



History of Azerbaijan

1-39540

Kitabxanası



**HEYDAR ALIYEV
FOUNDATION**

M.F. Axundov adına
Azərbaycan Milli
Kitabxanası



Azerbaijan is known for its rich and ancient history. Archaeological finds discovered in the course of research clearly indicate that the country's territory is among the oldest hotbeds of human civilization. Archaeological studies in Azykh Cave in Garabagh revealed an almost 2 million-year-old human history in the territory of Azerbaijan. The jaw bone of a primeval human being (the Azykh man or Azykhanthropus) dating back to the Acheulian period (350-400 thousand years ago) is another proof of Azerbaijan's belonging to the area of primeval human formation. It was thanks to this finding that Azerbaijan was included in the map of Europe's Ancient Inhabitants.

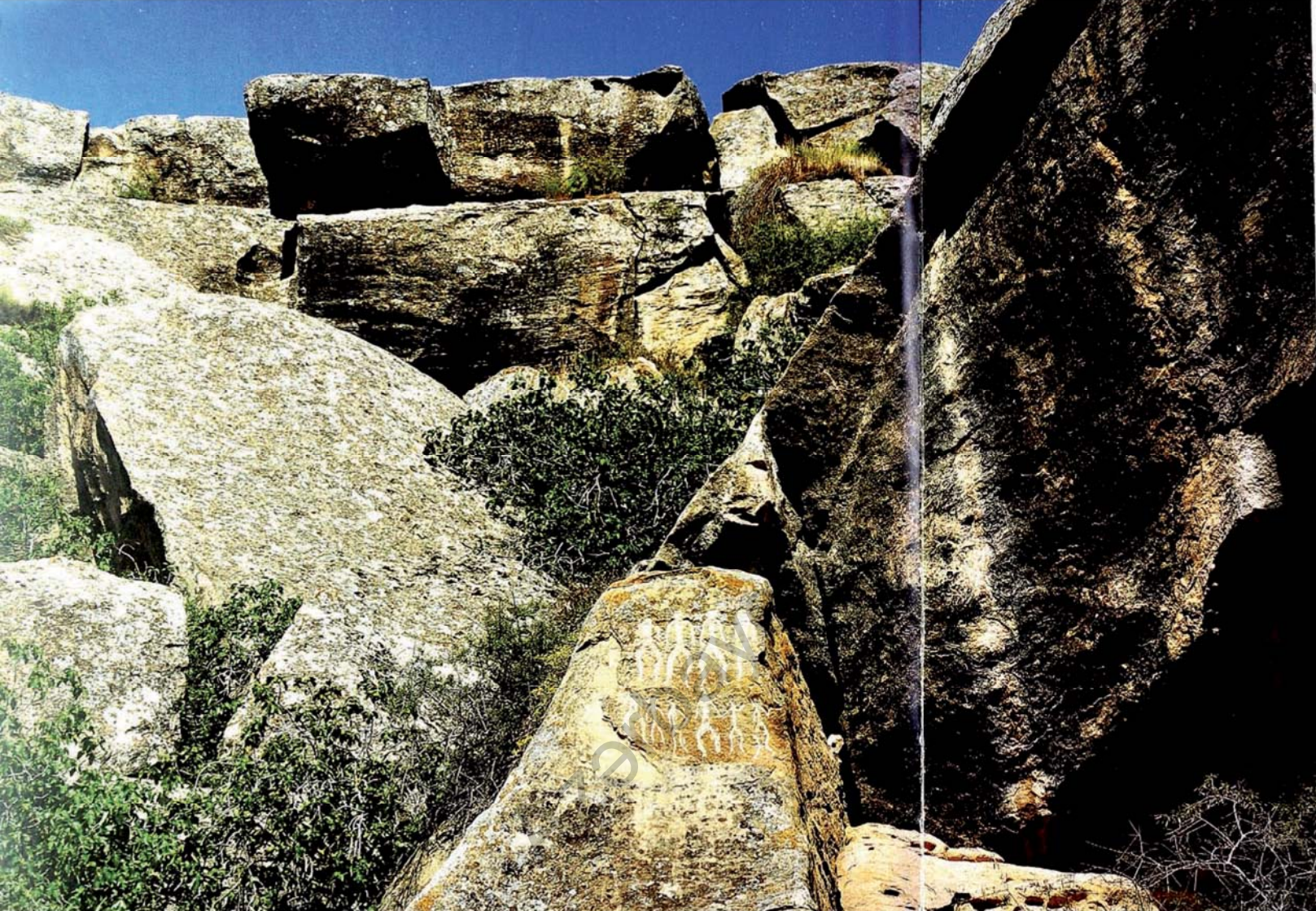
Since the Paleolithic Period (Ancient Stone Age), residents of the area were involved in the process of forming a highly developed and unique culture. Samples of material culture discovered in both North and South Azerbaijan provide sufficient evidence of the Azerbaijanis' being among the world's oldest settled nations.



