



БОЛЬШОЙ КАВКАЗ: СОЦИАЛЬНО-ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЕ ПРОЦЕССЫ

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MIGRATIONS AND RESETTLEMENTS IN THE TERRITORY OF MEDIEVAL SHIRVAN

Lala A. Aliyeva

Baku State University, Baku, Azerbaijan

Khadija Karim

Baku State University, Baku, Azerbaijan

Abstract. *Introduction.* Studying the diverse ethnic composition of Shirvan in the Middle Ages provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics of ethnicity, culture, and identity in the region. By scrutinizing the historical roots of the region's ethnic diversity, it is possible to observe the shifting from one ethnic identity to another in historical perspective. *Methods and materials.* Aiming to shed light on the migrations to the region based on the primary sources of the time, the paper studies medieval migrations and resettling populations in the case of Shirvan. This study is based on the medieval textual sources and archaeological findings, implementing methods of comparison and interdisciplinary approaches to mapping ethnic diversity. *Analysis.* The location of the region at the Darband passage and along the transit trade routes determined its ethnic diversity. Due to its strategic importance, the region was subject to invasions by neighboring leading powers of the medieval era. To strengthen their control, these powers enforced the propagation of their religion and resettled new populations. The resettlement of Persian-speaking populations during the Sassanid and Arab conquests, along with the influx of Arab tribes, contributed to the ethno-linguistic landscape of Shirvan. The arrival of Turkic tribes over the centuries played a significant role in shaping the demographic composition of Shirvan. *Results.* The migrations and interactions of these and other groups have created a complex societal structure in Shirvan, marked by a variety of languages, traditions, and religious practices. *Authors' contribution.* L.A. Aliyeva developed the basic concept and methodological foundations of the study, prepared the introduction article and the main results of the study, and analyzed the pre-Seljuk period. Kh. Karim analyzed the Seljuk and Mongol periods based on Persian-language sources.

Key words: Shirvan, Shirvanshahs, Azerbaijan, migrations, resettlements, indigenous, primordialism.

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МИГРАЦИИ И ПЕРЕСЕЛЕНИЯ НА ТЕРРИТОРИИ СРЕДНЕВЕКОВОГО ШИРВАНА

Лала Агамирзоевна Алиева

Бакинский государственный университет, г. Баку, Азербайджан

Хадиджа Керим

Бакинский государственный университет, г. Баку, Азербайджан

Аннотация. *Введение.* Изучение разнообразного этнического состава населения Ширвана в средние века дает ценную информацию о сложной динамике различных этносов, культур и идентичности в регионе. Тщательно изучая исторические корни этнического разнообразия региона, можно наблюдать изменения этнической идентичности в исторической перспективе. *Методы и материалы.* Стремясь пролить свет на тему миграции в регион, на основе текстовых источников того времени в статье изучаются средневековые миграции и переселение жителей конкретного региона – Ширвана. Данное исследование основано на средневековых текстовых источниках и археологических находках, с применением методов сравнительного и междисциплинарного подходов к картографированию этнического разнообразия. *Анализ.* Расположение региона около Дербентского прохода и на транзитных торговых путях определило этническое разнообразие из-за миграционного потока. По причине стратегической важности страна подвергалась вторжениям соседних ведущих держав средневековой эпохи. Для укрепления здесь эти державы принудительно распространяли свою религию и переселяли новое население. Переселение персоязычного населения во времена Сасанидов, а также арабские завоевания и приток арабских племен способствовали изменению этнолингвистического ландшафта Ширвана. Приток тюркских племен на протяжении веков играл значительную роль в формировании демографического состава Ширвана. *Результаты.* Миграции и взаимодействия различных групп создали сложную общественную структуру в Ширване, отмеченную разнообразием языков, традиций и религиозных практик. *Вклад авторов.* Л.А. Алиева разработала основную концепцию и методологические основы исследования, подготовила вводную часть и основные результаты исследования, проанализировала досельджукский период. Х. Керим проанализировала сельджукский и монгольский периоды на основе персоязычных источников.

