

## CULTURE OF AZERBAIJAN

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## I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Azerbaijani culture is rooted in ancient times, as documented by petroglyphs on the rocks of Gobustan, Gamigaya in Nakhchivan, on the mountain Dalidag in Kalbajar; archaic ceramics of neolith and epoch of bronze; bronze ornaments and utensils, products from gold and silver, found in numerous barrows, burials, settlements.

In the Middle Ages a number of cities emerged as main cultural, political, and administrative and trade centers. Such cities in Azerbaijan history were Shamakhi, Ganja, Baku, Barda, Sheki, Tabriz, Nakchivan, Shabran, Ardabil, Maraga, Gabala, Beylagan, etc. Medieval authors named Azerbaijan the country of hundred cities. By the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD Caucasian Albania had already had its own writing alphabet. Albanian educator Musa Kalankatu had written "The Agwan History" in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD including there the poem of Albanian poet Davdak "On Death of Grand Duke Javanshir".

In late 7<sup>th</sup> – early 8<sup>th</sup> centuries when the great bulk of the town population adopted Islam, a new culture emerged, and the Albanian writing was replaced with Arabic. Muslim educational institutions, mektebs or madrasa, where Arabic was taught alongside with Koran, mathematics, medicine, astronomy, philosophy, etc. spread over the country. Both during the Albanian period, and subsequently, construction works were extensive in the country. Many cult buildings (churches, mosques), bridges, castles, fortresses, irrigational constructions appeared during 11-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, marking it the time of renaissance in Azerbaijan.

This epoch brought along poets, thinkers, architects - philosopher Bakhmanyar, historian Masud Ibn Namdar, architect Abubakr Ajami, poetess Mahsati Ganjavi and the great poet and philosopher Nizami Ganjavi, poet and thinker Khagani and so on. At this particular time the Turk-oghuz epos "Kitab-i-Dede Gorgud" was finally formed, chess, backgammon, chovgan game (polo) were wide-spread entertainments. Almost in each town "zorkhana", the wrestling hall or gym was available. Thanks to that period, we enjoy the gorgeous architecture, including fortifications of Baku, the Maiden tower, mausoleums of Nakhchivan, kanegah on the Pirsaat River and many other monuments.

The intensive development of culture proceeded further in the 13-15<sup>th</sup> centuries despite wars and invasions. Such masterpieces of poetry as "Divan", the assembly of verses by poet Hasanoglu, "Kissa I Yussuf" by poet Ali were created in Azerbaijani language. A big observatory was built in Maraga according to plans of the great Azerbaijani astronomer, scientist and philosopher, Nasreddin Tusi who was considered mentor by many subsequent astronomers of the Muslim period, including Ulugbek. It was equipped with devices designed by Tusi himself, previously unknown to science. At that time musicians Safiaddin Urmavi and Abdulgadir Maragahi created the original and unparalleled musical system.

The culture of this epoch is distinguished with such outstanding personalities, as Imadaddin Nasimi, Badr Shirvani, Abdurrashid Bakuvi, Seyid Yahya Bakuvi, philosophers and poets. The famous historian Rashidaddin and others lived at that time. Many of celebrated personalities - poets, mathematics, philosophers - developed high principles of Sufi philosophy that frequently were concealed by love lyrics.

During the Safavid epoch (16<sup>th</sup> century) the art of miniature and calligraphy got a new impetus. One of the most known schools of miniature in the East, the Tabriz school, flourished at the time, the brightest representative Sultan Mohammed (16 century). Mohammed Fizuli's (1494-1556) poem "Leila and Majnun" became the poetic pinnacle. Spoken folk poetry also developed. The epos "Koroglu" was very popular in the region and the person of that legendary folk hero was so popular that now there are several presumed places of his legendary fortress Chanlibel.

During the Middle Ages applied art crafts - glazed ceramics, metal wares, colored glassworks, art of carpet weaving embroidery and tapestry - rapidly developed in Azerbaijan. Those goods were widely exported, and remarkable samples nowadays are kept in the leading museums of the world (the Hermitage, the Louvre, Topgapy, Victoria and Albert Museum, Metropolitan Museum etc.).

The reputation of local craftsmen was such, that they were often invited to work in other countries, and during wars, they were taken away forcibly. For example, Azerbaijani builders, copper-smiths, calligraphers and architects participated in construction of many architectural masterpieces of Samarqand, Shakhrisabz, Iraq, and India.

After Azerbaijan became part of Russian Empire, a stage of stronger European cultural influence began. It was reflected in fine arts, architecture, literature, education etc. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the first scientific research of the history of Azerbaijan since the medieval ages appeared, "Gulistan-i-Iram" by Bakikhanov. At the same time Mirza Fatali Akhundov (1812-1878) - the founder of Azerbaijan's drama and modern Azerbaijani literature became known for his realistic novels and dramas. In 1874, the first newspaper in Azerbaijani language - "Ekinchi" - was printed. Its publisher was well-known educator Hasan bay Zardabi.

In March 1873, the first theater performance in Azerbaijani took place, and in 1866 the first grammar school, later, in 1864, first female grammar school were opened in Baku. In 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries a number of newspapers and magazines have been issued in Azerbaijani: "Hummet", "Takammul", as well as in Russian - "Bakinski Rabochi", "Kaspi". The satiric magazine "Molla Nasreddin", issued by writer J.Mamedguluzade was wildly popular. Some outstanding personalities worked for the magazine, including well-known artist – caricaturist Azim Azimzade, satirical poet M.A.Sabir, and poet Aligulu Gamkyusar etc.

On January 12, 1908 performance of the first national opera "Leyli and Mejnun" by composer Uzeyir bay Hajibayov debuted. On October 25, 1913 the first display of a national comedy, "Arshin mal alan", gained the hearts of the public. Outstanding masters of national theatrical stage of that period were Huseyn Arablinski, Huseyngulu Sarabski, Mirza Aga Aliyev, and Sidgi Ruhulla. At the same period basis for modern fine arts in Azerbaijan was created. Its founders were artists Bakhriz Kangarli and Azim Azimzade. Architects Ploshko, Skibinski, Goslavski, Ahmedbey Ziverbayov had built such remarkable objects as the buildings of Puppet Theatre, the City Hall of Baku, Museum of History, Museum of Arts, National Academy of Sciences, the Theatre of Opera and Ballet, Juma mosque in Shamakhi etc.

After the beginning of the Soviet period in Azerbaijan such new directions, as constructivism found reflection in the architecture of Baku (Shyusev and Vesnin brothers) leading to construction of the old Intourist hotel, Azernashr building and others. National school of architecture developed under creative impact of Useynov, Dadashev, Kasimzade, Ismaylov, and Shulgin.

Poets, writers and dramatists Huseyn Javid, Mikayil Mushfig, Abbas Sahhat, Yusif Chamanzaminli, Mamedseyid Ordubadi, Jafar Jabbarli and others enriched the literature. Composers Gara Garayev, Niyazi, Fikret Amirov, Arif Melikov greatly influenced the development of modern national musical culture. Composers and jazzmen started using traditional motifs in their music, like Vagif Mustafazade, Aziza Mustafazade, and Rafiq Babayev and so on.

The most famous artists and sculptors of the period were Mikayil Abdullayev, Sattar Bakhuluzade, Tair Salakhov, Togrul Narimanbeyov, Alekber Rzaguliyev, Fuad Abdurakhmanov, Tokay Mamedov, Omar Eldarov but they are only a small portion of the talented group. The well known modern film directors are Hasan Seyidbeyli, Rasim Ojagov, Arif Babayev, Ajdar Ibragimov etc. Renowned writers include Maqsud and Rustam Ibragimbayovs, Anar, Natig Rasulzade, Elchin, Chingiz Abdullayev and others.

At the meeting of UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Intangible Heritage held on 26 November 2014, Azerbaijan's kelaghayi art was entered on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity under the title of "Traditional art and symbolism of Kelaghayi".

In addition to kelaghayi, Azerbaijan's mugham performance art, ashyg art, Novruz Holiday, Azerbaijani carpet, tar playing art were also entered on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and Chovken, Garabagh's traditional horseback played game, was entered on the organization's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

The 11th session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was held in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa on November 28-December 2, 2016. The Committee decided to include "Flatbread making and sharing culture: Lavash, Katryma, Jupka, Yufka" initiated by Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The preparation of dolma has been included in UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity as the Azerbaijani tradition during the twelfth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea on December 4-9, 2017.

Jointly presented by Azerbaijan and Iran "Art of crafting and playing Kamancha" has been included in UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity during the twelfth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea.



## II. MATERIAL CULTURE

Azerbaijan is rich in architecture masterpieces proving its traditions of construction. Stone, marble, bricks and wood were used commonplace.

Among memorial buildings the following are especially worth noting: Yusuf ibn Kuseyr mausoleum, Momine-khatun, Garabaghlar (Nakhchivan, 12-14<sup>th</sup> centuries), Ahsadan-baba (Barda, 14<sup>th</sup> century), Seyid Yahya Bakuvi (Baku, 15<sup>th</sup> century) mausoleums.

Several types of fortifications existed at the time: fortress cities, fortresses, castles, signal towers, defense lines. The most important ones were:

- Fortress cities – Baku (Old City), Ganja, Barda, Sheki, Nakhchivan, Gabala, Beylagan;
- Fortresses – Sabail in Baku bay, Alinja in Nakichevan, Goulistan and Kale-i-Bugurd in Shemakha;
- Defense lines – “long walls” of Beshbarmak, Samur, Gilgichay, Zagatala;
- Castles and signal towers – Maiden tower in Baku, Nardaran, Mardaken, Ramani on the Absheron peninsula, Muhas in Oghuz district and Aydin bulag in Sheki.

Among religious sites should be mentioned early Christian temples of 1-6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, including round cupola temples in Kish, Kilisadag, Mamruh, Lekit; basils in Kum, Lekit; synagogues – 6-cupola synagogue in Guba (17<sup>th</sup> century), classic – in Oghuz (19<sup>th</sup> century) and a new one in Baku (21<sup>st</sup> century); mosques – in Baku (Juma, 14<sup>th</sup> century, Tezepir, 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bibi-Heybat, restored in 19<sup>th</sup> century); in Shamakhi – Juma mosque (18<sup>th</sup> century). In Sheki around 40 mosques have been built, 6 of them are operational now (all built in 16-19<sup>th</sup> centuries). Orthodox churches – The holy wives church in Baku, 19<sup>th</sup> century; Atashgah Zoroastrian temple on the outskirts of Baku (17<sup>th</sup> century); Khanegakh – on the Pirsaat river (13<sup>th</sup> century), church on the Alinja River (13<sup>th</sup> century).

Fortresses: Darband (6<sup>th</sup> century); Chirag-gala (6<sup>th</sup> century); Sheki (18<sup>th</sup> century); Sabail – in Baku bay (13<sup>th</sup> century).

Palaces: Shirvanshakhs' palace ensemble in Baku (15<sup>th</sup> century); Palace of Sheki khans (18<sup>th</sup> century).

Dwelling houses: Shekikhanovs' (18<sup>th</sup> century); poetess Natavan's in Shusha (19<sup>th</sup> century);

Villas: Sh. Assadullaev's, H.Z. Tagiev's, M. Mukhtarov's, T. Ashurbekov's, I. Gadjinski's, Nobel brothers' Villa Petrolea.

Baths: in Nardaran (14<sup>th</sup> century), in Baku fortress (17<sup>th</sup> century), in Sheki (19<sup>th</sup> century).

Ovdan, abdan, and erdan are water collecting facilities for capturing ground water and rain water. They were elements of architectural panorama and were located at caravan houses mainly, forming small architectural complexes.

Ovdan had epigraphy bearing name of a sponsor and date of construction as well as name of architect. For example, Shakh's ovdan in the Old City; ovdan of 14-15<sup>th</sup> centuries in Shamakhi citadel.

Absheron had over 100 ovdans in 15-20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Caravan houses were located in Baku fortress, in Sheki and on the trade routes.

Bridges: across the Araz river on the outskirts of Julfa (12-13<sup>th</sup> centuries); Khudaferin bridges (7-13<sup>th</sup> centuries).

Azerbaijan has lots of ethnographic monuments. These include memorial signs on fortresses and mosques, khanegakhs and caravan houses.

Numismatic heritage of the country includes local coinage, with silver and copper ones having emerged in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC in the Albanian kingdom. Later they were in circulation in many countries including states of Atabey Ildegizids, Safavis, local khans. Mints existed in Darband, Shamakhi, Baku, Tabriz, Ganja, Gabala, Maraga, Sheki, Barda and Nakhchivan.

Along with local money other coins circulated in Azerbaijan including gold, silver, copper coins of Alexander the Great, Byzantium, Sasanids, Arabs, Mongols, Osmands, Russians etc.

Magnificent jewelry masterpieces, gold and silver products like women's belts and ear-rings, bracelets, necklaces, rings, buttons, finger-rings, both domestically produced and imported, are known throughout Azerbaijan's history.

The country is rich in museums: regional and specialized, picture galleries, carpets museum, museums of Azerbaijan history, home-museums.

It's hard to overestimate the role of the Great Silk Road in the history of many countries both Eastern and Western. This important route is described in many legends and epics, however between 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC and 15<sup>th</sup> century AD it was quite real, furcated route servicing whole of mankind.

Restoration of the Great Silk Road is not just a tribute to the past but a realistic assessment of its importance now when, as a result of globalization processes:

- Humankind feels like a single family on the Earth;
- Humankind strives for intensified exchanges in culture, economy, information, ideology, sports, education between different countries and peoples;
- Humankind is ready for a dialogue of civilizations and space travels.

However, not everything can be learned immediately. There are different ways and methods of how to share achievements and information. One of them is international tourism which allows people from different countries and continents meet each other, do the sightseeing, etc.

Tourists coming to Azerbaijan to learn about local routes of restored Great Silk Road can not only do that, but also observe architecture masterpieces of local masters, unique examples of material and non-material culture known worldwide as well as learn local traditions, original cuisine, unique dresses, dances, songs and leave Azerbaijan with unfading memories.

### III. MUSIC, NATIONAL MUSIC INSTRUMENTS

#### Musical instruments

"Music is a moral law. It gives inspiration to the entire world, wings to the soul and raises the thoughts of man up to the heavens. Music is the basis of order. It is the embodiment of eternal beauty and glory."

These words by the great Greek philosopher Plato would find resonance in the soul of any Azerbaijani philosopher or just ordinary worker. If one attempts to define the most characteristic feature of Azerbaijanis, it would doubtless be their love of music. Harmonic music lives in the very nature of this land, in its soil, trees and rocks. Classic Azerbaijani poetry is filled with lines about music and the supreme spiritual enjoyment that it gives.

For example, the beauty of Azerbaijani songs was glorified by the great poet of this land, Nizami Ganjavi:

*Dear singer, take your saz in your arms,  
Play sweet music for us,  
Don't limit your range,  
Our melodies are broad and rich*

Azerbaijani melodies have been adopted and sung by people from all of the neighboring countries: Georgians, Armenians, Turks, Dagestanis, Uzbeks and Turkmens. This music has been imprinted in the musical memory of these peoples and become accepted as their common heritage. A number of written materials and sources from the 19th century testify to the dominant role of Azerbaijani musical culture in the Caucasus and Central Asia. One can still find dozens of Azerbaijani tunes widespread in this area, both national folk tunes and those that were written by specific Azerbaijani composers.

Azerbaijanis' love for music is closely connected with their unique talent in this art form. At the beginning of the 20th century, composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov, the genius of Azerbaijani music, recognized for writing the first opera of the Caucasus and the Muslim East and acknowledged as the greatest figure in the musical world of this region, wrote: "Without the slightest exaggeration, it is possible to say that among the Caucasian peoples, the most talented in music are the Azerbaijani Turks." (1923).

The rich musical heritage created since ancient times are unchallengeable proof of a genetic talent that is inherent in every generation of the Azerbaijani nation. Our national musical instruments, designed for the emotional color, rhythm, tempo and artistic features of Azerbaijani folk music, have passed a long path of historic development and carried many characteristic features of Azerbaijani traditional music up until the present. Now they are part of Azerbaijan's musical culture, linking its past and present. Traditional music and musical instruments express the major features of Azerbaijani national musical thinking and the nature of Azerbaijani creativity.

At the same time, we must regretfully admit that a great deal of our national musical heritage has been lost. This especially relates to the rich collection of instruments used by Azerbaijanis during various periods of our cultural history.

Numerous string, wind and percussion instruments were created long before our era and improved throughout history to become the basis of Azerbaijan's national musical treasury. For centuries, they were used for the cultural development and creative activity of the people, decorating their lives, customs and traditions.

In 1988, as part of the State Museum of Azerbaijani Musical Culture, has been created an ensemble of musicians who perform these ancient musical instruments. According to a Presidential Decree, the Ensemble was awarded the status of State Ensemble. The Ensemble consists of 13 musicians. Nine of these musicians play instruments that had been forgotten-the chagane, choghur, barbat, tanbur, santur, rud, chang, rubab and gopuz. The other three play the canun (ganun), zarb and ney. The singer accompanies himself or herself by playing the gaval or daf.

The members of the Ensemble constantly work to improve and expand the performing properties and sound and technical capabilities of the ancient instruments. The popularity that the Ensemble enjoys both inside and outside of the country shows once again the great interest in our cultural heritage.



Ensemble of the Ancient Musical Instruments

### *Study and Recovery of Musical Instruments*

As a discipline of Azerbaijani musicology, instrumentology comprises its own separate sphere. The descriptions of ancient musical instruments provided by Azerbaijani scholars, musicians, historians and ethnographers are of great importance for the development of this science. These include the valuable observations of Uzeyir Hajibeyov, Afrasiyab Badalbeyli, Teymur Bunyadov, Mirali Seyidov and Saadat Abdullayeva.

Uzeyir Hajibeyov in particular contributed much to the study of Azerbaijani folk instruments; he described the characteristics and classifications of these musical instruments in his works, including the ranges of their modal scales and their prospects for further development. (See his book, "The Principles of Azerbaijani Folk Music" (Baku: Azeri 1945, English 1985).

Published research about these musical instruments has dealt with their structure, modal scales, technical and artistic capabilities, the history of their evolution and even the etymology of their names.

Despite the fact that these forgotten musical instruments have been researched from time to time, their restoration has never become a subject of study. In general, the creation of musical instruments, their development, and the etymology of names and places in the national musical heritage have never been fully explored. This book provides information about both contemporary instruments and the musical instruments that were widespread during the Middle Ages but later forgotten due to various reasons.

The restoration of ancient musical instruments begins, first of all, with the study of medieval written sources and miniatures. The works of numerous researchers and musicians, the notes of travelers, samples of folk and classical poetry and miniatures refer to the existence of a variety of string, wind and percussion instruments. This certainly proves that there is a rich heritage of musical instruments belonging to the Azerbaijani nation. Presented below is a summary of the sources that were used in researching and reconstructing these ancient instruments.

The most ancient artifacts related to Azerbaijani musical culture have been found in historical monuments and amongst the material culture that has been found in archeological excavations. A number of objects that have found during archeological digs are related to musical instruments. For instance, during the construction of the Mingachevir Water Basin, three musical instruments-tutak, zurna and ney-were discovered; these were made of clay or bone.

Azerbaijani classical poetry and oral history is also a rich source of information. Almost all great Azerbaijani poets and writers touched upon musical instruments in their works. The poetry of Nizami and Fuzuli provides an inexhaustible source for such research. These poets described the instruments'timbre and appearance and gave us very important information about the methods of their creation and the manner in which they were played.

Musical science also provides us with very important information about the ancient instruments of Azerbaijan. Treatises by medieval musicologists provide information about the pitch and scale of these instruments, the number of strings, the ranges and other data, giving us an idea of their acoustic quality. The scientific heritage of Azerbaijani musicologists like Safiaddin Urmavi (13th century) and Abdulgadir Maraghai (14th-15th centuries) provides us with the most valuable and extensive information for studying these instruments.

Without visual materials that illustrated what these instruments looked like, we would not have been able to restore them to any measure of authenticity or credibility. Therefore, the sketches and drawings of musical instruments that we find in decorative and applied art, on ancient pottery, and in architecture and monumental paintings of the pre-Moslem epoch are of enormous value.

Another body of research relates to the memoirs, travel notes and other literature from scientists, writers, diplomats and other travelers who visited Azerbaijan centuries ago. Information about musical instruments used in Azerbaijan in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries can be found in the travel notes and memoirs of Adam Oleari, Engelbert Kaempfer, Alexander Dumas, Evliya Chelebi and others.

Drawings and paintings by the famous Russian painter G. Gagarin, who visited Azerbaijan in the 19th century, depict scenes of musical majlises (assemblies), musicians and dancers belonging to the khanate of Shirvan.

The Research Laboratory for the Restoration and Improvement of Ancient Musical Instruments opened at Baku Music Academy in 1991. Researchers at this laboratory study the history of musical instruments and explore questions about their technology, including size, materials and acoustics. Reconstruction is performed on the basis of the information gathered.

Laboratory research of museum exhibits and archive materials has produced valuable results as well. In this sense, the work of the researchers of the laboratory should specifically be noted. As a result of their efforts, instruments that were broadly used in medieval Azerbaijan and later forgotten-such as the chang, barbat, chagane, choghur, santur, tanbur, rubab, gopuz and ney-have been completely restored.

We have also been working to restore existing instruments. For example, in order to strengthen sonority, some structural changes are being introduced. Another example is that the material used to make strings has been changed and the sound diapason has been widened. For example, the gut or silk that were used in the santur have been replaced with nylon threads or metallic wire. A clamp-like piece that presses against the strings was added to the body of the santur in order to keep the strings from vibrating.

The instruments that we have managed to recover represent only a small number of all the forgotten ancient instruments that once existed. There is still an enormous amount of research to be done. Ancient musical instruments are the monuments of the history, culture and spirituality of our nation. Restoring them and returning them to life is a noble and worthy occupation.

### *Performing Arts*

One of the most interesting pages in Azerbaijan's musical history relates to the performances of these ancient instruments. There is great historical value in the performing arts that have absorbed the rich traditions of Azerbaijani folk music. Early examples of written literature, history, architecture and fine art prove that the performing arts have been a favorite aspect of musical activity throughout the ages. For example, "Kitabi Dada Gorgud" (The Book of Dada Gorgud), our most famous ancient epic, indicates that playing the gopuz was recognized as a holy and noble occupation. Our classical poets presented delicate and loving images of well-known ancient musicians and offered a great deal of interesting data about them.

*When the song of Nikisa's chang fell silent,  
Barbat's sitar raised its voice.  
As the light-headed ashug touched the saz,  
At once he began to sing the gazal in the Ushshag mode.*

Here, in the story of "Khosrov and Shirin", the great poet Nizami Ganjavi describes a scene of competition between two unsurpassed musicians of the past, Nikisa and Barbat, both of them composers, singers and performers. Nikisa and Barbat outshined the greatest glory of their contemporaries in their ability to play the chang and barbat.

We know from history that many outstanding persons, poets, writers and scientists from Azerbaijan were also master performers on various musical instruments. Safiaddin Urmavi, a first-rate scientist-theorist of Eastern music, is one of the most famous. He was also known for his mastery of the instrument known as the ud.

Throughout history, performing arts have developed and matured both artistically and technically. Beginning in the second half of the 19th century, musical gatherings ("majlises") were held in Baku, Shamakhi and Karabakh, which helped to improve both the singing and performing arts. Outstanding performers such as Mirza Sadig Asadoghlu, Mashadi Jamil Amirov, Bahram Mansurov, Ahmad Bakikhanov, Gurban Pirimov, Mansur Mansurov and many others from the 19th-20th centuries grew up attending these musical assemblies.

During the second half of the 20th century, tar and kamancha performances rose to an even higher level of development. Performers such as Habib Bayramov, Baba Salahov, Haji Mammadov, Habil Aliyev, Shafiga Eyvazova, Aghasalim Abdullayev, Ramiz Guliyev, Mohlat Muslimov, Fakhraddin Dadashov, Munis Sharifov and many other instrumentalists raised the bar for performance technique and expanded the capabilities of Azerbaijani national musical instruments.

### *Percussion instruments*

The prototypes of Azerbaijani percussion instruments are rooted in very ancient times, in primitive society. Back then, people learned to play rhythms in various ways. The simplest way to keep rhythm was by tapping one's foot. Then people began experimenting by covering a well with dry wood and stretching an animal skin over it. Various rhythmic patterns could be produced by tapping on the skin. Presumably, the first percussion instruments originate from those times.

Even now, one of the zorkhana plays used in wrestling is called "Ayag-doyma" (foot tapping). There is a large rock "Gaval Dash" (tambourine) in one of the ancient human settlements in Gobustan on the Jingirdagh



Mountain slopes. By striking or tapping this stone, one can produce a sound that is reminiscent of the instrument known as the gaval. Some people believe that the name “Gaval Dash” came to us because this stone really was used as a percussion instrument in the distant past.

Various kinds of percussion instruments were historically widespread in Azerbaijan and have played a special role in the spiritual and material life of the Azerbaijani people. These instruments are mainly divided into three types:

1) membranophones, 2) idiophones, and 3) idio-membranophones.

Membranophones include the tabil, kos, (boyuk naghara) gosha naghara, naghara, dumbak and other instruments of this type.

Idiophones include earthenware crockery, various types of laggutu, shakhshakhs (trinkets), zingirovs (bells) and gumrovs (handbells). The gaval (tambourine) and daf belong to the third group.

### Laggutu

Just like the naghara, gosha naghara, gaval and other percussion instruments, the Laggutu is widely used in modern ensembles and orchestras of national instruments. The laggutu is used mainly in the musical folklore of the southern regions of Azerbaijan: Astara, Lankaran, Masalli and Jalilabad. The laggutu is placed on a platform, and the performer plays it with two wooden sticks. Usually, the laggutu is 250x125x50 mm in size and made of walnut, apricot, mulberry or beech wood. The instrument is hewn out in a special way: the upper part is hewn deeper than the lower part, which gives a special timbre to the instrument. The etymology of the name of the instrument is probably related to its timbre.



### Goltug Naghara

The goltug naghara is usually used in combination with the zurna, balaban and other instruments. In former times, a wolf's skin was stretched over the body of the instrument. Nizami Ganjavi described the naghara in one of his poems:

*The wolf skin naghara became agitated,  
And stirred up the brain of the world.*

Nowadays, the naghara is a leading instrument in ensembles and orchestras composed of national instruments. The word “naghara” comes from Arabic, meaning “to hit”. The performer plays the instrument by striking it with the palms and fingers of both hands. Some folk pieces are played with the help of two lightweight drumsticks. Other techniques include slapping, trilling and flicking. The naghara has a strong, dynamic sound, with various nuances in timbre. It can be played in the open air as well.



The goltug naghara is often used in folk ceremonies, games and dances such as the “jangi”, which refers to a group dance reflecting the spirit of heroism and fighting and incorporating elements of wrestling, horseback riding, javelin throwing and fencing. (The word “jangi” means “war” in Persian.) The Goltug naghara is also used for “yalli”, an ancient Azerbaijani mass folk dance performed mainly during open-air festivities.

The body of the goltug naghara may be made of walnut, apricot or other kinds of wood. Its height is 350-360 mm, and its diameter is 300-310 mm.

### Jura naghara

The jura naghara (small naghara) usually accompanies an ensemble of zurna players. The jura naghara is never played alone, but always in combination with the boyuk naghara. Since it is smaller than the main naghara, it is called “jura naghara”. The body of the instrument may be made of different kinds of wood, with goatskin or sheepskin stretched over it. The jura and boyuk naghara are similar in their construction. The jura naghara is



played with two lightweight sticks that are bent back on the top. As an instrument, it has its own definite role and function within musical traditions. The diameter of its body is 300-320 mm, and its height is 340-360 mm.

### Boyuk Naghara

The boyuk naghara is also called the “kos naghara” or “wedding naghara” in some regions of Azerbaijan. This kind of naghara is larger in diameter and height. The boyuk naghara is never used alone, but always in combination with the jura naghara. Its technical capabilities are more limited as compared to the other types of nagharas. The instrument is played on both sides with two wooden sticks. The large kos naghara is not used nowadays, but a smaller version is used in ensembles of zurna players. A naghara of this kind is used only in the open air. The body of the instrument is cylindrical and made of firm wood. The skin is stretched over the two sides of the body. Its diameter is 400-450 mm, and its height is 500-550 mm.



### Gosha Naghara

The gosha naghara is one of the most widespread folk percussion instruments. This instrument is part of ensembles and orchestras of national instruments and is also used for performing folk music. The gosha naghara has an original timbre and can even be used as solo instrument.

The gosha naghara consists of two small nagharas of differing sizes, joined together. Sometimes it is called a “gosha dumbul”. (A dumbul is a percussion instrument that is much like the naghara). Originally the gosha naghara was made of clay, and then later of wood and metal. Camel, goat or calf leather is used for the membrane, which is fitted to the body using metal screws. The screws are used for tuning the instrument as well. While it is being played, the instrument is usually placed on the floor or on a special platform. Wooden sticks are used to play it. The size of the gosha naghara can vary, but as a rule, the two bodies of the gosha naghara are equal in height, 300-330 mm. One of them is 240-280 mm in diameter, and the other is 110-140 mm.



### Gaval

The gaval belongs to the group of unilateral percussion instruments. There is a lot of information about this instrument found in the works of medieval poets. Images of gavals are presented in ancient miniatures, showing that this instrument was widespread in Azerbaijan during the Middle Ages. Most likely, it is the only instrument that has preserved its original shape. It has never been neglected. The gaval was mainly used in palace musical majlises during the Middle Ages.

There are varying sizes of gavals found in Eastern countries and Central Asia. Even though the gaval is considered to be a membranophone instrument, it has some of the features of an idiophone instrument. Metal rings, or sometimes a set of four small jingles, hang from the body, producing a unique sound when the instrument is shaken.



The gaval was included as a lead instrument in the Traditional Instruments Orchestra founded by Azerbaijani composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov, who also wrote the first musical scores for this instrument. Nowadays, the gaval plays a significant role in ensembles and orchestras composed of traditional instruments. This instrument has wide performance capabilities because it is possible for it to produce trills, tremolos, mordents and other musical features. The gaval is always part of a mugham trio (musical group consisting of a singer, tar player and kamancha player) that performs genres and forms of traditional Azerbaijani music such as “rangs”, “derameds”, “tasnifs” and “zarbi-mughams”. The gaval’s cylindrical frame is 60-75 mm tall, and its diameter is 340-450 mm. It is made of walnut wood, with 60-70 small copper rings fitted to the inner side of its frame along the perimeter. Sturgeon skin that has been tanned in a special way is stretched over the round frame. The thinness and transparency of the fish skin makes the sound of the instrument especially pleasant. While playing

on the instrument, the performer holds it with his hands and plays with his fingers. Sometimes the gaval is slapped as well.

### Daf

The daf is a percussion instrument that has occupied a special place in Azerbaijan's national musical culture. Medieval musical majlises could never have been imagined without the daf. Khagani wrote:

*Look at the daf player  
And you will see the excitement of the hunt.  
The daf is like a hunting ground  
Where one is fighting with another.*

The medieval miniatures that depict palace musical majlises show the daf as being part of instrumental ensembles such as the chang-ney-daf, the barbat-chang-ney-daf and the ney-tanbur-daf. The daf features pairs of copper cups on four sides of the body, with the rims facing each together. This provides the instrument with the timbre of an idio-membranophone. Today, however, this instrument is rarely used. Its sturgeon skin membrane is stretched over a round frame made of nut wood. The diameter is 250-260 mm, and the height is 45-50 mm.



Just like the naghara, gosha naghara, gaval and other percussion instruments, the Laggutu is widely used in modern ensembles and orchestras of national instruments. The laggutu is used mainly in the musical folklore of the southern regions of Azerbaijan: Astara, Lankaran, Masalli and Jalilabad. The laggutu is placed on a platform, and the performer plays it with two wooden sticks. Usually, the laggutu is 250x125x50 mm in size and made of walnut, apricot, mulberry or beech wood. The instrument is hewn out in a special way: the upper part is hewn deeper than the lower part, which gives a special timbre to the instrument. The etymology of the name of the instrument is probably related to its timbre.

### Dumbak

The dumbak is another ancient percussion instrument that was widespread in Azerbaijan. This instrument is more typical for the southern areas of Azerbaijan and was very popular during the Middle Ages. Although it was forgotten in the early 20th century, it has recently returned to the national musical culture of Azerbaijan. The dumbak was originally made of burnt clay; later it was made of wood and iron. It has the shape of a goblet. Today, its body is usually made of walnut and apricot wood. Calf or goat leather is stretched over the body. The strap that ties around the body is placed on the performer's left shoulder, and the performer plays the instrument with the fingers of both hands. The height of the instrument is 350-400 mm, and the diameter is 280 mm. It has a peculiar low timbre and produces various rhythms and tones. Nowadays, the dumbak is used in many musical groups.



### Wind instruments

Wind instruments have played an unprecedented role in the history of Azerbaijani traditional music. The earliest examples of wind instruments, dating back several thousand years ago, were undoubtedly made of reed. This tradition has survived until the present. Today, some wind instruments—such as the ney, tutak, musigar, sumsu and their varieties—are also made of cane and reed. But other materials are now used as well, such as animal bone, horn, baked clay and various kinds of wood and copper.

The limited diapason of the wind instruments affects their technical and artistic capabilities. For example, the diapason of the zurna, the most common wind instrument, does not exceed two octaves.



The wind instruments are divided into the following types:

1. *Instruments with a mouthpiece—zurna and balaban*
2. *Instruments without a mouthpiece—ney and tutak*
3. *Instrument with bellows—tulum, garmon*

### Ney

The ney is one of the most ancient musical instruments. Various types of neys were widespread among the peoples of the Middle East and other countries. There were several types of neys in Azerbaijan.

Fuzuli described the ney's sound as plaintive:

*Because of love, I always moan like a ney  
I won't stop moaning even  
If I am cut into pieces like a ney.*

The great scientist and musicologist Abdulgadir Maraghayi (14th-15th centuries) wrote in his work "Magasid al-Alhan" about two types of ney—the agh ney (white ney) and the gara ney (black ney), which were widespread in those times. The fine-timbred ney used to be a wonderful part of Azerbaijani music but was absolutely forgotten by the beginning of the 20th century. Only in recent years has it been returned to the national music again.



The agh ney was made of cane. Its length is 550 mm, and its diameter is 20-25 mm. There are five apertures on the upper part of the instrument and one aperture on the bottom part. To play the agh ney, the performer holds the thin brass pipe at the head of the instrument between the front upper and lower teeth. He blows into the pipe and produces a sound with the help of the tongue and lips, simultaneously opening and closing apertures with the fingers of both hands, thus producing a chromatic scale. Mughams, songs and other musical compositions can be played on the ney. The ney's range goes from the "do" of the first octave to the "sol" sharp of the second octave.

Modern neys are played by blowing with the lips into an aperture, which is placed approximately 50 mm lower than the head of the instrument. The most contemporary kind of ney is played in orchestras under the name of the flute. Currently, the modern flute is identified under its historical name ("ney") among a number of Eastern peoples.

### Balaban

The balaban is a wind instrument that is widely used in orchestras, ensembles, ashug and other folklore groups (photo). The name of the instrument (sometimes pronounced as "balaman") probably originates from the words "bala" (small) and "ban" (cock's cry). The balaban, which has a soft, melancholic sound, is used in ensembles, orchestras and as a solo instrument, as well as to accompany groups of wind instruments and groups of ashugs. The balaban is usually hewn out of apricot, walnut, mulberry or pear wood. After that, it is soaked in vegetable oils and then dried at a particular temperature for a long time. Eight apertures are cut on the front side, and one is cut on the back. To play the instrument, the musician opens and closes the apertures with the fingers of both hands. A mouthpiece is attached at the head of the instrument. This mouthpiece is made of cane of a specific size that is flattened on one side. Because of this, sometimes the instrument is called the "yasti balaban" (flat balaban).



With the help of a clamp that is fitted to the mouthpiece, the musician can regulate the musical tone and pitch of the sound. To produce a tone, the player, deeply breathing, directs air into the mouthpiece, which is placed between the lips. By placing his fingers over the apertures, he achieves the desired pitch. The length of the instrument is 280-300 mm, and the diameter is 20-22 mm. The balaban's range goes from the "sol" of the small octave to the "do" of the second octave. The diapason can be expanded, depending upon the mastery of the performer.

## Zurna

The zurna, an instrument with a strong, high tone, is widespread in Azerbaijan. It occupies an important place in Azerbaijan's cultural life (photo). The name "zurna" is thought to have come from the word "surnay", translated as "sur" (a large banquet) and "nay" (cane or reed). Many types of zurna were widespread in the Middle East and Caucasus. Four types of zurna made of deer horn were found during the archeological excavations at one of the ancient settlements in Mingachevir. According to researchers, these instruments date back 3,000 years.

The zurna is used mainly during national holidays for performing folk music in the open air. There were at least six types of zurna: "gara zurna" (black zurna), "gaba zurna" "arabi zurna" (Arabian zurna), "jura zurna" (small zurna), "ajami zurna" (zurna of ajams) and "shahabi zurna".

The zurna is usually made of apricot, walnut or mulberry wood. The diameter at the top of the instrument is 20 mm; at the lower part of the instrument, it is 60 mm. The length of the zurna is 302-317 mm. There are seven apertures on the front side of the instrument. The end of the instrument has a plug ("masha") that is 120 mm long. It is made of wild willow, walnut or apricot wood. The purpose of the plug is to regulate the tuning of the instrument. The mouthpiece is 7-10 mm long and made of cane. The player produces sound from the instrument by inhaling air and breathing it out through the mouthpiece.

A round bobbin is attached to the round board in the middle of the pivot. The bobbin functions as a kind of support for the lips. The air passes through the mouthpiece, pivot and plug and enters into the body of the instrument. The player plays the zurna by opening and closing the apertures with his fingers.

The range of the zurna goes from the "ti flat" of the small octave to the "do" of the third octave. Depending on the mastery of the performer, the range can be expanded by a few notes. These keys are identified as "extra" keys.

As a rule, the zurna is included in wind instrument ensembles. As a solo instrument, or in ensembles or orchestras, the zurna is used for performing some dance melodies such as the "jangi" and other musical patterns. Uzeyir Hajibeyov included the zurna in the symphonic orchestra for his opera "Koroghlu".



## Tulum

The tulum is a leather wind instrument that used to be quite widespread in Azerbaijan, mainly in Karabakh, Lachin, Gazakh, Tovuz and Nakhchivan (photo). Now it can be found mainly in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. Just like the other wind instruments, the tulum dates to ancient times. Scholars attribute the tulum's appearance to the beginning of class society. A number of versions of this instrument were widely used under various names by the peoples of the Caucasus and by some nations in the West. The tulum was especially popular among nomadic tribes engaged in cattle and sheep-herding.

Since the instrument has a timbre that is similar to that of the zurna, it is also called a tulum zurna". The tulum is made of goatskin or sheepskin that has been tanned and softened in a special way. The skin is stripped from the animal as a whole piece. The skin of two legs is tied together. One of the other two leg parts is used for filling the instrument with air by means of an attached pipe, made of bone or reed, with a plug in the mouth. A pair of tubes is attached to the other leg part. The tubes, which are used for playing the instrument, are 260-280 mm and have seven apertures. The player holds the instrument under the left elbow then slightly presses the bag filled with air and forces the air to pass through the tubes. By opening and closing the apertures with the fingers of both hands, he produces sounds of the desired pitch. The first tube is used for producing the melody, and the second one is for holding the tonic (keynote).



## Tutak

The tutak has been a common shepherds' musical instrument since ancient times. It is a type of pipe. Various types of tutak are spread throughout many countries. Both large and small versions of this instrument are used in Azerbaijan, mainly as solo instruments in ensembles and orchestras of national instruments. The tutak has a pleasant, soft timbre.

The cylindrical trunk is made of apricot, walnut, mulberry or reed. The trunk is 280-300 mm in length, and 20 mm in diameter. It has seven apertures on the front side and one on the back side. A wooden plug, which is cut slantwise, is inserted into the top end of the trunk. A crack of a certain size is left between the wooden plug and the wall of the body. Air is breathed out through this crack. By opening or closing apertures with the fingers of both hands, one can produce sounds of various pitches. The instrument's scale covers a diapason from the "ti" of the small octave to the "do" of the third octave.



## Garmon

The garmon is a keyed wind instrument with bellows and free metal reeds. It first became a part of Azerbaijani traditional musical culture at the end of the 19th century. Nowadays it is a popular part of Azerbaijan's musical culture. The garmon is used in various ensembles and has found wide application in dance music. It's no surprise that the modern version of the garmon is very often considered to be Azerbaijan's national instrument.

The garmon is a rectangular box, the lateral parts of which are made of wood, with leather bellows in the middle part. The height of the instrument is 360 mm, and the width is 268 mm. Thin metal keys are located in an internal part of the box, on wooden plates in a certain order. By stretching and compressing the bellows with both hands, while pressing the keys, the player causes the compressed air to pass through the space formed. The fingers of the right hand play the melody, and the fingers of the left hand hold the tonic of the appropriate key. Thus, depending on the size of the vibrating plates, the performer produces sounds of various pitches. The garmon has an attractive timbre. Its range goes from the "do" of the small octave to the "fa" of the third octave. The technical performance properties and sound structure of the Azerbaijani garmon with its chromatic scale is different from those of the Russian garmons. Instrument makers who lived in Azerbaijan developed its sound system in complete conformity with the Azerbaijani musical scale. Besides this aspect, the timbre and color of the instrument and its wide technical and performance opportunities make it a very convenient instrument for performing Azerbaijani national music, including mughams.



## *String instruments*

In terms of variety and geographic range, string instruments occupy an exceptional place in Azerbaijani musical culture. There are various legends recorded in written sources about the appearance of string instruments. According to one legend, the guts of an animal that had been torn to pieces by an eagle fell out and hung from tree branches. After some time, the guts, which had dried and stretched over the branches, began to produce various musical tones caused by the wind. This supposedly prompted ancient people to invent string instruments. One part of this legend is verifiable: we do know that the strings and frets of early instruments were made of animal gut, and that the body, neck and head were made of wood.

Numerous string instruments have passed through centuries of evolution and survived until the present, often having an impact on the creation of new instruments.

Azerbaijani string instruments are divided into four types according to the way they are performed:

1. *Instruments played with a plectrum — tar, saz, ud, canun, barbat, rud, rubab, gopuz and choghur*

2. Instruments played with a bow — *kamancha* and *chagane*

3. Instruments played with the fingers — *chang* and *Shirvan tanbur*

4. Percussion string instrument — *santur*

### Gopuz

The gopuz is the most ancient Azerbaijani string instrument. Archeological excavations conducted in the 1960s by prominent American archeologists working in Southern Azerbaijan on the Shushdagh mountain slope, in the ancient city of Jygamysh, uncovered rare objects that dated back to the 6th millennium B.C.<sup>10</sup> The most interesting of these findings was a clay plate that depicted musicians at a majlis, complete with an ozan pressing a gopuz to his chest. The gopuz was widely known throughout the areas inhabited by Turkic peoples. Certain kinds of gopuz were also spread to several European countries (Ukraine, Poland and Hungary) under the names of “kobuz”, “kobza”, “komuz” and “komza”. This probably occurred in the 4th-5th centuries of A.D., during the Huns’ march into Europe (Great Migration of Peoples). Two kinds of gopuz were especially widespread:

1. The two-stringed instrument known as the “gil gopuz” or “iklyg” was mainly performed among Central Asia, particularly in Kazakhstan, where it is still widely used.

2. The three-stringed “golcha gopuz”, considered to be an ancestor of the modern ashug’s saz, is the most ancient string instrument used by Azerbaijani Turks. The golcha gopuz, mentioned in the epic “Kitabi Dada Gorgud” (The Book of Dada Gorgud), is presented there under several names. The “Gurulcha gopuz” and “Alcha gopuz” mentioned in “Kitabi Dada Gorgud” are not two different instruments but rather two names for the same instrument.

There is also information about the “gopuz rumi” and “ozan gopuz”—two kinds of gopuz—in “Kitabi al Advar”, a treatise by the outstanding Azerbaijani musician Abdulgadir Maraghai (12th-14th centuries).

The word “gopuz” probably comes from the ancient Turkic words “gop” (height) and “uz” (voice, magic music sound). The ancient Turkic gopuz usually had two or three strings. The two-stringed gopuz was spread throughout Altai, Siberia, Turkmenistan and the area in China inhabited by Uigurs. The three-stringed gopuz was spread among Anatolia and the Azerbaijani Turks. The body of a golcha gopuz is like the body of an ud, but much smaller. Two-thirds of its surface is covered with leather, and the other part is covered with thin wood. The other part of its sounding board has a thin wooden covering. There are no frets on the neck of the gopuz. The total length of the instrument is 810 mm. The length of the body is 410 mm, the width is 240 mm and the height is 20 mm. Its range goes from the “si” of the great octave to the “la” of the first octave.



### Choghur

The choghur dates back to the 12th to 16th centuries, the period between the gopuz and the saz. In the Caucasus, Iran and Anatolia, and in Sufi traditions, darvishes and ashugs used an instrument called the “chaghыр” / “chagur” / “chugur” / “choghur” (photo). Presumably, the name “choghur” means “the musical instrument used to appeal to God and truth”. [In Azerbaijani the word “chaghır” means “to call”, “to appeal”] It may be assumed that the name of the instrument originates from the expression “chal-chaghыр” (festivity or celebration), which was later changed to “choghur”. Various historical sources indicate that the choghur was used to create a high battle spirit among the soldiers of the medieval Safavid state’s army.

In the “Jahanarai Shah Ismayil Safavi” annals, describing the situation at the beginning of the 16th century, several lines are devoted to such an occasion: “At the head of the victoriously striding army, chukurs played and Turks-Varsakgs sang in order to raise the battle spirit of the warriors.”

In his work “Turkmen Times in the South”, Ali Reza Yalchin tells about the nine strings, 15 frets and perfect timbre of the choghur. It is possible to conclude from historical facts that in the 12th-13th centuries, the choghur replaced the ozan gopuz, and in the 15th-16th centuries, the choghur was replaced by the saz. But some versions of the choghur that was spread throughout the Caucasus and among the Iraqi Turkmens have survived until the present.





The 19th-century choghur stored in the Azerbaijan History Museum has three pairs of strings and 22 frets on its neck. The body of this instrument is made of mulberry wood. The top of the body has a wooden covering that is four mm thick. The neck and head of the instrument are made of nut wood, the pegs of pear wood. The total length of the instrument is 880 mm. The body is 400 mm long, 225 mm wide and 140 mm tall. Two resonator apertures are drilled on each side of the body, and several apertures are made on top of the sounding board. Its scale goes from the “do” of the small octave to the “sol” of the second octave.

### Chagane

The chagane is a four-stringed instrument that was used in Azerbaijan up until the end of the 19th century. The Russian artist G.Gagarin, who visited Azerbaijan in the first half of 19th century, depicted the chagane in his work “Shamaha Dancers”. Information about this instrument appears in the works of Gatran Tabrizi, Imadaddin Nasimi, Seyid Azim Shirvani and many other classical poets. The chagane has a pear-shaped body, a neck and a head. This reconstructed instrument was presented at a scientific symposium in Edinburgh, Scotland in 2000 and made a significant impression on the participants at the symposium.

The oblong body of the chagane consists of nine parts. It is assembled from pieces of nut wood, sandalwood and beech. The body and neck of the instrument are connected with a long iron probe that goes from the bottom part of the body and plays the role of a core. The face of the body is covered with a five-mm-thick sounding board made of pine. Resonator apertures are bored through this board. During the performance, the instrument is held in a vertical position, and the probe rests on the floor. The sound is produced with a bow that is held in the right hand. The total length of the instrument is 820 mm. The body is 420 mm long, 220 mm wide and 140 mm tall. Its range goes from the “fa sharp” of the great octave to the “fa sharp” of the second octave.



### Rubab

The rubab is a plucked string instrument that is played with a plectrum. It was widely used during the Middle Ages in Azerbaijan. The rubab was described by Nizami, Nasimi, Fuzuli, S.A. Shirvani and many other classical poets. According to Al-Farabi, a prominent Arab scientist living in the 10th century, the rubab is of ancient Eastern origin.<sup>17</sup> It was very popular among the peoples of Central Asia under the names “Kashghar rubab” and “Tajik rubab”. Nizami compares the gentle, delicate sound of the rubab with the voices of singing birds. The rubab was very popular in Shirvan musical gatherings (majlises). It was highly praised in Khagani Shirvani’s works:

*The Rubab is intoxicated with wine,  
It has lots of veins on its arm.  
It has experienced so much suffering  
And its singing is as a dry reed.*

In the 17th century, Givami Mutarzim wrote about a duet of a chang and a rubab:

*Wine and beauty fog his eyes,  
Chang and rubab are ringing in his ears.*



Beginning in the 18th century, the rubab was used less and less in Azerbaijan, and is no longer used today. This instrument, which played a significant role in the history of Azerbaijan’s musical culture, has recently been restored and returned to our culture.

The body of the rubab is made of mulberry wood, walnut and beech, and the neck is made of nut wood. Fish skin or film from a bull’s heart is stretched over the face of the body. Two pairs of strings and one individual string are made by twisting silk or gut, which is then fastened to the instrument. There are 18 frets on the neck of the instrument. The total length of the rubab is 910 mm. The body is 210 mm wide and 80 mm tall. Its range goes from the “si” of the great octave to the “mi” of the second octave.

### Barbat

The barbat is a plucked string instrument that was used in Azerbaijan up until the 16th-17th centuries. It was considered to be a palace musical instrument. Detailed information on this instrument can be found in the works of medieval Azerbaijani poets such as Nizami Ganjavi.

The word “barbat” is thought to originate from the words “bar” (chest) and “bat” (duck). However, some sources affirm that this word is Arabic in origin and is translated from the Arabic for “waves, ripple on the water”.

It is possible to conclude, surveying the medieval sources and Nizami’s works, that the creator of this instrument was the well-known musician, skillful player, singer and composer Barbed. Nizami Ganjavi described the palace musician Barbed in his poem “Khosrov and Shirin”:

*When, as a drunken nightingale, entered Barbed,  
There was as rippling water in his hands a barbat.  
Choosing from the hundreds of songs he knew,  
Barbed played the tunes of thirty favorites  
Making my soul and heart alive and dead.*



Various versions of the barbat were spread throughout the Eastern countries during the Middle Ages. But the native land of the instrument is considered to be Saudi Arabia.

Many ancient sources reveal that there were three-, eight- and ten-stringed versions of the barbat. The strings of the instrument are made of silk and animal gut. The barbat consists of three main parts: the body, neck and head. The body is made of walnut or red plane wood. The head, neck and pegs are made of walnut. The face of the body is covered with a four-mm-thick pine plate. Resonator apertures are made on this plate.

The total length of barbat is 665 mm, the width is 465 mm, the height is 250 mm, and length of the neck is 205 mm. Like an ancient ud, the barbat is tuned in perfect fourths. Its range goes from the “mi” of the great octave to the “mi” of the second octave.

### **Shirvan Tanbur**

The Shirvan tanbur has a pear-shaped form and belongs to the same family of instruments as the saz. This two-stringed, sometimes three-stringed, musical instrument of a very simple design was very popular in the Oriental world for centuries and is now widespread in the East, particularly among Central Asian peoples. The tanbur has a very ancient history. Al Farabi emphasizes its pre-Islamic origin. A lot of information on the tanbur that was popular in the medieval era among both palace and national musicians can be found in classical poetry and medieval miniatures.

In “Haft-Jam” by Fuzuli, the tanbur is described in the following manner:

*Singer, show heartfelt affection to the tanbur,  
Open a door for it with a key of respect.  
Through opened door will inspiration come,  
And souls will flourish in happiness.*



This instrument was widespread in the Middle Ages in Azerbaijan and was known as the “Shirvan tanbur”. Later, it was named the “Shirvan Tabriz tanbur” due to the popularity of this instrument among Tabriz’s population.

Beginning in the second half of the 19th century, the tanbur gradually began to decline in Azerbaijan.

There used to be various kinds of tanbur; for instance, its Baghdad, Khorasan, Indian, Shirvan and Afghan versions are mentioned in literature. Some kinds of tanbur were played with a bow and called “ney-tanbur”.

The Shirvan tanbur has a small body and a long neck. Its body is made of mulberry wood and pear wood, and the neck and head are made of walnut. The face of the instrument has a thin wooden plate made of pine or mulberry wood. A total of 14-17 frets are tied to the finger-board of the instrument. Another three to four frets are tied to the face of the instrument. They are called “khas parda” (special frets). There are two strings in the instrument.

The tuning of the Shirvan tanbur is similar to that of the saz. The first string is used for performing the melody, and the second string is tuned in various ways, depending on the character of the music. The tanbur is unique in that it is played with the thumb and middle finger of the right hand. Sometimes it's also played with the help of a plectrum, which is laid under a thimble held on the forefinger of the right hand. The total length of the tanbur is 940 mm. The length of the body is 385 mm, the width is 200 mm and the height is 135 mm. The length of the neck is 340 mm, and the length of the head is 120 mm. The Shirvan tanbur ranges from the “do” of the first octave to the “mi” of the second octave.

## Chang

The chang is shaped much like a harp, with an arched form. The chang's roots date back to antiquity, and it was widespread during the Middle Ages. The earliest kinds of chang were found in Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations. The gentle, melodious sound of the chang beautified aristocratic majlises. Archeological excavations near the city of Barda, one of the ancient cultural centers of Azerbaijan, turned up fragments of a clay dish from the 4th-3rd centuries B.C with an image of a woman playing the chang.

In medieval Azerbaijan, the chang had 18-24 strings.

A lot of information about the chang can be found in the works of Azerbaijani classical poets, other written sources and medieval miniature paintings. This instrument, which was played mainly by women, was described in Nizami's “Seven Beauties”:

*Taking the chang in her hands, that beautiful angel  
Told us about the torments she had suffered.  
The chang's voice spread all over the place,  
Its groaning drove all the lovers mad.*



The etymology of the word “chang” may be connected to the words “to hold” or “to seize”.

The chang's body takes the shape of an arch. Fish skin is pulled over the open part of the face, and the oblong neck is attached to the bottom part of the body. The pegs are fastened to this part. The strings are fastened on one end by metal loops that are attached to the skin part of the body; on the other end, they are wound up on wooden pegs.

The reconstructed chang has 30 silk and gut strings. The total height of the instrument is 930 mm, the height of the body is 850 mm, and the length of the neck is 665 mm.

The chromatic scale of the chang consists of 30 steps; the instrument ranges from the “sol” of the small octave to the “ti” of the second octave. The chang is played both as a solo instrument and in ensembles.

## Rud

The rud is another ancient musical instrument that was mentioned in the works of Azerbaijani medieval classical poets. In his “Iskandarnama”, Nizami described it in the following way:

*Singer, help me, play on the rud,  
Wake me up from a ruthless dream.  
Maybe the sound of the rud, rippling as the brook  
Will extinguish the thirst of my flaring soul.*

Much information about the rud can be found in the works of Gatrán Tabrizi (9th century). In his treatise, Abdulgadir Maraghayi mentions the rud: “Rud hani: Up to half of its surface is covered by skin, and frets are fastened to it; it has four strings. It is played like an ancient ud.”

The rud, considered as mainly a palace musical instrument, was used in Azerbaijan up until the 16th-17th centuries. Researchers have found out that the first samples of the rud were made of pumpkin, and that the strings were made of silk and animal gut. It's remarkable that its appearance reminds one of a pumpkin.

Its structure differs from that of other string instruments. Fish skin is pulled over half of the body's surface, and the other part is made of pine. Primarily, the instrument was played with the fingers; later it was played with the help of a plectrum made of soft



material. The rud's body is made of mulberry wood and apricot wood, the neck and head are made of nut wood, and the pegs are made of pear wood. A total of 12 frets are fastened to the instrument's fret-board. The timbre of its sound is low. The total length of the instrument is 860 mm. The length of the body is 495 mm, the width is 335 mm and the height is 170 mm. The length of the neck is 285 mm. The scale of the rud ranges from the "mi" of the great octave to the "si" of the second octave.

## Santur

The santur belongs to the family of instruments named "yatyg sazlar" — that is, horizontally laying instruments. The ganun and nuzha are two other instruments of this type. The main difference between the santur and these instruments is in the way the sound is produced. The santur is played with light hammers. Hence, the santur is also considered a string percussion instrument. However, the canun and nuzha are played with the plectrum, so they are plucked (pizzicato) instruments. According to historical data, the word "santur" originates from the Greek word "psanterina".

According to legend, the Hebrew king David was the creator of a number of musical instruments, including the santur. R. Yektabey notes: "This musical instrument is of very ancient origin. It's mentioned in the Torah under the name 'psanterin'. The word 'santer' represents the other (phonetic) form of this name."

Other versions of horizontally laying musical instruments are widespread in Eastern and Western countries. The most ancient and simple versions are still found among the people of Tuva and Hakassia. Russians call the instruments of this type "gusli", Belorussians and Moldovans, "tsembaly"; the Chuvash, "kjesli"; Tatars, "gusli"; Estonians, "kannel"; Georgians, "santuri"; and Uzbeks, "chang" and other names. The Ottoman Turks use two kinds of santur: the Alafrang and the Turkish Santur. These versions of santur are very similar in terms of structure, performance, scale and other features.



The diatonic santur with nine bridges is widespread now in Southern Azerbaijan (Iran). These nine bridges are on only one part of the instrument. In total, the instrument has 18 bridges: (9+9). The chromatic version of the santur has 24 bridges (12+12). There are some larger versions of the chromatic santur in Iran that are called "bem santur"—that is, the santur with a low timbre ("bam" is Azeri for "low").

The santur looks like a trapezoidal wooden box. The instrument consists of a frame, a top board and a bottom board. The total length of a santur with 12 bridges is 892 mm, the width is 315 mm, and the height is 69 mm. The instrument has a total of 96 metal strings. Four strings of the same tuning pass through each bridge. All of the wooden parts of the instrument are made of nut wood, and the pegs and strings-holder are made of metal. The bottom sounding board is seven-mm-thick board, and the top board is five mm thick. Players identify a "sol santur", "la santur" or "ti santur", depending on the tuning of the instrument.

The santur is not considered to be a transposing instrument. The range of the santur with nine bridges goes from the "mi" of the small octave to the "re" of the first octave. The santur with 12 bridges ranges from the "mi" of the great octave to the "la sharp" of second octave. The santur can be used as a solo, ensemble or orchestral instrument.

## Saz

The saz is a string instrument that is played with a plectrum. It is an integral part of the ashug art, rooted in the tradition of the great ozans. Moreover, the saz is one of the symbols of the Turkic world and Turkic spirituality.

The syncretic art of ashugs, which combines playing an instrument, reciting poetry, singing, telling epics as well as acting and dancing (plastic art) is, along with mugham art, is connected with the most ancient layers of Azerbaijan's national culture. The predecessor of today's ashug was considered to be very creative and was known among ancient Turkic peoples as "shaman", "oyun", "bakhshi", "yanshag", "varsag" and "ozan".

Just as the ozan's art has been passed down throughout thousands of years of evolution to the art of the ashugs, the gopuz has developed to become the ashug saz. The





modern Azerbaijani saz is considered to be the perfect descendant of the gopuz. Its modern shape was already formed by Shah Ismail Khatai's epoch. There are some beautiful lines about the saz in one of the poems by Shah Ismayil Khatai (16th century):

*Today I have not taken my saz in my hands,  
Therefore my voice is disappearing away into the sky.  
There are four important things that everybody needs:  
Science, words, singing and saz.*

The modern Azerbaijani saz differs from the saz that is widespread among other Turkic peoples in terms of its technical performance and acoustic features, with considerable advantages.

The body of the saz is made of specific kinds of mulberry wood. The neck is made of nut wood. The trunk of the body is assembled from wooden pieces in an odd number (usually nine). These lags are assembled on a small part called the "kup" (kyup), which connects the body with the neck. The neck is attached to the "kup". The top of the body is covered with a thin wooden sounding board, and 16-17 frets are fastened to the instrument's finger-board.

The "tavar saz", or "ana saz", has nine, sometimes eight strings. The smaller "orta" or "goltug" saz has six, sometimes seven strings. The "jura saz", which is the smallest, has four to six strings. In former times, the strings were made of high-quality steel that had been dipped in a silver solution; such strings never rusted and broke only in very rare cases.

In an orchestra of national instruments, the saz is used as a solo instrument. Usually, the "goltug" or "jura" saz is used for this purpose. The sound of the saz is produced with the help of a plectrum, made as a rule from cherry bark. Quite often the neck and lateral parts of the instrument are decorated with mother-of-pearl.

The basic "Tavar" saz has a total length of 1,200 mm. The depth of the body is 200 mm. The tavar saz's range goes from the "do" of the first octave to the "sol" of the second octave.

## Tar

According to its technical and dynamic capabilities, the contemporary tar is considered to be the most improved of the Azerbaijani string instruments. Uzeyir Hajibeyov wrote the following about the technical and acoustic capabilities of the instrument: "The tar is the most important and the most valuable of instruments in Eastern musical education."

In Persian, the word "tar" means "string" or "wire". Like other musical instruments, the contemporary tar was formed on the basis of its predecessors and has followed a long path of development and improvement.

The tar is referred to in the works of medieval classical poets such as Gatrán Tabrizi, Nizami Ganjavi and Mahammad Fuzuli. The tar is mentioned in Nizami Ganjavi's "Iskandarnama":

*Singer, play the tar one more night,  
Give me relief from this torment!  
Maybe a way will open for me,  
Maybe I can get free of this place.*

There are various kinds of tar, such as the "du-tar" (two-stringed tar in Persian), "seh-tar" (three-stringed tar), "chahar-tar" (four-stringed tar), "panj-tar" (five-stringed tar) and "shesh-tar" (six-stringed tar). Abdulgadir Maraghai wrote about a six-stringed tar in his work entitled "Magasid-al-Alhan".

The tar is depicted in medieval paintings. In this respect, it would be relevant to mention the oil painting "A Girl Playing Tar", which was made by Abu Gasim Tabrizi in 1816.

Mirza Sadig Asad oghlu (Sadigjan) (1846-1902) introduced changes in the structure and form of the tar. He also increased the number of strings from 5 to 11. Sadigjan changed the position of the instrument during performances; before, the tar was held on the knees. After the changes introduced by Sadigjan, the tar was held against the chest.

The tar underwent intensive development during the 20th century. It was the leading instrument in the orchestra of national instruments created in 1931 by Uzeyir Hajibeyov and Muslim Magomayev. The score-based tar performance instituted by Hajibeyov increased the technical and artistic capabilities of the instrument.



The tar was and still is used as the main instrument in a mugham trio (tar, kamancha and gaval) and continues to play a significant role in the development of the mugham art today. Solo vocal parts in mugham operas are accompanied by the tar. A number of Azerbaijani composers have composed concertos for tar and orchestra.

The structure and form of the tar is different from that of other string instruments. The tar has three main parts: the body, neck and head. The body is made of mulberry wood, and the neck and head are made of walnut. Its total length is 850 mm. The body is 165 mm tall and 185 mm wide.

There are 22 frets fastened to the neck of the instrument. The body is covered with film made of a cow's heart (heart pleura). The instrument has 11 strings of various thicknesses. The instrument is played with the help of a plectrum made of ebonite or bone.

The tar has three kinds of strings:

1. White, yellow and root strings (each in a pair)
2. Root string (unary) (a single thick string that is used only in mughams)
3. Ring strings (jingana) (two pairs)

The tar is held horizontally against the chest. Its body is pushed against the performer's chest with the help of the right wrist. The neck is held in the left hand. The player holds the plectrum in the right hand and presses the frets with the fingers of the left hand.

The player plays trills and other ornaments (vibrato, glissando) with the help of a plectrum. One method is to strike the string with the plectrum and then press the instrument against the chest for a few seconds. This makes the sound vibrate for a certain period of time. The effect produced during such a pause is called a "khum".

Scores for the tar are written in the mezzo-soprano clef of the "do" system. The sound scale of the tar is chromatic and covers two and a half octaves. The range of sounds is from the "do" of the small octave to the "sol" of the second octave. It is possible for the tar to reach "la flat" and "la" as well.

### **Kamancha**

The kamancha is played with a bow. It is widespread amongst Eastern and Central Asian peoples under a variety of names. In Azerbaijan, the kamancha reached a high level of development starting from the second half of the 19th century. This is closely connected with the development of the khanande art.

Earlier kamanchas were made of pumpkin and the wood of nutmeg and decorated with ivory. The one-stringed and two-stringed versions of the kamancha are thought to be descendents of the gopuz played with a bow. The kamancha is described in the works of medieval classical poets. Mir Seyid Ali, representative of the 16th-century school of painting, depicted the barbat, daf and kamancha in his work called "A Musical Gathering".

Abdulgadir Maraghai mentioned the kamancha in his works. E. Kaempfer, a German traveler who visited Azerbaijan in the 17th century, noted that the kamancha had three or four strings and a fine timbre. Nizami Ganjavi described the kamancha in his "Khosrov and Shirin":

*The Kaman is moaning like Moses  
And is listening to the singer while he is singing.  
The singer started a beautiful gazal  
And praised this feast.*

In the 20th century, there were three-stringed, four-stringed and even five-stringed kamanchas. There is a 19th-century five-stringed kamancha preserved in the ethnography fund of the Azerbaijan History Museum. The kamancha that belonged to Zulfugar Hajibeyov, a well-known Azerbaijani composer, is also exhibited in this Museum. The body and the neck of this three-stringed kamancha are tastefully decorated with mother-of-pearl. The body of the instrument is horizontally cut in the middle and covered with leather.

The kamancha consists of a head and neck and a spit that passes through the head and connects the two parts. The body, head and pegs are hewed out of a nut tree with the help of a special device. The open front part of the instrument is covered with sturgeon skin. The sound quality of the instrument depends on the distance between the neck and strings. The total length of the instrument is 700 mm. The body is 175 mm tall and 195 mm wide.



The kamancha's range is from the "la" of the small octave to the "la" of the third octave. The scores for the instrument are written in the "sol" clef (treble clef, or G clef) and the instrument is played one tone higher. It is tuned in perfect fourths and fifths.

## Ganun

The ganun is a string instrument that belongs to the group of horizontally laying instruments. It has been widespread in the Middle East, including Azerbaijan, for centuries. Information on the ganun can be found in the works of Nizami Ganjavi, Mahammad Fuzuli and other Azerbaijani classical poets. One very skillful player on the canun and chang was Mahsati Ganjavi, a 12th-century poetess who had deep knowledge about Oriental musical science. The canun, which was played mainly by women, is described in Fuzuli's "Haft Jam":

*One night they had majlis and entertainment,  
Sadness and melancholy were forgotten,  
Songs imperial sounded and the maiden of paradise  
Charmed everyone's hearing with the ganun, pleasing hearts.*

The ganun was also depicted in miniatures. This instrument has reached the present form through a long process of evolution. Uzeyir Hajibeyov noted that in the past, the ganun was considered to be the perfect instrument: "Like playing the piano, which is very important for every contemporary musician, playing the ganun was a must for musicians in the past, which had to be able to play it in addition to their main instruments."

The ganun is a flat wooden box of trapezoidal form. The bottom and lateral sides are made of birch, nut or another firm wood. Three-fourths of the upper part of the instrument is covered with a four-mm-thick board made of pine. The other part of the instrument is covered with fish skin. There are three resonators on the wooden part. On the skin part, there is a wooden bridge that stretches along the entire width of the instrument. The strings are attached at one end to special apertures on the instrument's body, pass over the wooden bridge and are fixed to the other end with pegs. Under the strings near the pegs are the "lings" (iron levers), which make the strings rise and fall, changing the pitch of the sound within a tone or semitone. The 24 lines of threefold string are fastened to the ganun. Thus, the total number of strings is 72. These strings used to be made of silk and gut. Now, kapron strings are used.



The ganun is placed on the knees and played with the ring fingers of both hands, using iron thimbles under which are laid ebonite pluckers. The ganun is tuned using an iron key shaped like a quadrangular. The ganun is 800-900 mm long, 380-400 mm wide, and 40-50 mm thick. The diatonic scale of the instrument ranges from the "sol" of the great octave to the "ti flat" of the second octave. The ganun is played in orchestras and ensembles of national musical instruments as an accompanying and solo instrument.

## Ud

The ud is a plucked string instrument that is widespread among Arabic peoples, in Turkey, Iran and many other Eastern countries. The word "ud" in translation from Arabic literally means "tree". According to sources, the earliest historical data about the ud is contained in the works of Ishag Ibn Ibrahim of Mosul (767-849) and Abu Nasr Farabi (870- 950).

The ud was very important for the development of medieval culture in the Middle East. There are legends in many ancient treatises testifying to the ud's ancient history. Abdulgadir Maraghayi wrote in his commentary to the "Kitab al Advar" ("A Book of Music Cycles") (1252) treatise by Safiaddin Abdulmomin Urmavi that this musical instrument was invented by one of the Prophet Mohammad's grandsons.

However, a number of medieval scientists and musicians, including the great Nizami Ganjavi, ascribed the invention of the ud to the ancient Greek philosopher Plato. The outstanding scientist and musicologist Safiaddin Urmavi took an active part in the improvement of this instrument and in the formation of its scale.



The original, powerful sound of the ud is mentioned in Fuzuli's "Haft Jam":

*Once I arranged a joyous feast,  
I did it for a mystery.  
As soon as the ud sounded in the room,  
The fire burned my soul.*

The ud was frequently represented in miniatures. In medieval sources, the four strings of the ancient ud represented the four elements of Nature: fire, water, earth and air. These strings had the following names: the first was zil ("of the highest pitch"); the second, masna; the third, maslas; and the fourth, bam ("of a low pitch"). Later, a fifth string named "had" was added.

The structure and form of the ancient ud has undergone a number of reforms throughout the centuries, resulting in the perfected form of today. Brought by the Arabs to Spain, the ud was widely distributed in Western countries and known as the lute.

The body of the ud is placed on the right knee, and the performer's right hand clasps it to the breast. The modern ud has one single and five double strings (11 in total). The strings are made of silk thread, gut and a special kapron, and are tuned in perfect fourths.

The ud has a pear-shaped body, a neck and a head with pegs. The body is made by assembling several parts made of sandalwood, walnut and pearwood. The wooden lags that are used to assemble the body are cut into five-mm-thick pieces. They are warmed and then, with the help of special boot-trees, shaped into a bent form. Then, all of the parts are assembled. The top sounding board is made of pine and is five mm thick. The total length of the instrument is 850 mm. The body is 350 mm wide, 480 mm long and 200 mm tall.

The range of the ud goes from the "mi" of the great octave to the "fa" of the second octave. The ud is played in orchestras and ensembles of traditional instruments as a solo and accompanying instrument.

**Kerimov Majnun. The Azerbaijani musical instruments  
(Azerbaijani, english and russian languages)  
Baku, "Yeni Nəsil", 2003, P. 124-145.**



### Mugham as a national music of Azerbaijan

Mugham is a musical term, which refers to improvised modal music with a melody, free of meter. It is also a general term applied to Azerbaijani traditional music. Mugham is an oral musical genre, but also has a big volume of instrumental-vocal work. Mugham formed as a multi-branched musical genre the late Middle Ages. But its history goes back further. The term Mugham is used at least 700 years.



Tar

Azerbaijani mugham caused some musical genres to emerge. The role of mugham in Azerbaijani music and the importance of its conception can be compared to that of the sonata and symphony in the music of Europe. Mugham is considered to be the biggest and basic genre of classical Azerbaijani music. Expressing the magnificence of the people's epic, Azerbaijani mugham amazes with its wise completeness. Mugham genres such as *Rast*, *Shut*, *Segah*, *Chahargah*, *Bayati-Shiraz*, *Shushter* and *Humayun* are widely used in the playing of mugham. There is also percussion (it is played with percussion instruments) and low-volume mugham. Percussion mughams are *Heyrati*, *Arazbari*, *Mansuriyye*, *Samai-Shams*, *Mani*, *Ovshari*, *Heydari*, *Garabagh shikestesi* and *Kesme shikeste*. Low-volume mughams include *Qatar*, *Rahab*, *Shahnaz*, *Bayati-Kurad*, *Dashti*, *medium Mahur*, *Mahur Hindi Dugah*, *Bayati-Qarae*, *Dilkesh* and *Nava*.



Kamancha

Mugham is performed by the group of performers. The group is composed of a singer – khanende (in Azeri language) who plays on gaval (a musical instrument), tar (a musical instrument) and kamancha (a musical instrument). This group of performers is called “trio of mugham”. Because there are participating tree people. The text of mughams which singer songs are usually being the classics of Azerbaijan poetry such as Fizuli, Nizami Ganjavi, Khagani Shirvani and etc. By the way the text of mugham is called gazels. And singer is free to choose the kind of poem, but he should take into consideration the melodic peculiarities of mugham he performs.



Gaval

Azerbaijani mugham was first recorded in the early 20th century. And in 1928 it was for the first time scripted into notes by M. Magomayev. Prominent composers Maestro Niyazi (1912-1984), Gara Garayev (1918-1982) and Fikrat Amirov (1922-1984) managed to write down mughams. The lyrics of mughams are usually the poems of Azerbaijani classical writers such as Nizami, Fizuli and Nasimi. These geniuses were great scientists and philosophers of their time and greatly influenced



the arts. The content of mugham is similar to that of poetry. And poetry is often devoted to love and symbolises humanity's dream about happiness. Mugham is played by a trio - the tar, kamancha and daf.

The singers Sattar (19th century), Hacı Husu (1830-98), Jabbar Garyagdioglu (1861-1944), Seyid Shushinski (1889-1965), Khan Shushinski (1901-79), Zulfi Adigozalov (1898-1963), the composers Vasif Adigozalov (1935), Faraj Garayev (1943), Polad Bul-Buloghlu (1945), Farhad Badalbeyli (1947), Jamil Amirov (1957) and musicians Gurban Pirimov (1880-1965), Meshadi Jamil Amirov (1875-1928), Ahmed Bakikhanov (1892-1973), Habil Aliyev (1929), Ramiz Guliyev (1947) and others played an important part in the development of

Azerbaijani mugham playing.

Artistic values of Azerbaijani mugham for national culture and the culture of the whole world and its high sense acknowledged by highly authorized international organization UNESCO in 2003. On 7 November 2003 UNESCO held a special award ceremony in Paris, identifying 28 Declared Masterpieces of Oral & Intangible Heritage of the World. UNESCO appreciated mugham as one of the masterpieces of the verbal and non-material heritage of the world.

#### IV. FOLKLORE SONGS

The most important genre of musical and poetic creative activity of Azeri people, folklore songs perfectly reflected pure, moral inner world, wishes and expectations of Azeri people.

Folklore songs of Azerbaijan are divided into several genre groups depending on their theme and content, as well as differences in poetic language. These groups are labor songs, ceremonial songs, household songs (lyrical songs are also included in this group) and historical songs.

One of the ancient types of Azeri folklore songs are ceremonial songs. Festivities, weddings and funeral processions were accompanied by traditional songs and these songs remain popular among people even nowadays. These songs include songs created in ancient times and performed at various ceremonies and dedicated to the Sun, fire, rain and other natural forces. Such ceremonies were usually accompanied by traditional ceremonial songs. The songs are based on works of bayaty, the widely spread form of folklore literature.

Genre of lyrical songs is the most rich and wonderful genre of music. Lyrical songs at the same time account for the most part of this music. Lyrical songs mainly cover the themes of pure love, its beauty, separation, expectation, grief, sorrow, etc.

Beside mughams, professional oral traditions of the music of Azerbaijan include the musical and poetical creative activity of ashugs. The word "ashu" is derived from the word "eshg" ("love") and means the devotedness to one's profession. As a term it developed in the 14th century. The art of ashugs, which emerged in ancient times, was popular among the people as it praised their wishes and expectations.

## Ashiqs of Azerbaijan

Ashiq art is one of the most characteristic phenomena of the cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani nation. It is perhaps the most popular form of artistic expression for the fifty million Azerbaijani language speakers (Turkic languages family) who live compactly in the South Caucasus, Iran and Russia (Daghestan), a part of which (more than 8 million at present) has had its statehood since 1918 (Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, 1918-1920). "The ashiq with the saz in the hands" - is a figure of the consciousness or, maybe, sub consciousness of Azerbaijanis, and is connected with the primordial, essential layers of the national folk culture.

The ashiq is a poet, a composer, a performer who plays the saz, a long-necked folk lute, a narrator, an actor-improviser, and sometimes even a dancer. Not every ashiq has talent for both writing poems and composing music. Nowadays, as in the past, there is a degree of specialization among the ashigs: some of them became famous as «el shairi» («folk poets»), others - «ustad ashiglar» (i.e. master ashigs) who combine poetic and/or composing gifts with the mastery of playing the saz. There are also some ashigs who won fame mainly as performers of the ashig repertoire, although many of them contributed to the development of ashig art. In the second half of the XXth century, in connection with the development of saz playing techniques and with increasing complexity, the playing of this instrument formed an independent field of ashig performance.

The musical and poetic heritage of the ashigs is created, preserved and passed on from one generation to another one in oral form, inevitably leading to the loss of a certain part of the heritage over time. A number of medieval works of ashig poetry also remain in numerous ancient manuscript poetry collections («djunk»s) that were assembled by both literary figures and educated poetry lovers. The preserved heritage of prominent ashigs such as Dirili Gurbani (16th century), Sari Ashiq, Abbas Tufarganli, (17th century), Khasta Gasim, Abdalgulabli Valeh(18th century), the ashigs of the 19th century Dilgam, Alasgar, Hussein Shamkirli, Hussein Bozalganli, Molla Juma and of many others, forms the core repertoire of the modern Azerbaijani ashigs. Ashiq works, passed on by oral transmission, are subject to alterations, gradually producing a body of various pieces. Unlike folk traditions however, the ashig art is not anonymous. Even in the shortest poem, in its last lines (except in the «bayati» genre, where it usually comes in the first line) the ashig says his name or «takhallus» (poetic pseudonym), as if adding his "signature."

The history of Azerbaijani ashig art has preserved hundreds of names of its bearers - prominent creators and performers. Today in Northern Azerbaijan, there are about 400 members of this profession while the total number of professional bearers of the Azerbaijani ashig tradition in the world, according to experts, is close to two thousand.

Today, the main audiences of the ashigs are villagers and people who have moved to the city from the country. However, both ordinary people and the intelligentsia - literary men, educated professors, academicians, members of parliament - can be found among ashig audiences. The ashig art has not always been an art of rural people. In the 16-18th centuries it was also widespread in cities and even at palaces.

As with any professional creative activity, the ashig art developed its own professional education institutions. Following the tradition, professional knowledge is passed on from teacher (ustad) to apprentice (shagird) through extensive (for 3-5 years) direct communication that is called "serving" the ustad. As a rule, the teacher takes his apprentices with him to weddings and other parties ('majlis'es) to which he is invited to perform and where the apprentices get vivid lessons in mastering both the repertoire and the manner of its performance, and the rules of conducting the ashig majlises. In the ashig art, especially in the XIXth century, the relations of «ustad-shagird» were often formed between a father and son or between an uncle and nephew. Many modern ashigs come from such ashig dynasties. Today, along with the traditional form of transmitting professional skills (ustad-shagird) that is still preserved in Azerbaijan, the teaching of the ashig art is also part of the state musical education system, including higher musical education at the State University of Culture and Arts.

Ashiq art is also widespread among the music lovers. In provinces such as Gazakh, Tovuz, Kalbajar, Gadabay, Agstafa, Shamakha, Gobustan, and also in Borchaly (Azerbaijani ethnic enclave in Georgia), the



historical lands of the turks - oghuz and qipchaq, many families have the saz in their homes and people play ashig melodies for their own pleasure.

The XXth century made its own inevitable corrections in the traditional ashig culture in Azerbaijan: the culture of listening to it changed, the tradition of narrating dastans (epic poetic-musical compositions) started to gradually fade away, and the social status of the ashigs changed. The ashigs have always had a much higher status in Azerbaijani society than musicians or artists. Among the Azerbaijani ashigs there arose a certain ethical code of behavior and attitude towards their profession that was perfectly reflected in the famous poem by Ashiq Alasgar «Garakdi»

*To become an ashig and travel the countries,  
One should have comprehensive knowledge,  
He should be good in his way of behaving,  
And should have civility and politeness.*

*He should be able to teach people the truth,  
To kill evil inside himself, refrain from ill emotions,  
He should do favors, good deeds in order for,  
People to think highly of him.*

"The ashig says about the things he sees", "that who makes the ashig shed tears will never ever laugh" - the figure of the ashig, especially those who were called "haqq ashigi" ("ashig of the Truth", i.e. 'Truth lover'), has always been sanctified and bears a halo of respect and people's love both in Azerbaijani sayings and generally in traditional people's ideas. This special attitude towards the ashigs is not just due to their popularity in the country but also to the historical genesis of ashig art.

The ashig tradition in Azerbaijan is many centuries old and originated with the art of the Turkic ozans with the "Book of Dede Gorgud" as its prominent literary monument, created 1300 years ago. The ozans - singers, narrators and players of the string instrument 'gopuz', the keepers of the Turkic language and ethos, and the bearers of Turkic culture - had a special spiritual authority among the oghuz Turkic tribes. The most respected ones were called "Dede" (spiritual "father"), such as, for example, the famous ozans Dede Gorgud, Dede Abbas, Dede Yediyar, Dede Gasim, Dede Karam. The Ozans departure from the stage of history in the XVIIth century was due to a number of factors. The wide popularization of Islam with its supranational ideology among the Turks-oghuzs, the spread of the Arabic language, literature and, in general, culture oriented to Islamic values, washed away the foundation of the ozan art and inevitably marginalized the ozans - the bearers of the Turkic culture - in the society. In a way, the historic contest between the venerable ozan Dede Yediyar and the young ashig Dirili Qurbani that took place in Ganja in the XVIth century and resulted in the victory of the ashig can be taken as a metaphor for this shift.

The heritage of the ancient ozans became the common foundation of the art of the Azerbaijani, Turkmen, Kazakh, Uigur, Turkish and Uzbek folk singer-narrators. In the 16-17th centuries, during the period of the forming of ashig traditions in Azerbaijan and Turkey and the traditions of bakhshi art in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Iran, the individual features in the art of these nations were formed - their own musical and poetic material, and musical instruments.

The ashig tradition began to take root in Azerbaijani culture as of the 15th -16th century, although the term "ashig" did not immediately acquire the meaning that it has today. With regard to its etymology, there are various theories. Some specialists connect its origin with the Arabic word "eshq" ("love", "asheeq" - "in love"), interpreting it in the spirit of the mystic love, while others mention with the Turkic word "ishig" ("light") as a symbol of divine enlightenment. There is also a theory that the word "ashig" is a distorted form of the word "sheikh" (or its local phonetic form "shikh"), the term for leaders of medieval eastern mystical orders. The phonetic similarity between the words "ashig" and "asheeq" is interesting. For the first time the word, "asheeq" ("in love") as a title and form of address is found in the works of the Turkic poet-mystic Ahmad Yasavi (1105-1166) who referred to Sufi dervishes as those "in love with Truth."

*Darvishes, the servants of Truth,  
Learned Truth,  
Fell in love with Truth, (and)  
Stepped on the path of Truth.*



According to Professor Maharram Gasimly, the transformation of the asheeqs into ashigs, so to speak, from dervishes into bards, occurred through the Sufi zikr where the music and poetic word, and sometimes ecstatic dancing, served as a means of spiritual union of the dervish-ashigs with the divine object of their love. Later on, as was often the case in the liturgical practices of various religions, poetic words and music gradually moved apart in the individual field of work of the dervish-ashigs, which in the XVI - XVIIth centuries, still preserved some ideological function, although by the XIXth century it had become purely artistic and aesthetic. However, even in the XIXth century there were often religious motives and plots in the ashig poetry, while the artistic gift of the ashig was considered a God-given magical power ("ilahi vergisi"). To this day among ashigs and their admirers in Azerbaijan, there is a strong belief in the sacred origin of the ashig art and in the sanctity of its main feature - the saz.

Ecclesiastes used the term "a time to gather stones" to speak of a time of creation and accumulation. For the Azerbaijani ashig art, the period from the XVIth century up to the middle of the XXth century was the time of "gathering stones" and storing up artistic values. In the XVIth century, when Shah Ismayil (1501-1524) of the Azerbaijani Safavid dynasty came to power in Iran, the Azerbaijani language received the status of official state language. That contributed substantially to the development of the Azerbaijani literary language and the heyday of the ashig poetry written in this language. Shah Ismayil, not just a political figure but also a talented classical poet who composed under the pseudonym "Khatayi," patronized the ashigs and often wrote poems in Azeri language in ashig poetic forms and metres.

The period from the XVIth to the XXth century in Azerbaijani culture was marked by the creation of ashig works of high artistic value, and new ashig poetic forms and genres.