Fragment of the lower jaw of the Azykh man (Azykhanthropus), 350-400 thousand years ago. The National History Museum of Azerbaijan, Inv. № 163

Azykh Cave, Khojavend.





Rock carvings in Gobustan. Thousands of carvings (petroglyphs) dating from all Paleolithic periods through the Middle Ages, were found in the State History and Arts Reserve of Gobustan. The carvings depicting human beings, animals, various types of scenery, group dances, symbols, celestial bodies, etc. were accompanied by multiple samples of material culture. In 2007, the Gobustan State History and Arts Reserve was included in UNESCO's World Heritage List.



The Archeological and Ethnographic Museum Complex in Gala, an open air museum established with the support of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation in 2008, comprises mounds, tombs, residential premises, 4 underground water storage reservoirs, ruins of an ancient fort, mosques, 3 bathhouses and other historic landmarks dating back to III millennium B.C. all the way through XX century.





Tugh (bronze), the symbol of power.
XV-XIV centuries B.C., Shamkir.
The National History Museum of
Azerbaijan, Inv. № 21644



Bast figure. XIII-IX centuries B.C., Ganja.
The National History Museum of
Azerbaijan, Inv. № 1134

Talernacle-shaped carriage
model (faience). IX-VII
centuries B.C., Mingachevir.
The National History
Museum of Azerbaijan,
Inv. №852



Zoomorphic utensils
(faience). VII-IV centuries
B.C., Mingachevir. The
National History Museum
of Azerbaijan, Inv. № 1936



Zoomorphic utensils (faience).
IX-VII centuries B.C., Fuzuli.
The National History Museum
of Azerbaijan, Inv. № 1483



Milk jug. III-I centuries
B.C., Shamakhy.
The National History
Museum of Azerbaijan,
Inv. № 21424



The history of Azerbaijani statehood is 5000 years old. The first tribal unions and state systems in the country's territory date back to late IV – early III millennia B.C. During the period of I millennium B.C. to I millennium A.D. the states of Manna, Midiya, Scythian and Massagethian Kingdoms existed in the territory of Azerbaijan, followed by even more powerful states like Caucasian Albania and Athropatena. The states mentioned above played an important role in Azerbaijan's ethno-political history and the process of nation-building all over the country.



Azərbaycan Milli

Azerbaijan in IV-III centuries B.C.





Athropat meeting Alexander the Great, canvas by A. Mammadov.

Tetradrachma (silver),
III-II centuries B.C.,
Gabala. The National
History Museum of
Azerbaijan, Inv. № 47136



Drachma (silver), III-II
centuries B.C., Gabala.
The National History
Museum of Azerbaijan,
Inv. № 47139



Drachma (silver),
II century B.C., Shamakhy.
The National History
Museum of Azerbaijan,
Inv. № 47401



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Tetradrachma (silver),
IV century B.C., Barda.
The National History
Museum of Azerbaijan,
Inv. № 35727



The 135-kilometer-long Gilgilebay Bank (defense line) dating back to the 1-4 centuries A.D., initially consisted of four parts. The height of the Bank stretching all the way to Babadağh mount varies from 7 to 7-11 meters. This line of defense included several large fortresses, the fort of Chyraggala (V-VI centuries) among them.



Chyraggala fortress. V-VI centuries, Shabran.





In III century A.D., Azerbaijan fell under the Sassanian Empire (Iran), whereas in the VII century the area was conquered by the Caliphate. The Arabic rule for almost 600 years failed short to hamper the nation-building processes in Azerbaijan. With the Caliphate's decline as of mid IX century, the local dynasties like the Shirvanshah, the Saji, the Salari, the Ravvadi and the Shaddadi dominated the local political stage, with the Azerbaijani language becoming an official lingua franca all over the country.

