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KARABAKH-LAND OF ANCIENT UNIQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CULTURES OF THE CAUCASUS

Jabiyev Gafar- doctor of historical sciences, professor, head of Albanian Scientific Center
Institute of Archaeology, Ethnography and Anthropology of ANAS,
qafar.cebiyev2021@icloud.com

Abstract. The ancient land of Azerbaijan, Karabakh, has gone through different stages from ancient times to modern times. Karabakh has a rich history, where the stages of primitive society, and the archaeological cultures of the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages have been consistently represented since the creation of prehistoric man. Karabakh archaeology, one of the urgent issues of Azerbaijani archaeology, is very important in this regard. Karabakh, the land of unique archaeological cultures such as Guruchay, Leylatapa, Kur- Araz, Goycha- Uzerlik, and Khojaly- Gadabay, is distinguished by the richness of archaeological monuments. Azykh and Taghlar caves, Bronze Age mounds, Uzerliktepe, Yedditepe, Goytapa, grave monuments of Khojaly-Gadabay culture, Albanian period settlements, grave monuments, Albanian temples, Islamic period monuments replace each other chronologically. The study of historical, archaeological, and architectural monuments in the land of ancient archaeological cultures- Karabakh, is always relevant as a priority of science.
Keywords: Karabakh, archaeology, history, Zangazur, architecture

Introduction. Karabakh is one of the most ancient regions of Azerbaijan. The history of ancient human settlements there is 2.5 million years. This is proved by the artifacts discovered by Azerbaijani archaeologists in the 60s of the last century in the VII-X cultural layers of the Azykh cave camp in Karabakh [Jafarov, 2017: 103]. Lets` remind that 212 stone tools, 7 animal bones, and numerous rodent bones were found in the VIII-X cultural strata of Azykh cave camp [Jabiyev, 2018: 36-40].

Main part. According to researchers, based on the fact that the preparation and typology of stone tools found in the Azykh cave have certain layers and peculiarities, experts have registered it as a separate culture - Guruchay archeological culture [Huseynov, 1985].

This name is named after the Guruchay valley, where the Azykh cave is located. For reference, it should be noted that the Guruchay archeological culture, which lasted 1.5 million years, began 2.5 million years ago and ended 700,000 years ago [AA-I, 2018; Jabiyev, 2018: 28-40; Jafarov, 1989] (Fig. 1; 2; 3; 4). During the 1968 excavations, in the 4th horizon of the 5th layer of the Azykh cave, along with stone tools belonging to primitive people, the lower jawbone of a girl aged 20-22 was found (Fig. 6-7). Archaeologists have identified the find as an azykhanthropus. According to experts, this finding was a man of the transition from azyhanthropic to paleoanthropic [Huseynov, 1985; Jabiyev, 2018: 47-50; Jafarov, 2017] (Fig. 4-5). Another archaeological culture discovered and studied by Azerbaijani archaeologists in the territory of Karabakh is Leylatapa's archaeological culture. Monuments of this culture, which lasted until the middle of the 4th millennium BC, were first recorded in the 80s of the last century in the Aghdam region. Researchers have registered it as Leylatapa archaeological culture, based on the fact that the artifacts found in this monument differ from other materials of the South Caucasus period by some unique features. During the research, numerous monuments of this culture were registered in Azerbaijan, as well as in other parts of the South Caucasus. It should be noted that the most important features of this culture are the rectangular and plastered buildings made of raw bricks, children's graves buried in clay pots, and especially the use of pottery wheels [Jabiyev, 2018: 84-85; Museyibli, 2014] (Fig. 8-9).

Another archaeological culture recorded in the territory of Karabakh is the culture of painted pottery of the Middle Bronze Age. These cultural samples, which are widespread in South Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan, have also been recorded in the archeological monuments of the Kur-Araz basin

[Aliyev, 1997]. One of the noteworthy monuments in this regard is the Uzerliktepe monument in the territory of the Aghdam region [Ismayilov, 1981].