In the XVIIth, XVIIIth, XIXth and even at the beginning of the XXth centuries, the tradition of narration was thriving, with the creation of hundreds of ashig dastans (large literary-musical compositions). The Azerbaijani ashigs created about 150 dastans - heroic, lyric, instructive and others. Such dastans as "Koroglu", "Gurbani", "Abbas and Gulgaz", "Ashiq Garib", "Asli and Karam", "Alikhan and Pari", "Shah Ismayil and Gulzar" to this day form the active core in the repertoire of the Azerbaijani ashigs. In the Azerbaijani ashig poetry of that period new varieties appeared based on the traditional forms bayati, garayli, goshma or such new for ashig poetry forms as tajnis, mukhammas, divani, which were then developed further. The "tajnis" (a poem written with the use of homonyms) for example, the first examples of which are found in the works of Dirili Gurbani (16th century), acquired many compositional ("bayati tajnis", "garayli tajnis", "jigali tajnis", "ayaqli tajnis"), lexical ("awal-akhir tajnis"), phonetic ("dodagdaimaz tajnis") and other (in total about 29) varieties later on in the art of the Azerbaijani ashigs of the XVIIIth and XIXth centuries. All this proves the poetic virtuosity of the ashigs and the richness of their poetic language. Ashig poetry of the 16th-19th centuries, the flesh of folk poetry's flesh, was also closely connected to the classical written literature. Many ashigs of this period were well-educated people who knew classical poetry and the Arabic and Persian languages. A number of forms of ashig poetry (divani, mukhammas, musaddas, mulamma) originated under the influence of classical written poetry. For example, the divani, the first examples of which are also found in the work of Dirili Gurbani, a prominent ashig of the 16th century and his younger contemporary ashig Amrah, arose on the basis of classical poetic gazal, mainly the gazals by Shah Ismayil, which the ashigs performed to saz accompaniment. It is also possible to speak of the influence of ashig poetry on classical poetry. The melodies of the ashig poems, their naturalness, the ease of their poetic metre, polished through the synthesis with the music, made them attractive to classical poets including such famous ones as Shah Ismayil Khatayi (16th century), Molla Panah Vagif, Molla Vali Vidadi (18th century), Gasim bay Zakir, Seyid Abulgasim Nabati (19th century) who paid the largest tribute to them.

Masterful possession of rhyme, the art of forming complicated poetic forms, the beauty and richness of the language of the ashig poetry, its poetic images, metaphors - all of these factors made the Azerbaijani ashig poetry of the XVI - XIXth centuries a phenomenon of high art that was the equal of the classical literature of that period, sometimes even surpassing it.

The peak in the development of the ashig art, in terms of both poetry and music, was from the end of the XVIIIth century to the beginning of the XXth century. In the XIXth century lots of new dastans appeared and their heroes were the famous ashigs (dastans "Dilgam", "Ashiq Hussein and Rayhan khanim", "Khaltanli Taghi and Gullu", "Ashiq Alynin Osmanli safari/Ashiq Aly's journey to Turkey", "Ashiq Alasgarin Garabagh safari /Ashiq Alasgar's journey to Garabagh", etc.), and the fighters against social injustice (dastans "Gachagh Nabi", "Gachagh Karam", "Gandal Nagi", etc.). Ashig-composers of the XIXth century - ashig Mil (from Daralayaz), ashig Hussein Shamkirli (from Shamkir), ashig Valeh Abdalgulably (from Garabagh), ashig Mirza Bilal (from Shirvan) and dozens of others created many ashig melodies that now form the classical repertoire.

The "Golden Age" of Azerbaijani ashig art was also the time of its largest geographic distribution. Nearly every village had its own ashigs and "el shairi", who maintained close artistic relations with other ashigs of the

same region or even from other regions. That is why the most talented ashigs of that time, regardless of the place they lived in, became famous over the whole territory where the Azerbaijani language was spoken. The ashig Mahammad Varkhianli (from Zagatala), Molla Juma (from Shaki), ashig Bilal (from Shamakha), Khaltanly Taghi (from Guba), from the western regions - Yahya bay Dilgam, Hussein Shamkirli, Guvandikli Ahmad, Panah Seyfali, ashig Gasim (from Shamkir), Aghdabanli Gurban (from Kalbajar), Hussein Bozalganli, Khayyat Mirza (from Tovuz) were widely known ashigs. Among the women-ashigs of the XIXth century, the most popular ones were ashig Pari (from Garabagh), ashig Hamayil (from Samkir), and ashig Basti (from Kalbajar). There were large centers of Azeri ashig art in Tabriz, Qaradagh, Zanjan, Urmiya, Khorasan and other regions of Iran. In all places where there were concentrations of Azerbaijanis, there were hearths of the Azerbaijani ashig culture that combined and merged into regional artistic schools and milieus, each with its individual prominent representatives, and its artistic and performing traditions. There were such art milieus in Georgia (Borchaly), Turkey (Childir), Dagestan (Darband) and Armenia (Goycha, Daralayaz, Agbaba, Iravan). In the XIXth century, the ashigs of Goycha (the former name of Lake Sevan in Armenia) formed one of the largest and most creatively productive Azerbaijani ashig milieu. Among them, the ashigs Aly, Musa, Maharram, Alasgar, Najaf, and the poets Mammadhusein, Novras Iman enjoyed national fame. The Goycha milieu and other Azerbaijani ashig schools on the territory of Armenia lost their historical significance because of ethnic persecution of 1918, 1948 and 1988-92.

The art of the Azerbaijani ashigs of the XVI - XIXth centuries was popular not only in Azerbaijan but in the whole Caucasus, Central Asia, Iran and Turkey, and was connected with the wide use of the Azerbaijani language in this region. It is known that the ashigs - Georgians, Lezghis, Kurds, including such prominent figures as Miran, Lazghi Ahmad, Salmasli Gul Artun (18th century), Ashiq Seyran, Keshishoglu (18th-19th centuries), Skandar-Nava, Shamchi Melko, Hezir, Yetim Gurji, Kichick Oglan (19th century) and many others did not only sing poems and songs of the Azerbaijani ashigs but also composed poems in the Azerbaijani language "for the wider dissemination of their works" (August von Haxthausen).

### *Poetic and musical features of ashig works*

Folk syllabic versification "hedja" or as the people also call it "barmag hesabi", i.e. "counting on fingers," forms the basis of ashig poetry. Ashig poems have a stanza form, and each stanza has four, five or more rarely six lines. Quatrains form the basis of the overwhelming majority of ashig poetic forms such as bayati, garaily, goshma, tajnis, divani and their variants. The number of syllables in a poetic line defines Ashig poetic meters. In bayati (a folk poetry form that is widespread in ashig literature) for example, each line consists of 7 syllables, in goraily - 8 syllables, in goshma - 11 syllables, in divani - 15 syllables. The forms of mukhammas (five-line stanza) and musaddas (six-line stanza) came to ashig poetry from classical poetry. In classical mukhammas, each line of a stanza consists of 16, sometimes 15 syllables, although in ashig mukhammas poetic lines are divided by the ashigs into two parts (8+8 or 7+8) to facilitate vocal breathing.

The indivisibility of poem and melody is a major feature of ashig music. Ashig poems are intended for singing to the accompaniment of the saz, while ashig melodies, in turn, have a certain poetic "matrix." If an ashig is going to perform the "Misri", "Shahsevani", "Afshari" or "Dilgami" melodies for example, he is free to choose any poem that matches the character of the melody, although it must be in goshma form (11-syllable lines). He will perform the ancient melodies "Pasha kochdu," "Bash Saritel," "Heydari" in the form of garaily (8-syllable lines). It is significant that many ashig tunes bear the names of poetic forms (bayati, garaily, tajnis, mukhammas, divani, gullu gafiya, dubeyt, tasnif, rubayi, takhmis) and their variants. There are also some melodies that are referred to with geographic names ("Nakhchevani", "Darbandi", "Garabagh shikastasi", "Iravan chukhuru", "Savagulu", "Goyca gozallamasi", "Tabriz dubeyti", "Childir divanisi", etc.), the names of the historical figures (Koroglu, Shah Khatayi, Gachagh Nabi), the names of some famous ashigs ("Jalili", "Dilgami", "Durakhani", "Bakhmani", "Shamshiri" and others), the names of the tribes ("Shahsevani", "Gaytagi", "Afshari"), or by women's names ("Bashkhanimi", "Susanbari", "Lalakhanim"). Sometimes the melodies names can change over time, taking on the names of their best performers. Very often the same melodies have several names or in different regions of Azerbaijan they are performed differently and under different names. The variety of the names of the melodies, as well as the melodies themselves, and the existence of regional variants of the same melodies make it more difficult to count the number of the existing ashig melodies. With some caution, we can say that the main repertoire of ashig melodies now includes about 200 tunes.

In Azerbaijani ashik art, various regional musical traditions took shape, as can be seen in the different manners of performing, the types of instrumental accompaniment, the choices of certain melodies and the dastan repertoire, and in the body motions used in the process of performing. By these and other signs, numerous local schools of Azerbaijan ashik art can be grouped into relatively large regional art milieus such as Shirvan (eastern), Ganjabasar and Borchaly (western) milieus, and also a number of schools and milieus of Iranian (Southern) Azerbaijan - in Tabriz, Garadagh, Urmiya, Zanjan, and Sava.

Today, the Ganjabasar milieu is represented by the ashik schools of Ganja, Tovuz, Shamkir, Gazakh, Gadabay, Kalbajar, and by some remaining bearers of the Qoycha school traditions. Each of the schools of the Ganjabasar region has its individual traditions and famous masters. The ashiks Mirza Bayramov, Islam Yusifov, Asad Rzayev, Gara Movlayev, Mahammad Shikhly, Mikayil Azafli, Hussein Javan, Imran Hasanov, Akbar Jafarov, Murad Niyazly, among the women - ashiks Askinaz and others were prominent representatives of this region in the 20th century. Today, the ashiks Alasgar Taghiyev, Adalat Nasibov, Mahmud Mammadov, Alikhan Niftaliyev, Isfandiyar Rustamov, and Mayis Ganjali are considered the ustads of this region. Ulduz Guliyeva, Gulara Azafly, Solmaz Kosayeva, and Samira Aliyeva developed traditions of female ashiks. Ganjabasar ashiks created many ashik melodies whose popularity went beyond the boundaries of their region. Along with their high creativity, they were also skilled saz performers. It is significant that they were the ones who, in the 20th century, established the tradition of saz solo instrumental performance which is brilliantly represented by Adalat Nasibov (Gazakh), Khanlar Maharramov, Ali Guliyev (Tovuz), Damir Hasanoglu, Ilgar Imamverdiyev (Gadabay), and, among the younger ones, by Fazayil Miskinli, Neymat Gasimli (Gadabay), Zulfiyya Ibadova, Azar Khanlaroglu (Tovuz). Ganjabasar ashiks usually perform with balaban (wooden wind instrument) accompaniment, often in the form of a "deyishme" (contest) of two ashiks. The body motions of these ashiks are very particular: during performance, they take steps backward, squatting down somewhat.

Unlike them, the Borchaly ashiks do not use any musical instruments apart from the saz, and practice restraint in motion during performance. The Borchaly milieu includes regions of Georgia such as Bolnisi (Bulus), Marneuli (Sarkhan), as well as Bashkechid, Garayazy, Darachichak, and Qarachop, that are entirely inhabited by Azerbaijanis. In the 20th century, this milieu produced prominent figures such as Sadih Sultanov, Amrah Gulmammadov, Kamandar Afandiyev, Hussein Sarajli, and Ahmad Sadakhli. The ashiks Asian Kosali, Mahammad Sadakhli, Nuraddin Gasimli, Ziyaddin Keshali, and ashik Gulabi are the ustads of this milieu today. The Borchaly milieu is especially strong in its performing traditions. Such melodies as "Bashkhanimi", "Mansiri", "Fakhri", "Borchaly yurd yeri", "Mikhayi", "Dol hijrani" and others form the regional repertoire typical of the ashiks of this school. Having restricted the instrumental accompaniment of the tune to the saz only, the ashiks of Borchaly paid special attention to the development of this instrument. In the middle of the XXth century, ashik Amrah Gulmammadov improved the saz and increased the number of its strings from nine to eleven and the number of frets from 13 to 18. Amrah Gulmammadov became the founder of a masterly style of saz playing and established a new level of performing technique for all Azerbaijani ashiks.

Among the regional schools and milieus of Azerbaijani ashik art, the Shirvan milieu remains aloof, differing from all others in both its musical style and performing peculiarities. The ashiks of Shamakha, Gobustan, Ismayilli, Saliyan, Kurdamir, Akhsu, Oujar, Gabala, Agdash, Zardab, Khachmaz and other towns of this region belong to the Shirvan milieu. In the XXth century the Shirvan milieu gave Azerbaijan such prominent masters as Mirza Bilal, Baylar Gadirov, Gurban Sadigov, Shakir Hajiyev, Panah Panahov, Shamil Piriyeu, Ahmed Rustamov, and Mahmud Alasgaroglu, who combined high levels of performing with poetic and musical creativity. Such talented masters as Sharbat Fatiyev, Khanmusa Musayev, Khanish Zahidov, Yanvar Badalov, Avazkhan (Rəhmanoglu) Khankishiyev, Abbas Musakhanoglu, Agamurad Israfilov, and Ahliman Rahimov develop traditions of this milieu today. The synthesis of ashik and mugham melodic styles forms a considerable difference between the Shirvan musical style and other Azerbaijani regional styles. For many Shirvan ashiks, the period of apprenticeship with the master-ustad meant performing mugham at weddings and maj lises before the master's performing. The mere form of the tune among the Shirvan ashiks, as a rule, includes inserted mugham episodes at the beginning or in the middle of the tune and some phrases at the end. In these insertions, mugham are performed to a rhythmic background. As a result, it gives rise to a peculiar polyrhythmic texture that combines a strict rhythmic pattern of instrumental accompaniment with a metrically free vocal melodic line. It is this very combination that the Azerbaijani "zarbi-mugham", i.e. "rhythmical mugham", is built on. There are some reasons to believe that the Shirvan ashik style had a certain influence on the mugham genre, particularly on the forming of varieties such as "zarbi-mugham" (literally, "rhythmic mugham"). For example, such popular zarbi-mughams as "Garabagh shikastasi", "Shirvan shikastasi", "Kasma shikasta", which gained a firm place in the repertoire of the Azerbaijan khanandas (singer-mugham performers) are, in fact, the ancient Shirvan ashik melodies. Shikəstə is one of the most widespread genres of the Shirvan ashik repertoire. Apart from the three ones mentioned above, different kinds of shikasta (including "Bayati

Shikasta", "Gojaman Shikasta", "Saritorpaq Shikasta", "Zarinji Shikasta", etc), "shashangi", "peshro", as well as "Ordubadi", "Gobustani", "Darbandi" and other tunes form the Shirvan regional repertoire. Shirvan ashigs perform in an ensemble which, along with the saz, includes the balaban, the percussive instruments nagara (drum) and gosha nagara (double drum), and sometimes the gharmon (kind of the accordion). Thanks to the use of percussion instruments, the rhythmic, sometimes even dancing origin, is brightly expressed in the Shirvan musical style. Some Shirvan ashigs dance during performance.

Despite the regional differences between the various Azerbaijan ashig schools (including southern schools which are not presented in this album for certain objective reasons), they all form a single art tradition united by a common national language, a poetic and musical repertoire, and, lastly, by the saz, a permanent attribute of the Azerbaijani ashigs.

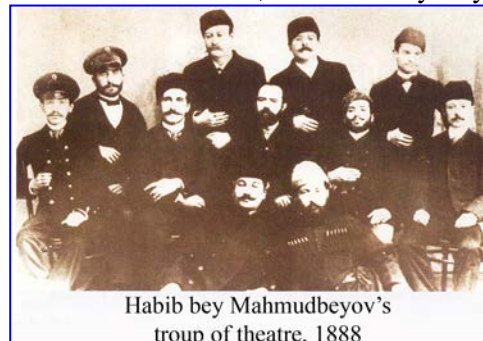
**Bagirova Sanubar. "Azərbaycan Aşıqları. Ashiqs of Azerbaijan".  
Baku, 2009. P. 33-54**

## V. THEATRE, OPERA AND BALLET

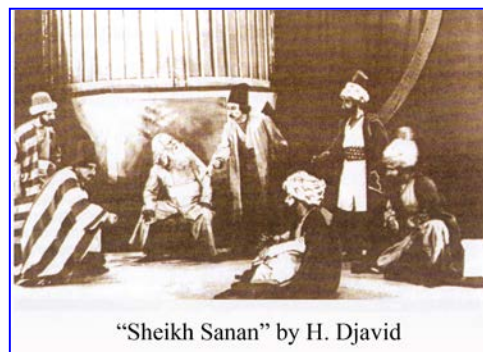
### Theatre in Azerbaijan

The Establishment and Development of Azerbaijani Theatre are closely connected with the activity, life, festivities, wedding traditions, and outlook of the people. Ancient traditional ceremonies, such as "Sayachy", "Novruz", and "Gevsech" encompass theatrical elements such as choruses, dances, various archetypical characters, and dialogs in dramatic plays. The most important moment of the ceremony of Novruz, in the game "Kosa-Kosa", is the pattern of the theatrical plays. The game is characterized by a plot, dramatic moments, and actors in masks who wear special clothes. The episodes "Khan-Khan", "Dancing of Mutribs" ("mutrib" means "a boy in woman's dress"), "The Competition between the Bride and Mother-In-Law" and others performed at wedding ceremonies reveal the importance of elements of games and performance. The elements of a stage theatre are also strong in a widespread ceremony "Yugh", at the meetings of Ozans and Ashugs, in the scenes of "Zorxana", and in rope-dancers' shows. Performances, which were present in ceremonies and games, played a great role in the development of independent national theatre. The most widespread "Kosa-Kosa", "Garavelli", (one of the forms of stage theater), "Kilimarasy", "Shah Selim" (puppet shows), etc. testify that the national theatre of Azerbaijan developed independently. Some of these performances were based on a predictable plot and were of game-like in nature, while others consisted of a satirical repertoire, reflecting a more mature stage of the national theatre of Azerbaijan.

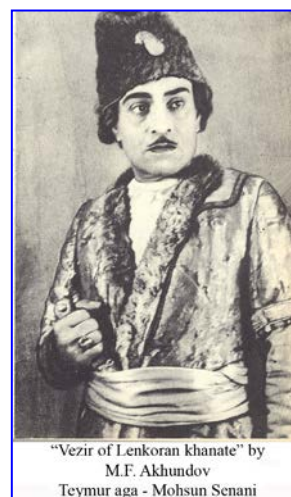
The national theatre of Azerbaijan was marked by its realism and connection with the working masses. The repertoire of the national theatre involved small ethical shows (fars). Such shows as "Kosa-Kosa", "Tapdiq choban" ("The Foundling Shepherd"), "Tenbel qardash" ("Lazy Brother", a three-act comedy), etc. were popular amongst the people. These performances are notable for their optimism. They mainly reflect everyday life and agriculture. The comedy developed into satire, criticizing the defects in people's work, life, and psychology. Under the rule of the Sefevies (in the 16th century), which advocated Shiism as an official religion, used different methods to influence the consciousness of the people. In that period, the religious performance "Shabih" was widespread. This performance, along with the positive influence of the development of the professional theatre of Azerbaijan, also created conditions for the appearance of a number of actors. Folklore Theatre played a great role in the development of the professional theatre of Azerbaijan. The history of Azerbaijani theatre dates back to the staging of "Lenkeran khanin veziri" (Vezir of Lenkoran Khanate) and "Hadji Gara" by M.F.Akhundov in March and April of 1873. These were performed by pupils of the school of realism with the close participation of N. Vezirov and A. Adygozelov (Gorani) and were the stimulus for the establishment of the national theatre. Leading intellectuals of Azerbaijan and teachers later graduating from the Gory Seminary staged various performances in Shusha, Nakhichevan and other cities (it is interesting to note that they simultaneously played a number of roles in each performance). Leading teachers and intellectuals, led by U.Melik-Hagnazarov arranged shows in clubs and in Khandemirov's theatre in Shusha during summer vacations. They mainly staged comedies by M.F.Akhundov ("Khrys-quldurbasan", "Musyo Jirdan ve dervish Mesteli shah"). Creations by M.F. Akhundov were also performed. The comedies, for example, were staged in Azeri starting in 1876. The most prominent among the leading intellectuals were N. Vezirov, the author of a number of comedies and vaudevilles, B. Badalbeyov, A. Velibeyov, F. Kocherli, Mukhtar Muradov, I. Shefibeyov, the famous singer Djabbar Qaryaghyoghlu (Shusha), M. Sidgi, Dj. Mamedguluzade's brother Mirza Alekper, playwright E. Sultanov (Nakhichevan), R. Efendiyev (Nukha), etc. From 1870-1880 the amateurs working in different cities of Azerbaijan gradually gathered around the workers



Habib bey Mahmudbeyov's  
troupe of theatre, 1888



"Sheikh Sanan" by H. Djavid

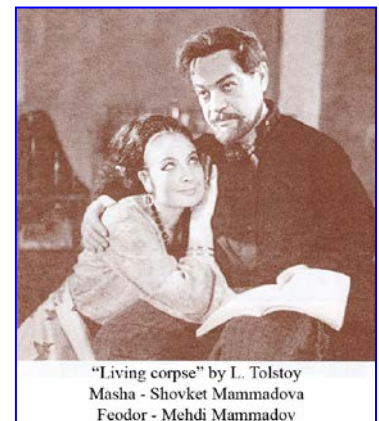
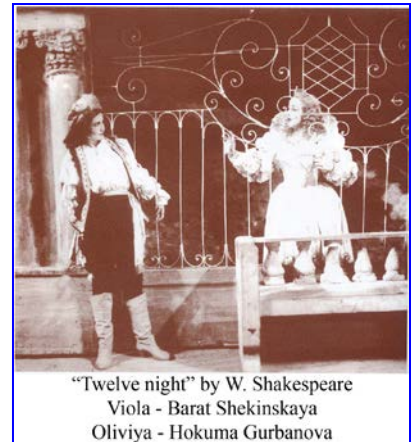


"Vezir of Lenkoran Khanate" by  
M.F. Akhundov  
Teymur aga - Mohsun Senani



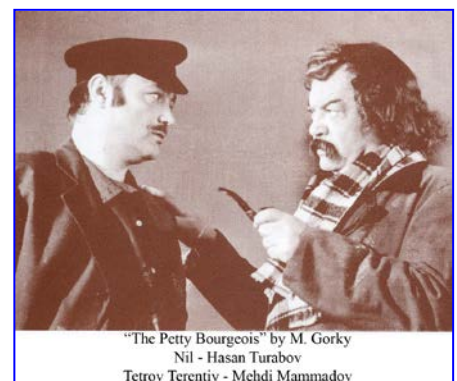
of the Baku theater. Therefore, Baku theatre livened by the late 1880s, in which led to the establishment of a permanent theatre team. In 1887, the theatre team in Baku was led by H.Mahmudbekov, S.M.Ganizade and N.Veliyev. They strengthened this team and transformed it into a troupe that started its career as the staff of an independent theatre in 1888.

Since 1890 N.Narimanov made a great contribution to implementation of the requirements of realism on the stage and to the development of the theatre with sound ideas in Azerbaijan. He regarded the theatre as one of the important means for spreading the leading ideas of the time and for raising the self-consciousness of people and used the theatre as a tribune for expressing ideas. N.Narimanov attracted the highly intellectual young people to the theatre troupes and at the same time played principal roles in a number of performances. H.Zerdabi created the first professional theatre troupe "The first Muslim theatrical troupe" in Baku in 1896. The union of actors was established for the first time in Baku in 1897. The repertoire of Azerbaijani theatre included the plays of national dramatists as M.F.Akhundov, N.Vezirov, H.Vezirov, N.Narimanov, A.Haqverdiyev, Dj. Mamedguluzade and others and was also enriched by creations of Russian (N.V.Gogol, I.S.Turgenev, L.N.Tolstoy and Western European classics (W.Shakespeare, F.Shiller, H.Heyne, Y.B.Molyer). From its very establishment Azerbaijani theatre adhered to the ideas of democracy and enlightenment. Along with the comedies of M.F.Akhundov, such plays as "Musibeti Fakhreddin" ("Misfortune of Fakhreddin"), "Avoiding rain, caught in a rainfall by N.Vezirov, "The ruining house", "An unhappy young", "Agha Mukhamed Shah Gadjar" by A.Hagverdiyev, "Nadanlig" ("Ignorance"), "Nadir Shah" by N.Narimanov exposed the traditions of feudalism, despotism and tyranny of capitalism. The organization of Muslim Theater Actors was established in Baku in 1906. It was led by famous theatre worker Dj.Zeynalov. Despite prosecutions and material difficulties the organization diligently staged different plays and expanded its repertoire. At that time theatrical circles and troupes were created in a number of working districts of Baku ("The theatrical circle of Balakhany", "Zeal"). The troupe "Zeal" included A.Rzayev, Dj.Hadjinsky, etc, beside its direct founder M.A.Aliyev. The troupers not only prepared performances but also attracted the audience.



Due to the lack of means for renting an appropriate establishment, the performances were shown in a salon "Granvio" of the trade passage. The play "Ignorance" by N.Narimanov was staged there in 1906. Following the revolution of 1905, it was permitted to establish a number of organizations while those operating secretly emerged on the surface. These included the cultural and educational organization "Nidjat". Establishment of a theatrical troupe under this organization in 1907 played a great role in the development of the theatre of that period.

The professional theatrical troupe, including the professional actors as H.Arablinski, S.Ruhulla, A.Veli, was created at that time under the organization "Hidjat" in 1908 and it had its permanent cloakroom and properties. The troupe demonstrated the performances twice or thrice a week at Taghiyev's theatre and in working districts. Such plays as "The unhappy young man", "Agha Mohamed Shah Gadjar" by A.Hagverdiyev, "Nadir shah", by N.Narimanov, "Pehlevani-Zemane" by N.Vezirov, "Gaveyi ahengar" by Sh. Samin, "Runners" by F.Shiller, "Almensur" by N.Neynen, "Othello" by W.Shakespeare, "A physician" by U.B.Molier, "The inspector", "Wedding" by N.V.Gogol, "The former wine-maker" occupied the most important place in the repertoire of Azerbaijani theatre at that time. A new cultural and educational society



"Shafa" and a theatrical department under this society were established in 1910. Yet the theatrical troupe of "Shafa" was weaker compared with "Nidjat". However, the actors of Nidjat's troupe gradually transferred to Shafa". D.Bunyadzade, poet Samed Mansur, actors Dj. Zeynalov, A.M. Sherifzade took an active part in the activity of the society and from time to time actors from Nidjat as H.Arablinski, M.A.Aliyev, S.Ruhulla, H.Sarabski were invited to take part in the theatrical shows. The troupe of Shafa not only arranged performances but also dealt with cultural and educational issues related to the theatre. The troupe celebrated the 25th jubilee of

Dj.Zeynalov's creative activity in 1911, the 100th jubilee of M.F.Akhundov in 1911, the fortieth anniversary of N.Vezirov's theatrical activity. Shafa was characterized not only by performing its shows in towns and villages of Azerbaijan but also by arranging tours to other countries (South Caucasus, Central Asia, North Caucasus, in the cities of Iran, Astrakhan, Kazan, etc). On the whole, both Nidjat and Shafa made a great contribution to strengthening of the organization and creative activity of the Azerbaijani theatre.

The staging of masterpiece by U.Hadjibeyov "Leyli and Medjnun" -the first creation of the national opera in January 1908 (by a new calendar-January25), laid the foundation of professional musical theatre of Azerbaijan. Within the first year of the establishment of the theatre U.Hadjibeyov's musical comedies created in 1908-1913 "Leyli and Medjnun", "Sheikh Senan", "No matter this or that", "Arshyn Mal Alan" dominated the repertoire of the theatre. The following years were marked by enrichment of theatrical repertoire with such creations of Z.Hadjibeyov (musical comedies "Ashug Garib", "Young at the age of fifty", "The Married Bachelor"), M.Magomayev ("Shah Ismayil", "M.M.Kazinovsky (musical comedy "Vurhavur"), M.Dj.Amirov (opera "Seyfalmulk") Yet, despite the absence of its own repertoire the musical theatre was in need of professional performers. Musical performances were mainly performed by theatrical artists H.Arablinski (director), A.Huseynzade, A. and Y.Olenskayas, R.Darably, A.Anaply etc along with opera singers H.Sarabski, M.Mamedov (Bulbul), H.Hadjibababeyov, H.Teregulov, M.Baghyrov, A.Aghdamsky. Musical and drama theatres were not delimited and both musical and drama creations were included in the repertoire of troupes (musical performances dominated in 1910th).

The staging of the comedy "Oluler" ("The deceased") by Dj.Mamedguluzade in 1916 proved the maturity of the Azerbaijani theatre. The play that stood against ignorance and superstitions, lie and tyranny was a great success. The union of Muslim Artists was founded in Baku in 1917. A.M.Sharifzade was elected the chair of the union. The union, uniting all theatrical troupes, produced performances based on friendship. However, this union survived only up to 1918. The entrepreneurs of Mayilov Theater did not give the actors an opportunity to appear on the stage. Most of the actors went on tours. Only the trup of U. and Z.Hadjibeyov brothers operated permanently. The troupe involved the actors of theater, opera and operetta. The theatre of Azerbaijan which reflected the leading, democratic ideas played a great role in the cultural development of people. However at that period the theatre did not reached the high level of the scene ethic.

Until 1919 theatre performances in Baku were put on by the following groups: the Azerbaijani Artists' Union, Nijat, Hamiyyat, Sefa and The Office of Brothers Zulfuqar bey and Uzeyir bey Hajibeyov. The performances were mainly played in the buildings of Tagiyev, Mayilov and Musa Nagiyev.

On 24 October 1919 the Azerbaijani Government Theatre was established in Baku and to date it is called the National Academic Drama Theatre. This group is also the heir of the one founded in 1873. Abdurrahim bey Hagverdiyev, Eyneli bey Sultanov, Huseyn Arablinski, Abbasmirza Sherifzadeh, Alexander Tuganov, Sultan Dadashov, Adil Iskenderov, Ismayil Hidayetzadeh, Zefer Nematov, Mehdi Mammadov, and Tofiq Kazimov played a big role in creating the productions of the Azerbaijani theatre. There were great actors too: Mirzaga Aliyev, Jahangir Zeynalov, Marziye Davudova, Fatma Gadirli, Hokume Gurbanova, Rza Afganli, Agadadash Gurbanov, Ismayil Osmanli, Nasiba Zeynalova, as well as Huseyngulu Sarabski, Hegiget Rzayeva, Shovket Mammadova and Bulbul created fine traditions of dramatic and musical theatre.

At present in Azerbaijan there are 27 state theatres which perform plays, opera, musical comedies, puppet shows and mime and also two municipal and four private theatres. The Azerbaijani State Cultural and Art University teaches different specialties of theatre art. In Baku there is also the Russian Drama theatre company, which performs in Russian, and the Young Spectators' and Musical Comedy Theatre which has its own Russian company of actors. Today the National Academic Drama Theatre includes in its repertoire plays such as *Oedipus by Sophocles*, *King Lear* and *Hamlet* by Shakespeare, *The Commemoration Night of Socrates* by Chingiz Aytmatov, *Aydin* by Jafar Jabbarli, *Farhad and Shirin* by Samad Vurgun and *The Prince and His Daughter* by Ilyas Efendiyev and others.



"Vagif" by S. Vurgun  
Gajar - Ismayil Dagistanly



"Aydin" by D. Djabbarly  
Boyukhanim - Hidjran Nasirova  
Gultekin - Maleyka Asadova



"Skull" by N. Hikmet  
Doctor Dolbanezo - Kamal Xudaverdiyev  
Girl - Mehriban Khanlarova

In Azerbaijan playwrights such as Necef bey Vezirov, Abrurrahim bey Haqverdiyev Jalil Mammadguluzadeh, Huseyn Javid, Sabit Rehman, Anvar Mammadkhanli, Ilyas Afandiyev and other contemporary's have created successful works in the wake of M. F. Akhundov.

<http://www.mct.gov.az/en/azculture/view/79/>



## Opera in Azerbaijan

Opera in Azerbaijan is basically a 20th century phenomenon which has incorporated elements of Azerbaijani traditional music. The first opera performances in Baku were staged at the old Taghiyev Theatre, a building that once stood on the site where the new Musical Comedy Theatre is presently being constructed.

The Azerbaijani State Theatre of Opera and Ballet was built in 1910. Oil baron and philanthropist Haji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev promised to underwrite the costs of construction. Ten months later, Taghiyev had to shell out the money. The opera house was ready.

Civil engineer and architect N. G. Bayev, a graduate of the Institute of Civil Engineering in St. Petersburg designed the building along the lines of the Renaissance style architecture. The total costs for construction exceeded 250,000 rubles (approximately \$30,000) an enormous sum of money for that period.

The Opera Theatre which was so vital to musical culture in Baku mysteriously burned down in 1985. It's still not clear how the fire started. But the building had become such a central landmark for music and culture that officials decided to rebuild it. Three years later on January 3, 1988, the Opera Theatre opened again. Today it stands as one of the most beautiful and majestic symbols of cultural life in Azerbaijan.



Leyli and Majnun by Uzeyir Hajibeyov

### *First Azeri Operas*

Azerbaijan prides itself with having created the first opera of the Middle East - "Leyli and Majnun" (1908) by Uzeyir Hajibeyov (1885-1948), which is based on the poetry of Nizami. It was Hajibeyov's first major work. He was 22 at the time and admits that he really didn't have the formal preparation to tackle an opera - music and libretto. Nevertheless, it was Hajibeyov who opened the first page of Azerbaijan's national opera history. He set the tone and direction of many works that followed. For example, Hajibeyov led the battle to retain traditional Azerbaijani modal forms, melodies and folk instruments. In the early 1920s, there was a furious intellectual battle going on between those who wanted to hold on to the traditional musical expressions of the past and those who wanted totally to discard them and embrace European music.



Leyli and Majnun by Uzeyir Hajibeyov

Hajibeyov was the genius who took the best of blending eastern traditional elements (melody, mode and instruments) with western style and form, specifically opera, which was followed later on by other composers who wrote works of symphonic, ballet, concerto and chamber music.

Between 1908 and 1915, Uzeyir wrote five more operas, one after another, making a total of six during the pre-revolutionary period. In addition, he wrote three musical comedies. After the Soviet power was established (1920), his productivity slackened in terms of composing as he was deeply involved with many administrative and pedagogical tasks. Hajibeyov went on to write only one more opera - Koroglu (The Blind Man's Son) in 1937. Fortunately, it was a masterpiece.

Early singers of opera, remembered for their masterful performances, include Bul-bul, Shovkat Mammadova, H. Sarabski, H. Hajibabayev and M. Bagirov. Later others like Sona Hajiyeva, Khurshud and Surayya Hajar, Hagigat Rezayeva and Sona Mustafayeva followed.

After 1920, opera in Baku was spurred on by the staging of several of the Western classics by Verdi, Bizet, Puccini, Rossini, Glinka, Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky.

The greatest developments in opera took place during the 1930s when some of the most outstanding operas were written, including "Shah Sanam" by Reinhold Gliere (1875-1956), "Nargiz" by Muslim Magomayev (1885- 1937) and "Koroglu" by Hajibeyov.

Gliere, an eminent Russian composer came to Baku because of his fascination with folk songs of the Caucasus. He incorporated many Azerbaijani melodies into his opera "Shah Sanam" (1934) in which Shovkat Mammadova and Bul-bul performed the leading roles.

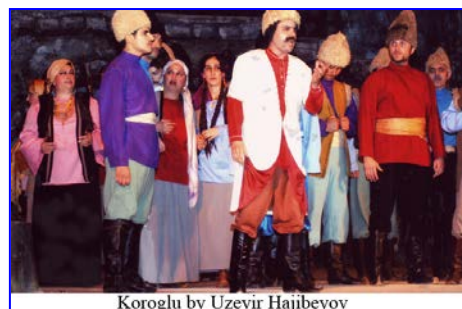
The year 1937 was a watershed in the history of opera in Azerbaijan as it marked the first performance of Hajibeyov's opera "Koroglu"(The Blind Man's Son) and Muslim Magomayev's "Nargiz."

Koroglu was based on Azeri folk music but it incorporated arias, recitatives, ensembles, a large chorus and dances. Folk instruments, such as the tar (a stringed instrument) and zurna (a wind instrument) were also written into the score along with western symphonic instruments. The scenes are dramatic. Even a horse-Koroglu's, of course-appears on stage.

Koroglu is based on an Azerbaijani folk legend. The hero overthrows the khan who has been exploiting the people. The plot is based on an Azeri folk legend but perfectly suited the Soviet propaganda machine of the time. The music score is extraordinary and hailed as Hajibeyov's masterpiece.

When we speak about the Azerbaijan Opera Theatre, it's important to note a distinguishing characteristic about its performance troupes. The opera collectives of Italy, England, America, Germany, France and other countries usually consist of only one troupe, meaning that all operas are performed in the native language of that nation or are performed in the composers' native languages. The same vocalists perform all of them. In other countries, the opera collectives consist of two troupes-those performing in the native language operas and those singing in languages of the Western classics.

But in Azerbaijan, there are three troupes. One troupe is comprised of mugam where the soloists are mugam performers who sing in the Azeri language. The second troupe consists of the soloists who perform the classic operas of Azerbaijani composers in the Azeri language. The third troupe, known as the Russian troupe, consists of soloists who perform European classic operas, as well as operas by Russian composers. During the Soviet period, most of the European classics were translated into Russian; so, many of these operas are traditionally performed in Russian instead of the original languages in which the operas were written-German, French and Italian. In addition to these three troupes, Azerbaijan has one single chorus and an orchestra that go to make up the Azerbaijani opera collective.



Koroglu by Uzeyir Hajibeyov

The Azerbaijani Opera and Ballet Theater troupe often toured throughout the former Soviet Union. In 1941, they performed in Iran and later went on to make appearances in France, Morocco and various Asian countries.

The opera is a powerful medium because it creates dramatic characters that take on a life of their own. Lately, with the economic difficulties that we have been experiencing since the collapse of the Soviet Union, opera has had severe setbacks and been neglected. It is critical that we don't lose what we have worked so hard to gain and that our singers maintain the high professional level of their previous performances. It's vital that we continue this legacy of Azerbaijani opera and pass it to the next generation. Somehow, we must find ways for the vibrancy of the opera to be able to continue to live and breathe and sing.

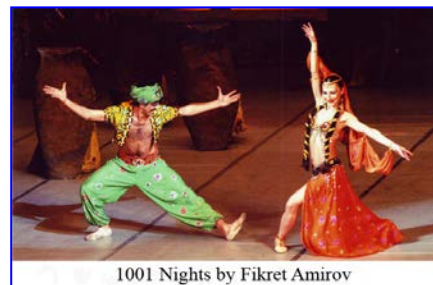
### *Major Operas by Azerbaijani Composers*

<b>1908</b> Leyli and Majnun	Uzeyir Hajibeyov
<b>1910</b> Husband & Wife	Uzeyir Hajibeyov
<b>1911</b> Mashadi Ibad	Uzeyir Hajibeyov
<b>1913</b> Arshin Mal Alan	Uzeyir Hajibeyov
<b>1915</b> Ashug Garib	Zulfugar Hajibeyov
<b>1919</b> Shah Ismayil	Muslim Magomayev
<b>1935</b> Nargiz	Muslim Magomayev
<b>1937</b> Koroglu	Uzeyir Hajibeyov
<b>1945</b> Vatan (Motherland)	Gara Garayev & Jovdat Hajiyev
<b>1953</b> Sevil	Fikrat Amirov
<b>1957</b> Azad	Jahangir Jahangirov
<b>1960</b> Vagif	Ramiz Mustafayev
<b>1972</b> Bridal Rock	Shafiga Akhundova

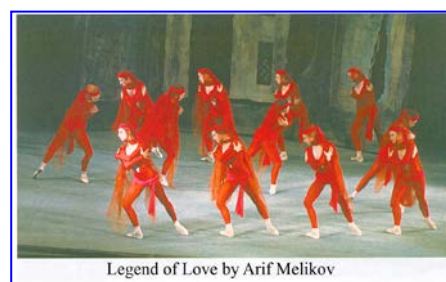
### Ballet in Azerbaijan

The first Azerbaijani ballet is *The Maiden's Tower*, staged by Afrasiyab Badalbeyli (1907-1976), a well-known composer, in 1940 based on motives in the eponymous poem by Jafar Jabbarli, a prominent playwright. The work was composed on basis of national dance music, mugham and classical ballet. The emergence and development of Azeri ballet began at this time. The Gulshen ballet by Soltan Hajibeyov staged in 1950. Ballets written by Gara Garayev *Seven Beauties* (1952) and *Along the Thundering Ways* (1958), by Fikrat Amirov; *Nizami* (1947) and *1001 Nights* (1979), by Niyazi Chitra (1971) and by Arif Melikoy *The Legend of Love* (1961), Faraj Garayev by *Shadows of Gobustan* (1969) and others made Azeri music famous all over the world.

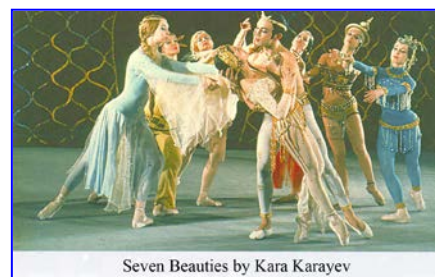
Among the great dances that have performed on the opera house stage are: Gamar Almaszadeh, Leyla Vakilova, Alaskar Abdullayev, Rafiqa Akhundova and Maksud Mamedov, Vladimir Pletnev and Chimnaz Babayeva, Medina Aliyeva, Tatyana Suxorukova, Zaur Fetullayev and others



1001 Nights by Fikret Amirov



Legend of Love by Arif Melikov



Seven Beauties by Kara Karayev

«Azerbaijan. 100 Questions Answered», Baku, 2005, P. 93-96



## VI. CINEMA

### The history of the film industry in Azerbaijan.

#### Silent films

(1920-1935)

The history of the film industry in Azerbaijan began on August 2, 1898. The first movies were newsreel documentaries ("Fire of the Bibi Heybat Oil Gusher", "Oil Gusher in Balakhany", "Festival In City Park", "Caucasian Dance", etc.) and one short motion picture ("You're Caught Up").

The first film distribution offices were established in Baku, Tbilisi and Yerevan by stock companies (trade houses) founded by the Pirone brothers in the Caucasus in 1915. That same year, the company started the production of Azerbaijan's first feature film, "The Reign of Oil and Millions", based on M. Musabeyov's novel of the same name, with the help of the financing of oil tycoons. Film director B. N. Svetlov was invited from St. Petersburg to produce the film. The landscape scenes were shot in Baku and suburban villages, while the indoor scenes were shot in a Tbilisi studio. The role of Lutveli bey was played by N. Arablinsky. The first comedy in Azerbaijan was produced based on the "Arshyn Mal Alan" opera by U. Hajibeyov in Baku in 1916. The full-length movie "Celebrations of the Anniversary of Independence of Azerbaijan" went on screen in 1919.

The Photo and Film Organization of Azerbaijan (PFOA) was established in 1923. The PFOA was involved in nationalization and integration of photo agencies, cinemas and movie distribution offices, owned by individual businessmen. The PFOA was at that time also operating the cinemas Teyyare, Edison, Million, Ladya, Medenchi and others in Baku.

The PFOA-produced bi-serial "The Maiden Tower Legend" (film director - V. V. Vallyuzek) was screened in 1924. The film producers highlighted Eastern exotics in this ethnography-oriented movie.

In 1925, Sh. Mahmudbayov initiated the establishment of a studio under the PFOA for training film directors and actors in Azerbaijan. This is the studio where J. Jabbarly, M. Mikayilov, A. Tahirov and others studied. Such prominent film directors as V. I. Pugovkin, I. A. Shevchenko, N. M. Shengelaya, M. E. Chiaureli, as well as cameramen G. M. Lembek, V. R. Lemke, A. V. Galperin, I. S. Frolov, A. M. Feldman, L. L. Kosmatov, V. M. Shneyder and others were invited to Baku, while D. Dzhabbarly, A. M. Sherifzade and others were involved in movie production for the purposes of improving movie production quality and the development of national resources.

The PFOA was later known as "Azdovletkino", (1926-1930), "Azerkino" (1930-1933), Azfilm (1933), Azerdovletsenayesi (1934), Azerfilm (1935-1940) and The Baku Film Studio (1941-1959). It was named J. Jabbarly's Azerbaijanfilm studio in 1961.

The struggle against ignorance and illiteracy, the revolution, and rights of women were the main subjects of Azeri films in the 1920s. The most successful ones were Bismillah (1925, film directors - A. M. Sherifzade and A. Valovo), "A House On the Volcano" (1929, film director - A. I. Bek-Nazarov, in cooperation with Azerkino), "Hadzhi Gara" (1929, film director - A. M. Sherifzade), as well as "Sevil" (1929, film director - A. I. Bek-Nazarov), which pictured the image of an Azeri woman struggling for freedom.

In the twenties of XX century local cameramen and reps of foreign movie companies were shooting in Baku documentary films and newsreel on life of city, oil mines. In 1920 first newsreel titled "Official march of 9 golden Army in Baku" was shot. The same year newsreel titled "First convention of eastern nations" was created. Next years newsreels on certain events were prepared: "3rd anniversary of Soviet Azerbaijan" (1923), "Fire in Surakhani oil mines" (1923), "Funeral of Nariman Narimanov" (1925), "Arrival of M. Frunze to Baku" (1925) and etc documentary films, as well popular science films started to be produced.

In 1925 director A.M. Sherifzade completed shooting of the film "Journey to Azerbaijan" on cultural and economic life of republic. In the twenties, beside historical documentaries, production of newsreel "Azerbaijani screen" started (4-5 issues a year) in Azeri cinema that was familiarizing the audience with successes of republic in economic and cultural fields. These years' talented directors such as M. Mikayilov, A.A. Litvinov, A.A. Makovsky, cameramen like V.P. Lemke, A. Valovoy, A. Tolchan, and I.S. Tartakovsky were working in



"The Reign of Oil and Millions"



"Sevil" 1929,

Azeri documentary. B.V.Pumyansky, S.Badalov, V.Yeremeyev, A.Hasanov, E.Elekberov and others started to work in this field in the thirties. Movies of these masters reflected life of republic, kolkhoz construction, successes in cultural field, equipment of oil industry with new technique in first five years and etc. Efforts in field of creation of image of perfect man in frame of documentary were artistic achievements of that time.

The movies produced in the early 1930s are features picturing contemporary life, the history and socialist revolution, such as Latif, Ismet (1930, 1934, film director - M. Mikailov), The Diamond and The New Horizon (1936, 1940, film directors - A. Guliyev and G. M. Braginsky), The Baku Residents (1938, film director - V. V. Turin), The Villagers (1940, film director - S. Mardanov).

**[www.azerbaijan.az](http://www.azerbaijan.az)**



### Azerbaijani cinema in 1935-1988. Sound films

The production of sound films began with the movie "On the Shores of a Blue Sea" (film director B.V.Barnet) produced by "Azerfilm" and "Mejrabromfilm" (Moscow) studios in 1935. Well-known soviet actors L.N.Shverdlin, N.A.Kryuchkov, V.A.Kuzmina and others played leading roles in the film. More than 10 sound films were released from 1936 to the 1940s.



"Her Great Heart" (Onun Boyuk Urayi), 1958.  
Directed by Azhdar Ibrahimov.

The theme of war has always captured the imagination of cinematographers. Azerbaijani filmmakers are no exception. World War II or what Soviets usually refer to as the "Great Patriotic War" (1941-1945) broke out rather unexpectedly on June 22, 1941. Although Azerbaijan never became a



"I Loved You More Than Life"  
(Sizi Duniyalar Gadar Sevirdim), 1985.  
Directed by Rasim Ismayilov.

combat zone, the republic suffered tremendous losses. Between 1940-1946 the population declined more than half a million people from 3.27 million to 2.73 million. In other words, one out of every six Azerbaijanis became a victim of the war. Azerbaijan played an immense role in the victory of the war, providing much of the oil for the Soviet war effort. In 1941, the year of the highest oil production, Azerbaijan produced 25.4 million tons-a record for the entire history of its oil industry which today has still never been surpassed. Every able-bodied person was involved in the war-whether at the front or at home laboring in munitions factories, oil fields or with agriculture.



"Stepmother" 1959,  
Director H. Ismayilov

Twenty seven years later, Rasim Ismayilov made the movie "I Loved You with My Whole Heart" (1985) which depicted the life of the great Azerbaijani General Hazi Aslanov.



"The Winds Blow in Baku"  
(Bakida Kulaklar Asir), 1975.  
Directed by Mukhtar Dadashov.

The Second World War was also reflected on some films as "Our teacher Jabish" (1970, film director H.Seyidbayli), "Winds blow in Baku" (1974, film director M.Dadashov), "Fife sound" (1975, film director R.Odjagov) etc. The life of Baku in the last months of the war were particularly openly described in the film "Shared bread" (1970, film director Sh.Mahmudbayov; Azerbaijan SSR State prize, 1969). "I loved you more than life" (1985) was devoted to Hazi Aslanov, the



"Our teacher Jabish", 1970,  
Director H.Seyidbayli

Soviet Union Hero.



"Shared Bread" (Sharikli Chorak), 1970.  
Directed by Shamil Mahmudbayov.

This was the time when the short sound movies "The Motherland's Son and Bakhtiyar" (1941,1942, film director A.Guliyev), which were devoted to the heroes of Kamal Gasimov and Bakhtiyar Karimov, who fought in the World War II, "Sabuhi" about the life and activity of M.F.Akhundov (1942, film directors A.I.Bek-Nazarov, R.Tahmasib), the three-part "One Family" (1943, film directors G.V.Aleksandrov, R.Tahmasib, M.Mikayilov), and the feature film "The T-9 Submarine", devoted to the heroism of sailors in the time of war (1943, film director A.Ivanov), were shot.

The musical comedy Arshin Mal Alan by U.Hajibeyov went on screen again in 1945. The film directors R.Tahmasib and N.Leshenko made a brilliant reality comedy, dominated by Azerbaijan's national style and sense of humor. The film was a success in the former USSR and many countries around the world. The film directors R.Tahmasib and N.Leshenko, composer U.Hadjibayov, actors R.Behbudov, L.Badirbayli, A.Huseynzade, M.Kalantarli and L.Abdullayev were awarded with the USSR State Prize in 1946.



"Gipsy girl" 1965,  
Director A. Abbasov

The major field of activity of the Baku kinostudiyasi (Baku film studio) in the late 1940s and early 1950s was the making of artistic-documentary and publicistic films. "Fatali Khan" (1947, film director V.I.Dzigan, released in 1959) and "The Baku Lights" (1950, film directors I.V.Xeyfits, A.G.Zarkhi and R.Tahmasib) were made during this period.



"Bakhtiyar" 1955,  
Director L. Safarov

A new stage of Azerbaijani films development began in the middle of the 1950s. National scenario writers, film directors, cameramen, artists developed. Most of them (I.Gasimov, A.Mammadkhanli, I.Tagizade, L.Safarov, H.Seyidbayli, A.Ibrahimov, N.Ismayilov, H.Seyidzade, Sh.Mahmudov, A.Atakishiyev,

Kh.Babayev, A.Narimanov, T.Akhundov, R.Odjagov, K.Nadjafzade, J.Azimov, E.Rzaguliyev, N.Zeynalov and others) studied in the Soviet State Cinematography Institute.



"On Distant Shores" (Uzag Sahillarda), 1958.  
Directed by Tofiq Taghizade.

The development of movie industry led to the widening of their subjects during those years. Labour and life of *workers*, collective farmers and others were the main subjects of the films. For instance, "Under The Broiling Sun" (1957, film director L.Safarov), "Black Stones" (1958, film director A.Quliyev), "The Shades Are A Creeping" (1958, film directors I.Afandiyev and Sh.Sheykhov), "Her Great heard" (1959, film director A.Ibrahimov), "A True Friend" (1959, T.Tagizade), "Could He Be Forgiven" (1960, film director Tahmasib), "Our Street" (1961, film director A.Atakishiyev), "A

Large Pier" (1962, film director H.Ismayilov), "A Telephone Girl", "There Is Such An Island As Well" (1962,1963, film director H.Seyidbayli), "Stepmother" (1959, film director H.Ismayilov).

Films on different subjects were made in "Baku kinostudiya" (Baku film studio). "Two Boys Of The Same Block" (film directors A.Ibrahimov and I.V.Gurin, cameramen M.M.Pilikhina and R.Odjagov, compositor G.Garayev) describes one Eastern nation's struggle for freedom and democracy.

"On Distant Shores", devoted to brave guerrilla Mehdi Huseynzade (1958, film director T.Tagizade), is one of the achievements of Azerbaijan, as well as former soviet film. Dynamic, tense events, exactly presented characters, high level of cameraman and producer work brought fame to the film. Artistic film "Koroglu" ("A Blind's Son", 1960, film director H.Seyidzade) is the first example of color wide-screen film. "Morning" (1961, film director A.Guliyev) describes the revolutionary events of 1905-1907. "So The Song Is Composed" (1959, film directors R.Tahmasib and M.Mikayilov) was devoted to Suleyman Stalski, the popular poet of Daghestan. "Love epos" (1961, film director L.Safarov) was shot on the basis of poem "Leyli and Madjnun".

The tendency towards the genre of musical comedy strengthened in Azerbaijan after "Arshin Mal Alan". "The Meeting" (1955, film director T.Tagizade), "Beloved Song" ("Bakhtiyar", 1955, film director L.Safarov, leading role R.Behbudov), "No matter This or That" (1965, film director H.Seyidzade), "Romeo is my neighbor" (1963, film director Sh.Mahmudbayov), "Where is Ahmad" (1964, film director A.Isgandarov), "Ulduz" (1964, film director A.Guliyev), "Arshin Mal Alan" (1965, film director T.Tagizade), "Mother In Law" (1978, film director H.Seyidzade) and other films continued this tradition.



"Arshin mal Alan" 1945,  
Director R. Tahmasib



"No matter This or That" 1956,  
Director H. Seyidzade



"Mother-in-law" 1978,  
Director H.Seyidzade



"Blow in the back" 1977,  
Director A. Babayev



"Seven sons of mine", 1970  
Director T. Tagi-zade



1960-1970s are symbolized with appearance of large youth group in cinematography (scenario writers R. and M.Ibrahimbayov brothers, Anar, A.Akhundova, I.Huseynov, V.Samadoglu, R.Fataliyev, film directors A.Babayev, E.Guliyev G.Mirgasimov, I.Afandiyev, T.Ismayilov, G.Azimzade, G.Babayev, cameramen Z.Maharramov, R.Ismayilov, R.Gambarov, V.Karimov, artists F.Bagirov, R.Ismayilov, actors H.Mammadov, Sh.Alakbarov, H.Turabov, R.Balayev, Sh.Mammadova and others). Their cooperation with art workers of middle age lead to rising of professional level of Azerbaijan film, appearance of films, differing with national peculiarity and idea depth. For example, "In a Southern City" (1969, film director E.Guliyev) focus on struggle between novelty and backwardness, throwing the yoke of old traditions. Moral problems, different views on life, analysis of human characters, forming of young generation and other subjects occupy main place in the films of this period. ("The Last Night of Childhood", "A Day Passed" (1969, 1971, film director A.Babayev), "The Head Interview", "Thank You, Girls" (1971, 1973, film director E.Guliyev), "Life Tests Us" (1971, film director Sh.Mahmudbayov), "Cares of happiness" (1976, H.Seyidbayli) and others. Attention to moral problems increased in Azerbaijan film in late 1970s-1980s. Tendency toward complicated psychological situations, observations related with protest against self-respect, selfishness, severity, mercilessness is strong in the films by scenario writer R.Ibrahimbayov and film director R.Odjagov such as "The Investigation" (1979, main prize of the 14th All-Union film festival, Dushanba,1980; USSR State Prize,1981), "A Closed Door" (1981), "The Park" (1983), "Another Life" (1987), "Forgive Me If I Die" (1988)). These subjects newly opened in films "Tell That You Love Me" (1977, film director M.Ibrahimbayov), "Forgive Us" (1979, film director A.Babayev, "A Silvery Van" (1982), "Devil In Font of Everybody's Eyes" (1987, film director G.Mirgasimov, 21st All-Union film festival prize, Baku,1988), "The Structure of A Moment", "A Business Trip" (1982, film director R.Ismayilov), "Great-great-grandfather", "A Garden Season" (1985, film director T.Tagizade), "A Piece of Ice In The Warm Sea" (1983, film director Y.S.Gusman), "The Silver Lake Legend", "A Whirlpool", "Diversion" (1984, 1986, 1989, film director E.Guliyev). Character deformation was depicted by modern artistic means, satiric colors in the film "Idiot" (1988, film director V.Mustafayev). This film raised interest in our country and abroad.

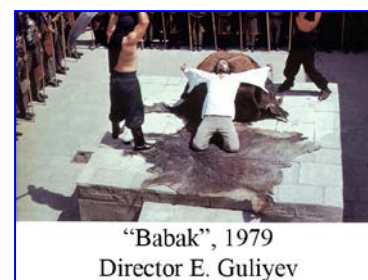


"The Investigation", 1979  
Director R. Odjagov



"Dada Gorgud" 1975,  
Director T. Tagizade

M.Ibrahimbayov), "Forgive Us"



"Babak", 1979  
Director E. Guliyev



"Nasimi" 1973,  
Director H.Seyidbayli



"Nasimi" 1973,  
Director H.Seyidbayli

film director E.Guliyev) is the first film in history of Azerbaijan film, made in corporation with foreign film studio (Czechoslovakia). Class struggle in Azerbaijani villages in the first years of the soviet government is reflected on the films "The last pass" (1971, film director K.Rustambayov) and "Mule Mammad" (1974, film director R.Odjagov). "Bay of joy" (1977, film director A.Babayev; Azerbaijan SSR State Prize 1978), "In the middle of night, the day after tomorrow" (1981, film director A.Babayev; Azerbaijan SSR State Prize, 1986), "Saddle horses" (1983, film director H.Turabov, Azerbaijan SSR State Prize, 1986), "Wait a sign from the sea" (1986, film director J.Mirzayev) are also on historical subject.

The life of the poet, protesting against injustices of feudal world, and social, moral problems of that time reflected on the film "Nasimi" (1973, film director H.Seyidbayli, 7th All-Union film festival prize for the best historical film, 1975). "Dada Gorgud" (1975, film director T.Tagizade) is distinguish by poesy. Struggle under the command of Azerbaijan military leader Babak against Arab Caliphate in XI century is reflected on the film "Babak" (1979, film director E.Guliyev). Nizami's character was created in

the film "Nizami" (1982, film director E.Guliyev), while we can see J.Mammadguluzade's character in the film "Window of sadness" (1986, film director Anar).

"Birthday" (1977, film director R.Odjagov, the first February prize of 8th All-Union television films, Baku,1979, Azerbaijan SSR State prize,1980) is particularly differing. "Dante's jubilee ", "You can not take only island", "The last night of the last year" (1978, 1980, 1983, film director G.Azimzade) "I want to know" (1980, film director G.Mirgasimov) and others artistic films are also production of Azerbaijan Television. Television film "Uzeyir Hadjibayov. Accords of long life" (1981, film director Anar) is made on the basis of archive materials.

Newsreel and documentaries, depicted about life of the city and oil field, were shot by local cameramen and representatives of foreign film companies in 1920s. The first newsreel journal "Official passage of the 9th Red Army in Baku" was made in 1920. Chronicle "The First Congress of Eastern Nations" was made in these years as well. News films, related with certain events, were shot: Production of scientific-and-mass films began along with documentaries "The third anniversary of Soviet Azerbaijan" (1923), "Fire in the Surakhani oil fields" (1923), "Funeral of Nariman Narimanov" (1925), "M.Frunze's arrival in Baku" (1925). Film director A.M.Sharifzade completed "Travel to Azerbaijan", described cultural and economical life of the republic, in 1925. Issue of news-reel "Azerbaijan screen" (4-5 number), describing achievements in the cultural and economical life of the young republic, began along with historical-and-documentary films in 1920s. Talented film directors as M.Mikayilov, A.A.Litvinov, and A.A.Makovski, cameramen as V.P.Lemke, A.Valovoy, A.Tolchan, I.S.Tartakovski, and I.S.Monakov worked in Azerbaijan documentary film production in these years. B.V.Pumyanski, S.Badalov, V.Yeremeyev, A.Hasanov, A.Alakbarov and others began their activity in 1930s. Life of the republic, kolkhoz establishment, achievements in culture, oil industry reflected on the films of these art workers. An effort to create completed human character in documentaries is one of the artistic achievements of that period.

Creative potential of documentary film was strengthened by formation of sound-film. Announcer text and performance of feature story heroes was firstly given in synchronic form in documentary chronicle of one part "Well-known Azerbaijan" (1935, film director and scenario writer B.V.Pumyanski, V.Yeremeyev). Newsreel "Azerbaijan screen" issued under the name "Order-bear Azerbaijan" (36 numbers per year) since 01939. Some of silent films of 1930s such as full-length films "Way to the East" (1934, film director A.A.Makovski) and "Azerbaijan fine art" are remarkable. In 1940 film directors M.Mikayilov and V.Yeremeyev made documentary "20th spring" in connection with 20th anniversary of Soviet government establishment in Azerbaijan.



"Qarib in the genies country" 1987,  
Director A.Atakishiyev

A group of Azerbaijan documentary film directors (A.Hasanov and others) and cameramen (M.Mustafayev, M.Dadashov, S.Badalov, V.Y.Yeremeyev, Ch.Mammadov and others.) record soldiers' heroism in the front-line.

These materials were sent to different fronts for showing as special issues. News-reel and feature story, reflecting Azerbaijan people's labour in the rear, appeared in this period: "For Motherland" (1943, film director A.Hasanov), "Care" (1943, A.Guliyev), "Response to the letter" (1944, film director I.Afandiyev), "Brother help" (1944, film director A.Dadashov) etc. Film studio "Baku kinostudiyasi" in cooperation with Moscow Documentary Film Studio shot full-length "The Caspians" (film

directors G.V.Aleksandrov and N.I.Bolshakov), depicting Caspian sailors' heroism in 1944. Film director H.Seyidzade made full-length documentary "Country of eternal fires" in connection with 25th anniversary of Soviet government establishment in 1945.



"Birthday", 1977,  
Director R.Odjagov



"Nizami", 1982  
Director E. Guliyev



Child film production was also in the center of attention: ("Secret of a tower", "Magic dressing gown", "Qarib in the genies country" (1959, 1964, 1987, film director A.Atakishiyev), "Lion leaves home" (1978, film director R.Ismayilov), "I compose song", "Along ways full of suffering", "Teacher of music" (1979, 1982, 1983, film director T.Ismayilov), "Secret of ship clock" (1982, film director R.Shabanov), "Casket of Ismayil bay" (1983, film director G.Azimzade) etc. The first Azerbaijan fantastic film ("Relation", film director Ch.Zeynalov) was made in 1989.

Issue of news-reel "Young generation" began along with "Soviet Azerbaijan" (36 number per year; former news-reel "Order-bear Azerbaijan") in post-war years. Scenarists I.Gasimov, A.Gulubayov, film directors Z.Kazimova, L.Safarov, cameramen A.Narimanbayov, T.Akhundov, Kh.Babayev, composers G.Garayev, T.Guliyev and others began their activity in documentary film sphere in 1945-1950s. Full-length film "On the other bank of Araz" (1947, film directors I.Afandiyev, E.I.Shub), describing freedom struggle of South Azerbaijan people in 1945-1946, draw attention. Colored full-length documentary "Soviet Azerbaijan" (film directors M.Dadashov, F.Kiselyov) was made in connection with 30th anniversary of Soviet government victory in Azerbaijan in 1950. The film was awarded with Cannes (France) international film festival special prize in 1951. Contemporaneity, people's mode of life, work achievements occupy leading place in the creation of documentary film makers afterwards: "In the gulf named after S.M.Kirov" (was awarded with Venetia international film festival prize in 1955), "He Who Searches Will Find" (1955, 1969, film directors S.Mammadov), "Along way of happiness» "Our Azerbaijan" (1957, 1959, film director M.Dadashov). "Baku and its residents" (1957, film director L.Safarov), "Spring of Azerbaijan culture" (1960, film directors Ch.Mammadov, Kh.Babayev), "M.F.Akhundov" (1962, film director N.Badalov) ». The epos about Caspian oil industry worker" (1953), one of the wonderful examples of soviet film and "Sea conquerors" (1959) were shot by world fame film director R.L.Karmen in "Baki kinostudiyasi" (Baku film studio). Selfless labor and life of sea oil industry workers reflected on these films. Film director R.L.Karmen, cameramen Ch.Mammadov and S.Y.Medinski were awarded with Lenin prize for these works (1960).

The youth like G.Mirgasimov, Y.Afandiyev, R.Shahmaliyev, T.Bakirzade, N.Bakirzade began their activity in the documentary film of 1960-170s. Certain changes (absence of announcer text, poetical mood, exact montage) in documentary film style is well seen in films "Sea" (1965), "Gobustan" (1966), "This is the voice of truth", "Composer Gara Garayev" (1967) by film director G.Mirgasimov in the second part of 1960s.

G.Mirgasimov was awarded with Azerbaijan Lenin Komsomol prize for these films in 1967. Film director Y.Afandiyev, scenario author I.Shikhli, cameraman Z.Mammadov of the film "How good that there is Samad Vurgun in the world" (1967), film director Ch.Zeynalov of "Like spring that does not fade» (1979), devoted to J.Jabbarli's memories, were awarded with Azerbaijan Lenin Komsomol prize. Examples of interesting scientific-and-mass films were produce in 1970-1980s: "Memories of patterns" (1973, film director I.Afandiyev), "Goldfish" (1975, film director Ch.Faradjov), "Where are you, green bank" (1983, V.Mikayilov), "Secret of Eskulap bowl" (1984, film director T.Bakirzade), "Revival" (1984, film director Ch.Faradjov), "Land dept" (1986, film director T.Mutallimov) etc. Film makers look for new ways of choosing and searching of actual subjects, additional potential of shooting method, montage and postscoring. "Dissonance" (1977), "Absheron towers" (1989) by film director T.Bakirzade, "With spring" (1978), "Removal" (1983) by Z.Maharramov, "Vagrant" (1985), "Expectation" (1986) by Ch.Zeynalov, "Life turning into eternity" (1987), "Dead zone" (1988) by R.Nagiyev, "Spring following winter" (1989) by V.Mikayilov are remarkable.



"Magic dressing gown" 1964,  
Director A. Atakishiyev



"Lion leaves home" 1978,  
Director R.Ismayilov



"Good-for nothing", 1988  
Director V.Mustafayev



Production of satiric news-reel "Mozalan" began in "Azerbaijanfilm" film studio in 1970-ci. Antipodes of society, defects in daily life and housing are criticized in the news-reel. Till the Second World War there were only efforts to shoot animated films in Azerbaijan. Artist and producer-multiplier courses were organized in 'Azerbaijanfilm' studio in 1966. Animated film in one part "Jirdan" on scenario of Azerbaijan popular tale by A.Akhundov (film director A.Akhundov, I.Afandiyev) was produced in the animation works-shop, established in "Azerbaijanfilm" in 1969, in 1970s "Intrigue", "My chickens" (1970, 1974, film director A.Akhundov), "Fox goes to Hadj", "Jirdan's new adventures" (1971, 1973, film director N.Narimanov), "Jackal is son of jackal" (1973, film director M.Rafiyev) and other animated films were produced. Film directors M.Panahi ("Why does cloud cry", 1974, 7th All-Union film festival prize, "Mouse and miss Pis-pisa", 1974, with A.Akhundov; "Once upon time", 1975; "Dingil, Sazim, Dingil", 1976; "Cock", 1977; "Legend about Maiden tower", 1978 etc.), A.Mammadov ("Stone", 1978; "Toral and Zari", 1979; "Stack", 1980; "Naughty rabbit", 1981; "Magic scarf", 1982; "Flying tablecloth", 1983 atc.), A.Maharramov ("It is time to create", 1984), V.Talibov ("Pursuit", 1984), R.Shahmaliyev ("Magical patterns", 1984), H.Akbarov ("Home in in the glade", 1986), F.Gurbanova ("Once in the evening", 1985; "A Mother Sitting On The Tree", 1986; "Seance", 1987 etc.) shot interesting animated films. Animated film series "Jirdan-wrestler" have been madding since 1981.

Production of animated films began in Azerbaijan television 1972. Animated films "Ilham" (1972, the first Azerbaijan puppet animated film), "Beautiful Fatma" (1973) and "Island of wonders" (1978) by V.Behbudov were awarded All-Union television films festival. Film studio "Azerbaijanfilm" was supplied with new equipment, providing stereophonic sound recording in sound, black-and-white, wide-screen, panoramic and large-format films.

About 7 artistic, 20 documentary and scientific-and-mass films were produced in studio "Azerbaijanfilm" per year. 7th and 21st All-Union film festivals (1974, 1988), 40th international festival of film-lovers (UNIKA-78) were hold in Baku.



### Azerbaijani cinematography in period of independence

The independence of Azerbaijan, gained in 1991, placed new objectives and tasks before the community. Social problems, concerned with the establishment of models for new development of society and national ideology of Azerbaijan turned to the principal trends of humanitarian research.

After 1990 (1999-2000) the number of feature films produced was much lower than in the previous years.

At the same time Azerbaijani cinematographers referring to most important and vital themes produced films, corresponding to esthetic requirements. ("Yarasa" ("Bat", producer A.Salayev), "Ozge vaxty" (producer H. Mehdiyev), films by Vagif Mustafayev and "Tahmina and Zaur" by the director R.Ojagov.

So far, only one film, "Faryad," (meaning loud cry) concerns the Karabakh War with Armenians which has been going on since 1988. This is the only film that has been made about the Nagorno-Karabakh war and the military occupation by Armenians of 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory.

A brusque, heavy-set Armenian officer sees a 5-year-old child playing with a toy gun and gathers the child in his arms, points to an Azerbaijani hostage and says, "Do you see him? He is your enemy. You must kill him. Otherwise, he will kill you."

In contrast to this scene, another character, Ismayil, an Azerbaijani, is being held captive by an Armenian officer. The soldiers torture Ismayil, beating and kicking him. Despite the physical pain, he doesn't consider it as brutal as the time when he saw an Azerbaijani girl being raped and brutally murdered. In another scene, he is pained by overhearing Armenians in another room celebrating the capture of the Azerbaijani towns of Khojali and Shusha which were major towns inside the region of Nagorno-Karabakh where all Azerbaijanis were forced to flee or be killed by approaching Armenian troops.

Meanwhile, Ismayil tries to revenge his situation. He slips off the bed, crawls towards a box of matches and gathering all the loose papers he can find, manages to start a fire. Upon succeeding, he breathes a sigh of relief, pleased with his small victory. Suddenly, he hears a child crying upstairs. He realizes that it's an Armenian baby. Tears gather in his eyes when he realizes he has endangered the life of an innocent child.

This scene from "Faryad" brings to mind what Anar, a famous Azerbaijani writer once said: "If a soldier doesn't have a feeling of hatred, he won't be able to fight. But a soldier should confine his hatred to the soldiers of the enemy and not to the entire nation."

National leader of Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev played a great role in the development of Azerbaijani cinematography. He highly appreciated the cinema among other kinds of art and stressed that Azerbaijani cinematographers created tens of high quality films on past and present life of our people.

Within the period of his ruling of Azerbaijan in 1970-1980 Heydar Aliyev expressed great respect and care towards people who worked in the sphere and to the development of cinema, and after he was elected the President of Azerbaijan Republic he did his best for those working in this sphere. Heydar Aliyev, speaking about valuable traditions of Azerbaijani cinematography, highly appreciated a number of historical feature films.

Our people watch the documentaries about Heydar Aliyev and his diversified activity with a great interest. One of the films about Heydar Aliyev was the film "President of the Azerbaijan Republic Heydar Aliyev", created by Andrey Karpov, well-known producer and the creator of serial films.

A.Karpov, aiming at producing serial documentaries about the presidents of CIS states, first created the film devoted to the President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev. Workers of Azerbaijani cinema also contributed to the creation of the film, enlivening the most important moments of the hard, meaningful, discrepant life of the leader of the country.



"Tahmina and Zaur", 1993  
Director R. Ojagov



"Wail" (Faryad), 1993.  
Directed by Jeyhun Mirzayev.



"Wail" (Faryad), 1993.  
Directed by Jeyhun Mirzayev.



Episodes, picturing the president at his working place, meetings with refugees, in his house, with his children and grandchildren surrounding him, were produced with a great professionalism. Heydar Aliyev's visit to Mecca was also included into the film.

The second film covering the wide range and many-sided activity of the President of Azerbaijan was the film "An example of ideal life" shot by cameraman O.Shikhaliyev on the basis of N.Safarov's screenplay. This film reflected Heydar Aliyev's activity after 1990 in a condensed form.

A serial movie of script-writer and film producer Vagif Mustafayev about the activity of Heydar Aliyev has recently drawn much attention. The film "Moment of truth", produced by Vagif Mustafayev attracted the wide audience. Besides, Vagif Mustafayev produced nine out of 12 series of the film "Heydar Aliyev" devoted to the life and activity of the national leader of Azerbaijani people Vagif Mustafayev. These are the following:

1. "General"
2. "The first"
3. "Moscow. The Kremlin"
4. "The leader"
5. "The destiny"
6. "About true love"
7. "The history of envy"
8. "Professional"
9. "Patriot"

The film "About true love" was a great success from those indicated above. The film deserved the main award and special prize of the fourth Eurasian TV-forum held in Moscow. The film "History of envy" was presented one of the main awards of a festival of documentaries held in Yekaterinburg in 2002 and "Gran-Pri" award of the fourth Eurasian TV-Forum Moscow. These films have been a success in different countries of the world.

The contract signed by the world's leading oil companies in Baku is also reflected in the film of Vagif Mustafayev "The Contract of the Century"

Motion pictures of modern directors, carrying on the film art of Azerbaijan as Huseyn Mehtiyev, Djavanshir Mehtiyev, Yaver Rzayev, Nidjat Feyzullayev, Ayaz Salayev, Eldar Guliyev, Rasim Odjagov, Ogtay Mirgasyimov, are interesting from the point of view of their content. The films of producer Gulbeniz Azimzade also won awards in a number of film festivals.





## VII. DECORATIVE ART

Decorative applied art mainly covers daily life. The field is divided into two branches in terms of its raw materials (metal, ceramics, textiles and wood) and techniques (carving, casting, minting, and weaving). These works embody people's mentality, daily life, custom and traditions and aesthetic visions. The ornaments on the handicrafts make them more beautiful and they are considered to be decorative art works just because of their ornaments. The various fields of decorative applied art in Azerbaijan include pottery, copper-work, jewellery, weaving, carpet weaving as well as carving on stone and wood.

### Pottery

Pottery has been known in Azerbaijan since the Bronze Age. Archeological excavations have found potter's ovens in Mingechevir, Qabala and Ganja. The most ancient of them was found in Mingechevir and concerns the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age. There are a number of potter's wares prepared on potter's wheels of the Bronze Age. According to archeological research, potter's wares were prepared on wheels and baked in special ovens. More than 20 kinds (churn, jug, pitcher, lamp, bowl, and cup) of potter's wares were made in Azerbaijan. This kind of handicraft was divided into a few branches



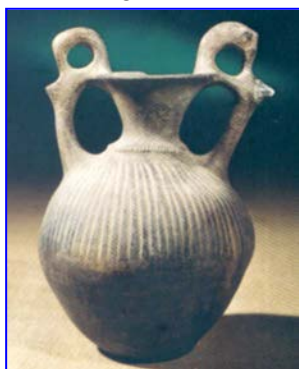
(earthenware, brick making etc). Guba, Khachmaz, Oguz and Qabala specialised in pottery. During medieval times fine compositions of pottery, particularly those reflecting human, animal and natural images were popular. For example, a ceramic vessel made in the early 14th century in Sultaniyye, Southern Azerbaijan, devoted to the poem Khosrov and Shirin by Nizami Ganjevi, is now in a collection



in London. Pottery developed in the 19th and 20th centuries and was sold or bartered. Items for daily use enjoyed a large market before industry developed, but with the arrival of mass production interest in hand-made ceramics fell. Some items for daily use in Azerbaijan are still made by master potters. At the moment this ancient art is successfully developed in Guba, Khachmaz and Oguz regions of Azerbaijan. The potters create valuable art works which charm the foreign and local community.

The archaeological monuments are carefully preserved and thoroughly studied; most of them are on display at the Museum in the department of "Ancient and Medieval History of Azerbaijan".

The Museum's archaeological fund and expositions number over 25,000 monuments. Each year it receives new finds from archaeological sites. Since 1969 the Museum has been carrying on underwater archaeological excavations on the Caspian Sea bottom. These expeditions have yielded numerous archaeological materials pertaining to medieval Azerbaijan. Among these the most remarkable are glazed cups



and dishes with images of birds and animals and details of inscriptions in Arabic, one of which represents verse by the great Orient poet Saadi.

Among the exponents there are numerous stone and obsidian implements from the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic and Acneolithic periods that have been found in Azerbaijanian territory.

The Museum's unique rarities pertaining to the Paleolithic include a detail of a jaw of the Asykhanthropos who lived 300 – 350 thousand years ago, which was discovered in 1968 in the Asykh cave near Fizuli.



The ancient monuments of Azerbaijani culture show that its roots lay in hoary past. Evidence of this is the cave drawings discovered in Kobustan, the Apsheron peninsula, in Kelbadzhar and Gemigaya in Ordubad district.

A special scientific interest is shown in two stone moulds for casting bronze articles, the evidence that the bronze implements and weapons discovered in Azerbaijani excavation sites were chiefly of local make. This fact has been confirmed by spectral analysis.

The Bronze Age is depicted by a rich collection of ceramics: boot-shaped vessels, zoomorphic pitchers and dishware with white paste incrustation. Unique in design is the red clay vessel excavated near the Shakhtaty settlement in Nakhichevan ASSR. The superbly decorated kitchen utensils and jewelry of metal, stone and bone; all point to the high development of diverse crafts in the Bronze Age, and to the high artistic taste of the ancient Azerbaijanian people.

The numerous ceramic ovens discovered in Mingechaur and other parts of the republic show that most of the ceramic items excavated in Azerbaijan were the work of local masters.

In burial grounds and sites of former settlements dating to the 4th-3rd cc. B.C. there have been discovered numerous implements and weapons of iron which according to F. Engels played a revolutionary role in social development: "Copper, tin, and their alloy, bronze, were by far the most important; bronze furnished useful tools and weapons, but could not displace stone implements. Only iron could do that..." Tools and weapons of iron gradually began to replace those of bronze.

Among the exponents there are unique historical monuments, such as an architectural detail, a capital with an Albanian (Caucasian) inscription, discovered among the ruins of an ancient temple in Mingcchaur. Sources confirm that there had existed extensive literature in Albanian.

Attention is drawn to a large collection of lustreware and glazed ceramics discovered at excavation sites in Balakan, Baku, and Barda. Ganja, Shemaha, all existing from medieval times. Glazed ceramics from these cities bears the distinctive traits of that period and embraces in terms of territory a wide range of Oriental countries. At the same time it has many local features. Many items boast a virtuoso technique and subtle elegance which make them veritable gems of Azerbaijani applied art.

Many glazed dishes and cups bear palcographic inscriptions dating to the 9th-12th cc, the golden age of the art of ceramics. They have preserved several names of ceramics masters of those days, although unfortunately most of them have remained unknown. The remarkable works of medieval masters are eloquent evidence of the Azerbaijani people's original culture.



<http://culture.az/2010/03/archaeological-monuments>.



## Jewellery

Jewellery is a widespread decorative art. Decorative items found in archeological excavations in Mingechevir, Yaloylutepe, Khojali, Qabala and Ismayilly show that jewellery has a long history and played a big role in daily life. The main items are rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelets and different kinds of beads. The bronze belts found in Mingechevir and Khojali (third millennium BC) as well as a gold bowl (9th-8th centuries BC), dug out in Hasanlu near the lake of Urmiya, and an apron (8th century BC) found in the region of Ziviya are classic pieces of jewellery. During the period of Caucasian Albania (4th century BC to 8th century AD) jewellery was a leading field of the economy.



During medieval times a new stage began in the development of this art. European travellers and diplomats have left a wealth of information about the development of jewellery-making in Azerbaijan. Decorative items such as bracelets, rings, belts and knick-knacks were very common in that period. For example, the golden belt of Safavid ruler Shah Ismayil I, kept in the museum of Topqapi, Istanbul, and has interested international scholars for many years.



Jewellery developed well in the 19th and 20th centuries and Azerbaijani master craftsmen made different ornamental items in metal. Research shows that jewellery was particularly developed in Nakhchivan, Shamakhi, Lahij, Ganja, Baku and Shusha. The majority of jewellery items consisted of women's ornamental items, such as rings with or without precious stones, earrings, necklaces etc. This ancient art continues to develop today. One of the streets in Baku is called Zargarpalan, because it used to have many jewellery workshops. Fine ornamental pieces for women made by Azerbaijani master craftsmen can be seen in Azerbaijan's museums.

Among traditional everyday implements, we operate mention bronze tray (mejmei) found in Dagestan and in present day kept at the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg. The descriptions of lower, bows and their general composition on the tray made by forging are considered for its original style to be the pattern of the VI-VII century. Ornamental motives of plants are described on a great medallion in the center of the tray Azerbaijan masters, but tender jewelries made not only everyday implements of metal as well. Parts of gold and silver belts, rings, bracelets and other accessories found during archeological digs in plain Mil, Gabala, Mingachevir, Nakhchivan and other places show that jeweler's art in Azerbaijan was in high level of its development even until the beginning of the middle ages. Those works of art decorated by most difficult techniques of jewel's art: shebeke (tracery), basma (blotting), gelem ishi (pen-work) and others are characterized with original form and delicate elaboration. The interesting fact is that designs on the works of art of that period, for example, crescent, five-point star and other motives remained up to our days and are used by masters even today.



Jewels may be referred as an inseparable part of samples of metal art of the XVI-XVII centuries. They were generally made of gold and silver and used as accessories for men and women.



The golden and silver accessories made of precious metal were of 4 kinds according to their usage: 1-accessoirs for neck, 2-those for arm and fingers, 3- for head, 4- and those attached on the clothes.

Two works should be mentioned among the jewelries made in this period and preserved up to our times. One of them is silver decorated necklace in the form of almond and corns of pomegranate found among Safavi coins during archeological digs in region Gedebeq, the second one is gold waistband of I Shah Ismayil referred to 1507.

Shah Ismail's waistband is of particular interest. Today it is kept in the palace of Topgapi of Istanbul and considered one of the richest and most decorated among the entire waistband for men. Ornamental designs of plant on the waistband are alike those met on the carpets, cloths and other works of art of the period. The most

beautiful part of the waistband is its belt. Being in the form of a circle, the belt has the real descriptions of a young noble on the horse going for hunting and a guide accompanying him.

According to general composition and separate motives, descriptions on the belt remind of some subjects in the art of miniature of the time.

The most popular women accessories used by women were necklaces. Among them were sinebends, bogazaltis, chechiks, garabatdags and others.

Those accessories were made by attaching valuable beads, purls or pieces of gold and silver in the form of pakhlava (rhomb). In majority of the cases or better look of those accessories a round second part with the description of net on it was attached to it to cover the chest. Sometimes this circle was replaced with a 6, 8 or 12 point star, worked in the technique of tracery, galam ishi or other, in the center of which there was ruby or turquoise and a crescent under it.



Two same woman head-dresses, kept in the museum of country-studies in Zagatala are among the best patterns of jewelry made in this century.

At first sight the abovementioned head-dresses look like a helmet.

The bashlig (hood) is composed of silver pieces of different form and size attached to each other by means of circles. In order to be far from monotonousness decorated with precious jewels round plates are placed between the silver pieces. They are placed at the sides and at the top of the bashlig. The most beautiful part of bashlig is a tender figure of a crescent and star attached to the tube rising up off its top.

The waistbands made for women and men made at this period again prove that the patterns of jewelry were related with old traditions.

In the past waistband was an inseparable part of women and men clothes, which might give the information about the position, wealth, religious belief, nationality and age of its owner.

The waistband in the XVIII century was used both by men and women. The waistband for women was wide, while that for men was thin.

The waistbands of this period were made of figurative and decorative pieces of bronze, silver and gold. The most beautiful part of them was the belts. The belts generally were in the form of square metal decorated in the technique of shebeke (tracery), gelem ishi (pen-work) and sometimes decorated with precious jewels. Women attached 23 lines of gold and silver coins or the accessories in the form of buta or pakhlava (rhomb) to the lower edge of the waistband, when men attached several decorated with different figurative metal pieces thongs hanged over the lap. One of the popular kinds of the waistbands in Azerbaijan in the XVIII century was 'cherkezi kemer (waistband)' for men. In some cases those waistbands had metal figures of pakhlava, circle and sometimes horses and rams facing each other and other samples decorated by the technique of garasavad and blotting.



In the technique of **blotting**, a piece of gold, silver and any other precious metal is placed on a high mould with decoration or design in the form of relief. Then the piece of precious metal is covered with a piece of lead of the same size and the masters begin to strike on it with wooden hammer and the precious metal takes the necessary form. This kind of technique is generally used in making of the waistbands, buttons, bracelets and others.

**Garasavad** was mainly applied on silver, for in dark tone silver gets clear and white lines. On the surface of forged smooth silver masters drew some description by means of scratching and covered its sides with black substance. Generally, the accessories (waistbands, daggers, pistols, gun powder-boxes and others) were decorated by this technique.

**Shebeke** is the description or a design made by thin winding string. Two forms of shebeke are known: the first constitutes the thing with gold and silver strings; the second decorates the same thing.

**Khatemkarlig** has a great heritage in the jeweler's art of Azerbaijan. To decorate dagger, swords and others samples of art the surface of the thing is slightly drilled by cheshni, appeared holes are filled with gold, silver and other non-ferrous metal nails. After the process is completed, the surface of the thing is smoothed and gets the form of a beautiful mosaic.

One of the most difficult and interesting branches of this technique is scraping a script or a picture on the thing with non-ferrous metals. The master should have a great taste and skill to do it. Azerbaijan artists were very skillful in that sphere of art.

**Minachilig** was one of the branches of the art which took Azerbaijan jeweler's art to its highest level. Perdeli mina as one of the difficult and interesting branches of minachilig, was widely spread in Tebriz, Nakhchivan and Baki.

