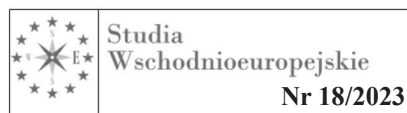


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Azerbaijani civilization: history and origins

The problem of the research is the Azerbaijani civilization. Azerbaijani civilization occupies a special place among other relevant civilizations with its unique preconditions, content and essence. The presented problem is studied from the main historical aspect. For this, a set of research methods is used. Among them, genetic (study of historical events and processes from their origins), historical comparison, periodization and typology methods take the main place.

As a result of the research, it is determined that the historical and cultural development of Azerbaijan confirms the legitimacy of the separation of the Azerbaijani civilization as an independent object of scientific research. It is determined that the Azerbaijani civilization has passed a very complex development path. Its main context is the historical development features of Azerbaijan. From this point of view, stages that leave serious traces in the development of Azerbaijani civilization (first state unions, Atropatena-Albania (Caucasus) period, etc.) are distinguished. The first local civilizations become the All-Azerbaijan civilization at a later stage. According to the modern typology of civilizations, an information society has been formed in Azerbaijan.

Both local, Eastern and Western sources played a unique role in the formation of Azerbaijani civilization.

1. Historical stages and typology of Azerbaijani civilization

The question of what civilization is has given rise to an extensive historiography. Without focusing on existing views on the history and meaning of the term, it can be expressed in general terms. Civilization is a historically established, stabilized historical and cultural community. Although all the political and socio-economic values covered by historical development are involved in this process, it is culture that unites them and turns them into a unified system. From the geographical and ethnic point of view, it can be formed on the basis of a specific country (China, etc.) or region (Western civilization, Eastern civilization, etc.), as well as on the basis of confessional unity (Christian or Islamic civilization).

Based on the history of civilizations, we can distinguish Azerbaijani civilization as an independent civilization. The territory of Azerbaijan is included in the ecumenism. BC, 2-2.25 million years ago, people lived here.

The remains of a man called Azykhanatrop date back to 350-400 thousand years ago. Important archeological cultures (Guruchay, Kur-Araz, etc.) existed in Azerbaijan. Some of them communicated with neighboring cultures both through migration and economic ties.

As a result, political processes developed in Azerbaijan and the first state unions were formed.

2. Historical stages of the Azerbaijani civilization

The historical roots of the Azerbaijani civilization date back to the 3rd millennium BC, when the first state institutions were established around Lake Urmia. The state institutions of Aratta, Lullubi and Kuti were associated with the Sumerian civilization. The centralized state of Manna created in Azerbaijan (IX-VI centuries BC) was the successor of the historical and cultural heritage formed in this territory. Manna had a written language and a developed culture.¹ With the conquests of Media and the rule of the Achaemenids (late VII century BC - 30s of the IV century BC), new historical terms emerged.

During the eastern campaigns of Alexander the Great (336-323 BC), Azerbaijan first encountered European martial arts, as well as the Hellenistic culture which emerged as a result of his victory. After Alexander's death, his empire collapsed. The states of Atropatena are formed in the south of Azerbaijan, and the states of Albania (Caucasus) are formed in the north.

With the formation of the states of Atropatena and Albania (Caucasus), an important event took place in the history of the local civilizations of Azerbaijan. The role of religious and spiritual values as a creative factor of civilization increased.

In ancient times, Azerbaijan was one of the centers of fire worship. It should be noted that merchants from India built a new temple called Ateshgah in the north of Azerbaijan (Absheron Peninsula, Surakhani village) in the early 18th century on the site of an ancient fire temple. Here, fire worship continued until the 1880s.

With the formation of the state of Atropatena (20s of the 4th century BC), the worship of fire became the dominant religion here. The main fire-worshipping temple was also located in the state capital of Ghazak. After the fall of the state of Atropatene as a result of the aggression of the state of the Sassanids (226-651), its territory became part of this

¹ Qaşqay S. Manna çarlığının tarixindən. Bakı, 1989.

state. The Sasanian rulers held their coronation ceremony at a fire-worshipping temple in Gazakh.

