

**The Archeology of Azerbaijan  
A Brief Discourse**

**Rashid Geyushev**

2012

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## Rashid Geyushev

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Prof. Dr. Rashid Geyushev has spent his childhood and youth in Garabagh, which is a region very rich in monuments. His interest in these monuments and his wish to learn the secrets of these monuments lead him to the history faculty and then to the post-graduate courses related to the specialty of archaeology. At present R. Geyushev is known as a famous archaeologist, doctor of historical sciences and professor not only in Azerbaijan but also in a number of countries of the world. He has published more than 10 monographs and more than 100 scientific articles including "Christianity in the Caucasian Albania", "Azerbaijan Archaeology", "USSR Archaeology", "Amaras-Ag oqlan", "Archaeology and Religion", "A Journey to the Past of Garabagh" and a number of other works are read willingly by broad masses of people.

At present R. Geyushev is the head of Department of Archaeological Investigation of New Construction Sites at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Azerbaijan Republic.

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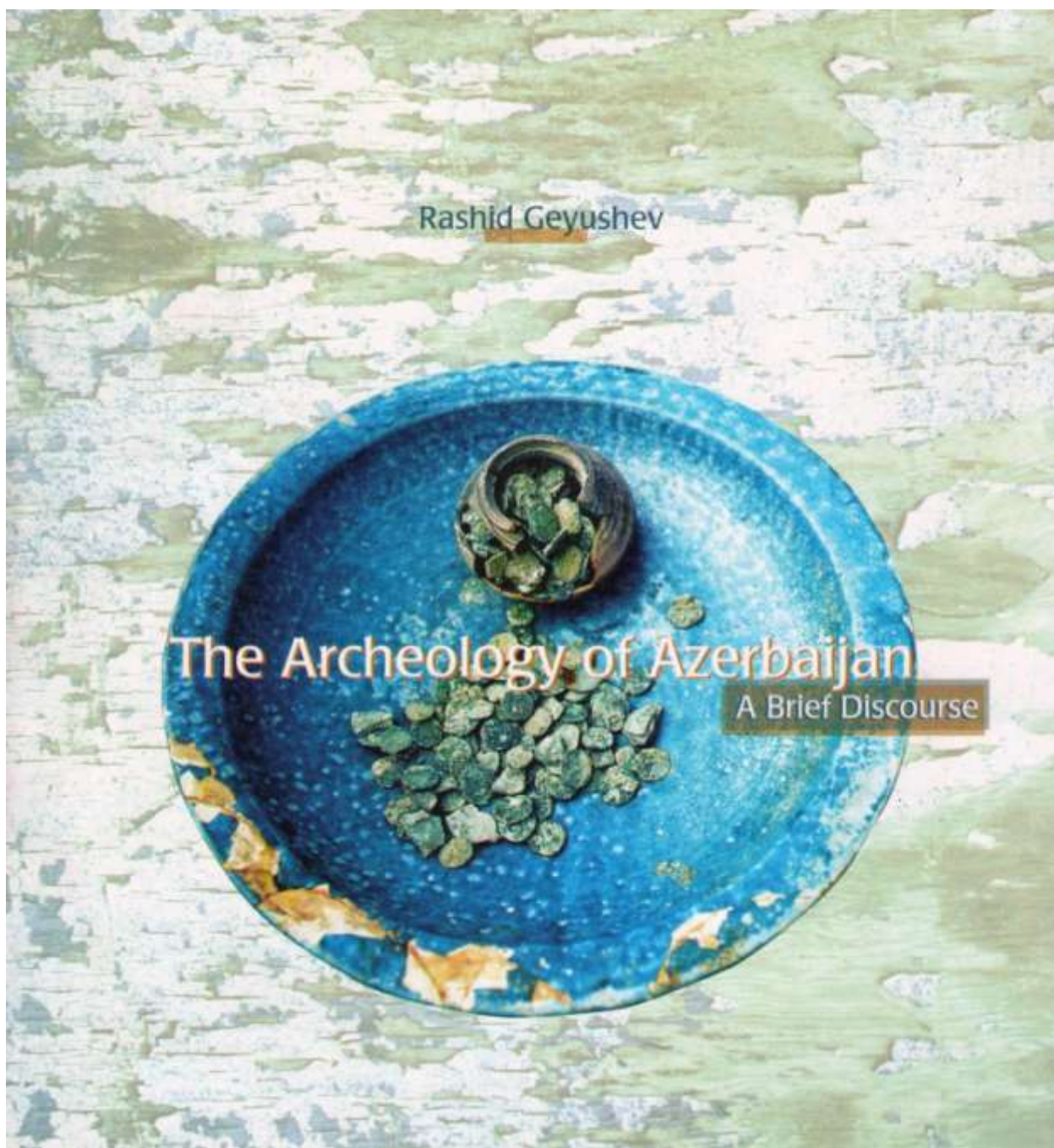
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### About the Author

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**WHATEVER THEIR SIGNIFICANCE, ALL MONUMENTS MUST BE THE FOCUS  
OF OUR ATTENTION.**

**HEYDAR ALIYEV**  
*President of the Azerbaijan Republic*



First assistant of USSR Council of Ministry Chairmen H. A. Aliyev getting familiar with archaeological excavations in Shabran in 1983.

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The animals shown in this book are from 2,000 B.C. and are depicted on artifacts stemming from Turkish speaking peoples; this is called the animalistic style. This type of decoration can generally be found in the Urals, the Far East, Siberia, middle Asia, the Caucasus and in parts of the Mediterranean basin.

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### From the Author

In recent years, Azerbaijan, especially its natural resources and cultural heritage, has become the focal point of attention in the world community.

Individuals from a variety of backgrounds come to visit Azerbaijan from all over the world. Given their keen interest in Azerbaijan's monuments, we have decided to publish this short guide to the archeology of Azerbaijan with the assistance of AIOC.

I particularly would like to note that AIOC and its Environmental Department are devoting considerable attention to archeological monuments found at oil pipeline construction areas along the northern and western routes.

With their assistance, maps of archeological monuments along both routes have been compiled and excavations to save some of these monuments have been conducted. For this and for their assistance in the publication of this book, I extend my gratitude to the staff at AIOC's Environmental Department.

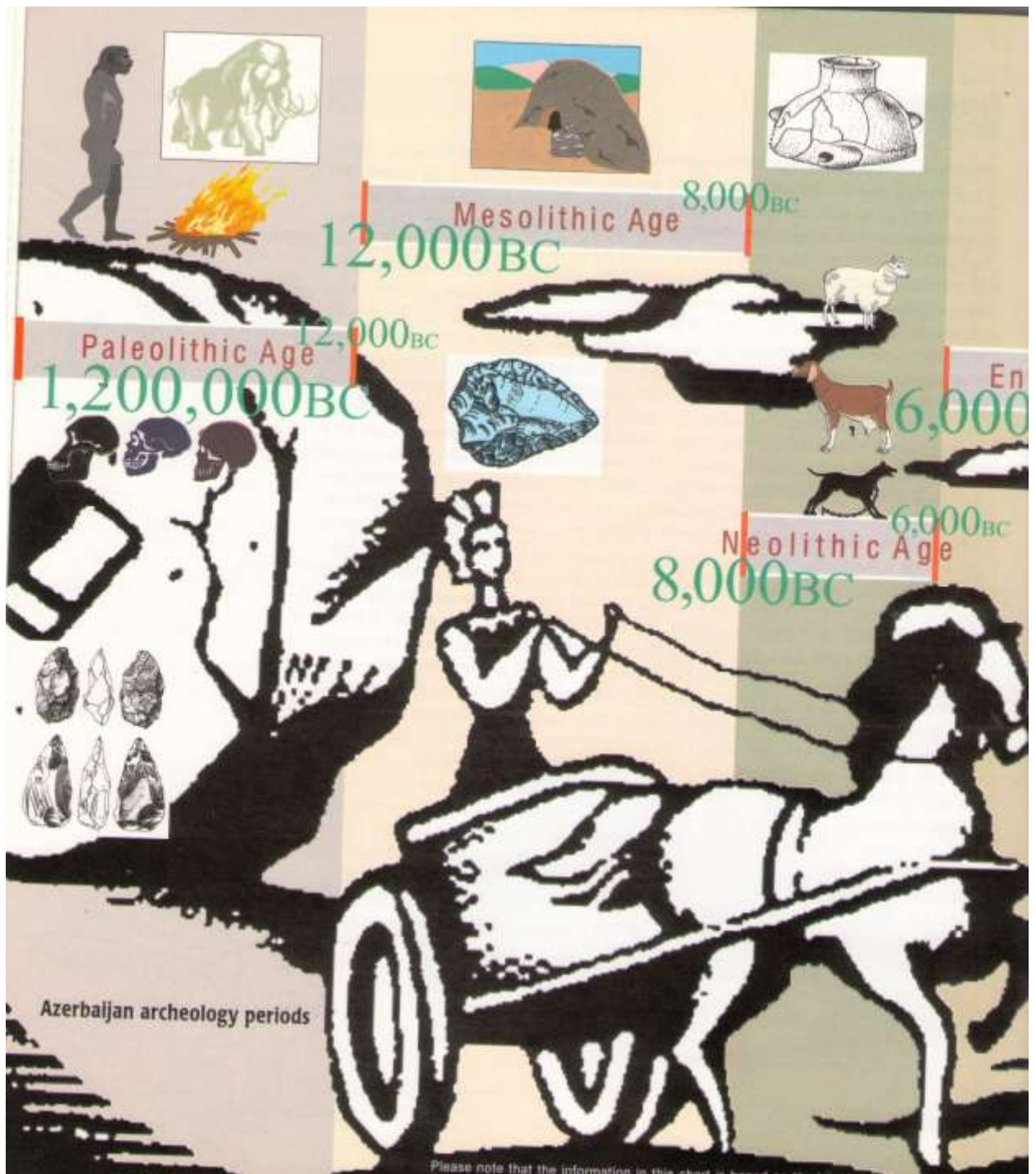


Professor Rashid Geyushev at work.

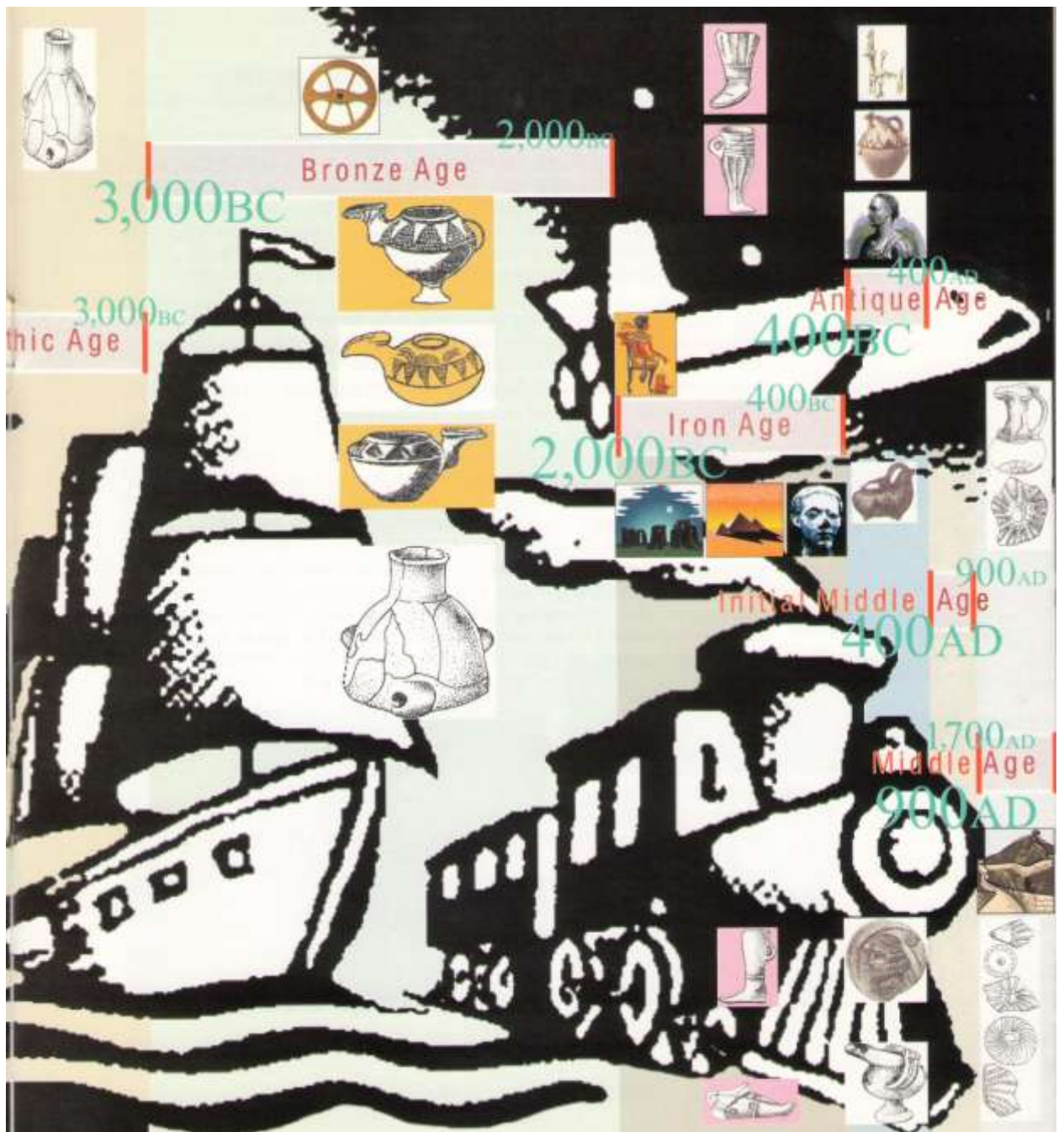
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## Preface

