

SOCIO-POLITICAL

REALITY IN HISTORICAL NARRATIVES ABOUT THE KARABAKH KHANATE

LA REALIDAD SOCIOPOLÍTICA EN LAS NARRACIONES HISTÓRICAS SOBRE EL KANATO DE KARABAJ

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ABSTRACT

In post-independence Azerbaijan, the historical narrative genre has emerged as a vital vehicle for reconstructing collective memory and affirming national identity. However, comparative assessments of its key authors often remain scarce. This study addresses this deficiency by analyzing how the narratives of Zaman Garayev and Agil Abbas reconstruct the sociopolitical memory of the Karabakh Khanate. Through close textual analysis and triangulation with primary sources (chronicles, diplomatic letters, and Mirza Jamal's Karabaghnama), this article examines the narrative strategies, source integration, and aesthetic conventions of each work. The findings reveal that both authors manage to recover significant, yet marginalized, historical figures and events, such as the diplomacy of Panah Khan and the epic resistance of Muhammad Bey Javanshir. Garayev's narratives are distinguished by their documentary rigor and comprehensive representation of the khanate's politics, although historical accuracy occasionally challenges narrative harmony. In contrast, Abbas's "Batman's Sword" exemplifies mythic dramatization through potent symbols (Batman's sword, tribal genealogy, etc.) and the strategic use of dialect, even with sporadic lapses in historicity. Both works have catalyzed literary criticism and remain indispensable for interdisciplinary dialogues in literary, historical, and cultural studies. We hope this comparative research highlights the dynamic interplay between historiography and aesthetic creativity within Azerbaijani historical prose. In practice, we underscore the importance of balancing fidelity to sources with narrative coherence in the construction of national histories. Future research could apply this framework to other regional narratives or investigate their reception and pedagogical potential.

Keywords: Historical narrative, Karabakh Khanate, National identity, Literary historiography, Comparative literary analysis.

RESUMEN

En el Azerbaiyán posterior a la independencia, el género narrativo histórico emergió como un vehículo vital para reconstruir la memoria colectiva y afirmar la identidad nacional. Sin embargo, las evaluaciones comparativas de sus autores clave suelen ser escasas. Este estudio aborda esta deficiencia analizando cómo las narrativas de Zaman Garayev y Agil Abbas reconstruyen la memoria sociopolítica del Kanato de Karabaj. Mediante un análisis textual minucioso y la triangulación con fuentes primarias (crónicas, cartas diplomáticas y Karabaghnama de Mirza Jamal), este artículo examina las estrategias narrativas, la integración de fuentes y las convenciones estéticas de cada obra. Los hallazgos revelan que ambos autores logran recuperar figuras y eventos históricos significativos, aunque marginados, como la diplomacia de Panah Khan y la épica resistencia de Muhammad Bey Javanshir. Las narrativas de Garayev se distinguen por su rigor documental y su representación integral de la política del kanato, aunque la precisión histórica ocasionalmente cuestiona la armonía narrativa. En contraste, "La espada de Batman" de Abbas ejemplifica la dramatización mítica mediante símbolos potentes (la espada de Batman, la genealogía tribal, etc.) y el uso estratégico del dialecto, incluso con lapsos esporádicos de historicidad. Ambas obras han catalizado la crítica literaria y siguen

siendo indispensables para el diálogo interdisciplinario en los estudios literarios, históricos y culturales. Se espera que esta investigación comparativa destaque la dinámica interacción entre la historiografía y la creatividad estética en la prosa histórica azerbaiyana. En la práctica, se subraya la importancia de equilibrar la fidelidad a las fuentes con la coherencia narrativa en la construcción de las historias nacionales. Futuras investigaciones podrían aplicar este marco a otras narrativas regionales o investigar su recepción y potencial pedagógico.

Palabras clave: Narrativa histórica, Kanato de Karabaj, Identidad nacional, Historiografía literaria, Análisis literario comparativo.