Ключевые слова: Ширван, Ширваншахи, Азербайджан, миграции, переселения, аборигены, примордиализм.

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Introduction. Mass movement of population from one place to another can lead to significant changes in social structures, cultural practices, and demographic compositions of any country. This has happened during the historical process and continues to this day. The purpose of this work is to scrutinize this process in the case of a particular region of the South Caucasus, Shirvan, and in a specific time frame, the medieval era (from the 5th to the 15th centuries). Mass movement of people occurred mainly in two forms: migrations for various reasons, including economic opportunities, conflict, environmental factors, or social factors, and resettlement of population, often with the political intention of settling permanently in a newly occupied location.

Migratory movements and relocations in Shirvan highlighted the fluidity of identity and culture, as people mix, interact, and sometimes blend different cultural practices and beliefs. All these processes resulted in the shifting from one ethnic identity to another, creating a new ethno-linguistic identity.

Methods and materials. To examine how trade routes, migrations, and conquests facilitated cultural exchanges and the blending of ethnic identities, the research utilizes historical textual sources and incorporates findings from archaeological sites [2; 4; 14; 16; 26], implementing methods of comparative studies and an interdisciplinary approach to understanding ethnic diversity in medieval times. In accordance with this approach, the conceptual framework

of the researcher rejects the primordialist view, which is based on the fixed identity concept, emphasizing its inherent, deeply rooted aspects. In this regard, the source base of the study consists mainly of medieval texts, such as the “History of the Albanians” by Moses of Kalankatuk, Armenian and Georgian chronicles, and works of Muslim authors in Arabic and Persian, combining historical and cultural anthropological approaches.

It should be especially emphasized that the notions of “indigenous population” and “migration pattern” can only be considered hypothetically. Migration is a characteristic feature of human history, and if some migration is not recorded by sources, this does not mean that people have lived in this territory since the period of anthropogenesis. This is nothing other than primordialism. Moreover, the methodological framework of the research does not consider literally the concepts of “autochthony” as “people who originated from this land” and “allochthony” as “outsiders.” The migration mass that has acquired a homeland and settled in a given territory cannot be considered an outsider.

Analysis. The Middle Ages are full of historical events associated with mass migrations and resettlement of the population. These global migrations did not bypass the Caucasus, including Shirvan. Considering the migration flow, firstly, it should be noted that the indigenous population of the region under study was the Albanian tribes, which Strabo also pointed out in his “Geography,” noting them as 26 tribes that do not understand one another [20, 11, IV]. However, the ethnic composition of the population has been subject to change for centuries due to migration and the resettlement policies of neighboring empires. From the end of the fourth century onwards, the flux of Huns, followed by Savirs, Bulgars, and Khazars, began through the Darband Pass. In late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, the main powers that claimed dominance in the Caucasus, including Shirvan, were the Sassanids and their rival Byzantium. To resist the influx of the tribes from the north, the Sassanids, using local forces, built the Darband stronghold. Even so, this measure alone was not enough to strengthen the area around Darband and the region to the south, where the routes with strategic and commercial significance passed, leading to the central regions

of Persia. In the first place, the Sassanids, being one of those powers using religion as a means for politics towards subordinate peoples, imposed Zoroastrianism in the region even before building the main stronghold. Zoroastrianism became an important instrument during the reign of Shapur I and was closely intertwined with the political system [3]. In addition to the textual sources, the spread of Zoroastrianism even to Darband is also proven by archaeological data [2].