In the 4th century BC, a state called Albania was established in the north of Azerbaijan. This state is more historically referred to as Caucasian Albania. Strabo Greekized the names of the gods worshiped in Albania and wrote that the Albanians worshiped Helios, Zeus and Selene, especially Selene². In the early days, polytheism reigned here. Strabo, Greekizing the names of the gods worshiped in Albania, wrote that the Albanians worshiped Helios, Zeus, and Selena, especially Selena. However, this did not last long. From the beginning of the first century, Christianity spread in Albania. The spread of Christianity in Albania through the apostles and the apthocephalus of the Albanian Church gave this process a peaceful character. By the beginning of the 4th century, Christianity had become the state religion in Albania. The first Christian churches in the Caucasus appeared in Albania. The Holy Elysee Church in the village of Kish in the Republic of Azerbaijan is considered one of such churches. It's interesting that, this church was built on the foundations of the temple of Selena, the goddess of the moon in its place.

Christianity covered all spheres of Albanian life, combining old and new cultural achievements. Albania, as a Christian state, participated in the spread of this religion. Albania participated in the spread of this religion as a Christian state.³

The Sasanian rulers, who subdued Albania in certain historical periods, used the Christian church for political purposes in order to gain an advantage in relations with Byzantium, on the other hand, they sought to strengthen fire worship. Thus, the Albanian Christian Church was weakened.

Despite all this, through Christianity, Albania became an integral part of Christian civilization.

With the advent and spread of Islam in VII century, a new stage in world history began. By the time of this event, which caused very important changes in history, a single religious system had not yet been formed in Azerbaijan. This was one of the important factors that influenced the spread of Islam. Usually the Arab caliphate divides Islam into two directions (peace and violence).

The spread of Islam went fast in the fire-loving Atropatena.⁴ The spread of Islam was rapid in the fire-worshipping Atropatena. In Albania, this process lasted until the beginning

² Страбон. География//Алиев К. Античные источники по истории Азербайджана. Баку, 1987.

³ Moisey Kalankatuklu. Albaniya tarixi. Bakı, 1993.

⁴ Bünyadov Z.M. Azərbaycan VII-IX əsrlərdə. Bakı, 1989.

of the VIII century. When the Arabs spread Islam in Albania, unlike other countries, they pursued a selective policy, while Islamization was carried out on the plains, while Christianity remained in the mountains. Thus, along with the spread of Islam, the Albanian Christian civilization was able to maintain its existence. It is no coincidence that, unlike fire worship, a certain part of the historical and cultural heritage of the Albanian period has survived to this day.

The Turkic origins played an important role in uniting local civilizations in Azerbaijan and leading them to a common civilization.

The epic “Kitabi-Dada Gorgud”, formed in the VI-VII centuries and written in the X century, systematically reflects not only the period of its creation, but also the events and processes originating from the most ancient layers of history.⁵ The events described in the epic are connected with the historical conditions of the spread of Islam and indicate a new and more dynamic stage. Divinity brought Islam closer to Islam. Thus, the creative factor of Turkish civilization merged with Islam and became the leading current.

This situation became even more stable during the rule of the Muslim states that existed in Azerbaijan before the Mongol invasions of the 13th century.⁶ A common Islamic civilization was formed in Azerbaijan, on the other hand, Azerbaijan acted as an integral part of the world Muslim civilization.

Despite the introduction of a new religion during the Mongol Empire, Islam was adopted as a result of reforms carried out by Qazan khan.⁷

In the post-Mongol period, with the independence of the Shirvanshah state, as well as the replacement of the Garagoyunlu and Aghgoyunlu states, conditions were created for the transition to a new stage of Azerbaijani statehood, the “Centralized Azerbaijani State”.

Certain changes in the structure of Islamic civilization took place during the Safavid state. The Shiite sect of Islam became the state religion by Shah Ismail (1501-1524), the founder of the state.⁸ This, along with the religious life of the state, had a serious impact on the political and cultural life. An attempt by Nadir Shah (1736-1747) to carry out a religious reform that united the Muslim world was unsuccessful.

⁵ Kitabi Dədə Qorqud. Bakı, 1988.

⁶ Şərifli M.X. IX əsrin ikinci yarısı - XI əsr Azərbaycan feodal dövlətləri. Bakı, 1978; Ашурбейли С.Б. Государство Ширваншахов (VI-XVI вв.). Баку, 1983; Bünyadov Z.M. Azərbaycan Atabəylər dövləti. Bakı, 1986.

⁷ Ализаде А.А. Социально-экономическая и политическая история Азербайджана XIII-XIV вв. Баку, 1956.

⁸ Əfəndiyev O. Azərbaycan Səfəvilər dövləti. Bakı, 1993, s.48-50.

