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XVII century Azerbaijani culture through the eyes of european travelers

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In the 17th century, Azerbaijan was remaining one of the most important cultural centers of the Near and Middle East. The ongoing Safavid-Ottoman wars at that time dealt a crushing blow to the cultural development of the people. Many famous Azerbaijani scientists were captivated and taken to Istanbul, and some were transferred to Qazvin and Isfahan. Only in the middle of the 17th century there was a certain revival in the development of science and education in Azerbaijan. There were various educational institutions in the cities of the country, which were the centers of crafts, trade and culture. In the Middle Ages, all educational institutions, including madrassas, neighbour schools, tekkehs, were, of course, religious in nature.

A careful analysis of the information provided by medieval historians and travelers leads to the conclusion that book printing was not only known in Azerbaijan in the middle of the 17th century, but even a printing press was brought here. The French traveler Chardin writes that the Safavid Empire, aware of the benefits of printing, was in favor of bringing it to Iran.

Generally, the history of Azerbaijan in the Middle Ages (as well as in the XVII century) had the character of a scientific chronicle. However, even the mere recording of real events served to develop the historical thinking of the people, to ensure the connection of inheritance. The expansion of folk art, the spread of cultural potential in the Near and Middle East was one of the features of the development of Azerbaijani culture in the 17th century. Unfavorable socio-economic and political processes had a negative impact on the development of culture in the country.

Keywords: *century, language, culture, monument, history, traveler, Europe, historian*

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Азербайджанська культура XVII століття очима європейських подорожніх

На початку XVI століття, внаслідок створення імперії Сефевідів в Азербайджані, культура людей також значно розвинулася, особливо завдяки посиленню централізованої політичної структури. «Мовна спільність, яка є одним із факторів національного етапу суспільної єдності», стала реальністю, яка тісно об'єднала азербайджанський народ у XVII столітті.

У XVII столітті Азербайджан залишався одним із найважливіших культурних центрів Близького та Близького Сходу. Поточні війни Сефевідів та Осману наносили нищівний удар по культурному розвитку народу. Багатьох відомих азербайджанських вчених було захоплено та вивезено до Стамбула, а деяких переведено в Казвін та Ісфахан. Лише в середині XVII століття в Азербайджані відбулося певне пожвавлення у розвитку науки та освіти. У містах країни існували різні навчальні заклади, які були центрами ремесел, торгівлі та культури. У середні віки всі навчальні заклади, включаючи медресе, сусідські школи, текії, мали, звичайно, релігійний характер.

Ретельний аналіз інформації, поданої середньовічними істориками та мандрівниками, призводить до висновку, що книгодрукування було відоме не лише в Азербайджані в середині XVII століття, але навіть сюди була завезена друкарський верстат. Французький мандрівник Шарден пише, що імперія Сефевідів, усвідомлюючи переваги друку, висловилися за те, щоб доставити його в Іран.

Загалом історія Азербайджану в середні віки (як і в XVII столітті) мала характер наукової хроніки. Однак навіть сам запис реальних подій слугував розвитку історичного мислення людей, забезпеченню зв'язку спадщини. Розширення народної творчості, поширення культурного потенціалу на Близькому та Близькому Сході було однією з особливостей розвитку азербайджанської культури в XVII столітті. Несприятливі соціально-економічні та політичні процеси негативно позначилися на розвитку культури в країні.

Ключові слова: *століття, мова, культура, пам'ятник, історія, мандрівник, Європа, історик*

Introduction

At the beginning of the 16th century, due to the establishment of the Safavid Empire of Azerbaijan, the culture of the people also developed significantly, especially due to the strengthening of the centralized political structure. "Language commonality, which is one of the factors of the national stage of public unity" was a reality that closely united the people of Azerbaijan in the 17th century. The Azerbaijani language took the most worthy place in the life of the Safavid Empire in the 17th century. Engelbert Kaempfer, a German scientist and traveler who visited Iran and Azerbaijan in 1685–1694, wrote: "Turkic speech, the mother language of the Safavid dynasty, is a widespread language in the Iran palace. This language is distinguished from the ordinary spoken language of the country's population. The Turkic language spread from the palace to the homes of high-ranking and influential people, and as a result, it became the language of everyone who wanted to gain the respect of the shah. Now the situation has reached the point that it is a sin for anyone whose head is valuable to his body not to know Turkic. Turkic language is easier than all Eastern languages. The magnificence and pronunciation of the Turkic language made it the only spoken language in the palace and the royal palace" (Onullahi, 1974, p. 85). The fact that the Turkic (Azerbaijani) language was the main means of communication not only in the palace, but also in the wider public environment was the result of an objective process, not the personal will of the Safavid rulers. "The easyness of of the Azerbaijani (Turkic) language than all Eastern languages" and the richness of this language objectively made it the principal means of communication. Iranian historian Nasrullah Falsafi showed that Azerbaijani (Turkic) language remained as the official language of the palace even after the Safavid dynasty left power (after the 30s of the XVIII century) (Эфендиев, 2007, с. 37) This is completely natural (Because the Afshars who came to power were also Azerbaijanis). The Azerbaijani language became a means of interstate correspondence. Most of the documents, discovered in the last 54 years and compiled in the Azerbaijani language, date back to the 17th century (Gasimov, 2008, p. 228).

