

The Tangible and Cultural Heritage of Karabakh During the Middle Ages

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Abstract

Karabagh is one of the oldest human settlements in the world. Azikh and Taglar camps located in the Karabakh territory are the area where ancient people lived. This region is the residence of the Kur-Araz and Khojaly-Gadabey cultures that existed in the bronze and iron ages of the creators of the Guruchay culture of the Paleolithic period. The territory of Karabakh is rich in archaeological and terrestrial monuments. Here, the city of Barda, which was founded in the ancient times in the territory of Uti, was further developed during the Middle Ages and reflected a high urban planning culture. Thus, other cities of Karabakh - Agdam, Tartar, Aghdara, Kalbajar, Khojavand, Shusha, Khankendi, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Aghjabedi, Lachin, Gubadli, Zangilan, Jabrayil were built during the Middle Ages.

In the article, the monuments, buildings, cultural examples built in Karabakh, which is the historical territory of Azerbaijan during the Middle Ages, were investigated. In addition to archaeological monuments, many Christian monuments have been studied in the territory of Karabakh. The construction of these monuments started from the early Middle Ages and continued until the later stages of history. The research object of the article was Christian monuments in Karabakh during the Middle Ages, as well as the construction of Islamic monuments here after the Arab occupation, the distinguishing features of these examples. Throughout history, Armenia has tried to take possession of these samples of Azerbaijan's cultural heritage, Armenianized them and thus falsified the monuments of Karabakh and carried out repairs on them in violation of international law, changing a number of ornaments and making it its own. At the same time, during the Karabakh Khanate, the construction architecture of Azerbaijan reached its highest stage of development, and its culture developed further. The construction of the strategically important Bayat, Shahbulag and Shusha fortresses in the Karabakh Khanate and the transformation of Shusha into the center of Azerbaijani culture took place in that period.

The author came to the conclusion that despite the Armenianization of the Albanian monuments, the Turkish names on them and the fact that some of them belong to the Kipchak Turks have been proven many times. After the Armenians occupied the lands of Azerbaijan, in addition to falsifying the Albanian Christian monuments, they destroyed the examples of Muslim architecture and kept pigs in the mosques. After the victory in the Second Karabakh War, these historical architectural monuments were returned to their owners, the state of Azerbaijan carried out important restoration works in the direction of the restoration of those mosques and buildings, and obtained an opportunity for the protection of rich examples of material and cultural heritage at the international level.

Keywords: Karabakh, the Middle Ages, material and cultural heritage, Albanian Christian monuments, Islamic monuments

Матеріальна та культурна спадщина Карабаху за Середньовіччя

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Анотація

Карабах – одне з найдавніших поселень людей у світі. Сторожі Азіх і Таглар, розташовані на території Карабаху, є територією проживання стародавніх людей. Цей регіон є резиденцією Кур-Аразської і Ходжали-Гедабейської культур, що існували в епоху бронзи і заліза творців культури Гуручай часів палеоліту. Територія Карабаху багата археологічними і наземними пам'ятками. Тут місто Барда, яке було засноване в давні часи на території Уті, набуло подальшого розвитку в середньовіччі та відобразило високу культуру містобудування. Так, інші міста Карабаху – Агdam, Тартар, Агдара, Кельбаджар, Ходжаванд, Шуша, Ханкенді, Фізулі, Джебраїл, Агджабеді, Лачин, Губадлі, Зангілан, Джебраїл були побудовані в середні віки. У статті досліджено пам'ятники, будівлі, пам'ятники культури, побудовані в Карабасі, який є історичною територією Азербайджану в період середньовіччя. Крім археологічних пам'яток, на території Карабаху досліджено багато християнських пам'яток. Будівництво цих пам'яток почалося з раннього середньовіччя і тривало до пізніших етапів історії.

Об'єктом дослідження статті були християнські пам'ятники в Карабасі в період середньовіччя, а також будівництво тут ісламських пам'яток після арабської окупації, відмінні риси цих прикладів. Протягом всієї історії Вірменія намагалася заволодіти цими зразками культурної спадщини Азербайджану, вірменізувала їх і таким чином фальсифікувала пам'ятники Карабаху і проводила їх ремонт всупереч міжнародному праву, змінивши ряд орнаментів і зробивши їх своїми. У той же час в період Карабаського ханства будівельна архітектура Азербайджану досягла найвищого ступеня розвитку, а його культура розвивалася далі. У цей період відбулося будівництво стратегічно важливих фортець Баят, Шахбулаг і Шуша в Карабаському ханстві і перетворення Шуші в центр азербайджанської культури.