The technique of this branch of art is to fill an engraved picture or a design with colorful liquid (glaze) named mina. Users of this technique by means of blotting copied the design (bird, animal, plant, etc.) described on the mould on to a piece of gold, silver and other metal and filled the spaces with mina.



The most frequently used colors in minachilig were rosy, green, blue, turquoise, black and red.

In comparison with minachilies of the other countries the works of minachilies of Azerbaijan were the most popular ones, for they did not use mixed or muddy colors in their works. Each of the colors used by them to fill in the spaces had their own peculiarities and were separated from each other with a golden or other string. Majority of colors in Azerbaijan minas and the harmony between them strikes everyone.

In comparison with other samples of metal art jeweler's art preserved the traditions of the past. Rings, earrings, bracelets, sinebends (collars), waistbands and others used by Azerbaijani women were again in fashion.

Minali earrings made by jeweler's of Baki and Shamakhi, the accessories for neck and chest made by the masters of Ganja and Sheki in the technique of shebeke and decorated with jewels gold combs, glassy waistbands made by Shuha masters still amaze everyone.

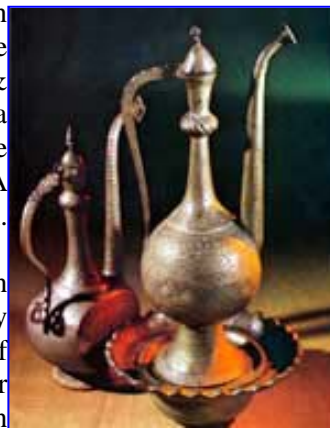
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## Copper-smithing

Azerbaijan folk art has very ancient and rich traditions.

Copper-smithing is an ancient handicraft, widespread in Azerbaijan. Since the end of the second millennium BC copper wares have been used widely. In medieval times there were copper - smithing quarters in the bazaars and forums of Azeri cities such as Baku, Ganja, Shamakha and Quba. The centre of metalwork in this period was Tabriz. Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller who visited Azerbaijan in the second half of the 13th century, dealt in copper wares. A figurative vase (1319), one of the well-known works of that time, is at present in the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. In 1399 in Tabriz master craftsman Abdul Aziz made a two-tonne copper bowl by the order of Amir Teymur (Tamerlane). One of the biggest bowls in the East, it is now kept in the State Hermitage in St Petersburg. A silver astronomic instrument from the 15th century (istirlab) is kept in the USA. The script on it shows that it was made by Shukrullah Mukhlis in 1486 in Shirvan.



Lahij, a village in Ismayilli district, was the centre of copper-smithing in Azerbaijan in the 18th-19th centuries. Copper jugs, vases and cauldrons made by Lahij master craftsmen were renowned in the Caucasus, Turkey and Iran. One of the oldest samovars in the former USSR was made in 1717-18 by master craftsman Najafqulu from Lahij. About 200 workshops are thought to have been operating in the mid-19th century. In the early 19th century the experience of the master craftsmen of Lahij was put into practice in the arms plant of Izhevsk. Today copper-smithing is still practised in Lahij, passed down through the generations.

The work of arts made of metal mined in Nakhichevan, Mingechevir, Gedebey, Gazakh, Ganja and other regions are 5000 years old. Kitchen utensils, weapons and samples of accessories found in these areas should not only be treated as a historical fact, but also as an important source which give important information about mastership of the craftsman.

Copper, after its discovery in Azerbaijan in the period of neolith plays an important role in economical, agricultural, social and cultural life of the people after the discovery of lead, tin, manganese in Azerbaijan we experience new and progressive age-the beginning of Bronze Age.

Material-cultural finds revealed during archeological digs in Azerbaijan inform that our in the II millennium b. c. our predecessors widely used in their everyday life plates, delicate in form, daggers, axes, belts and other accessories made of bronze.



In spite of accurate elaboration and original forms, bronze handicrafts made at this period were made without design. Among those monuments of original form and accurate elaboration we may name the figure of double-headed bronze deer found in village Dolanlar of Karabakh. In the past metal was generally used for creation of art works of religious character and it is possible that the deer was a totem the people of the whole territory worshiped.

Among bronze works of art of the ancient period belt carries a particular importance for its high artistic value and mastering. The bronze belts revealed at the territories of Karabakh ,Gazakh, Gedebey and other regions is striking with zoomorph descriptions and designs on them.

Among works of art made of metal one may find the patters with designs and descriptions on them, according which we may be informed of traditions, beliefs and clothes of that time population. Sealed bronze rings of the VIII-VII century b. c. found in Mingachevir tracts great deal of attention. Described on the seals a man fighting with a lion, a fighter with a shield and a spear and a man worshipping the fire forms an idea of that time clothes and traditions.

The interesting point is that Strabon (63-19 b.c.) in information given about the population of Caucasus mentioned the same clothes, weapons and everyday life implements here described. Metal processing at that times reached its high level in South Azerbaijan.

Rare samples of art found in Hasanli, Garatepe, Ziviye and other places, located 70 km far from the lake Urmiya, are not only important materials about the history and the culture of ancient Azerbaijan, but they may also serve as an 'important document' which helped to solve the problems concerning the development of cultures of the Near and the Middle East.

Among works of art demonstrated in the museum of Archeology in Tehran gold basin, found from Hasanli hill draws particular attention. The descriptions on the basin are placed in two and three lines and cover the whole of the it. The gold basin was found by an American archeologist Robert Dayson, who resting on the descriptions refers the basin to the IX-VIII century b.c

Gold apron found in region Ziviya near the lake Urmiya, dated to the VIII-VII centuries b.c. proves the relation of culture of Azerbaijan with neighboring states. The apron is decorated with descriptions of a lion, a ram, a dog, a rabbit and a creature with human head and lion body with wings.

Among lively descriptions on the gold apron, a special attention should be paid to the figure of lions with human head. Alternatively, their general appearance, composition and style of elaboration they remind animals 'Shedu' raised in front of the palace of II Sargon in ancient Assuria. We must point that the monuments were raised in VIII-VII century b. c. All this also prove the development of Azerbaijani culture.



**The Middle Ages** is the richest period in the history of Azerbaijan folk arts. Among everyday implements of this period kitchen utensils, found during archeological digs in Mingachevir and kept in the Museum of Azerbaijan History in Baku are especially important. Among those utensils, silver plates are especially distinguished with their delicate designs and

beautiful forms. Constantly repeated lines-relieves make the plate more interesting. As bas-relieves they reflect the light and the shade and thus composes the whole thing. Delicate aftafa (a jug used for ablution) kept in museum of Azerbaijan History was also decorated in this style.



**The XI-XV centuries** are characterized by the process of high development of art of metal in Azerbaijan. Many weapons, house equipment of different shape and other samples of art were made during this period; the most of them remained till our days. As in the past, Ganja, Shamakhi, Nakhchivan, Tabriz preserved their fame as the centers of metal products. Archeological digs prove that in the XII century and later Baku occupied particular position in that sphere.

Among metal monuments made at that period the most attractive one is bronze Shirvan tube (lulak), the work of 1206 kept in the State Hermitage in Saint Petersburg. It is difficult to understand at first sight that it is a water bowl. As it is composed of the monuments of small animals. The composition is created in the format stylization. The surface of the bronze tube is decorated with silver in the techniques of scratching and cyclization. Among the ornamental designs of Shirvan tube one may notice historically important scripts. One of the scripts reflects the name of the master of the tube - 'Ali Mahamed oglu'.

Metal equipments found together with the works of art of that period also draw particular attention. Those samples were revealed in the result of archeological digs in of reservation of Shirvanshah palace in Icherisheher (the Inner Town). Bronze figurative lamp found among the same metallic samples.

The lamp is thoroughly covered with different descriptions in the technique of bas-relieve. Those are the real descriptions of a horse, two bulls, fourteen heads of cats and two human faces.

Bronze brazier of the XIII-XIV centuries found in the region of Guba may also be referred to monuments of Shirvan area. It has the form of half-sphere, the height is 30 cm, the length at its mouth is 131 cm, the diameter is 41 cm and original form and ornamental designs. The scripts on the brazier say that it was made by a copper-smith Ahmad Mahammad oglu. The cities of Azerbaijan such as Beylagan, Ganja, Nakhchivan and Tabriz were main centers of the art of metal of that period.

It also proved by works of art revealed at those regions in the result of archeological digs. Among works of art referred to these zones bronze monuments of a human and birds, found in Beylagan (Oran-gala) bronze can made by Osman Salman oglu Nakhchivani in 1190 and kept in Luvr in Paris attract much interest. As it is seen from named patterns majority of metal implements used in everyday life were made of bronze.



Metal art was particularly developed in Tabriz **in the XIV-XV centuries**. Famous traveler of Venice Marko Polo visited Azerbaijan in the second half of the XIII century spoke about the hugeness of Tabriz and the position it occupied in development different spheres of the art. Today many prominent museums of the world exhibit many original patterns of metal art made in Tabriz at this period. A figurative bowl made by Yusif ibn



Ahmed Tabrizi in 1319, kept today in Victoria and Albert museum of London and a bronze tiyan, kept in the State Hermitage of Saint- Petersburg should specially be mentioned.

Tiyan made by Abdul Aziz Sharafaddin oglu in 1399 in Tabriz is the most interesting work of art among those reflecting national traditions of the mentioned period. With the weight of 2000 kg and the diameter of 2.45 cm, this work of art is considered the greatest tiyan known in the East World. Tiyan draws attraction not only for its incomparable size but also for its artistic construction. On the front part tiyan is decorated with beautiful designs of plants. Among the designs there is a script about that the monument was made by Abdul Sharafaddin oglu in 1399 in Tabriz on demand of Teymurleng for the mosque Khoja Ahmad Yasevi. One may also find the script 'The ruler of the world is Allah' one after another 22 times repeated along the whole kettle.



There are the specimens proving that Tabriz was not the only center of metal art, as during and after that period this kind of art was also developed in other cities of Azerbaijan. Today Mr. Harari keeps in America in his personal collection an original bronze istirlab, referred to the XV century. According to notes made on this tool, used in astronomy, the famous master of Shirvan Shukrullah Mukhis made it in 1468. Being a high technical instrument, this istirlab amazes with designs on its surface.

**In the XVI-XVII centuries** preparation of metal house equipment, weapons and accessories was specially developing in Tabriz, Ardabil, Maraga, Nakhchivan, Ganja, Shamakhi and Baki. Weapons (daggers, swords, topuzes and shield) and armored clothes (bashlyk (hood), elbow-rest, breeches) made by masters of Azerbaijan were very famous abroad at that period.

In Russian sources we often come across the names of weapons made in Shamakhi. In one of such materials we learn about 8 decorated hoods of Russian tsar Boris Godunov, made by the masters of Shamakhi.

The fame of Azerbaijani weapons at that time was not accidental. Local masters invaded many new ways in preparation of the weapons.

The XV century replaces so well known straight and wide swords with crook crescent like swords with the handle made of gold, silver and valuable bones.

The appearance of shields and armored clothes were richer and more magnificent than before.

A shield referred to the XV century kept in the house of weapons of Kremlin draws particular interest. With its amazing beauty, this shield protected a Russian tsar M.F.Romanov during the war. Then it passed to famous Russian warlord F.I.Mstislavski, and in 1622 after his death, was presented to treasury of Russian tsars. Its diameter is 50,8 cm, was forged of the whole red steel and covered with gold by the technique of khatemkarlig.

We may stress two more samples made in Azerbaijan at that period. Both of them are the hoods used by the nobles during wars. One of them is now kept in Moscow House of weapons; the second is kept in Istanbul. The second hood carries a script, noting that it was made for Shah Tahmasib in 1528.

The first armored hood is first named in the list of weapons brought to Boris Godunov from Shamakhi. Later this helmet was kept as figurative pattern by knyaz (prince) F.Mstislavski.

The abovementioned sample is so filled with decorations that it nearly looks like an arakhchin with gulabatin needlework, than a hood protecting the head from stab of sword, mace and so on.

One may notice the samples of calligraphy among decorations of the hood. They are placed in wide range on the forehead of the hood. They are the words: 'For the sake of powerful and merciful Allah'.

The hood was made of smoothed steal and decorated by means of three techniques of metal processing: tracery (shebeke), khatemkarlig and pen work.

The most developed sphere of art developed **in the XVIII** in Azerbaijan was the coppering. Foreign travelers inform that special streets of coppering were in the cities of Tabriz, Ganja, Sheki, Shusha, Shamakhi, and Baku where masters made decorated, original kitchen implements. There were zones in Azerbaijan where the major part of the population was busy with that sphere of art. One of such places was Lahij, included into the khanate of Shamakhi at that time.

Many everyday life and house implements (such as can, satil, aftafa, sernij, copper tray (mejmeji), serpuz, etc.) were made in Lahij at the period. Products of Lahij were as well in quality and quantity as the products made in central cities of that time.

Among preserved up today metal products made in Lahij samovar of XVIII century carries particular interest. It is has correct proportions, beautiful form and decorations on it. The decoration consisted of stylized descriptions of plant, zoomorph and human. The majority of designs used in the decoration of the samovar are found on many samples of Azerbaijan folk art (i.e. on walls and stones, cloths, fancywork, etc.). The samovar

was made of copper and decorated by the settler of the village Lahij, a copper-smith master Najafgulu in 1130 according to the calendar of hijri-gamary (in 1717 according to the calendar of christianity).

Sheki also was among those popular for production of metal house equipment and accessories in the XVIII century.

As to the sources, the masters of Sheki were famous for making cast decorated brazier.

Those braziers were not big in size. Majority of them consisted of 6-8 cast bronze parts hooked to each other with. On those bronze pieces you may find the ornaments of plants, geometric figures, and figures of birds and animals worked by bas-relief.

The composition of 'Islimi', a curved line with attached flowers and leaves was the popular one among plant designs, as well as the figures of nightingales and lions faced each-other.

Many of the patterns of the jewelry of the XVIII century had been preserved up today.

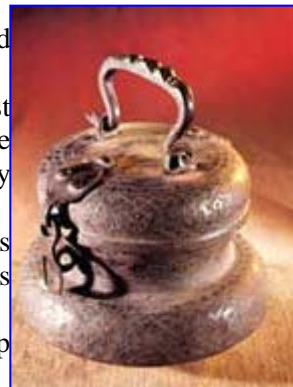
House equipments, weapons, accessories made of metal in XVIII century Azerbaijan were decorated by 6 techniques: forging, blotting, garasavad, shebeke (tracery), khatemkarlig (ring-making) and minachilig (glaze-covering).

**Forging** is one of the ancient techniques. It is the easier than other techniques of the art. It demands sharp eyesight and great skill. The masters work with hammer and sharp-tip tools.

**At the beginning of XIX-XX centuries** 3 kinds of metal art were developing in Azerbaijan.

They were the profession blacksmith, coppering and jeweler's art. The blacksmiths made the agricultural tools and everyday equipment: a brazier, tripod, door handle, tongs and others.

The art of coppering having great heritage in Azerbaijan was preserving its particular place during those ages. Depending on the peculiarity of everyday life and their economical engagement of people of Azerbaijan there was a great need in the country for a pot, a pan, a serpush (plate cover to keep the food hot), a sernish (milking), a tray, a satil (bucket), an aftafa, a seheng (a long jar with long neck to carry water), a can and other things made of copper



<http://www.azcarpetmuseum.az/004.html>

### Armour-making

Armour-making in the Caucasus embodies centuries of experience and the skills of oriental armourers. Adorned with many artistic and technically superb decorations, Caucasian weaponry constitutes a truly unique phenomenon in the culture of the Orient. Silver was the material most widely used in the Caucasus to decorate weaponry.

Caucasian pistols and guns, despite the simple technology of their manufacture, were of excellent constructional design and high-firing power. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Caucasian pistols and rifles earned fame and popularity throughout the Orient. Caucasian firearms were sumptuously and lavishly decorated: the barrels were adorned with gold damascene; the gun-stocks, straight and narrow, were made of plane and nut wood, inlaid with bone, silver or woods of different species. The bands used to secure the barrel and stocks were often made of solid silver with engraving. The inscribed names of the gunsmith and/or owner of the weapon, enclosed in decorative cartouches, served as an elegant addition to the artistic ornamentation of the piece.



In the 19th and early 20th centuries Caucasian armourers produced a special kind of cavalry sword, the so-called shashka, or "long knife", which resembled a sabre but with the blade only slightly curved and without a cross-guard.



In the late Middle Ages hauberks, breastplates, armlets, leggings and greaves, shields and sabres and all kinds of halberds and helmets were produced. Used by Caucasian warriors, these weapons and armour were both made in the Caucasus and imported.

The collection of armoury of the Museum of the History of Azerbaijan. Academy of Sciences of the Azerbaijan SSR is quite a significant assemblage of monuments of material culture, outstanding not

only among the stocks of this Museum, but also among the major collections of armoury owned by other museums of the Soviet Union. Started when the Museum was established in 1920. The collection today has more than 600 items of arms and armour belonging to different periods and different peoples, many of them remarkable masterpieces of applied art in general and armoury decoration in particular. Many of the objects in the collection, in addition to their artistic value, are of great historical interest.



Oriental arms, which make up nearly a half of the collection, are represented by some 300 pieces of defensive and offensive cold steel and firearm pieces from various parts of the Near and Middle East, the best items of which are in the Museum's permanent exhibition. The collection comprises also occasional arms from South-East Asia and the Far East, which are of great interest for



the ingenuity of their constructional design and superb artistic qualities.

A place of pride in the collection goes to the cold steel and firearms of the Caucasus, for the variety and splendid attributes of the objects exhibited; it is also one of the largest collections of Caucasian weaponry anywhere to be seen. Caucasian arms and armour embody the centuries long experience and skills of oriental armourers, enriched, as it is, by long-standing traditions of outstanding craftsmanship. Adorned with most varied decorations, artistically and technically superbly accomplished, Caucasian weaponry constitutes a truly unique phenomenon in the history

of the material and esthetic culture of oriental peoples.

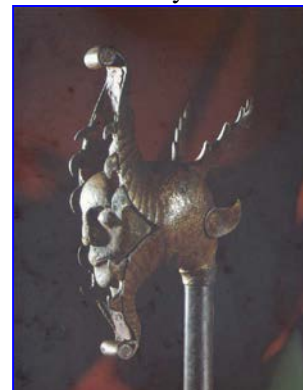
The cold steel and firearms on display are dated in the main to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with some parade and ceremonial pieces belonging to the early twentieth century. The bulk of the Caucasian sector is represented by the famous Caucasian daggers whose excellent workmanship and combat merits have won them universal renown. The dagger's broad blade, with a cutting edge on both sides, gradually tapers off towards the point. The dagger had always been an object of pride to the

Caucasian hillman, his reliable weapon and beautiful adornment, never to be parted with, worn at all times on his belt, next to the buckle. Little differing structurally from place to place, the dagger, throughout the



centuries, has been the principal personal male attribute among the different Caucasian peoples. The shape of the Caucasian dagger was borrowed also by the peoples dwelling in the south of Russia and in Turkey.

But when it comes to the hilts and scabbards, the lavish decor and shape of Caucasian daggers are of the greatest diversity possible. The hilts of the North Caucasian daggers were often faced with black horn, those of Southern Caucasus – with white bone, and frequently adorned with carving. The most widespread material used for the adornment of weaponry was silver, highly valued by Caucasian craftsmen. Quite a number of daggers on display are decorated with damascened silver, engraved, embossed, nielloed silver, granulations and filigree silver, virtually with all the different kinds of working silver, mastered so well by Caucasian silversmiths. Yet the most sophisticated ornamentation, both in beauty of design and workmanship distinguishes the daggers coming from the hands of the silversmiths of Daghestan; and foremost among them are the craftsmen of the village of Kubachi.



The collection includes daggers with scabbards adorned with a variety of materials -carved bone and gold-plating, fretted silver and engraving, chasing and nielloing, constituting not merely specimens of complex, varied and combined techniques, but true masterpieces of decorative and applied art.

Caucasian pistols and guns, despite the simple technology of their manufacture, were of excellent constructional design and high firing power. Organized in the seventeenth century, the manufacture of firearms attained a high degree of perfection already by the end of the eighteenth, with Caucasian pistols and rifles gaining well-earned fame and popularity

throughout the Orient. Light and handy, Caucasus-made flintlocks with breeches of the Spanish-Moorish type, long-barreled and with high-quality rifling, they offered a close shooting pattern and a long firing range. Their barrels were made of high-quality grades of steel and ensured a long service life without deterioration of performance. Many flintlocks made in the eighteenth century were still being used by hunters in the twentieth.



Caucasian firearms, too, were sumptuously and lavishly decorated: the barrels were adorned with gold damascening, the flintlocks – with engraving and embossing, the gunslocks. straight and narrow, were made of plane-tree and nut-tree wood, were inlaid with bone, silver, or woods of different species. The bands, used to secure the barrel and stock together, were often made of solid silver with engraving and nielloing. The inscribed names of the gunsmith and/or owner of the weapon, enclosed in decorative cartouches, served as an elegant addition to the artistic ornamentation of the piece.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Caucasian armourers produced a special kind of cavalry sword, the so-called “shashka”, or “long knife”, resembling a sabre but with the blade only slightly curved and without a cross-guard, for protecting the hand. Apart from the peoples of the Caucasus, this cavalry sword became very popular among the Cossaks of the Don. The collection has several unique pieces of this kind of weapon remarkable for their combat and decorative quantities. Pride of place among them goes to a cavalry sword that belonged to the Soviet General M.G. Yefremov; its hilt and scabbard are completely covered with an intricate plant ornament, executed in the technique of ivory carving, engraving on silver, damascening and polychrome enameling. Another parade sword, which also belonged to Yefremov. Its hilt and scabbard faced in silver, is a masterpiece of Caucasian jewellery art.

Quite varied is the collected armour belonging to the period of the late Middle Ages: hauberks, breastplates, armllets, leggings and greaves, shields and sabres, all kinds of halberds and helmets, most of them arms and armour of the Persian type. Used by Caucasian warriors, such weaponry was both imported and made in the Caucasus itself on Persian models, yet differing from the latter in design and ornamentation. The tabar/in (battle-axe) was a weapon favoured by oriental hero-warriors, who liked it for its mighty blow which would crush through any armour and smote an enemy at a single stroke. The collection includes field (abar/ins of damask steel, as well as tabarzins made after old models to serve just as heraldic symbols.

Round shields of different size, adorned with scenes from popular oriental literary works, and also with plant and geometric patterns, along with light sabres curving more steeply towards the tip. Were the main weapons of Caucasian and Persian warriors. Among the many pieces of this kind there are weapons made in Iran at different periods, yet all characterized by a single type of design. Their ornamentation, executed in the

technique of gold damascening, in addition to plant and geometric patterns contains a great number of inscriptions -examples of the art of calligraphy at its very best.

The collection's Turkish weapons are dated mainly to the late eighteenth -early nineteenth centuries, including sabres and yataghans, flintlock guns and pistols.



Turkish sabres with a broad blade ending in a special broadening out with a cutting edge on both sides, are made of Damask steel of the highest quality, adorned with gold damascened plant ornament and inscriptions. The nineteenth century sabres are very light and richly decorated. Some of the scabbards are entirely covered with ornamentation and include insets of semiprecious stones, mainly coral, to which Turkish armourers were so partial. Turkish eighteenth-century yataghans are fine examples of artistic decoration: their wavy blades have near the hilt embossed plates with protruding coral insets.

The faceted barrels of Turkish guns, made of weld steel, are covered with damascened gold in an intricate plant design incorporating cartouches enclosing the name of the gunsmith. The large flintlocks of Turkish guns were silver plated; their stocks were inlaid with mother-of-pearl and silver plaques with geometric ornamentation in the shape of stars and crescents.

In the nineteenth century Turkish pistols began to display flintlocks of the European type, thus reflecting the growing influence of European technology of the manufacture of weapons in Turkey.

The weapons of Central Asia are represented in the Museum's collection by sabres and daggers, and eighteenth-nineteenth century matchlock firearms.

Central Asian sabres with their slightly curving blades are distinguished for their moderate ornamentation; Central-Asian armourers were reluctant to interfere with the stern elegance of the blade made of superb damask steel, whose very surface at times presented a graceful ornament of fancifully entwined lines. But the scabbards of the pieces were covered entirely with chased silver plating with gill, and displayed turquoise and ruby insets.



The heavy, wrought-steel barrels of Central Asian guns were fitted right up to modern times with matchlock breeches. They are practically free of decor, with only the name of the maker or owner enclosed in a rather simply ornamented cartouche engraved on the barrel.

The arms and armour collection of the Museum of the History of Azerbaijan includes also some cold steel from South -East Asia and the Far East; worth mentioning among them are Indian and Nepalese sabres, as well as two-pronged Japanese lances and a battle-axe belonging to the late eighteenth-early nineteenth centuries.

**«Azerbaijan. 100 Questions Answered», Baku, 2005, P. 107-110**  
**<http://culture.az/2010/03/oriental-arms-and-armour>**



### Decorative needlework

Azerbaijan created a rich and specific culture through the history of the Azerbaijani people.

The decorative art was one of the most developed spheres of the culture in Azerbaijan. This art established in the ancient times. It embraces different kinds of the art including tattooing and jewelry, metal



works, ornaments on wood, stones and bones, carpentry, weaving and ornamental knitting and weaving, knitting and other thread-works. All the types of this art reflecting the talent and moral world of the Azerbaijani people are widely used in the usual life of people.

Decorative needlework in Azerbaijan has always been popular. All household items - curtains, tablecloths, bedding, garments, accessories and horse cloths and saddles - are

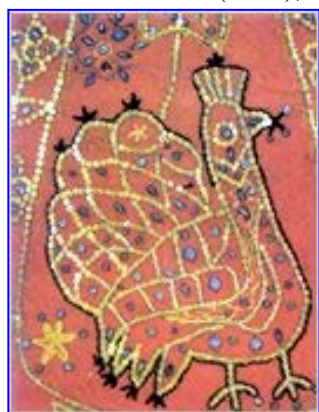
decorated with needlework. Some written sources comment on Azerbaijani needlework. Marco Polo in the 13th century noted the beauty of silks in Shamakhi and Barda. In 1561 Anthony Jenkinson, an English diplomat, writing about the luxury of the summer residence of Abdullakhan, Shirvan's ruler, said that "the Khan was sitting in a tent embroidered with silver and fine needlework. But his garment was decorated with pearl and precious stones." The French traveller Chardin, who lived in Azerbaijan for a short



time in the 17th century, compared the big workshops where only needlework was done with those in France.

Cotton, silk and wool produced in Shamakhi, Ganja, Sheki and Shusha were used in embroidery. Embroidery was knitted with silk, golden and silver threads. Combinations of brilliant golden beads, pearls and silk threads can be seen in the best examples of embroidery. Azerbaijani decorative needlework uses colourful techniques: tekelduz (dense embroidery with pearls and beads) and gulebetin (sewing with golden threads and applique).

According to traditions, tekelduz, perled embroidery and gulebetin were wide spread in Sheki, Shusha, Ganja and Gazakh and Baku. Both women and men were involved in decorative needlework, but in Sheki particularly men did embroidery. Their works received golden and silver medals in Moscow (1872), Paris (1900) and St Petersburg (1913).



*Gulebetin* is an ancient kind of needlework in Azerbaijan. The fabrics produced in Baku were big and protuberant while in Shamakhi they were decorated with fine pictures. Golden and silver threads prevailed in this embroidery. Hard and strong threads were used. Deep red and green smooth velvet cloths were the best. *Gulebetin* embroidery was best in Shamakhi. Y. Streis, a Dutch traveller who visited Shamakhi in the 17th century, was astonished when he saw "garments and other items with silver and golden threads".



But embroidery with pearl and beads differed in terms of its colourfulness and background. In the 19th century this embroidery was an integral part of some decorative items in Shusha, Ganja and Gazakh. Geometrical embroidery in the form of the stripes, rhombuses, squares and astral symbols on the rocks of Gobustan (10th millennium BC) were the main motifs in decorative works. Floral, birds and stylised human motifs were rarely applied in embroidery.

The technique and composition of the thread-work of Azerbaijan dates back to the remote past and proves the inheritance of the people. It is possible to define the time of the spread of different types of embroidery on the basis of different archeological materials. The analogues of embroidery ornaments that are the right lines

and polylines, zigzags, dotted ornaments, circles, triangles, rhombuses date back to the bronze era (3rd millennium B.C.).

A number of merchants, travelers and diplomats who visited these places in different periods provided interesting information about the development of Azeri art. Italian traveler Marko Polo stressed the beauty of the silk wares of Shemakha and Barda in the 13th century. English traveler -merchant Antoni Djenkinson wrote depicting the magnificence of the summer residence (the 16th century): "the king was sitting in the rich tent worked with silk and golden thread; his clothes were all in pearls and precious stones".



Darai and velvet were the most important local materials for the embroidery in the 19th-20th centuries. They were produced in Shemakha, Basgal, Sheki, Ganja, Shusha and other regions of Azerbaijan. The local silk and woolen threads and other patterns were used in the embroidery. The plant dyestuffs were used in dyeing.



The embroidery wares were distinguished for the richness and diversity of the ornamental motives. The plant motives as the image of roses, daffodils, pinks, tulips, lily, the leaves of the pomegranates, quince and cherry-plum trees as well as ears and leaves of different forms were the most widely themes in the embroidery of Azerbaijan.

The geometric ornaments of the embroideries comprised the right and poly lines, zigzags, triangles, quadrangles, six and eight pointed stars, rhombuses and images of the Sun and stars.



The people liked to embroider the nightingales, peacock, hoopoe, sparrow, pheasant, quail and others.

The widely spread image of two birds is the most favorite and ancient theme of the decorative art. The birds are usually depicted either in love with each other or offended to each other. Both themes are reflected as the love and parting. Among animals, the embroideries mainly contained the images of deer, tortoises, dragons and snakes, horses and others.



The most widely spread of the housing objects were the rails, containers for combs, boxes for cosmetics, jugs and others.



The most popular and widely spread types of embroidery were as follows: gold thread, plain embroidery, chain-stitch, embroidery with the technique "the birds eye", metal pearls embroidery, pearl embroidery, stamping, "buttoning", flapping, spiral embroidery and work on the file.

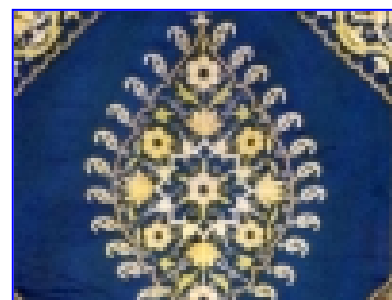
The embroidery with golden and silver threads is the most ancient of all the types of embroidery. It mainly used the thick cloths. Red, dark red, violet and green one color velvet was considered the best material. Golden and silver threads produced at the factories were used in embroidery. This type of embroidery was called gold and silver thread.

The gold and silver thread was used in decoration of the women's clothes, headwear, housing objects, saddles and other small objects. It was also a tradition to include the embroidery wares in a bride's dowry.

Chain stitch was the most widely spread among the embroidery wares worked with color threads.

Sheki was the center of the chain-stitch in the 19th century.

Red, black and dark blue velvet and cloths of local or foreign production were mainly used for the chain-stitch. Not only women were engaged in this type of decorative art. A number of men also demonstrated their





talent in this sphere. A master would first draw the contours of the picture on the cloth stretched by the loom and then filled its inner part. The needle used in chain-stitch was called qarmach.

The chain-stitch was used for decoration of the women's clothes, pillow-cases, mutakka, carpets used in the bathrooms.



Plain embroidery was another widely used technique of needle-works.

This type of embroidery mainly used not bright, pastel colors mainly colored silk and woolen threads in combination with golden ones. It had two types: two-sided and one-sided. Plain embroidery was used in the decoration of clothes, wall ornaments, curtains and others.

"The bird's eye" -ornaments worked with white or colored silk threads was one of the most widely spread types of embroidery.

Buttoning is found in the night headwear (shabkulag), canamaz and woolen clothes. It's simple and water sewing is carried out through laying the thin woolen or cotton layer between the prime and face of the ware.

The embroidery wares worked with pearls excited great interest and they have been in the decoration of costume elements and housing objects.

The embroidery with sparkling ornaments, pearls is the sewing along the contours of the image formed by the color silk threads on the cloths. The spiral embroidery is a relatively new type of needle-works.

The less widely spread drawn-thread work established very late and is seldom practiced. It is mainly used for decorating of handkerchiefs, veils and napkins.

To date Azerbaijan preserves the school of the art of embroidery that dates back to he ancient times. The wares of this sphere of art of Azerbaijan are demonstrated at the international exhibitions and in museums.



«Azerbaijan. 100 Questions Answered», Baku, 2005, P. 112  
<http://www.azcarpetmuseum.az/002.html>

### National clothes of Azerbaijan

Azerbaijani national costume is the result of the long and complicated processes involved in the development of the nation's material and intellectual culture. The history of a nation has a most direct bearing on the national costume. It reflects, more than any other element of material culture, the specific features of a nation and belongs to the more stable ethnic characteristics. National costume absorbs the ethnic, aesthetic and artistic features of a nation's creativity which finds expression in the forms of garments, in embroidery, in the art of weaving and knitting.



Traditional clothes among Azerbaijanis changed little up to the beginning of the 20th century. Men's dress at the time was similar to that of the rest of the Caucasus, except for minor differences in the cut and decoration. Naturally city-dwellers and peasants did not dress exactly the same, and neither did the rich and the poor. Peasants wore wide pantaloons with a belt made from home-spun cloth and with a simple tunic made from a variety of materials, including cotton and satin, and especially a woollen (occasionally silk) *kaftan* called an *arkhalyg*. The dress was completed with a fluffy sheep's wool *hat* (*papag*), woollen or silk socks and home-made, rawhide slippers. The better-off wore a *chukha* (a tight-fitting jacket)



and a *kurak* (a sheepskin coat) in winter. The dress of Azerbaijani women at that time was more original and unique, and varied with social status and ethnic identity. They would wear a short waist-length tunic of calico, cotton or satin among the poor, and silk among the rich. They also wore wide skirts, gathered at the waist, in the same material. City-dwellers at the turn of the 20th century began wearing European-style trousers, but otherwise dress remained traditional.



Women's hair was always hidden under a tightly bound headscarf and covered with a decorative silk *shawl*. Their footwear was similar to the men's. However, they also wore ornaments on their heads, hands and bosom. In those days, Azerbaijani women did not appear on the street without their *chadra* (a large veil) and sometimes they covered their face with a light scarf called a *rubend*. When they saw strangers, village women simply covered their mouths and lower part of their face with a corner of their head *shawl*. They all wore belts, usually made of leather with coins sewn on and with a buckle made of a rough grade of silver. Children's clothing was similar to adults, except that it was less decorative.

National clothes of Azerbaijan are the result of material and moral culture of the people who lived through numerous difficulties in their lives. Closely associated with the history of people, the clothes are one of the most important sources in the investigation of culture of that people. Clothes mainly reflect the national peculiarities and ethnic attributes of people. Clothes play a great role in solution of the matters regarding ethnogeny; they help to settle the problems of cultural-historical relations and mutual influence between the folks. They depend on the level of the development of natural economy and geographical conditions.



The history of folk creation, ethnographic and artistic qualities find their reflection on the clothes. This peculiarity is revealed in clothes of different form and in their decorations, art needlework and weaving.

During archeological digs in the territory of Azerbaijan the archeologists found out bronze needle and awl referred to the beginning of the Bronze Age (III millennium b.c.). Those findings prove that, the ancient Azerbaijanis could sew for themselves. Small clay statuettes found in Kultepe (the 2nd millennium BC) and barmagchills seals found in Mingchevir (V century BC) provide some information about the style of clothes during that period. Silk clothes found in Mingachevir catacombs are referred to the V-VI centuries AD. A number of golden accessories and plates made of clay in the form of shoe found in Azerbaijan and referred to the III-IV centuries b. c. prove that Azerbaijanis have ancient material culture.

As a result of archeological excavations in Baku city near the Shirvanshakh palace mausoleum (XV century) palace they found the remnants of valuable watered silk and silk clothes.



Rich sources of chip raw material in the territory of Azerbaijan, created suitable condition for production of silk and woolen cloth.

In the XVII century Azerbaijan was the greatest silk zone of the Near East, and the province of Shirvan the main region of silk production of Azerbaijan. Shamakhi, Shabran, Arash, Gabala, Javad, Agdashand others were the most important center of weaving in Azerbaijan. The famous traveler Adam Oleari wrote: "They (the people of Shirvan) were generally busy with weaving of thread, silk and wool and different kinds of sewing." Made in Shamakhi cloths such as taffeta, veil and delicate silk gained special fame. There was a great need for delicate head-dresses and other weaving products.

Ganja, Shaki, Nakhshivan, Maraga, Marand, Arash and Ordubad were major weaving centers of Azerbaijan. Ganja should be especially noticed as the center of silk art.

Evliya Chalabi (XVII century) wrote, that the silk of Ganja was too famous. Production of cotton cloth also occupied a prominent position among other crafts existed in Ganja.



Tebriz was the center of production of different kind of cloths. This city was especially famous for the production of high quality velvet, satin, red calico and keji. The part of those cloths was even exported abroad.

Skillful weavers of Nakhchivan made plenty of cheap but beautiful and high-quality cotton cloths. There was a great need in printed cotton they made.

A kind of centralization appeared in Azerbaijan cities in the XVII century was also continued later. Among produced and widely used in Azerbaijan and exported cloths we may count zarbaft, watered silk, satin, taffeta, gavonuz, kemkha, kiseya, velvet, delicate silk, broadcloth, shawl, tirma, midgal, coarse calico and others. Some of those cloths are called among people as "Haji mene bakh"(Haji, look at me), "geje-gunduz"(day and night), "genda dur"(stay aside), "alishdim yandim"(I'm burning), "kucha mene dar gelir"(the street is narrow for me) etc.

It goes without saying that cloth is one of his elements reflecting national culture. Difference of cloths in design and colors served to find differences between the folks and social classes within one nation. Azerbaijan people widely used such cloths as gavonuz, delicate silk, mov, zarbaft, watered silk, satin, velvet, taffeta, faille, tirma etc.

Women clothes were generally made of silk and velvet, clothes for men were made of broadcloth and shawl weaved at home.

Underclothing for men and women were sewed of flax and cotton. But in rich families undershirt was made of silk.

XVI-XVII century is characterized as the period of development of Azerbaijan clothes.

It was revealed that the school of national clothes of Azerbaijan was created during the abovementioned period. One might appoint the age, the profession, and his class by his clothing.

The most interesting part of clothes in the **XVI century** in Azerbaijan was **head-dress**.

We know that in the XVI century Azerbaijanis were called 'gizilbashlar'('gold-heads'), for their head dress was a red hat with thin and high top and embraced it with dressing. The nobles and servants of military post carried 12 jewels or drew with 12 golden lines.

A noble of a high status sometimes carried a big jewel, with relatively small jewels round it on his head-dress. The biggest jewel was the sign of the Prophet Muhammed or Ali; the smallest ones were that of 12 imams.

The famous an Uzbek scientist G.A.Pugashenkova and a German scientist H.Hots, interested in head-dresses of Safavi period, proved that their head-dress several times hanged its form since the beginning and along the whole of the XVI century. According to them, people carried such head-dresses since the beginning of the XVI century till 1535, and beginning with the second part of the XVI century their quantity minimized. Such head-dresses being in the fashion till the end of the XVI century were especially used in Tebriz, Nakhchivan and Shamakhi.

Together with **head-dresses red and sharp at the top** people at the XVI century used simple **head-dresses without any decoration**.

The most wide-spread turbans of that time were generally white. The king, the vizier and the clergymen with a rank used green turbans.

Together with turban in the XVI-XVII century Azerbaijan we also see the use of original **small hats alike bonnets**.



In the XVI-XVII centuries there were hats of different kind in Azerbaijan. The most wide-spread among them were those **sewed of ship leather**. They were generally used in the territories specialized in cattle- and sheep-breeding. His **women head-dresses** of the XVI-XVII centuries are also different. According to existing materials we may say that there were seven kinds of woman head-dresses at that time. They were beautiful and colorfully-designed **kerchiefs**, small- designed **skull-caps**, **bonnets** made of fur or velvet fixed under the chin.

Skull-caps were of widely spread woman head-clothes in the XVI-XVII centuries they were generally of two kind skull caps for a woman and for a maid.

Women usually wore their head-dresses at home, in the yard and at guests, but in the streets they covered themselves with white veil. Only little girls and old women were traditionally allowed to walk without a veil.

**Overcoats of the XVI-XVII century Azerbaijan** was different and colorful as well. The forms of the overcoats of that period were the continuation of old traditional ones. But this tradition had been gradually enriched, improved and developed in the direction of decoration. The main changes had been made in details, decorations and designs.

The more or less rich men of XVI-XVII Azerbaijan wore honorable **dressing gowns with fine needle-work** at its lap, shoulder and neck. There were two kinds of them. One kind of gowns was used only to cover the shoulders.

The second kind was little bit tight, with half-sleeved and sat tight on the body.

The traditional overcoat well-spread in Azerbaijan in the XVI-XVII centuries was **aba**. In comparison with old abas those of the XVI and XVII centuries sat tight both on the body and sleeves. In the miniatures of this century we see that the laps of abas were attaching to the belt.



Men wore trousers tight at the lap and loose at the upper part. They were made of the same cloth as over-shirt, but the color often was blue or dark-yellow.

**Men-shoes** of that period were also different in form. The wide-spread shoes for men were light high-boots without heels (sometimes with low-heels) made of the soft leather.

The overcoats for women in Azerbaijan in the XVI-XVII centuries were also different. Those dresses were alike those of men for the cutting.

Alike men women (especially that of rich class) wore on their shoulders full-sleeve gowns as an accessory. But women gowns were plainer and were lesser decorated.

One of collectively wore women clothes in the XVI-XVII centuries were trousers stretched down till the heels. The trousers of women were as same as that of the men; loose in the upper part and narrow at the foot.

**Azerbaijan clothes of the XVIII century** were more colorful. Appearance of independent khanates such as Baki, Guba, Shamakhi, Karabakh, Nakhchivan, Ganja, Lenkeran, Sheki, and others, also found its reflection in the dresses. Framed life, different political and economical situations existing in the khanates caused to change the style of the clothes (their appearance). The change generally was not in cutting and silhouette but in cloth and decorations.

In the XVIII century Azerbaijan men wore full-sleeve tight coat-**chukha** (a Caucasian coat). Chukha was mainly sewed of thick cloths. The difference of the coat depended on the age and the height of the man.

In comparison with previous times, in the XVIII century **aba** was commonly worn by mullahs and honorable old men.

**Shoes of men in the XVIII century** were also different. The most frequently used were leather small-heel shoes-**bashmags**. The rich men also wore high-boots made of thin leather and the peasants used bast sandals (**charigs**), which since the old times they had traditionally been carrying to the beginning of the XX century.



**In the XVIII century women clothes** were more beautiful and made with a taste. The traveler marshal Fon Bibershtain, at the end of this century visited Azerbaijan, spoke about his admiration towards the women of the country and their beautiful dresses.

In the XVIII century women overcoats contained of **upper shirt, chapkan, arkhalig, kurdu, kulaja, labbada, eshmak and bahari**.

The colors of the shirts the women wore were different depending on their age. Maids and brides wore yellow, red, green, the older women wore white or black shirts.

One of the beautifully cut upper clothes for women was **chapkan**. It had lining and was tight up to the waist. On its sides there were protuberances called 'chapig', it served to show the body more attractive and figured.

Another kind of woman dresses was **arkhalig**. It was also with lining alike chapkan and tight to the waist. Women wore arkhalig with laps of different width, which had gathers or pleats in lower part of the waist. Some arkhaligs were of wide and straight cut and had slits on the sides.

The best women arkhaligs of that century were made in Shusha, Sheki, Nakhshivan and Shamakhi.

One of the richest women overcoats of this century was **kurdu**. This was a sleeveless kind of dress with a band. It was carried in winter, thus its neck, collar and laps were of fur.

**Women shoes** in some cases looked like that of the men, but being more delicate and decorated with beautiful designs. The shoes of noble women had fancywork on them, the inside of it was thoroughly covered with designed silver cloth (such kind of shoes are kept at the museums of our republic).

**Women head-dresses in the XVIII century** were as different as in past times.

To gather their hair women used gauze and linen. It was also a mean of anti-perspiration (in Gachbend-Nakhchivan). In order to prevent it from slipping down, they used golden falsity (hook, bogazalti—a tie under the chin) or attached to the tips golden coin with hook on it. The gauze were made of white cotton cloth, chargat was orange, red-rosy and sometimes fringy.

Women preferred colorful silk kerchiefs.

Sometimes women wore kerchief over the silk kerchief. Thus they wore three kinds of the head-dresses at the same time: the **gauze** (or the linen), then **silk kerchief** and the third—simple **kerchief** (or gesabe, serendaz, zerbab).

In cold weather they always wore **shawls** (tirma shawl, made of woolen stuff, kashmiri shawl, and shawl weaved of natural wool) over all clothes.

One of the most popular head-dresses of the time was **arakhchin**. But they differed from XVI-XVII century arakhchins with absence of plait bag on its back.

A head-dress sewed of the cloth named 'tesekgabagi' was popular in Azerbaijan during and after the XVIII century. It smartened women forehead and was made by jewelers.

This type of head-dress was popular in Karabakh, Ganja, Gazakh, and Tovuz and in Borchali province.

The pictures of national dresses drawn from the nature by Russian painters V.V. Vereshagin and G.G. Gagarin, visited Azerbaijan cities - Baki, Shamakhi, Sheki, Ganja, Gazakh and others in the XIX century carry a great importance for us.

The territory of Azerbaijan may relatively be subdivided into several historical-ethnographic zones. They are Guba-Khachmaz, Absheron, Lankaran-Astara,

Shamakhi, Karabakh, Nakhchivan-Ordubad, Gabala-Oguz, Sheki-Zagatala, Ganja and Shemkir-Qazax. The similarity of clothes of Azerbaijanis living at the abovementioned historical and ethnographic territories proves that historically they belonged to the same ethnic group. Little differences of the dresses of the named zones reflected only local peculiarities.

Clothes did not only reflect local peculiarities of historical and ethnographic zones, they also revealed the age, family and social status of the person. The clothes of a maid and a married woman were differed. Young brides and old women used fewer accessories.

The clothes of men in the abovementioned zones were generally the same and also reflected the class they belonged to.

Dresses of children were alike the dresses of older generation, they only differed in sizes and the elements corresponding their age.

Wedding dresses and Sunday clothes were made of expensive cloths and in comparison with work-day and overalls, the formers were worn with golden and silver jewelry.

Women overcoats and underclothes used **in the XIX century and at the beginning of the XX century** in Azerbaijan may be subdivided into two groups.

To women overcoats belonged upper shirt, arkhalig, chapkan, labbada, kulaja, kurdu, eshmek and bahari.

**Women upper shirt** had full, loose and strait sleeves. The part of the sleeve attached to the shoulder was plain, sometimes with pleat. The dress-shield was covered with xishdek, made of different colored cloth. The shirt had a button on its neck. The upper shirt was usually made of ganovuz or fay. The neck, the collar, the hand and the lap of the shirt was banded with galloon. The front lap of the shirt was decorated with gold lapping, medakhil, and money with golden or silver hanging.

**Chapkan** was worn over the upper shirt. It had lining and was tight to the waist. At its sides near the lap it had slits. It also had installed sleeves with elchek at their tip. Those sleeves hanged down the shoulders. The





installed sleeve was sometimes decorated with buttons. Chapkan was made of tirma, velvet and other gilded cloths. The collar of chapkan, the borders of slits, laps and the sides of the sleeves were decorated with band and other galloons, borders, gold lace, shahpesend and so on.

**Arkhalig** was the most popular cloth in the whole Azerbaijan. There were different types of arkhalig.

Alike chapkan arkhalig had lining and was tight to the waist. Down the waist archalig had the lap of different size, with gathers or pleats. Some archaligs were cut wide and straight with slits on its sides. The sleeves of archalig were of different cut. Some were straight and long, and sewed in the form of sleeve-installation tith elchek at its tips. In the third kind of arkhaligs the sleeve was in the form of lelufer. Sleeve-lelufer straight till the elbow from here down continued in the form of the tulip. To the edge of the sleeve they added pleat, two finger width of the same cloth the archalig. The collar of the archalig was open. In most cases archaligs were buttoned down the chest till the waist, some of them were not. Archaligs were made of velvet, tirma and different other gilded watered silk cloths and decorated with sarimas (bands) and different galloons.



**Labbada** was banded and with lining. Its collar as open and was tied at waist. Down the waist labbada had short slits at the sides. Its sleeve was short will the elbow. Dress-shield was open-cut. Labbada was decorated with tirma, velvet, and other gilded cloths, its collar, the edges of its sleeves and the lap were decorated with delicate galloons.

**Eshmek** is a banded overcoat. Its chest and dress-shield are open, the sleeves are of half-length, i.e. till the elbow. Eshmek was mainly sewed of tirma and velvet. The inside of eshmek, its collar, the edge of the sleeves and its lap were covered with fur. The edges of the sleeves, the lap and the collar were also decorated with different galloons and chains.

**Kurdu** is banded sleeveless women clothe. It has open collar, slits at the side. Kurdu was made of tirma and velvet. The collar, the lap and the sleeves were covered with fur. Khorasan kurdu was a wide-spread kind of kurdu among the people. They were brought from Khorasan and were made of dark-yellow leather with designs made of the same-colored silk thread on it.

**Bahari** is a kind of woman dress with lining and band. It is tight to the waist and had long lap with little gathers. The sleeves are straight till the elbow, the collar is open. Bahari is generally made of velvet. Its collar, lap and the edge of its sleeves are decorated with galloon, border and chains.

**Kulaja** is a woman overcoat straight to the waist with gathered lap. It has has open collar, its length is till the neck, the length of the sleeves stretches down the elbow. Kulaja is mainly made of velvet and tirma. Its collar, waist, lap and the edges of its sleeves is often decorated with designs made of gold and silver threads, beads, scale and melila.



The length of skirt (**tuman**) wore by Azerbaijani woman was will the ankle, instead of those lived in zone of Nakhchivan-Ordubad. In Nakhchivan-Ordubad zone the skirt of women were comparatively short. The skirt was made of differently decorated silk or wool. Under the upper skirt women wore the second one-ara tuman. The skirts were gathered or pleat and had a tie in the belt. The tie was weaved of thread keji and had pompons made of colored silk and gold and silver threads at both tips. The skirts were made of all kind of the cloths beginning with printed cotton up to tirma. The lap of the skirt was decorated with border of another material, different galloons, gold laces and other means. In some cities woman wore chakhchur when they went to the street, which was made of different silk materials.

For better appearance of women dresses they used different kinds of galloons-sarima, garagoz, zenjire, shahpasand prepared at home or at master's manufactory. Besides it we may give the examples of nut-buttons or katibi nut-buttons, made of gold or silver used for decoration of collar of women dresses. Lappings or midakhils, cut off gold were used to attach to the lap of the shirt. Sometimes golden coins were also sewed to the lap of the shirt. Designs such as gulabatin (gold and silver thread), beads, scale and other means were widely used on woman dresses.

Over arkhalig and chapkan women wore waistband covered with silver or gold color. Leather waistbands with silver money attached on it and bands with silver belt were also popular at that time.

Among popular **woman head-dresses** we may call silk kerchiefs(**kalagayi**), **orpaks**(the kerchief-scarves), silk kerchiefs as **naz-naz** and **gaz-gaz**. Kalagayi were produced at special manufactures of Sheki, Ganja and Shamakhi, the famous ceters of silk production in Azerbaijan.

In some regions women wore **arakhchin** under the head-dress. Those arakhchins frequently were decorated with figures cut of gold.



**Charshab** (a kind of kerchief) in Azerbaijan was used by the people of some cities and their suburban villages. When women went out their houses they covered themselves with charshab from head to foot. It was made of monotone satin, of checked keji, and of different kinds of silk. Together with charshab women sometimes used ruband (veil).

**National clothes of men in the XIX century** also consisted of underclothing and overcoat.

To men overcoats belong over shirt, arkhaliq, chukha and trousers. In spite of small differences, this set was typical for all the territory of Azerbaijan.

The over shirts for men were of two kind: with mid-cut collar and with side-cut collar. Both of them had small yoke. The shirt was hooked with a button, made of lace and a buttonhole. Shirts for men were generally made of satin.

**Archalig** was cut at the waist and tight to the body. The lap was pleat or gathered the sleeves were straight but narrowed to the wrist. Arkhaligs were of one or two chests, with small yoke and buttoned till the neck. Archaligs were made of kishmir, satin, thin broadcloth lastic and other cloths. Over the shirt young men wore waistband or thong, middle-aged or old men wore girdle.

**Chukha** is one of men overcoats. There existed two kinds o chukha in Azerbaijan: vezneli and cherkezli. Both chukhas had open-cut collars. They were tight to the waist and had lining, the lap was gathered or pleat. There was bond on its waist.



The sleeves of **vezneli** chukhas were straight and long, it had vezne khazinas on the both chests. Veznes, the upper part of which was decorated with silver or gold were attached to khazinas.

**Cherkezli chukhas** differed from veznelis by the form of the sleeves. The lining of the installed sleeve of cherkezli chukha, with sharp or round tip elchek, was of silk material. Those sleeves often had buttons made of lace and buttonholes along the slits of the sleeves. The length of cherkezi chukha was different: the length of some them little bit stretched down the knee, some were till the knee. Chukha was made of broadcloth or shawl. Chukha was decorated with golden galloon, sarima, and border of different material.

**Trousers for men** were little loose at the belt, and were narrowing to the foot. Between the hems the trousers had material in the form of triangle. A tie of keji thread was attached to the belt of the trousers. At the tips of the tie were pompons made of golden and silver gulabatin. The trousers were sewed of home-made shawl or different kinds of wool.



In some mountainous regions a winter overcoat for a man was shipskincoat hooked on button and made of ship skin. In commercial centers and in the cities there were ones who wore Khorasan shipskincoat. The surface of Khorasan shipskincoat was designed with silk thread. In winters shepherds in the mountains used felt cloak (yapinji).

Men of Azerbaijan paid special attention to **head-dresses**. To go without a head-dress was prohibited. The most popular head-dresses for men considered leather hats of different shape: **bukhara** and **cherkezi** (made of leather of bukhara in black, roan and brown colors), **hala papag of shepherds** and others. Arakhchins of tirma and silk decorated with designs in gulabatin were also widely used. Under the hat the old men wore banded teseks (arakhchins) made of white broadcloth. In the nights they wore **banded shabkulah**.

**Socks**. Woolen weaved socks are the most popular kind of socks in Azerbaijan. The socks were made of silk and woolen threads. Socks weaved in Azerbaijan had particular evaluation for its tender and beautiful design and the colors of the threads. The designs put on them were alike the designs of carpets, fancyworks, blotting and cloths. The socks were of two heights: till the knee and till the ankle.

**Shoes**. The shoes in Azerbaijan were made of different colored materials. The most popular shoes used by women and men were **bashmags** (boots).

Women also wore bashmags, decorated in fancywork or high-**boots**, also with fancywork. Shoes for men, made of tanned raw skin, were monotonous and without design. In the cities men wore bashmags or naleyin made by shoe-makers. In the villages men used **charigs** made of raw skin. Charins had ties weaved of woolen thread.

The beautiful appearance of the clothes was completed with different **accessories**, which also enriched their national peculiarity. Jewelers made the accessories of gold and silver as well as jewels: brilliant, diamond, emerald, ruby, purl, turquoise etc. The centers of Azerbaijan famous with their jewels were Baki, Ganja,

Shamakhi, Shaki, Nakhshivan and Shusha. Local jewelers made any kind of jewel the people need. The silver belts for men and woman made by jewelers of Kubashi in Dagestan got fame in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijani women were fond of accessories which they frequently and skillfully used.

The set of accessories used by women was called imaret. It embraced different kinds of accessories for head and chest, rings, earrings, waistbands, bracelets and bangles.

<http://www.azcarpetmuseum.az/003.html>  
«Azerbaijan. 100 Questions Answered», Baku, 2005, P. 120

### From the history of Azerbaijani clothing

Clothing fashions date back to the period 40,000 – 25,000 BC. The first people to live on the land of the present Azerbaijan wore clothes made from natural materials (leather, artificial fibres leaves etc).

**Stone-Age weaving.** The development of weaving brought changes to the clothing people wore. Already by the late Neolithic – early Eneolithic periods, the number of woven clothes had increased; rather than appropriating readymade forms from nature, people were developing their own designs. Samples of material culture obtained during archaeological excavations on Azerbaijan’s territory (stone and bone awls, needles, spinning tools made from bone and clay, leather polishers made from bone etc) prove conclusively that the art of weaving developed during the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages.

Machine weaving played an important role in further developments in the textile arts. Remnants of fabric and parts of a weaving machine found during excavations in Mingechevir show that machine weaving was present in Azerbaijan in the early Middle Ages.

With the transition to machine weaving, the production of fabric and the weaving of clothes increased, as did the number and variety of clothes. As early as the 9th century BC, the Assyrian ruler Ashurnasirpal received clothes made from wool and colour wool fabric from Manna’s Zamya province as a tax levy. At this time, linen and wool were the main weaving materials and, in later periods, they were superseded by cotton and silk.

Herodotus, the “father of history” who lived in the 5th century BC, noted especially that fabrics of quality were woven in Azerbaijan, that tree leaves were used here to dye clothes naturally and that these adornments were durable.

From ancient times, clothes in Azerbaijan were made from the wool of goats and camels, as well as that from sheep and lambs.

According to the historian Elia, fine-fleeced camels, whose wool was as soft as Milet wool (the best quality wool from Miletus –ed.), were kept in Albania’s Kaspiana province; the rich and renowned, and also the priests, had their clothes made from this wool.

Research into Azerbaijani clothing culture shows that the shape of clothes did not change much until the beginning of the first century AD. However, the tools used (spinning and weaving machines) improved somewhat. A piece of clothing hand-woven in the 3rd millennium BC, consisted of a narrow strip, was tight on the body and took on its shape. The same shape was present in the 8th century BC, but the style was freer and, by the 6th-5th centuries BC the strip was made from a very large piece of material and was gathered by a belt which pleated it at the back. Men’s and women’s clothes during that period did not differ much, either.



**The papakh appears.** In Strabo’s famous “Geographica” there is also information about the clothes worn by the Albanians. He noted that the Albanians, like the Iberians, carried large shields and wore helmets on their heads made from wild animals’ skins. In the 1st millennium BC, the population of these lands wore shirts and trousers woven from wool and linen, leather outer clothes, felt and woollen papakhs (high cylindrical hats), and leather shoes with upward curved toes. The main raw materials for clothes-making were wool, leather and, very probably, felt.

People’s clothes developed more intensively in the Middle Ages. Written sources dating from this period, and archaeological excavations, show that the range of Azerbaijani clothing was broadened by innovation. It has been observed that, alongside leather and wool, linen and cotton were also in general use as clothing materials.

As a rule, a fabric called “coarse calico” was made from cotton and linen. The phrase “you cannot make coarse calico from old cotton” in the “The Book of Dede Gorgud” saga; the fact that one of its characters, Qantural, “cloaked his back with coarse calico, which was made from fine linen and decorated with gold”; written sources and archaeological evidence about cotton-growing in Azerbaijan, prove that during this period linen and cotton fabrics were key clothing materials.“

The Book of Dede Gorgud” saga provides detailed information about Oghuz men’s and women’s clothing in the early Middle Ages. It is clear that the following comprised the basic wardrobe for men and women: komlak (shirt), shalvar (trousers), kaftan (a type of outer clothing, long- and short-sleeved, unfastened, and





made from white and red fabric) and a waistband (“coarse calico which was made from fine linen and was decorated with gold”). Items were also worn on the head, such as khans’ crowns and beys’ turbans (calma, dolband; the shoes were adik (men’s high shoes resembling boots), soqman (shoes to ankle level) and sarmuza (women’s shoes).

A Sassanid ruler rewarded Javanshir for fighting against the Arabs on the side of the Sassanid Empire. He had a gold belt with pearls and a sword with a gold shaft placed on Javanshir’s back, bracelets on his arms, a crown with gems on his head, heavy pearl necklaces around his neck, a shah’s shawl made from taffeta on his shoulder, and four tasselled blue trousers made from brocade silk fabric. 7th-9th century Arab authors who wrote about the traditional commodities of Azerbaijani towns noted that silk, good curtains and clothes made from various fabrics were exported to local and international markets from Barda, and linen fabrics were exported from Derbent.

**Poetry and Polo on fashion.** The “Khamasa”, written by the great poet Nizami Ganjavi, who lived in the 12th century, considered to be Azerbaijan’s “Renaissance”, contains interesting information about the fabrics and clothes of the period. The poet writes of a large variety of silk fabrics among the high-quality materials of that period. He says of women’s and men’s clothes that the most common everyday and holiday wear were shirts, papakhs, socks, dresses, kaftans etc. Individual arts and trading centres in Azerbaijan in the 12th-13th centuries specialized somewhat in the production of fabric and clothes. Thus, satin decorated with gold, and also simple silk fabrics were made in Ganja; a silk fabric called “kazzkasida” was made in Beylaqan; a black fine fabric called “cama” was made in Barda; men’s satin outer clothes were made in Tabriz; and woollen clothes in Ganja.



An Arab writer of the 10th century, al-Istakhri, wrote in his “Kitab al-masalik wa-al-mamalik” (Book of the Paths and Provinces) that linen fabrics were exported from al-Bab (Derbent), and that linen clothes were not made anywhere else but Arran, Armaniyya and Azerbaijan.

A 13th-century author, Yaqut al-Hamawi, also confirmed that linen clothes were made in Derbent. Writing about Tabriz, the author said that fabric for aba and siqlatun (silk fabric with gilded threads), xatayi (a woven Chinese fabric) satin etc. were woven here and exported to countries across the East and the West. The 13th-century Italian traveller Marco Polo also provided information about Azerbaijan and spoke enthusiastically about the abundance of silk and silk products here, as well as the silk fabrics woven here, writing that these were not to be found anywhere else he also described Tabriz’s silk fabrics.

**Clothes make the man.** In the 14th century, F. Rashid ad-Din, the author of “Jami al-tawarikh” (“Compendium of Chronicles”), wrote a letter to his son Shihab ad-Din in which he said that out of the three treasuries (money, weapons, and clothing and food) needed by any ruler, his stock of clothing was the most important.

The Azerbaijani wardrobe underwent significant change from the 14th-16th centuries. First of all, clothes became separated into the everyday and the ceremonial (wedding, dinner, holiday, mourning etc.), and motifs gradually became more significant on ceremonial clothes (style, colour, decoration and range of patterns). These changes can be seen in miniature paintings which reflect various areas of Azerbaijani people’s everyday lives and which depict the clothing of people from the various social strata.



In this period, Turkic-Islamic culture also reached a higher stage in its development – abstraction and complicated systems of geometrical ornamentation were established in the arts. The harmony of colours in people’s clothing, the beauty of style, symmetry and taste with which clothes were worn were given prominence in the works of painters of miniatures and in the travel notes and works of foreign travellers and geographers who visited Azerbaijan (G. Clavijo, A. Contarini, A. Jenkinson, A. Eduarde, L. Chapman, D. Deket, T. Benster etc.). In the 16th century, English traveller and diplomat A. Jenkinson visited Abdulla khan in Shemakha.

This is how Jenkinson described the ruler’s clothes: “The ruler himself was of medium-height and a stern man. He was wearing long silk clothes decorated with expensive pearls and jewellery. On his head he had a pointed turban (papakh) which was half-a-yard (1 yard is 91.44 cm) in length and was made from rich golden fabric. On top of it, he had a jalma from Indian silk, 20 yards in length and sewn with golden thread...”

The 16th century was an important period in Azerbaijan’s political history and it was also a period when the traditions of clothing culture became richer. The fact that themed fabrics dating to this period can be found



in many museums around the world (in the Armoury in Moscow, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Museum of Decorative Arts in Budapest, Musee des Arts Decoratifs in Paris etc.) and also in private collections (Maroon in New York, Levine in Paris etc) confirms that the production of fabric based on national traditions developed to a high level in Azerbaijan, especially in Tabriz, in the late Middle Ages. Men's and women's clothes made from these fabrics preserved their conservative style in subsequent centuries too, and, apart from changes in methods of cutting and sewing, artistic-decorative coloration and local particularities, they were repeated almost completely.

From the 16th-18th centuries, the main items in a woman's wardrobe were, as in previous centuries, an undershirt and outershirt (kaftan), breeches, pants and trousers with hems reaching the knees or the heels.

**Style houses.** Due to an increase in the number and importance of Azerbaijani towns in the 17th century, traditional fabric weaving and clothes-making workshops and enterprises began to concentrate in the towns. In this period, the largest weaving centres were the towns of Tabriz, Ardabil and Shemakha. At the same time, other Azerbaijani towns - Ganja, Nakhchivan, Arash, Maraga, Ordubad, Dehargan and Marand - also became important production centres. Although there was no major specialization in the towns in terms of fabric production, still, Tabriz became famous for its velour, satin, red calico, multi-coloured coarse fabric and light fabric (duvaq); Ardabil – for its taffeta, duvaq fabric and qaba fabric; Shemakha - for its taffeta, or “shemakha”



Clothing ornamentation - detail and duvaq fabric; and Nakhchivan – for its fabrics called “qalamkar”.

In the 17th century, a wardrobe included clothes made from wool, cotton, linen, silk fabrics and leather. These clothes had various decorative features and sewing styles – papakh, kaftan, waistband (belt), kurdi (a hat from broadcloth), head kerchief, trousers, socks etc.

In this period, the predominant clothes were: the Qizilbash papakh called “dovrband”; “ucatak” believed to be an Arab-Muslim dress; “xirqa” which was worn instead of “labbada” (“xirqa”, a long, wide garment, was worn without a belt and was buttoned from the neck down to the belt area); and also the “kamarcin”, which was similar to xirqa, but was worn during combat and with a belt; shoes with or without heels, shoes woven from white linen yarn, with a fabric sole of several-layers, called “giva”; and “caqcur” shoes worn with socks woven from woollen yarn and with cloth wrapped round the feet.

Zadagan women wore a triangular crown on their heads, called a “nim-tac” or “tiyar” and wrapped a band round it. The “tiyar” was also an important sign that the woman was married. A skull cap decorated with beads, and a shawl and veil were also inseparable parts of women's clothing. The hem of a women's dress was gathered, folded at the front and attached to the belt; its lining was made with special care from a coloured silk fabric that was pleasing to the eye.

**European influence.** The period of the khanates and its trends towards independence encouraged development in agriculture and craftsmanship in individual regions of Azerbaijan.

The production of hand-made goods was boosted, centres of arts and trading, like the town of Shusha expanded, and there was a broadening of commercial and economic relations with other Eastern and European countries. This led to the further enrichment of the range of Azerbaijani clothing, improvements in quality and the mass production of a variety of clothing materials. There was also an increase in the number of handicraft workshops making garments.



In this period the khanates were based on large Azerbaijani towns which developed as important arts and trading centres. The production of fabrics and clothes was concentrated primarily in these cities.

Further, in the 18th century European clothing began to exert an influence and foreign motifs ousted those of the themed fabrics of the Middle Ages. Geometrical, floral and linear motifs began to dominate.

From the second half of the 19th century, many types of handicraft, manufacturing and factory enterprises producing clothing materials in Azerbaijan began to undergo major development. The resultant increase in the

variety and production of clothing materials paved the way for more colourful fashions, with greater variety in range, form and type.

**Fashion labels.** These fabrics, produced domestically or imported, were given popular, and sometimes provocative, names: “It has deceived me”, “I have grieved”, “Haji, don’t look at me”, “Night and day”, “The street seems too narrow”, “

A thousand and one flowers”, “Come, take me for a walk”, “No sloven would wear me”, “To make my neighbour jealous”, “Slipped and fallen”, “Don’t touch, or my flower will fall”, “The Sun and the Moon” etc.

From the late 19th century, industrially produced clothing, now well-entrenched in people’s everyday lives, began to supplant hand-woven garments. During this period, textile products brought to Azerbaijan from Russia, Iran and European countries prevailed over local output.

Along with their foreign clothes, however, the richer social layers in Azerbaijan continued to wear taffeta, satin, velour etc. for a long period, in this way maintaining traditions until the middle of the 20th century.

**Valiyev Fazail “Visions of Azerbaijan”. May-June 2010, P. 66-72**

## VIII. CARPETS

Carpet-weaving is an ancient art in Azerbaijan. According to archeological excavations on Azerbaijani territory and to literary sources, carpet-weaving was conceived in ancient times. In some sources Azerbaijani carpets are referred to as Persian carpets. Xenophon (5th century BC) noted that the Iranians, who expanded their influence in the regions of Azerbaijan, had appropriated the arts of local stone and metal craftsmen and were also using their garments and decorative items as well as carpets. Facts confirm that northeastern Azerbaijan was a centre of high-quality carpet production in the 6th-7th centuries. Famous Chinese traveller Khuantessank, who visited Iran in the 7th century, wrote in his memoirs: "Azerbaijan is one of the largest centres of carpet-making." Historian Moisey Kalankaituisky noted in *Agvan tarihi* that silk textiles and multi-coloured carpets were manufactured in northern Azerbaijan.

A 10th century manuscript by an unknown author, *Khudud-Al-Alem*, says that the Azerbaijani town of Mugan was famous for its chuvals and palliases; the towns of Nakhchivan, Khoy and Salmas for zili, khali and sashes; Ardebil and Shirvan for coloured silk and woollen textiles. Well-known historiographer Abu Jafar Muhammad at-Tabari in the 10th century said that carpets of high quality were manufactured in northeastern Azerbaijan. Historian and traveller Al Mukaddassi, describing the Azerbaijani town of Barda and its market in the 10th century, noted "the silk and clothes have no equals in the world".

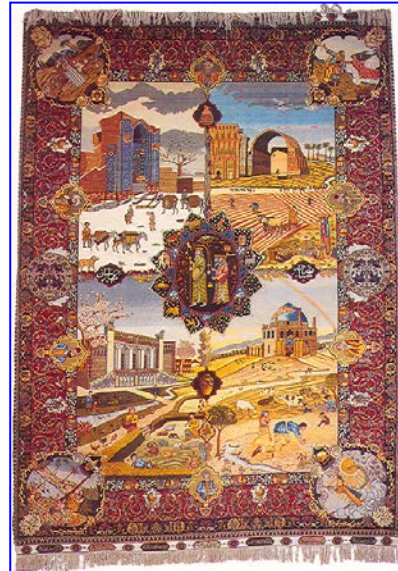
In the 13th century Venetian traveller Marco Polo wrote "there are many skilful craftsmen, producing textiles, carpets and sabres all over the world in Azerbaijan". In the 13th-14th centuries Azerbaijan jewellery and carpets attracted European, especially Venetian merchants. Dealers, travellers and ambassadors from different countries exported picturesque carpets from Azerbaijan as commodities and presents. Azerbaijani carpets can be found on the canvases of famous European artists. They can be seen on the picture Hans Holbein's *Ambassadors*; well-known Dutch artist Jan Van Eyck painted his *Madonna of Canon Van der Paele* with the Azerbaijani carpet Guba in the background.

In the 16th-17th centuries, in the epoch of the Safavids the Azerbaijani art of carpet-making developed rapidly. In this period Tabriz, Ardabil, Shamakhi, Baku, Ganja and Barda were considered to be the centres of carpet-weaving. The Sheikh Safi carpet, a masterpiece of carpet-weaving, was made in this period. This rare work of art was woven in 1539 by Azeri carpet-makers and given to the mosque of Sheikh Sefieddin in Ardabil. In 1893 it was sold to the Victoria & Albert Museum. It is the biggest carpet of the 16th century: 10.51m long and 5.34m wide, a total area of 56.21 sq.m.

Ornamental carpets woven centuries ago in Shirvan, Garabagh, Absheron, Guba, Gazakh, Ganja, and Talysh-Mugan now decorate the great museums of the former Soviet Union, Western Europe and the USA. Ninety per cent of the carpets, especially the flat-woven ones known by the name of Caucasus, are original Azerbaijani carpets.

The carpet, first used in daily life, later became an example of decoration and earned fame in other countries for its high quality. Azeri carpets had different kinds of decorations and were made differently, depending on local features, traditions and raw materials (wool, silk, cotton etc).

Azerbaijani carpets are divided into four groups according to their design and techniques -Guba-Shirvan, Ganja-Gazakh, Garabagh and Tabriz. To learn Azerbaijani carpet-making the principles of ornaments, colour and composition should be considered. These closely interrelated factors characterize carpets in general as well as Azeri carpets. Azeri carpets are different in terms of their composition. The composition, size, decorations and even colours of carpets vary, depending on what they are going to be used for. For instance, small carpets for namaz or prayers, wall carpets, a set of





carpets to decorate lounges - a big carpet (khali) on the upper side of the room, with a "top" carpet and "border" carpet spread out on top of the "top" carpet.

The compositions of Azeri carpets consist of two interrelated components: the middle of the carpet and the yelan (the decorations on the border of the carpet). The middle area and yelan define the character of the carpet, while the ornament completes their composition. Azeri carpets have had either practical or artistic features since olden times. The artistic specialty and content are embodied in the picture, ornament and colour of the woven carpet.

The oldest surviving Azeri carpets date back to the 13th-14th centuries. Shirvan carpets from the 13th-14th centuries are in the Turkish and Islamic museums in Istanbul and also Gazakh and Shirvan carpets from the 15th century are in the Eastern Department of the Museum of Berlin.



Carpet-weaving continued to develop in the 19th and 20th centuries. The most valuable masterpieces of different carpet schools are Baku (the Metropolitan Museum in New York), Ancient Ganja (a private collection in Brussels), Four Seasons (the R. Mustafayev State Art Museum in Baku), The Meeting of Leili and Majnun in the Desert (the Nizami Literary Museum in Baku).



Carpet-weaving in Azerbaijan is still developing. Today women and girls over the age of seven in cities and villages usually make carpets in winter. They follow the harmony of colour from memory. In 1928 the Azeri Carpet Union was established to manage all the carpet factories in the country. The workers of the union make fine, vivid carpets. These carpets have been exhibited in international fairs in Baghdad, Leipzig, Montreal, Plovdiv, Algeria, Cairo, Izmir, Damascus, Tripoli and Tehran. There are specialised schools in all Azerbaijan's carpet-weaving regions. They teach the art and technique of carpet-weaving.

In 1967 the State Carpet Museum, the first carpet museum in the world, opened in Baku. There are all kinds of Azerbaijani carpets and carpet-wares here. The collection of the museum is regularly enriched. Today valuable examples of national carpets can be seen in the museum.

«Azerbaijan. 100 Questions Answered», Baku, 2005, P. 110-112



## The Development of Carpet Weaving in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijani applied arts, especially carpet weaving, occupy a special place in the history of its national culture.

The most widespread folk art is carpet weaving. It made its way into the everyday life of the people of Azerbaijan and turned into a symbol for the nation. Because of their high aesthetic value, fleecy and pileless carpets, decorated with various patterns and signs, are used to decorate the walls and floors of marquees, huts, homes, nomads' tents, and other buildings.



Regarding the results of archeological excavations and historical records, carpet weaving was shown to have occurred in Azerbaijan during the Bronze Age (the end of the 2nd millennium to the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE). The ancient history of carpet weaving is evidenced by a clay figure of a horse with its horse-cloth decorated with flowers, found in Maku city in Southern Azerbaijan (dates to the 2nd millennium BCE) as well as a golden plate picturing a lion with a decorated cloth found in the hills near Hasanulu on the coast of Lake Urmiya (1st millennium BCE).

Archeological excavations in Mingechevir unearthed the remnants of palaces (carpets without pile) and carpets in catacombs dating back to the 1st -3rd centuries.



Herodotus, Claudio Ptolemy, Ksenofond, and other ancient historians provided information regarding the development of carpet weaving traditions in Azerbaijan. During the reign of the Sasanies (3rd - 7th centuries) this art was steadily developing in Azerbaijan, in which carpets were made of silk and golden-silken threads. Albanian historian, Musa Kalankatli (7th century), provided accounts of silken clothes and multi-color carpets. Weaving of carpets with golden-silken threads and jeweled decorations became a traditional activity during the 16th - 17th centuries. Carpets without piles were woven mainly in Tebriz, Shamakhi and Barda. These very expensive carpets woven for the feudals were called zerbaf. Anthony Jackinson, who visited Azerbaijan in the 16th century, reported that carpets were woven of golden-silken threads in the summer residence of Abdulla khan in Shamakhi. The Dutch traveler Yan Straits (17th century) reported that a Shamakhi ruler had a horse-cloth made of golden threads, which was decorated with pearls and jewels.



Written sources of the middle centuries give interesting information about the products of Azerbaijan carpets weaving and their graphical specifications. In a written work 'Hudud al-alem'('The boundaries of the world') an unknown author gives the information about palaces and horse-clothes (chul) weaved in Mugan, and carpets



weaved in high-tones in Nakhchivan, the epos 'Kitabi-Dede Gorgud' tells us of silken carpets, the works of Abul Ula Ganjevi, Nizami and Khagani (XII century) give the information of fleecy carpets and that of without pile.

In XII-XIV Azerbaijan exported many carpets and carpet products to foreign countries. Those carpets, attracting attention with delicate ornaments and decorations are reflected in the works and miniatures of many painters of the Europe. In XV century Netherlands painter Hans Memeling's tableau 'Maria with her child' we may find 'Shirvan' carpet, in the work 'Saint Maria' by Van Eykin we may find the carpet 'Zeyva', in 'The Ambassadors' by German painter Hans Holbey (XV century) we may find the description of 'Gazakh' carpet.

In the II part of XVIII century the North part of Azerbaijan began to be separated into small feudal states: khanates of Sheki, Baki, Guba, Garabakh, Iravan, Ganja, Nakhchivan and Shirvan. The carpet production greatly progressed in the period of khanates and each khanate had its own carpet manufactory that caused the appearance of carpet schools. The best samples of carpets and products of carpet of Baki, Guba, Shamakhi, Ganja, Sheki, Gazakh, Javad gaza (a kind of territory) and other places, demonstrated In 'Mocsow-Politechnic' exhibition held in Moscow in 1872 and in 'Uni-Russian exhibition of industry and art' won gold and silver medals. The major part of the exhibit

demonstrated the International exhibitions held in Vienna (Austria) in 1872, Turin (Italy) 1911, London and Berlin 1913 made up carpets and carpet products brought from Azerbaijan.

**Kind of the carpets without pile.** According to their technical peculiarities Azerbaijani carpets are divided into fleecy carpets and carpets without pile. The weaving of the carpets without pile dates to the earliest period of the art of weaving.

The art of Azerbaijani carpet weaving differs by its high graphic and technical peculiarities and variety of weaving without pile. The patterns of all the carpets without pile are presented here, while these patterns are very few in carpets weaving of other countries. Witnessed it, in the part 'Caucasus carpets' of 'Oriental carpet', German art investigator O.Rop informs that carpets of mentioned region appeared earlier than that of the Asia, and proves the best carpets without pile-kilims are in the Caucasus. The first patterns of the carpets, as well as those without pile, are hesir (matting), cheten, and buriya. According to the style of weaving, composition, the richness of the ornaments and the colors there are 8 different samples of them:



- Palas
- Jejim
- Ladi
- Kilim
- Shadda (bead)
- Varni
- Zili
- Sumakh

**Azerbaijani carpet schools.** Azerbaijani carpets are relatively subdivided into 7 carpet schools according to geographical position, design, composition, color-selection and technical peculiarities.

*The carpets of:*

1. Guba,
2. Baki, or Absheron,
3. Shirvan,
4. Ganja,
5. Gazakh,
6. Karabakh,
7. Tebriz.

1. **The Guba carpet center** located in the north-east of Azerbaijan is subdivided into 3 parts- located on mountain, at mountain-foot and at lowlands. The centers of mountainous part are located in the villages of Gonagkend, Khashi, Jimi, Afurja, Yerfi, Budug, Giriz, Jek, and Salmasoyud.



Carpet weaving at mountain-foot is centered at the villages Amir Khanli, Alikhanli, Khalfalar, Piramsan, Biliji, Shahnazarli, Pirabadil, Zeyva, Zohrami, Sumagobag, Khirdagul-chichi, Sirt-chichi, Dere-chichi, but that of at aran zone (at lowlands) is centered at Chay Garagashli, Haji Garagashli, Susanli, Garagashli, Devechi, Mollakamall. The carpets weaved in Derbend may also be added to that school.

The decoration of Guba carpets are composed of ornaments of geometrical designs, stylized in motives of plants and sometimes animals. The carpets of this school are characterized with style of cheshni with



medallion. The best compositions of Guba carpets are " Gedim-Minare", "Gimil", "Alpan", "Gollu-chichi", "Pirabadil", "Haj?gayib", "Giriz", "Jek" and others.

2. **The school of Baku** embraces the villages of Absheron- Goradil Novkhani, Nardaran, Bulbule, Fatmayi, Mardakan, Gala, Khila and others, as well as the region Khizi, outside Absheron and its carpet centers- Gadi, Hil, Kesh, Findigan and others. Bali carpets are characterized with softness, intensity of the colors,



original graphical elements and tenderness of the design. The decoration of the carpets is generally composed of the elements of geometrical lakes, the curved line plants. In coloring of Baki carpets for background spaces they use dark blue, and in rear cases red and yellow. Most of these carpets carry out the name of the villages they are made. Baki group includes cheshnies "Khilabuta", "Khila-afshan", "Novkhani", "Surakhani", "Gala", "Baki", "Goradil", "Fatmayi", "Findigan", "Gadi" and others.

**3. Shirvan carpet-weaving school** embraces Shamakhi, Maraza, Agsu, Kurdemir, Gazimammad (Hajigabul), Goychay and their villages. Shirvan group includes the compositions "Maraza", "Gobustan", "Shirvan", "Kurdemir", "Shilyan", "Shirlibey", "Chukhanli", "Bijo", "Sor - Sor", "Hajigabul" etc. Rich composition and complex designs of Shirvan carpets are well known since middle ages. Artistic value of Shirvan carpets are known from diaries of German, English merchants and ambassadors of VI-VIII centuries. Those carpets could be seen in the tableaux of painters of XIV-XV century Europe. The painter of Netherlands Hans Memling described 'Shirvan' carpet in his work 'Maria with her baby'.



**4. Ganja carpet school** embraces Ganja and the villages surrounding it, as well as the territories of Gedebey and Goranboy, Shemkir, Samux regions. The center of that school is Ganja. Being one of the ancient cities of Azerbaijan Ganja is located in north-west of our country. Even in the X-Xi centuries Ganja was famous as a center of production of silk, woolen cloth and silk carpets. During centuries Ganja, as a center of high-quality carpets, had its own carpet manufactures. Ganja carpet school positively influenced carpet weaving of surrounding regions.



Ganja carpet school includes such compositions as "Ganja", "Gedim Ganja", "Golkend", "Fakhrali", "Chaykend", "Chayli", "Shadili", "Chiragli", "Samux" etc. the carpet for namaz 'Fakhrali' being of Ganja group is distinguished by its artistic peculiarities, and the style of weaving.

**5. Gazakh carpet school** includes the schools in Gazakh, Borchali, the territory of Georgia where Azerbaijanis live, and Goycha, located in the territory of Armenia, historical place of Azerbaijan people till 1988.

Gazakh carpet area includes one of the ancient cities of Azerbaijan Gazakh and the villages surrounding it, and regions Agstafa and Tovuz.

Goycha carpet center includes Bambak, Lambali, Ijevan, Gara-goyunlu and areas round Goycha (today's Sevan).

Borchali carpet center embraces such carpet points as Borchali, Garayazi, Garachop, and Gachagan.

Gazakh group includes carpets with cheshnies such as "Shikhli", "Borchali", "Gaymaqli", "Garaqoyunlu", "Garayazi", "Garachop", "Gachagan", "Dagkesemen",

"Demirchiler", "Kemerli", "Goycheli", "Salahli" and others..

The coloring of these carpets is created with the help of few colors.



The designs of Ganja- Gazakh carpets attracted the attention of painters of the Europe already in the middle ages, and XV century Italian painter XV Carlo Crivello in his tableau 'Happy news' and German painter Hans Holbey (XV century) in 'Ambassadors' gave the description of these carpets.



**6. Karabakh carpet school**-located in south-west of Azerbaijan developed in the region of mountain and aran. In Mountainous part of Karabakh, named in written records by Arabic historians Al - Mugaddasi, Masudi and others, as a great center of wool and cotton processing, Shusha city and the villages Dashbulag, Dovshanli, Girov, Trniviz, Malibeyli, Chanakhcha, Tug, Tuglar, Hadrut, Muradkhanli, Gasimushagi, Gubadli, Gozag, Mirseyid, Bagirbeyli, Khanlig, Tutmas played main role in XIX century carpet weaving. In the regions of aran, well supplied with raw material in comparison with that of the mountainous, Jabrayil, Agdam, Barda and Fuzuli play the main role in carpet production. Each of these centers included a plenty of villages the people of which intensively weaved carpets for sell. According to its artistic structure,

technological peculiarities and colors Zangezur and Nakhchivan carpet weaving centers are also considered to be the members of Karabakh carpet school. Carpet compositions with cheshni such as "Aran", "Bagchadaguller", "Balig", "Buynuz", "Barda", "Bahmanli", "Karabakh", "Goja", "Gasimushagi", "Lambarani", "Mugan", "Talish", "Lampa", "Malibeyli", "Khangarvand", "Khanlig", "Khantirma", "Chelebi", "Shabalidbuta", etc. are classical patterns of Karabakh carpet school. Karabakh is also characterized by a set of 5 carpets fitted to the interior-gebes (rugs).

