



BAKU INTERNATIONAL
MULTICULTURALISM CENTRE
BAKI BƏYNƏLXALQ MÜLTİKULTURALİZM MƏRKƏZİ



ETHNOCULTURAL HERITAGE OF CAUCASIAN ALBANIA

No. 5

BAKU 2024

Ethnocultural Heritage of Caucasian Albania (Collection of Articles) No. 5.

Baku, 2024, 274 p.

Editor-in-Chief:

Kamal Abdullayev *Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre, Rector of the Azerbaijan University of Languages, People's writer, Academician*

Managing Editor:

Ravan Hasanov *Executive Director of the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre*

Scientific Editors:

Karim Shukurov *Director of the Institute of History and Ethnology named after A.A.Bakikhanov of ANAS, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor*

Najaf Museibli *Head of the Ethnoarchaeology Department of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of ANAS, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor*

Ulviyya Hajiyeva *Leading Research Associate of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of ANAS, PhD in History*

Editorial Board Members:

Richard Danakari *Professor of Volgograd State Agrarian University, Doctor of Philosophy, Russian Federation*

Lolua Roman *Professor of the Institute of Linguistics named after Arnold Chikobava, TSU, Doctor of Philology, Georgia*

Gulchohra Seyidova *Head of the UNESCO Chair in Comparative Studies of Spiritual Traditions, their Specific Cultures and Interreligious Dialogue in the North Caucasus; Vice-Rector for Research and International Relations of the Institute for the Friendship of Peoples of the Caucasus; Associate Professor of the Department of Legal and Humanitarian Disciplines at the Derbent Branch of Dagestan State University, Russian Federation*

Kamala Imranli-Lowe *Visiting Fellow, Oxford Nizami Ganjavi Centre, Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Oxford, Doctor of Historical Sciences, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*

Rasa Čepaitienė *Professor at the European Humanities University, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Senior Scientific Researcher at the Lithuanian Institute of History, the Republic of Lithuania*

Kim Jongil *Professor at the Department of Archaeology and Art History, Seoul National University, the Republic of Korea*

Zurab Kananchev *Editor of the journal "Transcaucasica", Russian Federation*

The fifth issue of the collection of articles, "Ethnocultural Heritage of Caucasian Albania", features the proceedings of the 11th International Conference, "Caucasian Albania: Ethnoarchaeology, Written Sources, and Historical Monuments," held in Baku on April 19–20, 2024.

**PROCEEDINGS OF
THE 11th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON**

**CAUCASIAN ALBANIA:
ETHNOARCHAEOLOGY,
WRITTEN SOURCES
AND HISTORICAL MONUMENTS**

Baku, April 19-20, 2024

CONTENTS:

FOREWORD	7
-----------------------	---

HAIJEVA U. The Distortion of Historical Information About the Borders of Caucasian Albania in Modern Foreign Historiography	10
--	----

ARCHAEOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY, NUMISMATICS

KIM JONGIL. Multilayered Identity of Women and Female Warriors in Caucasian Albania	18
GADJIEV M., ABDULLAYEV A., BUDAYCHIEV A. Archaeological and Architectural Study of the Juma Mosque in Derbent in 2023 (Brief Report)	27
ALIYEV I. Archaeological Research in the Area of “Khinalig State Historical-Architectural and Ethnographic Reserve”	36
ALIYEV T. Torpaggala: a Settlement of Caucasian Albania	46
KIRICHENKO D. Anthropological Material from Janakhar	54
MUSTAFAYEV L. International Relations of Caucasian Albania with the Ancient World	60
NAJAFOV S., ALIYEVA S., MURSAGULIYEV M. Archaeological Research in and around the Avey Albanian Temple in 2023	68
NAJAFOVA I.M., MAMMADOVA A. About the Parthian Coin Found in Gabala	77

HISTORY, SOURCE SCIENCE, ETNOLOGY, LINGUISTICS

ASADOV F. Accounts by Early Armenian Authors on the Khazars: On the Reliability of References to the Khazars in the History of Movses Khorenatsi	84
AUTHIER G. Compound Verbs in Udi and Caucasian Albania	90
BAHRAMOVA M. The Budukh People: From the Caucasian Albanian Period to the Present Day	96
BECKER M. Caucasian Albania Through the Lenses of the Jewish Diaspora History	103
DABAKOV V. The Udis of Russia and Azerbaijan: Prospects for Developing and Strengthening Mutual Ties	107
DANAKARI R. Historical Memory and Experience of Self-Identification of the Udis: Traditions of Socio-Cultural Heritage	111
GOSHGARLY G. The Prehistory of the Great Silk Road	118

GUNAY NEJLA. Role of Russian Policies in Reshaping the Demographics and Politics of Karabakh: A Study of the Russian Occupation (1813–1950)	123
HORI GABRIYEL AKYÜZ. The Evangelical / Missionary Activities of the Syrians in the Caucasus	131
JAFAROV Y. Revisiting the Gargareans of Alvania/Aran: What Do the Concise Sources Reveal and What Do Numerous Researchers Write	138
KHALILOV M. Cultural Relations and Development Trends of Ancient and Early Medieval Albania	144
KURANOV A. Caucasian Albania: Revisiting the Albanians and the Udis/Utians	154
LOLUA R. Script of the Caucasian–Albanian Alphabet	160
MAMMADOV E. Christian Elements of Caucasian Albania	166
NIKONOROV A., ARCHIMANDRITE ALEXIY. Canonical Law of the Church of Caucasian Albania in the Fifth Century: a Comparative Perspective	172
PASHAYEVA M. Aghoghlan Temple: Facts of Armenian Vandalism Against Albanian Christian Heritage	181
SEYIDOVA G. On the Origins of Christianity in Caucasian Albania	190
SHABIYEV B. Albania–Khazar Relations During the Mihranids Dynasty	198
SHALBUZOVA N. Common Albanian Traces in the Mutual Influences of the Azerbaijani, Kryts, and Udi Languages	203
VALIYEV E. Funerary Monuments and Rituals of Zoroastrianism	212
ZHENIS ZHOMART ZHENISULU. On the Origin of Tent-Shaped Cultic Structures in Caucasian Albania	217

ARCHITECTURE, ART

ADGOZALOVA A. Description of Religious Symbolism on Albanian Cross Stones	224
AHMADOVA A., RZAYEVA S. Artistic Analysis of the “Gryz” Carpet	230
ČEPAITIENĖ R. Challenges and Opportunities in Preserving the Authenticity of Cultural Monuments in the Post-Soviet Space	237
FARMANOV F. Pattern Elements on Ceramics from the Caucasian Albanian Period	245
GARABAGLI R. Albanian Temples Around Lake Goycha	250
JAFAROVA E., KHALILOV M. The Christian Church in Khachmaz	257
JERZY LUBACH. About Azerbaijan in Lehistan	270

FOREWORD

The development of the rich cultural and spiritual heritage, religious tolerance, and traditions of tolerance and multiculturalism at the level of state policy in the Republic of Azerbaijan is based on the ancient history of the country's statehood.

For centuries, multiculturalism has served as a guiding force, fostering the harmony and integration of diverse cultures represented by various ethnic and sub-ethnic groups in the region, situated at the crossroads of East and West, into a unified national culture of Azerbaijan.

At the end of the 20th century, under the leadership of National Leader Heydar Aliyev, the preservation of multicultural traditions became a cornerstone of Azerbaijan's state policy, aligned with the ideology of Azerbaijanism. This policy continues to be successfully developed by President Ilham Aliyev.

This policy is enshrined in the Constitution of Azerbaijan and further detailed in relevant legislation, decrees, and executive orders. It is also reflected in the foreign policy of Azerbaijan, which is a full member of prestigious international organizations such as the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and GUAM. Azerbaijan is successfully advancing its integration into Europe through the European Union's Eastern Partnership initiative. Our country serves as a multinational and multi-faith hub for intercultural dialogue on a global scale. Currently, various models of multiculturalism exist, such as those in the United States, Sweden, Australia, and Canada. The Azerbaijani model of tolerance has been recognized and adopted as an exemplary approach by many progressive nations around the world.

During the 44-day Second Karabakh War in 2020, citizens of Azerbaijan, regardless of their ethnicity, united to liberate the country's Armenian-occupied lands. The subsequent restoration of monuments previously destroyed by Armenians in the liberated territories, including Muslim, Christian, and Albanian temples, exemplifies the humanitarian principles underpinning Azerbaijan's multicultural policy.

Four virtual roundtables, hosted by the Service of the State Counsellor of the Republic of Azerbaijan for Multiculturalism, Interethnic and Religious Affairs, brought together renowned scholars, public figures, and students from Brazil, the United States, Italy, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Türkiye, Russia, Georgia, Egypt, Jordan, and other nations. These discussions focused on themes such as "Harmony of Socio-Economic and Spiritual Development in Modern Azerbaijan", "Multicultural Security", "Teaching the Subject of Azerbaijani Multiculturalism in Foreign Universities: Problems and Prospects", and "Interest in Azerbaijan Turns into Love for Azerbaijan: The Azerbaijani Multiculturalism Through the Eyes of Local and International Students". The Materials from These Roundtables were Published in Azerbaijani, Russian, and English.

In 2022, conferences were held on the topics of "Heydar Aliyev: Multiculturalism and the Ideology of Tolerance", "Heydar Aliyev and Azerbaijani Multiculturalism", and "Multicultural Perspectives on Pressing Global Challenges".

The Baku International Multiculturalism Centre works to preserve the unique achievements of national, cultural, religious, linguistic, and ethnic diversity in Azerbaijani society. To this end, the Centre organizes a wide range of international events and academic conferences on multiculturalism, interethnic and interfaith relations, and dialogue. Additionally, it publishes major scholarly works, collections of articles, journals, fiction, and textbooks, including those in the languages of ethnic groups living in Azerbaijan.

Supported by the Knowledge Fund under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre has organized winter and summer schools as part of the project "Teaching the subject of Azerbaijani Multiculturalism in foreign and domestic universities". These programs aimed to introduce Azerbaijan's multicultural and tolerant values to young people. Today, the course of

Azerbaijani Multiculturalism is included in the curricula of prestigious universities in Azerbaijan and around the world.

Azerbaijan is the direct historical heir and guardian of the rich ethnocultural heritage of Caucasian Albania, including its ancient and early medieval culture, as well as all the historical and religious heritage created within these territories in previous centuries. One of the key focuses of the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre is to support research into crucial issues related to Albanology, spanning the fields of history, archaeology, anthropology, ethnology, linguistics, architecture, and art.

In 2023, a collection of articles titled “Ethnocultural Heritage of Caucasian Albania” (No. 4) was published. This publication was dedicated to the 100th anniversary of National Leader Heydar Aliyev and included materials from the 10th International Conference on “Caucasian Albania: Religious and Social Life”, which was held on April 14, 2023, in Baku. The conference was jointly organized by the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre, the A.A.Bakikhanov Institute of History of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, the Spiritual Values Promotion Foundation, and the Albanian-Udi Christian Community.

In 2023, a series of books were published, including “Onomastics of Truth – 2: Karabakh and East Zangazur”, “Onomastics of Truth” in Russian, a bibliography titled “On the History of Azerbaijani Albanology (Caucasus)”, the “Military Topographic Map of the Caucasus Region in 1847”, and “Albanian Monuments of Karabakh and East Zangazur” (in English).

On February 20, 2024, the Presidential Library of the Office of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan hosted a presentation of the publication “Map of the Caucasus region: Tiflis, 1847”. This publication was created with the joint support of the Presidential Library, the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre, and the Western Azerbaijan Community.

The 11th International Conference on “Caucasian Albania: Ethnoarchaeology, Written Sources, and Historical Monuments” was held in Baku on April 19-20, 2024. The conference was organized by the Baku International Multiculturalism Center, the A.A.Bakikhanov Institute of History and Ethnology of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, the Azerbaijan–Korean Cultural Exchange Association (SEBA), and the Albanian-Udi Christian Community. The conference aimed to foster collaborative discussions on the findings of scientific research in archaeology, anthropology, history, ethnology, linguistics, numismatics, architecture, and art related to Caucasian Albania and the Albanian ethnocultural heritage.

At the opening ceremony of the conference, speeches were delivered by Prof. Karim Shukurov, Director of the Institute of History and Ethnology of ANAS; Academician Kamal Abdullayev, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Baku International Multiculturalism Center and Rector of Azerbaijan University of Languages; Ravan Hasanov, Executive Director of the Baku International Multiculturalism Center; Prof. Yuksel Ozgen, President of the Turkish Historical Society; Prof. Ziyabek Kabuldinov, Director General of the Institute of History and Ethnology of the Science Committee of the Ministry of Science and Education of Kazakhstan and Corresponding Member of the Kazakhstan Academy of Sciences; Academician Azamat Ziyov, Director of the Institute of History of the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences; and, Academician Isa Habibbeyli, President of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.

Among the invited officials was Bishop Vladimir Fekete, Prefect of the Apostolic Prefecture of the Catholic Church in Azerbaijan. The Baku and Azerbaijan Eparchy of the Russian Orthodox Church was represented by Archpriest Mefodiy Efendiyev, head of the Eparchial Department for Interaction with Public Organizations.

The conference was attended by 27 distinguished scholars from 13 countries, including Türkiye (Yuksel Özgen, Ibrahim Tellioglu, Nejla Gunay, Hori Gabriel Akyüz), Georgia (Roman Lolua), the Russian Federation (Murtazali Gadzhiev, Abdul Abdullayev, Arsen Budaychiev, Gulchokhra Seyidova, Zurab Kananchev, Richard Danakari, Artem Kuranov, Vladislav Dabakov), Lithuania (Rasa Čepaitienė), France (Gilles Authier), Kazakhstan (Ziyabek Kabuldinov, Jenis Jomart), Uzbekistan (Azamat Ziyov), South Korea (Kim Jongil), Germany (Jost Gippert), Canada (Yusif Jafarov, Nazila Isgandarova), the United States (Gregory Neal Williams), Poland

(Jerzy Lubach, Marek Jan Olbrycht, Jerzy Ostapczuk), and Italy (Francesco Mazzola). The conference sections covered such topics as “Historical geography and archaeology of Caucasian Albania”, “Internal state of Caucasian Albania: International relations and foreign policy”, “Writing, religion, and culture in Caucasian Albania”, and “Population and descendants of Caucasian Albania”. The materials from this conference are included in the fifth volume of the collection of articles “Ethnocultural Heritage of Caucasian Albania”.

In connection with Shusha being declared the “Cultural Capital of the Islamic World” for 2024, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan has approved a plan for numerous events. These include organizing a Cultural Forum of the Islamic World, hosting an international conference of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Shusha dedicated to the preservation of cultural heritage, holding a roundtable and exhibition entitled “Examples of intangible cultural heritage of the Islamic World in danger of disappearance”; presenting a postage stamp titled “Shusha – Cultural Capital of the Islamic World – 2024”, preparing and distributing materials on Shusha’s historical monuments internationally, such as publications, articles, books, brochures, TV programs and films, organizing joint scientific and cultural events (conferences, concerts, presentations, exhibitions, film screenings, contests, etc.) dedicated to Shusha at the ICESCO headquarters, creating and hosting the inaugural meeting of the “Shusha Network” connecting cultural capitals of Islamic countries, organizing an exhibition and creative camp for artists and photographers from Islamic countries in Shusha, producing a multi-language documentary film highlighting Shusha’s rich historical and religious heritage and influential figures who have contributed to Islamic culture, and holding “Days of Shusha” events in various Islamic countries, showcasing folk art performances, Karabakh carpets, photo and painting exhibitions, video presentations, and book launches.

The 6th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, themed “Dialogue for Peace and Global Security: Cooperation and Interaction”, was held in Baku from May 1 to 3, 2024. President Ilham Aliyev of the Republic of Azerbaijan delivered the opening address at the Forum’s opening ceremony.

The Heydar Aliyev Foundation has made invaluable contributions to the development and promotion of ethnic and religious tolerance, multiculturalism, and national and spiritual values in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

On May 11, 2024, a ceremony was held at Jidir Plain in Shusha to mark the opening of the 7th “Kharibulbul” International Music Festival (May 11-13, 2024) and “Shusha – Cultural Capital of the Islamic World 2024”, organized by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and the Ministry of Culture. President Ilham Aliyev of the Republic of Azerbaijan and First Vice-President, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva were among the distinguished guests at the event. In addition to Azerbaijan, the “Kharibulbul” International Music Festival this year brought together artists and creative ensembles from ICESCO member countries, Türkiye, the UAE, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Qatar, Guinea, Morocco, and Uzbekistan. The festival continued its program on May 12 in Shusha and concluded on May 13 in Lachin.

A series of international and local symposiums and scientific-practical conferences were held in September 2024 to discuss the preservation of cultural heritage and to delve into the Islamic culture, history, and art of Azerbaijan.

Academician Kamal Abdullayev

Hajiyeva Ulviyya

*Scientific Editor of the collection of articles “Ethnocultural Heritage of Caucasian Albania”, Leading Research Associate of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of ANAS, PhD in History
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3548-5717>*

THE DISTORTION OF HISTORICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE BORDERS OF CAUCASIAN ALBANIA IN MODERN FOREIGN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Abstract. Contemporary foreign historiography disseminates falsified information about Caucasian Albania. This article highlights the historical-geographical issues of Albania and the real history of Armenian statehood, which was formed far from the Caucasus, in Asia Minor. It was only due to the religious policies of Tsarist Russia in the 19th century that the Armenian Church was granted legal rights to the Albanian ethnocultural heritage in the region. However, this does not constitute a legitimate basis for claiming the lands of Karabakh and Zangazur, or the Albanian temples in Karabakh and Zangazur, along with the territories where they are located, as Armenian or as part of Armenian ethnic history.

Keywords: Caucasian Albania, borders, coin hoards, registers of church councils

Recent foreign studies, such as the collection of articles edited by J.Gippert and J.Dum-Tragut, “Caucasian Albania: An International Handbook” (2023), “the History of the Aghuans” edited by K.D.Andreasyan (2023), “The Udis: A Historical and Ethnographic Overview” and “Distortions of the History of Armenia, Caucasian Albania, and Azerbaijan in Azerbaijani Historiography” by G.G.Ayvazyan (2023), as well as several others, have consistently and purposefully published distorted information about the historical geography and borders of Albania, one of the key states of the South Caucasus during antiquity and the medieval period. The aim of these publications is to substantiate the centuries-old false Armenian concept that the territory between the Kura and Aras rivers, along with the material and spiritual culture created in Albania from the 4th century BC to the early 8th century AD within a unified country, and in later centuries within the territories of separate principalities, kingdoms, and then melikdoms up until the early 19th century, belonged to the Armenian state and people, who were located far from the South Caucasus in Asia Minor, as part of an effort to historically legitimize modern illegal claims to the lands of the Republic of Azerbaijan–Karabakh and Zangazur. These studies are based on contradictory accounts by Strabo, which themselves rely on a now-lost work by Chares of Mytilene and travel notes of Roman legionnaires who visited Albania. They also draw on a series of falsified, edited written sources and the false ideas constructed upon them.

Azerbaijani Albanology, throughout the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, encompasses fundamental studies in the history, archaeology, numismatics, epigraphy, anthropology, architecture, and art of the Albanian period. Based on rich archaeological material and the accounts of M.Kaghankatvatsi (7th–10th centuries) [Каганкатвацци, 1861], the Gandzasar Catholicos Esayi Hasan-Jalalyan (18th century) [Баку: Элм, 1989], Bishop M.Barkhudaryants (19th century) [Бархударян,

1893; 1949; 2009], and a number of other sources, as well as the historical realities of Albania and Armenia, and the geopolitics of Rome, Byzantium, Parthia, and Sasanian Iran regarding the countries of the South Caucasus, the borders of Albania in the 1st, 5th, and 7th centuries are delineated as follows.

M.Kaghankatvatsi, in "The History of the Albans", states that: 1) "The head of all of them was appointed someone Aran from the Sisakan clan, descendants of Japheth, who inherited the fields and mountains of Albania from the Aras River to the castle of Hnarakert" [I, 2, c.1-3]; 2) Another passage indicates that the great prince Javanshir Mihranid (642–684) "ruled autonomously and magnificently from the borders of Iberia to the gates of the Huns and to the Aras River" [II, 21, c.146]. These accounts indicate that the southern border of Albania during this period was the Aras River.

The Gandzasar Catholicos Esayi Hasan-Jalalyan, describing events occurring in Karabakh in the 18th century, refers to this region as the "Albanian country", which attests to the preservation of Albanian identity.

At the end of the 19th century, Bishop M.Barkhudaryants, in his work "The Albanian Country and Its Neighbors" (published in 1893), writes in the chapter "Borders" that: "During the reign of King Valarsace, the known borders of our country were the Aras River, the Caucasus Mountains to the north, the castle of Hnarakert to the west, and the mountains of Artsakh down to the Aras to the south. Sisakan Aran was appointed by King Valarsace as the governor of these borders. During the Arsacid period, the defensive wall stretched from Derbent, the Caspian Sea in the east... to the west as far as the Alazani and Khrami Rivers, to the south – the Kayen Mountains, the entire Gardman, Gandzak, Artsakh, and the left bank of the Aras. The land encompassed within these borders is called Aghuank by the Armenians, Rani by the Georgians, Aran or Aranshah by the Persians, Ran by the Arabs, and Albania by Europeans" [Бархударянц 1893, с.4]. In another of his works, Artsakh (published in 1895), the same information is confirmed: "The borders extended from the Dzoraget River, including the Murghuz Ridge, to the Aras River" [Бархударянц, 1949, ч.I, с.11-12; 2009, ч.I, с.24-25], which includes the Tavush region of modern Armenia. Thus, the interfluvium between the Kura and Aras Rivers, from the Dzoraget River in the west to the Aras River, constituted provinces of Albania.

Now, let us turn our attention to archaeological material. It is well known that one of the attributes of statehood, as well as trade and economic relations, is coinage; that is, numismatic material either confirms or refutes the existence of the above. For decades, archaeological research has been conducted in Azerbaijan, uncovering a wealth of factual material, including numismatic evidence. These findings consist of individual coin discoveries as well as several large coin hoards. The Numismatic Fund of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan (NF NMHA) under the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan serves as the national center for the collection, preservation, and registration of numismatic facts. It houses over 100,000 coins, the majority of which were discovered within the Republic's territory and belong to the coinage of Azerbaijani states. Over the past centuries, more than ten hoards of ancient coins have been discovered in Azerbaijan. Key international transit trade routes, including the Great Silk Road, passed through Albania, due to the region's natural resources, water communication systems (such as the Kura and Aras Rivers and the Caspian Sea), and its close connections with the Hellenistic cultural world [Раджабли, 2013, с.40; Раджабли, 2017, с.32-33].

Long-term research on numismatic material has allowed scholars to affirm that monetary circulation in Albania during antiquity can be divided into two periods: 1) from the late 4th century BC to the mid-1st century BC; 2) from the mid-1st century BC to the mid-3rd century AD. These periods are further subdivided into stages during which significant changes occurred in the monetary circulation of Albania, driven by geopolitical shifts.

In antiquity, prior to the minting of Albanian coins, cowrie shells were widely used as a form of currency. These shells entered the region through trade and monetary relations with the countries of the Middle East [Бабаев, 1990, с.153]. Numerous hoards of silver drachms and tetradrachms from almost all states of the ancient world have been discovered near prominent trade, craft, and cultural centers of Albania, such as Kabalaka (Gabala), Shamakhi, Nakhchivan, and several other regions. These include

coins from the Seleucid Empire, Cappadocia, Bithynia, Greek city-states, Pontus, Bactria, Parthia, as well as Roman coins from the Republic and Empire periods. Among the findings are silver tetradrachms and drachms of Alexander the Great (336–323 BC), tetradrachms of all Seleucid kings (Antiochus IV, Antiochus V, Demetrius I Soter, Antiochus VII Euergetes). In 1958, near the village of Khynysly, not far from the city of Shamakhi, a hoard of 300 coins was discovered. This hoard contained silver tetradrachms of Athens, King Lysimachus of Thrace (4th century BC), the kings of Bithynia (Nicomedes II and III), King Mithridates VI Eupator of Pontus, and the Seleucid rulers (Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Demetrius I Soter, Alexander Balas, Antiochus VII Euergetes, Alexander II Zabinas, Antiochus VIII Grypus, Seleucus VI Epiphanes, and Antiochus Philadelphus). The hoard also included drachms of Parthian kings (Phraates I, Mithridates II, Artabanus II, Sanatruces, Phraates III) and a Roman denarius of Gaius Licinius [Бабаев, 1990, с.155-156; Раджабли, 2013, с.40-44]. Other excavations have yielded Greco-Bactrian tetradrachms and a coin from the island of Crete (the city of Kydonia) [Бабаев, 1990, с.157].

After the fall of the Achaemenid Empire, Albania became an independent state. Coins of Alexander the Great, minted after his conquest of Achaemenid Iran, flooded the entire Hellenistic world and were widely circulated in Eastern markets. These coins served as a standard for minting local currency during the period from the 3rd century BC to the end of the 1st century BC, as the influx of foreign coins could no longer meet the demands of the domestic market. Archaeological excavations have uncovered significant hoards of Albanian silver coins near the ancient settlement of Gabala, in the village of Nuydi of the Aghsu district, and in the village of Khynysly. These coins, minted in the capital, Kabalaka (Gabala), were imitations of the tetradrachms and drachms of Alexander the Great, Seleucid coins, and coins of other Hellenistic states [Тревер, 1959, с.55; Рахомов, 1962, с.106-113; Пахомов, 1959, с.7; 1962а, с.74-76; 1966, с.19-21; Бабаев, 1990, с.155, 158, 162-163; Раджабли, 2017, с.32-33].

Among the imported coins of the 2nd century BC, the Seleucid tetradrachms are particularly noteworthy. In 1929, a hoard of Macedonian and Seleucid tetradrachms was discovered in the Barda district [Тревер, 1959, с.55]. From the 2nd century BC, the struggle for hegemony in the Western Asia and the South Caucasus between Rome and Parthia led to the circulation of Parthian and Roman coins in Albania [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.113]. Among the Parthian coins, notable examples include the silver drachms of Mithridates II (124–88 BC) and the coins of Artabanus III (10–38 AD). The discovery of Arsacid drachms in various regions of Azerbaijan suggests, as E.A. Pakhomov notes, that during this period in Albania, they began to supplant all other coins [Тревер, 1959, с.59].

Starting from the 1st century BC, Roman coins appeared in Albanian markets. These were found in Mingachevir, Barda, Tazakand, Shamakhi, and Gabala, with Augustan denarii being the most widespread. Coins of Roman emperors Galba, Otho, and Vitellius were also discovered [Раджабли, Наджафова, Мамедова, 2023, с.102-110]. The finds of Roman and Arsacid coins in jar burials dated to the 1st century BC–1st century AD indicate the use of these coins in settlements of the plains [Тревер, 1959, с.60].

In the 1st century BC–1st century AD, Parthian coins held a dominant position [Бабаев, 1990, с.158]. In the early 20th century, during archaeological excavations of a necropolis with clay burials near Ganja, three coins were found beneath the mandible of a skeleton. Two of these coins, made of low-grade silver, belonged to the Arsacid Parthian rulers Phraates III (70–57 BC) and Orodes (57–38 BC). These clay burials were therefore dated to this period [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.63, 109].

In 224 AD, the Parthian state fell and was replaced by the Sasanian Empire. From this point onward, the influx of Arsacid coins into Albania ceased. Albania became dependent on the Sasanian Empire, and Sasanian coins flooded the markets, replacing Arsacid and Roman coins until the early 8th century, when the Arab conquest led to the fall of Albanian statehood. During the Sasanian period, silver dirhams of Sasanian shahanshahs were minted in major Albanian cities such as Derbent, Baku, Barda, and Nakhchivan [Раджабли, 2017, с.33]. In 1964, during excavations in the Shamakhi district, A.B.Nuriyev discovered Sasanian silver coins of Khosrow II in a jar burial at the Shargah necropolis, allowing the burial to be dated

to the 7th century AD. At the Shargah necropolis, over 40 jar burials were studied, one of which contained a hoard of 133 Sasanian coins [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.94].

Notably, only two coins of Tigranes II were discovered in Azerbaijan during decades of archaeological excavations, both found in Mingachevir.

During the 30-year occupation of Karabakh, Armenian archaeologists, in collaboration with foreign researchers, conducted illegal excavations in the region. Among these were the excavations initiated by Hamlet Petrosyan in 2006 near the Shahbulag Castle, which in the 19th century was also called Tarnagyut. Armenian scholars claim this site to be Tigranakert, a city allegedly built by Tigranes II. This is a multi-layered site with cultural strata from the Bronze Age, antiquity, and the medieval period, suggesting that the city existed until the 13th–14th centuries. A question arises: why, despite extensive factual material, was not a single Armenian coin—neither of Tigranes II nor any other—found at the site? The discovery of a single copper coin of unclear origin, found in the teeth of a skeleton, was reported by the media with great fanfare. The burial ritual of placing a coin in the mouth of the deceased, known as the “Charon's Obol”, originated in Greece and became widespread in the Hellenistic period across the East. This practice was also observed in Albania during antiquity, as evidenced by burial findings near the village of Jafarli in the Jalilabad district, the Khanlar necropolis [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.63, 112-113], Gabala, in the area of “Khinalig state historical-architectural and ethnographic reserve”, and the necropolis of the Aveydagh temple in the Gazakh district. As for the city where Armenian archaeologists conducted their unauthorized research, it was likely one of the 29 cities of Albania mentioned by ancient authors. The numismatic material discovered there proves that in Albania, and specifically in the interfluvium of the Kura and Aras Rivers, Armenian coins were not used at all. This fact further demonstrates that the interfluvium between the Kura and Aras Rivers did not fall under Armenian influence, and the city in question could not have been the Armenian capital, Tigranakert.

It is worth revisiting the true history of Armenian statehood. According to Armenologists, Armenians, originating from Phrygian tribes, initially lived in the Balkans. Driven by the Cimmerian migration, they appeared in Asia Minor in the 13th century BC. Subsequently, they advanced toward the Euphrates. In the 12th century BC, Indo-European Armenian tribes, referred to in Assyrian cuneiform texts as “Mushku” and “Urmu”, and in Greek sources as “Arima” (later “Armenians”), entered the territories of the Hurrians, Hittites, and Luwians in the upper reaches of the Euphrates. M.Abeghyan noted: “What is the origin of the Armenian people, how and when did they establish themselves in Armenia? From where and by what routes did they come to their homeland? What tribes did they interact with before and after coming to Armenia? Who influenced their language and ethnic composition? On all these matters, we lack precise and detailed information” [Абегян, 1975, с.11]. Historically, Armenians lived outside the Caucasus, in Asia Minor, around Lake Van, and along the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers. The first Armenian state emerged in Asia Minor in the 6th century BC. During the 6th–3rd centuries BC, Armenia consisted of two satrapies or provinces (Eastern Armenia and Western Armenia), which were subject to the Persian Achaemenid Empire and later the Seleucids. The Armenian state established by Artaxias I at the end of the 1st century BC, later expanded by Tigranes II in the early 1st century AD, lasted only 30 years. The conquests of Tigranes II affected only the territory of Caspiane within Albania, which later became part of Atropatene and, from the 3rd century AD, part of Albania. After being defeated by the Roman general Pompey, Tigranes II lost all his acquired territories, retaining control only over Armenia within the bounds of the Armenian Highlands. From the 1st century BC to 428 AD, Armenia had a nominal status as a state but was, in reality, divided into provinces of Persia and Rome-Byzantium, repeatedly partitioned between these powers in 66 BC, 37 AD, 298 AD, 387 AD, and 591 AD. Armenia was ruled alternately by Persian and Roman appointees, who were often princes from Atropatene or Iberian-Georgian lineages. This meant that Armenian kings had no inheritance rights and were nominal rather than actual rulers. Armenia was conquered and divided between Rome and Parthia, leading to the emergence of territorial and administrative divisions such as Armenia I, II, III, and IV, as well as Greater and Lesser Armenia, Eastern and Western Armenia. Under these divisions, parts of Armenia came under Byzantine rule and were referred to as Western Byzantine Armenia (west

of the Euphrates) or Lesser Armenia. The other portion was under Persian rule and was known as Eastern Persian Armenia (east of the Euphrates) or Greater Armenia. This situation led Armenians to fragment and appropriate the histories of the peoples among whom they lived [Mammadova, 2021, p.434, 436-437].

During the 5th–9th centuries, there was no Armenian state. K.Patkanov wrote: “Armenia never played a significant role in the history of humanity. It is not a political term but rather the name of a geographical region scattered with Armenian settlements. Armenians were always poor stewards of the lands they inhabited, but they were adept at serving the powerful, betraying their neighbors” [Патканов, 1875, с.5].

The acts of the Armenian Church councils (Kanonagirk Hayots or Armenian Book of Canon) allow the localization of its dioceses, which were situated in Eastern Anatolia, around Lake Van, west of the Aras River, on the eastern bank of the Tigris River, and in the interfluvium of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers—far from the Caucasus. These dioceses included: Taron, Mardpet, Tayk, Mok, Rotak, Phasiane, Mardagi, Bznunik, Arsharunik, Bagratunik, Khorhorunik, Rshtunik, Vanand, Amatunik, Gnunik, Palunik, and Mehnunik. The councils of the Armenian Church were held in the following locations:

in 365 AD in Ashtishat (in the Taron region, on the banks of the Aratsani River, a tributary of the Euphrates);

in 447 AD in Shaapivan (in the southwestern part of the Bagratuni domain, north of Lake Van);

in 505 AD and 633 AD in Karin (Theodosiopolis) in the southern part of the Tayk region, near the headwaters of the Euphrates;

in 506 AD, 555 AD, and 649 AD in Dvin; in 726 AD, the Manzikert Council took place in the Apahunik region (north of Lake Van, on the banks of the Aratsani River); in 862 AD, the Shirakavan Council was convened in the Vanand region (in the southwestern Caucasus) [Mammadova, 2021, p.423-424].

The records of Armenian Church councils indicate that representatives of the Albanian Apostolic Church did not participate in these councils. This demonstrates that the Albanian clergy was not subordinate to the Armenian Church.

In the 9th–11th centuries, an Armenian state of the Bagratids emerged in the regions of Kars and Erzurum, with Ani as its capital. During this period, the concept of a mythical history about a “great country from sea to sea” was created. It included legends about Mesrop Mashtots as the supposed creator of Georgian and Caucasian Albanian scripts, among other claims. This era also marked the beginning of an intensive collection, rewriting, editing, and falsification of manuscripts to prove Armenian superiority in the South Caucasus over other ethnic groups and to claim the ethno-cultural heritage and territories of others in the future. In the 12th–14th centuries, the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia was established, but from the 14th century to the early 20th century, Armenians did not have a state. During this period, the Armenian Church was not unified, with separate sees in Constantinople and Aghtamar. In the 15th century, the Catholicosate of the Armenian Church moved from Cilicia to Etchmiadzin, located in the territory of historical Azerbaijan [Mammadova, 2021, p.437-438]. From that point, the Armenian population began to settle in this area. However, the activities of the Armenian Church remained primarily focused on the eastern part of Asia Minor, Eastern Anatolia, and the southwestern Caucasus, while the Albanian and Georgian Apostolic Churches, with their dioceses, operated within the southeastern and western Caucasus.

At the time of Russia’s conquest of the South Caucasus, the Armenian Etchmiadzin Church did not have any dioceses in the Caucasus. Beginning in 1828, Armenians were resettled en masse into the territories of the Irevan and Karabakh Khanates. By 1836, the Armenian Etchmiadzin Catholicosate was granted control over all Albanian religious heritage, including churches, archives, and libraries, which it looted and destroyed throughout the 19th century [Гаджиева, 2004, с.66, 72-73].

Conclusion. In summary, it should be stated that the territory stretching from the foothills of the Samur ridge and Derbent (Chola) in the north to the Aras River in the south, from the Caspian Sea in the east to the borders of Iberia, the upper reaches of the Iori and Alazani Rivers (the fortress of Hunarakert/Hnarakert), and to the Dzoraget River in the west, including the Tavush region and the lands of Western Azerbaijan (including Lake Goycha), are historical lands of the Albanian state. All Christian temples,

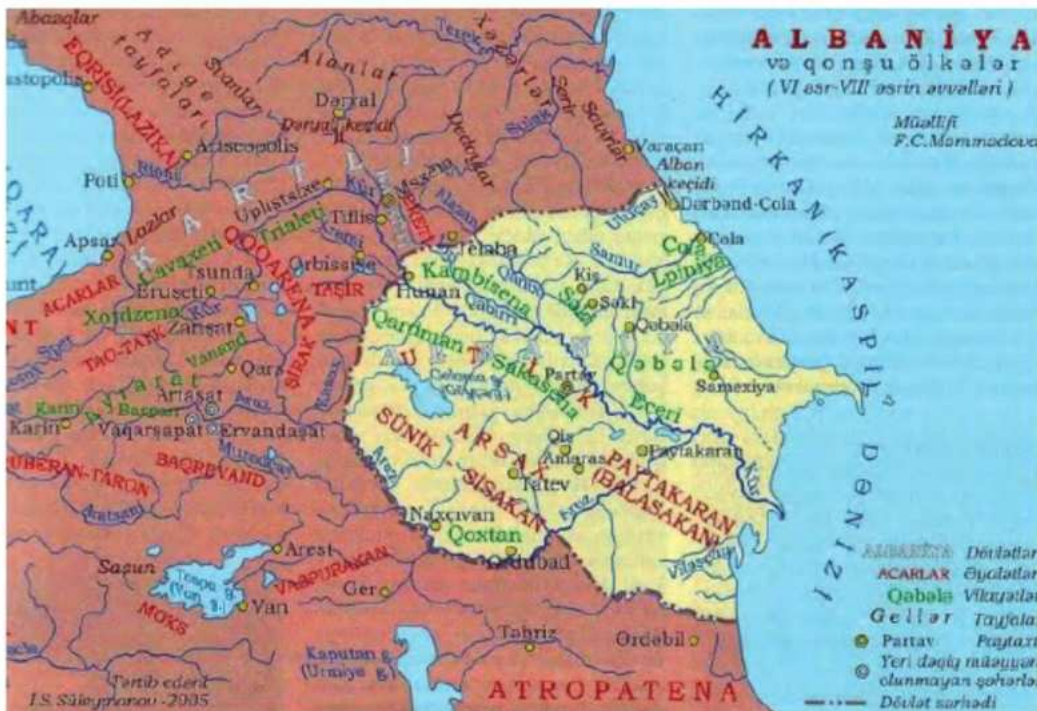
monasteries, hermitages, and churches built in Karabakh and Zangazur up to the end of the 18th century were under the jurisdiction of the Albanian Catholicosate until the early 19th century.

Armenian states were located far from the Caucasus. It was only due to the religious policies of Tsarist Russia in the 19th century that the Armenian Church was granted legal rights to the Albanian ethno-cultural heritage in the region. However, this does not provide a legitimate basis to claim the lands of Karabakh and Zangazur, or the Albanian temples of Karabakh and Zangazur along with the territories they are located in, as Armenian or as belonging to the Armenian ethnic history.

With the establishment of Soviet power in the Caucasus, Armenians gained statehood in the early 20th century on the historical lands of Western Azerbaijan, formerly the Irevan Khanate (with Irevan as its capital), forming the Armenian SSR and an autonomous region in the highlands of Karabakh. Throughout the 20th century, Armenian armed forces subjected the Azerbaijani population of the region to ethnic extermination, devastation, and displacement in 1905–1906, 1918–1920, 1948–1953, and 1987–1993. During nearly 30 years of occupation of Karabakh and its neighboring districts, Armenians inflicted immense ecological, material, and cultural damage on the region. They completely destroyed cities such as Aghdam and Fuzuli, as well as numerous villages, mosques, pirs (shrines), Muslim cemeteries, and Orthodox churches. During the renovation of several Albanian monasteries (Gandzasar, Amaras, Khudavang/Dadivank, and others) and churches, stones with Armenian inscriptions were embedded, hypocritically showcasing to the world their “care” for Christian monuments on illegally occupied territories. Throughout the occupation, numerous illegal archaeological excavations were conducted with the involvement of foreign specialists. All discovered artifacts were unlawfully transported to Armenia and displayed in museums as “heritage of the Armenian people”.

Following the Great Victory in the Patriotic War of 2020, the authorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan continue to be falsely accused by Armenians in the media of destroying Albanian temples in Karabakh. The sole purpose of these claims is to leverage international support to regain access to the lands they previously devastated, under special rights.

Today, the Republic of Azerbaijan, as a multicultural country, stands as the direct successor to the entire Christian and Muslim ethno-cultural heritage created on its historical territory over the centuries, and it intends to preserve and protect this heritage.



REFERENCES:

1. Рахмонов У.А. Albaniya (Azərbaycan SSR ərazisində) antik sikkələr (*Ancient Coins of Albania (in the Territory of the Azerbaijan SSR)*) / Вопросы истории Кавказской Албании. Баку, 1962, с.106-113.
2. Абебян М. История древнеармянской литературы (*History of Ancient Armenian Literature*). Ереван: Изд-во АН Арм.ССР, 1975, 616 с.
3. Айвазян Г.Г. Искажения истории Армении, Кавказской Албании и Азербайджана в азербайджанской историографии (*Distortions of the History of Armenia, Caucasian Albania, and Azerbaijan in Azerbaijani Historiography*) / Ред.А.А.Акопян. Ер.: Изд-во «Лусакн», 2024, 228 с.
4. Айвазян Г.Г. Удины: Историко-этнографический очерк Удины: Историко-этнографический очерк (*The Udis: A Historical and Ethnographic Overview*) / Ред.: А.А.Акопян. Ер.: Изд-во ИАЭ, 2023, 296 с.
5. Бабаев И.А. Города Кавказской Албании в IV в. до н.э. – III в. н.э. (*Cities of Caucasian Albania in the 4th century BC – 3rd century AD*). Баку, 1990, 236 с.
6. Бархударян М. Албанская страна и ее соседи (*The Albanian Country and Its Neighbors*). Тифлис, 1893, 302 с. (in Arm.).
7. Бархударянц М. Арцах (*Artsakh*). Часть I–II. Баку, 1895, 461 с. (in Arm.) / Перевод Яргуляна, 1949-НАИИАНА инд. №1622.2010, 415 с.
8. Гаджиева У. Деэтнизация кавказских албан в XIX веке (*Deethnicization of Caucasian Albanians in the 19th century*). Баку: Нурлан, 2004, 120 с.
9. Гошгарлы Г. Типология погребальных памятников античного периода на территории Азербайджана (*Typology of Burial Monuments from Antiquity on the Territory of Azerbaijan*). Баку: Элм, 2012, 248 с.
10. Епископ Макаре Бархударянц. Арцах (*Artsakh*) / Сост. и подгов. текста Б.А.Григорян, В.Г.Григорян. Перевод с арм. Н.Алексяна. СПб.: «Наука», 2009, 394 с., 23 ил.
11. Каганкатвацци М. История агван (*History of the Aghuans*) / Пер. с древнеармян.яз. К.Патканова. СПб.: типография Импер. Академии наук, 1861, 376 с.
12. Патканов К. Ванские надписи и их значение для истории Передней Азии (*Van Inscriptions and Their Significance for the History of Western Asia*) // ЖМНП, 1875, с.5.
13. Пахомов Е.А. Монетные клады Азербайджана и других республик и краев Кавказа (*Coin Hoards of Azerbaijan and Other Republics and Regions of the Caucasus*). Баку, 1966, вып.IX.
14. Пахомов Е.А. Монеты Азербайджана (*Coins of Azerbaijan*). Баку, 1959, вып.I.
15. Пахомов Е.А. Чеканка в Албании подражаний монетам македонским или селевкидским в I в. до н.э. (*Minting in Albania of Imitations of Macedonian or Seleucid Coins in the 1st century BC*) / ТМИА. Баку, 1962а, т.I.
16. Раджабли А. К истории монетной чеканки в Азербайджане (*On the History of Coin Minting in Azerbaijan*) // Тəsviri və dekorativ-tətbiiqi sənət məsələləri, 2013, №2, с.40-44.
17. Раджабли А. Монета и государственность (*Coin and Statehood*). Баку, 2017, 184 с.
18. Раджабли А., Наджафова И.М., Мамедова А. О монетах императоров Гальбы, Оттона и Вителлия в Национальном Музее Истории Азербайджана (*About the Coins of the Emperors Galba, Otho and Vitellius in the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan*) // Этнокультурное наследие Кавказской Албании, Баку, 2023, с.102-110.
19. Тревер К.В. Очерки по истории и культуре Кавказской Албании (*Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania*). М.-Л.: Ленинградское отделение Изд-ва Академии наук СССР, 1959, 392 с.
20. Хасан-Джалалян Есаи. Краткая история страны Албанской / 1702–1722 гг. / (*A Brief History of the Albanian Country / 1702–1722/*) / Пер. с древнеарм. яз. Т.И.Тер-Григоряна. Предисл. и подготовка к изданию акад. З.М.Бунятова. Баку: Элм, 1989, 48 с.
21. *Caucasian Albania. An International Handbook* / Edited by Jost Gippert and Jasmine Dum-Tragut, published by Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston, 2023, 735 p.
22. Mammadova F. *Caucasian Albania and Albanians*. Second edition. Baku, 2021, 512 p.
23. Hrant D. Andreasyan. *Ağvan tarixi (History of the Aghuans)*. Hazırlayan: Doğanay Eryılmaz. Yayınevi: Türk Tarih Kurumu (TTK). Ankara, 2023.



**ARCHAEOLOGY,
ANTHROPOLOGY,
NUMISMATICS**

Kim Jongil

*Professor at Department of Archaeology and Art History,
Seoul National University
(THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA)*

MULTILAYERED IDENTITY OF WOMEN AND FEMALE WARRIORS IN CAUCASIAN ALBANIA

Abstract. Since 2009, the Azerbaijani–Korean joint expedition team has excavated the Salbir site, Gabala in Azerbaijan with a full support of SEBA (Seoul–Baku) and in cooperation with Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. Among catacomb and jar burials, several burials in which female body (or female body fragments), have been detected and investigated and more interestingly, female burials with deformation, Sarmatian weaponry and other full body ornamentation, have been also found. These female burials demonstrate the typical but ‘static’ image of female warrior of the period on the one hand, but they also could give us lots of evidence to throw light on the active role of the buried with negotiation and renegotiation of her own identity from her birth to death on the other hand.

Keywords: A-DNA analysis, female warriors, catacomb burials, Jar burial

1. Introduction

Recently considerable amount of female warrior’s burials have been reported in old Scythian and Sauromatian (or Sarmatian) regions. The image of a female warrior ‘reflected’ in these burials has been regarded as representing namely an ‘Amazonian warrior’ described in mythology or records (e.g. Herodotus) and also demonstrating ‘social persona’ endowed to female of the period. Nevertheless, it has not been hitherto fully discussed about ‘mapping formation process of female identity as a warrior’ and furthermore, it has failed to appreciate the active involvement of female as one of ‘social actors’ into material context and its network.

Since 2009, the Azerbaijan–Korean joint expedition team has excavated the Salbir site, Gabala in Azerbaijan with a full support of SEBA (Seoul–Baku) and in cooperation with Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. Various types of building structure and storage pits (of the ancient period), and qanat and kiln as well as houses (of the medieval period), were investigated. Especially, approx. 20 catacomb burials and jar burials (of ancient period) were investigated so far. As already known, the Salbir site has been considered as a capital fortress (or city) of Caucasian Albania, which existed approximately from the 4th century AD through to medieval and modern periods (for example, 18th century).

Among these catacomb and jar burials, several burials in which female body (or female body fragments), have been detected and investigated and more interestingly, female burials with deformation, Sarmatian weaponry and other full body ornamentation, have also been found. These female burials demonstrate the typical but ‘static’ image of a female warrior of the period on the one hand, but they also could give us lots of evidence to throw light on active role of the buried with negotiation and renegotiation of her own identity from her birth to death on the other hand.

This article aims to, first and foremost, introduce female burials (of Caucasian Albania) to be excavated in the Salbir site, Gabala (Azerbaijan) which the Azerbaijan and Korean Joint team have investigated since 2009. Secondly, based upon this argument, it will be examined that a female of Caucasian Albania would

form their identity (or materialised image of identity) by continuous interpretation (or negotiation) and reinterpretation (renegotiation) for her lifetime and even after life) with 'a stock of knowledge' inherited from the past in this region.

2. A-DNA analyses on Catacomb Burials of Caucasian Albania

A total of 18 catacomb burials have been investigated in the Salbir site so far. However it is confirmed that a lot more catacomb and/or jar (or pit) burials would exist in the site. In actuality there still remain several catacomb burials to be excavated and an ancient burial was investigated in the layer (yellowish in colour) dating to the ancient period in 2023 (Fig. 1). Unfortunately, the upper part of this burial was already destroyed and so it was not possible to identify the overall shape and therefore type of burial (for example, catacomb burial or pit burial). However, it yielded 5 ancient black burnished pottery vessels, one iron knife, one iron bident, and human and animal bones. In particular, the iron knife was found between the animal bones; the other animal bones were found within the three black burnished pottery vessels (Fig. 2). Based upon a pottery type such as black burnished pottery, this burial can be approximately dated to the similar phase (for example, 1st century BC to 2nd century AD) to those found in the pit burials of Northern wall and the catacomb burials of the western part (which were dated to the ancient period).



Fig. 1. Burial No. 1 (ancient period): Investigation in process



Fig. 2. Ancient Pottery with animal bones in the burial No. 1

In addition, a total of 9 cases of human bone or tooth (where were collected from the catacomb burials of the Salbir site, dating to the ancient period) and 7 cases of animal bones were sampled for A-DNA analysis (Fig. 3). This analysis was designated to establish the various identities of the buried remains, such as sex, age, pathological characteristics, disease, etc. A-DNA from these human bones (or tooth) was

extracted and sequenced in the Max-Planck institute and Kanazawa University, Japan and analysed by Korean biologists and geneticist working on A-DNA.



Fig. 3. Extraction of A-DNA in 2023

Site	Type	Species	Generic Sex	Etc.
Salbir	No.2 Jar burial	Human	Female	
Salbir	Catacomb 3 (No. 1 jar burial)	Human	Female	
Salbir	Catacomb 16	Human	Male	
Salbir	Catacomb 17	Human	Female	
Salbir	Catacomb 8	Human	?	Contamination
Salbir	Catacomb 13	Human	?	Contamination
Salbir	Catacomb 14	Human	?	Contamination
Salbir	Salbir 2013 Pair burial	Human	Male	Reported by Dr. Jeyhun Eminli
Salbir	Salbir 2013 Pair burial	Human	Female	Reported by Dr. Jeyhun Eminli

Table 1. A tentative result of A-DNA from the Salbir site

It is of interest that the buried of catacomb 3 no.1 jar burial, No. 1 Jar burial of Catacomb 3 and catacomb 17 are identified as female whereas that of Catacomb 16 turns out to be male (Figs. 4, 5 and 6). As expected, the buried of Salbir 2013 pair burial are as of male and female (quite possibly of a couple). Unfortunately, the generic sex of catacombs 8, 13 and 14 were not identified because of contamination. The A-DNA analysis as such would inform us that the results drawn from observation on human bones, correspond to that of A-DNA analysis, and thus although the generic sex of catacombs 8 and 13 were not identified, the tentative result drawn from observation could be trustworthy to some extents.



Fig. 4. Jar Burial No. 2 and Catacomb Burial No. 3 (Jar Coffin)

Jar burial No. 2
Catacomb burial No. 3
Female 40's based upon DNA and Physical Anthropology
Jar coffin (secondary burial): Female based upon DNA analysis

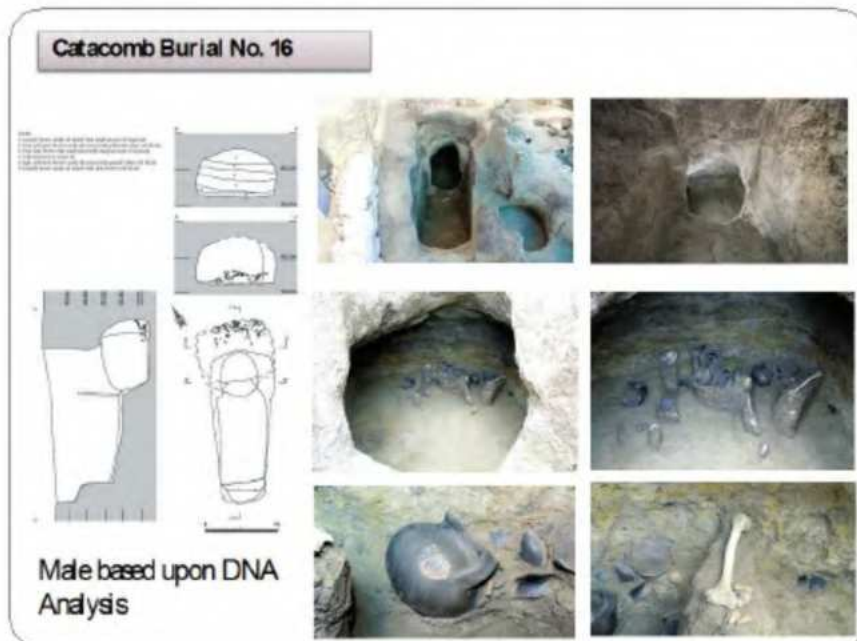


Fig. 5. Catacomb Burial No. 16

Catacomb burial No. 16
Male 40's based upon DNA Analysis
Grayish brown sandy silt mixed with small amount of charcoals
Gray yellowish brown sandy silt mixed with yellowish white soil blocks
Gray dark brown sandy silt mixed with small amount of charcoals
Yellowish brown sandy silt
Light yellowish brown sandy silt mixed with grayish white soil blocks
Grayish brown sandy silt mixed with dark brown soil blocks

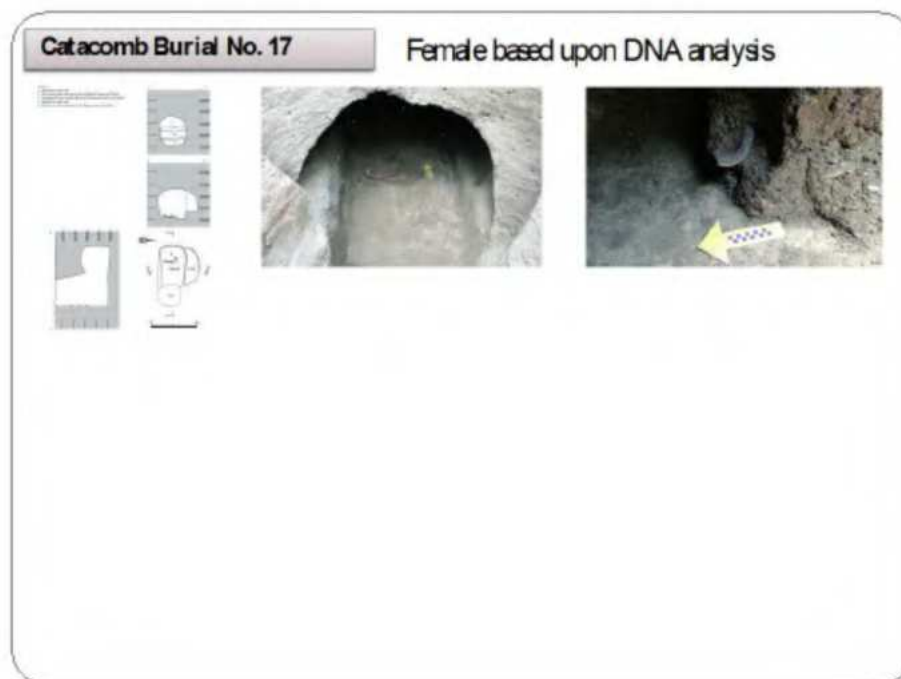


Fig. 6. Catacomb Burial No. 17

Catacomb burial No. 17
Female based upon DNA analysis
Light brown sandy silt
Dark brown sandy silt mixed with yellowish brown soil blocks
Dark grayish brown sandy silt mixed with grayish white soil blocks
Light brown sandy silt
Dark brown silty sand mixed with large amounts of pebbles

3. Formation of a female body and female warrior

Catacomb burials No. 8 and No. 13 are most conspicuous and thus interesting. From No. 8 catacomb burials (Figs. 7, 8 and 9), a large amount of pottery, Roman glass vessels, and iron weapons were found. For example, many potteries, one Parthian coin and two Roman glass vessels were discovered with many pieces of bronze objects. In particular, many iron armoury, including 50 iron arrowheads, iron military fork and spear heads, were also found in this chamber. The iron armoury was strongly influenced by that of Sarmatia. It is also clear that human bones, which are assumed to belong to a female at her late 30's with well-developed greater sciatic notch and femur, were accompanied by various burial goods as mentioned above. Although it is not so clear, but it could be suggested that deformation on skeleton would be executed.

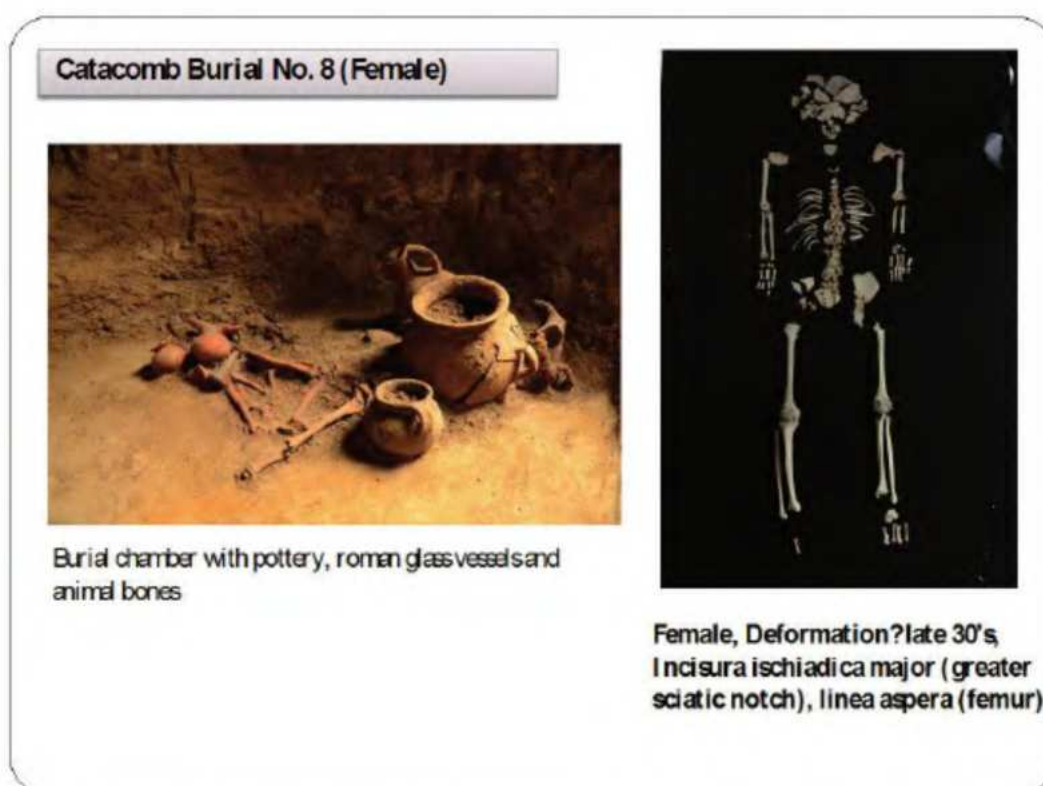


Fig. 7. Catacomb Burial No. 8

Catacomb burial No. 8 (Female)
Burial chamber with pottery, roman glass vessels and animal bones
Female, Deformation? Late 30's, Incisura ischiadica (greater sciatic notch), linea aspera (femur)



Fig. 8. Burial goods from Catacomb Burial No. 8 (1)

Catacomb burial No. 8
Roman glass vessels
Artabanus III (?-40 AD) from Parthia



Fig. 9. Burial goods from Catacomb Burial No. 8 (2)

Catacomb burial No. 8
Various Iron Objects of Sarmatian type from Catacomb No. 8

A human skeleton was found on the burial chamber floor from Catacomb Burial No. 13 (Fig. 10). The deceased had been laid to rest in a crouched position with the head and body facing eastwards and arms upon the chest. A bracelet consisting of jet, bone, carnelian, and glass beads was found near the spine of the skeleton. Four potteries were also discovered. Human bones from this catacomb burial is assumed to belong to a female in her early 40's and approx. 155 cm in height. Trace of deformation on skeleton is clearly observed and this woman gave birth 3 or 4 times.



Fig. 10. Catacomb Burial No. 13

These two female catacomb burials would tell us about several interesting points. First and foremost, it seems so clear that they would follow the specific tradition for women, which was frequently observed in the Alan, namely, deformation. Secondly, these two women burials would reveal so different images to us, a female warrior and/or mother. This difference cannot be interpreted as a simple dichotomous division between a warrior and mother. Nevertheless, it seems true that these two burials are likely to demonstrate two different images to us. Thirdly, Catacomb Burial No. 8 and the buried woman in this burial included prestigious artefacts from Sarmatia, Parthia and even Roman glass. The assumption that this woman would occupy a high status with her identity as a female warrior, is in a sense, taken for granted. However, I think that if we stay at this interpretation as reflected in this image, then this female burial would be understood as the typical but 'static' image of a female warrior of the period. It would urge us to interpret this burial as sufficient evidence to cast light on the active role of the buried in terms of the negotiation and renegotiation of her own identity from birth to death.

This process of negotiation and renegotiation can be exemplified as follows; at the first stage, namely in her infancy, she was thrown or positioned into the gender differentiated discourse evidenced by deformation, skeletal expression of gender. This discourse or expression has been constituted or executed, not by her own wish but by the adults like her parents. At the 2nd stage, in her early age, she would be aware of the difference in body by looking at her body (in particular, the shape of head). At the 3rd stage: in her youth or early adult age, she might have come to face with different types of social roles and positions,

for example, 'warrior' and/or 'mother'. Different decisions would be made for various reasons, for instance, her social hierarchy (or customs) or even her wish. It is so difficult to infer the actual role of female warrior based upon archaeological evidence. As regards this, Herodotus mentioned the following:

"The women of the Sauromatae have continued from that day to the present to observe their ancient customs, frequently hunting on horseback with their husbands, sometimes even unaccompanied; in war taking the field; and wearing the very same dress as the men. The Sauromatae speak the language of Scythia, but have never talked it correctly, because the Amazons learnt it imperfectly at the first. Their marriage-law lays it down that no girl shall wed till she has killed a man in battle. Sometimes it happens that a woman dies" (Herodotus *The Histories* Vol.4. pp. 116-117).

Although this document tells us about the Sauromatai female warrior, it seems enough for us to assume the role and position of a female warrior in Caucasian Albania. It is unclear whether the differential development of body parts and muscles would have been the cause or result of this decision. Nevertheless, it seems so sure that she would continuously subjectify herself by body movement and practice as well as body ornamentation. At final stage, in her death, the mourner would bury her body taking into consideration her process of subjectification and self-identity in her life course, as well as their own interpretation of her subjectification and identity.

4. Conclusion

In this article, it has been discussed that the formation of a female body and her identity based upon the results drawn from excavation by Azerbaijani–Korean joint excavation team and A-DNA analysis on them in the Caucasian region. Although the interpretation and hypothesis suggested in this article, would be tentative and need to be further elaborated in the future, it is of necessity to emphasise that women would negotiate and renegotiate their body and identity continuously by reflecting themselves by their own will in their life course.

Gadjiev Murtazali

Head of the Department of Archaeology, Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography, Dagestan Federal Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor (RUSSIAN FEDERATION)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4592-0527>

Abdullayev Abdul

Research Associate, Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography, Dagestan Federal Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RUSSIAN FEDERATION)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3571-5343>

Budaychiyev Arsen

Research Associate, Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography, Dagestan Federal Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RUSSIAN FEDERATION)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1718-9105>

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL STUDY OF THE JUMA MOSQUE IN DERBENT IN 2023 (Brief Report)

Abstract. The article presents the findings of the archaeological and architectural surveys of the Juma Mosque in Derbent, one of the oldest functioning mosques in the world. Based on architectural surveys, opposing opinions were previously expressed about the time of construction and the original purpose of the monument: M.I. Artamonov argued that the building was originally a Christian temple [Artamonov, 1946], while S.O. Khan-Magomedov maintained that it was originally constructed as a mosque [Khan-Magomedov, 1970]. Recent investigations conducted in 2023 have uncovered stratigraphic layers dating to the Sassanid and pre-Mongol periods. The walls, constructed using the characteristic Sassanid orthostatic masonry technique, have survived to heights of 3-5 meters. It was established that the building originally had a gable roof with roofing tiles, and the existing mihrab room was apparently built in the 11th century. The monumentality of the basilica is evident in its dimensions (interior measurements approximately 68x17 meters, with a 4:1 ratio), the thickness of its walls (approximately 1.25 meters), and its division into three naves by two rows of massive columns (18 in each row). These architectural features, combined with the presence of a gable roof, suggest that the building originally comprised two tiers. On the eastern exterior wall, aligned with the building's longitudinal axis, a projecting tower (10.75 meters in length) constructed with Sassanid masonry at its base likely represents a rectangular apse. The upper part of the eastern wall and the tower projection were built using Byzantine brickwork techniques, employing large fired bricks (28-29x2-29x4 cm, occasionally with sides measuring 27 cm or 30 cm) with horizontal lime mortar joints matching the thickness of the bricks. The building was undoubtedly the largest in the city, serving an important public function. Compelling evidence suggests that the structure was originally a monumental Christian basilica built in Derbent during the tenure of the Catholicos of Albania, Lpinia, and Chor, Ter-Abas (551–595). It was subsequently converted into a mosque in 115 A.H. (733 A.D.).

Keywords: Derbent, Sassanid period, Juma Mosque, Christian basilica, architecture

In 2023, as part of an ongoing restoration project, the Derbent Archaeological Expedition of the Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography of the Dagestan Federal Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences conducted archaeological and architectural research of the Juma Mosque in Derbent – one of the world’s oldest operational mosques. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements of Federal Law No. 73 dated June 25, 2002 On Cultural Heritage (Historical and Cultural Monuments) of the Peoples of the Russian Federation as part of the initiative to ensure the preservation of the territory of the federally significant cultural heritage site (archaeological monument) “Cultural Layer of the Fifth to the Early Twentieth Century of the Landmark ‘Citadel and Historic City within the Fortress Walls of Derbent’”, as part of the “Restoration and Landscaping of the Federally Significant Cultural Heritage Site ‘Juma Mosque, Eighth Century’” project.

The Juma Mosque is one of the most prominent architectural monuments of Derbent. After the campaigns of the Arab commanders al-Jarrah ibn Abdallah and Maslama ibn Abd al-Malik (brother of Caliphs al-Walid I and Hisham) in the Eastern Caucasus in the early eighth century, Derbent (Arabic: *Bab al-Abwab*) finally became part of the Arab Caliphate. Under the governorship of Maslama in the Caucasus – and since March, 732 under that of Marwan ibn Muhammad (the succeeding caliph), Bab al-Abwab became the main stronghold of the Caliphate in the Caucasus and an important administration, political, religious, and ideological center. Under Maslama who was a prominent figure in Islamization of Derbent and its surroundings, during the period from 725 to 731 AD, 24,000 soldiers with their families were resettled to the city from Damascus, Hims, Kufa, Jazira, and other regions of the Middle East. According to written sources, the city was divided into quarters (*qisim*), each having its own mosque named after the place of origin or ethnic affiliation of its inhabitants: Khazar, Palestinian, Damascus, Hims, Qaysar, Jazira, Mosul. In addition, there was the monumental Friday (congregational) mosque—the Juma Mosque (Arabic: *Masjid al-Jami*) [Шихсаидов, 1969, с.89-90].

Apart from narrative sources, such as al-Baladhuri (d. 892), *Derbend-nameh*, the construction of the mosque is also attested by a linear Arabic-Persian relief inscription (lines 4 and 5 are written in Persian) above the entrance on the masonry inside the arched niche of the central portal:

[1] *Enter in peace and security!*

[2] *In 115 AH – may Allah bless and grant him and all his family peace! Year 115.*

[3] *Allah and His Messenger. O Allah, bless Muhammad and his family*

[4] *Muhammad! The mosque collapsed. In the seven hundred and seventy [year] restored*

[5] *Afriburuz ibn Tahmuras with the help of the Almighty. 770*

[Лавров, 1966, с.120, №289].

115 AH corresponds to February 733 – February 734 AD. The inscription also reports the destruction of the mosque and its restoration in 770 AH (August 1368 – August 1369 AD) by the order of Emir Afriburuz ibn Tahmuras. It should be noted that the inscription on the western end of the portal, made in the same script, reports the restoration of the mosque by Ustad (building master) Taj al-Din ibn Musa Banna Bakui (an architect from Baku) [Лавров, 1966, с.120-121, №290].

The partial collapse of the mosque was likely the consequence of an earthquake. This may be evidenced by a now-lost inscription above the portico of the Kyrkhlyar-Kapy gate about the restoration of the gate in the same 770 AH [Лавров, 1966, с.121, №291]. The simultaneous restoration of such monumental structures – the Juma Mosque and the main gates of the northern city wall – may indirectly indicate a strong earthquake that damaged these architectural sites.

Regarding the topographical position of the Juma Mosque complex, it was located in the center of the upper part of the medieval shahristan – the inhabited and built-up part of Derbent between the city’s northern and southern defensive walls – with its eastern end closely adjoining the upper transverse wall

which connected the northern and southern city walls and limited the city's space between it and the Naryn-Kala citadel. The middle transverse wall stretched along the Salmana Street and the Svoboda Square; parts of it were discovered during construction. Finally, the lower transverse wall, now newly exposed, ran through the coastal part of the city [Гаджиев М.С., Гаджиев Б.Х., 2021, с.397-401].

Structurally, all the transverse walls are similar to the Sasanian defensive walls of Derbent, erected during the reign of Shahanshah Khosrow I Anushirvan (531–579) in the mid-sixth century, more precisely at the very end of the 560s (for the absolute date of construction of the northern defensive wall and the citadel of Derbent, see: [Гаджиев, 2006, с.77-94; Gadjeiev, 2008, p.1-15; Gadjeiev, 2016]). They had a dry double-sided armor cladding of large rectangular slabs laid in a Flemish bond (stretcher and header), with rubble stone back filling on a strong lime mortar. The transverse walls served an important defensive function, dividing the shahristan into four enclosed sections, communicating only through gates flanked by towers, thereby providing additional defensive barriers against an attacking enemy in case of a successful assault on any section: the enemy would find itself trapped between the powerful walls [Гаджиев М.С., Гаджиев Б.Х., 2024].

Archaeological investigations of the Juma Mosque have never been conducted before. However, there have been a number of visual architectural surveys of the monument. Based on these studies, opposing opinions have been voiced about the time of construction and the original purpose of the monument.

The first researcher to draw attention to this unique monument was M.I.Artamonov who conducted visual survey in Derbent in 1937 as part of the North Caucasian Archaeological Expedition that he headed for the Institute of the History of Material Culture of the USSR Academy of Sciences. In his article titled *The Ancient Derbent*, he made but a passing mention of the Juma Mosque but provided valuable insight. An examination of the monument allowed him to conclude as follows: "Undoubtedly, the mosque was adapted from a building constructed simultaneously with the oldest part of the stone fortifications. The walls of the mosque were erected using the same technique as in Anushirvan's construction. Based on the blueprint, the structure appeared to be a basilica, supporting the legend that the Derbent Juma Mosque was once a Christian temple" [Артамонов, 1946, с.141-143]. M.I.Artamonov also made the first fairly detailed plan of the mosque.

In 1949–early 1950s, S.O.Khan-Magomedov carried out architectural studies of the Juma Mosque, which were later described in his article *The Juma Mosque in Derbent* [Хан-Магомедов, 1970, с.202-220]. The researcher noted that the main masonry on the inner side of the mosque's southern and western walls is composed of large, well-dressed stretcher and header stones [Хан-Магомедов, 1970, с.203], using the complex orthostatic technique typical of Sasanian fortifications of Derbent. He also considered the hypothesis of the mosque being reconstructed from a church. He cited the existing legends about the church past of the Juma Mosque, recorded in the late 18th–first half of the 19th century (P.G.Butkov, I.N.Berezin, J.Klaproth), drew attention to A.A.Bestuzhev-Marlinsky's report on the remains of an altar ("the traces of the now destroyed altar are obvious"), as well as the similarity of the masonry of the mosque walls to that of the Sasanian fortifications of Derbent, built under Khosrow Anushirvan (531–579) [Хан-Магомедов, 1970, с.209-211]. He also cited the opinion of L.S.Bretanitsky who believed that the construction of the Juma Mosque "significantly preceded the rise of Islam", as evidenced, in his opinion, by "the construction features of the most ancient parts of the mosque and its basilica plan, characteristic of cult structures of Caucasian Albania and adjacent areas" [Бретаницкий, 1966, с.159-160]. S.O.Khan-Magomedov noted that "while being similar to the oldest masonry of the fortress walls, the masonry of the lower parts of the Juma Mosque also has significant differences", namely, "its stones, in contrast to the masonry of the fortress walls, have a regular shape and secondly, in addition to rows alternating stretchers and headers, in the masonry of the Juma Mosque, there are rows of stones laid flat", and this type of masonry found in the ruins of the Mountain Wall (Dag-bary) is characteristic of the second period of construction of the Derbent defensive system, which he attributed to the Arab period [Хан-Магомедов, 1970, с.216]; also

see: [Хан-Магомедов, 1966, с.227-243]; on the Mountain Wall Dag-bary – a component of the Derbent defensive system – also see: [Гаджиев, 2008, с.8-36; Gadjiev, 2017]. However, such a combined masonry technique, as established by studies of Dag-bary, is also characteristic of the Sasanian fortification. At the same time, the researcher noted that the Juma Mosque blueprint, save for its dome part, “very much resembles Syrian basilicas”, but has “significant differences” to which he drew attention [Хан-Магомедов, 1970, с.213]. Eventually, the researcher came to a conclusion opposite to that of M.I.Artamonov, “that the Juma Mosque was built as a Muslim religious building and was not reconstructed from a church, that its most ancient parts date back to the period of Arab domination in Dagestan (8th–10th centuries), and that the mosque was repeatedly rebuilt and repaired, with its spatial arrangement not being formed before the 14th century” [Хан-Магомедов, 1970, с.220].

Therefore, there are two opposing viewpoints regarding the origin of the Juma Mosque: according to the first, it was rebuilt from a Christian basilica; the second argues that it was originally constructed as a mosque.

The mosque (Fig. 1) is rectangular, measuring about 68x17 meters within, with its long axis running from west to east with a slight deviation to the north. The interior space of the mosque consists of three naves (the central nave is 6.3-6.4 meters wide, the side naves are 4 meters wide each) separated by square low pillars (appr. 0.97x0.97 meters) with shaped capitals. The pillars across the building’s long axis are spanned with pointed arches. The distance between the pillars is 2.5 meters with the central section’s span being 3.8 meters. Each section of the side naves is crowned with semicircular vaults. All sections of the central nave are covered with mirror vaults and the central section with a small faceted pointed dome. On the southern side, the central nave adjoins a square hall crowned with a large pointed dome about 9 meters in diameter and its southern half projecting beyond the line of the southern wall of the mosque. Here, in the middle of the southern wall of this hall, there is the mihrab. This mihrab projection under the dome has an overall width of 13.8 meters (including side rooms and staircases), extending beyond the inner line of the southern wall by approximately 5.25 meters. Evidently, this mihrab projection (a hall open from the northern side) served as a maqsurah, i.e. a space partitioned off from the main hall in the mosque, where the ruler performed namaz with his close associates and where the mosque’s imam resided. Presumably, there used to be a screen, curtain, or ornate lattice separating it from the main hall.

Three exploratory trenches were made at the monument both outside the southern (trench 46, measuring 4x2 meters) and northern (trench 47, measuring 2x2 meters) walls and inside it—adjacent to the central part of the eastern wall between the two abutments of the central nave (trench 48, measuring 6.45x1 meter). The trenches were made to determine the stratigraphy of these areas, the thickness and nature of cultural layers, their chronology, the nature of the lower courses of the mosque walls masonry hidden by cultural deposits, their dating, and other data.

The investigation completed allowed for the determination of the thickness of the cultural layers at the building’s southern, eastern, and northern walls and identification of layers of the Sasanian (5th–6th centuries) and pre-Mongol periods (10th – early 13th centuries). The typical Sasanian orthostatic masonry walls have been preserved to a height of 3-4.8 meters (Figs. 2-4). Based on the similarity of the building’s masonry with that of the Sasanian stone fortifications of Derbent and stratigraphic data, the time of its construction has been determined to be the turn of the 560s–570s.

It has been established that the building originally had a gable tiled roof, which is evidenced by whole tegulae and imbrices and numerous fragments of them found in the area. The building appears to once have two stories, based on its monumentality, three naves, gable roof, and massive pillars. An extremely significant finding was made during restoration work on one of the pillars after the later plaster was removed: the remnants of an ancient arch abutment were discovered in the center of the structure, showing that the arches were longitudinal rather than transverse.

The excavations showed that the existing mihrab chamber used as the *maqsurah* was evidently constructed in the 11th century, which is evidenced by the junction between the chamber's wall and the earlier Sasanian masonry, as well as stratigraphic observations. The cultural deposits dated to the 10th – early 13th centuries on the one side adjoin the maqsurah wall (upper part of the layer) and on the other side, underly (lower part of the layer) this attached chamber. The construction of the extensive mihrab chamber, which entailed the reconfiguration of the mosque building, was likely due to the acute military-political situation in Derbent, i.e. the struggle periodically breaking out between the city's emirs and the "people of al-Bab", the merchant and artisan elite, which is vividly described in the Tarikh al-Bab chronicle [Минорский, 1963].

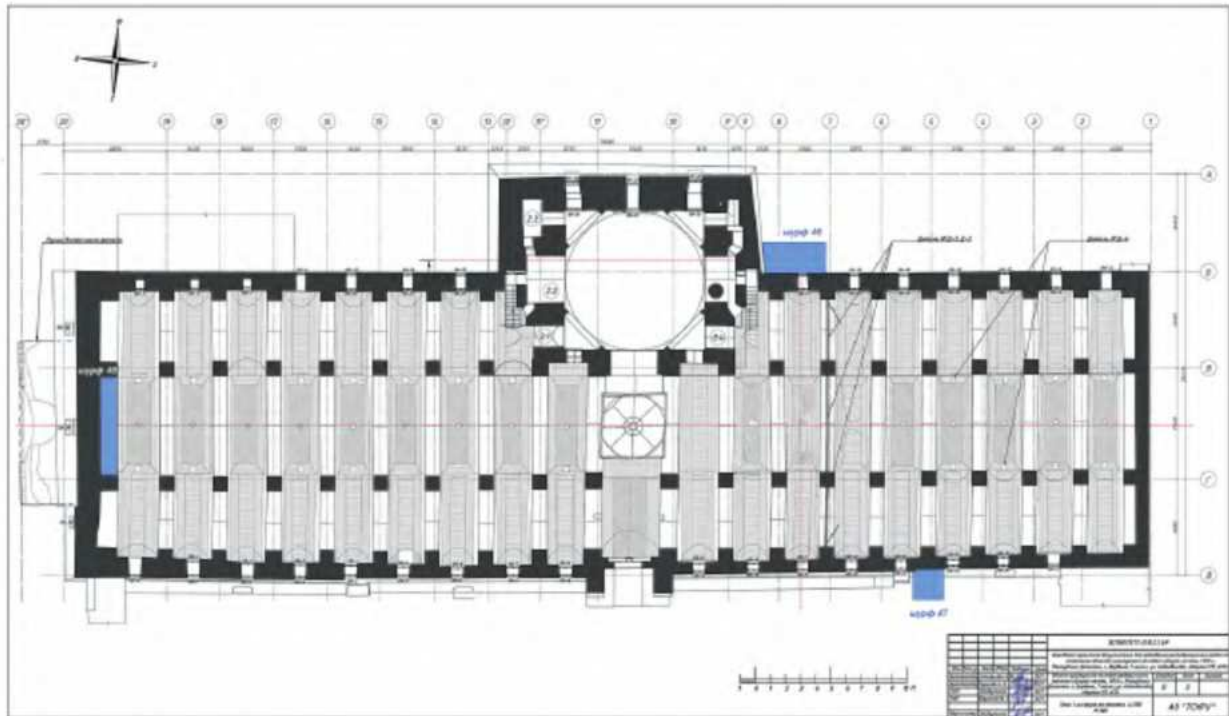
The examination of the interior space showed that the building had no western entrance as the western wall is entirely constructed in the typical Sasanian masonry technique and shows no traces of muring up or rebuilding (Fig. 4). This calls into question whether the northern wall had a central entrance, most likely positioned where the current doorway is.

Outside the eastern wall, precisely along the longitudinal axis of the building, there is a rectangular tower projection (10.75 meters long; projection about 3.75 meters) with Sasanian masonry in the lower part (Fig. 5), which was probably a rectangular apse (apsidal projection), possibly with a crypt with a semicircular arched vault, located beneath it. The Sasanian stone masonry of the eastern wall, almost entirely hidden by cultural deposits both inside and outside the building, is about 4.85 meters high. The upper part of the eastern wall of the building and the tower projection are made in Byzantine brickwork using large fired bricks (28-29x28-29x4 cm, sometimes with 27 cm, 30 cm sides) with horizontal lime mortar joints equal in thickness to the bricks (Fig. 6). The type of the joint between the Sasanian stone masonry and the so-called Byzantine brickwork of the wall and the rectangular tower projection allows us to believe that they were constructed in one and the same building chronological period.

The excavations revealed that the eastern wall of the building was attached to an existing massive wall constructed of the so-called Sasanian mud brick (measuring 40-41x40-41x10-11 cm) preserved to a height of over 2.0 meters and resting on bedrock. Considering this fact, it can be presumed that here the upper transverse stone wall of the city, like along the northern city defensive wall [Гаджиев М.С., Гаджиев Б.Х., 2024], mirrored the outline of the city's existing mud-brick transverse defensive wall. The construction of the mud-brick fortifications of Derbent, as previously established by archaeological research in conjunction with narrative sources data, is dated to Shahanshah Yazdegerd II reign (439–458), more precisely to the late 440s [Кудрявцев, 1978, с.243-257; 1979, с.31-43; Гаджиев, 1989, с.61-76; 2011, с.115-117, рис. 10-12; 2013, с.130-133, рис. 1, 2, 11].

Summing up what has been said, the archaeological and architectural studies showed that the Juma Mosque was built around the turn of the 560s–570s, in the same chronological period as the Sasanian stone fortifications of Derbent. Its internal dimensions are approximately 68x17 meters, or a 4:1 ratio, with walls that are about 1.25 meters thick. The edifice is divided into three naves by two rows of pillars, each having 18 pillars. It was evidently the largest in the city and undoubtedly played an important public role. The building has certain parallels with early Christian basilicas of Syria, Iraq, and the South Caucasus, including its rectangular altar projection (Der il-Kahf, Kerratin, Deir Semaan, Ayn Shayah, Qusayr, Samtseverisi, Idleti, Kamravan, and others), but differs in significantly larger dimensions. The building was rebuilt into a mosque in 733–734.

Strong evidence has been gathered from archaeological and architectural studies that this edifice was initially erected as a Christian basilica in Derbent under the patronage of Ter-Abbas, the Catholicos of Albania, Lpinia and Chola (551/2–595/6). At the same time, it should be noted that there are still a lot of unanswered questions related to the architectural history of this unique early medieval monument, which calls for more research, mostly in the form of archaeological excavations.



*Fig. 1. Derbent. Juma Mosque.
Plan of the mosque with the location of pits 46, 47, 48 marked*



Fig. 2. Derbent. Juma Mosque. Southern wall. Pit 46. Brick and stone Sassanid masonry of the outer façade of the southern wall of the mosque. View from the SSE (South-South-East)



*Fig. 3. Derbent. Juma Mosque. Interior. Inner façade of the southern wall.
View from the NNW (North-Northwest)*



*Fig. 4. Derbent. Juma Mosque. Interior. Inner façade of the western wall (central nave).
View from the NEE (North-East-East)*



*Fig. 5. Derbent. Juma Mosque. External projection with an arched chamber at the eastern wall of the mosque:
1 – view from the NEE (North-East-East), 2 – view from the NE (North-East)*



*Fig. 6. Derbent. Juma Mosque. Interior. Eastern wall.
Adjacency of the pilaster to the wall (1) and the nature of the brickwork (2)*

REFERENCES:

1. Артамонов М.И. Древний Дербент (*Ancient Derbent*) // Советская археология, VIII, 1946, с.121-144.
2. Бретаницкий Л.С. Зодчество Азербайджана XII–XV вв. и его место в архитектуре Переднего Востока (*Architecture of Azerbaijan in the 12th–15th centuries and its Place in the Architecture of the Near East*). М.: Наука, Главная ред. Восточной литературы, 1960, 559 с.
3. Гаджиев М.С. Даг-бары – Великая Кавказская стена (*Dag-bary – The Great Caucasian Wall*) // Дагестанские святыни. Кн.2. Сост. и отв. ред. А.Р.Шихсаидов. Махачкала, 2008, с.8-36.
4. Гаджиев М.С. Исследования сырцово-глиняной фортификации цитадели Дербента сасанидского времени (по материалам раскопок P-XI и P-XIII) (*Research on the Unfired Fortifications of the Sasanian-Era Citadel of Derbent (Based on Excavation Materials P-XI and P-XIII)*) // Древняя и средневековая архитектура Дагестана. Махачкала, 1989, с.61-76.
5. Гаджиев М.С. Определение абсолютной даты строительства цитадели и северной городской стены Дербента и произведенных трудозатрат (интерпретация среднеперсидской надписи №3) (*Determining the Absolute Date of the Construction of the Citadel and Northern City Wall of Derbent and the Labor Costs Involved (Interpretation of Middle Persian Inscription No.3)*) // Вестник Института истории, археологии и этнографии, №1, 2006, с.77-94.
6. Гаджиев М.С. Раскопки в Дербенте в 2010 г. (*Excavations in Derbent in 2010*) // Вестник Института истории, археологии и этнографии, №3, 2011, с.110-129.
7. Гаджиев М.С. Раскопки в цитадели Дербента в 2011 г. (*Excavations in the Citadel of Derbent in 2011*) // Вестник Института истории, археологии и этнографии, №1, 2013, с.122-147.
8. Гаджиев М.С., Гаджиев Б.Х. К исторической топографии Дербента в поздне-сасанидский период (*On the Historical Topography of Derbent in the Late Sasanian Period*) // XXXIII Крупновские чтения. Достижения и перспективы изучения археологии Северного Кавказа в XX – первой четверти XXI века. Материалы Международной научной конференции, посвященной 120-летию со дня рождения Е.И. Крупнова. М.: ИА РАН, 2024 (in print).
9. Гаджиев М.С., Гаджиев Б.Х. Новые исследования прибрежной поперечной стены Дербента середины VI века (*New Research on the Coastal Transverse Wall of Derbent in the Mid-6th Century*) // Морские исследования и образование (MARESEDU-2021). Труды X Международной научно-практической конференции. Тверь, 2021, с.397-401.
10. Кудрявцев А.А. Длинные стены на Восточном Кавказе (*Long Walls in the Eastern Caucasus*) // Вопросы истории, №11, 1979, с.31-43; Лавров Л.И. Эпиграфические памятники Северного Кавказа на арабском, персидском и турецком языках. Ч.1. Надписи X–XVII вв. Тексты, переводы, комментарии, введение и приложения. М.: Наука, 1966, 300 с.
11. Кудрявцев А.А. О датировке первых сасанидских укреплений в Дербенте (*On the Dating of the First Sasanian Fortifications in Derbent*) // Советская археология, №3, 1978, с.243-257.
12. Минорский В.Ф. История Ширвана и Дербенда X–XI вв. (*History of Shirvan and Derbent in the 10th–11th centuries*). М.: Восточная литература, 1963.
13. Хан-Магомедов С.О. Джума-мечеть в Дербенте (*Juma Mosque in Derbent*) // Советская археология, №1, 1970, с.202-220.
14. Хан-Магомедов С.О. Раннесредневековая горная стена в Дагестане (*Early Medieval Mountain Wall in Dagestan*) // Советская археология, №1, 1966, с.227-243.
15. Шихсаидов А.Р. Ислам в средневековом Дагестане (VII–XV вв.) (*Islam in Medieval Dagestan (7th–15th centuries)*). Махачкала: Типография Дагестанского ФАН СССР, 1969, 251 с.
16. Gadjiev M. Dagh bary // Encyclopædia Iranica, online edition, 2017, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dagh-bary> (accessed on 20 October 2017).
17. Gadjiev M. Darband Epigraphy. i. Middle Persian Inscriptions // Encyclopædia Iranica, online edition, 2016, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/darband-epigraphy-01> (accessed on 26 January 2016).
18. Gadjiev M. On the Construction Date of the Derbent Fortification Complex // Iran and the Caucasus. 2008. V.12. №1, P.1-15.

Aliyev Idris*Leading Research Associate of the Institute of Archaeology
and Anthropology of ANAS, PhD in History*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN THE AREA OF “KHINALIG STATE HISTORICAL–ARCHITECTURAL AND ETHNOGRAPHIC RESERVE”

Abstract. Archaeological reconnaissance conducted at the “Kimaligebrish” archaeological site revealed the presence of an ancient settlement and cemetery spanning nearly 1 hectare. In the southeastern part of the site, more than 15 kurgans were documented. Based on the examination of the excavated graves and uncovered materials, the burial complexes can be unequivocally dated to the 5th century BC – 8th century AD. The territory of the “Kimaligebrish” archaeological site held strategic importance during the political and military processes between the Romans and Parthians, Byzantines and Sasanians, and Khazars and Arabs. Artifacts representing these historical events have been preserved in the soil of Khinalig to this day. The complex contains material-cultural traces of the Sasanians, Alans, and Arabs.

Keywords: Khinalig, settlement, stone cist graves, archaeological sites, findings

In the 1970s and early 1980s, archaeological work was conducted for the first time in the areas included within the Khinalig Reserve. Generally, the sites located in Khinalig and its surrounding mountainous and foothill regions were attributed to the medieval period. For many years, it was assumed that sedentary lifestyles did not exist in the mountainous northeastern regions of Azerbaijan during earlier periods. Due to the brief duration of these studies, it was concluded that Khinalig’s chronology was limited to the early medieval period.

The study of this region is connected with the expedition organized in 1934 by anthropologist Prof.N.I.Anserov. The expedition was actively participated in by Dr.Hajizadeh and M.M.Afandizadeh. It gathered data on the social and living conditions, demographic information, and physical characteristics of the Khinalig and Kryz communities. One of the participants, docent M.M.Afandizadeh, who studied sanitary and living conditions, collected extensive and detailed ethnographic information about the Khinalig population. Subsequent research efforts accumulated significant knowledge about the linguistics and ethnography of Khinalig; however, no information on archaeological excavations in the area was provided. Following the establishment of the historical-ethnographic reserve in Khinalig, restoration work was carried out on some residential houses to preserve the architectural structure of the village. In parallel, excavation work was conducted on archaeological sites in the historic section of the village and its surroundings.

In August 2011, archaeological excavations were conducted on a kurgan discovered in a location known as Zangar. Preliminary results suggest that the studied kurgan dates back to the 2nd millennium BC. While the materials uncovered from the site generally show analogies with similar sites found in the plains of Azerbaijan, traces of Northern Caucasus cultures were also observed. Of even greater significance is the site of a *settlement* near the kurgan, located in the Zangar area, which dates back to the 3rd millennium BC. This site is particularly intriguing as a residential area. It should first be noted that, until now, no kurgan or settlement had been discovered at such altitudes in the Greater Caucasus Mountains. For this reason, even the discovery of a temporary settlement here holds substantial scientific importance. Moreover, this site is not merely a temporary settlement but appears to belong to the category of sites that confirm

long-term human habitation, marking its debut in archaeological research. Preliminary exploratory excavations revealed that the settlement spans over 0.5 hectares and contains a cultural layer 150-200 cm thick. The findings confirm its association with the widespread Kur-Aras archaeological culture. The discovery of this 3rd-millennium BC culture at such high altitudes provides substantial evidence for the distribution of this culture in Azerbaijan.

Based on recent findings, it can be asserted that the medieval village of Khinalig was established on the foundations of older settlements. While Khinalig had long been registered as a medieval site, its origins should be attributed to the Early Bronze Age, thereby providing evidence of uninterrupted settlement processes in the area throughout history.

Since the establishment of the “Khinalig State Historical-Architectural and Ethnographic Reserve”, annual archaeological research has been conducted by the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography (now the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology) of ANAS in the Khinalig village and its surrounding sites, starting in 2010 under the Reserve’s initiative. As a result, numerous new sites of significant scientific value have been discovered and studied.

On March 2, 2020, the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of ANAS, under the leadership of PhD in History I.N.Aliyev, carried out archaeological work in the territory of the “Khinalig State Historical-Architectural and Ethnographic Reserve” within the framework of the STA-FD-015/20 agreement signed with the State Tourism Agency of Azerbaijan.

Zangar ancient settlement. The Zangar site is located 10 km southeast of the Khinalig village, along the Quba–Khinalig road, covering an area of approximately 2 hectares (GPS coordinates: 41.11.53.2; 048.12.48.8; elevation 1963 m above sea level). During our archaeological research in 2011, a wealth of material culture artifacts was uncovered at this site. These include various bronze ornaments of different sizes and shapes (pendants, amulets, earrings, needles, etc.) and numerous beads made from various materials such as agate, stone, glass paste, and seashells. The period and scientific significance of the site are determined based on the discovered materials and excavation results. These initial investigations allow us to make certain conclusions about the site. Firstly, an analysis of the ceramics shows that the pottery from the settlement reflects the main technological and decorative characteristics typical of the Early Bronze Age.

The discovery of the widespread Kur-Aras archaeological culture from the 3rd millennium BC at such a high mountain altitude provides substantial evidence for the distribution of this culture in the northeastern region of Azerbaijan.



Zangar settlement

Barkshane (Inga) settlement. The ancient settlement is located 2 km south of Khinalig (GPS coordinates: N 412088.6; E 0430981.8; elevation 2100 m above sea level). Archaeological research conducted in 2012 identified the settlement’s area as approximately 1.5 hectares. At the center of the site, there are two closely situated elevated mounds. The site is separated from the Khinalig village by the Gudyalchay River, to the north by the Deyirmanchay River, and to the east by the Giblachay River. The mounds have a height

of 8-12 m, a length of 37-45 m from west to east, and a width of 30 m from north to south. Although the second mound has a similar height, it covers a relatively larger area. Pottery fragments of various sizes were discovered across both mounds. Notably, remains of constructions built with river stones are also clearly visible at the site. Based on preliminary investigations, the site can be dated to the 2nd millennium BC. While reconnaissance work has been conducted on the mentioned sites, initiating large-scale excavations would require significant time and resources. For this reason, we launched archaeological research primarily at the site known as Kima Ligebrish.



Barkshane (Inga) settlement

Kimaligebrish (ancient cemetery). This burial site, locally called “Kima Ligebrish”, is an ancient cemetery located 2 km southeast of Khinalig (GPS coordinates: 41 10 05.52 N; 048 08 56.20 E; elevation 1968 m above sea level). Situated on the right bank of the Qudyalchay River, the cemetery spans approximately 3 hectares. Within this site, stone cist graves have been studied. The site has been well-preserved due to its use as grazing land by the local population for decades. Between 2016 and 2019, reconnaissance and archaeological excavations were carried out at this site. In the northern part of the area, fortification remains were discovered, while stone cist graves were found in the southern section. Initially, the expedition began excavation in the southern area of the site, specifically in the third excavation section covering 100 square meters. Artifacts uncovered included surface-level ceramic handles, fragments of various pottery vessels, and beads of different types, all dating to antiquity. In 2020, archaeological investigations were deemed necessary in the southern part of the excavation site, as some of the stone cist graves faced the threat of collapse due to natural factors.



Kimaligebrish (ancient cemetery)

Grave No. 19. The grave is oriented east–west, measuring 150 cm in length, 38-40 cm in width, and 40 cm in depth. It was constructed using three rows of river stones. The human skeleton buried within was laid on its back with the face oriented northward. A perforation measuring 2-3 cm in diameter was observed at the top of the skull. Other bones were found in a decayed and damaged state. The only artifact recovered from the grave was a blue evil eye bead.



Grave No. 19



Grave No. 19.



A human skull with ante-mortem trauma

Grave No. 20. This grave, also constructed using three rows of river stones, was oriented northwest-southeast. It measured 170 cm in length, 54 cm in width, and 42 cm in depth. The buried individual's knee and leg bones were slightly bent. Mandible fragments were found in the lumbar area. At the center of the grave, a pointed iron tool was uncovered.



Grave No. 20

Grave No. 21. Aligned in the same direction as Grave No. 20, this grave was constructed using three rows of river stones. It measures 160 cm in length, 50 cm in width, and 40 cm in depth. Oriented east-west, its surface was covered with flat river stones. The skullcap of the buried individual showed visible signs of damage, but no other remains of the skeleton were found. Artifacts recovered from the western part of the grave, near a fragment of the left foot bone, included a bronze pin and decoration. The upper part of the pin was flat and triangular in shape, while the lower part was crafted by twisting. The bronze decoration was adorned with circular pendants and rings strung on a leather cord. Additionally, a pointed iron tool and a small black zoomorphic single-handed vessel were discovered in the grave.



Grave No. 21



Bronze ornament



Bronze pin

Grave No. 23. The grave is oriented northeast-southwest, with its surface covered by river stones. The dimensions of the grave are as follows: 180 cm in length, 30-40 cm in width, and 30-35 cm in depth. It was constructed using three rows of river stones. The skeleton was in a supine position, with the face oriented northward. The temporal bone of the skull showed signs of damage, and similar damage was observed on other bones, including the arms and legs. The mandible was missing from the skull. Artifacts discovered in the grave included a crescent-shaped bronze pendant, small agate beads, and an evil eye bead.



Grave No. 23

Miniature bronze axe

Grave No. 24. This grave is located adjacent to Grave No. 23 and shows signs of damage: 170 cm in length, 35 cm in width, and 30 cm in depth. Apart from the leg bones, other skeletal remains were observed in a fragmented state. The skull was found positioned on the western side of the grave. Artifacts discovered in the grave included a piece of lead and an evil eye bead.



Grave No. 24

Grave No. 25. This grave is located beneath Grave No. 22. It is oriented east-west, with the head positioned toward the south. The dimensions are 170 cm in length, 45 cm in width, and 55 cm in depth. The skull showed signs of damage in the temporal region, and the mandible was found on the western side of the burial chamber. No other human bones were recovered. The burial chamber is rectangular and constructed using five rows of neatly arranged river stones.



Grave No. 25

Grave No. 26. The grave's stone cover was partially removed at the center, and the burial chamber had been looted. On the southern wall of the grave, a human mandible and small bones were discovered.

*Grave No. 26**Bronze fibula*

Grave No. 27. The grave was constructed from river stones and oriented east-west, measuring 200 cm in length, 45 cm in width, and 40 cm in depth. The stone cover of the grave had been disturbed. Within the grave, parts of the skeleton, including leg bones and the skull, were found, but the mandible and other bones were missing. Despite the looting, scattered interesting artifacts were uncovered from the grave. Notable findings include items made of bronze, iron, and silver. Among these, a bronze phalera depicting a human face—likely a representation of Heracles—stands out as an example of Roman-Byzantine culture. Additional discoveries include two silver coins attributed to the reign of Khosrow II, an ornamental element of armor, an iron spearhead, and an iron arrowhead. Ceramic artifacts were less frequently encountered, but given their uniqueness, a detailed classification of the pottery is provided to highlight their significance.

*Grave No. 27**Silver coin of Khosrow II*



Bronze standard



Bronze ram figurine and bracelet



Bronze ornament



Bronze bracelet



Military outfit element



Armor element (phalera)



Silver ornament



Iron arrowhead



Iron spearhead



Iron amulet



Jugs

Archaeological investigations within the Khinalig State Historical–Architectural and Ethnographic Reserve were conducted under the agreement signed on May 17, 2023 (STA-FD-49/23), between the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of ANAS and the State Tourism Agency of Azerbaijan.

Artifacts were uncovered from Graves No. 10, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32, including skeletal remains and various items that included: **silver** artifacts (a bowl, a medallion with chest decoration, and a dirham coin dating to the early 8th century AD); **bronze** artifacts (pendant-type ornaments, four bracelets, various types of pins and pin-like objects, two rings, one pair of earrings, a large umbo, a tubular head ornament, a plate decorated with punches, an oval-sectioned bracelet, small rings, spiral wires, a buckle, fragments of a dagger sheath, a knife handle, and a twisted diadem with flattened and folded ends); **iron** artifacts (spear fragments, spearheads, a dagger hilt, a crescent-shaped pendant, knife fragments, a buckle head, and remains of small daggers); spherical pendants, paired buttons, evil eye beads of various sizes and colors made from glass paste and agate, and beads crafted from gold, bronze, and gemstones. These types of beads are also commonly found in archaeological sites in the Caucasus and Eastern Black Sea regions.