Figure 1. Azykh cave

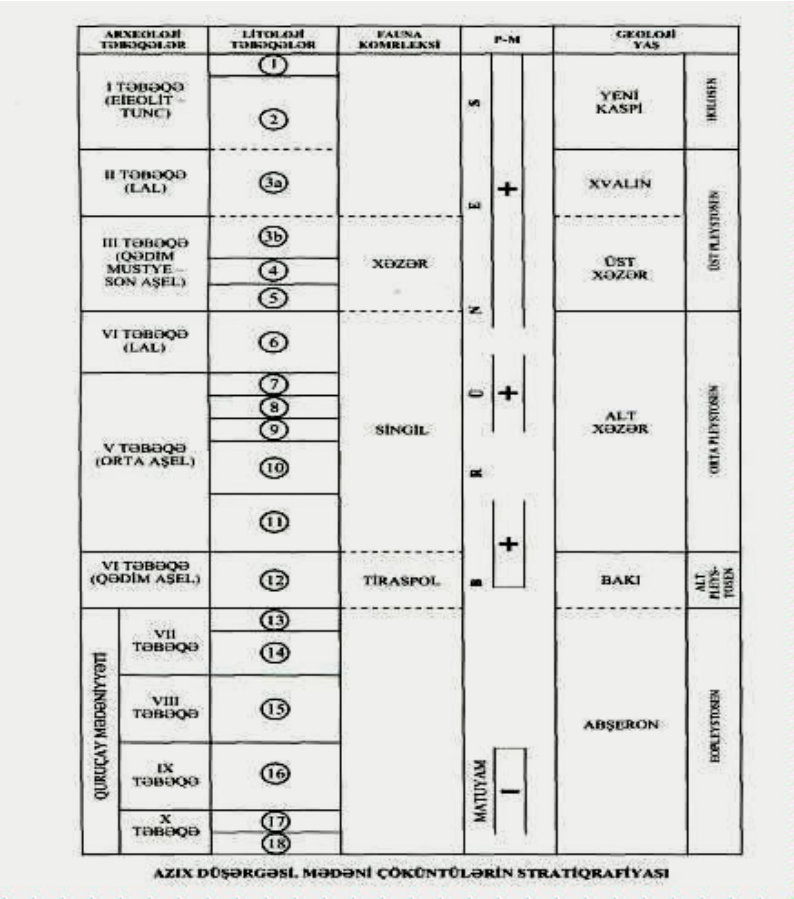

Figure 2. Horizintals of Azykh cave

One of the widespread archaeological cultures formed in the territory of Karabakh is the Khojaly-Gadabay archeological culture of the Late Bronze Age [Jabiyev, 2018: 124-130]. Chronologically, the most magnificent monuments of this culture, which lasted from the second half of the second millennium BC to the first half of the first millennium BC, are in the territory of Karabakh (Fig. 10; 11; 12). It should be noted that these monuments are monuments of the collapse

of primitive community society and the emergence of early class society in Azerbaijan. Since these monuments are mostly recorded in the Ganja-Karabakh region, they are sometimes presented as "Ganja-Karabakh archeological culture" [HA-1998]. The brightest examples of this culture were recorded in Khojaly. Unfortunately, during the occupation of Karabakh by Armenia, many mounds of Khojaly-Gadabay culture were savagely destroyed, and the remains of material culture there were destroyed, looted, or taken to Armenia.

Figure 3. The plan of Azykh cave

Figure 4. Mammadali Huseynov during the research inside of Azykh cave

Conclusion. During the research carried out by Azerbaijani archaeologists together with Russian scientists during the Soviet period, numerous mounds belonging to the Turkic peoples of VI-III centuries BC were discovered and studied in the territory of Karabakh [Geyushev, 1981]. During the 30 years of occupation of Karabakh, most of these monuments were destroyed by Armenians.

