

**COATS OF ARMS
OF PROVINCIAL
AND
DISTRICT CITIES
OF AZERBAIJAN
IN THE 19TH
- EARLY 20TH
CENTURIES**



Coat of arms of the Elizavetpol province. 1878



Coat of arms of the Baku province. 1878

The coat of arms is one of the most important elements of attributes. The definition of the coat of arms boils down to its main feature - the emblem of images approved by the government in accordance with the rules of heraldry. The word "gerb" (national emblem) comes from the German word "erbe", which means inheritance (1). The science of heraldry is based on a general system of compliance with laws, which has been formed among the peoples of the world for centuries, as well as on peculiar national-historical traditions. This means that the symbols displayed on any emblem have a certain general compliance with laws, a strong internal system, and at the same time, these symbols in one way or another reflect the historical, political, ideological, national-moral, religious and mystical views of the people, nation and state they symbolize.

The collection of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan contains 12 drawings of coats of arms of Azerbaijani cities and provinces under the Russian Empire (2). The exhibits made in watercolour on paper are in excellent condition and make it possible to describe

each coat of arms in detail. The material involved in the study made it possible to appropriately reflect the social and economic condition of districts and provinces.

The development of signs and emblems in Azerbaijani territories was entrusted to the well-known German heraldry artist Hugo Strehl, who had already developed a certain number of coats of arms for other Russian provinces (3). Russian heraldry is based solely on European tradition, symbols that take their roots from the emblems of their clans and personalities, and not peoples. Work on the creation of local heraldry was carried out very carefully. At that time, distinctive coats of arms that reflected the features of the regions were created in Azerbaijan. Symbols and emblems should reliably reflect the existing reality (i.e. geographical location, agricultural status, natural resources, the development of sericulture, horse breeding, etc.). The main part of the coat of arms is the shield. The shields of these coats of arms belong to "French" ones (with the sharp point below) and are called crossed.

Governance of the Caucasus was brought into line with the governance system of the Russian Empire. On

Coat of arms of the Baku County. 1843



Municipal coat of arms, Shusha. 1843



Municipal coat of arms, Lankaran. 1843



Coat of Arms of the city of Nuha (Sheki). 1843

10 April 1840, the former Azerbaijani khanates became part of two provinces – the Caspian and Georgian-Imereti provinces under the name "Institution for the Administration of the Transcaucasian Territory" on the basis of the law on administrative reform approved by Emperor Nich-

olas I. The Caspian province with the capital in Shamakhi included the districts of Shusha, Sheki, Lankaran, Baku, Derbent, Guba, and the districts of Yelizavetpol, Balakan, Ordubad, Erivan and Nakhchivan were incorporated into the Georgian-Imereti region with the capital in Tiflis (4).

Municipal coat of arms, Guba. 1843*Municipal coat of arms, Shamakhi. 1843**Municipal coat of arms, Nakhchivan. 1843**Coat of arms of Elizavetpol (Ganja). 1843*

In 1859, in connection with the devastating earthquake in Shamakhi, the centre of the Shamakhi province was moved to Baku by the decree of Tsar Alexander II and received the status of a provincial centre.

In 1878, the coats of arms of the Baku, Yelizavetpol

and Erivan provinces were approved, then in 1883, the second coat of arms of the Baku province was approved.

Coat of arms of the Caspian province. By the 21 May 1843 decree of Emperor Nicholas I submitted to the Senate, the coat of arms of the Caspian province,



Zagatala municipal coat of arms. 1843

drawn up in the office of the Chief Executive in Georgia and the commander of the Separate Caucasian Corps, was approved.

Description: A shield with a golden field is divided into four parts. The two upper parts a standing tiger (personifying stamina and courage) on the right side, and flammable gas gushing out from the earth (symbolizing rich natural resources) on the left side. In the two lower parts, there is a blue strip (meaning the Caspian Sea) on the right side, and the famous Mount Beshbar-mag, which serves as a beacon for sailors, on the left. At the top of the shield, the Imperial Crowned Eagle covers it with its wings.

The coats of arms of the Baku, Shamakhi, Sheki, Shusha, Lankaran, Guba, Yelizavetpol, Zagatala, Irevan, Nakhchivan and Derbent districts were approved by the same decree.

Coats of arms of district towns approved by Emperor Nicholas I on 21 May 1843

Coat of arms of Baku district. Caspian province.

