

Research Article/ Araştırma Makalesi

Historical and Cultural Heritage of Azerbaijan Destroyed as a Result of Armenian Aggression

Sübhan Talıblı*

(ORCID: 0000-0002-6331-5865)

Makale Gönderim Tarihi

21.03.2024

Makale Kabul Tarihi

18.09.2024

Atıf Bilgisi/Reference Information

Chicago: Talıblı, S., "Historical and Cultural Heritage of Azerbaijan Destroyed as a Result of Armenian Aggression", *Vakanüvis-Uluslararası Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 9/2 (Eylül 2024): 1510-1529.

APA: Talıblı, S. (2024). Historical and Cultural Heritage of Azerbaijan Destroyed as a Result of Armenian Aggression. *Vakanüvis-Uluslararası Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 9 (2), 1510-1529.

Abstract

The article studies the historical, material and moral monuments of Azerbaijan, which were destroyed because of the aggression of the Republic of Armenia and its supporting forces. At the same time, the article examines the issues such as the history of Karabakh, the Karabakh Khanate, socio-political, socio-economic, cultural and moral situation of Karabakh, Armenia's terror against the historical, cultural and spiritual monuments of Azerbaijan, Armenian vandalism in Irevan, the Turkic-Muslim, Albanian monuments destroyed in Karabakh during the occupation. At the same time, it analyzes the position of international and regional organizations regarding material and moral monuments destroyed as a result of Armenian vandalism, measures taken by the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding the destruction of monuments as a result of Armenian aggression. The principle of historicity

* Assoc. Prof. Dr., Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Oriental Studies, Azerbaijan, subhantalibli@gmail.com.

Doç. Dr., Azərbaycan Milli Bilimler Akademisi, Şarkiyat Enstitüsü, Azərbaycan.

and comparative analysis methods were used in the research paper. The major purpose of the research is to bring the atrocities committed against Azerbaijanis as a result of Armenian vandalism to the attention of the world community.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, Karabakh, historical and religious-cultural monuments, Armenian vandalism, Armenian terrorism

Ermeni Saldırısı Sonucu Yıkılmış Azerbaycan'ın Tarihi ve Maddi-Manevi Anıtları

Öz

Makale, Ermenistan Cumhuriyeti ve onu destekleyen güçlerin saldırısı sonucu yıkılan Azerbaycan'ın tarihi, maddi ve manevi anıtlarını incelemektedir. Bunun yanı sıra Karabağ'ın tarihi, Karabağ Hanlığı, Karabağ'ın sosyo-politik, sosyo-ekonomik, kültürel ve ahlaki durumu, Ermenistan'ın Azerbaycan'ın tarihi, kültürel ve manevi anıtlarına yönelik terörü, işgal zamanı Erivan'da Ermeni vandalizmi, Türk - İslam abideleri, Karabağ'da yıkılan Müslüman, Alban anıtları, uluslararası ve bölgesel kuruluşların Ermeni vandalizmi sonucunda yıkılan maddi ve manevi anıtlarla ilgili tutumu, Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'nin Ermeni saldırısı sonucu yıkılan maddi ve manevi anıtlarla ilgili attığı adımlar ve başka bu gibi konular ele alınmakta, araştırılmakta ve analiz edilmektedir. Araştırma makalesinde tarihsellik ilkesi ve karşılaştırmalı analiz yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın temel amacı, Ermeni vandalizmi sonucu Azerbaycanlılara karşı yapılan zulmü dünya kamuoyunun dikkatine sunmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Azerbaycan, Karabağ, tarihi ve dini-kültürel anıtlar, Ermeni vandalizmi, Ermeni terörü

Introduction

There are many serious facts, documents, and photos related to the destruction of the religious, cultural and historical monuments of the Azerbaijani people by Armenia, either inside the aggressor Armenia, in our historical territories built at the expense of historical Azerbaijani lands, or in Karabakh and surrounding regions under occupation. In addition, articles and books have been written both in Azerbaijan and abroad related to the history of the religious-cultural and historical monuments destroyed by aggressor Armenia in the lands of Azerbaijan.

The Republic of Armenia bears direct international legal responsibility for acts of aggression, vandalism and terror committed against material and cultural monuments in our occupied territories. International and regional organizations should take serious measures against the aggressor Armenia's vandalism against the historical, cultural and spiritual monuments of Azerbaijan, especially against international law. When we look at the historical monuments, as well as religious monuments, tombs, museums, houses, etc. in the territories liberated by the Azerbaijani army, which made history with its bravery and blood, and carried out an anti-terrorist operation in its own land, we witness Armenian vandalism once again. In this issue, serious measures should be taken against the occupying state, and practical steps should be taken from the international legal point of view.

Armenians settled in the historical lands of Azerbaijan with the support of Tsarist Russia have always carried out a policy of terrorism and vandalism in our historical and ancient lands. The acts of vandalism of Armenia against our national, religious, material, cultural and spiritual heritage violate the decisions and resolutions of the many international documents. These are the Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949¹ and its additional protocols, the 1954 Hague Convention as "Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict"², the 1992 European Convention on the "Protection of Archaeological Heritage" and the 1972 UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage³, the requirements of UN General Assembly resolution 1803 (XVII) of 14 December 1962⁴, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, as well as other international and regional organizations.

