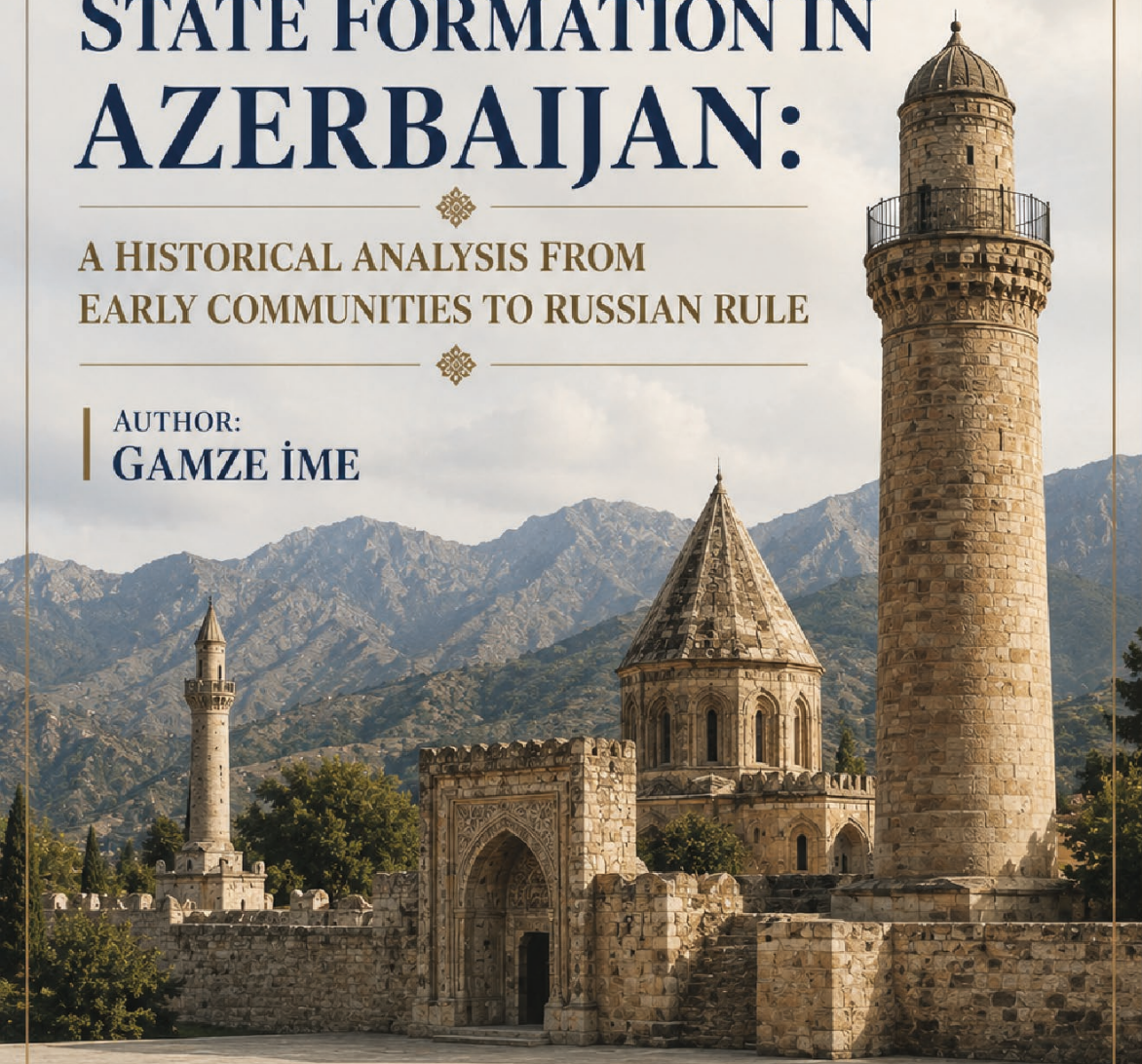


CONTINUITY OF STATE FORMATION IN AZERBAIJAN:

A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS FROM
EARLY COMMUNITIES TO RUSSIAN RULE

AUTHOR:
GAMZE İME



BİDGE Yayınları

Continuity of State Formation in Azerbaijan: A Historical Analysis
from Early Communities to Russian Rule

Author: Dr. Gamze İme

ISBN: 978-625-8989-28-1

1. Baskı

Sayfa Düzeni: Gözde YÜCEL

Yayınlama Tarihi: 21.05.2026

BİDGE Yayınları

Bu eserin bütün hakları saklıdır. Kaynak gösterilerek tanıtım için yapılacak kısa alıntılar dışında yayıncının ve editörün yazılı izni olmaksızın hiçbir yolla çoğaltılamaz.

Sertifika No: 71374

Yayın hakları © BİDGE Yayınları

www.bidgeyayinlari.com.tr - bidgeyayinlari@gmail.com

Krc Bilişim Ticaret ve Organizasyon Ltd. Şti.

Güzeltepe Mahallesi Abidin Daver Sokak Sefer Apartmanı No: 7/9 Çankaya /
Ankara



Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Literature Review.....	7
Method	12
Findings.....	14
CHAPTER I.....	18
THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF AZERBAIJAN: FROM EARLY SOCIETIES TO GREAT CIVILIZATIONS	18
CHAPTER 2	51
KHANATE PERIOD	51
Shaki Khanate.....	51
Shirvan (Shamakhi) Khanate.....	53
Baku Khanate	54
Derbent Khanate	56
Karabakh Khanate	57
Ganja Khanate	59
Kuba Khanate	60
Nakhchivan Khanate.....	62
Revan Khanate.....	63
Talysh (Lankaran) Khanate	65
Khanate of Tabriz	66

Ilisu Sultanate	67
Salyan Khanate	69
Maragha Khanate.....	70
Khoy Khanate	71
Maku Khanate.....	72
CONCLUSION	73
BIBLIOGRAPHY	76

Introduction

Situated along the corridor linking Asia and Europe, Azerbaijan has long drawn the attention of diverse communities, political formations, and empires. Its strategic position turned the region into a stage where military rivalries unfolded, while over longer stretches of time social change, cultural contact, and traditions of governance gradually took shape. From the earliest communities onward, the lands of Azerbaijan witnessed continuous settlement and, beginning in early periods, gave rise to increasingly complex forms of social organization and political authority, unfolding along a sustained historical trajectory. Archaeological evidence together with written sources from neighboring civilizations makes it possible to trace this development back to early communal structures, revealing that patterns of settlement and organization did not emerge in isolation but evolved through a steady process of adaptation. Such continuity places Azerbaijan among the enduring historical centers of the South Caucasus, where early forms of collective life developed into more structured political entities over time.

Yet a review of the existing scholarship reveals a tendency to approach that extended trajectory in a fragmented manner. Much of the literature concentrates on particular eras, individual polities, or short-lived political episodes, and rarely follows the line of development from early communities through the khanates and into the period of Russian rule within an integrated framework. This tendency often frames the past through interruptions, leaving less room to observe how social organization and political authority were continuously reshaped across different periods. A closer engagement with the region's historical experience points to a long-term process in which change did not erase earlier structures but reworked them, allowing new forms of governance to emerge while retaining elements rooted in earlier stages.

The present study addresses this gap by examining Azerbaijan's historical development across a broad temporal span that extends from early communal formations to the establishment of Russian rule in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The trajectory from early societies to the political entities of antiquity, from the transformations of the medieval period to the consolidation of Turkish political presence, from the dissolution of the Safavid state to the rise of the khanates, and ultimately to Russian domination is approached as a sequence of interconnected phases rather than isolated moments. Such an approach makes it possible to explore how state formation took shape, how continuity persisted despite political change, and how regional power struggles influenced the direction of that development. In this sense, the study brings together archaeological data, historical chronology, and written records in a descriptive and comparative framework that allows different periods to be read in relation to one another.

Within this broader structure, the emergence of early political formations in antiquity marks an important stage in the development of organized authority. These formations, shaped over time under the influence of neighboring civilizations, did not disappear with the passage of time but contributed to later institutional patterns. During the medieval period, shifts in political control, the strengthening of feudal relations, and religious transformations redefined the region's internal organization while preserving underlying continuities. The consolidation of Turkish political presence further contributed to the formation of a more distinct historical identity, reflected in successive political orders such as the Seljuks, Mongols, Timurids, and various Turkic dynasties, each of which positioned Azerbaijan within wider regional and international power structures.

The period following the Safavid state introduced a different configuration in which local political units gained prominence. The khanates that emerged during this era reflect a setting in which local

governance strengthened while broader political unity weakened under the pressure of internal rivalries and external intervention. This fragmentation did not arise abruptly but developed gradually through shifting balances of power, creating conditions that made the region increasingly susceptible to external influence. The strategic position of Azerbaijan continued to draw the attention of larger powers, and the political landscape shaped during the khanate period played a decisive role in accelerating the process that led to Russian expansion into the region.

Seen in its entirety, Azerbaijan's incorporation into Russian rule in the early nineteenth century appears not as a sudden rupture but as the outcome of a long accumulation of social, political, and regional factors. The study thus emphasizes a continuous process of state formation and reconfiguration, where each phase builds upon earlier developments while responding to new conditions. Its analytical focus lies in tracing how internal dynamics interacted with external pressures, and how political structures evolved within that interaction over time. By bringing together themes of continuity, transformation, and regional power relations within a single narrative, the study offers a framework that allows Azerbaijan's past to be understood as an evolving historical process shaped by its own internal logic, while remaining deeply connected to the broader currents of regional history.

Literature Review

Scholarship on the history of Azerbaijan portrays the region's development as an interconnected sequence of periods, tracing a continuum that begins with early human communities and extends through antiquity, the medieval era, and later historical stages. Work devoted to the earliest phases draws heavily on archaeological evidence, using cave sites, stone tools, and other forms of material culture to reconstruct patterns of initial settlement. Excavations carried out across Azerbaijan, including major sites such as Azıx,

Tağlar, and Damcılı, indicate that human habitation in this region reaches back to the earliest phases of human history. A large portion of this research, however, arranges the available evidence within a chronological framework, while sustained attention to long-term continuities in social organization and cultural life remains limited, leaving broader processes of transformation less fully explored.¹

A substantial portion of scholarship on the ancient period draws on accounts preserved by classical geographers and historians. Among these, Strabo's *Geographica* stands out as a key work, offering not only a detailed description of the spatial organization of the ancient world but also valuable insight into the social and political structures of various regions. In his treatment of the Caucasus, Strabo discusses Albania alongside neighboring peoples and situates the region within a broader ethnographic perspective. Read in this way, the work provides an early and systematic framework for understanding the regional setting of Caucasian Albania.² Read along these lines, *Geographica* moves beyond the confines of a descriptive geographical account and presents a narrative that allows the spatial organization of the ancient world to be considered together with its political and ethnographic dimensions. Strabo's treatment of different peoples and regions within a shared frame transforms the text from a simple description into a source that supports historical and geographical analysis. Herodotus' account offers early descriptive observations on the communities living around the Caucasus and their ways of life, placing the region's geographical and ethnographic features within a single narrative frame. His references to the presence of diverse

¹ Maisa Rahimova, *Archaeology of Azerbaijan: The Stone Age* (Baku: Sharq-Garb, 2008), 11–14; Ziya Bunyadov and Yusif Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan (From Ancient Times to the 20th Century)* (Baku: Azerbaijan State Publishing House, 2007), 15–19.

² Strabo, *The Geography of Strabo*, trans. Horace Leonard Jones, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917), 451–53 (2.5.11).

groups across the Caucasus reflect patterns of everyday practice and the relationship these communities maintained with their natural surroundings, while also contributing to an early body of knowledge about the region in the ancient world. Although his narrative does not take the form of a systematic analysis, it continues to serve as a foundational point of reference in later historical writing.³ These classic narratives have significantly shaped the conceptual foundation of modern literature on the early stages of Azerbaijani history.

Modern research rests on reinterpreting narratives preserved in classical sources and reinforcing them with archaeological evidence. Studies addressing early political formations such as the Scythians, Saka, Lullubi, Manna, and Caucasian Albania indicate that these entities often emerged as fragmented and loosely organized political units rather than as unified structures, a pattern that reflects both the limits of the surviving evidence and the complex historical conditions in which they developed.⁴ Such diversity reflects the richness of early Azerbaijani history, yet it also leads the narrative to take on a fragmented character. Connections between early forms of social organization and later political structures tend to be treated in an indirect manner, leaving long-term processes of state formation only partially visible.

The literature on the Middle Ages has largely developed around an analytical framework that brings together shifts in political authority and religious transformation. Within this body of work, narratives concerning the history of Caucasian Albania devote particular attention to the institutional and cultural changes that accompanied the spread of Christianity in the region; the activities of Mesrop, the creation of the alphabet, and the consolidation of

³ Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. George Rawlinson (Moscow: Roman Roads Media, 2013), 257–59.

⁴ Igrar Aliyev, ed., *History of Azerbaijan*, vol. 1 (Baku: Elm, 2007), 274–85; Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 91–95.

ecclesiastical structures are treated as key elements in the reconfiguration of social order. The reign of Vachagan, in turn, is presented as a phase in which religious institutions became more closely intertwined with political authority. The Arab conquests and the subsequent process of Islamization are approached as a new stage in the region's historical development, marked by the reorganization of administrative structures, taxation systems, and patterns of social relations. Read in this way, the medieval historiography of Azerbaijan tends to follow a line of transformation extending from early Christianization to Islamization, placing religious change at the center of its interpretation of political and social structures. This general pattern appears in a more concrete and event-oriented form in works based on narratives of conquest, where accounts of the Arab expansion are structured around military campaigns, administrative appointments, and tax arrangements negotiated with local populations. In these texts, Azerbaijan's incorporation into the Islamic world is described through the surrender of cities, the replacement of local rulers, and the establishment of new administrative frameworks, with the process largely interpreted through shifts in political control. Such an approach reflects a tendency to situate Azerbaijan within broader imperial formations, while leaving local social dynamics and patterns of continuity in the background, which in turn makes it more difficult to trace the long-term development of the region in a cohesive and integrated manner.

The literature on the institutionalization of Turkish political presence in the region is largely concentrated on the Seljuk, Atabeg, Aq Qoyunlu, and Safavid periods. Studies dealing with this era tend to approach the formation of Azerbaijan's political and cultural identity primarily through a dynastic framework, placing ruling houses and their political trajectories at the center of analysis.⁵ Jean-

⁵ İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Anatolian Principalities and the Aq Qoyunlu and Qara Qoyunlu States* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Press, 1969);

Paul Roux's works occupy a distinct place in the literature for their treatment of the historical mobility of Turkic communities, their patterns of migration and expansion, and the political formations they established across different regions within a broad temporal and spatial frame; following developments from Central Asia to the Islamic world and into Anatolia, he presents these communities not simply as military actors but as agents that reshaped regional balances of power and contributed to the formation of new political orders in the areas where they settled.⁶ At the same time, these studies tend to focus on the histories of specific political formations, leaving the long-term development of state tradition only partially addressed.

The period of the khanates that emerged after the weakening of the Safavid state is generally addressed in the literature within a framework of political fragmentation and instability. Studies on the Karabakh, Ganja, Shaki, Quba, Baku, Shirvan, Revan, and Talysh khanates examine in detail their internal administrative structures and their positions vis-à-vis larger powers.⁷ Yet in many of these accounts, the historical accumulation that prepared the ground for the emergence of the khanate system and its connections with earlier state traditions receive limited attention. Russian military and diplomatic interventions are often treated as the outcome of this process, while the historical and structural conditions that made such interventions possible remain insufficiently explored. When the body of scholarship is considered as a whole, it becomes clear that the literature on the history of Azerbaijan offers a remarkably rich

Ziya Bunyadov, *The Atabegs of Azerbaijan (1136–1225)* (Baku: Sharq-Garb, 2007), 48–125.

⁶ Jean-Paul Roux, *History of the Turks: From the Pacific to the Mediterranean for 2000 Years* (Istanbul: Kabalcı, 2008), 180–264.

⁷ Sara Ashurbeyli, *History of the City of Baku* (Baku: Avrasiya Press, 2006), 190–97, 274–316; Tofiq Mustafazade, *The Quba Khanate* (Baku: Elm Publishing House, 2005), 13, 242–43.

range of sources and data, though this material is frequently approached within the confines of discrete periods, leaving the lines of continuity between different historical phases less visible. Historical writing tends to proceed through moments of rupture and abrupt change, which obscures the longer trajectory of state formation in Azerbaijan. The present study engages this accumulated scholarship within a more integrated framework and approaches Azerbaijan's past through the intertwined notions of continuity and transformation. The span from early communities to the era of the khanates and the establishment of Russian rule is treated not as a sequence of isolated events but as the outcome of long-term historical dynamics. In this way, the study moves beyond predominantly descriptive accounts and seeks to offer a more analytical, connected, and long-range interpretation of Azerbaijan's historical development.

Method

This study is conceived as a qualitative historical inquiry that traces the development of Azerbaijan from early communal formations to the early nineteenth century through a long-term perspective. It does not rely on a defined sample group but proceeds through a document-based approach grounded in the systematic analysis of historical sources. The research brings together archaeological evidence, writings from classical antiquity, medieval chronicles, texts from the early modern era, and works of modern historiography, considering them in relation to one another as part of a continuous interpretive effort.

The core body of evidence rests on written and material sources from a range of periods. For early phases and prehistory, the study draws on research grounded in archaeological excavations conducted across Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus. Assessments of the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic periods rely on stratigraphic data, remains of material culture, and interpretations

developed within the archaeological literature. Such evidence is considered with an eye to tracing continuity in human settlement across the Azerbaijani landscape and to identifying early forms of social organization. For antiquity, geographical and historical accounts preserved in classical sources serve as a point of departure, approached through reinterpretation informed by modern historiography and geographical scholarship rather than direct transmission. In this way, the limits of those texts are acknowledged and a contextual reading takes precedence over a linear one. When turning to the medieval period, chronicles based on Arab, Armenian, and Caucasian traditions are read alongside modern studies that examine them. Themes such as the spread of Christianity, the political and cultural structure of Caucasian Albania, the Arab conquests, and the process of Islamization are explored through comparison across distinct bodies of evidence, allowing the period to be understood through the interplay of differing perspectives. The development of Turkic political presence in the region is treated across the Seljuk, Atabeg, Aq Qoyunlu, Qara Qoyunlu, and Safavid eras, drawing on both classical chronicles and modern monographic studies. Attention extends beyond dynastic narratives to include administrative arrangements, shifts in ethnic and cultural patterns, and regional balances of power, with the aim of tracing lines of continuity in the formation of political structures in Azerbaijan. The era of the khanates that emerged following the weakening of the Safavid state forms a central focus of inquiry. Analyses of this period engage monographs on the khanates, Ottoman archival materials, Russian sources, and local chronicles in concert. The political organization of the khanates, their relations with one another, and their position vis-à-vis larger powers are examined not through events alone but within the historical conditions that gave rise to these structures, making it possible to argue that the khanate period did not represent a rupture from earlier traditions of statehood.