INTRODUCTION

Historical narrative has played a central role in Azerbaijani literature, serving as a vehicle for reconstructing founding episodes and consolidating a national cultural imaginary that simultaneously embraces collective memory and the artistic reinterpretation of its past (Dadashova, 2025). This genre gained renewed traction after independence in 1991, authors began to revive the traditional form of the “long story”—known as “narrative” in the region—to present historical passages aesthetically, without abandoning documentary rigor. The transition to a pluralistic environment allowed Azerbaijani historical narratives to explore previously disregarded themes, revalue primary sources, and reconstruct political and social figures with greater complexity (DeHaan, 2021). This resurgence of the genre is part of an interest in reaffirming national identity, as well as a desire to engage with official historiography and propose critical reinterpretations of events such as the 18th-century khanate wars and the traumatic conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Narrative genre is one of the leading genres of prose in literary studies, one of the genres that carries the weight of the literary environment in its numerous examples, and is distinguished by its aesthetic value and expressive possibilities (Giorgi, 2018). Narrative as a genre is called this in the post-Soviet space. In the research of the years of independence, there are certain ideas and different approaches regarding the narrative genre, and these ideas mainly explain why this literary form, characterized as “Long story” in world literature, is called a narrative in our country (Gasimov, 2022; Mammadova, 2022). Even in the literary polemic, which was attended by literary critics Tehran Alishanoglu, Asad Jahangir and others, short stories, long stories, and other versions are proposed. It should also be noted that the narrative genre, whatever its name, is an important part of Azerbaijani literature, and

numerous examples of the genre have become literary events.

If we divide Azerbaijan's historical prose by genres, along with novels, historical narratives and even short stories were written, and the literary environment accepted these in the reader. In literary studies, narratives are classified into several groups according to their subject, one of which is narratives with a historical theme (Aliyeva, 2016, p. 258). The common point of narratives with a historical theme classified as historical, documentary, memorial, and chronic is that in artistic examples, pages of history - near or far - are turned, the synthesis of the historical period and modern reality determines the author's position, and using the documents, sources, and letters corresponding to the period in question, the literary level of the historical reality's reflection is drawn into the center of attention. It should be noted that these issues are also touched upon in the research related to historical prose, and the unanimous result of the considerations forms the demands of literary studies in front of the genre.

Considering the above, the goal of this paper is to analyze, in a comparatively way, how the historical narratives reconstruct the memory and national identity of the Karabakh Khanate in the post-Soviet Azerbaijani period. This study will focus on two key authors of Azerbaijani historical narrative (Ahmadov, 2011):

- Zaman Garayev, whose works “They Passed the Spawn” and “Karabagh Dudemesi” revive the history of the Karabakh Khanate, exposing political intrigues and inter-Karabakh conflicts.
- Agil Abbas, author of the celebrated “Batman Sword,” a story that fuses epic and legendary elements to narrate the defense of the khanate against Qajar troops, incorporating genealogies and symbolism that connect with the Turco-Mongol past and Bayati memory.

In both cases, the narratives revolve around specific episodes—the consolidation of Ibrahim Khalil Khan's rule (Shusha Today, 2025), diplomatic maneuvers with Russia and Iran, internal betrayals, etc.—but their selection is not arbitrary: the works share the goal of revaluing Karabakh's historical sovereignty and to underscore Azerbaijan's cultural continuity. We believe that studying these narratives today is important for several reasons:

1. **Historical memory and symbolic reparation:** Both works contribute to rescue from oblivion figures and events that reflect contemporary political tensions. By foregrounding figures such as Panah Khan and Muhammad Bey Javanshir—usually absent from mainstream historiography—the idea of a resilient and pluralistic national identity is reinforced.

2. **Construction of national identity:** The 1994 post-war period and the recent 2020 conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh have rekindled identity debates. These narratives offer literary models to understand the roots of territorial claims and the conception of homeland, grounded in genealogies and founding myths that engage with official historiography.
3. **Interdisciplinary Dialogue:** Beyond the literary, these texts draw on historical sources, letters, chronicles, and poetry by Molla Panah Vagif, making them objects of interest for historians, political scientists, and cultural studies scholars who examine memory.

DEVELOPMENT

In the history of our literary thought, there are many intellectuals and creative personalities who have the identity of researchers, writers, or poets and playwrights. One such personality is Zaman Garayev. Although extensive research has not been conducted on him, his works related to M.F. Akhundov in the field of scientific activity form his image as a researcher in literary studies, "...the novels and stories he wrote mainly on historical topics strengthen his image as a productive, hardworking, responsible writer" (Valiyev, 2016). Zaman Garayev's signature cannot be erased in the 20th century Azerbaijani prose, because his works on Karabakh, the novel "Alinca Castle" are successful examples that enrich our literary thought. Three historical narratives came out of his pen: "Khargo", "They passed the spawn", "The Karabakh war". About Zaman Garayev, critic and doctor of philology Vagif Yusifli writes: "Zaman Garayev is the author of a number of historical narratives. He is especially interested in the history of Karabakh" (Yusifli, 2001, p. 47).

