

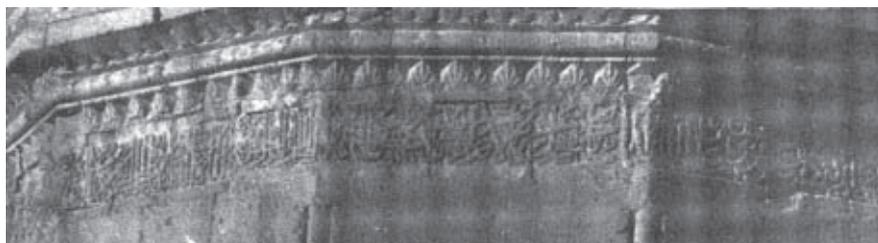
MASTERPIECES OF AZERBAIJANI ARCHITECTURE

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THE AZERBAIJANI PEOPLE ARE A PEOPLE OF RICH CULTURE AND ANCIENT HISTORY. THIS HISTORICAL MEMORY LIVES IN THE EXTANT ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS, REFLECTING THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE NATION AND THE PEOPLE.

*Inscription on the mausoleum
in Jafarabad*



Artifacts and place names are direct witnesses to the settlement and formation of a particular ethnic group in a specific geographical area. They are the most reliable sources of the belonging of a territory to a particular ethnic group. For this reason, Armenians start misappropriating foreign territory, first of all, by renaming settlements and destroying architectural monuments. For example, the Azerbaijan place name Almali turns literally into Armenian Khndzorek, Urud into Oront, Jafarabad into Argavang, Zeyva into Metsamor, etc. It is aimed at destroying the traces of Azerbaijani culture in these areas.

In the era of globalization and integration, no other people would think of making completely unfounded territorial claims against its neighbor in such an uncivilized form. Azerbaijan has more reason to put forward such claims against Armenia because the Armenian Republic is located on the historical Azerbaijani land of the Iravan province and Zangazur, where the Bolshevik regime established the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1920. Prior to that, there was no Armenian statehood in any historical period in the South Caucasus. Azerbaijani scientists came to this conclusion based on rich source materials (epigraphic material, medieval sources and archival material).

The establishment of the Armenian state in the Caucasus was due to the policy of Christianization pursued by tsarist Russia. It was impossible to Christianize the Caucasus, because there was a very strong Islamic factor. The role and position of the Muslim clergy in the socio-political and cultural life of Azerbaijan in the 19th century and their strong social base forced the tsarist government to cre-



ate Sunni and Shiite religious boards in the 1880's in order to maintain their power in the region and involve the clergy in the state administrative structure of the region. The creation of a Christian Armenian state in the Caucasus was aimed at separating Turkey from the Turkic world. That was the purpose of the resettlement of Armenians to the Azerbaijani lands of the Iravan province, Zangazur and the mountainous part of Karabakh,

which was carried out periodically. Today being an "outpost of Russia in the Caucasus", the Armenian Republic is successfully implementing its mission.

In Western Azerbaijan (the area now occupied by the Armenian Republic), there used to be a lot of mosques, madrasas, mausoleums and medieval cemeteries. Until 1915, the Yerevan province had 382 Shiite and nine Sunni mosques, while 38

Salim caravanserai



Shiite operated in Zangazur district and 40 Shiite mosques operated in Sharur-Daralayaz. In the early 20th century, there was the ancient city mosque Jame, Haji Novruzalibay Mosque, Haji Imamverdibay Mosque, Mirzasafibay Mosque and Haji Jafarbay Mosque in Iravan. (GIA, f. 290, inventory 23, case 15 146 a, l. 91; f. 291, inventory 10, case 6354, ll. 64-67; f. 290, inventory 1, case 163, ll. 17-19). At present, the city of Iravan has one Jame, which has been handed over to the Iranian embassy.

Of the rich cultural heritage of Western Azerbaijan, several monumental landmarks have survived. In the territories where they settled, the Armenians, as a rule, started the systematic destruction of Muslim culture. Architectural monuments were destroyed or Armenified. Mosques and medieval cemeteries were razed to the ground, while Albanian Christian monuments are misappropriated

and presented as Armenian artifacts. In their work, Armenian "historians" change the geography of Albanian monuments and move them from the mountainous part of Karabakh to the newly-occupied territories of Kalbajar, Lachin, Jabrayil, Gubadli, Zangilan, Agdam districts of Azerbaijan and attempt to prove the legality of the seizure of foreign territory. Thus, a European who does not know the region has a false idea of the essence of the case.