During the final stage of the expedition, exploratory work in the Khinalig village area led to the discovery of a *stone cist grave* in the southeastern part of the village. The grave contained human skeletal remains, animal bones, and two ceramic vessels. The ceramic samples found in Khinalig can be dated to the early 3rd–2nd millennia BC. Similar types of ceramics have also been uncovered in archaeological sites of the same period across Azerbaijan. Notably, analogous ceramics have been found in the Absheron kurgans as well. In addition to these ancient findings, archaeological discoveries in the Khinalig area also included ceramic fragments from the 10th–12th centuries AD. However, these earlier studies did not provide sufficient evidence to conclude continuous settlement in the village. The newly examined materials, combined with previous discoveries, now allow us to suggest that Khinalig was a site of permanent habitation.



Beads from Grave No. 10



Silver dirham found near the skeleton mandible (8th century AD)

Conclusion. Archaeological reconnaissance conducted at the “Kimaligebrish” archaeological site revealed the presence of an ancient settlement and cemetery spanning nearly 1 hectare. In the southeastern part of the site, more than 15 kurgans were documented. Excavations carried out in the foothill area of the site yielded findings and archaeological materials that serve as substantial sources for understanding Khinalig’s ancient past and broad historical chronology. Based on the studied graves and uncovered materials, the burial complexes can be definitively dated to the 5th century BC to the 8th century AD. Both earlier discoveries and recent materials suggest the presence of a continuous, long-standing local culture with a stable settlement. Furthermore, it is notable that certain artifacts and burial customs from this site reflect significant influence from Caucasian and Dagestani cultures during the periods spanning the 5th century BC to the 8th century AD. Khinalig held considerable strategic military importance in the Greater Caucasus region and bore witness to major historical events. Among the finds from 4th-century burials were socketed arrowheads of the Scythian-Sarmatian type. This type of weapon was widespread in the archaeological sites of the Caucasus, the Volga region, Crimea, Siberia, and Azerbaijan, indicating the advancement of these tribes into the area we are studying [Давудов, 1996, с.128].

In the graves dating back to ancient times and the early medieval period, weapons and jewelry were among the recovered artifacts. Similar materials have also been widely represented in archaeological sites across the regions historically part of Caucasian Albania, including Mingachevir, Ismayilli, Gabala, and Shamakhi in Azerbaijan, as well as Dagestan and other locations [Osmanov, 1982, s.137].

The weapons primarily consist of short swords, spears, and spearheads. These findings align with written sources that document the political processes in the Caucasus during this period, particularly Rome’s eastern campaigns and its conflicts with Parthia. One notable example is the Roman inscription in Gobustan, which confirms the presence of the Twelfth Legion during the reign of Emperor Domitian. However, some researchers continue to express skepticism about the evidence of the Roman presence in Azerbaijan, including this inscription and other archaeological findings, treating them with a critical perspective [Смышляев, 2018, с.607].

In late 2020, the excavation of Grave No. 27 at the Kimaligebrish necropolis uncovered significant artifacts, including a bronze phalera depicting Gorgon-Medusa, a bronze element of a belt set, umbos, and a pilum–javelin commonly associated with the Roman military. These materials unequivocally provide new evidence supporting the advancement of Romans into Azerbaijan. These artifacts found in Khinalig indicate that this area served as a key mountain passage on the route from west to east [Гаджиев, 2006, с.78, 88].

The territory of the “Kimaligebrish” archaeological site held strategic importance during the political and military processes between the Romans and Parthians, Byzantines and Sasanians, and Khazars and Arabs. Artifacts representing these historical events have been preserved in the soil of Khinalig to this day. Recent findings also shed light on the political events that unfolded in this region. The complex contains material-cultural traces of the Sasanians, Alans, and Arabs.

It can be confidently stated that the Khinalig region served as one of the most important mountain passes connecting not only the eastern and western parts of modern Azerbaijan but also the entire Transcaucasia and Caucasus. Continued study of the materials unearthed through scientific and desk-based research may reveal even more fascinating facts. The site’s scientific importance is unparalleled and could be compared to the Mingachevir archaeological complex in terms of its significance. Further stationary excavations at this type of site would play a vital role in the development of Azerbaijani archaeology and in advancing the study of material culture. Additionally, the archaeological materials obtained are invaluable, often unique, and could significantly enrich the Khinalig museum’s exhibition. The studied sites also hold great potential for the promotion and development of archaeotourism, paving the way for the creation of a solid foundation for future endeavors in this field.

REFERENCES:

1. Xəlilov M.C. Albaniyanın qəbir abidələri (IV–X əsrlər) (*Grave Monuments of Caucasian Albania (4th–10th centuries AD)*). Bakı: Nafta-Press, 2009, 324 s.
2. Osmanov F.L. Qafqaz Albaniyasının maddi mədəniyyəti (*Material Culture of Caucasian Albania*). T.IV. Bakı, 1982, s.137.
3. Бакушев М.А. Погребальный обряд населения Дагестана албано-сарматского времени (III в. до н.э. – IV в. н.э.) (*Burial Rite of the Population of Dagestan During the Albanian-Sarmatian Period (3rd century BC – 4th century AD)*). Ростов-на-Дону, 2008, с.183.
4. Бородавская Е.Л. Погребение с полихромными стеклянными бусами эпохи эллинизма на Нижней Катунь (*A Burial with Polychrome Glass Beads from the Hellenistic Period in the Lower Katun Area*) // Вестник НГУ, 2009, вып.3, т.8, с.167, рис.5-6.
5. Гаджиев М.С. Определение абсолютной даты строительства цитадели и северной городской стены Дербента и произведенных трудозатрат (*Determining the Exact Date of Construction of the Citadel and the Northern City Wall of Derbent, as well as the Labor Involved*) // Вестник Института ИАЭ, 2006, №1, с.78, 88.
6. Давудов О.М. Материальная культура Дагестана албанского времени (*Material Culture of Dagestan During the Albanian Period*). Махачкала, 1996, с.128.
7. Катаржина Максимюк. Значение охраны Кавказских проходов в отношениях между Византией и Сасанидским Ираном (363–506 гг.) (*The Importance of Guarding the Caucasian Passes in the Relations Between Byzantium and Sasanian Iran (363–506 AD)*) // CAUCASO-CASPICA. Труды Института востоковедения Российско-Армянского (Славянского) Университета, Вып.II-III. 2017-2018, Ереван, 2018, с.5.
8. Смышляев А.Л. Латинская надпись из Азербайджана: Проблемы и история интерпретации (*A Latin Inscription in Azerbaijan: Interpretative Challenges and Historical Context*) // ВДИ, №78/3, 2018, с.607.



View of the 2023 excavation site

Aliyev Taleh

Head of the Sector of Archaeological Research of the Material Cultural Heritage of Caucasian Albania, Albanian Studies Scientific Centre of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of ANAS, PhD in History, Associate Professor
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0519-6930>

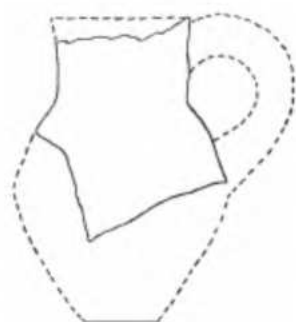
TORPAGGALA: A SETTLEMENT OF CAUCASIAN ALBANIA

Abstract. The northwestern region of Azerbaijan is rich in archaeological sites reaching back to the antiquity and early Middle Ages. The province of Cambisena in Caucasian Albania encompassed densely populated settlements along the Ganikh (Alazani) and Gabirri (Iori) rivers. Along the banks of the Ganikh (Alazani) River, there are numerous Albanian-era residential sites and burial monuments. One of these sites is Torpaggala, located near the village of Lalali in the Gakh district, at the confluence of the Gapichay and Ganikh rivers. The archaeological site covers an area of approximately 20 hectares and includes fortifications, residential areas, and a necropolis. The fortification section is located on a hill in the southwestern part, which is strategically significant for observation. The residential area primarily occupies the central part of the site and is rich in layers from the antiquity and early medieval periods.

Keywords: Albania, Gakh, Torpaggala, antiquity, early Middle Ages

The archaeological research of settlements from the antiquity and early Middle Ages in Caucasian Albania is a highly relevant topic. These settlements encompass both urban and rural types of sites. The monuments located in the southern part of the Gakh district are also of this nature. In the territory of the Cambisena province of Albania, settlements from the antiquity and early Middle Ages were primarily situated near rivers. There were settlements from antiquity and the early Middle Ages in the areas near the Ganikh (Alazani) and Gabirri (Iori) rivers. One such site is Torpaggala, located on the village of Lalali in the Gakh district (*GPS coordinates: 41°20'46.47"N, 46°40'44.72"E*). Torpaggala is situated to the east of Lalali village, near the confluence of the Gapichay and Ganikh (Alazani) rivers, on the left bank. The entire site covers an area of approximately 20 hectares. Torpaggala is mainly composed of three sections: the residential area, the fortification, and the necropolis. The Gapichay River touches the western part of the site at three points as it passes through. Archaeological excavations were conducted at Torpaggala in 2009 by the late researcher Vilayat Karimov [Kərimov, 2010, s.205], and more recently in 2023 by our team [Əliyev, 2023, s.25]. Following a survey of the site in 2022, the decision was made to proceed with further archaeological excavations the following year [Əliyev, 2022, s.33].

During our archaeological excavations, we discovered that the wall section in the northwestern corner of the fortification area, made of river stones and bricks, extends northward. This wall is intersected by another masonry structure that extends westward, while the main wall continues to the north (Fig. 1-2). At the intersection point, fragments of a ceramic vessel, including its base and body, were discovered with charcoal remains inside. On the southern part of the intersecting masonry, a layer of plaster mixed with lime mortar is observable. The wall turns at an open angle towards the southeast in the southern part, continuing in that direction. At the lower part of the foundation of this wall, made of river stones, a fragment of a medium-sized ceramic vessel, consisting of the neck, mouth, and body, was found. In the southwestern part of the grid square, pieces of a black ceramic vessel with incised designs and fragments of



obsidian were discovered. Bone remains from both small and large ruminants were discovered in the northeastern corner of the grid square. River stones were found in a continuous and grouped pattern in the southeastern and central areas. A fragment of a polychrome glazed medieval vessel, a range of ceramic shards of different functions, half of a handled glass, and animal bones beside it were discovered in the southeastern part of square A 1. The eastern side of the wall continuing northward was uncovered, indicating that it was made of river stones and brick. In the western part, a layer of plaster laid on the ground was cleaned, and a cut was identified on its southern side. Excavation work was continued to lower depths in square A 1 [Əliyev, 2023, s.26-27].

Since the defensive wall, along with the structure intersecting it at a 90° angle, extended northward, square A 1 was extended by 1 meter to the north (the size of the square is 5x6 meters). As the northwestern part of the square was excavated, the continuation of the wall extending northward and the northwestern end of the structure running east-west, which intersects the wall, were uncovered, including the intersection point. The mentioned masonry was constructed using river stones and bricks. The eastern side of the northward-extending wall, consisting of a foundation made of river stones, was uncovered from north to south.

During the excavation work in square A 2, masonry made of river stones was cleaned and uncovered in the southwestern part, which appeared to be a continuation of the masonry found in the southeastern part of square A 1. Excavation work was continued in square A 2, deepening the area. In the southwestern corner, parts of a structure made of small river stones were fully uncovered. Square A 2 was extended by 1 meter to the north, parallel to square A 1. As a result, in the newly exposed section in the northeastern part of the square, a part of a structure made of small river stones was discovered. These types of structural remains resemble a foundation.

Square B 1 is characterized by a slope inclination towards the southwest, corresponding to the terrain. In that area, it is more appropriate to work on the stratigraphy through a profile. In the northwestern corner of the square, the continuation of the structure made of small river stones, which was uncovered in other squares, was found. Charcoal remains, fragments of ceramic artifacts, and osteological remains were also found. The ceramic artifacts encompass specific phases of the ancient, early medieval, and classical medieval periods (9th–13th centuries). Unglazed and glazed ceramic fragments predominate as examples of pottery artifacts.

In the northeastern part of square B 2, the continuation of the structural remains made of river stones, uncovered at the southern corner of squares A 1 and A 2, was partially revealed. In the central area, fragments of a glazed ceramic vessel dating to the 12th–13th centuries were found, while in the northern area, fragments from a 13th-century glazed ceramic vessel were discovered. In the central part of the square, a large storage jar was buried in an upright position. The jar, which was partially revealed, was found broken. In the western part, the remains of a structure made of river stones continue in a single row along the north-south axis. To the east of the discovered jar, a circular structure made of small river stones was cleaned. In the northern part of the square, a tile fragment was found. In the southeastern part of the square, a bead was discovered on the eastern side of a structure made of small river stones. Inside the large storage jar, charcoal remains, and four vertebrae of a small ruminant were found, while in the southwestern part of the square, a neck vertebra of a large ruminant was discovered. Charcoal remains were also found inside a medium-sized jar uncovered in the southeastern part [Əliyev, 2023, s.30-31].

The eastern part of the defensive wall consists of mud bricks plastered with lime, extending parallel to the wall. In the northwestern part of square A 2, excavation was carried out parallel to the gap area extending from square A 1. In the center, there was a thick floor layer plastered with lime mortar (Fig. 3).

During the archaeological excavations in all four squares of the excavation site, it was observed that the cultural layer extends up to 1.5 meters in the deepest part, corresponding to the terrain. In square A 1, at a depth of 1.5 meters in the eastern part, a floor layer with a burn layer on top was uncovered. Within this layer, fragments of black ceramic objects, half of a small black single-handled vessel, and the base and body of a decorated pan-shaped vessel were found. Additionally, two pieces of obsidian were recovered from the eastern part. In square A 2, in the eastern part at a depth of 1.5 meters, traces of a floor and burn marks were recorded. Various ceramic fragments were uncovered during the excavation. In the southern part of square B 2, fragments of black ceramics were found during the excavation process.

When viewed from point A, which is conventionally taken as the starting point, the structure in the northwestern corner of the fortification area is clearly visible. The defensive wall in the western part of the excavation site, as well as the structures and floors to the east, including rooms, circular sections made of river stones, and cultural layers, are discernible as a structure [Əliyev, 2023, s.33].

The uncovered ceramic artifacts are black, red, gray, and reddish yellow in color, consisting of handles, bodies, mouths, necks, spouts, and base sections. It should be noted that similar materials have been identified at the Torpaggala settlement site near the Almali village in the Gakh district and from the monuments of the Aghyazi plain [Исмизаде, 1956, s.30-32; Mahmudov, 1965, s.132; Vahidov, 1965, s.202]. In the central part of square A 2, ceramic artifacts serving a range of purposes were discovered, along with a spindle whorl used in weaving. Excavations in squares B 1 and B 2 were continued into the lower layers. The upper layer dates to the medieval period (11th–13th centuries). Pottery dating back to the 9th–11th centuries was discovered in the lower layers. In the northeast part of the square, a fragment of a long-necked vessel with a side handle was found, along with fragments of a thin-walled vessel decorated with scratch patterns nearby. In the central part of square B 2, a small anthropomorphic ceramic artifact was discovered in the upper layer. Additionally, a range of ceramic fragments, including pot, handle, jar, and glass bowl parts, as well as the base and body sections of a medium-sized jar, were uncovered in the southern part [Əliyev, 2023, s.42].

The parts of the ceramic vessels consist of fragments of handles, bases, bodies, mouths, necks, and spouts. The pottery belongs to vessels of types such as small and large jars, pots and pitcher-type vessels [Əliyev, 2022, s.43; Əliyev, 2023, s.38]. Some of the obsidian pieces resemble small cutting tools, while others are debitage. Both glazed and unglazed ceramic products were included in the research. In square A1, small fragments of a thin-walled small glass vessel from the medieval layer were also discovered.

In square A 1, the upper part of the northwestern defensive wall of the fortification was uncovered at a depth of 30 cm. The foundation of the structure, made of mudbrick, was revealed at a depth of 80 cm. During construction, small and medium-sized river stones were used for the foundation of the wall. On top of these, mudbricks measuring 10x20x20 cm and 10x20x30 cm were used, with a 2 cm thick layer of lime mortar in between. Some of the river stones used in the foundation measure 15x20x30 cm, while others are 12x15x20 cm, with slight variations in size. The width of the wall is 80 cm. The foundation, in its entirety, is laid with river stones, using larger stones in the lower part and smaller stones above them for reinforcement. In the northwestern part of square A 1, a reinforcing projection was discovered, measuring 60 cm north to south, 70 cm in length towards the west at a 90° angle, and 60 cm in width. The preserved section of the wall is 4.7 meters long. To the north, in square A 1, the wall continues northward towards the ravine. On the western side of the wall, a plastered area measuring 3x1.3 meters was found parallel to the foundation, and 80 cm of the southern part of this plastered area was uncovered. In the southeastern part of square A, remains of a structure made of small river stones were uncovered, measuring 1.5x0.9 meters and at a depth of 10-30 cm. On the eastern side of the defensive wall, a brick section was identified, measuring

2.7x0.9 meters with a thickness of 20 cm, and beneath it, another layer of flooring was uncovered with a thickness of 30 cm. Another plastered area, measuring 2.6x1.3 meters, was uncovered in the northeastern part of square A 1 at a depth of 1.5 meters.

When square A 2 was uncovered, a structural remnant made of small river stones, measuring 1.4x1.9 meters, was uncovered at a depth of 30 cm in the southeast. This is a continuation of the structure revealed in the southwestern part of square A 1. A floor, 20 cm thick, was exposed in the southwestern and northeastern parts of the square (where they intersect). In the northern part, according to the terrain, it was uncovered at a depth of 70 cm, and in the southern part at a depth of 50 cm. Near the northwestern corner of the square, a structural remnant made of small river stones, measuring 1.1x0.4 meters, was uncovered. In the southeastern part of the square, a structural remnant of the same size was revealed, but it was removed after being documented to reach the lower layer. The northwestern part of the square was excavated to a depth of 1.4 meters, revealing an area measuring 3.3x1.3 meters. This section is 60-70 cm deeper than the floor within the square. In the southeastern part, an area measuring 4.1x1.6 (2.8) meters was uncovered, with a depth ranging from 1.2 to 1.3 meters. The layers vary between 40, 35, 40, and 35 cm, respectively. A burn layer, 2 cm thick, was recorded at a depth of 94 cm [Əliyev, 2023, s.35].

During the excavation of squares B 1 and B 2, a structural remnant made of small river stones, measuring 0.7x1 meters, was uncovered at a depth of 20 cm in the northwestern corner. Additionally, river stones were recorded along the western wall of the square, extending 1.8 meters to the south. In accordance with the terrain, the floor surface was cleaned at a depth of 60 cm in the north and 90 cm in the east. This cleaning process was continued sequentially in the northern and western parts of the square. In the southeastern corner of the square, a medium-sized jar, ceramic fragments serving a range of purposes, and charcoal remains were found on the floor surface at a depth of 40 cm, covering an area of 1.1x0.8 meters. Above this, a flat river stone measuring 28x30x5 cm was uncovered at a depth of 10 cm. At a depth of 30 cm, a structural remnant made of small river stones, measuring 0.8x0.7 meters, was also revealed. At the front, in the western section, a storage jar with a diameter of 75 cm and a preserved height of 80 cm was discovered. In the central part, remnant of a brick structure measuring 1.2x0.6 meters was preserved. The square was excavated to a depth of up to 1.5 meters, reaching the Early Iron Age layer in the southern and southwestern sections. As in previous squares, the cultural layer continued at intervals of 40, 35, 40, and 35 cm [Əliyev, 2023, s.36].

Four layers were recorded. The first layer is 40 cm, the second layer is 35 cm, the third layer is 40 cm, and the fourth layer is 35 cm. The first layer corresponds to the Classical Middle Ages (9th–13th centuries), the second layer to the 3rd–8th centuries, the third layer to the Antiquity period (6th century BC – 3rd century AD), and the fourth layer to the late Early Iron Age (8th–7th centuries BC). At a depth of 1.25 meters, a burnt layer 4 cm thick was recorded. Additionally, at a depth of 50 cm in the northwestern corner, another burn layer 5 cm thick was recorded.

Conclusion. The Torpaggala settlement, covering an area of 20 hectares, was a site of intensive activity during Antiquity and early Middle Ages (Fig. 4). The fortification section spans an area of 0.35 hectares with a size of 50x70 meters. Based on the overall layout, a bastion extends along the entire edge of the fortification at the southwest point, serving observation and defense purposes. These bastions are traces of the fortification's defensive wall. The central part has a large area with a depressed surface. The northwestern part of the hill is more elevated and bastioned compared to other areas. During archaeological excavations, the upper part of the wall in the northwestern section of the fortification was uncovered at a depth of 30 cm. The foundation of the structure, made of mudbrick, was revealed at a depth of 80 cm. Small and medium-sized river stones were used for the wall's foundation, and mudbrick was used in the masonry above, with lime mortar as the binding material. The width of the wall is 80 cm. So far, the preserved section of the wall in the excavated area is 4.7 meters long. The wall continues northward towards the ravine. In the central part of the excavation area, a structural remnant made of small river stones has been

uncovered. The circular foundation in that section is partially larger, with smaller similar foundation sites found around it. The defensive wall in the western part of the excavation area, along with the structures and floors located to the east of it, including rooms, column bases made of river stones, and cultural layers, are discernible as a structure. The cultural layers identified so far, from top to bottom, are as follows: the Classical Middle Ages (9th–13th centuries), the Early Middle Ages (3rd–8th centuries), the Antiquity period (4th century BC – 3rd century AD), the Pre-Albanian period (7th–5th centuries BC), and the final stage of the Early Iron Age (8th century BC). The uncovered ceramic artifacts belong to vessel types such as small and large jars, pots and pitcher-type vessels, and they are black, red, gray, and reddish yellow in color, consisting of fragments of handles, bases, bodies, mouths, necks, and spouts. Among the material cultural artifacts, there are also remains of stone, glass, obsidian, bone, and charcoal. Observations revealed that jar burials and earth graves were present in the peripheral areas. Torpaggala was established as a settlement at the end of the Early Iron Age and transformed into an urban settlement during Antiquity and early Middle Ages.

As an initial hypothesis, when reviewing sources, it can be considered that Torpaggala may correspond to Iobula or Adiabla, one of the Albanian settlements mentioned by Claudius Ptolemy [Ptolemy, 1932, p.123]. However, a definitive conclusion can only be drawn after systematic archaeological excavations are conducted.

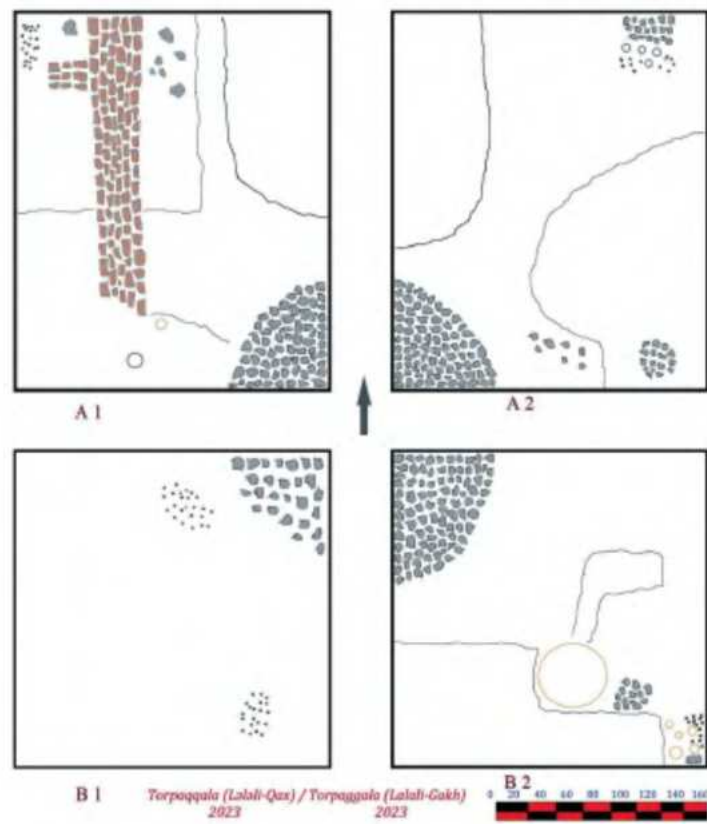


Fig. 1. Plan of the archaeological excavation site in Torpaggala (Taleh Aliyev, 2023)

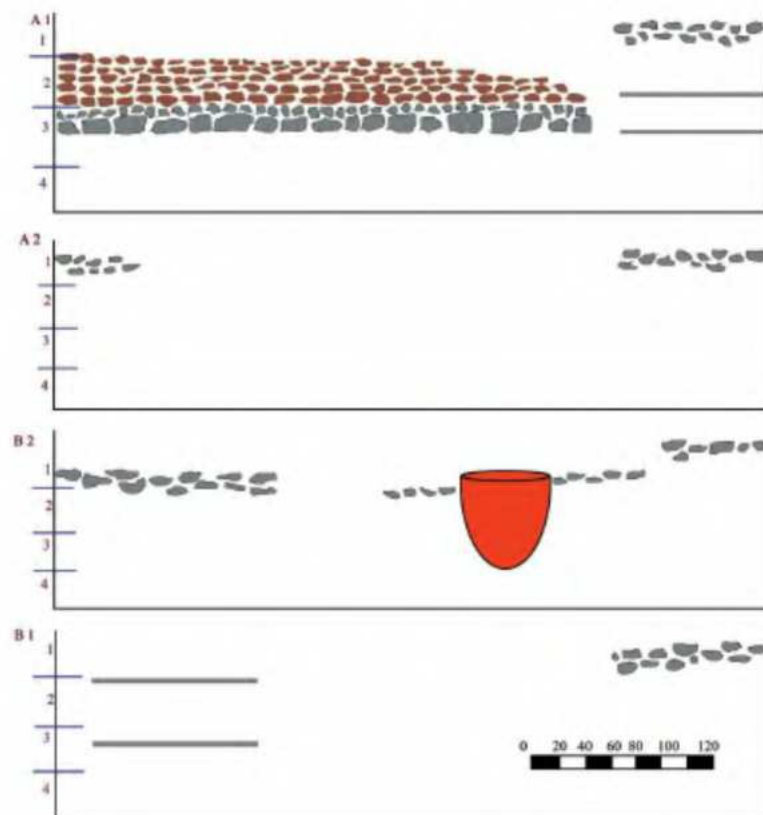


Fig. 2. The cross-section of the archaeological excavation site at Torpaggala



Fig. 3. The archaeological excavation site in the fortification section of Torpaqgala



Fig. 4. Satellite view of Torpaqgala

REFERENCES:

1. Əliyev T.V. Şimal-qərbi Azərbaycanın alban dövrü arxeoloji abidələri ekspedisiyasının 2022-ci ildə apardığı arxeoloji tədqiqat və çöl-tədqiqat işlərinin hesabatı (*Report on the Archaeological Research and Field Studies Conducted in 2022 by the Expedition on Albanian Period Archaeological Monuments of Northwestern Azerbaijan*) / AMEA Arxeologiya, Etnoqrafiya və Antropologiya İnstitutu. Bakı, 2022, 150 s.
2. Əliyev T.V. Şimal-qərbi Azərbaycanın alban dövrü arxeoloji abidələri ekspedisiyasının 2023-cü ildə apardığı arxeoloji qazıntı işinin hesabatı (*Report on the Archaeological Excavation Conducted in 2023 by the Expedition on Albanian Period Archaeological Monuments of Northwestern Azerbaijan*) / AMEA Arxeologiya və Antropologiya İnstitutu. Bakı, 2023, 120 s.
3. Kərimov V. Azərbaycanın Qax rayonunun Lələli kəndinin yaxınlığında yerləşən Torpaqqala yaşayış məskənində arxeoloji tədqiqatlar (*Archaeological Research at the Torpaqqala Settlement Located Near the Lalali Village in the Gakh District of Azerbaijan*) / Kərimov V., Əliyev M., Kərimov H. Azərbaycanda Arxeoloji Tədqiqatlar – 2009. Bakı, 2010, s.205-209.
4. Mahmudov F.R. Ağyazı düzənliyində Yaloylutəpə mədəniyyətinə aid abidə (*Yaloylutepe Culture Monument in Aghyazi Plain*) / Azərbaycan Maddi Mədəniyyəti. VI Cild. Bakı, 1965, s.131-144.
5. Vahidov R.M. Torpaqqalada arxeoloji qazıntı işlərinin ilk yekunları (*Preliminary Results of the Archaeological Excavations at Torpaqqala*) / Azərbaycan Maddi Mədəniyyəti. VI Cild. Bakı, 1965, s.201-211.
6. Исмизаде, О.Ш. Ялойлутепинская культура (*Yaloylutepe Culture*). Баку: Изд-во АН Аз.ССР, 1956, 132 с.
7. Ptolemy Claudius. Geography / Translated and edited by Edward Luther Stevenson. New York, 1932, 240 p.

Kirichenko Dmitry

*Leading Research Associate of the Department of Anthropology
of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of ANAS,
PhD in History, Associate Professor
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1045-4159>*

ANTHROPOLOGICAL MATERIAL FROM JANAKHAR¹

Abstract: This article examines cranial material from an in-ground burial uncovered at the Janakhar settlement. The anthropological materials from Janakhar are currently the only known remains from the Khachmaz district of the Republic of Azerbaijan. They indicate that the man from Janakhar represented the indigenous population of ancient Caucasian Albania.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, archaeology, burials, Antiquity, Caucasian Albania, anthropology, craniometry, paleopathology

The Janakhar settlement is located on the northern outskirts of the same-name village, on the right bank of the Aghchay River in the Khachmaz district of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Janakhar is a multi-layered settlement and necropolis dated from the 1st century to the 14th centuries. This archaeological site was discovered and surveyed in 1977 by the expedition of *The Register of Archaeological Monuments of Azerbaijan* [Халилов и др., 1991, с.109-110].

The lower layer of the settlement dates to the 1st–4th centuries, while the upper layer dates to the 1st–14th centuries [Əliyev, Qoşqarlı, 1984, s.83].

Archaeologist M.J.Khalilov identifies the Janakhar site as the Albanian city of Gangara mentioned by Claudius Ptolemy [Халилов, 1992, с.70].

The site consisted of 14 mounds of various sizes. An in-ground burial was discovered on Mound 8 [Бабаева, 2014, с.233].

Archaeological literature provides a variety of descriptions of the in-ground burial (No. 1) at the Janakhar settlement [Əliyev, 1981; Əliyev, Qoşqarlı, 1984; Халилов и др., 1991; Гошгарлы, 2012].

In the article by archaeologist A.A.Aliyev, the burial was found at a depth of 1.65 meters. The skeleton was positioned on its side in a loosely crouched position, with the head southwestwards. To the left of the skeleton, near the head, was a jug; on the chest lay a round bronze mirror. Among the bones was a bronze item resembling a wheel (a bronze arrowhead ran through the center, connecting two round, wheel-like covers), though its purpose remains unclear. Other bronze items were also found in the grave, including two buckles, two rings, a pendant, a pin, and a spiral bronze object. The burial contained glass and bone beads, as well as cowries [Əliyev, 1981, s.72].

The paper by archaeologists A.A.Aliyev and G.O.Goshgarly provides the following burial dimensions: length – 85 cm, width – 60 cm [Əliyev, Qoşqarlı, 1984, s.82].

Archaeologist A.A.Aliyev notes that bronze mirrors similar to the one found in the burial were widespread from north to south during Sarmatian invasions and that such items are often found at coastal Albanian-period sites in Dagestan [Əliyev, 1981, s.72].

¹ This work was supported by the Azerbaijan Science Foundation – Grant № AEF-MGC-2024-2(50)-16/16/5-M-16.

J.A.Khalilov et al. report a burial discovered at a depth of 1.3 meters. The skeleton was stretched on its back, with the head oriented westward and the arms crossed on the chest. The burial contained (Fig. 1) two small-handled bowls of pink clay with inward-curved rims, as well as a handled jug, also pink, with a raised lip connected by a bridge. There were also numerous metal items: a short-handled bronze mirror, earrings, a buckle, two rings, a pin-shaped fibula, and an item resembling a small wheel with an axle. These adornments were complemented by beads and shells. The burial type and the inventory indicate the influence of Sarmatian tribes [Халилов и др., 1991, с.112].

Archaeologist G.O.Goshgarly notes that the skeleton in the burial was in a loosely crouched position on the right side, with the head westward, and the hands crossed on the chest. The grave inventory included a small-handled pink bowl, a small pink single-handled jug with a raised lip connected by a bridge. There were also numerous metal items, in particular a short-handled bronze mirror, earrings, a buckle, rings, a pin-shaped fibula, and various beads differing in size, shape, and material. Traces of ash and pieces of charcoal were clearly visible at the bottom of the in-ground grave [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.23].

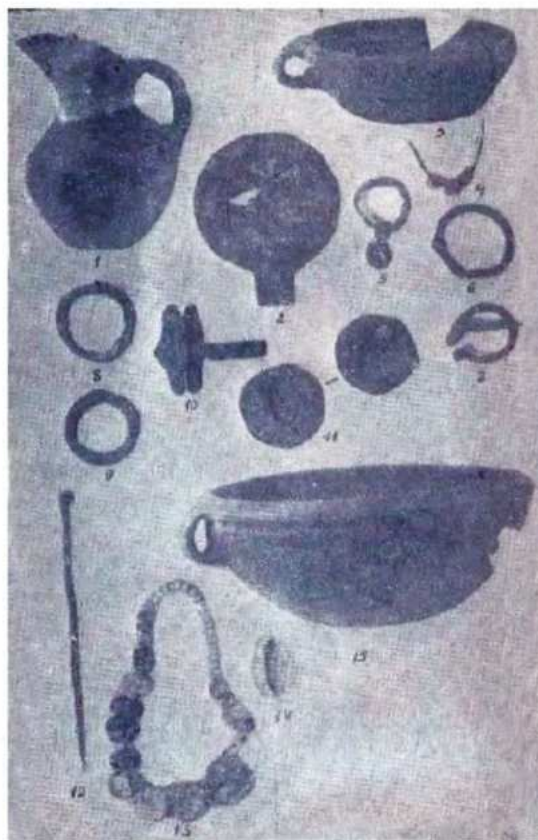


Fig. 1. Artifacts from the in-ground burial (Халилов и др., 1991, с.210, Табл. XLVIII)

Despite the differences in the descriptions of the burial, most researchers date the in-ground burial to the 1st–2nd centuries AD [Әлієв, 1981, с.72; Халилов и др., 1991, с.112].

In-ground burials with loosely crouched skeletons were one of the burial types characteristic of Caucasian Albania in antiquity [Гошгарлы, 2012].

Later archaeological studies at the Janakhar necropolis indicate an overall Albanian material culture but with strong Sarmatian-Albanian cultural elements [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.24].

The Janakhar necropolis reflects a picture of a mixed Albanian-Sarmatian culture [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.104].

The author of this article examined a well-preserved skull (Fig. 2) from the in-ground burial.

Currently, the anthropological material from the burial is on display at the Human Anatomy Museum and is stored at the Department of Human Anatomy and Medical Terminology of Azerbaijan Medical University.¹

The craniological material (Table 1) was analyzed according to R. Martin's standard paleoanthropological methodology [Martin, Saler 1957; Алексеев, Дебец 1964]. The sex of the individuals was determined based on skull morphology [Пашкова, Резников, 1978; Гайворонский et al., 2018], while the age was assessed by the degree of suture closure and dental wear [Buikstra, Ubelaker, 1994].

Pathological observations were conducted using various scientific methodologies [Бужилова 1995; Ubelaker 1978; Ortner, Putschar 1981; Buikstra, Ubelaker 1994; Aufderheide, Rodriguez-Martin 1998; Waldron 2008].

The study was based on standard scientific methods, ss. laboratory analysis. The materials obtained were prepared for publication using the method of systematizing the available data. The work involved craniometric measurements, photographing the skull in various projections, and paleopathological studies.

The skull from burial No. 1 is presumed to have belonged to a male (Fig. 2), approximately 25-30 years old.

The skull is dolichocranial, though it approaches mesocephalic index, characterized by a small cranial length, very small cranial breadth, and large cranial height. The frontal is narrow. The face is very narrow, short, and well-profiled, falling on the boundary between mesene and leptene according to the facial index. The orbits are very low, narrow, and chamaeconchic. The nose is very narrow, short, leptorrhine, and moderately prominent. The skull is classified as part of the southern branch of the Caucasoid race, presumably of the Caspian anthropological type.

The paleoanthropological materials from burials in ancient Azerbaijan (historical Caucasian Albania) predominantly demonstrate a dolicho-mesocephalic Caspian anthropological type, present in our region since the Mesolithic era [Кириченко, 2020, с.72].

The skull from Janakhar shows several pathologies: signs of cold stress (vascular reaction), periodontosis, and dental calculus.

The vascular reaction is a specific alteration of the periosteum in the area of the brow ridges, along the outer edge of the zygomatic bones, around the orbits, around the Bregma perimeter, along the sagittal suture, and in the occipital region. This marker is typically associated with the effects of cold stress, related to a person's regular outdoor exposure to cool, windy, or cold highly humid weather [Перерва, 2017, с.166]. Cold stress markers indicate a high level of daily activity among the population [Перерва, 2017, с.168].

The Janakhar man's periodontosis can be accounted for by his diet during life, while the presence of dental calculus is primarily linked to environmental factors (such as water quality, etc.).

The man from Janakhar belonged to the indigenous population of ancient Caucasian Albania. It should be noted that the anthropological materials from Janakhar are currently the only known remains from the Khachmaz district of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

¹ The author thanks and is deeply indebted to the Head of the Department of Human Anatomy and Medical Terminology PhD (Medicine), Ass. Prof. A.S.Abdullaev for the opportunity to study anthropological material, as well as to the staff of the Human Anatomy Museum for assistance during the work.

Table 1

Craniometric measurements of the male skull from the in-ground burial

No According to R. Martin	σ 25-30 years
1	176.8
8	130.8
5	99.5
9	90
17	137.1
20	126.5
40	97
45	121.9
48	67
51	40
51a	38
52	28
54	21
55	49
8:1	73.98
48:45	54.96
52:51	70
52:51a	73.7
54:55	42.85
77	139
$\angle Zm$	118.6
75 (1)	26



Fig. 2. Skull from in-ground burial No. 1



Fig. 3. Pathologies. Signs of cold stress and periodontitis



Fig. 4. Dental calculus

REFERENCES:

1. Əliyev Ə.Ə. Canaxar kəndi yaxınlığındakı qədim qəbiristanlıq haqqında (*On the Ancient Cemetery Near the Village of Janakhar*) // Az.SSR Elmlər Akademiyasının Xəbərləri. Tarix, fəlsəfə və hüquq seriyası, 1981, 3, s.69-73.
2. Əliyev Ə.Ə., Qoşqarlı Q.O. Canaxar abidəsi haqqında ilk məlumat (*Initial Information on the Janakhar site*) // Az.SSR Elmlər Akademiyasının Məruzələri, 1984, XI, 5, s.81-83.
3. Алексеев В.П., Дебец Г.Ф. Краниометрия. Методика антропометрических исследований (*Craniometry: Methodology of Anthropometric Research*). М.: Наука, 1964, 128 с.
4. Бабаева Т.В. К истории изучения могильников античного периода в северо-восточном Азербайджане (*On the History of Studying Necropolises of the Antiquity in Northeastern Azerbaijan*)// Гілея: науковий вісник, 2014, 84, с.231-236.
5. Бужилова А.П. Древнее население (палеопатологические аспекты исследования) (*Ancient Population (Paleopathological Aspects of Research)*). М.: ИА РАН, 1995, 189 с.
6. Гайворонский И.В., Фандеева О.М., Ничипорук Г.И., Гайворонская М.Г. Сравнительная методика определения соматического пола взрослого человека по черепу (*Comparative Methodology for Determining the Somatic Sex of an Adult Based on the Skull*) // Вестник Российской Военно-Медицинской Академии, 2018, 3 (63), с.207-213.
7. Гошгарлы Г.О. Типология погребальных памятников античного периода на территории Азербайджана (*Typology of Burial Sites of the Antiquity Period on the Territory of Azerbaijan*). Баку: Элм, 2012, 248 с.
8. Кириченко Д.А. Палеоантропология Азербайджана (VII в. до н.э.–V в. н.э.) (*Paleoanthropology of Azerbaijan (7th century BCE–5th century CE)*). Баку: «Арострон-А», 2020, 208 с.
9. Пашкова В.И., Резников Б.Д. Судебно-медицинское отождествление личности по костным останкам (*Forensic Identification by Skeletal Remains*). Саратов: Изд-во Саратов. ун-та, 1978, 320 с.
10. Перерва Е.П. Маркеры стресса у сарматов II–IV вв. н.э. из подкурганых захоронений Нижнего Поволжья (палеопатологический аспект) (*Stress Markers Among the Sarmatians of the 2nd–4th Centuries CE from Under-Kurgan Burials in the Lower Volga Region (Paleopathological Aspect)*) // Известия Волгоградского государственного педагогического университета, 2017, №10 (123), с.165–177.
11. Халилов Дж.А., Кошкарлы К.О., Аразова Р.Б. Свод археологических памятников Азербайджана (*Register of Archaeological Monuments of Azerbaijan*). Вып.1. Археологические памятники северо-восточного Азербайджана. Баку: Элм, 1991, 216 с.
12. Халилов М.Дж. Сарматия–Кавказская Албания: границы, контакты (I в. до н.э. – II в. н.э.) (*Sarmatia–Caucasian Albania: Borders and Contacts (1st century BCE–2nd century CE)*)// Античная цивилизация и варварский мир. Материалы III археологического семинара. Ч.1. Новочеркасск, 1992, с.68–75.
13. Aufderheide A.C., Rodriguez-Martin C. The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Paleopathology. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 478 p.
14. Buikstra J.E., Ubelaker D.H. Standards for data collection from human skeletal remains: proceedings of a seminar at the Field Museum of Natural History, organized by Jonathan Haas. Arkansas archaeological research series. 44. Indianapolis: Western Newspaper Company, 1994, 206 p.
15. Martin R., Saller K. Lehrbuch der Anthropologie in Systematischer Darstellung, mit Besonderer Berücksichtigung der Anthropologischen Methoden. Bd.I. Stuttgart: Fischer, 1957, 518 p.
16. Ortner D.J., Putschar W.G.J. Identification of Pathological Conditions in Human Skeletal Remains. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981, 479 p.
17. Ubelaker D.H. Human Skeletal Remains. Excavation, Analysis, Interpretation. Chicago: Adline Publishing Company, 1978, 116 p.
18. Waldron T. Paleopathology. Cambridge: Cambr. Univ. Press, 2008, 298 p.

Mustafayev Lachin

Senior Researcher at Archaeological Scientific Fund Division of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, Senior Lecturer at the Department of General History and History Teaching Technology at Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University, PhD in History
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1995-642X>

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF CAUCASIAN ALBANIA WITH THE ANCIENT WORLD

Abstract. The article discusses the emerging early connections and traces of Azerbaijan's interaction with Ancient World culture. The research specifically highlights the cultural, economic, and political international relations that Caucasian Albania established with Hellenistic countries starting from the 4th century BC. It also examines the influence of these international relations, which expanded significantly from the 4th century BC to the 3rd century AD owing to these interactions, on the material and spiritual culture of Caucasian Albania. Additionally, the article reveals facts related to the influence of ancient Greek culture through the Achaemenid Empire until the formation of Caucasian Albania. The problem is analyzed for the first time from a broad perspective, spanning nearly 1,500 years of historical and chronological aspects.

Keywords: Caucasian Albania, international relations, historical-chronological aspects, Ancient world, Hellenistic period

Introduction. Azerbaijan has established cultural relations with various civilizations and ancient states since the earliest periods. We can study these cultural relations through the material-culture artifacts discovered during archaeological excavations. Findings from archaeological sites in Azerbaijan, dating back to different periods, indicate that connections between the Near East and Azerbaijan began to form as early as the 5th–4th millennia BC [Müseyibli, 2014; Müseyibli, 2020]. Notable examples of these connections include the Leyla-Tepe culture (5th–4th millennia BC), which is closely related to the Ubaid culture, the pot from Halaf (5th millennium BC) (inv. No.23852), a fragment of a cuneiform-inscribed storage jar (2nd–1st millennia BC) (inv. No.28788), a hanging string of cowries (2nd–1st millennia BC) (inv. No.12613, inv. No.12655), a cuneiform-inscribed bead bearing the name of the Assyrian king Adad-nirari (1st millennium BC) (inv. No.21557), an Assyrian-style vessel (1st millennium BC) (inv. No.27817), an Assyrian-style clay vase (inv. No.28977), a ladle (inv. No.28975), and other similar artifacts preserved in the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan. These findings are clear evidence of the early connections between Azerbaijan and Near Eastern world [Джафаров, 1984]. The early connections were either the result of migrations of ancient populations or manifested in a sporadic, unorganized manner through cultural, political, and economic interactions. These connections included not only relations with the Near East but also with various peoples living in the territories of Iran, Egypt, and Central Asia, who had mutual interactions with Azerbaijan. Over time, these connections expanded, eventually reaching Europe. Initially, Azerbaijan established relations with the Ancient Greek world [Mustafayev, 2014, s.137-145; Mustafayev, 2016a, s.276-279; Mustafayev, 2019, s.109-118], and later, the state of Caucasian Albania, which emerged on the historical scene, formed international economic, political, and cultural relations with both Greece and Rome [Пасулова, 2008]. These international relations, which lasted for several centuries, left deep and indelible marks on the material and spiritual culture of Caucasian Albania [Mustafayev, 2016a, s.276-279].

Early connections with the Ancient world. The geography of Azerbaijan's relations with neighboring states and various peoples is quite extensive and ancient. The connections between the culture of the ancient world – Europe's cradle of ancient and early civilization – and Azerbaijan date back 2,400 years, to the Hellenistic period. Archaeological findings repeatedly confirm the authenticity of these connections.

Research in this area also demonstrates that from the time Caucasian Albania emerged on the historical scene, it established close and continuous relations with the Hellenistic world. As a result of these mutual interactions, the culture of the ancient world influenced our material culture, as well as our religious and philosophical worldview. However, if we more precisely characterize these archaeological findings within the context of ancient sources, it becomes evident that these connections stretch back nearly 2,500 years [Геродот, 1999, s.426; Mustafayev, 2019, s.109-118].

Some artifacts suggest that the history of these connections is even earlier. In Ancient Greece, several pottery vessels were traditionally placed in the grave along with the deceased during burial ceremonies. These types of pottery vessels, usually used for religious rituals, were likely placed in the burial chamber and served a ritual purpose. One of these vessels, known from the ceramics of the ancient world, is called a "kernos". The term κέρνος in ancient Greek refers to a ritual vessel with small cups attached around its rim (in modern Greek: a candelabrum, chandelier; in ancient Greek: a vessel for sacrifices or sacrificial ceremonies). Along with kernos-type pottery, other ceramic items such as hydria, lekythos, loutrophoros, guttus, kalathos, kalpida, and phiale (a shallow drinking cup) are also examples of items placed in the grave during rituals and burials. Similar ceremonial, ritual ceramics, dating back to the Late Bronze – Early Iron Age, to the Khojaly–Gedabay culture, discovered in Mingachevir in 1946–1953, reflect traces and influence of ancient Greek culture. Currently, a small fragment of the ceramic vessel is currently preserved in the Archaeological Fund of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan (inv. No.27291). Examples of kernos-type vessels have also been uncovered at sites such as Khanlar, Chardagly, Garajamirli [Порпелова, 1977, с.93-96; Гусейнова, 2011, с.113, 130, 169-172, 192] and from various archaeological sites around the world, dating back to the Late Bronze–Early Iron Age.

A more intriguing fact is that the chronology and geography of kernos-type vessels are even older and more widespread. The earliest examples of such vessels in the world of ceramics date back to the 4th millennium BC and are known from regions in the Mediterranean basin. The emergence of these vessels occurred after contact with the ceramics of the Near East [Порпелова, 1977, с.94]. These types of vessels, characteristic of Ancient Greek culture, were more commonly found in the Eastern Mediterranean basin, including Syria, Palestine, and Cyprus. Parallel to the South Caucasus region, kernos vessels are also known from sites in Iran such as Khurvin, Hasanlu, and others, particularly in the northwestern part of Iran. Researchers indicate that analogous examples gradually entered the South Caucasus through Iran during the late 2nd millennium BC to the early 1st millennium AD [Порпелова, 1977, с.95-96]. It must be acknowledged that the emergence of these types of vessels in Iranian ceramic production discovered at sites like Khurvin and Hasanlu, was also influenced by external factors.

The ancient Greek civilization, which developed over time, reached the highest peak of pottery in the ancient period. The connections of the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Asia, including Iran, with ancient Azerbaijan during this period led to the emergence of this type of vessel.

The territory of ancient Azerbaijan was incorporated into the Achaemenid Empire, which existed from the 6th to the 4th centuries BC. The South Caucasus region, with its favorable natural and geographical conditions, was not only one of the main transit routes leading to Europe but also held significant strategic importance. Located on the caravan route coming from the north, Azerbaijan was a key area of interest for the Achaemenids in the South Caucasus. Through this transit route, it was possible to control cultural and trade connections, as well as to use it for military purposes [Mustafayev, 2019, s.109-118]. The Achaemenid Empire, which spanned vast territories from the Persian Gulf to the Caucasus Mountains and from Egypt to India, included many peoples, among them the Greeks. The culture was enriched and developed within

the framework of these multifaceted interactions between the two civilizations [Mustafayev, 2016a, s.276-279; Mustafayev, 2018, s.204-213; Mustafayev, 2014, s.137-145]. The Achaemenid Empire was divided into 20 satrapies (administrative units). The Greek historian Herodotus, in his book *"The History"*, noted that the territory inhabited by the Caspian tribe was included in the eleventh satrapy [Геродот, 1999, с.208-209].

Furthermore, these tribes participated in Xerxes' campaign against Greece. Pottery vessels and fragments reflecting the early influence of Greek culture were discovered at the Ilyastapa and Idealtepe sites in the village of Garajamirli, the Shamkir district, dating back to the Achaemenid period. Fragments of pottery with distinctive ancient cultural features, such as tilted-rim vessels and parts of oenochoe (a type of wine jug), were uncovered at both sites.

In 2014, a reddish, single-handled clay vessel with a flower petal-shaped mouth, resembling an oenochoe, was discovered at the Ilyastapa site, dating to the Achaemenid period (5th–4th centuries BC) (AF 28118, s/q 62). Another oenochoe-type vessel, also from the Achaemenid period, was found at Ilyastapa in 2015. This find is smaller in size, single-handled, and gray in color (AF 28119, s/q 14) [Мустафаев, 2017, с.75-77; Babayev, Kaniyut, Mustafayev, Qruber, 2017, s.81-91]. These types of vessels were widely used in the domestic life of Albania during the 4th century BC to the 3rd–4th centuries AD [Османов, 2006, с.180-182; Халилов, 1985, с.118-119]. Oinochoai, produced under the influence of Ancient Greek culture, are regularly found during excavations at archaeological sites from this period. The appearance of oenochoe-type vessels in local production is a direct result of the influence of Ancient Greek culture on Azerbaijan's ceramic production [Бабаев, 1990, с.141-142]. Thus, even before the eastward campaign of Alexander the Great and the formation of Caucasian Albania, the local population had already become acquainted with Ancient Greek culture and benefited from its positive attributes [Мустафаев, 2015, с.143-148].

Caucasian Albania in the Hellenistic period. Starting from the 4th century BC, Caucasian Albania's relations with the Greek and Hellenistic worlds had already reached the level of international economic, cultural, and social interactions. This fact is confirmed by the archeological monuments of antiquity and the numerous material-culture artifacts uncovered during archaeological excavations across the country. Alexander the Great's eastern campaign, which began in Europe, extended as far as India. Caucasian Albania's location on international transit routes significantly influenced the formation of its cultural, political, economic, and military relations. During the ancient period, these long-established connections over the centuries became more regular and reached an international level. The transition from sporadic relations to sustained and comprehensive interactions can be attributed to several key factors: 1) the wealth of natural resources, as well as its rich flora and fauna; 2) the previously mentioned location of Caucasian Albania along major international land and sea trade routes, as well as on the migration paths of various peoples moving from north to south and from east to west; 3) prior to Caucasian Albania's emergence on the historical scene, these territories were part of vast empires and developed states, which had a positive influence on the region; 4) the intervention of our material culture and the inhabitants of Caucasian Albania in global events and their close participation in the course of historical developments.

Ancient sources provide a wealth of written information about Caucasian Albania. The records of Polybius, who lived in the 2nd century BC [Алиев, 1987, с.7], Strabo's *"Geography"* (64 BC–24 AD) [Страбон, 1964, с.467-475], Pliny the Elder's *"Natural History"* (23–79 AD) [Латышев, 2 (28), 1949, с.271-308], Plutarch's *"Parallel Lives"* (46–119 AD) [Плутарх, Т.2, 1987, с.136-137, 310-313], and Claudius Ptolemy's *"Geography"* (70–147 AD) [Латышев, 1948, с.215-314, 231-257] among others, contain rich details about the nature, urban settlements, population, military-political situation, economy, and occupations of the people of Caucasian Albania.

The international relations between Ancient Greek culture and Caucasian Albania can be observed in the artifacts uncovered during archaeological excavations. This historical process can be analyzed from two perspectives, based on archaeological evidence.

1) The importation of artifacts from ancient world countries into Albania as a result of mutual cultural, political, and economic relations (Coins and artisanal products).

2) Against the backdrop of the aforementioned international relations, the influence of ancient world culture on various aspects of Caucasian Albania's material culture can be clearly observed, particularly in pottery, jewelry production, and construction techniques. Ancient world culture had a noticeable impact on the religious worldview of the Albanian population, their burial customs, economic activities, lifestyle, as well as the development of trade and monetary circulation.

The influence of ancient world culture on Caucasian Albania's material culture, and international relations in the final stage is closely connected to Rome [Mustafayev, 2016].

Roman sources provide highly accurate and relevant information about Albania's toponyms, hydronyms, ethnic diversity, cities, participation in historical events, and particularly the economic and military-political relations of the Albanian population. The findings from archaeological excavations of ancient settlements and burial sites in Azerbaijan complement the facts presented in Latin-language sources of Albania. Among the material culture artifacts uncovered, many are related to Ancient Rome. These findings, along with the observed Roman influence in craftsmanship and construction techniques, reflect the mutual connections in the formation of trade, political, and cultural relations. A significant portion of the relations formed between Rome and Albania centered on trade. Albania was situated on important trade routes that connected various regions, and it was through these land and sea routes that it maintained connections with the countries of the ancient world. International trade relations played a central role in Albania's economic, political, cultural, and social life. The primary reason for the expansion of trade from Europe to Asia during the ancient period was Alexander the Great's campaign to the East. These international trade routes connected Europe with countries rich in ancient culture, such as Egypt, Syria, the Seleucid Empire, Parthia, Media, Bactria, China, and India [Алиева, 2005, с.40; Алиева, 2007, с.42-60; Расулова, 2008, с.60-105, 129-139].

The discovery of a hoard in 1958 in the village of Khynysly, the Shamakhi district, containing more than 70 coins – local, Athenian, Seleucid, Arsacid, and others – along with a Roman denarius minted in the 80s BC, serves as a striking example of Albania's trade relations with Rome [Пахомов, 1962, с.107-110; Пахомов, 1966, с.19-21]. The high level of development in trade relations and the emergence of monetary circulation in Albania were directly influenced by Hellenistic culture, as well as by the urbanization process that was intensifying in the East [Бабаев, 2002, с.177-178]. The discovery of local imitation coins in Azerbaijan indicates that the inability of Hellenistic coins to meet the country's economic demand for currency led to the necessity of minting local coins in Albania. As a result, beginning from the 3rd century BC, local coins appeared, establishing a system of monetary circulation [Бабаев, Казиев, 1971, с.16-32; Бабаев, 1990, с.160-162; Раджабли, 1997, с.9-28; Халилов, 1985, с.152-155]. The discovery of Roman coins is a clear indicator of the international trade relations that were established. In 1964, a hoard was uncovered during plowing by a tractor south of the village of Chukhur-Gabala, which included denarii of the Roman emperors Otho (69 AD), Vespasian (69–79 AD), Trajan (98–117 AD), and Hadrian (117–138 AD) [Babayev, Əhmədov, 1981, s.18-19]. Additionally, silver denarii of Julius Caesar and Claudius, found in 1978 in the cultural layer dating back to the 1st century BC at the ancient city site in the village of Chukhur-Gabala in the Gabala district, represent the earliest coins that mark the early relations between Albania and Rome [Наджафова, Бабаев, 2009, с.208-210]. Roman coins have also been found in other regions of Azerbaijan, including Mingachevir (in grave monuments of the 1st century BC – the 3rd century AD), Barda, Ganja, Shamakhi, and others [Бабаев, 1990, с.164]. Twelve denarii of Augustus, dating from the late 1st century BC to the early 1st century AD, were discovered in the Tazakand ruins of the Beylagan district, providing evidence of the widespread prevalence of these coins across vast territories from Spain to India, including the South Caucasus. These findings indicate the close connections between Rome and Albania during the early centuries AD [Azərbaycan tarixi, I Cild, 2007, s.391-392].

The influence of Greek-Roman culture entered the territory of Albania primarily through trade, and this can also be observed on clay fragments with seal impressions (bullae). These artifacts, found in Mingachevir, Gabala, and Shamakhi, feature motifs that bear a strong resemblance to the religious and mythological depictions of the ancient world, particularly Roman craftsmanship [Асланов, Бабаев, 1965, с.94-102; Бабаев, 1990, с.165-176]. The main reason for the discovery of glyptics related to Roman culture during the Mingachevir excavations is the city's location on international trade routes. The seals often depict statues of Roman gods. The motifs similar to Greek seals on these artifacts include images of gods associated with war, the sun, love, and other aspects [Бабаев, 1965, с.8]. The discovery of Greek and Roman-style seals in Albania is a clear manifestation of mutual trade and cultural relations. The influence of Rome on Albania's social-political life also led to the production of local seals.

Starting from the early centuries AD, the art of toreutics began to develop in Albania. The primary reason for the emergence of this art form in Albania was the introduction of toreutic examples from the ancient world into the region. Familiar with Greek-Roman craftsmanship, the Albanians began to create similar versions of these foreign products. Roman toreutic artifacts such as plates, bowls, and phiales, discovered in regions like Mingachevir, Shamakhi, Ismayilli, Goychay, Guba, and others, were brought into Albania through trade and cultural exchanges. Various examples of craftsmanship, particularly jewelry, were introduced into Albania not only from Greece and Rome but also from countries like Egypt, Syria, and others, via trade and cultural relations. In 1893, a silver plate, one of the most beautiful examples of Roman toreutics of the 2nd–3rd centuries, with legendary scenes of the ancient world was found in the Ismaili district [Osmanov, 1982, s.95-96]. The plate, crafted by forging two metal plates, features a smooth underside with a circular protrusion—likely a foot or base—welded. Additionally, the upper surface is adorned with an engraved depiction of a young, beautiful girl seated on a sea horse, surrounded by tritons, erotes, and dolphins. This central motif, taken from ancient Greek-Roman mythology, is gilded, adding a radiant shine. According to the historian E.Spartianus, the Roman Emperor Hadrian (117–136 AD) maintained friendly relations with the Albanians and Iberians, bestowing gifts upon their leaders [Тревер, 1959, с.177; Тревер, 1969, с.25; Кошкарлы, 1985, с.6-7, 54-57].

The images on a cup found in a wooden casket grave in Mingachevir during the 1940s and on a phiale discovered in an earth grave in the village of Rustov, Quba district, in 1974 are similar. The depiction of grape clusters engraved on these artifacts is characteristic of the toreutic art of Rome and other ancient countries [Гошгарлы, 2006а, с.49-55; Гошгарлы, 2006, с.116-118; Əliyev, Əliyeva, 1997, s.74-75]. The grape motif, associated with Dionysus, is prominent in the art of Greece and Rome, as well as the Mediterranean basin and Eastern countries. Earrings shaped like triangular grape clusters, found in burial monuments from the Albanian period in Mingachevir and Shamakhi, share similar features [Гошгарлы, 2006а, с.54-55]. Examples of toreutic art and jewelry featuring such depictions are preserved in the Special Fund of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan and are also displayed in the exhibition hall (XF 517, XF 547, etc.). The influence of Roman toreutics can be observed in the artifacts produced in Albania. Silver cups found in a jar burial in Shamakhi and in burial monuments in Mingachevir closely resemble Roman toreutic art in both their designs and forms. These types of cups were widespread in Rome during the early centuries AD [Кошкарлы, 1985, с.41-42].

The influence of Greek-Roman culture can also be traced in the construction techniques of Albania. The use of roof tiles in construction was directly influenced by Greek culture. Ancient tiles have been discovered at archaeological sites in Gabala, Shamakhi, and Ismayilli [Бабаев, 1974, с.48-59; Алиев, Османов, 1975, с.188-202; Халилов, 1985, с.34-38]. In the construction techniques of this period, lime mortar was used as a masonry material. This new method, widely applied in Roman construction techniques from the 1st century BC, was identified using in structures made of mudbrick in Gabala. Prior to this, in Rome, lime mortar was mainly used for plastering and mosaic work [Бабаев, 1990, с.86].

In the oval-type structures, which are rare architectural monuments for the Caucasus, one can observe a distinct example of ancient Roman influence. In 2017, some parts of the floor of oval structure No.5, at a depth of 0.7-0.8 meters in squares B4 and C4, was found to be partially plastered with a fine gravel-mixed lime mortar, approximately 1.5 cm thick. This modern construction technique is known as Roman concrete (*opus caementicium*). Until now, no similar findings have been discovered in the territory of Azerbaijan [Babayev, Ağamalıyeva, Mustafayev, Heydərova, Hüseynova, 2018, s.229-230; Mustafayev, 2014, s.305; Бабаев, 1990, с.86].

During archaeological research conducted in 2020 at the “Kımalıqeberiş” site within the territory of the Khinalig State Historical-Architectural and Ethnographic Reserve by the Khinalig expedition of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of ANAS, material culture artifacts from the ancient period were discovered. The site comprises both a settlement and a cemetery, dating from the 4th century BC to the 7th century AD. Numerous diverse and intriguing material culture artifacts were uncovered from this site. Among the findings was a bronze phalera, an element of ancient Roman military attire, which serves as evidence of Albania’s connections with Rome. In ancient Rome, phalerae were initially used as ornaments for horse harnesses and later as medal-like awards, typically circular or oval. The rare find features a depiction of Medusa Gorgon from Greek mythology (<https://news.milli.az/culture/917683.html>).

Based on the aforementioned facts, we can conclude that during the ancient period, the international multifaceted economic, political, and cultural relations that Albania established with the cultures of the ancient world, particularly with Greece and Rome, led to significant development in various aspects of Caucasian Albania’s material culture.

REFERENCES:

1. Azərbaycan tarixi (*History of Azerbaijan*): 7 cilddə. I Cild. Bakı, 2007, 199 s.
2. Babayev İ., Ağamalıyeva S., Mustafayev L., Heydərova Ü., Hüseynova S. 2017-ci ildə Qəbələnin Antik şəhər ərazisinin V qazıntı sahəsində aparılan arxeoloji tədqiqatlar (*Archaeological Excavations Carried Out in 2017 in 5th Excavation Site of the Ancient City Site in Gabala*) / Milli Azərbaycan Tarixi Muzeyi, 2018, s.226-233.
3. Babayev İ.A., Əhmədov Q.M. Qəbələ (*Gabala*). Bakı, 1981, 96 s.
4. Babayev İ., Kaniyut K., Mustafayev L., Qruber M. 2016-ci ildə Şəmkir-Qaracəmirlə Beynəlxalq arxeoloji ekspedisiyası tərəfindən MATM-in Arxeologiya fonduna təhvil verilən arxeoloji tapıntılar (*Archaeological Findings Handed Over to the Archaeology Fund of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan by the Shamkir-Garajamirli International Archaeological Expedition in 2016*) / Milli Azərbaycan Tarixi Muzeyi, 2017, s.81-91.
5. Əliyev K., Əliyeva F. Azərbaycan antik dövrüdə (*Azerbaijan in Antiquity*). Bakı, 1997, 120 s.
6. Mustafayev L. Antik dünyanın Qafqaz Albaniyasının maddi mədəniyyətinə təsirini şərtləndirən amillər (*Factors Determining the Influence of the Ancient World on the Material Culture of Caucasian Albania*) / Milli Azərbaycan Tarixi Muzeyi – 2019. Bakı, 2019, s.109-118.
7. Mustafayev L.X. Antik mədəniyyətin Azərbaycan Albaniyasının maddi irsinə mədəni təsiri (*Cultural Influence of Ancient Culture on the Material Heritage of Azerbaijani Albania*): Tarix üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru diss. avtoref. Bakı, 2016, 26 s.
8. Mustafayev L. Azərbaycanda izlənən Əhəmənilər dövrü abidələrində yunan mədəniyyətinin izləri (Şəmkir rayonunda aparılan arxeoloji qazıntı materiallarına əsasən) (*Traces of Greek Culture in Achaemenid Era Monuments Observed in Azerbaijan (Based on Archaeological Excavation Materials from the Shamkir district)*) / Görkəmli tarixçi-alim S.Aşurbəylinin anadan olmasının 110 illik yubileyinə həsr olunmuş "Azərbaycan tarixinin öyrənilməsində muzeylərin rolu", VI Respublika elmi konfransının materialları. Bakı, 2016a, s.276-279.
9. Mustafayev L.X. Keramika istehsalında varislik (Milli Azərbaycan Tarixi Muzeyi və Quba tarix-diyarşünaslıq muzeyinin materialları əsasında) (*Inheritance in Ceramic Production (Based on Materials from the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan and the Guba History and Ethnography Museum)*) / Ümummilli Lider Heydər Əliyevin anadan olmasının 95 illiyinə həsr olunmuş "Muzey, arxiv və kitabxanalarda qorunan milli dəyərlərin tədqiqi, təbliği, mühafizəsi və bərpası" II Respublika elmi konfransının materialları. Bakı, 2018, s.204-213.
10. Mustafayev L.X. Şimali Azərbaycan Əhəmənilər imperiyasının tərkibində. Antik dünya ilə ilk əlaqələr (*Northern Azerbaijan as Part of the Achaemenid Empire: Initial Contacts with the Ancient World*) / "Azərbaycan tarixinin öyrənilməsində muzeylərin rolu" IV Respublika elmi konfransının materialları. Bakı, 2014, s.137-145.
11. Müseyibli N.Ə. Leylatəpə mədəniyyəti (*Leyla-Tepe Culture*). Bakı, 2020, 576 s.
12. Müseyibli N. Leylatəpə mədəniyyətinin qəbir abidələri və dəfn adətləri (*Grave Monuments and Burial Customs of the Leyla-Tepe Culture*). Bakı, 2014, 140 s.
13. Osmanov F.L. Qafqaz Albaniyasının maddi mədəniyyəti (e.ə. IV – b.e. III əsrləri) (*The Material Culture of Caucasian Albania (4th century BC – 3rd century AD)*). Bakı, 1982, 159 s.
14. Алиев К.Г. Античные источники по истории Азербайджана (*Ancient Sources on the History of Azerbaijan*). Баку, 1987, 132 с.
15. Алиев И.Г., Османов Ф.Л. Бассейн рек Геокчай – Гирдиманчай – Ахсучай в античное время (*The Basin of the Goychay, Girdimanchay, and Aghsuchay Rivers in Antiquity*) // СА, 1975, №1, с.188-202.
16. Алиева Ф. Античный Азербайджан. Политические и торговые связи (*Ancient Azerbaijan: Political and Trade Relations*) / Археология, этнология, фольклористика Кавказа. Баку, 2005, с.40.
17. Алиева Ф. Культура античного Азербайджана – Мидийской Атропатены и Кавказской Албании (IV в. до н.э. – III в. н.э.) (*The Culture of Ancient Azerbaijan – Media Atropatene and Caucasian Albania (4th century BC – 3rd century AD)*). Баку, 2007, 180 с.
18. Асланов Г.М., Бабаев И.А. Общая характеристика памятников глиптики, найденных при раскопках в Мингечауре (*General Characteristics of Glyptic Monuments Found During Excavations in Mingachevir*) // Изв. АН Аз.ССР, Серия общественных наук, 1965, №2, с.94-102.
19. Бабаев И.А. Античная черепица Кавказской Албании (*Ancient Roof Tiles of Caucasian Albania*) // СА, 1974, №2, с.48-59.
20. Бабаев И.А. Античные памятники глиптики Азербайджана (*Ancient Glyptic Monuments of Azerbaijan*) // Материалы I науч. конфер. аспирантов Ин-та истории АН Аз.ССР. Баку, 1965, с.6-8.
21. Бабаев И.А. Города Кавказской Албании в IV в. до н.э. – III в. н.э. (*Cities of Caucasian Albania in the 4th century BC – 3rd century AD*) Баку, 1990, 236 с.

22. Бабаев И.А. Денежное обращение Кавказской Албании в эллинистическую эпоху (конец IV – первая половина I вв. до н.э.) (*Monetary Circulation in Caucasian Albania During the Hellenistic Period (late 4th – first Half of the 1st century BC)*) / Azərbaycan Tarixi Muzeyi. Bakı, 2002, с.177-196.
23. Бабаев И.А., Казиев С.М. Кабалинский клад монет эллинистической эпохи (*The Gabala Hoard of Hellenistic Coins*) // НЭ, Т. 9, 1971, с.16-32.
24. Геродот. История в девяти томах (*History in Nine Volumes*) / Пер. Г.А.Стратановского. М.: Научно-издательский центр «Ладомир», 1999, 752 с.
25. Гусейнова М. Из истории Южного Кавказа. Ходжалы–Гедабекская культура Азербайджана (XVI–IX вв до н.э.) (*From the History of the South Caucasus: The Khojaly–Gadabay Culture of Azerbaijan (16th–9th centuries BC)*). Баку, 2011.
26. Гошгарлы Г.О. Античные могильники древнего Мингечаура и их параллели на трассе трубопроводов Баку – Тбилиси – Джейхан и Баку – Тбилиси – Эрзерум (*Ancient Cemeteries of Mingachevir and Their Parallels Along the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan and Baku–Tbilisi–Erzurum Pipeline Routes*) / Mingəçevir arxeoloji ekspedisiyasının 60 illiyinə həsr edilmiş elmi konfransın materialları. Mingəçevir, 2006, с.116-118.
27. Гошгарлы Г.О. Серебряная чаша из срубного погребения на трассе нефтепровода Баку – Тбилиси – Джейхан (*Silver Bowl from a Timber Grave Along the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan Pipeline Route*) / Azərbaycanın antik və orta əsr arxeologiyası problemləri. Bakı, 2006a, с.49-55.
28. Джафаров Г.Ф. Связи Азербайджана со странами Передней Азии в эпоху поздней бронзы и раннего железа (по археологическим материалам Азербайджана) (*Azerbaijan's Relations with the Countries of Western Asia During the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages (Based on Archaeological Materials from Azerbaijan)*). Баку, 1984, 107 с.
29. Кошкарлы К.О. Античная и раннесредневековая торевтика из Азербайджана (*Ancient and Early Medieval Toreutics from Azerbaijan*). Баку, 1985, 140 с.
30. Латышев В.В. Известия древних писателей о Скифии и Кавказе (*News of Ancient Writers on Scythia and the Caucasus*) // ВДИ 2 (24). М.; Л.; 1948, с. 215-314, 231-257.
31. Латышев В.В. Известия древних писателей о Скифии и Кавказе (*Accounts of Ancient Writers on Scythia and the Caucasus*) // ВДИ 2 (28), М.-Л., 1949, с.271-308.
32. Мустафаев Л.Х. Влияние культуры античного мира на керамическое производство Кавказской Албании (*Influence of Ancient World Culture on the Ceramic Production of Caucasian Albania*) // Гілея: науковий вісник: збірник наукових праць / гол. ред. В.М.Вашкевич. К.: “Видавництво “Гілея”, 2015, Вип.97 (6), с.143-145.
33. Мустафаев Л.Х. О развалинах построек, обнаруженных в 2014–2015 гг. на памятнике Ильястепе (*On the Ruins of Structures Discovered in 2014–2015 at the Ilyastepe Site*) // Новые материалы и методы археологического исследования: От археологических данных к историческим реконструкциям. Материалы IV конференции молодых ученых. М.: ИА РАН, 2017, с.75-77.
34. Наджафова И.М., Бабаев И.А. Монета Клодия из античной Кабалы (*A Coin of Clodius from Ancient Gabala*) / Международная научная конференция, Азербайджан Шамкир, 11-12 сентября 2008. Баку, 2009, с.208-211.
35. Османов Ф. История и культура Кавказской Албании IV в. до н.э. – III в. н.э. (*History and Culture of Caucasian Albania in the 4th century BC – 3rd century AD*). Баку, 2006, 288 с.
36. Пахомов Е.А. Античные монеты в Албании (*Ancient Coins in Albania*) // ВИКА, Баку, 1962, с.106-113.
37. Пахомов Е.А. Монетные клады Азербайджана и других республиках и краев Кавказа (*Coin Hoards of Azerbaijan and Other Republics and Regions of the Caucasus*) / Вып.9. Баку, 1966, 124 с.
38. Плутарх. Избранные жизнеописания (*Selected Lives*). Т.2, М.: Изд-во «Правда», 1987, 605 с.
39. Погребова М.Н. Иран и Закавказье в раннем железном веке (*Iran and Transcaucasia in the Early Iron Age*). М., 1977, 184 с.
40. Раджабли А. Нумизматика Азербайджана (*Numismatics of Azerbaijan*). Баку, 1997, 232 с.
41. Расулова М.М. Торгово-экономические и культурные связи Кавказской Албании с античным и эллинистическим миром: IV век до н.э. – III век н.э. (*Trade, Economic, and Cultural Relations of Caucasian Albania with the Ancient and Hellenistic World: 4th century BC – 3rd century AD*). Баку, 2008, 228 с.
42. Страбон. География в 17 книгах (*Geography in 17 Books*) / Пер. Г.А.Стратановского. М.: «Наука», 1964, 941 с.
43. Тревер К.В. Блюдо серебряное с позолотой с изображением Нереиды, римская работа II–III вв. (*Silver Dish with Gold Plating Depicting a Nereid, Roman Work of the 2nd–3rd centuries*). Ленинград: Эрмитаж, 1969, 41 с.
44. Тревер К.В. Очерки по истории и культуре Кавказской Албании (*Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania*). М.-Л.: Ленинградское отделение Изд-ва Академии наук СССР, 1959, 392 с.
45. Халилов Дж.А. Материальная культура Кавказской Албании (IV в. до н.э. – III в. н.э.) (*Material Culture of Caucasian Albania (4th century BC – 3rd century AD)*). Баку 1985, 236 с.

Najafov Shamil

*Leading Researcher Associate of the Ethnoarchaeology Department
of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of ANAS,
PhD in History, Associate Professor
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8834-7188>*

Aliyeva Saadat

*Director of "Avey" State Historical-Cultural Reserve,
PhD in pedagogy
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5370-3178>*

Mursaguliyev Musa

Director of "Keshikchidagh" State Historical-Cultural Reserve

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN AND AROUND THE AVEY ALBANIAN TEMPLE IN 2023

Abstract. Temples and churches hold a significant place in the study of the material and cultural heritage of Caucasian Albania. In Azerbaijan's western region, particularly within the territory of the Gazakh district, many churches and temples, remnants of the Albanian state, can be found. Situated in one of the regions where Christianity was widely spread, the Avey temple plays a significant role as a monument that preserves the architecture and art of the Albanian period within our material and cultural heritage. This article discusses the archaeological research conducted in 2023 at this monument complex, which preserves traces of our historical past.

Keywords: Gazakh, Dash Salahli, Avey, Alban, temple

Archaeological research at the Avey Temple. In 2023, the Gazakh archaeological expedition conducted archaeological research at the Albanian temple and its surroundings, located on Avey Mountain in the Gazakh district, as well as in the Dash Salahli caves. At the summit of Avey Mountain, within the territory of the Avey State Historical-Cultural Reserve, situated at an altitude of 922 meters above sea level, stands the Alban temple, which dates back to the 7th century. The temple bears a registration mark (inv. No.283) and a brief information plaque [Nəcəfov, 2024, s.18].

The ancient temple, considered an Albanian temple (Moon temple), is located on the southern peak of Avey Mountain. The two-nave (room) temple, measuring 4.5x3.5 m and 3.5x2.5 m, was constructed from local Avey stone [Мамедова, 2004, с.98]. The ceiling of the northern section is vaulted, while the ceiling of the southern section is completed with a conical dome (Fig. 1-3). The temple complex includes two churches, an auxiliary building, fortress walls, and several ancillary structures [Ахундов, 1986; Мамедова, 2004, с.98].

Various sources and literature provide information about the history of the temple. By summarizing the above stated and systematizing the materials obtained from the excavations, it can be inferred that the temple was likely constructed during the 5th–7th centuries, within the period of the Caucasian Albanian state. However, the architectural style of the temple bears a stronger resemblance to pre-Christian

Albanian monuments. The construction style of the monument shows significant influence from Roman and Greek architectural traditions [Ахундов, 1986]. According to some theories, the word “Avey” in ancient Turkic languages means “Moon House”, and the temple was built in honor of the Moon goddess Selene from ancient Greek mythology. As we know, before the advent of Christianity, polytheism was practiced in Albania, where Roman and Greek gods were worshipped. Another theory suggests that the site was a hunting ground (in the Gazakh dialect, the word “ov” is still expressed as “oy”). However, the idea of it being a hunting ground raises some doubts and surprises, as the area is mountainous rather than a plain.

The fact that the temple was built on the summit of a mountain, perched on a steep cliff, indicates that it was not intended to be a place open to the public. In our opinion, this site was a sacred space where likely priests would come to perform religious rituals at specific times. In this respect, the Avey temple distinctly differs from another Albanian church located in the territory of the Ashaghi Askipara village, on the left bank of the Jogaz River in the Gazakh district [Ахундов, 1986]. Unlike the Avey temple, the second monument prominently displays Christian elements and is situated within a settlement area, open to the public. Additionally, it is worth noting that above the doors of the second monument, there is an Albanian cross, and the columns feature ornament elements consisting of floral ornaments and fish motifs. This monument is believed to have been constructed in the Syrian style between the 5th and 8th centuries. In its courtyard, there were inscribed gravestones, one of which, according to reports, bore an inscription in the Gargarian language that read: **“We did not abandon our homeland, we did not submit to the Gregorian faith, we perished...”**



Fig. 1. Eastern view of the Avey Temple



Fig. 2. Southern view of the temple



Fig. 3. An auxiliary building in the northeastern part



Fig. 4. View of the excavation site in front of the Avey temple

In the 1870s and 1880s, graves were discovered in the courtyard of the Avey temple. The grave slabs of these graves were decorated in a style characteristic of the Albanians. On one of the stones, a lotus flower – an emblem specific to the Albanians – was carved, along with a rosette divided into eight parts, symbolizing the Sun, placed in the upper corners [Ахундов, 1986].

Inside the Avey temple, above one of the cell-like spaces near a window facing east, an Albanian cross was depicted, surrounded by a lake-patterned decorative element. This cross was carved and engraved on the stone by relief method. Externally, on the western side of the temple, another cross above was depicted like the one inside. Both crosses have been damaged, scratched with some blunt instrument, and certain parts have broken off [Nəcəfov, 2024, s.19-20].

In 2023, archaeological excavations were conducted inside the temple complex as well as in the northern, southern, and eastern courtyards of the temple. The purpose of the excavations was to determine whether there were any burials inside the temple and in its immediate surroundings. Additionally, the excavations aimed to further clarify the structure, construction style, and period of the temple, by comparing human burials with the period during which the temple was constructed. This included analyzing the artifacts obtained to determine their age [Nəcəfov, 2024].

Excavation areas were selected both inside the Avey Albanian temple and in its courtyard. Inside the temple, a 2x2 meter excavation area was chosen in the inner room. It is common for Albanian-period temples and churches to sometimes contain human burials or the graves of saints within them. For this reason, archaeological excavations were conducted inside the temple; however, no burial sites were discovered [Nəcəfov, 2024, s.28].

In the southern courtyard of the temple, an initial exploratory excavation area was established, measuring 2x2 meters, but it was gradually expanded. Starting from a depth of 10-15 cm below the modern surface, grave slabs began to appear (Fig. 4). In the early stages, the dense and closely aligned, symmetrical arrangement of these stones raised doubts. Initially, we considered the possibility that this area might have been a paved sidewalk, given its location at the front of the temple. However, the subsequent discovery of the placement of some stones, the markings and symbols found on them, and the fragments of human bones discovered between the gravestones confirmed the idea that these stones marked human burials underneath [Nəcəfov, 2024, s.23]. The excavation area was expanded to 3x7 meters. It was determined that in this area, the burials were densely arranged side by side, and there was not a significant time gap between them. Some human bones were found as fragments even at a depth of 5-10 cm. When a border-guard post was constructed at the height where the temple is located, the soil was partially disturbed with machinery, which led to the discovery of human bones at very shallow depths. Undoubtedly, at the time these burials and ceremonies were conducted, people buried their dead at certain depths (typically 1-1.2 meters) according to religious practices. However, because the soil layer on the hill was partially removed later, some bones from the skeletons were discovered in relatively shallow layers. During the excavations, at a depth of 10 cm from the modern surface, a skeleton was found lying atop one of the grave slabs, extending along it (Grave No. 1). It is believed that this skeleton belongs to a later period than the others. Due to the presence of the grave slab from an earlier grave in the spot intended for burial, the deceased was laid directly on top of the grave slab and then covered with soil [Nəcəfov, 2024, s.23]. An interesting burial practice was observed. The deceased was buried on his back, oriented west to east, with his right arm extended alongside his body and his left arm bent at the waist and placed over the groin area, in accordance with Christian burial customs. Some of the shin and toe bones were scattered, likely due to the skeleton being buried so close to the surface, causing the bones to become lost or scattered over time. Anthropological analysis and the examination of the skeleton's bones revealed that the individual was a male of large stature. The shin bone of the right leg was found to be bent, indicating that the deceased might have had an anatomical issue with his leg bones. The man's head was placed inside a medium-sized clay brazier, filled with ash and charcoal, during the burial. The clay brazier was relatively low in height,

with thick walls, and fragments of it were found at the site. A whole piece of the brazier was discovered beneath the skull [Nəcəfov, 2024, s.24]. The practice of placing a clay brazier under the skull during burial is intriguing. We believe that this custom might be connected to a fire ritual. S.M.Gaziyev noted that in Karimli (Oguz district), in a burial monument from the early Iron Age, a fire was kindled at the head of the grave, and a pair of spherical objects with horn-shaped projections were placed in front of the deceased, which he associated with primitive religious beliefs related to fire and flame [Qaziyev, 1962]. The researcher also mentioned discovering clay braziers in some graves in the area known as Munjuglutepe, between the Sarisu and Garabaldir rivers [Qaziyev, 1973, p.149]. In general, nine earth graves dating back to the early first millennium BC were studied in Karimli, and clay braziers were found in graves No. 1, 3, 5, and 8 [Qaziyev, 1973, pp.149-155]. Next to the grave No. 5, a hearth was discovered, within which three wide-based, rectangular braziers that taper towards the top were found [Qaziyev, 1973, s.156].

Fragments of an iron dagger were discovered from the waist of the human skeleton. Due to severe corrosion and fragmentation, it was difficult to determine its exact shape.

A copper coin was found on the mandible of the skull (Fig. 5). Upon examination, it was revealed that this relatively well-preserved coin was a dirham minted during the reign of the Ilkhanid (Hulagu) ruler Abaqa Khan. The copper dirham was minted in Tabriz in the year 663 AH (1265 AD), with a diameter of 20 mm and a weight of 2.76 grams. The copper dirham, belonging to the "Qaan al-Adil" type, was likely placed in the deceased's mouth. There are records of such customs existing in Christian burials. The discovery of the copper coin on the skeleton was a significant find for determining the period during which the individual was buried [Nəcəfov, 2024, s.24].

Some similar coins from the era of Abaqa Khan feature a Christian cross and bear the inscription in Arabic: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, only one God".



Fig. 5. Copper dirham from the era of Ilkhanid (Hulagu) ruler Abaqa Khan

The dirhams from the Ilkhanate period, preserved in the Numismatics Fund of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, provide valuable information about the mints in Azerbaijan, the coin circulation during the reign of the Ilkhanid (Hulagu) Khans (1256–1358), and the corresponding historical period [NMHA Numismatics Fund. inv. No.F19987, No.F6014, No.F19548]. These silver and copper dirhams, which feature inscriptions of "tawhid" expressions on the obverse, the mint location, the year according to the

Hijri lunar calendar, and the titles and names of the Ilkhanid khans on the reverse, confirm the operation of mints in cities such as Tabriz, Tus, Hamadan, Maragha, Barda, Shirvan, Alinja, Nakhchivan, and others. One of the preserved examples in the fund, weighing 2.5 grams, is a coin of Abaqa Khan, minted in Tabriz in the year 678 AH (1279/1280 AD). On the obverse, it has the “tawhid” inscription in three lines, with the mint location and year along the edge, and on the reverse, the titles and name of the khan are inscribed in five lines in Uyghur script [NMHA Numismatics Fund. inv. No.F19987].

To the right of Grave No. 1, to its north, Grave No. 2 was opened to examine one of the extended grave slabs and to study burial practice. The lines of a depiction resembling a human silhouette were meticulously and symmetrically carved into the surface of the headstone using an engraving technique. The grave slab, laid in a west-east orientation at a depth of 15 cm from the modern surface, measured 1.9 meters in length and 55 cm in width. Upon lifting the grave slab, a human skeleton was discovered inside a very narrow and confined burial chamber beneath it. During the excavation of the grave and the cleaning of the skeletal remains, another human skull was found at the foot of the chamber, shoulder bones belonging to another skeleton were uncovered near the southern wall, and the foot bones of two additional skeletons were discovered at the head of the chamber. This indicates that the burials were carried out in extremely close and dense proximity within a small area. This density of burials can be explained by the fact that the temple and its surroundings were considered sacred, leading Christian believers to prefer burying their deceased in this area. During the excavation of Grave No. 2, the skeletal remains of other individuals were found at different levels, indicating that they do not all correspond to the same burial depth. This suggests a certain time difference between the burials. The fact that some of the grave slabs are positioned higher while others are relatively lower further supports this idea. Chronologically, it is likely that the Christian burials around the temple were carried out with some time intervals between them, possibly spanning 150 to 250 years [Nəcəfov, 2024, s.26-27].

The position of the skeleton in Grave No. 2 also indicated that the deceased was buried in a west-east orientation (with the head to the west and the feet to the east), lying on their back with hands folded on the chest in parallel alignment. This clearly suggested that the individual belonged to the Christian faith [Nəcəfov, 2024, s.27].

In the eastern part of the temple, a 4x2 meter area was selected for excavation. Excavations were conducted to a depth of 40 cm, revealing that this section contained a higher concentration of natural mountain rocks. Despite this, people still managed to carry out burials in the loose and soft soil layers found between the rocks. Three grave slabs were discovered in this area. One of these grave slabs featured a carved pattern resembling a human silhouette using engraving technique. The graves found here were similar in size and shape to those discovered in the southern section (Fig. 6).

In the 3x3 meter excavation area selected in the northern section, only hard rock stones and limestone fragments were found at a depth of 40 cm. It is likely that due to the unsuitable soil conditions in this area, no burials were carried out [Nəcəfov, 2024, s.29].

Thus, the southern part of the temple’s courtyard contained the highest number of graves, which were also densely aligned. The lengths of the gravestones ranged from 1.5 to 2.5 meters, with widths varying between 40 and 60 cm. The inscriptions and symbols on the stones were mostly carved using the engraving technique (Fig. 6).

A total of 34 grave slabs were discovered in the temple’s courtyard. Some of them (approx. 6) were found stacked on top of each other. This suggests that there was a significant time gap between the burials, leading to the graves being layered. If we compare this with the information provided by local residents about similar graves being found during trench digging in the vicinity, it becomes clear that Christian graves are abundant around the entire perimeter of the temple, starting from depths of 10-15 cm below the modern surface [Nəcəfov, 2024, s.29].

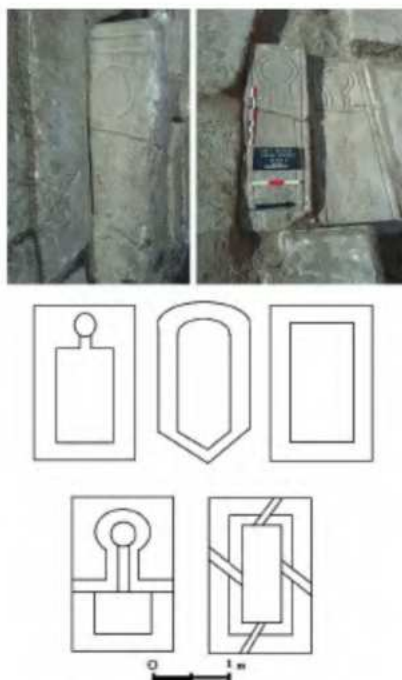


Fig. 6. Depictions on grave slabs

Armenian researchers who have written about the Avey temple claim that this temple belongs to what is now Christian Armenia, asserting that it was founded by Mesrop Mashtots and that its name is the “Saint Sarkis Monastery” located on Mount Surbsarkis [Анохин, 1981]. Naturally, this claim is fabricated and has no basis in historical reality.

It is well-known that Armenian historians have attempted to present Albanian churches and monasteries as their own to the world. Numerous examples of such Armenized churches and monasteries can be cited. Mila Avraam, writing for the “International Society Projects”, states that unlike the Georgian Church, the Albanian Church in Caucasian Albania fell into the trap of Armenian priests who sought to Armenianize the Albanians under the guise of sharing the same religion.

Archaeological findings, their classification, and dating. During the archaeological excavations conducted in and around the Avey Albanian temple, several artifacts were discovered, which help to further clarify our understanding of the temple’s ancient history.

Among the findings, ceramic samples hold a prominent place. These ceramics can be classified into two groups: glazed and unglazed. The glazed ceramic artifacts show traces of primitive forms. The glaze was primarily applied to the surface of the vessels after they had been polished and engobed. The quality of the glaze was high, and it has preserved its marks on the clay vessels (Fig. 8, 5-6). Monochrome glazed vessel fragments are predominant. The unglazed pottery samples are more numerous. Based on the forming elements, it can be inferred that these vessels represent the mouth, shoulder, body, and base parts of jars, cups, pitchers, saucers, pots, and basin-type clay vessels (Fig. 8, 7-8). The ceramic artifacts indicate that they were made from a mixed clay composition (mainly sand and fine gravel) and were fired at a consistent temperature. The presence of burn marks and soot traces on some of them suggests that these vessels were used in daily life for an extended period [Нәсәфов, 2024, s.32].

The unglazed clay fragments consist of broken pieces from domestic vessels such as jars, cups, pitchers, plates, and others, all made from a mixed clay composition [Нәсәфов, 2024, s.32]. There is no doubt that these clay vessel pieces date back to the 9th–13th centuries.

The glass artifacts are represented by two types of fragments. One fragment is from a plain bracelet made of black glass (Fig. 8, 2). Additionally, three fragments of glass vessels were discovered (Fig. 8, 4). One is light green, another is light blue, and the last is brown. These glass vessel fragments likely belong to perfume and pharmacy containers. Based on their classification and function, similar examples of these vessels can be found among materials from the 9th–12th centuries. Similar glass artifacts have been discovered in medieval urban sites such as Shabran and Shamkir, as well as at the Karpilitepe site [Dostiyev və b., 2013, s.408-431, 456-460; Əsədov, Əhmədova, 2023, s.103-108, şəkil 4-8].

During the excavations on the southern slope of the temple, an iron arrowhead was discovered near a grave slab (Fig. 8, 1). The arrowhead is well-preserved, with a heavy tip, indicating that it was used as a long-range weapon, specifically designed to pierce the enemy's armor in battle during the medieval period and earlier. The end of the arrowhead is spindle-shaped, intended to be attached to a wooden shaft. Based on its design, it resembles the type of arrowheads used by the Seljuk Turks in the 12th century. The arrowhead measures 4.5 cm in length.

Another interesting find from the temple's courtyard is a rock stone with engraved depictions of goats [Nəcəfov, 2024, s.34]. This petroglyph, reflecting the thoughts of a primitive artist, most likely depicts a shepherd's goats through simple lines (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7. A stone with depictions of goats on it

Dash Salahli Caves. The archaeological expedition also conducted brief research in the Dash Salahli caves, which are considered rare monuments within the Avey State Historical-Cultural Reserve. These caves are located slightly below the summit of the mountain where the Avey temple stands. The access to the caves is somewhat difficult, as the entrances are surrounded by steep cliffs. The caves are arranged in a row, following a circular, encircling line. The entrances to some of the caves are neatly carved, while others are characterized by the uneven and rugged surfaces of the surrounding hard rock stones (Fig. 9). The height of the cave entrances ranges from 1 to 1.5 meters, and their width varies between 60 and 80 cm, with the thickness of the wall at the entrance reaching approximately 1 to 2 meters [Nəcəfov, 2024, s.34].

The interior walls of the caves are almost entirely covered with a thick layer of soot. This soot layer is especially thick and hardened on the ceilings of the caves. The cause of this is the moisture from rainwater absorbing into the rocks from above, combined with the soot from fires lit inside the caves, which became absorbed into the damp limestone, creating this dense soot layer.

Some of the caves have a single chamber, while others consist of 2-3 rooms. The entrances to these rooms are interconnected. The area of these chambers ranges from 10-15 square meters, with some reaching up to 20-25 square meters (Fig. 9). In modern times, these caves are used by shepherds as shelter

and protection for their animals, resulting in the accumulation of animal dung inside the caves, with layers sometimes reaching a thickness of 20-30 cm, and occasionally even 40-50 cm [Nəcəfov, 2024, s.34].

Inside the caves, numerous artifacts were discovered, predominantly consisting of ceramic artifacts. Most of these ceramic pieces are characteristic of the ancient period. This raises important questions that require further investigation. For instance, the period during which the Alban temple was constructed on the upper part, the presence of both ancient and medieval ceramics found around the temple, and the identical inscriptions and symbols found on both the cave walls and the temple walls all suggest intriguing connections. It can be hypothesized that the early Christians, Albanians who worshipped at the Avey temple might have created these caves below the temple for their priests and revered religious figures. These individuals may have lived in the caves, dedicating themselves to worship.

The research conducted within the Avey State Historical-Cultural Reserve has proven to be of great scientific importance, particularly in the study of Christian religious monuments. The investigation of the temple, the uncovering of Christian burials, and the discovery of various artifacts of differing content and form, which have led to distinct scientific interpretations, all highlight the necessity of conducting more extensive and long-term archaeological excavations in this area in the near future.



Fig. 8. 1 – iron arrowhead; 2 – glass bracelet fragment; 3 – base of a ceramic vessel; 4 – glass vessel fragments; 5-6 – glazed artifact fragments; 7-8 – unglazed ceramic pieces

REFERENCES:

1. AMEA Milli Azərbaycan Tarixi Muzeyinin Numizmatika Fondu (*Numismatics Fund of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan of ANAS*): inv. No.F19987, No.F6014, No.F19548.
2. Dostiyev T.M., Bəşirov R.Y., Mirzəyev R.H., Hüseynli N.N. Orta əsr Şamkir şəhəri: arxeoloji qazıntılar və artefaktlar (*Medieval City of Shamkir: Archaeological Excavations and Artifacts*). Bakı: Çarşıoğlu, 2013, 516 s.
3. Əsədov V.A., Əhmədova G.R. Kərpiclitəpədə aşkar edilmiş şüşə məmulatları (*Glass Artifacts Discovered at Karpiclitepe*)// Dövlət və Din, №02 (76), 2023, s.101-109.
4. Qaziyev S.M. Qəbələ mahalının qədim tarixindən (*On the Ancient History of the Gabala Region*) // Qafqaz Albaniyası tarixi məsələləri. Bakı: Elm, 1962, s.75-105.
5. Qaziyev S.M. Vardanlıda arxeoloji qazıntılar (*Archaeological Excavations in Vardanli*)// Azərbaycanın Maddi Mədəniyyəti. VII cild. Bakı: Elm, 1973, s.146-160.
6. Nəcəfov Ş.N. Ağstafa rayonu ərazisindəki Keşikçidağ Dövlət tarix-mədəniyyət qoruğu və Qazax rayonu ərazisindəki Avey Dövlət tarix-mədəniyyət qoruğunda aparılmış arxeoloji tədqiqat işlərinin hesabatı (14.12.2023-12.01.2024) (*Report on Archaeological Research Conducted in the Keshikchidagh State Historical-Cultural Reserve in the Aghstafa District and the Avey State Historical-Cultural Reserve in the Gazakh District (December 14, 2023 - January 12, 2024)*). AMEA AEİ, Çöl tədqiqatları şöbəsi. Bakı, 2024, 37 s.
7. Анохин Г.И. Малый Кавказ (*Lesser Caucasus*). Москва: Физкультура и спорт, 1981, 191 с.
8. Ахундов Д.А. Архитектура древнего и раннесредневекового Азербайджана (*Architecture of Ancient and Early Medieval Azerbaijan*). Баку: Азернешр, 1986, 311 с.
9. Мамедова Г.Г. Зодчество Кавказской Албании (*Architecture of Caucasian Albania*). Баку: Чашыюглу, 2004, 224 с.



Fig. 9. The entrance and interior parts of the Dash Salahli Caves

Najafova Irada M.

Leading Research Associate of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of ANAS, PhD in History, Associate Professor / SEBA

Mammadova Aygun

Senior Researcher of the Numismatic Fund of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, PhD in History

ABOUT THE PARTHIAN COIN FOUND IN GABALA

Abstract. Parthian coins were found in different periods in the vicinity of Gabala city and in the city itself, both as part of mixed hoards (from Chukhur-Gabala, Dizakhli, Dellekotu) and as single finds. Among the most recent finds, one can mention a heavily rubbed silver Parthian coin discovered in 2013 during the excavations of catacomb No. 8 in the Salbir site of the Gabala city. As a result of the research, it was found that this coin is an “*Artabanus type*” (previously called “*Gotarzes type*”) drachma minted in the 1st–2nd centuries.

Keywords: Gabala, Caucasian Albania, Parthia, coin

Introduction

Parthian coins entered the monetary circulation of Caucasian Albania (*hereinafter – Albania*) already at the end of the 2nd century BC [Раджабли, 1997, с.20]. These coins (mainly silver drachmas) are found in hoards consisting only of them, in mixed hoards, and as single finds [Алиев, 1992, с.69; Бабаев, 1990, с.165; Пахомов, 1962, с.50; Пахомов, 1966, IX, №2080; Раджабли, 1997, с.18; Сейфеддини и др., 1998, с.53-59].

Parthian coins were found both near the capital of Albania – the Gabala city, and in the territories of the Gabala city. In particular, it is known that the Parthian coins were found in three mixed hoards from Gabala found in Chukhur-Gabala [Луконин, Раджабли, 1979, с.74], Dizakhli [Бабаев, 2017, с.15], Dellekotu [Алиев, Гадиров, 1985, с.28, 68], as well as single finds [Babayev and others, 2015, p.27; Алиев, Гадиров, 1985, с.28, 68; Бабаев, 1990, с.158; Пахомов, 1949, V, №1381; и др.]. In different years, during the activities of the Gabala Azerbaijani-Korean Archaeological Expedition (carried out with the support of SEBA (Seoul–Baku) Azerbaijan–Korean Cultural Exchange Association) under the general leadership of the corresponding member of ANAS Ilyas Babayev, and with the participation of the authors of this article, some coins were also found.

Among them, there is a Parthian coin found in 2013 during the excavation of catacomb No. 8 [Yi Seonbok and others, 2016, p.95] by the Korean team of the expedition (under the leadership of professors Yi Seonbok, Kim Jongil, Kwon Oyung, Seong Jeongyong, etc.) This coin will be presented below.

About catacomb No. 8

Catacomb No. 8 was found and studied in 2013–2014 during excavations in the western part of Salbir, one of the areas of the Gabala city. It should be noted that during this period, 17 catacombs were excavated and studied in the western part of Salbir. It is supposed that this catacomb complex belongs to the 1st–4th centuries [Yi Seonbok and others, 2016, p.91].

During subsequent studies carried out in this area, the number of catacombs already exceeded 20 [Jabiyev and others, 2022, p.33]. However, the coin was found in only one of them – catacomb No. 8 [Yi Seonbok and others, 2016, p.92].

The coin was found in the southern part of the burial chamber [The Salbir site, 2017, I, p.63], which is 295 cm high, 297 cm long, and 221 cm wide [The Salbir site, 2017, I, p.62]. In general, the finds in this catacomb (among all the catacombs found by the Korean expedition team) were the largest in number and included many ceramic vessels, bronze, glass and gold jewelry, two Roman glass bottles, iron weapons (arrowheads and spearheads, battle pitchfork), etc. [Yi Seonbok and others, 2016, p.93].