One of the interesting historical narratives in Garayev's work is "They Passed the Spawn". Despite its short volume and compact plot line, the work conveys great issues with the problem it raises. The narrative begins with a brief summary of the Panahabad fortress attacked by Karabakh Khan Panah Khan, the nature of Karabakh and the internal and external politics of the Khanate. In order to decorate his palace in the city he attacked, Panah Khan sends his godfather, the father-in-law of his son Ibrahim, the father of Khurad, the Armenian Shahnazar to Shekiya Haji Chalabi Khan, takes a share, and gives Shahnazar money from the newly minted coins of the Khanate to take to Chalabi Khan. Shahnazar returned from the trip and informed Panah Khan that Chalabi Khan received us badly, insulted the khanate's coin, Panah Khan and did not sell Shaki silk. The enraged Panah Khan fades away from this, and the hatred formed against Chalabi Khan reveals itself over time. Briefly and comprehensively speaking about the internal conflicts between the khanates, the writer creates

a complete and accurate picture of the political, economic, and cultural situation of 18th century Azerbaijan. The impact of these internal conflicts on Azerbaijan is regrettably remembered in every sentence of the work. Analyzing the relations between Russia, Iran, the Georgian kingdom and the khanates, Panah Khan comes to the conclusion of the inevitability of attempts to expand the borders of the khanate.

At this point in the work, the writer describes Nadir Shah's rule, his brother Farzali Bey being Nadir Shah's vizier during his reign, being a victim of internal contradictions, bringing Panah Khan to the post of doorkeeper instead of him, fleeing to Karabakh in order not to take part in these processes, his release as a result of Nadir Shah's murder, and during the time of Adil Shah, the process of receiving the title of Khan through the mediation of governor Amiraslan Khan. The events we read in the work are as follows in history:

Farzali Bey was appointed a butler in the Shah's palace, and Panahali Bey was appointed as the commander of the army... In 1738, Panahali Bey left the palace with a group of his close friends and retreated to his native Karabakh. (Mahnudov, 1994).

In these pages we read: "Panah Bey declared himself Khan. He began to control Karabakh, as well as some lands of Ganja, Tabriz, Ardabil, and Nakhchivan provinces" (Garayev, 2001a, p. 49).

Throughout the plot of the work, the Armenian factor is in the center of attention. At this point, the writer who turns to the "history" of the Armenian Shahnazar draws attention to certain facts and reveals the historically existing traitor face of the Armenians in the example of such historical facts. It becomes clear that Shahnazar came from around Lake Van and took refuge in the lands of Karabakh, after settling down with the Khamsa Maliks, he took refuge in Panah Khan because his uncle killed the Vanand Malik Seyn. Here, the writer turns to history and states that after Shahnazar became a relative of Panah Khan, he used him to take Mehri and Güney districts from the governor of Garadagh up to Bargushada and subjugate them to him. He received Sisyan district from Nakhchivan judge, Zangezur and Gafan districts from Tabriz Beylerbey. It was the abode of the Kolanis, and he took the lands on the banks of the Tartar River from the village of Ushacik to the border of Goycha from the Iravan judge. He took over the lands belonging to Ganja judges and from Khudafarin bridge to Kurek river (Garayev, 2001a, p. 51). Kazim Khan, the judge of Garadagh, comes to Panahabad. At this time, Panah Khan talks about the coordinates, natural conditions, geographical structure and beauty of the city,

while Kazim Khan gives information about the historical monuments in the territory of his Khanate, such as Bazz Castle and Babak Rebellion. Panah Khan reveals his strategy in his meetings with the Khans. The essence of the conflicts between the khanates is reached. Panah Khan made alliances with Nakhchivan Khan Heydargulu Khan, Garadag Khan Kazim, Ganja Khan Shahverdi and appealed to the Georgian Tsar Irakli II, and made a plan to attack Sheki Khan Haji Chalabi Khan. On the other side, Chalabi Khan, hearing the news, prepares for the pre-Nowruz battle.

Information based on history strengthens the historical connection of the work. Thus, in the scenes of preparation for the battle, certain information is given about the life and livelihood of the rugged areas, and at the same time, certain information is given about the history of Mingachevir and this region, the Roman attack is mentioned, and the information about the 2,000-year-old inscription kept in the State History Museum of Georgia chronicles the text. In the scenes of two villages on the banks of the Kurun: Alagargali and Zurnabadli, standing on the banks of the river and talking to each other, fighting for Shirvan Karabakh according to their own ideas, and defending their khans, the writer emphasizes with special sensitivity that there is a truth known to everyone, that the struggle of these villagers, who will live amicably after the war, is actually a vivid picture of the history of Azerbaijan during the period of the khanates and reflects the political processes of the time. The villagers say to each other: "Our girls are bought by your boys, and your girls are bought by our boys: we are relatives, neighbors, relatives. Why do we need a fight!" (Garayev, 2001b).

