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ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE OF KARABAKH AND EASTERN ZANGEZUR

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Abstract. Architectural monuments of Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur located in the southwestern part of Azerbaijan as an integral part of the architectural heritage of the country had permanently been the subject of study in the 20th century. Some monuments were studied in the context of historical development of Azerbaijani architecture as examples of various architectural types and were included in the periodization and classification of medieval architecture. However, there is a need for a deeper study of rich architectural heritage of these regions, which are closely related to each other from geographic, historical and economic points of viewbased on its common roots, peculiarities and characteristic features, common historical development. Of great interest is the study of the history of the formation and development of architecture, identification of common sources and traditions, links and connections with the architecture of other parts of Azerbaijan precisely in the Karabakh-Zangezur region. The general catastrophe that befell the architectural and cultural heritage of the region as a whole due to the Armenian occupation over the past 30 years has predetermined the need and urgency for the creation of a scientific basis for its restoration and protection
This article talks about the historical and current state of the monuments of Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur, examines various aspects of the historical development of the investigated area associated with the formation of Azerbaijan culture at different historical stages.
Keywords: architecture of Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur, Azerbaijani architecture, deliberation of the Azerbaijan lands, restoration of the architecture

QARABAĞIN VƏ ŞƏRQİ ZƏNGƏZURUN MEMARLIQ İRSİ

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Annotasiya. Azərbaycanın cənub-qərb hissəsində yerləşən Qarabağ və Şərqi Zəngəzur bölgələrinin memarlıq abidələri ölkənin memarlıq irsinin ayrılmaz hissəsi olaraq XX əsrdə aparılan elmi-tədqiqatlara cəlb edilmiş və elmi ədəbiyyatda öz əksini tapmışlar. Bu tədqiqatlarda ayrı-ayrı abidələr müxtəlif memarlıq tiplərinin nümunələri kimi Azərbaycan memarlığının tarixi inkişafı kontekstində tədqiq edilib və orta əsr memarlığının dövrləşdirilməsinə və təsnifatına daxil edilmişlər. Bununla yanaşı coğrafi, tarixi və iqtisadi cəhətlərdən bir-biri ilə sıx bağlı olan bu bölgələrin zəngin memarlıq irsinin daha dərindən tədqiq edilməsinə, onun ümumi köklərinin, cəhətlərinin və səciyyəvi xüsusiyyətlərinin müəyyən edilməsinə, tarixi inkişaf yoluna ümumi elmi yanaşmaya ehtiyac var. Məhz Qarabağ-Zəngəzur bölgəsinin (bundan sonra bölgə) ərazisi çərçivəsində memarlığın formalaşması və inkişafı tarixinin öyrənilməsi, ümumi mənbələrin və ənənələrin üzə çıxarılması, Azərbaycanın digər hissələrinin memarlığı ilə əlaqələrinin və bağlılığının müəyyənləşdirilməsi böyük maraq doğurur. Bölgənin memarlıq və bütövlükdə mədəni irsinin son 30 ildə erməni işğalı nəticəsində yaşadığı ümumi fəlakət, onun bərpası və qorunması üçün elmi əsasın yaradılması zərurəti bu yanaşmanın aktuallığını bir daha əsaslandırır.
Məqalədə Azərbaycan mədəniyyətinin ayrılmaz hissəsi olan Qarabağ və Şərqi Zəngəzurun memarlıq irsi .araşdırılır, abidələrinin hazırkı vəziyyəti təhlil edilir.
Açar sözlər: Qarabağ və Şərqi Zəngəzur memarlığı, Azərbaycan memarlığı, Azərbaycan torpaqlarının müzakirəsi, memarlığın bərpası

Architectural monuments of Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur located in the southwestern part of Azerbaijan as an integral part of the architectural heritage of the country had permanently been the subject of study in the 20th century. Some monuments were studied in the context of historical development of Azerbaijani architecture as examples of various architectural types and were included in the periodization and classification of medieval architecture. However, there is a need for a deeper study of rich architectural heritage of these regions, which are closely related to each other from geographic, historical and economic points of viewbased on its common roots, peculiarities and characteristic features, common historical development. Of great interest is the study of the history of the formation and development of architecture, identification of common sources and traditions, links and connections with the architecture of other parts of Azerbaijan precisely in the Karabakh-Zangezur region. The general catastrophe that befell the architectural and cultural heritage of the region as a whole due to the Armenian occupation over the past 30 years has predetermined the need and urgency for the creation of a scientific basis for its restoration and protection.

