

CAPITAL

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General overview of Baku

Baku is the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is a large scientific, cultural and industrial center. Ancient foundations, a large area and population all make Baku one of the oldest and largest cities in the East.

People have lived and founded their settlements in Baku city and the Absheron peninsula since ancient times. This was motivated by continuous migrations from north to south and from west to east due to the physical and geographical conditions, a favorable location in the center of trade routes that crossed Silk Road, climatic conditions, production of petroleum fuel in ancient times and the availability of large power resources.

Baku is situated on the shore of the Caspian Sea in the south of the Absheron peninsula. It covers an area of 2,200 square km and has a population of 2 million. Nearly 500,000 refugees from Armenia as well as IDPs from the occupied territories, currently reside in Baku.

Baku has 11 administrative districts and 5 settlements.

Modern Baku is a large industrial complex with a developed extraction of oil and gas, petro-chemical, machine-engineering and metalworking industry, production of construction materials.

Baku is a great transport junction. The leading part in freight turnover belongs to the commercial seaport. Airlines connect Baku with a number of cities in the world. The railway lines connect Baku with Georgia, Russia and Iran.

Baku's twin cities are Izmir (Turkey), Naples (Italy), Dakar (Senegal), Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Bordeaux (France), Basra (Iraq), Houston (the USA) and Mainz (Germany).



Symbols of Baku city

Flag of "Bacu" (Baku) in the Middle Ages

The "Book of All Kingdoms", of 1350, tells the voyages of an anonymous Castilian friar and is illustrated with 113 flag images, referred to (though seldom described) in the text.

The 109th flag mentioned and illustrated in the "Book of All Kingdoms" is attributed to "Bacu" (Baku).

The 2005 Spanish illustrated transcription of the "Book" shows a white flag with a red emblem, made of a red crescent pointing to the hoist offset to the fly and a device consisting of a vertical bar ending in a ring on the top and in the base a an arm of a cross patty, with a shorter such element attached to its hoist side lacking the ring; the flag is shown in the ogival default shape of this source. This design appears five times in the "Book" (91st, 104th, 107th, 109th and 110th flags in the Spanish transcription), being the most duplicated flag in the "Book".



The anonymous author of the "Book" describes the flag thusly: *E las señales del Emperador de Sara son un pendón blanco con una señal bermeja tal* (The device of the Emperor of Sara is a white flag with a red sign - translation as provided in the Hakluyt Society edition (1912) of the "Book").

The emblem of Icheri sheher (the inner city) in the Middle ages

During archaeological excavations in Icheri Sheher and its surrounding scientists found many images of bulls (see over the text). It is well-known that the bull was very respected by Zoroastrians and it is quite possible that the bull head was the first emblem of ancient Baku. Portrayed on the central double gate of Icheri Sheher - Gate of Shah Abbas, the bull (at the left) with two symbols of the Fire and the Sun confirms this assumption (the pattern made on an apartment house of the 18th century, to some extent repeats this idea - see p. 84). The lions



The emblem of Baku – a bull head with two symbols of the Fire and the Sun

standing on the right and on the left from the bull, might have symbolized Safavids that took the city at the time when there were still Zoroastrians living in it. Despite this assumption, there is another one confirmed by the images of four lions of heraldic character that were preserved on the minaret of Juma Mosque, built in the 15th century (see over the text, in the centre), and lions could have been connected with the emblem of Shirvan. A traveler of the 17th century Kempfer explained the images over the gates of the Fortress in this way: "the lions protect the bull, that is - a city inside walls, under the Sun and the Moon, day and night".



Baku's first coats of arms

Baku was conquered by the Russian Empire in 1806 but was not granted a coat of arms until after 1840, when the tsar issued a decree on the "Institution of Administration for the Transcaucasian region". Once incorporated into the structure of Russian government, the region had to acquire the attributes of imperial heraldry.

In 1841 General Golovin, commander-in-chief of the Caucasus, and Senator Gan, chairman of the Commission for Establishing Governance of the Transcaucasian region, informed the capital that the Caspian region (which included Baku), "as well as other Caucasian districts" did not have a coat of arms. On 21 May 1843, the emperor approved a coat of arms for the Georgian-Imeretian governorate and the Caspian region. On 21 July of the same year the Senate issued its decree. The register of coats of arms of the Russian empire, compiled by Von Winkler, actually gives inaccurate dates for the approval of the coats of arms for the Caspian region and Baku, and we correct this here. The Baku district coat of arms was approved along with the one for the Caspian region.

The Baku coat of arms of 1843 was a shield, divided in two. The upper half contained part of the regional coat of arms on a gold background: on the left a "standing tiger", on the right "jets of burning gas, bursting from the ground". The lower part had a blue background: on the left an "endorse (*centre line- ed.*) and camel bearing saffron stems with flowers to symbolize the important businesses of transport and saffron cultivation"; on the right was a "cast anchor, signifying Baku's role as a port". From Winkler's terminology we conclude that the 1843 Baku coat of arms was not directly representative of the city. Depicting the whole or part of the governorate coat of arms was obligatory in districts of the Russian Empire, and this is true of Baku's coat of arms. The figures used: camel, tiger and saffron, are non-heraldic, i.e. they are taken from real life.



**Baku coat of arms
21.05.1843**



**Baku coat of arms
16.03.1883**

On the 1883 Baku coat of arms the central figure, three golden flames, represents the natural wealth (oil and gas) of the Absheron peninsula. Their placement on the shield (one at the top, two below) is incorrect in heraldry, as three figures on a shield, according to Winkler, should be arranged with two above and one below. A golden tower crown would top shields on the coats of arms of governorate cities, and tower and city crowns were based on a city's walls, with their castellations and turrets. The adornment around the shield was the Alexander's medal scarlet ribbon, which traditionally connects spikes, vines, anchors, hammers, picks and banners. On Baku's coat of arms it connected golden spikes, which were used on the coats of arms of cities associated with crop farming or the grain trade. The 1883 coat of arms was also not directly representative and its figures non-heraldic.

Baku's coats of arms during this period certainly helped in forming an image for the city and the changes in the city's heraldry underlined its growing significance within the Russian Empire.

The emblem of Baku city at present

Emblem of Baku City consists of right-angled shield-shaped board bottom of which is in form of sharp angle. Each part of the shield is bordered with 6-mm golden stripe.

Date of acceptance 29.03.2001



Main measures of emblem: width – 100 mm, height – 140 mm.

The emblem has a blue background (the symbol of peace and free sky) with three golden tongues of flames of equal size (symbol of land of fire). Height of each tongue of flame is 37 mm, width 26 mm.

In the bottom part of the emblem there is a vertical black-colored line, reminding about the presence of oil and occupying approximately 1/10 of the shield. The remaining part of the shield is occupied with turquoise sea waves.

There are three lines of 5 golden waves in turquoise background. Every wave measures 17, 6 mm.

On the buildings and monuments the emblem is framed in bottom of the board in form of bas-relief with 3 tongues of flames in centre.

Emblem in medals and honor diplomas is framed with olive (symbol of fame) branches from right and left. Branches are crossed in bottom.

All proportions are observed in medals, honor diplomas, other documents and things reflecting the emblem; scale of the description is defined respective of the need.

History of Baku city Executive Power

On 16 June 1870 Russian emperor decreed on foundation of the city self-governing bodies – dumas and municipality councils in Russia. According to that decree, municipality councils were organized in all big cities of Russia and elections started to create dumas. This decree's performance in Baku started 8 years later only and it was linked to the reason as if other nations do not possess yet the capacity of self-government.

Only in 1878 Duma elections started in Baku. Members of first Duma were 72, later they were 75. Members of Duma were called 'glasny'. According to the decree, number of Azerbaijanis could not exceed half of total number of Duma members. Those aged above 25, possessing immovable property or commercial or industrial enterprises estimated in 1500 manat could be elected to Duma. Municipality councils were considered executive bodies. Duma was legislative body. It was Duma's right to decide establishment of the city economy and implementation of this decision was fulfilled by the municipality council.



At the time Hasan bey Zerdabi and teacher Hebib bey Mahmudbeyov were elected glasny to Duma not as possessor of property but as custodian of rich family lost head. Decree allowed election of custodians of rich families to Duma. Baku Duma was located at the building in current Youth Square (there is garden in place of that building at present). In 1905 it moved to the building in Istiglaliyyet Street (current building of Baku Council). Date of issue of the Decree – 1870 has been engraved on its front.

Duma sittings were held in Russian. That is why the glasny not fluent in Russian were sleeping in the sitting. Often addressing the sittings Hasan bey Zerdabi was criticizing the anarchy, untidiness, bribery in the city, demanding opening of new schools in the city, free education for poor children, serious help to education affairs. Glasny Rasulov also was regularly giving speeches in Russian.

The Baku rich H.Z.Tagiyev, Musa Nagiyev, Shemsi Asadullayev, Ejder bey Ashurbeyov, Agabala Guliyev and others were elected glasny in all times.

Name of the organization ruling Baku, which became capital of the province since 1860:

Baku City Duma, founded in 1870, one of the richest departments of Russian empire.

Executive Committee of Baku City Laborer Deputies Council – 1939-1977

Executive Committee of Baku City National Deputies Council – 1977-1991

Baku City Executive Power – 1991-till present

Baku City Executive Power is located at 4, Istiglaliyyet Street, Baku City.

History of Baku

People have lived and founded their settlements in Baku city and the Absheron peninsula since ancient times. This was motivated by continuous migrations from north to south and from west to east due to the physical and geographical conditions, a favorable location in the center of trade routes that crossed Silk Road, climatic conditions, production of petroleum fuel in ancient times and the availability of large power resources.

The Egyptian Pharaoh Minesan first mentioned Baku in the Book of the Dead in 3,500 BC. Stone carvings dating back to 12,000 years ago and archeological excavations also evidence the ancient age of Baku. Another important piece of evidence is a stone carving by August Guy Octavio, who reflected the stationing of a military camp under the rule of the Roman emperors Pompey and Lucius near Baku (40 km to the south) for the purposes of seizing the southern Caucasus in the 1st century BC. The history of Baku reflects many of the milestones of Azerbaijan history and can be traced back to before the Common Era. This means that Baku is nearly 5,500 years old.



Baku was the capital of Shirvan (twice, during the reign of Akhsitan I and Khalilullah I), Baku khanate, Russian Baku governorate, Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, Azerbaijan SSR and finally the capital of modern Azerbaijan. The fortified city suffered, in turn, Mongol, Safavid, Ottoman and Russian invasions. In the second half of the 19th century an oil boom led to a major revival of the city. Baku was the place where the world's first oil well was drilled, the world's first paraffin factory built and the world's first oil platform established. The city was once captured by Turkish troops in World War I, but never during World War II. However, shortly after World War I, Baku was captured by Bolsheviks and, along with the surrounding area, was incorporated into the Soviet Union. During World War II, the growing demand for oil pushed Baku oil workers to reach record levels of extraction 23,482 million tons.

Antiquity

The history of the city of Baku goes back to the great antiquity, though the exact date of its rise is not known up to now. The territory of the Apsheron Peninsula where the city is situated enjoys a favorable geographical position, a convenient bay, a warm, dry climate, a fertile soil, natural minerals, and therefore the emergence of the ancient settlements here is quite natural. The district of Gobustan is to the southwest of modern Baku by the Caspian Sea. Here in the vast space were pastured numerous herds of animals the images of which are fixed on the rocks of the neighboring mountains. The pictures dating back to 8 millenniums reflect different hunting scenes, ceremonial and ritual processes of the ancient dwellers of these places.



Noteworthy is the Latin inscription of the 80s-90s of our era found at the foot of the mountain of Boyukdash in Gobustan which runs, "The time of Emperor Domitianus Caesar Augustus Germanicus, Lucius Julius Maxim, and Centurion XII of the Lightning Legion".

