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Armenian Vandalism Against Turkish-Islamic Monuments in the City of Irevan

Abstract

The presented study examines the Turkic-Islamic architectural monuments, especially mosques, that existed in the city of Yerevan, one of the important historical and cultural centers of Western Azerbaijan, now called "Armenia", and their historical fate. The cited historical sources and research works once again show that the city of Yerevan has been one of the important residential and cultural centers of the Azerbaijani Turks since ancient times. The rich material and cultural heritage formed in this city reflects the history, religious life and architectural traditions of the Azerbaijani people. An important part of that heritage is made up of architectural monuments related to the Islamic religion, especially mosques. The article provides extensive information about the history of the establishment of mosques that existed in the city of Yerevan, their architectural features and their role in the social and cultural life of the city.

Based on archival documents and scientific research, it is determined that hundreds of mosques operated in the city of Yerevan and the territory of the Yerevan province as a whole at the beginning of the 20th century. The book "Monuments destroyed, Armenianized or attributed to other peoples in Western Azerbaijan (present-day Armenia)" published by Afgan Valiyev in 2023 provides information on 144 monuments, including mosques, that existed in the lands of Western Azerbaijan in various historical periods, especially after the last deportation in 1987-1991. Armenians, who were resettled and settled in the lands of Azerbaijan with the help of Tsarist Russia, ignored the rights of the local population and appropriated or destroyed the historical and cultural heritage created here over the centuries.

In writing the article, complex and multifaceted methodological approaches based on historical facts - historical-analytical, comparative analysis methods - were used, the reliability, objectivity and origin of the information used were assessed using a source analysis approach, the available information was interpreted using a qualitative research method, and the political, cultural and ideological reasons for the acts of vandalism were explained.

The research concludes that the mosques that existed in Yerevan are not only places of religious worship, but also important examples of material and cultural heritage reflecting the history, culture, and architectural traditions of the Azerbaijani people. Studying the history of these monuments and their scientific research is of great importance in terms of a more complete study of the historical and cultural heritage of the region.

Keywords: *Iravan Mosques, Modern "Armenia", Ancient Turkic-Oghuz homeland, Western Azerbaijan, Cultural heritage, Armenian vandalism, Blue Mosque*

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İrəvan şəhərində türk-islam abidələrinə qarşı erməni vandalizmi

Xülasə

Təqdim olunmuş araşdırmada indi "Ermənistan" adlandırılan Qərbi Azərbaycanın mühüm tarixi-mədəni mərkəzlərindən biri olan İrəvan şəhərində mövcud olmuş Türk-İslam memarlıq abidələri, xüsusilə məscidlər və onların tarixi taleyi araşdırılmışdır. İstinad edilmiş tarixi mənbələr, tədqiqat əsərləri bir daha onu göstərir ki, İrəvan şəhəri qədim dövrlərdən etibarən Azərbaycan türklərinin mühüm yaşayış və mədəniyyət mərkəzlərindən biri olmuşdur. Bu şəhərdə formalaşmış zəngin maddi-mədəni irs Azərbaycan xalqının tarixini, dini həyatını və memarlıq ənənələrini özündə əks etdirir. Həmin irsin mühüm hissəsini İslam dini ilə bağlı memarlıq abidələri, xüsusilə məscidlər təşkil etmişdir. Məqalədə İrəvan şəhərində mövcud olmuş məscidlərin yaranma tarixi, memarlıq xüsusiyyətləri və şəhərin ictimai-mədəni həyatındakı rolu haqqında geniş məlumat verilmişdir.

Arxiv sənədləri və elmi araşdırmalar əsasında müəyyən edilir ki, XX əsrin əvvəllərində İrəvan şəhərində, bütövlükdə isə İrəvan quberniyasının ərazisində yüzlərlə məscid fəaliyyət göstərmişdir. Əfqan Vəliyevin 2023-cü ildə nəşr etdiyi "Qərbi Azərbaycanda (indiki Ermənistanda) dağıdılmış, erməniləşdirilmiş və ya digər xalqlara aid edilmiş abidələr" kitabında Qərbi Azərbaycan torpaqlarında müxtəlif tarixi dövrlərdə, xüsusən də 1987-1991-ci illərdəki son deportasiyadan sonra mövcud olan məscidlər də daxil olmaqla 144 abidə haqqında məlumat verilir. Çar Rusiyasının köməyi ilə Azərbaycan torpaqlarına köçürülən və yerləşdirilən ermənilər yerli əhalinin hüquqlarını görməzdən gəlmiş, əsrlər boyu burada yaradılmış tarixi və mədəni irsi mənimsəmiş və ya məhv etmişlər.

Məqalənin yazılmasında tarixi faktlara əsaslanan mürəkkəb və çoxşaxəli metodoloji yanaşmalardan-tarixi-analitik metoddan, müqayisəli təhlil metodundan istifadə edilmiş, istifadə olunan məlumatların etibarlılığı, obyektivliyi və mənsəyi mənbə təhlili yanaşması ilə

qiymətləndirilmiş, mövcud məlumatlar keyfiyyət tədqiqat metodu ilə şərh edilmiş və vandalizm aktlarının siyasi, mədəni və ideoloji səbəbləri izah edilmişdir.

Tədqiqat nəticəsində belə qənaətə gəlinir ki, İrəvanda mövcud olmuş məscidlər yalnız dini ibadət məkanları deyil, həm də Azərbaycan xalqının tarixini, mədəniyyətini və memarlıq ənənələrini əks etdirən mühüm maddi-mədəni irs nümunələridir. Bu abidələrin tarixinin öyrənilməsi və onların elmi əsaslarla tədqiqi regionun tarixi-mədəni irsinin daha dolğun şəkildə araşdırılması baxımından böyük əhəmiyyət kəsb edir.