During the researches, it was also determined that catacomb No. 8 was used twice for burial [Yi Seonbok and others, 2016, p.93], and since a female skull was found in this catacomb [Yi Seonbok and others, 2016, p.93], it turns out that one of the buried was a woman. It was not possible to determine exactly in which grave of this catacomb the coin was placed (or was it there by chance?).

It should be noted that coins, including Parthian coins, were also found during excavations in some catacombs in Albania [Османов, 2006, с.104, 184]. It may also be related to some elements of the burial custom.

Coin unearthed from catacomb No. 8

When the results of the excavations were published, it was noted about the mentioned coin that:

- It is a Parthian coin [Yi Seonbok and others, 2016, p.95],
- It is a coin of the Parthian ruler Artabanus II [The Salbir site, 2017, I, p.138],
- and with a question mark, is this Parthian coin of Artabanus II(III)? [Jabiyev and others, 2022, p.33].

Apparently, if archaeologists do not doubt that the coin found at Gabala is a Parthian coin, then there are still doubts about the identification of the name of the ruler who was in power at the time when this coin was minted. It is noticeable that a Parthian ruler named Artabanus is shown in the coin publications.

It should be noted that in historiography, there are two versions of the numbering of the names of Artabanus, the ruler of Media-Atropatene (*hereinafter – Atropatene*), who was invited to Parthia [Сафарова, 2023, с.97] according to the succession of power of the Parthian rulers and reigned there in the years 10/12-38 [Алиев, 1992, с.22; Бокщанин, 1966, с.302]. In historiography, this Parthian ruler is mentioned both as Artabanus II [Алиев, 1992, с. 22; Сафарова, 2023, с.97; и др.] and as Artabanus III [Бокщанин, 1966, с.169, 302; Kahrstedt, 1950, S. 11; и др.]. Without going into the details of the various considerations regarding the numbers of all Parthian rulers named Artabanus, this article will refer to the aforementioned Artabanus II(III) whose years of power are 10/12-38. By the same analogy, this article will refer to both the accepted two numbers and another Parthian ruler Artabanus who ruled in 80–81 – Artabanus III(IV). (He will be talked about below).

As for the presented coin, let's note that the portrait on the obverse side, the image of a seated person and several letters on the reverse side are legible. The severe rubbing of the coin, especially the reverse side, made it difficult to determine whether it belonged to the coin collection of a certain Parthian ruler or not (Photos 1, 2).

In order to clarify the mentioned coin, the collection of Parthian coins of the Numismatic Fund (*hereinafter – NF*) of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, including the coins belonging to the 2nd century hoard discovered in the territory of the Ali-Bayramli (*hereinafter – AB*) district of Azerbaijan in 1960 [Голенко, Раджабли, 1975, с.71, 73, 78] were reviewed.



Photo 1



Photo 2

Photos 1, 2: Coin unearthed from catacomb No. 8 in Gabala in 2013 (photographer Oh Saeyoon)



Photo 3: Coin of Artabanus II(III), 10/12–38 AD, found in Gabala in 1978, NF No. 55378



Photo 4: Coin of Gotarzes II (38-51) from the Ali-Bayramli hoard, NF No.27721

So, taking into account a number of coins of the same type from the NF collection (for example, coin No. 55378, which, by the way, was previously found in Gabala in 1978 (Photo 3)) and a number of coins of the same type from the AB hoard (for example, coin No. 27721 (Photo 4)), the coin found in Gabala in 2013 and presented to the readers can be described as follows:

Obverse:	portrait faced left; hair [and beard] arranged in straight lines; [a bandage marked in three lines covers the forehead], at the back, there is a bow and a ribbon dangling in three lines; there is an adornment on the neck marked with three lines [Голенко, Раджабли, 1975, с.72]	
Reverse:	a man seated right [on the throne], [bow in outstretched hand]; this image in square-like [Greek] inscription [Голенко, Раджабли, 1975, с.72]	
Inscription:	above: on the right: below: on the left:	[ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ /]ΒΑΣΙΛ[ΕΩΝ] [ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ] ΕΥ[ΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ / ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ] [ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ / ΦΙ]Λ[ΕΛ]ΛΗ[ΝΟΣ]
Place of minting:	Ecbatana city [Голенко, Раджабли, 1975, с.72]	
Type:	drachma	
Material:	silver	
Diameter:	19 mm	
Thickness:	1.9 mm	
Weight:	3.4 gr	

According to this version of the restored text, the name of “the king of kings Arsaces” is mentioned on the coin. It should be noted that after Arsaces I, the founder of the Parthian state and the Arsacid dynasty, all subsequent Parthian rulers used his name together with the personal name [Бокщанин, 1966, с.302] as the name of the throne [Балахванцев, 2017, с.78, 85]. Personal names of Parthian kings were not always written on coins [Сейфеддини и др., 1998, с.50]. This makes it difficult to clarify the personal name of the ruler named Arsaces, for whom certain coins, including the studied coin from Gabala, were put into circulation.

Based on the coins of the AB hoard, it can be noted that the mentioned coin from Gabala is similar to coins from this hoard. Some of them were originally listed in the catalog of the NF as coins of Gotarzes II (38–51), son of Artabanus II(III). However, further study of the hoard and its publication revealed that most of the coins were of the so-called “Gotarzes type” coins, and were ultimately minted with similar inscriptions and as the general type of three Parthian rulers – mainly Artabanus II(III), at the same time Gotarzes II, Artabanus III(IV) [Голенко, Раджабли, 1975, с.77-78, 82-85], as well as some other rulers of the 1st–2nd centuries. Along with the coins of the rulers of those periods, “Gotarzes type” coins were also minted [Голенко, Раджабли, 1975, с.82; Раджабли, 1997, с.21, 23].

So, it turns out that the series of Parthian coins of Artabanus II(III), Gotarzes II and some later Parthian rulers were minted in the same form both in their time (in the 1st century) and in the periods after them (in the 2nd century).

A particularly interesting idea was that according to the study of the AB hoard, we can talk about the minting of coins of Artabanus II(III) by that type [Голенко, Раджабли, 1975, с.82]. In this regard, the minting of "Gotarzes type" coins had been started since the period of Artabanus II(III) [Голенко, Раджабли, 1975, с.78; Раджабли, 1997, с.21], that is, considering that it was started before Gotarzes II and was used by later rulers, it is more appropriate to designate them as "Artabanus type" rather than "Gotarzes type" coins.

We would also like to suggest that the aforementioned coin from Gabala found in Salbir in 2013 should be considered "*Artabanus type*" Parthian drachma since a more precise definition is not possible.

Currently, this coin is preserved in the collection of the Gabala Archaeological Center, built by SEBA Association, near the villages of Chukhur-Gabala and Mirzabayli of the Gabala district of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Conclusion

Although the coins are an excellent element of dating, state of their preservation, their belonging to similar coinage of the different Parthian rulers with the same name make identification difficult. Therefore, there is no clear answer regarding the definition of the mentioned coin from Gabala. In this regard, we can only note that:

- The coin from catacomb No. 8 is a Parthian coin;
- The coin is a silver drachma;
- It is "*Artabanus type*" coin (previously called "Gotarzes type");
- The minting of the coin can be attributed to the 1st–2nd centuries;

It is added to the series of Parthian coins circulating in Gabala [The History of Gabala, 2017, p.32] and Albania in general, along with other coins.

All finds of Parthian coins are evidence of trade relations between Albania and Parthia. According to their entry into the Albanian markets, the flow of Parthian coins is divided into two groups: the first – coins minted before (and including) Phraates IV, and the second – coins of Artabanus II(III), already mentioned several times in this article, and his successors [Раджабли, 1997, с.20]. In addition, it is known that the coins of Artabanus II(III) circulated in Albania until the 3rd - early 4th centuries [Раджабли, 1997, с.22].

Parthian coins entered Albania through Atropatene along the western coast of the Caspian Sea [Алиев, 1992, с.70; Раджабли, 1997, с.18] and together with the coins of other countries (for example, Roman [Раджабли и др., 2023, с.109]) created another direction of economic relations in Albania, including Gabala.

REFERENCES:

1. Алиев И., Гадиров Ф. Кабала (*Kabala*). Баку: Элм, 1985, 88 с.
2. Алиев К. Античная Кавказская Албания (*Ancient Caucasian Albania*). Баку: Азернешр, 1992, 238 с.
3. Бабаев И.А. Города Кавказской Албании в IV в. до н.э. – III в. н.э. (*The Cities of Caucasian Albania in the 4th century BC – 3rd century AD*). Баку: Элм, 1990, 236 с.
4. Бабаев И.А. Сборник статей по нумизматике (*Collection of Articles on Numismatics*). Баку: CBS, 2017, 144 с.
5. Балаханцев А.С. Политическая история ранней Парфии (*Political History of Early Parthia*). Москва: ИВ РАН, 2017, 192 с.
6. Бокщанин А.Г. Парфия и Рим (*Parthia and Rome*). Ч.II. Москва: Изд-во МГУ, 1966, 303 с.
7. Голенко К.В., Раджабли А.М. Али-Байрамлинский клад и некоторые вопросы обращения парфянских монет в Закавказье (*The Ali-Bayramli Treasure and Some Issues of the Circulation of Parthian Coins in Transcaucasia*)// ВДИ, 1975, № 2, с.71-93.
8. Луконин В.Г., Раджабли А.М. Клад в Чохур-Кабала (*Treasure in Chokhur-Kabala*) // Луконин В.Г. Иран в III в. М.: Наука, 1979. с.74-85.
9. Османов Ф. История и культура Кавказской Албании IV в. до н.э. – III в. н.э. (на основе археологических материалов) (*History and Culture of Caucasian Albania 4th century BC – 3rd century AD (based on archaeological materials)*). Баку: Тахсил, 2006, 288 с.
10. Пахомов Е.А. Античные монеты в Албании (в пределах Азербайджанской ССР) (*Antique Coins in Albania (within the Azerbaijan SSR)*) // Вопросы истории Кавказской Албании. Баку: Изд-во АН Аз.ССР, 1962, с. 48-51.
11. Пахомов Е.А. Монетные клады Азербайджана и других республик, краев и областей Кавказа (*Coin Hoards of Azerbaijan and Other Republics, Territories and Regions of the Caucasus*). Вып. V. Баку: Изд-во АН Аз.ССР, 1949, 63 с.
12. Пахомов Е.А. Монетные клады Азербайджана и других республик, краев и областей Кавказа (*Coin Hoards of Azerbaijan and Other Republics, Territories and Regions of the Caucasus*). Вып. IX. Баку: Изд-во АН Аз.ССР, 1966, 124 с.
13. Раджабли А.М. Нумизматика Азербайджана (*Numismatics of Azerbaijan*). Баку: Элм ве хаят, 1997, 232 с.
14. Раджабли А.М., Наджафова И.М., Мамедова А.М. О монетах императоров Гальбы, Оттона и Вителлия в Национальном музее истории Азербайджана (*About the Coins of the Emperors Galba, Otho and Vitellius in the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan*)// Этнокультурное наследие Кавказской Албании, №4, Баку, 2023, с.102-110.
15. Сафарова И. По поводу происхождения парфянского царя Артабана II (*Regarding the Origin of the Parthian King Artabanus II*) // *Azərbaycan tarixşünaslığı (elmi əsərlər)*. Cild 84, №1, 2023, s.96-107.
16. Сейфеддини М.А., Бабаев И.А., Расулова М.М., Алиев З.М., Дадашова С.Х. Нумизматика Азербайджана (*Numismatics of Azerbaijan*). Том I. Баку: Элм, 1998, 200 с.
17. Babayev I., Mustafayev L., Alishov N., Huseynov S. Report on the archaeological investigations at the Ancient site, Gabala in 2013 // *The Gabala Archaeological Expedition: Reports, Findings 2013*. Baku: CBS. 2015. p. 22-57.
18. Jabiyevev G., Kwon Ohyoung, Kim Jongil, Najafova I., Abbasova E., Son Jaehyun. Some results of studies of Azerbaijan-Korea Gabala international archaeological expedition // *Ethnocultural heritage of Caucasian Albania*. No.3, Baku 2022. pp. 30-39.
19. Kahrstedt U. Artabanos III. und seine Erben. Bern: A.Francke. 1950, 89 S.
20. The History of Gabala / Editor-in-chief: Teymur Bunyadov. Baku: CBS PP, 2017, 308 pp.
21. The Salbir site 2017. Vol. I, Seoul: Zininzin, 2017, 276 pp.
22. Yi Seonbok, Kim Jongil, Kwon Ohyoung, Seong Jeongyong. Brief report on the archaeological investigations at the Selbir site and in the village of Dizakhli, Gabala in 2014 // *The Gabala Archaeological Expedition: Reports, Findings 2014*. Baku: CBS. 2016. p. 86-101.



**HISTORY,
SOURCE SCIENCE,
ETHNOLOGY, LINGUISTICS**

Asadov Farda

*Head of the History and Economy of Arab Countries Department
Institute of Oriental Studies named after Z.M.Bunyatov of ANAS,
Doctor of Historical Sciences, Associate Professor
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9034-0011>*

ACCOUNTS BY EARLY ARMENIAN AUTHORS ON THE KHAZARS: ON THE RELIABILITY OF REFERENCES TO THE KHAZARS IN THE HISTORY OF MOVSES KHORENATSI

Abstract. Among the early Armenian historians (5th century AD), only Movses Khorenatsi, in his *History*, mentions the Khazars in the Caucasus, in connection with the campaign they undertook together with the Barsils to the South Caucasus, allegedly around 216 AD. However, a thorough examination of the pertinent passages in the text indicates that it was altered multiple times and has evidence of additions and modifications in the past, describing the period when the Khazars were first mentioned in other sources. Therefore, there are strong reasons to consider Khorenatsi's references to the Khazars at such an early time as unreliable. It seems likely that Khorenatsi's account of the early 3rd century AD campaign should instead be attributed to early Turkic tribes that preceded the Khazars in the Caucasus. Examination of the reliability of Khorenatsi's report could introduce important updates to the debate on the timing of the Khazars' emergence in the Caucasus and their ethnic origins.

Keywords: Khorenatsi, Khazars, Barsils, Armenian King Vagharsh, Armenian King Khosrow

The 5th century is considered to be the golden age of ancient Armenian historiography [Britannica, 1998; Ващева, 2012, с.219-220]. During this period, prominent Armenian historians like Koriun, Agathangelos, Eghishe, Faustus of Byzantium, Movses Khorenatsi, and Ghazar Parpetsi created their major historical works [Налбандян, 1984, с.289]. The time of the Khazars' arrival in the Caucasus, like many other aspects of their history, has been the subject of scholarly debate for decades. Researchers' views on the formation of the Khazar tribal confederation and state on the northern borders of Albania vary widely, ranging from the 2nd to the 7th centuries AD. There are also more speculative hypotheses suggesting that the Khazars' presence in Azerbaijan dates back to the era of the Scythians and the ancient Median Kingdom, as far back as the 8th century BC [Капахан, 2022, с.127-130]. In this respect, reports by Armenian historians of the 5th century AD could be of crucial importance in determining the timing of the Khazars' appearance in the Caucasus. However, among these early historians, only Movses Khorenatsi mentions the Khazars and his account remains the earliest known written evidence to their presence in the Caucasus.

Let us consider this account in the modern translation by G.Sarkisyan:

"Vagharsh died after reigning for twenty years¹ ...During his reign, hordes of Khazars and Barsils led by their king, a certain Vnasep Surhap, emerged from the gates of Chor and crossed the Kura River. Vagharsh faced them with a large army and valiant men and

¹ It is unclear if this is the Armenian Arsacid king Vologases II who after the death of his father Vologases IV took the Parthian throne under the name of Vologases V (191–208) or his son who succeeded his father in Armenia under the name of Khosrow I (191–217).

covered the battlefield with the corpses of the scattered hordes and after a prolonged chasing broke through the Chola Gate. There, the enemies regrouped and prepared for battle once again. Although the brave Armenians overthrew them and forced them into retreat, Vagharsh himself was killed by skilled archers” [Хоренаци, 1990, кн.2, гл.65].

Let us set aside the confusion surrounding the chronology and the names of Armenian rulers, which suggests that the author – or possibly later editors – did not know about this narrative. Instead, let us dwell upon the question of the author’s position and the historical concept of the presumed author of this work.

The author of the “History of Armenia” is considered to be the first historian to work on his narrative in accordance with a stated concept of Armenian historical storytelling. Khorenatsi’s work which enjoys the reputation of being the first comprehensive history of Armenia represents a synthesis of church history and the traditions of Greek historiography [Акопян, 2013, с.67]. Speaking in the pathetic artistic style typical of Armenian historiography, the light of Christian teachings and the heroism of human deeds are combined here into a coherent picture of the historical process. The author himself asserts that adherence to the Greek historical tradition is more important to him than the informative nature of Chaldean and Assyrian records of his land’s history:

“It should come as no surprise that although, as is widely known, many nations have historians, especially the Persians and Chaldeans, and they have preserved more references to various events concerning our people, we have only noted the Greek historians and promised to present their indications in our genealogy” [Хоренаци, 1990, кн.1, гл.2].

This implies that Khorenatsi’s primary goal was to create a history that linked Armenia with the Greco-Christian world. Moreover, he admits that in pursuing this goal he might disregard information from Persian and Syrian sources, which likely did not fit into his vision.

What united Armenian Christians and, to a large extent, distinguished Khorenatsi from the early historical school, was the way he declared the Armenian people as collective actors on the historical stage and as neighbors to other nations. This is clearly illustrated by the following passage from his work:

“...though we are but a small plot, limited in number, lacking in power, and repeatedly subdued by other states, many acts of bravery have been accomplished in our land, worthy of being immortalized in writing, which, however, none of them took pains to record in books” [Хоренаци, 1990, кн.1, гл.3].

Conspicuous is the use of the terms “we” and “our country” to define the subject of the historical narrative.

Khorenatsi’s historical concept rests on the unity of three narrative threads, each with its own pantheon of heroes. The first thread is about the national heroes – mythical eponym, Armenian kings, and Christian spiritual leaders, such as the Catholicoi. Alongside these unifying figures, the narrative also features the noble Armenian nakharar families, whose deeds are each, in some way or another, characterized by the author. The third thread of the historical narrative concerns Armenia’s relations with neighboring peoples and states, with whom the Armenians had historical contact and engagement [Акопян, 2013, с.67]. We must evaluate the validity of these reports and ascertain the context of Khorenatsi’s allusions to the Khazars in this last thread.

Researchers who have conducted a critical analysis of Khorenatsi’s text have voiced serious doubts regarding his consistency in selecting and presenting facts [Ващева, 2012, с.221]. The author of the modern English translation of the History of Armenia, Robert Thomson (1934–2018), who served as chair

of Armenian Studies at Harvard University (1962–1992) and headed Armenian Studies at Oxford University, was highly critical of the accuracy of Khorenatsi's accounts. The conclusions of his textual analysis were well-argued and definitive. Thomson even questioned the very existence of a historian named Khorenatsi in the 5th century:

- Khorenatsi's autobiographical details, as presented in the book, are actually quotations from the autobiography of the Armenian geographer Anania Shirakatsi (early 7th century), the Romance of Alexander by Pseudo-Callisthenes, and the sermons of Gregory of Nazianzus;

- The references to the temple histories of priest Olympius in Ani-Kemakh, an ancient Armenian political and religious center on the banks of the Euphrates in modern-day Türkiye's Erzincan province, were found to be borrowings from Eusebius of Caesarea (265–340), Josephus Flavius (37–100), the Syrian author Labubna¹, and Armenian author Agathangelos;

- The name of the Armenian alphabet creator is given by other early authors as Mashtots and it wasn't until the 8th century that he was first referred to as Mesrop Mashtots—the form found in Khorenatsi's work;

- The name Movses Khorenatsi itself is not mentioned by Armenian authors until the 10th century, which puzzles given the book's importance as the first national history, supposedly written during the golden age of Armenian historical literature (the 5th century). Only Ghazar Parpetsi mentions a certain philosopher named Moses, who was disliked by monks, but he does not refer to any historical book authored by him [Thomson, 1978, c.2-3, 16, 51].

These and other arguments of the meticulous textual study of the History of Armenia allowed R.Thomson to make some rather unfavorable conclusions regarding the source's reputation. He argued that Khorenatsi not only placed events in the global historical context but also rewrote them to glorify his Bagratuni patrons while downplaying the importance of other nakharar families. Furthermore, he relied entirely on a few translations of Greek sources into Armenian and had not read the original texts he cited. The British scholar's most significant conclusion, especially in relation to Khorenatsi's accounts of the Khazars, is that, contrary to the autobiographical details found in the book, the presumable author could not have lived in the 5th century and the text of the History of Armenia was not finalized until the 7th century [Thomson, 1978, c.1, 51, 58-59].

A telling example of the inaccuracies in Khorenatsi's accounts is the story of Abgar, ruler of the Syrian kingdom of Osroene, with its capital in Edessa. Eusebius of Caesarea, who allegedly found this king's letter to Jesus, asking for healing from an illness, and included the account of Edessa's ruler converting to Christianity in his *Ecclesiastical History*, made no link between this story and Armenia. However, Movses Khorenatsi incorporated this narrative into his account of the Armenian state, making Abgar an Armenian king [Thomson, 1978, c.13]. A recent article by a Russian author critically examined this story in detail [Ващева, 2012, pp.221-223].

Even assuming that the work originated from some ancient component, perhaps genuinely authored by a 5th century monk, and was subsequently expanded and revised by other Armenian churchmen until the 8th century, the establishment of an independent historical tradition in Armenia during this later period would still have been a unique phenomenon in the early medieval East. This bridges the distant centuries to the tumultuous era of nation-states and the rise of modern Armenian nationalism. The stance of the author (or authors) of the *History of Armenia* is perfectly in line with the sentiments of contemporary Armenian historians—and likely not only historians. However, it is essential to recognize the difference between the concepts of “we” and “our people” as used by the 5th century authors and those of modern Armenian historians.

¹ This early Christian writer is sometimes incorrectly identified as an Armenian author. He is the author of the story “The History of Abgar and the Sermons of the Holy Apostle Thaddeus”. See:

АННИНСКИЙ А. Древние армянские историки как исторические источники. СПб.: Тип. Акционерного Южно-русского общества печатного дела. 1899, с.6-7.

As we have seen above, Khorenatsi's principal objective was to carry on the Greek historiographic tradition and his primary sources were also Greek and Syrian Christian authors. The main concern of Armenian Christians and clergy who took up the pen was to assert their right to be represented in the Christian tradition and at the same time highlight the merits and contributions of the Armenian Church's adherents and clergy. The boundaries and interests of this particular medieval religious identity within the broader Christian world and the boundaries of modern Armenian nationalism may overlap but are not identical in essence. However, the inability—or unwillingness—to distinguish between these two different identities has led to a reverential and uncritical attitude among historians of the 20th and 21st centuries toward this foundational piece of Armenian historiography.

Uniqueness is a source of pride, and pride breeds total apologetics of the content of the first conceptually structured work of Armenian historiography. This is why the same modern author, while acknowledging that “historical events and artistic fiction” in ancient Armenian historiographic works “are so closely intertwined that it is often difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins, “can at the same time claim that this” in no way diminishes the reliability of historical writings” [Налбандян, 1984, с.289].

For some modern scholars, the intellectual heirs of Khorenatsi, the reported facts are not as essential as “the Armenian historian's understanding and vision of the history of his own country, the writer's ‘historical world’” [Акопян, 2013, с.67]. But the question is, how closely does the author's reality align with the actual events taking place in the real world?

Modern Armenian historiography faces a major challenge in trying to reconcile the importance of ancient Armenian historiography—particularly Khorenatsi's *History of Armenia*—in shaping the historical narrative and historical consciousness of the Armenian people with the veracity of the material found in these works. Critical opinions from Western specialists on Armenian sources—let alone those from Azerbaijani and Georgian colleagues¹—are met with emotionally charged rejection by contemporary Armenian historians. The position of the aforementioned Robert Thomson is condemned as hypercritical [Акопян, 2013, с.67]. American historian Ronald G.Suny, a specialist in the South Caucasus and Russia and himself a descendant of Armenian immigrants, label the emotional response of Armenian historians to criticism of Armenian historiography as nationalistic outbursts, noting that any critical opinion from non-Armenian scholars is regarded “in some sense as an intrusion into the soul of the people” [Suny, 2001].

It should be kept in mind that while information from medieval Armenian historians is particularly valuable for understanding the Khazar history, there is no mention of the Khazars in the writings of the first, so-called “golden age” of Armenian historiography (the 5th century). Movses Khorenatsi's *History of Armenia* is the only source from that early period which refers to Khazar campaigns in the South Caucasus in the early 3rd century. However, this work appears to have been constantly edited and shows signs of later additions and alterations dating back to the time when the Khazars were first mentioned in other sources.

Recall that Movses Khorenatsi claimed to have derived early historic information—particularly about the earliest campaign of the Khazars and Barsils in the South Caucasus—from the 2nd century AD Syrian historian and philosopher Bardaisan (also known as Bar Daisan or Bardesanes). However, as mentioned before, Khorenatsi might not have read the original texts he referenced. Later Syrian writers claim that

¹ Among Azerbaijani historians, the works of Academician Z.M.Buniyatov and the famous Albanian historian Farida Mamedova who substantiated the existence of Albanian historical literature separately from Armenian, incite particular fury. See:

BUNIYATOV Z. Azerbaijan in the 7th-9th Centuries. Baku: Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the Az.SSR, 1965; MAMMADOVA F. Political History and Historical Geography of Caucasian Albania (third century BC – eighth century AD). Baku: Elm, 1986; MAMMADOVA F. Caucasian Albania and Albanians. Baku: Caucasian Albania Research Center, 2005.

Criticism of Armenian sources and modern Armenian historiography on issues of Georgian history can be found in the latest article by famous Georgian historian:

MUSKHELISHVILI D. Some aspects of Georgian History in the Light of Armenian Historiography. *The Caucasus & Globalization*, 2011, 5, pp.170-180.

Bardaisan, now advanced in age, set out on a mission to bring Christianity to Armenia and lived for a while in the Ani religious center. His missionary efforts were largely unsuccessful, but his inquisitive mind and scholarly interests continually sought expression and recording. There he penned the *History of Armenia* in Syriac and Khorenatsi used the Greek translation of it [Wright, 1894, p.29]. Unfortunately, none of the versions of this Bardaisan's work has reached us and Khorenatsi used its information through the lens of later realia.

The early 2nd century Greek geographer Dionysius Periegetes reports certain "Unnis" living on the shores of the Caspian Sea—whom scholars tend to associate with the Huns—which raises the possibility that Bardaisan (or Bardesanes) might have documented the first wave of Hun nomads invading the South Caucasus during the time mentioned by Movses Khorenatsi [Периэгет, 2005, 2006, с.730-35]. Azerbaijani historian Yusif Jafarov, while acknowledging the legitimacy of doubts about the reliability of Khorenatsi's report on the Khazars, nevertheless took Khorenatsi's account into consideration in his conclusions about the presence of the Khazars among the nomads raiding the South Caucasus in the 2nd–3rd centuries AD, basing his assessment on Dionysius' report [Джафаров, 1993, с. 9-10, 13].

Contemporary Dagestani historiography also offers the idea of the autochthonous Caucasian origin of the Khazars, who supposedly consolidated to a union of Iranian-speaking and Caucasian highlanders [Гаджиев, 2016, с.17-18]. The author of the publication also bases his line of reasoning on the unquestionable accuracy of the data provided by Armenian historian Movses Khorenatsi regarding the Khazars.

Nevertheless, as we have seen, the reliability of this last account is dubious, since the Armenian author refers to a joint campaign of the Khazars and Barsils, rather than the Huns. Contrary to tradition, which dates Khorenatsi's *History* to the 5th century [Thomson, 1978, с.60], scholars believe it was completed in the early years of the Abbasid rule. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the early reports of some Turks having made a campaign to the South Caucasus—possibly as early as the first quarter of the 3rd century—were superimposed on the editors' knowledge, who worked during the Khazar era which occurred four centuries after the campaign mentioned in the *History* attributed to Khorenatsi.

However, it should also be noted that Khorenatsi's work provides important insights on the relations between the population of the South Caucasus and the nomads who penetrated the region through the Caucasus mountain passes during the period mentioned by the author. According to Khorenatsi himself, the source of this piece of information could have been the Syrian historian Bardaisan, who passed away at the end of the first quarter of the 3rd century, meaning he could plausibly have been a witness to the events. It's interesting to note that Bishop Sebeos, a later author of a historical work on Armenia, who extended his narrative up to the Arab conquests—specifically the 661 civil war in the caliphate – describes the events in the South Caucasus involving the participation of northern nomads in the late Sasanian period, but he does not refer to them as "Khazars".¹

The Arab rule in the South Caucasus was established in a fierce confrontation with the Khazars. Eyewitnesses to these events had a clearer idea of who dominated the Eurasian steppes north of the Caucasus Mountains and with whom the Arabs had to contend for political power in the South Caucasus. One of these eyewitnesses who offered a reliable account of the Arab conquest and the wars with the Khazars was Armenian historian Ghevond, author of the 8th century *History of the Caliphs*. It is likely that the editors of the *History* attributed to Movses Khorenatsi also lived during this time, witnessing the brutal wars with the Khazars and retroactively applying their name to the nomads of earlier centuries.

¹ Sebeos' *History of Emperor Heraclius* is also a compilation of texts of multiple authors. Anyway, all researchers and translators of the text have voiced skepticism regarding Bishop Sebeos's complete authorship who might have been a historical figure and only authored part of the text. SEBEOS. *The History of Emperor Heraclius. The work of Bishop Sebeos, a seventh-century writer. Moscow, 1862, p.VI-VIII, 76*; SEBEOS. *The Armenian history attributed to Sebeos. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999, p.XXXIV*; SEBEOS. *History. New York, 1985.*

REFERENCES:

1. Акопян П.А. Историческая концепция Мовсеса Хоренаци (*The Historical Concept of Movses Khorenatsi*) // Вестник Нижегородского Университета им. Н.И.Лобачевского, 2013, с.67-71.
2. Аннинский А. Древние армянские историки как исторические источники (*Ancient Armenian Historians as Historical Sources*). СПб.: Тип. Акционерного Южно-русского общества печатного дела, 1899.
3. Буниятов З. Азербайджан в VII–IX вв. (*Azerbaijan in the 7th–9th Centuries*). Баку: Изд-во АН Аз.ССР, 1965.
4. Ващева И.Ю. Парадоксы исторической концепции Мовсеса Хоренци (*Paradoxes of the Historical Concept of Movses Khorenatsi*) / Диалог со временем. 2012. Вып.40, с.219-230.
5. Гаджиев М. Сообщение Хоренаци о походе хазир и басил в 216 г. и этнокарта Северо-западного Прикаспия в поздне-сарматский период (*Account of the Campaign of the Khazars and Basils in 216 and the Ethnic Map of the North-Western Caspian Region in the Late Sarmatian Period*) / Г.Асатрян (ed.) Caucaso-Caspiica: Труды Института автохтонных народов Кавказско-каспийского региона. Ереван: Изд-во РАУ, 2016.
6. Джафаров Ю.Р. Гунны и Азербайджан (*The Huns and Azerbaijan*). Баку: Азерб. госуд. изд-во, 1993.
7. Карахан Э.З. Хазарский простор (*The Khazar Expanses*). Баку: Мутарджим, 2022.
8. Мамедова Ф. Кавказская Албания и албаны (*Caucasian Albania and the Albanians*). Баку: Центр Исследований Кавказской Албании, 2005, 800 с.
9. Мамедова Ф. Политическая история и историческая география Кавказской Албании (III в. до н.э. – VIII в. н.э.) (*Political History and Historical Geography of Caucasian Albania (3rd century BC – 8th century AD)*). Баку: Элм, 1986.
10. Мухелишвили Д. Некоторые вопросы истории Грузии в освещении армянской историографии (*Some Questions of Georgian History in the Light of Armenian Historiography*)// Кавказ и глобализация, 2011, 5, с.170-180.
11. Налбандян В.С. Армянская литература (V–XIII вв.) (*Armenian Literature (5th–13th centuries)*) / История всемирной литературы. Москва: Наука, 1984.
12. Периэгет Д. Описание Ойкумены (*Description of the Oecumene*) / Перевод Е.В.Илюшечкиной. Вестник Древней Истории [Online]. 2005, 2006. Available: <http://simposium.ru/ru/node/11475> [Accessed 20.07.2015].
13. Себеос. История императора Иракла. Сочинение епископа Себеоса, писателя VII века (*The History of Emperor Heraclius. Written by Bishop Sebeos, 7th Century Author*). Москва, 1862.
14. Хоренаци М. История Армении (*Armenian History*). Ереван: Айастан, 1990.
15. BRITANNICA, T. E. O. T. E. 1998. Armenian literature. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.
16. Sebeos. *History*. New York, 1985.
17. Sebeos. *The Armenian history attributed to Sebeos*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999.
18. Suny R.G. Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations. *The Journal of Modern History*. 2001, 73, P.862-896.
19. Thomson R.W. Introduction. *Moses Khorenatsi. History of Armenians*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978.
20. Wright W. A Short History of Syriac Literature. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1894.

Authier Gilles

Professor, *École Pratique des Hautes Études, PSL*
(FRANCE, Paris)

COMPOUND VERBS IN UDI AND CAUCASIAN ALBANIA

Abstract. The proportion of compounds may change during the documented history of languages, because this history is tightly linked to the history of contact between different peoples and their languages. Already in Old Udi, as represented by the Albanian palimpsest, verbal compounds are extremely frequent, and many of these old compounds are cognate with their equivalents in Modern Udi dialects.

Keywords: compound verbs, the Albanian palimpsest, languages

All languages have verbs, and these may be simple, like *dinlemek*, *anlamak*, *anlatmaq*, *unutmaq*, or compound, like *qulaq asmaq*, *başu düşmək*, *başu salmaq*, *yaddan çıxmaq*. But while all languages have simple verbs, not all languages have compound verbs: for instance, Russian and English lack them entirely. And across dialects of the same language, like Turkish and Azerbaijani, some discrepancies can be observed.

The proportion of compounds may change, and actually does change, during the documented history of languages, because this history is tightly linked to the history of contact between different peoples and their languages. And since contact between people speaking different languages has always existed, the evolution of this part of the lexicon is a window on the history of peoples and the regions where they coexist, either in a relationship involving language dominance, or in more equal terms, involving widespread intermarriage and bilingualism. So the proportion of compounds in the verbal lexicon seems linked to the intensity of contact with other languages, related or not, in the course of their history. Nominal elements are always combined with native auxiliaries, also called 'light verbs' as new, compound verbs. But the new complex verbs may either include borrowed elements, in which case only the light verb is native, or combine two native elements.

For an instance of the first type, some languages like Basque, spoken in France and Spain by bilingual speakers, have very dramatically increased the proportion of compounds in their verbal lexicon: while ancient Basque, spoken in the 16th century, still featured some 45 simplex verbs, modern Basque uses only a dozen, and the overwhelming majority of modern Basque verbs are actually hybrid formations, including a coverb, which is more often than not a loan from French or Spanish, and one of the two main native auxiliaries also known as 'light verbs', meaning 'be' or 'do'.

Old Turkic and Old Iranian had almost no compound verbs, while all modern Turkic and Iranian languages have both simplex and compound verbs. Persian is famous for having many more compound verbs than its restricted set of simplex verbs. A very important factor in this evolution seems to be language dominance, but it is not always linked to political power. If the vast majority of Turkish compounds include a coverb of Arabic origin (*sebretmek*, *seyretmek*, etc), it is because of the great religious prestige of this language, but the Turks, not the Arabs were politically dominant in the region when these compounds were created. They later became univerbated when the old verb 'do' (*etmek*) was replaced by a new one (*yapmaq*), and they have become so well accepted into the daily linguistic landscape that they have escaped the infamous *öztürkçe* witch-hunt in the twentieth century. No Anatolian speaker today feels them

as foreign. In Persian, most verbs are compounds, and while most of these compounds, like *harf zadan* 'talk' include a word borrowed from Arabic, others like *šenâ kardan* 'swim', do not. In the latter case, the compounding strategy seems to make easier the acquisition of this part of the lexicon because less verbal morphology has to be memorized by second language learners.

Azerbaijani is particularly rich in this second type of compounds, which combines only Turkic elements (*qulaq asmaq, başa düşmək, başa salmaq*) and the structure of many of these compounds has been copied in minority languages of Azerbaijan. For instance, the meanings 'listen', 'undertand', and 'explain' are expressed in Kryz by similar combinations *ibur kiyic, q'aleŋ ƣarfic* and *q'aleŋ ƣaric* meaning, literally, 'hang' + 'ear', 'go down' + 'head' and 'let down' + 'head', respectively.

Similar processes seem to have occurred in the history of most other Lezgetic languages, to which Kryz and Budugh (in the Guba district) belong like Lezgian in the regions of Gusar, Guba and Khachmaz, as well as Rutul in the region of Sheki, and Tsakhur, in the regions of Gakh and Zagatala.

Udi, spoken today in the region of Qabala, is also a Lezgetic language, although its history is very different. Known from two modern dialects and an earlier form attested in the recently discovered Albanian palimpsest of Mount Sinai and known as Old Udi or Caucasian Albanian, it is the earliest attested East Caucasian language. The language of the Albanian palimpsest, like Modern Udi, of which it is a direct or indirect ancestor, already shows a split in the verbal lexicon between simplex and compound verbs. This is actually a feature of the whole eastern group of the East Caucasian linguistic family, which comprises various branches (Dargic, Lak, Khinalug and Lezgetic), as opposed to Western East Caucasian languages like Avar, Tsez or Bezhta. And these 'Eastern East Caucasian' languages are characterized by various degrees of convergence with other families representing different linguistic types, especially for valency change – that is, the formation of passive and causative constructions – on verbs (Turkic by inflectional means, and Iranian mostly through analytic light verb constructions). Such long-term contacts resulted in a high level of non-simplex verbs in most of these branches, leading the American typologist Johanna Nichols (2016) to present such languages as 'noun-based languages' in which "simplex verbs are a closed class; the only source of new verbs is light verb constructions".

Each of the ten modern Lezgetic languages stands at some stage in a common trend to replace native synthetic verbs by either loans or morphologically more manageable verbal adjectives. In the case of Udi, its compound verbs feature 1) adjectives (borrowed or native) with no synchronic link to a verbal root, 2) defective stems of obsolete native intransitive or ambitransitive verbs in both stages of the language, 3) perfect participles of Azerbaijani verbs are only found in the recent form of the language.

Udi has developed the use of light verb constructions probably more than any other East Caucasian language, but this shift from synthetic to complex verbs apparently started a very long time ago, because most of the light verbs have undergone such extensive phonological attrition that the resulting constructions have since become unverbated, like the Anatolian *seyretmek* type, and nowadays they function synchronically as bipartite stems. Udi is famous for having developed endocclisis [Harris, 2002]: inflectional morphemes get inserted between the old coverb and a former light verb. This spectacular and crosslinguistically very rare feature is linked to the bipartite nature of most verb stems. And nowadays, historical compounds greatly outnumber the simplex remaining in Udi.

Whatever the cause of the reduced number of simplex verbs in Udi is, this language makes extensive use of compound verbs to compensate for this reduction. As in Lezgian, Kryz, or Tsakhur, there are many lexicalized and sometimes morphologically merged locutions in Udi combining the verbs *besun* 'do', *baksun* 'become' with adjectives or 'stative verbs' (themselves a type of adjectives). According to Gippert & Schulze (2023), there are four productive light verbs in Modern Udi: *baksun* 'be', *besun* 'do, make', *pesun* 'say', *esun* < **eğsun* 'become' < '*arrive'. All these verbs are based on native, East Caucasian verbal roots, with cognates in other Lezgetic languages and often also in other branches of the family.

The verb *baksun* ‘be’ mainly combines with nouns as *zɛʳ* ‘stone’ > *zɛʳ-baksun* ‘petrify’ and adjectives as *mutɕa-* ‘sweet’ > *mutɕa-baksun* ‘become sweet’ or *abuz* ‘more’ > *abuz-baksun* ‘increase’ to form change-of-state verbs.

The verb *besun* ‘do, make’ may combine with the same elements to produce the corresponding transitive, causal verbs: *abuz* ‘more’ > *abuz-besun* ‘augment’, *mutɕa* ‘sweet’ > *mutɕa-besun* ‘sweeten’. A number of lexical bases used as coverbs in Udi are Itanian loans, like *andax-besun* ‘to consider’ from Persian *andīšīdan* ‘to think, consider’, and *afre-pesun* ‘pray’ already attested in Old Udi *afre-pesun*, which incorporates Middle Iranian *āfrī* ‘praise’. The case of *mandesun* ‘stay’, from Persian *māndan* is a rare case of borrowing without light verb periphrasis.

Another light verb or formant *-tʳesun* is used in other transitive combination like *boʃ* ‘inside’ > *boʃ-tʳesun* ‘put into’, including as a causative auxiliary of simplex verbs, like *ukes* ‘eat’ > *ukes-tʳesun* ‘feed’.

Udi also seems to use the verb *pesun* ‘to say’ in a way that is unknown to other Lezgian languages except Archi (for a detailed study of Archi compounds with ‘say’, see: Authier, 2024). The case of *vai* ‘woe!’ > *vai-pesun* ‘warn’ and *pur-pesun* ‘fly’ (maybe incorporating the Persian word *par* ‘feather, wing’) seem both plausible because the coverb is clearly ideophonic. The first is an example of purely native compounding, without integration of a borrowed lexical item, while the other model, combining a loan as coverb with the same light verb ‘say’, is also represented in *ayt-pesun* ‘speak’, in which *ayt* < ‘word’ bears witness to the historically well attested presence of Kipchak Turkic tribes in medieval Transcaucasia. But the supposed borrowing from Greek *καλέω* (*kaléō*) ‘call’ seen by Schulze in *kʳal-pesun* ‘call, read’ is most probably a literate illusion. This verb cannot be separated from Lezgian *kʳelun* and Southern Rutul *qʳaliy haʔas*, both meaning ‘recite, read’, and of which the latter can still be analyzed as ‘make’ + ‘on head’ (Rutul *qʳaliy* is the exact cognate of Kryz *qʳaleʃ* see further above, both superessive case forms of the noun for ‘head’, *qʳil* in Kryz and *qʳul* in Rutul, with the same vowel opening in oblique cases. In Lezgian, the corresponding citation form is *qʳil*, without apophony in oblique cases, so the relation with *kʳelun* has become opaque, but *kʳil* is found in dialects and thus *kʳelun* is more probably the result of a syncopated **kʳilel+avun* lit. ‘make on head’. As for *kʳalpesun* in Udi, it probably includes the same opaque coverb, rather than a loan from Greek, combined with the same light verb *besun* ‘do’ rather than *pesun* ‘say’.

This is not to say that borrowing from distant languages cannot have occurred, when the historical conditions can be documented. For instance the case of *port-besun* ‘suffer, bear’ seems indeed related to a Romance verb *port-are* ‘bear, carry’. Probably the source is not Late Latin as assumed by Schulze, but Genovese, since the presence of Italian merchants from Genova, and their activity in building roads and bridges in the Pontic region and Transcaucasia is very well documented.

Apart from *ayt-pesun* ‘talk, say’ already mentioned above, and which incorporate the Kipchak word for ‘word’, there are few Turkic verbs borrowed as bare stems, like *ç(i)xar-kʳesun* ‘save, end’ from Azerbaijani *çixar(t)maq* ‘bring out’, or *batksun* ‘sink, drown’ from *bat* (cf. Azerbaijani *batmaq* ‘sink’ + *baksun* ‘become, be’, which presents another case of syncope).

The only productive way of incorporating Oghuz Turkic, that is Azerbaijani loans into the Udi verbal lexicon is to combine light verbs ‘do’ or ‘be’ with the *-miʃ*-perfect participle form of the Azerbaijani verb, generalized as *-miʃ-* in Udi. Examples with *baksun* ‘be’ are *indžimiʃ-baksun* ‘be punished’ from *incimək* ‘be punished’, *džinlamiʃ-baksun* ‘become possessed’ from *cinlamaq* ‘become possessed’, or *şäklämiʃ-baksun* ‘doubt’ from *şäklänmək* ‘doubt, hesitate’. With the transitive light verb *besun* ‘do’, Udi forms *bağıʃlamiʃ-besun* ‘forgive’ from *bağıʃlamaq* ‘forgive’, *ögmüʃ-besun* ‘praise’ from *öymək* < **ögmək* ‘praise’, *tʳikʳmiʃ-besun* ‘fix, mend’ from *tikmək* ‘build ; sew’, *tapşirmiʃ-besun* ‘to order, instruct’ > *tapşirmaq* ‘instruct’ or *sinamiʃ-besun* ‘find out’ > from *sinamaq* ‘check’.

This technique is common in all other Lezgian languages (Lezgian, Agul, Tabasaran, Kryz, Budugh, Tsakhur and Rutul), with Archi as an exception, due to the fact that Archi never had direct contact with Azerbaijani. The same is also found in Juhuri [Authier, 2012], the Iranian language of the Mountain Jews of

Guba and Derbent, in which intransitive Azerbaijani participles are combined with the verb *bire* 'be': *batmış bire* 'sink', *çəşmiş bire* 'be surprised', *dulanmış bire* 'make a living', *evlənmiş bire* 'get married', *hürşlemiş bire* 'be angry', *soymuş bire* 'be in love', *uçmuş bire* 'fly away', *yesemiş bire* 'live'. With transitive Azerbaijani verbs, the Juhuri light verb is *soxde* 'do': *asmiş soxde* 'hang', *bəxşlemiş soxde* 'forgive', *burmiş soxde* 'twist', *dartmış soxde* 'pull', *degmiş soxde* 'touch', *geymiş soxde* 'put on', *injimmiş soxde* 'torment', *puzmiş soxde* 'destroy', *qəzənmiş soxde* 'earn', *qırmış soxde* 'break', *qondurmuş soxde* 'persuade', *seçmiş soxde* 'choose', *sinemiş soxde* 'test', *siqmiş soxde* 'oppress', *suymiş soxde* 'take off (clothing)', *tapşürmüş soxde* 'entrust'.

Today, more than 75% of all Udi verbs are compounds based on a light verb. This state of affairs is the result of a long evolution, which must have started very early, as soon as the ancestors of Udi speakers got in close contact with other languages present in Eastern Transcaucasia, mostly Iranian and Turkic. Already in Old Udi, as represented by the Albanian palimpsest, verbal compounds are extremely frequent, and many of these old compounds are cognate with their equivalents in Modern Udi dialects. This can be illustrated by the sentence from Luke 4.18 in the palimpsest version (a), which should be compared with the parallel Vartashen (b) and Nij (c) versions:

a.	axay-pee-ank'e=oen	<i>e</i>	<i>d'ip'</i>	<i>baḡ-ee=nou</i>		
	open-LV-when=3SG	ART	book	find-AOR=3SG		
	<i>e</i>	<i>xun'</i>	cam-pee-hamay=k'e=he.			
	ART	place	write-LV-which=REL=be.PERF			
b.	<i>šet'in-al,</i>	qay-p-i	<i>käğz-ax,</i>	bo'ga=ne=b-i		
	3.ERG-ADD	open-LV-SEQ	book-DOM	find=3SG=LV-AOR		
	<i>ga-n-ux</i>	<i>maa-te</i>	cam=ne=i.			
	place-OBL-DOM	where-REL	write=3SG=AOR			
c.	<i>Isus-en</i>	<i>girk-ä</i>	qay-p-i	<i>me</i>	<i>äyit-mox</i>	cam-ec-i
	Jesus-ERG	book-DOM	open-LV-SEQ	PROX	word-PL	write-DETR. LV-
	<i>ga-n-u=ne</i>		bä'ğä'=b-i.			
	place-OBL-DOM=3SG		find=LV-AOR			

'(Jesus,) having opened the book, found the place where these words had been written'.

It immediately appears that all three verbs of this sentence (marked in bold face) are compounds, and formed with the same coverbs and auxiliaries. Old Udi light verbs are mostly the same as in modern Udi. According to Gippert and Schulze, we find *biy-esun* 'do, make', *iğ-esun* 'go/come', *ih-esun* 'become' (instead of Modern Udi *baksun*, but these forms can be shown to be based on the same proto-Lezgian root), and *pesun* 'say'. The formant *-t'esun* is also well attested in *bos-t'esun* 'shut, wrap' and *ze-t'esun* 'bind'.

Examples of the intransitive type with the verb *ihesun* 'be' are *buxi-ihā-nan* 'You all, become strong!', or *zahun-ihā-nan* 'You all, learn!'.

With the transitive light verb *biyesun* 'do', old Udi forms the compounds *t'ap'-biyesun* 'shut, close', *he-biyesun* 'send', or *hüwk'el biyesun* 'remember' < 'do on heart', as shown by the following examples:

he-biyay-q'a=z=ya *vfaxu.*
 send-LV-FUT=1SG=IT 2PL.APUD

'I will send it to you' (John 16.7)

nu-ba-ağen-hüwk'el
 'she does not remember' (lit. 'does not do on heart'; John 16.21)

It appears that some Old Udi synthetic verbs like *buq' -esun* 'love, want' have periphrastic modal or subordinate forms using *biyesun* 'do' as an auxiliary, as in *buq' ana-biya-nan* 'love!' or

Isus-en *buq'ana=biyay-haç'ink'e* *ek'lesi-x* *iç-ee.*
 Jesus-erg love=LV-AOR-as church-dom refl-gen

'(just) as Christ loved his church' (Ephesians 5.25).

This suppletion type is common with experiential verbs across Lezgian languages and beyond.

Finally, Old Udi has the form *(u)pesun* for 'say, tell', and this verb is found in ideophonic compounds like *çu-pesun* 'spit', *kap-pesun* 'hurry' (II Peter 1.15) ~ *kapsun* 'id.', *q'ut'-pesun* 'swallow' ~ *q'uç- p'esun* 'id.' (I Corinthians 15.54), or *parpesun* 'release' ~ *far-pesun* 'play (instrument), lift up and throw down', and *sak-pesun* 'throw', and *hay-pesun* 'lift':

haypee-baa=hamoçk'e=nan *ğar-ax* *işuy*
 rise-LV.PRS=when=2PL son-DOM man.GEN

'When you lift up the son of man' (John 8.28)

Not that Azerbaijani perfect participles are only found in the recent form of the language, and never in Old Udi. This is a clear indication that the Albanian palimpsest predates the arrival of Oghuz Turkic speaking peoples in the eastern part of Transcaucasia.

REFERENCES:

1. Authier Gilles. *Grammaire Kryz, Langue Caucasique d'Azerbaïdjan* [Kryz Grammar, a Caucasian Language of Azerbaijan]. Leuven/Paris: Peeters, 2009.
2. Authier Gilles. *Grammaire Juhuri, ou judeo-Tat, Langue Iranienne Des Juifs du Caucase de l'Est* [A Grammar of Juhuri, or Judeo-Tat, the Iranian Language of the Mountain Jews]. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2012.
3. Authier Gilles. The origin of differential object marking and tripartite alignment in Udi (East Caucasian). In *Transactions of the Philological Society* Volume 121:3. 2023, pp.460–474.
4. Authier Gilles. Ideophonic verb compounds in Archi. In *Linguistic Typology at the Crossroads* 4-1. 2024.
5. Gippert Jost & Jasmime Dum-Tragut (eds.). *Caucasian Albania. An International Handbook*. Berlin/Boston: DeGruyter. 2023.
6. Gippert Jost & Wolfgang Schulze. 2023. 'The language of the Caucasian Albanians', in Jost Gippert & Jasmime Dum-Tragut (eds.), *Caucasian Albania. An International Handbook*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter. 167–230. Gippert Jost, Wolfgang Schulze, Zaza Aleksidze & Jean-Pierre Mahe (eds.), 2008. *The Caucasian Albanian palimpsests of Mount Sinai*, 2 volumes. Turnhout: Brepols.

Bahramova Matanat

*Senior Researcher of the Department of World History
of the Institute of History and Ethnology named after A.A.Bakikhanov of ANAS
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7531-3157>*

THE BUDUKH PEOPLE: FROM THE CAUCASIAN ALBANIAN PERIOD TO THE PRESENT DAY

Abstract. One of the ethnic groups living in multicultural Azerbaijan, a country home to countless minority peoples, is the Budukh people. Primarily settled in the Budug village of Guba, the Budukh people have not remained isolated from historical events; they have participated in the country's historical and political life and have been mentioned in various sources. As the indigenous population of the region, the Budukh people possess a unique language and traditions. Their status as a minority also accelerates this process. Driven by its commitment to multicultural values, the Republic of Azerbaijan provides special care to the Budukh people, just as it does for all minority ethnic groups, ensuring that they live as full-fledged citizens within the country's borders.

Keywords: Caucasian Albania, Shahdagh ethnic group, Budug village, Budukh people, ethnic groups

Azerbaijan has always drawn attention for its ethnic diversity. Caucasian Albania, which carries a rich cultural heritage, was a state that played a significant role in the history of Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus. The Albanian tribes have held an important place in the ethnogenesis of the Azerbaijani people. The ethnic map of this region, which has witnessed complex historical events, is quite diverse. Among the indigenous peoples of Azerbaijan are the Khinalug, Budukh, Kryz, Haput, Jek peoples, as well as the Udis, Ingiloy, Rutuls, Tsakhurs, and other ethnic groups, all of which belong to the Caucasian language family and are known as the Shahdagh peoples.

The ethnic diversity of Guba, a region where numerous minority ethnic groups are widely spread and reside, is particularly evident. Guba, one of Azerbaijan's ancient and beautiful corners, is home to Khinalug, Kryz, Budug, Haput, Gizilgaya, Tufandagh, and the high mountain ranges of Shahdagh. Today, the Budukh, Khinalug, and Kryz ethnic groups, who live in only a few villages, stand out with their unique ethnographic characteristics and languages, holding a special place in the history of Azerbaijan's material and spiritual culture. These groups live in villages that bear their names, and as ethnic groups, they are known by these village names.

The Budukh people hold a distinctive position among these ethnic groups. The current research is specifically dedicated to the Budukh people. Who are the Budukh people?

These people, settled in the village of Budug, located 64 km southeast of Guba, are mentioned in historical sources. The Budukh people, known as part of the "Shahdag ethnic groups" or "Shahdag peoples", live compactly in this area. There are different theories by different researchers in the historical literature regarding the ethnogenesis of the Budukh people. Scholars such as G.Geybullayev, V.Piriyev, G.Javadov, and many others have conducted valuable studies on the ethnic identity of the Shahdag group of ethnicities, including the Budukh people.

Research, historical sources, and ethnographic materials indicate that, like other Shahdagh ethnic groups, the modern Budukh people have ethnogenetic ties to ancient Albanian tribes. The Budukh are often

associated with the “Budi” tribes mentioned in the “Histories” by the Greek author Herodotus [Геродот, 2006, c.101]. This view is also supported by K.Aliyev, a researcher on Caucasian Albania [Алиев, 1960, s.18].

There are various opinions and theories regarding the origin of the word “Budug”. The ethnographer G.Javadov, who is among the researchers of Azerbaijan’s minority peoples, considers the Budukh people, like other Shahdagh ethnic groups, to be indigenous to Caucasian Albania [Cavadov, 2000, s.176]. The village was established in a remote location to protect the population from sudden attacks by Sassanid troops. The Budukh people settled in an area where the roads are passable only during the summer months. The caves located in the nearby Kulakhana and Ambara mountains indicate the presence of ancient inhabitants in this area. The word “Budug” in ancient Turkic languages means “fierce” or “angry”. However, the Budukh people refer to themselves as “Budad”. G.Geybullayev, who devoted part of his research to the Budukh people, also classified them as part of the Shahdagh group. Although the author considers the Budukh people to be indigenous to Caucasian Albania, he localized them in the Shaki–Zagatala region [Гейбуллаев, 1994, c.93]. The customs and overall ethnography of the Budukh people have been described in the works of the ethnographer M.Kosven. In his work, the author compared the customs and traditions of the Budukh people, along with the Khinalug, Jek, Udi, and Kryz, to those of other Caucasian peoples [Ковсен, 1961, c.21-22].

Vagif Piriyeu, a scholar who is himself of Budukh origin, proposed the hypothesis that the Budukh people might be descendants of the “Budat” tribe, based on information provided by the 13th century author Fazlullah Rashidaddin. He even conducted a morphological analysis of this term [Piriyeu, 1994, s.21-22]. However, the author also emphasized that the precise determination of the Budukh people’s ethnic identity would be fully clarified through future research. Despite various hypotheses, the idea that the Budukh people are one of the many tribes of Caucasian Albania and hold a significant place among the Caucasian-speaking peoples should be considered the most scientifically and logically sound [Piriyeu, 2001]. We believe that the aforementioned views provide the most logical explanation for the ethnic identity of the Budukh people.

In this article, our primary goal is not to explore the ethnic identity of the Budukh people, but rather to review the centuries-old history of the Budukh people within the territory of Azerbaijan. Therefore, we also consider it essential to discuss the information available about the Budukh people from the medieval period.

The village of Budug is first mentioned at the threshold of the 16th and 17th centuries, indicating that it was granted as a fiefdom to Ulug Agha Bey and Nemat Bey [Piriyeu, 2001]. The earliest official document known to history regarding Budug dates back to 1607. According to a decree issued by Safavid ruler Shah Abbas I, the administration of Budug was entrusted to Malik Adi. Until the mid-19th century, the governance of this area continued to be carried out by beys from this lineage, including Ali Bey, Mammad Bey, Rustam Bey, Osman Bey, Abdullah Bey, and others.

Decrees from the 18th and 19th centuries also contain information about Budug and the Budukh people. The decrees issued by the Khans of Guba, Fatali Khan and Sheikh Ali Khan, are of significant importance in the study of the history of the Budukh people [Piriyeu, 1994, s.30-31].

In the 18th century (in 1728), descriptions of Budug and the Budukh people can be found in the accounts of I.G.Gerber, who undertook a military expedition along the Caspian Sea coast, as well as in the works of F.Simonovich and A.A.Bakikhanov. Historically, Budug was part of the Shirvanshah state. A dictionary reflecting the languages of 30 peoples living in the Caucasus, including Budukh, Khinalug, and Jek languages, was compiled [Bakixanov, 2010]. Numerous archival documents from the period of the Tsarist Empire contain extensive materials and statistical studies that reflect the history and lifestyle of the Budukh people. These documents are instrumental in clarifying various issues related to the Budukh people.

Similarly, documents such as F.A.Shnitnikov’s *Description of the Guba Province* (1828–1831), V.Legkobytov’s *Guba Province*, cameral descriptions, and censuses conducted during that period are of

exceptional importance from a research perspective [Piriyev, 1994, s.31]. In later periods, it is particularly important to note the decisions made by the Baku State Chamber. According to official documents, Budug was declared a “state village” in 1851.

Historically, Budug was considered part of the Guba province. From an administrative-territorial perspective, according to official documents, Budug had 3,800 hectares of land in 1831 and 3,500 hectares in 1875. In 1912–1914, the Budug community (including villages like Aghyazi, Garadaghli, etc.) had a total land area of 6,150 hectares.

It is known that the Budug beys were one of the three noble families in the Guba uyezd (district) that officially received the title of bey (the others being the Guba and Alpan beys). Budug and its surrounding villages were governed by representatives of this lineage. Villages such as Qushchi, Ugah, Chalgan, Gonagkend, Sohub, Ruk, Yerfi, Nudun, Talish, Bash and Ashagi Talabi, Padar, Zergava, Sadan Sarkar winter pasture, and others were under the control of the Budukh beys [Piriyev, 1994, s.39]. Throughout history, particularly in the 19th century, the Budukh people, involved in the political life of the region they inhabited, were forced to leave their lands and settle in nearby areas for various reasons. This is evidenced by population censuses.

In the first half of the 19th century, like the Kryz, Khinalug, and Jek peoples, the Budukh people settled predominantly in what is now the Khachmaz district [Гейбуллаев, 1991, с.94]. According to the 1870 census, of the 14 individuals over the age of 100 recorded among the various ethnic groups of the Baku governorate, 11 were Budukh. Due to the migration of the population from their homeland to neighboring areas, more than 15 new settlements were established in districts like Shabran and Mushkur with the help of the Budukh people. These settlements include Valioba, Hajioba, Sharifoba, Jilov winter pasture, Haji Alibay, Aghyazi-Budug, Digah-Budug, Deligaya, Pirustu, Azizoba, Garadaghlioba, Haji Khanoba, Qirxlaroba, Ramazan winter pasture, Sukhtakele winter pasture, Aghalig, Yalavanj, and others [Mustafazadə, 2000, s.15-18]. S.B.Bronevsky, in his writings on Budug, mentions that there were 12 villages [Броневский, 1823, с.394].

As mentioned earlier, the Budukh people held a certain place in the political history of the country. Notably, the resistance led by the Budukh outlaws against Nadir Shah Afshar and the documented events of Sheikh Ali Khan, the brave son of the Guba Khanate, going to Budug in 1796 highlight the Budukh people’s determination and fighting spirit. One of the most honorable chapters in the history of the Budukh people corresponds to the early 1920s, during the establishment of Soviet rule in Azerbaijan. The Guba region was one of the areas where the outlaw movement spread widely in opposition to the Soviet regime. A key figure in this resistance, Gachag Mayil (Mayil Zahirov), was originally from Budug village. Legends about Gachag Mayil, who fiercely fought against the Bolsheviks and Armenians, have been passed down to the present day. Gachag Mayil, who supported the formation of a local Azerbaijani government, maintained close ties with the leaders of the “Musavat” party [Piriyev, 1994, s.135-137].

When discussing the Budukh people, it is essential to highlight the Budukh language, which stands out for its uniqueness. The Budukh speak a unified language – Budukh – that does not have dialects. There have been some studies conducted on the Budukh language, several significant articles have been published, and a Budukh–Russian dictionary has been issued. However, it is also crucial that this language be thoroughly researched by an educated Budukh intellectual who has a deep understanding of the language.

There is a belief that the Budukh language belongs to the Shahdagh subgroup of the Lezgin group within the Dagestani languages. The Budukh language is closely related to the Kryz, Haput, Jek, and Lezgian languages. Some words in Azerbaijani and, to a lesser extent, Udi and Ingiloy languages also have the same meaning in Budukh. However, the subtle yet fundamental differences between Budukh and Lezgian languages cast doubt on their historical kinship. The language, alphabet, and script of these ancient people have not been documented. Lexically, the Budukh language is closest to the Kryz language, which belongs to the same language group. Moreover, there are many words whose pronunciation is almost

identical to that in the Udi language, suggesting a possible ethnic connection between the Budukh people and the ancient Albanian Udi tribe [Халилов, 2007, с.20].

The Budukh language is unwritten and is classified among the languages that are gradually disappearing. The scattering of the Budukh people across surrounding areas and their intermingling with other peoples and ethnic groups have led to the decline of their language. Currently, aside from those living in the village of Budug, only about 20-25% of Budukh people (approximately 2,000 individuals) living elsewhere are fluent in their native language, with some understanding it but not speaking it fluently. Today, the Budukh language is primarily spoken by the older and middle-aged generations. The younger generation, particularly teenagers and children, are unable to learn the Budukh language, which is indeed a matter of concern. It is important to note that not only the Budukh language but also the languages of other peoples belonging to the Shahdag group are on the brink of extinction. Most modern Budukh people are fluent in two to three languages, with some speaking even more. They receive their education in Azerbaijani, and in rare cases, in Russian and Lezgian (in Dagestan). Despite this, the Azerbaijani language has historically served as a common means of communication for the Budukh people [Cavadov, 2000, s.169].

I must note that the Budukh language now has an alphabet. Recently, the alphabet for the Budukh language was developed by Adigozel Budad, a linguistic teacher from the village of Alekseyevka in the Guba district, who is also one of the intellectuals of the Budukh people. The Budukh language, which has survived orally until today, has attracted the attention of European linguists and is currently being studied by them. We consider it important to present the book "Picture Dictionary in the Budukh Language", which was prepared with great effort and dedication by Adigozel Budad. I would like to extend my gratitude to Adigozel Budad for bringing such a lasting work to fruition.

There are records from as early as the 19th century that indicate the existence of a pocket qibla compass, dagger blades and sheaths, a rifle stock workshop, a construction materials workshop, and a stud farm in Budug. The mass migration of Budukh people to lowland areas, driven by the horrors of the Great Patriotic War, also changed their primary occupations. Most modern Budukh people are no longer herders but gardeners, vegetable growers, and farmers. Many of them work in technical fields and various crafts. In Budug itself, the number of households has decreased significantly, from nearly 500 before the war to about 50 today. Those who remain primarily continue the traditional occupations of their ancestors.

To prevent the Budukh people, along with other ethnic minorities, from disappearing from the stage of history due to strong assimilation pressures, it is crucial to take practical measures. First and foremost, the depopulation of Budug village must be prevented. The village's social needs should be addressed, and conditions should be created to ensure that its residents continue to live there; constructing a road to the village (like the Khinalug road) is one of the key requirements for this. The active involvement of all Budukh people in the preservation of the village is also essential. It should not be forgotten that the primary reason the Budukh language has survived to the present day is the existence of Budug village, as well as its remote and inaccessible location. Secondly, every Budukh individual should, to the best of their ability, strive to teach the Budukh language to their children, adolescents, as language is the fundamental ethnic marker. Thirdly, it is important to periodically document and register the Budukh people as an ethnic group.

Although statistical data from the 19th century and population censuses provide figures on the number of Budukh people, it is inexcusable that this practice was neglected during the Soviet era, particularly in recent times. In the 1970 census, not a single word was mentioned about the Budukh people, as well as the Kryz, Khinalug, Tat, and other minority peoples; it was as if these ethnic groups had already vanished from the stage of history. There is no doubt that this principle was followed in subsequent censuses as well. The indifference of those representing these ethnic groups should not be overlooked either. If individuals representing minority groups were recorded under the name of their ethnic group during censuses and in identity documents, it would help determine the number of each group's members and contribute to the preservation of these groups for the future. Fourthly, individuals representing the group, particularly

intellectuals, could serve this cause by adopting the surname “Budukh” (or “Budad”). A close examination of archival documents reveals that when an individual bears the surname “Buduqlu” (or “Budugi”, “Buduqski”), there is no need to investigate their ethnic identity, as such surnames provide great opportunities for tracing the history of the Budukh people. Finally, it would be beneficial for the Budukh people, along with the Khinalug, Kryz, Haput, Jek, and Alik people, to establish a “Shahdagh National Cultural Centre” or a similar institution. Such a center (institution) could play a significant role in addressing the common problems faced by these ethnic groups residing in the area.

An attempt to conduct a census of the Budukh people was made by Budukh intellectuals in early 1991. Based on approximate calculations, the population of the ethnic group was estimated to be close to 10,000. In addition to the Budug soviet (council), the Budukh people live compactly in villages such as Baghbanli (578), Aghyazi-Budug (462), Haji Alibay (344), Vladimirovka (344), Zardabi (310), Barli (192), Narimanabad (190), Petropavlovka (177), Sukhtakele (175), Timiryazev (142), Deligaya (140), and others. Hundreds of Budukh people also reside in cities such as Baku, Guba, Khachmaz, Sumgayit, and more, with many others scattered across various regions of the Republic and the former Soviet Union. A small group of Budukh people lives in Dagestan, primarily in the village of Garakure in the Akhty district.

The Budukh people are currently actively involved in all aspects of our Republic’s socio-economic, political, and cultural life. There are hundreds of highly educated professionals among the Budukh, including teachers, doctors, agronomists, engineers, economists, lawyers, and others. We consider it our duty to mention some of them, such as historian and orientalist scholar Vagif Piriyeu, Shahin Fazil, lawyer Zaver Gafarov, Adil Asadov, and others.

Many Budukh people work in scientific institutions and higher education, having earned academic titles and military ranks. Numerous Budukh individuals can be found in central government bodies, military, administrative, and regional organizations, and across all sectors of the national economy. Nevertheless, the majority of Budukh people are still engaged in agriculture. Historically, the Budukh people, who led a nomadic lifestyle, primarily focused on animal husbandry, farming, and weaving. The rural population is also involved in grain cultivation, poultry farming, and handicrafts. The ethnic history, ethnography, domestic traditions, and ancient religious-mythical worldview of the Budukh people are relics of the rich traditions of Azerbaijan’s spiritual heritage.

In conclusion, it must be said that the village of Budug has managed to preserve its existence over many centuries. Our ongoing duty is to protect and preserve this village, its customs, and its language, which are relics of ancient times.



The Budug village in the early 20th century. The Budukh people in traditional attire

REFERENCES:

1. Bakıxanov A. *Gülüstani-İrəm (Gulistan-i Iram)*. Bakı: Xatun-Plyus, 2010, 301 s.
2. Cavadov Q.C. *Azərbaycanın azsaylı xalqları və milli azlıqları (Ethnic Minorities and National Minorities of Azerbaijan)*. Bakı: Elm, 2000, 440 s.
3. Qubatov Ə. *Azərbaycan və Şahdağ dillərinin əlaqəsi (The Connection between Azerbaijani and Shahdagh languages): Filologiya elmləri doktoru dissertasiya*. Bakı, 1992, 313 s.
4. Mustafazadə T.T. *Quba əyalətinin kameral təsviri (Cameral Description of the Guba Province)*. Bakı: Sabah, 2008, 752 s.
5. Piriyev V.Z. *Buduq və buduqlular (Budug and the Budukh People)*. Bakı: Sabah, 1994, 139 s.
6. Piriyev V.Z. *Buduqlular (The Budukh People)/ Qafqaz Albaniyasının Etnomədəni İrsi*. Beynəlxalq elmi konfrans. 21-24 may, 2001. Bakı, 2001.
7. Алиев, К.Г. К вопросу о племенах Кавказской Албании (*On the Question of the Tribes of Caucasian Albania*)/ Исследования по истории культуры народов Востока. М.-Л., 1960, с.18.
8. Броневский, С.Б. Новейшие географические и исторические известия Кавказе. Общее обозрение. (*The Latest Geographical and Historical Information on the Caucasus: A General Overview*). Т.2. Москва: Тип. Склевановского, 1823.
9. Гейбуллаев Г.А. К этногенезу азербайджанцев-историко-этнографическое исследования (*On the Ethnogenesis of Azerbaijanis – a Historical and Ethnographic Study*). Баку: Элм, 1994, 296 с.
10. Геродот. *История в девяти книгах (A History in nine books)*/ Пер. Г.А.Стратановского. Москва: АСТ, 2006, 671 с.
11. Ковсен, М.О. *Этнография и история Кавказа (Ethnography and History of the Caucasus)*. М.: Изд-во Восточной литературы, 1961, 261 с.
12. Халилов Э. *Будуги (The Budukh People)* // YOL, Bakı, 2007, №3, с.16-29..



The Budug village

Becker Moses

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Sciences<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-8534-1772>

CAUCASIAN ALBANIA THROUGH THE LENSES OF THE JEWISH DIASPORA HISTORY

Abstract: This article explores the history of the Jewish ethnic group's formation within the historical Caucasian Albania's territory, spanning the period from the 12th century to the early 19th century. The research draws upon historical chronicles and materials from the State Historical Archive of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Keywords: Jews, migration, Guba Khanate, Podgornaya (Jewish) Sloboda (Piedmont Settlement)

The history of the Jewish ethnic group in Caucasian Albania paralleled the state's own developmental stages. Despite the dynasties change and the different names rulers gave to their lands, the region remained a shared homeland for both the indigenous population and the migrants who sought better opportunities within its borders. It is recorded that in the late 12th century, Samuel Ben Yahya moved from Baghdad to this region to become a scholar at the court of the Ildegizids who founded the powerful Atabeg state [Беккер, 2009, с.121].

In the 13th and 14th centuries, the region rose as the center of the Ilkhanate. "Following the destruction of the Baghdad Caliphate by Hulagu Khan in 1258, local Jews migrated en masse to Azerbaijan where well-established and populous Jewish communities already existed. At the same time, leading minds from the East and West – from China to Spain – migrated to this region" [Беккер, 2009, с.122].

The religious tolerance of the Mongol Ilkhan rulers paved the way for representatives of various religious denominations to rise to leadership positions in the state. Thus, "Sa'd ad-Dawla, the Jewish first minister of Arghun Khan (1284–1291), actually steered the entire domestic and foreign policy of the Ilkhanid state. Jew Muhazzim ad-Dawla headed the Tabriz administration, while Jew Labid ben Abi-r-Rabi' ran the administrative system of all Azerbaijan. Rashid ad-Dawla (Rashid al-Din), who took the first minister's office in 1298, was the author of the historical code *Jami'at-tawarikh* ('The Code of Chronicles,' in Persian), which is one of the major monuments of Eastern historiography" [Беккер, Азербайджан-еврейская община/www.ejwiki.org]. "The 14th century data testifies to Azerbaijan being one of the centers of literary activity among the Karaites. The number of Jews in the country in the subsequent centuries evidently fluctuated due to ongoing conversions to Islam and migration" [Беккер, Азербайджан-еврейская община/www.ejwiki.org].

In the mid-18th century, as a result of the weakening of the Persian empire following the death of Nadir Shah (1736–1747), small feudal states emerged on the territory of Azerbaijan. The largest of these was the Guba Khanate. Its founder, Huseyn Ali Khan, in an effort to strengthen the economic independence of his khanate and develop crafts and trade, invited merchants, artisans, and mining experts. Jews were among those who answered the khan's summons.

Legend has it that before settling in the new location, the Jewish chieftains came to the ruler's palace (his summer residence was near the site of the famous Dome Bath) to seek protection. Not only did the khan guarantee their safety but also granted them land in the upper part of what is now known as Krasnaya Sloboda (renamed Qırmızı Qəsəbə in 1991). Among the settlers were many Jews from Gusar, Kala-Chiraki, Kulgat, the Persian province of Gilan, Aghajani, Chapkani, Mizrahi, and the village of Shudukh, who had relocated to the Guba Khanate after the devastating raids of Nadir Shah. In 1731, together with the residents of the devastated

Kulgat, they established a new settlement – Jewish Podgornaya Sloboda. “They settled in distinct quarters, each according to the origin of its inhabitants. For example: Kulgati, Gusar, Karchag, Shudukh, Kryz, each comprising several synagogues; Gilyaki, Chapkend, and Mizrahi. The oldest quarter is considered to be Kulgat. A same-name village was located three kilometers from Guba and its population consisted almost entirely of Mountain Jews. In addition, Gusar residents also relocated to Guba. In the 1780s, Jews from the Persian province of Gilan moved to Jewish Podgornaya Sloboda. The quarter of Gilan immigrants, known as ‘Gilyaki Mahalla’, is located in the center of the settlement. Jews from Baku and Guba, from the opposite bank of the Gudyal River, also moved to the Sloboda. The quarter of these later immigrants became known as ‘Mizrahi’, meaning ‘Eastern’” [История и культура горских евреев, 2018, с.106-107].

As evidenced by P.Butkov, a participant in V.Zubov’s Persian campaign, “in 1796, the settlement had 200 households only, meaning the population could have ranged from 800 to 1,000 people. All the residents were very poor, spoke their own language, followed their own laws, and had four synagogues and four rabbis. ‘I saw books printed in Poland in their language (Hebrew). The village had small soap-making and leather-tanning factories’” [История и культура горских евреев, 2018, с.110]. The fact that Jewish books were printed in Poland shows that, on an intellectual level, the rabbis maintained contacts with their counterparts in this distant European country. Equally remarkable is that P.Butkov referred to the Jewish Sloboda as Kulgat. This implies that, initially, the settlement was named after its first quarter. Additionally, as noted above, during that period, “Mountain Jews were engaged in soap-making and leather production” [История и культура горских евреев, 2018, с.110].

The Jewish Sloboda started to grow quickly under Fathali Khan who waged conquest campaigns that resulted in the annexation of northwestern Azerbaijan and southern Dagestan to the Guba Khanate. This outstanding ruler’s domestic policy featured political stability, interfaith harmony, and economic prosperity. According to elders, in 1765, in order to protect the Jewish population of the Sloboda from sudden raids by bandit gangs, Fath Ali Khan ordered to design a special alert system.

Fathali Khan succeeded in reconciling Shias and Sunnis and he showed a great deal of tolerance for all the ethnic groups residing in his khanate. Many researchers have noted this fact. As to the evidence provided by S.Bronevsky, “The Jews inhabiting the Kulgat village opposite Guba follow their own laws, have four rabbis and four synagogues. The inhabitants of this village engage in cattle breeding, grow sorghum, wheat, millet, barley, manufacture cotton, and cultivate garden trees and silkworms” [Давид Ицхак, 1989, с.150].

The fact that Jews worked the land is also evidenced by the mill on the outskirts of the Sloboda. According to local elders, there was a market near the mill, where Jewish and Muslim traders exchanged goods.

From 1722 onwards, the Russian Empire made efforts to conquer the Azerbaijani lands. The first unsuccessful campaign was launched by Peter I. In 1796, Catherine the Great sent a corps led by V.A.Zubov against the Persian army. That intended expansion, however, was never accomplished due to the Empress’s death.

The systemic conquest of Azerbaijan started in 1804 with the annexation of the Ganja Khanate. The forceful policies of the Russian Empire led to two Russo-Persian wars, which ended with the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813 and the Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828, formalizing the division of Azerbaijan into two unequal parts. The incorporation of the South Caucasus and Azerbaijan into the Russian Empire enabled Mountain Jews to strengthen their connections with the broader Jewish world. By this time, according to S.Esadze, the “Caucasian region” was inhabited by “Asian Jews who were part of the indigenous population, European Jews, who were granted the right of permanent residence in their designated locations, and finally, passport holding Russian and Asian Jews. Their spiritual matters, as is the case with all Jewish communities, were overseen by rabbis, with greater or lesser involvement from the communities themselves, without strict adherence to the rules concerning the spiritual matters of Jewish societies as outlined in Article 1060 and subsequent sections of Chapter XI, Part 1 of the Civil Code, since most of these rules are completely

inapplicable to the region. Meanwhile, no special directives regarding the spiritual matters of Jews were issued for the governor-generalship due to the limited number of people of this confession. Thus, the Governor-General had no special powers in such matters and only exercised the authority of the Minister of Internal Affairs to approve the establishment of prayer houses outside their designated settlements (Article 1060, Note 2, 1876 edition)" [Эсадзе, 1907, с.576].

In addition to the above benefits, the region saw an end to the internal wars between local rulers and raids by Iranian forces. Despite the anti-Semitism of the Tsarist regime, the authorities still attempted to maintain a certain order in the newly conquered lands. For example, according to reports, the Jews of Vartashen [Oghuz. – *M.B.*] could now "travel more safely on roads and between villages" [Давид Ицхак, 1989, с.338]. Once relative lawfulness and order were established in the area, Jewish Podgornaya Sloboda's population started to rise steadily. "In 1856, 3,000 people lived there" [Давид Ицхак, 1989, с.340]. "In 1863, there were 2,291 men and 2,685 women, as well as 10 prayer houses in Guba and the district" [Давид Ицхак, 1989, с.342]. However, the population growth without a proper increase in the settlement's territory led to significant overcrowding, which caused frequent cholera outbreaks resulting in numerous deaths. Nevertheless, 12 years later, according to a report submitted by the Guba Uyezd (district) chief to the Baku provincial administration, the demographic situation in the Sloboda was as follows.

"January 27, 1869, to the Baku Provincial Administration from the Guba Uyezd Chief

Report

I hereby have the honor of submitting to the Provincial Administration a report on the number of Jews, kehillas, synagogues, prayer houses, and officials in the Jewish Podgornaya Sloboda for the year 1868. No. 286, January 27, 1869, Guba.

Register

of the number of Jews, kehillas, synagogues, prayer houses, and officials in the Jewish Podgornaya Sloboda for the year 1868

Total Jews		Births		Deaths		Marriages	Divorces	Kehillas	Synagogues	Prayer Houses	Officials
M	F	M	M	M	F						
2564	2383	104	89	41	22	44	---	9	11	--	10

Uyezd Chief (signature)" [ГИА АР, ф.44, оп.2, ед.хр.410, л.1-2].

The total population of the Sloboda was 4,947 people, with the birth rate three times as high as the death rate. "By 1873, the population of the Sloboda had grown to 5,120 and by 1886, it reached 6,280" [Беккер, Азербайджан-еврейская община/www.ejwiki.org]. "In 1897, the number of Jews rose to 6,662 and by 1916, it had reached 8,400. There were a total of 12 synagogues in the Sloboda. The Jewish community was cared by 12 rabbis and 6 shohtim (ritual slaughterers). The interior of the synagogues was simple: there were no benches, people sat on the floor. The worshippers could lean their backs against low partitions. There was no women's section, as women did not attend the synagogue except on major holidays" [Давид Ицхак, 1989, с.454].

The monoethnicity of the Jewish Sloboda inhabited purely by Mountain Jews makes the settlement unique. Mountain Jews have ever lived here alone and the communication between the residents of the Sloboda and Guba were minimal. This is evidenced by the fact that the first wooden bridge connecting the two parts of the town was not built before 1851 and the longest arched bridge was constructed in 1894. However, even the modern stone bridge over the Gudyal River has not united the city of Guba with the Jewish Sloboda. The isolation of the Jewish Sloboda from neighboring Azerbaijani Guba is even evident in local folklore, which etymologizes the name of the Gudyal River as "two rivers".

REFERENCES:

1. Беккер М. Азербайджан-еврейская община (*Azerbaijan-Jewish Community*) /www.ejwiki.org
2. Беккер М. Община европейских евреев Азербайджана (*Community of European Jews of Azerbaijan*)// Азербайджан и азербайджанцы в мире, №2, июль 2009, с.121-122.
3. ГИА АР, ф.44, оп.2, ед.хр.410, л.1-2.
4. Давид Ицхак. История евреев на Кавказе (*History of Jews in the Caucasus*). Т.1. Кавказсиони. Тель-Авив, 1989.
5. История и культура горских евреев (*History and Culture of Mountain Jews*). Москва, 2018.
6. Эсадзе С. Исторические записки об управлении Кавказом (*Historical Notes on the Administration of the Caucasus*). Том 1-2. Тифлис, 1907.

Dabakov Vladislav*Researcher of the Institute of Sociology and Regional Studies, Southern Federal University
(RUSSIAN FEDERATION, Rostov-on-Don)*

THE UDIS OF RUSSIA AND AZERBAIJAN: PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPING AND STRENGTHENING MUTUAL TIES

Abstract. This article examines the small ethnic group known as the Udis, who were once part of the ancient state of Caucasian Albania and played an important role in its history. Today, the Udi people reside in Azerbaijan and are recognized as heirs of the culture, language, and Christian traditions of Caucasian Albania. Since the dissolution of the USSR, migration among the Udis has increased, and there are now Udi communities in Russia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and several other countries. Against this backdrop, the author also explores the interactions between Udis living abroad and their kin on their historical homeland, as well as prospects for the further development and strengthening of mutual ties.

Keywords: Udis, Caucasian Albania, migration, community, Nij

The South Caucasus is one of the most fascinating regions in the world, particularly due to its rich historical and cultural heritage of the peoples inhabiting this area, as well as its deep tradition of state-building. Without delving too deeply into history, it can be confidently stated that the region has served as a center of civilization, where ancient state formations emerged and developed over various historical periods. One of these states was Caucasian Albania, which arose in antiquity. In recent decades, interest in studying its history, architecture, script, and population has sharply increased. We know from written sources that Caucasian Albania was home to numerous tribes and ethnic groups. Among them were also the Udis. Ancient authors, such as Herodotus, Strabo, Claudius Ptolemy, Plutarch, and others, wrote about the ancestors of the Udis – the Utis [Ворошил Г., 1974, с.15]. Further information on the Udis can be found in medieval sources. According to all these authors, the Udis were part of the tribal confederation of Caucasian Albania and likely played a significant role in it. Supporting this view is the fact that both capitals of Caucasian Albania – Gabala and Partav (Barda) – were located within the territory where the Udis lived. Additionally, findings from the deciphered Albanian palimpsest discovered in Sinai indicate a close relationship between the Caucasian Albanian language and the modern Udi language. In other words, the script and literary language of Caucasian Albania were based on the Proto-Udi language. Taken together, these factors allow us to confidently assert that the Udis are direct descendants of the Caucasian Albanians and the bearers of the culture, language, and Christian traditions of this ancient state.

As a result of the Arab conquests in the early 8th century, Caucasian Albania lost its independence. From this period, a process of de-ethnicization began among the local tribes, including the Udis, leading to a reduction in their residential areas and overall population. However, despite these processes, the Udis continued for a long time to preserve their identity, language, culture, and traditional residential areas. As late as the 17th–18th centuries, Udi settlements existed in the Sheki-Gabala region on the left bank of the Kura River, as well as in the Karabakh, Tovuz, and Ganja areas on the right bank of the Kura [Харатьян, 2003, с.84].

After the South Caucasus was incorporated into the Russian Empire, there was a surge in scholarly interest in the history and culture of the region's peoples, including the Udis. By that time, the largest

remaining Udi villages were Vartashen (now the city of Oghuz) and Nij. Additionally, in neighboring villages, people who still remembered the Udi language could be found [Бежанов, 1892, с.215]. According to various sources, by the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Udi population reached over 10,000 people. For instance, such data are cited by A.Arutinov in the article “The Udis”, published in 1905 in the Russian Anthropological Journal, referencing information from the “Caucasian Calendar” [Арутинов, 1905, с.77]. However, following the tragic events of World War I, the collapse of the Russian Empire, and the beginning of the Russian Civil War, the Udi population declined. By the 1926 census in the USSR, there were only about 2,500 Udis remaining [Cavadov, Hüseyinov, 1999, с.211].

During the Soviet period, most Udis continued to live in the villages of Nij and Mirzabeyli in the Gabala district, in the district center of Vartashen (now the city of Oghuz), as well as in the village of Zinobiani in Georgia, whose residents are migrants from Azerbaijan. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the resulting socio-economic upheavals forced many Udis to leave their homeland. Most of them settled in Russia. Their migration to Russia was facilitated by the fact that Udis were educated in Russian-language schools. They have been multilingual from a young age and are familiar with Russian culture. All of this greatly eased the process of adapting to a new social, cultural, and linguistic environment [Дабаков, 2013, с.57]. It is worth noting that the migration process began during the Soviet period. Many young people left to study in Moscow, Leningrad, Sverdlovsk, Taganrog, and other cities across the country, and after finishing their studies, they chose to stay and work there. According to the All-Union Census of 1989, 1,102 Udis were already living in Russia [Cavadov, Hüseyinov, 1999, с.212]. These were the initial groups of Udis who established roots in the country and later became a support base for the next wave of emigration.

At present, the majority of Udis in Russia reside in the southern regions: in the Rostov, Volgograd, and Astrakhan regions, as well as in the Krasnodar and Stavropol territories. In addition, Udis live in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Ivanovo, Yekaterinburg, and several other regions across the Russian Federation. According to information from Udi community organizations active in Russia, as of early 2024, more than 6,000 Udis reside in Russia. Below are figures for some regions:

1. Rostov region – 2,800 Udis;
2. Krasnodar territory – 1,800 Udis;
3. Moscow and surrounding area – 400 Udis;
4. Volgograd region – 350 Udis;
5. Stavropol territory – 280 Udis.

Returning to the topic of Udi migration, it is worth noting that the most active migration period occurred in the mid-1990s and early 2000s. This was naturally a time when many were focused on finding employment and establishing themselves and their families in new living conditions. However, after a period of adaptation, the Udis in Russia developed a natural desire to preserve their native language, distinct identity, culture, and traditions, as well as to strengthen ties with their kin in their historical homeland of Azerbaijan. In response to this need, Udi activists and patriots registered and started to run national-cultural organizations of an educational nature in areas where Udis live in significant numbers. Currently, the following Udi public organizations are active in Russia: 1) Regional public organization for the preservation of the Udi language, culture, and traditions, “Moscow Udi Community”; 2) Regional public organization for the preservation of the Udi language, culture, and traditions, “Udi Community of Rostov Region”; 3) Krasnodar Regional Public Organization “Udi Cultural Centre”; 4) Volgograd Regional Udi Public Organization “Nij”; 5) Local public organization “National Cultural Centre of Udis in Ivanovo”, among others.

A significant event in the life of the Udi people was the first congress of representatives from Udi communities held in the city of Krasnodar in November 2011. In addition to Udis from Russia, delegates from Azerbaijan were also invited and attended, including leaders of the Albanian-Udi Christian Community and the Udi Cultural Centre “Orayin”. Several important decisions were made at the congress, one of which was to hold an international conference in the Udis’ historical homeland in Azerbaijan, specifically in the village

of Nij, where Udis still reside in significant numbers. Subsequently, in April 2012, an international scientific and practical conference titled “The Udis: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow” was successfully held in the village of Nij, Gabala district. Participants included representatives from Udi communities in Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Ukraine, and Georgia, prominent historians, linguists, and representatives of state authorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan at all levels, including a representative from the Presidential Administration.

The main themes of the conference centered on the preservation of the Udi language, culture, and national identity in today’s rapidly changing world, as it is clear to everyone that the Udis’ continued existence in Azerbaijan, within their natural environment, is essential for ensuring the preservation and further development of the Udi people. The conference concluded with the adoption of a resolution addressed to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, outlining several important points. Specifically, the conference participants expressed support for the vigorous and multifaceted efforts of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in preserving territorial integrity, strengthening unity, and fostering interethnic peace and harmony, trust, and respect among all peoples of the country. The conference participants affirmed that the Republic of Azerbaijan is the historical homeland of the Udis, their only area of concentrated residence, and the guarantor of the preservation of their language, culture, identity, traditions, and customs.

Additionally, the resolution included recommendations to develop a state program aimed at the preservation and development of the Udi ethnicity within the framework of the existing legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan. As part of this program, it was proposed to establish an open-air ethnographic museum-reserve in the village of Nij, Gabala district. The resolution also recommended that state programs on culture, education, and architecture include the possibility of restoring historical monuments, particularly the three Albanian-Udi churches located in the village of Nij and the city of Oghuz.

It should be noted that in the decade following the 2012 conference, many of the aspirations outlined in the resolution were realized. For example, with financial support from the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the center of Nij was restored, a modern school was built, and the Udi cultural complex “Udi Ojag” is now operational. However, much remains to be done, and here, Udi activists and public organizations, both within Azerbaijan and abroad, need to take the initiative and collaborate on these efforts.

A new generation of Udis living in Russia and other countries around the world is increasingly interested in deepening mutual ties with their kin in Azerbaijan and in participating in the social, cultural, scientific, and economic life of their historical homeland. In today’s digital world, these processes are accelerating. At the same time, several challenges arise, particularly in terms of language, legal, and cultural barriers. Increasingly, Udis outside Azerbaijan do not speak their native Udi language or the Azerbaijani language. Additionally, it should be noted that many Udis of the second generation are already citizens of the countries where they reside, which restricts them in certain rights, such as property ownership, as most who have emigrated still retain ancestral estates in their homeland. Mental and cultural challenges also emerge, as living abroad has led to a division within Udi society.

Another important decision made at the 2011 congress of Udi communities was to establish an annual Udi Culture Day, celebrated on July 20. For over a decade, Udis living abroad have made efforts to travel to Azerbaijan, to their native village of Nij, to participate in this celebration. This day serves as an example of multiculturalism and the state’s attention to all peoples residing in Azerbaijan. It may be worth elevating this event to the level of an international festival, which would likely require support from state authorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The entire range of issues faced by the Udis as a small ethnic group in the modern world should be the subject of in-depth study by specialists. Overcoming these current challenges in the coming years is critically important for the present and future of the Udi people, to ensure the preservation of their native language, unique identity, and national culture. This will require active efforts from Udi activists and public organizations in close collaboration with the government structures of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

REFERENCES:

1. Cavadov Q., Hüseynov R. Udilər (tarixi-etnografik tədqiqat) (*The Udis (Historical-Ethnographic Study)*). Bakı, 1999, 253 с.
2. Арутинов А.А. Удины. Историко-этнографический очерк (*The Udis. A Historical-Ethnographic Sketch*) // Русский антропологический журнал, №1-2 (материалы для антропологии Кавказа), 1905, с.73-96.
3. Бежанов М. Краткие сведения о селе Варташене и его жителях / Сборник материалов для описания местностей и племен Кавказа (*Brief Information on the Village of Vartashen and Its Inhabitants / Collection of Materials for the Description of Localities and Tribes of the Caucasus*). Тифлис: Изд. Упр. Кавказ. учеб. округа, 1892. Вып.14, с.213-262.
4. Ворошил Г. Удинско-азербайджанско-русский словарь (*Udi-Azerbaijani-Russian Dictionary*). Баку: Элм, 1974, 297 с.
5. Дабаков В.В. Удины Юга России: Политические и этнические аспекты (*The Udi of Southern Russia: Political and Ethnic Aspects*) // Исторические, философские, политические и юридические науки, культурология и искусствоведение. Вопросы теории и практики. Тамбов: Грамота, 2013, №11 (37): в 2-х ч. Ч.1, с.55-58.
6. Харатян Г.С. Этноконфессиональные процессы в зоне Шеки-Кабала (XVIII–XX вв.) (*Ethno-Confessional Processes in the Sheki-Gabala Zone (18th–20th centuries)*)// Научная мысль Кавказа, 2003, №3, с.80-89.



Danakari Richard

*Professor of the Department of Law and Socio-Humanitarian Disciplines,
Volgograd State Agrarian University, Doctor of Philosophy
(RUSSIAN FEDERATION, Volgograd)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5683-5275>*

HISTORICAL MEMORY AND EXPERIENCE OF SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF THE UDIS: TRADITIONS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL HERITAGE

Abstract. This article delves into the socio-cultural heritage traditions of the Udi ethnic group, exploring the nuances of their historical memory and the journey of their identity formation. A philosophical reflection on the historical trajectory and social existence of the Udis – one of the ancient ethnic groups in the Caucasus – has revealed the existential facets of their lifeworld and the pivotal role of traditions and memory in shaping their contemporary reality. Today, in the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Udis, alongside numerous other small ethnic groups, are an integral part of the state’s policy of tolerance and multiculturalism. This paper highlights that in an era marked by modernity, universal uncertainty and the imbalance of social systems, ethnic minorities maintain their resilience and cultural diversity, thereby fostering stability and harmony within multi-ethnic and multi-faith societies.

By addressing the characteristics of modernity and the ongoing dynamics of heterogeneous postmodern societies, the author uncovers the unique attributes, key determinants, and ontological aspects of Azerbaijani multiculturalism. He emphasizes that, unlike many developing nations, Azerbaijan does not treat traditionalism as a conservative or closed system, but rather as an open and evolving sphere. The Azerbaijani society, rich in its multi-ethnic and multi-faith fabric, dialectically negates the past, while preserving many of its foundational principles. Furthermore, it cultivates collectivist identity traits that are increasingly essential amidst the continuous transformation of its social landscape.

Keywords: The Udis, existence, multiculturalism, identity, communication, ethnophor, marginality

For many years, international conferences have been hosted in Baku, the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan, focusing on the historical, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural heritage of Caucasian Albania. The relevance and significance of such high-level forums, especially those with international status, allow for an open and relaxed environment, where interdisciplinary discussions can outline both the research scope and objective grounds, as well as pluralistic and subjectivist positions. Moreover, contemporary philosophical, sociological, and ethnological dimensions of the social, cultural, and religious life within Azerbaijan’s multi-ethnic and multi-faith society remain at the forefront of these discussions. Today, the work of the international conference gains special meaning because it is being held for the first time in the context of the complete restoration of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan – the real triumph of historical justice. The second important factor is the successful functioning of the Azerbaijani model of tolerance and multiculturalism, the strict adherence by both the state and citizens to the country’s Constitution, which guarantees the rights and freedoms of national minorities and ethnic groups. This strategy was proclaimed at a high state level a decade ago.

Notably, on May 15, 2014, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, signed the “Decree on the establishment of the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre”. The decree states that “situated at the crossroads of civilizations, Azerbaijan boasts a rich cultural and spiritual heritage and traditions

of tolerance, which is an internationally recognized truth. The existing environment of national-cultural diversity and religious-ethnic tolerance has transformed it into a unique space for intercultural dialogue on a global scale, as a multi-ethnic and multi-faith country. The successful state policy currently implemented in the Republic of Azerbaijan, aimed at preserving this cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity, necessitates dedicated efforts to nurture and enrich the extensive historical experience accumulated over centuries in the realm of multiculturalism, and to further promote the unique achievements of the [Azerbaijani] society in this area on the international stage" [Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the establishment of the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre..., p.1].

Over the past decade, the foundation of national unity in Azerbaijan has been built not only on its unique natural landscape, economic system, collectivist traditions, and the distinctive mentality of indigenous ethnic groups residing within its territory, but also on their preserved rich historical, social, cultural, and linguistic heritage: language, morality, cult, and customs. Among the positive factors of Azerbaijani multiculturalism is the state's and society's commitment to preserving cultural diversity, protecting the values of national minorities, and fostering trust towards the "Other". One should concur with L.R.Nazimova's perspective when she writes that "multiculturalism can be characterized as a state policy where both human rights and freedoms and diverse cultures hold equal value" [Кознова, 2003, с.25].

In the concept of multiculturalism, the dialogue of cultures is prioritized as a social norm, where nationwide tolerance and mutual respect among ethnic groups are significant as conditions for the recognition of the value of the "Other" by all parties. In other words, multiculturalism entails both the process of societal unity and the preservation of its ethnic and cultural diversity. However, it is essential to understand the objective contemporary trends present in the process of social communication. It should not be forgotten that today, various social groups and individuals, regardless of their racial or ethnic backgrounds, are uniting into groups to assert their rights to coexist [Волкова, 2011, с.256].

Naturally, multiculturalism is a form of self-affirmation, rooted in the individual's peaceful assertion of their uniqueness and individuality.

Returning to the experience of the international conference in Baku, it is worth noting that the participants consistently emphasize the necessity of continuing the study of the unique historical and cultural heritage of Caucasian Albania, focusing on the history, language, culture, and traditions of the Udi ethnic group as one of the principal successors of Azerbaijan's ancient heritage.

In this context, it becomes essential to highlight the primary characteristics of the phenomenon known as historical memory. As is well-known, the existence of a society and its social dynamics are impossible without an understanding of the fundamental foundations of an ethnic group's historical existence, the preservation of memory, and the continuity and significance of comprehending both the past and the present. The forgetting or distortion of historical memory leads not only to the stagnation of a nation and its society but also to significant regression and the devaluation of values. For effective national development, it is crucial to recognize the role and place of the phenomenon of "historical memory" in the life of an ethnic community and its individual members – ethnophors.

Historical memory and the ethnic identity of peoples, along with their legal consciousness, encapsulate the majority of motives behind current and future events – from political decisions to everyday interactions. The existing and continuously emerging diverse interests and needs of various social strata and ethnic groups, as well as their elites, can only be reconciled through mutual concessions and compromises [Данакари, 2017, с.258].

In scholarly discourse, historical memory is examined as both a rational and often also irrational identification within the context of specific time and space. The Udi people have always, and continue to, identify themselves within the historical existence of Azerbaijan, feeling deeply connected to the rich historical heritage and the contemporary multi-ethnic people of the Republic.

The characteristic features of the Udi historical memory include, firstly, the lasting preservation of ideas and knowledge about the history and past of their ethnic group and community. Historical memory is characterized by the presence of a specific foundation – the material and spiritual culture. For the public consciousness of an ethnic group, the existence of traditions, symbols, representations, and unique artifacts that characterize their community is significant, providing it with stability and the ability to transmit these elements from generation to generation. Within the very historical consciousness, often even in the subconscious, concentrated forms of relevant and valuable information about the past of their ethnic group are preserved. In this case, historical memory has most effectively retained the images of the most famous events and heroes, which inspire and serve as examples for the present and the future [Назимова, 2005, с.29].

It should be noted that historical memory is multifaceted, yet selective and fragmentary. It is marked by substantial subjectivity and myth-making, where emotional, artistic human perceptions, especially dramatic and tragic events, find a unique echo. Memory can be viewed both as a generalized definition and as a real representation of the past. It is a means by which people recreate their past and coexist with it in the present. However, one cannot fully agree with Y.A.Safronova, who, drawing on the principles of social constructivism, notes that “the emergence of memory as one of the key concepts of the new historicism coincides with the formation of a new cultural history, which has become a response to the diverse challenges of postmodernism” [Сафронова, 2019, с.23].

An intriguing stance is presented by A.Assman, who emphasizes that historical memory serves as a transitional link between individual and collective consciousness. In this way, historical memory enables individuals to perceive themselves as part of a collective – an essential aspect of their existence as social beings [Ассман, 2014, с.22].

The poly-structural nature of society, the divergent and multifaceted directions of social dynamics, the uncertainty surrounding historical development, particularly the future of our planet, the application of poly-paradigmatic methodologies in research, especially the synergistic approach to reality analysis, and the prevailing plurality of opinions create significant challenges for understanding historical memory and finding objective foundations of what might be termed “elusive everydayness”. Socio-cultural heritage acts as a cornerstone for ethnic communities in their quest to navigate the vast streams of contemporary information, multifaceted events, and facts. It helps them to find foundational knowledge not only for survival but also for establishing a new self-identity. Turning to historical memory signifies an acknowledgment of the importance of heritage, allowing communities to “save themselves” from marginalization, discover new meanings for cultural existence, and develop norms, rules, and values that are relevant to modern times.