Monuments located in the South Caucasus, including in the territory of modern Armenia, have nothing in common with Armenian history. In connection with this formulation, which has long been known throughout the scientific world, it would be appropriate to make a little digression into history.

Armenians consider the current territory of Armenia to be their historical homeland, while Armenians

appeared in the South Caucasus in the first half of the 19th century as settlers. This is a well-known and indisputable fact. The historical evidence of this fact is still stored in the archives. Suffice it to recall the 15th paragraph of the Treaty of Turkmanchay signed between Iran and Russia in 1828, the documents developed by the then Russian ambassador to Iran, famous Russian writer Griboyedov. In 1828-30 alone, more than 40,000 Armenian households were moved to the Yelizavetpol and Yerevan provinces of Azerbaijan from Iran and 84,000 from Turkey. There were many unofficially resettled people. In 1978, in the village of Maragashen, Karabakh Armenians erected a monument to mark the 150th anniversary of their resettlement, which, unfortunately, was destroyed by Armenians themselves after the beginning of the Karabakh events.

After the Crimean War of 1854-56, a large number of Armenians left north-eastern Anatolia and moved to the South Caucasus along with the Russian troops.

During the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-78, 25,000 Armenians from Anatolia moved to the South Caucasus again. Simultaneously, more than 60,000 Muslims were expelled from Anatolian territories seized by Russia.

A population census in Russia in the 19th century, topographic maps made by Russians and the names of settlements on these maps indicate that the majority of the population living in these territories was Azerbaijani. As the Armenians settled in the Azerbaijani lands, local residents were told that the Armenians had been placed there temporarily as refugees.

Shavrov wrote: "Of the 1.3 million Armenians in the Caucasus, more than a million are not indigenous and were settled here by us."

Simultaneously, Azerbaijanis were systematically expelled from these territories. Velichko said: "In the Muslim provinces of the Transcaucasia, they keep talking about the eviction of natives (i.e. Azerbaijanis - V. K.) to Turkey and Persia, and partial eviction is happening continuously ... Armenian intrigue is also to blame for this, as they systematically use Russian servicemen to displace the Muslim population from their homes in order to replace them with Armenian incomers...

The numerical superiority of the Armenians in the purely Muslim provinces of the Russian Empire, where their number was insignificant before, was created in this way. In general, today, denying their resettlement to the lands of Azerbaijan over the past 200 years, the Armenians claim the cultural heritage located in these areas. They misappropriate Albanian cultural heritage, declaring themselves the most ancient, civilized and native nation of the Caucasus. A lot of monuments were destroyed.

The belonging of the Christian churches of Karabakh to the Albanians is confirmed by Armenian medieval written sources. Suffice it to cite one example. Claiming a 16th century church in the village of Garnaker in Shamkir District, Armenian authors studied Armenian gravestones in the area and found that the most ancient inscription on the tombstone belongs to the 19th century. The logical conclusion of these studies is that the Armenians came to the area in the last 200 years.

When they try to make the history of the Armenian people more ancient, present the remains of an ancient Roman temple which has existed in the area since the Roman conquest as an ancient Armenian

temple, keep a piece of Noah's Ark at the Echmiadzin museum, claiming that Noah was Armenian, try to present tombstones with Arabic inscriptions as Arabic inscriptions of Armenia and claim that the Armenians forcibly converted to Islam during the Arab conquest of the territory are buried under them - all this might cause surprise and ironic laughter in an unenlightened reader. But when these arguments are given as evidence that the Armenians are the most ancient, civilized and cultured nation in the Caucasus, and therefore have more rights to this region than other peoples who inhabit it, it is no laughing matter.

In the Armenian press, Academician B. B. Piotrovskiy exposed Ayvazyan's pseudoscientific statements about the existence of Metsamor script from which all the alphabets of the world originate. As evidence, he cited an inscription from a gravestone in the village of Zeyva in Zangazur and attributed it to the 19th century BC. Academician B. B. Piotrovskiy proved that it was an Arabic inscription from a 19th century headstone.