After the assassination of Nadir Shah, more than 20 khanates emerged in Azerbaijan. Each khanate was formed around a city, and the Karabakh khanate laid the foundation of a new center - the city of Shusha. The khanate period was characterized by an increase in the influence of the regions in the general Azerbaijani civilization.

After the fall of the Safavid state, the Afshar state was established by Nadir Shah (1736-1747). With the assassination of Nadir Shah, his state disintegrated. Khanates were established in Azerbaijan. Unification of the country was not possible. As a result of the wars of 1804-1813 and 1826-1828, the lands of Azerbaijan were divided. Thus, a new situation has emerged in the Azerbaijani civilization.

Although Islamic traditions were preserved in the southern lands of Azerbaijan under Iranian rule, as a result of the anti-national policy of the central government, its political and cultural rights were limited, and the supremacy of Iranian civilization became a priority. As a result of further development of the lands of Northern Azerbaijan, which came under the rule of the Russian Empire, the center of Azerbaijani civilization moved here.

The Russian Empire was still trying to occupy Azerbaijani lands during the reign of Catherine II. During the reign of Peter I, he managed to seize the Caspian lands of Azerbaijan (1723-1735). Although short-lived in the past, the period that began in the early 19th century lasted until 1917. As a result of the colonial policy of the Russian Empire, Azerbaijani civilization suffered a serious blow. The development of national and religious values was prevented. Orthodoxy began to spread rapidly. However, some progress was achieved only within the goals of the empire, including the acquaintance with progressive Russian intellectuals and advanced European culture through Russia.

After the collapse of the Russian Empire, Azerbaijan regained its independence. For the first time in the Muslim East, a republic was established in Azerbaijan.⁹ A law was passed giving women the right to vote. Unfortunately, the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan (1918-1920) lasted only 23 months. As a result of the occupation by Soviet Russia, the ADR collapsed. Forced Sovietization was carried out.

Today, Soviet civilization is divided as an independent civilization. The foundations of this civilization, which emerged in Soviet Russia, were forcibly exported to the former Soviet republics, including Soviet Azerbaijan. One of its biggest shortcomings was the deprivation of national ground.

⁹ Rəsulzadə M.Ə. Azərbaycan Cümhuriyyəti. Bakı, 1990.

The restoration of the state independence of Azerbaijan in 1991 gave a new impetus to civilizational development. Contrary to the atheistic policy of the Soviet state, the restoration of both religious and cultural values opened a new stage in Azerbaijani civilization. At present, multiculturalism has been declared a state policy in Azerbaijan. The World Forums on Intercultural Dialogue, etc., are systematically held.

3. Origins of Azerbaijani civilization

The origins of Azerbaijani civilization can be divided into three parts: Indigenous, Eastern and Western.

Local origins occupy the first and main place in the formation of Azerbaijani civilization. The first place here was due to the natural and geographical conditions of the country. The country has 9 out of 11 climatic zones. Azerbaijan has not only forests and deserts. Azerbaijani nature has historically created conditions for the development of both agriculture and animal husbandry, as well as handicrafts. The natural and geographical conditions and geostrategic position of Azerbaijan have led to migration from the East since the time of primitive society and created conditions for expanding trade and economic ties. Azerbaijan had its own primitive religious views and was the first place where world religions spread.

The historical development of Azerbaijan has left an important mark on the formation and development of its civilization. This historical development was cyclical. Independence and foreign slavery alternated periodically.

From the first days of its formation, the Azerbaijani civilization had close relations with the East. Eastern origins occupied a dominant position in the history of Azerbaijani civilization until the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries. There are two periods: pre-Islamic and Muslim. Babylon, Assyria, Urartu, Media, Achaemenids, Parthians, Sassanids and other empires that appeared in the East in the pre-Islamic period fought for power in Azerbaijan, and at certain times managed to establish their power. As a result of the occupation of the Arab Caliphate and the spread of Islam, a new period was opened in the history of Azerbaijani civilization. Azerbaijan has become an integral part of Muslim civilization. Even after the adoption of Islam, the struggle of powerful eastern empires for the lands of Azerbaijan continued. The Mongol Empire, the Red Horde and the Timurid state managed to establish their power here for some time. In the subsequent period, the Ottoman Empire came to the fore, which managed to leave certain traces in the Azerbaijani civilization.

Eastern states influenced civilizational processes not only with their political history, but also with their resettlement, socio-economic and cultural policies.

