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KARABAKH CARPET SCHOOL AND RARE SAMPLES OF KARABAKH CARPETS IN THREE MUSEUMS OF THE WORLD

Abstract. In this article Karabakh rare carpets kept in three famous world museums is spoken about. Among them the plot carpet “Dragon-Simourgh” carpet (XV century), kept in Germany, in Berlin Art Museum, “Khatai-Dragon” carpet (XVIII century), kept in Washington Textile Museum, the XIX century wall carpets and carpets sets (dest-khali), kept in Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum should be noted particularly. Except it, in the article the peculiarities of Karabakh carpets, the using of contrastive bright threads, the size of such carpets, their artistic peculiarities are studied also. In the article the influence of Tabriz carpet school on Karabakh carpet art, the using of European artistic styles is pointed out also. The essence of article is formed by artistic description and analyses of Karabakh carpets.

Key words: Washington Textile Museum, Karabakh, Shusha, dragon, carpets.

Introduction. Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan. Karabakh is placed in the south-western part of the Caucasus Mountain range. Its territory, that is, its landscape, consists both of mountainous and lowland parts. In this territory magnificent mountains such as Shahdag and Murovdag are located. During the excavations carried out by Azerbaijani scientists in the Azikh cave placed in Khojavand region of Karabakh the jawbone of Azikhanthropus (most ancient man) was found. This fact proves that Karabakh was one the first settlements in Ancient Azerbaijan. In Karabakh region since the Bronze

Age, both cattle breeding and agriculture developed. A part of the first Albanian state also was located in this territory. The city of Barda, which is one of the most famous and ancient cities of Karabakh, was the area where the Christianity spread first and was the center of Catholicos in the Albanian period. The remains of Christian monuments are preserved in the territory of Kalbajar region of Karabakh until today. During the time of Hulakids, Jalairs and Timurids Karabakh was also famous settlement. In VII-VIII centuries this area was occupied by Arabs. Three Mongol rulers (Gazankhan, Arpakhan, Anushirvan) came to power namely in Karabakh.

The interpretation of the main material. As for the ethnic composition of Karabakh, inhabitant here consisted of Turks and Albanians. As its known, in Azerbaijan the XVIII century was the era of khanates. In 1748, Panah-Ali khan laid the a foundation of Karabakh Khanate. In the XIX century, Russians began to dominate in South Caucasus. After 1805, according to the Kurakcay Treaty, the Russians began to Armenianize Karabakh [1, p. 3-7]. In XVIII century, Shusha became the capital of Karabakh knanate instead of Barda. It is known from the works of Azerbaijani scientists that in the VII-VIII centuries, the Arabs who conquered Azerbaijan, including Karabakh, began to spread Islam in this region. From this point of view, the information written by Arab historians and geographers about Karabakh and its capital, Barda, is of great interest. So, Ibn Howgal wrote about Barda in such way: “Barda is the mother of Umme-r-Ran” and the most beautiful part of this country. Barda is bigger than all other cities of Azerbaijan.” Al-Istahri, a geographer of the X century, wrote that “After Ray, Isphahan, Iraq, and Khorasan, there is no such beautiful flourishing city equal to Barda.” While talking about the types of crafts in this city Al-Istahri wote that : “Barda is the main city in this region, here unique natural dyes are used. In work “Sharafname” by Nizami Ganjavi, Alexander the Great talks about the silk carpets and palaces he saw when he was in Nushaba’s palace in Barda” [2, p. 156-157]. The development of carpet art in Karabakh is rich and multifaceted. From the researches we conducted earlier, it is known that the carpet weaving developed in four directions. In them pileless carpets woven terekeme; pileless and piled carpets woven by villagers who lived a sedentary life in the villages and were engaged both by cattle-breeding and agriculture; new compositions created by carpet makers in the big cities of Karabakh- Shusha, Barda, Aghdam, Kalbajar were included. These carpets differ from each other in terms of composition, color, ornament and technology, which will be described below. The first direction