And the name of the settlement of Ramana or Romana in the vicinity of Baku perhaps also speaks of the Roman troops' stay in Apsheron in the I century. The Roman troops' distribution in Gobustan indicates the presence of a large settlement or city in the vicinity, which might have been Baku at that time towards which the Roman troops must have made for.



The discovered rock carvings in Bailovo and a bronze figure of a small fish in the Inner City approve the existence of the Bronze Age settlement within the city territory. In the 6th century BC the temple of fire worshippers Ateshi-Baguan was constructed within the modern city area. The earliest numismatic evidence, the Abbasid coin, concerns the 8th century.

In the Life of apostle Bartholomew Baku is identified as Alban. Some historians assume that Baku during the existence of Caucasian Albania was called Albanopolis. The local church legend specifies also a place of the martyr death of Bartholomew, at the bottom of the Maiden Tower within the Inner City where according to historical data on the basis of the pagan temple Arta a Christian church was built. At the same time Baku became a major center of the ancient Zoroastrism. Sasanid shah Ardashir I ordered "to keep an inextinguishable fire of the god Ormazd" in the city temples.

Middle Ages

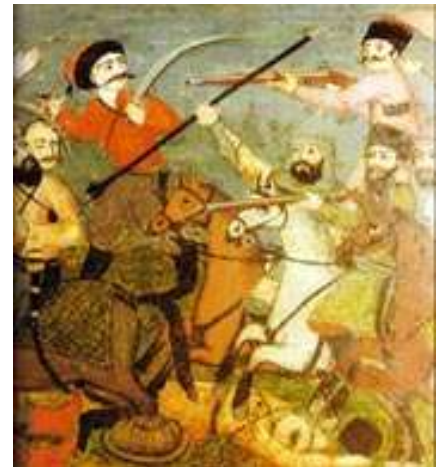
Baku was mentioned at least four times in the early Middle Ages, by historians Masudi-Abdul-Hussein, Istahri-Abu Iskhak, Muhammad Bekran and Abu Dulafin. Manuchekhr's son Akhsitan I in 1175 managed to repel probably the first Russian



assault on the vicinity of Baku and created a strong fleet in the Baku Bay. To defend Baku from the coastal side the Sabail Castle, which is presently under the water, was built in 1232-1235. However during the third Mongol campaign in Azerbaijan (1231-1239), led by Hulagu Khan Baku was occupied within the whole Shirvan state.



Marco Polo indicated that oil from Baku was being exported to the Near Eastern countries. The ships belonging to the Italian merchants from Genoa and Venice arrived in the Baku port while the city traded with the Golden Horde, the Moscow Princedom and European countries. From the 13th century a mint place was set working. In the second half of 14th century the Caspian Sea was sometimes referred to as the Baku Sea. It is also underlined in the atlas published in 1375 in Catalan language.



In 1501 Safavid shah Ismail I laid a siege to Baku. The besieged inhabitants fought with fortitude, relying on the impregnability of their fortification. Having seen the reluctance of the besieged to surrender Ismail ordered to undermine the part of the wall. Finally the fortress's defense was broken and many inhabitants have been annihilated. In 1538

shah Takhmasib put a final end to the Shirvanshahs' reign and united the entire country including Baku under the Safavid state. In 1540 Baku was again captured by the Safavid troops and in 1604 the city fortress was destroyed by Safavid shah Abbas I.

In 1636 German diplomat and traveler Adam Olearius described Baku's 30 oil fields noting that there was a greater quantity of the brown oil. In 1647 Baku visited a Turkish traveler Evliya Chelebi. In April, 1660 Cossacks under Stepan Razin attacked the Baku coast and plundered the village of Mashtaga. In 1683 Baku was visited by the ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden Engelbert Kaempfer. In the next year Baku was temporarily recaptured by the Ottoman Empire.

Russian Empire

In 1803 Sisianov reached an agreement with the Baku khan to compromise. The khan even swore an oath of citizenship to Russia, but the agreement was soon annulled. At the beginning of 1806 marching with a big army Sisianov united with General Zavalishin's fleet at 2 verst distance of Baku and restarted to conduct negotiations with the Baku khan on the surrender of the city. In a reply to the refusal on capitulation the city was exposed to firing of the marine flotilla after which the ruler of Baku



Huseingulu khan gave his consent to surrender the city. On



February 8, 1806 under the accompaniment of the retinue Huseingulu khan of Baku left the city to present the city's keys to Sisianov. When Sisianov accepted the keys he and Prince Elizbar Erstov standing next to him were suddenly killed by two people from among the retinue. Sisianov's body was chopped on the spot by the citizens of Baku who had run out of the fortress. After this his head was sent to

Fatali Shah in Iran and his body was buried in front of the Shamakhy gates where his murder had taken place. Having heard of Sisianov's death the Russian army retreated. But this murder only put off the city's capture. On October 3, 1806 General Bulgakov's forces captured Baku without striking a blow the Baku Khanate was annexed to Russia. Huseingulu khan of Baku fled to Iran.

In addition the Gulustan treaty signed between Russia and Iran in 1813 legalized the annexation of the Baku khanate to the Russian empire. However, the treaty did not solve all the Russian-Iranian contradictions. And the former Baku khan did not give up his hope to return to the power. In July 1826 when the Iranian army invaded the boundary of Northern Azerbaijan a detachment headed by Huseingulu khan made for Baku and sieged the city. He was actively supported by the inhabitants of Baku and its neighboring villages that revolted against the Russians. But the defeat of the Iranian army as well as the action of the Russian army directed against the Baku khan, forced the latter to return



to Iran in October 1826. With the termination of the last Russian-Iranian war in 1828 the Turkmanchay treaty was signed which divided Azerbaijan between Russia and Iran along the river Araks and officially annexed the occupied areas including Baku to Russia. That was a national tragedy; however the treaty contributed to the termination of wars in the region and its further development.

Oil Boom

In 1823 the world's first paraffin factory was built in the city and in 1846 the world's first oil well was drilled in Bibi-Heybat. In 1863 Javad Melikov from Baku has built the first kerosene factory. In 1873 the Russian government offered free competition for plots of land and Baku was caught the eye of the Nobel brothers. In 1882 Ludvig Nobel invited more technical staff to Baku from Finland, Sweden, Norway and Germany and founded a colony that he called Villa Petrolea, located in what was then and still is called the "Black City". Up to the end of 70s years of the XIXth century the oil has been transported by the bullock-cart drivers in wineskins or flanks. In 1883 a Rothschild's plenipotentiary arrived from Paris to Baku and created the "Caspian-Black Sea Joint-Stock Company". Meanwhile the increasing number of Baku oil magnates included Musa Nagiyev, Murtuza Mukhtarov, Shamsi Asadullayev, Seid Mirbabayev and many others.



The companies owned by Musa Nagiyev and Shamsi Asadullayev were the largest Baku oil producers. Established in Baku respectively in 1887 and 1893 they produced between 7-12 million poods of oil annually. The companies owned oil fields, distilleries and tankers. In the beginning of the next century more than hundred oil firms operated in Baku.

The Pre-Revolutionary Period

The second half of the XIXth century was highlighted by an intensive communication development. In 1868 the first telegraph line to Tiflis was established and in 1879 an under-sea telegraph line connected Baku with Krasnovodsk. In the same year the first railway in Azerbaijan, Baku-Sabunchi-Surakhany has set working. The railway measuring 520 versts, from Tiflis was finished in a short term, on May 8, 1883. In 1886 the first telephone line was enabled. In 1899 the first horse tramway appeared.

In the 70s the number of administrative and public institutions has grown, among them a provincial court and arbitration. In the first years of the 20th century a case considerations in the district court has won a greater popularity and lawyers from Petersburg, Moscow, Tiflis and Kiev, involved by fabulous fees, often got over here.

In the beginning of October, 1883 tsar Alexander III with the wife and two sons, accompanied by a huge retinue, arrived to Baku from Tiflis. The railway station has been prepared for the solemn ceremony. The population authorized Haji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev to welcome Alexander. The visitors have examined oil storage of Nobel brothers, the pump station and three powerful oil wells of Shamsi Asadullayev. Beginning from the 1890s, Baku provided 95% of the oil production in the Russian Empire and approximately half of world oil production. Within ten years the city had become the foremost producer of oil overtaking. In August, 1894 Nariman Narimanov established in Baku the Azerbaijan's first library and reading room. In the same year the city's first water distiller was put into operation.

In 1914-1917 Baku produced 7 million tons of oil each year, totaling 28 million, 683 thousand tons of oil, which



constituted 15% of world production the time. Germany did not trust Turkey in oil matters and transferred General Kress von Kressenstein from the Middle Eastern front and sent him with his troops to Georgia in order to enter Baku, through Ukraine, the Black Sea and Georgia. Great Britain in February, 1918 urgently sent General Lionel Dunsterville



with troops to Baku through Anzali to close the way for German troops. Having studied the Caucasus from the strategic point of view Dunsterville concluded: "Those who capture Baku, will control the sea. That's why it was necessary for us to invade this city". On August 23, 1918 Lenin in his telegram to Tashkent wrote: "Germans agree to attack Baku provided that we would kick the British out of Baku". Having been defeated in World War I Turkey had to withdraw its forces from the borders of Azerbaijan in the middle of November, 1918. Headed by General William Thomson, the English troops of 5,000 soldiers arrived in Baku on November 17 and a martial law was implemented on the capital of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic until "the civil power would be strong enough to release the forces from the responsibility to maintain the public order".

In the same year Thompson was faced with an enormous challenge to recreate confidence in the economy. His fundamental requirement was to recreate a sound and reliable banking system. He wrote, however: "the political situation in Baku does not permit the opening of a British Bank because this would have increased suspicion and jealousy as to British intentions."

Soviet Baku

In 1917, after the October revolution and amidst the turmoil of World War I and the breakup of the Russian Empire, Baku came under the control of the Baku Commune, which was led by dashnak - Stepan Shaumyan (Armenian origin).

From March 30 to April 3, 1918, forces of the Bolshevik Baku Soviet, aided by armed militia of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksutiun), carried out brutal attacks on the Muslim quarters of Baku city massacring, according to the New York Times, close to 12,000 Azerbaijani civilians. The four days of carnage, known in Western historical references as the March Days, unraveled a wave of mass killings committed by the forces of Baku Soviet and Dashnak militia in other parts of Azerbaijan from April through August 1918.

Historically remembered by Azerbaijanis as a *Soyqırım* (an Azeri Turkic term for *genocide*), the March Days of 1918 set the stage for other massacres committed against Azerbaijani people throughout the 20th century. March 31 was designated officially as a Day of Azerbaijani Genocide.

On May 28, 1918 the Azerbaijani fraction of the Transcaucasian Seim proclaimed the independent Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) in Ganja. Shortly after, Azerbaijani forces, with support of the Ottoman Army of Islam led by Nuru Pasha, started their advance onto Baku, and liberated the city from the coalition of Bolsheviks, Essers, Dashnaks, Mensheviks and the British forces under the command of General Dunsterville on September 15, 1918. Baku became the capital of ADR.



In the February, 1920 the 1st congress of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan illegally took place in Baku and made a decision about preparation of the armed revolt. On April 27 of the same year the units of the Russian 11th Red Army crossed the border of Azerbaijan and began to march towards Baku. The Soviet Russia presented the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic with an ultimatum to surrender and the troops entered Baku and captured the city next day. The city

became a capital of the Azerbaijan SSR and underwent many major changing.