A general overview of the history of Karabakh

Karabakh, one of the ancient historical regions of Azerbaijan, is located in the area between the Lesser Caucasus Mountains and the

¹ https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.33_GC-IV-EN.pdf

² <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000187580>

³ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/resources.pdf>

Kura and Araz rivers. The concept of "Karabakh" began to be used from the 7th century, and became widespread from the 12th century. Researchers also say that "Karabakh" is derived from the combination of Turkic-Azerbaijani words "kara (great)" and "bagh (garden)", and "Karabakh" is used in the sense of "great garden", "rich garden".⁵

The human settlement and the remains of the archaic man ("Azykhanthrop" or "Azykh man") found in the Azykh cave in Fuzuli region suggest that this region, along with the Mediterranean and East Africa, is one of the places where modern humans originated. The tools discovered from the below sediments of Azykh are called Guruchay culture.⁶

After the collapse of the Arab caliphate, Karabakh came under the rule of the Azerbaijani Shaddadi state (975-1075), the Great Seljuk empire (mid-11th century - early 12th century), and the Atabegs of Azerbaijan (1136-1225). At the end of the 12th century - the beginning of the 13th century, the Albanian principality of Khachin was formed in the mountainous part of Karabakh. Later, Karabakh-Albanian principalities (Khachin, Varanda, Dizag, Gulustan) were formed in its territory, including Khachin itself. In the 13th-14th centuries, Karabakh was a part of the Mongol Empire, and at the end of the 14th century - in the 15th century, it was part of the Timurid state. Shirvan ruler Ibrahim I (1382-1417) was able to unite the plain part of Karabakh to his lands. At the beginning of the XV-XVIII centuries, Karabakh was part of the Gara Goyunlu (1410-1468), Ak Koyunlu (1468-1501), and Safavid (1501-1736) states of Azerbaijan. The Safavids united the Karabakh lands as a whole in the Karabakh or Ganja Beylerbey (principality). During the Safavid-Ottoman wars (1514-1555, 1578-1590, etc.), Karabakh passed from hand to hand. After the 1590 treaty, a detailed register was drawn up because of the census in the lands of Karabakh, which became part of the Ottoman state (1593). According to that

⁵ Jannatov A.J. (2016). A Brief History of Karabakh and the Armenian-Azerbaijani Relations: Before the First Armenian-Muslim Clash (1905-1906). VAKANÜVIS-International Journal of Historical Researches, Vol. 1, Special Issue on the Middle East, p.153.

⁶ Azərbaycanın tarixi abidələri və toponimləri: bibliografiya. (2016). Bakı: M.F.Axundov adına Azərbaycan Milli Kitabxanası. p.6.

information, Ganja-Karabakh province was divided into 5 sanjaks and 36 districts. Russian tsar Peter the Great (1682/89-1725), who divided the historical Azerbaijani lands and seized the Caspian lands, used Armenians under the name of Christianization to strengthen himself in the Azerbaijani lands and expand his invasion plans. In the decree signed by Peter the Great on November 10, 1724, addressed to the Armenians, it was envisaged to transfer Armenians to the occupied Azerbaijani lands, show kindness to them, give them empty houses, fertile lands, organize their protection, and deport Muslims from their native places to realize all this.⁷ The Karabakh khanate was founded by Panahali Khan (1748-1763), a member of the Sarijali clan of the Javanshir tribe, and he built the city of Panahabad and then Shusha, and moved the capital of the khanate here in 1756.⁸

Great powers skillfully used the "Armenian card" against the Ottoman Empire. All historical facts prove that Karabakh was the territory of Azerbaijan. The settlement of Armenians in the South Caucasus, including the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, started in the beginning of the 19th century in accordance with the strategic plan prepared by Russia. Although a plan was prepared for the transfer of Armenians to the South Caucasus during the reign of Peter I, it was not possible to fully realize it at that time. Favorable conditions for the realization of this plan created at the beginning of the 19th century.⁹

Statistical data published in the Russian Empire, especially in the "Caucasian Calendar" information books for more than half a century, in publications on the results of the first all-Russian census of the population in the Russian Empire in 1897 shows that Azerbaijanis in the current territory of Armenia still constitute the main part of the population even after the resettlement policy of Russia. Thus, out of 326 villages in Zangazur district of Elizavetpol Governorate, 149 were Azerbaijani (45.7 percent), 91 were Kurdish (27.9 percent), and only 81 were Armenian (24.8 percent) in 1886. In 1889, the Azerbaijani population of Zangazur district was 1500 more than Armenians. In

⁷ History of Karabakh - <https://mod.gov.az/az/qarabagin-tarixi-075/>

⁸ Mustafazadə T. (2009). Qarabağ xanlığı. Bakı: Sabah, s..39

⁹ Talıblı S.A. (2016). İran İslam Respublikasının Qafqaz siyasətində Dağlıq Qarabağ problem (1991-2005-ci illər). Bakı: Elm və təhsil, s.140

