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# SYMBOLISM AND ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGIES OF MEDIEVAL TOMBS IN KARABAKH: COMPARATIVE REFLECTIONS FROM THE ISLAMIC WORLD

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***Abstract.** This research analyzes the architectural features of medieval tombs in the Karabakh region and explores their symbolic meanings within the broader context of Islamic funerary architecture.*

***The purpose** of the article is to identify the typological characteristics of Karabakh tomb monuments and to examine their cultural, spiritual, and symbolic significance in comparison with similar monuments in different regions of the Islamic world. The article compares the Karabakh tombs with tomb architecture in Azerbaijan, Iran, Anatolia, Central Asia, and other Islamic regions, emphasizing both common architectural traditions and local characteristics. Particular attention is given to the typology of the tombs' forms, including octagonal and dodecagonal plans, domed and conical roofs, stone ornamentation, and epigraphic elements such as Kufic and Nastaliq inscriptions.*

***Methodology.** The research is based on comparative architectural analysis, visual typology, and the study of historical and architectural sources. Through stylistic interpretation and cross-regional comparison, the study evaluates the symbolic content of the monuments, including Sufi concepts, cosmological symbolism, and representations of power and sanctity.*

***The results** of the article demonstrate that the tomb architecture of Karabakh reflects the interaction of local building traditions with broader artistic and ideological trends of the Islamic world. The monuments integrate Turkic nomadic heritage, regional construction techniques, and Islamic spiritual symbolism. In conclusion, the study highlights that the medieval tombs of Karabakh are not only funerary structures but also important cultural and artistic expressions that reflect collective memory, spiritual beliefs, and the architectural heritage of the Islamic civilization.*

***Scientific novelty.** The scientific novelty of this research lies in the comprehensive and comparative analysis of medieval tomb architecture in the Karabakh region within the broader framework of Islamic architectural heritage. While previous studies have primarily examined tomb monuments in Azerbaijan from a regional or stylistic perspective, this article introduces a cross-regional approach that places the Karabakh tombs in dialogue with mausoleum traditions of Iran, Anatolia, Central Asia, and the Middle East.*

***Practical relevance.** The practical relevance of this research is related to the preservation, documentation, and scholarly interpretation of medieval architectural monuments in the Karabakh region. Many of these tombs were damaged, neglected, or altered during the period of occupation, making their systematic study an important*

*step toward their restoration and protection. The findings of this study may serve as a valuable academic resource for architects, historians, and specialists working in the fields of architectural conservation, cultural heritage management, and monument restoration. The comparative analysis presented in the article can also support future restoration projects by providing historical and stylistic references for the original architectural forms and decorative elements of the monuments.*

*Keywords:* Tomb, Karabakh, Sufism, Seljuk architecture, Islamic, Mausoleum typology, Architectural symbolism, Sufi architecture, Turkic architectural traditions, Architectural heritage, Monument restoration, Architectural ornamentation.

## INTRODUCTION

The research of medieval tomb architecture in Karabakh remains insufficiently explored within the broader framework of Islamic architectural history. While numerous studies have examined Islamic funerary monuments in regions such as Iran, Anatolia, and Central Asia, the architectural typologies and symbolic meanings of tomb structures in Karabakh have received comparatively limited scholarly attention. This creates a gap in understanding the regional variations and intercultural connections within the Islamic world's funerary architecture. When considering the origins and initial geography of the tomb concept, one can trace its primitive form to the monumental burial structures and kurgans that were prevalent among pre-Islamic Turkic peoples. In Central Asia, the Altai region, and the Orkhon Valley, monumental tombs covered with earth or stone for military leaders and rulers were common in Turkic cultural traditions. These structures held both religious and political-symbolic meanings. Over time, as architecture and craftsmanship developed, these kurgans evolved into tombs. The first tombs in the Islamic world emerged between the 8th and 10th centuries. While pre-Islamic burial practices were generally simpler, the graves of revered figures began to be transformed into pilgrimage sites following the spread of Shi'ism and Sufi orders. According to research, tomb construction first appeared among the Gokhturks and Uighurs and was later adopted and developed by the Turks of Central Asia and the Samanid dynasty, eventually spreading to other regions. During the Seljuk period, tombs became essential structures to commemorate the deceased [20].

