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THE MODERN CONCEPT OF THE HISTORICALLY AUTOCHTHONOUS
POPULATION AND THE ETHNOCULTURAL HERITAGE OF
THE WESTERN ZANGAZUR

In this research, the author, studying the ethnocultural and historical fate of Zangazur, particularly western Zangazur, used scientific evidence to identify processes of destruction and falsification of the region's heritage. The author sought to demonstrate that the forced deportation of the population and the falsification of various historical monuments inevitably led to the erasure of ethnocultural memory. In terms of terminology, deliberately rejecting the concept of "aboriginal", the author adopted the term "autochthon", which is frequently encountered in Azerbaijani historiography, as well as in international scientific literature. The term "autochthonous", rather than "aboriginal", was chosen more accurately to emphasize the fact that the Zangazur people developed in this geographical environment and were an integral part of the ethnogenesis of Azerbaijanis. The ethnocultural memory of the indigenous population was seriously undermined by forced deportations and artificial changes in the demographic balance. Thus, the aim of this study is to identify the anthropogenic factors and their consequences that contribute to the formation and development of events leading to the loss of the ethnocultural and historical heritage, which represents the unprecedented cultural contribution of the Zangazur region.

The scientific novelty of this study lies in its analysis of the customs, daily life, economic life, epigraphic monuments, and toponyms of the indigenous population of Zangazur based on interdisciplinary sources. The author takes a critical approach to 19th-century censuses and demonstrates that the numerical superiority of Azerbaijanis was concealed through various statistical manipulations. Regarding the application of this study, the obtained scientific results provide a scientific basis for developing conceptual approaches to incorporating the region's historical and cultural heritage into the international scientific community, as well as for conducting new research within the framework of the concept of lost lands.

Keywords: Western Zangazur, toponyms, Turkish-Muslim population of Zangazur, autochthonous people, local population, administrative territory of Zangazur

Introduction

The native autochthonous people of Western Azerbaijan contributed greatly to all-Azerbaijani ethnogenesis even in the early period of history. The material and spiritual values created in the said region began to grow progressively. From the ancient history of Azerbaijan, the population of 26 tribes in Albania is known. These tribes were of great importance in the nation formation process. These tribes played an important role in the formation of the nation. Mahmud Yagublu claims that, "the main intention of trying to insist that there is no Turkish ethnos among these 26 tribes was to remove our ancient state-Albania from the history of Azerbaijan" [6,s.4]. "The presence of Turkic tribes in the population is proved not only by archaeological, but also by epigraphical evidence. In that geography, the

age and traditions of the presentation of folk performances in various forms and contents have been formed, which can be measured in thousands of years” [8].

The definition of ethnocultural heritage is that it is a cultural heritage that is transmitted through successive generations. The traditions associated with this legacy are well-known. To permanently remove ethnocultural legacy, either monuments are destroyed or stolen, the population undergoes a strategy of forced relocation and removal, or active measures are taken to remove the cultural heritage of the indigenous tribes. The Zangazur region, like many others, suffered the consequences of such a policy.

As is known, the creation and development of political-administrative and territorial divisions is of great importance not only from the point of view of state or state-building, but also from the point of view of regional development. However, sometimes the creation and development of such divisions was created deliberately. Since nations, states and societies are complex structures with historical roots, the emergence of political and territorial divisions as a result of deep political, social, economic and cultural processes also has inefficient and informal historical developments. Such deliberately created institutions have served as fuel for internal and international conflicts, turning them into highly complex and sensitive political problems that cannot be resolved.

