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NEW STONE RELIEFS FROM KUBACHI – ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS OF THE 14TH–15TH CENTURIES WITH GRAPHIC SUBJECTS

Abstract. The article introduces new stone reliefs – details of architectural décor of the 14th–15th centuries with a graphic narrative. The reliefs were discovered by the author in the village of Kubachi in different years of the 20th century, and only now gained special attention.

The reliefs in question are scattered through various buildings of the old part of the village, mainly in its middle and lower districts.

The integrity of the reliefs varies: some remained in a good state, some – in fragments, others – in poor condition.

In most cases, it was not possible to photograph them from the desired angle due to their inaccessibility (second or third floors of buildings in very densely built-up areas, etc.).

Most of the reliefs date back to the 14–15th centuries. The dating was carried out according to stylistic features, taking into consideration the fact that a huge number of stone reliefs with graphical subjects were made in Kubachi in the said time period. These reliefs are now stored in many domestic and foreign museums and have partially preserved in Kubachi.

The description of the reliefs is given in the order of their record by the author at different times and in different districts of the village.

Keywords: Dagestan; Kubachi; stone reliefs; architectural details; 14-15th centuries; graphic subjects; secondary use of reliefs for decorative purposes.

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НОВЫЕ КАМЕННЫЕ РЕЛЬЕФЫ – АРХИТЕКТУРНЫЕ ДЕТАЛИ XIV–XV ВВ. ИЗ СЕЛ. КУБАЧИ С ИЗОБРАЗИТЕЛЬНЫМИ СЮЖЕТАМИ

Аннотация: В статье описываются новые каменные рельефы – детали архитектурного декора XIV–XV вв. с изобразительными сюжетами из сел. Кубачи, выявленные автором в разные годы XX в., но не ставшие еще объектами изучения учеными.

Публикуемые рельефы рассеяны по различным зданиям всей старой части сел. Кубачи, в основном, в среднем и нижнем кварталах. Они вмонтированы в конструкции жилых и культовых сооружений в декоративных целях при вторичном использовании.

Сохранность рельефов разная: одни из них дошли до нас сравнительно неплохо, другие в неполном виде (в виде фрагментов), третьи – в неудовлетворительном состоянии. Зафиксировать многие из них, т.е. сфотографировать в нужном ракурсе в большинстве случаев не представлялось возможным из-за их расположения на недоступном для съемок месте (на втором или третьем этажах зданий в очень густо застроенных кварталах и т.д.).

В большинстве своем рельефы датируются XIV–XV вв., датировка проведена по стилистическим признакам и с учетом того обстоятельства, что именно в эти века в сел. Кубачи было создано огромное количество каменных рельефов с изобразительными сюжетами, хранящимися ныне во многих отечественных и зарубежных музеях и частично сохранившимися в Кубачи.

Описание рельефов дается в порядке фиксации их автором в разное время и в разных кварталах сел. Кубачи.


Ключевые слова: Дагестан; Кубачи; каменные рельефы – архитектурные детали; XIV–XV вв.; изобразительные сюжеты; вторичное использование рельефов в декоративных целях.

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Medieval Kubachi stone reliefs – the details of architectural décor with graphic subjects, Arabic inscriptions, as well as ornaments – have been in the focus of attention of many domestic and foreign researchers [1, pp. 8–42]. Nevertheless, there is still a number of reliefs which have not yet been studied or even recorded to this date. Moreover, medieval carved stones are taken away as Kubachi souvenirs by guests of the village, after which their location becomes unknown and their study as valuable objects of the Dagestan national cultural heritage renders impossible.

Some of the lost pieces are: a relief in the wall of the Shirpaevs' house in the lower district of the village (Fig. 8); a relief in the outer masonry wall of the eastern facade of the former building of the Kubachi jewelry artel “Khudozhnik” (currently the Palace of Culture) in the middle district of the village (Fig. 9); a relief of the 15th century (not described in this article) with floral ornaments and the name of the stone-cutter Cha'man, which is located at the lower left end of the entrance, in the former building of the library, built in Soviet times at the eastern end of the Great Mosque (“Hvala mishit”) [1, p. 459, fig. 54]. A large number of reliefs with Arabic inscriptions and floral ornaments were removed from the walls of this mosque in Soviet times.

The reliefs described below can now be found in the outer masonry of the walls of residential buildings or the Great Mosque (“Hvala mishit”), installed in different years for decorative purposes or simply as well-finished stones.

