

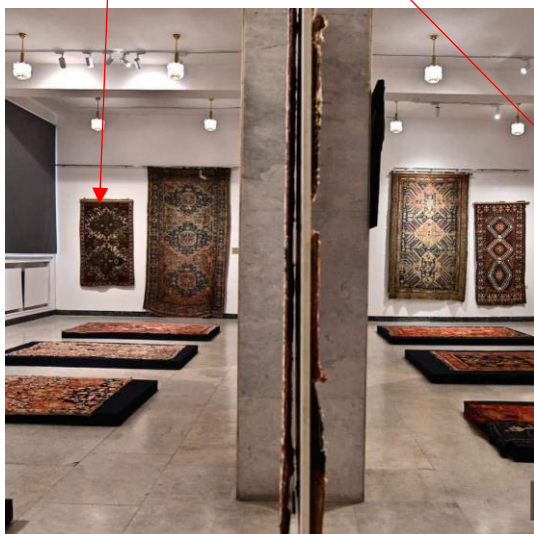
REFERENCE

on behalf of the Expert Commission operating under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum

Analysis of patterns through the images published by Armenian press about the exhibition of Shusha carpets, organized at the National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after A. Tamanyan in Yerevan on February 20, 2021, reveals that the carpets that were illegally removed from Shusha Carpet Museum and exported by Armenian authorities are not only carpets of the Karabakh type, but also carpets from Guba, Shirvan, Ganja and other regions of Azerbaijan. Along with *Chelebi*, *Talish*, *Atli-Itli*, *Nelbekigul*, and other Karabakh carpets, one can see *Sumakh* of Guba and *Chiragli* carpet of Ganja group at the exhibition.

Unfortunately, the above-mentioned illegal exhibition of carpets is another attempt by the Armenian authorities to deceive the public and to create false evidence in support of claims of Armenian cultural superiority over the ethnic cultures of the peoples of the region.

***Chelebi* carpet**



The famous *Chelebi* carpet is among the exhibited carpets. The carpet composition *Chelebi* or *Barda* was first woven in the surrounding villages of Karabakh, including Chelebi village, 10 km east of Barda. Later it reached Nagorno-Karabakh, Aran, and in the 19th century Gazakh district and became popular there. According to the prominent researcher Latif Karimov, the word Chelebi (meaning bey or sir) was an honorary title among the Turkic people. Another view expresses that the name of the carpet is associated with the famous Chelebi tribe, a descendant of the Oghuz Turks. Chelebis lived in the territories of the Ottoman Empire, Iraq, and Azerbaijan. There are several places named after Chelebis in Shaki, Barda, and

Jabrail districts of Azerbaijan. The Shaki Khanate was founded by Haji Chelebi Khan from the Chelebi tribe.

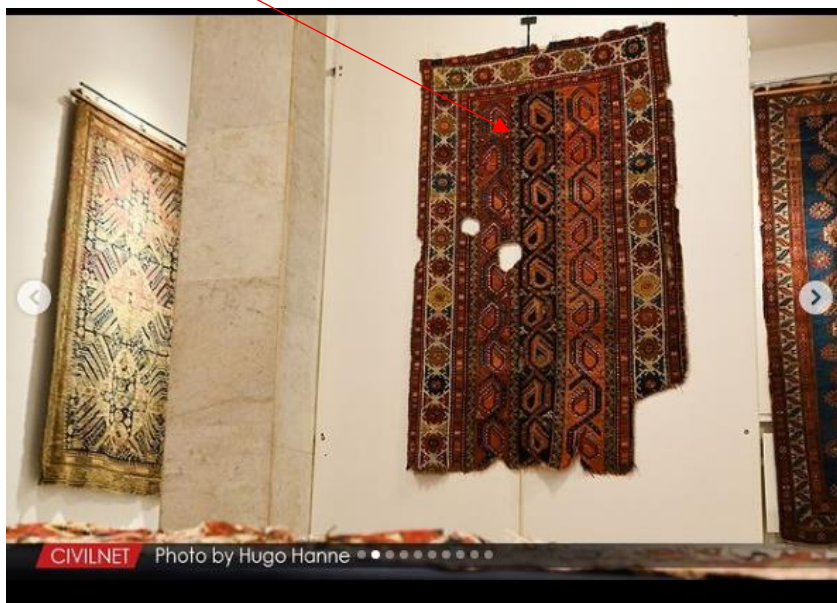
The carpet design is based on single or several-medallion composition. The *Gunesh* or *Chelebi* element of the medallion, widespread on Karabakh carpets, was believed to reflect the sun and its rays and also a sign of divine light.