Açar sözlər: *İrəvan məscidləri, Müasir "Ermənistan", Qədim türk-oğuz yurdu, Qərbi Azərbaycan, Mədəni irs, Erməni vandalizmi, Göy məscid*

"Unfortunately, the day after the establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1918, the city of Yerevan was given to the Armenians. But there was no reason for that. Yerevan is an ancient Azerbaijani city, the Azerbaijani people have lived there since ancient times, and the now disappearing historical appearance of Yerevan confirms the centuries-old existence of this Azerbaijani architectural monument. Yerevan is one of those cities that does not have an "old town" at all. Simply because there was an Azerbaijani city there and it was demolished".

"...The current state of Armenia was formed on the historical land of Azerbaijan. The city of Yerevan was gifted to Armenia by the leadership of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1918. This was, to put it mildly, a big mistake. When the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was established in 1918, it ceded the city of Yerevan to Armenia. The Iravan Khanate is an ancient land of Azerbaijan. "I want to say once again that Armenians came to this region as guests".

Ilham Aliyev
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Introduction

The city of Iravan, the central city of an artificial state called Western Azerbaijan, or present-day "Armenia", which is part of the whole of Azerbaijan, was a Turkic-Oghuz homeland from the times before our era until the end of the 20th century. Despite the fact that it was given as a gift to the Armenians settled here in the beginning of the 20th century to be declared the capital, even today, every inch of this land still bears the traces of our ancestors.

As we mentioned, the city of Yerevan has historically been one of the oldest settlements of Azerbaijani Turks. However, at the beginning of the 19th century, Armenians who were resettled by Tsarist Russia from the territories of the Qajar and Ottoman states were settled in a number of our territories, including the territory of the Iravan governorate. Shortly thereafter, at the beginning of the 20th century (in 1918), the independent Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, which emerged in the South Caucasus after the fall of the Russian Empire, made the wrong decision and gave the city of Yerevan to the Armenians who had settled in our lands to declare it their capital.

The city of Yerevan is rich in historical monuments reflecting the presence of its ancient inhabitants - Azerbaijanis - on every inch of its land. The city of Yerevan has a very rich historical past, being one of the oldest cultural centers of Western Azerbaijan, now called "Armenia". Thus, the history of this ancient Turkic-Oghuz homeland dates back to before the 8th century BC. Azerbaijanis, the indigenous people of this ancient land, have left behind a rich cultural and historical heritage that they have created over millennia. One of such rich cultural monuments is Islamic religious monuments. Both the Albanian-Christian temples, which are examples of pre-Islamic culture, and the historical and cultural monuments of the Islamic era, as well as the rich cultural heritage created here over millennia and included in the world's cultural treasury, prove that this area is historically one of the oldest regions of Azerbaijan. Although Islam was once the dominant religion here, unfortunately, today there are no traces left of those who worshiped this religion, they were displaced from their homes by Armenians in stages. In Western Azerbaijan (modern Armenia), the majority of those who

practice Islam are Kurds, numbering about 2,000, who live mainly in the Ellar (present-day Abovyan) region.

Mosques occupy a special place among the historical monuments in this ancient city of Azerbaijan. However, it should be noted with regret that throughout the territory of Western Azerbaijan, all place names belonging to the local Azerbaijani population have been changed, our monuments have been destroyed, and not only our people, but also our monuments have been subjected to genocide in the truest sense of the word. Thus, out of the dozens of mosques that existed in this city alone at the beginning of the 20th century, none (Gala Mosque, Zal Khan Mosque, Haji Bey Mosque, Günlüklü Mosque, Günbezi Mosque, Shehar Mosque, Novruzali Mosque, Hüseynali Mosque, etc.) except for the Blue Mosque, have survived to this day. Armenian sources also acknowledge that the 8 mosques we mentioned in Yerevan city existed at the beginning of the 20th century, and of these, only the Blue Mosque, built in 1765 by the Khan of Yerevan, Hüseynali Khan, has survived. As we will note below, the Blue Mosque is presented to the whole world as a Persian mosque. Even Armenian sources claim that during the mass demolition of religious buildings during the Soviet era, the Blue Mosque was preserved thanks to the efforts of a number of Armenian intellectuals, including Yeghishe Charentsi, who opposed the government's plan and did their best to preserve the mosque.

This article discusses the atrocities committed by Armenians against Turkic-Islamic monuments - mosques - belonging to the Azerbaijani people in the city of Yerevan.

After the wars waged by Tsarist Russia with the Qajar and Ottoman states at the beginning of the 19th century, the Armenians who settled in the ancient lands of Azerbaijan first strengthened their positions and then began to implement a policy of oppression against the local Turkic-Muslim peoples on whose lands they settled. Following this, they replaced the policy of repression with a policy of genocide from the beginning of the 20th century. Thus, the massacres, genocides, and deportations that Armenians carried out step by step against Azerbaijani Turks throughout the 20th century have left deep, indelible marks in the memory of our people. One issue that should be specially noted is that the Armenians committed genocide, in the truest sense of the word, not only against our people, but also against the national-spiritual, historical-cultural monuments that this people have built and created on the lands of Azerbaijan for millennia. The hated Armenians set themselves the goal of destroying the local Turkish-Muslim population not only physically, but also morally. Although Islam was once the dominant religion in Western Azerbaijan, there are currently neither adherents of this religion nor monuments associated with it. It is precisely as a result of the policy pursued by the Armenians that in the territory of Western Azerbaijan (present-day Armenia- A. M.), which has a rich culture, there is almost no trace left of the palaces, caravanserais, mosques, cemeteries, tombstones, etc., which are relics of this great and inexhaustible culture.

During the last wave of the Armenian genocide and deportation policy against our people at the end of the 20th century, not only were more than 250,000 Azerbaijanis who had lived here for centuries expelled from their historical and ethnic lands, but the historical and architectural monuments belonging to our people were also completely erased from the face of the earth.