Three of the said reliefs are stored in republican museums – one in the Taho-Godi National Museum of the Republic of Dagestan (NMRD) (fig. 11), two reliefs – in the Gamzatova Dagestan Museum of Fine Arts (fig. 12–13).

As craftsmen, the Kubachi people are highly knowledgeable about decorative aspects of carved stones and their worth. For this reason, most of the villagers keep the reliefs in their homes with care.

Construction workers, being the followers of Muslim orthodoxy, would intentionally chip off heads from images of people, animals, birds or fantastic creatures (griffins, dragons) when reusing reliefs with graphic subjects in the construction of residential or religious buildings, considering it unacceptable to depict a living creature. In some cases, an entire relief image would be completely lost without a trace. This, for example, happened to the keystone, mounted in the outer masonry of the northern longitudinal wall of the Great Mosque of the 15th century, located in the lower district of the old part of Kubachi (fig. 7).

The quality of the published images of the reliefs varies due to the degree of their integrity, as well as the complexity of photographing in hard-to-reach places.

Let's now proceed to the description of the reliefs in the order of their record in various districts of the village. We will then consider several unpublished and already published (only photographs included), but not described reliefs stored in the Taho-Godi National Museum of the Republic of Dagestan and the Gamzatova Dagestan Museum of Fine Arts.

Relief № 1 is located in the outer masonry of the southern wall (fig. 1, A, B) of a long abandoned and collapsed house in the lowest district of the old part of Kubachi. The relief is in the middle section of the second floor of the southern facade, in a partially preserved state. The eastern section of the building has not remained. The relief had been recovered from the ruins of another old building and installed in the masonry of the wall during its construction, presumably in the end of the 19th century. This stone stands out clearly against the background of the wall of the house, which is built of poorly dressed, relatively small stone blocks.

The relief is embedded high, which made it impossible to accurately measure its size, so they are given here in approximate dimensions: height 25-27 cm, length 43-45 cm.

On a rectangular stone block, through a rather deep cut-in of the background, figures of three men carrying a long beam on their shoulders, supporting it with their hands are depicted. The right arms of the two men in front are shown at the level of the lower back and bent at an acute angle at their elbows. The legs of the middle figure are crossed above the knees. The last left figure with slightly bent legs is shown with its back to the viewer. His left arm appears to be stretched to the side.

The figures are made in low details – their faces, attire, shoes are unclear.

The image of the men is framed at the edges by a narrow relief frame, broken off in places. The left end of the relief is chipped, so it is difficult to judge whether there was another figure of a man in it or not.

The relief in question depicts, as we believe, the members of the Kubachin men's union "gulalla ak' buk'un" – a group of young single men [see also: 2, pp. 146–173]. A prominent ethnographer-caucasiologist E.M. Shilling (1892–1953) writes, that the members of the union would "carry out community service of their own initiative: they would repair a building, a well; deliver wooden beams for reconstruction of a mosque, road works, etc." [2, p. 153]. On the relief in question, such scene of the members of the men's union performing community work is reproduced – the delivery of a beam for the construction or repair of a mosque, madrassah or other building.

It is difficult to specify the exact date of the relief due to the lack of dating indications. Nevertheless, the execution technique and the presence of a graphic subject, which was widely spread in the medieval art of Kubachi, allow us to date the relief the 14th–15th centuries.

Relief № 2 is inserted in the outer masonry of the wall between the windows of the second floor of G.-I. Kvarizhov's house, located in the north-eastern outskirts of the lower district of the old part of Kubachi. This is a fragment of a large relief, obtained from the ruins of an old building and installed as decoration into the wall of the southern facade, in plain sight (fig. 2, A, B).

It is impossible to determine due to its location high in the building.

By the nature of the fine processing, the relief clearly stands out among the poor-

ly dressed stones around it. It is embedded into a specially designed square niche. It depicts a lying animal with its head turned back, limbs bent under the body, the tail passed through the hind limbs with a slight thickening at the end, protruding above the back. The animal's head is partially chipped off. The owner of the house G.-I. Kvarizhov marked the eyes of the animal with black paint, thereby restoring the missing details of the image.

On the neck of the animal there are raised curls with pointed ends, apparently depicting a mane. It is difficult to determine the type of the animal due to its stylization.