The sources employed in the study are classified according to their content and chronological placement, with each group examined within its own historical setting. Discrepancies among sources are not smoothed over or resolved directly, but are treated as part of the fabric of historical writing itself. Such an approach aims to strengthen the study's reliability while steering clear of a one-dimensional narrative. No quantitative method is applied, and the material is examined through a descriptive and comparative mode of analysis. By comparing political structures and forms of social organization across different periods, patterns of continuity and change in the history of Azerbaijan are brought into view. Throughout the analysis, the conceptual frame takes shape around questions of state formation, political continuity, and struggles over regional power. Since the research relies on archival documents and published academic works, it does not require ethics committee approval. All materials consulted are drawn from open-access or formally published scholarly sources.

The method draws on a source-based and comparative approach informed by multiple disciplines, with the aim of explaining the long-term development of Azerbaijan's history. Such an orientation seeks to move beyond a merely chronological account and to bring into view the relationships that link historical processes across time.

Findings

Archaeological and written evidence examined during the research indicates that the geography of Azerbaijan has served as a continuously inhabited area since very early periods. Cave finds dated to the Paleolithic suggest that human communities did not engage with the region in a temporary manner, but established long-term living spaces. Traces identified at sites such as Azıh, Tağlar, and Damcılı point to a developed capacity among early populations to adapt to environmental conditions. Such indications imply that the

natural setting offered a framework supportive of sustained human life. The experience of early settlement carries forward into the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods with a noticeable transformation. Alongside hunting practices, the emergence of production-based activities signals a diversification in subsistence patterns. Structural remains and tools associated with production, which evoke a transition toward settled life, indicate that collective living assumed a more ordered form. Changes observed in material culture reveal that a clearer division of labor began to take shape within these communities.

Findings from the Neolithic and the Bronze Age point to a trajectory toward a more complex social structure. The wider use of metal reflects a clear increase in productive capacity. Variation in burial practices suggests that distinctions of status within communities had become visible. Symbolic meanings attributed to women and the presence of ritual practices indicate that belief systems were taking shape in close connection with social organization. Evidence from this period gives the impression that social order was beginning to form around more enduring rules. In the later phases of the Bronze Age, the emergence of large settlement centers signals a rise in population density. The diversification of agricultural production and traces of irrigation systems reveal that economic activities were carried out in a more organized manner. Discoveries pointing to private ownership further indicate that social inequality had become more pronounced. Developments of this kind suggest that the material foundations of political authority were starting to take form.

By the Iron Age, distinct archaeological cultures can be identified across different regions of Azerbaijan. Despite regional variation among these cultures, patterns in settlement layout and defensive architecture point to comparable forms of organization. Finds related to weaponry and fortifications indicate the emergence

of organized centers of power. Such evidence suggests that conditions conducive to the formation of early state structures had become more clearly defined. Written records and toponymic data provide a political framework that aligns with these material findings. References to entities such as Aratta, Lullubi, Kuti, and Manna indicate that the lands of Azerbaijan were already home to organized systems of governance in early periods. These formations can be traced through the region's interactions with neighboring civilizations. Accounts preserved in the texts of surrounding states reveal that Azerbaijan did not occupy a passive position but held an active place within regional dynamics. In antiquity, the presence of political entities such as Atropatena and Caucasian Albania points to the continuity of state traditions under varying forms. Records concerning agriculture, trade, and craft production show that these structures were economically organized. Settlements that developed along trade routes further indicate that Azerbaijan became an integral part of wider regional networks of circulation.

Evidence from the medieval period shows that control of the region passed between different political powers. Sources relating to the Sasanian, Byzantine, and Arab periods indicate that administrative structures were repeatedly reorganized over time. Findings on religious change reveal that Christianity and Islam each came to shape social life at different stages. Over the course of these developments, feudal relations gained strength, and local elites became more visible in the political sphere.

Findings related to the Seljuk and Atabeg periods indicate that Turkic political presence acquired an institutional character. Place names, patterns of population movement, and administrative practices point to the enduring nature of this development. Azerbaijan appears during these centuries as a region holding a significant position within broader balances of power. Records from the Mongol, Timurid, Qara Qoyunlu, and Aq Qoyunlu periods,

however, show frequent shifts in political control. Even so, continuity in settlement and administrative practice suggests that inherited structures did not disappear entirely. Such persistence reflects the capacity of social organization to adjust to changing political conditions. Evidence from the Safavid era points to a strengthening of central authority and a more clearly defined administrative order. In the period of the khanates that followed, local governance came to the forefront and political unity weakened. Rivalries among the khanates and their relations with external powers reveal a gradual move toward a more fragile political landscape. By the late eighteenth century, the political structure in Azerbaijan had taken on a fragmented and unstable character. Diplomatic documents and military records indicate an environment increasingly open to outside intervention, within which Russia's influence in the region expanded step by step.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF AZERBAIJAN: FROM EARLY SOCIETIES TO GREAT CIVILIZATIONS

A sound understanding of the past allows societies to make sense of events and transformations with greater clarity, and such awareness tends to nurture a lasting interest in their own histories, encouraging further inquiry. Azerbaijan stands among the oldest centers of culture and civilization, shaped by favorable natural and geographical conditions, a rich variety of fauna and flora, and a temperate climate that marks it as one of the regions where early human communities emerged. Archaeological discoveries, together with wall and cave paintings, remain among the most significant sources for reconstructing the historical development of Azerbaijan.¹ The earliest traces of archaeological work in Azerbaijan begin to appear in the nineteenth century, and the sustained effort devoted since that time to illuminating its past merits recognition. The desire to learn one's history is a shared trait across societies, including the peoples of the Caucasus. The value that history offers is expressed with clarity in the words of A. Bakikhanov²:

¹ Material cultural remains uncovered through archaeological discoveries constitute significant evidence indicating the presence of early human settlement in Azerbaijan and the Caucasus approximately 2 to 2.5 million years ago.

² Abbasgulu Agha Bakikhanov (1794–1846) was born into a noble family in Baku. He received a comprehensive traditional Oriental education and developed a strong command of Arabic and Persian, along with an advanced knowledge of classical Azerbaijani and Persian literature. In 1801, his father left Baku and the

*“History is such a silent speaker that it conveys the legacies of predecessors to successors with all their details and descriptions, explains the causes of need and prosperity, the paths of progress, and the reasons for decline. It presents events that may arise in the future in the guise of the past for people to take heed.”*³

The primitive communal period represents the earliest stage of human history and, in Azerbaijan, extends from the emergence of the first humans to the formation of large tribal unions, roughly between the third and first millennia BCE. The social structure associated with this period persisted for a long time in Azerbaijan, much as it did in other parts of the world. Tools in use during this stage were simple, and the level of production remained quite limited. Economic activity depended on natural resources and was closely tied to environmental conditions. In archaeological terms, the chronology of this period is classified into the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age. Early human groups or communities began to take shape during the Lower and Middle Paleolithic. In order to

family settled in Guba, where he lived and continued his education until the end of 1819. From an early age, he studied the works of prominent poets such as Nizami Ganjavi, Ferdowsi, Khaqani Shirvani, Omar Khayyam, Saadi Shirazi, Rumi, Hafez, and Fuzuli, gradually cultivating his literary talent and becoming an accomplished poet. In December 1846, while returning to Azerbaijan via Damascus, Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, and Tehran, he contracted the plague and passed away. For further details, see: Gunturk M. I. Aslanli, “Physical Education Issues in the Works of A. Bakikhanov,” *Pedagogical Sciences* 112 (2013): 5–6; Parvana Bayram, “The Life and Works of Abbaskulu Agha Bakikhanov,” *Journal of International Social Research* 6, no. 27 (2013): 146–48; The Persian work *Gulistan-i Iram*, authored by Abbasgulu Agha Bakikhanov, stands as a significant source for the history of Azerbaijan. When presenting the text to the Tsar, he noted that he felt compelled to write the history of his country and homeland. The work focuses on the geography and ethnography of Dagestan and Shirvan, while also offering detailed information on the languages, religions, ethnic compositions, and sectarian affiliations of the peoples inhabiting the region. See: Ahmet Kanlıdere, *The Turkish World in the 19th Century* (Ankara: Anadolu University, n.d.), 117–18.

³ Abbasgulu Agha Bakikhanov, *Gulistan-i Iram* (Baku: Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences Press, 1951), 10.

survive and secure food, people formed small groups of twenty to thirty individuals, creating the earliest human communities. These groups established settlements in regions such as Karabakh, including the Azıh and Tağlar caves, and Kazakh, where sites like Damşılı and Daşsalahlı caves are located.⁴

The Middle Paleolithic, or Mousterian period, dated roughly between 120–100 thousand and 40–30 thousand BCE, marks a phase in which human populations spread more widely across the geography of Azerbaijan, establishing settlements along the southern slopes of the Caucasus from Karabakh to Ceyranchol. Developments during this period include an increase in hunting activities, the emergence of the earliest simple burial practices, the refinement of primitive tools into more functional forms, and efforts to preserve cohesion within tribal groups.⁵ Among the archaeological sites where tools and animal bones from the period have been uncovered are the third layer of Azıh Cave, the surroundings of Tağlar Cave (Azıh and Tağlar caves), Daşsalahlı and Damcılı caves in the Gazakh region, Gazma in Nakhchivan, Zar in Kelbajar, Buzeyir in Lerik, the area around Artin Cave in Armenia, and settlements near Sochi.⁶ In the Upper Paleolithic period, dated between 40 and 14 thousand years ago, intergenerational communities began to take shape. These early human groups, grounded in kinship ties and collective ownership, gradually acquired a more stable form of organization. A matriarchal structure became more pronounced, and various artistic figures were produced from bone, stone, and horn.⁷ With the

⁴ Mehman Abdullayev, ed., *History of Azerbaijan (From Ancient Times to the Early 21st Century)* (Baku: Baku University Press, 2016), 5; Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 21; For the stratigraphies of these Paleolithic cave sites and the materials uncovered during excavations dating to the period, see: Rahimova, *Archaeology of Azerbaijan*, 38–45.

⁵ Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 24–25.

⁶ Qabil Aliyev, *History of the Caucasus* (Baku: Elm, 2009), 34.

⁷ Teymur Bunyadov, *Ethnography of Azerbaijan*, vol. 1 (Baku: Sharq-Garb, 2007), 24–25.

transition to the Mesolithic period, which began in the early thirteenth millennium BCE and continued until the seventh millennium, a marked increase in the use of the bow and arrow can be observed. Archaeological evidence indicates that populations living in Azerbaijan during this time moved toward a more settled way of life and began to adopt forms of collective living. Early signs of animal domestication are also thought to date to this period, roughly between the eighth and seventh millennia BCE.⁸ The Neolithic period, which began in the eighth millennium, witnessed significant developments in agriculture and animal husbandry. The production of tools through polishing and drilling stone, the practice of early forms of farming, and the breeding of animals such as cattle illustrate these developments. Archaeological excavations have revealed the presence of production tools and the remains of simple settlement structures, indicating the emergence of agricultural activity. Tools were commonly made from materials such as flint and obsidian, with stone hoes, sickles, hammers, and axes among the items recovered. Findings also suggest that agriculture and animal husbandry were becoming distinct activities. Alongside farming and hunting, fishing formed another component of the economic life of the period.⁹ Rock carvings discovered in Azerbaijan provide valuable insight into how people of the time perceived the world, understood their surroundings, and expressed artistic ability. These images are particularly notable for their depictions of hunting scenes,

⁸ Thomas de Waal, *The Caucasus: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 90; Mesolithic period findings in Azerbaijan were first discovered and studied in the 1950s by M. M. Huseynov in the Damjili Cave on Mount Avey, located within the territory of the village of Dashsalakhli in the Gazakh region. See: Rahimova, *Archaeology of Azerbaijan*, 143.

⁹ Dilgam Ismailov, *History of Azerbaijan* (Baku: NPM, 2017), 23; Yusif Seferov, *What Do We Know About Ancient Azerbaijan?* (Baku: Azerbaijan State Publishing, 1989), 20–21; Numerous depictions of boats, fish, and fishing nets appear in the rock carvings at Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape. For the petroglyphs of Gobustan, see: Rahimova, *Archaeology of Azerbaijan*, 406–443.

collective dances, and various animal and human figures.¹⁰ The Neolithic period gradually evolved into the Eneolithic period, spanning the sixth to fourth millennia BCE.

The Eneolithic period, dated to the sixth through fourth millennia BCE, marks a stage when metal was first discovered and tools began to be produced from copper. Archaeological remains from this period in Azerbaijan include various ornaments made of copper and female figurines. Women were regarded as sacred, understood not only as bearers of lineage but also as a central force within the tribe, associated with fertility, peace, and well-being. They were valued as symbols of prosperity and harmony, as well as representations of purity and sanctity.¹¹ Toward the end of the fifth millennium, the horse was domesticated for the first time, with remains of such domesticated animals identified at Alikomektepe in the Jalilabad region. Elder members of the community held an important place during this period. Burial practices began to involve specific rituals, with the deceased interred within houses or among settlement areas through ceremonies that included the use of red pigment symbolizing blood.¹² Sites where remains from this period have been uncovered include Ganja-Kazakh regions such as Shomutepe, Babadervish, and Kargalartəpəsi, Mil-Karabakh sites like Iamltepe, Calagantepe, and Leylatepe, the Mughan plain at Alikomektepe, Nakhchivan at Kultepe, along with the basins of the Kura and Aras rivers. Eneolithic monuments studied in the Lake Urmia region and near Tabriz offer valuable evidence for understanding the lives of early agricultural and pastoral

¹⁰ Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 28; The richest material remains associated with the Mousterian culture in the Caucasus and the Near Eastern regions have been uncovered in the third stratigraphic layers of the Taglar Cave and Azikh Cave sites. For these tools, see: Rahimova, *Archaeology of Azerbaijan*, 91.

¹¹ Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 33.

¹² Irada Nuriyeva, *History of Azerbaijan (From Ancient Times to the Early 21st Century)* (Baku: Mutarjim, 2015), 13; Ismailov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 24.

communities in Azerbaijan.¹³ Following this stage, the transition to the Bronze Age took place.

In Azerbaijan, the Bronze Age is dated to the fourth through second millennia BCE and is divided into early, middle, and late phases.¹⁴ The Early Bronze Age, spanning the late fourth and third millennia BCE, is known as the Kura-Araxes culture. During this period, a shift occurred from the keeping of domesticated animals to cattle breeding on open pastures. The abundance of alpine meadows encouraged expansion into wider territories and supported the development of sheep husbandry.¹⁵ The emergence of winter farming and nomadic cattle breeding increased the role of men in economic life and led to a transition from a matriarchal to a patriarchal structure.¹⁶ Middle Bronze Age, covering the end of the third millennium and the beginning of the second millennium BCE, marks a time when large settlements and urban centers began to form, with Nakhchivan and Urmia serving as notable examples. Clans and tribes in Azerbaijan came together to form larger tribal unions, while the growing prominence of wealth and private property gave rise to social and economic inequalities.¹⁷ In the Late Bronze Age, dated to the fourteenth through twelfth centuries BCE, artistic production gained increasing importance, and the earlier communal structure gave way to a stratified social order. The horse came into widespread use as a riding animal, tools became more advanced, and large irrigation canals were constructed. Viticulture and winemaking also saw considerable development during this time.¹⁸ The peoples of Azerbaijan may take pride in these three

¹³ Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 29.

¹⁴ de Waal, *The Caucasus*, 90-91; Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 30.

¹⁵ *Azerbaijcan Tarixi*, 9.

¹⁶ Nuriyeva, *History of Azerbaijan*, 15.

¹⁷ Ismailov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 27.

¹⁸ Nuriyeva, *History of Azerbaijan*, 16-17; Ismailov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 27-28.

formative phases that shaped the Eneolithic and Bronze Age heritage of the South Caucasus, as a significant portion of the more than 150 known monuments and remains from these periods across the region are located within Azerbaijan.¹⁹

The Iron Age spans the period from the end of the second millennium BCE to the beginning of the first millennium BCE. Following the establishment of the Azerbaijan Archaeological Committee in 1923, excavations carried out in Nakhchivan and Karabakh between 1926 and 1927 led to the discovery of remains from the Bronze and early Iron Ages, contributing significantly to the understanding of these periods. With the intensification of social stratification, formations resembling state structures, such as Iberia and Caucasian Albania, as well as warrior tribal federations including the Scythians, Sarmatians, and Alans, began to appear.²⁰ In northern Azerbaijan, several archaeological cultures from the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages have been identified, among them the Khojaly-Gadabay, Talysh-Mugan, and Nakhchivan cultures.²¹ As the primitive communal order gradually dissolved, class-based societies and clearer social stratification emerged during the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. While state-like formations developed in the southern regions of Azerbaijan, large tribal groupings took shape in the north. Powerful tribal unions established centers of authority by gaining control over fertile lands. By the end of the second millennium and the beginning of the first millennium BCE, the first state formations had appeared in southern Azerbaijan, marking a gradual transition from earlier communal structures toward

¹⁹ *Azerbaijcan Tarixi*, 9.

²⁰ Frederik Coene, *The Caucasus: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 91.

²¹ For detailed information on these civilizations, see; Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 47–51.

processes of state formation.²² Before turning to the emergence of the first states in Azerbaijan, it is worth noting the following words of Seferov:

*“As Azerbaijani scholars speak of the ancient history of our great homeland, the frozen heartbeats of people who lived thousands of years ago can be heard. Their secrets are revealed and brought into human understanding. The remains of Daşsalahlı, Şuşagala, Daşgala, and finally the Azıh cave, which had remained hidden like a secret for centuries, have been presented to humanity. These findings have become a mirror of the modern human’s own past.”*²³

The emergence of the first states in Azerbaijan is closely linked to an ancient tradition of state formation, a connection supported by traces of human presence found in Azıh Cave. From such a perspective, political entities that appeared in the region can be seen as expressions of a long-standing tradition of statehood in Azerbaijan.²⁴ From the third and second millennia BCE onward, formations such as Aratta, Lullubi, and Kutium took shape across Azerbaijani lands, with onomastic²⁵ and toponymic data lending support to this information.²⁶ No written texts produced by these states have survived, yet accounts preserved in the records of neighboring powers such as Assyria and Urartu provide valuable insight into their existence and organization.²⁷

²² Hasan Qəniyev, *Azərbaycan Tarixi (Ən Qədim Zamanlardan–XXI Əsrin İlk Onilliklərində)* (Bakı: Elm və Təhsil Nəşriyyatı, 2019), 36–37; Nuriyeva, *History of Azerbaijan*, 18.

²³ Seferov, *What Do We Know About Ancient Azerbaijan?*, 21.