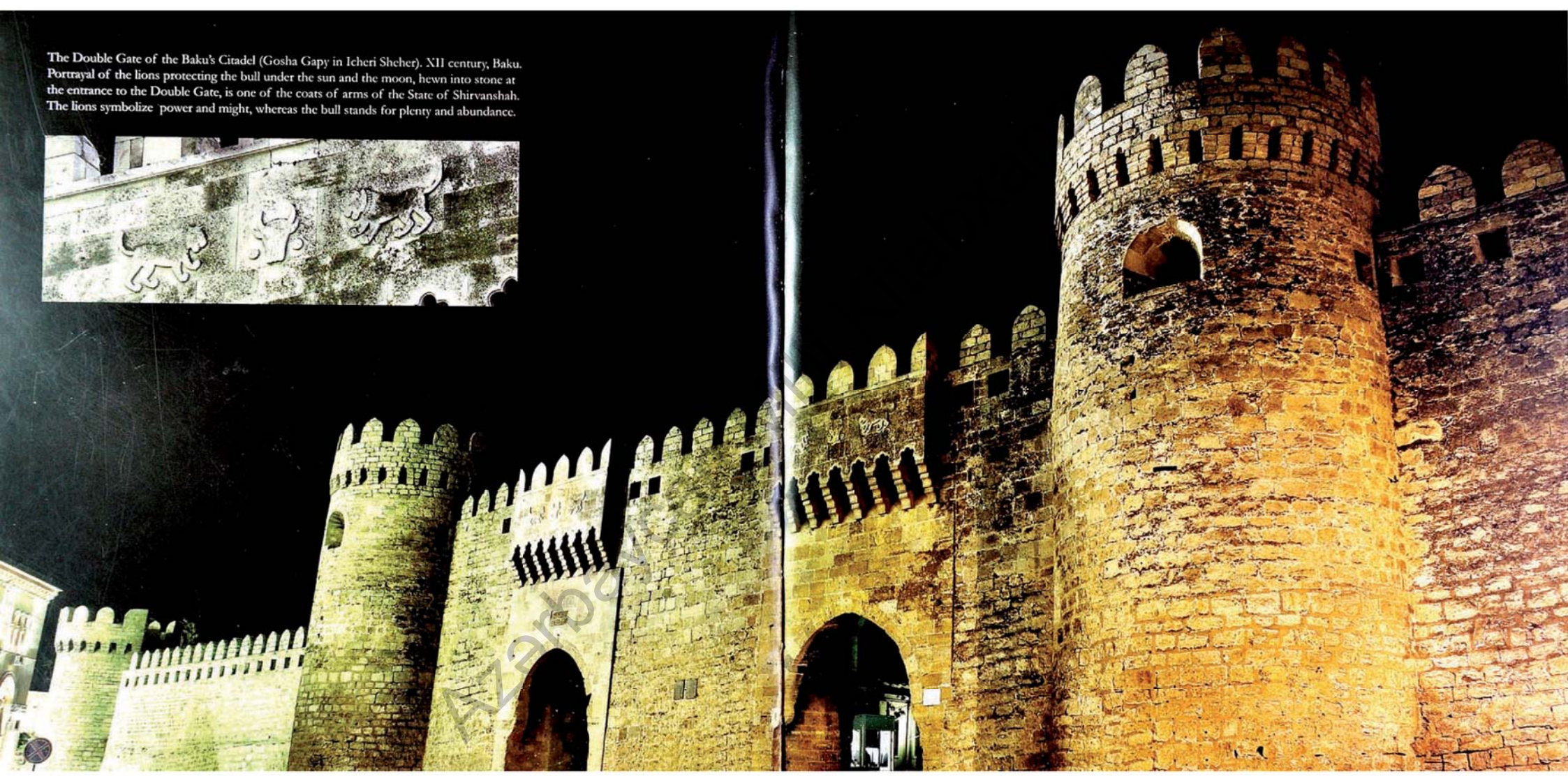
In the middle of XI century, Azerbaijan became a part of the Great Seljuk Empire. The Azerbaijani states of Shirvanshah and Eldeniz (Atabey), revived and reinforced with the collapse of the Seljuk Empire, played a pivotal role in the further development of the Azerbaijani statehood traditions. The State of Eldeniz, then one of the most powerful players in the Middle East, had a crucial input in the nation's ethno-political history and further increase of the Azerbaijani language's outreach.

In XV-XVIII centuries, empires of Garagoyunlu, Aggoyunlu, Sefevi, and Afshari, possessing vast territories in the East, were run by the dynasties of Azerbaijani descent.

Babak, the National Hero,
canvas by S. Sharifzadeh.