The earliest monumental tombs began to appear in Iraq, Iran, and Central Asia. Under the influence of both the Seljuks and Sufi traditions, Iran and Khorasan became the cradle of tomb architecture. As these tombs often housed the tombs of saints and religious figures, they came to be regarded as sacred.

From a religious standpoint, the concept of the tomb may be considered inconsistent

with Islamic doctrine. However, their prevalence in Islamic regions, including Azerbaijan, is linked to the enduring influence of ancient Turkic customs. For instance, tower-shaped tombs—commemorative structures—were especially common in Anatolia, Azerbaijan, and Khorasan. In the Middle Ages, these structures were also known as “gunbez” (domes). Tomb architecture, beyond expressing post-mortem rituals and reverence for the deceased in Islamic culture, reflects the aesthetics of architecture and the historical development of construction technologies.

In the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, tombs such as those of Malik Azhdar, Kar Gunbaz, Akhsatan Baba, Ahmadalilar, Sheikh Babı, as well as the tombs of Gutlu Musa and the village tombs of Kangarli in Aghdam district, represent various historical periods and display diverse characteristics in terms of form, decorative elements, and function. The domed typologies, ornamental and epigraphic features, and spatial layouts of these monuments demonstrate a synthesis of local and regional architectural traditions.

The relevance of this research lies in its contribution to the preservation and interpretation of cultural heritage, particularly in the context of Karabakh's historical and architectural legacy. In recent years, increasing attention has been given to the restoration and documentation of monuments in post-conflict regions, making it essential to analyze their architectural features and symbolic dimensions. Furthermore, examining Karabakh tombs within a comparative Islamic context enhances our understanding of shared artistic traditions and regional uniqueness.

This research is closely related to current scientific discussions in the fields of architectural history, art history, and cultural heritage studies. It addresses key issues such as the classification of architectural typologies, the interpretation of symbolic elements in funerary structures, and the transmission of architectural ideas across the Islamic world. From a practical perspective, the findings may support conservation strategies,

heritage management policies, and the reconstruction of damaged monuments, contributing to both academic research and applied heritage preservation efforts.

### ANALYSIS OF RECENT RESEARCH

The theoretical framework of this article, which investigates the architectural features, typology and symbolism of the mid-century tombs in the Karabakh region, covers the Islamic world of the Turkish world, Iran, Anatolia and Central Asia. It is based on an extensive scientific literature on architecture. It analyzes the works of both local and international researchers with a comparative approach.

The formation of mausoleum architecture in Azerbaijan and the entire Southern Qafqaz area has been widely learned by local researchers. Yusifova [20] investigates the typological evolution of middle century religious monuments in the Azerbaijani regions and emphasizes that the tombs have both religious and social functions. This approach explains the functions of the Karabakh tombs as both a visitor's place and a memorial monument.

Qənbərova [16] analyzes the decorative features of Naxçıvan tombs and shows that their roots are connected to the Turkish tent (yurt) tradition. This idea is also supported in the article and emerges as one of the main ways to explain the uniforms of the Karabakh tombs, which originate from the tent archetype. Qiyasi [17] investigates the samples of Azerbaijani architecture from the Regular period and identifies the evolution process of mausoleum architecture in the region. His research is an important reference showing the extent of Salcuq's influence in the formation of architectural style. It is one of the main theoretical pillars of the rich heritage created by Salcuq architecture on tomb typology. Çelik [3] compares the development of Salcuq tombs in Iran, Azerbaijan and Anatolia, drawing attention to two main forms - sunburst and rose-like tombs. His research is important in showing the relevance of Karabakh tombs with regional architectural monuments. Öney [15] explains the sources of sculpture and intellectual structures in Anatolian Saljuq architecture. This research provides an important basis for the iconographic evaluation of the bull images in the Malik İjder tomb. Influential works investigating the early periods of Islamic architecture and the religious and symbolic aspects of the understanding of the tomb also strengthen the theoretical basis of the article. Grabar [7] describes the stages of formation of Islamic art and highlights the relevance of mausoleum architecture to Turkish-Mongolian burial traditions.