Figure 1. Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur

There are two opposing views on the history of the Albanian architecture in Karabakh. One of them, the pro-Armenian approach which is based on the concept of the Armenianization of the history and cultural heritage of these lands under the leadership of the Gregorian Church. Owing to the fact that in antiquity and the early Middle Ages Caucasian Albania as an independent state covered the entire territory of Northern Azerbaijan, Armenian and pro-Armenian researchers have argued in scientific literature that its right-bank territories are a remote eastern province of so-called Greater Armenia. In fact, this is a continuation of the centuries-long struggle of the Armenian Church to subjugate and enslave the Albanian Apostolic Church from the time of early Christianity.

The second scientific view is based on objective approach to the history and culture of the South Caucasus as developed in the works of a number of Soviet scientists, as well as in the research of Azerbaijani scientists of the second half of the 20th century.Researches of scientists proved that Caucasian Albania is the state with more than 1100- year history, the territory of which, including Karabakh and Zangezur as Albanian principalities were included in all historically existed states in the territory of Azerbaijan. The antiquity and originality of the Albanian culture and architecture werereflected in a number of studies. The scientific view of Albanian history and cultural heritage as an integral part of the historical and cultural heritage of our people has caused severe dissatisfaction among Armenian scholars causing their serious opposition. Armenian activities aimed at falsification of our history intensified afterthe 1970s. At this time, books were published on the Armenian heritage

of Karabakh, Nakhchivan and other regions of Azerbaijan, and many samples of Albanian culture were taken out of Azerbaijan due to the fact that the borders between the two Republics were open. An example of this is the Upper Cross stollen from Hamshiveng [Mammadova G., 2004].

During the Karabakh war, initiated by Armenia in the early 1990s to reclaim Azerbaijani lands, there was an active policy of Armenianisation of the Albanian heritage and the erasure of any traces of Muslim-Turkic heritage from these lands. The war and the subsequent 27-year occupation period caused enormous damage to the rich and confessionally diverse architectural heritage of Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur. The policy of destruction and Armenianisation of Albanian heritage pursued against the Islamic heritage of Azerbaijan during the occupation led to the destruction of the most monuments by the Armenian invaders. Destruction of towns and villages led to the destruction of hundreds of historical, architectural and cultural monuments. Some of these monuments are in a semi-submerged state, threatened with complete disappearance. As a result of illegal restoration the Albanian Christian monuments werefalsified, and their historical and aesthetic value damaged. Restoration work over the region's monuments and measures to eliminate the consequences of the war and occupation must be based on extensive scientific research to fully comply with modern restoration laws. The forthcoming major activities in the restoration of our heritage are directed to enhancing the relevance and scientific and practical significance of the subject.

Figure 2 a,b. Results of armenian agression during occupation

The history of Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur has preserved examples of human work and creativity since ancient times and brought them up to date. Beginning from Azykh cave where on the territory of Khojavand region in the foothills of mountains and plains the remains of man who lived in Ashelian period, were found. Numerous ancient settlements werediscovered on these lands. The results of the archaeological research laid the foundation for scientific views on the general history of the ancient period. The reseasrchinto of preserved Uzerliktepe [Agdam], Kamiltepe [Agjabedi], Garakopaktepe [Fuzuli], Ilanlitepe [Agdam] and other widely recognized archaeological monuments allows us to trace economic and cultural life, construction activities and traditions of ancient people, which once again proves that Karabakh is one of the most ancient cultural centres.

It ought to be noted that the historical evidence of large Temple land situated in Karabakh in the 1st millennium B.C. which was owned by the high priest in Amaras, once again proves the significance of the region, its highly developed economic and cultural life. Karabakh and Zangezur were a part of Caucasian Albania for over a thousand years. From the 1st century the kings of the country were from Massaget Arshakid-Aranshah dynasty;since the 7th century they were substituted for the Mehrani dynasty. During the Middle Ages Karabakh was the central region of Albania and after 551 the capital city of Barda, located here, became the capital of the country.