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Discussion

In the XVII century, Azerbaijan was remaining one of the most important cultural centers of the Near and Middle East. The ongoing Safavid-Ottoman wars at that time dealt a crushing blow to the cultural development of the people. Many famous Azerbaijani scientists were captivated and taken to Istanbul, and some were transferred to Qazvin and Isfahan. Only in the middle of the XVII century there was a certain revival in the development of science and education in Azerbaijan. There were various educational institutions in the cities of the country, which were the centers of crafts, trade and culture. In the Middle Ages, all educational institutions, including madrassas, neighbourhood schools, tekkehs, were, of course, religious in nature (Mammadov, 1977, p. 140). European travelers provided extremely valuable information about the education system of Eastern countries, including Azerbaijan.

Enlightenment was also an important stage in the history of Azerbaijani socio-cultural thought. Thus, in the middle of the XVII century, there were 40 primary and 7 secondary schools in only Shamakhi. In Tabriz, there were 600 primary and 47 secondary schools (Mammadova, 2001, p. 67).

In the 16th and 17th centuries, education and schooling were in the hands of the clergy. In Azerbaijan, children's education was carried out in mosques, schools and madrassas organized in private homes. At the initial stage, children were taught in their mother language, and in the upper grades they used textbooks written in Persian and Arabic because there were no textbooks in Azerbaijani (Jafarov, 1988). Speaking about the textbooks used in madrassas, Tavernier wrote that most of the books were written by the famous Azerbaijani scientist, mathematician, astronomer, philosopher Khoja Nasreddin Tusi. The works of Aristotle, Archimedes and Galileo were also used in the education process. Mir-Khvand's "Revzat as-safa" was considered an authoritative textbook (Tavernier). In schools, students first learned the alphabet and then memorized the Qur'an. The Qur'an, which was in Arabic, could not be understood by the pupils and was mastered by mechanical memorization. Then small books, including excerpts from Ubayd Zakani's "Sichan and Pishik", Faridaddin Attar's "Nasihatname",

from Sadi's "Gulistan" and Hafiz's "Divan" were taught. Although theology was the main subject in madrassas, the teaching of social and natural sciences was also widely covered. The philosophical works of Aristotle, activities of Mir-Khvand, Nizami, Khagani, Shams Tabrizi, Avhadi Maragayi, Hafiz, Fuzuli's "Leyli and Majnun" and Jami's poems were also objects of study. Adam Olearius, who observed a number of madrassas in Azerbaijan (including the Shamakhi madrassa), noted that the teaching of astronomy, philosophy and algebra in the country was in line with European teaching (The history of Azerbaijani literature, 2009, p. 449).

There were many schools and madrasas in the cities of Azerbaijan. While in Ardabil, J. Streis was impressed by the richness of the city's libraries. He wrote: "We went to the library, it's a big building without even a single column. There the books were stacked on top of each other, and the covers of some of them were covered with pieces of gold and silver" (The history of Azerbaijan. In seven volumes, 2007, p. 305–306).

In his travelogue, A. Olearius mainly provided information about the clerical neighbourhood schools. However, at that time there were many madrasas and tekkehs in the territory of the Safavid state, including Azerbaijan. Evliya Chalabi, a famous Turkish traveler who visited Azerbaijan shortly after A. Olearius, provides clearer and more specific information about the country's education system comparing with A. Olearius. He wrote: There are about four madrassas in Tabriz with well-developed educational institutions, the largest of them is Shah Jahan Madrasa. All sciences are taught here and there are many famous teachers. He notes that there are 600 clerical schools and 160 tekkehs in Tabriz (Gasimov, 1997).

