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Ticari İlişkilerde İçeri Şehir Kervansaraylarının Turizm Potansiyeline Kültürel Bakış

A Cultural Overview of The Tourism Potential of Icheri Sheher Caravansaraies In Commercial Relations

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Abstract

Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, has an important role in world trade for centuries. Being surrounded by the Caspian Sea has a positive effect on the functioning of the port city of Baku. Thus, Baku has had very strong trade relations with China, Dagestan, Russia, Iran and other countries for many years. It is very important to have a caravanserai for travelers and merchants who come to the city in commercial relations. In ancient times, caravanserais were used as accommodation centers for merchants from distant lands for commercial purposes. Therefore, there were many caravanserais in Icheri Sheher in the center of Baku. From the earliest period until the 1920s was widespread commercial use of the caravanserai in Icheri Sheher. In general, the caravanserai as a cultural place is one of the main monuments of tourism. Among the caravanseries of Icheri Sheher, monuments such as Bukhara caravanserai, Multani caravanserai, Small caravanserai, Kasim bey caravanserai have survived to the the present day. The article tries to explain the commercial and cultural purpose of the existing caravanserais in Baku fortress from the ancient period to the 1920s. At the same time, the aim of the article is to talk about the current state of the caravanserais in the mentioned years. As a result, starting from all these purposes, the past and present cultural values of the Icheri Sheher caravanserais are compared in the article and their importance in modern Icheri Sheher tourism is researched.

Keywords: Baku, The Caravanserais of Icheri Sheher, Commercial Relations, Culture, Tourism.

Özet

Azerbaycan'ın başkenti Bakü, yüzyıllardır dünya ticaretinde önemli bir yere sahiptir. Hazar Denizi ile çevrili olması, Bakü'nün liman şehri olarak işleyişini olumlu yönde etkilemiştir. Böylece, Bakü, uzun yıllar Çin, Dağıstan, Rusya, İran gibi bir çok ülkelerle güçlü ticari ilişkilere sahip olmuştur.

Böyle ki, ticari ilişkilerde şehre gelen seyyah ve tüccarlar için kervansarayların olması çok önemlidir. Eski dönemlerde kervansaraylar ticaret maksadıyla uzak diyarlardan gelen tüccarlar için konaklama merkezi olarak kullanılıyordu. Bu nedenle, Bakü'nün merkezinde bulunan İçeri Şehir'de çok sayıda kervansaray bulunuyordu. En erken dönemlerden 1920'lere kadar, İçeri Şehir'de kervansarayların ticari amaçla kullanımı yaygındı. Genel olarak, kültürel bir yer olarak kervansaray, turizmin ana anıtlarından biridir. İçeri Şehir kervansaraylarından Buhara kervansaray, Multani kervansaray, Küçük kervansaray, Kasım bey kervansarayı gibi anıtlar günümüze kadar gelebilmiştir. Makale, eski dönemden 1920'lere kadar, Bakü Kalesi'deki mevcut kervansarayların ticari ve kültürel maksadını açıklamaya çalışmaktadır. Aynı zamanda makalenin amacı, söz konusu yıllarda kervansarayların mevcut durumundan bahsetmektir. Sonuç olarak, tüm bu amaçlardan yola çıkılarak, makalede İçeri Şehir kervansaraylarının geçmiş ve günümüzdeki kültürel değerlerinin karşılaştırılmakta ve modern İçeri Şehir turizmindeki önemi araştırılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bakü, İçeri Şehir Kervansarayları, Ticari İlişkiler, Medeniyet, Turizm.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Azerbaijan has been a very active state in the field of trade since time immemorial. In this case, it is of great importance that the territory is bordered by countries and surrounded by the Caspian Sea. Thus, our state has extensive trade relations both by land and water. Also, the Caspian Sea is very important for maritime trade. In the past, sea trade was the most active in the country. It is for this reason that the city of Baku, which is surrounded by the Caspian Sea, was very famous in the past, as it is now. Thus, the main purpose of the article is to study the commercial life of Baku from the earlier times to the 1920s, as well as to examine its cultural position at that time. At the same time, the position of cultural factors in the commercial development of the city is studied in the article. The object of the research is the cultural objects, more precisely, the caravanserais, which are included in the commercial structure of the country.