²⁴ Fuat Hacısalıhoğlu, “Historiography in Azerbaijan,” PhD diss., Ankara University, 2012, 264.

²⁵ The science that deals with proper names and personal names.

²⁶ Grantovsky, E. A. *Rannyaya istoriya iranskikh plemen Peredney Azii*. Moscow: Vostochnaya Literatura, 2007, 37.

²⁷ Grantovsky, *Rannyaya istoriya*, 67; Hacısalıhoğlu, “Historiography in Azerbaijan,” 34.

Based on early Sumerian pictographic inscriptions²⁸, the first state identified within the territory of Azerbaijan is Aratta. It is generally located to the south and southeast of Lake Urmia, extending toward the Diyala River and the Zanjan–Qazvin region. Although differing views exist regarding its exact location, Aratta is widely understood to have encompassed these mountainous areas and is regarded as the earliest known name associated with the lands of ancient Azerbaijan.²⁹ Around the middle of the third millennium BCE, as the Sumerian state declined, Aratta also disappeared. In the period that followed, the Lullubi state emerged to the south of Lake Urmia, while the Kuti state took shape to the southwest.³⁰

The Lullubi state is regarded as the second state formation in Azerbaijan. Mesopotamian chronicles, as reflected in studies dated to the mid-second millennium BCE, refer to both the Lullubi and the Kuti states. Lullubi is often considered either a continuation of Aratta or part of its sphere of influence.³¹ Its territory extended from the Diyala River in the south to Lake Urmia in the north.³² The ethnic origins of this state remain uncertain, yet an examination of the activities of its rulers suggests a connection with the Sumerian-Akkadian cultural sphere.³³ With the fragmentation of the Lullubi state in the second millennium BCE, the Kuti state emerged. Known as Kuti or Kutium, this group settled to the west and southwest of Lake Urmia. The boundaries of the Kuti domain stretched from the western shores of Lake Urmia to the Persian Gulf. The Kuti managed

²⁸ For the rivalries between the Sumerian and Aratta states, see: Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 66–68.

²⁹ Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 70–71.

³⁰ Qəzənfər Rəcəbli, *Azərbaycan tarixi: Oçerklər* (Bakı: Elm və Təhsil, 2013), 26.

³¹ Alakbar Alakbarov and Muhammet Kemaloğlu, “The Origin of the Ethnonym Lulubi,” *Gümüşhane University Journal of Social Sciences* 9 (2014): 239.

³² Qəniyev, *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 39; Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 72.

³³ İsmail Mehmetov, *Political and Ethnic Structure in the Turkic Caucasus (The History of Azerbaijan from Antiquity to the Present)* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 2009), 81.

to establish a degree of stability in their region, though their state came to an end following a revolt against their last ruler, Tirikan. After this collapse, the Turukk and Su tribes appeared on the historical stage.³⁴

At the beginning of the second millennium BCE, political formations known as Turukk or Turukki and Su became prominent among the tribes living in the Lake Urmia basin. These groups are regarded as successors to the Lullubi and Kuti states. Their relations with Assyria³⁵, particularly through the province of Shushshara, account for their frequent mention in Assyrian sources, while references also appear in Sumerian inscriptions. According to some interpretations, the Su and Turukk tribes belonged to the Lullubi. However, the Babylonian ruler Hammurabi (MÖ 1792-1750) intervened and defeated these formations.³⁶

After the middle of the second millennium BCE, tribal-based unions began to dissolve. In the wake of these formations, the state of Manna or Mana emerged, often regarded as their successor³⁷ (it is especially considered to be descended from the Kuti and Lullubi states). The boundaries of this state have remained a matter of debate among scholars. Early research places it in the region between the Aras River and Lake Urmia, while cuneiform records indicate a location along a transitional zone between Anatolia and Assyria.³⁸ The name of Manna appears for the first time in Assyrian sources dated to 843 BCE. Relations with the Urartian and Assyrian states shifted between alliance and conflict.³⁹ Their origin is widely

³⁴ Ismailov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 32–33.

³⁵ For these relations, see: Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 77–81.

³⁶ Nuriyeva, *History of Azerbaijan*, 20–21.

³⁷ Solmaz Gashgay, *The State of Manna* (Baku: Azerbaijan State Publishing House, 1993), 44.

³⁸ Suzan Akkus Mutlu, “The Policy of Assyria and Urartu over Manna,” *Journal of Academic History and Thought* 4, no. 11 (2017): 222–23.

³⁹ Mehmetov, *Political and Ethnic Structure in the Turkic Caucasus*, 84–86; For details of these relations, see: Mutlu, “Policy of Assyria and Urartu,” 221–26.

regarded as Turkic. As the Manna state weakened, the Median state took advantage of the situation and brought an end to it. A portion of the Manna tribes continued to exist within the Median state.⁴⁰

The earliest information concerning the Mada or Median state dates to the beginning of the first millennium BCE. Inscriptions of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III from the early ninth century BCE indicate that he campaigned against the Medes and compelled them to pay tribute.⁴¹ Assyrian sources suggest that the land of Mada lay to the southeast of Manna. The geographical scope of ancient Media, expressed in modern terms, extends across regions corresponding to Armenia, Azerbaijan, southwestern Georgia, Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, southwestern Turkmenistan, Iraq-i Ajam, and a broad zone stretching from the eastern Black Sea to Gaziantep.⁴² In the 620s BCE, Media grew in strength and launched a campaign against Assyria, while Babylon expanded at the same time and entered into conflict with the Assyrians. These two powers captured the Assyrian capital in 612 BCE, weakening the state and dividing its territories between them. During this period, Manna in the South Caucasus, along with the Scythian kingdom and Urartu, came under Median control.⁴³ Even prior to its territorial expansion, the Median state appears as a strong and influential polity, marked

⁴⁰ Ismailov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 86; *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 19; The Mannaeans played an important role in the development of the Median state in the social and political spheres, as well as in its economic progress. See: Seferov, *What Do We Know About Ancient Azerbaijan?*, 49.

⁴¹ Grantovsky, *Rannyyaya istoriya*, 32; Whether the Medes had inscriptions of their own is a matter of debate. The general view is that the Persians, who knew the Median language, wrote the Median inscriptions of the Achaemenids. However, according to Mehmet Bayrakdar, they did have inscriptions written by themselves, though the issue has not yet been clarified conclusively. For detailed information, see: Mehmet Bayrakdar, *Medler ve Türkler* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2013), 41–45.

⁴² Bayrakdar, *Medler ve Türkler*, 398; The ancient names of these countries are also given in the book.

⁴³ Abdülhaluk Çay and İlhami Durmuş, “Scythians,” in *The Turks Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2002), 883; Aliyev, *History of Azerbaijan*, 94.

by a developed economy, a high level of culture, and political formations closely aligned with state structures.⁴⁴ The empire was divided into smaller and larger regional units, among which the area known as Lesser Media encompassed all of southern Azerbaijan and parts of northern Azerbaijan, a region later referred to as Atropatene.⁴⁵ For the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, sources concerning the peoples of northern Azerbaijan remain scarce, and archaeological evidence is limited.⁴⁶ In the introductory section of *Gülüstani-İrem*, Abbasgulu agha Bakikhanov describes the regions of Shirvan and Arran (Albania) as one of the long-standing zones of political and ethnic transition in the South Caucasus, emphasizing the successive presence of various peoples and local formations across time. This observation highlights the region's enduring role as a space of settlement and political interaction from the Median and Atropatene periods through to Albania.⁴⁷ Among the most detailed accounts of Median history is the work of Herodotus, particularly his discussion of the six Median tribes.

Atropat refers to the name given to Lesser Media and derives from the commander Atropat. He prevented the region from submitting to the Macedonians in the same way as Greater Media and established his own authority there, after which the state came to bear his name. Formed through the union of various tribes in northern Azerbaijan, this polity took its place on the historical stage. During this period, notable advances were made in agriculture and animal husbandry, and significant achievements were recorded in the extraction of petroleum. Coins minted in the name of Alexander the Great have been found in the region, along with traces of Greek cultural influence, including elements of architecture and religious

⁴⁴ Grantovsky, *Rannyya istoriya*, 71.

⁴⁵ Rəcəbli, *Azərbaycan tarixi: Oçerklər*, 36.

⁴⁶ Rəcəbli, *Azərbaycan tarixi: Oçerklər*, 38.

⁴⁷ Bakikhanov, *Gulistan-i Iram*, 12–14.

belief. The dominant faith of the state was Zoroastrianism, with fire worship standing as its most widely recognized ritual.⁴⁸

Albania refers to the country located on the southeastern slopes of the Caucasus Mountains (Map 4). Established within the territories of the modern Republic of Azerbaijan and Dagestan, the state of Caucasian Albania maintained an active presence in the region from the late fourth century BCE into the early third century BCE. It is widely accepted that its formation is connected with the arrival of the Saka groups in the area.⁴⁹ Before addressing Caucasian Albania⁵⁰ in detail, it is useful to consider the Saka, who are thought to have come to the region from Central Asia, Siberia, and the Altai. Records indicate that they reached the Caucasus around 680 BCE and settled along the banks of the Aras River. Place names in northern Azerbaijan such as Sheki-Shakashon, Artsakh⁵¹, and Sisakan⁵² point to their spread across these regions, while similar names are also encountered in the South.⁵³ There are differing views regarding the route by which the Saka arrived in the Caucasus. Some suggest that during the ninth and eighth centuries BCE they moved from Central Asia toward northern Iran and the southern shores of the Caspian Sea before reaching the Caucasus, and that by the eighth and seventh centuries they had integrated with local populations, contributing to the formation of the early Azerbaijani people. Others argue that they advanced southward from the northern Caucasus alongside the Scythians, while still others maintain that the Saka and

⁴⁸ Ismailov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 41–45.

⁴⁹ Aliyev, *History of Azerbaijan*, 124–125.

⁵⁰ Since Albania in the Balkans was also called Albania, the term ‘Caucasian Albania’ was used.

⁵¹ The territory of present-day Nagorno-Karabakh.

⁵² A historical toponym belonging to the Zangezur region.

⁵³ Mehebbet Paşayeva, “Azerbaycan Türklerinin Etnik Tarihine Kısa Bir Bakış,” *38th ICANAS* (Ankara, 2007), 2507–2508.

Scythians moved independently of one another.⁵⁴ After the Arab conquest, Albania⁵⁵ came to be known as Arran, while in Armenian historical tradition it appears as Alpan or Aghvan, and in Urartian sources as Kuh Albania.⁵⁶

The Greek geographer Strabo describes the boundaries of Albania in his well-known work in the following terms:

*“They dwell to the east between the Iberians and the Caspian Sea. To the west, they border the Iberians. Their northern frontier is enclosed by the Caucasus Mountains. To the south lies the Aras River. The Kura River flowing through Albania, together with the other rivers that feed it, increases the fertility of the land.”*⁵⁷

The same source also provides a detailed account of how the Kura and Aras rivers pass through Albanian territory and reach the sea. Albania occupied a strategically significant position in the South Caucasus, functioning as a bridge between east and west and lying along major international trade routes. Its boundaries are often compared with those of present-day Azerbaijan, though it is clear that the territory of Albania extended beyond these modern limits.

For the state of Albania, which showed little involvement in the military and political events of the Near East until the 60s BCE, this period can be regarded as one of relative peace. During the era

⁵⁴ Those who advocate this view have based their argument on the statement of Herodotus and Strabo that ‘the Iranians called the Scythians “Saka.”

⁵⁵ Brenda Shaffer, *Borders and Brethren: Iran and the Challenge of Azerbaijani Identity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 23; Movses Kaghankatvatsi counted this place among the regions north of Media. See: Moisey Kalankatuklu, *Albaniya Tarixi* (Baku: Avrasiya Press, 2006), 24; Moreover, in the study of the early medieval history of Albania, it is evident that Movses Kaghankatvatsi’s *History of Albania* is an incomparably valuable source. In the book, the historical, political, economic, social, cultural, ideological, and legal life of Albania, as well as the ethnogenetic processes in Azerbaijan to a great extent, are interpreted without comparison with other sources.

⁵⁶ Seferov, *What Do We Know About Ancient Azerbaijan?*, 68.

⁵⁷ Strabo, *Geography*, XI.4.1–2.

known as Hellenism⁵⁸, the state experienced economic and cultural growth and sought to maintain stable relations with neighboring lands. In the first century BCE, it faced attacks from a small state called Armenia, located around Lake Van in eastern Anatolia. The Armenians, believed to have arrived from the Balkans, attempted to expand their territory toward Iberia and Albania.⁵⁹ In 66 BCE, Roman forces advanced into the region with the aim of gaining control. In the battle fought along the banks of the Alazani River, Roman troops prevailed and brought Albania under their authority.⁶⁰

Azerbaijan has been a region inhabited by early Turkic groups since the ninth century BCE. It stands among the oldest areas where such communities established their first political formations across both its northern and southern parts. In tracing their origins, the people of Azerbaijan are led to examine Turkic groups that had lived in the region from the third millennium BCE onward. The view that these communities were of Turkic origin is no longer treated as a theoretical claim, but is regarded as a historical fact.⁶¹

A look at Azerbaijan's history in the Early Middle Ages shows that a new phase in socio-economic development began in the third century. The defining feature of this period lies in the formation of a feudal system. The feudal class emerged as the principal force within society and held extensive privileges, while the ruler was regarded as the largest landowner. Peasants and artisans constituted the productive segments of society, generating its material wealth.⁶² From the middle of the first century until 510, Azerbaijan remained

⁵⁸ For the spread and influence of Hellenism in the Caucasus, see: Aliyev, *History of Azerbaijan*, 130–138.

⁵⁹ İsmayıl Məmmədov, *Azərbaycan Tarixi* (Baku: Adiloğlu Nəşriyyatı, 2005), 45.

⁶⁰ *Azerbaijan Tarixi*, 28–29; İsmailov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 49–51; For this conflict between the Romans (under the leadership of Pompey) and Albania, see: Strabo, *Geography*, XI.4.5.

⁶¹ Paşayeva, “Azerbaycan Türklerinin Etnik Tarihine Kısa Bir Bakış,” 2507; Bayrakdar, *Medler ve Türkler*, 123–240.

⁶² *Azerbaijan Tarixi*, s.31

under the rule of the Alban Arsacids (Parthians)⁶³. As the feudal structure deepened during this period, the ruling class became divided into distinct groups. In 224, the Sasanian state was established and gained considerable power by seizing the lands of the Arsacids. In the conflict between Rome and the Sasanians, the Arsacids supported Rome and were therefore eliminated by the Sasanians in 510. Between 510 and 629, the lands of Albania were governed by the Marzbans, who acted as successors of Sasanian authority.⁶⁴ Throughout this period, the Azerbaijani region remained an arena of continuous struggle between Byzantium and the Sasanians, and as Byzantium prevailed with the support of the Khazars, the territory of Albania came under the political influence of the Khazars.

Christianity spread widely in Azerbaijan, particularly during the Sasanian period, while its expansion across the Caucasus can be traced back to the second and third centuries. Missionaries arriving from Palestine, Syria, and Cappadocia preached this faith among the peoples of the Caucasus and invited them to adopt it. Studies indicate that, already in the second century, missionaries affiliated with the Syrian Church were active in promoting Christianity among communities living in eastern Asia Minor and in areas close to the Caucasus Mountains.⁶⁵

⁶³ Coene defined the territories ruled by the Arsacids as Parthia, Armenia, Kartli, and Albania. See: Coene, *The Caucasus*, 210; The territory of the Arsacids was a vast area extending from Khorasan and including the eastern part of present-day Anatolia. Historians have referred to the Arsacids in Iranian lands as the 'Great Arsacids,' and those in Armenia as the 'Lesser Arsacids.' For detailed information, see: Mehmet Özmenli, "Armenia'da Arsaklar ve Kamsarakanlar," *Yeni Türkiye* 60 (2014): 1–14.

⁶⁴ Coene, *The Caucasus*, 104–105; *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 37–38.

⁶⁵ Aliyev, *History of Azerbaijan*, 197; Qəzənfər Rəcəbli states that the spread of Christianity in Azerbaijan dates back to the first century AD. According to this view, two years after the death of Jesus Christ, the apostles Paul, Thomas, and Bartholomew passed through the territories of Azerbaijan on their journeys respectively to China, Parthia, and India, contributing to the introduction of

The official spread of Christianity in Albania dates to the early fourth century. During this period, the Sasanian shah Yazdegerd I (399–420) strengthened religious activity in the region. Yazdegerd II (438–457), however, rejected Christianity in favor of Zoroastrianism and compelled his nephew Vache II (440–463) to adopt this belief. Following the death of Yazdegerd II in 457, Vache II abandoned Zoroastrianism, embraced Christianity, and sought to promote it throughout Albania. Vachagan III (493–510)⁶⁶, after consolidating his authority, initiated an active campaign in support of Christianity. He not only failed to show tolerance toward other beliefs and persecuted those who adhered to religions other than Christianity, but also established schools dedicated to its propagation.⁶⁷

During the sixth and seventh centuries, missionaries from Byzantium, Albania, Iberia, and the Armenian Church were sent to promote Christianity across the North Caucasus. In the same period, Byzantium employed Christianity in ways that aligned with its political aims. Efforts to expand influence took shape through the creation of military and religious buffer zones in areas close to imperial frontiers, with the spread of Christianity forming part of this broader strategy. Local populations at first showed reluctance toward adopting the new faith, yet sustained missionary activity gradually altered this situation, and Christianity gained a firm foothold, particularly in parts of the North Caucasus situated near the Black

Christianity in the region. Later, another apostle, Thaddeus, continued missionary activities in Atropatene, beginning from the Maku region. For detailed information, see Rəcəbli, *Azərbaycan tarixi: Oçerklər*, 72.

⁶⁶ He was the last ruler of the Arsacids, who were vassals of the Sasanians.

⁶⁷ Ismailov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 57–58; Nuriyeva, *History of Azerbaijan*, 40–42; Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 193–196; Rəcəbli, *Azərbaycan tarixi: Oçerklər*, 83; Those who did not wish to accept Christianity sent letters to the Armenians with the intention of uniting with them. For detailed information, see: Kalankatuklu, *Albaniya Tarixi*, 42–44.

Sea⁶⁸ When Arab forces began to enter Azerbaijan, the religious landscape of the region started to shift. The Caucasus has long held a strategic position that drew the attention of many states. Prior to the rise of Islam, Arabs largely lived as small tribal communities within the Arabian Peninsula. Over time, with the aim of spreading Islam and fostering a broader sense of collective identity, they made notable advances. In this process, they embarked on rapid campaigns of expansion, extending Islam across a wide geographical area.