As previously mentioned, both historically and in the present day, one of the key forms of self-identification for the Udi people is their reliance on the historical, cultural, spiritual, and moral heritage of Caucasian Albania. This involves a continuous search for their origins and understanding of their roots. The reproduction of historical memory and the rich ancient heritage enables them to preserve their traditions, coexist in the present, and face the increasing globalization and challenges of the postmodern era without fear. Historical memory helps overcome the threats that emerge during transitional periods in society’s lifecycle. For most ethnic groups and indigenous communities, such transitions and movements toward modernity create an intermediate state that leads to significant marginalization filled with threats, uncertainties, and fears, especially regarding the future.

Today, the traditions of socio-cultural heritage, including historical memory, play a significant role in shaping the existence and fate of modern society and individuals. This underscores the importance of mobilizing the potential that historical memory carries. Socio-cultural heritage draws upon both historical past and present realities, particularly the courage of modern-day heroes of the Patriotic War of 2020, who restored Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity and ensured the triumph of historical justice. The rich tapestry of

ancient history and modern heritage constructs the social and cultural fabric of people's lives, guiding them towards lofty goals and aspirations.

Modern challenges and threats highlight the importance of the search for the essential characteristics of true existence, aiming to ensure cohesion and unity. Various methods and forms of globalization, coupled with ongoing hybrid information warfare, exert a powerful influence on society, especially on the younger generation. The danger lies in the revision of history and the traditional cultures of nations, particularly concerning the era and events of the Great Patriotic War and the victory of the Soviet peoples in World War II. The marginalization of Russia and many post-Soviet republics by developed countries, especially the USA, the UK, and France, relegates them to the periphery of global politics and international relations. This transformation into mere objects of globalization significantly diminishes the role and place of other civilizations. The persistent policy of imposing the exclusivity of the modern form of liberalism, the assertion of the "end of history" [Фукуяма, 2015, с.8], as well as the promotion of the "clash of civilizations" theory and the practical implementation of this model contribute to the erosion of traditional, fundamental values of the majority of the planet's peoples, particularly those in developing countries. This process marginalizes both cultures and their representatives, undermining uniqueness and morality [Хантингтон, 2016, с.25].

In the modern information space, despite all the talk about freedom of speech and the right to dissent, the dominant position is held by the USA and European Union countries. It is well known that their policies and practices of tolerance and multiculturalism have completely failed. It is no secret that today Western states, employing various manipulative technologies, strive to erode the value systems, worldviews, and rational and irrational aspects of consciousness of populations in many countries, especially the youth, linked to ethnic mentality and national traditions. The promotion of "universal" models and abstract programs for a digitized and technologized world poses serious threats to political and civil identity, creates societal divisions, and undermines national and patriotic traditions.

Currently, the preservation and creative development of traditions, culture, and morality must focus on spiritual depth – the foundation of an ethnic group's existence. This involves maintaining the essence of its being, particularly the mentality of its people, their cultural code, and other substantial and existential constants. In the postmodern era, the loss of spirituality and living under conditions of deviance and anomie can be detrimental to ethnic groups, including the Udis. The omission of essential layers from historical memory, which form the foundation of a people's existence, devalues traditions and the value system, resulting not only in a deficit of spirituality but also in the devaluation and destruction of the ethnic group's core cultural code.

Let's highlight one more point. An important way to counter and then overcome marginalization is through active dynamics and movement towards the formation of new forms of identity. As previously emphasized, in this context, a new understanding of the past becomes significant, especially regarding the great historical events of the 20th century, particularly our shared history and the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War. Today, the preservation and development of the cultural and moral heritage of what was once a unified country hold particular value for all large and small ethnic groups in the post-Soviet space. This involves defining the main determinants and principal origins that have shaped concepts and phenomena such as "Soviet people", "internationalism", "heroism", "unity", "friendship of nations", and "dignity".

Preserving the finest cultural achievements aids in the search and enrichment of socio-cultural heritage with new meanings and content, enabling a creative engagement with many traditions and rituals, and moving away from the conservative attitudes of the past. Today, for the Udis living in the Republic of Azerbaijan, traditional heritage should be complemented by patriotic efforts, new facts, events, and a historical milestone related to the Victory in the Patriotic War that took place in the autumn of 2020. This heritage holds significant importance; the event is specific yet represents a genuinely patriotic phenomenon that aligns with the interests of all peoples of Azerbaijan. Therefore, the importance lies in the new mission

of education, training, and upbringing; it involves the socio-cultural inheritance of the present, the genuine spiritual and moral reproduction of moral values, and the development of patriotism.

Social existence and public consciousness in the modern era require the setting of at least equally high goals and ideals, the acquisition of new values, the discovery of real meanings, and their achievement, as was the case in the past.

Principles such as unity in diversity, multiculturalism, and friendship among peoples should transform in the consciousness of people, their interactions, and communications from mere events into a way of life, becoming a principle of existence for society as a new subject of modernity. The victory of the multi-ethnic Azerbaijani people in the Patriotic War of 2020 has fundamentally changed the reality within the Republic itself.

This affirmed the greatness and ontological rightness of the people, their integrity, uniqueness, and self-sufficiency. In the new circumstances, an equally complex task has emerged: guiding society into a realm of new meaning and new existence, practicing creative exploration, and actively mastering the ever-changing reality. A significant goal is to understand the relationship between the dialectics of tradition and innovations in the mastery of common cultural heritage, to comprehend the social function of patriotism, and to facilitate a new transformation of values associated with serving the Homeland following the return of native lands to Azerbaijan, which historically belong to it.

Tradition encompasses historical memory and modernity, actualizing and integrating the resource of love for one's native land, its history, and present. The emerging modernity of the 21st century brings to the forefront the entire spectrum of socio-cultural heritage, the everyday lives of people, and the rational perceptions and subconscious attitudes of the ethnophor, linking them to their goals and interests, the realization of rights and freedoms, especially the aspiration for a dignified life. Historical memory and the possibilities of its socio-cultural inheritance should be perceived as a unique spiritual and moral state of society, which is confident in its purpose and the "truth" of life and united around chosen ideas and objectives. Historical memory is our cultural heritage, a common treasure, the intersubjective space of existence for all peoples, characterized by a high level of social energy, spiritual creativity, and faith in the future. After 2020, the principle of pride in our ancient history, our shared past, our people, and our country acquired a new understanding and grandeur for the Udis as well. Today, the preservation and reproduction of values embedded in the great historical, cultural, and moral heritage are both relevant and necessary because only a rich legacy of the past gives new meaning to human existence, opening up opportunities and prospects for the future.

Traditionalism should be viewed as a significant object of spiritual heritage and patriotism. It is essential to move away from understanding traditions as a closed system. Traditions are open to the adoption of new values, helping individuals navigate a complex and multifaceted society and find means for self-realization. Reflecting on traditions fosters a dialectical approach to the legacy of the past, transferring these values through the present into the future. Tradition can be perceived as a unity, a dialectic between the collective and the individual within society, embodying the social and group aspects within a person. Tradition should be regarded as a specific hypertext; it represents the hermeneutics of value orientations, providing contemporary generations with unique codes for understanding the profound meanings of actions undertaken in the name of the present and the future.

Traditions possess significant resources and mobilization potential, provided they are not treated as eternal dogmas and are appropriately utilized by shedding their conservative interpretations. It is crucial to maintain continuity in interpreting traditions while setting new meaningful goals essential for the development of society, culture, and the individual.

In the era of globalization and continuously evolving information society, it is quite challenging to harmonize traditionalism with modernity, collectivist and individualist principles, and to preserve the system of old values and meanings that were once significant and fateful for the ethnic group. However, it has

become evident that contemporary society cannot function adequately without historical memory, cultural heritage, mentality, and various forms of identity because these elements unify each nation into a cohesive whole, ensuring cohesion and unity through the relationships between ancestors and descendants.

Over the past decade, the Azerbaijani model of multiculturalism has gained considerable popularity. It has successfully established a globally recognized system of unified multicultural national ideas and values. The globally renowned Baku International Multiculturalism Centre (BIMC), led by Ravan Hasanov, has been actively working in this field. For an entire decade, the Centre has annually conducted hundreds of events both within the country and internationally, promoting policies of tolerance and multiculturalism. It strives to effectively integrate and synthesize all positive experiences in the multicultural and ethno-confessional spheres. It is noteworthy that thanks to the BIMC, there has been a creative harmonization of traditional and modern values, which contributes to the formation of a unified and unique socio-cultural space for the peoples of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The ability of the multi-ethnic Azerbaijani people to coexist with representatives of all ethnicities, religions, civilizations, and cultures demonstrates the considerable robustness of Azerbaijan's multiculturalism model. The successful functioning of a market economy and reliance on universal human values do not affect the traditional values of the Republic's peoples. The implementation of the principle of unity in diversity also positively influences Azerbaijani multiculturalism, which continues to develop dynamically, spreading further and being professionally and skillfully integrated into a multi-ethnic and multi-faith society.

In concluding this article, we must state that the Udis also make a significant contribution to the dynamically developing Azerbaijani multiculturalism model. The Albanian-Udi Christian community, led by Robert Mobili, has been actively operating in the Republic of Azerbaijan for several decades. Together with other religious organizations and denominations, it engages in vigorous activities to ensure interethnic and interfaith peace, harmony, trust, and friendship in the Republic. Over the past decade, the historical homeland of the Udis – the village of Nij in the Gabala district of Azerbaijan – has hosted numerous international scientific and practical conferences, supported by the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre, various Institutes of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, state structures, and public organizations, with the participation of scholars from around the world, including the author of these lines. These high-level forums held in Baku, other regions of the Republic, and the village of Nij, were dedicated to the history and ethno-cultural traditions of Caucasian Albania and the Udi people. Leaders and activists of Udi national public organizations from Russia and other CIS countries participated in these conferences.

Today, more than ever, ethnic and confessional factors are significant in the social and cultural existence of the Udi people, serving to some extent as a form of protection against both natural and artificial assimilation and acculturation. For many millennia, they have helped and continue to help them preserve their material and spiritual culture. History, language, values, cult, traditions, and customs have not only contributed to the survival and existence of the Udis, helping them solve existential problems, but also helped preserve and develop their identity, reproduce their mentality, and maintain self-awareness and self-identity.

REFERENCES:

1. Ассман А. Длинная тень прошлого: Мемориальная культура и историческая политика (*The Long Shadow of the Past: Memorial Culture and Historical Politics*) / Пер. с нем. Бориса Хлебникова. М.: Новое литературное обозрение, 2014, 328 с.
2. Волкова Т.П. Классические философские концепции мультикультурализма и толерантности (*Classical Philosophical Concepts of Multiculturalism and Tolerance*) // Вестник МГТУ, 2011, №2. Т.14, с.254-259.
3. Данакари Р.А. Философия этнического бытия. Этническая группа удин(ы) в условиях глобализации человечества (*Philosophy of Ethnic Existence: The Udi Ethnic Group in the Context of Globalization*). Волгоград: Изд-во Волгоградского института управления - филиала ФГБОУ ВО РАНХиГС, 2017, 388 с.
4. Кознова И.Е. Историческая память и основные тенденции её изучения (*Historical Memory and Main trends in Its Study*) / Социология власти. М., 2003, с.23-32.
5. Назимова Л.Р. Идеология и политика мультикультурализма: потенциал, особенности и значение для России (*Ideology and Politics of Multiculturalism: Potential, Features, and Significance for Russia*) / Малащенко А.И. (ред.). Гражданское общество в многонациональных и поликонфессиональных регионах: материалы конференции. М.: Гендольф, 2005, с.25-26.
6. Сафронова Ю.А. Историческая память: введение: учебное пособие (*Historical Memory: An Introduction – A Study Guide*) / СПб.: Изд-во Европ. Ун-та в Санкт-Петербурге, 2019, 220 с.
7. Указ Президента Азербайджанской Республики о создании Бакинского Международного Центра мультикультурализма (*Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Establishment of the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre*) / Президент Азербайджанской Республики Ильхам Алиев. URL: <http://ru.president.az/articles/11740> (дата обращения 15.05.2023).
8. Фукуяма Ф. Конец истории и последний человек (*The End of History and the Last Man*). М.: АСТ, 2015, 576 с.
9. Хантингтон С. Столкновение цивилизаций (*Clash of Civilizations*). М.: ООО «Издательство АСТ», 2016, 640 с.



Speech at the International Conference "Caucasian Albania: in Historical and Contemporary Context". The village of Nij. 2019



Participants of the International Conference "Caucasian Albania: in Historical and Contemporary Context". The village of Nij. 2019

Goshgarly Goshgar*PhD in History, Associate Professor*
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8593-223>

THE PREHISTORY OF THE GREAT SILK ROAD

Abstract. The article focuses on the historical conditions that underlay the formation of a mature international trade route system which in antiquity and the Middle Ages facilitated both trade and a vast cultural and informational exchange between peoples from China in the east to the Mediterranean in the west. This system came to be known in historical science as the Great Silk Road (GSR). The article substantiates the idea that the GSR emerged as a combination of four independently formed regional trade routes, which can be identified as the Mediterranean, Western Asian, Central Asian, and Far Eastern routes. Each of these routes had its own history and formation dynamics before they merged into a single transcontinental route.

Keywords: silk, Phoenicians, Greeks, Achaemenid Empire, Seleucid state, Ptolemaic state, Maurya state and Han Empire in China

The Great Silk Road (GSR), a network of roadways that allowed the Old World's nations to trade and share ideas and cultures from China in the east to the Mediterranean in the west, did not appear overnight and had a lengthy prehistory.

Back in the first millennium BCE, the centralized states of the East fostered the growth of long-distance trade. This was pioneered by the Phoenicians who built a sophisticated network of city-colonies across the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions to promote trade.

Unlike the majority of the Western Asian and Egyptian peoples, whose economy relied on agriculture and cattle breeding, the Phoenicians centered their life around the sea. The natural environment they inhabited was different. The Phoenicians resided in a narrow strip of land between the sea and the Lebanese mountain chain, that lacked large river valleys and fertile soils suitable for farming and grazing. Instead, the Phoenicians cultivated grapes and olives. Wine, olive oil, and the sturdy cedar wood became the key export goods of the Phoenician cities of Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, and others. Numerous trade routes from the cities of Western and Central Asia converged at these Phoenician cities on the Mediterranean coast. After mastering the art of building massive, durable ships, the Phoenicians took control of the Mediterranean. By the turn of the second and first millennia BCE, Phoenician merchants dominated all Mediterranean trade. Moreover, they crossed the Strait of Gibraltar to enter the Atlantic Ocean, reaching the tin rich Britain and even Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea, from where they started bringing amber [Всемирная история, 1955, с.504]. To promote trade, the Phoenicians built colonies along the coasts of Asia Minor, Spain, Italy, the islands, and the Mediterranean coast of Africa, which served as strategic trade bases. In the early first millennium BCE, the Phoenicians also navigated the waters of the Red Sea [Азербайджан на шелковом пути, 2020, с.18].

The Phoenicians established themselves as Egypt's and the Western Asia's primary supplier of raw materials after seizing control of all intermediary trade throughout the Mediterranean region. As a result, their towns saw rapid economic growth. At the same time, the Phoenician cities fostered various crafts, such as weaving, jewelry making, glass production, metallurgy, and pottery. They learned to dye fabrics with a durable purple dye. The secret of making this dye from sea mollusks was jealously safeguarded. This

expensive purple clothing was worn by the most privileged members of ancient Egypt and Western Asian states societies.

The Phoenicians also invented a method of producing transparent glass. Glassware and beads made from this glass were highly popular throughout the ancient world and brought great profits to the Phoenicians. Their greatest invention, however, was the alphabet where each symbol represented a specific sound.

The historical contribution of the Phoenicians was the integration of the primarily land-based and riverine trade routes of the Western Asia with the maritime trade of the Mediterranean, thus creating a single trade and economic environment from the Strait of Gibraltar and the Atlantic coasts of Europe and Africa to Central Asia and India [Всемирная история, 1955, с.496-503].

In the 8th through 6th centuries BCE, the rising power of the Greeks started to displace the Phoenicians from the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions. The Greeks actually took over the vast maritime trade infrastructure built by the Phoenicians and established their own extensive system of city-colonies along both seas coasts, taking international maritime trade to a new, higher level. This marked the beginning of the Great Greek Colonization era. Dozens of colonies sprang up along the Mediterranean and Black Sea coasts, from Spain and North Africa to the coast of Asia Minor, Crimea, and the Caucasus. Greek colonists, through profitable trade exchange, generally established peaceful relations with the local tribes and benefited much from this trade. In the eighth-sixth centuries BCE, Greek city-colonies contributed greatly to spreading Greek culture, language, and science over vast territories.

In the 8th to 6th centuries BCE, Lydia, a state that emerged in western Asia Minor, was becoming increasingly important in international trade. Its capital, Sardis, located at the intersection of international trade routes, rose to become one of the centers of global commerce. The scale of this trade was so large that the goods purchased required a uniform form of payment. With their rich gold mines, the Lydians were the first in the world to establish the mass production of coins made of electrum and gold. In the early sixth century BCE, Lydia confronted Media in the east, but soon, through a dynastic marriage, the two states made peace and the Halys river became the border between them [Алиев, 1960, с.243]. This resulted in a successful merger of the West Asian and Mediterranean international trade routes into a single trade and economic environment. This process can be regarded as laying the groundwork for the future Great Silk Road.

In the middle of the 6th century BCE, Media and Lydia were brought down by the Persians and the vast Achaemenid Empire was established within a short period, stretching from Central Asia and India in the east to Egypt and Asia Minor in the west, and from the Indian Ocean in the south to the Greater Caucasus in the north [Дандамаев, 1985, с.12-52]. There had never been a state so immense in human history before. What was once thought of as international trade over large distances was now trade within a single state. Ruling such a vast empire effectively required new principles of territorial administration, communication systems, control over local authorities, and conditions for the development of the economy, trade, and finance.

Thanks to the reforms of King Darius I (522–486 BCE), the Achaemenid rulers succeeded in creating a system of governance that accounted for all the aforementioned factors. Due to his interest in trade development, Darius I was referred to by his contemporaries as a “merchant” [Редер, Черкасова, 1979, с.246]. The Achaemenids preserved the pre-existing system of international trade relations. Taking control over the Greek and Phoenician trade cities on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, the Persians mainly refrained from interfering in their internal affairs and encouraged the development of crafts and trade in these regions. Moreover, the existence of the Achaemenid Empire ensured the uninterrupted flow of West Asian goods to the Phoenicians. They also received political support from the Persians against Greek merchants, relying on Persian assistance in reclaiming their lost positions in Mediterranean maritime trade. Such cities as Sardis, Babylon, Ecbatana, and others also preserved their roles as major trade centers. To

ensure fast and consistent communication with their satrapies, the Persians constructed many excellent, stone paved roads known as “royal roads”. Every twenty to twenty-five kilometers, there were stations along these roads where travelers could stop, change horses, and, by means of a relay system, quickly dispatch goods, royal decrees, and other items to the remote satrapies. The main trading artery was the road from Susa to Ephesus on the coast of Asia Minor, which stretched 2,400 km. According to Herodotus, couriers covered this distance in just seven days [Геродот, V, 52-54]. The guarded “royal roads” with their branched infrastructure were a new phenomenon in global trade and significantly contributed to its growth.

The Persians gave credit for maritime routes, too. By the order of Darius I, the Persian navigator Scylax undertook a voyage across the Indian Ocean from the mouth of the Indus River to the Red Sea. Darius ordered that a canal be dug connecting the Nile to the Red Sea. This enabled Indian goods to be transported directly to the Mediterranean by a shorter route. This marked the beginning of the second stage in the formation of the GSR.

Trade in the Achaemenid Empire was greatly promoted by Darius I’s financial reforms. He introduced the daric, a gold coin that weighed 8.4 grams, which became the basis of the vast empire’s monetary system. The high gold content in these coins (97%) allowed them to serve as the primary gold currency in international trade for several centuries [Дандамаев, 1989, с.141].

The mainland Greece trade city-states did not like the Persian hegemony over all trade from Asia Minor to Central Asia and India. Not only did the Persians subjugate all the Greek cities along the Asia Minor coast and in the islands of the Aegean Sea but also halted the Greek efforts to displace the Phoenicians from Mediterranean maritime trade. Many Phoenician cities actually became allies of the Persians in their struggle against the Greeks. In fact, the Phoenicians were the ones who constructed numerous transport ships for the Persians. The Persians had aspirations to conquer the entire Mediterranean region and a conflict with the mainland Greece city-states was inevitable. This half-century struggle (500–449 BCE) ended in the Greeks’ victory and gave the latter the dominion over the whole Mediterranean and Black Sea regions.

With the Persians’ defeat in the war with the Greeks in the first half of the 5th century BCE and the subsequent peace treaty between them, the second stage in the formation of the Great Silk Road came to an end. Greek traders thus became the dominant force in the Mediterranean and Black Sea trade, while land trade in the Western and Central Asia continued to be dominated by the Persians who in fact closed the door to Greek traders to those areas. To move the war into Asia, onto Persian territory, the Greek city-states first needed to resolve their internal conflicts and unite. This became possible after Greece was conquered by Macedonia. The Greek-Macedonian campaign into Persia was led by Alexander the Great. Following his early victories over the Persians at the Granicus River (334 BCE) and near the city of Issus (333 BCE), Alexander took control of all of Asia Minor. In 332 BCE, he took Egypt without a fight and in 331 BCE, in the decisive Battle of Gaugamela, he defeated the army of Darius III who was killed by his own satraps in 330 BCE, leaving his vast empire to Alexander.

The immeasurable wealth in gold and silver coins that had been lying dormant in the treasuries of Persian kings was now put into circulation which ensured a rapid growth in trade. Alexander the Great founded many new cities in Asia, including the famous Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast of Egypt. All of these cities were strategically located along important trade routes, marking future pathways of the Great Silk Road. Some of them, along with the above Alexandria, such as Herat, Merv, and Kandahar, still exist today.

From the very first years of Alexander’s eastern campaign, many craftsmen and merchants followed his army to the East. Most of them eventually settled in the cities he founded, facilitating the expansion of trade connections between the Mediterranean and not only the Western Asia as before, but also the more remote regions of Central and South Asia. This marked the beginning of the third stage in the formation of the Great Silk Road (GSR).

Alexander the Great's conquests ensured the logical outcome of the development of trade links across the Eurasian space – the establishment of sustainable relations virtually throughout the entire region, from the Mediterranean to India. However, Alexander's death and the rapid fragmentation of his empire halted this process. The Diadochi (his successors) started to struggle for power. This resulted in new states appearing on the political stage of the ancient world by the 3rd century BCE, which were meant to become the main guarantors of the GSR's future. This was the era of great empires stretching like a chain from the Pacific to the Atlantic Oceans. On the eastern edge was the Han Empire, which united all of China in the 3rd century BCE. On the western frontier stood the mighty Roman Empire. The links between them were the Greco-Bactrian, Kushan, Seleucid, Parthian, and Egyptian (under the Ptolemaic dynasty) states.

The Chinese cut off from Central and Western Asian civilizations by the steppe expanses dominated by the nomadic Huns, had long believed that cities, agriculture, and irrigation systems existed only in China, while the rest of the world was mainly mountains and steppes inhabited by barbarian nomads. It was not until the end of the 2nd century BCE, when the Chinese explorer Zhang Qian traveled through the Hunnic steppes, that China discovered the Central and Western Asian civilizations. They, like China, had thriving agriculture, irrigation channels, prosperous cities, numerous crafts, and sustainable trade. Upon learning this, the Chinese Emperor Wu-di raised a powerful army, pushed the Huns to the north, and took control over the trade route from China to Central and Western Asia. A system of military settlements and fortresses was created there. Thus, by the end of the 2nd century BCE, two major trade routes were connected – one from China heading westward and the other from the Mediterranean reaching into Central and Western Asia. These two ancient international trade routes, once merged, came to be known as the Great Silk Road.

Important hubs started to emerge along the Great Silk Road from its very first years. The primary goal of these hubs was to build infrastructure to ensure caravan servicing and the uninterrupted transit of goods. These hubs included ancient cities located on the Silk Road routes, crossing points and fords on the banks of major rivers, and oasis centers in desert regions. Service markets grew quickly in these sites, and social groups formed that helped to sustain trade posts and caravans directly. These groups included guides and translators, animal drivers, craftsmen producing specific goods necessary for long journeys, small traders who made their living by reselling imported goods, tax collectors, and hired warriors often employed by the leaders of large caravans, among others.

Nearby farmers and herders flocked to these quickly expanding centers along the Silk Road branches to sell their products and, in return, buy imported goods such as silk and other fabrics, spices, various utensils, and jewelry, to name just a few.

The high demand for imported goods throughout the entire Silk Road network encouraged local artisanal manufacturing, often as local imitations of imported items.

Together with trade caravans, missionaries, monks, spies and agents of all shades were on the move pursuing their tasks. It was not uncommon that large caravans carried out state assignments and were referred to as embassies [Бабаев, 1998, с.21].

Thus, the emergence and the centuries-long existence of the Great Silk Road was a unique phenomenon in human history. The exceptional economic and political significance of this transcontinental trade route largely shaped the primary foreign policy directions of many leading countries throughout multiple historical periods.

Whether willingly or unwillingly, small states crossed by the Silk Road routes were drawn into the sphere of these interests. Among them were the states of ancient and medieval Azerbaijan.

REFERENCES:

1. Азербайджан на шелковом пути (*Azerbaijan on the Silk Road.*). Баку: Изд-во «Tahsil», 2020, 384 с.
2. Алиев И. История Мидии (*History of Media*). Баку: Элм, 1960, 420 с.
3. Бабаев И.А. Великий шелковый путь и Азербайджан (*The Great Silk Road and Azerbaijan*)// Великий шелковый путь и Азербайджан: вчера, сегодня, завтра. Баку, 1998, с.16-30.
4. Бикерман Э. Государство Селевкидов (*The Seleucid State*) / Пер. с франц. Л.М.Глускиной. М.: Наука, 1985, 264 с.
5. Всемирная история (*World History*). Т.1. М.: Госполитиздат, 1955, 746 с.
6. Геродот. История (*Histories*). М.: Изд-во "АСТ", 2006, 671 с.
7. Дандамаев М.А. Политическая история Ахеменидской державы (*Political History of the Achaemenid Empire*). М.: Главная редакция восточной литературы издательства «Наука», 1985, 319 с.
8. Дандамаев М.А. Мидия и Ахеменидская Персия (*History of the Ancient World*) // История древнего мира. Кн.II. Расцвет древних обществ. М., 1989, с.129-145.
9. Куликан У. Персы и мидяне. Подданные империи Ахеменидов (*The Persians and the Medes: Subjects of the Achaemenid Empire*). М.: Центрполиграф, 2010, 223 с.
10. Редер Д.Г., Черкасова Е.А. История древнего мира (*History of the Ancient World.*). М.: Просвещение, 1979..

SILK ROUTES OF AZERBAIJAN



Gunay Nejla

*Professor, Dr., Department of History Education,
Faculty of Education, Gazi University (TURKEY, Ankara)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5895-8359>*

ROLE OF RUSSIAN POLICIES IN RESHAPING THE DEMOGRAPHICS AND POLITICS OF KARABAKH: A STUDY OF THE RUSSIAN OCCUPATION (1813–1950)

Abstract. Starting from the reign of Tsar Peter I, Russia pursued an expansionist agenda, launching attacks on Persia and the Ottoman Empire. Following Tsar Peter's expedition to Iran in 1722, the provinces of Derbent, Azerbaijan, Mazandaran, and Gilan became Russian dominions, yet Russians were forced to withdraw from these areas after the death of Tsar Peter I. During this expedition, friendly relations began between Armenians residing in Persia and the Russians. With the ascension of Catherine II to the throne in 1762, the Russian advance towards the Caucasus region progressed systematically. Russian Cossacks were settled in the conquered territories, and some of the local peoples were forced to accept the Orthodox faith.

In the early 19th century, Russia solidified its dominance in the Caucasus. In 1801, Georgia came under Russian rule. Russia emerged victorious in its wars with Iran. Through the Gulistan Treaty of 1813 with the Qajar Dynasty, the Khanates of Baku, Nakhchivan, Karabakh, and Erivan fell under Russian occupation. The extent of Russian occupation from the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea threatened both Ottoman and Persian territories. Tsar Nicholas I, who ascended the Russian throne in 1825, established a centralized administration and a disciplined professional army. By building Europe's largest land force, Tsar Nicholas aimed to expel the Turks from Europe and envisioned converting the Turk-Muslim population of around four to five million living under Russian dominion to Orthodox Christianity. The Russo-Iranian War of 1826, initiated for religious and political reasons, saw the Russian army advancing rapidly with the help of Armenians. As a result, the Russians seized Tabriz, Urmia, and Ardabil. Faced with the Russian threat to Tehran, Iran was compelled to accept the peace dictated by Russia. According to the Treaty of Turkmenchay signed in 1828, Iran ceded all territories on the left bank of the Aras River, including the city of Erivan, to Russia and renounced all claims and rights over the Caucasus. Shortly after defeating the Ottoman Empire, Russia, through the Treaty of Edirne in 1828, forced the Ottoman Empire to recognize that the Khanates of Erivan and Nakhchivan belonged to Russia.

On March 17, 1828, Russia established the "Armenian Province" by merging the Nakhchivan and Erivan Khanates. In just three and a half months, over 120,000 Armenians were resettled from Iran, Azerbaijan, and Ottoman territories to this newly established province, thereby posing a threat to the Turkish presence in the region. The areas where Armenians were predominantly resettled included the mountainous regions of Ganja and Karabakh, as well as the shores of Lake Goycha.

Influenced by nationalist movements, Armenians aspired to establish a large state including the territories of the Qajar Dynasty and Eastern Anatolia. Following the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, Armenians engaged in acts of violence against Turks in various places, including Baku, Shamakhi, and Guba. Armenians made claims over Karabakh, a region belonging to Azerbaijan. They particularly vocalized these claims more prominently after autonomy was granted to Nakhchivan. This study examines the process by which Karabakh, a region with a Turkish majority population that had been under Turkish rule for centuries, separated from the state of Azerbaijan due to the policies pursued by Russia between 1921 and 1923. It explores how Karabakh was given independent status under Armenian supervision and how the Turkish inhabitants were forced to migrate elsewhere. In this study, documents from the Diplomatic Archives of the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be used as primary sources for research on the subject.

Keywords: Caucasus, Azerbaijan, Karabakh, Russia

Introduction. Russia's Establishment of an Armenian Province in Erivan and Nakhchivan and the Increase of the Armenian Population in the Region. Russia, after taking Crimea from the Ottoman Empire towards the end of the 18th century, sought to expand its territories in the Balkans and the Caucasus. The Danube, Black Sea, and Caucasus regions became prime targets of Russian attacks. During Tsar Peter I's 1722 campaign in Iran, the provinces of Derbent, Azerbaijan, Mazandaran, and Gilan fell under Russian control. However, this control was short-lived, as the Russians had to withdraw after Tsar Peter's death. During this campaign, the Armenians living in Iranian territories formed friendly relations with the Russians. The Tsar, with various promises, invited the Armenians to Russia. Armenians who migrated to Russia, especially the Lazarev family, willingly joined the Russian army against Iran [Beydilli, 1988, p.368]. After ascending the throne in 1762, Catherine II accepted the Georgians' request for assistance. From that point on, Russian advances in the Caucasus became systematic. Russian Cossacks were settled along the Terek River and established close relations with the Kabardians, ensuring their acceptance of Orthodoxy. This created a favorable environment for the Russians to sow discord among the tribes of the North Caucasus. Russia built the Mozdok Fortress on the Terek River and settled 350 Don Cossacks there in the 1770s. Additionally, 517 Cossack families were brought from the Volga region. By constructing fortified fortresses at certain intervals from Mozdok in the direction of the Sea of Azov, the Russians built their famous "fortified line", along which many Cossacks were settled. This "fortified line" would soon serve as the launching point and support base for Russian advances towards the Caucasus [Kurat, 1990, p.33-35; Lynch, 1901, p.124,155].

When Russia and the Ottoman Empire clashed again in 1787, the commander of the Russian detachments fighting against the Turks in the Caucasus, A.Suvorov, had gained fame for annihilating the Nogais. In 1788, A.Suvorov captured the fortresses of Ozi and soon after Ismail, where he massacred the Turkish inhabitants. The Ottoman Empire sued for peace and ceded many of its territories to Russia. At the naval bases of Sevastopol and Kherson in Crimea, the Russian Black Sea fleet began to be constructed. This meant that Istanbul and the Straits were also under Russian threat. It was known that Catherine II wanted first to seize the Caucasus and then Anatolia. During the reign of Tsar Alexander I, Georgia was annexed to Russia in 1801, and Russian troops were deployed to Tbilisi. Bloody wars between Iran and Russia ensued, with Russia emerging victorious. In 1804–1805, the Russians occupied the Khanates of Baku, Nakhchivan, and Erivan, establishing dominance in Transcaucasia [Yeşilot, 2015, p.7-9].

At the beginning of the 19th century, Russia, as a result of the wars it fought with Iran and the Ottoman Empire, signed treaties that changed the social, political, and demographic landscape of the Caucasus. Through the 1813 Treaty of Gulistan with Iran, Russia seized all the Azerbaijani khanates. According to Peter the Great's project, the Armenians in Iran were to be relocated to Shirvan (Ancient Albania), and the inhabitants of that region would be moved to Iran. In this way, the Armenians would be removed from Iran. However, Russia was unable to fully accomplish this. The Armenians were obliged to remain in the territories of the Ottoman Empire, Iran, and Russia [Mirzabala, 1922, p.25].

In the Russo-Iranian War that began in 1826, the Russian army, with the assistance of the Armenians, captured Irevan (Revan) without a fight. The Armenians celebrated "*liberation from the Iranian yoke under Russian arms...*" As a result of Armenian Patriarch Nerses encouraging his community to side with the Russian army, Tabriz was also surrendered to the Russians. When the Russians seized Urmia and Ardabil, they posed a direct threat to Tehran, forcing the Qajar Dynasty in Iran to accept the peace dictated by Russia. According to the treaty signed in the village of Turkmenchay, Iran ceded all territories on the left bank of the Aras River, including Nakhchivan and Erivan, to Russia and renounced all its rights over the Caucasus. Article 15 of the treaty concerned the Armenians living in Azerbaijani territories, allowing them to move to Russian lands within one year and sell and transfer their goods and properties during this period. A five-year period was provided for the liquidation of immovable properties. The treaty also included a provision that

those who chose not to migrate and remained in their places would not be prosecuted for their conduct during the war and their collaboration with the Russians [Beydilli, 1988, p.369].

During Tsar Nicholas' reign, disputes between Russia and the Ottoman Empire were politically and religiously motivated. By building Europe's largest land force, Tsar Nicholas aimed to expel the Turks from Europe and envisioned converting the Turk-Muslim population of around four to five million living under Russian dominion to Orthodox Christianity. Meanwhile, in 1826, the Ottoman Empire abolished the Janissary Corps, and its navy was burned during the suppression of the Greek uprising in 1827. This left the Ottoman Empire defenseless. Consequently, the Russian army passed through Akhaltsikhe and Kars, reaching as far as Bayburt, Eleshkirt, and Erzurum. The Turkish and Muslim populations in the areas traversed by the Russian army were forced to migrate in hunger and misery. The Armenians, on the other hand, cooperated with the Russians and migrated to Russia, fulfilling their wishes. Before leaving, they burned houses and villages belonging to Turks and Muslims [Beydilli, 1988, p.391]. Taking advantage of this situation, the Tsar attacked Ottoman territories through the Balkans and the Caucasus. As a result, the Treaty of Edirne was signed in 1829. With this treaty, Russia stipulated that the border with the Ottoman Empire would remain as the Prut River, as before, but also made the Ottoman Empire accept that the Erivan and Nakhchivan Khanates, which were ceded to Russia with the "Treaty of Turkmenchay" signed with Iran on February 22, 1828, belonged to Russia [Mahmudov ve Şükürov, 2009, p.489-508]. This study examines how the policies of the Russians settled in the Caucasus towards the Turkish and Muslim populations increased Armenian influence in the region and the pressures exerted by them on the Turks.

Effects of Russia's Policy in the Caucasus on the Political and Demographic Structure of the Region.

On March 21, 1828, Russian Tsar Nicholas I issued a decree naming the region encompassing Erivan, Nakhchivan, and Ordubad as the "Armenian Province" [Yeşilot, 2008, p.191-193]. By relocating Armenian populations from Iranian and Ottoman territories to this newly established province, Russia initiated a demographic shift in the Caucasus in favor of the Armenians. Concurrently, the oppression inflicted by the Russians on the Muslim and Turkish populace forced many Turks to leave their homes. In as short a time as three and a half months, 41,245 people from 8,249 families were relocated to the other side of the Aras River. It is estimated that around 100,000 Armenians were relocated from Eastern Anatolia. According to Ottoman records, just from Erzurum, 4,230 households – approximately 21,150 people – were relocated, corroborating the figure provided by Lynch, who stated that in 1827, the Armenian population of the city (compared to 130,000 Muslims) was between 19,000 and 20,000. Lynch further noted that in 1835, there were 120 Armenian families in the city compared to 15,000 Muslims. Thus, Armenians were gathered and concentrated in a specific region under Russian rule [Beydilli, 1988, p.376, 407-408; Lynch, 1901, p.260].

According to the results of a census conducted by the Transcaucasian Statistical Committee, established by the General Governorate of the Caucasus, the statistics from the years 1886, 1897, 1902, 1908, 1915, and 1917 regarding the population distribution in the Erivan Province indicate that, as a result of migrations carried out over nearly a century, the Armenian population surpassed the Turkish population. As understood from excerpts of the "Kavkazskiy Kalendar" published by the Russian General Governorate of the Caucasus and found in the Central State New History Archive of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Armenians were relocated from Iran and Türkiye to the territory of the Erivan Province. Meanwhile, Turks in the region were removed through various pretexts, pressures, massacres, and oppressions. Despite these efforts, nearly 40% of the population of the Erivan Province in 1917 was Turkish. In the Sharur-Daralayaz, Surmali, and Nakhchivan regions of this province, Turks were in the great majority. In Erivan itself, 45% of the population was Turkish. Although the Russians used the term "Muslim" to conceal the identity of the Turkish population, the information about the presence of Turks in the region could not be suppressed [Aslan, 2014, p.2616-2620].

Russia's advance into the Caucasus marked the beginning of a new chapter in Armenian history. Armenians began to congregate around Etchmiadzin and formulate plans to acquire Iranian and Ottoman

territories. To this end, terrorist organizations were established, which carried out actions against the Ottoman Empire and against Turks and Georgians in the Caucasus. Among these organizations, the Dashnaksutyun initially aimed to unite Armenians remaining in Türkiye and Iran under one roof but added Russian Armenia to its agenda in 1904. At the Third World Congress held in Vienna in 1907, it was decided to secure independence for Armenians in the Caucasus by means of a socialist program. However, in Transcaucasia, which consisted of 54 uyezds (districts), Armenians constituted a majority in only five uyezds. In Erivan, considered the center of Armenia, more than half of the population was Turkish. In 1905, Armenians revealed their intentions by massacring Turks in Baku and its surroundings [Mirzabala, 1922, p.27-28].

Developments in the Region after World War I and Russia's Establishment of Soviet Socialist Republics. The Bolsheviks ended the Tsarist regime while World War I was still ongoing. The peoples living under the rule of the Russian Tsar declared their own republics. The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was also established on May 28, 1918. Needing Türkiye's assistance [Swietochowski, 1991, p.182], this state signed a Treaty of Friendship with the Ottoman Empire on June 4, 1918, marking its first diplomatic activity [DBDA. 34669-136698-2]. As a result of this cooperation, Baku was taken on September 15, 1918 [ATASE. 2944-613-21]. However, when the Ottoman Empire lost the war and signed the Armistice of Mudros, Azerbaijan was left alone, and the British occupation forces entered Baku. Russia and Iran also emerged as countries threatening Azerbaijan's independence. Following its occupation, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic first joined the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic in 1922, and later that same year, it became part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The uninterrupted struggle for independence eventually resulted in the Republic of Azerbaijan achieving full independence in 1991 [Aslanlı, 2023, p.41-44].

Attempt to Sever Karabakh from Azerbaijan and Turn it into a Problem. Influenced by nationalist movements, Armenians aspired to establish a large state encompassing the territories of the Qajar Dynasty and Eastern Anatolia. To achieve this, they engaged in terrorist activities in both Ottoman and Azerbaijani territories, spilling Turkish blood. During World War I, the Ottoman Empire, struggling to contain Armenian terrorism, decided to relocate the Armenians away from the war zones. This led to hundreds of thousands of Armenians once again migrating towards the Caucasus [Günay ve Çaykiran, 2020]. After the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, Armenians continued to enjoy the protection of the new regime, as they had under the Tsarist regime. Armed Armenian groups attacked Turks in many places, especially in Baku, Shamakhi, and Guba, in late March and early April 1918 [ATASE. BDH. Kl. 527 D.718, F.10; ATASE. BDH. Kl. 359 D.1023, F.3-31].

As a result of political developments, Azerbaijan declared its independence on May 28, 1918. During this process, the most debated issue was the matter of Armenia's borders, as in many places, Armenians did not constitute a population majority. On the other hand, since Azerbaijan did not have an army, it lacked the power to defend itself. Therefore, the designation of Erivan as the capital of Armenia was reluctantly approved. This was done under the following compromise reached between the two sides: "*Azerbaijan would not object to the establishment of an Armenian state within the borders of the 'Alexandropol (Gyumri) Governorate,' and in return for this concession, Armenia would never claim any rights to Karabakh and other Azerbaijani territories*" [Aslanlı, 2023, p.137]. However, the Armenians did not keep their word and continued their territorial claims. On September 28, 1919, the Administration of the Parliament of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic established a commission to investigate the Karabakh issue on-site. The commission's work resulted in a report comprising 82 documents, which was sent to the government [DBDA. 34832-137502-4]. Azerbaijan declared that it would defend its homeland against Armenian claims and preserve its territorial integrity. The leaders of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, representatives of security forces, and religious leaders visited settlements where Armenian gangs carried out attacks and places with a higher Armenian population density, keeping the doors of dialogue open. One of the Bolshevik Armenian leaders, A.I.Mikoyan, stated in his report to Lenin on May 22, 1919, that Armenians

wanted to live in Azerbaijan. On April 27, 1920, Russia, with an army of approximately 70,000, occupied Azerbaijani territories, thereby establishing Soviet rule in Azerbaijan [Aslanlı, 2023, p.138]. Meanwhile, the Governor of Karabakh had close relations with Türkiye. Governor Sultanov requested from Türkiye the establishment of a printing press in Shusha and asked for an expert to be sent with Turkish letter types [DBDA. 44833-216201-89]. The governor's close dialogue with Türkiye was evident in his expressed opinions regarding conscription processes in Karabakh and Ganja [DBDA. 44833-216201-98]. This was a situation that disturbed both Russia and Armenia.

The Situation of Karabakh after the Soviet Occupation. Immediately after the Ottoman army under the command of Kazim Karabekir captured Kars, Ardahan, and Gyumri [Taşkiran, 1999, p.107], Bolshevik Russia occupied Erivan on November 28, 1920, and established a new administration aligned with itself. Since the Armenians had been defeated in the war at that time [DBDA. 34854-137567-24], they were in negotiations with the Turkish delegation. The war with the Armenians ended with the signing of the Treaty of Gyumri on December 3, 1920. Kars, Ardahan, and Batum were transferred to Türkiye [DBDA. 34782-136193-1]. However, the Bolshevik leaders of Armenia attempted to annul the Treaty of Gyumri on one hand, while on the other, they began to assert more insistent territorial claims over Azerbaijani lands such as Nakhchivan and Karabakh. In January 1921, attacks against Turks in Karabakh increased so significantly that the Governor of Karabakh requested assistance from the Caliph to protect the Muslims in the region [DBDA. 34832-137502-36]. With the Moscow Treaty of Friendship signed with Russia on March 16, 1921, it was decided that Kars and Ardahan would remain within Türkiye, Batum would remain in Georgia, and Nakhchivan would be granted autonomy under the supervision of Azerbaijan [DBDA. 34614-136324-20; Musa, 2002, p.517-530]. Due to some reservations arising in Azerbaijan regarding this, the Presidency of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (TBMM) sent a telegram to the Eastern Front Command, stating that the concluded treaty remained valid and that, as a result of negotiations with G.V.Chicherin, there was no situation contrary to the agreement [DBDA. 34371-135142-1; DBDA. 34782-136182-1]. Furthermore, the TBMM government held discussions with G.V.Chicherin regarding the status and future of Azerbaijani territories. On September 19, 1921, G.V.Chicherin communicated that during these delicate days when Türkiye was at war, some individuals who had fled abroad wanted to come to Türkiye and create unrest; that Russia did not support these individuals because it did not wish to disrupt Türkiye-Russia relations; that there was no decision for Armenia to occupy Nakhchivan; and that the final form of the decisions of the Moscow Treaty would be determined at the Kars Conference [DBDA. 34614-136308-2].

Rumors that Nakhchivan and the mountainous regions of Karabakh would be given to Armenia greatly disturbed the Azerbaijani people. The Armenians were making certain demands, claiming that Karabakh was an inseparable part of Armenia. They wanted not only the mountainous regions of Karabakh but also its plains [DBDA. 34854-137567-12]. In response, on June 27, 1921, the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party decided that Karabakh could not be separated from Azerbaijan. Despite this, the Caucasus Bureau of the Russian Communist Bolshevik Party, in a meeting on July 4, 1921, where only four members attended out of a total of eleven, decided by a vote of four to give the mountainous part of Karabakh to Armenia. Nariman Narimanov, the only representative of Azerbaijan at the meeting, strongly protested this decision, saying, *"Even if a Muslim embraces Bolshevism, he is still treated as inferior to an Armenian"* [Memmedov, 2010, p.9]. A conference on the subject was held in Tbilisi. At this conference, the issue of Karabakh, which was causing a dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan, was addressed. Azerbaijani delegates Narimanov and Mirza Davud reported that it was decided at the conference to establish an autonomous administration in Karabakh, similar to Nakhchivan [DBDA. 34778-136959-12; DBDA. 34778-136959-20]. The Treaty of Moscow recognized the autonomy of Nakhchivan. In the Treaty of Kars, Türkiye accepted the autonomy of Nakhchivan under the condition that it remain under the protection of Azerbaijan and not be placed under the protection of a third state [Şimşir, 2024].

The Azerbaijani people, in telegrams sent to the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (TBMM) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated that every nation has the right to self-determination, and that an attempt was being made to place a barrier between them and the Anatolian Turks, which was halting the construction of the planned railway between Azerbaijan and Türkiye. Protesting the transfer of Karabakh, Zangazur, and Nakhchivan – regions where more than 100,000 Turks lived – to Armenia, which had no ethnic or historical rights there, they declared their continued fight for this cause over the past four years. They expressed that their homeland was unjustly being handed over to the Armenians. They requested that this injustice be protested and that efforts be made to persuade Russia to reverse its decision [DBDA. 34770-136934-6].

On July 5, 1921, after re-evaluating the situation, it was decided that Nagorno-Karabakh would remain within the Azerbaijan Socialist Republic and that an autonomous structure would be established with the city of Shusha as its administrative center. Thus, consensus was reached on keeping the mountainous part of Karabakh within Azerbaijan. However, debates on the issue did not end. When disagreements arose over the borders of Nagorno-Karabakh, the administration in Azerbaijan was removed, and Russian Sergey Kirov was appointed. Following this, on July 7, 1923, it was decided to establish the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region, designating Khankendi as its center [Aslanlı, 2023, p.140]. A letter received by the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (TBMM) from Huseyin Talip Bey, the Consul of Batum, revealed that the situation was more complex. It turned out that the administration of the Shusha district was attached to Karabakh, and it was decided that the official language in Shusha –whose population was almost entirely Turkish and Muslim – would be Armenian. Meanwhile, Russia wanted to build a strong barrier between Türkiye and Azerbaijan. To this end, Armenian officials were appointed to Nakhchivan, and Armenian villages began to be established in Ganja and Karabakh, while Turks opposing these moves were relocated to Baku [DBDA. 34770-136942-1]. Furthermore, it was learned that a Kurdish autonomy was established in Karabakh with Minkend as its center [DBDA. 34770-136931-12]. Detailed information on this subject came about two and a half months after the initial report, on December 9, 1923, from Chief Secretary Ferit Bey, who was serving in Baku. According to him: *“Following the autonomy granted to the Armenians in the rocky parts of Karabakh, autonomy was also given to the Kurdish majority in the same region. This was done to eliminate the negative impact that Armenian autonomy had on the Muslim population. Both autonomies are authorized to be administered by a council consisting of local organizations directly affiliated with the Central Committee of Azerbaijan, in accordance with the ‘General Council Laws’. These autonomy decrees will be examined at the Azerbaijan General Councils Conference to be held on November 23. The Armenian autonomy consists of five districts (200 villages) and a population of one hundred thousand; the Kurdish autonomy consists of four districts (262 villages) and a population of seventy thousand”* [DBDA. 34770-136947-2; DBDA. 34770-136947-12].

After autonomy was granted to Nagorno-Karabakh, adjustments were made regarding some administrative matters on how the borders would be defined. Accordingly, the city of Shusha, the center of Karabakh, was included in the autonomous administration. Thus, the border began from the Askeran area on the Shusha-Yevlakh road, and Khankendi was confirmed as the center of the autonomous administration. Repairs had begun on houses that were burned and destroyed in recent wars. Although it was said that Azerbaijan’s border on the Karabakh side passed near Keshishkend and did not reach as far as the Aras River, the border from this side and from the Nakhchivan side had not yet been finalized. The city of Keros was also included within the autonomy. In addition, a Kurdish autonomy was being established with Minkend as its center, extending as far as the Ganja region and including the lowland Kurds. The decision to make Armenian the official language in the Armenian autonomous region was met with strong opposition from the Turks. Hostility between Turks and Armenians appeared to have been rekindled. The Turks were saying that if the situation was not corrected, they would demolish their homes and leave the region. As of August 16, 1923, the autonomous administration had not yet commenced. The said

administration would begin after receiving approval from Azerbaijan [DBDA. 34770-136931-5]. Indeed, a decision of the Executive Committee of Azerbaijan published in Baku on September 9, 1923, announced that an autonomous administration was granted to the mountainous part of Karabakh, with Khankendi as its center [DBDA. 34770-136943-2].

Russia, aiming to sever the connection between Türkiye and Azerbaijan, established an uyezd from villages inhabited by Kurds around Karabakh. This place, called the Kerche Uyezd, was not a Kurdish republic. In fact, it did not even have autonomy. In this uyezd, there were primary and secondary schools where the language of instruction was Turkish. There was no difference between these schools and the schools in other uyezds. There was no evidence that students were intended to be sent to Türkiye for education [DBDA. 34695-135195-4].

On February 18, 1929, Russia gave the southern part of Zangazur, which belonged to Azerbaijan, to Armenia. Consequently, the land connection between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan was severed, as was the land connection between Baku and Türkiye. The Moscow administration took measures to reduce the Turkish population in Karabakh by relocating Turks to Azerbaijani territories. The USSR issued two decisions specifically on this matter on December 23, 1947, and March 10, 1948. These decisions were promptly implemented, and by 1950, 150,000 Turks were removed from Karabakh [Aslanlı, 2023, p.142].

Conclusion. In the Caucasus, there were Azerbaijani Khanates, which over time were forced to accept the sovereignty of either Iran or Russia. While Turks and Muslims constituted the majority of the population in the Caucasus, this changed as a result of Russia's policy of Christianizing the region. Tsar Peter's strategy of dominating Iran and considering Eastern Anatolia as a possible route to reach the Mediterranean was implemented step by step by the Russians.

In the early 19th century, Russia, having won wars against Iran and the Ottoman Empire, established the Province of Armenia in the regions of Nakhchivan and Erivan, facilitating the migration of Armenians to this region. Political developments after World War I saw Armenia seeking to expand its borders. With the support of the Bolsheviks for the Armenians, Karabakh was granted an autonomous status in 1923 by a decision of the Russian government. The Turks living there were forced to migrate elsewhere.

Despite being a region where the majority population was Turkic and which had been under Turkic rule throughout history, Karabakh was intended to be taken from the Turks and turned into an Armenian homeland as a result of the policies pursued by the Russians.

SOURCES:

Archive documents:

1. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı (CDA). Dışişleri Bakanlığı Diplomatik Arşivi (DBDA).
2. CDA. Milli Savunma Bakanlığı Arşivi (ATASE). Birinci Dünya Harbi Kataloğu (BDH).

Research and investigation works:

3. ASLAN Yavuz. Rus İstilasından Sovyet Ermenistanı'na Erivan (Revan) Vilayeti'nin Demografik Yapısı 1827, 1922. Yeni Türkiye Dergisi, cilt IV, sayı 63, 2014.
4. ASLANLI A. Azerbaycan Dış Politikasında Ekonomi-Güvenlik İlişkisi. Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2023.
5. BEYDİLLİ K. 1828–1829 Osmanlı Rus Savaşında Doğu Anadolu'dan Rusya'ya Göçürülen Ermeniler. Belgeler, cilt XIII, sayı 17, Ankara, 1988, s.365-434.
6. GÜNAY Nejla ve ÇAYKIRAN Güzin. Rusların 1915 Yılında Van Vilayeti ve Çevresinden Ermenileri Kafkasya'ya Göç Ettirmesi. Gazi Akademik Bakış Dergisi, cilt 14, sayı 27, 2020, s.133-150.
7. KURAT A.N. Türkiye ve Rusya. T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara, 1990.
8. LYNCH H.F.B. Armenia and Travels and Studies. Volume I, Longmans Green, London, 1901.
9. MAHMUDOV Y.M. ve ŞÜKÜROV K.Ş. Vatan Tarihi. Azerbaycan Milli İlimler Akademisi Tarih Enstitüsü, Bakü, 2009.
10. MEMMEDOV S. Ermeniler Tarafından Azerbaycanlılara Karşı Türetilmiş Soykırım. Bakü Slavyan Üniversitesi Azerbaycanlılar Tedris Medeniyet Merkezi, Bakü, 2010.
11. MUHAMMEDZADE M. Ermeniler ve İran. Milli Azerbaycan Neşriyatı Sayı 6, İstanbul: Cem-i İstiklâl Matbaası, 1922.
12. MUSA İsmayıl. Azerbaycan ve Rus Kaynaklarına Göre 1921 Moskova–Kars Antlaşmaları ve Kuzey Azerbaycan'ın Toprak Bütünlüğü Meseleleri. Belleten, cilt 66, sayı 247, 2002, s.517-530.
13. NECEFLİ G. XVIII. Asırda Çarlık Rusyası'nın Azerbaycan Topraklarında Ermeni Devleti Kurma Politikası. Yeni Türkiye, sayı 60, 2014.
14. TAŞKIRAN C. Millî Mücadele'de Kâzım Karabekir Paşa. Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, Ankara, 1999.
15. YEŞİLOT O. Ateş Çemberinde Azerbaycan. Yeditepe Yayınevi. İstanbul, 2015.
16. YEŞİLOT O. Türkmençay Antlaşması ve Sonuçları. Atatürk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi, Sayı 36, Erzurum, 2008.

Hori Gabriyel Akyüz

Assyrian Horibishop Priest, Assyrian Historian (TURKEY)

THE EVANGELICAL / MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES OF THE SYRIACS IN THE CAUCASUS

Abstract: The Syriacs established the state of Urfa in 132 BC and maintained their presence until 249 AD. During the lifetime of Jesus, the ruler of the Urfa kingdom was King Abgar V Ukkama. After hearing reports about Jesus, Abgar accepted Him and extended Him a written invitation to his country. Jesus responded that He would not come Himself but would send one of His disciples. Upon completing His spiritual mission, Jesus sent Addai, head of the evangelical group, to Urfa, where he baptized King Abgar. Thus, the Syriacs entered history as the first people to embrace Christianity in the mid-1st century, maintaining their existence through an affiliation with the apostolic center founded by the apostle Peter in Antioch. During its golden age, this center had 12 metropolises and 137 episcopates under its jurisdiction. After completing His spiritual teachings, the Savior, Lord Jesus Christ, ascended to the heavens and bestowed the Holy Spirit upon His disciples. When the Syriacs observed that their evangelical activities among the Persians did not achieve significant success, they redirected their focus to the Caucasian territories, including Armenia, Georgia, and Albania. We find that their missionary efforts yielded notable success in all three regions, with reliable sources indicating that each of these countries formally accepted Christ in the early 4th century.

Keywords: Syriac Church, Caucasus, Albania, evangelical/missionary activities

The Syriac Church is renowned within the Christian world for its earlier acceptance of Christianity than other nations, embracing and embodying the teachings of the Gospel. Its unique status is underscored by its connection to the first apostolic center established in Antioch by the apostle Peter. During its golden age, this center encompassed 12 metropolises and 137 episcopates. The Syriac language, the church's primary language, is among the world's oldest languages and is cherished as the language of angels, the language of Adam and Eve, our father Abraham, and our Lord Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the apostles.

The evangelical movement in Mesopotamia was led by Addai, the brother of the apostle Thomas, one of the 72 heads of the evangelical groups. With King Abgar Ukkama (also known as Abgar the Black), the ruler of Urfa, leading the way, the kings of other Syriac lands, including Tadmor, Petra, Karka d'Beth Slokh, Hidyab/Erbil, and Hatra, also accepted Christ. Consequently, the Syriac people embraced Christianity in large numbers without hesitation, and by the end of the third century, approximately 98% of the Syriac population had accepted Christ.

Beginning in the early 4th century, the fathers of the Syriac Church deeply absorbed the teachings of the Gospel and placed great emphasis on spiritual life, leading hundreds of thousands to enter the clerical order.

According to an anonymous Syriac writer from Urfa, by the first quarter of the 5th century, 350 churches and monasteries existed on the Sacred Mountain, known as the Tek Tek Mountains, east of Urfa, where ninety thousand (90,000) monks resided. A Syriac congress held in southern Syria concerning matters of faith was signed by 135 heads of monasteries. During the 'Golden Age' of the Syriacs (5th to 7th centuries), records indicate that the number of monks reached six hundred thousand (600,000).

While living a reclusive life in monasteries, they not only devoted themselves to theology but also engaged deeply with scientific knowledge, learning, teaching, and translating all of the Greek scholarly works into Syriac. After the seventh century, they translated the same works for Muslim Arabs as well, dedicating a total of 600 years to this endeavor.

The Syriac Church also pioneered the first reforms in Christianity, including the first Eucharistic liturgy, Bible translation, introduction of music into church services, establishment of women's choirs, commitment to scholarly pursuits, and ensuring the church was not misused. As the Gospel states: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's".

After completing His spiritual teachings, the Savior, Lord Jesus Christ, ascended to the heavens and bestowed the Holy Spirit upon His disciples. Following His command to them, "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Luke 9:1-2), the disciples cast lots among themselves, dispersed across the world, and shared the message of Christ with all humanity.

The fathers of the Syriac Church regarded this command from Christ to His disciples as a sacred duty and fulfilled it diligently in the early days of Christianity. Initially, they focused their evangelical activities on Arab tribes, who were their neighbors and kin, successfully converting three Arab nations to Christianity:

- The Ghassanid state in Syria,
- The Himyarite state in Yemen,
- The Lakhmid state in Hira, Iraq.

They established church structures within these nations, linking them to the Syriac Church in Antioch. They translated the Bible from Syriac to Arabic using the Syriac alphabet and imparted knowledge of civilization. Not stopping there, the Syriacs extended their missionary activities to the Persians, Afghans, Indians, Abyssinians, Mongols, Turks, and other peoples, bringing many from these groups to Christianity.

When they saw that their missionary efforts among the Persians were not yielding significant success, they turned their attention to the Caucasus. After achieving great success in the Caucasus, they also ventured to the Far East, where their efforts also reportedly proved fruitful. Reliable sources confirm that each of the three nations mentioned below formally accepted Christ in the early 4th century. We will present these accounts in sequence:

1–Armenians: The Armenians are of Aryan descent, a mix of Balkan and Alpine peoples who integrated with the Urartians and emerged as a distinct nation in the 6th century BC. Inspired by their brave ruler, King Hayk, they called themselves 'Hay' and their country 'Hayastan'. According to traditional accounts, the name Armenian derives from Aramaneak, the son of King Hayk.

The Armenian language, part of the Indo-European language family, has gradually absorbed influences from Greek, Syriac, and Persian. Once the Armenians came to power in the state of Urartu, they resisted the expansion of Assyrian control and faced threats from the Persians advancing from the southeast. Until Alexander the Great of Macedonia conquered Persia in 331 BC, Armenia remained under Persian rule. After this period, the Armenian state regained its former sovereignty.

The Armenians, originally pagan, worshipped a variety of deities, including those of Persian, Assyrian, and indigenous origins. In 52 BC, the Armenian state came under Roman rule, which lasted until 428 AD. During this time, Armenian kings of the Arsacid dynasty maintained their rule under Roman authority.

According to church tradition, the apostles Thaddeus (Jude) and Bartholomew traveled to Armenia in the mid-1st century to spread the message of Christ. However, it is known that by the late 2nd century, Syriac missionaries from Urfa and Nisibis also went to Armenia to convert the Armenians to Christianity. The first Armenian king to accept Christ was Tiridates III (284–305), who, by reaching an agreement with Emperor Diocletian, managed to keep the Persians away from Armenia's borders. In 301 AD, King Tiridates and his family were baptized in the Euphrates River by Saint Gregory [Ermeni Kilisesi, Neşat ve Tarih, s.

3-5]. Initially, the Armenians were connected to the center in Antioch, but later they were affiliated with Caesarea in Cappadocia [Kilise Tarihi, Patrik Efremler Barsavm, s.342].

After accepting Christ through the Syriacs, the Armenians initially wrote Armenian using Syriac letters. Some Armenians even fully learned the Syriac language. In the 440s AD, during the time of Catholicos Isaac, an Armenian scholar named Mesrop, with the help of a Syriac named Daniel, invented the Armenian alphabet. They also translated the Torah from Syriac into Armenian for the first time [Tarih-ül el-Keniset ül-Süryaniye, Metropolit Severiyos Yakup Tuma (sonradan patrik), İkinci Baskı: 1989, s.170-171].

On December 9, 2006, during a ceremony at Deyrulzafaran Monastery where Priest Melke Ürek was promoted to Metropolitan of Adıyaman, the Patriarch of Türkiye's Armenians, Mesrob Mutafyan, was also present at the blessing ceremony. During the welcome ceremony, he made the following speech: "I was deeply moved when I heard the Syriac hymns. It reminded me of how, in ancient times, our Syriac ancestors traveled to Armenia and spread the Gospel to us in the Syriac language. If it weren't for them, who knows what our current state would be?" [Kurkmo Dergisi, Şubat 2007, Sayı: 6, s.6].

2-Georgians: Georgia was composed of nine administrative regions, including the autonomous republics of Adjara, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia. The earliest written sources on the region date back to Assyrian inscriptions from the 13th–12th centuries BC and Urartian records from the 11th–8th centuries BC. According to these records, the first Georgian (Kartveli) political union was established by the Diauehi, known as the Taochoi to the Greeks, around the 1st millennium BC in the area now within the Erzurum Province [Artvin ve Erzurum'daki Gürcü Dini Mimarisinde Süsleme, Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Tahsin Korkut, s.61-62]. Georgian tribes formed their second political union in the 6th century BC in eastern Georgia with the kingdom of Egrisi (Colchis) and, later, a third political union in western Georgia with the kingdom of Kartli (Iberia) [A. E., s. 62].

In the first half of the 5th century BC, the Achaemenid Empire of Persia invaded Colchis (Georgia) after continuous attacks. In the 4th century BC, Greek armies under the command of Alexander the Great (356–323 BC) ended this occupation. Alexander appointed his relative, King Azon, to rule in Mtskheta. King Azon, however, destroyed nearly the entire city, sparing only four fortresses.

Later, King Azon was killed by the first Kartlian king, Parnavaz (302–210 BC), who rebuilt the city and ruled Georgia for 65 years. King Parnavaz is regarded as the founder of the Iberian kingdom, with Mtskheta as its capital. In 66 BC, the Romans took control of Georgia, and the Roman Empire ruled Georgia as an ally for 400 years.

According to the tradition of the Georgian Church, the Gospel was first preached in Georgia by the apostle Simon and his brother Andrew. In later centuries, the Georgians accepted Christianity through Saint Nino.¹

In the first half of the 4th century AD, numerous miracles performed by Saint Nino of Cappadocia, particularly the healing of the son of Georgian (Iberian) King Mirian III and Queen Nana, led them to embrace Christianity in 330 AD. To baptize themselves, receive religious education, and learn Christian customs and traditions, they requested priests from Roman Emperor Constantine. Saint Nino's life story is highly inspiring, and her admirable services contributed to the rapid spread of Christianity among the Georgians. Saint Nino passed away in 338. The Georgians, who fully embraced Christianity, established a close alliance with the Romans to counter the Persian/Sassanian threat [El-Durar el-Nefise, Patrik Efremler Barsavm, Kilise Tarihi, s.461-462].

In 325 AD, following the decisions of the First Council of Nicaea, Emperor Constantine granted land in Jerusalem to King Mirian, who had accepted Christianity, for the construction of a monastery for the

¹ Nino was of Cappadocian origin, and her father was a renowned commander in the Roman Empire. Her mother was known to be the sister of the Patriarch of Jerusalem. When Nino was only 12 years old, her parents distributed all their wealth to the poor.

Georgians. This monastery became known as the Jvari (Cross) Monastery. Until 381, the Georgian Church was under the Patriarch of Constantinople, after which it was affiliated with the Patriarch of Antioch under the name of the Iberian Church. In the 5th century, during the reign of King Vakhtang Gorgasali, Georgia separated from the Antioch Patriarchate, establishing its own autonomy, and the Bible was translated into Georgian. In 1990, the historical autonomy of the Georgian Church was officially recognized by the Patriarch of the Orthodox Christians worldwide [A. E., s.84].

From the early 4th century AD, Georgia became a battleground between the Byzantine and Persian Empires for nearly three centuries. The Sassanid king Khosrow II eventually ended the Kingdom of Kartli's sovereignty. In 654 AD, armies loyal to the Arab Caliphate entered the country and established an emirate in Tbilisi. By the latter half of the 8th century, with the weakening of the Caliphate's power, the Georgians began to unify around two main centers: Abkhazia in the northwest and Tao-Klarjeti in the southwest.

The Georgian Bagratid dynasty began in 813 and lasted for a thousand years. During this period, King David IV successfully ended the Arab emirate and reclaimed Tbilisi in 1122.

In the 16th century, Georgia came under the rule of the Ottoman and Safavid empires. Toward the end of the 18th century, the Georgian kingdom turned to Russia, and in 1783, King Erekle signed an agreement with Russian Empress Catherine II, bringing Georgia under Russian protection [A. E., s.66].

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev, a referendum was held in Georgia on March 31, 1991, and on April 9, 1991, Georgia's declaration of independence was adopted.

During our 2017 visit to Georgia, upon learning that 500 Syriac families resided in the village of Kanda, located 8 km from Tbilisi, we visited them along with our esteemed Metropolitan, Saliba Özmen. We were surprised to see a plaque at the entrance of the village with an inscription commemorating 13 Syriac martyrs. These individuals were most likely martyred while preaching the Gospel.

3–Albanians: In the 4th century BC, when Alexander the Great ended the Median Empire, he extended his conquest as far as the northern region of the Caucasus. The Great Caucasus Mountains were populated by tribes that governed themselves.

In the 1st century AD, the Romans launched a campaign against the Caucasus. They named the northern part of Atropatene and the entire Caucasian frontier "Albania" (distinct from Albania in Europe). While European Albania still exists, the Caucasian Albania corresponds to the current boundaries of the Republic of Azerbaijan.¹

The Albanians began embracing the message of Christ in the first century through the apostle Bartholomew and apostle Thaddeus' (Jude) disciple Saint Elishe. Subsequently, Syriac missionaries built the first church in the Caucasus, located in Kish.

Under the reign of Albanian King Urnayr, in 313 AD, the Albanians accepted Christ and were baptized, coinciding with the Roman Emperor's conversion. Christianity became the official religion in Albania, with churches, monasteries, and religious centers established in various cities. Today, the descendants of the Albanian people are the Udis, Lezgins and the ethnic groups of the "Shagdag group". Their primary language is Udi, which has a 52-letter alphabet. Following the establishment of a church organization among the Albanian people, the Albanian-Udi Kingdom and the Albanian-Udi Patriarchate continued to exist until the late 8th century.²

The Holy Gospel was first translated into the Caucasian-Albanian language from Syriac.

¹ Azerbaijan, Where East Meets West, Björn A.Wegge, English, P.13-14. Persler bu ülkeyi ele geçirdiklerinde Zerdüştlük inanaçlarını yaydılar ve ülkeye de Adurbadağan ismiyle çevirmişlerdir. Azerbaycan'ın isim anlamı: Land of Fire/Ateş Memleketi.

² Article 'From Jerusalem to Gıs', Björn A.Wegge, English, Gabala Conference, 26/7/2016, Ve Alban-Udi Hıristiyan Başkanı, Robert Mobili, Mardin ve Diyarbakır Metropoliti Saliba Özmen'e Gönderdiği Mektup, İngilizce ve Türkçe, 2016.

The original copy of this Gospel is currently preserved in the Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai. The Albanians established religious schools in the Caucasian-Albanian language, and writers, historians, poets, and theologians produced and translated numerous works in this language.

The Albanian, Georgian, and Armenian Churches rejected the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD), with all three churches adopting Orthodoxy (Monophysitism – one nature rather than two) in unity with the Syriac Church of Antioch. As a result, they faced opposition and persecution from the Byzantines until the Arab invasion of the Caucasus in the 7th century.¹

In the last quarter of the 5th century, during the reign of Albanian King Vache II (457–463 AD), Persia invaded and occupied Albania. The Persian emperor demanded that the king renounce Christ, promising him valuable gifts if he complied. King Vache II firmly rejected this demand and, together with thousands of believers, left the state and went into seclusion in his ancestral estate. Consequently, the Albanian Church declared King Vache II a saint, honoring his memory with an annual celebration [List of Names Of Local Caucasian-Albanians Persons, English Article, 2017, P.3].

After the Arabs assumed control, the Albanian kingdom and patriarchy dissolved, and by the mid-8th century, Islam had become Albania's official religion. Consequently, the name of Albania was believed to have changed to "Azerbaijan" around that time. According to some accounts, the name "Azerbaijan" originally derived from "Hazer-Baigen". Since Arabs could not pronounce the sound [g], they pronounced it as [dʒ], eventually dropping the "H" sound over time, resulting in "Azerbaijan." A similar example is how Arabs pronounce the angel Gabriel as "Jibrail", substituting [g] with [dʒ]. When the Persians took over the region, they spread Zoroastrianism and named the country Azerbaijan. Which translates to "Land of Fire".

Over time, the Alban-Udi people and their Church were weakened and marginalized. In 1836, the church ceased its activities, because by decree of Tsar Nicholas I it was annexed to the Armenian Church. However, with the collapse of the communist regime in 1991 under the leadership of Soviet Union President Mikhail Gorbachev, the Udi people living in Azerbaijan found the opportunity to reconnect with their roots. The Udis have since worked to revive their faith, culture, history, and traditions with great dedication, and these efforts continue with vigor today.

Syriacs in Azerbaijan

The Syriac Church's Diocese/Regional Administration in Azerbaijan was established in the mid-7th century. Reliable sources indicate that Maphrian Marutha of Tikrit consecrated a Syriac metropolitan for Azerbaijan in 940 or 941 in the Greek calendar (629 or 630 AD) [Bar-Ebroyo'nun Kilisesel Tarihi; Süryanice El-Yazması, Fotokopisi, s.314 Özel Kitaplık.; Abellos ve Lami'nin Baskısı, 1872-1877, Paris ve Luvan, Süryanice Latince, s.119-127]. On October 8, 1478, in the Greek calendar (1167 AD), when Patriarch Michael the Great was elevated to the patriarchate at the Mor Bar Sauma Monastery in Malatya, the Metropolitan of Azerbaijan, Mor Timotheos, was among the assembled metropolitans [Patrik Büyük Mihayel'in Tarih Kitabı, Halep Nüshası, Süryanice, s.756].

The Syriac Church's regional administration in Azerbaijan continued until 1286, when the prominent scholar Maphrian of the East Bar Hebraeus (Abu'l-Faraj) moved his residence to the Syriac Church in Maragha. The decision to relocate to Maragha was driven by the dire circumstances in the Mosul region in 1286. Due to Mongol attacks, the state became weak and helpless, leading to an increase in looting, plundering, and highway robberies. With no assurance of safety, everyone feared for their lives.

Concerned for the Maphrian's safety, his brother Bar Saumo persuaded him to move to Maragha in Azerbaijan to avoid potential harm. Once there, the Maphrian expanded the existing single Syriac church by adding a new church and several adjacent rooms for guests. He personally covered all construction expenses.

¹ Christianity in Azerbaijan, From Past To Present, English, P.39.

During this time, he fell seriously ill and passed away on July 30, 1286. As his final hour approached, he expressed his regrets to his brother with these words: "Oh, my brother Bar Saumo! My body has weakened; I no longer have the strength to rise. Why did you not let me rest peacefully in the Eastern Church, where I served for 22 years in the rank of Maphrian? The bishops, priests, clerics, and deacons I served would have buried me with honors fitting my rank. You have wronged me in this matter. I fled death, but it was in vain. My advice to you: mourn me according to custom, do not overstep those bounds, and observe the mourning period appropriately, for death is no new event in this world".

In addition to Syriac Orthodox, Greeks, Armenians, and Nestorians also attended the funeral. Four Syriac Orthodox priests were present at the ceremony. After the funeral, the Nestorian Catholicos Yaballaha issued an order to the people of Maragha: no one was to open their shops or go to work in the fields; everyone was to wear black and observe mourning. He declared, "This person was a cornerstone of Christianity and a star shining in the heavens. He is a loss not only to his own people but to all of Christianity, especially the East" [Yuhanna İbn el-İbri Hayati, Metropolit Griğoriyos Bulus Bihnam, Halep Metropolit Griğoriyos Yuhanna İbrahim Tarafından Basıldı, 1984, s.42-48].

The exact date when the Syriac Church's regional administration in Maragha was dissolved remains unknown. Nevertheless, historical records clearly point to the Syriacs' significant missionary endeavors in the Caucasus.

During the reign of the Mongol ruler Arghun Khan (1284–1291 AD), Rabban Bar Sauma, a close friend of Nestorian Patriarch Yaballaha, was sent on a diplomatic mission to Pope Honorius IV to deliver Arghun Khan's request for an alliance against the Mamluks. However, during this period, Arghun Khan passed away. Following his death, a struggle for the throne arose between his two sons, and the state came under the rule of his son Ghazan Khan. Under Ghazan Khan's rule, a pivotal shift occurred in Ilkhanid history: with Ghazan Khan's conversion to Islam, Islam became the official religion. From this point on, a period of decline began for Christianity. Many Syriac Nestorian Christians left Maragha in 1297 AD and resettled in Erbil. In the later years of Ghazan Khan's reign, Nestorianism and Christianity in general began to lose their former importance and prestige. Patriarch Mar Yaballaha passed away on November 13, 1317 [Karamanlı Ortodoks Türkler, Yonca Anzerlioğlu, s.20-21].

During the Mongol period, the Seljuk Turkish state accepted Christianity through the Nestorians. The Seljuks were related to Christian Turks of the Kerait and Naiman tribes, as evidenced by the names of their kings, such as Michael, David, and Jonah. They were also related to Turks, Huns, Mongols, and Tatars. The Seljuks established several states in Iraq, Damascus, Khwarezm, and Kerman, with some ruling from Konya as their center in the Sultanate of Rum. The Circassians, who were under their rule, were also Christians [El-Naşriyat Beyn il-Kudama-i el-Etrak ve Moğol, Levis Şeyho, s.768-770].

REFERENCES:

1. Artvin ve Erzurum'daki Gürcü Dini Mimarisinde Süsleme, Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Tahsin Korkut, s.61-62.
2. Bar-Ebroyo'nun Kilisesel Tarihi; Süryanice El-Yazması, Fotokopisi, S.314 Özel Kitaplık.; Abellos ve Lami'nin Baskısı, 1872-1877, Paris ve Luvan, Süryanice Latince, S.119-127.
3. Christianity in Azerbaijan, from Past to Present, English, P.39.
4. El-Durar el-Nefise, Patrik Efrem Barsavm, Kilise Tarihi, s.461-462 (in Arabic).
5. El-Naşriyat Beyn ıl-Kudama-i el-Etrak ve Moğol, Levis Şeyho, s.768-770 (in Arabic).
6. Ermeni Kilisesi, Neşat ve Tarih, Stokholm, 2003, s.3-5 (in Arabic).
7. Karamanlı Ortodoks Türkler, Yonca Anzerlioğlu, s.20-21 (in Turkish).
8. Kilise Tarihi, Patrik Efrem Barsavm, s.342 (in Arabic).
9. Kurkmo Dergisi, Şubat 2007, Sayı: 6, S. 6 (in Turkish).
10. List of Names of Local Caucasian-Albanian Persons, English Article, 2017, P.3.
11. Patrik Büyük Mihayel'in Tarih Kitabı, Halep Nüshası, Süryanice, s.756.
12. Tarih-ül el-Keniset ül-Süryaniye, Metropolit Severiyos Yakup Tuma (sonradan patrik), Birinci Baskı: 1959, Lübnan, İkinci Baskı: 1989, Hollanda, s.170-171.
13. Yuhanna İbn el-İbri Hayatı, Metropolit Griğoriyos Bulus Bihnam, Halep Metropoliti Griğoriyos Yuhanna İbrahim Tarafından Basıldı, 1984, s.42-48 (in Arabic).

Jafarov Yusif
PhD in History (CANADA, Toronto)

REVISITING THE GARGAREANS OF ALVANIA/ARAN: WHAT DO THE CONCISE SOURCES REVEAL AND WHAT DO NUMEROUS RESEARCHERS WRITE

Abstract. The article is devoted to one of the most important aspects of the history of early mediaeval Alvania/Aran – the localisation of Gargareans and the emergence of the alphabet and writing in the Old Udi language. The article refutes the point of view on the original habitation of Gargareans in the Caucasus mountains and substantiates the opinion about their original thousand-year residence on the right-bank Kura, in the area of the ancient capital of Alvania/Aran – the city of Partav (now Barda).

Keywords: Gargareans, alphabet, native habitats

Who are these Gargareans, the subject of so much recent discussion in the pages of scholarly collections and journals? Where did they live and what did they have to do with Aghvania/Albania/Aran [I have long stopped using “Caucasian Albania”, since there is no need to emphasize the geographical definition “Caucasian” every time.–*Yu.D.*]?

What were their ethnic and linguistic origins? What role did they play in the history and culture of ancient Azerbaijan?

According to some sources, in the early 5th century, writing was developed in Aghvania for the Gargarean language, which was a dialect of the Udi (ancient Udi) language. This fact alone elevates the question of the Gargareans to a key topic in the ancient history of Aghvania/Aran.

One of the most important turning points in any people’s cultural and historical development is the invention of a writing system. The adoption of a national alphabet in their native language helps to fill, through retransmission, the gaps left by the pre-literate period in the history of a people and its country. This unique historical event is intended to uphold and strengthen cultural traditions and values within the community. It is aimed at long-term historical continuity and future generations. Thus, it is clear that in the context of the 5th century Aghvania, creating a writing system for a language that is unknown to the population and understood only by the Gargareans themselves made little sense. This reality was well understood in the 5th century at the Arsacid royal court, as well as within state and church institutions and in the cultural circles of the Aghvanian society. Unfortunately, unlike the full clarity of this issue in the 5th century Aghvania and among its neighbors, in the 20th and early 21st centuries, this critical aspect of ancient Azerbaijan’s history has stirred heated debate in both academic and quasi-academic literature, shifting from a historical to a political context. This led to several unfounded conclusions that have negatively impacted the ethno-political history of Aghvania/Aran. This was mainly due to the incorrect interpretation of the Gargareans’ location, leading many authors (whether deliberately or not) to fail to connect their native settlements with the emergence of a writing system.

Who are the Gargareans? The Gargareans are mentioned only in the *Geography* of the ancient Greek historian and geographer Strabo (Ancient Greek: Στράβων; ca 64/63 BC – ca 23/24), as well as in the accounts of several Armenian writers. All other information about the Gargareans in sources is not independent but borrowed from Strabo and these Armenian authors. Therefore, a detailed analysis of

Strabo's description of the Gargareans and a comparison with the relatively precise location data offered by the Armenian writers would be a starting point for a deeper understanding of both the Gargarean problem and an important facet of Aghvianian history in general.

What was the exact historical territory where the Gargareans resided? Most scholars still believe that they inhabited the Greater Caucasus mountains north of the Kura River [Волкова, 1973, с.152-153; Смбатян, 1984, с.176-177, прим.8; Акопян, 1987, с.64-74; Гаджиев, 2015, с.180; Гумба, 2020, с.66, сл., и др.].

What specific historical data laid the foundation for the belief that the Gargareans resided north of the Kura, in the mountains of the Greater Caucasus? As noted above, this perspective is based solely on a single account from Strabo. Currently, it has become widespread in academic (and even popular) literature, relying on a rather superficial analysis and a peculiar interpretation of Strabo's borrowed story about the Gargareans and the Amazons. This resulted in conclusions that significantly affect numerous key issues related to the history and culture of Aghvania and its people [Еремян, 1958, с.304; Акопян, 1987, с.57-74; Schulze, 1997, p.34; Gippert, Schulze. Some Remarks on the Caucasian Albanian Palimpsest, 2007, p.210; Гаджиев, 2015, с.180]. In this regard, let us try to examine Strabo's account in detail, citing it in full: "The mountains above Albania are said to be home to the Amazons. Theophanes, who accompanied Pompey on his campaign and visited the land of the Albans, recounts that the Scythian tribes of the Gelae and the Legae live between the Amazons and the Albans and that in this region flows the Mermadalis River, running between these tribes and the Amazons. Other writers, also well-acquainted with these regions (including Metrodorus of Scepsis and Hypsicrates), assert that the Amazons live in proximity to the Gargareans in the northern foothills of those parts of the Caucasus Mountains known as the Ceraunian Mountains [further – well-known details about the Amazons.–*Yu.D.*]. In spring, they (the Amazons) have two special months when they ascend the nearby mountain that separates them from the Gargareans. According to an ancient custom, the Gargareans would also ascend this mountain to perform a ritual sacrifice with the women and then secretly meet with them in the dark to conceive children; these encounters take place in secrecy, without regard for choice of partners. After making the women pregnant, the Gargareans would let them go home. The Amazons kept all the female newborns but gave the male ones to the Gargareans for upbringing. Each Gargarean accepted any infant brought to him, considering him, due to ignorance, his own son. The Mermoda River, thundering down from the mountains, flows through the land of the Amazons, Siracena, and the entire desert lying between them, eventually emptying into the Maeotis. The Gargareans are said to have migrated to this region together with the Amazons from Themiscyra; later, however, they started a rebellion and fought against the Amazons together with some Thracians and Euboeans (who reached these regions due to their nomadism); eventually, they ceased hostilities and reached an agreement under the conditions mentioned above: they would interact with each other solely for child-bearing, while each tribe would live independently" [Strabo, XI, V, 1-2].

The information provided shows that Strabo drew his knowledge from two main sources – Theophanes of Mytilene's writings and the works of Metrodorus and Hypsicrates. It should also be assumed that, since Metrodorus is mentioned before Hypsicrates, the major part of the information (at least concerning the Gargareans or Gargarenses) was borrowed from him. This is implicitly confirmed by Strabo himself in other parts of his work (see below). Theophanes reports on "Scythian" tribes – the Gelae and the Legae – who lived between the Amazons and the Aghvianians, and mentions the Mermadalis River flowing between these tribes and the Amazons. Meanwhile, Metrodorus asserts that the Amazons lived near the Gargareans in the foothills of the Ceraunian Mountains (the southeastern spurs of the Greater Caucasus), from where the same Mermoda River originates and flows into the Maeotis.

By comparing these two passages, it can be concluded that it was Metrodorus who mentions the Gargareans as the Amazons' neighbors while Theophanes who accompanied Pompey on his campaign in Aghvania and left a detailed account (now sadly lost), refers to the Gelae and the Legae as the Amazons'

neighbors. In this regard, it's interesting that Plutarch who derived his knowledge from Strabo's sources did not overlook the mysterious Amazons who resided "near the Thermodon River". "The Amazons", Plutarch reports, "live in that part of the Caucasus which stretches to the Hyrcanian Sea. However, they do not border directly on the Albanians, but are separated from them by the Gelae and the Legae. They meet these tribes every year on the Thermodon river and spend two months with them, and then they retire to their own country and live there by themselves, without men" [Plut, Pomp, 35].

Upon comparing Strabo's and Plutarch's accounts, it becomes evident that Plutarch relies on Theophanes' account for determining who exactly the Amazons bordered along the Mermadalid/Mermoda river [The Mermadalida River, also known as Mermoda, is nothing more than a copyist's mistake: Mermodas-Thermodas, i.e. We are talking about Thermodont.–*Yu.D.*]. Moreover, everything that takes place between the Amazons and the Gargareans during the two spring months, according to Metrodorus, is attributed by Plutarch not to the Gargareans but to the same Gelae and Legae. This gives reasonable grounds to believe that, according to Theophanes, the primary source for both Strabo and Plutarch, it was the Gelae and the Legae who were "involved" in relations with the Amazons, and not the Gargareans, as mentioned by Metrodorus. This gives rise to a natural question: who exactly was this Metrodorus of Scepsis and what was the unknown source of the information about the presence of the Gargareans in the mountains of the Greater Caucasus, moreover on the Mermoda River [Thermodonte, modern Kyzyl-Yrmak in Türkiye.–*Yu.D.*], which separated the Gargareans from the Amazons, with whom the Gargareans, losing all moral restraint by springtime (see above), engaged in these events that became widely known in ancient society? Strabo's reference to Metrodorus shows that he came from Scepsis located on the western coast of Asia Minor, in the region of the Troad [Strabo, XIII, I, 4; 55]. This fact alone does not reveal much, except for the detail that Metrodorus' homeland neighbored the region and the town of Gargar with its inhabitants known as the Gargareans (Gargarenses) [Strabo, XIII, I, 51; 56].

Describing the location of Mount Ida with the ruins of the legendary Homer's Troy on its slopes, Strabo notes that "even now people show a place in the highest parts of Ida, known as Gargar, from which the present-day Gargar, an Aeolian city, takes its name" [Strabo, XIII, I, 5]. Regarding the Gargar inhabitants, i.e. the Gargareans – Strabo reports that "now the Asis and the Gargareans hold all the lands up to the sea opposite Lesbos" [Strabo, XIII, I, 51]. Further, citing the authority of another Scepsis writer, Strabo adds, "according to Demetrius of Scepsis, the inhabitants of Gargar transformed from Aeolians into semi-barbarians" [Strabo, XIII, I, 58]. It is known that the Aeolians were Greeks who, together with the Ionians, settled the western coast of Asia Minor in ancient times [Strabo, XIII, I, 3; XII, III, 21; XIV, I, 1-4]. From this it is easy to infer that Metrodorus, who represented Mithridates Eupator at the court of Armenia's King Tigranes [Strabo, XIII, I, 55], and being curious, after learning of a tribe known as the Gargareans who lived close to the Armenians and shared a name with the people who resided in the Aeolian city of Gargar, i.e., his neighbors, he concluded that he was dealing with the same people. To provide his readers with a more or less plausible explanation regarding the Gargareans who lived thousands of stadia east of the Troad, near the Caspian Sea, Metrodorus simply "relocated" them from Asia Minor to the Caucasus, placing them in the foothills of the Ceraunian Mountains so as not to deprive them of the familiar landscape of the foothills of Ida. For such a "relocation" to the Caucasus, the most suitable partners for the Aeolian Gargareans naturally proved to be the Amazons. Since Homer, the homeland of these mysterious warrior women had always been thought to be the plains of Themiscyra and the Thermodon River, located in northern Asia Minor, specifically in Pontus [Strabo, XII, XI, 14-15]. Meanwhile, the legend of the existence of the Amazons in the Caucasus, near the Caspian Gates, and their migration there from Themiscyra, known since the time of Alexander the Great (and perhaps even earlier) [Strabo, XI, V, 4], created a perfect picture of credibility against which the emergence of the Gargareans generated the desired effect. Providing a thorough description of Themiscyra's location, Strabo ironically remarks: "Everyone calls Themiscyra, the plains around the Thermodon and the mountains rising above them, the land of the Amazons, claiming

that they were expelled from here. As for the current whereabouts of the Amazons, only a few provide information, and that too, without evidence and lacking credibility" [Strabo, XI, V, 4]. Strabo makes explicit reference to Metrodorus of Scepsis, whose information on the Amazons and Gargareans, being a diligent geographer, he includes in his work but whose accounts, as a knowledgeable and astute historian, he does not trust, viewing them as "marvelous and incredible tales" [Strabo, XI, V, 3]. Moreover, Metrodorus himself gives away the fictional nature of his story about the Gargareans living in the Ceraunian Mountains with the following phrase: "The Gargareans are said to have migrated to this region together with the Amazons from Themiscyra; later, however, they started a rebellion and fought against the Amazons together with some Thracians and Euboeans (who reached these regions due to their nomadism)" [Strabo, XI, V, 2]. We will never know why the Gargareans' more-than-friendly relations with the Amazons suddenly soured. As for the "war" of the Gargareans against the Amazons with some "Thracians", the explanation is quite simple. The fact is that the regions neighboring the Troad (including the Troad itself), where the Aeolian Gargareans lived and which were well known to Metrodorus, were inhabited by tribes (such as Phrygians, Mysians, and others) that were essentially of Thracian origin, as Strabo himself explains in detail [Strabo, XII, IV, 4-5], which Metrodorus undoubtedly knew as well. Moreover, it would only occur to one who does not burden himself with useful knowledge to suspect the sedentary Thracians and Greek Aeolians from the island of Euboea of wandering across the world all the way to the high Caucasus Mountains without serious grounds; and this suspicion rests entirely on his conscience. Strabo justifiably doubted the existence of the mythical Amazons and criticized writers who recount incredible fables about them. He gave his own assessment of Metrodorus and his writings, remarking that "the stories of Metrodorus of Scepsis in his book *On Habit* resemble a fairytale and should be disregarded" [Strabo, XVI, IV, 16].

Given the foregoing, it is easy to conclude that the Gargareans' appearance in the highlands of the Greater Caucasus and their migration there from Asia Minor together with the Amazons are largely the responsibility of the vivid imagination of Metrodorus of Scepsis. He misled not only ancient readers and writers [Stephani Byzantii, 1849, s.v. Gargareis] but also a number of modern researchers [Тревер, 1959, с.48-49; Адонц, 1971, с.424; Алиев, 1981, с.89 и др.].

Such an analysis of Strabo's account regarding the Gargareans is unique in academic literature. It has never been carried out at this level before. Therefore, the question of the original habitat of the Gargareans being in the Greater Caucasus mountains (and also in the vicinity of the "Amazons") and their subsequent motiveless migration (!) to the plains of Aghvania, to the southeastern part of the right bank of the Kura [Wolfgang Schulze. *Old Udi / Conference on the Languages of the Caucasus*, 2007, с.1-2. – December; Гумба Г. Кавказская Албания по «Ашхарацуйцу» Вардана Вардапета (XIII в.) // *Լրաբեր Հասարակական Գիտություններ*. №9, с.69-73], seemingly should no longer be considered a primary alternative to their millennia-old habitat near the early medieval capital of Aghvania, the city of Partaw (now Barda) (see below).

Where did the Gargareans reside if their location in the Caucasus Mountains is not supported by logic or evidence?

According to the data from several Armenian sources, the Gargareans lived south of the Kura, on the territory of the present-day Mil Plain, formerly known as the Gargarean Plain, in the basin of the Qarqaray/Gargaray River [Еремян, 1958, с.304; Тревер, 1959, с.49, 327; К.Алиев, 1960, с.17 и др.]. The plain of the Gargareans (Gargarenses) south of the Kura is mentioned by Movses Khorenatsi (*History*, II, 85). However, his account of the "Gargarean Plain" is rather vague. On this basis, the Gargareans' settlement has been determined to be to the southeast of the middle course of the Kura River [Еремян, 1958, с.304 сл.]. This hypothesis was recently reconfirmed [Schulze, 2017, с.10].

Meanwhile, the precise location of the Gargarean Plain and the Gargareans settlement area is evidenced by two direct references from Tovma Artsruni:

1) "...Bugha (the Arab commander), gathering all his army, descended onto the Gargarean Plain and entered the great city of Partaw" [Histoire des Ardzruni, 1874. III, 10];

2) "...and he (Isa) went again and reached Partaw in the land of the Gargareans" [Histoire des Ardzruni, III, 18].

It is difficult to overstate the significance of these reports. On one hand, they confirm Khorenatsi's general reference to the "Gargarean Plain" on the right bank of the Kura. On the other hand, they clarify that the capital of Aghvania/Aran, Partaw (the present-day Barda), was located not only on the Gargarean Plain but precisely "in the land of the Gargareans". This unequivocally demonstrates that, contrary to popular belief, the "land of the Gargareans" was not in the southeast of the Mil Plain, which was a part of Balasagan/Caspiane [Еремян, 1958, с.303-304; Schulze, 2017, p.10]. It was located in the Mil Plain's northwest, close to Kura, in the basin of the lower reaches of the Indjachay, Tartar, and up to the Gargarchay rivers. In other words, it was at the very center of the ancient Aghvanian province (ashkharh) of Uti. This logical framework refutes the long-held belief that the city of Paitakaran-Bailakan was located in the Gargarean settlement area on the Gargarean Plain and was its center [Еремян, 1958, с.304, 327]. On the contrary, it was the capital of Aghvania, the city of Partaw (now Barda), that was located in the "land of the Gargareans" and was both its political and cultural center. The main population of Partaw and its surroundings was Gargarean and spoke that very guttural, "rich in throaty sounds" Caucasian language, which, according to Khorenatsi, formed the basis of the written language of Aghvania.

It has long been known that when there is a need to create a written (literary) language, it is typically the "language" (variety or dialect) of the state's capital and its surrounding area [Адонц, 1915, с.187 сл.]. The above clearly indicates that the dialect or speech of the Gargareans, which essentially was a dialect of the ancient Udi language, formed the backbone of the Aghvanian alphabet and writing system created in the mid-5th century. It is also worth noting that in 1996, Z.N.Aleksidze, a corresponding member of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, found a palimpsest at St.Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai. This palimpsest includes the text of a lectionary in the original Caucasian Albanian language. An extensive linguistic study of the preserved text has demonstrated that the Caucasian Albanian alphabet and writing system is 80% based on the grammar (phonetics, syntax, etc.) and vocabulary of the Udi language. Due to this fact, this language has also been termed as Proto-Udi [Gippert, Schulze, Aleksidze, Mahe. The Caucasian Albanian Palimpsests of Mt. Sinai, Vol. I, 2008; Vol. II, 2009; Vol. III, 2011; Лолуа, 2021, с.147-155; Лолуа, 2023, с.146-154].

This leads to yet another crucial conclusion: the political, economic, and cultural center of the Aghvanian kingdom was relocated from the foothills of the Greater Caucasus, from the former capital Kabalaka (now Gabala) on the left bank of the Kura to its right bank, to the Gargarean steppe, to the new Aghvanian capital Partaw, at least as early as the end of the 4th century (apparently in 387). This fundamentally differs from the deeply rooted opinion in scholarly literature [Еремян, 1958, с.327; Тревер, 1959, с.309, и др.]. This historical and ethno-linguistic aspect is crucial for understanding the maze of issues that have arisen around the Gargarean "phenomenon" and the resulting implications and conclusions. We are highlighting this circumstance here for the first time, or rather, we are viewing the Gargarean question from this perspective for the first time. For a detailed discussion of the emergence of writing and the formation of the Aghvanian ethno-lingual community, see [Джафаров, 2021, с.38-50].

SOURCES AND REFERENCES:

1. Адонц Н.Г. Армения в эпоху Юстиниана (*Armenia in the Era of Justinian*). Ереван: Изд-во Ереван. ун-та, 1971, 526 с.
2. Адонц Н. Дионисий Фракийский и армянские толкователи (*Dionysius Thrax and Armenian Commentators*). Петроград: тип. Имп. Акад. наук, 1915. [8], СХСIII, [7], 307 с.
3. Акопян А.А. Албания-Алуанк в греко-латинских и древнеармянских источниках (*Albania-Aluank in Greek-Latin and Ancient Armenian Sources*). Ереван: Изд-во АН Арм.ССР, 1987, 303 с.
4. Акопян А.А. Роман об албанском царе Вачагане Благочестивом в «Истории Албании» Моисея Каланкатуйского (*The Novel of the Albanian King Vachagan the Pious in the 'History of Albania' by Moses Kaghankatvatsi*) / Кавказ и Византия. Вып. 4, Ереван, 1984.
5. Алиев К. Кавказская Албания (I в. до н.э.–I в. н.э.) (*Caucasian Albania (1st century BC – 1st century AD)*). Баку: Элм, 1974, 363 с.
6. Алиев К.Г. К вопросу о гаргарах и территории их расселения (*On the Issue of the Gargars and Their Settlement Territory*) // Доклады АН Аз.ССР, 1981, №1.
7. Волкова Н.Г. Этнонимы и племенные названия Северного Кавказа (*Ethnonyms and Tribal Names of the North Caucasus*). М., 1973.
8. Гаджиев М.С. К интерпретации сведений о создании письменности Кавказской Албании (*On the Interpretation of Information about the Creation of Caucasian Albanian Script*). Т.И. Москва: ИВ РАН, 2015, с.177-188.
9. Гумба Г. Кавказская Албания по «Ашхарацуйцу» Вардана Вардапета (XIII век.) (*Caucasian Albania According to "Ashkharatsuyts" by Vardan Vardapet (13th century)*). 2020.
10. Джафаров Ю.Р. Гаргарская проблема и алванская письменность (*The Gargar Problem and Albanian Script*) / XXIII научная сессия молодых учёных, посвящённая 70-летию основания Института истории, археологии и этнографии им. И.А.Джавахишвили АН Груз.ССР. Тезисы докладов, Тбилиси, 1988.
11. Джафаров Ю. Гаргары и алванская письменность. К вопросу возникновения этноязыковой общности (*Gargars and Albanian Script: On the Emergence of Ethnolinguistic Unity*) / Міністерство освіти та науки України Національний педагогічний університет імені М.П. Драгоманова. «Україна-Азербайджан: діалог культур та цивілізацій» з нагоди століття встановлення дипломатичних відносин між Україною та Азербайджаном, Київ, 2021, с.38-50.
12. Еремян С.Т. Идеология и культура Албании III–VII вв. (*The Ideology and Culture of Albania in the 3rd–7th centuries*) / Очерки истории СССР (III–IX вв.). Т.II. М.: Изд. АН СССР, М., 1958, с.323-330.
13. Еремян С.Т. Экономика и социальный строй Албании III–VII вв. (*The Economy and Social System of Albania in the 3rd–7th centuries*) / Очерки истории СССР (III–IX вв.). Т.II. М.: Изд. АН СССР, 1958, с.303-310.
14. Лолуа Р. Парадигматика кавказско-албанского алфавита (*The Paradigmatics of the Caucasian Albanian Alphabet*) / Этнокультурное наследие Кавказской Албании (сборник статей), №4. Баку, 2022, с.146-154.
15. Лолуа Р. Сообщения древнеармянских источников о генезисе кавказско-албанской письменности (*Reports of Ancient Armenian Sources on the Genesis of the Caucasian Albanian Script*) / Этнокультурное наследие Кавказской Албании (сборник статей), №2. Баку, 2022, с.147-155.
16. Страбон. География (*Geography*) в 17 книгах / Пер. с др.-греч., статья и комментарии Г.А.Стратановского. Л.: Наука, 1964, 944 с.
17. Тревер К.В. Очерки по истории и культуре Кавказской Албании IV в. до н.э. – VII в. н.э. (*Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania from the 4th century BC to the 7th century AD*). М.-Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1959, 392 с.
18. Хоренский Моисей. История Армении (*History of Armenia*) / Пер. Н.Эмина. М., 1858, 401 с.
19. Historie does Ardzrouni par Vartbied Thoma Ardzrouni trad. par. ВМ. Brosset, SPb., 1874.
20. J.Gippert, W.Schulze. Some Remarks on the Caucasian Albanian Palimpsests. – *Iran and the Caucasus*, 11, 2007.
21. J.Gippert, W.Schulze, Z.Aleksidze, J.-P.Mahe. The Caucasian Albanian Palimpsests of Mt. Sinai. Vol.I, 2008, 290 p.; Vol.II, 2009, 510 p.; Vol.III, 2011, 229 p.
22. Stephani Byzantii Ethnicorum quae supersunt. Tom I. Berolini, 1849.
23. Wolfgang Schulze. *Caucasian Albanian and the Question of Language and Ethnicity*, 2017.