As a tolerant country, Azerbaijan cares for the monuments of Christian culture. An example is the restoration of Christian monasteries in Gakh District, the Albanian church in the village of Kish in Shaki, which was also restored with the joint efforts of Azerbaijani and Norwegian specialists and restorers. Churches built in

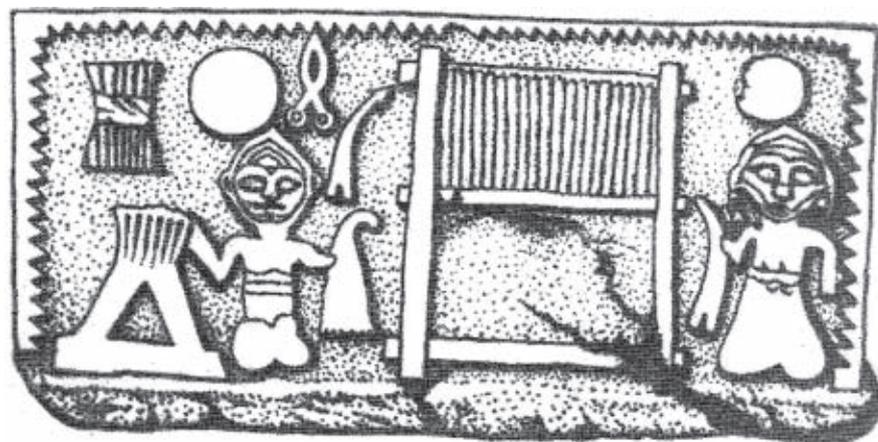


Azerbaijan in the 19th century are also protected by the state.

Armenian claims to Nakhchivan also have no grounds. Julfa has been an Azerbaijani city throughout history. Located on the Great Silk Road, Julfa played the role of a big trade center of international importance, connecting eastern countries to Western Europe. Armenian merchants were involved in trade transactions and had trading colonies here like merchants from Genoa, Amsterdam, Venice, and the Middle East. No more than that. The burials at the Armenian cemetery in Julfa belong to the second half of the 19th century, when Armenians settled in Nakhchivan en masse.

We should draw attention to the fact that during the Soviet period, Islamic monuments were mostly destroyed. At that time, the Soviet leadership was dominated by Armenians, and they held key positions in the state apparatus and had a great influence in the Politburo and in the higher echelons of power. It was in the Soviet era that Armenians established the Armenian Republic (1918-1920) in the historical lands of Azerbaijan and systematically and methodically destroyed the cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people in the territory for 70 years. Currently, of the hundreds of mosques, mausoleums, medieval cemeteries, there are very few remaining, and they have been "Armenified". This spiritual genocide has continued over the last 200 years and taken on an open form over the last 20 years. The destruction of the cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people in Western Azerbaijan has become a state policy in Armenia. In connection with the above, we should draw attention to some facts. In 1914, the Tiflis-Kutaisi Provincial Majlis appealed to the

Urud monuments



Governor to suspend the destruction of a Muslim cemetery by Armenians. Over the past few years, the Muslim cemetery in the village of Nuvadi in Armenia's Megri District, a medieval necropolis of the 15th-18th centuries in the village of Urud in Armenia's Sisian District, a 16th century necropolis in the village of Shaki in Armenian Zangazur, the 16th century Haji Baba mausoleum in Megri District, Zaviya Akhi in the village of Alayaz in Armenia and hundreds of historical monuments have been wiped off the face of the earth.

In 1961, during a joint expedition of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the village, M. S. Neymat found interesting tombstones that looked like a chest and stone sculp-

tures in the form of a ram at a medieval necropolis in the village of Urud in Zangazur. The words "min evladi avgvan" i.e. "From descendants of the Albanians" were engraved on two of them. Also, the headstones carried images of tamgas and ongons (deities) of ancient Turkic tribes. Prior to that, it was thought that with the advent of Islam, Albanians as Christians took the Georgian cross and Gregorianism. The Urud monuments testified to the Turkization of Albanian tribes before the arrival of Islam. This scientific discovery completely brushed aside the idea of the alien Turkic element in the South Caucasus. In response, the Armenians plowed this medieval necropolis and after that, expelled the Azerbaijanis from these territories.

In the village of Jafarabad in Zan-

gazur, there is a Qaraqoyunlu mausoleum. There is a 22-metre inscription on the mausoleum. The inscription states that the mausoleum was built in 816 AH = 1413 and mentions the names of amirs of Chukhur-Saad (the name of the territory of present-day Armenia in medieval written sources), Pir Huseyn and his father Amir of Saad, descendants of Oguz Turkic tribes.