At the beginning of 1750 the khan of Karabakh Panahali khan founded Shusha. the first time the city was called Panahabad and it had for a long time been the center of Karabakh khanate. In the XVIII century Karabakh carpet school was centered in Shusha. Together with classical cheshni carpets in XVIII century Shusha produced new carpet compositions, cheshnis such as "Bagchadaguller", "Sakhsidaguller", "Bulud" the decorations of which were taken from salvers, aromatic

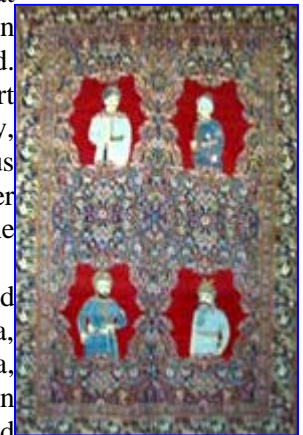


soaps, prints and other every-day life equipments brought from Russia and the Europe. Karabakh carpets are very rich in color palette, which reflect the most delicate shades of colors of nature of Karabakh. Since ancient times background spaces on Azerbaijan carpets was colored in red. The colors were procured from the insect, as well as from the flowers. Among them cochineal is widely used to get the color of red. People call it "qirmiz bojeji", "gurd girmiz", "palid jujusu" ('red insect', 'insect of an oak').



7. The treaty of peace signed in village Turkmenchay near Tebriz in 1828, February 10 between Russia and Iran fixed at the history as Turkmenchay treaty and a war between Russia and Iran between 1826-1828 came to an end. According to the terms of the treaty the northern part

of Azerbaijan included to the territory of Russia. Tebriz, Ardebil, Urmiya, Khoy, Maraga, Marand, Maku and other cities included into the territory of Iran. Thus Azerbaijan was been divided into two. The term of 'South Azerbaijan' appeared after this event. Since that time all the patterns of **Tebriz carpet school** got the fame as the carpets of Iran.



Tebriz carpet school is an ancient and famous scholl of Azerbaijan and embraces the regions of Tebriz, Ardebil, Maraga, Marand, Maku, Khoy, Urmiya, Zenjan, Garaja, Heris, Serab, Ahmedabad, Mirish, Ahar, Salmas, Goravan, Senna, Garadag and others. Turkish tribes, the settlers of this region played a great role in foundation and the development of carpet weaving from ancient times, and had



significant influence on the formation of art of carpet in Iran at different periods. Being one of the most important centers of commerce and a rich city of the Middle Age East, its commercial relations with European countries also quickly developed the art of carpet.

XI and XII centuries are the period of the renaissance of Tebriz carpet school, in XIII-XIV Tebriz mastered artistic features of the school of miniature, in XVI-XVII reached its highest level of development. Fleecy carpets and carpets without pile belonging to that school are different for its artistic arrangement, palette, and character of ornamental decorations. For main carpet composition Tebriz carpet school

is divided into: Tebriz and Ardebil groups. Tebriz group embraces the compositions of "Tebriz", "Bakhshayis", "Gereje", "Goravan", "Heris", "Lechekturunj", "Afshan", "Agajli", "Ovchulug", "Dord fasil", Ardebil group includes cheshnis "Ardebil", "Sheykh Safi", "Shah Abbasi", "Sarabi", "Zenjan", "Mir" and "Achma-yumma". Carpet school of Tebriz is also well known for such classic compositions as "Bag-behisht", "Bag-meshe", "Balig", "Buta", "Dervish", "Ketebeli", "Gordest", "Gollu-gusheli", "Guldanli", "Leyli ve Mejnun", "Meshahir", "Mun", "Namazlig", "Nejagli", "Servistan", "Serdari", "Sahand", "Silsilevi lechek", "Farhad ve Shirin", "Khayyam", "Khatai", "Heddad", "Charxi-gul", "Jeyranli", etc. the composition "Lechekturunj" weaved in



Tebriz and the famous carpet "Sheykh Sefi"(sizes 56.12 m2, 1539, London, 'Victoria and Albert' museum) are best pattern of ornamental carpets, and the masterpiece of Tebriz carpet school.

**Development of carpet weaving in the XX century.** The next period of development of art of carpet weaving in Azerbaijan coincides to the middle of the XX century. Azerbaijan art of carpet weaving at this period is developing in several directions. The traditions of carpet weaving are developed by different carpet-masters in regions and villages of the Republic. We notice their creative attitude towards classic compositions in the carpets weaved by them in traditional cheshnis. At the same time new compositions and the elements of design appear in the art of carpet. In newly created cheshnis one may find the inclination towards the descriptions of the plants with curved lines, of a human, animal, bird and subjects on lyric and romantic style. The activity of 'Azerkhalcha' Production Unity contains another branch of the development of the art of Azerbaijan carpets. On carpets produced in manufactures and workshops of 'Azerkhalcha', masters skillfully made changes to the traditional designs, the pictures of lakes and colors, which enriched the number of classic carpet compositions,

Another branch of development carpet art is developed by professional painters. Carpets weaved on new ornaments and cheshnies created by them play an important role in enrichment of classic compositions

In spite of those classic canons in composition, picture and palette are sometimes disturbed in these carpets; different artistic and technical means help to decode the plot.

The best had been done to develop carpet weaving in Azerbaijan. As a branch of art and a science carpet weaving is taught at Azerbaijan State school of Painters named after A.Azimzadeh, at Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Art, as well as at colleges specialized in art. It is also taught at technical schools, children picture galleries and other institutions.

The study of Azerbaijan carpet weaving as a branch of a science and its modern development in the creativity of professional painters is related with the name of Latif Kerimov (1906-1991), national painter of Azerbaijan. Latif Kerimov, well known as a master of Oriental and art of Azerbaijani carpet and the art of decorative-application, the prominent ornamentalist, a painter, a scientist -investigator, studied Azerbaijani carpets for a long time, enriched Azerbaijan art of decoration with new ornaments, created new decorative motives on the basis of traditional elements of design. Ornamental and portrait carpets "Afshan" (1932), "Gonagkend" (1939), "Lechekturunj" (1952), "Shusha" (1953), "Goygol" (1958), "Karabakh" (1960), "Islimi" (1964), "Butali" (1965), "Bahar" (1966,1976), "Heyvanlar alemind?" (1969), "Shebi-hijran" (1975), "Zarhara" (1977), "Firdovsi" (1934), "Samed Vurgun" (1956), "Vaqif" (1967), "Fuzuli" (1972), "Nasimi" (1974), "Safiaddin Urmavi" (1975), "Acemi" (1976) and others weaved on the drafts of Latif Kerimov are valuable patterns of carpet weaving for matching of ornamental elements, the completeness of composition, tenderness and expressiveness of pictures and rich palette.

For carpet 'Stalin' created in 1949 with the collective help of authors, he was awarded USSR State Reward in 1950. his personal exhibition open in 1986 in London got great success, where he presented his works such as "Bandi-Rumi" (1980,1981), "Lachakturunj" (1981), "Khatai" (1981,1985), "Ashma-yumma" (1982), "Lachakbandlik" (1983), "Katababandlik" (1984), "Asrlerin nagmesi" (1985) etc. In book of L. Kerimov 'Azerbaijan Khalchasi'(the carpet of Azerbaijan) published in many volumes, one can find the analysis of ornamental elements of more than 1300 Azerbaijani carpets.



<http://www.azcarpetmuseum.az/001.html>

## IX. FINE ARTS

The contemporary fine arts of Azerbaijan came to take the place of the centuries-old rich and original artistic heritage of the people. The ancestors of the present-day Azerbaijanis abundantly decorated implements and household objects with various ornaments and drawings being close to the forms of real life. Wonderful examples of ancient handicrafts, antique ceramics of *Baylakan* and *Ganja*, old mausoleums of *Nakhchivan* and *Shrivan* with their open fretwork and beautiful glazed tiles, intricate patterns of *Gazakh*, *Garabag* and *Guba* carpets - they all tell about these wonderful traditions.

Calligraphy was one of the leading art fields in Middle Ages. The typography was unknown to the peoples of the East at that period, and books were produced in forms of manuscripts done by calligraphers - copyists. Manuscripts done by such famous masters-calligraphers as *Ubeydulla Tabrizi* nicknamed «Sweet feather», *Ali-bey Tabrizi*, *Muhammad Bagir*, *Ordubadi*, *Nizam-ad-din Ali Ardebili*, *Mir Abdulbegi Danishmend*, *Ali Rza Tabrizi Abbasi* etc, were considered to be the most valuable ones.

The famous Tabriz School of miniature painting (book illustration), which was founded in the XIV century, is by right traditionally included into the treasury of the world's culture. An outstanding representative of this school was Sultan Mohammed. This school gave birth to such talented artists like *Kemaleddin Behzad*, *Mir Mussavir Tabrizi*, *Mir Zeynalabdin Tabrizi*, *Mir Seyid Ali*, *Mohammed*, *Muzaffar Ali* and others. Miniatures of the period plunge spectators in poetry of the surrounding world, amazing with warm and intensive colors, idealized human figures, with the beauty of living nature. The magnificent art of these miniature artists had a great influence on the development of miniature art and book graphics of many eastern countries. During the last quarter of the century miniatures on separate sheets and portrait works began to appear.

In the XIX century the fine arts of Azerbaijan, paintings and book graphics were frequently combined with a realistic interpretation of character. This was particularly clearly reflected in the painters' works: *Abbas Huseyni*, portrait painter *Mirza Kadim Irevani*, poet *Mir Movsum Navvab* (he accompanied his writings with colourful drawings and portraits) and the talented poetess *Natavan*, who also decorated her poems with artistic motives. It should be noted that in their paintings, done in a spirit of miniature, features of European painting prevail, in perspective and treatment of light and shade.

The realistic forms of representation with the influence of miniature further found their development in works of artists of the early XX century: subtle lyrical artist - *B.Kengerli* and the master of satirical graphics - *A.Azimzadeh*.

The artistic creative work of *Behruz Kengerli* was especially productive. Due to his unique talent and diligence, *Kengerli* created hundreds of landscape works and portraits. Having perfectly mastered the techniques of both watercolors painting and in oil paints, *Kengerli* with love depicted in his landscapes mountains, plains, architectural monuments. The portraits of this artist constitute an exceptional artistic value.

The series of watercolors paintings and drawings bearing historical, family subject-matters, illustrations, theatre sketches speak of many-sidedness of creative work of the Azeri graphics' founder. A valuable contribution to the development of book graphics was the painter's illustrations for writings of the famous satirical poet *Sabir*. The simple and clear artistic language, coming from folklore, endless creative fantasy, the ability to penetrate in the depth of human feelings - these features distinguish works of this original artist.

*Alibey Huseynzadeh* created in the early XX century genre paintings, landscapes and portraits using watercolor bases.

The best achievements of portrait painting are connected with the works of *Tahir Salahov*. Local colorful relations and decorations are peculiar to the artistic manner of *Abdurahmanov*. The portraits of *Vajiha Samedova* attract by painting range and bright color contrast.

Since 40s of the XX century the name of *Mikayil Abdullayev* has become famous. He is the artist of a many-sided talent, working both in the genre of thematic painting and in portrait and landscape painting. Poetical generalization, inner excitement and deep psychology of characters are peculiar to the works of M. Abdullayev. For his «*Indian cycle*» Abdullayev was awarded with International Jawaharlal Nehru Prize. The poesy of perception, the ability to find beauty in every day's life, bright paintings that reveals the unity of man and nature - these are the qualities that distinguish the painter.

The landscape paintings of *Sattar Bahlulzadeh* are lyrically melodious and colorful, mainly reflecting sunny *Absheron*, sultry *Mugan*, mountains and plains, forests and fields of Azerbaijan. The pictures of *Togrul Narimanbeyov*, created in romantic aspect, are full of colorful expression and energy rhythm. His pictures are permeated with pathos of victorious humanism, with a feeling of hatred towards violence.

Summoning up the traditions of genre painting, many contemporary artists and sculptors introduced new attributes to their works. In the capital and big cities of the country new exhibitions are constantly organized, picture galleries and museums work and great attention is paid to children's paintings.

**«Guidebook Azerbaijan» (the fourth Edition), Baku, 2007, P. 75-77**



### The development of the fine arts in ancient times and Middle Ages

The most ancient models of material culture in the territory of Azerbaijan are from the 8th millennium BCE. Ancient megalith monuments, herdsman stones, dolmens, caves, defense buildings, burial mounds, metallic instruments pottery and jewelry were typical of Azerbaijani households of that period. The national cultural and aesthetical ideations are reflected on rock carvings. The Azikh cave (with a length of 215-220 meters) near the town of Fuzuli proves that Azerbaijan is one of the most ancient dwelling-places of humankind in the world.



Of exceptional importance to serve as examples of ancient models of fine art are the rock carvings in Gobustan, in the Ayichingili and Parichingil Mountains near Zalkha lake in the Kalbadjar region during the Bronze epoch (3rd millennium BCE), and rock carvings into the Gamigaya Mountain in the north of the town of Ordubad.. The rock carvings "Boyukdash", "Kichikdash", "Jingirdagh", and "Shongardagh" portray the lifestyle of ancient peoples, their housing and labor. Dynamic scenes, pictures of people and animals, episodes of hunting, cattle-breeding, farming, and other spheres of life, were perfectly carved into rock. The rock carvings in Gobustan, which are known as pictograms, cover a long historical period from primitive communal order to

feudalism.

Decorative models, pictures, raised pictures on pottery and stone, as well as metallic wares and statues occupy an important place among ancient models of fine arts. Some of them, especially round crockery (Shahtakhti village, Nakhichevan AR), two-head deer figures (Dolandar village, Khodjavand region), bronze crockery with pictures of five fantastic animal (Gadabay), golden crescent-shape collar (Ziviyq), a golden basin (Hasangulu hill near the Urmiya lake), ceramic crockery, fond in the plains of Mil and Karabakh, are distinguishing for their delicacy and artistic perfection (VIII-VII centuries B.C.). Different glass wares, found in Mingachevir, Shamakhi, as decorative crockery, bowls, jewelry, show existence of glass production in Azerbaijan as well.



Engraving and sculpture patterns were widespread in Albanian (Caucasus) art. Raised pictures of two peacock in the right and left of holy life tree on stone capital in Mingachevir temple (V-VI centuries) is one of the perfect examples of Albanian (Caucasus) sculpture. Plastic forms are spread in artistic metal wares are frequent artistic kinds. Deer, lion, peacock, bud were pictured on silver bowls, bronze water crockery, found in Mingachevir, Torpaggala and other places. Bronze and stone pictures of peoples and animals, scenes, related with housing, fire and religious ceremonies predominate in round



sculpture patterns of that period. Architecture complexes, palaces, castles, mosques and mausoleums constructed in the ancient historical towns of Azerbaijan as Qabala, Nakhichivan, Shamakhi, Baku, Barda, Gandja, Beylaqan, Tabriz, Maragha and Ardabilda in connection with spreading of Islam since VII century. Calligraphy - inscription, ornament, glaze and raised elements were widely used in decorative design of these buildings. Stone engraving examples, geometrical and plant patterns are typical for buildings, belonging to Shirvan-Absheron architecture school, while ornament motives occupy important place on buildings, belonging to Nakhichevan architecture school.

Inscriptions and raised pictures on Shirvansahs' "Bayil castle" or "Sabayil" architecture monument, built in the Baku port in XIII century, played important role in decorative design of building. Human and animal pictures (tiger, camel, horse, bull, bird) were made in deep engraving style along with inscriptions on "Bayil

daslar?" (Bayil stones). "Bayil daslar?" of frieze type represents decorative element of previously onshore prominent architecture monument.

Azerbaijan fine art present unity with decorative applied art in the Middle Ages. Knight shooting clawed bird with arrow was pictured along with plant and geometrical ornaments on ceramic examples in Gandja, Beylaqan and other towns. Azerbaijan renaissance architecture was closely related with Nizami Gandjavi's creation. He creates architect, sculptor, mosaic decorators and painter characters (Farhad, Shapur, and Simnar) in his poems.

[www.azerbaijan.az](http://www.azerbaijan.az)

### The development of fine arts in XIX century and first half of XX century

The fine arts of Azerbaijan presented a unity with the applied art and architecture in the Middle Ages. Monumental wall pictures in Shaki, Shusha, Guba, Ordubad, Lahij and other towns and settlements were closely associated with popular creative traditions. Wall pictures in Shaki khans palace gained particular fame. These pictures, created by Abbasgulu, Usta Ganbar, Garabagi, Alili Gulu, Gurban Ali, Shukur and other masters in



XVIII-XIX, stand out for their thematic richness and multiple colors of the decorative elements. Colorful and bright pictures, stylized ornaments, pictures of people, animals and birds, multifigure pictures, describing war and hunting scenes, replace each other in internal salons and rooms of the palace. You can see architecture monuments of Baku, Shusha, Iravan and other towns on the works of Russian painters G.G.Gagarin and V.V.Vereshagin, visited Azerbaijan in XIX century. The strong traditions of Azerbaijani monumental painting were continued on the walls of the Sardar palace in Yerevan (the palace was destroyed in XX century, 4 large portraits, painted by Mirza Gadijm Irvani on the walls of the palace, was destructed) and some houses in Shusha.. Discovery of easel painting is related with Mirza Gadim Irvani's name. He created perfect artistic portraits as "Dancer", "Darvish", "Wrestler", and "Rider".

Mir Mohsun Navvab, well-known as talented poet, musical theorist and calligrapher in Azerbaijan culture history, was also engaged in painting and mosaic decoration. Motives of nature, pictures of flowers, birds occupy important place in his works.

Lanscapes, pictures of flowers and decorative applied art patterns by poetess Khrshidbanu Natavan draw attention as well.

Realist tendency strengthen in Azerbaijan fine art, new artistic kinds and genres appeared in connection with annexation of North Azerbaijan to Russia in early XIX century. Magazines like "Molla Nasraddin", as well as satiric graphic and illustration genres appeared.. Painters of the magazine "Molla Nasraddin" O.Shmerling, I.Rotter, A.Azimzade and Kh.Musayev were engaged in graphic art, conforming to public-political problems of that time. A.Azimzade, the founder of Azerbaijan satiric graphic, made sharp caricatures, cartoons, exposing public inequality, ignorance, fanaticism, tsar oppression. Famous pictures series "Hundred types", watercolors, devoted to woman freedom, atheism and political motives, differs with actuality and national color. Illustrations, drawn by A.Azimzade to "Hopopnama" by M.A.Sabir in 1914, are one of his most successful works.



"Ilanli mountain under moonlight", "When the Sun sets", "Spring" landscapes, "Refugees" series, including portraits of homeless people, compositions like "Matchmaking", "Wedding", as well as artistic design and cloth sketch to plays "Deads" (J.Mammadguluzade), "Hadji Gara" (M.F.Akhundzade), "Pari-jadu" (A.Hagverdiyev), staged in Nakhichevan theatre in 1910s, by B.Kangarli, one of the founders of Azerbaijan realist easel painting, are valuable examples of Azerbaijan painting.



State museum "Istiglal" (Independence- 1919), national symbols-state emblem and flag were established, as well as measures on protection and restoration of historical monuments were taken in this period. Alibay Huseynzade, famous publisher of magazine "Fyuzat", philosopher, journalist and painters created such works as "Bibiheybat" mosque, "Sheykhulislam's portrait"

70-year soviet government established in Azerbaijan in 1920. Culture formation and development of new styled fine art began in the country. The first school of arts was opened in Baku (1920), new kinds and genres of fine art appeared.



G.Khaligov, I.Akhundov, A.Hadjiyev, M.A.Vlasov, K.Kazimzade, A.Mammadov and other painters worked in graphic along with A.Azimzade in 1930s. They painted books by Azerbaijan and foreign writers, made political posters on different actual subjects. Modern easel painting was related with activity of young painters, graduated Azerbaijan State School of Arts in 1920s. The first creation exhibition of Azerbaijan Young Painters Society (1928), the exhibition, organized by Azerbaijan Revolutionary Fine Art Union in 1930s had success. Works by S.Salamzade, G.Khal'gov, A.Rzaquliyev and other painters, devoted to up-to-date subjects occupied important place in the first exhibition, organized in Baku and Moscow. Azerbaijan painters' organizational committee was established in 1932. Some achievements were gained in painting. "Vintage" by S.Sharifzade, "A.Azimzade's portrait" by H.Hagverdiyev, "Nizami Gandjavi's portrait" by G.Khal'gov, housing and historical tableaus by M.Abdullayev, B.Mirzazade, B.Aliyev, S.Bahlulzade and K.Khanlarov draw attention with color richness, color harmony.

Some monuments were built, national sculptors developed in connection with appearance of Azerbaijan modern profession sculpture. Statues of M.A.Sabir, M.F.Akhundzade and others, decorative monuments, portraits and busts were created by sculptors I.Guliyev, S.D.Erzya, Y.R.Tripolskaya, P.V.Sabsay and others in 1920-1930s. F.Abdurrahmaniov, one of the founder of soviet sculpture, created busts and portraits of Azerbaijan literature and culture workers (A.Hagverdiyev, M.F.Akhundzade, U.Hadjibayov, A.Zeynal' and others), his first monumental work "Fuzuli" statue (1939, Azerbaijan Literature Museum named after Nizami) in 1930s. Decorative statues and portraits, statue of M.P.Vagif (1939-40, Azerbaijan Literature Museum named after Nizami) by sculptor J.Garyaghdi are valuable examples of Azerbaijan sculpture of XX century.

The first Azerbaijan painters' congress was held in 1940.

Political posters and satiric graphic occupied main place in Azerbaijan painters' creation of the Second World War. A.Azimzade, G.Xaligov, I.Akhundov, A.Hadjiyev, S.Sharifzade and others took important part in the creation of political caricatures.



### Fine arts in the second half of XX century

The stage of artistic perfection of Azerbaijani fine arts began the World War II in the 1950s. The holding of exhibitions played a particular role in this development.



The wide and multicolored panorama of the republic was portrayed on the tableaux by M.Abdullayev, the full member of the USSR Academy of Arts. Lyrical scenes of workmen and housing were given in "The Evening", "The Mingachevir Lights", "In the Steppes of Azerbaijan", "A Joy" and other works by the painter. M.Abdullayev was awarded with the International Nehru Prize in 1970. His creative activity was appreciated with the orders of Glory (1997) and Independence .

The heroic enthusiasm and romanticism of that time, the greatness of artificial islands in the



Caspian sea are reflected in the tableaux "Workers Come Back From Duty", "The Morning Train", "Absheron Women", "A New Sea" by popular painter T.Salahov, the full-right member of the USSR Academy of Arts. "Composer Gara Garayev's Portrait", created by T.Salahov, is one of the classical examples of the portrait art. His tableaux, landscapes and still lives, devoted to the life of foreign states and "Composer Shostakovich's portrait " are the best works of the modern Azerbaijani painting. The painter also created the portrait of our national leader Heydar Aliyev. T.Salahov was awarded with Independence order for services in the development of Azerbaijan fine art.



Contemporaries' characters and nature of native land are pictured with colorful decorative paints in works by T.Narimanbekov, owning original creation. Optimism is typical for "Happiness", "Joy", "Abundance of land", "Market" and other his tableaux, still lives and landscapes. His improvisation ability is well seen in tableaux and decors like "When we remember Paris", "Beethoven's world". T.Narimanbayov's creation, based on synthesis of national and international traditions, is world famous. "Paddy sowers", "Setting on the mountains" by N.Abdurrahmanov, "Thinking of tomorrow", "Life", "My Azerbaijan", portraits of poet Aliagha Vahid, composer A.Malikov by A.Jafarov draw attention with color richness.

Portraits of working people, culture and fine art workers (singer Z.Khanlarova, film director. Sh.Badalbayli), landscapes and still lives pictured in B.Mirzazade's creation. Subjects like labor, industry, reflected on the tableaux of B.Aliyev, L.Feyzullayev, A.Mammadov, A.Verdiyev Working people and housing scenes predominate in the creation of Kh.Safarova, H.Mammadov, G.Seyfullayev, Abdulkhalig, A.Abdullayev, H.Hagverdiyev, D.Kazimov, C.Rustamov, K.Khanlarov, T.Shikhaliyev, A.Mehdiyev, M.Abbasov, F.Aghayev, S.Manafova and others while nation's historical past, traditions, war and peace subjects prevail in the works by E.Rzaguliyev, V.Narimanbayov, T.Sad?gzade, A.Huseniyov, K.Nadjafzade and others. S.Salamzade, T.Taghiyev, V.Samadova, Sh.Sharifzade, O.Sadigzade, Nadjafgulu, A.Karimov, G.Mustafayeva, O.Aghababayev, H.Zeynalov, H.Karimov, S.Mammadov, Ch.Farzaliyev and others particularly distinguished in portrait genre.



Beauties of Azerbaijan nature reflected on tableaux "Way leading to dog-violet", "Native plains", "Longing for land", "Tears of Kapaz" etc. by popular painter S.Bahlulzade. N.Gasimov, K.Khanlarov, M.Taghiyev, S.Hagverdiyev, T.Javadov, F.Khalilov, B.Maratli, N.Rzayev, A.Asgarov, U.Hagverdiyev and other painters created original tableaux in landscape genre.

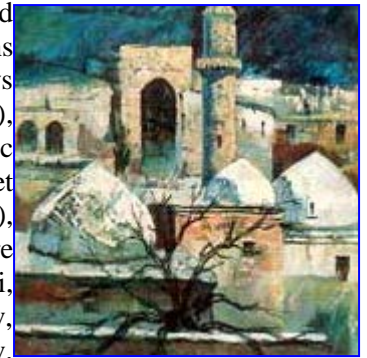
Tableaus by F.Khalilov, devoted to Absheron nature, distinguished in respect to perceiving of life beauty, philosophical meaning.

Mythological notion presents synthesis with up-to-date painting research in works by J.Mirdjadov, N.Rahmanov, K.Ahmadov, G.Yunusov, S.Veysov, A.Ibrahimov, I.Mammadov, S.Mirzazade, F.Hashimov, F.Gulamov, A.Samadov and others.

Development of theater-decoration art is related with scenic embodiment of Azerbaijan operas, ballets, drams and musical comedies. Cloth sketches, made by A.Azimzade for some theatre spectacles, artistic design, made by R.Mustafayev for drams, operas and ballets like "Deseaseds" in 1920-30-s (J.Mammadguluzade), "Rebellion" (D.Furmanov), "Blacksmith Gava" (Sh.Sami), "Sevil", "Bride of fire", "In 1905" (J.Jabbarli), "Sheyx Sanan" (H.Javid), "Collapsing hearth" (A.Hagverdiyev), "Shah Ismayil" (M.Magomayev), "Arsin mal alan", "Leyli and Madjnun", "Koroghlu" (U.Hadjibayov), "Ashug Garib" (Z.Hadjibayov), "Swan lake" (P.Chaykovski) etc. occupy important place in the development of Azerbaijan theatre-decoration art. Artistic design of operas "Leyli and Mecnun" (U.Hadjibayov), "Sevil" by I.Seyidova (F.Amirov), "Koroghlu" (U.Hadjibayov), "Human fate" (I.I.Dzerjinski), "Bahadur and Sona" (S.Alasgarov), balets "Gulshan" (S.Hadjibayov), "Nigella" (A.Abbasov) by A.Almaszade, N.Fatullayev "The city of the East" (A.Mammadkhanli), "Otello" (V.Shakespeare), "Vaqif" (S.Vurghun), "Song left on mountains" (I.Afandiyev) by A.Fataliyev, "Faded flowers" (J.Jabbarli), "Sheykh Sanan" (H.Javid) by I.Akhundov "Javanshir" (M.Huseyn), "Peasant's daughter" (M.Ibrahimov) by S.Sharifzade and other drams draw attention.



Tendency toward novelty strengthened in scenic design, painters attached significance importance to sharpness, laconism and symbolical picture means since 1960s. The first success in this sphere belonged to T.Salahov in plays "Antonio and Cleopatra", "Hamlet" (V.Shakespeare), "Aydin" (J.Jabbarli), particularly in opera "Koroghlu" (with A.Fataliyev). M.Abdullayev made scenic design of operas "Leyli and Madjnun", "Koroghlu" (U.Hadjibayov) and ballet "Chitra" (Niyazi) with bright and multi-colored. "Gobustan shadows" (F.Garayev), "Seven beauties" (G.Garayev), "Nasimi epos", "1001 nights" (F.Amirov) are distinguished with romantic style design, made by T.Narimanbayov. B.Afganli, H.Mustafayev, S.M.Fefimenko, Y.A.Toropov, A.Abbasov, E.Aslanov, B.Afandiyev, M.Aliyev, A.Seyidov, E.Mammadov, S.Hagverdiyeva, F.Ahmadov, G.Mammadov, F.A.Khalilov, F.Gafarov and other painters took important part in the theatre-decoration art, while J.Azimov, K.Nadjafzade, N.Zeynalov, F.Bagirov, R.Ismayilov, M.Aghabayov, N.Baykishiyev and others had great services in film art.



New development stage of monumental and easel sculpture began in Azerbaijan after the Second World War. Monuments of N.Gandjavi in Gandja (1946; the USSR State Prize, 1947) and in Baku (1949) were important stage in the creation of F.Abdurrahmanov, the associated member of the USSR Academy of Arts. His monuments in Baku, as "Free woman" (1960), S.Vurghun (1961), Soviet Union Hero Mehdi Huseynzade (1973), in Dushanba poet Rudaki (1964, the USSR Academy of Arts Golden Prize) are the most successful examples of Azerbaijan monumental sculpture. Master of monumental sculpture P.V.Sabsay, full member of the USSR Academy of Arts, create a gallery of working people, science and culture workers ("Oil industry worker M.P.Kaverochkin", "Painter S.Bahlulzade", "Oil industry worker Babayev", "Writer S.Rahimov", S.Vurghun's portrait for his flat-museum). "A.S.Pushkin's portrait" ("Elegiya") is one of his perfect works.



J.Garyaghi's monumental decorative sculpture works draw attention with artistic expressiveness and dynamism.. Statues of M.A.Sabir (1958), N.Narimanov (1972), monument of twice the Soviet Union Hero general H.Aslanov (1983, Lankaran) are valuable examples of Azerbaijan sculpture.

Joint monument "Fuzuli" (1962, Baku), created by full member of the USSR Academy of Arts O.Eldarov and associated member of The USSR Academy of Arts T.Mammadov, is one of the perfect, plastic art examples. T.Mammadov's monuments U.Hadjibayov (1962), M.Azizbayov (1977), Nasimi (1979; with I.Zeynalovla) are the best patterns of Azerbaijan sculpture.

O.Eldarov got synthesis of sculpture and architecture in the monuments "Kh.Natavan" (1960), "M.Magomayev" (1987), H.B.Zardabi (1973; Zardab), "to 77th Azerbaijan division" (1975, Sapun-Qora, Sevastopol) and "H.Cavid" (1993, Baku). Laconism and national color are typical for his compositions and portraits as "Oil industry workers" (1963), "S.Bahlulzade's portrait" (1966), "Four seasons of life" (1974).

The bust of Azerbaijan people's national leader Heydar Aliyev in Nakhichevan, marmoreal composition "Ellegiya" (1997), perpetuating the memory of well known oculist Zarifa Aliyeva, monument set to Turkish scientist I.Doghramadj in Bilkand (2002) are some of his new successes. O. Eldarov was awarded with



Independence order (1997) and to the Worthy medal of the Russia Federation (2002) for services in the development of Azerbaijan sculpture.

Famous philanthropist Hadji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev's bust (in his flat, monument of well known statesman and poet Shah Ismayil (Baku-1993) are some of the estimable works of sculptor I.Zeynalov. F.Nadjafov ("Maternity", "Oldest doctor"), monumental sculptor F.Salayev ("S.Yesenin"), A.Asgarov ("Academic Y.Mammadaliyev"), N.Aliyev ("A.Vahid") who display interest in modern forms demonstrated plastic form variety of sculpture. M.Mirgasimov's monuments like J.Mammadguluzade (1974; Nakhchivan), J.Jabbarli (1982; Baku) and "Ukuru" ("Freedom"), "Oil industry worker", "Khazri" are some of the achievements of Azerbaijan sculpture. Azerbaijan sculptors made outstanding contribution to national sculpture with successful memorial composition Honorary Alley in Baku, where well known public and culture workers were buried.



Setting monuments to genius Nizami in Dashkand and St.Petersburg (2002), "Dada Gorgud" in Brussels (2004) is some of new successes. Talented woman sculptors H.Abdullayeva, E.Huseynova, M.Rzayeva, and Z.Aliverdiyeva praised youth, beauty and maternity in their works. Novelty, national traditions reflected on the monumental works by E.Shamilov, G.Sudjaddinov, A.Mustafayev, F.Salayev, and A.Salikov. F.Nadjafov, F.Bakikhanov, A.Gaziyeu, M.Rustamov, K.Alakbarov, A.Mirzayev, M.Salahov, A.Rustamov, H.Musayev, V.Sharifov, G.Babayev, Sh.Sharifov, T. and E.Zeynalov brothers, A.Asgarov, Kh.Ahmadov, Z.Isgandarov, H.Hagverdiyev, S.Zakiri, N.Zeynalov and others attach particular importance to novelty, emotionality of plastic form in monumental decorative works and portraits.



Subject, genre, artistic style researches take deciding role in the development of Azerbaijan graphic art. Works series were created in the easel graphic. Linoleum engraving and painting series "In our Caspian sea" (1953-60), "Sumqayit-Rustavi" (1962), "My sisters" (1965-82) by M.Rahmanzade, devoted to labor and housing subjects differ with national peculiarity. These features are typical also for illustrations, painted by the painter to Nizami, Fuzuli, Heyran khanim, M.S.Orduvadi, A.Jafarzade and others. Linoleum engraving series "Old Baku", "Carpet-makers" by A.Rzaguliyev, "Gobustan", "Henna" by R.Babayev distinguished with real scenes of popular housing, expressive perfectness.

Y.Huseynov's book design particularly influences on easel graphic and painting. His colored linoleum paintings "In the expanse of the Caspian sea", works "Henna", "Land of flames", "Caspian fishermen" are some of successes of Azerbaijan graphic art.

Linoleum paintings, illustrations, etching and picture series of A.Hadjiyev, R.Mehdiyev, A.A.Mammadov, E.Aslanov, C.Mufidzade, N.Babayev, B.Hadjiyeva and others distinguish with character contemporaneity. Original picture and composition harmony, individual style is typical for creation of representatives of middle age generation such as A.Huseynov, A.Rustamov, A.Alasgarov, A.Salimov, and R.Huseynov.



G.Khaligov, I.Akhundov, K.Kazimzade, A.Hadjiyev and others painted interesting illustrations to classic Azerbaijan literature and folk patterns, particularly works by Nizami and Khagani, M.Abdullayev "Kitabi-Dada Gorgud" boys



(parts), poem "Leyli and Madjnun" by Fuzuli, "Shamo" by S.Rahimov.

Development of modern satiric graphic is mainly related with magazine "Kirpi" (1952) (Nadjafgulu, G.Khaligov, I.Akhundov, K.Kazimzade, S.Sharifzade, H.Hagverdiyev and others).

Caricatures by Z.Karimbayli, A.Guliyev, R.Gadimov, A.Zeynalov and other painters occupy significance place in the development of satiric genre.

New stage began in the development of national culture, as well as fine art in the independence conditions of the Azerbaijan Republic in 1990s. State care for fine art development strengthened, creation process obtained wide scope. Some impellent factors of culture workers' level rising and artistic researches activating are presentation of honorary titles, Independence and Glory orders, and presidential pension, and Sultan Mahammad and Humay prizes.

Artistic perfection stage of Azerbaijan fine art started, its achievements became famous beyond the bounds of the country as well.

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### Azerbaijani miniatures

There were wonderful traditions in the different kinds of painting, particularly portraying human characters in the Middle Ages when Islam dogmas were dominating. This is evidenced by the development of the miniature art in that period.

The miniature painting in Azerbaijan provided a significant contribution into the cultures of the Near and Far East. It occupies a special place in the history of world fine arts.



The history of Azerbaijani miniature paintings, which first appeared in the form of book illustration, is not determined exactly. Nevertheless, stylistic and artistic peculiarities of miniatures, painted by Abdulmomin Mahammad al-Khoyi for manuscript "Varga and Gulsha" in early XIII century (Topkapi museum, Istanbul), show that they are based on certain traditions of the miniature paintings, which existed since the ancient times. Miniatures, painted for "Varga and Gulsha", are considered some of the ancient patterns of this art not only in Azerbaijan, but in the Near and Far East.



Calligraphy and miniature speedily spread in Maragha, Tabriz and other towns of Azerbaijan, Tabriz turned into powerful center of artistic creation, book art, calligraphy and miniature painting in XIII-XIV centuries. East painters, profited by Chinese and Uigurian art, tried to adapt Far East nations' picture forms and expression means with local traditions - superficial-and-decorative forms.

Tabriz masters created artistic style of successful graphic and painting styles synthesis in the middles of XIV century. Development of this new style reflected on the miniatures of well known manuscript "Great Tabriz Shahname" (a book praising shahs) or "Demott Shahname" of 1340-1350s. The Miniatures, painted by famous painters of that time Ahmad Musa and Shammsaddin, are keeping in some of world museums and libraries. Only 58 miniatures of these manuscripts are known. Researchers highly appreciated the development of Tabriz miniature school of that time, particularly illustrations of "Demott Shahname". French art critic Ostash de Lorey wites: "miniature art has never been so sublime, original and far from academism".



Artistic style peculiarities of Azerbaijan miniature art much more improved in early XV century. Style, artistic quality of pictures, painted by genius painter Abd-al-Khayin for poem "Khosrov and Shirin" by Nizami Gandjavi (1405-10, Frir gallery, Washington), "Divan" (selected poems) by the last Jalair ruler Sultan Ahmad (1405-10, Frir gallery, Washington) and illustrations, painted by calligrapher Jafar Tabrizi for "Mehr and Mushtari" by Assar Tabrizi (1419) testify perfection of Tabriz school.

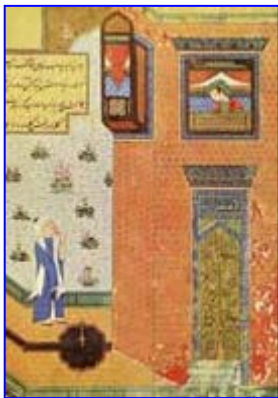
Tabriz had been sublime art center, providing the Near and Far East towns with talented masters, for long time since early XV century. Famous German art critic F.Shults called Tabriz "mother school" ("Mutter Schule"), had great impact on miniature art of neighbor Eastern states. Miniature art began to develop in Shamakhi and Baku under the influence of Tabriz school in XV century. Illustrations, painted for "Anthology of Eastern poesy" or "Shamakhi anthology" (1468, British museum, London) and other manuscripts, portraits with one and two figures by Abdulbagi Bakuvi ("Mehtar", "Two emirs"; Topgapi museum, Istanbul) are some of the best miniature patterns of Shamakhi and Baku painters.



New raising period of Tabriz miniature art late XV century. 9 miniatures of early XVI century, painted for Istanbul "Khamasa", written for Sultan Yaqub in 1481 and completed in the period of Shah Ismayl I, principally differ from the miniatures of the same subject and considered more valuable, for figurative expression means, complicate composition and grandiloquent decorativeness, color richness ("Khosrov looks at Shirin in her swimming", "Isgandar and Dara", "Isgandar and herdsman", "Isgandar in Nushaba's palace" etc.). These works were doubtless painted by founder of Tabriz miniature school Sultan Mahammad, his contemporaries and students in XVI century. It is not accidental, that the most valuable miniatures of unknown authors, created in this period, are usually referred to Sultan Mahammad School or his style.



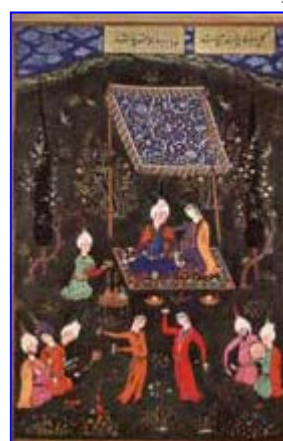
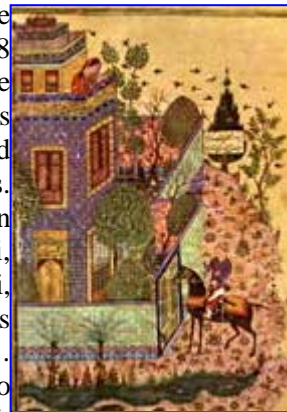
Development peak of this school dated to XVI century. Tabriz, the capital of Azerbaijan, turned into main center of culture, aesthetic view, and artistic creation in connection with appearance of centralizing Safavis state. Famous painters, calligraphers and masters of the East like Kamaladdin Behzad, Sheykhzade, Aghamirak Isfahani, Shah Mahmud Nishapuri, Dust Mahammad created under the direction of great master Sultan Mahammad along with talented local painters like Mir Musavvir, Mirza Ali Tabrizi, Mir Seyid Ali, Muzaffar Ali in the palace library of Shah Ismayil and Tahmasib in Tabriz.



Relation of Tabriz miniature school with classic literature became closer since XVI century. Works, poetical plot and characters of Firdovsi, Nizami, Sadi, Hafiz, Jami, Navai, Amir Khosrov Dahlavi and others occupy main place in the creation of Tabriz painters. A lot of books and the most valuable miniatures painted for these two works "Shahname" and "Khamsa". Some of the miniatures, blending artistic style peculiarities of Tabriz school of XVI century, as illustrations painted for manuscripts "Khamsa" of 1524 (Subway-museum, New-York), "Shahname" (Institute of Oriental Studies, St. Petersburg), "Guy ve Chovkan", "Chami at-Tavarich" of 1528 (both in the Library named after M.Y.Saltikov-Shedrin, St. Petersburg) draw close attention. Relatively simple and laconic works in respect to simple composition, color, character solution and landscape motives represent transitional period from laconic style peculiarity of XV century to new grandiloquent decorative style of.

Eastern miniature art reached the peak of its development in 1530-1540s. A lot of valuable manuscripts in the view of artistic aesthetics and mastery were worked out in this period.

Manuscripts "Shah and Darvish" with three delicate small miniatures (The Library named after M.Y.Saltikov-Shedrin, St.Petersburg), "Shahname" with 258 miniatures (1537; some of them are in the Metro Museum of New-York, the rest in the Houghton collection, New-York) and world-famous "Khamsa" with 14 rare miniatures (1539-1543, British museum, London) are considered masterpieces of book art and miniature painting in the East due to rich artistic design, delicate decorative adornments. Some of the miniatures painted for "Shahname" are "Keyumarz's meeting", "Execution of Zohhak" by Sultan Mahammad, "Reception of Indian envoys" by Mirza Ali Tabrizi, Hunting and battle scenes by Muzaffar Ali, Palace meetings by Mir Seyid Ali, miniatures painted for "Khamsa" are "Sultan Sandjar and old woman", "Khosrov looks at Shirin in her swimming", "Prophet Muhammad's ascension" by Sultan Mahammad. "Conversation of Anushiravan and owls" by Mir Musavvir, "Khosrov listens to Barbad's music", "Shapur shows Khosrov's portrait to Shirin" by Mirza Ali Tabrizi,



"Beggars-woman takes Madjnun to Leyli" by Mir Seyid Ali and other works are considered the peak of the Eastern miniature art. Plots of "Shahname" and "Khamsa", loved by Eastern painters, were brightly and classically reflected on works by Sultan Mahammad and his contemporaries. Azerbaijan painters created original miniatures for other poetic works as well. For instance, "Sham Mirza's music and drunken revel", "In the meykhana" (tavern), painted by Sultan Mahammad in 1530s for "Divan" by Hafiz, miniatures painted by unknown painter for works by A.Jami, Amir Khosrov Dahlavi, Sadi (The library named after M.Y.Saltikov-Shedrin, St. Petersburg). Characters described in "In meykhana" by Sultan Mahammad are considered rare works in Eastern miniature art in view of psychological expressiveness, grotesque and satire.

Easel miniatures, occasionally met in miniature art till XVI century, turned into particular genre. Ordinary life scenes like hunting and battle scenes, musical and drunken revels, palace entertainments, portraits of shahs and nobility are mainly painted in the independent miniatures in contrast of book illustrations. "Musical revel in the palace" by Mirza Ali Tabrizi, "Hunting scene" by Sultan Mahammad, "Village life" and "Town life" by Mir Seyid Ali, kept in the special albums or included into different manuscript books in museums and libraries of Russia (St. Petersburg), Turkey (Istanbul), as well as Europe and the USA occupy exceptional place in Eastern miniature art.

Sultan Mahammad, Mir Musavvir, Dust Mahammad and others created some portrait miniatures in the middle of XVI century. Painters described characters of shahs and nobility in compliance with beauty notion of that time in these portraits, which sometimes differ but sometimes not for typicalness, character solution and ethnographic peculiarity, given in different positions. The main purpose of these portraits, created on the basis of certain canons (rule, style), was to praise rulers' outward appearance.

A group of painters, worked in the palace library, gathered in the new center in connection with removing of Savavis's capital from Tabriz to Gazvin in the second half of XVI century. Miniatures, created by Azerbaijan painters in Gazvin till 1575, do not differ from miniatures of Tabriz period because of artistic style peculiarities and represent its logical continuation.

Development of Azerbaijan miniature art and formation of new style in Gazvin in the second half and late XVI century related with creation of Sultan Mahammad's successors Siyavush bay, Mir Zeynalabdin Tabrizi, Ali Rza Abbasi Tabrizi and well known masters Mahammadi and Sadig bay Afshar. Independent miniatures, reflecting real life and ordinary housing scenes, were created in this period. Stagnation of Azerbaijan book and miniature art is observed in the second half of XVI century. One of the main reasons was lost of Tabriz's culture center role in connection with removing of the capital; another was Tabriz painters' working in the art centers of Turkey and Iran, as well as lack of comprehensively developed masters with wide creative potential like Sultan Mahammad and his successors.



Tabriz school kept creative relations with neighbor states, representatives of the school worked in foreign countries in different periods. Well known painter Mir Seyid Ali with his father Mir Musavvir had worked as chef painter in the palace of Mogul rulers as Humay (1530-39, 1555-59) and Akbar (1556-1605) in India for long time. They played great role in the training of young painters, foundation and development of Indian painting school, named Mogul miniature school. Azerbaijan painters had great influence on the development of Turkish miniature school. Shahgulu Naggash, Validjan Tabrizi, Kamal Tabrizi and other Tabriz painters worked in Istanbul in different times, Shahgulu Naggash and Validjan Tabrizi run palace studio. Many valuable works, reminiscent of miniature style for content, artistic form and figurative expression means, were created in carpet-making, and ceramics.



Azerbaijan miniature art continued till late XIX century. But miniatures, painted for manuscripts and books of stone print in the XVIII-XIX centuries, were simple, schematic and even primitive popular print for painting and compositions. The illustrations, painted by Avazali Mughanli for "Kalila and Dimna" (1809), by Mirza Aligulu for "Shahname" (1850), by Mir Mohsun Navvab for "Bahr ul-hazan" (1864), by Nadjafgulu Shamakhili for "Yusif and Zuleykha" (1887; these works are in the Manuscripts Institute of the Azerbaijan Republic Academy of Sciences)



and for other books prove decay of classic miniature art for figurative expression means.

Rich traditions of classic miniature, its artistic style peculiarity were creatively used in the soviet period. Usage of classic miniature art peculiarity more expanded, painters' creative researches in painting, graphics, particularly in book illustrations resulted in successful works in the following development periods. M.Abdullayev created some valuable works, related with classic heritage in painting, graphics, monumental painting and theatre design. Illustrations created by painter for "Kitabi-Dada Gorgud" (1962 and 1979 editions), mosaics on the basis of works by Nizami in the Nizami station of Baku underground draw attention.



### Azerbaijani art in the world museums

The art of Azerbaijan is as old and rich as its history. Rock picture of Gobustan, works of art of ceramics and metal, the art of glass and engraving developed in Caucasian Albania, the works of miniature art, colored carpets, needlework, pottery plates with lions, the art of glazed tile, engraved tender shebekes and beautiful jewelries popular in the Middle Ages in Tebriz prove that our artistic heritage is very rich.

Folk arts appeared as a result of work of our people and widely used in their life have great and rich history.

The investigations show that the four thousand years ago the tribes lived in the territory of Azerbaijan made original kitchen implements, weapons and accessories of stone, clay and metal and used them in their life. Those works of art have for a long time attracted the interest of art-researchers for their original form, exact construction and designs on them.



Among rich museum collections of Victoria and Albert in London, Luvr in Paris, Metropoliten in Washington, and museums of Vienna, Rome, Berlin, Istanbul, Tehran, Cairo one may find the works of art created by hands of the masters of Tebriz, Nakhchivan, Ganja, Gazakh, Guba, Baki, Sheki, Shamakhi and Karabakh.



The appearance of our works of arts, considered the jewelry of the world museums, in the museums and personal collections of European, Asian, American countries lean on a great historical background. Many of them were bought from separate individuals, some were brought by foreign travelers, merchants, diplomats and scientists visited Azerbaijan, some were stolen.

**Azerbaijani works of art in the museums of Moscow.** Long scientific investigations revealed that a great part of works of art created by Azerbaijan people for centuries is kept in Moscow as well as in other great cities of the world.

They are generally kept in the House o Weapons in Kremlin, in the museum of Eastern folks, in the State Historical Museum, in the museum of folk creativity, in the churches of Moscow and its suburbs( the mosques of Savvo-Storojevski, Sergiyev, the monastery of Kiril-Belozyerski etc.)

The most figurative and original patterns of Azerbaijan art kept in Moscow are in the House of Weapons in Kremlin.



Original works of Azerbaijan art are also demonstrated together with art of Turkish, Iranian, Indian, French, English, Germanic people. The majority of works of Art kept in House of Weapons is the works of jeweler's art and metal art. We must specially mention hoods, shields, swords, daggers and accessories.



Among Azerbaijan jewelries exhibited in House of Weapons in Kremlin particular interest deserves a figurative shield of the XVI century.

Together wit the shield we must also speak of two more works of art made in Azerbaijan at that time. They are an armored head-dress used by the nobles in war and a couple of elbow-rest.

As in the case of figurative shield, there is no exact information about the time and the name of the one who brought it here.

When speaking of the decoration of metal works kept in the House of Weapons we must mention about written in Arabic alphabet words and sayings shown among the pictures and designs of the abovementioned. Those scripts generally reflect the time of their creation and the name of the customer, as well as words taken from Guran and also the parts of classical poems.

To their artistic peculiarities the cloths kept in the House of Weapons may be divided into ornamental cloth and topical cloths.

Topical clothes are more original and valuable. As on the cloths of this type we view different scenes taken from the works of East classics and those taken from Azerbaijan folk creation.

One of those cloths attracts particular attention.

**The works of Azerbaijani art kept in the Museums of Saint-Petersburg.** Among museums preserving works of art created by masters of Azerbaijan museums located in Saint-Petersburg occupy an important



position. The State Hermitage of Saint-Petersburg, Kazanski Sobor and other places are first among those museums.

In the department of culture of the East of the State Hermitage together with material culture of the people of Iran, Turkey, China, Japan and Arabia, one may find rare works of art of Azerbaijan people created during the centuries.

Here one may find engraved works of jewelry, pottery, stone, and wood and different works of weaving made by Azerbaijan masters since the ancient times up to the beginning of our century.

First of all the State Hermitage is a cultural center among the museums of the world preserving the ancient patterns of Azerbaijan mastership. Gathered here tender plates, swords, axes, waistbands and other accessories made of bronze create an interesting page of the art of the ancient period.

Among the monuments referred to II millennium b. c. exhibited at the Hermitage a bronze bull head found during archeological digs in Nagorny Karabakh attracts particular attention for its original form and exact composition.

At the State Hermitage among works of art referred to Bronze Age one may meet such kind of the accessories as waistbands, bracelets, colorful beads of different shape.

3000 year old patterns of jeweler's art found during archeological digs once conducted in the village Khojaly of Karabakh are interesting for their original form and technical use. We should mention that some gold accessories kept at the State Hermitage today and referred to Bronze Age were found from here.

At State Hermitage of Saint-Petersburg we also have many samples of metal art referred to the middle ages.

According to their form and the theme those works of art might be grouped under two groups:

1. Monuments of plastic art
2. Everyday life equipments.

To plastic monuments kept here first of all belong bronze cast of bird, animal and human figures referred to the V-VIII.

A prominent scientist of Saint-Petersburg academician K.Trever, interested in art and the history of the Caucasian Albania looks upon those figures as the continuation of the same type pottery found in Mingacheir. One of the mentioned figures has for a long time attracted the attention of the scientists. The figure referred to the VII century was found at the end of the XIX century in Nakhchivan. The figure is 35,6 high and according to the scientists it is the monument of Javanshir(638-670), the ruler of Caucasian Albania.



On the face of the square pedestal of the figure there is the description of two lions and a mountain goat. The sides are decorated with the scene of fight between the hunter and the lion and also ornamental motives of an elephant, a fox and plants.

Among plastic works of art made of metal Shirvan tube referred to 1206 is the most interesting exhibit.



Together with plastic works made of metal demonstrated at the State Hermitage of Saint-Petersburg one may find everyday decorated equipment original in form. To such samples of art we first of all refer bronze trays belonging to the VI-VIII centuries. Three of our trays kept at Hermitage are referred to the beginning of the middle ages. Two of them are decorated with topical descriptions; the third one has only ornaments on it. To the everyday house equipment made of metal we may refer bronze pots of different form and decoration referred to the XIII and XIV centuries.

Those pots draw attraction for its volume, form and decorations. One of them is especially distinguished.

One of the most developed spheres of middle age Azerbaijan art was ceramics.

The State Hermitage also preserves the beautiful pattern of this kind of our art. Works of ceramics kept here are subdivided into two groups according to their usage and graphical peculiarities.

The first group contains pottery used in everyday life; the second group includes glazed tiles applied in architecture. To the pottery used in everyday life belong kup-nimche (plate- big pot), bowl and rail found during archeological digs once held in Oran-Gala (the region Goranboy).

The samples of glazed tiles are also demonstrated at the state Hermitage. The major position here is given to the glazed tiles of Pirhuseyh khanagah (places for dervishes) over Pirsatchay of Gazimammad region.

The State Hermitage possesses about 500 glazed tiles of different form and decoration. The majority of samples of carpet weaving kept at Hermitage are fleecy carpets. One can also find here the carpets weaved in the famous carpet centers of Azerbaijan since the XVI up to the XIX centuries.



Azerbaijan carpets weaved in Tebriz and Shirvan are one of the precious samples of the museum. The carpets Pirabadil weaved in the villages of Guba, Mereze weaved in villages of Shamakhi are the most attractive ones for their color and rich elements of design. On the carpet of Shamakhi there is a note that it had been weaving in 1881-1885.

Among the samples kept in the museum one can find a nearly unknown to us work of Mirza Gadim Irvani, a prominent artist of Azerbaijan painter-ornamentalist lived in the middle of the XIX century.

The museum preserves referred to 1430 'Khamsa' by Nizami Ganjevi. This exhibit is not only one of the first copies of the five poems of the poet, but also as a work of art.

**The works of Azerbaijani art in the museums of Budapest.** The works of Azerbaijani art existed in Hungary were kept in personal collections till the 40-s of the XX century. During the later 50-60 years those works are gathered by the government and placed in the museums. Today the majority of works of Azerbaijan art are preserved in the museums of 'Decorative arts' and 'The art of the East' located in Budapest.

More than 200 works of Azerbaijan art are kept in those museums. Among them you can find carpets, cloths, needlework and many works of art made of metal and wood.

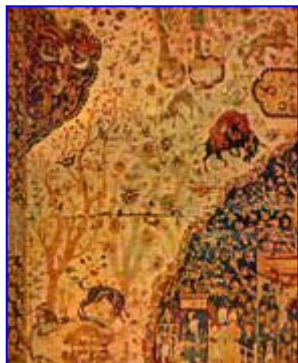
As in other foreign museums the most of works of arts kept in the museums of Budapest are carpets.

Those are the carpets at different periods weaved in the cultural centers of Azerbaijan such as Baki, Guba, Shamakhi, Shusha, Gazakh and Tebriz.

A small carpet of Gazakh referred to the XVIII century and demonstrated in the museum of 'Decorative arts' carries particular attention.

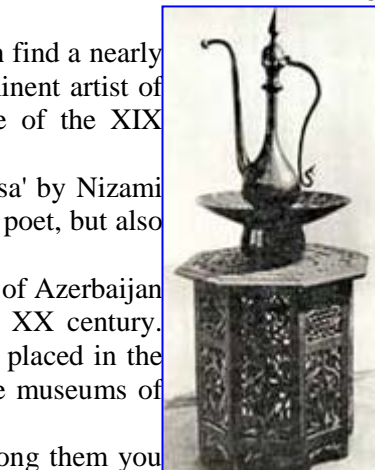
Together with ornamental carpets weaved at different times in cultural centers of Azerbaijan you may find here some carpets with original topical composition.

Referred to different periods needleworks of Azerbaijan, kept here as a precious exhibit of the museums are coverings, pillow-cases, table-cloths, saddle-cover and figurative curtains.



As a sample we may show a curtain decorated by the masters of Tebriz in the VXI century.

Works of Azerbaijani art kept at the museums of 'Decorative arts' and 'The art of the East' of the Budapest do not only embrace carpets and needleworks, those made of metal, wood and pottery as well.



The majority of monuments made of metal are weapons (swords, daggers) and some house equipment (tray, satil, and lamp). For artistic and technological peculiarities those samples made of different metals (silver, gold, steel) and referred to the XVIII-XIX remind the style of Shirvan masters. There is only one work made of wood in the museum of Budapest-the figurative rahil (book-supporter) kept in the museum.

**The works of Azerbaijani art in the United States of America.** Most of the works of Azerbaijani masters is kept in America.

In museums, artistic galleries and personal collections in Washington, New-York, Chicago, Los-Angeles, Philadelphia, Huston, San-Francisco, Cleveland, Detroit, Boston and other cities of the USA you may find hundreds of works of national masters.

The most of the patterns kept here are carpets, cloths, figurative metal and pottery. The most ancient samples among those kept in the USA are metallic works.

It is now kept in the museums 'Metropolitan' in New-York, America and 'The Art of Asia ' in San-Francisco.

Among the works of metal art kept in the museum 'Metropolitan' the most interesting one is referred to the VIII century b.c. accessories found in the province of Ziviya, near the lake Urmiya.





A gold bracelet attracts particular attention of world for its figurative peculiarity and realization.

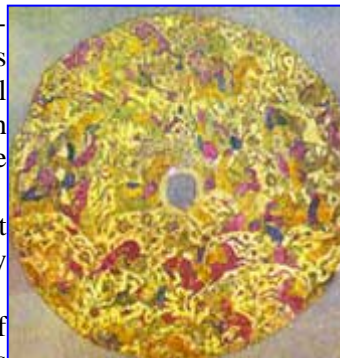
In the USA one can find plenty of samples of metal art of the middle ages. They are bronze plate of the XII-XIII centuries made in Nakhchivan, kept in the personal collection of Piyepront Morgan in the USA, bronze plate referred to 703 year according to hijri-



gamari (moslem) calendar (year 1304) with the words "Oljayt Khudabende" on it and is still kept in the personal collection of Mr. Harari, again decorated with rich ornaments bronze plate of the XII century kept in the museum of art of Cleveland.

Alike in foreign museums, in the shop of ancient things and personal collections you may find many samples of Azerbaijan carpets in the USA as well.

Today this country preserves thousand patterns of ornamental and the best quality fleecy carpets and carpets without pile weaved in major centers of art of our country.



The oldest Azerbaijan carpets demonstrated in the USA are in the museum 'Metropolitan' in New-York.

Let us view one of the mentioned carpets.

The great attraction deserves a piece of round velvet with descriptions on it.

**The works of Azerbaijani art in the museums of the Great Britain.** The Great Britain is one of the countries where you may find ancient works of our folk art.

In the museums located in such the cities of this country as London, Birmingham, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, shops of ancient things and personal collections there are hundreds of works of our art

From the point of view of figurativeness, the most original works of Azerbaijan masters are now preserved in the museum of Victoria and Albert in London.

The works referred to Azerbaijan are kept in the Near East department of the museum.



They are patterns of figurative cloths, needlework, carpets, jewelry, and pottery and so on.

From the aspect of antiquity the oldest pattern of our folk art kept in the museum of Victoria and Albert is a bronze bowl of 1319.

A particular position among samples preserved in the museum of Victoria and Albert occupy Azerbaijan carpets. For their graphic and technology they are subdivided into Tebriz carpets of the XVI century and the carpets of Guba-Shirvan, Ganja-Gazakh and Karabakh of the XVI-XIX centuries. In London museum of carpets you may find a carpet weaved in 1892 in

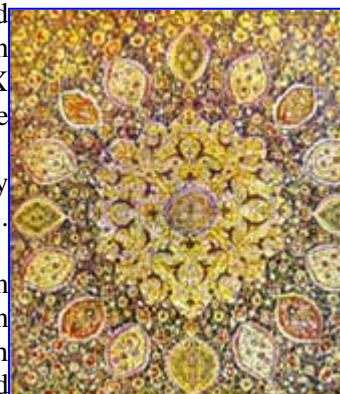


Karabakh.

Among the carpets of Tebriz demonstrated in the museum of Victoria and Albert we must especially remind of a carpet known as 'Sheyk Sefi' weaved in Tebriz in 1539 by request of Shah Tahmasib for the mosque of Ardebil. XVII-XIX century Azerbaijan carpets preserved at the museum of Victoria and Albert are those once weaved in Guba, Baki, Shamakhi, Gazakh and Karabakh.

In the museum of Victoria and Albert alike other world museums we may find plenty of figurative specimens of cloths referred to the XVI-XVII centuries. There of them are most attractive.

**Azerbaijani works of art in France.** The majority of now preserved in France specimen of Azerbaijan folk art consist of the works of art weaving. In many museums and personal collection of France you may find hundreds of high quality cloths of Azerbaijan made in Shamakhi, Sheki, Ganja, Nakhchivan and Tebriz. Among them special attention should be paid to topical cloths of the XVI-XVII



One of topical clothes demonstrated in the museum of decorative arts in Paris draws particular attention.

In the museum of Decorative arts in Paris there is an original topical cloth of 26 cm length referred to the XVI century.

While speaking about works of art of weaving we should specially mention about carpets demonstrated in rich museums of this country. The most graphically and technologically valuable carpets of Azerbaijan are kept in the museums of Decorative arts and Luvr of Paris.



Let us view one of the carpets demonstrated in the museums of Decorative arts of Paris.

Besides samples of the art of weaving, kept in this cultural center, being one of the richest museums of the world you may also find hundred specimen of art of pottery, glazed tile and graphic metal.



There some rare patterns of metal art made of silver, copper and bronze in Luvr. The most interesting of them is a bronze plate of original figure made in 1190. This specimen is demonstrated under a bell-glass on a high stool in the middle of the East culture hall of the first floor of Luvr.

This bronze plate, in the form a bird with long bill is original not only for its form but, but for its decorations as well. The decorations on the plate are three birds different in size and medallions placed on the spaces between them.



Those decorations made by the technique of forging and scratching are composed of stylized ornamental plant elements and the scripts. One of the scripts reflects the name of the master Osman Salman oglu Nakhchivani.

**Azerbaijani works of art in Switzerland.** Specimen of our art kept in the museums, personal collections and shops of antique things of the cities Bern, Geneva, Zurich, Basel, and Lausanne create a beautiful page of the history of Azerbaijan art. Many valuable samples of Azerbaijan arts are demonstrated at historical museums of Bern together with material culture of the Europe.



The center of the museum exposition is composed of a great mafrash (a sack to carry linen, carpets, and palazes) stylized in the harmony of blue and red and weaved in the motives of ornaments with kilim (a type of rug) under it. There is a great label near them informing in Germanic that they were weaved in Azerbaijan in the XVIII century. This admirable specimen reminds us the technique of weaving of Karabakh carpets for its figurative and technological peculiarities and is considered to be one of the best exhibits of the department of East art.



An interesting carpet kept in the museum of Bern is 'Golluchichi', weaved in 1830 in Guba.

Among interesting patterns of Azerbaijan art particular attention is paid to daggers, swords, pistols and gun-powder boxes made in the XVIII-XIX centuries in Shanakhi, Goychay, Ganja, Sheki, Baki, Tebriz, Ardebil. The works made by Shirvan masters prevail in historical museum of Bern.

Among the artistic composition of the weapons kept in the museum we come across with designs of plant and geometry, scenes taken from animal world and also small topical compositions.

Among different kinds of designs of those weapons you may even find scripts written in Arabic language. Those scripts are so skillfully placed among the designs and the descriptions; they look like beautiful design and compose an inseparable part of the general composition. Those scripts also carry some important historical information. For instance, on decorated by the technique of forging and garasavad nice silver gun-powder box we may read the name of 'Shamakhili Seyidzadeh'(inventory # 832), on the a pistol, the butt and the joint of barrel to the body of which are covered with silver decorated pieces we may find the script 'amali Ali'(inventory #766), on a small dagger 38,2 cm long with a handle of ivory and the blade decorated with the ornaments you may read "amali Mahammad Ardabili" (inventory # 1178), and on 51,1 cm long dagger with curved blade one may read the names o the master and the owner of the weapon.



On the weapons of Azerbaijan kept in the historical museum of Bern one may find the scripts "Baki", "Guba", "Amali Samed", "Omar"and others.

In the department of East of that museum we may find the patterns of house equipment made of copper widely used by our people in the XVIII-XIX centuries. Those kitchen implements original in form are demonstrated on the text-bench within the niche-frames

**Azerbaijani works of art in Federative Republic of Germany.** Only one pattern represents our carpets in Federative Republic of Germany.

Thousands of our carpets are kept in the museums, the shops of ancient things and personal collection found in Bonn, Hamburg, Munich, Cologne, Dusseldorph, Frankfurt-Mayn, Manheim and other cities.

Together with mass simple carpets one may find in this country rare patterns of carpets weaved at different periods in our motherland.



The originality of Gazakh carpet referred to the XVIII century and demonstrated in 1960 in the shop of the antique things in Munich draws a good deal of attraction on it.

So wide-spread in the world of the East for its constructive structure those designs, seemed like swastika with the tips directed towards four different sides and were such really weaved as if they were circling around one point. The mentioned element of the carpets 'Damgali' of Gazakh could also be seen in other kinds of decorative-applied art of Azerbaijan.

**Azerbaijani works of art in Turkey.** Azerbaijani art patterns as decorative-applied and picturing art examples are generally focused in Istanbul.

The most beautiful and ancient patterns of Azerbaijan art are mainly kept in three large museums in Istanbul. Those are Topgapi palace museum, Turkish and



Islam works museum, Carpet museum.

Utensils, jewelry and arms of different metals (gold, silver, steel, copper etc.) exceeded among art patterns, kept in Istanbul museums.

Golden belt, kept in Topgapi palace museum, particularly draws attention among metallic art examples.

Steel hood of 1528, kept in Topgapi, is considered valuable work, giving notion of medieval Azerbaijan jewelry.

Bronze alams (gonfalon), once made in Ardabil and Tabriz, might be included into metal art patterns, and kept in Istanbul museums. Bronze alams used to be stuck into roofs of mosques and madrasas (religious school), tops of minarets and had religious essence. Trunks of alams were without adorn as they were stuck into special projections.

The most beautiful part of alams is its top. Religious scripts and symbolical portrayals were given in this part. Alams, kept in Turkish museums at present time, are of two forms: horn and pear-shaped.



You can see figuratively worked out words as Allah, Muhammad, and Ali on some of them, and symbolical portrayals on the others.



Some rare patterns of Azerbaijan weaving art are kept in Turkish museums. There are material, fine needleworks and carpets, once made in Shamakhi, Ganja, Sheki, Shusha and Tebriz.

A number of qualitative patterns represent material and fine needlework art of Azerbaijan in Turkish museums at present. Most of them are mainly collected in Topgapi museum, Istanbul. Two examples draw particular attention. One of them is piece of material with plots belonging to XVI century and another is embroidery gown.

Azerbaijan carpets, found world fame are turned to be fine exhibits of Turkish museums.

Azerbaijan carpets are collected in four large museums of Turkey. These are the Turkish and Islam works museum, Topgapi palace museum and Carpet museums in Istanbul, Moylana museum in Koniya.

The most ancient carpet, kept in Turkey, belongs to XVIII century. According to Turkish art critics, this rare pattern of art of weaving, 254 cm length and 170 cm width, was given to Ashraf oglu mosque in Beyshahar as alms. It was brought to Movlana museum in 1932.

We may refer script of difficult painting, exhibiting in the Archeological museum in Izmir, to our original art patterns.

**Azerbaijani art patterns in Iran museums.** Thousands of rare art patterns, created by Azerbaijan people during centuries, are protected in Iran museums, mosques and private collections at present.

Exhibits of archeological and carpet museums, located in Tehran, Basitan, Gulustan, draw particular attention.

Artistic metallic wares, found in Hasanli hill, have particular significance among our art examples, exhibiting in the Archeological museum in Tehran.

Hasanli hill is situated in Sulduz region, Iranian Azerbaijan. This point with fine nature was one of the richest culture centers of the Near East one thousand year B.C. According to sources, Manna tribe, belonging to Great Midiya state, lived in this territory.



Among art monuments, found in Hasanli hill in 1956-1957 golden bowl, exhibiting in the Tehran Archeological museum, especially draws attention of world scientists.

There are many attractive scenes on the surface of the bowl. Hunter with snack around his head, naked woman laid on two rams, man holding his hand to the wrestler, staying aside, to rescue from tricipalious dragon were described here. These scenes pictured on the middle part of the bowl. An old man was described in the comparatively lower part. A woman, staying before him, holds out an infant. Above that scene a man stands with some plate in his hands with his face to the sandal. There are three more scenes between the descriptions of a hunter with a snake winding around his head.

Referred to the VIII-VII century b. c. gold apron found in the province of Ziviye round the lake Urmiya proves the fact of mutual culture relation existed between Azerbaijan and the neighboring states.

Museums in Iran also keep the carpets made in Azerbaijan. We must particularly mention a carpet weaved in the village Pirabadil of Guba.

<http://www.azcarpetmuseum.az/006.html>



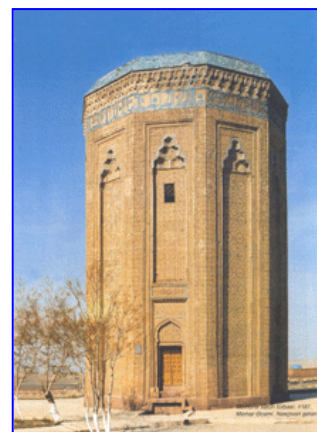
## X. ARCHITECTURE, MUSEUMS, LIBRARIES

### Architecture

The nature endowed Azerbaijan with the richest types of stone, which let our ancestors create wonderful examples of architecture: city walls and towers, bridges, caravanserais, houses and religious constructions. The whole many-sided history of Azerbaijan and various external impacts are reflected in the rich architectural heritage of the country.

Azerbaijan preserved various monuments of three religions: Zoroastrianism (fire worship temples in *Khunaliq*, *Surakhani* etc), Christianity and Islam. Many regions of Azerbaijan are notable for the presence of architectural monuments related to Caucasian Albania - monasteries and churches. The Temple in *Kish village* is considered to be one of the very first Christian temples not only in the Caucasus but also in the whole world. *Derbent defence walls* with *Pekhlevian* inscriptions, *Javanshir's Wall*, *Gari-korpu Bridge* in Barda are the brightest examples of the ancient Albanian architecture. Taking into account the fact that Christianity was more deeply preserved in the mountainous part of the country, construction of churches continued in Middle Ages too. The monastery on the bank of *Agoglan River* in Lachin district, *Amarass group* of buildings, *Lekit temples* (Gakh district), the monastery in *Askipara village* (Gazakh district) and the ruins of other religious constructions testify to the preservation of Christian influence in the territory of Caucasian Albania at that period. Location of Azerbaijan on the crossroads of Temple in *Lekit* significant trade routes was one of the main reasons for building numerous caravanserais. Bridges occupy special place among architectural monuments of the country. The following monuments can be the perfect examples of them - bridges of *Khudaferin*, *Ardebil* and *Tabriz*, as well as *Giz-korpusu Bridge* in Gaflanti, *Girmizi-korpu Bridge* and the bridge located in the neighbourhood of Barda across Terterchay River, which are 16 spans and 120 metres long.

Since the XII century there has been an increase in the number of cities in Azerbaijan, which established new architectural schools that closely combined local traditions and high professional skill. The famous eastern architect - Ajami was the founder and an outstanding representative of one of these schools - School of Nakhchivan. A real masterpiece is the splendid *Momine-khatum mausoleum*, which was built by him. Besides the School of Nakhchivan, there were also *Shirvan-Absheron*, *Arran* and some other schools that left a significant heritage potential for the country. The monuments and constructions created by masters of those schools - fortresses, richly decorated palaces, mausoleums, mosques, bridges, caravanserais, baths - immortalised names of many outstanding architects - Masud, Abdul Mejid, Zeynaddin, Muhammad Ali, Murad Ali, Abdul Azim and others. The group of religious monuments of Sheikh Sefi-ad-din in Ardebil, the *Blue Mosque* in Tabriz, the *Khasht-behisht Palace* is wonderful examples of the Azeri architecture of the Middle Ages.



The mosque build in 1311-1324 in Tabriz by Haji Alishah is a grand example of a mosque with a big prayers' hall having a pointer-shaped ogive. The ogive is about 30 metres long. The stability of the construction was ensured through side wali being 10,4 metres wide. *The Mosque of Alishah* was one of the biggest religious buildings of Islamic world. Today, a smaller part of it - «*Ark Galasi*» -has become a symbol of Tabriz. In contrast to the Alishah Mosque, the Blue Mosque in Tabriz, which was built by Haji Ali Kuchachi in 1465, had a central domical composition. Covered with a large dome of 16,5 m in diameter the central square part of the prayers' hall was from three sides surrounded by galleries. Small domes, surrounding the large central dome and two splendid minarets, built at the corners of the main front, attached expressiveness and solemnity to the entire mosque.

In XV-XVI centuries eminent monument of Azeri architecture that should have served the proof of the unshakable power and unlimited force of feudal lord was built in the residence of *Shirvanshahs* in Baku.

The increasing portliness and ornamentally are common features that characterizes the architecture of the later Middle Ages period. Mosques of this period are very diverse and each of them was unique and original. The organizing role of the Islamic architecture of Azerbaijan of the Middle Ages period was apparent not only in delimitation or joining of spaces, but also in the impact it had on emotions and consciousness of people. Microenvironment, which was created around mosques, merging with the appearance of the building itself, reinforced its magnificence and significance.

The degree of defensive capacity, significance, economic level and even accomplishment of mediaeval cities depended to a great extent on their fortress. Firm walls, high towers were also considered as signs of the

city's greatness and its beauty. *Chirag-gala*, *Didvan* and many other towers that were built for defense against nomad tribes-deserve special attention.

The most famous fortress of Azerbaijan is the *Derbent Fortification*, which defended northern borders of the country. The strategic location of the *Derbent* Fortress, as well as magnificent iron gates, which then became a symbol of its impregnability, gave a basis for Derbent to be called among people as «*Demirgapi Derbent*» («Derbent - Iron Gates»). The *Giz-galasi* fortress, built from burnt brick under the hardest conditions, stands out among the most influential mountainous fortresses of Azerbaijan.



Khan palaces and citadels were built in Azerbaijan during the period of feudal division. The glorious Palace of *Sheki khans* (XVIII c.) is the most outstanding well preserved monument of that period. The main front of the palace is decorated with wonderful stained-glass windows and wood *shebekes*. The interior of the palace is beautifully designed with drawings, portraying flora, fauna and birds of the country, various geometric figures, battle and hunting scenes. Social and commercial constructions are also numerous among the architectural monuments of Azerbaijan of that period.

At the beginning of the XX century Baku acquires refined and magnificent appearance. The modernist style, which dominated in architecture of the buildings, constructed during Oil boom period, was enriched by Mauritanian, Romanic and Gothic elements. Being surrounded by splendid flora there stood magnificent houses of an architecture being as diverse as the nationalities which lived in Baku at that period. The soviet style has also become very widespread and is represented with splendid monumental public buildings.

**«Guidebook Azerbaijan» (the fourth Edition), Baku, 2007, P. 62-65**

### The history, development and models of stone carvings

Stone is considered to be one of the most ancient and natural gifts in human life. Stone helped people to get food and to make domestic implements. The first place of human settlement (caves, etc.) was made of stone. The first woman accessories, the first pen and the first writing-board were made of stone. Stone also played great role in development of human ability of painting and as well as aesthetic taste.

Scientists noticed the first patterns of decoration and painting on stones and rocks.

The history of decorated stone monuments dates to ancient times.

The ancient samples of stone pictures made by engraving, hewing and scratching are reviled by our scientists in Ordubad (Gemi gayasi), Absheron (villages Mardekan, Shuvalan) and on Gobustan rocks, locating not far from the shore of the Caspian sea, 60 kilometers south from Baki.



Pictures on Gobustan rocks are more attractive for rich theme, artistic peculiarity and the quantity.

Here our scientists found more than 3000 pictures of men, animals, domestic implements, kin pictures drew by primitive stone and metallic tools. According to the investigations, the pictures on Gobustan rocks are different in their size, composition and the techniques of drawing, depending the period they were executed. Archeologists think that the oldest of these pictures were made at the end of Stone Age, in the period of appearance of bronze tools and weapons. The pictures of the abovementioned period are large in volume, are more schematic and far from real proportions.

The major part of descriptions is that of reflecting hunting, and especially the descriptions of wild bull, deer and goat. And this is evident, for hunting occupied an important position in life of primitive people lining in Azerbaijan territory.

Being the main source of living in the live of primitive people hunting was the main topic of described compositions.

Materials revealed during archeological digs prove, that at the beginning of Middle Ages in Azerbaijan the stone was used not only for construction and as domestic implements, as it was before, but also as the smallest patterns of jewelry as well.

Though at these ages designs made on the stones were enriched in technical execution, one can hardly find any topical description among them.

The main descriptions characterizing these ages were the descriptions of plants, geometrical figures, birds, animals. Among stone designs created at the beginning of the age one finds the designs of plant depending local traditions, and in X-XI centuries and later, i.e. after acceptance of Islam traditions by the people we frequently notice geometrical designs.



While speaking of stone designs of the beginning of middle ages, we should mention a monument scientifically known as 'alban capiteli', found among the remnants of a religious temple during archeological digs in Mingachevir in 1948. Our archeologists refer this monument to V-VI centuries. This monument carries particular importance for us, for in later periods we find the ornamental composition described on it in many kinds of our folk art.



This monument had been cut in the form of swelling with two figures of peacocks, symmetrically placed around a plant curving up on its side. The both peacocks have long gallons round their neck. The gallons seem to hang in the air. One should pay special attention to this fact, for according to scientists' opinion, at the beginning of middle ages those gallons carried some symbolic meaning and pointed to sanctity of a bird or an animal carrying it.



It is very interesting that in old times peacock was considered to be holy and symbolized the goddess of fire and the sun. In VII-VIII centuries foreign travelers, being at the reception of Turkish Khakans living in Middle Asia, considered that bird to be holy and brought her many gifts.

The interesting conception concerning this fact belongs to a great Azerbaijan poet Nizami Ganjevi. In his epic 'Iskendername' Nizami described Nushaba's palace in Barda and several times mentioned about silk cloths with the description of peacocks and spoke that they considered to be holy by Turkish people.

The plant curving up between the peacocks also deserves some attention from this aspect.

The investigations prove that in the old past people worshiped a plant as a synthesis of our elements symbolizing the universe, 'water, fire, earth and air'. Time passed and this tradition changed its form in accordance with ideological and aesthetic peculiarities of the ages. The symbols of 'a holy tree' were an oak-tree, olive-tree, fig tree, cypress and sometimes a lower or a leaf.

For its holy character the plant was always at the center of compositions on patterns of decorative-applied art. The figures of birds, animals, human placed in symmetric position around the plant should traditionally be of two different genders (male, female).



Existing materials show that at the beginning of the middle ages, folk masters alongside with decorating and shaping figures on the stones by engraving and scratching, they made different sculptures of the stone.

Beginning with the XV century we do not see engravings of living beings in graphic arrangement of the architectural monuments and they are replaced with ornaments of flowers.

Disappearance of decorations engraved on the stones was the result of the change of the artistic style, as well as wide use of colorful glazed tiles in architectural monuments beginning with that century.

Thus, in later centuries, in the territories of Azerbaijan, the most original patterns of design engraved on the stone are frequently met on grave stones.

There are several kinds of gravestones in Azerbaijan. They may be strait, frowned, round at the top, in the form of turban vertical stones, horizontal sandugas, statues in the form of ram and others. Abovementioned stones were decorated in different form and the shape, depending on the position the berried one occupied in his life and society. The graves of statesmen had more rich and tender decorations.

Depending on the climate, the applied material and tradition of the place gravestones might be of different form and decoration in different territories of Azerbaijan. Today in the territories of Asheron, Shamakhi, Barda, Lachin, Lerik, Nakhchivan, Ganja and in the village of Hazra of Gabala one may see the most original and tenderly engraved gravestones of XVI-XVII century Azerbaijan. On Those gravestones one may see masterly made geometrical, plant ornaments, as well as the figures of a human, an animal, a bird, and even the topical compositions. They did not simply remain as designs, but they gave the information about the gender, life, the profession of berried man. For instance, the description of a sword, shield, a horse, a ram, and an eagle on the gravestones denoted the youth and courage, the description of beads and rahil was on the gravestones of priests or honorable old men, the description of a needle, a thread, a mirror, etc. denoted that buried there was a women.



## Museums

### **Azerbaijani State Museum of History**

One of the biggest museums of the Caucasus, the Museum of History of Azerbaijan, is situated in the mansion of the famous Azerbaijani oilman Haji Zeynalabdin Tagiyev, which was built in 1895-1896. Ten funds of the museum contain more than 250,000 exhibits.

The museum collection of archaeological fund has about 22 000 exhibits that are mainly stone and obsidian instruments of labour of the epochs of Paleolith, Mesolite and late Stone Age; household objects made of copper, bronze, iron, examples of clay and china ware, jewellery. One of the main positions among them belong to the fragment of a fossil man's lower jaw found in the Azikh cave not far from the city of Fizuli - the man called nowadays «azikhantrop» that is estimated to have lived 300-350 thousand years ago.

The numismatic fund of the museum has more than 150000 coins belonging to different historical periods. It is an exceptionally important material for studying history of the country, covering more than 2000 years, the whole history of coining and currency in Azerbaijan. Here, coins of various periods are preserved - coins of Alexander the Great, those of some Hellenistic countries (Seleukia, Parthia, Bactria, Ponta etc.); coins of great antique centers - Athens, Rome; coins of the period of the Arabic caliphate, period of feudal countries, period of Mongol invasion, as well as coins of Shirvanshahs. In ancient Azerbaijan (in Atropatena and Caucasian Albania) silver coins were already minted for the first time in III century B.C. At the period of Early Middle Ages, the cities of Nakhchivan, Baku, Barda and some others start to coin their own money. Besides, the fund also has a good collection of medals, various signs, banknote, seals, postage stamps etc.

The ethnographic fund has in its collection about 9000 exhibits. These are examples of ware, clothes, as well as a rich collection of carpets and carpet goods. The richly decorated ware and jewellery point to prosperity of various types of crafts and high artistic taste of the masters. The arm collection, the main part of which is the oriental type of arms, has over six hundred exhibits of various epochs and peoples. The central position in this collection belongs to cold steel and fire-arms of the Caucasus, which is, according to the quality and quantity of the exhibits, one of the biggest collections of Caucasian arms. The most interesting part in this exposition is represented by the famous Caucasian daggers that won world's recognition by its battle peculiarities and artistic expression.

*Address: 4 H.Z.Tagiyev str.*

### **Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography**

The museums contains archaeological finds reflecting the history of Azerbaijan, beginning from the Stone Age till the period of Middle Ages, ethnographic material related to XIX-beginning of XX century.

*Address: 2 Boyuk Gala str., Icheri Sheher.*

### **Gobustan State Historical and Artistic Reserve**

Gobustan is a rocky region situated among north-eastern spurs of the Great Caucasus mountain chain and the Caspian Sea, 70 km from Baku. The historical reserve of Gobustan is a museum under the open sky, where evidences of the epochs of Stone and Bronze Ages are concentrated – rock paintings and ancient human sites where people lived for centuries. More that four thousand petroglyphs preserved in Gobustan - images of people, animals, scenes of labour, collective hunting and dance.

*Address: 3 Lermontov str.*

### **State Historical and Architectural Museum-Reserve «Complex of Shirvanshahs' Palace»**

Museum preserves unique residence of rulers of Shirvan State - Palace of Shirvanshahs (XV century). The Ensemble is situated on the highest point of one of the hills of Icheri Sheher and contains dwelling house with 52 rooms, divan-Khane, shirvanshahs' tomb, palace mosque with minaret, mausoleum of Bakuvi, and portal of eastern gate.

*Address: 76 Gasr lane, Icheri Sheher.*

### **Maiden Tower**

Giz Galasi (Maiden Tower) is a monumental construction at the height of 29,5 meters and diameter of 16,5 meters. Maiden Tower situated in the southern part of Icheri Sheher is a symbol of Baku. The Tower is an eight-storied cylindrical-shaped one built at the coast-rock.

*Address: Neftchiler ave.*

### **Ateshgah Temple**

Ateshgah Temple («House of Fire») is located in 30 kilometres from the centre of Baku. The temple is constructed in XVII-XVIII centuries at the old place of the ever-burning eternal fires. These fires had been esteemed from the ancient shrine of fire-worshippers - Zoroastrians.