Behrens-Abouseif [1] analyzes the Mamluk period Cairo architecture and illuminates the religious-social functions of the pilgrimages [14]. The similarities between the tomb of Kar Günbiz and the tombs of Seyid Ruqiyya and Şajar ad-Dürr in Egypt are based on this literature.

### PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this study is to investigate the architectural typologies and symbolic meanings of medieval tombs located in the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and to analyze their place within the broader context of Islamic funerary architecture. The research aims to identify the structural characteristics, decorative elements, and spatial compositions of these monuments and to compare them with similar tomb structures in other regions of the Islamic world, including Iran, Anatolia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. Through this comparative approach, the study seeks to reveal both the shared architectural traditions and the unique local features that shaped the development of tomb architecture in Karabakh. Another objective of the research is to explore the symbolic and spiritual dimensions of these monuments, particularly their connections with Sufi concepts, Turkic nomadic cultural traditions, and cosmological symbolism within Islamic architectural thought.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The architectural ingenuity of the Seljuk builders in Anatolia is particularly notable in the realm of tomb architecture. While rooted in the traditions of the Great Seljuk Empire, the mausoleums of the Anatolian Seljuks incorporated a wider variety of forms than those of their predecessors. These türbes often featured a conical roof atop an inner hemispherical dome, with a polygonal or circular two-story base structure. The use of inscription panels and glazed tiles in their decoration may indicate connections to Iran and Central Asia. In general, tomb architecture during the Seljuk period represents a critical phase in the evolution of Islamic architecture, leaving a profound legacy in Iran, Central Asia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, and Anatolia. This architectural style was further developed and widely disseminated during the 11th to 13th centuries by the Great Seljuks and their successors, including the Eldiguzids, Rawadids, the Anatolian Seljuks, and the Jalalids. "Tombs were built in two primary forms: domed and tower-shaped. In many of these structures, mihrabs were installed in the southern wall, suggesting that they may have also functioned as places of prayer. While fired brick was the predominant material in tomb construction in Iran (including South



Fig. 1. "Three Domes" in Erzurum and "Qutlu Musa" in Aghdam district.

Source [Məmmədov N. İşğal altındakı tarixi-dini abidələrimiz. Bakı : Nurlar, 2015. 13 s.]

Azerbaijan) and across Azerbaijan, in Eastern Anatolia, tombs were initially built with brick but later constructed with stone" [3].

During the Seljuk period, the Turks constructed a number of valuable architectural monuments not only in Iran and Azerbaijan, but also in the Anatolian region of present-day Turkey. Among these monuments, tombs (mausoleums) occupy a special place. These tombs were primarily built in cities such as Kayseri, Erzincan, Erzurum, Ahlat, Konya, Sivas, and Niğde. In Erzurum, three large and one small tomb are located within an old cemetery to the south of the Great Mosque (Ulu Cami) and the "Çifte Minareli Madrasa". These tombs are popularly known as the "Üç Kümbetler" (Three Domes). The most prominent among them is the Emir Saltuk Mausoleum, which was built in the 12th century. The lower part of the body has a square plan, while the structure transforms into an octagonal form as it rises. The octagonal section then transitions into a cylindrical form through triangular elements, and the dome is completed in a pyramidal shape [4].

There are many architectural similarities between the Emir Saltuk Mausoleum and the Qutlu Musa Tomb, located in the village of Khachindarband in the Aghdam district of Azerbaijan. Like the Emir Saltuk mausoleum, the Qutlu Musa tomb is also composed of an octagonal structure with a pyramidal dome, built atop a stylobate. (figure 1) According to the inscription above its entrance, the tomb was built in 1314 by master architect Shahbanzar. "An important feature of the monument's overall composition is its pyramidal roof covering, made of stone slabs" [2, p. 13].

Two other tombs located east of the Emir Saltuk mausoleum date to the 14th century. Both have cylindrical forms and are constructed

of stone. Similar to the tomb in Khachindarband, these mausoleums also feature simple masonry surfaces framed by modest arches. In both cases, one can observe the «Seljuk chain» motif, commonly found in Seljuk architecture, carved within the band that encircles the body of the tomb (Figure 2).