Автор дійшов висновку, що незважаючи на вірменізацію албанських пам'яток, наявність на них турецьких імен і приналежність деяких з них туркам-кипчакам неодноразово доведені. Після окупації азербайджанських земель вірмени, окрім фальсифікації албанських християнських пам'яток, знищували зразки мусульманської архітектури та тримали свиней у мечетях. Після перемоги у Другій Карабаській війні ці пам'ятки історичної архітектури були повернуті власникам, держава Азербайджан провела важливі реставраційні роботи в напрямку відновлення цих мечетей і будівель і отримала можливість охорони багатих прикладів матеріальної та культурної спадщини на міжнародному рівні.

Ключові слова: Карабах, Середньовіччя, матеріальна та культурна спадщина, албанські християнські пам'ятки, ісламські пам'ятки

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Introduction.

Karabagh is one of the oldest human settlements in the world. Azikh and Taglar camps located in the Karabakh territory are the area where ancient people lived. This area is the residence of the Kur-Araz and Khojaly-Gadabey cultures, which existed in the bronze and iron ages of the creators of the Guruchay culture of the Paleolithic period. The territory of Karabakh is rich in archaeological and terrestrial monuments. Here, the city of Barda, which was founded in the ancient times in the territory of Uti, was further developed during the Middle Ages and reflected a high urban planning culture. So, other cities of Karabakh - Agdam, Tartar, Aghdara, Kalbajar, Khojavand, Shusha, Khankendi, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Aghjabedi, Lachin, Gubadli, Zangilan, Jabrayil were built during the Middle Ages (Hajiyev, 2010, pp. 6, 17).

In addition to archaeological monuments, many surfaces Christian monuments have been studied in the territory of Karabakh. The construction of these monuments started from the early Middle Ages and continued until the later stages of history. Despite the groundless claims of Armenians, it has been proven many times that these monuments are of Albanian origin and have nothing to do with Armenians. A large number of mosques and minarets were built in the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan during the Muslim era.

Discussion.

Above-ground Christian monuments of the medieval period of Karabakh were found in Barda, Aghjabedi, Agdam, Fuzuli, Aghdara, Lachin and Kalbajar areas. The most famous of these sources are the temples of Gandzasar, Amaras and Elysey. Let's not look at the Armenians' claims to the tangible and cultural heritage of Azerbaijan, the study of the teeth and jawbones of the ancient people who lived in the mountainous part of Karabakh shows that there is no ethnic connection between the people who lived there historically and the current Armenians. As a result of the analysis, it has been proven that the ancient inhabitants of Karabakh are the ancestors of the current Azerbaijanis, and the claims of Armenians to the cultural heritage in the territory of Karabakh are groundless. The only evidence they put forward regarding the fact that the Karabakh monuments belong to Armenians are the inscriptions on these monuments. However, this situation cannot be sufficient to prove the ethnic belonging of those monuments, because Albania was under the rule of the Arshaki dynasty in the 1st-6th centuries, and the Mehrani dynasty until the beginning of the 7th-8th centuries. In that period, the Albanian script and the Albanian-Arran language were used. There was no need or necessity for the Armenian language here. The Armenian inscriptions on the monuments were traces left for the purpose of forgery. (Hajiyev, 2010, p. 22)

A number of Armenian historians tried for a long time to describe all Albanian Christian monuments as Armenian monuments, and tried to prove that the territories between the Kura and Araz rivers and the cultural heritage there

belong to Armenians. With that, Armenians implemented the policy of Armenianization of Albanian monuments in Karabakh territory at different levels. An example of the policy of Armenianization of the material and cultural heritage of Karabakh is the illegal excavations carried out in the Amaras temple complex. The main goal of the archaeological excavations conducted by the Armenian illegal expedition in the Amaras temple complex, which was one of the religious centers of Albania, at the junction of plain and mountainous Karabakh, near Sos village of Khojavend region, was to acquire the Albanian Christian heritage and make it their own. (Medieval archaeological monuments, 2021)