1.1. The Purpose Of The Study

The main purpose of the article is multifaceted. First, the history of caravanserais, which are considered historical and cultural objects included in the composition of the Icheri Sheher, and their activity in the field of trade in the past are reviewed. Then, the importance of those caravanserais for the tourism sector in the modern era is investigated. The main goal here is to investigate the role of Icheri sheher caravanserais in the trade of Baku and its utility value for modern tourism.

1.2. The Method Of The Study

The study method consists of stages such as data collection, analysis, results and recommendations. In the data collection phase, places such as the library and the Internet were consulted. First of all, we should mention that scientific books are given priority in the study. Among these books, books and academic studies related to history, culture and tourism have taken their place. Academic books on trade and tourism are first referred to in order to study the influence of Icheri sheher caravanserais on modern tourism. Finally, the article concludes with conclusions and suggestions based on those conclusions.

2. COMMERCIAL LIFE OF THE CITY OF BAKU FROM THE MOST ANCIENT PERIOD TO THE 1920s

Baku has been one of the famous cities of the world since ancient times. It is believed that the history of the establishment of this city belongs to ancient times. It is written in the scientific literature that it was active in the field of trade after the city was created. According to the sources, the city has been active in trade since the 1st century. It

is obvious that since ancient times people have loved to explore new places. Some of them have visited our country. Travelers wandering the land wrote extensive information about the city and its trade. It is in these notes that they talked about the commercial activity in the city and the products that are most sold in the trade during shopping. In general, the main thing that made Baku famous around the world was its oil. After oil, salt mining was popular in the city. Ibn Sina, Al-Muqaddasi, Abu Dulaf, Al-Istakhri, Al-Masudi, Al-Biruni, Hamdullah Qazvini, Muhammad ibn Najib Bakran, Abu-I-Fidani, Al-Qarnati, Yagut Hamavi, Marco Polo, Jurden Catalani de Severak, Iosafato Barbaro, Abdurrashid Bakuvi, Evliya Chalabi such as prominent personalities provided extensive information (Ashurbayli, 1998: 36, 92-97; Ashurbayli, 1997: 128).

In addition to travelers, there is also information about the commercial life of Baku in literary works. Even in the 12th century poet Khagani Afzaledin Shirvani's ode in praise of Shirvanshah Akhsitan ibn Manucheher, he points out that Baku had a strong trade relationship. It is mentioned in the ode:

*“Baki duasını unutmaz bir an,
Olub sayesinde Bestem, Xevaran”*
(Baku will never forget the prayer,
Thanks to Bastam, Khavaran)

In the third and fourth verses of the mentioned ode, it is indicated that the city of Baku had a sea trade connection with countries such as Iran, the country of the Caspians and Dagestan. The goods found in the territory of Baku fortress, especially in the territory of the Shirvanshahs Palace, prove the trade relationship of the city with the countries. The discovery of bronze kubachi lamps and Rey ceramics from the area as a result of archaeological excavations is a prime example of this. Also, Evliya Chalabi gave extensive information about the trade of Baku. Thus, the city once established trade relations with Dagestan, Iran, India, China and the country of the Kalmuks, Khatai, Hotan, Faghfur Eli and Zenan, Moscow, Western Europe, as well as other cities of Azerbaijan, etc. During the trade, goods such as cloth, white and black oil, marena, fur skins, saffron, and salt were bought (Ashurbayli, 1998: 100, Chalabi, 1997: 68; Nazarova, 2020: 68-78).