Fig. 2. «Seljuk chain» on the surface of the tomb "Qutlu Musa"

Source [Ettinghausen Richard, Grabar Oleg, Jenkins-Madina Marilyn Islamic art and architecture 650–1250. New Haven : Yale University Press, 2001]

What distinguishes the Qutlu Musa Tomb in Aghdam is the presence of fine stalactite (muqarnas) compositions above all the niches, doors, and windows. Unfortunately, during the Armenian occupation, the wall paintings and inscriptions on the structure were erased, and instead, small crosses and new carvings were engraved onto the stones. Because the inner chamber of the mausoleum was perceived to resemble a cross, it was not physically destroyed—but it was instead "Armenianized" [5].

Similar tombs in Karabakh include the Mir Ali Türbe in Fuzuli, a tomb in the cemetery of Minkend village in the Lachin district, and a 14th-century tomb in Khojaly. The decorative motifs around the door of the Qutlu Musa

Mausoleum—especially on its upper and lateral edges—can also be observed in the Hunat Hatun Mosque in Kayseri, Turkey [2].

According to researchers, the architectural design of the tombs mentioned above was inspired by the structure and form of the nomadic tents (yurts) used by Turks. The nomadic Turks of Central Asia called their tents “Yurt,” and to immortalize their reverence for this traditional dwelling, they introduced a new architectural form into the built environment [6, p. 632].

From the 13th–14th centuries onwards, the southwestern regions of Azerbaijan—including the Lachin-Gubadli-Zangazur zone—developed close scholarly and religious ties with Iran and the Levant (Sham). These connections grew stronger during the Ilkhanid period, during which Sufi orders such as the Qadiriyya, Kubrawiyya, and Suhrawardiyya spread widely across both Iran and eastern Anatolia, leading to the formation of tomb architecture that evolved into pilgrimage sites [9, p. 1325].

The migration of Sufi sheikhs and devout pilgrims during this time facilitated the transmission of religious centers and architectural forms from region to region. The influence of Sufi orders in the Azerbaijani region began intensifying from the Seljuk period onward, particularly during the 12th to 14th centuries in the regions of Arran and Karabakh. Several tombs and shrines located in Karabakh and its surrounding areas were dedicated to Sufi sheikhs or dervishes. These structures often served not only as burial sites but also as spaces where Sufi rituals and dhikr (remembrance) ceremonies were performed. On certain tombs and

gravestones, one can find Sufi terminology such as “faqir”, “mardan”, “khalwat”, “sayyid”, “shaykh”, and “murshid”. The Arab traveler and merchant Ibn Battuta, in his work “The Travels of Ibn Battuta”, provides accounts of his visits to Sufi khanqahs, sheikhs, and dervishes in the Caucasus, Shirvan, and Arran regions [18]. Similarly, the Arab geographer and traveler Yaqut al-Hamawi, in his encyclopedic work *Mu‘jam al-Buldān* (“Dictionary of Countries”), mentions Sufi sheikhs when describing cities such as Barda, Ganja, and Arran [7]. One such example is the “Kar-Gümbəz” tomb located in the Cicimli village of Lachin district. Its location in an isolated mountainous area and its simple yet monumental structure reflect the architectural features of pilgrimage sites. “Similar architectural practices in terms of form can be observed in Egypt, particularly in the Sayyida Ruqayya (12th century) and Sayyida Shajar al-Durr (13th century) mausoleums from the Fatimid and Mamluk periods. (Figure 3.) These monuments, with their low, smoothly transitioned domes, leave a strong spiritual impression” [9].

The architectural structure of the “Kar Gümbəz” tomb exhibits features that diverge from local traditions, necessitating its evaluation not only within the framework of the regional architectural style but also within the broader Islamic architectural context. Unlike the typical conical domes found in the region, this monument appears to feature a spherical or parabolic dome, allowing for a comparative analysis with medieval mausoleum architecture in Egypt, Syria, and Iran. During the Ilkhanid period, architectural technologies were transmitted



Fig. 3. *Sayyida Shajar al-Durr* in Cairo, Egypt and “*Kar Gunbaz*” in Lachin district.