1891, 270.4 thousand people (41 percent) were Azerbaijanis out of 661.6 thousand people in Irevan governorate. In 1893, this number reached 276 thousand, and in 1897, it reached 313 thousand. In 1897, the population of Zangazur district was 142 thousand people, of which 71.2 thousand people (50.1 percent) were Azerbaijanis, and 63.6 thousand people (46.8 percent) were Armenians. The ethnic composition of the population of that time in the city of Irevan, which is now the capital of Armenia, and in the Irevan district attracts special attention. In 1896, 7.2 thousand people (49 percent) were Azerbaijanis, and 7.1 thousand people (48 percent) were Armenians out of 14.7 thousand people in the city of Irevan. 52.8 thousand (53.5 percent) were Azerbaijanis, 36.4 thousand (46.4 percent) were Armenians out of 99 thousand people in Irevan district.¹⁰ According to the information as of January 1, 1916, the ratio between the Azerbaijani and Armenian population of that region changed to some extent due to the influence of the Caucasian front passing through this area during the First World War. Nevertheless, Azerbaijanis still made up the main part of the population in this area. Azerbaijanis were 74.2 thousand people (48 percent) in Irevan district, 119.5 thousand people (53.3 percent) in Zangazur district, 45.9 thousand people (31.2 percent) in Surmelik district, 41.3 thousand people (24.6 percent) in Echmiadzin district and 50.7 thousand people (29.2 percent) in Yeni Bayazid district.¹¹

After its establishment on May 28, 1918, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic declared the entire historical territory of Karabakh as an integral part of the republic and began to take necessary steps to establish its political power here. As stated in the session of the Azerbaijani parliament held on December 20, 1918, the Armenian government "officially" declared that "we have no concern in Karabakh, we do not want Karabakh and we have no connection with

¹⁰ Кавказский календарь на 1897 год: Изданъ по распоряжению Главноначальствующаго гражданской частию на Кавказе (1896). Под ред. Е.Кондратенко. Тифлисъ, с. 573, <https://cloud.mail.ru/stock/cMiHcjKEQMnbnmhUURemRnHJe>

¹¹ Кавказский календарь на 1916 год. (1915). Под ред. Н.П.Степьмащукa; Издан по распоряжению Наместника его Императорскаго Величества на Кавказе. Тифлисъ, 1915. 914 с.

Andranik". The Republic of Armenia declared itself in Tbilisi also put forward an unjustified claim to Karabakh, and the Armenian-Dashnak nationalists, who were looking for a homeland for themselves, tried to turn these regions entirely into Armenian territories by cleansing the local Azerbaijani population of Erivan Governorate, Zangezur, Nakhchivan and Karabakh. Khosrov Pasha bey Sultanov was appointed to the position according to the decision "On the appointment of governor-general to Javanshir, Shusha, Jabrayil and Zangazur districts" of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic on January 13, 1919. Kh.Sultanov arrived in Shusha in February 1919 and began his duties. As a result of practical measures taken by the Governor General's office, the Armenians who were incited to separatism in the mountainous part of Karabakh were forced to recognize the Azerbaijani government. On June 30, 1919, the "temporary agreement of the Karabakh Armenians with the Azerbaijani government" was signed.

After the fall of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic on April 28, 1920, in the first half of May, Soviet power was established in Shusha, Jabrayil, and Javanshir districts. After the declaration of Soviet power in Armenia on November 29, 1920, with the direct help and participation of Bolshevik Russia, a large part of Zangazur was given to Armenians, as a result, Nakhchivan and other lands of Azerbaijan were separated from each other. On July 7, 1923, the foundation of the new Armenian separatism for the future was laid with the establishment of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) in the mountainous part of Karabakh. In 1945, the issue of Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh was raised before the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). After giving brief information about the history of Nagorno-Karabakh and the organization of the autonomous province, M.J.Bagirov wrote: "The Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast is not adjacent to the Armenian SSR in terms of territory and has never been". Moscow's anti-Azerbaijan policy resulted in the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis. As mentioned above, during the years of Soviet rule, a part of Azerbaijan's land was given to Armenia. The idea of creating "Greater Armenia" was put forward again in 1985, at the 23rd Congress of the Dashnaksutyun Party in Athens. In Nagorno-Karabakh, the separatist organizations "Krunck"

and "Miatsum" began to operate openly. Armenian chauvinists, relying on the central government and the Armenian diaspora abroad, expelled the Azerbaijanis living in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh from their homes by force of arms.

