

PREHISTORIC ROCK ENGRAVINGS IN GOBUSTAN IN  
COMPARISON WITH "LURISTAN PAINTINGS" AND EARTHEN WARES

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About 60 km. from Baku, not far from the Caspian Sea, can be seen some low grey and white mountains. They belong to "Yaziliq" which is located in a well known place called "Gobustan". This word consists of two parts: The first (gobu) means hill and the second (stan) means land or place, or we can say pasture. This is located along Jairan Kochmaz and at the end of the southern Caucasian Mountains in Azerbaijan in the former USSR. A very interesting collection of rock engravings were executed here in the times before Christ. These engravings are found in three places:

- 1) Biok dash (big stone)
- 2) Kichik dash (small stone)
- 3) Jin gir daq (Jinee mountain)

Gobustan was inhabited from the Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age period. The people hunted and with favorable climatic conditions and abundant water sources, agriculture was possible.

Presently at the foot of Biok dash mountain, there is a spring and many fig trees grow there. It seems the people moved the animals such as cows, wild goats, and deer to the high place and then attacked them. This frightened and confused them and the hunters felled and killed them in this way.

Some rock engravings depict boats and fish in this area which is not far from the sea. The population doubtlessly used much of the sea's resources. According to some finds, it seems to have been inhabited in the neolithic period.

In the Admiralty period the natural fortification of Biok dash mountain provided a safe place for migrating tribes, and some of them lived at the foot of the mountain and farmed. In Gobustan, at the foot of rock engravings, we found many weapons, broken bowls and bones of wild animals which were hunted by the local population and they help us to date the engravings. These 4,000 engravings are located in an area of 3,500 acres and the Azeri republic in the former USSR has named this an historical region. According to the Azeri archaeologists, the engravings belong to three periods:

- 1- Mesolithic
- 2- Neolithic
- 3- Bronze Age

A few of the engravings belong to later centuries and in jen gir daq mountain an engraving written in the persian language was found. Such complete engravings give us the opportunity to study their lifeways, their ways of thinking and the quality of the Azerian art.

## SUBJECTS OF THE ENGRAVINGS

The descriptive engravings on the Gobustan rocks depict various subjects in different shapes and in different ages.

1- Depictions of domestic and wild animals such as ox, a kind of goat, horses, deer, wild pigs, dogs, fish, lions, wolves, zebras, tigers and birds.

2- The battle of animals and cattle, camels, and horses.

3- Some depict hunting scenes with men and animals.

4- Ceremonial subjects such as dance, killing-ceremonies, harvesting, boating.

Some of the engravings are very realistic. One interesting engraving depicts a panther attacking a deer with the deer defending itself. The creator of this engraving could have shown a worried deer with a defending manner. In another engraving a dog chases a pig. In some of these engravings, humans are depicted. There are three engravings of birds. There are two groups of engravings of people.

## STONE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

One of the interesting works in the "qobal dash" which is at the foot of the "jeh gir daq" is called "stroking musical instrument". This musical instrument was built with ferro-stone foil which is on three stones.