Small triple cut-in arcs are applied to the animal's right thigh, torso and right scapula. The relief is quite high, the outlines of the animal's figure are rounded. The very image of the animal is carefully smoothed. It is enclosed in a figured relief frame, the left and right ends of which have fallen off. The background of the image is also smooth.

Based on the dating indications of the relief № 1, the relief № 2 can be ascribed to the 14th–15th centuries.

Relief № 3. In the lower district of Kubachi, in the masonry of the wall of the third floor of an abandoned building of an unknown owner, there is a relief of square shape with depiction of three stylized animals running in circle, one after another (Fig. 3). Their heads are intentionally broken off in places. Their bodies are made somewhat elongated. The figures themselves are enclosed in a round relief frame, with their limbs touching it. On the trunks, shoulder blades and hips of animals there are triple arcs. The animals are reproduced in a stylized manner. Their large ears, short tails, and the remained outlines of their heads lead to believe that these are hares.

Our attempts at photographing the relief with clear-cut images of animals and ornament were unsuccessful, since the house, in the wall of which the described architectural detail is located, is in the midst of neighboring residential buildings, and this made it difficult to choose the right position for recording.

On the upper and lower corners of the relief, a floral ornament is carved in the form of a wavy sprout of a stem with leaves, halves of trefoils and palmettes. Along the edges of the square stone block, a relief braid of ribbon ornament is carved, with a round frame with animals inside and a floral pattern along its upper and lower edges. The left edge of the relief was cropped (apparently, with an intention to fit it exactly into the masonry of the wall during reuse), so the ribbon ornament has not survived here.

The combination in one composition of a visual subject, plant and ribbon ornaments enhances the decorative qualities of the relief.

The relief dates back to the 14th–15th centuries, since this period of stone-cutting art in Kubachi is characterized by the mentioned combination in one composition.

The relief above drew attention of a prominent Kubachin jeweler Rasul Alikhanov, the People's Artist of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Dagestan, Repin RSFSR State Prize Laureate. On a decorative silver platter "Deers" (*Oleni*), made

in 1991 and currently stored in the museum of the Kubachi Alikhanov Artistic Enterprise [3, ill. on p. 18], three identical images of animals running after each other in a circle included in the ornamental composition of the plant style “*markharai*” are reproduced. They are decorated with niello, against which a light silver floral ornament stands out clearly.

The round shape of the silver dish, the animals reproduced on its bottom running after each other in a circle – in the same manner as on the relief, – make it easy to determine that the subject of the medieval Kubachi stone relief served as the prototype for the composition of the dish.

Relief № 4 is located in the masonry of the wall at the height of the third floor of the southern facade of the residential building of Rasul Khakachiev in the lower district of Kubachi (Fig. 4). The relief is between the windows of the living room, at a height of 1.8 m from the roof level of the terrace in front of the corridor and living quarters on the third floor. It is a relatively small stone block (30x37 cm); presumably, this is the upper part of the lateral right column of the window tympanum. A salient semi-medallion, which encloses the figure of a man, depicted in profile, running to the left side is carved on it. His slender waist is engirdled in one turn by a dragon-serpent. The man's head is intentionally chipped off. With his left hand, bent in an arcuate manner, the man holds the end of the body of the dragon-serpent protruding from the right side of the human figure. The right arm, bent at the elbow, is extended forward. What is interesting is that the man's feet are depicted as clawed paws.

The body of the dragon-serpent thickens around its head, which was broken off much later than the relief was made. The general contour of the head and ears, sharp at the ends, has preserved. The lower part of the relief (especially its right corner) exfoliated. The section of the stone block on the left side, not occupied by the semi-medallion and the image of a man, is trimmed with cut-in dots, applied with a special tool.

According to the owner of the house, the relief was discovered in 1971 during the digging of the foundation of his house, and then inserted into the wall of the building for decorative purposes. It can be dated the 14th–15th centuries.

Relief № 5. The relief is also located in the masonry of the wall of the residential building of R. Khakachiev, closer to the eastern side of the southern facade. This is a part (40x26 cm) of a side stone column of a door or window tympanum (Fig. 5). On it, in a figured semi-medallion, an image of an animal is reproduced, in profile facing to the right, with its head extended upward and turned back. The animal is ungulate, but it is difficult to accurately determine its type; it seems to be an image of a deer. A half-trefoil (or antlers?) extends vertically downward from its head. The left limb of the animal is stretched almost vertically upwards and rests on the bold ridge of the edge of the relief. The right limb is sharply bent at the knee joint. A relief trefoil with elongated petals extends upward from the scapula. Two small loops extend from the middle petal along the back of the animal. The trefoil is a rudiment of the animal's

wing. At the end of the tail down, there is a salient trefoil instead of a switch.