When Muslims first entered the Caucasus, they began with small-scale raids aimed at familiarizing themselves with the region and securing gradual advances, and over time these incursions became more frequent. Following the withdrawal of Sasanian authority, a struggle for control of the region emerged between the Eastern Roman Empire and the Muslims, as the latter, having dismantled the Sasanian presence, were unwilling to share these lands. Both powers sought to establish dominance over the area.⁶⁹ Although Arab forces initially encountered resistance from the populations of Azerbaijan and Armenia, they prevailed and appointed Hudhayfa b. al-Yaman as governor of Azerbaijan, marking the beginning of sustained contact with the Khazars.⁷⁰ Yahya el-Belâzurî, *Fütûhu'l-Büldân*, çev: Mustafa Fayda, Siyer Yayınları, İstanbul 2013, s.372). In the northern Caucasus, the Khazars held power, and repeated conflicts between Arabs and

⁶⁸ Aliyev, *History of Azerbaijan*, 202; Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 187.

⁶⁹ Bayram Arif Köse, “Internal and External Developments Affecting Muslim Policies in the South Caucasus from the First Muslim Rule to the Abbasids,” *Vakanüvis – International Journal of Historical Research* 2 (2017), s.308

⁷⁰ Ahmed b. Yahya el-Belâzurî, *Fütûhu'l-Büldân*, çev: Mustafa Fayda, Siyer Yayınları, İstanbul 2013, s.372; The Khazars were one of the major Turkic states that established political dominance between the 7th and 10th centuries in the northern plains of the Black Sea and the Caucasus, over a territory extending from the Volga to the Dnieper, the Çolman (Kama), and Kiev. See: İbrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milli Kültürü* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2011), 161.

Khazars unfolded as each side sought control over the region. The first major campaign dates to the reign of Caliph Uthman in 651–652, and reciprocal raids continued until the mid-eighth century. The determined resistance of the Khazars indicates the strength of their political structure.⁷¹ Arab control over Azerbaijan took shape in a gradual manner, and around 730, after defeating the Khazars, they established dominance in the region and facilitated the spread of Islam.⁷²

The settlement of Arab tribes in Azerbaijan is generally dated to the period of Caliph Uthman. During this process, certain groups placed in the region were tasked with inviting the local population to Islam, and Arab families entrusted with its propagation played a role in the conversion of many inhabitants.⁷³ In the Abbasid period, the dispersal of Arab populations across Azerbaijan intensified further, and Arab quarters began to emerge in various cities and administrative centers. Urban locations such as Arran, Barda, and Beylagan were turned into bases for Islamic military forces, while strategically positioned frontier towns like Derbent were developed into major garrison centers.⁷⁴ The dispatch of Abu Muslim to Derbent with a force of twenty-four thousand soldiers during the time of Maslama stands as a clear example of this policy.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milli Kültürü*, 163–164; There were also periods in which the Arabs held the upper hand. For example, during a time when the Arabs advanced as far as Derbend (737), Marwan ibn Muhammad, the governor of Armenia and Azerbaijan, besieged Itil, the capital of the Khazar State. Although the Khazar khagan was forced to accept Islam, he later abandoned it, and in the first half of the 9th century Judaism was declared the official religion. See: Nesimi Yazıcı, *İlk Türk İslam Devletleri Tarihi* (Ankara: Ankara University Press, 1992), 15–16; al-Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, 238–239.

⁷² Svante E. Cornell, *The Politicization of Islam in Azerbaijan* (Washington, DC: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2006), 14.

⁷³ al-Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, 375–376; Ali İpek, “İlk İslami Dönemde Azerbaycan (632–750)” (PhD diss., Istanbul University, 1999), 152.

⁷⁴ İpek, “İlk İslami Dönemde Azerbaycan,” 155–156.

⁷⁵ Bakikhanov, *Gulistan-i Iram*, 62–65; Qəniyev, *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 72; Derbend is also known as an important passageway through which Turkic tribes entered the

By the middle of the eighth century, open objections and uprisings against the caliphate began to emerge among the population, with the most prominent among them being the Babak Revolt. Its leader, Babak, belonged to the Khurramite⁷⁶ movement, a group that had engaged in repeated rebellions since the Sasanian period and viewed the arrival of Islam as an Arab invasion. In pursuit of preventing Arab domination and establishing their own rule, they rose in revolt whenever circumstances allowed.⁷⁷ Initial acts of resistance appeared between 748 and 752, and the uprising that began in Beylagan spread widely across Azerbaijan, reaching Barda, Ardabil, Shirvan, and Dagestan.⁷⁸ As the head of the Khurramites, Babak launched a more organized phase of the rebellion in 816. Caliph al-Ma'mun (813–833) appointed governors to the region in an effort to suppress the movement, though early attempts failed to contain its expansion. Under Caliph al-Mu'tasim (833–842), the revolt grew significantly and came to pose a serious threat. The Abbasids engaged in an extended struggle lasting around twenty years to bring it under control. The commander Afshin⁷⁹, sent to the region by al-Mu'tasim, fought against the rebellion for a prolonged period and eventually defeated Babak near Bazz⁸⁰. On 4 January 838, Babak was brought before the caliph and executed in public,

region. Indeed, the Derbend Gate, called Bāb al-Abwāb ('the Iron Gate'), was a 'Turkic gate' used by the Khazars and many Turkic tribes that followed them. See: Ali Sinan Bilgili, "Azerbaycan Türkmenleri Tarihi," in *Türkler Ansiklopedisi (Ortaçağ)*, vol. 7 (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002), 21–22.

⁷⁶ For the meaning of the term 'Khurram,' see: Ziya Bünyadov, *Azərbaycan VII–IX Əsrlərdə*, Şərq-Qərb, Bakı 2007, s.254–261.

⁷⁷ Osman Turan, "Babek," *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 2 (Istanbul, 1970), 170–174; Cornell, *Politicization of Islam*, 15.

⁷⁸ Nuriyeva, *History of Azerbaijan*, 53.

⁷⁹ Jean-Paul Roux writes that Afshin was of Turkic origin and became famous for suppressing this rebellion. See: Jean-Paul Roux, *History of the Turks*, 183.

⁸⁰ The Bezz Fortress, located in the city of Garadağ in southern Azerbaijan, is also known as Babek Fortress because it was used by Babek as a refuge.

with his limbs severed before his death.⁸¹ The Babak Revolt has been interpreted by some groups as a struggle for independence and a symbol of resistance against foreign domination. Babak himself continues to be regarded as a respected historical figure, and the suppression of the uprising carries lasting historical significance in this regard.⁸²

By the mid-ninth century, the weakening of the caliphate and the strengthening of feudal relations brought about a profound shift in the political balance in Azerbaijan (Harita 5). As large feudal principalities gained influence, tendencies toward independence began to emerge in territories that had been under the authority of the Arab caliphate. Feudal rulers in these regions rejected allegiance to the central government and refused to transfer collected taxes to the state treasury. Many of these figures belonged to local dynastic structures and were of Arab origin. Following the suppression of the Khurramite movement, a number of independent and semi-independent states appeared in Azerbaijan between the ninth and eleventh centuries, including the Shirvanshahs (861–1538), the Sajids (879–941), the Sallarids, also known as the Musafirids or Kangarids (941–981), the Shaddadids (951–1199), and the Rawadids (981–1071).⁸³ With the arrival of the Seljuks, the entire territory of

⁸¹ Hakkı Dursun Yıldız, “Babek,” *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 4 (Istanbul, 1991), 376–377; Vladimir Minorsky, “Caucasica IV,” *BSOAS* (1953): 509; Ismailov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 73–74; Məmmədov, *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 95; For the beliefs of the Khurramites, to whom Babek belonged, and the Babekites, who are regarded as their continuation, see: Sebahattin Çelik, “Hurremiyya Sect,” *Balıkesir University Journal* 9 (2006): 95–106; For compiled accounts regarding the Babek rebellion, see: Bünyadov, *Azərbaycan VII–IX Əsrlərdə*, 363–385.

⁸² Shaffer, *Borders and Brethren*, 213; Cornell, *Politicization of Islam*, 15; Yusifov and Seferov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 279.

⁸³ Ottoman Archival Documents on Relations between the Ottoman State and the Azerbaijani Turkic Khanates (Karabakh-Shusha, Nakhchivan, Baku, Ganja, Shirvan, Sheki, Revan, Quba, Khoy), 1578–1914 (Ankara: State Archives, 1992), 28; Yusifov and Seferov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 279; Məmmədov, *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 98–105; *Azerbaijan Tarixi*, 226–227; Mehmetov, *Political and Ethnic*

Azerbaijan came under their control. In the mid-tenth century, the Seljuk Turks, originating from the Oghuz groups, migrated from the north of the Aral Sea into Iran and adopted Persian language and culture.⁸⁴ By 1040, they had established a vast nomadic empire extending across much of Central Asia and Iran, and their victory over the Ghaznavids at Dandanakan marked the consolidation of their state.⁸⁵ Tughril Beg captured Ganja and Tabriz in 1054 and began advancing toward Eastern Anatolia, a move that strengthened Seljuk influence in the region. Sultan Alp Arslan carried out a decisive campaign against Byzantium in 1064 with the capture of Ani, thereby incorporating the South Caucasus into Seljuk domains. The conquest of the Armenian Kingdom of Ani was further marked by the title “Abu’l-Fath” granted to Alp Arslan by Caliph al-Qa’im bi-Amr Allah⁸⁶, reflecting recognition of his military success and achievements.

Feudal polities in the Caucasus were able to preserve a high degree of autonomy as long as they paid annual tribute to the sultan. After the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, Turkish authority in the Middle East became firmly established. During the reign of Malik Shah (1072–1092), Azerbaijan came to be recognized definitively as a Turkic homeland.⁸⁷ In the same period, when the Turkic character of Azerbaijan became more pronounced, a Turkic group known as the Kipchaks or Cumans inhabited the Caucasus and the northern

Structure in the Turkic Caucasus, 207–238; Ismailov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 77–83.

⁸⁴ Although they accepted Persian as the official language, the military-administrative cadre of the state did not wish to remain under the influence of Iranian civilization. See: Mehmet Altay Köymen, “Selçuklu Devrinin Özellikleri,” in *Türkler*, vol. 4 (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002), 639.

⁸⁵ Coene, *The Caucasus*, 113.

⁸⁶ Osman Turan, *Selçuklular Tarihi ve Türk İslam Medeniyeti* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 2003), 156; Savaş Eğilmez, “Alp Arslan’s Caucasus Policy,” in *Türkler*, vol. 4 (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002), 712.

⁸⁷ Shaffer, *Borders and Brethren*, 24; Coene, *The Caucasus*, 113; Ottoman Archival Documents on Azerbaijani Khanates, 29.

Black Sea regions. Some of the Kipchak Turks who migrated into Azerbaijan from the north through the Derbent corridor entered Seljuk service and adopted Islam.⁸⁸ With the decline of the Great Seljuk Empire, Azerbaijan passed under the control of the Seljuks of Iraq and Khorasan, and the Atabeg period began within this political framework.

The institution of the atabeg entered the Islamic world during the Seljuk period. The title referred to individuals entrusted with the education of princes and the management of their affairs. In order to secure their position, atabegs often married their daughters to the princes or entered into marriage with the widowed mothers of those princes.⁸⁹ In times when central authority weakened, they also established independent states in order to maintain their effective power. The Atabeg state of the Ildenizids in Azerbaijan stands as one such example.⁹⁰

During the reign of Sultan Tughril II (1132–1135), Shams al-Din Ildeniz, the founder of the Ildenizid Atabeg state, drew the

⁸⁸ Ottoman Archival Documents on Azerbaijani Khanates, 29; Some of the Kipchaks joined the Georgians and converted to Christianity. Indeed, at the age of sixteen, David IV of Georgia (1088–1125) ascended the Georgian throne in 1089 and sought to strengthen the central authority by fighting against the Seljuk invasions. Around 1118–1120, David settled 40,000 Kipchak families from the North Caucasus in Georgia, and each family was required to provide one warrior and one horse. The Kipchaks, who integrated easily, also contributed to revitalizing the weak economy. See: Yaşar Bedirhan, “Seljuk Turkmens and the Caucasus,” *Turkish Studies* 9, no. 4 (2014): 168; Kinship ties also reinforced the Georgian–Kipchak relationship, as King David married the daughter of Atrak, the son of the Kipchak ruler Karakhan. For detailed information, see: Turan, *Selçuklular Tarihi*, 232.

⁸⁹ The best example of this is the marriage of Shams al-Din Eldiguz to Mumine Khatun, the widowed wife of Tughril II and the mother of Arslan Shah, whose atabeg he was. See: Hüseyin, *Ahbârü’l-Devleti’s-Selçukiyye*, trans. Necati Lugal (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 1943), 94.

⁹⁰ Turan, *Selçuklular Tarihi*, 310; The Atabeg dynasty (1141–1225), established in Azerbaijan under the suzerainty of the Iraqi Seljuk State, is also called the Eldiguzids after the name of its founder.

attention of his ruler through his loyalty and impartial conduct and was entrusted with significant responsibilities. The sultan appointed him as the atabeg of his son Arslan Shah. After Sultan Masud ascended the throne (1135–1152), he granted the region of Azerbaijan to Shams al-Din Ildeniz as an iqta in 1136. Over time, Ildeniz succeeded in winning over local emirs in the region and steadily moved toward establishing control over the whole of Azerbaijan.⁹¹ A considerable Turkic presence existed in the Caucasus during this period, and Shams al-Din Ildeniz made effective use of these Turkmen groups. His words in a letter addressed to Sultan Masud reflect this clearly: “*If you wish me to march against the enemy, I will do so, and I can gather around me as many Turkmen as I desire.*”⁹²

The Khwarazmians brought Seljuk rule in the region to an end in 1194 and assumed control over Azerbaijan. Atabeg Uzbek launched a campaign against them in an attempt to reclaim these lands, yet the effort ended in defeat. He later reached an agreement with Sultan Muhammad (1217–1218) and acknowledged Khwarazmian authority. Uzbek’s preoccupation with leisure, alongside his weak character and limited capacity for governance, accelerated the decline of the Atabeg state founded by Shams al-Din Ildeniz.⁹³ Following Jalal al-Din Khwarazmshah’s defeat by the forces of Chinggis Khan, Mongol armies advanced through Khorasan and Iran and moved into Azerbaijan in 1221, marking the beginning of Mongol dominance in the Caucasus. At that time, Atabeg Uzbek, who ruled the region, submitted to the Mongols and sent money, garments, and livestock as tribute and compensation. Mongol units then pushed into Georgia, destroying settlements and

⁹¹ Ziya Bünyadov, *Azərbaycan Atabəyləri Dövləti (1136–1225-ci illər)* (Baku: Şərq-Qərb, 2007), 38.

⁹² Lugal, *Ahbârü’l-Devlet*, 90.

⁹³ Hüseyin Kayhan, “Azerbaijan Atabegs (Ildenizids),” in *Türkler*, vol. 4 (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002), 876–879.

populations encountered along their route, leaving a lasting impact across the Caucasus.⁹⁴ After the death of Chinggis Khan in 1227, territories under Mongol control were divided among his four sons.

Between 1220 and 1231, Mongol forces defeated the Khwarazmians and advanced into the Near East, first taking Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia in 1221, then turning north before resuming their campaigns. These incursions continued beyond the Caucasus and by 1243⁹⁵ reached Anatolia, eventually extending to Baghdad, the seat of the caliphate, in 1258. Hülegü, a grandson of Chinggis Khan, established his authority across Iran, Georgia, and Anatolia with Maragha as his center, founding the Ilkhanid state, while another grandson, Batu, created the Golden Horde with its capital at Sarai, ruling over Crimea, the Dasht-i Qipchaq, the Volga region, Khwarazm, and the northern Caucasus.⁹⁶ Azerbaijan remained a contested zone between the Ilkhanids and the Jochid ulus, a tension reflected in the conflict between Hülegü and Berke, where Berke was defeated north of the Kura River in 1262, followed

⁹⁴ Bünyadov, *Azərbaycan Atabəyləri Dövləti*, 99–104; Hüseyin Kayhan, “The Collapse of the Ildenizids,” *Tarih ve Gelecek Dergisi* 3, no. 1 (2017): 242–243; Qəniyev, *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 101–103; René Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 1980), 254.

⁹⁵ The Mongols who entered Anatolia defeated Kaykhusraw II at the Battle of Köse Dağ in 1243. After Sultan Kaykhusraw II fled the battlefield, the Seljuk army dispersed, and the Mongols found the gates of Anatolia unexpectedly open before them with great ease. For detailed information, see: Fatma Akkuş Yiğit, “Kösedağ’dan Ayn Câlût’a Türk-Moğol Hâkimiyet Mücadelesi [The Struggle for Turkic-Mongol Dominance from Köse Dağ to Ayn Jalut],” in *1243 Köse Dağ Savaşı: Türk’ün Anadolu Tarihinde Bir Dönüm Noktası ve Anadolu’nun Moğollar Tarafından İşgali [The Battle of Köse Dağ (1243): A Turning Point in Anatolian Turkish History]*, ed. Abdullah Kaya (Sivas: Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2018), 438–439.

⁹⁶ Önder Güler, “Black Sea Trade in the Mongol Period,” *Karadeniz Journal* 45 (2020): 23–25; Dinçer Koç, *Altın Orda Tarihi* (Istanbul: Istanbul University Open and Distance Education Faculty, n.d.), 41.

by Hülegü's defeat in the Battle of Demirkapı⁹⁷ in 1263. Later, Golden Horde rulers Tokhta Khan and Özbek Khan attempted to incorporate Azerbaijan into their domains, yet control stayed in Ilkhanid hands. During the reign of Jani Beg Khan (1341–1356), a large-scale campaign in 1356 brought Azerbaijan under Golden Horde control.⁹⁸ Jani Beg left his son Berdi Beg (1357–1359) in Tabriz and returned to Sarai, yet Berdi Beg, driven by ambition, departed from Tabriz and killed his father, and the Golden Horde forces that remained in Azerbaijan failed to hold their ground against the Jalayirids⁹⁹, making their rule in the region short-lived.¹⁰⁰ In the aftermath, the Timurid period began.

Timur¹⁰¹ seized Transoxiana in 1370 and established his rule in Samarkand, then, after crossing the Amu Darya in 1380, launched a major campaign toward Khorasan that unfolded between 1386 and 1388, often referred to as the three-year campaign, and brought Azerbaijan under his control as well. Through these advances, his dominion extended as far as Iraq.¹⁰² Azerbaijan remained a zone of

⁹⁷ It is referred to in the sources as the Battle of Demirkapı. Demirkapı is another name for Derbent. Despite Hülagü's defeat in the battle, the territories of Azerbaijan remained under Ilkhanid control. See: Koç, *Altın Orda Tarihi*, 48.

⁹⁸ Koç, *Altın Orda Tarihi*, 90.