When the Russians invaded Transcaucasia (1801-1828), these territories were reorganized on the basis of new administrative divisions in the second half of the 19th century. However, during the divisions, they didn't take into account the actual ethnographic, historical, religious, and household characteristics of the local population. Basically, this division was aimed at weakening one part of the population, especially in any administrative unit, to the detriment of the other part of the Caucasus [14,s.12]. We can illustrate this as an example: the Nakhchivan khanate with a purely Turkish population was merged into the Irevan governorate by including the Armenian peasant population of Echmiadzin (Or Uchmiadzin), Alexandropol and Yerevan districts [14, s. 12]. Their relations would be completely severed, if a state border were drawn between the Azerbaijani Turks of the border regions, who own vast estates beyond the old administrative borders (especially in the Zagatala region along the Alazani River). Even the artificial climate change was contemplated by the Russians in the change of administrative uniformity. With that, they would have a negative impact on the population living in the plains. This would lead to a change in the climate and agricultural conditions in these areas. It would also have a negative impact on the population living on the plains. Because decisions would be made without considering the interests of the autochthonous people [14, s. 13-14]. In drawing administrative boundaries under Russian rule, irrigation systems, pastures, and various other conditions of local agriculture and land ownership had to be considered along with basic ethnographic principles after independence [14, s. 14].

Main part: The Gulistan and Turkmenchay treaties which concluded between Russia and the Gajars marked the beginning of a new era in the history of Zangazur. “In 1861, Zangazur governorate was established after the approval of the new structure project of the administrative, judicial and territorial divisions of the South Caucasian province. On February 25, 1868, Yelizavetpol Governorate was created, consisting of Tbilisi, Baku and Irevan Governorates 137.22 sq.m. Zangazur district, covering an area of 100,000 km, was included in Yelizavetpol governorate” [1, s.119]. Nomadic cattle breeding, cocoon farming, agriculture, crafts, horticulture, and carpet weaving occupied the main place in the household and economic life of the Ghaza population. More than half a million (559 thousand 649 heads) of the 3 million head of cattle kept in Yelizavetpol governorate belonged only to Zangazur district. As for the social-class composition of the village population in Zangazur, Kamran Asadov emphasizes that "261 bey families (1524 people) and 70 Armenian landlord families

were registered in Muslim villages. The Armenian church has historically opposed the fulfillment of Armenian political claims; 46 churches, including 25 Armenian and 25 Gregorian chapels, were in operation in Zangazur in the 1880s. In addition, there were four secular village schools with a combined student body of 209... There were only forty pupils from Azerbaijan. (ARDA, f.970)"[1, s. 120]. As Guliyeva claims, "in 1875, 491 Muslim mosques and 21 schools were registered in Zangazur district, where 40 students studied. In 1876, the number of students reached 59" [12, s. 38].

According to N.N. Shavrov, "... Armenians in Yelizavetapol governorate and Iravan were insignificant in number and did not matter at all until the war between the Khajar monarchy and the Russian empire in 1826-1828" [11, s. 21]. In the population census of 1886, it was determined that 53.3 percent of Zangazur district were Azerbaijanis, and 46.3 percent were Armenians. "Azerbaijani Turks lived in 45.7% of Gaza's 326 villages, Kurds in 27.8%, and Armenians in 24.8%. In the 1897 census, Zangazur had a population of 137,871 people. 63,622 of them, 46.1% were Armenians, 51.6% were Azerbaijanis, and 1.3% were Kurds"[1, s. 120]. The next census was carried out in 1901. 67% of the 294,753 people of Zangazur district in Yelizavetpol governorate were Muslims, 32.9% were Armenian-Gregorian, and 0.1% belonged to other religions"[1, s. 120]. The main point was that the Armenians put forward the fantasy of the "revival" of the Kurds in the Zangazur district. However, "by the words of Musa Urud, the Kurdish people were not able to establish a state. Kurds came in Zangazur after the 17th century and settled in several villages of present-day Lachin, Gubadli and Zangilan regions... Rather than establishing a state, Zangazur Kurds thought about grazing their cattle and supporting their families. On the other hand, there was no political-ideological, nor historical-geographical basis for the separation of the Kurds from Azerbaijan [11, s. 43-44].