As Moses of Kalankatuk reports in his “History of the Albanians,” in the days of the impious Yazkert (Yezdegerd II (438–457)), he forced Christians to abandon the faith and submit to the Magian sect of fire-worshippers [15, p. 65]. Then the author states that the Persian forces, which were in the land of the Honk (the land of Huns), have returned and have brought with them 300 theologians [15, p. 66], meaning Zoroastrian mobads. Moses of Kalankatuk further describes how the Sassanid officials tried to frighten and force people to accept their religion. During the reigns of Kavad I (intermittently between 488 and 531) and Khosrow I (531–570), these measures were further strengthened.

The 9th-century Arab historian Baladhuri reports that the Persians built here 360 city-fortresses in total [11], which was repeated by the 10th-century author Ibn al-Faqih, who uses the notion of city “madinah” rather than fortress “ghalah” [18, p. 287]. He also reports that Qubad’s son Anushirvan built the cities of Shabran, Maskut, and Karkarah in the Shirvan region, and then Bab al-Abwab [18, p. 288]. Of course, the Sasanian rulers did not build them to improve the lives of the local population but for their own strengthening and the resettlement of trusted people here. From this information we can conclude that those whom the Sassanids resettled for the purpose of strengthening populated such a huge number of city-fortresses, as V. Minorsky also indicates [24, pp. 13-14]. The reason for the Sassanid migration policy was also specified by al-Istakhri: it was done because of a strong desire to populate this region with reliable people [19, p. 184]. Baladhuri has a direct reference to the resettlement of the Persians. He states that after Qubad (Kavad I), his son Kisra Anushirvan ibn Qubad (Khosrow I) became malik (ruler) and built the cities of Shabiran and Masqat and the city of Bab al-Abwab (Gate of the Gates). He settled

in what he had built in these areas, a people called *Siyasijin* [11, pp. 273-274]. Regarding the etymology of *Siyasijin*, it should be noted that in the Talysh language “siyanush” means “highlanders.” In Azerbaijan, the Tats are often called “daghly” – highlander.

Modern Tats of Shirvan and other territories are most likely the descendants of these settlers. According to I. Semenov, who studied the resettlement of Persians by Khosrow I Anushirvan, the total numbers of Persian Mazdakite and Jewish settlers “exceeded 200 thousand people” [5, p. 35]. Although the figures given by I. Semenov do not inspire complete confidence, one can still agree that the Sassanids resettled an impressive number of Persians and Jews to the soil of Shirvan. So, the forceful relocation of Persians and Jews brought to Shirvan the new ethno-linguistic patterns.

The penetration of the Huns and their descendants into the Caucasus has been widely studied by modern historiography. Based on the reports of Christian chronicles, we see that they played a perceptible role in the region in the fifth to sixth centuries. Although the Honagur/Onogur fortress is indicated in Lazica, in western Georgia [27, p. 6], the main passage was still Darband. The Armenian and Georgian chronicles contain lots of reports about the flows of the Huns, the Bulgars, the Savirs, and then the Khazars, but they mostly describe them in a negative way. An exception is the description by Moses of Kalankatuk about the Hephthalites, as after the Caucasian Albanian ruler Vachagan’s message to them, they provided military support to Albania. He writes that Vachagan sent the Hephthalites as a rod of wrath against the king of Persia, and they defeated him together with his people [15, p. 25]. Then the author even makes a compliment, saying that the Hephthalites came like giants to satisfy the wrath of the Lord [15, p. 26]. And yet, the Khazars played a major role in the ethno-political map of the Caucasus, including Shirvan prior to and during the Arab conquests. Even the ancient capital city of Caucasian Albania, Qabala, on the eve of the Arab conquests, was named Al-Khazar, as Baladhuri points out, writing that Qabala was built by Qubad (Kavad I), which is called Al-Khazar [11, p. 273].