⁹⁹ The name of the dynasty derives from the Jalayir, a major Mongol tribe. In terms of organization, the Jalayirids possessed a structure quite similar to that of the Ilkhanid State. Indeed, the founders of the state and the officials within its administrative cadre consisted of individuals who had previously served under the Ilkhanids. For detailed information, see: Muzaffer Ürekli, "Jalayirids," *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 7 (Istanbul, 1993), 264.

¹⁰⁰ Koç, *Altın Orda Tarihi*, 137–138; Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 340–342; Hayrunnisa Alan Akbıyık, "Timur's Campaigns against Tokhtamysh and the Question of the Collapse of the Golden Horde," *Bilig* 27 (2003): 125.

¹⁰¹ For detailed information on Timur's life, see: Abdurrahman Kaplan, *Timur'un Kafkasya Cihadı* [Timur's Jihad in the Caucasus] (Ankara: Astana Yayınları, 2020), 25–56.

¹⁰² İsmail Aka, "Timurids," *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 41 (Istanbul, 2012), 177; Bunyadov and Yusifov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 344; Məmmədov, *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 149.

persistent contest between the Golden Horde and the Timurids¹⁰³, and many historical accounts connect the collapse of the Golden Horde to Timur's campaigns against Tokhtamysh, a view underscored by A. N. Kurat's remark that Timur's destruction of the Golden Horde left a negative mark in history.¹⁰⁴ After Timur's death, within a short span, the Qara Qoyunlu established dominance in Azerbaijan and emerged as a rival to Timurid authority, while the Aq Qoyunlu, who later defeated them and secured control of the region, disappeared from the political scene with the rise of the Safavids.

When Kara Yusuf, leader of the Qara Qoyunlu Turkmens, entered Azerbaijan, the region stood under the control of Abu Bakr (1405–1407), son of Miranshah, a descendant of Timur. Kara Yusuf defeated Abu Bakr near Nakhchivan, took Tabriz, and established authority over the region. That confrontation is widely regarded as a turning point that reversed Timur's western gains and marked the expulsion of his successors from western Iran.¹⁰⁵ Shah Rukh, seeking to avenge his brother Miranshah, continued efforts to reclaim Azerbaijan from the Qara Qoyunlu, yet he failed to end their dominance. Following Shah Rukh's death, the Qara Qoyunlu ruler Jahan Shah expanded his control, taking Iraq-i Ajam from the Timurids in 1452 and later Isfahan, Fars, and Kirman in 1458. The fall of Jahan Shah and his state came not at the hands of the Timurids but through Uzun Hasan, leader of the Aq Qoyunlu, a Turkmen

¹⁰³ Azərbaycan Tarixi, 107–109; Ismailov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 113–116; Timur's assistance played a major role in Tokhtamysh's accession to the throne of the Golden Horde. After expanding his sphere of domination, Tokhtamysh forgot Timur's support, regarded him as a rival, and they fought over the Caucasus and Khwarazm. For detailed information, see: René Grousset, *Bozkuş İmparatorluğu: Attila, Cengiz Han, Timur*, trans. M. Reşat Uzmen (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2022), 384–385.

¹⁰⁴ Akdes Nimet Kurat, *The Turkic Peoples of the Northern Black Sea* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2019), 140; Məmmədov, *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 148.

¹⁰⁵ Uzunçarşılı, *Anatolian Principalities*, 181; Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes*, 428; *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, s.113.

confederation based in Diyarbakir, who defeated and killed Jahan Shah near Muş on 11 November 1467 and emerged as the new ruler of western Iran. The last Timurid, Abu Sa'id, was captured and executed on the orders of Uzun Hasan (1469–1478), bringing western Iran under Turkmen control. From that point until the establishment of the Safavid state in 1502, they ruled the region with Tabriz as their capital.¹⁰⁶

The Aq Qoyunlu¹⁰⁷ established their rule in Azerbaijan during the reign of Uzun Hasan, whose administration appears to have been effective and stable.¹⁰⁸ Relations with the Timurids, which had long remained amicable, began to weaken once the Aq Qoyunlu expanded their territories and emerged as the dominant power in Azerbaijan. As noted earlier, the defeat of Abu Sa'id by Uzun Hasan brought the lands of Azerbaijan fully under Aq Qoyunlu control.¹⁰⁹ After Abu Sa'id's death, struggles among Timurid princes over

¹⁰⁶ Sara Ashurbeyli, *Shirvanshahs* (Baku: Avrasiya Press, 2006), 297; Tufan Gündüz, *Kızılbaşlar, Osmanlılar, Safeviler* (Istanbul: Yeditepe, 2015), 61; Mahmut Ak, *Akkoyunlu, Karakoyunlu ve Safeviler Tarihi* (Istanbul: Istanbul University Open and Distance Education Faculty, n.d.), 33; Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes*, 428–431; Ismailov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 120; When Uzun Hasan ascended the throne, he wrote in a letter to Mehmed II: 'Now all of Azerbaijan, Iraq, Iran, Kirman, Shiraz, and Arab Iraq are under our rule.' See: *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, s.116.

¹⁰⁷ At the end of the 13th century and during the early years of the 14th century, the political landscape of Anatolia and the Caucasus changed following the complete collapse of the Seljuk State and the subsequent weakening of Mongol-Ilkhanid domination. After the Mongol invasion, many Turkic principalities were established in Anatolia. One of these was the Aq Qoyunlu dynasty, founded by the Bayındır tribe belonging to the Üçok branch of the Oghuz Turks. This principality is first mentioned in the sources around 1340–1341 in connection with the raids they carried out against the Empire of Trebizond. For detailed information, see: Adnan Sadık Erzi, "Akkoyunlu and Karakoyunlu," *Belleten* 17 (1954): 188.

¹⁰⁸ Halil Altay Göde, "Translation and Analysis of Zeyneoğlu Cihangir's Work Titled *Muhtasar Azerbaycan Tarihi*," MA thesis, Erciyes University, Institute of Social Sciences, 1993, 75; Uzunçarşılı, *Anatolian Principalities*, 197; For the reforms and regulations implemented by Uzun Hasan in Azerbaijan, see: Ismailov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 121.

¹⁰⁹ Mahmut Ak, *Akkoyunlu, Karakoyunlu ve Safeviler*, 33.

succession weakened their state and eroded its authority. Taking advantage of the resulting instability, the Safavid leader Shah Ismail rose in strength and eventually brought the Aq Qoyunlu state to an end.¹¹⁰ The Safavids began as a small religious order in Ardabil under the leadership of Shaykh Safi al-Din and gradually gained strength until they emerged as a state.¹¹¹

Backed by Turkmen tribal groups¹¹², the polity had already begun to take shape during the time of Shaykh Junayd (1447–1460). After consolidating their position in Ardabil from the fifteenth century onward, they defeated the Shirvanshahs¹¹³ and formally established their rule. Their influence extended across Karabakh and reached as far as the Talysh Mountains in Azerbaijan.

After the establishment of Safavid rule, the regime sought to impose Twelver Shiism as the official doctrine upon a population that was largely Sunni.¹¹⁴ Shah Ismail did not hesitate to employ coercion in enforcing Shi'i Islam as the state creed, leading a number of Sunni scholars to flee to Herat and Bukhara, and in the absence of

¹¹⁰ Gündüz, *Kızılbaşlar*, 67–72; After arriving in Erzurum, Ismail I, one of the sons of Shaykh Haydar, came to Shirvan in 1501 with the force he had assembled there and defeated the Shirvanshah Farrukh Yasar. He then defeated the Aq Qoyunlu ruler Alvand Mirza in a place called Sharur in Nakhchivan. See: Ak, *Akkoyunlu*, 64.

¹¹¹ For the process of transformation from a religious order into a state, see: Məmmədov, *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 208–209.

¹¹² For detailed information on the tribes that played a role in the foundation of the state, see: Faruk Sümer, *The Role of Anatolian Turks in the Safavid State* (Ankara: Güven, 1976), 43–56.

¹¹³ The Shirvanshahs were regarded as the pinnacle in the development of Azerbaijani culture and, by the 12th century, had become completely assimilated with the local population, turning into a local dynasty through their way of life and traditions. Accordingly, the state played an important role in the economic, cultural, and political development of Azerbaijan. They carried out significant construction activities in Baku and also commissioned the great Palace of the Shirvanshahs there. See: Sara Ashurbeyli, “Shirvanshahs,” *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 39 (Istanbul, 2010), 212–213.

¹¹⁴ Shaffer, *Borders and Brethren*, 25–26; Cornell, *Politicization of Islam*, 16–17; de Waal, *The Caucasus*, 23.

a strong opposing force, Shiism spread rapidly and became dominant in the region.¹¹⁵

In parallel with these developments, the Safavid state pursued expansion toward Dagestan and Georgia, launching repeated campaigns into Georgian territories. The Treaty of Amasya¹¹⁶ signed in 1555 formalized a division of Georgia, with eastern regions such as Kartli, Kakheti, and Mesheti coming under Safavid control, while western regions including Imereti, Mingrelia, and Guria were incorporated into the Ottoman sphere.¹¹⁷

During the reign of Shah Muhammad Khudabanda (1576–1587), state affairs were marked by serious disorder, as rivalries among officials intensified and feudal lords, disregarding royal authority, sought to expand their power in the provinces. Taking advantage of this weakness, the Ottoman state moved into Azerbaijan and seized Nakhchivan and Karabakh. Between 1586 and 1589, nearly all of Azerbaijan fell to the armies of Sultan Murad III. Shah Abbas I was compelled to make peace, and under the Treaty of Ferhat Pasha in 1590, Azerbaijan along with the southern

¹¹⁵ John R. Perry, “Cultural Currents,” in *New Perspectives on Safavid Iran*, ed. Colin Mitchell (New York: Routledge, 2011), 85; Ak, *Akkoyunlu*, 159.

¹¹⁶ Because of Georgia’s important geographical position, both the Ottoman State and the Safavids sought to dominate the region. The Safavid domination of Georgia and Shah Tahmasp’s efforts to consolidate his authority there constituted a threat to the Ottoman State. The war that began between the two states and lasted for twenty-two years in northwestern Iran and the Caucasus came to an end with the Peace of Amasya in 1555. After the treaty was signed, no significant conflict concerning the Caucasus occurred until the end of Shah Tahmasp’s reign. See: Abdolvahid Soofizadeh, “Ottoman–Safavid Rivalry,” *OTAM* 43 (2018): 169–170.

¹¹⁷ Aliyev, *History of Azerbaijan*, 298–300; Əfəndiyev, *Azərbaycan Şəfəvilər Dövləti*, 105; Özer Küpeli, “Transkafkasya’da Güç ve Rekabet: XVII. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Güney Kafkasya’da Osmanlı-Safevi Mücadelesi” [Power and Rivalry in Transcaucasia: The Ottoman–Safavid Struggle in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century], *Cihannüma: Tarih ve Coğrafya Araştırmaları Dergisi* 1 (2015): 104; Before the Peace of Amasya, Suleiman the Magnificent campaigned against Azerbaijan four times. For detailed information, see: Əfəndiyev, *Azərbaycan Şəfəvilər Dövləti*, 79–103.

Caucasus and parts of western Iran passed into Ottoman hands, allowing the empire to maintain its presence in the region until the early seventeenth century. In the early seventeenth century, during the reign of Shah Abbas (1587–1629), the Safavids regained Azerbaijan and removed Ottoman control from the region.¹¹⁸ The Caucasus, particularly its southern areas, remained a persistent source of conflict between the Safavids and the Ottomans, with cities frequently changing hands, and these ongoing struggles created conditions that facilitated Russian expansion into Circassian lands, Dagestan, and the northern stretches of the Caucasus range.

The Safavid state entered a phase of steady decline, weakened by succession struggles and the ineffective rule of certain shahs. By the mid-eighteenth century, the South Caucasus had turned into a zone of rivalry between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, a shift that made it increasingly difficult for the Safavids to maintain their position. From 1722 onward, Peter I's growing interest in the Caucasus, along with his efforts to draw Georgia and Armenia into his sphere, placed severe strain on Safavid authority. The Ottoman state also moved to take advantage of these conditions and sought to secure its own share of influence. The Treaty of Istanbul signed in 1724 defined spheres of control in the Caucasus, assigning Azerbaijan and Georgia to the Ottomans while the Caspian coastal provinces passed to Russia. In the aftermath of this agreement, Ottoman forces captured Yerevan in 1724 and then Tabriz, Ganja, and Ardabil in 1725, while Russian troops occupied Lankaran, Javad, Ganja, Salyan, and other areas in 1726.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Əfəndiyev, *Azərbaycan Səfəvilər Dövləti*, 234–235.

¹¹⁹ *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 149–153; Tofiq Mustafazadə, *Ottoman–Azerbaijani Relations in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Baku: Elm Publishing House, 2002), 29–30; Doğan Yörük and Elvin Valiyev, “Ottoman Rule in the South Caucasus (1723–1735),” *Journal of Turkic Studies of Selçuk University* 40 (2016): 19–21.

The Afshar and Zand dynasties rose to power in Iran following the collapse of the Safavid Empire. In 1736, Nadir Shah (1736–1747)¹²⁰ founded the Afsharid dynasty, having earlier placed the last Safavid ruler, Abbas III, on the throne as a child and used this arrangement to consolidate his own authority.¹²¹ He entrusted the administration of Azerbaijan to his brother Ibrahim Khan. With Nadir Shah's assassination in 1747, Afsharid control in the Caucasus came to an end, and the khanates in the region declared their independence.¹²² In the aftermath of his death, the resulting disorder and vacuum of authority enabled Karim Khan Zand to establish his rule over Iran between 1750 and 1779, a period marked by relative internal stability and significant reconstruction efforts.¹²³ In 1752, Karim Khan Zand launched a campaign into Azerbaijan, yet he was repelled by Fath Ali Khan Afshar¹²⁴, and from that point onward the khanate period took shape across Azerbaijani lands.

Some secondary works contain the mistaken claim that Karim Khan Zand was the son of Nadir Shah. Jean-Paul Roux, in his book *History of the Turks*, for instance, identifies Karim Khan Zand

¹²⁰ Nader Shah was one of the men of Shah Tahmasb II and served the Safavid State with the title “Tahmasb Qoli Khan.” Nader quickly suppressed internal rebellions and established an atmosphere of peace in Isfahan. Moreover, after driving the rebellious Afghan Ghilzais out of the country, he defeated the armies of the Ottoman State one after another and recovered Iranian territories from them. He also compelled Russia to withdraw from the Caspian shores without warfare. For Nader Shah's activities prior to his accession to the throne, see: Abdurrahman Ateş, “Nadir Shah of the Afsharid Dynasty and the Ottoman-Iranian Conflicts During His Time,” PhD diss., Süleyman Demirel University, 2001, 55–110.

¹²¹ Tufan Gündüz, *Kızılbaşlar, Osmanlılar, Safeviler* (Istanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2015; Aliyev, *History of Azerbaijan*, 338.

¹²² Aliyev, *History of Azerbaijan*, 341.

¹²³ John Bohn, *The Dynasty of Kajars* (London: 17 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, 1833), 102; Şerafettin Deniz, “Kerim Han Zend'in Şiraz'ı İmar ve İhyası,” *Çanakkale Araştırmaları Türk Yılığ* 20 (2016): 158.

¹²⁴ Fath-Ali Khan Afshar (1747–1763), by establishing the Urmia Khanate after the death of Nader Shah, sought to dominate the whole of Azerbaijan. The neighboring states of this khanate were the Khanates of Khoy and Maragha, Kurdistan, and the Ottoman Empire. See: Qəniyev, *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 209.

in this way.¹²⁵ Scholarly literature, however, makes it clear that Karim Khan Zand had no paternal connection to Nadir Shah and was an independent leader belonging to the Zand tribe.¹²⁶

With the death of Nadir Shah, a period marked by intensified struggles for the throne and the weakening of central authority gave rise to independent feudal polities, known as khanates, across Azerbaijani lands. Revolts that had begun shortly before his death are often interpreted as early signs of this movement toward autonomy.¹²⁷ Among the khanates established in 1743 were Baku, Ganja, Karabakh, Guba, Shamakhi, Nakhchivan, Salyan,

Tabriz, Derbent, Talysh, Ilisu, Maragha, Khoy, and Maku. As each of these entities asserted its independence, territorial unity in Azerbaijan fragmented, and relations among the khanates were frequently shaped by conflict and rivalry.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Roux, *History of the Turks*, 416.

¹²⁶ *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, s.v. "Zand Dynasty".

¹²⁷ Between 1743 and 1747, continuous rebellions against Nader Shah broke out in Azerbaijan. For detailed information, see: Qəniyev, *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 205–207.

¹²⁸ Mahmud İsmayıl and Maya Bağirova, *Şəki Xanlığı* (Baku: Azərnəşr, 1997), 12.

CHAPTER 2

KHANATE PERIOD

Shaki Khanate

Following the uprising of 1743–1744, the Sheki region broke away from Iranian control and formed its own khanate under the leadership of Haji Chelebi (1743–1755).¹ During his rule, the khanate faced continuous pressure from multiple directions, engaging in conflict with Georgian rulers supported by Russia while also resisting incursions launched by both Russia and Iran, each seeking to dominate the region.² Authority within the khanate was concentrated in the hands of the Khan, who held the power to execute or pardon at will, reflecting the highly centralized nature of governance. After the Khan, the most influential position belonged to the vizier, who played a key role in administrative affairs. The territory of the Sheki Khanate was organized into eight distinct regions, namely Sheki, Khachmaz, Erash, Gutgashen, Alpaout, Padar, Aghdash, and Goynuk, each governed by major feudal lords

¹ For the process through which Haji Chelebi established the khanate, see: Necmi Uyanık and Arif Cabbarov, “Ottoman–Shaki Khanate Relations,” *Tarihin Peşinde: International Journal of History and Social Research* 19 (2018): 465; Abbasgulu Bakikhanov writes the following in his work *Gulistan-i Iram*: “Haji Chelebi, son of Qurban from Nukha, raised the banner of independence and brought Sheki, Erash, and Gabala under his authority.” See: Bakikhanov, *Gulistan-i Iram*, 184.

² Uyanık and Cabbarov, “Ottoman–Shaki Khanate Relations,” 466.

appointed directly by the Khan, illustrating the layered structure of local rule within the broader political framework.³

After the death of Haji Chelebi in 1755, authority passed to his son Aghakishi Khan, followed in time by his grandson Huseyn Khan. During these years, Fath Ali Khan Afshar, who had secured power in Iran, advanced into Azerbaijan and occupied Karabakh. The Iranian Shah, once Huseyn Khan declared his loyalty, allowed him to remain in position as the khan of Sheki.⁴ A shift in power occurred again in 1779 when Huseyn Khan's uncle Abdulkadir seized control by killing his nephew. The broader regional setting grew more unstable as Russia annexed Georgia in 1783, bringing Azerbaijan into its sphere of interest. In 1784, Muhammadhasan, the son of Huseyn Khan, killed Abdulkadir and assumed rule. While the Sheki Khanate continued its struggles with neighboring khanates, recurring internal conflicts of this kind gradually weakened political stability and created conditions that made external intervention and eventual occupation increasingly likely.⁵

In Russian military-administrative sources, the Sheki Khanate is portrayed as a political structure grounded in the authority of a strong khan, yet marked by fragile internal balances shaped by the influence of major feudal lords. These accounts indicate that administrative fragmentation and ongoing power struggles within the ruling family played a decisive role in leaving Sheki open to external intervention in the early nineteenth century.⁶

³ İsmayıl and Bağirova, *Şəki Xanlığı*, 13.