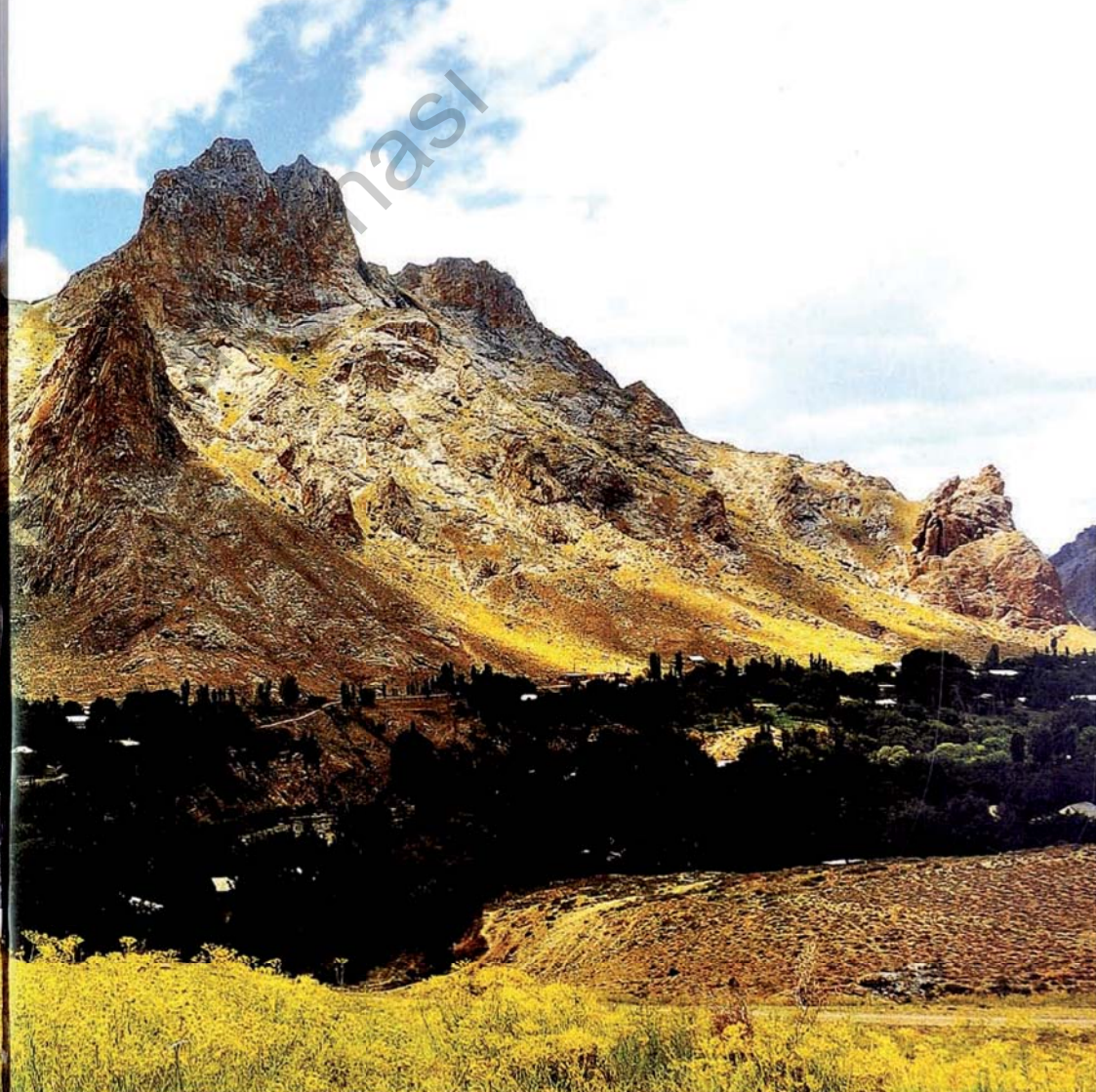


The Double Gate of the Baku's Citadel (Gosha Gapy in Icheri Sheher). XII century, Baku. Portrayal of the lions protecting the bull under the sun and the moon, hewn into stone at the entrance to the Double Gate, is one of the coats of arms of the State of Shirvanshah. The lions symbolize power and might, whereas the bull stands for plenty and abundance.



Alma Fortress, Julfa.

This fort is the only settlement in Azerbaijan that managed to withstand the attack by Emir Teymur (Tamerlane) during his invasion to Azerbaijan.





In the second half of XVIII century, Azerbaijan got split into small duchies (the khanates). The division of the Azerbaijani lands hampered the country's social, economic and political development. Dissent among the khanates was among the major causes of their inability to withstand the outer attacks. This in turn put the very independence of the duchies in jeopardy.

The Garabagh Khanate was founded in 1748 by Panakhali Khan (1748-1763). The town of Shusha was the capital of the Khanate located in-between the Kura and Araz rivers.