engendered among the terekeme tribes engaged in sheep farming. These tribes live a season (winter, spring and summer) lifestyle and have all the pile-free carpets and household items needed in their daily-living, including tents, coverlets for doors, holdalls (containers) for bedroom accessories (mattresses, blankets, etc), bags and khurjuns for daily transportation, horse and camel covers, hundreds of household items, ties, cords including roof and tent cords, mafrash and khurjun ties, waist ties, hundreds of camel ties, bags for the kitchen, etc. All these things were woven by pileless technique and were transported when migrating from one place to another. Strictly geometric, ornaments, such as square, triangle, rhombus, vertical and horizontal stripes are used in these carpets as the main pattern. Geometric ornaments which were used on carpets, were also connected with ancient beliefs and rituals, and were used as family and tribe signs and clan stamps. In terekeme ceremonies only ashug sayings and ashug music performance predominated, played a major role. The monumentality of the general elements is emphasized by contour lines of different colors surrounding the edge of each element. In weaving woolen threads dyed with natural dyes, (mainly of red color and its various shades) were used. These societies have lived with the shamanic worldview for centuries and have kept it until today. The rules and ceremonies of Zoroastrianism and Islam are stranger to them.

Direction II. The second direction is represented by carpets woven by the sedentary village population: along with all the geometric elements, traditionally used by the terekeme carpet-makers, here in carpet design bird, animal and plant patterns were added, these patterns were light and flowing. The ornament is worked delicately. In such carpets the remains of totemism are seen clearly. With the change of lifestyle, the patterns on the pileless carpets had an impact on the artistic design of the pile carpets also. The number of colors increased, local weavers began to weave pile carpets also.

III direction. In the centers of the region, namely in Barda, Aghdam, and Shusha the tendency to create new compositions on pileless and piled carpets woven by the local carpet weavers was observed. They benefit a lot from the new information available in their cities. E.g. new compositions “Flowers in the Garden” and “Flowers in Pot “ are created as a result of the influence of trays with rose pictures brought in Azerbaijan from Russia. New plot motifs, including animal and human images, began to be used in the carpet-making. The number of carpets with definite content increased, on carpets paintings with plots, front view paintings of historical figures and heroes began to be reflected.

The IV direction is represented by palace carpets with patterns based on miniature and silk fabrics ornaments, which were decorated mostly by animal and human images, along with floral patterns. The carpets in grand halls of the rich people of Karabakh were mainly influenced by carpets (“khali”) of Tabriz carpet school. That influence is seen clearly in the plot motifs used by the artists in the newly created carpets. For decoration of the halls of palaces and mansions, a new carpet sets, consisted of three or five-part carpets began to be woven. The ornaments of these carpet-sets were based on the artistic imagination of Karabakh carpet makers. In these carpet-sets richly decorated central carpet and similar, but relatively narrow carpets-gebets placed on both sides were included. In some cases, carpets, called “bashlig” (top) or “ayaglig” (bottom), were also added to the top and bottom of set. Unfortunately, these pieces are separated

from each other when they were including in collections of world museums. The main reason for this is that the carpet was always considered as a property and the parts of carpet set being divided by parents among the children as an inheritance were separated from each other. So, the complete samples of such sets are found in museums seldom. In this article the Karabakh rugs and carpets of XV-XVIII century which are kept in three famous museums of the world (Berlin Art Museum, Washington Textile Museum, Baku National Carpet Museum) will be spoken about.



Fig. 1. Barda pile carpet “Simurgh and Dragon”, Germany, Berlin Art Museum, XV century