As a result Baku played a great role in many branches of the Soviet life. Since 1921 the city was headed by the Baku City Executive Committee, commonly known in Russian as Bakgorispolkom. On February 8, 1924 the first tram line and two years later the electric railway Baku-Surakhany, the first one in the USSR, started to operate. While being in Baku in May, 1925 Russian poet Sergei Yesenin wrote a verse "Farewell to Baku! I'll see you no more: A sorrow and fright are now in the soul: And a heart under the hand is more painful and closer: And I feel the simple word "friend" more distinctly. However Yesenin returned to the city on July 28 of the same year. Maxim Gorkiy wrote after visiting Baku: "The oil fields remained in my memory as a perfect picture of the grave hell. This picture suppressed all the fantastic ideas of depressed mind, I was aware of". Well-known at that time industrialist V. Rogozin noted, in relation with the Baku oil fields, that everything there was done "without counting and calculating". In 1940 22, 2 million tons of oil was extracted in Baku which comprised nearly 72% of all the oil extracted in the entire USSR.

In 1941 the trolley bus line started to operate in the city, meanwhile the first buses appeared in Baku in 1928.

The US Ambassador to France, W. Bullitt, dispatched a telegram to Washington concerning "the possibilities of bombing and demolition of Baku" which were being discussed in Paris at the time. Charles de Gaulle was extremely critical of the plan according to both his wartime and postwar statements. Such ideas, he believed, were made by some "crazy heads that were thinking more of how to destroy Baku than of resisting Berlin". In his report submitted on February 22, 1940 to French Prime Minister General Maurice Gamelin believed the Soviets would fall into crisis if those sources were lost. However during the Soviet-German War ten defense zones were built around the city to prevent possible German invasion Werth, Alexander. Russia at War 1941-1945, planned within the



Operation Edelweiss. Even a cake for Hitler was adorned by a map of the Caspian Sea with the letters B-A-K-U spelled out in chocolate cream. After eating the cake Hitler said: "Unless we get Baku oil, the war is lost".

The first oil platform in the world, originally called "The Black Rocks," was built in 1947 within the city's metropolitan area. In 1960 the first Caucasus house-building plant was built in Baku and on December 25, 1975 the only plant producing air-conditioners in the Soviet Union was turned over for operation. In 1964-1968 the level of oil extraction rose to the stable level and comprised about 21 million tons per year. By the 1970s Azerbaijan became one of the largest producers of grapes and a champagne factory was subsequently constructed in Baku. In 1981 a record quantity of 15 billion m³ of gas was extracted in Baku.

The architectural monuments of Baku and Absheron peninsula.

Old city (Icheri Sheher) in Baku

Baku's "Ichari Shahar" (literally, Inner City), often referred to by foreigners as the "Old City", is a unique architectural preserve that differs considerably from the other ancient cities of Azerbaijan. Ichari Shahar has many fascinating architectural monuments, including the Maiden's Tower and the Shirvanshah Palace.

Inner City, Outer City According to the archeological evidence, the city of Baku dates back to at least the early centuries AD. After 1538, Baku served as the capital of the khanate of Shirvanshah after Shamakhi, a city 1.5 hours north of Baku, sustained a major earthquake. That's when the Shirvan Shahs moved their capital to Baku.



From 1747 to 1806, Baku was the capital of a khanate that included Baku itself and 39 neighboring villages. This independent principality was called "Badkube" (i.e. wind-beaten), "City of Winds", and coined its own money.

During this period, the entire city was located inside the fortress walls and had a population of approximately 7,000 people. After the Russians occupied the city in 1806, and especially during the first Oil Boom of 1850-1920, Baku grew rapidly beyond its fortified walls. This is when the expressions "Ichari Shahar" (Inner City) and "Bayir Shahar" (Outer City) first came into use. Huseingulu Sarabski writes: "Baku was divided into two sections: Ichari Shahar and Bayir Shahar. The Inner City was the main part. Those who lived in the Inner City were considered natives of Baku. They were in close proximity to everything: the bazaar, craftsmen's workshops and mosques. There was even a church there, as well as a military barracks built during the Russian occupation." Residents who lived inside the walls considered themselves to be superior to those outside and often referred to them as the "barefooted people of the Outer City."

The Inner City consists of many small sections that are demarcated by winding lanes and narrow streets. Originally, each section, or block, was named after a neighboring mosque: Juma Mosque Block, Shal Mosque Block, Mohammadyar Mosque Block, Haji Gayib Mosque Block, Siniggala Mosque Block, Gasimbey Mosque Block and so forth.

Some of the sections of the Inner City and their mosques were named after the clans and nationalities that lived there. For instance, Gilaklar was the place where the merchants from Gilan stayed; Lezgilar was the street where the Dagestani armorers and gunsmiths lived. Most of the Inner City's residents were craftsmen, merchants

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or seamen. Some of the sections took their names from certain professions, such as Hamamchilar (Bathhouse Owners), Bazarlar (Cloth Traders) and Hakkakchilar (Stone Engravers).

Back in 1806, there were 707 shops and craftsmen workshops in the city, even though the total population was only 7,000. Every merchant and skilled craftsman had his own store. Their customers were the traders who came to Baku from various countries. Baku ships carried goods to and from Iran, Central Asia and Russia.

Icheri sheher today

Having entered Icheri Sheher's through the gate from Sabir Square, one can visit the house of At-Agha, who was ESP-gifted and could heal people. Baku residents even know, after At-Agha's death, think the house to be a sacred place and come here with hopes to have their wants come true.

The air of the Old City has always been attracting artists; there are many studios and exhibition galleries as the Centre of Azerbaijan Miniatures and "Gala", "Gyz Galasi", "Absheron" and "Baku" picture galleries, which regularly gather art lovers.



Vagif

Mustafazadeh, a famous Azerbaijani musician and the founder of jazz-mugham, which has been a new school in music, was born, grew and lived his short life in the Old

City. His House-Museum is here nowadays. In one of Icheri Sheher's narrow streets, there is a unique Museum of Miniature Books, whose collections has more than 5,300

books published in 60 countries, their size being from 100mm:100mm to 2mm:2mm. Academic institutions, the Centre of Archeology and "the Encyclopedia", are situated here as well.

In the fort labyrinths, the versatility of old-architecture masterpieces, exotic for tourists, is mixed with modern buildings, where the Greek, Italian, Norwegian and Polish embassies and local offices of foreign companies and international organizations are located.

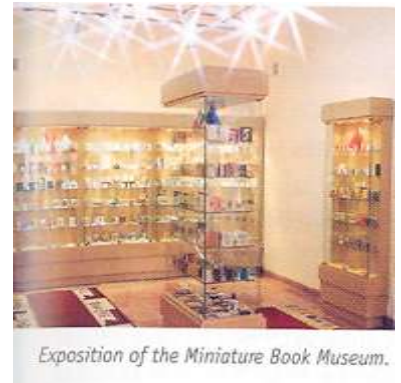
One can buy exotic souvenirs, copper dishes, rugs and other carpet products in Icheri Sheher's numerous antique shops.



Holding Icheri Sheher's Day Festival, including a set of events to attract public attention to this ancient architecture site and revive national traditions, has become a tradition within the framework of the Project of supporting Azerbaijan's cultural legacy. For the festival time, Icheri Sheher magically appears a medieval city, in whose streets one can meet a merchant with a loaded camel, watch dramatic performances and visit various exhibitions of applied arts, national clothes and dishes.

In modern Baku, Icheri Sheher seems a small active island enclosed in legendary fort walls. Local residents are still living in houses built from the rise of the fort till nowadays, in narrow medieval streets.

For centuries, Icheri Sheher's natives have had their unique mode-of-life, including its values and the world outlook, an original code of honor, certain activities and even entertainments such as "meykhana" or sport exercising in special premises, where "pekhlevans" could wrestle. Therein, Icheri Sheher's each block had its own name: "Aghshalvarlilar" (People in White Trousers), Garashalvarlilar (People in Black Trousers),



Exposition of the Miniature Book Museum.



Fragment of the exposition of the Archaeological Center.

"Kosalar" (the Beardless), "Bozbashyeyanlar" ("Bozbash" (a national food) Lovers, "Elichomakhlilar" (People with Whips), Bij-Zeynalabdin (Cheater Zeynalabdin) etc.

Plunging into the narrow streets and lanes of the Old City, one can see completely European facades next to mosques, baths and houses with ancient ornaments. It could be easily called an open-air museum, among whose walls the unique sites of ancient Azerbaijan history and culture of different epochs, such as Shirvanshahs' Palace, the Maiden's Tower, Sinig-Gala, mosques, baths, the Multani and Bukhari caravanserais and others, are concentrated.

The Ensemble of the Shirvanshahs' Palace

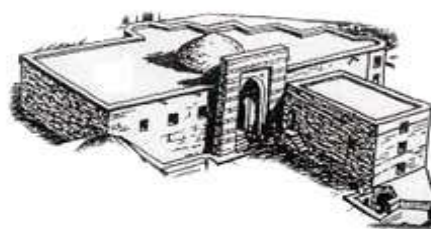
The Shirvanshahs' Palace ensemble is the biggest monument of the Shirvan-Absheron branch of the Azerbaijani architecture. In the XV century following the rise of economic and political importance of Baku, which was one of the strongly fortified fortresses and the main port in the Caspian, Khalilullah, the Shah of Shirvan, transferred the Shirvanshahs' residence from Shamakhy to Baku. In connection with the flood of the Sabail fortress the construction of a new palace was carried out in a new safe place on the top of the Baku hill. The ensemble was not built according to a single architectural project and consists of a range of constructions located in accordance with the relief on three levels: the main building of the palace (the 1420s), Divankhana (the 1450s), the burial-vaults – (1435), the shah's mosque with a minaret (1441), Seyid Yahya Bakuvi's mausoleum (the 1450s) and the remnants of the Keyguba mosque. The palace constructions include a portal in the east – Murad's gate (1585), a reservoir and the remnants of the bath-house. According to some data to the north-east of the palace building there formerly used to be the shah's stables, but at present there are living houses in this place. To the north of Divankhana in one of the living houses one can see the foundation of the surviving ancient wall, the laying of which is similar to the laying of the palace facade. This seems to be the remnants of the laying of the buildings belonging to the palace ensemble. In 1964 the complex was declared a museum-reserve and was taken under the state protection.



The Palace Building

The Shirvanshahs' palace ensemble was not built on the basis of a single architectural project. However, taking into consideration the purpose of each building its builders contributed to the formation of an architectural landscape with their location.

The palace, the main building of the Ensemble which is the earliest of all the palace constructions was built almost within ten years according to the historians – architects. This is the biggest building of the complex both for its dimensions and for the area it occupies. Its construction was started in 1411 by Shirvanshah Sheykh Ibrahim I, Tamerlane's ally.



But after his death his son Shirvanshah Khalilullah I who was said to be married to Khanika, Tamerlane's great-granddaughter continued his work.