Describing the carpet, researcher T.Ibrahimov notes the *Seb-i Arus* (Night of Union) in the Sufi theory and practice of *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *Ishraqilik* (Illuminism) teaching in Suhrawardi's Hikmat al-Ishraq (The Philosophy of Illumination), and the remaining of *haal* (state or condition), a quintessence of Sufi spiritual practices and its result, the access to *Barakah* (blessing) that are symbolically represented in the carpet's medallion.

The medallion, consisting of twelve-petaled, arrow-shaped and notched patterns used also among other groups of Karabakh-type carpets, has a special place in the artistic design of *Ajdahali* (Dragon) carpets.

In Armenian sources this carpet is called *Chelaberd*. This falsification stems from an attempt to link it with the name of Karabakh's village of Jraberd (Chilabord, Tartar District of Azerbaijan) with the Armenian-majority population. It should be noted that A.S. Piralov and M.D. Isayev, who provided detailed information about the production of carpets in the South Caucasus in the late 19th – early 20th centuries, do not give any information on the existence of carpet production in this village.

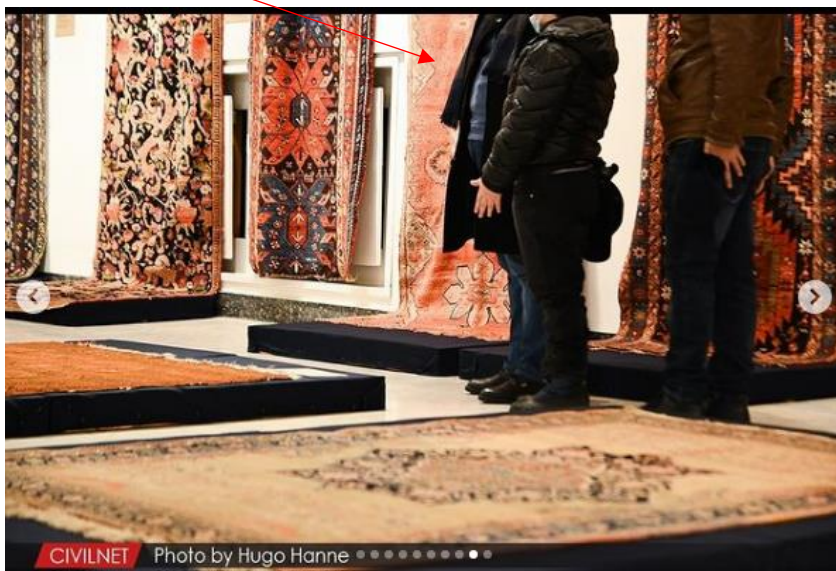
Khantirma carpet



The main production centers of *Khantirma* carpets of Karabakh group are Barda, Aghjabadi, Tartar, as well as Hadrut, Garabulag, Kohna Tuglar and others. The carpet's name is derived from a combination of the words *khan* and *termeh*, since the composition of this carpet is similar to the Indian termeh and the clothes of khans and noblemen were sewn from this fabric.

The central field of these carpets, mainly woven in an elongated shape, consists of alternating wide and narrow stripes decorated with vegetative elements. The design of wide stripes consists of *buta* and *ilangach* elements.

Lampa carpet



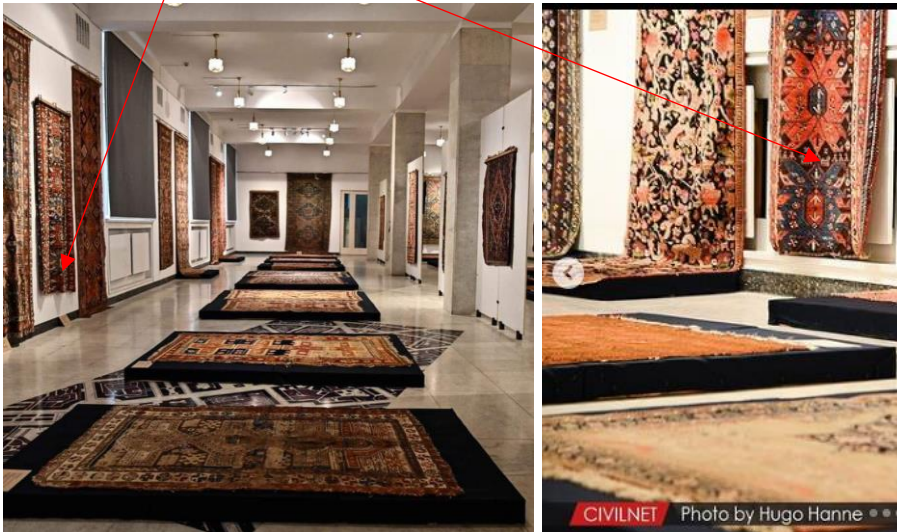
Lampa or *Lempe* are pile carpets belonging to the Shusha group of the Karabakh type.