"Sovme's are considered the most massive form of Albanian Christian architecture. "Sovme's are small chapels on the sides of caravan routes and are also memorial buildings. As a rule, the most complex buildings were in monasteries. According to estimates, there were more than 30 monasteries in Albania in the early Middle Ages. Some of these monasteries were in the territory of Karabakh. (Hajiyev, 2010, pp. 27-29)

The most important feature that characterizes Albanian religious architectural monuments, especially monasteries and temples, is that their interior space has a four-arched composition. This leads to a cross-shaped plan structure. Research shows that the first use of the cross-domed composition of temples belongs to Azerbaijani architecture. The roots of this composition belong to the 7th century. (Afshar, 2021, pp. 185-186) After the adoption of Christianity in Albania in the 4th century, buildings - Albanian Christian religious monuments - were built in the type of Christian architecture and architectural style that characterized the building culture of the 4th-7th centuries in the Karabakh territory.

Built in the 9th century, the Agoglan monastery complex is built of solid basalt stone and occupies a special place among the monuments of Albanian Christian architecture due to its skillful structural solution. Located in the Agdara region of Karabakh and founded in the 5th century, the complex of the Holy Elisay Temple was built on the top of a high mountain, 2000 meters above sea level, and surrounded by fortress walls.

The famous Gandzasar monastery, built on the mountain on the left bank of the Khachin River in the village of Vangli, Kalbajar region, is one of the most prominent monuments of the Christian architecture of Caucasian Albania. The monastery, which was the residence of Albanian Christians for a long time, was named Ganjasar in the sense of the main treasure of religion. (Bayramli, 2020)

Along with the Gandzasar monastery located in Vangli village of Kalbajar region, another famous monument - Khudaveng monastery stands out among the thirteenth century monuments. The Khotaveng or Khudaveng monastery complex, located on the left bank of the Tartarchay, was the religious center of the Albanian principality of Khachin. The residence of the Albanian

bishop and the religious education center functioned in the complex. The main church built by the Albanian prince differs from the churches of the neighboring nations due to its architectural features. The historical monument, the monument complex belonging to the Albanian Christian architecture, located in Gozlu village of Kalbajar, was built in 1224. This monument complex consists of a church, a narthex, a sanctuary and other buildings. (Karabakh – the cradle of our culture, 2020)

Thus, the monuments in Ashagi and Yukhari Karabakh, which are part of Caucasian Albania, were built both before Islam in Azerbaijan, that is, in the 7th century, and in the renaissance period in the 12th-13th centuries. One of the oldest monuments is the tomb built in 1272 in Shikhabali village in Fuzuli. This mausoleum is covered with an octagonal dome. Agoglan monastery complex (9th century), Amaras monastery complex (4th-9th-12th centuries), Holy Elysey Temple complex (5th-14th centuries) and Gandzasar monastery (1216-1240) in Lachin region restored by (Alizadeh, & Naciye, 2020, p. 2585) Khudafar's bridges are one of the famous monuments located in Jabrayil region. The 13th century traveler Hamdullah Qazvini gives interesting information about Khudafar's bridges in his work "Nuzhat al-gulub". The author writes that the bridge near Zangilan on the Araz River was built by Bark ibn Abdallah, one of the close friends of the Prophet Muhammad, in the 15th year of Hijri (636). That is why it is called "Khudaferin", that is, "created by God" bridge. Diya al-Mulk Nakhchivani built the fifteen-span bridge near the Karkar shopping center for charity. (What monuments are there in Karabakh, 2021) In the mountainous part of Karabakh, in the territory of the current Khojaly region, there are the Albanian temple (905), the round temple of 1356-1357, the Askeran fortress and walls of the 18th century, and the examples of the Khojaly-Gadabay culture of the 13th-7th centuries BC. The church belonging to Albania (8th century) and the Khojaly tomb (17th century) built in the Middle Ages have been preserved. Numerous material and cultural monuments in the territory of Aghdam in Lower Karabakh belong to ancient times. At the same time, the tombs of the Karabakh khans are located in the place called Imarat in Aghdam. (Huseynov, 2018, pp. 161-163)

All cultural findings, inscriptions, historical buildings in Karabakh indicate the rich heritage of the Azerbaijani people and have nothing to do with Armenians. Samples of material culture, numismatic evidence discovered during archaeological research in Khankendi, Aghdara, Khojavand, Shusha of Yukhari Karabakh, Barda, Tartar, Aghdam, Aghjabedi, Fuzuli, Beylagan, Lachin and Kalbajar of Ashagi Karabakh reflect the ancient material culture, ethno-cultural characteristics of Karabakh, socio-economic level of the population, and living conditions.