Armenians excavated the base of the mausoleum and came to the conclusion that the mausoleum was built by Armenian masters and is the cultural heritage of the Armenians. They call the Qaraqoyunlu state Iranian and Qaraqoyunlu amirs Turkmens (identifying them with modern Turkmens), while the Qaraqoyunlu amirs belonged to the Oguz-Turkic union of Turkemans who lived in Anatolia, north of Lake Van, in the 13th century. In addition to that, by its architectural and constructive form, the mausoleum is identical to the Momina Khatun and Yusif bin Kabir an-Niyaz mausoleums in Nakhchivan and is a continuation of the architectural school of Ajami bin Abu Bakr Nakhchivani. In this place, there were several tombs and a large Muslim cemetery. Everything was barbarously destroyed.

At the Salim pass in Zangazur, there is a caravanserai of the Ilkhanid period. Above the entrance, there is a huge sign which says that the caravanserai was built in 729 AH = 1328/29 during the reign of Abu Said. Inside the caravanserai, Armenians put a small inscription in Armenian, which states that the caravanserai was built in 781 AH = 1332 by Chesar from the descendants of Orbelyan, and insist that "Tatars" (i.e. Azerbaijanis) put up an Arabic inscription over the door later, misappropriating the monument. However, it is undeniable that the inscription was

installed above the door during the construction of the mausoleum.

Thus, the individual monuments that remain in what is now Armenia indicate that it is the historical land of Azerbaijan.

It is common knowledge that the concept of the history of the South Caucasus was developed in the mid-20th century by I. P. Petrushevskiy in his "Essays on the history of feudal relations in Azerbaijan and Armenia in the 16th – 19th centuries". This concept argued that the roots of the Armenian state in the South Caucasus go back to antiquity. The hollowness of this concept and the lack of a scientific basis were proved by Azerbaijani historians. On the basis of archaeological materials, written Greek, Roman, Persian and Armenian antique sources, and a comprehensive study of anthropological material, it was proved that there was no Armenian state in the South Caucasus in ancient times.

No written source other than the works of I. P. Petrushevskiy and Armenian historians describes the territory of Western Azerbaijan, where an Armenian state supposedly existed, as Caucasian Armenia or Ararat country. In these documents, the territory of present-day Armenia is referred to as Chukhur-Saad and is part of the idea of Azerbaijan. The study of written records proves that the history of Azerbaijan was falsified by Soviet Russian and Armenian historians. It is with a feeling of deep regret that we would like to note that Azerbaijani historiography was dominated by this concept until recently.

Documents of the late 19th century say that in the village of Pirdavudan in Zangazur, there was the tomb of a grandson of the 8th Imam Reza Mir Davud; in the village of Garavelli, there was the tomb of a son of the 7th



Imam Musei Kazim Seyyed Ahmad. Now they are destroyed.

Iravan mosques in various places of the Iravan province had vaqf property. These were mostly land plots and shops. Documents show that the boundaries of vaqfs were in contact with the property of Azerbaijanis. Documents do not name any Armenian. This, in turn, suggests that the majority of people in the region were ethnic Azerbaijanis.

All this confirms the conclusion about the historic affiliation of these territories to Azerbaijan.

Currently, monuments from the territory of Karabakh are also being massively destroyed and Armenified. In this way, they are trying to justify their expansionist policy. Christian Albanian monuments from the territory of the mountainous part of Karabakh are being misappropriated by Armenians and declared monuments of Armenian culture. Whole "works" are being written about this and distributed in various languages. (Samvel Karapetyan "Monuments of Armenian culture in the Nagorno-Karabakh zone", 2000; Shagen Mkrtchyan "Treasures of Artsakh", 2000)

However, it should be emphasized

that in Karabakh and adjacent territories occupied by Armenians, there were a lot of mosques, mausoleums, khanakas, shrines, monumental buildings, medieval cemeteries, memorials, etc. until recently. It is 20 years since we lost control of the territory and have no information about the state of this cultural heritage.

Inscriptions on these structures provide a wealth of information about architects, calligraphers, scholars, Sufi sheikhs and founders of architectural schools that existed in Azerbaijan. In the valley of the River Khakara, there are several mausoleums that stand out for their architectural and constructive manner. Among them is the mausoleum of Yahya ibn Muhammad located in the village of Mammadbayli in Zangilan District; and the mausoleum of Shikh Baba (13th-14th centuries) in the village of Shikhlar in Jabrayil District, around which there is a medieval necropolis. A little way from the mausoleum, there is the tomb of Sheikhzadeh Sheikh Abd al-Salam, son of Sheikh Qias ad-Din (759 AH = 1358). Around the mausoleum, there are graves of followers of the Sheikh. From texts, paleographic features and artistic design, it was established that

the Shikh Baba Khanaka belonged to the Sufi tariqat of Qadiriya and operated in the 13th-14th centuries.

