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**SECTION 17. World history. History of science
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TO THE QUESTION ON THE RESEARCH OF GANJA GATES

Abstract: *On the basis of historical-cultural materials in this scientific article has been investigated the main moments about ancient Ganja gates. Also was researched the academic problems of its restoration.*

Key words: Azerbaijan, Ganja, historical-cultural value, ancient gates.

Language: English

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Introduction

Up to the end of Middle Ages, Ganja was one of the most resplendent and well-known scientific and cultural centers of the East throwing down a challenge to Europe from both the economic and cultural point of view. Medieval historians called Ganja the last greatest urban and frontier point ("Sarhad dar al-mulku") in the North of the Moslem world.

The carried archeological digs and historical sources refer the history of Ganja to the VII century B.C. Since the X-XI centuries A.D., the glory of Ganja, the city outliving the period of its economic and cultural development, flourishing and becoming mighty, spread from Kiev Russia to India, China and the whole East. The high-level organization of the defence system of Ganja with 300 thousand people of its population is a proof of rise of a level of its development [1, 35].

Historical facts show that exactly in this area – in Eastern Georgia, majority of the population consisted of Azeri Turks. One of our most ancient sources "Kitabi - Dada Gorgud" proves this fact.

At the same time, Tiflis Moslem Emirate kept close relations with the State of the Shaddadis existed in Azerbaijan at that time.

Being a Turkish-Islamic Union, the State of the Shaddadis (an ancient Azeri state) including the

Seljugs (a Central Asian empire), prevented the conquest of Western Azerbaijan lands by Georgia and its protector – Byzantium for a long time [2].

In 1054, after conquering Azerbaijan, the Seljugs feudalized both the State of the Ravvadis and the State of the Shaddadis. Ganja also became a vassal of the Seljugs. The well-known Ganja Gate was prepared in the period when the State of the Shaddadis was a vassal of the Seljugs.

Materials and Methods

Afterwards, as a result of the collapse of the Caliphate, the Tiflis-Moslem Emirate became independent. This emirate existed up to 1122, when David IV (a Georgian tsar) put an end to it. In 1122, after the collapse of the Tiflis-Moslem Emirate, the present Western Georgia practically fell under the government of David IV. After David IV, Demetri I, who came to power, became a ruler of those lands [4].

The most prosperous period of Ganja as a city is the period of governing of the Shaddadis. In 1063, a representative of the Shaddadis' dynasty – Shavur, with a strategic goal built a stable fortress around the city and mounted a two-door gate in it. On the surface of one half of the gate there was an inscription in Arabic written in Kufi handwriting:

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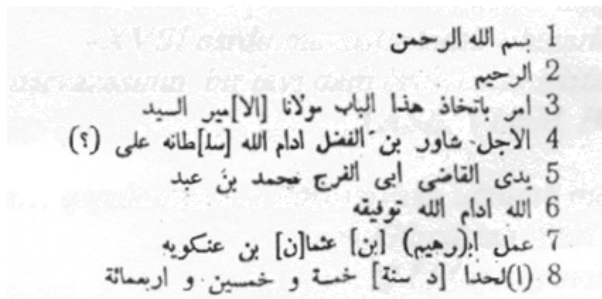
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Picture 1 - The inscription on the surface of one half of the Ganja Gate, which is kept in the Monastery of Gelaty near Kutaisi, the Republic of Georgia



Picture 2 - A schematic description of the inscription



Picture 3 - A graphic way of writing of the inscription lines

The translation of the inscription is the following:

"In the Name of the Gracious and Merciful Allah! Our great ruler and emir Seyid Shavur ibn Al-Fazl – as the Allah willed, long may he rule - enjoined us to produce this gate in our deep deference and submission to Gazi Abul Faraj Mahammad ibn Abdullah. Long may he also live, as the Great Allah willed!

By the blacksmith Ibrahim ibn Osman Angaveyh – fifth, fiftieth, four hundredth year according to the Hijri (the beginning of Moslem era from the 16th of June 622)

As it may be seen from the inscription text, in 1063, the iron gate was made by the blacksmith Ibrahim ibn Osman Angaveyh by Ganja ruler Emir Shavur's order. Gazi Abul Faraj Mahammad ibn Abdullah directed the work on preparation of the gate.

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But this iron gate did not exist in the history of Ganja for a long time.

A terrible earthquake taken place in 1139 made difficult to defend Ganja, which was subordinate to the Seljugs. Historical sources prove very well that the Georgian Tsar Demetri I took advantage of absence of any defence of the city, attacked it, sacked the tumbledown Ganja without any resistance, and took away its gate to Gelaty monastery near Kutaisi. At present, one half of the gate with the inscription on the surface has been fixed to the wall in front of the grave of David IV in the yard of Gelaty monastery in Georgia [3-5].

All guests and tourists visiting the monastery are given information that the gate was brought to the monastery by the army of Demetri I as if a symbol of victory over Ganja at the time of fighting with it. But in reality it is clear that the Georgians did not have any powerful forces to fight against the Seljugs.

The fate of another half of the gate is unknown. There are many different conjectures from many sources about it:

"In XVIII century, one half of the Ganja gate was used in covering the roof of the monastery when repairing it" [5, 84].

"The Arranian ruler Gara Songur rendered assistance to the population of Ganja, took revenge on the Georgians, brought a half of the gate back, founded new Gana and placed the gate there."

"Zubdat an-nusra va nuxbat al-usra" by Imadaddin al-Isfahni

The Georgian Tsar Demetri I did not take away both parts of the Ganja gate; he took only one half of it to Georgia. The another half turned out to be brought to Derbend and was fused there" (it is said that it was utilized for moulding bullets)

... is taken from the manuscript "History of development of fine arts in Azerbaijan" by Javad bey Rafibeyli

Historical sources prove that the first of these statements is the most realistic one. Information about utilization of another half of the gate during

repair of the monastery in XVIII century is found most often.

Conclusion

The statement about corrosion and decay of one part of the gate is unlikely. In this case another half of the gate would also subject to corrosion and decay because both parts of the gate had been made from the same material and at the same time.

Imadaddin al-Isfahni's statement about the restitution of the gate to Ganja people by the Arranian ruler Gara Songur is refuted by other historical documents and presence of the gate itself in Gelaty monastery.

The statement about taking one half of the gate away not to Georgia but to Derbend is also proved to be mistaken and is refuted by many historical facts. The last statement itself shows that both parts of the gate were carried away to Georgia and one of them disappeared in XVIII century.

The gate made by the blacksmith Ibrahim ibn Osman Angaveyh, known in our history as Ganja gate, a symbol of immovability of the city can be included into the row of our metal memorials reflecting elements inherent to the Islamic Culture. Within the framework of our people's medieval craft samples reached our era and adorning many world museums, our artistic metal work and incrustation attracts attention most of all. One of the factors stimulating its development was availability of iron resources, which were abundant around Ganja.

The basis of one half of the Ganja gate kept in Gelaty monastery consists of a big bolted iron frame. The frame is divided into 7 partitions in height. Each of the partitions has 9 parts in breadth. All the parts are bolted to each other. On the top of the gate, on the II and III partitions there is an inscription. The inscription was enched on the surface of the gate. It proves the high-level craftsmanship of the blacksmith Ibrahim ibn Osman Angaveyh, and, at the same time, his master's aptitudes towards artistic metal and incrustation work [2-4].

The issue on restitution of the intact half of the Ganja gate to Ganja was raised many times during the past centuries. But because of obscure reasons the negotiations on the issue came to nothing.

Up to present, one part of the Ganja gate still lives its sad life in Gelaty monastery near Kutaisi in Georgia.

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