*Address: Surakhani settlement.*

### **Museum of Art named after R.Mustafayev**

The Art Museum is a thesaurus of examples of fine arts and crafts of Azerbaijan and some eastern countries: Turkey, Iran, Japan, Chine, as well as Russian and Western European art. The museum is located in two buildings constructed in the end of XIX century that are also historical monuments themselves. The exposition of the museum was created in historical chronological order and in accordance with various national schools. The fine arts of Azerbaijan is represented by painted ceramics, copper and bronze engraved wares, ancient carpets, jewellery, works of Azerbaijani miniature-painters of XV-XVI centuries, lacquered miniature of XVIII-XIX centuries, as well as paintings and sculptures of contemporary painters and sculptors.

The Russian fine art is represented by works of Old Russian School of painting, works of painters of XVIII-XIX centuries - Borovikovskiy, Tropinin, Vereshagin, Serov, Korovin, Rerikh and other outstanding masters of painting.

The paintings of Bassano, Solimena, Brawver, Susermance, Pitter Class, Kaulbach, Dupre, Buvre etc represent the fine arts of Western Europe.

*Address: 9/11 Niyazi str., Baku.*

### **Museum of History of Religion**

The scientific fund of the museum has materials on religious views of people from ancient times till the present-day, statues of Buddha, icons, manuscripts and printed editions of Talmud, the Holy Bible, the Gospel, the Holy Quran, as well as examples of clothes of clergymen, examples of painting, sculptures and graphic art of religious content.

*Address: 123a Neftchiler str., Baku.*

### **Museum of Independence of Azerbaijan**

The museum reflects various stages of the struggle of the Azeri people for independence. Visitors are offered materials telling about national liberation movements that took place in Southern Azerbaijan early XX century, documents of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic - the first Republic in the East, materials testifying to repressions of 1920-1950, as well as telling about the participation of Azeri people in the Second World War and the territorial claims of Armenia. '

*Address: 123a Neftchiler str., Baku.*

### **Museum of Azerbaijani Carpet and applied Art named after L.Kerimov**

In 1967 the first carpet museum of the whole World was opened in Baku, where all types of carpets and carpet works were collected. The museum's collection has more than 10 thousands of valuable art works. Particularly, the exposition of the museum contains old carpets weaved in XVIII-XIX centuries, artistic



Museum Centre decorative carpets created nowadays. According to the technology of weaving and artistic solution Azerbaijani carpets are divided into two types: tufted and non-tufted carpets that remind tapestry.

The museum also has various objects of medieval household, ceramic wares belonging to the Bronze Age, artistic metal of XIV century. Jewellery made of silver and gold, national costumes and artistic embroidery are performed in the best mastery traditions of Azerbaijan; works of applied art painters are also widely represented.

The Carpet Museum is also famous in the world as competent scientific centre. It gives the museum the opportunity to act as an expert side at various international scientific events.

*Address: 123a Neftchiler str., Baku.*

#### **Museum of Azerbaijani Literature named after Nizami**

The museum is dedicated to literature and folklore of Azerbaijan and reflects the development of Azerbaijani literature from ancient times till the present. In the centre of the facade of the museum building there is a big loggia decorated by multicoloured ceramic facing serving as a wonderful background for the sculptures of famous poets and writers placed in it - those are representatives of Azerbaijani classical literature.

*Address: 53 Istiglaliyat str.*

#### **Theatre Museum named after J. Jabbarli**

The Theatre Museum exposition describes the history of Azeri theatre since its beginnings from foundation in 1873 up to present, life and work of its eminent workers. Books, monographs, booklets, albums, cinema- and photo materials are kept here; the documents from the personal archives of the dramatists, producers, artists, actors are collected here.

*Address: 123a Neftchiler str.*

#### **Museum of Azerbaijani Musical Culture**

This Museum was established in 1967. The Museum funds at present total to over 30.000 units of maintaining. Materials from the personal archives of composers U.Hajibayov, M.Magomayev, G.Garayev, T.Guliyev, F.Amirov, S.Alasgarov and others are kept in the museum. A collection of Azeri folk musical instruments is demonstrated here.

*Address: 5 R.Behbudov str.*

#### **Permanent Exhibition of the Traditional Musical Instruments (Branch of the State Museum of Azerbaijani Musical Culture)**

The national artist, famous tar player Ahmad Bakikhanov lived in this museum building. Examples of the ancient Azeri musical instruments are demonstrated here, and modern national musical instruments are widely represented.

*Address: 119 Zargarpalan str.*

#### **Manuscripts Institute named after Fuzuli**

It is a world-known treasure of manuscripts. There are materials of the millennial scientific and literature development of Azeri nation and nations of Middle East - manuscripts in Azeri, Turkish, Arabic and Persian languages.

*Address: 8 Istiglaliyat str.*

#### **Azerbaijani Agriculture Museum**

The museum is devoted to the development of agriculture of Azerbaijan and its present-day state. Various sectors of agriculture are reflected in the museum's exposition: plant growing, cattle breeding, gardening etc. The museum is also very often used as a place to organize lectures and exhibitions, as well as to show documentaries.

*Address: 30/97 Darnagul highway.*

### **Geology Museum**

The museum tells about the geological structure of the territory of Azerbaijan, achievements of the Azeri science in the field of geology and mineralogy. Among exhibits - rock samples being rich for various minerals. Besides the examples gathered in the territory of the Republic, various rock samples from different regions of the world are also included in the collection.

*Address: 95 I.Gutgashenli str.*

### **National Education Museum**

The museum presents the history of the development of pedagogical thought, science and education in Azerbaijan. Among exhibits - rare books and training aids, manuals and school syllabuses of various periods.

*Address: 11 Niyazi str.*

### **Natural History Museum named after H.Zardabi**

The exposition of the museum presents the rich nature of Azerbaijan. Among exhibits there are fragments of skeletons of ancient animals found in Binagadi Lake.

*Address: 3 Lermontov str.*

### **Museum of Miniature Book**

The main basis of the museum's exposition is the collection gathered by Zarifa Salahova during 20 years - it is about 3750 miniature books published in 60 countries. The museum fund has in total more than 5300 editions. The books presented in the museum enables to get to know the best examples of miniature books created in different countries and belonging to different periods. Visitors of the museum can see old editions of the Holy Quran, prayer books of XIX century, books about arts, tale books, books about cities and counties of the world etc. There are in Museum «The History of England» published in 1815 in London and a novel in verses «Evgeniy Onegin» published in 1837 in St Petersburg, at the time when the poet was still alive. The museum collection surely contains miniature books published in Azerbaijan. Among the most interesting ones - micro-books having a size from 2 to 10 mm, as well as those with a size of 2x2 mm having a sheepskin cover and published in Tokyo and accompanied by their «own» reading magnifiers.

*Address: 67 1st Gala Dongesi, Icheri Sheher.*

### **National Oil Museum**

The exposition of the museum reflects the history of the development of oil industry of Azerbaijan. The theme of labour protection and safety matters in this field is widely represented here.

*Address: 68 Tabriz str.*

### **Olympic Museum**

The museum is located on the ground floor of the administrative building of the National Olympic Committee of Azerbaijan. The museum exposition includes medals, cups, diplomas won by Azerbaijani sportsmen at Olympic Games, world championships, other prominent international sport competitions, various pennants and souvenirs having Olympic significance, as well as examples of sports clothes and equipment. The interior of the museum is decorated with pictures and sculptures on various sports themes.

*Address: 5 Olimpiya str.*

### **Rinay Malakofauna Museum**

This is the first private museum in Azerbaijan. According to its type, this is the only one in Eurasia. It was established in 1932 by the first honourable oil industry worker of USSR - Sadikh Garayev. Then the museum collection was enlarged by Professor Tofiq Garayev. The exposition of the museum is composed of more than

2000 clam-shells found in different oceans, seas and lakes; a special stand was designed for examples whose age is about 2 000 000 years. Starfish, sea-urchins and turtles are also demonstrated in the museum.

*Address: 85 apt., 2a Ibrahim Mammedov str.*

### **Azerbaijani Fauna Museum**

The museum exhibits examples of animals and birds living in mountains of the Great and Lower Caucasus, as well as fish of the Caspian Sea.

*Address: 29 Matbuat ave. (Hunter House).*

### **Mardakan Arboretum**

The Arboretum is situated in the north-eastern part of Absheron peninsula in Mardakan settlement in 40 kilometres to Baku. Famous oil-industry worker and Patron of art Mukhtarov established it at the end of XIX century. The Arboretum was promoting acclimatization of new species of plants in Azerbaijan. The Arboretum is famous for its valuable and rare plants, including aromatic and herbs. The Arboretum is a wonderful resting place.

*Address: 89 Yesenin str., Mardakan settlement.*

### **Heydar Aliyev Foundation**

Heydar Aliyev's Fund is established in May, 2004 and is involved into social, humanitarian and cultural life of Azerbaijan. It supports needy people, sponsors development projects in science, education, culture, ecology and sport. Fund is aiming at fostering new generations in the spirit of independence and patriotism, learning Heydar Aliyev's legacy and using it in the benefit of our future.



Work and life of our national leader Heydar Aliyev has been widely represented in the Fund. In many halls of the Fund you can come across books, documents and photo expositions telling you about his great life. Fund is situated in one of the beautiful buildings of the city and is constantly visited by foreign countries' officials.

Fund is organizing social support projects for refugees, orphans, children from needy families and children suffering from bad diseases. Several projects such as «Development of children homes and boarding schools», «Support for diabetic children», «In the name of life without thalassemia» are run by the fund. They are aiming at making world better place to live for children with congenital diseases, providing lifetime coverage for needed medication and supporting prophylaxis measures.

Fund has broad activity, besides humanitarian projects it is also engaged into projects to protect and populate historic legacy of Azeri nation. Jomard Gassab's mausoleum has been restored; Javad Khan's mausoleum has been erected in Ganja. Also, famous Azerbaijan poet Absulla Shaig's museum is under reconstruction. Fund supports infrastructure development activities like water pipeline, high way construction and etc. Fund is also involved into information technology development. Thus, major information portal «Azerbaijan» has been created under its sponsorship. It is located under following address [www.azerbaijan.az](http://www.azerbaijan.az) and contains broad and detailed information about our country.

**Address: Niyazi str., 5, Baku, AZ1000, Republic of Azerbaijan**  
**«Guidebook Azerbaijan» (the fourth Edition), Baku, 2007, P. 86-95**



## Libraries

**National Library of Azerbaijan**

[www.anl.az](http://www.anl.az)

**Administrative Department of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
Presidential Library**

<http://www.preslib.az>

**“Heydar Aliyev’s Heritage” International On-line Library**

<http://www.aliyevheritage.org>

**Library of Azerbaijan Ministry of National Security**

[http://www.mns.gov.az/library\\_az.html](http://www.mns.gov.az/library_az.html)

**The Central Scientific library of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences**

[www.csl-az.com](http://www.csl-az.com)

**Library of Baku State University**

<http://www.bsu.az/lib/>

**Library of Western University**

<http://www.wu.edu.az/library.html>

**Library of Azerbaijan State Economic University**

<http://www.aseu.ab.az/cgi-bin/menu.pl?n=16>

**Library of Baku Slavyan University**

[http://www.bsu-az.org/library\\_az.html](http://www.bsu-az.org/library_az.html)

**Library of "Azerbaijan" University**

<http://www.au.edu.az>

**Library of Khazar University**

<http://www.khazar.org/sservices/index.shtml>

**Library of Udjar**

<http://ucarlibrary.iatp.az/ucarlibrary/>

**Azerbaijan Library Information Consortium (AzLIK)**

[www.azlic.aznet.org](http://www.azlic.aznet.org)

**Library of Center of Economic Reforms**

<http://www.cer.az/kitabxana.htm>

**Library of Qafqaz University**

<http://www.qafqaz.edu.az/index.php?z=31>

**Library of Medicine University**

<http://www.medlib.aznet.org/>

## XI. NATIONAL TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS OF AZERBAIJANI PEOPLE

Azerbaijan is a country holding its national traditions sacred. Traditions accompany Azerbaijanis from the moment of their birth: wooing, birth of children, feasts, harvesting and many others. Besides, many traditions of Azerbaijan are incarnated in hospitality, culture, folk beliefs, national clothes, national festivals and entertainments.

Azerbaijan traditions reflect the elements and cults of various religions which have existed on its territory. Today many national traditions can be observed in a dramatized form during national feasts or events such as meeting guests of honor.

### Art of dancing in Azerbaijan.

The Azerbaijanis have a rich national culture. Azerbaijani dances, like literature and music, are well-known the world over. Azerbaijani dances play a big part in the dance repertoires of the world's groups.



The history of dancing art of Azerbaijan traces its roots back to ancient times. The first dances were ceremonial and hunting ones. The dances "samani", "khydir ilyas", "kosa-kosa", "godu-godu" and others have been known from time immemorial.

"Samani" ritual is dedicated to arrival of spring and revival of nature. It was accompanied by canticles, games and dances.

"Khyndir Ilyas" was intended to summon rain. The word "Khydir" is an embodiment of water. This ritual was observed in early spring.

"Kosa - Kosa" is dedicated to coming of spring. The meaning of ritual game is the struggle of two forces - fierce winter and young spring.

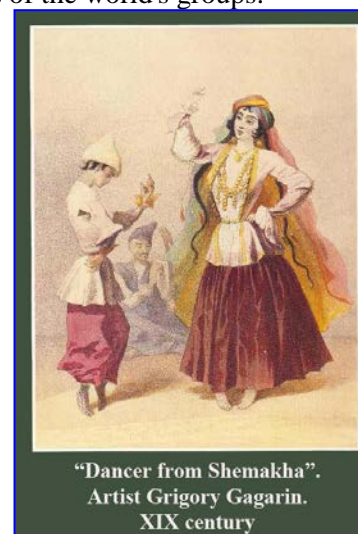
Another ritual is called "Godu" - it was intended for good harvest. It is a cult ceremony of summoning the sun.

These ritual dances have laid the foundation for various national dances which are subdivided into labor ("shepherds"), ceremonial (ritual, wedding), common, military, sport, round, game and others.

Female and male dances greatly differ from each other. The development of female dance has been conditioned by a costume: a long skirt defined the smoothness of legs movement, the entire focus of the dancer is on elaborate movements of hands, arms, shoulders, head, facial expression etc. Male dance is

determined by legs movement techniques. The dancer can easily stand on toes, promptly kneel etc.

Well known Azerbaijani dances include *Uzundere*, *Vagzali*, *Terekeme* (Nomadic Man), *Papacj*, *Innabi*, *Ceyrani*, *Mirzeyi*, *Cutcu* and after places *Shaki Zorkhanasi*, *Nakhchivan* or *Qazakh Yallisi*. The *Zorkhana* men's dance brightly symbolizes courage, bravery and youthful enthusiasm. The *Qazakh yallisi* propagates unanimity, unity and collectiveness. This dance is performed by a group of people and whoever doesn't dance properly is "fined" by the chieftain who makes him sing a song or dance another dance. *Vagzali* is played when the bride is seen off from her native house to the house of the bridegroom and her departure is reflected in this dance. *Gangi* (martial music) calls all people to unity, friendship and invincibility. *Uzundere* (literally "a long gauge") is a kind of a long dance, which traditionally used to be performed when the bride and bridegroom were on the road. The dancer performing the *Banovsha* (Violet) lives with his, feelings, showing how the violet grows from the ground, blooms and fades. *Ceyran bala*



is an old and delicate dance. This dance shows the gazelle's gracefulness and elegance. It is performed by men and women. *Mirzabeyi* is traditionally played at wedding parties and performed by men and women with handkerchiefs in their hands. *Innabi* is the name of a fruit. It is a girls' dance and performed by one or two girls. The dancers show a woman's airs and graces as well as coquetry. *Terekeme* is a dance of a nomadic people. Those who are dancing extend their arms and go forward with their heads



up. This dance is filled with the feelings of freedom and expansiveness. Both men and women perform it. Other dances include *Nazlanazlana* (with coquetry), *Nalbekilerle regs* (a dance with saucers) and *Neftchiler sultani* (sultan of oilmen) etc.



Traditionally the common part of Azerbaijani dances talks about friendship, invincibility and courage.

<http://www.advantour.com/azerbaijan/traditions/dances.html>.

«Azerbaijan. 100 Questions Answered», Baku, 2005, P. 92



## National folklore

If you really want to know what influences the way people think and act, delve into their folk epics, proverbs, anecdotes and traditions. It isn't always easy to penetrate the layers and layers of belief that have been carried down through generations for centuries, or, in the case of Azerbaijan, perhaps millennia. It is even more complicated when you're dealing with a foreign language.

The Azerbaijani people have a rich folklore heritage. Azerbaijani literature covers up to 100 genres and can be epic, lyrical or dramatic. Proverbs and sayings, folktales, legends, myths, anecdotes, toasts, curses, oaths, puzzles, tongue - twisters, bayati, elegies, lullabies and love songs and are all oral literature and play a big role in passing information over the generations.

A few specific genres of Azerbaijani literature are connected with people's daily and economic life. They mainly include holavarlar, counting songs and ploughman's songs which are connected with cattle breeding and farming. Historically the ashuqs, a kind of bard or people's musician created and immortalized the lyrical and epic genres of Azerbaijani folklore, known as qoshma, gerayli, mukhemmes, technis, divani, epos and legends. The art of the ashuqs probably emerged in the 16th century and was at its highest point in the 19th century due to professional ashuqs such as Ag Ashuq, Ashuq Ali and Dede Alesker.

The ancient patterns of artistic thinking and poetry of the Azerbaijani people have been preserved in the literary texts of Oguz, the ancestors of the Azerbaijani people, and they are *Oguz khagan*, *Kitabi-Dede Gorgud* and *Oguzname* as well as *Divani-luget et-turk*, by Mahmud Kashqari, a prominent Turkic scientist who lived in 11th century. *The Koroghlu* epic of the Azerbaijani people and its varied versions later became very popular amongst neighboring other Turkic peoples. It should be noted that the epic was written down in 1834 in Tabriz, Southern Azerbaijan, and later in 1842 was published in London (A. Chodzko). The adventures and improvisations of Koroghlu, the bandit minstrel of Northern Persia, contain examples of popular poetry of Persia and the songs of the people on the shores of the Caspian Sea. And this is the full version of the *Koroghlu* epic.

Although some facts about the patterns of Azerbaijani folklore were known in the Middle Ages, they were mainly collected and published in the 19th century. At that time The Caucasus newspaper was published in Tbilisi and devoted special sections to Azerbaijani folklore. Later, by the mid-20th century S.Mumtaz, H.Zeynalli, V.Khulufllu, A.Akhundov, A.Tahirbeyov, M.H.Tehmasib and H.Alizadeh did their best to collect Azerbaijani folklore.

Since 1994 the Folklore Cultural Centre, since 2003 the Institute of Folklore, an independent structure of the Academy of Sciences, has been engaged in collecting and systematizing Azerbaijani folklore. The Institute collects folklore in all the regions and publishes an anthology of Azerbaijani folklore. The Institute of Folklore also regularly publishes scientific publications such as *Research on Oral Azerbaijani Literature* and the *Dede Gorgud magazine*.

### *Children's folklore*

As in every society, there are many examples of oral folklore for children - obviously many created by adults for children and many that children themselves invent spontaneously in response to a situation. We have included some of the most favourite examples which have been carried down for many generations that continue to intrigue and inspire children (and adults) today, just as they did in the past.

*Jirtan* is one of the most popular and beloved fairy tales in Azerbaijan. *Jirtan*, meaning "tiny" in Azerbaijani, is about a child, much smaller than other children his age, who finds strength in being intelligent. Clearly, the div in the story, a hairy, scary monster who loves to eat children, embodies the gigantic forces of evil. By creating a hero out of *Jirtan*, the story challenges children, though physically small and weak, not to be afraid to outwit forces much larger than they are.

*Jirtan* closely resembles the German fairy tale of Hansel and Gretel, in which a brother and sister, who lose their way in the forest, finally outsmart and escape an evil witch who intends to, eat them. As these stories are passed down generation after generation by word of mouth, there may be many other variations to this fairy tale.

### *Proverbs - "Father's words"*

In the Azerbaijani language, the translation of "proverb" is father's words - *atarlar sozu*. For many generations, father's words have been valued as an extremely rich inheritance of the collective thought and

experience of the community. These short sayings encapsulate the wisdom of the past, making it available to both present and future generations. There are thousand of Azerbaijani proverbs. Who knows how old some of them might be - centuries, possibly even millennia. Azerbaijanis are extremely fond of spicing up their conversation with these pithy sayings to convince others of the "rightness" of their opinions and actions.

Proverbs are traditional answers to recurring ethical problems - meanness, deceit, treason, cunning, unreliability, jealousy, etc. They provide an argument for a course of action which conforms to the expectations of society. Like proverbs and expressions found all over the world, Azerbaijani proverbs cover a broad range of topics. In fact, if you look hard enough, you can probably find a saying to prove any point of view, even ideas that contradict one another.

**«Azerbaijan. 100 Questions Answered», Baku, 2005, P. 121-122**

## Novruz Bayram

Some of the myths, stories, customs and traditions, plays and spectacles connected with the Novruz Holiday - a new month, new year and the cherished first day of spring – have come down to us from the most ancient of days. These rituals and beliefs, whether traditional or scientific, have roots in the prehistoric past.



Even then, people waited impatiently for, and cheerfully greeted, the arrival of spring, warm weather and nature's renewal. The occasion was celebrated with animal sacrifices, singing, dancing and general festivity. Thus the celebrations originated in the ancients' scientific and mythical ideas about death and the revival of life.

The Sumerians, who created one of the earliest forms of human civilization, developed a striking myth about the awakening of the earth, the recovery of nature and the beginning of the sowing season. From the myth, it is clear that they performed annual ceremonies on the “death” (hibernation) of Dumuzi, the god of the plant kingdom, at the end of autumn and his revival in spring.

The Sumerians connected the “death and revival” of Dumuzi with sowing and husbandry; Dumuzi died – seeds were planted (buried), there was mourning on this occasion and the seeds were watered with tears; in spring he returned to life – seeds sprouted, nature revived, new life and a new day began.

The ancient Egyptians also had annual celebrations for the revival and return to life of the dead Osiris, the god of the plant kingdom, according to the husbandry calendar. Mythologies connecting changes in nature with various of their gods were

widespread among the ancient Babylonians and other Eastern nations.

### Zoroaster

The great Zoroaster created his own religion, with community of fire worshippers; among the seven important holidays devoted to Ahura Mazda, the spring holiday at the vernal equinox was particularly celebrated for the awakening and renewal of nature. This holiday, stretching back to times immemorial, focused on “Asha”, the immortal symbol of light and truth in the “Avesta” and on Fire, the symbol of life.

On the last day of the year, “Asha” finally defeats the forces of Evil. Zoroastrians also celebrated on Novruz, the New Day, the return of the “noon spirit”, who had walked the underworld during winter in order to warm the roots of plants and their sources. Thereafter, prayers were said every day at noon for the spirit who brought warmth and light back to the world.

Some connected the Novruz holiday with the names of certain historical and legendary figures. Although these legends have no historical basis, their existence speaks of the holiday's importance in people's lives and behaviour. The celebration was passed down the generations, to the day that Imam Hazrat Ali Ibn Abu Talib claimed the caliphate throne, in 656. This indicates Novruz' unique significance as one of the fire worshippers' most cherished rituals prior to the adoption of Islam by the inhabitants of Iran, Azerbaijan and other places.



Thus Novruz, long celebrated by people living on the territory of Azerbaijan, was also accepted by succeeding religions and, in some cases, even valued as a religious holiday. Prominent Muslims of the Middle Ages referred to Novruz not for its religious status, but as a secular holiday of truly national, humane character and of benevolent, noble purpose. They declared it “a fine tradition transferred from generation to generation”.

### Omar Khayyam

The great XI century poet and philosopher Omar Khayyam wrote a treatise entitled “Novruznameh”, declaring it to be a unique public celebration. He narrated different legends associated with Novruz and their origins.



He included the traditions and customs commonly observed on the holiday. He noted that Novruz was a genuine secular holiday based on the awakening of nature and the beginning of agricultural labour.

The famous XI century Seljuk vizier Nizamulmulk, in his work “Siyasatnameh” (Political science) gave interesting information about the special place and weight of Novruz in people’s spiritual lives and confirmed the important role it played in public administration.



Nizamulmulk makes it clear that some days prior to the beginning of the holiday; heralds went round the cities, settlements, markets announcing the opening of the palace gates to the people. On the day of celebration, the people gathered in the palace and everyone lodged their complaints with the governor. Then the Padishah would descend from the throne and, kneeling before a priest, state: “Taking no account of my position, consider the complaint of this person about me impartially and pronounce sentence”. After this a court was set up and the complaint was considered. Its purpose was to help complainants, not to apply punishments, and nobody was off ended. Apparently, in ancient times even the severest governors were compelled to lighten their

oppression on the day before the Novruz holiday.

Nizami Ganjavi, in his XII century work “Iskander-nameh”, (about Alexander the Great.) said that Azerbaijanis’ celebrated Novruz as a genuine national holiday even before Christ. He described the origins of Novruz and praised it in a literary form common to Azerbaijan poetry, ie. in lyrical verse (ghazals, odes, couplets), called bahariyya (about spring).

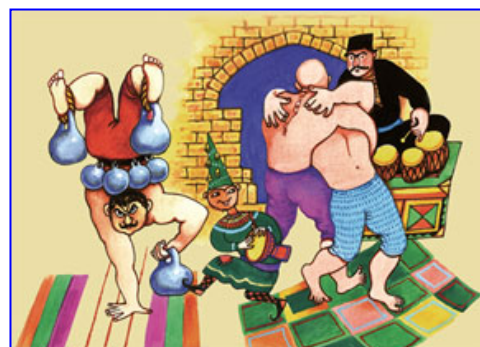
The German traveler, Adam O’Leary, who visited Shamakhi in 1637, had much to say about the arrival of Novruz. The traveler, a participant in the ceremonies, wrote: “the Astrologer often approached the table, observing the Sun by his own method, looking at the clock; thus he was waiting for the instant when the Sun would reach the point of equinox. As soon as the moment arrived, he declaimed: A New Year has come, a New Year has begun! A gun salute was immediately fired, pipers played on the city fortress walls and towers, and drumming began. This was the start of great folk festivities ...”

### Keeping the flame alive

Novruz differs from other holidays in its historical roots, essence and culture. Over the millennia, the Novruz holiday, with its ceremonies, customs and traditions, acts of kindness, oral folk tales, games and entertainments, has inspired the works of all ozans (or ashugs – Caucasian folk rhymers and minstrels) and poets, singers and performers, scientists and thinkers: from Dede Gorgud to Fizuli, Sabir, Samed Vurgun and Shahriyar. Months, years and centuries replace each other, family roots spread, new generations are created, nations change, but our people, in spite of all bans, obstacles and fears, have treasured the Novruz holiday, keeping it alive as a sacred festival and cherishing its traditions.

Our ancestors, who had previously signalled the arrival of Novruz with fireworks, adapted to technological progress by firing gunshot salutes at the turn of a new year. Consequently, the “Novruz Salute” is summoned at “Year End”.

According to a popular belief still current among Azerbaijanis, the Novruz Salute brings in a new year under the sign of a certain animal. The character of the New Year is defined according to the characteristics of the animal. Scientists link this belief to the Mongolian and Turkic moon-sun calendars; thus, both Mongols and Turks grouped time into 12 year cycles, every year being named after a certain animal (rat, bull, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, cock (hen), dog or pig).



### I will grow you every year

The growing of semeni - green sprouting wheat - is the most sacred Novruz ceremony as the herald of spring. Sprouting semeni symbolises sowing and a rich harvest, it represents grain, bread, increase and abundance.

Grain and abundance is a pledge of life, existence, the most vital material necessity for life. People have always grown semeni from wheat, barley, peas, lentils or other grains in copper dishes; they have always revered it and rejoiced at its sprouting.

*Semeni, sprout well and even  
Every spring  
Remember me*

This symbolism was also accepted by Zoroaster, and it came to be associated with his name. According to Zoroaster's laws, people's happiness lay in husbandry, and everyone was summoned to a settled life, to land cultivation, to fair labour. The "Avesta" said: "Whoever cultivates is engaged in sacred labour". Concern for the



earth, worship of the earth, sowing the earth and transforming it into a mother were the main requirements of the "Avesta". In this ancient text the earth, addressing humanity, says: "O, man if you grasp me with two hands and cultivate me properly, then I will tirelessly create benefits for you, give you abundance and rich harvests. If you behave otherwise, if you do not labour on the earth, you will join the beggars and you will hang your head before the doors of strangers.

- What is the most important thing in the world?
- Sowing the earth with good, healthy seeds.

Observance of this law is equivalent to ten thousand prayers and to one hundred sacrificial animals".

The Greek philosopher, writer and historian Plutarch (approximately 46-127AD) noticed that in ancient Azerbaijan (called Media) the regard for grain as a sacred plant was widespread. This tradition was realised at the beginning of every year (in spring). It is very interesting that this has survived to our time in the practice of growing semeni.

*Semeni, please, protect me,  
I will grow you every year!*

Our ancestors, singing the gentle entreaty "Semeni, please, protect me ..." asked semeni for protection, for prosperity. They promised: "I will grow you every year".

### **The first heralds of spring**

One ancient legend relates how the first announcement of Novruz was delivered by a gentle snowdrop, considered to be the most graceful of flowers. Warmed by the breath of the earth, it lifts its head from under the snow and in gentle voice joyfully announces: "Spring has come! Spring has come!" The violet with inclined head, the watermint and narcissus, as well as the snowdrop, impart the good news to all. Children and youth welcome a new day –"Violet Day" - when everybody goes to the foot of a fragrant hill, valley, southern slope or spring and collects wild flowers with great enthusiasm. Girls and brides decorate their hair and their clothes with violets; they spin wreaths from multi-coloured flowers which exude a magical aroma. Collecting bouquets of violets, they distribute them to their mothers and sisters with the words "they are spring's first-born", please, betrothed girls, make merry and sing songs:

*I am violet with an inclined head,  
I am violet with a broken heart,  
I look out across the snow,  
You, who have tasted troubles,  
I breathe out a spring aroma,  
I am fragrant as snow-white.*



...Birds feeling the warm spring breeze return to their native land. Trees and roofs are bedecked with bird's nests. Birdsong, trills, the hoopoe's chirp, swallows; storks and titmice are heard from roofs and porches ...

Cherished days of the year ...

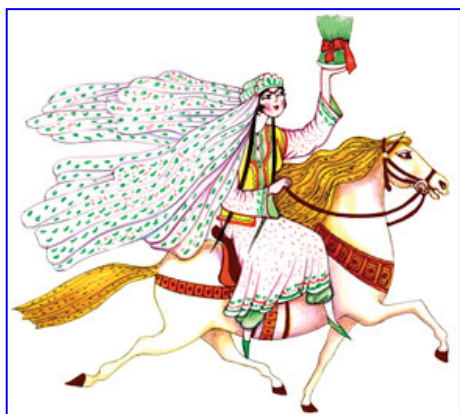
The arrival of spring brings in the favourite days of the year. These are days cherished for people's folk celebrations. Our people prepare to meet these days with both pleasure and inspiration:

*Novruz is coming, spring is coming,  
Songs and fun are on their way,  
May flowers blossom in the gardens,  
May nightingales sing there too!*

According to custom, our ancestors planted a tree for each member of the family during Novruz; they grew flowers and laid out orchards. In mountain and foothill areas the whole month of April was known as the month of green light.

### Save the trees

A widespread popular belief held that 'bailing out' trees encouraged the production of fruit. As soon as the Novruz salute was fired people went to their fruit trees. One way to protect trees was for a man to carry an axe or a chopper as if he was going to cut down a tree. At this point an elder would approach him and ask: 'Tell me, what you are going to do, why are you going to cut the tree down?' – 'It doesn't produce fruit' - was the answer.



Then the elder would advise: 'Do not chop this tree, I will stand bail for it, it will bear a lot of fruit this year.' In this way, all the fruit trees which regularly produced no fruit were frightened and were put on bail. Then a boy or a girl who was considered lucky poured sweets and fried wheat over the roots, watering them with sweet water. The whole family rejoiced, held a party and blessed the tree: 'May your fruit increase, may your fruit be sweet.' After that, a fire was kindled in the garden so that the wind carried its smoke towards the fruit trees. It was said that if the trees were not enveloped in smoke, the fruit would be rotten and empty inside.

As mentioned above, Zoroaster advocated husbandry and cultivation in the "Avesta", writing of the beauty of vegetation and recognising it as the source of life. The book advises everyone to plant and grow at least three trees during public celebrations, weddings and holidays.

The great Dede Gorgud pronounced blessings such as "May your great shady tree be not cut"; he blessed men of courage and his compatriots and considered the "Cutting of a great shady tree" as the worst offence, as a sign of enmity.

### Spring cleaning

Novruz is a triumph of cleanliness and health. In order to greet these favourite days properly, good works are done throughout the country, improvements are made to villages, city streets and courtyards, roads are cleaned and houses are repaired. Accommodation is carefully cleaned and tidied. Everything is put in order, house walls are whitewashed. Everywhere is radiant with cleanliness. People call it "house cleaning".

Girls and brides clean their carpets and rugs, take them out into the open air, hang them on lines and fences, beat the dust out of them, leave them to air in the sun, with the wish that friends may rejoice in their prosperity and foes may be afflicted.

Many rites and ceremonies are fulfilled on sacred Novruz eve. Eavesdropping at doors, promenading in the courtyards, putting caps outside the doors (to be filled with goodies – ed.) and lowering shawls down flues were ancient rites which have survived until now. The great poet Shahriyar praised these rites as follows:

*It was a holiday, the night bird sang,  
The bride was knitting her groom's socks,  
Everywhere shawls were lowered down the flues,*



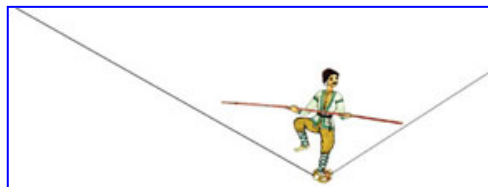
*How beautiful is the ceremony,  
To treat the groom with festive sweets.*

The householder took a shawl and wrapped into it a red egg, fried peas and wheat, nuts, filbert, raisin, oleaster, almonds, pistachios, dried apricots, dried fruit and a lot more besides; the shawl was lowered down a neighbour's flue. Sometimes the shawls became too heavy. As grandmothers, mothers and brides included a pair of socks with pompons, fragrant soap, a towel or something else. While treating neighbours and relatives in this way they always wished them abundance and prosperity.

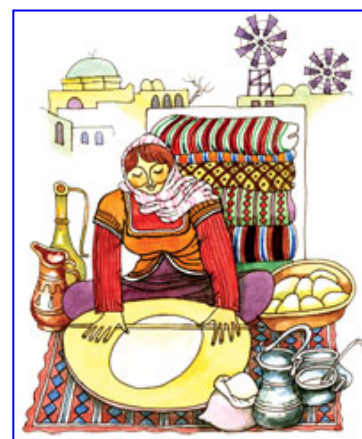
“Eavesdropping at doors» was basically a rite of the youth, who made wishes and tried to learn their destiny. The purpose of this rite was to hear words of goodwill. If the eavesdropper heard a pleasant word their wish would come true. Consequently on that evening everybody tried to talk about pleasant things, not to use bad words at all. There is a saying that “Who laughs at Novruz will laugh the whole year”. The blessings and wishes of grandmothers and grandfathers are heard from houses.

### **Be Sweet**

On Novruz eve it is forbidden to be gloomy, to behave badly, to drink wine or to use bad language. It is said that “Allah will not bless those who speak rudely on such a joyful day”. As the actions, wishes, thoughts, behaviour of all are refreshed, spirits are elevated on that day. For betrothed girls, the eve of Novruz means presents; they are sent decorated trays filled with various sweets. Colourfully dressed women, girls and brides carry the trays covered with fringed and flowered shawls. They are followed by the eyes of the neighbourhood ... The custom of sending trays continues still. With the approach of twilight the fireworks begin; fires are kindled in the squares and courtyards. Everyone gathers around festive tables adorned with every possible pastry delicacy: gogals (savory rolls of thin layers of pastry), pakhlava (baklava – a rich sweetmeat consisting of thin layers of pastry, filled with nuts and honey), shekerburah (patterned pastry, with nut stuffing), crumbly cookies, badamburah (a sweetmeat of puff pastry with an almond stuffing), bamiya (a pastry delicacy), fasali (puff rolls), halvah (made from sesame paste) with nuts and



filbert, gurabiyah (almond cookies). You also will find on the tables fragrant sherbet, trays of different sweets, dried fruits and delicacies, and coloured eggs. Pan lids are raised to reveal steaming plov (pilaff), relatives and neighbours are treated. It is difficult to imagine a festive table



without dishes of fish, a symbol of pleasure and fun. Fish bring abundance, said our ancestors. People in need are helped, food is sent round to their homes.

The centrepiece of every family's table is semeni. Words of praise are recited and ancient songs sung in honour of fresh green semeni:

*Flowers have blossomed, spring has come,  
Birdsong is heard,  
Snow-white has turned to green  
All is revived,  
Mountains are covered with flowers,  
Gardens are flower strewn,  
White and red,  
How beautiful is the spring!*

Neighbours and relatives send semeni to each other. On the table it is surrounded by candles: one for every member of the family. Candles are lit at the moment the old year ends and the new one begins. Researchers connect this to the sun, which the ancients perceived as heavenly fire; with fire on the earth being its representative. With the arrival of the New Year, everyone sits down at the festive table. Novruz is a holiday of poetry, songs and love for humanity. These well-loved days are dressed in new attire. The elderly smarten up, dress up. Children, young men, girls and brides also put on bright, holiday dress. Single girls and boys search for their beaux and belles and exchange vows of love.

## A new start

At Novruz generosity, mercy and kindness triumph. People forgive insults, halt reproaches, try to reconcile quarrellers, people abandon mourning. It is forbidden to swear, tell lies or gossip. Everybody visits each other to avoid trouble or enmity. People become more affable and careful. It is customary for people to remember their departed dear ones in their prayers.

Parents who wish their own children to be fresh and healthy, name babies born at this time in honour of the ancient, national holiday; with such beautiful names as Novruz, Bayram (Holiday) or Bahar (Spring).



Everyone congratulates each other, wishing many happy returns and sending folk greetings – ‘May your life have the aroma of spring. We wish you good, bright mornings’.

At daybreak on the first morning of spring everybody would go to the river and wash thoroughly, leaving all hardship and fear in the water. Girls and brides, young guys, elders, made wishes and jumped over water, “dumping heaviness”, easing the burdens of life.

In the course of the celebrations, brave men show their courage, combatants tussle, try their strength, horsemen jump onto their horses and arrange races, they compete in shooting arrows. Wrestlers and strongmen display their skills.

Swings hung from high plane trees and majestic oaks; lines were drawn for a game called “diradoymah” in open areas. Children made “horses” out of reeds for themselves and skip backwards and forwards, calling to the sun: “Sun, come to our side, shade, go to the mountains, Sun, come to our side, shade, go to mountains”.

“Chiling-agach”, “Mara-mara”, “Enzeli”, “Papagaldigach” were favourite children’s games. Rope-walkers gave thrilling performances. Crossed poles were erected in open areas and connected by a tightly stretched rope. The rope-walker held a long pole in his hands and danced on the rope accompanied by a zurna (oriental wind instrument) and kettledrum, showing his acrobatic prowess. His assistant, called “kechepapag” (‘holder of the woolly hat’), entertained people below, clowning around and making them laugh.

## The egg - symbol of life

From the very dawning of the Novruz holiday, eggs have been dyed red and egg cracking competitions held. This custom still exists and is another children’s favourite; it has been turned into an amusing ditty:

*Stoned egg,  
Stone, stone ...  
Head egg,  
Head, head ...  
Uncle Gadzhi  
Was angry  
Broke a whole basket of eggs  
Stoned egg,  
Stone, stone ...*

Eggs were specially selected to be banged together, alternately by the blunt and sharp ends. 20-25 eggs were put in line; one was taken from one end, another from the other end and they were banged together.

Whoever broke the most eggs collected the broken ones and celebrated as the winner. The game was won by cunning and skill: “You hold, I’ll strike”, “I’ll have this one, you take another”, “Let’s change eggs, then we will play”, “Let’s taste it”, “No, your eggs are warty” etc.

In most cases the eggs of a speckled chicken won:

*My chicken was white,  
My chicken was fat,  
May you burn, who stole the chicken,*

*May you blaze, who stole the chicken.*

... From time immemorial the egg has been considered a symbol of life and the creation of life by many nations: there is also the belief that, as in life, both good and evil can hatch from an egg.

Experts on the Middle Ages thought that egg embodied the four elements, symbolic of the material world: the shell symbolised the earth, the lining symbolised air, the white represented water and the yolk was flame. This symbolism explains why the egg came to be used in these and other ceremonies in many countries.

- But why are the eggs dyed?

Different nations reply to this question according to their religions, beliefs and ways of life. Ancient Azerbaijanis connected the red colouring of eggs with the worship of fire. Red symbolises fire, the sun and flame.



### Spring shapes the year

The first four days of spring were highly significant and were connected to the seasons. The first day was called yazdan (spring), the second was called yaydan (summer), the third day was called payizdan (autumn), the fourth day was called qishdan (winter). According to some beliefs, the weather during these four days determined how these four seasons would be. If the first day was soft and sunny, it meant that spring weather would be favourable.



If the second day was wet and windy summer would also be rainy. If there was rain and high wind on the third and fourth days, people would make dolls and promenade, singing songs to summon the sun. However, the ancients believed that cloudy, rainy weather during the first days of spring was a reason for joy. It was not rain that poured from the clouds, but wellbeing and abundance; let it pour - it meant that Novruz had not come with empty hands. People went to the sowing fields, raised their hands to the sky and declared "Thanks to God, thanks to God, God grant that this year is fertile".

*Let high water flow on the roads  
On roads, on inflows  
Let pour it on the fields,  
On the fields and the meadows.*

That is why our ancestors said knowingly ... "The farmer's barn is filled by spring rain". And there is one more saying:

"Spring defines the luck of a year"

**Babayev Tofiq. "Visions of Azerbaijan". March-April, 2010. P. 64-71.**



## The Azerbaijani wedding

The wedding is one of the most beautiful and richest embodiments of the spiritual values of Azerbaijan.



Here the 'wedding' actually means the last stage in the modern process of marriage, the final celebration with a dinner-dance. Our ancestors, however, understood 'wedding' to mean any 'festivity', a time for eating, drinking, playing and dancing. The festive meaning of wedding is illustrated in our oldest surviving literature, in the epic 'The Book of Dede Korkut'. There is said in the epos: "Once a year, Bayandur, the khan of the khans organized a wedding (toy-duyun) and invited the Oghuz beys too".

In Azerbaijan, the wedding consisted of several stages: approval of the bride (matchmaking), proposing marriage, engagement (betrothal) and a wedding party.

### Approval of the bride

In the approval of a bride, along with her beauty, stature, innocence, skilful housekeeping, efficiency, intellect, courtesy and other qualities, special consideration was also given to the personality of her mother. There is a popular proverb: "look at the edge when you buy coarse calico, look at the mother when you marry a daughter".

In former times, the mother, aunts or sisters of a young man of marriageable age were on the lookout for a suitable girl at weddings, funerals, holidays, street festivities and springs (sources of water – ed.). In some cases, the mother or sister went to the prospective bride's home. In this case, the girl would feign ignorance of their mission and serve tea as for any guest.

In former times, the girl was not asked for her opinion about a possible marriage. Later, when girls were asked for their opinion they would answer, "my parents know". In noble families, the girls usually were asked and would be listened to. In noble circles, as well as the customs of 'seeing' and 'approving a bride', there would be 'seeing a groom', 'approving a groom' and a testing ceremony. In 'The Book of Dede Korkut', the ruler of Trabzon, before wedding his daughter Seljan to Ganturali, put him to the test. The testing ceremony was also an opportunity to 'see the groom'. When Ganturali went into the square to fight with wild animals, Seljan watched him from the summerhouse and fell in love with him.

The stage of proposing marriage that followed the 'approval of the girl' was a very important event in the life of an Azerbaijani family.

### Elchi - the envoy

Seeking the advice of relatives and elders before proposing marriage has long been the custom. A matchmaker (elchi-envoy) exercised special authority over people. The person sent to propose marriage had to be talented and a good communicator. The matchmaker was expected to proceed directly to the essence, using choice words to substantiate their own thoughts.

It was usual for three or four men, and one or two women, to propose the marriage. These matchmakers were usually a grandfather, the father and uncles of the groom. The groom's mother and aunts made up the women's contingent.

According to custom and tradition, the girl's family received matchmakers respectfully, as they were considered envoys from Allah. Even if they did not consent to the marriage, the bride's family had to respect the matchmakers, receiving and seeing them off with dignity.

Notwithstanding the fact that a *sufra* would be laid out (a tablecloth usually set on the floor or on a low table for a meal) for the visitors, the groom's matchmakers did not reach out for food until they received a positive answer. Only after the bride's consent was given, would the matchmakers put sugar into their tea, saying, "Allah blesses them" (Allah mubarek elesin) and sweeten their mouths. Then a pilaf was brought in. The mother of the groom called the fiancée into the room where the women were sitting and put an engagement ring

onto her finger for confidence, covering her head with a scarf. In some regions of Azerbaijan, this ceremony was called the ‘affirmation’.

The news of the proposal was met with joy by relatives, friends and neighbors of the girl, her parents were congratulated. Since the girl’s “consent” had been given, she and the young man were considered to be “betrothed”.

When the matchmakers were given a negative answer, it was done in an inoffensive manner so that the families would not become enemies. This tradition is described in the great Azerbaijani poet, Fuzuli’s ‘Leyli and Mejnun’. Leyli’s father turns down Mejnun’s father in a gentle manner, with respect for his pride and dignity. Leyli’s father displays humanity for Mejnun’s father and does not dash his hopes. He pledges with the words: “Take measures to cure your son” and “when he is healthy they will marry”.

We know from the romantic epics that a bride’s father would observe the rules of propriety towards matchmakers and, instead of rejecting them, would find another way - perhaps laying down difficult conditions for a groom.

### Proposing marriage

In most regions of Azerbaijan, the ceremony to propose marriage and the engagement ceremony have been mixed. As a ring and a shawl were usually taken to an engagement, this ceremony was also called ‘taking a ring and shawl’ in Baku, Tabriz, Lenkeran and other regions. In ‘The book of Dede Korkut’ the ceremony of engagement and proposing marriage (the ceremony of shirni ichmek – to drink sweet tea,) is called ‘a small wedding’. The epic says: “Yalinjig, the son of the liar, proposed marriage, celebrated a small wedding and fixed the date of the big wedding”.

On the engagement day ‘nishan khonchasi’ (engagement trays usually filled with sweets and presents) were taken by the groom’s family to the girl’s home. Depending on the family’s means, along with a ring and a headscarf, earrings, a bracelet, a necklace, a locket and other jewellery, 1 or 2 pieces of fabric to make clothes and various sweetmeats were also among the presents. Besides the mother and sisters of the prospective groom, his nearest relatives would also prepare khonchas (trays) and go to the girl’s home. The trays were not returned empty. The girl’s family returned a special khoncha called the ‘top of the sugar loaf’ (gand bashi) to the groom’s home on the same trays. Usually the top part of a sugar loaf was broken and put on the tray.

After the engagement, the couple was officially considered betrothed. From the day of betrothal, the fiancée had to half cover her face with a headscarf in the presence of the groom’s relatives and the groom had to avoid meeting the bride’s close relatives.

In order to let them get accustomed to each other after the engagement, the betrothed were allowed to see each other with the consent of both families. This custom, called ‘adakhlibazlig’ (a meeting of the betrothed pair) was nicely described in the musical comedy “Not This One, then That One” by the great composer, U. Hajibeyov. During the holidays at “Novruz”, “Ramadan” and the Moslem Feast of Sacrifice (commemorating Ibrahim/Ismayil - Abraham/Isaac – ed.), a groom’s family usually sent festive presents for the bride. In the Moslem Feast of Sacrifice, a ram with a silk scarf tied around its neck and henna-dye on its head was sent. According to custom, the groom’s family bought clothes for the betrothed girl while she was living in her father’s home.



### Wedding festivities

After the official engagement, the groom’s family began preparing for the big wedding. All kinds of clothes and jewellery were bought for the bride. The bride’s family also started to make dowry preparations. In rich families, the bride’s dowry would have been assembled throughout her life. Close to the wedding day, relatives and neighbours assembled to prepare the bride’s bedding and arrange the dowry.

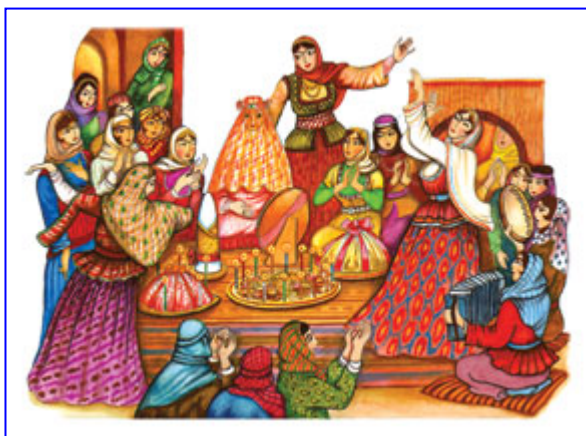
According to the folk custom, before the wedding party, the bride was a guest of relatives and friends in turn. At the end of the visit, she would be given blankets, mattresses, pillows, a nazbalish (a large, soft pillow), cushions, carpets, copper pans and other kitchenware. These were all added to her dowry.

The first wedding ceremony was held in the bride’s home. The groom’s family covered the expenses. Several rams with red cloths tied around their necks or with henna-dyed heads and various foodstuffs were provided.

One of the wedding traditions was called 'paltarkesdi' (a ritual ceremony to tailor and display dresses for the bride (an old Azerbaijani tradition). Throughout paltarkesdi day there was music and dancing in the groom's home. In the afternoon all the clothes were put into a chest, sweetmeats and food were put into baskets and everything was taken to the bride's home to musical accompaniment. The women stayed there playing and dancing, enjoying themselves. Then the groom's mother took the clothes from the chest, put them onto trays (khonchas) and led other women into the party, carrying the khonchas and dancing. One woman would show off the clothes on the trays to all who participated in the party, declaring: "Allah bless her! Who saw saw, let others see!" After showing the clothes brought for the bride they were returned onto the trays. All the women, starting with the groom's mother, put money onto the clothes. This was given to the one who had displayed them. A widow was usually chosen for this duty, to support her with the money collected. After putting the clothes into the chest, the groom's mother locked it and gave the key to the bride's mother.

### A sew-in

In the 1940's, the ethnographer, Rakhshanda Babayeva, described a 'paltarkesdi' party in her book, "Wedding customs of the city of Guba": "The groom's mother sent a message to the bride's home and warned them that they were coming next day for the paltarkesdi ceremony. As soon as the bride's mother got the message, she started preparations and invited some close women relatives. On the appointed day, the groom's mother arrived with around ten close relatives and neighbours. The visitors sat on cushions spread across the carpets and began talking. A large tablecloth was brought and laid in the centre of the room. Someone from the bride's family put the clothes chest into the middle and began to take the fabrics and lay them out on the tablecloth. Then a dress and a blouse belonging to the bride were brought and, using them as a guide some dresses were sized and cut from the lengths of fabric. After tailoring the clothes, everybody wished: "Allah bless them! May they have sons and daughters and grow old together". All the clothes and fabrics were placed into



the chest. Then the tablecloth was laid for a meal and a woman with an aftafa-leyen (aftafa - a jug with a long spout used for ablutions, leyen – basin) helped the women, starting with the groom's mother, to wash their hands". For guests invited to the paltarkesdi ceremony, a chicken pilaf, spiced with saffron, sabzigovurma (fried greens and meat), chighirtma (a dish cooked from lamb or chicken dressed with egg), aubergine dolma (a dish cooked from aubergines, tomatoes and sweet peppers filled with minced and spiced meat) and nar govurma (roast meat dressed with pomegranates) were cooked in rich families. Less well-off families served pilaf cooked in milk and dressed with raisins, dried persimmon, smoked omul or chub. Poorer families offered bozbash (stew with peas and some spices)

or dolma (vine leaves stuffed with minced lamb) and dovgha (a dish made from liquid yogurt and finely chopped herbs). After eating, the women drank tea with lemon or jam and left the party blessing the betrothed. After the 'paltarkesdi' stage the big wedding, the last stage of the wedding ceremonies began.

According to sources, in ancient times, Azerbaijani weddings lasted 40 days and 40 nights. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the big wedding in rich families lasted 7 days and 7 nights, sometimes 3 days, but usually 1 day, in average or poor families. 2-3 days before the wedding, a messenger was sent round the houses dispensing sweets and inviting people to the wedding.

A few days before the wedding, bread and yukha (bread baked with thinly rolled dough) were baked and stored in the groom's home. The day before the wedding close relatives and neighbours gathered in the groom's home to help. Animals were slaughtered and meat was stored. A few men chopped the meat, the women minced it for dolma and lule kebab (meat chopped, formed into a tube shape and roasted on spits). The offal of the animals killed was roasted and served out the helpers. After dinner, duties were assigned: erectors of the wedding tent, managers of the wedding, cooks, waiters, tea makers, distributors of tea, also people responsible for greeting guests, bringing musicians, delivering the bride and others.

### Music, sport.... and henna

A marquee for the wedding ceremony was erected in the groom's courtyard or other appropriate place. This was the 'toykhana' (wedding house). In all regions of Azerbaijan, the wedding began with the sound of the



gara zurna (an oriental wind instrument). As soon as the zurna players arrived at the toykhana, they walked to a high position and started to play music announcing the start of the wedding. The population of the village, hearing the sounds of the zurna from some distance, flowed towards the toykhana. Wedding guests wore new, clean clothes. A wedding was a celebration for the whole village.

If wedding ceremonies were the core of the customs and traditions of family life in Azerbaijan, then the decoration was the music. Rich families invited several music bands consisting of a khanende (a singer who usually sings mughams), some sazende (saz players) and ashugs (Caucasian folk poets and singers) to the wedding. Weddings in poorer families featured players of the zurna, balaban (wind instruments), naghara (an oriental drum) and gaval (a tambourine). Irrespective of social origin and financial status of the family, it was impossible to imagine a wedding in Garabagh without a khanende, or in Shirvan and other regions without ashugs.

When ashugs related the epics, the whole population of a village listened. Ashugs, or ozans, adorned Azerbaijani weddings even in ancient times. During all Oghuz (a Turkic tribe) weddings, the ozan sat in prime position. 'The Book of Dede Korkut' tells of Oghuz wedding ceremonies, mentioning the musical instruments zurna and naghara, as well as the folk dance 'yelletme'(yalli) (waving) and ashugs "who played a gopuz (an old Azerbaijani stringed instrument) and sang songs".

It is traditional to give presents to wedding messengers, musicians, singers, khanendes and ashugs. The folk epics tell us that ashugs lived by people's support. The master of ceremonies of the wedding was the 'toybeyi' (usually a man). His word was law; everybody had to obey him. The toybeyi managed the festivities with the aid of his assistants. In rural wedding ceremonies, various sport competitions, games and entertainments were organized. The young men demonstrated their skills in horse races. A silky head-dress was tied around the neck of the winning horse or his owner was given a shirt. Some competed at wrestling and others took part in tests of strength, or their shooting skills. In 'The Book of Dede Korkut':

"Mayar Goykun's ring was the target. Beyrak shot through the ring with a single arrow and broke it".

In former times, in some regions of Azerbaijan, the groom's and the bride's weddings were celebrated at the same time. The musicians at the bride's wedding were all women. The bride was adorned and sat at the head of the table. In the Gazakh region, two khonchas (trays) filled with fruits, charaz (nuts, fried peas and



dried fruits) and sweetmeats and 'a shakh – tree' (a dry branch decorated with fruits and sweets) were brought by the bridesmaids and placed before the bride. The female singers sang bayati (folk quatrains) and the girls danced.

One custom was the 'khinayakhdi' (all the girls and women dyed their hair and decorated their hands with henna). A few days before the wedding, the groom's family brought a ram tied with a red ribbon and food. As evening approached, the women gathered in the bride's home. The groom's mother, sisters, close female relatives and neighbours prepared a khoncha and went to the bride's house for the 'khinayakhdi' ceremony. Besides henna for the bride, two decorated candles, some sugar, tea, sweetmeats and fruit, there was a pair of shoes on the khoncha. Everybody in the party played and danced until midnight. After dinner, the girls dyed each other's hands and feet with henna, accompanied by song. This was the last wedding ceremony in the bride's home.

### **For her the dowry, for him the bathhouse**

It was followed by the elaborate procedure of seeing the bride off to the house of the bridegroom. On this day, preparations for the wedding meal began in the morning. In the bride's home, a list was made of the bride's dowry. Representatives of both families worked on the list. Alongside the akhund (an Islamic spiritual authority) and the mullah, were the local elders. First on the list was the Koran, then a prayer mat and a 'mohur' (a stone on which to rest the head while praying). One person from each family witnessed the dowry list. The signed list was submitted to the bride's father and he in turn gave it to his wife for safekeeping.

After listing the dowry, the registration of the marriage began. The marriage fee was entered on the certificate of marriage. According to shariah law, in case a man wanted to divorce his wife he had to pay her this fee. In most cases, in order to strengthen the marriage bond and to make divorce difficult, the fee indicated was

quite substantial. Apart from the groom and the bride, the marriage certificate was signed by witnesses, one person from each side, as well as by an akhund or a gazi (a confessor), and sealed. After the marriage registration, the bride's dowry was carried to the groom's home and the bride's room was decorated. That evening the groom, together with his attendants and peers went to the 'beylik hamami' (a bathhouse ceremony organized for the groom). A special 'bey khonchasi' (a tray filled with things for the groom) for the bathhouse ceremony was sent from the bride's home. It would include a silk shirt, skullcaps, socks, silk handkerchiefs and other presents. After the bathhouse ceremony, the groom put on the silk shirt and socks, a skullcap and put one of the handkerchiefs into his pocket. The other presents were given to his attendants. The custom of the bride's family presenting a silk shirt to the groom was an ancient one in Azerbaijan. 'The Book of Dede Korkut': "Beyrek received a red marriage kaftan from the bride. He put the kaftan on."

When the groom returned from the bathhouse ceremony, a meal was served. After the dinner, the young people went to fetch the bride. They lit torches and marched towards the bride's house accompanied by music. They fired guns and let off firecrackers, cheering on the way. The adorning of the bride was finished by this time. A brother or a cousin of the groom was invited inside to tie the bride's waist. He tied a red silk sash or ribbon around the bride's waist, over the veil, pronouncing the following:

*You are my mother, you are my sister,  
You are perfect happiness!  
We are waiting for seven sons  
And a girl with your beauty!*

Then the bride's father took her arm and walked her three times around the lamp. When the bride was leaving the room, she had to break a glass or a ceramic plate in order not to take misfortune to her husband's home. She was led under the holy "Koran" at the doorway. Her father, or one of uncles, stopped her at the threshold. Someone from the groom's family had to give the certificate of marriage to the bride's mother for safekeeping.

### **The bridal procession**

In cities, the bride was taken away by phaeton. The bride's 'yenga' (a woman accompanying the bride to the house of the groom) who sat in the phaeton usually carried a parcel filled with bread and sweets. A yenga of the groom usually held a lit lamp in her hand. A boy who sat next to the phaeton driver held 'a fate mirror' of the bride in his hand. The phaeton carrying the bride had to move slowly to allow followers on foot to keep pace with it. Young people carrying torches escorted the bride's procession. In rural areas, the bride was taken by a horse-drawn vehicle or on horseback. The bride's horse was covered with a red cloth. In low-lying lands, a Bactrian camel carried the bride. The camel was decorated and carried a palanquin whose low borders were lined with bells. The elder brother (or father, or uncle) of the groom rode at the head of the procession. The young men or boys repeatedly stopped the procession, barring the way with a rope. The groom's family would clear the way by giving them gifts or money. Thus the bridal procession eventually reached the groom's home.



The bride was taken down from the phaeton or horse and approached the home. The groom's mother or sister waited for her at the threshold and scattered sweets, candies and coins over her head. The children picked these up. In most cases a ram was sacrificed for her. In some regions, when the bride was approaching the door of the house, tongs, a spit, a horseshoe or other things made of iron were dropped at her feet - to make her place in her husband's home as strong as iron. The bride was preceded into the house by her lamp, fate mirror and parcel of bread.

When she entered the room, some honey, sherbet, flour or dough was brought to her on a tray. The bride had to dip her finger into it and rub it onto the upper doorframe. Then she had to go under the frame and, when she entered the room, she had to trample and break a china or ceramic plate with her foot.

According to custom, when the bride entered her room, her mother-in-law and father-in-law had to come and promise her a valued present called a 'dizdayaghi' (literally – diz – knee, dayaq – support; in rural areas this present consisted of piece of land or a milch cow (or other animal), in cities it would be jewellery or another expensive gift) and let her take a seat. When the bride sat down, a 3-4 year-old-boy was placed on her lap and a wish was made for her to have boys and girls. The bride had to put a skullcap on the boy's head. Then the girls and women gathered around the bride and started the entertainment: playing, dancing and singing.

The groom had not sat in the wedding marquee during the first days of the wedding. On the final evening, after the bride's arrival, the groom was carried into the marquee accompanied by music, and sat in the specially arranged place with his attendants. The tray full of fruit, charaz (nuts, fried peas and dried fruits) and sweetmeats was laid in front of him.

At the end of the wedding, there was acclamation of the groom. The ashug or khanende praised the groom and invited his parents, friends and acquaintances to give him presents. Then his mother, sisters and brothers and other relatives gathered around him dancing and singing. Later they congratulated him and left. His attendants accompanied him from the tent to the "gardak" (literally a curtain hung before the nuptial bed).

### **Her new family**

Three days later there was the ceremony of "uzechikhti" (the appearance of the bride before her husband's parents after the wedding). In most places, this ceremony was called "uchgun" (three days). During "uchgun" the groom's mother cooked a meal and invited close relatives and neighbours for "gelin gordu" (literally – to meet the bride). With the guests assembled, the mother-in-law called the bride. The visitors gave her presents. The ceremony of "uzechikhti" brought the bride into the life of her new family; she became an equal member.

The wedding ceremony that founded the Azerbaijani family has been improved and enriched through the years and centuries and has preserved its importance and splendor to our times

**Rajabli Gazanfar. "Visions of Azerbaijan". July-August, 2010. P. 64-70**



### Fortune telling in Azerbaijan

There are a lot of legends and fortunetelling related to "Ахыр чершенбе ашамы" ("Last Tuesday") that precedes Novruz (March 20-21). Many believe that fortunetelling before the dusk at this day is exact and might predict the future. Unmarried girls do not miss an opportunity to find out on this day when and who they will marry.

Fortunetelling is carried out in the evening and a number of procedures are taken. One of them aimed to make unmarried girls happy is to **put 'black' coins in the jug of water** (black coins symbolize bad luck) at daytime and pour the water with the coins out to a street. Another tradition is "гулаг фалы" (gulag faly "listening fortunetelling"), though not all remember now that one has to go outside grasping a key in her hand. The most important is the first word you will catch and how you will be able to interpret it. The key in the hand is key to that will open you a way for your wish to come true and the first word that you will hear will help to understand whether that wish will be realized or not.

Another popular belief: if the girl will **eat an apple a night before Novruz and put 10 seeds** under the pillow she will see her betrothed in her dream. The other way to see your future spouse in the dream is to eat a salty scone and not to drink water before sleep. According to beliefs future spouse will give his fiancée to drink.

**Engagement ring** is hanged with a thread and dropped into the glass of water three times. The ring starts to twist and touch glass walls. The number of times the glass will clang is the age when the girl will get married.

Take **white egg and two pencils**: black and red. Make your wish and put the egg into a clean place (better use a window sill and open a window leaf), with 2 pencils on each side. In the morning one could see lines in the egg – if the lines are red then your wish will come true.

To find out whether young marrieds will be happy take **two needles**, wind a cotton bud into dull end of the needles. Put those needles into the plate with water and start to whirl it. If the needles join each other with cotton ends then marrieds will be happy.

Take **two empty glasses** and go to your neighbours, let them know in advance about your visit. Having opened the door the neighbor with total silence should fill one of the glasses with water. If that is the glass that you had in your mind and made wish – it will come true for sure.

Take **three pieces of dough**. Put a button into one of the pieces. Place pieces in different places in your apartment. One piece near doorstep, another on window sill and the third one in the corner. Open each piece in the morning and if the button is in the piece that was near doorstep – then the day of wedding is coming soon; finding it in window sill means engagement, and corner means that nothing is expected this year.

In the evening unmarried girls hang on their chest some **small lock** and go outside just before sunset and pronounce: «Come to me my happiness, unlock and free me».

In the night when all your close in the bed **burn in the dark a paper** in the plate and direct the light to walls corner. You can see a profession of your beloved one on the wall.

Happy Novruz! And let all the girls will find their family happiness!

<http://azerbaijan24.com/component/content/article>.

### **Azerbaijan Childbirth Traditions**

When a girl gets married, people together with blessings and wishing her luck let her hold a baby. After she comes to her husband's house her veil is removed and thrown on the branches of a fruit-bearing tree. Then they put a baby on the bed prepared for the newlyweds. By all these rituals people express their desire to see the bride as future mother.

To make sure the child is born without any imperfections the pregnant woman tries to be cordial and affable. She tries to look at beautiful colors, still water, blue sky and so forth

After the baby is born his umbilical cord cut off the baby is bathed. For bathing they add some salt to make sure the child will grow truthful, bold and smart. During bathing the child's mother stays away. The baby is brought to her so that the child respond to her call, respect her.

When a child has the first teeth a special meal of seven grains is to be cooked followed by the ritual. People believe this will make teeth grow faster and more smoothly.

Only after the child marks his or her first birthday his fingernails and hair can be first cut. But they are not thrown out. Nails are normally wrapped in piece of clean cloth and hidden in one of the cracks on the wall or in the floor. The first cut child's hair is also kept.

**<http://azerbaijan24.com/component/content/article/49.html>**

### Azerbaijani Traditions of Hospitality

**Knock on any door...**Azerbaijan's customs of hospitality are very revealing of the culture and the spirit of the world in which its people live. These customs tell us much about the people who live in this land and their potential. Alexandre Dumas wrote about Azerbaijani hospitality and also of the Caucasus peoples: "If you knock on any door in Azerbaijan, or anywhere in the Caucasus, say that you're a foreigner and have no place to spend the night, the owner of the house will immediately give you his largest room. He and his family will move to the small room. Moreover, during the week, two weeks, or the month that you stay in his house he will take care of you and will not let you want for anything".



Azerbaijanis consider it a duty to show infinite respect for a guest. The guest is sacred in Azerbaijan and the tradition of respect is taken very seriously.

The great 12th century Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi returned often to the noble custom of hospitality in his works. He wrote in his work "Yeddi Gozel" (The Seven Beauties):

*She was welcoming as a garden flower,  
Her smile was the bud of a rose.  
Her palace was prepared for guests  
And it reached to the skies  
She laid a table and arranged a celebration,  
Her servants were raised in grace.  
For each new arrival, they held his horse's bridle,  
They laid the table according to rule.  
They showed him courteous hospitality,  
And dined him according to his rank.*

In Nizami Ganjavi's writings, hospitality is clearly seen as a custom routine in the everyday life of the Azerbaijani people.

Every household in Azerbaijan (within their means, sometimes even beyond their economic means) believed it their duty and a matter of honour to receive their guest with great respect, entertain him and send him on his way. This was not a tradition restricted to acquaintances only. It also applied to strangers, people who did not know each other at all and travellers on a journey.

In Azerbaijan hospitality acquired a certain status, took on a moral quality and became an internal instinct.

That is to say, regardless of whether the guest was personally invited or whether the householder knew him, everyone regarded a visitor to their country as their personal guest and felt bound to receive him and see him off sincerely. This is a distinctive feature of our people. The custom of hospitality seems simple enough, but it has specific requirements and can be quite demanding. Thus, it takes much effort and attention on the part of the householder to do the job thoroughly of receiving a guest, hosting him and seeing him off appropriately.



#### Guest: first and foremost

Even if an enemy steps into one's house in Azerbaijan, no retribution may be exacted; as a guest he is untouchable. Eastern hospitality rises above all other customs of everyday life.

The householder would even set a guard to protect a guest whose life was in danger and who asked for help; as well as providing comfort; the safety of a guest was all part of the responsibility. This extended, of course, to protection of the guest's belongings. All household members saw the guest off,

Miniature showing Khagan receiving Iskender as a guest, Nizami's 'Iskendername' (Isfahan, 1560-1570) but the host would always suggest that the stay be prolonged a little. As a mark of respect, the householder followed the departing guest with his eyes until he was out of sight. However, if the guest had a request or a wish when he was leaving the house, naturally, the host did his best to fulfil it and, if need be, he would expect to walk the guest to a staging post or take him to his destination.



There is a tradition in Azerbaijan that if a passer-by, even a complete stranger, says that he is a guest; a householder must serve him with all his heart and soul. Often, not only the house owner but also his relatives, consider it their duty to invite the guest to their place.

All household members were prepared for the sudden arrival of a guest. One or two extra portions of every meal would be prepared for just such an eventuality. In the past, a group of horsemen would meet high-level guests. Foreign guests were the centre of special attention and all influential people in the locality would call and invite them to their homes.

Azerbaijani households kept either a separate building or a room in the house as a guest room. Children were not allowed in there. If the visitor had a horse, even this was allocated a special place and well looked after.

In general, it was thought improper for the host to tire a guest with many questions, to ask why he had arrived or when he would leave. Only after the newcomer had said who he was and announced his purpose would the household rally round to provide all he needed.

Guests were freely given food, a room and a bed. Each household member had a specific responsibility for the guest. The householder always ensured there were reserves of food and provisions.

### Lay a good table...

From the earliest of times, a banquet would be held to honour a visitor, the table was laid and festivities began.

The guest was placed at the head of the table. Next to him sat the elder of the house, then other respected elders and people. Only adults could engage in conversation. It was not thought right to talk too much at the table during banquets and all had to know their place. The host also arranged for a selection of meals to appear on his banquet table.

The table on such occasions was laden with more delicious and abundant meals than for the everyday meal.

Miniature showing a music gathering for Khosrov and Shirin, 'Khamsa' (Bukhara, 1648)

The drinks served were sherbet and ayran (a diluted yoghurt drink – ed.) and, in some cases, wine. The meals served at a banquet table were mainly of rice and meat, accompanied by herbs. Along with different types of sweetmeats, jams etc., fruit was also served as dessert.

As a rule, banquets were accompanied by music – as confirmed by miniature paintings, which indicate that a special corner was set aside for musicians. For the sound to carry, the musicians would sing on the lower floor of a house, or from some distance within a tent.

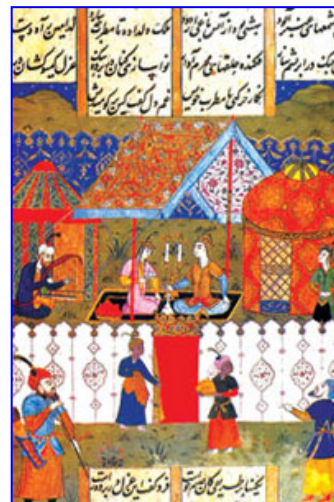
Tradition decreed that it was impolite not to listen to the music at banquets, to ignore it or to talk a lot.

A common part of traditional hospitality was to give presents to the guest. The guest would offer a gift to the host and, in turn, the householder would send the guest off with other presents. This custom has survived to the present day.

The celebrated 17th century Turkish traveller and geographer Evliya Celebi described his reception in Azerbaijan, the banquet table and the presents given to guests: "During the banquet, a kalamkari (hand-printed – ed.) tablecloth was laid. Eleven types of plov (pilaf – ed.) were served: and soup, we ate tasty meals and had good conversation.

After the banquet, the guest, I and small Hasanagaya were given fine lynx leather. From there we went down to our tent. He sent us about 50 sheep, some 1,000 loaves of white bread, seven to eight mules of fruit and sherbet. That night we had a huge celebration; we stayed another two days there and had a look at the beautiful palaces on the bank of the river Qarsi."

According to tradition, a man's best quality is generosity, demonstrated by his ability to lay a good table and give a banquet for visitors to his house. People say that a generous person's prosperity comes from Allah.



### Guest for one, guest for all

When the householder is unable to provide a good reception for a guest, people help him. At this time, relatives and neighbours will help poor families. Thus hospitality goes beyond the limited framework of a household and becomes a collective effort. Good relations can be formed by benevolence and lending each other a helping hand is accepted as a moral law and the most honourable thing to do.

According to a folk custom, after receiving the guest it is advisable to leave him by himself for some time to rest, adjust and make him comfortable. However, this should not be for too long, because one should not be inattentive to one's guest. If the guest is a stranger and his stay is temporary, the house owner will not think it right to stay too long by his side, so as not to tire him.

The time of arrival also helps determine the rules. Thus, if the guest arrives in the evening, he is given food and a bed made up quickly. If the guest is someone close, an acquaintance or a relative, in this case the house owner naturally prefers greater contact. In this case, not only the house owner but also his relatives assemble and entertain the guest and fulfil the smallest of his wishes with enthusiasm. The guest becomes one of the families.

Since travellers were often not familiar with the country and the roads, naturally, as a sign of special attention to and care for travellers, they were given guides to enable them to continue their journey in comfort. The guide would not restrict himself to merely accompanying the guest on their journey but he would arrange meals and help with other things, too.

Decorating the guest house or room was by no means a formality. The interior of the house or guest room was decorated in the best taste. During the guest's stay, everything in there was his. This meant that every single item in the room was for the guest's use and at his disposal.

Hospitality during holidays is special. It is still a tradition, a duty and a good deed to invite a guest for a meal to break the fast during Ramazan, or to visit others to take them sweets and, during the Festival of Sacrifice (the Gurban Bayram holiday – ed.) to take some sacrificial meat (usually lamb) to close relatives and neighbours.

Thus, along with abstaining from food during these holidays, giving an evening meal to those fasting during the day and distributing the meat of sacrificial animals brings people closer together. The Novruz holiday is a particular time for visiting, when people settle quarrels and hand out presents



### Historically hospitable

The 17th century Dutch traveller Jan Struys, who attended Novruz holiday ceremonies, wrote of dashing in the company of aristocrats to eat now in one Azerbaijani's place and now in another's.



our people. The primary indicator of hospitality is the laying of the table and its adornment with many dishes. This is the breaking of bread and sharing it equally with someone else.



The 15th century Venetian ambassador Ambrogio Contarini was greeted with gifts on his arrival in Isfahan. He writes with enthusiasm about the hospitality with which Uzun Hasan received him and Giosafat Barbaro, whom he invited to his palace in Isfahan in November 1474: “when we entered the room, we saw the shah surrounded by his courtiers.

According to the local custom, I bowed my head and he gestured that I sit on the carpet. Afterwards, we were served various delicious dishes cooked according to local custom. Then we parted. He invited us again. He kindly showed us his palace built on the bank of a river. Here, too, he treated us to different kinds of sweets.

Uzun Hasan invited us round often. Sometimes, we happened to eat in his marquee. The meals which came in bowls were served in large helpings and they were excellent. When we were not near Uzun Hasan, he often sent us various consumer goods. I was also quickly provided with a house.”

Anthony Jenkinson also wrote about the high level of hospitality in Azerbaijan. An English merchant and sailor, Jenkinson embarked upon a major sea journey in the 16th century and visited Azerbaijani territory. In his memoirs, he also provides information about the custom of hospitality here.



Thus he notes that he was sincerely and very well received when he was a guest of Abdulla khan in Shemakha. He writes about how he was invited to lunch. As a sign of respect, he was shown to a seat near the host.

He notes that an expensive carpet was laid on the floor and that people were sitting on the floor with their legs folded. “When they saw that I was not used to sitting like that, a table was specially brought for me. A tablecloth was laid and various dishes were brought. There were about 140 of them. When they were removed, in its stead they laid a table full of fruit and adorned with other meals (there were about 150 of these). I was bid ‘welcome’ there. The next day, I was invited to go hunting. The hunting was

fun. Upon our return, they presented me with long garments sewn according to their tradition; they put the garments on me and took me to the khan. I kissed his hand. Then, he seated me next to himself and we had lunch together. During the conversation, he inquired about how the hunting had gone. Upon my return, he gave me an excellent horse as a gift. He even gave me a guide and a watchman for the continuation of my journey. Finally, when we got to Ardebil, we were placed in a caravanserai built from white stone and designed for foreigners and other travellers. Everyone here is provided with food and feed for the horses.”

### Home stays and caravanserais

There was a separate building for guests in the courtyards of rich and wealthy people. They were normally built in a convenient part of a common courtyard. This was especially important in places with no caravanserais (mainly in mountainous regions and villages). The construction of a separate house for guests indicates the importance of hospitality in our country.

#### Tea and dishes for a banquet

They were built with particular attention to their appearance, beauty and comfort as a reflection of both the house owner’s taste and his respect for a guest. The decoration of the house or the room allocated to the guest was meant to ensure his comfort and complete freedom: carpets were a special feature. In addition, there was bedding and sometimes even a musical instrument. The householder bore great responsibility for the guest but, at the same time, the guest’s presentation and manners were also important. Acting in line with the rules of propriety, maintaining self-control and behaving according to the customs of the alien environment he was in were the guest’s responsibilities. The guest was absolutely not expected to interfere in the family’s internal affairs or intervene inappropriately.



Like many oriental countries, Azerbaijan also had caravanserais. They were located in towns and on important commercially significant routes and were widespread in their capacity as hotels. There were more of them in large trading centres. There was a certain similarity in the construction of caravanserais in all areas of Azerbaijan. Along with rooms for relaxation, caravanserais also had a canteen, mangers, storage facilities, shops etc.



Home-style caravanserais, which were places of temporary shelter, usually served guests arriving in Azerbaijani territory.

Most of the travellers and merchants who visited Azerbaijan at various times and travelled through the country spoke of the presence of such caravanserais and remarked on their interior and exterior appearance.

### **Cleanliness next to...**

In Azerbaijan, too, as in a number of Muslims countries, Shari'ah rules applied and this was directly evident as regards hospitality. For example, according to Shari'ah, "hands should be washed and wiped with a towel before and after eating".

Also, unlike in the West, guests in the Muslim East did not retreat to a special room or corner to wash their hands. Water in an elegant container, and a bowl, were brought to guests at the table. The guests washed their hands without leaving their places. This is how hands should be washed according to the etiquette: after the first of the guests washes his hands, next is the one sitting to his right. Thus, all of them take turns to wash their hands. After they have eaten, a parch (a type of metal jug – ed.) and a bowl are also brought. The guest who was last to wash his hands before eating is the first to wash his hands after eating. As a rule, a servant or the host's underage daughters or sons pour the water onto the guests' hands. As a sign of special respect, the host himself brings water for honoured guests.



Class distinctions are at work here. If a high-ranking aristocrat visits a person of a lower class, the householder himself brings the water for him to wash his hands.

"The householder should start eating before everyone else and stop eating after everyone else. Before starting to eat, they pronounce Allah's name and say "bismillah". If different courses are brought to the table, Allah's name is mentioned separately every time" A visitor was considered to be a guest from Allah. This was widely acknowledged in Azerbaijan. For example, when asked "Do you want a guest from Allah?" a householder replied "May I be the sacrifice for both Allah and his guest". The guest, too, knew that he would never be rejected; he could arrive uninvited and would not hear any protest. Thus he could knock on the door of any house.



Seeing the guest off in a proper manner made the host feel comfortable and experience inner satisfaction. Over the centuries, children were brought up in families in a spirit of respect for guests and this feeling was instilled in them time and again. It could not actually be otherwise, because in the future the guest would extol the good name of

the family (after leaving their house).

Regardless of the aim of the visit, it is characteristic of hospitality to get together, share in someone's joy and have a good time. There is always a hero of the occasion at such events, and at banquets a toastmaster is selected who congratulates the hero of the occasion on behalf of all participants and then glasses are raised to the health of all.

### **The wisdom of the ages**

Hospitality is deeply rooted in people's lifestyles. From ancient times people have visited each other and considered it their duty to offer help with building houses or other work in their community and also at wedding parties. Even after a house was built, it was a rule to invite people to celebrate.

Wise proverbs that have passed from generation to generation and travelled across the centuries have this to say about the guest and the respect due to him:

- A guest brings prosperity.
- A hospitable person's table is never empty.
- A guest decorates one's house.
- A guest is a flower of the house.
- May I be a sacrifice for the guest and for the road which brought him.
- The food for a guest comes before the guest himself arrives.
- A house without a guest is like a mill without water.

- The guest's job is to come and the householder's job is to host him.

In the modern period, hospitality is still especially important on a number of occasions. This can be seen during birthday parties, and match-making, engagement and wedding ceremonies. Congratulating someone on their birthday became fashionable. One of the customs is to give presents to the birthday

Hospitality involves ancient folk customs and is a widespread, long-lived rite that embraces certain of our people's traditions and has preserved them to date.

Everybody knows that traditions of hospitality evolved gradually, passed from generation to generation and they have developed. The characteristic features of hospitality make people forget about their grief at weddings, celebrations and other festivities and inspire joy in the celebrants.

Hospitality has been adjusted to modern times and has undergone qualitative changes. The only feature that has not changed with time is the great respect for a guest. Customs and traditions are an indestructible bridge between generations. Historical upheavals and ruthless conquests have not been able to destroy this treasury of trust.

**Bunyadova Shirin "Visions of Azerbaijan". May-June 2010, P. 38-45**

## Azerbaijani Legends

Azerbaijan is famed for having a lot of legends, myths and stories. We know a lot about legends of other people, this time let us learn what our ancestors passed to us

### **Why the pigeon is believed to be a symbol of peace...**

*(from the words of elders of Ohut settlement in Sheki region)*

Long time ago the dispute between powerful Khans of Ganja and Sheki run high and outgrew to warfare. Each side was accusing opponent of all thinkable and unthinkable sins and in the end the war erupted when Khan of Ganja declared state of war to Khan of Sheki. They agreed on time and place of decisive battle.

Khan of Sheki had not waged war for 15 years and all his ammunition was kept in one of the remote rooms in his palace. A day before the battle he asked his mother to prepare ammunition for the battle and bless him for this battle which might be the last one for him. Mother's blessing was believed to be sacred and Khan needed it. When his mother brought him ammunition he could not find a helmet. Khan was surprised and asked:

- Mom, where is my helmet which is pride for the man and for our family?

- I could not bring it - said old woman without disclosing her reasons.

- I understand your mother feelings, you don not want war and destructions, but I can't step back. This will be disgrace for all my people. If needed I am ready to give my life for my land, but I will not retreat. This is my last word! Please, bless me - said Khan with determination in his voice.

- I do not doubt your bravery and determination; my son was raised to protect the homeland from enemies. But your helmet seems to be bewitched. I could not lift it.

- Then I will go and take it by myself

- Please do not do it, do not touch the helmet, said his mother and stopped the way. I ask you in the name of the mother's milk that brought you up as well as a Khan of Sheki, the ancient and glorious land.

- But mother, how could I show up in a battle field in front of my people and my warriors with uncovered head?

And then the mother told him the real reason behind her action.

- Great Khan, my beloved son, there is a couple of white pigeons that made a nest in your battle helmet. They are the most peaceful birds and breed 3 nestlings. Pigeons know where to nest and want to raise their nestlings in safety. If these innocent creatures will be touched then the parents will fly away, nestlings will die and grief and illness came to our land, misfortune will stay in this country forever. Are you ready to accept this?

Khan was silent; he did not know what to say. The logic of the mother was stronger than force and power.

In the morning Khan of Ganja noticed that Khan of Sheki riding his battle horse had his head unprotected. This surprised him and he asked the reason behind this. The Khan of Sheki said:

- A pair of white pigeons made a nest in my helmet, they have three nestlings and my mom pleaded me not to destroy the nest. My people might suffer from this. But this should not disturb you - Khan of Ganja, I am ready for the battle.

Khan of Ganja was bewildered and surprised by peacefulness of his opponent. He sent his couriers to check and confirm this fact. Khan of Ganja was thinking. Breathless silence was around; the decision of Khan of Ganja could shed a blood of brothers. Wise Khan appreciated the deed of Sheki Khan and offered him his hand.

- Great Khan, I would like to make a peace! If your mother did not want to destroy pigeon's nest how we can destroy lands and homes, shed a blood of innocent people. Your uncovered head is not a sign of your disgrace or acceptance of defeat; it is the other way just proves your honor and clear thoughts. Thank you.

Peace was made and since then white pigeon is a messenger of peace and symbol of well-being.

### **How Jeyranbatan Lake was born?**

*(from the words of elders of Sarayi village)*

In the place of modern Sumgayit an ancient Azeri tribe was once settled. There were two loving hearts in that tribe - young hero Sum and the beauty Jeyran. They were engaged, they love was blazing as eternal flame. There had been a river flowing by that the tribe was relying on.

But one day a large barbarian army came from the north and conquered all the approaches to the river. Everyone who was trying to approach river was finding his end. Then the elders of the tribe decided to propitiate barbarians and started negotiations. But enemies asked for inconceivable price: for each day of using



river water the tribe had to sacrifice one person to barbarian's idol who they worshipped. Being in a desperate situation elders agreed. But Sum was against and said:

"In this way we will lose all our tribe!". The head of the tribe opposed: "Is not slowly better than immediate death of all the tribe? We need to win a time". But Sum could not reconcile himself with this and said: "These comparisons will lead us to nowhere. Let's gather people and fight them!". But the tribe's head said that their forces are not enough to win: "You will perish yourself and the whole tribe".