In 1987, Armenian academician A.Aganbekyan gave an interview to "Humanite" newspaper in Paris, and argued for the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. This was a green light for the struggle of the Armenian Dashnaks for the occupation of Karabakh. On June 18, 1988, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR discussed the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh. A large group of deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR from Azerbaijan and Armenia also participated in the meeting. G.M.Voskanyan, G.A.Poghosyan, V.A.Ambarsumyan, S.G.Arutyunyan, S.A.Ambarsumyan, V.A.Petrosyan, S.B.Tatliyev, A.Kh.Vazirov from Armenia and M.A.Ibrahimov from Azerbaijan delivered speech there.¹²

M.Gorbachev writes in the heading "Karabakh explosion" of "National Policy" section of the second chapter entitled "In the Kremlin" of his book "Life and Reforms" (Gorbachev M.S. Life and reforms. In two books. Book. 1, M., "Izdatelstvo novosti", 1995) that at that time, those who dealt with national issues, first of all I.V.Stalin, failed to solve the Karabakh problem, this issue was not refined at the necessary level and an ideal option was not found. He added that over the decades, a number of difficulties and problems have accumulated in the autonomous province.¹³

The province was practically removed from Azerbaijan in January 1989, by the decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR "On the introduction of a special form of administration in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) of the Azerbaijan SSR". A Special Management Committee was established here under the leadership of the pro-Armenian A.Volski. In July 1989, the Azerbaijani population of Khankendi, consisting of 14,000 people, was evicted from the city. The Supreme Soviet of the USSR abolished the Special

¹² Алиев И. (1989). Нагорный Карабах: История. Факты. События. Баку: Элм, 104 с.

¹³ Горбачев М.С. (1995). Жизнь и реформы. В двух книгах, Кн. 1, М., АО "Издательство "Новости", 1995, 600 с.

Management Committee on November 28, 1989 at the request of the Azerbaijanis. However, as a result of the Center's failure to take effective measures, Armenia was actively interfering in the economic and political management of the NKAO. In May 1990, the administration of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Province was returned to Azerbaijan. The events that took place were carried out under the dictates of Moscow. A number of foreign authors admit that the roots of this conflict are artificially created and prefer its solution between the conflicting parties.¹⁴

On September 11, 1991, "National Council of Nakhchivan Armenians" was established in Irevan. The Council appealed to Russia with the request to cancel the Treaty of Kars concluded in 1921. In connection with the events directed against the national security of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on February 9, 1999, the Milli Majlis appealed to the UN, the Inter-Parliamentary Union requested OSCE, and the Council of Europe about the timely prevention of Armenian aggression, the liberation of the occupied territories. The Milli Majlis condemned the "claim of creating a state from sea to sea". On August 8, 1991, Nuvedi (Mehri region), the last Azerbaijani village in Armenia, was liberated with the help of Russian soldiers. Thus, 230,000 Azerbaijanis were expelled from 185 Azerbaijani villages in Armenia. 255 people were killed, 1200 people were injured, 31 thousand houses, 165 collective farms and state farms were looted. Cold-blooded and indifferent attitude of Moscow and the world community towards these acts committed by Armenian armed groups gave them a hope and an impetus to expand the movement to unite Karabakh to Armenia.¹⁵

Thus, with the support of the aggressor Armenian armed forces and the forces that fully support it, Azerbaijan districts, such as Khojavand (02.10.1992), Shusha (08.05.1992), Lachin (18.05.1992), Kalbajar (02.04.1992), Aghdam (23.07.1993), Jabrayil (23.08.1993), Gubadli

¹⁴ Talıblı S.A. (2016). İran İslam Respublikasının Qafqaz siyasətində Dağlıq Qarabağ problem (1991-2005-ci illər). Bakı: Elm və təhsil, s.153-154

¹⁵ Pirişev A.M. (2005). Siyasi strategiya və milli təhlükəsizlik. Bakı: "BDU" nəşriyyatı, s.220.

(31.08.1993), Zangilan (29.10.1993) were occupied in 1993, more than 1 million of our compatriots were displaced from their historical lands.

Armenia's terror against the historical, cultural and spiritual monuments of Azerbaijan

During Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan, 1,600 Muslim religious monuments were destroyed by Armenians in the ancient lands of Azerbaijan, including Karabakh and surrounding regions, the dates and wall inscriptions on 1,700 historical and cultural monuments were removed and replaced with Armenian texts, the fate of 100,000 exhibits looted from 27 museums and picture galleries under Armenian occupation has been unknown. Up to 500 historical architectures, more than 100 archaeological monuments, 22 museums with tens of thousands of objects in their collections, 4 art galleries, 927 libraries with 4.6 million books and manuscripts, 808 clubs, 85 music and art schools, 10 recreation and cultural parks, 20 concert organizations were plundered. In addition, 100 thousand samples of decorative and applied art - carpets, ancient clothes with embroidery, jewelry and copper items stored in the private homes were burned, looted, transported to Armenia and fraudulently appropriated as a result of the armed military aggression of Armenia, or some of them were sold in foreign countries under the name of "examples of Armenian culture". Apart from that, the Azykh¹⁶ and Taglar cave camps of Paleolithic era, which are world important archaeological monuments, Khantepe¹⁷, Kultepe, and Shomutepe as the Eneolithic monuments dating back to the 7th-6th centuries BC and still

16 Azykh paleolithic camp is located in the most picturesque corner of Karabakh, in the village of Azykh, Khojavand district, in the Tug depression, on the left bank of the Guruchay, 900 meters above sea level and 100-120 meters above the modern bed of the river. From 1960, under the leadership of Mammadali Huseynov, the Paleolithic archaeological expedition, the excavations in the Azykh cave were continued in two stages until 1985.