Based on the materials of 1894, it can be noted that "in the villages of Zangazur's Karakilsa - present-day Sisian region, information is given about the population. There are highlighted the names of many Azerbaijani villages, including the population, such as Sheki – 282 people, Kyzylchik - 150 people, Vagudi - 510 people, Agudi - 44 people, I Sofulu - 322 people, Markhuz - 56 people, Garrag-55 people, Saldash- 106 people, Karkyal-93 people, Agbes- 261 people, II Sofulu- 520 people, Alishar- 185 people, Agbag- 67 people, Hajiami- 54 people, Balligaya-191 people, Karkas- 205 people, Charalı- 153 people, Dastekerd- 546 people, Galacik - 87 people, Mazidli- 96 people, Amirgulu-66 people, I Jijimli-694 people, II Jijimli- 131 people, Grachali- 29 people [12, s. 39].

70 percent of the population living in the area were Azerbaijanis. This area stretched from Mehri to Akara, to the mountains of Gapychig, Khusdub and Bargushat [5,s.10]. In order to erase the people's ethnocultural heritage, the Armenians falsified and Armenianized several historical sites after the Azerbaijanis were forcibly deported. Example of this policy is the Veng Church, which was built by the daughter of the Albanian king Sanakari in 913. It was located near the village of Shekherdzhik in the Gafan region. Other samples are the historical monument in the village of Dovrus (Ejanin Valley), and several monuments in the villages of Urud and Vagudi in the Sisian region [5, s. 10]. The fact that monuments such as the temples in Veng are also found in Karabakh, Ismayilli, Gakh, Balaken, and Sheki indicates the formation of a historical and cultural layer [5, s. 22].

Azerbaijani Turkic toponyms were also being changed as part of the hateful strategy. A. Alakbarli's "Ancient Turkic-Oguz Land Armenia", A. Rustamli's "Turkic Origin of Place-Place Names of Ancient Oguz Land Zangazur", I. Bayramov's "Turkic Origin of Toponyms of Western Azerbaijan", V. Aliyev's "Our Remaining Trace in Zangazur" and other authors' works show lists or toponyms proving the changing of place names of Turkic origin in the Western Zangazur region.

For example, the names of the villages listed below have changed as follows:
in Gorus district, Bayandur to Vaghatur, Muganchiq to Hadezgor, Koru to Dzorashen;
in Gafan district, Akhtakhana (Khladagh) to Chorasten, Kilsekand to Srashen, Pirmirza to Katnarat;
in Mehri district, Pushgah to Aygudrov, Lok to Vartanadzor;
in Sisyan district, Marza to Bartsravan, Malik to Spardaryan, Urud to Vagudi [5, s. 14-15].

According to Ali Asker's book, "Russia attempted to expand its power in the region by diminishing the influence of the Muslim population in the early 1800s after seizing power in the territories under Azerbaijani control in the South Caucasus" [7, s. 42-43]. What did this signify? To reduce the demographic balance against the Muslims! The demographic decline of the local peoples could, of course, lead to the gradual disappearance of the ethno-cultural heritage. This process continued until the beginning of the 20th century. Thus, "as a result of ethnic cleansing, the cultural heritage of tens of thousands of Azerbaijani families was plundered and appropriated by the Armenians [13]. This is demonstrated by the remains of almost 900 historical and cultural monuments in the Western Zangazur administrative settlements of Gafan, Mehri, Khot, Shinuair, and Alidara [13].

George Burnutyan, an Armenian historian, highlights that the first official census was taken in 1897 and that demographic studies carried out in Russia and the South Caucasus throughout the 19th century were negligible [3, s.47]. However, Ali Asker notes that the 1897 census cannot diminish the importance of previous censuses. The Armenian author does not deny the fact that Armenians settled in the South Caucasus after the Turkmenchay Treaty. That is, "the 1897 census included all Armenians who had arrived in the region before that date and were alive" [3, s. 48]. In that year, "the South Caucasus consisted of six provinces (governorates), of which Zangazur was part of the Yelizavetpol province. In this area, out of a population of 878,415, 552,822 (60 percent) were Muslims. It is known that the number of Azerbaijanis was greater" [3, s. 50-51]. In the same work, published in 2017, Bournoutian claimed the numerical superiority of Christians by giving the total number of Georgians and Armenians, and made arguments by separating Azerbaijanis from other Muslims such as Kurds. This approach is obviously incorrect [3, s. 50-51].