Azerbaijan, one of the earliest areas where human beings are known to have dwelled, has had an unusual and uneasy history. The country, enjoying a splendid natural and geographical situation and possessing rich economic potential, simultaneously occupies a very convenient geopolitical position. Although Azerbaijan had repeatedly faced numerous invasions by foreign conquerors, as well as incessant attacks by the Romans, the Sasan Empire, the Arabs, the Seljuks and the Mongolians, Russians and Armenians, the people of Azerbaijan have protected and nurtured their own spiritual values. With a very high level of urban culture already evident in the second millennium BC, the Azerbaijani people for centuries have been famous for their hospitality, simplicity, and frankness, as well as for their cruelty towards their enemies, if so required. It is quite possible that this is the reason certain small nations, including the Tats, Talishes, Udi, Kurds, Sakhs, Ingush and others, have historically settled in Azerbaijan and have played a key role in the formation of its population and its history. Historically, then, Azerbaijan always has been a multi-ethnic country, and each of these nations has its own specific place in the economic, political and cultural life of Azerbaijan. At present, Azerbaijan is an independent country and is shaping its own future. In any event, it should be remembered that the Armenians have invaded over 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory and that our historical and cultural monuments in these places have been intentionally destroyed. These include such monuments as the Azikh Cave, the Khojali Monument Complex, the stone idol "forest," hundreds of museums, and other memorial sites. Having once investigated these monuments myself, I am very sorry that I am obliged now to give my opinion of them from afar. However, Azerbaijan is so rich in monuments that through them one can study not only the problems of Azerbaijan's own history, but also questions of human history. The popular Mingachevir monuments, the dozens of rich monuments of the Kur-Araz culture, the Gobustan petroglyphs, the abundant Christian monuments, the material and cultural relics collected from excavations in Gabala, Beylagan, Nakhchivan, Barda, Shamakhi, Ganja, Shabran, Baku and other cities – all of these allow us to set the stage of the development of the Azerbaijani people. Considered part of the national wealth of our nation, these monuments are protected and faithfully advertised by our State. The Milli Majlis of the Azerbaijan Republic recently adopted a law "On the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments" with the participation of the author. This shows the obvious concern our country feels for its monuments.







## The History of Azerbaijan Archaeological Investigations

Azerbaijan is rich in diverse archeological monuments spanning vast periods of time. The study of archeological monuments dates to the mid-19th century when many archeology enthusiasts were conducting digs, primarily of burial grounds in the Mugan-Talish, Gyandja-Garabakh, and Nakhichevan zones. Many unique archeological finds were turned over to Germany, France and other countries. It should be noted that these amateur archeologists did not undertake a systematic study of the history of Azerbaijan society. For the most part, they were treasure hunters.

The development of archeology as an independent scientific discipline in Azerbaijan is directly associated with the establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. Since 1918, a number of scientific organizations have been established, charged with the protection and study of Azerbaijan's historical and cultural monuments.

An important event in the study of material culture was the founding in Baku of the State Museum of the History of Azerbaijan. A decree on the registration and preservation of monuments of antiquity, issued March 4, 1924, was a document of tremendous importance. The Azerbaijan Archeological Society was founded in 1922 and the State Museum's Commission on the Preservation of Monuments of Antiquity began operating at this time. In 1923, the Society for the Exploration and Study of Azerbaijan was founded, with branches in Lenkoran, Gyandja, and Nakhichevan. The first Azerbaijan Congress of Regional Studies was held in 1924. This Congress developed a research program for archeological studies in Azerbaijan. In 1923, these organizations were merged to form the Azerbaijan Archeological Committee, a division of the Peoples Commissariat for Education. This Committee registered, protected, and studied monuments of material culture. In 1927, the Committee was renamed the Azerbaijan Committee for the Protection of Monuments of Antiquity, Art and Nature with branches in the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic and in the Nagorno-Garabakh Autonomous Region.

The chronology of the archeological materials discovered in the 1920s covers a wide range, from the Early Bronze Age to the Late Middle Ages.

The Azerbaijan State Scientific Research Institute (AGNII) and the Department of the History of Material Culture at the Azerbaijan branch of the Transcaucasus affiliate of the USSR Academy of Sciences (AzOZFAN) were founded in the early 1930s based on the Society for the Exploration and Study of Azerbaijan.

Since then, a number of expeditions have been organized in which scientists from



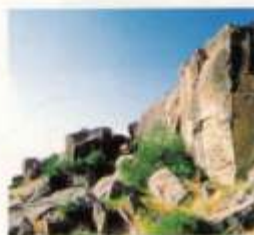
Azerbaijan, such as D. I. Sharifov, A. K. Alekperov, I. M. Djafarzade, S. M. Kaziyeu and others have participated.

In studies of Azerbaijan's monuments, the work of German scientist Gummel in the Gyandzha-Garabakh zone has proven to be of tremendous importance. At the time, he was at work in the Gyanja-Garabakh, Shemakha, Ismailly, and Khanlar regions, the Mil and Mugan steppes, in Mingechaur and other areas. Based on the materials discovered, the scientists were able to compile information on the culture and life of the people, their rituals and customs.

In 1945, a new stage in the development of archeology of Azerbaijan was underway. First and foremost, this had to do with the founding of the Academy of Sciences of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

The Mingechaur Archeological Expedition was organized in 1946 to the site where the state power plant was being built. It played an important role in the archeology of Azerbaijan. Over an 8-year period, monuments of material culture were discovered in Mingechaur, dating from the Eneolithic to the Late Middle Ages. Information obtained has made it possible to create a time-line and to identify the basic stages in the development of the material culture and history of the Azerbaijan people.

In the archeology of Azerbaijan, the Gobustan Archeological Expedition, organized in 1947, was of special significance. This Expedition recorded and studied several thousand petroglyphs - cliff carvings. Petroglyphs were then recorded in Apsheiron, Kelbadzhar and in the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic.



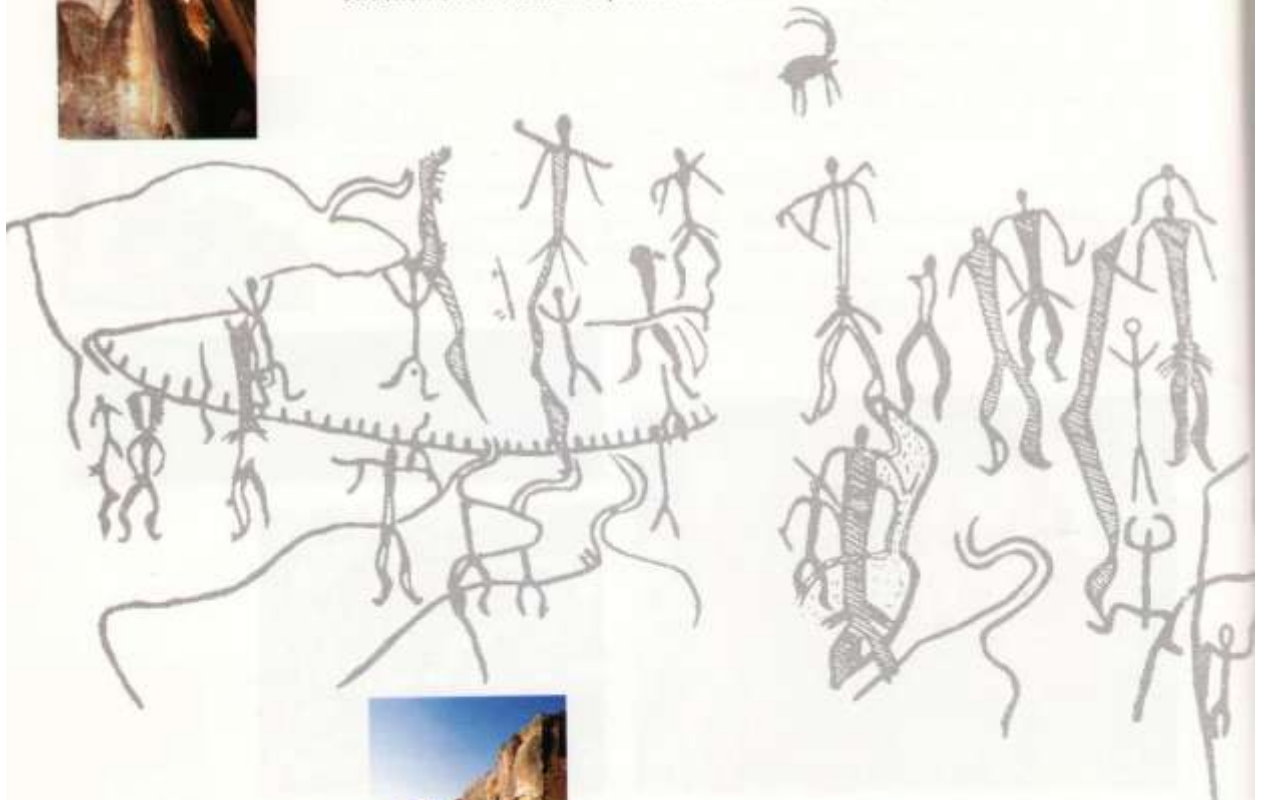
Gobustan cave paintings.



In the 1950s, a number of expeditions were organized to study archeological monuments of Azerbaijan from different periods. From 1953 on, Professor S. N. Zamyatnin took part in expeditions to study Paleolithic monuments. During these years, the exploration of the settlement of Orenkala in the Mil steppe continued. In 1951, the exploration of the majestic multi-layer monument of Kyultep I in Nakhichevan began. The Kazakh, Kuba-Khachmas, Mugan, Torpagkala, Khinisly and other expeditions were undertaken in 1951. At present a special Institute of Archeology and Ethnography in, uniting 20 divisions and laboratories employing more than 250 scientists, more than 20 of whom are Doctors of Science, has been established at the Azerbaijan Science Academy. The Institute of Archeology and Ethnography has organized more than 20 expeditions into different regions of Azerbaijan.



Special attention in recent years has been devoted to archeological explorations in accordance with accepted methodologies and approaches in the areas of new construction sites. From this point of view these studies, in the areas of water reser-



Gobustan cave paintings from the Paleolithic period.

voirs in Nakhichevan, Khudaferin, Shamkir, Yenikend, gas line constructions in such areas as Mozdok-Gasymammed and finally along the Western Pipeline, help to gain a better understanding of the ancient history of Azerbaijan.

Up to the present a significant number of archaeological sites have been discovered and studied. These studies allow us to re-create a general picture of how Azerbaijan people lived both in ancient times and during the medieval period.





#### Archelological sites by historical ages and cultures

##### Copper-Stone ages

□ Eneolit

##### Bronze age

● Kur-Araz culture (III millennium B.C.)