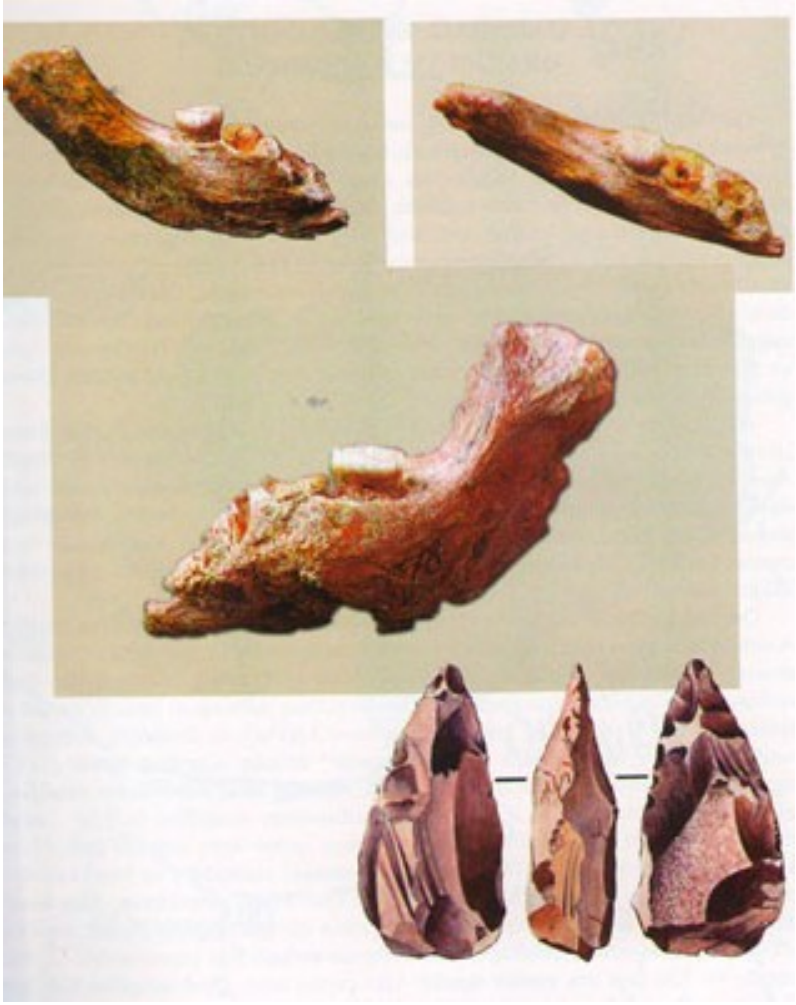

Figure 5. Remains of Azykhantrhopus and ancient stone tools

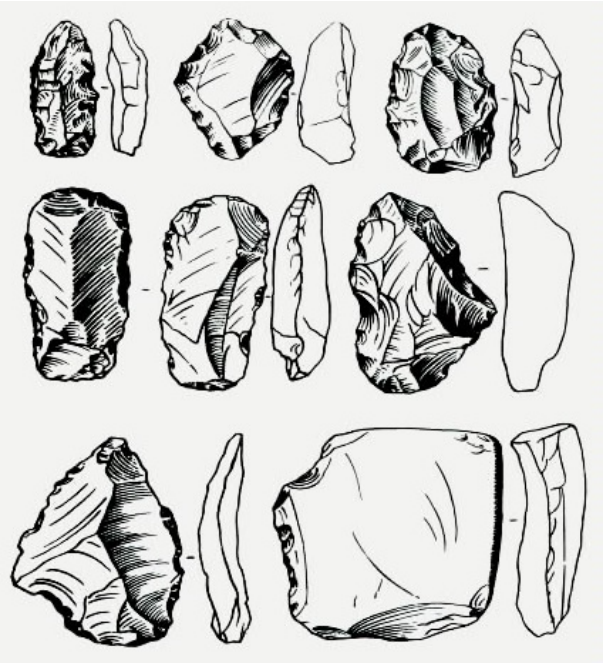

Figure 6. Stone tools of Guruhcay culture from Azykh cave

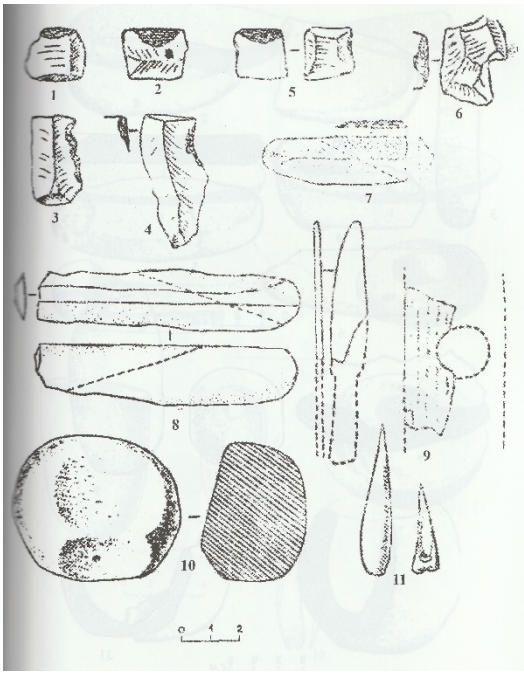

Figure 7. Stone tools of Azykh cave (Guruchay archaeological culture)

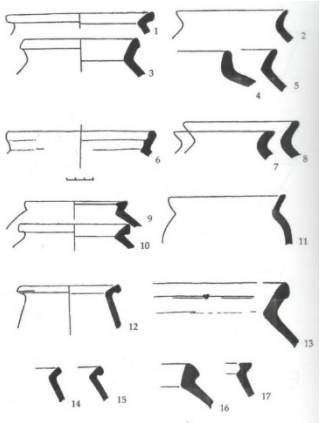

Figure 8. Description of pottery samples from Leylatapa