As a result of research, it is known that dozens of epigraphic monuments existed in the historical territories of Azerbaijan. One of them is the runic inscription depicted on Mount Gargadashi near the village of Nuvedi in the Mehri region [4]. The people of Western Zangazur have left behind a wealth of stories, folklore, and lyrical examples that have persisted to this day. Aziz Alakbarli reminds that the Zangazur region is identical to the Karabakh Turks in terms of customs and lifestyle. Regional features related to the environment are observed in ceremonies and traditions, which are also indicators of Turkic-Islamic culture [13].

An intriguing fact is that Western Zangazur's total area was 4505.5 km² after 1920. However, the reason for this territory being given to Armenia still remains a mystery as a historical forbidden zone [5, s. 11]. The goal of many researchers has now become to study the history, geography, and culture of Western Zangazur in detail with facts. As a result, scholars believe that a more thorough study of this area is required, going beyond the writings of Strabo, Orkhon Yenisei monuments, and Musa Kalankatli.

Conclusion

As a result, we must admit that the policy of the Russian Empire regarding the historical territories of Azerbaijan, especially the Western Zangazur region, as well as the aggressive policy of Armenia, has been successful. It can be concluded that the western part of Zangazur,

whose autochthonous population once consisted of Turks, could not preserve its ethno-cultural heritage as a result of various policies. As a result of massacres committed in the 20th century, the Turkish-Muslim composition of the population changed. As a result of the administrative changes and massacres, the population left their homelands, which led to the loss of ethno-cultural characteristics. As a result of historical research, the fate and ethnocultural heritage of the autochthonous people of Western Zangazur were revealed. The crimes committed under the "Right of the Strong" law led by the Russians led to the mass extermination of the population of that region, causing historic losses. Today, researchers pursuing our ethno-cultural heritage are witnesses to the destruction or concealment of important documents. The customs, religion, language, culture of the autochthonous people of Western Zangazur, their social and economic life should be investigated and proven with facts from the point of view of the concept of lost lands and published in scientific journals in different languages.

Therefore, we have to acknowledge that the aggressive approach of Armenia and the Russian Empire's attitude towards the historical areas of Azerbaijan, particularly the Western Zangazur region, have been successful. Important documents are either being destroyed or hidden from scholars studying our ethno-cultural past. From the perspective of the idea of lost lands, the customs, religion, language, culture, and social and economic life of the indigenous people of Western Zangazur should be studied and supported by facts, and they should be published in scientific publications in many languages.

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QƏRBİ ZƏNGƏZURUN TARİXİ AVTOXTON ƏHALİSİ VƏ
ETNO-MƏDƏNİ İRSİNİN MÜASİR KONSEPSİYASI
XÜLASƏ

Açar sözlər: Qərbi Zəngəzur, toponimlər, Zəngəzurun türk-müsəlman əhalisi, avtohton xalq, yerli əhali, Zəngəzurun inzibati ərazisi