¹⁷ In 1969, the Khantape Eneolithic settlement was discovered and recorded in the Karabakh plain by archaeologist Ideal Narimanov. In 1980-1981, the Fuzuli archaeological expedition carried out further research in the Khantepe settlement, which dates back to the 5th and 4th millennia BC, during further research in the Guruchay and Kondalanchay basins.

scientifically relevant for the study of human civilization, as well as Albanian monuments, mosque complexes, ancient cemeteries, tombs, palaces, castles, bridges, ancient settlements, archaeological monuments of Azerbaijan from the Christian era, etc. were a victim of the Armenian occupation. Rare exhibits of the History Museum of Kalbajar region, including gold and silver items dating back to 3000 years before our era, History Museum of Lachin region, its ancient coin collection, Shusha History Museum with about 5000 exhibits, Karabakh State History Museum with about 1000 exhibits, Agdam Bread Museum, which is the second in the world, Home Museum of composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov, the founder of Azerbaijani professional music with more than 300 items, House Museum of Bulbul, the founder of Azerbaijani classical vocal music, with 400 items, Mir Movsum Navvab's House Museum with more than 1000 exhibits, Memorial Museum of the invaluable tar-player Gurban Pirimov, Gubadli Museum with about 2,000 items, museums in Zangilan, Jabrayil, Fuzuli with about 6,000 exhibits and items, etc. were looted and destroyed.¹⁸

Facts, articles, books, etc. related to the destruction of the religious and cultural monuments of the Azerbaijani people by Armenia, either inside the aggressor Armenia, in our historical territories built at the expense of historical Azerbaijani lands, or in the surrounding regions of Karabakh and the occupied territories, have been investigated both in Azerbaijan and abroad. In those places, 738 historical monuments, 28 museums containing 83,500 works, 4 art galleries and 1,107 cultural institutions were destroyed. The Juma Mosque (17th century) in the Jabrayil region, the Yukhari Govhar Aga Mosque, the Ashaghi Govhar Aga Mosque and the Saatli Mosque in the city of Shusha (these mosques date back to the 18th century) were subjected to acts of vandalism, destruction and blowing up, and Agdam mosque was insulted and turned into a stable for pigs and cows.¹⁹

¹⁸ Talibli S.Ə. (2022). "Erməni vandalizmi nəticəsində dağıdılmış Azərbaycanın tarixi,maddi-mənəvi abidələri". AMEA Şərqşünalıq İnstitutu, Azərbaycan şərqşünaslığı elmi-kütləvi jurnal, 01 (22), 23-28.

¹⁹ Mustafayev E.K. (2003). Şuşanın maddi-mədəni (irsi epiqrafik abidələr əsasında). Bakı: Elm. s.71-113

Detailed information about the Yukhari Govhar Agha Mosque in Shusha is given in Baharlı's "Ahvalati-Karabakh. Kharabakhsnameler"²⁰, Z.Bunyadov's "History of Azerbaijan (from the earliest times to the 20th century)"²¹, Mashadikhanim Nematova's "Inscriptions of the "Juma" Mosque in Shusha"²², etc.

Armenian vandalism in Irevan

The Demir Bulag Mosque in Irevan was destroyed to the ground²³, the Blue Mosque was renovated to restore its original appearance, and the Sardar Mosque in the center of Irevan was systematically razed to the ground in 2014.²⁴ In addition, Agadede cemetery, Agudi monument, Ashagi Shorja cemetery, Ashiq Alasgar's gravestone monument, Demirbulag mosque, Amir Saad mausoleum, Gullubulag cemetery, Haji Novruzali bey mosque (XVIII century), Rajab Pasha mosque (1725), Saral tomb, Salim (Shah Abbas) caravansary (1328-1329), Tepebashi Mosque, Zal Khan Mosque (1687)²⁵, etc. were destroyed.

Monuments destroyed in Karabakh during the occupation

About 13,000 valuable items were looted from the Museum of History and Ethnography in Kalbajar, and more than 5,000 valuable items and rare exhibits were taken from the Museum of History and Ethnography in Lachin and transported to Armenia. As a result of the occupation of Shusha, the national religious and cultural heritage there was seriously damaged. 8 museums, 31 libraries and 8 cultural houses were destroyed in Shusha alone. About 5,000 items were looted from the Shusha History Museum, and about 1,000 items were looted from the Shusha branch of the National Azerbaijan Carpet and Applied Arts Museum.

²⁰ Baharlı. (1991). Əhvalati – Qarabağ. Qarabağbimələr. Bakı: Yazıçı. 302 s.

²¹ Bünyadov Z. (1994). Azərbaycan tarixi (ən qədim zamanlardan XX əsrədək. Bakı: Azərbaycan Dövlət Nəşriyyatı. 628 s.

²² Nemətova M. (1961). Şuşa şəhərindəki "Cümə" məscidinin kitabələri. Azərbaycan SSR Elmlər Akademiyasının xəbərləri. Bakı: Elm, No. 1.

²³ Ələkbərli Ə. Qərbi Azərbaycan abidələri. Bakı: Ağrıdağ, - 2006, p.198

²⁴ <https://iravan.preslib.az/meschidler.html>

²⁵ Armenian vandalism: Azerbaijani monuments in captivity, https://armenianvandalism.preslib.az/az_armenia.html

The Armenian invaders looted the exhibits of the National History Museum in Aghdam region (more than 2 thousand)²⁶, the National History Museum in Gubadli (more than 3 thousand), and the National History Museum in Zangilan region (about 6,000 items). The National History Museums in Gabala, Fuzuli and Khojaly regions were also destroyed.

