

Historical and architectural monuments

Most of the historical and architectural monuments that have historically existed in Zangazur and have survived to the present day are associated with religious beliefs and tombstones.

Before professing the monotheism, the people of ancient Zangazur believed in different religions - paganism, fire worship and Zoroastrianism. Although Zoroastrianism appeared as the first religion, it was not widespread in Zangazur. Before the spread of Christianity and Islam, fire-worship was widespread in these areas. Religious beliefs related to fire-worship are still evident in the traditions of the Zangazur people.

After the Arab Caliphate invaded Albania in the second half of the 7th century, the part of population of Zangazur converted from Christianity to Islam and the other part remained Christian. The fact that Albanians and Kipchak Turks living in Karabakh and Zangazur at present identify themselves as "Armenians" is the result of this historical process. All the Albanian temples in these regions that have survived to the present day have been converted into Armenian-Gregorian churches. Many temples, such as the Tanaat Temple of the 4th-5th centuries in the Sisian region of Zangazur, St. Gregory of the 6th-7th centuries, or the Garakilsa Temple, and the Tatev Temple of the 9th century in the Gorus region, are examples of ancient Albanian monuments converted into Armenian-Gregorian churches. Although these monuments are introduced to the world by Armenians as ancient Armenian churches, historical and scientific evidence confirms that these monuments are purely Albanian temples.

There are many shrines and sepulchres in Zangazur. Girkhlar, Salvarti shrines in Sisian region, Pirdavidan, Chilekhana shrines in Gafan region, Bughakar shrine in Meghri region, Gushchu, Aghababa, Sultan Baba shrines in Lachin region, Mir Sadi agha shrine in Gubadli region, Imamzade shrine, Agh Hasar shrines are sacred places that Zangazur people always visit. Aghoghlan temple in Lachin region, Hamza Sultan palace, Jijimli tomb, Aghudi tombstone in Sisian region, Baba Haji mausoleum in Meghri region, Bartaz Maiden Tower in Zangilan region, Mammadbeyli tomb, Goy Gala (Blue Fortress) in Gubadli region, some historical and architectural monuments, such as the Tomb of the Blacksmiths, the Mahrizli and Dondarli mosques, were destroyed by Armenian vandals, and some are described as Armenian heritage. Remains of Muslim temples in a number of settlements in West Zangazur still remain. After the occupation of East Zangazur in 1993, hundreds of ram statues were destroyed by Armenian vandalism.

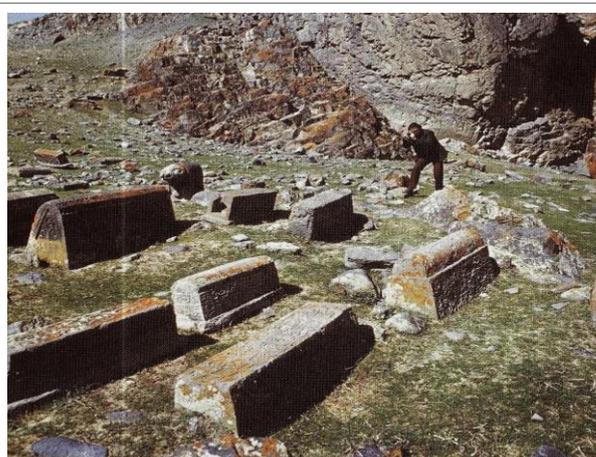
Although Armenians tried to destroy the centuries-old cultural heritage and traces of Azerbaijanis in West Zangazur, they could not erase it from memories, photo-video materials and documents. Hundreds of gravestones depicting ram and horse figures in Muslim cemeteries there testify to the historical past of these lands belonging to Azerbaijanis. The consequences of the vandalism committed against the historical and architectural monuments committed during the occupation of East Zangazur by the Armenian army will be eliminated in a short time, every monument

and all mosques will be restored. However, the vandalism committed by Armenian criminals will be passed on to future generations through photos and videos as lessons of history.

We present brief information about some of the historical and architectural monuments in Zangazur.