Thus the time was going and it was turn of Sum's family to bring sacrifice. "I will be sacrifice!" - said Sum. But his beloved Jeyran offered herself: "There is no life for me without you anyway!" they have been arguing till end of the day, and by the morning when Jayran fell asleep Sum and a small number of volunteers marched out against enemy.

When Jeyran woke up, she realized that she was sedated and ran into the road and started to cry in madness: "Sum, gayit!... Sum, gayit!" ("Sum, return!"). When she reached the battlefield she realized that Sum and his friends defeated the enemy but Sum was killed in battle with numerous enemies. She embraced his blooded body and screamed to the whole valley: "Sum, gayit!.. Sum, gayit!!!". Being frantic with grief she ran towards Bog Lake and jumped into waters. The bog started to pull her down, but she kept on calling her beloved one: "Sum, gayit!.. Sum, gayit!".

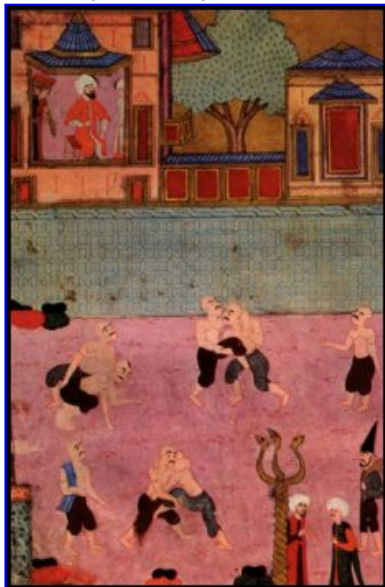
Since then that lake was called Jeyranbatan (literally, drowned Jeyran), and the place where the tribe was settled - Sumgayit.

<http://azerbaijan24.com/component/content/article/49.html>

### Traditional Wrestling - Gulesh

Gulesh according to Azerbaijanis is the competition not only in body force but also in will power and spirit. And if earlier Gulesh was simply a national pastime, today's Gulesh is an attribute of national Azerbaijani culture same as dances and music. The tournaments are accompanied by music (as in ancient time) to melodious sounds of zurna and rumbling of drums. Gulesh wrestlers are called pekhlevans.

By the way, in ancient times pekhlevans competed right on the village ground. In Baku , Ganja and



Ordubad there have survived special buildings - zorkhana. Present day sports complexes are built with arena and amphitheater for spectators, with beautiful domes and carpets. In zorkhana there were tournaments, practices; people could listen to music and songs about warriors' victories.

The prelude to wrestling is called "meidan-gazmek". It is a kind of warming-up, a ritual dance: slender bare-breasted fighters dressed in loose trousers patterned with embroidery wearing soft belts. The rivals smoothly move on a circle on both sides of the carpet alternately swing hands upwards and backwards. Then they drop on the floor and while bending arms touch the ground several times with their chests. Then they jump up and greet each other with a wide salutatory gesture. It is a Salam - a polite sign of salutation. After that they come to the center of the carpet and hit each other three times with left and right shoulders alternatively then jump from each other ready to fight. Now their objective is to try various grips.

There are a lot of swift movements; the wrestlers seize one another by trousers or legs, use backheels and throws. Gulesh rules practically do not constrain the wrestlers' initiative. Throat clutching, punches and kicks below stomach level are forbidden. It is not allowed to throw the opponent without following him, twist arms, legs and fingers, and push the rival's body with head. Long time ago pekhlevans used to wear pieces of mirror on their knees to show that they never touch a carpet with them. Today in order to win it is necessary to throw the opponent on both his shoulder blades. These days' regular Gulesh competitions on all levels are held in Azerbaijan.

<http://azerbaijan24.com/component/content/article/49.html>

## XII. NATIONAL CUISINE OF AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijani cooking, with its specific richness, can be considered a pearl of world cuisine. The natural geographic situation of the country, its resources and its location at the crossroads of East and West has made the national cuisine more colourful. Throughout history travellers, traders and thinkers who visited Azerbaijan talked about the colourfulness of its national cuisine and enjoyed it. Azerbaijan has always been famed for its cookery. The abundance of vegetables, fruit, fragrant herbs and spices have inspired Azerbaijani cooks to invent new national dishes, which are so distinctive that they cannot be confused with the dishes of other peoples.

Even the most sophisticated gourmets coming to Azerbaijan from all over the world appreciate the exquisite taste and subtle aroma of these dishes. It is for a good reason that Azerbaijan is called the home of long-livers. Researchers say that this is due, firstly, to Azerbaijan's salubrious climate, secondly, the healthy way of life of its people and last, but not least, the wholesome food and eating habits.

Azerbaijani first courses are prepared from very concentrated meat stock, indeed much more concentrated and thicker than European soups. Lavishly used spices and a special cooking technique lend them a peculiar aroma. Some Azerbaijani dishes are served as both first and second courses. Among them are piti and kufta-bozbash. In this case the meat stock is served separately from the other ingredients (meat, peas, and potatoes) which are treated as a second course although cooked in the stock.

Azerbaijani cuisine is one of the most ancient, richest and tastiest cuisines of the world. Azerbaijan cuisine is not only meals and technological methods of their preparation. It is also the part of the material culture, which harmonically unites in itself the culture of cuisine, its history, philosophy, table psychology, customs, physiology, hygiene, equipment, chemistry, ethics, aesthetics, poetry, other aspects of cuisine, and practical skills, created on the territory of historical existence of the Azerbaijani people in harmony with the surrounding world.

Azerbaijani Cuisine is created by the genius of the Azeri people living on the territories, which included Azerbaijan Republic, Iran Azerbaijan, Erivan khanate, Zangezur and Geogchay mahali region, taken by force lands of modern Armenia where Azerbaijani people lived, lands of Georgia, where Azerbaijani people have been living (mainly in Borchali), in Dagestan territory and former capital of Azerbaijani state - Derbent as well.

Naturally, that the most important factor which influences the creation and development of cuisine is the climate. In connection with this, it is necessary to note that Azerbaijan Republic has nine climatic zones, which create the variety, wealth of flora and fauna of the region, cause favorable conditions for the life and the development of all animals and plants, which in its turn are the main and basic things for the creation of rich cuisine.

For the creation of rich cuisine, besides the usage of wild animals and birds, fish and plants in the following periods of the development of the society, it is necessary to possess agricultural products. For this purpose, the population should be on high level of farming and cattle breeding.

For example, complex dishes from pastry and grain could appear only in case the production of agricultural products could exceed the needs of bakery and bread-replacements. Only in case of the appearance of grain excess people could make experiments and create complex dishes, only when it lasted for centuries, the meals were created and were stamped on people's memory. Only the existence of "cheten" (archaic image of colander), which was weaved from reeds, refers the history of dish preparation from grain and pastry to the 5-6th century BC and it says to us about stable harvest in that period of time and accordingly about the high level of farming.

The production of a large amount of grain shows us highly developed agriculture, the existence of the irrigation system, the development of cattle breeding etc.

It was impossible without settled way of life.

It is necessary to note that Azerbaijanis, who owned a high level of farming and cattle-breeding culture, produced raw materials for the cuisine in the Caucasus. For example, the Georgian scientist M.I.Tkshelov in 1888 wrote about Azerbaijani population living in Iravan khanate: "In the villages they cultivate land, grow grain, fruit; that is naturally that in lowlands, in yaylags they are busy with cattle-breeding. Because of the fact that Azerbaijanis lives on the banks of the rivers, we may call them "land-cultivating" people. We may say that





Azerbaijanis constantly live on the banks of the rivers, while Armenians have been living only in the mountainous area".

L.K. Artamonov in 1889 pointed out "Azerbaijan Horasan, kirmanshah Fars, Isfahan and Ezd provinces produce the most amount of grain".

G.V. Sologoub in 1852 wrote: "Armenian people direct their activity at the trade and accumulating wealth. Azerbaijanis, naturally in accordance with the places of the living, directed their activity at farming and cattle-breeding, - are the main productive elements in the Caucasus".

I.L. Segal in 1902 noted that "Muslim people mainly live on the banks of the rivers "Bazar chay, Ayrichay, Bergushad, Ohuchuchay, Choundurchay, at their tributaries, and on the banks of the Araks; Armenian population live in a scattered state, on the severe tops of the mountains. The most part of Armenian men (from 15 to 40 years old); live from hand to mouth and every winter they earn money at the Caspian seashore, in Baku and Tiflis. Server and street life attract them. As far as Azerbaijanis is concerned, they live in the plains, in better conditions for farming".

It is understood that it is a natural process. While other peoples were coming, all fertile lands were settled and used by the local population. The Armenian scientist G.A. Ezov (1908), «New Motherland met Armenians not very cordial, there were little Free State lands», proved this fact.

The notes of the different travelers, scientists, merchandises, diplomats etc. and archaeological findings as well, prove that on these lands they grew much wheat, oat, rice, kundjout (sesame), soya, beet-roots, melons, water-melons, grapes, apples, pomegranates, quince and other products of farming and gardening.

Local population was provided with vegetables, fresh and dried fish, caviar, honey, butter and other products of cattle breeding were exported to the neighbor and other countries.

Evidently, that century by century the Caucasus markets were provided with the products of farming and plant - growing by Azerbaijanis. For example, U.D. Angabadze and N.G. Volkova referring to the book "The Old Tiflis" wrote, "At the Tiflis markets cheese was sold by Osetins and Azerbaijanis cheese was also sold by Borchalins (Azerbaijani -T.A.). Geochay (now Sevan Lake T.A.), trout was in popular demand at the Tiflis markets, they brought it from Azerbaijan".

Thus, Azerbaijanis were the main people in the Caucasus who had the opportunity to create rich cuisine and develop it, having enormous raw base for cuisine.

The fact that a great number of Armenian, Georgian and Persian meals have Azerbaijani roots is connected with this phenomenon.

There are a lot of books about the, influence of Turkish cuisine upon Bulgarian and Yugoslavian, Russian and other cuisine. It is interesting that Azerbaijan cuisine influenced Arabic and Persian cuisine greatly. For example, the scientist Djavad Hoyat in his book "The comparison of two languages" refers to about 60 culinary terms, which were borrowed from the Azerbaijan language and went into Persian.

From the linguistically point of view there are some conformities to the formation of the names of the Azerbaijan cuisine in the Azerbaijan language.

The first conformity is that the names of the meals correspond to some different stages, forms, and methods of influence on its preparation.

For instance, such names as gatlama dolma, dogramach, azma-show the methods of the initial technical influence (gatlama means layer; dolma -filling, dogramach - cutting), azma - pressing, gizart-ma, partlama, govurma, bozartma, dondurma and etc. - methods of heat influence; dindili kufta, nazik yarpag hangal, juha, lyula-kebab and etc. - geometrical forms of the meal; yarpag dolmasi, yarma hashil, duyu chancuru, sebze-kuku, bal-gaymag - the main raw materials for the dish preparation; gatig, sulu hangal, horra - consistence; turshu, shoraba, shirin nazik - organoleptic features of the dish; sad-jichi, tava-kebab,kufta,churek and etc. - the name of the hearth; Gandja paxhlava, Tauz hangal, Gara-bakh bastirmasi, Sheki halvasi - the region where these dishes are well spread .

We should mention that very often the name of the dish means not only one dish, but also several; for example, there are about 30 variants of dolma, about 200 varieties of plov and etc.

The second conformity is connected with the word "Ush" - from this word came out a range of terms such as ushbaz, ushichi, ush-hana (canteen), hush (dishes from animal legs); hushhil (flour porridge), gashig (a spoon) and etc. We meet the term "ush" in many old Turkish written sources, in Orhan-Enisey and stone manuscripts.

The third conformity in the formation of the culinary terms refers to all Turkish languages; for example, in Turkey, Imambaildi (Imam lost his consciousness from enjoyment), in Kazakhstan beshbar-mag (five fingers); in Azerbaijan khangyal "Su dashi" - (literal translation is stone water) is used from the ancient time for the cleaning water (khan come), tarhan (young khane-prince); ashag-ohlag (a lame goat), tutmadj (adjtutma - not be hungry), galadj (be hungry).

After the influence of the climate, the main influencing factor on the cuisine is the hearth. For example, a great number of baked, boiled and stewed dishes in Slovenian kitchens, f.e. in Russian, are connected with the possibilities of the Russian oven. The creation and development of Azerbaijan Cuisine is mostly connected with the existence of different open and close hearths such as tandir, ku-ra, buhari, kulfa, chala odjag, sadj, mangal and etc.

Up to now special cottage cheese 'motal pen-dir'is ripening in the skins of animals. The shepherds of Ismayli at the pasture use the skins of animals instead of a pot.

For this, the skins are spread over the hearth with the hairs down, and fry meat on it. In Gabala region under a flat stone (1,5x0,8 m<sup>2</sup>) they set fire.

When the stone is hot, the stone is covered with sheep fat, and put meat (goat, sheep meat, veal, chicken, and fish). Then the same stone presses the meat.

This way people cook dasharasi (between stones).

Some definite influence of our cuisine caused the usage of different dishes and kitchen utensils. Up to now our housewives use different dishes made of skin of animals, stone, wood, clay, glass and metal and etc.

Besides gas and electricity in Azerbaijan National Cuisine people use wood, wood coal, kizyak as fuel. The usage of kizyak causes a special interest. In the places where people used kizyak the cutting of the trees and brushwood is getting lower, there are no illnesses of respiratory organs and lungs in the places of its storage. According to the investigations Indian scientists, the smoke from kizyak while burning has some antiseptic features.

One of the indexes of people's culinary cultural level is their attitude towards water, to its cleaning and usage of it.

From ancient times, Azerbaijani people considered water to be white and black. The water, which contains many minerals, ions of metal is hard,-black water and contrary, the water with low number of metal ions and minerals is mild - white water.

When we prepare drinks and food, we use only mild white water. On the banks of the rivers, ariks (water channel), planted channels people always planned weeping willow beds. The roots, branches and other parts of weeping willow have antiseptic features and made water healthy. The pieces of weeping willow branches or a silver thing were put into the water with this aim as well. For sediment of water impurities people put apricot stones into the special pot with water.

May be the first and the best natural water cleaner in the history was invented and used up to now by Azerbaijanis. The stone for cleaning water this «su dashi». The "su dashi" is a hollow pyramid from black and white sandstone, which is put on a special wooden stand, upside-down, and a dish for clean water is put under it. People pour water into it and often put a silver thing or willow branches into it. The water, passing through the capillaries of the stone drop by drop flow into the dish for clean water; it is not only cleaned by also cooled by means of the difference of pressure in the pores of stone and at the exit from capillaries.

It is necessary to note that the oldest samovar that is about 3700 years was found in Azerbaijan in Sheki region and it is older than Egyptian one, which is about 2000 years. And this is one of the starting points of the culinary - transferring the hearth from outside inside of the dish, changing of water - air balance in water, changing of volumes of nutritional items into water environment and accordingly the taste of the liquid

Found in Gabala region the distillation apparatus, made of clay, referring to the VII-VIII century AD, is the evidence that from ancient times people in Azerbaijan got liquid with ether oil and alcohol. This lets to widen the assortment of alcohol and refreshing drinks.

The next important factor, influencing the cuisine is the historical - geographical location of the peoples, ties with neighboring peoples.

The origin of the ancient trade- caravan and war ways through the territory of Azerbaijan influenced definitely on the cuisine.

Though the belonging to all Turkish ethnos lead to the appearing of the dishes, having mutual roots. Azerbaijan cuisine can be the crown of Turkish cuisines. From the point of view of the tastes, Azerbaijan cuisine is close to Anadolu and the cuisine of Turks Seldjucs.

The long lasting ties with Arabs gave to our cuisine coffee, the Silk Way brought from China - tea.

The acquaintance with Russian cuisine on one hand , brought into the cuisine of Azerbaijan ;schi' and; borsch', which is known under the one and the same name "Borsch", on the other hand allowed to know, through Russia, the distorted "Russian styled" European cuisine. In connection with the development of oil industry at the end of the XIX century and in the beginning of the XX century the process of direct acquaintance with European cuisine (this process we can be watched up to now) which influenced mainly the restaurant cuisine.

One of the important factors, which influenced the national cuisine of Azerbaijanis, was religion and faith of people. Zoroasterism, fire-worshiper, philosophy of Avest and the reflection in the psychology, customs and ways of thinking of Azeri people, found its reflection in cuisine. Respect to the first helper of the cook "ochag"-hearth comes out from here. Up to now table, customs and meals are alive and were formed under the faith into white light and fire.

For long time period in Azerbaijan there exists and acts Christian religion.

But for thousands of years Azerbaijanis have been Moslems and the influence of Islam on the cuisine is out of question, it goes without saying. Refusing from the usage of golden dishes, pork, prohibition of alcohol etc. tell us about the strong influence of Islamic traditions. Different holidays, customs and the fast influenced the cuisine greatly.

We should note that the kitchen traditions connected with the religion prohibitions, advice are the objects of special explorations. Here we must mention that the demands of the religion and Islam, particularly in connection with food and products have serious scientific ground under them. For example in Islam, people are not advised to eat peeled fruits and grains, obviously that some recent scientific researchers tell that the main part of water dissolved vitamins and microelements are in the skin of plants and etc.

The meat of cattle is used from ancient times in Azerbaijan. Some sources point out the usage of horseflesh in the initial periods of kitchen development. Today Azeri people do not use horseflesh in food. Old residents remember the taste of camel-meat, especially gutabs of camel-meat.

Now in our cuisine the meat of wild animals is well spread. The meat of young animals males and shishaks (female of goats, to which male-goat was not allowed); castrate animals are considered to be milder and more tasty. Snow-white meats of animals of lawn cattle breeding, mountains and pre-mountainous regions, has big advantages. The fatty drops of such meat are included into the cell

Near Baku city, in Gobustan, were found the pictures of Bizard goats. These pictures are related to the 10-35 millenniums BC. Such pictures were also found in Nahichivan (Azerbaijan city) in the place of Gemigaya. The pictures show the first process of meat cutting for culinary purposes and prove that in these places there existed a culinary school.

In Gabala, in Azerbaijan region, was found a distillate apparatus for getting alcohol (spirit) and ether oil, related to the VTI-VIII century AD.

All these facts and other facts prove that Azerbaijan is the 'cradle' of the culinary culture of the world.

The next important factor influencing the cuisine is the historical and geographical location of people, ties and connection between neighbor people.

The passing of ancient, trade caravan, and military roads through the territory of Azerbaijan somehow influenced the cuisine.

Though the reference to the Common Turkish ethnos led to the appearance of the same names of the meals, having common roots, Azerbaijan cuisine can be considered as a crown of common Turkish cuisine. From the point of view of common tastes, Azerbaijan cuisine is close to Anadolu cuisine and to the cuisine of Turk-seldjucs.

#### **Xoncha for "Novruz" holiday**

The long lasting ties with Arabians gave to our cuisine coffee, "Silk Road"; - brought us tea from China. Acquaintance with the Russian cuisine on one hand brought schi and borsch into Azerbaijan cuisine that is known now under one and structure.

The advantages are given to the fresh meat in comparison with the frozen. Besides meat, people use fat of sheep's tails and sub products in meals.

For long time people stored fresh meat, they cut it into pieces, fried on fat of sheep's tail, put it into sheep skin and special clay jugs, and poured on melted fat. Besides people store up guhudj- at (dried meat).

In our cuisine, the meat and eggs of domestic and wild animals and poultry are widely used. The hunting for wild birds begins after the snow and when the beaks and legs of birds have been reddening from cold. The meat of domestic birds -geese, ducks and turkey, chicken is used in meals.

The birds are put into the special cages, where they can't move and feed them with grains that contain mostly fat (corn grain, sunflower etc.). Such birds have fat mild meat. Birds' fat is considered to be a more qualified product than animals'.

The meat of birds and cattle are cooked whole, big and small parts, separately or together with the other products. In our cuisine from ancient times people use the cut meat. Dolma, kufta and etc. are cooked from such meat.

The Caspian Sea, the Kura, the Araz and other lakes Gey-gel, Djeyranbatan, Geocha and etc. enriched our cuisine by delicious fishmeal. A great number of meals from fried, stewed, boiled and stuffed fish decorate our table.



Fishmeal is prepared from the whole fish or from little pieces of it, but also from minced fish stuff. Red and black caviar is very popular among people.

Eggs are also used in meals. In dietary the quail's eggs, are widely used, gayganag, chalhama, kuku and chychurtma decorate our table, even up to now. Dairy products of Azerbaijan cuisine are very different and rich. Milk, agizsud, boulama, karamaz, gatig, pendir, doog, gaymag, chiya, ayran, shor and other dairy products, and meals prepared from them - dovga, dogramach, ay-ranashi, atilama, sudlu sayig and etc. which have been enriching our cuisine from ancient time.

Azerbaijanis with the sense of tremble and respect treat bread: juha, fetir, lavash, sengah, hamrali tendir-churek and others bread of different form thickness and methods of preparation was put on the table. Azerbaijanis began meals, respecting bread, because they think that there is nothing better than bread. Generally, Azerbaijanis for ages swore at the hearth on mother's milk, bread, and Koran as well.

Meals, culinary products from pastry occupy a special place in our cuisine. We should mention that the unity of meat and pastry is natural for all Turkish peoples. A Historian Farig Sumer in the book "Ogoozi" in order to prove that seldjuks were Turkish several times proves that "seljuks" ate tut-madj (the meal from pastry, meat and beans), han-gal (sulu hangal, yarpag hangal, goorza, dushbara, hashil, horra and other pastry meals from flour are prepared mainly in winter).

When the weather gets warmer, there are fewer meals from flour and meat but contrary there are many meals from cultivated wild growing -plants. Kyata, soyug, dovga, adjab-sandal and others, different salads-are prepared from wood louse, spinach, and beetroot tails, mint, egg plants and tomatoes, etc.

The special places on the table occupiers the meal from grain and beans: sayig, pilaff, chilov, govurga, hadig etc. The most delicious meal is considered to be pilaf. In Azerbaijan in the country, that can be surely mentioned one of the Motherlands of rice, there about 200 kinds of pilaf.

In some areas of Azerbaijan rice substitute's bread. For example, before, the Lenkoran people didn't eat bread at all.

The main place in Azerbaijan cuisine occupies sweets, confectionary and halva. It was because of the fact that Azerbaijan was the producer of sugar. It was got from sugar-cane reeds, which was brought by Potyomkin by order of Catherine from Russia to Azerbaijan. Such sugar was called tahta-gyand. Another sugar was from beetroots.

These kinds of sugar the Azerbaijanis got in impure form, though sugar refinery took place in Azerbaijan in the X century. Nizami Gendjavi in the XII writes about the impure sugar, sugar from reeds and beetroots. Besides, these kinds of sugar, people prepared fruit sugar-nabat. A great number of honeys and boiled, condensed till honey consistence of fruit juice bekmez, doshab, promoted the variety of deserts. Such sweets and bakery products as paklava, shakarbura, rahatlukum, richal, sud-juk, peshmek, peshvenk, ter halva, guymag, gatla-ma, and juha halvasi are the pride of our housewives and masters.

Using honey, sugar, bekmez and fruits, people could create delicious meals. They are jams, compotes, marmalades and sweet products from Cornelian - cherry, quince, cherry, figs, nuts, rose, petals with sugar and etc.

The skin of animals is used for keeping and maturing food up to now.

For example, motal pendir (blue cheese in animal skin) and motal shor (cottage cheese in animal-s'skin), which is highly valuable, are prepared in sheep's skin and for preparing 'choban basdirma' food, they cut meat of the cattle into pieces, add salt, thyme, etc and put into the skin. People put the fire and when there appear hot charcoal, the skin with meat is put into it, top with charcoal or ground and again the fire is put on it, either the skin with meat is put into hot tendir or kura (kinds of Azerbaijan hearth) and up to now the shepherds of Ismail region lead their cattle into Lahich yaylags (summer pasture), there they hung the skin of animals over the fire and cook fried mead on the frying pan.

In Northern regions (Gabala, Sheki, etc) people cook the food on flat stones up to now.

The number of meals "dasharasi'), that means 'between stones', are very delicious.

A big pot is put on a flat stone, size 1,5x 1 m. When the stone is strongly hot, it's rubbed with sheep fat, then top with pieces of poultry or fish, and then pressed with the same kind of a flat stone and in 15-20 minutes a very tasty food is ready.

In Azerbaijani people, widely use tinned vegetables (tutma) with the help of sour base (turshular) and with the help of salt (shorbalar).

Medical and diet cuisine occupy a leading place in Azerbaijan culinary. Many meals, such as umadj, hash, horra, guymag, they are used as treatment for ages.

The main part of cuisine is ritual and holiday meal. The meals from semeni (growing springs from wheat grain) are prepared only during Hidir Nebi Holiday, hedik, govurga are prepared when the baby's first tooth

appear or when 100-years old men change their teeth, during women's holiday "Little Chillya ", in winter people cut special water-melon.

One of the different parts of cuisine is drink. Arag-vodka is prepared from mulberry, Cornelian cherry and some other plants, and it's used mainly as treatment. "Arag" means white drink: ag - white, ar - drink (in the word "kefir" "ir" means a drink -sour milk). From another side "ar", can mean pure, clean, without impurities (from the word "aran-mish" - without impurities).

By means of distillation from different plants, different medical and alcoholic extracts and arags are prepared.

For example, let's take aragiz mint, gulyabi, drink from mixed greens "chal arag".

From ancient times in Azerbaijan "buza -beer" was prepared. The Russian word "buzit" (fights) has this origin as well.

Like in other Turk cuisines, there are many drinks from milk and sour-milk products, such as ayran, atlama, bulama and so on.

Different sherbets are prepared from fruit juices, different extracts from plants, sugar, saharol and etc. Sherbets are served with pilafs during the holidays and rituals.

Different drinks like ovshara, gyandab water mushmuli, cyalab, not only decorated the table, but also are also medical.

Tea occupies a leading place in Azeri cuisine. It is impossible to imagine our table without tea. Coffee and cacao are used more rarely than tea.

In the morning, boiled warm milk and drinks from milk are served.

The leading place among drinks occupies mineral waters of Azerbaijan, "Istisu", "Badamli", "Sirab" etc. They are served when people are thirsty and ill.

The more useful drinks people consider bek-mez (doshab), drinks, boiled up to the consistence of honey from mulberry juice, watermelon, sugarcane, beet-roots, grapes, wild persimmon etc., brought to the density of soured cream.

When "substantial" meal is served, from thirst and for digest of it, people serve the drink "iskendjebi", which is prepared from the mixture of honey and vinegar. In some sources, it is called vinegar-honey. Sometimes sugar is used instead of honey.

Among drinks of the Azerbaijan cuisine (not sweet meals), we mention hoshabs (compotes) and paludi (kisel).

The best natural drink is considered to be cold as ice spring waters of Azerbaijan.

Among every day light meals of Azeri cuisine Kla-yanalti (snacks) it is necessary to note yahma (open sandwiches - from the word (cover) and durmeks which are prepared by rolling the products into then bread - jacha or lavash in the form of a roll or cutting tendir-churek along, hamrali or others in the form of a pocket and putting the products in that pocket. Accordingly, durmeks are called "bukme" (wrapped) or "jibbi" (pocket). Durmeks are given not just in cold condition, but also in hot.

Among snacks, we should mark "meze-salads".

At the end of the meal, they served "charas" (fruits, dry fruits, nuts etc.) and sweet meals.

One of the important factors - which shows the level of richness, variety, development and of the kitchen are sauces and "zvars". In XVII century a famous Turkish traveler Elviyya Chalaby wrote about Azerbaijan: "here there is twelve more kind of sauces and "zvars" are known".

Sauces from sour milk (gatih) and garlic, garlic and vinegar, which are brought to the density of honey and soured cream, juices of fruits, are mostly used. Sauces, which are made on the base of dry pastila and lavashana (dry pastille), are used with different kind of dishes. "Narsharab" (sauce from pomegranate juice) or sauce on the base of narsharab is usually served with fish.

In Azeri kitchen menu is composed depending on such factors as season, weather, age of place, life traditions, customers, place etc. It is known different group of meal: aran (lowland) meal, diet meal for woman in childbirth, meal for fiancée, meal for children, young people and old men.

Our national kitchen is very various. It is known about 200 dishes of Azerbaijan kitchen. From the evidence of English traveler Anthony Jenikson "Abdulla-khan from Shemakha was given 150 types of dishes, after that 140 types of dishes were taken away and 140 more were brought at once".

Such variety in kitchen created householders and specialists. In addition, division of specialists created such variety.

Elviyya Chalabi reminds that here were working 12 cook shops, which were connected with the names of 12 imams, where thousand of people were working. Bakers, chorekchi, yukhasalan, shatir, ashchi, pitichi, kebabchi, chaychi, halvachi, confectioners, sherbetdar etc. Specialists are called from the name of this group of dishes and meals work at our food enterprises up to now. Such internal division of labor and its development

conducted to increasing of quantity of one kind of dishes. For example, 200 types of pilafs, 30 types of dolmas, 20 types of lyulya kebabs and so on are known etc.

The most long livers are Azerbaijanis, who created the most healthy kitchen, because without healthy kitchen impossible to live long.

The culture of Azerbaijani kitchen allows eating with hands. Our thin type of bread ("yukha", "sangah") is wrapped as spoon and with its liquid part of dish is eaten. In addition, their hard parts of the dish are wrapped into such thin bread.

Eating with hands has many advantages.

1. At the end of every finger of hands there are very sensitive nervous endings. That is why extra sense people work with hands and blinds "see" with hands. Hands feel the warmth composition of the consistence of the dish.

2. When dish is brought to the mouth with a spoon or a fork, we can burn or cool our mouth. During eating with hands, meal goes to the mouth at the temperature nearly to the temperature of our body. At such temperature, the taste receptors and ferments work better in our mouth. Such meal is eaten not quickly, but very slowly, chewed carefully. That is why in Islam it is forbidden to use hot meals, it is recommended to eat them at normal temperature, warm.

3. During eating with metallic forks and spoons ions of metal destroy fluorine and iodine and this bring to the spoiling of teeth.

4. Eating with hands makes everybody observe high hygienic rules, because you should wash your hands thoroughly. In addition, all these steps make the process of eating something like little holiday, because it prepares a man psychologically to the long receiving of meal.

Accordingly, to the traditions after fine cleaning of your hands, you should put your fingers into rose water again.

It is necessary to mark that it is possible to define the state of the kitchen by its influence on the kitchen of neighbor peoples. If China kitchen influenced Asian kitchen greatly (Thailand, Malaysia) and French influenced European Azerbaijani kitchen has become the base for neighbor peoples' cuisine. Thus, Azerbaijani kitchen stands in one range with China and French kitchens by its influence.

However, in Azerbaijan kitchen, the most important things are not dishes, pleasant drinks and fruits; main part of our kitchen is the guest. In the base of philosophy for Azerbaijan kitchen stands the Guest.

So, welcome to be our Guest!

**Author T.I. Amiraslanov. "Azerbaijani culinary". 2011, P. 27-29.  
«Azerbaijan. 100 Questions Answered», Baku, 2005, P. 142**

### Azerbaijani cuisine history

Azerbaijan - one of the oldest centers of civilization. Azerbaijani culture goes back thousands of years deep.

"Father of History" Herodotus, who lived in the V century BC, said that in the land of Azerbaijan in ancient times were established remarkable monuments. On the aesthetic tastes and outlook of the ancient ancestors of Azerbaijanis throughout the ages show and rock carvings in Gobustan, Nakhichevan, Apsheron, the findings of archaeologists in the area of one of the earliest human settlements, Azyhs koy cave.

The long and thorny path passed Azeri people for thousands of years. A lot of testing has made the ancient country of lights; many times it became a place of crossing "copies" and took to their boards with new strikes fated his destiny. But despite all the predictions in each case, the ruins left behind by conquerors or geological hazards, and again revived the new culture of the province.

Cramped on three sides by mountains with stone hands, but on the other hand washed by the moist breath of the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan is a unique geographical layout of our planet. The diversity of terrain and sea are represented by a factor 9 of the 11 existing in the world climate types.

In Azerbaijan, you can watch all four seasons. So lush vegetation of the humid subtropical zone next to the eternal snows and glaciers Shahdagh and Murovdaga, filled with spring scent in the woods Ismayilly, Lachin, Kelbajar with hot-Mil, Mugan and Shirvan steppes, fog and rain over the fertile valleys, tea, and perfumed citrus plantations in foothills Talish-hot and gusty north-Khazri-Apsheron.

The natural contrasts, the wealth of natural resources, complex backgrounds, giving Azerbaijan features unique geographical identity. Contributed to this independent state, it has played a significant role in its further development.

Azerbaijan is considered to be the long edge. And there really are many people, who are over 100 years old. Scientists explain this phenomenon of many ingredients: a favorable climate, lifestyle, and, last but not least, a healthy diet and proper nutrition, an important factor, positively affecting the efficiency and the life and largely determines the duration of life.

The art of cooking in Azerbaijan is rooted in the depths of centuries. Archaeologists in many areas of Azerbaijan found primitive stone tools, made in the time of the Stone Age. At the sites of ancient human found stone axes, hammers, utensils and other utensils, indicating the emergence of pockets of pastoral and primitive farming. These ancient objects, which our ancestors met their physical needs as well as images of Gobustan

rock-a kind of ethnographic encyclopedia of people, helping to penetrate the secrets of the times of human civilization.

In Azerbaijan, as early as the Neolithic population of cultivated wheat and barley, and employees, along with meat the main raw material for cooking. In the Bronze Age to the development of pastoralism in the diet ancestors were composed and products from milk. The Azeris have since time immemorial enjoyed clay churn. Later in the evolution of improved nutrition, culinary ability of the Azerbaijani people.

Azerbaijan cuisine belongs to one of the most interesting cuisines worldwide. It is well known among the Eastern cuisines, but some of the dishes are included in the menu of international cuisine. A lot of it is historically based, as appropriate, on the relevant national tastes, lifestyles, etc. Azerbaijan cuisine dishes are mentioned in ancient written sources, records of travelers and explorers.

Azerbaijan's geographic location at the crossroads of ancient trade routes and the busiest north-south and from east to west on the one hand contributed to the penetration of the generous gifts of the Azerbaijani lands on the world market, but on the other - the recognition of animal and plant diversity in Azerbaijan produced hard-working and skilled hands of the Azerbaijani laborers.





Historically, the life of the Azerbaijani people run and developed in close proximity with other people-neighbors, the Georgians, Armenians, Persians, Turks, and Lezgins. This, of course, is due to the similarity of their national cuisines. However, the Azeri cuisine and has its own distinctive national flavor, reflected in the specificity of cooking techniques, aromatic taste, color and traditions of the Azerbaijani feast.

With the growth of material well-being of people in the Soviet years has improved the range and quality of food products. Azerbaijan kitchen on the composition and diversity of dishes is one of the most delicious and healthy cuisine. It is notable for an abundance of all kinds of meat, fish and vegetable dishes, complemented by aromatic herbs and spices.

The most sophisticated gourmets coming to Azerbaijan from different corners of the world will come to the delight of the thin delicacy of taste and flavor of dishes Azerbaijani cuisine. Azerbaijani cuisine and dishes are original and unique. They are not confused with other dishes of national cuisines. It's no secret that the cuisine of Azerbaijan enjoys continued popularity among other nations, as well as purely Azerbaijani dishes as dolma, bozbash, bozartma, chyhyrtma, hashil, shish kebab, Petey, pilaf, govurma included in the national menu neighboring Caucasian peoples. In turn, through cultural exchanges, some dishes people-neighbors are widespread in the Azerbaijani media.

Even in the second half of XIX century and beginning of XX century in the Shaki famous master of preparation under the name of Petey Horuz-ogly. In order to taste his delicious piti people from all over Azerbaijan specially came to Sheki. Petey in Shaki prepared from mutton bones bases with the addition of saffron. Piti prepared from of old in South Azerbaijan (Tabriz), and they rightly consider it a national dish of Azeri people. Later this dish under a different name was included in the cuisines of neighboring peoples.

Azerbaijan cooking on cooking characteristics and taste of food, as well as the use of sharp spices and seasonings is much closer to the eastern cuisine.

Currently, Azerbaijan cookery, preserving the specific features of the old ways of cooking, has modified them taking into account the modern culinary demands.

The Azerbaijani national dishes have long been preparing for copper utensils. And now in many areas and rural areas of Azerbaijan dishes cooked in the copper pan, turn out tastier. Therefore, items of the Azerbaijani national cuisine (pot, durshlag, bowl, tray, skimmer, polovnik, etc.) mainly made of copper. It should be noted that, as in the past, and now, copper pots and other utensils in special workshops periodically treated with tin (tinning) to prevent falling into the food, and therefore in the body, large quantities of copper. Some national dishes in the cafes and restaurants are served in special earthenware (pitishnitse), where they are preparing. Most of the national dishes prepared from meat of lamb, beef and poultry. Meals of minced meat are widely distributed. The sea, lakes and rivers of the republic are rich sources of fish of various species of fish, especially sturgeon and stellate sturgeon. Sturgeon and flake fish are basically used in Azeri cuisine.

Azerbaijan cuisine is famous for an abundance of vegetables, especially green vegetables, eggplant, sweet peppers (biber), cabbage, spinach, sorrel, beets, radish, onions, cucumbers, green beans, etc. The range of national dishes varies with many culinary products from rice, flour, vegetables and green vegetables.

In the Azerbaijani cuisine is widely used by local spices such as saffron, cumin, fennel, anise, bay leaf, coriander, and the spicy flavor leaf vegetables as mint, dill, parsley, celery, tarragon, basil, savory, thyme, etc. In the Azerbaijani cuisine, with the addition of saffron prepare 50 different dishes and 10 different flour confectionery products.

To improve the taste of foods commonly used lemons, olives, olives, edible acid, abgora, azgil-Sharab, narsharab, cherry-plum, albuvara, mountain dogwood, Akhtala, dried apricots, lavashana, sumac, etc.

Salads of fresh vegetables in the kitchen of Azerbaijan have a special place. When cooking with fresh lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet peppers, coriander and basil, cut the vegetables very finely. You eat this salad with the main dishes.

In the modern Azerbaijani cuisine from salads and snacks available salad "Khazar", "Azerbaijan", "Bahar", salad of red caviar, Shaki salad, kyukyu of greens, kyukyu of Kutum, kyukyu of nuts, beans fisindzhan of maroon and etc. As cold snacks are served to the table separately for different liquid and a second different salting meat dishes and pickles, pickled garlic, chili, eggplant, hyafta-bedzhar, onions, marinated with thorns, tomatoes, cucumbers, etc.



In the Azerbaijani national cuisine there are more than 30 titles of the first dishes. This is all kinds of meat dishes (piti, kyufta-bozbash, shorba, etc.), dishes of sour milk and greens (dovga, ovduh, dogramach, Balvi, etc.).

In the manufacture of certain dishes, each prepared in a separate portion of utensils (Petey), or in a small number of servings (dyushbara, Sulu-Hingan etc.).

Unlike conventional soups Azerbaijan first courses of their consistency are more concentrated and dense, as they usually contain a small amount of broth.

A distinctive feature of the Azeri cuisine is that some national dishes replace both the first and second meals. For example, piti, kyufta-bozbash etc. The broth is served separately, and then the rest (meat, peas, potatoes) as a main dish, but cooked together.

Another characteristic of the Azerbaijani liquid foods is used in their manufacture fat, which usually lay in a dish of finely minced form.

For the first filling dishes tomato paste or tomato sauce is used very rarely. Instead, this summer, use fresh tomatoes, and winter-dried alchu (to make sour taste) and spices with a coloring matter (saffron, sarykek).



In Azerbaijan, there are a wide variety of kitchen flour first dish-Sulu-Hingan, hamrashi, umach, kyurza, dyushbara, etc.

Widespread dishes made from fresh and sour milk or katyka, such as firni, syudlu syyyg, dovga, kelekosh, ovduh etc.

Main courses are prepared mainly from the lamb, as well as poultry, fowl, vegetables and rice. One of the most popular dishes in the Azerbaijan – is plov. There are about 40 recipes for cooking this dish. Depending on the nature and type of additions pilav is called: kourma pilaf (with lamb stew), plov sobza kourma (with stewed mutton and greens), toyug pilaf (with chicken), the width of pilaf (with sweet dried fruits), syudli pilaf (rice boiled in milk), etc.

From the second course should emphasize barbecues: basturma-kebab, skewers of teriyaki, barbecue amateur, skewers of liver and kidney prepared from natural meat; lyulya-kebab, Tawali-kebab, Sham-kebab, and

others are made from minced meat.

From the second pastry dishes are widespread hashil, Hingan with meat, syuzma Hingan, yarpag Hingan, kutaby (with meat, pumpkin, greens), chyudyu etc.

Many other dishes are prepared from fish. Shashlik Sturgeon, Kutum in Azerbaijan, kyukyu of Kutum, balyg chyhyrtma, stuffed fish, boiled, fried, stewed, balyg-pilau, pilaf with sevruga and balyg mutyadzhyam - the most common fish in Azerbaijan.

Second dishes made from meat, fish, vegetables and flour, there are over 100 items. Such dishes Azerbaijan cookery as pilaf, Petey, Lula-kebab, stuffed fish on the Azeri and others have the deserved attention in the world.

Peculiar manner of filing of dishes: first, by tradition is served tea, followed by a second dish, the Azerbaijanis at banquets, celebrations and weddings are not usually the first dish is served, to the same table every possible greens, fresh tomatoes and cucumbers (salted or pickled in winter). Often, after dinner (especially pilau) served dovga, arguing that dovga prepared from sour milk and greens, promotes better learning of the previous meal (rice, meat, etc.).

In Azerbaijan kitchen Sweet (third) dishes have very limited use and therefore their range is negligible. From the sweet dishes are prepared firni, sudzhug, tarah and kuymag.

Traditionally, meal, i.e. breakfast, lunch or dinner ends with sweets. "Food," said Ivan Pavlov, "started with pleasure because of the need for food, have to finish them, despite the satisfaction of needs, with the object of that pleasure is a substance that did not require a work of the digestive ... sugar." Based on these provisions there have long been in Azerbaijan vow ends sherbet or sweets.

The Azerbaijani national confectionery products are divided into three groups - flour, jelly and sweet products.

To the flour products include: Shekera-borer, pahlava, Shekera-churek, kurabe Baku, roll Ordubad, kyata Karabakh, tyhma Cuban, kyulcha Lenkeran, mutaki Shamakha, pahlava Nakhichevan and the other national flour products comprise more than 30 titles, with in each area has its own special products.

In Baku has long been preparing Shekera-buru, Baku pahlavu, Shekera-churek and other sweets. A special place is occupied by Sheki sweets. This pahlava Shaki, peshvenk, phone (telhalva) gyrmabadam and others, which is used in the production of rice flour, sugar, nut kernel, butter, egg whites and spices.

From jelly sweets in Azerbaijan are preparing Shekera-pendir, parvarda, kozinaki of nuts, kinzovy nogul, Goz paste, etc.

From "sweet" sweets should be noted Turkish delight (with various additions) nogul bitmish, filler figs, sherbet, feshmek etc.

In Azerbaijan, the most common drink is sherbet. To prepare the sorbet using sugar, lemon, saffron, seeds of mint and basil, as well as different fruits.

Azerbaijani to receive the basic food drink tea, mainly black. A long tradition in Azerbaijan: immediately after the arrival of guests, serve them tea. The advantage of this tradition is that drinking tea in the crowded company has to communicate enjoyment. Tea in Azerbaijan is a symbol of warm hospitality.

By tea served from quince jam, figs, watermelon crusts, apricots, cherries, peaches, plums, kizils, walnuts, strawberries, blackberries, grapes, berries of the mulberry, etc. If tea is sometimes added in small amounts dried leaves of inflorescence savory, clove, cardamon and other spices, which give the tea the special flavor.

Out of cinnamon (darchyn tea) and ginger (zyandzhafil tea) is also preparing a special tea. In recent years, has become a popular coffee and cooked in the east.

Sometimes the tea adds rose water. This gives the tea the special flavor and well quenches thirst. Rose water is also a special drink, sherbet, which is called in the Sheki-Zakatal'skoy Zone ovshala. Azerbaijan is rich in rare sources of mineral waters. "Turshu-su", "Isti-Su, Sirab, Darydag and others have therapeutic value. Characteristically, "Badamly" is currently the only republic in the canteen of water. That has been universally recognized far beyond the republic. On the territory of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic, there are about 140 mineral springs.

From generation to generation, evolved and developed Azerbaijani cookery, which were typical dishes with high nutritional qualities and spicy taste, beautiful appearance.

We hope that this site will create the visitors a detailed and thorough understanding of the Azerbaijani kitchen and help them in everyday domestic concerns.



**Ahmedov I.A. From the book "The Azerbaijan cookery".  
Ishyg publishing. P.55-56.  
<http://www.aserikook.ee/cuisine-2>**



## Our National kitchen

The Azerbaijan cuisine belongs to one of the most interesting cuisines in the world. It is widely known among other oriental cuisines and some of its dishes were included in the menu of international cuisines. The Azerbaijan cuisine has its own originality and national colour specified by cooking techniques, flavor and traditions of the Azerbaijan feasts.

The Azerbaijan cookery has preserved old cooking methods although has modified them taking into account up-to-date techniques. The Azerbaijan national dishes have been cooked in the copper utensils from time immemorial. In addition, even now in many areas of Azerbaijan the meal is cooked in copper pans. They say that dishes prepared in these pans are more delicious. In cafes and restaurants, some national dishes are served in special crockery in which the dish is prepared. The majority of national dishes are mutton, beef, poultry and minced meat.

The republic is rich in various fish sources especially *sevruga* (starred sturgeon) and sturgeon. The sturgeon and scale types of fish are mainly used in Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijan cuisine is famous for its vegetables, firstly vegetable greens, eggplants, paprika (*biber*), spinach, sorrel, green haricot, etc. The variety on national dishes includes many items such as rice, flour, vegetables and vegetable green.

The feature of the Azerbaijan cuisine is using such spices as saffron, caraway seeds, fennel, anise, capsicum, laurel, coriander and spice taste leaf vegetables as mint, dill, parsley, celery, tarragon, basil, savory, thyme etc. The national cuisine has 50 different dishes and 10 different flour confectionary with the saffron addition. Such seasoning as lemon, olives, food acids, *abgora*, *azgilsharab*, *narsharab*, cherry plums, *elbukhara*, *gora*, *kizil-akhta*, *kuraga* (dried apricots), *lavashana*, *sumac* and others are widely used to enhance the food taste and smell.

A special place in the Azerbaijan cuisine belongs to salads prepared from fresh vegetables. When making salads of fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, capsicum, coriander and basil these ingredients are finely cut. Salads are served together with main course.



Pickled garlic, capsicum, eggplants, *khyafta-bejar*, pickled onion with sloe, pickled grapes, tomatoes are served separately accompanying different soups and meat courses.

The Azerbaijan national cuisine includes more than 30 kinds of soups. Courses as *piti*, *kuftha-bozbash*, *shorba* or dishes prepared these various meat from sour milk and greens as *dovga*, *ovdukh*, *dogramach*, *bolva* etc. When cooking some of dishes, each of them is prepared separately (*piti*) or in small quantities (*dushbara*, *sulu-khingal*).

The Azerbaijan first courses differ from usual soups by their concentrated and dense consistency because they usually contain a small amount of broth. The specific feature of the Azerbaijan cookery is that some of national dishes can be used as the first and main course (*piti*, *kuftha-bozbash*). In this case the broth is served separately and then the rest (meat, peas, potatoes) as the main course but they are cooked together. The other

feature of national soups is the application of sheep fat, which is put into the dish in fine-cut pieces. Instead of tomato paste for the first courses fresh tomatoes are used in summer time and in winter – dried cherry plum (to add *sourish* taste) and spices with colorants (saffron, *sary-kek*). There are many different first flour courses as *sulu-khingal*, *khamrashi*, *umach*, *kurza*, *dushbara* etc. Fresh and sour milk are widely used to make *dovga*, *firni*, *sudlu syiig*, *kelekosh*, *ovdukh* etc. Main courses are mostly prepared of mutton and of poultry, game birds, vegetables and rice. The most popular main course in Azerbaijan is pilaf. There are about 40 recipes for preparing this dish. Depending on the type of additions pilafs are named as *kaurma-pilaf* (with stew mutton), *sabza kaurma* (with stew mutton and greens), *toyug-pilaf* (with chicken), *shirin-pilaf* (with sweet dried fruit), *sudlu pilaf* (rice cooked in milk) etc. Among main courses *shashliks* should be distinguished by following types:



*shashlik-basturma*, fillet *shashlik*, choice *shashlik*, liver and kidney *shashlik*, *shashlik a la Kars* which are prepared from natural meat; *lulya-kebab*, *tava-kebab*, *sham-kebab* and others are prepared from mince meat. Of popularity are the second flour courses such as *khashil*, *khingal* with meat, *suzamkhingal*, *yarpag khingal*, *kutaby* (with meat, pumpkin, greens), *chudu* etc. Many second courses are prepared of fish. Sturgeon *shashlik*, *kutum a la Azerbaijan*, *kuku of kutum*, *balyg chygyrtma*, stuffed fish, boiled, fried and stew fish, fish-pilaf, starred sturgeon *pilaf*, *balyg mutyanjan* are the most popular fish dishes. There are more than 100 names of main courses prepared of meat, fish, vegetables and flour.

Such dishes of the Azerbaijan cookery as *piti*, *lula-kebab*, stuffed fish a la Azerbaijan etc., are merited all over the world. Dish serving is very original: as a tradition tea is served first then main courses come. In many areas after dinner (especially after *pilaf*) they serve *dovga*. *Dovga* prepared of sour milk and greens promotes better assimilation of previous courses (rice, meat etc.). Sweet dishes as the third dishes in the Azerbaijan cookery are very limited and their assortment is small. Sweet dishes include *firni*, *sudzhug*, *tarakh* and *kuimag*.

Any meal is completed with a sweet course. Hence, since olden days in Azerbaijan dinner is completed with sherbet or sweets. The Azerbaijan national confectionary is divided into three groups: flour, caramel and sweet type articles. The flour articles are *shaker-bura*, *pakhlava*, *shaker-churek*, *curabye a la Baku*, *nan a la Azerbaijan*, *roll a la Ordubad*, *kyata a la Karabakh*, *tykhma a la Kuba*, *kulcha a la Lankaran*, *mutaky a la Shamakha*, and *pakhlava a la Nakhchivan* etc. There are more than 30 varieties of the national confectionary whereupon each area has its own special articles. *Shaker-bura*, *pakhlava a la Baku*, *shaker churek* and other things have been prepared in Baku since olden days. A very special place belongs to Sheki sweets. These are *pakhlava a la Sheki*, *peshmek*, *tel (terkhalva)*, *gyrmabadam* etc. To make them rice flour, sugar, nut kernel, butter, egg-white and spice are used. Caramel type sweets include *sheker-pendir*, *parvarda*, *kozinaks* of nuts, *nogul* of coriander, *goz-khalva* (more than 15 names). Sweet type articles include *rahat lacoum* (with different additives *nogul bitmish*, jellied fig, solid sherbet, *feshmek* etc.).



The most popular soft drinks in Azerbaijan are *sherbets*. They are made of sugar, lemon, saffron, seeds of mint and basil and other fruit. From the time of immemorial, there is a tradition in Azerbaijan: when guests come, tea is served first. Tea in Azerbaijan is a symbol of warm hospitality. Tea is accompanied with various jams as quince, fig, water melon peels, apricot, white cherry, cherry, peach, plum, Cornelian berry, walnut, strawberry, blackberry, grapes, mulberry. Sometimes when making tea dried leaves or flowers of savory, clove, cardamom and other spices are added to give a special flavour. Special tea is also made of cinnamon (*darchin*) and ginger. Sometimes rose water is added to tea.

<http://www.mct.gov.az/?/en/metbex/2167/47>

### Diversity of the meals in the Azerbaijani cuisine

Our national cuisine is extremely rich. Some 2000 meals are known in the Azerbaijani cuisine. According to Anthony Jackson, the English voyager, when he was a guest of Abdulla khan in Shamakhy, 150 types of meals had been served for his one lunch, and, after taking the table-cloth back at the end of the lunch, he was produced 140 types of meal. Such a rich cuisine had been historically created by housewives and specialists. Such diversity was, at the same time, possible through the help of labour division between the specialists. Ottoman traveller Evliya Chalabi recalls that “thousands of people had been working here in 12 cook-houses associated with 12 imams.”. He referred to them calling them as baker, “*yukha salan*” (a man rolling out thin sheets of dough), *shatyr* (baker), *ashchi* (cook), “*piti*” cooker, *kebab roaster*, *tea-server*, “*halva*” maker, *confectioner*, “*sherbet*” maker etc. Specialists carrying the names of the same meal and products groups are working today at out catering establishments. Such internal division of labour and its development has caused the increase in the number of meals. For example, there are 200 types of pilaf, 20 types of dolma and 20 types of lyulya kebab.



Since the ancient times, meats of neat and small cattle are used. The sources have shown the use of horse meat at the early stages of development of the cuisine. Today Azerbaijanis do not use horse meat in the meal. Old people so far remember the taste of camel meat, especially *gutabs* made with camel meat. Meat of wild animals and of cattle is widely used in our cuisine. Meat of male sheep, two-three-year old sheep, castrated animals are considered to be softer and more tasteful. Meat of animals browsing on upland and foothill districts’ grass-plots, which resembles white marble, is given preference. In such meat fat drops are in the cell structure itself. Fresh meat is preferred to frozen meat. In addition to meat, fat of a sheep’s tail and auxiliary products are also used in meals.

In order to keep meat for a long time, it is cut into small pieces and fried together with tail fat and filled in wineskin, special earthen wares and poured over melted fat. In addition, overdried meat also may be stocked.



Meat of poultry and wild birds, as well as their eggs is used in our cuisine. Wild birds hunting begins after the snow has melted and beaks and legs of birds turned red from cold. Poultry such as goose, turkey, duck and chicken are widely used in meals. In many cases birds are placed in special cages so that they did not move much. Here they are fed with feeding stuffs containing more fat (corn, sunflower seed etc.). In this case, bird meat becomes fatty and tender. Bird fat is considered to be of better quality as compared with animal fat. Bird meat and animal meat are cooked wholly, in the form of large and small pieces, separately or together with other products.

Since the ancient times, forcemeat is also used in our cuisine. In order to prepare *dolma*, *kufta* etc., and meat should be put through a mincing machine. Caspian Sea, Kur, Araz and other rivers, Goy-Gol, Jeyranbatan, Goyja and other lakes have enriched our cuisine with delicious meals made from fish. Many types of various meals prepared from fried, scalded, stuffed fishes adorn our tables. Fish meals are prepared from a whole fish, its large and small pieces, as well as stuffed fish. Black, red and pressed caviars are widely used.

Of the bird products, eggs of hen are used more in meals. Eggs of quail are being used in dietary cuisine. “*Scrambled eggs*”, “*chalkhama*”, “*kyu-kyu*”, “*chyghyrtma*” etc. adorn our tables. Azerbaijani milk cuisine has very wide assortment and is rich. Milk, “*ağız südü*” (milk of a cow, which has just calved), “colostrums”, “sour clotted milk”, “cheese”, “dug”, “cream”, “*chiye*”, “buttermilk”, “curd” and other milk products and meals prepared from them – *dovga*, *dogramaj*, *pilaf* from buttermilk, *atlama*, milky porridge and other meals have since the ancient times enriched our cuisine.



The Azerbaijanis treat bread- different breads such as *yukha*, *fatir*, *lavash*, *khangal*, *khamrali*, *tendir chorak* etc. with different form and thickness, which are the main wealth of our table, with great respect. If bread is served, Azerbaijanis first, as a sign of respect, reach for the bread, because they think bread is superior to everything. They respect bread as much as Quran and swear by bread.

Floury meals and culinary products play a special role in our cuisine. It should be noted that most of the meals prepared from meat and dough related to all-Turkish people. Historian Farig Sumer tried in his book "Oghuz people" to prove that saljugs were Turks and brings one more example that saljugs ate "*tutmaj*" (meal made from noodles and beans), "*khangal*" (watery *khangal* and leaf-*khangal*), "*gurza*", "*dushbara*", "*khashyl*", "*horra*" and other floury meals. In the meantime, these meals were basically prepared in winter.

As the weather became warmer, meat and floury meals were replaced by meals made from cultivated and wild plants. Winter weed, spinach, leaves of beet, mint, eggplants, tomato etc. were used to prepare "*kata*", "*suyug*", "*dovga*", "*ajabsandal*" etc. and various salads. Meals prepared from grain-crops and leguminous plants such as "porridge", "*pilaf*", "*govurgha*", "*hadik*" etc. take their worthy places.

However, the most respected meal is pilaf. In Azerbaijan, which can be considered one of the native country of rice, there are about 200 types of pilaf. For some districts of Azerbaijan rice replaces the bread. For example, in the past people in Lankaran were not using bread at all.

Sweets, confectioner's products and halva have their special place in the Azerbaijani cuisine. The cause of this was the production of sugar in Azerbaijan since the old times. Sugar had been received from sugar cane. It was brought into Azerbaijan by prince Potyomkin from Russia by the order of Ekaterina. This sugar was called "wooden sugar". This type of sugar was received from sugar-beet. Azerbaijanis received this type of sugar in a cleaned form, although refinement of sugar in Azerbaijan occurred in X Century. In addition to these types of sugar, fruit sugar- *nabat* were also produced. Large amount of honey and types of *bakmaz* received by means of cooking fruit

juices had improved the assortment of the sweets. Our housewives and meal specialists are pride of "*baklava*", "*shakarbura*", "*rahat lukum*", "*richal*", "*sujuk*", "*peshmak*", "*peshvang*", "*guymag*", "*gatlama*", "*yukha halvasy*" etc. Abundance of sweet basis (honey, sugar, *bakmaz*) and fruits have caused the creation of delicious products in our cuisine. They include various jams, stewed fruits (compotes), sugared products prepared from cornelian cherry, quince, cherry, fig, and kernel of a nut and petals of rose.

Preservation of vegetables by means of pickling and salting has been widely applied in Azerbaijan. Curing and dietary cuisine has its special place in the Azerbaijani cuisine. "*Umaj*", "*khash*", "*horra*", "*guymag*" and other meals had been used since the old times as a factor of treatment. Main part of the cuisine consists of the meals for parties and holidays. Meals from malt are prepared only at Novruz Bayram, "*qovut*" only in Khydyr Nabi Bayram (Holiday), "*hadik*" and "*govurga*" (browned wheat) only when a child is cutting teeth, or old men over hundred loose their teeth, specially preserved watermelon is cut at "*kichik chilla*" (a period of twenty days of winter).

Among daily light snacks of Azerbaijani cuisine may be shown "*yakhma*" (open sandwich), "*durmak*" (a thin bread – *yukha* or *lavash* – fold up in the form of a pipe or bread baked in *tendir*, *khamraly* and other types of breads cut in half lengthwise and stuffed with butter, cheese etc.). It is also called "*bukma*" (from the word "fold up") or "*jibli*" (cutting bread in half lengthwise in the form of a pocket) accordingly. *Durmak* is served both in cold and also in hot condition.

Appetizers-salads should also be mentioned among the snacks. Desserts (fruits, dried fruits, nut, hazelnut etc. may) are served at the end of the meals. One of the factors defining the richness and diversity of development of a cuisine is sauces and broths. Famous Ottoman traveller Evliya Chalabi wrote in XVII: "There are, in addition, 12 types of sauces and broths here". Sauces made from sour milk and garlic, vinegar and garlic, condensed honey or cream, fruit juices are used widely. Sauces prepared from marshmallow sticks (is prepared from thin fruit porridge) and *lavasahana* (dry marshmallow sticks) are used in various meals. *Narsharab* (sauce cooked from pomegranate juice) or sauce on the *narsharab* base is served together with fish meals.

Menu in the Azerbaijani cuisine is usually made up depending on the time of a year, weather, age, life style and place of location of a consumer etc. Groups of meals such as meals for lowland, dietary meals, meal







## Factors that have had influence on the emergence and development of the Azerbaijani cuisine

The Azerbaijani cuisine has been one of the ancient, rich and tasty cuisines in the world. The Azerbaijani cuisine is not only the basis for the meals and methods of their preparation, but is also the material culture. The Azerbaijani cuisine comprises the culture of cuisine, its history, philosophy, meal psychology, customs, physiology, hygiene, chemistry, equipment, ethics, aesthetics, poetry and various other aspects, as well as practical skills created by the Azerbaijani people in the territories where they had historically lived in full harmony.

The Azerbaijani cuisine has been created by the genius of the Azerbaijani in today's Republic of Azerbaijan, Southern (Iranian) Azerbaijan, Iravan Khanate, Zangazour and Goyja provinces, where Azerbaijanis were forced out of their homes, in the territories of districts (Borchaly) where Azerbaijanis of Georgia have lived since the old times, in the territory of Dagestan, including Darband, which had been the centre for former Azerbaijani people, and surrounding territories. Of course, the most important factor having an impact on the creation of the cuisine is the climate. It is sufficient, in this connection, to mention that 8 climate zones exist in the territory of Azerbaijan, and these conditions, in its turn, the diversity and richness of the flora and fauna of this region creates favourable conditions for lives and development of all animals and plants. And they are the basis for the creation of a rich cuisine.

In addition to using wild animals, birds, fishes and plants in creation of a rich cuisine, production of agricultural products is required in the later periods of development of the society. For this, a population has to have a high level of cropping and cattle-breeding culture. For example, complex meals made from dough and grain-crops could only have appeared if the need for production of agricultural products had been over the need for cooking bread and products that would replace bread. Only in cases when there had been the



need for keeping grain for sufficiently long term, there were opportunity to carry out experiments with complex meals and create them. As this had continued for centuries, gradually new meals appeared and remained in the memory of the people. Only the existence of “*chatan*” (archaic form of colander) takes the history of preparing meals from grain-crops back 5-6 thousand years B.C. and allows us to talk about stable crops and, accordingly, high level of farming.

Production of large amount of grain products talks about high level of farming culture, existence of irrigation systems and development of cattle-breeding etc. All this could not have been possible without having stable life style. It should be mentioned that in Southern Caucasus raw products necessary for cuisine had mainly been produced by Azerbaijanis having high level of farming and cattle-breeding culture. For example, Georgian scientist M.I.Tkeshelov wrote in 1888 about the Azerbaijanis living in the territory of Iravan khanate: "people in villages are engaged in grain-growing, farming and gardening. Of course Azerbaijanis not only engage in cattle-breeding on plains, summer pastures in mountains, they could be named as farming people as they live at the banks of rivers. We can say that Azerbaijanis live everywhere at the banks of rivers, while Armenians are settled on uplands. E.K. Artamanov mentioned in 1889 when he wrote about Iran that “Grain is mainly supplied by Azerbaijan, Khorasan, Kirmanshah, Phars, Isfahan and Yazd”. G.V.Sologub wrote in 1852: “Armenians have mainly focused their activity on trade and collecting wealth. And Azerbaijanis, in turns, have focused their activity on farming and cattle breeding according to the places of residence and are the main producing element in Transcaucasus”.

I.V. Segalov mentioned in 1902 that “Muslim people mainly live at the banks of Bazarchay, Ayrichay, Bargushad, Okhuchay rivers and their branches, as well as of Araz River; and Armenians have scattered on uplands in places with sharp weather conditions. The majority of Armenian men (from 15 to 40) go each year to the coast of Caspian Sea, Baku and Tbilisi for earnings. Here they are attracted by a job of servant and street life. As regards the Azerbaijanis, they live on plains and in good conditions for farming”. This, of course, was in the progress of a natural process. Until other nations arrived, local population had settled in productive lands and been using them. This is confirmed by an Armenian scientist G.A. Yezov (1908): “New homeland did not welcome Armenians, because they were very little lands for an independent state”.

Notes of travellers, scientists, traders, diplomats and others, as well as archaeological excavations prove that since the ancient times people cultivated here large volumes of grain, rice, küncüt, soy beans, beetroot, melon, watermelon, grape, apple, pomegranate, quince and other similar farming, gardening and

melon/watermelon/gourd growing products. Not only local population had been provided with these products of plant-growing, as well as fresh and dried fish, caviar, honey, butter and other cattle-breeding products, but these products had also been exported to neighbouring, close and far countries. This is an indisputable fact that for centuries-long the Caucasian markets were supplied with cattle-breeding and plant-growing products produced by Azerbaijanis. For example, Y.D.Angabadze and N.G.Volkova wrote referring to the sources in the book “Old Tbilisi”: Cheese was brought to Tbilisi markets by Ossetians and Azerbaijanis, and people from Borchaly (Azerbaijanis) too traded with cheese. There was a great demand in Tbilisi markets for salmon brought from Azerbaijan, “Goyja Lake” (After giving that area to Armenia it was renamed to “Sevan Lake”).

Thus, the Azerbaijanis had been the main nation to have the possibility to create and develop a rich cuisine in Transcaucasus and strong raw product basis for cuisine. Attachment of the source of the large majority of the meals in Armenian, Georgian and Persian cuisines to Azerbaijani Turks, in terms of name, is just explained by this factor. After the climate, the main factor having an influence on cuisine is the hearth. For example, in Slavic cuisine, especially in Russian cuisine, a number of sweet meals cookies, meals cooked in water or scalded meals have appeared with the possibilities of the Russian oven. Creation and development of Azerbaijani cuisine is largely associated with the existence of many types of open and closed hearths such as



*tendir*, hearth, fire-place, kulfa (an oven built of bricks to bake bread), *chala-ojag* (pit-hearth), *saj* (iron disk for baking bread), brazier etc.

Unique tableware's and kitchen utensils have also had certain influence on our cuisine. Even today our housewives have been using various table wares made of animal skin, stone, wood, clay, glass, metal etc. In addition to gas and electricity, firewood, charcoal, manure briquette etc. are used in the Azerbaijani cuisine as fuel. Use of briquette is especially interesting. In places where briquette is used as fuel, cutting trees

and shrubs for fuel is prevented. At places where briquette is used there are no lung diseases and respiratory ducts. According to Indian doctors' researches, the smoke generated as a result of burning briquette has antiseptic properties.

One of the indices of the level of a nation's cuisine culture is how this nation treats water and its purification and their capability to use water. Since the old times, the Azerbaijani people have divided water into two parts, white and black. Water containing many salts, ions, metals is hard – black water. And water containing fewer salts, ions, metals is soft-white water.

Only soft white water is used in preparation of drinks and meals. Weeping willow is planted at the banks of rivers, irrigation ditches, canals, because roots, branches and other parts of a willow that have antiseptic properties make water healthier. For this purpose, branches of willow is cut and immersed in containers with water. Sometimes a silver item is thrown into water. In the absence of them, stone of apricot is thrown into water in order to cause settling of additional substances contained in water. May be the first and best natural water purifier in the history has been used by Azerbaijanis. This is water stone used for purification of water. Water stone is a pyramid-like black or white stone, which is craved to make a volume in the stone to contain water to be purified. It is placed, with the pick downwards, on a special wooden supports and a container is put under it to collect the purified water. The stone is filled with water; in some cases a silver item or branch of a willow is thrown into the water. Water passing through the capillary of the stone is collected drop-by-drop in a container and during this process water is not only purified, but also is cooled in a natural way due to the difference of pressures in the porosity of the stone and passing through the capillary.



It should be noted that the oldest (3700 years old) samovar was found in Azerbaijan (Sheki) and it is older than the Egyptian samovar being 2000 years old. And this was one of the main points of the culinary. Transfer of a hearth from outside the pot to its inside, change of water-air balance in water have caused the change of the

volume of separation of food substances and, accordingly, taste of the liquid. The next important factor that has had influence on the cuisine is the historical and geographical place of location of people and mutual relations with neighboring nations.

The fact that ancient trade caravans and military roads passed through Azerbaijan have had certain impact on our cuisine. Although relationship to all-Turkish ethnoses has led to meals with the same root, the Azerbaijani cuisine may be considered as the crown of the all-Turkish cuisine. In terms of taste, the Azerbaijani cuisine is much closer to Anatolian cuisine. Long-term relations with Arabs gave us coffee, the historical "Silk Way" has brought tea from far China to these places. On the other hand, getting to know the Russian cuisine gave the Azerbaijani cuisine "shee" (cabbage soup) and "borsch" (it is famous among people as "borsh"), on the other hand allowed us to get to know the European cuisine misinterpreted by Russia. Direct acquaintance had started at the end of XIX Century and at the beginning of XX Century due to the development of the oil industry (this process is being observed nowadays too), which has not only had influence on restaurant cuisine, but also taught people to use aluminum table wares, and this intervention has not added anything positive, but harm to the health of people.

One of the factors that have had impact on the Azerbaijani national cuisine was the religion and faith of the nation. (Zərdüştilik), fire worship and the Avesta philosophy have not only found its reflection in customs and mentality of the Azerbaijani people, but also in the cuisine. Respect for a first assistance of a cook - the hearth - comes, to our opinion, from here. Customs associated with meal formed under the influence of the faith in light and fire is living today. Christianity has for a long time existed in Azerbaijan and exists today, and this factor has left its footsteps in our cuisine. At the same time, the fact that the Azerbaijanis have been Muslims for more than a thousand year and influence of Islam on the cuisine are also indisputable facts. Refusal to use golden utensils, eat pork, forbidding drinking alcoholic drinks etc. talks about strong influence of Islamic traditions. Various holidays, ceremonies and fasting have also had a strong impact on the cuisine.

Let us mention that the cuisine customs associated with the religion, prohibition, recommendations are the subject of special researches. Here must be mentioned only one thing that the requirements of the religion, especially of Islam, regarding the meal and food products have a serious scientific basis. For example, Islam recommends eating fruits and grain-crops without removing their skin. However, it was only recently discovered that most part of vitamins and microelements that do not dissolve in water are contained in the skin of the plants etc.

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### Diversity of drinks in the Azerbaijani cuisine

One of the sections of our cuisine rich in diversity of types is drinks. Tinctures (“*arag*”) are made from mulberry and other plants and used especially for medical treatment purposes. “*Arag*” in our language means “white drink” (*ag* – white, *ar* – drink, “*ir*” in the word “*kefir*” also means drink). On the other hand, the word “*ar*” originates from “*arınmış*” and means also pure and purified.

Various types of alcohol-free medical treatment tinctures, infusions and other distillations are prepared from various plants by means of distillation. As an example, tincture made from mint, “*gyulabi*” (rose water), “*chal arag*” made from mixed herbs may be shown. Since the ancient times, “*buza*” (beer) has also been prepared in Azerbaijan. The Russian word “*buzit*” also originated from this word.

As in other Turkish cuisines, there are many drinks such as “*ayran*”, “*atlama*”, “*bulama*” made from milk and sour milk products. Different types of sherbets are prepared from fruit juices, various types of herb infusions and sugar. Sherbets are mainly served together with pilaf, and are drunk at holidays and parties. Drinks such as “*ovshala*”, “*gandab*”, “*dog-rose water*”, “*salab*” not only decorate our

tables, but also have treatment features.

Tea has its special place in the Azerbaijani cuisine. It is impossible to imagine the table without tea. Coffee and cocoa are used less as compared with the tea. In the mornings hot milk and drinks prepared from milk are served.

Azerbaijani mineral waters such as “*Istisu*”, “*Badamly*” and “*Sirab*” etc. are famous. They are served to quench thirst; at the same time have treatment characteristics.

Drinks made from thick *bakmaz* cooked from mulberry juice, watermelon, sugar cane, beetroot, grape, wild dates quench thirst, at the same time are considered to be useful for health. Drink called “*iskanjabi*” is served together with “heavy” meals in order to quench thirst and facilitate digestion of heavy and fatty meals; it is prepared from the mixture of honey and vinegar.

In some sources it is called “vinegar honey”. Sometimes sugar is used instead of honey.

In our cuisine, “*khoshab*”s (*stewed fruits-compotes*) and “*paloud*”s (*kissel*) are related not to sweet meals, but to drinks. However, of course, the best drinks are icy waters of Azerbaijani springs.



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### Regularities of the emergence of the meal names in the Azerbaijani language

A lot has been written about the influence of the all-Turkish cuisine on Bulgarian, Yugoslavian, Russian and other cuisines. It is interesting that the Azerbaijani cuisine has also had a strong influence on the Arabian and Persian cuisines. For example, Javad Heyat, a famous scientist, has mentioned in his book "Comparison of two languages" some 60 culinary terms among the other words transferred from Azerbaijani language.

From the linguistics point of view, there is certain regularity in generation of the names of dishes in the Azerbaijani language. The first regularity is that name of a dish conforms to the stages of its preparation, and forms and methods of impact.

For example, "gatlama", "dolma", "doghramaj", "azma" show the initial methods of technical impact; "gyzartma", "portlama", "govourma", "bozartma", "dondurma" etc. are the methods of heat impact; "dindili kufta", "nazik yarpag khangaly" (thin leaf khangal), "yukha", "lyulya kebab" etc. are geometrical forms of dishes; "Yarpag dolmasy", "yarma khashil", "duyu chinkuru", "sabzi kyukyu", "bal gaymag" show the raw products used in preparing the foods; "gatyg", "sulu khangal", "hora" are consistencies; "turshu", "shoraba", "shirin nazik" are sensory features of the dishes; "saj ichi", "tava kebab", "kolfa chorek" etc. show the names of hearths; "Ganja baklavasy", "Tovuz khangali", "Garabagh basdyrmasy", "Sheki halvasy" are the place where the meal has originated from.



"kolfachorek" etc. show the names of hearths; "Ganja baklavasy", "Tovuz khangali", "Garabagh basdyrmasy", "Sheki halvasy" are the place where the meal has originated from.

It should be mentioned that mostly the name of a meal shows not one, but many of its types. For example, dolma has about 30 types; pilaf has about 200 types etc.

The second regularity is that they are associated with the word "ash". A number of words are generated from this word: *ashpaz*, *ashchi ashkhana*, *khash* (a meal from legs of animals – hot broth), *khashyl* (thick flour cereals), *gashyq* and many others. We encounter terms "ash", "az» in a number of Turkish ancient written sources, including Orkhan-Yenisey and other written stone monuments.

The third regularity of generation of culinary terms relates to all-Turkish languages. For example, similarity in the generation of the names of dishes such as, in Turkey "imambayildi" (mullah lost his consciousness from the taste of a meal), in Kazakhstan "beshbarmag" (five fingers), in Azerbaijan "khangal" (Khan, come), "tarkhan" (young khan), "aghsag oghlag" (lame kid), "tutmaj" (do not let starve), "galaj" (be hungry) may be shown as an example.

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### Travellers about Azerbaijani cuisine

The music of aromas, poetry, tastes, and the game of rich color gammas... You may continue this nice list and it will still not be enough to characterize our cuisine.

The Azerbaijani cuisine is one of the most ancient, delicious and varied cuisines of the world. There are about 2000 dishes, which comprise the foundation of the Caucasian Cuisine.

From ancient times Azerbaijan supplied markets of the neighboring countries with meat products, fish, grains, fruits, vegetables, flour, dairy products, sugar, salt and many others products and its cuisines. As a matter of fact, all the Caucasian cuisines are based on the cuisine of Azerbaijan. Dishes such as dolma, sudjuk, basash, hapama, gayzaba, basdirma, borani, nazik, asuda, chilov, plov, shashlyk, pakhlava, bozartma, arishta, kufta, harisa, kyata, gata, lavash, djad, odjab, sare-lal, hangah bekmez, doshab, alani and many others that are widespread dishes of the Caucasian peoples were originated by a genius of Azerbaijan people, with the help of the God, on flourishing lands of Azerbaijan.

However, it's not good to flatter ourselves. It is better to spread the word to our guests.

**ANTONIO JANICKSON** an English sea sailor (XVI Century), who was in Shemaha, describes the dinners - at Abdulla -Han: "On the floor there laid table-clothes and different dishes were served. They were put at the row according to the kinds of the dishes: to my counting, there were 140 ones. Then the dishes were taken away with the table-clothes, and new were laid and 150 dishes with fruit and other convivial food were brought in. So, they served 290 dishes at 2 servings."

**BARON FYODOR KORF** was in Azerbaijan in 1834-1835. "The fruit are good, grapes, peaches, apricots, cherry, melons and watermelons grow in plenty... juicy and aroma fruit are golden by the glorious East Sun... Servants entered, carrying on their shoulders many kinds of bread. The first dish consisted of mutton, cheese, onion, radishes, and fragrant greens and so on. Then there appeared different kinds of fried eggs, bozbash, soup, fisinjan, sour-sweet sauces made from meats and almonds, fried meats, pilavs with meat, sultana and saffron and almonds. In the end, huge muttons (sheep), wholly roasted on spit with heads and legs, were served. I found out, that there were 99 dishes on our table, from this, one can conclude, in what quantity and variety the foods were served. Wines and sherbets were plenty."

**AMBROSIO KONTORINI** Venician ambassador (XV century): "We were served many different viands, cooked, according to local traditions and which were very tasty."

**TOMAS BENISTER and JEFFRY DSKET** is English merchants of the XVI century. "Incredible number of nuts is brought from Zegam, which is of the same sort and quality, taste and thin skin as our forest nuts. Mutton is very good... The Caspian Sea is rich in fish; there are special kinds of fish which can't be found in other parts of the world".

**AL GARNATI** from Grenada (XII c) writes: "So I saw on the coasts of the Hazar (Caspian in the Azerbaijan language - T.A.) sea, near the city, which is called Bakuh. This area rises above the sea, there are much grass and game animals. Such as gazelles and so on. People cut their meat and put into skins with salt, grains and spices, like rice, wheat or others. Then take a pipe from reeds, thick at both ends, tie the meat into the skin with the rope. Then they put it into the ground and the other end of the pipe leave on the land. The meat is boiled in the ground and the foam comes through the pipe, then the process is stopped, so the meat is ready. Then it is taken out and it's boiled, like in harise."

**JAKUT AL-HAMAVI** (Arabian traveller of XII c) writes: "Azerbaijan... great number of fruit trees. I've never seen so many gardens and so many rivers like here...there grow the best peas, nice pomegranates, which have no equal in the whole world, and amazing figs. I've never seen such tasty apricots. Here fine grapes, grain and cotton grow ripe. Many fruits, especially nuts and chestnuts are the best in the world. Ar - Rass (the Araz River) - so lots of various fish are found here. The fish, known as Shurmachi is found only here".

**ALEXANDER DUMA** (father) the French cook and writer of the XIX c. "Kebab is the tastiest dish that I've ever seen. It's necessary to include it into the list of the popular dishes of France. Now I'm going to tell you, how to cook it, and I'm sure when you cook it and eat, you'll remember me with gratitude..."

**MARCO POLO** - Venician traveller (XVIII c): "it is surrounded by wonderful gardens, from which nice fruit is gathered."

**ADAM OLEARI**, Holstein ambassador (XVII c): "Suggacht - the smoked fish is wrapped with the piece of cloth, put on the hearth, covered with cinders and roasted in this order. It has such a pleasant taste...32 big dishes, full of food were brought to us. Firstly, boiled rice of different colors and fried chickens, ducks, beef, mutton, fish were placed on all dishes. These dishes were cooked nicely and were tasty enough..."

**EVLIYA CHELEBI**. The Turkish traveller (XVII c). "They Served 11 sorts of plov, with mayoran, chicken, musaffar plov, plov with aloe, plov with origans, chosh plov, chilav



The Azerbaijani cuisine is one of the most ancient, delicious and varied cuisines of the world. There are about 2000 dishes, which comprise the foundation of the Caucasian Cuisine. Plov with ginger, garlic, kese plov, dyusei plov, fried vegetables with rice, fragrant like a beautiful lady's lips, soup of mastaba and nice herisa. Everything was tasty... 26 kinds of juicy pear were brought. Tasting the "maladja abbasi", "ordubadi" one can feel like there's candy in one's mouth.

Forty kinds of fragrant plov, herise, and soup from eggplants. Local cooks have 12 more kinds of soups and sauces in store. 7 kinds of nutmeg grape juice enjoy popularity, koknas, the pomegranates juice, made from the flowers of pomegranate, winter drinks from honey, buza from millet and rice, divine wine from grape meleki."

This is only a small part of the admiration for the food, which different travellers, merchants, diplomats and guests expressed when they visited our country.

**Author T.I. Amiraslanov. "Azerbaijani culinary". 2011. P. 31-33**

### XIII. TOURISM IN AZERBAIJAN

#### Brief information on Azerbaijani tourism.

Azerbaijan - a miraculous country with its rich natural resources, and ancient culture, history and people; whose lifestyle presents a unique and harmonious combination of the traditions and ceremonies of many different cultures and civilizations.

Azerbaijan is the geographical name of the country. On one hand, this name is linked with the ancient population which lived in this region for thousand of years, and who were mostly fire-worshippers. The local population considered fire to be their God, and thus they worshipped it. "Azer" means fire. The Turkic name "Azer" was used to describe this territory for centuries. The word "Azerbaijan" originates from the name of an ancient Turkish tribe, who resided in these lands.

Azerbaijan is one of the most ancient sites of human civilization. People have been present here at every stage of their historical development. There were developed settlements in Azerbaijan even at the earliest stages of civilization.

Time has preserved a range of ancient archeological and architectural monuments for our generation. Ancient headstones, manuscripts and examples of carpets, preserved to the present day from ancient ages, can provide much insight to those who can and want to read them. If you wish to understand Azerbaijan and know of its fascinating history and culture, you need to look at this country and its people through the eyes of an old friend.

The policy of "Open Doors" carried out by the Azerbaijan government, as well as the social and economic reformation and democratization of society carried out in the Republic, have allowed many more citizens of independent Azerbaijan to expand the scope of their worldview, and to receive wonderful opportunities to visit foreign countries. Visits of foreign travelers to Azerbaijan are also increasing day by day.

Azerbaijan has great potential for the development of the tourism industry - with such fascinating sights as ancient cities, palaces, fortresses, mausoleums, and mosques. Azerbaijan has always been famous for its sources of eternal fire - the "atashgehs". There is a place called Yanardag (blazing mountain) in Absheron and thermal springs in some parts of Nakhchievan, Kelbejar, Masali, Lenkoran, and Babadag provinces.

In Surakhani, there is a site of eternal flame. From ancient times, fire worshippers from remote places, and even Indian priests, came to Absheron in search of fire, and found it here. They built large temples here in Surakhani and in Ateshgah.

There are more than 6 thousand historical architectural monuments on the territory of Azerbaijan. The natural climatic conditions of Azerbaijan are also unique. As is well known, 9 climate zones exist in Azerbaijan, out of the 11 in the world.

Azerbaijan is endowed with picturesque natural landscapes, monuments of culture and modern tourist resorts. The Khudat-Yalama seacoast, bordered by forests and the seashores of Absheron and Lankaran are fine places for recreation and relaxation. In these places, there are fine sandy beaches with steady water temperatures of 22-26°C for five or more months, which provide for a long swimming season. The most attractive areas for Alpinism and winter sports are Shamakhi and Gusar. Many types of animals and birds are objects of licensed hunting, and in the reserves they are very easy to watch and photograph. In particular, the Gizilagach reserve, where in the winter months more than one million individuals from two hundred species of birds of passage gather, is ideal for this purpose.

In Azerbaijan are a number of health resorts and spas, creating an opportunity for treatment of many illnesses yielding to natural therapies. Most of the resorts with mineral spas also function as tourist centers.



Nakhchivan is especially rich in mineral sources; the only known deposit of medicinal petroleum in the world - Naftalan - is completely unique.

Baku and the Absheron peninsula; Nakhchivan, Guba-Khachmaz, Sheki-Zagatala, and Lankaran-Astara regions; and the historical areas of Shirvan and Ganjabasar are the most attractive for travelers in Azerbaijan. The lovely nature of these places, numerous ancient ruins, wonderful ethnographic variety and the astonishing skills of local craftsmen will leave an unforgettable impression of Azerbaijan upon its guests.

### **Stages of the trade caravans in Azerbaijan in an ancient and Middle Ages**

First travels to Azerbaijan were related with trade, religious, political and comprehension purposes. Motions of trade caravans passing through the territory of ancient Azerbaijan can be considered as first travels.

Yet in ancient times Azerbaijan was known as a country of an important stop on the Great Silk Road. According to ancient authors the most active routes of the Great Silk Road passed through territory of Caucasian Albania (ancient state located in the territory of the present Republic of Azerbaijan). According to Strabo, the great majority of Indian goods passed through the territory of Central Asian to Gurgan (Caspian) Sea and then through the sea to Albania and on Kir (Kura) River to Iberia (Eastern Georgia), then the Pont Evksinski (Black Sea). The important role of cities located on the route of Silk Road was noted.

Tabriz, Maraga, Ardabil, Ganja, Nakhchivan, Ordubad, Nuha (Sheki) became important centers of international trade on the route of the Silk Road in the north of Azerbaijan.



### **Stage from XIV century to the end of the XIX century**



The role of Baku located in crossroads of marine routes and surface roads to from Russia to Iran and India in trade relations in the mid-fourteenth century between West and East, was great. The marine routes from White Sea through the Volga River to the Caspian Sea and then Volga-Caspian route leading to Iran and India caused the establishment of new caravanserais in Baku and their size was bigger than in the previous periods. Historians and travelers, who traveled Azerbaijan in different times, noted about it in their travel notes. At the moment from these Multani (XII - XIV), Bukhara (XIV - XVI), Fars, Lezgin and others reached our days.

Notes in travel notes of travelers, merchants, diplomats (Marco Polo, Rui Gonzales Clakhvio, Afanasi Nikitin, Iosafat Barbaro, Ambrocco Contarini, Anthony Jankinson, Vincensi Alesandri, Sadko, Ovliya Chalabi, Fedor Kotov) visited Azerbaijan in different times shows that the history of our nation occupied the deserved place in the process of global historical progress.

