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## **Ancient City of Barda in Archaeological Research**

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***Abstract:** The study of the history, historical geography and archeology of the Albanian period in the study of the Albanian period urban places and general settlements of Azerbaijan maintains its importance even today. The researches necessary for the study of the history and archeology of the Albanian era of Barda are also important in the direction of scientific research of contemporary monuments, analysis and classification of material culture samples.*

*The main research object of our research is to study the ancient and early medieval urban culture based on the Barda materials against the background of the archaeological research conducted in the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and to determine its place in social politics, ideological and other fields of Caucasian Albania. Also, the main object of the research is to trace the urban culture in the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan in the ancient and early middle ages on the basis of Barda materials, the changes in social processes and the development of productive forces, as well as the reasons affecting it on the basis of archaeological materials.*

*In the article, the comparative analysis of the monuments specific to the Barda region by carrying out archaeological excavations, the classification of the stratigraphic features of the cultural layers, the grouping of the obtained materials, the determination of the topographical aspects of the monuments, the development of the plan, the use of modern research methods, the comparison of the place of residence with other locations, as well as with neighboring and regional methods of studying relations with other countries were used.*

***Key words:** archaeology, Albania, history, monument, Barda, city, material.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The study of the urban culture of the Albanian era of Karabakh is one of the most urgent problems of Azerbaijani archeology. In the study of the coastal areas of Caucasian Albania, the study of Barda and its urban culture forms the main line of the mentioned topic. If we take into account that the monuments of the Albanian period of Azerbaijan become victims of the science of theft by some forces, in this regard, the ancient and early medieval monuments stand out. While sources confirm that the southern border of Caucasian Albania passes along the Araz River, Armenian and pro-Armenian circles claim that it is the Kura River. All written sources and archaeological studies prove that the Kura River runs through the middle of Albania, and its territory covers both the right and left banks of the Kura. From this point of view, the monuments of the Albanian era of Karabakh, especially the urban areas, are distinguished by their importance. The study of ancient and early medieval monuments located in Barda, Tartar, Aghjabedi, Khojavand, Fuzuli, Khankendi and other regions is enough to provide a worthy response to those forces. In this regard, the importance of archaeological excavations conducted in recent years in the Shortepe archaeological complex in Barda region should be specially noted. The results of the archaeological excavations conducted in these monuments once again prove that the right bank lands of Caucasian Albania fully encompassed the historical lands of Azerbaijan, Karabakh. Although written sources are used in the study of the history of Shortepe, it was possible to clarify the information about the ancient history of the city that the sources could not provide with the help of archaeological research. On the other hand, the source data of the ancient and early medieval periods are also clarified with the help of archaeological research.

## MAIN PART

Material culture samples are the sources on which archaeologists study history. Azerbaijan is called the land of rich monuments for conducting archaeological research. According to archaeologists, the recording of archaeological monuments in Azerbaijan began in the 30s of the 11th century. The first information was given by foreign travelers and researchers, and this was not in the form of a consistent study. The study of ancient history in the territory of Azerbaijan began at the beginning of the 20th century. Since the 50s of the 20th century, the role of national personnel in the study of our monuments has increased, and research has been started on many monuments. Currently, the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography is considered one of the major scientific and research institutions. Many specialists work in this institute. All areas from the Stone Age to the New Age are being researched. Large research works are being carried out in the entire territory of Azerbaijan (Ganja, Barda, Gabala, Shamkir, Tovuz, Kazakh, Nakhchivan, Karabakh), and many expeditions are active. Active archaeological research is being conducted in all areas of Azerbaijan, which are important for our history.

"Archaeology" is formed from the combination of two Greek words "archayos" - ancient and "logos" - science, and it means science about ancient history.

The history of archeology as a science is not so ancient. It is not known who the first archaeologist was, but that person laid the foundations of science about the past. This is true. The archeologist sheds light on the traces of the distant and near "yesterday", thanks to his work we have the opportunity to understand the present day and the distant past. This is reality.