The numismatic samples found from the Baku fortress also prove the commercial life of Baku. The discovered coin samples were usually cut in the name of rulers, kings. An example of this is the coins minted in the names of these rulers: Abagha Khan, Ghazan Khan, Olcaytu Sultan, Abu Said, Hulaku Khan, Ahmad Khan, Shirvanshah I Akhsitan ibn Manuchehr, Shirvanshah Garshasb ibn Farrukhzad, Gizil Arslan II of the Seljuks of Rum, Darband Malik Muzaffar bin Muhammad, Malik Mahmud ibn Beshken of Ahar, Byzantine emperor Alexey Komnenos I. Coins were usually minted in copper, bronze, silver, gold. However, coin hoards were also found in the territory of the Baku fortress (Archeology of Azerbaijan, 2008: 409; Ashurbayli, 1998: 101).

3. CARAVANSARIES OF ICHERI SHEHER

There have been special buildings in the territory of Icherisheher since the past. These include mosques, baths, tombs, palaces, as well as caravanserais. Caravanserai served as a shelter for travelers and merchants traveling to the area as a historical-cultural object. It is well known that people need special facilities during their travels. These objects ensured their relaxation. So, the visitors who came here in the past were engaged in trade and rested. However, some of the caravanserais have not reached our present time, and some still exist today. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the history of those caravanserais.

In the past, there were many caravanserais in Baku fortress. This factual information is confirmed by scientific sources. Those caravanserais have not survived to our present time. So, the four caravanserais on the sea coast belonging to the 17th century have not come down to our modern times. There were also five caravansaries near the fort that were used for land and sea trade. The famous German traveler of the 17th century, Engelbert Kaempfer and the Turkish traveler Evliya Chalabi reported about the caravanserais that existed in Baku at that time. Kaempfer wrote a caravanserai in his note. That caravanserai had an octagonal shape, and the courtyard was surrounded by an arched porch with columns. It existed on the city road leading to the Shamakhi gates of this castle. Another Icheri sheher caravanserai that we got from the sources was a caravanserai called Shishali. The meaning of the name of this caravanserai is quite interesting. Instead of having windows in some of the caravanserai's cells, lanterns have been made from glass on the roof. It is for this reason that the name of the caravanserai has remained as Shishali caravanserai (Ashurbayli, 1998: 223; Suleymanov, 1987: 32).

3.1. Caravanserais That Came To Our Time

In addition to the Icheri sheher caravanserai, which have not survived to our time, there are also the main caravanserai that have survived to the present day. Four caravansary can be mentioned: Bukhara caravanserai, Multani caravanserai, Kasim bey caravanserai, Small caravanserai.

These buildings belong to the Middle Ages. Generally, caravanserais were square in plan, consisted of balconies and cells. The cells were private rooms designed to provide accommodation for those who came here. In the courtyard in the middle of the caravanserais, there is a hall under the open sky, where merchants and travelers who came to the city used to gather and relax here.

The Bukhara caravanserai was built at the end of the 15th century. That caravanserai was a recreation center for merchants from Central Asia. It should be noted that the Bukhara caravanserai was restored in 1964 and the building was freed with additional buildings. Also, as a result of archeological excavations conducted here, it was found that the water line supplying water to Baku passed under the caravanserai.

The Multani caravanserai also belongs to the 15th century. The caravanserai is located opposite the Bukhara caravanserai. This caravanserai is called the Indian caravanserai. It is interesting that this building used to be the main shelter for Indian merchants and pilgrims who came to visit the fire pits. Also, Multan is the name of a city in Pakistan. The name of the building comes from here. The Multani caravanserai is similar to the Bukhara caravanserai in terms of its style.

The Kasim bey caravanserai (İkimartabali caravanserai) was built in the 15th century. The caravanserai was given by Shirvanshah I Khalilullah to Baku resident Kasim bey and his heirs. According to the planning, the second floor of the caravanserai repeats the first floor. It is protected from the south-eastern part by corner forts. At the same time, it plays a role in the city's defense system. The Small caravanserai (Kichik caravanserai) was built at the end of the 15th century and at the beginning of the 16th century. This caravanserai is called Khan's caravanserai. An interesting information about this caravanserai has been put forward. According to the opinion, this is not actually a caravanserai, but a madrasa built opposite the Jame Mosque (İbrahimov, 2006: 140-141; İbrahimov, 2017: 86; Fatullayev-Figarov, 2013: 119, 125-126).