Albanian monuments attacked and destroyed in Karabakh

In history, it is known to the whole world that Azerbaijan has always respected and protected all religions, languages and peoples. Regarding the issue of Albanian churches, let me note that according to numerous written historical sources, the territory of the state of Caucasian Albania covered a wide area from the beginning of our era to the beginning of the 8th century AD, from the Araz River in the south to the North Caucasus, in the east from the west coast of the Caspian Sea to the lands located west of Lake Goycha. There are many temples, churches and monasteries belonging to the rich architectural heritage of Caucasian Albania in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Recently, a number of studies have been conducted by our researchers and scientists in the field of studying the real history and monuments of Albania.²⁷ When we look at the historical facts, we see once again that the Albanian churches have no historical and religious connection with the Armenians and their claimed religious beliefs. The throne of Albanian Catholicism was located in the Chola monastery in Darband in the 4th-5th centuries, in the Barda monastery in the 6th-7th centuries, in the holy Elisey monastery in the Aghdara region in the 8th-9th centuries, in the Khudaveng monastery in the Kalbajar region in the 10th-15th centuries, and in the Ganjasar monastery in the 15th-19th centuries.²⁸ In 552, after the head of the Albanian Church, Holy Father Abbas, the Catholicos, moved the residence from Chola to Barda, the Barda church became a large monastery. Located in the territory of Kalbajar region, on the left bank of the Tartar River, the

²⁶ Qarabağ Yaddaş kitabı. (2010). Bakı: MHS-Poliqraf. 190 s.

²⁷ Paşayeva M. (2022). Qarabağın və Şərqi Zəngəzurun alban abidələri. Bakı: Bakı Beynəlxalq Multikulturalizm Mərkəzi.

²⁸ Əliyev İ.H., Məmmədzadə K. (1997). Qarabağın alban abidələri. Bakı: Azərneşr. 32s.

monastery complex, popularly called Khotaveng or Khudaveng²⁹, i.e. "the temple of God", was the religious center of the Albanian principality of Khachin, which was established in the mountainous part of Karabakh in the 9th century - a century after the collapse of the state of Caucasian Albania. The residence of the Albanian bishop and the religious education center functioned in the complex.³⁰ From the results of archaeological research, it is known that the foundation of the monastery was laid in VI-VII centuries. Vakhtang, the son of Hasan Jalal, prince of Khachin from the Mehrani dynasty, carried out extensive construction works in the territory of the complex, and Arzu Khatun built a church in the complex in memory of her husband Vakhtang and two sons in 1214. It is the holy Elisey monastery complex in Agdara region of Nagorno-Karabakh that has survived to this day. During the reign of Hasan Jalal, the territory of the principality expanded considerably, and construction and improvement works took place. The famous Ganjasar monastery, built on the mountain on the left bank of the Khachin River in the village of Vangli of the Aghdara region, opposite the Holanaberd Castle, which is the residence of Hasan Jalal, is one of the most prominent monuments of the Christian architecture of Caucasian Albania. It is known from the epigraphic inscription on the wall of the monastery that this monument was built by "the ruler of the high and great Arsakh country, the tsar of the vast province, the grandson of Hasan the Great, the son of Vakhtang, Hasan Jalal Dovla and his mother Khorisha Khatun in 1216-1238. In the territory of Karabakh, in the occupied territories of Lachin, Kalbajar and Gubadli, there are ancient Albanian churches that have survived to this day. On the one hand, Armenians were destroying the monuments related to the occupation, and on the other hand, they were falsifying Albanian churches and replacing them with Christian elements according to Armenian churches. Thanks to Russia and other states, Armenians actually armenianized the Christian Albanians and armenianized the Udis in Karabakh after settling in Karabakh. In Nagorno-Karabakh, they changed the plaques and the architectural structure of the church, if the altar part of the Albanian church is 70-71 cm, they raise it up to 1.20 cm, and they show this fact

²⁹ Məmmədov N. (2015). İşğal altındaki tarixi-dini abidələrimiz. Bakı: Nurlar. p.34

³⁰ Əlizadə R., Nəciyev E. (2021). Qarabağın alban-qıpçaq tarixinə dair.

to the visitors and justify their opinion that it is an Armenian church. When experts restore those churches, they see that they have raised the church by 50-60 cm. They change the elements on the base. For example, in all the Eastern churches, the elements of the cross are different; they change it, whether it is a question of worship, whether it is linguistic, whether it is a subtext. They change the architectural style, the elements on it, and the cross. The worship is performed not in the ancient Albanian language, but in the Armenian language, and the members of the Albanian church witnessed this event. No matter how much they falsify, it is impossible to erase the memory in the stone, if we look at these monuments on a global scale, we will see what information was in the stone and what connecting elements were there. It is impossible to erase that history, also because its age and architectural style were different.³¹

The position of international and regional organizations regarding material and moral monuments destroyed as a result of Armenian vandalism