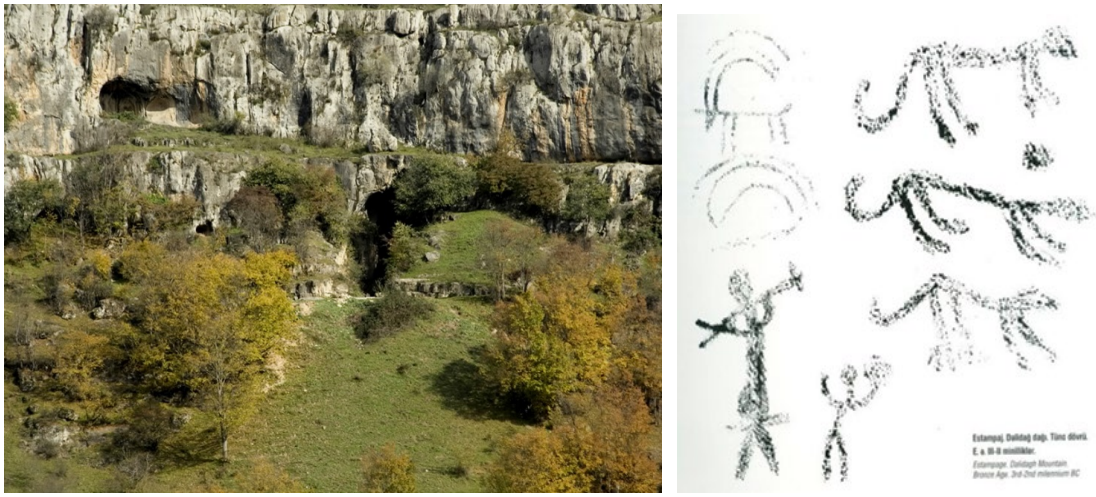

Figure 3.a,b. Azykh cave

In the first century AD, Saint Thaddeus [Tadeusz] and then the apostle Elysee [Elisha] began to preach Christianity in Albania. Gradually the new doctrine began to spread in other parts of the country, although the first Albanian church, founded by Elisha, was located in the village of Kish on the left bank of the river Kura. In 314, Christianity was declared a state religion by the Albanian king Unayr, and the church was granted considerable privileges. The Albanian kings and the Apostolic Church gradually began to expand church building in the country. Churches and temples began to be built in the provinces of the country, including Karabakh and Zangezur. According to Musa Kalankatly [Kalankatuyskiy], the Albanian king Momin III Vachagan, who seriously fought against paganism and fire worship and paid special attention to religious construction, built churches "according to the number of days in a year".

Among architectural monuments built in Karabakh and surrounding territories in early Middle Ages three tier basilicas attract the most attention. One of these, the church located in Amaras, long known as a religious centre, has retained its original plan despite repeated demolitions and alterations. Located on the banks of the river Agoglan in the Lachin region, the temple, which dates back to the 6th century, is one of the oldest examples of three-tier basilicas widespread in the Caucasus. The first temples of monastic complexes Khudaveng [Kelbajar], St.Elisha [Agdara] and Yurakvang [Terter] were built in the 5-7th centuries. They were mostly single-nave basilicas and small temples with a sacral cover.

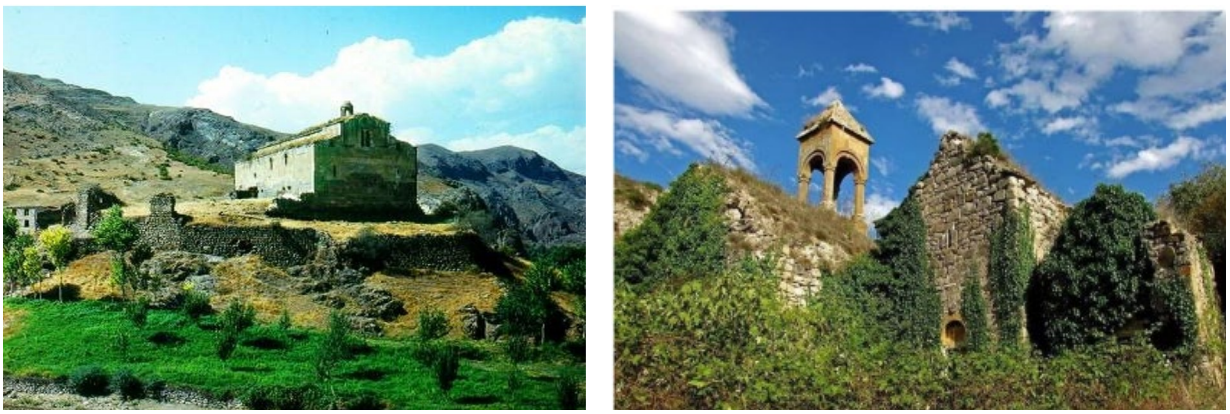

Figure 4. Churches and monasteries

The three-aisled basilicas discovered during archaeological excavations in Barda and Tazakend and a single-aisled temple in the Sofulu village of Agdam indicate that more basilicas were built in Karabakh in the early Middle Ages. And the four-apsed round temple in Mehrani village proves its use in the Albanian architecture in the compositions of the central dome.