The Fortress of Shusha.
The Ganja Gate, 1750-1757.



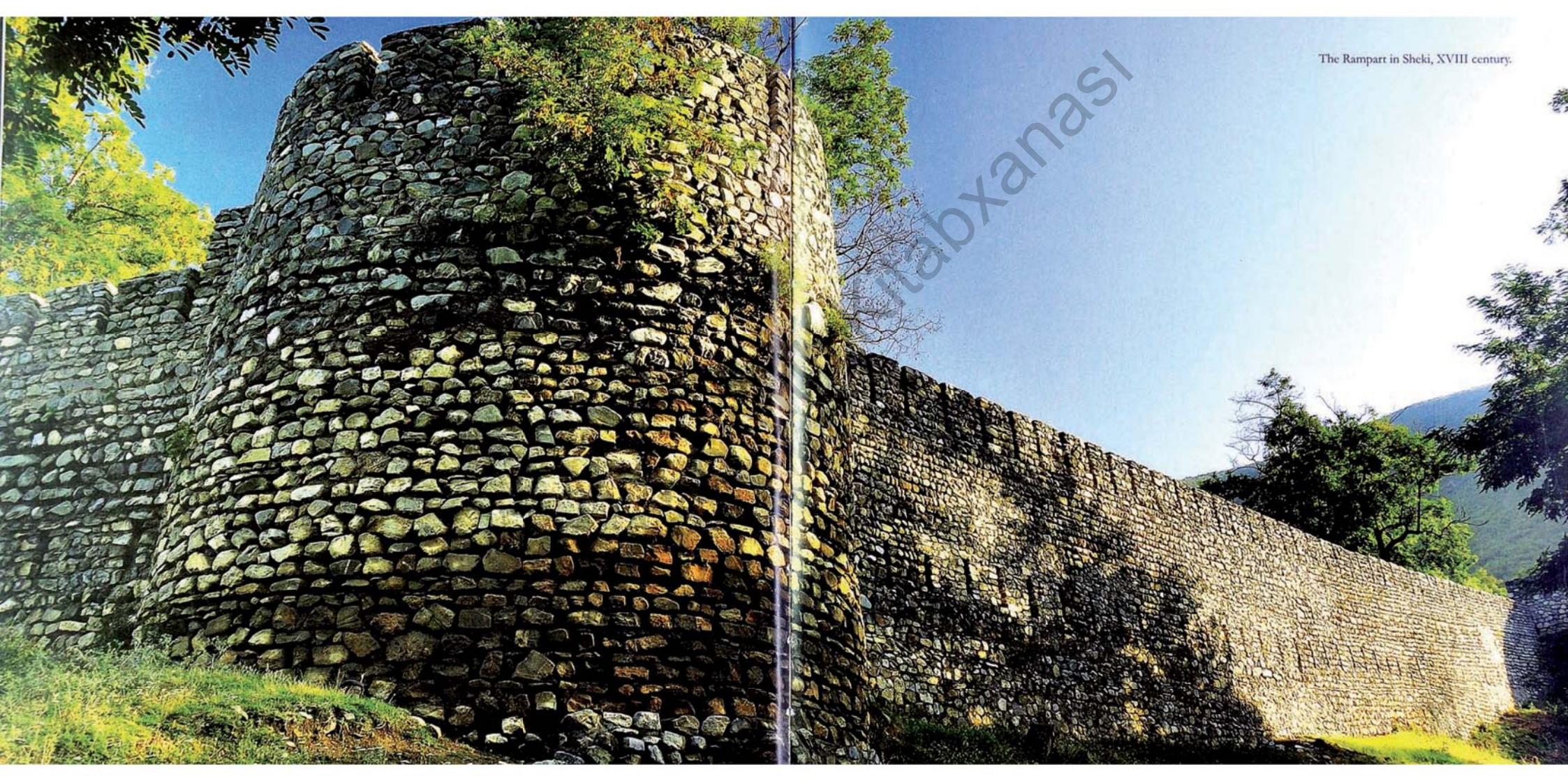
The flag of Iravan Khanate.
The National History Museum
of Azerbaijan, Inv. № 461

Iravan Khanate was founded in the middle of XVIII century by Mir-Mehdi Khan. The Khanate occupied the area between the Aghry Valley, Davalayaz and the lake of Geycha.