By continuing the policy of terrorism against the civilian population, the military and political leadership of Armenia violated the decisions and resolutions of the Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949 and its additional protocols, the UN, the Hague Convention, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, UNESCO, as well as other international and regional organizations, in particular, grossly and deliberately violated his obligations. During the First Karabakh War, the Armenian military-political leadership violated, the Hague Convention of 1954 on the "Protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict", "Protection of archaeological heritage" against our national and moral values, historical monuments, mosques, and civilian population in our historical lands. They acted contrary to the requirements the European Convention of 1992 on the "Protection of archaeological heritage" and the UNESCO Convention of 1972 on the "Protection of world cultural and natural heritage", requirements of UN General Assembly Declaration No.1803 (XVII) of December 14, 1962.³²

³¹ Əlizadə R., Nəciyev E. (2021). Qarabağın alban-qıpçaq tarixinə dair.

³² <https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

Such acts of Armenia are a gross violation of the 1954 Hague Convention on the "Protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict" and the Second Protocol of that Convention adopted in 1999. Clause 9 of Protocol II stipulates the obligation of the occupying party to prohibit and prevent the illegal trade of cultural property, any archeological samples, and removal from these areas, alteration or destruction of cultural, historical or scientific evidence characteristics of monuments "in relation to the occupied territories". Illegal acts against cultural property and heritage during armed conflicts are considered war crimes under international criminal law. As a state, the Republic of Armenia bears direct international legal responsibility for acts of vandalism committed against material and cultural monuments in our occupied territories. Despite all this, international and regional organizations should take serious measures against the actions of the aggressor Armenia against this law and international law.³³ We are concerned about our historical monuments, as well as religious monuments, tombs, museums, houses, etc. When we look at the personnel in our territories liberated by the Azerbaijani army, which made history with its bravery and blood, and carried out an anti-terrorist operation in its own land, we witness Armenian vandalism once again. Unfortunately, the world, as well as the states and organizations supporting the aggressor Armenia, have not taken serious measures against the occupying state in this matter.

Steps taken by the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding material and moral monuments destroyed as a result of Armenian aggression

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan prepared an extensive report on "Destruction of the religious and historical heritage related to Islam in the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia" and "Destruction and insult of the cultural and historical heritage of Azerbaijan due to the actions of the Armenian aggressors against the

³³ Talibli S.Ə. (2022). "Erməni vandalizmi nəticəsində dağıdılmış Azərbaycanın tarixi,maddi-mənəvi abidələri". AMEA Şərqşünalıq İnstitutu, Azərbaycan şərqşünaslığı elmi-kütləvi jurnal, 01 (22), 23-28.

Republic of Azerbaijan" and presented to UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ISESCO and many other organizations. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation has taken successive decisions regarding the destruction and desecration of temples and historical and cultural heritage related to the Islamic religion in the occupied territories as a result of the Armenian occupation.³⁴ As a result, these decisions were made at the meetings of the foreign ministers of the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation held in 2015 (Kuwait), 2016 (Uzbekistan) and 2017 (Ivory Coast). Later, at the 46th meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation held in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE (March 1-2, 2019), the resolution entitled "as a result of the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan, the destruction and insult of historical and cultural monuments related to the Islamic religion in the occupied lands of Azerbaijan" was adopted.³⁵

Conclusion

The state and people of Azerbaijan continued their rightful and international law-based struggle on their historical and ancient lands, during the 44-day Patriotic War, our victorious army under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Commander-in-Chief İlham Aliyev carried out an anti-terrorist operation on the historical lands of Azerbaijan, which had been occupied for nearly 30 years. In addition to liberating our land from occupation, the Azerbaijani people took revenge for the ethnic cleansing, resettlement, genocide and vandalism committed against our people by the aggressor Armenian state with the full support of international and regional powers.

³⁴ Talibli S.Ə. (2020). Dağıdılan tarixi abidələr erməni vandalizminin əyani sübutudur. Bakı: Elm qəzeti. 18(1253), 11.

³⁵ İşğal olunmuş İslam mədəni irsi! // <https://abudhabi.mfa.gov.az/az/news/3287/isgal-olunmus-islam-medeni-irsi>

Issues such as the steps taken by the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding the monuments destroyed as a result of Armenian aggression, Armenia's terrorism against the historical, cultural and spiritual monuments of Azerbaijan, Armenian vandalism in Irevan, Albanian monuments destroyed and attacked in Karabakh, the position of international and regional organizations regarding the material and moral monuments destroyed as a result of Armenian vandalism were investigated.

As for ***construction and restoration of historical monuments in Karabakh***, restoration and construction works are carried out in a planned, systematic and designed manner in the territories freed from occupation. Our Karabakh, with its mysterious nature, underground resources and terrestrial resources, will bring great dividends to our economy, and will once again become the center of science, culture, tourism, art and commerce of the region. Since the works of construction and improvement are carried out in our Karabakh, the return of our people to their homeland, the planting and cultivation of land, the restoration of all liberated cities and villages, social, economic, cultural, scientific, etc. After the creation of infrastructure, employment, and the attraction of new domestic and foreign investments, especially in the non-oil sector, this region will play a major role in the development of Azerbaijan. At present, work has been done and continues to solve management and security, infrastructure issues, social services activities, the issue of economic reconstruction and development, as well as the natural resources of the region, traditional economic areas, transport hubs, including rehabilitated transport corridors, and construction has already begun, their profile is specialized, taking into account the proximity to roads and railways. Eventually, it is appropriate for the society, scientists and specialists to contribute to the construction and improvement works in Karabakh, especially to the restoration of historical and cultural heritage.