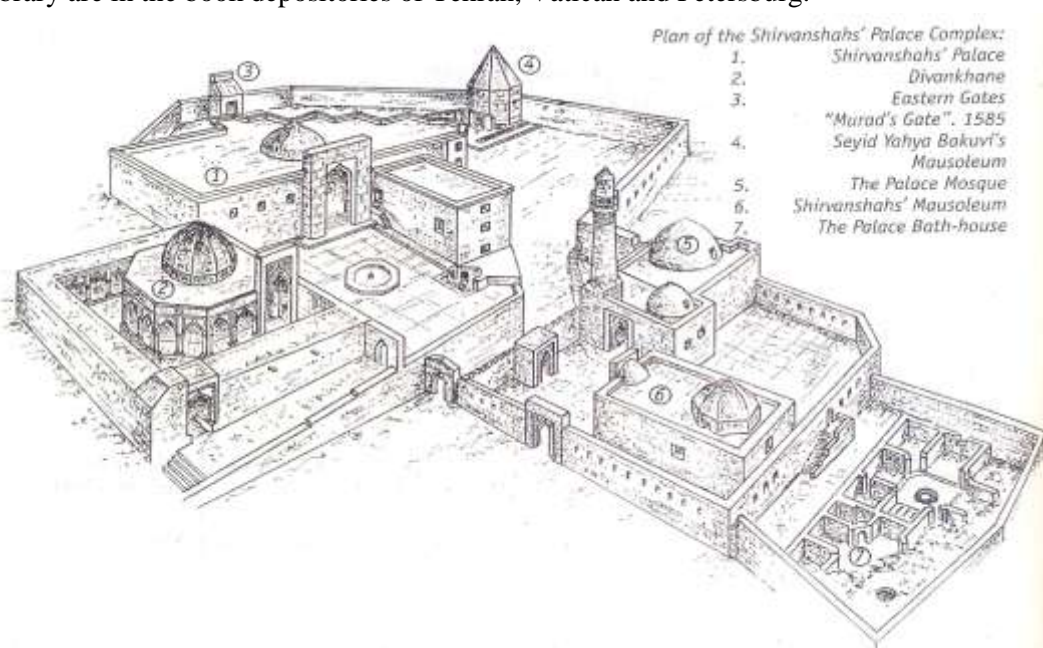
The two-storey building of the palace numbers about 50 different dimensions and outlines of the constructions connected with 3 narrow winding staircases. The big lancet portal directly leads from the courtyard to the second floor, into a high octahedral lodging covered with a cupola. A small, also an octagonal vestibule, located behind it, connects it with the rest of the lodgings in the palace. A crack-like inlet in the bays of the octahedral lodging served as a means of communication with the lower floor. Only 16 out of 25 rooms on the second floor have survived. The lower floor of the building with 27 rooms served to house the servants and to store the household reserves. It has remained as well as it was built in the XV century. The austerity of the front courtyard of the main façade differs from a richer treatment of the buildings of the other courtyards. The laconic forms, the sunny tones of the smooth surfaces of the walls, the patterned network of the upper windows and window-inlets



of the lower floor give a unique expressiveness to the image of the building. The excavations of the rooms on the first floor showed that the palace stands on the rock and below it in the antiquity before the construction of the palace there was a large construction with the foundation of its walls wedging in the foundation of the palace.

Before the Shirvanshahs' Palace became a museum-reserve it had had to witness in its time a lot of good and sad events. Thus during the Safavis' occupation of Baku in 1501 the palace became subject to devastation. The entire treasure of the Shirvanshahs - weapons, armour, jewellery, carpets, expensive clothing materials, rare books from the palace library, gold and silverware - was taken away to Tabriz by the Safavis. But after the Chaldiran battle in 1514 between the Turkish armies under the command of Salim I (the son of the conqueror of Constantinople Mahammad II) and the Safavis which ended in the latter's defeat, the Turks got the treasure of the Shirvanshahs' Palace as a trophy. Today a part of it decorates the museum collections of Turkey, Iran, England, France, Russia and Hungary. Thus the Istanbul museum keeps Khalilullah I's chain armour made in 1424 and two helmets belonging to Farrukh Yasar - his son who was his heir among his five surviving sons. Several carpets of the palace were found in the Museum of Albert and Victoria in London, and the ancient volumes of the royal library are in the book depositories of Tehran, Vatican and Petersburg.

In his book "Travel Notes" the Turkish traveller Evliya Chalabi writes that the Turkish commander Mustafa Lala Pasha "brought back the roof, the cupola and the window frames with the glasses of a beautiful building with him" on leaving Baku occupied by him in 1585, "and presented them as a gift to Sultan who



erected out of them in the garden "Sultaniye Gasri Humayun" a royal castle rousing amazement for its beautiful view." The above-mentioned cupola with the tile cover was possibly from the roof of the Shirvanshahs' Palace.

The Shirvanshahs' Palace suffered during the bombardment by the Russian squadron from the sea in 1723, during the liberation of the city by the Persian troops and during the seizure of Baku by the Russian army in 1806. After Baku's annexation to the Russian Empire the palace was transferred to the tsarist military department which bossed here almost for a century. The Shah's chambers on the second floor were turned into soldiers' barracks and the lodgings below them into a stable, arsenal; somebody has painted over the stone paintings in the portal of the burial-vault in green and the shah's mosque was almost turned into a garrison church at the desire of the Russian military authorities. The military personnel repaired the palace partially and at the same time they adjusted the palace buildings to the arsenals. During the reconstruction the cupolas were destroyed and part of the walls dividing the rooms on the first and second floors was pulled down. The remnants of the cupola, lancet and cruciform ceilings were destroyed and replaced by flat girder ceilings. Some window openings were installed, but the window frames cut in the stone were destroyed. An entry was constructed to the second floor of the north façade of the palace, and a big aperture was made in the wall so that the two-wheeled carts with harnessed horses could drive up straight onto the second floor of the palace from the street. The blue glazed mosaic plasterer of the vaults and cupolas was destroyed. The slots of the bullets are still preserved on the walls, which is the result of the soldiers shooting training.

At the end of the XIX century the military commissariat played a role of a saviour of the entire ensemble willy-nilly. While selecting a site for the construction of Alexandre Nevski's cathedral the choice fell on the territory occupied by the complex of the Shirvanshahs' Palace. It was only due to the circumstances that the military had nowhere to go that saved the architectural monument from a complete destruction. In 1920 again

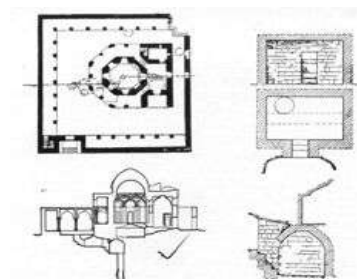
the stables, the arsenals, the soldiers' barracks of the "glorious" XI Red Army of workers and peasants including an infirmary were placed in the palace.

All around was in a miserable desolation, therefore a large group of eminent Azerbaijani historians and archaeologists had to appeal to the leadership of the Azerbaijani Revolutionary Committee with a special letter in the name of the rescue of this unique Medieval archaeological monument. Only following all this, cleaning and restoration work started in the complex. At the very end of the 20s the Museum of Azerbaijani History was registered in the cold, wet lodgings with worn out roofings in the palace which housed it in 1920s-1930s.

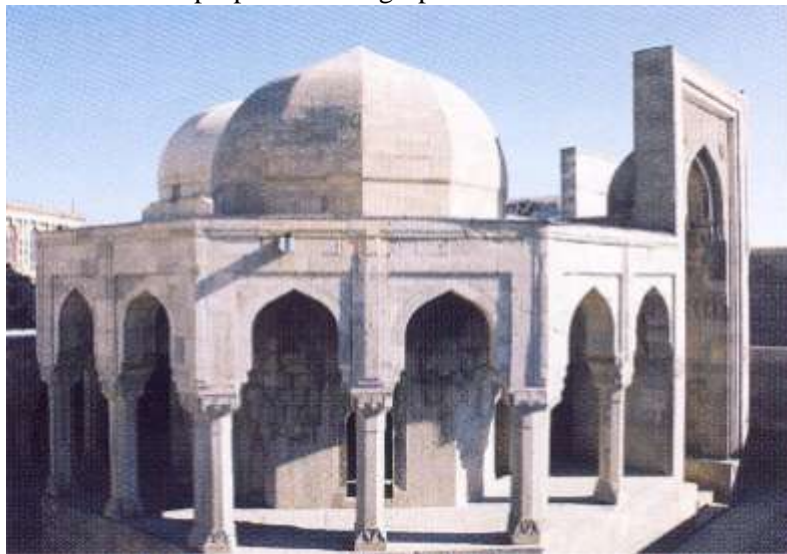
The palace is in need of a serious restoration. The restorations of the palace complex in 1920s, 1930s or 1950s were carried out at random, unprofessionally and unsystematically. Since 1992 a new restoration work has started in the building of the palace.

Divankhana

The main building of the Shirvanshahs' Palace adjoins Divankhana, a small fine pavilion situated inside a small yard surrounded by a gallery-arcade on three sides. The Divankhana pavilion consists of an octahedral hall covered with a stone cupola both inside and outside. It adjoins a rectangular apartment of the vestibule. Inside the apartment the vestibule is linked with the entrances into the gallery-arcade, into the hall and beneath the floor of the hall into an octahedral chamber under which there is a second chamber of a rectangular shape in the dungeon as an entrance of which serves an opening on the ground level to the north side. In the rock serving as a basis for the second chamber there is a mouth of a five-metre deep well. The functional purpose of these two chambers as well as that of the entire apartment remains unknown as a whole.



The well-proportioned high portal of the main entrance is decorated



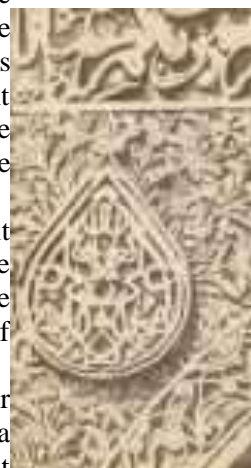
with an ornament and inscriptions of extraordinary refinement and beauty. The ornament pictures the interlacing fig and vine leaves. Besides this, the portal is decorated with two medallions inside of which there are inscriptions in the Arabic language in graphic print of Cufa. To an unfamiliar viewer it seems only as a mere ornament.

The architectural composition and planning of Divankhana are original and do not have analogues in the other Oriental countries. The construction of Divankhana was not finished which is testified by the incompleteness of the ornamentation of the capitals and the bases

of the colonnade and other details of the building. The construction of the building might have been stopped in connection with the military developments of 1500-1501. The features of the style and the partial incompleteness of the decoration work date Divankhana back to the end of the XV century.

There are different opinions related to the purpose of Divankhana. Some think that it was a trial place, justice being carried out in its cupola hall with a round opening in the middle of the stone floor. Following the pronouncement of death sentence the head of the criminal was chopped off by an executioner directly above that opening, and the body of the executed was floated into the sea through certain underground channels.

Others suggest that it served for legal proceedings, receptions or state councils or was a mausoleum. In the XIII-XV centuries the financial department was headed by a sahib-divan. The Divankhana pavilion under the domination of the Shirvanshahs might have been the lodging of the sahib-divan, of his functionaries and the treasury itself. The mysterious opening in the cupola, covering the chamber, coming out in the centre of the octahedral hall was apparently made later,



perhaps during the developments of 1501, during the seizure of the city by the Safavis and the ravage of the palace in search of the treasury. The Safavis were said to have discovered a lot of gold and valuables in the cupola of the pavilion.

A mausoleum version is also possible. This is proved by the existence of a two-chamber vault in its dungeon and Surah from the Koran on the portal of the entrance: "The God calls to the abode of the world and leads whomever he desires to a true path... This is the abode of the paradise where they stay forever." It is curious that in the surviving legends the entire territory of Divankhana, especially the underground chamber with a well called a milky well was considered a holy place where the women who had lost their milk were healed. The territory occupied by Divankhana and the palace must have been a holy place back in the pre-Islamic period.

The Shirvanshahs' Burial-vault

The family burial-vault of the Shirvanshahs is of a rectangular shape and crowned with a hexahedral cupola which is decorated from outside with multi-radial stars. In the past the planes of the cupola's hollows were bricked with blue glaze. This is also confirmed by I.Lerkh, the traveller, visiting Baku in 1733. He points out, "The roof (burial-vault) was covered with stones of azure colour."

The inscription on the entrance doorway indicates the purpose of the building, "Khalil-Ullah I, the greatest Soltan, Great Shirvanshah, the namesake of the divine prophet, the defender of the religion ordered to construct this light burial-vault for his mother and son in the year of 839"

(1435-1436). On the pointer of the entrance doorway there is a hexahedral rosette with the name of Ali reiterated 12 times. An inscription from the Koran, glorifying Allah crowns the top of the portal.