Bunchug (horse tail, metal, wood and silk thread). Accessory of Javad Khan, the ruler of Ganja (1786-1804). The National History Museum of Azerbaijan, Inv. № 4063



Sheshpar (Mace – iron finished with gold and adorned with vegetal ornament). Symbol of power also used as a shock-action arm. Accessory of Ibrahim Khan, the ruler of Garabagh (1726-1806). The National History Museum of Azerbaijan, Inv. № 704



The Rampart in Sheki, XVIII century.

The Yelisevopol Battle, canvas by F. Rubov, 1897

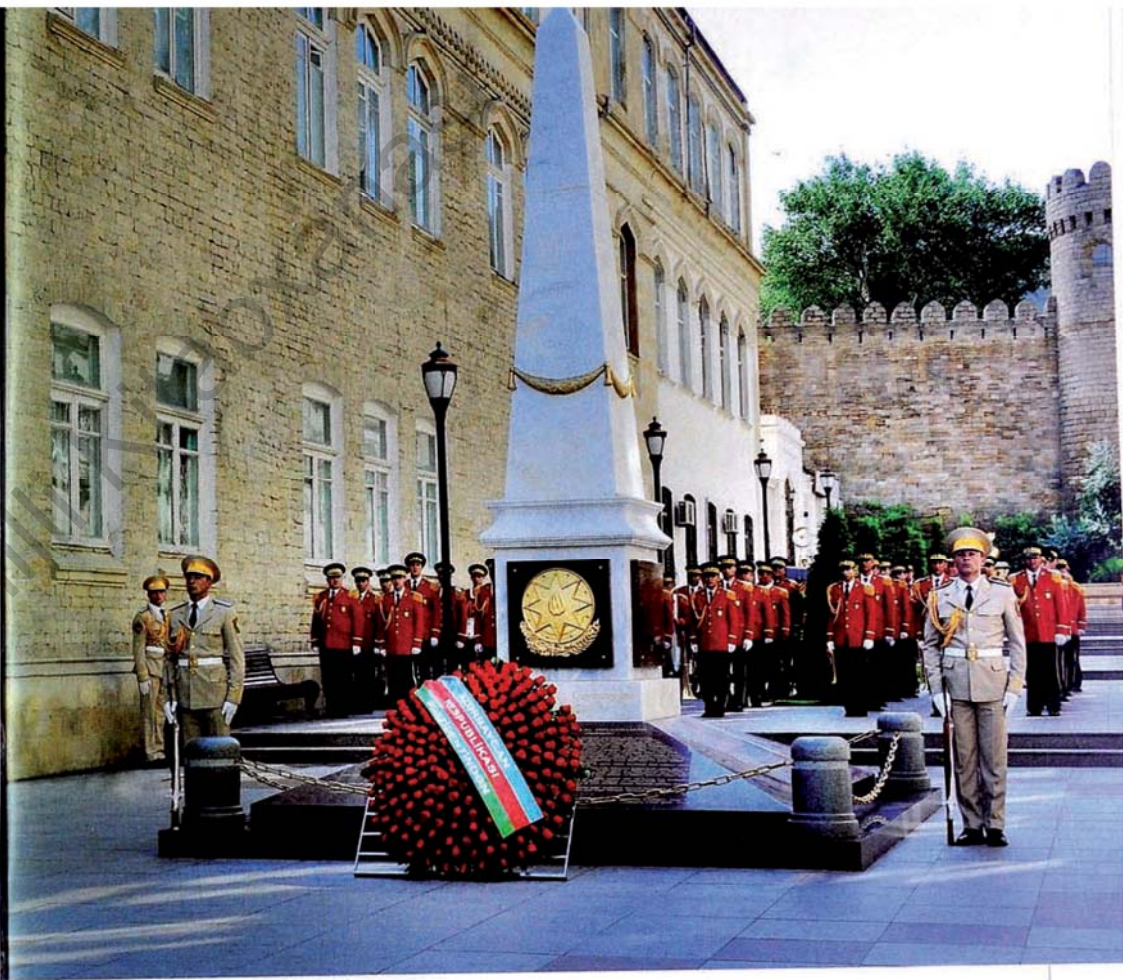


On May 28, 1818, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the first secular and democratic state of its kind in the Orient was established in North Azerbaijan. Pursuant to the resolution of the Paris Peace Conference, adopted on January 11, 1920, the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan got a de facto recognition as an independent state. A number of serious steps were taken at that period in such important areas as economy, culture, education, public health, judiciary and building military capabilities. Within the 23 months of its existence, the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan succeeded in establishing official diplomatic relations with a number of countries and concluded numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements.

Azerbaijani's Declaration of Independence proclaimed the foundation of the first parliamentary democracy in the Turkic and Muslim world.