4. USE OF CARAVANSARES AS TOURISM OBJECTS IN THE MODERN PERIOD

In our modern times, caravanserais no longer function as a commercial space. However, caravanserais have not lost their main essence at the moment. It is clear that in the past, caravanserais were the main resting place for travelers and merchants who came to the city. This tradition is preserved today. However, this situation is different now. Caravanserais are currently the facilities that define people's relaxation. The above-mentioned caravanserais (Bukhara, Multani, Kasim bey, Small) are operating as restaurants. These caravanserais are currently at the service of visitors to the city. The fact that the monuments serve as recreational objects increases their function as cultural objects. Foreign and local guests who come to the caravanserai as a restaurant provide an opportunity to understand the historical past of this place, including its role in the cultural field. As it is clear, caravanserais combine the unity characteristics of culture, trade and tourism. It is known that trade and travel played a big role in the development of tourism. The early journeys around the world marked the beginning of modern tourism. This is the main factor that directly affects tourism, including culture. Thus, Icheri sheher caravanserais are useful for the modern tourism sector if they operate in this way. Currently, many tourists come to these places. Tourists are attracted here by the antique atmosphere, ancient structure and appearance of caravanserais, serving delicious Azerbaijani food, and hospitable service. This has a positive effect on the touristic activity of Icheri sheher. However, the monuments of Icheri sheher are currently in the virtual tour project. It is Bukhara and Multani caravanserais that are also available in this tour. Their virtual operation plays a major role in promoting the monuments worldwide (Republic newspaper, 2008: 2; Nazarova, 2020a: 68-78; Nazarova, 2020b: 176-181).

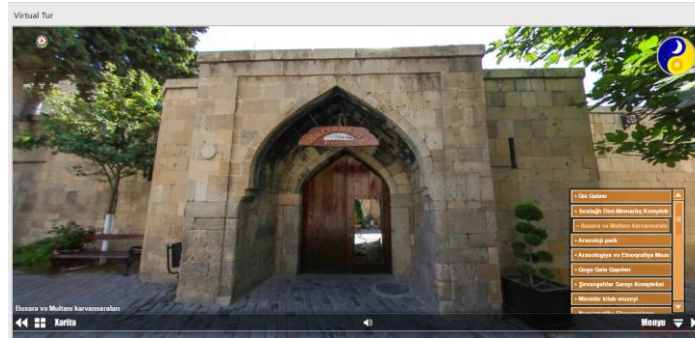


Figure 1. Bukhara and Multani caravanserais on a virtual tour (<https://icherisheher.gov.az/az/18-project/>)

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

So, in the article, we analyzed Icheri sheher caravansaries from a cultural point of view and came to the following conclusions:

- During the period we studied, Baku had extensive trade relations with foreign countries;
- Active activity in the field of trade has led to the rise of the city in the cultural, economic and political fields;
- At that time, caravanserais were very important in terms of commercial relations of the Baku;
- Caravanserai were the main shelter for travelers and merchants in the past;
- Some of the caravanserai have survived to our modern times, while some have not;
- Also, caravanserais are one of the main objects of Icheri sheher culture as a cultural-historical monument;
- The caravanserais that have survived to our time are currently operating as restaurants;
- At the same time, as a cultural monument, the caravanserais of the Icheri sheher have a positive effect on the modern tourism sector;
- The virtualization of the monuments of the Icheri sheher has a positive effect on the promotion of culture and tourism;
- The caravanserais of the Icheri sheher have an important position for each of the trade, culture and tourism fields.

Based on the results, we also consider it appropriate to make the following suggestions:

- ✓ It would be better if the history of the caravanserais that existed in Icherisheher were re-examined by experts. Perhaps there are still unknown points about Icheri sheher caravanserais;
- ✓ Bukhara and Multani caravanserais from Icheri sheher caravanserais have taken their place in the virtual tour. It would be good if other caravanserais were also included in this virtualization process. Also, it would be better if the virtualization process is strengthened. This process has a special role in their promotion.

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