Unlike Adam Olearius, who gives information about the primary school, J.B. Tavernier talks extensively about the secondary education system, as if complementing A. Olearius's views on schools and madrassas. J.B. Tavernier's first journey approximately coincided with A. Olearius. Therefore, when comparing J.B. Tavernier's information with A. Olearius's facts about the school and madrasa system, the real picture becomes clearer. J.B. Tavernier writes that many students in the madrasa had the opportunity to study at the expense of the foundation. Each student brought carpets, rugs, and other means of subsistence to the madrasa, and was given a cell in the madrasa. They put their belongings in a cell and put them in order like their own. The

teachers who taught these students were called muderris. Students worked on themselves even outside the madrassa, learning from students in the upper class at the madrassa. J.B. Tavernier shows allegedly madrassa students were called muderris (The history of Azerbaijani literature, In seven volumes, 2009, p. 140).

Z. Hasanaliyev rightly notes that J.B. Tavernier's last thought is not correct. Because the muderrisses were the most knowledgeable people of the time. Also, the "muderris" was not a madrassa student, but a teacher. Since madrassas were higher education institutions, the teachers were higher school teachers. (Hasanaliyev, 2000, p. 113).

During the reign of Shah Abbas I, music developed significantly in the cities of Azerbaijan. Shah himself was both a composer and a musician. Iskandar beg Munshi called him a prominent man of the time in musicology and playing music. Some of the classifications composed by the Shah are widely spread among musicians. In the 17th century, official guests were greeted with music in Azerbaijani cities. When the German traveler Adam Olearius reached Ardabil, drums and tutek were played. In Shamakhi, the traveler is greeted by garranay, tutek and tambourine. Santur, kamancha, and drums were also sung at banquets. As the Shah marched from one place to another with his army, he was accompanied by musicians and khanendes. In 1586, when Hamza Mirza, the son of the Safavid ruler Sultan Muhammad, was in Kurakchay (near Ganja), many musicians and khanendes took part in the assembly. In Tabriz, Ganja and Shamakhi, the central cities of the provinces, there were always a group of musicians in the palaces of the beylerbeys. At the behest of Beylerbeys, they were playing, singing and dancing at the festivities. There were even theater groups in the khan's palaces in these cities. While in Yerevan in the middle of the 17th century, Chardin watched a three-act play at the Shah's palace and called it the Opera of the East. Chardin writes that Such theaters were also found in the central cities of the provinces where the beylerbeys lived. In the 16th and 17th centuries, ashugh music was widespread in Azerbaijani cities. Ashugh songs glorified the real life style and condition of the masses of the people. At that time, saz, kamancha, tanburf ud, garranay, barbat, tutek, qanon, daf and other musical instruments were used in Azerbaijani

cities. The names of musicians Huseyn Gushtari Bayani, zurna player Master Asadi Hafiz Sadig Bartaq, qanon player Mevlana Qasim, zurna player Master Gahmahammad, Master Yusif Movdud, Hafiz Laleyi Tabrizi, jalajal musical instrument player Hafiz Jalajal, Mirza Mahammad Kamanchei, Sultan Mohammad Kamanchei, Sultan Mahammad Changi are known from written sources of the time. Generally, during the Middle Ages, clergies hindered the development of music. However, the banning of music by one or another ruler did not prevent progress in the field of music in Azerbaijan in general. Azerbaijani music has also gained widespread popularity in the Near and Middle East. When the son of Saru Taqi came from Isfahan to Ardabil with a delegation of several people to meet Adam Olearius and his gang, Adam Olearius told Saru Taqi's son that he liked everything here, especially fascinated by Azerbaijani music. There are facts that show that Azerbaijanis were acquainted with European music in the 15th century (The history of Azerbaijan. In seven volumes. III volume, 2007, p. 305–306).

A careful analysis of the information provided by medieval historians and travelers leads to the conclusion that book printing was not only known in Azerbaijan in the middle of the 17th century, but even a printing press was brought here. The French traveler Chardin writes that the Safavid Empire, aware of the benefits of printing, was in favor of bringing it to Iran. But they did not have the opportunity to do so. Chardin writes that when I was in Iran in 1087 AH (1671 AD), the Shah's relatives asked me to help bring in printing workers from France and teach them this work. They consulted with Shah on this matter and obtained permission. But as soon as there was a talk of money, everything turned upside down (The history of Azerbaijan. In seven volumes. III volume, 2007, p. 406). Although the German orientalist Jan Rypka connects book publishing in Azerbaijan with the period of Abbas Mirza and attributes it to the beginning of the 19th century, also shows that in the first half of the 17th century, an attempt was made to publish books in the Safavid state (The history of Azerbaijan. In seven volumes. III volume, 2007, p. 323). The French jeweler Chevalier Ian Hardin (1643-1717) wrote in his book published in Amsterdam in 1735 that when he was at the shah palace, he was invited to invite printers from Europe. According to