Historical and architectural monuments in West Zangazur:

The Urud tombstones, which date back more than 500 years, are located in the village of Urud, Sisian region, in front of the Urud fortress, on the left bank of the Bazarchay River. There are about 100 Muslim-Turkish monuments in the cemetery. The tombstones in the Urud cemetery were studied by the Azerbaijani scientists Alasgar Alakbarov, Ziya Bunyadov and Mashadikhanim Nematova during the Soviet era. The inscriptions on the tombstones in the Urud cemetery have also been developed in Kufic, Naskh, Suls and Nastaliq styles of Arabic graphics. The tombstones in Urud monuments, ram and horse figures, pictures and inscriptions on the figures reflecting the pre-Islamic culture, lifestyle, customs, hunting, gatherings, wedding and mourning ceremonies of the Turkic peoples, the carvings, which reflect the worship of the cult of ongon and shamanism, provide invaluable historical information about the life of the indigenous inhabitants of this area. After West Zangazur became a part of Soviet Armenia, Armenians stole some of the tombstones in Urud. Most of the ram statues in the Sisian region have been destroyed, and some have been displayed in the courtyard of the history museum in Sisian since 1993 under the name of "Armenian cultural monuments". Two of the ram statues brought from the Urud cemetery are now in front of the Nakhchivan Drama Theater, and the other two are in front of the Nizami Museum in Ganja, witnessing the historical past and historical truth of Zangazur.



Urud tombstones



Urud castle

Urud fortress was built in 6th-7th centuries on the hill on the right bank of Bazarchay in Urud village of Garakilsa region of ancient Zangazur. The castle belonged to Senikarim I, the ruler of Syunik in 1075-1094. The fortress was captured by the Seljuk Turks in 1104. In the early 13th century, the Kipchak Orbeli family from the northern part of the Caspian Sea settled in Zangazur and converted to Christianity. The Orbeli dynasty later became Armenian. When Amir Teymur's troops occupied Syunik in 1386, they also captured the fortress of Urud. Gara Yusif, the ruler of Garagoyunlu, captured the fortress of Urud in 1407 and appointed Bagiri, the local feudal lord, as the

ruler of the fortress. Malik Bagir's tribe, one of the Garagoyunlu feudal lords, ruled over the Urud fortress for about three hundred years. The people of Malikbagir lived in Urud until the beginning of the 20th century, had a high religious education, had a religious rank, and were known as an educated and distinguished generation. The fortress of Urud is now in ruins, with a view of the fort from above in the form of a saddle extending to the north-west and south-east. The castle is surrounded on all three sides by steep rocks. Remains of double fence walls are visible only from the south-west. The fence is made of large, unpolished basalt stones and mortar. Remains of the underground road leading to the river in the wall of the Urud fortress facing Bazarchay are still preserved.

Urud Bridge is an architectural monument of the 19th century in Urud village of Garakilsa region of Zangazur province. The inscription on this single-span bridge connecting the right and left banks of the Bazarchay states that it was built in 1849. The bridge is built of limestone and sand with river stone and hewn rocks on solid basalt rock on both sides. According to locals, one hundred thousand eggs were used in the construction of the bridge.



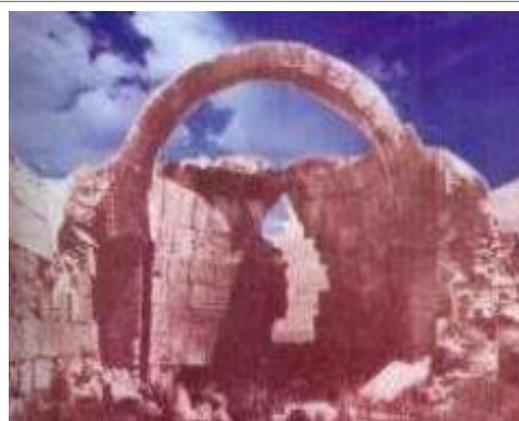
Urud bridge



Aghudi gravestones

Aghudi tombstone is located in Aghudi village of Garakilsa region, 5 km from Sisian city, on the Aghudi-Sisian road. Aghudi tombstone was built in the 7th century. Aghudi monument has a three-storey structure. The first floor of the monument resembles a large square. A small arched cave with two entrance gates under this square attracts attention. The second floor consists of two rectangular columns on the sides and an octagonal column in the middle. Both outer columns are connected to the middle column by arched masonry. The third floor of the monument consists of three columns with a beautiful architectural structure. Aghudi village was one of the oldest Azerbaijani villages of Sisian region. At present, Armenians are trying to describe this monument as an ancient Armenian monument.