These carpets were first woven in Shusha in the first half of the 19th century. After a while, they began to be woven in all carpet-weaving centers in Karabakh. *Lampa* carpets were usually woven in a set. It consists of a central carpet and side carpets.

Due to both its structure and composition, *Lampa* carpets are considered to be the most complex works of Karabakh carpet weaving art. Despite the fact that these carpets resemble the *Khanlig* carpet of the Jabrail group and the *Lachak-Turunj* carpet of the Tabriz group, their composition is very unique. The composition of *Lampa* carpets has an elongated shape. It is characterized by a large octagonal medallion in the middle of the central field. The elongated *ketebe* typical for the *Lampa* carpet adorns the medallion's upper and lower parts. The medallions and *ketebe* successively decorate the whole central field. Most often these large elements – medallions and *ketebe* that form a vertical shape – culminate with a *bashlig*. Shusha carpet weavers call this element *chellek*. The remaining part of the central field close to the medallion is enhanced with the image of a parrot. In addition, the wide-edged petals at the top and bottom corners of the central field enrich the carpet's design.

Notably, *Lampa* carpets, related to the 19th-century carpet weaving, appeared with the need to decorate the walls and ceilings of large houses in Shusha. There is also *Lampa* carpets in the form of *namazlig* (a prayer rug).

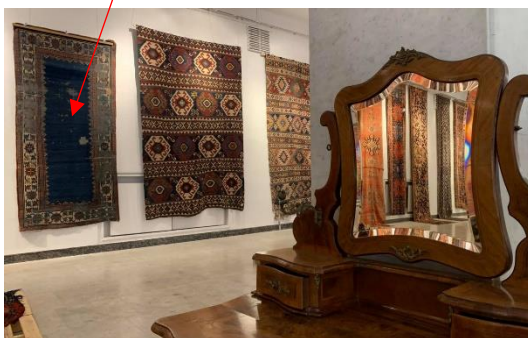
Talish carpets



Although the *Talish* carpet displayed at the exhibition belongs to the Karabakh type, it is woven far away from this place. There is a Talish village in eight regions of Azerbaijan. However, this carpet derives its name not from the name of these eight villages but from the name of a large area on the shores of the Caspian Sea, along the Talish Mountains. This carpet, which has a more complex composition, forms the second group of *Talish* carpets. Carpets with complex compositions also include elongated carpets with medallions called as *pakhlava pattern*. These medallions of the same shape but different in color, depicted one after the other, create an original composition. *Talish* carpets, woven by special order and for dowry, are of high quality compared to other carpets woven in the Talish region.

The pile length of *Talish* carpets of different densities is shorter than other carpets of the Karabakh carpet weaving type.

Talish carpets



It should be noted that another simple version of the *Talish* carpet is also on display at the exhibition. The composition of these carpets can be simple and

complex. The central field with a simple design was usually without patterns or decorated with several elements.

The central field with a dark navy (rarely red or green) background, the main border depicting the ancient *Almagulu* pattern against the white (beige) background, and one or more *mollabashi* narrow borders are the main features of the *Talish* carpets.

***Bulud* carpet**



Carpets, belonging to the Shusha group of the Karabakh type and known as *Bulud* (Cloud), were created in Shusha under the influence of European and Russian art in the second half of the 19th century.

Since the second half of the 19th century, in connection with Azerbaijan's accession to the All-Russian trade, Russia has supplied Azerbaijan with a variety of goods such as calico, knitting, lace, *khoruznishan* towels, decorative porcelain, jewelry, soap wrapped in checkered paper and decorated with geometric patterns, and other materials. Many carpets produced in Shusha are samples created by carpet artists inspired by the images on these products. *Sakhsida Guller* (Flowers in Ceramic Pot) and *Bulud* carpets, woven in Shusha, are also carpet samples created under the influence of Russian decorative art.

The scattering of elements depicted on the *Bulud* carpet creates the impression of clouds in the sky (hence the name of the carpet).