Chevalier, Shah Abbas II, who had close ties with Europe, could have done so, but his death turned everything upside down. Suleiman, the successor of Shah Abbas II, was completely indifferent to science and culture and did not pay attention to this issue. The Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1675-1689) in his book of travel stories shows that during the reign of Shah Abbas II, a jeweler from Julfa brought Persian (based on the Arabic alphabet) fonts to Isfahan, the capital of the Safavid state. These fonts were carved in Europe and, after being brought to Isfahan, became obsolete due to negligence and neglect (Ширвани, 1974, с. 5).

German researcher Franz Babinger's book "Book printing in Istanbul in the XVIII century", published in 1919, also touched upon the issue of book printing in Azerbaijan. He claims that in the 17th century, book printing was known in the Safavid state, and attempts were made to print books in type. According to the Persian-language magazine "Talash", published in West Germany, in 1640, a printing press was brought to Isfahan and the first product was obtained like this. However, this attempt failed, and the printing of the book was stopped because it did not meet the tastes and demands of the people (Kazimi, 2008, p. 51).

Among the Azerbaijani historians of the 17th century, Iskandar Beg Munshi was the most distinguished for his professionalism. "Iskandar Beg Munshi differed from other historians of the Safavid period with a quality unique to historians of that period. He did not simply take information from the works of his predecessors. He sought to analyze this information, to classify it, and often to express his views on events. He often did not take into account the outward side of the events, focusing on revealing the content of these events. From this point of view, he was superior to historians who were content to state only the facts" (Afandiyev, 2007: 25).

Conclusion

The seventeenth century was not conducive to the development of Azerbaijani culture. From the end of the 16th century, the role of the Safavid state in the development of culture decreased. The relocation of the state capital to Isfahan in 1598 for objective (military-political) reasons, the removal of the main Azerbaijani provinces from the control of the Safavids, was the basis of this negative situation. The development of Azerbaijani culture became more democratic due to necessity and demand (that is, it relied on the initiative of the people).

Especially strong development of folklore, arts and crafts, a significant reduction in the Arabic-Persian content in the Azerbaijani literary language, the fact that architects, calligraphers, miniature artists, poets and many scientists continued to write in the classical conservative style, mainly abroad. New advances have been made in historical science. The 16th and 17th centuries, differing in the variety of conditions for the development of culture, can be considered the chronological boundaries of a single, contradictory Renaissance in the cultural and historical evolution of our people.

The main sign of the Renaissance is the "return" of the people with a long, uninterrupted, rich history and culture in the process of cultural and historical evolution, the renewal of the people in the process of ethnogenetic development, the "awakening" of important features of ancient heritage. Other features of the Renaissance (secular nature of cultural facts, humanism, etc.) are also characteristic of this cultural-historical event. Renaissance is a controversial process. The ancient heritage of the Turks, who played a leading role in the ethnogenetic evolution of the Azerbaijani people, began to revive in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. However, up to this time, the Turkish heritage (language, literary facts, folklore, etc.) did not fully realize its potential. If in the historical stage before the 16th century, Azerbaijani culture manifested itself in the Eastern, Muslim context, the Azerbaijani

Renaissance of the 16th-17th centuries was characterized by a return to the all-Turkic context.

One of the important features of the All-Turkish Renaissance was the process of stabilization of Turkish political unions in the Middle East in the XVI-XVII centuries, in the example of the Ottoman and Safavid states (the Sheibani and Mughal states of Turkish origin were also important political institutions of the time). The process of economic growth in the 16th century was a solid material basis for the Azerbaijani Renaissance. The economic growth was largely stimulated by the unification of the northern and southern provinces of Azerbaijan within a single, centralized Safavid state.

The strengthening of the process of economic integration ensured the development of Azerbaijani culture as a single system. In the XVI-XVII centuries, the Azerbaijani Renaissance was characterized by the dominant role of the Turkish language within the Safavid Empire. During this period, there was a turning point in the development of the Azerbaijani language and literary language, a new era began, and from the end of the 16th century, the process of differentiation in the Turkic languages began to become clear.

In the 17th century, a new period began in the evolution of Azerbaijani culture, which was a single, legitimate process. The renewed Azerbaijani cultural system from that period was based on the cultural values of all historical periods up to the 17th century.

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