1. The XV century pile carpet woven in Barda, which is kept in Berlin Art Museum in Germany, is very original by its plot. The stylized animal and bird images pictured in profile inside the polygon of yellow color are actually connected with the Zoroastrian worldview, they reflect images of fighting dragon and Simurgh. As it is known, according the Zoroastrian worldview, the Simurgh bird is considered to be a symbol of good forces, and the dragon is considered to be a symbol of evil forces. A relatively large sample of such composition (XVIII century) was discovered by the author of the article in Germany, in the Museum of Islamic Art in Munich.
2. Rare pile carpets, included in group of the most famous Karabakh carpets, woven in Shusha, are stored in the Textile Museum of Washington as a large collection. These samples are considered to be rare works due to their artistic characteristics and during many years were picked up in the form of a collection by the founder of the museum, George Hewitt Myers. In 1975, in connection with the 50th anniversary of museum, Charles Grant Ellis, most skilled carpet expert of America at that time, created a special catalogue of Shusha carpets belonging to the late XVII and early XVIII centuries and prepared them for their exhibition. The exhibition was demonstrated in museums of all American states for a year. These carpets and rugs are considered as palace carpets and can be included in the group of large size rugs. One of them is a carpet, called "Chelebi".

These carpets are of oblongated form. Both the middle field and the border of the carpet are of red color, and on it a large white and red medallion, palmettes created by oblong leaf-like "khatai" motifs complete the entire composition. I would like to bring to your attention that the carpet-makers of Karabakh mainly preferred to fill the middle field of carpet by patterns very compactly. From this point of view, as you can see in this carpet, medallions and palmettes, which are positioned in the center of the middle field, are also placed in the form of fragments on the edges of the middle field of the carpet.

In the XVI-XVIII centuries, on the carpets of Tabriz artists elongated floral patterns with "cogged" edges, decorated with floral elements began to be used widely. In a short time, those elongated leaf-like "khatai" elements spread widely both in carpets of Tabriz school and in Shusha carpets. In the present khali-carpet, the vertical four-cornered medallions are repeated rhythmically



Fig. 2. “Khatai” ornamental carpet, Shusha, middle of XVIII century, 4,88x2,08, Washington Textile Museum.

in the middle field of red color and the “khatai” elements directed outside from them are used as an artistic composition in the carpets of red color. In composition of Shusha carpets of such kind stylized cypress trees, popular in the miniatures of Tabriz artists are included. However, in differ from Tabriz carpets, Shusha carpets were woven in an oblong narrow format according to the accepted rule. Besides, the middle field was filled completely with small and relatively larger floral patterns. This peculiarity is seen clearly in the present carpet. In the XVIII century samples of Shusha carpets, the border is not very active, on contrary, the border just acts only as a frame on the carpet. “Khatai” elements of yellow color are placed on a red background and sacred tree paintings are surrounded by flowers on both sides. The border is decorated with repeating palmettes of black and blue and yellow color.



**Fig. 3. Shusha, carpet “Dragon-khatai”, early XVIII century.
3,58x1,75. Washington Textile Museum**

The represented carpet woven in Shusha reminds the Tabriz carpet composition “Shah Abbasi”. The background of this carpet is worked completely in the red color, typical for the Shusha carpets of that time. The red middle field of the carpet is formed by white, light green, and blue leaf-like “khatai” elements, creating not very dense net-like composition. Small and large stylized palmettes of red, blue, yellow, light-blue colors are actively visible in the junction points of the “khatai” elements, both on the top and bottom. At the bottom of the carpet, two stylized dragon paintings are prominently depicted back to back. Different small and large-sized floral patterns decorating the entire space of carpet are formed by contrasting “passing” lines and stand out more from the composition. The harmony of colors that differ from each other reminds a flower-crown, made of beautiful flowers. This composition fascinates

human soul, and flower-crown looks as if floating in a huge waterfall. From our research, it is clear that the floral elements created by Tabriz artists, including “khatai” paintings, were transformed into a new, pleasant carpet pattern thanks to artistic the imagination of Shusha carpet makers.

It should be also noted that Tabriz artists Mirza Ali and Soltan Mohammad often used “khatai” elements with floral patterns in their miniature paintings, as well as motifs showing battle scenes between the dragon and the Simurgh. But in the low-density carpets woven by Shusha carpet-makers, these elements changed their initial form and became a new one, so they became an independent element, a quite new carpet pattern. As it's seen, in this carpet woven in Shusha at the beginning of the XVIII century, the border is getting narrow and cannot not carry out their function. So, this composition is completed by thin lines.