The depiction of the animal is designed with a decorative intention in mind. It is compactly enclosed in a semi-medallion and the outline of its figure is subordinated to the outline of a semi-medallion. The background outside the medallion is dotted.

The relief dates the 14th–15th centuries on the premise that it is the part of a broken column of a window or door tympanum that relates to this chronological framework [1, p. 528, fig. 221; p. 545, fig. 264, 265].

Relief № 6. This relief is located in the masonry of a stone staircase of Magomed Khakachiev's house (father of Rasul Khakachiev), leading from the balcony on the second floor to the terrace on the third floor. The relief (60x19 cm) is a half of a keystone with floral ornament (fig. 6). On the other lower half, the location of which is unknown, there was a depiction of some animal, by analogy with other keystones [1, pp. 521–522, fig. 206–208; 4, ill. 44; 5, table V, ill. 4–5; 6, p. 128, fig. 75].

The relief is put onto one of the steps of the staircase like an ordinary building stone with its ornament facing upward. The ornament is large, in the form of half-palmettes of axial composition and mirror symmetry. The lower elongated petals end with stylized images of bird heads. The middle petals have deep indentations parallel to the contours of the petals.

The relief dates from the beginning of the 15th century, judging by the fact that the ornament on it has direct analogies to the ornament of similar keystones from Kubachi [1, p. 521, fig. 206-207] of the specified time.

Relief № 7 is in the exterior masonry of the northern wall of the Great Mosque (“Hvala mishit”) of the 15th century, located in the lower quarter of the old part of Kubachi. It is inserted into the masonry of the eastern part of the longitudinal wall as an ordinary finely dressed building stone (62x21 cm) obtained from the ruins of an old building. The relief is a keystone (Fig. 7) with floral ornament. In the middle of the lower part of the composition there was an image of an animal, judging by the decor of other similar keystones from Kubachi [1, p. 521, fig. 206-207]; unfortunately, it was broken off without a trace. The ornament itself remained intact. The upper lateral corners of the relief are partially cropped in order to give it a rectangular shape and fit tightly into the masonry of the wall. The ornament of this relief in composition and shape is similar to the ornament of other keystones from Kubachi (including the relief № 6 described above), which are now stored in the State Hermitage, the Gamzatova Dagestan Museum of Fine Arts and those preserved in Kubachi. These are large half-palmettes along the upper and lateral edges of the stone block, the ends of the lower petals of which are decorated in the form of stylized bird heads.

The date of this relief – early 15th century – coincide with the date of the relief № 6 and other keystones from Kubachi.

Relief №8. A large relief (46x48 cm) of a rectangular shape is embedded in the masonry wall of the western facade of the second floor of O. Shirpaev's house in

the middle district of Kubachi (Fig. 8). On it, in its middle part, a heraldic composition of winged animals facing each other is carved. It is difficult to determine their appearance due to the stylization and the fact that their heads are lacking. The relief had been discovered in the ruins of an old building and inserted into the masonry of the wall for decorative purposes during the construction of the house, approximately at the end of the 19th century.

The animals are depicted in profile, crouching on their hind legs. From the forelimbs and from the shoulder blades, wings with longitudinal relief stripes extend upward in a curved shape. The wings protruding behind the back are pointed at the ends. In the upper part of the heraldic composition, opposite the heads of the animals, there are half-trefoils, finished with curled indentations. The animals themselves are put in a relief frame, the upper middle ends of which converge and form a sharp ledge.

On the left and right edges of the relief, there are ornamental compositions in the form of bindweed, curling upward (from the left and right lower corners) the wavy stems with bilateral (left and right) branches with curved leaves and curls. In the upper part, the bindweed ends with trefoils with elongated middle petals. The upper and lateral edges of the relief are framed by a raised ridge, and at the lower end a small area is left for the entire width of the relief, free of decor.

The relief is made at a fine professional level, the composition is original, the decor is generally expressive and artistically complete. The dating belongs to the second half of the 14th century, taking into account the peculiarities of the interpretation of animals and the originality of the execution of ornamental compositions.