References

Алиев И. *Нагорный Карабах: История. Факты, События*, Баку: Элм 1989. (Aliyev, I., Nagorno-Karabakh: History. Facts. Events. Baku: Elm, 1989)



Azərbaycanın tarixi abidələri və toponimləri: bibliografiya, Bakı: M.F.Axundov adına Azərbaycan Milli Kitabxanası, 2016.

Baharlı, Əhvalatı – Qarabağ. *Qarabağbimələr*, Bakı: Yazıçı, 1991.

Bünyadov, Z., *Azərbaycan tarixi (ən qəzdim zamanlardan XX əsrədək)*, Bakı: Azərbaycan Dövlət Nəşriyyatı, 1994.

Ələkbərli, Ə., *Qərbi Azərbaycan abidələri*, Bakı: Ağrıdağ, 2006.

Əliyev, İ. H., *Məmmədzadə K., Qarabağın alban abidələri*, Bakı: Azərənşr, 1997.

Əlizadə, R., Nəciyev E., *Qarabağın alban-qırçaq tarixinə dair*, 2021.

Jannatov A. J., "A Brief History of Karabakh and the Armenian-Azerbaijani Relations: Before the First Armenian-Muslim Clash (1905-1906)", *VAKANÜVİS-International Journal of Historical Researches*, Vol. 1, Special Issue on the Middle East, 2016, 150-161.

Qarabağ Yaddaş Kitabı. Bakı: MHS-Poliqraf, 2010.

Горбачев М. С., *Жизнь и реформы*. В двух книгах, Кн. 1, М., АО "Издательство "Новости", 1995. (Gorbachev M. S., *Life and Reforms*. In two books, Book 1, Moscow, JSC "Publishing House 'Novosti', 1995.)

Кавказский календарь на 1897 год: Изданы по распоряжению Главноначальствующаго гражданской частию на Кавказе (1896). Под ред. Е.Кондратенко. Тифлись. (Caucasian Calendar for 1897: Published by the order of the Head of the Civil Part in the Caucasus (1896). Edited by E. Kondratenko. Tiflis)

Кавказский календарь на 1916 год., Под ред. Н.П.Стельмашчука; Издан по распоряжению Наместника его Императорскаго Величества на Кавказе, 1915. (Caucasian Calendar for 1916, Edited by N.P.Stelmashchuk; Published by order of the Viceroy of His Imperial Majesty in the Caucasus, 1915.)

Məmmədov N., *İşğal altındakı tarixi-dini abidələrimiz*, Bakı: Nurlar, 2015.

Mustafayev E. K., *Şuşanın maddi-mədəni (irsi epiqrafik abidələr əsasında)*, Bakı: Elm, 2003.

Mustafazadə, T., *Qarabağ Xanlığı*. Bakı: Sabah, 2009.

Nemətova, M., "Şuşa şəhərindəki "Cümə" məscidinin kitabələri", *Azərbaycan SSR Elmlər Akademiyasının xəbərləri*. Bakı: Elm, No. 1, 1961.

Paşayeva, M., *Qarabağın və Şərqi Zəngəzurun alban abidələri*, Bakı: Bakı Beynəlxalq Multikulturalizm Mərkəzi, 2022.

Pirişev, A. M., *Siyasi strategiya və milli təhlükəsizlik*, Bakı: "BDU" nəşriyyatı, 2005.

Talibli, S. Ə., *Dağıdılan tarixi abidələr erməni vandalizminin əyani sübutudur*, Bakı: Elm qəzeti. 18(1253), 11, 2020.

Talıblı, S.Ə., “Erməni vandalizmi nəticəsində dağıdılmış Azərbaycanın tarixi,maddi-mənəvi abidələri”, *AMEA Şərşünalıq İnstitutu, Azərbaycan şərşünaslığı elmi-kütləvi jurnal*, 01 (22), 2022, 23-28.

Talıblı S. A. *İran İslam Respublikasının Qafqaz siyasətində Dağlıq Qarabağ problem (1991-2005-ci illər)*, Bakı: Elm və təhsil, 2016.

Internet Sources

Erməni vandalizmi: əsrilikdə olan Azərbaycan abidələri,
https://armenianvandalism.preslib.az/az_armenia.html

İşğal olunmuş İslam mədəni irsi!,
<https://abudhabi.mfa.gov.az/az/news/3287/isgal-olunmus-islam-medeni-irsi/>

Qarabağın tarixi, <https://mod.gov.az/az/qarabagin-tarixi-075/>

<https://iravan.preslib.az/meschidler.html>

https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.33_GC-IV-EN.pdf

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000187580>

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/resources.pdf>