Khalilov Mubariz

*Leading Research Associate of the Institute of Archaeology
and Anthropology of ANAS, PhD in History*

CULTURAL RELATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS OF ANCIENT AND EARLY MEDIEVAL ALBANIA

Abstract. This article is dedicated to the material culture of Caucasian Albania, which developed on a multicultural basis and possessed local forms. Based on the archaeological study of various types of burial monuments, it can be noted that these monuments formed the foundation of the local forms of this culture.

During the early medieval period, the transformation of the multi-faceted, polytheistic Albanian culture into a monotheistic Albanian culture led to the disappearance of some forms. Research has confirmed the notion that the polytheistic Albanian Christian culture became the leading culture of Caucasian Albania.

Keywords: Caucasian Albania, multi-faceted culture, state, tribes, written sources

One of the main characteristic features of the general Albanian culture in antiquity was its possession of local forms [Халилов, 1985, с.160-161; Халилов, 1985а, с.105]. The primary factor contributing to the emergence of these forms was the settlement of tribes speaking 26 different languages in the territory of Albania [Страбон, 1964, XI: IV, 6].

During the reign of Darius I (549–486 BC), satrapies, which were administrative-territorial divisions of the Achaemenid Empire, were established. Some of the tribes that later joined the Albanian union (the Utians, Caspians, and Mikes) were divided among different satrapies [Геродот, 1972, III: 93]. While the Utians and Mikes were grouped with the inhabitants of the islands in the Red Sea and other tribes in one satrapy, the isolated Caspians were divided between two other independent satrapies [Геродот, 1972, III: 92, 93]. The formation of the cultures of the Uti, Mik, and Caspian tribes under such circumstances laid the foundation for certain distinctive characteristics to emerge. For example, the inclusion of part of the Caspian tribe in the XV Satrapy alongside the Sakas left its mark on the customs and traditions of the Caspians. This refers to the ritual associated with the elderly, which Strabo attributed to Scythian origins [Страбон, 1964, XI: XI, 3], but according to ancient historical sources, was also recorded among the Massagetae, Issedones, and other steppe peoples related to the Sakas [Геродот, 1972, I: 216; Помпоний Мела, 1986, с.86, 87]. The Caspians also performed this ritual. [Страбон, 1964, XI: XI, 3, 8].

At the end of the 4th century BC, after the fall of the Achaemenid Empire, the formation of each of the Albanian tribes' independent state allowed the continuation of the unique development of their cultures to a certain extent [Страбон, 1964, XI: IV, 6].

Around 192 BC, the centralized state of Albania was established by Arran, the ruler of the Albanian state [Халилов, 2004, с.34]. After Arran, his dynasty, known as the Aranshahiks, ruled Albania until the 3rd century. In the 2nd century BC, the commander of the Albanian army, which consisted of only 10,000 soldiers, was always appointed from this dynasty [Каганкатвази, 1861, I: 4].

In the 3rd century, the Aranshahiks were overthrown in Albania, and the Arsacid dynasty, which had previously founded the Parthian state, came to power. During the 70s and 80s of the 3rd century, the Arsacids also ruled over the Maskut-Hun state, which was established in the northeastern part of Albania. Strabo provides information about the connection of this dynasty with the Maskuts (Massagetae). He writes that the founder of the Arsacid dynasty, Arsaces, who was either of Scythian origin from Meotyda

(the Sea of Azov) or a native of Bactria, fled from Seleucus Callinicus (246–226 BC) and took refuge in the country of the Apasiacae, one of the Massagetae tribes [Страбон, 1964, XI: VIII, 8, IX, 2, 3]. The Maskut-Hun tribes that arrived in Albania were also led by the Apasiacae (Abkhaz) tribe. It is possible that the Arsacids of Albania, as a branch of the Maskut Arsacids, came to power in Albania not at the beginning of the 3rd century but in the 70s and 80s of the 3rd century. The fact that only two rulers from the Arsacid dynasty (Vachagan I the Brave and Vache I) are mentioned before Urnayr, who is listed third in the roster of Arsacid rulers and whose name first appears in connection with events in the 320s AD, also supports this hypothesis [Каганкатвази, 1861, I: 15].

Although the creation of a centralized Albanian state directed the cultural development of the tribes within the Albanian union towards a unified path, it could not completely eliminate the differences between these cultures, which in turn resulted in the formation of a multi-faceted general Albanian culture. Unlike the Achaemenid Empire, the administrative-territorial division of the ancient Albanian state sometimes took ethnic principles into account, which also influenced this process. An example of this is the region of Caspiane in ancient Albania [Страбон, 1964, XI: IV, 5].

The fact that some of the cities mentioned in ancient written sources within the territory of historical Albania bear the names of specific tribes could also be seen as an indicator of the distinctive cultural development of various compactly settled ethnic groups. Among such cities are Albanopolis, mentioned by Claudius Ptolemy (2nd century) [Клавдий Птолемей, 1948, с.252, 257], Anariaka, associated with the Anariak tribe, referenced by Strabo; and Aeniania, founded by the ancient Greek Ainianies tribe in the land of the Utians [Страбон, 1964, XI: VII, 1] Aeniania, built by the Greeks in the territory of historical Albania (in present-day Karabakh plain), provided a highly favorable environment for the Albanians to assimilate ancient Greek culture. The Greek inscription found on a stone in the village of Boyuk Dahna in the Shaki region, dating to the 1st–2nd centuries AD, is one of the confirming facts [Тревер, 1959, с.340–342, рис.46] The inscription reads: “In memory of Aelius Jason, the benevolent Evnon” [Тревер, 1959, с.340]. Information from historical sources dating to the 4th century suggests that the Albanians may have had their own script in antiquity. For example, in 65 BC, the ruler of Albania sent a letter (epistulae) to the Roman general Помпей [Евтропий, 1986, VI: 14, с.101; Павел Оросий, 1986, VI: 4/8, с.103]. In 260 AD, the Albanians wrote (scripserunt) to Roman officials, offering to assist in the release of the Roman emperor Valerian from captivity [Юлий Капитолин, 1986, §7, с.94].

Archaeological research conducted in Albanian urban areas has revealed that people from various tribes lived in these cities. This is confirmed by the different types of burial monuments and anthropological evidence uncovered through excavations in the city cemeteries. For example, in the ancient Samekhia (Shamakhi) cemetery, three types of burial monuments from the ancient period were discovered (pit, earth, and jar burials) [Халилов, 1985, с.59–66, 73–77, 79–81], indicating that representatives of three tribes lived in the city simultaneously. In the cemetery of the ancient site of Mingachevir, jar burials were uncovered, with not only ordinary skeletons but also examples of skulls that had undergone artificial cranial deformation, suggesting that foreign populations had settled in Mingachevir during antiquity [Nərimanov, Aslanov, 1962, s.223–226]. The fact that both local and foreign populations were buried in the same type of jar burials, in the same cemetery, indicates that the foreign populations were influenced by the local culture.

The local forms of the multi-faceted general Albanian culture were primarily based on different types of burials. Strabo writes that the Albanians would place all of the deceased’s belongings in the grave, which left them living in poverty, deprived of their paternal inheritance. This burial ritual reflected the Albanians’ belief in the afterlife. To date, eight types of graves have been identified in ancient Albania: 1) earth graves; 2) pit graves; 3) clay trough graves; 4) jar burials; 5) cist graves; 6) mudbrick tombs; 7) wooden cist graves; 8) catacombs [Халилов, 1985a, с.93–105, 164–175]. Syncretic variants of these eight grave types have also been recorded (catacomb + jar, catacomb + wooden cist, jar + mudbrick tombs). This reflects the cultural exchanges between different tribes. Three of the grave types (catacombs, wooden cist graves, and mudbrick

tombs) were introduced to Albania by foreign tribes, and both catacombs and mudbrick tombs eventually became part of Albanian burial practices.

The spiritual culture of the Albanians during the ancient period developed in close contact with the surrounding ancient world. Their worship of the sun god Helios, the sky god Zeus, the moon goddess Selene, the Roman god of fertility and wine Bacchus, and the deification of Jason (Iason), leader of the Argonauts, are all indicative of this.

According to Herodotus, Zeus was the god of sky in Sparta [Геродот, 1972, VI: 56]. Interestingly, in the languages of the Jek and Khaput ethnic minorities of Azerbaijan, the word “zov” means “sky” [Саадиев, 1959, с.117]. It is not impossible to assume that this word reflects the worship of Zeus among the population of Albania.

The temple (sanctuary) dedicated to Selene, the deity most worshiped by the Albanians, was well known in the ancient world and was located near the borders of Iberia. It is plausible to consider this temple as the main sanctuary, while smaller, local temples dedicated to Selene likely operated in other regions of the country.

Strabo groups together all the temples dedicated to Selene, known as Mene in Asia Minor. This is not coincidental, as the Mene temples in Asia, especially in the ancient state of Pontus, and the rituals performed there find their parallels in the Albanian temple of Selene.

As in Pontus, in Albania, all religious rites were led by an individual who held the rank of priest, second only to the ruler.

The rulers of Pontus regarded the cult of Mene (Selene) as highly significant and would swear oaths to Mene (Selene). It is possible that Albanian rulers held the cult of Selene in equally high regard, and, as in Pontus, the cult had state status in Albania as well.

In Albania, as in Pontus, the priest was the head of both the sacred province where the temple of Selene was located and the slaves of the temple of Selene.

In Pontus, all the revenues of the sacred province went to the priest. Although Strabo does not provide information about the fate of the revenues from the sacred province in Albania, some clarity can be found in the writings of the ancient author Pomponius Mela, who discusses another sacred land, Talga. The island of Talga in the Caspian Sea is identified with Pirallahi island near Baku [Ямпольский, 1961, с.13]. This fact confirms that the island of Talga, mentioned by Pomponius Mela, belonged to Albania. Hamdallah Gazvini (1280–1349) referred to this island as Allah Akbar and noted that it was located not far from Baku and had since been resettled, becoming a major port in the Caspian Sea [Йакут ал-Хамави. Хамдаллах Казвини, 1983, с.62, глава XX]. Pomponius Mela mentions that all the fruits and other products on Talga Island were dedicated to the gods, and for this reason, neighboring peoples did not touch them. As a result, the products that grew on Talga Island either remained unharvested or were given to the priest, who was the head of the sacred area. It is likely that the produce from the sacred province dedicated to Selene in Albania followed a similar fate to those on Albania’s sacred Talga Island.

As in Pontus, the slaves dedicated to Selene in Albania were known as “god-frenzied” devotees. When it was decided that one of these devotees who could foretell the future was to be sacrificed to Selene, they would be kept for a year, treated with special care, and bound with sacred chains. When the time came, the devotee would be struck down with a sacred spear. The manner in which the sacrifice fell was interpreted as a special sign, which was then proclaimed to all. After this, a purification ritual was performed, in which they would step over the body. In Anariaka, there was also an oracle who, in a state of sleep, could foretell the future.

In the city of Comana, dedicated to the goddess Mene (Selene) in Pontus, the priest would don a diadem, the symbol of power, when the goddess “appeared” twice a year [Страбон, 1964, XII: III, 32]. Men and women from different places would flock to the sacred sanctuary, celebrating this occasion as a festival; some took vows to live in the sanctuary permanently and offered sacrifices to the goddess [Страбон, 1964,

XII: III, 36]. Since the sacred rites, divine frenzy, and reverence for priests in Comana were nearly identical [Страбон, 1964, XII: III, 32] it is reasonable to assume that a similar scene occurred in Albania as well.

Selene and Helios were considered among the gods who provided healing, healthy air, and ensured people's well-being and safety. Accordingly, people attributed incurable diseases and sudden deaths to punishments from Selene and Helios [Страбон, 1964, XIV: I, 6]. It is no coincidence that a large medical school arose at the sanctuary of Mene in the Caria region of Asia Minor [Страбон, 1964, XII: VIII, 20].

The investigation of Selene's accepted symbols in Albania is also of great importance. In Sumer, god of the Moon Sin (Nanna) was depicted as a large-horned bull [История Древнего Востока, 1983, с.170]. Experts consider the bronze and glass crescent-shaped horns, as well as bullhead with horns figures found in Dagestan to be symbols of moon worship and at this time, they remember that Albanians worshiped the moon [Абрамова, 1966, рис.1/8-11, с.95-96]. Similar figures made from paste have also been discovered in Albanian monuments in Azerbaijan [Халилов, 1965, рис.7, с.177]. However, it should be noted that while the Sumerian Sin (Nanna) was a moon god, Selene was a moon goddess. It is somewhat difficult to accept the depiction of a goddess as a bull. The connection of crescent-shaped ornaments found in ancient Albanian monuments with moon worship seems more plausible. Nevertheless, Nicander (2nd century BC), in his work *Metamorphoses*, writes that in ancient Greece, Artemis, the moon goddess, substituted a bull for the human sacrifice on the altar and referred to the nomadic people as *Taurians*, meaning "bulls" [Никандр, 1947, с.302-303]. Euripides (5th century BC), in his drama *Iphigenia in Tauris*, mentions that Artemis substituted a deer, not a bull, on the sacrificial altar [Эврипид, 1947, с.289]. Strabo writes that the sacred rites of Artemis were brought to Cappadocia from Tauric Scythia [Страбон, 1964, XII: II, 3]. Considering this information, one could conclude that the crescent-horned bullhead figures discovered in Albania represent the bulls sacrificed to the moon goddess, rather than Selene herself. Strabo's statement that a "god-frenzied slave" in Albania was sacrificed to Selene "along with other offerings" is noteworthy. These "other offerings" could have included animals, such as bulls.

Animal sacrifices were widespread in Albania. Valerius Flaccus (70–90 AD), in his work *Argonautica*, wrote that in the land of the Caspians, dogs participated in battles and were "buried in the graves of ancestors and heroes" [Тревер, 1959, с.77]. For comparison, Apollodorus (2nd century BC), in his work *On the Gods*, mentions that the Carians of Asia Minor sacrificed dogs to Mars, the god of war [Аполлодор, 1947, с.305]. Among the Albanian tribes, the ritual of horse sacrifice was also practiced. Strabo mentions that the Gargar tribe performed sacrifices alongside Amazon women, but he does not specify what was sacrificed. This is clarified in *Life and Deeds of Alexander*, attributed to Callisthenes (4th century BC). It states that Amazon women, along with neighboring men, sacrificed horses annually for 30 days in honor of Zeus, the god of sea Poseidon – who was originally represented in the form of a horse – the god of fire Hephaestus, and the god of war Ares [(Каллисфен), 1947, с.248]. The sacrifice of a horse to Poseidon, who had a symbolic connection to horses, might seem somewhat mysterious, but such practices were known in the ancient world. For example, Cornelius Tacitus (1st–2nd centuries AD) mentions in his *Annals* that the Iberians and Albanians, since Phrixus brought them a ram, never sacrificed rams at the sanctuary of Phrixus—although it remains unclear whether the ram was a live animal or the figurehead of a ship.

According to Strabo, as in several other countries of the ancient world, sanctuaries and "certain other monuments" were erected in Albania in honor of Jason (Iason, Jazon), the leader of the Argonauts. Cornelius Tacitus (1st–2nd centuries AD) and Gaius Julius Solinus (3rd century AD) report that the Albanians believed themselves to be descended from Jason, originating from Thessaly [Корнелий Тацит, 1986, с.42; Гай Юлий Солин, 1986, с.91]. Pompeius Trogus (1st century BC – 1st century AD) notes that the deified Jason's fame was regarded with jealousy in the ancient world, and one of Alexander the Great's generals even ordered the destruction of all the Jason temples in the East to prevent him from being regarded as superior to Alexander.

Another deity worshipped in Albania, borrowed from the ancient world, was Bacchus, the Roman god of fertility and wine. This is mentioned by Dionysius Periegetes (1st–2nd centuries AD) [Дионисий, 1948, фр.652-710].

The turning point in the development of ancient Albania's multi-faceted culture occurred in the year 56 AD [Xəlilov, 2011, s.29]. In that year, Saint Eliseus, a disciple of the apostle Thaddeus, received the blessing of Saint James, the first Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the city of Jerusalem (Al-Quds) and was sent to Albania. There, in the settlement of Gis (modern-day Kish village in the Shaki district), he built the first Christian church in the Caucasus [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 6].

Thus, in the late antiquity period, the foundation was laid for the transformation of Albania's multi-faceted, polytheistic culture into a monotheistic one.

The development directions of Albania's cultural environment in the early medieval period were marked by diversity. During this period, three main cultures emerged in the territory of Albania: Albanian Christian culture, Albanian pagan culture, and Massagetae-Hun culture.

The first Arsacid rulers (the last quarter of the 3rd century – early 4th century), Vachagan I the Brave and Vache I, were pagans. Despite this, the formation of Albanian Christian culture and the activities of Albanian catholicoi continued against this background. It is known that Saint Eliseus, who established Christianity in Albania, was only able to spread the religion in the northern part of the country [Каранкатваци, 1861, I: 9]. Historical information suggests that the first successful Christian missionary work in southern Albania was carried out by the Albanian catholicos Lazarus (late 3rd century – early 4th century). Lazarus founded the fortified settlement of Lazarabad and the church of Saint Pantaleon in a place called Bagamejk between the cities of Barda and Beylagan [Киракос Гандзакечи, 1976, глава 11] [Мхитар Гош, 1960, с.8]. A Lazarus's actions in a political environment where Christianity had not yet been declared the state religion and a pagan ruler was still in power indicate a relatively normal state of pagan-Christian relations in the country.

In 326 AD, when Urnayr, the third member in the list of the Arsacid dynasty rulers, declared Christianity the state religion, it was a decisive moment for elevating Christian culture to a prominent position [Xəlilov, 2011, s.37-38]. This was an extremely bold political decision. It should be remembered that at that time, Albania was part of the Zoroastrian-worshipping Sassanid Empire of Iran, and Urnayr himself was married to the sister of Sassanid ruler Shapur II [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 11].

Both Urnayr and the other Christian rulers from the Arsacid dynasty, until the reign of Vachagan III the Pious, demonstrated tolerance toward paganism, avoiding any violent measures. They "either could not win pagan Albanians over or simply did not regard them" [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 25]. Among the Arsacid rulers, the only exception to this policy of leniency toward Albanian paganism was Vachagan III the Pious (who came to power in 488 AD). He applied torture methods in his fight against pagans, anticipating the European Inquisition by seven centuries [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 24, 25] However, even this ruler did not immediately punish pagans, issuing "repeated warnings" to them in the name of the state [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 24]. It is possible that one factor that influenced his patience was that the Iranian ruler, Sassanid Balash (Walakhsh), around 488 AD, declared religious freedom in the territory of the Iranian Empire [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 24].

During the Arsacid period, there were almost no restrictions on the activities of foreign missionaries who were not considered heretical. For example, around 338 AD, Syrian monks built a monastery (vang) in the village of Haku in Albania [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 10]. Syrian-origin names were common among Albania's clergy: Shuphalesha, meaning "Glory to Jesus" [Никоноров, 2005, с.179]. Kardost, meaning "Called by God" [Путешественники об Азербайджане, 1961, с.20]. It is possible that these individuals (the Archbishop of Barda and the Bishop of Aran) were of Syrian ethnic origin and worked within the Albanian church structures. As a point of comparison, it is worth noting that the Christian rulers of various dynasties in Albania, unlike the Albanian clergy, largely retained their national names from the pagan era, with only a few minor exceptions. It is undeniable that Saint Gregory of Parthian origin played a significant role in King Urnayr's decision to declare Christianity as the state religion in Albania [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 11]. When

Saint Gregory visited the region of Haband in Albania as a religious missionary, he laid the foundation of a church in the city of Amaras and provided skilled workers and laborers for its construction [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 10]. His grandson, Saint Grigoris, served as the religious leader of both Georgia and Albania until 337 AD, establishing churches in towns and villages and appointing clergy to church positions [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 10]. Before Grigoris, it is believed that a bishop from the city of Rome may have overseen religious affairs in Albania [Каганкатвацци, 1861, I: 11]. During the 5th century, the renowned Armenian educator Mesrop Mashtots was active in Albania for a time [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 15, 16], spreading Christianity and conducting alphabet reforms.

Several factors suggest that the Albanians had their own alphabet before the 5th century [Xəlilov, 2011, s.219-220]. The Albanians were among the few peoples in the world with their own script [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 3]. This is confirmed by inscriptions from Mingachevir, Ninotsminda (Georgia), the palimpsests from the Monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai, and the written items belonging to Albanians mentioned in *The History of Albania*, among others [Xəlilov, 2011, s.220-223]. Considering the settlement of 26 ethnically diverse tribes in Albania, experts consider it possible that there may have been not just one, but several indigenous alphabets in use simultaneously in the country [Меликсет-Бек, 1957, с.59]. According to *The History of Albania*, Mesrop Mashtots worked on creating alphabets corresponding to the languages of not only for the Gargar tribe but also for other unnamed mountain tribes of Albania [Каганкатвацци, 1861, I: 27]. The Albanian Apostolic Church also dealt with alphabet-related issues in foreign countries. In 528 AD, Bishop Kardost of Aran, while among the northern Huns, “prepared a script in the Hun language” [Xəlilov, 2011, s.73, 234; Путешественники об Азербайджане, 1961, с.21]. Pahlavi inscriptions of a construction-related nature have been recorded on the walls of the city of Derbent, which served as the northern stronghold of Albania [Гаджиев, Касумова, 2006]. Historical sources also mention a Greek inscription, made in the name of Byzantine Emperor Marcian (450–457 AD), on the walls of Derbent, but this construction-related inscription has not survived to the present day [Тревер, 1959, с.273-274].

In general, the population of early medieval Albania had a great interest in education and literacy. It is known that Catholicos Viro (595–629 AD) was fluent in Persian and engaged in translation work [Kalankatuklu, 1993, II: 14]. By the end of the 7th century, an Albanian cleric was known to be proficient in both the Syrian and Armenian languages [Kalankatuklu, 1993, II: 32]. *The History of Albania* also mentions a figure from the 560s–590s referred to as “Ezekiel, a lover of books” [Kalankatuklu, 1993, II: 2]. During the time of Vachagan III the Pious, a widely circulated moral story concerned an Albanian monk. *The History of Albania* states: “Our guest then rose, took the goblet, and left. He later sold the goblet, earned some money, and entered a school, using the money to study [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 29]. Later, after a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, this person returned to the house in Amaras where he had stolen the goblet, repaid its value, and asked for forgiveness for his sin [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 29].

Regardless of whether they represented the Dyophysite or Monophysite doctrine, Alban clergy could hold various positions within church structures. For example, during the time of Catholicos Abbas, while the Albanian Church was officially Dyophysite, there were Monophysite bishops among the clergy [Каганкатвацци, 1861, II: 7, 8]. In a 704 AD list of Albanian nobles, a nobleman residing in Cambisena who adhered to the Jacobite sect is mentioned [Каганкатвацци, 1861, III: 10].

The presence of various Christian sects in Albania was one of the factors enriching Albanian Christian culture. For instance, Dyophysite and Monophysite churches could be distinguished by the height of the altar area. In Dyophysite churches, the priest was physically closer to the congregation, reflecting the Dyophysite belief in Christ’s dual nature as both human and divine. In contrast, Monophysites, who viewed Christ’s divine and human natures as inseparable, constructed their altars at a higher elevation, signifying the priest, as a representative of Christ, standing above the congregation [Керимов, Стурфиел, 2003, с.132]. Therefore, when an Albanian church transitioned from Dyophysitism to Monophysitism, or vice versa, the first renovations took place in the altar area [Kalankatuklu, 1993, III: 1; Alişov, 2014, s.11]. There was another distinguishing feature between Dyophysite and Monophysite churches. Between the second half

of the 6th century and the 9th century, frescoes were frowned upon in Monophysite churches in the South Caucasus [Мамедова, 2004, с.57]. In other words, frescoes were primarily characteristic of Dyophysite churches. Seven types of Christian churches have been recorded in the territory of Albania: 1) single-nave rectangular, 2) three-nave basilica, 3) cruciform, 4) circular, 5) three-hall, 6) cave, and 7) semi-underground churches [Xəlilov, 2011, s.248]. Additionally, *The History of the Albania* mentions the existence of portable sanctuary (tabernacle), which form an eighth type [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 26]. Among these, the fifth type (three-hall churches) was observed exclusively among Dyophysites. The emergence of such structures was connected to the necessity for several daily divine services in Dyophysite churches and the prohibition against conducting multiple divine services in the same location [Мамедова, 2004, с.91].

The discovery of seven different types of crosses in Albanian Christian monuments is one of the indicators of the richness of this culture [Xəlilov, 2011, s.210-212].

Albanian Christian culture is represented by nine types of graves: 1) earth graves; 2) mudbrick graves; 3) baked brick vaults; 4) catacomb graves; 5) tile graves; 6) cist graves; 7) stone crypts; 8) stone sarcophagi and 9) rock crypts [Xəlilov, 2011, s.189-207]. It is presumed that each grave type may have belonged to a specific ethnic group. When Vachagan III the Pious gathered clergy from different parts of Albania at Amaras to search for the grave of Saint Grigoris, “the sound of prayers being recited in various languages was so overwhelming that it seemed as though the earth itself was singing these prayers with a sweet voice” [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 28]. Among these were both local tribes and incoming tribes that had settled in Albania and accepted Christianity [Xəlilov, 2011, s.65-83]. This environment created fertile ground for the development of a multi-layered culture.

In Albanian pagan culture, four main types of graves and one syncretic grave type have been identified: 1) earth graves; 2) jar graves; 3) clay coffin graves; 4) cist graves, as well as a syncretic clay coffin + cist grave type [Xəlilov, 2009, s.23-48]. The syncretic grave type likely indicates the blending of two pagan Albanian tribes. The presence of both earth and cist graves among both Christians and pagans may, in some cases, suggest that parts of the same tribe were divided, with some members being Christian and others remaining pagan. Pagan tribes within the Albanian tribal union did not always avoid churches. *The History of Albania* notes that those afflicted with fever would come to the church in the city of Tsri, where sacred relics were buried, take a handful of earth, and despite being pagans, “many of them would find healing” [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 26]. Seeking healing from graves was undoubtedly a remnant of pagan beliefs. It is interesting that during the reign of Vachagan III the Pious, the archaic belief in the healing powers of graves still persisted among Christians in the settlement of Amaras. “Infertile women would come to the grave, take a handful of soil, and then become pregnant and give birth; those suffering from fevers and other illnesses would also fully recover after touching the soil from the grave” [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 29]. Other aspects of the pagan past also remained among Albanian Christians. For example, in the Albanian poet Davdagh’s *Elegy on the Death of Javanshir*, he describes how Javanshir “drives the chariot of Mars to the stars” [Kalankatuklu, 1993, II: 37]. Mars, as is known, was the ancient pagan Roman god of war. The 5th–6th century author Priscian referred to the Albanians as “the warlike sons of wrathful Mars” [Присциан, 1986, с.104, фп.644-721].

Three types of graves belonging to the Massagetae-Hun culture are known: 1) kurgans; 2) catacombs; and 3) earth graves. The spread of catacomb and earth graves among Christians is clear evidence that some of the incoming “nomadic” tribes had accepted Christianity in Albania.

The diversity of grave types reflects the coexistence of different tribes (both local and foreign) in Albania, each contributing to the creation of their own culture. In several burial monuments in Albania (Mingachevir, Gabala, Govurgala, Yedditepe), both pagan and Christian graves have been found. This indicates that Christian and pagan communities lived peacefully together in Albania, without religious affiliation being a source of conflict. Anthropologists have identified individuals of Mongoloid origin buried in sites such as Uchtepe [Гинзбург, 1965, с.192-193], and Mingachevir [Касимова, 1984, с.83, 95]. In fact, the discovery of Mongoloid individuals buried in the same monuments as Europoids (Caucasian race) in

Mingachevir confirms that racial discrimination did not exist in Albania. In one catacomb grave chamber in Mingachevir, both male skeletons with artificially deformed skulls characteristic of northern “nomadic” peoples and a female skeleton with a normal skull were found [Nərimanov, Aslanov, 1962, s.227] suggesting the existence of mixed marriages between different ethnic groups in Albania. It seems that the marriage of Albanian ruler Javanshir to the daughter of a pagan Hun ruler in 664 AD [Kalankatuklu, 1993, II: 29] was not a coincidence. With the state decree issued by Albanian ruler Varaz-Tiridates in 681/2 AD, the prohibition on Albanians marrying Huns was entirely lifted [Каганкатвацци, 1861, II: 39]. Even before Javanshir’s time, marriages between representatives of various ruling dynasties did not take religious affiliation into account. For example, Christian Albanian Arsacids (the father of Vache II and Vachagan III the Pious, Vache II himself, and Urnayr) entered into marriages with the Zoroastrian-serving Sassanids of Iran [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 21], Similarly, Christian Aranshahiks married representatives of the early Mehranids, a Zoroastrian branch of the Sassanids [Kalankatuklu, 1993, II: 13]. These mixed marriages demonstrate that in the South Caucasus, when rulers from different dynasties entered into marriage, it was political interests, not ethnic that were taken into account. Javanshir’s marriage to the daughter of the Sunni ruler and his sister Yelena’s marriage to the Armenian commander Grigor Mamikonian [Kalankatuklu, 1993, II: 19; II: 40, s.226] were political events of this nature.

In the cities of Albania, it was common for ethnically and religiously diverse groups to cohabit. In the capital city of Barda during the early 7th century, the peaceful coexistence of Christian, pagan, and Jewish communities was recorded in written sources [Kalankatuklu, 1993, II: 9]. In the context of external aggression against Albania, it was a significant achievement that Zechariah, a priest of Barda, protected the lives of individuals from various religious communities—without discrimination—through prayer, offering hostages, and other measures. Due to his efforts during these difficult times, the Albanian clergy elected him as Catholicos in 629 AD [Kalankatuklu, 1993, II: 9]. The population of Tsri during the reign of Vachagan III the Pious included Christian Albanians, pagan chilib tribes, and Zoroastrian Persians [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 26]. These tribes, including pagan Khazar-Hun tribes, also lived in the grand city of Derbent. At the same time, it is important to note that some cities were named after specific ethnic groups: Gargar, Masgat (city of the Massagetae), and Abkhaz (city of the Apasiacae, a tribe of the Massagetae). Certain regions of Albania were also named after ethnic groups, such as Sakasene and Caspiana. Some Albanian tribes enjoyed a degree of autonomy within the centralized state, including the principalities of Gargar, Uti, Tsovd, and Girdiman [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 5]. The eleven mountain kings who supported the Albanian ruler during Vache II’s famous revolt against the Sassanids [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 21] likely represented a group from the 26 tribes that made up the Albanian union. One of the bishoprics of the Albanian Church, Balasakan [Kalankatuklu, 1993, II: 3], was ruled by its own ruler in the 5th century [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I: 20].

The early medieval period in Albania concludes with two significant events: in 704 AD, the Armenian and Albanian churches signed a union agreement in the city of Barda, and during the Church Council of Barda, the newly elected Albanian Catholicos, Simeon I (704–706 AD), had his church code confirmed [Kalankatuklu, 1993, III: 6-9]. This union between the Armenian and Albanian churches can be referred to as the Armenian-Albanian Church Union or simply the Barda Church Union. The union was based on the principle of equality in all areas, with the only advantage for the Armenians being that the Armenian Catholicos presided over the union [Kalankatuklu, 1993, III: 6]. The most important provisions in Simeon I’s church code were those the articles that guaranteed the protection of the Albanian Christian culture both within the country and abroad, as well as the property of the Albanian Apostolic Church. Under Simeon I’s laws, when a village containing a church was sold, the church and its lands were listed separately as property in the deeds, making it impossible for them to be sold with the village. In this regard, all civil and secular documents were considered invalid and unlawful in comparison to church documents [Kalankatuklu, 1993, III: 9]. The protection of the property of the Albanian Apostolic Church meant the preservation of the Albanian Christian cultural domain.

REFERENCES:

1. Alışov N.Ə. Azərbaycan Albaniyasının xristian abidələri (Arxeoloji materiallar əsasında) (*Christian Monuments of Azerbaijani Albania (Based on archaeological materials)*): Tarix üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru disser. avtoreferatı. Bakı, 2014.
2. Xəlilov M.C. Albaniyanın qəbir abidələri (IV–X əsrlər) (*Grave Monuments of Albania (4th–10th centuries)*). Bakı: Nafta-Press, 2009, 324 s.
3. Xəlilov M.C. Albaniyanın xristian abidələri (IV–X əsrlər) (*Christian Monuments of Albania (4th–10th centuries)*). Bakı: Xəzər Universiteti nəşriyyatı, 2011, 344 s.
4. Xəlilov M.C. Antik Albaniyanın nəzəri arxeologiyası XX–XXI əsrlərin qovuşuğunda (*Theoretical Archaeology of Ancient Albania at the Turn of the 20th–21st centuries*) // Azərbaycan arxeologiyası, 6-cı cild, №1-4, 2004, s.31-37.
5. Kalankatuklu Moisey. Albaniya tarixi. Mxitar Qoş. Alban salnaməsi (*The History of Albania. Mkhitar Gosh. The Albanian Chronicle*) / Müqəddimə, tərcümə, qeyd və şərhlər akad. Ziya Bünyadovundur. Bakı: Elm, 1993, 270 s.
6. Nərimanov İ.H., Aslanov Q.M. Mingəçevirin bir qrup qəbir abidələri haqqında (*On a Group of Grave Monuments of Mingachevir*) / Azərbaycanın Maddi Mədəniyyəti. IV Cild. Bakı: Az.SSR EA nəşriyyatı, 1962, s.217-249.
7. Абрамова М.П. О пережитках культа двойной секиры в раннесредневековом Дагестане (*On the Remnants of the Cult of the Double Axe in Early Medieval Dagestan*) / Археологический сборник. Труды Гос. Истор. Музея, вып. 40. Москва: «Советская Россия», 1966, с.89-96.
8. Аполлодор. О богах (*On the Gods*)//Латышев В.В. Известия древних писателей о Скифии и Кавказе // Вестник древней истории, №3, 1947, с.305.
9. Гаджиев М.С., Касумова С.Ю. Среднеперсидские надписи Дербента VI века (*Middle Persian Inscriptions of Derbent from the 6th century*). Москва: Изд-кая фирма «Восточная литература» РАН, 2006.
10. Гай Юлий Солин. Сборник достопримечательностей (*Collection of Landmarks*) / Алиев К.Г. Античные источники по истории Азербайджана. Баку: Элм, 1986, с.91-93.
11. Гандзакеци Киракос. История Армении (*History of Armenia*) / Пер. с древнеарм. яз., предисловие и комментарий Л.А.Ханларяна. Москва: Наука, 1976, 357 с.
12. Геродот. История в девяти книгах (*History in Nine Books*) / Перевод и примеч. Г.А.Стратановского. Ленинград: Наука, 1972, 600 с.
13. Гинзбург В.В. Антропологическая характеристика черепа человека из впускного погребения в кургане №3 в урочище Уч-тепе (*Anthropological Characteristics of the Skull from the Secondary Burial in Mound No. 3 in the Uchtepe Locality*) / Материалы по археологии СССР, №125. Труды Азербайджанской археологической экспедиции, т.II. 1956-1960 гг. М.-Л.: Наука, 1965, с.192-193.
14. Дионисий. Описание населенной земли (*Description of the Inhabited Land*) / Латышев В.В. Известия древних писателей о Скифии и Кавказе // Вестник древней истории, №1, 1948, с.236-241.
15. Евтропий. Бrevиарий от основания города (*Breviary from the Foundation of the City*) /Алиев К.Г. Античные источники по истории Азербайджана. Баку: Элм, 1986, с.100-101.
16. История Древнего Востока (*History of the Ancient East*) / Под ред. И.М.Дьяконова. Часть первая. Месопотамия. М., 1983, 534 с.
17. Йакут ал-Хамави. Хамдаллах Казвини. Му'джам ал-булдан. Сведения об Азербайджане (*Information about Azerbaijan*). Нузхат ал-кулуб. Материалы по Азербайджану (*Materials on Azerbaijan*). Баку: Элм, 1983.
18. Каганкатваци Моисей. История агван (*History of the Agvans*) / Пер. с древнеармян. яз. К.Патканова. СПб.: типография Импер. Академии наук, 1861, 376 с.
19. [Каллисфен]. Жизнь и деяния Александра Македонского ([*Callisthenes*]. *The Life and Deeds of Alexander*) / Латышев В.В. Известия древних писателей о Скифии и Кавказе // Вестник древней истории, №3, 1947, с.246-249.
20. Касимова Р.М. К этногенезу азербайджанского народа по данным антропологии (*On the Ethnogenesis of the Azerbaijani People Based on Anthropological Data*) / К проблеме этногенеза азербайджанского народа. Баку, 1984, с.69-101.

21. Керимов В., Стурфиел Б. Киш. История, архитектура, археология (*Kish: History, Architecture, Archaeology*). Баку: Чашьюглу, 2003, 184 с.
22. Клавдий Птолемей. Географическое руководство (*Geographical Guide*) / Латышев В.В. Известия древних писателей о Скифии и Кавказе // Вестник древней истории, №2, 1948, с.231-257.
23. Корнелий Тацит. Анналы (*Annals*) / Алиев К.Г. Античные источники по истории Азербайджана. Баку: Элм, 1986, с.39-49.
24. Мамедова Г.Г. Зодчество Кавказской Албании (*Architecture of Caucasian Albania*). Баку: Чашьюглу, 2004, 224 с.
25. Меликсет-Бек Л.М. К вопросу о генезисе армянского, грузинского и албанского алфавитов (*On the Question of the Genesis of the Armenian, Georgian, and Albanian Alphabets*) / Материалы по истории Азербайджана, т. II. Труды Музея Истории Азербайджана. Баку, 1957, с.45-68.
26. Мхитар Гош. Албанская хроника (*Albanian Chronicle*) / Предисловие, перевод и комментарии З.М.Буниятова. Баку: Изд-во АН Аз.ССР, 1960, 34 с.
27. Никандр. Превращения (*Metamorphoses*) / Латышев В.В. Известия древних писателей о Скифии и Кавказе // Вестник древней истории, №3, 1947, с.302-303.
28. Никоноров Алексей, иеромонах. История христианства в Кавказской Албании (*History of Christianity in Caucasian Albania*). Баку: Нурлан, 2005, 204 с.
29. Павел Оросий. Историй против язычников 7 книг (*Seven Books Against the Pagans*) / Алиев К.Г. Античные источники по истории Азербайджана. Баку: Элм, 1986, с.102-103.
30. Помпей Трог. Филипповы истории (*Histories of Philip*) / Алиев К.Г. Античные источники по истории Азербайджана. Баку: Элм, 1986, с. 82-85.
31. Помпоний Мела. Землеописание (*Description of the Earth*) / Алиев К.Г. Античные источники по истории Азербайджана. Баку: Элм, 1986, с.86-88.
32. Присциан. Землеописание (*Description of the Earth*) / Алиев К.Г. Античные источники по истории Азербайджана. Баку: Элм, 1986, с.104-105.
33. Путешественники об Азербайджане (*Travelers on Azerbaijan*) / Под ред. Э.М.Шахмалиева. Том 1. Баку: Изд-во АН Аз.ССР, Баку, 1961, 500 с.
34. Саадиев Ш.М. Об устойчивых элементах словарного состава крызского языка (Имена существительные) (*On the Stable Elements of the Lexical Composition of the Kryz Language (Nouns)*) / Изв. АН Аз.ССР. Серия общ. наук, №1, 1959, с.111-119.
35. Страбон. География в 17 книгах (*Geography in 17 Books*) / Пер. с др.-греч., статья и комментарии Г.А.Стратановского. Л.: Наука, 1964, 944 с.
36. Тревер К.В. Очерки по истории и культуре Кавказской Албании (*Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania*). М.-Л.: Ленинградское отделение Изд-ва Академии наук СССР, 1959, 392 с.
37. Халилов Дж.А. Кавказская Албания (*Caucasian Albania*) / Раздел книги «Древнейшие государства Кавказа и Средней Азии» авторского коллектива. М.: Наука, 1985а, с.93-105, 164-175.
38. Халилов Дж.А. Материальная культура Кавказской Албании (IV в. до н.э. – III в. н.э.) (*Material Culture of Caucasian Albania (4th century BC – 3rd century AD)*). Баку: Элм, 1985, 236 с.
39. Халилов Дж.А. О раннесредневековом могильнике у села Эных Кусарского района (*On the Early Medieval Cemetery Near the Village of Anykh, Gusar District*) / Археологические исследования в Азербайджане (Сборник статей). Баку: Изд-во АН Аз.ССР, 1965, с.175-179.
40. Эврипид. Ифигения в Тавриде (*Iphigenia in Tauris*) / Латышев В.В. Известия древних писателей о Скифии и Кавказе // Вестник древней истории, № 2, 1947, с.289-291.
41. Юлий Капитолин. Два Валериана (*The two Valerians*) / Алиев К.Г. Античные источники по истории Азербайджана. Баку: Элм, 1986, с.94.
42. Ямпольский З.И. Древняя Албания. III–I вв. до н.э. (*Ancient Albania. 3rd–1st centuries BC*). Баку: АН Аз.ССР, 1962, 383 с.

Kuranov Artem*Candidate of Philological Sciences, Independent researcher
(RUSSIAN FEDERATION, Moscow)*

CAUCASIAN ALBANIA: REVISITING THE ALBANIANS AND THE UDIS / UTIANS

Abstract. In this article, the author examines a number of contentious issues concerning the place and role of the Udi, one of the oldest autochthonous tribes of Caucasian Albania, within the union of Caucasian Albanian tribes, as well as questions regarding their settlement territory, particularly on the right bank of the Kura River. The article highlights the tendentiousness, bias, and lack of objectivity of many contemporary Armenian authors who address the history of Caucasian Albania. At the same time, the author supports the views of several renowned scholars that the Udis historically inhabited the territory between the Kura and Aras rivers and that the Caucasian Albanian language and script originated from the ancient Udi language.

Keywords: Caucasian Albania, Albanians, Utik, the Udis/Utians, the Udi language

From the earliest written sources, Caucasian Albania is mentioned as a country representing a union of Caspian and other tribes and peoples, which emerged as a confederative association with the aim of “consolidating forces to resist attacks from Armenia, as well as from northern nomadic tribes” [Тревер, 1959, с.56.]. At the same time, this was the result of prolonged cross-cultural communication [Аликберов, Мудрак, 2019, с.213-231].

Among the tribes that were part of Caucasian Albania, the Udis are mentioned in ancient sources earlier than all others – specifically by Herodotus in the 5th century BC. The Albanians themselves are first mentioned in ancient written monuments in connection with events of the 4th century BC. The designation Uti/Udi is used both as an ethnic name and as the name of the region Otena/Uti/Utik. When addressing the question of the settlement area of the Utians/Udis in the period of antiquity and considering the viewpoints of many researchers based on the accounts of ancient historians – who in turn relied on the report of Patrocles – K.V.Trever emphasizes that Patrocles surveyed the Caspian coast only from the sea, and therefore “could become acquainted only with that part of the Utians who lived in the coastal mountainous regions, whereas the main part of this tribe occupied the left and right banks of the Kura River (below the mouth of the Alazani)” [Тревер, 1959, с.44].

Researchers of ancient sources consider the 4th–3rd centuries BC as the time when the country of Albania formed as a union of tribes. However, the data from written monuments do not prevent modern Armenian authors from asserting that Albania as a unified state emerged only in the 1st century BC. Indicative in this regard is the viewpoint of A.A.Akopyan, who in one of his articles mentions the 1st century BC in the first paragraph, and then immediately in the second paragraph writes that in another of his works he has “argued the hypothesis that already in the 3rd century BC the Derbent Pass was considered the northeastern border of the country of the ‘Albanians’” [Акопян, 2015, с.129-130].

Modern Armenian historians are making every effort to exclude and erase the Udis from the history of the South Caucasus and Caucasian Albania, aiming to refute the assumptions of many renowned scholars about the important role and significant place of the Udis in this region over the past nearly three millennia. The northeastern borders of Albania are generally not a subject of dispute among scholars, which cannot be said about the southern border, specifically the right bank of the Kura River.

G.Ayvazyan's approach to this issue is highly illustrative. In one of his publications, he presents the viewpoints of well-known Soviet scholars (K.V.Trever, N.V.Pigulevskaya, Z.I.Yampolsky, G.A.Klimov, O.I.Vinogradov, A.G.Shanidze, I.M.Dyakonov, G.A.Melikishvili, L.Gumilev, V.Gukasyan, I.Petrushevsky, Y.B.Koryakov, I.G.Aliyev, R.Malikov, V.N.Leviatov, Z.Bunyadov, A.P.Novoseltsev), Armenian scholars (A.S.Vartapetov, K.P.Patkanian, J.A.Orbeli, N.G.Adontz, S.T.Yeremian, H.Kharatyan), American researchers of Armenian origin (R.G.Suny, Leo (A.G.Babakhanyan), G.Bournoutian), and other foreign researchers and authors (H.Hübschmann and J.Markwart, R.Hewsen, W.Schulze, the early medieval Syrian author Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, and Arab authors). The essence of their viewpoints boils down to the fact that on the right bank of the Kura River – in Utik, Artsakh, Khachen, and partly Syunik – there lived autochthonous tribes of Caucasian Albanian origin who spoke the Albanian language. Moreover, many of these authors identify the Udis/Utians with the Albanians and the Udi language with Albanian. However, at the conclusion of his article, he writes that “in the 1960s–1980s, Albanology in Armenia underwent further scientific development. Fundamental monographs by A.Mnatsakanyan, B.Ulubabyan, G.Svazian, S.Smbatyan, A.Akopyan, and others were published. The works of these authors are very balanced and deeply argued. They share a common goal to demonstrate the fact that territorially, politically, culturally, ethnically, and by faith, the right-bank so-called “Albania” is Northeastern Armenia. Armenian researchers convincingly prove that throughout the entire antiquity, the Kura River was the political boundary between Albania and Greater Armenia, and that the population of right-bank, Armenian Albania was originally – i.e., from the moment of the formation of the ancient Armenian ethnos – Armenian. Under conditions of harsh ideological confrontation, Armenian historians largely managed to maintain adherence to principles of scientific rigor... Through their works... they have significantly deepened and expanded the knowledge of world science in the field of the history and culture of Armenian Albania (the right bank of the Kura) and Albania proper on its left bank” [Айвазян, 2016, с.3-24].

How can one speak of “balance”, “deep argumentation”, and “scientific rigor” when these authors have a predetermined common goal – to **“demonstrate the fact that territorially, politically, culturally, ethnically, and by faith, the right-bank so-called ‘Albania’ is Northeastern Armenia”?**!

It is also noteworthy that with phrases like “The works of these Armenian researchers are quite balanced and deeply argued” and that they “managed to maintain adherence to the principles of scientific rigor”, the author apparently emphasizes the absence of all these listed principles in the studies and publications of the aforementioned group of scholars and historians.

In the mentioned article, G.Ayvazyan considers the “Udi ethnic group well-known and studied, including in Armenia”, and in a footnote, he cites A.A.Akopyan and his work “Albania-Aluank in Greco-Latin and ancient Armenian sources” as an example. It is appropriate to note that this “expert on the history of the Udi ethnic group” in the above work placed the ancient and early medieval Udis on the shores of the Strait of Hormuz, in the Caspian regions, in Western Albania, and to the north of Derbent. At the same time, he suggests that “the term ‘Uti’ (‘Udi’) in East Caucasian languages meant some concept very convenient for designating ethnic units, one’s own or a foreign tribe (like ‘Aryans’ and ‘Anariaks’ among Iranian peoples), and, as a result, it (the term) became the name of a number of Lezgin-speaking or neighboring tribes. In any case, we see that two tribes in coastal Dagestan and one tribe in Western Albania were called so (assuming that modern Udis descend from one of the Albanian tribes that lived in the same Kutkashen-Shaki area during antiquity)” [Акопян, 1987, с.80]. The only place where A.A.Akopyan refuses to place the Udis is, as he writes, “the province of Utik in the northeast of the kingdom of Greater Armenia”. Having considered the question of the connection of the ethnonym ‘Udi’ with the name of the province Utik, acknowledging the phonetic and graphic correspondence of these terms and that “many researchers consider it an indisputable fact that the toponym ‘Utik’ originated from the name of the ancient Udis/Utis, who lived, in their opinion, both on the left and right banks of the Kura River”, he cites three absolutely frivolous reasons that “nevertheless make one treat such identification with caution”. Moreover, he comes to the conclusion that “at least from the 4th century BC onward, it is impossible to speak of the habitation of non-Armenian, and therefore Udi, population in the territory of the province of Utik”. And the explanation he proposes

for the name of the province is as follows: "The province of Utik received its name because it was located opposite the left-bank Udis-Utians" [Акопян, 1987, с.81-83]. In the conclusion of his work, he emphasizes that "the opinion of certain researchers that the Caspians, Gargarians, Mycians, and Utians – well-known from ancient and medieval texts – were among the 26 Albanian tribes is not confirmed by a comprehensive analysis of the sources". But he immediately makes an exception for the Udis: "However, regarding the Utians, a reservation should be made. The material about Lezgin-speaking tribes with the same name living in an area neighboring the Albanian kingdom allows us to reconstruct the ancient Albanian tribe of Utians/Udis also in central Albania, in the area where modern Udis reside" [Акопян, 1987, с.273].

A.A.Akopyan's attitude towards Caucasian Albania and the Albanians is also clearly manifested in his analysis and evaluation of the invaluable historical work titled "History of Albania" by Movses Daskhurantsi, which he presented in Chapter III of his work [Акопян, 1987, с.150-272]. Let us recall that practically all Armenian researchers regard the "History of Albania" as an invaluable ancient Armenian source. Initially, the author also demonstrates that this is a genuinely Armenian written monument, authored by an Armenian in Classical Armenian. Then he lists and analyzes numerous changes, corrections, and additions that were introduced into this source by scribes, including the time of enlightenment (i.e., conversion to Christianity) of Albania, pushing this event from the apostolic era to a time after the Christianization of Armenia. He also notes the presence of contradictions, "which cannot be attributed to the author of the work". Further, he demonstrates that Movses Daskhurantsi took certain parts, the most important information, from other Armenian sources (Movses Khorenatsi and others). And in the end, he accuses the author of being a "historian, an advocate of the Albanian Church", obsessed with an "Albanian worldview", and therefore making significant changes to the information borrowed from other Armenian sources, promoting "Albanian ideas," the independence of Albania and the Albanian Church. From the materials presented by A.A.Akopyan, one can conclude that the scribes did not copy the original text but "edited" or "corrected" it, and in fact deliberately distorted the facts presented in the "History of Albania". And these distortions began from the very first scribe who worked with the original manuscript of the "History of Albania". A.A.Akopyan gives the "History of Albania" such characteristics that are suitable only for an alien, hostile, falsified source. Reading his analysis and evaluation, only one conclusion can be made: the authenticity, that is, the genuineness of the text of the "History of Albania" that has come down to us in Classical Armenian is out of question. He has effectively destroyed the "History of Albania" as a source! From Akopyan's interpretation, it can be deduced that the Armenian scribes transformed the original text into something more aligned with Armenian interests. The versions that have survived are not the genuine works of Movses Kaghankatvatsi or Movses Daskhurantsi, but rather significantly altered texts compiled by Lunkianos and other scribes. Given this, it's plausible that the original text, regardless of whether it was in Classical Armenian or Albanian, was deemed unnecessary by the Armenians and the Armenian Church and thus destroyed or concealed so deeply that its discovery is unlikely. It's also noteworthy that despite all these acknowledged distortions in the form of "corrections", "additions", "abridgments", and so on, modern Armenian scholars (S.Smbatyan, A.Mnatsakanyan, B.Ulubabyan, and others), who seem to find the scribes' work insufficient, continue to do the same through their own "interpretations" and "commentaries" on the "History of Albania", with the sole purpose of diminishing the significance of Caucasian Albania and the Albanian Church in the history of the South Caucasus, while glorifying everything Armenian [Смбатян, 1984, с.176-240].

Returning to the question of the place of the Albanians and Udis in the history of the South Caucasus and Caucasian Albania, it is worth once again recalling the viewpoints of authoritative scholars on this matter. G.A.Klimov writes that "the Armenian tradition identifies the historical Albanians with the modern Udis" [Климов, 1967, с.69]. A.P.Novoseltsev, in one of his works, states that "after the events of the 4th century, due to a number of reasons, the political, economic, and cultural center of Albania shifted to the right bank of the Kura River, to the regions of Gardman and Utik. Here, the new capital of Albania, Partav, was founded by King Vache..." One reason he gives is that "in the multi-ethnic Albanian kingdom, up until the 5th century, there was apparently no people who could become the hegemon in this state. This role fell

to the population of the right bank of the Kura, where in the 5th century, writing and literature emerged in one of the local languages" [Новосельцев, 1991, с.15]. However, it seems to us that the relocation of Albania's center to the right bank of the Kura would have been impossible without close contacts and connections, including ethno-cultural and kinship ties, between the populations of the right and left banks of the Kura. Moreover, the creation of writing and literature in the local language, specifically in Proto-Udi, refutes the claim by some modern Armenian scholars that the population of Utik and Artsakh by that time was entirely Armenian or Armenianized. Moreover, the relocation of Albania's center to the right bank of the Kura River and the emergence of writing in the Albanian/Proto-Udi language may indicate that the Udis/Albanians always lived on both the right and left banks and that connections between them were not interrupted. This viewpoint, in our opinion, aligns with the position of S.T.Eremyan, who writes: "...In the second half of the 5th century, a new capital of Albania emerged –the city of Partav, in the region of Utik. Partav, along with its region, occupied a central position in the country. The spoken language of Partav and its urban territory – the region of Utik – was Utian, i.e., the Udi language that has survived to the present day. Arab historians and geographers of the 9th–10th centuries referred to the language of Partav and its region as Arranian, i.e., Albanian, since the ethno-graphical term 'Arran' is another form of the same name 'Alvan', 'Alban'. Thus, the long-standing view that the Udi language, preserved to this day, originates from the Caucasian Albanian language can be considered true. Moreover, one can think that the term 'Albanians' is collective, encompassing a union of several tribes, among which the largest were the Utians, or Udis, several thousand of whom have survived to this day" [Еремян, 1958а, с.327]. S.T.Eremyan unambiguously believed that "the population of Albania, in terms of its ethnic composition, was very diverse. In the territory of the Albanian kingdom proper, i.e., left-bank Albania, the main population were the Albanians who had formed into a people and, in all likelihood, called themselves Utians (Udis)" [Еремян, 1958с, с.303].

However, for scholars, the question of the actual number of tribes within Caucasian Albania and to what extent the tribal names mentioned in sources are truly ancient ethnonyms, rather than names of population groups used to distinguish this group from other tribes or even fellow tribesmen, remains open. Two striking examples can be provided. Strabo mentions the tribal name "Anariaks" in the context of the city of Anariaka in the land of the Utians. K.V.Trever and other scholars, according to one interpretation, consider this term not an ethnic but a collective one, designating tribes that do not speak Iranian languages. As another example, we can cite information about the so-called tribe of Sevordiks in the region of Uti. Medieval sources mention a tribe called Sevordiks living in the territory of the Uti region. Researchers have proposed various hypotheses about the name of this tribe. For instance, S.T.Eremyan, in connection with the struggle of the inhabitants of Albania against the Arabs, writes that "in 752, the Sevordii (probably the present-day Ayrums) revolted..." [Еремян, 1958b, с.535]. I.G.Semenov, opposing V.F.Minorsky's suggestion of a connection between the Sevordiks and part of the Magyars who had migrated to Transcaucasia, considered the Sevordiks to be descendants of the Sabirs, Alans, and Bulgars captured and resettled in Transcaucasia by Khosrow I [Семёнов, 2015, с.238]. The renowned French Orientalist René Grousset, in his book "History of Ancient Armenia", frequently mentions the Sevordiks in connection with the events of the 9th century and the struggle against the Arabs. He writes: "In that same Aghuank, in the region of Uti, on the right bank of the Kura River, near Shamkor and the borders of Gugark to the west and near the borders of Artsakh to the south, lived a restless people, about whose origin little is known (Armenians or Georgians?), deeply devoted to the Christian faith. They were called Sevordik ('Black Threads'). The monasteries of the Sevordiks in Haghpat and Sanahin were famous, and many leaders of this people met a martyr's death at the hands of the Arabs" [Грыссе, 2022, с.406]. In Grousset's account, the Sevordiks are valiant, stern highlanders, whose battle axes made them formidable warriors, led by the prince of the Uti region, Stepanos Kun (referred to as Stepan Klia by F.Mammadova), with whom the Arabs of Caliph Mutawakkil had a personal vendetta. However, the solution to this question, it seems to us, can be found in the 10th-century Armenian author Vardan, who reports that Prince Stepan Klia originates from the Sevko-Ordik clan, which took its name from its progenitor. This may indicate that Sevordik is not an ethnonym

but a clan name. It is only unclear, though, why Grousset mentions Armenians or Georgians in this context. It is unlikely that such a prominent Armenologist, constantly referencing Armenian sources in his work, is unfamiliar with Vardan's chronicle! Or does René Grousset not consider the possibility that the prince of the Uti region and his kinsmen could be Utians/Udis?!

The discovery and decipherment of the Sinai palimpsests convincingly confirmed that a writing system and literature of the state emerged in the proto-Udi language. Y.Jafarov, who thoroughly studied the history of Caucasian Albania, notes that "in Aran (Northern Azerbaijan), for millennia, tribal communities (Albanians, Gelians, Legians, Utians, Gargarians, Sodians, Mycians, Balasanians, etc.) dominated, connected by origin and language to the substratum of the Caucasian-language ethnic mass", and concludes that the Gargarian dialect is a dialect of the Uti (Albanian) language, thus identifying the Udi and Albanian languages: "At the beginning of the 5th century, a national script was created in the 'guttural' Gargarian dialect of the Uti (Albanian) language, whose alphabet reflected the richness of phonetics (52 letters) of the ancient Udi language. This script existed until the Arab conquest (7th century) and the de-ethnization of the Albanian ethnic community (10th–11th centuries)" [Джафаров, 2021].

G.A.Klimov supports the hypothesis that "the 'Gargarian language', for which, according to historical tradition, Mesrop Mashtots and his Aghvan associates created a script, was either one of the ancient Udi dialects or closely related to the Udi language", emphasizing before that "calculations show that the statistical structure of the Aghvan text turns out to be very close to that of Udi and at the same time significantly differs from the corresponding parameters of the nearest related Lezgin languages (the statistical analysis was carried out on the text of the Udi translation of the Gospel by S.Bejanov)" [Климов, 1967, с.72].

Based on the results of deciphering the materials of the Sinai palimpsests, W.Schulze also confirms that the Caucasian-Albanian language corresponds most closely to the Udi language, although he still wonders: "The question remains open as to why today the descendants of the common 'Albanian' traditions, namely, the Udis in the villages of Nij and Vartashen/Oghuz in northern Azerbaijan, call themselves *udixo ~ udiux*", that is, Udis [Schulze, 2018, pp.288-311].

Speaking about the Albanian language, A.K.Alikberov notes: "Now there is no doubt about what exactly the sources understood under the Albanian language: it was the language recorded in the Albanian palimpsests, and it was precisely this language that dominated in the liturgical and partly administrative spheres in Albania in the 5th–8th centuries" [Аликберов, 2015, с.86].

The editors of the publication of the Sinai palimpsests date the Caucasian-Albanian texts to the period between the 7th and 10th centuries, considering the later dating more likely (I-32) [Майсак, 2010, с.95]. Hence, the materials of the palimpsest and this conclusion of the editors refute the conclusions of many researchers about the cessation of the use of the Caucasian-Albanian language and script from the late 7th–early 8th centuries, after the cessation of the existence of the unified state of Caucasian Albania.

Thus, the prevailing opinion in the scientific community that after the fall of the state, worship in Albanian churches completely switched to the Armenian language, the script was forgotten, and accordingly, books in the Caucasian-Albanian language ceased to be copied, and the manuscripts created before that time were completely destroyed, does not correspond to reality. The scant Albanian linguistic material (Albanian inscriptions on archaeological finds – candlesticks, stands/pedestals, etc.; names of Albanian months – the Udi calendar) that was available to scholars before the discovery and decipherment of the Sinai palimpsests, indicated that the Albanian script continued to be used in highly relevant segments of the daily life of society, meaning that, the Caucasian Albanian language was not only the language of the Albanian Church and the elite.

Based on the foregoing, we are entitled to consider W.Schulze's following statement in his work "Towards a History of Udi" to be absolutely objective and well-founded: "The fact that today we possess comprehensive data on a variant of the Udi language that was spoken 1,500 years ago makes this language historically the most documented East Caucasian language (recall that the earliest documented source on any other language of this language family dates, at best, to the 17th century)" [Schulze, 2005, pp.55-91].

REFERENCES:

1. Айвазян Г. К вопросу об этногенезе армян Азербайджана в свете албано-удинской проблематики (*On the Question of the Ethnogenesis of the Armenians of Azerbaijan in Light of the Albanian-Udi Issues*) / Сб. Историко-культурный вклад армян Гардмана и Ширвана история и современность). Ереван, 2016.
2. Аликберов А.К, Мудрак О.А. Исторические названия Албания, Алуанки и Алан в пространстве кросскультурной коммуникации (*Historical Names Albania, Aluank, and Alan in the Space of Cross-Cultural Communication*) / Вопросы ономастики. 2019. Т.16.
3. Аликберов А.К. Народы и языки Кавказской Албании. О языковом континууме как альтернативе койне. Язык письменности и «язык базара» (*The Peoples and Languages of Caucasian Albania. On the Linguistic Continuum as an Alternative to Koine. The Language of Writing and the 'Bazaar Language'*) / Сб. статей «Albania Caucasica». М. 2015. Т.1. М. 2015, с.81-116.
4. Акопян А.А. Албания-Алуанк в греко-латинских и древнеармянских источниках (*Albania-Aluank in Greco-Latin and Ancient Armenian Sources*). Ереван, 1987.
5. Акопян А.А. К хронологии завершения этноконсолидации удинов и лезгин (период ослабления Арабского халифата) (*On the Chronology of the Completion of Ethnic Consolidation of the Udis and Lezgins (Period of the Weakening of the Arab Caliphate)*) / Сб. статей «Albania Caucasica». Т.1. М., 2015, с.129-147.
6. Груссе Рене. История древней Армении (*History of Ancient Armenia*). М., 2022.
7. Джафаров Ю. История – корень современности (*History: The Root of Modernity*) / Интервью. Информационное агентство Turan. 6 июня 2021.
8. Еремян С.Т. Азербайджан (Албания) в период арабского владычества / Очерки истории СССР (III–IX вв.) (*Azerbaijan (Albania) During the Period of Arab Rule / Essays on the History of the USSR (3rd–9th centuries)*). М., 1958b.
9. Еремян С.Т. Идеология и культура Албании III–VII вв. (*Ideology and Culture of Albania in the 3rd–7th centuries*) / Очерки истории СССР (III–IX вв.). М., 1958a.
10. Еремян С.Т. Экономика и социальный строй Албании III–VII вв. (*Economy and Social Structure of Albania in the 3rd–7th centuries*) / Очерки истории СССР (III–IX вв.). М., 1958с.
11. Климов Г.А. К состоянию дешифровки агванской (кавказско-албанской) письменности (*On the State of Decipherment of the Aghvan (Caucasian Albanian) Script*) // Вопросы языкознания, 1967, №3.
12. Майсак Т. К публикации кавказско-албанских палимпсестов из Синайского монастыря (*On the Publication of the Caucasian Albanian Palimpsests from the Sinai Monastery*) // Вопросы языкознания, №6, 2010.
13. Новосельцев А.П. К вопросу о политической границе Армении и Кавказской Албании в античный период (*On the Question of the Political Border between Armenia and Caucasian Albania During the Period of Antiquity*) / Сб. «К освещению проблем истории и культуры Кавказской Албании и восточных провинций Армении». Составитель: П.М.Мурадян. Изд-во Ереван. гос. университета, 1991.
14. Семёнов И.Г. Кавказ в политических отношениях Ирана с Византией и Тюркским каганатом в 556–591 годах (*The Caucasus in the Political Relations of Iran with Byzantium and the Turkic Khaganate in 556–591*) // «Хазарский альманах», Т.13, Москва, 2015.
15. Смбатян Ш.В. Комментарии к изданию: Мовсэс Каланкатуаци. История страны Алуанк (*Comments on the Publication: Movses Kaghankatvatsi. History of the Country of Aluank*). Ереван, 1984.
16. Тревер К.В. Очерки по истории и культуре Кавказской Албании. IV в. до н.э. – VII в. н.э. (*Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania. 4th Century BC – 7th century AD*). М.-Л., 1959.
17. Schulze Wolfgang. Caucasian Albanian and the Question of Language and Ethnicity / Sprachen, Völker und Phantome. De Gruyter. 2018.
18. Schulze Wolfgang. Towards a History of Udi. International journal of diachronic linguistics, 2005, Vol.1, pp.55-91.

Lolua Roman

*Professor, Doctor of Philology, researcher of the Institute of Linguistics
named after Arnold Chikobava of Tbilisi State University
(GEORGIA, Tbilisi)*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4508-7587>

SCRIPT OF THE CAUCASIAN–ALBANIAN ALPHABET

Abstract: The Caucasian-Albanian alphabet is an original writing system, although noticeable similarities exist between some of its graphemes and those of Armenian, Georgian, Greek, or Syriac scripts. Beyond the coincidence or closeness in the design of certain graphemes of the Caucasian-Albanian and Georgian alphabets, their graphic structures are opposed to the structure of the Armenian Erkatagir by the same relevant features. This includes the frequency of use in writing of upper (especially) and lower straight horizontal lines, as well as combinations of vertical lines and circles/semicircles. This demonstrates completely different methods of grapheme creation in the development of the three ancient Caucasian alphabets. In our opinion, this completely negates the possibility that the Armenian, Georgian, and Caucasian-Albanian scripts were created by the same person or group of persons.

Keywords: Script, writing system, Caucasian-Albanian alphabet, Georgian alphabet, Armenian alphabet

The script of the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet is one of the least studied fields of Albanology. In the scientific literature, we can find only one attempt at a complete graphic analysis of the Albanian alphabet, which is the third study “The External Form of the Caucasian-Albanian Alphabet” from S.N.Muravyev’s extensive article “Three Studies on the Caucasian-Albanian (Aluan) Script” [Muravyev, 1981, c.294-320].

According to S.N.Muravyev, “1) The Albanian alphabet did not arise spontaneously but is the result of purposeful human creativity; 2) in its creation, the inventor (or group of inventors) of the alphabet relied on the Armenian alphabet, as evidenced by the typology of the alphabetical order and the division of all values (Albanian phonemes) into Armenian-like and non-Armenian-like ... even more unexpected was the discovery of a similar connection between some Albanian and Georgian graphemes” [Muravyev, 1981, c.297].

The researcher believes that the alphabet contains letters for non-specific (similar to Armenian and Georgian) and specific (mainly intensive and pharyngealized) sounds. Letters for non-specific sounds were created based on the corresponding Armenian (vowels, abruptives and voiced stops, “posterior” fricatives) and Georgian (sonorants, aspirated stops, medio-palatal sounds, sibilants, affricates, and the labial fricative *v*) letters. For specific sounds, corresponding Albanian letters were used [created based on Armenian and Georgian letter-sounds.–R.L.] [Muravyev, 1981, c.299-306].

In another work, S.N.Muravyev advances the thesis that the graphemes representing vowels in the Georgian Asomtavruli were obtained from the corresponding Armenian signs through “graphic derivation”. This led the researcher to the idea that the Georgian script was also created based on the Armenian alphabet [Muravyev, 1982].

It should be noted that we categorically disagree with the methods of graphic analysis employed by S.N.Muravyev in his studies of Caucasian scripts. For instance, to “prove” the origin of all vowels of the Caucasian-Albanian script from Armenian graphic forms, S.N.Muravyev derives the 35th letter of the Albanian alphabet, **Օ- (o)**, from the Armenian **Ո (o)** [Muravyev, 1981, c.297], although the Albanian

sign is practically identical to the letter **Օ (o)** of the Georgian Asomtavruli. Many other graphic correspondences proposed by S.N.Muravyev are also questionable (e.g., Alb. **Ճ** from Arm. **Ջ**, Alb. **Դ** from Arm. **Դ**, Alb. **Դ** from Arm. **Դ**, Alb. **Դ** from Arm. **Դ**, Alb. **Դ** from Geo. **Դ**, Alb. **Դ** from Geo. **Դ**, Alb. **Դ** from Geo. **Դ**, Alb. **Դ** from Geo. **Դ**, etc.) and some even represent a distortion of paleography (e.g., Alb. **Ջ** from Arm. **Ջ**, Alb. **Ջ** from Arm. **Ջ**, see: [Муравьев, 1981, с.299-301]. Some correspondences have lost their relevance after clarifying the phonological system of the Caucasian-Albanian language or confirming certain graphic forms in the palimpsests.

The methodology used by S.N.Muravyev clearly demonstrates how unconvincing the theories about the origins of certain scripts can be when they are based on the graphic similarity of some letters through unsystematic analysis. Determining which graphic associations the creator of an alphabet relied upon when developing a particular symbol is practically impossible. As a rule, such conclusions represent the subjective opinion of the researcher and do not go beyond the bounds of a hypothesis.

Apart from S.N.Muravyev, individual issues concerning the graphic structure of the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet are discussed in the works of A.G.Abramyan, A.G.Perikhanyan, G.G.Sevak, V.L.Gukasyan, M.Kurdiani, and some other researchers.

A.G.Abramyan, in his monograph [Абрамян, 1964], compared several Albanian graphemes with similar-sounding characters of the Armenian and Georgian alphabets.

A.G.Perikhanyan, who believed that all three Caucasian alphabets originate from a lost variant of the North Mesopotamian Aramaic script (the so-called Danielian scripts), proposes some graphic parallels between Albanian and Armenian, Georgian, Aramaic, and Pahlavi scripts [Периханян, 1966, с.103-133]. However, it should be noted that most of the comparisons are made without considering the phonetic values of the letters [Периханян, 1966, с.129, 131].

G.G.Sevak, on the other hand, connects the ancient Caucasian alphabets not with the North Semitic alphabetic world, as A.G.Perikhanyan does, but with the South Semitic [Севак, 1962].

Some interesting graphic comparisons of the Caucasian-Albanian script with Greek or Syro-Aramaic are presented in the work of V.L.Gukasyan [Гукасян, 1969]. A methodological shortcoming of this attempt is that the author compares the Caucasian-Albanian script with chronologically distant variants of Greek and Syro-Aramaic writing systems. In particular, for comparison, he involves on one side – Estrangelo, Aramaic variants of the inscriptions of Armazi, Bori, Garni, Sevan (1st–2nd centuries AD), and on the other side – Pahlavi (from the 3rd century AD) and Greek uncial script (from the 4th century AD) [Гукасян, 1969, с.58].

Finally, M.Kurdiani, based on the analysis of the frequency of use of upper and lower horizontal lines in grapheme creation, comes to the conclusion about the typological and genetic proximity of the Caucasian Albanian and Georgian alphabets [Курдиани, 1994].

From a graphic point of view, the Caucasian-Albanian is undoubtedly an original alphabet, although noticeable similarities exist between some Albanian graphemes and Armenian, Georgian, Greek, or Syriac ones. It should be noted that more graphic parallels can be found between the Albanian and Georgian or Armenian alphabets (here we are not comparing phonetically completely different signs), cf.:

Armenian	Caucasian-Albanian
Է (ē)	Է (ej)
Դ (w)	Դ (w)
Կ (h)	Կ (h) – anti-form
Ե (e)	Ե (e) – anti-form
Բ (b)	Բ (b) – inverted form
Ի (i)	Ի (i) – inverted form
Օ (o)	Օ (o) – inverted form

Georgian	Caucasian-Albanian
ⴈ (i)	Გ (j)
ს (s)	Გ (*šσ)
ⴁ (v)	Დ (w)
ო (o); Ⴆ (u)	Ა (o); Ა-Დ (u)
ქ (k)	Ბ (k)
ჯ (a)	Ბ (a) – inverted form
ღ (t)	Გ (t) – inverted form
შ (š)	Დ (š) – inverted form

Some letters of the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet are definitely borrowings from the Greek alphabet, cf.:

Greek	Caucasian-Albanian
Ε (e)	Გ (ej)
Ο (o)	Ა (o)
Φ (f) or Ψ (ps)	Ბ (p)

Graphic parallels with Syro-Aramaic writing systems are also encountered [Гукасян, 1969, с.58], although they are not as obvious, e.g.:

Syriac (Estrangelo)	Caucasian-Albanian
ⲥ (s) – 90° degree rotation	Ბ (š ^σ)
Ⲁ (‘ a) – 90° degree rotation	Ბ (a)

Also, in the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet, there is a graphic similarity between letters with close phonetic values. Often, such signs are distinguished by only a single graphic element. Apparently, to create signs representing specific sounds, Albanian letters with similar sounds were used, cf.:

Გ (x)	Გ (q/x)
Გ (l)	Გ (l ^σ)
Ბ (ž ^σ)	Ბ (ž)
Დ (w)	Დ (v)

Besides the coincidence or similarity in the shapes of some graphemes of the Caucasian- Albanian and Georgian alphabets, their graphic structures are opposed to the structure of the Armenian Erkatagir based on the same relevant features. The first feature by which Asomtavruli and the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet differed from the Armenian alphabet is the frequency of using upper (especially) and lower straight horizontal lines in grapheme creation, which subconsciously aligned the letters during writing. This is a common phenomenon in monumental scripts. In the Georgian alphabet, out of 37 letters, 18 (i.e., about 50%) have upper or lower lines. Of these, 15 letters have upper horizontal lines (Ⴃ, Ⴄ, Ⴅ, Ⴇ, Ⴈ, Ⴉ, Ⴊ, Ⴋ, Ⴌ, Ⴍ, Ⴎ, Ⴐ, Ⴑ, Ⴒ), and four have lower ones (Ⴓ, Ⴔ, Ⴕ, Ⴖ; including one letter — Ⴔ — which has both lines). It is necessary to note that among these letters, three graphemes represent vowel sounds (Ⴃ, Ⴇ, Ⴈ), which are frequently used.

In the original script of the Armenian alphabet, out of 36 letters, there were only 9 such letters (i.e., 25%). Of these, two letters had upper horizontal lines (Ⴀ, Ⴁ), and seven had lower ones (Ⴂ, Ⴃ, Ⴄ, Ⴅ, Ⴆ, Ⴇ, Ⴈ). Seven graphemes represented consonant sounds, while Ⴂ and Ⴃ represented vowels.

Out of the 52 graphemes of the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet (four letters have been hypothetically reconstructed based on the list of the Albanian alphabet from the Matenadaran manuscript), upper and lower horizontal lines were present in 25 letters (i.e., almost 50%). Of these, 17 letters had upper horizontal lines (Ⴃ, Ⴄ, Ⴅ, Ⴇ, Ⴈ, Ⴉ, Ⴊ, Ⴋ, Ⴌ, Ⴍ, Ⴎ, Ⴐ, Ⴑ, Ⴒ, Ⴓ, Ⴔ), and 12 had lower ones (Ⴓ, Ⴔ, Ⴕ, Ⴖ, Ⴗ, Ⴘ, Ⴙ, Ⴚ, Ⴛ, Ⴜ, Ⴝ) including four letters that had both (Ⴃ, Ⴅ, Ⴈ, Ⴔ). Twenty-two signs were used to denote consonants, and three for vowels (we can also add here both digraphs used to denote the sound **U** and its pharyngealized variant — ႠႢ and ႡႢ), including one letter (Ⴃ) that had both lines. It is noteworthy that both alphabets have a high number of letters with upper horizontal lines (15 out of 37 in Georgian and 17 out of 52 in Caucasian-Albanian, compared to Armenian, which has only two such signs).

The second relevant feature that distinguishes Asomtavruli and the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet from Erkatagir is that most graphemes of the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet, like Georgian (R.Pataridze, V.Boeder, E.Machavariani, T.Chkhenkeli, T.Gamkrelidze, etc.), represent a combination of a vertical line and a circle/semicircle.

In the Georgian Asomtavruli script, there are 21 such graphemes (Ⴓ, Ⴔ, Ⴕ, Ⴖ, Ⴗ, Ⴘ, Ⴙ, Ⴚ, Ⴛ, Ⴜ, Ⴝ, Ⴞ, Ⴟ, Ⴐ, Ⴑ, Ⴒ, Ⴓ, Ⴔ, Ⴕ, Ⴖ, Ⴗ, Ⴘ, Ⴙ), of which 14 letters have or had (in the original script of the Georgian alphabet) closed circles (Ⴓ, Ⴔ, Ⴕ, Ⴖ, Ⴗ, Ⴘ, Ⴙ, Ⴚ, Ⴛ, Ⴜ, Ⴝ, Ⴞ, Ⴟ). In the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet, the number of such signs is 28 (Ⴂ, Ⴃ, Ⴄ, Ⴅ, Ⴆ, Ⴇ, Ⴈ, Ⴉ, Ⴊ, Ⴋ, Ⴌ, Ⴍ, Ⴎ, Ⴐ, Ⴑ, Ⴒ, Ⴓ, Ⴔ, Ⴕ, Ⴖ, Ⴗ, Ⴘ, Ⴙ, Ⴚ, Ⴛ, Ⴜ, Ⴝ), including 14 that have closed circles (Ⴂ, Ⴃ, Ⴅ, Ⴆ, Ⴇ, Ⴈ, Ⴉ, Ⴊ, Ⴋ, Ⴌ, Ⴍ, Ⴎ, Ⴐ, Ⴑ, Ⴒ, Ⴓ, Ⴔ, Ⴕ, Ⴖ, Ⴗ, Ⴘ, Ⴙ, Ⴚ, Ⴛ, Ⴜ, Ⴝ). It is noteworthy that in the Armenian alphabet, only one such letter can be found — **Փ**, which is undoubtedly borrowed from the Greek alphabet. In the Erkatagir script, there are two more signs that can be attributed to this graphic type, namely: **Պ**, **Տ**. In reality, based on the graphic structure of the Armenian alphabet, these letters should be classified into another graphic group — the so-called horseshoe-shaped graphemes. The presented signs were formed by cutting off one of the “legs” of the “horseshoe” and subsequent rounding: **Պ** < **Պ** < **Ղ** < **Ղ** < **Ռ**; **Տ** < **Ս**; cp.: **Ս** > **Ն** > **Ե** > **Կ**; **Ռ** > **Ր** > **Բ** > **Ը**.¹

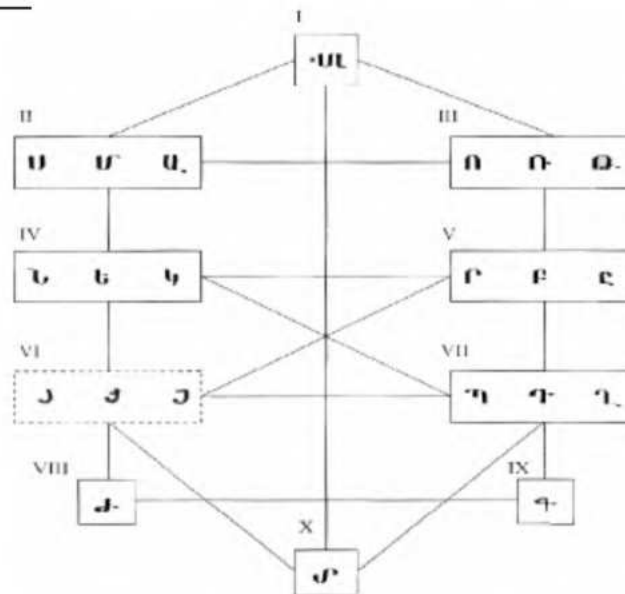
Thus, it can be concluded that the method of grapheme creation widely applied in the development of the Georgian Asomtavruli and the Caucasian-Albanian alphabets, which significantly contributed to the creation of many graphemes in these two alphabets, is practically not implemented in the Armenian script. This confirms that the graphic structure of the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet is typologically related to the structure of the Georgian Asomtavruli. However, this does not imply a common origin of the Georgian and Caucasian-Albanian alphabets.

¹ In our deep conviction, the majority of the signs in the Armenian alphabet (19 out of 36 letters) have a monographemic basis. This is likely a relic of the 22-letter “Danielian script” in Erkatagir, see: [Лолуа, 2015, с.204-218; cf.: Патаридзе, 1980; Муравьев 1980, 2012]:

As has been shown, the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet is partially based on the principle of identity. Some Albanian signs have clear parallels in the Georgian, Armenian, or Greek alphabets.

The principle of conventionality in the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet is mainly applied in the creation of graphemes for specific phonemes of the Caucasian-Albanian language.

The Armenian Erkatagir, on the other hand, is a graphic system almost entirely based on the principle of conventionality (which indicates its artificial nature). Although the principle of conventionality is also applied in the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet, the Albanian and Armenian alphabets use different features. When creating letters of the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet that do not have parallels in other alphabets, circles (or semicircles), vertical and horizontal lines are used as basic graphic forms, similar to the Georgian alphabet. In contrast, the Armenian alphabet uses pre-existing forms with certain designs and subsequently modifies them to create graphic groups [Севак, 1962].¹ In our opinion, this completely negates the possibility that the Armenian, Georgian, and Caucasian-Albanian scripts were created by the same person or group of persons.



Two other graphic groups in the Erkatagir also have a monographemic basis: the “rounded” and “rectangular” graphemes. The “rounded” graphemes (mainly for sibilant and fricative phonemes) include: Arm. $\bar{\text{f}} \rightarrow \text{Չ}$ (leftward inverted form) $\rightarrow \text{Չ}$ (change of the lower additional element) $\rightarrow \text{Յ}$ (transfer of the additional element upward) $\rightarrow \text{Յ}$ (“opening” of the additional element) $\rightarrow \text{Շ}$ (‘‘rounding’’ of the grapheme) $\rightarrow \text{Շ}$ (conversion of ‘‘circle’’ into ‘‘triangle’’) $\rightarrow \text{Շ}$ (opening of the ‘‘triangle’’) $\rightarrow \text{Շ}$ (‘‘rounding’’ of the grapheme) $\rightarrow \text{Շ}$ (transfer of the additional element downward). The ‘‘rectangular’’ graphemes include: $\text{է} \rightarrow \text{է}$ [e, ej] (probably created from the duplicated grapheme $\text{է} \rightarrow \text{է}$) $\rightarrow \text{է}$ (dropping of the middle line) $\rightarrow \text{է}$ (dropping of the lower additional element) $\rightarrow \text{է}$ $\rightarrow \text{է}$ (modifications of the middle additional element). Only two graphemes in the Armenian alphabet are identical to foreign symbols: ք p , derived from the corresponding Greek letter (Φ), and the sign կ , which copies the form of the Christogram established after 355 AD.

It is noteworthy that the ‘‘rounded’’ and ‘‘rectangular’’ graphemes of the Erkatagir were created through ‘‘linear’’ graphic transformations and do not form triadic groups like the ‘‘horseshoe-shaped’’ graphemes.

¹ ‘‘Not a single letter of Mesrop (except perhaps the letter Φ) in its appearance and sound value is a borrowing from any alphabet... Mesrop Mashtots, having set the goal of creating a script distinct from foreign ones, abandoned the law of identity and applied the principle of conventionality... It is enough to group Mesrop’s similar letters to see that he derived one group from another, endowing each of them with some distinguishing feature... Hence, our researchers need to study the question of how many groups make up Mesrop’s script and which letter from which language served as the basis for each group, rather than engaging in arbitrary searches for correspondences of each letter in the alphabets of all the ancient world languages’’ [Севак, 1962, c.30, 39-40].

REFERENCES:

1. Абрамян А.Г. Дешифровка надписей кавказских албанцев (*Deciphering the Inscriptions of Caucasian Albanians*). Ереван, 1964, 95 с.
2. Гукасян В.Л. Опыт дешифровки албанских надписей Азербайджана (*The Experience of Deciphering Albanian Inscriptions of Azerbaijan*) // Изв. Академии наук Аз.ССР, №2, Баку, 1969, с.52-74.
3. Курдиани М. Албанское заглавное письмо (графическая структура и проблема генезиса) (*Albanian Capital Letters (Graphic Structure and Genesis)*) // LII Научная сессия Института языкознания, 1994, с.25-26 (in Georgian).
4. Лолуа Р. Месроп Маштоц и вопросы генезиса еркатагира и кавказско-албанского письма (*Mesrop Mashtots and the Genesis of the Erkatagir and the Caucasian Albanian script*) / Albania Caucasia (сборник статей). Вып. I. Москва, 2015, с.189-216.
5. Муравьев С.Н. О протосистеме армянского алфавита (*On the Proto-System of the Armenian Alphabet*) // Историко-филологический журнал, 1980, №2, с.221-240.
6. Муравьев С.Н. От протосистемы Данииловых писем до месроповского алфавита (*From the Proto-System of Danielian Scripts to Mesrop's Alphabet*) // Армянский гуманитарный вестник, №4. Москва-Ереван-Степанакерт, 2012, с.35-64.
7. Муравьев С.Н. Три этюда по кавказско-албанской (алуанской) письменности (*Three Essays on the Caucasian-Albanian (Aluan) Script*) // Ежегодник иберийско-кавказского языкознания. т.VIII. Тбилиси, 1981, с.222-325.
8. Патаридзе Р. Графические основы еркатагира (*Graphic Foundations of the Erkatagir*) / Грузинское письмо асомтаврули. Тбилиси, 1980, с.528-584 (in Georgian).
9. Периханян А.Г. К вопросу о происхождении армянской письменности (*On the Question of the Origin of the Armenian Script*) / Переднеазиатский сборник. II. Дешифровка и интерпретация письменностей Древнего Востока. Москва: Наука, 1966, с.103-133.
10. Севак Г.Г. Месроп Маштоц: создание армянских писем и словесности (*Mesrop Mashtots: The Creation of Armenian Writing and Literature*). Ереван: Айпетрат, 1962, 77 с.

Mammadov Emin*Senior Researcher of the Department of the Archaeological Science Foundation,
National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, PhD in History*

CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS OF CAUCASIAN ALBANIA

Abstract. According to various written sources, archaeological monuments, and artifacts, Caucasian Albania (4th century BC – 8th century AD) was one of the earliest Christian states in the South Caucasus. This article presents materials from the Christian period featuring imagery of Christian symbols and Albanian script, attesting to their widespread use throughout the country.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, Caucasian Albania, Dagestan, Christianity, script

Azerbaijan is a multi-ethnic and multi-faith country. The history of the Azerbaijani people has roots in deep antiquity. Today, there is an extensive body of scholarly research dedicated to studying the Christian period of Caucasian Albania, based on material culture evidence.

Caucasian Albania was the first state to exist on the territory of historical Northern Azerbaijan. To the north, its borders were the Caucasus Mountains, the Alazani Valley of Georgia, and the southern regions of Dagestan; to the west – the lands of Western Azerbaijan (the territory of present-day Armenia), including Lake Goycha (Sevan), and the territory from the fortress Hunarakert to the Caspian Sea; to the south – the lands up to the River Aras [Azərbaycan tarixi. C.I, 1998; Тревер, 1959; Алиев, 1974].

The population of Caucasian Albania was multi-ethnic, but the Albanians dominated, as reflected in the name of the country [Алиев, 1960, с.35-56]. Throughout its long history, this country experienced various cultural and ideological influences, including the Christian religion. The religious worldview of the ancestors of modern Azerbaijanis was formed under conditions of constant close contact with the civilizations of the Near and Middle East. This interaction has a very ancient history. In different regions of the world, at all times, people have tried to find reasons for certain events in their lives and in the surrounding world. In the distant past, the concept of divine origin, its power, and the ability to create good and evil arose. On the territory of modern Azerbaijan, many beliefs emerged. Here, paganism, idolatry, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam mutually influenced each other.

The history of Christianity in Azerbaijan spans 2,000 years. In Caucasian Albania, this religious doctrine began to spread from the 1st century AD, which was associated with the name of one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ – the Apostle Bartholomew, who, according to church tradition, was martyred in 71 AD. The important role of the missionary activity of Saint Elisæus, a disciple of the Apostle Thaddeus, should also be noted. He began spreading Christianity from Dagestan, where the ideological environment was complex and ambiguous, characterized by the syncretism of local pagan cults with the beliefs of the Iranian-speaking tribes of the Alans and Maskuts (for example, the Iranian deity Aspandiat, also called Tengri-khan in Turkic, was revered in Dagestan) [Новосельцев, 1989, с.24; Гмыря, 1995].

The Albanian Arsacids, aiming to counter the Persian Zoroastrianism imposed by Sassanid Iran, began to orient themselves towards Christianity. In 313 AD, King Urnayr of Albania, along with all his close associates, was baptized by Archbishop Gregory the Illuminator. There are reports that the majority of the population of Caucasian Albania converted to Christianity [Геюшев, 1978, с.18; Очерки..., 1958]. The adoption of Christianity had a significant impact on the culture, public life, and state institutions of

Caucasian Albania. The missionary activity of Gregory the Illuminator is attested by a 9th-century Arabic-language source published by N.Y.Marr, in which St.Gregory is depicted as the baptizer not only of Albanians, Armenians, and Georgians, but also of the Dzurdzüks (Vainakhs), Alans, and Basians [Mapp, 1905, c.137]. However, the information from this source is so contradictory and confusing in terms of chronology and terminology that it cannot be taken seriously.

It is important that Christianity was established as the state religion in Albania in the 4th century, accompanied by the spread of Christian culture and education, the emergence of written literature, historiography, and the beginning of temple construction. In the 4th century, the Albanian Autocephalous Church was established, headed by a patriarch/catholicos, which existed until the beginning of the 19th century. According to R.B.Geyushev, after the “consolidation of Christianity” by the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD [apparently referring to the adoption of the “Nicene Creed” by this council.—E.M.], Christianity in Albania spread further [Геюшев, 1978, c.15], but it did not take such deep roots as in Georgia.

After the death of King Vache, Albania remained without a ruler for thirty years. The Sassanid Shah Valash/Balash (484–488) decided to restore the Albanian monarchy in the person of Vachagan III, son of Yazdegerd and brother of the previous King Vache [Каганкатвацци, 1861, I, 16, c.32-38]. According to this version, Vachagan III the Pious (487–510), a staunch advocate of Christianity, ordered the renegade nobles to return to the Christian religion and waged war not only against Magianism but also against pagan practices, idolatry, and sorcery (in particular, against the sect of *matnahatk'* or “finger cutters”) [Тревер, 1959, c.295]. At his initiative, the Council of Aghuen was convened in 488, whose canons were approved by the highest civil dignitaries and the Albanian secular nobility [Каганкатвацци, 1861, I, 26, c.65-69]. In Albania, the construction of churches began, but the most developed architectural forms would appear in the 6th century: domed basilicas with horseshoe-shaped apses; a three-nave basilica with an ambulatory in the village of Gum (6th century), resembling the basilicas in Tekor, Yererouk, and Bolnisi [Барановский, 1947, c.2]; the 7th-century circular-plan church buildings in Lyakit and on Mount Kilsadag [Тревер, 1959, c.303], and the 6th–7th century triconch church on Mount Beshikdag [Ямпольский, 1960, c.246-250; Ишханов, 1968, c.59-62] are the most complex buildings. But Christian religious construction came to a halt in the 7th century due to the appearance of the Arabs in Transcaucasia and the beginning of a new period of wars [Тревер, 1959, c.283].

The National Museum of History of Azerbaijan is currently one of the leading museums of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Its collections and archives hold invaluable treasures of the spiritual and material culture of the Azerbaijani people. The archaeological materials from the period under study allow us to trace the continuous transition from one religion to another. This is clearly evident in numerous artifacts made from clay, stone, lime, metal, precious metals, and minerals, which bear images of crosses, birds, animals, various plants, as well as fragments of inscriptions written in Albanian script.

Among the museum exhibits, it is worth noting a stone capital discovered in 1948 on the grounds of a temple in Sudagylan, near Mingachevir, and dated by archaeologist R.Vahidov to the 6th–7th centuries (Fig. 1.1). On one of the sides of this quadrangular capital, two peacocks facing each other are carved, flanking a stylized tree: the trunk, thickened downward, ends at the top with a three-lobed palmette resembling in outline a lily flower. The peacocks here are also adorned with “royal ribbons”. Other findings include a stone positioned beneath the altar with Albanian inscriptions encircling the cornice of the capital (Fig. 1.1), four candlesticks (Fig. 1.2), and two pieces of ceramics with Albanian text (Fig. 1.3) [Ваидов, 1948, c.108-117].

The development of the economy and culture, along with the spread of Christianity in the Early Middle Ages, contributed to the emergence of Albanian script, which was refined in the early 5th century during the reign of Albanian king Aswagan.

In the scholarly work of R.Vahidov, a brief description is provided of all the Albanian and other epigraphic monuments discovered during the excavations at settlements No. 2-3. The epigraphic features

of the Mingachevir inscriptions allowed researchers to trace the differences between the inscriptions on the stone cross base and those on clay fragments: the former consist of capital letters, while the latter are in cursive script.

Based on archaeological and historical data, it has been established that the period of the spread and use of Albanian script in Mingachevir is limited to the 5th century through the early 8th century. It can be assumed that after the 9th century, the Albanian script gradually lost its significance and was replaced by Arabic script [Ваидов, 1961]. It is also possible that a rich body of literature existed in the Albanian language.

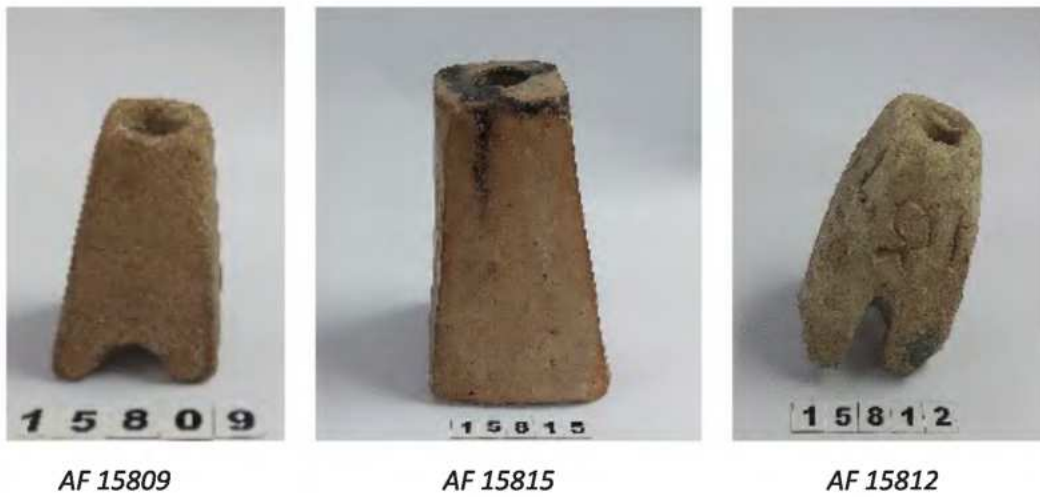
Another archaeological material from the Christian period, stored in the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, which is of great scientific interest, is a stone mold used for casting bronze and iron crosses (Fig. 1.4). This artifact proves that the metal items discovered during excavations in Azerbaijan were primarily locally produced. This is also confirmed by spectral analysis, which was conducted on many artifacts in laboratory conditions.

Conclusion. The artifacts of material culture from Caucasian Albania, discovered during archaeological excavations, demonstrate the rich history of one of the oldest cultures in the South Caucasus, with its unique traditions. Many of the items from the Christian era are crafted with virtuoso skill and delicate elegance, serving as vivid examples of applied art created by remarkable Albanian artisans of the medieval period. Although Albanian inscriptions have been preserved, many of them have not been fully deciphered and remain unclear to us. It is important to note that, despite the adoption of Christianity, many inhabitants of Caucasian Albania continued to adhere to ancient religious beliefs, rituals, and customs alongside their new faith. This had an impact on Christianity, preventing it from becoming a single common religion. With the Arab conquest of Albania, Islam became the dominant religion in the country, spreading rapidly and leading to the Islamization of the region. As a result, Christian elements gradually disappeared from objects of material culture.

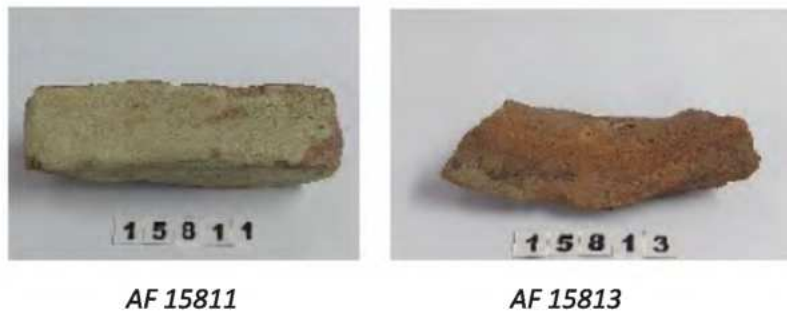
The historical significance of Christian elements on artifacts from the Caucasian Albanian period lies in the fact that they bear witness to the centuries-old, multifaceted cultural heritage of Azerbaijan.



*Fig. 1.1. Architectural element of a stone capital with an Albanian inscription, discovered by archaeologist R.Vahidov in 1948 on the territory of the Sudagylan settlement near Mingachevir.
National Museum of History of Azerbaijan*



*Fig. 1.2. Four clay candlesticks with Albanian text.
National Museum of History of Azerbaijan*



*Fig. 1.3. Two clay pieces of ceramics with Albanian text.
National Museum of History of Azerbaijan*



A lily flower made of limestone

A clay cross

A stone plant decoration made of limestone

Mingachevir



AF 26038 A copper cross



№ 27088

A clay jug with one handle featuring an image of a cross



№ 693

A clay jug with two handles featuring an image of a cross

Mingachevir



AF 1330

A clay jug with three handles, covered with various letters of the Albanian alphabet in red ochre. Khynysly (Shamakhi)



AF 23865

Fig. 1.4. A stone mold for casting a cross

REFERENCES:

1. Azərbaycan tarixi (*History of Azerbaijan*). Yeddi cildə: Cild I. Bakı: Elm, 1998.
2. Алиев К. Кавказская Албания (I в. до н.э. – I в. н.э.) (*Caucasian Albania (1st century BC–1st century AD)*). Баку: Элм, 1974, 363 с.
3. Алиев К. К вопросу о языках на территории Азербайджана (*On the Question of Languages in the Territory of Azerbaijan*) / Труды Института истории АН Аз.ССР, т.XIV, Баку, 1960, с.35-56.
4. Барановский П.Д. Памятники в селениях Кум и Лякит. Архитектура Азербайджана эпохи Низами (*Monuments in the Villages of Gum and Lyakit. The Architecture of Azerbaijan During the Era of Nizami*). Москва-Баку, 1947.
5. Ваидов Р.М. Археологическая характеристика эпиграфических памятников Мингечаура (*Archaeological Characteristics of the Epigraphic Monuments of Mingachevir*) // Изв. АН Аз.ССР, Серия общ. наук, Баку, 1948, №4, 108-117 (in Azer.).
6. Ваидов Р.М. Мингечаур в III–VIII вв. (по материалам археологических раскопок) (*Mingachevir in the 3rd–8th centuries (based on archaeological excavations)*). Баку, 1961(in Azer.).
7. Геюшев Р.Б. Христианство в Кавказской Албании (*Christianity in Caucasian Albania*): Автореф. докт. дисс., Тбилиси, 1978.
8. Гмыря Л.Б. Страна гуннов у Каспийских ворот (*Land of the Huns at the Caspian Gates*). Махачкала: Даг. кн. изд-во, 1995, 228 с.
9. Ишханов Л.Г. Новый памятник архитектуры Кавказской Албании (*A New Architectural Monument of Caucasian Albania*) // КСИА, вып. 113, М., 1968, с.59-62.
10. Каганкатвацци М. История агван (*History of Aghuank*) / Пер. с древнеармян. яз. К.Патканова. СПб.: типография Импер. Академии наук, 1861, 376 с.
11. Мэпп Н. Крещение армян, грузин, абхазов и алан святым Григорием (*Baptism of Armenians, Georgians, Abkhazians and Alans by St.Gregory*) // ЗВО ИРАО, т.XVI, СПб.: Тип. Имп. Акад. наук, 1905, с.63-211.
12. Новосельцев А.П. Христианство, ислам и иудаизм в странах Восточной Европы и Кавказа в средние века (*Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Countries of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus in the Middle Ages*) / ВИ, 1989, №9, с.20-35.
13. Очерки истории СССР III–IX вв. (*Essays on the History of the USSR in the 3rd–9th centuries*). Москва, 1958, 949 с.
14. Тревер К.В. Очерки по истории и культуре Кавказской Албании (*Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania*). М.-Л.: Ленинградское отделение Изд-ва Академии наук СССР, 1959, 392 с.
15. Ямпольский З.И. Памятники Кавказской Албании на горе Бешидаг (*Monuments of Caucasian Albania on Mount Beshikdag*) // СА, 1960, №2, с.246-250.

