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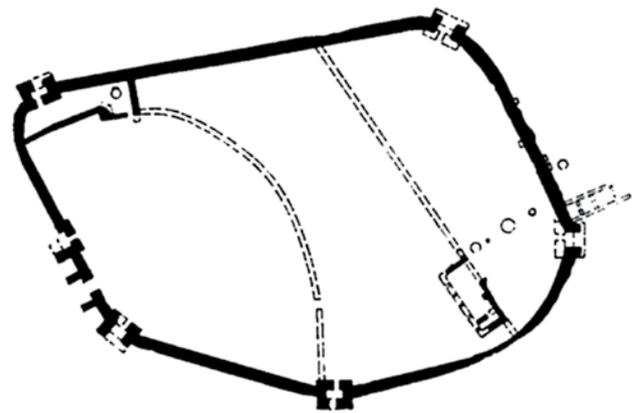
ANCIENT FORTIFIED CITIES OF NAKHCHIVAN



Reconstruction and plan of Kul-tapa-2 fortress

The period from the end of the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC was marked by a new upsurge in economic and cultural development in such Azerbaijani regions as Urmia, Karabakh and Nakhchivan, which are noted for their favorable geographical location, natural and climatic conditions. These places registered a significant increase in productivity, an increase in the population and development of agriculture and livestock breeding. Along with this, economic centers arose on the important caravan routes passing through the region, and various crafts developed in them – pottery, metal, stone and bone processing, textile production. Local tribal unions established active trade, economic and cultural ties with the neighboring regions of the Near and Middle East. As a result of this development, fortified cities began to emerge here, which reached their greatest development in the 2nd and 1st millennia BC. Some of them retained their significance even in the Middle Ages.

Fortress cities, defensive fortifications and cyclopean structures of Azerbaijan of the Bronze and early Iron Ages were identified and studied in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, Dashkasan and Gadabay districts, and in Karabakh. In the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, the urban settlements of Kul-tapa-2, Oglan-gala, Govur-gala, the Sadarak fortress, the Gazanchi fortress, the Garabaglar fort, Nakhajir, Plov-tapa, Giz-Galasi dating back to the 2nd-1st millennia BC (Middle and Late



Bronze Age, beginning of the Iron Age) were studied by Azerbaijani archaeologists under the leadership of V. Aliyev in 1960-2003, and these studies revealed valuable scientific material.

It should be noted that the study of fortified cities and defensive fortifications of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age on the territory of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic made it possible to reveal a number of long-standing problems in the historiography of antiquity and the history of architecture of Azerbaijan. In particular, the time was established for the formation of the initial urban culture of Azerbaijan and its characteristic features. The defensive walls with towers revealed in such fortified cities, internal citadels,

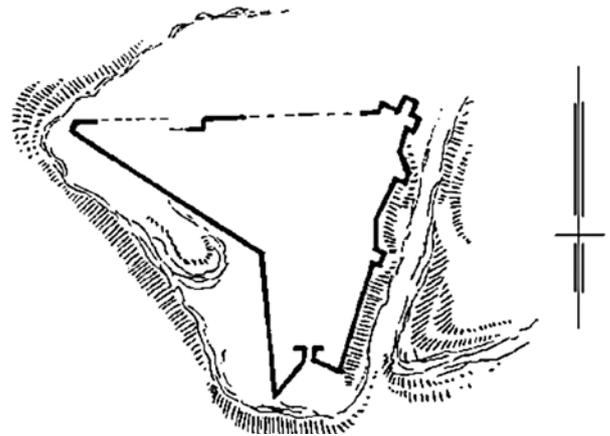


Reconstruction of the Oglan-gala fortress

stone-paved streets, as well as fragments of pottery and blacksmith workshops and prayer rooms convincingly prove the presence of primary public entities in the region in the 2nd-1st millennia BC.

Ancient fortified cities were first identified on the territory of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in 1934-1936 by prominent Azerbaijani archaeologist A. K. Alakbarov, who discovered fortified cities of Govurgala near the village of Shahtakhti and Oglan-gala in the valley of the Arpa-chay river. Based on materials on the defensive fortifications of Oglan-gala, the scientist made valuable judgments about the ancient culture of

building fortresses in this region, pointing to similarities between the architecture of Nakhchivan and Assyria of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age. In Oglan-gala, colored pottery dishes of the early urban



Reconstruction and plan of the Vaykhir Gavur-qala fortress





The walls of Oglan-gala were fortified with semicircular towers



culture of Nakhchivan were found and compared with ceramics from the ancient necropolises of the villages of Nehram and Gizil-burun.

Along with this, the architectural features of fortified cities and defensive fortifications of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic were studied by D. Akhundov and V. Karimov.

In the 1990s, the fortified city and defensive fortifications of Sadarak on mount Validag, the fortresses of Sum and Najahir in Julfa District and cyclopean monuments on Mount Gami-gaya in Ordubad district were thoroughly studied on the territory of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, revealing valuable material for studying the ancient history and culture of this region.

Recent archaeological research has made it possible to draw a number of important conclusions regarding the emergence and evolution of early urban culture in Azerbaijan, the development and flourishing of various types of handicraft production, economic and cultural ties with other countries of Western Asia. Maps of fortified cities and defensive fortifications of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic were drawn up, indicating caravan routes passing through them.

Ancient fortified cities represent a valuable source of information clarifying various circumstances of the emergence of an early class society in Azerbaijan, the development of tribal unions and early state formations. ✦

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