Western origins of Azerbaijani civilization were connected with the formation of military-political relations between them. The basis of this was the Eastern marches of Alexander the Great. Thus, the possibilities of the ancient civilization to influence Azerbaijan were created. This influence is documented in the words “əntiq” or “əntiqə”, which means “elegant”, “beautiful” in the Azerbaijani language. Coins similar to those of Alexander the Great were minted in Albania (Caucasus).

Subsequent influences are associated with the Romans. It is known in history that the Roman general Pompey’s march to Albania and Antony and Atropatena had friendly relations. The visit of the centurion of the XII Lightning Legion of the Empire in the 80s plays an important role in the relations between Rome and the Albanian state. This is reported by the epigraphic monument in Gobustan. It should be noted that the emperor Domitian mentioned in this epigraphic monument was later cursed, and everything connected with his name was destroyed. The Romans did not reach only this monument.

According to the Roman historian Momze, the centurion traveled north, but was killed there. According to the toponymic study of the village of Ramana in Absheron, the Romans settled here and introduced a new culture into its life, albeit on a village scale.

One can also note the influence of Byzantium on Albania after the collapse of the Roman Empire. The Albanian church was subjected to severe persecution both by the Sasanids and the Arab Caliphate for its relations with Byzantium. This shows that there were powerful connections between these churches.

After the adoption of Islam in Azerbaijan, European influence waned until about the 15th century. The strengthening of the Ottoman state and the threat to Europe prompted Western diplomacy to get closer to the Azerbaijani states. Thus, the possibilities of cultural influence between Europe and Azerbaijan have increased. The foundation of an important event for the Azerbaijani civilization was laid in the 15th century. Azerbaijani carpets are depicted in the paintings of European artists. This tradition was continued in the works of European travelers. It is known that according to Islamic traditions, painting was prohibited. From this point of view, the Azerbaijani theme in European painting is of particular importance from a civilizational point of view.

During the Safavid period, these relations expanded even more. With the incorporation of the northern lands of Azerbaijan to the Russian Empire, economic and cultural ties expanded both with the empire and with other European countries. An industrial revolu-

tion took place in Azerbaijan based on European technologies. The outstanding Azerbaijani thinker M.F. Akhundov laid the foundations of drama in 1850-1855, writing five comedies. The theater was founded in 1873 and the national press in 1875. Azerbaijani youth began to study in Russia and other European countries. Among them were such thinkers as Ali bey Huseyzade and Ahmed bey Aghayev, who made an invaluable contribution to the development of Azerbaijani civilization. The first opera in the East was written and staged by Uzeyir bey Hajibeyov.

With the collapse of the Russian Empire and the formation of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, relations with Europe reached a new level. Its founders chose a republican polity and created its institutions. In 1919, he founded the European-style university for the first time. He sent over 100 young people to the leading universities in Europe.

With the creation of the USSR, direct relations with Europe were abolished, since the external relations of the allied states became monopolized by Moscow.

Only with the re-independence of Azerbaijan, relations with Europe were restored. The integration of the Azerbaijani state into Europe allows the application of the most advanced examples of Western civilization in the country, further enrichment of the Azerbaijani civilization.

Poland also left its special mark on the development of Azerbaijani civilization. The fact that Poland was also part of the Russian Empire brought the fate of Azerbaijan closer to it. I.F. Paskevich, who signed the Turkmenchay Treaty, which completed the division of Azerbaijani lands, was sent from the Caucasus to Poland to suppress the uprising of 1830-1831. Poland held a special place in the empire in its struggle for independence. He had leading thinkers in all fields of science and culture. Thus, like other parts of the empire, it played a progressive role in the life of Azerbaijan. The constructions of Polish architects in Baku are considered masterpieces of Azerbaijani architecture and are well known. As a result of our research, I would like to mention two little-known facts. Ehsan khan from Nakhchivan also visited Warsaw in 1840. Polish Vladislav Karlovich Stakhovsky (1852-1932), born in 1852 in Guba, Azerbaijan, painted the cities of Baku and Yerevan in Azerbaijan and contributed to the painting of the country.¹⁰

Thus, it is obvious that European origins have played an important role in the formation and development of Azerbaijani civilization.

¹⁰ Вейденбаум Е. Путеводитель по Кавказу. Тифлис, 1888.

Summary

This article is devoted the concept of civilization, the historical stages and content of Azerbaijani civilization, identifies common origins, and discusses the role of Europe, including Poland as a member of the European family.

Keywords:

Azerbaijan, Europe, civilization, culture, religion, East, West

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