Irakli, who made a deal with Shahnazar, captured four khans in Kizilgaya. While waiting for the battle, Chalabi Khan heard that Panah Khan and his allies were captured. Even though his son and nobles advised him to return to the city before the holiday, Chalabi Khan did not leave the Khans in difficult times; he ordered the army to save them for the sake of Azerbaijan, the motherland. When Chalabi Khan invaded Irakli's forces, Shahnazar allied with Irakli and shared the lands of Karabakh and Azerbaijan. As soon as they heard that Chalabi Khan's army was approaching, Shahnazar ran to Panah Khan, and Irakli's army was defeated and retreated. One of the points worth noting in the work is the response of the khans to Irakli's offer of submission: they prefer death to selling their homeland. Irakli says to Shahverdi Khan, "You gave Nadir Gazakh and Borchali to the Georgians, and you give Ganja Khanate." This is the point the writer wants to draw attention to: the visible Armenian and the invisible Georgian. In the battle of Jar-Balakane, Irakli, who was familiar with

the skill of Chalabi Khan, fell into fear. Chalabi Khan frees the Khans. Here things become clear. The khans' confession of their mistakes while in captivity, the confession of Karadag poet Kazim Khan Chigirli, Panah Khan's desire to attack Khankendi, information from the history of the khanate period, and scenes of the khanate's monetary policy are welcomed with interest.

In the dialogue between Chalabi Khan and Panah Khan, Shahnazar's lies are revealed, his confessions are given in his own words, details such as Shahnazar's sale of the "Yusif and Zuleykha" carpet sent by Chalabi Khan to Panah Khan to Taktak in Ganja clarify the essence of Armenian sedition. Parallels are drawn between Sahl Sumbat who betrayed Babek and Shahnazar who betrayed Panah Khan, Heydargulu Khan's attempts to draw conclusions from the betrayal, his appeal to history, the gates of Ganja prepared by Omar Osmanoglu on the order of Shavur, the ruler of Shaddadi, and the Georgians taking him away, but his strategy and approach attract attention in the eyes of the author. At the end of the play, when Panah Khan and other Khans agreed to kill Shahnazar, Chalabi Khan was humanistic as usual, he did not think it was right to shed blood because it was before the holiday, and Shahnazar was not killed. The fate of Shahnazar is not given in the later scenes of the work.

There are also points of interest in the work within the framework of literary norms. As an example of benefiting from people's memory, the idea that "pilaf will not be harmed by too much oil", giving related details in the fishing habits and everyday life of Kurqirag: "The fish says who ate me, drank water from it, I made his mother cry, who drank tea, made my mother cry...". The place of the eel on the table and the moments from the myth about the snake, the giving of beliefs should be evaluated as the writer's attachment to the national memory. In the process of preparing for the battle, the reading of oriental songs the recitation of special expressions related to carpet weaving from the language of the characters, and the use of parcels that have found a place in the people's memory strengthen the layer of nationality and history in the work (Garayev, 2001a).

There are moments in the work where the historicity and fiction are violated. The mention of the Ganja earthquake in the year of Nizami's birth and the mention of Turkey and Iran appear as a result of the author's carelessness. Researcher Elnara Garagozova notes that "The narrative reflects a glorious and at the same time painful period of our history" (Mammadli, 2016). We think that one cannot make a mistake in a work of art that talks about a "painful" period of our history. Because these wrong ideas form over time. The story "Karabagh Dudamesi" is

Zaman Garayev's next literary attempt about the history of Karabakh. Considering the possibilities of the narrative genre and the requirements of the genre, it can be concluded that the author can create complete information about the history of Karabakh in the work. The story expresses the historical and political nature of the measures taken by Karabakh Khan Ibrahimkhalil Khan against the looting of the Khanate's wealth in the wars between Tsarist Russia and Iran.

In the story, we read that in 1784, Ibrahimkhalil Khan sent his son Abulfat Agha to a meeting with Zubov, the representative of the Tsar's army in the Caucasus, in Salyan in order to protect himself from Qajar attacks and looting, and to create unity between the khanates. The welfare of the khanate is also seen in Russian subjects in his consultations with the Khan's vizier, the poet Molla Panah Vagif. Historical sources also confirm this fact. At this point, in his conversations with the khan, a certain information base is created to study the position of Vagif in the politics of the khanate during his life. Vagif says that there is another side to the proverb: "...not every mule driver is Murad". We also learn that this is the same Murad who was rewarded by the khan for his good services, and the village of Muradbeyli was donated, which is located near Agdam. In the following pages, many issues that are reflected in the literary-historical sources are clarified, and the given information skillfully finds its place within the plot. Qajar sent a poem by Iranian poet Seyyed Mohammad Shirazi as a threat to Karabakh Khan, and in return Vagif replied with a poem that if the one who protects him is someone he knows, he will protect the glass from corruption. When Abulfat returned from a meeting with Aga Zubov, he presented a jeweled scepter from the Russian Tsar Catherine to Vagif. Let us anticipate the events and say that Vagif's son, along with Gasim Aga, was killed by Mohammad Bey Javanshir (sources give the name of Vagif's son as Ali Aga - A.H.).