According to Albanian historian Musa Kalankatly, the strengthening of Christianity and the expansion of religious construction in the country occurred during the reign of the Albanian ruler Javanshir. The author of the "History of Albania" proudly describes the prowess and exploits of Javanshir as a ruler and military leader: 'Javanshir made a name for himself in the Iranian war [wars against the Arabs] and returned... The ruler donned his clothes and ascended the throne... Without joining the eish-ishrath, he went about the business of his country all day long. He led the tribes of the Caucasus, living as savages, to the path of truth. Thus he was absolute ruler right up to the borders of Iberia, its gates and its glittering river Araz' [Kalankatuyskiy].

In the sixties of the 6th century Javanshir accepted the vassalage of the Caliphate and to this end went twice to meet the Caliph Muawiya. The Caliph forgave the Albanian ruler his authority over the principality of Syunik and made significant concessions without affecting the internal independence of his country. The far-sighted Javanshir succeeded in preserving his country's independence by his wise policy. However, after the death of Javanshir, the Caliphate gradually began to suppress the internal independence of Albania. In 705, Muhammad ibn Marwan took Albanian ruler Sheruya and his entourage to the Caliphate capital of Sham [Damascus], and executed them. This put an end to the independence of Caucasian Albania from the Arab Caliphate.

Despite the policy pursued by the Albanian kings, in the early Middle Ages only a part of the population converted to Christianity. The other part remained faithful to their former religious beliefs. As a result, a number of traditions and beliefs inherent in paganism and fire worship had taken root in Albanian Christianity. The influence of this religious diversity influenced the Albanian culture and architecture even in the developed period of the Middle Ages [Axundov D.,1986]

Religions and their followers who unconditionally accepted the uniformity and greatness of God and the sacred religious books sent down by God [Koran, Bible, Torah, psalms] were respected.Other religions and sects that did not have 'sacred books' [for example, fire-worship, idolatry, etc.] and those who worshipped them, were pressured and persecuted. Albanian Christians who had not converted to Islam had to pay, in addition to tribute, a tax called *kizya*. The new religion spread relatively quickly in Southern Azerbaijan, Mugan, Mil, on the Caspian coast, along the rivers Kura and Araz, especially in the cities where paganism was more prevalent. In the mountains and foothills, where Christianity was stable, particularly in the villages with strong resistance to Islam ["The History of Azerbaijan", 2005].

In the centuries-long struggle for dominance of Albanian and Armenian Gregorian churches, the Armenians also attempted to avail from the Arab domination. They subdued the Albanian church for some time after they betrayed the pro-Byzantine Albanian Catholicos Nerses Bakur to the Arabs. Gregorian churchmen destroyed the literary monuments collected in Albanian religious centres.

I. P. Petrushevski, an outstanding Orientalist, considering the Christian Church in Albania as an instrument of Armenization of the country, comes to a scientifically correct conclusion: "Neither Arsah nor other areas and regions, whose population was composed of Armenized Albanians, now Armenians, had ever belonged to the centre of the Armenian culture" [The history of Azerbaijan, 2005]. In regions where the population remained faithful to Christianity, including the Nagorno-Karabakh and Zangezur regions, the building of churches and monasteries continued in subsequent centuries. The weakening of the power of the Arab Caliphate in the 9th century led to the strengthening of local Albanian princes, who, having obtained vassal status, were able to continue their domination of their small territories. The records that came to us from Arabic-speaking historians give some idea of the construction activities and urbanisation of the time.

During the Arab Caliphate some of the world's trade routes changed their direction. When Arabs changed the direction of the main trade routes of the Byzantines through the Black Sea to the east - towards the Caspian Sea, life in Azerbaijani towns revived significantly. Barda was a crossroads for the Arabs on all trade routes in the forefront of the Caucasus and a centre of transit trade with the north. Arab historian Ibn Khavgal wrote: "Barda is the mother city of Arran [capital] and the best of these places. The city is very large. It had a Persian face, somewhat new... After Ray and Isfahan, between Iraq and Tabaristan, there is no better place than the position it occupies and the income it brings to the treasury... ["The History of Azerbaijan", 2005].