○ Middle Bronze age (first half of II millennium B.C.)

■ Nakhchivan culture (II millennium B.C.)

■ Khochalz-Gadabay culture (13-7 centuries B.C.)

■ Talysh-Mugan culture (14-7 centuries B.C.)

▲ Iron age (7-5 centuries B.C.)

■ Yaloylutapa culture (4 century B.C.-1 century A.D.)

● Burial mounds (3 century B.C.-2 century A.D.)

▲ Towns and other ancient ruins (3 century B.C.-2 century A.D.)

■ Early middle age antiques (3-8 centuries A.D.)

● Middle age antiques (9-15 century A.D.)



## Azerbaijan in the Stone Age

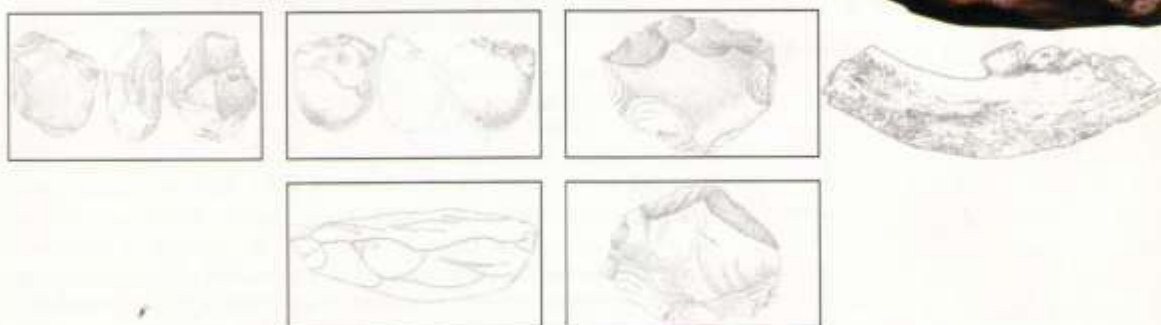
Since 1956 great success has been achieved by archaeologists, investigating the Paleolithic age.

Many archaeological sites of Paleolithic age have been discovered in the Minor Caucasus region, twenty-five of which are located on Azerbaijani Territory. These sites have enabled archaeologists to gain a good understanding of early man, as five sites belong to cave type dwellings and the others are in the open. The Azykh cave, discovered in 1960, is one of the most ancient multi-horizontal settlements of ancient man known in the world.

### Azykh Cave

Azykh cave is situated on the left bank of Kuruchay River more than 900 m above sea level. According to the late M. Hysseyinov, a specialist of the Paleolithic age: Pre-shell, Shell, Ashell and the first half of the Muster age. The evolution of stone industry is well presented here. Tooth-like weapons found in the area provide evidence of ancient man. Cutting weapons from the middle muster age were also discovered and specialists have defined this as the "Kuruchay culture."

The Azykh Cave is noteworthy also for its paleo-anthropological finds. Fragments from the lower jaw of fossil man were discovered in layer VI. The jaw of "Azykhanthropus" in terms of its mass, morphological and other signs is placed in the transition stage between Sin-anthropus (Peking Man) and early Paleo-anthropus (fossil man). The materials discovered in Azykh make it possible to study individual problems in paleology from the epoch of pebble culture to the "muster" culture inclusive, and to reconstruct a general picture of primitive man's natural environment.



Stone tools & lower jaw of Azikhantrop (Paleolithic man).

### The Taglar Cave

The Taglar Cave is of great importance in the study of this latter period. Materials from this cave are well depicted in scientific literature. The Taglar cave site is a unique monument of the "muster" epoch, whose cultural deposits reach to 7 meters. The very rich materials of Taglar make it possible to discover local features in the development of the "muster" culture and to trace the stages of its evolution.



### The Gazma Cave

Paleolithic monuments have also been explored in the Gazma cave in the Sharur region of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic. A great number of materials from the "muster" period have been discovered in the Gazma cave. On the whole,



Paleolithic period stone tools.

the exploration of Azerbaijan's monuments make it possible to say that people in the former USSR appeared in Ashell age, earlier than was originally supposed.

### Mesolithic Monuments in Azerbaijan

During the last few years, unique Mesolithic monuments have been discovered in the Gobustan region where a great collection of tool artifacts have been obtained.

Among Mesolithic monuments, the "Firuz" site occupies a special place. During excavations here, a burial site was discovered belonging to the end of the Mesolithic era. Ten adults and one child were interred in this burial site. Alongside the skeletons, several tool artifacts and ornaments made from bone, rock and shells were discovered. A group of cliff paintings belongs to the Mesolithic era.



### Neolithic culture in Azerbaijan

The Neolithic culture in Azerbaijan arises from the Late Paleolithic and Mesolithic cultures. Neolithic monuments have been discovered in the Khanlar and Shamkhor regions Kilikdag and Kurgan from the village of Gelitsino, at burial mounds 119 and 125 in the city of Khankend, in groups of cliff paintings in Gobustan and individual finds in Mingechaur. Among these monuments, the upper layer of the "Firuz" site has been fairly well studied. The Neolithic layer of the "Firuz" site contains small flint tips, knife points, semicircular blades, and fine, trapezoidal-shaped flakes.

The aggregation of these materials led scientists to conclude that agriculture and cattle breeding had already been developed in Azerbaijan in the Late Neolithic epoch.

### The Invention of Metal: The Copper & Bronze Ages

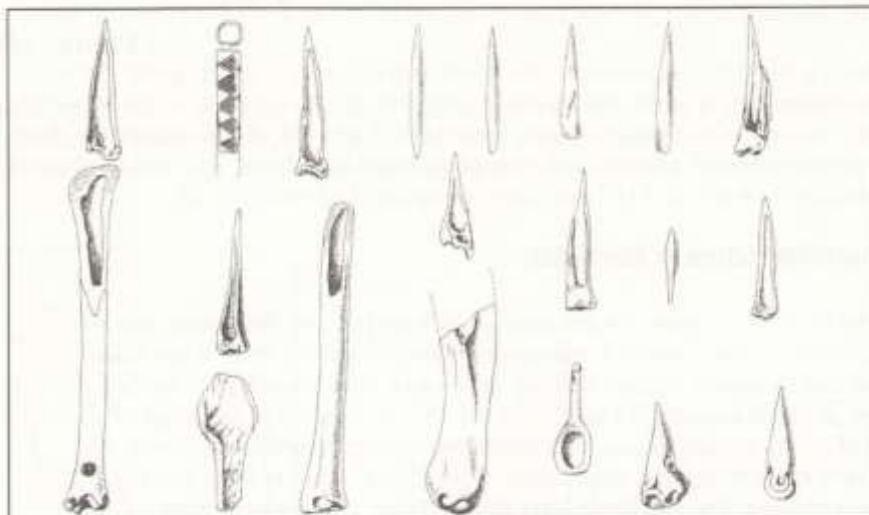
As an independent branch of the economy, agriculture and cattle breeding developed primarily in the Eneolithic period. The study of the Eneolithic period proper in Azerbaijan began with the digs of the village of Kyultep I near Nakhichevan. The digs of Kyultep I established that in 5,000-4,000 B.C. in the Transcaucasus there was an ancient agricultural settled culture, caught up in a kind of proto-Asian "Neolithic revolution." This is confirmed by the exploration of such important Eneolithic monuments as Ilanitepe and Chalagantepe in the Mil-Garabakh zone, Alikemakhtepe in Mugani, Toyretepe and Shomutape in the Gyandja-Kazakh zone, and many others. Archeological finds discovered during Mesolithic period stone tools · Neolithic period pottery







the excavation of these monuments show that the transition from the appropriation of nature's bounty to production process - that is, the Neolithic revolution - took place in Azerbaijan long before the development of the Kura-Araks culture. Favorable natural and geographic conditions resulted in Azerbaijan's ancient farmers settling primarily in the plains, where the early "hill dwelling" farming settlements emerged.



### Shomutepe

Shomutepe holds a special place among the Eneolithic monuments of Azerbaijan. Digs in 1961-1964 established that Shomutepe has a number of characteristic features. As a hill-shaped settlement, the dwelling structures in Shomutepe, for the most part, are built of flat bricks and lie in a circular plane. The floor and walls of the dwellings are covered in clay. The tribes that lived in Shomutepe were engaged mainly in farming and cattle breeding. They grew hard and soft wheat, two-serial and multi-serial barley, and bred cattle. The inhabitants of Shomutepe were also engaged in cottage industries, including the manufacture of stone and bone weapons, pottery, weaving, etc.

As for burial monuments, it should be noted that in the opinion of a well-known scientist of the Caucasus, professor R. M. Munchayev, in 5000-4000 B.C., in the Transcaucasus and in Dagestan, the custom of burying kinsmen in the settlement was practised. This custom, fairly commonplace and practised by a wide range of ancient settled farming tribes, is associated with ancestor worship and with the entire system of ideology of early farmers in the Old World.

Neolithic period pottery and early Bronze Age bone tools

## Kura-Araks Culture in Azerbaijan

Archeologists were extremely successful in their study of monuments of the Kura-Araks Early Bronze culture, whose range embraces virtually the entire Transcaucasus.

The most studied monuments of this culture are Kyultepe I (layer 2) Nakhichevan, Babadervish (upper layer in Gazakh), the Mingechaur complex, Garakopektepe, Guneshtepe in Garabakh area, and others.

There are more than sixty recorded monuments of the Kura-Araks culture in Azerbaijan. A significant number of these monuments appear as multi-layer hills in river basins - plots favorable for agriculture and cattle breeding. In the opinion of specialists, many of the hills served as the home of individual ancestral family clans. The assimilation of mountainous regions began in the Early Bronze Age. Some Early Bronze Age settlements had fortifications.

### Early Bronze Age

The most common type of dwelling of this period is a round home on a stone foundation. But in the Early Bronze Age, rectangular dwellings were also common. An analysis of archeological materials discovered during the excavation of Early Bronze Age settlements shows that the overall progress in the domestic and cultural life of local tribes during the period in which bronze was assimilated resulted in farming becoming the leading form of economic life. This was a basic prerequisite for the formation of a new and rather sophisticated settled agricultural culture on this territory. Agriculture in the Early Bronze Age was diversified. Researchers suggest that the farmers of the Early Bronze Age even employed artificial irrigation.



Bronze Age pottery





In local tribal economies, second in importance was livestock breeding, in which cattle-breeding played a dominant role. Sheep and goat breeding was also important. It was during this period that the use of cattle as draught animals began. The development of wheeled transport dates to this period, also characterized by a sharp increase in goat and sheep breeding. Together with agriculture and livestock breeding, metalworking became widely developed.

In the 3rd millennium B.C. in Azerbaijan, as throughout the Transcaucasus, the entire cycle of metallurgical production was mastered, from the extraction of copper ore to the manufacture of various tools, weapons, and ornaments made of copper-arsenic bronze. In the Early Bronze Age, pottery-making reached an advanced level.

Among the tribes which settled on the territory of Azerbaijan in the Early Bronze Age, ancestor worship took strong hold. Great collections discovered in numerous burial monuments testify to this. Burial sites can be found in mounds, earthen graves, crude structures and stone chests.

### **Middle Bronze Age Culture**

Azerbaijani archeologists were extremely successful in their exploration of the monuments of Middle Bronze Age culture - a period representing a distinct stage in the ancient history of the Azerbaijani people.

Investigations of monuments of the Middle Bronze Age had begun already by the end of the last century. In 1896, scientists discovered the Kizilvani monument (close to Nakhichevan), and in 1901, a number of monuments dating to the Middle Bronze Age were discovered by the Morgan brothers in the Lerik zone near the village of Khovil.

In 1926, an expedition of the Society for the Exploration and Study of Azerbaijan re-



Bronze Age metal tools and pottery



corded a number of monuments in the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic. These monuments were located primarily in the Arpechay, Alindzhachay and Nakhichevan-chay River valleys. In subsequent years, expeditions of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Azerbaijan Republic explored Kyultepe I and II, Uzerliktepe, Garakepektepe, Gyunashtpe, Shortpe, Nakhadzhir, Dzhavarkhanli, Misharchay I, the Borsunlu burial mound and many other monuments, making possible a study of the history of society during this period.

