, just like in any museum, archival documents, fund materials, literature and many other sources are used in research work here. There is no doubt that occasional consultations with scientific institutions and specialists on spheres of research are also of special importance. Only by following these conditions, do objects of research be-

come exhibits and are their scientific description sheets compiled. These are considered initial reference sources for researchers.

Crafts, metal, photos, graphics, dying and ancient clothes that describe part of the life of ancient Baku, documents, manuscripts and videos that talk about the history of the city, archaeological coins, stamps and weapons that contain the realities of time, various household items that remind us of customs and traditions and other material and spiritual artifacts are taken great care of in the museum's fund.

As we know, various samples of craftsmanship widely used in the everyday life of the Baku population reflect the history of the period in which they were created. For this reason, as objects of extensive scientific research, they are of great importance in the study of the ethnography of different periods. These exhibits, which are hundreds of years old, have lived in the everyday life of the people and have been handed down from generation to generation, are treasures, coins and valuables that



*Fragments of medieval tombstones in Icharishahar*

played an important role in the economic life of Baku, determined trade relations and indicated power changes and to the independence of Azerbaijani feudal states at various times.

Numismatic records show that coins (silver dirham) engraved with the name of Suleyman, who belonged to the Hulakuid dynasty, and the name of the city of Bakuya were minted in Baku at the end of the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This goes to show that there was a mint in Baku, one of the largest cities of Shirvan, at the time. Most of the coins in the fund are monetary units of the Safavid period. The Safavids, who ruled for more than 200 years, minted money in several cities of our country (Ganja, Nakhchivan and Barda). The discovery of money minted here in different countries is one of the factors that prove Azerbaijan's extensive economic relations with the rest of the world in the Middle Ages.

From this point of view, the period of Safavid rule in Azerbaijan is shown as a high development stage in the history of our homeland, especially its economy and culture, because as a result of the economic policy conducted by that state, only Safavid money was accepted in-

*Sample of medieval ceramic found in Icharishahar**Model of Icharishahar*

side the country. They had unusual stamp content. Shah Abbas's monetary reform lived longer in the memory of Azerbaijanis. Thus, the older generation still uses words like "abbasi" or "shahi".

It is no accident that the collection of coins and money in the fund of the Icharishahar history museum is exhibited in a numismatic exhibition entitled "Azerbaijani money (3<sup>rd</sup> century BC – 19<sup>th</sup> century) in the Chinese mosque.

Just like everywhere, the population of Baku and Absheron had their own faiths in everyday life from time immemorial. Various rites to protect a child from the evil eye or to remove it have not lost their significance and still exist in the modern period.

The most interesting thing linked with ancient popular beliefs in Azerbaijan is metal dishes that are considered valuable exhibits of the fund. According to people's primitive ideas, metal was considered a stronger weapon in the

*Sample of copper dishes from Icharishahar*

fight against evil forces. There was a mystical belief that evil forces were afraid of the sound made by metal tools. Therefore, people rattled copper dishes and pans during an incident and made noise in order to keep evil forces away.

Various types of archaeological materials found during excavations carried out in Icharishahar from time to time are studied in the museum. A collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century pharmaceutical products recently interested the scientific staff. This suggests that traditional oriental pharmacies called attar shops existed in Baku.

Turkic medicine called turkachare (shamanism, surgery, exorcism and treatment with natural medicines) was more widespread in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Doctors were called qam (shaman) or otachi (those who treat people with herbs) in Turkic while medicines were called ota.

After the Arab invasion of the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries, a new concept called Islamic medicine spread in Azerbaijan. There is also a lot of information about the creation of an ointment school in Shamakhi, the capital of the state of the Shirvanshahs, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The founder of this scientific center was Doctor Kafiaddin Omar, the uncle of the prominent Azerbaijani poet Khaqani Shirvani. Along with medicine, anatomy and pharmaceuticals, the school also taught mathematics, logic, theology and other subjects.

Manuscripts found in the Middle Ages show that people engaged in the production of medicines in Azerbaijan were called attar. The attars picked medicinal plants, dried and sold them. They made medical solutions from plants growing in Baku and Absheron.



Baku oil was used to treat a number of diseases. The healing properties of the "black oil" were known far beyond Azerbaijan. People from various countries came here for treatment. Sources write that there is a source of black oil (tar oil) that smells very badly in Baku. It was used to lubricate camels infected with mange and itching.

The city customs checkpoint used to be on the right of the Double Fortress Gate. Sanitary-hygienic rules were strictly observed in the ancient city. Anyone who entered the city washed here and a special solution made from tar oil was spread on their legs of their pack animals and acted as an antiseptic. Most Baku residents used clay or gilabi instead of soap. It was not only used for washing the head, but also strengthened the hair and eliminated headaches.

This proves once again that these items used in everyday life are very valuable for studying the historical development path of spiritual culture. Thus, familiarization with exhibits shows that all these rich spiritual artifacts give us a detail idea about our people's lifestyle, wishes and desires in ancient times. These unprecedented artifacts and exhibits can bring times and people together and unite them and strengthen the feelings of care for labour and land and love for their people in them.

Finally, it must be noted that although it is not possible to prevent natural development, it is important to minimize losses. From this point of view, it is extremely important to protect exhibits that are our historical memory and to give them a new lease of life. Along with state care, this work requires a creative attitude from each museum employee. Preventing the loss of the functional particularity of exhibits and their destruction, ensuring their scientific study, restoration and conservation and keeping them for future generations is the direct mission and civil duty of museum employees. ✿



*Sample of medieval ceramic found in Icharishahar*