Barda, situated in the plain part of Karabakh, was noted for its richness and beauty. Arab authors informed about famous juma mosque, palaces, baths and covered markets, city water pipes and barns. "History of the Albanians" also reports that there is a Christian head temple in the town of Barda next to the juma mosque. Sources inform that there were many beautiful dwellings in Barda, their columns made of brick and decorated with wood ["The History of Azerbaijan",2005]. Unfortunately, samples of architecture of that period have hardly come down to our time.

In the 9th-11th centuries the Albanian principalities were a part of feudal states of Azerbaijan. Feudal internecine wars not only slowed down the country's development, including construction activity, but also weakened its general defensive power against foreign attacks. The 11th-12th centuries saw a flowering of urban culture in Azerbaijan, as elsewhere in West Asia. Architecture of that time, which was called Renaissance of the East, reached us with different types of monuments. Widespread were fortifications, civil buildings, religious buildings - mosques, mausoleums, khanagahs and caravanserais. Numerous sepulchres - a large group of monuments of mediaeval architecture - were built on the graves of state and religious figures.In the 30s of the 12th century, the state of Atabeks emerged in Azerbaijan. The founder of the Atabek state of Azerbaijan, one of the great states of the Near and Middle East, was Shamsaddin Eldaniz, an intelligent diplomat and visionary statesman of his time.

The Seljuk and Atabek periods were characterised by the development of towns in Azerbaijan. Architectural monuments of this period show high professionalism of masters and architects. Karabakh and Zangezur, like the whole country, were going through the period of construction activity and architectural development.Bridges built in Zangezur at Khudafarin passing over the Araz river provide full information about the scale and quality of medieval engineering construction. The time of construction of the first bridge, 200 m. long with fifteen spans, built of river stone with lime mortar, dates back to the 12th century. Some distance from this bridge in the upper part of the river, there is a second, eleventh bridge constructed in the 13th century. The Khudafern bridges built in the 12th and 13th centuries played an important role in linking Northern Azerbaijan, including Karabakh and Zangezur, with the south throughout the centuries.

Economic and cultural development, expansion of trade between the countries and the spread of Islam gave impetus for the creation of schools of architecture in Azerbaijan. Nakhchivan, Barda, Ganja, Derbent, Tabriz and other cities developed and created magnificent architectural works. The significance of Ajami Abubakr, the founder of Nakhchivan school of architecture and the greatest architect of the Renaissance, went far beyond the borders of Nakhchivan and Azerbaijan.

In the mountainous regions of Karabakh, Christian Albanian princes from local dynasties were able to retain power over their lands until the 13th century. Despite the conditionality of independence, the Albanian princes were engaged in extensive building activities in the 12th century and the first decades of the 13th century. Among them, Hasan Jalal, the Prince of Cross from the Mehrani dynasty, played an even greater role in the preservation and development of Albanian culture. High constructive and architectural value of defensive constructions and religious complexes built by Karabakh princes Hasan, Bakhram [Vakhtang], Hasan Jalal and their family members shows

that the Albanian Christian architecture together with Azerbaijani Islamic culture underwent Renaissance period in this period.