The borders of Armenian vandalism did not only cover the territory of Western Azerbaijan. The barbaric Armenians, who occupied the then "Nagorno-Karabakh" and the surrounding regions and held them under occupation for thirty years, with the help of their patrons, completely destroyed the cities and villages located there, our historical monuments, cemeteries, bridges, hearths, shrines, sanctuaries, in short, everything. Not a single example of our material and cultural heritage remains in the occupied lands of Azerbaijan; they have been razed to the ground or pigs have been kept in our mosques.

By committing genocide against Azerbaijani Turks, Armenians were trying to change the demographic situation of the Caucasus to their advantage, and by destroying our historical and cultural monuments, they were trying to prove that they were the indigenous people and that Azerbaijanis came to the Caucasus later. In addition to changing the demographic situation in the territories they occupied in their favor, the Armenians began the Armenianization of these territories.

Throughout Azerbaijan, especially in the Iravan province, Islamic material and cultural monuments were subjected to genocide, Turkish toponyms were changed, and ancient Albanian monuments were given Armenian names.

Our national, spiritual, historical and cultural monuments in every part of Azerbaijan - in Baku, Shamakhi, Guba, Lankaran, Ganja, Nakhchivan, Yerevan, Zangezur, Vedibasars, etc. - have literally become victims of Armenian vandalism.

One of the areas where our historical monuments have been subjected to Armenian vandalism is the city of Yerevan, an ancient land of Azerbaijan and currently the central city of the so-called state called "Armenia". The city of Yerevan, which has been one of the central cities of various emirates, principalities, and khanates from time to time, has been one of the important trading centers not only of the South Caucasus, but also of the Near and Middle East. Because this city is located at the crossroads of international trade routes, our people have created a rich culture here for millennia. In the city of Yerevan, which was once rich in countless historical and architectural monuments, mosques, caravanserais, cemeteries, tombstones, etc., today, with the exception of the Blue Mosque, there is not a single monument belonging to Azerbaijani Turks left. Travelers and geographers who have traveled to the region have provided extensive information about these historical and architectural monuments in their works. As historian-scholar Nazim Mustafa noted, Armenian vandals, who aimed to change the historical face of the Turkic-Islamic city of Yerevan and turn it into a city belonging to Armenians, razed Yerevan's famous mosques, especially the Khan's Palace (Mustafa (2016): 6). Considering that the scope of the topic addressed is very broad, in this scientific article we will try to provide information only about the mosques that existed in the city of Yerevan.

Main part

According to information from the not-so-distant past, namely the beginning of the 20th century, we know that there were a total of 310 mosques in the territory of the Yerevan province (Agamoghlanov, 2025, pp. 234-239). As a result of the research conducted, it was determined that at the beginning of the 20th century, that is, until 1912, there were 42 mosques operating in the Iravan region, 33 in the Uchkilsa region, and 35 in the Zangezur region. This is also proven by the "Memory Book of the Yerevan Governorate for 1902", published in 1902 by the Yerevan Governorate Statistical Committee. The booklet indicates that 7 of those 310 mosques are in the city of Yerevan (Mustafa, 2016, p. 13).

Studies conducted by researchers Aziz Alakbarli and Afgan Valiyev also show that the number of mosques in Western Azerbaijan has increased significantly since 1915 (Alakbarli, Valiyev, 2021, pp. 32-33). This can be explained by the fact that during the First World War, Azerbaijanis were forced to leave their native lands as a result of the genocide committed by Armenians and flee to various regions of Azerbaijan, only to return after the war ended.

Russian sources also note that in Western Azerbaijan (now Armenia), in the city of Yerevan, only one functioning Muslim shrine, that is, a mosque, remains, located on Mesrop Mashtots Avenue, and that it is the Blue Mosque, which was restored with financial support from Iran. It is also indicated that other historical mosques of the city (up to eight mosques are mentioned in the fortress) were destroyed during the Soviet period. Researcher Nazim Mustafa, citing George A. Burnutyanyan, a leading scholar on the modern history of Eastern Armenia and Transcaucasia, South Asia, Central Asia, Russia, Australia, and South America, notes that the presence of two Armenian churches and 15 Muslim mosques in Yerevan in itself proves that this city is a Muslim city (Mustafa, Nazim, 2024, pp. 2361-2372).

The German-born Austrian historian Markus Ritter addressed the issue of interest to us in his article "The Lost Mosque(s) in the Qajar-era Iravan Fortress: Architecture and Identity, Iran and Local Traditions in the Early 19th Century" (Ritter, 2009, pp. 239-279). In his article, he discusses the fact that the mosques located in the Citadel of Yerevan have not survived to this day and are therefore little known in the scientific literature.

In her article "The Poetics and Politics of Urban Landscape: Yerevan's Blue Mosque," Chipilma Darieva notes that during the Soviet era, the mosque was used more as a cultural object than as a

religious space. In modern times, the mosque is presented as a symbol of Iranian-Armenian cultural relations and Islamic heritage. The author notes that the Gok Cami or Blue Mosque, built in the second half of the 18th century by order of the then city governor Sardar Huseyn Ali Khan, is today called the Persian Mosque by the city's residents. The mosque is perceived by the city administration and residents as a political symbol of Iranian-Armenian friendship, which strengthened during the years of Armenia's independence (Darieva, Tsypylma, 2013, pp. 110-128). The author notes that the mosque used to have three entrances (south, north and west). Until 1930, only one of these entrances was open. The southern gate, which faced the minaret and served as the main entrance to the mosque, was closed during the anti-religious campaign, leaving only the opposite northern entrance open. Having lost its original meaning and functionality as a religious place, the Blue Mosque was transformed into an educationally oriented secular institution. From 1935 to 1991, the building of the former cathedral mosque, whose doors symbolically face north, was used as the Yerevan Museum of Atheism, later the Natural History Museum and the Yerevan History Museum. In the late 1990s, the city's residents witnessed a new stage of contextualization. After a thorough restoration of the space, the Blue Mosque was renamed the Persian Mosque. In 1995, Iranian construction companies, together with Armenian architects, restored the dome, and the right to officially use the building as a mosque and cultural center was transferred to the Cultural Representation of the Republic of Iran. The process of restoring the mosque and handing it over to representatives of the southern neighboring country took place at a time when the Karabakh war was still ongoing. At that time, Iran continuously provided Armenia with significant strategic assistance in the form of energy and food supplies.