Elmi tədqiqat işində müəllif Zəngəzurun, xüsusilə Qərbi Zəngəzur bölgəsinin etno-mədəni tarixi taleyini araşdıraraq, adı çəkilən bölgənin irsinin məhv edilməsi, saxtalaşdırılması proseslərini elmi faktlarla üzə çıxarmışdır. Müəllif sübut etməyə çalışmışdır ki, əhalinin zorla deportasiyası, müxtəlif tarixi abidələrin saxtalaşdırılması təbii ki, etno-mədəni yaddaşın silinməsinə səbəb olacaqdı. Terminoloji baxımdan “aborigen” anlayışından məqsədli şəkildə imtina edərək müəllif Azərbaycan tarixşünaslığında, həmçinin beynəlxalq akademik ədəbiyyatda tez-tez rast gəlinən “avtohton” terminini əsas götürmüşdür. “Aborigen” deyil, “avtohton” termini məhz Zəngəzur xalqının həmin coğrafiyada təşəkkül tapmasını, azərbaycanlıların etnogenez prosesində ayrılmaz tərkib hissəsi olmasını vurğulamaq üçün ən doğru olaraq seçilmişdir. Zorakı deportasiyalar, demoqrafik balansın süni şəkildə dəyişdirilməsi ilə avtohton əhalinin etno-mədəni yaddaşına ciddi zərbə vurulmuşdur. Ona görə bu tədqiqatın məqsədi Zəngəzur bölgəsinin misli görünməmiş mədəni irsinin etno-mədəni və tarixi formalaşmasının itirilməsinə səbəb olan hadisələrin formalaşmasına və inkişafına töhfə verən antropogen təsir amillərini və onların nəticələrini müəyyən etməkdir.

Elmi yeniliyi isə Zəngəzurun avtohton əhalisinin adətlərini, məişət, təsərrüfat həyatını, epiqrafik abidələrini, toponimikalarını çoxsaxəli mənəbələr əsasında təhlil edilməsindən ibarətdir. Müəllif XIX əsr siyahıyaalınmalarına tənqidi yanaşaraq azərbaycanlıların say üstünlüyünün müxtəlif statistik manipulyasiyalarla kölgədə saxlanıldığı göstərir. Tədqiqatın tətbiqinin mahiyyətinə gəlinə, əldə edilən elmi nəticələr- bölgənin tarixi-mədəni irsinin beynəlxalq elmi dövriyyəyə çıxarılması, həmçinin itirilmiş torpaqlar konsepsiyası çərçivəsində yeni araşdırmaların aparılması istiqamətində konseptual yanaşmaların formalaşdırılması üçün elmi baza yaradır.

ИСТОРИЧЕСКОЕ АВТОХТОННОЕ НАСЕЛЕНИЕ ЗАПАДНОГО ЗАНГЕЗУРА И
СОВРЕМЕННАЯ КОНЦЕПЦИЯ ЕГО ЭТНОКУЛЬТУРОНОГО НАСЛЕДИЯ

РЕЗЮМЕ

Ключевые слова: Западный Зангезур, топонимы, турецко-мусульманское население Зангезура, автохтонный народ, местное население, административная территория Зангезура

В исследовательской работе автор, изучая этнокультурно-историческую судьбу Зангезура, особенно западного Зангезура, на основе научных фактов выявил процессы разрушения и фальсификации наследия указанного региона. Автор стремился доказать, что насильственная депортация населения и фальсификация различных исторических памятников неизбежно привели к стиранию этнокультурной памяти. В терминологическом плане, намеренно отвергнув понятие «абориген», автор взял за основу термин «автохтон», часто встречающийся в азербайджанской историографии, а также в международной научной литературе. Термин «автохтонный», а не «аборигенный», был выбран наиболее точно, чтобы подчеркнуть тот факт, что зангезурский народ сформировался в этой географической среде и являлся неотъемлемой частью процесса этногенеза азербайджанцев. Этнокультурная память автохтонного населения была серьезно подорвана насильственными депортациями и искусственными изменениями демографического баланса. Таким образом, целью данного исследования является выявление антропогенных факторов и их последствий, которые способствуют формированию и развитию событий, приведших к утрате этнокультурного и исторического наследия, представляющего собой беспрецедентный культурный вклад региона Зангезур.

Научная новизна исследования заключается в анализе обычаев, повседневной жизни, экономической жизни, эпиграфических памятников и топонимов автохтонного населения Зангезура на основе междисциплинарных источников. Автор критически подходит к переписям населения XIX века и показывает, что численное превосходство азербайджанцев скрывалось различными статистическими манипуляциями. Что касается сущности применения исследования, полученные научные результаты создают научную основу для формирования концептуальных подходов к включению историко-культурного наследия региона в международное научное сообщество, а также для проведения новых исследований в рамках концепции утраченных земель.

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