⁴ Bakikhanov, *Gulistan-i İram*, 187; İsmayıl and Bağirova, *Şəki Xanlığı*, 17.

⁵ İsmayıl and Bağirova, *Şəki Xanlığı*, 18–20.

⁶ S. M. Bronevskiy, *Noveishie geograficheskie i istoricheskie izvestiya o Kavkaze* (St. Petersburg, 1823), 214–216; *Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoy Arkheograficheskoy Komissiyey*, vol. 6 (Tiflis, 1871), 356–358.

Shirvan (Shamakhi) Khanate

From 1730 onward, during the Ottoman–Iranian wars, Nadir Shah captured Shamakhi in 1733, devastated the city, and relocated its population to Aksu. As a result of this event, a new settlement known as New Shamakhi was established, and in time two separate administrative centers emerged in Old Shamakhi and New Shamakhi. Following prolonged conflict between the khans of Shirvan and Quba, Shirvan eventually came entirely under the control of Fath Ali Khan of Quba. In 1794, the Iranian Shah Agha Mohammad launched an campaign against Shamakhi with the support of Muhammad Hasan of Sheki, aiming to secure control over the Caucasus, and in the aftermath Develi Mustafa Khan was appointed as the new khan of Shamakhi. At the same time, Iranian attacks on Georgia, which was under Russian protection, prompted Empress Catherine of Russia to intervene in the Caucasus. When Russian forces reached Shirvan, the ruling khan Mustafa Khan fled to Iran, and Qasim Khan assumed authority in his place. Russian archival records describe the Shirvan Khanate, especially after the destruction of Shamakhi, as having largely lost its political cohesion, weakened by internal rivalries and external pressures, and unable to resist Russian military advance, while the Tsarist administration interpreted Mustafa Khan's flight to Iran as clear evidence that effective khanate rule in Shirvan had come to an end.⁷ In the summer of 1797, Russian troops withdrew from Azerbaijan, allowing Mustafa Khan to return, yet the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813 transferred the Shirvan Khanate to Russia. Although Mustafa Khan attempted to defend the fortress, Russian authorities abolished the khanate, forcing him once again to seek refuge in Iran. During the

⁷ P. G. Butkov, *Materialy dlya novoy istorii Kavkaza* (St. Petersburg, 1869), 233–235.

Russo–Iranian War of 1826–1828, Shirvan came fully under Russian control and was incorporated into the Caspian region.⁸

Baku Khanate

The Baku Khanate emerged in the early eighteenth century as the Safavid Empire weakened and local landholders gained increasing influence. During the reign of Nadir Shah Afshar, the declining authority of the central administration created conditions in which local khanates could take shape, linking the rise of the Baku Khanate directly to the collapse of Safavid power and the growing prominence of feudal lords.⁹ Established in 1747 by Mirza Muhammad Khan, the khanate consisted of thirty-nine villages with the city of Baku serving as its center. Following the death of Feteli Khan in 1789, the Baku Khanate attained its independence.¹⁰ A new phase unfolded in 1796 when, under the order of Catherine II, a Russian army commanded by Count Valerian Zubov launched a large-scale campaign into the South Caucasus and Azerbaijan. The imperial government aimed to consolidate its hold over northern Azerbaijan and to carry forward earlier plans of expansion. On 24 May, Russian forces advanced toward Baku and set up camp along

⁸ *Ottoman Archival Documents on Azerbaijani Khanates*, 29–30; Mustafa Aydın, “Shirvan,” *TDV Encyclopaedia of Islam* 39 (2010): 204–206; In fact, while trying to preserve his independence, Mustafa Khan sometimes appealed to Russia, sometimes to the Ottomans, and at other times fled to Iran. Unlike the khanates of Karabakh, Ganja, Sheki, and Quba, Mustafa Khan did not recognize the sovereignty of Fath-Ali Shah Qajar (1797–1834) and refused to submit to the shah’s authority, saying, ‘I myself also possess the shah’s pen.’ See: N.Ş.Bayramova, “Şamaxı Xanlığının Tarixinə Dair”, *Journal of Azerbaijani Studies*, 2009, 348.

⁹ MM. S. Iskenderova, *Bakinskoe khanstvo* (Baku, 1999), 9–10; Sara Aşurbəyli, *Bakı Şəhərinin Tarixi*, Avrasiya Press, Bakı, 2006, 274; Merziye İskenderova, “Baku Khanate,” in *Türkler*, vol. 7 (Ankara, 2002), 44.

¹⁰ *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 165; İsmailov, *History of Azerbaijan*, 172.

the Rubas River, after which envoys of the Baku Khan reported that the khan had acknowledged the authority of the Russian ruler.¹¹

A decisive episode in the history of the Baku Khanate unfolded after the accession of Russian Emperor Alexander I, who appointed Pavel Sisianov as Commander-in-Chief in the Caucasus, an appointment that soon led to a dramatic confrontation in Baku where Sisianov was killed in an ambush organized by Huseynkulu Khan. Rejecting any intention of surrendering the city to Russian control, Huseynkulu Khan ordered Sisianov's assassination, an act that accelerated the process through which Baku passed into Russian hands. In the aftermath, the Russian Empire moved quickly to assert control, launching a military operation aimed at securing the city and stabilizing its position in the region. Baku was subsequently occupied by Russian forces and, with the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813, was formally incorporated into the Russian Empire.¹² Over time, the Baku Khanate came to occupy a central place within Russia's strategic and commercial calculations, increasingly serving as a focal point for imperial expansion. After the death of Feteli Khan, internal rivalries intensified and the already fragile economic foundations of the khanate further weakened its cohesion, leaving it exposed to external pressures and territorial ambitions. Within such conditions, Baku emerged as a primary objective in Russia's broader effort to extend its influence and secure lasting control over the region.¹³

¹¹ Ashurbeyli, *History of the City of Baku*, 283–284; Qəniyev, *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 236.

¹² Rüstəm Kamal, Knyaz Sisianovun Qətlı Süjet Elementi Kimi, *Ədəbiyyat Qəzeti*, 27 Noyabr 2020, 26; Ashurbeyli, *History of the City of Baku*, 289–293.

¹³ Merziye İskenderova, "The Baku Khanate," in *The Turks*, vol. 7 (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Publishing, 2002), 52–54.

Derbent Khanate

The Derbent Khanate was a small feudal polity established in Azerbaijan in the mid-eighteenth century, where local governance, as well as economic and military authority, rested in the hands of the khan. In 1796, Russian forces occupied Derbent, and the khanate was subsequently incorporated into the Quba Khanate. Russian military-administrative records interpret the occupation of Derbent in 1796 as a strategic move aimed at securing control over the Caspian coastal line, while the same records note that the incorporation of the Derbent Khanate into the Quba Khanate reflected the effective loss of independent political existence among local feudal entities in the region.¹⁴ Within the framework of the Treaty of Georgievsk, Derbent and other feudal governments of Azerbaijan and Dagestan pledged to support Russia in its war against Iran, a development that eventually led to Derbent's inclusion within the Russian Empire during the Russo-Iranian War of 1804–1813.¹⁵ Over the course of the eighteenth century, the Derbent Khanate emerged as a notable political actor in the South Caucasus, yet its independence came to an end following the Russian occupation of 1796 and its subsequent unification with the Quba Khanate. The political developments of this period reflect the complex and shifting character of the South Caucasus, where regional dynamics were closely tied to the evolving balance of power and the strategic ambitions of Russia. After the death of Fath Ali Khan, the khanates that had once been within the boundaries of the Quba Khanate began to break away, and during the rule of his son Ahmed Khan, who

¹⁴ *Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoy Arkheograficheskoy Komissiyey*, vol. 7 (1870), 487–489.

¹⁵ *Azərbaycan Sovet Ensiklopediyası*, vol. 3 (1979), 419; Nuriyeva, *History of Azerbaijan*, 163; Məmmədov, *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 288.

succeeded him, only the Derbent Khanate remained under his authority.¹⁶

Karabakh Khanate

The Karabakh Khanate was established in 1748 by Panah Ali Bey, the leader of the Javanshir tribe, following the incorporation of the region into Iranian authority under the Treaty of Ganja in 1735. Its center was set in the city of Shusha, and its territory extended across a defined geographical area bounded by the Kura and Aras rivers, the Keshbek, Salvarti, and Erikli mountains, as well as Lake Gokche, with its eastern frontier marked by the Kura River.¹⁷ Over a period approaching three centuries, the khanate maintained its presence and assumed a notable political role in the region, during which time it experienced significant development in economic, cultural, and military spheres, securing a lasting place in the historical landscape of the South Caucasus.¹⁸ Under the leadership of Ibrahim Khalil Khan, the khanate expanded further, navigating a complex network of relations with neighboring khanates and with Georgia, while its growing political and military strength brought it increasing prominence, allowing it to emerge as an influential actor within the broader dynamics of the South Caucasus.¹⁹

In the nineteenth century, settlement policies implemented by Russia brought about a marked transformation in the ethnic composition of the Karabakh Khanate. At the time of its establishment, the population consisted predominantly of Azerbaijan Turks, yet Russian authorities encouraged the resettlement of

¹⁶ Məhərrəm Zülfüqarlı, *Azərbaycan Tarixinə Yeni Baxış* (Baku, 2007), 30.

¹⁷ Ş. Duygu Ata Kuduban and Mevlüt Kaya, “The Political Trajectory of Karabakh: From the Pre-Islamic Period to Soviet Rule,” *Journal of the Institute of Social Sciences of Erzurum University (ERZSOSDE)* 10, no. 1 (2017): 117–118; Elsevar Ganimatlı, “Karabakh Khanate,” MA thesis, Gazi University, 2020, 27.

¹⁸ Fakhri Mitat Oğlu Abasov, *Garabagское ханство* (Baku: Tahsil, 2007), 25–27.

¹⁹ Abasov, *Garabagское ханство*, 71–74.

Armenians into the region, leading to a rapid increase in the Armenian population. Over time, these developments altered the demographic balance, placing the Armenian population in direct competition with Azerbaijan Turks and shaping the framework of later debates concerning the region's status.²⁰ It is also noted that, as a result of these policies, segments of the Armenian population that settled in Karabakh gradually came to regard themselves as the indigenous inhabitants under the influence of nationalist narratives.²¹ The broader consequences of these demographic shifts included the displacement of Azerbaijan Turks from their lands and a gradual reshaping of the region's ethnic and cultural structure, developments that weakened existing social cohesion and contributed to Karabakh's emergence as a focal point of political tension in subsequent periods. These changes also formed one of the underlying factors behind the declaration of independence in Karabakh in the 1990s and the conflicts that followed, reflecting the long-term impact of nineteenth-century policies on the region's modern history.

In 1783, the Russian Empire began a broad expansion into the Caucasus, seeking to extend its influence and authority across the region. By the end of that same year, it had taken the Tiflis Khanate under its protection. During this period, Ibrahim Khalil Khan of Karabakh established diplomatic relations with Russia, concluded a treaty of protection, and swore allegiance to the empire. With the Treaty of Kurekchay in 1805²², the khanate formally became subordinate to Russian rule. The terms of the agreement included an imperial guarantee for the preservation of the territorial integrity of

²⁰ Kuduban and Kaya, "The Political Trajectory of Karabakh," 118–119.

²¹ Г. Мустафаев, "Карабахское Ханство и Его Население В XVIII–XIX ВВ.," *Всесвітня Історія* 34, no. 1 (2023): 213.

²² For the articles accepted by the Karabakh Khanate and the promises made by Russia to the khanate, see: Qarabağnamələr, vol. 3 (Baku: Şərq-Qərb, 2006), 104.

the Karabakh Khanate, yet the khanate lost its independence, and Russian troops were stationed in Shusha.²³

Ganja Khanate

The Ganja Khanate maintained its existence in the early eighteenth century under the rule of Nadir Shah, and following his death, the emergence of independent khanates across Azerbaijan created the conditions in which it took shape as a distinct political entity. Its foundations were laid in 1747 by Shahverdi Khan II Ziyadoglu of the Qajar Turks.²⁴ Covering an area of approximately 500 square kilometers, the khanate extended from the Murov Mountains to the Kura River. Compared to neighboring polities, Ganja remained relatively small in size and faced continuous pressure from the khanates of Karabakh and Tiflis, to which it was compelled to pay annual tribute until 1785. A shift occurred with the accession of Javad Khan in 1786, as the khanate succeeded in freeing itself from these dependencies and asserted a greater degree of autonomy.²⁵ When Russian General Pavel Dmitrievich Sisianov advanced into the South Caucasus under imperial orders with the aim of conquering Azerbaijan, he encountered resistance from local

²³ Elsevar, "Karabakh Khanate", 81-82; Мустафаев, "Карабахское Ханство," 212; Mustafa Aydın, "Karabağ," *TDV Encyclopaedia of Islam* 24 (2001): 368; Faced with the occupation of Ganja and the threat from Iran, Ibrahim Khalil Khan, the Khan of Karabakh, submitted to Sisianov's threatening letters and accepted the protection of Russia; thus, Karabakh came under Russian domination. For detailed information on how Ibrahim Khalil Khan was persuaded to accept the protection of the Russian Tsardom, see: Ramin Sadiqov, "The Annexation of the Karabakh Khanate by Tsarist Russia," *History Studies* 10, no. 7 (2018): 205–206.

²⁴ *Azerbaijan Tarixi*, 165.

²⁵ Javid Hajiyev, "The Ganja Khanate of Azerbaijan: Correspondence between Javad Khan and General Sisianov (The Struggle for Ganja)," *Journal of Turkic World Studies* 131, no. 258 (2002): 141; Hüsamettin Memmedov, "From Beylerbeylik to Khanate: Ganja–Karabakh," in *The Turks*, vol. 7 (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Publishing, 2002), 61.

leadership, most notably from Javad Khan. Diplomatic efforts failed to resolve tensions, leading to the outbreak of the Battle of Ganja. Although Javad Khan attempted to organize resistance against Russian forces and sought assistance from Iran and Kazakh leaders, the military superiority of Sisianov's reinforced army proved decisive, and the khanate was eventually occupied. Following the conquest, the territory of the Ganja Khanate was renamed Elizavetpol, marking its incorporation into the administrative framework of the Russian Empire.²⁶

Kuba Khanate

The Quba Khanate emerged in the early eighteenth century in Dagestan and Northern Azerbaijan, developing within a challenging environment shaped by the influence of surrounding major powers.²⁷ Its leadership pursued a careful combination of diplomatic and military strategies, securing agreements with neighboring regions to expand its borders while maintaining relatively stable relations, and at the same time forming alliances with other khanates and states to strengthen its military capacity and safeguard its territory. Economic activity also played a significant role in this process, as trade networks and commercial ties contributed to both material growth and the consolidation of political connections.²⁸ The rise of the Quba Khanate reached its peak during the reign of Fath Ali Khan, the son of Huseynali Khan (1758–1789), a period in which the khanate became a central force in efforts to unify the Azerbaijani lands. Driven by this ambition, Fath Ali Khan

²⁶ Hajiyev, "The Ganja Khanate of Azerbaijan: Correspondence between Javad Khan and General Sisianov," 141–142; Oktay Efendizade, "Gence," *TDV Encyclopaedia of Islam* 14 (1996): 19.

²⁷ Saleh Muhammedoğlu Aliev, "Kuba," *TDV Encyclopaedia of Islam* 26 (2002): 297.

²⁸ Tofiq Mustafazadə, *Quba Xanlığı* (Baku: Elm, 2005), 12–17.

captured Derbent in 1759 and brought the Baku Khanate under his influence through diplomatic means, thereby establishing authority over Quba, Derbent, Baku, and Salyan. His position was further strengthened with the capture of Shamakhi and the incorporation of additional territories, allowing him to assume control over much of northeastern Azerbaijan. These expansionist initiatives, however, drew him into a series of conflicts and shifting alliances, as he also sought to extend his authority over Karabakh, Ganja, Kazakh, Shamshaddil, and the Borchali sultanates, ambitions that ultimately encountered resistance and were curtailed by the intervention of the Russian army.²⁹

In 1806, Russian forces launched a campaign aimed at bringing the territories of the Quba Khanate under their control, and within this context the city of Derbent passed into Russian hands. Following this development, Sheikh Ali Khan, who was the ruling khan at the time, was compelled to submit to Russian authority and was removed from power. Shortly thereafter, General Bulgakov, having completed the conquest of Quba, initiated a military advance toward Baku.³⁰ Under the terms of the Treaty of Gulistan in 1814, Quba, together with the khanates of Derbent, Baku, Shirvan, Sheki, Ganja, Karabakh, and Talish, was formally ceded to Russian rule, although Sheikh Ali Khan refused to accept the agreement. In 1819, descending from the mountainous regions, he engaged Russian forces in a series of intense confrontations, yet these efforts ended in defeat, after which segments of the Quba population were forcibly resettled by Russian authorities. During the Russo-Iranian War of 1826–1828, Quba once again became a center of resistance, but it proved unable to mount an effective challenge against the strength of the Russian army and failed to regain its independence. Following the abolition of the khanate, the city of Quba was first

²⁹ *Azərbaycan Tarixi*, 161-163.

³⁰ Mustafazadə, *Quba Xanlığı*, 215–216.

administratively attached to Shamakhi and later incorporated into the Baku Governorate. By 1896, the population of the Quba district had reached 175,000, of whom 94 percent were Turks.³¹

Nakhchivan Khanate

With the collapse of Nadir Shah's state in 1747, Haydarkulu Khan, leader of the Kangarli tribe, took refuge among local feudal lords, deposed Agha Hasani, and declared himself the independent ruler of the Nakhchivan Khanate.³² In the mid-eighteenth century, the Nakhchivan region faced persistent political instability and intense struggles for power, a situation that became more pronounced after Haydarkulu Khan's death, when the khanate weakened and gradually fell under the influence of the Iranian Empire. Haji Khan's acknowledgment of Karim Khan Zand's authority with Iranian backing further eroded Nakhchivan's political and economic strength, while rivalries among local rulers such as Alikulu Khan and Abbaskulu Khan deepened instability and forced segments of the population to abandon their homes. Amid this atmosphere of uncertainty, neighboring powers including the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, and Georgia sought to intervene in Nakhchivan's affairs³³, revealing how shifting regional dynamics and external pressures shaped local political developments.