Temple of Tanaat - an Albanian temple belonging to the first periods of ancient Christianity (IV-V centuries), located in a high mountainous area between the villages of Arafsa and Tazakend in the Garakilsa region, is in a dilapidated condition. Because the temple was built of red stone, the local Azerbaijani people also called it the Red Church. According to researchers, the monument was a fire-worshiping temple before the spread of Christianity in the region. According to Stepan Orbelian, the author of "History of Syunik", the temple was built in 491. Around the temple there are cross stones, cemetery, castle ruins and other monument remains of the 13th-17th centuries.



Tanaat temple

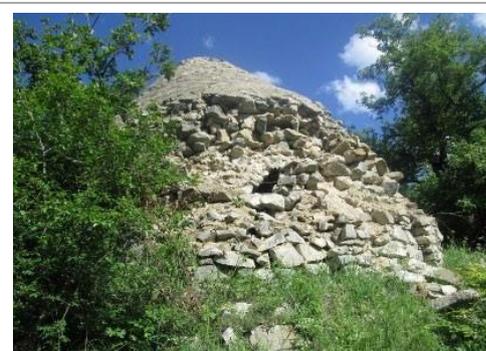


Tatev Monastery

The Tatev monastery complex is located near the town of Gorus in the Garakilsa region, on the banks of the Oxchu River. The monastery was built on a large basalt rock near the village of Tatev. This monastery was built in the 11th century as an Albanian monastery and later armenianized. The name of the monastery is mentioned in Moisey Kalankatuklu's "History of Albania". Albanians were oppressed by the Armenian Church because they belonged to the Diophysite sect of Christianity. In 1286, the monastery came under the control of the Orbeli dynasty. In the 16th-18th centuries, during the rule of the Safavis, the complex was restored and several new buildings were built. Armenian sources from the early 18th

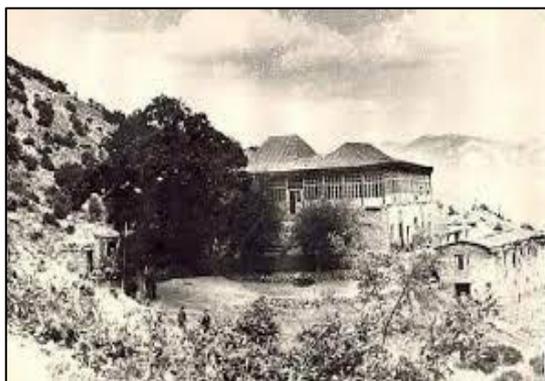
century state that the Tatev Monastery fought against the Echmiadzin Church. After the annexation of the Karabakh Khanate to Tsarist Russia in 1822, the independence of the Albanian Apostolic Church was terminated in 1836, and the Tatev Monastery was subordinated to the Echmiadzin Catholicosate as a diocese.

Baba Haji mausoleum belonging to medieval Oghuz monuments is near Nuvedi village of Meghri region. The height of the mausoleum is 3.5 meters, the diameter of the circle is 6 meters. Baba Haji mausoleum is circular on the outside and 16-cornered on the inside. According to popular legend, this mausoleum belongs to Babek.



Baba Haji mausoleum

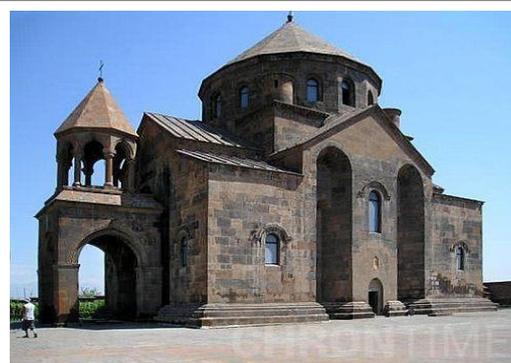
Bughakar shrine is a shrine in the territory of Bughakar village of Meghri region. It was built in the style of Azerbaijani architecture. The village of Bughakar was named after Bugha Al-Kabir, a