Let's pay attention to another point. In his conversations with Ibrahim Khan, Vagif draws attention to the great danger to the khanate posed by the marriage of Abulfat agha, who is from Ibrahim Khan's family, to the daughter of Armenian Malik Shahnazar, who is a traitor. It should be noted that the writer carefully analyzed the historical sources and presented the fact that the Armenians have been claiming Karabakh since the time of the khanates in an artistic plan with real facts. We even learn that Georgy Shahnazarov, the chief assistant of the last leader of the USSR, Gorbachev, is also one of Malik Shahnazarov's descendants and carries on his ideas. The writer's awareness, the artistic result of his familiarity with the documents of

the period, reveals the history of the phrase "Let's blush" about Zubov.

If the history of the Karabakh Khanate is the main line of the narrative, one of the main aspects that the writer wants to draw attention to is the Armenian factor. When we make historical parallels, we see that the facts given in the work mainly express historical reality. It is also known that the kinship of the khans and heirs of Karabakh and other Azerbaijani khanates with the Gajars and Armenians is a plan of Armenian and Persian diplomacy. Thus, Ibrahim Khan is angry because Ganja Khan Javad Khan and Malik Majnun are guiding the Qajar troops. In their dialogue, if Javad Khan expresses his kinship with the Qajars and is forgiven, Malik Majnun says that his son is Abulfat Agha's uncle, and if he kills him, Abulfat Agha will avenge him. The political situation is tense not only in the Khanate, but in all of Azerbaijan, because Qajar is marching on Karabakh for the second time. Ibrahim Khan goes to Jar-Balakan to gather help and an army, or to take refuge in Darban, to his relative Umma Khan. The fortress of Shusha was captured, Vagif was arrested, but an assassination attempt was organized on Qajar. One of the perpetrators, Abbas Sadiq Khan Shagaigi, fled to Ganja, while the other, Safarali, stayed in Shusha.

The writer even anticipates the events and provides certain information. At this time, we learn that Sadiq Khan Shagaig was deceived and captured by Fatali Shah, who later replaced Qajar, and starved to death. Ibrahim Khan negotiates with Fatali Shah and sends his son Abulfat Agha and Javad Khan's sister Agabayim's daughter from Tutubayim to Tehran as hostages. It should be noted that the writer gives episodes from the life of Agabayim, who is also a poetess, in Tehran, and at this time, he mostly remains loyal to historical sources. Her brother's planting of a khan's garden in Tehran, Khari's inability to raise a nightingale, the poem created in connection with this, the information surrounding the verse "If Tehran returns to heaven, Karabakh will not be forgotten" are mentioned, examples of her creativity are given, and even her father Ibrahim Khan's letter is included in the text to increase the historical and political connection of the work.

In the narrative, the return of Ibrahim Khan, the conclusion of a treaty with Sisianov on May 1, 1805 on subjection, the deployment of the Russian army to Karabakh under the leadership of Lisanevich, the march of the Iranian army to Karabakh under the leadership of Abbas Mirza, the removal of Ibrahim Khan's family from the Khan's garden, the killing by Lisanevich, the death of his son Mehdiqulu Khan as the "Karabagh Duma," Abulfat Agha's prevention of the transfer of the population around the village of Tugh to Ordubad, Abulfat Agha's escape to Iran for life, and

Mehdiglu Khan's attempts for the khanate are given. The writer Abulfat says that he longs for Karabakh, which is important in terms of the writer's foresight and the expression of his national position. Because Karabakh will not be a homeland for Abulfat lords! As Ibrahim Khan said, Abulfat aga "didn't draw on his bones, but on his milk."

The creation of a large period of the history of the khanate in a short volume, as well as a complete picture, creates a positive opinion about the work and the level of preparation of the author. In this sense, it is necessary to draw attention to the moments that determine the historicity of the work. Thus, giving facts based on Mirza Jamal's "Karabaghnama", which is accepted as an authoritative source on the history of Karabakh, is positive, even if it is for the sake of violating the principles of artistry. The writer gives the date of the killing of Ibrahim Khan with reference to the chronicles: "...These men were killed three hours before the morning on the night of June 14, 1806" (Garayev, 2001a), or, citing Mirza Jamal, "Shusha fortress, which is the gate of Georgia and Shirvan, should not get into the hands of the Russians," his views are an expression of historical and political conditions.