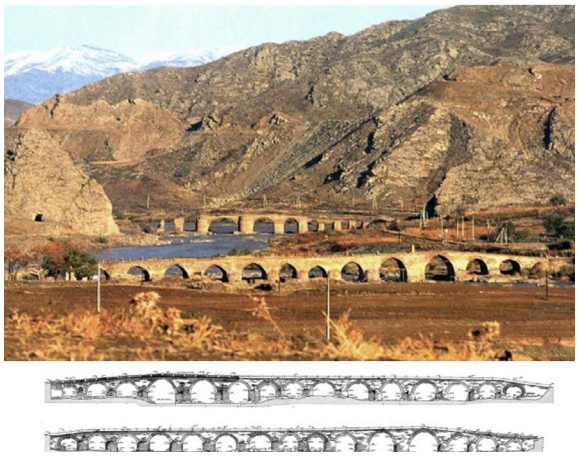

Figure 5. a, b. Khudafarin bridges

Among Karabakh's complexes the most impressive are Khudaveng [Kelbajar], Ganjasar [Khojavand], Khatiraveng [Kelbajar] and Kitish [Khojavand]. Interesting information and legends have reached us from historical sources on monastic complexes of St. Elisee [Elisha], St. Jacob [Great Aran], Urakvang and others. These monuments, which are of great importance both architecturally and historically, are a valuable part of the Albanian culture. Note that foundations of most of the monasteries were laid in the early Middle Ages, but in the 12th and first decades of the 13th centuriesthe new domed halls or churches with rich decorations in cross-dome compositions were erected in them. The inscriptions on these monastic complexes indicate that they were built by Albanian princes and did not belong to the Armenian people [Mamedova G.,2004]. This is the largest monastery ensemble in modern Azerbaijan, consisting of four churches, two narthexes, numerous economic, residential and defensive buildings. The main church, with a cruciform and domed composition with small chapels in its four corners, was built in 1214 by Princess Bahram-khanum Arzu Khatun of Upper Cross [Kirakos Ganzakesi, 1946]. A 19-line book of his name is carved on the southern wall of the temple. This is one of the most outstanding monuments of Albanian architecture [Mamedova G., 2004].

Built by Albanian prince Hasan Jalal and his family members [Kirakos Ganzakesi, 1946], Ganjasar monastery church is distinguished by its magnificent size, architectural composition and rich decoration. This complex, reflecting the power and might of Hasan Jalal, played a major role in the history of the Albanian Catholicosate. For a long time this place had been the religious centre of Caucasian Albania; the residence of the Albanian Patriarch was here until 1836. Inscriptions carved on the walls of these and other monastic buildings or on memorial plaques indicate the construction of these religious complexes by Albanian princes with the blessing of the Albanian Catholicos.

In addition to the monastic complexes, numerous dilapidated churches and temples belonging to the ancestors of the contemporary Caucasian Albanians survived in Karabakh. Research shows that Albanian architecture developed according to the general laws of Eastern Christian architecture. However, Albanian architecture, and Christian architecture in Karabakh in particular, had its own peculiarities. First of all, this is connected to diversity of building materials, which gave interesting coloring to buildings, and use of differently processed stones and sometimes even burnt brick in different combinations. Another distinctive feature of Albanian Christian architecture is the

combination of Christian iconographic motifs, Islamic decoration and pagan symbolism in the decoration of a single monument. [Axundov D., 1986]

Mongolian troops, which invaded Azerbaijan in 1220, put an end to the period of development and prosperity of the country. They ravaged and plundered rich towns and villages and plundered the civilian population. The cities of Barda, Ganja, Nakhchivan were destroyed and burned. The country with its numerous cities, developed crafts and trade was destroyed and fell into a severe economic crisis. The destruction of the cities was not only a social and economic decline, but also the destruction of the material and cultural heritage created by the country. The magnificent examples of architecture created over the centuries were destroyed and burnt down [The history of Azerbaijan, 2005]. Regrettably, during this period the destruction of mosques also became widespread.

Mongols, consisting mainly of pagans, from the early days waged a serious struggle against Islam to spread and strengthen paganism in Azerbaijan and other areas. The Hulaguys, who widely used religious factors in their foreign and domestic policies, relied on one or the other religion-Christianity or Islam, in accordance with their interests. As a result of this and numerous wars very few examples of religious architecture built in this period have survived to our time. In the first half of the 13th century there was a relatively peaceful life and building activity in the mountainous regions of Karabakh. The flexible policy of the Albanian Prince Hasan-Jalal for a time protected his lands from ruin and his population from massacres.

The khan of Kazan [1295-1304], for the sake of gaining power, adopted Islam and declared it the state religion again. The religious reform of the khan of Kazan weakened the position of paganism, Christianity and other religions.

At the beginning of the 14th century a new rise in architecture was observed. Unlike Southern Azerbaijan, in the architecture of Northern Azerbaijan, including Karabakh and Zangezur, different kinds of stones were used as the main material. This feature also applies to the architecture of Shirvan-Absheron and Aran.

Karabakh has a number of examples of Islamic memorial architecture from the 13th-14th centuries. The mausoleum in Barda, built in 1322, is one of the most valuable monuments of this type in Azerbaijan, and a fine example of the Nakhchivani architectural school.

Figure 6. Gyandjasar monastery

Haji Musa oglu mausoleum [1314], valuable monument of Ilkhanid era in Khachin village of Agdam region, is remarkable for its original technique and colouring of zoomorphic images on facade [Mamedova G.,Mamedova Z.,2013]. Mausoleums that survived in the villages of Ashagi Veysali,

Baba, Ahmedalli, Mammadbeyli, Demirchilar and other villages of Karabakh and Zangezur are remarkable examples of memorial architecture of that period.