The Declaration reads:

- 1. The Azerbaijani people shall henceforth bear sovereign rights, and Azerbaijan embracing the East and South Transcaucasia shall constitute a sovereign and independent state.*
- 2. Democratic Republic shall constitute the basis of political system in Azerbaijan.*
- 3. The Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan aspires to establish good neighbor relations with all members of the international community in general and with its immediate neighbors in particular.*
- 4. The Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, within its territory, shall guarantee civil and political rights to all its citizens, irrespective of ethnic origin, confession, social status and sex.*
- 5. The Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan guarantees broad opportunities for free development to all ethnic groups residing in its territory.*
- 6. Unless the Constituent Assembly is convened, the National Council elected through the nationwide vote and the Provisional Government accountable to the National Council shall govern the whole of Azerbaijan.*



The Memorial commemorating the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan.



On April 28, 1920, the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan was overtaken by the Communist Russia. This led to the announcement of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan. In the meantime, the Republic of Armenia was founded in the western part of indigenous Azerbaijani lands in 1918 to be followed by the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia two years later. The latter one's territory accrued at the expense of the districts (uyezd) of Zangazur, Gazakh, Sharur and Ordubad, originally forming an integral part of Azerbaijan. Furthermore, in 1923, the Autonomous Region of Daghylyg Garabagh (Highland Garabagh) was illegitimately proclaimed within Azerbaijan, contrary to the will of the Azerbaijani people. In 1924, the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Nakhchivan was formed.

A series of uprisings took place in North Azerbaijan to oppose the Soviet colonial regime, followed by bloodbath of massacre, repressions and exile. Hundreds of thousands of ethnic Azerbaijanis were uprooted from the original areas of residence in Western Azerbaijan, then the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia.


During World War 2, the Azerbaijani people manifested a true courage and heroism fighting Nazis both in the battlefield and in the rear, as well as by joining anti-fascist movements in various European states. 640 thousand ethnic Azerbaijanis were drafted to the Soviet Army, more than 10 thousand out of them women.

The role of Baku's oil in the victory over Nazism in WW2 was absolutely crucial. 75 million tons of crude oil provided by Baku counted for good three quarters of the overall hydrocarbon production of that-time USSR. In the meantime, the Baku oil industry supplied up to 85-90 per cent of fuels and lubricants.

Shipment of Baku's oil to the front, 1942.



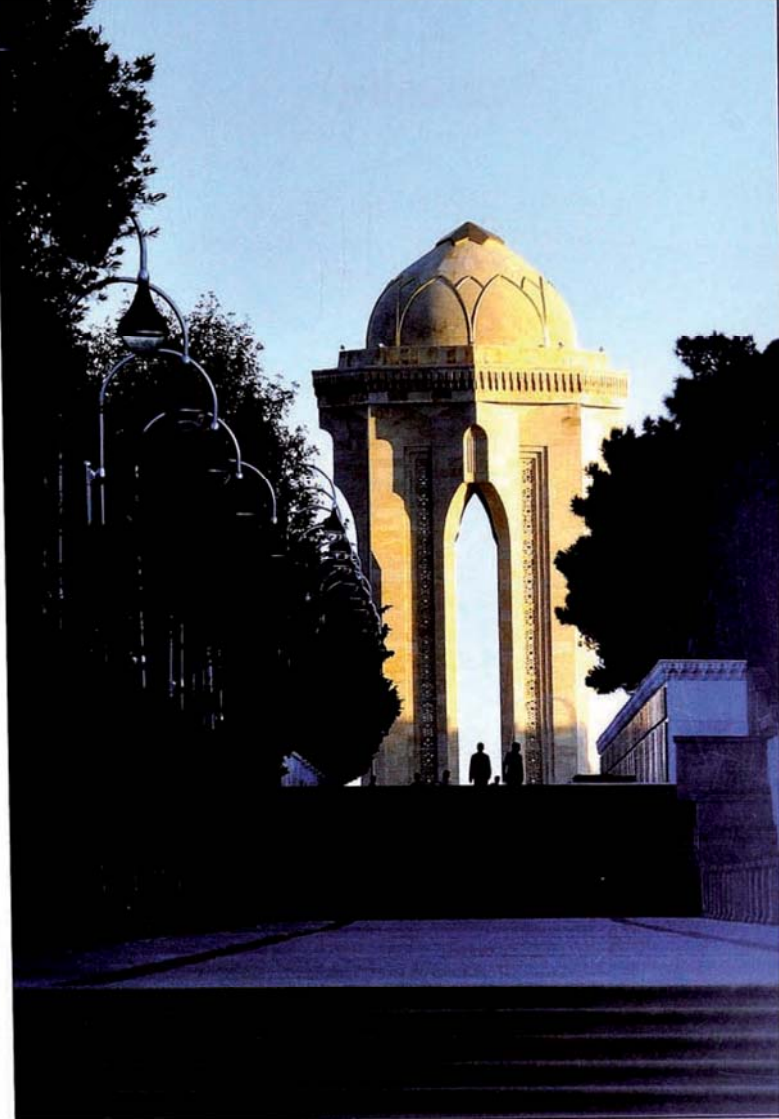
A monument erected in memory of the fallen in World War 2.