In Karabakh, religion also played a role in the Armenians taking ownership of the ancient cultural heritage belonging to the Azerbaijani people. After the

spread of Islam in Azerbaijan, the Arabs donated the local Albanian temples to the Armenians, who used them as churches and made them their own.

The Christian period monuments of Karabakh are the most subject to appropriation. The main reason for this was that the symbols and indications of the Christian religion on such monuments, as well as stone and mural paintings, were Armenianized and history was falsified. The Georgian historian A. Chavchavadze fully reflected the facts of the appropriation of the monuments of the Christian era of Azerbaijan by the Armenians in his work "Armenians and Blood Weeping Stones". He wrote that the Armenians artificially Gregorianized the aboriginal Albanians and called the lands of Azerbaijan, where they once took refuge, "the country of Hay" - Eastern Armenia. However, researchers show that even the monuments of the Christian era do not correspond to the Armenian religion (Gregorianism), nor to the Armenian culture and origin. Historical-archaeological and architectural study of Albanian-Christian monuments in the territories of Azerbaijan helps to clarify many features of Christianity. Another reason why Albanian monuments were appropriated by Armenians during the Christian era was the abolition of the Albanian Apostolic Church in 1836 and its subjugation to the Armenian Gregorian Church. With this, the Albanian religious leadership was transferred to Echmiadzin. In later times, Armenians Armenianized all Azerbaijani toponyms in Armenia, and falsified the historical monuments, temples, fortresses, and material culture samples there and described them as Armenian cultural heritage. They continued their falsification policy even after the occupation of Karabakh. (Bayramli, 2020)

The existing monuments and construction remain in the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, architectural examples created in the Albanian Christian and later Muslim Eastern type allow us to trace the relationship and development sequence of the building culture, architecture and art types of that period. Various construction remains discovered during the archaeological excavations in Karabakh - stone column bases, capitals, tiles, etc. allow us to understand the construction culture of the early Middle Ages. In that period, the constructions were made in a circular shape, inherited from the ancient Parthian type, and in a rectangular shape according to the Roman tradition. The examples of the material heritage of the Karabakh territory of Azerbaijan were further developed during the Karabakh Khanate. Bayat, Shahbulag (Tarnakut), Panahabad (Shusha) fortresses were built in Karabakh in the second half of the 18th century, and bazaar, caravanserai, mosque, bath, etc. were built in those fortresses. During that period, mansions, Panahali Khana and domes belonging to his descendants were built in Agdam. Beautiful and typical examples of wall patterns were created in the interiors of residential houses and public buildings in Shusha, the center of the Karabakh Khanate. (Hajiyev, 2023)

Azerbaijan's cultural heritage was at its highest stage during the Karabakh Khanate, in the example of the city of Shusha in the 18th century. During that period, Shusha, the center of the khanate, became the cultural center of Karabakh. (Hajiyev, 2021) All types of Eastern Christian architecture existed in Albania. The Albanian cross in Karabakh has signs that include signs of pre-Christian beliefs and understanding of the universe. All his compositions are reflected as a symbol of the connection between the sky and the earth, the sun, light and fertility. During the period when the Shirvan-Absheron, Nakhchivan-Maraga schools, which reflected the main directions of architecture in the XI-XII centuries, were widespread, the Arran (Karabakh) school of architecture determined the further development of medieval Azerbaijani architecture. The fields of architecture and urban planning, decorative and applied arts began to develop, and the number of epigraphic monuments increased. More than 2,000 different historical and cultural monuments, most of which belong to the Muslim era, have been registered in the Karabakh zone. Among them are residential houses, public buildings, as well as religious buildings and places of pilgrimage. The cities of Karabakh – Aghdara, Kalbajar, Khojavand, Shusha, Khankendi, Tartar, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Agjabedi, Lachin, Gubadli, Zangilan were built during the Muslim era. The national-spiritual and ideological way of thinking of the people has found its artistic reflection in the construction culture of these cities. New national-ideological features are more visible in the interior of houses and administrative buildings. This is confirmed by architectural examples built in the Middle Ages throughout Azerbaijan, as well as in Karabakh.