In general, there is no trace left of the hundreds of monuments that once existed throughout the Yerevan province, including our magnificent monuments such as the Khan's Palace and the Sardar (Abbas Mirza) Mosque in Yerevan. Such historical monuments were completely destroyed and wiped off the face of the earth, both in 1918-1920 and after the establishment of Soviet power in "Armenia". As we mentioned above, the only surviving monument of Turkic-Islamic architecture in the territory of Western Azerbaijan, now called "Armenia", is the Blue Mosque, which Armenians present to the world as a "Persian" monument. However, it is clear to everyone, including Persians and Armenians, that this monument has nothing to do with the Persians and is a historical monument belonging solely to Azerbaijanis. If we look at the history of the monuments existing in Western Azerbaijan and the inscriptions on them, it becomes clear that they truly belong to the Azerbaijani Turks. The Blue Mosque of Yerevan, built in 1765 during the Safavid period, is one of the most beautiful examples of mosques built in this style in Tabriz, Turkey, and Afghanistan, and is also known as the "Caame" Mosque of Yerevan (Saeed Joshgani, Muhammad Kazem Hasanvand, Muhammad Arif, 2024, pp. 35-46).

One of such monuments, as we have mentioned, is the Blue Mosque. Information about the Blue Mosque can be found in the works of all travelers and researchers who have visited Yerevan. For example, the French archaeologist Frederick Dubois de Montperre, who was in the Caucasus in 1833, provided extensive information about the Blue Mosque in his work "Travel Around the Caucasus", published in Paris in 1839 (Mustafa, 2016, p. 10).

Henry Bloss Lynch, who visited Yerevan and the Ottoman Empire in 1893 and 1898 and wrote a two-volume book about his travels, published in 1901, wrote in his book dedicated to Yerevan, "Armenia: Travels and Studies," that there was nothing particularly remarkable about the architecture of the mosque. However, the floral paintings that decorated the ceiling of a mosque and a small building on the northern side of the courtyard are of great value (Lynch, 1901). Armenia: Travels and Studies. Volume I). It should also be noted that the 13th chapter of the 2nd volume of the work "Armenia: Travels and Studies" written by the British traveler Henry Finnis Bloss Lynch, who traveled to Eastern and Northeastern Anatolia twice in 1894 and 1898, about his trip to the Ottoman Empire, is called "From Hınıs to Tutak" and this part was translated into Turkish by Murat Yılmaz (Yılmaz, Murat, 2023, pp. 109-121). It is worth mentioning one more thing, which is the issue of Lynch's ethnic identity. Lynch was a British traveler and traveller of Armenian origin. His maternal grandfather, Robert Taylor, was a 20-year-old ensign of the British East India Company who was

sent to the Qajar state in the 1790s with the 12-year-old Rosa, the daughter of an Armenian merchant from the village of Shiraz. One of his daughters, Caroline, married Henry Bloss Lynch, a lieutenant in the East India Company's fleet. In 1841, Lynch and his two brothers founded the company "Lynch Brothers", which exported goods from Great Britain to Mesopotamia. One of them, Thomas, a classical scholar at Trinity College, Dublin, married Caroline's sister Harriet, who became the mother of H. F. B. Lynch, while his other brother, Stephen, married the daughter of another Armenian merchant (Vartan Matiossian, 2013).

Italian diplomat and historian Luigi Villari also gave a detailed description of the mosque in his book "Fire and Sword in the Caucasus" published in 1906 and noted that "the great mosque called the Blue Mosque is more of a long quadrangle than a mosque, containing several places of worship and a number of cells, schools and offices of the Muslim religious administration. It is not very ancient, but it is beautiful. The Encyclopedia Britannica published in 1911 described the Blue Mosque as the most beautiful building in the city of Yerevan (Lynch, 1901). Armenia: Travels and Studies. Volume II). He noted that the mosque's 24-meter (79 ft) high minaret was the tallest building in 19th-century Yerevan.

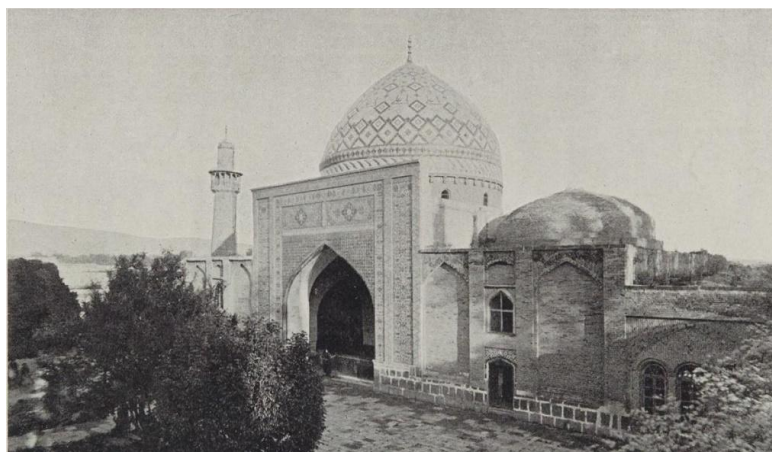
In his article "Historical and Architectural Features of the Blue Mosque in Yerevan", Fazil Humbatli notes that the Blue Mosque, one of the most remarkable and historically significant monuments of the South Caucasus, built between 1760 and 1765 during the reign of Huseyn Ali Khan, played an important role in the cultural and religious identity of the Muslim population of Yerevan in the 18th and 19th centuries and served as a central religious, educational and social institution for the Muslim community. The author writes that despite the periods of functional changes during the Russian and Soviet rule, the mosque was restored and continues to serve as both a place of worship and a cultural landmark. Unfortunately, however, the author presents the Qajar state of Turkish origin as the "Persian Qajar dynasty", and the Blue Mosque, which belongs to our people, as an example of Persian Islamic architecture (Humbatli, 2025, pp. 83-86).

