

# CLOSER LOOK AT ANCIENT HISTORY

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FAVORABLE NATURAL AND GEOGRAPHIC CONDITIONS ON THE TERRITORY OF THE NAKHCHIVAN AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC HAVE ATTRACTED HUMAN SETTLERS SINCE AS FAR BACK AS THE STONE AGE. THIS WAS ALSO FACILITATED BY THE PRESENCE OF NUMEROUS CAVES.

**A** research of one of them, the Gazma cave located near the Tananam village of Nakhchivan's Shahur District, proved very worthwhile. It has been established that people started to live in the cave in the mid-Paleolithic age. A three-meter occupation layer was examined as part of archaeological research (13, p. 270-274). A close look at the unearthed material shows that the main occupation of ancient settlers of the Gazma cave

was hunting, while gathering was of secondary importance. Judging by the gathered material, **those living in Gazma were on the threshold of the appearance of a tribal community.**

Monuments of the Mesolithic epoch have not been registered on the territory of Nakhchivan yet. But the examination of Eneolithic monuments suggests that people of that age were already aware of several stone dressing techniques.

The population had become settled and started engaging in production activities. The dwellings discovered in the Kultepe I settlement demonstrate that people used to live in rectangular areas and were engaged in agriculture and cattle-breeding (3, p. 109-114).

Nakhchivan's Eneolithic culture has been studied more thoroughly than the culture of the stone age. Economic development in the Eneolithic period facilitated migration



*Chalkhangala fortress (2nd-1st millennia BC)*

to new areas. Evidence of Eneolithic material culture has been discovered in Kultepe I, Khaladj, Srabengije, Ovchulartepesi and other settlements. **The fact that the technology of alloying copper with other metals was mastered in this period points to the high level of metallurgy, which was largely explained by the presence of vast copper, arsenic, stibial and other ore deposits. A research of the Kultepe I and other settlements suggests that Nakhchivan's Eneolithic culture was developing in parallel with the cultures of the Urmia basin and Mesopotamia** (2, p. 72-78). A special role in the emergence of the Eneolithic culture was played by Ubaid tribes. The appearance in Mesopotamia of burials that were characteristic of Ubaid culture is linked to the Sumerians (20, p. 190). Archaeologists have discovered extensive information pertain-



*Scene of magic (Gamigaya)*

ing to the spread of Ubaid tribes in Azerbaijan (17, p. 271). It is beyond doubt that this migration covered Nakhchivan as well. There are opinions that **the Ubaid culture is associated with the Proto-Sumerians and Sumerians, while the**

**language of the latter with Turkic languages** (10, p. 17; 1, p. 83-85; 12).

The Nakhchivan population of the Eneolithic period led a settled way of life, lived in rectangular and round dwellings in which floors were rubbed with a clay solution.



*Scene of hunting (Gamigaya)*

The dwellings were heated by means of rectangular and round heaters. Eneolithic homes were noted for being rather austere. Areas outside the dwellings were covered with a stone flooring, which is further evidence of the high level of development of Eneolithic tribes. People were mainly engaged in farming and cattle-breeding. Also quite popular were pottery, metalwork, weaving, stone dressing, carving and other crafts. Eneolithic tribes had beliefs associated with heavenly bodies and domestic animals.

The population of Nakhchivan experienced very important socio-economic changes in the early Bronze Age. This was when **bronze metallurgy was rapidly developing, cattle-breeding was separated from farming, nomadic and seasonal cattle-breeding appeared and tribal communities were established. The economic development and the growing population facilitated the appearance of new settlements.** This period gave birth to such settlements as Kultepe I, Kultepe II,

Makhtakultepesi I, Makhtakultepesi II, Khaladj, Arabengidja, Ovchulartepesi, Ashagi Dashark, Khovuzlu, Khornu, etc. Burial monuments at-



*Painted vessels of the mid-Bronze epoch from Shahtakhti*

tributed to this period have been discovered in Diz, Karabulak, Plovdag and Khornu.

The examination of early bronze age monuments shows that round

dwellings with rectangular annexes were characteristic of the Kura-Aras culture (2, p. 100-103; 9, p. 56-60). Rectangular dwellings emerged in the late bronze age (18, p. 20-42). Such dwellings were heated with rectangular heaters and round braziers.

**The Kura-Aras society was dominated by patriarchal relations (10, p. 22; 15, p. 94). The complex and multifaceted nature of production activities inevitably expanded the role of men. The family led by a man formed the basis of society.** It appears that the main form of governance in this period, for which inter-tribal clashes were quite common, was military democracy (10, p. 24).

The researches of recent years have revealed that Nakhchivan was one of the key regions in which the Kura-Aras culture developed (5, p. 24; 10, p. 25). It has been established that **the Kura-Aras culture was established on the territory of Azerbaijan, including Nakhchivan, by Turkic-speaking tribes of Guti, Lullubi, Su and Turukks** (1, p. 77-83).

The culture of painting ceramics emerged in southern parts of Azerbaijan, including Nakhchivan, in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. This period was examined in excavations conducted at Kultepe I, Kultepe II, Shahtakhti, Kyzylburun, Nekhedjir, Shortepe and other settlements. It has been ascertained that Kultepe II was an urban type settlement in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC (4, p. 161). In the mid-bronze epoch, cities were not only administrative units but also important trade and handicraft centers. It was at this time that handicrafts were separated from farming and animal husbandry.

Mid-bronze culture spread over

a very large area, including Georgia, the Mil steppe, the Urmia basin and north-eastern Anatolia, while Nakhchivan was its center (11). The population of Nakhchivan and the Urmia basin led a settled life, while the people of Eastern Anatolia were nomadic. There are numerous mid-bronze burials in Eastern Anatolia, but there is no mid-bronze superposition in settlements. Painted ceramic was largely brought to life by Turkic-speaking Lullibi, Nakhchi and Kassit tribes.

**The Gamigaya rock engravings near the village of Nasirvaz in Ordubad District were an integral part of the bronze epoch in Nakhchivan.** These images are largely concentrated around water springs in the Karankush, Nebiyurdu and Jamisholen pastures. A comparison of the rock engravings with folk and ethnographic material has established that the inscriptions reflect mythological views of primitive man (8, p. 64-102).

Complex public and political developments were unfolding on the territory of Nakhchivan in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> and early 1<sup>st</sup> millennia BC. This is when the monuments created by the tribes of the Khojali-Gadabey culture are believed to have appeared (7, p. 73). There was a cultural and political consolidation among Nakhchivan tribes in this period (6, p. 37).

**In all appearances, the southward advance of the tribes of the Khojali-Gadabey culture was brought about by the aggressive policies of Assyria and Urartu in the Urmia region. The Oglankala, Kazanchi, Kajajig, Shahtakhty and other fortresses were built on the territory of Nakhchivan to protect the population from foreign invaders. Monuments of**

**this period are significantly different from the Urartu ones for their planning and construction technique.** This is evidence of the fact that Nakhchivan has never been part of Urartu proper. At the same time, the discovery of Scythian arrows points to a certain role of Scythian tribes in the history of the region (19, p. 355). However, there is no substantive evidence of that.

The research of archaeological monuments and artifacts suggests that **starting from the Eneolithic period the territory of Nakhchivan was inhabited by the following ethnicities: Sumerians, Subars, Gutians, Lullubis, Kases, Scythians, Kengers and other Turkic-speaking tribes** that had a strong ethnic and cultural affinity with each other. Although the culture they created did undergo certain change, they played an important part in the ethnogeny of Azerbaijanis, and traces of this culture are preserved in the customs and folklore of our people. ■

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