Relief №9 was installed in the eastern entrance of the former building of Kubachin jewelry artel “Khudozhnik”, in its upper (second) floor¹ (fig. 9); the relief is now absent from this place. Some of the local residents took it out of the masonry wall and sold it to an individual who visited Kubachi. It is also possible that the relief was installed into the wall of one of the houses of the village. There are known cases of buying and selling reliefs among local residents.

The relief had been obtained from the ruins of an old building in the lower district of the village and inserted into the masonry of the wall above the entrance door to the artel for decorative purposes during its construction, presumably at the end of the 30s of the 20th century. When the artel acquired a new building in the late 50s of the 20th century in the Betukhazhila area in the upper district of Kubachi, near the Kubachi secondary school, the building of the jewelry artel, located on the border of the upper and middle districts (near the house of the Rasul Alikhanov People’s artist of the RSFSR and DASSR) was allocated for the building of the Kubachi village club (now the House of culture).

The relief survived in a poor state – its right side is partially cropped, with the

1 The sketch of the relief without any description appeared in the album of R.A. Alikhanov “Kubachin ornament”. M.: Gosizdat of literature on household services, 1963. Fig. 3.

purpose of fitting the stone into the masonry. The lower end and the lower left corner have exfoliated, damaging the images of the ends of the legs. On a rather large stone block of a rectangular shape (42x33 cm), by grooving the background, an image of a human-like bird – a siren in profile, is carved. The figure has a human head (partially broken off, presumably with a curved kokoshnik (?) on it). On a high neck there are two rows of relief festoons with rounded ends. The chest is protruding, the bird's legs are parallel. The tail with longitudinal stripes and relief festoons (the same as on the neck) is bent down. Tail feathers with longitudinal stripes are raised high. The tail tapers upwards and ends with a curvature at the end. The wings with two transverse rows of festoons and longitudinal stripes are folded along the body.

The contour of the siren's figure is put into the figured relief frame, filling it compactly. The features of the depiction of the figure, reproduced on the relief, give it a somewhat fantastic appearance. This is at the same time a siren and not a siren, a bird and not a bird. The figure is well finished, its sharp edges are rounded, the background is even and smooth.

The surface of the stone outside the figured frame is decorated with textured dotted indentations.

The relief can be dated the 14th–15th centuries, taking into account the fact that this period is characterized by depiction of animals, birds, human figures and fantastic creatures enclosed in figured frames.

Relief № 10 can be found in the masonry of the north wall, facing a village street, of the utility room of I. Gadzhiakhmedov's house, located in the upper part of the middle district of Kubachi. It is embedded into the masonry of the wall of the first floor (on the south side, the room is two-story – the house is built on a very steep slope).

A relief depicting a sitting bird (Fig. 10), obtained from the ruins of an old building, is installed for decorative purposes into a special niche in the wall.

On a rectangular stone block (22x29.5 cm), the bird is depicted by a deep grooving in the background, facing to the right, with its head turned sharply back. It is difficult to determine its type, but it seems like an eagle. The large eye of the bird is depicted by a raised circle, the beak (the tip is chipped off) is bent down, the body is dressed with scales, the wings are extended along the body, the short tail is trimmed with parallel grooves, the legs are placed parallel to each other. The figure looks as if the stone-cutter tried to squeeze it into a quadrangle, framed along the edges with a thick relief roll.

Due to the lack of dating indications, it is difficult to determine the exact date of the relief. However, such features of the bird's iconography as a sharply turned back head, putting the image of the bird into a relief frame, decorating its body with scales to resemble plumage, similar to images of birds on other stone reliefs from Kubachi, allow us to attribute this relief to the 14th–15th centuries. Although it is still possible that this relief was made at a later period.

Relief № 11 is stored in the Taho-Godi National Museum of the Republic of Dagestan (NMRD). It is a large stone block of trapezoidal form (the bottom is narrower than the top), with a pink tint². It is a keystone (Fig. 11), probably from the arch of a gate.

On the front leveled and smoothed surface of the stone block, relief images of animals and floral ornament are applied. The images of animals are depicted in profile, in an upright position, and occupy the middle area of the monument. They have survived partially: their heads, as well as parts of their bodies and forelimbs were intentionally broken off without a trace.