One of the visitors to the Blue Mosque was the German traveler August von Hackhausen. To prove that Yerevan belongs to Armenians, Armenians cite the name of an Armenian named Khachatur Abovyan, along with the German traveler, and write that the German traveler August von Hackhausen, who visited the Blue Mosque accompanied by Khachatur Abovyan, described the history and interior decoration of the mosque in sufficient detail and called it the most magnificent building he had ever seen in Yerevan (Garabaghly, Rizvan, 2010).

The Blue Mosque complex covers an area of 7,000 square meters, including a 71x47 meter courtyard, a ritual building, a dome, and a minaret covered with decorative majolica tiles. The minaret on the southeast side of the mosque is 24 meters high and is the only one of the mosque's four original minarets that remains today. The other three were demolished by Armenians after World War II. The Blue Mosque complex has 28 pavilions. The northern section houses the library, while the southern section houses the main hall and dome, as well as the courtyard.

The Blue Mosque is considered one of the rare examples of oriental architecture. The mosque was built in 1766 by the Khan of Yerevan, Huseyn Ali Khan Qajar. This mosque was one of seven mosques operating in Yerevan at the beginning of the 20th century. According to sources, the mosque was built between 1760 and 1765. It is called the Blue Mosque because the dome of the mosque is covered with blue tiles. The mosque was thoroughly renovated with tiles during the Russian rule, around 1887-1888 (1305 AH). Later, restoration and repair work was carried out on the mosque between 1907 and 1910. The mosque is the most magnificent architectural monument in Yerevan, both in terms of beauty and scale. It is the largest of the eight mosques in the city of Yerevan in the 19th century and the only active mosque in Armenia today.

Blue Mosque (or Huseynali Khan Mosque)



It should also be noted that, according to the results of the cameral census conducted after Yerevan was occupied by Russia, six of the eight mosques in Yerevan were in the city and two were in the citadel. These mosques are: Tepebashi Mosque, Shahar Mosque (Zal Khan Mosque), Sartib Khan Mosque, Goy Mosque (Huseynali Khan Mosque), Haji Novruzali Bey Mosque, Gala Mosque (Sardar Mosque or Abbas Mirza Mosque), Demirbulag Mosque, Haji Jafar Bey (Mustafa, Nazim, 2025, p. 8)

The cameral census was conducted by the French traveler and ethnographer I. Chopin. He came to Russia in 1870 and worked in the Caucasus Viceroyalty. After the Edirne Peace Treaty, that is, in 1829-1832, he was engaged in researching the history and geography of the Caucasus. Although I. Chopin stated that there were several other mosques that were partially destroyed in the city of Yerevan, he did not disclose their names. In general, historian-scientist Nazim Mustafa states that there were 10 mosques in the city of Yerevan alone before the establishment of Soviet power in Armenia (Mustafa, 2016, p. 15).

Until the beginning of the 20th century (1906-1911), all of these mosques remained intact. Even a document from 1949, kept in the State Archives of the Republic of Azerbaijan, reflects the existence of 15 architectural monuments belonging to Azerbaijanis in Armenia, as well as 4 mosques in the city of Yerevan. A document kept in the State Archives states that the city mosque (Zal Khan Mosque) was built in 1649-85, the Blue Mosque (Huseynali Khan Mosque) in 1776 (In 1179 AH), the Sardar Mosque (Qala or Abbas Mirza Mosque) in 1807-17, and the Haji Jafar Bey Mosque in the 18th century (Mustafa, 2016, p. 16). This means that shortly after the Armenian government achieved the adoption of the decision of the USSR Council of Ministers, which provided for the deportation of Azerbaijanis from their homeland, covering the years 1948-1953, it began to take "measures" against our historical and architectural monuments, achieving the destruction of four of the existing mosques.

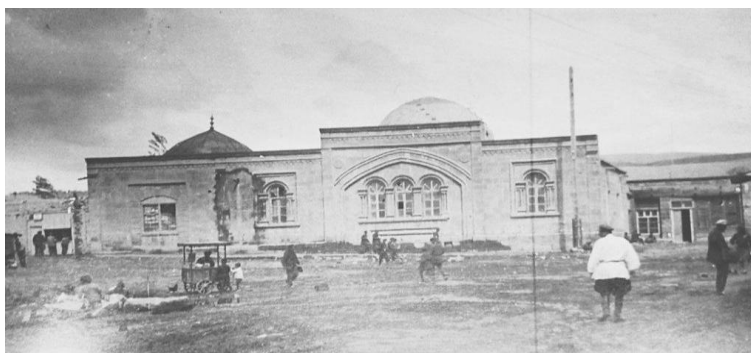
During the Soviet era, the mosque was converted into a museum. In 1931, the Yerevan Museum of History and Natural Sciences was opened inside the mosque complex, displaying rare collections of prominent Soviet archaeologists (Ali Mozaffari, Ali Akbar, 2024, pp. 1393-1422). It would be naive to think that the reason the Blue Mosque has not survived to this day and has not been destroyed is because of the "love" of Armenians for our people. It should be emphasized once again that the reason why this Turkic-Islamic monument - the Blue Mosque - has survived to this day stems from the necessity of the Armenian government to establish diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 1995, an agreement was signed between the governments of Armenia and Iran on the reconstruction and restoration of the mosque. In 1995-1997, the prayer hall and 24 rooms arranged along the courtyard were restored. In 2011, the World Heritage Committee announced that the Blue Mosque would be included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The current appearance of the Blue Mosque, which was presented as a Persian mosque:



One of the mosques operating in Yerevan until the end of the 20th century, or more precisely, until 1988, was the Demirbulag Mosque. Another name of the mosque is Çetrlı mosque. The main reason for this name is that the upper part of the railing, which is surrounded by iron bars on all sides, is covered with an iron layer. The mosque, built in 1909, was burned down by Armenians on February 23, 1988, and completely destroyed in 1990 (Mustafa, 2024, p. 8).