### **The stage of mass tourism at the end of the XIX century to the mid-XX century**

In the late XIX century and the beginning of the XX century in order to create comfort for guests in caravanserais of Baku the renovation work were carried in buildings of caravanserais and they were used as hotel. After becoming a part of the Russian empire, the development of the tourism – excursion work was connected with Russia. The history of organized tourism in Azerbaijan may be referred to 1908. Thus, in 1908 one of the branches of the Crimea - Caucasus mountain club was opened in Baku. Baku section was engaged with organization of the remote and close excursions. At the end of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century, the





scientific and amateur societies (Geographical society, society of lovers of nature, people's universities society and others) began to pay attention to development of tourism.

Beginning from 1929 the "Proletariat Tourism Society" has become the main tourist movement center in the former USSR. Its sections began to establish in various cities, as well as in Baku. The main objectives of "Proletariat Tourism Society" are development of amateur tourism among workers, to give tourism the organized public form, application of country elements in tourism, etc. The main purpose of the society was to make the tourism as mass movement, to cover the different groups of workers (mainly with low income), to use tourism as a means of increase of political and cultural level.

In 1922 the first excursion circles were created in Baku. Excursions mainly used for acquaintances of workers working in the factory, plants and oil fields with other industrial sectors. In summer period recreation excursions were arranged to the Caspian coasts in Mardakan, Shuvalan, Buzovna, Turkan, Zig, Artyom Island and Shykh strip. In 1927 450 excursion tours were arranged. During these years the most active entity engaged in the tourism excursion was Trade Unions.

In Azerbaijan PTEC ("Proletariat Tourism and Tours Company") functioning as section of all-union PTEC since 1929 began to operate under the Central Executive Committee of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic since the year 1935. In this regard, by the decision of the Council of People's Commissars of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic dated May 11, 1935, No. 476 some measures were implemented for improvement of tourism business. In Kirovabad (Ganja) the base of District Council of the PTEC of Azerbaijan was created. In Hajikend 3 tourist center houses were taken in leasing. The 20-seat tent camp was established in Goygol.

### Up to the period of independence (1950 - 1991)



To make travel and recreation of tourists interesting the horse riding and bicycling were arranged in tourist centers.

As in all the USSR during the years of the Second World War tourist excursion activities were cancelled.

During post-war years, sports, amateur, family and children tourism began to be a wide scoped. In September 1950 the tourist center has been created in Baku. At that time this tourist center was located in the recreation park named after Nizami. In 1957 tourist centers were organized in Mingechevir and Hajikend, too. Tourist centers began functioning in 1958 in Zagatala, in 1960 in Shusha and Goygol.

Tourism Excursion Department of Azerbaijan was named since 1962 as the Council of Tourism of the Azerbaijan Republic, and since 1969 as Council of Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Tourism Excursions. For organization of summer rest of Baku workers "Sputnik" tourist tent camp was established in 1962 with 150 people capacity in Nabran (Khachmaz region). In 1963 the tourist club in Baku, "Khazar" tourist center in Nabran, and in 1965 excursion bureaus in Baku, after two years in Ganja, Sumgait, in 1969 in Naftalan and Mardakan settlement of Baku were created. In 1970 in Zagatala and in 1972 in Shusha the new buildings of tourist centers and in 1975- in Gabala region of the Caucasus and Dostluq tourist center in Nabran, in the same year the "Karabakh" tourist hotel was put into operation. A little while ago excursion offices were opened in Khankendi (1971) and Mingechevir (1972).

In subsequent years, in various regions of the republic; in 1978 in Nakhchivan the first tourism organization (Travel and Tours Office) was created. Years 1970 - 1987 are characterized by the development of social tourism perspective in the country. In order to expand material - technical base for foreign tourism in 1973 the largest hotel complex in the Republic of Azerbaijan hotel "Azerbaijan" was put into operation in Baku with 1942 beds. In 1978 the 200-seat comfortable "Moscow" Hotel has been added to the structure of "Intourist" joint-stock company. Since 1929 the RTC became the country's main center of the tourist movement and its sections were opened in different cities, as well as in Baku.

According to the experts who are engaged in tourism development Azerbaijani tourism had achieved the highest level in 1987. In the same year, 50 thousand from foreign countries and 250 thousand tourists from different regions of the Soviet Union visited the republic. In view of increase of tourist flow in republic the construction of tourist hotels for 300 people in Lankaran and Mingechevir each, for 200 people in Shusha, Garabagh tourist hotel in Baku was begun.

The year 1983 was most memorable in the development of tourism in the Republic of Azerbaijan. That year by initiative and leadership of the then First Deputy Chairman of the USSR Soviet of Ministers H. Aliyev on the shores of the Caspian Sea of Azerbaijan the relevant decision was adopted for creation of resort zones

with all-union importance. After that, basing on decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated October 2., 1984, No. 381, the scheme of tourism development in Azerbaijan republic was adopted.

In 1988 at result of events took place in the autonomous province of Nagorno-Karabakh and its adjacent territories the number of domestic and foreign tourists visiting Azerbaijan was decreased considerably. Imposing of state of emergency in Khankendi, Shusha, Sumgait, and then in Baku in fact, led to freezing of activities of a number of tourism organizations in these regions of the republic. The hostile policy carried out by Armenians against Azerbaijanis, resulted in exodus of hundreds of thousands of refugees from those areas. By the decision of the Government of the Republic the Azerbaijanis driven away from Armenia in December of 1988 were accommodated in the tourist centers.

### **The post-independence stage**

All-union and international tourist routes functioned in Azerbaijan were cancelled since 1st quarter of 1990. The war and instable situation on borders led to occurrence of other problems in the system of tourism. For example, 2 of 10 tourism centers in the system of the trade unions left in the occupied territories and other places were accommodated with internally displaced persons. In September 1991 the department on foreign tourism was liquated and Foreign Tourism Council was established in its place under the auspices of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Only at the end of the 90-es the trends of tourism development were reflected in the legislative acts of the country.

Already at the beginning of the XXI century in Baku, Ganja, Nakhchivan and other regions of the country modern hotels that can accommodate foreign guests operated. More than 100 tourism companies covering all regions of the republic are engaged in accommodation of foreign tourists and servicing local population with tourist services, and 149 hotels have been officially registered. The total amount of beds in those hotels is more than 5000. Private treatment and resort centers with modern level were given for use in the regions suitable for tourism and recreation. The number of foreign tourists visited the republic passed the 1 million people.

The “State Program on development of tourism in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2002-2005” approved by the Decree of President Heydar Aliyev, as well as the “State Program on socio-economic development of regions” were of great importance for the tourism industry, and their implementation will create favorable conditions for building rich infrastructure and lay the foundation for our country's integration into the international tourism market. Gained in those years of social and economic experience has created new opportunities for the full development of tourism. World Heritage List of UNESCO included the Inner City of Baku “Old City” with the Shirvanshahs Palace and Maiden Tower and museum of petroglyphs “Gobustan”. On turn other unique historical and archaeological curiosities.

Announcement by the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev the year 2011 as the Year of Tourism, preparation of and holding a prestigious international contest “Eurovision-2012” in the capital of Azerbaijan have created new opportunities to increase the flow of tourists from all over the world, and given a powerful impetus to the development of domestic tourism. In particular, in the Year of Tourism there were opened a lot of new hotels in tourist regions, roads in the direction of historical and cultural reservations and sites of special purpose have been improved and repaired, tourist traffic signs have been established, the construction of a tourist complex “Shahdag” has been sped up, the works on Development of tourism infrastructure in the cultural and historical reservations such as Shabran and Lahij, have been carried out. A draft navigation GoMap which includes data on tourist areas, monuments and other landmarks of the country has been implemented as well.

As a result of government’s actions in the country, a modern hotel and service infrastructure has been established, training of personnel for the tourism industry has been provided, and an extensive network of travel agencies (more than 200 travel agencies) has been ensured, information and advertising structures are successfully operating, a lot of tourist routes which pass through the most picturesque and fertile regions have been created and tested in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan learns quickly and gains experience. The country is annually held international exhibition “Travel and Tourism» AITF. Azerbaijan, in turn, participates in the 20 most prestigious international tourism forums in London (WTM), Berlin (ITB), Moscow (MITT), Istanbul (MTE), etc.



The flow of tourists is increasing every year (according to official information in 2011 Azerbaijan was



visited a record number of foreign nationals - more than 2.2 million), so in the capital and other tourist areas there is a growing number of hotels with the highest level of service. Today their number is more than 500. Among the most popular hotels in the capital are the chain of brand hotels such as Four Seasons Hotel Baku, Hyatt Regency, JW Marriott Absheron Baku Hotel, Jumeirah Bilgah Beach Hotel, Grand Hotel Europe, Hilton Baku, Kempinski Hotel Badamdar etc.

Hotels, recreation, entertainment and sports centres operate also in the regions of Azerbaijan - a chain of hotels and amusement park Qafqaz Gabaland in Gabala, the epic winter and summer tourist complex “Shahdag” in Gusar region, more than 15 Olympic sports complex having necessary infrastructure for receiving tourists all over the country, etc.

All this indicates that tourism in Azerbaijan is one of the priorities of the state policy and holds great promise for economic development.

[http://azerbaijan.orexca.com/tourism\\_azerbaijan](http://azerbaijan.orexca.com/tourism_azerbaijan).

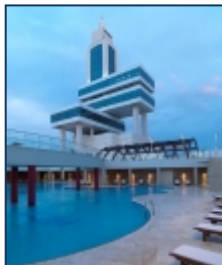
[www.azerbaijantravel.ru](http://www.azerbaijantravel.ru)

[www.mct.gov.az](http://www.mct.gov.az)



### Tourism-related projects and events

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism carrying out state policy in Azerbaijan in the field of tourism implements the action plan in the field of the recognition of the existing tourism potential in the international arena, organization of travel of a large number of tourists to Azerbaijan, the development of various kinds of tourism, creation of modern tourism infrastructure, etc.



In accordance with the requirements of the State program "The development of tourism in the Republic of Azerbaijan for years 2002-2005" approved by President of Azerbaijan H. Aliyev the hotels built to international standards in the field of tourism, a number of leading international investment companies has been involved in the country. Basing on opinions of experts invited from Turkey and master plan on the long-term development of tourism prepared on grant allotted by USA Trade and Development Agency the specialists of "Caspian Group Consulting" company winner of the tender announced by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Azerbaijan, the staff of the Ministry

has prepared the State program "The development of tourism in the Republic of Azerbaijan for years 2008-2016", which will give impetus to development of tourism improvement of personnel training for tourism, increasing of number of accommodations, development of various kinds of tourism. In addition, in accordance with the requirements of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan "The exemplary Charter of tourism and recreation areas" has been developed.

During this period, number of historical and cultural monuments have been restored which is to be used as the object of tourism and given in use of tourists.

Every year September 27 is celebrated as "World Tourism Day". Within the events arranged on that day, as well as every year "National Domestic Tourism Conferences" on various topics like current problems in tourism and discussion of the ways of its settlement, improving the level of service in the field of tourism, creation of tourism infrastructure, etc. are held. Also during this period, the International Tourism Exhibition has been held with the participation of tourist companies, tourist service facilities.

At the same time, for recognition of the country's tourism potential at the international level the info-tours were organized for tourism companies of Germany and Austria, representatives of mass media. In addition, info-tours have been organized for tourism companies operating in Azerbaijan and the representatives of mass media in Guba, Zagatala and Lerik regions. The results of info tours to the regions are the establishment of cooperation between the tourist companies and the hotels, conclusion of contracts.



In order to improve the level of service for representatives engaged in tourists service objects in the city of Baku and the regions training courses are organized by experts invited from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey on a regular basis on topics like meal, drink services, hotel management, etc.

In addition to the above, within the framework of the requirements of the Decree of "State Program on Poverty Reduction and Economic Development (2003-2005-years) in the Republic of Azerbaijan" approved by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan H. Aliyev in Sheki, Guba, Shamakhi, Sheki, Lankaran, as well as in Lahij with financial aid the World Bank "Tourist Information Centers" began to function in order to deliver information to tourists. Besides the above-mentioned information «Tourist Information Center» was established in Ganjlik international leisure center located in Zugulba settlement of the Apsheron Peninsula in order to provide complete information to tourists about tourism services.

Within the framework of the creation of new international tourist routes the creation of route of cultural tourism in areas of former settlement of Germans in Khanlar, Tovuz, Shamkir, Agstafa regions of republic, where the Germans had left deep traces in the history, culture of Azerbaijan since the early nineteenth century, for the restoration of the monuments related to the German residence centers, restoration of historical-cultural monuments as the object of displaying in this area and creation of tourism infrastructure the measures are implemented under then name of "German settlements in Azerbaijan". Together with GTZ of Germany, the tourism development plan of Ganjabasar area is intended within the above-mentioned project. In addition to this route, within the framework of the protection of national and spiritual values and delivery to our people, as well as creation of new tourism routes the "Gamigaya cultural-tourism route", "Alexander Dumas in the Caucasus" and "Wine Roads" projects, which are planned to implement within Kiyev initiative of the Council of Europe, have been developed.

Taking into account the favorable geographical position of Azerbaijan, passing of many historical routes like "Silk Road" through the territory of Azerbaijan, today Azerbaijan takes part in tourism routes from west to east, north to south. We would like to note that, in previous years, passing of «Silk Road Bicycle Tour» project, which started in Istanbul and ended in Beijing, "On traces of the XV century traveler Afanasi Nikitinin" project, started in Russia and ended in India, through Azerbaijan is very effective in terms of propagating of the tourism potential of our country in the world.

Within the framework of the measures carried out in country the workshop on theme «Regional development, conservation and the frontier experience and perspectives of cooperation» dedicated to the development of tourism and protected areas in the South Caucasus were arranged by International Association InWent in 2004 on training and development. Tourist companies, non-governmental organizations also took part at the workshop.

At the same time in 2004, within the framework of "Protection of National Heritage" project, for representatives of tourism industry working in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic joint training courses were arranged together with the international organizations and the employees of the department gave lectures therein.

For the first time in Azerbaijan in 2003, on Sep 26, 1st Tourism Film Festival was held. The press conference was arranged with the participation of mass media related to dissemination of information on conduction of the event and more than 70 works on tourism were presented at festival, held with the participation of foreign guests and the heads of state and private institution.

In addition to those mentioned above, each year before the summer tourist season, the employees of the Ministry are sent to 30 regions for rendering aid to checking the level of readiness of tourism servicing objects in regions with great tourism potential, analyzing the conditions of road infrastructure.

Certain works have been done within the Intergovernmental Agreements on cooperation in the field of tourism. Thus, during the last 5 years, the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed agreements on cooperation in the field of tourism with the Republic of Moldova, Republic of Belarus, Qatar State, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of Kazakhstan, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the French Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Arab Republic of Egypt and the Republic of Lithuania. At present, drafts of the agreement on cooperation in the field of tourism between the Republic of Azerbaijan and 26 countries (the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Austria, Great Britain, Israel, Iran, Bahrain, Sultanate of Oman, Hungary, Korea, Switzerland, Japan, Indonesia, the Kingdom of Brunei, Malaysia, San Marino, Marrakech, Argentina, Mexico, Macedonia, Sweden, the Philippines, Cuba and Croatia) have been prepared.



World Tourism Organization of the UNO is one of the most important organizations on multilateral cooperation in the field of tourism. The main purpose of WTO of UNO is development of tourism, which is an important factor in maintaining international peace, mutual understanding, and economic development. Republic of Azerbaijan, which joined WTO since September 2001, had participated in the many events organized by the Organization, including the assemblies, meetings of the European Commission, training courses and seminars. In addition the activity of WTO consists of providing a number of recommendations to governments on tourism issues and technical assistance. For this purpose, the technical mission sent in 2002 by WTO to Azerbaijan. The expert of organization had studied the Azerbaijan's tourism potential and made analysis and prepared the relevant report and gave recommendations in this regard. By line of WTO in April of 2003 and 2007, workshops were held in Baku. Representatives of tourism companies, hotels, Culture and Tourism sections of regions of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, universities took part in the workshops. Multilateral cooperation in the fields of culture and tourism relations with the Islamic world is growing at a high level. The cooperation carried out within the framework of the Organization of Islamic Conference and its specialized institutions, the ISESCO, IRCICA, SESRTCIC, the Islamic University of Technology, etc. organizations. In 9-12 September of 2006 our country hosted the V Conference of the Ministers of Tourism of OIC member states.

In order to promote tourism opportunities the Ministry of Culture and Tourism prepared "Information for Tourists" Guide, "Azerbaijan" cards sets, booklets like "The hotels of Azerbaijan", "Historical and architectural monuments of Azerbaijan", "Theatre and the museums of the Baku city", "Azerbaijan" and "Baku" photo albums, "Silk Road", "Carpet" booklets, tourist maps of Azerbaijan, Shusha and Garabakh, "Welcome to Azerbaijan" CD and films for 10-20 min. in DVD



format. The above-mentioned publications, CD-s and DVD-s are in Azerbaijani, English, German, Arabic, Japanese, and Russian languages. Since 2002, "Azerbaijan Review" magazine is published in Russian and English languages six times a year. Information is published in the newspaper "ATN" once a month about the work done in the field of tourism. The above-mentioned ad-print products are delivered at international tourism exhibitions to exhibition visitors, the embassies and missions to foreign countries. The advertisements on tourism potential of the republic are placed in tourist magazines published in foreign countries ("ABTA", "Travel IQ", "Faints and Projects", "TTG Russia", "Travel Unravalled", "Qde otdixat", "Otdix v Rossii" and the "World Travel Guide").



Starting since April 2002 «AITF" International tourism exhibition is held in Baku. The number of tourism companies of foreign countries participating in this exhibition is increasing yearly. If 26 companies from 5 countries participated in 2002, in 2007 the number of countries has increased from 18 to 60 the number of companies.

For last 5 years the geography of the exhibitions was expanded and the number of exhibitions attended reached 19 : they are international tourism exhibitions held in London, New York, Moscow, Berlin, Beijing, Milan, Madrid, Deli, Vienna, Mumbai, Istanbul, Tokyo, Al-Kuwait, Dubai, Kiev , Tbilisi, Bahrain, Tashkent, Mahachqala.

Since 2005 in well-known foreign TV channels, advertisement trailers have been broadcasting reflecting the tourism potential of the republic. These trailers were broadcasted by "CNN" television channel for 6 months, in "Euronews" for a period of 3 months. And since 2007 the negotiations continued with the representatives of "National Geographic", "Travel Channel", "CNN", "Euronews" TV channels for continuous broadcasting of ads. Also, these ads were placed onboard magazines and on screens of aircrafts belonging to "Austrian Airlines", "British Airways" "AZAL Airlines".

As a result of this work done, the number of tourists visiting our country is increasing from year to year. The National Assembly adopted law "On Tourism" in 1999. On July 27, 1999, President of the Azerbaijan Republic Heydar Aliyev signed a decree on implementation of the Law of Azerbaijan Republic "On Tourism". This law defined the basis of the principles of state policy aimed at the establishment of the legal bases of the tourism market in the Republic of Azerbaijan, basis of tourism activity, the rules of efficient use of tourism resources as one of the means to ensure socio-economic development by regulating relations in the field of tourism.



On 25 September 2001 in Seoul, the capital of South Korea, at the XIV General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the Republic of Azerbaijan became a member of the international tourist organization. This, in turn, has created an opportunity in the country to promote tourism activities and getting the practical recommendations.



In 2001 for the first time a special disk which propagated Azerbaijan in full "Welcome to Azerbaijan" was created and presented to the General Assembly of the WTO. In addition, the website of the disc "Tourism in Azerbaijan" has been created. For the first time in 2002 the International Tourism Fair was organized in Baku with the participation of foreign tourism companies and the support of the WTO has been provided.

For development of tourism and efficient use of tourism resources in the country with decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated August 27, 2002 the State Program "On the development of tourism in the years 2002-2005" was approved.

In September 9-12, 2006, the V Conference of the Tourism Ministers of OIC member-states was held in Azerbaijan. The conference had adopted the resolution on the development of tourism, as well as the Baku Declaration.

Azerbaijan has the right to preside during 2006-2008 years at the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers.

On June 21-22, 2007 in Baku "The role of tourism in the economy of the OIC member countries" the international scientific-practical conference was held.

At present, tourism is developing on the ascending line in Azerbaijan. In 2008, the number of tourists visited Azerbaijan had exceeded one million three hundred thousand people. In April 2009 at Sport and Exhibition Complex named after Heydar Aliyev 8th International Tourism Fair was held. 78 tourism enterprises from 20 countries took part in the exhibition.



Like in the countries of the world every year on September 27 «The World Tourism Day" is celebrated.



*Baku-Khachmaz*

**KHIZI.** Khizi district is located in so called Guba-Khachmaz region and is the least distant from Baku (70 km) among all administrative districts of the republic. Climate is temperate with low precipitations. The east part of the district is formed by the Caspian coast.

On the road to Khizi, 10 km away from Baku-Rostov road one can observe an interesting natural phenomenon: emergence of different geological layers on the surface forming an original pattern of landscape. Specialists believe that such geological phenomenon can be observed in only one more place on Earth - in the Valley of Death, in the USA.

Here, in Khizi district, is located one of the most beautiful reserves in the country - "Alti Agac". 90% of its area is occupied by forests. The reserve has been established with the purpose of restoration and prevention of erosion processes occurring in southeast mountainsides of the Greater Caucasus and preservation of rare animal and plant species. During Shirvanshahs rule a caravan stop was located here, in Alti-Agach. Since agach (a tree) is an obsolete unit of distance (7 km), the name "Alti Agac" means "six trees" i.e. 42 km which equals the distance from the reserve to Shamakhi. An ancient caravan route connecting Shamakhi with Derbent passed through this area. Even today amateur tourists make tours from here in the direction of Maraza and Shamakhi. Also located in Khizi district (not far from Sumgait) is Yashma game reserve covering an area of 4 hectares. Water birds hunt and fishing are available in Yashma. Khizi town is the administrative center of the district. Its population is about 15, 5 thousand people. It is located 104 km from Baku. The town is the hometown to a famous Azerbaijani writer and playwright Dzhafar Dzhabbarli, who made a significant contribution to the development of national cinematographic art.

Azerbaijan State Film Studio bears his name. Among other renowned natives of Khizi were such prominent figures of Azerbaijani culture as Mikail Mushvig and Dzhahir Novruz. Not far from the town there is a fine resort for travelers, tourists and local residents named "Dzhannet Baghi". It is situated in a mountain forest, on the bank of Atachai River, very close to "Alti Agach" reserve. Eight kilometers away from Khizi there is another resort named "Gizilgazma".

**SIAZAN.** Siyazan district is located to the north of the capital and extends along the Caspian coast. Its climate is semidesert and dry and the landscape features fragments of sparse woods and bushes. Local fauna includes wolves, desert cats, jackals, hares etc. The coastal zone is a home to many water birds. Gilgilchai and Atachai rivers traverse the territory of the district.

Located here in the Early Middle Ages was the second line of the Caspian defense zone. It has been included in the list of historical and cultural monuments of Azerbaijan under the name of Gilgilchai Defensive Structures and is protected by the state. As a part of "Caspian Defensive Structures" it has been nominated by UNESCO for the inclusion in the list of World Legacy Monuments. Archeologists revealed that Gilgilchai Defensive Construction was built in ancient times, before our era, and that it was constantly reinforced and fortified. The wall originates in the very sea (level of the Caspian Sea varies from year to year) and extends many kilometers, rising to mountains where it terminates with the grand watch tower of Chirag Gala (5th century). The tower is worth ascending to: aside of historical importance, it features an astounding view from the mountain top over the sea and nearby mountains. Here, between the sea and ridges of the Caucasus Mountains there is a very convenient passage from Azerbaijan to the north, to other countries. Since ancient times the passage has been named the Caspian Passage. It was used by invaders from neighboring countries and distant lands. They would invade Azerbaijan and ransack Baku ports, sometimes reaching as far as the inland areas of the country. Therefore, the walls served to defend and alarm Absheron (Baku) and further, all borderland regions of the ancient Azerbaijan. The magnitude of the construction and defensive significance of the wall and fortresses (they also secured the approaches to the Great Silk Road) make them a rival of the famous Great Wall in China. However, this object has not been restored yet. Not far from the tower of Chirag Gala there is a resort complex Gala Alti ("Under the Tower") with a health center named "Chirag Gala", known for its mineral springs with medicinal sulfurated water, especially beneficial for patients with urolithiasis and cholelithiasis. On the road to the health resort there is a number of shashlik houses, cafes and small camps a majority of which operate only in summer.

Fragments of another defensive line, Beshbarmak, remained near the village of Zarat. Residents call these ruins Khizirzinda Baba. Not far from another village - Sedan, there are remainders of Dindar fortress. The region is known for carpet weaving, inlaid wood engraving and production of folk musical instruments. Siyazan town is located 103 km from Baku with the population of 39,4 thousand people inhabitants. There is no hotel in Siyazan so one can stay at a private house or the health resort. Meals are provided at restaurants "Gerush",

"Zafarran" and "Chiraggala". The town's proximity to the Caspian Sea determines a broad assortment of fish meals, aside of meat and vegetable ones, in local menus.

**Shabran.** Shabran district is located to the north of Baku and its eastern border extends along the Caspian coast. The name of the district originates from the word "cameleer"; evidently, it is connected to the development of caravan roads. In ancient times residents of the town would hold camels and people from neighboring regions would come to local markets - not only to buy camels but also to purchase poultry, cattle, butter, milk products, honey, wool (of camels and sheep) and carpets and also to join a caravan or hire a personal cameleer.

On the territory of Shabran district, 12 km away from the coast, is located a hunting estate Agzi Bir which covers an area of 11,8 sq km. Water birds and otter hunt as well as fishing are available here. On the territory of Agzi Bir are located three communicating lakes with the outlet to the sea. With small houses and boats the place is well suited to accommodate hunters. The district features plenty of forests (21500 hectares) with bears, foxes, wolves, jackals, wild boars and gazelles. Among birds (including water birds) there are francolins, partridges, geese, ducks, swans, cormorants and kachkaldacks. The landscape is very diverse - plains, foothills, rocks and mountains. Very popular among local residents and tourists is Kechi Gaja with sulfurated mineral springs and a river flowing between rocks. Historical and archeological monuments of the region include ruins of the famous settlement Shabran (5th-18th centuries) near the village of Shakhnazarli. Shabran was one of the largest trade and craft centers of medieval Azerbaijan. Silk production, pottery and glass-blowing were especially developed in this area. Archeological excavations conducted in the 1980's revealed a large amount of ceramics - both local and of foreign origin evidencing the established trade communications with many eastern countries. During the excavations archeologists found fragments of a 14th century aqueduct which provided the city with drinking water from a spring located 10 km away. The settlement Gulistani Irem (18th-19th centuries) is located in the village of Gandob. Numerous archeological objects dated to the 3rd-2nd millennia BC have also been found in the district of Devechi. One can survey the materials found during the excavation at the Shabran Museum of Regional History. Shabran town is the administrative center of the district. It is located 122 km from Baku. Local types of carpets - Pirabedil and Kherat Pirabedil that, according to the professional classification belong to the so called "Guba Carpet School", are original, distinctive and are popular among fanciers of hand-woven carpets.

**GUBA.** Guba district is one of the most advanced agricultural districts in Azerbaijan - local vegetables and fruits are transported to the capital's markets for sale, undergo processing at local canning factories, and are exported abroad. In spite of a large number of various fruit and vegetable species growing in the district every Azerbaijani first associates Guba with its apple orchards. Sellers in the capital praising their goods will certainly call their apples "Guba apples". The immensely rich flora of the district includes broad spectrum of herbal plants - hawthorn, juniper, balsam, nightshade, valerian, plantain, sally-bloom, althea, ephedra, laserwort etc. The most popular and frequently visited places in the vicinity of Guba are such charming nature spots as Geshresh, Balbulag, and the canyon of Tenggealti, 400 m. to 600 m. deep. The famous Afurdzhi waterfall on Velvelichai River is included in the list of "Monuments of Azerbaijani Nature" and is protected by the state. There are other waterfalls too, attracting tourists and travelers with their uniqueness and originality. Taking tourist paths over these picturesque nature spots and climbing higher to the mountains, one can observe tall trees being alternated with bushes and even higher, by the river of Khashichai, there are thermal springs with water jetting out the rocks of a mountain canyon. Long time ago local craftsmen carved three large hollows in the very rock here - some kind of baths coated by stone walls. In the bath one could revel in warm medicinal water from sulfurated springs. Experts maintain that the natural stone bed enhances the medicinal effect of the spring water. These places were once visited by French writer Alexander Dumas. While taking a break at the camp near the road he was invited to the fireplace by Guba residents that had also decided to take some rest and refresh themselves. He was very impressed by the skill Gubans cut the ram with and by the taste of kebab (shashlik) which they served him. The greatest modern traveler, Norwegian scientist Thor Heyerdahl also stopped in Guba during his visit to Azerbaijan as he had been speculating that "aces" mentioned in the "Edda" epic were the most ancient ascendants of Azerbaijanis that moved to the north of Europe during the Great Migration of Nations. Here, in Guba district, 65 km from Guba is located a mountainous (2500 m above sea level) settlement Khinalig whose population constitutes a unique, separate ethnographic group. Residents of Hinalig speak an archaic language unrelated to any modern language of the world. The language is highly preserved although the locals also speak Azerbaijani. The phenomenon of Hinalig is a major enigma in not only in the history of Azerbaijan but in the world history, too.

Near Khinalig there is a sanctuary (9th century) where natural emergence of fire to the surface of earth can be observed. Due to this phenomenon the place was called Ateshgah by local residents, the name meaning "The Temple of Fire".

Remained in the village of Budug, whose population also constitutes a separate ethnic group with its rare language is an ancient construction named Dakhma - "The Tower of Silence", dated to the Zoroastrian ages. The towers were designed for Zoroastrian burial ceremonies.

Guba town is located on the bank of Kudial-chai River and on the northwest slopes of Shakhdag Mountain of the Greater Caucasus. This is the administrative center of Guba district with the population of 159, 3 thousand people, located 168 km from Baku and 600 m above sea level. In the local Museum of History one can learn about the history of the town and Guba Khanate as well as about famous people that brought fame to this region. There is also a memorial estate of A. Bakhikhanov, a prominent public figure, writer and enlightener of Azerbaijan. One of his books, "Gulistani Irem" was devoted to the history of the country and virtually, was the first systematic research on the history of Azerbaijan.

In Guba there is also a center of carpet weaving, since this zone have been famous with its carpets 'Chichi', "Sirt Chichi", "Gimil", "Dzhimi", 'Erfi" that can be found in many museums and private collections around the world. Also remained in the town preserved are such historical monuments as the mosque of Sakine Khanum, Juma mosque, mausoleum of the 16th century and ancient eastern-type baths. In the first half of the 18th century territories of the present Guba district as well as present Devechi, Gusar, Khachmaz, Khizi and Siazan districts were united to form Guba Khanate. Initially the center of the khanate was in Hudat city but soon after Guba khan Gusein Ali made the town of Guba the capital of his khanate and relocated his residence there. The most renowned ruler of Guba Khanate, Fatali khan always struggled to unite disconnected khanates of Azerbaijan under his reign. He conquered the whole northwest Azerbaijan from Derbent to Lankaran. At that time Jews were invited for settling in Guba, on the left bank of Kudial-Chai River. Initially the settlement was called Jewish community; in 1926 it was renamed to Red community.

From the north Guba Khanate was always threatened by Dagestan khans. With Russia developing its own geopolitical interests in Caucasus and Transcaucasian territories it became significantly harder to secure an independent existence and protect the borders of the khanate. At the beginning of the 19th century (in 1813) Guba khanate was incorporated into the Russian Empire.

Guba is a small town but present territory of Guba district, occupying northwest mountainsides of the Greater Caucasus are very picturesque and one can immerse into its beauty just outside the town. Neither Azerbaijani nor foreign tourists ever pass by this area. Similarly, Baku citizens, especially if they visit Guba to recreate often make car rides from Guba to the coastal resort Yalama located relatively close to Guba. And vice versa, tourists in Yalama (Nabran) sometimes make trips to Guba to combine the delight of recreation on the Caspian coast with the pleasure to observe forest foothills of Guba, plentiful of springs and beautiful nature spots. Guba district is one of the most beautiful in the country and its proximity to the capital, the vicinity of a forest zone and the Caspian coast as well as numerous tourist facilities and resorts in the area make it an important recreational and balneal zone of the republic.

Lodging is available at "Shakhdag" hotel and also in cottages and hotels of the newly constructed Olympic complex equipped with an indoor swimming pool (50 m), an outdoor stadium, indoor stadium for team sports, training halls, tennis and indoor football courts.

"Long forest" resort. Here at your service are 10 furniture wooden chalets (conditioners, fireplaces), a restaurant with national, Indian and European cuisines, bar, conference hall for business meetings and workshops, sauna and sweating room, training facilities and swimming pools. For sporting recreation: mountain bicycles, billiard, darts, table tennis etc. Horse rides and tours to historical monuments are also available.

In Guba there are also resorts "Guba" "Dzhannat Baghi" and "Minaret". Meals are provided at numerous kebab houses along the Baku-Guba line and also in the forest tract Geshresh, 7-9 km from Guba on the bank of Kudial-Chai River. Here, along the road, there are many cafes, restaurants and various resorts for recreation and refreshment.

**KHACHMAZ.** The district of Khachmaz occupies a part of Samur-Devechi lowlands and is located on the northwest part of Azerbaijan. On the north it is bordered by Russia. Its territory is traversed by major roads and a railway (Baku-Moscow). Climate in the district is of temperate dry semideserts and dry steppes. Nevertheless, over 20 hectares of its territory are occupied by forests. There are three artificial lakes and plentiful of springs, including thermal and mineral.

Here, on the border with Dagestan formerly was a road used by conquerors - Scythians, Alans and Huns. This became a primary reason for the building of Caspian Defensive Constructions - reinforced walls with towers extending to the territories of the present Khachmaz district. At the beginning of the 18th century one of ancient stronghold cities, Khudat ("The Gift of God") became the capital of Guba Khanate. An aqueduct from local Shollar village to Baku was constructed in 1914.

Traces of settlements dated to the late Stone and Bronze Ages have been found on the territory of the region. Scientists link the toponym "Khachmaz" to the foreign Hun tribes - "Khachmataks or Khachmats" that



were later assimilated by local inhabitants. Interestingly, from the territory of Khachmaz these tribes relocated to Oghuz region where they also founded a settlement and (sometime later) a fortress of the same name. About 60 monuments of history and culture have been found on the territory of the district. However experts believe that their number should be much higher since the region was already densely inhabited in the earliest times. Settlements and mounds of the Bronze Age have been found near the villages of Mollaburkhan, Khulovlu, Garadzhik, Khasangala, and the Middle Age settlements - near the villages of Dzhanakhir and Bostanchi. The Mosque of Sheikh Yusuf (15th century) remained in the village of Shikhlar. It belongs to the early onset of architectural mausoleum complexes, which became widespread later, in the 16th-17th centuries. In the villages of Morug Oba, Tagar Oba and Uzun Oba remained a mosque dated to the 19th century, in Garagurtlu village - a mosque and madrasah dated to the 15th century.

The town of Khachmaz is the administrative center of Khachmaz region with the population of 166,8 thousand people. It is located 157 km from Baku. Since carpet weaving is the most developed among local crafts a special faculty has been established at the local Lyceum. The faculty is often visited by city guests to see how deft fingers of young craftswomen are weaving magic carpet patterns, the patterns that have been preserved through hundreds of years, passing from generation to generation.

In Khachmaz lodging is available at "Khachmaz" hotel. On the territory of the district there is the second (in terms of size and comfort) resort on the Caspian shore, extending along the whole sea coast from the village of Mukhtadir to Nabran village and further. There are plenty of tourist facilities and pensions to stop by.

**NABRAN.** Nabran is the largest recreational region in the Khachmaz district, situated on the Caspian shore. An interesting feature of the place is that right after the edge of sand the beach directly turns to a forest which hosts various tourist facilities, camps, pensions and resorts. Their conditions vary from comfortable first-rate luxury hotels and cozy cottages for small number of visitors to camp towns.

"Green ville" resort. The resort is located in a forest, on the Caspian shore. There are 18 comfortable cottages with 4 separate rooms in each. Each cottage can accommodate from 2 up to 12 visitors at a time, Restaurants, conference halls, bars, pools for adults and children, children's playground, tennis court, volleyball, basketball, football, table tennis, badminton - there is everything for your recreation.



"Palma" resort campus. 30 comfortable cottages (a conditioner, TV, bar and telephone in each), pools for adults and children, playgrounds, conference hall, restaurant, bar.

"Atlant" resort. The resort is located in a forest on the Caspian coast. 2-rooms and 3-rooms comfortable cottages, restaurant, disco, bar, medicinal mineral springs, pools, playgrounds, tours on bus, jeeps or walking tours. Boating and catamaran sailing for children.

**GUSAR.** Population - 91,5 thousand people; Gusar town, the center of the district. The district of Gusar borders Dagestan and is located in the northeast part of Azerbaijan 35 km from the Khudat railway station. The name of the district, Gusar, tomonimically ascends to the name of the tribe of Khisar which inhabited the region and vanished during historical ethnogeny. The region is predominantly populated by Lezghins.

Landscape of the territory is an alternation of mountains and plains covered with forests. Deciduous trees: hornbeams, oak, and beech are prevalent. In riparian woodlands grow medlar, sumach, hawthorn, dogrose, wild fruit trees, gooseberries, wild vines and plenty of herbal plants. There is also a beech forest called "Alistan Baba" (7 hectares) protected by the state. Not the less diverse is the local fauna - wolves, bears, mountain goats, eagles, owls etc. A game reserve named "Gusar" (with an area of over 15000 hectares) has been established with the purpose of preservation and restoration of species of hunting and farm importance and their habitat.

In mountain canyons one may observe beautiful waterfalls, the most popular of which, Laza and Shakhnabaz attract a great number of tourists and fanciers of wild nature of the Caucasus. Mountains and peaks of the district attract many climbers while local waterfalls have lately become a center of winter competitions. There is a walking path from the village of Laza to Khinalig village located in Guba district, the route becoming increasingly popular among foot travelers.

If taking an ecotourist route from the town of Gusar in the direction of Laza waterfall on the way one will cross the village of Anig with the remainders of fortress walls dated to the 13th century and an ancient mosque located nearby. By the village of Laza there is a resort named "Suvar". Taking a route from Gusar to the village of Sudug (75 km) located on the slopes of Shakhdag Mountain, in the village of Khazra one may survey the

ancient mausoleum of Sheikh Dzhuneid (16th century), the grandfather of Shah Ismail Khatai, the founder of Azerbaijani State of Sefevids.

This land, as the whole land of Azerbaijan, retains traces of ancient culture and life of its inhabitants. Remained in the villages of Khazra, Khil, Balagusar, Anig, Yasab, Keine Khudat and Gunduz Gala are ancient mausoleums, mosques, remainders of antique settlement sites and fortresses. Gusar town is the administrative center of the district. It is located 183 km of Baku. The town was visited by a brilliant Russian poet M. Lermontov. There is a museum bearing his name in the town.

Among folk crafts the most advanced is carpet production, especially weaving of fleecyless Sumakh carpets, woven both at home and at the workshop located in the center of the town. Installed in the same carpet workshop is the biggest loom in the republic. Ten people can work at this loom at the same time. Lodging is available at Garabulag, Gaibulag and Suvar resorts. Aside of lodgings these resorts also provide meals.

**<http://www.mct.gov.az/?/en/routes>**.

### *Baku-Gobustan*

If the shape of Azerbaijan on a map is similar to a bird flying towards the sea then the bird's "beak" would be the Absheron peninsula with an ancient and ever young city situated on its southwest coast. The city is Baku - the capital of Azerbaijan.

**Coordinates:** Latitude: 39° 39' N- 40° 03' N. Longitude: 49° 39' E - 49° 39' E. The population is 2000000. Even though administratively Baku is separated from Absheron suburb settlements (in a total number of 32), historically they are indivisibly linked to the capital both in cultural and economical as well as in geographical terms. Due to this, the whole Absheron peninsula including the capital is called "Big Baku".



Absheron and Baku feature major transport lines: International Airport named after Heydar Aliiev, a big port in the Baku Bay (the biggest on the whole Caspian Sea), Baku Railway station and highways connecting the capital with the rest of the country.

Major oil and gas pipelines also originate on the peninsula. Baku is a key point of the international transport corridor (Europe-Caucasus-Asia) TRASECA, in the framework of which Azerbaijan participates in restoration of a historical route, the Great Silk Road.

**Climate.** The Absheron Peninsula is located 29 m below World Ocean level. The climate of Baku and Absheron is of temperate warm semideserts and steppes with Absheron-specific

winds. While bringing refreshment in summer the northern wind "Khazri" is chilling in winter; on the contrary, the southern "Gilavar" is heating in summer but attenuates the cold in winter. In general, however, the climate of present Baku was substantially softened by gardens and parks, lovingly cultivated by Baku citizens. While at the beginning of XX century it was often impossible to go outside due to blinding dusty winds, today's Baku has evolved into a warm and comfortable city.

Mineral deposits - oil, gas, building stone (limestone - "badamdash"), salt, sand, lime. Salt lakes at the Absheron include Masazir, Gala, Beyuk-Shor and Hodzhasan. There are some of the oldest oil wells in the world where people would draw oil from with buckets and the first industrial oil wells on the Absheron.

**Mud volcanoes - a fine mystery of nature.** Azerbaijan is the first among the world's countries by quantity and diversity of mud volcanoes. Among 800 mud volcanoes known in different countries on Earth 400 are located within the boundaries of the South Caucasus oil-and-gas basins and among the latter 300 are located on the land of Azerbaijan, within its Caspian area of water and on numerous islands.

All known types of mud volcanoes on the world are represented in Azerbaijan. This is a genuine natural stock and laboratory of mud volcanoes. Due of this, in the last years Baku has become a center of international scientific forums on mud volcanism, geodynamics and seismicity.

Mud volcanoes also attract a great number of tourists visiting our country. Desert and rocky landscapes of Absheron with its volcanoes remind of the youth of our planet, of the ages before the advent of humans, or moon landscapes. However, the volcanoes in Azerbaijan are alive, active.

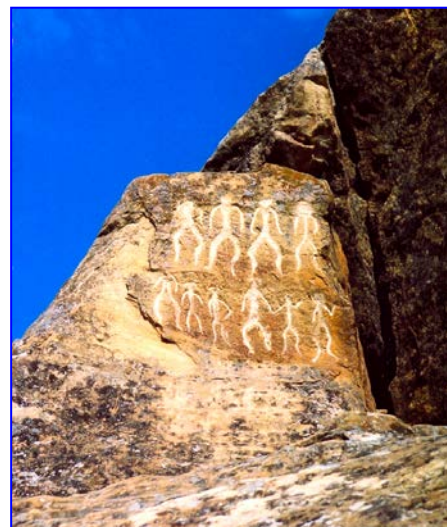
**Gobustan petroglyphs - an outdoor museum.** Prehistoric rock drawings - petroglyphs - are an art "archive" of the human evolution on Earth. The "articles" of such archives are the first transmissions from the human "I" to the outer world. There are a few of such outdoor "archives" in Azerbaijan. One of them, the largest, is located in Gobustan, at the Baku State Reserve of History, Ethnography and Arts, near Baku. It is a rocky massif on the bottom of the southeast part of the Great Caucasus Range, near the Caspian Sea and a modern highway built on the ancient Shirvan road.

A great number of rock drawings, dwellings, ancient settlement sites and mounds have been found here. D. Rustamov and F. Muradova, a married couple of archeologists who devoted 35 years to the research of Gobustan maintain that the most ancient group of Gobustan petroglyphs is the most optimistic and in spite of the basic form of self-description presents a very informative picture of the human life in the dawn of the development of humanity. They studied about 20 rock dwellings and settlements, excavated around 40 mounds and revealed 300 new rocks and stones with drawings. However, the stones of Gobustan are not only witnesses of the most ancient ages of human life. They reflect the history of the region during the period of over 15 thousands of years, from the Lower Paleolithic to The Middle Ages.



The first researcher of Gobustan who introduced this unique place to the world science in 1939 was archeologist Izhak Dzhafarzade. By now, over 4000 petroglyphs (rock drawings in the style of wooden engraving) have been found and studied. Among these there are pictures of hunt, fishing, domestic life, group dances, various symbols including solar (fylfot, spiral, cross), constellations, men and women (interestingly, women hunted along with men), pictures of animals - gazelles, aurochs, lions, goats, pictures of reed boats, two-wheeled carts, human traces. There are remains of unique "plates" - depressions carved in stones and even ornamented. There are also unusual "musical instruments" - stones producing loud sounds, each stone with its own timbre. This is the "Gaval-Dash", the tambourine stone.

The rocks of Gobustan also retain the evidence of the presence of Roman legionnaires crossing this attractive region in the 1st century BC. A rock has been found here with the carved inscription in Latin written by Roman centurions of the XII Legio Fulminata. The inscription reads that the Emperor Domitianus Caesar Augustus Germanicus ruled in Rome at the time. Now Gobustan is nominated for the inclusion in the list of "World Legacy" maintained by UNESCO.



**The history of Absheron.** Favorable climate-geographical and geological conditions contributed to the fact that the Absheron was already inhabited 20000 years ago (e.g., an ancient human settlement site near the village of Yeni Surakhany). The whole peninsula is studded with ancient man settlement sites and mounds dated to the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. There are types of burial complexes with burials of anthropomorphic figures made of stone accompanied by plot pictures (villages of Dubandy, Turkani, Hashahuna, Mardakan, and Shuvelan) that are restricted only to the Absheron. More settlement sites have been found in Pirallakhi, on the lake of Zikh, in Binagadi and in Amiradzhani. This evidences that the whole Absheron was one of inhabited places in the most ancient times. However, geostrategic position of the peninsula attracted various invaders as well.

The largest settlement site on the Absheron is Mashtaga. Here, aside of settlements dated to the Bronze and Iron Ages there are also posterior monuments: mosques: Bira Argutai (1414), Hodzha Aydamir, Gazikhana, Hodzha Kerbalai Khusein, (18th century); a mosques dated to the 13th-14th centuries with a 40 m tall minaret built later, a bath of 17th century, Ovdan (a lodgment dated to the 19th century), mausoleums: Agilbara, Hodzha Aslan, Gasanbek, Hodzha Aydamir (18th century). "Gala" if the Baku State Historical and Ethnographic Reserve located in the Absheron village of Gala. Remained in "Gala" are ancient mosques, old roads, ovdans, an ancient cemetery (15th century), baths and settlement sites dated to the Bronze Age. Gala is a typical Absheron settlement and is sometimes called "Icheri Sheher" of Azerbaijan.

Attracting a great interest among guests of Baku is the temple of Zoroastrians - Ateshgah (the house of fire) in the village of Surakhany (17th century). It is situated on a rock where natural emergences of gas on the surface have been burning for thousands of years. Near the village of Muhammedli one can observe an interesting natural phenomenon -the emergence of burning natural gases at the bottom of the mountains. The place is called Yanar Dag (The Burning Mountain"). In ancient times there were many such places in Azerbaijan. Ancient, prehistoric tracts - complete analogs of the mystical road tracks in Malta have been found in every part of the Absheron. Many of them lead right to the sea vanishing in the depth.



In very ancient times the city became the first sea port on the Caspian coast. Both the boats of invaders and civilian trade caravans with traders traveling from Russia and European countries were plying one of the ancient naval routes along the Volga River to Astrakhan. From here they could travel further, to the southwest - across Georgia, to the Black Sea countries, and to the east - to Persia, China and India. If the whole Azerbaijan is a country on the virtual border between Europe and Asia then Baku-Absheron is one of its main gates, through which the residents of European countries would travel to unveil the lands of Asia. Also, residents of

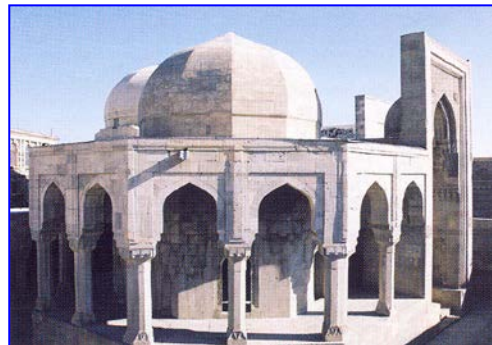


Asian and Far Eastern countries traveling to Europe did not pass Baku by. The place emerged as one of the branches of the Great Silk Road.

Some sources mention the city of Baruka located in the ancient Caucasian Albania. Scientists maintain that this is connected to Baku. Bagavan, Atesh-i-Bagavan, Bakukh, Bakuya, Bad-Kube, Baku, Baka - these are the ancient names of our city mentioned in various written sources of the antiquity. In the period of Shirvanshahs State formation, Baku attained even higher importance. In the 12th century, after a powerful earthquake that severely damaged Shamakhi, the capital of the State of Shirvan, Shirvanshah Ahsitan I whose wife and children also died during the earthquake, relocated the capital to Baku. Thus Baku became of the main city of the Shirvan State. Shirvanshah got a new capital, built the fortress walls of Icheri Sheher, and surrounded them with ditches. The population was occupied in crafts: carpet weaving, production of copper and bronze wares, weapons (many of them made their way to the museums of different countries in the world). Baku emerged as a strategic port on the Caspian Sea which favored its further prosperity. Shirvanshahs built a powerful fleet on the Caspian Sea. During the reign of Shirvanshah Khalilullah the 1st (1417-1462) extensive building construction works were conducted in Baku; economy and culture were prospered, too. In 1501 Baku was captured by Shah Ismail Sefevi and during the reign of Shah Tahmasib (1538) the state of Shirvanshahs was incorporated to the state of Sefevids. After a collapse of the latter in the 18th century a new, independent Baku Khanate was established. At that time Russia began to intensify the development of its geopolitical strategies at the Caucasus with the territory of Baku being a crucial part of these strategies. In 1723 Peter I launched an expedition to the Caspian Sea. In the same year his armies occupied Caspian borderlands including Baku, Shamakhi, Shirvan, Derbent, and border towns of Iran. The wars between Russia and Iran ended in 1813 with the Gulustan peace treaty by which Azerbaijan was divided into the North and South parts. The North Azerbaijan was incorporated into Russian Empire while the South part went to Iran.

**Monuments of Baku.** Among historical monuments of Baku the most exciting is the Old City - Icheri Sheher, surrounded by large fortress walls from three directions. There is a palace of Shirvanshahs with a complex of various structures: a burial vault, palace, mosque, Divan-khane, the Mausoleum of Seyd Yakhya Bakuvi (mausoleum of a dervish) - a court scientist. The palace was built by Shirvanshah Khalilullah I (1417-1462) and his son Farrukh Yasar (1462-1501). An interesting monument of antiquity is Juma Mosque with the inscription of Sultan Oldzhaytu (13th century). In the narrow streets of Icheri Sheher where the width of passages between houses are often reduced to the width of stretched arms, there are many little shops where one can buy ancient and modern wares of local craftsmen: carpets, ceramics, copperware etc. Here in Icheri Sheher, in buildings of the ancient caravanserais there are restaurants where one can taste the meals of Azerbaijani national cuisine.

Viewing the city from above, from the Upland Park or from the direction of the sea it is easily seen that the city's shape resembles an amphitheater on the slopes of rocky hills, it is like a bowl on the sea coast. Rising above at the edge of Icheri Sheher, near the big Baku Boulevard is one of the most famous historical-architecture monuments of the country, a symbol of Baku, Giz Galasy (Maiden's Tower) Giz Galasy is dated to the 12th century, researchers maintain that the Tower was of military and defensive importance and was a part



Seyid Yakhya Bakuvi's Mausoleum and remains of Key-Gabad's Mosque. XV c.

of the whole complex of defensive structures originating on the northern borders of Azerbaijan (at Derbent Fortress), Gilgichai Defensive Structures (a long wall, originating in the sea with many fortresses along its extent and ending in the mountains with a big tower called Chirag-Gala). However, not all secrets of Giz Galasy have been revealed. For instance, there are facts supporting the view that the Tower was built in much earlier times. For many residents of Baku the Tower, a unique example of the history and architecture of the country, possesses not only cultural, defensive (astronomic) but also esoteric importance. City folklore contains many legends both about the Tower itself and about its name. It has been speculated that on the

Caspian Sea, not far from Baku, there was another tower of the same kind. However, only the following information can be considered reliable. In 1235 Shirvanshah Fariburz III built fortifications on the rocky islands

of Bail bay (in the vicinity of the present Baku, the oldest region of oil production). There was a castle in a shape of an irregular rectangle with the length of 180 m and the width of 40 m. The castle was surrounded by fortress walls, 1.5-2 m thick and had a 15 m tall watch tower. Extending along the upper part of the fortress wall there was a 400 m-long inscription describing genealogy of Shirvanshahs dynasty. The inscription on one of the remained stones reads "Bender-i-Baku" (Port of Baku). It was a naval fortress guarding the approaches to the city since Shirvanshahs had a strong fleet already in the end of the 12th century. In the 13th century the fortress was besieged by Mongols who destroyed many of its structures with their battering rams but ultimately failed to capture it. The island with the castle was located 350 m from the city. After the earthquake in 1306 and subsequent increase in the Caspian Sea level the island with the castle became scuttled. During archeological excavations about 700 stones with inscriptions along with fragments and whole pieces of earthenware and copper coins of Shirvanshah Kershasb (13th century) were raised from the bottom of the sea. Some of the stones were later exhibited in the atrium of the palace of Shirvanshahs. The submerged fortress is now known as "Shahri Saba", "Sabail Castle" or "Bail Stones".

Nowadays Baku is a modern city with a delicate charming of the East and features of a modern megapolis. Here, in the capital, there are museums of: History of Azerbaijan, Literature, Musical Culture, Carpets, and Theater. There are also memorial Museums of: U. Hadzhibekov, the founder of modern Azerbaijani music, a renowned Azerbaijani composer Niyazi; composer and jazz performer V. Mustafazade, Baku-born world-famous musician M. Rostropovich, writers and playwrights G. Javid, Jabbarli, M.S. Ordubadi and a unique museum of miniature books.

There are also a number of exhibitions, concert halls, art galleries, theaters, sport complexes, stadiums, swimming pools, numerous hotels and restaurants. Around Baku, along the whole perimeter of the Absheron peninsula there are a number of beaches. One can bathe and tan on the Absheron five months a year since there are many warm and hot sunny days. When the sun goes down and the heat of summer days fades away discos and night clubs begin their work on the beaches. At the service of tourist and vacationers are plentiful of hotels, resorts and health centers on the Caspian Coast.

**<http://www.mct.gov.az/?/en/routes>**.

*Baku-Astara*

**SALYAN.** Population - 128, 1 thousand people.

The district of Salyan is located in the southeast part of Azerbaijan, in Lankaran-Astara region which is characterized by its original cultural and historical traditions and unique flora. The region is also famous for its longest-livers and special cuisine with broad assortment of fish meals. It has been inhabited since the ancient times. The district forms an original gate to this region. Major transport lines of the republic, a highway and railway connecting the rest of Azerbaijan with its south regions and also with Middle East countries, traverse its territory.

In ancient times this region was inhabited by various tribes, they were replacing one another in the waves of history and formed the components Azerbaijani nation ethnogeny. The area's name is derived from self-designation of one of these ancient tribes - "sals".

On the territory of the district flows one of the major rivers of the country - Kura and its east border is formed by the Caspian coast.

Located here is the State National Park "Shirvan" (reorganized from the reserve of the same name in 2003). The reserve was established in 1969 to protect and reproduce special plant complexes of Shirvan lowlands (semidesert and aqueous-swampy ecosystems). There is also a reserve called "Bandovan" established in 1961. The reserve covers an area of 30000 hectares. It includes parts of territories of two administrative regions - Salyan and Garadag and was formed with the purpose of preservation and restoration of the population of gazelles, water birds and little bustards

The place is also interesting due to its archeological importance. There are a number of remained historical and architectural monuments. In the 1970-1980's a number of objects belonging to the Middle Ages were found on the territory of the district.

These settlements once were advanced trade and industrial centers as evidenced by numerous findings of goods made of ceramics, glass and stone. Due to the increase in the Caspia Sea level the settlements became scuttled. A stationary underwater archeological expedition under the supervision of V. Kvachidze was organized to study this so called Caspian Atlantics. The findings of the expedition are collected in the Baku Museum of Azerbaijani History.

Here, in the district, there are a number of archeological objects covering the period from the Bronze Age to the Early Middle Ages. Among them there is the Marimli necropolis, necropolis of pitcher burials in the village of Gursanga, ruins of ancient settlements in present villages of Nohudlu and Mahmudabad. 5 km away from the regional center is located one of numerous mud volcanoes of Azerbaijan, Babazanan which attracts local residents with healing properties of its mud.

Near Salyan, in a place called Dashgil not far from the Caspian coast one can observe a mud volcano. There is also a game reserve named "Dashgil", a place to hunt water birds and catch kutum, sazan and other Caspian fish.

Salyan town is the administrative center of the district, located 126 km from Baku. There is an ancient mosque of 19th century, an architectural monument protected by the state. Presently at the service of travelers is a newly constructed modern-style caravanserai where one can taste dishes of the old local Azerbaijani cuisine.

Lodging is also available in motel "California" located on the road from Baku, close to Salyan, not far from the sea. There is also a restaurant "Tendirhana" as well as numerous outdoor cafes in the town.

**BILASUVAR.** Population - 94, 0 thousand people.

Bilasuvan district is bordered by Iran on the west. Local climate is of semideserts and dry steppes; the climate favors the development of cotton and cereals growing as well as cattle breeding. According to one of versions, the name of the region is connected to the search of water ("here is water"), according to another - to the craftsmen who were able to find water in a desert area ("they who know where water is"). Like the whole territory of Azerbaijan, this area has been inhabited since the ancient times. This is supported by numerous archeological findings and remainders of architectural monuments. The monuments remind of the ancient history of the region: settlement sites like Chil Agdam, Toragay dated to the antiquity and early middle ages. Unfortunately, a majority of these archeological objects have not been studied yet.

Bilasuvan is a small town, located 182 km from Baku. Lodgings are available at the local hotel and guest houses. Meals are available in numerous shashlik houses and in "Zirve club".

**JALILABAD.** Population – 202,0thousand people.

Jalilabad region is located on the border of Kura-Araz lowlands; climate varies from temperate warm with almost uniform precipitation to semideserts and dry steppes with dry summers. The rivers Indzhadzhai, Bulgarchai, Misharchai and Geitepechai traverse the territory of the district. The climate and landscape favor the



intensive development of winegrowing though in early times the region was a main supplier of various grains for the country. Presently these traditions are actively restored.

Almost 14700 hectares are occupied by forests and there are fine places for hunt. In a hunt estate Zavvar it is possible to hunt water birds. Fauna is represented by wolves, hares, badgers, foxes, wild boars, wild ducks, eagles, francolins etc.

Jalilabad town is the administrative center of the district, located 210 km from Baku. On the outskirts of the town archeologists have found and excavated a site called Hashramtepe. Among other findings there were objects of material culture from the Late Stone Age. Specialists maintain that the place was inhabited by the famous tribe of Mages - one of Aryan tribes of early Zoroastrianism. Traditionally natives of the Mages tribe became priests of this religion to replenish the lines of the higher priests. They were skilled in healing and Zoroastrian astrology. They could do many things that after a time the self-designation of the tribe became a common noun - magic. Here, in small hills of the Hashramtepe site were found domestic objects and instruments for the preparation of Haoma - a cult drink of Zoroastrian religion. There are numerous mounds, settlement sites and necropolises (from the Bronze Age to the early Middle Ages) found on the territory of the district.

The former name of the town is Hasilli, later it was renamed to Astrakhan-bazaar. Jalilabad bears its present name in honor of prominent Azerbaijani writer-satirist Jalil Mammadguluzade, the founder and permanent editor of "Molla Nasreddin" - the first satiric journal in the East.

In Jalilabad there is a small museum of regional history, a park, a hotel and a motel. At the service of tourists there are a number of small shashlik-restaurants and the restaurant "Yurd".

**MASALLI.** Population – 208, 9 thousand people Masalli district extends along the main transport line of the region: a road from the capital to the south, to Iran. One of the borders of the region is formed by the Caspian coast, another - by Talysh Mountains. Diverse landscape of the area - mountains and plains (Lankaran lowlands) underlie the climate drops - from temperate warm with dry summer to subtropical. Rivers traversing the lands of the district - Vilash, Alvadichai, Tatyán etc. empty into the Caspian Sea. Masalli region is rich in mineral springs - both thermal and cold, some are sulfurated and enriched with other trace elements. Located in one of picturesque mountain spots of the region is a mineral spring Istisu with medicinal water. The place is often visited, and not only because of the medicinal springs but also for the sake of recreation - the area is very beautiful with a waterfall of thermal waters and suspended bridge. "Istisu" is a very popular medicinal mineral water bottles of which are available in drugstores of our country.

Masalli town is the administrative center of the district, located 232 km from Baku. The place was a home to the ancient tribe of "masals"; remained in the memories of people this name was transformed into the present name of the town. Located on the outskirts of the town, in a forest, is a small picturesque lake; this is the most preferred resort of both visitors and residents.

Historical and architectural monuments of the town include a mosque of the 19th century, an ancient bath, the Erkivan tower, Museum of Regional History. There are mosques of the 16th century and the mausoleum of Seid Sadig in the nearby villages of Digah and Boradigah. Wares of traditional folk crafts (mats, shawls, pottery and woodenware carpets and jorabs) are made in the villages of Musakudja, Turkoba, Kolatan, Sigdash etc.

Located on the road from Masalli to Lankaran, on the southwest coast of the Caspian Sea (bay of Gizilgach) is the Gizilgach reserve, whose territories include the whole water area of the bay and the bordering areas of the land. The reserve was established in 1929 year to protect and reproduce water birds, swamp and steppe birds as well as water and semidesert natural complexes which are the place of wintering of birds including those in the Red List (a total of 248 species of birds and 54 species of fish).

"Dashtvent" Resort. Located near the village of Erkivan. There are cottages and a hotel of modern urban standards.

**LANKARAN.** Territories of Lankaran district occupy the east coast of the Caspian Sea and whole Lankaran lowlands up to Talysh Mountains. On the local shore of the Caspian Sea there are many fine sand beaches. Wet subtropical climate without harsh winters, dry and hot summer and rainy autumn underlie the richness of the local flora and fauna. The major rivers are Lankaran, Verapvul, Gumbashi; their waters are replenished mainly by rainy precipitations. They are stormy in spring and autumn but rather quiet and shallow in summer. Due to this, the HanbulanChai reservoir has been constructed here for watering agricultural crops.

Lankaran district is another important agricultural region of Azerbaijan, whose climate favors the growing of subtropical crops - tea, tangerines, persimmons, feijoa and lemons of various sorts. This is the main region of the country where grows the famous Lankaran tea, well compared by quality and taste with the classical Indian tea. It is not a coincidence that the area is a home to skilled engravers - the region is rich in unique sorts of trees, including relict and endemic ones. Lignum vitae, corkwood, velvet birch, hyrcanian box

tree, silk tree, oak, eucalypt and the most abundant tree of Talysh forests of Lankaran - deciduous oak grow in this area. Aside of these there are many wild fruit trees, herbal plants and bushes in forests. Therefore it is not surprising that two reserves and one game reserve have been established on the territory of the region.

The reserve "Gizil Agach" is located on the southwest coast of the Caspian Sea, on the area of Gizil-Agach bay. The area of the reserve includes waters of the whole Greater Gizil-Agach bay and the north part of Smaller Gizil Agach bay, and also adjacent parts of the shore. The reserve was established in 1929 for protecting and reproducing wintering and migrant water birds, swamp and steppe birds. There are 248 species of birds and 54 species of fish.

Located on an area of 21435 hectares is the "Hyrcanian" reserve reorganized into the "Hyrcanian" National Park in 2004 (the park occupies a part of Astara and Lankaran regions). The game reserve "Small Gizil Agach" was established in 1978 (on an area of 10700 hectares) on the Smaller Gizil-Agach bay to protect and restore the population of wintering and migrating swampy-water and coastal birds including rare and endangered species. It is bordered by the reserve "Gizil Agach".

Lankaran town is the administrative center of the district. Its population is 215, 8 thousand people. It is located 268 km from Baku. This is a town of advantageous geographic situation, fertile soil and natural resources. Lankaran is situated on the southeast border of the country, on the bank of Lankaranchai River. It is speculated that the town was founded at this very place, near the sea, about 300 years ago. A fortress with watch towers and a lighthouse were built here. The initial name of the town, "Lengerkunan", means "an anchorage" indicating that it was a port town. Presently, among architectural-historical monuments remained here there are "Khan Evi" khan palace with an original ornament of the front, Kichik Gala mosque, Guldasta minaret, and the ancient bath of Gadzhi Mirza. One can learn about the history of the region in the Museum of History, the very building of which attracts special interest from the architectural standpoint. There are workshops of decorative and applied art in the town where craftsmen engrave on wood, stone and metal. There is also a theater, the first performance at which occurred in 1850 year; the returns were donated to the poor. Lankaran is a hometown of the famous Azerbaijani commander, General Azi Aslanov and there is a monument erected in his honor. A museum exhibition was opened in the house he lived in.

Such traditional crafts as jewelry, carpet weaving, reed netting (according to some sources the whole town of Lankaran was constructed on a swampy place covered in reed) are developed on the outskirts of Lankaran, in the villages of Boladi, Vilvan Veravul. Among architectural and historical monuments remained to present day there are Abirlar tower in the village of Yukhary Nuvedi, the Tower of Sheikh Zahid in the village of Shihakaryan, and to the west of Lankaran there are ancient remainders of Balabur tower in the construction of which an unusual combination of materials - red bricks and fluvial stones was used. Local residents also call the tower "Boz Gala", which means "A Grey Fortress". There are ceramic aqueducts remained in the fortress to present day.

In the 18th century, during the reign of Garakhan, Lankaran became the capital of Talysh Khanate which marked the onset of its cultural and economic prosperity and development of crafts, especially works with metals: forging, jewelry and copperware production. With the goods from Iran, Central Asia, India and Russia shipping through Lankaran became an important trade center - in the town there were 9 major banks with advanced infrastructure. Due to its wealth and advantageous geopolitical position the town constantly drew the attention of aggressive forces of neighboring khanates and larger states. In 1795 it was ransacked by armies of Iranian Shah Mohammed Kadjar and in 1813 the whole Lankaran khanate was usurped by Russia. In 1813 this occupation was legitimated by the Turkmenchai treaty.

"Gala-Lankaran" Hotel. There are 59 comfortable rooms with telephones, conditioners and cable TV in the hotel.

#### **LERIK.** Population – 78,7 thousand people

Located high in Talysh Mountains, the district of Lerik is one of the most beautiful nature spots in Azerbaijan. A stunning landscape, clean mountain air with the balm of woods, springs, rivers, fertile soil...it is not a coincidence that this region is famous for its longest-livers. In summer temperature rarely exceeds 25°C but frequent autumn rains sometimes make the routes impassable and some villages become very hard to get to. Some nearly inaccessible areas of Lerik forests are habitat of leopards, now protected a special program. It is possible to hunt wild boars, foxes, hares and birds (ducks and partridges). The tallest peaks of Talysh Mountains are Kemur-Gey (2492 m) and Gizyurdu (2433 m). The unique history of this region reflects the most interesting periods in the complex history of the whole country. There are plenty of cultural and historical monuments evidencing that these places were inhabited already in the Late Stone Age. E.G. cave stop dated to the Stone Age, ancient site "Giz Yurdy" near a mountain village at the level of about 2430 m. Mausoleums include "Baba Hasan" near the village of Jonu, "Baba Isa" in the village of Mondigah, "Hodja Seid" in the village of Hanagah (14th century), "Pir Yusif" near the village of Kekonu, Dabira (12th-14th centuries) and "Khaliph Zakariya" on

the road to the village of Djengemiran in which both ancient and simply old trees are protected and honored by the residents. This village was once visited by Alexander Dumas who later pictured a heroic fate of a woman from the village in one of works.

Remained in the village of Lulukaran is an original mosque dated to the 19th century. Noteworthy are also numerous stone figures of rams remained in many villages. We have already mentioned that the region is famous for its longest-livers. Shirali Muslumov, for instance, lived 163 years of active life (1812-1975) thus setting the world record. Mahmud Eyvazov lived 150 years (1808-1958). Even today dozens of longest-livers who turned 100 and yet have not lost the ability to work live in the regions. Among the developed folk crafts are carpet weaving, production of various domestic wares and pottery. An interesting feature of the local carpet weaving is that the carpets are woven not on a vertical loom but on horizontal one, laid out right on the floor.

Lerik town is the administrative center the district. It is located 323 km from Baku. The town is situated on foothills, on a fertile land. Here one can visit the Museum of History, survey the memorial erected in honor of victims of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorny Karabakh conflict.

Lodging can be provided by local residents and is also available in numerous resorts along the road from Lankaran to Lerik, the most popular of which are "Shelale" and "Meshachi".

**ASTARA.** Population – 101,2 thousand people.

Astara district is located on the border with Iran, in the southeast part of Azerbaijan. A part of its territory is occupied by Talysh Mountains and another part - plains which underlies the climatic diversity of the area.

The forests occupy 37000 hectares; the rivers Astarachai and Tengerud originate high in Talysh Mountains and empty into the Caspian Sea. Flora is rich and diverse - wild quince, medlar, hawthorns, blackberry bushes, silk tree, evergreen butcher's broom, various lianas. The area features also famous *lignum vitae* (Damir Agach), a tree immersed into the water. In ancient times local residents used the tree for the production of looms and nowadays it is used for part of weaving machineries.

Fauna is none the less diverse than the flora - porcupines, roes, wolves, lynx, deer etc. The animals feel comfortable in local forests. There is an abundance of sand beaches with clean, transparent water on the shore of the Caspian Sea.

Located on the territory of the region is a part of Hyrcanian National Park, making the place attractive to ecotourists. In Astara region, near the border with Iran, in the place named Isti-Su there are medicinal springs. This is an area of tea, vegetables and citrus growing. There is a great number of historical and architectural monuments (about 400) remained in the region. In nearly all villages there are traces of ancient dwellings. E.G., a tower in the village of Shindan (named The Tower of Babek by local residents); another tower in the village of Nudis; the Bath of Meshedi Abutalyb, the Mosques of Gadzhi Teimus and Gadzhi Jahan Bakhish in the village of Pensar; a mausoleum in the village of Shakhgach; the Bath of Kerbelai Gamid Abdulla in the village of Archivan (in the same village there is a famous sulfurated spring: its water takes fire if exposed to a lit match); fortress ruins, a mausoleum, a caravanserai dated to the 7th century and stone sculptures dated to the Stone and Bronze ages in the villages Siniyapert, Lomin and Pileken.

Astara town is the administrative center of the district. It is located 322 km from Baku. The town is an important transit point on the road Baku-Teheran.

Astara is a border town bounded by the sea from one side and by mountains from another. There are rice fields around the town. Fishing is also developed which is reflected by the local cuisine. In Astara there is a Museum of Regional History with quite rich collections. The main pride of the museum is not only old coins evidencing about the advanced level of trade in ancient times but also a stone human sculpture about 200- years old.

<http://www.mct.gov.az/?/en/routes>.

*Baku-Gazakh*

**HAJIGABUL.** Population of Hajigabul district is 69,1 thousand people, center of district is Hajigabul city.

Hajigabul district is located in a part of ancient fruitful land of Mugan in Kur-Araz lowland. Climate is semi-desert, dry and hot, winter is mild. Temperature of weather is not lower than positive 6 degree in winter. It rains less, but tugai forests and bushes exist along the Kur River.

Hajigabul Lake created as a result of natural withdrawal of Caspian Sea in certain geological period is situated within this district. Bed of the lake was enlarged as a result of flood of Kur River in springtime. Now used hot waters of Ali-Bayramly State District Power Station flows into this lake. This lake, depth of which does not exceed 5 meter, is not frozen in winter. It has big importance as suitable place in winter for migrant birds, as well for water-march birds to build a nest. Many of those birds belong to unique types that face the danger of being ended.

Carpet-weaving has developed here since the ancient times. Shirvan School's tradition of weaving the hand carpets called "Sari khalcha" is continued still.

Hajigabul city, administrative center of district, is located in 113 km from Baku. Meaning of its name is 'God accept your Hajj visit'. Visit of Muslims to saint Medina and Mecca cities is called 'Hajj'. Honorary title 'Hajji' is granted to the person having visited Hajj and this word is used before its name. Hajj visit is a complex of religious concepts and covers the requests of mercy, different confessions from Allah. So, it comes clear from name of Hajigabul city that it was a camp not only for trade caravans but also for Hajj pilgrims. Sometimes pilgrims used to go in caravans, sometimes they promised to walk till Hajj. There were caravanserais here to receive both pilgrims and merchants traveling the Persian Gulf region.

In XVII century Shah Abbas built a big caravanserai near Hajigabul Lake and a city was built here when dynasty of the Safavi was in reign and this city was called Mahmudabad at the time. Later this name was forgotten and city was called again Hajigabul. But this territory was inhabited yet 5 thousand years ago - archeologists found out ruins of cyclopean buildings in Harami Mountain in north-west of city. Petroglyphs in walls of these buildings catch the attention. There were found out images of people and extraordinary, fantastic animals on the stones near. Scientists suppose this object belongs to Eneolith era. Other historical-architectural monuments remain near Hajigabul. In Gubali Baloglan village Pir Huseyn Khanegah includes: ancient mosque with minaret, castle walls, caravanserai, living buildings (XIII-XIV centuries), mausoleum of Sheikh Huseyn, who lived in XI century, (this mausoleum that was built in honor of sheikh was erected after two centuries after his death), as well ancient bridge (XVII-XIX centuries).

Glazed brick of Khanegah reflecting picture of lion is considered one of the best in the East. At the present time a part of this bricks is at The Hermitage in Saint-Petersburg and Nizami Ganjavi's Literature Museum in Baku. Gungormez defense tower of early middle ages remained in Udulu village. Apparently from name of this tower people defended there were protected themselves till their last breathe in fight against enemy.

**KURDEMIR.** Number of population of district is 108,8 thousand people, district center is Kurdemir city.

**KURDEMIR DISTRICT** is situated in Shirvan, historical province of Azerbaijan, in north-west from Baku. This beautiful and fruitful land is very attractive for tourism and recreation. It sometimes is called Gulustan. Summer is hot and dry in Kurdemir. Climate is steppe. Fauna of district is diverse - there are wolf, fox, jackal, wild boar, pheasant, turac, wild duck and goose here. Vineyards of this land are very famous. The very famous type of grape is "Shirvanshahly". Kurdemir is famous with its carpet-weaving traditions. The most popular type of local carpets in world market is "Shilyan" carpet. This carpet is woven at the same-called village near Kurdemir.

Kurdemir city, administrative center of Kurdemir district, is located on the left bank of Kur River, in 189 km from Baku.

Numerous cafes and restaurants here located along the Baku-Ganja highway are available for lunch. Most popular of them is "Garabag" Restaurant situated in 5 km west of district center.

**YEVLAKH.** Number of population of district is 122,3 thousand people, district center is Yevlakh city.

Yevlakh district is situated on the right bank of Kur River and one of biggest cities of the region called by the people Ganjabasar (it is called so because was the territory of former Ganja Khanate). Ganjabasar region covers a number of districts of Azerbaijan. These districts are similar for their joint history and geographic-climate circumstance. Yevlakh city, administrative center of Yevlakh district, is 287 km away from Baku. Yevlakh is located on the cross of numerous roads. Roads lead from here directly to Mingechevir, Sheki, Balaken, Ganja and Khankendi cities. It is not accidental that Yevlakh is called "Door of Karabakh" in written



sources of XII century. Both caravans and travelers used to pass from these "doors", as well flocks of sheep used to be taken to pastures in alpine meadows. A number of archeological objects of Bronze Age and early middle ages were found out in Garamammadly, Garamanly and Khaldan villages of Yevlakh.

**TERTER.** Number of population of district is 100,2 thousand people, district center is Terter city.

Terter district is situated along the lower flow of Terterchay, borders upon Injechay from north. Temperature is not lower than positive 2 degree in winter and rarely exceeds 25 degree in summer. Climate is different within the district - mild and semi-desert climates are specific to different regions. Just because of such a changeable climate sheep-breeding is widespread here. Khachinchay crosses this district. In due time this territory was a constituent part of Albanian state, which was one of early state institutions (Manna, Mydia, Atropaten, Caucasian Albania) of Azerbaijan. Like other Azerbaijanis, Albans also believed in religion of Zoroaster in ancient times, converted to the Christianity later. Terter city is administrative center of Terter district. City is situated on the both banks of Terterchay, 332 km from Baku. Agriculture and cattle-breeding, as well ancient folk arts such as carpet-weaving, weaving and sewing are developed here. Terter city, located on the ancient caravan way, was called Chaparkhana in due time. A number of architectural monuments exist in Terter, Kengerly, Garadagly, Gaynag, Azad Garagoyunlu villages of district.

**NAPHTHALAN.** Number of population of small Naphthalan city located near Goranboy city, center of Goranboy district, is 9,4 thousand people. Patients coming to sanatoriums and pensions of this resort city are treated with Naphthalan oil and solutions made of it. Naphthalan oil is very effective for treatment of injures, dermatologic, nervous, urologic and gynecologic diseases, liver, joints and soft tissues around joints. Naphthalan city was built in the place of the same-called small village. The word 'naphtha', which is the base of this name, means 'flowing, leaking' from language of Mydia that was one of the ancient state structures in Azerbaijani territory. Yet a few thousand years ago Azerbaijanis were able to use the naphthalene for different purposes. Not only local residents used Naphthalan oil to treat the wounds, also soldiers of Alexander of Macedonia, Roman legionaries and Vikings, as well alans, khezers and reps of other tribes that attacked Azerbaijan in due time used Naphthalan oil to treat their wounds. Naphthalane used to be exported as well. It was transported to other countries - Kiev Russian State, Central Asia, Afghanistan, India, Persian Gulf countries through caravan routes. Famous traveler of middle ages Marco Polo called the Naphthalan oil 'magical solution to treat dermatologic diseases'. When oil industry started to rapidly develop in Azerbaijan in XIX century, number of European engineers, manufacturers and bankers increased much in Azerbaijan. In 1874 German engineer Yeager took interest in what the local people said on Naphthalan oil and regulated the production of 'Naphthalan' ointment in Germany. He exported that solution to different countries. Obviously, Germans producing solutions in base of Azerbaijani Naphthalane were good managers because this solution was used not only in European countries. First-aid set of Japanese soldiers included jars containing naphthalane ointments during Russian-Japan war in 1904. This ointment was used as first-aid means. It was written on those jars: 'One having this solution should not be afraid of any wound. Visitors can stay at "Chinar" sanatorium here.

**GANJA.** Ganja city - is located on the banks of Ganjachay in Ganja-Gazakh lowland. City is divided in two by river. Two climate zones exist here - mild-hot semi-desert and dry steppe climate, as well mild hot climate. Number of population of city is 323,0 thousand people. City is situated in 375 km from Baku. Ganja is the second biggest city of Azerbaijan. There are Ganja State University, Academy of Agriculture, and Ganja Branch of National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, Scientific-Research Cotton-growing Institute, Experimental Agriculture Station here. Modern Olympic Sport Complex was built in city. Ganja is homeland of world-famous poet Nizami Ganjavi, poetess Mahsati Khanim, Mirza Shafi Vazeh. There are many historical monuments here. There are Juma Mosque and its madrasah, Sheikh Ibrahim Mausoleum, Gizil Hajily, Ozan, Bala Bagbanly, Sherefkhanly and Shahseven Mosques, Great Bridge and Small Bridge built on the Ganjachay (XII century), caravanserai and complex of buildings, Imamzade with blue cupola of glazed brick, very beautiful ancient City bathhouses (bathhouses are available now) here. Guests are recommended to visit Nizami Ganjavi Mausoleum located in the entry of city.

Ganja is one the most ancient cities, which played important role in history of our country in different periods. Arabs called this city Ganza. During excavations conducted in Ganja archeologists discovered ancient habitations of II century B.C., many archeological objects belonging to Bronze Age around Ganja.

History of Ganja includes its destruction by invaders and revival after that. Ganja was destroyed in Khazar-Arab wars by foreign invaders, tribes such as the Alan, Mongol, Georgian kings and Osmanly. After destruction of residence of Christian head of Albans in Barda in XI century, his residence was moved to Ganja. Christians and Muslims used to live in peace together in Ganja, goods taken to Black Sea coasts from Eastern countries were transported through caravan ways crossing this city.

In XII century Ganja was capital and residence of feudal lords. But at the time two strong quakes happened in the city. As a result of quake happened in 1139 Ganja was destroyed, nearly 250,000 of city

residents died. One of peaks of Kepez Mountain fell and created Goygol Lake by blocking the way of Agsu River.

In XVII century city was rebuilt in 6km east from previous place. In the earlier XVIII century Ganja again underwent attack of invaders, in the mid of the same century became center of Ganja Khanate. Ganja Khanate existed until it was occupied by Russia. When Russian troops, number of which was more, attacked Ganja in 1804, band of Javadkhan defended Ganja in heroic way and Javadkhan himself bravely died. After this event, in 1804 name of Ganja was changed in honor of Russian Empress Elizabeth and called Yelizavetpol.

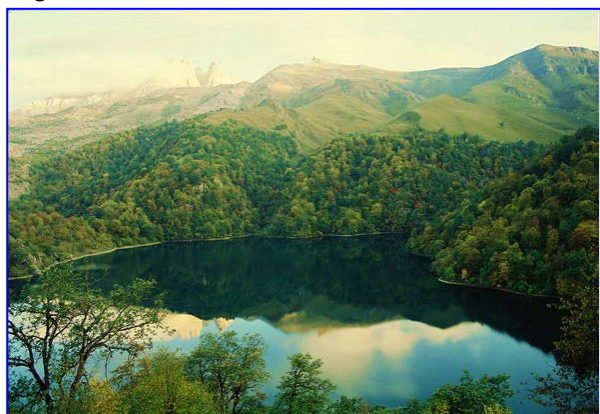
In 1918 - on the eve of collapse of Russian Empire Ganja was a capital of independent Azerbaijan Republic for a few months. Then school of officers was opened in Ganja. Name of Ganja was again changed in 1935 to Kirovabad. Only after Azerbaijan regained independence in 1989 and on the eve of collapse of USSR historical name of Ganja maws restored.

Hajikend resort zone is located now near Ganja. There are numerous tourist routes, pensions, tourist bases and rest houses here.

Goygol State Reserve is first in Azerbaijan. area of this reserve created in 1925 in order to protect and study ecologic systems of middle mountainous, forest and partly subalpine areas, as well Goygol, Maralgol, Zeligol and other mountain lakes, consists of forests and mountain meadows. Goygol, which is located in south of Ganja at the north foots of Murovdag, in 1566m above sea level, is rightly called pearl of Azerbaijan lakes. This reserve that is the first in Caucasus is consisted of two parts - main part and branch called 'Forest hf Eldar Pine'. Distance between the two parts of reserve is 80-85km. Ganja got own history-regional geography museum. There are very interesting findings of Bronze Age among exhibits of museum. Drama Theatre and Child Puppet Theatre function in Ganja. 'Ganja' Hotel, located in city center, is available for tourists and guests of city.

**GEYGEL.** Number of population of district is 59,9 thousand people.

Geygel district is situated at the foots of Small Caucasus, a bit south of Ganja. Agriculture is well-developed in this district, which has very nice landscape. Climate is mild hot. There are many bird nests here. Ganjachay and Gushgara rivers are best places for hunting and fishing. Highest peak of district is Murovdag range that is located in 3724m above sea level. This district is very popular among tourists and ecotourists. They lodge at houses of local people and surrounding villages.



Administrative center of Geygel district is Geygel city located in 364 km from Baku. Geygel city was built in XIX century by refugee Germans in place of ancient village called Khaniglar. They planned this city with order specific to themselves and called it Yeleniyendorf in 1819. Smooth streets of this city, facades, reflecting flutes, of houses built of wood, protestant church (Lutheran church) remind German style. Local Germans living here were exiled to Middle Asia during USSR time on the order of Stalin. There are local history-regional geographic, music school, cinema, many cafes and restaurants in Geygel. Tourists visiting this silent and green city travel from there

to tourist zones on different routes. Archeological findings belonging to Bronze and iron ages confirm that this city possess ancient history. Lutheran Church (1854), 'Ikigozlu Korpu' (XVI c) and 'Uchgozlu Korpu' (1896) on Ganjachay have remained safe till now as historical-architectural monuments. Monuments remained near Geygel include castle of XII century in Zurnabad village, Mausoleum of XVI century in Sari Gaya village, 'Ag Korpu' of XII century in Topalhasanly village, a number of historical monuments in Chaykend village.

**DASHKESAN.** Number of population of district is 33,5 thousand people.

Dashkesen district, located at the north-east foots of Small Caucasus, is ore producing center of Azerbaijan. Temperature is strictly changeable. 20 degrees of frost in winter (this is not characteristic for Azerbaijan) and 35 degrees of hot in summer like in Absheron, climate of which is semi-desert. District attracts both tourists and people resting with its fresh air, mountainous grasslands rich with alpine meadows, springs.

Archeologists found out ruins of ancient habitations belonging Stone Age in areas of Khoshbulag, Zagaly, Gurbulag, Emirvar, Bayan, Darderya villages of this district. Two ancient stone bridges built on the Gushgara River and mausoleum in Ahmadly village are historical-architectural monuments remained till now. Monastery built in Gushchu village in 487 is safe. There are ruins of Christian temple of XV century in Bayan village.

Administrative center of district is Dashkesen city, which is located in 397km from Baku. Apparently from its name this region was famous with its sculptors that were considered masters of art of carving out stone

and wood since the ancient times. At present time folk arts such as carpet-weaving and sock-weaving well-developed.