In the work, the author creates an open encyclopedia of Armenian intentions around the Karabakh Khanate. Malik Shahnazar becomes a traitor to Panahali Khan, and as reflected in the writer's story "The Spawns Passed", he acts as a mediator in the breakdown of relations with the Khan of Shaki and the Khan of Chalabi. By marrying Shahnazar's daughter Rugami to Ibrahim Khan, he took a big step in the direction of his dirty intentions. Malik Majnun, the son of Shahnazar, became a mediator in the arrival of the Iranian army to Karabakh and was killed by Ibrahim Khan. In his last breath, Abulfat confesses in an Armenian accent how he poisoned the lord. One of Shahnazar's grandsons is Abulfat Agha, whose mission is to seize the khanate, take revenge on his father, and give Karabakh to the Armenians. In the end, he causes the death of Ibrahim Khan, and his brother Mehdigulu tries to kill Khan. Shahnazar's other grandson is Jumshud, who also grew up at Ibrahim Khan's table, but always waits for an opportunity to fulfill his traitorous nature. Such an opportunity arises with Lisanevich's arrival in Karabakh. He goes into service with him, conveys the news from Ibrahim Khan and Fatali Khan through Abulfat Agha to Lisanevich, and even tells Lisanevich that Askeran Castle was built by Malik Shahnazar.

It is those Armenians who set Lisanevich against Ibrahim Khan, caused the death of Ibrahim Khan, and created long-term "Karabakh" plans. One of the examples of historical prose written on the subject of Karabakh is the historical narrative "Batman Sword" by Agil Abbas. It should

be noted that the writer first worked on the work in a narrative version, and later improved it and published it as a historical novel.

Literary critic Tehran Alishanoglu, talking about the short story "Batman Sword" by Agil Abbas, writes: "In the last Soviet period, Agil Abbas wrote the short story "Batman Sword" (1988). The time has come to say the word with history, and also with an appeal to national history" (Mammadli, 2016, p. 394). The chosen name of the story is Mohammad Bey Javanshir, the son of Mehrli Bey, the brother of Karabakh Khan, Ibrahimkhalil Khan, and Batmankilync. Based on the information received from historical sources, the writer connects the "Batman sword" component with the genealogy and two swords written on the gazelle skin left by Genghis Khan, the great grandfather of the Bayat tribe. It is with these swords that Mohammad Bey Javanshir fights against Qajar. In the narrative, the position of the Karabakh Khanate in the wars between Tsarist Russia and Iran, the conflicts between the Khanates, attempts to unify, and Ibrahimkhalil Khan's efforts in this direction are fictionalized according to historical sources.

We learn from the narrative that the strategy of Agha Muhammad Shah Qajar, who took power after Karim Khan Zand, is based on establishing a single-authority administration system in the region. At this point, the writer compares Qajar with Amir Teymur in Qajar's language, and in fact draws historical parallels and concludes, "Qajar was not Amir Teymur. It could not even have a fingernail" (Abbas, 1988). This is received as the result of historical-political evaluation in the eyes of the author. Historical events find their place in the work in this way: after the death of Karim Khan in 1783, Qajar walks to Mazandaran, Astaraba; his brother Jafargulu marches on Isfahan; Zubov moves towards Darban. At the center of all these events is the Karabakh Khanate and the efforts of Ibrahimkhalil Khan. We also learn that Zubov's move to Azerbaijan worries Ibrahimkhalil Khan as well as the Gajars. Because, in the war between these two forces, the Azerbaijani khanates will be damaged, the population will be destroyed, and looting will happen.

It should be noted that we can see this position in the "History of Karabakh" by Mirza Jamal Javanshir, which is considered the most reliable source of the history of Karabakh (Javanshir, 1989). The writer writes that supporters of Mohammad Bey Javanshir, as well as supporters of Russia and Iran in the khanate, are working towards the unification of the khanates and the establishment of an independent state of Azerbaijan. Khanate minister M.P. Vagif and his supporters, Ibrahimkhalil Khan saw the salvation of the Karabakh Khanate in friendship with Tsarist

Russia. In the work, the writer expresses the position of Mohammad Bey in this way: "There were supporters of Mohammad Bey, whose belief is that neither Russia, nor Iran, but a fully independent Azerbaijan" (Abbas, 1988).