Demirbulag Mosque



It should be noted that the Çetirli mosque was one of the 3 mosques that existed in the Demirbulag massif (Haji Novruzali bey mosque, Haji Jafar bey mosque and Demirbulag mosque). The Haji Novruzali Bey and Haji Jafar Bey mosques were destroyed by Armenians in 1930 when the master plan of the city of Yerevan was being prepared. It is known that the Demirbulag Mosque was built in 1307 AH, that is, in 1909, by Haji Muzaffar Agha. Demirbulag Mosque is also called Korpugulagi Mosque because it is located near the red stone bridge over Geder River, a branch of Zangi River (Mustafa, Nazim, 2023). The name of the Demirbulag mosque is indicated as Korpüqulag in the source of 1856. Aziz Alakbarli, in his work “Monuments of Western Azerbaijan” (Baku, Nurlan, 2007), referring to Qevond Alishan’s work “Ayrarat,” wrote that this mosque was also mentioned as “Qirkhbulag Mosque”.

A map of the years 1906-1911 prepared by Boris Mehrabov, a technician of the city of Yerevan, shows information about the presence of 8 mosques in the city and their location. According to this information, the Demirbulag Mosque is located near the Black Market. Later, a statue of A. Griboyedov, who initiated the resettlement of Armenians to Azerbaijani lands, was erected near the mosque. In Armenian sources, the condolence written by Farajov, chairman of the council of Demirbulag mosque, to Etchmiadzin in 1954 on the death of Catholicos of Nornakhichevan, Gevorg VI, proves once again that the mosque continued to function after the Second World War (Mustafa, Nazim, 2020, pp. 237-244).

On April 15, 1991, American researcher Robert Cullen, writing an article about the city of Yerevan in *The New Yorker*, mentioned the Demirbulag Mosque. He noted that this mosque was the only functioning mosque owned by Azerbaijanis. He also mentioned, citing an Armenian friend, that

this mosque was burned by Armenians at the same time as the massacres against Azerbaijanis in Yerevan, and was later blown up and wiped off the face of the earth (Mustafa, 2024, pp. 2361-2372).

In 2000, the British researcher Thomas de Waal, who was on a visit to Yerevan, went to the place mentioned in Robert Küllen's article, i.e. Vardanans Street, he saw with his own eyes the destruction of Demirbulag Mosque and wrote about it. The author indicated that, based on the statements given by the Armenians, they took this step to avenge the Armenian church that was demolished in Baku (Mustafa, Nazim, 2023). But of course, the rumors spread by Armenians about the demolition of the Armenian church in Baku are nothing more than a hoax.

One of the historical-architectural monuments that existed in the territory of Western Azerbaijan is Haji Novruzali bey mosque located in the city part of Yerevan. It is not known exactly which period the mosque belongs to. However, based on the architectural characteristics of the mosque, experts are of the opinion that it belongs to the XIV century (Alekbarli, 2007, p. 236). A. Alekberli indicates that the mosque was built in the second half of the 18th century by a person named Qara Seyid (Alekberli, 2007, p. 238). The mosque was named so because it is located in the Haji Novruzali neighborhood, in the urban part of Yerevan. Like our other historical and architectural monuments, this mosque was a victim of Armenian vandalism at the beginning of the 20th century. Thus, the Haji Novruzali Bey mosque was also demolished in the 20s-30s of the 20th century, when the master plan of the city of Iravan was prepared. The mosque, which was smaller than the Zal Khan Mosque in size, resembled it in appearance.

Haji Novruzali Bey Mosque



The ruins of the mosque with a single minaret remained until the 50s of the 20th century.

One of the oldest mosques in Yerevan is the Shah Abbas Mosque. The mosque was located in the fortress part of Yerevan, near the Sardar Palace. This mosque is also known by various names, such as the Qala Mosque or the Old Mosque, Abbas Mirza, Sardar or Khan Mosque. The mosque was first built by Shah Abbas in 1606, and was rebuilt for the second time in 1810 during the reign of the Iravan Khan Huseyngulu Khan Sardar, and was named after the Qajar prince and ruler of Azerbaijan Abbas Mirza. Most likely, for this reason it was named after Shah Abbas and Mirza Abbas. Aziz Alakbarli notes that the mosque dates back to an earlier period, that is, to the time when Shah Ismail's vizier Ravangulu Khan built the Iravan Citadel. The researcher and scholar shows that. The mosque was built in 1510 by order of Shah Ismail and was restored by the Ottomans in 1589 (Alakbarli, 2007, p. 110).