Customers are offered here national cuisine at small restaurants, delicious national meals made of fresh meat at kebab-houses, as well national music performed by ashigs (national improvisator singers). Dashkesen's honey is one of the best in republic. Residents of nearby Ganja city love to rest in Khoshbulag village of Dashkesen district.

**SHEMKIR.** Number of population of district is 201,4 thousand people.

There are many archeological objects of Bronze and early Iron ages in Shemkir district. They mostly were discovered in Chenlibel, Seyidler and Garajaemirly villages. There are also a number of historical-architectural monuments of middle ages: castles in Tatarly and Ashagi Seyfelly villages, bridges in Tehneli village and on the Zeyem River, Christian churches in Yukhari Chaykend, Guneshly, Dag Jeyirly villages. There are beloved places of fishers here - Yenikend dam on Kur River is especially popular.

Shemkir city, administrative center of district, can be reached in an hour with a car from Ganja. Shemkir is 399km away from Baku. There was a small colony called Annenfeld of German refugees here in XIX century. Like in Khanlar, residents of this colony also left here a number of streets that are ideally smooth and Lutheran church. According to written sources and archeological information this city was built in V-VI centuries on the bank of Great Shemkir River near current Mukhtariyyat village, 20 km from modern Shemkir. There was 8-tower feudal castle in that city that was called Shamkur in Middle Ages. Wealth of Shamkur caught attention of not only merchants as well invaders. As many of ancient cities of Azerbaijan, Shamkur, too, was destroyed for many times, then restored and held the period of progress. But after one of the next attacks, survived population of city moved and built new city.

Two ancient castles belonging to XVII century remain around modern Shemkir. These are Shamkhor Castle and Koroglu castle (name of this castle was chosen as our national symbol in honor of hero Koroglu, who bravely fought against despots). Most of scientists think that Koroglu was real historical personality. But it was not convincingly qualified whether he really lived in Chenlibel castle.

You may have lunch at one of restaurants 'Khan Sarayi', 'Murovdag', 'Efes-1' in Shemkir. Special house or room can be rented to live here.

**GEDEBEY.** Number of population of district is 96,0 thousand people.

Gedebey district is situated in Small Caucasus Mountains, as well in high mountains (height of Goshabulag peak is 3549m, Gojadag peak is 3317m) and mountains with middle height. Different levels of territory above sea make climate changeable. Climate, specific to tundra, of mountainous area partly transfers into dry climate accompanied with hot summer. Distance between district center and Baku is 444km. Road from Shemkir or Govlar station of Tovuz leads to Gedebey. Tovuz route is more beautiful but cars pass this way hardly: jeeps are recommended here.

There is good circumstance within Gedebey district for fishing in Shemkir River. There is special fishing farm near Galakend village. Flora and fauna of Gedebey district is rich and various. 'Gizilagaj' reserve is located within this district. A number of nature objects that are included in list of objects preserved by state as 'Nature monuments of Azerbaijan' - Shamlig, Gamish, Godekdere, Govdu forests are here. It also includes Kechi-Kechi, Juyur, Ayi, and Jerge Springs as well Narzan, Gizilja, Mormor, Chaldash mineral water springs. Ancient cultural monuments that entered Azerbaijani history under name of Khojaly-Gedebey culture - Cyclopean buildings belonging to Bronze age, as well 'Gedebey Treasures' - domestic appliances and ancient jewelry jugs, silver coins belonging to XVI century - reign of Shah Tahmasib were discovered here. These coins were used in from Tebriz (current Iran) to Shirvan and Ganja.

Historical-architectural buildings that are safe within district include Tagly Korpu (XIX c), Gulle in Gala village (XVI c), Giz Galasi in Soyudlu village (or Namerd Gala - IX c), Christian temples of early middle ages in Novosaratovka, Soyudlu, Chanakhchi and Kilevi villages.

Reps of the Old Russian tribe called "dukhobor" live in Saratovka village. They have protected their material and moral culture so far. Folk arts such as wood carving, carpet-weaving, sock and glove-weaving from color wool, processing of sheep leather are wide-spread in this region.

Territory of Azerbaijan was paid attention by some of popular western owners. For instance, The Brothers Nobel became rich due to Baku oil. Germany's 'Siemens' company built two copper-smelting plants in Gedebey in later XIX century. 25% of all the copper smelt in Russia of czar was carried out at these plants. The brothers Siemens took interest in history of this extra-ordinary land and organized implementation of archeological excavations in this region. According to results of those excavations scientific work titled 'Galaken' was written. Visitors can stay at the hotel located in city center.

**TOVUZ.** Number of population of district is 164,5 thousand people.

Tovuz district of Azerbaijan is situated in west of republic, borders on Georgia and Armenia. Kur, Akhinja, Tovuz, Zeyem and other rivers cross territory of this district. There are many forests, springs, rich flora and fauna (wolf, fox, rabbit, turaj, and partridge) on the mountains. Climate is dry; mainly rabbit and water birds can be hunted.

Ancient monuments have been preserved in Tovuz district. Most interesting ones of them include temple of XII century in Kirzan village, mosque of XVII century in Yanigly village, mausoleums in Gazgulu village, castle in Alibeily village and etc. There are also numerous archeological objects of Bronze, Iron and early Middle Ages here.

Administrative center of district - Tovuz city is 439 km from Baku. Like majority of Azerbaijani cities, Tovuz also was built in place of ancient habitations belonging to Stone and Bronze ages. This city left the traces in genetic memory of people as if to remind the places where our fathers replaced each other during millenniums. According to the ancient Turkish sources, name of this city was taken from names of two relative Turkish tribes - Oguz and Toguz. This name was confirmed as toponym just because it was created here. As modern settlement, foundation of Tovuz city was laid by German refugees, they called this city Traubenfeld. There is small museum of famous Ashig Huseyn Bozalganly (1860-1942) in Tovuz. Ashig Huseyn Bozalganly knew by heart the whole Koroglu epos. Tourists visiting here stay at homes of local residents mostly. Residents lease separate rooms or houses. 'Gunay' motel is also available. There are restaurants in Tovuz. Biggest ones of them are 'XXI Century', 'Anar' and 'Vladivostok'.

**AGSTAFI.** Number of population of district is 82,7 thousand people.

Agstafa District is situated at the foots of Great Caucasus Mountains, in frontier of Azerbaijan with Georgia and Armenia. Climate is mild. Local people are engaged mainly in cattle-breeding and agriculture.

A few small rivers and branch of Kur River - Agstafachay run through district. Jandargol Lake is situated here. Gelachma Spring in Tatly village, which is located in 20km from Agstafa city, is favorable rest place for local people and tourists. Customers adore kebab made here.

Garayazi State Reserve, covering 4,9 thousand hectares of area on the bank of Kur river, was created in 1978 to preserve and restore tugai forests around Kur, Garayazi lowland and middle flow of Kur river. Major object protected in reserve is tugai forestland. 'Garayazi-Agstafa' Reserve that was established in 1923 in area of 12,0 thousand hectares, is located within Agstafa district. Goal of creation of this reserve was to protect Caucasian deer, pheasant, turaj, other types of unique animals and birds and lift their number. Reserve is situated in tugai forestland in middle flow of Kur River, in border between Georgia and Azerbaijan. Flora and fauna of this reserve is identical to ones of 'Garayazi' Reserve, which directly borders on it.

A number of historical monuments were discovered within district: ancient habitation called Molla Nagi Tepesi of Paleolithic age near Kochasger village, Gulle of XVII century and Mosque of XIX century in Girag Kesemen village, mosques of XIX century in Kolkhalvaly, Garahasanly, Dagkesemen and Duz Gishlag villages and etc. There are too many monuments here belonging to Stone, Bronze and Iron ages. These facts show that level of habitation of this region was very high in ancient times. There is need for detailed study of all these archeological objects and realization of new excavations.

There are defense castle and cave-monasteries, built in Caucasian Albania during early Christianity, near herdsman places, which are grasslands for sheep flocks in summer, in Keshikchidag Range in upper part of Agstafa city. This zone was banned to visit during USSR, because military units of TransCaucasus Military Division were located there. This is why that unique complex was not studied in required manner. It was prohibited zone; many of ancient images in caves were wiped off with artillery fires. This complex, which belongs to Caucasian Albania - one of state structures of ancient Azerbaijan, is studied at present time by archeologists of National Academy of Sciences. Agstafa city is situated near Georgian border, 461 km from Baku. City was built in 1914 as railway junction. The city, territory of which was small then, was called Yelizavetinka. Train takes from here to Georgian capital Tbilisi. Special attention is paid to protection of historical-architectural monuments and cultural heritage of Agstafa district - carpet-weaving and ashig creativity. Findings discovered by archeologists - vase, glass, domestic appliances and ornaments are kept at local regional geography museum.

There are park, cinema, as well restaurants 'Tourist', 'Injegul', 'Tural', 'Serinlik', 'Karvan', 'Poylu', 'Deli Kur', 'Tut Bagi', 'Banovsha' and others in small and comfortable agstafa city. 'Hasangulu' hotel is available for tourists on the road Tovuz-Agstafa. Hotel includes a restaurant.

**GAZAKH.** Number of population of district is 92,0 thousand people.

Gazakh district is situated near western borders of Azerbaijan. In general, Gazakh and Agstafa districts are considered western borders of not modern Azerbaijan only as well state of Caucasian Albania. Division of this region into two independent administrative districts - Gazakh and Agstafa districts took place not long ago. There are historical monuments (architectural and archeological monuments) here that are preserved by state:



Sinig Korpu (XII C), Damjili Cave, Temple of V century in Yukhari Eskipara village, Sheker Gala Temple of XV century, Didevan megalith Defense Castle, Temples Complex of Alban era (VII c) in Dash Salahly village, Goyazan Mountain (last middle ages), which is attractive with ruins of castle walls, and ruins of ancient city recently discovered near that. There are many ancient habitations within Gazakh district: caves periodically inhabited by Neanderthals in Avey Mountain, between Dash Salahly and Kemerly villages, Injesu River valley, north-east parts of Small Caucasus, settlements of Cro-Magnon men near Damjili cave in Avey Mountain, Khal-Khal city place near beautiful pinky-golden Gizil Gaya and ruins of castle walls were found out. This territory is supposed to be one of summer residences of Alban rulers. Without implementing any excavations, archeologists found here numerous ruins of ceramic appliances of Bronze Age on the surface of ground. In due time Albans destroyed troops of Roman Pompey here. Ancient written sources say about this: '10,000 horsemen and 60,000 pedestrians of Albans were fighting against troops of Pompey'. Barrow graves of Bronze Age were discovered in Berkin Agzi canyon, which is located a bit west of Gizil Gaya. All these historical objects (except Sinig korpu) are nearby Gazakh city. Due to efforts of initiator men of this land, numerous archeological artifacts have been collected and exhibited at local Regional geography museum. People coming to Yukhari Salahly village can visit here house of popular Azeri Poet Samad Vurgun. Relief of Gazakh district - mountains, valleys, rivers (Kur, Agstafachay, Jogaz, and Khramchay) have always been effective for seasonal cattle-breeding. In winter local herdsmen bring sheep frocks from pastures (mountainous grasslands) and keep them here. Local character of folk music and national cuisine is connected to natural circumstance of this territory. Ashigs are many here; they are invited to family celebrations and holidays. Ancient name of Gazakh city is supposed to be 'Kasal' and 'Qazaka'. By some written sources, Mervan ibn Mohammad built a city here in VIII century. Gazakh, which is the last biggest city in western frontier of Azerbaijan, is homeland of talented poets and writers. Population of Gazakh is known as people with special poetic emotions. A number of popular ashigs, scientists and fighters were born here. Poets Samad Vurgun, Molla Panah Vagif, writers Mehdi Huseyn, Ismail Shikhly, General Aliaga Shikhlinsky, who was called 'God of Artillery' and took part in defense of Port-Arthur Castle, and others are from Gazakh. First Teachers Seminary in Azerbaijan was opened here - in Gazakh in 1917. There are museums reflecting life of famous poets Vagif and Vidadi, origin of Gazakh, ancient mosque and other interesting objects in the city. Gazakh is also popular as one of the very ancient carpet-weaving centers and horse-breeding factories. Local horses Diliboz raised here are especially famous. There is big need in world market for carpets 'Dag Kesemen', 'Gazakhcha', 'Aggoyunlu', 'Dord Buynuz', 'Shikhly', 'Chobankere', 'Borchaly', 'Fakhraly', 'Gaymagly' that are products of Gazakh carpet school. Cuisine of Gazakh region consists of simple but very delicious meat and floury meals. Tourists are recommended to stay at houses of local residents.

<http://www.mct.gov.az/?/en/routes>.

### *Baku-Balaken*

**MARAZA.** Gobustan district is one of political provinces of our country's historical area called Shirvan. In the 8th-16th centuries one of principal states of Azerbaijan - the state of Shirvanshahs with the capital in Shamakhi was located on the territory of Shirvan. It was the longest-lived state in the history of medieval East.

Presently, Gobustan region is located to the south of Shamakhi, 101 km from Baku. The Azerbaijani word "Gobu" literally means "a hollow" which toponomically reflects the outline of the ground: hollows, gullies and rocky canyons. With blossoming poppies, chamomiles and irises the place looks especially beautiful in spring. Climate in the region is predominantly semidesert. Cave labyrinths (kures) located in a canyon not far off the town in the village of Sunlu, attract a great number of tourists. Here one can observe an original natural phenomenon which the locals named Aghlayan Gala, "The Tearful Rock". The legend says these are the tears of a mother mourning her fallen sons. The caves represent a large system of natural galleries and grottos, artificially expanded for habitation in The Middle Ages, at the times when Azerbaijan was an arena of civil wars and raids of foreign conquerors.

Maraza town is the administrative center of Gobustan district. It is situated on Maraza plateau, near the main roadway of the district. According to one of legends, the town's name, "Maraz", appeared when the wife of an influential man recovered from an ailment after moving to the town. There is no way of knowing if the legend is true or not. However, in the vicinity of Maraza there is a mineral spring. Water in the spring is bitter-salt but it does cure certain gastrointestinal diseases. Famous mounds of Sheikh Duzu, remainders of old settlements dated to the 1st-8th centuries BC, situated on ancient trade roads near the present village of Dag Kolani; the mausoleum of Diri Baba (15th century) on the town's outskirts; remainders of Shah Abbas caravanserai in the very center of the town remind of the fact that the place was already inhabited in ancient times.

Since the earliest times the place has been a center of carpet production. The patterns of local carpets are known all over the world under the names of "Maraza", "Chukhanly" and "Dzhemdzhemli". Even today, "Nabur" carpets are woven in the village of the same name. Maraza town is small, with no hotels, so for lodging one can rent a room or a private house. The hosts may take care of cooking meals of your choice.

**SHAMAKHI.** Present Shamakhi district is the center of the ancient Shirvan, the former state of Shirvanshahs, a historical area of Azerbaijan. It is situated on southeast foothills of the Greater Caucasus. Climate is predominantly temperate with dry summers. Landscape is diverse - steppes alternate foothill meadows and forests and the higher above sea level the colder is autumn and the later melts the snow. Overall, however, the climate is mild, soil is fertile and flora and fauna are rich. There are roes, wild boars, wild cats, foxes, wolves, bears and many species of birds. Deciduous forests of hornbeams, beeches and oaks, verdure of



the meadows covered in scarlet poppies in spring are a sheer eye candy. There are over 50 species of herbal plants growing in the area. Shamakhi district is a top center of Azerbaijani winegrowing. Shamakhi wines are popular not only at local markets. They have also been getting awards at international exhibitions for quite a long time. The region is attractive both to tourists and to amateur foot travelers. Those who prefer walking tours make trips from here to Guba and Ismaili. Ecotourists and simply amateur travelers are eager to see Dzhalingin forest with crabs, pear trees and cherry plum along with springs of sulfurated water in its vicinity. In mountain villages locals weave famous carpets like "Shirvan", "Shamakhi", "Israfil" and "Ardzhiman". There are many interesting places in Shamakhi district. On the right bank of Pirsaat River there is Chukhuyurt village inhabited by molokans, migrants from Russia. The village is famous for the production of delicious sunflower oil, specially pickled vegetables, mountain honey, vegetables and fruits. In a place called Girkh Bulag ("forty springs") there are countless springs of mineral water. Located near the village of Melkhem is a famous cave, renowned for its healing properties.

In the 12th century, the poet Afzaladdin Khagani, renowned in the Orient, was born in this village. In general, this area became famous for its poets, philosophers and architects including Seid Azim Shirvani, Nasimi, Sabir, Hadzhi Zeynalabdin Shirvani, Magomed Shirvani, Azim Azimzade, Abbas Sikhkhat, Gamedil Shirvani, Feleki Shirvani (the frequent use of the word "Shirvani" comes from an ancient oriental tradition according to which newly renowned persons named themselves after the place they were born in or taught by

famous masters).m. Located 1400 meters above sea level, near Pirgulu village is Shamakhi astrophysical observatory (SAO) n.a. Nasireddin Tusi. The first of the largest telescopes in the USSR was mounted here. In his time, the second president of Azerbaijan NAS, the scientist Yusuf Mammadaliev, a founder of Azerbaijani oil chemistry, put great efforts for the building of the observatory. The grateful scientists erected a monument in his honor. Baku schoolboys and schoolgirls always look forward a tour to the big telescope of SAO. They are especially eager to come here from snowless Baku in winter - to play with snow which melts quite late in Pirgulu. And in summer the residents set up horse rides for all comers. Historical monuments of the region include Dzhuma Mosque (8th-19th centuries), the mausoleums of Pirmardakan (13th-14th centuries), and Shakhandan (17th century), a complex of seven mausoleums named Eddi Gumbez (18th century), remainders of the legendary fortress Kalai-Bugurt near a mountain village of the same name - the fortress looks somehow attached to a steep rock. Gulustan fortress (8th-15th centuries) where Shirvanshah Shakhmuraz set up a steadfast defense against Persian armies - his palace and the unique water supply system: a secret aqueduct providing water for defensive walls, stone reservoir for its storage and water tower remained within the fortress. Located on the territory of the district is the reserve of Pirgulu. It was established in 1968 and consists of three sectors covering a total area of 1521 hectares, 1362 of which are occupied by forests, 8000-2000 m above sea level. The reserve's flora includes 45 rare and endemical plant species, many of which have been included in the Red List.

Shamakhi town is the administrative center of the district. Its population exceeds 96,9 thousand people. It is located 135 km from Baku. In ancient times Shamakhi (ancient names of the city include "Sharvan", "Ashshmah", "Shirvan" and "Shakh-Mah") was the capital of Shirvan - the state of Shirvanshahs, which was established in the 18th century along with other smaller states after weakening of the dynasty of Abbasids. The town has a glorious but tragic history - it has been devastated many times. And not only by invaders but also as a result of earthquakes since this is an area of high seismicity. When in 1191 Kizil Arslan of Atabeks Eldenisids dynasty seized and grounded the city Shirvanshah Ahsitan the 1st temporarily relocated the capital to Baku. However, in 1501 both Shamakhi and Baku were captured by Shah Ismail Sefevi. 37 years later Shirvan's existence as an independent state ceased and Tahmasib Sefevi founded the state of Sefevids. Afterwards Shamakhi was frequently destroyed in wars with Turkish Ottomans. Not only people were killed, architectural monuments and books were also destroyed.

However, Shamakhi residents always found strength to restore the town and their lives. Alexander Dumas who traveled across Azerbaijan wrote that the town's residents could never know would they be alive tomorrow or not. Presently, there are plenty of antique remainders around Shamakhi. An old Soviet style hotel located at the center of the town is at the service of the town's guests. There is also an attractive and comfortable resort called "Magic World".

In the village of Pirgulu there are comfortable cottages of the "Fortuna" resort. They feature all necessary consumer services and there is a satellite television. The complex is very close to the astronomical observatory. In the local restaurant there is a broad assortment of dishes, a bar and a dance floor. Horse rides are also available.

**ISMAILLI.** Three of eight climate belts of Azerbaijan are represented on the territory of Ismailli district - temperate warm with dry winters, temperate warm with uniform precipitation (on lowlands) and cold with wet winters in mountains. The prevalent landscape of the region is mountainous. Local nature is very beautiful with mountains covered in forests, rocks and rivers (Girdiman, Ag-Okh, Geichai) and waterfalls (Galadzhig - 50 m, Chaigovushan - 30 m, Istisu - 25 m, Burovdal - 50 m and Mudrusa - 25 m). There are three natural lakes at the level of 3500 m near the mountain of Babadag and three artificial ones - near the villages of Kurdmashi and Ashigbairamli are not only beautiful but also provide an excellent place for fishing. On the territory of the district there is a reserve "Ismailli" established in 1981. Its territory covers 5778 hectares. Two of its areas - Topchi and Galindzhi are located 1 km from each other. Galindzhi, established to protect chestnut oak, is located at the level of 650 m. Forests of the reserve occupy 5021 hectares and 227 hectares are occupied by alpine meadows. There are over 40 species of trees and bushes, 170 species of vertebrate animals - deer, mountain goats, Dagestan goat, wild boars, bears, wolves, foxes, hares etc. This region made his way to the history of Russian literature - a dastan about ashug Garib, heard by Lermontov from an ashug (a folk singer) in the local village of Tirszha formed the core of his poem "Ashug Garib".

Aside from the title nation (Azerbaijanis) the area is also inhabited by other nations and ethnical groups that have been living here since ancient times. They are Lezghins, Jews, Russians (molokans living in the village of Ivanovka), Lahidzhi (Farsi-speaking) and Khapiti (descendants of ancient Albans). The residents of the district retained ancient traditions of crafts and applied arts. Carpet weaving (Galadzhig and Tezekend villages), production of copper embossed crockery and weapons, tannery and forging crafts, wooden and metal engraving (Lagic village, the major street of which hosts a lot of shops and workshops). National women's silk shawls kelagai with print patterns are produced in the village of Basgal. Historical-cultural reserves have been

established in Lagic and Basgal and many monuments have been taken under protection of the state, including the mosque of Bedoy Zevero (1791), Agali Mosque, Zevero spring and a mosque and bath dated to the 18th century.

Other monuments include Maiden's Tower (17th century) in Khanega village, Fitdag tower (18th century) in Sulut village and many other archeological objects. Interestingly, residents link one of legends about Alexander the Great to the tower. The great conqueror allegedly stopped here and his heralds would signal from golden horns from the top of a mountain. ("Fit" is the Azerbaijani for "a signal", "whistle"). On the top of another mountain, on the left bank of Girdiman River, near the village of Talystan there are remainders of the fortress where, according to a legend, lived Dzhavanshir - one of the rulers of Caucasian Albania (7th century). In Sulut village there are also remainders of Girkhotag fortress, Kharam tower and Khiraki defensive wall as well as Juma Mosque.

The town of Ismaili is the administrative center of the district. The population averages 82,4 thousand people. The town is located 185 km from Baku. Lodging is available at "Talystan" motel and in a resort named "Giz Galasy". Meals are available in restaurants "Gulustan" and "Bado" as well as in numerous cafes and shashlik houses along the major road.

**GABALA.** Gabala district is located on the territory of Shaki-Zagatala zone, in the northwest part of Azerbaijan on the border of Dagestan and Georgia. This region has an ancient history; it was inhabited already in times the Late Stone Age. Once it was a center of Caucasian Albania and then it became a part of Shirvanshah and Sheki Khanates, in successive order. The rivers Demirparanchai, Vandamchai, Gumchai and Tikanlychai traverse the territory of the district. The area is rich in walnut and chestnut trees. Located on the mountain slopes at the level of 1000 m is a famous chestnut grove. Chestnut woods blossoming in spring are a truly magic sight. The trees are old, with the average age of over 500 years; some of them are included in the list of natural monuments protected by the state. Here one can hunt gazelles, roes, bears, wolves, hares and other representatives of the local fauna. Here originates one of the climber routes to the tallest mountain of the republic - The Mountain of Bazarduzu (4466 above sea level).

Many monuments of history and culture have remained on the territory of the district. Their list includes a mosque of the 19th century in the village of Bum, an Albanian temple of the 4th century in Amili village, the Tower of Ustaszhan (9th century) in the village of Bayramkoha, the mosque of Gadzhi-Garib and the Albanian church Chotari in Nidzh, the mausoleums of Sheikhs Badreddin and Mansur (15th century) in Khazra village, a mausoleum of the 17th century in the village of Shefili and also "pirs" (burial places of people recognized as saint and pious persons during their lives): Shih-Baba (16th century) in Hamzelli village and Komrad on the top of Komrad Mountain.

On the mountain of Yaloylu archeologists found an ancient settlement site near the village of Nidzh. Archeological culture found here is typical for the north parts of Azerbaijan and was named "The Culture of Yaloylu Tepe". Among other findings there were weapons made of iron, wares of bronze and gold, millstones etc. The most developed crafts were woodworking (in Vandam village), pottery (in Gamarvan village), carpet weaving (in the villages of Laza and Bum). In the village of Bum there is a folk ensemble Zop-Zopa which successfully performed at various festivals abroad.

The village of Nidzh in Gabala district is a place of compact residence of Udines. This ethnic group is considered descendants of ancient Albans who managed to preserve their traditions, language, material and spiritual culture to present day.

Gabala town is the administrative center of the district. It is located on the slopes of Shahdag Mountain. This is the ancient Kabala; a town mentioned in Greek and Roman (Pliny) written sources of the 1st century. The town is approximately 2000 years old and over 600 years it was the capital of Caucasian Albania. Ancient ruins of Kabala are located close to present Gabala (15 km) between Garachai and Jurluchai rivers. The mausoleum of Imam-Baba (13th century) and Juma Mosque remained in the town. There is also a large Museum of Regional History collecting numerous archeological objects found on the territory of the district.

There is a resort called "Ay Ishigi" on the outskirts of Gabala. "Mountain tourist base" tourist facility organizes recreation in the forest, walking tours, hunts and fishing. "Sahil" resort (covering an area of 1.5 hectares) is located on the bank of Nohur Lake, 5 km of Gabala-Baku highway. Tours to waterfalls, across the forests and to the historical monuments are available.

**OGHUZ.** Oghuz district is located on south slopes of the Greater Caucasus in the Sheki-Zagatala zone. On the north this region is bordered by Russia. It is so beautiful that they call it Azerbaijani Switzerland. Slightly less than a half of its territory is occupied by forests. There are many waterfalls, sulfurated springs and thermal waters emerging on the surface. Fauna is represented by hares, bears, wild boars, mountain goats, pheasants, partridges, goose, the list of fish include cat-fish and trout. On the territory of the district grow many fruits, nuts and berries: apples, pears, cornels, hawthorn, cherry trees, cherry-plum, currants and raspberries. The



region retains traditional folk crafts - carpet weaving (the village of Filfilli) as well as wood and metal engraving (Bash-Dashagil village). The place was inhabited already in the Late Stone Age. At the beginning of our era its territory became a part of Caucasian Albania, and in the 13th century it was incorporated into Sheki Khanate. Archeologists found ancient settlements sites near the villages of Kerimli and Garabaldir. Among the findings there were spearheads, bronze weapons, female sculptures made stone and staves. On the territory of the district there are many ancient monuments of history and architecture: Dashuz Bridge (19th century) across Sari-Su River near the village of Khachmaz, a mosque of the 18th century in the village of Sindzhan, a mausoleum of the 15th century in Kerimli village, three-storied tower of the 14th century in the village of Muhas, Gabur defensive tower (7th-14th centuries) in the village of Khachmaz at the top of Galadag mountain, Gavurgala tower (7th century) located on the same mountain near Gabur tower but provided with drinking water, Surhaikhan tower (18th century) made of fluvial stone and located on the bank of Galachai river, near the village of Filfilli.

Oghuz town is the administrative center of the district. On its territory is located Jewish quarter with an ancient synagogue (1849), Albanian temple which presently hosts a local Museum of Regional Studies and one of the oldest schools operating on the territory of Azerbaijan. The school was built in 19th century (similar schools are located in the villages of Padar and Khachmaz). There are many places for hunting and fishing starting just 15-20 outside the town. In the town and villages one can hire a guide among local residents. Tourists are advised to stop at houses of the local residents. Meals are served at the restaurants "Soyug Bulag", "Gajnana", "Shahdag", "Gobur" and "Kerimli".

**SHEKI.** Sheki region is located on picturesque slopes of the Caucasus Mountains. Numerous monuments of early medieval architecture remained in the vicinity of Sheki. They include fortresses, watch towers, churches and ruins of monasteries dated to the period of Caucasian Albania. Among the most interesting objects are the monuments in the villages of Bideiz, Bash Kungut, Orta Deizit and, of course, the church in the village of Kish (2nd-4th centuries) built by St. Elias; it is considered the earliest Christian construction on the territory of CIS. Presently, the church is being restored and reorganized into a museum.

The town of Sheki is the major town of Sheki-Zagatala region, one of the most ancient and beautiful towns of Azerbaijan dated back to the 1st millennium BC. The town is mentioned in Arabic, Turkish, Georgian, Russian and European written sources. Scientists maintain that the town received its name from the tribe named "saks" that inhabited the area. Sheki is located on the route of the Great Silk Road. In Ptolemy's works Sheki is mentioned under the name of Niga. Modern scientists identify it as an ancient town of Nuha. Even today older residents call the town Nuha, by the name of the village of Nuha located near Sheki village. The latter was ruined in 1772 and its residents relocated to the survived Nuha. During the spread of Christianity Sheki became one of religious centers of Albania. During Arabic-Khazar wars (7th-19th centuries) the town became an arena of military actions and conflicts. With the weakening of the Caliphate a principedom constituting a part of the Shirvanshah state was established here.

During the reign of Elkhanids (the end of 14th century) Sheki was living times of prosperity and the town became a center of an independent estate under the administration of a local regent named Sidi Ali (or Seid Ali). During the invasion of Tamerlane Sidi Ali resisted the invaders and afterwards marched with his armies to aid Nahichevan, which at that time set up a steadfast of Alindjagala fortress (1397-1398). In the 16th century Sheki ruler Dervish Mohammed was killed in battle and the town became a part of the Sefevids state. The famous Sheki markets were a center of trade of seeds, engraved ware, and jewelry. Sheki silk was of different types - soft and opaque, thin and translucent, matted or embroidered in gold. Craftsmen of the town made a great contribution to the development of trade along the Great Silk Road. Sheki was a center of silk production of the whole Caucasus. In 1860 about 62239 poods of silk were produced in Nuha (Sheki) province. The first silkmill was constructed here in 1861 and it was one of the biggest in the world. At the international exhibition in 1862 in London Sheki silk was awarded with the gold medal. Sheki is proud of Mirza Fatali Akhundov - a famous philosopher, writer and enlightener. Houses-



museums of M.F. Akhundov and Sabit Rahman remain here, in the town. The Palace of Sheki Khans is a rare example of combination of folk architecture (wood engraving) with the traditions of Oriental palace architecture (varnished and wall paintings).

With their magnitude, the Ashaghi and Yukhary caravanserai (18th century) evidence the advancement of trade in the Middle Ages. Near Sheki, on the west bank of the Kish River remained ruins of the ancient fortress "Gelersen-Gorersen" (come and you will see); the name suggests that the defenders of the fortress were confident in its unassailability and in their determination not to let the enemies pass. In his novel "Khadzhi Murat" Leo Tolstoy made this fortress a place of action. The place has been visited by Dumas and Kempfer; N. Raevsky wrote in one of his letters "our camp is situated in the forest of pomegranates, tamarisks and plain trees...Nuha is marvelous". In 1805 Sheki Khanate became a part of Russia and ceased its existence as a khanate. In 1819 Sheki was ruled by a Tsarist commandant and by the Tsar's decree the province of Nuha was established in the region. Other attractive cultural objects of the town include the Dramatic Theater n.a. Sabit Rahman, Museum of Decorative and Applied arts and the Art Gallery.

Even today Sheki residents have not lost their original traditions and ancient lore. Silk shawls "kelagai" which are exported to the Middle Asia countries to be used there by local craftsmen for silk paintings as well as wooden chests with special, Sheki paintings are also produced here. Local jewelers make adornments, the shape of which has undergone little changes since ancient times. The art of Tekelduz (chain stitch) embroider, which was made predominantly by men in ancient times, is one of the most advanced in Sheki. The town is also known for the production of caps and musical instruments and also Shebeke (open-work wooden grates with inserts of colored glass, usually used in windows and door frames).

The original culture of Sheki includes also special cuisine, with no analogs in Azerbaijan. Unusual Sheki candies are delicate networks of sliced pastry of rice flour. Lodging is available at "Sheki-Caravanserai" hotel. This is a modern hotel complex which can accommodate up to 75 visitors at a time. There are 38 rooms among which 8 are two-storey luxury rooms, entertainment center, disco, conference hall, winter and summer restaurants. Excursions and tours are available.

**GAKH.** The district of Gakh is located in the northwest part of the republic and is bordered by Georgia. In the south part of Gakh the climate is dry; in the center it is temperate hot, alternated by subtropical wet; in mountains it is cold, with uniform precipitations. As evident, four climate zones are represented here, on a relatively small territory. Temperature drops are significant: from - 400 C at mountain tops to +400 C near Adjinour Lake. Located on the territory of the district is the State reserve "Ilisu" (covering an area of 9.2 hectares). The main protected objects of the reserve are middle-mountainous forests (90% of the territory). There are about 300 plant species, including 90 tree and bush species, a significant number of endemic and endangered species. The mountainous forests are inhabited by bears, wild cats and jackals. In the region of Ganyg-Airichai Valley there are good places for hunt and fishing.

There are remainders of historical monuments in the region. Mounds, found by archeologists, suggest that the region was inhabited already in the Bronze Age. An example of the original culture is the bridge Ulu Kerpu, dated to the 18th century. Sumgut fortress, with a mosque in its center, is located in the village of Ilisu, the former capital of a sultanate of the same name. In memories of people Sumgut remained as one of the last strongholds of the last local sultan Daniyal Bek, a brother in arms of Sheikh Shamil. The place was inhabited in very ancient times. Here archeologists found unique pitcher burials dated to the 1st century BC. Here, in Ilisu, remained a square Watch Tower, 10 meters -tall, dated to the 14th century. About the village there are many sulfurated thermal springs. Near the village of Termechi, in forests of century-old oaks there is a grave of Khadzhi Murat, a naib (commander) of Sheikh Shamil. On his grave there is a mounted stone plate with an inscription in Arabic reading "A great martyr, Avar Hadzhi Murat Hunzah is buried here". Remained near the village of Kum are monuments dated to the period of Caucasian Albania (fortress Sirtgala of 18th century, Kum Basilica, ruins dated to the 5th century, The Round Temple (7th century). In the village of Lekit there also remained a Temple Complex (12th century). In the villages of Saribash and Dzhalai local craftswomen weave carpets with original patterns and sew woolen socks called jorabs. In the village of Gahbash the residents produce home-made wines.

Gakh town is the administrative center of the district. It is a small town located 500 m above sea level. It is situated on the bank of the mountain river Kurhumchai, near mountain bottoms of the Greater Caucasus. The town's name is translated as "a fortress". Lodging is available the pension "Ilisu", however, it is located not in the town itself but 10 km away, on the bank of the mountain river Kurhumchai. The pension consists of comfortable cottages and a hotel building with high standards of service and comfort.

**ZAGATALA.** Zagatala district is located on ridges of the Greater Caucasus, in the northwest part of the republic. The northeast border of the district forms the border between Azerbaijan and Russia. Landscape is mountainous and plain; climate is cold in mountains and warm on plains. There are many forests in the area;

however they are mostly located in mountains and foothills. Flora is rich in various valuable species of trees - chestnut, walnut, filbert, oak, hornbeams, garagaches etc. Fauna - deer, mountain goats, wild boars, bears, wolves, hares, and many birds - pheasants, partridges, eagles, hawks, thrushes and nightingales.

In 1929 here, on the south slopes of the Great Caucasus Range was established a State Reserve "Zagatala", with the present area of 23843 hectares. It is located 650-3686 m above sea level and includes a part of not only Zagatala but also Belokani districts. Here, on the territory of the reserve there are places for tourists to rest and lodge. On the outskirts of the village of Gas there is a lot of snow in winter. Aside of Azerbaijanis, representatives of other nations and ethnical groups: Russians, Avars, Lezghins, Tsakhurs, Tatars, Ingiloeses (a total of 20 nations) also live in the district. Historical monuments of the regions are located in the villages remained from ancient times. Remained in the villages of Gezbarah and Galal is a mosque dated to the 18th century, in Kebeloga village - two towers (14th century), in the village of Mazih - a tower of the 12th century, in the village of Yukhary Chardakhlar - Peri-Gala fortress-grotto (5th century), in Djar village - Jingez tower (14th century), in the same village there is a museum of regional history, in Pashan village - an Albanian tower (13th century), and another Albanian tower (12th century) in the village of Ahahdere. In various villages of the district, e.g. in Aliabad and Mosul remained mosques of the 19th century. Tourists often visit the village of Jar which is located 6 km northwest to Zagatala. It not only a beautiful nature spot; the local residents managed to preserve their original, region-specific architectural traditions and ways of life.

Zagatala town is the administrative center of the district. It is situated on the bank of Tala-Chai River, 535 m above sea level. Its population is approximately 82,4 thousand people. It is located 372 km from Baku. This town can be considered a true resort judging by its climate and the beauty of local nature. There is a park of culture covering an area of 14 hectares, and also an interesting natural phenomenon: an 800-years old lain tree.

There is also an ancient fortress (1830). It is not only interesting as itself but also because it was the place where seamen of the rebellious battleship "Potemkin" were imprisoned. In the local park there is a monument erected in honor of one of the participants of the battleship rebellion - S. Demashko. There is also an interesting monument of Sevil Gaziyeva, an Azerbaijani, the first woman to operate a cotton-harvesting machine.

In Zagatala there is a museum of regional history with a broad collection of medieval manuscripts. In summer lodging is available in cottages of the "Lezzet" resort located in a forest near the village of Dzhar and also at the "Tala" hotel located in the village of Ashagi Tala and at the "Turgut" motel. Meals are available at the restaurants "Lezzet", "Murad", "Gerush", "Turan" and "Tala".

**BALAKEN.** Balaken district is located in the northwest part of Azerbaijan, on the south and west it is bordered by Georgia and on the north and east - by Russia. Landscape is diverse, mountains are alternated by plains. On lowlands climate is temperate warm, with dry winters, at foothills it is temperate warm with uniform precipitation, in mountains - cold with wet winter (annual humidity averages over 40%). There are many mountainous rivers and a beautiful lake near the Katekh Mountain, on the north the area is occupied by forests. More than a half of the territory of the Zagatala reserve belongs to the district of Balaken. The reserve was established in 1929, it extends along the south slope of the Great Caucasus Range 650-3496 m above sea level. By the character of vegetation the territory of the reserve can be divided into mountain-forest (67.4%), and mountain-meadow zones. Flora includes more than a thousand of species, with rare ones (hornbeams, alder tree, oaks, walnuts, chestnuts, acacia and over 30 species of herbal plants) Fauna is rich, of special interest is the habitat of black Caucasian grouse in the area. On the territory of the region remained many historical and architectural monuments. Archeologists revealed a number of places identified as ancient settlement sites dated to the Early Iron Age. E.G. 2 km off Mahamallar village by the rock Gubek there is a cave named Noho with the traces of a site dated to the Early Iron Age. At the same place, near the village of Mahamallar, there is a pitcher burial (2nd-1st centuries BC), a pir and ruins of residential buildings (5th-7th centuries), a mosque (18th century), a tower (19th century) and stronghold walls. There are also an underground reservoir and mosque dated to the 17th in the village of Gullar, mausoleum of the 14th century in Tul, temple of the 14th century in Hanifa, mosque of the 14th century in Halatala, Albanian temples in the villages of Hanifa and Mazimchai, Peri Tower (12th century) in Gullar village on the bank of Gumbez river. There are also remainders of an early medieval settlement site at the Meklakan Mountain.

Balaken town is the administrative center of the district. Population - 93,0 thousand people. It is located 394 km from Baku. There is also an interesting mosque with extraordinarily tall minaret dated to the 17th-19th centuries. Collected in the regional museum there are articles of traditional crafts, different archeological findings suggesting that the place was already inhabited in the Late Stone Age and other items evidencing the rich history of the region. The most popular crafts include copperware, Shebeke (open-work wooden frames for windows), wooden engraving and pottery. And, of course, the original type of embroidering, rarely met in Azerbaijan, - Tekelduz ("chain stitch"): rich, fantastic patterns with silk threads against a dark background.

In Balaken there is a large town park covering an area of 7.5 hectares, to take a break after a walk in the town. Lodging is available at the local motel and also at the hotel but it is preferable to stay in summer (due to a lack of heating systems). Meals are available in restaurants "Katekh" and "Shabalydlyg" as well as in numerous outdoor kebab houses.

**<http://www.mct.gov.az/?/en/routes>**.



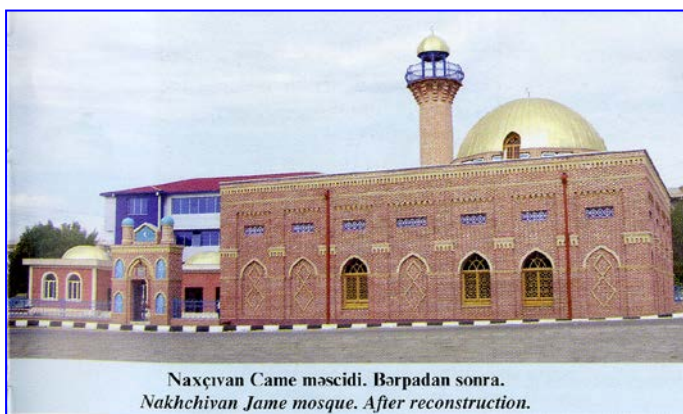
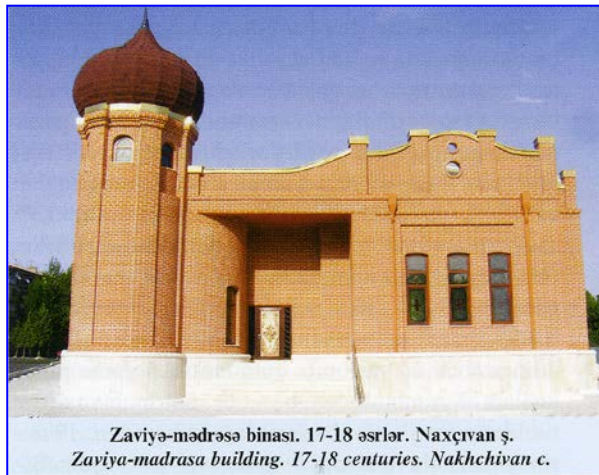
### *Baku-Nakhchivan*

Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (NAR) is located in the southeastern part of Azerbaijan. Nakhchivan is separated from the rest of Azerbaijan by a narrow reach of a foreign country - once it became possible due to the conflict of Russian and Persian imperial interests. NAR is located on the southern slopes of the Daralaya Mountains and southwestern slopes of the Zangezur Mountains.

This is a mountainous area - over 30% of its territory is located 600-1000 m above sea level. The tallest mountains of the region are Kapudzhuk (3904 m) and Ilandag (2385 m). The Autonomous Republic features rich deposits of marble, rock salt, limestone, plaster stone and unique mineral waters - Sirab, Badamli, Vaikhir, Nagadzhir and Gizildzhir. There are many underground waters and the region is known for the advanced craft of kagrizs construction (kagrizs - unique underground water tunnels). Kagrizs were connected to the ground by footsteps; in some, the water was simply diverted to the surface (like in modern aqueducts). Craftsmen of kagrizs construction (kan-kans) have preserved their art to the present day.

The climate in the republic is strongly continental; temperature varies from +43C in summer to -30C in winter. Humidity is low. Flora is represented by beech, oak, walnut, willow and wild pear; there are many herbal plants. Fauna includes bears, wild boars, foxes, hares, wolves, stone martens, bezoars and Asian mouflons; birds - Caspian snowcock, alpine accentor, crag martin and rock partridge. Along the state border with Iran and Turkey flows the Araz River. Aside of it, there are about 40 other middle-to-small rivers (Ordubadchai, Alindzhachai, Gilanchai, Nakhchivanchai, Arpachai etc.). There is also an incredibly beautiful lake called Batabat with so-called "drifting islands"; there is an artificial lake used for the drainage of the Babek and Dzhulfa districts - it is located 1500 m above sea level, near the village of Gazanchi. There are numerous ruins of ancient towns, towers, fortresses and mausoleums remained all over the region. This land has always been attractive to invaders because of both its important strategic position and natural deposits.

In the 4th century BC, Alexander the Great sacked and burned out the whole region. After that, Nakhchivan was annexed by Persia. In the middle of the 17th century, the Nakhchivan Khanate was formed; however, at the beginning of the 19th century the khanate was incorporated into the Russian Empire. The city of Nakhchivan is the capital of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan. It is located on the right bank of the Nakhchivanchai River, 1000 m above sea level, and 560 km from Baku. Its population is estimated at 88,0 thousand people. This is one of the earliest large cities of Azerbaijan and the ancient East. The history of



the city dates back to the earliest ages. Archeologists have found objects of material culture dated to the 2nd-1st millennia BC. The residents link the history of the ancient settlements in the area of Nakhchivan with the legend of the biblical patriarch Noah, who escaped the Deluge. His ark is believed to have collided three times with mountain peaks of the Lesser Caucasus before mooring at the mountain and one of the peaks even collapsed (the mountains of Agridag, Balaagri, Ilandag, Lalngez, Gapidzhik). The residents believe that after the Deluge Noah lived and died here. Not so long ago were alive the old men (agsakkals) who assured that they knew the place of his grave. The story is so popular that the renowned painter Behruz Kengerli painted a picture of the same title - "The Grave of Noah". The earliest written source to mention Nakhchivan is the works of Ptolemy (2nd century). He mentions Nakhchivan under the name of "Nahsuan". In medieval Arabian sources, the city is called "Neshava" and in the works of such renowned authors as Muhammed Nakhchivani, Hamdullah Kazvini, Katib Chelebi and Evlija Chelebi Nakhchivan is respectfully called Nahsh-i-Dzhahan ("The Beauty of the World").

The city is located on the crossroads of ancient trade routes. Once it was a part of one of the states of ancient Azerbaijan - Athropatene (4th-3rd centuries BC). In The Early Middle Ages, the links between Nakhchivan and the countries of Asia Minor, Middle East and Transcaucasia became especially close. The city's wealth and geopolitical position became the reason for frequent raids from neighboring countries. As a result, Nakhchivan was often destroyed. However, the city was always rebuilt to become even more beautiful. For instance, in the middle of the 1st century AD the city was sacked and destroyed by the Byzantine Emperor Iраclion the 2nd; it was frequently sacked during the Mongol raids; it became a permanent conflict of interest between Byzantine and Arab Caliphate. In all times Nakhchivan was one of the key cities of different states - the ruling dynasties of Sadjids, Salarids, the capital of the Azerbaijan State of Atabeks Eldegezids.

In the 12th century, the population of Nakhchivan was estimated at up to 2000 inhabitants. The city enjoyed high level of trade and was famous for artisans and craftsmen: weavers, jewelers and glass blowers. However, the city was particularly famous for its architects of the famous school of Nakhchivani architecture. The volume of construction works increased substantially. According to travelers, medieval Nakhchivan housed a cathedral mosque, a large madrasah, which became a center of Muslim enlightenment, state buildings and palaces of aristocracy. Written sources mention "20 thousand houses, 70 religious buildings, 20 caravanserais, 7 baths and a few bazaars". French travelers Pierre Chardine and Dubois de Monpierre and British traveler Porter noted that this was a splendid city with well-preserved architectural monuments of the antiquity. Turkish traveler Evlija Chelebi was enchanted by the city's baths with the water pools daily scattered with rose petals. In the 15th-16th centuries, Nakhchivan was a part of the Azerbaijan States of Garagoyunlu, Aggoyunlu, and, later, Sefevids. In the 17th century, it was incorporated into the Chukhursaad Beglarbek ruled by chiefs of a military Turk tribe called Kengerli. The 18th century saw the foundation of the Nakhchivan Khanate. In 1828, according to the Turkmenchai Treaty, the Khanate was incorporated into Russia to become the center of a Russian uyezd of the same name later. In 1924, the city became the capital of Nakhchivan ASSR.

This ancient city features unique culture with the local cuisine being its inseparable part. For instance, this is the only place to possess the secrets of "Alana" - specially dried peaches filled with powdered nuts with sugar or "baligaynag" - special omelet with honey, and many others. Nakhchivan is a homeland of the 12th century's great architect - Adzhemi Ibn Abubekr Nakhchivani, who built the Mausoleum of Yusuph Ibn Kuseir (Gumbez Atababa), the Mausoleum of Momine-Khatun and a portal with minarets for the Juma Mosque. It is generally believed that with the Mausoleum of Momine-Khatun Adzhemi painted a picture of its era. It is not a coincidence that the mausoleum is decorated with an inscription "We perish but the world stays; we die but the memory remains". Geometric and epigraphic patterns decorating the mausoleum are made with utter precision. They resemble a shining turquoise - the most popular gemstone in the East.

This is a homeland of the famous scientist, statesman, writer, philologist, author of the first Farsi-Azeri dictionary (about four thousand words), Hindushakh Ibn Sanjar Ibn Abdulla Nakhchivani (13th-14th centuries). His son, Muhammed Nakhchivani was a



renowned finance statesman, who wrote a book on taxation (13th-14th centuries). The list of famous figures of Azerbaijan born in Nakhchivan also includes Kelbali Khan Nakhchivani and his son Gusein Khan Nakhchivani, a renowned military commander; Dzhamsheed Nakhchivani - a prominent figure of the 20th century; Dzhahalil Mammadguluzade, a classic, Hussein Javid, a romanticist poet and playwright who became a victim of Stalin's repression, painter Behruz Kengerli. Nakhchivan is a homeland of the national leader Heydar Aliiev.

In present Nakhchivan, close attention is paid to the development science and education. There is a university, a branch of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, the Academtown. Schools are not set aside, too - old schools are being restored along with building of new ones - e.g. a large, finely equipped school n.a. Heydar Aliiev. The city houses the Palace of Culture, Dramatic Theatre, and Puppet Theater etc. The finely equipped Olympic Sport Complex has been built recently. Museums - Carpets Museum, Historical Museum. The city also houses the memorial museum and mausoleum of Husein Javid, a writer and playwright. There are also a number of historical monuments in the city - "Imamzade", an architectural complex, the Juma mosque, "Zaviyya" mosque, "Pirgamish" mosque, "Khan Evi" bath, "Ismaikhana" bath, the Mausoleum of Yusuf Ibn Kuseyyir and the Mausoleum of Momine-Khatun. "Grand Nakhchivan" Hotel Fourteen comfortable rooms with all conveniences.

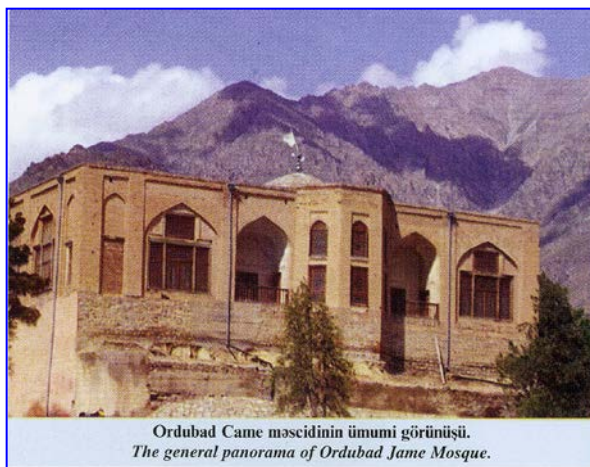


**ORDUBAD.** The district of Ordubad is bordered by Armenia on the north and east and by the Islamic Republic of Iran on the south. It is located in the eastern part of NAR. The climate is contrast - cold winters, hot summers. The flora and fauna are rich and the air is exceptionally clean. Many herbal plants and fruits grow in the district. There are many historical monuments dated to the Bronze Age: stone sculptures of rams, remainders of ancient settlements dated to the 2nd-1st millennia BC in the village of Sabir, ruins of the ancient town of Gilan by the village of Aza, medieval buildings in the villages of Kilit, Velaver, Ailis, Aza, Kotam, Bilev and Vanand. There are also ruins of the ancient town of Anabad, the Shahtakhty Tower near the village of Andemidzh, mosques of the 19th century, a mausoleum of the 14th century in the village of Der, a bridge (1826) near the village of Aza, ruins of a bath (14th century) in the village of Der and many other monuments. On the Gamigaya Mountain, 60 km to the south of Ordubad, there are unique petroglyphs dated to the 3rd-2nd millennia BC. There are thousands of drawings picturing people, domestic life, and hunt, real and fantastic animals.

The town of Ordubad is the administrative center of the district. This is the second largest town in Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. This town has been known since the 12th century. It is located 850 m above sea level. For its ancient history, the large number of historical monuments, the exterior almost untouched by new buildings and the preserved domestic life of its residents, the town has been named the State Historical-Architectural Reserve. Its monuments include the Juma Mosque with unique arched recesses of the elevation, the Dilbar-Mosque, the Afgan Tower and an eyvan of the 18th century, numerous ancient chashme (buildings near springs), the Geysariya indoor trade complex with round domes (19th-20th centuries), an ice-house and mosques of the 18th century, two-storied madrasah and many others.

One must see Ordubad to recognize the beauty of this small town, which preserved a genuine taste of antiquity. Unbelievably big and old plane trees, nearly 8 m in circumference, make up a "roof", under which people gather for leisure conversations. Unique mosques, ovdans, and kagrizs - everything here has a special touch. It is a town where modern inhabitants preserved the beauty of traditional national ways of life.

The town houses the Museum of Regional History with splendid collections, a theatre, the memorial museum of Ordubadi, a writer and the founder of the historical-romantic genre in Azerbaijani literature. Under restoration is the house of Yusuf Mammadaliev, an academician, one of the first presidents of the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, the founder of Azerbaijani oil chemistry, a bright, creative person whose part in the Azerbaijan's great contribution to the final destroy of Nazi invaders during the WWII is exceptional. Lodging in Ordubad can be provided by local residents.



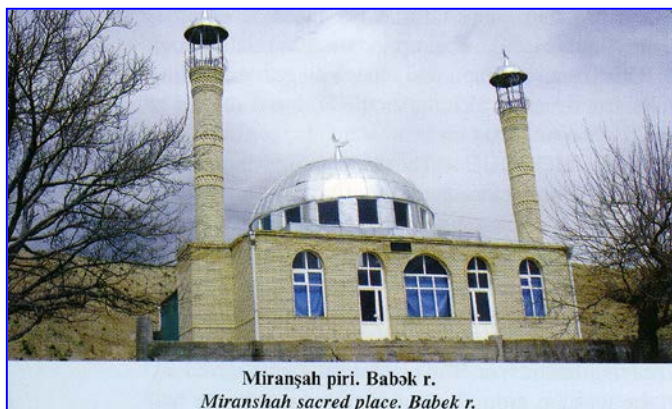
Ordubad Came məscidinin ümumi görünüşü.  
The general panorama of Ordubad Jame Mosque.



**DZHULFA.** The district of Dzhulfa is located to the east of Nakhchivan city. It is dry, hot in summer and freezing in winter. Total amount of precipitations is about 220-600 mm. There are rivers of Alindzha, Gardara and Araz (along the border with Iran). Very beautiful and unique are mountains along the road to Dzhulfa: the geological factor (the composition of layers, age etc.) has influenced their appearance - the mountains resemble huge, dome-shaped, fantastic structures. The mountains of Dzhulfa are forested, with beech, hornbeam, oak; fauna includes wolves, foxes and hares. On the bank of the Araz River, there are remainders of ancient structures. These are a caravanserai (13th century) - one of the largest on the territory of Azerbaijan, and the remainders of a bridge dated to the beginning of the 14th century, built by decree of Nakchivan Khan Khakim Ziya Ad-Din. There is the small Gulistan mausoleum (13th century) near the village of Dzhuga and more mausoleums near the village of Der (particularly well preserved is the Tower Mausoleum (15th century). There is also the fortress of Alindzha (12th-13th centuries) and a number of other monuments and ancient ruins. There are many springs in the area (about 40). One of them, located on the slopes of the Daridag Mountain, produces about 500000 liters of strongly mineralized water annually.

The town of Dzhulfa is located on the bank of the Araz River, on the border with Iran. Located on the opposite bank of the Araz River, almost symmetrical to the Azerbaijani Dzhulfa, is its Iranian namesake. In the past, there was an ancient caravan route connecting Persia with Shirvan, Georgia and Dagestan. Now here is located a border checkpoint. Lodging is available at the "Araz" hotel near the railway station. There is also a restaurant. Meals are available also at the "Gulistan" restaurant and "Eldar" Cafe.

**BABEK.** The district of Babek is bordered by Armenia on the north and by Iran on the south. Northern and southeastern parts of the district feature mountainous landscape, while southern and southwestern parts are predominantly lowlands. The tallest peaks are Kechaltepe (2740 m), Garagush (2617 m) and Buzgov (2470 m). The district is rich in mineral springs (Sirab, Gakhab, and Vaikhir) and deposits of rock salt. It is traversed by the Nakhchivanchai River and its branch called Dzhakhrichai; there are reservoirs - Araz, Nekhra, Uzunoba and Sirab. There are no forests. Native industries include wine, grain and melon growing as well as cattle breeding. Located on the area of the district are such famous archeological monuments as Gultepe and Gultepe-2 along with the ancient ruins of Abasabad, Vaikhir and Aznabyurt. The town of Babek is the administrative center of the district. Until 1978, the town was called Tezekend.



Miranshah piri. Babek r.  
Miranshah sacred place. Babek r.

**SHAKHBUZ.** The district of Shakhbuz is located in the northern part of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. This is a mountainous land. The tallest peaks are the Salvatly (3160) and Kechaldag (3115) mountains; there is also a mountain pass called Bichanak. Like the rest of the republic, there are many underground waters, including mineral - Badamli, Batabat, Karvansara and Bichanak. There are also deposits of brimstone, construction materials and peat. The district is traversed by the Nakhchivanchai River and its branches - Kuku, Shakhbuz and Salvarty. Lakes - Ganligel, Batabat. The mountains are heavily forested.

The town of Shakhbuz is the administrative center of the district. An interesting monument sometimes called "The House of Farhad" (on behalf of the Nezami's "Farhad and Shirin" poem's key character) has been found on the outskirts of the town. In fact, this is an ancient "house" of rather unusual shape - four rooms with "verandah" carved out in the mountain walls. Archeologists have also found the ruins of the Shakhpur fortress, bearing the name of an ancient ruler. The name is believed to have transformed to "Shakhbuz" later. The village of Garabaglar houses a famous mausoleum called "Garabaglar". The village is covered in gardens with ancient but still operational kagrizs located in the foothills of the Zangezur Range. There is also a system of fortifications with towers and water supply systems evidencing an ancient origin of this settlement site. According to one of versions, the mention of "Garabaglar town with 10000 houses, 70 mosques among which 40 are with minarets" regards the present village. The town of Shakhbuz is the administrative center of the district. Lodging can be provided by local residents. There is a resort called "Badamli" (1400 above sea level), located near the mineral water bottling plant of the same name.

**SHARUR.** The district of Sharur is located in the western part of the republic. On the south, this area is bordered by Iran. Northern and western parts of its territory feature mountainous landscape with the Daralaya Mountain Range. The tallest mountain is Galingaya (2775 m). The climate is semiarid; in winter, the temperature rarely falls below 30 C, in summer, it does not exceed 260 C. Local rivers are branches of the Araz River (Arpachai etc.). The waters of Arpachai are used for drainage, facilitated after the construction of the "Arpachai" reservoir. Local fauna includes mouflons, wolves, bezoars, foxes, wild boars and hares. The district's numerous historical monuments include ancient settlement sites dated to the Bronze Age on the banks of the Araz and Arpachai Rivers. Found in the cave of Gazma were stone and obsidian instruments dated to the Middle Paleolithic Age; examples of skillfully made decorated ceramic ware have been found in the village of Shahtakhty. Archeological excavations near the villages of Arbatan, Vermazyar, Garagasanli, Babeki and Kosadzhan revealed the settlement sites of Kelukler, Kehne, Arbatan, Kehnekend and Kultepe, the memories of which had been living in minds for ages.

The town of Sharur is the administrative center of the district. The town is new - it was founded during the building of the railway. There are two parks, a museum, a stadium, a cinema, a mosque and the memorial museum dedicated to shahids. On the other side of the railway, there is an old town with baths, bazaar and mosques. Lodging can be provided by local residents.

**KENGERLI.** The district of Kengerli is located between the districts of Babek and Sharur. The southern part of the district is bordered by Iran, the northern - by Armenia. The landscape of the district is predominantly



mountainous; it is located on the Daralaya Plateau. The climate, like in the rest of the autonomous republic, is strongly continental; it is very hot in summer and chilling in winter. On the territory of the district runs the Araz River that flows along the border between Azerbaijan and Iran. Mountainous landscape, climatic conditions and lack of small rivers underlay the features of the indigenous fauna, which is represented largely by semidesert and mountainous species (bushes, herbage and scarce trees). This is an agricultural district with advanced tobacco, cine, grain, vegetable and melon growing. Like the rest of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, there are many ancient monuments, evidencing that the land was inhabited in earliest times: the Chilkhangala mounds, the Gazma Cave and the ancient settlements of Galadzhig, Govurgala, Damlama, Gulamtepe and Balatepe. There are also newer monuments - the Jami Mosque (18th century) in the village of Khok, a mosque of the 18th century and a bath of the 19th century in the village of Shahtakhty.

The village of Givrag is the administrative center of the district. It was founded only in 2004. Givrag is located on the Nakhchivan-Sharur highway, 30 km from the capital (Nakhchivan) and 6 km from the Araz River.

As the administrative center status has been gained not too long ago, Givrag has not yet developed the infrastructure for tourists' accommodation. However, lodging can be provided by local residents that can rent out an apartment or a house for reasonable price.

**<http://www.mct.gov.az/?/en/routes>**.

*Baku-Shusha*

The ancient Karabakh is the heart of Azerbaijan, the land that gave the country a great number of talents. Karabakh is not only the unique nature, the landscapes included in the List of Natural Monuments of the Republic; it is also a constellation of gifted individuals - poets, writers, musicians, khanendes (performers of mugam - the national music). Karabakh is the cradle of the Azerbaijani music. The nature and resources of this ancient land leave no one untouched. Probably that is why this beautiful land is occupied now.

**BARDA.** The district of Barda is located in the center of the Karabakh Plain, in the northwestern part of the Kura-Araz lowlands, on the bank of the Terterchai River. The region is also traversed by the Khachin River. The Kura River flows along the border of the district. The large Upper Karabakh channel has been built in the district. There are two beautiful lakes along the road from Barda to Terter and one more (Agali) is located near Barda. Forests occupy 6856 km of the district's territory. The land features many relict trees; there are oaks, hornbeams, garagaches, walnuts and plane trees. The fauna includes wolves, foxes, jackals, wild boars, hares, pheasants, geese, francolins etc. Hunting and fishing are available. Natural conditions favor melon, cotton and grain growing. Until the collapse of the USSR, the district was an All-Union Sanatorium and a popular resort, largely owing to the land, rich in healthful mineral springs. The most acclaimed are Istisu, located 3 km. from Barda, and the spring near the village of Muganli.

The town of Barda is located 314 km from Baku. In Arabian written sources (Ibn Khovgal), Barda, located in the western part of Azerbaijan, was mentioned as "The Mother of the Arran Towns". In the past, the town was a key stop on the Great Silk Road. Barda was known to the neighboring nations already two thousand years ago. There was even a legend claiming that the town had been founded by Alexander the Great; the legend was mentioned in the works of such ancient authors as Balazuri and Kazvini. Since the 6th century BC, Barda became the capital of Caucasian Albania. Archeological expeditions revealed ruins of an ancient town near present Barda. Numerous objects found there evidence the high level of culture, trade and crafts: jewelry, forging, pottery, silk production, woodworking and carpet weaving. This was a town with advanced infrastructure: archeologists found underground water communications and sewer systems built with the use of ceramic pipes. The streets of the town were cobbled; red brick was used in construction works. Money was coined at the mint. The findings indicate established links between Barda and the adjacent towns of Azerbaijan and the whole Middle East. Archeologists have also found objects of material culture covering the period from the 2nd millennium BC to the Late Middle Ages. Many architectural monuments remained to the present day. They include remainders of the famous bridge across Terter (7th-9th centuries), the mausoleums of "Akhsatan Baba", "Guloglular" (with the burial of Bakhman Mirza Gadzhar, a famous scientist) built by Akhmed Ibn Ayub al-Khafiz, an architect, "Imamzade" (scientists believe this mausoleum to be the place of Sheikh Ibragim's burial). There is also a square-shaped cob fortress. As the capital of Caucasian Albania, Barda became the religious center of the Albanian Christian Church in 552. Christianity in Caucasian Albania was introduced by Syrian missionaries.

However, since the first half of the 7th century Barda became an arena of Arabian - Khazar wars. During the reign of Caliph Muawiyah (661-680), Barda was restored and surrounded with fortress walls. The Arabs garrisoned the place as an outpost against Khazar invasions. The population of Barda at that time was estimated at 100,000 inhabitants - quite large for a town in those times. That is why Mugaddasi, an Arabian writer, called Barda "The Baghdad of this region". Since the collapse of the Caliphate and until the nearly end of the 10th century, Barda was a part of the Salarids State. There is an interesting event in the history of Barda. In 944 Vikings, heading out the Kievan Princedom and sacking everything there was to sack, reached Kura. According to the records, the Vikings troops were quite large in number, from 30 to 50 thousands men. For a short time, they managed to capture and hold Barda. However, after a few months the Vikings, many of which had died of unknown illnesses, left the town without a fight. More serious were results of the Mongol raids. The town was severely damaged during the invasion of Tamerlane (15th century). After the devastation by Persian Shah Nadir in 1736, the town did not recover. It fell into decay and became merely a small populated place within the Karabakh Khanate (the end of the 18th century).

In the past, Barda comprised the sharply delineated center of the town - Shahrستان, surrounded by fortress walls, and Rabata - residential quarters of artisans, craftsmen and merchants. There were quarters of blacksmiths (present village of Gara Demirchiler), potters, stonemasons, wood engravers tanners etc. It was a town of beautiful fabrics, ceramic and glass ware, embellishments made of common and precious metals. A great number of the famous "Karabakh Type" carpets (both with and without nap), made by Azerbaijani craftsmen, and were produced in Barda. This was a genuine Town of Craftsmen, praised by the famous Azerbaijani poet Nezami Ganjevi in his poem "Islander-Name". The ancient town was glorified by Gazi

Mahiatdin Bardi, a prominent political figure of the 14th century, progressive jurist and scientist Muhammed Ibn Abdulla Abubekr Bardi (died in 961), renowned in the East, the author of "The Answer to Dissidents" (regarding the Muslim law). His works indicate democratic and progressive views of their author.

**AGDAM.** Remained on the territory of the district are numerous ancient architectural monuments. They include the Mausoleum of Khanaoglan (17th century), a caravanserai (18th century) in the village of Shahbulag, a mosque (17th century), The Palace and Mosque of Panahali-Khan, "Gutlu Musaoglu" mausoleum (14th century) in the village of Khachinturbetli, two mausoleums and a mosque in the village of Papravend, a cave temple dated to the Christian period of Caucasian Albania, carved out on the northern slope of the Bozdog Mountain.

The town of Agdam is the administrative center of the district, located 362 km from Baku. Agdam was also one of the large towns located on the Karabakh plain. Turkic tribes would often build small defensive fortresses on lowlands (the word "Agdam" is translated from the ancient Turkic as "a small fortress"). Later the word gained its modern meaning of "light, white" - connected to the fact that one of Karabakh Khans, Panahali, built a house of white marble here, in the 18th century. It was a whole complex of harmonic structures - an imaret of white stone.

The town houses an unusual museum - The Museum of Bread. The museum's collections include unique artifacts - archeological findings relevant to bread and grain growing. There are petrified seeds, grain graters, hand mills, ware, ancient books, manuscripts, various documents describing the history of tillage, farmers' tools (sickles, ploughs, threshing boards) etc.

**SHUSHA.** The town of Shusha is located 373 km from Baku. The town's name owes much to the splendid clean and transparent air of the land. "Shusha" is literally translated as "glass" (Azerbaijanis usually associate clean air with transparent glass). This is one of the most beautiful towns of our country, blessed by nature with unique springs - Isa Bulag, Turshsu, Sakina Bulag, Isti Bulag, Soyug Bulag, Yuz Bulag, Girkh Bulag, Charikh Bulag and many others. The foundation and subsequent prosperity of the town are connected to strengthening of the Karabakh khanate. From two sides the town is screened by remained city walls, once heavily fortified.



The town was founded by Panahali Khan, a Karabakh ruler (1756-1757). He built a fortress here and named it Panahabad. Later it was renamed into Shusha, the name of a village nearby. Panahali Khan also built other fortresses - Bayat, Shahbulag and reinforced the fortress of Askeran. In the 18th century Shusha emerged as one of the most important towns in Azerbaijan. It was surrounded by tall and thick fortress walls. A number of craftsmen's quarters were built, merchant routes connected Shusha with Persian towns and Moscow, and the town began coining its own silver money - Panabadi. Travelers have always admired this beautiful town, located high in the mountains. "Its houses are regular, beautiful, and tall and lit through numerous fine windows. The town is built of stone from the rocks it is situated on. Every street is cobbled with wide slabs; roofs are made of boards" - these are the impressions of V. Vereshagin, a Russian painter. The quarters had indoor galleries with stone pillars, market squares were large and the town's main square - Meydan - housed rows of shops and a two-storied caravanserai. There was also a cathedral mosque with two minarets. Located near the border of the town was the "race track" - Dzhidir Duzu. It was located near the deep canyon of Dashalty. Steep staircase steps of Girkh Pilakan (forty steps) led downwards to the river of Dashalty, to the secret cave of "Khazina Gala" (the fortress of treasures). Every guest of Shusha would visit this place. To count all ancient monuments of architecture and art in Shusha is not an easy thing to do - only the number of architectural monuments is estimated at 170, monuments of arts - 160. They include house museums: of Khurshud Banu Natavan, a poetess, museum of General Mekhmandarov, a participant of a heroic defense of Port Arthur, prominent composer Uzeyir Hadzhibekov, singer Bul-Bul, poet and painter Mir Mohsum Navab, there are the castles of Ibragim Khan and his daughter, Gara Beyuk Khanum, "Ganja Gates", the fortress wall etc.

The town is often called the "conservatoire of the East". Shusha is a hometown to many prominent Azerbaijani singers, musicians, great composers and conductors - Dzhabbar Garyagdi Oglu, Gurban Primov, Bul-Bul, Seid Shushi, Khan Shushi, Rashid Beibutov, Uzeyir Hadzhibekov, Niyazi, Fikret Amirov and Suleyman Alasgarov. It is also a hometown to writers S. Akhundov, A. Agverdiyev, N. Vezirov, poetess Khurshud Banu Natavan, poet Kasumbek Zakir, sculptors and painters T. Narimanbekov, Dzh. Garyagdi and others.

Located near Shusha is the town of Khankendi, first mentioned in written sources of the 9th century. It was founded by a Turkic tribe whose name, Verande, became the original name of the town. In the end of the 18th century the son of Panahali Khan, Mehti-Kuli Khan founded a large settlement on this place and later gave it to his wife, Peridzhan Begim. In the 1923 the town was renamed into Stepanakert but after the collapse of the USSR it regained its original name.

**KELBADZHAR.** The district of Kelbadzhar is located on the slopes of the Lesser Caucasus. Its administrative center is the town of Gelbedzhar (translated as "high pass" or "highland"). The town is located 445 km from Baku. The area is famous for its mineral springs, including thermal ones. The most famous of those, Istisu ("hot water") gave the name to a local resort. Other healthful springs are located 2000-2400 m above sea level, on the banks of the Terter River. In terms of chemical composition their waters are almost identical or even superior to waters of the world-famous Karlovy Vary springs (Czech Republic).

It has to be mentioned that natural landscape, historical-architectural monuments, transit-communication set of Nagorny Karabakh and surrounding districts, occupied by Armenia, have been destroyed by Armenians, in a word; tourism infrastructure of top the region has fully been destructed.

<http://www.mct.gov.az/?/en/routes>.



## The Natural Monuments of Azerbaijan

The land of Azerbaijan has a natural environment which is fascinating and unique - with a touch of mystery. The miracles of nature to be experienced in its different regions never fail to attract and amaze. The complex geography, geological structures and range of natural climatic conditions further the shaping of its natural features. We will describe the wonderful features of the Azerbaijani landscape in terms of its geology and flora and fauna.

**Natural geological features - Nature's architecture.** The mountain peaks and some of the variously-shaped rocks are a focus for tourists as sights to be seen in themselves and also for the panoramic views they provide. The Ilan Dag and Goyazan mountains, located in the Autonomous Republic of Nakchivan and in the Qazakh region respectively, are blister cones formed during volcanic eruptions resulting from magma penetration into rock strata; the magma hardened and weathered while the surrounding strata eroded away. Ilan Dag is a towering 2,415 metres of volcanic rock. The actual height of Goyazan is 858 metres, compared with its surroundings at 250 metres. They both have prominent shapes, clearly seen from the low-lying lands that surround them. Besh Barmaq Rock also juts up considerably higher than its surroundings. The rocks are polished and stand atop steep hillsides. The steep Alti Agach rocks in the Khizi region are fossil rocks (limestone). They are the remains of reefs, strangely altered from their original shape. There are pentagonal and hexagonal prisms and columns up to 40 metres high, formed from basalt rocks in the Kalbajar district. Geologically, they are column-shaped basaltic partings.



The mountain of "Baku storey" and the Boyukdag mountain clays are also striking geological features. The anthropogenous sediment rock stratum generates the layer of 70 metre depth on the mountain of "Baku storey".

Also related to this group are the classic section of the Kushkuna-Aghjagil marine sediments in the Jeyranchol area of the Agstafa region, a strange, bird-shaped formation created by weathering and solar radiation in Guzdek village and the Ateshgah geological area, located in the same region. Maykop clay developed a distinctive shape when entering the younger rock layers of the latter area.

The mountains called the "ears" of Baku are located near the Korgoz settlement in Absheron district. They were formed as an anticlinal fold in solid fossil rocks from the medieval Absheron period. The "ears" of Baku, or Mount Garadagh-Karkas, is a hill with two peaks. Sailors used this landmark as a lighthouse because it is the highest point on Absheron. The Karkas rocks have been eroded and planed by physical weathering and wind erosion and strange human and animal-like shapes have been created in the rocks.

**Valleys, monuments of nature.** The flows of Mountain Rivers have, over millions of years, created special valleys. Sometimes, when soft rocks generate thick layers, deep, Narrow River valleys are the result.



One example is the Tanga valley formed on the Tanga River - a tributary of the Valvala River in the north-east of the Great Caucasus. This valley is some 400-600 metres deep.

A slope of rocks ranging from the Palaeozoic era to the anthropogenic period of the Cainozoic Era can be seen in the Nehram valley located in the Julfa district of the AR of Nakhchivan. The Yasamal valley in Absheron is also a very particular landscape. As the Garamaryam ridge in the south of the Great Caucasus is perpendicular to the Girdimanchay valley, the river crosses it transversely in five places. The ridge is 25 km long, 6 km wide and 350-500 metres high. The valleys created by the river are called "Padar penjereleri" (Windows of Padar) or "Padar Darvazalari" (Gates of Padar).

**Ancient human habitats.** In mountainous areas of limestone rock, the distinctive topography of karst landscapes appear. Caves are particularly characteristic here. The Azykh cave is hugely significant historically, culturally and archaeologically. It is situated in Khojavand district in an area of chalky rock from the Jurassic period. The cave has six chambers and is 250 m long and 20 m high. This is the site of one of the most ancient

human habitants. Human traces and samples of culture belonging to the Palaeolithic period have been found here.

The following caves are protected as natural monuments in Azerbaijan: Taghlar (length 22 metres) in Khojavand district; Khan (length 114 metres) and Gahal (length 72 metres) in Shusha district; Garainek (length 30 metres) in Dashkesen district; the cave of the same name (length 48 metres) in Kilit village in Ordubad district, the AR of Nakhchivan; Divler Sarayi (Ogres' Palace) (length 30 metres) in Daghtumas village, Jabrayil district; Galahalti (length 50 metres) in Shabran district; Avey (length 73 metres) in Dash Salahli village in Gazakh district and the cave of the same name (length 40 metres) in Hashi village in Guba district.

The Keshikchidagh caves complex in Agstafa district boasts a unique lay of the land and a particular nature. It is a site full of numerous archaeological monuments, thus it is protected as being of cultural and historical significance. Ancient people used these caves as a place of refuge. Since 19 December 2007, the caves complex covering part of the Keshikchidagh chain has been the "Keshichidagh" State Historical and Cultural Reserve.

**Mud volcanoes - the Earth's hot pots.** Mud volcanoes belong to the range of natural geological monuments and are spread across the Absheron peninsula, in Gobustan, in the South-eastern Shirvan plain and on the islands of the Baku archipelago. Their distribution occurs in areas of sand-clay sediment rocks and oil and gas fields in adolescent detachment areas. There is nowhere else in the world like Azerbaijan for the variety and activity of its mud volcanoes. 45 percent - more than 300 - of all the mud volcanoes registered in the world are located in Azerbaijan. Mud volcanoes create miraculous environments; most of them continuously expel hot water and melted mass (breccia). Mud from these volcanoes contains valuable chemical substances which are very important in the treatment of various diseases of the gastrointestinal tract, urology and cosmetology.

Lokbatan, Ayrantokan, Boyuk Kenizdagh and Dashgil have mud volcanoes included in the list of natural monuments. 23 mud volcanoes were included in the list of the protected natural monuments. On 15 August 2007, the State Nature Reserve was established to protect mud volcanoes and develop ecological tourism.

**Eternal flames.** There are many natural monuments connected with Azerbaijan's oil and gas reserves. Yanar Dag and Ateshgah are two examples.

Yanar Dag is situated near Mammadli village in Absheron district; natural methane surfaces here and burns. Natural gas flames in the craters of most mud volcanoes; for example near Khinalig village in Guba district, the flames are the result of gas escaping from burning shale and coming to the surface. It is a fascinating sight.

Other eternal flames also exist near Surakhani village, some 20 km from Baku. The amazing fire worshippers' temple, Ateshgah, was built there and still stands.

Besh Barmaq (Five Finger) mountain in Siyazan district. Khizirzinda Sanctuary is on this mountain

**Palaeontological monuments or time travel to the past.** In Azerbaijan, rock layers containing the remains of plants and animals which inhabited the sea and the land in ancient times are protected as monuments of nature. These territories are included in the list of palaeontological monuments. The Pirekushkul fauna graveyard is near Pirekushkul village in Absheron district. Rocks full of the remains of unique sea animals are preserved here in the Maykop clay and clay shale. Remains of Cetacea, large marine mammals, fish, turtles, seals, reptiles, lobsters inhabiting the Tethys ocean, birds, including unique birds with teeth, various insects and coniferous trees from the Neogene period are to be found there.

The deposit of Eldar vertebrate fauna situated in Samukh district is also included in the palaeontological monuments. Remains of vertebrate animals from the Neogene period have accumulated here on the right bank of the river Gabirri. The asphalt (bitumen) lake situated near Binagadi district, 10-12 kilometres to the northwest of Baku, was created by oil naturally leaking to the surface and then hardening during the Pleistocene era. Later, animals died here and their remains have been preserved in comparatively satisfactory condition. This is why numerous bones - of cave bears, rhinoceroses, bulls, deer, hyena and other animals - have been found in a lake called "the asphalt graveyard". The remains of various animals have been discovered in rocks of the Neogene and the Quarternary periods of the Cainozoic Era in the Duzdag stratotypic section situated in the Yevlakh district and within marine sediment in Absheron and Baku. The remains of ostrich eggs, elephants, horses, bulls, beavers and other animals have been found here.

**Mineralogical sites.** Minerals are found at sites like the Vesuvius hill, rich in reserves of vesuvianite and tourmaline crystals and the salt mine in the AR of Nakhchivan. Respiratory tract illnesses and pulmonary diseases are treated at the physical therapy centre established in the salt mine.





**Lakes - the creative work of earth and water.** Natural climatic conditions and the variety of Azerbaijan's topography have created lakes with complicated hydrological features. For example, Tufan Gol (Tufan Lake) in the Great Caucasus originated from a glacier. The Lakes Boyuk and Kichik Alagol (Great and Minor Alagol Lakes) of tectonic origin and Goygol (the Blue Lake) caused by landslide appeared in the Lower Caucasus. Batabat gol (Batabat Lake) in the AR of Nakhchivan also appeared following a landslide. The fascinating and picturesque nature of these lakes creates great opportunities for the development of tourism in the region.

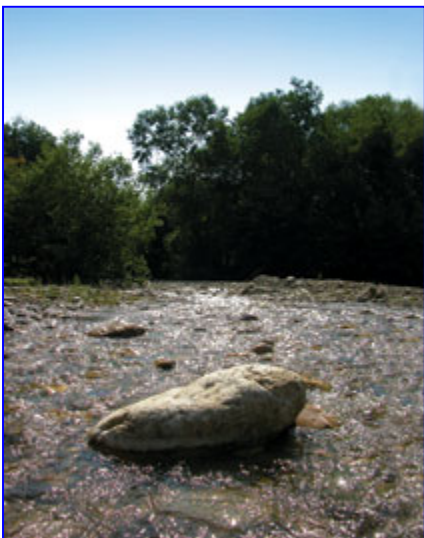
Tufan Gol (Tufan Lake) is actually two lakes. One belongs to the basin of the Gusar River, the other to the basin of the Damiraparan River. These lakes were created by the movement of ancient glaciers and formed when valleys were dammed by a moraine ridge. They are located at an altitude of 3300 m, in a rocky landscape. They are fed by snow and glacial waters, provide no economical benefit and are covered by thick ice in winter.

Goygol (the Blue Lake) is in the Lower Caucasus, on the northern hillsides of the Murovdagh mountain chain, at an altitude of 1553 m. The lake was formed as a result of the Agsu River being dammed by a landslide during an earthquake in 1139. Lakes Maralgol, Aghgol, Shamligol, Ordekgol, Jeyrangol and Garagol were formed at the same time. Hook-shaped pine trees of ancient origin have grown on the hillsides of the mountains around Goygol. Mountain goats, European red deer, roe deer, brown bears, foxes and partridges live in the forest.

Most of the world's mud volcanos are in Azerbaijan. Maralgol Lake is at an altitude of 1902 m, its surface covers an area of 23 hectares between mountains, it is around 60 m. deep. Its water is used to supply summer pastures. As the lake freezes over for long periods in winter, it could be used as a winter tourist resort.

Lakes Goygol and Maralgol and adjacent areas around Hajikend settlement are outstandingly picturesque and contain springs of mineral water. Recreation bases for local residents and tourists have been set up in these territories. On 1 April 2008, the Goygol National Park was established in order to develop ecological tourism and to exploit its potential for tourism and recreation.

Lake Boyuk Alagol is located on volcanic pasture in Karabakh, at an altitude of 2729 m. It is of tectonic origin. Volcanic activity in the Quarternary period influenced the shaping of its hollow cavity. It extends across an area of 510 hectares, it is 3670 m long and its maximum width is 2875 m; it is 9.4 m deep. There are around 30 lakes in this basin. The largest of them (90 hectares) is Lake Kichik Alagol. Its water is used on pastures.



Batabat Lake is in the Shahbuz district of the AR of Nakhchivan, in the basin of the Nakhchivan River and covers an area of 16.0 hectares. The basin is used to irrigate land in the Babek district. Its surroundings are used as pasture. The local climate and landscape are favourable for the creation of tourist and recreation facilities. The existing meadows, clean, life-giving air, natural forests and bushes, fresh water streams (Zorbulag and Sudlubulag) and mineral water springs surely demand the creation of a leisure and tourism zone. Conditions are very favourable for the treatment of cardiac diseases and diseases of the nervous system.

**Waterfalls break through.** There are numerous waterfalls on the rivers running from mountainous areas of the country. They were created when rivers pushed through severely eroded sheer hillsides. Every waterfall is unique in its height, intensity of flow, surrounding landscape and environment

Afurja on the Valvala River, Mijig on the Damiraparan River, Hamzalichay on the Hamzali River, Sariguney on the Kish River, Ilisu on the Kurmuk River and others are among the best known waterfalls in Azerbaijan. The Afurja waterfall near Afurja village in Guba district, cascades for 60 m and has been included in the natural monuments.

**Mineral springs - health from the depths.** The mountains and foothills of Azerbaijan are rich in mineral springs. The surfacing of these springs is a particular natural sight. The minerals (sulphur, carbon and nitrogenous gases) contained in the waters are beneficial in the treatment of gastrointestinal, cardiac, vascular, urological, skin and rheumatic diseases.



The most celebrated mineral springs in Azerbaijan are Badamli and Sirab in the AR of Nakhchivan, Turshsu and Shirlan in Shusha, Istisu in Kalbajar, Slavyanka in Gadabey, Chukhuryurd in Shemakha, and Galaalti in Shabran. However, there is only one sanatorium in operation - at the Galaalti mineral spring, where urological diseases are treated.

The Shemakha mineral springs situated on the outskirts of Chikhuryurd village and the Madrasa settlement in Shemakha district have been included in the state's list of natural monuments. These natural water sources come to the surface as a result of the collapse of upper chalk sediments onto Neogene rocks.

Azerbaijan could well be considered a land of natural monuments. These monuments could be highly significant for the development of medical treatment, leisure and tourism.

**Eminov Zakir "Visions of Azerbaijan". July-August 2010 P. 40-45**