As we mentioned, working on the narrative, the writer writes the novel "Batman Sword". Researcher of historical novels Y. Akhundlu writes about the novel and the character of Mohammad Bey Javanshir: "In the novel, Mohammad Bey Javanshir attracts attention in two aspects. First of all, he is remembered as a brave general. Later, as a patriot who is zealous for his country..." (Akhundlu, 2013, p. 285). As is clear from history, Ibrahimkhalil Khan goes to Darban to get help, during the Qajar campaign, and the defense of the Khanate falls on Mohammad Bey Javanshir. Describing the scenes of the attack of the Qajar army on the Shusha fortress, the writer emphasizes that the drummers of the Qajar army throw away their drums and embrace their swords on the way to their homeland. Inevitably, at this point, the question arises, which homeland? Aren't those who fought in the Qajar army and Mohammad Bey's group Azerbaijanis? Isn't Azerbaijan the homeland of all of them?

The writer's position, which comes from his unique national thinking, the expression of his national thinking, answers the well-known questions in the work in this way: "When both enemies called the same sky, the same god, and the same land for help and forced it". In accordance with the psychology of the time, the writer reveals his unique ideas and national position in the course of events, and when he writes the description of his two brothers' battle to the death, "Blood fell from the sky instead of rain", he comes to these ideas to get to the essence: "There was no God. He was also deaf and blind..." (Abbas, 1988).

It should be noted that in the literature of the Soviet period, there was a certain aggression in the appeal to the cult of God - "Creator", and at the same time, the writer's position is understandable when we consider the thesis of Western philosophers "God is dead". Let's take into account that the way chosen by the writer to describe the fight to the death of two brothers for a country was also strong enough. If we look at some of the details selected from the work, the factor of killing brother against brother as one of the biggest calamities in the history of this nation is described in very effective details. For example, Khaliqverdi, a simple peasant, gave his son Elyar as a soldier to the khanate during the first march of Qajar to Karabakh. However, he had high hopes for his son, and most of them were not met. Seeing that the siege was pointless, Qajar moved towards Tiflis. While receiving news from Elyar, Khaliqverdi heard that his son was wounded in the chest. Let's remember that this factor has been used many times in Azerbaijani

prose: "Don't touch your back to the enemy when you are standing, son".

In the second march of Qajar, Khaliqverdi and men like him stopped working in the fields and gardens, took weapons and went to battle. With this, the writer brings to the reader's attention that the trained army of Qajar was faced with ordinary peasants who were separated from their work in the fields and given weapons. The writer's second goal, the point he wants to draw attention to, is that a Khaliqverdi man is killed in battle by Jafar, who is fighting in the army of his brother Qajar. At this point, the writer leaves the word to the reader. As a result of treachery during the battle in difficult conditions, the gates of the Shusha fortress were opened to the Qajar army. We read: "Those sitting at the head of Ibrahim Khan's table and those with bread on their knees were seen from afar" (Abbas, 1988).

The writer exhibits a unique skill of description. The writer who draws historical parallels compares Amir Teymur and Qajar: "If Amir Teymur first thought of Abdul Qadir Bagh to take revenge when he invaded Baghdad for the second time and entered the city, Agha Muhammad Shah Qajar swore at Muhammad Bey Javanshir" (Abbas, 1988). The writer also says that Amir Teymur and Qajar could not be compared. The keys of the Shusha fortress are handed over to Qajar. In order to capture Bey Mohammad, the elder of the Bayat tribe, Zeynalabdin, is first imprisoned by Qajar's order, then they put him back on a horse and send him to Bayat. In some cases, the writer distorts historical facts for the sake of art, and this adds a positive tone to the work. Mohammad Bey meets Zeynalabdin Agha on the road, and when he sees him in this condition, he promises to cut off Qajar's ear and send it to him. After all, throughout the story, we learn that Muhammad Bey Javanshir was famous for cutting off ears in battles, and he even made the Qajar army a nuisance.

Before entering the battle to the death, Mohammad Bey burns the thousand-year-old genealogy written on the gazelle skin given to him by Uygur Alish. And finally, Qajar is killed at night, Muhammad Bey is released from prison, and the narrative ends with these sentences: "In the morning, two horsemen came out of the castle. ...The Qajar's head was taken as a gift to Ibrahim Khan in a gold case. The other horseman was listening to Zeynalabdin Agha in a gold casket - Qajar's ear" (Abbas, 1988, 32). It is clear that Qajar was killed in Shusha. In history, the events happened as follows: "Soon, on July 4, 1797, Agha Muhammad Shah was assassinated by his close friends - Safarali Bey and Abbas Bey, on the initiative of Ibrahimkhalil Khan's nephew Muhammad Bey" (Mahnudov, 1994).