Nikonorov Andrei (Archimandrite Alexiy)

*Diocese of Baku and Azerbaijan of the Russian Orthodox Church,
Doctor of Church History (PIO), Candidate of Theology (MTA),
PhD in Theology, Secretary of the Diocese*

CANONICAL LAW OF THE CHURCH OF CAUCASIAN ALBANIA IN THE FIFTH CENTURY: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Abstract: The history of church councils holds without exaggeration a prominent place in the framework of relations between the Church and the state in the early Middle Ages. The active Christianization phase that took place in the Caucasus Albania during the 4th–5th centuries largely determined the role of the Church in the Albanian society. The form of self-organization and representation inherent to Christian communities since the very formation, known in canonical law as Σύνοδος (synod or council), became a powerful means of adapting the institutions of the early Church to new historical paradigm after Christianity was adopted as the state religion. An analysis of the canons of the first council in the history of the Albanian Church, the Aguen Council held in 488, is essential for determining the status of the Albanian Church during this period and understanding the processes that contributed to the Christianization of the Albanian society. The Aguen Council attests to the Albanian Church's autonomy and illustrates how legal tendencies are influenced by one another and integrated throughout the Eastern Christian oecumene.

Keywords: Church of Caucasian Albania, Aguen Council, canonical law, Church history, King Vachagan's Canons

Introduction: The canonic issues in the Church of Caucasian Albania are of interest in terms of the formation of the ecclesiological and legal self-awareness of the church institution during the early medieval period. Accordingly, the rules of the first council in the history of the Albanian Church, the so-called "Aguen Council", can be viewed as a unique source for the history of the development of canonical law in Eastern churches. The canons corpus adopted in the fifth century laid the foundation for the rapidly developing independent Albanian Church, whose "golden age" occurred during this time.

In this article, we consider in the comparative perspective the ecclesiastical and legal heritage of the formative period of Caucasian Albanian Church canonical law. This period undeniably begins with the conversion of the Caucasian Albania under King Urnayr and the subsequent Christianization of various aspects of public life. During this time, the boundaries of the church community expanded, its structure became much more complex, which necessitated legal regulation of many new issues and challenges on the one hand and norms that would ensure the preservation of Christian identity and continuity of church tradition on the other. These norms, for which the term κανόνες (rules) was adopted as early as in the fourth century, soon began to be purposefully collected and disseminated. By the time jurisprudence flourished in the Orthodox East in the 11th century, the Albanian Church had entered a period of decline. Thus, its most ancient canonical decrees adopted at the Aguen Council remain as a testament to its once-independent self-awareness and harmonious position within the Eastern Christian oecumene.

Historical Context: According to Albanian historian Movses Kaghankatvatsi, King of Caucasian Albania Vachagan III the Pious (487–510) realized that there had never before existed an institution with such a disciplinary effect on the entire society and various spheres of life as the Church. However, its effectiveness as a social institution was based on the uniformity of its organization and economic stability. To address

these issues, the king convened the first national council of the Albanian Church in his country's history, known as the "Aguen Council". The nominal reason for convening the council were the so-called "disputes" between the clergy and the laity [Каланкатуаџи, 1984, кн. I, гл. 26]. The council was held at the king's summer residence, Aguen (Aghvank), located near Partaw (Barda), presumably in 488. Historians have not preserved any detailed accounts of the council's proceedings and the Albanian historian only mentions its participants and outlines the decrees, totaling twenty-one.

Along with the king himself who presumably presided over the council, the sessions were attended by seven bishops, clergy members, and numerous princes and elders. The senior member of the clergy was Shuphalishoy, the archbishop of the country's capital Partaw. While the designation of Archbishop Shuphalishoy as "of Partaw" previously appeared anachronistic [Никоноров, 2021, с.138] – since the common belief based on the Albanian author's testimony was that the primatial see was not moved to Partaw before 552 – now we must acknowledge the coherence of Y.Jafarov's view that "the city of Partaw was the capital of the Albanian kingdom back in the early fifth century. ...This, in turn, gives reason to believe that the political, economic, and cultural center of the Albanian kingdom was relocated from the foothills of the Greater Caucasus... to the Gargar steppe at least by the end of the fourth century (presumably in 387), which fundamentally differs from the entrenched opinion found in scholarly literature. Sure enough, Partaw was not founded by the 'command' of the Sasanian Shah Peroz (459–484), as reported by Kaghankatvatsi [Каланкатуаџи, 1984, с.39] and as believed by researchers who have not gained insight into his contradictory account. This city was founded at least several centuries before Peroz, most likely during Parthian rule" [Джафаров, 2021, с.48].

According to some researchers, the Aguen Canons played a "decisive role in establishing the independence of the Albanian Church" [Мамедова, 1986, с.235]. However, we would not overstate the significance of the Aguen Council. This council, as we see, covered but a limited range of issues, without addressing topics typically associated with the Local Councils of Eastern Churches (such as the canonical status of the Church, its *sui iuris*, the authoritative powers of the Local Church, the administrative division of dioceses and their canonical boundaries, the election and consecration of bishops and primates, etc. [Salachas, 2003, p.54 ecc.]). The Aguen Canons do not even touch upon any doctrinal questions. The Albanian historian cites the Aguen Canons dedicating to them the entire Chapter XXVI of his First Book [Каланкатуаџи, 1984, кн.I, гл.26]. These canons have also been preserved as part of the Code of Canons of the Armenian Church [Тигранян, 1999, с.124-154], titled Canons of King Vachagan of Aluank.

Classification of the Canons

F.Mammadova divides the Council Canons into four groups [Мамедова, 1977, с.160-161]:

1. Canons concerning the clergy, their relationships, rights, and responsibilities.
2. Canons governing the relationships between the clergy and the secular nobility.
3. Canons governing the relationships between the clergy and the laity.
4. Purely legal canons.

The first group includes canons 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 15, and 16; the second group includes canons 3, 17, 18, 20, and 21; the third group includes canons 3, 4, 5, 17, 18, and 19; and finally, the fourth group includes canons 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. F.Mammadova devoted an entire section of her *Caucasian Albania and the Albanians* to a detailed analysis of the canons [Мамедова, 2005, с.571-583].

However, we find it more appropriate to classify the canons contained in the register of the Aguen Council in another way. We divide them into five groups:

1. Canons concerning church taxation – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 17, 18, and 19.
2. Canons related to church administration – 9, 17, 20, and 21.
3. Canons addressing problematic situations in parishes and monasteries, with specified requirements and sanctions – 6, 7, 8, 15, 16, and 21.

4. Canons of a moral nature – 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14.
5. A canon granting the bishop the authority to adjudicate criminal cases involving Christians – 8.

The narrow scope of the Aguen Canons is due to the fact that the Albanian Church had already accepted the general dogmatic and legal standards by the time of the council [Salachas, 2003, p.17-24]. These are, first of all, the Holy Scriptures (by that time already translated into Albanian) and other documents of the ancient undivided Church: the Didache (first–second centuries), Didascalia Apostolorum (230), the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus (215–218), the Apostolic Canons (360–380), the Canons of the first three Oecumenical Councils – those of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381), and Ephesus (431), the canons of six Eastern Local Councils – Ancyra (314), Neocaesarea (between 314 and 325), Gangra (ca 340), Antioch (341), Laodicea (365), and Sardicia (c.343). By that time the Albanian Church was undoubtedly governed by the canons of the neighboring Church: the Ashtishat Council (354–356), Sahak the Parthian (387–439), and the Shahapivan Council (446/7). The use of “other” canons is evidenced by the very text of the Aguen canons: “...in accordance with the rule, they shall bring him [епископу.–А.Н.] a yearly gift” (Canon 1); “any Christian... is to be brought before the bishop and punished **in accordance with the laws**” (Canon 8); “... they are to be punished **in accordance with the canons** and driven from the village” (Canon 15); “...should they hereafter cause any mischief, however, they are to be punished **in accordance with the canons**” (Canon 16); “...he has paid the amount of the fines as **prescribed by the canons...**” (Canon 21).

The Aguen Canons do not address any dogmatic or canonical topics that were important and relevant to the Christian world of the time and were discussed at the Ecumenical and Local Councils of the Eastern Churches, as well as in the canonical epistles of the teachers and fathers of the Ancient Church, which clearly proves that the Albanian Church was well acquainted with these rules and epistles.

According to sources, Bishop Aristaces, the son and successor of Gregory the Illuminator, took part in the First Oecumenical Council. According to Agathangelos, he brought the council canons home, where later St.Gregory himself made additions to these canons [Агатангелос, 2004, с.254]. The canons of the Third Oecumenical Council are reported to have been brought to the Caucasus by translators Ghewond, Koriun, and Eznik of Kolb in 436 or 437. Additionally, Koriun, in his Life of Mashtots, reports that they also brought with them the Nicene Canons. Scholars understand them to include both the canons previously brought by Bishop Aristaces and the collection of canons of the six Eastern Local Councils [Варданян, 2014, с.77-80].

It was precisely in the 5th century that the Albanian Church actively participated in the country’s political processes and, in fact, oversaw its civil and cultural life. During this period, the Albanian writing system was created and representatives of the Caucasian peoples were sent to study in the largest for that moment centers of science and culture. Upon return, they brought back, along with the acquired knowledge, many important literary texts, including the canonical collections of the Eastern Church and the scriptures of the Holy Fathers.

The council canons undoubtedly addressed those issues that caused disagreements between the clergy and the laity. The overall nature of the decisions taken gives reason to believe that most issues were resolved in favor of the Albanian Church. The canons governed the annual offerings of “the fruits to the priest from the people”; the distribution of the tithes collected by the *azats*¹ in favor of the Church; judicial authority in civil and criminal matters was entrusted to the bishop; the pagan custom of mourning over the dead was prohibited; marriage between relatives was banned, divorce without cause and living with a woman outside wedlock (violation of this decree was punished as a murder); the *azats* were forbidden from appointing or dismissing a priest in their estates without the bishop’s consent; the population was obliged to go to Sunday worship services in the church [Тревер, 1959, с.296].

¹ The *azats* (from Middle Persian *azat*) refer to the lower nobility.

Canonical Parallels

Parallels can be drawn between the canons of the Aguen Council held in 488 and those of the Shahapivan Council, the closest one in time [Шаапиванские каноны, 1959, с.334-348], held in 446/7. S.Hovhannesyan also compares the Aguen canons with the resolutions of the Ashtishat Council of 356 and concludes that the former are based on the decisions of the Ashtishat Council. Sh.Smbatyan is of the opinion that the Aguen canons relied on the resolutions of the Shahapivan Council, as well as the canons of the Armenian Catholicos Sahak the Parthian [Каланкатуацци, 1984, с.190]. Mammadova argues that the Ashtishat and Shahapivan canons had a minor impact on those of the Aguen Council [Мамедова, 1977, с.69].

It seems appropriate to us to conduct a comparative analysis of the decrees of the Shahapivan and Aguen Canons. Canon 13 of the Council of Shahapivan: "Let no one touch a sister, or a daughter of his mother's brother, or his brother's daughter or an aunt or whoever belongs to his people until the fourth degree and take her as a wife..."

Regarding adultery and fornication, Canon 11 of the Aguen Council states: "He who abandons his wife without cause, or lives with [another] woman outside wedlock... is to be bound, brought to the royal court, and put to a cruel death". Canon 3 of the Shahapivan Council: If anyone who has a wife fornicates and does not keep the purity of the sacrament of marriage... let the chiefs rebuke such a person, by caning and beneficially counseling him. And let him be removed from the church and pay a fine to the church, which should be distributed to the needy". As we can see, the crime was punished by death in the former case and by fine and excommunication in the latter.

The same Canon 11 of the Aguen Council prescribes similar sanctions against those who practice witchcraft and fortune-telling: "He who is lawless or a murderer or one who consults wizards is to be bound, brought to the royal court, and put to a cruel death". Canons 8 and 9 of the Council of Shahapivan: "If a man or a woman are found to be engaged in sorcery or in apostasy or in other evil works..., they must be stoned according to the order of the Scriptures. However, if they confess, let them spend the rest of their life in penance"; "Those who go to soothsayers and diviners must pay a fine of two hundred drams, which will be given to the needy, if they are azats. And if they are shinakans,¹ let them be caned fifteen times and pay a fine of one hundred drams, which will be given to the needy. After three years of penance, they can be brought back into communion". As we can see, the Shahapivan canons distinguish between sorcery, soothsaying, and divination, with the former being considered a more serious sin.

The pagan tradition of mourning for the dead is refuted by Canon 12 of the Aguen Council: "Of those who mourn for the dead, let the head of the household and the gusans be bound, brought to the royal court, and punished". The same tradition is described in Canon 11 of the Shahapivan Council: "Those who lament and cry hopelessly after the dead, instead of giving a hopeful and blessed farewell... Thus, if an azat or a shinakan act against the canons of the Apostles and lament, let them be anathematized, the lamenting and crying. For one year they may not enter the church. Furthermore, they will pay a fine of one hundred drams if azats and fifty drams if shinakans. Let the money be distributed to the poor".

Canon 15 of the Aguen Council pertains to charges against the clergy: "Should a layman accuse a priest or a deacon and they confess to the charge, the bishop is to judge them, and they shall repent in solitude. Should they not confess, however, and that which the others say against them is manifestly true, they are to be punished in accordance with the canons and driven from the village". The same is covered by Canon 2 of the Shahapivan Council: "If a priest is found in defilement or fornication or in other evil acts, and his deeds are exposed by witnesses, let him not serve the priesthood. He must pay a fine of three hundred

¹ The shinakans were the main peasant population of medieval Caucasian Albania, who paid taxes to the feudal lords, while the privileged feudal classes – the azats and the clergy – were exempt from these taxes.

drams, which should be distributed among the poor, and he will stand in the rank of the acolytes... The same canon applies both to priest and deacon. They will be assigned to the military ranks and pay the royal taxes, and they may not mix with the clergy”.

Canon 21, the last of the Aguen Canons that have parallels with the Shahapivan Canons, concerns the foundation of temples and the veneration of relics: “If an azat wishes to build an altar in his church or places relics therein or serves a liturgy, he shall do it with the permission of the bishop. Whoever does it without permission shall be expelled from the church and shall pay a fine to the bishop proportionate to his resources”. Canon 17 of the Shahapivan Council: “Let no one who wants to deposit the relics of a martyr do so without the permission of the bishop of the country. Let no one commemorate the memory of a martyr or a council without the permission of the bishop. And if someone brings the relics of a martyr from a holy place, let him bring them to the bishop with witnesses and letters from the bishops of the area from which he brought relics. Let him place them wherever is appropriate, with the permission of the bishop of his area. Let him who wants to erect an altar for the mystery of the Lord not do so without the permission of the bishop”.

More severe sanctions – as compared to other regulations – for certain violations of the canons can be explained by the necessity for radical measures to raise the Christian consciousness of the masses and fight the remnants of pagan customs among them. Church historian V. Bolotov is credited with the following statement: “What is useful for the church is canonical”. The Church’s actual benefit or need is expressed in Canon 13 of the Shahapivan Council: “And if someone argues asking why penalties in the Nicene canons are not as harsh, it is because no one was expecting that evil works and crimes of such great magnitude would happen in the world. Otherwise, as early as that time, they would have cut off the evil roots of destruction”.

We may seek the sources of specific canonical issues that were considered by the Council of Aguen, which will allow us to draw the necessary parallels.

Group 1 Canons

Group 1 Canons pertaining to church taxation and the support of the clergy are derived from the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which prescribes that the church community support the priesthood: “Don’t you know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple, and that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:13-14). Apostolic Canon 41 reiterates this idea of the Apostle and grants bishops and all the clergy the right to receive allowance from their flock: “We ordain that the bishop have authority over the goods of the Church: for if he is to be entrusted with the precious souls of men, temporal possessions should be entrusted to him. He is therefore to administer them all of his own authority, and supply those who are needy, through the presbyters and deacons, in the fear of God, and with all reverence. For the law of God has ordained, that they who wait at the altar should be nourished of the altar. Neither does any soldier bear arms against an enemy at his own cost” [Правила, т. I, 1996, с.110]. Apostolic Canon 4 mentions another source of clergy support: “Let the first fruits of every other kind be sent to the bishop and presbyters’ house”.

Canon 2 of the Aguen Council arouses the suspicion that it legalizes simony.¹ The sin of simony during ordination to the priesthood, according to the canons, eliminates the operation of grace and makes consecration invalid. Apostolic Canon 29 states: “If any bishop, presbyter, or deacon shall obtain possession of that dignity by money, let both him and the person who ordained him be deposed, and also altogether cut off from all communion, as Simon Magus was by Peter” [Правила, т. I, 1996, с.89]. However, church history reveals that ordination at different times required payment of a fee to the bishop’s house treasury, as stated in the canon of the Aguen Council. Such a despicable practice probably occasionally resulted in

¹ Simony is buying or selling of church positions and the holy order.

simony accusations, but in the strict sense, it should not be considered simony, as long as the ordination decision itself is not dependent on the amount of the fee, which remains the same for all candidates for the priesthood. At any rate, Archpriest Vladislav Tsy-pin, an expert in church law, holds that this conclusion follows from the ecclesiastical judicial practice of the past [Цыпин, 2004, с.193].

Groups 2 and 3 Canons

Regarding Group 2 Aguen Canons related to church administration, equivalents are not to be found in the decrees of councils (except for Armenian ones) of that time, nor in the rules of Church fathers and teachers.

Group 3 Aguen Canons addressing challenging matters in parishes and monasteries, are likely based primarily on local legal traditions.

Aguen Canon 6 is intended to fight sacrilege.¹ This rule safeguards the inviolability of the property of the Church or, more specifically, of a monastery. Apostolic Canon 72 has it: "If any clergyman or layperson takes wax or oil from the Holy Church, let him be excommunicated and pay back fivefold what he took". Rule 61 of St. Basil the Great says: "Anyone who has stolen anything, provided he has repented of his own accord and has accused himself of the theft, shall be excluded from the Holy Communion for one year only. But if he was detected, two years" [Правила, т. II, 1996, с.439].

As for Aguen Canons 15 and 16, they are based on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy: "Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses" (1 Timothy 5:19). The matter of accusations against clergymen was dealt with in greater detail at the Council of Chalcedon.

Groups 4 and 5 Canons

Group 4 Aguen Canons which pertain to moral norms, can be clarified through the general canonical rules of the Church.

For instance, Canon 10 prohibits marriage between close relatives. The Book of Leviticus directly forbids marriages in the third degree (Leviticus 18:1-30). These rules were fully adopted by the Christian Church. Moreover, Christian prohibitions on kinship marriages became even stricter. In addition to the prohibitions in Leviticus, it was forbidden to marry a deceased wife's sister (2nd degree), which was not mentioned in the Old Testament law, as well as to marry a niece (3rd degree). These rules were affirmed by the Apostolic Canons, Local Councils, and the Rules of the Holy Fathers: the 19th rule of the Holy Apostles; the 2nd rule of the Council of Neocaesarea; and Rules 23, 27, 67, 68, 75, 76, 78, 79, and 87 of Basil the Great.

Aguen Canon 11 provides for death penalty for adulterers, sorcerers, and murderers. Apostolic Canon 48 states: "If a layman, having expelled his wife, takes another or one dismissed by another, let him be excommunicated" [Правила, т. I, 1996, с.121]. Rule 77 of Basil the Great says the same: "A man who abandons his legally wedded wife and marries another woman, according to the Lord's word, is liable to the judgment of adultery. But it has been ruled and regulated by our Fathers that such men are to weep for a year, listen on the side for two years, kneel for three years, in the seventh year co-stand together with the faithful and then be deemed worthy to participate in the offering, provided they repent with remorseful tears" [Правила, т. II, 1996, с.448]. The "Rules of the Fathers" referred to by St. Basil, in addition to the aforementioned Apostolic Canon, include Canon 20 of the Council of Ancyra, Canon 115 of the Council of Carthage, and Rule 15 of Timothy of Alexandria.

Canon 24 of the Council of Ancyra also condemns divination: "They who practice divination, and follow the customs of the heathen, or who take men to their houses for the invention of sorceries, or for lustrations, fall under the canon of five-year penance" [Правила, т. I, 1996, с.24-25]. The same is described

¹ Sacrilege is the theft of something that is sacred or belongs to the church. In a broader sense, it refers to the desecration or profanation of a relic.

by Rule 83 of Basil the Great: “Those resorting to divination and continuing the usages of the heathen nations, or admitting certain persons into their homes with the view of seeking sorceries and purification, let them fall under the canon of six years: one year weeping, and one year listening, and three years kneeling, and one year standing among the faithful, then they will be received into communion” [Правила, т.II, 1996, с.452]. In Rule 65, St. Basil refers to those who practiced sorcery to harm people and equates their penance with that of murderers. In Rule 83, however, the focus is on those who believe in sorcery without intending harm to others.

Regarding murderers, Apostolic Canon 66 states: “If any clergyman shall strike anyone in a contest, and kill him with one blow, let him be deposed for his violence. If a layman shall do so, let him be excommunicated” [Правила, т.I, 1996, с.143]. The same is prescribed by Rule 11 of Basil the Great: “As for one that has committed an involuntary murder, he has fulfilled the requirements of justice by a term of eleven years. For it is plain that in the case of the ones assaulted we may observe the rules of Moses (Exodus 21:18-19)...” [Правила, т.II, 1996, с.393]. We can see that the Aguen canons prescribe much tougher sanctions for those falling under the Canon 11 charges and require the use of secular officials as punishers, unlike the church practice of Byzantium.

Aguen Canon 12 goes against the tradition of mourning over the deceased. It should be noted that all Eastern peoples had more or less stable forms of “mourning for the dead”, family or public mourning, which could last from several days to several weeks. As a rule, when a loved one died, their relatives hired professional wailers to mourn over him. The Christian tradition, however, implied that the hope of resurrection after death must overcome the hopelessness of funeral weeping. Aristides, one of the 2nd-century church authors, says in his Apology: “If any righteous person of their number passes away from the world they rejoice and give thanks to God, and they follow his body, as if he were moving from one place to another” [Аристид, 1904, гл.XV, ст.11]. Later, as pagan mourning rites started to infiltrate Christian practices, the ban on wailer services was accompanied by the threat of excommunication, since weeping for the dead and mourning were “incompatible with the hope of resurrection and cast doubt on the Christian faith” [Иоанн Златоуст, 2005, с.896-902].

Aguen Canon 13 which prohibits eating “filthy food” and breaking the Holy Lent is derived from Apostolic Canons 63 and 69: “If any bishop, presbyter, or deacon, or any one of the sacerdotal order, shall eat flesh, with the blood of the life thereof, or torn by wild beasts, or that dies of itself, let him be deposed. If he be a layman, let him be excommunicated”; “If any bishop, presbyter, or deacon, or acolyte, or singer, does not fast the holy Quadragesimal fast of Easter, or the fourth day, or the day of Preparation, let him be deposed, unless he be hindered by some bodily infirmity. If he be a layman, let him be excommunicated” [Правила, т.I, 1996, с.139, 148]. The ban on eating dead meat was transferred from the Old Testament law: “If an animal that you are allowed to eat dies, anyone who touches its carcass will be unclean till evening. Anyone who eats some of its carcass must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening. Anyone who picks up the carcass must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening” (Leviticus 11:39-40).

Working on Sundays is indirectly prohibited by Canon 29 of the Council of Laodicea: “Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honoring the Lord’s Day; and, if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be judaizers, let them be anathemized from Christ” [Правила, т.II, 1996, с.101].

Canon 8, which we have assigned to Group 5 as being of particular importance and which authorizes a bishop to investigate the criminal cases of the Christians, indicates that the judiciary was part of the ecclesiastical hierarchical authority in the Albanian Church. It is obvious that the church represents human society, which, like any social organism, may face controversies; the church members are sinful people..., therefore, there is always room for the earthly church to exercise judicial authority over its children. Depending on the nature of the relationships between the Church and the state, the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical courts at different times in history included disputes among Christians and even criminal

cases, which, generally speaking, are not typically aligned with the nature of ecclesiastical authority [Цыпин, 2004, с.508].

After the Edict of Milan was issued, the custom of Christians going to their bishops for litigation was officially sanctioned and the judicial decisions of prelates since that time relied on the executive power of the state. In the wake of Constantine the Great, Albanian king Vachagan III entitled the Christians to bring cases before the bishops' court, whose judgement was final. The peremptory episcopal court endowed with official state status by the Aguen Council may have undergone various changes over time depending on the political context of the country. The Byzantine Empire recognized the trial of civil cases of clerics by their bishops as an absolute canonical principle. However, due to their nature, such matters could also be heard by the state judicial authorities. The analysis of Aguen Canons shows that only offenses punished by death were handed over to the royal court (Canon 11). The situation was different for the church cases proper, which, albeit litigious, by their nature could not be submitted to the jurisdiction of non-church judicial bodies. These included clerics' lawsuits to distribute ecclesiastical revenues, issues of monastery and parish jurisdiction, matters associated with parish discipline, etc. By signing the Canons of the Council of Aguen, King Vachagan III confirmed that jurisdiction in these matters rested exclusively with the Albanian Church, but such confirmation on his part was not a concession, but only acknowledgment of the Church's inalienable right sealed in the canons and historical tradition of other Eastern Churches.

Conclusion. There is a long history behind the issues surrounding the relations between the Albanian Christian Church and the monarchy. It is evident that every state has sought and continues to seek an optimal solution for the relationship between secular and spiritual power. Such a model was introduced during the reign of the Albanian King Vachagan III at the end of the 5th century. Though existing on the periphery of the Christian world, the Albanian state nonetheless played a key role in the political processes occurring in the East and in the relations between the powerful empires of that time. Albanian statehood reached its zenith during this time, and this was mirrored in the country's church life as well. The independent Church of Caucasian Albania, in cooperation with state institutions, was committed for the political unification of the multiethnic state, engaged in educational efforts, initiated the creation of the original Albanian script, and shaped the legal framework for its further functioning. One of the links in this evolutionary process was summoning the first Local Church Council. The study of the circumstances of this council's convening and the Canons adopted on its sidelines allows us to affirm the special relationship between royal authority and the Church in Caucasian Albania by the fifth century, the autonomous status of the Albanian Church, and its spiritual unity with other Eastern Churches, manifested through their shared canonical framework.

For a researcher of Early Middle Ages church history, understanding the church-legal literature of Caucasian Albania is possible only by analyzing and becoming familiar with the broad body of canonical law of the Eastern Churches. As has been shown, the Aguen Canons resulted from a governmental initiative in the legal domain. The adoption of these Canons formalized the tight relationship between political and religious institutions in Caucasian Albania, defining church-state ties in accordance with the symphony concept, which was undoubtedly a model for all countries of the Orthodox *oecumene* at that time.

SOURCES:

1. Агатангелос. История Армениич (*History of Armenia*) / Пер. К.С.Тер-Давтяна и С.С.Аревшатяна. Ереван, 2004, 334 с.
2. Аристид, мученик, философ Афинский. Апология о почитании Бога Всемогущего (*Apology on the Veneration of the Almighty God*) // Крестников И. Христианский апологет II века, афинский философ Аристид и его новооткрытые сочинения: опыт историко-критического исследования. Казань, 1904.
3. Егише. Война армян против персов (*The War of the Armenians Against the Persians*) / Пер. с древнеарм. яз. Э.Диллена. Ереван, 1884, 224 с.
4. Иоанн Златоуст, святитель. Творения (*Works*). Том XII. Почаев, 2005, 984 с.
5. Каганкатваци Моисей. История агван (*History of the Aghvans*) / Пер. с древнеармян. яз. К.Патканова. СПб.: типография Импер. Академии наук, 1861, 376 с.
6. Каланкатуаци Мовсес. История страны Алуанк (*History of the Country of Aluank*) / Пер. с древнеарм. яз. Ш.В.Смбатяна. Ереван, 1984.
7. Правила Православной Церкви с толкованиями Никодима епископа Далматинско-Истрийского (*Rules of the Orthodox Church with Commentaries by Bishop Nikodim of Dalmatia and Istria*) / Пер. с сербского. Свято-Троицкая Сергиева Лавра, 1996. В 2х томах. 652 с., 643 с.
8. Шаапиванские каноны – древнейший памятник армянского права (*Shaapivan Canons – The Oldest Monument of Armenian Law*) / Пер. С.Аревшатяна // Историко-филологический журнал, №2-3 (5-6). Ереван, 1959, с.334-348.

REFERENCES:

9. Варданян Н., Ширинян М.Э. Книга канонов (*Book of Canons*) // Православная энциклопедия, том XXXVI. Москва, 2014, с.77-80.
10. Джафаров Ю. Гаргары и алванская письменность. К вопросу возникновения этноязыковой общности (*Gargars and Albanian Script. On the Question of the Emergence of an Ethnolinguistic Community*) // Пилипчук Я.В. Украина-Азербайджан. Материалы международной научной конференции «Украина-Азербайджан: диалог культур и цивилизаций». Киев, 2021, с.38-49.
11. Джафаров Ю. Город Цри и страна чилбов в «Истории албан» Моисея Каланкатуйского (*The City of Tsri and the Country of the Chilbs in "The History of Albania" by Movses Kaghankatvatsi*) // Древний и средневековый Восток, №1, Москва, 1985, с.65-80.
12. Мамедова Ф.Дж. «История албан» Моисея Каланкатуйского как источник по общественному строю раннесредневековой Албании (*"The History of Albania" by Movses Kaghankatvatsi as a Source on the Social Structure of Early Medieval Albania*). Баку, 1977, 198 с.
13. Мамедова Ф. Кавказская Албания и албаны (*Caucasian Albania and the Albanians*). Баку, 2005, 800 с.
14. Мамедова Ф.Дж. Политическая история и историческая география Кавказской Албании (*Political History and Historical Geography of Caucasian Albania*). Баку, 1986, 284 с.
15. Никоноров Алексей, игумен. История Церкви Кавказской Албании по Моисею Каланкатуйскому (*The History of the Church of Caucasian Albania According to Movses Kaghankatvatsi*). Москва: ИВРАН, 2021, 374 с.
16. Ованесян С.Х. Каноны Агуэнского учредительного собрания и их связь с канонами Аштишата (*The Canons of the Aguen Founding Council and Their Connection to the Canons of Ashtishat*) // Историко-филологический АН Арм.ССР, №4, Ереван, 1967, с.266-274.
17. Смбатян Ш.В. Замечания по поводу книги Р.Геюшева «Христианство в Кавказской Албании» (*Remarks on R.Geyushev's Book "Christianity in Caucasian Albania"*) // К освещению проблем истории и культуры Кавказской Албании и восточных провинций Армении. Ереван, 1991.
18. Тигранян С.Ф. Древнеармянская книга канонов (*The Ancient Armenian Book of Canons*). Петроград, 1918, 182 с. / Критическое издание 1964 г., приведенное в журнале «Христианский Восток» 1999 г.
19. Тревер К.В. Очерки по истории и культуре Кавказской Албании (*Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania*). М.-Л.: Ленинградское отделение Изд-ва Академии наук СССР, 1959, 392 с.
20. Цыпин Владислав, протоиерей. Курс церковного права (*Course of Church Law*). Клин, 2004, 700 с.
21. Salachas D. Istituzioni di diritto canonico delle Chiese cattoliche orientali. Bologna, 1993, Napoli, 2003, 416 p.
22. Shirinian M.B., Muradian G. The Armenian Collection of the Ecclesiastical Canons // Христианский Восток (новая серия), Т.1 (7), 1999, p.124-154.

Pashayeva Mahabbat

*Professor, Doctor of Historical Sciences,
Head of UNEC Research Centre for Multiculturalism,
Senior Scientific Researcher of the Institute
of Archaeology and Anthropology of ANAS,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4856-6006>*

AGHOGLHAN TEMPLE: FACTS OF ARMENIAN VANDALISM AGAINST ALBANIAN CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

Abstract. The current article is dedicated to the Aghoghlan Temple, one of the magnificent examples of early Christianity in Caucasian Albania, located in the Kosalar village of the Lachin district, which was subjected to 28 years of Armenian occupation. The study focuses on the temple's condition before and during the war, and its current state. The study highlights the distortion of the Aghoghlan Temple's name, particularly the illegal archaeological excavations and repair work conducted by Armenian falsifiers during 1999–2000, which led to changes in the complex's architectural style and interior. It also documents the act of Armenian vandalism, including the destruction, alteration, and theft of inscriptions, Albanian symbols on the monument's walls and tombstones. Additionally, the article includes the results of ethnographic field research we conducted in 2021–2023 with the residents of the Lachin district and Kosalar village, who were forced to leave these lands due to the Armenian armed forces' occupation since 1992. Based on the ethnographic survey conducted among the villagers, information was gathered about the rituals, ceremonies, and folk beliefs preserved in the memory of the local population, who continue to refer to this ancient Albanian shrine as a sacred site to this day. Additionally, details about the appearance of the monastery complex before the occupation, as well as the ancient stones that existed there, were also collected. Based on this information, a comparative analysis of the monastery's interior before the illegal restoration work and its current state was conducted, highlighting the illegal restoration activities carried out by Armenian nationalists in the Aghoghlan Monastery. The study also examines acts of theft, forgery, and vandalism related to ancient stelae and inscriptions from the monastery area. Additionally, the article explores traces of pre-Christian beliefs in the Aghoghlan Temple, elements of pagan worship, ancient cult symbols, and the connection between the temple and Gregory the Enlightener, who propagated Christianity in Caucasian Albania in the 4th century, and his successor, Saint Grigoris, based on existing historical-ethnographic and archaeological materials.

Keywords: Aghoghlan Temple, facts of Armenian vandalism against Albanian Christian heritage

Introduction. The material-cultural examples of Albanian Christian heritage are not only part of the ethnocultural legacy of the Azerbaijani people but also a heritage of universal human culture. Unfortunately, it must be noted that during nearly 30 years of occupation of Azerbaijan's Karabakh and Zangazur regions by the Republic of Armenia, a significant portion of the historical relics of Caucasian Albania, including Albanian churches and monasteries, alongside Islamic monuments in the region, were irreversibly destroyed or falsified by Armenian nationalists. Throughout the occupation years, the architectural structure of the Albanian Christian monasteries and churches was altered and adapted to the Apostolic Church; inscriptions and cross-stones were looted and transported to Armenia. All artistic and inscribed stone artifacts in these Albanian monuments, which are historical relics of the Azerbaijani people, were stolen and replaced with fake inscriptions containing Armenian texts. In Karabakh and Zangazur, many

historical architectural monuments, considered the jewels of Albanian architecture, such as the Khudavang Monastery (Kalbajar district), the Amaras Monastery (Khojavand district), the Ganjasar Monastery (Kalbajar district), and Aghoghlan (Lachin), had their original appearance distorted. The historical elements of these temples were stolen and transported to Armenia, and the Albanian ornaments on their walls were erased and falsified. Even in the current period, where Azerbaijani territories have been liberated from Armenian occupation, Armenian claims against Albanian monuments continue on an ideological level. During the years of occupation, the Armenian Apostolic Church conducted cultural genocide against Albanian monuments, transforming and presenting all the Albanian monuments in Karabakh and Zangazur to the world as Armenian churches. This remains an undeniable fact.

I. The reasons behind Armenian vandalism against Albanian Christian heritage. Since the 19th century, Armenians, who began to settle *en masse* in the Caucasus, have consistently sought to appropriate the Albanian Christian heritage by distorting the history of Caucasian Albania and altering the ethno-confessional identity of the Albanian temples. Their goal has been to falsify the architectural structure and interior of these monuments. Throughout the 19th century, with the support of the Russian Empire, the Armenian Apostolic Church attempted to seize the entire legacy of the Albanian Church. This process continued into the 20th century during the Soviet era, with the removal and alteration of the construction inscriptions of Albanian churches and monasteries, particularly those in Karabakh and Zangazur, as well as the removal and distortion of ornaments and symbols crafted in the artistic style of the Albanian period. All cross-stones and inscriptions belonging to Caucasian Albania were stolen and transported to Etchmiadzin. During the years of occupation, Armenians did not hesitate to completely destroy the original appearance of monuments in the Karabakh and Zangazur regions, which had fallen out of the control of the Republic of Azerbaijan, under the guise of restoration, and even went as far as to construct new buildings in their place. Their aim was to completely eradicate Albanian culture and erase it from history, presenting it to the world as Armenian culture. In doing so, the occupiers sought to legitimize their claims to Azerbaijani territories and convince the world of these falsehoods. During the occupation, Armenian chauvinists did not shy away from claiming that the Aghoghlan Monastery, like hundreds of other Albanian-era monuments in Karabakh and Zangazur, was an Armenian church, and they presented this ancient Albanian temple to the world as an Armenian church.

II. The condition of the Aghoghlan Temple before, during and after the war. II.1. The historical background of the Aghoghlan Temple (a brief historical and ethnographic overview). The early Christian monuments of Caucasian Albania, with the symbolism of their ornaments, serve as a living archive reflecting the religious and ideological worldviews of the ancient Albanians and the traces of their heritage extending from the past to the present. Caucasian Albania was among the first regions where Christianity spread, and throughout the Middle Ages, Albanian churches and monasteries, characterized by the unique features of ancient Eastern Christianity, were constructed here. The Aghoghlan Temple, located in the village of Kosalar, one of the oldest settlements in the Lachin district, is one of these Albanian temples built on an ancient sacred site. There is considerable archaeological and ethnographic evidence suggesting that the Aghoghlan Temple existed as early as the 1st century, and even dates back to the period before the spread of Christianity [Ямпольский, 1962, Göyüşov, 1975]. Like all early Christian churches in Caucasian Albania, the Aghoghlan Monastery complex incorporated elements of pagan temples and was rich in ancient cult symbolism. The architectural style of the church contains clear traces of pagan techniques and old priestly traditions, which are also found in several Christian churches across Azerbaijan [Ахундов, 1986, с.194]. From the 5th to the 6th centuries, a period marked by the active rise of cult structures in Albania, the Aghoghlan temple complex began to function as a monastery. According to legend, a piece of the remains

of Grigoris¹, the mythical first Catholicos of Caucasian Albania, which were reportedly found in Amaras, was distributed to various Albanian bishoprics, including the Aghoghlan Monastery [Бархударян, 1895, с.229]. By the order of King Vachagan III, parts of Grigoris's remains were distributed in fragments to all Albanian bishoprics and churches [Казанкатвацци, 1861, I, 30].

Historical and ethnographic materials from the 19th and 20th centuries reveal that the Aghoghlan Temple was visited by both Christian and Muslim populations from the Karabakh region. In the early 20th century, Z.I.Yampolski, who studied the monument, noted that people would come to this place of worship from distances as far as 100 kilometers away [Ямпольский, 1962, с.230]. The local population would kiss the ground at the shrine, and sometimes, as an act of devotion for healing from illness, they would vow to crawl on their stomachs in front of the shrine. Traditionally, visits to the shrine took place on Sundays and Fridays. At the Aghoghlan Temple, people of both Christian and Muslim faiths would light candles and offer sacrifices, regardless of their religious affiliation. Visitors to this ancient Albanian shrine believed that the water flowing from the spring at the foot of the hill where the temple is located had healing properties, and they would take it home as a remedy. The trees surrounding the temple were also considered sacred, as is common with all sacred sites in Azerbaijan. On the western wall of this ancient shrine, there was a large cross-stone known as the "Aqrava Cross" [Зангезурский уездъ Елисаветпольской губерний, 1904, с.198]. Visitors to the shrine would tie various pieces of cloth to the sole tree in the churchyard, near the western wall of the monastery, beside the ancient grave known as the Aqrava Cross. They would bathe children who were slow to start walking on top of the Aqrava Cross, light candles, and place two eggs and a horseshoe with two nails driven into it there [Зангезурский уездъ Елисаветпольской губерний, 1904, с.199]. In Azerbaijani folk beliefs, eggs are symbols of fertility, and horseshoes are believed to bring good luck. According to information provided by villagers who lived in this region until 1992, when the Lachin district was occupied, this tradition continued until the late 20th century, where they would perform a heat-based treatment ritual of "çilədağ (applying heat)" on children over this ancient cross-stone and make offerings. In the past, locals from surrounding villages would bring sacrifices and offerings to the Aghoghlan Monastery. They would slaughter their sacrifices, place their offerings there, and circle the monastery three times. Armenians, however, have attempted to provide a nonsensical explanation for this buried cross-stone near the western wall of the monastery, claiming it to be the grave of a crow and referring to it as the Aqrava Cross-Crow Grave [<https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/blogs/929/posts/16220>]. They claim that the stone marks the grave of a crow that supposedly saved the Christian population from death. However, in Azerbaijani dialects, it is known that the word "aqrava" is derived from "əqrəba", which means "relative" or "kin". In the Azerbaijani language, the word "əqrəba" or "aqrava" is used in the sense of "relative", "tribe", "lineage", or "patronymic". It seems that this ancient cross-stone belonged to one of the Albanian patronymics. In Azerbaijan, it is known that ancient burial sites, especially those belonging to tribal leaders, were often sanctified as holy sites. During the occupation years, in 2001–2002, Armenians destroyed this ancient cross-stone and replaced it with two fake red cross-stones [<https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/blogs/929/posts/16220>].

II. 2. The truths and Armenian myths regarding the name of the Aghoghlan Temple. The Aghoghlan Temple is one of the oldest Albanian shrines, and its name has always been referred to as "Aghoghlan Pir" among the Azerbaijani population. The name Aghoghlan appears in the region's toponyms, in local legends, as well as in the works of the 7th-century Albanian author Movses Kaghankatvatsi and the information provided by the 19th-century Albanian bishop M.Barkhudaryan. Up until the 19th–20th centuries, legends

¹ As is well known, the revival of Christianity in Albania in the 4th century is associated with the names of the Enlightener Gregory and his successor, Saint Grigoris. The Albanian author Movses Kaghankatvatsi wrote that the foundation of Christianity in Albania was "originally laid by the Saint Elisaeus, and later affirmed by Saint Gregory... the Albanians were enlightened for the second time and in a more perfect way thanks to the Gregory the Enlightener" [Казанкатвацци, 1861, I, 9; III, 6, s.296].

circulated among the local population about Aghoghlan, a young man dressed in white. According to the legend, Aghoghlan was a renowned mounted warrior and defender of the local population. He heroically died in battle and was buried in this shrine. According to the legend associated with the Aghoghlan Temple, Aghoghlan would appear at the shrine three times a day. At other times, he would withdraw into the forest and live a solitary life. After Gregory the Enlightener, who propagated Christianity in Albania in the 4th century, chose this area as his residence, Aghoghlan is said to have disappeared [Göyüşov, 1975, s.29]. This information indicates that the name “Aghoghlan”, which continues to be regarded as a sacred site by the local population, predates Christianity. It is important to note that Grigoris is depicted in the Albanian chronicle as a young man dressed in white [Каганкатвацци, 1864, I, XXVIII]. It is also suggested that the name “Aghoghlan” is connected to the local population’s astral religious beliefs and possibly linked to solar worship [Ямпольский, 1962, с.40-47]. The топоним “Aghoghlan” has been preserved to this day in the names of a river, a mountain, a village, and the temple located in the Lachin district of the Karabakh plateau. The Hadrut settlement in the Khojavand district, where the Amaras Church is located, was known as “Aghoghlan” until 1923 [Azərbaycan toponimlərinin ensiklopedik lüğəti, 2007, s.23]. Sources from the 19th century refer to this monastery as the “Aghoghlan Shrine” [Бархударян, 1895, с.64]. In a 19th-century Russian military map of the region, this area was also recorded under the name “Aghoghlan” [Карта военных действий на Кавказе 1809–1817 гг., 1902] (Photo 1). In the early 20th century, during the Lachin expedition in 1924, it was noted that the surrounding Muslim population referred to the church as “Aghoghlan” and regarded it as a sacred site [Онощенко, 2022, с.106]. Until 1992, the Azerbaijani inhabitants of this area continued to call the temple a “sacred fire” or “shrine” for centuries. The residents of the Kosalar village, who were forced to leave the village on May 18, 1992, due to the Armenian occupation of Lachin, still remember that everyone offered sacrifices and made offerings at this shrine. A villager named Aghammam Mammadov, who lived in a house near the monastery until 1992, recalls that despite being a Muslim, he was responsible for maintaining this ancient shrine until the occupation of Lachin. He even built a fence around it to prevent cattle from entering.

Armenian historians have provided a highly illogical explanation for the name “Aghoghlan”, claiming that it is due to the building being constructed from white felsite. However, by this logic, the temple should have been named “Aghdash” (White Stone), not “Aghoghlan”. According to the Armenian myth, which presents the Aghoghlan Temple as “Tsitsernavank”, the monastery supposedly derives its name from the Armenian word “Tsitsernak”, meaning “swallow”, and they attempt to link this to a supposed widespread cult of the swallow among Armenians. Another fabricated myth claims that the church’s name is associated with the preservation of the little finger of Saint Peter, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ, at this monastery. According to this myth, the word “Tsitsernavank” supposedly comes from the ancient Armenian root “tsitsern”, which means “little finger” [<https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/blogs/929/posts/16220>]. However, these illogical explanations regarding the name of the monastery are not based on any historical facts. For instance, no one, except for Armenian storytellers, can explain how the finger of Saint Peter, who was crucified in Rome by the order of Emperor Nero in the 1st century, could have been preserved until the 4th or 5th century, let alone how it ended up in Aghoghlan. Even they acknowledge that this is nothing more than a fabrication [Зангезурский уезд Елисаветпольской губернии, 1904, с.182-217].

III. The construction history of monument and the architectural features characteristic of Albanian temples. Due to the theft of stone inscriptions at various times, there is no precise information regarding the construction date of the Aghoghlan Monastery. However, legends circulating among the local population suggest that the area where the monastery complex is located was a site of worship even before the advent of Christianity, and that the first church here was built on the site of an earlier polytheistic temple [Göyüşov, 1975, s.29]. Although there are no written sources about the original structures of the monastery complex, the architectural features of the temple suggest that its construction dates back to an earlier period. Based on the style of the doors on the southern wall of the simple rectangular basilica, the earliest structure is

believed to belong to the 5th–6th centuries. The overall construction of the Aghoghlan church is generally dated to the 6th century [Мамедова, 2004, с.58]. Functioning as a monastery since the 6th century, the Aghoghlan Monastery held significant influence, particularly in the year 844. In a donation act dated 844, from the Prince of Syunik to the Tatev Monastery, a clergyman from the Aghoghlan Monastery is mentioned as a witness [Мамедова, 2004, с.55].

The original appearance of the church, along with the planning features of the temple's exterior, indicates its deep roots extending back to Albanian architecture. The building's construction, characterized by horseshoe-shaped windows and a horseshoe-shaped altar, typical of Albanian temples, further confirms that this is indeed a monument of Albanian architecture. Research confirms that the horseshoe-shaped arch surrounding the church altar is a feature found only in Albanian Christian churches within Azerbaijan. The presence of traces of pagan traditions, which are characteristic of Albanian Christian churches in Azerbaijan, observed in the temple, provides insights into the confessional origin of the church. The interior decoration of the Aghoghlan Temple includes simple geometric ornaments typical of early Christianity, and traces of frescoes have been recorded on the northern wall of the church [Ахундов, 1986, с.194-195; Мамедова, 2004, с.55-58].

IV. Evidence of the falsification of the Aghoghlan monastery by Armenians during the period of Armenian occupation. It is known that inscriptions from the 17th–18th centuries existed within the monastery grounds. However, one of these inscriptions was stolen during the Soviet period in 1967, and the other was taken between 1989 and 1992, during the onset of the Karabakh conflict. The text of the inscription stolen between 1989 and 1992 contained information that the fortress walls surrounding the monastery were reinforced and the main arched entrance gate was constructed in 1613 [Мамедова, 2004, с.55]. Another church inscription, dating back to 1779, detailed the repair of the main church building and the bell tower. This inscription mentioned that the church was restored in 1779 during the reign of Ibrahim Khan of Karabakh, with the participation of Udi Iohan [Карапетян, 2001, с.146]. This information further confirms that the Udis were settled in the Karabakh region until the 19th century and constituted the main congregation of Albanian churches.

During the occupation of the Lachin district by Armenian armed forces from 1992 to 2020, all historical and cultural monuments, including Albanian temples, were subjected to acts of vandalism by Armenian nationalists. Taking advantage of the impunity they enjoyed during the occupation years, Armenian falsifiers altered the architectural structure, both interior and exterior, of the Aghoghlan Monastery to adapt it to the Apostolic Church. They placed fake inscriptions and cross-stones within the monastery grounds, indicating that the monument belonged to the Armenian Church, while replacing the ancient Albanian cross-stones, which bore the names of Christian Albanians, with new, falsified cross-stones. Armenian falsifiers themselves confirmed that in 1993–1995, they placed 26 new inscription plaques in various parts of the monastery's walls, indicating that the monument belonged to the Armenian Apostolic Church, and made additions to the portal and the bell tower [Карапетян, 2001, с.140-141]. Armenian authors themselves acknowledge the destruction of the inscriptions dating back to 1613 and 1779, which occurred between 1989 and 1992 [Асратян, 1990, с.5; Карапетян, 2001, с.145-146]. Additionally, cross-stones from 1605, inscribed with Turkic names such as Gozal, Khansuman, Nazar, and Altun, were present in the churchyard until 1985. It is known that these cross-stones were removed from the churchyard during the occupation years, around 1994–1995 [Карапетян, 2001, с.146-147].

During the occupation, Armenian falsifiers destroyed an ancient stela from the Albanian period in the courtyard of the Aghoghlan Monastery and replaced it with two fake cross-stones brought from Yerevan. These fake tombstones were buried near the entrance gate on the right side of the monastery courtyard during the occupation years. Additionally, Armenians stole an ancient stela depicting four women, created using an engraved technique within a rectangular frame in the area from the entrance of the complex to

the main building. The Armenians did not hesitate to document this act of theft through photographs, thereby inadvertently confirming their crime (Photo 2).

From 1997 to 2001, the Scientific Research Center for Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Armenian Ministry of Culture conducted illegal excavations within the Aghoghlan Monastery complex and its surrounding fortress walls [<https://golosarmenii.am/article/18379/cicernavank-i-keren-otkryvayut-tajny>].

The materials uncovered during these illegal archaeological excavations were subsequently transported to Armenia. Despite the fact that numerous samples taken from graves identified as belonging to the 7th–8th centuries, dating back to the Albanian Christian period, were subjected to radiocarbon analysis in Chicago, Illinois, USA, the results have inexplicably been kept confidential [<https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/45808>].

Confident that they would face no consequences, Armenian falsifiers continued their so-called “restoration” work on the monastery in 1999–2000, interfering with its architectural style in an attempt to alter the ethnic identity of the monument by falsifying the characteristic elements of Albanian architecture. They raised the three-tiered altar, typical of Albanian temples, in the Aghoghlan Monastery, transforming it into a five or six-tiered structure similar to those found in Armenian churches, thereby adapting the monument to resemble an Armenian church (Photo 3). In 2005, three fake tombstones, unrelated to the monastery, were placed beside the right wall of the temple, and two new cross-stones made of red basalt stone brought from Yerevan were placed in front of the main entrance gate. Illegal archaeological research, as well as unauthorized restoration and conservation works, continued at the Aghoghlan Monastery until 2006.

The liberation of the Aghoghlan monastery. In 2020, during the 44-day Patriotic War, the Azerbaijani Army liberated the territories of Karabakh and Eastern Zangazur from occupation, thus freeing historical monuments from captivity. Since 2020, the monuments of the Lachin district, including the Aghoghlan Temple, have been liberated from enemy occupation. However, during the period leading up to the return of the Lachin district, Armenians removed several material-cultural artifacts belonging to the church complex, including materials they had illegally excavated from the monastery complex during the occupation, and transported them to Armenia.

Historical sources from the 19th century indicate that the Udis, who made up the main congregation of Albanian churches in Karabakh, can now regularly visit the monastery. In February 2021, representatives of the Albanian-Udi Christian Community held a memorial ceremony for the victims of the Khojaly massacre at this ancient Albanian temple, lighting candles and offering prayers for the souls of the victims. The Udis continue to perform ancient Albanian Christian rituals annually at the Aghoghlan Temple [<https://report.az/qarabag/udiler-lacindaki-agoglan-mebedinde-novbeti-defe-ibadet-edibler/>; <http://pravda.az/news/46569>].

Residents who lived near the Aghoghlan Temple before the occupation and who have returned to their homeland after 30 years report that the structure of the temple, which had been sanctified as a sacred site or “shrine” by the local population, has undergone illegal alterations. Aghammat Mammadov, a villager who lived near the temple before the occupation, stated that the elevated height of the altar, which now exists, was not there before. He recalls that the altar of the church was originally built from river stones and was much lower, and that the church’s ceiling was also added later. He also mentioned that the crosses now present in the altar area were brought there after the occupation. The accuracy of this informant’s account can be confirmed by comparing photographs of the church from the 20th century (Photo 4). The villagers, who referred to this ancient Albanian shrine as a sacred fire or “shrine,” also witnessed Armenians carving fake crosses into the walls of the church as early as the 1980s and attempted to prevent these acts of falsification.

The Albanian ethnocultural heritage, which Azerbaijan has strived to preserve for centuries, is an integral part of world culture. The material-cultural examples of Albanian Christian heritage not only



The altar before the occupation



Changed appearance during the years of occupation

Photo 3. The altar of the Aghoghlan Temple



*Photo 4. The Aghoghlan Temple
before the occupation*



*Changed appearance during the years
of the occupation*

REFERENCES:

1. Azərbaycan toponimlərinin ensiklopedik lüğəti (*Encyclopedic Dictionary of Azerbaijani Toponyms*): I Cild. Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, 2007.
2. Göyüşov R. Amaras-Agoglan (*Amaras-Aghoghlan*). Bakı: Elm nəşriyyatı, 1975, 100 s.
3. Асратян М.М. Цицернаванк (*Tsitsernavank*). Ереван, 1990.
4. Ахундов Д.А. Архитектура древнего и раннесредневекового Азербайджана (*Architecture of Ancient and Early Medieval Azerbaijan*). Баку: Изд-во Азернешр, 1986, 311 с.
5. Бархударян М. Арцах (*Artsakh*). Баку, 1895 (in Arm.) / Пер. Яргуняна.Ч.1-2. НАИИАНА инд. №1622/ 2010.
6. Зангезурской уезд Елисаветпольской губернии (*Zangazur Uyezd of the Elisabethpol Governorate*) / СМОМПК, вып.34, 1904.
7. Каганкатвацци Моисей. История агван (*History of the Aghuans*) / Пер. с древнеармян. яз. К.Патканова. СПб.: типография Импер. Академии наук, 1861, 376 с.
8. Карапетян С. Памятники армянской культуры в Карабахской области (*Monuments of Armenian Culture in the Karabakh Region*). Ереван, 2001.
9. Карта военных действий в Закавказском крае с 1809 по 1817 год с границами по Гюлистанскому договору и Бухарестскому миру (*Map of Military Operations in the Transcaucasian Region from 1809 to 1817 with Borders According to the Treaty of Gulistan and the Treaty of Bucharest*) // Аносов Н.С. Время Тармасова, Паулуччи и Ртищева, 1809–1817 годы. Тифлис, 1902.
10. Мамедова Г. Зодчество Кавказской Албании (*Architecture of Caucasian Albania*). Баку: Çaşıoğlu, 2004, 222 с.
11. Мамедова Ф. Кавказская Албания и албаны (*Caucasian Albania and the Albanians*). Баку, 2005, 800 с.
12. Онощенко В.В. Санкт-Петербургский филиал Архива РАН (*Saint Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences*) // Археология, этнография и языки Кавказа. Вып.3. Санкт-Петербург: Реноме, 2022.
13. Ямпольский З.И. Древняя Албания. III–I вв. до н.э. (*Ancient Albania. 3rd–1st centuries BC*). Баку: Изд-во АН Аз. ССР, 1962, 394 с.
14. **İnternet resursları:**
<https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/blogs/929/posts/16220>
<https://golosarmenii.am/article/18379/cicernavank-i-keren-otkryvayut-tajny>
<https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/45808>
[https://report.az/qarabag/udiler-lacindaki-agoglan-mebedinde-novbeti-defe-ibadet-edibler/;](https://report.az/qarabag/udiler-lacindaki-agoglan-mebedinde-novbeti-defe-ibadet-edibler/)
<http://pravda.az/news/46569>

Seyidova Gulchohra

*Head of the UNESCO Chair in Comparative Studies of Spiritual Traditions,
their Specific Cultures and Interreligious Dialogue in the North Caucasus (Derbent);
Vice-Rector for Research and International Relations of the Institute
for the Friendship of Peoples of the Caucasus (Stavropol);
Associate Professor of the Department of Legal and Humanitarian Disciplines
of Derbent Branch of Dagestan State University;
Scientific consultant of the State Budgetary Institution of the Republic of Dagestan
“Museum of the History of World Cultures and Religions” (Derbent)
(RUSSIA FEDERATION)*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2382-7564>

ON THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY IN CAUCASIAN ALBANIA

Abstract. The origins of the birth and spread of Christianity in the early medieval state of Caucasian Albania, which once included most of present-day Azerbaijan, parts of southern Dagestan, and the Alazan Valley of Georgia, are discussed. There was an independent Albanian Church with apostolic origin, and preaching began in Derbent, which was not only a part of the Christian world of Caucasian Albania, but also for a long time the seat of its patriarchal throne. Considerable attention is paid to the sources determining the location and geographical outlines of the state in the region.

Keywords: Caucasian Albania, Christianity, Albanianism, Albanian Apostolic Church, Albanian ethnic community

The scholars who deal with the subject under consideration are drawn to it not only by the subject itself but also by the opportunity to gain insight in the full spectrum of research approaches to interpreting its results. The methodology for the comprehensive study of the heritage of Caucasian Albania should take into account its evolutionary nature and structuring historical processes over time. The grand third edition of Ethnocultural Heritage of Caucasian Albania collection in Azerbaijani, Russian and English, published by the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre, allows for reaching out to a vast international audience and increasing research interest in this topic. K.Shukyurov, the General Director of the ANAS Institute of History and Ethnology named after A.A.Bakikhanov, appreciating the previous two volumes of these collections [2019, №1; 2021, №2], also acknowledges the role of Dagestani scholars after the collapse of the USSR, considering the use of the potential for scientific cooperation in this field as the most promising line of research. Summing up his article from the third volume of the collection, the professor writes: “Therefore, studying the history of Albanology as one of the most important scientific areas involves learning certain lessons, both from a scientific and practical point of view. It is not based on the confrontation of the concepts put forward, but rather on the resolution of the most complex and controversial issues through scientific cooperation and discussions” [Шукюров, 2022, с.85]. It seems to us that this very approach should become the leitmotif for researching all challenging topics, which are prevalent in history and generally in any scientific domain.

Addressing problematic issues in Albanology, relying on research in archaeology, history, anthropology, source studies, ethnology, linguistics, epigraphy, architecture, art, and numismatics – those various streams that feed the broad river of Albanology – in its turn stimulates these very sciences. Ancient written sources are, of course, fragmentary, but they can be used as valuable auxiliary material for writing

the history of Caucasian Albania. The primary source, as we see it, is archaeological monuments. Together with data from related sciences, they help address pressing issues in this field. These include such questions as the political boundaries of Caucasian Albania, the period of nation building to name just a few. The emergence of Albanian statehood was conditioned by the collapse of Darius III (Codomannus)'s Persian Empire, which resulted from the defeat in the Battle of Gaugamela in BC 331 by Alexander the Great's army. It was precisely at this time that the Albanians appeared on the historical stage.

The history of participating in previous Caucasian Albania forums in the Republic of Azerbaijan, the rightful heir to all ethnocultural heritage on its territory, confirms the idea that the country which carefully cherishes its history is indeed on the rise. According to reviews from colleagues, there was a lot of interest in the topic of Albanology, to which my plenary report, "Christianity in Caucasian Albania", was dedicated at the Second International Scientific-Practical Theological Conference *The History of Christianity in Chersonesus and Ancient Tauris: Origins and Heritage* on December 9, 2019, in Sevastopol. [Сеидова, 2020, с.11-17].

Undoubtedly, the residents of Derbent take pride in the fact that "...one of the oldest and most beautiful cities of Albania is Derbent... Since ancient times, the Derbent Gate was a major conduit for communications between the South and North Caucasus, the Near East, and Southeastern Europe" [Мусеибли, 2022, с.23]. It is well known that more than 50 fortresses and settlements of the Albanian period were located in the territory of Dagestan. Most of them are small in size (6-7 hectares, less often 10 hectares), although there are also larger ones, such as Derbent, Targu, Urtsaki, and Verkhneye Labkomakhi (15-20 hectares). Dagestani historians believe: "...the tribes of the Albanian circle inhabit Azerbaijan, Eastern Georgia, and Dagestan, i.e., Caucasian Albania, whose northern borders are limited by the Keraunian Mountains (Kisten Ridge) and the Soana River (according to a later Georgian transcription – Sona), corresponding to the Argun, a tributary of the Terek. It was the latter, identified with the Mermodal River, that served as the borderline between the Telae and the Legae on one side and the Amazons on the other. According to the inscription of the Persian king Shapur I on the Kaaba-i-Zardusht in the third century, Caucasian Albania is mentioned alongside Mahelonia (the Ossetian name for Ingushetia), located on both sides of the Greater Caucasus Range near the Tushetians. The archaeological culture of Dagestan, which is part of the East Caucasian or Albanian historical and cultural community, extends to the Argun-Terek system. This unity corresponds to the Albanian ethnic unity" [История Дагестана, 2004, с.129, 141].

The state location itself is a topic of considerable interest. Our attention was drawn to the article by S.V.Yushkov, which focuses on the northern borders of Albania. It distinguishes groups of researchers who include the following territories within Albania: 1) Azerbaijan and Dagestan up to the Terek, Aksay, and Sulak rivers; 2) Azerbaijan and a narrow coastal strip of Dagestan; 3) Azerbaijan and part of Dagestan up to Derbent; 4) only the territory of Sheki and Shirvan. The author himself extended the northern borders of Albania to the Terek River [Юшков, 1937, с.129-148]. This question continued to be the subject of comprehensive study in post-war historiography. Famous Orientalist V.F.Minorsky describes Albanian borders within the Kura-Aras valley, between the Caspian Sea and Iberia, including the entire Caspian coastline of Dagestan [Минорский, 1963, с.27-30]. According to a group of authors in the History of Azerbaijan [Baku, 1958, p.5], Albania's territory includes both Azerbaijan and a sizable portion of Dagestan.

With reference to Tacitus' Annals, K.V.Trever, whose important contribution to the study of this topic is indisputable, states in her monograph *Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania* that "... we learn that in the first decade of the first century, Albania was ruled by local kings. We gain insight in their peaceful relations with Rome, about their embassy to Augustus, which apparently sought a treaty of 'friendship,' and also that the Albanians held a prominent position among the Caucasus peoples since they are mentioned first in the inscription" [Тревер, 1959, с.115-116]. The *Essays* cover the period from the fourth century BC, i.e., the time when they were first attested by written sources on the historical stage, up

to the seventh century AD and make the lands of modern Dagestan up to Derbent part of Albania [Тревер, 1959, с.44-46, 123].

J.A.Khalilov includes coastal Dagestan up to the Sulak River into the territory of Albania [Халилов, 1985, с.93-105; 164-175]. After considering and analyzing written sources in support of such a definition of Albania's northern borders, K.G.Aliyev draws the northern boundary of Albania along the Samur River. The scholar reached the well-grounded conclusion that "...not a single ancient author provides grounds for asserting that Albania included all of modern Dagestan, stretching to the Terek or Sulak Rivers" [Алиев, 1982, с.46, 83-123]. There is another opinion, that of S.N.Mouraviev, who argues that Caucasian Albania was located in the Kura Valley of Azerbaijan, which in turn allowed for resolving all the contradictions in the sources about the rise of the Caspian Sea to the area of present-day Mingachevir [Муравьев, 1983, с.117-147].

The Director of the Caucasian Albania Research Center, Prof. F.J.Mammadova, believes that from the third century BC to the 3rd century AD, Albania's northern borders extended to Derbent, though at times they may have reached as far as the Sulak River or even beyond it. The researcher argues: "It was necessary to counteract the religious and political influence and assimilation policies of the Sassanids – who sought to impose Zoroastrianism in the country – as well as the activities of the Syriac-speaking Church by establishing a Christian Church in the local Albanian language, the one that could defend the cultural and ethnic identity of the Albanians" [Мамедова, 1986, с.6]. Analyzing the significance of *The History of the Albanians* by Moses Kaghankatvatsi, the author makes the following conclusion: "Thus, the goal of the author of *The History of the Albanians* was to create a history of the emergence and evolution of the Albanian kingdom, of its ethnos, territory, political and spiritual life, the rule of its kings – the Albanian Arsacids and the great princes of the Mihranid dynasty (Javanshir) – and to demonstrate the succession and continuity of royal power, as well as the history of the emergence of the Albanian Autocephalous Church with its apostolic patriarchal principle. This monument glorifies the independent statehood and independent Church of Albania" [Мамедова, 1986, с.10].

It is undeniable to us that for the study of historical heritage of Azerbaijan, the monograph of Academician Z.Bunyatov, *Azerbaijan in the 7th–9th centuries*, is of paramount importance. This work, for the first time in the history of science, gives comprehensive coverage to the history of Christianity in Caucasian Albania, the Albanian Church, its structure, and Albanian literature based on Albanian, Byzantine, Georgian, Armenian, Arab, and Syriac sources. The academician notes: "The centuries-long struggle between the Albanian and Gregorian clergy for the supremacy and primacy of the Church ended, as is known, with the victory of the Gregorian Church, which, supported by foreign powers, subordinated all the parishes of the Albanian Catholicosate, which was closed after repeated petitions from Etchmiadzin by the Holy Synod in 1836" [Бунятов, 1965, с.24].

The head of the UNEC Multiculturalism Research Centre Prof. M.Pashayeva highlights the traces of ancient Turkic traditions in the work of Moses Kaghankatvatsi, *The History of the Albanians*, noting its encyclopedic significance for the study of early medieval history of Azerbaijan, the ethnogenesis and the ethnic traditions and beliefs of the Azerbaijani people. The professor notes: "Kaghankatvatsi wrote that due to the Khazar campaigns in the sixth century, even the religious center of the country was moved from Derbent deeper into the country, to the safer region of Barda" [Пашаева, 2022, с.144]. However, even after the relocation of the patriarchal see from Derbent, later (after AD551), during the 5th–7th centuries, this city remained one of the most important Christian centers of the Eastern and Northeastern Caucasus, and it retained a very large episcopal see [Козубский, 1906, с.48-51]. It is likely that two significant samples of monumental religious architecture in Derbent belong to this period of widespread Christian ideology. These are the cross-shaped central-domed structure in the citadel and one of the most significant buildings of the medieval city, possibly used by the Arabs in the 8th century as the Cathedral Mosque (the Juma Mosque). The former structure was only recently identified as a Christian antiquity of the city [Кудрявцев,

1985, c.127-128], but similar assumptions regarding the historical Juma Mosque of Derbent were expressed as early as the 19th century [Бестужев-Марлинский, 1958, с.321]. Visually close parallels in the form of the cross-domed structure in the Naryn-Kala citadel, which was previously used as a water reservoir, can be traced to some Christian structures of Western Byzantine architecture in Italy, particularly to the fifth-century structures of Ravenna [Golasanti, 1926, p.1].

Bringing us back to the origins of Christianity in the South Caucasus, Russian researcher P.K.Uslar attests: “The earliest period, known as the Syrophile or Apostolic period, is associated with the names of the Syrian missionary Apostle Thaddeus and his disciple Saint Yeghishe who was the first to preach the ideas of Christianity in Caucasian Albania” [Услар, 1992, с.15]. In turn, the existing differences in church architecture, the cross symbols, elements of Christianity, representatives of spiritual heads, and the Catholicosate line testify to the development of a sophisticated church organization, liturgy, and the establishment of new bishoprics while preserving the old ones.

Outstanding historian Orientalist, Arabist, Turkologist, and Islamic scholar A.E.Krymsky (1871–1942), whose name was long prohibited and whose scholarly works were never republished, devoted two very substantive articles to Caucasian Albania. The first one, *Pages from the History of Northern or Caucasian Azerbaijan (Classical Albania)*, published in 1934, was dedicated to the ancient city of Gabala and the second to Shaki. The earliest available data about the spread of Christianity in Albania dates back to the 2nd century AD. In the 2nd century AD, Christian missionaries made efforts to convert the Albanian people to Christianity. Krymsky noted that “...the king’s capital of Gabala turned into a respected Christian bishop’s see”. The author also addressed questions of Albania’s borders, showing that “Gabala entered the Greco-Roman world, undoubtedly through those chroniclers of ‘the great triumvir Pompey’, who accompanied him in the Roman campaign of BC 66–65 in Albania or received information from other eyewitnesses who participated in the campaign” [Крымский, 1938, с.369-384]. The fate of the scholar, who ended his life in prison – information that became known only after the collapse of the USSR – is tragic, but his works remain alive and in demand.

According to the founder of Azerbaijani scientific historiography Abbasgulu agha Bakikhanov, Albania was bordered in the north by Shirvan and Derbent. In his fundamental work *Gulistan-i Iram*, which was the first academic monographic study, he argues: “The city of Albana, which, according to the accounts of ancient historians, lay between the rivers Albanus and Casius, could be identified as Derbent; the Albanus River as the Samour, and the Casius as the Manas, flowing between Buynak and Tarki” [Бакиханов, 1991, с.18-19].

It must be acknowledged that the major way that religion evolved in Albania was as an essential part of the governmental structure. By analyzing data from a wide range of sources, we can conclude that the political organization itself, i.e. the Albanian state, had a well-established system of governance, based on the traditions of West Asian and Transcaucasian states, and was capable of pursuing independent economic and political policies in Transcaucasia and West Asia. This was particularly evident when the Albanians, like other Transcaucasian peoples, had to fight against Rome, which sought to seize new markets and trade routes in Asia Minor and the Mediterranean. As is known, in BC 36, Roman legions, led by Antony, once again invaded Transcaucasia to conquer its states. One of his generals, Canidius, successively defeated the Armenians, Iberians, and Albanians. At that time, Albania was ruled by King Zober. Nevertheless, despite this, the Albanians tried to free themselves from nominal dependence on Rome whenever possible. This, in fact, prompted the Transcaucasian campaign of Emperor Octavian Augustus (63 BC – 14 AD) to bring Armenia, Iberia, and Albania under Roman control. It is known that before that time Emperor Nero prepared a campaign against Albania in BC 68 to seize the strategic Derbent pass (“The Caspian Gates”). Fortunately, this last campaign was never undertaken due to Nero’s death, although his intentions were later pursued by Domitian. Rome’s interest in Albania did not wane in subsequent times. This fact is evidenced by the inscription carved between AD 84–96 at the base of Mount Beyuk-Dash in Gobustan: “Under Emperor

Domitian Caesar Augustus Germanicus. Lucius Julius Maximus, centurion of the XII Fulminata (completed, made by)" [История Дагестана, 2004, с.144].

Doctor of Church History (PIO), Archimandrite Alexiy (Nikonorov), a researcher of Christianization of Caucasian Albania, writes: "Iran started a long and brutal struggle for the countries of the South Caucasus. In the following two centuries, two epochal events occurred in Caucasian Albania (a historical state in the territory of present-day Azerbaijan and southern Dagestan) – the adoption of Christianity and the creation of its own writing system. There is no doubt that these events weren't just coincidental in time" [Никоноров, 2022, с.131]. His position is as follows: "Back in the fourth century, Albania had its own independent Church with a three-tier hierarchy, a sufficient number of episcopal sees, its own monastic institution, liturgy, dogmatics, canon law, i.e., the entire liturgical service – the public worship of the Church. The history of Christianity in any people can and should indeed be viewed as part of the history of the Universal Church, moreover, the history of Christianity in a particular region should with good reason be considered part of the nation's history" [Никоноров, 2012, с.10].

As we can see, the lands of Caucasian Albania attracted numerous conquerors, but a pivotal moment for many peoples of the Caucasus and the West Asia was the change of the Arsacid dynasty in 225–226 AD in Parthia to the Sassanids. The latter took control of Caucasian Albania and strengthened their presence in the area of the present-day Derbent with one of the largest cities, Chola (Choga, Jora).

The centuries-long struggle between Iran and Rome ended with a peace agreement in 390 AD, according to which the eastern regions of Armenia, Georgia, and Albania were ceded to the Sassanids. To counter Iran, the Albanians often allied with the Huns who appeared in coastal Dagestan in the fourth century AD. Incited by Byzantium and the Sassanids, nomadic barbarian tribes from coastal Dagestan raided Albania, plundering and destroying cities and villages, and killing or capturing locals. To protect their northern borders, the Sassanid rulers had to build long defensive walls. The remains of these walls have survived to this day north of the Absheron Peninsula – the Beshbarmak wall, the Gilgilchai (Shabran) wall 23 km further north, and in Dagestan – the Derbent wall. The Sassanids, having imposed heavy taxes on the conquered territories, induced the population to build defensive walls and fortresses in the Chola area [История Дагестана, 2004, с.146-147]. One of the Sassanid kings' top priorities became fortifying the Caucasian passes. The border at the Derbent pass was secured with special care. To this end, several lines of defensive structures, the so-called long walls, were built along the western coast of the Caspian Sea. The Derbent defensive complex fortifications were, of course, the most impressive of these. As a result of this large-scale construction, Derbent emerged not only as a fortified center of paramount strategic importance but also as a city, a major political, ideological, and economic center in the Eastern Caucasus, the capital of one of the provinces that became part of the Sassanid empire after AD 461, and a major center of Christianity, and later – a stronghold of Islam.

According to Georgian researcher Prof. R.Lolua, the body of Caucasian Albanian inscriptions has historically included the so-called Derbent inscription. The scholar argues: "It seems particularly important that during the search for the Derbent inscription, in certain spots on the northern wall of Derbent, as well as on the southern gates of Orta-Kapi, S.N.Mouraviev found 'very distinct Albanian symbols', which, in his opinion, were the tamgas (brands) of Albanian stonemasons involved in the construction of the fortifications" [Муравьев, 1981, с.282]. Unfortunately, S.N.Muravyov did not photograph or copy the marks he found, merely providing a 'brief mention of them' [Лолуа, 2022, с.119]. According to Dagestani historians, writings in Albanian letters have been found on the territory of modern Azerbaijan and Derbent. Moreover, they have also been discovered beyond Albania's borders – in the mountainous regions of Dagestan, which were not part of Albania in the early Middle Ages. Albanian literacy was taught to children and church books were translated into this language. This was undoubtedly a great cultural achievement for the country. It seems especially important to us that, according to some data, Albania had already had a writing system. The 5th-century Armenian writer Koriun does not discuss the creation but rather the

“renewal” of the Albanian alphabet by Mesrop Mashtots. It is also worth recalling that in BC 65, Albanian king Oroys sent a letter to Pompey, asking to restore peace and in AD 260, the Albanians, rejecting the letters of Shapur I, wrote letters to Roman leaders offering assistance in the liberation of Valerian [История Дагестана, 2004, с.78, 147].

Regarding Dagestan, it should be mentioned that the fact that a part of the country was formerly a part of Caucasian Albania, one of the first states in this region, had a major impact on the social development of the society. The structure of Albanian class society was formed by individual alliances of tribes or alliances of alliances (super alliances), led by their own “kings” before they were united under a single authority. The power of the Iranian shahs preserved the existing order in Dagestan without creating a new administrative structure, but merely confirmed and reinforced the status of local rulers by awarding them titles of Iranian origin [История Дагестана, 2004, с.169]. Turning to the history of the region as a whole, we are pleased to note the intertwining of ethnic and confessional diversity from ancient times, the combination and mutual enrichment of Turkic, Iranian, and Caucasian ethnic layers, which provided such a vibrant and rich cultural palette.

Today, we can see that the Republic of Azerbaijan strives to prioritize the function of cultural policy, such as preserving national and local cultural identity. It demonstrates the art of aligning cultural policy with human development, the formation of civil society, strengthening harmonious intercultural communication, and establishing a dialogue between cultures. This is demonstrated by the focus on Christian roots. One of the central global issues of the present century is the socio-cultural one. The origins of Christianity in Caucasian Albania, which once included modern Azerbaijan, parts of southern Dagestan, and the Alazani Valley in Georgia, are among such issues. It is necessary to build a general scientific paradigm adequate to the new worldview, while enabling broader cultural contacts, communication, comparison, and the borrowing of positive experiences that help enrich both national cultures and their contributions to the collective culture of humanity. At the same time, the reasonable question arises: how should we address the need to preserve and protect the uniqueness of traditional cultures, their creative development, and enrichment through interaction with other cultures? Perhaps the spread of the ideas of cooperation among all cultures, civilizations, and religions, on which the Baku International Multiculturalism Center bases its policy, will help develop and make available to millions of people an understanding of the world based on the ideas of dialogue and partnership between civilizations as the only possibility for humanity to survive on this planet. Without awareness of one’s own identity, our societies will not be able to confidently respond to the challenges of today’s globalizing world and ensure the national security of their countries. And for this, it is necessary to return to the comprehension of the wealth of one’s historical heritage, something Azerbaijan demonstrates by continuously revisiting the ethnocultural heritage of Caucasian Albania.

REFERENCES:

1. Алиев К.Г. Кавказская Албания: (I в. до н.э. – I в. н.э.) (*Caucasian Albania: (1th century BC – 1th century AD)*). Баку: Элм, 1982, 363 с.
2. Бакиханов А. Гюлистан-и Ирам (Gulistan-i Iram). Баку: Элм, 1991, 304 с.
3. Бестужев-Марлинский А.А. Сочинения (*Works*). Т.2. М., 1958.
4. Буниятов З.М. Азербайджан в VII–IX веках (Azerbaijan in the 7th–9th centuries). Баку: Изд-во АН Аз.ССР, 1965, 404 с.
5. История Дагестана с древнейших времен до наших дней (*History of Dagestan from Ancient Times to the Present Day*) / Ин-т истории, археологии и этнографии. М.: Наука, 2004. Т.1: История Дагестана с древнейших времен до XX века / Отв. ред. А.И. Османов. 2004, 627 с.
6. Каганкатвацци Моисей. История агван (*History of Agvan*)// Пер. с древнеарм. яз. К.Патканова. СПб: Тип. Императорской Академии наук, 1861, 376 с.
7. Козубский Е.И. История города Дербента (*History of the City of Derbent*). Темир-Хан-Шура, 1906, 469 с.
8. Кудрявцев А.А. О месте духовенства в социальной структуре феодального Дербента (*On the Place of the Clergy in the Social Structure of Feudal Derbent*) // Духовенство и политическая жизнь на Ближнем и Среднем Востоке в период феодализма. М, 1985, с.127-128.
9. Крымский А.Е. Страницы из истории Северного или Кавказского Азербайджана (Классической Албании). Кабала. Шеки (Pages from the History of Northern or Caucasian Azerbaijan (Classical Albania). Cabal. Sheki) // Сборник «Памяти Н.Я. Марра». М.-Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1938, с.369-384.
10. Лолуа Р. Кавказско-албанская эпиграфика и знаки албанского письма на оборонительных стенах г.Дербента (Caucasian-Albanian Epigraphy and Signs of Albanian Writing on the Defensive Walls of Derbent) // Этнокультурное наследие Кавказской Албании, 2022, №3, с.115-123.
11. Мамедова Ф. Политическая история и историческая география Кавказской Албании: (III в. до н.э. – VIII в. н.э.) (Political History and Historical Geography of Caucasian Albania: (3rd century BC – 8th century AD)). Баку, 1986, 284 с.
12. Минорский В.Ф. История Ширвана и Дербенда X–XI веков (History of Shirvan and Derbent 10th–11th centuries) / Акад. наук Аз.ССР. Ин-т востоковедения. Москва: Изд-во вост. лит., 1963, 265 с.
13. Муравьев С.Н. Птолемеевская карта Кавказской Албании и уровень Каспия (Ptolemaic Map of Caucasian Albania and the Level of the Caspian Sea) // Вестник древней истории, 1983, №1, с.117-147.
14. Муравьев С.Н. Три этюда по кавказско-албанской (алуанской) письменности (*Three Studies on Caucasian-Albanian (Aluan) Writing*) // Ежегодник иберийско-кавказского языкознания. т.VIII. Тбилиси, 1981, с.222-325.
15. Мусеибли Н., Ахундова Г. К вопросу о предыстории Албанского государства (On the Question of the Prehistory of the Albanian State. Ethno-Cultural Heritage of Caucasian Albania) // Этнокультурное наследие Кавказской Албании. Сборник статей. Баку, 2022, №3, с.22-29.
16. Никоноров Алексей, иеромонах. История Христианства в Кавказской Албании (*The History of Christianity in Caucasian Albania*) / 2-е изд. Махачкала: Издательский дом «Эпоха», 2012, 192 с.: ил.
17. Никоноров Алексей, архимандрит. Христианизация Кавказской Албании в контексте реформ Сасанидского Ирана (*Christianization of Caucasian Albania in the Context of the Reforms of Sassanid Iran*) // Этнокультурное наследие Кавказской Албании, 2022, №3, с.131-136.
18. Пашаева М. Следы древнетюркских традиций в труде «История албан» Моисея Калакатуйского (Traces of Ancient Turkic Traditions in the Work "History of Albanians" by Movses Kalakatuysky)// Этнокультурное наследие Кавказской Албании, 2022, №3, с.142-149.
19. Сеидова Г.Н. Из истории христианства в Дербенте как части Кавказской Албании (From the History of Christianity in Derbent as Part of Caucasian Albania) // Conference on History Cultural Heritage of Ethnos of Caucasian Albania in the context of Human Rights. Baku. June, 10-11. 2014. Qafqaz Albaniasinin tarixi və mədəni irsi insan hüquqları kontekstində. Beynəlxalq konfransın tezislər toplusu. Bakı-2014, pp.121-122.

20. Сеидова Г.Н. Кавказская Албания и древний Дербент (Caucasian Albania and Ancient Derbent). Материалы X Международной конференции «Кавказская Албания: религиозная и социальная жизнь» // Этнокультурное наследие Кавказской Албании (сборник статей). Баку, 2023, №4, с.180-188.
21. Сеидова Г.Н. Христианство в Кавказской Албании (Christianity in Caucasian Albania). Вторая Международная научно-практическая теологическая конференция «История христианства Херсонеса и Древней Тавриды: истоки и наследие». 9 декабря 2019 г. Севастополь // Вопросы культурологии, 2020, №3, с.11-17.
22. Тревер К.В. Очерки по истории и культуре Кавказской Албании (IV в. до н.э. – VII в. н.э.) (*Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania (4rd century BC – 8th century AD)*). М.-Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1959, 389 с.
23. Услар П.К. Начало христианства в Закавказье и на Кавказе (The Beginning of Christianity in Transcaucasia and the Caucasus) // Кавказские горцы: Сборник сведений. Репринтное издание. М., 1992. Т.2, с.1-24.
24. Халилов Дж.А. Древнейшие государства Кавказа и Средней Азии (The Most Ancient States of the Caucasus and Central Asia). М., 1985, 496 с.
25. Шукюров К. К истории Албанистики (Кавказ) (To the History of Albanistics (Caucasus)) // Этнокультурное наследие Кавказской Албании, 2022, №3, с.81-90.
26. Юшков С.В. К вопросу о границах древней Албании (To the Question About the Borders of Ancient Albania) // Ист. зап., 1937, №1, с.129-148.
27. Golasanti A. Byzantine Art in Italy. Milan, 1926. P.1 / <http://udi.az>. from 07.12.2012. Date of treatment: 4. 12.2019.

Shabiyev Baymirza

*Associate Professor of the Department of "History of Azerbaijan"
(for Natural Sciences Faculties),
Baku State University, PhD in History
<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-6954-1482>*

ALBANIA–KHAZAR RELATIONS DURING THE MIHRANIDS DYNASTY

Abstract. This article is dedicated to the analysis and critique of Prof. S.S.Aliyarli's thesis, which posits the existence of a Hun-Bulgar Turkestan state on the left bank of the Kura River during the second half of the 7th century. According to the author, in the 60s-80s of the 7th century, the ruler of Albania, Javanshir, attempted to establish diplomatic relations specifically with the Turkestan Khaganate through matrimonial diplomacy.

Based on the materials from M.Kaghankatvatsi's work "History of Albania", Prof. S.S.Aliyarli's thesis has been refuted and it has been proven that in the 60s-80s of the 7th century, the Albanian princes Javanshir and his successor Varaz-Tiridates were engaged in diplomatic negotiations not with some Hun-Bulgar state on the left bank of the Kura River, as claimed, but rather with the Khazar Khaganate, whose territory was located north of Derbent.

Keywords: Albania, Khazars, Kaghankatvatsi, Javanshir, Alp-Iluetuer

The period of Mihranids rule (630–705) represents one of the most complex and intense phases in the history of Caucasian Albania. Situated in a crucial region where the military-strategic and economic-commercial interests of major powers such as the Sasanian Empire, the Caliphate, Byzantium, and the Khazar Khaganate intersected, one of the key directions of Albania's foreign policy was the regulation of relations with the Khazar Khaganate.

Nearly all researchers involved in Albanian studies and Khazar studies have, to some extent, addressed the issue of Albania-Khazar relations, with some conducting detailed investigations on this subject. In this regard, the works of Z.M.Bunyadov, F.Mammadova, Y.Jafarov, M.I.Artamonov, A.P.Novoseltsev, L.N.Gumilyov, A.Y.Krimsky, R.Huseynzadeh, S.S.Pletneva, and others deserve special mention.

In addition to monographic studies, Albania-Khazar relations have also received attention in academic publications and higher education textbooks. In the seventh chapter of the 1996 textbook *History of Azerbaijan*, edited by Prof. S.S.Aliyarli, which is dedicated to ethnogenesis, a completely new "scientific" perspective on Albania-Khazar relations was presented. As a result of the author's research, he concluded that in 665, the ruler of Albania, Javanshir, did not marry the daughter of the Khazar Khagan, but instead married the daughter of the ruler of the Hun-Bulgar state, which had been established on the left bank of the Kura River at that time, in an effort to regulate relations between the two states [Azərbaycan tarixi, 1996, s.181]. The article presented here clarifies how much this claim aligns with historical realities.

To support his claim, S.S.Aliyarli presented the following arguments:

1. According to the author, in M.Kaghankatvatsi's *History of Albania*, the Huns and Khazars are depicted as distinct ethnic groups. Specifically, in the first book, chapters 12, 14, 29, 30, and in the second book, chapters 1, 2, 26, and several other sections, the name of the Hun (Hon) tribe is mentioned, along with references to the king of the Barsil people in the Hun land and the ruler Rosmosok, who gathered the

Hephthalites regiment under his command. The concept of the “Khazar land”, however, is only introduced from the beginning of the second book [Azərbaycan tarixi, 1996, s.181]. The author asserts that Albanian-Khazar relations are reflected in the second book, 4 chapters, which are dedicated to the events of 628, in chapter 23 and in chapter 16 of the third book [Azərbaycan tarixi, 1996, s.181].

2. In the 26th chapter of the second book of M.Kaghankatvatsi's *History of Albania*, it is explicitly shown that Javanshir was related not to the Khazars, but to the Hun ruler [Azərbaycan tarixi, 1996, s.181].

3. The researcher claims that, from a historical perspective, it was impossible for Javanshir to have met with the Khazar Khagan. According to the researcher, under the “Dual Kingship” laws in the history of the Khazars, First Turkic Khaganate, Oghuz, and Karakhanid khanate, the “Great Khagan” (Khaqan al-Kabir) was neither allowed to go on military campaigns nor engage in negotiations with other rulers. To support this argument, the author references the writings of the Arab chronicler Masudi about the status of the Khazar Khagan, as described by Ibn Fadlan, who traveled to the land of the Volga Bulgars as an envoy of the Caliph in 921–922 [Azərbaycan tarixi, 1996, s.181-182].

4. The author also argues that it was impossible for Javanshir to have met and become related to the Khazar Khagan's deputy, Jebu Khagan. This is because Jebu Khagan had fled the Khazar Khaganate long before 665, specifically in 630 [Azərbaycan tarixi, 1996, s.182].

We believe that the arguments put forward by the late researcher S.S.Aliyarli are insufficiently substantiated and that there is a great need for a thorough examination of these arguments.

First and foremost, it must be acknowledged that M.Kaghankatvatsi's *History of Albania* extensively uses the terms Hun and Khazar in various chapters [Kalankatuklu, 2006, s.83, 127, 140, 166 və s.]. However, when examining the matter closely, it becomes evident that in the source, the ethnonyms Hun and Khazar, as well as the concepts of the Hun land, Hun king, Khazar land, and Khazar ruler, are often used synonymously. The exact reason why M.Kaghankatvatsi used the term Hun in some chapters and Khazar in others cannot be precisely determined. Nevertheless, nearly all researchers investigating the events of the 630s–680s unanimously accept the fact that Javanshir married the daughter of the Khazar Khagan without any doubt [Bünyadov, 2007, s.87; Məmmədova, 1993, s.199; Джафаров, 1993, с.82].

Referring to the events of this period, Z.Bunyadov, based on M.Kaghankatvatsi's information, writes that in 664–665, the Khazars attacked Albania again, committed plunder, and Javanshir, compelled to make peace with the Khazars, married the Khagan's daughter [Bünyadov, 2007, s.87]. The subsequent raid on Arran by the Khazar army under the command of Alp-Iluetuer, allegedly to avenge their relative Javanshir after Varaz-Tiridates ascended the throne, and the dispatch of Catholicos Yelizar and Bishop Israel to the Khazar Khaganate to negotiate relations, also confirm that Javanshir was indeed related to and met with the Khazar Khagan [Bünyadov, 2007, s.116-118]. The well-known researcher of Albanian history, F.Mammadova, also emphasized that these events occurred precisely between the Albania and the Khazar Khaganate [Məmmədova, 1993, s.199-202]. It is clear that both Z.Bunyadov and F.Mammadova fully understood that when M.Kaghankatvatsi referred to the Hun land and the Hun ruler, he was directly referring to the Khazar Khaganate. Interestingly, when researcher Y.Jafarov interpreted these events, he noted that, as reflected in M.Kaghankatvatsi's *History of Albania*, Hun prince Alp-Iluetuer marched on Albania to avenge Javanshir, and Catholicos Yelizar and Bishop Israel traveled to the Hun land to negotiate relations [Джафаров, 1993, s.82]. Renowned researcher L.N.Gumilyov's studies indicate that ethnos groups such as the Huns, Turkic, Khazars, Oghuz, Bulgars, and others, despite being mentioned under different names in various sources due to their inclusion in the “Hun superethnos” system, had all united under the Khazar Khaganate starting from the mid-7th century [Гумилев, 1990, s.148-149].

Armenian chronicler Stepanos Taronetsi (Asoghik) also touches upon these events, noting that in the 130th year of the Armenian calendar (681 AD), the Khazar army, under the command of Alp-Iluetuer attacked Arran under the pretext of avenging Javanshir. The renowned researcher of Khazar history, M.I.Artamonov, also specifically highlighted that diplomatic relations existed between the Khazar Khaganate and Caucasian

Albania during the 630s–680s and mentioned that Javanshir attempted to regulate these relations through matrimonial diplomacy with the Khazar Khaganate [Торонский, 1964, s.64-157; Артаманов, 1962].

A careful examination of the information particularly the details of Catholicos Yelizar and especially Bishop Israel's route to the Khazar Khaganate to negotiate relations, reveals that they reached the Khaganate's territory after passing through the city of Derbent. M.Kaghankatvatsi writes: "At that time, the commander of the Huns and the great prince Alp-Iluetuer... plundered the provinces located at the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains and the villages of the Gabala province with the intent to avenge Javanshir's blood... Then... they set up camp on the plain near Lpina... The great Catholicos Yelizar was sent to the prince of the Huns. Yelizar convinced the prince of the Huns. He [referring to Alp-Iluetuer.–B.Ş.] gathered his troops and returned to his country" [Kalankatuklu, 2006, s.161]. From this source, it becomes clear that Catholicos Yelizar met with Alp-Iluetuer in the Lpina region, after which the raiders returned to their homeland. This fact undoubtedly proves that Alp-Iluetuer's country was located north of Derbent.

M.Kaghankatvatsi's account of Bishop Israel being sent to the land of the Huns leaves no doubt about the accuracy of this fact. Kaghankatvatsi writes: "He immediately agreed to depart for the distant land of the Huns. They... crossed the borders of Albania and, on the thirteenth day of the journey, reached the city of Lpina... Then they set off and arrived in the land of the Chilbils, located at the foothills of the majestic mountains... A few days later, they reached the Chola gate near Derbent... Continuing their long journey, they finally arrived at the splendid city of Varachan on the eve of the 40-day fasting festival" [Kalankatuklu, 2006, s.164-165]. These details provided by the chronicler make it clear that the land of the Huns or Khazars was situated north of Derbent. Therefore, the version proposed by S.S.Aliyarli, which suggests the existence of a Hun-Bulgar Turkestan state on the left bank of the Kura River and posits that two states existed in Azerbaijan during the 60s-80s of the 7th century – the Principality of Girdiman on the right bank and the Hun-Bulgar state on the left bank – and that there were mutual relations between these two states [Azərbaycan tarixi, 1996, s.186], lacks any scientific basis.

S.S.Aliyarli writes that, from a purely historical perspective, the Khazar Khagan could neither invade the lands of the Girdman ruler Javanshir and launch a campaign toward the Aras River, nor conduct diplomatic negotiations on a ship in the waters of the Kura River. This is because, as in many Turkic state traditions, the "ancient Turkic dual kingship" tradition that existed in the Khazar Khaganate dictated that the Great Khagan could neither participate in military campaigns nor engage in diplomatic negotiations with other rulers [Azərbaycan tarixi, 1996, s.181]. The information provided by 10th-century chroniclers Ibn Fadlan and Masudi about the Khazars' Great Khagan or Khaqan al-Kabir and his status further confirms this fact. Indeed, research shows that the Khazar Khagan, belonging to the Ashina dynasty, led a secluded life as a sacred figure symbolizing statehood and did not hold any real power. The Great Khagan was even permitted to appear before the public only three times a year, once every four months [Гусейнзаде, 2019, s.172-173]. In reality, actual power in the Khazar Khaganate was exercised by a state official who was considered the deputy to the Great Khagan and was referred to by various titles in the sources (such as king, bey, prince, leader, ruler, khagan bey, malik, tarkhan-khagan, etc.) [Гусейнзаде, 2019, s.172-173]. Based on the information recorded in the sources about the status of the Great Khagan, S.S.Aliyarli considers it impossible for Javanshir to have met and negotiated with the Khazar Khagan and poses a rhetorical question: Could Javanshir have met and negotiated with the Great Khagan's deputy, Jebu Khagan? In answering this question, the professor notes that even this was impossible because Jebu Khagan had fled the country after losing a battle long before Javanshir came to power in Albania [referring to the events of 630.–B.Ş.] [Azərbaycan tarixi, 1996, s.182].

According to the tradition in the Khazar Khaganate, a commander who was defeated in battle, along with his family, was to be killed. As Jebu Khagan was defeated in battle, he decided to flee to save his life and advised his son Shad, who was in Albania, to kill those around him and escape to safety [Kalankatuklu, 2006, s.196].

In general, research shows that the year 630 was marked by disastrous events in the history of the First Turkic Khaganate. As M.I. Artamonov noted, in 630, the Eastern Turkic Khaganate was defeated by the Tang Empire, and the Western Turkic Khagan was killed by his own uncle. Under such circumstances, it would have been impossible for the Khazars to remain in Albania [Торонский, 1964, s.154].

S.S. Aliyarli's information regarding the events of 630 and the impossibility of Javanshir meeting and becoming related to Jebu Khagan raises no doubts. However, the professor overlooked one crucial point. As the author himself noted, according to the dual kingship tradition in the Khazar Khaganate, it was the deputy to the Great Khagan, Yabghu Khagan (or Khagan's yabghu – where, as seen here, the term “yabghu” is not a personal name but a title), who led military campaigns and conducted diplomatic negotiations [Azərbaycan tarixi, 1996, s.182]. The researcher failed to consider the possibility that, after Jebu Khagan fled the country following the events of 630, the Khazar Khaganate could not have remained without a “yabghu” until 665. During the Khazars' next campaign in Albania in 665, the Great Khagan's yabghu was Alp Iluetuer. As noted by M. Kaghankatvatsi, it was Alp-Iluetuer with whom Javanshir met and negotiated on the flowing waters of the Kura River, engaging in matrimonial diplomacy. In 681, it was again Alp-Iluetuer, the Great Khagan's yabghu, who led a campaign against Albania, under the pretext of avenging Javanshir's death.

Conclusion. Thus, research indicates that although the terms Hun and Khazar are used with different ethnic connotations in several chapters of M. Kaghankatvatsi's *History of Albania*, they often carry a synonymous meaning. The Albanian prince Javanshir, in 664–665, was not related to the ruler of the Hun-Bulgar Turkestan state on the left bank of the Kura River, as claimed by Prof. S.S. Aliyarli, but rather to the ruler of the Khazar state located north of Derbent. The detailed analysis of the travel routes taken by Catholicos Yelizar and Bishop Israel, who were sent by Varaz-Tiridates to the Khaganate to negotiate relations with Khazar Khagan Alp-Iluetuer, who invaded Albania in the early 680s under the pretext of avenging Javanshir, also demonstrates that the entity S.S. Aliyarli presented as the left-bank Turkestan state was, in fact, the Khazar Khaganate, whose territory was located north of the Chola-Derbent passing.

REFERENCES:

1. Azərbaycan tarixi (Uzaq keçmişdən 1870-ci illərə qədər) (*The History of Azerbaijan (From Ancient Times to the 1870s)*). Bakı: "Azərbaycan" nəşriyyatı, 1996, 872 s.
2. Azərbaycan tarixi. Yeddi cildə (*The History of Azerbaijan. In Seven Volumes*): İkinci cild (III–XIII əsrin I rübü). Bakı: Elm, 1998, 596 s.
3. Bünyadov Z.M. Azərbaycan VII–IX əsrlərdə (*Azerbaijan in the 7th–9th centuries*). Bakı: "Şərq-Qərb", 2007, 424 s.
4. Kalankatuklu Musa. Albaniya tarixi. Mxitar Qoş. Alban salnaməsi (*Albanian History, Mkhitar Gosh – Albanian hronicles*). Bakı: "Avrasiya press", 2006, 296 s.
5. Məmmədova F. Azərbaycanın (Albaniyanın) siyasi tarixi və tarixi coğrafiyası (*The Political History and Historical Geography of Azerbaijan (Albania)*). Bakı: Azər nəşr, 1993, 262 s.
6. Артаманов М.И. История хазар (*The History of the Khazars*). Л.: Из-во Гос. Эрмитажа, 1962, 521 с.
7. Гумилев Л.Н. Тысячелетие вокруг Каспия (*A Millennium Around the Caspian*). Баку: Азернешр, 1990, 312 с.
8. Гусейн-заде Р.А. Тюрки Дешт-и кыпчака и окружающий мир: симбиоз кочевой степи и оседлого оазиса (*Turks of Dasht-i-Kipchak and the World Around: Symbiosis of Nomadic Steppe and Settled Oasis*). Баку: «АФполигрАФ», 2019, 248 s.
9. Джафаров Ю. Гунны и Азербайджан (*The Huns and Azerbaijan*). Баку: Азернешр, 1993, 107 с.
10. Торонский Степаннос (Асогик). Всеобщая история (*Universal History*)/ Пер. с древнеарм. яз. Н.Эмина. М., 1964.

Shalbuzova Nazira

*Researcher of the Institute of History and Ethnology
named after A.A.Bakikhanov of ANAS
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0454-2977>*

COMMON ALBANIAN TRACES IN THE MUTUAL INFLUENCES OF THE AZERBAIJANI, KRYTS, AND UDI LANGUAGES

Abstract. This article investigates the traces and specific features of the Albanian language within the Kryts and Udi languages by comparing historical, linguistic, toponymic, and ethnographic materials related to the Azerbaijani, Kryts, and Udi languages. A comparative analysis of the Kryts language with other related languages has been conducted. By exploring the influence of the Azerbaijani language on both the Kryts and Udi languages, the study uncovers the mutual interactions between the Kryts language and several languages that, despite belonging to different language families, live in close proximity and maintain close contact.

