

Karabakh-2020: Turks regain favorite winter quarters of the ruler of Asia

The result of the Karabakh war in 2020 was not only the de-occupation of the sovereign territories of Azerbaijan, recognized as such by four UN Security Council resolutions, but also the return of the Turkic civilization to one of the most iconic places in its history.

“Timur’s favorite wintering place was Karabakh...”, “... in general, he wintered quite often in Karabakh”, – noted the outstanding Soviet orientalist Vasily Barthold about one of the most famous and successful commanders in world history – Tamerlane, also known as Timur.

[\[Barthold V. V. Works on separate problems of the history of Central Asia. Moscow, 1964. Page 65; General works on the history of Central Asia, works on the history of the Caucasus and Eastern Europe. Moscow, 1963. Page 735\]](#)

Of all the Turkic leaders, he left perhaps the most vivid trace in history. In the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, its power extended from the banks of the Ganges in the South to Ryazan in the North; from the borders of the Chinese Empire in the East to Damascus in the West. He crushed the Golden Horde, the Turkic power of Eastern Europe, defeated the Ottoman Empire, and conquered Baghdad and the Italian colonies in the Crimea. France, Britain, and Castile maintained diplomatic relations with him.

Often the decisions that influenced the further course of the history of Asia and Eastern Europe were made by Timur in Karabakh. Here he held meetings with his allies, foreign ambassadors, and prominent representatives of the Muslim clergy.

In 1386, from Karabakh, Timur issued the first orders concerning the beginning of a confrontation with the Golden Horde [Collection of materials related to the history of the Golden Horde, Moscow-Leningrad, 1941. P. 110]. At the end of 1399, messengers brought him news of the change of power in the Chinese Empire [Barthold 1964, p.68]. In the spring of 1402, it was from Karabakh that Timur launched his famous campaign against the Ottoman Empire [Barthold 1963, p. 745]. As a result, Sultan Bayazid I was captured, and all of Asia Minor submitted to Timur. In the winter of 1403-1404, seyids (descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) and famous Sufi sheikhs from Termez, Bukhara, and Samarkand visited Timur in the Karabakh headquarters [Barthold 1964, pp. 43-44, 122].

This is how an eyewitness – Persian historian Sharaf ad-din Yazdi described the arrival of Timur and his entourage to spend the winter in Karabakh:

“After spending one month in the vicinity of Karaul-tube (Dagestan), Timur migrated from there, safely went on and, passing through Ganja and Barda, on Tuesday 22 rebi II 804 (that is, November 29, 1401)... encamped in the Karabagh. For the mighty Timur and the glorious princes, kuryas were made of reeds, and high tents were erected inside them. Since it was decided that at the beginning of spring the victorious banner would move to Desht-I-Kipchak, everyone pitched a tent in their place facing Derbent and set up a winter quarters. The king’s grace distributed rewards to the entire army. At this time, ambassadors arrived from Desht, who, through the emirs, were honored with the kiss of the earth, knelt down, and in the name of their Khan, expressed good wishes and praises, and declared submission.”

[\[Collection of materials related to the history of the Golden Horde, Moscow-Leningrad, 1941. P. 188\]](#)

Here, in Karabakh, in winter of 1403-1404, Timur’s spiritual mentor, a descendant of the Prophet Mohammad Mir Said Baraka,

died. *“At the end of 1403, shortly before his death, he came to Timur in Karabag; Timur came out of his tent to meet him”* [Barthold 1964, pp. 448-449]. A contemporary of Timur, the Arab historian Ibn Arabshah, noted that the great commander considered the blessing he received from Baraka one of the main reasons for his military success [Barthold 1964, pp. 449-450].

And here, in Karabakh, in 1399-1404, little Ulugbek spent his winters [Barthold 1964, p. 175] – Timur’s grandson, who later became the ruler of the Timurid Empire in Central Asia, famous as a patron of science, an outstanding mathematician and astronomer. *“The stay in Karabakh ... remained for Ulugbek a memory of his early childhood,”* noted orientalist Vasily Barthold [Barthold 1964, P.65].

Another well-known researcher of the East, and the Caucasus in particular, Ilya Petrushevsky, who led an ethnographic expedition to Karabakh in the summer of 1928, reported that the cults of two Holy places revered by the inhabitants of the local mountains originate from the legends associated with the stay of Timur and his troops here [Petrushevsky I. Pre-Christian beliefs of the peasants of Nagorno-Karabakh. Baku, 1930. Pp. 23, 26-27].

Thus, as a result of the Karabakh war in 2020, the lands where one of the brightest pages of its history was written were returned to the Turkic civilization.