Bughakar pir (sacred place)

commander who lived in the ninth century, and the shrine was known as the "Bughakar Shrine". It is also popularly known as the mausoleum of Sultan Seyid Ahmad. The village of Bughakar, inhabited by Azerbaijanis since ancient times, was abolished in 1939 and its population was relocated to the village of Lehvaz. However, the Bughakar shrine remained a shrine for the Azerbaijani population of the surrounding villages. This monument was destroyed by Armenians after the forced expulsion of Azerbaijanis from West Zangazur in 1988.

The Garakilsa temple, built on a high hill in the center of the Sisian region, was built in the 6th-7th centuries. One of the religious monuments created by the Albanians, this temple is called Garakilsa (black church) because it is built of black, carved basalt stone. According to historical sources, the Garakilsa temple existed in this region before Christianity and was built on the site of a pagan temple. Styles and ornaments used in other Albanian temples and in many Greek churches are widely used in the architecture of the Garakilsa temple. Although the Garakilsa temple was partially destroyed by an earthquake in Sisian in 1931, it was later rebuilt.



Garakilsa temple



Mighri castle

Mighri Fortress was one of the unique defensive fortifications in Zangazur. Built in the northern part of the city of Meghri on the mountain hills in the form of horseshoes, the walls of the fortress are made of unpolished, uneven granite stones and clay mud. Part of the fortress was protected by steep towers and mountains as a natural fence. This hexagonal fortress was first reported in 1083. In the 18th century, the castle was completely restored. Six towers of the fortress (four round, two rectangular) surrounded the settlement in the form of horseshoes on the hills to the north of the part of the city Meghri called "Big

neighborhood".

Okhchu fortress is located at the confluence of Okhchu and Gighi rivers in Gafan region of Zangazur province, on a high hill called Novruzyurd. It is presented in Armenian sources as "Baghaberd". The fortress, which dates back to the 6th-7th centuries, is considered one of the five Babek fortresses in Zangazur. Located in an important position separating the Khustub and Gazbel mountain peaks, the fortress is surrounded on two sides by a steep valley and on the other two sides by a double wall. The Okhchu fortress was destroyed in 1170 by the Seljuk Turks and later rebuilt. Until recently, the fortress, which is believed to have 26-27 towers, had 17 towers left.



Okhchu castle

Pir Davidan shrine is located in Pirdavidan village of Gafan region. According to some authors, the grave of Javidan (807-816), the leader of the Khurram movement, is located there. The famous Azerbaijani writer Mammad Said Ordubadi talks about how the Armenians destroyed the village of Pirdavidan in 1905 in his book "Bloody Years". He notes that the tomb of Pir David is associated with Imam Rza's brother Davud. Sultan Davud is the grandson of the 6th Imam of the Shiites, Jafar Sadiq. According to the sources, Museyi-Kazim had 40 children - 23 sons and 17 daughters. Imam Ali Rza is his first son and Davud is his 22nd son. Ali Rza is the eighth imam of the Shiites. His grave is now a shrine in Mashhad. Imam Rza's younger brother Davud was buried in Qafan and his tomb was turned into a shrine and named Pir Davidan - that is, Shrine of Davud.

Historical and architectural monuments in East Zangazur:

Aghoghlan Temple is located on the 30th kilometer of the Lachin-Minkend highway, on the right bank of the Hakari River, near the village of Kosalar. Aghoghlan Temple is an Albanian monastery of the 5th-6th centuries. As the monument was subjected to avalanches and ruins at different times, it was rebuilt in the 9th century and adapted to the church style - a monastery. The Aghoghlan temple is 25 meters long and 12.5 meters wide. After the occupation of the Lachin region in 1992, the Armenians illegally changed the architectural structure and interior of the Aghoghlan Monastery, completely erasing several stone inscriptions on the walls of the monument, as well as a large number of ornaments and symbols of the Albanian period and made it unrecognizable.