Thus, well-developed medieval architecture of Karabakh and Zangezur reached our days with both Christian religious monuments and Muslim memorial monuments - mausoleums and civil architectural monuments. Historical sources attest to the existence of numerous, rich works of monumental architecture. However, time and numerous raids mercilessly wiped out most of the monuments, especially monuments of Islam located in the lowlands.

Figure 7. Khudavank monastery

In the 16-17th centuries there was a period of stagnation in the architecture on the territory of Karabakh. At that time almost no new monumental architectural works were created, in small feudal estates medieval monuments were repaired or reconstructed. Although most Albanians gradually converted to Islam, Christianity retained its positions in the mountainous and foothill areas of western part of Northern Azerbaijan. During this period the Armenian Monophysite Church continued its policy of subordination and Armenianisation of the Albanian Church. A part of the population of Karabakh, faithful to Christianity, fell increasingly under the influence of this policy in the last Middle Ages. After Shah Abbas granted certain privileges to the Christian holdings of Karabakh in the seventeenth century, a revival took place in their small feudal estates. Construction activities expanded, and medieval monuments were repaired or reconstructed. Inscriptions were written in Armenian on restored Christian religious buildings on behalf of those who financed these works, and the date of repair was indicated as the date of construction.

The Karabakh khanate was the largest state among the khanates that emerged in Azerbaijan in the mid-18th century. The founder of the khanate Panahali Khan built Bayat fortress, rebuilt Askeran fortress and erected Shahbulag fortress in a short period of time. But the search for a more durable and inaccessible place led him to the foothills of the Karabakh mountains with unique natural protection. The town of Panahabad - Shusha was founded here in 1751. Within a short time Shusha had become a centre of crafts and trade for Karabakh. Despite the existence of irrefutable historical documents and evidence that Shusha was founded by Panahali Khan and built by his heirs, Armenians do not refuse their claims that this Azerbaijani town belonged to Armenians.The Shusha castle had four gates in keeping with the medieval traditions of oriental town-building. On a hill near the main gate was the fortress-palace of Panahali Khan. Shusha houses were built in a style typical of the whole of Karabakh - two-storey, with deep verandas opening onto the courtyard. Many of them - house of poetess Natavan, Haji Guli, Mehmandarovs, Ugurlu Bey, Asad Bey and others - are valuable monuments of Azerbaijani history and architecture.

There were many mosques in Shusha in the 19the century. The most significant of them were constructed by famous architect Karabagi Safi-khan Kerbelai with his daughter Gevkhar-aga. Yukhary Gevkhar-aga mosque as architectural dominant of the city's main square had great town-building value. Ashagi Gevkhar-aga mosque, Saatly, Mamai, Taza and other mahallas built by the same master had three-sided plan. Creative work of outstanding architect Kerbelai Safi khan Garabagi left his imprint on the architectural design of all mosques in Shusha.

Much of Karabakh and its historical architectural heritage had been under occupation for 27 years. There was clearly widespread cultural terror in the occupied lands.

The war and occupation caused enormous damage to monuments - numerous mosques, palaces, bridges, baths and memorial structures located in Karabakh and the surrounding territories. Ancient burial mounds weredestroyed, and historic caves wereused for military purposes. Many Islamic monuments, mosques, mausoleums, ancient cemeteries in Khojaly, Agdam, Fuzuli and Jebrail districts were buried in the ground. Some of the destruction was the result of military operations, other most part was the result of cultural terror and systematic destruction of traces of Azerbaijanis in the occupied territories.

While a policy of terror was pursued against Islamic monuments, on the other hand, Christian architectural monuments of Caucasian Albania, which are part of Azerbaijan's cultural heritage, were subjected to a policy of "armanisation".

Figure 8. Demolished heritage of Shusha

In the architectural monuments of Caucasian Albania, "cleansing" was carried out, during which elements of Albanian architecture and epigraphy were removed and Armenian inscriptions were added in their place. In monuments built by Karabakh princes, both historically and architecturally belonging to Albanian culture, "restoration" and, in fact, falsification works were carried out.

The destructive activities of the Armenian occupants contradict all international laws. The destruction of historical and architectural monuments in the territory of Azerbaijan is a gross violation of The Hague Convention "On the Protection of Cultural Property during the Armed Conflict", adopted in 1954, the UNESCO Convention "On the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage". Nevertheless, no action has been taken by international organisations to stop this vandalism and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Figure 9. Demolished Islamic heritage

First and foremost, an inventory should be made and measures should be taken to record the damage done. This is the demand of the day, which will reveal all the consequences of war and cultural terror, will fully demonstrate the scale of Armenian barbarism, will monitor the monuments of material culture, will bring the results to the international community and provide legal assessment of this barbarism.