As for burial monuments of the Middle Bronze Age, they primarily consist of earthen and stone chests and mounds.

The main types of economic activity during the Middle Bronze Age were farming, livestock breeding, mining, and so on. The excavation of monuments revealed many artifacts which allow us to describe the degree of development of these economies.

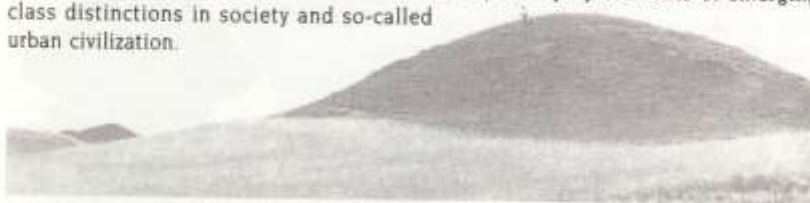
If in the Early Bronze Age in Azerbaijan, the Kura-Arak culture is distinctive with its local features, then in the Middle Bronze Age, the archeology of Azerbaijan is characterized mainly by monuments of the Nakhchivan culture.

The most characteristic feature of this culture is ceramic artifacts. Monochrome and polychrome ceramic fragments are encountered here in great quantities, among which the so-called "teapots" occupy a special place.

In 2,000 B.C., plough-farming was dominant in Azerbaijan. Based on archeological finds, researchers have come to the conclusion that during the Middle Bronze Age, sheep breeding was especially well developed.

Archeologists obtained important results in studies of the social structure of the Middle Bronze Age. It has been determined that marked property differentiation was a feature of the population. This can be observed in the systems of fortifications found in the different settlements, in the internal planning of the settlements, and in the burial records of this era.

As a result, a number of monuments in Azerbaijan display elements of emerging class distinctions in society and so-called urban civilization.



Bronze Age burial hill, and vessels belonging to the Nakhchivan culture.





During the Middle Bronze Age, communications developed between the tribes of Azerbaijan and the Near and Middle East. Numerous materials illustrate this point.

### Azerbaijan in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages



Many settlements of the Late Bronze Age had systems of defense. Defenses made of large stone blocks were studied in the fortresses of Chalkhankala, in the Dzhakhrichay River basin, and on the territory of the Kyultepe II, Vayjkhir, Gyavurkala, and other monuments. The layouts of the settlements are quite diverse, depending on the terrain.



A major shift in the economy and social structure may be observed in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age. The exploration of monuments of this period also began in the last century. For the purpose of enriching museum and private collections, many Russian and foreign explorers, conducted excavations of numerous burial sites rich in artifacts. But none of these explorers attached the proper significance to the exploration of the settlements. Many different types of archeological monuments from an extensive geographic range are now being explored by Azerbaijani archeologists. Archeological monuments have been explored in the Mil-Mugan steppe, in the Garabakh, Gyandzha-Kazakh and Kuba-Khachmas zones, and in Apsheron. Among them, of special interest are the multilayer monuments of Mingechaur, the monuments of the Khodzhalı-Kedebek culture, the cliff paintings of Gobustan and Apsheron, the cyclopean structures of Minor Caucasus and many others.



Pottery and bronze decorations from the Bronze Age



Bronze Age pottery

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## Cyclopean structures



Cyclopean structures, made of huge, uncut stones, joined together without mortar, were erected on mountain peaks or at the very top of structures. Cyclopean structures have no distinct planning, more often depending on the relief of the terrain where they were erected. They almost always form a closed circle with one or two entrances.

In recent years, cyclopean structures have been explored thoroughly in the zone of Kadabek region. Exploration has shown that these structures were either cattle-sheds or settlements or even fortresses. During the excavation of these structures, domestic artifacts, tools, and weapons were discovered. Dwellings were also found. The exploration of cyclopean structures in the zone of Kedabek date primarily to 1100-1200 B.C.

During the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age, various types of settlements arose in the territory of Azerbaijan. Settlements are encountered with a burial culture layer characteristic of a settled life in which the dominant role belonged to farming. Settlements of this kind are Khanlar I, the layer two settlement I in Mingechaur, the settlements close to Kizilvanka, Galdjik and Karabaglar in Nakhichevan, Saritepe in the Gazakh region and others.

Other settlements are characteristic of inhabitants engaged in cattle breeding. Uchtepe in the Mil Steppe is a prime example of this category.

A number of settlements of this period have stone fences and earthen walls. Dwellings in these settlements consisted of above-ground complexes or partially dugout dwellings. For the most part, they were rectangular in construction. The structural material was quite varied. Walls generally were of uncut stone or cobblestone, but the most common were of clay mixed with straw. In Mingechaur, archaeologists discovered walls of reed and twigs in a clay base. Every dwelling had some type of mandatory hearth and household pits.



Antique pottery & metal tools

## Burial monuments

The burial monuments of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age are of great scientific interest and appear mainly in the form of various types of mounds, stone chests and earthen graves.

Based on the exploration of different types of burial structures and burial sites, and also by analyzing the burial ritual, archeologists have identified two archeological cultures of this era. The first and most common is the Khodjali-Kedabek archeological culture, characteristic of the entire Central and Eastern Caucasus. Monuments of this culture date back to 1400-700 B.C. Characteristic monuments of this culture are mounds with earth and rock embankments, stone chests, cromlechs, dolmens and cyclopean structures.

A common burial ritual is to position the body on its side, less frequently in a stretched out or sleeping position. Together with these rituals, the rite of cremation is encountered. Both single and group burial sites have been found.

There is a great deal of diversity among the graves found here. Generally, they are composed of bronze, iron and stone artifacts, and also various ceramic artifacts.

Among the bronze artifacts, the most common are broad-bladed long swords, flat axes, poleaxes, knives, double-bladed pitchforks, and spears. Various ornaments of rock, bronze, bone etc., are encountered. The name of the Assyrian Tsar Adadnirar is inscribed on one of the beads found in Khodjali.



In layers belonging to the latter stage of this culture, iron artifacts consisting of blade tips, daggers, etc., have also been discovered.

The ceramic artifacts of the Khodjali-Kedabek culture show great diversity. They are represented by black, dark-grey, and less often red-clay bowls, pitchers, churns, pottery cups, etc. In many cases, ceramic artifacts of this culture display elaborate gorgeous ornamentation. Engraved lines were used to depict scenes of the hunt, solar signs, and figures of men and animals. The lines are inlaid with a white paste.

Monuments from the Khodjali-Kedabek culture are divided into three local groups, the Garabakh, Gyandja and Kedabek, each with its own distinctive features. The tribes of the Khodjali-Kedabek engaged in farming and cattle breeding. Metallurgy was also highly developed.

In the study of the economy and everyday life of Azerbaijan during the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age, monuments of the Talysh-Mugan archeological culture are of



particular significance. This culture was established primarily in the mountainous regions of Talish and on the southern Mugan steppe using burial monuments as their base.

Burial monuments here are represented by stone chests and earthen graves. Characteristic artifacts of this culture are narrow-bladed swords, various types of daggers, axes, spear tips, black-gloss ceramics, and ornamental artifacts.

In the mountainous regions, the primary economic activity was cattle breeding and in the plains, farming. Handicrafts were also highly developed.

However, the lack of in-depth study of this culture has prevented the discovery of the specific economic activities of this region during this period.

A comprehensive analysis of the monuments discovered makes it possible to conclude that during this period, major changes took place in farming, cattle breeding, metal working and in many other types of activities. The same may be said of the social structure.

The tribes of Azerbaijan carried out close cultural and economic cooperation with the leading countries of Asia. Artifacts discovered in Assyria, Iran, Egypt, Palestine, and other countries testify to this. Azerbaijan, in turn, exported copper, various semiprecious stones, and agricultural products (especially wool).

Items discovered at various burial sites play a large role in characterizing the socioeconomic and cultural position of the country during the first half of the first millennium B.C.. Having explored monuments of material culture of the Transcaucasus, scientists came to the conclusion that "this period is known to be a transition period. Characteristic of this period is the appearance in the Transcaucasus of new ethnic elements, the breakdown of a certain stability of life that was inherent in the preceding epoch, the forming of new associations and alliances." All these changes are rightly associated with the onset of the Scythes and the influence of the Akhemenids. Together with local materials, a great quantity of artifacts of Scythian origin is encountered in the monuments of Azerbaijan dating to 700-600 B.C. For the most part, these artifacts consist of weapons, equine tack with various ornamental motifs and, assorted ornaments on which various subjects are encountered.

### Azerbaijan in the Antique Age

The major event in the second half of the first millennium B.C. is the formation, beginning at the end of the 4th century B.C., of the state of Albania on a significant portion of the territory of Azerbaijan and Southern Dagestan. With the excep-

A natural monument & a top part of a stone monument.



tion of certain burial structures Nidj village of the Khanlar zone and in the vicinity of the Nukha province, the systematic study of Albania's monuments of material culture began in the 1920s. In 1926 digs were conducted at Kabala, the ancient capital of Albania, and in the area of Yaloylutepe.

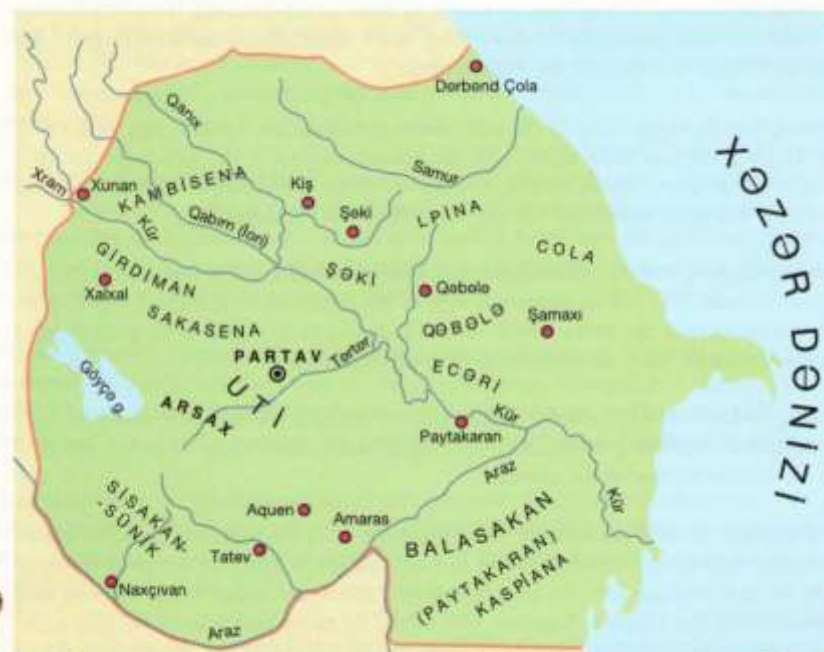
Beginning in 1927 funeral pitchers were studied in different regions of Azerbaijan. Of great significance is the research in 1937 near Djafarakh grave-site, Sabirabad region. Monuments of Caucasian Albania in the Alazan valley were explored as well.

The discovered materials allow us to determine the important role of Caucasian Albania in the socioeconomic and cultural history of all the Caucasus.

The first to report on Albania was the historian Arrian regarding the events of the 4th century B.C. Beginning with the 1st century, when discussing the Caucasus, classical authors have always touched on the history of Albania.



### Caucasus Albany



- Capital
- Towns
- Albanian Border
- REGION
- PROVINCE



Stone statue and clay vessel from the antique period.

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## Social Structure

The social structure and economy of Albania in the classical period were quite unique. At the time, there was patriarchal slavery, but beginning in the 3rd century B.C., primarily on the basis of agricultural communities and patriarchal societies, feudal relations began to develop gradually.

## Agriculture

As throughout the Transcaucasus and in Albania, production for the most part developed along the lines of agriculture and handicrafts. Archeological materials and the reports of ancient writers permit us to understand the degree of development of these sectors of the economy.

During digs in Mingechaur and other regions of the Kura-Araks plain, farming tools were discovered, including iron hoes and sickles, and fragments of grain, barley, and millet.

Strabon describes a wooden plow used by the Albanians

During archeological explorations at a number of sites, irrigation installations were discovered belonging to this period. Such installations were common in the Mil and Mugan steppe and the Shamkir zone.