History is studied on the basis of sources from two groups:

1. Examples of material culture.
2. Written sources.

Azerbaijan has a history of 2.5 million years of early human settlement, and the whole world accepts this history. There are monuments that gradually complete 2.5 million years of history. So, Azerbaijan is really a land of rich monuments for conducting extensive and comprehensive archaeological research. Therefore, foreign specialists are very interested in coming to Azerbaijan and conducting research.

In the whole territory of Azerbaijan (Ganja, Barda, Gabala, Shamkir, Tovuz, Kazakh, Nakhchivan, Karabakh) great research works are being carried out, many expeditions are active. Ideal Narimanov, Gudrat Ismayilzadeh, Rashid Goyushov, Hidayat Jafarov, Asadulla Jafarov, Arif Mammadov, Tavakkul Aliyev and other researchers, among our archeological scientists, have conducted research for many years in the study of the archaeological monuments of Karabakh. With their guidance, a new generation of Azerbaijani archaeologists has grown up.

The city of Barda was built in an area near the Azikh settlement, which is one of the oldest human settlements in the world, between the Kur and Tartar rivers. The city of Barda is one of the oldest residential centers not only in Azerbaijan, but also in the Middle East as a whole. Obtained sources indicate that Barda had ties with existing countries in EC.

"In 1984-2004, under the leadership of A.B. Nuriyev, archaeological researches were continued in Barda and concrete facts about the early medieval history of the city were discovered. In 2006, archaeologist I.A. Babayev carried out 12-day archaeological researches in Shortepe, and discovered "the remains, which are considered to be a food storehouse of ancient city Barda" (7, p.5). As a result of archeological excavations, a large number of glassware samples belonging to the Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages have been obtained in Barda" (5,49).

Numerous examples of coins from Albanian monuments were also found during archaeological research. They include coins minted in different countries and cities of the world, as well as numerous local Albanian coins. This means that the Albanians, who are our ancestors, not only knew money, but even the coins they minted themselves are a historical reality. In the studies on the relief of the area, it is noted that "the abundance of fresh water sources and natural food sources is noticeable in the area. ...the land of Karabakh, which has rich flora and fauna, has been considered a favorable area for human habitation since ancient times" (4,51).

Arab historian Belazuri (9th century) stated that Barda was built during the Sassanid ruler Gubad I (483-531), Iranian historian Hamdullah Qazvini (14th century) stated that it was built during the reign of Alexander the Great (336-323 BC). According to Movses Kalankatli, Barda was built by the order of Firuz (459-484) during the reign of the Albanian ruler Vache II. In this period, the name of Barda was "Firuzabad". Barda is mentioned in the "Kitabi-Dada Gorgud" epic. During the Sassanid period, Barda was the center of the viceroyalty. During the period of Gubad I, a wall was built around Barda. It became the capital of Albania in the 10th century, and in 552 the center of the Albanian Church was moved to Barda. Barda was occupied by the Khazars in 628 and by Iranian feudal lords in 639. The Albanian ruler Javanshir was able to expel the invaders from Barda. During the reign of Caliph Osman (644-656), Arab troops occupied Barda. 100,000 people lived in Barda in VI-VII centuries. Money was minted in Barda in the 13th century. Barda became the center of the province of Arran in 752. In the 8th-9th centuries, Barda became an important trade and cultural center. The famous "Al-Kurkiy" market was located near the Barda gate. Until the 90s of the 9th century, Barda was part of the Sasanian state. Barda was also one of the main sources of power of the Khurrami movement. In some sources, the city was called "the capital of Aran" and "the mother of Aran". In 944, the Russians marched to Barda, known as a craft and trade center in the near and Middle East. According to the