Judging by the remained parts, oblique parallel lines tapering at the ends were applied to the necks of the animals to depict a mane. On the front shoulder blades and on the thighs, half-trefoils are applied. Downward tails with half-trefoils at the ends cross the lower limbs.

The upper part of the relief is decorated with floral patterns like other similar Kubachi keystones – from the center to the edges there are large half-palmettes with grooves in their middle. The lower petals end not with images of bird heads, as in other Kubachi keystones, but with five-petal palmettes with grooves in the upper side and central petals. From the lower ends of the half-palmettes, stripes (thick stems) extend to the edges of the relief, which end in the upper lateral corners with half-palmettes with five-part palmettes at the ends of the lower petals. Further, the ornament runs downward, forming a bindweed – a wavy stem shoot with half-palmettes extending from it, in which the lower large petals end in stylized images of bird heads.

This relief was made with great artistic skill and it is unfortunate that it was damaged by an orthodox Muslim, who considered any depiction of a living creature inadmissible.

Basing on the comparison of its ornamental composition with the ornamentation of other keystones from Kubachi, as well as reliefs decorated with ornamental compositions with five-part palmettes, the relief can be attributed to the first half of the 15th century.

Relief № 12 is a small block of irregular rectangular shape (25.5x18 cm) with the image of a stylized animal in profile, facing left. The relief is stored in the Gamzatova Dagestan Museum of Fine Arts. The image was made by cutting out the background and with a slight downward slope of the front side. Due to the strong stylization, it is difficult to identify it. However, taking into consideration the fact that its limbs are shown clawed, the mouth open, we can assume that it is a predatory animal of some kind (Fig. 12).

It has a rounded head with lips slightly extended forward, rounded at the ends; erect ears, pointed at the ends, an almond-shaped eye with a dot-pupil in the middle.

² The relief was published by E.M. Shilling in 1949, along with a double-embasement stone window in the masonry of a wall of one of the Kubachi houses, photographed in 1925 [2, p. 45, fig. 12]. However, the said relief is not mentioned in the book.

The mane is marked with oblique grooved stripes in three parallel rows. The front right limb is raised high and stretched horizontally forward, the left is in an upright position, and the hind legs are spaced one after the other. The tail lays on the back and ends in a large half-palmette with grooves in the upper and middle petals.

The animal's figure on this relief resembles those of a predatory breed, carved on large stone blocks located in the masonry of the walls of the second floor of B. Sultanov's residential building in Kubachi [1, p. 518, fig. 200]. Undoubtedly, the figure was inspired by these images, since the general interpretation of the animals and their details coincide.

The reliefs in the masonry of the wall of B. Sultanov's house date from the end of the 14th – the early 15th century. Thus, the relief described above can be attributed to the same period.

Relief № 13 is another notable piece from the collection of Gamzatova Dagestan Museum of Fine Arts. On a relatively large stone block (23x24 cm) of square shape, on its preliminarily levelled and finely smoothed front side, an image of some winged animal is carved (fig. 13). The relief itself and the image on it survived in an imperfect state. The upper right corner and part of the upper end of the stone exfoliated, the relief strips of the frame on the left and right also peeled off. The animal's head is lacking. The front right limb is also intentionally broken off, and the left one seems to be lifted vertically up (?). Hind legs, parallel to each other, detached or broken off below the knee joints.

It is impossible to determine the type of the animal. It looks as if it were squeezed into a square relief frame. The head with a long neck is turned sharply back, the body is lean. A wing with longitudinal stripes extends upward and along the body from the right forelimb and scapula. The curved end of the wing protrudes above the body. In place of the scapula, a half-trefoil (?) is depicted, on the left and right sides of which there are strips of festoons with curled ends.

The bottom of the neck is encircled by a relief strip with a double braid inside. Above it is a strip of skew cut-in lines. From the end of the outlines of the chipped off head, a relief element of the ornament extends downward – a half-palmette with double cut-in arcs on the petals.

On the upper part of the right thigh, triple arcs are carved, and on the back of the thighs, oblique cut-in lines are applied, most likely to represent fur.

The portrayal of the animal is quite expressive and skillfully decorated. Both the figure and the background are finely smoothed. At the lower end of the relief, a strip is left free of decor.