Description: In the upper half of the shield, on a golden field, there is a fragment of the coat of arms of the Caspian province. In the lower part, against a blue background (i.e., the Caspian Sea), there is a laden cam-

el on the left side carrying heavy loads (which means trade), and on the right side, an anchor thrown into the ground, symbolizing the Baku port.

Coat of arms of Shamakhi district.

Description: In the upper half of the shield, there is a fragment of the coat of arms of the Caspian province. In the lower part, there are two cross-shaped trunks on a silver field, on which a piece of silk fabric unfolds (symbolizing the manufacture of weapons and silk), and below there is a copper jug with two fish on the sides (representing fisheries).

Coat of arms of Sheki district.

Description: In the upper half of the shield, there is a fragment of the coat of arms of the Caspian province. In the lower part, there is a branch of a mulberry tree on a green field, on which there is a silkworm. There are three silk cocoons under it with a butterfly on each, symbolizing the development of sericulture.

Coat of arms of Shusha district.

Description: In the upper half of the shield, there is a fragment of the coat of arms of the Caspian province. In the lower part, there is a galloping golden horse with an Asian saddle and a bridle on a green field, which symbolizes the breeding of the Karabakh horse, as well as the manufacture of the Asian saddle and bridle.

Coat of arms of Lankaran district.

Description: In the upper half of the shield, there is a fragment of the coat of arms of the Caspian province. In the lower part, there is a silver harrow on a green field, on both sides of which there are two wriggling snakes (symbolizing fertile soil).

Coat of arms of Guba district.

Description: In the upper half of the shield, there is a fragment of the coat of arms of the Caspian province. In the lower part, on the left, there is a blue stripe on a green field, meaning the Caspian Sea, as well as a mountain (symbolizing the highlands), and on the right, there are three ears of wheat (representing abundance and fertility).

Georgian-Imereti province.

Coat of arms of Yelizavetpol district.

Description: In the upper half of the shield, there is a fragment of the coat of arms of the Georgian-Imereti province. In the lower half of the shield, on a red background, there is a sword on a broken Asian sabre laid crosswise with their ends down and connected by a laurel wreath (symbolizes the victory gained by the Russian troops).

Coat of arms of Zagatala district.

Description: In the upper half of the shield, there is a fragment of the coat of arms of the Georgian-Imereti province. In the lower part, there is a red field illuminated by the rising sun; near the wall there is a sickle with a broken sabre as a sign that residents favour a peaceful life and engage in agriculture.

Coat of arms of Nakhchivan district.

Description: In the upper half of the shield, there is a fragment of the coat of arms of the Georgian-Imereti province. In the lower part, on a red field, there is a spear (which means the local population wields the spear) and three golden quivers filled with arrows with their feathers upwards (personifying the unity of the people).

Further, according to the project, the head of the coat of arms section of the Heraldry Department of the Senate, B. V. Köhne, established for provincial coats of arms a special form of external ornaments in the form of a wreath of golden oak leaves surrounding the coat of arms, intertwined with St. Andrew's blue ribbon and a crown (5).

Coats of arms of provinces approved by Emperor Alexander II on 5 July 1878.

Coat of arms of the Baku province.

Description: On a black shield, there are golden flames - a symbol of oil in soil (torches of associated petroleum gas have been known here since antiquity). The shield is crowned with an Imperial crown and surrounded by golden oak leaves, meaning strength and power, connected by St. Andrew's ribbon.

Coat of arms of the Yelizavetpol province.

Description: In the centre of the shield, there is a dagger pointing upwards on a gold background, on the sides of which, there are white St George's Crosses on a black background. The shield is crowned with an Imperial crown and surrounded by golden oak leaves, meaning strength and power, connected by St. Andrew's ribbon.

Coat of arms of the Baku province approved in 1883.

Description: On a black shield, there are golden flames - the symbol of Absheron "Burning Flames". (The shield is crowned with a city golden crown with three prongs, indicating the antiquity of the city and its origin from the fortress) and is surrounded by two golden ears of wheat as a symbol of wealth and fertility connected by the Alexander ribbon.

The development of local heraldry was not sponta-



Municipal coat of arms of Baku. 1883

neous, and its appearance became one of the important elements of the incorporation of new lands into the Russian Empire. ✪

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