During digs in Mingechaur in the settlement of Sudagelan, earthen pits were found in which grain had been stored. At the bottom of one of the pits were decayed fragments of grain: wheat, millet, and barley. From the ceramics and coins found there, it was determined that the pit dated from I-III centuries B.C.

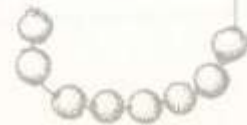
Among ancient writers, information has been preserved about horticulture in ancient Albania: "The entire country is rich in fruits, gardens (orchards), trees, evergreens (plants); it produces olives." In 1957, during excavations in an ancient town in the Garabakh zone, an oil-making shop was discovered.

Owing to favorable geographic conditions in Albania, animal husbandry became widespread. According to Strabon, Albanians "were drawn more to a pastoral type of life similar to that of the nomad."

If they were "similar" to nomads, then that type of cattle-breeding could be called pastoral. Interesting information on this occupation is given by Ellian in his work "On Animal Husbandry." He points out that there are many herds of oxen and horses along the Caspian. Together with cattle, he notes that goats were also herded, "very white, hornless, small and blunt-nosed." According to Ellian, camels, of

Antique period decorative artifacts, zoomorological pottery and stone column base.

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which there were many in the Caspian, were of particular importance as their wool was remarkable for its "great softness, such that it was as good as fine wool... Priests wear clothing made from it... The wealthiest and propertied valued this wool very highly."

Archeological digs uncovered osteological fragments, which help us to imagine the stage of development of animal husbandry in Caucasian Albania. In burial mounds and catacombs belonging to the first centuries A.D., bones of goats, sheep, pigs and cows have been discovered.

In many burial sites in Azerbaijan, bones of horses have been discovered. Such fragments have been found in various graves in Garabakh, famous for its horses even today.

### Industry

Alongside agriculture in Albania, various cottage industries also developed. There are a number of archeological finds that allow us to identify the trades that occupied a dominant place in the life of the city dwellers. Metalworking also was highly developed in early antiquity. According to opinion of the scientists, Albanians have been engaged in mining copper, gold, iron, and other materials since ancient times.

Another important occupation was stonemasonry. During digs at a number of ancient monuments, various stone seals made of agate, chalcedony, jasper and others minerals were discovered that had been mined from deposits in Minor Caucasus. This testifies not only to involvement in stone-cutting but also indicates the ability to extract stones and process them locally.

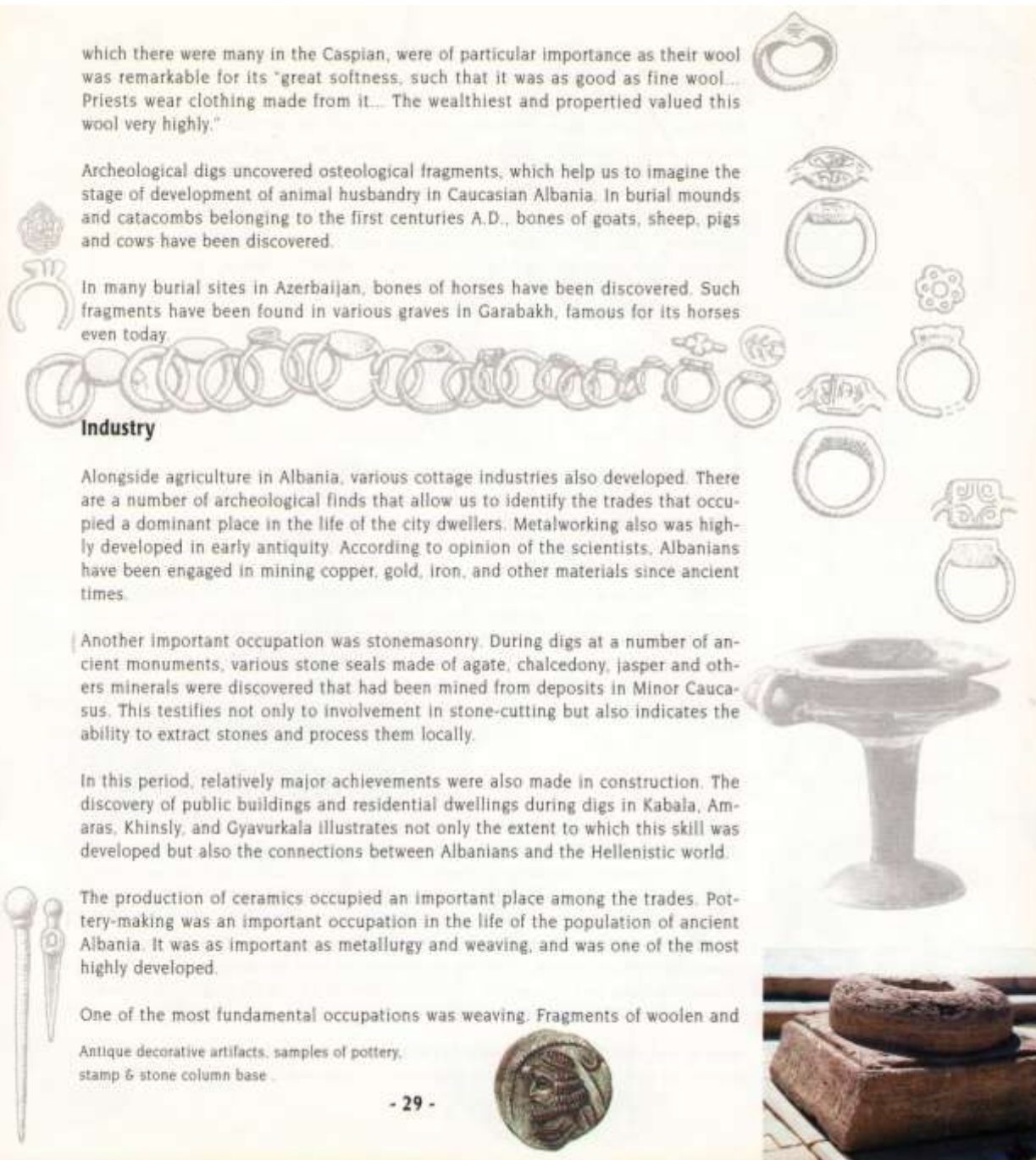
In this period, relatively major achievements were also made in construction. The discovery of public buildings and residential dwellings during digs in Kabala, Amaras, Khinsly, and Gyavurkala illustrates not only the extent to which this skill was developed but also the connections between Albanians and the Hellenistic world.

The production of ceramics occupied an important place among the trades. Pottery-making was an important occupation in the life of the population of ancient Albania. It was as important as metallurgy and weaving, and was one of the most highly developed.

One of the most fundamental occupations was weaving. Fragments of woolen and

Antique decorative artifacts, samples of pottery, stamp & stone column base.

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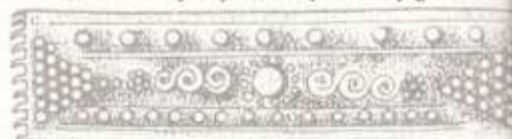


linen fabrics were discovered, which in the opinion of researchers were of local origin, together with numerous weaving tools.

Archeological excavations have also brought to light the fact that other handicrafts such as jewelry making, tanning, dying and others were also highly developed. V. N. Deviatov was correct in noting that the abundance of archeological materials indicates that cottage industries were distinct from farming and that there was a rather significant differentiation among the industries themselves. It must be pointed out that if in the villages handicrafts were not clearly distinct from agriculture and constituted an auxiliary occupation for peasants, then in the towns, handicrafts were the primary occupation of city artisans. Here, specialization in production quickly developed and assumed the nature of a commodity.



In examining the social structure of Albania in this period, K. V. Trever advances the proposition that in Albania there were several structures. "Together with clan tribe-relationships, with a primitive communal structure, there may have been slave owner structure (on the lands of the Tsar and nobility this could also exist in the cities, where prisoners of war also found themselves). In some parts of the country, a feudal structure also may have existed, arising due to the breakup of the primitive communal structure, when the agricultural community began to fall apart, when the number of major landowners began to increase, and when commune members, maintaining their small landholding together with the slaves settling on the land (where there were slaves), a feudally-dependent peasantry gradually took shape."



The existence simultaneously of different social structures in Albania is a very possible phenomenon. It was helped by the unique natural conditions that caused the country's economy to develop in zones. To this one must add that Albanian society was formed from a number of tribal alliances, each at a different level of socioeconomic development, which had a great effect on the further economic and cultural development of the country. That is apparently why the pre-Christian creeds of the Albanians were so diverse. "Here we encounter not only the traces of the influence of interbreeding and syncretism but also elements of the ideologies of different stages in their historical development."

Metal earring, rings, necklaces, bracelets, part of belt and water pipe found in Nakhchivan. These are from the early Middle Ages. A statue supposedly the image of Albania leader Dghavanshir.



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## Worship

The Albanians worshipped nature and its different phenomena: lightning, the heavenly lights (sun, moon and stars), the maidens who raised storms and blizzards, and all that was majestic and inaccessible in nature: the high gloomy cliff, the tall mighty oak, and the impregnable summits of mountains were defied by the Albanians. In order to win their favor, in order to soften their anger which might cause various calamities, in order to show their gratitude for punishment meted out to their enemies and in order to win over their good will, Albanians made sacrifices to them.

According to Strabon, there were tribes living in Caucasian Albania speaking 21 different languages. He reports that initially, every tribe had its own ruler but that at the dawn of our era "one ruled over all." Thus, in Strabon's period, different ethnic groups lived in Albania and they differed not only in their ethnic appearance but also in their socioeconomic position.

This was the cause of different religious creeds in Albania. Apparently, each tribe living in isolation from one another had its own religion distinct from that of its neighbors.

## Burial Rituals

The main sources for the study of pre-Christian Albanian ideology are funeral monuments and the burial ritual. In pre-Christian Albania, the following types of funeral monuments existed:

1. earthen graves
2. burial in pits
3. burial in clay sarcophagi
4. burial in mounds
5. burial in non-burnt clay mounds
6. burial in wooden shells
7. burial in catacombs
8. burial in stone chests



It should be noted that of these rituals, mounds, stone chests, natural and catacomb burial are thought to have existed in Albania during the Christian period as well.

Earthen burials are the most common and oldest type of burial structures in Albania. They have been well studied in almost every area in Albania and Southern Dagestan. In terms of construction, earthen pits have rectangular and oval shapes. The depth of the funeral pits varies, from 0.5 meters to 2.5 meters. The skeleton lies in the

Examples of urn burials.







burial pit in a posed position. The orientation of the skeleton also varies. In this regard, the observation of archaeologist O. S. Ismizade is interesting. In his opinion, the ritual of earthen burial called for women to be buried on their right side, with their head facing west and their legs facing east. Men were buried on their left side with their head facing southeast and their legs facing northwest. In all cases, the face of the buried was turned so that it could receive the most light from the sun.

In the opinion of researchers, those buried in earthen tombs worshipped the sun and paid homage to fire. This opinion is based on a very important ritual that is a feature of earthen burial.

Occasionally in graves at Kabala, Yaloylutepe, Mingechaur, Shemakha, Torpakala, Nyudi, etc., pieces of coal are encountered (and sometimes, an entire fire), and in isolated instances, red dye (from Kabala), which might be considered a material representation of the symbol for fire.

In general, sun worship and homage to fire were the most basic elements of the pre-Christian cults of Albania, and some regions, existed as relics in the Christian period as well.



Gobustan cave paintings.

Examples of urn burials.



On the south slope of Great Caucasus, pit burial existed side by side with in-ground burial. These have been studied thoroughly in the Shirvan area in the region of the city of Shemakha.

In appearance, burial pits are virtually indistinct from household pits. The main differences observed are only size. The depth of the pit ranges from 1 meter to 5 meters. The diameter of the bottom is from 0.8 to 2.2 meters and the upper diameter is comparatively narrow. The skeleton in the pit is almost always posed, on the right or left side. The orientation of the body varies. According to the observations of researchers, one of the characteristic features of pit burial is the mandatory presence of a household urn or clay vessel of large diameter placed at the head of the body. In some cases, fragments of ceramic vessels are placed under the skeleton. This phenomenon is also characteristic of pit burial.