Works aimed at restoration of our architectural heritage demand great funds, professionalism and time. During the restoration works there should be a long-term systematic activity in line with all modern restoration requirements and regulations, to fully restore the historical and aesthetic value of our architectural heritage.

Figure 10. Filsified Christian heritage

The restoration and return of architectural monuments of Karabakh and Zangezur, which are a valuable part of our heritage, to our people is a sacred task before us.

Shusha was not only the administrative, but also the cultural and economic centre of Karabakh. Shusha, which was built by Karabakh khans as a major historical, cultural, architectural monument of Azerbaijan, was an open-air museum preserved as a historical-architectural reserve in the 20th century.

Karabakh inherited numerous defensive structures from the 18th-19th centuries. Notable among them is the Askeran fortress, a large fortification built by Ibrahim Khan on the Gargar river in 1787. Another important monument of defensive architecture of the 18 th century is Shahbulag fortress, located 10 km from Aghdam. Among the interesting monuments of the 19th century are the Juma Mosque of Agdam [1868] and the Haji Alekber Mosque [1889], built by architect Kerbalai Safi-khan Karabaghi, who continued the tradition of double-tier mosques and created a local group of Karabakh mosques.

Many of the thousands of Armenian families relocated to Azerbaijani lands in the 19 th century by order of the Russian Tsar in keeping with the Treaties of Turkmenchay and Gulistan and settled in Karabakh with its excellent natural and climatic conditions and fertile lands. This dramatically increased the Armenian ethnos and accelerated the process of assimilation of the local Christian Albanian population. The subordination of the independent, Apostolic Albanian Church to the Armenian Catholicosate in 1936 by a decision of the Tsarist Synod was the result of centuries of insidious Armenian policy aimed at assimilating the Albanian culture.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Armenians settling in Karabakh erected several new religious buildings. These included the churches of Kazanchezos and Agulesos in Shusha. Their parishes preferred to use the older Albanian churches. This was done by reconstructing them, making changes in accordance with the requirements of the Armenian Church, destroying the inscriptions of the former patrons, and engraving in their place the names of the new owners. The falsified inscriptions later served as "grounds" for accusations that the architecture belonged to Armenians.

Much of Karabakh and its historical architectural heritage had been under occupation for 27 years. There was clearly widespread cultural terror in the occupied lands.

The war and occupation caused enormous damage to monuments - numerous mosques, palaces, bridges, baths and memorial structures located in Karabakh and the surrounding territories. Ancient burial mounds weredestroyed, and historic caves wereused for military purposes. Many Islamic monuments, mosques, mausoleums, ancient cemeteries in Khojaly, Agdam, Fuzuli and Jebrail districts were buried in the ground. Some of the destruction was the result of military operations, other most part was the result of cultural terror and systematic destruction of traces of Azerbaijanis in the occupied territories.

While the policy of terror was pursued against Islamic monuments, on the other hand, Christian architectural monuments of Caucasian Albania which are a part of Azerbaijan's cultural heritage, were subjected to a policy of "Armenization".

In the architectural monuments of Caucasian Albania, "cleansing" was carried out during which elements of Albanian architecture and epigraphy were removed and Armenian inscriptions were added in their place. In monuments built by Karabakh princes, both historically and architecturally belonging to the Albanian culture, "restoration" and, in fact, falsification works werecarried out.

The destructive activities of the Armenian occupants are contrary to all international laws. The destruction of historical and architectural monuments in the territory of Azerbaijan is a gross violation of the Hague Convention "On the Protection of Cultural Property in during Armed Conflict" adopted in 1954, the UNESCO Convention "On the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage". Nevertheless, no action has so far been taken by international organisations to stop this vandalism and bring the perpetrators to justice.

First of all, an inventory should be made and measures should be taken to fix the damage. The demand of the day is to disclose all the consequences of war and cultural terror, to show the full extent of Armenian barbarism, to monitor the monuments of material culture, to bring the results to the international community and provide legal assessment of this barbarism.

It should be remembered that actions aimed at restoring our architectural heritage require a lot of funds, professionalism and time. Restoration works must be carried out on a long-term systematic basis in order to meet all modern restoration requirements and regulations, to fully restore the historical and aesthetic value of our architectural heritage.

The restoration and return of architectural monuments of Karabakh and Zangezur, which are a valuable part of our heritage, to our people is a sacred task before us.

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