Nelbekigul carpet



Nelbekigul carpets are pile carpets belonging to the Shusha group of the Karabakh type.

Although these carpets are popularly called *Nelbekigul*, Shusha carpet weavers call them *Minakhanim* or *Minakhani*. It is known that this carpet was woven by Mina khanim, who moved from Barda to Shusha in the second half of the 18th century. Carpets with vegetative ornaments woven by her soon spread to all carpet weaving centers in the Caucasus, South Azerbaijan, Iran, and Turkmenistan.

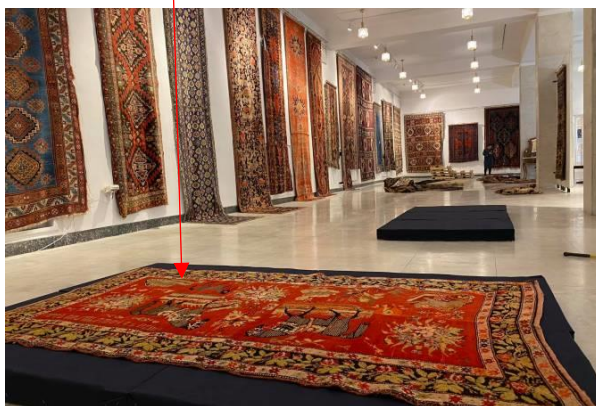
The central field of the *Nelbekigul* or *Minakhani* composition is adorned with small and big circular vegetative elements placed on the branches. Despite their symmetrical, sometimes asymmetrical placement and simple design, these elements embody the beauty and simplicity of Karabakh carpets. There is also *khali gaba* set among them. *Nelbekigul* is considered one of the best Karabakh carpets.

Mashin carpet



According to sources, in the second half of the 19th century, tiles and porcelain, metal trays, wallpaper, fabric, velvet, and factory-made haberdashery were imported from Russia to Azerbaijan. The patterns on these products were European and Russian in style with an element of realism. Shusha carpet weavers, who became famous as innovators, weaved these paintings on carpets and rugs. This is how the composition of the *Mashin* carpet was created.

Atli-Itli carpet



The *Atli-Itli* carpet displayed at the exhibition is one of the narrative carpets woven in Karabakh. The *Ovchulug* (Hunting) carpets depicting hunting scenes were more developed in Tabriz carpet weaving type from the 15th century. From this period, the theme of hunting in carpet weaving became widespread in other carpet weaving centers of Azerbaijan.

The image of a hawk sitting on the hunter's hand was the traditional theme of Shirvan and Karabakh carpets. In some provinces, the production of hunting carpets continued until the late 19th century, while in others until the mid-20th century. Over

time, their composition simplified, and as a result, in the early 20th century, it gave way to simple animal images. Consequently, in the 19th century, narrative carpets with animal images known as *Atli-Itli*, *Itli-Pishikli*, and others appeared in Karabakh. Armenian carpet weavers simply added inscriptions on them in Armenian.

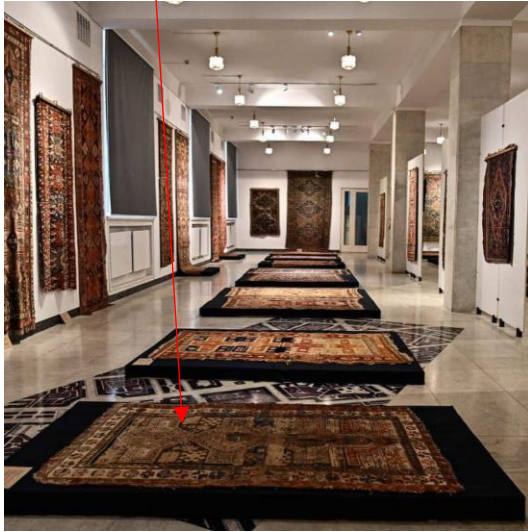
Embroidery



Along with the Azerbaijani carpets, the embroidery is also on display. Azerbaijani embroidery in this style is preserved in the Textile Museum (George Washington University) (embroidery, Azerbaijan, 17th–18th centuries, cotton, silk, inv. No 2.19), in the Victoria and Albert Museum (embroidery, Azerbaijan, 1770–1800s, cotton, silk, inv. No T.49-1940), and in the Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum (embroidery, Azerbaijan, 18th century, cotton, silk, inv. No. 9483; the object was purchased by the museum at Christie's in 2017).