Soon new upheavals shook the entire world, including the region under study. The Arabs became a huge force as a result of uniting around

the new religion and began their conquests, turning Islam into a world religion. Like the Sassanids, the Arabs used religion as a means of strengthening their power and control over newly conquered countries. By this time, Zoroastrianism, implanted by the Sassanids; Judaism among the Jewish communities; and Christianity in Caucasian Albania were spreading in the territory of Shirvan, while paganism was preserved in some places. Inclining from one to another teaching of Christianity, the Albanians under Javanshir Mihranid preferred Monothelitism. In the end, the Armenian Monophysite Church achieved the subordination of the Albanians when Caliph Abd al-Malik abolished the power of the Mihranids in 705 [6, p. 9]. So, the favorable conditions were created for the spread of Islam with such an unstable religious picture. However, the process of Islamization was gradual, and for strengthening in newly conquered territories, additional measures were in effect. And the Arab Caliphate, repeating the same policy of the Sassanids, implemented resettlement of the Arab tribes to Shirvan and the entire Caucasus. The reason was not only to strengthen the newly conquered lands but, most importantly, to control the strategic and trade routes and create a base for resistance against the enemy, the Khazar Khaganate.

Tabari, in his work “Tarikh ar-Rusul wal-Muluk,” reports that the Arab commander Suraqa ibn Amra conquered Darband in 643 during the reign of the caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab. When Bukayr ibn Abdullahi and Abdurrahman ibn ar-Rabi’a al-Bahili approached Darband by the order of Suraqah, Shahrbaraz, the hereditary ruler of this province and former Sassanid protégé, submitted to them. According to the terms of the treaty concluded with him, the Shirvanians did not pay tribute but instead assumed the maintenance of an army that defended the borders from attacks by nomads from the north. In the negotiation with Abd-ur-Rahman Shahrbaraz declared the following: “I have nothing in common with either the peoples of the Caucasus Mountains or the Armenians. You (the Arabs) invaded my country, and today my people and I are one of you; my hands are your hands.” Shahrbaraz’s main request was exemption from the poll tax jizya, as it could weaken Shirvanians. Taking this into account, Suraqah, with the consent of Caliph Omar, decided to collect jizya

only from those who did not serve in the army. In return, Darband and its environs dwellers had to fight the infidels and not let them into Muslim territory [7]. Military service instead of paying tribute was offered to the Armenians in al-Bab as well [7]. Thus, according to the peace agreement, the Arabs did not need to keep troops in these regions for a while.

The Arabs, as already noted, pursued the same policy as the Sassanids to strengthen their positions in the conquered countries. On the one hand, a new religion, and on the other, the resettlement of Arab tribes to new lands in order to create a support base from a trusted mass, rather than non-Arabs of other faiths, were the main methods of the caliphate. Despite the fact that an agreement was signed with the local ruler, and one of the main points directly provided for responsibility for protection from the Turks, the Caliphate still preferred to trust its generals. In 736 Hisham b. Abd al-Malik appointed Asad b. Zafir Sulami to the governorship of Darband; he gave him 400 men from his own staff and also men from four Arab tribes [24, pp. 124-125]. The names of these tribes are not mentioned in the source, but V. Minorsky believes that one of them is Sulemi or Banu Sulaym [24, p. 125].

The issue of the resettlement policy of the Caliphate and the migration of the Arab tribes to the territory of Azerbaijan was deeply studied by Z. Buniyatov. He points out that at first the Umayyads resettled the northern tribes of Arabs. However, after the fall of the Umayyad dynasty, the privileges of the northern tribes, which were highly valued and on which the last Umayyad caliphs relied, began to disappear quickly. The Abbasids, reckoning on the Arab tribes from the south, began to gradually displace the northern tribes from their settlements in Azerbaijan and Arran [12, p. 193].

The question of whether the Arab migration caused an outflow of the local population to other places remains open. However, we have reports from the medieval authors that the population of these countries was given a condition: to pay the per capita tax *jizya* or leave it, as reported by al-Baladzuri concerning Damascus and Antioch. Even though the Arabs did not apply to all cities and countries the requirement to leave their native places, and in the case of Shirvan, we do not have any such kind of report. However, as already

noted, the local population could have been forced to leave the steppe part of Shirvan and find refuge in the mountains.