It should be pointed out that among the Azerbaijani people, the image

of dragon was always connected with water and alike in Chinese mythology, it was considered as a symbol of water coming from the clear sky. In this regard, dragon image on carpet has a positive character. It is not occasional, that in Azerbaijan, the wooden rainwater pipes of the houses were made by the craftsmen in the form of a dragon's mouth. In addition, the mouth and handle part of copper water pots and ahtabas (vessels for ablution or abdest, used by Moslems) , which were very fashionable in the past, were made in the shape of a dragon with an open mouth.



Fig. 4. The carpet “Katai-dragon”, Shusha, the end of XVIII-early XIX century, 4,45x1,83. Washington Textile Museum.

A sample of Shusha carpet “Khataili-Ajdahali” (“Khatai-Dragon”) woven at the end of the XVIII century – early XIX century is very similar to the carpet we described above, both in terms of color and composition. This carpet is woven basing on the same composition, i.e. it is divided into tighter net by “khatai” paintings on a middle field of red color. Except dragon paintings, this composition is enriched with other animal and bird paintings. In the centers of the nets created by “khatai” elements placed in the middle field, the images of different colors (red, green, yellow, blue), namely moving gazelle, parrot, dragon, snake, red and blue rooster, running deer looking back, flying dragons, red sitting camel, peacock, i.e. animal world is pictured. So, the carpet space is filled with very interesting stylized dynamic shapes of running, flying, singing birds and other animal drawings, transforming the entire composition into a very interesting, rich work of art. All the animal images created by the carpet-maker on this carpet were decorated by the master with special taste, festively. For example, the gazelle’s horns are in the shape of leafy trees, dragons are covered by white, yellow and floral clothes, birds have wings of the same color, their bodies are covered with patterns, etc. The border of this carpet is surrounded by rhythmic repetition of “S”-shaped multicolored elements. The writing on carpet is also feature, that makes it more interesting. The words “15 Muharram 1001. Huseyn Bey” are written in the Arabic alphabet on the top of the carpet. The writing was translated by Grant Ellis and means “17 October 1689, a Hijira date”.

Other samples of similar carpets, picked up as separate collection in Washington Textile Museum, and represented to the readers above, can be found in other museums of Europe and USA. It can be concluded that these samples were the most fashionable carpet templets (cheshni) at that time. That’s the reason, that numerous samples of carpets with such composition were woven until the end of the XVIII century – the middle of the XIX century and are collected now in different museums of world. Later, the new generation of carpet makers completely forgot about this kind of templets and made new ones such as “Goja”, “Nalbaki-gul”, “Fish”, which were fashionable in the palaces and mansions of Shusha.

In the XVIII–XIX centuries, commercial relations of Azerbaijan (including Karabakh) with Europe and Russia became the reason of creation of carpets with new compositions. Alongside with carpets and rugs for decorating the floor, new wall carpets began to be woven.

These carpets are a kind of panel type (murals) and were included as a innovation in the entire artistic design of the houses. After the oil boom in Baku, both in Shusha and Baku the walls and ceilings of the new houses and mansions built by rich people in Icherisheher (Old city) and Bayir-Sheher (Outward – city) were decorated by professional artists with special taste. Such an innovation stimulated Karabakh carpet-makers to create new type wall carpets in Azerbaijan. These carpets were distinguished by the variety of themes. Carpet makers began to use purple color to make the images and patterns in the created compositions more impressive-looking. Only in Karabakh, mainly in Shusha, black woolen threads were applied in the background of the carpet. These threads were dyed by using a plant, called “mazi” (ink tree). As for the images, larger-sized floral patterns of red and yellow color, animal pictures, as well as images of personages taken from the works of the classical literature were used. In this regard, the carpets “Rustam and Sohrab”, “Atli-atli” (“Horse and dog”), “Tiger”, “Flowers in the Garden”, “Flowers in the Pot”, etc. can be defined as wall-carpets.