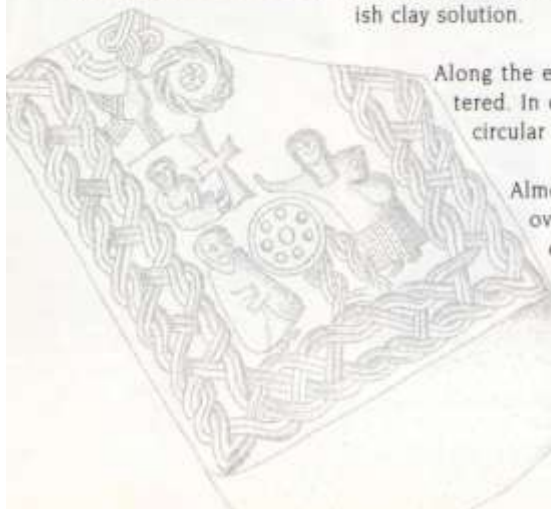


In many respects, the burial pit resembles an urn. Even the shape of the pit is very much like that of the urn intended for burial. The pits are usually oval. The upper edge is relatively narrow. Thus, the shape of the pit mirrors the shape of the large urn placed at the head of the deceased.

Finally, the materials for these two types of burials are almost identical. As for the positioning of the skeleton in the pit or in the urns, no differences are noted. This similarity raises the question as to whether pit burial is a variation of burial in urns or vice-versa. This merits special study, in our opinion. Nonetheless, it can be said that both these burial rituals are associated with ancestor magic.

In the Girdimanchai area and in the vicinity of the town of Kabala, and also in the area of the Mingechaur hydro-system, in addition to the monuments mentioned above, there were also clay sarcophagi.

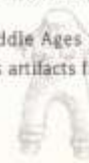
The majority of burial sarcophagi have a reddish tint and are made by hand out of clay mixed with sand. In a number of cases, their surface was painted with a whitish clay solution.



Along the edges of these sarcophagi, inset ornaments are often encountered. In certain cases, both in burial urns and in sarcophagi, we see a circular opening. Some of them had a vertical, loop-shaped handle.

Almost all sarcophagi consisted of two pieces. The main piece – an oval-shaped bath and a lid. Depending on the height of the deceased, sarcophagi might be rectangular with an arched roof. Sometimes the walls of the burial pits were made of cobblestone. The skeleton in the bath was laid on his left side in a posed position. Many small objects were usually placed

Stone statues from the Middle Ages found in Karabach. "Nishan-dash" or small clay religious artifacts from the antique period.







near the skeleton, ornaments or weapons, and around the sarcophagus there are clay vessels of various shapes. Large vessels are almost never encountered in these graves. This ritual continued to exist in some areas of Albania in the epoch of early feudalism.



Among burial monuments of pre-Christian Albania must be noted the existence of wooden shell burial sites, common in the Mingeçaur area. Wooden burial shells are in the form of log coffins made from a local species of tree (juniper). By the way, it must be noted that in the Bronze Age, juniper was the basic material in the cremation ritual in Azerbaijan. Today juniper is considered to be a holy tree.

Unlike other types of burial, the ritual of burial in wooden shells has several distinctive features.

First, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the deceased are buried in pairs in wooden shells, arranged face to face. Second, there is a common pattern in orientation. The heads of the deceased are arranged facing southeast. Third, in all cases the deceased are buried clothed. Considering these features and the distribution of the graves, it can be presumed that they belong to some kind of foreign population, subjected to assassination. In some areas, this ritual continued in Azerbaijan up to A.D. 600-700.



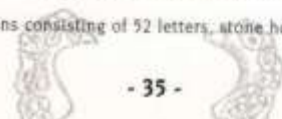
In the study of pre-Christian creeds of the Albanians, the many cult artifacts discovered in different monuments are of tremendous importance.

We will not analyze all these materials in depth, but would like to spend a few moments on a certain group of monuments from this category, most clearly expressing the pre-Christian ideology of the Albanians.

Among these, clay statuettes and ceramic artifacts stand out most distinctly. These monuments were distributed widely in the lower reaches of the Araks and in the area of Shirvan.

Clay figurines of women with their heads and extremities broken off represent a special typological form. For the most part they are distinguished by their plain, coarse form. Discovered in the village of Molla Isakla in the Ismaylin region, the

Stone with Albanian inscriptions consisting of 52 letters, stone holy statue, "nishandash" & antropomorphological clay bowl.



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9 cm female statuette is a typical example of this group. The Mingeaur red-clay statuette 20 cm tall and coincident with similar to the Ismaylin statuette is distinguishable by a certain distinctive feature. The major difference in the statuettes is the presence of adornment at the neckline with nine rows of beads. A belt and phallic symbols are noted, which connect this statuette with a fertility cult. In the opinion of scientists, this statuette had magical properties against evil spirits and the evil eye.

In terms of politics, this period is characterized by the fact that the peoples of the Transcaucasus continued to fight for their independence, entered into relations and clashes with the Roman emperors, with the Kings of Parthia and the tribes of the Northern Caucasus.

Intensive economic and cultural links developed between pre-Christian Albania and the countries of Asia Minor despite the clash between Rome and Parthia.



The 4th-5th century Chirag Fortress and the ruins of the famous fortress Beshbarmag.



### Caucasian Albania In Early Middle Ages

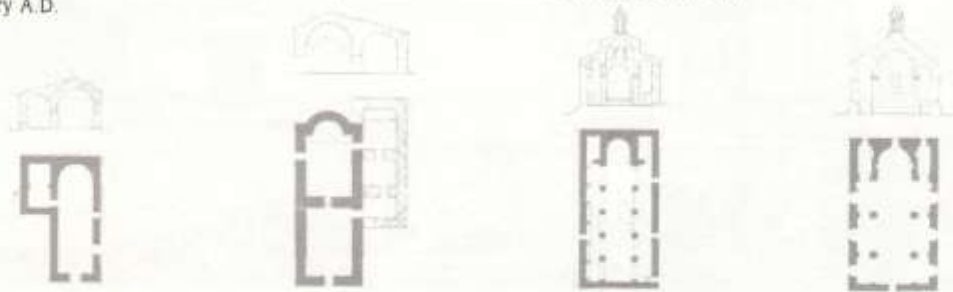
Beginning from the 3rd century, economical and ideological changes took place in Albania. From that period feudal relations developed on the basis of agricultural communities. In 320 Christianity became the state religion of the country, although the Christian ideology had been established in Albania since the late antique age.

With the spread of Christianity throughout Europe and in the Near East, new and very complex tasks faced the master architects. They had to create special structures distinguishable from previous religious buildings and conforming to the new Christian religious ritual. Monuments belonging to the early stage of Christianity vividly indicate that the new tasks before the master architects of Albania were not accomplished at once, because they could not immediately renounce ages-old traditions prevailing in the country. Therefore, the first Christian monuments were quite similar to earlier monuments and differed sharply from the subsequent church buildings in Albania.

In canonical terms, Albanian churches were built in the period of construction of Basilica-type churches. As for the simple rectangular and circular temples, they contain many pre-Christian elements contradicting the canonical demands of Christianity.

After a thorough analysis, based mainly on monuments that had been reliably dated, the conclusion can be drawn that the earliest types of church buildings in Albania were temples in the form of elongated church buildings. So far, six monuments of this category have been studied. Four of them were discovered in Mingechaur, one in the town of Gyavurkal, and one in the Khotavans Monastery compound.

Chronologically, the construction of these types of monuments dated to IV century A.D. and in parallel with other more complex church structures, continued into VIII century A.D.



Clay candle holder with Albanian inscription. Development stages of the Christian temples in Albania.





Christian temple Gausar.

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It is well known that the construction of church buildings often "depended on the generosity of donors" and, of course, on the economic ability and social position of those who bore the cost of the construction. Evidently, this was also one of the reasons for the lengthy existence of this type of simple, non-cupola structure in Albania.

With the strengthening of the economic power of the Church, church structures also were refined. From A.D. 500-600 in Albania, circular, 4-cupola temples dominate and later the most popular church structure is the triangular basilica.

During the period when Christian ideology was supreme, different types of chapels became widespread in Albania. Cave monasteries are also encountered.

During the early feudal epoch, among burial monuments of Caucasian Albania, the Christian burial ritual played the dominant role.

The following types of burial structures with Christian burial rituals are known:

1. earthen graves with wooden or earthen covers
2. wood or brick chests
3. wood sarcophagi
4. vaults built of stone or burnt brick.

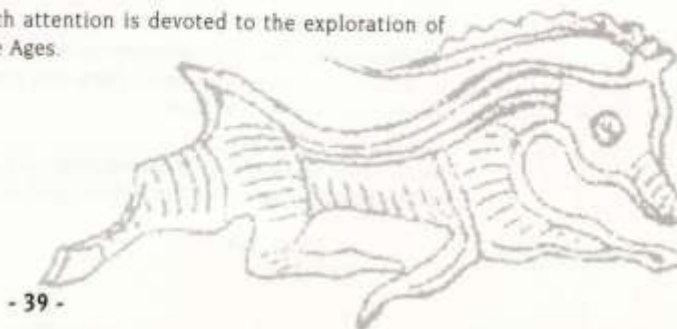
The presence of these varieties, in all likelihood, was associated with geographic conditions; that is, with the availability of building materials and with evolution in the formation of burial rituals and, finally, social status. This is confirmed by the fact that at one burial ground there are several different kinds of burial sites.

Burial structures not only differ from one another, they often differ in the arrangement of the skeletons. Present archeological materials do not yet allow us to identify the chronological sequence of individual types of burial structures, although this is very important. Nonetheless, it is well known that rock sarcophagi with the Christian burial ritual did not appear before A.D. 700-800. As for the other types of burial structures, they are encountered in parallel throughout nearly the entire period of existence of Christianity in Albania.

In the archeology of Azerbaijan, much attention is devoted to the exploration of ancient cities and those of the Middle Ages.



Circle-shaped temples and basilica.



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## Azerbaijan Cities in the Middle Ages

Ancient writers preserved the names of 29 cities and city-type settlements and thus, the names from the writings of Ptolemy.

But unfortunately, until now, the majority of locations of these cities are not determined, and generally speaking Albanian cities were founded mainly for four reasons.

Some cities were found on the basis of temple sites and were of religious character.

Other group of cities were based on magisterial trade road as a center of trade and art crafts.

There are cities, founded on military basis, i.e. cities-castles, and finally there are cities, founded as capitals for example Kabala and Barda.

Strabon mentions the names of two other cities in the Uti province. In his words, "...In Ut" the Aynianans built a city with walls that is named Ayniana, and there you can see Greek buildings and bronze vessels and tombs. And there is another city there, Anariaka, where, they say, you can see the dead come back to life."

The majority of cities and villages of that time have disappeared. Only three cities have been studied reasonably well: Kabala, a town situated on the territory of the present-day Kabala region, and Kemakhiya, a town located in the area of present-day Shemakha and Mingechaur on the Kura River.

In the first centuries A.D., new cities arose which immediately became major centers of commerce and trade. Among such cities are Paytakaran and Yunan in the Mil steppe, Barda on the banks of the Kura, Shirvan, near Shemakha, and Derbent (in the present-day Dagestan).

The significant growth of the economy and culture affected the planning and character of the cities and settlements. The widening property differentiation exacerbated the struggle between the "haves" and "have-nots." For this reason, the propertied classes tried to cut themselves off from the population at large and hid behind additional defensive walls. From this time, fortified cities and settlement are widely distributed in Albania.

Later, these cities and settlements take on a definite feudal appearance. Speaking about the appanage authority of the cities of Albania in the first centuries AD The

specific character of these Albanian cities in the first century AD is influenced, it must be noted that they whereby their usually being directly subordinate to tsars and their governors-generals, preserving their old pre-feudal organization based on self-government. Cities were for the most part populated with merchants and free artisans, but beginning in the 5th century A.D., due to the development and strengthening of feudal relations, the cities gradually lost their independence. The urban population in A.D. 500-800 was subordinate to the land-owners and dependent on them. Artisans worked in the private households of the feudal lords, in monastery shops and in churches.

### The City of Kabala

One of the early cities of Caucasian Albania was Kabala, the ruins of which now lie on the territory of the Kabala region. The archeological exploration of Kabala dates back to the 1920s and is still underway.

The ancient Greek writer Pliny the Elder (200 B.C.) calls Kabala "the country's ruling city."