In the early nineteenth century, the Russian Empire, pursuing its objective of securing control over the Caucasus, first occupied Karabakh in 1803 and then the Ganja Khanate in 1804. When Iran demanded the withdrawal of Russian forces, war broke out between

³¹ Ottoman Archival Documents on Azerbaijani Khanates, 46.

³² İsa Həbibbəyli, *Naxçıvan Xanlığı* (Nakhchivan: Presidential Library, 2009), 27–31; Fuad Əliyev and Mirabdulla Əliyev, *Naxçıvan Xanlığı* (Baku: Şərq-Qərb, 2007), 30.

³³ Əliyev and Əliyev, *Naxçıvan Xanlığı*, 61–68.

the two empires. Although Russian troops initially advanced successfully, resistance emerged from the khanates in northern Azerbaijan. Concern over the fate of Ganja led the khanates of Karabakh, Sheki, and Shamakhi to accept Russian protection, while the Iranian shah continued efforts to assert authority over South Azerbaijan. Local rulers displayed varying degrees of opposition to Russia, adopting different strategies within the broader territorial contest between Russia and Iran, with some aligning themselves more closely with Russia, others maintaining neutrality, and some engaging with both sides in accordance with their own interests and the prevailing balance of power.

In 1828, the Nakhchivan Khanate was transferred from Iran to Russia, and before the establishment of Russian rule its last khan was Karim Khan Kangarli. The khanate included regions such as Alinja-Chay, Mavazi-Khatun, Hok, Daralayaz, Ordubad, Akulis, Dasta, Bilav, Chinanab, and Julfa. In 1834, the population of the khanate stood at 30,323, while in 1896 the population of the city of Nakhchivan was 7,433, of whom 4,512 were Muslims (60.70 percent) and 2,376 were Armenians (31.96 percent). Turks consistently formed the majority within the population of Nakhchivan. Following the revolution of 1917, Nakhchivan was established as an autonomous republic under Azerbaijan, yet no direct territorial link was secured between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan, as the intervening Zangezur region was assigned to Armenia.³⁴

Revani Khanate

The Erivan Khanate emerged as one of the political entities in Azerbaijan that declared independence following the death of Nadir Shah. Formed under the leadership of the Qajar, Sadlu, and

³⁴ Ottoman Archival Documents on Azerbaijani Khanates, 53.

Rumlu tribes, the khanate secured its autonomy in the eighteenth century and reached a position of relative strength during the rule of Amir Aslan Khan.³⁵ Within the territory of this khanate, which historically belonged to Azerbaijani lands, what is now described as an artificial Armenian state was later established.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, Erivan suffered extensive destruction due to repeated invasions and Russian incursions, leading to a noticeable decline in its population. The city remained shaped by feudal relations and a predominantly rural agrarian economy, while the majority of its inhabitants were Azerbaijanis. Industrial activity remained limited, and even prior to the Russian occupation of the South Caucasus, Erivan displayed signs of economic and political fragility.³⁶

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the Erivan Khanate became deeply entangled in the political rivalry between Iran and Russia, as increasing Iranian influence encouraged the formation of competing alliances among local leaders. Russia sought to expand its authority in the South Caucasus with the aim of curbing Iranian power, yet the efforts of the Russian commander P. D. Sisianov to persuade the Erivan Khan Muhammad Khan to cooperate with Russia did not succeed. This failure further intensified the political uncertainty and complexity within the khanate.³⁷

In 1803, Tsarist Russia began the conquest of the khanates of Northern Azerbaijan, and following Iran's defeat in 1813, this process gained momentum. Under the terms of the 1813 agreement, Iran ceded the Northern Azerbaijani khanates to Russia, with the exception of Erivan and Nakhchivan. In 1828, the Treaty of

³⁵ Hasan Oktay, "Revan Hanlığı ve Hanları," in *Türkler*, vol. 4 (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2014), 151–152.

³⁶ Fuad Əliyev and Urfan Həsənov, *İrəvan Xanlığı* (Baku: Şərq-Qərb, 2007), 72–76.

³⁷ Əliyev and Həsənov, *İrəvan Xanlığı*, 131–134.

Turkmenchay brought about the transfer of Erivan and Nakhchivan to Russian control as well. In the aftermath, Tsar Nicholas I abolished these khanates and established the “Armenian Province” in the region, while more than 40,000 Armenians were resettled there.³⁸

Talysh (Lankaran) Khanate

By the early eighteenth century, the Talish (Lankaran) Khanate, one of the feudal polities present in Azerbaijan, occupied a strategic position between the Talish Mountains in the southeast of Azerbaijan, the Caspian Sea, and the Mughan steppe. It shared borders with the khanates of Gilan, Ardabil, Karadag, Javad, and the Salyan Sultanate. Although the capital was initially established at Astara, it was later moved to the city of Lankaran.³⁹

During the Russian campaign in the Caucasus in 1722, Russian forces took control of the Talish region, yet the Treaty of Rasht in 1732 returned it to Safavid authority. In the period of Nadir Shah, the rise of Seyyid Abbas of Ardabil, a figure linked to the Safavid lineage, led to the relocation of the khanate’s center to Lankaran, and administration during this time was organized into eleven districts. In 1795, amid conflict with Iran, Agha Mohammad Shah’s campaign into the Talish region prompted Mir Mustafa Khan to seek assistance from Russia. Through Kerbalayi Asadullah Bey, who was sent to St. Petersburg, an alliance was established with Russia, and under the Treaty of Georgievsk (1802) the Talish Khanate entered Russian protection. The Treaty of Gulistan in 1813 transferred a large portion of the khanate into Russian control, and when Russian forces captured much of Iranian territory in 1826, Mir

³⁸ Saide Hacieva, “The Irevan (Revan) Turkic Khanate and Its Relations with the Ottoman State,” in *The Turks*, vol. 7 (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Publishing, 2002), 69–72.

³⁹ İrade Memmedova, “Talış (Lenkeran) Hanlığı,” *Yeni Türkiye* 72 (2015): 705.

Mustafa Khan fled to Iran, later surrendered, and was executed. These developments marked the final incorporation of the Talish Khanate into Russian rule.⁴⁰

Khanate of Tabriz

The Tabriz Khanate emerged as one of the local political formations that took shape in Iranian Azerbaijan following the gradual disintegration of the Safavid state in the first half of the eighteenth century and the death of Nadir Shah Afshar in 1747. Centered in the city of Tabriz, the khanate exercised influence over a relatively limited area that largely corresponded to the Urmia Lake basin and its immediate surroundings. Tabriz's long-standing role as one of the principal commercial and administrative centers of the region allowed the khanate, despite its brief existence, to attain a certain degree of political and economic significance.⁴¹

From the Afshar period onward, authority within the khanate came to be shaped by members of the Dunbuli (Dönbeli) dynasty, who had established a strong presence in the region. Najaf Quli Khan Dunbuli, regarded as the founding figure of the khanate, took advantage of the power vacuum that followed Nadir Shah's death and established effective control in Tabriz. Even so, the khanate remained engaged in continuous rivalry and shifting power struggles with neighboring polities such as Karabakh, Urmia, and Khoy, a situation that undermined its political stability.⁴² Its administrative structure reflected patterns common across Azerbaijani khanates,

⁴⁰ Mirzə Əhməd Mirzə Xudaverdi Oğlu, *Əxbarnamə (Talış Xanlığının Tarixindən)*, trans. Əli Hüseynzadə (Baku, 2009), 7–9; Mustafa Aydın, “Talış Hanlığı,” *TDV Encyclopaedia of Islam*, suppl. 2 (2019): 577–578.

⁴¹ George A. Bournoutian, *Eastern Armenia in the Last Decades of Persian Rule, 1807–1828* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1982), 78–80.

⁴² Willem Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2001), 145–147.

resting on established feudal relations in which the khan held military and fiscal authority while local beys and tribal leaders retained a measure of autonomy. The commercial vitality of Tabriz, sustained by its position along trade routes linking the Iranian interior with the Caucasus, contributed to the khanate's economy, yet this potential did not translate into a durable political order.⁴³

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the efforts of the Qajar dynasty to reassert centralized authority across Iran posed a direct challenge to the continued existence of the Tabriz Khanate. Following the campaigns of Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar in Azerbaijan, the khanate effectively disappeared and Tabriz was reintegrated into the Iranian central administration. Such a development illustrates how the khanate, like others in Azerbaijan, did not evolve into a lasting political entity and instead reflected the transient character of the broader khanate system.⁴⁴ From this angle, the Tabriz Khanate can be read as a telling example of the constraints faced by urban-centered political formations in the eighteenth century, where its brief existence reflects not so much the limits of the city's economic or administrative capacity as the determining influence of regional competition and the reassertion of central authority, suggesting that the continuity of local power rested less on the city itself than on the broader political networks that sustained it.

Ilisu Sultanate

The Ilisu Sultanate occupied an active position within the regional political landscape during the second half of the eighteenth century, and the year 1803 marked the beginning of a decisive turning point, as the sultanate was invaded by Russia in that year. In 1830, Russian authorities incorporated the Ilisu Sultanate into the

⁴³ Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, 150.

⁴⁴ Bournoutian, *Eastern Armenia*, 82–83.

Jar-Balakan province.⁴⁵ Following the occupation, Ilisu became part of the broader military-administrative reorganization implemented by the Tsarist regime across the Caucasus, and although the sultanate formally continued to exist after 1803, its effective authority was significantly curtailed, with local rulers placed under the control of Russian military commanders. Such arrangements weakened the traditional governing structure of Ilisu and gradually eroded its autonomous character.⁴⁶ The formal abolition of the sultanate came in 1830, when its incorporation into the Jar-Balakan province ended its legal status and brought the region directly under the Russian administrative system. This reorganization formed part of a wider policy aimed at eliminating local political entities along the northwestern Azerbaijan and Dagestan frontier, where the Russian administration sought to consolidate central authority and dismantle the military capacity of indigenous dynasties, particularly in mountainous areas.⁴⁷

Despite the dissolution of the Ilisu Sultanate, resistance within the region did not entirely disappear, as Danyal Sultan, a member of the former ruling dynasty, launched an armed uprising against Russian rule in 1844. This episode reveals that Ilisu retained significance not only as an administrative unit but also as a religious and social center, and the resistance led by Danyal Sultan was ultimately suppressed through harsh military measures imposed by the Tsarist authorities, after which the region was brought fully under

⁴⁵ Mustafa Aydın, “From the Caucasus to Istanbul: Danyal Bey, the Last Sultan of Ilisu (d. 1871),” *Journal of Turkic World Studies* 129, no. 254 (2021): 137; Elvira Latifova, “The Role of the Ilisu Sultanate of Azerbaijan in the Struggle of the Peoples of the Caucasus against the Russian Empire’s Nineteenth-Century Colonial Policy,” *New Turkey* 74 (2015): 487.

⁴⁶ Bournoutian, *Russia and the Armenians of Transcaucasia, 1797–1889* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1994), 96–97.

⁴⁷ Bournoutian, *From the Kur to the Aras* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 178.

Russian military-administrative control.⁴⁸ These developments point to a historical role for the Ilisu Sultanate that extends beyond the eighteenth-century khanate system, indicating its transformation into one of the notable centers of local resistance against Russian expansion in the Caucasus during the first half of the nineteenth century, while the case of Ilisu more broadly illustrates how local political structures along the Azerbaijan–Dagestan frontier generated both administrative and religious forms of opposition to Russian domination.

Salyan Khanate

Salyan emerged in the mid-eighteenth century, during the period of post-Safavid political fragmentation, as one of the notable settlements of the Shirvan region, and its location in the lower basin of the Kura River placed it directly within the sphere of regional power struggles. Abbasgulu Agha Bakikhanov refers to Salyan among the geographical and administrative components of the Shirvan province, thereby situating it within its broader historical setting.⁴⁹ Russian military-administrative records, on the other hand, describe Salyan by the late eighteenth century not as an independent political center but as a local administrative unit caught between the competing influence of the Shirvan and Quba khanates and gradually incorporated into Russia's efforts to secure control over the Caspian coastline.⁵⁰ The historical significance of Salyan lies less in its development as a fully institutionalized khanate center than in its position as a logistical and administrative junction between the lower Kura basin and the Caspian shores, a role that shaped both its

⁴⁸ Firoozeh Mostashari, *On the Religious Frontier* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 41–44.

⁴⁹ Bakikhanov, *Gulistan-i Iram*, 13–14.

⁵⁰ Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheograficheskoy Komissiiyey, vol. 5 (Tiflis, 1870), 412–414.

strategic value and its vulnerability. In this sense, the case of the Salyan Khanate provides a clear illustration of the structural limitations faced by smaller local centers within the Azerbaijani khanate system, particularly those with restricted military and demographic resources, and helps explain why such entities struggled to establish durable and stable political formations when compared with the larger and more consolidated khanates.

Maragha Khanate

The Maragha Khanate emerged as one of the local political formations that took shape in South Azerbaijan following the death of Nadir Shah Afshar in 1747. Establishing its center in the city of Maragha, a place of longstanding historical and cultural significance, the khanate exercised influence over the area stretching between the southeastern shores of Lake Urmia and the Tabriz–Urmia corridor. Maragha’s role since the medieval period as a center of learning and administration contributed to the regional legitimacy of the khanate and reinforced its standing within the broader political landscape.⁵¹ Governance of the Maragha Khanate rested in the hands of local Turkic beys who rose to prominence in the aftermath of Safavid rule, yet from its inception the khanate remained closely entangled in the political dynamics of neighboring powers such as Tabriz, Urmia, and Khoy, a situation that narrowed its capacity for independent action. The military pressure exerted in particular by the Urmia Khanate, together with shifting balances centered around Tabriz, limited Maragha’s ability to establish a stable and enduring political structure.⁵² By the late eighteenth century, the khanate found itself directly affected by the Qajar dynasty’s efforts to restore central authority across Iranian Azerbaijan, and the campaigns of Agha

⁵¹ Bakıxanov, *Gülistan-ı İrem*, 192–193.

⁵² I. P. Petrushevskiy, *Ocherki po istorii feodal’nykh otnosheniy v Azerbaidzhane i Armenii* (Moscow–Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1949), 286–287.

Mohammad Khan Qajar led to the loss of Maragha's effective independence, bringing it under Qajar control. This development left the Maragha Khanate as a relatively short-lived and limited political entity within the wider system of Azerbaijani khanates.⁵³ The experience of Maragha reflects a broader pattern in South Azerbaijan, where many khanates, lacking strong military and economic foundations, struggled to sustain lasting political structures, a condition that underscores the structural fragility of the post-Safavid khanate period and reveals the vulnerability of the region in the face of expanding central powers.

Khoy Khanate

The Khoy Khanate emerged as one of the political entities that took shape in South Azerbaijan following the death of Nadir Shah Afshar, establishing its center in the city of Khoy, whose strategic location along the Iran–Anatolia–Caucasus corridor gave it particular significance. Its position along key military transit routes allowed the khanate to assume a noticeable role in regional politics during the second half of the eighteenth century, while Russian sources describe Khoy as an important military and logistical hub linking the Iranian interior with the Caucasus.⁵⁴ Governance within the khanate remained in the hands of local Turkic dynasties, and its political course alternated between cooperation with Qajar authority and attempts to preserve a degree of practical autonomy, a duality that introduced a persistent element of instability into its position. Russian military reports underline the absence of a strong centralized administrative structure within the khanate and point to the limited

⁵³ Vladimir Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 104–105.

⁵⁴ Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheograficheskoy Komissiiyey, vol. 4 (Tiflis, 1866), 412–413.

scope of its military capabilities.⁵⁵ In the early nineteenth century, the advance of Russian power into the South Caucasus brought Khoy directly into the sphere of conflict, and during the Russo-Iranian wars the khanate, situated close to the line of confrontation, became a site of military operations, a development that significantly narrowed its capacity for independent action. Archival materials from Russian sources indicate that in this period the Khoy Khanate fell under the military control of Qajar Iran and ceased to function as an autonomous political unit.⁵⁶

Maku Khanate

The Maku Khanate emerged as one of the local political formations in the northwestern part of South Azerbaijan following the death of Nadir Shah Afshar, situated near the Ottoman–Iranian frontier. Its mountainous terrain provided a limited defensive advantage, allowing the khanate to maintain a semi-autonomous position within the broader political framework of Iran during both the pre-Qajar and Qajar periods throughout the eighteenth century. Yet the restricted scale of its military and economic resources prevented the development of a durable and fully independent political structure. By the early nineteenth century, although the Maku Khanate did not come under direct Russian occupation during the Russo-Iranian wars, it became more closely integrated into the authority of the Qajar state and gradually lost its effective autonomy.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Sbornik materialov dlya opisaniya mestnostey i plemen Kavkaza, vol. 2 (Tiflis, 1882), 97.

⁵⁶ Akty, sobrannyye Kavkazskoy Arkheograficheskoy Komissiiyey, vol. 6 (Tiflis, 1873), 219–220.

⁵⁷ Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History*; Akty, vol. 6, 241.

CONCLUSION

This study sets out to move beyond narratives that reduce the history of Azerbaijan to a sequence of ruptures and instead approaches it as a long-term process of social and political transformation. A combined reading of archaeological evidence and written sources makes it clear that the region has functioned as a continuous space of settlement and organization since early periods. Such continuity suggests that historical development did not proceed through abrupt breaks but took shape through structures that accumulated over time while adapting to changing conditions. The trajectory extending from early communities to more complex political formations points to a historical experience shaped by its own internal Dynamics

The findings indicate that early social structures did not serve as a passive background for later political entities but carried a formative legacy that influenced subsequent developments. Settlement patterns, modes of production, and belief systems from the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods reveal that not only economic life but also social relations and forms of authority began to take shape at an early stage, laying the material and intellectual foundations for later political organization, which suggests that processes of state formation in Azerbaijan are better understood as developments built upon local experience rather than as outcomes initiated by external intervention.

Much of the existing literature has tended to frame Azerbaijan's past through shifting external dominations and changes in political control, often leaving underlying continuities in the background, whereas a closer reading highlights the determining role of local social structures, production relations, and political practices, since external influences could only gain meaning within the limits and possibilities set by existing conditions, making it necessary to view Azerbaijan not as a passive arena but as a historical

space capable of shaping its own course while remaining open to interaction.

Political formations such as Aratta, Lullubi, Kuti, Manna, and Media demonstrate that organized governance emerged early in the region, and although their presence is often traced through the written records of neighboring civilizations, material culture and settlement continuity show that these entities were neither superficial nor fleeting, inviting a reconsideration of early states not as short-lived political units but as initial expressions of a longer state tradition that persisted in altered forms. Throughout the medieval period, frequent changes in political authority have commonly been interpreted through notions of fragmentation and instability, yet the persistence of social and administrative structures suggests a capacity for reorganization grounded in internal dynamics, where the development of feudal relations, religious transformations, and the rise of local elites reveal a pattern shaped less by rupture than by adaptation, with political forms shifting while social memory and governing practices continued in transformed ways.