Source [Grabar O. *The formation of Islamic art*. New Haven : Yale University Press, 1987]

between centers of knowledge and practice, and dome construction techniques, as well as compositional principles, spread via Persian, Arab, and Central Asian architects working in Tabriz.

From this perspective, the dome of the "Kar Günbəz" tomb may be considered a product of local craftsmanship influenced by external technological and architectural practices. Although no definitive epigraphic or archival evidence regarding the function of the mausoleum has been found, its geographic location and architectural typology suggest that it likely served as a memorial monument not for a ruler or military leader, but rather for a Sufi ascetic or local religious figure. This typology resembles certain shrines from the Fatimid and Mamluk periods, and can be associated with the Islamic architectural concept of the "sacredness of solitude" [19].

The Kar Günbəz Mausoleum is attributed to the medieval period, and its construction is generally dated to the 13th–14th centuries. Its location corresponds with the geographic spread of Sufi architecture. Regarding the origin of its name, the word "Kar" may derive from "Kər," meaning "rocky area" or "solid ground". Alternatively, if "Kar Günbəz" is interpreted in the local dialect as meaning "hidden in snow" or "enclosed," this could further reinforce its identity as a Sufi retreat or sanctuary. Within the broader framework of Azerbaijani architecture, this tomb occupies a unique and specific position. The facts mentioned above reflect not only architectural traditions but also the circulation of ideas and formal typologies across the vast geography of the Islamic East.

One of the distinguishing features separating Seljuk-period mausoleum architecture in Iran, Azerbaijan, and Turkey lies in the ornamental compositions applied to wall surfaces. While "girih" patterns in Azerbaijani mausoleums may resemble the exterior "chīnī (glazed brickwork)" decorations in Iranian examples, carved stone motifs in Turkish mausoleums often display rare mythological and symbolic imagery.

Similar decorative figures can be observed in Karabakh mausoleums such as Qutlu Musa and Malik Ajdar. The Malik Ajdar Mausoleum, in both its exterior form and interior space, evokes the structure of a nomadic tent. The overall appearance of the monument recalls the traditional "yurt" construction widely used among Turkic peoples. Above the entrance and on both sides of the doorway, bull figures are carved into the stone panels. (Figure 4) These features strongly suggest that the Malik Ajdar Mausoleum was influenced by Seljuk-era mausoleum architecture. It is believed to have been built in the 12th–13th centuries. While the exterior plan is octagonal

and the interior space is circular, the monument still stands out from other tombs due to its distinctive features.

As noted in previous studies, the Cicimli Mausoleum, with its prismatically tapering volume, parabolic dome, and thin rod-like corner columns, appears to be an architectural reinterpretation of a nomadic yurt [9].

Since there is no inscription on the tomb and limited artifacts or artistic elements associated with it, the identity of the person in whose honor the tomb was built remains unknown. However, based on the name of the tomb and local toponymy, some hypotheses can be proposed. The title "Malik" was commonly used by Muslim or Christian local ruling families in the Karabakh and Zangezur regions between the 13th and 19th centuries. "Ajdar" is a Turkic-origin name. It is plausible that Malik Ajdar was a local feudal leader or a heroic figure, and the tomb may have been erected either in his memory or over his grave. Given that the name "Ajdar" is often associated in folk tradition with extraordinary strength and heroism, the tomb could have been built in honor of a person considered sacred or legendary in local beliefs.