Aghoghlan temple

In 2006, under the pretext of repairing the monument for the second time, Armenians placed plaques on the walls of the monument indicating that they belonged to the Armenian Gregorian sect. After the liberation of Lachin region from the Armenian occupation on December 1, 2020, representatives of the Albanian-Udi Christian community of Azerbaijan visited the Aghoghlan Temple.

The tombs in Demirchiler village are in the form of two tower tombs in Demirchiler village of Gubadli region. The first of them is located on the right bank of the Aghachay. The tomb is octagonal in plan. The inner height of the tomb is 4.5 meters. The inner walls are covered with well-hewn stones. All the outer faces of the tomb are designed in the form of shallow arches with shoulders, which are typical for the tombs of the Elkhanilar period. There are small windows in the middle of the eastern and western arches. The door is 1.2 meters above ground level. The second tomb is located on the right bank slope of Aghachay, between Demirchiler and Dondarli villages. Due to its convenient location, the tomb looks good from afar. Its plan is also octagonal. In terms of construction material, construction equipment and architectural solution, this monument is the same as the first tomb. Only the dimensions of the second tomb are slightly larger (the inner size of the upper chamber is 6.2 meters, the height of the body from the ground is 6.9 meters), and the shape of the shallow arches with shoulders on the outer faces is slightly different. Both of these tombs are considered to be monuments of the 13th-14th centuries.



Demirchiler tomb

Dondarli mosque was built by Nadir Shah in Dondarli village of Gubadli region in 1732. At that time, Nadir Shah, who came to Zangazur from Shirvan, worshiped in this mosque. Dondarli Mosque was built with local construction materials. From a distance, the mosque looks like a two-story building. In fact, the building is single-storey. The mosque was built on a pedestal of about one meter. The door to the prayer hall opens directly from the two-meter-wide balcony. The entrance door is completed with a semicircular arch from above. Four stone pillars have been installed in the prayer hall of the Dondarli mosque. Pilasters were installed on the side walls to help the columns. They make the domes covering the hall more durable. The roof of the mosque is sloping, as in the mosques of Shusha, Aghdam, Fizuli and other cities. Dondarli Mosque is a beautiful example of ancient Islamic architecture in Zangazur.



Dondarli mosque

Haji Badal Bridge was built in the 19th century on the Aghachay River by Haji Badal, a resident of Demirchiler village and an innate talent. In the construction of the bridge, idol stone, lime and egg yolk were used with special decorations. This bridge connected 15 villages with the district center. The bridge has an extremely interesting architecture. There are no supports in the middle of the bridge built in the form of an arch. The purpose of doing so was to ensure the unimpeded flow of the roaring mountain river. This historical monument remained as it was before the occupation of Gubadli.



Haji Badal bridge

Lalazar bridge is located on the river Bargushad in the territory of Aliguluushaghi village of Gubadli region. The bridge with an interesting architectural structure was built in 1867. Lalazar bridge is built in the shape of a straight oval. The two straight columns in the center are completed with arches, giving the bridge a double arch. The bridge is 17 meters long, 2.8 meters wide and 4.5 meters high. Although the bridge was not seriously damaged during the occupation, the inscriptions on the wall indicating the date of its construction were removed by Armenians.



Lalezar bridge

Hamza Sultan Palace is located in Husulu village of Lachin region. The date of construction of the palace is



Hemze Sultan palace

estimated in 1761. It is clear from the general view of the palace that the castle had a high tower. There is an entrance gate in the south corner of the castle. The palace has two floors. The palace has a spacious and large hall, a large number of ancillary rooms. Oriental architectural traditions were widely used in the construction of the building. The palace building is built of local stones and limestone. During the occupation, Armenians repaired the Hamza Soltan Palace and used it as a guest house for tourists.

Jijimli tombs There are two adjacent tombs in the cemetery near Jijimli village of Lachin region. The historically ancient tomb of Malik Ajdar is round inside and octagonal on the outside. The entrance door to the tomb, which has a rectangular passage, is located on the north side of the building. The top of the doorway is covered with a whole architectural stone with a pointed arch shape. Inside its border are traces of a carved horse figure. A number of details of the monument are the same as those used in the tombs in the Demirchiler village of Gubadli. There is no construction inscription or patterned surfaces on it. Researchers believe that the Jijimli tomb was built in the 12th-13th centuries. It seems more convincing that this monument was built in the late

13th century - during the Elkhaniler period. The second Jicimli tomb, popularly known as the “Dumb dome”, is cruciform on the inside and square on the outside. This monument is believed to have been built in the 17th century.



