

# SERICULTURE IN AZERBAIJAN

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The Uzbeks brothers will write that “the trade routes of the Great Silk Road consistently passed through Azerbaijan. It was the “gateway” between the mysterious far East and rich Europe.



The native population in Azerbaijan have long been engaged in sericulture. Sericulture is a branch of agriculture that has spread throughout Azerbaijan since ancient times and has been developing to this day. The main production areas are Sheki and Baskal. The development of the silk industry in Azerbaijan was influenced by the passage of the Silk Road route through certain regions of Azerbaijan.

[[Шеки - жемчужина Кавказа: шелк, чай и дворцы](#) (рус.), *euronews* (23 июня 2013).].



Lankaran silkworm cocoon producers.





Sheki, Azerbaijan



1927

Modern  
enterprise for  
the production  
of silk fabrics



Sheki, Azerbaijan



Silk production began to grow rapidly after the inclusion of Azerbaijan into the Russian Empire, in connection with the demand for silk. In particular, the Dzharo-Balaken, Sheki and Shirvan regions became the main development zones for sericulture in Azerbaijan. In 1836 the “Society for the spread of sericulture and the trade industry in the Caucasus” was created for the development of the sericulture industry. In the same year, the company was handed over leadership over the Khanabad manufactory which was operating since 1829. The taken measures led to an increase in the number of machine tools, from 20 (in 1829) to 30 (1850). The Practical School of Sericulture which was established in 1843, in the territory of Azerbaijan, in Nukha, became the place for training specialists in the field of growing raw silk [Эльдар Исмаилов. Очерки по истории Азербайджана. — Издательство “Флинта” 2010.].

The main centers were also located in Zakatala district, Geokchay, Areshkom, Shemakha, and Nukha counties [Велиев Т.Т. Шелкообрабатывающая промышленность Азербайджана в начале XX века (1900- 1917 гг.), с. 15.].



The 60-70s of the 19th century is characterized by a period of crisis in the field of silk production, in connection with the importation of infected grains. In order to solve the problem and restore production, the state took measures to eliminate contaminated soils and in qualitative terms. In the 80s, sericulture was fully restored and continued to develop. In certain regions of Azerbaijan, there was a grain yield of 2 times a year [[Мировая история. История России. XVIII-XIX вв. Книга 1.](#) — ОЛМА Медиа Групп. — 328 с. — [ISBN 9785948496450](#).].

One of the centers of the silk industry of the South Caucasus, in the 80s of the 19th century, was Shirvan. The publication of the newspaper "Caucasian Agriculture" indicates that silk production, along with field crop production, was the main profit sector of the region at that time [[Кавказское сельское хозяйство, 1898, 28 марта](#).].

Thus, in the late 80s, sericulture was distributed in about 1,100 villages.  
[[Кавказское хозяйство, 1912, № 11, с. 13](#)]

By the beginning of the 20th century, about 40% of Shemakha district was occupied in the field of sericulture [[Гаджи Гасанов. Из истории североазербайджанской деревни в конце XIX начале XX вв.](#) — Баку: «Тахсил», 2007.].





Since the 1990s, exhibitions and contests have been held in various districts, such as Geokchay (in 1998), Shemakhi (in 1990). In 1914, an incubator for greyny was introduced to Kurdamir, due to which sericulture begins to develop in the area. Geokchay silkworm took part in various exhibitions related to sericulture, which were honored with awards and diplomas. The first sericulture point was established in 1914, in the Baku province, in Kurdamir. In this period, hired labor, the use of new technologies, began to be introduced into the silk industry [*Гаджи Гасанов. [Из истории североазербайджанской деревни в конце XIX начале XX вв..](#) — Баку: «Тахсил», 2007.*].







Sheki, a trade caravan in caravanserai  
in the 19th century



Şəki, Baramaqaan fabrik

In the history of sericulture, the first large silkworm breeding enterprises were established in the Soviet Union, where sericulture was most developed in Uzbekistan, Ukraine and Azerbaijan. The largest silkworm breeding plant in the South Caucasus began functioning in Sheki in 1931. Another factory in Ordubad functioned in the 1960s and 1970s, when, according to Azernews, Azerbaijan was producing some 7,800 tonnes of raw cocoon annually. The raw silk was used in light industry, in the military and in medicine to produce surgical thread.

In 1960-1970, Azerbaijan occupied the second place in the manufacture of silk fiber in the territory of the Soviet Union. [[Насекомое, которое может подарить Азербайджану миллионы. ru.sputnik.az.](https://ru.sputnik.az/)]

In the 3rd article of the 1st section of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the legal protection of the expressions of Azerbaijani folklore, sericulture is an expression of folklore, and is subject to protection by the state [[Закон Азербайджанской Республики о правовой охране выражений фольклора Азербайджана.](#)].





# State Program for the Development of Cocoon and Sericulture in the Azerbaijan Republic for 2018-2025

On November 27, 2017, the President of Azerbaijan signed the “State Program for the Development of Cocoon and Sericulture in the Azerbaijan Republic for 2018-2025”. The program provides for the allocation of funds for the development of sericulture, on the basis of which, the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Azerbaijan is entrusted to provide funds allocated for the implementation of measures in the preparation of the state budget. According to the signed Program, control over the implementation of measures lies with the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Agriculture, which in turn undertake to provide a report to the President once a year [[Официальный сайт президента Азербайджанской Республики - ДОКУМЕНТЫ » Распоряжения. ru.president.az.](http://ru.president.az)].



In January 2018, at the conference on summing up the state program “Socio-economic development of regions in 2014-2018”, the Head of the Executive Power of the Balaken District indicated an increase in cocoon production by 3.4 times compared with the previous year [[Ильхам Алиев принял участие в конференции, посвященной итогам четвертого года реализации Государственной программы социально-экономического развития регионов в 2014-2018 годах.](#)].