Fig. 4. "Malik Ajdar" tomb in Lachin district and figures are carved into the stone panels

Source [Öney G. Anadolu Selçuklarında heykel, figürlü kabartma və kaynakları haqqında notlar-Ankara, 1970. S. 187–190]



Fig. 5. "Choban dash" or "ram statue"

Source [Öney G. Anadolu Selçuklarında heykel, figürlü kabartma və kaynakları haqqında notlar-Ankara, 1970. S. 187–190]

The side-by-side construction of the Kar Gunbaz and Malik Ajdar tombs in the village of Cicimli in Lachin can be interpreted as a significant indication of how religious and social memory were stratified and constructed in the region. If the Kar Gunbaz tomb is considered a Sufi monument, its spiritual authority and status as a pilgrimage site may have persisted in later periods, contributing to the sanctification of the area. The construction of the Malik Ajdar tomb in the same location might reflect a strategy of religious legitimacy and social prestige by associating with the sacredness of the site. If the Kar Gunbaz was indeed a Sufi tomb from an earlier period (11th–13th centuries), it may have later been regarded as a holy place, leading to the desire to bury a figure of influence like Malik Ajdar nearby. This is a common phenomenon in regions with strong Sufi traditions [15].

Another possibility is that if Malik Ajdar was a real and influential person in the region, being buried close to the tomb of a revered Sufi sheikh may have served as a means of attaining spiritual status or intercessory benefits. Furthermore, tombs built in close proximity are sometimes intended as components of a unified complex. The presence of these two tombs together constitutes a rare example of the intersection of religious, political, and cultural memory in the Lachin region. This indicates that these monuments served not only aesthetic but also ideological and social functions. Therefore, both tombs should be studied as complementary monuments and re-evaluated accordingly [17].

Additionally, the discovery of a ram-shaped gravestone (commonly known as a "choban dash" or "ram statue") in the area carries special significance. (Figure 5) Such gravestones are typically dated to the 14th–18th centuries and were erected in memory of local heroes, warriors, and commanders [13]. They are also important symbols reflecting the cultural identity and heroic ideals of local Turkic tribes. The presence of this gravestone alongside the tombs suggests the formation of a burial complex. It is also possible that the tombs belong to different periods and social groups. The coexistence of the tomb and the ram-shaped gravestone illustrates the synthesis of Sufi-mystical values and Turkic heroic traditions in this region. In such cases, both Islamic culture and Turkic ethnographic elements coexist, offering insights into the hybrid and multi-layered cultural memory of the area.

The tombs of Karabakh—whether monumental structures such as Kar Gunbaz, Malik Ajdar, and Aghsadan Baba, or simpler examples like Qutlu Musa, Ahmadali, and Kengerli village

tombs—demonstrate original approaches both functionally and aesthetically through their architectural language. These tombs not only reflect architectural features but also play a role in shaping public memory. When compared with similar structures in other countries, it becomes clear that while there are common elements in tomb architecture, each has developed within a specific historical, religious, and social context. The tombs of Karabakh are not merely regional structures but represent architectural examples with a distinctive place in the broader development of Islamic architecture. Overall, the tombs of Karabakh, while continuing the traditions of Turkic-Islamic architecture, can also be evaluated as expressions of local craftsmanship and religious-philosophical thought. Comprehensive future research, including archaeological, art historical, and epigraphic materials, would provide a solid foundation for integrating these monuments into academic discourse and securing their rightful place in the international history of architecture [10].

## CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that tomb architecture in Karabakh is a product of both local traditions and broader Islamic influences. The formal similarities with Seljuk and Mamluk tombs, as well as symbolic elements rooted in Sufi and Turkic culture, reflect the hybrid identity of the region. The architectural language of these tombs not only commemorates the deceased but also encodes layers of memory, spiritual beliefs, and political power. Future research should focus on integrating archaeological evidence and conservation strategies to preserve these monuments as part of the Islamic world's shared heritage. A comprehensive post-war investigation of Karabakh's tomb architecture represents an urgent and significant scholarly undertaking. For over three decades, many of these monuments were subjected to occupation, resulting in either their complete destruction or progressive deterioration due to neglect. The systematic study and documentation of these structures are crucial not only for understanding Karabakh's architectural heritage, but also for reaffirming its cultural identity and historical continuity within the broader Turkic-Islamic context. These tombs serve as tangible expressions of national memory and can play a pivotal role in reinforcing the ethnic and cultural identity of the Azerbaijani people. It is recommended to conduct comprehensive field surveys and digital documentation of medieval tombs in Karabakh in order to ensure their accurate preservation and scholarly analysis. The use of modern technologies such as 3D scanning and GIS mapping can

significantly enhance the quality of architectural data. Researchers should adopt a comparative analytical framework by systematically examining funerary monuments across different regions of the Islamic world, including Iran, Anatolia, and Central Asia, to better understand shared typological features and regional distinctions. Greater attention should be given to the symbolic aspects of tomb architecture, particularly the interpretation of geometric patterns, inscriptions, and spatial organization, as these elements reflect religious, cultural, and philosophical concepts within Islamic art. It is advisable to strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration between historians, architects, archaeologists, and conservation specialists to provide a more holistic understanding of medieval funerary architecture and its socio-cultural context.