conditions put forward by the Russians, people from Barda who did not leave the city within a day were imprisoned. The Russians put 20,000 Bardalians to the sword. Plague spread in the area, so the Russian army had to leave the city. After the looting of the Russians, Barda could not recover for a long time. Fazlin (985-1030) from the Shaddad dynasty included Barda in his state in 993. Barda was under the rule of the Seljuks in the 11th century and the Eldegiz in the 12th century. Barda was destroyed again during the Mongol attack and restored during the Elkhanid period. Barda was destroyed again during the campaign of Amir Teymur. During the Khanate period, Barda was part of the Karabakh Khanate. Ru of the Karabakh Khanate After the occupation by the Russian Empire in 1804, the Russians started moving Armenians to Barda as well as to all of Karabakh. In 1828 alone, more than 1000 Armenian families were moved to Barda territory. It is possible to learn the history of ancient Barda only as a result of archaeological research. For this purpose, Azerbaijani archaeologists consistently conduct researches and obtain important results to convey the ancient history of our nation to the world of science.

Since the beginning of 2000, under the leadership of Professor Arif Mammadov, archeological researches have started in the city of Barda, and these researches are currently ongoing. In the archaeological research, special attention was paid to the study of the ancient history of the cities of Ganja and Barda. During the archaeological survey of the cities of Ganja and Barda, the head of the expedition, Professor Arif Mammadov, put an end to the wrong and controversial ideas in the history of archeology. During the excavations carried out by the archaeological expedition in Barda, various types of objects, believed to belong to the 7th century BC, were discovered. As a result of archaeological research, the 4-meter-wide castle walls, B.C. Samples of material culture belonging to the 7th century have been identified. A few years ago, based on the research conducted in the Shortepe monument, it was concluded that B.C. In the middle of the 1st millennium, Barda was already a highly developed settlement. The city of Barda was formed as a result of the separation of craftsmanship from agriculture and animal husbandry: "Considering that this process took place in the middle of the II millennium BC, it is confirmed once again that the age of the city is not less than 3000 years. During excavations, it is possible to trace the history of the city in 3 layers. Upper layer IX-X centuries, the 2nd cultural layer covers the period from the 2nd to the 8th century, the 3rd layer covers the period from the 7th century before our era to the 3rd century of our era"(2,66).

Remains of houses, ovens, fireplaces, and wells were discovered under the ruins of Barda, where ancient Albanian tribes lived, along with samples of crafts from different periods. During the excavations, archaeologists also found traces of the occupation of Barda by the Russians in 943. Coins belonging to Mesopotamian, Greek and Parthian cultures were also found in Barda. This indicates the existence of extensive trade relations of the ancient city in the territory of Azerbaijan at that time.

According to historical sources, Barda was the second capital of Azerbaijan (Caucasus Albania) after the city of Gabala. Here is how that has happened. Iranian Sassanids, who invaded Azerbaijan in the 5th century, were looking for a new residence in Caucasian Albania for their successors. The residence they sought had to be in a secure location, on the central trade routes through the South Caucasus, and in a relatively convenient location for the necessary communications with Iran. Since the city of Barda met all these requirements, as we have shown above, the Sassanids moved the center of the country from Gabala to Barda. After this event, which took place from the beginning of the 5th century, Barda became one of the most magnificent cities not only of Albania, but also of the Sasanian Empire as a whole.

According to the sources, in the VII-IX centuries, the width and length of the city of Barda was 5-6 km, and magnificent fortress walls were built around it. These castle walls with large iron gates were