The high artistic level of the relief is worth noting, but unfortunately the image on it survived in a distorted form. It was made by a talented stone cutter of the highest qualification. The dating attributes the relief to the 14th–15th centuries, based on analogical images of winged animals in the medieval art of Kubachi [1, p. 527, fig. 218 – Images of animals in an archivolt (semicircle); 11, fig. 7].

Thus, the above described medieval stone reliefs from Kubachi extend the number

of details of architectural decor with graphic subjects known from the publications of researchers. Among them are the subjects that have been previously unknown. For example, a scene with images of members of the Kubachi men's union "gulalla ak' buk'un"; subjects with stylized winged animals genetically derived from images of winged animals in the art of the Near and Middle East [7, ill. on p. 48, ill. on p. 87; 8, p. 30, fig. 8, p. 42, fig. 12, inserted into the text from with ill. № 24, inset № 64].

Images of various winged animals are also presented on medieval architectural details from Kubachi, published by B.A. Dorn and A.S. Bashkirov [9, tab. XIV, fig. 11, tab. XV, fig. 7; 10, p. 38, fig. 11, p. 49, fig. 14]. However, heraldic compositions with winged animals on the relief in the masonry of the wall of O. Shirpaev's house are not similar to these images.

The relief in the wall of the Shirpaevs' house is one of the carved stones, probably made by a guest stone-cutter from the Middle East who was specially invited to Kubachi, presumably from Iran. The same can be said about another relief from the Dagestan Museum of Fine Arts' collection, depicting a winged animal. This is evidenced by the perfect execution of carving for its time and the winged animals reproduced on them.

Among the architectural features described, of special interest is the image of a man (with his head broken off during the reuse of the relief), running to the left, whose waist is wrapped by an image of a dragon-serpent, with clawed paws as feet (Fig. 4). A similar image of a man with feet in the form of clawed paws is carved among various stylized animals (deer, hare, etc.), placed in a chaotic composition, and another figure, but without clawed feet, on the relief located above the gates of the Kannaevs' house in the lower district of the village. The relief was painted by the owner of the house, Gadzhi-Magomed, "for decoration purposes" with brown paint, and the contours of the images of animals and human figures are somewhat distorted. The schematic drawing of the relief was published in 1949 by the ethnographer E.M. Schilling [2, p. 183, fig. 76]. The image of a man in a horned mask and a stick with an animal skull planted on it in his right hand can be seen in the upper right corner of the relief. Photographs of the relief without any descriptions were published by E.V. Kilchevskaya in two of her books [5, tab. IV, 7; 6, p. 121, fig. 68].

The fact that two reliefs depict a human figure with clawed paws instead of feet is barely coincidental; but the semantics of these anthropomorphous characters is hard to reveal.

In the medieval Kubachi, the stone-cutting was one of the most highly developed types of decorative and applied art. This is evident from the huge number of carved stones that have survived – both architectural details and burial monuments, which, along with works of artistic metalworking, wood carving, etc., played a large role in the formation and development of modern Kubachi art. Therefore, the task that was set back in 1937 by E.M. Schilling to register "carved stones with their brief description and measurement in order to protect the most valuable historical monuments from destruction and plunder" preserved in Kubachi remains relevant to this day [13, p. 9].



Fig. 1, A, B. A stone relief – an architectural detail depicting men carrying a long beam. The relief was installed during its reuse into the masonry of a partially preserved wall of a now collapsed residential building in the lower district of Kubachi. The 14–15th c.

Рис. 1, А, Б. Каменный рельеф – архитектурная деталь с изображениями мужчин, несущих длинную балку. Рельеф вставлен при его вторичном использовании в кладку частично сохранившейся стены ныне развалившегося жилого дома в нижнем квартале сел. Кубачи. XIV–XV вв.



Fig. 2, A, B. A relief depicting a lying animal, located in the masonry of the wall between the windows of G.-I. Kvarizhov's house in the lower district of Kubachi. The 14–15th c.

Рис. 2, А, Б. Рельеф с изображением лежащего животного в кладке стены между окнами жилого дома Г.-И. Кварижова в нижнем квартале сел. Кубачи. XIV–XV вв.



Fig. 3. A relief with images of running hares and with ornaments in the masonry wall of one of the residential buildings in the lower district of Kubachi. The 14–15th c.

Рис. 3. Рельеф с изображениями бегущих зайцев и с орнаментом в кладке стены одного из жилых домов в нижнем квартале с. Кубачи. XIV–XV вв.