On 2 drop-shaped medallions in the flannel parts of the portal there are inscriptions with the architect's name – Memar (architect) Ali. On each medallion one and the same inscription is repeated twice: in a direct and mirror reflection. With great art and skill did the architect cut on the shah's burial-vault his own name which had remained unknown for long years and was read only in 1945 by the Azerbaijani scholars.

The centre of the building is a sepulchral place with a cupola. According to some sources in 1501 after Shirvanshah Farrukh Yassar's death, Shah Ismayil's troops captured the fortress of Baku and committed the remains of the deceased in

the burial-vault to the flames. The archaeologists' work in 1945 refuted this version. A vault with 5 burials covered with tombstones was discovered under the wooden floor of the burial-vault. It was made known that in three tombs there had been buried adults and in the two others - children. As the work continued in the burial-vault a more number of untouched tombs were found out which totalled 14. These burial-places were the graves of the family members of the Shirvanshahs. The tombs turned out to be intact, but the tombstones were missing.

The archaeological work confirmed the existing inscriptions by proving that here were buried Bika khanyam – Shirvanshah Khalil-Ullah's mother and his son, and the other members of the family too. During the clearing of the burials were found the remains of the material (tirma) with the traces of geometrical ornament, with medallions within which were woven inscriptions in the Arabic print, several blue beads, a gold pin with a turquoise and 6 rubies, gold earrings. At present these materials are kept in the funds of the History Museum of Azerbaijan.



"The Palace of the Khan of Baku"
Artist Grigory Gagarin (1847)



The Palace Mosque

The Palace Mosque is situated in the lower court of the complex. The laconicism of its prismatic volumes, completed with two slightly pointed cupolas, is shaded by a well-proportioned vertical line of the minaret rising above in the north-eastern corner of the building. There are 2 chapels for prayers in the mosque: a hall of a large size for men and a hall of a small size for women, also a couple of small subsidiary rooms where one can climb up the winding stone staircase. All these apartments are inscribed into a rectangle of the scheme out of which only the women's chapel is distinguished with a slight protuberance.

Three entrances lead to the mosque. The northern entrance is the main one emphasized by a portal. On both sides of the portal there are half-circular bays which were designated for shoes, as according to the Islamic belief the mosque should not be entered with shoes on and without performing the ceremony of ablution. The ablution process was performed in the northern part of the court behind the portal passage to the lower court where there is a well and a small swimming pool on a lofty square.

In the east on the part of the middle court there is a second entrance leading to the mosque which is marked with a more modest portal; in the west the entrance aperture is not distinguished by anything.

Four big clay jugs with their narrow necks turned into the hall are walled in the upper corners of the central hall of the mosque. On the one hand, this gives an excellent resonance, for the jugs serve as an original microphone; on the other hand it is a constructive-engineering anti-seismic method, giving a big steadiness to the building lowering the centre of gravity by lightening the upper part.

In the butt-end of the southern wall of the central hall of the mosque there is a modestly decorated mehrab with a shallow bay covered with a lancet semi-cupola. There are bays of different shapes and designations in the mosque. They served as the storehouse of the prayer carpets, lamps, the books of the holy Koran and beads.

The windows are taken in stone bars-patterns (shabakas) which give a special beauty to this modest building from the point of view of an architectural decoration.

The minaret of the mosque rises 22 m high. There is an inscription laid under the stalactite belt of the minaret which reads, "The greatest Soltan Khalil-Ullah I ordered to build this minaret. May God exalt the days of his governing and reign. The year of 845" (1441-1442). The small balcony (sharafa) of the minaret had previously been made of stone, but in 1723 when Baku was exposed to the Russian troops' bombing, the shell destroyed part of the minaret. Later in our times the small balcony was restored and made of iron.



The Palace Bath-House

The Palace Bath-house is situated on the lowest terrace of the complex. It was discovered in 1939. The archaeological excavations exposed a big bath-house consisting of 26 rooms, covered up with earth above which there was a garden. In 1953 the bath-house was partly cleared and in 1961 it was laid up. On the basis of the surviving remains of the walls of the bath-house one can say that its rooms used to be covered with cupolas and the light penetrated through the openings in the cupolas. The bath-house was semi-underground for keeping the heat in winter and the cool in summer. The indicated system is typical for the bath-houses in Baku and Apsheron.



The project of the palace bath-house consists of 2 big square apartments, further divided by 4 pylons into smaller rooms.

One group of rooms "churl" or "bayir" (external) was designated for undressing and another group "icheri" (internal)

for bathing. The bathing section adjoins reservoirs for cold and hot water – “khazna”. A special furnace chamber for heating the water was installed in the place where the reservoir for hot water was. The heating of the baths was carried out with the condensed white oil, hardened as a yellow stone that burns like a candle. The heating went through the steaming channels beneath the floor of the bathing section. The cloakroom was heated by means of the hot air coming from the bathing section.

Traveller I.Lerkh who visited the palace in 1733, wrote about the bath-house, “It is well decorated both from outside and inside.” The water from the ovdan (reservoir) at the walls ran into the boiler-room of the bath-house – “gyulkhana” and further was distributed through ceramic pipes for which special channels were built. The entrance into the ovdan under the earth had a lancet aperture leading to the staircase cut in rocky tracts that ended in the depth of 70 steps at the big reservoir. The water ran there from the subterranean galleries - kahrises. During the construction work near the western fortress wall in the depth of 10 metres there was found an ancient water pipe running from the mountains towards the ovdan and the Shirvanshahs’ Palace. The palace and bath-house must have been provided with the water from this water-pipe.

There were many rooms: a cloakroom, a bath-house and “khalvati” (a secluded place) – a nook for single bathing. There are small swimming pools of a round shape and cells for shoes in the rooms. The last compartment with a restored cupola has a majolica decoration of the walls partially preserved.

Seyid Yahya Bakuvi’s Mausoleum

Seyid Yahya Bakuvi’s Mausoleum is situated in the southern part of the palace complex and is generally known under the name of a “Mausoleum of the “dervish”.

According to the sources Bakuvi was a royal scholar in the court of Shirvanshah Khalilullah. He was born in the town of Shamakhy. He was a sophist, adherent to the teaching of Sheikh Sadraddin who was at the head of the sect “khalvati” (a secluded place). After Sheikh Sadraddin’s death Bakuvi moved to Baku. According to different sources he died in 868 (1464) and was buried in the territory of the palace complex. Up to present about 15 works by Seyid Yahya Bakuvi have been survived. They all are of a sophist-mystic nature and are kept in the cities of Turkey: Istanbul, Konya, Manisa.

These are such works as “The Mysteries of the Seekers of Truth”, “The Mysteries of Inspiration”, “The Symbolism of Signs”, “Commentaries on the Samanids’ Dynasty”, “The Mysteries of Spirits”, etc. which are the valuable sources in the sphere of studies of philosophy, astronomy and mathematics.

Sophism is a mystic-ascetic trend in the Islam known since the VIII century. The sophists aspired to the individual unity with the God and even for the blending with him through self-absorption, internal contemplation, followed by ascetic exercises.

The Mausoleum is of an octahedral shape and covered with an octahedral marquee. It consists of ground and underground parts. The upper part of the Mausoleum served to perform the cult rites, and the lower one housed the sepulchral vault. The inside of the mausoleum was ornamented and decorated with a coloured plaster. The Mausoleum is faced with narrow and wide rows of stones, tightly fitted to one another and wonderfully-dressed.

On the southern, eastern and western verges of the Mausoleum there are three small lancet windows with a stone bar - shabaka. The Mausoleum is one of the branches of the Shirvan-Apsheron school of architecture.

The Mausoleum was built to an old mosque known as Key-Kubada Mosque. It was in this mosque that Seyid Yahya Bakuvi worked, prayed and taught. The mosque was built in the years of Shirvanshah Key-Kubad’s reign in the XIV century and was named after him. But in 1918 the mosque burnt in the fire and at



Seyid Yahya Bakuvi's Mausoleum and remains of Key-Kubad's Mosque, XV c.

present only its foundation is remaining. It seems probable that the mosque had been built in the place of a more ancient one.

The Eastern Portal



The ensemble of the palace constructions also includes the portal of Eastern Gates, the so-called “Murad’s Gate” which stands alone. It was erected within the walls of the citadel rather later than all the other constructions of the complex during the seizure of Baku by the Turks in the XIV century. The gates were named by them in honour of Soltan Murad III.

By its general style and artistic composition the eastern portal bears the spirit of the portals of Divankhana and the burial-vault. However, in it one can see the features of the fall of the art of construction, the poorer quality of the stones and the destruction of the purity of the style of the Azerbaijani ornamental

art.

The builder of the portal was an architect, Master Amir-shah Vayankukhi by name, an inhabitant of a suburb near Tabriz. The upper part of the portal is decorated with a construction inscription in Arabic, “(Great) Ulu Rajab-baba-Bakuyi ordered to construct this noble building in the period of the fairest and greatest Soltan - Murad in 994. (1585-86).



Rosettes with vegetable ornaments are set on both sides of the inscription. In the lower part of the portal there is a deep bay formed of stalactite semi-cupola. Unlike the other portals in the courtyard, this portal has a wide lancet entrance doorway resembling a gate. Most probably this



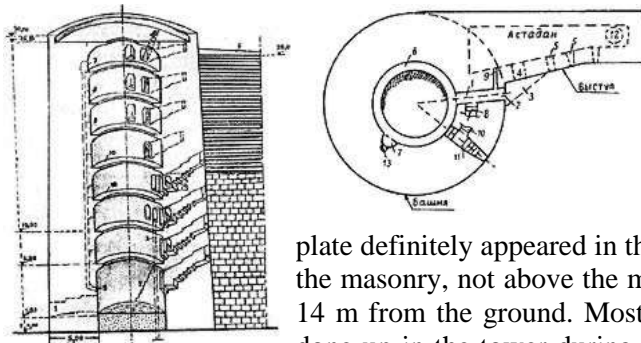
construction functioned as an entrance into the building which either did not survive or had never been erected at all. This can be seen from the text of the inscription, which mentions the construction of a building – as an “imarat” (a palace), but not as a gate.

The architect tried to preserve the unity of the ensemble, but anyway could not avoid the impact of the collapse, which took place in the architecture of the period full of military actions.

The Maiden Tower

The most majestic and mysterious monument of Baku is Gyz Galasy - the Maiden Tower rising in the south-eastern part of the fortress of Icheri Sheher. This unique building of the Azerbaijani architecture does not have any analogues in the East. There are numerous debates on the date of construction and purpose of this monument, at present it attracts the attention, most of all for its unparalleled form.

The tower was built on the ledge of the coastal rock and consists of a cylinder 28 m in height and 16, 5 m in diameter which was inlaid with local grey limestone. The thickness of the walls at the foundation is 5 meters, and in the upper part 4 meters. On the eastern side a projection, the purpose of which is still unknown joins the tower. The internal space of the tower is divided into 8 tiers which can shelter more than 200 people simultaneously. Each of the eight tiers of the tower is covered with a stone cupola with a round opening. The light penetrated inside through the narrow window openings of a loop-hole type, widening inwards. The communication among the tiers was carried out with the help of the winding stone staircase, laid in the thickness of the wall. The first tier, like in other Apscheron towers was connected with the second one through an attached or rope-ladder, which could be taken away in case of danger. Bays are constructed in the same thickness with the walls, inside them are laid a pottery pipe 30cm in diameter. There is a well 21m deep inside the tower, cut in the rock to the water-bearing stratum from the third tier. The water here was clean and fresh.



T

he construction date of the Maiden Tower has not been fixed yet. Often its construction is ascribed to the XII century. This is the age of the plate with the inscription laid from the outside of the tower. The Cufi inscription, engraved on the plate reads “gubbe (the cupola, vault) of Masud Ibn Davud”. But this plate definitely appeared in the tower later, as it is accidentally and inaccurately fit to the masonry, not above the main entrance, but somewhere by the side, at a height of 14 m from the ground. Most likely it is a tombstone which was placed in the dent done up in the tower during the repairs. To date the tower two conditions are used.