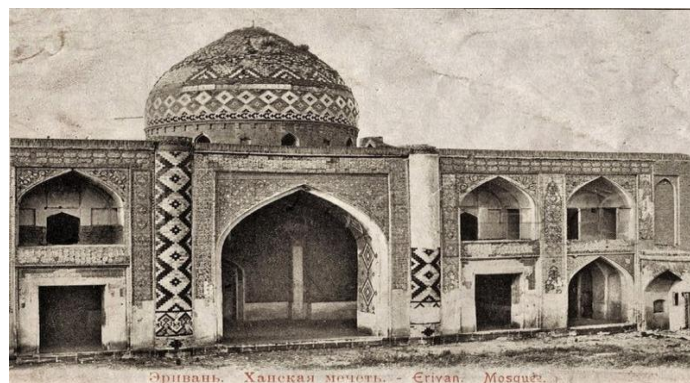
Azerbaijani philosopher and religious scholar Elmir Guliyev notes that in 1604, two years after Shah Abbas recaptured Yerevan from the Turks, he built a cathedral mosque inside the fortress. The mosque is also referred to in sources as the Sardar Mosque, as it is located to the east of the Khan's Palace or the Sardar (ruler) Palace. The author notes that the Shah Abbas Mosque had a large courtyard with an ablution pool (shadirvan) in the center. The mosque's dome and large portal with a magnificent porch were decorated mainly with dark blue ceramic tiles. The interior of the dome was decorated with circular Arabic script, and there was a carpet pattern above the mihrab. Since it closely resembles the Juma Mosque in Ganja, it is believed that its architect was Baha ad-Din al-Amili, a prominent scholar and thinker of his time, who was the sheikh of Islam at the court of Shah Abbas.

In August 1843, the German researcher August Hackshausen, who was in the Gala part of Yerevan, reported that of the two mosques here, the Rajab Pasha Mosque had been turned into a Russian-Greek church, and the Sardar Mosque into an ammunition depot (Aziz Sharif, 1983 pp. 44-47).

Shortly after the German researcher, in 1880, the Russian archaeologist Praskofya Uvarova, who was in Yerevan, witnessed the destruction of the mosques with her own eyes and spoke with heartache about the destruction of historical and architectural monuments (Mustafa, 2016, p. 18).

During the First World War, the mosque became a temporary settlement for Armenian refugees from the Ottoman Empire. In 1918-1920, the Armenians, who carried out a genocidal policy against our people, packed the Azerbaijani population into this mosque and burned it. After the collapse of the Soviet regime in Yerevan, this mosque, like other historical and architectural monuments, was destroyed. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the declaration of Armenia's "independence", the mosque, with only one wall remaining, was later completely wiped off the face of the earth.

Shah Abbas Mosque



One of the mosques in Yerevan is the Rajab Pasha Mosque. According to sources, after the capture of Yerevan by the Ottoman troops in 1724, the Turkish commander Rajab Pasha began to take certain measures in the field of development of the city. One of these measures was the order he gave to build a new mosque in the Gala part of Yerevan in 1725. Therefore, this mosque was named Rajab Pasha Mosque in his honor. Nazim Mustafa notes that this mosque was built after the capture of Yerevan by the Ottoman commander Farhad Pasha in 1583 (Mustafa, 2016, p. 6). After the Russian troops occupied the Yerevan fortress on October 1, 1827, the crescent and star on the mosque were replaced with a cross and a church bell. Later, certain changes were made to its appearance and it was transformed into a church. However, despite these changes, the mosque became a victim of Armenian vandalism in 1930, when the master plan of the city of Yerevan was being prepared.

It should be noted that the French-born Russian artist Franz Roubaud depicted the Rajab Pasha Mosque and the Sardar Mosque near the Khan's Palace in his painting dedicated to the capture of the Iravan Fortress by the Russian army (Mustafa, 2013, pp. 35-37).

Recep Pasha Mosque



The Tepebashi Mosque, believed to have been built in 1867, was built by Abbasgulu Khan Iravanski, a descendant of the Iravan Khans, and is located in the Tepebashi neighborhood of Iravan. Abbasgulu Khan's house was also located in the same neighborhood, and Armenians continue to live in it today, and the house is called "Khan's House." Although the minaret of the mosque was demolished in 1960, its remains remain.

Tepebashi Mosque



One of the mosques located in the ancient Turkic-Oghuz homeland of Yerevan is the Sheher or, in other words, the Zal Khan Mosque. The mosque was located in the Old City, located between the Castle part of Yerevan and the Tepebashi massif. Although it is smaller in size than the Blue Mosque, it attracted attention for being more beautiful. There is information written in Arabic on the mosque that its construction date is 1098 AH (1687 AD). According to researchers, the mosque was rebuilt after the earthquake that occurred in 1679. Its construction is associated with the name of the Yerevan beylerbey Zal Khan. Zal Khan was seriously engaged in the restoration of monuments in Yerevan, and one of the mosques built or restored during his time was called the Zal Khan Mosque. As we have noted, the mosque was also called the Sheher Mosque because it was located in the Sheher part (Mustafa, 2016, p. 34). It is reported that the large hall of the mosque was demolished in 1928.

Zal Khan Mosque



One of the surviving historical and architectural monuments belonging to Azerbaijanis in the territory of today's "Armenia" (unfortunately, the third one no longer exists - A.M.) is the Amir Saad Mausoleum, located in the village of Jafarabad, located on the Yerevan-Uchkilsa road near the city of Yerevan. We thought it was important to provide information about this in the article.

By the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR dated April 4, 1946, the Armenians changed the name of the village to Argavand (Mustafa, Gurbanov, Alili, 2018, pp. 248-256). It is known that this historical and architectural monument was built in 1413 by Pir Huseyn, son of Amir Saad, the emir of the Garagoyunlu state, over the grave of his father. This architectural

monument differs from other monuments in the territory of the Yerevan province. This difference lies in the fact that this monument was built not of brick, but of locally produced tuff stone. The authorities of Yerevan, who describe the Blue Mosque as an Iranian or Persian mosque, also describe this mausoleum as a Turkmen mausoleum due to the diplomatic relations they have established with Turkmenistan.