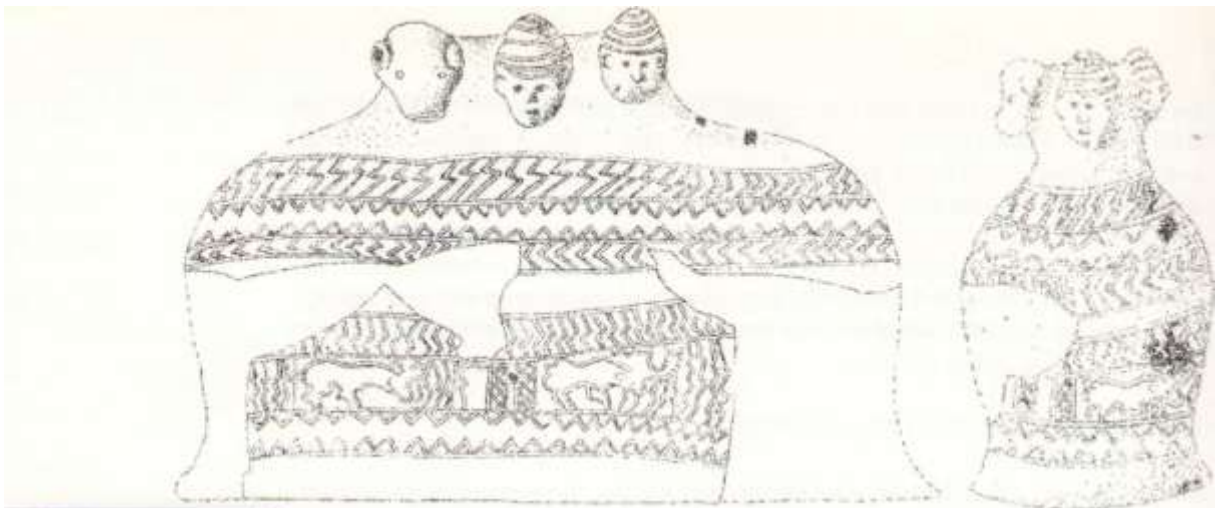
The nexus of Kabala were the settlements of Selbir, Kala, and Chakgally. If Selbir and Kala were surrounded by powerful fortress walls then the settlement of Chakgally was enclosed in earthen embankments.

### The Town of Baylakan

In the history of the archeology of Azerbaijan, materials from the town of Baylakan have tremendous significance. The ruins of this town are located in the present-day Baylakan region. According to information from historians, already in the 5th century A.D., Baylakan (Paytakaran) became a major mercantile and trade center in the Mil steppe. The city arose as a crossroads on the trade route from Iran to the north. Archeological work in the city dates back to the 1930s. But systematic exploration of the city began only in 1953 and was conducted by a joint expedition of the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Archeology, USSR Academy of Sciences, and the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan. Archeological work has shown that the city of Baylakan initially arose in what is now Tazakent, where settlements with a powerful cultural structure have been preserved. The residents of the city then moved to a settlement subsequently named Orenkala. After the conquest of the city by the Mongols, it lost its former importance.

In the Mil steppe, Baylakan was the only city where a significant number of artisans were concentrated. The 12th century writer Masul ibn Namdar reports that tin-smiths, stonemasons, potters, weavers, dyers, upholsterers, boot-makers, chemists,





barbers, bakers, butchers, vintners, cotton workers and other artisans lived in the city. Excavation has revealed a large quantity of tools demonstrating the existence of these types of artisans and professions in Baylakan.

### **The City of Barda**

One of the major administrative, economic and centers of cultural enlightenment in Azerbaijan was the city of Barda.

Situated on the crossroads of trade routes, Barda developed at a rapid pace and in V-VI centuries A.D. became a major city. Written sources claim that Barda arose in V century A.D., but archeological exploration shows that the city arose at an earlier period.

Archeological study of the city dates back to 1970. Archeological materials from Barda do not yet allow us to fully classify the cultural layers of the city.

### **The City of Shemakha**

In this respect, the exploration of the city of Shemakha, one of the oldest centers of culture and economics in Azerbaijan, is of great interest.

The oldest reference to Shemakha is first encountered in the writings of the Greek author Ptolemy, who calls the city "Kemakhia." Archeological work at the Khynysla site and in the present-day city have shown that Shemakha arose on the base of a major settlement dating to 1000 B.C. and was later transformed into a major city situated on the route from Barda to Derbent. In the middle of the century, Shemakha was famous for its different handicrafts and agricultural products. In written sources, Shemakha is especially renowned for its silks, carpet weaving, metal-working, etc. According to writ-

A clay cup in the shape of a human head found in Shemakha & copper coins found in Shabran.

ten sources, Shemakha's weaving was of great importance both in domestic and international transit trade. The great Azerbaijani poet Khagani of the 12th century A.D., comparing Shemakha to Bukhara, remarked that "the majesty of Shemakha overshadowed the majestic Bukhara."

### Nakhichevan

In the cultural, economic and political life of the country, Nakhichevan played a tremendous role. Nakhichevan is one of the most ancient cities of Azerbaijan. Back in the 2nd century A.D., Ptolemy calls it "Naksuana," the Sassanids call it "Nakhch," and the Arabs "Hashava." Later authors named the city "Nakhchvan," and so on. Exploratory archaeological excavation in 1969 revealed that the city arose on top of settlements dating to first millennium B.C. For this reason, the cities formed a cultural layer with rich inventories. Layers containing significant numbers of archaeological artifacts were discovered during these excavations.

Nakhichevan emerged as a link at the crossroads of trade routes between East and West. According to written sources, Nakhichevan was a major handicraft center, but along with artisans, the city was settled with farmers and cattle-breeders. Noting the social position of the artisans, sources report that the artisans of Nakhichevan "know their profession very well and as such live well." In present-day Nakhichevan, numerous architectural structures, masterpieces of the ancient East and illustrating the highest level of development of architecture as an art form, have been preserved. Nakhichevan has one of the largest mints in the East.

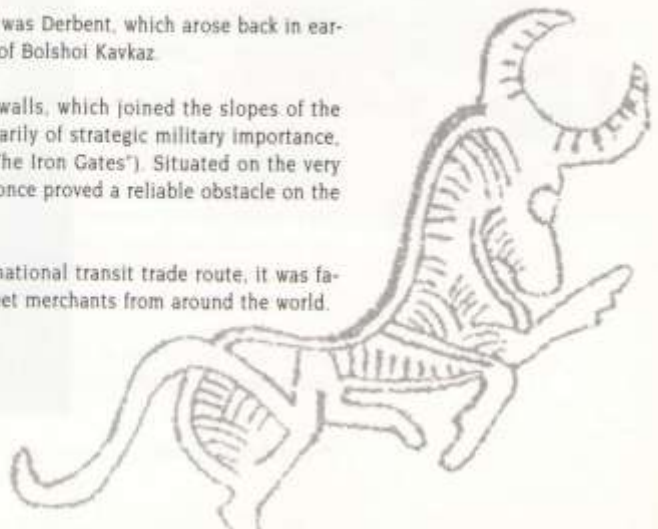
### Derbent

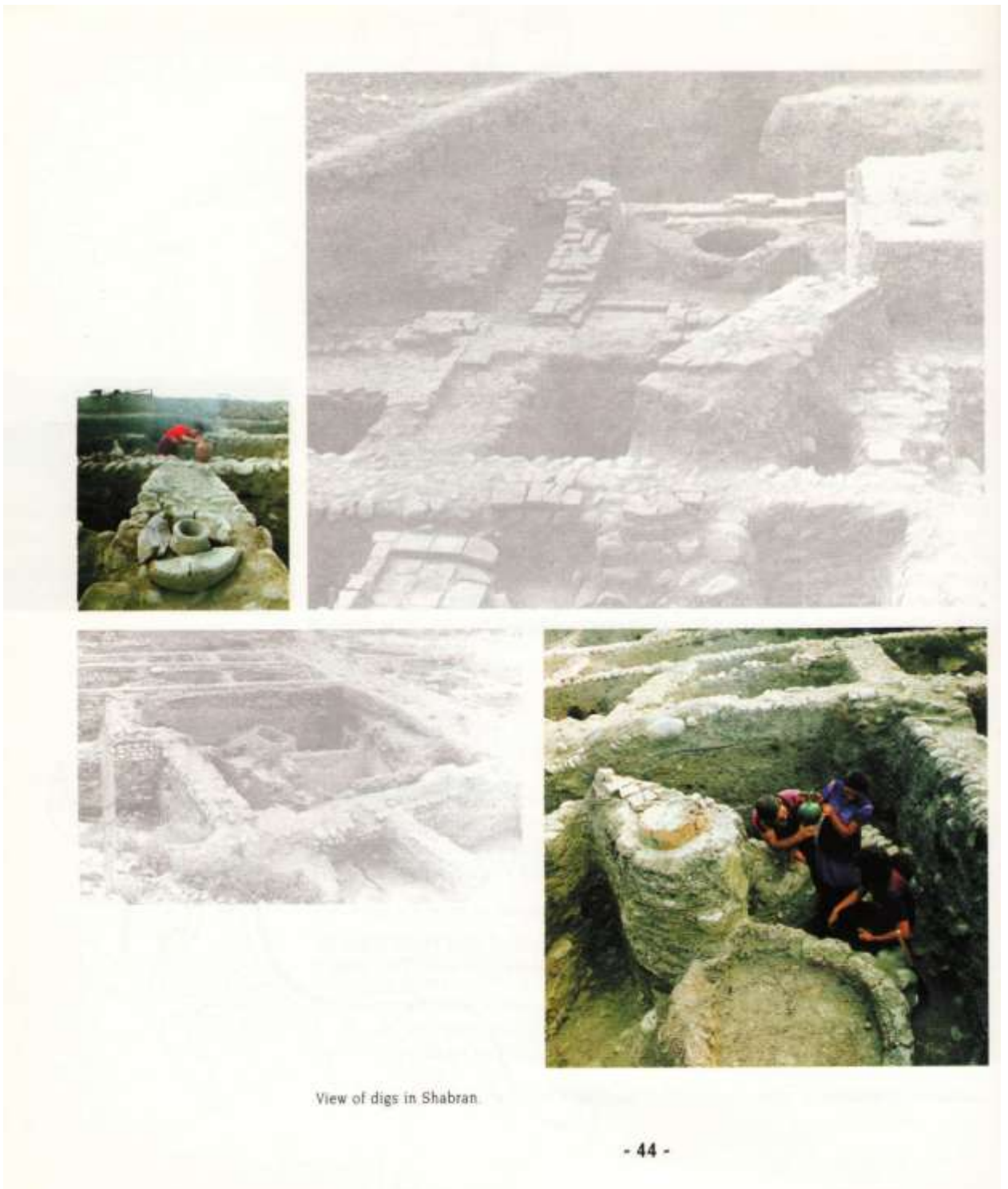
In northeast Azerbaijan, one of the largest cities was Derbent, which arose back in early antiquity as a major link on the eastern slope of Bolshoi Kavkaz.

Derbent was famous for its powerful defensive walls, which joined the slopes of the mountain to the Caspian Sea. Derbent was primarily of strategic military importance, and as such was called Bab-el-avbab (that is, "The Iron Gates"). Situated on the very border of Caucasian Albania, the city more than once proved a reliable obstacle on the path to raiding parties of northern nomads.

Since the city arose as a major link on the international transit trade route, it was famous for its bazaars, where it was possible to meet merchants from around the world.

View of digs in Shabran.





View of digs in Shabran



## Shabran

One relatively well-explored city in Azerbaijan is Shabran, which arose in the early days A.D. as a key point on the western shore of the Caspian Sea. Arab-speaking writers attribute the founding of the city to the Sassanid king Khosrov Anushirvan (531-579).

A number of scientists identify the city of Shabran with Ptolemeyev Shapotrann. Among Arab authors of Istakhra and Yakuta, it is reported that Shabran was a small, beautiful and fortified city with many masonry quarters. Al-Mukaddasi reports that Shabran does not have a fortress and is situated right on the border. Sources tell us that Shabran was famous for its linens and agricultural products. Black rock was mined here for testing gold purity. These reports are clearly confirmed by the archeological data.