The black background of the embroidery's central field sports a large octagonal medallion. The medallion is surrounded by hooks on all four sides. The edges of the embroidery are decorated with torch-shaped elements pointing towards the center. The arrow-shaped motifs symbolizing the four sacred elements in the center of the medallion give the embroidery a unique look. The central field's blank spaces are filled with various stylized zoomorphic motifs. The embroidery is framed by a narrow border. The border is embroidered with elements typical of Karabakh's decorative applied art and carpets.

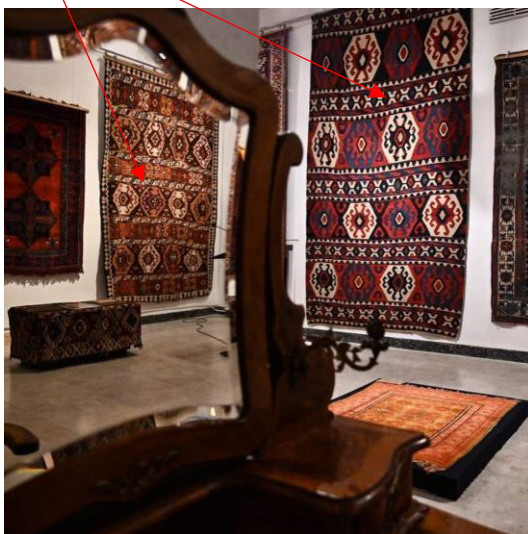
Chiragli carpet



This Azerbaijani pile carpet belongs to the Ganja carpet group. The carpets are named after the village of Chiragli, located 35 km south of Ganja. Some carpet weavers call it *Gazakhcha*, *Ganja*, *Fakhrali*. *Chiragli* carpets belong to the category of medium quality among Ganja carpets.

Six-pointed medallions consecutively adorn the carpet's central field. The elements inside the medallions are similar to the patterns of ancient *Mughan* carpets and kilim ornaments. This national ornament, a common Turkic symbol created by the combination of two ram's horns is widespread not only in Azerbaijani and Anatolian folk art but also in Bashkir embroidery, among carpet and kilim ornaments of Kumyks, Karachays, Kazakhs, Turkmens, Kyrgyz and Khakas people, Volga Tatars (Bulgarians), and Crimean Tatars.

Kilim



We can also observe several Shirvan kilims at the exhibition. These are the famous *Pashali* kilims. When giving information about them, the Armenians mention such patterns as *qurd ağzı* (wolf's mouth), *çaxmaqlı qızıl gül* (flaming rose), *pitik* (prayer) used by ancient Azerbaijani carpet weavers, and, most importantly, in our native Azerbaijani language. Note that these terms have no meaning in the Armenian language.

Mafrash



A *mafrash* is a household item that was widely used by people engaged in cattle breeding. It was made using zili, kilim, and sometimes pile-woven techniques. This patterned bag with loops has a height of 0.5 meter, a width of 1 meter, and a length of 1.2 meters. Its form is similar to that of a tall trunk. It was used to store blankets, mattresses, and clothes, and also to transport them from the mountains to the lowlands in winter, and vice versa in spring.

Nizami Ganjavi's poem *Khosrov and Shirin* gives detailed information about a silk *mafrash* that features in Khosrov's hunting scene.

During migration, the most necessary items were gathered into the *mafrash*, making them very heavy. Therefore, the *mafrash* was loaded only onto the biggest and most powerful animals, such as camels, horses, and mules. The mouth of the *mafrash* was mainly covered with a *jejim* (a small rug) and tied to a horse with an *orkan* (a narrow rope) on the right and left. *Mafrash* was woven in pairs like *chuval*, making them easy to load onto animals. A bride's bedding, bedcover, and clothing were sent to her husband's house in these bags. Every family owned at least one pair of these bags, while wealthy families had four or more.