Located in these territories, Arab-Persian-Azerbaijani-language epigraphs that looked like chests were shaped as steles, had the form of a stone sculpture of sheep and horses and had various bas-reliefs carved on them, highlight issues of life, various aspects of everyday life, history, place names, traditional medicine, the problem of the ethnogenesis of the Azerbaijani people and a number of issues of the cultural life of medieval Azerbaijan.

The image of a tamga (three vertical and one horizontal line) characteristic of Oguz Turkic tribes on the thigh of three figures in the form of stone sculptures of horses in the village of Malibayli in Lachin District (14th-17th centuries) and in Armaziskhev (14th century) is very interesting. The epigraphic material of Karabakh and motifs of art make it possible to determine the range of the settlement of ancient Turkic tribes in the South Caucasus, which played a big role in the ethnogenesis of the Azerbaijani people.

Epitaphs shaped as stone sculptures of horses in the villages of Malibayli and Gulabird in Lachin District depict the symbol of the sun and a man with a bird in his hand. Everyone knows that the bird Humay was a deity of ancient Turkic tribes. A picture of its monuments, apparently, was aimed at saving them from destruction.

Monuments of Karabakh testify to the construction work and cultural and educational activities of the Elkhanids and Karabakh khans.

These monuments include the octagonal mausoleum of Sheikh Yaqub Baba (13th century) in Fizuli District, a mausoleum in Barda and

the remains of the foundations of a mausoleum in Ahsadanbab. This is the work of an architect from Nakhchivan, Ahmad bin Ayyub al-Hafiz Nakhchivani. The epigraphic monuments of the village of Khojali depict animals - mountain goats and various tamgas identical to the rock paintings of Gobustan and Absheron. In the Diridag lowlands in Jabrayil District, there is a medieval necropolis with a half-destroyed mausoleum. Around the mausoleum, there are epitaphs of various art forms, including two in the form of a stone sculpture of sheep similar to monuments of foothill districts of Azerbaijan.

Chest-like headstones from a medieval necropolis (16th century) were concentrated at the Imarat memorial complex in Agdam District. On the right side of the road leading to the Agoglan temple in Lachin District, there were gravestones in the form of stone sculptures of horses and chests. In the village of Ahmadallar in Fizuli District, there remains a chest-like tomb in place of a medieval necropolis (1024 AH = 1615). Above the Shah Abbas caravanserai in the village of Garabaglar, there is the Qias ad-Din mosque towering on a rock. It is commonly known as the Shah Abbas mosque. On a source located in the village, there is a three-line Arabic inscription, which states that the



source was constructed by the son of the Ganja amir of Gargabazar. The marble stele from the headstone of Panah Khan of Karabakh was moved from its mausoleum in Agdam to the Azerbaijan History Museum. In the village of Jijimli in Lachin District, there is a rectangular mosque built of river stone in 1790-1791.

In the city of Shusha, there are two mosques and two madrasas built by architect Karbalai Safi Khan of Karabakh. This is evidenced by the inscription on the mosque. The architect's name appears on mosques in Fizuli, Barda and Agdam districts and neighborhood mosques in Shusha. All these monuments belong to the second half of the 19th century.

The rich cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people in mountainous and lowland Nagorno-Karabakh is now under Armenian occupation. We cannot say what condition these monuments are in, because we have not had access to them for 20 years. However, the fate of the monuments of Western Azerbaijan subjected to genocide at the hands of the Armenians in the Soviet era gives us reason to conclude that the same fate most likely befell the monuments of Karabakh.

The primitive vandalism raised to the level of a state policy in the 21st century by a nation that considers itself the most ancient, civilized and cultured in the world gives food for thought. For the culture of each nation is unique in its kind and is part of universal human culture.

Armenia is pursuing a policy of "scorched earth", and throughout the 20th century, they purposefully seized Azerbaijani lands and expelled Azerbaijanis from them. "Azerbaijan without Azerbaijanis" is the slogan of Armenian nationalists. This spiritual terror will continue as long as the

Azerbaijani lands are under Armenian occupation. 🌟

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