The first – in the construction of the Maiden Tower lime mortar was used, and the oldest building constructed with the mortar was found in Gabala dating to the I century of our era. This is the lowest temporal limit of the age of the tower. The highest limit can be defined, if the color of the stone of the Maiden Tower is compared with that of the mosque of Mahammad Ibn Abu-bark, situated in the fortress and constructed in the years of 1078-1079. Though both of the constructions were made of the same type of the local limestone, the stones of the Maiden Tower are much darker, that is, it is several hundred years older than the mosque of Mahammad. Thus the highest limit is not later than IX-X centuries. S.B.Ashurbayli, the well-known historian advanced a supposition on the construction of the Maiden Tower in the first centuries of our era, M.A.Nabiyev – in the VI century of our era. By D.A.Akhundov’s supposition the tower was erected in the VI century BC. L.Bretanitski, the historian of the Azerbaijani architecture considered that it had been erected in two stages: the lower part of the monument up to the height of 13,7 m was constructed in the V-VI centuries, and the upper part was completed in the XII century.



It is also rather hard to define the primary functional purpose of the Maiden Tower. The original construction of the tower as a defense structure gives rise to doubt. It is of little use for a defense because of the



small area and the lack of the conditions for a long stay. The existing narrow window openings are directed towards the sea and are not intended to repulse the attack of the enemy. Though it is somehow possible to defend oneself from the enemy only from the top of the tower. Besides, it has been calculated that it could be possible to build another wall around the city with the stones and lime spent on the construction of the tower. There are versions that primarily the tower was constructed as a temple of fire (the word “Gala”- “tower” has another meaning in Azerbaijani – “to light a fire”), a Zoroastrian hut (that is the tower, where on the top were laid the bodies of the people for the black kites to tear to pieces), an observation point. But it is doubtless that in the XII century this splendid tower was part of the defence system of Baku and was the main citadel of the Baku fortress, one of the most powerful fortresses of the Shirvanshahs. In the XVIII-XIX centuries the Maiden Tower was used as a beacon.

The beacon in the tower began to give light since June 13, 1858 but until then a fortress flag had been hoisted on it. Later with the growth of the city the lights of the beacon on the tower began to mingle with the night lights of the city and the beacon was transferred to the Nargin Island (Boyuk Zira).

The tower has repeatedly been restored. During the repairs done in the middle of the XIX century by the Russian military department, the merlons (mashikuli) used for defence purposes disappeared from the top of the tower. The tower was last restored in the 1960s. In 1964 the Maiden Tower became a museum, and since 2000 has been included in the UNESCO list of the monuments.



The word “Maiden” is also found in the names of the other towers in the territory of Azerbaijan and the East and perhaps it means “unsubdued”, “impregnable”. There are a number of legends connected with the etymology of the name of the Baku “Maiden Tower”.

The Sabael Castle

In 1235 Shirvanshah Fariburz III had a fortification built on one of the rocky islands of the Baku bay which was subsequently called the Sabael Castle, Shahri Saba, Shahri Nau, the city under water, the caravanserai, the Bail rocks, etc. Wrapped in legends, the castle is completely under water at present and is about 350 meters distant from the shore.



The castle was constructed by the project of the architect Zeynaddin Ibn Abu Rashid Shirvani. The plan of the building has a view of an irregular shaped rectangular of 180 m in length and 40 m in width sharply stretched from the north to the south. This shape coincided with the outlines of the island rising above the sea water on which the foundation of the building is entirely located. The castle was surrounded with the fortress walls of 1,5-2 m in thickness and had 15 towers, three of which were round and 12 - semicircular.

The entire fortress in the upper part is set in a frame with an inscription made of Arabic type. The greater part of the inscription

was made in the Persian language – the official language of the period. The general length of the inscription is 400 metres. Each of the stones with an inscription was 70 cm lengthwise and 25-50 cm wide, the thickness reached 15-25 cm. These inscriptions do not have analogues in the entire Near East of the feudal period for their decorative design, the pictures of living creatures, first discovered in the Islamic monuments of the world. The text of the inscription gives the genealogy of the Shirvanshahs' dynasty Mazyadids. The inscriptions on the stones have not been deciphered up to now. The pictures of different animals perhaps show the years of one or



another Shirvanshah. As is generally known, in the medieval period in the Near Eastern countries the years were marked by the names of animals. The pictures of human heads with a crown seem to refer to individual representatives of the Shirvanshahs' dynasty. Among the proper names one can see on the

inscriptions are Mahammad Ibn Yazid, Khalid, Ali, Manuchuhr, Fariburz Afrasiyab, Jamaladdin, etc. One can also see the titles "shah", "soltan", the names of cities are also encountered. On one stone one can read Benderi-Baku, that is, the port of Baku. The name of Rashid an-Naggash, that is artist Rashid who had cut out human and animal pictures is also mentioned.

There are different versions about the purpose of the castle. The small width of the exit doors (1,25m) refutes the version that it was a caravanserai, as loaded camels and horses could not pass through them. The researches show that this was a defence sea fortress being at the same time a residence of the Shirvanshahs. The sea fortress on the approaches to Baku was necessary in case of an attack from the seaside. At the end of the XII century the Shirvanshahs had a marine which stood round the fortress. From outside round the walls one can see the stones with an opening to tie the ships.



In the XIII century the Mongols who did not have any fleet, laid siege to the fortress for a long time. Although they did destroy the upper part of the fortress with siege-guns, they could not occupy it.

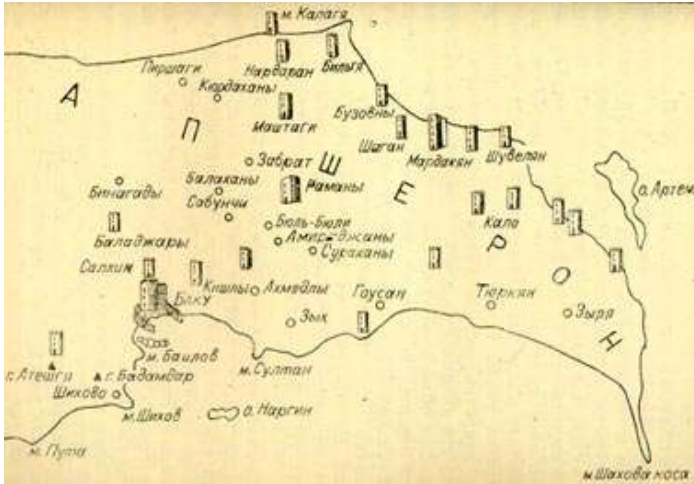
In 1306 as a result of a strong earthquake in the south of the Caspian and the rise of the sea level the fortress sank into the water. From the beginning of the XIV century and to the beginning of the XVIII century the building was flooded with the Caspian waters. In 1723 in connection with the abatement of the water level in the Caspian the top of the tower appeared from beneath the water. The upper

part of the building is completely destroyed, only the lower part of the walls and the towers reaching in some places about 1,5-2 m high is surviving.

The archaeological investigations of the castle were carried out in 1939, 1940, 1946, 1962 and 1969. In the course of the excavations the foundations of 9 habitual premises were discovered, two of them had a hearth. About 700 stones with inscriptions, fragments of earthenware crockery of black and red baking, intact vessels, copper coins of Shirvanshah Kershasb (1203/4-24) and others were lifted from the bottom of the sea. Also were found the fragments of potter's pipes of different diameters which seemed to be water-pipes. At present part of the stones lifted from the bottom of the sea are displayed in the museum of the Shirvanshahs' Palace.

Towers of Apsheron

In the XI-XIII centuries in connection with the consolidation of the Shirvanshahs in the territory of the Apsheron Peninsula a great construction work was carried out. Among the buildings of that time the towers and castles hold a special place; they served as reliable strongholds for the feudal lords in the intestine wars, also as shelters and places of defense during the foreign invasions. Particularly this question was keenly raised in the XII century, when Apsheron was exposed to the attacks of the Russian buccaneers from the sea. Thus in 1175 Shirvanshah Akhistan I repulsed several raids of the Russians, who attacked on 73 vessels.



Located along the entire Apsheron Peninsula the towers were not designed for long stay in them. Unlike the West European castles of the same period the Apsheron castles did not have wide inner courtyards with habitable rooms and office buildings. Such kinds of buildings were situated

beyond the fortress walls. The towers served just as temporary shelters for the feudal lords and their vassals during the attacks and for a passive defense. All the towers of Apsheron comprised the unified system of defence. In the XVII-XVIII centuries the towers played the role of a signal. While the enemy approached, oil was burnt on top of the towers and in this way the population was warned against the danger.

The towers of Apsheron have a lot of similar features. All of them are or were situated in the outskirts of the settlements or in general beyond them. Round and quadrangular towers of Apsheron have almost the identical planning in all cases. All of them are enclosed with quadrangular fortress walls. The courtyard side round all the towers made of stone walls is 20-25 m. In height the towers are divided into tiers (from two to eight), connected with one another by the stairs as thick as a wall. There are no stairs to the second floor; portable wooden ladders were likely used. The first floor of all the towers is 6,5 – 7 meters in height, the upper floors – 3,5 – 4,5 meters. The diameters of the round towers and the length of the sides of quadrangular towers (3,5 – 5,5 m), the thickness of the walls (up to 2 m) are also close to one another. All the means of defense of the towers are concentrated on the upper square. Being placed on it the riflemen sheltered themselves by a stepped parapet with merlons. The slot-like narrow openings widened inside on all the tiers of the tower except the ground floor, served mainly for lighting and ventilation. Their sizes did not allow using them for military actions; the zone for defeating was extremely limited. The primitive sewage lines – posts and wells with water also point to the fact that these towers served as temporary living quarters during the siege.

Better preserved towers are in Ramana, Nardaran and two - in Mardakan, but the towers in Bilgah, Shagan and Gala are in ruins. Towers also existed in the settlements of Mashtagha, Shuvalan, Keshla, Hovsan, Buzovna and others. Thus there were about 30 towers in the villages of Apsheron.

Round Tower in Mardakan.

Round Tower in Mardakan 16m in height is situated in the centre of the square courtyard (25X25m), laid with stone walls of 7m in height. The tower has 3 tiers. The construction inscription carved on the stone informs about the date of the erection of the tower – 1232 year and the name of the architect Abdulmajid Ibn Masud.



The Quadrangular tower in Ramana. The Quadrangular tower in Ramana was erected in the XVI century. The tower is 15 meters high and has 4 tiers.



The Quadrangular tower in Mardakan was erected in the XVI century. The dimension of the inner courtyard is 28X25m. The tower is 22 m high and has 5 tiers.



The Round tower in Nardaran. The Round tower in Nardaran was erected in 1301. The tower is 12,5 m high. The construction inscription engraved the name of the master - Mahmud Ibn Saad. He was also the author of the old Bibi Heibat mosque and Molla Ahmad Mosque in the Baku fortress.

The Fire Temple Ateshgah

In early history Azerbaijan was called the “land of the sacred fire”. Although the “everlasting fire” mentioned by early travelers such as Alexandre Dumas was due to the gas and oil deposits erupting from the earth, it became surrounded by legend and mystery. Some 2,600 years ago, Zarathustra was formulating Zoroastrianism, one of the first major monotheistic religions. His idea to use fire as a metaphor for the mysteries



of God probably came from witnessing the spontaneous flames that rise so eerily from Azerbaijan's Absheron Peninsula. Today some such fires still burn. Most notable is Yanar Dagh near Mammedli, where a small hillside is constantly and naturally aflame.