It should be emphasized once again that the Armenian authorities were forced to preserve these two monuments belonging to Azerbaijanis under the names of “Persian mosque” and “Turkmen mausoleum” not out of “love and affection” for our people, but in order to escape the difficulties they faced, in order to please the Iranian and Turkmen authorities. It was precisely as a result of this that in March 1996, when the President of Turkmenistan, Saparmurat Niyazov, visited Armenia, the President of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, stated that this monument was built by “the Turkmen emir Pir Hussein” and noted that they had preserved it “as a symbol of Turkmen-Armenian friendship.” In return, Armenia received certain concessions from Turkmenistan. Thus, the Amir Saad mausoleum, one of the relics belonging to the Azerbaijani Garagoyunlu state, was included in the list of historical monuments protected by the Armenian government as “a mausoleum belonging to the family of Turkmen emirs” (Mustafa, Nazim, 2018).

Amir Saad Mausoleum



It should be noted that near the Amir Saad Mausoleum there were two other mausoleums, which were relatively smaller in size than this one. This fact was also confirmed by the Armenian historian Akop Papazyan. However, these mausoleums were victims of Armenian vandalism (Jafarli, 2025, pp. 292-300). In 1961, the excavations conducted by the epigrapher-scientist Mashadi Khanum Nemet and the employees of the Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR at the Amir Saad Mausoleum, as well as information provided by the local population (Azerbaijanis - A.M.), revealed that there were two more medieval mausoleums and a large cemetery belonging to Azerbaijanis in the village area, which were destroyed by the Armenian authorities "because they were of no importance".

Finally, it would be appropriate to emphasize one issue in particular. It should not be forgotten that during the Soviet period, both in Azerbaijan and in other allied republics, including the territory of present-day "Armenia", attacks were made against religious figures and Islam as a whole in several directions. Soviet party bodies, trade unions, press workers, cinema workers, journalists, the "Society of the Godless Fighters", and other societies and organizations were involved in this attack. As a result of these attacks, historical and architectural monuments belonging to our people, including Islamic religious monuments, were destroyed. The majority of the members of this Society organized in Azerbaijan were Armenians and Russians. In the struggle of the Bolsheviks against Islam, the closure of Islamic religious monuments - mosques was one of the most important issues they had to

solve. They used various methods to destroy mosques, and the destruction of mosques was the main one among these methods (Hajiyev, 2021, pp. 39-86). The next stage of the campaign to close and destroy mosques began in the 1930s, when the article touched upon the issue of the cessation of the activities of most of the Islamic religious monuments in the city of Yerevan under the pretext of preparing the master plan of the city of Yerevan, and their subsequent destruction.

Result

As a result of the research, it was determined that at the beginning of the 20th century, the territory of the Yerevan province, especially the city of Yerevan, had a rich Turkic-Islamic architectural heritage. Based on existing literature, statistical sources, and research conducted by authors from various countries of the world at different times, it has been determined that at the beginning of the 20th century alone, hundreds of mosques operated in this area, and a certain number of them directly occupied an important place in the urban structure of the city of Yerevan. This fact indicates that Muslim religious and architectural monuments are systematic and widespread in the historical and cultural landscape of the region.

As a result of comparative analysis, it becomes clear that throughout the 20th century, the vast majority of these monuments lost their original function and physical appearance for various reasons. When examining the reasons for this process, it is observed that several main factors influenced it. First of all, political changes, wars and demographic transformations taking place in the region directly affected the fate of the monuments. In particular, the conditions created by the First World War in the international world, the events of 1918–1920 and the changes in the population structure in the subsequent period did not remain without impact on the use and protection of religious and cultural objects.

At the same time, the state policy implemented during the Soviet period also acted as one of the factors that seriously affected the condition of all religious monuments in the republics that were part of the union. The materials of the study show that within the framework of the atheist ideology carried out in the USSR, some of the religious buildings were either destroyed or their functional purpose was changed and used for secular purposes. In this context, the facts of the transformation of mosques in the city of Yerevan into museums, warehouses and other facilities can be assessed as part of a broader Soviet practice.

At the same time, a comparison of various sources used in the study, including works by local, foreign and authors reflecting different positions, shows that approaches to the fate of monuments are not at all unified. While some sources explain these processes in the context of political and ethnic conflicts, other studies focus more on ideological, urbanistic or socio-economic factors. This indicates that the topic is complex and multifaceted, and it is not enough to explain it with only a one-dimensional approach.

The fact that the Blue Mosque, the only one in the city of Yerevan, has been preserved to this day, deserves special attention in the article. The analysis of sources shows that the preservation of this monument and its subsequent restoration were associated with a number of political, diplomatic and cultural factors. The fact that this monument is presented in various contexts in modern times - as a religious, cultural and even geopolitical symbol - indicates that it has undergone functional and semantic transformation. This shows that historical monuments are not only physical objects, but also concepts that change under the influence of political and cultural views.

The facts presented within the framework of the study on specific monuments - for example, Demirbulag, Haji Novruzali Bey, Shah Abbas (Sardar), Rajab Pasha and other mosques - show that some of them were destroyed at different stages of the 20th century. However, taking into account not only one factor, but the interaction of various historical conditions - political decisions, urban planning processes, ideological campaigns and regional conflicts - in explaining the causes of these events allows for more objective results.

Additionally, it should be emphasized that the fate of other examples of Turkic-Islamic heritage that existed in Yerevan, including mausoleums and cemeteries, is characterized by similar trends.

This indicates the need to examine the issue of preserving historical and cultural heritage in general not only locally, but also within a broader regional and political context.

Thus, the results of the conducted research show that the Turkic-Islamic architectural heritage that existed in the city of Yerevan and in the territory of the former Yerevan province in general has been subjected to serious destruction during the 20th century. This destruction has manifested itself in the form of both physical and functional changes. In order to investigate the topic more deeply and objectively, it is considered appropriate to apply wider archival materials, international sources and multidisciplinary approaches in future research.

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