Medieval sources contain lots of testimonies about the migration of Arabs to Azerbaijan, including Shirvan, during the Arab Caliphate. It would be appropriate to recall some genetic studies on the haplogroups among the population of the Caucasus, as well as Azerbaijan. They prove the high mean pairwise J_2 value in the gene pool of the Azerbaijani population (0.31), widely identified among the Arab countries of the Near East [25, p. 259, Table 2].

The Population Dynamics in Shirvan During the Seljuk and Mongol periods.

The medieval textual sources contain various insights about the population and tribes living in the territory of the Shirvanshahs in the 11th and 12th centuries. Since the 11th century, the population of Shirvan cities such as Qabala, Shabran, Darband, and Baku had increased and become even more densely populated compared to previous centuries. Falaki Shirvani, a poet living in Shirvan, mentioned in his poems that there were nine hundred thousand houses in the territory under the Shirvanshahs. The fortified areas of the cities of Shirvan, such as Shamakhi and Darband, were about one hundred hectares, and about one hundred thousand people lived here. Shirvan cities with a fortified area of less than one hundred hectares were secondary ones, such as Baku, Qabala, and Shabran. Areas of Shirvan with an area of less than twenty hectares, such as Torpaqqala in Qakh and Shehergah in Siyazan, were urban and large settlements [13, pp. 32-35]. Likewise, G.A. Dzhididi estimated the population of Shamakhi, a city of Shirvan, based on the area of the town and concluded that more than one hundred thousand people lived there at that time [4, pp. 44-45]. The above-mentioned cities embarked on a new development stage in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Cities like Shamakhi, Darband, and Baku emerged as the centers of culture, trade, and economy [9, p. 218]. Thus, the growth of the population and the development of the cities were closely related and directly proportional. Large and densely populated places like Shamakhi and Darband were also rich and colorful in their ethnic composition.

The Shirvanshahs upheld their internal sovereignty, albeit the ruler of Shirvan, Fariburz I,

accepted the vassalage of the Seljuks as a result of the military marches of the Seljuk Turks to Shirvan in the eleventh century. It was also reported that some Seljuk Turk forces had served the Shirvanshah ruler in that timeframe [9, p. 249]. As a result of the arrival of the Seljuk Turks in Shirvan in the eleventh century, the positions of the Turks were underpinned not only among the people living in this region but also in the fields of military and administration.

The Georgian chronicle *Kartlis Tskhovreba* mentions the ethnicities that David IV encountered during his campaigns in the Shirvan, Darband, and Shabran territories. After capturing Shirvan in 1123, David marched again on Darband and Shabran in April 1124 and overtook the Shirvan fortress. The chronicle indicates that tribes such as the Kipchaks, Kurds, and Leks, serving the governor of Darband, were defeated during this march [22, p. 182]. Then, it emphasizes that in the next campaign David arranged all affairs in Shirvan and presented gifts to the Leks, Kurds, and Tarases, as he had done earlier with the people subject to him in Shirvan [22, p. 182]. It can be inferred from this that some of the many different tribes living in the territory of the Shirvanshahs were Kipchaks, Kurds, and Leks (Laks), one of the North Caucasian peoples. It seems that before some Kipchak tribes moved to Darband in the 13th century, the Kipchaks had been living in Darband in the 12th century and were subservient to the ruler of Darband and directly to the Shah of Shirvan.

The Laks region was located in the north of Shirvan and was subordinated to the Shirvanshahs in 1075 during the time of Fariburz I. This region, inhabited by the Lak tribes, stretched along the north of Shirvan and gained importance as an area protecting Shirvan from attacks from the north [24, p. 80]. As can be seen from *Kartlis Tskhovreba* and the notes of Minorsky, who emphasized the importance of this area for Shirvan, in the 11th and 12th centuries, Laks inhabited the north of Shirvan, served Shirvanshah, and was one of many diverse peoples living under his rule.