Jijimli tombs



Mammadbeyli tomb

Mammadbeyli tomb consists of an octagonal prism covered with pyramidal domes in Mammadbeyli village of Zangilan region. The door of the tomb is 1.8 m high from the ground. There is also an underground cellar. The floor of the tomb is paved with well-polished stones. There is an inscription on the entrance of this tomb, written in line. This book contains verses from the Holy Quran in four lines. In two lines, it is stated that the tomb was built in 704 AH (1305 CE) in honor of Muhammad al-Haj's son Yahya. The upper part of the dome was destroyed during the Armenian occupation. The area where the Mammadbeyli tomb is located was liberated on October 20, 2020.

Sari Ashig's memorial museum is located in Lachin region. The tomb of the famous Sari Ashig is on the right bank of the Hakari River, which passes through Lachin, Gubadli and Zangilan districts, and the grave of his lover Yakhshi is on the left bank. Ashig lived in Gulabird village of Lachin region in the 17th century. In 1988, Sari Ashig's memorial museum was opened in Gulabird village.



Ruins of the Memorial Museum of Sari Ashik

150 items related to Sari Ashig were donated to the memorial museum and a monument



Memorial Museum of Sari Ashig

was erected. As a result of the occupation of Lachin region by the Armenian Armed Forces in 1992, the museum building and all its exhibits were destroyed and looted. Gulabird village was liberated from occupation on December 1, 2020.

Sharifan tomb is located in Sharifan village of Zangilan region. During archeological excavations in 1974, the ruins of a medieval city known as "Shahri-Sharifan" or "Shahri-Khalifan" were discovered in this area. The area of the city remains is about 9 hectares. The survey revealed that there are two cemeteries around the city. One of them is a tomb-type tomb belonging to the wealthy population of the city, and the second cemetery is located in the south-west of the city and consists of graves covered with poles. Funerals in both cemeteries were conducted in accordance with Islamic law. During the excavations in Sharif, a large amount of material and cultural remains was found. According to archeological materials, Sharifan, an urban settlement, was built in the 14th century and was intensively inhabited until the 17th century. Only part of the tomb in the village of Sharifan on the right bank of the Hakari River has reached us. The plan of the tomb is a square with protrusions (5.4 x 5.4 meters). The southern wall of the tomb has a shallow rectangular altar. Its upper part is decorated with stalactite, the



Sharifan tomb

sides are decorated with thin columns. The protrusions of the tomb are covered with an arch, the central part is covered with a spherical dome. The walls and arches are covered with well-cut and polished stones. Sharifan Mausoleum is considered a monument built at the turn of the 13th-14th centuries. On October 20, 2020, Sharifan village was liberated from occupation.

Zangilan Mosque The construction of this mosque located in the center of the region dates back to the 17th-18th centuries. The mosque is believed to have been built during the Safaviler period. Its dimensions are 12x20 m. Local limestone was mainly used in its construction. The walls were not covered.

The door of the mosque opened to the sun. The door was arched. It had an inscription on the top. Unfortunately, during the Soviet era, this mosque was used as a warehouse. Armenian vandals destroyed this mosque building. After the liberation of Zangilan on October 20, 2020, the ruins of the mosque were discovered. A commission consisting of both foreign and local experts, organized by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, assessed the existing building of the mosque. At present, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation is restoring the mosque. On April 26, 2021, President Ilham Aliyev laid the



A groundbreaking ceremony on the site of the destroyed Zangilan mosque

foundation stone for the restoration of the mosque during a visit to Zangilan with family members.

More information about the historical and architectural monuments in East Zangazur can be found in the project "ARMENIAN VANDALISM: Azerbaijani Monuments in Captivity" of the Presidential Library. (<https://armenianvandalism.preslib.az/>)