Different types of cultural monuments have been registered in the territory of Karabakh, most of which are epigraphic monuments. In Shusha, Aghdam, Barda, Fuzuli, Zangilan, Jabrayil, Lachin, Kalbajar regions of Azerbaijan, a large number of constructions, graves, etc. epigraphic monuments were recorded and studied. In the Fuzuli region, the tomb of Sheikh Yaqub (XII century), Goch Ahmadli Juma mosque, Haji Alasgar mosque, tombs of Mir Ali (XIV century) in the village of Ashaghi Veysalli and the tombs of Ahmadallar village (XIV century), Sheikh Ibrahim tomb (XVII century), Ahmed Sultan tomb, Jalal tomb, Juma Mosque in Horadiz village, Askeran Castle in the mountainous part of Karabakh, "Giz Galasi" in Jabrayil district, tomb in Shikhlar village of Jabrayil (1308), 12-cornered tomb near Khachin-Darbend village in Aghdam, Juma Mosque of Aghdam (1870), tombs, Abdal- Bath building in Gulabli village (beginning of 20th century), Shahbulag mosque of Agdam, 12-arched bridge over the Tartar river in Barda city (XIV century), "Barda" and "Akhsadan Baba" tombs (XIV century), double minaret built by Saffkhan Karabagi of Karbalai in Barda city "Imamzade" mosque

complex (1868), "Bahman Mirza" tomb, octagonal tomb in Shusha city, Panah Khan fortress, Natavan's house, Mamayi mosque, Mashadi Shukur Mirsiyab oglu's caravanserai with a mosque, Julfalar mosque, Haji Yusifli mosque, Saatli mosque, Yukhari Govharaga mosque, Ashagi Govharaga Mosque (19th century), Khan's house, gymnasium building, Karasaqgal tomb in Lachin area, Soltan Baba's tomb, Sheikh Ahmed's tomb, Sari ashug's tomb (15th century), tombs in Jijimli village, "Ushag galasi" in Guşchu village, "Boyuk bulag" monument (XV century), Hamza Sultan palace (1761) are the most valuable examples of material culture in the history of Azerbaijan (Karabakh monuments, 2023).

Conclusions.

As a result of the research, several conclusions have been made. The presence of different religions in the territory of Karabakh has had a great impact on the social life of human society. As everywhere in Azerbaijan, the presence of Christianity and Islam in Karabakh and the replacement of one by the other has shown itself in the construction culture. Many Albanian Christian monuments have been built in Karabakh territory (Amaras, the mountainous part of Karabakh, Govurgala in Aghdam, Khotavang in Kalbajar, Agoghlan in Lachin) and in other parts of Albania (Gum village in Qakh district, Amidli village in Gabala district, Mingachevir). The adoption of Islam marked the beginning of a new phase in Albania. A large number of mosques and minarets were built in the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan during the Muslim era. At the same time, Christian churches and other religious temples are also preserved here.

Armenians tried to make the tangible and cultural heritage of Karabakh their own. Armenians presented the Albanian monuments in the Azerbaijani territories they occupied as Armenian churches and claimed that all the monuments of the Albanian era in the mountainous part of Karabakh are Armenian churches. However, even in the time of the USSR, there was only one Armenian church in this area, and this church served all the Armenians living here. After the Second Karabakh War, the tangible and cultural heritage of Karabakh was freed from occupation and returned to its owners. There are ample opportunities to prove that these material and cultural heritage samples belong to Azerbaijan. In Karabakh, several Albanian churches of the 4th-16th centuries, reflecting Albanian architecture, have survived to our time. Agoghlan monastery in Lachin district, Khudaveng (Dadiveng) complex of Kalbajar, St. Elisey temple complex in Aghdara district, Gandzasar monastery are the historical heritage of Caucasian Albania, which were the first Christian state of the South Caucasus, united under the flag of the Turkish and Caucasian noble people and played an important role in the formation of the ethnogenesis of the Azerbaijani Turks.

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