In accordance with “*Nuzhat al-Qulub*” by Hamdallah Mustawfi and “*Aja’ib ad-Dunya*” by an anonymous author, the territory of Shirvan was identified as an area between Darband and the banks of the Kura River, a large region including the shores of the Caspian Sea [1,

p. 514; 17, p. 92]. The territories north of the Kura River were governed by the Shirvanshahs dynasty and ruled by the Shah of Shirvan [29, pp. 47-48].

The Turks, who inhabited Shirvan, were emphasized in “*Aja’ib ad-Dunya*,” a textual source from the beginning of the 13th century. It changes Baladhuri’s report on the 360 city-fortresses to the 360 gates in Bab al-Abwab and then indicates that 110 of them belong to Muslims and 250 to Turks [1, p. 494]. The work of Abbas Quli Agha Bakikhanov also shows that the Turks were one of the main populaces inhabiting Darband. He clarified that the population of Darband city and all the villages of Ulus and Turkman districts were Turks and spoke Turkic [10, p. 18].

Although “*Aja’ib ad-Dunya*” provides information about the geography and characteristics of cities such as Baku, Shabran, Shamakhi, and Shaki, it offers limited details regarding their population. Though the source narrated the people of Shamakhi as very fanatical in matters of faith and the people of Shaki as zealous and honest in matters of religion [1, p. 514], the ethnic composition of the population was not mentioned in any case.

The first Mongol campaigns in the Caucasus in the 1220s inflicted harm on the culture and economy of many cities, among them Shamakhi, whose population was slaughtered [28, pp. 113-117]. Following the first Mongol marches, the Shirvanshahs faced the campaign of the Kwarazmshah ruler Jalal al-Din Manguberdi in 1225, and Shirvanshah Fariburz III had to pay tribute during the short period of the Khwarazmshahs. In the next stage, Shirvan was subjugated by the Mongol Empire, and the Mongol era, covering the 13th and 14th centuries, began for the Caucasus [21, pp. 83-84]. Mongol invasions not only impacted the political framework of the country but also affected the ethnic history of Shirvan. In the Mongol period, a number of the Turco-Mongol tribes settled in Azerbaijan, including Shirvan. According to V. Piriyeu, more than twenty tribes resettled to Azerbaijan during the Mongol campaigns and later the Ilkhanate rule [28, pp. 261-264]. However, we cannot approve the information concerning settling the Mongol tribes in Shirvan.

Regarding the ethnic composition of the Shirvan population during the Mongol era,

“Nuzhat al-Qulub” contains meager data, having detailed information on its geography and the nature and revenues of the cities. Hamdallah Mustawfi described the Gushtasfi region located in Shirvan on the shores of the Caspian Sea and mentioned its population. The author noted that the population of Gushtasfi professes the Shafi'i madhhab of Sunni Islam and speaks a Pahlavi dialect close to the Gilani language [17, pp. 92-93], which can easily be associated with the local Tat population of the modern period. The territory of the Gushtasfi region along the coast of the Caspian Sea might be interpreted as corresponding to the territory of the current Quba-Khachmaz or Khizi-Absheron economic regions of Azerbaijan, where the Tats, or as they often call themselves, Daghy, the highlanders, still live.

A. Bakikhanov noted that the Tat language was spoken by people in the area between Shamakhi and Quba, as well as in Baku, except for the six Turkman villages. Additionally, he distinguished the population of the Khinaly village of Quba, which had their own language. Bakikhanov also emphasized that the population in six Turkman villages of Baku, Salyan, Shabran, Shaki, and a part of Quba speak Turkic [10, p. 18]. According to S. Ashurbeyli, in the 12th century, Turks, Iranian-speaking Tats, and Lezgians inhabited Absheron and Baku [8, p. 186].