Fig. 4. A detail of a stone column of the tympanum with an image of a running man, girded with a dragon-serpent and feet in the form of clawed paws. Inserted between the windows of R. Khakachiev's house for decorative purposes. The 14–15th c.

Рис. 4. Деталь каменной колонки (столбика) тимпана с изображением бегущего человека, опоясанного изображением змее-дракона и ступнями в виде когтистых лап. Вставлен между окнами жилого дома Р. Хакачиева в декоративных целях. XIV–XV вв.



Fig. 5. An image of an animal with a broken off head in the masonry of the wall of R. Khakachiev's house in the lower district of Kubachi. The 14-15th c.

Рис. 5. Изображение животного с отбитой головой в кладке стены жилого дома Р. Хакачиева в нижнем квартале сел. Кубачи. XIV–XV вв.



Fig. 6. The upper part of the keystone with floral ornaments and images of stylized bird heads. The relief is inserted into the stone staircase of M. Khakachiev's house in the lower district of Kubachi. Early 15th century. The location of the lower part of the relief is unknown

Рис. 6. Верхняя часть замкового камня с растительным орнаментом и изображениями стилизованных голов птиц. Рельеф вставлен в каменную лестницу дома М. Хакачиева в нижнем квартале сел. Кубачи. Начало XV в. Местонахождение нижней части рельефа неизвестно



Fig. 7. An ornamented keystone inserted into the masonry of the northern longitudinal wall of the 15th century Great Mosque in the lower district of Kubachi.
The image of the animal in the lower part of the relief is completely broken off

Рис. 7. Замковый камень с орнаментом, вставленный в кладку северной продольной стены Большой мечети XV в. в нижнем квартале сел. Кубачи.
Изображение животного в нижней части рельефа полностью сбито



Fig. 8. A relief with images of crouched winged opposing animals (heads broken off) and with floral ornaments in the masonry of the wall of O. Shirpaev's house in the lower district of the village Kubachi.
Second half of the 14th c.

Рис. 8. Рельеф с изображениями присевших крылатых противостоящих животных (головы отбиты) и с растительным орнаментом в кладке стены жилого дома О. Ширпаева в нижнем квартале сел. Кубачи. 2-я половина XIV в.



Fig. 9. A relief depicting a siren (?) embedded above the entrance of the former Jewelry artel “Khudozhnik” (now the House of Culture) on the boundary of the upper and middle districts of Kubachi. The relief has not remained in place. The 14–15th c.

Рис. 9. Рельеф с изображением сирини (?), вставленный над входом в ювелирную артель «Художник» (ныне Дом культуры) на границе верхнего и среднего квартала сел. Кубачи. Ныне рельеф на месте отсутствует. XIV–XV вв.



Fig. 10. A relief depicting a crouching bird in the masonry of the northern wall of the utility room of I. Gadzhiakhmedov’s house in the middle district of Kubachi. The 14–15th c.

Рис. 10. Рельеф с изображением сидящей птицы в кладке северной стены хозяйственного помещения жилого дома И. Гаджихамедова в среднем квартале сел. Кубачи. XIV–XV вв.



Fig. 11. A keystone of the gate with images of two animals standing vertically against each other (the central part of the composition is broken off), framed along the upper and lateral edges with floral ornament. Kubachi. First half of the 15th century.
The National Museum of the Republic of Dagestan

Рис. 11. Замковый камень ворот с изображениями двух вертикально стоящих друг против друга животных (центральная часть композиции сбита), обрамленные по верхнему и боковым краям растительным орнаментом. С. Кубачи. Первая половина XV в.
Национальный музей Республики Дагестан



Fig. 12. A relief from Kubachi with a stylized image of a carnivorous animal of undetermined species. The 14th – early 15th century. The Gamzatova Dagestan Museum of Fine Arts

Рис. 12. Рельеф из с. Кубачи со стилизованным изображением хищного животного неопределенной видовой принадлежности. XIV – начало XV в.
Дагестанский музей изобразительного искусства



Fig. 13. A relief from Kubachi depicting a winged, decoratively finished animal with its head sharply turned back (broken off). The 14–15 c. The Gamzatova Dagestan Museum of Fine Arts

Рис. 13. Рельеф из с. Кубачи с изображением крылатого, декоративно отделанного животного с резко повернутой назад головой (сбита). XIV–XV вв. Дагестанский музей изобразительного искусства

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