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# KARABAKH CARPETS OF AZERBAIJAN

**T**he period from the end of the 17th to the beginning of the 20th centuries in Azerbaijan was marked by the flourishing of folk weaving. In the 18th century, at the time of feudal fragmentation, when separate khanates arose, local centers of carpet weaving and folk rather than palace weaving began to develop more intensively. It was at this time that the most ancient layers of archetypes of ethnic subconsciousness manifested themselves with renewed vigor in the minds of the people, which in a sense can be regarded as the beginning of a return to the traditions of distant ancestors, although, in fact, this connection was never broken.

The Azerbaijani carpet is distinguished by a variety of types and subtypes. The typological richness of the Azerbaijani carpet, along with historical and ethnocultural factors, is associated with the unique diversity of natural and climatic conditions, which also contributed to the development of carpet weaving. The color and varied, intricate color-rhythmic structures of the Azerbaijani carpet are largely due to the perception of the surrounding nature through the prism of centuries-old information codes of artistic thinking.

Over the course of many centuries of the development of carpet weaving in Azerbaijan, stable centers of carpet weaving have been formed, the emergence and development of which is primarily due to the availability of a raw material base - sheep breeding. There are three carpet production areas in the region. The first one - along the southeastern slopes





of the Greater Caucasus towards the Caspian Sea and south, towards the Shirvan lowland; the second - in the Lesser Caucasus zone extending to the banks of the Aras in the south and to Kafan in the northwestern direction. Both of these massifs are mainly located on the territory of the modern Republic of Azerbaijan, and their formation follows from natural geographic conditions. The third massif of carpet weaving was historically formed in South Azerbaijan in the Talish Mountains zone with access to the Ardabil and Sarab intermountain hollows and further to Tabriz.

These centers, where the carpet weaving of Azerbaijan was historically formed, developed and functions nowadays, were a place of cattle-breeders' migrations. The main centers at the turn of the 19th-20th centuries were Karabakh, Guba, Shirvan, Baku, Ganja, Gazakh, Tabriz and Ardabil, where the main types of the Azerbaijani carpet were formed. Each of these centers, in turn, consists of several large production hubs, which also have their own specific carpet production points. Each center, hub and even point is distinguished by the originality of the technical and artistic features of carpet production,

which provides a variety of color, ornamental and compositional solutions, which give originality to the Azerbaijani carpet, creating numerous variations of traditional compositions.

The formation of carpet weaving production centers shows that their emergence, development and sustainability practically did not depend on the





dynamics of historical and ethnic processes in the region. The originality of the carpets of these centers was determined by the natural-climatic, household, and social factors, and the basis of the compositions



was always the ancient weaving traditions that developed in this territory.

Karabakh carpets. The Karabakh type was based in two centers - mountainous and lowland. The city of Shusha and the villages of Dashbulag, Dovshanli, Girov, Trniviz, Malibayli, Chanakhcha, Tug, Taglar, Hadrut, Muradkhanli, Gasimushagi, Gubadli, Gogaz, Mishsaid, Bagirbayli, Khanlig and Tutmasli dominated the mountainous center of production in the 19th century. The peculiarity of the mountain center is that carpet production in villages was less developed than in Shusha.

In the low-lying areas, undoubtedly the dominant centers better provided with raw materials were Jabrayil, Agdam, Barda and Fizuli. Around each of these cities, there are many villages where the population was engaged in the production of carpets for sale. Such types of carpets as "chelebi", "aran", "goja", "achmayumma", "shabalid-but", "bakhmanli" and "mugan" were woven here.

The carpets of the Zangilan, Talish-Lankaran and Nakhchivan production centers also belong to the Karabakh type. Here, the most common carpets were

"Talish" and "Nakhchivan". A number of hubs, densely populated by Azerbaijanis until recently, were located in the former Zangazur district on the territory of present-day Armenia.

The Karabakh zone is famous for both pile and lint-free carpets, as well as carpet products. Karabakh carpet weavers developed and used a wide variety of compositions, some of which appeared as a result of the creative processing of compositions created in the Tabriz and Ardabil carpet weaving centers.

These carpets can be large or small. The "dast-haligaba" carpet sets, which were in great demand on the domestic and foreign markets, were especially popular. Karabakh produced carpets with both low pile and high density of knitting, as well as less dense carpets with high pile. The former were more typical for Shusha and for low-lying industrial points, and the latter for mountainous ones. Karabakh produced medallion, subject and ornamental carpets. The most widespread compositions were "buynuz", "balig", "daryanur", "bakhchada-gullar", "sakhside-gullar", "khanlig", "khantirme", "gasim-ushagi", "minakhani" and "bulut". ❀