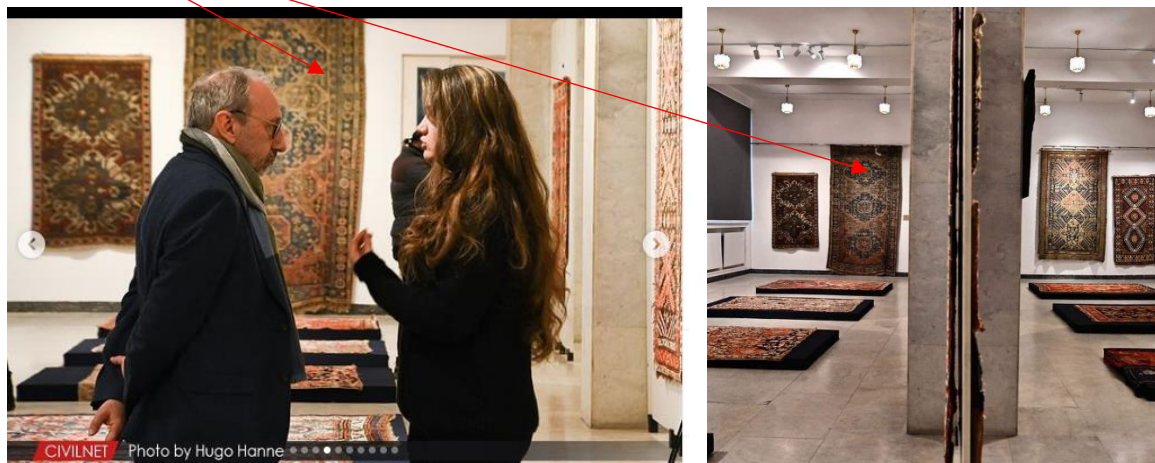
It was decorated with *tamga* (a tribal symbol of Turkic people) patterns that illustrate the sacred thoughts of the human mind.

The hooked rhomboid figure depicted in the wide border of *mafrash* that divided into horizontal stripes of different sizes is a symbol of the motherland, fertile fields, and productivity in general. Rhythmic repetition of colorful diamond-shaped patterns brings a special dynamism to the composition. This pattern, which was

initially widespread among the population engaged in animal husbandry (mainly sheep-breeding), later underwent numerous changes and became characteristic of the carpets of the settled population.

According to the weaving technique, *mafrash* was made in flat-woven techniques of Azerbaijan such as zili, sumakh, and palas.

Sumakh



In 18th–20th-century examples of *sumakhs*, which have separated composition and patterns, some elements of pile carpets were used. However, the weaving techniques of *sumakhs* caused the shapes of compositions and patterns to change gradually. The *sumakh*'s characteristic features include the colorfulness, geometric medallions, and the rich interpretation of floral patterns and geometric elements of pile carpets from Guba, Shirvan, Karabakh, and Ganja, as well as an S-shaped *dolangaj* (meander) pattern used to complete the carpet's final strip of border. The weavers adorn the *sumakhs*' central field with big six-pointed, eightpointed, square, rhomboid *gyols* (medallions).

The presented *sumakh* was woven using the *Gonagkend* carpet of the Guba carpet group.

It resembles *zili* and *verni*, the flat-woven carpet techniques of Azerbaijan. Here, however, rows of weft yarns run consecutively, first, from left to right, then from right to left. Therefore, from a closer distance, the patterns woven in the sumakh technique resemble a braid in shape. In addition, when weaving *sumakh* carpets, the ends of the yarns are drawn out to the reverse side and are not cut off. Thus, the carpet's reverse side becomes shaggy.

List of used literature:

1. Керимов Л.Г. “Азербайджанский ковер”. Т. 2; Т. 3. Баку, “Гянджлик”, 1983
2. Алиева К. М. “Безворсовые ковры Азербайджана». Баку, “Ишыг”, 1988
3. Ibrahimov T. Karabakh carpet “Chelebi”. Origins and Symbolism of the Patterns // LIVING HERITAGE. © Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO. Issue 3-4, Page 136-144, Sofia, 2020

Members of the Expert Commission of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan operating in the Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum:

Shirin Melikova	Director of the Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum, Ph.D. in Art History, Honored Cultural Worker of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Associate Professor
Eldar Mikayilzade	People’s Artist of the Republic of Azerbaijan, carpet artist, Associate Professor at the Azerbaijan State Academy of Fine Arts
Mammadhuseyn Huseynov	Professor at the Azerbaijan State Academy of Fine Arts, Honored Artist, carpet artist
Natiq Safarov	Head of the Department of Scientific Restoration and Conservation at the Azerbaijan National Museum of Art, high-category restorer artist, Honored Artist
Mira Mammadkhanova	Deputy Director at the Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum, Ph.D. in Art History, Senior Lecturer of the Museum Studies Department at the Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts
Aydin Rajabov	Board member of the Union of Artists of Azerbaijan, Chairman of the Decorative and Applied Arts Sector at the Union of Artists of Azerbaijan

Invited:

Aytan Ahmadova	Head of the Scientific Research and Preservation of National Heritage Department at the Azerbaijan National Carpet
----------------	--

Museum, Senior Lecturer of the History of Art Department
at the Azerbaijan State Academy of Fine Arts, Ph.D. in Art
History