Digs conducted at various sites around the city have established that Shabran, brimming with relics of material culture, occupies an area of approximately 40 ha. It consists of numerous cultural deposits reaching thickness of 5 meters.

Four building periods have been identified: the first (lower) bed reflects the early Middle Ages period, the second covers A.D. IX-XII centuries, the third is from 1200-1300, and the fourth, from A.D. 1400-1700.

During the excavations, an enormous amount of metal, ceramic, and glass remains of material culture was collected, allowing us to describe the life and times of the residents of Shabran.

One of the most well-developed handicrafts in Shabran was the production of glazed ceramics. Shabran craftsmen were skilled with clay, paints and glazing. All glazed artifacts bear the stamp of the master craftsmen. Based on this fact, there were 14 specialized shops operating in Shabran in 900-1100 AD. That Shabran produced glass was confirmed by the discovery of a fragment of glass bearing the inscription "Amali-Shabran" (made in Shabran).

Nearly all Arab sources maintain that Shabran was famous for its black rock (mekkhak), used for determining gold purity. The stones and jewelry found during excavations, including pendants of copper, bronze, silver and gold, vividly confirm the testimony of the written sources.

One of the most fundamental problems facing researchers in Azerbaijan is the study of services and utilities of Middle Ages cities. In Shabran, significant material shedding light on this question has been discovered.

Walls of feudal fortress in Shabran.



In the layer dated A.D. 1100-1200, a street made of stone was discovered. This street ran between large public buildings.

Remains of a water supply system have been discovered in different parts of the city. Sources say that water was delivered to the city via clay pipelines from springs located 14 km away.

A major discovery made by archeologists was the sewer system leading to the river. The sewer is a closed-type system and belongs to the 11th century AD. It is unique for Azerbaijan.

### **Gyandja**

One of the largest cities, arising on the base of an older city and later becoming a major center of culture and economic life, is Gyandja.

Nizami the Great, talking about Gyandja in XII c. in his poem "Treasure House of Secrets" writes:

"Gyandja - my Babylon - Kharuta has burned,  
Its soul, like Zuhra, has risen upward like a star."

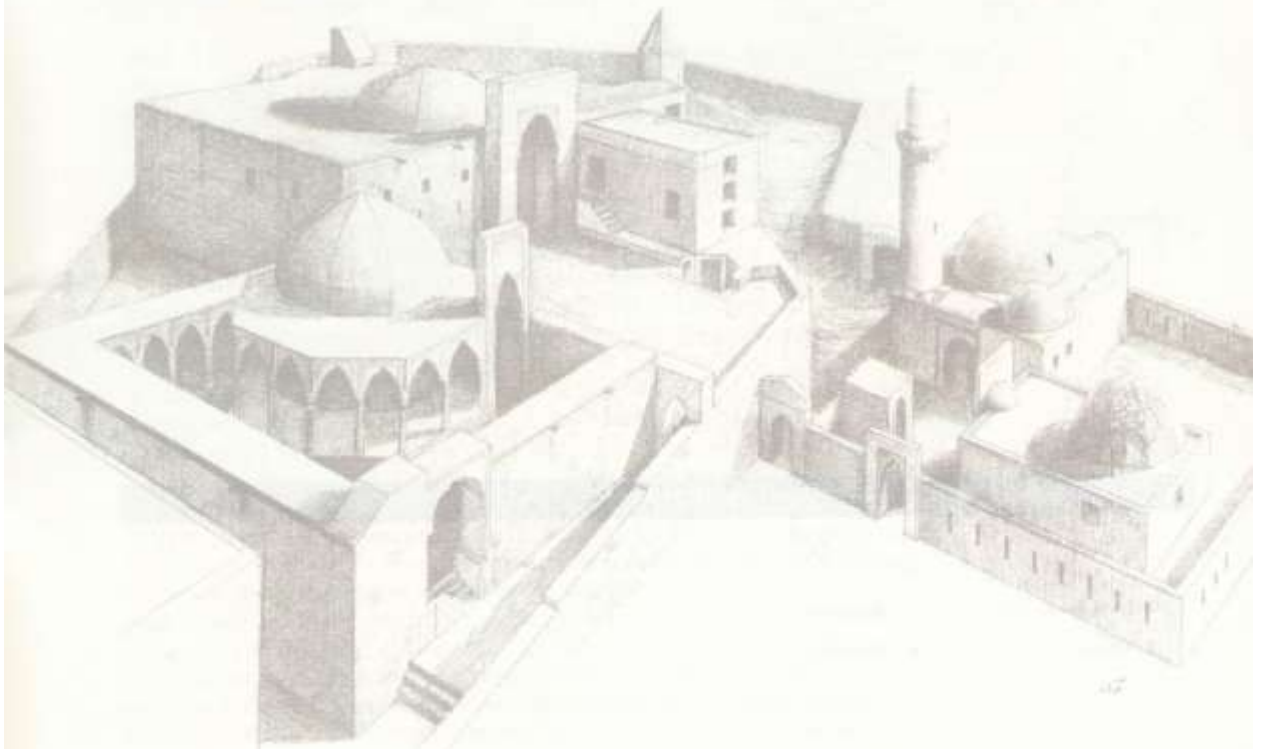


Stone sheep (15-16 centuries A.D.).

## Baku

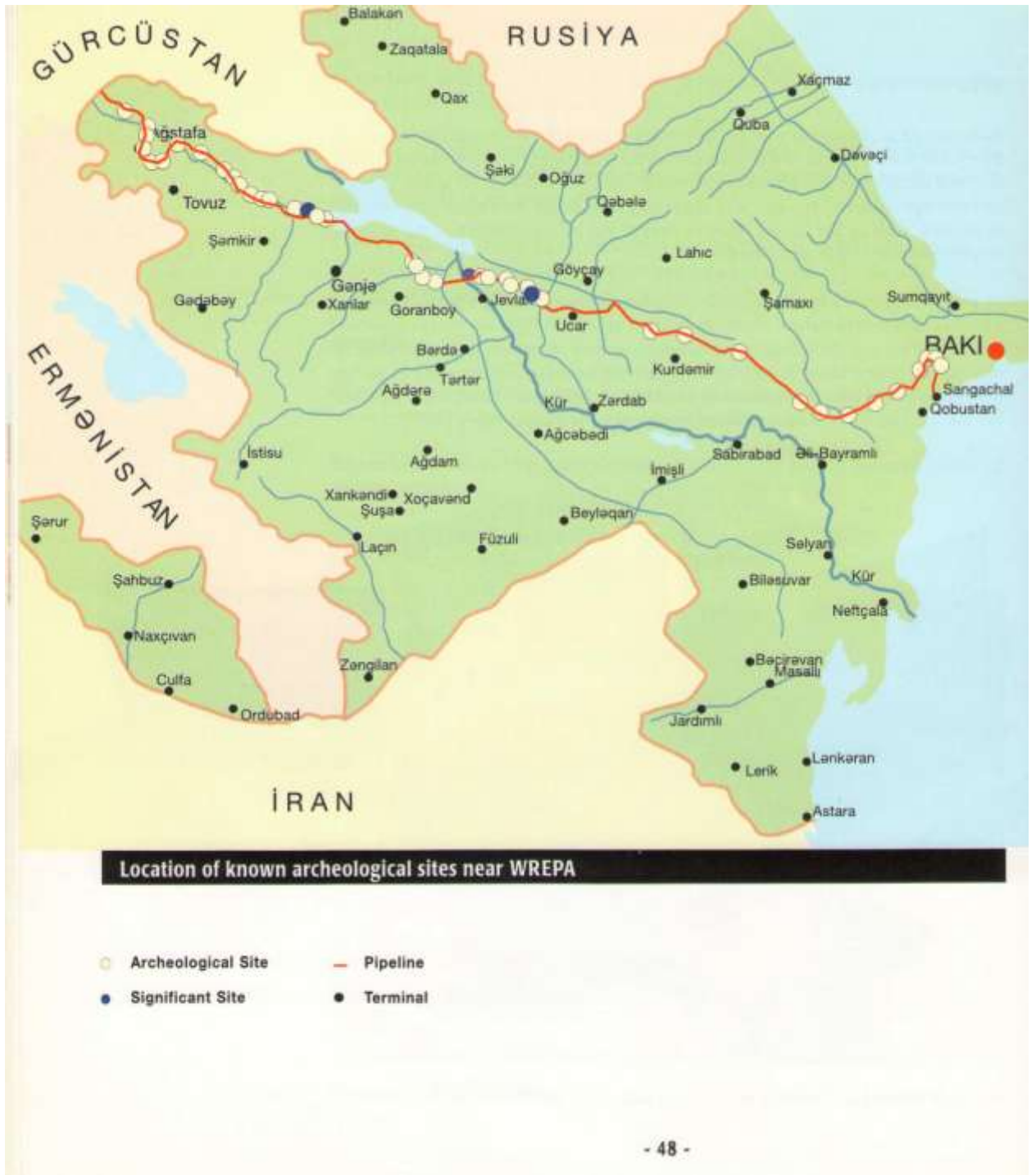
Baku played an enormous role in the history of the Azerbaijani people during the developed feudal period. Baku was founded back in the 8th century. Favorable natural and geographic conditions facilitated its becoming the major center of trade and cottage industry. The city was especially famous for its unique architectural structures, such as Gyz Galasy (Maiden tower), the palace complex of the Shirvan-shakhs and many other structures.

At present scientists in the Republic have been able to employ various chemical, physical, and mathematical methods in their research. They are most concerned with recording and documenting monuments located in new construction sites. In this regard, major scientific prospecting has been conducted along the construction route of the Evlakh-Belokan railroad, the Kazi-Magomed-Mozdok gas pipeline, the Alazan, Shamkhor, Enikend, Tazuhydro-system, and many other objects.



View of the Shirvan Shahs' Palace in the old city of Baku.





## Protection of archaeological remnants during construction of the

### Western Route Export Pipeline

During the past few years, large-scale construction operations are being performed in independent Azerbaijan. Oil export pipelines constitute a large portion of these construction operations. On the whole, the zone of the reconstructed Western Route Export Pipeline is very rich from the archaeological viewpoint. The AIOC, which is directly managing the construction of the pipelines, established an in-house environmental department on the first day and one of the basic duties of this department is to save monuments that are located within the construction areas to prevent their destruction, to document and map them when possible, and to ensure their integrity by making appropriate changes in pipeline routes. Only as a result of the regular work carried out by the AIOC have various types of monuments from different historical periods been found along the pipeline route and documented. I particularly want to deal with some of these monuments.

Some of the monuments that have been found and documented are cemeteries consisting of pot graves. These cemeteries have been registered near Yevlakh city, within the territory of the Ashaghi Dallar village in the Goranboy region, within the territory of the Bayramli village in the Shamkir region, and within the territory of the Ashaghi Ayibli village in the Tovuz region. Partial examination of these monuments has been possible due to the direct support of the AIOC. These sites have been documented and mapped. Moreover, appropriate actions have been taken to prevent the destruction of these monuments and to ensure their security. One of the most interesting pieces of recent news was the discovery of residential areas parallel to the cemeteries. The complex found within the territory of the Ashaghi Ayibli village in the Tovuz region is very interesting from this point of view.

The caravanserai complexes occupy a special place among the monuments documented with the help of the AIOC. During field work, a similar caravanserai was found on a hill within the territory of the Nadirli village of Goranboy region on the Barda-Tiflis caravan road. Rescue work has been performed on this monument, which was ruined as a result of fire, and appropriate measures have been taken for its safety. I can further enumerate and elaborate on a number of monuments of this type. However, the size of the booklet does not permit. The AIOC not only takes care of the monuments located within the territory of the pipeline, but also takes serious action to protect the archaeological monuments within the territories of the repeater and radio stations to be constructed. In this context, two residential areas that have great importance for the history of Azerbaijan have been protected and mapped. In general, archaeological rescue work is going on within the territories of oil pipelines and other facilities. The operations in these areas may

be shown as an example for other construction organizations, as well.

While we are on the topic, I want to note with a particular feeling of gratitude that a graceful monument from the Middle Ages has been restored by the RAMCO Company in the Inner City Historical and Architectural Preserve. All of this means that care for our monuments is increasing day by day and that this problem has the attention of the international companies participating in the Oil Agreements.



Lab processing of archeological materials.