In the course of collapse of the Soviet Union, North Azerbaijan became the hotbed of a powerful liberation movement. In response to this, the Soviet Troops invaded Baku to curb the ever-increasing dissent against the 70 years of totalitarian regime and committed an atrocious massacre of civilians. The national independence of Azerbaijan was reinstated with the declaration of the Republic of Azerbaijan on October 18, 1991.

Since the very first years of its independence, the Republic of Azerbaijan became the subject to Armenia's military aggression. The separatist movement launched by ethnic Armenians within Azerbaijan evolved into a full-fledged warfare. With a significant military support from the outside, Armenia succeeded in occupying 20 per cent of the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan. As a result, more than million ethnic Azeris were displaced, the public and political stability within the country undermined and the threat of civil war became imminent.

Eternal Fire commemorating the victims of the tragedy of January 20, 1990.





Occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

The Region of Daghyg Garabagh

Area – 4 388 km²

Population – 189,085 residents (1989)

Ethic composition:

Armenians – 145,450 (76,9%)

Azerbaijanis – 40,688 (21,5%)

Russians – 1,922 (1%)

Others – 1,025 (0,6%)

The District of Shusha

Area – 289 km²

Population – 20,579 residents (1989)

Ethic composition:

Azerbaijanis – 19,036 (92,5%)

Armenians – 1,377 (6,7%)

Occupied on May 8, 1992

Districts adjacent to Daghyg Garabagh

Lachyn	occupied on May 18, 1992
Kalbajar	occupied on April 2, 1993
Aghdam	occupied on July 23, 1993
Fuzuli	occupied on August 23, 1993
Jabrayil	occupied on August 23, 1993
Gubadly	occupied on August 31, 1993
Zangilan	occupied on October 29, 1993

Casualties of the aggression

20 thousand dead

50 thousand handicapped

4,866 missing

The following Resolutions of the UN Security Council demand an unconditional liberation of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and repatriation of their original population:

UNSC Resolution No.822, April 30, 1993,

UNSC Resolution No.853, June 29, 1993;

UNSC Resolution No.874, October 14, 1993;

UNSC Resolution No.884, November 11, 1993.



With Heydar Aliyev's return to power following insistent demand of the nation in 1993, when the very independence and the sovereignty of Azerbaijan were under a serious threat, the domestic stability was restored, the ceasefire accomplished and substantial internal reforms were launched in the country.

The Contract of the Century signed on September 20, 1994, laid the foundation for the new Oil Strategy of the independent state of Azerbaijan. Today, the Azerbaijani oil produced in Azeri, Chyraq and Gunesli offshore fields together with the world's leading transnational oil companies is being transported to the world markets through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline.

Inauguration ceremony of
President Heydar Aliyev.
October 10, 1993.

The ceremony of signing the Contract
of Century. September 20, 1994.



The National Flag Square.





On November 12, 1995, the Constitution of independent Azerbaijan was adopted at the National Referendum. As a successor of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan (1918-1920), Azerbaijan today is a democratic, secular unitary republic based on the rule of the law. Guarantees of human rights and civil liberties constitute the ultimate goal of the state. The state of Azerbaijan provides social welfare and adequate living standards for the whole nation and each individual, together with assistance in promoting culture, education, health, science and arts and support in the preservation of the nation's historic, tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Historically Azerbaijan is known for a model culture of tolerance towards various confessions and congregations peacefully coexisting in the country. The Constitution stands guarantor of the freedom of conscience for all citizens.

The foreign policy of today's Republic of Azerbaijan is based on the international legal norms and is conducted in full compliance with the principles of respect towards the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states and non-interference into their internal matters. As a result of successful domestic and foreign policy of President Ilham Aliyev, the national independence of Azerbaijan got furthermore reinforced, turning the country into a regional leader capable of finding its due place in the system of contemporary international relations.

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