As part of the program for the development of silk production, the State, after purchasing silkworm from China and cultivating it in an incubator, transfers it to farmers free of charge, thus stimulating productivity.

[В АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНЕ ПРОЦВЕТАЮТ ТРАДИЦИИ ШЕЛКОВОДСТВА by FAO Europe and Central Asia on Exposure \(англ.\). Exposure. \].](#)

In 2017, the 8th International Conference on Sericulture “Climate Change and Chemical Reagents: New Searches in Sericulture” was held in Sheki. 44 representatives of 9 countries held discussions on the effects of climate change in Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus, and on sericulture.

[AZƏRBAYCAN MİLLİ ELMLƏR AKADEMİYASI ŞƏKİ REGIONAL ELMİ MƏRKƏZİ. shrem.az.](#)





Since the XV century, Sheki is known as a place of silk production. Sheki became the center of sericulture in the Caucasus. In 1861, the world's largest silk spinning factory was established in Sheki. At present, silk spinning factories for the production of various goods, such as scarves, bark, scarves and so on, are located in Sheki. Sheki is considered the center of sericulture in Azerbaijan [[Шеки - жемчужина Кавказа: шелк, чай и дворцы](#) (рус.), *euronews* (23 июня 2013).].

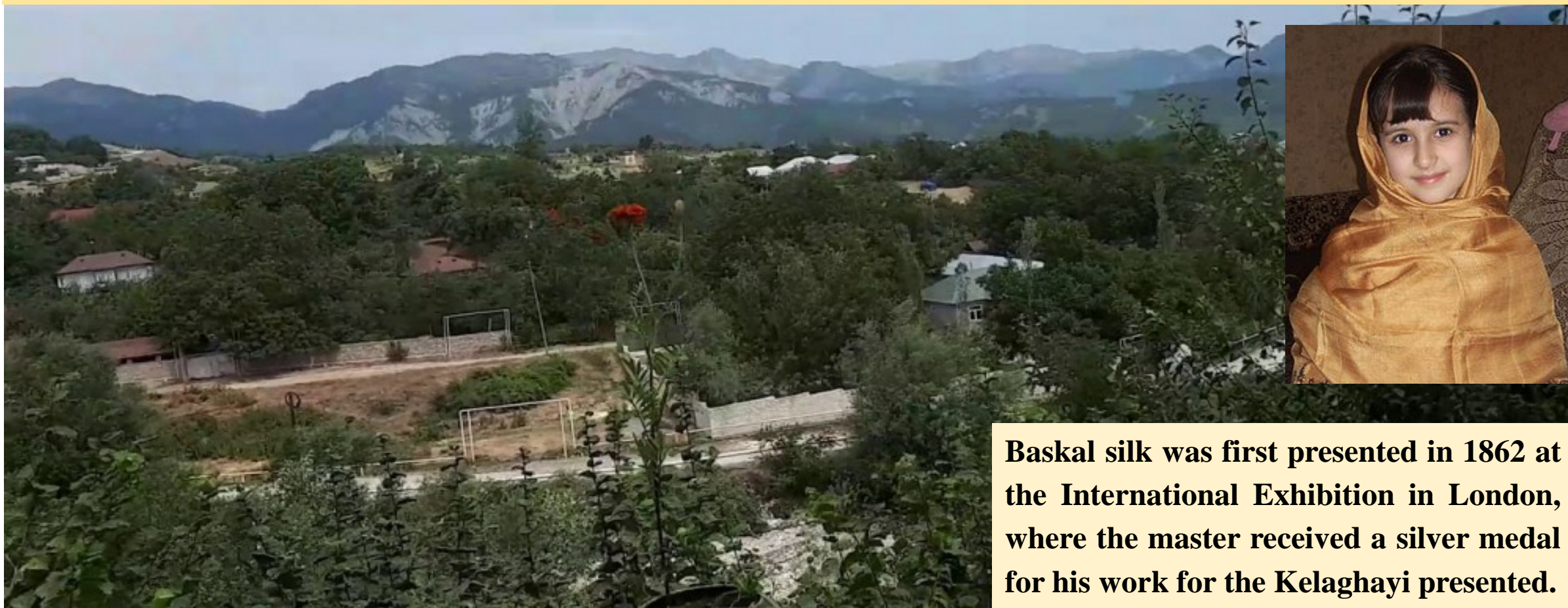


In 2005, within the framework of the program for the improvement of sericulture in Azerbaijan, the largest workshop of Azerbaijan, Sheki-Ipek, was reconstructed and restored to increase productivity and quality [[Шелководство в Азербайджане: от упадка - к возрождению](#)].





**Baskal is considered the second zone after Shaki for the production of silk. Baskal, also located on the Silk Road, in the 15th century began to grow rapidly due to the production of silk. According to the records of archaeologist A.P. Fituni in 1795 a silk factory was established in Baskala. The main product of silkworm production in Baskal is the national symbol of the country Kelaghayi [[Национальное наследие Азербайджана: Басгал и кялагаи](#)].**



**Baskal silk was first presented in 1862 at the International Exhibition in London, where the master received a silver medal for his work for the Kelaghayi presented.**





The most popular silk product in Azerbaijan is a women's silk scarf called Kelaghayi. Kelaghayi is mainly produced in Sheki and Baskala. In 2014, Kelaghayi was included on the UNESCO list as an intangible cultural heritage from Azerbaijan [[Traditional art and symbolism of Kelaghayi, making and wearing women's silk headscarves - intangible heritage - Culture Sector - UNESCO \(англ.\). ich.unesco.org.](https://ich.unesco.org/en/ki/1158)].





**Thanks for attention!**