On Absheron there were many temples of Fire as well. From their variety the most famous is the well-preserved temple Ateshgah ("the Fire Place") in Surakhany, located 20 kilometers east of the town center. The temple was built over a pocket of natural gas that fuelled a vent providing an 'eternal' fire. This kind of use of fire in Zoroastrian temples led to the followers of Zoroaster (Zarathustra).

Historians, archaeologists, and theologians have argued over the construction date of the temple. Some defend that there was a Zoroastrian temple in Surakhany since the 6th century; others delay that event for another seven centuries. As the introduction of Islam to the region to the area resulted in the destruction of almost every Zoroastrian temple and documents, these claims are hard to assess. After Azerbaijan was Islamized

some Zoroastrians escaped to India. But trade links with India in later centuries, led to renewed contacts with the fire-worshippers, who had migrated from to Northern India. During 17th and 18th Century, the site was rebuilt by Indian merchants and masons, who had established in Baku their settlement. More photogenic is a fortified 18th century stone fire temple built on the site of original at Surakhany Ateshgah. This fire temple, with a mixture of Indian and Azerbaijani architectural styles, is a surviving proof of age old relationship between the two countries. The pentagon shaped building is surrounded by a wall with a guest room over the gate ('balakhane'). There are still some wall inscriptions in Sanskrit and Gurumukhi, including poems. Cells for pilgrims line the wall inside and surround the main altar in the center of the temple - a quadrangular pavilion with the fire on the altar inside.



Surakhany remained a popular destination for Indian pilgrims until the end of XIX century. The natural gas vent has been exhausted and in 1880 the last pilgrim returned to India.

The temple was last restored in 1975. Today low, dark cells for monks and pilgrims in the Ateshgah Temple at Surakhany house is an interesting museum, intended to introduce the rudiments of Zoroastrianism to the uninitiated.

Modern Baku

The history of modern Baku was beginning from fight of people for the national sovereignty and freedom of Azerbaijan from Soviet Union.

To suppress the national movement, to ban the calls for and not to allow the collapse of the USSR, the Soviet leadership's punitive action unprecedented in cruelty and cynicism and savage reprisal against unarmed population of the city were carried out in Baku



in January 1990. At night from January 19 to 20 troops were brought into Baku. The engagement of the military units and formations in the city was accompanied with firing which victimized the peaceful citizens: the youth, the old and the children – part of the defenseless



unarmed population of Baku who either protested against the entry of the unbidden army into the city or happened to be on its way. Tanks crushed the passing emergency vehicles, the cars on the roadside, the wounded were crushed, and the medical personnel rendering first aid on the spot were fired at. Death overtook some people in their flats, in the porches of the houses, in buses and at their workplaces. As a result, 131 people died and 744 were wounded and a lot of them were crippled forever. The January tragedy of 1990 entered the Azerbaijani people's national consciousness as the most sorrowful event, at the same time, as the turning point in the history of Azerbaijan in the XX century on its way to the national independence.



After the collapse of the USSR the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan accepted a declaration "On the Restoration of the State Independence of Republic of Azerbaijan". In accordance with this declaration Republic of Azerbaijan was proclaimed sovereign on October 18, 1991. For the second time in the history of the XX century Baku

became the capital of an independent state.



With the independence gained in 1991 Baku as well as the entire Azerbaijan clashed with a range of uneasy problems associated with the collapse of the planned economy and the hardships of the transition period. The independent Azerbaijan fighting for the territorial integrity had to solve also a range of complicated problems caused by the aggression of neighboring Armenia which had occupied one fifths of the Azerbaijani territory. The most complicated were the questions associated with the solution of living problems of more than one million refugees who had to leave their homes. The Armenian aggression inflicted on the economy of Azerbaijan such a heavy blow that it stops the reform processes, has an

impact on the micro-economic indices of the country and impedes the further economic structure.

Heydar Aliyev's return to the leadership of the Republic in 1993 enabled to stabilize the internal political situation in the Republic and to attract the investments of the biggest international oil companies for its

development. A significant event of this kind was the signing of the great oil contract in September 1994 also known as “the Contract of the Century”. This enabled to start the realization of several concrete issues including the ones connected with the consolidation of the independence of the Republic, the development of the city’s economy and the constructions in Baku. Today being actively developed the capital of Azerbaijan plays a significant role and has become the biggest political and economic centers in the region.

The basis of Baku's economy is petroleum. Azerbaijan produces about 800,000 barrels of oil per day and 1 bcma of gas—with an historical peak of 1.2 million barrels per day by 2008 with equally large amount of gas expected. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, opened in 2006, transports crude oil 1094 miles (1760km) from the Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli oil field in the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. The oil is pumped from the Sangachal Terminal close to Baku, via Tbilisi the capital of Georgia, to Ceyhan a port on the south-eastern Mediterranean coast of Turkey.



The oil economy of Baku underwent resurgence in the early years of the twenty-first century, with the development of the massive Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli field, development of the Shah Deniz gas field, and the expansion of the Sangachal Terminal. Industries in Baku produce equipment for the oil industry. The city is the location of metalworking, shipbuilding and repair industries, and the manufacture of electrical machinery, the production of chemicals and construction materials, and food processing. The Baku Stock Exchange has been operating since February 2001.

The citizens of Baku are always notable for their belief in future and great optimism despite any adversity. And today when our young republic has chosen the road of its independent development, we are sure that Baku will achieve great successes and

hold a place worthy of its past, present and future to rank with the famous capitals of the world.

Modern Baku consists of three parts: The Old Town (İçəri Şəhər), the boomtown, and the Swhioviet-built town. The center of Baku is the old town, which is also a fortress. In December 2000, the Inner City of Baku with the Palace of the Shirvanshahs and Maiden Tower became the first location in Azerbaijan classified as a World Heritage Site. UNESCO's justification for the listing states: "The Walled City of Baku represents an outstanding and rare example of an historic urban ensemble and architecture with influence from Zoroastrian, Sassanian, Arabic, Persian, Shirvani, Ottoman, and Russian cultures."

Most of the walls and towers, strengthened after the Russian conquest in 1806, survived. This section is picturesque, with its maze of narrow alleys and ancient buildings: The cobbled streets past the Palace of the Shirvanshahs, two caravansaries (ancient inns), the Maiden Tower, the baths, and the Juma Mosque. The old town has dozens of small mosques, often without any particular sign to distinguish them from the next building.



More than 225 names of streets have been changed since 1988, in an attempt to erase links with the former Soviet Union. The first street to be built outside the Inner City, originally called *Nikolayevskaya* after

Nicolas I, was renamed to *Parlaman Kuchesi*, because the Parliament of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic held its meeting in a building located at that street. During the Soviet era, it became *Kommunisticheskaya Ulitsa*. Now it is called *İstiqlaliyyet Kuchesi*, celebrating Azeri independence.

Baku is divided into eleven administrative districts, or raions (Azizbayov, Binagadi, Garadagh, Narimanov, Nasimi, Nizami, Sabail, Sabunchu, Khatai, Surakhany, and Yasamal), and 48 townships. Among these are the townships on islands in the Baku Bay and the town of Oil Rocks, built on stilts in the Caspian Sea, 37 miles (60km) away from Baku.

Baku has vibrant theater, opera and ballet. The main movie theatre is "Azerbaijan Cinema." The Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre is one of the most ornate music halls in the city. The State Philharmonic Hall with excellent acoustic conditions often holds performances outside. The Carpet and Applied Arts Museum exhibits the carpets from all periods, styles and from both Azerbaijan proper and the Azeri provinces in Iran. Baku also houses the country's largest art museum — Azerbaijan State Museum of Art, a depository of both domestic and foreign works of art, Western and Eastern.

Heydar Aliyev Palace is one of the main venues featuring sizable performances.

Baku has produced a number of notable figures in the sciences, arts and other fields. Notable scientists include: Soviet space program head Kerim Kerimov, winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics of 1962 Lev Landau, fuzzy logic inventor Lotfi Zadeh, philosopher Max Black, cellist Mstislav Rostropovich and many others.



The basic dates from the history of Baku

VIII millennium BC	First settlements are founded on the Absheron Peninsula.
VI c. BC	"Ateshi-Baguan", the temple of fire worshippers on the Absheron Peninsula, is constructed.
VI c. BC	"Giz Galasi" [the Maiden Tower] is constructed.
Early V c. BC	Huns invade Azerbaijan.
87-92	Roman military campaign to the coast territories of the Caspian Sea
Mid VII c. and late VIII c. BC	Khazars rule in Azerbaijan
6th century AD	First currency with an indication of the coining place - Baku, Sasanids, Khormuzd
7th century	The rule of one of the first Shirvanshahs – Shahriyar
7th-8th centuries	Arabs' invasion of Azerbaijan
Early VIII c. BC	Islam becomes the dominant religion in Azerbaijan.
707	First coin during the Arabs' rule – dirkhema
861 -1027	The rule of the Shirvanshahs dynasty of Mazyadids
1027-1382	The rule of the Shirvanshahs dynasty of Kesranids
60s of the IX c.	Shirvan regains its independence.
The 11th century	Seljuks' invasion of Azerbaijan
1027-1037	The rule of Manuchohr Shirvanshah
1074-1117	The rule of Shirvanshah Fariburz I
1078	The mosque of Mohammed ["Sinig-gala"], the most ancient architectural memorial, is constructed.
The 12th century	Construction of the fortress walls in Baku
1120-1149	The rule of Shirvanshah Manuchekhr II
1149-1203	The rule of Shirvanshah Akhsitan I
1220-1222	The first march of Mongols to Azerbaijan.
1231-1239	The second march of Mongols to Azerbaijan
1258	The third march of Mongols headed by Hulaku Khan, occupation of Shirvan and Baku
1382-1538	Shirvanshahs dynasty of Derbendi
1382-1417	The rule of Ibrahim Shirvanshah I
The 12th -15th centuries	Construction of the Shirvanshahs Palace in Baku
1417-1462	The rule of Khalilullah Shirvanshah I
1462-1501	Rule of Shirvanshah Farruh Yassar
1500	Troops of Farruh Yassar are defeated by Ismail Sefevi
XIV-XV c	Construction of the Shirvanshahs' Palace in Baku.
1501	The rule of Bahram-bey Shirvanshah.
1501	Baku is occupied by the troops of Sheikh Ismail Sefevi

1501-1502	The rule of Sultan Mohammed Gazi Shirvanshah.
1502-1524	The rule of Sheikh Ibrahim Shirvanshah II.
1524-1535	The rule of Khalilullah Shirvanshah II.
1538	Annexation of Shirvan by Safavids.
1534,1535,1548,1554	Military campaigns of Turkish sultan Suleyman I to Azerbaijan
1607	Baku was taken by the troops of Shah Abbas
1667-1669	Pirate attacks of Stepan Razin troops on Mashataga and Baku
1683	The visit of the Swedish Ambassador to Baku. E. Kempfer's paintings of Baku.
1722-1723	The Caspian march of Peter I. Occupation of the western and south-eastern coast of the Caspian Sea
1723, July 10	The Russian squadron occupies Baku.
The 17th -18th centuries	Construction of the fire temple in Ateshgah
1734-1744	Military campaigns of Nadir Shah
40s XVIII c.	Independent and semi-independent khanates in Azerbaijan are founded.
1747	Baku khanate becomes fully independent. The first Baku khan was Mirza Muhammad Khan I
1796	Campaign of V. Zubov to Azerbaijan
1806,8 February	Assassination of General Tsitsianov in Baku, commander of Russian troops in the Caucasus
1804-1813	The Russian-Persian War.
1806, October 3	Abolition of the Baku khanate.
1826-1828	The Russian-Persian War.
1828-1829	The Russian-Turkish War.
1840, July 10	"Principles of ruling of the Transcaucasian region" is approved by the Russian Duma and the Baku uyezd is included as an administrative region of Russia.
1848	The world's first oil well is drilled in Baku [in Bibi-Heybat].
1859, December 2	Shemakhi province is renamed into Baku province. Baku becomes a provincial city.
1859,6 December	Creation of Baku government
1859	The first oil refinery is constructed in Baku [in Surakhani].
1859	The first city garden is laid.
1861	The first photos of Baku taken by A.Ulsky, captain-lieutenant of the Russian Fleet.
1863	The world's first kerosene plant is constructed.
1868, February 6	Telegraph communications begins between Baku and Tbilisi.
1872	The fanning system for "Oil Lands" in Russia is abolished.
1873	The national theater of Azerbaijan is founded.
1874	The Modern school is opened in Baku.
1874	The oil school is established in Baku.