Besides the Turkic population of Darband, Bakikhanov reported that the majority of the Turkic-speaking population living in the districts of Shirvan and Salyan, Shabran, the city of Quba, most areas of Shaki, and the six villages of Baku where Turkmens live are of Mongol, Tatar, and Turkman descent. Then, he added that some of them arrived in these areas during the Safavid era [10, p. 18]. However, it would not be correct to state that the greater part of that population are descendants of Mongols, as Mongoloid physical anthropology is not observed among the population.

Moreover, A. Bakikhanov mentioned the names of Armenians and Jews as non-Muslim people residing in Shirvan while portraying the religions and sects of the population. He noted that except for Jews and Armenians, all the people dwelling in Shirvan are Muslims. Some adhere to the Shia sect, and some to the Sunni sect of Islam [10, p. 19].

Examining the population of Shirvan makes clear that in later times, Turkic tribes were established as prominent figures across the region. In the urban and suburban areas of Shamakhi, we come across toponyms such as Abdal, Karachukha, Akkaya, and Bashibaghli and ethnonyms such as Gushchi, Bayram, Soltanli, and Mollagullu. Those toponyms and ethnonyms in Shamakhi coincide with the ethnonyms of the Turkmen tribes living there. This evidences the Turks' influential status in the city [23, pp. 242-243].

The study of the population of Shirvan confirms that this region was one of the most diverse in terms of ethnic composition in the Seljuk and Mongol periods. Overall, Shirvan had been the abode of a population belonging to different linguistic groups, such as Turkic, Caucasian, Iranian, and Semitic. Regarding religion, despite the dominance of Islam, Christianity and Judaism were also represented in the region. Between the 11th and 14th centuries, many factors, such as the development of cities, the marches of the Seljuks, and the campaigns of the Mongols, affected the number and composition of the population of Shirvan. The economic development of the cities produced beneficial effects on the inhabitants.

Results. A study of Shirvan reveals how population movements and resettlement transformed the ethno-linguistic landscape and created a new ethno-cultural identity. Notably, the Arab invasion under Islam's banner, the Caliphate's settlement policy, and the subsequent Seljuk influx – followed by political processes that strengthened the Turkic ethno-linguistic pattern – resulted in a new Turkic-Muslim identity.

While migrations can occur due to environmental and natural changes that force a mass to move from one place to another, Shirvan experienced invasions aimed at territorial conquest. These movements were primarily motivated by economic, expansionist, and political goals. Shirvan became subject to military campaigns that introduced new migration patterns, though indigenous groups demonstrated remarkable resilience.

Considering the migrations and resettlement of the population, it is necessary to emphasize that the local indigenous population continued living in the territory of Shirvan. It can be assumed that

they moved to highland areas in order to survive and preserve their identity. It is no coincidence that many Caucasian-speaking ethnic groups of Azerbaijan live in mountain villages. In short, Shirvan has been inhabited for centuries by both the indigenous population and migration patterns.

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Information About the Authors

Lala A. Aliyeva, PhD in History, Associate Professor, Faculty of History, Baku State University, Z. Khalilova St, 23, 1148 Baku, Azerbaijan, lalaaliyeva@bsu.edu.az, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4831-6915>

Khadija Karim, Master (History), Faculty of History, Baku State University, Z. Khalilov St, 23, 1148 Baku, Azerbaijan, khadija.karim.nail@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-2944-6781>

Информация об авторах

Лала Агамирзоевна Алиева, кандидат исторических наук, доцент исторического факультета, Бакинский государственный университет, ул. З. Халилова, 23, 1148 г. Баку, Азербайджан, lalaaliyeva@bsu.edu.az, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4831-6915>

Хадиджа Керим, магистр исторических наук, исторический факультет, Бакинский государственный университет, ул. З. Халилова, 23, 1148 г. Баку, Азербайджан, khadija.karim.nail@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-2944-6781>