Keywords: Kryts language, Udi language, traces of the Caucasian-Albanian language, toponym

Ancient authors such as Arrian and Pliny have provided information about the Albanian ethnos and the tribes in Albania that spoke various languages. Ancient sources note that the ethnonym “Albanian” was used not only as the leading ethnos of Albania but also as a general name for the tribes settled in this country. F.J.Mammadova also states that in the 1st–8th centuries AD, the primary ruling ethnos in Albania was the Albanians. Discussing the ethnogenesis of the Azerbaijani people, the author notes: “The Azerbaijani nation was formed from three powerful, foundational national-cultural layers – the Caucasian-speaking (Albanians), Persian-speaking (Medes, Kurds, Tats, Talysh people), and Turkic-speaking layers” [Мамедова, 2005, с.615]. Some authors, however, believe that the name “Albanian” is not related to a specific ethnos but rather to the geographical region where 26 tribes resided. According to this view, “Albanian” does not refer to a specific ethnos but to an administrative geographical area. Authors suggest that at different times, various languages of different origins were referred to under the umbrella of the Albanian language. M.M.Ikhiliov notes that the Lezgins, Tabasarans, Rutuls, Tsakhurs, Aghuls, and Khinalugs, along with the Udi and Kryts, are peoples related by ancestry and are also some of the oldest inhabitants of Azerbaijan [Ихиллов, 1969, с.105]. N.Yakovlev divides the eastern group of Caucasian languages into five subgroups. The section titled “The Small Peoples and Languages of Samur” includes the Aghul, Rutul, Tsakhur, Khinalug, Budukh, Jek, Kryts, Naput, and Udi languages. He groups the Khinalug, Budukh, Jek, Kryts, and Naput languages under the Shahdagh language, though he lists them as independent languages [Языки и народы Кавказа, 1930, с.28]. Professor A.S.Chikobava, in his research, points out that the Kryts language has dialectal varieties [Чикобава, 1953, с.168].

Since the formation of a language, which is directly linked to the spirit of the people, is a lengthy process, its development takes considerable time, but it can be forgotten quickly over time. The sources studied indicate that the Shahdagh peoples were bearers of the Caucasian-Albanian language and are autochthonous Albanian peoples. The Kryts language, as well as the Udi language, are ancient languages that have been preserved for centuries and they are considered difficult to study. In different years, different researchers have developed alphabet systems for these languages. On the internet, a brief description of the Kryts language in German and alphabet based on the listed sources can be found (Table 1). We

noticed a sign where sounds dominate over letters, and a similar sound “ç” can be observed as a letter in the alphabet developed by teachers from the village of Jek (Table 3). In the alphabet created in the village of Jek, an additional 10 letters were included alongside the Azerbaijani alphabet, and their pronunciation was illustrated with examples used in the Jek language. We can see the symbol representing the same sound in the phonetic system of the Albanian alphabet described by various authors in the book *Kavkazsko-Albanskje Shtudii* by Georgian scholar Roman Lolua [Лолуа, 2019, s.39] (Table 4). As the author notes, this symbol indicates that the letter is articulated from the throat.

In 2018, a Kryts dictionary containing approximately 2,000 entries was compiled based on a 39-letter alphabet by Shikhbaba Mehdiyev, a schoolteacher from the village of Kryts, and Ken Keyes. This dictionary was later made available on the website www.webonary.org.

Later, in 2020, a new Kryts-Azerbaijani-English dictionary, containing nearly 4,000 entries and based on a 46-letter alphabet, was prepared and published in Khachmaz by Israfil Hummetov, a history teacher by profession, along with Monika Rind-Pawłowski, a researcher in Caucasian languages at Goethe University (Table 2). However, both dictionaries feature letters that differ from the previously developed Kryts alphabet and from each other. Due to the presence of similar and differing letters and sounds in the alphabets developed by international scholars and local teachers, it is evident that the Kryts alphabet requires further detailed comparative and thorough analysis alongside the studies conducted by linguists and specialists in Caucasian languages. It is no coincidence that in order to fully understand and properly analyze the Kryts language, a comparative analysis with both its related Dagestani languages and the Azerbaijani language is necessary.

When conducting a comparative analysis of the Kryts, Udi, and their related languages, we observe the preservation of several consonants characteristic of Caucasian languages. However, we also notice the influence of the Azerbaijani language on the vocabulary, phonetic system, and even grammatical structures of these languages. Numerous Azerbaijani words have been incorporated into their vocabulary, gradually replacing native root words with new ones. Upon closer examination, it becomes clear that while the roots of these words are borrowed, the suffixes remain their own. For example, in Kryts: *iļçival* (Kryts) – *elçilik* (matchmaking); *fikirləşmişxiyic* (Kryts) – *fikirləşmək* (to think); and in Udi: *haburruxüyar* (Udi) – *abırlı* (decent), *nazbesun* – *naz etmək* (to be coquettish), *alxışbaksun* – *alqışlamaq* (to applaud) (R.Mobili, Ə.İsrafil Hümətov, Monika Rind Pawłowski). Alternatively, native root words have been combined with word-forming suffixes borrowed from Azerbaijani, resulting in words that follow the phonetic harmony of their languages (for instance, in Kryts: *rişsiz* [*riş-qız*], *xəbsiz* [*xəb-əl*], *qilsiz* [*qil-ayaq*], *yizsiz* [*yiz-qar*], etc.). There are many words in both Kryts and Udi languages that are currently used in daily life, which have been borrowed from Azerbaijani, yet remain archaic in modern Azerbaijani. The fact that certain archaic Turkic traditions, which are rarely encountered in the language or traditions of contemporary Azerbaijani Turks, continue to manifest in the customs, languages, and beliefs of various ethnic groups living in Azerbaijan further strengthens the likelihood of close ethno-genetic ties between these ancient Albanian tribes and Turkic tribes. G.Voroshil also wrote: “The Udins didn’t just borrow words from the Azerbaijanis; their tales, fables, proverbs, and sayings were also borrowed from Azerbaijani. In terms of clothing, customs, and traditions, they differ little from the Azerbaijanis” [Voroşil, 1984, s.91]. We can observe these similarities in ethnographic characteristics as well. Among the Udins, a small engagement gift was called *bəlgə*, just as it is among Azerbaijani Turks. The word *bəlgə* is an ancient Turkic word meaning “to mark, to define, to indicate”. For instance, on Easter, both the parents of the engaged girl and boy would go together to the Udins’ ancient place of worship, “Kala Qerqels” (the Great Church), to sacrifice a sheep. After this ceremony, the engaged boy would send his future father-in-law a *tapak* (a decorated tray) and a branch adorned with valuable gifts [Paşayeva, 2008, s.144]. As we can see, ethnographic elements such as *bəlgə* and *tapak* have been preserved in the traditions of the Udins to this day with the same meanings. The fact that common

traditions exist in language, daily life, and customs shows the result of mutual cultural influence that has lasted for centuries among these peoples.

Of course, as a result of the close relationship between the Kryts and Azerbaijanis, the vocabulary of the Kryts language has become richer and undergone certain changes. Sh.Sadiyev classifies the Azerbaijani words that have entered the Kryts language into two categories.

1) Words pronounced the same way as in Azerbaijani;

2) Words pronounced after being adapted to the phonetic system of the Kryts language [Sadiyev, 1954, s.97].

The words that have entered the Kryts language from Azerbaijani, or through Azerbaijani from other languages, represent new concepts for the Kryts people. These words adapt to the internal rules of the Kryts language and are formed according to the phonetic characteristics of that language. For example, *kvftan* (from *kotan*), *kvasə* (from *kasa*), *virğand* (from *yorğan*), and so on. Just as words from Azerbaijani subdialects enter the subdialects of these languages, words from those languages also enter Azerbaijani subdialects to some extent. Thus, a significant number of words, expressions, and new grammatical forms from the Azerbaijani literary language enter these languages [Sadiyev, 1955, s.156]. Over time, words borrowed from Azerbaijani into Kryts begin to be pronounced without any changes. Despite this, authentic Kryts words, which form the core of the Kryts language's vocabulary, have been preserved and retained up to the present day. In his article, *On the Study of the Vocabulary of the Kryts Language*, Sh.M.Sadiyev notes that the core vocabulary of Kryts contains words also found in related languages such as Tabasaran, Budukh, Khinalug, Lezgi, Dargwa, and other Dagestani languages. He classifies these words into groups, including terms that express kinship relations, names of various parts of human body, names of domestic birds, names of domestic animals, names of fruits, names of cereals, names of foods and edibles, names of wild animals, as well as numeral expressions, pronouns, and verbs with no more than two syllables. These categories are illustrated with examples [Sadiyev, 1954, s.126-127]. Georgian sources also categorize these languages in a similar way, and we will try to illustrate our points using examples from the researchers of these languages. Various symbols were used in the examples to represent sounds, and although the symbols employed by the authors differ, they all aimed to accurately convey the sounds. For example, the word for "heart" is represented as *hu^ck* in Udi, *uk//ük³* in Lezgi, *rik* in Tabasaran, *juk^w* in Aghul, *irk^w* in Rutul, *jik* in Tsakhur, *ik^w* in Archi, *jik* in Kryts, *jək* in Budukh, *rak* in Avar, and *urki* in Dargwa. Similarly, the word for "salt" is *el* in Udi, *qel* or *qil* in Kryts, *qel* in Lezgi, *qil* in Tabasaran, *q^cal* in Aghul, *qäl* or *qili//qilir* in Rutul, and *qew* in Tsakhur [Лолуа, 2019, s.66-74].

In particular, it is noted in sources that the Albanian language's numerical system was based on the vigesimal (base-20) system rather than the decimal system. We can see this reflected in the numerical systems used in the Kryts and Udi languages. For example, "60" is expressed as *şibqad* (Kryts: *şib* - 3, *qad* - 20), and *xibq'o* (Udi: *xib* - 3, *qo* - 20), meaning "three twenties"; "30" in Kryts is *qanəyisid/qanayitsid* (with *yitsid* - 10 and *qa-qad* - 20, with *na* being a conjunction), while in Udi, it is *saq'ovis* (*saq* - 20, *vis* - 10), meaning "one twenty and ten" [Мобили, 2010; Süleymanov, 2002].

As the Kryts and Udi languages are further researched, certain findings allow us to assert that these are indeed rich and deeply rooted languages. History shows that the Albanian alphabet with phonemes, improved in the early 5th century, was rich in sibilant and guttural sounds. As admitted by Armenian authors of the 5th century, the Albanian language was considered "foreign" to Armenians [Бабаев, 1976; Бабаев, 1990; Мамедова, 1986]. Both linguistic and historical research indicates that the languages of these peoples are rich in sibilant and guttural sounds, diphthongs, and heterogeneous consonants.

Since ancient times, the names people have given to the places they settle and live – toponyms – have played an invaluable role in researching the origin, history, and language of a people. In this respect, toponyms are among the most reliable sources. Archaic words that have fallen out of modern language are often preserved in place names, which reflect the identity of a people and by which they are often known.

In this context, the study of toponyms becomes an interesting subject for historians, ethnographers, archaeologists, and linguists, especially when an ethnic group has undergone assimilation due to various natural-historical processes. Place names and personal names in any country, with the exception of foreign names, originate from the period when the ethnic group living in that country existed [Qeybullayev, 1992, s.16]. Based on written sources and research in toponymy, T.M.Mammadov indicates that Turkic and Caucasian-speaking peoples lived in Albania between the 4th and 7th centuries. According to the author, the indigenous population of Albania underwent assimilation by neighboring tribes and passed through several stages in this process [Мамедов, 1993, s.43-44]. The Caucasian-speaking Silvs, Chilbs, Lubins (Lpins), Ghats, Hers, Udins and Legs (ancestors of the present-day Avars, Tsakhurs, Khinalugs, Kryts, Udins, and Lezgins) were settled in left-bank Albania. In the regions where these peoples lived, numerous toponyms and ethnonyms in both their own languages and Turkic languages can be found. For instance, the river that flows between the villages of Kryts and Jek is called *Jeydar*, which is a branch of the Gudyalchay, and in the same area, there is also a place called *Jeydar*. At the beginning of the road leading to Grizdahna, the Gudyalchay cuts through a stone rock. In that very place, there is a location called *Minara* by the local inhabitants of the villages. *Minara* also serves as a natural bridge. It should be noted that *Gudyal* means “two ridges”. In Lezgi, *qud* (квед, къод) represents the number 2, and in Kryts, the word *q’oad* also stands for the number 2. Sources indicate that the numeral system of the Caucasian-speaking peoples exhibits the same pattern. For example, *pa^c* in Udi (from *q^wa*) means “two”, while in Lezgi, it is *q^we-d*; in Kryts: *q^wa-d*; in Tabasaran: *q^cub*, *q^cuü*; in Aghul: *q^cud*, *q^cur*; in Rutul: *q^cw^a-d*; in Tsakhur: *q^co-llä*; in Archi: *q^we*; and in Budukh: *qa-b* [Лолуа, 2019, 71 s.). This means “the ridge coming from two peaks. There is a winding road leading from Jek village to Kryts village. Some sources mention 92 turns, others 98, but according to information from the local population, there are actually 99 turns. Kryts people refer to this winding road as *qar-qar*. A.Qubatov also provides information about Gar-gar Mountain in his work, noting that it is located in the Kryts village area on the left bank of the Gudyalchay. A road with 92 turns or bends passes through this mountain. In the Kryts language, a bend or winding road is expressed by the word *qar-qar*. Therefore *Gar-gar* Mountain translates to “Mountain of Bends” [Qubatov, 1991, s.146]. In another source, it is stated that from the bridge over the Gudyalchay on the Jek village side, there are 98 bends leading to Kryts village, and the name *Q/gar-Q/gar* (*qar-qar*) is said to mean “broken, fragmented” [Süleymanov, 2002, s.88]. During our ethnographic expedition, local villagers informed us that the steep cliffs surrounding the mountain resemble fragmented, winding steps, and thus the mountain’s name conveys the meaning of “winding”. They also stated that the road consists of exactly 99 bends. In the middle of this winding path, there is a place that the Kryts people call *g^hirci me’el* or *ghirci meel*, meaning “warm corner” (*g^hir* – warm, *me’el* – corner). Although the Kryts village is small in size, there are numerous sacred sites to be found here.

In the worldview of the Azerbaijani people, beliefs related to hydronyms, the sanctification, and to influence through various magical formulas based on primitive thinking and several features play an important role. In ancient times, when drought occurred, people would go to sacred sites, primarily to pray for rain, and bring a stone from that site to bury it in a flowing river or spring. Once the rain came, they would remove the stone. The Shahdagh peoples had a similar practice: during droughts, they would take a stone from the shrine of Hazrat Baba and throw it into the Kura River, while saying, “the mountain’s stone goes to the plains”, believing this to be the most effective solution [Məmmədova, 2016, s.83]. It is believed that the name of the Kura River has been derived from one of the subdialects spoken by the Albanian tribes who settled along its banks in ancient times. When examining the Kryts language, it becomes clear that the words *kir* or *kur* are used in its subdialects to mean “river”. Thus, from an etymological perspective, the name *Kura* means “river”. While there are various etymologies for the name of the Kura River, this interpretation holds some validity. Another source indicates that the Shahdagh villages are located north of the Kura River, in the southeastern foothills of the Greater Caucasus, within the ancient territory of Albania. In this region, the hydronym *Kürmük* or *Kürmux*, which consists of two parts and is a tributary of the Alazan

River, further suggests that *kür* means “river” [Yüzbəyov, 1972, s.77]. From an etymological perspective, we observe in another source that the name of the Kura River may have originated from the language of the local, ancient autochthonous Albanian tribes (such as Kryts and Haput), where it is used to mean “river”. This supports the idea that the Kryts language was more widely spoken during the Albanian period [Алиев, 1959, с.362]. The ancient author Strabo also noted that “the Kura River passes through Albania”, indicating the existence of two coastal areas of the country [Hacıyeva, 2023, s.13]. It is known that the areas where the tribes settled were located in the central flow region of the Kura River and the valleys of the Alazani and Iori Rivers [Меликсетбеков, 1939, с.170]. These ethnic groups that mentioned lived, and some still live, in these areas, and “Kura” in their languages uniquely expresses the meaning of “river”.

A.Akhundov explains the origin of the Kura River’s name based on the Udi language, spoken by one of the Albanian tribes [Axundov, 1956, s.56]. When researching the origin of any toponym, hydronym, or even a common word, it is first necessary to investigate the historical period in which it was formed and to trace its roots back to the relevant facts. The author notes that the Albanian language had a written literary tradition as early as the 5th century. However, as the Albanian language lost its dominant position, it had to continue in a more restricted form (as modern Udi, Kryts, and other languages do today) and to live. Therefore, the interpretations of the Kura River’s name by researchers through the Shahdagh and Udi languages are not accidental. Of course, there are also studies suggesting that the hydronym *Kura* has Turkic origins, indicating that it derives from words meaning “abundant (water)”, “strong”, “fast”, “unshakable”, or “proud”. In some regions, we have also witnessed the use of the phrase “*çox kür adamı*” to describe an impulsive or wild person.

Thus, every ethnos, tribe, and ethnic group that contributed to all Azerbaijani culture and engaged in ethno-genetic and ethno-cultural interaction with Azerbaijani Turks has, over the centuries, gone through its own unique historical processes. While preserving their native cultures, they have intertwined with one another, enriching both their languages and cultures with new meanings and nuances, and have managed to survive from the ancient layers of history to the present day.

KRYZISCH ¹										
Кърыцаъ мез – Ѓус'ă мез ²										
Schrift	Name	Laut	ts.	Schrift	Name	Laut	ts.	Schrift	Name	ts.
А	а	a'	a	а	Н	н	en	N	n	n
Аь	аь	æ'	Æ	ā	О	о	o'	O	o	o
Б	б	be'	B	b	Об	обь	ø'	Ø	ö	ö
В	В	ve'	V	v	П	п	p ^h e'	p ^h ~p'	p	p
Г	Г	ge'	G	g	Пл	пл	p'e'	p'	p'	p'
	гг ^{3,4}		γ	gh	Р	р	er	R	r	r
Гь ³	гь	ve'	в	ğ	С	с	es	S	s	s
Гь	гь	he'	h	h	Т	т	t ^h e'	t ^h ~t'	t	t
Гл	гл	ge'	ɣ	'	Тл	тл	t'e'	t'	t'	t'
Д	Д	de'	D	d	У	у	u'	U	u	u
	дж		dʒ	dž	Уь	уь	y'	Y	ü	ü
	дз ⁴		dz	dz	Ф	ф	ef	F	f	f
Е	е	e'	e~ε	e	Х ³	х	χa'	X	x	x
Ж ⁴	ж	ze'	ʒ	ž	Хь	хь	q ^h a'	q ^h ~q'	x''	x''
З	з	ze'	Z	z	Хь ³	хь	xe'	X	ẋ	ẋ
И	и	i'	I	i	Хл ⁴	хл	ha'	H	h	h
Й	й	(ji')	J	j	Ц ⁴	ц	ɕ ^h e'	ɕ ^h ~ɕ'	c	c
К	к	k ^h a'	k ^h ~k'	k	Цл	цл	ɕ'e'	ɕ'	c'	c'
Кь ⁵	кь	ca'	ç	ç	Ч	ч	tʃ ^h e'	tʃ ^h ~tʃ'	č	č
Кь	кь	q'a'	q'	q'	Чл	чл	tʃ'e'	tʃ'	č'	č'
Кл	кл	k'a'	k'	k'	Ш	ш	ʃa'	ʃ	š	š
Л	л	el	L	l	Ъ ⁴	ъ	jer	ʔ	'	'
М	м	em	M	m	Ы	ы	je'ru	ɯ~ə	y	y

Table 1. Kryts Alphabet (in Cyrillic script)

	Lügətdə istifadə olunan latın qrafikalı qırz əlifbası	Qafqaz dilləri üçün yaradılmış kiril əlifbası		Lügətdə istifadə olunan latın qrafikalı qırz əlifbası	Qafqaz dilləri üçün yaradılmış kiril əlifbası
1	A, a	А, а	24	Ǫ, ǫ	Кь, кь
2	B, b	Б, б	25	Ǫ, ǫ	Хъ, хъ
3	C, c	Дж, дж	26	L, l	Л, л
4	Ć, ć	Джл, джл	27	M, m	М, м
5	Ç, ç	Ч, ч	28	N, n	Н, н
6	D, d	Д, д	29	O, o	О, о
7	E, e	Е, е	30	Ö, ö	Оь, оь
8	Ə, ə	Аь, аь	31	P, p	П, п
9	F, f	Ф, ф	32	Ǫ, ǫ	Пл, пл
10	G, g	Г, г	33	R, r	Р, р
11	Ĝ, ĝ	Гь, гь	34	S, s	С, с
12	Ĝ, ĝ	Гг, гг	35	Ŝ, ŝ	Цл, цл
13	H, h	Гь, гь	36	Ŝ, ŝ	Ц, ц
14	Ĥ, ĥ	Гл, гл	37	Ş, ş	Шл, шл
15	Ĥ, ĥ	Хл, хл	38	T, t	Т, т
16	X, x	Х, х	39	Ǫ, ǫ	Тл, тл
17	Ǫ, ǫ	Хь, хь	40	U, u	У, у
18	I, i	Ы, ы	41	Û, ù	Уь, уь
19	İ, i	И, и	42	V, v	В, в
20	J, j	Ж, ж	43	Y, y	Й, й
21	K, k	К, к	44	Z, z	З, з
22	Ǫ, ǫ	Кл, кл	45	Ž, ž	Дз, дз
23	Q, q	Кь, кь	46	'	Ъ, ъ

Table 2. Israfil A.Hummatov and Monika Rind-Pawłowski. Kryts-Azerbaijani-English Dictionary

k (kama) ağac
 p (pax) dadıqlar
 q (qıl) bar
 ç (çax) tux
 ç (çax) dux
 çh (çhux) qılıx
 t' (tıl) barmaq
 ts' (tia) od t'os (koci)
 xh (xhad) su
 q (qıl) göx

Table 3. Alphabet and sounds added by teachers in the Jek village in addition to the Azerbaijani alphabet

№	Рукопись № 7117	Название	Палеоскерт м	Фонетическое значение	А.Г. Абрамян	Г.А. Калоян	С.Н. Муравьев	В.Л. Гукасиан	З. Александров	И. Гипперт, В. Шульце
1	ⲁ	ait	ⲁ	a	a	a	a	a ⁵	a	a
2	Ⲃ	odet	Ⲃ	b	b	b	o ⁵	b	b	b
3	ⲃ	zim	ⲃ	g	g	g	b	g	g	g
4	Ⲅ	gaŋ	Ⲅ	d	d	d	g	γ	?	d
5	ⲅ	ejb	ⲅ	e	e	e	e/o ⁵	e	e	e
6	Ⲇ	zaŋi	Ⲇ	z	z	z	z	z	z	z
7	ⲇ	en	ⲇ	e/je	e	e ⁵	e ⁵ /e	e ⁵	e	ej
8	Ⲉ	zil	Ⲉ	z	a	z	z:	z	z	z
9	ⲉ	tas	ⲉ	t	t	t	t	t	t	t
10	Ⲋ	ča	Ⲋ	č	z	č	č	?	č	č
11	ⲋ	jud	ⲋ	j	i	j	j/j:	j	j	j
12	Ⲍ	ža	Ⲍ	ž	i	?	z	z:	z?	z
13	ⲍ	irb	ⲍ	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
14	Ⲏ	ša	Ⲏ	[ʃ]/š	l	?	š	š	š	š
15	ⲏ	lan	ⲏ	l	l	l	l	l	l	l
16	Ⲑ	ina	Ⲑ	n	x	?	i/o	i ⁵	?	n
17	ⲑ	zejn	ⲑ	χ	x	x	x	x	q/x ¹	x
18	Ⲓ	dan	Ⲓ	š	x	?	d	d	d	d
19	ⲓ	čar	ⲓ	*c	c	c	c	e ⁵	č?	c
20	Ⲕ	zoχ	Ⲕ	š ⁵	c	?	z:	z:	z?	š
21	ⲕ	kar	ⲕ	k	k	k	k	k ⁵	k	k
22	Ⲍ	liŋ	Ⲍ	*l	h	?	l ⁵	l ⁵	?	l
23	ⲍ	hejt	ⲍ	h	h	h	h	h	h	h
24	Ⲏ	haj	Ⲏ	q/x	š	?	h:	h	?	χ/q
25	ⲏ	ar	-	-	a	š	a ⁵	a	ā	a ⁵
26	Ⲑ	coj	Ⲑ	č	o	?	j/j:	c	e?	č

№	Рукопись № 7117	Название	Палеоскерт м	Фонетическое значение	А.Г. Абрамян	Г.А. Калоян	С.Н. Муравьев	В.Л. Гукасиан	З. Александров	И. Гипперт, В. Шульце
27	ⲑ	či	ⲑ	č	č	č	č	č	č	č
28	Ⲓ	čaj	-	-	γ	?	č:	č	?	*č
29	ⲓ	mak	ⲓ	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
30	Ⲕ	kar	Ⲕ	q	j	?	k/q:	q	q	q
31	ⲕ	nac	ⲕ	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
32	Ⲍ	čaj	-	-	š	?	š/š:	š	š/š:	*š
33	ⲍ	šak	ⲍ	š	š	š	š	š	š	š
34	Ⲏ	šajn	-	-	š	?	š/š:	š?	?	*š
35	ⲏ	un	ⲏ	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
36	Ⲑ	čaj	Ⲑ	*č:	č	?	č	č	?	č
37	ⲑ	χam	ⲑ	f	č	č	χ/χ:	q	γ	f
38	Ⲓ	čaj	Ⲓ	š	č	?	š	š	š?	š
39	ⲓ	čaj	ⲓ	č	č	?	č	č	č	č
40	Ⲕ	pen	Ⲕ	p	p	p	p	p	p	p
41	ⲕ	peu	ⲕ	y	š	š	š:	p?	γ	γ
42	Ⲍ	kat	Ⲍ	r	r	r	q/ka	k	r	r
43	ⲍ	sejt	ⲍ	s	s	s	s	a:	s	s
44	Ⲏ	vejt	Ⲏ	v	w	w	v	v	v	v
45	ⲏ	liwr	ⲏ	t	t	t	t	t	t	t
46	Ⲑ	soj	Ⲑ	š	š	š	š	s?	š	š
47	ⲑ	ion	ⲑ	o ⁵	r	o ⁵	i/o	r	?	o
48	Ⲓ	čaw	Ⲓ	*c:	e	?	r	č	?	č
49	ⲓ	čajn	ⲓ	c	c	c	c	e ⁵	c	c
50	Ⲕ	jajd	Ⲕ	(w)	w	w	w	w	w	(w)
51	ⲕ	plwr	ⲕ	p	p	f	p	p	p	p
52	Ⲍ	kiw	Ⲍ	k	k	k	k	k	k	k
35+50	-	-	ⲏ	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
47+50	-	-	Ⲑ	u ⁵	-	u ⁵	-	-	āw	u
14+1	-	-	ⲑ	u ⁵	-	-	-	-	-	ša
14+5	-	-	Ⲓ	e ⁵	-	-	-	-	-	šc
14+13	-	-	ⲓ	i	-	-	-	-	-	šc

Table 4. Lolua Roman. From the book "Kavkazsko-albanske shtudii".
Names and phonemic meanings of the letters in the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet

REFERENCES:

1. Axundov A.A. "Kür" sözünün etimologiyası haqqında (*The Etymology of the Word "Kur"*)// Kirov adına Azərbaycan Dövlət Universiteti, №10, 1956, s.51-56.
2. Hacıyeva Ü. Qafqaz Albaniyasının tarixi-coğrafiyasının əsas aspektləri (*The Main Aspects of the Historical-Geography of Caucasian Albania*)// Qafqaz Albaniyasının etno-mədəni irsi (məqalələr toplusu), №4, Bakı, 2023, s.11-20.
3. Qeybullayev Q.Ə. Qədim türklər və Ermənistan (*The Ancient Turks and Armenia*). Bakı: Azərnaşr, 1992, 140 s.
4. Qubatov Ə.B. Azərbaycan xalqı ilə vahid qardaşlıq ailəsində (*In a Single Brotherhood Family with the Azerbaijani People*). Bakı: Elm, 1991, 200 s.
5. Məmmədova X.Ş. Xınalıq folklorunda lokal xüsusiyyətlər (*Local Characteristics in Khinalug Folklore*) // Bakı: AMEA Folklor İnstitutu Azərbaycan, 2016, s.80-86.
6. Paşayeva M.T. Azərbaycanlıların ailə mərasimlərində etnik ənənələr (XIX–XX əsrin əvvəlləri Şəki–Zaqatala bölgəsinin materialları üzrə) (*Ethnic Traditions in Azerbaijani Family Ceremonies (Based on materials from the Shaki–Zagatala region, 19th–early 20th century)*). Bakı, 2008, 308 s.
7. Sədiyev Ş.M. Azərbaycan dilinin qız dilinə təsiri məsələsinə dair (*On the Issue of the Influence of the Azerbaijani Language on the Kryts Language*)// Bakı: Az.SSR EA Xəbərləri, 1954, №11, s. 87-98.
8. Sədiyev Ş.M. Azərbaycan ərazisində yayılmış yazısız dillərin öyrənilməsi (*The Study of Non-Literate Languages Widespread in the Territory of Azerbaijan*). Bakı: Az.SSR EA Məruzələri, №7, 1955, s.151-158.
9. Sədiyev Ş.M. Qız dilinin lüğət tərkibinin öyrənilməsinə dair (*On the Study of the Lexical Composition of the Kryts Language*)// Bakı: Az.SSR EA Xəbərləri, №8, 1954, s.125-130
10. Süleymanov Ş.Ş. Qızlar və qız dili (*The Kryts People and the Kryts Language*). Bakı: Mars-Print, 2002, 138 s.
11. Voruşil Q. Udınər (*The Udins*) // "Elm və həyat" jurnalı, 1984, №4, s.91.
12. Yüzbəyov R. Azərbaycanın coğrafi adları (*Geographical Names of Azerbaijan*) / K.Əliyev, Ş.Sədiyev. Bakı: Azərnaşr, 1972, 100 s.
13. Алиев К.Г. О названии реки Куры (*On the Name of the Kura River*)//Az.SSR EA Məruzələri, №4, 1959, s.361-364.
14. Бабаев И. Города Кавказской Албании в IV в. до н.э. – III в. н.э. (*Cities of Caucasian Albania in the 4th century BC – 3rd century AD*). Баку: Элм, 1990, 236 с.
15. Бабаев И.А. К вопросу о возникновении государства Албании (Кавказской) (*On the Question of the Emergence of the Albanian (Caucasian) State*) // Изв. АН Аз.ССР. Серия истории, философии и права, 1976, №4, с.52-62.
16. Ихилов М.М. К вопросу о происхождении народностей лезгинской группы (*On the Question of the Origin of the Peoples of the Lezgian Group*)// УЗ Даг. фил. АН СССР, серия общ. наук, кн.2 // Махачкала, 1969, с.68-106.
17. Мамедов Т.М. Кавказская Албания IV–VII вв. (*Caucasian Albania in the 4th–7th centuries*). Баку: Маариф, 1993, 214 с.
18. Лолуа Р. Кавказско-албанские штудии (*Caucasian-Albanian studies*). LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing RU. 2019, 190 s.
19. Мамедова Ф. Политическая история и историческая география Кавказской Албании (III в. до н.э. – VIII в. н.э.) (*Political History and Historical Geography of Caucasian Albania (3rd century BC – 8th century AD)*). Баку: Элм, 1986, 284 с.
20. Меликсетбеков Л.М. Обзор источников по истории Азербайджана (*Review of Sources on the History of Azerbaijan*). Вып.II. Баку, 1939.
21. Мобили Р.Б. Удинско-Азербайджанско-Русский словарь (*Udi-Azerbaijani-Russian Dictionary*). Баку: Изд-во «Леман», 2010, 368 с.
22. Лолуа Р. Кавказско-албанские штудии (*Caucasian-Albanian Studies*). LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing RU. 2019, 190 s.
23. Чикобава А.С. Введение в языкознание (*Introduction to Linguistics*). Ч.I. Москва: Гос. учебно-педагогическое изд-во министерства просвещения РСФСР, 1953, с.323.
24. Языки и народы Кавказа. Краткий обзор и классификация (*Languages and Peoples of the Caucasus: A Brief Overview and Classification*) / Проф. Н.Яковлев. Заккнига. Тифлис: Тип. «Заря Востока», 1930, 69, [2] с.

Valiyev Elnur*Senior Researcher of the Archeological Service Department
of the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology of the ANAS,
PhD in History, Associate Professor*

FUNERARY MONUMENTS AND RITUALS OF ZOROASTRIANISM

Abstract. The study of funerary monuments plays a crucial role in archaeology for determining the religious and cultural worldviews of various ethnic groups of a particular culture in a specific region. Archaeological research in Azerbaijan has uncovered several types of burial places, including trough, jar, and earthen graves. This indicates the existence of polytheistic religious worldviews and the various associated burial rituals from ancient times.

Keywords: Avesta, Zoroaster, ossuary, sarcophagus

A funerary monument contains a wide range of diverse information that researchers successfully use to reconstruct socio-economic, political, ethnic, ideological, and other aspects of the history of ancient societies. The possibility of comparison and comparative analysis of burial rites from individual graves and necropolises, as well as the artifacts found in them, allow us to trace the dynamics of societal development and visually document the changes that have occurred within it due to various reasons [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.6]. As a result of archaeological research in Azerbaijan, several different types of burial places have been identified, which can be categorized into several groups: trough, jar, and earthen graves. This points to the existence of polytheistic religious worldviews from ancient times and the various burial rituals associated with them.

Trough graves (sarcophagi). Between the 1930s and the 1960s, archaeological exploratory works were conducted in the Albanian-period burials in the basins of Goychay, Turyanchay, and Girdimanchay rivers, leading to the identification of a type of clay trough graves. The existence of trough graves in the Ismayilli district was first reported by Prof. E.A.Pakhomov, who in 1933 discovered remnants of material culture and trough graves in the village of Molla-Isakhly (Fig. 1). In 1938, during archaeological excavations at the "Umanahud" settlement near the village of Galagah, he uncovered another trough grave. Despite providing precise descriptions of the nature and condition of the grave, E.A.Pakhomov did not publish his materials, and his research has survived only in the form of reports. The grave he discovered consisted of two sections: the upper part had rotted and collapsed; the surviving lower part had an oval shape with dimensions of 60x75 cm, a thickness of 1.2-5 cm, and edge heights of 15-20 cm [Бойс Мери, 1998, с.54].

It is noteworthy that in 1939, E.Schmidt discovered 24 clay graves in Persepolis [Дандамаев, 1980, с.323], which were similar in shape and size to the clay trough graves in Azerbaijan. The Persepolis graves measured 80 cm in length, 18-20 cm in height, and 55 cm in width. These Achaemenid-era graves and the clay trough graves (sarcophagi) from Molla-Isakhly and Galagah exhibit similarities in form. Chronologically, they do not differ much either, dating from the Achaemenid period to the 1st century AD. E.Schmidt associates the emergence of this type of graves and ossuaries in Iran, Central Asia, and other Eastern countries with Zoroastrianism [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.76–82; Osmanov, 1982, s.61]. All the clay trough graves found in Persepolis were divided in the middle into two sections, with a skeleton in one of them. Comparing the clay sarcophagi of Persepolis and Susa, E.Schmidt noted that they were made to accommodate the

deceased in an extended position, and dated them to before the 1st century AD. During the Achaemenid period, the practice of interment in a flexed position was likely influenced by the dimensions of the clay sarcophagus. It is plausible that this type of burial was reserved for the privileged class. R. de Mecquenem suggested that although the Persians themselves were Zoroastrians, the Babylonian heritage of the wives of the Achaemenid shahs led to their burial according to Babylonian traditions in sarcophagi. I.M.Lurie argued that the small clay sarcophagi discovered in Egypt, containing statuettes rather than skeletons, belonged to all social strata – from the lowest to the highest [Дандамаев, Луконин, 1980, с.61].

F.L.Osmanov linked the tradition of trough burials in Albania to fire worship, citing evidence of ash or fire traces at the head of some graves. Based on available ceramic artifacts, he dated these burials to the period of Yaloylutepe culture. Among the Aryans, it was considered sinful to cremate the deceased or leave traces of fire near them. In this context, I.Aliyev noted that such practices were more characteristic of Indo-Europeans. In particular, the grave goods comprising single-legged vases and clay milk jugs were completely identical to household utensils from the 4th to 1st centuries BC [Дандамаев, Луконин, 1980, с.61].

Jar burials were also widely practiced in Azerbaijan, particularly on the southern slopes of the Greater Caucasus, along the Kura and Aras rivers, in the Mil-Mugan steppes, and in Shirvan, Nakhchivan, and Karabakh. The peak period for jar burials was the last quarter of the 1st millennium BC and the 1st to 3rd centuries AD [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.27] (Fig. 2). K.Aliyev, comparing jar burials with ossuaries, pointed out their difference from Central Asian ossuaries and noted the characteristic nature of jar burials for Caucasian Albania. I.G.Aliyev disagreed with this assessment, positing that due to the sacredness of the earth in Zoroastrianism, jar burials could symbolically be considered ossuaries.

Earthen graves of the Yaloylutepe culture, most common in ancient Azerbaijan, were geographically distributed along the Alazani Valley in the southwest, from the Caspian coast to Dagestan in the east, and to the banks of the Aras River in the south [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.11-26; Osmanov, 1982, с.46-47]. Earthen burials are rooted in the most ancient burial ceremonies. They were also widely practiced in Iran [Дандамаев, 1980, с.323]. In Azerbaijan, three types of burials are observed. Depending on the social status of the population, each class was interred with its own funeral ceremonies.

Zoroastrianism, with its sacred text, the Avesta, originated from ancient Aryan tribes who spread across the Central Asia and roamed vast Eurasian territories. Archaeological excavations in these regions primarily uncovered earthen graves. However, as the Aryans migrated southward to Central Asia and settled there, new burial types – ossuaries – emerged. Many scholars link ossuaries to Zoroastrianism. Scholars such as J.J.Modi, K.A.Inostrantsev, A.Y.Borisov, W.B.Henning, B.Y.Stavisky, B.A.Litvinsky, and Y.A.Rapoport have extensively explored various aspects of this topic.

Pir Venzeri is the only stone ossuary from the Zoroastrian period located in Baku that has survived to this day. Inside its rectangular opening, niches carved into the cave floor can be seen – these are the ossuaries. This large limestone rock is situated within a park, near the former settlement of Chambarakend (Fig. 3). For centuries, it was considered a sacred place, which is why it was called a “pir”, that is, a sanctuary.

If this burial tradition is linked to Zoroastrianism, it is notably absent from the Yashts and Gathas – the oldest portions of the Avesta. Zoroastrian funeral rites are primarily found in the Vendidad, a later addition to the Avesta (2nd–1st centuries BC). These rituals are highly distinctive: neither earth nor fire could be contaminated by contact with a corpse. Anyone burying a human or a dog was sentenced to 500 lashes. The land where a human or dog died could not be irrigated or sown for a year. Fire could only be brought into a house where someone had died after nine days in winter and a month in summer. The dead had to be carried to high, dry, rocky places. At least two corpse-bearers (risto-kasha) were required. These individuals were considered unclean for the rest of their lives. They were not allowed to come closer than 30 steps to fire, water, and barsman, and closer than three steps to people. On the bare rocky place, the corpse was secured by the legs and hair so that animals or birds, tearing the body apart, could not drag

the bones to water or into a special repository (asto-dana or ossuary) [Авеста, 1998, с.21]. Here, rituals associated with funeral ceremonies are indicated: 1) Uzdana (“astagar” in Pahlavi sources) refers to a bone repository. The term appears twice in the Vendidad and denotes a type of structure, fortification, or wall built using a specific technique. F.Grenet suggests that these were either stone ossuaries or rock niches for storing bones, as found in Fars; 2) Dakhma (“a tower of silence”) typically refers to a structure imitating a bare rocky place, where corpses were placed. Bones were also deposited there. However, since the corpse might initially be exposed in a different location, the term “dakhma” could also mean a receptacle for bones (in Middle Persian, “dakhma” is known specifically as an “ossuary”) [Авеста, 1998, с.21]; 3) Kata means a “house for the dead” or temporary grave.

V.B.Henning, after analyzing the etymology of the word “uzdana”, proposed replacing “uzdana” (ossuary) in the Avesta with “azdana”. Gershevitch noted that such a substitution is inappropriate, as the ancestors of the Iranians in ancient times invested in the word a specific meaning – the “place of preservation of bones” – which would be lost for future generations if replaced by another word [Хисматуллин, Крюкова, 1997, с.207]. Gershevitch’s reasoning is more logical and convincing than Henning’s.

The term “dakhma” first appears in the Avesta (in the Vendidad) and is used broadly to refer to any place containing a corpse [Хисматуллин, Крюкова, 1997, с.210]. In his article on burial forms in the Vendidad, H.Humbach proposed two types of dakhmas: 1) open platforms for exposing corpses; and 2) closed tombs, similar to vaults, where bodies were preserved and could only mix with the earth after the dakhma itself had collapsed. According to H.Humbach, the first type of dakhma is Zoroastrian [Хисматуллин, Крюкова, 1997, с.211-212]. The Vendidad (7.51) promises forgiveness of sins in thought, word, and deed to those who dig a dakhma the size of their own body. Dakhmas, or “towers of silence”, were where the Persians placed the bodies of the deceased. Corpses could not be burned as this would be a desecration of fire. In secluded places away from settlements, low towers were built with one door or none at all. Inside, on stone beds arranged in circles, the corpses were laid. Many birds of prey would come to these towers and peck everything clean within a couple of hours. The remaining bones were collected into a common pit within the same tower (Vendidad: 6.44–6.46).

V.B.Henning equated the term “uzd’n” (grave) with “dakhma” in Avestan and Pahlavi sources. Henning believed that the word “uzd” did not refer to an ossuary but rather to a burial place for bones.

V.V.Bartold repeatedly addressed this topic in his works, noting that he was cautious in his approach towards Central Asian ossuaries associated with Zoroastrianism and its priests [Пананопт, 1971, с.10, 12]. In 1900, in correspondence with N.P.Ostroumov, V.V.Bartold remarked that “Zoroastrians built high fortresses and never buried bones in graves”. Information from al-Tabari about this funeral ceremony is corroborated by a burial resembling an ossuary found in Samarkand. The Vendidad (6.51) states regarding ossuaries: “Mazdayasnians must protect corpses from air, light, and sunlight. They must be placed on stone, lime, or clay. If these are unavailable, they should be placed on the ground”. The traditions of the population of Transoxiana differed from Iranian traditions. The spread of Zoroastrianism in Transoxiana cannot be entirely considered as Zoroastrian faith. Here, we can only speak of certain sects of Zoroastrianism that significantly differed from the doctrine itself [Пананопт, 1971, с.10]. In 1901, V.V.Bartold noted that “the Iranians did not have uniform funeral traditions. The eastern group of Aryan tribes never built dakhmas for their deceased” [Пананопт, 1971, с.10]. After the article by K.A.Inostrantsev titled “Ossuaries and astadans of Turkmenistan”, V.V.Bartold accepted the transition of ossuary funeral rites into the Zoroastrian religion [Пананопт, 1971, с.121; Иностранцев, с.557].

Thus, the study of funerary monuments plays an important role in archaeology for determining the religious and cultural worldviews of various ethnic groups of a particular culture in a specific region.



Fig. 1. A trough grave in the village of Nyuydi, the Aghsu district



Fig. 2. A jar burial in Mingachevir



Fig. 3. Pir Venzeri stone ossuary, Baku

REFERENCES:

1. Osmanov F.L. Qafqaz Albaniyasının Maddi Mədəniyyəti (*Material Culture of Caucasian Albania*). Bakı, 1982, 158 s.; 1997, 272 s.
2. Авеста в русских переводах (1861–1996) (*Avesta in Russian Translations (1861–1996)*). Санкт-Петербург: Нева, Летний сад, 1998, 480 с.
3. Бойс Мери. Зороастрийцы. Верования и обычай (*Zoroastrians: Beliefs and Customs*) / Пер. с англ. и примечания И.М.Стеблин-Каменского. М.: Наука, 1998, 301 с.
4. Гошгарлы Г. Типология погребальных памятников античного периода на территории Азербайджана (*Typology of Funerary onuments of the Ancient Period in Azerbaijan*). Баку: Элм, 2012, 248 с.
5. Дандамаев М.А., Луконин В.Г. Культура и экономика древнего Ирана (*Culture and Economy of Ancient Iran*). М.: Наука, 1980, 416 с.
6. Иностранцев К.А. Персидский погребальный обряд в иллюстрациях гузератских версий (*Persian Funeral Rites in the Illustrations of Gujarati Versions*) // Известия Импер. Академии Наук, 1911, с.557-560.
7. Рапапорт Ю.А. Из истории религии древнего Хорезма (*From the History of Religion in Ancient Khorezm*). М., 1971, 126 с.
8. Хисматуллин А.А., Крюкова В.Ю. Смерть и похоронный обряд в исламе и зороастризме (*Death and Funeral Rites in Islam and Zoroastrianism*). Санкт-Петербург: Петербургское востоковедение, 1997, 272 с.

Zhenis Zhomart Zhenisulu

*Deputy Director of the Institute of History and Ethnology
named after Sh. Ualikhanov under the Science Committee
of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education
(KAZAKHSTAN, Almaty)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7556-6939>*

ON THE ORIGIN OF TENT-SHAPED CULTIC STRUCTURES IN CAUCASIAN ALBANIA

Abstract. Tent-shaped cultic structures, built between the 10th and 17th centuries, are found across vast areas of Eurasia, including Caucasian Albania, and date from long before the spread of Islam in the region. It has been established that the emergence of tent-shaped temples in Azerbaijan is one of the manifestations of the Turkic-Caucasian cultural symbiosis. The study of architectural monuments, particularly tent-shaped structures built across Eurasia, including in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, sheds some light on the interactions between the Caucasian and nomadic civilizations during the 10th to 14th centuries. It has been revealed that these architectural monuments are closely linked to the traditional Turkic dwelling – the yurt, which, in turn, reflects the worldview of the nomads. Our findings highlight the role of traditional nomadic worldview in shaping this aspect of the material culture of the Azerbaijani people.

Keywords: Caucasian Albania, Turkic civilization, architecture of the Caucasus, Turkic-Caucasian cultural symbiosis, tent-shaped temples

Caucasian Albania, which has attracted the attention of scholars worldwide with its history, unique culture, and architectural monuments, is one of the oldest states to have adopted Christianity. The Albanian culture and ethnicity, which form part of the spiritual heritage of the Azerbaijani people, have undergone certain transformations throughout history but have preserved traces of Albanian culture in the rich and ancient traditions, customs, historical monuments, and folk beliefs of Azerbaijanis.

Among such monuments in Azerbaijan are tent-shaped cultic structures. According to M.Pashayeva, archaeological and ethnographic research confirms that many early Christian monuments, such as the temples of Armatay, Kurmuk, Kish, and Gum, and the round temple of Lakit, where polytheistic religious rites were once performed, were built on the foundations of ancient temples.

Interestingly, these cultic structures were designed to serve not only Albanian Christians but also Azerbaijani Muslims: “For centuries, the people living in this place have taken care of these sites and come here to have their wishes fulfilled. To do this, they press a coin against the wall – it is believed that if the coin sticks to the wall, their intentions and wishes will come true” [Ш.Аббасова].

Despite the fact that the construction of these monuments, both in terms of chronology and style, coincides with the arrival of Turkic nomads in the region, most scholars fail to recognize the Turkic cultural influence. This is largely due to the persistent Eurocentric bias within the academic study of historical heritage.

Similar religious tent-shaped structures were built under the influence of Turkic civilization and were widespread not only in Azerbaijan but also in other regions of Eurasia such as Iran, Central Asia, and Asia Minor.

Azerbaijani researcher Sh.Hajiyeva does not associate these cultic structures in Caucasian Albania with Islamic civilization, given that Islam was not established in the region until the 8th and 9th centuries. Instead, Sh.Hajiyeva links their origins to Sassanid Iran, stating, “An uninterrupted sequence of monuments had already attained artistic maturity by the late 3rd and early 4th centuries. This set them apart fundamentally from their Byzantine counterparts of the same period, suggesting some influence from Sassanid Iranian architecture. Moreover, decorative techniques from even earlier periods, preceding the era of flourishing and classical maturity, contributed numerous elements used in later constructions” [Ш.Гаджиева].

V.L.Voronina had also previously hypothesized that the construction of cultic structures in Iranian Azerbaijan was connected to ancient Iranian worship rituals [Воронина, 1969, с.155]. The renowned historian O.Grabar also finds it difficult to explain the emergence of minarets like Varamin in Tehran, which are typical of the 12th century. In his words, “These could be adaptations of forms used by the Sassanids. If so, we could interpret them as a revival or a new architectural seed sown by the Sassanids. Or is this a new style influenced by Turkic rulers who came from the east? In that case, should we not call these monuments as ‘Seljuk’?” [Грабер, 1993, с.47]. He left this question open. According to him, this is an unresolved problem that needs thorough investigation.

In this regard, the peculiarity of funerary structures built by the Turks, such as minarets and tents, suggest that they may reflect the worldview of nomadic civilization. A key factor supporting this interpretation is the temporal alignment between the construction of minaret mausoleums and the Turkic arrival in Iran and the Caucasus. Furthermore, as noted by B.Weimar and T.Kaptereva, Soviet scholars had previously proposed a link between tent-shaped mausoleums and the ancient burial customs of the northern (primarily Turkic) peoples of Central Asia.

Even before our era, the Turks erected tent-shaped structures over the graves of their ancestors. Later, as the Turks spread to other regions, similar types of structures began to be built in other parts of Eurasia. For example, “agas ib” – traditional wooden houses of the Sayan-Altai peoples – are distinguished by their roof shape carved from wooden logs; they are tall, dome-shaped structures that have been preserved to this day. In the Tagar-Tashtyk transitional period of the 2nd–1st centuries BC, convex roofs first appeared at the head of the graves, next to square log cabins (Fig. 1). It is precisely these structures – square or round wooden mausoleums with pyramidal roofs – that were depicted in the petroglyphs of the Boyarsky ridge, dating back to the Tagar-Tashtyk transitional period (2nd–1st centuries BC) [Кызласов, 2005, с.44].

Later, during the early 6th to 9th centuries, this square-shaped archaeological culture was superseded by a culture of polygonal and circular stone mausoleums. A notable example is the mausoleum unearthed in the Saryg-Bulun region of Tuva, which resembles an octagonal house. Its foundation consists of 13 posts embedded in the ground [Кызласов, 2005, с.48].

The widespread belief that nomads exclusively lived in yurts and had no tradition of building houses from wood, stone, or clay is inaccurate. The Chinese historical text, “Sui Shu”, when describing burial customs, states that ancient Turkic peoples lived not only in yurts but also in yurt-like structures constructed from various materials depending on their needs, and they fashioned their graves to resemble these traditional dwellings, using a diverse range of materials [Кызласов, 2005, с.51].

Thus, tent-shaped cultic structures emerged in the Altai region as a material manifestation of the traditional Turkic worldview and spread to other regions as the Turks migrated westward, including to the Caucasus. The territory of Azerbaijan was inhabited by Turkic tribes even before the Oghuz people. A.G.Balayev writes: “The effectiveness of the Turkification process during this period is explained by the fact that the Oghuz encountered a rather compact local Turkic population in many regions of Central Asia, including Azerbaijan. The ethnic proximity of the Oghuz, who arrived in the 11th century, to the Turkic peoples of Hunnic origin (from the Bulgars of the 3rd–4th centuries to the Khazars of the 8th–10th centuries), who had become the indigenous population of Azerbaijan, is confirmed by numerous historical facts” [А.Г.Балаев].

According to Kazakh researcher M.M.Mendikulov, “A numerous group of mausoleums spread across the vast territory of Kazakhstan and the northern regions of Khorazm, due to their conical or pyramidal domes, are referred to in scientific literature as tent-shaped [tower-shaped.–Zh.Zh.]” [Мендикулов, 1987, с.35]. M.M.Mendikulov also noted that, in fact, these monuments are abundant in the territories of Atyrau and Ural regions and Ustyurt, while clay mausoleums can be found in the vicinity of the Syr Darya River, Southern and Central Kazakhstan.

One such monument is the mausoleum of Korkyt Ata. This monument, built from fired bricks, is characterized by a circular shape and a hexagonal pyramidal dome, i.e., it has architectural features of the delta of the ancient Syr Darya. The interior of this monument resembles the entrance of a yurt. The clay monuments of Uytas, Kosuytas, and Tugisken, similar to the tomb of Korkyt, date back to the 8th–10th centuries, to the period of the Oghuz-Kipchaks [Мендикулов, 1987, с.38]. The mausoleum of Kozy Korpesh and Bayan Sulu in Semipalatinsk, and the mausoleums of Begim Ana and Saraman Kosa (Fig. 2) in the vicinity of the Syr Darya are considered by researchers to be monuments of the Oghuz-Kipchak period, which were built even before the spread of Islam in these areas [Маргулан, 1966, с.99].

It is worth noting that mausoleums of this type indeed resemble a yurt (tent). As Castagne wrote, the conical shape most closely resembles a “Kyrgyz malahai” (traditional headgear). Similar monuments are found in various parts of Kyrgyz lands [Кастанье, 1911, с.42]. A.Margulan considers the Andronovo dwellings found in the Bogeli Valley of Central Kazakhstan as an ancient prototype of the yurt [Маргулан, 1966, с.228]. Further evidence supporting this fact comes from the archaeological excavations conducted by G.N.Patseevich in 1939, where mausoleums were found with entrances resembling those of yurts [Байбосынов, 2001, с.226].

Winter houses located near medieval cities that served as winter quarters were externally similar to Muslim mausoleums that were widespread in the territories of sedentary peoples.

The Turks who arrived in Iranian lands long before the Seljuks had already engaged in the construction of tower-like structures. Thus, the origins of these tower-like monuments in Iranian architecture can be traced back to the period before the Seljuks, when Turkic tribes first arrived in the region. During the Seljuk period, these structures were actively utilized for various purposes. For instance, Istakhri, describing the surroundings of Sistan (northeastern Iran), wrote: “The Khalaj are from Turkic tribes; they came here (Sistan) even earlier. And they built a mausoleum between India and Sistan. The Khalaj outwardly resemble Turks. They have Turkic customs, and they all speak a Turkic language” [Истахри, 1969, с.196].

When considering the contribution of Turkic nomadic culture to the architecture of Eurasian countries during this period, the existence of a Turkic nomadic trend in architectural style seems quite logical. Kazakh scholar and public figure O.Zhanibekov noted: “To the question of what contribution we have made to world civilization, I would seek the answer in folk architecture. The Kazakh yurt, in its structure and decoration, being known as a collapsible dwelling, is also notable for resembling in shape the peak of a mountain, and *tirkеспе kystau* (interconnected winter quarters), *tokal tam* (low house), and *korzhyn uy* (hut with a central entrance), though seemingly plain, exemplify architectural simplicity, harmony, and meticulousness. The dome, a characteristic feature of Central Asian structures – the idea of ensuring the integrity of buildings – came along with the nomadic society that inhabited the Dasht-i Kipchak” [Жанибеков, 1995, с.10].

During the Seljuk period, Islamic architecture was enriched with new types of structures, constructions, and their various forms. The city of Isfahan, which served as the capital during the Seljuk era, transformed into a major city of the Middle East, holding a place in Iranian architectural history similar to that of Athens in Greece and Rome in Italy [Воронина, 1969, с.146].

The Turkic nomads of the Turco-Mongol period, who came after the Seljuks, also contributed to the flourishing of local culture. Hulagu and his successors were known for their contributions to the development of the culture and civilization of the people under their rule [Хыр, 1970, с.94]. While they spent the first thirty years destroying everything, in subsequent periods, culture experienced a revival under their reign.

The periods of Hulagu and Oljeitu became periods of cultural prosperity and creativity [Палолези, 1983, с.5].

During the Ilkhanid period, the constructions and decorative forms inherited from the Ghaznavids and Seljuks were further developed [Воронина, 1969, с.159]. Wilber stated: “The architecture of the Ilkhanid period is more connected than ever with the building style of the Seljuk period and is very similar to it” [Вильбер, 1968, с.33].

European travelers to the Central Asian steppes invariably mentioned the yurt in their descriptions of Turkic and Mongol traditions. According to Marco Polo, their homes were made in a circular shape from wood. Wherever they went, they took their yurts with them. They were lightweight, with poles fastened together using rawhide. The entrance of the yurt faced south. Children and women, loading the yurts onto carts, would harness camels and oxen to pull them [Книга Марко Поло, 1956, с.99]. William of Rubruck wrote: “Nomads made the covering for their houses from white felt, which was often burnished with lime, white sand, and bone ash to give it a sheen; sometimes they covered it with black felt”. He also provided a sketch depicting a yurt loaded onto a cart [Путешествия, 1993, с.145].

As D.Wilber wrote, upon their arrival in Iran, the Mongols lived in yurts. During Abu Sa'id's time, the Ilkhans resided in the hot steppes of Azerbaijan in winter and in the western Azerbaijani mountains during the summer. The tents sewn in these regions were extraordinarily beautiful. Arghun received Hulagu in a yurt sewn from golden fabric and secured to the ground with a thousand golden nails. In Ujan, the Mongols established a winter city made entirely of yurts. A temporary bazaar and mosque functioned there. When summer came, the city was set ablaze. The Ilkhans utilized the skills of local artisans and laborers during its construction [Вильбер, 1968, с.117].

To this day, in Azerbaijan and Iran use a yurt called *alachyk* is utilized on summer pastures. *Alachyk* was originally a four-cornered adobe or log dwelling of the Mishar Tatars and Kumyks, covered with a gable roof and heated by a clay stove.

According to V.P.Kobychev, the *alachyk* differed only in that the upper ends of the poles were not tied together but inserted into a special hoop secured to a pole in the center of the kubitka (tent). The *alachyk* was typically the dwelling of the wealthy. One variety of Azerbaijani kubitkas, a *mukhru*, was a somewhat more complex *alachyk* with a well-arranged chimney. The *mukhru* was sometimes called an Ardabil *alachyk*. Another variety of a felt kubitka, the *karakecha*, was used by the Padar tribe of Azerbaijanis. The *karakecha* had an elongated shape and a covering made of black felt [А.Г.Балаев].

A similar trend was observed in the Golden Horde. A.Feodorov-Davydov writes that the architecture of the Golden Horde exhibited signs of a mixed culture: “Typical Muslim houses had Central Asian features: the walls of the houses were made mainly on top of a brick foundation from a wooden structure in the form of a *kerege* [wall of a yurt – Zh.Zh.]. The external square shape of the houses resembled a yurt” [Феодоров-Давыдов, 1976, с.122].

In Iran, tent-shaped temples initially spread in the east, in Khorasan, and then, with the advance of the Turks toward the center of the Islamic world, they spread westward. For instance, the tomb of Momine Khatun (12th century), built in Nakhchivan, is an example of this type of construction. The external appearance of these structures resembled yurts; therefore, Turkic emirs who spent their entire lives in yurts built mausoleums similar to them. Christian temples in Asia Minor, Iraq, and Armenia were constructed in this style [Феодоров-Давыдов, 1976, с.75]. It should also be added that the form of these structures was adopted by European architects and introduced in Europe. According to Italian researcher Pierson Palolesi, in 1418–1419, Italian architects Brunelleschi and Ghiberti constructed the Byzantine church Santa Maria del Fiore, modelling it on the Sultaniyya Mausoleum. The Mosque of Bursa and the Church of San Lorenzo in Türkiye were built in this style [Палолези, 1983, с.39].

Monuments of this type were also built on the territory of modern Russia. In the 16th century, a new type of temple appeared in Russia, built without the use of columns. Temples in the shape of a fir tree

became a symbol of that time. Inside the temple, there was only one place for tents. Later, such structures with roofs and domes began to appear throughout Russia – over gates, peasant parks, boyar palaces and wells, chapels, and even wooden tombs.

The most striking examples of tent-shaped churches are the monuments of the 16th century: the Church of the Ascension in Kolomenskoye (built to celebrate the birth of Tsar Ivan IV at the beginning of the century); St. Basil's Cathedral on Red Square; and the Kesene Mausoleum ("Tower of Tamerlane"), a historical monument of the 14th century located in the Chelyabinsk region, three kilometers east of the district center Varna, on the shore of the overgrown Lake Great Kesene.

Thus, based on the above, we can conclude that the form of tent-shaped temples in Eurasia, including in Caucasian Albania, was influenced by the idea of traditional Turkic dwellings. According to N.Shakhanova, in all traditional cultures, the house is a kind of unified *imago mundi* – an image of the world. As she correctly noted, the idea of the *shanyrak* (dome) of the house is directly connected with the spirit of the ancestors [Шаханова, 1997, с.25]. The structure of the mausoleum's dome reflects the Turkic people's conception of the cosmos, rooted in their traditional beliefs.

According to B.T.Tuyakbaev, epigraphic decoration in the architecture of Muslim countries did not arise during the heyday of the Caliphate but rather during the period of the Turkic dynasties like *Tulunids*, *Ikhshidids*, *Karakhanids*, and *Seljuks* [Түякбаева, 1989, с.164]. A similar spiral epigraphic ornament, as well as the type of thuluth script resembling zoo-anthropomorphic decoration, was formed in the 11th century, i.e., during the Seljuk period. These structures are directly connected with the styles of minarets in northern Iran and are a copy of the worldview of the nomads of Central Asia [Түякбаева, 1989, с.77].

Thus, the tent-shaped cultic structures built in Azerbaijan are primarily the result of a Turkic-Albanian cultural symbiosis. The architectural legacy of the Turks in the territories they inhabited provides valuable insights into their worldview and culture. Without understanding the Turkic perspective, it is very difficult to grasp the meaning and essence of the numerous monuments they constructed in the Caucasus. The construction and design of these monuments can only be adequately explained from the standpoint of Turkic civilization and the worldview of Turkic nomads.

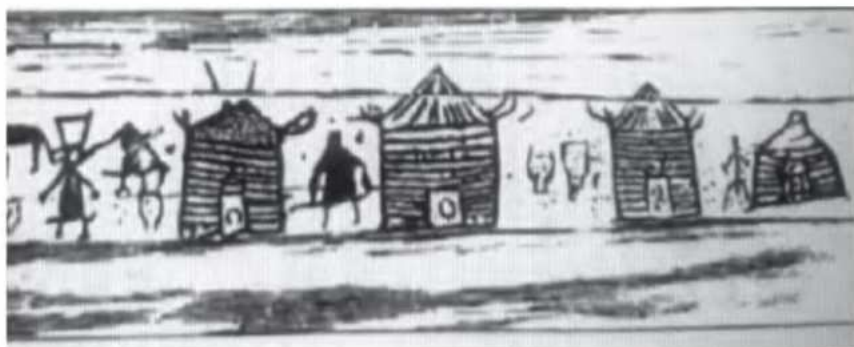


Fig. 1. Petroglyphs of the Boyarsky ridge (2nd–1st centuries BC)



Fig. 2. Mausoleum of Saraman Kosa

REFERENCES:

1. Аббасова Ш. Азербайджанцы до сих пор ходят в церковь св.Елисея с монетой в руках (*To This Day, Azerbaijanis Visit the Saint Elisæus Church with a Coin in Hand*) // <https://az.sputniknews.ru/20161010/cerkov-svjatogo-eliseja-kish-albanija-407306057.html>
2. Байбосынов К. Олкемиздеги коне наным-сенимдер мен дини агымдар (*Ancient Beliefs and Religious Movements in Our Country*) // Материалы международной конференции «Казахстан и Центральная Азия: история, современность и перспективы развития. Т.1. 29-31 мая, 2001. Тараз, с.112-133 (in Kazakh).
3. Балаев А.Г. Азербайджанские тюрки. Основные этапы становления нации в XIX–XX веках (*Azerbaijani Turks: The Main Stages of Nation Formation in the 19th–20th centuries*) // <https://www.litres.ru/book/aydyn-guseynagogy/azerbaydzhanskie-turki-osnovnyye-etapy-standovleniya-na-66108408/>
4. Вильбер Дональд. Н. Ма'мориэ Ислами дар доурейэ Ильханион. Аударған Абдолла Фариод. Техран: Моджарад, 1346 г. (1968), 333 с. (in Persian).
5. Воронина В.Л. Архитектура средневекового Ирана (Architecture of Medieval Iran) // Всеобщая история архитектуры. Т.VIII. Москва: МГУ, 1969, с.136-169.
6. Грабер А. Хонархойэ таджасми. 442-751х/1050-1350м // Тарихэ Иран аз омаданэ салжуион та форупошиэ даулатэ ильханион. Печухешэ донешгахэ Кембридж. Техран: Амир Кабир, 1371 г.х. (1993), с.46-63 (in Persian); Грабар, 1993, с.116.
7. Жанибеков О. Жолайрыкта. Алматы: Рауан, 1995, 163 с. (in Kazakh).
8. Истахри, Абу Исхак. Масолек ва мамолек. Техран: ВТНК. 1347 г/х. (1969), 237 с. (in Persian).
9. Кастанье А.И. Древности киргизской степи и Оренбургского края (*Antiquities of the Kyrgyz Steppe and the Orenburg Region*). Оренбург, 1911, 242 с.
10. Книга Марко Поло (*The Book of Marco Polo*). Москва: Гос. Изд-во Географ. Литературы, 1956, 359 с.
11. Кызласов И.Л. Пратюркские жилища. Обследование саяно-алтайских древностей (*Proto-Turkic Dwellings: A Survey of Sayan-Altai Antiquities*). Москва - Самара, 2005, 96 с.
12. Мавзолей Кесене или Башня Тамерлана// <http://oksmih.livejournal.com/218026.html>.
13. Маргулан А.Х., Акишев К.А, Кадырбаев М.К, Оразбаев А.М. Древняя культура Центрального Казахстана (*Ancient Culture of Central Kazakhstan*). Алма-Ата: Гылым, 1966, 328 с.
14. Мендикулов М.М. Памятники народного зодчества Западного Казахстана (*Monuments of Folk Architecture of Western Kazakhstan*). Алма-Ата: Онер, 1987, 235 с.
15. Палолези. Та'сирэ ма'мориэ конбадэ Солтаниейэ Иран бе сохтемонэ конбадэ Санта Мария дел Фиориэ Италия / Пер. Реза Касой. Техран: Моджарад, 1361 г.х. (1983), 45 с. (in Persian).
16. Путешествия в восточные страны Плато Карпини и Гильома де Рубрука (*Travels of John de Plano Carpin and William of Rubruck to Eastern Countries*). Алматы: Гылым, 1993, 248 с.
17. Туюкбаева Б.Т. Эпиграфический декор архитектурного комплекса Ахмеда Яссави (*Epigraphic Decoration of the Architectural Complex of Ahmad Yasawi*). Алматы: Онер, 1989, 264 с.
18. Феодоров-Давыдов Г.П. Очерки культуры и искусства народов Евразийских степей и Золотоордынских городов (*Essays on Culture and Art of the Peoples of Eurasian Steppes and Golden Horde Cities*). Москва: Искусство, 1976, 322 с.
19. Хуг Дж. Хонарэ ма'мори дар сарзаминхой ислами / Пер. Парвиз Варжованд. Техран: Тегеранский университет, 1348 г.х. (1970), 294 с. (in Persian).
20. Шаханова Н. Мир традиционной культуры казахов (*The World of Traditional Kazakh Culture*). Алматы: Наука, 1997, 225 с.



**ARCHITECTURE,
ART**

Adgozalova Aliya

*Researcher of the Sector for Archaeological Research of the Material Cultural Heritage
of Caucasian Albania, Albanian Studies Scientific Centre
of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of ANAS
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5879-6337>*

DESCRIPTION OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM ON ALBANIAN CROSS STONES

Abstract. The “cross” has frequently appeared as a symbol in Albanian monuments, particularly in Christian temples, representing Christianity. However, the use of the cross predates Christianity. For instance, individuals involved in the promotion of Christianity and various religious figures would place wooden crosses in place of pagan altars, intending to later build temples at those sites. In Albania, the cross was first used as a symbol of the Christian religion during this period.

Keywords: Caucasian Albanian, religion, Christianity, cross, stella

Since ancient times, religious and tomb monuments in Albania were influenced by various ancient religions. Undoubtedly, the most prominent examples of such tomb monuments are cross-stones and stelae.

Based on the inscription, it is known that an Albanian cross-stone was erected in 854 at the Monastery of Saint James by Solomon, the bishop of Greater Aran, as a foundation cross stone. The cross stone from 977, dedicated to Bishop Petros of Amaras, was placed over his grave [Геюшев, 1984, с.126; Хәлилов, 2011, с.208].

Albanian crosses are unique in that they contain symbols reflecting pre-Christian beliefs and perceptions of the universe. According to this, K.V.Trever also noted that the word “cross” originated in connection with the belief in the Moon and later permeated Christianity [Тревер, 1959, с.293]. The entire composition of these crosses symbolizes the connection between heaven and earth, the sun, light, radiance, and fertility. The pre-Christian beliefs and representations of cosmic forces found on Albanian inscribed stones from this period are arranged in a regular manner, a feature not found in the cross depictions of other peoples [Шанидзе, 1938, с.3].

In the early medieval commemorative sculptures of Albania, certain pre-Christian worldviews and symbolic representations are particularly evident. The depictions on Albanian cross-stones evolved over centuries, first through the religious symbolism in the images of stelae, and later under the influence of other existing religions. The distinctiveness, originality, and, most notably, the fundamental difference of these cross-stones from khachkars lie precisely in this unique synthesis.

In most Armenian khachkars, the cross depiction forms the foundation of the symbolic and artistic interpretation of the entire composition. However, in Albanian cross-stones, the cross depiction typically expresses depth and height, dissolving into several smaller crosses – two, four, or six – which blend into the overall decorative design in a multi-layered artistic interpretation. These crosses, by their thematic content, resemble the pre-Christian depictions of the tree of life. In the cross-stones, the cross element is not the primary focus; rather, it is considered the final resolved image of the stela [Axundov D.A., Axundov M.D., 1984, s.80].

D.Akhundov and M.Akhundov have conducted research on Albanian cross-stones. Based on the artistic design and the uniqueness of the depicted compositions, these existing cross-stones are categorized into four groups: Khachin, Arsak, Jugha, and Yenivang cross-stones.

In the Kalbajar region, Khachin-type cross-stones are more commonly found, directly connected to the existence of the Albanian-Khachin principality. One of the Khachin-type cross-stones studied in the Kalbajar region is particularly notable for its artistic design. This cross-stone features an anthropomorphic deity depiction within a double rectangular frame. On its head, instead of a face, a star symbol within a circle, the sun, cosmic light, and the heavenly sphere – is depicted. In its hand, there is a round moon within a circle, representing fertility. Below the waist, slightly smaller than the one on the head, another circle contains a star – symbolizing the underworld or its entrance. These elements represent the clear three-tiered model of the world in the consciousness of the ancient Albanians. The human figure itself is the axis of the world, connecting all these realms. Nearby, another stela from the pre-Christian period was discovered. This stela, also within a rectangular frame, features a depiction of a woman, most likely the moon goddess – Selene, Artemis, or Anahit – engraved using a carving technique. These stelae date back to the pre-Christian period, perhaps even to more ancient times [Axundov D.A., Axundov M.D., 1984, s.81].

At the Khudavang Monastery, two cross-stones standing side by side are among the finest examples of Khachin cross-stones (Fig. 1). When we examine the first cross-stone, which has two circular medallions placed one above the other, we observe that the larger medallion at the bottom symbolizes the underworld or its entrance. The upper medallion contains an additional four smaller medallions, likely representing the four cardinal directions of the sky – the symbol of the heavenly sphere – or perhaps embodying the boundless space of light with the eternal movement of the planets. A cross resembling the tree of life is depicted above them. The artistic symbolic interpretation of the cross-stone is completed by a finely crafted belt. At its center, above the cross, within a trilobed arch, there are three medallions arranged in a cross, symbolizing constellations, the boundlessness of the sky, celestial bodies – the heavenly sphere. The cross-stone on the left is designed similarly in structure to its neighboring cross-stone on the right. At the lower part of the cross-stone, there is a large medallion woven from latticed circles. Above it, on the sides, there are two smaller medallions, which together symbolize the divine trinity. This cross-stone, echoing the design of the first, is completed with an elegantly crafted belt. Within its trilobed arch, a depiction of a god seated on a throne is portrayed. Both cross-stones stand out for their originality and uniqueness. From the upper branch of the cross, a small cross emerges within a winged circle. There is no doubt that this symbolizes the dual gods Ahura-Mitra, remarkably unified with Christian symbolism. This is a feature observed only on the stelae of Caucasian Albania [Гусейнова, 1977, табл II].

The Arsak-type cross-stones have primarily been studied by D.Akhundov in the regions of Khojaly, Aghdara, Tartar, Gadabay, and others. According to him, the finest example of Arsak cross-stones is the cross-shaped stela from 1633, which was illegally taken from the courtyard of the Hamshivang Monastery to Armenia and is now kept at the Uchkilse Cathedral (Etchmiadzin Cathedral (Fig. 2). Arsak cross-stones are cross-shaped and are particularly interesting and original. They are designed within the framework of universally accepted principles. Although the form is cross-shaped, the primary artistic and unchanging element of the stela's image is the large medallion of three circles at the center of the cross. The central circle is divided into eight equal parts and is arranged in a geometric braid pattern. In the center of the medallion, there is a depiction of an equilateral cross, with a small circular medallion located at the intersection point [Axundov D.A., Axundov M.D., 1984, s.83-84].

In the imagery of all cross stones, the central element is the symbol of the sun, light, and fertility, which is integrated with the composition. The sun symbol rises from a symbolic tiered mountain, which represents the sun and is backed by the tree of life – the cross. This method has been characteristically

applied in the ancient Azerbaijani territory since time immemorial [Axundov D.A., Axundov M.D., 1984, s.84].

When examining the composition and artistic design of Jugha and Yenivang-type cross-stones, D.Akhundov notes that we most often find Jugha cross-stones in the necropolis of the ancient city of Jugha, located along the banks of the Aras River on the border of Azerbaijan with Iran (Fig. 3-4). According to researchers, although most of these cross-stones date back to the time of the Syunik principality, stelae from later periods can also be found in these areas.

In the design of Jugha-type cross-stones, two winged dragons facing each other are typically depicted with their bodies covered in horned armor. Despite facing each other, their open mouths are turned to the sides. Between the two dragons, there is an image of a male head with a halo or halo-like hair. According to the authors, this iconographically resembles the head of Jesus. These depictions are placed on tombstones because the image of Jesus on cross-stones was still ingrained in popular memory as a protector, akin to the benevolent dragons – giant guardians. This complex composition also represents a symbolic group resulting from the fusion of various religions and beliefs (Zoroastrianism, Mithraism, Christianity, and Islam), depicted by Albanian artisans, reflecting their deeply rooted multicultural traditions.

Similar to the compositions mentioned above, one can also find examples designed in the same manner based on Mithraic-Christian traditions. In these, the foreground typically features a deity, followed by a lion, bull (sometimes a deer), and bird, with angels depicted in the third and fourth planes. In these distinctive cross-stones, where the Christian tradition predominates, elements of Mithra are depicted beneath the feet of the Christian deity. Let's examine the various types of Jugha cross-stones and pay attention to their artistic design [Axundov D.A., Axundov M.D., s.87].

On the first cross-stone, the central figure of the deity is depicted holding a bowl filled with water in his left hand, while pointing to it with two fingers of his right hand. Around the deity's head are three spherical halos, with rays of light emanating upwards. One of the spheres represents Mithra, symbolizing the infinite space. On either side of the depicted composition, there are two niches with pointed arches. Inside these niches, angels are shown kneeling, with their hands and gazes directed towards the central deity figure. The depiction on the second cross-stone is almost identical to the first, but it includes additional figures: on the left, in the second plane, a lion is depicted with an angel behind it, and on the right, there are depictions of a bull and a bird. The depiction of the deity on this stone parallels that of the third cross-stone, but instead of holding a bowl of water, the deity is depicted holding a four-faced braided ornament. D.Akhundov notes that the first three cross-stones are older than the fourth. The Jugha-type cross-stones currently preserved in Etchmiadzin feature similar human-deity depictions at the base of the cross. This same form is also found in the medallions at the base of six-cross Jugha cross-stones [Axundov D.A., Axundov M.D., 1984, s.89].

On some cross-stones, it is possible to find depictions of a horseman holding various Mithraic symbols in his raised hands, often resembling a cross, which are key symbols of the underworld in Mithraism. Typically, in these types of cross-stones, the horseman holds intersecting ellipses or, more commonly, four crosses, both of which are symbols associated with Mithraism. In other types of cross-stones, there is a medallion representing the underworld, placed above which is a cross depicted as a branched Tree of Life. In these types of cross-stones, the number of crosses can range from one to six, and they are located within niches with deep pointed arches – mihrabs – that are considered elements of Islamic design. Here, Christian, Islamic, and Mithraic traditions converge [Axundov D.A., Axundov M.D., 1984, s.90].

Yenivang-type cross-stones are commonly found in border areas with Armenia, in Syunik, and particularly within the territory of the Yenivang Monastery. D.Akhundov dates these cross-stones to the 13th century and categorizes them into several types based on their characteristic structure. The

first type tapers as it descends and becomes more rounded towards the top, with the cross positioned along the height of the stela. In the second type, the overall volume of the stela narrows slightly towards the bottom, and the upper arch rests on slender columns. In this type, the cross is centrally positioned on the stela, and fig leaves extend from its center. A medallion is located at the center of the cross, with its small protruding part forming the base of the quadrilateral cross. According to researchers, the central medallion symbolizes the Sun, the infinite light of space, and the heavenly sphere. Generally, in both Jugha and Yenivang-type cross-stones, the depiction of a deity is prominently featured in the foreground. Above the head of this figure, the Moon and particularly Mithraic elements are often depicted. The oldest example of a cross-stone belonging to this type is found on the grave of Grigor Neren, an Albanian prince in 881, located in the village of Boyuk Mazra near Basarkechar. The central element of the religious and artistic image of this cross-stone is the cross depicted as a tree of life. Two fig leaves extend upwards from the lower part of the cross. At the center of the cross, the symbol of the Sun is positioned within a medallion made up of two circles. The second cross-stone, erected in the 9th century over the grave of Grigor Amir-Nerseh, a prince of Syunik, is similar in design to the cross-stone of the Albanian prince Neren (Fig. 5). Upon closer examination of this cross-stone, we can see that it narrows slightly towards the bottom. The complementary upper arch is supported by slender, elongated columns. Here too, the central part features a cross, from the lower part of which fig leaves extend, with the lower sections of the leaves twisted like spirals. Two such leaves hang from the upper branch of the cross. A medallion is placed at the center of the cross, and its small protruding part forms the base of the four-branched cross. The central medallion represents the Sun and the infinite space [Axundov D.A., Axundov M.D., 1984, s.91-92].

When we examine the two cross-stones found in the Gazakh region, we see that the first one is larger and narrows towards the bottom, culminating in a semicircular arch. Symbolically, it is divided into four sections, with a significant portion of the first smooth layer embedded in the ground. This layer contains six medallions, each with a triangular tree of life rising from it. Then, two independent bands filled with six triangles pass through the composition. Above these is a niche-mihrab completed with two bands. The first band encircles the cross-stone in the semicircular form, while the second band twists above to form two deep, six-pointed medallions at the center of the cross.

Next to the first large cross-stone, there is a second, slightly smaller cross-stone that also narrows towards the bottom and closely resembles the first. This cross-stone is similarly divided into four symbolic sections. The first section is smooth, while the second section consists of a finely decorated rectangle, with its edges completed by triangles and various geometric figures. Above this section, there is a large niche with a pointed arch, corresponding to the first one. At the top of the niche, three trees of life are depicted, extending upward. Symbolic trees of life are also depicted on the side surfaces of both cross-stones [Axundov D.A., Axundov M.D., 1984, s.93].

All the stelae and cross-stones we have examined are distinguished by their architectural and artistic imagery and represent unique examples belonging to the Albanians. These cross-stones and stelae, integral parts of the Albanian heritage, demonstrate the richness, diversity, and monumental nature of Albanian art and architecture, as well as the creative thinking of the Azerbaijani people throughout history.



Fig. 1. The paired Khachin-type cross-stones located under the bell tower of the Khudavang Monastery in Kalbajar, dating back to 1283



Fig. 2. The stela discovered in the territory of the Hamshivang Monastery in Gadabay, dating back to 1633

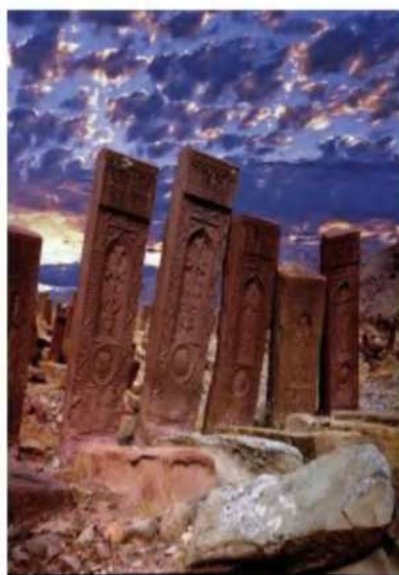


Fig. 3-4. The Jugha necropolis and the cross-stone that was taken from there to Armenia

REFERENCES:

1. Axundov D.A., Axundov M.D. Xaçın xaçdaşları (*Khachin Cross-Stones*)// "Azərbaycan abidələri" jurnalı, №1, Bakı: Azərbaycan Dövlət Nəşriyyatı, 1984, s.80-93.
2. Xəlilov M.C. Albaniyanın xristian abidələri (IV–X əsrlər) (*Christian Monuments of Albania (4th–10th centuries)*). Bakı: Xəzər Universiteti nəşriyyatı, 2011, 344 s.
3. Геюшев Р.Б. Христианство в Кавказской Албании (по данным археологии и письменных источников) (*Christianity in Caucasian Albania (based on archaeological data and written sources)*). Баку: Элм, 1984, 192 с.
4. Гусейнова М.А. Об интерпретации рисунков на группе сосудов эпохи поздней бронзы Азербайджана (*On the Interpretation of Drawings on a Group of Vessels from the Late Bronze Age of Azerbaijan*)// Изв. АН Аз.ССР. Серия ист., фил., право, №2, 1977, табл.II.
5. Тревер К.В. Очерки по истории и культуре Кавказской Албании (*Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania*). М.-Л.: Ленинградское отделение Изд-ва Академии наук СССР, 1959, 392 с.
6. Шанидзе А. Новооткрытый алфавит Кавказских Албанцев и его значения для науки (*The Newly Discovered Alphabet of Caucasian Albanians and Its Significance for Science*)// Изв. НЯМИК. Груз. ФАН ССР, Т.4, 1938, с.3.



Fig. 5. The cross-stone dedicated to Albanian prince Grigor Neren, dating back to 881, located in the village of Boyuk Mazra

Ahmadova Aytan

*Deputy Director for Scientific Affairs, Azerbaijan National Museum of Art,
PhD in Art History*

Rzayeva Saltanat

*Senior Public Relations Officer, Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum,
PhD in Art History
<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-6919-3894>*

ARTISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE “GRYZ” CARPET

Abstract. This article is devoted to the study of six “Gryz” carpets preserved in the collections of the Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum (inv. No. **2621, 8186, 8521, and 4699**) and the Azerbaijan National Museum of History (inv. No. **6670, and 6724**). The objective of this study is to identify the main typological characteristics of the “Gryz” carpet, a representative of the Guba-Shirvan type of Azerbaijani carpets, through artistic analysis. The study involves a thorough review of literature on the carpet weaving traditions of the Gryz people. Special attention is given to the artistic elements of the “Gryz” carpet, its composition and particularly medallion, which serves as a key identifying feature. Comparative analysis is employed as the primary method to explore the artistic design of these carpets.

Keywords: “Gryz” carpet, artistic analysis, Caucasian Albania, Gryz people, museum

The rich history and folklore of the numerous ethnic and sub-ethnic groups from diverse language families that have inhabited Azerbaijan over the centuries have always piqued the interest of experts. A particular focus is on the ethno-cultural heritage of the descendants of the ancient tribes of Caucasian Albania, including the Khinalugs, Lezgins, Budukhs, Gryzs, Haputs, Jeks, Yergujs, among others, who still reside in the country.

Ancient authors like Arrian and Strabo recorded that Albanian tribes spoke 26 related languages. The ethnonym “Albanian”, representing the leading ethnic group, served as a common name for the various tribes inhabiting this country. Among these tribes, the Gryzs (Jigb), like all the others, participated in the political life of Albania as allies of its rulers.

Currently, the Gryz people are scattered across nearly 30 villages, including Jek, Alik, Haput, Yerguj, as well as Gryz and Gryz-Dahna in the Guba district [Cavadov, 2000, c.180; Azərbaycan toponimləri, 2007, c.69]. The village of Gryz is located thirty-five kilometers southwest of Guba, near Shahdagh [Керимов, 1961, c.18].

In 1886, I.V.Kotliarevsky wrote that “About 50-60 years ago, all these tribes lived separately, in different districts. The Gryzs and Khinalugs lived in the summer pasture zone, the Lezgins lived in the middle zone, and the Turks lived in Mushkur. At present, due to migrations, ...Mushkur now hosts newly formed settlements of Lezgins and Gryzs alongside the villages of long-time indigenous inhabitants, Turks. However, mixed-population villages are not found; each village consists of a single ethnic group” [Котляревский, 1886, c.294-295].

To thoroughly discuss Gryz carpet weaving, it's essential to first examine the 19th-century context of the entire Guba district. This helps identify the various factors that influenced its emergence, spread, and development.

As is well known, a unique natural environment not only shapes the needs of its inhabitants but also dictates the economy, occupations, labor division, traditions, and customs of ethnic groups, and forms of artistic expression, such as carpet weaving. The natural conditions of the Gryz people have had a direct impact on their lifestyle. For instance, I.M.Kara-Murza and L.P.Loiko note that "Topographic and climatic conditions determine the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the inhabitants of the Guba district" [Кара Мурза, Лойко, 1902, с.7], i.e., the primary economic activity of Gryz villagers is transhumant pastoralism, particularly sheep breeding. "During the summer, livestock are grazed on mountain pastures near the villages", and in autumn, families and their herds migrate to winter quarters in the lowland territories of Azerbaijan [Народы Кавказа, 1962, с.200].

N.K.Zeidnitz, in his 1870 publication Lists of Inhabited Localities of the Russian Empire in the Caucasus Region, noted: "The Jeks and Gryzs, as described by the author of the manuscript about these communities provided to us by A.P.Berzhe, were engaged in livestock farming, just like the Khinalugs" [Зейдлиц, 1870, с.94].

I.V.Kotliarevsky, in his work *The Economic Life of State Peasants of the Northern Part of the Guba District*, pointed out that the peasants of the Gryz and Jek villages have limited "land suitable for grain cultivation and very few hayfields"; "...the peasants of the summer pasture zone engage extensively in *livestock farming* as it is the most profitable activity available to them" [Котляревский, 1886, с.364].

Let's consider the reasons behind the emergence and spread of carpet weaving. The Gryz people's involvement in sheep breeding naturally provided them with *livestock products, particularly wool*, which, according to I.V.Kotliarevsky, "is a product of significant economic importance to local peasants" [Котляревский, 1886, с.364].

For carpet weaving to develop, there needs to be both a *demand for carpet products in daily life and accessible raw materials*. The transhumant pastoral system of livestock farming led to a semi-nomadic lifestyle, creating a necessity for collapsible portable houses called "alachugs", furnished with carpet products, and the acquisition of wool. Thus, both factors were present. M.D.Isayev wrote that residents of the mountainous sub-region, including the Gryz people, had access to raw wool [Исаев, 1932, с.116].

Since ancient times, the peoples inhabiting Azerbaijan have engaged in carpet weaving. In the Guba district, this craft has long thrived, "driven not so much by profit but by the needs of a peasant's domestic life. As is known, Muslims have almost no furniture¹ in their homes – it is customary to sit on the floor with legs tucked under. This custom necessitated covering the floors, even in the poorest houses, with carpets, pileless carpets, and felts" [Котляревский, 1886, с.365].

Thus, besides raw wool, the Gryz people had a significant need for carpet products, which undoubtedly influenced the emergence and development of carpet weaving. Various wool products are mentioned, including cloth for clothing, stockings, carpets, pileless carpets, and Soumak rugs, made both for personal use and for sale. Interestingly, for personal use, they "weave everywhere well, always better than for sale" [Кара Мурза, Лойко, 1902, с.32].

These products were exclusively crafted by women during their free time from other household chores [Котляревский, 1886, с.364-365; Кара Мурза, Лойко, 1902, с.28, 33; Исаев, 1932, с.117; Cavadov, 2000, с.188; Мустафаев, 2009, с.23]. It is emphasized that "Carpet making is entirely in the hands of Muslim women... A woman who does not know how to weave carpets is an extremely rare phenomenon among the indigenous population of the Guba district; she is less appreciated and has less chance of getting married"

¹ "The rooms have no tables, chairs or beds... The floors are covered with carpets, felts and pileless carpets" [Котляревский, 1886, с.377].

[Капа Мурза, Лойко, 1902, с.28, 33]. Annually, a weaver could produce “no more than 4 carpets and Soumak rugs” [Котляревский, 1886, с.365]. Meanwhile, men specialized in the production of felt [Cavadov, 2000, с.193].

I.M.Kara-Murza writes that “In the second half of the 19th century, historical circumstances compelled the population to focus on earning money... The increased market demand (local Caucasian and European) for carpet products met this need, transforming the production of woolen goods and carpets into a true craft; carpets were increasingly made exclusively for sale” [Капа Мурза, Лойко, 1902, с.28]. “The cost of carpets and Soumak rugs ranges from 6 to 20 rubles for carpets, and from 6 to 50 rubles for Soumak rugs” [Котляревский, 1886, с.365]. “Moreover, in the village of Gryz, they mainly produced socks from colored threads” [Котляревский, 1886, с.364]. By “socks”, he likely refers to colorful woolen stockings called “jorabs”, typically featuring carpet-like ornamentation.

Researchers have frequently noted the widespread practice of carpet weaving in the Guba district. I.V.Kotliarevsky remarked that “Carpets, pileless carpets, and Soumak rugs are produced throughout the entire northern part of the Guba district. One could say *there is not a single village and almost not a single hearth (household)*¹, where the production of these items is not undertaken” [Котляревский, 1886, с.364]. Similarly, I.M.Kara-Murza in 1902 affirmed that “The carpet craft undoubtedly occupies the foremost position among other handicrafts of the Guba district... *It is hardly possible to find even a single village in the district where there is absolutely no production of carpet items.* But this production achieved its greatest development in the highland part of the mentioned district and mainly in the *foothills*” [Капа Мурза, Лойко, 1902, с.27]. As these quotes suggest, carpet weaving was ubiquitous, including in the villages of Gryz and Jek [Народы Кавказа, 1962, с.200; Шахбазов, 1981, с.23].

The carpets woven in the Guba district are renowned for their superior artistic and technical quality, earning high praise from carpet experts. Kotliarevsky notes the stable economic situation of the local residents and their desire for durable, long-lasting items, regardless of cost [Котляревский, 1886, с.373, 378], which undoubtedly could have fueled their ambition to produce high-quality carpets. Residents sought and could afford to surround themselves with valuable items, including carpets [Котляревский, 1886, с.378]. “The cost of carpets and Soumak rugs ranges from 6 to 20 rubles for carpets, and from 6 to 50 rubles for Soumak rugs” [Котляревский, 1886, с.365].

When discussing the quality of the carpets produced, leading carpet researchers unanimously note the exceptionally high technique: “nowhere in the Caucasus do they use such fine yarn for carpet production as here...”, highlighting the strength, density, and extraordinary fineness of carpets with low pile trimming [Пиралов, 1918, с.56; Котляревский, 1886, с.365; Исаев, 1932, с.131; Керимов, 1983, с.191]. “Carpets and Soumak rugs are made exclusively sheared and fluffy” [Котляревский, 1886, с.365]. According to L.Karimov, the knot density of “Gryz” carpets ranges from 50x50 to 55x55 (from 250,000 to 300,000 knots per square meter), with a pile height of 4-5 mm [Керимов, 1983, с.191].

It would be appropriate here to dispute I.M.Kara-Murza’s statement that “Previously, only Soumak rugs and pileless carpets were made in the Guba district; they did not know how to produce pile fabric; then, about 40-50 years ago, they learned from the Persians and began to make carpets” [Капа Мурза, Лойко, 1902, с.30]. In fact, however, in all regions of Azerbaijan, pile carpets were woven using a symmetrical knot called “Turkbaf”, while Persians use an asymmetrical knot called “Farsbaf”. If the technique had been adopted from the Persians, the knotting manner would have been adopted as well. Pile carpets have been woven here since ancient times, but due to increased demand at the end of the 19th century, production and sales surged [Шахбазов, 1981, с.21].

¹ The tax on buildings was one of the earliest and most common levies. Known as the “hearth tax”, this type of taxation persisted until the 20th century. <https://taxes.gov.az/vn/child/vergitarixi.html>

I.M.Kara-Murza noted that the wool from the villages of Khinalug and Jek is “cleaner, the hair is longer, and more threads come out of it” [Капа Мурза, Лойко, 1902, с.39]. Although the wool from Gryz is not specifically mentioned, given its high-mountain region, it is reasonable to assume its quality is similarly high.

The coloring of wool is of great importance in carpet weaving. The Gryz people partially dyed the wool themselves and also sent it to Guba for dyeing [Котляревский, 1886, с.365]. “They weave carpets and Soumak rugs on looms of the most primitive design” [Котляревский, 1886, с. 365].

Renowned carpet expert L.Karimov notes in his monograph *Azerbaijani Carpet* that “Gyryz carpets are considered of excellent quality in the Guba-Shirvan group, both technically and artistically” [Керимов, 1983, с.191]. The name “Gryz” carpet originates from the village of Gryz, or from the name of the people recorded in Russian historical and ethnographic literature as the Gryz people. In Azerbaijani carpet studies, the carpet was first named “Gyryz” in an article by N.Abdullayeva and later in L.Karimov’s monograph [Абдуллаева, 1960, с.122-123; Керимов, 1961, с.18]. Therefore, we also refer to it as “Gryz”, albeit omitting the initial letter “-y,” as this ethno-oikonym is written in Azerbaijani as “Gryz” [Azərbaycan toponimləri, 2007, с.69]. According to L.Karimov’s classification, the “Gryz” carpet belongs to the Guba group of the Guba-Shirvan type. Gryz is both a principal village and the most renowned carpet-weaving hub in the mountainous sub-region of the Guba group, where industrial carpet weaving still holds significant importance, as noted by M.D.Isayev [Исаев, 1932, с.131, 116, 117]. G.Javadov and A.Mustafayev have also documented carpet weaving in Gryz [Cavadov, 2000, с.188, 190-191; Мустафаев, 2009, с.23]. Art historians sometimes refer to it as “Jek”, named after a village five kilometers south of Gryz [Керимов, 1983, с.190]. L.Karimov also identified a carpet known specifically as “Jek” [Керимов, 1983, с.189], but noted that, unlike the “Gryz” carpet, it features a simpler composition with the same color for both the central field and the central border.

One of the first to write about the “Gryz” carpet was N.Abdullayeva in 1960, providing a good art historical analysis [Абдуллаева, 1960, с.122-123]. In his 1983 book *Azerbaijani Carpet*, L.Karimov presents an artistic analysis of this carpet and provides brief information about its technical features [Керимов, 1983, с.190-191]. This text was translated into Azerbaijani and included in the *encyclopedia Azerbaijani Carpet*, compiled by R.Tagiyeva [Тагйева, 2015, с.406].

As L.Karimov accurately describes, the composition of the “Gryz” carpet primarily features several large medallions along the central vertical axis [Керимов, 1983, с.190] (Fig. 1). The carpets we examined have 2, 3, or even 4 medallions, with varying overall lengths depending on their number. On four “Gryz” carpets, several rosettes (“*sekkiz dyrnag*”/ “eight-nailed ornaments”) are placed at the beginning, end, and middle of the central field, on the four sides of each medallion. Above, below, and between the medallions, crossing the entire field, one to three rows of horizontally arranged horn-like forms are depicted, including “*salkhym*” (“cluster”) (Fig. 3), “*chyrag*” (“lamp”) (Fig. 4), “*buynuz*” (“horns”) (Fig. 5), and “*syrga*” (“earring”).

We will delve deeper into each of these ornamental forms later.

The medallions of all six carpets are octagonal, featuring a cruciform structure (Fig. 2). On both sides of the vertical and horizontal axes, inward-curving hook-shaped protrusions are placed. Additionally, four carpets have horizontally elongated axes ending with horn-like elements on both sides.

The inner space of the medallion is defined by a central hexagonal figure¹ with eight thin rays emanating crosswise. Above and below this figure, a tree-like ornament is depicted (Fig. 9), while to the right and left, a rhomboid ornament called “*gullu yaylyg*” (“flowered kerchief”) is featured [Керимов, 1961, таб.36, p.9] (Fig. 8). Inside the rhombus, there is a concentric rhombus, with a half-zigzag “>” on one side and dot-like forms on the other. Interestingly, on five carpets, the tree-like form has three transverse branches, suggesting a specific significance for the weaver. In the corners of the medallion, hook-shaped elements are depicted.

¹ Medallions with horizontally elongated shapes are called “*ketebe*”.

The hexagonal form's interior echoes this design, featuring a central rectangle flanked by triangular "syrga" ornaments, each corner adorned with rhombuses. In jewelry, these triangular motifs are often referred to as "aypara", or "crescent moon" [Керимов, 1961, таб.31, п.5, с.9] (Fig. 11). To the right and left of it are depicted "ketebe" ornaments, also known as "кемер" ("belt") (Fig. 12), while the corners are adorned with rectangles containing eight-petal flowers [Керимов, 1961, таб.30, п.2, с.24] (Fig. 10).

The main filling elements of the carpet are five or more horizontally arranged horn-like connected forms crossing the field. L.Karimov notes that "Located horizontally at the beginning and end of the central field and called "salkhym" or "meshe gyulyu" ("cluster" or "forest flower"), these elements are, in our opinion, either the petal of a thistle or acanthus... The element called "chyrag", located vertically to the left and right of the "gul" motifs, can be considered the main element of the analyzed carpet" [Керимов, 1961, таб. 57, п.5, таб. 58, п.3; Керимов, 1983, с.191]. In the six examined "Gryz" carpets, no such vertical depictions were found. All elements are shown horizontally and resemble both the "salkhym" and "chyrag" elements (Fig. 5). Despite their different names, in our opinion, these related motifs are variations of the ancient "tree of life" symbol.

In the carpets examined, there is a horizontally elongated motif ending with horns. It is called "buynuz" and is depicted horizontally (Fig. 6). According to L.Karimov, this motif is also characteristic of the "Gryz" carpet [Керимов, 1961, таб. 51, п.2].

The ornament called "sekkiz dyrnag" ("eight-fingered ornament"¹), also known as the "animal footprint", features a stepped form with a rhombus inside [Керимов, 1961, таб.38, п.2, с.24] (Fig. 7). The corners of the rhombus are elongated and bifurcated at the ends, with an eight-pointed star placed inside. Surrounding the rhombus are eight leaf-shaped forms.

These elements comprise the main ornamental forms of the central field of the "Gryz" carpet. Regarding the border of this carpet, N.Abdullayeva writes: "The central border consists of intertwining "horuk-burug" elements, executed mainly in three colors" [Абдуллаева, 1971, с.34] (Fig. 13). Following her, L.Karimov also discussed this border type in "Gryz" carpets. Our study of six "Gryz" carpets revealed that three of them feature a central border strip called "horuk-burug" ("curly braids"). This border consists of two rows of intertwined triangular forms with hook-like curls, slightly twisted inward.

In four carpets, a minor border features a repeating pattern of eight-petal flowers called "alma" ("apple") (Fig. 14). Eight-petal flowers are a common border motif in Azerbaijani carpets. Both borders are common in Guba-Shirvan type carpets. Four carpets have three borders, with two identical minor borders. Two carpets have four borders (one with all four borders being different, and the other with two repeating and two distinct borders). The central field background is blue in four carpets and red in two carpets. The central "horuk-burug" border in three carpets has a white background. Thus, the primary colors in these carpets are blue, red, and white.

These are the primary characteristic features that constitute the composition of the "Gryz" carpet. Regarding its theme, N.Abdullayeva suggested that the carpet "depicts a wedding..." [Абдуллаева, 1971, с.33-34]. However, we believe that uncovering the semantic meaning of the "Gryz" carpet is a complex task requiring further research based on extensive folklore and other materials. In scientific literature, there is mention of a Gryz carpet pattern called "Selim aghajy" ("Tree of Selim") [Şalbusova, 2016, с.197, Paşayeva, 2018, с.28]. Unfortunately, N.Shalbusova did not publish an image of this pattern or provide a specific source for this information. M.Pashayeva published an image of the "Gryz" carpet from L.Karimov's book [Керимов, 1983, таб.29], so we cannot offer further insights on this matter.

Summing up our research, we would like to note that at this stage, we have traced the origins and development of Gryz carpet weaving by analyzing all the available literature. We especially emphasize

¹ "Sekkiz dyrnag" is translated in L.Karimov's book as "eight-fingered". The correct translation, however, is "eight-nailed", as the word "dyrnag" translates from Azerbaijani to English as "nail" [Керимов, 1961, с.24].

that "Gryz" carpets, like other museum exhibits, are valuable factual material. By using the comparative analysis method, we identified their main typological features, considering previously published studies. In conclusion, it should be noted that "Gryz" carpets are as beautiful as they are mysterious, akin to the unique ancient people who created them, living high in the mountains, almost in the heavens.