- 1878** The city's public administration in Baku is founded.
- 1879** The Nobel brothers establish their oil-production company.
- 1883, May** Completion of the construction of the Baku - Tbilisi Transcaucasian Railway.
- 1883** Outside walls of Baku fortress were pulled down
- 1885** Foundation of the Rotshild oil-industry and commercial company in the Caspian-Black Sea region.
- 1892** The first public transport - horse-driven tramway in Baku.
- 1894, August** N. Narimanov establishes the first library and reading room in Azerbaijan.
- 1894** The first water distiller in Baku is put into operation.
- 1896** H.-Z. Tagiyev establishes the first women's college in the East.
- 1896** Foundation of the commercial college in Baku
- 1897-1901** The textile factory of H.Z. Tagiyev is constructed in Baku.
- 1897-1907** The Baku-Batumi oil pipeline is put into service.
- 1898** The "Russian Oil" company begins its activity in Baku.
- 1898** A civil engineer Von der Nonne develops the first professional plan for the growth of Baku.
- 1897-1907** Baku-Batumi oil pipe-line is built.
- 1905 March** Foundation of the "Nijat"["Rescue"] education association
- 1906 August** The First Congress of Teachers of Azerbaijan
- 1906 October** Foundation of the "Union of the Workers of Oil Industry" in Baku
- 1908 October 12** Staging of the first opera in the East ["Leyli and Majnun" by U. Hajibeyov]
- 1911** Foundation of the political party "Musavat"
- 1911** Construction of the first branch of the Baku water-supply system
- 1911** Construction of the first cement producing plant in Baku
- 1912** - January 20 - approval of the Law "On the cease of the temporary-obligatory and dependent relations of peasants to the landlords in the Transcaucasus [including Baku province"] by the way of redemption of their lands into their property under the assistance of the government" by the Russian Duma
- 1916** Creation of the first feature film "In the kingdom of oil and millions"
- 1914-1917** Baku produced 7 million tons of oil each year, totaling 28 million, 683 thousand tons of oil, which constituted 15% of world production the time.
- 1917** After the October revolution and amidst the turmoil of World War I and the breakup of the Russian Empire, Baku came under the control of the Baku Commune.
- 1917-March 6** Foundation of the Baku Soviet of Deputies of Labourers

1918-April 25	Foundation of the Baku Soviet of Peoples Commissars
March 30 - April 3, 1918	Forces of the Bolshevik Baku Soviet, aided by armed militia of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutun), committed massacres of 12 thousands Azerbaijani civilians. These days historically remembered by Azerbaijanis as genocide.
1918, May 28	Acceptance of the "Document about independence of Azerbaijan". Creation of the People's Republic of Azerbaijan. Baku became the capital of ADR.
1918-June 2	Decree of the Baku Soviet of People's Commissars on the nationalization of the oil industry
1918-July 31	Overthrow of the Soviet power in Baku
1918-August 1	Arrival of the contingent of British Troops in Baku
1918, September 4	Withdrawal of the troops of British Army from Baku.
September 15, 1918.	Arrival of the regular Turkish troops in Baku
September 15, 1918.	Liberation of Baku by Caucasian Islamic Army.
February, 1920	1st congress of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan illegally took place in Baku.
April 28, 1920	Invasion of Eleven's Red Army in Baku.
April 28, 1920	Declaration of the Soviet power in Azerbaijan. Establishment of Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.
1923	Laying of a hotbed for planting trees and gardens in the city
1923-April	Foundation of the first off - shore oil field in the world "the Bay of Ilych" in the place of the artificial harbor
February 8, 1924	The first tram line and two years later the electric railway Baku-Surakhany, the first one in the USSR, started to operate.
1924-1937	Elaboration of variants of the general plan of development of Baku
1926	First International Turkish congress in Baku
1926	First Radio station in Baku
1936-March 4	Opening of the First Congress of Architects of Azerbaijan in Baku
1940	22, 2 million tons of oil was extracted in Baku which comprised nearly 72% of all the oil extracted in the entire USSR.
1941	The trolley bus line started to operate in the city.
1946-January 5	Decree of the Soviet of People's Commissars of the USSR "On Measures for the Improvement of the Urban Economy of Baku"
1947	The first oil platform in the world, originally called "The Black Rocks," was built in within the city's metropolitan area.
1948	Building of the first in the world oil-field's platform in the Caspian sea

1949-November	The first well drilled in the area of the "Oil Rocks" off-shore deposit
1949-November 1	Opening of the Azerbaijan Polytechnic Institute in Baku
1952-1954	Elaboration of the General Plan of Development of Baku for the period till 1976 by a group of architects from "Bakgiprogor" State Projecting Institute
1960	The first Caucasus house-building plant was built in Baku.
1960-November 5	Starting up of the first energetic unit of open type in the USSR in HES "Severnaya" in Baku
1967	Bringing in exploitation of the 6 stations of Metropolitan in Baku.
1964-1968	The level of oil extraction rose to the stable level and comprised about 21 million tons per year.
1970s	Azerbaijan became one of the largest producers of grapes and a champagne factory was subsequently constructed in Baku.
December 25, 1975	The only plant producing air-conditioners in the Soviet Union was turned over for operation in Baku
1980-April 16	Baku was awarded with the Red Banner of the CC of CPSU, the All-Soviet Labor Unions Organization and Komsomol Organization for its victory in All-Union Socialist Competition of 1979.
1981	A record quantity of 15 billion m ³ of gas was extracted in Baku.
1982	Development of the General Plan of the Economic and Social Development of Baku for the period till 2005
1983	Bringing in exploitation of the oil pipe-line Baku-Grozny.
1988-November 17-December 4	Mass meetings in Baku connected with the conflict in Garabag
January 19-20, 1990	Occupation of Baku by the Soviet troops and massacre of the innocent victims. As a result, 131 people died and 744 were wounded and a lot of them were crippled forever. This day remembered as "Black January" in memory of the people.
June 9, 1993	Arrival of Heydar Aliyev in Baku.
September 20, 1994	A significant event - the signing of the great oil contract also known as "the Contract of the Century".
1997-October 19	Beginning of the exploitation of the Baku-Novorossiysk oil pipeline by AIOC
1997-November 12	Production of the first oil on the off shore platform "Chirag" by the Azerbaijan International Operating company [AIOC].
December 2000	The Inner City of Baku with the Palace of the Shirvanshahs and Maiden Tower became the first location in Azerbaijan classified as a World Heritage Site.
November 9-10, 2001	I Congress of Azerbaijanis of the world in Baku
May 22-23, 2002	Visit of the Rome Pope Ion Paul II in Baku.
September 18, 2002	Foundation of the oil pipe-line Baku-Jeykhan in Sangachal
May 26, 2005	Letting out in exploitation of Azerbaijani part of the main export oil

March 9, 2007	pipe-line Baku-Tbilisi-Djeykhan I Forum of the leaders of Azerbaijan and Turkish diasporas in Baku
June 18, 2007	Summit of GUAM in Baku
November 17, 2007	Opening of XI Congress of the friendship, brotherhood and cooperation of Turkish states and associations in Baku
21-23 November, 2007	The fifth Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers was proclaimed Baku the Capital of Islamic Culture for 2009 and it was decided to hold the Sixth Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers in 2009 in Baku.
2008	Azerbaijan produces about 800,000 barrels of oil per day and 1 bcma of gas — with an historical peak of 1.2 million barrels per day with equally large amount of gas expected.
March 7, 2008 March 7, 2008	Official inauguration of Virgin Mary Catholic Church was held in Baku Inauguration of Baku branch of Moscow State University
May 9, 2008	In Baku opened the first concrete road Zikh-Airport that meets the requirements of the international standard I-B
May 26, 2008	Re-opening ceremony of the State Russian Drama Theater after reconstruction.
February 27, 2009	The opening ceremony of "Baku - the Capital of Islamic Culture 2009" culture year
February 12, 2009	Inauguration the Baku International Bus Station Complex
July 6, 2009	Inauguration Tezepir mosque complex after major overhaul
February 10, 2010	The introduction of the state historic – architectural reserve-museum entitled “The Ensemble of the Shirvanshahs’ Palace” into the framework of Icheri Sheher State Historic – Architectural Reserve Office under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan
March 16, 2010	The opening of the dry cargo port area in Baku bay
April 26, 2010	Summit of the world religious leaders was held in Baku
May 17, 2010	The inauguration of the memorial of the founder of the Turkish Republic Mustafa Kamal Ataturk
September 1, 2010	The opening of the National Flag Square in Baku
October 4, 2010	Opening of Jewish school in Baku
November 3, 2010	Ceremony of laying the foundation of New Baku International Trade Seaport Complex
November 8, 2010	Opening of Baku circular road
November 9, 2010	The opening ceremony of the National Flag Museum which is located on the National Flag Square in Baku
November 18, 2010	The third summit of Caspian Sea littoral states was held in Baku. The Summit involved the signing of an agreement on security cooperation and a Joint Declaration between the leaders of the five countries

- December 28, 2010** Oguz-Gabala-Baku water pipeline was put into operation
- June 6, 2011** The ceremony of laying the foundations of Baku Olympic Stadium
- June 26, 2011** The grand military parade on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of restoration of state independence of Azerbaijan and the 93rd anniversary of Armed Forces was held in Azadlig (Freedom) square in Baku
- June 29, 2011** Opening of “Darnagul” station of Baku Metro in the 7th microdistrict of Baku
- September 19, 2011** Inauguration of memorial to outstanding Azerbaijani composer, People's Artist of the USSR and Azerbaijan, Hero of Socialist Labour, State Prize Laureate Fikret Amirov in the center of Baku
- October 10, 2011** International Humanitarian Forum on "XXI century: hopes and challenges" was held in Baku

Translated.

Documents related to the capital

December 6, 1859 – The Decree of Tsar Alexander on the renaming of Shemakha governorate into Baku governorate and transfer of some establishments from Shemakha to Baku

January 16, 1878 - An Act on establishment of the Baku Municipal Administration

October 28, 1906 – The Decree on establishment of the Baku Gradonachalstvo (Baku Municipal Administration).

September 18, 1918 – An Act of the Council of Ministers about restoration of the activity of Baku Municipal Administration

December 29, 1998 – A Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan On granting to Baku Boulevard Seaside the status of the National Park

February 17, 2003 – A Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan On measures state-care to the protection of historical-architectural monuments in Icheri Sheher

February 10, 2005 – A Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan On establishment of the Administration of the State Historic and Architectural Reserve Icheri Sheher (SDHARIS) under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan

August 18, 2006 – A Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan On restoration and protection of historical-architectural monuments in the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan Baku city

December 19, 2007 - The Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the announcement of the territory of the Temple Ateshgah at the Surakhany district of Baku city of the Republic of Azerbaijan as a State Historic and Architectural Reserve “Temple Ateshgah”

January 10, 2008 – A Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan On establishment of the Administration of Boulevard Seaside under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan

December 16, 2009 – A Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan On measures on development of the State Historic and Architectural Reserve Icheri Sheher.

You can look through the text of the given documents in Azerbaijani and Russian versions of e-resources.

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Informal translation by Sarijalinskaya K.