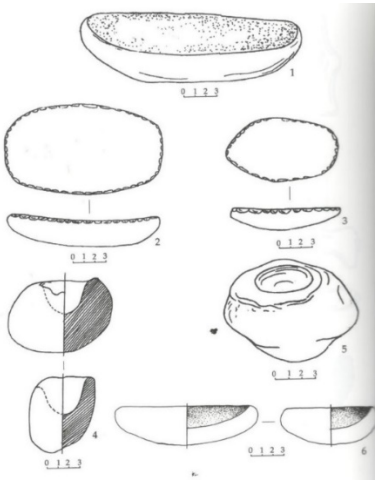

Figure 9. Stone tools from Leylatapa

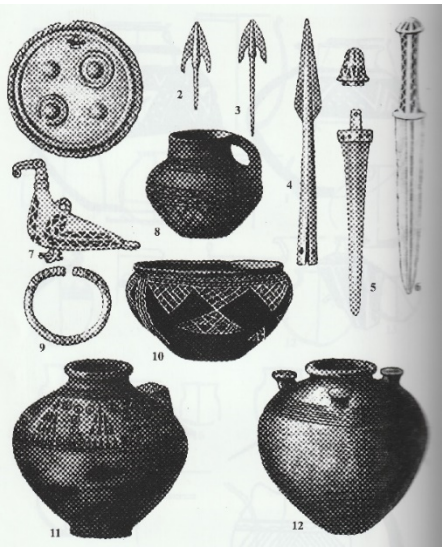

Figure 10. Archaeological materials of Khojaly-Gadabay culture

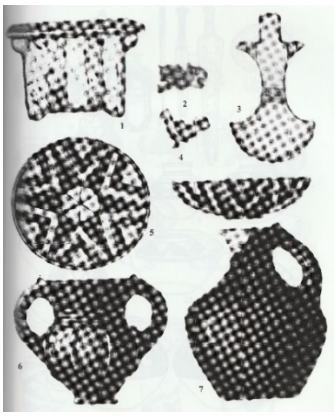

Figure 11. Archaeological materials of Khojaly-Gadabay culture

Figure 12. Archaeological materials of Khojaly-Gadabay culture

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