All over Karabakh, including Shusha, there is a sufficient number of woven wall carpets, which do not exist in no other carpet schools. In this regard, the plot wall carpets woven in Shusha demonstrate the richness of the creative imagination of Karabakh folk craftsmen. Human and animal paintings made full-face and in profile reflect various plots, including portraits of heroes from the works of Firdausi, Nizami or some folklore plots. In some cases, the plots of such carpets were also formed by the grotesque front view portraits of the figures of the statesmen.

Conclusion. As a result, it should be noted that in the present article we talked about the rare carpet samples of Karabakh kept in the collections of the three world museums mentioned above. We brought to your attention only a small part of them. In this group the “Dragon Simurgh” carpet (XV century) kept in the Art Museum in Berlin, Germany, the XVIII century carpets, kept in the Washington Textile Museum, and the XIX century carpets and rugs kept in the National Carpet Museum of Azerbaijan are included. Karabakh carpets are characterized by a great variety of compositions, by contrasting and bright threads used in coloring, original carpets and rugs of small and excessively large sizes. The main feature, differing Karabakh carpet school from the other carpet schools of Azerbaijan is that it was influenced by the Tabriz carpet school, and

here a lot of European artistic styles and motifs were used also. The best feature of Karabakh carpet makers is that they skillfully, very creatively overworked the strange patterns and make them namely a part of Karabakh a style.

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Kübra Əliyeva (Azərbaycan)

QARABAĞ XALÇA MƏKTƏBİ VƏ QARABAĞ XALÇALARININ NADİR NÜMUNƏLƏRİ DÜNYANIN ÜÇ MUZEYİNDƏ

Məqalədə dünyanın üç məşhur muzeyində saxlanılan Qarabağın nadir xalçalarından bəhs edilir. Bunlardan Almaniyada, Berlin İncəsənət Muzeyində saxlanılan süjet xalçası “Əjdaha-Simurq” xalçası (XV əsr), Vaşinqton Tekstil Muzeyində saxlanılan “Xətai-Əjdaha” xalçası (XVIII əsr), XIX əsrə aid divar xalçaları və xalça dəstləri Azərbaycan Milli Xalça Muzeyində saxlanılan (dəst-xalı) xüsusi qeyd edilməlidir. Bundan başqa, məqalədə Qarabağ xalçalarının xüsusiyyətləri, təzadlı parlaq səpələrdən istifadə olunması, belə xalçaların ölçüləri, bədii xüsusiyyətləri də araşdırılır. Məqalədə Təbriz xalça məktəbinin Qarabağ xalça sənətinə təsiri, Avropa bədii üslublarından istifadə olunması da vurğulanır. Məqalənin mahiyyətini Qarabağ xalçalarının bədii təsviri və təhlili təşkil edir.

Açar sözlər: Vaşinqton Tekstil Muzeyi, Qarabağ, Şuşa, əjdaha, xalçalar.

Кюбра Алиева (Азербайджан)

КАРАБАХСКАЯ КОВРОВАЯ ШКОЛА И РЕДКИЕ ОБРАЗЦЫ КАРАБАХСКИХ КОВРОВ В ТРЕХ МУЗЕЯХ МИРА

В статье рассказывается о карабахских редких коврах, хранящихся в трех известных музеях мира. Среди них сюжетный ковер «Дракон-Симург» (XV век), хранящийся в Германии, в Берлинском худо-

жественном музее, ковер «Хатаи-Дракон» (XVIII век), хранящийся в Вашингтонском музее текстиля, настенные ковры и ковровые наборы XIX века. (дест-хали), хранящиеся в Азербайджанском национальном музее ковра. Кроме того, в статье исследуются также особенности карабахских ковров, как использование контрастных ярких нитей, размеры таких ковров, их художественные особенности. В статье также указывается влияние тебризской школы ковроделия на карабахское ковровое искусство, использование европейских художественных стилей. Суть статьи составляют художественное описание и анализ карабахских ковров.

Ключевые слова: Вашингтонский текстильный музей, Карабах, Шуша, дракон, ковры.