so magnificent that during serious threats, not only the city's own population, but also the population of the entire surrounding area took refuge here to protect themselves from the enemy. At that time, more than 100 thousand people lived in Barda. The city had 4 large bazaars, special craft districts, several baths and many religious and public buildings built in the style of Eastern architecture. Historical facts show that the most prosperous period of Barda was the 9th-12th centuries. During this period, Barda became not only the administrative and religious center of Azerbaijan, but also the economic center of the entire Azerbaijan during this period. Located on the West-East and North-South trade routes, Barda was called the hub of Eastern trade in the middle Ages. We should note that the city of Barda has changed its location several times due to a number of reasons. One reason for this is the torrential floods of the Tartar River, and the other reason is foreign raids. As a result of serious scientific research, it was determined that Barda came to its current location after the 12th-13th centuries. Previously, it was a little to the west. Currently, there are only two above-ground monuments in the city of Barda. One of them is a monument called Nushaba Tower, sometimes called Nushaba Castle among the local population. Based on the research conducted by H.A. Mammadzadeh, he came to the following conclusion: "The ancient city of Barda is located approximately 5 kilometers away from its current territory. According to historical sources, this city, which developed from the 4th-5th centuries BC, was one of the largest cities in the Caucasus 1500 years ago, and later it was considered a large settlement of the Albanian state in the territory of Azerbaijan. The Albanian province of Uti, whose center is Barda, was the historical territory of Azerbaijan. This is both in writing and archaeological sources also prove. Researches show that life in the Shortepa archaeological complex, the former site of the ancient city of Barda, began in Balatep since the Bronze Age and continued in the Shortepa monument itself in ancient times. It should be noted that there are mounds nearby, one large and the others small. In a word, the Shortep monument is the ancient Barda itself. This is one of the ancient cities of Azerbaijan. During the early Middle Ages, that city location was further developed, but due to the processes taking place in the country in the VI-VII centuries, it moved to Toprakgala, the current city center" (3,22).

It gives reason to say that the urban culture was formed in Barda from the end of the Middle Bronze Age, based on it, a magnificent city place with defensive walls was formed in Shortepa, and then the city life continued in the Toprakgala area of Barda, which is one of the most important cities in the Caucasus as a whole.

In 1913, Robert Hoyland, the head of Oxford University's Nizami Ganjavi Scientific Center for Azerbaijan and Caucasian Studies, a professor at Oxford and New York universities, came to Azerbaijan in 1913 and thought that it was necessary to conduct archaeological excavations here, and together with Azerbaijani archaeologists, he prepared an archaeological research project. The Nizami Ganjavi Center, which was created in the structure of Oxford University, one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in the world, for the purpose of studying the history, languages and cultures of Azerbaijan, the Caucasus and Central Asia, has done commendable work in recognizing Azerbaijan as it is in the world. Some fragments of material and cultural samples discovered during the archaeological excavations in Barda in March 2018 and April 2019 were sent to Oxford University for scientific and laboratory research. A settlement dating back to the 5th-6th centuries was discovered in the area called Garatepe of Barda region.



## CONCLUSION

Barda existed from the ancient Roman period to the Islamic period and was a very important city of the state. Western scientists know this state as Caucasian Albania. Two interesting results investigated so far during the archaeological excavations in Barda were particularly memorable for Robert Hoyland. One of them belongs to the twelfth century, when Nizami Ganjavi lived. Until then, people thought that Barda was not so developed during this period. However, the results of the research brought the researchers closer to the period when Barda was the capital city of Caucasian Albania, and work in this direction is currently being continued. One of the issues that hinder excavations in the city is the presence of new buildings in that area and the use of vehicles in those areas. Therefore, only certain areas are selected for excavations. Research results in the selected areas show that the material culture of the city of Barda is based on ancient and rich foundations. The material culture shown in the sources, studied through archaeological excavations and studied ethnographically provides the study of an important area of the general history of the city. Thus, the research shows the Barda city as a reflection of the development process, created and formed on the ancient material culture, which underwent a certain development during the ancient, early and advanced Middle Ages, the important features of the urban culture - the culture of urban planning, the standard of living of the urban population, the emergence and expansion of art forms, art and culture in a connected manner. (1,166-167). Archaeological research gives full reason to say that Karabakh was a part of Caucasian Albania during antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

## LITERATURE

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