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## АНОТАЦІЯ

### **Алієва Айгун Залімхан. Символіка та архітектурні типології середньовічних гробниць у Карабаху: порівняльні роздуми з ісламського світу**

Це дослідження аналізує архітектурні особливості середньовічних гробниць у Карабахському регіоні та досліджує їх символічне значення в ширшому контексті ісламської похоронної архітектури.

**Метою** дослідження є визначення типологічних характеристик карабахських гробниць та вивчення їхнього культурного, духовного та символічного значення у порівнянні з аналогічними пам'ятками в різних регіонах ісламського світу. У статті порівнюються карабахські гробниці з архітектурою гробниць в Азербайджані, Ірані, Анатолії, Центральній Азії та інших ісламських регіонах, підкреслюючи як спільні архітектурні традиції, так і місцеві особливості. Особлива увага приділяється типології форм гробниць, включаючи восьмикутні та дванадцятикутні плани, куполоподібні та конічні дахи, кам'яний орнамент та епіграфічні елементи, такі як кувфічні та насталікські написи.

**Методологія.** Методологічно дослідження базується на порівняльному архітектурному аналізі, візуальній типології та вивченні історичних та архітектурних джерел. За допомогою стилістичної інтерпретації та міжрегіонального порівняння дослідження оцінює символічний зміст пам'яток, включаючи суфійські концепції, космологічний символізм та уявлення про владу та святість.

**Результати.** Результати дослідження показують, що архітектура гробниць Карабаху відображає взаємодію місцевих будівельних традицій із ширшими художніми та ідеологічними тенденціями ісламського світу. Пам'ятки поєднують тюркську кочову спадщину, регіональні будівельні техніки та ісламську духовну символіку. На завершення дослідження підкреслюється, що середньовічні гробниці Карабаху є не лише похоронними спорудами, а й важливими культурними та художніми виразами, що відображають колективну пам'ять, духовні вірування та архітектурну спадщину ісламської цивілізації.

**Наукова новизна.** Наукова новизна цього дослідження полягає у всебічному та порівняльному аналізі середньовічної архітектури гробниць у Карабахському регіоні в ширших рамках ісламської архітектурної спадщини. Хоча попередні дослідження переважно розглядали гробниці Азербайджану з регіональної чи стилістичної точки зору, ця стаття пропонує міжрегіональний підхід, який ставить карабахські гробниці в діалог з традиціями мавзолеїв Ірану, Анатолії, Центральної Азії та Близького Сходу.

**Практична значущість.** Практична актуальність цього дослідження пов'язана зі збереженням, документуванням та науковою інтерпретацією середньовічних архітектурних пам'яток у Карабахському регіоні. Багато з цих гробниць були пошкоджені, занедбані або змінені під час окупації, що робить їх систематичне вивчення важливим кроком до їх реставрації та захисту. Результати цього дослідження можуть служити цінним академічним ресурсом для архітекторів, істориків та фахівців, що працюють у сфері архітектурної консервації, управління культурною спадщиною та реставрації пам'яток. Порівняльний аналіз, представлений у статті, також може підтримати майбутні реставраційні проекти, надаючи історичні та стилістичні посилання на оригінальні архітектурні форми та декоративні елементи пам'яток.

**Ключові слова:** гробниця, Карабах, суфізм, сельджуцька архітектура, ісламська архітектура, типологія мавзолеїв, архітектурна символіка, суфійська архітектура, тюркські архітектурні традиції, архітектурна спадщина, реставрація пам'яток, архітектурний орнамент.

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