With the consolidation of Turkish political presence, Azerbaijan's historical identity assumed a clearer outline, and the Seljuk, Atabeg, Aq Qoyunlu, and Safavid periods can be read as successive phases in which political organization took different forms, their transitions gaining greater meaning when considered through changes in social structure, economic life, and religious practice rather than dynastic succession alone, while the persistence of a state tradition across these periods underscores the depth of political experience in the region. The khanates that emerged after the Safavid era have often been described as a phase of decline, yet a closer examination places them within a longer continuum of state formation, where local actors gained prominence even as the inability to establish lasting unity remained tied to regional rivalries and external pressures, allowing the establishment of Russian

dominance to be understood not as a sudden break but as the outcome of structural and political conditions that had developed over centuries.

In this way, the study contributes to the historiography of Azerbaijan by proposing a framework that emphasizes continuity and transformation over rupture, making visible the connections between early social formations and later political structures and bringing into sharper focus the role of internal dynamics alongside external forces.

It also points toward new directions for future research, where micro-level comparative analyses of early settlements may illuminate regional variations in greater detail, expanded archival work on the khanates may clarify their internal functioning, and approaches that examine Azerbaijan's relations with neighboring regions through economic and cultural networks as well as political interaction may reveal connections that have remained overlooked.

The study approaches Azerbaijan's past not as a collection of completed events but as an ongoing historical process that offers insight into the present, with a long-term view showing that its historical experience unfolded not through chance but through a transformation shaped by its own internal logic, opening space for more balanced, connected, and nuanced interpretations in future scholarship.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abasov, Fakhri Mitat Oğlu. *Garabagskoe xanstvo*. Baku: Tahsil, 2007.

Abdullayev, Mehman, ed. *History of Azerbaijan (From Ancient Times to the Early 21st Century)*. Baku: Baku University Press, 2016.

Ak, Mahmut. *Akkoyunlu, Karakoyunlu ve Safeviler Tarihi*. Istanbul: Istanbul University Open and Distance Education Faculty, 2015.

Aka, İsmail. "Timurids." In *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*. Vol. 41. Istanbul, 2012.

Akbıyık, Hayrunnisa Alan. "Timur's Campaigns against Tokhtamysh and the Question of the Collapse of the Golden Horde." *Bilig* 27 (2003), 117-156.

Akkus Mutlu, Suzan. "The Policy of Assyria and Urartu over Manna." *Journal of Academic History and Thought* 4, no. 11 (2017), 225-239.

Akkuş Yiğit, Fatma. "Kösedağ'dan Ayn Câlût'a Türk-Moğol Hâkimiyet Mücadelesi." In *1243 Köseadağ Savaşı: Türk'ün Anadolu Tarihinde Bir Dönüm Noktası ve Anadolu'nun Moğollar Tarafından İşgali*, edited by Abdullah Kaya. Sivas: Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2018.

Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoy Arkheograficheskoy Komissiyey, vol. 4 (Tiflis, 1866).

Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoy Arkheograficheskoy Komissiyey, vol. 5 (Tiflis, 1870).

Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoy Arkheograficheskoy Komissiyey, vol. 6 (Tiflis, 1871).

Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoy Arkheograficheskoy Komissiyey, vol. 6 (Tiflis, 1873).

Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoy Arkheograficheskoy Komissiyey, vol. 7 (1870).

Alakbarov, Alakbar, and Muhammet Kemaloğlu. "The Origin of the Ethnonym Lulubi." *Gümüşhane University Journal of Social Sciences* 9 (2014), 236-246.

Aliiev, Saleh Muhammedoğlu. "Kuba." In *TDV Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Vol. 26. Istanbul, 2002.

Aliyev, Igrar, ed. *History of Azerbaijan*. Vol. 1. Baku: Elm, 2007.

Aliyev, Qabil. *History of the Caucasus*. Baku: Elm, 2009.

Ashurbeyli, Sara. "Shirvanshahs." In *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*. Vol. 39. Istanbul, 2010.

Ashurbeyli, Sara. *History of the City of Baku*. Baku: Avrasiya Press, 2006.

Ashurbeyli, Sara. *Shirvanshahs*. Baku: Avrasiya Press, 2006.

Aslanli, Gunturk M. I., "Physical Education Issues in the Works of A. Bakikhanov," *Pedagogical Sciences*, no. 112 (2013): 5–11.

Aşurbəyli, Sara. *Bakı Şəhərinin Tarixi*. Bakı: Avrasiya Press, 2006.

Ata Kuduban, Ş. Duygu, and Mevlüt Kaya. "The Political Trajectory of Karabakh: From the Pre-Islamic Period to Soviet Rule." *Journal of the Institute of Social Sciences of Erzincan University* 10, no. 1 (2017), 113-124.

Ateş, Abdurrahman. "Nadir Shah of the Afsharid Dynasty and the Ottoman-Iranian Conflicts During His Time." PhD diss., Süleyman Demirel University, 2001.

Aydın, Mustafa. "From the Caucasus to Istanbul: Danyal Bey, the Last Sultan of Ilisu (d. 1871)." *Journal of Turkic World Studies* 129, no. 254 (2021), 135-162.

Aydın, Mustafa. "Karabağ." In *TDV Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Vol. 24. Istanbul, 2001.

Aydın, Mustafa. "Shirvan." In *TDV Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Vol. 39. Istanbul, 2010.

Aydın, Mustafa. "Talysh Khanate" In *TDV Encyclopaedia of Islam*, suppl. 2. Istanbul, 2019.

Azərbaycan Sovet Ensiklopediyası. Vol. 3. Baku, 1979.

Bakikhanov, Abbasqulu Agha. *Gulistan-i Iram*. Baku: Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences Press, 1951.

Bayrakdar, Mehmet. *Medler ve Türkler*. Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2013.

Bayram, Parvana. "The Life and Works of Abbaskulu Agha Bakikhanov." *Journal of International Social Research* 6, no. 27 (2013), 145-165.

Bayramova, N. Ş. "Şamaxı Xanlığının Tarixinə Dair." *Journal of Azerbaijani Studies* (2009), 345-350.

Bedirhan, Yaşar. "Seljuk Turkmens and the Caucasus." *Turkish Studies* 9, no. 4 (2014), 165-185.

Belâzurî, Ahmed b. Yahya. *Fütûhu'l-Büldân*. Translated by Mustafa Fayda. Istanbul: Siyer Yayınları, 2013.

Bilgili, Ali Sinan. "Azerbaycan Türkmenleri Tarihi." In *Türkler Ansiklopedisi*. Vol. 7. Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002.

Bohn, John. *The Dynasty of Kajars*. London: 17 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, 1833.

Bournoutian, George A. *Eastern Armenia in the Last Decades of Persian Rule, 1807–1828*. Malibu: Undena Publications, 1982.

Bournoutian, George A. *From the Kur to the Aras*. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

Bournoutian, George A. *Russia and the Armenians of Transcaucasia, 1797–1889*. Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1994.

Bronevskiy, S. M. *Noveishie geograficheskie i istoricheskie izvestiya o Kavkaze*. St. Petersburg, 1823.

Bunyadov, Teymur. *Ethnography of Azerbaijan*. Vol. 1. Baku: Sharq-Garb, 2007.

Bunyadov, Ziya, and Yusif Yusifov. *History of Azerbaijan (From Ancient Times to the 20th Century)*. Baku: Azerbaijan State Publishing House, 2007.

Bunyadov, Ziya. *The Atabegs of Azerbaijan (1136–1225)*. Baku: Sharq-Garb, 2007.

Butkov, P. G. *Materialy dlya novoy istorii Kavkaza*. St. Petersburg, 1869.

Bünyadov, Ziya. *Azərbaycan Atabəyləri Dövləti (1136–1225-ci illər)*. Baku: Şərq-Qərb, 2007.

Bünyadov, Ziya. *Azərbaycan VII-IX Əsrlərdə*. Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, 2007.

Coene, Frederik. *The Caucasus: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Cornell, Svante E. *The Politicization of Islam in Azerbaijan*. Washington, DC: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2006.

Çay, Abdülhaluk, and İlhami Durmuş. “Scythians.” In *The Turks Encyclopedia*. Vol. 1. Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2002.

Çelik, Sebahattin. “The Khurramiyya Sect and the Revolt of Bābak in the Abbasid Era.” *Balıkesir University Journal* 9 (2006).

de Waal, Thomas. *The Caucasus: An Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Deniz, Şerafettin. “The Reconstruction and Restoration of Shiraz by Karim Khan Zand” *Canakkale Studies Turkish Yearbook* 20 (2016), 157-171.

Efendizade, Oktay. “Gence.” In *TDV Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Vol. 14. Istanbul, 1996.

Eğilmez, Savaş. “Alp Arslan’s Caucasus Policy.” In *Türkler*. Vol. 4. Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002.

Encyclopaedia Iranica. “Zand Dynasty.”

Erzi, Adnan Sadık. “Studies on the History of the Aq Qoyunlu and Qara Qoyunlu.” *Belleten* 17, no. 70 (1954): 179–222.

Floor, Willem. *Safavid Government Institutions*. Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2001.

Fuad Əliyev and Mirabdulla Əliyev. *Naxçıvan Xanlığı*. Baku: Şərq-Qərb, 2007.

Fuad Əliyev and Urfan Həsənov. *İrəvan Xanlığı*. Baku: Şərq-Qərb, 2007.

Ganımatlı, Elsevar. “Karabakh Khanate.” MA thesis, Gazi University, 2020.

Gashgay, Solmaz. *The State of Manna*. Baku: Azerbaijan State Publishing House, 1993.

Göde, Halil Altay. “Translation and Analysis of Zeyneoğlu Cihangir’s Work Titled Muhtasar Azərbaycan Tarihi.” MA thesis, Erciyes University, Institute of Social Sciences, 1993.

Grantovsky, E. A. *Rannyaya istoriya iranskikh plemen Peredney Azii*. Moscow: Vostochnaya Literatura, 2007.

Grousset, René. *Bozkır İmparatorluğu: Attila, Cengiz Han, Timur*. Translated by M. Reşat Uzmen. Istanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2022.

Grousset, René. *The Empire of the Steppes*. Istanbul: Ötüken, 1980.

Güler, Önder. “Black Sea Trade in the Middle Ages during the Mongol, Golden Horde, and Ilkhanid Periods.” *Karadeniz International Scientific Journal* 45 (2020): 23–35.

Gündüz, Tufan. *Kızılbaşlar, Osmanlılar, Safeviler*. Istanbul: Yeditepe, 2015.

Hacısalihoglu, Fuat. “Historiography in Azerbaijan.” PhD diss., Ankara University, 2012.

Hacieva, Saide. “The Irevan (Revan) Turkic Khanate and Its Relations with the Ottoman State.” In *The Turks*. Vol. 7. Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Publishing, 2002.

Hajiyev, Javid. “The Ganja Khanate of Azerbaijan: Correspondence between Javad Khan and General Sisianov (The

Struggle for Ganja).” *Journal of Turkic World Studies* 131, no. 258 (2002).

Həbibbəyli, İsa. *Naxçıvan Xanlığı*. Nakhchivan: Presidential Library, 2009.

Herodotus. *The Histories*. Translated by George Rawlinson. Moscow: Roman Roads Media, 2013.

Hüsəmettin Memmedov. “From Beylerbeylik to Khanate: Ganja–Karabakh.” In *The Turks*. Vol. 7. Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Publishing, 2002.

Hüseynî. *Ahbârü’ d-Devleti’s-Selçukiyye*. Translated by Necati Lugal. Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 1943.

Iskenderova, M. S. *Bakinskoe khanstvo*. Baku, 1999.

Ismailov, Dilgam. *History of Azerbaijan*. Baku: NPM, 2017.

İpek, Ali. “İlk İslami Dönemde Azerbaycan (632–750).” PhD diss., Istanbul University, 1999.

İsmayıl, Mahmud, and Maya Bağirova. *Şəki Xanlığı*. Baku: Azər nəşr, 1997.

Kafesoğlu, İbrahim. *Turkish National Culture*. Istanbul: Ötüken, 2011.

Kalankatuklu, Moisey. *Albaniya Tarixi*. Baku: Avrasiya Press, 2006.

Kanlıdere, Ahmet. *The Turkish World in the 19th Century*. Ankara: Anadolu University, n.d.

Kaplan, Abdurrahman. *Timur’s Caucasian Jihad*. Ankara: Astana Yayınları, 2020.

Kayhan, Hüseyin. “Azerbaijan Atabegs (İldenizids).” In *Türkler*. Vol. 4. Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002.

Kayhan, Hüseyin. “The Collapse of the İldenizids.” *Tarih ve Gelecek Dergisi* 3, no. 1 (2017).

Koç, Dinçer. *History of the Golden Horde*. Istanbul: Istanbul University Open and Distance Education Faculty, n.d.

Köse, Bayram Arif. "Internal and External Developments Affecting Muslim Policies in the South Caucasus from the First Muslim Rule to the Abbasids." *Vakanüvis – International Journal of Historical Research* 2 (2017): 297-342.

Köymen, Mehmet Altay. "Characteristics of the Seljuk Period." In *Turks*. Vol. 4. Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2002. 634–638.

Kurat, Akdes Nimet. *The Turkic Peoples of the Northern Black Sea*. Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2019.

Küpeli, Özer. "Power and Rivalry in Transcaucasia: The Ottoman–Safavid Struggle in the South Caucasus during the First Half of the Seventeenth Century." *Cihannüma Journal of History and Geography Studies* 1 (2016): 97–113.

Latifova, Elvira. "The Role of the Ilisu Sultanate of Azerbaijan in the Struggle of the Peoples of the Caucasus against the Russian Empire's Nineteenth-Century Colonial Policy." *New Turkey* 74 (2015), 485-492.

Mehmetov, İsmail. *Political and Ethnic Structure in the Turkic Caucasus (The History of Azerbaijan from Antiquity to the Present)*. Istanbul: Ötüken, 2009.

Məmmədov, İsmayıl. *Azərbaycan Tarixi*. Baku: Adiloğlu Nəşriyyatı, 2005.

Memmedova, İrade. "The Talish (Lankaran) Khanate." *Yeni Türkiye* 2, no. 72 (July–December 2015): 705–720.

Minorsky, Vladimir. "Caucasica IV." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1953).

Minorsky, Vladimir. *Studies in Caucasian History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953.

Mirzə Əhməd Mirzə Xudaverdi Oğlu. *Əxbarnamə (Talış Xanlığının Tarixindən)*. Translated by Əli Hüseynzadə. Baku, 2009.

Mostashari, Firoozeh. *On the Religious Frontier*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2006.

Mustafazadə, Tofiq. *Ottoman–Azerbaijani Relations in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*. Baku: Elm Publishing House, 2002.

Mustafazadə, Tofiq. *Quba Xanlığı*. Baku: Elm, 2005.

Mustafazadə, Tofiq. *The Quba Khanate*. Baku: Elm Publishing House, 2005.

Muzaffer Ürekli. “Jalayirids.” In *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*. Vol. 7. Istanbul, 1993.

Nuriyeva, Irada. *History of Azerbaijan (From Ancient Times to the Early 21st Century)*. Baku: Mutarjim, 2015.

Oktay, Hasan. “The Revan Khanate and Its Khans.” In *Turks and Armenians in History*. Vol. 4. Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2014. 149–185.

Ottoman Archival Documents on Relations between the Ottoman State and the Azerbaijani Turkic Khanates (Karabakh-Shusha, Nakhchivan, Baku, Ganja, Shirvan, Sheki, Revan, Quba, Khoy), 1578–1914. Ankara: State Archives, 1992.

Paşayeva, Mehebbet. “A Brief Overview of the Ethnic History of Azerbaijani Turks.” *ICANAS* 38, no. 5 (Ankara, 2007): 2505–2516.

Perry, John R. “Cultural Currents.” In *New Perspectives on Safavid Iran*, edited by Colin Mitchell. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Petrushevskiy, I. P. *Ocherki po istorii feodal’nykh otnosheniy v Azerbaidzhane i Armenii*. Moscow–Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1949.

Qarabağnamələr. Vol. 3. Baku: Şərq-Qərb, 2006.

Qəniyev, Hasan. *Azərbaycan Tarixi (Ən Qədim Zamanlardan–XXI Əsrin İlk Onilliklərinədək)*. Bakı: Elm və Təhsil Nəşriyyatı, 2019.

Rahimova, Maisa. *Archaeology of Azerbaijan: The Stone Age*. Baku: Şərq-Gərb, 2008.

Rəcəbli, Qəzənfər. *Azərbaycan tarixi: Oçerklər*. Bakı: Elm və Təhsil, 2013.

Roux, Jean-Paul. *History of the Turks: From the Pacific to the Mediterranean for 2000 Years*. Istanbul: Kabalcı, 2008.

Sadiqov, Ramin. "The Annexation of the Karabakh Khanate by Tsarist Russia." *History Studies* 10, no. 7 (2018).

Sbornik materialov dlya opisaniya mestnostey i plemen Kavkaza. Vol. 2. Tiflis, 1882.

Seferov, Yusif. *What Do We Know About Ancient Azerbaijan?* Baku: Azerbaijan State Publishing, 1989.

Shaffer, Brenda. *Borders and Brethren: Iran and the Challenge of Azerbaijani Identity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002.

Soofizadeh, Abdolvahid. "Ottoman–Safavid Rivalry." *OTAM* 43 (2018).

Strabo. *The Geography of Strabo*. Translated by Horace Leonard Jones. Vol. 1. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917.

Sümer, Faruk. *The Role of Anatolian Turks in the Safavid State*. Ankara: Güven, 1976.

Turan, Osman. "Babek." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Vol. 2. Istanbul, 1970.

Turan, Osman. *History of the Seljuks and Turkish-Islamic Civilization*. Istanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2003.

Uyanık, Necmi, and Arif Cabbarov. "Ottoman–Shaki Khanate Relations." *Tarihin Peşinde: International Journal of History and Social Research* 19 (2018).

Uzunçarşılı, İsmail Hakkı. *Anatolian Principalities and the Aq Qoyunlu and Qara Qoyunlu States*. Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Press, 1969.

Yazıcı, Nesimi, and Nusret Çam, eds. *History and Civilization of Islam*. Ankara: Ankara University Press, 1992.

Yıldız, Hakkı Dursun. "Babek." In *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*. Vol. 4. Istanbul, 1991.

Yörük, Doğan, and Elvin Valiyev. “Ottoman Rule in the South Caucasus (1723–1735).” *Journal of Turkic Studies of Selçuk University* 40 (2016).

Zülfüqarlı, Məhərrəm. *Azərbaycan Tarixinə Yeni Baxış*. Baku, 2007.