REFERENCES:

1. Azərbaycan toponimləri (*Toponyms of Azerbaijan*). Bakı: "Şərg-Qərb", 2007.
2. Cavadov Q. Azərbaycanın azsaylı xalqları və milli azlıqları (tarix və müasirlik) (*Minority Peoples and Ethnic Minorities of Azerbaijan (History and Modernity)*). Bakı: Elm, 2000.
3. Paşayeva M. Biz azərbaycanlıyıq: qısa etnoqrafik очерklər (*We are Azerbaijanis: Short Ethnographic Essays*). Bakı: Costko Company, 2018.
4. Tağıyeva R. Azərbaycan xalçası ensiklopediyası (*Encyclopedia of Azerbaijani Carpet*). I cild. Azərb. Resp. Mədəniyyət və Turizm Naz., Azərb. Xalça Muzeyi. 2015.
5. Şalbuşova N. Qız etnosu haqqında (*About the Gryz Ethnic Group*) / Труды института истории НАНА, 2016, том 60.
6. Абдуллаева Н.А. Ковровое искусство Азербайджана (*Carpet Art of Azerbaijan*). Баку: Элм, 1971.
7. Абдуллаева Н.А. Орнаментальный ковер «Крыз» (*The Gryz Ornamented Carpet*) // Изв. АН Аз.ССР. Серия литературы, языка и искусства, 1960, 6, с.122-123.
8. Зейдлиц Н.К. «Списки населённых мест Российской империи. По Кавказскому краю» Бакинская губерния: по сведениям 1859 по 1864 год (*Lists of Inhabited Localities of the Russian Empire. For the Caucasus Region. Baku Governorate: based on data from 1859 to 1864*). Тифлис, 1870.
9. Исаев М.Д. Ковровое производство Закавказья (*Carpet Production in Transcaucasia*). VIII. Тифлис, 1932.
10. Кара Мурза И.М., Лойко Л.П. Ковровый промысел в Кубинском уезде Бакинской губернии. Кустарная промышленность на Кавказе (*Carpet Industry in the Guba District of the Baku Governorate. Handicraft Industry in the Caucasus*). Вып.1. 1902.
11. Керимов Л. Азербайджанский ковер (*Azerbaijani Carpet*). Баку-Ленинград, 1961.
12. Керимов Л. Азербайджанский ковёр (*Azerbaijani Carpet*). Том II. Баку: «Гянджлик», 1983.
13. Котляревский И.В. «Экономический быт государственных крестьян северной части Кубинского уезда, Бакинской губернии». Материалы для изучения экономического быта государственных крестьян Закавказского края (*Economic Life of State Peasants of the Northern Part of the Guba District, Baku Governorate. Materials for the Study of the Economic Life of State Peasants of the Transcaucasian Region*). Т.2 (117). Тифлис: Тип. А.А.Михельсона, 1886.
14. Мустафаев А. Грызы – отголоски этнической истории Азербайджана (*Gryzs: Echoes of Azerbaijan's Ethnic History*) // İRS №2 (38), 2009, с.20-24.
15. Народы Кавказа (*Peoples of the Caucasus*). Т.2. Москва: «Академия Наук СССР», 1962.
16. Пиралов А.С. Краткий очерк кустарных промыслов Кавказа (*A Brief Overview of the Handicraft Industries of the Caucasus*)//Кустарная промышленность России. Том II. СПб., 1913.
17. Шахбазов И. Материальная культура народов Шахдагской группы в XIX– начале XX в. (историко-этнографическое исследование) (*Material Culture of the Peoples of the Shahdagh Group in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Historical-Ethnographic Study)*): Автореф. канд. истор. наук, 1981.

Čepaitienė Rasa

*Professor at the European Humanities University in Vilnius,
Senior Scientific Researcher at the Lithuanian Institute of History,
Doctor of Historical Sciences, PhD in Humanities
(LITHUANIA, Vilnius)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8023-7870>*

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN PRESERVING THE AUTHENTICITY OF CULTURAL MONUMENTS IN THE POST-SOVIET SPACE

Abstract. The article discusses the concept of authenticity of cultural heritage. It shows its historical evolution, and the current diversity of conceptions related to postmodern cultural relativism. It reveals the persistent tensions between the classical and the contemporary notions of authenticity, which are still a source of conflict among heritage experts and the public. Its complexity is revealed through a more detailed analysis of cases of restoration of fully or partially lost architectural monuments, mainly from Central Eastern Europe and post-Soviet countries.

Keywords: authenticity, reconstruction, recreation, post-Soviet countries, Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania

Introduction: The centuries-old and complex history of Caucasian Albania has left a legacy of invaluable architectural monuments, which today are in various states of disrepair or preservation. These monuments hold significance not only for Azerbaijan but for all humanity, making the issue of preserving their authenticity especially pressing. This article will delve more deeply into the phenomenon of cultural heritage “authenticity”, providing a brief overview of its development within the professional discourse in Europe from the 19th to the 21st centuries, and exploring the contemporary civilizational and cultural diversity of this concept’s interpretations. Drawing on two main perceptions of authenticity – classical and contemporary postmodernist – the article examines some of the most contentious approaches to preserving cultural assets: the reconstruction and recreation of lost buildings from post-Soviet countries. Particular attention will be paid to the case of “recreating the appearance” of the Palace of the Grand Dukes in Vilnius, Lithuania. This case is worth exploring in greater depth, as the complex challenges involved in preserving the surviving underground sections of the Palace, which was destroyed at the end of the 18th century, and integrating them into a newly recreated building, were addressed at both theoretical and methodological levels, providing a potential model for similar cases.

This study focuses on the post-Soviet region, where centuries of wars, uprisings, occupations, and annexations have left numerous architectural monuments in states of ruin, partial decay, or extensive modification. These structures hold significant value for the national identity of the local population [Rymkevičiūtė, 2006, pp.183-216]. After the Soviet Union’s dissolution, these countries embarked on a quest to define the foundations of their statehood and national dignity, making the decision to recreate previously destroyed prominent buildings from scratch or to reconstruct their ruins became a subject of widespread attention [Bartetzky, 2015, pp.19-34; *Reconstruction and Restoration...*, 2020]. Examples include the recreation of the Golden Gate in Kyiv (1982, Ukraine) for the anniversary of Ukraine’s capital, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow (1994–1999), the House of the Black Heads in Riga (2000), the reconstruction of several

Belarusian castles, and the recreation of the Palace of the Grand Dukes in Vilnius' Lower Castle in the early 2000s. The article aims to briefly outline the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept of "authenticity of cultural heritage" within professional discourse and to address the question of its applicability in cases of reconstruction and/or recreation of lost architectural monuments.

Evolution of the concept of authenticity. Until the seventh decade of the 20th century, the authenticity of cultural assets was rarely considered a distinct category. It was one of those concepts perceived as "self-evident". The physical preservation of ancient architectural structures or their fragments served as credible evidence of a nation's historical past and its achieved level of civilizational development; hence, their authenticity carried not only documentary but also political significance. For instance, in the *Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites*, signed by a group of experts from various European countries in 1964 and for many years the principal international document guiding the principles and ethics of architectural conservation, authenticity is mentioned only in a single phrase. The authors of the Charter did not elaborate on the specific nature of an object's authenticity. This category was not revisited in discourse until the 1990s.

However, despite the absence of theoretical foundations for this category in Western heritage conservation discourse until the 1990s, it is essential to note that the preservation of ancient buildings' authenticity was a concern from the very inception of this professional field. The discipline of cultural heritage conservation developed through trial and error, gradually acquiring more defined theoretical and methodological characteristics and establishing ethical principles for engaging with historical monuments, which would later be adopted in national legislation and on an international level [Choay, 1996]. By the late 19th to early 20th century, Western European countries began to experience disputes regarding the suitability of the then-dominant approach –the so-called "stylistic restoration" of buildings. Initially, the aim of this approach was to preserve key national monuments of history, science, and art; however, over time, it transformed into a desire to restore their stylistic integrity, which had been lost over the course of history. Architects-restorers such as Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879) in France and Sir George Gilbert Scott (1811–1878) in England, who shaped the primary principles of stylistic restoration, considered a building's integrity and expressiveness (its artistic value) to be paramount. These qualities were revealed when restorers removed later "insignificant" additions to expose the original layer, often Gothic. Viollet-le-Duc asserted that "restoring a building means neither maintaining, repairing, nor rebuilding it, but rather returning it to a state of completeness that may never have actually existed" [Viollet-le-Duc, 1990, p.195]. This approach was romantic, based on the assumption that the "true", authentic state of an object was "not what was constructed but what was conceived" [Muñoz Viñas, 2005, p.5]. Yet, this perspective devalued not only the informational-historical significance but also the age-related value of heritage objects, which had been subject to modifications and reinterpretations over time due to stylistic shifts. Furthermore, due to a lack of precise data on the original appearance of buildings and their components, Viollet-le-Duc advocated for the use of stylistic analogies and applied this controversial method extensively [Jokilehto, 1999, pp.137-157].

However, by the late 19th century, the *interventionist* theory and practice of restoration began to draw criticism, became unsatisfactory to critics who saw in it a threat to the authenticity of monuments. Its effects were indeed quite severe: in the process of restoring monuments to their "original appearance", many 17th–18th-century architectural structures were damaged and falsified, their surroundings cleared, and later additions demolished. Consequently, the theoretical principles and methodological approaches of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc and Sir George Gilbert Scott, which had significantly influenced heritage conservation practices in many European countries, came to be viewed as destructive and falsifying (some of the objects they restored were even "de-restored" in the 20th century). Researchers began to prioritize what had genuinely existed rather than attempting to "correct the mistakes of predecessors". Debates emerged about whether architectural buildings should be restored at all, to what extent, and by what means. In

other words, discussions revolved around what constitutes an ethical approach to historic structures that we aim to preserve for future generations. The main critics of “stylistic restoration” were proponents of “non-intervention” in the substance of monuments, the British figures John Ruskin and William Morris, who favored continuous maintenance and care over restoration, going so far as to equate restorers to counterfeiters who destroy the essence of a monument – the authenticity of its historical fabric [Ruskin, 1956].

Only decades later was a compromise found between these two extreme approaches, as the restoration/non-intervention dilemma evolved into an understanding that heritage management encompasses a broader range of tools (maintenance, conservation, restoration, etc.) beyond a binary perspective. It was recognized that the most appropriate approach to intervening in a monument’s material substance should be chosen based on the specifics of each case – namely, the level of preservation, the available amount and reliability of information about it, and its history and transformations. This more moderate and rational perspective was substantiated by representatives of the Italian school of restoration – Camillo Boito, Gustavo Giovannoni, and others [Jokilehto, 1999, pp.200-207]. The principles they developed for the conservation of architectural monuments eventually formed the foundation for both the *Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments* (1931) and the Venice Charter. Subsequently, these principles gained the support and advocacy of international organizations such as UNESCO, ICCROM, and ICOMOS. However, this did not resolve the disagreement among specialists regarding authenticity. The antagonism between the two perspectives, rooted in the 19th-century debate between the followers of Viollet-le-Duc and John Ruskin, persists to this day, underpinning the two main paradigms of heritage perception: the classical and the contemporary, postmodern perspectives.

Today, these views can be summarized as the *paradigm of authenticity in historical form versus authenticity in historical material* [Kulevičius, 2014, pp.2-3]. In one perspective, experts argue that the fundamental substance of heritage lies in its historicity and materiality. That is, the historical period in which a monument was conceived and created as an embodiment of its originating culture defines its essence and truthfulness. Just as each historical event is unique and unrepeatable, so is each heritage object; cultural value, like the irreversible passage of time from past to present to future, is also irreversible. Once destroyed, it is lost forever and cannot be recreated. A monument can be considered authentic only if it remains composed of its original material. In this understanding of heritage objects, priority is given to a scientific approach. Cultural assets are, first and foremost, sources of knowledge for science, and therefore they can only be restored or recreated based on compelling interdisciplinary data. However, what is reconstructed can no longer serve as a source of the past (which is why the *Venice Charter* mandates that new parts/elements be distinguished by a different color or texture to separate them from the authentic, older ones).

Meanwhile, the paradigm of historical form prioritizes a visually cohesive object. Thus, it is not limited to the existing physical appearance of a building but confidently recreates forms that have been lost over time (resembling stylistic restoration but based on more scientifically credible grounds). Restoration and reconstruction are used far more freely in this paradigm than in the first, with the completeness and informativeness of the form being considered more important than the presence or absence of precise historical data about it. In the absence of reliable evidence, it allows for the application of hypotheses, improvisations, analogies, and so forth. For the sake of a cohesive appearance and aesthetic, the principle of separating historical and reconstructed material is no longer as essential. Here, heritage primarily serves educational and illustrative purposes, creating comprehensive representations of the past. This paradigm is oriented toward the general public and toward revitalizing the past by adapting its physical remnants to contemporary social needs. Despite their often-incompatible theoretical foundations, both paradigms coexist in practice, reflecting the varying needs of experts and society. Harmonizing them is inherently

challenging due to fundamentally different understandings of cultural heritage authenticity [Kulevičius, 2014, pp.4-5].

It was not until 1994, three decades after the signing of the *Venice Charter*, that a new international policy document was created, with authenticity placed at the center of the text and defined as the foundation of heritage preservation. This document, the *Nara Document on Authenticity*, was signed in Nara, Japan, by representatives from UNESCO, ICCROM, and ICOMOS [The Nara Document..., 1994]. Why did the international expert community require a clearer definition of this concept? While the *Venice Charter* reflected Europe's experience of profound loss after two world wars, attempts to apply its principles in different geographical and cultural contexts – particularly when nominating cultural assets for the UNESCO World Heritage List – encountered challenges. According to Indian architect Romi Khosla, the issues were primarily rooted in the difficulty that non-European countries faced in “distinguishing between conservation, preservation, restoration, reconstruction, and contemporary construction work” [Khosla, 1997, pp.65-66]. In this regard, international heritage preservation principles, such as the *Nara Document* and others, emerged as responses to the conflict between a universalism of European origin – which sought to impose its interpretation of heritage as the only correct and universally acceptable view – and the diversity of cultures that define their own cultural heritage in distinctly different ways. At times, this conflict even became publicly evident, such as in the Japanese practice of periodically reproducing ancient wooden temples [Making Japanese Heritage..., 2010], which did not align with the international definition of authenticity. The *Nara Document* was developed to reconsider and expand the definition of cultural authenticity, aiming to “bring greater respect for cultural diversity, heritage interpretation, and conservation practices” [The Nara Document..., 1994]. In it, authenticity is codified as a global term, yet the underlying concept may carry a range of meanings. Experts from twenty-eight countries ultimately did not reach consensus on how to reframe and contextualize authenticity – “the essential qualifying factor that determines values” [The Nara Document..., 1994].

Within the global application of the concept of “authenticity”, the ambiguity of this term has motivated Asian countries, particularly Japan, to develop their own interpretations and practices that align with their unique cultural, social, historical, and political contexts, thereby extending the meaning of authenticity beyond the European framework and understanding [Jokilehto, 2007, p.179]. The *Charter for the Conservation of Unprotected Architectural Heritage and Sites in India* (2004) and the *Consensus on the Theory and Practice of Historic Building Conservation in China* (Declaration of Qufu, 2005) are key examples of this [Weiler, 2017, pp.xxii]. This shift in the theoretical understanding of authenticity was accompanied by a series of regional and national expert events, such as the *InterAmerican Symposium on Authenticity in the Conservation and Management of the Cultural Heritage* (1996, San Antonio, USA) and the *Eastern European Regional Seminar on Authenticity and Historical Reconstruction in Cultural Heritage* (ICOMOS, 2000, Riga, Latvia), which produced the *Riga Charter on Authenticity and Historical Reconstruction in Relationship to Cultural Heritage* [The Riga Charter..., 2000], among others.

The authenticity of cultural assets has also become a topic of public debate, as seen in discussions surrounding the restoration of the Berlin Royal Palace in Germany or the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania. Although the scope of cultural heritage significantly expanded in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, encompassing numerous new forms and types, including intangible heritage, the criterion of authenticity remains a primary parameter for assessing both tangible and intangible cultural assets. Despite these efforts, the definition of authenticity remains vague and fluid, continuously reinterpreted and transformed according to different cultural contexts and local characteristics. According to Finnish researcher Jukka Jokilehto, stylistic restoration remains the dominant approach in heritage conservation worldwide [Jokilehto, 1999, p.301]. This approach finds regional support, as illustrated by Polish cities such as Warsaw, Gdańsk, Wrocław, and Elbląg [Lubocka-Hoffmann, 2000; Tung, 2001; Rymaszewski, 2002], the Golden Gate in Kyiv, and the House of the Blackheads in Riga, among others. Stylistic restoration and

reconstruction can sometimes align, particularly when restoring the structural and aesthetic integrity and stylistic unity of an architectural monument, where the restored object is largely composed (70% or more) of new materials and adapted for new uses (primarily as museums), as in the cases of Belarusian castles in Nesvizh, Ruzhany, and others.

Challenges of preserving authenticity in reconstruction and recreation.

The issue of reconstruction was first examined more comprehensively in the *Burra Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, adopted by Australia ICOMOS in 1979 (subsequent versions in 1999 and 2013), which adapted the principles of the *Venice Charter* to local needs. The guidelines outlined in the *Burra Charter* quickly gained global relevance and are now used by heritage professionals in Latin and North America, Europe, Asia, Canada, and New Zealand. In the *Burra Charter*, reconstruction is defined as “returning a site to a known earlier state and distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material” [*The Burra Charter...*, 2013]. However, it is only applicable if a site has been damaged or altered and only when there is sufficient evidence to reproduce an earlier historical state [*The Burra Charter...*, 2013, Article 20]. The document justifies full restoration of an object only in exceptional cases and asserts that reconstruction should be limited, with restored fragments not constituting the primary part of the object; in other words, it should not aim to reproduce replicas of cultural assets. Meanwhile, the *Dresden Declaration* (1982) specifically supports the possibility of reconstructing monuments of national significance. Reconstruction in this context includes both full and partial restoration. It emphasizes that in both cases, thorough prior scientific documentation and research are required.

It should be noted that, while Western European countries largely addressed the possibility of recreating lost architectural assets by the mid-20th century, Central and Eastern European countries, due to complex historical circumstances, faced these issues directly and quite acutely in the post-Soviet era. These countries encountered a dilemma: whether to align with the prevailing international principles and Western European heritage conservation practices, which often proved incompatible with addressing the specific challenges of preserving and adapting a large number of partially destroyed or significantly modified architectural monuments from the Soviet period. Reflecting the unique situation of post-communist countries, where the question of consolidating national identity became pressing, was the signing of the *Riga Charter*. This regional document, initiated by ICCROM and the National Commission of Latvia for UNESCO and signed by the Baltic States, Ukraine, and Belarus, permits scientific reconstruction of destroyed historical structures in exceptional cases, particularly those with immense symbolic value for the identity of a specific nation and society. However, the *Riga Charter* also sets forth several strictly defined conditions: 1) appropriate survey and historical documentation must be collected, including iconographic, archival, or material evidence; 2) the reconstruction must not falsify the urban or landscape context; 3) existing significant historic fabric must not be damaged; and 4) the need for reconstruction must have been established through full and open public consultations [ICCROM, *The Riga Charter...*, 2000].

These principles formed the foundation for the decision to recreate the appearance of the Palace of the Rulers in the Lower Castle of Lithuania’s capital.

The recently completed project of the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania in Vilnius can be considered the most significant cultural project in the entire history of independent Lithuania [Čepaitienė, 2005, pp.343-363]. Prior to 1987 (when comprehensive archaeological excavations began in the very center of the city, where parts of the Upper and Lower Castle complexes remain), written sources indicated that the four-winged structure was first constructed in 1520 by order of Polish King and Grand Duke of Lithuania, Sigismund the Old, as his residence. During the reign of his son, Sigismund Augustus, the last representative of the Lithuanian Jagiellonian dynasty, the Palace experienced a period of prosperity, serving as a center of high Renaissance culture. In the mid-17th century, during the war with Moscow, the Palace was devastated, and the rulers never returned. Following the third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795, the Russian Empire occupied these territories, renaming them the “Northwestern

Region". The Palace ruins remained in the city center until 1801, when, by order of the Tsarist government, its above-ground structures were dismantled for brick sale, while the surviving foundations were buried.

In 1987, archaeological excavations uncovered all preserved foundations of the Palace of the Grand Dukes and revealed that the cultural layer of the site was extremely rich in artifacts, indicating its use for human habitation well before the 16th century. Due to its strong symbolic significance, the authentic remains of the Palace have never been merely a site of neutral scientific interest – this structure can be confidently considered the *lieu de mémoire* of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania *par excellence*. Consequently, its study and preservation have always been more of a political and ideological matter than simply a heritage issue. In 2002, restoration work on the Palace commenced. When deciding on the methodology, the architects and restorers selected the term "recreating the appearance of the Palace of the Grand Dukes", as it was more neutral, precise, and aligned with the public's desire to see a "monument to the lost monument". The future building, within the framework of political rhetoric, was perceived as a monument to Lithuania, which celebrated its Millennium in 2009, and thus, it was intended to be completed by the beginning of these celebrations.

Debates among specialists over the choice of scientific methodology for the reconstruction took on a distinctly oppositional character. Despite the diligent efforts of researchers, opponents of the Palace's reconstruction emphasized that the lack of sufficient authentic data on its former appearance, especially concerning the inner courtyard and interiors, posed a significant obstacle, not to mention the complexities involved in constructing and maintaining the building. This was, after all, a structure that had undergone at least three reconstructions in three different architectural styles. Proponents of a purist approach to cultural heritage preservation highlighted the value of *historical truth* – arguing that the authentic building had already been destroyed, making its recreation impossible, and that any new building constructed on the archaeological remains would be a replica, an imitation, a foreign element in the context of the historically established urban environment of the site (alluding to non-compliance with the second and third conditions of *the Riga Charter*). In response, patriotic supporters of the reconstruction idea emphasized the value of historical justice – for them, recreating the Palace symbolized that "the occupiers did not defeat us". They also underscored that the reconstruction would restore a lost element of the broader urban structure, specifically the entire Upper and Lower Castle complex. The decision was made to build the new structure not directly on the old foundation but to first reinforce the foundation appropriately and then use a unique support system to cover the authentic parts, effectively "settling" over the archaeological ruins without disturbing them. As a result, a respectable museum dedicated to the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was established within the Palace, quickly becoming popular for its active cultural programs. The museum's experience demonstrates that the concerns of some specialists and the public regarding whether the authentic underground portion of the former Palace could be preserved while creating a new national symbol were unfounded. The concept of "recreating the appearance" resolved the dilemma of "preserving authentic material" versus "recreating the former image of the Palace" in favor of both archaeological preservation and the needs of contemporary society. This may be a rare successful case of harmonizing the opposing paradigms of historical material and historical form.



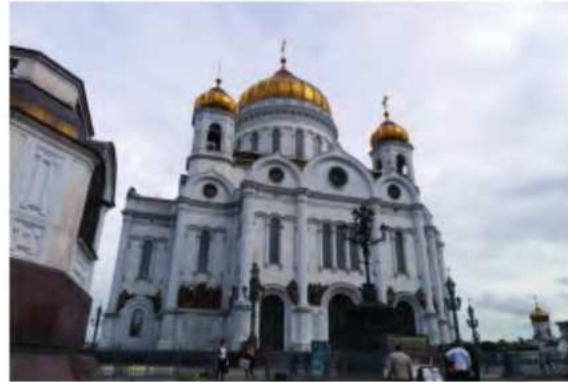
House of the Blackheads, Riga



Old Town of Warsaw



Golden Gate, Kyiv



Cathedral of Christ the Savior, Moscow



Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, Vilnius (right)



Foundations of the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania

REFERENCES:

1. Bartetzky Arnold, Architecture Makes History. Reconstruction and Nation Building in East Central Europe. *Architecture RePerformed: The Politics of Reconstruction* (ed. by T.Moger). Ashgate, 2015, pp.19-34.
2. Choay Françoise, *L'allegorie du patrimoine*. Paris, Seuil, 1996.
3. Čepaitienė Rasa, *Laikas ir akmenys. Kultūros paveldo sampratos moderniojoje Lietuvoje*. Vilnius, LII, 2005.
4. ICCROM, *The Riga Charter on Authenticity and Historic Reconstruction in Relationship to Cultural Heritage*. https://www.google.lt/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.iccrom.org/sites/default/files/publications/2020-05/convern8_07_rigacharter_ing.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiLvs-y9aOFAxVGBdsEHR5gDGsQFnoECB YQAQ&usg=AOvVaw2pCwWu-kfCQz3VN3qOK-kf
5. ICOMOS. *The Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments*, http://www.icomos.org/athens_charter.html
6. Jokilehto Jukka, *A History of Architectural Conservation*. Oxford, Butterworth Heinemann, 1999.
7. Jokilehto, Jukka, Philosophical Challenges in Cultural Heritage Conservation in the 21st Century. *Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century. Opportunities and Challenges* (ed. by M.Muzyn and J.Purchla). Cracow: International Cultural Centre in Cracow, 2007, pp.171-182.
8. Khosla, Romi, The Persistence of Pre-Modernism: The Search for Authenticity in Central Asia, Tibet, India, and Nepal. *Contemporary Architecture and City Form: The South Asian Paradigm* (ed. by F.Amin). Mumbai: Marg Publications, 1997, pp.64–74.
9. Kulevičius Salvijus, In Search of Cultural Heritage Authenticity Definition: History and Current Issues. *Historical and Cultural Studies*, 2014, vol.1, nr.1, pp.1-6.
10. Lubocka-Hoffmann M. Реконструкция исторических городов в Польше. *Программа реставрации районов старых городов в условиях реконструкции Балтийска* (состав. M.Lubocka-Hoffmann and B.Szmugyn). Эльблонг, Европейская комиссия, Программа PHARE-CREDO, 2000, pp.27-39.
11. *Making Japanese Heritage* /ed. by C.Brumann and R.Cox. London/New York, routledge, 2010.
12. Muñoz Viñas Salvador. *Contemporary Theory of Conservation*. Oxford, Elsevier, 2005.
13. *Reconstruction and Restoration of Architectural Heritage* (ed. by S.Sementsov and all...). Taylor and Francys, 2020.
14. Rymkevičiūtė Agnė, Kultūros paveldo atstatymo fenomenas ir jo raiška Europoje bei Lietuvoje XX a. antroje pusėje – XXI a. pradžioje. *Lietuvos Didžiosios kunigaištystės Valdovų Rūmų atkūrimo byla: vieno požūrio likimas* (sud. A.Bumblauskas). Vilnius, VU leidykla, 2006, p.183-216.
15. Rymaszewski Bohdan. *Polska ochrona zabytków. Refleksje z lat 1918-2002*. Warszawa: Bis-Press, 2002.
16. Ruskin John. *The Seven Lamps of the Architecture* / ed. by J.M.Dent and Sons). London, 1956.
17. *The Burra Charter. The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, 2013 / <https://australia.icomos.org/publications/burra-charter-practice-notes/>
18. Tung Anthony M. *Preserving The World's Great Cities. The Destruction and Renewal of the Historic Metropolis*. New York, 2001.
19. UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, *The Nara Conference on Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention*, 1994 / www.icomos.org/charters/nara-e.pdf
20. Viollet-le-Duc Eugène-Emmanuel. "Restauration", *The Foundation of Architecture: Selection from the Dictionnaire Raisoné*. New York, George Braziller Inc., 1990.
21. Weiler Katharina, Introduction. *Authenticity in Architectural Heritage Conservation. Discourses, Opinions, Experiences in Europe, South and East Asia* /ed. by K.Weiler and N.Gutschow. Springer, 2017, p.xvii– xxii.
22. IInd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites*, 1964 / www.icomos.org/charters/venice_e.pdf

Farmanov Farhad*Researcher Fellow of the Ethnoarchaeology Department
of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of ANAS, artist*

PATTERN ELEMENTS ON CERAMICS FROM THE CAUCASIAN ALBANIAN PERIOD

Abstract: Craftsmanship, with rich and unique traditions for centuries, including metalworking, jewelry making, pottery, glassmaking, stone carving, bone and wood carving, leatherwork, and weaving, flourished in Caucasian Albania. Various pottery vessels, glass items, and ornaments made from diverse materials, unearthed from grave monuments, showcase the country's rich cultural heritage. Among the discovered items, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic vessels also hold a significant place. High quality was a key criterion for each product, with artistic and aesthetic appeal playing a crucial role.

Keywords: craftsmanship, weaving, metalworking, jewelry making, pottery

Since ancient times, the rich natural environment and favorable geographical conditions of Albania have fostered the development of its economy and culture, as reflected in archaeological materials [Халилов, 1984, p.14]. The history of Caucasian Albania was first studied in the late 19th century and has been continuously researched since then, with numerous historians and archaeologists contributing to the exploration of this period. As a result of these studies, many material-cultural monuments have been uncovered, with grave monuments being particularly noteworthy. These graves vary in type, including earth graves, jar burials, clay graves, trough graves, cist graves, catacombs, burial mounds, and Christian graves [Халилов, 2009, p.22].

Numerous and diverse materials, both locally produced and imported, have been discovered during the study of archaeological monuments in Caucasian Albania. These materials can be categorized into several groups, including ceramics, glass tools, weapon embellishments, and more. Among these archaeological finds, domestic, economic, and artistic ceramics, as well as construction materials, are particularly prevalent [Халилов, 1984, p.107].

Craftsmanship, with its centuries-old unique traditions, flourished in Albania and was central to the urban economy. For Albania, city types that emerged along international trade routes were typical and served as major administrative and trade-craft centers. [Мамедова, 1986, p.157]. A variety of crafts were cultivated in Albania, including metalworking, jewelry making, pottery, glassmaking, stone carving, bone and wood carving, leatherwork, and weaving [Халилов, 1984, p.107]. The development of Caucasian Albania facilitated the establishment of relations with other countries. Archaeological excavations have uncovered material-cultural artifacts that confirm connections with many regions, including Rome, Egypt, India, Syria, Parthia, Georgia, and others. A significant amount of imported goods has been found among these materials. Regardless of how these items reached Albania, they became integrated into the material culture of the local population [Ахундова, 2019, p.155]. The material-cultural artifacts discovered in various types of graves during archaeological excavations are crucial for studying the history, socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, and religious characteristics of Caucasian Albania.

The various pottery vessels, glass items, and ornaments made from materials such as metal, bone, and others, obtained from grave monuments, demonstrate the rich cultural heritage of Caucasian Albania.

Among the vessels discovered from these grave monuments, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic forms hold a significant place. Zoomorphic vessels are further classified into two types: those depicting animals and those depicting birds [Əsədov, 2018, pp. 82-83].

In addition to metal products, silver vessels were also uncovered. Other metal artifacts and equipment discovered include swords, knives, sickles, scissors, daggers, spearheads, and tridents. Metal jewelry items, such as bracelets and bangles, are also among the discoveries, alongside ornaments made from a variety of materials.

Glass vessels and seals were found in different types of graves as well. Pottery production was one of the key crafts in Albania, with archaeological studies yielding a wide range of ceramic products [Мамедова, 1986, pp. 156-157].

High quality was a fundamental requirement for each product, but artistic and aesthetic appeal were equally vital. Artisans dedicated significant effort to decorating each item, often drawing on traditional ornamental designs or separately crafted components while adding their own touches to create more refined decorations. In many cases, while maintaining traditional technical methods, artisans enhanced preparation techniques, tools, and artistic designs, resulting in improved products. In some areas, more recent and progressive changes were evident. For example, the products made by Albanian potters were distinguished by their delicate styles, well-prepared clay, firm and evenly fired surfaces, and exquisite, rich ornaments. In almost all cases, the shoulders, necks, and handles of the vessels were decorated (Fig. 1). The vessels featured a variety of engraved patterns, including straight-wave lines, curved lines, sideways incisions, intersecting lines forming triangles, incised and deep punctures, circles, and more (Fig. 1). Appliqué ornaments, such as bosses, reliefs, and crescents, were also used on the vessels. Additionally, dome-shaped embossing and other techniques were employed to enhance the surface decorations (Fig. 1-2) [Халилов, 1984, pp. 178-179].

In Caucasian Albania, urban craftsmen primarily produced goods for the market, with their products being purchased by a diverse range of customers, including both urban and rural dwellers [Хəлilov, 1984, p.183]. In addition to the quantity of various products produced in Caucasian Albania, considerable attention was also given to their quality, as well as their artistic form and design. There was a continuous demand for new varieties of products, innovative shapes, and appropriate decorative elements. Moreover, connections with highly developed cultural centers of that time, particularly those in antiquity, enriched the local culture and positively influenced all aspects of the local population's life [Ахундова, 2019, p.154].

The majority of goods manufactured in Caucasian Albania have been discovered in grave monuments (earth, jar, clay, trough, cist, catacomb, burial mound) and Christian graves [Хəлilov, 2009, p.22]. When examining the material-cultural artifacts obtained from these grave monuments, significant changes can be discerned, particularly in technical and technological aspects, as well as in artistic form and design methods compared to earlier periods. These changes are evident across almost all fields, especially in the artistic forms and decorative elements (ornaments and motifs) of the material-cultural artifacts produced. Each crafted item was intended for a specific use and, in fact, reflects the field to which it pertains. For example, labor tools represent agriculture, while domestic items indicate the level of craftsmanship and help determine the social composition of society.

The comparative analysis of material-cultural artifacts obtained through archaeological research reveals that all the fields operating during the same period significantly influenced one another. These mutual influences are evident in the achievements and benefits shared across different domains. For example, the preparation of high-quality clay led to advancements in production and firing techniques, ornamentation methods, and the creation of more refined and aesthetically pleasing designs. These improvements resulted in higher-quality finished products with greater marketability. Additionally, some newly developed artifacts were adapted for use in multiple fields. When these ornamental designs were produced, they were tailored to fit the materials, tools, and technological methods of the specific field

in which they were applied. The same type of ornament or ornamental element could be used in stone carving, carpet weaving, ceramics, jewelry making, copper craftsmanship, and other fields. However, as noted, these ornaments or individual elements were crafted according to the raw materials and technical capabilities of their respective fields. A unique and distinctive culture, rooted in ancient local traditions, flourished within the territory of Albania [Халилов, 1984, p. 213].

After Christianity was declared the state religion in Albania in the 4th century, Christian burial rituals began to spread across the country. However, studies of grave monuments indicate that the rituals performed during Christian burials practices were mixed with pagan burial rituals and continued in this blended form for some time [Халилов, 2009, p. 89].

In the 7th century, the spread of Islam achieved what Christianity had not: the eradication of pagan monuments in Albania. Despite this, some types of graves common among pagan Albanians persisted among Albanian Christians until the late 9th–10th centuries. With the spread of Christianity in Albania, there was an increased demand for the construction of religious-architectural monuments, including churches, monasteries, and grave monuments. This, in turn, led to a greater need for stone carving and stone working. The most significant of these crafts was the art of intricate stone carving, the most challenging and labor-intensive form of craftsmanship. The ornaments and motifs depicted on stones, various decorative designs, and other elements were crafted with great precision and are noteworthy for their artistic-aesthetic value, remarkable composition, originality, and craftsmanship [Нәсәфов, Фәрманов, 2023, pp.92-102]. In the artistic design of architectural and grave monuments, the ornaments and motifs used by craftsmen in Caucasian Albania were influenced by decorative artifacts from pre-Christian and early Christian periods, as well as by the stone carving traditions of early and medieval Islam. Studying the cultural heritage of Caucasian Albania reveals a remarkable synthesis of cultures (Fig. 1).

The decorations and motifs depicted on the cross-stones of grave monuments clearly demonstrate their aesthetic resolution through the precise arrangement and symmetrical structure of the compositions [Нәсәфов, Фәрманов, 2023, pp. 92-102]. Decorative ornaments and motifs were skillfully applied in both grave monuments and architectural works. In areas requiring detailed design, the ornaments and various elements were carefully planned, with their placement and size within the composition precisely determined. As a result, a range of compositions, from simple to complex, can be found. One or several motifs were used in the decoration of pottery, domestic items, decorative objects, temples, and gravestones. The rhythmic repetition and adaptation of partition elements in these designs enhance rather than detract from the composition's structure, creating a cohesive and unified visual appeal. Visual appeal remains one of the key criteria in composition (Fig. 1-2).

From the 8th century onward, the spread of Islam in Albanian territories not only preserved the traditions of earlier periods but also enriched them with elements of Islamic culture. This blending of traditions is particularly evident in the use of mixed elements in ornamentation (Fig. 1-2). This synthesis is most often seen in geometric ornamentation and compositions. In Azerbaijan, the study of Albania's material, historical-archaeological, political-economic, geographical, territorial, cultural, and spiritual heritage is of great importance. Every monument and the material-cultural artifacts obtained from these sites should be thoroughly examined to achieve accurate results, and efforts should be made to consistently and widely promote this cultural heritage.



Fig. 1

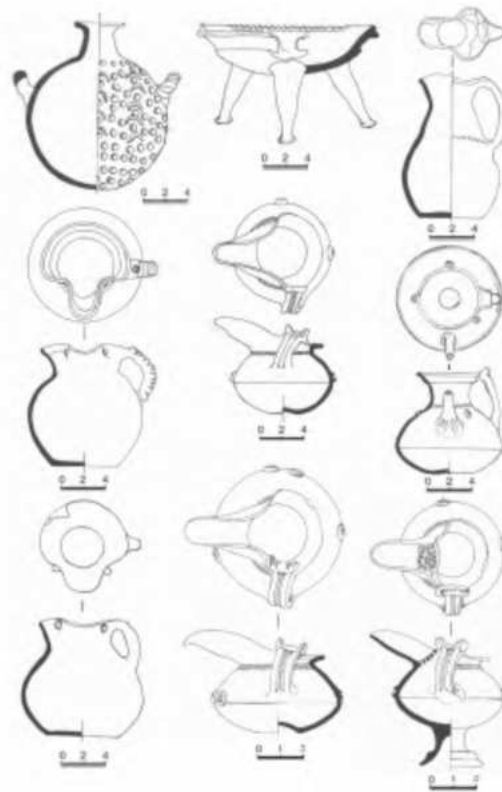


Fig. 2

REFERENCES:

1. Xəlilov M.C., Cəfərova E.B. Quba, Şabran və Xaçmaz rayonlarında tədqiqatlar (*Research in the Guba, Shabran, and Khachmaz Districts*) // Azərbaycanca arxeoloji tədqiqatlar 2015-2016. Bakı, 2017, s.291-297.
2. Хотыановски. Quba əyalətinin kameral təsviri (*The Cameral Description of the Guba Region*). Bakı: "Sabah", 2008.
3. Мамедова Г.Г. Зодчество Кавказской Албании (*Architecture of Caucasian Albania*). Баку: Чашьюглу, 2004, 224 с.
4. Тревер К.В. Очерки по истории и культуре Кавказской Албании (*Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania*). М.-Л.: Ленинградское отделение Изд-ва Академии наук СССР, 1959, 392 с.
5. Халилов М.Дж. Христианские памятники Албании (Азербайджан) (*Christian Monuments of Albania (Azerbaijan)*) // Религии Центральной Азии и Азербайджана. Том IV. Христианство. Самарканд: МИЦАИ, 2018, с.157-227.
6. Халилов М.Дж. Церкви Урекванка (Нагорный Карабах) и Верхнего Чирюрта (Дагестан) (*Churches of Urakvang (Nagorno-Karabakh) and Upper Chiryurt (Dagestan)*) / "Qarabağın arxeoloji irsi" Beynəlxalq Elmi Konfransın materialları. Bakı, "Xəzər Universiteti" nəşriyyatı, 2016, s.72-73.

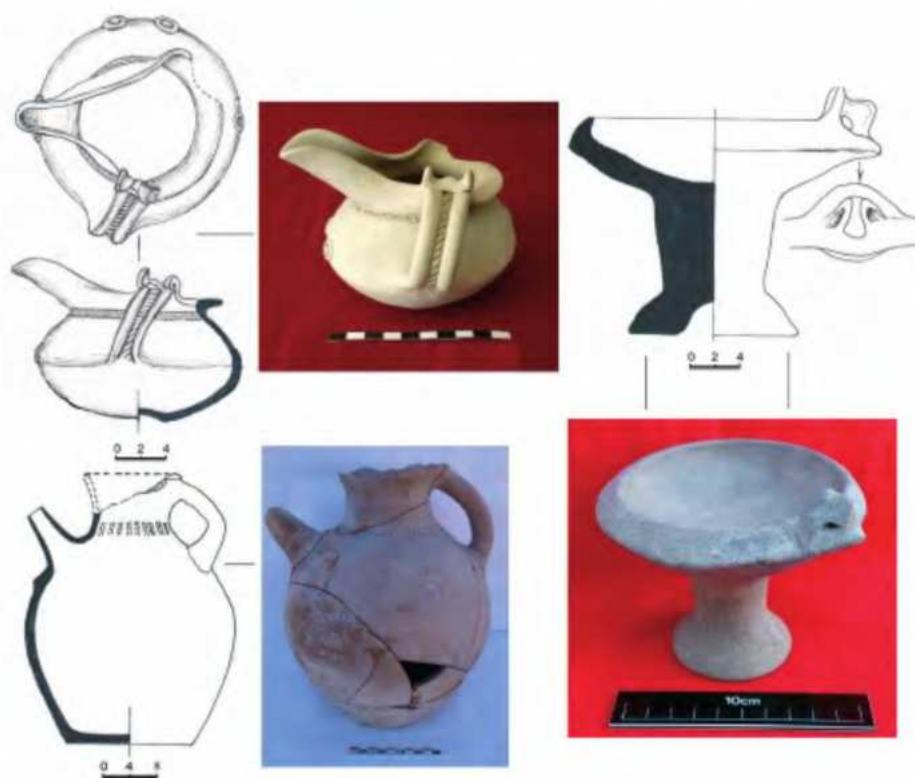


Fig. 3

Garabaghli Rizvan

Corresponding member of the Eastern Countries International Academy of Architecture, Leading Research Associate of the Institute of Architecture and Art of the ANAS, PhD in Architecture, Associate Professor

ALBANIAN TEMPLES AROUND LAKE GOYCHA

Abstract. There are approximately 450 lakes of various origins in Azerbaijan. One of them is Lake Goycha, located in Western Azerbaijan (currently the territory of the Republic of Armenia). In Russian and Armenian sources, the lake is referred to as “Sinaya voda”, “Sevan”, “Gegham”, and “Gegharkunik”. According to sources on Azerbaijani history, Lake Goycha and its region have been, at various times, part of states ruled by Turkic dynasties such as the Sajids, Salarids, Rawadids, the Seljuk Empire, the Eldiguzids, the Ilkhanids, the Garagoyunlu, and the Aq Qoyunlu dynasties. During the Safavid period, it was an administrative unit within the Chukhursad Baylarbaylik. In the first quarter of the 18th century, Lake Goycha and its region were initially part of the Chukhursad Baylarbaylik, which encompassed the provinces of Iravan, Nakhchivan, and Maku, and later became part of the Afshar Empire and, generally, an administrative unit of Azerbaijan. Despite the efforts by the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic which was part of the Iravan Khanate, to reclaim its historical lands, no positive result was achieved, and instead, the western part of the Goycha region, along with the uyezds of Iravan and Etchmiadzin, were ceded to Armenia. Azerbaijani architects and archaeologists were unable to conduct excavations or architectural research in these areas. Armenian “researchers” took full advantage of this, demolishing monuments and using their materials in construction, displacing or modifying Albanian cross-stones, and selling them to foreign museums. They also destroyed and looted mass graves. The Goycha monastery complex suffered the same destruction and “reconstruction” efforts.

Keywords: Lake Goycha, Goycha region, Albanian monastery, Arran architectural school

There are approximately 450 lakes of various origins in Azerbaijan. One of them is Lake Goycha, located in Western Azerbaijan (currently the territory of the Republic of Armenia). Lake Goycha, considered the jewel of the freshwater lakes of the Caucasus, lies 1,926 meters above sea level and covers an area of about 1,242 km². It is bordered to the south by the Aghlagan and Chanlibel mountains, as well as the Salim pass, and to the north by the Murghuz and Shahdagh mountain ranges. The historical Goycha region lies at the foothills of these mountains, with the lake acting as a vast mirror for this region (Fig. 1).

There are various theories about the etymology of the name “Goycha”. In Russian and Armenian sources, the lake is referred to as “Sinaya voda”, “Sevan”, “Gegham”, and “Gegharkunik”. As can be seen, just as they have done with many of our historical toponyms and monuments, the Armenians have changed the name of Goycha to “Sevan”, meaning “Black Lake”. Why should Lake Goycha be called



Fig. 1

Sevan? After all, it reflects the color of the blue sky. Even the renowned Russian writer Maxim Gorky, who visited Goycha in 1928, wrote about it: "This lake seems like a piece of the sky that has fallen into the mountains... Yes, it is incredibly beautiful! It seems as though the mountains lovingly and delicately embrace and protect the valley. The air is extraordinarily clean and transparent, appearing as if it has been painted in a soft shimmering blue tone" [<https://viananmeri.livejournal.com>]. According to several researchers, the lake derived its name from its color. Similar toponyms, such as Goychay, can also be found in Azerbaijan. In the epic "Kitabi-Dede Gorgud", the lake is referred to as "Goycha", "Gokce", and "Gokche" [Aqreqator.az/ <https://aqreqator.az › medeni...>]. It seems that later the name of Lake Goycha was associated with the name of a monastery complex located on a peninsula.

In the Persian-language sources of the 14th–17th centuries, Lake Goycha is also referred to as "Gogce tengiz", meaning the Sea of Goycha [Zeynəddin bin Həmdullah Qəzvini, 1990, s.16, 18, 52]. In his work, Iskandar Beg Munshi writes about the nature of the Sea of Goycha: "...During the days of spring, when nature is pure and lush, His Majesty, the Shadow of God, Shah [Shah Abbas.–R.Q.] spent his time indulging in pleasure and hunting in the highlands of the Sea of Goycha, a place that, with the freshness of its air, the abundance of its water, the richness of its flowers and plants, and its eye-catching rivers and springs, resembled a heavenly garden" [Münşi İsgəndər bəy. Dünyanı bəzəyən Abbasın tarixi. II Kitab, s.1204].

There are also legends that the name "Goycha" was given in honor of a beautiful lady. However, we hold to the version that the lake derived its name from its color. Similarly, the historical Goycha region, which had developed over millennia, took its name from Lake Goycha. As its name suggests, this region has long been the homeland of ancient Turkic tribes. History shows that Turkic tribes such as the Cimmerians, Scythians, and Sakas lived in these lands for thousands of years. Some information about this can be found in the epic "Kitabi-Dede Gorgud". The epic specifically describes the Goycha region as the homeland of the Oghuz Turks and mentions toponyms like Lake Goycha, Mount Aghlagan, and Ayghir Spring. Sources on Azerbaijani history also note that Lake Goycha and its region have, at various times, been part of states ruled by Turkic dynasties such as the Sajids, Salarids, Rawadids, the Seljuk Empire, the Eldiguzids, the Ilkhanids, the Garagoyunlu, and the Aq Qoyunlu dynasties. During the Safavid period, it was an administrative unit within the Chukhursad Baylarbaylik. However, after the Safavid-Ottoman war, it came under the rule of the Ottoman Empire as per the terms of the Treaty of Istanbul.

In the first period of 33 years of the 18th century, Lake Goycha and its region were initially part of the Chukhursad Baylarbaylik, which encompassed the provinces of Iravan, Nakhchivan, and Maku, and later became part of the Afshar Empire and, generally, an administrative unit of Azerbaijan. After the death of Nadir Shah in 1747, the Goycha region became part of the Iravan Khanate and was the largest region in the northern part of the khanate, both in terms of area and population. This is evident from the list compiled after the Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828, when the "Armenian Province" was established on the territory of the Iravan Khanate of Azerbaijan. The list included the names of 59 villages belonging to the Goycha region (Bashkend, Dalikdash, Kasaman, Aghgirag, Kosa Mammad, Ardanish, Yukhary Adyaman, Bighly Huseyn, Aghbulag, Zeynalaghali, Tokhluca, Ashaghy Adyaman, Golkendi, Rahmankend, Aghgala, Gizilchig (Abulkend), Gizilbulag, Gozaldara, Gishlaq, Kavar, Gul-Ali, Basarkechar, Pashakend, Deli Gardash, Alchali, Abdul Aghali, Tazakend, etc.) Relying on this, in the mid-19th century, Tsarist Russia created the Nor-Bayazit (New Bayazid) uyezd in the areas surrounding Lake Goycha, where the absolute majority of the population were Azerbaijanis. Administratively, the district was divided into four sections: Darachichak, Goycha, Gozaldara, and Mazra. This was another step in the planned effort to transfer Azerbaijani territories to Armenians. By creating this uyezd, Russia actually separated Lake Goycha and the northeastern part of its coastal areas from its southwestern region.

Although the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic worked to reclaim its historical lands, no positive outcome was achieved. On the contrary, the western part of the Goycha region, along with the Iravan and Etchmiadzin uyezds, was ceded to Armenia. The eastern part of the lake remained within the Republic

under the status of “Goycha district”. As a result, Lake Goycha continues to serve as a border between Azerbaijan and Armenia to this day.

According to historical sources, the 59 villages mentioned earlier, located around Lake Goycha, each had numerous historical material-cultural monuments belonging to ancient Turkic tribes, including Albanian architectural monuments. After Azerbaijanis were deported from these areas, many of these monuments were looted and destroyed by Armenians who settled there. One notable Albanian monastery complex was located on a peninsula in Lake Goycha. However, historical photographs reveal that the area where the monastery was located was originally an island (Fig. 2-3, 4). The photos also clearly show that both the island and the area surrounding Lake Goycha were once covered in dense forests. Now, however, the surroundings of the lake are barren rocky areas (Fig. 5-6).



Fig. 2–3. Views of the Alban monastery complex on Goycha Island from different angles. 1818



Fig. 4. Alban monastery complex on Goycha Island, 1869



Fig. 5-6

It seems that the Armenians who later settled here not only dismantled the architectural monuments for building materials, but also made extensive use of the local forest resources. As a result, evaporation from the lake increased, causing the water level to drop, and the island turned into a peninsula. Today, the monastery stands on a peninsula.

It is worth recalling that during the Albanian period, great importance was placed on the construction of monasteries. Princes endowed them with vast lands and wealth, leading to the accumulation of significant resources in the monasteries. This wealth facilitated the construction of numerous new buildings, as monasteries were not only religious, cultural, artistic, and educational centers but also played a crucial role in the political affairs of the country. Based on this, we can assert that the construction of the Goycha monastery complex was also funded by Albanian princes.

According to legend, in the 4th century, Saint Gregory destroyed a pagan temple in this area and built the Church of the Holy Resurrection and the Monastery of John the Baptist in its place. These structures were destroyed during an earthquake in the 10th century, and later a new three-apse domed church with the same name was constructed on the same site.

It is also worth recalling that some monasteries, churches, and even mosques in Karabakh (such as the Juma Mosque in Baku's Icherisheher) were built on the sites of previous Zoroastrian, pagan, and other religious worship areas, as these places were considered sacred. As we can see, the Albanians also adhered to this tradition at the Goycha monastery. Over time, new churches and auxiliary buildings were gradually constructed around the monastery, and both inner and outer defensive walls were erected to protect against foreign invaders. In this respect, the Goycha Monastery is reminiscent of other monasteries like Mahrza (17th century, Gadabay), Gandzasar (13th century, Kalbajar), Khudavang (12th–13th centuries, Kalbajar), Saint Eliseus (13th century, Aghdara), and Aghoghlan (5th–6th centuries, Lachin).

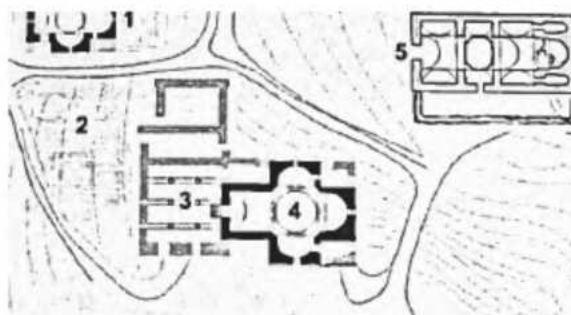


Fig. 7. Alban monastery complex on the Goycha Peninsula:

- 1. Single-nave cruciform church. 2. Remains of the religious school.*
- 3. Remains of the church porch. 4. Single-nave cruciform church. 5. Three-nave church*

The monastery complex was built in the Albanian architectural style, using well-polished, smooth tuff and raw basalt stones. Due to the dark color of these stones, the monastery complex appears black from a distance. For this reason, Armenians later referred to this ancient complex as the "Black Monastery" ("sev" meaning black and "vank" meaning monastery in Armenian).

In the 9th century, the Church of the Holy Apostles and the Saint Mary Church were built here.

As seen in the master plan, the monastery complex contains three churches (Fig. 7). Two of the churches have a cruciform plan and are single-nave structures. The other, which is relatively larger, has a rectangular plan and is a three-nave church. The bell tower of the churches is mounted on top of a polygonal drum, supported by pillars rising from the center of the worship hall, and the roof is pyramid-shaped. The general roof structure of the church is cruciform. This bell tower placement on the roof can also be applied to the three-nave church. In these features, the churches resemble the temples of Zayzid in Sheki, Gabizdere in Zaqatala, and many others in Karabakh.



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

In Church No. 5, the porch is located on the southern side of the building, with a door leading into the worship hall from this direction. In Church No. 4, however, the porch is on the western side. The gallery-style porch roof was supported by six columns. On the northern side of the porch, there was a chapel with a square-shaped plan. Only the foundations of both the chapel and the porch have survived to the present day. It is worth noting that it was customary for the altar in churches to be on the eastern side, and this rule was also followed in the Goycha Monastery complex. The two well-preserved churches in the monastery complex are triconch, meaning they have three apses. Although the two churches are similar in this respect, the second church differs from the first by having a door that opens to the south and a small porch in front of it. This porch and door appear to have been intended for specific individuals. A wooden door, once hung here and adorned with carved decorations, is now kept in the Armenian State History Museum (Fig. 9).

Interestingly, Armenian authors in Armenian and Russian-language websites admit that many material-cultural artifacts from the Goycha monastery complex are kept in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg (<https://overlandarmenia.com/ru/monastir-sevanavank>). It is even specifically noted that in 1931, churches around Lake Goycha were dismantled, and their stones were used to build a sanatorium in the city of Goycha (Sevan) (Fig. 8).

Overall, the Goycha monastery has been able to preserve the stylistic characteristics of Arran architecture.

It should be noted that, since Lake Goycha remains within the territory of present-day Armenia, Azerbaijani architects and archaeologists have been unable to carry out excavations or architectural studies in these areas. Taking advantage of this situation, Armenian “researchers” have dismantled monuments, using the materials for construction, displaced Albanian cross-stones, altered them, or sold them to foreign museums, and destroyed and looted mass graves. The Goycha monastery complex has also suffered similar destruction and “reconstruction” efforts (Fig. 10, 11, 12, 13).

These Armenian claims find confirmation in the differences observed in the masonry of the church walls within the monastery complex (Fig. 16).



Fig. 10



Fig. 11

Moreover, the foundation of a third church has survived to this day. Unfortunately, it is a tragic fact that the cross-stones embedded in the walls of this church and the surrounding Albanian gravestones have been collected in the monastery's cells, where reconstruction work has been carried out, and these artifacts are now presented to tourists as Armenian monuments (Fig. 14, 15, 16, 17).

It is further mentioned on those sites that, in the mid-1950s, the buildings of the Goycha monastery were completely rebuilt, with their historically valuable elements sent to museums and replaced by new replicas crafted by skilled hands. I believe no further commentary is needed here, as the Armenians themselves openly admit how they dismantled and looted Albanian monuments.

At this point, it is fitting to recall the words of National Leader Heydar Aliyev: "As a result of the deliberate ethnic cleansing and genocide policy carried out against Azerbaijanis in the Caucasus over the past two centuries, our people have been subjected to severe deprivation, national tragedy, and suffering. This inhumane policy, implemented step by step, led to the expulsion of Azerbaijanis from the territory now called Armenia – lands that they had lived on for thousands of years, their native historical-ethnic lands – where they were subjected to mass killings and massacres. Thousands of historical-cultural monuments and settlements belonging to our people were destroyed and left in ruins".



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17



Fig. 18. Pay attention to the masonry of the church walls on the right and left!

REFERENCES:

1. Aqreqator.az. <https://aqreqator.az> › medeni...
2. Münşi İsgəndər bəy. Dünyanı bəzəyən Abbasın tarixi (*History of Shah Abbas the Great*). II Kitab, s.1204.
3. <https://vienanmeri.livejournal.com>
4. <https://overlandarmenia.com/ru/monastir-sevanavank>
5. Zeynəddin bin Həmdullah Qəzvini. Zeyl-e tarix-e qozide ("Seçilmiş tarixə əlavə) (*Zeynaddin bin Hamdullah Ghazvini. Zeil-e Tarikh-e Gozideh ("Addendum to the Selected History")*) / Fars dilindən tərcümə, müqəddimə, qeydlər və göstəricilər M.D.Kazımov və V.Z.Piriyevindir. Bakı: Elm, 1990, s. 16, 18, 52.

Jafarova Elmira*Leading Research Associate of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of ANAS, PhD in History, Associate Professor
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2212-5344>***Khalilov Mubariz***Leading Research Associate of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of ANAS, PhD in History*

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN KHACHMAZ

Abstract. The Christian temple of Khachmaz is located in the Khachmaz district of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The monument belongs to the rectangular, single-nave type of Christian temple. The apse of the Khachmaz temple is rectangular in shape. Temples with such apses were characteristic of medieval Albanian Christian culture and were more typical of the 11th to 13th centuries, though they were also constructed in the 16th century. The construction of the temple involved the use of fired bricks with dimensions of 21x11x5 cm, 23x12x6 cm, 22x14x5 cm, 22x10x4 cm, and other sizes. It is known that rectangular fired bricks with a 1:2 ratio in their dimensions became widespread from the 19th century onwards, gradually replacing square fired bricks. Based on initial research, the authors concluded that the Christian temple of Khachmaz dates to the 18th–19th centuries.

Keywords: Khachmaz, temple, rectangular, Christians, Muslims, niche

The name of the Khachmaz settlement has been linked in scholarly literature to the name of the Hechmata tribe, which was part of the Albanian tribal union [Тревер, 1959, с.211]. The name of the Hechmata is mentioned for the first time in written historical sources in connection with the events of the year 337. It is believed that the Hechmata, who had adopted Christianity during the Albanian period, later assimilated into the Tat population.

In accordance with a document drafted in 1831 [Xotyanovski, 2008, s.53], the village of Khachmaz (Mushkur district) where the Christian temple of Khachmaz is located, was home to a group of 101 Armenian-Apostolic denomination adherents who spoke the Tat language, along with 13 Muslims. The church under study belongs to the rectangular, single-nave type of Christian temple and was constructed using rectangular fired bricks of various dimensions. The fact that the temple's floor is covered with debris and other waste has made it impossible to place test pits in the area.

Until the end of the 20th century, among the Christian inhabitants who lived here, one could find Turkish male names such as Mirgulu, Allahverdi, Baba, Aghasi, Dashdamir, Eyvaz, and others, as well as Turkish female names like Tamam, Arkinaz, Guljannat, Gyzkhanim, Banovsha, Nazlykhan, Nazan, Mingul, Garabirchak, and Gizyetar. An additional piece of evidence that confirms the Christian population of Khachmaz was not ethnically Armenian, but only belong to the Armenian-Apostolic denomination, is that during the massacres and plundering carried out by the Dashnak-Bolshevik forces in the Guba district in 1918, Khachmaz Station, as well as the Old and New Khachmaz were among the settlements affected. This was noted in the report by Extraordinary Investigation Commission member A. Novatsky.

The south and north walls of the Khachmaz temple (Fig. 1) have identical structures. A doorway is in the middle of the wall, and the top of these entrances is semi-circular in shape. The doorways are framed

with two protruding rectangular frames. The inner frame is lower in relief compared to the outer one, creating a two-tiered portal. The height of each of the south and north doors is 3.50 m, the width is 1.75 m, and the thickness is 1.45 m. Later, the doorway in the north wall was covered using fired bricks. Above the door, two adjacent rectangular window openings were constructed (Fig. 2). These window openings are surrounded by a single protruding rectangular frame. In fact, this frame is a continuation of the outer frame of the door. A row of fired bricks, arranged in a horizontal line and running across the protruding section between the windows and the door, divides this frame into two parts. Above each window opening, there is a raised arch-like protrusion, which serves as an architectural ornament and draws attention. Twin windows like these were commonly found in early medieval architectural monuments, with the Aghoghlanchay temple serving as a parallel example. The sections of the wall extending westward and eastward from the door have the same appearance. On both sides of the door and twin windows, three niche-like architectural decorations are located on the surface of the wall, positioned one above the other. The corners of the rectangular niches located on both sides of the twin windows are curved inward in an arch-like shape. Below these, at the level of the upper part of the door, there are rectangular niches on both sides, with their width longer than their height. Between each of these niches and the upper niche, along the entire width, a row of fired bricks is raised in a straight horizontal direction. Below the rectangular niches, on both sides of the door, there is another square-shaped niche. Inside the surface of these niches, matching their depth, are 9 small square protrusions arranged in three rows, with three in each row. These protrusions, placed equidistant from each other, are made up of three horizontally stacked fired bricks. Near the western and eastern corners of the south and north walls, there are four similarly designed sections, two in each area. Above each of these sections, there is a window, and below the window, a square-shaped niche, with a rectangular niche located beneath it. These windows have an elongated rectangular shape. Above each window, there is a small triangular tympanum made of fired bricks. Each of these windows, located near the western corner of the south and north walls, opens to the second floor of the corresponding auxiliary structures inside the interior. The analogous window located near the eastern corner of the south wall illuminates the sacristy, while the window near the eastern corner of the north wall lights up the prothesis. Between each such window and the niche below it, there is a horizontal, straight projection made of fired bricks. Inside the lower elongated rectangular niche, a rhombus-shaped ornament is raised in relief, matching the depth of the niche. One of these rhombus-shaped niches near the eastern corner of the south wall was later destroyed, and an additional second (lower) window was opened for the sacristy in its place. This window, with an arched top, has a height of 1.40 m, a width of 1.10 m, and a thickness of 1.15 m. The same situation is observed on the north wall, where an additional second (lower) window was also created for the prothesis. This window, which also has an arched top, measures 1.35 m in height, 1.14 m in width, and 0.65 m in thickness. In the middle of the west wall, there is a doorway with a semi-circular top, and above it, a window with an arched structure. The height of this entrance is 3.50 m, the width is 2.10 m, and the thickness is 1.10 m. The door is framed by a portal on the exterior. On both sides of the doorway, the structure is identical: an imitation of a rectangular window topped with a triangular tympanum, a rectangular niche in the middle, and a rhombus-patterned niche at the bottom. On the east wall of the temple, there are three adjacent rectangular window openings, each topped with a triangular tympanum. The middle window serves to illuminate the apse, while the side ones are architectural decorations, imitating windows. Below each window and window imitation, there are two corresponding niches placed one above the other. The area of the eastern wall where the windows and niches are located is recessed compared to the adjacent areas of the wall, where the window imitations and their corresponding niches are situated. The exterior surface of the temple's walls is encircled by a cornice made of three rows of fired bricks. This cornice runs along approximately the middle of the walls (between the two floors of the auxiliary structures) and is interrupted only at the doorways. The circular dome of the temple rests on an eight-ribbed drum (Fig. 3). On the surface of each rib, a rectangular window opening is framed within a rectangular raised border. Above each of the eight windows, a horizontal row of fired

bricks, matching the width of the windows, protrudes as a decorative element. In the center of the dome, there is a cavity for placing a cross.

Upon entering the temple from the south door, an arched niche can be observed on the right side, in the south wall. The dimensions of this niche are 1.15 m in height, 0.85 m in width, and 0.58 m in depth. The second niche is directly opposite the first, located 1.90 m to the east of the north door, in the north wall. This niche measures 1.30 m in height, 0.90 m in width, and 0.83 m in depth (Plan 1).

The pastophorion consists of two rectangular rooms (the sacristy and the prosthesis). The sacristy, also known as the diaconicon, is located in the corner between the eastern and southern walls of the temple. This room measures 3.30 m in length and 2.10 m in width. The entrance from the sacristy to the main hall of the temple is in its western wall. This doorway, with an arched shape, is 2.05 m in height, 1.15 m in width, and 1.24 m in thickness. A second arched doorway leads from the north wall of the sacristy to the apse. This entrance measures 2.35 m in height, 1 m in width, and 0.75 m in thickness.

The prosthesis is situated in the corner between the eastern and northern walls of the temple. The dimensions of this room are 3.30 m in length and 2.05 m in width. The arched doorway that opens to the main hall is located in the western wall of the prosthesis. This entrance is 2.25 m in height, 1.13 m in width, and 1.24 m in thickness. Unlike the sacristy, there is no doorway between the prosthesis and the apse.

A stepped, vertical protrusion has been constructed in the corner between the western wall of the sacristy (facing the hall) and the southern wall of the temple. A similar protrusion can be found in the corner between the western wall of the prosthesis (facing the hall) and the northern wall of the temple.

The altar apse, located between the prosthesis and the sacristy, is also rectangular in shape. It measures 4.55 m in length and 2.77 m in width. This room is illuminated by two windows positioned one above the other in the eastern wall. Several indicators suggest that the lower window was added later. In the northern wall of the apse, there are two arched niches placed one above the other. The lower niche measures 1.08 m in height, 0.95 m in width, and 0.50 m in depth. On the southern wall of the apse, above the door leading to the sacristy, there is another arched niche. It can be assumed that two niches, similar to those on the northern wall, originally existed on the southern wall, but the lower niche was replaced by the doorway to the sacristy.

Upon entering the temple through the western door, there is an auxiliary room on both the right and left sides. One of these rooms is located between the southern and western walls of the temple, while the other is between the northern and western walls. Since these rooms are two stories high, in fact, there are two auxiliary rooms on each side (Fig. 4). The rooms on the first floor are rectangular in shape. The distance between the rooms on the right and left, or in other words, the width of the corridor, is 2.70 m.

The interior of the room located between the southern and western walls of the temple measures 2.70 m in length from west to east and 2.05 m in width from south to north. In the western wall of this room, there is an arched niche with a height of 1.60 m, which runs along the entire length of the wall from south to north. The entrance to the room is in its northern wall, located 1.56 m from the northeast corner of this wall. This arched doorway measures 2.10 m in height, 1.30 m in width, and 0.85 m in thickness.

The room located between the northern and western walls of the temple, situated 3.95 m from the northern door, measures 2.60 m in length from west to east and 1.95 m in width from south to north. The entrance to this room is located in its southern wall, more precisely, 1.50 m from the southeast corner of this wall. The dimensions of this arched doorway (2.10x1.30x0.85 m) are identical to those of the entrance to the opposite room.

Stairs were constructed to ascend to the second floor of the auxiliary structure located at the corner of the southern and western walls. However, ascending to the second floor of the other structure located at the corner of the northern and western walls is impossible without additional equipment (such as a ladder), as no staircase was built there. It can be presumed that the room on the second floor of this auxiliary structure might have been used as a secret defensive shelter or a place to store highly valuable items. Each of the rooms on the second floor has a window on the northern and southern walls, directly opposite each

other. Apart from the two windows, each of the rooms on the second floor had another window in the eastern wall, facing the hall, but it was later covered with fired bricks (Plan 1).

The width of the temple's interior (from the northern wall to the southern wall) is 8.37 m, and its length (from the western door to the apse) is 12.65 m. Including the apse, the total length of the temple from the western to the eastern wall is 17.20 m.

In the construction of the temple, fired bricks of various sizes were used: 21x11x5 cm, 23x12x6 cm, 22x14x5 cm, 22x10x4 cm, and others. Based on these dimensions, these bricks can preliminarily be dated to the 18th–19th centuries. Rectangular fired bricks with a 1:2 ratio gradually became more widespread, replacing square bricks from the 19th century onwards [Xəlilov, Cəfərova, 2017, s.296]. The interior-facing surface of the temple's walls was plastered and whitewashed, unlike the exterior. After the surface of the dome, which faces the interior, was plastered, it was painted blue, representing the sky.

One of the distinguishing features of the Khachmaz temple is the rectangular shape of its apse, setting it apart from the Kilvar temple. Temples with such apses were characteristic of medieval Albanian Christian culture (examples include the Pipan, St. Eliseus, and Urakvang temples). In addition to the apse, a room was built in each of the four corners of the Khachmaz temple, giving the interior a cross-shaped appearance. Temples with a cross-shaped interior, featuring a room in each corner, were also found in Albanian Christian culture (examples include the Tatev, Khudavang, Gandzasar, Arzu Khatun, Kurmuk, Chudulu Bina, and Kaptavank temples). Such Albanian temples were more typical of the 11th–13th centuries, though some, like the Chudulu Bina temple, were built in the 16th century. The Khachmaz temple has three doors, a feature also found in several Albanian temples (Beshikdagh, Yeddikilse, Mazimgaray, Lekit, Kilsedagh, Mamrukh, and others). The utility structures located in the southwestern and northwestern corners of the temple were constructed with two stories. Two-story temples are rare examples and have been recorded within the area of Albanian Christian culture (such as the Gurjaani temple). Notable examples of Albanian Christian temples with two-story auxiliary structures include the Golakand (13th century), St. Mary (1211–1222), Arzu Khatun (1214), Gandzasar (1216–1238), Varag (1231) and other churches [Мамедова, 2004, с.41, 102, 106, 107, 119, 125; Халилов, 2016, s.72-73; Халилов, 2018, с.166].

In the future, after the interiors of both the Khachmaz and Kilvar temples are cleared, archaeological excavations to be carried out in these churches will allow for a more precise determination of their construction history.



Fig. 1. The southern view of the Khachmaz temple



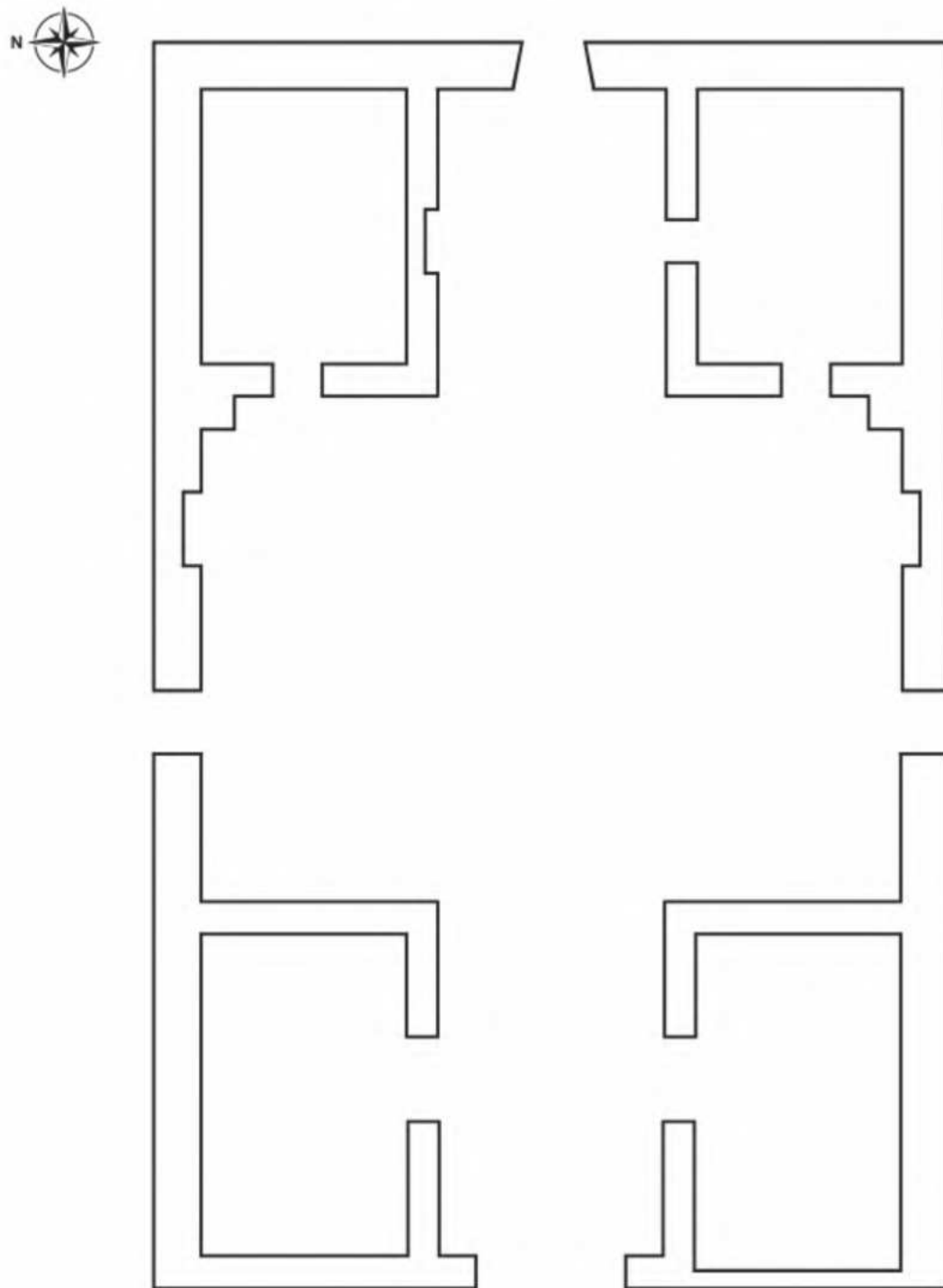
Fig. 2. The twin windows of the Khachmaz temple



Fig. 3. The interior view of the dome of the Khachmaz temple

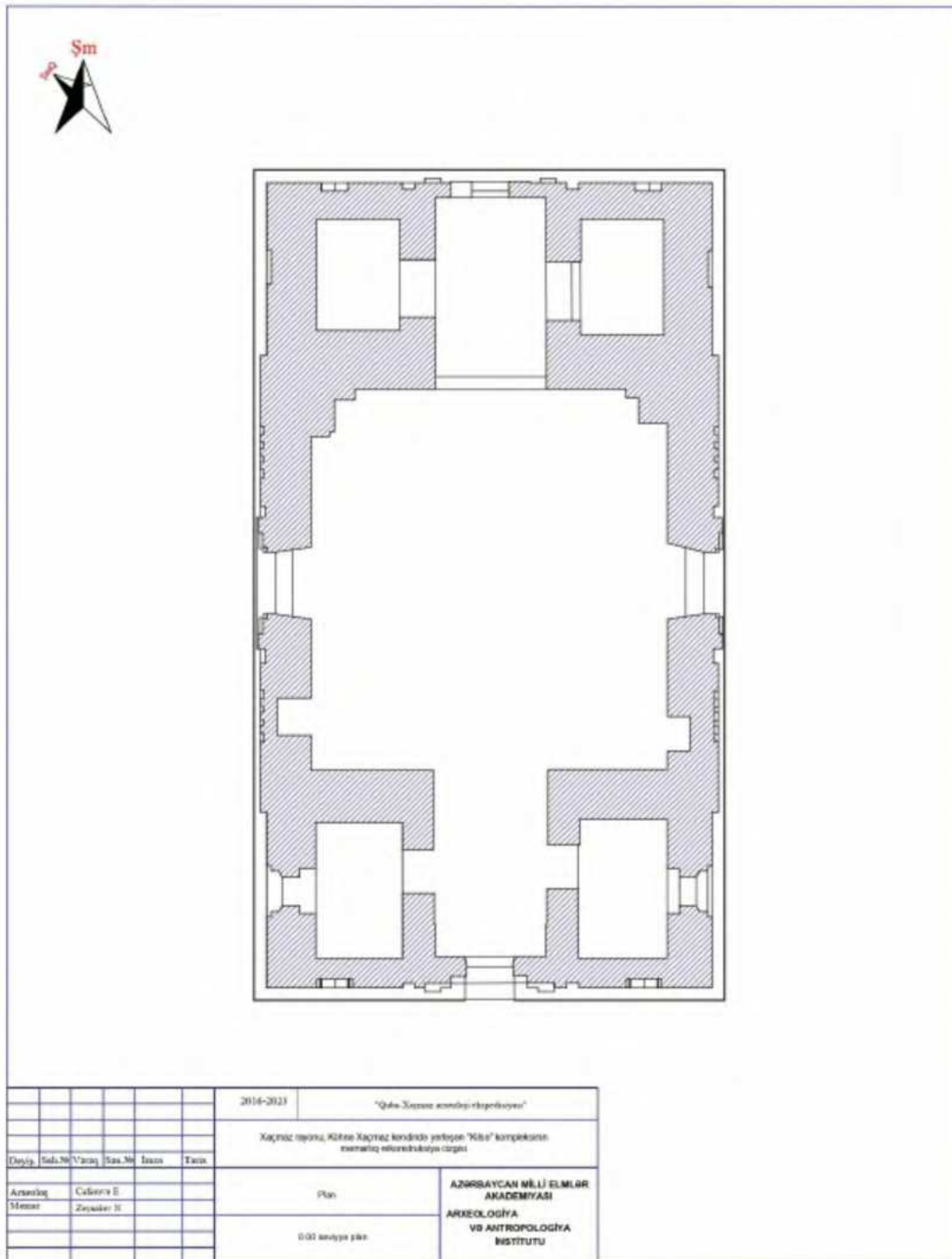


Fig. 4. The view of the two-story auxiliary rooms

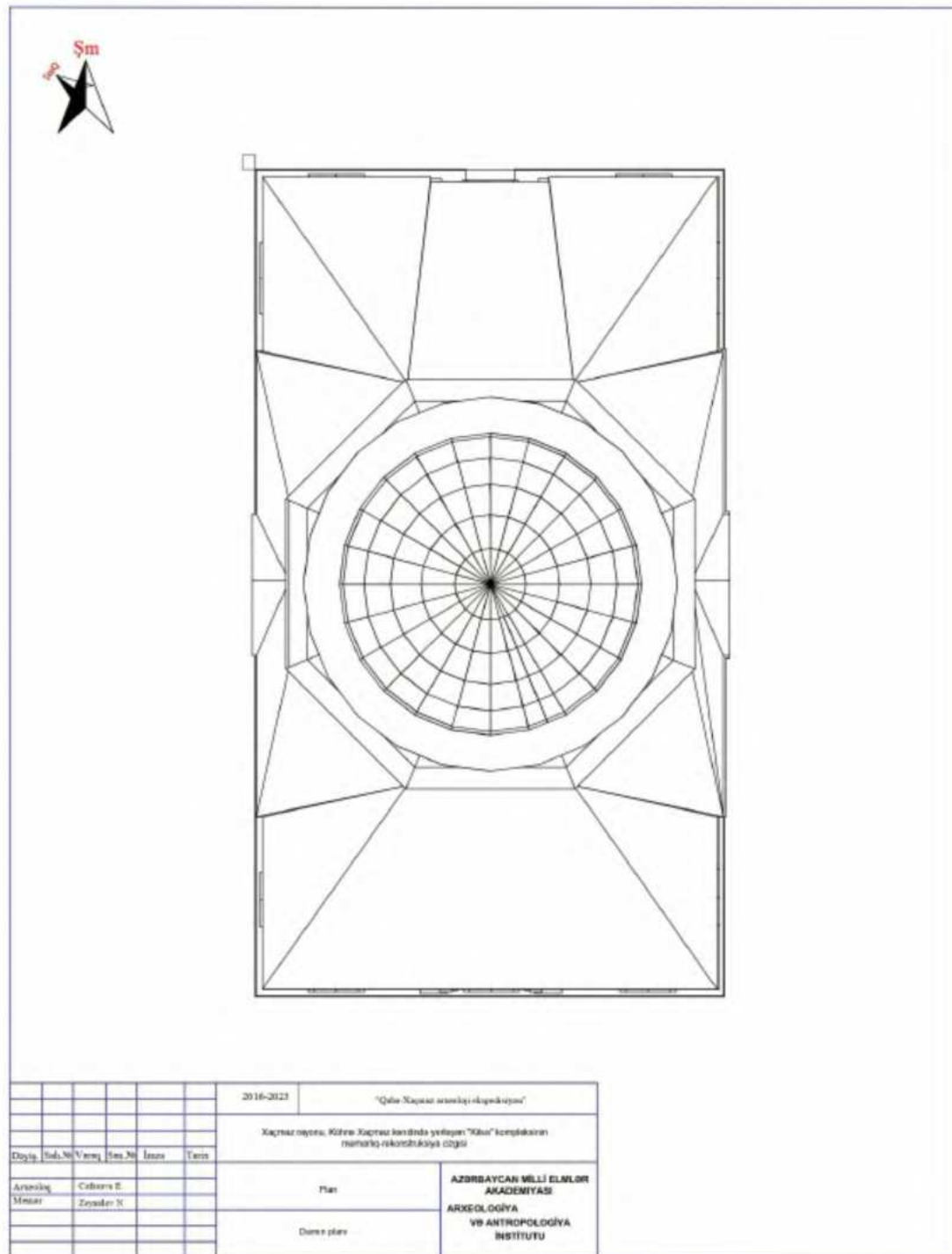


The scale: 1: 100

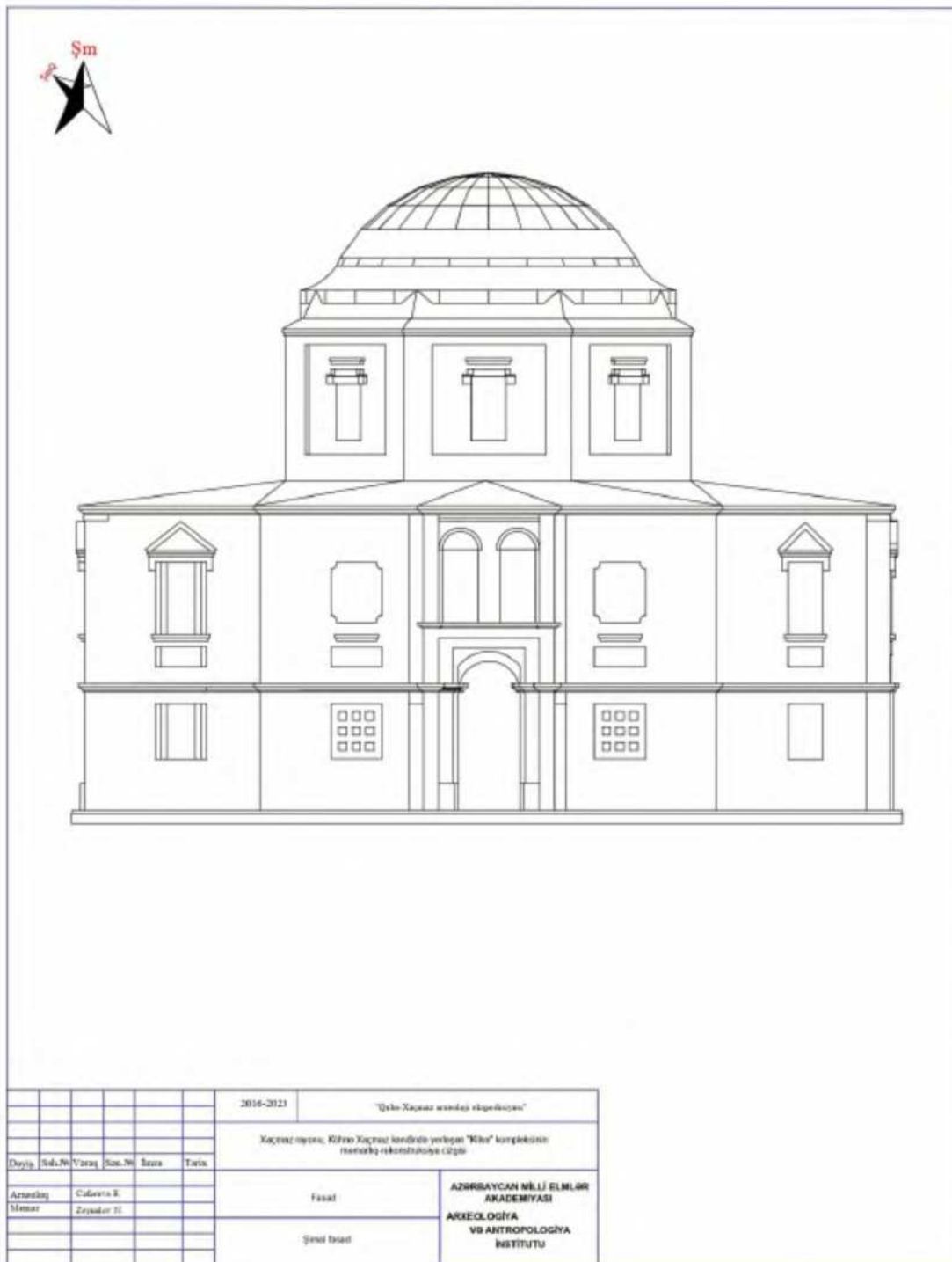
Plan 1. Khachmaz temple (M.J.Khalilov, E.B.Jafarova)



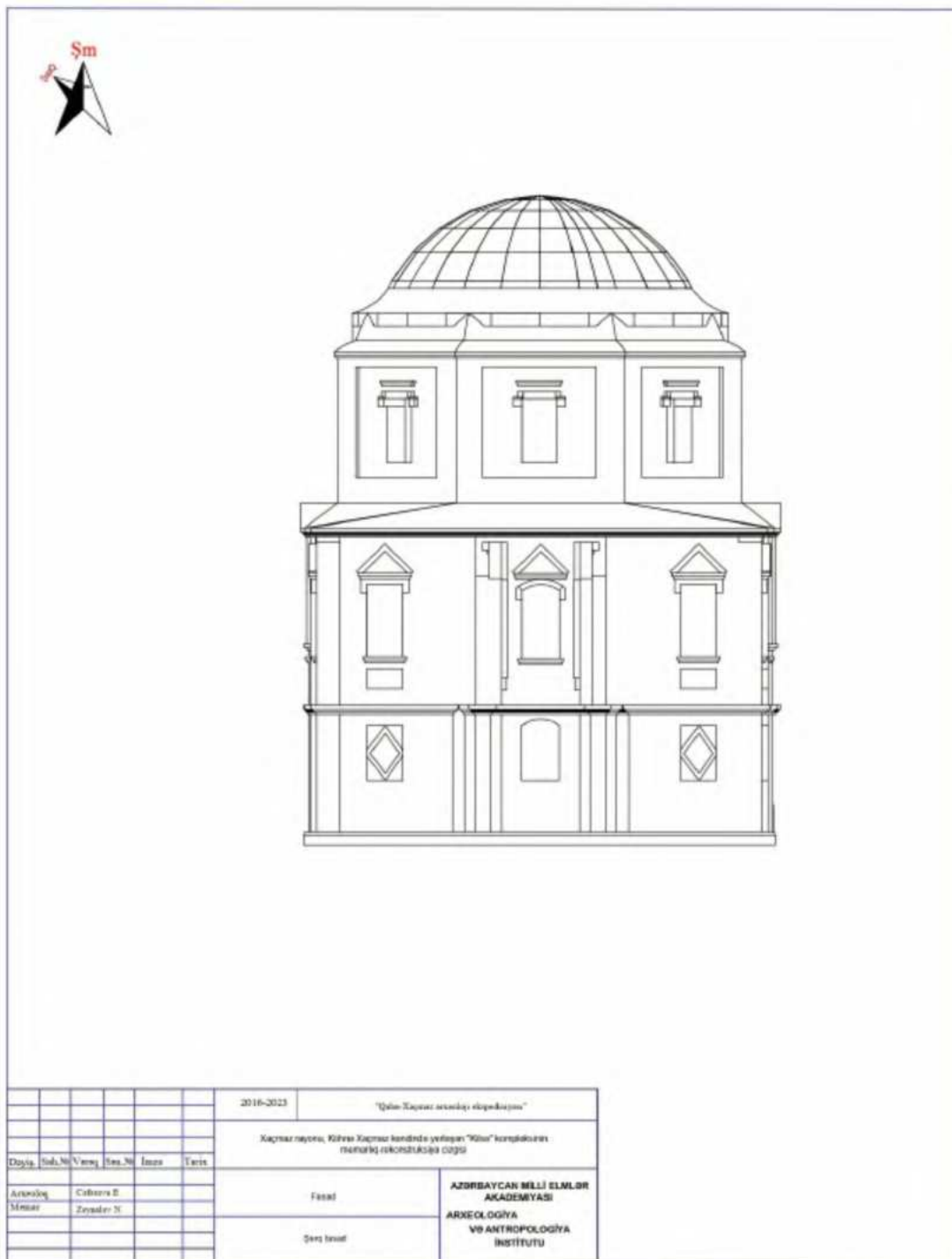
Plan 2. Architect N.Zeynalov



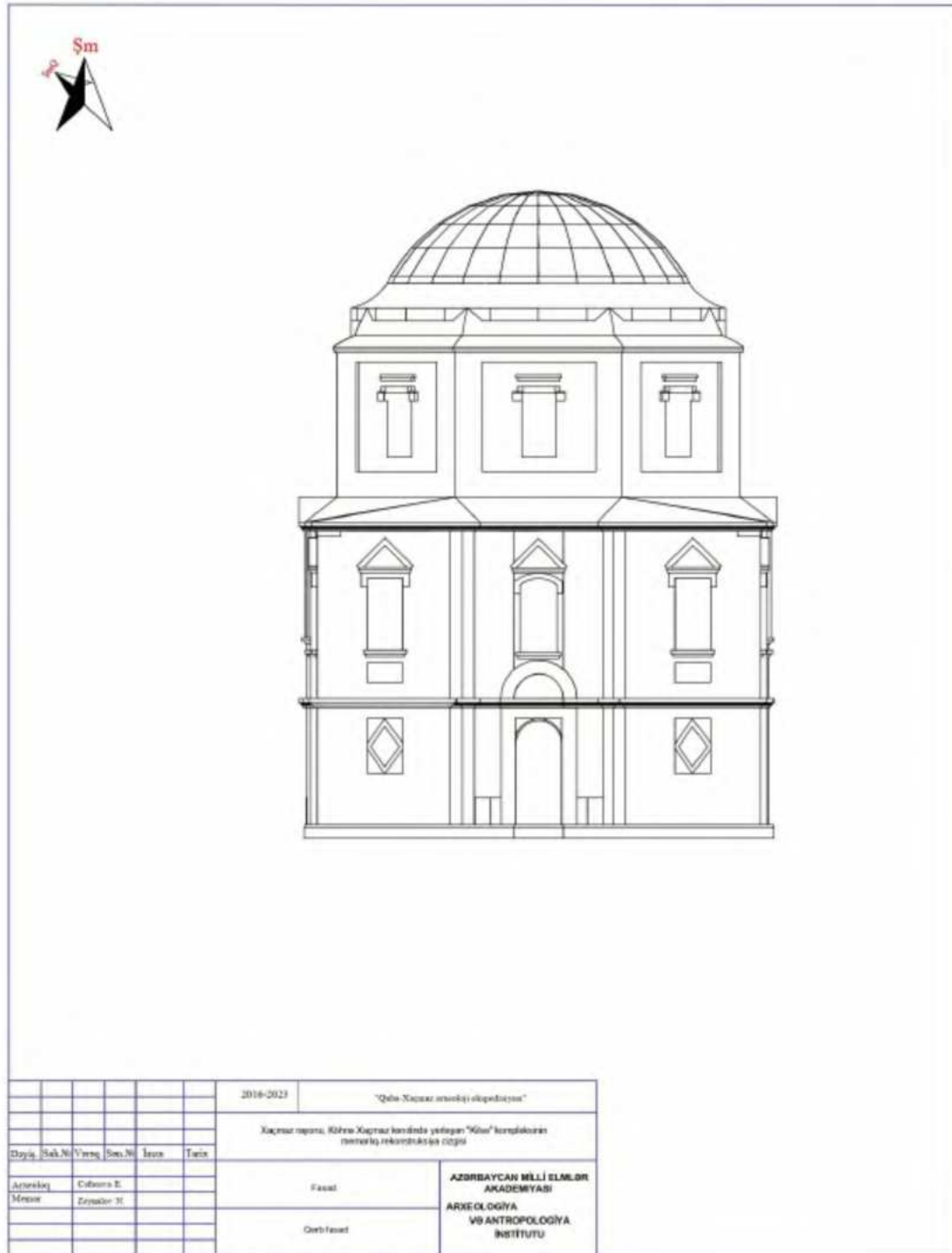
Plan 3. Dome. Architect N.Zeynalov



Plan 4. View of the northern facade. Architect N.Zeynalov



Plan 6. View of the eastern facade. Architect N.Zeynalov



Plan 7. View of the western facade. Architect N.Zeynalov

REFERENCES:

1. Xəlilov M.C., Cəfərova E.B. Quba, Şabran və Xaçmaz rayonlarında tədqiqatlar (*Research in the Guba, Shabran, and Khachmaz Districts*) // Azərbaycanca arxeoloji tədqiqatlar 2015-2016. Bakı, 2017, s.291-297.
2. Хотяновски. Quba əyalətinin kameral təsviri (*The Cameral Description of the Guba Region*). Bakı: "Sabah", 2008.
3. Мамедова Г.Г. Зодчество Кавказской Албании (*Architecture of Caucasian Albania*). Баку: Чашьюглу, 2004, 224 с.
4. Тревер К.В. Очерки по истории и культуре Кавказской Албании (*Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania*). М.-Л.: Ленинградское отделение Изд-ва Академии наук СССР, 1959, 392 с.
5. Халилов М.Дж. Христианские памятники Албании (Азербайджан) (*Christian Monuments of Albania (Azerbaijan)*) // Религии Центральной Азии и Азербайджана. Том IV. Христианство. Самарканд: МИЦАИ, 2018, с.157-227.
6. Халилов М.Дж. Церкви Урекванка (Нагорный Карабах) и Верхнего Чирюрта (Дагестан) (*Churches of Urakvang (Nagorno-Karabakh) and Upper Chiryurt (Dagestan)*) / "Qarabağın arxeoloji irsi" Beynəlxalq Elmi Konfransın materialları. Bakı, "Xəzər Universiteti" nəşriyyatı, 2016, s.72-73.

Jerzy Lubach
*Polish State Television (TVP),
 Director, Writer, Master of Arts (POLAND)*

ABOUT AZERBAIJAN IN LEHISTAN

In ancient times up to the Middle Ages, cartographers placed various exotic countries on the edges of their known world maps, mainly based on tales from ubiquitous merchants. However, in territories about which they had no information, they simply wrote in large letters, *"Hic sunt dracones"*, meaning "Here be dragons", sometimes with a corresponding illustration of the creature, and were satisfied with such "information".



An ancient map depicting the land "where dragons live" and the search for the "Lost Kingdom" – Caucasian Albania

The French precursor of surrealism, Alfred Jarry, in 1896 wrote the farce *"Ubu Roi"* (*"King Ubu"*), recognized as the beginning of the "theater of the absurd", whose action takes place, according to the author, *"in Poland, that is, nowhere"*. Regrettably, I must state that in the 21st century, for the majority of Poles, Azerbaijan remains an unknown land – *terra incognita* – that mythical fringe. It is for this reason that I titled my film about Caucasian Albania *"The Forgotten Kingdom"*, although thanks to the invaluable help of Marek Lech, a Polish scholar and expert on its history who has lived in Azerbaijan for many years, it was not difficult for me personally to find it on the map.

Once a powerful kingdom in Europe, Poland maintained relations even with very distant countries, as President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev noted during his first visit to Poland in 1997:

"This is the first visit of the President of Azerbaijan to Poland, and it is a historic event! But our peoples have maintained relations for many centuries. As early as 1472, political and trade relations were established between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Aq Qoyunlu".

In the mid-16th century, the name "Caucasus" did not sound abstract even to Sigismund II Augustus, King of *Lehistan*. Turkic peoples called Poland by the name of its legendary founder, Lech, evidence of which was a royal commission: wishing to decorate the walls of his famous and enormous Wawel Castle in Kraków with large carpets, the king turned not only to the Flemish city of Arras – renowned for its tapestries (from

which such tapestries are still called “arrases” in Poland) – but also to the equally famous weaving workshops in Karabakh, Shirvan, and Baku. The only country in the world that did not recognize the partitions of Poland in the 18th century was Türkiye, and during the annual reception of foreign diplomats, the Sultan’s herald would announce: “*Ambassador from Lehistan*”.



Arrases in the royal chambers of Wawel Castle

Unfortunately, nowadays few people know about all this except specialist historians, just as few are aware of the pioneering significance of the brilliant Polish engineer Witold Zglenicki in the discovery of oil on the Caspian shelf, the enormous role of Polish architects in the rapid development of Baku at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, or about the bold attempt to conclude a political-military alliance between the re-established Poland and Azerbaijan in 1918. During the Soviet period, Poland’s close contacts with this region diminished. Only when Lech Kaczyński became President of Poland in 2005 did he establish strong political and economic relations with Azerbaijan with the aim of supplying Poland with Caucasian oil and gas, as well as personal, friendly relations with President Ilham Aliyev.



Presidents Lech Kaczyński and Ilham Aliyev

After the death of President Lech Kaczyński, the emerging interest in Azerbaijan in Poland diminished, not without the influence of the strong Armenian lobby in our country, which for decades tried to instill in the predominantly Catholic population of Poland that bloodthirsty Azerbaijani Islamists were preparing to repeat against innocent Christian Armenians the genocide allegedly perpetrated 100 years earlier by the Turks, brothers of the Azerbaijanis by blood and faith. The situation changed for the better after

Pope John Paul II's visit to Azerbaijan in 2002, when Poles saw firsthand how warmly he was received by crowds – 95% of whom were Muslim. It was then, from television reports about the Pope's stay in this distant country, that Poles learned with surprise about the Udi people, living heirs of one of the world's earliest Christian countries – the mysterious Caucasian Albania!

After I visited Azerbaijan several times myself and personally witnessed the extraordinary tolerance of both the authorities and ordinary people towards Christianity, and learned about the seemingly paradoxical situation that the Christian heritage of Albania is preserved and restored in a Muslim country but destroyed in the supposedly Christian Armenia, I decided to dedicate my next film to this topic. In fact, in 2013 I made three films, also about the modern situation of Christians –Orthodox, Catholics, and Protestants – in Azerbaijan. But my main topic was Caucasian Albania, so I traveled with a camera to all significant ancient monuments and managed to film the world authority in this field, Professor Farida Mammadova. Unfortunately, I could not at that time show viewers the heart of the Albanian Patriarchate, the Gandzasar Monastery in the then-occupied territory of Karabakh, where the Armenians did not allow me to go.



*Director Lubach with Professor Farida Mammadova and Udi Zaur Gumburashvili
at an Albanian church*

All these films were shown multiple times on state television and are available on YouTube, where the film about Caucasian Albania is particularly successful. Since I am also a political commentator for the popular publication "Gazeta Polska", I often write about Azerbaijan there as well, because I constantly have to expose the false Armenian propaganda. It especially intensified during the liberation struggle for Karabakh, occupied for almost 30 years. The response from my viewers and readers has been very positive, and interest in Azerbaijani culture has greatly increased, also thanks to the actions of the former Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Poland, Hasan Hasanov, who facilitated the publication in Poland of many books on history and art, as well as literary classics. I personally had the honor to translate into Polish the famous "Dede Korkut" and "Koroghlu", which can now be found in every university library in Poland.

Four UN Security Council resolutions condemning the unlawful occupation of Karabakh by Armenia were also published in my translation. And all this had an effect when, in 2020, during the liberation of Karabakh, Polish state television began broadcasting reports from there, clearly inspired by Armenian propaganda. Protests from viewers and the very energetic actions of the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Azerbaijan in Poland, Nargiz Gurbanova, led the television to apologize and send a new film crew there, which covered the events objectively.

There are many things that connect Poland and Azerbaijan, and as a documentary filmmaker, I hope to visit your beautiful and hospitable country many more times with my camera, to deepen in Poland the knowledge about the great cultural contribution of Caucasian Albania to the world's Christian heritage. We should also tell about our common heroes, such as the Polish Tatar General Maciej Sulkiewicz, creator in 1918 of the army of independent Azerbaijan, executed by Russian Bolsheviks in 1920, and Colonel of the Polish Army Veli Bey Yadigar, who, after the Soviet takeover of Azerbaijan, found a second homeland in Poland and heroically defended it during World War II. Monuments to both have been erected in Warsaw.

In short, I strive for Poles to easily and without surprise find their European neighbor Azerbaijan and even Caucasian Albania on the modern map of the world, and for the territories where "here be dragons" to move as far away from our countries as possible.



*Unveiling of monuments to Colonel Veli Bey Yadigar
and General Maciej Sulkiewicz in Warsaw*

The publishing agreement is signed: 12.02.2025
Format: 70x100 1/34. Size: 235x300 mm.
Font: Arial, Calibri, MinionPro. Font size: 10-12pt.
Page number: 274. Offset printing.
Order №. 10052. Print run: 200 copies.



AZ1141, Baku, Sh. Mehdiyev Str., 133
Tel.: (+994 12) 596 17 12 / 13 / 14
Mob.: (+994 50) 532 12 22 / (+994 55) 213 22 73
E-mail: info@indigo.az