With this fact, the writer expressed the victory of justice. Let us remind you that there is a proverb related to this period: "There is someone who turns a nail into a nail". The key that emerges from the work is to draw attention to the fact that the writer's appeal to this period is the trouble caused by the conflict between the Azerbaijani khanates, the inability to unite, the occupation of our lands by the forces that use it, and the killing of brothers and sisters. The work has a rich system of images, and each of these images separately plays a role in the formation of the plot line. Muhammad Bey, Ibrahimkhalil Khan, Vagif, Abulfat Agha and other characters are important in enriching the historical color of the work. At the same time, Zeynalabdin Agha - the head of the Bayat tribe, is a character that attracts attention; Uygur Alish - Muhammad Bey's teacher and defender; and Khaliqverdi - a simple peasant, distinguished by his patriotism and zeal.

Uygur Alish is one of the guards of the Bayat tribe in a certain sense; he is the bearer of a certain mission. He gives Mohammad Bey the Batman sword and the gazelle skin on which the genealogy of the tribe is written. Alish attracts attention with his actions, and at the end, the dance he performs with a special pre-death ritual - welcoming death, burning himself in a bonfire, spreading the ashes of his sanctification all over Karabakh - the image in itself carries the secret of the work and the era. Death dressed in a mystical robe, let's remember, is also present in the novel "The Day of Murder" by Yusif Samadoglu, a contemporary of the writer. Finally, Muhammad Bey and Uygur Alish are talking by the fireplace. Uygur Alish says: "...your descendants... descended from this fire" (Abbas, 1988, 9); or details such as "Ashraf Ibrahim came from the back of a wolf, was born from a wolf" (Abbas, 1988) add a mystical aura to the work, condition its historicity, and at the same time indicate the writer's reading circle and familiarity with the period from which the subject was taken.

CONCLUSIONS

Zaman Garayev's historical narrative Karabagh Dumesi is a work that provides comprehensive information about the history of Karabakh, offering a thorough depiction of the social and political life of the khanate and the diplomacy of Ibrahim Khan. While it is true that the artistic value is sometimes weakened due to the complete contrast of historical facts presented in certain parts of the work—despite the vivid imagery—it remains an exemplary narrative in terms of its fidelity to historical sources and serves as a successful example of the genre. Garayev's historical narrative They Passed the Spawn retains its place in the literary-historical memory as an original artistic example. At the end of the work, the author conveys his thoughts through the words of Chalabi Khan: "This land we walk on

is a legacy from our ancestors. We must preserve it and pass it on to future generations. We must protect the unity and integrity of our sacred homeland as we would the apple of our eye. We must not give an inch of our land to foreigners!"

Agil Abbas is a writer with a unique style in Azerbaijani prose. Both the short story Batman's Sword and the novel based on it present a complete image of the history of the Karabakh Khanate, marking a successful step toward fostering national consciousness. At the same time, the writer's individual creative talent, national thinking, and uncompromising stance on the national issue add positive value to the work. When portraying a person who wants to protest against the Qajars but lacks courage, Abbas uses a specific expression such as "...he didn't have enough manhood", which also appears in his other works and contributes to his distinctive style. In the historical narrative, the writer's deep familiarity with period sources is evident. Additionally, his broad literary knowledge, adherence to tradition, and skillful use of folk creativity enhance the work's value. It is worth noting that the narrative was written in 1981—a time when Azerbaijani prose was strongly connected to national history and memory, while also reflecting certain influences from the modernization of global prose. The reported death of Uygur Alish—his self-immolation and the mystical layer surrounding it—the presence of death in the novel The Day of Murder to which it is compared, etc., not only contribute to the success of the work as an example of historical prose but also connect it to the broader literary trends of the time. We read in the story: "...One day this Najaf bey would save Mohammad bey from death. There was still a long way to go...". Such epic descriptions were among the original techniques in Azerbaijani prose at the time.

Despite all these positive qualities, there are moments in the narrative that somewhat violate historical and literary conventions. For instance, at the end of the work, Zeynalabdin Agha speaks in the Batmankilinc dialect—though this is not consistent throughout the work—and uses expressions like "gelif" and "gedif". While incorporating dialectal features of the period in the characters' language is generally a positive and authentic approach, limiting it to a single page and just one dialogue between two characters is not easily understandable. Thus, Agil Abbas's historical narrative Batmanqilinc, which tells the story of the Karabakh Khanate, is one of the most valuable examples of Azerbaijani historical prose recounting the history of Karabakh. Today, the reading of historically themed prose plays an important role in the study of Karabakh's history, alongside historical sources—provided that the writer approaches history with accuracy.

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